

**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:	WP12
Event name:	Local community safety signals of outreach youth workers connected to the municipality of Grammont
Type:	Training
In situ/online:	In situ
Location:	Belgium 1. JC De Spiraal, Zakkaai 29, 9500 Geraardsbergen 2. VZW Jong, Antwerpsesteenweg 195, 9040 Sint-Amandsberg 3. Sociaal Huis, Deken Jonckheerestraat 9, 8560 Wevelgem 4. JC De Spiraal, Zakkaai 29, 9500 Geraardsbergen
Date(s):	1. 27/05/2026 2. 11/06/2026 3. 20/08/2026 4. 24/08/2026
Website(s) (if any):	https://www.uitdemarge.be/cosy/
Participants	
Female:	1. 3 2. 2 3. 5 4. 4
Male:	1. 1 2. 5 3. 3 4. 2
Non-binary:	1. 0 2. 0 3. 0 4. 0
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 12 (WP12) of the COSY project — "Local community safety signals of outreach youth workers connected to the municipality of Grammont" — 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 WP4 gathered signals directly from young people in Grammont, WP12 turns to the outreach youth workers, youth development workers and other societal professionals who support them. Four activities were organized, deliberately combining a general mapping of the local youth work landscape (WP12.1), a broad multi-domain signal-gathering session with outreach youth development workers (WP12.2), and two dedicated sessions in which the most recurring signals gathered directly from young people (WP4) were tested for recognizability with a wide range of other societal actors — including Red Cross reception center staff working with unaccompanied minors, youth center and youth-house workers, the municipal community-service-officer (BOA) coordinator, special youth care professionals, and workers supporting young people with an institutional history or facing homelessness (WP12.3, WP12.4). This report:

- presents the process toolkit that was used, across the whole COSY project, to determine what qualifies as a local community safety signal (identical to the toolkit applied in all WP, reproduced here for completeness);
- provides verified, sourced context on Grammont covering demography, safety and policing, prevention, integration, and youth policy;
- documents the four activities organized for WP12 (context, approach, participants) each separately numbered on the same template;
- presents, for each activity, the signals identified — including, for WP12.3 and WP12.4, the professional feedback gathered when testing signals already raised by young people 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 WP12 deliverable D9-16.2 ("Method(s) to determine what a local community signal is", shared with WP9-16) and for the WP12 monitoring & evaluation report (D9-16.3).

Note on participant counting: WP12.2 was attended by 8 youth development workers; however, one female participant had already been counted as a participant in WP12.1. To avoid double-counting a single individual as two unique COSY participants, the consolidated total of unique WP12 participants counts this person once, yielding 7 unique participants for WP12.2 and 25 unique participants across all four WP12 activities in total.

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 WP12 activities in Grammont. 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 WP12, interpreted as the leadership of youth workers' professional voice and frontline expertise, and, in WP12.3 and WP12.4, explicitly used to test whether young people's own signals (WP4) are recognized across the wider professional field.

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. In WP12.3 and WP12.4, this filtering takes an additional, distinctive form: rather than generating new signals from scratch, the facilitator directly tested the most recurring signals already raised by young people (WP4) against professionals' own recognition and experience — criterion 4 (pattern/repeated experience) and criterion 5 (community actors' ability to influence) were thereby examined explicitly, with professional feedback recorded per signal below.

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 WP12 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: Grammont

This section draws on publicly available, verifiable sources — the Belgian statistical office (Statbel), the Flemish Agency for Growing Up (Opgroeien/Kind en Gezin), the local police zone Grammont/Lierde, and the official communications of the Grammont local authority — 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

Grammont is a city and municipality in the province of East Flanders, Belgium, comprising the city center and fourteen surrounding sub-municipalities, spread over a surface area of approximately 79.7 km².

- Population: 35,338 inhabitants as of the end of 2025 (+0.3% year-on-year); Statbel-based figures place the 2025 population at approximately 35,236, a rise of roughly 18% since 1990. [Sources: NUUS, August 2026, citing Statbel; AlleCijfers.be/Statbel]
- Population growth is driven entirely by migration (both from other Belgian municipalities and internationally): in 2025, Grammont recorded 261 births against 381 deaths (a natural population decline of –120), a pattern also observed in 2024 and in line with a wider Flemish trend of ageing and low birth rates. Without net in-migration, the municipality's population would be shrinking. [Source: NUUS, August 2026, citing Statbel]
- Grammont is a diverse municipality: residents trace their origins to 128 different countries, and close to one in five residents (nearly 20%) has a migration background. [Source: Lokaal Bestuur Grammont, integration policy plan launch, June 2026]

3.2 Safety and policing

Grammont falls under local police zone Grammont/Lierde (zone 5428), covering both Grammont and the neighboring municipality of Lierde, led by chief commissioner Patrice De Mets.

- The zone's six-yearly Zonal Security Plan 2026–2031 was approved by the zonal security council and police council in 2026, informed by a resident Safety Monitor survey. [Source: Lokale Politie Grammont/Lierde, official communications, 2026]
- The Safety Monitor identified residents' main concerns as litter, illegal dumping, vandalism and general public-space nuisance, alongside dangerous driving behavior (speeding, aggressive driving,

phone use, illegal parking). [Source: VRT NWS, 6 May 2026, quoting chief commissioner Patrice De Mets]

- On this basis, the zone set five priorities for 2026–2031: (1) reducing dangerous traffic behavior through visibility, enforcement, prevention and partner consultation; (2) more proactive detection and prosecution of drug dealing, with the station area, city parks and main routes to schools specifically named as problem locations; (3) addressing public-space nuisance and violence; (4) strengthening internal police training, including de-escalation techniques for officers during interventions; and (5) continued attention to intra-family violence, sexual offences, cybercrime and digitalization as ongoing daily priorities alongside the four headline goals. [Sources: VRT NWS, 6 May 2026; NUUS, 6 May 2026, both quoting official police zone communications]
- Both mayors involved — Fernand Van Trimont (Grammont) and Jurgen Soetens (Lierde) — publicly stressed that safety is a shared responsibility across the zone. [Source: NUUS, 6 May 2026]

3.3 Poverty and child poverty (prevention-relevant context)

Poverty context is directly relevant to several WP12 and WP4 signals concerning housing, wellbeing and hunger, and is therefore included here as prevention-relevant background rather than as a safety signal.

- According to the Kind en Gezin (Opgroeien) child-poverty index, 20.49% of Grammont residents were classified as living in poverty in 2021 — the second-highest rate in East Flanders after Zelzate (21.48%), and higher than nearby cities such as Aalst, Denderleeuw, Ronse and Ninove. [Source: NUUS, August 2023, citing Kind en Gezin/Opgroeien figures]
- The child-poverty index (share of children born into a family classified as poor) stood at 19.2% municipality-wide, against a Flemish average of 12.7%; in the city center specifically, this figure reached 39.8% — down from a previous peak of around 47%, attributed by local policy-makers to sustained local action, though the underlying problem is described as persistent. [Source: NUUS, August 2023, citing Kind en Gezin/Opgroeien and the local integration scan of the Agency for Home Affairs (Agentschap Binnenlands Bestuur)]
- Children born into poor families in Grammont come from diverse backgrounds: based on the mother's country of origin, 42.5% are Belgian and 49.5% originate from outside the European Union. [Source: local integration scan, Agentschap Binnenlands Bestuur, cited in NUUS, August 2023]
- The local authority has implemented several prevention measures aimed at children and young people in poverty, including a school-cost fund, learning support, a language coach, a school outreach worker, and a dedicated "child-poverty signal toolkit" used by school care teams to identify poverty-related risk factors early. [Sources: NUUS, August 2023; Lokaal Bestuur Grammont, product page for the Signalenbundel Kinderarmoede]

3.4 Integration policy

On 17 June 2026, the Grammont local authority presented its new integration policy plan, "From welcome to participation. Dutch as compass for integration and living together 2026–2031", replacing a more fragmented, initiative-by-initiative approach with a coordinated strategy across municipal departments.

- The plan rests on three priorities: (1) strengthening Dutch-language proficiency as the primary lever for participation in education, work, services, associational life and social contact; (2) strengthening social cohesion through mutual knowledge, openness, respect and encounters between residents of different origins and beliefs; and (3) a diversity policy within the local authority's own services and staffing, alongside continued support for non-municipal organizations and services active in this field.

[Sources: Lokaal Bestuur Grammont, official policy announcement, 17 June 2026; Vlaamse beleidsprioriteiten integratiebeleid, as published on the municipal integration webpage]

- The local authority explicitly frames integration as a shared responsibility across the whole territory, not only the city center, extending support, language provision and encounter opportunities to the surrounding sub-municipalities and rural areas as well. [Source: Lokaal Bestuur Grammont, official policy announcement, 17 June 2026]
- Concrete integration provision includes OKAN (reception classes for non-Dutch-speaking newcomers) within mainstream education, adult-education Dutch courses, the "Dutch practice opportunities" project — reinforced in 2026 with a €30,000 Flemish subsidy plus €30,000 local co-financing, delivered jointly by the Society Department, the library, Huis van het Kind and the art academy — and a dedicated integration officer supported by volunteers (language cafés, reading groups). [Sources: Editiepajot, February 2026; Lokaal Bestuur Grammont, Dienst Samenleving webpage]
- Alderman for Society & Participation Griet Blaton has publicly stated that "integration is not the task of a single department alone", underlining the plan's cross-departmental design. [Source: Lokaal Bestuur Grammont / Nieuwskrant / Persregiodender, June 2026]

3.5 Youth policy and youth work infrastructure

Youth policy in Grammont is coordinated by the municipal youth service, based in youth center De Spiraal, which also houses youth center De Ressort and, since 2024–2025, a dedicated OverKop-house.

- OverKop-houses are a Flanders-wide model of low-threshold, youth-designed drop-in spaces (ages 12–25) combining informal social space with access to first-line psychological support; Grammont's OverKop-house was announced in 2024 and developed in consultation with young people themselves, explicitly to lower the threshold to professional support by embedding it within an existing leisure setting. [Source: Lokaal Bestuur Grammont / NUUS / Persinfo, September 2024]
- Alderman for Youth Fernand Van Trimpont has stated that reaching young people during their free time at OverKop makes the sometimes-difficult step toward professional support easier and faster to take. [Source: NUUS/Persinfo, September 2024]
- Grammont has held the Flemish "child-friendly city" designation since November 2016, and the youth service runs a broad programme including play-street schemes, neighborhood playgrounds across the sub-municipalities, holiday play schemes (Speelplein Guustje, Speelplein Ondersteboven), an inclusive play initiative (Binnenstebuiten), an equipment loan service for youth associations, and reduced-fee/reimbursement schemes to lower financial barriers to organized youth movements. [Source: Lokaal Bestuur Grammont, official Jeugd/Jeugddienst webpages]
- At Flemish policy level, the Flemish Youth and Children's Rights Policy Plan 2025–2029 — the framework within which local youth policy such as Grammont's operates — explicitly prioritizes strengthening cooperation between OverKop and youth work, amplifying children's and young people's own voice in policy-making, expanding outdoor play and hangout space, digital resilience, and suicide prevention — themes that map closely onto several signals reported below (need for hangout space, distrust of institutions, digital safety, and the request for more trusted adult figures). [Source: Vlaams Jeugd- en Kinderrechtenbeleidsplan 2025–2029, as published via Themis/Vlaanderen.be]

4. Activities organized for WP12 with youth workers connected to Grammont

Four activities were organized with outreach youth workers, youth development workers and other societal professionals connected to Grammont to realize OO1.2. The first two activities (WP12.1, WP12.2) generated new signals directly from professionals; the latter two (WP12.3, WP12.4) tested the most recurring signals already raised directly by young people in WP4 against a wide range of other professionals working with the target group, to establish whether these signals are locally specific or recur across regions.

Event	Date	Organisation(s)	Format	Participants
WP12.1	27/05/2026	Youth service Grammont	3-part exercise: life-domain signal mapping → neighborhood mapping → stakeholder ("boat") exercise	4
WP12.2	11/06/2026	Team West, Uit De Marge	Structured group session: one priority signal per life domain per participant, discussed and cross-checked as a group	8 attended (7 unique for WP12)
WP12.3	20/08/2026	Red Cross reception center, youth-house workers, local global policy officer, BOA coordinator, youth service	Validation session: testing the most recurring youngster-reported signals (WP4) with professionals	8
WP12.4	24/08/2026	Special youth care, support/welfare services, workers with young people with an institutional history or facing homelessness, leisure sector	Validation session: testing the most recurring youngster-reported signals (WP4) with professionals	6

WP12.1: Youth service Grammont — life-domain, neighborhood and stakeholder mapping

Description

This first WP12 activity was carried out with 4 staff members of the municipal youth service Grammont, using three linked exercises.

The first exercise mapped signals the youth service is aware of concerning the target group, bundled per life domain, with the most-discussed domains and the most prioritized signals identified.

The second exercise discussed the different neighborhoods of Grammont — a municipality participants described as highly fragmented across its city center and many sub-municipalities — distinguishing neighborhoods experienced positively from those experienced negatively.

The third exercise ("boat exercise") mapped the target group, partner services and the youth service's wider network: which sub-groups of young people are reached ("on the youth service's boat"), which partner organizations and services actively support this work ("in our fleet"), and which actors are perceived as less aligned or even obstructive ("in the pirate fleet"). This exercise did not itself generate new safety signals in the strict sense but usefully surfaces the perceived strength and gaps of the local support network, and is reported separately below.

Safety signals identified

Safety signal	Life domain(s)	Context/ illustrative content
Police presence experienced as too distant from the target group	Police	Police currently patrol mainly by car ("in combi"); participants suggested it would be preferable to see officers on foot occasionally stopping for a conversation with young people present in public space.
Lack of a shared, partly covered public meeting space	Public space	Participants prioritized the need for a public meeting space (partly covered) where everyone can find a place and where people can be together, without exclusion.
Young people without a stable, safe home environment	Housing/ Wellbeing	Described directly as young people who "don't have a real home".
Older men actively seeking out boys in the nightlife scene	Gender/ Leisure	Named as a prioritized signal without further elaboration in the source material.

Additional observation — neighborhood mapping

Participants distinguished neighborhoods and locations experienced positively from those experienced negatively across Grammont's city center and sub-municipalities. Positively experienced locations included: Raspeuvillebos, Boelarebos, the Kaaien (particularly at midday), Gavers, Abdijpark, the city center, Den Oudeberg, Plage, Maretak, Belevingsplein/the market, De Vrijheid (Ophasselt), youth-association premises, and the sub-municipalities generally (described as mostly positively experienced).

Negatively experienced locations included: Abdijpark, Gentsestraat, Moerbekeplein, Overpoort, the area around Brouwershof, Maretak, Berlarestraat, the city center ("in need of renewal"), Vianeplein, D'Oude Pompe (the Vianeplein site, described as "claimed by anglers"), the station area (particularly its rear side),

Weverijstraat, De Stikte, and several sub-municipalities (Overboelare, Viane, Moerbeke, Schendelbeke, Onkerzele, Idegem).

As in WP4, some locations (Abdijpark, Maretak) were named in both categories, indicating that the same physical space can be experienced very differently depending on context, time of day, or who else is present.

Additional observation — stakeholder ("boat") exercise

Signal tested (as raised by young people in WP4)	Professional feedback recorded during validation
Which sub-groups of young people are reached ("on the youth service's boat")?	Playground animators who also care for younger siblings; some young people from the Overpoort area; young people of Roma background; young people within the service's own youth work; young people at the playground; young people who come to De Spiraal to chill; young people at the youth house; young people reached via Overkop; girls from Overpoort; OKAN young people (newcomer reception-class students); young people reached via the cargo bike outreach; young people reached via welfare partners; young people reached via youth development work; young people from Meander, Marbol and Magnolia; students who cannot stay at home; young people from Overkop; young people from Okkernoot; young people with a disability reached via Binnenstebuiten; young people from De Ressor; and individuals met directly on the street.
Which partners actively support this work ("in our fleet")?	Residents of the Overpoort neighborhood; Uit De Marge (UDM); De Poort; BKO (out-of-school childcare); Overkop; JC De Spiraal; JAC; the social house (Sociaal Huis); the urban development department; schools (Keerpunt, OKAN, KA, the college); Huis van het Kind; the mayor; the library; Marbol, Meander, Magnolia; the leadership of Jeugdhuis De Ressor; Mozaïk and De Drempel; the "connective school climate" initiative; the police chief, the youth-and-family police officer, and the neighborhood commissioner; the technical department; the community department; CAW; and a named contact, Leslie.
Which actors are perceived as less aligned or obstructive ("the pirate fleet")?	Some residents of the Overpoort neighborhood; police inspectors; residents of various other neighborhoods; 't Huizeke (a local association in the Overpoort area); some individual police officers; some colleagues within the city administration holding a different view (e.g. on young people's presence in the library); colleagues in De

	Spiraal's events department; village/neighborhood councils; a named local safety-advocacy figure (Luc Swartenbroeckx, "Weerbaar Grammont"); the social service; the Carmelites; some adults within local politics associated with right-wing views; and the national railway company NMBS (with a specific complaint that some conductors deliberately close train doors early).	
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Photo



WP12.2: Team West, Uit De Marge — multi-domain signal-gathering session

Description

Eight youth development workers from Team West of Uit De Marge took part in this session. Each participant individually wrote down one priority signal per life domain; all noted signals were then reviewed together, alongside signals already gathered from youth welfare workers and young people, to assess whether they reflect the specific local context or recur across different contexts more broadly.

Note on participant counting: one of the eight participants in this activity — a woman — had already been counted as a participant in WP12.1. To avoid recording this individual twice as a unique COSY participant, WP12.2 is treated as contributing 7 unique participants to the WP12 total.

Safety signals identified

Safety signal	Life domain(s)	Context / illustrative content
School fatigue leading to drop-out and truancy	Education	Many young people are described as "school-tired", contributing to drop-out and truancy.
Long-term school suspensions	Education	—
High school-related costs	Education	School invoices/fees described as too high.
Education insufficiently taking into account young people's difficult context outside school	Education/ Wellbeing	—
Excessive rules on dress and appearance at school	Education	—
High pressure on teachers	Education	—
Racially/ethnically segregated schools	Education/ Other: race	Described as "concentration schools" divided along white/non-white lines.
Long waiting lists to enroll in a school of choice	Education	—
Conflicts over use of public space	Public space	—
Repressive approach to the city center driven by tourism	Public space	—
Young people's mere presence in public space experienced as under pressure	Public space	—

Insufficient shelter/indoor spaces to hang out	Public space	—	
Feeling unwelcome in certain locations	Public space	Named locations include the station area and parks.	
Need for more places where young people can be present without expectations	Public space	—	
Insufficient public toilets	Public space	—	
Sports clubs showing little interest in accessibility/inclusion	Sport	—	
High thresholds preventing young people from joining sports clubs	Sport	Thresholds named: cost, skill-level testing, waiting lists, and club rules.	
Sport in public space perceived as nuisance	Sport/ Public space	—	
Difficult transport to sports clubs from certain neighborhoods	Sport/ Mobility	—	
Lack of public sports infrastructure	Sport/ Public space	—	
Loss of comfortable public spaces during summer due to tourism	Wellbeing/ Public space	During the summer period, young people lose the few places where they feel comfortable in public space, due to tourism and second-home residents.	
Loneliness and limited connectedness	Wellbeing	—	
Homelessness/houselessness among young people	Housing/ Wellbeing	—	
Young people leaving home prematurely, seeking welfare benefits, housing, or	Housing/ Work/ Wellbeing	—	

dropping out of school for work			
Performance pressure on girls to be a "good daughter/sister"; need for girls-only safe spaces	Gender/ Wellbeing	A need was named for separate girls' programme/safe spaces where girls can simply be young without having to meet a particular expectation pattern.	
Young people judged on behavior without regard for context	Wellbeing/ Other: social dynamics	—	
Taboo topics for young people of different ethnic-cultural backgrounds that are normalized for the "average citizen"	Other: social dynamics	—	
Long waiting lists for mental health care (GGZ)	Wellbeing/ Health	—	
Appointment-only thresholds at services such as JAC	Wellbeing/ Information	—	
Not enough buses	Mobility	—	
Little to no public transport after 20:00, sometimes as early as 19:00 on weekends	Mobility	—	
High cost of public transport	Mobility	—	
Poor public transport connections	Mobility	—	
Social pressure around fatbikes, scooters and cars	Mobility/ Other: social dynamics	"If you're not keeping up, you fall out of the boat."	
Mobility poverty limiting labor-market and social opportunities	Mobility/ Work/ Wellbeing	—	

Loneliness amplified within the crowd on social media	Social media/ Wellbeing	—	
Excessive social-media use creating a manufactured sense of unsafety	Social media/ Wellbeing	—	
Addictive effects of social media displacing real-life connection	Social media/ Wellbeing	—	
Polarization driven by social media, pushing young people toward extremes	Social media	—	
Social-media-driven pressure (unrealistic expectations, wanting more/better)	Social media/ Wellbeing	—	
Harmful role-pattern content on social media (misogynistic, mocking difference, harsh language)	Social media/ Gender	—	
Little/no awareness of the consequences of social media use	Social media/ Information	—	
Spread of fake news	Social media/ Information	—	
Young people sharing photos of others as a form of bullying	Social media/ Other: social dynamics	—	
Loss of a fair second chance after a single past police incident	Police	"Make one mistake as a young person once, and afterwards intervention officers no longer give you a fair chance."	
Illegal searches by police officers	Police	—	

Tension between young people and police in public space	Police/ Public space	—	
Ethnic profiling by police	Police/ Other: race	Young people report feeling permanently targeted and scrutinised by police because of skin color or dress.	
Insufficient dialogue between young people and police	Police	—	
Inappropriate conduct by some officers toward young people	Police	—	
Distrust of police among young people	Police	—	

Photo



WP12.3: Signal validation session — Red Cross reception center, youth-house and youth service staff, local global officer, BOA coordinator

Description

This activity tested the most recurring "local safety signals" gathered directly from young people (WP4) against a group of 8 professionals from different societal actors working with the target group: the Red Cross reception center (working with unaccompanied and other minors), youth-house workers, local global staff, the municipal community-service-officer (BOA) coordinator, and youth service staff.

Across the various WP4 exercises with young people, nine recurring themes emerged; for each theme, the two most frequently occurring signals were tested with professionals. Professional feedback recorded per signal is presented below, organized by theme.

1. Public space

Signal tested (as raised by young people in WP4)	Professional feedback recorded during validation
Many girls feel unsafe walking alone on the street in the evening.	The experiences of a few individuals reinforce this feeling of unsafety across many girls more broadly; this is felt especially strongly in neighborhoods with limited street lighting and limited social control.
Young people are chased from one square to another by residents, police, or other young people.	Racism by adults occurs very frequently. Certain sites are intended for young people but are taken over by young families, hospitality venues, tourism, or youth associations. Groups of young people with a similar profile gathering in one place often feel threatening to passers-by.

2. Sport

Signal tested (as raised by young people in WP4)	Professional feedback recorded during validation
Need for more sports infrastructure in public space to allow unorganized sport.	Initiatives for informal, non-commitment group sport are lacking.
Sports clubs impose thresholds that cause young people to drop out or prevent them from joining at all (e.g. trial tests before admission).	Waiting lists, admission tests, and parental-logistics expectations (laundry, transport) form thresholds to participation; provision is often centralized; accessibility varies strongly by sport (e.g. dance and gymnastics are relatively low-threshold, while football and volleyball are relatively high-threshold).

3. Justice/ police

Signal tested (as raised by young people in WP4)	Professional feedback recorded during validation
Young people often have no trust in the police because officers approach them inappropriately or check them up to 3 times a day, which feels like harassment.	Experience strongly depends on which individual officer approaches a young person. The dedicated youth-liaison officer (JOPO) is experienced positively. Police presence/appearance is often itself experienced as threatening by young people.
Young people often feel targeted by societal institutions.	Power imbalance plays a central role here: young people can essentially never "win" a discussion with an institution. There is a need for more trusted figures within societal institutions with whom young people can speak without consequences.

4. Education

Signal tested (as raised by young people in WP4)	Professional feedback recorded during validation
School trips are too expensive for large families.	For young people up to age 18 residing with the Red Cross reception center, Fedasil, or the relevant institution, such invoices are typically covered; ASO (general secondary education) is often more expensive than other tracks; young people who cannot afford trips drop out and lose connection with classmates; a good-practice example of cost-solidarity for school invoices was shared during the session.
Too little trust in education causes young people to disengage.	Positive experiences are reported specifically within OKAN classes, where teachers build a strong relationship with students and make a difference beyond the classroom, including supporting them in their free time. OKI enrolment criteria give some priority on primary-school waiting lists, but this priority does not extend to secondary education.

5. Mobility

Signal tested (as raised by young people in WP4)	Professional feedback recorded during validation
Public transport is not always adapted to need (e.g. travel from a sub-municipality to the center and	Discrimination/racism on public transport occurs. Bus stops are often already far away for residents of certain neighborhoods, further limiting young people's free

back is no longer possible after 19:00 in the evening).	time. Overcrowded buses create an unsafe feeling, but so do empty buses.
Unsafe cycling infrastructure, worsened by tourism in the city.	Particularly an issue in the city center.
6. Social media	
Signal tested (as raised by young people in WP4)	Professional feedback recorded during validation
Stereotypes and role patterns are pushed forward online ("manosphere").	Algorithms have an enormous influence on what young people see and are difficult to reset or change; participants described this as a broader societal phenomenon, with a marked shift toward more right-wing content on platforms such as TikTok and Instagram.
A significant amount of illegal trade takes place via social media platforms.	Few participants in this session were aware of the scale of this.
7. Leisure	
Signal tested (as raised by young people in WP4)	Professional feedback recorded during validation
Not enough covered places to gather in bad weather.	Newcomers find it very difficult to connect with other young people (and vice versa) in leisure settings; more covered spaces could improve the sense of safety at existing hotspots used in bad weather (e.g. the station tunnel).
Association life carries significant thresholds (financial, distance, etc.).	Some associations have taken their own initiatives to lower thresholds (e.g. second-hand equipment); the UITPAS (reduced-price leisure pass) can make a difference, though this depends on the specific association.
8. Housing	
Signal tested (as raised by young people in WP4)	Professional feedback recorded during validation

Exploitative/substandard renting is common.	Often experienced as a workable "temporary solution" in the short term but leads to health problems over the longer term.
Housing is often too expensive and comes with high entry requirements (e.g. 6 months of pay slips) that young people often cannot meet, leaving them with lower-quality or no housing (sofa-surfing/homelessness/houselessness).	Having the right connections makes finding housing easier; without them, it is very difficult. Young people sometimes hold unrealistic expectations of what a first home should look like. Tourism drives up rental/purchase prices. The number of Airbnb-style lets is increasing relative to standard long-term rentals. This is already difficult for the average citizen and is markedly more difficult for people in a vulnerable position.
9. Wellbeing	
Signal tested (as raised by young people in WP4)	Professional feedback recorded during validation
There are very few trusted figures to talk to.	Access to trusted figures is often limited; if a young person does not connect with the one trusted person available, there is frequently no one else to turn to.
Hunger is a recurring issue.	Mouldy sandwich boxes are regularly observed among primary-school-aged children (in play-scheme and camp settings). Schools sometimes offer a solution, but not during holidays and weekends, and this is not a structural solution. Considerable effort and energy are already being invested but need continues to outstrip available provision.
Photo	



WP12.4: Signal validation session — special youth care, welfare and homelessness/leisure-sector professionals

Description

This activity tested the same set of recurring "local safety signals" gathered directly from young people (WP4) with a second, distinct group of 6 professionals: workers from special youth care, general welfare/support services, workers specialized in young people with an institutional history or facing homelessness, and the leisure-provision sector.

As in WP12.3, the two most frequently occurring signals per theme (across nine recurring themes) were tested with this group; professional feedback recorded per signal is presented below, organized by the same nine themes, allowing direct comparison with WP12.3.

1. Public space

Signal tested (as raised by young people in WP4)	Professional feedback recorded during validation
Many girls feel unsafe walking alone on the street in the evening.	Young people in institutional care rarely go out alone in public space. Others' experiences strongly shape this feeling. Media influence was also named: the world used to feel further away for young people, whereas fear is now more actively driven by media coverage. Boys and support workers from institutions also report receiving threats on the street. Girls from a different ethnic-cultural background are often dropped off directly at activities by parents out of fear (with that fear itself reinforced at home). Bystander training (how to

	respond) should receive more attention. Many negative experiences were reported, e.g. being pulled off a bicycle.
Young people are chased from one square to another by residents, police, or other young people.	Young people arrange via social media to confront an individual or group at a specific square. A proactive approach (neighborhood work/street-corner work) could make a difference. Racism in public space occurs. Café terraces are considered "Belgian" culture, while other target groups doing the same thing in public space are chased away.

2. Sport

Signal tested (as raised by young people in WP4)	Professional feedback recorded during validation
Need for more sports infrastructure in public space to allow unorganized sport.	Young people in institutional care can often play sport within the facility itself. The limited infrastructure that does exist in public space is often claimed by boys, further reducing girls' opportunities.
Sports clubs impose thresholds that cause young people to drop out or prevent them from joining at all.	Cost is a key threshold preventing participation. Some sports clubs take their own initiatives to reduce thresholds (e.g. kit provision). Adapted/G-sport is often more accessible and better tailored to the target group's needs.

3. Justice/ police

Signal tested (as raised by young people in WP4)	Professional feedback recorded during validation
Young people often have no trust in the police because officers approach them inappropriately or check them up to 3 times a day, which feels like harassment.	Very recognizable across the different youth workers present. As a result, young people more often arrange to meet at each other's homes instead, meaning substance use becomes less visible in public but is, if anything, more strongly present. Distrust of police is very often passed down from home.
Young people often feel targeted by societal institutions.	Young people who run away from an institution are often formally flagged, so this targeting is not always without reason. There is a need for more restorative-justice-based work. Lawyers often advise young people to deny everything, which leaves little room for the

	young person to develop genuine awareness of wrongdoing. The justice system is seen as too slow and unclear, with a young person's experience heavily dependent on which case officer they are assigned.	
4. Education		
Signal tested (as raised by young people in WP4)	Professional feedback recorded during validation	
School trips are too expensive for large families.	For young people from special youth care, this is often financed by the placing institution. Public transport to reach trip locations is often too expensive, and some young people cannot cycle, meaning they must simply stay at school instead.	
Too little trust in education causes young people to disengage.	Access to certain schools requires formal "label", but a young person's needs are sometimes too complex to obtain one. Excessive pressure from school (homework, assignments, trips, tests) causes young people to disengage. Schools themselves also need "safe spaces".	
5. Mobility		
Signal tested (as raised by young people in WP4)	Professional feedback recorded during validation	
Public transport is not always adapted to need (e.g. travel from a sub-municipality to the center and back is no longer possible after 19:00 in the evening).	Timetables are also poorly matched to school travel needs; young people sometimes wait up to an hour at the school gate, where they meet less positive influences (e.g. smoking joints before school). Obtaining a driving license is very difficult for many young people (cost, waiting times). Distance to the nearest bus stop is sometimes already substantial. Newcomers' misunderstanding of ticketing/fare-class rules results in fines. Ticket checks disproportionately target specific profiles (ethnic profiling).	
Unsafe cycling infrastructure, worsened by tourism in the city.	Little further reaction from this group.	
6. Social media		

Signal tested (as raised by young people in WP4)	Professional feedback recorded during validation
Stereotypes and role patterns are pushed forward online ("manosphere").	Young people can spend hours scrolling, with their feed becoming increasingly extreme. There is a need for greater resilience, potentially through media-literacy education at school. Bullying via social media starts from a very young age. There is a fear of being oneself, since everything is filmed and shared everywhere. Manosphere content is already reaching 12–13-year-olds.
A significant amount of illegal trade takes place via social media platforms.	Older residents within institutional settings expose younger residents to these platforms quickly. Several substances are dealt via social media, including MDMA/mephedrone, cocaine and ketamine.

7. Leisure

Signal tested (as raised by young people in WP4)	Professional feedback recorded during validation
Not enough covered places to gather in bad weather.	In response, young people arrange to meet at each other's homes instead — particularly significant in vulnerable family situations, where a great deal of negative exposure can occur in that home context.
Association life carries significant thresholds (financial, distance, etc.).	Youth movements are increasingly working to remove these thresholds (e.g. camp-fee reimbursement); associational norms sometimes conflict with home values (e.g. alcohol use), leading parents to withhold permission for their child to take part.

8. Housing

Signal tested (as raised by young people in WP4)	Professional feedback recorded during validation
Exploitative/substandard renting is common.	Family pressure to move out and live independently sometimes pushes young people into exploitative renting situations.
Housing is often too expensive and comes with high entry requirements that young people often cannot	Young people leaving institutional care are often given priority; even the cost of a very small studio is often too high for a young person. Difficulty holding down a job for

meet, leaving them with lower-quality or no housing.	an extended period means some young people cannot present enough pay slips. Solidarity among homeless young people (one person finding housing quickly, taking others in) can lead to blacklisting, overcrowding, and broken house rules. Discrimination in the housing market occurs. Temporary use of vacant buildings against squatting provides no structural solution. Gentrification was also named.
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9. Wellbeing

Signal tested (as raised by young people in WP4)	Professional feedback recorded during validation
There are very few trusted figures to talk to.	Trusted figures are replaced too often, forcing young people to repeatedly retell their story and lose trust as a result, causing disengagement. A court case officer sometimes imposes the institution's own rules, which some young people then exploit as leverage ("playing the connection"). Burnout in social work is a concern, driven by high pressure and too few resources and staff relative to a steadily rising number and complexity of support needs — raising the question of how long professionals can sustain this.
Hunger is a recurring issue.	Even within care facilities, the meal budget for residents is described as painfully limited. Shame about "standing in line" for food is a barrier; the question was raised of how existing food-support initiatives can be made more low-threshold and dignified.

Photo



6. Consolidated overview of identified signals and context

Together, the four WP12 activities engaged 25 unique outreach youth workers, youth development workers and other societal professionals connected to Grammont — 4 in WP12.1, 7 unique in WP12.2 (of 8 attending; see the participant-counting note in Section 1), 8 in WP12.3, and 6 in WP12.4. The sample deliberately spans generalist municipal youth work, outreach youth development work, and a wide range of specialized societal actors (Red Cross reception center staff, youth-house workers, local global staff, the municipal BOA coordinator, special youth care, and homelessness/leisure-sector workers), providing an unusually broad professional cross-section for a single ecosystem. The table below consolidates the recurring themes across all four activities.

Recurring theme	Raised in	Cross-activity observation
Police relationship: distrust, ethnic profiling, disproportionate checks	WP12.1, WP12.2, WP12.3, WP12.4	The most consistently confirmed theme across all four activities: raised as a fresh professional observation in WP12.1 ("police too distant") and WP12.2 (ethnic profiling, illegal searches, loss of a fair second chance), and independently and very strongly confirmed as recognizable by two entirely different groups of societal professionals in WP12.3 and WP12.4 — including the specific detail that distrust is often "passed down from home", and that a dedicated youth-liaison officer (JOPO) is experienced

		positively, showing the issue is with approach rather than policing as such.	
Gendered unsafety in public space	WP12.1 (older men in nightlife), WP12.2 (girls' safe spaces), WP12.3, WP12.4	Confirmed independently across all four activities; WP12.3 and WP12.4 add that this feeling is often socially transmitted (from peers' experiences and from parental fear) rather than only resulting from a person's own direct experience, and that girls from certain ethnic-cultural backgrounds face an additional layer of parental protectiveness rooted in this same fear.	
Lack of adequate, welcoming public and covered meeting space	WP12.1, WP12.2, WP12.3, WP12.4	A structurally confirmed theme: WP12.1 prioritized it directly; WP12.2 raised repression of young people's presence in public space and a lack of sheltered gathering space; WP12.3 and WP12.4 both confirmed the same signal and added that a lack of covered space pushes young people toward meeting at each other's homes instead — which WP12.4 links directly to increased exposure to negative influences in vulnerable family settings.	
School-related barriers: cost, trust, disengagement	WP12.1, WP12.2, WP12.3, WP12.4	Confirmed across all four activities, with WP12.3 and WP12.4 adding rich, concrete detail: costs are often already covered for young people in reception-center or institutional care, but transport to reach school trips is not; OKAN classes are highlighted as a strong positive practice; and formal enrolment "labels" can themselves exclude young people whose needs are too complex to categorize.	
Housing insecurity, exploitation and homelessness	WP12.2, WP12.3, WP12.4	Confirmed independently by three activities with escalating detail: WP12.2 raises homelessness/houselessness generally; WP12.3 and WP12.4 both	

		add the specific mechanism of exploitative/substandard renting as a common short-term coping strategy with longer-term health costs, and WP12.4 adds further detail on blacklisting among homeless young people who take each other in, and on gentrification and short-term-let pressure on the rental market.	
Social media as amplifier of polarization, harmful role models and unsafety	WP12.2, WP12.3, WP12.4	Consistently confirmed, with WP12.3 and WP12.4 both explicitly naming a rightward political drift in algorithmically driven content ("manosphere") as a broader societal phenomenon rather than an isolated concern, and WP12.4 adding that this content already reaches children as young as 12–13 and that social media platforms are a channel for the sale of specific illegal substances (mephedrone, cocaine, ketamine).	
Long waiting lists and thresholds to mental health and welfare support	WP12.2, WP12.3, WP12.4	Confirmed independently by all three groups of professionals consulted, with WP12.4 adding that professional burnout — driven by rising demand and insufficient staffing — is itself a linked concern, since it risks further reducing the continuity of trusted support relationships.	
The value, and limits, of trusted adult figures	WP12.1 ("our fleet"), WP12.3, WP12.4	A cross-cutting protective-factor theme: WP12.1's stakeholder mapping shows a rich existing network of trusted partners; WP12.3 and WP12.4 both independently confirm that a shortage of trusted figures — and their frequent replacement — undermines young people's willingness to open up, since a broken trust relationship often cannot be immediately rebuilt with someone new.	
Hunger and material poverty	WP12.3, WP12.4	Independently and vividly confirmed by both professional groups, including	

among young people		the shared, striking detail of mouldy sandwich boxes observed among primary-school-aged children during play-scheme activities, and the observation that even institutional meal budgets are described as painfully limited.
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6.1 Value of the validation approach used in WP12.3 and WP12.4

WP12.3 and WP12.4 adopted a distinctive and methodologically valuable approach within WP12: rather than generating new signals from scratch, they systematically tested the most recurring signals already raised directly by young people in WP4 against two separate, non-overlapping groups of professionals. Because both sessions independently confirmed the large majority of the same 18 tested signals (two per theme, across nine themes), and frequently added compatible, non-contradictory detail rather than contradicting one another, this provides an unusually strong basis for treating these signals as genuinely embedded in the local Grammont context — a key criterion (pattern/repeated experience, and recognizability across independent actors) within the COSY decision tree described in Section 2.2.

6.2 Context of the four activities within the Grammont ecosystem

The verified context in Section 3 helps situate several of the strongest cross-activity signals. The police-related distrust signal (Section 6, row 1) sits against a police zone that has itself just adopted a 2026–2031 security plan prioritizing de-escalation training for officers and a reduction in public-space nuisance and violence — suggesting institutional openness to exactly the kind of dialogue COSY's Phase 2 activities can support. The housing, poverty and hunger signals (Section 6, rows 5 and 9) align closely with Grammont's documented status as having the second-highest poverty index in East Flanders, with child poverty in the city center reaching nearly 40%, and with a population composition in which nearly half of children in poor families originate from outside the EU — directly relevant to the ethnic/cultural dimensions raised alongside several signals above. The integration and youth-policy context (Sections 3.4–3.5) — a newly adopted 2026–2031 integration plan, an established OverKop-huis embedded in the youth center, and Flemish-level policy priorities on youth voice, outdoor space and digital resilience — likewise provides concrete, already-existing policy hooks for the public-space, trusted-figure and social-media signals identified above.

This document was produced in the framework of the CERV 2021–2027 programme, funded by the European Union. Views and opinions expressed are those of the organisers and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union.