

## Youth coaches in Belgium-Flanders

Youth coaching is a project which has been developed in Belgium-Flanders. In this project, young people are coaching their peers in secondary schools. The coaches are school drop outs themselves and have the same background as their coached peers. As such, they have credibility and can detect problems in an early phase (e.g. personal problems, addiction, bullying...) and prevent escalation.

The project targets groups is two-fold:

- on the one hand, young people in secondary education (age between 11-18 year) at risk of early school leaving and who experience some disadvantage (problematic personal situation, poor parental guidance, poor cultural background, a lack of self-esteem, etc.)
- on the other hand, the youth coaches themselves. This project empowers them and helps them to achieve a qualification and later a job.

Every Flemish school can apply for a youth coaching project by the Flemish Department of Education. Depending on the funds, they decide which school can join the project. Candidate youth coaches will apply for the job in a school. The school selects a coach who fits in the context of the school, as well as a mentor for the youth coach.

The Flemish Department of Education will then provide training for the coach, which includes coaching skills as well as support for the coaches to achieve a qualification.

A youth coach is contracted for one year and works during the whole school year. Renewing the contract is possible for a second and exceptionally for a third year. The specific job content is defined by the school but has to respect the job description from the department of education.

### **1. Overall responsibility for implementation**

The Flemish Department of Education has overall responsibility on the project. In the City of Antwerp, a 'network coach' is supervising the project in the Antwerp schools (Antwerp is the only city with a local network coach). The network coach supports the mentors in the Antwerp schools. In the school the mentor supports the youth coach and aligns the work of the coach with the vision of the school

### **2. Stakeholders involved in the delivery of the project**

The Flemish Department of Education provides: subsidies, training sessions for the mentor and the coach, website with information. The content of the youth coach job is also described by the Department of Education.

The Network coach in Antwerp ensures: screening of candidates, job application training, empowering the candidates, guiding them in choosing an appropriate adult education, support for problems related to the coaching job and the personal training.

The school leader develops a vision on the project based on the school context and the educational vision of the school.

The Mentor in the school coaches, motivates and trains the youth coach.

### **3. Obstacles in introducing this measure**

In some schools there is poor use of the project. For ex. the coach is used for other jobs than listed in the job description. The quality of the guidance in some schools by the mentor is poor.

The Department of Education and the Antwerp Network coach try to tackle these obstacles with sharing good practices, peer learning, informal critical friends review, etc. If necessary the network coach organizes an information session for the school team.

### **4. Monitoring/assessing the Youth Coaches**

The Flemish department of education is monitoring the project in Flanders. The Antwerp component is monitored by the Network coach.

Elements of the monitoring:

- number of coaches who achieve a certificate in adult education
- number of coaches who find a job after the coaching job
- one time a year the mentor, headmaster and coach are interviewed about the results in the school.

Every 5 years a report is published.

### **5. Results**

± 50% of the school intern coaches achieve a certificate in adult education and find a job afterwards.

± 70% of the school extern coaches achieve a certificate in adult education and find a job afterwards

### **6. Funding/resourcing of the Youth Coaches**

The project is financed by the Flemish department of education. There is place for 226 coaches in Flanders. 80 of them work in Antwerp. Estimated cost: 1400 euro / coach / month (wages)

The registration fee for the adult education is also paid (maximum 700 euro / year).

The schools can organize extra coaching activities for their pupils without extra costs.

### **7. Further info (e.g. website, contact details, etc)**

<http://www.ond.vlaanderen.be/jojo/>

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