



## Engaging Youth and Communities

Promoting the recognition of Mobile Youth Centre initiatives

## Mobile Youth Work

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This publication was developed by the Mobile Youth Work project team, a collaboration between Roter Baum Berlin (Germany), Curba de Cultură (Romania), Strauss APS (Italy), and Le Fagotin (Belgium).

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MOBILE  
YOUTH  
WORK

# index

<b>01</b>	<b>INTRODUCTION</b> .....	<b>06</b>
1.1	About the Project	
1.2	Partner Network	
<b>02</b>	<b>WHAT IS MOBILE YOUTH CENTRE WORK?</b> .....	<b>12</b>
<b>03</b>	<b>YOUTH WORKERS FOR MOBILE YOUTH WORK</b> .....	<b>18</b>
3.1	Profile	
3.2	The Logistician and the Host	
3.3	Core Competencies for Mobile Youth Workers	
<b>04</b>	<b>A PRACTICAL GUIDE TO STRUCTURE AND SETUP</b> .....	<b>28</b>
4.1	What Structure Do We Need for a Mobile Youth Centre?	
4.2	Modifications and Extensions. Functional Enhancements	
4.3	Load Securing. An Essential Aspect	
4.4	Equipment. Flexible and Appealing to the Target Group	
<b>05</b>	<b>OPERATING MOBILE YOUTH CENTRES</b> .....	<b>38</b>
<b>06</b>	<b>MOBILE YOUTH CENTRES' SERVICES</b> .....	<b>42</b>
<b>07</b>	<b>FUNDING AND SUPPORT</b> .....	<b>46</b>
<b>08</b>	<b>ACTIVITIES AND PROGRAMS</b> .....	<b>50</b>
8.1	Organising a Mobile Activity	
8.2	Learning Objectives	
<b>09</b>	<b>ETHICS IN MOBILE YOUTH WORK</b> .....	<b>56</b>
9.1	A code of conduct in Mobile Youth Work	
9.2	Ethical and professional principles	
<b>10</b>	<b>DREAM MOBILE YOUTH CENTRE</b> .....	<b>62</b>
<b>11</b>	<b>LESSONS LEARNED</b> .....	<b>68</b>
<b>12</b>	<b>BENEFITS OF SUPPORTING MOBILE YOUTH WORK</b> .....	<b>72</b>

Credits



# 1

## Introduction

“Mobile youth work becomes effective when mobility is combined with continuity, participation with real responsibility, and visibility with strong community anchoring. The lessons learned are not abstract, they are grounded in kilometres driven, villages reached, young people involved and concrete educational processes sustained over time”.

Mobile Youth Work - Project Team

## 1.1

# Introduction

## About the project

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**Mobile Youth Work - Engaging Youth and Communities** is an international project launched in 2024 that explores mobile youth work as an innovative approach to expanding youth engagement and services beyond traditional settings.

The initiative is a collaboration between four experienced organisations: **Roter Baum Berlin** (Berlin, Germany), **Curba de Cultura** (Izvoarele, Romania), **Strauss APS** (Mussomeli, Italy), and **Le Fagotin asbl** (Stoumont, Belgium).

The project aims to **enhance the quality of mobile youth work** by exploring its diverse dimensions and developing tools and resources for youth workers, policymakers, and decision-makers. It provides a comprehensive framework addressing the **physical, organisational, pedagogical, and practical aspects of mobile youth work**, with a particular focus on innovative mobile youth centre initiatives.

This publication is the result of a **collaborative process** and aims to make the collected knowledge accessible to youth workers, organisations and policy makers across Europe.

The project “Mobile Youth Work - Engaging Youth and Communities. Promoting the recognition of Mobile Youth Centre initiatives” is co-funded by the European Union (Project No. 2024-1-DE04-KA220-YOU-000245905).

**For more information:**

*youthcentres.eu*

# Introduction

## About the project

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The project raises awareness about mobile youth work and encourages dialogue by incorporating **the perspectives of both young people and youth workers**.

Information and insights were collected using specific questionnaires sent to youth workers and organisations, as well as through a youth exchange held in Berlin. The project also collected examples of successful practices and explored effective models of mobile youth centres. It also analysed young people's expectations alongside empirical and scientific research.

**This process contributed to a deeper understanding of mobile youth work, its methods, tools, meanings, and variations in different contexts.**

The project was supported by **four Transnational Project Meetings** held in Germany, Italy, Romania and Belgium. These meetings enabled partners to collaboratively work on the **definition of mobile youth work**, analyse the **profile of youth workers** operating in mobile settings, and synthesise the results into **practical guidance for policymakers**.

# Introduction

## About the project

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### Project timeline

The two-year project progressed through several key phases, outlined below.



#### 2024

- Start up meeting in Mussomeli, Italy
- Survey: “Mobile Youth Centres and Activities in Europe”  
Analysis of the profile of mobile youth centres in Europe  
Mapping of typical activities in mobile youth work
- Development of a “Mobile Youth Work - Database”
- Collection of best practices



#### 2025

- 1st intermediate meeting in Stoumont, Belgium  
“Dream Mobile Youth Centre - Concept development”
- Youth Exchange in Berlin, Germany  
“Dream Mobile Youth Centre, from the perspective of young people”
- 2nd intermediate meeting in Izvoarele, Romania  
“Policy recommendations”



#### 2026

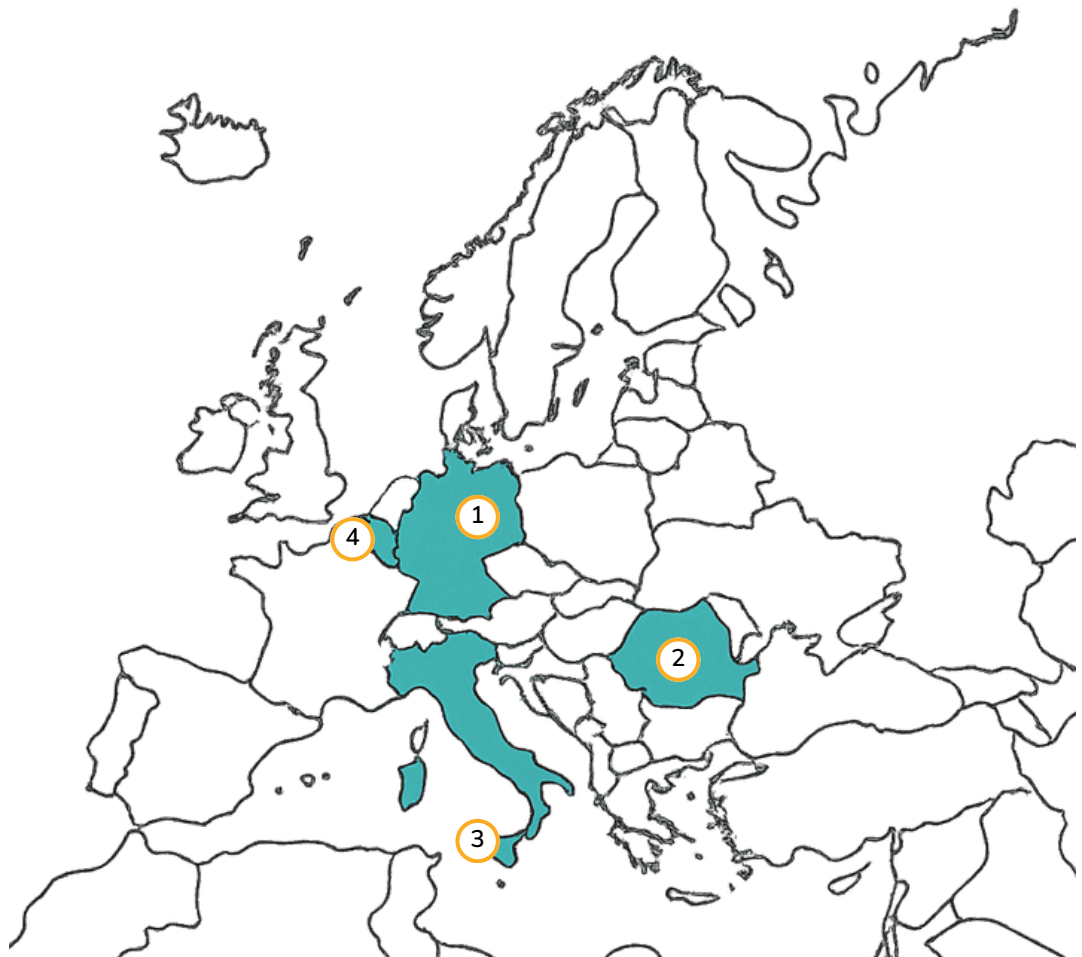
- Final meeting in Berlin, Germany
- Final event of the project in each country

# 1.2

## Introduction Partner Network

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- ① Roter Baum Berlin (Berlin, Germany)
- ② Curba de Cultură (Izvoarele, Romania)
- ③ Strauss APS (Mussomeli, Italy)
- ④ Le Fagotin (Stoumont, Belgium)



# Introduction

## Partner Network

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### **Roter Baum Berlin (Berlin, Germany)**

Roter Baum Berlin UG is the Berlin branch of Roter Baum e.V., a non-governmental organisation active in youth work since 1993. Committed to making its services accessible to all young people, Roter Baum Berlin coordinates the network's projects in Berlin, with a particular focus on the Marzahn-Hellersdorf district. These include Erasmus+ and ESC programmes, open and mobile youth work initiatives, school-based social work, cultural and social activities, and youth camps aimed at directly engaging and supporting young people with fewer opportunities.

### **Curba de Cultură (Izvoarele, Romania)**

Curba de Cultură is an NGO committed to non-formal learning, culture and participation opportunities. The aim of Curba de Cultură is to improve education levels and community engagement for the young people living in rural environments in Romania, revitalising it by the engagement of youth. Curba de Cultură focuses on teenage and youth development, using non-formal education as a complementary method to the formal educational system for young people.

### **Strauss APS (Mussomeli, Italy)**

Strauss APS is a non-profit organisation founded in Mussomeli in 1999 and part of ARCI (Associazione Ricreativa Culturale Italiana), a national network promoting cultural and educational initiatives. Strauss APS is recognised as one of the most active NGOs in Europe in the field of European youth mobility and has been active in the field of European projects since 2002.

### **Le Fagotin (Stoumont, Belgium)**

Le Fagotin, based in Stoumont since 1995 in the heart of the Parc Naturel des Sources, is a rural environmental education centre open to everyone, with a particular focus on young people. It operates across three complementary areas: accommodation, offering a welcoming space that encourages encounters and exploration; activities, including nature workshops, walks, donkey rides and an educational farm, along with events designed to spark curiosity, stimulate critical thinking, and promote civic engagement and self-empowerment; and educational stays, such as school trips, international projects and training courses led by a team of passionate facilitators, providing a learning experience deeply connected to the natural world. Le Fagotin is much more than just a place: it is a space for discovery and knowledge sharing, where every shared moment becomes an opportunity to experience, explore and learn together.



## 2

### What is Mobile Youth Centre Work?

This chapter introduces the concept of Mobile Youth Centre Work, outlining its purpose, core values and guiding principles. It explains how Mobile Youth Centres operate as inclusive, free and educational tools designed to reach young people where traditional services cannot. The chapter highlights the social, educational, and preventive role of Mobile Youth Work, its impact on youth wellbeing and community development, and the reasons why it represents a sustainable and effective response to contemporary challenges faced by young people.

## 2

## What is Mobile Youth Centre Work?

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A Mobile Youth Centre is a tool used by youth workers to provide youth services to young people “**where they are**”. Its main purpose is to reach young people in hard-to-reach or scattered areas, empowering and providing them with learning opportunities towards personal growth through guided socialising and non-formal and/or informal activities.

**Mobile Youth Work should be:**

### Universal

Mobile Youth Centres have to be accessible to all young people. Independently from their physical and mental resources and barriers, they are able to use the offers of Mobile Youth Centres. Everyone has the right and deserves to be guided in education and growth. Both staff and facility must be prepared and ready to react in all circumstances.

### Free

Mobile Youth Centres should not cost young people any money. They can use it without any obligations or condition of reciprocity. In that way all young people can be reached.

### Educational

Young people can learn from each other or from youth workers. They learn both in given frames and outside of them. Mobile Youth Centres are the way to connect all of this. They provide experiences and activities that help young people develop new skills, support their transition to adulthood and contribute to their personal growth.

### Sustainable

According to its educational role, Mobile Youth Centres have to be an example in sustainability. Showing off some innovative solutions for a sustainable environment is essential, even if perfection is not always achieved.

## What is Mobile Youth Centre Work?

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### Welcoming

Young people feel that it is okay to “open the door” and step in. They feel taken seriously and can freely express their problems. Young people are using their leisure time to do constructive things / activities in the youth centre. The building and the staff behaviour are welcoming to / for young people. In this way, young people and youth workers can work together to overcome all kinds of problems.

### Safe

Young people are protected from any harm by trained professionals. Mobile Youth Centres provide a space where young people can experiment, associate, meet peers and grow as individuals in a positive and supportive environment. The Mobile Youth Centre approach, together with community interventions, helps ensure the safety of youth workers, staff, and young people.

### Social learning

Young people learn about each other and how to behave with others based on the situation. They learn about group interactions, cooperation and culture, to adapt their speech to different life situations and to different people.

### Mindful of the environment

Mobile Youth Centres are designed for a specific territory. For example, the shape and structure are relevant for answering to the local/regional geography. Since the goal is to reach the young people where they are, they must be designed that way.

### Mindful of the community

A Mobile Youth Centre is a temporary presence in an already established community. The staff should be mindful of community practices, (unspoken) rules and values and act accordingly. Ideally the Mobile Youth Centre will operate with the support of the community’s leaders, formal or informal.

## What is Mobile Youth Centre Work?

### What does it do?

- Brings youth work services to young people who cannot access youth centre programmes
- Provides safe and structured activities for young people outside their homes
- Contributes to the prevention of juvenile delinquency
- Promotes young people's safety and wellbeing
- Fosters civic engagement among young people
- Addresses mobility challenges related to limited public transport
- Complements formal education systems
- Reduces isolation and strengthens social skills

### Whom and what is it for?

- Young people aged 12 to 19 (depending on various national legislation)
- Open to all young people, regardless of religion, cultural background, nationality, migration status, gender identity, or sexual orientation

### Why should you support Mobile Youth Work?

**1. Because Mobile Youth Centre Work is Youth Work.** Youth Work generates a high Social Return on Investment (SROI), reaching up to 7.8 times the value of the initial investment.

Estimated return on investment in the youth sector		Social return		
		Low: £ 2,5 bn	Central: £ 3,2 bn	High: £ 3,9 bn
Public investment	Low: £ 0,5 bn	5x	6.4x	7.8x
	High: £ 1,0 bn	2.5x	3.2x	3.9x

Source: Economic Value of Youth Work – Summary, UK Youth London Office, November 2022 (accessed 10 December 2025).

## What is Mobile Youth Centre Work?

As it is often cheaper to run, the ratio of SROI indicators is possibly higher for Mobile Youth Work than for “classical” youth work. Considering this, we strongly believe that Mobile Youth Centres are complementary to physical youth centres and should not replace them.

### 2. Because youth work addresses the current post-pandemic challenges faced by young people:

- Decreased crime (including violent crime, anti-social behaviour, and criminal justice costs)
- Improved health (including mental health, reduced substance abuse, lower rates of teenage pregnancy and obesity)
- Increased education and employment

<b>Decreased crime</b> Low: £ 0,5 bn Central: £ 0,5 bn High: £ 0,6 bn	<b>Improved health</b> Low: £ 0,5 bn Central: £ 0,5 bn High: £ 0,6 bn	<b>Increased employment/education</b> Low: £ 0,5 bn Central: £ 0,5 bn High: £ 0,6 bn
<b>Knife crime</b> Low: £ 6 m Central: £ 11 m High: £ 17 m	<b>General reduction in criminal justice loss</b> Low: £ 405 m Central: £ 405 m High: £ 405 m	<b>Not in education, employment or training (NEET)</b> Low: £ 578 m Central: £ 778 m High: £ 983 m
<b>Anti-social behaviour</b> Low: £ 89 m Central: £ 121 m High: £ 153 m	<b>Substance abuse</b> Low: £ 484 m Central: £ 652 m High: £ 823 m	<b>Mental health</b> Low: £ 881 m Central: 1,179 m High: £ 1,408 m
<b>Teenage pregnancy</b> Low: £ 2 m Central: £ 2 m High: £ 3 m	<b>Obesity</b> Low: £ 4 m Central: £ 6 m High: £ 7 m	

Source: Economic Value of Youth Work – Summary, UK Youth London Office, November 2022 (accessed 10 December 2025).





# 3

## Youth Workers for Mobile Youth Work

This chapter introduces the role and mission of youth workers in Mobile Youth Work and explains how their flexible, outreach-based approach differs from work in traditional youth centres. It outlines the key roles required to operate a Mobile Youth Centre effectively. It also defines the core competencies required to work in changing, informal, and diverse environments. Finally, it highlights the importance of adaptability, safety, inclusion, and strong communication skills.

## 3.1

### Youth Workers for Mobile Youth Work Profile

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**Mobile youth workers** provide support to young people in the places where they naturally spend their time, such as parks, schools, public spaces, or smaller communities. They do not wait for young people to come to a youth centre, but instead **bring youth work to them, ensuring that everyone has access to support, activities, and positive relationships.**

A mobile youth worker operates in varied and changing locations, often with limited infrastructure and under diverse logistical and social conditions, making youth work more **inclusive, accessible, and responsive** to the real needs of young people.

What sets mobile youth workers apart from those working in traditional youth centres is their mobility, flexibility, and adaptability in reaching young people on their own ground, often in informal and unfamiliar environments. Their role goes beyond delivering activities: **they build trust**, create safe spaces wherever they go, and develop meaningful and reliable relationships.

#### Key roles

To make Mobile Youth Work successful and effective, **different key roles of the youth workers** can be identified. These roles work together to plan, deliver, and support activities in various locations, ensuring that young people can access safe, meaningful, and consistent youth work experiences, regardless of where they live.

We have identified different roles for youth workers, each with its own set of tasks. These roles are defined as follows:

**The host** welcomes newcomers to the Mobile Youth Centre, introduces them to other participants, and helps them become familiar with the space and its activities. Aware that they are entering spaces that belong to young people, they act with respect, sensitivity, and openness.

## Youth Workers for Mobile Youth Work Profile

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**The driver** is responsible for planning the route, driving the vehicle and making sure the Mobile Youth Centre gets to the right place in one piece. They are the one with all the necessary licenses.

**The facilitator** gives the kick off to the implementation of activities for the young people, helping them create bonds and taking care of their personal development.

**The coordinator** is responsible for leading the team, supervising activities and maintaining an overview of the project's overall state, as well as the youth workers and young people involved.

**The fundraiser** has one eye on budget and another on chances to acquire funding and grants, for example through relationships with the local community, which may provide financial support or donations. They focus on helping the Mobile Youth Work initiatives remain financially sustainable. The fundraiser identifies and applies for grants, manages fundraising efforts, and builds partnerships with public institutions, private donors, or local sponsors.

**The logistician** ensures that the operational engine of the Mobile Youth Centre runs smoothly. They ensure that materials, vehicles, and workflows function reliably. They take care of setting up mobile spaces, managing equipment and supplies, and ensuring everything needed for the activity is in the right place at the right time.

**The communicator** is responsible for visibility, documentation, and promotion. They support the communication processes, produce content for social media, and help communicate the value and outcomes of Mobile Youth Work to young people and the public.

**The risk and safety expert** is responsible for managing risks and ensuring safety during Mobile Youth Work activities. This includes first aid readiness, conflict prevention, safety checks, and helping plan for emergencies.

**The local partnerships coordinator** helps to connect the Mobile Youth Work team with local stakeholders like schools, municipalities, associations, and informal groups. They support access to spaces, gather useful local information, and encourage cooperation between sectors. Their role helps build trust and ensures the mobile service is well-rooted in each community.

## Youth Workers for Mobile Youth Work Profile

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We recognise that most Mobile Youth Centres do not have nine staff members and therefore **several roles may be taken on by the same person**. Depending on the size of the project, available funding, local context, or the stage of development, teams can operate with fewer people. **Very often, a youth worker assumes multiple responsibilities, combining logistics, safety, community outreach, or even communications.**

What matters most is that the core values of Youth Work are upheld, regardless of how tasks are distributed.

Each role in Mobile Youth Work requires **specific competencies**, but some attitudes and principles are shared by all mobile youth workers and lay the foundation of a successful project.

Regardless of their role, **youth workers must be attentive to young people, teams, environments, and communities**. This includes acting with empathy, openness, and trustworthiness; working collaboratively; being mindful of individual backgrounds and personal development paths; and maintaining clear professional boundaries. **Building and sustaining trust** with local communities and institutions is an essential part of this work.

Mobile youth workers are expected to be **approachable and reflective professionals**, able to listen actively, observe local contexts, and adapt their presence without adopting a lecturing or hierarchical stance.

A solid understanding of Youth Work principles, legal frameworks, and standards, combined with a strong commitment to inclusion, diversity, and the prevention of discrimination, underpins ethical and effective practice.

Finally, youth workers act as **role models** in informal and changing environments. **Integrity, adaptability, equality, confidentiality, and humility** serve as a shared ethical compass guiding everyday interactions with young people.

## 3.2

### Youth Workers for Mobile Youth Work The Logistician and the Host

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Now that we have defined a general profile of the Mobile Youth Worker, let's focus on two of the roles we have previously identified and that we consider are essential for both young people and Mobile Youth Centres. These two roles have been selected as they represent two complementary dimensions of Mobile Youth Work: **the operational foundation and the relational approach.**

#### The logistician

**The logistician** or mobile logistics manager plays a central role in Mobile Youth Work. Since Mobile Youth Centres operate with limited storage space, changing locations, and a wide variety of activities, a reliable person is needed to plan, prepare, transport, and follow up on all technical and material resources. This person serves as the operational foundation that enables pedagogical staff to fully concentrate on their work with young people.

#### ● Core responsibilities before the activity

Logistical responsibilities begin with careful planning of each deployment. This includes:

- **Needs assessment and material preparation:** Selecting and assembling the materials required for each activity without transporting unnecessary items. This may include games, creative supplies, sports equipment, tools, audio/video devices, or specialised materials for workshops.
- **Inventory and quality control:** Checking functionality, completeness, and safety of equipment, carrying out minor repairs, and arranging larger maintenance tasks with external partners.
- **Optimisation of storage:** Systematic and space-saving organisation of equipment, sorted thematically, packed in suitable boxes, and stowed in a way that ensures quick access and minimises transport damage.
- **Vehicle management:** Regular inspection and maintenance of the vehicles used (e.g., van, bicycle, boat), performing minor repairs and driving the vehicle to activity locations.
- **Cooperation and coordination:** Contacting host organisations or authorities, clarifying organisational conditions, and, if necessary, coordinating the reception or supervision of participating children and young people.

# Youth Workers for Mobile Youth Work

## The Logistician and the Host

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### Responsibilities during the activity

During deployment, the logistician ensures that all technical processes run smoothly:

- **Set-up and dismantling:** Supporting the team in setting up tents, tables, gazebos, and play or work stations.
- **Material readiness:** Ensuring that all needed materials are immediately accessible and that activity leaders can work efficiently.
- **Safe handling:** Properly loading, unloading, and moving equipment and materials.

### Responsibilities after the activity

After each activity, the logistician is responsible for the full follow-up process:

- **Sorting, cleaning, and reorganisation:** Carefully cleaning, sorting, and returning equipment to its designated places.
- **Inventory updates and repairs:** Identifying losses or damages and arranging replacements or repairs.
- **Vehicle care:** Checking the vehicle, cleaning it, and performing any necessary maintenance.
- **Returning and redistributing materials:** Ensuring that borrowed items are returned on time and that needed equipment reaches other projects promptly.

### Required competencies

This important role requires:

- Strong organisational and planning skills
- Flexibility, problem-solving abilities, and forward-thinking
- Knowledge of logistics, storage, and material flow
- Technical understanding and ability to perform minor repairs
- Ability to safely operate various vehicles
- Strong communication skills and team orientation
- Ability to guide colleagues without exerting hierarchy

**In short:** The logistician ensures that the “operational engine” of Mobile Youth Work runs smoothly. They ensure that materials, vehicles, and workflows function reliably, creating the foundation for successful educational work with young people at changing locations.

# Youth Workers for Mobile Youth Work

## The Logician and the Host

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### The host

**The host** is a central figure in Mobile Youth Work. Unlike fixed youth centres, Mobile Youth Centres arrive at locations chosen by young people themselves, often informal gathering spots they temporarily consider their own space. The host's role combines adaptability, empathy, and relationship-building skills, balancing the dual role of being both a guest in the young people's space and a host guiding them through the centre's activities.

#### ● Core responsibilities as a Guest

When the Mobile Youth Centre first arrives, the host initially assumes the role of a guest. This stage is critical for gaining acceptance from the young people and the local community.

Responsibilities include:

- **Observing and adapting:** Assessing the local environment, understanding informal meeting points, identifying opportunities for positive engagement.
- **Building trust:** Acting respectfully, patiently, and attentively to gain the trust of young people and the wider community.
- **Non-intrusive presence:** Finding a role within the space without disturbing the local social dynamics, similar to an ethnographer or documentary maker carefully observing their environment.
- **Relationship initiation:** Making initial contact in low-threshold ways, such as informal conversations, games, or small invitations, while allowing young people to respond voluntarily.

#### Core responsibilities as a Host

Once young people accept the invitation to engage, the host transitions fully into their guiding role. Responsibilities include:

- **Welcome and orientation:** Introducing the mobile centre, explaining spaces, activities, ground rules, and available resources.
- **Building comfort and belonging:** Ensuring young people feel safe, respected, and valued, and enabling them to act as ambassadors to their peers.
- **Facilitating participation:** Encouraging engagement through activities, supporting exploration of interests, providing clear guidance when needed.
- **Observing and adapting activities:** Monitoring whether offers meet the interests and needs of the participants, and adjusting plans accordingly.

# Youth Workers for Mobile Youth Work

## The Logician and the Host

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- **Promoting inclusivity:** Treating all young people equitably, creating an environment free of judgment, and maintaining awareness of individual backgrounds, lifestyles, and social dynamics.

### Required Skills

The host role demands a mix of interpersonal, professional, and organisational competencies:

#### **Personal and interpersonal skills:**

- **Empathy and active listening:** Understanding expressed and unexpressed needs of young people.
- **Communication:** Clear, polite, engaging, and approachable interaction.
- **Patience and stress management:** Remaining calm and positive in challenging situations.
- **Charisma and friendliness:** Engaging with energy, warmth, and joy to encourage interaction.
- **Flexibility and teamwork:** Adapting to different situations and cooperating with colleagues.

#### **Professional and organisational skills:**

- **User-centred approach:** Prioritising the needs and comfort of young people.
- **Organisation:** Managing admissions, guiding young people, and coordinating activities.
- **Problem-solving:** Addressing unexpected challenges quickly and effectively.
- **Knowledge of the Mobile Youth Centre:** Understanding available activities and resources to provide meaningful guidance.

#### **Behaviour and attitude:**

- **Making a strong first impression:** Welcoming visitors and establishing trust immediately.
- **Representing the organisation:** Acting in ways that reflect the centre's values and create memorable, positive experiences.
- **Continuous learning:** Staying aware of trends, local realities, and young people's evolving needs to provide relevant and meaningful engagement.

**In short:** The host must skillfully balance being a respectful guest in young people's chosen spaces with guiding and supporting them as they engage with the mobile centre. By fostering trust, creating a welcoming environment, and tailoring activities to local needs, the host ensures that young people feel included, valued, and motivated to participate and invite others.

## 3.3

### Youth Workers for Mobile Youth Work Core Competencies for Mobile Youth Workers

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Mobile youth workers are responsible for **designing and delivering activities, building relationships, and ensuring that youth work values** (voluntariness, inclusivity, participation) **are upheld**. Teams must be flexible, as the setting is often informal, changing, and unpredictable. To work effectively in Mobile Youth Work, professionals and volunteers alike need specific competencies that go beyond those required in fixed youth centres. Here are some essential ones:

#### Adaptability and Flexibility

The ability to adjust quickly to new environments, social contexts, and unexpected situations. Every space, community, and group is different.

#### Initiative and Autonomy

Mobile Youth Work often means working alone or in small teams. Youth workers must take initiative and be self-managing, while staying aligned with ethical and educational goals.

#### Communication and Relationship-Building

Strong interpersonal skills to engage effectively with young people, stakeholders, and community members. Building trust and creating safe, non-judgemental spaces are essential.

#### Planning and Organisational Skills

From logistics to equipment handling and time management, youth workers need to plan carefully and stay organised on the move.

#### Safety Awareness and Risk Management

The ability to assess and manage risks, especially in public or unfamiliar settings. This includes safeguarding, first aid, and emotional resilience.

# Youth Workers for Mobile Youth Work

## Core Competencies for Mobile Youth Workers

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### Cultural Sensitivity and Inclusivity

Mobile settings often involve diverse groups of young people. Workers must respect differences, challenge discrimination, and promote equity in practice.

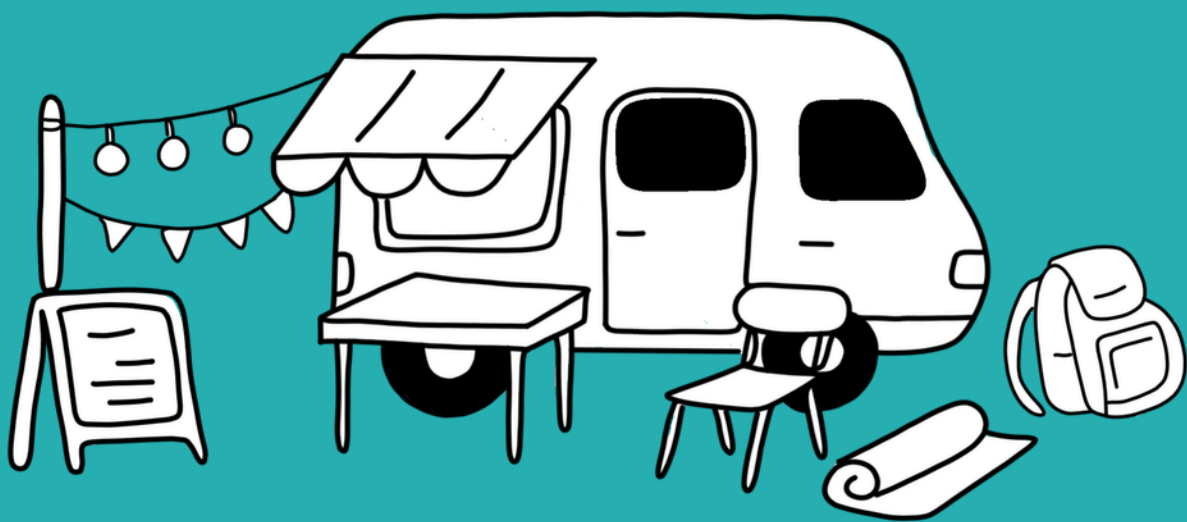
### Digital Literacy

Useful for communication, documenting activities, using digital tools in youth work, and managing an online presence when needed.

### Knowledge of Youth Policy and Local Services

Understanding the local landscape helps youth workers connect young people to other services and support systems.

Together, these competencies support youth workers in being effective, ethical, and impactful, wherever youth work happens. **They enable the Youth Worker to adapt to different environments, respond to the needs of diverse groups of young people, and create safe, inclusive spaces for young people in both familiar and unfamiliar settings.** Whether working in a park, a school, a village square, or a mobile unit, these competencies serve as a necessary foundation for building trust, fostering participation, and delivering meaningful, high-quality youth work on the move.



# 4

## A practical guide to structure and setup

This chapter provides a practical overview of the different structural options for Mobile Youth Centres, outlining their benefits, strengths and limitations. It explains which are the useful modifications and technical extensions that can improve functionality and autonomy. It also highlights the importance of safe load securing during transport. Finally, it presents recommended equipment to ensure flexible, safe and engaging youth work in mobile settings.

## 4.1

### A practical guide to structure and setup What structure do we need for a Mobile Youth Centre?

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The decision depends largely on available financial resources, the geographical area to be served, the number of people working in the Mobile Youth Centre, the required level of flexibility, and any licences required (e.g. category B or D driving licences, or a boat licence).

The following types of vehicles and structures are **commonly used**: van, minibus, trailer/caravan, motorhome, bus, shipping container and houseboat.

#### Pros and Cons:



**Vans** and **minibuses** offer the highest level of flexibility. They can operate almost anywhere, require minimal setup, and are easy to deploy. Operating costs are manageable, and acquisition is relatively affordable. They can be driven with a category B driving licence and handled similarly to a standard car.

**Cargo space in large vans** is limited by the vehicle's maximum authorised mass and the driver's licence category. However, for most purposes, vans provide sufficient capacity. We recommend using long-wheelbase and high-roof models, where access conditions, such as narrow streets or tight corners, allow. Vans are also relatively easy to adapt for specific uses, and there is a wide range of inspiration available from campervan conversion projects.

**Minibuses** are more versatile when small group transport (e.g. excursions) is needed. If the seats are removable, they offer nearly the same loading capacity as vans. However, proper load securing is usually only feasible after structural adaptations.



**Caravans** are also modular in their use: they can remain on-site while the towing vehicle is used elsewhere. They are suitable for conversion into meeting spaces and are relatively low-cost in both purchase and maintenance. Depending on the size, even toilets can be integrated.

However, a suitable towing vehicle is required, ideally one that can also carry additional materials, as most caravans have low payload capacity. Larger caravans, particularly those with toilets, often exceed the limits allowed under a category B driving licence.

## A practical guide to structure and setup

### What structure do we need for a Mobile Youth Centre?

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**Motorhomes** combine many of the advantages (and some of the disadvantages) of vans and caravans. They are immediately ready for use, come equipped with lounges, kitchens, and sanitary facilities, and can operate autonomously. They are, however, more expensive to buy and maintain, and offer limited storage space for materials. Many can be reconfigured by removing beds to create more living space or storage. However, payload is often limited. In some localities, parking or staying overnight in motorhomes may be prohibited.



A particularly impressive option we encountered was the use of a **converted public service bus**. It provides ample space for social areas, workshops, equipment, and can be fitted with a kitchen and toilet. It can compete with permanent youth centres in terms of functionality.

However, several limitations apply: very few youth workers hold the required category D driving licence. Staff effort is often higher, as the vehicle cannot be operated solo. Purchase, conversion, and ongoing costs are extremely high. Deployment is also limited by its size, many locations are unsuitable due to lack of space or access, and the vehicle is too bulky for narrow streets.

**Shipping containers** are another possible solution. They are durable, resistant to vandalism, and can be fitted out creatively. Used units, or those repurposed from mobile offices or accommodation units, are relatively inexpensive.

However, they are hardly mobile in practice: transport requires special vehicles and cranes, and permanent foundations are often necessary. This makes spontaneous relocation almost impossible, and any move usually cancels out the initial cost advantage.



If the target area includes waterways, a **houseboat** can be a unique and attractive solution. It offers a special atmosphere, can be tailored to meet most needs, and can run sustainably using solar power. Its size can be adapted to the needs of the group.

However, purchase costs are high, and maintenance needs increase significantly over time. Securing a mooring can be challenging, and close cooperation with water and environmental authorities is essential, as permissions are usually required. Ensuring barrier-free access for all target groups can also be more challenging.

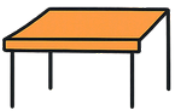
## 4.2

### A practical guide to structure and setup Modifications and extensions. Functional enhancements

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To ensure the long-term success of a Mobile Youth Centre, **targeted modifications and structural additions should be considered**. These can significantly improve usability, comfort, independence and practicality in everyday situations. Homologation from the authorities may be required for all adaptations and installations, especially for motor vehicles. This usually applies to awnings, seat consoles, roof racks, and other camping accessories. In most countries, self-built items must be recorded in the vehicle documents.

The following extensions have proven useful in practice:



#### **Awnings or sunshades**

A retractable awning creates a sheltered outdoor space in front of the vehicle, which can be used as a meeting area, workshop space, or for weather protection. Simple sunshades can also be installed flexibly to provide shade and increase comfort.

Many awning systems offer compatible tent extensions, including side and front panels that provide extra protection. This allows youth work to continue even in poor weather conditions or during colder temperatures, thereby creating usable space beyond the interior. In addition to the awnings, an inflatable vehicle skirt (seal tube) should be considered. It prevents cold air from flowing under the vehicle into the awning.



#### **Roof racks and roof boxes**

Roof racks provide valuable extra storage space, ideal for transporting sports equipment, tents, tables or weatherproof technical containers. This is especially useful when interior space is limited, allowing bulky items to be stored externally.



#### **Solar panels with battery storage**

A fixed photovoltaic system on the roof can provide autonomous power when combined with a battery. This is ideal for operating lighting, sound and media equipment, or charging mobile devices. It increases operational independence, reduces running costs and the project's environmental footprint.

Larger solar panels can also be installed on existing roof racks alongside roof boxes, allowing for additional power generation without impacting interior space.

## A practical guide to structure and setup

### Modifications and extensions. Functional enhancements

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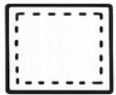
#### **Lighting**

Reliable and adaptable lighting, both inside and outside the vehicle, is essential. Portable LED lights, motion-activated spotlights, or dimmable systems create a safe and welcoming environment. Fixed 12V or 230V lighting systems powered by the vehicle or solar battery are particularly effective.



#### **Swivel seat bases for front seats**

In some cases, it is beneficial to install swivel bases for the driver and passenger seats. With just a few simple steps, the seats can be rotated to face the interior, creating a welcoming space for consultations or meetings. This setup is especially useful for private conversations, quiet retreat areas, or collaborative planning sessions inside the vehicle.



#### **Felt panelling**

It helps prevent damage to the vehicle's paintwork and load. In addition, the interior atmosphere can be enhanced through appropriate colour choices.

**Additional options, such as heating systems, fold-out tables, whiteboards or mobile kitchen units** may also be worth considering, depending on the intended use and available budget. Any structural changes should be checked for safety and carefully planned with particular attention to weight distribution and the vehicle's centre of gravity.

## 4.3

### A practical guide to structure and setup

#### Load Securing: an essential aspect

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Regardless of the structure used as a Mobile Youth Centre, **all transported items must be properly secured during travel**. This includes technical equipment (e.g. speakers, projectors, tables) as well as personal belongings, food supplies, and sanitary units. Poor or missing load securing poses a serious safety risk to the driver, passengers, and other road users.

During sudden braking or evasive manoeuvres, **unsecured objects can become dangerous projectiles**. In addition, failure to comply with load securing regulations may lead to fines, penalty points, or, in the worst case, the loss of insurance coverage.

The following steps help ensure safe load securing:

- ) **Plan weight distribution**  
Heavier items should always be placed low and as close to the vehicle's centre of gravity as possible. Uneven loading can negatively affect driving stability.
- ) **Use anchor points and straps**  
All mobile components must be secured using tension belts, nets, or locking systems attached to fixed anchor points.  
When using minibuses in particular, it is strongly recommended to install airline tracks, which can accommodate seating systems and securing bars, or lashing eyes for straps. Although the initial investment ranges between €2,000 and €4,000 (depending on the vehicle and configuration), it pays off quickly, making loading and securing significantly easier, faster, and safer.
- ) **Use anti-slip surfaces**  
Anti-slip mats or coatings help prevent items from sliding during cornering or on uneven road surfaces.
- ) **Store loose items securely**  
Boxes, tools, food, and personal items should be placed in closed cabinets, crates, or compartments, ideally with locking mechanisms (e.g. latches or catches).

## A practical guide to structure and setup

### Load Securing: an essential aspect

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- ) **Perform regular checks**  
Before every journey, ensure that all items remain securely fastened and check for any shifts caused by loading, unloading, or movement in transit.
- ) **Use ramps**  
The installation of sturdy ramps significantly facilitates loading and unloading, particularly for heavy or bulky equipment. In addition, ramps are a vital element in ensuring barrier-free access to the Mobile Youth Centre, especially for wheelchair users or participants with limited mobility.
- ) **Proper load securing** not only protects people and equipment, but also extends the lifespan of the mobile unit and contributes to a professional overall appearance of the project.

## 4.4

### A practical guide to structure and setup Equipment. Flexible and appealing to the Target Group

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The equipment of a Mobile Youth Centre must first and foremost match the planned services and activities. At the same time, it should be attractive to the target group, appropriately designed, and flexible in its use. Below are some proven examples of useful equipment:



#### **Screens for film afternoons or gaming consoles**

Depending on the type of activity, screens can either be permanently installed in the vehicle or mounted on mobile stands. This enables both media education and recreational activities to be delivered flexibly.



#### **Power supply (generators and power stations)**

Power can be supplied using traditional petrol generators or modern portable power stations. Generators are weather-independent, affordable, and robust. Power stations, on the other hand, offer silent, emission-free operation and, when paired with a solar panel system, can power even energy-intensive activities such as cooking or baking. While the initial cost is higher, they tend to pay off over time due to lower operating costs and more sustainable use.



#### **Kitchen equipment**

Options range from simple hotplates or camping stoves to professional-grade mobile kitchen modules in flight cases, originally developed for disaster relief. These are particularly suitable when catering for larger groups or extended stays.

#### **Tableware**

Wherever there is cooking, there will be eating. Disposable tableware is environmentally damaging, and ceramic is too heavy and fragile for mobile use. A good alternative is enamel tableware: lightweight, durable, reusable, and shatterproof – ideal for everyday mobile use.



#### **Mobile storage cabinets**

A wheeled cabinet provides space for essential items such as office supplies, a Wi-Fi router, board games, small sports gear or creative materials – safely stored and quickly accessible.

## A practical guide to structure and setup Equipment. Flexible and appealing to the Target Group

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### **Flight case sofas**

Comfortable seating can also be mobile: sofas built into flight cases are easy to set up and very popular with young people – perfect for chill-out areas or as part of a media lounge.



### **Flight cases for sports and leisure equipment**

Balls, badminton rackets and similar items can be stored in robust trunk-style flight cases with recessed wheels. These are stackable, can be secured with straps, and are easy to transport.



### **Foosball tables with foldable legs and wheels**

A youth centre classic: space-saving models with foldable legs and castors make transport much easier without compromising on fun.



### **Table tennis tables**

Always in demand, though often challenging to transport. Compact, foldable models that can be easily stored and moved are particularly suitable for mobile use.



### **Mobile internet access (LTE router, Wi-Fi hotspot)**

A reliable internet connection is crucial for many youth services. Mobile LTE routers with sufficient data plans – ideally with an external antenna – can provide stable Wi-Fi even in rural areas.



### **Audio systems / portable PA systems**

For outdoor events, music projects or moderation, mobile speaker systems with rechargeable batteries are highly effective. Microphones can support open mics, discussion rounds, or workshop formats.



### **Pop-up gazebos or event tents**

In addition to awnings, mobile gazebos are a useful extension: they define outdoor spaces, offer weather protection, and provide room for group work, counselling or creative activities.

## A practical guide to structure and setup

### Equipment. Flexible and appealing to the Target Group

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#### **Weatherproof extension leads and power strips**

These are essential for safe and flexible power distribution, especially when multiple devices are used or weather conditions require additional protection.



#### **Whiteboards or flipcharts**

Useful for workshops, idea sharing or planning sessions with young people. Mobile or foldable models are particularly suitable for transport.



#### **Box of games and activity sets**

Card games, board games or simple outdoor games like Kubb, boules or frisbees are low-effort and promote social interaction and group dynamics.



#### **First aid and hygiene supplies**

A comprehensive first-aid kit is essential. A mobile hygiene box with a water canister, soap, paper towels, disinfectant and gloves ensures good hygiene at all times.



#### **Outdoor lighting**

Rechargeable floodlights, LED light chains or portable lamps improve visibility and create a welcoming atmosphere, especially for evening events or during the darker months.

#### **The toilet provision**

in many set-ups can be problematic. If there are no toilets near the activities area, using a foldable dry toilet and shower tent for privacy can be a good solution.



# 5

## Operating Mobile Youth Centres

This chapter explains how different urban and rural environments impact the operation of a Mobile Youth Centres. It highlights the importance of understanding local structures, infrastructure, and existing youth services to build networks and avoid overlaps. Key location-related factors such as accessibility, safety, and neighbourhood impact are explored. Finally, it outlines essential legal requirements, permits and regulatory obligations for lawful operation.

# 5

## Operating Mobile Youth Centres Surroundings, Environment, and Legal Requirements

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**Different environments present different opportunities** but also challenges, when working with a Mobile Youth Centre. It makes a difference whether the Mobile Youth Centre is located in a busy urban area or in a rural area with a smaller population and therefore less infrastructure.

However, regardless of the type of environment in which the Mobile Youth Centre operates, **it is crucial to familiarise yourself with existing structures.** This is important, firstly, to explore potential collaborations and build networks, and secondly, to avoid disrupting already established structures or creating duplicate offerings (for example, if there is weekly football training every Wednesday for young people in the village, it makes little sense to offer other activities at the same time).

**Regardless of the setting, you should familiarise yourself with:**

- Schools (primary and secondary schools)
- Local stakeholders such as neighbourhood management, local clubs, or privately organised associations
- Sports clubs, volunteer fire departments, and other club structures that regularly involve young people
- Infrastructure (supermarkets, snack bars, libraries, museums, etc.)
- (Informal) meeting places for young people
- Responsibilities and contact persons for permits and authorisations.

Aside from these general aspects, another important consideration is:

**Is the location where the Mobile Youth Centre operates urban or rural?**

Both spaces have different advantages and obstacles for daily work, and it can be helpful to familiarise yourself with the circumstances as early as possible in order to best design services and adapt them to people's needs.

# Operating Mobile Youth Centres

## Surroundings, Environment, and Legal Requirements

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### Urban environment

- Many people, including children and young people
- Family structures are often diverse, including two-parent households, single-parent families, young people living independently, and multigenerational households.
- Often a rather anonymous nature, it can take longer to connect with key stakeholders.
- Often characterised by diverse cultures and ethnic backgrounds within a small area
- Well-developed infrastructure with many shopping options, public transport, roads, etc.
- In some cases, higher crime rates
- Often all types of schools are available (i.e., primary and secondary schools)
- Other youth centres probably already exist
- Economic conditions can vary between urban and rural areas, depending on the local context.
- Fast pace, often non-binding nature
- More solid surfaces (asphalt) than green spaces

### Rural environment

- Small-housing areas are common (residents may be more sensitive to noise or gatherings of young people nearby)
- Family structures are often more homogeneous, with a higher prevalence of households consisting of parents and children.
- Generally fewer people than in urban areas
- Often there is only one elementary school, and secondary schools are located further away in urban areas (this results in longer journeys for older adolescents)
- Infrastructure is more manageable (fewer shops, etc.)
- Economic conditions should be assessed locally, as they can vary significantly between communities.
- Often there are central locations/meeting points (e.g., market square, village centre)
- Many young people are involved in club structures (sports clubs, fire department, etc.)
- Often there are no other youth centres
- Social interactions often follow a different dynamic (“everyone knows everyone”), which can make it easier to make contacts and form networks/collaborations but it also means that activities are more visible and subject to community observation
- Often closer contact with parents and families
- Proximity to nature offers different opportunities than in the city (forests, meadows, proximity to bodies of water, etc.)

# Operating Mobile Youth Centres

## Surroundings, Environment, and Legal Requirements

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Aside from these characteristics, the **general condition** of the chosen (or assigned) location where the Mobile Youth Centre operates is **crucial for possible offerings and requires adaptation**, regardless of whether it is in an urban or rural area.

- Is the location paved or a green space?
- Is the location sheltered or located on a busy road?
- Is the location accessible for everyone?
- Are there restrooms nearby?
- Is the location public or privately owned?
- Are there residents in the immediate vicinity who might feel disturbed?

All of these aspects, and more, must be considered and require legal compliance. **Operating a Mobile Youth Centre without the appropriate permits is not advisable**; in the worst case, this could lead to lasting problems for future operations.

### Legal aspects and permits

- General approval or contractual agreement to operate a Mobile Youth Centre (e.g. from the relevant youth authority)
- Certificates of good conduct for youth workers
- Required driving licences
- Compliance with the “Youth Protection Act”
- Permit to enter, drive to, and operate in the selected location
- Respect for the noise protection regulations
- Event registration with the police, where required



# 6

## Mobile Youth Centres' Services

This chapter presents the seven core categories of services offered by Mobile Youth Centres. It describes how information, training, orientation, counselling, socialising, integration, and leisure activities support young people's development and wellbeing. Practical examples and implementation ideas are provided for each category. The chapter highlights flexible, youth-centred and participatory approaches to service delivery.

# 6

## Mobile Youth Centres' Services

### Seven categories

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General services offered by Mobile Youth Centres can be structured in the following categories:

#### ●) Information services

Information services aim to empower young people with accessible, reliable, and youth-friendly information that helps them make informed decisions. Here are a few examples:

- Printed and digital resources on topics such as sexual health, substance abuse, mental health, employment rights, and education pathways.
- Interactive kiosks or tablets with curated local information on services like housing, jobs, legal aid, and health clinics.
- Staff Q&A sessions during which young people can ask questions anonymously (e.g., via a suggestion box or digital form).
- “Know Your Rights” sessions for migrant or disadvantaged young people.

*How to ideas:*

Information boards inside the vehicle

QR codes on posters linking to trusted websites

Regular “Info of the Week” themes

#### ●) Training services

Training services aim to build practical skills that support personal development, employment readiness, and independence. Here are a few examples:

- Digital skills training: basic computer use, social media literacy, the use of job search tools, or online safety.
- Vocational workshops: CV writing, job interviews, barista skills, or bicycle repair.
- Life skills: budgeting, meal planning and cooking, conflict resolution, or public speaking.
- Soft skills: teamwork, leadership, and decision-making games or simulations.
- Application of non-formal learning approaches.

*How to ideas:*

Hands-on workshops inside the vehicle or under a pop-up tent

Collaborations with local training providers or businesses

# Mobile Youth Centres' Services

## Seven categories

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### ●) **Orientation services**

The role of orientation services is to help newly arrived or marginalised young people (e.g., newcomers, refugees, young offenders) navigate their local environment and available youth services. Here are a few examples:

- Welcome packs with maps, contact info, transportation tips, and service guides.
- Community orientation tours, e.g., visits to local libraries, youth hubs, health clinics.
- “How to” guides, e.g., how to get a bank account, apply for housing, or use a public transit card.
- Buddy systems linking new arrivals with peer mentors.

*How to ideas:*

Orientation sessions via slideshows or interactive quizzes

Icebreakers or cultural exchange activities to build comfort and connection

### ●) **Counselling services**

Counselling services aim to support young people’s mental, emotional, and social wellbeing through professional and peer-based help. Here are a few examples:

- Drop-in sessions with qualified youth workers or psychologists (confidential spaces in the van)
- Scheduled 1:1 counselling (in-person or via telehealth)
- Group therapy, discussion circles on topics such as grief, anxiety, or identity.
- Referral support, connecting young people with specialist services.

*How to ideas:*

Designated quiet zone in the van

Use of calming tools (e.g., fidget items, art supplies)

Mental health first aiders within the team

### ●) **Socialising opportunities**

Socialising services contribute to reducing isolation and foster friendships and a sense of belonging among young people. Here are a few examples:

- Video gaming sessions, quizzes, and board games
- Peer discussion groups on shared interests or identities (e.g., maths, trains, LEGO, LGBTQI+, etc.)
- Cultural exchange events (e.g., food and music sharing)
- Community art or graffiti walls where youth can leave messages

# Mobile Youth Centres' Services

## Seven categories

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### *How to ideas:*

Use outdoor space for social zones

Rotate themes or activities weekly to maintain engagement over time

Encourage youth to lead or co-create social events

### **Integration services**

Integration services help marginalised or at-risk young people feel included and active in their communities. Here are a few examples:

- Volunteering opportunities with local groups
- Civic engagement projects, e.g., youth voting awareness, community projects (e.g. park development or clean-up initiatives)
- Intergenerational connections, bringing young people and the elderly together for shared activities
- Cultural celebration days recognising different backgrounds
- Mentorship programs connecting youth with adult role models or professionals

### *How to ideas:*

Joint initiatives with schools, NGOs, and councils

Provide transport or incentives to reduce access barriers

Showcase youth-led stories of success and inclusion

### **Leisure activities**

Leisure time services offer positive, safe, and fun outlets for young people to unwind, express themselves, and explore new interests. Here are a few examples:

- Art, music, and dance workshops
- Mobile sports kits (e.g. basketball, volleyball, football, pétanque, etc.)
- Outdoor movie screenings and/or karaoke
- Outdoor parties and events using the available Mobile Youth Centre equipment
- DIY activities such as soap making, jewellery making, or mini gardening

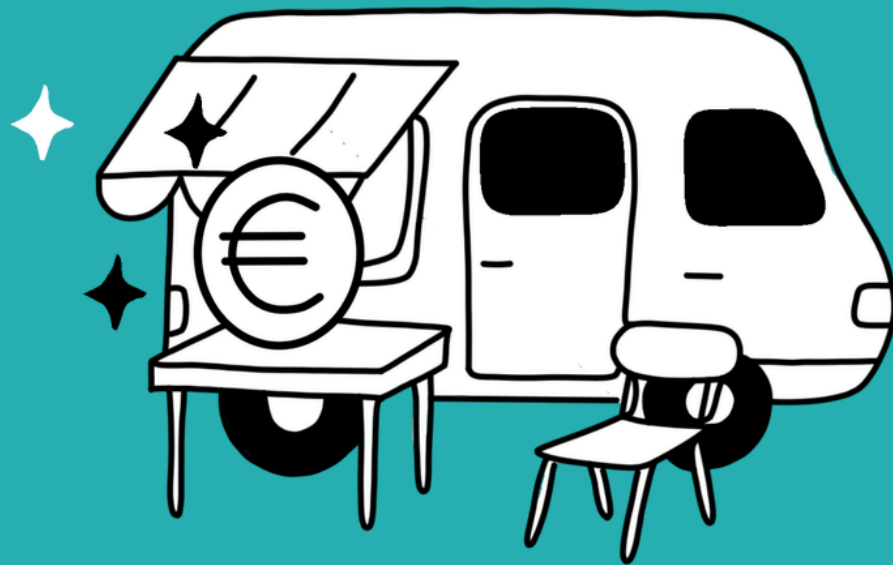
### *How to ideas:*

Young members of the community share their skills and passions (e.g. painting)

Flexible zones: reconfigure indoor and outdoor setups depending on the activity

Seasonal themes (e.g., summer splash day, winter warm-up)

Talent shows or youth performances



# 7

## Funding and Support

This chapter outlines how to plan for and secure the financial resources required to launch and operate a Mobile Youth Centre. It distinguishes between start-up and long-term operational costs for both human and material resources. Various public and private funding sources are outlined for each phase. The chapter highlights the importance of realistic budgeting, partnerships, and long-term financial strategies for sustainability.

# 7

## Funding and Support How to finance a Mobile Youth Centre

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The financial planning of a Mobile Youth Centre must take into account **two main types of resources: human and material**. Both require investments in terms of time, funding, and skills, even when much of the work is based on existing structures and staff.

### Human Resources



A carefully designed project is the first step towards financial sustainability. Avoid rushing the process. Take time for reflection and co-design the Mobile Youth Centre with young people, based on their real needs and clear educational objectives.

In most cases, the creation of a Mobile Youth Centre responds to mobility and accessibility issues, rather than to the need for an entirely new service. The Mobile Youth Centre should therefore be understood as an extension of existing youth work, not as a separate activity. Part of the work can often be integrated into regular working hours, especially when the project is developed with and for young people.

Under these conditions, the launch phase does not necessarily require additional staff costs. However, it requires realistic planning and a clear agreement with the supporting organisation.

### Material Resources



The cost of materials varies significantly depending on the chosen structure, from a second-hand trailer to a fully equipped new van. No solution is truly cost-free. Even when acquiring a used vehicle or caravan at a low price, additional expenses for repairs, technical adjustments, decoration and basic equipment should always be anticipated.

Moreover, every Mobile Youth Centre needs a minimum of educational and technical material to operate effectively. For this reason, the initial investment for putting a Mobile Youth Centre on the road should be considered a one-off expense, but a significant one, which requires proper financial planning.

# Funding and Support

## How to finance a Mobile Youth Centre

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### **Funding sources for the launch phase (non-exhaustive list)**

Several financing options can be combined:

- Donations: private donors, companies, sponsors, and promotional partnerships.
- Community-based funding: crowdfunding and cooperative models
- Borrowed funding: crowdlending or other forms of loans (note that these generate additional costs and repayment obligations)
- On-demand public funding: municipal, provincial, regional, national or European level
- Public calls for proposals related to youth policies (keywords such as youth, mobility, participation, empowerment, social inclusion)
- Calls from foundations and private funding bodies

### **How to ensure the sustainability of a Mobile Youth Centre**

Once operational, a Mobile Youth Centre generates regular running costs. Long-term sustainability therefore requires a stable financial strategy from the very beginning. The maintenance of vehicles and equipment is an unavoidable expense. Regular annual costs that should be budgeted for include:

- Technical inspections
- Repairs and wear & tear
- Insurance and taxes
- Fuel or energy supply

Keeping the Mobile Youth Centre roadworthy is a permanent obligation and should be clearly integrated into the annual budget.

### **Human Resources for the operational phase**

Even if the Mobile Youth Centre is part of regular youth work, resources are limited and cannot be duplicated. Preparation of activities, transport, on-site work, follow-up and evaluation require time and coordination.

If Mobile Youth Centre activities go beyond the organisation's standard operations, additional human resources will be necessary. This can include:

- Paid staff
- Volunteers

# Funding and Support

## How to finance a Mobile Youth Centre

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- Interns
- Trusted partners (e.g. local organisations, associations, schools, or professionals with established collaboration)

Clear role distribution and coordinating structures are essential. For further details, refer to Chapter 3.

### **Material Resources for the operational phase**

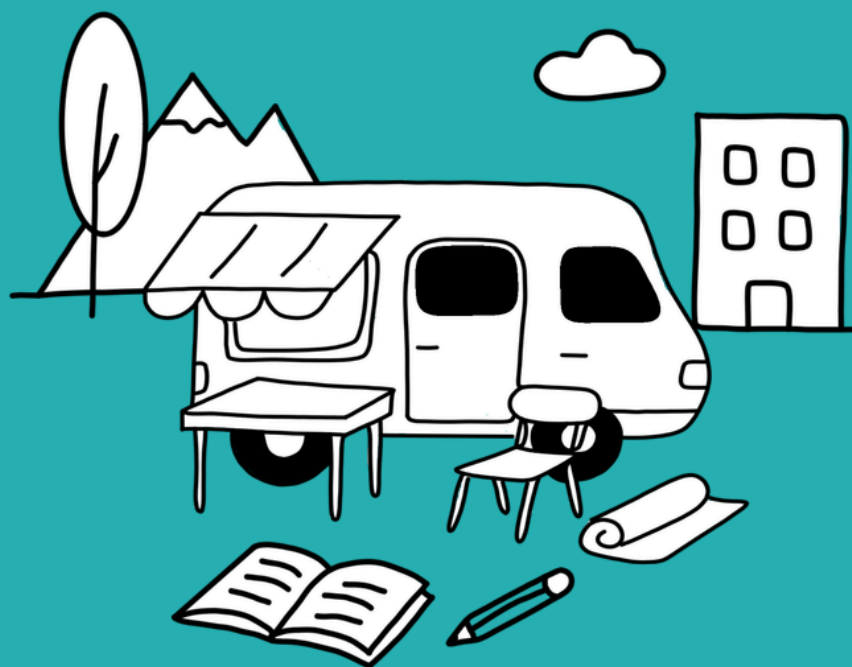
Running a Mobile Youth Centre implies recurring small expenses: replacing tyres, repairing water systems, changing light bulbs, maintaining and repairing technical equipment. Technical skills within the team can reduce costs, but financial resources will always be required.

In addition, the Mobile Youth Centre must cover fuel or energy costs, unless it operates exclusively through non-motorised means. All these expenses must be understood as regular operating costs and included in a realistic long-term budget plan.

### **Funding sources for the operational phase (non-exhaustive list)**

- Promotional partnerships with companies.
- Self-generated income through activities (workshops, events, services)
- Local public partnerships: municipalities are legally responsible for youth policies, but often lack operational capacity. By delivering concrete services, Mobile Youth Centres may receive financial compensation or operational support.
- Regional or national accreditation schemes: in several countries, official recognition at regional or national level can lead to structural financial support
- European public programmes: Erasmus+, ESC, Council of Europe, etc.
- Para-public or transnational long-term support: networks, international foundations, linguistic or cultural cooperation frameworks.

All of these funding opportunities require structured applications, long-term planning and stable administrative capacity. Sustainable financing cannot be improvised and requires long-term strategic planning.



# 8

## Activities and Programs

This chapter frames the Mobile Youth Centre as a flexible and educational environment that brings learning and participation directly to young people. It outlines how activities are planned, adapted to different contexts, and grounded in real local needs. Key aspects such as logistics, materials, voluntary participation, safety, and educational presence are explained. A strong emphasis is placed on data protection, image rights, and ethical standards in all activities.

# 8.1

## Activities and Programs Organising a Mobile Activity

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A Mobile Youth Centre is not simply a “travelling container of activities”. First and foremost, **it is an educational space that moves to where young people are**, operating in school courtyards, neighbourhood streets, squares, rural areas and villages, parking spaces and residential courtyards.

From urban settings to the most remote rural contexts, **what all Mobile Youth Centres have in common is their ambition and ability to identify real needs and transform them into concrete opportunities** for relationship-building, learning and participation.

The activities offered are **diverse**: sports, cooking, visual arts, music, cinema, cooperative games, counselling, street work, creative workshops, and civic participation. What defines them as part of a Mobile Youth Centre, however, is not the activity itself, but the way it is designed, implemented and facilitated.

This chapter provides a general framework. The individual activities, with their specific technical details, can be found on the project’s online platform ([youthcentres.eu](http://youthcentres.eu)). This booklet offers a practical and reflective guide for those who design, plan and deliver mobile educational interventions.

### Organising a mobile activity: what really needs to be taken into account

#### The context before the activity

Every successful activity begins with a careful understanding of the local context. Whether the activity takes place in an urban neighbourhood, at a school, in a rural area, or in an informal gathering space, it is essential to understand the following:

- Who are the young people who use that space?
- What are their daily routines?
- Which networks (schools, families, institutions and associations) are already present?
- Which needs are explicit, and which emerge more informally?

In many cases, entering a territory requires a **process of negotiation** with school principals, municipalities, reception centres or local organisations. Experience clearly shows that **the key to success is to present oneself not as a bearer of demands, but as an educational resource** that enriches the everyday life of the community.

# Activities and Programs

## Organising a Mobile Activity

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### ●) Logistics and materials: functional simplicity

Most Mobile Youth Centre activities are based on simple, portable and adaptable materials: balls, foldable nets, creative tools, board games, photo printers, a mobile kitchen, artistic materials. The guiding rule is as follows: **everything one offers must be able to adapt to the space**, the weather and the variable number of participants.

It is essential to plan for:

- Power sources (batteries, generators, sockets)
- Alternatives in case of bad weather
- Spare materials
- Realistic timing for set-up, implementation and dismantling

A well-functioning mobile activity is not necessarily the most complex one, but the one that still works when something changes at the last minute.

### ●) The group: voluntariness, safety and educational presence

A recurring principle across all experiences is **voluntary participation**. Young people are not forced to join; they are invited, involved and made curious. This builds trust and prevents forced group dynamics.

**Educational presence** should always be:

- Visible and recognisable (often through identifiable clothing)
- Non-invasive
- Focused on relationships rather than performance

Safety, both physical and emotional, must be ensured through clear rules, constant supervision, attention to age, gender and vulnerability, preventive risk management (allergies, tools, spaces).

# Activities and Programs

## Organising a Mobile Activity

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### **Data protection and image rights: a non-negotiable principle**

Data protection is treated with great seriousness in all experiences. The shared principles are clear:

- Only strictly necessary data is collected
- Anonymisation whenever possible
- Use of informed consent forms
- Possibility to participate without providing personal contacts
- Immediate deletion of photos from personal devices after use
- No publication without explicit authorisation
- Full compliance with GDPR

In many cases, especially in school and street contexts, photos and videos are often not taken at all. The image of a minor is not a promotional tool, but a right that **must be protected**. This approach builds trust not only with young people, but also with families and institutions.

## 8.2

### Activities and Programs Learning Objectives

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#### ●) Learning objectives: what do young people learn in a Mobile Youth Centre?

Even when an activity appears purely recreational in nature, it actually fosters key **transversal competencies**. The data consistently shows that the most common educational outcomes are:

- Social skills: cooperation, respect, conflict management, communication
- Self-efficacy and self-esteem: feeling capable, recognised and competent
- Participation and active citizenship: speaking up, proposing ideas, deciding together
- Creativity and self-expression: art, music and craftsmanship as forms of expression and learning
- Well-being and healthy lifestyles: sport, movement, food awareness
- Responsibility and care: for materials, spaces and the group

What matters most is that these learning processes take place in a **non-formal** way, through direct experience, interaction and “learning by doing”. The Mobile Youth Centre thus becomes an **itinerant informal learning space**, accessible even to those who rarely attend traditional educational spaces.

#### ●) Evaluation and reflection: measuring without bureaucratisation

One of the most striking elements is the strong emphasis on reflection and evaluation processes, which take many different forms:

- Informal discussions at the end of activities
- Weekly team meetings
- Monthly supervision sessions
- Questionnaires for participants
- Direct observation of group dynamics
- Attendance monitoring
- Structured feedback moments

**Evaluation** is rarely understood as control; rather, it is seen as a tool for continuous improvement.

## Activities and Programs

### Learning Objectives

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The most frequently asked questions are not “how many participants were there?”, but:

- Who participated and who did not?
- Which groups were formed?
- What needs emerged?
- What worked and what did not?
- Did the activity increase trust in with the Mobile Youth Centre?

A particularly relevant aspect is the connection between evaluation and subsequent attendance at the centre: participation in on-site activities is often used as an indirect indicator of educational effectiveness.

#### **The added value of the Mobile Youth Centre**

From the overall analysis of these experiences, one central element clearly emerges: **the Mobile Youth Centre does not only bring activities, but also continuous presence.**

Regularity, recognisability of educators, weekly return to the same places, availability for listening and support even when “nothing seems to happen” are what truly makes the intervention effective.

The Mobile Youth Centre:

- Reduces territorial and social distances,
- Reaches young people who do not attend structured services,
- Builds relationships of trust over time,
- Transforms public space into an educational space.

**It is a flexible tool, but not an improvised one; informal in its approach, yet deeply structured from a pedagogical perspective.**



# 9

## Ethics in Mobile Youth Work

This chapter defines the ethical foundations and values guiding Mobile Youth Work. It explains why ethics and a shared code of conduct are essential for trust, safety, and professional integrity. Core ethical and professional principles are outlined, including respect, safeguarding, social justice and professional boundaries. The chapter also promotes continuous ethical reflection and responsibility at both individual and organisational levels.

# 9.1

## Ethics in Mobile Youth Work

### A code of conduct in Mobile Youth Work

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#### Nature and purpose of youth work

The purpose of youth work is to facilitate and support the growth of young people from dependency to **interdependence**, encouraging their personal and social development and enabling them to express themselves, influence and actively participate in their communities and society.

Working with young people includes a commitment to giving them **equal opportunities** to become partners in learning and decision-making, and to help them develop their own set of values. The key characteristics and objectives that define our work with young people are:

- Offering services where young people are and choose to participate
- Encouraging young people to think critically about their own actions and their environment
- Helping young people to access information and make informed choices
- Helping young people to reach their full potential together with the education system
- Being responsive to the needs of young people together with other stakeholders

#### Why do we talk about ethics?

Ethics can be defined as a **set of beliefs and principles** about what is morally right and wrong, guiding behaviour and decision-making in youth work practice.

In a professional context, ethics involves:

- Developing the ability to see the ethical dimension of issues, to reflect on them, to make difficult decisions and to be able to justify them
- Acting with integrity in accordance with one's duties and responsibilities (this may involve acting in accordance with professional principles, norms and rules).

# Ethics in Mobile Youth Work

## A code of conduct in Mobile Youth Work

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The behaviour of all those involved in youth work and youth services, political and managerial leaders, managers, administrators, staff, volunteers and participants, should set the standard in:

- Actual service delivery
- Modelling appropriate behaviours for young people
- Trust between young people and youth workers
- Trust between organisations, services, parents and young people
- Willingness of different parties to allocate resources
- Trust in the ability of youth work to help young people learn how to make moral decisions and act on them.

This requires all those involved to be able to make appropriate judgements about ethical principles in practical situations.

### **Why a code of conduct?**

The code of conduct outlines the **basic principles of youth work** with the **aim of guiding youth workers** and managers and serving as a starting point for debate and discussion of ethical issues in practice. It is not, however, a manual that prescribes what youth workers should do in every situation, as this would be impossible.

Rather, it provides a **framework for outlining the general principles of ethical conduct**, raising awareness of the multiple responsibilities that youth workers - whether paid staff or volunteers, and including those in coordination or management roles - may hold, as well as the potential tensions between these responsibilities. It also aims to **encourage reflection** and **ongoing dialogue on ethical practice**.

## 9.2

# Ethics in Mobile Youth Work

## Ethical and professional principles

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### Ethical Principles

#### **Treat young people with respect**

- Valuing each young person and acting in a way that does not exploit or discriminate against them on the basis of ethnicity, religion, gender, ability or sexual orientation.
- Explaining the nature and limits of confidentiality and emphasising that confidential information given for one purpose should not be used to achieve another purpose without the young person's consent - except in situations where there is clear evidence of dangerous situations to which the young person, youth worker, other person or community may be exposed.

#### **Respect and promote the right of young people to make their own decisions and choices**

- Raising young people's awareness of the many decisions and choices they can make and discussing and debating the implications of the choices in each individual case.
- Providing opportunities for young people to develop their capacity and confidence in decision-making by participating in decision-making bodies as well as working with youth workers in decision-making.
- Respecting young people's choices and views as long as their own or others' well-being or legitimate interests are not threatened.

#### **Promote and ensure the well-being and safety of young people**

- Taking responsibility for risk assessment and safety management of work and activities involving young people
- Ensuring that their own skills and those of the employees and volunteers for whom they are responsible are sufficient for the tasks undertaken
- Warning authorities and taking action if work-related risks are deemed to exist
- Bringing to the attention of the employer, or if this proves ineffective, to those in power or ultimately to the general public, activities or policies of the employer which could seriously jeopardise the interests or safety of young people.
- Being aware of the need to find a balance between avoiding unnecessary risks and allowing and encouraging young people to take part in challenging educational activities.

# Ethics in Mobile Youth Work

## Ethical principles

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### **Contribute to promoting social justice for young people and society at large**

- Promoting fair and just behaviour and condemning discriminatory actions and attitudes directed towards young people, peers and others
- Encouraging young people to respect and value difference and diversity, particularly in the context of a multicultural society.
- Drawing attention to unfair policies and seeking ways to change them.
- Promoting the participation of all young people, and especially those who are generally discriminated against, in youth work, in public structures and in society in general.
- Encouraging young people and others to work together to solve problems that concern them all.

### **Professional Principles**

### **Set boundaries between personal and professional life**

- Recognising the tensions between a supportive developmental and emotional relationship with young people and the need to maintain a professional distance.
- Taking steps not to develop close personal, particularly sexual, relationships with young people with whom you work as this may be against the law, exploitative or lead to preferential treatment. If such a relationship develops, the Youth Worker concerned should report it to the supervisor for appropriate action.
- Avoiding involvement in activities for personal gain or accepting gifts or favours from young people or those in the community as this may compromise professional integrity.
- Avoiding behaviour outside working hours which can undermine the confidence of young people and the wider community in youth work.

### **Be aware that young people, parents, guardians, employers, funders, society in general and others rely on you**

- Being aware that holding responsibilities towards different groups can lead to conflict and taking responsibility for seeking appropriate advice and making decisions in such cases.
- Being open and honest in all matters concerning young people, enabling them to access information and make choices and decisions for their lives in general and regarding their participation in youth activities.

# Ethics in Mobile Youth Work

## Ethical principles

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- Ensuring that what you do as a youth worker is in line with the law.
- Ensuring that the resources under the youth worker's control are distributed fairly, in accordance with the principles of youth work, and that the tasks undertaken are carried out as efficiently as possible.
- Reporting to the appropriate authorities any suspicion of a young person who may be at risk of harm or danger, particularly of a sexual nature or physical abuse.
- Actively seeking ways to cooperate with colleagues and professionals in other agencies.

### **Develop and maintain the skills required by the job**

- Taking on only those tasks or responsibilities for which the youth worker has the necessary skills, knowledge and support.
- Seeking feedback from beneficiaries and colleagues on the quality of the work carried out and continuously improving skills and knowledge.
- Recognising when new skills and knowledge are needed and seeking relevant training and education.

### **Encourage and engage in ethical debate when working with young people**

- Bringing attention to the youth worker's personal values and how they relate to the ethical principles of youth work
- Re-examining these principles, engaging in reflection and discussion with colleagues and contributing to the learning process within the organisation.
- Bringing attention to potential conflicts between personal and professional values and between the rights and interests of different individuals and between the ethical principles set out in the code of conduct.
- Recognising the importance of ongoing reflection and debate and seeing this code of conduct as a working document that needs to be constantly debated.

### **Actively discuss, evaluate and re-negotiate these principles in the workplace and ensure their implementation**

- Ensuring that colleagues, employers and young people are aware of the existence of this code of conduct
- Being prepared to discuss difficult ethical issues in the light of the principles developed in this document and contributing to the interpretation and development of practical applications.
- Being prepared to challenge colleagues or organisations whose actions or policies are contrary to the principles stated above.



# 10

## Dream Mobile Youth Centre

This chapter presents the vision of a “Dream Mobile Youth Centre” created by young people during an international youth exchange. It explores their ideas on staff, equipment, locations, activities, and motivations. The chapter highlights what young people value most: accessibility, inclusion, safety, and creativity. It also reflects their realistic views on implementation and sustainability. Ultimately, it portrays young people as active co-designers of youth work.

# 10

## Dream Mobile Youth Centre The perspective of young people

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From 2nd to 8th September 2025, Berlin became a vibrant laboratory of ideas, encounters and creativity, hosting the international youth exchange “**Festival of Mobile Youth Centres**”, which brought together 24 young people from Germany, Belgium, Romania and Italy.

Within this dynamic environment, participants were invited to design their own **Dream Mobile Youth Centre**. Through three structured sessions, they worked in international teams to create infographics representing their ideal models. What emerged was a rich, coherent and deeply insightful vision of what young people believe a Mobile Youth Centre should be, and, above all, why it matters.

### ●) Who is involved (Staff)

At the heart of every Dream Mobile Youth Centre imagined by the participants stands a diverse and well-prepared team. Young people clearly expressed that the quality of relationships defines the quality of the space. They envisioned teams composed of:

- Local and international youth workers
- Gender-balanced staff
- Professionals with backgrounds in psychology, social work, sign language and first aid
- At least two team members holding a driving licence

Beyond formal qualifications, participants highlighted **the importance of human qualities and soft skills**. Staff should be friendly, welcoming, creative and approachable. They should act as positive role models and be capable of facilitating activities in an engaging and inclusive way.

### ●) What it has (Equipment and Materials)

The Dream Mobile Youth Centre is imagined as a well-equipped, multifunctional space, capable of adapting to different interests, ages and contexts. Participants envisioned a wide range of materials, including:

# Dream Mobile Youth Centre

## The perspective of young people

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Music equipment



Gaming Consoles



Books, Board Games



Sport equipment



Yoga mats



Mobile kitchen



Arts and crafts



Movie projections



Tables and chairs



First aid kits



Informational Leaflets



Water, snacks

A key concept repeatedly mentioned was **modularity**: equipment should be adaptable, easy to transport and allow the space to be adapted according to the activity. This reflects a clear understanding of **mobility not as a limitation, but as a creative advantage**.

### ●) Where it is (Locations)

For the young participants, a Mobile Youth Centre truly fulfils its mission only if it is present across diverse environments. Their vision includes:

- Both rural and urban areas
- Open public spaces such as squares and parks
- Schools, especially through activities during school breaks

This reveals a strong awareness that **access is not equal everywhere** and that mobility is a powerful tool to reduce geographical and social barriers, especially for young people living in remote or underserved areas.

# Dream Mobile Youth Centre

## The perspective of young people

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### What it offers (Activities)

The Dream Mobile Youth Centre is, above all, a place of doing, experimenting and expressing. The participants imagined a **broad spectrum of activities**, spanning from leisure to education:

- Arts and crafts
- Sports and physical activities
- Board games and console gaming
- Creative and experimental workshops
- Cooking sessions
- Jam sessions and karaoke
- Movie nights
- Counselling (career and psychological support)
- Intercultural activities
- Financial, sexual and political education
- Open space for participant-led ideas and proposals

What stands out is the **balance between playing and learning**, and between entertainment and personal development. For young people, fun is not separate from learning; it is often the gateway to deeper reflection, dialogue and empowerment.

### Why it exists (Motivation)

When reflecting on the motivation behind the Dream Mobile Youth Centre, participants articulated a vision that goes far beyond the simple provision of activities. According to them, a Mobile Youth Centre exists to:

- Build community
- Offer learning opportunities
- Support civic education
- Empower young people
- Provide a safe and inclusive space

# Dream Mobile Youth Centre

## The perspective of young people

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These considerations demonstrate that young people see the Mobile Youth Centre as a **social and educational actor, not merely as a recreational service**. Safety, inclusion and empowerment are not perceived as abstract concepts, but as concrete needs rooted in their everyday experiences.

### How it works (Implementation)

Participants also paid close attention to the practical functioning of their dream centre. They imagine a structure that is:

- Easily recognisable
- Friendly, colourful and inviting
- Based on well-planned activities
- Able to operate across multiple locations
- Actively promoted
- Supported by fundraising
- Capable of hosting indoor activities
- Powered by sustainable solutions such as solar panels and generators

This operational vision reflects a strong sense of responsibility and realism. **Young people did not design an abstract utopia**, but a centre that can actually function within real logistical, financial and environmental constraints.

### Shape and Design

Almost all groups imagined the physical form of their Dream Mobile Youth Centre as a van, a moving hub capable of hosting people while offering generous storage space. **The van symbolises both freedom of movement and stability of presence**: it arrives, sets up, creates encounters and then moves on, leaving behind connections and memories.

# Dream Mobile Youth Centre

## The perspective of young people

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### Beyond the Dream

The Dream Mobile Youth Centre designed during the exchange is not only a creative exercise. **It is a collective manifesto of how young people want to be reached, supported and empowered.**

Their vision is centred around accessibility, inclusion, creativity, professionalism and trust. It reflects a deep understanding of the fact that youth work is not only about activities, but about relationships, participation and shared responsibility.

Through this process, young participants were not merely beneficiaries of a programme: **they became co-designers of youth work itself.**

Their dream is also a call to organisations, educators and policymakers: to listen more closely to the voices of young people and **to build Mobile Youth Centres not only for young people, but genuinely with them.**



# 11

## Lessons Learned

This chapter presents practical lessons drawn from concrete Mobile Youth Work experiences across different European contexts. It highlights what increases participation, trust, and educational impact in both rural and urban settings. Key themes include continuity, mobility, youth responsibility, and community embeddedness. Concrete examples demonstrate how Mobile Youth Work overcomes isolation and builds lasting relationships.

## Lessons Learned

### from mobile youth work in rural and urban areas

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- ) **Regular presence breaks initial barriers**

This lesson comes from the school-based outreach work of the Mobile Youth Centre Langer See (Germany), where youth workers are committed to being present in the same schools once a week, always on the same day and at the same time. With only simple materials such as balls, board games and tea, they observed that regularity was more effective than complex programming. After a few weeks, young people stopped perceiving the team as external visitors and began to see them as a stable part of their school environment. This continuity created trust and made participation in afternoon activities more likely.
- ) **School break activities as a first access strategy**

Also at Mobile Youth Centre Langer See, presence during school breaks proved to be an extremely effective low-threshold access tool. Once a week, youth workers entered the schoolyard during recess with sports equipment and drinks. In a single break, they could reach dozens of young people at the same time, observe peer dynamics, and identify both active groups and isolated young people. Many young people who later attended the Mobile Youth Centre in the afternoon first met the team during these school break activities.
- ) **Personalised invitations increase participation**

In Stoumont (rural eastern Belgium), a municipality with only 29 inhabitants per km<sup>2</sup> and very limited public transport, participation was initially low. The project team therefore introduced personalised postcard invitations. One week before each activity, every young person aged 12–18 received a postcard with their name in their home mailbox. On average, about 35 young people per village were reached in this way. Participation increased significantly because young people felt directly addressed rather than generically informed.
- ) **Youth take responsibility when given real decision-making power**

After the first Belgian youth exchange in Berlin, the Belgian group created a permanent youth coordination group called the “Team Caravan.”

## Lessons Learned

### from mobile youth work in rural and urban areas

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This group took charge of concrete decisions: what materials should be placed inside the caravan, how to reach other young people, and when to schedule activities. This shift from participation to shared governance transformed young people from users into co-managers. The result was higher continuity, stronger identification with the project and a clear sense of ownership.

#### ●) **Learning happens through making mistakes**

Within the Belgian Mobile Youth Work context, young people were entrusted with organising concrete events such as village parties and community evenings. They got access to the space, received a limited budget and technical support, but the organisation remained theirs. Mistakes in planning, timing or communication were accepted as part of the educational process. Over time, young people showed visible growth in self-confidence, improved teamwork and a stronger ability to compromise and reorganise after setbacks.

#### ●) **Mobility is essential to reach isolated communities**

The Romanian project tINEMOBIL, the first Mobile Youth Centre in the country, shows in concrete numbers how essential mobility is. In 2024 alone, the project delivered 60 activities, in 10 different rural villages, reaching over 400 young participants, and involving more than 50 volunteers while driving over 2,500 kilometres.

These results clearly demonstrate that a mobile structure allows the project to reach very distant and potentially isolated young people. Mobility is not an added value here, it is the condition for access.

#### ●) **International volunteers strengthen both learning and outreach**

In tINEMOBIL, international volunteers from the European Solidarity Corps worked together with local volunteers. For rural communities, the presence of international youth increased curiosity and participation; for volunteers, it offered real non-formal education in challenging territorial contexts. The collaboration strengthened intercultural learning and helped stabilise the weekly delivery of activities across multiple villages.

## Lessons Learned

### from mobile youth work in rural and urban areas

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#### ●) **Off-site Youth Work Works When Embedded in Local Institutions**

In Maneciu (Romania), Mobile Youth Work took place not through a van but inside the communal library. Every week, international volunteers organised one-hour activities hosted by the library. Participation varied between 3 and 18 young people per session. The clear distribution of roles—volunteers proposing activities, library staff in charge of materials and hosting, and municipal support—proved that youth work can also be “mobile in function” when embedded in trusted local institutions.

#### ●) **Itinerant projects generate strong personal and social impact**

The H3 itinerant youth project in Sicily (Italy) operated as a long-distance Mobile Youth Work action lasting 59 days and crossing more than 20 cities and rural villages. Volunteers combined non-formal education, environmental actions, health promotion and cultural heritage activities while constantly moving. This intense mobility fostered strong development of leadership, teamwork and communication skills, while also generating visible benefits for local communities through clean-up actions, health campaigns and cultural initiatives.

#### ●) **Research and practical tools improve quality**

Within a bilateral cooperation between Latvian and Romanian organisations, partners conducted two international study visits, an online training course on Mobile Youth Work, several meetings for sharing good practices, and research on young people’s interests.

These activities led to the creation of a practical Mobile Youth Work toolkit - “Be Mobile Kit”, showing how structured research and tool development increase quality and transferability.

#### ●) **Visibility during community events legitimises the service**

In both Belgium and Romania, the use of mobile units during school parties, village fairs, sporting events and youth exchanges significantly increased public recognition. In Stoumont, for example, the caravan became a visible presence during local celebrations, contributing to the organisation of the first Belgian Mobile Youth Centre meeting.



# 12

## Benefits of supporting Mobile Youth Work

This section provides recommendations on how Mobile Youth Work can be implemented, recognised, and supported.

## Benefits of supporting Mobile Youth Work Opportunities

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**Mobile Youth Centres bring the benefits of youth work directly to young people wherever they are.** In this way, they reach those who usually do not visit youth centres and who often lack structured social learning opportunities or support outside their families. Mobile Youth Centres offer youth work services that help young people develop their competencies, strengthen positive daily routines, and lower barriers to participation for young people who may be hesitant to approach formal institutions.

**They create a safe and supportive environment in public spaces** and offer activities through which young people can express themselves, be creative, engage in physical activities, and connect with peers. **The presence of professional youth workers** also helps to de-escalate conflicts, reduce vandalism, and contribute to cleaner and safer public spaces. Young people gain access to social life, strengthen peer relationships, and receive early support when problems such as school difficulties, mental health issues or conflicts arise. **Mobile Youth Centres also act as a bridge to other support systems**, such as stationary youth centres, counselling services, schools or health services.

Over time, **these activities support community-building and foster a sense of ownership among young people over their neighbourhood.** This increased engagement helps young people become active contributors to their surroundings, encourages democratic behaviours, and leads to greater acceptance of youth by neighbours and the wider community. The regular presence of youth workers in public spaces also provides municipalities with direct feedback on local developments and the needs of young people.

From an economic perspective, **Mobile Youth Centres activate underused public spaces, reduce costs related to vandalism, and strengthen local businesses and communities**, including through participation in programmes such as Erasmus+ or European Solidarity Corps. By promoting healthy lifestyles and supporting educational pathways, Mobile Youth Centres contribute to reduced healthcare costs, lower risks of long-term unemployment, and increased employability and future tax revenue.

Politically, **Mobile Youth Centres increase the visibility of youth services** and help reduce social tensions, which supports a more positive perception of decision-makers.

## Benefits of supporting Mobile Youth Work Opportunities

Over the medium term, **they strengthen trust in local institutions and improve cooperation between sectors** such as education, social services and community organisations. In the long term, they foster sustained political participation and democratic engagement of young people into adulthood, while also contributing to the prevention of social exclusion and radicalisation.

By bringing publicly funded resources directly to young people, Mobile Youth Centres ensure accessibility, visibility and effective use. **They create vibrant, inclusive public spaces and support young people in becoming active, healthy, engaged, and responsible members of their communities.**

	Short-term	Medium-term	Long-term
Social	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reaching young people where they are;</li> <li>• lowering barriers to participation;</li> <li>• offering meaningful activities.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strengthening peer relationships;</li> <li>• providing access to social learning, education and counselling;</li> <li>• early detection and support for problems;</li> <li>• bridging to other support systems (youth centres, counselling, schools, health services).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stronger community building and neighbourhood cohesion;</li> <li>• increased youth engagement and ownership of public spaces;</li> <li>• improved mental health and reduced social exclusion; greater acceptance of young people by neighbours.</li> </ul>
Public space and safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Creating safe and secure environments;</li> <li>• conflict de-escalation;</li> <li>• reducing vandalism; contributing to cleaner and safer public spaces.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stabilising young people's presence in public spaces;</li> <li>• promoting constructive group norms.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sustained positive use of spaces;</li> <li>• shared responsibility and long-term improvement of public areas.</li> </ul>

## Benefits of supporting Mobile Youth Work Opportunities

	Short-term	Medium-term	Long-term
Economic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Activating underused public spaces;</li> <li>• directly supporting local businesses and communities.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enabling cooperation through programmes such as Erasmus+ or European Solidarity Corps;</li> <li>• supporting educational pathways and school retention.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promoting healthier lifestyles and reducing public health expenditure;</li> <li>• increasing competencies and employability;</li> <li>• reducing long-term welfare dependency;</li> <li>• increasing future tax revenue;</li> <li>• enhancing urban attractiveness.</li> </ul>
Political	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increasing visibility of youth services;</li> <li>• reducing social tensions;</li> <li>• improving the perception of decision-makers; providing municipalities with immediate feedback on youth needs.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strengthening trust in local decision-makers;</li> <li>• improving cross-sector cooperation (education, health, social services).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Long-term political participation and democratic engagement of young people;</li> <li>• preventing radicalisation;</li> <li>• establishing sustainable youth participation structures.</li> </ul>
Resource use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bringing publicly funded resources directly to young people;</li> <li>• enabling accessible and effective use.</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensuring sustainable, inclusive and efficient use of community resources.</li> </ul>

## **CREDITS**

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### **PROJECT COORDINATION AND MANAGEMENT**

Chiara Maggi - Roter Baum Berlin

### **EDITORIAL TEAM AND CONTENT DEVELOPMENT**

Martin Kleinfelder - Roter Baum Berlin

Juliane Krafft - Roter Baum Berlin

Chiara Maggi - Roter Baum Berlin

Christian Flemming - Roter Baum Berlin

Mario Messina - Strauss APS

Dario Palermo - Strauss APS

Anthony Santangelo - Strauss APS

Dorian Kempeneers - Le Fagotin asbl

Denis Joris - Le Fagotin asbl

Mihai-Cosmin Catană - Curba de Cultură

Iulian Lungu - Curba de Cultură

### **GRAPHIC DESIGN AND LAYOUT**

Chiara Maggi - Roter Baum Berlin

### **PROOFREADING**

Miriam Schmelter - Roter Baum Berlin

Juliette Cayrel - Roter Baum Berlin

Maria Vrbesic - Roter Baum Berlin

Laura Dinu - Roter Baum Berlin

Rebecca Epple - Roter Baum

### **PROJECT COMMUNICATION AND WEBSITE**

Dario Palermo - Strauss APS

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