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Annotated bibliography on existing approaches to prevent and control youth deviance and violence in Belgium.

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A) Basic outline of systems of youth crime prevention and control in Belgium

Burssens, D., Goris, P., & Vettenburg, N. (2004). Preventie en jeugd. Voorstellingen van een onderzoek. *Actuele thema's uit het strafrecht en de criminologie* (pp. 103-121).

Leuven: Universitaire Pers.

In Belgium there is no straightforward strategy of prevention of (youth) crime. The authors describe the situation as highly chaotic with a lack of united concrete concepts, unclear profiling of actors involved and overlap and gaps characterising the field of prevention.

Willekens, P. (2006). Beter één vogel in de hand dan tien in de lucht: integrale veiligheid. *Orde van de dag*, (35), 9-16.

In this article the author discusses the current local integrated security policy and tries to reflect critically by looking back at the situation in the beginning of the 1990's, where the emergence of decentralisation of 'prevention' in Belgium took place. Security and prevention contracts were established to give local governments more responsibility regarding crime prevention and safety. These contracts signed between cities and municipalities and the minister of internal affairs provides in brief more resources for matters of security and prevention for the local authorities.

Royal Decree on the strategic security and prevention plans, BS 22 December 22, 2006.

The security and prevention contracts which are important devices of prevention policy in Belgium have known a large evolution since its creation. With this Royal Decree several criteria are formulated in order to allow the establishment of these contracts between the minister of internal affairs and the municipalities with the purpose of receiving funding for preventive projects and measures. These modalities allow the municipalities to develop and evaluate their own local security and prevention policy adjusted to the local situation. In this Royal Decree special attention is explicitly requested for problems with youth crime.

Enhus, E., & Christiaens, J. (2006). *Politique urbaine et sécurité en Belgique et aux Pays-Bas*. Verwey-Jonker Instituut.

This paper discusses the context of urban politics and security in Belgium, and more important (one chapter) applied to the field of youth. Although there is no specific policy

within the context of security directed at youth, they are perceived as an important target within the general security policy in Belgium established through the security and prevention contracts. Within these contracts there are several sections provided for the installation of different projects. One of these sections includes 'a better integration of target groups' that creates room explicitly to set up preventive projects for juvenile delinquency.

Hebberecht, P. (2004). Het Belgische preventie- en veiligheidsbeleid. *Justitiële Verkenningen*, 30(7), 81-94.

The article examines the Belgian prevention and security policy until 2004. In particular, to what extent this policy is inspired by political points of view and in what way it is responsive to crime data and feelings of insecurity. Mainly professional organisations and specific population groups, who are able to influence public authorities from their political supporting position, determine the priorities. One of the key actors in this process is the media. The author also claims that the political ideological viewpoint play an important role in developing preventive programs. He states that within the last years in Belgium a strategy of rather repressive segregation of certain risk populations is being applied. The local prevention structure and the projects created through the security and prevention contracts are now based upon the priorities brought forward by the Federal security plan implying situational and techno prevention of property crime, street violence and nuisance caused by drug use and traffic. Less and less room is created for social prevention projects.

Van Keirsbilck, B., & Druant, F. (2003). Problématique SAJ/CPAS: contribution au débat. *Journal du Droit des Jeunes*, (224), 41-47.

Within the French speaking part of Belgium conflicts have predominate the field of assistance to youth. In brief the public services of social assistance have directed youngster to special youth care. However a decree that organizes the assistance to youth mentions explicitly that the special youth care needs be complementary to the more general assistance organised by public services of social help. This article aims to contribute to this debate and tries to offer answers to avoid youngsters (and/or persons related to them) demanding assistance, would be send from one service to the other without being helped at all. The fact that the assistance to youth implies several other social services and sectors in organising help and prevention, it comes as no surprise that these kind of conflicts arise in the field

National Security plan 2008-2011 approved by the Ministry Board on February 1, 2008

This plan approved by the federal ministry board forms the cornerstone of the Federal security and prevention policy in Belgium aimed at police and the justice system.

This document circumscribes which security phenomena deserve priority for the given time period. Besides mentioning explicitly juvenile crime in general, also street crime and small petty crime are integrated in the security plan. Although these phenomena cannot be marked as solely youth crime as such, the question can be asked whether crime in public space like vandalism and street crime are not more often being related to youth in general. Furthermore the plan states that more and more minors commit crime.

Roose, R. (2006). *De bijzondere jeugdzorg als opvoeder*. Gent: Academia Press.

This book puts in general pedagogical aspects of the special youth care in Flanders in the spotlights. It comes to the insight that the underlying preventive aim of this system can be perceived as a threatening for aspects of ‘care’ for minors and their families. The author defends a more pedagogical approach when it comes to problematic situations for youngsters ‘in danger’ and in ‘need of care’

Act of May 7, 2004 modifying the act of April 8 1965 regarding the youth protection and the new municipality law, BS June 25, 2004.

This act created the possibility for municipalities to apply administrative sanctions to minors above the age of 16 in order to react faster and more consequently to acts of nuisance. The communities receive therefore more responsibility regarding the reaction to juvenile delinquency by applying a sanction. This development is rather contradictory since it is embedded within the youth protection system of which the core principle is not consistent with imposing sanctions to juvenile delinquents.

Decree of March 4, 1991 on assistance to youth, BS June 12, 1991. And

Decree of March 7, 2008 on the special youth care, BS April 15, 2008.

Both decrees organising the system of assistance to youth and the special youth care of respectively the French and Dutch speaking communities, form the corner stone of the preventive approach to youth in Belgium. Obviously this is not strictly directed to youth crime as such, but to minors in a problematic situation or ‘in need of care’. Considering the fact that these problems, which may appear within the context of family, school or with peers more often are perceived as risk factors for deviant or delinquent behaviour, it can be stated that the

system of assistance to youth or the special youth care indirectly can be seen as mechanisms of prevention of youth crime. In both parts of Belgium these systems have generally created a voluntary section and a judicial one. A central body organises individual help and if a consensus cannot be reached, the case will be referred to the juvenile judge. However both systems of youth care and assistance are built upon the core principles of subsidiary character of the judicial system and priority of voluntary assistance within the habitat of the minors.

Within the French community the CAAJ (district board of assistance to youth) has a general preventive task implying coordination and stimulation of general preventive measures within its related district. Several other (social) services (private or public) are responsible for the individual help. Within the French decree it is clearly mentioned that priority needs to be given to prevention. The Dutch equivalent of the CAAJ, the Committee of Special Youth care (that besides offering individual support) also has a general preventive task aiming at more broad social welfare principles including other sectors and services.

Act on youth protection, the management of minors who have committed an act qualified as an infringement of the law, and reparations for the damage/injury that said infringement has caused, 13 juni 2006, BS

This act organizes the reaction to delinquent minors (minors who are deemed to have committed an act qualified as an infringement of the law). The protection model within the juvenile justice system was conserved however the introduction of some components can be perceived as an indication in the direction of punitive model. Clearly stated in the very own title of the act, priority is given to restorative justice. More responsibility of both the minor and their parents are emphasized like the introduction of the parental guiding course aimed at parents who show a lack of interest in the minor's delinquent behaviour.

Furthermore the procedure to transfer juveniles to the adult penal court (that was already created in 1965) was reformed. From now on the minor can not be transferred anymore without a history in the youth protection system except if very serious offences have been committed.

Since 2006 criminologists were employed at the youth prosecutor's office. They play an important role in dealing with truancy, juvenile delinquency and child abuse.

Finally from now the juvenile courts received more obligations regarding the motivation of their decision and were provided with order of priority that needed to be followed in applying a measure. Priority is given to retain the minor in its habitat.

Goedseels, E. (2008). Jeugddelinquentie: Wallonië helpt, Vlaanderen straft? *Alert*, 34(5), 29-38.

When it comes to the reaction to juvenile delinquency, it is often stated that Dutch speaking part of Belgium is more likely to react with punitive responses, whereas the French speaking community advocates the protection and assistance to young people. With this article the author tries to nuance this assumption by reflecting critically the discourse of key actors in the field of both parts of the country. She comes to conclude that even though the French part mainly defends the protective philosophy; they also show interest in restorative justice. However this can be dangerous when restorative practices are used and reduced to instruments to complete the pedagogical plan. On the other side the author points out that an exclusively helping and protective approach can unintentionally lead to a more punitive approach because when assistance to juveniles does not work, they could choose a more punitive measure like the waiver procedure for example. The Dutch speaking part of the country (where opinions are more divided) advocates an approach where the deed is put more central and the reaction is more in accordance with it but still not a total punitive way of thinking because they all are opponents of the waiver procedure.

Van Dijk, C., Dumortier, E., & Eliaerts, C. (2004). *Juvenile delinquency and juvenile justice in Belgium. Onuitgegeven paper. Working Group, European Society of Criminology.*

A specialized chief inspector is a function created within the local police force that requires an additional degree in humanities. Local police forces often have special youth sections establishing preventive actions like school visits regarding information sessions on drug use (depending on local governments' initiatives). They also offer special support in controlling specific youth delinquency behaviour like car-jacking, street crime ...

Minister of Internal Affairs, Circular Letter PLP 41 of 7 July 2006.

In this circular letter the minister of internal affairs has decided to establish a contact point in each local police force for schools regarding youth crime. Moreover he distinguishes several

types of crime that require more attention like violence, threatening with violence, steaming and weapon carrying. The minister recommends a chain and network approach directed at community policing and stimulates reflection between actors in the field to work out some preventive and proactive measures like campaigns at schools conducted by the local police.

B) Important sources of information on approaches to youth deviance / youth violence prevention in Belgium

Cyber bullying, www.cyberpesten.be [July 20, 2011]

This website created by pedagogue, sexologist and lecturer Gerard Gielen is a private initiative that was established to come across the lack of initiatives in Flanders regarding the problem of cyber bullying. On the one hand it consists of general information about the scope of the problem, on the other hand specific guidelines for prevention and support

Platform for youth research, www.jop.be [March 25, 2011]

This interdisciplinary and interuniversity cooperation was established to create a clear image of youth research in Flanders. They aim to collect, take stock and analyse existing research and conduct new studies in the field of youth.

Support point youth guidance, www.osbj.be [March 25, 2011]

This autonomic organisation tries to deliver support to youth workers and their organisations as an intersection between practise, policy, theory and education. Information can be found about the special youth care system in Flanders, current trends that live within youth guidance, documents and reports regarding conferences and symposiums.

Belgium award for security and crime prevention, <https://besafe.ibz.be/NL/Politie/belgische-prijs-prix-belge/Pages/default.aspx> [July 18, 2011]

Every year an award is granted to the most innovated project in Belgium regarding security and crime prevention. This year the contest was built around the theme of “sports, science and art in prevention of crime with children and youth”. The winner gets the opportunity to represent Belgium for the European Crime Prevention Award.

Love without violence,

http://www.aimesansviolence.be/index.php?id=aimesansviolence_chiffres [May 18, 2011]

This campaign established by the French speaking community, wants to provide information and sensitize all parties involved in violence within relationship between adolescents (victim, witness, perpetrator, family ...) The website provides contact details of related services for help and guidance and a list of projects that deal with this matter.

Assistance to youth of the French speaking community,

http://www.aidealajeunesse.cfwb.be/index.php?id=ajss_pro [March 24, 2011]

The French equivalent of the special youth care (Flanders) is called the assistance to youth. This website collects all necessary information on every social service available in the field. An important service is called 'assistance in an open environment' (AMO) that offers preventive care to youth in their own environment only at the request of the minor or his family.

<http://www.quifaitquoi.be/services-de-premiere-ligne/> [July 19, 2011]

This websites gives an overview of all services at first line involved in the battle against school drop outs in the French speaking community.

VLASTROV, <http://www.straathoekwerk.be/> [May 18, 2011]

VLASTROV is an organisation which collects all street work initiatives in Flanders.

Vzw Ondersteuningsstructuur Bijzondere Jeugdzorg (Red.). (2003). *Herstelmiddeling, leerprojecten, gemeenschapsdienst minderjarigen: Vlaams overzicht - Bijgewerkt tot februari 2003*. Brussel: OSJB.

OSBJ is an organisation of the Flemish special youth care that tries to carry out a point of support to youth workers and organisations and for substantive and methodological development of this youth care system. Commissioned and financed by the Flemish government they receive the task to support the outlining of restorative justice practice for minors. This work forms an overview of the very large and divers offer of: mediation, community service and educational training and projects.

Youth welfare, www.jongerenwelzijn.be [May 17, 2011]

This Flemish agency resulted from the fusion between the former department of the special youth care and the section community institutions. It aims to provide more information for youth, their family or everybody who is interested in or comes in contact with the special youth care system and the existing related services.

Tackling antisocial behaviour in school,

<http://www.ond.vlaanderen.be/antisociaalgedrag/> [June 14, 2011]

The website of the Flemish ministry of education offers a special section for antisocial behaviour at school. It provides information and guidelines for schools and other practitioners on how to prevent and react to problem behaviour within the school context.

Belgian forum for prevention and security in cities,

<http://www.urbansecurity.be/?lang=nl> [May 10, 2011]

This organisation aims to promote and spread prevention programs developed by Belgian cities and municipalities directed at combating urban insecurity. They work around several specific topics like street gangs, drugs, street workers, community guards, mediation ...

A Belgian prevention guide is offered, containing a list of different local prevention projects.

C) Research on youth deviance and youth violence in Belgium

Gavray, C., & Vettenburg, N. (2007). *La délinquance juvénile autorévélee: le cas de la Belgique. Carrefours de l'éducation*, 2(24), 53-72.

The article presents the results of a research of 3 different self-report studies regarding juvenile delinquency. It is confirmed that family and school practice an important influence. Insecurity within family plays, especially for boys, a significant role. Regarding the factor school, the study pointed out that a positive relationship with the teacher can protect against delinquency. Amongst girls the effort and investment in school lowers the risk of delinquency, especially when it comes to a lower level of education.

Vercaigne, C. (2000). *Onderzoek naar het fenomeen steaming. Een nieuw criminaliteitsfenomeen of een nieuwe term voor een oud probleem? Eindrapport. Onuitgegeven onderzoeksrapport. Leuven: K.U.Leuven, OGJC.*

This research examines the phenomenon ‘steaming’¹ (minors who try to rob someone by threatening or using violence). It was found that this phenomenon can rather be understood as a small form of youth crime instead of the more severe organised crime in gangs. Perpetrators are mainly boys aged between 15 and 17. The use of violence with steaming stays rather restricted. In formulating some policy recommendations, the researchers emphasize the evaluation of existing preventive project.

Vandebosch, H., Van Cleemput, K., Mortelmans, D., & Walgrave, M. (2006). *Cyberpesten bij jongeren in Vlaanderen* (p. 213). Brussel: studie in opdracht van het viWTA.

This research report presents the results of a first exploratory study about the nature and extend of the phenomenon 'cyber bullying' amongst youngsters in Flanders. They come to conclude that cyber bullying is closely related to the classic form of bullying. A strong influential factor that was found is the parental supervision. Young people who are less controlled by their parents are more likely to bully. Factors like the use of a computer, internet or mobile phone, and experiences with classic bullying appeared to have a significant influence. Regarding gender, it is claimed that because boys use the internet more and are generally less controlled by their parents, they are more likely to be offender than victim.

Verzelen, W. (2006). *Stereotypes jongeren en geweld. Alert, 32(4), 63-71.*

This article aims to provide a nuanced view on youth violence by also including the opinion and view point of the youngsters (aged 12 – 16 from the city of Antwerp) themselves. It was found that the respondents had a remarkable indifferent attitude towards violence. Secondly the research pointed out that in general boys are more often involved in, as well as act more tolerant towards, violence than girls. However despite the fact that girls disapprove bullying strongly, they commit it just as much as boys. Regarding the relation between school and violence, the research showed that the lesser one likes going to school, the more one gets involved in fighting. When it comes to the influence of family, no relation was found between family situation and potential fighting by the children. Sexual violence as well as the use of a

¹ In the French speaking part of Belgium the term ‘racket’ is used and is defined more in the direction of violence at or around school.

weapon was strongly rejected by the surveyed youth. Finally violent acts are more frequently committed in group, not just for the kick but also because it was 'necessary' (e.g. robbery ~ lack of money).

Poelman, M., & Smits, D. (2007). *Agressie tegen holebi's in Brussel-Stad. Antwerpen: Maklu.*

This work consist of an explorative research into the phenomenon of aggression against homosexual people in the city of Brussels. The results showed that the offenders are more often men (boys) aged between 15 and 25 years old. Supporting traditional gender roles was found related to homophobia.

Delens-Ravier, I. (2005). Jeunes "étrangers" et intervention judiciaire: le point de vue des acteurs. In N. Queloz, F. Bütikofer Repond, D. Pittet, R. Brossard, & B. Meyer-Bisch (Red.), *Délinquance des jeunes et justice des mineurs. Les défis des migrations et de la pluralité ethnique* (pp. 461-475). Brussel: Bruylant.

In this contribution the relationship is examined between professionals of the special youth care and the youth protection system and minors of foreign origin (results deriving from 2 different studies). It is emphasized that crime can not be understood as a product of cultural conflict and it is therefore important to be aware of the impact of an intervention within the context of integration difficulties for these families. The researchers observed that strategies of refuse and dissociation can result from the widespread feeling of rejection, injustice and lack of respect. It was found that professionals often have feelings of powerlessness toward some youth that can be translated in decreasing investment in interventions with them. This enforces the perception of social exclusion and confirms the feeling of being rejected that on its turn can lead to a refusing and indifferent attitude that finally enforces the powerlessness of professionals. The researchers plead for the need of action that consist of respect for the integrity and recognition of these youngsters and their family.

Duchateau, K., Van Poeck, B., & Hebberecht, P. (2004). *Het levensverhaal van jongeren van Turkse en Marrokaanse origine met een instellingsverleden: Gent: UGent, Faculteit Rechtsgeleerdheid, Onderzoeksgroep Criminologie en Rechtssociologie.*

This study aims to provide a reconstruction of life stories of Moroccan and Turkish youth who have repeatedly committed severe offenses and were therefore placed in an institution and young imprisoned men with a history of placement. Truancy and the related hanging on the

street is often the start of committing delinquency. The majority of the respondents think that school related services like CLB have a too high threshold. Concentration schools are disapproved strongly. The study pointed out that the migrant youth live most of the time in migrant neighbourhoods. The majority is unsatisfied with the quality of the special youth care. They do not have anything against measures applied by juvenile court but do criticize the personal approach of juvenile judges. They plea to be more considered for alternative measures except for the ones where they get directly confronted with the victim.

Foblets, M-C., Djait, B., & Pieters, K. (2004). *Mietjes en macho's: Allochtone jeugddelinquentie. Getuigenissen van autochtone en allochtone jongeren. Leuven: Acco.*

This work is the result of a research project that focused on young (15-25 years old) migrant and native people's perception of norms and laws. The researchers indicate that diminishing mutual stereotypes and positive interethnic relationships can put a brake on feelings of insecurity and possible youth delinquent behaviour. Therefore they decline the existence of concentration schools and plea for more educational programs aimed at cultural diversity. Taking part in social activities as youth organisations, sport clubs ... was also mentioned having a positive influence on youth delinquency. Finally it is emphasized that combating discrimination in every life sphere (nightlife, leisure time, labour market ...) needs to be (or remain) a policy priority.

Teney, C., & Subramanian, S. V. (2010). *Attitudes toward homosexuals among youth in multiethnic Brussels. Cross-Cultural Research, 44(2), 151-173.*

This article reproduces the results of a research into attitudes toward lesbian and gay men in 70 secondary schools in Brussels. Although it was confirmed that youth with foreign origin have a more negative attitude toward lesbian and gay people than Belgians, the study pointed out that this can to great extend be explained by the role of social norms, the identification process (within the receiving society) and experienced institutional discrimination. They conclude that cultural explanations are too simplistic to clarify ethnic differences on sexual prejudice.

De Wree, E. (2004). *Daders van groepsverkrachting. Een daderprofiel in maatschappelijke context. Antwerpen-Apeldoorn: Maklu.*

With this book the author aims to provide an in-depth view on gang rape by analysing files at the public prosecutor's office in Brussels. The study showed that nearly all offenders were

young migrant men mostly of Moroccan (17-25 years old) and African (15-18 years old). Furthermore the research pointed out that the phenomenon of gang rape often is accompanied by the use of alcohol and drugs, appearance of first problems during puberty and attaching exorbitant importance to compulsive masculinity (which will be even more reinforced by the group situation). Group formation mainly takes place between youth in the same neighbourhood and more often as a collective reaction to their similar conditions of life.

De Wree, E., Vermeulen, G., & Christiaens, J. (2006). Aanpak op het juiste spoor: (Strafbare) overlast door jongerengroepen in het kader van openbaar vervoer. *Panopticon*, 27(6), 7-26.

This article aims to explore the nature and scope of nuisance caused by youth in the context of public transport. Moreover it tries to reflect on adequate approaches and reaction to this problem. The research pointed out that mainly youth groups are in charge of nuisance at public transport, especially boys aged between 16 and 19 years old. When it comes to suitable approaches they indicate the importance of phenomenon directed reaction since nuisance covers a lot of different sorts of problem behaviour. The authors formulated a few core action points for concrete policy recommendations: formation of employees in order to react correctly on violent incidents to reduce the chance of escalating. Activating and involving community workers (e.g. street workers) to assist youth that find themselves in a social risk situation also due to other circumstances. Projects conducted for and by youngsters and finally evaluation and follow-up of initiatives.

Burssens, D. (2006). Over daders, slachtoffers, preventie en aanpak. Jeugddelinquentie in het jeugdonderzoek 2000-2005. In N. Vettenburg, E. Elchardus, & L. Walgrave (Red.), *Jongeren van nu en straks. Overzicht en synthese van recent jeugdonderzoek in Vlaanderen* (pp. 253-271). Leuven: LannooCampus.

In this contribution the author seeks to formulate some general trends regarding scientific research conducted on youth delinquency in the period 2000-2005 based upon the Flemish database of youth research platform (JOP). In general recent research pointed out that Flemish young people are not as criminal as often assumed. Mainly boys between the age of 16 and 19 commit occasionally small offences that can be seen as more adolescent related. When it comes to the reaction to delinquency, it appears that in general alternative sanctions are perceived as most promising. Research in the field of prevention of youth crime and

young people as a victim of crime is rather scarce. On the other hand, delinquency of migrant youth is a very popular subject. The author concludes that youth crime research gets often involved in more short-term assignments where only current problems are being analysed and rapid results are being required. It seems to be very hard to find trends or evolutions regarding youth delinquency on a long term base.

Van Nuffel, K., Schillemans, L., Verschelden, G., Vettenburg, N., & De Bie, M. (2004). *Jeugdonderzoek in Vlaanderen. Conference proceeding, paper voorgedragen op SISWO dagen Amsterdam.*

In this paper the authors take a closer look into Dutch youth research. They emphasize that within this kind of research the definition of the problem is often related to remarkable youth behaviour. This type of striking behaviour is brought forward. Most of the time youth research is conducted within social sciences with a large focus on problems associated with youngsters (e.g. drugs, crime...) Images of adults determine very often the way how young people need to be 'studied'. Youth research is often steered by social involvement and policy aimed questions.

Vercaigne, C., Walgrave, L., Mistiaen, P., & Kesteloot, C. (2000). *Verstedelijking, sociale uitsluiting van jongeren en straatcriminaliteit. Leuven: DWTC.*

This research project studies the relation between macro social, economical exclusion mechanisms and urbanization and the link with delinquency committed by young people. The study was conducted in the capital city of Brussels. Deriving from the results it is stated that Brussels does not form an exception when it comes to youth crime (often the opposite is assumed). The spatial characteristic (neighbourhood where one lives) has a very weak influence on delinquency. If specific neighbourhoods are indicated as problematic, it is not due to its characteristics but because of the concentration of social problems. Therefore this study recommends neighbourhood-related action in stead of neighbourhood-directed actions. Likewise, it is found that being a migrant is not connected with crime as such. However, the risk to display delinquency (with migrant youth) is connected to the social position and mechanisms like social exclusion.

Van de Water, G., & Vettenburg, V. (2004). *Weglopen: weg ... van wat? Studie over het profiel en de ervaringen van weglopers in België. Antwerpen: Maklu.*

This study was conducted to circumscribe the problem of runaway youth in Belgium. Its

purpose lies in the creation of a clear image and scope of this problem and consequently the formulation of specific policy recommendations concerning the prevention of runaway behaviour and (viewed more broadly) delinquency (considering the fact that allegedly runaway youth often indulge into delinquent behaviour). The authors argue that either deviancy arose after the runaway behaviour or either the already existing deviant behaviour increases in intensity after running away. The researchers also come to conclude that the services available are not known amongst the youngsters (and/or their families). Therefore they argue that these organisations need to be more approachable and offer assistance at a low threshold

D) Evidence –based prevention: evaluation of youth deviance and violence prevention in Belgium: what works, what doesn't work and points for concern.

Goethals, J. (2006). What works? Evidence based no nonsense criminologie? *Panopticon*, 27(6), 1-6.

The author critically discusses the emergence of the 'no nonsense what works criminology. He states that centrally the focus is placed upon the enforcement of human capacity expressed in cognitive or labour skills whereby interventions aimed at individual guidance means ignoring social correlates of crime. Research conducted in the field of desistance pointed out that besides this human capital also social and economical needs of the offender are of high importance. Despite this critical elucidation, the author does plea for room provided for evidence based criminology. However he emphasizes that studies need to focus on the understanding of how interventions work and the context in which they operate and the need for more research into desistance processes.

Vettenburg, N., Burssens, D., Goris, P., Melis, B., Van Gils, J., Verdonck, D., & Walgrave, L. (2003). *Preventie gespiegeld: visie en instrumenten voor wenselijke preventie*. Leuven: Lannoo.

The work aims to provide a constructive definition of 'prevention' and attempts to translate it into concrete concepts. By developing a workable instrument called 'the mirror of prevention', the writers try to offer actors within the prevention field a framework for evaluation and reference for prevention projects. According to the authors preventive projects

can be described as 'desirable initiatives' when they anticipate risk factors earlier and earlier; are to the utmost offensive; develop an integral approach; work participatory and have a democratic character

Spitz, J. (2005). Intervention psychosociale auprès de jeunes immigrés d'Afrique centrale. In N. Queloz, F. Bütikofer Repond, D. Pittet, & B. Meyer-Bisch (Red.), *Délinquance des jeunes et justice des mineurs. Les défis des migrations et de la pluralité ethnique* (pp. 449-460). Brussel: Bruylant.

This contribution deals with problems that may rise with psychosocial intervention with youth migrants of central Africa. Parents of these youngsters still want to safeguard their African values (belief in magic, protection by the elders...) while youngsters need to deal with values of individualism and democratic norms put forward by actors of social intervention. These contradictive paradigms contribute to the disorientation and social vulnerability of these youth and their families.

Baeten, I., & Rossiers, J. (2010). *Alcohol- en druggebruik in de bijzondere jeugdzorg. Vragen over aanpak en begeleiding* (p. 65). Brussel: Vereniging voor Alcohol- en andere Drugproblemen vzw.

The research pointed out that the Special Youth Care most often is confronted with the use of drugs (mainly cannabis) followed by alcohol and medication. The vast majority of the respondents claim that the substance abuse is a symptom of an underlying problem. People working at facilities of the special youth care point out that they try to assist youths with drug problems but in more severe cases they refer to external assistance. The cooperation between these organisations does not always run smoothly. When it comes to prevention, three-quarter of the respondents claim to deliver non drugs related preventive work like enforcing social skills and providing useful pastime activities.

Beernaert, I. (2008). Drugpreventie: een drugbeleid op school. *Welwijs*, 19(3), 34-37.

The author is a member of the organisation for alcohol and drug related problems (VAD) in Flanders and therefore offers a point of view from the practice field. According to the author, postponing the age where one starts using drugs is a crucial goal when it comes to prevention of drug use. Scientific research has proven that the younger one starts using drugs, the bigger the chance problematic use will appear at older age. The educational system is therefore an effective mechanism to reach youngsters. However drug prevention can not only consist of a

narrow focus on personal aspects. Also environmental factors are very important. That is why the author pleads for integrality as a necessary dimension for drug policy in schools because this transcends the school context obviously. It is practical impossible to reach every student through school. The author therefore designated an intersectoral approach involving social youth work and the justice system.

Deboutte, G. (2008). *Pesten en geweld op school: handreiking voor een daadkrachtig schoolbeleid*" (p. 232). Vlaams Ministerie van Onderwijs en Vorming.

This work is a publication of the Flemish government of education and formation that aims to provide support in preventing and tackling bullying and antisocial behaviour at school. Several guiding principles are being reached to develop a 'whole school approach', meaning the involvement of the whole school community and wide combination of variety of initiatives and actions. Furthermore it is clearly emphasized that restorative practices within the school setting, as a reaction to problem behaviour, is highly recommended.

Nuytiens, A., Christiaens, J., Eliaerst, C., & Brolet, C. (2006). *Trajecten van uithanden gegeven jongeren in het strafrecht. Ernsitge delinquenten gestraft - deel 2. Gent: Academia Press.*

This research commissioned by the former minister of justice, investigates penal trajectories of minors that were transferred to the adult penal system². This procedure appears not to be an effective approach since the results pointed out that minimum three-quarter of this population will once stay in prison. Moreover it was shown that it will be a herald for the start of a criminal career. Contacts with the justice system will consequently not end. Considering the high amount of recidivism the researchers recommend that communities need to stimulate research to improve guidance of trajectories. They conclude that the lack of resources in the Belgian youth protection system stimulates the use of the waiver procedure.

Claus, L., De Mey, W., Merlevede, E., Bosmans, G., Van Leeuwen, K., & Braet, C. (2009). *Kindtrainingen. Een volwaardige component van vroege interventieprogramma's voor antisociaal gedrag? Gedragstherapie, 42, 49-68.*

This pilot study evaluates the effect of training in social skills with 4 to 7 year olds. This child training is part of the STOP-project that offers besides child also parental training and teacher

² This is called the waiver procedure

guidance. The children visit the centre once a week for a period of 10 weeks. Although this study has pointed out some progress related to social-cognitive knowledge with the training group, no strict statistical significant results have been found especially regarding the behavioural component of social competence.

Warmenbol, L., & Goossens, L. (2006). *Aandacht in 't kwadraat: in "probleembuurtten" werken met "probleemjongeren"*. Leuven: Acco.

This work consists of evaluative research regarding youth work in problem areas of the organisation 'Arktos'. This empirical research showed amelioration with the youngsters' image of themselves and the development of (social) skills. The youngsters indicated that they became more aware of their own behaviour and that they got bored less. The researchers underline the importance of evaluation on a long term bases.

Glazemakers, I., & Deboutte, D. (2011). *Evaluatierapport Implementatie Triple P in de Provincie Antwerpen*. Antwerpen: Universiteit van Antwerpen: Collaborative Antwerp Psychiatric Research Institute Department Youth Mental Health.

Triple P is an educational (upbringing) supporting program aimed at parents of children below age of 16 with the objective of preventing behavioural, emotional or developmental problems by enlarging knowledge, educational skills and confidence with the parents and better cooperation between eachother. The project was evaluated positively. Parent and practitioners were both satisfied. Within the group that followed the program at the highest level, a decrease of 11 % was found of problem behaviour with the children.

Verheuden, T. (2000). *Evaluatie van het project jeugdadviseurs. Onuitgegeven onderzoeksrapport*. Berchem: In Petto, Jeugddienst Informatie en Preventie.

Youth preventive actions can only succeed if they are connected closely to the lifestyle and environment of youth. This consideration forms the cornerstone of the project of youth advisors. Young people between 15-19 years that are trained to help peers with problems and refer them if necessary to the right service. This report evaluates the effectiveness of this training. They come to conclude that through this project the young people get more familiar with the youth guidance sector that contributes to low threshold. Furthermore, it was found that the youngster who received the training got more self assured and found help as well.

Burssens, D., & Vettenburg, N. (2004). *Hergo op school. Herstelgerichte antwoorden op tuchtproblemen in de school. Herstelgericht groepsoverleg als case-study* (p. 68). Leuven: Onderzoeksgroep Jeugdcriminologie K.U.Leuven.

In this research report results are provided of an experiment with family group conference in schools. The study generally pointed out that many actors involved were satisfied after this restorative way of reacting to problem behaviour within the school setting. However it was found that schools who utilize this restorative approach as a pedagogical tool, the outcome was not positive. Therefore it is important (especially for schools who used to apply retributive measures) not to focus too hard on the offender. Furthermore the research showed that the family group conference can not succeed if the offender does not recognize the facts and/or his responsibility. Finally it is recommended that training of the moderators need to use methodology from an educational setting and not from a judicial one (as in the case of this research).

Ferwerda, H., van Leiden, I., & Cornelissens, A. (2009). *Back on track? Een evaluatieonderzoek naar de onthemende projecten van de Bijzondere Jeugdbijstand in Vlaanderen. (onuitgegeven onderzoeksrapport)*. Arnhem: Bureau Beke.

This research report is the result of a study about the effectiveness of projects that removes youngsters (with deviant and/or delinquent behaviour) from their familiar habitat for 4 months to take up a physical challenge (e.g. living and working on a farm). Although the participating youngsters evaluate their experience positively, it appears that they strongly need continuing assistance and aftercare which can not be offered immediately due to the long waiting lists within the sector leading to elapsing into their old habits. The researchers emphasize that only when continuing assistance and context are organised well, short term effects can be reached. However these projects are best to be used as an instrument of a wider 'trail' approach with the goal of reaching out a fresh start to the most vulnerable and problematic youngsters.

Burssens, D. (2009). Preventie van geweld op school. *Welwijs*, 20(4), 3-6.

The author reflects on several forms of prevention of violence in a school context. He concludes that curative prevention can be effective in modifying a students' behaviour like most of the school guidance centres work. However this kind of approach focuses on the individual level and ignores more broad external social causes. Therefore he recommends

social prevention like adjusting the general school climate. However the effects are very difficult to measure since it has its results on a long term bases.

Rombouts, D. (2000). *Het time-out project: een preventieve werkvorm voor school-drop-outs*. Leuven: Garant.

The book discusses the method of time-out projects, which offers students with problematic behaviour at school a period of rest, a time-out. These projects are important devices in Belgium to prevent and to deal with (potential) school drop-outs. The study pointed out that this kind of project is indeed effective when it comes to modification of the behaviour. Unfortunately there is not enough aftercare provided to maintain this alternation. Schools in general do seem to evaluate the project as successful for the majority of the children. However according to them, it does not work for a small minority. For this group other initiatives need to be developed otherwise the schools are obliged to expel them from the institution. Furthermore this research report consists of other recommendations brought forward by the surveyed schools. The question is critically asked whether the schools perceive this project as a non retributive alternative or as a last step in a disciplinary measure

Blomart, J., Caffieaux, C., & Petiau, A. (2001). Recherche-action “Devenir son propre mediateur” Programme de socialisation à l’école, comme défi à la violence. *Le point sur la recherche en Education*, 19, 1-17.

This research project commissioned by the government of the French speaking community examined the implementation in schools of an animation program for children between 8 and 11 with the objective of preventing violence in school setting. The research pointed out that a short period of this pro social animation program is not effective in changing behaviour but it did with children taking part for a longer period. It was also found that feelings of solidarity improved between the pupils. Furthermore the researchers found a connection between quality of school performance and positive social habits.

De Caluwé, & Ilse Smits. (2010). *Projectmatig Wetenschappelijk Onderzoek. Youth at Risk Vlaanderen op de effectenladder* (p. 152). Hasselt: Katholieke Hogeschool Limburg.

This scientific report describes the results of evaluative research on the effectiveness of Youth at Risk projects in Flanders. This kind of project, aimed at youngsters appointed to the juvenile court or subject of continued guidance of the Committee of Special Youth Care, has

as central general objective to reduce delinquent behaviour. Other purposes are to reduce negative perception of themselves and as a result display more appropriate behaviour at school, at home and in their spare time in order to get more integrated within society. Youth at risk consists of 3 phase process. The study pointed out that this project was effective for boys when it came to school related skills and strong reduce in emotional aimed coping mechanisms. With girls a large increase was found of positive oriented reflecting style. Furthermore a better relationship with family and committing less truancy was found as results. The coaches as well as the parents and the youngsters generally experienced this project as positive.

Roevens, E., Deboutte, G., Verdonck, E., Deklerck, J., & Put, J. (2008). *Onderzoeksrapport beleidsindicatoren time-out in het onderwijs*. Leuven: Leuven Instituut voor Criminologie.

This research report commissioned by the Flemish government aims to draft policy indicators regarding 'time-out' projects in schools. The student will be removed from class for maximum 10 days (short time-out) or maximum 6 weeks (long time-out). During this period personal guidance is offered by a person outside the school with the intention of reintegrating the student into education again and avoiding school drop out. These kinds of projects focus on students with serious problem behaviour whereby the situation in class becomes untenable. It appears to be an effective intervention for students who display internal or external problem behaviour and are in danger of being expelled from school. However this kind of project appears not to be effective for the students who suffer a combination of several problems and/or display persistent problem behaviour.

Heylen, B., Ravier, I., & Vanneste, C. (2010). *Recherche évaluative sur l'usage de la mesure de placement à Everberg*. In F. Cazan, C. De Craim, & E. Traets (Red.), *Jeugddelinquentie: op zoek naar passende antwoorden* (pp. 101-111). Antwerpen-Apeldoorn: Maklu.

This contribution deals with an evaluative research into the use of a placement in the centre 'De Grubbe' in Everberg by way of a provisional measure. This measure was established with a Bill in 2002 and creates the possibility to imprison minors for a maximum of 15 days. It is meant to serve as a reaction to severe offences committed by minors above 14 who can not be sent to a community institution due to a lack of places available. The results pointed out that the initial purpose of using the measure strictly in subsidiary way has shifted

in practise towards another direction. The quantitative data has shown that juvenile judges are sometimes misled by the pedagogical feature of the institution and often use the measure as a tool for putting a hold to assumed feelings of impunity regarding youth. Furthermore it was also found that the origin of the minor has an influence in the direction of a tougher approach to this population.

E) Current discussion about criminal law/policy related to young offenders in Belgium.

Vervotte, I. (2006). *Globaal Plan Jeugdzorg: de kwetsbaarheid voorbij... opnieuw verbinding maken*. Brussel: Vlaams Ministerie van Welzijn, Volksgezondheid en Gezin.

This policy report written by the former minister of well being is an answer to the familiar problems within the Special youth care in Flanders. Issues like the increasing number of minors in the special youth care system, enlarging length of waiting lists, further growing gap between request of assistance and the offer. Within this policy report special attention is addressed to organising scientific research in the field of effectiveness and efficiency of the offered help and assistance.

Devroe, E., Deschamps, H., & Hannes, K. (2008). Evidence-based beleidsvoering in de kijker: twee Belgische initiatieven. *Panopticon*, (6), 59-66.

This article puts evidence based policy in Belgium into the spotlights. This kind of policy is far from being encapsulated into practice. The authors observe that there is a huge lack of quasi experimental research in Belgium and if evaluation of policy exists at all, it is most of the time not organised systematically and characterised as very fragmented. However an important initiative was brought into live to promote evidence based practice, namely the Belgian Campbell Group³. This organisation aims to promote and stimulate evidence based practice and production of systematic reviews amongst policy makers, practitioners and researchers regarding the domains of education, well being and crime and insecurity. They try to increase interest and connection with criminologists but the authors state that so far this remains without significant results. From the corner of the Belgian criminological discipline a very critical stance is put forward.

³ national variant of the international familiar Campbell Collaboration

Burssens, D. (2008). Valkuilen van een evidence based criminaliteitsbeleid. *Panopticon*, 29(2), 6-20.

The article offers a critical reflection on evidence based crime policy, where policy measures are based on scientific evaluative research. The author points out several pitfalls, for example the underestimation of methodological difficulties in this kind of research. More important he fears that the criminological science threatens to lose its value when the research agenda is only limited to things that can be measured by figures. Since evidence-based measures are based upon methodologically well elaborated research designs, the writer asks himself the question whether this policy can be applied upon criminological research, that is rarely conducted in an isolated closed room. The society is a complex structure that can not be observed in a laboratory.

Van Dijk, C., & Dumortier, E. (2006). Survival of the protection model? Competing goals in Belgian juvenile justice. In J. J. Tas & S. H. Decker (Red.), *International Hanbook of Juvenile Justice* (pp. 187-223). Dordrecht: Springer.

In this contribution the authors aim to provide a deeper view on the paradigms that underpin the reaction to juvenile delinquents. Generally they conclude that the juvenile justice system in Belgium has moved from protective and rehabilitative objectives towards two competing directions. This is explained by firstly, the emergence of diversion experiments, educational training and mediation measures as an alternative for judicial intervention. Secondly the acts of 1994 and 2002 introducing on the one hand components of the justice model (e.g. more legal safeguards) on the other one more punitive characteristics creating room for a re-penalisation trend (e.g. facilitating of waiver procedure⁴). The new act of 2006 remains adherent of the protection model however considering the extension of the youth court that will be able to impose adult measures and restorative justice clearly coming to the surface leaves the authors to conclude that this new legislation reflects a broad range of different models: protection, retribution and restoration.

⁴ The waiver procedure makes it possible for minors to be transferred to the adult penal system.

Christiaens, J., & Dumortier, E. (2010). Belgium. *Juvenile Justice Systems in Europe/ Current Situation and Reform Developments* (pp. 99-130). Mönchengladbach: Forum Verslag Godesberg.

The authors of this contribution conclude that although the debate regarding the reaction to youth delinquency in Belgium seems to have been stagnated, there are still significant gaps (criticisms already earlier formulated) in the system that were ignored easily by the recent reform of 2006. They mention the lack of attention for the children's rights, still mixing delinquents and non delinquent minors in the youth protection system and the inability of Belgian authorities to centralize and collect statistical data in the domain of youth crime.

Nagels, C. (2007). Responsabilisering van maatschappelijke verantwoordelijkheid en herstelrecht voor jongeren. Respons op Claes en Van Droogenbroeck. In E. Claes, J. Deklerck, A. Marchal, & J. Put (Red.), *Herstel en jeugd: nu in het (r)echt* (pp. 101-109). Brugge: die Keure.

The author critically discusses in this contribution the issue of 'giving more responsibility to minors'. She claims that restorative justice for minors is an inadequate way to fulfil this objective (that becomes currently more and more popular within the approach to juvenile minors). According to the author family group conference (that knows its origin within small communities) establishes unequal power relations in our current society and is a perverse way of making youth more responsible. Offender and victim do not have the same environment. A police agent as a representative of society does not always sound credible. Moreover this restorative practice creates expectations that are not formulated explicitly but that need to be fulfilled by the offender. A minor has always an inferior position toward adults. Therefore it is concluded that it is the responsibility of an independent juvenile judge to serve an answer to problematic behaviour and not the responsibility of the participating actors of family group conference.

Onkelinx, L. (2004). Kadernota betreffende de hervorming van de wet van 8 april 1965 betreffende de jeugdbescherming.

This framework document established by the former Minister of Justice, which preceded the new act regarding the youth protection from 2006 reflects the philosophy that undermines the new legislation. It defends the conservation of the protection model within the juvenile justice

system in Belgium but nevertheless holds several components aiming in the direction of a more punitive approach. It pleads for more responsibility for both the minors and their parents and a tougher approach to the 'hard core' juvenile delinquents.

Smeets, S., & Tange, C. (2009). Evaluation of Safety and Crime Prevention Policies in Belgium. In P. Robert (Red.), *Evaluating Safety and Crime Prevention Policies in Europe* (pp. 41-59). Brussels: VUB Press.

Evaluation research regarding safety and crime prevention policies in Belgium is in a high extend influenced by the political discourse. The author critically discusses the way this type of research has been conducted in Belgium the past decades. She states that after 1999 the focus was placed on findings that can directly be transferred into practice and/or policy orientations with the objective of responding rapidly to civil alleged concerns of safety and security. This tendency puts evaluations performed before a project's implementation at the background. Focus is placed on the process of unfolding initiatives and its reception by actors on the field to the detriment of research into effects of programs and projects.