



# LES PROMENEURS DU NET FACT SHEET 8

Youth professionals who provide an online presence to young people



## PRESENTATION

The **Promeneurs du Net** program is a national educational program established in 2012. It is aimed at **young people aged 12 to 25** and is supported by the social action of the Caf (French Association of Family Allowances). Net Walkers (PDN) are **youth professionals** who provide an online presence to young people, maintaining a **listening, prevention, and support** function.

They are active on various online platforms such as **social media**, where they provide on-call time slots, in addition to their physical missions within social centers, **youth centers**, youth workers' centers, **digital spaces**, and local missions. They are educators, facilitators, integration advisors, or digital mediators and come from different **structures in the educational, socio-cultural, medico-social, animation or mediation sectors**.



## LES PROMENEURS DU NET

### IN A FEW WORDS

- National educational project to support young people
- Educational presence online
- Implemented in 2012

### IN A FEW NUMBERS

Activities in **97** departments across France

**2,930** Internet Walkers (2022)

**5** national partners

**“Joining the Net Walkers really allowed me to facilitate my interactions with young people. [...] It’s where we connect with them much more easily, where we clearly share all the information we can give them.”**

**Sabrina, Net Walker, Rouen**

Certain **practices** are developed by support workers to target the **needs of their audiences**.

The use of **analytical tools** such as Google Trends makes it possible to identify young people's concerns using keywords, with insights by age group and geographic area.

PDNs position themselves on trendy **platforms popular** with young people, such as Snapchat, Instagram, TikTok, and Discord. The latter allows them to **create spaces** based on communities (servers) that contain several themed chat rooms. These include chat rooms dedicated to local life, for example.

This gives PDNs the opportunity to interact with young people through these channels, and they may be required to occupy several channels, for the various types of young people they support. Thus, PDNs **adapt** their interventions according to their **personal interests**.

Similarly, on Twitter, thanks to the hashtag system and the search function, it is possible to retrieve young people's questions. The Tweet Deck platform also allows for **monitoring** of the app, using a keyword system to find **specific questions** (jobs, housing, issues, etc.). The PDNs then interact directly with them on their posts to answer their questions.

Sometimes, they are required to **adapt their online hours based on the youth's availability**, such as in the evenings after school.

## OBSTACLES AND SOLUTIONS

It's clear that **youth professionals**, such as educators and activity leaders, are already **well established in physical spaces** frequented by young people (schools, community centers, streets, etc.). However, a major challenge remains: their presence in the **digital space** remains insufficient, even though young people spend a large portion of their time online.

To address this issue, the Net Walkers program allows professionals to **extend their physical outreach to social media**, thus promoting continuity in supporting young people.

## PARTNERSHIPS AND COLLABORATION

The project has a national scope and an educational and prevention focus, and is supported by **five major national stakeholders**:

- Family Allowances
- Ministry of Urban Affairs, Youth and Sports
- Ministry of Families, Children and Women's Rights
- Internal Security Fund
- Agricultural Social Security Fund

**"I see myself as a kind of a "Pascal le grand frère". These young people live in isolated places, are with their families all the time, and don't know where to turn... So many confide in me on social media."**

**Valentin Chaves, youth worker  
at the Grandvilliers social center in Oise.**

## RESULTS AND IMPACT

As part of their online presence, the Net Walkers engage with young people at various levels, depending on their professional mission:

- Information regarding the organization (schedules, activities, etc.) and local events;
- Thematic information (school guidance, health, prevention, cyberbullying, etc.);
- Support in implementing projects and monitoring individual progress

The Net Walkers are required to **answer questions from the young people** they support and to **monitor**—with compassion—**their published content**. Social media allows them to share information about organized events or promote local assistance.

## LESSONS LEARNED AND ADVICE

The Net Walkers' approach is based on a **methodology centered on trust and dialogue**. One of the key lessons learned from this initiative is the importance for professionals to be clearly identified on social media. By displaying their **professional status** and adhering to a national charter, they offer young people a reassuring and structured environment.

Another key factor is the **confidentiality of exchanges**. To establish a lasting and secure relationship, Net Walkers must adhere to strict ethical principles, thus ensuring a **supportive and supportive environment**.

Because this system is primarily based on **human relationships**, professionals integrate the young people they support into their online network by becoming "friends," allowing them to interact easily. This approach fosters a bond of trust, while maintaining a **clear professional framework** and ensuring compliance with the commitments defined by the national charter.

**"Our department is a pioneer in the development of this system. Various authorities and administrations have been jointly investing in this method for several years now..."**

Hugo DIMSTER, NET Walkers coordinator for the Pas de Calais (62) department.



**"We run our network of Internet walkers through monthly group sessions to train and inform about digital developments and raise awareness of best practices in this unique mission, particularly in its regulatory aspects."**



**Want to know more?**

[www.promeneursdunet.fr](http://www.promeneursdunet.fr)