



EDucation of International Newly Arrived migrant pupils

Country report – Flanders (Belgium)

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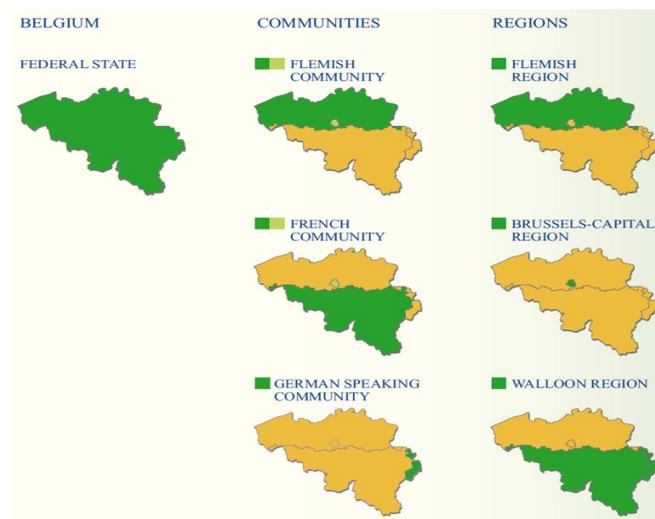
1 - Introduction: the Flemish Education system

General information

Belgium consists of 4 language regions, 3 Communities and 3 Regions (for a clear insight in our country, see https://www.dekamer.be/kvvcr/pdf_sections/pri/fiche/en_03_00.pdf). Under the Constitution and in our federal state, the Communities have legislative powers in educational matters. Gent is a city in Flanders, so in this report we will not speak about the Belgian but about the Flemish educational system.

Flanders lies in the northern part of Belgium and is centrally located to major industrial areas in Western Europe. Flanders has a population of slightly over six million. The official language is Dutch. The Flemish capital of Brussels is also the capital of Belgium and of Europe.

The **Flemish Community** is competent for person-related issues. These are policy areas in which the services to the population are closely related to the language in which they have to be provided. In concrete terms, these policy areas relate to 'education and training', 'welfare, public health and the family' and 'culture, youth, sports and media'.



Under the Belgian Constitution, every child has a right to education. In order to guarantee this right to education, **compulsory education** was introduced. Compulsory education starts on 1 September of the year in which a child reaches the age of 6, and lasts 12 full school years. A pupil has to comply with compulsory education until the age of fifteen or sixteen. Afterwards only part-time compulsory education is applicable (= a combination of part-time learning and working). However, most young people continue to attend full-time secondary education. Compulsory education ends at the eighteenth birthday or on June 30 of the calendar year in which the youngster reaches the age of 18.

All children who reside in Belgium are subject to compulsory education. Thus, also children of foreign nationality are subject to compulsory education. From the sixtieth day of their registration by the local authorities, these children must be enrolled in a school and attend classes regularly. Schools are not

allowed to refuse pupils without a residence permit.

Freedom of education is a constitutional right in Belgium. Every natural or legal person has the right to organise education and establish institutions for this purpose. The 'governing body' (or school board) is a key concept in Flemish education. The governing body is responsible for one or more schools and is comparable to a board of directors in a company.

Governing bodies enjoy considerable **autonomy**. They are entirely free in choosing teaching methods and are allowed to base their education on a certain philosophy or educational view. They can also determine their own curriculum and timetables as well as appoint their own staff. However, schools that want government recognition or funding must meet the attainment targets. In addition, schools must have sufficient teaching materials and be established in habitable buildings that comply with safety provisions and hygiene standards. The constitution also guarantees the parents' freedom of choice. Parents and children must have access to a school of their choice within a reasonable distance from their home.

Educational networks

An educational network is a representative association of governing bodies and often takes over some of the responsibilities of governing bodies. For example, they draw up their own curriculum and timetables. This means that the governing bodies concerned surrender some of their autonomy to the networks.

There are three educational networks:

- **GO! education of the Flemish Community is publicly run education** organised by the public body called 'het GO! onderwijs van de Vlaamse Gemeenschap' acting under the authority of the Flemish Community. Under the constitution, this GO! education is required to be neutral. Indeed, the religious, philosophical or ideological convictions of parents and pupils must be respected.
- **Publicly funded, publicly run education (OGO) comprises municipal education** (organised by local authorities) **as well as provincial education** (organised by provincial authorities). The governing bodies of this education network are united in two umbrella organisations: the Educational Secretariat of the Association of Flemish Cities and Municipalities (OVSG) and the Flemish Provincial Education (POV).
- The **publicly funded, privately run schools (VGO)** deliver education organised by a private person or private organisation. The governing body is often a non-profit-making organisation (vzw). Privately run education mainly consists of catholic schools. They are associated in the umbrella body called Flemish Secretariat for Catholic Education (VSKO). Furthermore, there are also protestant, Jewish, orthodox, Islamic, ... schools. In addition to these denominational schools, there are also schools, which have no affiliation with a particular religion. Examples of such schools are Freinet schools, Montessori schools or Steiner schools, which adopt particular educational methods and are also known as 'method schools'.

Education that is organised for and by the government (GO! education and local and provincial education) is known as **publicly run education**. Recognised education founded on private initiative is called **privately run education**.

Distribution of pupils across the networks in primary and secondary education (2006-2007 school year).

subsidised privately run education: 68,28%

subsidised publicly run education: 16,46%

GO! (community education): 15,27 %

Each educational network has its own **educational guidance service (PBD)**, which ensures professional internal support to schools and centres. Schools can call on them for educational and methodological advisory services (innovation projects, self-evaluation projects, support initiatives).

The **Pupil guidance centre (CLB)** is a service financed by the government. In Flanders, there are 73 centres,

which each belong to one of the three educational networks. But a CLB works across the networks and thus can also accompany schools belonging to another educational network. Pupils, parents, teachers and school management teams can call on the CLB for information, help and guidance. CLB guidance is free of charge and is based on four key pillars:

- learning and studying
- the school career
- preventive health care
- social and emotional development

So CLBs provide multidisciplinary guidance.

Nursery & Primary and Secondary Education

'**Basisonderwijs**' comprises both nursery and primary education. There is mainstream and special nursery and primary education. **Nursery education** is available for children **from 2,5 to 6 years**.

Mainstream **primary education is aimed at children from 6 to 12** and comprises 6 consecutive years of study. A child usually starts primary education at the age of 6 and thus when he is subject to compulsory education.

Since 1989, **full-time secondary education** has been organised in a uniform system. This uniform structure comprises stages, types of education and courses of study. Pupils, on average **starting at the age of 12**, only make a final choice of subjects in the second stage so that they are first introduced to as many subjects as possible.

The majority of teaching periods in the first stage is devoted to the core curriculum. From the second stage, we distinguish four different education forms:

- **General secondary education** (aso) places an emphasis on broad general education. Pupils are not prepared for a specific profession. aso provides a very firm foundation for passing on to tertiary education and that is why most pupils choose to continue studying after aso.
- **Technical secondary education** (tso) places a special emphasis on general and technical/theoretical subjects. After tso, young people can exercise a profession or pass on to tertiary education. This education also includes practical classes.
- **Secondary arts education** (kso) combines a broad general education with active arts practice. After kso, young people can exercise a profession or go on to tertiary education.
- **Vocational secondary education** (bso) is a practice-oriented type of education in which young people learn a specific occupation in addition to receiving general education.

From the **age of 15 or 16**, pupils can transfer to **part-time education**. Part-time learning is available in three ways:

- through part-time vocational secondary education (dbso);
- through apprenticeship (organised by Syntra Vlaanderen);
- through part-time training programmes.

All young people in part-time education must learn and work for at least 28 hours a week. Furthermore, a better harmonisation of the three existing learning systems is aimed at. In the 'new' part-time education system, young people will be able to attain a vocational qualification through an individually tailored learning pathway.

(source: "Education in Flanders. A broad view of the Flemish educational landscape/2008". Download: <http://www.vlaanderen.be/nl/publicaties/detail/education-in-flanders-a-broad-view-of-the-flemish-educational-landscape2008>)

2 - A description of the population of Newly Arrived Migrant pupils (NAMs) in the Flemish education system over the past three years

(based on: https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/fpfis/mwikis/eurydice/index.php/Belgium-Flemish-Community:Support_Measures_for_Learners_in_Early_Childhood_and_School_Education#Reception_education_for_non-Dutch-speaking_newly_arrived_migrants_in_mainstream_education_.28OKATN.2FOKAN.29_2)

Target group

The target group of this form of reception education in mainstream elementary and secondary education is non-Dutch speaking, newly arrived migrants (NAMs). This is a very diverse group: children of asylum seekers and refugees, children that come to Belgium through family reunification programmes, non-accompanied minors, children of employees of international organisations in Belgium, ... These NAM pupils meet the following conditions to get registered in a reception class/school:

1 - Age requirements:

- Be at least 5 years old or attain that age at latest on December 31st of the current school year (primary education);
- Be at least 12 years old and not have attained the age of 18 years on December 31st of the current school year (Full-time secondary education);
- Not have attained the age of 18 years on December 31st of the current school year (part-time vocational secondary education - dbso).

2 - Not have Dutch as a mother tongue or home language;

3 - Have insufficient proficiency of the teaching language to follow classes;

4 - Be registered for at most 9 months in a school with Dutch as its teaching language (holiday months July and August are omitted);

5 - Be a newly arrived migrant (reside uninterruptedly in Belgium for at most one year).

Besides this group, the term non-Dutch speaking newly arrived migrant is also applicable to children officially residing in open asylum centres. For these children, only the age requirement must be met. The other requirements are disregarded if the pupil can provide a certificate of the asylum centre where he or she resides. This means that all pupils that meet the age requirements are eligible for reception education as long as they reside in the asylum centre. The year subsequent to when they have left the asylum centre, they are eligible for a follow-up year.

In full-time regular secondary education, the class council has the authority to diverge from the requirements regarding age, duration of residence and school trajectory. This is also possible in part-time vocational secondary education (dbso), but the procedure runs through the Flemish Agency for Education Services (AgODi).

Tables and Figures

We present a selection of figures and tables as published by the Flemish Ministry of Education in 2015. These figures do not take into account the recent (and expecting) rise of migrant and refugee families in Belgium since the start of the refugee crisis in Europe. The figures only relate to the situation in Flanders.

Number of NAMS

tabel nr. 1 – Number of NAMS in Primary Education

Gewoon basisonderwijs

2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014
2.512	2.945	3.173	2.511	2.286

Tabel 6: Overzicht van het aantal anderstalige nieuwkomers in het gewoon basisonderwijs

	Aandeel anderstalige nieuwkomers t.o.v. schoolbevolking
2009-2010	0,66%
2010-2011	0,77%
2011-2012	0,82%
2012-2013	0,64%
2013-2014	0,57%

Tabel 7: Overzicht van het aandeel anderstalige nieuwkomers t.o.v. de totale schoolbevolking in het gewoon lager onderwijs

Share of NAMs relative to the whole school population in primary education

tabel nr 2 – Number of NAMS in secondary Education

	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014
Total	2357	2631	3152	2701	2326

	Aandeel OKAN-leerlingen t.o.v. schoolbevolking
2009-2010	0,54%
2010-2011	0,60%
2011-2012	0,73%
2012-2013	0,63%
2013-2014	0,54%

Tabel 3: Overzicht van het aandeel regelmatige OKAN-leerlingen ten opzichte van de totale schoolbevolking in het voltijds secundair onderwijs op 1 februari

Share of NAMS relative to the total school population in secondary Education

tabel nr 3 - Numbers of NAMS in Part-time Vocational secondary Education

	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014
Total	28	50	97	146	110

tabel nr 4 - Nationality (The Flemish Ministry of Education only published figures for Secondary Education)

Voltijds secundair onderwijs

2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014
Afghanistan (242)	Afghanistan (268)	Afghanistan (502)	Afghanistan (422)	Afghanistan (203)
Marokko (169)	België (155)	Bulgarije (151)	België (156)	Polen (176)
België (147)	Kosovo (152)	Polen (143)	Polen (141)	Ghana (116)
Bulgarije (123)	Bulgarije (147)	België (149)	Bulgarije (137)	Bulgarije (113)
Irak (114)	Rusland (123)	Irak (140)	Marokko (124)	Roemenië (109)
Kosovo (99)	Irak (123)	Marokko (118)	Irak (113)	Spanje (103)
Rusland (97)	Marokko (114)	Turkije (114)	Turkije (104)	Marokko (101)
Polen (91)	Macedonië (101)	Roemenië (100)	Roemenië (103)	België (84)
Turkije (89)	Armenië (100)	Servië (98)	Spanje (83)	Irak (82)
Armenië (85)	Servië (94)	Rusland (88)	Ghana (81)	Turkije (68)

Tabel 13: Overzicht van de 10 meest voorkomende nationaliteiten bij OKAN-leerlingen op 1 februari

Overview of the 10 most current nationalities of the NAMS

tabel nr 5 - Nationality at Part-time Vocational Secondary Education

2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014
Roemenië (7)	Marokko (12)	Afghanistan (21)	Afghanistan (79)	Afghanistan (61)
België (4)	Belgisch (11)	Roemenië (10)	Bangladesh (6)	Polen (5)
Afghanistan (3)	Pools (7)	Bulgarije (8)	Irak (5)	Turkije (4)
Bulgarije (3)	Ghanees (7)	België (4)	Macedonië (5)	Bulgarije (4)
	Afghanistan (6)	Servië (3) / Slovakije (3)	Pakistan 5)	België (4)

Tabel 14: Overzicht van de meest voorkomende nationaliteiten bij OKAN-leerlingen DBSO op 1 februari

Conclusion

Based on these and other figures (until 2013-14) the Flemish Ministry of Education concluded that the number of pupils in the full-time secondary education has declined. In former years, a series of regions risked having to face an impending shortage of capacity. Nowadays, the receptive schools have to cope with new challenges. Thus, it was difficult or even completely impossible for a series of receptive schools to ensure the employment of all teachers in the receptive classes.

Nevertheless, we expect the number of NAMs to increase again, due to ongoing inflow of refugees in the Flemish education system, and consequently new challenges for the receptive school in primary and secondary education.

3 - A precise description on the mobility of the population involved in particular with regard to 'circular migration' children

There is hardly any research and follow-up on 'circular migration' in Belgium. The most relevant study we found is "Temporary and circular migration in Belgium: empirical evidence, current policy practices and future options (Vanheule a.o., January 2011, European Migration Network - Belgian National Contact Point. "temporary_and_circular_migration_in_belgium_emn_study_2011.pdf").

Below, we present the **final conclusions** of this study (p. 51-52), consisting of a first attempt to gather data, information and evidence on the issue of temporary and circular migration in Belgium.

1. No specific debate on temporary and circular migration is ongoing in Belgium at present. Other issues related to the asylum procedure, the regularization of irregular migrants, family reunification and integration, keep on dominating policy discussions. When circular or temporary migration is discussed, issues of attracting new workers to fill labour market shortages for specific job positions (especially bottleneck positions) and of adequately respecting their social rights are more central than temporary/circular/return aspects.
2. The current political context as well as historical experiences might explain the reluctance of national authorities to promote new projects of temporary and circular migration. The so called 'guest workers' programmes, which already started in the late 1940s, were intended by the Belgian government to be temporary. In the beginning of the 1990s, prominent migrant movements of mostly Eastern-European citizens to the country mainly occurred in an informal and often irregular manner. In both examples, considerable numbers of migrants remained in Belgium.
3. Notwithstanding the absence of a specific policy on circular or temporary migration, these forms of migration exist in Belgium. Projects which establish a link between migration and development are examples thereof. Some programmes explore means to mobilize the Diasporas as agents for developments. A recent pilot project shows a certain willingness to undertake test circular migration pilot projects.
4. Moreover, certain legislative and administrative tools to facilitate temporary and circular migration are present. The existing immigration legislation already allows some forms of temporary or circular migration for specific categories like pupils and researchers. Maintaining one's residence status in Belgium while returning from time to time, and even for longer periods, to one's country of origin, is also made possible through specific absence and re-entry provisions. The issuance of multiple entry visas allowed migrants to come from time to time to Belgium, while maintaining their main point of interests in their country of origin.
5. In terms of data, it is difficult to obtain an accurate and complete overview on temporary and circular migration in Belgium. While figures on visa, work permits, residence permits, etc. are available within the administration, they cannot provide an accurate picture of these forms of migration. This may be inherent to the object of study. Initial temporary migration may, as a result of

interaction in the country of residence, change into permanent immigration and eventually into the acquisition of Belgian citizenship. Temporary return migration may also occur as independent initiative and therefore remain out of sight. In order to obtain a more appropriate data collection, it would be required to (1) qualitatively collect data on migration aspirations to better understand these movements (surveys), (2) quantitatively enter data into a more specialized classification and registration of migration purposes, at all levels through the immigration process and compare data from sources that are now widespread at both the federal and the regional and community levels.

6. According to available data, in 2008 and 2009 respectively around 30% and 20% of all issued residence permits (family reasons included) were permits with a temporary validity (less than 12 months). This mainly concern pupils, workers and their family members. However, it is not possible to deduce from the data that these migrants return or not. According to the data as well, labour permits B are mainly granted to three categories, including highly-skilled workers, managers and interns. Seasonal workers from the CEE new Member States of the EU occupy an important position in the context of intra-European mobility. With regard to seasonal workers in horticulture and agriculture, available data show that only a small percentage of these workers are non-nationals. Posted workers constitute an important group of temporary workers in Belgium and are more numerous than workers holding a work permit. The share of third country nationals is below 10%, although their absolute numbers are also higher than the number of third country nationals holding work permits.

4. Description of the NAMS programmes in Flanders

In this chapter we describe the overall organisation of reception education in Flanders. We also focus on the situation in the city of Gent.

Reception education

Organizing reception education

Education is one of the major keys to social participation, integration and community integration. Every year, a considerable number of NAMs are arriving in Belgium, including minors. Just like their adult counterparts, minors are also part of the target group as regards the community integration policy. However, contrary to the adult newcomers, the minors are not included in the community integration trajectories that are set up by the reception bureau. Community integration of these young newcomers mainly occurs via education. Just like other minors in Belgium, non-native minors have the right to education and compulsory school attendance¹.

When young children arrive in Flanders with no knowledge of the Dutch language, they and their parents² are directed to the **local integration reception bureau** for information about the Flemish education system. Then they can start looking for a school. They should be enrolled in a school within 60 days after arrival in Flanders.

In **primary education**, NAM pupils are assigned a place in **regular classes**. They are either integrated into these classes through extra support and flexible programs or provided with an additional reception program in separate classes (pull out classes).

The situation is different for **secondary education**. The NAM pupils join a special **reception class** (also called a '*welcoming class*'), in Dutch: 'OnthaalKlas voor Anderstalige Nieuwkomers' or abbreviated, 'OKAN'. As the classes are made up of youngsters from different cultural backgrounds, staff have to come up with innovative ways to introduce them to learning in Flanders. They get a personalised study programme that will mainstream them as soon as possible. The class generally lasts one academic year, though extensions are possible.

Goals of reception education

Reception education for non-Dutch speaking, newly arrived migrants in mainstream primary and secondary education is a specific and temporary education provision that aims to take-in newly arrived people with a mother tongue other than Dutch. The goal is to teach pupils the **Dutch language** as soon as possible and to promote their social integration.

Reception education for NAMs in part-time vocational secondary education (dbso) prepares pupils for a better transition to the labour market and consists of language proficiency, integration and self-reliance.

¹ Geïntegreerd eindrapport Actie-onderzoek 16- tot 18-jarige nieuwkomers uit Derdelanden (2014), Reinhilde Pulinx, UGent, p. 5 e.v.

² If accompanied by their parents. If not, a guardian is appointed to them.

Financing, conditions and support

Primary education

Reception education in primary education lasts at least until the end of the school year in which the pupil is enrolled. NAMs that enroll later in the school year generate financial means for a second year of reception education. After reception education a follow-up year can be organised.

To organise reception education for NAMs, primary schools can receive **supplementary teaching periods** and an extra operational allowance for every non-Dutch speaking NAM pupil. A temporary measure was adopted for non-Dutch speaking **toddlers** in 2015: pre-primary schools receive a benefit of €950 for every migrant pupil under the age of 5.

In primary education and depending on the type of school a **minimum of 4 to 6 non-Dutch speaking NAMs** must be registered as regular pupils in a particular school or, alternatively, 12 pupils per school community (or an increase of 4 over and above the former count). No mandatory minimum has been set for the follow-up year.

For every non-Dutch speaking NAM pupil an **individual work plan and learning pathway** must be drawn up. For a full-time reception class, supplementary teaching periods can be used (15 NAM pupils generate teaching periods for 1 full-time equivalent). Usually, the NAMs will be enrolled with peers in regular classes and supplementary periods will be used for a couple of hours of support within the class or for a part-time reception class.

Next to receptive activities for NAMs, this also includes **former NAMs**. These are pupils from primary education who were NAMs in the previous school year and enjoyed receptive education. In view of receiving former NAMs, **one teacher-hour is financed** or subsidized for the entire school year for each former NAM registered on the first school day of October of the current school year. There are no minimum standards to obtain these teacher-hours. As soon as the school has one former NAM, the school is entitled to one additional teacher-hour.

Secondary education

Secondary schools receive **extra teacher hours**, which are also allocated per school community for the provision of support and guidance for pupils entering regular secondary education from reception education (follow-up school coaches).

There is **no mandatory minimum number of NAM pupils**. Subsidies are allocated for every NAM pupil. The allocation of **extra teacher hours** can be recalculated for **every four additional NAMs**.

An individual learning pathway that meets the learning objectives of reception education and in which the level is adjusted throughout the year for each pupil on the basis of his/her possibilities and interim results, must be devised for each non-Dutch-speaking NAM pupil. The provision of support for NAM pupils must also be clearly set out in the learning pathway. This is done in conjunction with the relevant Centre for Pupil Guidance (CLB).

The weekly timetable in the reception year consists of between **28 and 32 teacher hours** (including religion/non-confessional ethics/own culture and religion/cultural philosophy). Up to four teacher hours per week may be used by the school for purposes other than teaching Dutch. For example, the use of these hours may be based on an analysis of the individual possibilities, interests and prior knowledge of the migrant pupil.

All available information must be passed on when the pupil **transitions to regular secondary education**. Once the pupil has progressed to regular education, the follow-up and support must also be maintained.

This support may be provided within the schools community or in dialogue with one or several schools of another schools community. Enhancing the understanding and expertise of regular teachers in and outside of reception schools through coaching by reception-education teachers, the presence of a **follow-up school coach**, a proper flow of pupil information and regular contact with former reception-education pupils can have a significant impact on the school results of former reception-education pupils.

Every contact school of a school community that is entitled to the organization of receptive education and for the adjudication of a specific package, can claim **22 teacher-hours** in order **to support former NAMs during and following the transfer towards regular education**. If the school or the school community ceases organizing a receptive year, it is still entitled to these 22 hours-teacher during three school years, because one of the tasks of the follow-up school coach is to follow a former NAM three years after he has left reception class.

The **duration** of reception education in regular secondary education is related to the pupil's individual learning pathway.

Part-time Vocational Secondary Education (dbso)

For each NAM, **an additional 1,2 teacher-hours is granted in surplus of the regular hour package** in order to set up receptive education. This grant is limited to the period of registration. Also NAMs that are following a personal development trajectory, are taken into consideration. At each modification of the number of NAMs, the specific package teacher-hours will be recalculated.

Both in primary and secondary education, schools must commit to make teachers partake in specific further **training** for reception education.

Certification

At the end of the school year, each non-Dutch-speaking migrant who has attended the reception year as a regular pupil receives a certificate confirming this attendance. The class council also formulates an advise considering the transition of the pupil to further education.

In secondary education, after the completion of the reception year, the pupil is integrated into regular education through the system of flexible learning pathways, taking account of the admission requirements defined in the regulations. In practice, this will primarily mean that entry into regular education takes place either on the basis of a decision by the class admissions council or on the basis of age. The admissions council must take into account the advice from the class council of the reception education. Every decision that diverges from this advice must be motivated.

Situation in Gent

Primary Education

NAMs in primary education in the city of Gent: numbers and distribution

During the school year 2014-2015, the peak number of NAMs generating additional NAM-lessons amounted to 281. They were distributed among half of all schools for primary education, with numbers varying between 1 and 50. The top-five schools with the largest NAM-numbers represented 52% of the overall amount. We distinguish a leading group of four schools, boasting respectively 50, 33, 28 and 23 NAMs. Two of these schools are situated in the district Sluizeken – Tolhuis – Ham, one in the Brugse Poort district and

another one in Ledeborg (three areas in Gent known for a high number of migrant families and poverty). Next, there is a second group of 15 schools, comprising 6 to 12 NAMs. A third group of 16 schools generated during peak moments 1 to 4 NAMs.

The unequal distribution of NAMs over the schools is mainly related to the residence of the NAM-families. The four schools in the leading group are situated in the most underprivileged Gent neighbourhoods. But these same neighbourhoods also boast schools with considerably less NAMs. Conversely, there are also other neighbourhoods with a relatively high number of NAMs. Some NAM-families are deliberately opting for a school with children from the same background, whereas others do not make that choice.

Demand for a reinforced central dispatching role of In-Gent (the local integration reception bureau)

A considerable part of the NAM- parents finds a school by means of their proper networks. Previous estimations amounted to 60 %. We do not have any influence on this.

Another part finds a school via mediation by In-Gent, the local integration reception bureau. By reinforcing the role of In-Gent as central dispatcher, it would be possible to realize a better distribution of NAMs over the various schools, while still taking into account (1) the desiderata of the parents (as regards a school within walking distance of their homes, or easily accessible by public transport, whether or not with other pupils of the same region of origin, etc.) and (2) the current minimum standards to generate additional NAM-lessons.

Secondary Education

For the moment, there are 4 NAM-schools ('OKAN-scholen') who organize the one year reception classes. Each of them takes part in the EDINA-project (together with 'De Ronde', a Part-time Vocational Sec. Education school, and OLVI, a school who is applying for the permit to organize reception classes).

Numbers of NAMs (2015-16)

School	2/9/15	15/10/15	18/12/15	14/01/16	5/02/16	Maxcap 15-16
VISO	58	67	86	90	95	160
PM	22	32	40	62	66	70
TvB	54	76	106	112	115	140
KTA	28	36	40	50	52	84
	162	211	272	314	328	454

VISO – Vrij Instituut voor Secundair Onderwijs – location Guinardstraat

PM – Provinciale Middenschool

TvB – Toren van Babel

KTA – Koninklijk Technisch Atheneum

Evolution of NAMs in figures in the four schools

	February	May	October
2003		298	
2004		245	161
2005	215	248	164
2006	219	234	123
2007		208	181
2008	231	263	180
2009	261	235	235
2010	305	332	293
2011	348	348	298
2012	388		240 *

2013		316 *	209 *
2014	255 *	264 *	228 *
2015	244 *	279 *	211 *
2016	328 *		

*De Ronde (DBSO) (6 NAMs -capacity 7 NAMs assistant cook training) en 'Kidz Dampoort' (Personal Development Traject) (cap. 27 NAMs) take up extra NAMs.

5. A description of the schooling systems with regard to reception, observation, evaluation criteria, and integration of NAMS

Schools that organize reception classes must generate an **individual learning path or trajectory** for every NAM pupil, be it in primary or in secondary education. In general, the development or leaning objectives can be described in the following **three main goals**: language acquisition, general goals such as social and integration and wellbeing, (social and emotional) attitudes.

For secondary schools, the goals of reception education are more elaborated. In this chapter we will focus on secondary education. We will also describe a few topics and bottlenecks regarding reception education that are put forward by different educational councils and platforms.

Reception class for NAMS - Secondary Education

Individual learning trajectory

The **intake**, the first step in elaborating an individual learning trajectory, includes data concerning the past history of the NAM pupil, the school background, the legal status, personal data and possible medical data and language skills. The intake is usually a language skills test, followed by an observation period at the end of which classes are made up according to the level as homogeneous as possible. The number of level groups depends on the amount of teacher-hours they can spend on reception education. The more level groups are formed, the better the teacher can start from an equal starting point. Differentiation in the classroom and 'active' pedagogical methods are necessary.

An **individual learning trajectory** is elaborated for each NAM, of which the aspiration level throughout the year is adjusted, taking into account his possibilities and intermediate results. The framework consists of objectives during the receptive year.

The individual learning trajectory allows to monitor and steer the development of the pupil. Planning and progress throughout the year can be set out against the learning objectives.

At the end of the year schools are giving a sound advice towards **further orientation**. This comes with accessible information for NAM pupils and their parents. During the year NAM pupils can experience the life and ways of the regular school in so-called 'snuffelstages' ('sniffing internship').

In view of the transfer towards regular education and the monitoring of the pupil in his continuation, the advice of the school board is included and elucidated.

The language targets are the top priority, but the motivation, the interest, the attitude... of the pupil is being calculated in. Bearing in mind all development targets, data indicate the achievements of a pupil and the possible points of attention. Thus, the individual learning trajectory becomes the starting point for the coaching and support in the regular school.

Learning Objectives

The 15 learning objectives contain text characteristics, a language task, a processing level: descriptive, structured or assessing; a concrete outline of the processing level; examples of text types; contexts; communication partners; skills: listening, reading, writing, speaking and oral interaction.

These learning objectives are provided in various NAM classes and schools:

- Dutch;
- General basic knowledge of maths and science;
- Information about the various possibilities in Belgium with respect to studies, jobs, leisure, welfare;
- Social competences: cooperation, self-reliance, a school attitude, adopting moral values and standards;
- Work competences: discipline, hard work, learning competences;
- Sporting and creative competences.

All NAM schools are focused on learning Dutch.

Topics and problems to be tackled

Specific bottlenecks as regards the age group of 16 to 18 year olds

Despite the measures that are in effect since 2006, research and experience has taught us that significant difficulties still need to be overcome - especially among 16- to 18-year old newcomers. Both the circulation from the receptive class towards regular class as well as the reception in the regular class and the connection to other training structures or towards the work floor remain bottlenecks. A sound monitoring and a 'warm transfer' of this elder group of newcomers is problematic.

We need a more customized approach. The heterogeneity of this group must be born in mind: youngsters from strong schooling systems next to youngsters with barely educational experience and are not alphabetized in their mother tongue, as well as a sizeable middle group of youngsters with highly diverse education experiences.

This heterogeneity, makes it more difficult for the actors involved (receptive teachers, continuation coaches,...) to set up a customized learning trajectory which should furthermore start from a maximum extent of the readily available talents, competences and expectations. For these newcomers, there are only 1 or 2 years to achieve integration via education before the end of the compulsory education period. Newcomers that are nearly of age and have attended one year of receptive education, have no longer the opportunity to follow a community integration trajectory for adults. So far, there is no specific education or training trajectory tailored to the needs of 16- to 18-year old newcomers.

There is a lacking effort in linking the various life domains of the newcomers. Schools all too often are operating in isolation with respect to other actors (e.g. the leisure activities) and sectors (e.g. welfare, work/training, integration) that play a role in the reception and the social and community integration of these newcomers. Moreover, the informal and formal learning of NAMs should be closer adjusted: the available formal (receptive) education offer can be reinforced by leisure initiatives, welfare work... and vice versa. This strengthens the integrated approach, and in its continuation, the integration of newcomers, both in education and in society.

According to NAM teachers and coordinators, the diverse influx of youngsters considerably impedes mapping the needs and necessities of youngsters. More than once, it is mentioned that youngsters in the receptive class are experiencing an identity crisis and do not feel at home anywhere.

Teachers should be better informed about the reference framework of these youngsters, the standards and values they are abiding and the context in which they lived prior to the migration.

Bottlenecks as regards the contents and the purpose of the receptive education lessons

Receptive schools can act quite autonomous regarding concretizing development targets. As a

consequence, the class curriculum depends not only of the pupils (according to the interests of the pupils), but also depends on the teachers. Within receptive education, it is not self-evident to include the above-mentioned items ('contents of receptive education lessons') in the curriculum. On the one hand, quite some classes are coping with heterogeneous age groups. On the other hand, youngsters within the same age have various continuation perspectives.

Research reveals that the teaching material is until now barely shared between various receptive schools. Furthermore, there are hardly any consultations between the various schools as regards the contents. One of the people involved describes this phenomenon as follows: 'Every receptive school acts as it pleases'.

For teachers and continuation school coaches, working with newcomers is a considerable challenge. Interviews with these actors have revealed that some among them are lacking the appropriate expertise, skills or methods to transfer the necessary information to the target group and provide proper guidance. Moreover, they are not familiar with the target group and their social environment.

Bottlenecks as pointed out by the Vlor³

The Flemish Education Council (in Dutch: de "Vlaamse Onderwijsraad" – Vlor), is the official advisory body on the education and training policy of the Flemish Community. Representatives of all the different stakeholders in education and training meet in the Vlor. Together they look for ways to further improve education and training in Flanders. On the situation of the NAMs in the educational system, the Vlor has written a number of advices which were handed over to the Flemish Government.

According to the VLOR, a good receptive education **implies a customized approach, taking into account the diversity and heterogeneity of the pupils**. It does not only include a diversity of characteristics proper to each pupil, but also characteristics of the environment from which they originate and the new environment in which they end up:

- the age of the pupil, and the concurring measure of a language gap as compared to Dutch-speaking peers. The VLOR asks for specific attention to pupils of the so-called 'tilt-age': 5 to 7 year olds, 11 to 12 year olds and 15 to 18 years olds;
- the country of origin;
- the migration history and the concurring loss experience as a result of the migration;
- the psycho-social wellbeing (including possible traumatic experiences);
- the school history (including the characteristics of the school system from which the pupil originates);
- the learning motivation and personal ambitions;
- the socio-economic background;
- the home situation of the pupil. A particular group in this respect are the non-accompanied minors;
- the specific education needs;
- the characteristics of the environment in which the pupil end up (urban environment, smaller centre city, asylum centre);
- the moment in the school year when the newcomer enters the education system (at the start of the school year or in the very midst of this school period?)
- ...

Topics regarding NAMs in primary Education (Gent)

The Local Council Board (in Dutch: 'Lokaal Overlegplatform – LOP) on Primary Education in the city of Gent made a SWOT-analysis regarding the situation of NAMs (October 15th 2015), assignment and agreements

3 http://www.vlor.be/sites/www.vlor.be/files/ar-ar-adv-011_0.pdf – 24 January 2013

made between the schools.

As *External challenge* (Threats) the Council notes that Gent primary schools contain of 250 to 300 NAMs, of which almost half of them has hardly any school experience, among which Roma children. Half of the schools/residences possesses 1 or more NAM, but yet, half of the NAMs is to be found in merely 5 schools and there is a relative significant concentration in schools already boasting quite a few other non-native pupils. The council concludes: "How will we be able to find an adequate answer to the dilemma 'decentralization versus acquiring expertise?' - which the Council also formulates as a *weakness*. Moreover, with the current refugee crisis, there is a real chance of a considerable influx of NAMs with war traumas. School managements formulate the need for specific support to adequately cope with this situation.

As *strength*, the Council formulates: "We have an active work group 'guidance towards NAMs' with strongly engaged school boards and a smooth cooperation with In-Gent (local integration reception bureau)." Finally, as *opportunities* the Council notes that the current refugee problem makes decentralization of NAMs a topical issue. Schools demonstrate their solidarity. There is also an strong sense of awareness to tackle problems of war traumas: "The Public Centre for Social Welfare explores the possibility to provide psychological support to school and other instances that are working with (children of) war refugees."

6. A description of the practices to communicate and support parents and relatives

The schools organizing reception education practice more or less a vision and attitude towards the parents/relatives of the NAMs that is focusing on wellbeing and a welcoming attitude: guarantee a heartening, welcoming feeling, from the first day of the visit to the school during the whole school year. Here we will focus on the **experiences of the EDINA-schools in Gent**.

We notice that, during the intake and/or registration, school staff members and teachers take their time to get to know the parents well, give them a tour in the classes and the school. This intake can take two hours. During the school year **parents are invited to come to the school** whenever they need to or have questions. Quite a few parents come to school, as their most important trustworthy contact, to ask for help in different matters: housing, administration and paper works, medical care, ... Sometimes school staff accompany parents to different services, explaining on the way how public transport operates, where to get (free) tickets, ... When pupils in the transition period of going to secondary schools, sometimes parents are invited to come and visit the new school as well.

In the primary schools parents are sometimes invited to stay in the classroom with the children, so that they see for themselves how a classroom is organized, what a day in a school life looks like, how the teachers interact with the children, ... Once in a while the teachers organize activities, such as cooking, and invite the parents to join in.

Communication with parents is organized through different means: using icons and simple drawings, colours, simple terms and language, using 'hand and feet', ... All the schools put effort in realizing as many informal contacts with the parents as possible. Some schools organize a 'coffee moment' once a week, where parents can chat with each other and with the school mediator or teacher. Or they motivate the teachers to be available on the playground every morning so welcome parents and children.

In more formal contacts translators are there (sometimes as a telephone service). All of the schools have 3 or 4 formal contact meetings to talk about the evolution of the pupil, the positive aspects, attitude, challenges, etc. One school does not deliver the evaluation sheets to the pupils when their parents are not present, as a 'soft' means to show to the parents that they should come and talk about progression, that the school considers it important that the parents are partners in this evolution.

In several schools staff members (usually the person responsible to support teachers in pupil guidance) also undertake home visits to get to know the family better, to talk about school and other matters, ...

There are **several activities** in which the parents are engaged: open their home for pupils of teacher training institutes involved in a project of 'reading at home'; library visits, youth organizations and leisure time possibilities, ...

7. An overview of the stakeholders involved in the different processes related to integration of NAMS into the school system

NAMs are considered as a vulnerable group. Therefore a sound cooperation between schools, centres for pupil guidance, other organizations (welfare, integration, ...) is necessary.

The **practices in the EDINA-schools of Gent** can be divided into four categories:

School internal organization

Teachers cooperate as a **team** in order to guarantee a good follow-up of the pupils wellbeing, language acquirements, ... School staff members such as mediators, pupil guidance, even sports teachers are involved in these common goals.

Schools meet schools

Several schools who are organizing receptive education **meet each other regularly**, e.g. once a month to discuss issues and share experiences, challenges and practices and cases.

In secondary education the follow-up school coaches (teachers from the receptive education schools) have contact with the 'regular' schools in order to guarantee a smooth transition for the pupils. Each year they organize a 'networking day' for teacher and directors of regular secondary schools. They discuss transition problems and share practices on flexible learning pathways.

However, many schools believe that these contacts could and should be organized in a more systematic way, regardless of membership of schools to one umbrella organization or another. Teachers like to learn from each other, from each other experiences.

School supporting organization

The most important partner for schools in the Flemish education system are the **Centres for Pupil Guidance** ('Centrum voor leerlingbegeleiding' - CLB). They play an important role when it comes to testing pupils (on language acquisition, intelligence, learning disabilities, ...). These tests result in necessary documents or certificates to orientate pupils (and parents for that matter) towards the 'right' study programmes. CLB's support schools and parents to come to the right decision regarding choice of school and study programme.

External stakeholders

Receptive education schools are in contact with a wide variety of organisations and services that might support pupils and their families. They are continuously broadening their network on different life domains.

A few examples from the Gent network:

- language training camps for youngsters during school holidays,
- regular contact with In-Gent, the local integration reception bureau,
- contacts with organizations offering adult education or language courses for adults,
- youth services and organisations offering leisure and sport activities,
- job counselling bureaus, for older pupils (student jobs, training, ...)
- the Public Centre for Social Welfare for minimal wages, administration, but also for support in dealing with traumas (war refugee children)
- support organizations in the psychotherapy field who are offering advice at youngsters dealing with certain psychological issues,

...

8. A description of the teachers' recruiting system, training and skills especially with regard to the target population

(source: "Onderwijsspiegel 2016. Jaarlijks rapport van de Onderwijsinspectie". Vlaams ministerie van Onderwijs en Vorming – Onderwijsinspectie, 2016, p. 165-173)

Besides a pedagogical diploma there are no requirements to teach to NAMs. Next to having obtained a pedagogic certificate, there are no other specific diploma requirements for NAM teachers. Many schools have an NAM-team having preliminary expert knowledge such as history, sociology, physical education, economics, bio-engineering sciences, translator/interpreter, pedagogy, nursing, speech therapy. So teams exist of **teachers with different educational backgrounds and experiences**.

A problem is that there is a **shortage of CVT courses** (Continuing Vocational Training) that are focusing on the NAM pupil group or on reception education. At the same time it is not compulsory to follow these courses. These two aspects linked means that there is a **lack of building up expertise** in the schools. Flemish Education encourages schools to professionalize their teams in language acquisition, Dutch as a second language, specialized didactics, practices in intercultural education, ...

Certain centres and institutions who offer teacher training programmes (or 'adult education programmes') have training in 'Dutch as a second language' (In Dutch: 'Nederlands als tweede taal' – NT2). At least one of them is considering a special module on NAMs in the next academic year.

Although several schools who are organizing receptive education meet each other regularly, there is an overall **lack of consultation and sharing ideas** (within or beyond the educational network of the schools).

Some schools consider the **variety of intrinsic backgrounds** of NAM teachers to be a **surplus value**, since 'the task is diverse'. Receptive education also requires considerable social insight, not merely 'Dutch' as professional skill. Next to a teaching and coordinating role, NAM teachers also assume the role of social worker by providing support to the youngsters and their parents as regards welfare, leisure, jobs, etc. While some schools embrace the mix of backgrounds among their teachers, other schools prefer to select teachers with a language background (Dutch lessons) because 'the central idea in receptive education is that all disciplines are in fact language courses'.