



Drawing on the experience of our European partner network, as well as established practice and research, we have identified key principles that define what **Mobile Youth Work** should be and what it requires.

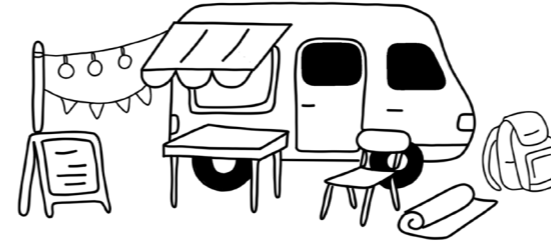
Mobile Youth Work should be:

- **Universal:** Mobile Youth Centres must be accessible to all young people, especially those who need support in their education and development.
- **Free:** Mobile Youth Centres should be free of charge. Participation is voluntary and without obligation.
- **Educational:** Mobile Youth Centres offer learning experiences at different levels.
- **Welcoming:** Young people feel welcome and free to join the centre's activities. They feel taken seriously and can actively shape what happens.
- **Safe:** Young people are protected from harm by trained professionals.

This handout was developed in the framework of the project "Mobile Youth Work. Engaging Youth and Communities: Promoting the Recognition of Mobile Youth Centre Initiatives".

The project was co-funded by the **Erasmus+ Programme** of the European Union. The content reflects the views only of the authors. Neither the European Union nor the granting authority can be held responsible for it.

For more information:
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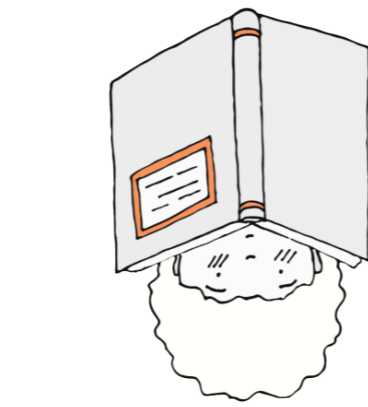
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WHAT DOES IT DO?

A Mobile Youth Centre:

1. **Brings** youth work directly to those who cannot attend a fixed youth centre
2. **Encourages** young people to move beyond isolation at home and offers a safe space
3. **Helps** reduce juvenile delinquency
4. **Reduces** exposure to risky or dangerous situations
5. **Promotes** civic engagement and participation among young people
6. **Provides** services in areas with limited or no public transport
7. **Complements** formal education with practical and social learning
8. **Reduces** isolation and strengthens social skills



Every young person has the right to be supported in their education and development (Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Article 26).
Building on this statement, we claim that open youth work, as an informal and open to all form of learning, can provide essential support for young people's personal development. Within the EU Youth Dialogue process, 11 European Youth Goals have been identified.
As highlighted in the European Youth Goals:
"Young people are underrepresented in decision-making processes that affect them. Their engagement is crucial for democracy, and they need access to physical spaces in their communities to support their personal, cultural, and political development."
For youth work to be accessible to all young people, local services are essential. Where permanent youth centres are lacking or difficult to reach, mobile youth centres create equivalent opportunities and help close existing gaps in provision.

WHAT IS MOBILE YOUTH WORK?

Mobile Youth Work brings youth services directly to the places where young people live, meet, and spend their free time. Instead of a fixed youth centre, a **mobile unit**, such as a van, caravan, bus, container, or boat, visits neighbourhoods, villages, schoolyards, or public spaces **on a regular basis**.

It offers an **educational space in motion**, combining information, counselling, learning, leisure, and participation. Mobile youth work teams build relationships with participants, create safe and inclusive spaces, and connect young people to local services and communities.

The structure, equipment, and programme of a mobile youth centre are always **adapted to local contexts**, urban or rural, central squares or remote villages, and the needs that arise from them.

In this way, mobile youth centres reduce barriers, reach underserved groups, and transform public spaces into **flexible youth centres**.



MOBILE YOUTH CENTRES

Mobile Youth Centres provide communities with a flexible and reliable way to offer youth work, especially where a permanent youth centre is not feasible. They bring **safe, barrier-free, and welcoming spaces** directly into neighbourhoods and villages, making youth services accessible even in remote or underserved areas.

Because they can **adapt to different contexts** and locations, Mobile Youth Centres respond quickly to local needs and reach young people who might otherwise have no access to youth work services. They increase visibility in the community, strengthen social cohesion, and help prevent isolation, conflict, or risky behaviour.

Young people actively shape the space: together with youth workers, they create activities that support personal, social, and intergenerational development. The mobile setting encourages participation, creativity, and shared responsibility. To ensure continuity, fairness, and long-term impact, Mobile Youth Centre initiatives should be supported through stable agreements and **sustainable funding structures** in line with national and local regulations.

BENEFITS

	Short-Term	Medium-Term	Long-Term
Social	Reaching young people where they are; offering safe spaces and activities.	Access to social learning, counselling and peer relationships; early support.	Stronger community ties; increased youth engagement; reduced exclusion.
Public Space	Safer, cleaner public spaces; reduced conflict and vandalism.	More stable youth presence; more positive group behaviour.	Long-term positive use of public spaces; increased shared responsibility.
Economic	Activation of neglected spaces; support for local businesses.	Improved educational pathways; participation in programmes.	Lower health and welfare costs; increased employability and tax revenue.
Political	Greater visibility of youth services; better image of decision-makers.	Increased trust in local institutions; improved cooperation between sectors.	Long-term democratic participation; prevention of radicalisation.

RESOURCES

Mobile Youth Centres must be tailored to the specific needs and conditions of each local context. **Youth workers are the key resource**, as they take local circumstances and young people's needs into account, shaping both the services and the structure of the Mobile Youth Centre.

The **choice of structure** - van, minibus, caravan, motorhome, bus, container, or houseboat - depends on local space, access routes, terrain, licences, and available budget. **There is no one-size-fits-all solution:** narrow streets, long distances, or waterways all require different approaches. Equipment should remain practical and relevant, for example, sports gear, media tools, kitchen equipment, or simple seating solutions.

This level of adaptability requires **adequate financial resources**, both for initial investment and long-term operation. Sustainable funding and **institutional support** are therefore essential to ensure continuity and quality.

A Mobile Youth Centre works best when its structure and equipment are not standardised, but carefully adapted to local realities.

- **Social learning:** Young people learn from and about each other. They practise how to interact and behave in different situations.
- **Mindful of the environment:** The Mobile Youth Centre is designed for a specific context or area and planned to effectively reach the young people who live there.
- **Sustainable:** The Mobile Youth Centre should set an example in environmental sustainability and promote innovative, sustainable solutions.
- **Mindful of the community:** The staff of the Mobile Youth Centre respect local customs, rules, and values and work in alignment with the host community.

