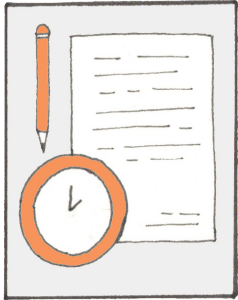




Space, time and conditions

Facilities and resources



Participants were asked to answer some questions to find out what their ideal youth centre is and how it should look, not only aesthetically but also emotionally. Through the collaboration of youth workers, social workers and partners — here are the results.

About the foundations and priorities of a youth centre, from the point of view of the youth workers, firstly we have their perspective on space: one that brings young people together, is welcoming, has identity, often with a history that is enhanced. However, to stop at space would be a mistake, just as to stop at the concession of a space can be a problem. Space is necessary but it is not everything. Space is a centre of gravity only if it is in sync with matters of time and instruments. The times vary from country to country: we are talking about public times of concession, authorisation or recognition of a youth centre. Keeping these public times together with the times of activities, the times of the involvement and engagement of young people, the emerging needs and therefore the expectations from a youth centre is the real challenge. On this point, public policies and public administration can make the difference.

In this context, the wish to have a longer contract for a youth centre is at the centre of this reflection. It is in fact a common desire to have longer contracts (at least 5 years) because we believe that this period of time is essential to establish and create a bond with the young people, the community and the neighborhood. Not only that, but the possibility of a long-term contract makes it also possible to plan ahead for future activities, to imagine the development of the youth centre and to dream big.

Reasoning about times and tools for the development of a youth centre also means reasoning about the concept of shared ownership. When does an asset become a common good? When there is constant work on the territory, when people become familiar with the space and participate in the proposed activities, but also when do users become promoters of events and initiatives themselves. This process needs time and once again the concept of time is always at the centre of our attention. In the second place is the desire to be able to be autonomous in making decisions. Our dream is to get longer concession contracts and the full trust of the policy makers. Society should provide youth-led physical facilities and infrastructures called youth spaces defined by being autonomous, open and safe, accessible to all, offering professional support for development and ensuring opportunities for youth participation.