

**www.thebulletin.be**Date: **25-03-2020**Periodicity: **Continuous**

Journalist: -

Circulation: **0**Audience: **9468**<https://www.thebulletin.be/campaign-launched-get-laptops-lower-income-pupils>**Campaign launched to get laptops to lower-income pupils**

Education

19:53 25/03/2020

From Flanders Today

Flemish education minister Ben Weyts and Brussels minister for Dutch-language education Sven Gatz are co-operating with Digital for Youth to provide previously loved laptops to secondary school students who do not have one at home. The initiative has been launched in response to schools being closed as part of the coronavirus measures.

Weyts is providing enough funding to get 2,000 laptops in the hands of pupils in Flanders, while Gatz is providing 1,000 laptops to Dutch-speaking schools in Brussels. Digital for Youth has itself invested enough to provide 1,000 laptops.

It's a great start, but it's not enough, so organisers are calling on businesses to donate fairly recent laptop computers they no longer need. Direct donations can also be made by companies or individuals.

"In corona times, we need to get everyone connected," says Weyts. "We want to absolutely ensure that our most vulnerable youth don't fall behind because they don't have a computer to do schoolwork from home. We are calling on all companies and citizens to get behind this project."

Many teachers are providing distance learning options while schools are closed, but not every pupil can take part in this because they don't have a computer at home. "The corona crisis could go on for a few more weeks," says Weyts. "We need to support this effort for the pupils in vulnerable socio-economic households so they don't end up with learning deficits."

[Digital for Youth](#) is a project of DNS Belgium, which distributes domain names, and Close the Gap, a Brussels-based organisation that provides pre-owned computers to educational, medical and social projects around the world.

"DNS Belgium and Close the Gap have been partners for over 10 years," explains Phillip Du Bois, general manager of DNS. "Last year, we established DigitalForYouth.be, where we focus on the Belgian market to help youngsters to be included digitally. In these times of crisis, we decided to go the extra mile, given the fact that many young people do not have a laptop to do school work from home. They need help, and they need it soon."

So Digital for Youth has launched a call for laptops as well as a crowdfunding campaign. "We decided to invest €100,000 to give this project a boost, and thereby kick-off two new initiatives," says Du Bois. "First is a B2B campaign reaching out to companies, asking to donate used but recent laptops.



The second is a crowdfunding campaign, aiming to collect more donations to empower this initiative.”

A pick-up service is available for groups of 30 or more working laptops. Monetary donations can be made to BE10 0000 0000 0404 with the notation “L83229: Digital4Youth”. Donations of €40 and higher are tax deductible.

“A computer at home is an indispensable educational tool,” says Weyts. “Students who stay home cannot be cut off from the rest of the class – or from the rest of the world.”

*Photo ©PeopleImages/Getty Image*