

Generalist Youth Information Services in Luxembourg in 1997

The attached pages constitute the chapter concerning **Luxembourg**
which is part of a 17-country study completed in 1997.

Each chapter provides a summary of the situation in the country at the end of 1997
concerning generalist youth information and counselling,
and the methods and structures involved in its organisation and distribution.

This study was conducted by the **European Youth Information and Counselling Agency** (ERYICA), to which all the author organisations belong as “Member Organisations” or as “Co-operating Organisations”. Accordingly, the study is limited to those countries where in 1996-97 there existed functioning networks of generalist youth information centres and services which were co-operating with ERYICA.

The 17 chapters of this study, in separate English and French versions, can be consulted on the ERYICA Internet site (“www.eryica.org” - see the section “Documents”, then “1997 Study”). Each file, which is in Word 2.0 for Windows / PC (varying between 4 and 20 pages in length), can also be downloaded from the site.

More recent information about each ERYICA national partner, its activities and its network can also be found on the ERYICA Internet site:

- a) **current addresses of national partners**: under “Discover ERYICA”, then “Members”, then “Country”
- b) **links to Internet sites of national partners**: under “Discover SERVICES”, then “Web-sites of ERYICA Partners”
- c) (when the organisation co-ordinates a network) **links to a list of addresses of regional or local centres**: under “Discover ERYICA”, then “Members”, then “Country”.

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101 quai Branly, F-75740 Paris Cedex 15, France
E-mail: SGeryica@aol.com

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LUXEMBOURG

INTRODUCTION

In the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg, the first youth information centre was founded in 1987. In the light of the growing volume of youth information and the increasingly complex social environment, the absence of a general-purpose youth information centre made itself strongly felt. Providing comprehensive information and being available to listen to a young person when necessary were the two basic missions entrusted to the first centre, which was defined as:

- a **“welcoming” place** which collects and centralises all information likely to be of interest to young people;
- an **impartial and generalist place** to provide information to young people without them being subject to any *a priori* discrimination (stigmatisation).

Since 1990, the number of information centres has continued to increase. The centres were, from the outset, designed to address the needs of the most highly disadvantaged youth in danger of exclusion. On this account, the Ministry has pursued an ongoing policy of collaboration with the commune authorities. Certainly, social integration and civic education are best carried out within the local community and, up to a point, at regional level. Thus, responsibility for this youth education mission also lies with the local authorities, and the centres must necessarily base their approach on the needs of their specific locality.

An information centre is intended to serve as a first contact point for young people in order to facilitate their access to information. The staff must be available to listen to young people and help them better understand the complexities of the various social structures. Whenever the need arises, a rapid connection is established with the legal and social service run by the *Service National de la Jeunesse* (SNJ - National Youth Service). Should specialised counselling prove necessary, the centre puts the young person in contact with the relevant professional service.

Although the ways of establishing contact with young people are chosen in the light of local and regional particularities, all of the structures share the common aim of making social integration easier for young people. It is only natural therefore that they operate within a network structure.

The information for this text has been provided by the Centre National d'Information et d'Echanges pour Jeunes (CNIEJ):

CNIEJ
76, boulevard de la Pétrusse
L-2320 Luxembourg
☎ (352) 40.55.50
Fax: (352) 40.55.56

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Under a co-operation agreement signed by all the network members, the *Centre national d'Information et d'Echanges pour Jeunes* (CNIEJ - National Centre for Youth Information and Exchange) is responsible for co-ordinating the “information” services and also represents the network at international level. The various centres are thus able to offer information on European programmes such as “Youth for Europe” and the Youth Card. The centres are often housed on school premises and teachers seconded to the SNJ for local activities ensure a contact between the centres and schools.

There are currently 15 youth information centres. Most of these are run mainly on the lines of youth clubs, but they also act as regional or local information centres. The local and regional centres provide information and organise youth exchanges and activities.

AIMS AND PRINCIPLES

The overall aims are:

- to collect and process all information which relates to young people’s lives and may interest them;
- to distribute this information to young people and take initiatives within the centres to make this information more accessible to young people.

In compliance with the above-mentioned agreement for the creation of a youth information centre network in Luxembourg, the centres operate on the following of principles:

- *A youth information centre is defined as a centre providing young people with information in order to defend and develop their rights and responsibilities;*

- *A youth information centre ensures that it provides varied and comprehensive information on all topics;*
- *A youth information centre informs young people regardless of their social category, political or philosophical beliefs, nationality;*
- *As an information provider, a youth information centre makes sure that a high quality service is provided as regards the welcome given to young people and the ability to dialogue with and listen to them;*
- *Delivering information in a youth information centre can involve a variety of services and can address any person with any kind of interest in youth affairs. The purpose of these services is to help to give young people a free and responsible choice and the chance to exercise their autonomy;*
- *An information centre recognises the principle of complementarity and encourages youth organisations to collaborate in the information process. The centre enables private and public bodies to make themselves known to young people;*
- *In order to help young people fully play a social role and to encourage their autonomy, a youth information centre incites young people to participate actively in youth information and counselling work;*
- *A youth information centre sets itself the prime objective of seeking ways in which to help young people become active, discerning and responsible citizens, who strive for a greater well-being on both a personal and social level;*
- *A youth information centre provides young people with comprehensive*

information so that they are able to make their own “fully informed” choices.

The code of principles states that:

- *The information provided by a youth information centre is always given on the basis of the requests expressed by young people and is not dictated by needs which are independent of them;*
- *The information given always offers alternatives in response to a request;*
- *A youth information centre makes sure that the information is complete, impartial and accurate. The centre does not simply rely on the appreciation of the team member(s) involved in receiving and transmitting the information;*
- *A youth information centre ensures that the services offered encourage autonomous behaviour in young people, and avoids creating a relationship of dependence;*
- *Confidentiality and anonymity of the user are obligatory.*

GOVERNMENT POLICY

Over the last few years, youth information has been one of the political priorities for the Ministry for Youth Affairs, and a great deal of effort has been invested in implementing a national youth information policy, particularly with a view to diversifying the levels of intervention, finding the appropriate partners and ensuring co-ordination.

Making information more accessible implies above all making the information available locally near to where young people actually are. For this reason, one of the Ministry's priorities has been to develop the **network of Centres de Rencontre, d'Animation et d'Information des Jeunes** (Youth Centres for Contacts, Activities and Information)

and to institute a decentralised approach which ensures that information is available at local and regional levels. The network's mission with respect to information is co-ordinated by the *Centre National d'Information et d'Echanges pour Jeunes*. There are now 15 information centres in Luxembourg, a youth magazine “Tam-Tam”, regular youth radio programmes, etc. in order to reach young people and especially those who do not often have such easy access to information as their more privileged peers. Providing information to further personal development necessarily raises the issue of empowering young people and taking into account what they have to say. This means that information has always been closely linked to youth activities in general.

The delivery of youth information at school is being developed to a greater or lesser degree through the links that exist between the *Centres de Rencontre, d'Animation et d'Information des Jeunes* and teachers on secondment to the SNJ.

The SNJ is collaborating on several European Union youth information projects whose aims include setting up a computer-ised network in order to facilitate “Youth” information exchange between European Union member countries. As the SNJ is eager to participate in the developments offered by new technologies, it has also decided to take advantage of the Internet information highway as a means of informing young people, both nationally and internationally, about Luxembourg. These new media can be used interactively and thus offer more advantages than a one-way information service. All young people (or people of any age) can consult this information, which primarily targets youth but also addresses all voluntary workers or professionals involved in youth work. Internet technology enables connections with other servers or web pages offering information of interest to young people.

Profile of the Luxembourg Network

National Co-ordinating Body:

CNIEJ - Centre National d'Information et d'Echanges de Jeunes

Network:

- CNIEJ (national centre)
- 15 local centres

Legal Status:

All the centres (including CNIEJ) are non-profit-making associations.

Number of Information Workers Employed in Network:

25 salaried employees.

Responsible Governmental Body:

Service National de la Jeunesse (SNJ)

The SNJ, which manages a “Youth Page” on Internet, is thus working to centralise the information and transmit it to other servers when necessary, collaborating with the initiatives taken by other organisations.

The SNJ's Web “**Youth Page**” is now accessible at the following address (URL): <http://www.online.lu/snj>.

At present, the information collected is divided into four categories:

- General information on Luxembourg, useful addresses, information on the rights and duties of young people. This information is made available by the *Centre d'Information et d'Echanges pour Jeunes*;
- Information from the Ministry for Youth Affairs: its activities, youth programmes and structures of the *Service National de la Jeunesse*, and

associations, structures and organisations closely linked to the SNJ;

- Pages dedicated to national and European youth organisations, enabling them to present their structures and programmes. This information is communicated by the youth organisations themselves;
- Information on public and private-sector youth services, both at national and European levels. The services may give details on their aims, missions, opening hours, etc. This information is provided by the services concerned.

Youth organisations are another important element in delivering youth information. The *Conférence Générale de la Jeunesse Luxembourgeoise* (CGJL - General Conference of Luxembourg Youth) participates in Ministry events and committees so as to guarantee that youth organisations are kept up to date on youth policy developments. The CGJL secretariat is located at the Centre National d'Information et d'Echanges pour Jeunes, which enables easy access to all national and international information of interest to young people.

The quarterly magazine “**Youth Line**” was launched in 1994 by the SNJ. Designed to reply to queries from the heads of youth organisations, it differs from the above-mentioned actions in that it does not address young people, but rather youth workers, heads of youth organisations, anyone involved in youth work on either a voluntary or professional basis and all those who have a hand in implementing youth policy.

LEGAL STATUS AND FINANCING OF CENTRES

The centres are all independent, non-profit-making associations. Their staff have the status of private-sector employees. In local and regional centres, voluntary workers are called on to ensure youth exchange and

recreational activities. There are presently about twenty professionals working in this sector. Fifty per cent of the centres' funding is provided by the Ministry for Youth Affairs, the other half by the local authority concerned. The CNIEJ, however, is entirely funded by the Ministry for Youth Affairs.

Each year (by March 1st), the association submits the budget proposed for the forthcoming year, along with the previous year's accounts drawn up and verified by the monitoring committee, for approval by the Ministry.

In compliance with the existing convention, each centre receives advance payments for the total expenses budgeted for current financial year and approved by the Ministry: 50% is paid at the beginning of the year and 25% on August 1st. The remainder outstanding, once it has been finally approved, is paid the following year, no later than April 1st.

NATIONAL CO-ORDINATION SYSTEM

National co-ordination is ensured by several partners:

- The *Service National de la Jeunesse* co-ordinates youth information policy with all those involved in the youth sector, the information centres, youth organisations, schools, specialised centres, etc.
- The *Centre National d'Information des Jeunes* undertakes and co-ordinates nation-wide projects in collaboration with the local and regional centres.
- The association *Réseau des Centres de Rencontre, d'Animation et d'Information des Jeunes* represents the associations managing the centres. The purpose of this association is to group together the Luxembourg *Centres de Rencontre, d'Animation et d'Information des Jeunes* and defend the

centres' interests, whatever these may be.

The association's mission is primarily to:

- 1) - *ensure that a code of good practice is respected in youth information services, and that the statement of principles is implemented in the Centres de Rencontre, d'Animation et d'Information des Jeunes;*
 - *establish and, if necessary, modify the co-operation agreement which defines the internal running of the network;*
 - *establish and maintain close ties between the members;*
 - *watch over their common interests;*
 - *support them in their dealings with the public authorities and third parties;*
 - *intervene in any dispute that may occur between the members themselves or between the member and the public authorities or third parties, in order to obtain an amiable settlement.*
- 2) *represent the members within the representative body for the youth centres and services, with the aim of reaching agreements with the public authorities and collective agreements with the personnel.*
- 3) *take position and make co-ordinated statements on all issues concerning the assignments and functioning of the Centres de Rencontre, d'Animation et d'Information des Jeunes, as defined in the above-mentioned co-operation agreement.* (extracts from the
Articles of Association) of

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN GOVERNMENT AND YOUTH INFORMATION SERVICES

The contract (convention) signed by the three partners (the association responsible for the centre, the commune and the Ministry for Youth Affairs) provides for a

7-member monitoring committee comprising:

- 2 representatives from the commune
- 2 representatives from the Ministry for Youth Affairs
- 1 representative from the Ministry of Finance
- 2 representatives of the association

The mandate of the President of the Monitoring Committee will alternate between a representative from the Ministry for Youth Affairs and a representative from the commune, whilst a youth worker from the centre will be in charge of the committee's secretariat. The first President will be elected by drawing lots.

Article 9: The Monitoring Committee has the mission of:

- ensuring and promoting consultation and co-operation between those parties concerned by the centre's activities;
- communicating an annual plan, submitted by the association managing the centre, covering the projects and programmes to be implemented;
- approving the following financial year's budget for the programme that has been adopted;
- verifying the annual income and expense accounts;
- dealing with problems that are likely to adversely affect the centre's functioning and, more specifically, arbitrating in any disputes arising between the parties.

Article 10: The members of the Monitoring Committee are appointed for the term of this convention.

Article 11: The Monitoring Committee is convened on the initiative of the President or at the request of four of its members, and at least twice a year.

Article 12: The decisions of the Monitoring Committee are taken by a majority vote, and at least four members representing

each of the four parties must be present at the vote. Should voting be equal, the President has the deciding vote.

(extracts from the Convention)

Each centre - managed by a local association in close collaboration with the local authority (and the Ministry) - is responsible for ensuring that young people's needs at local level are optimally taken into account. Furthermore, to avoid any centre becoming isolated and to ensure a coherent line for the centres' educational work, the development of the centres has always been based on a network approach. The network has become an important partner of the SNJ for reaching young people whose social background makes their social integration particularly difficult.

As provided for in the conventions signed with the Ministry for Youth Affairs, the SNJ attends the meetings between the member centres, above all, to keep up to date on the centres' educational work. Regular meetings with youth workers from the centres allow the SNJ to keep in touch with the centres' needs.

As centres cannot be set up in all of the communes, it is important to develop actions at regional level in order to assist the smaller ones, to keep abreast of the needs of young people in rural areas and to find new relays to render youth information more accessible.

CURRENT DEVELOPMENTS

Information services should thus be developed quite considerably over the forthcoming years, co-ordination being ensured by the *Service National de la Jeunesse*. The centres need to develop into resource centres supplying all partners working in favour of:

- young people, first and foremost
- but also youth associations

- associations working in favour of young people, parent associations, etc.
- communes, youth committees
- schools and teachers.

For some centres, which have concentrated more on developing services such as recreational activities and encounters for youth, this will mean highlighting their specific role of information providers so as to attract a wider public than at present.

To this end, various actions have been carried out or are under way:

- training for counsellors on the “Youth for Europe” programme, in co-operation with the Programme’s national agencies
- training in the use of Internet-related information technologies
- overhaul of the centres’ equipment to enable young people to consult Internet for highly specific information
- creation of a mobile information centre, “Info-Bus” by the SNJ and the CNIEJ.

All the centres will be called on to collaborate at the regional level.

TYPICAL SERVICES PROVIDED BY CENTRES

The information centres provide information mainly on the following subjects:

- leisure, language-study holidays, adventure holidays
- education, higher education, study abroad, foreign-language courses
- work, working holidays, training courses
- work life and social life
- student and trainee accommodation
- “Youth for Europe” programme
- *au-pair* work
- Youth Card

Other services offered by the centres:

- sale of Youth Card
- occasional sale of concert and disco tickets
- sale of practical guides
- advice on and enrolment for language-study holidays and *au-pair* work, and helping young people prepare their stays
- enrolment for UCPA holidays
- organisation of adventure, cultural or sports holidays abroad
- legal information and advice.

In the local and regional centres, emphasis is placed on counselling: young people become regular users and a relationship of trust can thus be built up between them and the staff. At the National Centre, more importance is given to providing information, although counselling services also exist.

Generally speaking, all information is given free of charge. Only certain publications and the Youth Card are for sale.

COLLECTING INFORMATION

Information is collected in different ways through:

- requests (periodically renewed) for information sent by either the National Centre or a local centre to associations and institutions that provide information on one or more subjects;
- information sent by the associations and institutions themselves;
- information taken from the daily press.

Information is selected on the basis of the requests expressed by young people. Following a high demand for information on a given topic, the centres seek to provide as much concrete information as possible relating to that demand.

Subjects of Frequent Enquiry

- 1) **Youth Card and Youth Cinema Card:** information and sales
- 2) **UCPA:** information and enrolment
- 3) **Holidays, leisure, sports, transport:** sports training, adventure holidays, sports clubs and cultural associations
- 4) **Youth Information Centre:** information on the Youth Information Centre and its activities and products, newsletter, Info-Magazine, Vakanz-Brochür, ERYICA guides
- 5) **Language-study holidays:** Au-pair, school year abroad, stays in families
- 6) **Housing in Luxembourg:** students and trainees looking for accommodation
- 7) **Working holidays:** search for working holidays, student work
- 8) **Daily life:** health, social life, young people's rights, grants and subsidies, hire of premises
- 9) **Foreign countries:** accommodation, information, addresses
- 10) **Studies and work:** technical, secondary, university studies, job hunting, professions
- 11) **European programmes:** information, technical help
- 12) **Concerts:** information, point-of-sales addresses
- 13) **In-service training:** evening classes, language lessons

DISTRIBUTING INFORMATION

The distribution of information is ensured by:

- young people's visits to the centres;

- the publication of practical guides and various manuals;
- the centres' participation in fairs, school fêtes and other events;
- the publication of a quarterly magazine;
- a radio programme;
- the preparation of special-subject files.

ASSESSING THE INFORMATION NEEDS OF YOUNG PEOPLE

The last in-depth survey on the situation of young people in Luxembourg dates back to 1985, at the time when the first youth information centre was set up. Several findings emerged concerning who young people chose to consult in various situations:

Parents and peer groups are preferred when it comes to talking about specific problems; other adults are rarely consulted.

For problems at school, parents are usually solicited (57% of young people) and for problems with friends, peer groups are most often chosen (60% of young people). When it comes to "drugs" and "sexuality", parents and peers are consulted on an equal basis.

Within the peer group, the young person solicits school friends and friends in general in case of problems. A friend encountered in a club is only consulted by 4.6% and 1.8% of young people, depending on the problem.

In the "other adults" category, guidance services are most often used: 4% of young people seek their support for school- or drug-related problems, 3% for sex-related problems and 1% for problems of relationships with friends.

The peer group and parents are thus solicited the most when young people have problems in different areas, whereas the other adults are only rarely consulted for help in solving problems. One noteworthy

Specialised youth information services

*In addition to the **generalist** youth information services described here, young people in Luxembourg have access to **specialised** information services in the following fields:*

a) Educational Guidance

Centre de Psychologie et d'Orientation Scolaire (Centre of Psychology and Educational Guidance)

280, route de Longwy

L - 1940 Luxembourg

☎ (352) 45.64.64 - 609

b) Vocational Guidance

Berufs-Informationen-Zentrum (BIZ- Career Information Centre)

10, rue Bender

L - 1229 Luxembourg

☎ (352) 478.53.00

c) Sexuality

Planning Familial

18-20, rue Glesener

L - 1630 Luxembourg

☎ (352) 48.59.76

d) Drug Addiction

Jugend-an Drogenhëllef (Drug-abusers support service)

25, rue du Fort Wedell

L - 2718 Luxembourg

☎ (352) 49.10.40

observation is that the parents' ranking is most often due to the fact that the mother is the person a young person prefers to talk to. There is, in fact, a marked difference between the position of the two parents.

In all other areas, the mother ranks first. 4 out of 10 young people prefer to speak to their mother when they have sexual or school-related problems, and 3 out of 10 do so for drug-related problems or relational problems with friends.

The father is consulted less often about problems. Whilst he is more solicited for school- and drug-related problems, his support is less solicited for relational problems with friends and sexual problems (9% and 6% respectively).

The Ministry for Youth Affairs, in collaboration with the *Institut Supérieur d'Etudes et de Recherches Pédagogiques* (Higher Institute of Educational Studies and Research), has just started to prepare a larger-scale research project on the situation of young people in Luxembourg.

A number of subjects (see previous page) have been identified as frequently recurring in young people's enquiries. A statistics record form is used to keep track of the users and their requests.

CO-OPERATION WITH OTHER SERVICES

In some cases, the centre refers users to other services. If a specialised service exists in a given field, the centre provides only first-level information. For more detailed information, the user is referred to the appropriate service as, for example, in the case of educational guidance, career guidance, drug abuse and AIDS.

HOW PLURALISM AND QUALITY ARE GUARANTEED?

Pluralism is first guaranteed by the existence of the network of centres. The fact that the centres have the status of autonomous non-profit-making associations and are closely linked to the local community by their agreements with the commune (see above) means that as a priority the centres must respond to the specific needs of the young people in their region. On the other hand, in the convention which they sign with the Ministry for Youth Affairs, they undertake to abide by the rules and principles of the European Charter. During the training courses given

to the staff of the centres, the issues raised by the application of the Charter to their daily work are addressed.

The quality of the information provided is discussed during the preparation of the annual work plans, as well as during the evaluations at the end of the year made by the control commissions which involve all the parties to the convention.

EUROPEAN DIMENSION

The Luxembourg network co-operates with several European networks, especially via the *Centre National d'Information et d'Echange de Jeunes* which is responsible for representing the network at the European level:

- ERYICA
- Eurodesk
- Youth Cards
- National Agency for the Youth for Europe and the European Voluntary Service programmes.

This integration of national and European services facilitates rapid access and effective assistance for a young person who has an activity or project involving mobility. On the other hand, it is the personalised reception that a youth information centre offers to young people which enables these European services and networks to be in direct contact with young people.

This collaboration with the European networks is also a practical tool, providing useful opportunities for youth organisations which seek to work at the European level. In this way, the youth information centres also become partners for youth organisations.