



## **Tool B**

### **Youth Workers for Mobile Youth Work**

This tool was developed within the Erasmus+ project “Mobile Youth Work – Engaging Youth and Communities”.

It provides a competency framework for professionals and volunteers involved in Mobile Youth Work, presenting the key roles, competencies, and approaches needed to develop inclusive and effective mobile youth services.

## Mobile Youth Work

Engaging Youth and Communities

Promoting the recognition of Mobile Youth Centre initiatives



### Learn more about the project:

Scan the QR code to access additional resources and updates.

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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## 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.

# A

## 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.

# B

## 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.

# C

## 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.

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