

CUBE – Educational tool

Presentation of the tool for teachers and educational teams

Within the framework of the European project “Stay@School”, the working group¹ coordinated by Inforef proposes a tool addressed to teachers in order to help them identify and prevent behaviours and situations that can lead to early school leaving.

This document explains the aims of the tool and guides the teacher when using it in class. It can also be used by other members of the school staff (educators, headmasters ...).

Why a Cube?

The playful shape of the Cube makes it possible to view the 6 sides through a simple rotation with one’s hands and to use it like a dice. Its colours, in reference to the Rubik’s cube, arouse curiosity. Each side includes a catch phrase, which is the real testimony of a student who dropped out, and a QR code that can be scanned by a Smartphone or a tablet (using a specific application, downloadable for free) that directs to a video. The videos are all gathered on a same blog created for the project.

Aims:

1. To help identify risk factors of early school leaving.
2. To prompt reflection, ease discussions and seek solutions.
3. To catch students’ attention, ease debate in class and help students talk and share ideas on a difficult topic.

What is there behind the Cube?

Following a reflection and consultation work on the various causes of early school leaving, the working group selected risk factors, the most common of which have been organised in 6 categories corresponding to the issues young people are often confronted to:

1. **Difficult integration into school**
2. **Problems related to the course of studies**
3. **Learning difficulties**
4. **School violence**
5. **Family background**
6. **Personal problems**

¹ The working group is made up of various actors of the education sector in the *Fédération Wallonie-Bruxelles* (French-speaking Community of Belgium): teachers, headmasters, educators, school mediators, psychologists, social workers, Ministry of Education...

These categories are not mentioned or visible (on the cube or blog) but can support teachers. Each is represented by a side of the cube. Thus, the first thing that catches their attention is a sentence or an image evoking a cause of early school leaving. In this way, students are free to think by themselves on the risk factor illustrated by each side and on the whole problem.

The quotes are real testimonies of students who have dropped out of school, gathered during the projects “School Inclusion” (<http://schoolinclusion.pixel-online.org/>) and “I Am not scared” (<http://iamnotscared.pixel-online.org/>). The QR codes of each side are all different as they direct to a video that aims to bring a solution to the situation of school leaving addressed: a positive example, a message inviting to identify oneself and to seek a solution.

Selections of the videos

The videos have been carefully selected by the working group according to the following criteria:

- relevance of the subject regarding the situation illustrated by the sentence/image;
- neutrality (no propaganda or too typical cultural specificities);
- language;
- capability to draw young people’s attention;
- length.

Creation of a blog

All the videos are gathered on a blog created by Inforef and accessible on the following address: <http://inforef.be/projets/stayatschool/>.

Users who do not have a smartphone or a tablet can work directly on the blog, where all the elements of the tool can be found: the pattern of the Cube, the testimonies, the videos, discussion spaces and this guide.

Thus, the blog can extend the chances to use the tool, in class or outside school.

The six categories in detail:

1. Difficult school integration

It can concern a new student or an immigrant who is not used to his/her new cultural environment.

- **Sentence:** “I came from another country. I was hearing remarks about my origin and received indifference.” (Tassos, 19)
- **Video:** the video introduces a program to help immigrant students catch up, for instance because they do not master the language. (2’51)

2. Problems related to the course of studies

This can concern any student who fails because they have chosen a course of studies that does not suit them or which was inadequately guided (for instance, the case of a student who studies sciences while he should be in a technical section).

- **Sentence:** “I do not understand the lessons, nor do I try to. I want to become an electrician-mechanic and the school does not provide such knowledge to me.” (Tom, 14)
- **Video:** presentation of a vocational rehabilitation service in which students are trained to jobs they are really interested in. (5’41)

3. Learning difficulties

Students who learn more slowly than others or need particular attention. Students with learning disabilities (e.g. dyslexia, dysphasia, dyscalculia...) are also concerned.

- **Sentence:** “I found it hard to understand my lessons and no one helped me” (Tassos, 19)
- **Video:** an inspirational video for students with disabilities, aiming to convince them they are not stupid. (1’28)

4. School violence

Violence and bullying can be physical, emotional or be inflicted through ICT (cyber bullying)

- **Sentence:** “The others always mocked me. I got used to it but nothing has changed” (Mathieu, 14)
- **Video:** interview of students giving their opinion of various aspects of bullying (its causes and effects, how to react...). (3’21)

5. Family background

Family related factors that influence the student’s success or failure (parents who are not able to help their children do their homework, students who have little time to study because they have to look after their younger brothers and sisters, whose parents are in a difficult financial situation...).

- **Sentence:** “It’s hard to study at home and I have no one to help me” (Tom, 14 years old)
- **Video:** the video features a girl who needs help for her homework while her mother is busy, and who is disturbed by her little brother.

6. Personal problems

They can be related to physical or mental health, various kinds of addiction (drugs, alcohol, video games...).

- **Sentence:** image with the sentence “Why don’t you go to school anymore?”
- **Video:** features a young boy who spends hours playing video games and eventually drops out of school.

Assembling the cube

1. Download and printing.

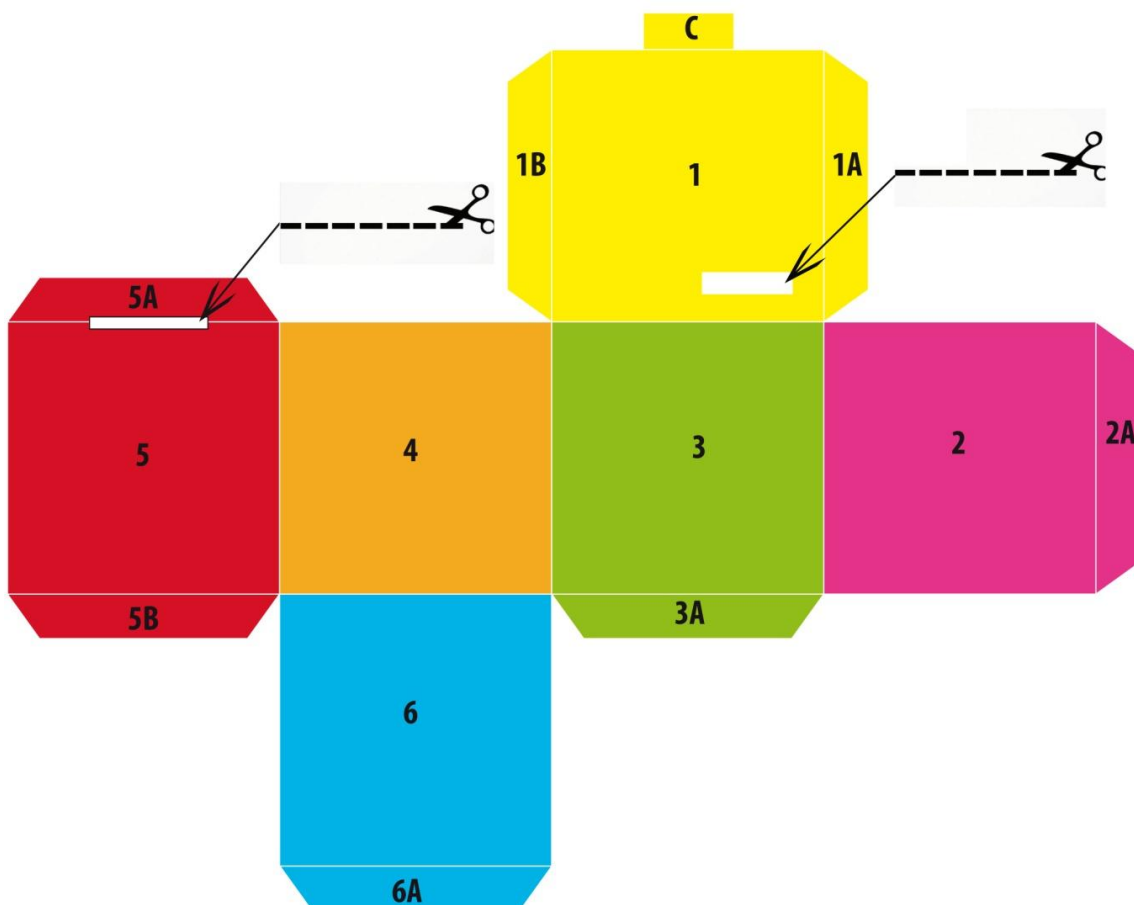
The pattern can be downloaded on the blog <http://inforef.be/projets/stayatschool/> and printed in colour. Paper to be used preferably: A3 format, cardboard.

2. Assembling the cube

You will need adhesive tapes or glue, a ruler, a pair of scissors and a box cutter.

- Cut out the pattern.
- Slice the two white openings on the yellow and red sides (see the diagram below).
- Fold the edges (A and B) and the sides.
- Assemble the sides and paste them one after the other.
- To close the Cube, insert the tab C in the opening on the red side.

The Cube is ready to be used.



Ideas for use

You can start the activity in two ways: either throw it like a dice and read the top side or handle it and choose a side.

The next steps could be as follows: read sentence/look at image, scan QR code, watch video, launch the activity:

- Ask questions such as: what's the matter, what's the message, what does the teenager says with his testimony, what cause can be inferred, could it happen to you, what would you do in their place, what is the video about, is it related to the sentence, does it offer a positive message, which one, does it offer a solution to the problem, what solution can you imagine?...
- Motivate the children who do not wish to participate in the dialogue in the class to put a note in the cube through the opening (side 1), leaving them the possibility to remain anonymous; the purpose is to raise their motivation to participate and interact and to assist them in their questioning.
- Suggest to the students they interact on the blog, together in the class or individually at home while staying anonymous if they wish. Note that, in order to avoid misconducts and stick to the subject, the comments will have to be validated by Inforef to be viewed on the blog.

The students' reactions and the discussions that emerge (in class, on the blog...) will help the teacher spot more easily students at risk, for instance when a student identifies him/herself to the situation displayed.

Using the blog

The blog can be found at the address <http://inforef.be/projets/stayatschool/>

In the menu banner you will find the following sections: Home, About, Teachers, Students. The pages are available in two languages: English and French.

- **On the "Home" page** are listed all the catchphrases – students' quotes and the related video. Clicking on the quote that interests you, a new page opens with the sentence, the video and a field to leave a comment.
- **On the "About" page** is a short introduction to the educational tool (Cube)
- **On the "Teachers" page** is a download area including:
 - the pattern in two versions: a PDF version and a customisable Word version;
 - the presentation of the tool for teachers and educational teams.
- **On the "Students" page** is a download area including:
 - the pattern in PDF format;

- ideas on how to use it addressed to students. These are written in a simple, accessible and playful way.

Tool transferability

The working group wishes any user be able to make the tool their own and improve it.

In the framework of the Stay@School project

Teachers of the partner countries have the possibility to search videos in their national language and to join a QR code they can create by themselves. Likewise, anyone can adapt the sentences according to their context. For this purpose, a Word version of the pattern is also downloadable on the blog.

To create your own QR codes, please follow these steps:

1. Choose the video that suits you best in your language (use YouTube, Dailymotion, Google...)
2. Create the related QR code:
 - Copy the address of the page on which is the video.
 - Go to the website <http://generator.code-qr.net/>
 - Paste the address of the page in the writing field entitled "URL" on the home page of this site.
 - Change the size (Size 3).
 - Click on the button "Generate" and your QR code will appear in the frame on the upper right side of the page.
 - Click on "download PNG" and save the file on your computer.
3. Edit the pattern:
 - Go to the blog created by Inforef.
 - Open the "Teachers" page and download the pattern in Word format.
 - Edit the quotes if you wish.
 - Paste on each side the QR codes you created and give it an appropriate size. Note that the code needs to have 2 cm sides to be readable.
 - Print the pattern, preferably in A3 format. The cube is ready to be used.

(Note: this is not the only QR code generator)

For other users

To be used by external services (reschooling services, youth aid, social services...), users can draw inspiration from the ideas given to teachers and adapt them to their own situation.

The tool can also be used by any person concerned by education (parents, future teachers, youth organisations...).