



VRAC – A local update from MAP

Aims and impact of VRAC we are hoping to see locally

In short, the VRAC (Village to Raise a Child) project aims to reduce the number of early school leavers, by supporting young people's social and emotional wellbeing. MAP will work in close partnership with three Norwich schools and with the communities they serve – to provide the support, information and opportunities that can make all the difference to a young person's ability to engage well in their education, to enjoy their community and to reach their full potential. Through these opportunities the project aims to address the numerous and complex challenges that young people experience which can create barriers to their educational, social and personal development.

VRAC schools, who are our schools and our relationship with them

MAP will work in partnership with three Norwich schools. At present, we are working with City of Norwich School (CNS) and Jane Austen College. MAP is working hard to finalise an agreement with a third school in the area.

MAP has worked with CNS since 2015, initially through our Early Action project. As a result, we have built a strong relationship with the school and its students, and look forward to continuing our work there with the VRAC project.

MAP started working with Jane Austen College towards the end of 2019, and began offering support to students at the beginning of 2020. Jane Austen College have embraced MAP's values and the support we are able to offer young people; it has been a promising start to our working relationship.

Our offer – what services we are offering within each school

The VRAC project will develop an integrated child and community-oriented service in partnership CNS, Jane Austen College and a third school by jointly creating and offering a person-centred "menu" of support and engaging opportunities. An important concept of this project is that young people will have an active part to play in choosing the support and activities that they engage with. This support offer includes:

- After-school groups, groups in school time and lunch time 'life zones' which aim to improve self-confidence and levels of engagement in education.
- Mentoring and mediation support for individuals to support them through challenging times and to help them to communicate their needs and perspective more effectively.
- Counselling for individuals who would like support with their emotional wellbeing.

MAP will also be working with the schools' communities of staff, parents, carers and significant adults in young people's lives in order to support the social and emotional well-being of young people together. To this end we will offer:

- Training and support for school staff in areas relevant to student and staff mental health and wellbeing.
- Training and support for parents in subjects that local parents feel would be useful. We will work with our partner schools to consult with parents and guardians as to what subjects are important to them.
- We will work with local organisations and professionals to ensure that the most relevant support and best opportunities are available to young people, their families and their schools when they need them.

The VRAC Network – what is the network and examples of who is involved.

MAP will continue to facilitate a network of local organisations and professionals that work to support young people. Recent organisations to attend network meetings include The Garage, The Matthew Project, Spurgeons and the Norwich International Youth Project.

We aim to hold network meetings once per term, where possible in our partnership schools. MAP will invite pastoral workers and key staff to join the network meetings in order to fully explore the support available to their students. MAP will share bulletins from these network meetings with parents, along with the ways they can contact organisations to find out more.

We will continue to facilitate training, and hope members can share their knowledge, information and skills with the wider network. Recent training topics have included supporting young carers, trauma informed practice, and trending drugs. Unfortunately, upcoming training had to be cancelled due to Covid-19.

Covid 19 – How we are working with Covid-19 and what are we doing to adapt.

Covid-19 has posed a significant challenge to the VRAC project and our partner schools. In terms of supporting students, MAP has moved all support to online platforms or telephone. One-to-one support, such as counselling and mentoring, is being offered to students by Zoom, though some young people opt for phone calls instead. Mediation sessions between young people and significant adults have also taken place by Zoom. In addition, we are exploring ways to continue our lunch time drop-in life zones so that we can continue to support as many students as possible.

THE VRAC PROJECT

It takes a Village to Raise A Child

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

WHITE LETTERS-BLACK BACKGROUND



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 Flemish 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 AdviCe 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/>

