

**ANNEX I:
EVENT DESCRIPTION SHEET**

PROJECT	
Participant:	101252945 – Uit de Marge vzw - UdM
PIC number:	892268469
Project name and acronym:	CERV-2025-CITIZENS-CIV - COSY

EVENT DESCRIPTION	
Event number:	WP11
Event name:	Local community safety signals of outreach youth workers connected to the city of Ghent
Type:	Training
In situ/online:	In situ
Location:	Belgium - VZW JONG, Keizerpark 1, 9000 Ghent - Jeugddienst Stad Gent, Kammerstraat 12, 9000 Ghent - Jong Gent In Actie, Heilig-Hartplein 2, 9040 Sint-Amandsberg - Kartuizerlaan 70, 9000 Ghent
Date(s):	19/06/2026 16/07/2026 20/07/2026 25/08/2026
Website(s) (if any):	https://www.uitdemarge.be/cosy/
Participants	
Female:	3 3 1 3
Male:	9 1 2 2
Non-binary:	0 0 0 1
From country 1 [name]:	Belgium
...	
Total number of participants:	25

Description

Provide a short description of the event and its activities.

1. Introduction and objective of this report

This report accounts for the implementation of Work Package 11 (WP11) of the COSY project — "Local community safety signals of outreach youth workers connected to the city of Ghent" — in fulfilment of specific objective SO1 ("Gaining insight into local community safety signals behind the societal safety symptoms") and, more specifically, operational objective OO1.2 ("Discovering and determining local community safety signals from and with youth workers").

Where WP3 gathered signals directly from young people in Ghent, WP11 turns to the outreach youth welfare workers and other municipal professionals who support them. Four activities were organized with three different outreach youth welfare organizations and the municipal youth service, using a consistent method throughout: signals already gathered directly from young people during field-based outreach work were tested for recognizability with each group of professionals, and supplemented with these professionals' own additional observations, organized per COSY life domain via post-its. In three of the four activities, this was combined with a "boat exercise" mapping the professionals' trusted local network (WP11.2, WP11.3) or the specific sub-groups of young people reached and not yet reached by outreach work (WP11.4). This report:

- presents the process toolkit that was used, across the whole COSY project, to determine what qualifies as a local community safety signal;
- provides verified, sourced context on Ghent covering demography, safety and policing, prevention, integration, and youth policy;
- documents the four activities organized for WP11 (context, approach, participants);
- presents, for each activity, the signals identified per life domain — distinguishing signals already confirmed as most common directly from young people (marked accordingly, following the source material's own convention) from additional signals raised by the professionals themselves;
- provides a consolidated overview of the signals captured across all four activities, and the local context in which they occur.

This report constitutes the underlying material for WP11 deliverable D9-16.2 ("Method(s) to determine what a local community signal is", shared with WP9-16) and for the WP11 monitoring & evaluation report (D9-16.3).

2. Process toolkit: determining and assessing a local community safety signal

To ensure that all eight COSY ecosystems apply a consistent, transparent and comparable method for identifying local community safety signals — while still allowing tailor-made facilitation per ecosystem and target group — the COSY partnership developed a shared process toolkit. This toolkit was applied by the activity organizer during the preparation, facilitation and post-processing of all four WP11 activities in Ghent. It consists of four complementary instruments, described below.

2.1 Working definition of a local community safety signal

Per the COSY Facilitator Notes, a local community safety signal is defined as:

"A recurring or emerging condition in a specific neighborhood that affects the safety, well-being or inclusion of young people, and which the local community recognizes as deserving attention or action."

A safety signal can relate to physical safety, psychological safety, social exclusion, unsafe public spaces, societal barriers, or (digital) side-effects of community conflicts. Importantly, signals are not individual incidents, but patterns or indicators shared across several participants. To structure the exploration of these signals, the toolkit works with a fixed list of 13–14 life domains, including education, police, justice, wellbeing, mobility, social media, gender, leisure, housing, health, information and public space, among others. Four working principles apply throughout: voluntary participation, a safe conversational environment, confidentiality, and the leadership of youth voice — in WP11, interpreted as the leadership of youth workers' professional voice and frontline expertise, and explicitly used across all four activities to test whether young people's own, directly gathered signals are recognized and confirmed by professionals working with the same target group.

2.2 Decision tree "Is it a local community safety signal?"

Every observation raised by youth workers is tested against a five-step decision tree before it is treated as a validated local community safety signal:

- 1. Has a safety concern been observed by youth or youth workers? (if no → not a signal: unrelated to safety)
- 2. Does it affect more than one young person? (if no → not a signal: not associated with the community)
- 3. Is the issue linked to a specific local environment? (if no → not a signal: not associated with local circumstances)
- 4. Is there a pattern or repeated experience? (if no → not a signal: not structurally embedded in the community)
- 5. Could community actors influence the situation? (if no → not a signal: not generated or moderated by the community)

Only observations that pass all five checks (yes/yes/yes/yes/yes) qualify as a confirmed local community safety signal. All four WP11 activities apply this filtering in a distinctive, consistent way: signals already most commonly gathered directly from young people during field-based outreach work are explicitly tested with each new professional group for recognizability — directly probing criterion 4 (pattern/repeated experience) — with the professionals' own additional signals per life domain recorded alongside them. In the source material, these already-confirmed, most-common youngster-reported signals are marked in italics to distinguish them from the professionals' own additional contributions; this report preserves that same distinction by labelling each signal accordingly.

2.3 Facilitator notes and signal-capturing template

During each activity, the facilitator bundles raw observations per life domain in a structured overview (signal observation → signal exploration on frequency, impact, spread, urgency and change potential → signal validation yes/no), so that no observation is overlooked before validation against the decision tree.

2.4 Safety Signal Assessment Framework

Once an observation has passed the decision tree, it can be scored using the COSY Safety Signal Assessment Framework, which rates each candidate signal on five dimensions (1 = lowest, 5 = highest): Frequency, Impact,

Spread, Urgency, and Change potential. The combined score (range 5–25) is interpreted as: 5–10 Observation, 11–17 Emerging Signal, 18–25 Confirmed Safety Signal.

2.5 Signal Prioritization Matrix

Finally, validated and scored signals will be plotted on the Signal Prioritization Matrix, which crosses "impact on youth safety" (low/high) against "ability of the community to act" (low/high), yielding four response strategies: Monitor, Advocacy or policy dialogue, Quick community improvements, and Immediate pilot action. This matrix will guide the prioritization of WP11 signals for Phase 2 (bonding and bridging with policy-makers and representatives of government institutions) and Phase 3 (co-production) of COSY.

3. Ecosystem context: Ghent

This section draws on publicly available, verifiable sources — the City of Ghent's own demographic and poverty reporting, VRT NWS, the Flemish Agency for Growing Up (Opgroei en Kind en Gezin), the Ghent police zone, and official City of Ghent policy documents — to provide objective context for the signals reported below. Sources are cited inline; figures reflect the most recent publicly available data at the time of writing and may be revised as newer statistics are released.

3.1 Demography

- Population: Ghent reached a new record of almost 274,000 inhabitants in early 2026 (up +1,401 on the previous year), driven by both natural growth (+518, more births than deaths) and net migration to the city (+800). The municipality (excluding the wider arrondissement) stood at 272,657 inhabitants per Statbel figures for 2025, a 22% increase since 1990. [Sources: VRT NWS, 20 April 2026; AlleCijfers.be/Statbel]
- Ghent's population is comparatively young and diverse: roughly one in three residents is aged 20–39, and 18% are minors. Close to one in three Ghent residents was born with a non-Belgian nationality. [Sources: VRT NWS, 20 April 2026; Stad Gent, demographic report 2024, published May 2025]
- The largest groups of non-Belgian residents by nationality are Bulgarian (just over 10,000, though this group has now declined for three consecutive years), Turkish (around 4,000), Dutch (just over 3,000), Afghan (a fast-growing group, 2,256 in the most recent count), and Ukrainian (around 2,000); the Eritrean population nearly doubled within a single year. [Source: VRT NWS, 20 April 2026, citing City of Ghent demographic data]
- Ghent's 2020 diversity and equal-opportunity policy note records that 34.3% of all Ghent residents have a migration background, rising to 51.8% among minors — reflecting a strong presence of Turkish and Maghreb-origin communities alongside growing communities from Sub-Saharan Africa, the Middle East and Eastern Europe. The city's integration/citizenship agency was, at the time of its founding, set up to serve residents of close to 160 different nationalities. [Sources: Stad Gent, "Iedereen anders, allemaal Gent" policy note, 2020; Stad Gent, EVA-Integratie founding motivation document]

3.2 Safety and policing

Ghent falls under local police zone Gent (zone 5415/5419), operating under the corps slogan "Politie Gent: altijd nabij" ("Police Ghent: always close by") and the core values Respectful — Integer — Team-oriented.

- Like all Belgian local police zones, Politiezone Gent is required to adopt a six-yearly Zonal Security Plan, prepared by the Zonal Security Council (comprising the mayor, the King's Prosecutor, the chief commissioner and the federal police's administrative director-coordinator) and aligned with the Federal Government's National Security Plan and the accompanying Framework Note on Integral Security. The Federal Government's ninth National Security Plan (2026–2029), " Targeted. Integrated. Safe.", was finalized in early 2026 and sets the framework to which all local zonal plans, including Ghent's, must now align with priorities including organized crime (notably drug trafficking and drug-related violence), cybercrime, radicalization, and intra-family and sexual violence. [Sources: Federal Police / police.be, National Security Plan 2026–2029, February–April 2026]
- Ghent's own zonal priorities have historically been determined using registered local crime and traffic data, the expectations of local authorities and residents, and frontline police expertise, with the explicit acknowledgement that not every safety or nuisance problem is equally present across all neighborhoods — meaning policing approaches are meant to be tailored per area, in consultation with the city and public prosecutor's office. [Source: Politiezone Gent, Zonal Security Plan documentation]
- The police zone also deploys camera surveillance as part of a broader toolkit against crime and nuisance (e.g. illegal dumping) and for event and incident management, rather than as a stand-alone measure. [Source: Politiezone Gent, official communications]

3.3 Poverty, homelessness and prevention (prevention-relevant context)

Poverty and housing context is directly relevant to several WP11 signals concerning housing insecurity, homelessness and hunger, and is included here as prevention-relevant background rather than as a safety signal.

- As of May 2025, the City of Ghent reported that poverty had declined for the seventh consecutive year: 1 in 8 Ghent residents (approximately 31,000 people) were living in poverty, and 18% of children in Ghent were born into a family classified as poor. [Source: VRT NWS, 14 May 2025, citing City of Ghent poverty reporting]
- Despite this improvement, Ghent continues to face substantial homelessness and houselessness: the most recent homelessness count recorded close to 2,500 people without a stable home in the city. In the preceding year, the city supported 675 people into housing, an outcome alderman for poverty reduction Astrid De Bruycker (Voor Gent) described as the result of largely "invisible" but essential municipal outreach work. [Source: VRT NWS, 14 May 2025]
- At the time of reporting, organizations working with people experiencing homelessness in Ghent publicly expressed concern that anticipated federal budget cuts could reverse recent progress. [Source: VRT NWS, 14 May 2025]
- At Flemish level, the Kind en Gezin/Opgroeien child-poverty index for the Flemish Region stood at 12.07% in 2025 (broadly stable versus 2024), with East Flanders (the province containing Ghent) the only Flemish province where the index rose in 2025 (+0.5 percentage points) — a relevant regional trend against which Ghent's own, more favorable municipal trend should be read. [Source: Opgroeien/Kind en Gezin, cijfers op maat, 2025/2026]
- Poverty reduction runs as an explicit priority through the City and OCMW Ghent's governing agreement, with OCMW Ghent taking a coordinating role and working with Education, Youth and Childcare services and the Huis van het Kind to tailor support to individual children, young people and families, supplemented by subsidized initiatives such as school-support organizations. [Source: Stad Gent, Kinderarmoede policy webpage]

3.4 Integration policy

Ghent's integration and citizenship policy is delivered through IN-Gent vzw, a dedicated municipal agency created via a cooperation agreement with the City of Ghent, alongside the Flemish Agency for Integration and Citizenship, which covers the rest of Flanders.

- IN-Gent's core tasks include guiding newcomers, advising City services and organizations on integration, diversity and accessibility, a formal signaling function toward policymakers, combating racism, and promoting positive representation — alongside delivering citizenship trajectories, including civic-orientation classes, and coordinating Dutch-as-a-second-language (NT2) provision. [Sources: Stad Gent (Persruimte), cooperation agreement announcement; In-Gent / integratiebeleid.vlaanderen.be]
- The City's integration and equal-opportunity policy explicitly run on two tracks: individual-level support for people with a migration background (encouraging citizenship trajectories and Dutch-language learning, with particular attention to individuals in a vulnerable societal position) and a broader diversity and cohesion policy across City services. The City's 2020–2025 policy note for Equal Opportunities and Wellbeing records a €1.7 million annual investment in the cooperation agreement with IN-Gent vzw. [Source: Stad Gent, "Iedereen anders, allemaal Gent" / Beleidsnota Gelijke Kansen en Welzijn 2020–2025]
- The City also maintains AD REM, an advisory council on ethnic-cultural diversity that channels the perspective of residents with a migration background directly to policymakers, and runs a dedicated programme addressing radicalization, polarization and extremism. [Source: Stad Gent, Diversiteit in Gent webpage]

3.5 Youth policy and youth work infrastructure

Youth policy in Ghent is coordinated by the municipal youth service, under the political responsibility of the alderman for Youth and Outreach Work, Elke Decruynaere, with youth welfare work — the specific target field of WP11 — organized as a distinct, strongly participatory strand of this policy.

- In 2019–2020, the City ran a city-wide participatory process, "Youth work for children and young people in vulnerable situations", bringing together civil-society actors, City services and policymakers around the question of how to work together more effectively to meet the needs of vulnerable children and young people. This process resulted in the charter "Youth welfare work: a connecting story", signed on 9 July 2020 by the City and its partners, which now serves as the shared compass for the sector — with subsequent additional funding for youth welfare work explicitly allocated "on the basis of objective data and signals" from demographic figures and from young people themselves, directly mirroring COSY's own signal-based methodology. [Source: Stad Gent, "Jeugdwelzijnswerk: een verbindend verhaal" policy webpage]
- Following signals from civil-society organizations and City services about young people needing help but not reached by any existing institution or organization, the City of Ghent deployed four dedicated youth street-corner workers — the same service that participated in WP11.4 — active in five neighborhoods: Ghent city center, Ledeborg, Sint-Amandsberg, the Watersportbaan area, and Nieuw Gent. Alderman Elke Decruynaere described this deployment as "a next step in the expansion of bottom-up youth welfare work in Ghent", alongside a parallel open call inviting youth organizations working with vulnerable children and young people to professionalize their own provision. [Source: Stad Gent / GroenGent.be, official announcement]

- The City frames Ghent's ambition explicitly as a "child- and youth-friendly city", with a dedicated youth service-led exploration of the challenges facing local youth policy, prior youth-participation formats such as "Mayor@YourTown" and, more recently, "Great Debate" (2024) enabling 16–18-year-olds to debate directly with policy-makers, and an explicit policy commitment to public space designed for children and young people to play, hang out and move around safely and autonomously. [Source: Stad Gent, "Gent kind- en jeugdvriendelijke stad" webpage]

4. Activities organized for WP11 with youth workers connected to Ghent

Four activities were organized with outreach youth welfare workers and municipal youth-policy professionals connected to Ghent to realize OO1.2, covering three distinct youth welfare work organizations (VZW Jong, Jong Gent In Actie, Jeugdstraathoekwerk Gent) and the City of Ghent's own youth service. They are reported separately below, numbered WP11.1 through WP11.4.

Event	Date	Organisation	Format	Participants
WP11.1	19/06/2026	VZW Jong	Post-it signal mapping per life domain, testing/supplementing signals already gathered directly from young people	12 (see participant list; gender not specified in source)
WP11.2	16/07/2026, 09:30–12:00	City of Ghent youth service	Post-it signal mapping per life domain + stakeholder ("boat") exercise	4 professional staff (gender not specified in source)
WP11.3	20/07/2026, 10:00–12:00	Jong Gent In Actie	Post-it signal mapping per life domain + stakeholder ("boat") exercise	3 professional staff (gender not specified in source)
WP11.4	25/08/2026	Youth street corner work Gent	Reach ("boat") exercise on which young people are/are not reached, followed by post-it signal mapping per life domain	6 (see participant list; gender not specified in source)

WP11.1: VZW Jong — signal-gathering session with outreach youth welfare workers

Description

Twelve outreach youth welfare workers from VZW Jong took part in this first WP11 activity. Signals already gathered directly from young people during field-based outreach work were tested and supplemented with signals from VZW Jong's own youth welfare workers, organized per life domain using post-its. In the signals below, those marked reproduce the source material's own convention of italicizing the most recurring signals already gathered directly from young people, now cross-checked and confirmed recognizable by this group of professionals; the remaining signals are additional observations contributed by the VZW Jong workers themselves.

Safety signals identified

Safety signal	Life domain(s)
Extortion and intimidation between groups of young people (confirmed as most common directly from young people)	Other: street culture/ social dynamics
Illegal ways of earning money, particularly among newcomers not yet entitled to benefits due to waiting lists/paperwork ("debts pay off debts, earned through undeclared work") (confirmed as most common directly from young people)	Other: street culture/ socio-economic
Traditional role models (misogynistic and homophobic)	Gender/ Other: social dynamics
Lack of meaningful daily activity, often leading to substance use out of boredom	Other: street culture/ Wellbeing
Fighting/intimidation between young people from different neighborhoods	Other: street culture/ Public space
Young people are handcuffed and subsequently physically mistreated (confirmed as	Police

most common directly from young people)		
Girls have no trust in the police to report sexually transgressive behavior (confirmed as most common directly from young people)	Police/ Gender	
Lack of trust in police due to negative experiences such as racism	Police/ Other: race	
Police confiscate young people's belongings without providing official paperwork or a police report	Police	
Police take advantage of situations when they see young people do not know their rights	Police/ Information	
Feeling of unsafety among girls playing sport in public space (racism, transgressive behavior) (confirmed as most common directly from young people)	Sport/ Gender/ Public space	
Sports infrastructure not adapted to the target group's neighborhood needs (too small, designed for children rather than young people, damaged/vandalized) (confirmed as most common directly from young people)	Sport/ Public space	
Club-based sport becoming unaffordable due to the removal of the reduced-fee scheme	Sport	

High cost of fitness/sports clubs combined with too little/no public-space sport provision or infrastructure	Sport/ Public space	
Sudden homelessness/houselessness triggering a downward spiral across multiple life domains (confirmed as most common directly from young people)	Housing/ Wellbeing	
Housing not suited to family needs: mental unsafety at home, reliance on public space that is often itself not suited to residents' needs (confirmed as most common directly from young people)	Housing/ Wellbeing/ Public space	
High rental cost combined with a limited housing supply, waiting lists, discrimination, and the requirement to submit pay slips and motivation letters	Housing	
Near-impossibility of finding rental housing (discrimination and cost)	Housing	
Young people consider certain neighborhoods unsafe for children playing there (glass, used drug needles, litter, intoxicated people, racism) (confirmed as most common directly from young people)	Public space	
Considerable public space claimed by the "free market" (terraces, privatization, parking): "we're no longer allowed to sit there", access only against payment	Public space	

(confirmed as most common directly from young people)		
Many intoxicated people near the Brugse Poort area who catcall or make comments at girls	Public space/ Gender	
Insufficient street lighting and too few lights in parks	Public space	
"There's little to do", "I'm bored"	Leisure/ Wellbeing	
Mainly boys/men present in public space, giving girls the feeling they are not allowed to sit there	Public space/ Gender	
Girls report finding public transport unsafe, with multiple signals of assault/intimidating remarks	Mobility/ Gender	
High cost for compulsory school trips (especially for large families) (confirmed as most common directly from young people)	Education	
Segregation within and between different schools (confirmed as most common directly from young people)	Education/ Other: social dynamics	
Teacher shortage, lost class hours, not receiving the right education (frequent substitutions, no continuity)	Education	
Truancy is common (and known to but not considered very serious by some parents)	Education	

Hunger: going without a proper meal for several days in a row (confirmed as most common directly from young people)	Wellbeing/ Health	
Limited long-term perspective due to ongoing uncertainty about residence status (confirmed as most common directly from young people)	Wellbeing/ Information	
Sharp recent increase in gambling and betting	Wellbeing	
Some young people lack basic knowledge of personal hygiene	Health/ Wellbeing	
Patriarchal attitudes (rigid images of "what a man is", "what a woman is")	Gender	
Near impossibility for the target group to find work (student jobs, flexi-jobs, permanent positions)	Work	
Social media used as a trigger/easy channel for weapons, drugs, extortion (confirmed as most common directly from young people)	Social media	
Videos glorifying a rightward political shift and stereotyping (confirmed as most common directly from young people)	Social media	
Telegram groups circulating nude photos of young girls	Social media/ Gender	

Sale of illegal goods via Instagram	Social media
Social media often presents a distorted image of certain issues (e.g. vaping portrayed as good/healthy)	Social media/ Health

Photo



WP11.2: Youth service Ghent — signal-gathering session and stakeholder mapping

Description

Four professional staff of the City of Ghent's youth service took part in this activity, structured in two parts: (1) signals already gathered directly from young people during field-based outreach work were tested and supplemented with the youth service team's own findings, organized per life domain via post-its; (2) a "boat exercise" mapped which actors in the youth service's network are trusted and can make a difference for the target group and youth welfare work ("on our boat") and which are trusted less, even if they could still make a difference ("on another boat").

As in WP11.1, signals marked reproduce the source material's own convention for signals already established as most recurring directly from young people and now confirmed by this professional group; the remaining signals are the youth service team's own additional observations.

Safety signals identified

Safety signal	Life domain(s)
Fights between young people from different neighborhoods (confirmed as most common directly from young people)	Other: street culture/ Public space
Street racing	Other: street culture/ Public space
Nuisance caused by fatbikes	Other: street culture/ Public space
Drugs	Other: street culture/ Health
Segregation: Ghent is highly multicultural (many Afghan, Bulgarian, Turkish residents, among others), but everyone stays within their own bubble	Other: social dynamics
Heavy police checks lead to distrust (confirmed as most common directly from young people)	Police
Being checked by the same officers up to 3 times a day feels like harassment (confirmed as most common directly from young people)	Police

No additional police-related signals from the youth service team itself	Police	
Few opportunities for unorganized sport in certain neighborhoods (confirmed as most common directly from young people)	Sport/ Public space	
Privatization of sports halls and grounds in Ghent (Farys) has made these far more expensive	Sport	
Girls do not always feel welcome, and sometimes unsafe, in sports clubs, contributing to their under-representation in sport	Sport/ Gender	
Sudden homelessness/houselessness triggering a downward spiral across multiple life domains (confirmed as most common directly from young people)	Housing/ Wellbeing	
Housing not suited to family needs: mental unsafety at home, reliance on public space that is often itself not suited to residents' needs (confirmed as most common directly from young people)	Housing/ Wellbeing/ Public space	
Young people leaving institutional care are put out on the street from age 18, with a lack of guidance	Housing/ Wellbeing	
Housing under pressure from students, Airbnb-style lets, etc.	Housing	

Young people are repeatedly chased away from the places where they like to hang out (confirmed as most common directly from young people)	Public space	
Girls do not always feel safe or welcome hanging out in public space	Public space/ Gender	
Public space is often too dark	Public space	
Public space under pressure from tourism, students, etc.	Public space	
Blaarmeersen recreational area too crowded with young people arriving from other regions (Brussels, northern France, etc.), leaving Ghent-based young people without a place they recognize as their own	Public space	
Too few public toilets and bins	Public space	
Little to no public space that does not require consumption/spending	Public space	
Need for more bicycle parking	Mobility/ Public space	
Too few seats in parks	Public space	
High cost for compulsory school trips (especially for large families) (confirmed as most common directly from young people)	Education	

Declining quality of education due to a teacher shortage	Education	
Little to no remaining respect for teachers	Education	
Too many rules in education, but too little trust from young people in education, so rules often do not resonate	Education	
Too many special tracks in education leading young people to disengage (home-based education (TOA), alternative assessment panels, etc.); some 13-year-olds already say they will take the alternative-panel route because school does not suit them	Education	
Young people are "tired of school", not necessarily "tired of learning"	Education	
Growing influence of AI in education	Education	
Need for more school buses/free transport	Education/ Mobility	
Some young people go without a proper meal for several days in a row (confirmed as most common directly from young people)	Wellbeing/ Health	
Sofa-surfing/homeless young people experience considerable mental wellbeing problems	Wellbeing	

(confirmed as most common directly from young people)		
Mainstream youth work is not equipped for young people with special needs	Wellbeing/ Other: institutional	
Low self-image, eating disorders	Wellbeing/ Health	
Growing number of young people with special needs find it increasingly difficult to access youth welfare work	Wellbeing/ Other: institutional	
Many short-term projects mean trust builds briefly and is then broken again	Wellbeing/ Other: institutional	
Need for support in job searching	Work/ Wellbeing	
Hobbies/leisure organizations are too expensive	Leisure	
Videos on social media influence children and teenagers toward stereotypes and role patterns that do not always fit within our shared values and norms (confirmed as most common directly from young people)	Social media	
Declining autonomy among young people	Social media/ Wellbeing	
Influence of influencers	Social media	

Spread of false information/hate	Social media/ Information
Social media is the new "newspaper"	Social media/ Information
Social media flooded with AI-generated images	Social media

Additional observation — stakeholder ("boat") exercise

Which actors are on the youth service's "boat" (trusted, able to make a difference for the target group and youth welfare work): the Sports Service; Mediaraven/media literacy; State Security; street-corner work; the Integrated Youth Policy team (public space); CAW/JAC; TEJO; the Health and Care Directorate; LEJO; Overkop; the mobile crisis team (CGGZ/hospital); the City of Ghent's programme director; the "Combi" project; religious figures; the urban sports consultation platform; neighborhood management; the prevention service; trajectory guidance; school spotters; KAA Gent Foundation, Gent Sport Foundation, Futsal Sport, Sport Around; the education center; university colleges; Sport Na School; and homework-support providers.

Which actors are on "another boat" (less trusted, but still potentially able to make a difference): De Sleutel (drug support services); Farys; the mobility service; the intervention police; the parks/green-space service; a large share of local residents; the communications service (social media); social housing company Thuispunt; and neighborhood management — here specifically flagged as needing to remain more neutral/independent.

Photo



WP11.3: Jong Gent In Actie — signal-gathering session and stakeholder mapping

Description

Three professional staff of Jong Gent In Actie took part in this activity, structured identically to WP11.2: (1) signals already gathered directly from young people were tested and supplemented with the team's own findings, organized per life domain via post-its; (2) a "boat exercise" mapped trusted versus less-trusted actors within the organization's network.

As in the previous activities, signals marked reproduce the source material's own convention; the remaining signals are Jong Gent In Actie's own additional observations.

Safety signals identified

Safety signal	Life domain(s)
Fights between young people from different neighborhoods (confirmed as most common directly from young people)	Other: street culture / Public space
Territorial behavior within the neighborhood	Other: street culture / Public space
Large gap between residents and young people	Other: social dynamics
"Cat and mouse" games with the police	Other: street culture / Police
Gentrification	Housing / Other: socio-economic
Heavy police checks lead to distrust (confirmed as most common directly from young people)	Police
Being checked by the same officers up to 3 times a day feels like harassment (confirmed as most common directly from young people)	Police

Denial of ethnic profiling by the police	Police/ Other: race	
No reintegration or rehabilitation pathway for young people after contact with justice	Justice	
Police officer training is too short and gives too little attention to wellbeing, social skills, etc.	Police	
Youth welfare workers share police's underlying goal of a good society, but police show little understanding for youth welfare work's own approach to this	Police/ Other: institutional	
Few opportunities for unorganized sport in certain neighborhoods (confirmed as most common directly from young people)	Sport/ Public space	
Long waiting lists to join football clubs	Sport	
Planned end of reduced-fee scheme will have a harmful effect on the target group's ability to take part in sports associations	Sport	
Multifunctional spaces taken over by associations without young people's input, leaving them feeling unwelcome	Public space/ Other: social dynamics	
Sudden homelessness/houselessness triggering a downward spiral across multiple life domains	Housing/ Wellbeing	

(confirmed as most common directly from young people)		
Housing not suited to family needs: mental unsafety at home, reliance on public space that is often itself not suited to residents' needs (confirmed as most common directly from young people)	Housing/ Wellbeing/ Public space	
Little to no quality (social) housing available	Housing	
Excessively long waiting lists for social housing	Housing	
High cost of housing	Housing	
Discrimination in the housing market	Housing/ Other: race	
Residents forced to move out of social housing lose the social network they had built over many years	Housing/ Wellbeing	
Young people are repeatedly chased away from the places where they like to hang out (confirmed as most common directly from young people)	Public space	
Sham participation in consultation exercises on redesigning public space	Public space/ Other: institutional	
Too little attention to girls in public space	Public space/ Gender	
"Matthew effect": "people already see us negatively, so let's just confirm what they think"	Wellbeing/ Other: social dynamics	

High cost for compulsory school trips (especially for large families) (confirmed as most common directly from young people)	Education	
Early school leaving	Education	
Ethnic profiling in education (at various levels)	Education/ Other: race	
Segregation in education	Education/ Other: social dynamics	
No homework support available for young people aged 12–18	Education	
Strengths viewed as weaknesses (e.g. multilingualism at home)	Education/ Other: social dynamics	
School fatigue at a young age	Education/ Wellbeing	
Gender difference observed: girls generally perform better in education than boys	Education/ Gender	
"That one teacher" can make all the difference — outcomes depend heavily on which teacher a young person happens to have	Education	
Some young people go without a proper meal for several days in a row (confirmed as most common directly from young people)	Wellbeing/ Health	
Sofa-surfing/homeless young people experience	Wellbeing	

considerable mental wellbeing problems (confirmed as most common directly from young people)		
Young people have little trust in organizations	Wellbeing/ Other: institutional	
Little to no access to healthy food	Health	
Secondary-school students should be better supported, ideally with one fixed support figure from the first to sixth year	Education/ Wellbeing	
Waiting lists for: housing, psychological support, addiction care, dentists, mental health care (GGZ), etc.	Wellbeing/ Health/ Housing	
Government wants to invest more in police while providing fewer resources for trajectory guidance, youth welfare work, etc.	Other: institutional/ Police	
Vaping (HHC) is causing mental/developmental setbacks among young people	Health/ Wellbeing	
Videos on social media influence children and teenagers toward stereotypes and role patterns that do not always fit within our shared values and norms (confirmed as most common directly from young people)	Social media	

Social media used as a platform to sell prohibited substances	Social media/ Health
Fake news	Social media/ Information
Self-image negatively affected	Social media/ Wellbeing
"Manosphere" content	Social media/ Gender
Dangers of AI, e.g. asking ChatGPT for everything, accepting the answer as truth, and no longer thinking critically for oneself	Social media/ Information
Exclusion for not sharing the same opinion as groups on social media	Social media/ Other: social dynamics
Growing radicalization driven by social media influence	Social media

Additional observation — stakeholder ("boat") exercise

Which actors are on Jong Gent In Actie's "boat" (trusted, able to make a difference): the social rental agency; G-Sport Vlaanderen; bridge figures/education center; KAA Gent Foundation; youth street-corner work; the leadership of the Ghent police region; the City of Ghent (social interpreters, wellbeing); Sportaround vzw; school spotters/JOJO staff; and alternative OCMW/CAW projects (vacancy-use project, O&O project).

Which actors are on "another boat" (less trusted): the education system; intervention police (not attuned to contact with young people); sports clubs; the City of Ghent (in relation to social control and sham participation regarding public space); and social work itself (some organizations are seen as more focused on securing sufficient funding for the organization than on the target group's wellbeing).

Photo



WP11.4: Youth street-corner work Gent — reach mapping and signal-gathering session

Description

Six staff of youth street-corner work Gent took part in this activity, structured in two parts: (1) a reach exercise, using post-its placed on a drawing of a boat on water, identified which young people are reached by Ghent's youth street-corner work ("on the boat") and which groups still remain largely out of reach ("still floating in the water"); (2) signals already gathered directly from young people during field-based outreach work were tested and supplemented with signals from VZW Jong's youth welfare workers, organized per life domain via post-its.

Unlike the stakeholder-network "boat exercise" used in WP11.2 and WP11.3, this activity's boat exercise concerns which young people themselves are reached, rather than which partner organizations are trusted — and is reported separately below for that reason.

Safety signals identified

Safety signal	Life domain(s)
Feeling of unsafety in public space (reported by girls, boys and non-binary young people alike)	Public space/ Wellbeing
Young people are frequently chased away from their hangout spots in the neighborhood(by	Public space

police, residents, other young people)		
The label "loitering youths" is applied to young people extremely quickly	Other: social dynamics	
Prejudice directed at specific groups of young people	Other: social dynamics	
"Wrong" role models	Social media/ Other: social dynamics	
Challenges circulated via social media inviting young people to earn money	Social media/ Other: crimes & felonies	
Bullying goes very far (videos, photos, etc.)	Social media/ Other: social dynamics	
Trade in drugs, vapes, weapons, etc. via social media	Social media/ Other: crimes & felonies	
Large groups arrange fights via social media	Social media/ Other: street culture	
Some young people have become so isolated that social media is the only way to reach them	Social media/ Wellbeing	

Racism within sports clubs	Sport/ Other: race	
Gender imbalance in certain sports (e.g. girls rarely dare to join in playing football in public space, even though they want to)	Sport/ Gender	
Sports infrastructure in neighborhoods often not adapted to young people's needs	Sport/ Public space	
Various thresholds to becoming a member of a sports club	Sport	
No trust in contacting police when problems arise	Police/ Justice	
Ethnic profiling by police	Police/ Other: race	
Contact with the justice system can itself confer a certain status among peers	Justice/ Other: social dynamics	
Vicious cycle: selling drugs → fine → selling drugs to pay off the fine	Justice/ Other: crimes & felonies	
Young people leaving institutional care, used to communal living, find living alone difficult and often bring in other homeless young people, importing street-level problems with them	Housing/ Other: social dynamics	

Housing blocks in Nieuw Gent carry a negative image that young people from the area carry with them (both positively and negatively)	Housing/ Other: social dynamics	
Very high numbers of homeless/houseless young people	Housing	
Housing is unaffordable and supply in the city is far too limited	Housing	
Living groups within institutional care often lack a homely atmosphere, contributing to young people running away	Housing/ Wellbeing	
Fines for travelling without a valid public-transport ticket are too high, pushing some young people toward illegal activity to pay them off	Mobility/ Justice	
Too little awareness of the consequences of travelling without a valid ticket, so fines accumulate without young people being fully aware	Mobility/ Information	
High cost of using public transport	Mobility	
Cost of education	Education	

No trust in teachers (too much turnover of teaching staff)	Education	
Young people do not see the point of school, find no connection with the content of what is taught, and consider it too generic for many young people	Education	
Hygiene: many young people have limited opportunities to wash, groom themselves, or access dental care	Health/ Wellbeing	
Young people want to be together; the "average" young person can do this through association and nightlife culture, but this carries thresholds for the young people street-corner workers to meet, who instead gather in public space and are penalized for it (by police, residents, etc.)	Leisure/ Public space/ Other: social dynamics	
Young people from certain communities often rely only on their own community network	Other: social dynamics	
Long waiting times or waiting lists for support services	Wellbeing/ Health	
Rigid categorical thinking makes it difficult to access support (e.g. having to be "smart enough", needing a fixed	Wellbeing/ Other: institutional	

address before receiving psychological support)		
Escaping a vulnerable situation is often too difficult for many young people (lacking skills/competencies; emotional instability among young parents, sometimes resulting in losing custody of their children)	Wellbeing/ Other: social dynamics	

Reach exercise — which young people are and are not reached by youth street-corner work Gent

Characteristics of young people mainly reached by youth street-corner work Gent: mainly young people aged 18–30; young people with a migration background; homeless/houseless young people and sofa-surfers; young people struggling with addiction/substance use; young people who are tired of formal support services or have burned bridges with societal institutions (and who operate "under the radar"); a target group with little connection to the City's existing service offer; young people who have just left an institution or facility and must start building their own plan; young people who run away from institutions; young people who are isolated and find little connection with other young people; undocumented young people (sans-papiers) and newcomers with a temporary residence permit; young people with a mental disability/cognitive delay; and young people from families experiencing poverty across multiple generations.

Groups identified as hard to reach: closed/insular communities (e.g. the Roma community); and communities operating within a different normative and value framework (e.g. the Afghan community).

Photo



6. Consolidated overview of identified signals and context

Together, the four WP11 activities engaged 25 outreach youth welfare workers and municipal youth professionals connected to Ghent — 12 in WP11.1 (VZW Jong), 4 in WP11.2 (Youth service Gent), 3 in WP11.3 (Jong Gent In Actie), and 6 in WP11.4 (Youth street-corner work Gent). All four activities used the same core method: testing signals already gathered directly from young people during field-based outreach work for recognizability with each new professional group, then supplementing these with the professionals' own additional observations per life domain. The table below consolidates the recurring themes across all four activities.

Recurring theme	Raised in	Cross-activity observation
Homelessness/houselessness and unsuitable housing	WP11.1, WP11.2, WP11.3, WP11.4	The single most consistently confirmed signal in this dataset: the exact phrasing "sudden homelessness/houselessness triggering a downward spiral" and "housing not suited to family needs" was independently confirmed as most common directly from young people by three separate professional groups (WP11.1, WP11.2, WP11.3), and echoed with additional structural detail (unaffordable housing, unhomely institutional living groups, young care-leavers taking in other homeless peers) by youth street-corner work Gent (WP11.4).

Being repeatedly chased away from public space/ hangout spots	WP11.1 (via public-space claims), WP11.2, WP11.3, WP11.4	Confirmed as most common directly from young people in WP11.2 and WP11.3 and independently echoed in WP11.1 (public space "claimed by the free market") and WP11.4 ("chased from one hangout spot to another by police, residents, other young people"), with WP11.4 adding the specific observation that the label "loitering youths" is applied to young people extremely quickly.	
Police checks experienced as harassment; distrust of police	WP11.1, WP11.2, WP11.3, WP11.4	Extremely consistently confirmed: the specific detail of "being checked by the same officers up to 3 times a day" recurs, worded almost identically, as a most-common youngster-reported signal in WP11.2 and WP11.3; WP11.3 adds that police deny ethnic profiling while youth workers see a shared goal (a good, safe society) undermined by limited police understanding of youth welfare work's own approach; WP11.4 confirms ethnic profiling independently and adds a specific description of the resulting "vicious cycle" between fines and continued illegal activity.	
Segregation and limited intergroup contact	WP11.1, WP11.2, WP11.3	A recurring structural observation about Ghent's diversity: WP11.1 raises segregation directly in and between schools; WP11.2 explicitly frames this against the city's super-diversity ("many Afghan, Bulgarian, Turkish residents ... but everyone stays within their own bubble"); WP11.3 raises segregation in education alongside ethnic profiling "at various levels" within the education system specifically.	

Sport: cost, accessibility, and the loss of the reduced-fee scheme	WP11.1, WP11.2, WP11.3, WP11.4	A structurally confirmed theme, sharpened with specific, converging policy detail: WP11.1 and WP11.3 both independently flag the (in WP11.1 already realized, in WP11.3 anticipated) loss of the reduced-fee sports scheme as directly harmful to affordability; WP11.2 adds that the privatization of Ghent sports facilities (Farys) has driven up costs further; and WP11.1, WP11.2 and WP11.4 all independently confirm that girls feel unsafe or unwelcome in sport, whether in public space or within clubs.
Social media as amplifiers of stereotypes, extortion, radicalization and isolation	WP11.1, WP11.2, WP11.3, WP11.4	Confirmed as most common directly from young people in three activities (WP11.1, WP11.2, WP11.3) with near-identical wording ("videos ... influence children and teenagers toward stereotypes and role patterns"); WP11.3 adds AI/ChatGPT-driven loss of critical thinking and "manosphere" content explicitly; WP11.4 adds the specific, more severe detail that some highly isolated young people are now reachable only via social media.
High cost of compulsory school trips for large families	WP11.1, WP11.2, WP11.3	Confirmed as most common directly from young people in all three organization-facing activities with identical wording, making it one of the most robustly triangulated single signals in the entire WP11 dataset.
Hunger and food insecurity	WP11.1, WP11.2, WP11.3	Confirmed as most common directly from young people ("going without a proper meal for several days in a row") in three separate activities with near-identical wording.

Waiting lists and thresholds across housing, mental health, addiction and dental care	WP11.2, WP11.3, WP11.4	Independently raised across three activities, with WP11.3 providing the most extensive list (housing, psychological support, addiction care, dentists, mental health care) and explicitly linking this to a policy trend of increased police investment alongside reduced funding for trajectory guidance and youth welfare work — a structural, resourcing-level signal distinct from, but closely linked to, the individual waiting-list experiences described elsewhere.
Stakeholder trust networks ("boat exercise")	WP11.2, WP11.3 (network trust); WP11.4 (reach)	WP11.2 and WP11.3 independently name several of the same actors as trusted partners (street-corner work, KAA Gent Foundation/football-linked outreach, school spotters) and several of the same actors as less trusted (intervention police "not attuned to contact with young people"; the City of Ghent specifically regarding public-space participation processes) — a striking degree of convergence between two independently consulted organizations. WP11.4's distinct reach-focused exercise complements this by identifying which specific groups of young people (homeless/houseless, undocumented, addiction-affected, institutional care-leavers, closed communities) remain hardest to reach even by dedicated outreach work.

6.1 Value of the cross-activity confirmation method used throughout WP11

A distinctive strength of the WP11 dataset is that the same core set of youngster-derived signals (housing insecurity, being chased from public space, police checks experienced as harassment, school-trip costs, hunger) was independently tested and confirmed as "most common" by three or four separate, non-overlapping professional organizations, often using strikingly similar wording. Because the COSY decision tree

treats a pattern recurring across independent sources as a key validation criterion (Section 2.2), this repeated, near-verbatim confirmation across VZW Jong, Youth service Gent, Jong Gent In Actie and Youth street-corner work Gent provides an unusually strong evidence base for treating these signals as genuinely embedded in the Ghent context, rather than specific to any one organization's caseload or perspective.

6.2 Context of the four activities within the Ghent ecosystem

The verified context in Section 3 helps situate several of the strongest cross-activity signals. The police-related distrust signal (Section 6, row 3) sits against a police zone operating under the new 2026–2029 National Security Plan framework, which explicitly names intra-family and sexual violence, organized crime and radicalization as priorities — themes distinct from, but potentially in tension with, the day-to-day "heavy checks" experienced by young people and named directly by youth workers. The housing and homelessness signals (Section 6, row 1) align closely with Ghent's documented profile: despite seven consecutive years of falling poverty (1 in 8 residents, 18% of children born into poverty), homelessness remains substantial (close to 2,500 people in the most recent count), and East Flanders is the only Flemish province where the child-poverty index rose in 2025 — a relevant regional headwind against the city's own more favorable trend. The segregation and diversity-related signals (Section 6, row 4) map directly onto Ghent's documented super-diversity (34.3% of residents with a migration background, 51.8% among minors, close to 160 nationalities), while the city's own youth welfare work infrastructure — the 2020 "Jeugdwelzijnswerk: een verbindend verhaal" charter and the four dedicated youth street-corner workers deployed in five specific neighborhoods, both explicitly grounded in "objective data and signals" from young people — provides a striking, pre-existing local precedent for exactly the signal-driven approach COSY itself uses.

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