

# THE VRAC PROJECT

## It takes a Village to Raise A Child

Our engagement with young people, parents and partners is set to continue after a brief break to gather our thoughts due to COVID-19 and lockdown. As for all of us, it was a real shock to the system!

Unfortunately, our partner meeting planned for June has had to be cancelled. We are so disappointed that we cannot have our friends from France, Belgium and Holland visit us in East Sussex (they are also very sad!) We had such great plans to show them our lovely county, traditional seaside towns and our VRAC project work– so, maybe next year.

We want to ensure that we record the here and now; so, we are focusing on talking to young people and parents about their current health and wellbeing during this unprecedented event. We are also looking at various approaches to engagement, including online focus groups and art packs as a creative way for young people to record their experiences. We have two surveys ready to go which will look at support during transition to new educational settings. This is fast becoming a major focus for VRAC in both pilot areas. The evidence and insight gathered will greatly inform the development of our front-line team.

The work continues in building networks of stakeholders, and we continue to seek out and initiate partnerships where we can. We have made great progress here and there some exciting partnerships and ideas are taking shape in both Newhaven and Hailsham. This is very much focused on the front-line team work at present and we are beginning to define what the service will look like once activity starts in around October (all being well).

The tender opportunity for Work Package One – the Extended Learning Time Activity Programme, went live on Wednesday 29th April. We hope to give you positive news about the tender after the closing date of Wednesday 3rd June.

VRAC wants to **develop a new organizational model for education** that accommodates the complex situation of vulnerable children, specifically in deprived areas. By developing an **integrated service**, the limitations of individual attempts will be transcended and the potential of all partners to create strong learning environments will be unlocked. Rather than focusing on isolated issues, **VRAC will intervene across all contexts in which vulnerable children learn and develop.**

Thus VRAC will have an impact on the main factors causing early school leaving and school delay and create a higher sense of belonging and wellbeing for children and families, more parental involvement, more competence in supporting the families and more institutional efficiency in cross-sectoral cooperation.

This, in turn, will lead to **more learning profit and a decrease in school delay and early school leaving.**

The following 3 work packages with associated activities, deliverables and outputs provide a **structured approach to the project, in collaboration with children, youngsters, parents, neighbourhood, schools, welfare and leisure partners.**

The guidelines and policy recommendations are based on the analysis of the data collected during the pilots and are co-drafted by all partners, which in turn involve observer partners and policy makers. The publication is written in such a way that both solution actors and policy makers can use it **to organise transitions to integrated services and/or to review policy.**

- **Work Package 1: Developing Extended Learning Time**
- **Work Package 2: Frontline wellbeing teams**
- **Work Package 3: Adoption and policy recommendations**



## **MISSION STATEMENT**

VRAC wants to make quality education attainable for all children and youngsters.

Therefore VRAC will co-construct integrated community-based education and welfare services in deprived areas. All stakeholders will try to forge balanced, transparent relationships and adhere to the following principles:

- Children are human beings not human becomings: they are capable of expressing what they need.
- Children and their families are approached in a 'strengths-based', equitable manner: their sense of belonging is central.
- Children and their families have 100 languages: we employ a pedagogy of listening.

## **COVID 19**

The covid 19 virus is playing tricks on all of us, our entire planet is being turned upside down by this virus.

And yet... despite this severe setback, everyone is looking for ways to get through this period unharmed.

Also all partners of VRAC see today, even better than before, what can be improved in our society to get everyone on board.

VRAC's target group has been hit hard, even though they seem to be the least susceptible to the virus. Where school delays and early school leaving were already a big challenge to tackle, digital lessons, making laptops and wifi available and motivating the least reachable and most vulnerable pupils are an almost impossible task.

Many partners of the VRAC project are currently committed to tackling this gap in our society.

The project keeps on going, but priorities affecting the target group are now being addressed and give the opportunity to look for sustainable solutions that we might not have considered under 'normal' circumstances.

## Get to know the VRAC partners



### Lead Partner: City of Mechelen

Mechelen is a city in the Belgian province of Antwerp. The city is located between the cities of Antwerp and Brussels and has circa 86.600 inhabitants.

The city of Mechelen strives to be both a pioneering as a social and human city. Reducing the risk of early school leaving and child poverty are top priority! By providing a strong educational and poverty policy, the city tries to provide and support answers to local needs.

The city can't do this alone, we involve the residents (children, youth and adults) and works together with different organizations, entrepreneurs and so many other local partners.



<https://www.mechelen.be/vrac>



### Project Partner 2: Karel de Grote University College

The Centre of Expertise for Pedagogical Care in Childcare and School carries out research and provides training for professionals in child care and education in the field of parental participation, innovation in and with teams, perceptions and experiences of children, education for sustainable development, innovative forms of care for young children intercultural dynamics, evaluation research and in the field of perceptions of care.

This project provides an in-depth insight into the preconditions for cooperation for longer learning time and chain care. It also gives the opportunity to develop new reflective methods that serve both to monitor and evaluate innovative processes and to support professionals.



<https://www.kdg.be/vrac>



### Project Partner 3: East Sussex Community Voice

Our community interest company is a special type of limited company, set up to benefit the community, rather than private shareholders.

People's voice and lived experience is our passion. Our vision is for people centred public services in East Sussex, where all members of the public are empowered to have a say in their service design and delivery. What is especially important to us is that we will seek the views of the marginalised in all our work.

We get out of bed in the morning because we want to see public services that work for everyone, where people are at the centre of influence.



<https://www.escv.org.uk/vrac>

## **Project Partner 4: AFEJI**

Afeji is an educational, social and socio-medical non-for-profit actor established in 1962, in the Nord, France. In 2019, 3000 professionals run 112 establishments for 16000 beneficiaries.

Stemming from the National Education department, Afeji is strongly rooted in the social and educational reality and has a solid experience working with children facing special needs, educational issues and deprived environment.

Two establishments participate in VRAC: a special education and home care service as well as a medical-psycho-pedagogical centre.



<http://www.afeji.org/?s=VRAC>

## **Project Partner 5: Wattlelos Association of Community Centres**

Wattlelos Association of Community Centres was created in 1969, in order to unify all the community centres located in the town of Wattlelos. Today, ACSW has inherited of three community centres: Le Laboureur, La Mousserie, and L'Avenir.

The association acts for the local community that can benefit from a wide range of activities and services : daycare nurseries, after-school clubs, offering leisure and sports activities, cultural and educational trips for children and families, community counselling and advisory services, help from social workers, home care service for elderly people etc.



<https://acsw.centres-sociaux.fr/vrac/>

## **Project Partner 6: Samenlevingsopbouw vzw**

Samenlevingsopbouw is an organisation for community development: we want to contribute to a just, inclusive and sustainable society, in which everybody can participate and exercise their fundamental rights, such as good housing, work and education.

We do that by bringing people in poverty together, empowering them and search together for sustainable solutions for problems and social injustices. We work on different topics, mainly: work, housing, energy and watersupply, and education.

Our funding comes from the Flemisch government, but also from local authorities and other resources.



<http://www.samenlevingsopbouw-antwerpenprovincie.be/nl/programmas-en-projecten/onderwijs/vrac---it-takes-a-village-to-raise-a-child-149.aspx>



### **Project Partner 7: Mancroft Advise Project (MAP)**

MAP is an organisation in Norfolk UK who offer young people support in all areas of their lives.

We first opened our doors in 1991 offering advice, information and counselling for the first time in Norfolk to young people. Since then we have grown into a large charity offering Advice, Therapeutic Services and Youth Work, to holistically support 11 -25 year olds in challenges they face in today's society. We make it easy for our service-users to access support, by having it available all under one roof.

We are young person-led in all the work we do.

We also encourage young people to embrace their rights and we support them in fighting for social justice for young people.



<https://www.map.uk.net/vrac/>



### **Project Partner 8: Municipality of Leiden**

The municipality of Leiden, located in the province of South Holland, has 124,906 inhabitants and is one of the most densely populated cities in the Netherlands. Leiden, a so-called 'central municipality', presents itself as a city of knowledge and culture, with Leiden University, Leiden Bio Science Park and various national museums as its flagship. This profile is accompanied by increasing internationalisation, within which 'Interreg 2 Seas' fits neatly.

the VRAC project relates to the participation and social development cluster, where it unites the policy areas of education and youth care.



<https://gemeente.leiden.nl/inwoners-en-ondernemers/jeugd-en-onderwijs/onderwijs/gelijke-kansen-in-het-onderwijs/>

