

MANUAL “EUROPEAN PRACTICES ON MOBILE YOUTH WORK AND PRACTICAL GUIDELINES”

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Introduction

Methodology “European practices on Mobile youth work and practical guidelines” is a practical manual (publication) on how to organize mobile youth work activities, involving young people, from various backgrounds.

The manual is produced by a partner consortium implementing ka2 strategic partnership project "Mobile youth work: shaping European practices" (No. 2018-3-LT02-KA205-006081) partly funded by the Erasmus + program. The publication is based on a process of piloting mobile youth work activities in 2019-2020 in Lithuania, Latvia, Bulgaria, Romania and Lithuania.

Manual is providing practical tools how to: make need assessment; collect data about local reality and reality of young people; make youth work service design; practical recommendations and methods for mobile youth work; daily activities of mobile youth work assure ownership of various groups, who will use the services; how to work with the community.

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Disclaimer:

The opinion expressed in this publication, recommendations and conclusions do not necessarily coincide with the position of the European Commissions.

I. WHAT IS YOUTH WORK

How do we understand Youth Work? If you are working with youth, would your work then automatically be defined as youth work?

The European commission defines youth work as having three main characteristics:

- Young people choose to participate
- The work takes place where the young people are
- It recognizes that the young person and the youth worker are partners in a learning process

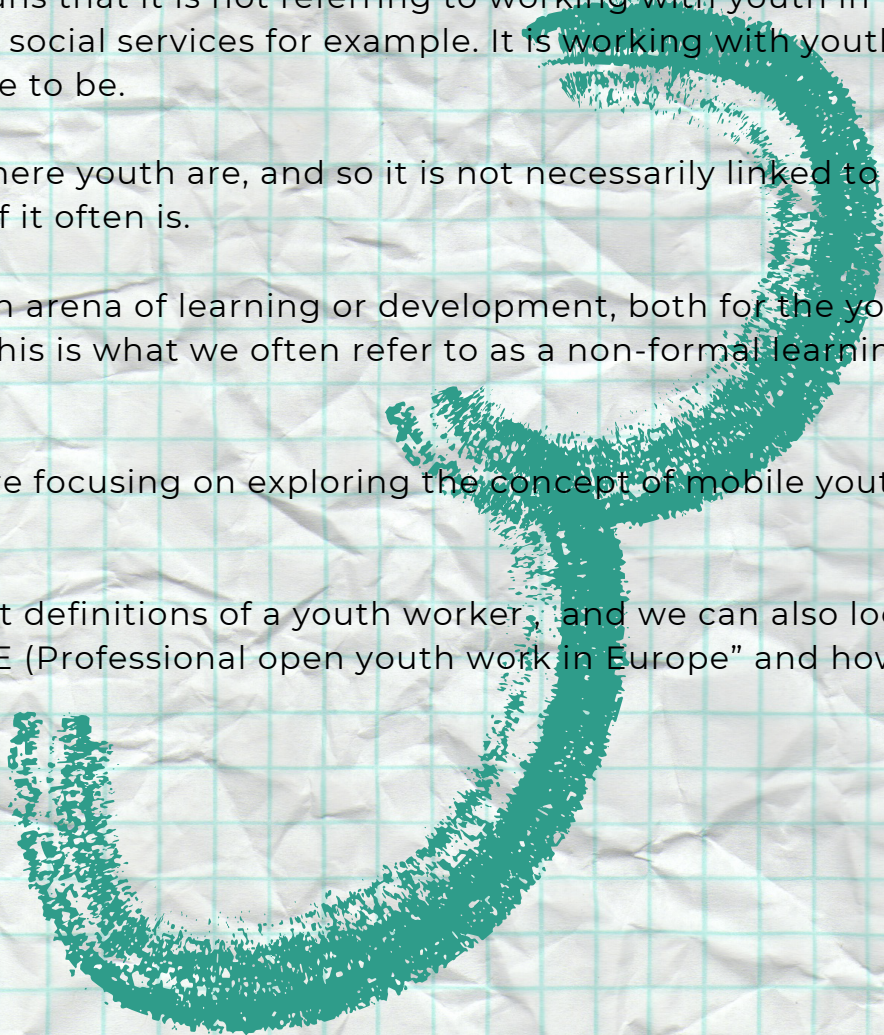
From this we can understand that youth work, or open youth work, as a voluntary practice. This aging means that it is not referring to working with youth in the framework of schools or social services for example. It is working with youth in an arena where they choose to be.

It is also taking place where youth are, and so it is not necessarily linked to a building or place, even if it often is.

It also says that this is an arena of learning or development, both for the youth worker and the youth. This is what we often refer to as a non-formal learning arena.

In this publication we are focusing on exploring the concept of mobile youth work.

There are many different definitions of a youth worker, and we can also look to the organization POYWE (Professional open youth work in Europe" and how they define a youth worker:



“Professional Open Youth Work is a profession that is practised by trained and educated workers who commit to codes of ethics and quality standards and are paid for their work. It is a practice of non-formal and informal learning. It is offered on a universal basis and open for all young people who voluntarily choose to participate. It is based on pedagogical concepts that aim to raise the emancipation and empowerment of young people as well as their critical awareness. Professional Open Youth Work fosters the ability to critically evaluate one’s own individual situation in relation to others and society, applying a variety of methods aimed at the young peoples’ personal and social development and social inclusion, hence empowering them for social change. It especially seeks to support and empower young people that are in a marginalized or vulnerable situation. Its approach is holistic and inclusive of young people, focusing on their talents, potentials and interests, seeing them as an asset and not as a deficit. It provides for a professional stable relationship between young people and youth workers that is based on dialogue and which is not judgemental. It seeks to create a sense of belonging and strengthens resilience in young people. Offers are co-created with the young people, with support from the youth worker. It actively advocates and promotes the interests of young people at all relevant levels”

POYWE, “Professional Open Youth Work Declaration of Principles” 2016

They touch many of the same criteria as the definition from the European commission, but are focusing on the professionals in the field. This definition has also been criticized for not recognizing that youth work also can be done by volunteers or unpaid workers. In our work, we have experienced that youth work can also be practiced by volunteers, and still be practiced in a professional way with quality standards and codes of ethics, and while acknowledging that youth workers are to be seen as professionals, and should be paid for their work. We need to acknowledge that this situation is different for different countries in Europe, and also differs inside the countries.

In our partnership working on this project, we understand youth workers as someone working with youth in a way that has purpose, that youth workers need to develop skills and conduct their work in a professional way, but that this also can, and in some countries are, conducted by organizations delivering youth work via volunteer youth workers.



From this starting point we can further divide youth work into several subcategories:

1. Detached youth work
2. Information and counseling youth work
3. Digital youth work
4. Outreach work
5. Open Youth work
6. Mobile youth work

What is mobile youth work

In this publication we will focus on what mobile youth work looks like, and how it has developed. Our understanding of mobile youth work, lends inspiration from both traditional open youth work, based in youth centers, and from Outreach and detached youth work. Outreach and detached youth work, is a practice of either bringing your services to where young people are (outreach) for example by moving youth youth work services to a park during summertime, or that you deliver your services where youth are, maybe connected to a base, but still delivering services to youth detached from a physical location. This work can be conducted on the streets, on malls or other locations where youth are.

With detached youth work, there has over the years been developed several unique approaches and frameworks, adapted to the reality of delivering youth work in a more fluent environment, where youth has not necessarily invited you in. Based on this detached youth workers spend a lot of time mapping their environment, safeguarding themselves and young people and carefully developing their relationship as a youth worker.

The form of mobile youth work we are discussing here, mobile youth work, has been developed to serve the needs of youth in smaller rural areas and communities, where there might not be a youth population of a size that makes it realistic to establish a permanent youth center. It has developed lending techniques and theory from several other forms of youth work, mainly from open youth work in youth centers, outreach work, and detached youth work. This hybrid approach to youth work has therefore a form that makes it suitable to be defined as a separate form of youth work, even if many aspects of mobile youth work can be recognized from other forms of youth work.

Mobile youth work is in this publication understood as delivering youth work services to young people and enabling young people to participate in activities that are carried out in accordance with their needs in his or her living environment where youth centers do not exist.

Different forms of youth work

Youth work can have many forms, and many objectives. In the introduction we looked at how we could define youth work and youth workers, we will now look more into several subcategories of youth work. You will often find one or more of these forms in a local community, and they may also sometimes overlap.

Open youth work

Is a form of youth work in youth centers based on principles of open youth work. Open youth work is usually done in youth centers, where youth workers and youth interact. It has a low threshold to join; Meaning not requiring any existing competencies to take part in activities, are accessible both physically, economically, and culturally. Youth work is done with individuals and groups and can also address the local community or their stakeholders. This type of youth work is often justified from a social work perspective or a cultural perspective and can also be a mix of these two.

Information youth work and counseling

IProviding young people with information that covers all topics relevant to youth, which is needed by young people and allows them to choose from a wide variety of options and topics. The youth maintains his or her independence and anonymity. This type of youth work is provided by a professional consultant. The role of the youth worker is to analyze the needs of young people, guide and direct them to other institutions who can help to solve issues.

This approach to youth work can be provided online (Eurodesk) and offline. This type of youth work is aimed at providing means for youth to get the support they need, or to find ways to further develop themselves.

Detached / outreach youth work

In detached or outreach youth work, you are working with youth in their non-formal meeting places (ex. Public places, streets, cafes, parks, sports and playgrounds, other). It is typically done in a non-institutional environment, and are mainly provided in cities and towns.

The aim of the youth worker is to help young people to solve their issues between themselves and their surroundings.

Detached youth workers will usually do their work on the streets (sometimes called street youth workers). The aim is to provide support for young people where they are, and are not linked to a physical location (they usually have a office, that could be used for talking to youngsters, but the main activity will not be linked to a physical place)

Outreach youth work is based around bringing services that exist to youth where they are, this could be information, health services or the services of a youth center. The aim of outreach work can both be to provide youth with opportunities where they are, but also to recruit youth to other services.

Mobile youth work

Is a form of youth work where the youth workers are going to the place where young people live (village or residential area) and provide youth work activities in already existing infrastructure (ex. School, library or other) based on the needs of young people. Often done in rural areas, where establishing a full-time youth center could be hard.

Mobile youth workers will often work in several communities at the same time. The youth workers pay a lot of attention in the preparation of their work, having to build relationships not only with youth, but also the local community. They work on a fixed and strict schedule, to create predictable access to youth work. In Germany mobile youth work is managing youth clubs which are run by young people.

Digital youth work

Activities implemented on the social media platforms, internet groups, virtual reality or other platforms. It is using technologies, digital tools and methods, creating opportunity for youth to receive information or take part in activities, which promote personal development, learning, present opportunities for youth in a youth friendly way. This type of youth work can be done in several ways: It could have the form of detached youth work, seeking out young people in their e-environments, or the form of a youth center; a place where youth come to engage in online activities. It can also be hybrid forms (LAN, game centers) or take forms of informational youth work.

Youth work with volunteers

Helping young people to develop personal and social competencies during volunteering activities. Often provided in NGOs or leisure time organizations. It can also be done in festivals or events for youth.

For this to take the form of youth work, it needs a systemic approach to volunteering, working a lot on reflection and personal learning of the volunteer. The youth worker will focus on recognition of learning outcomes of the volunteer and creating learning opportunities.

Youth policy development – youth participation

Aims at supporting young people in representative processes, where young people contribute to solving issues which affect their lives. It promotes youth issues and advocates for the needs and interests of youth. This can be done both in existing structures for youth participation, or in ad-hoc groups related to topics or groups of young people..



II. WHAT IS THE AIM OF MOBILE YOUTH WORK?



In general, the aim of mobile youth work is no different from the mission of Open youth work- to ensure meaningful leisure, education and social integration of young people.

On top of that, Mobile youth work takes into consideration individual needs of young people living in the area concerned, and aims to enable young people to take an active part in young people's area of residence.



The tasks of mobile youth work:

- to create conditions for a safe, open, informal, non-binding environment in which a young person can be with friends and communicate with peers;
- to help young people to get involved in the infrastructure of youth work closest to them (open youth centers, open youth spaces, etc.), voluntary activities and the activities of youth organizations;
- to enable young people to get involved in community activities by building a relationship of trust between the young person and the community;
- to develop social skills of young people;
- counseling young people or mediating between different organizations, institutions and individuals in different life situations;
- to acquaint young people with positive leisure activities, learning opportunities through outreach activities (eg trainings, camps, seminars), to involve them in intercultural education, prevention (eg from harmful habits, bullying, etc.) activities.

Mobile youth work strategies

Across Europe 3 main strategies of mobile youth work provision are being used. These strategies are also widely used for business or public service provision, used from the sixties.

Strategy 1

Mobile youth work is provided in a youth center. The young people are driven by busses or cars to the youth center and back on a regular basis from rural areas, small towns. Arguments for this strategy: the infrastructure of youth centres can be used by a bigger number of young people and young people from all around the wider territory are connected. Drawbacks of this strategy: the communities are based in all directions around the youth centre, several means of transport are needed to provide these services and also young people don't get youth work activities in their community. This strategy is being used by banks, hospitals and schools, organizations that have expensive infrastructure, of qualified specialists.



Strategy 2

Mobile youth work is provided in a bus or a truck. The mobile center is traveling around in the community on a regular basis on a fixed schedule. Arguments for this strategy: services are provided in the communities where young people live, this service is interesting because it is not typical. Drawback of this strategy: the bus can not be parked at any place (not all places can be entered with the bus. The bus needs technical checks each 6 months, you need a professional bus driver, bus space is limited, so only 10-15 young people can take part. You need a toilet for activities and also electricity to connect equipment. This strategy is being used by banks, hospitals, laboratories, shops on wheels.

Strategy 3

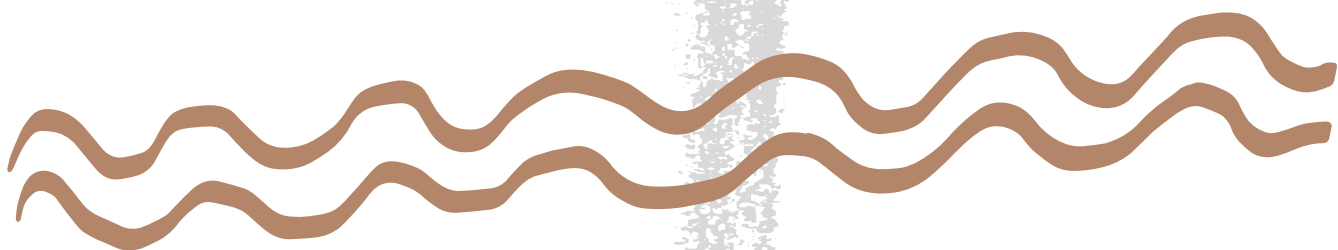
Mobile youth work is provided in existing infrastructure in local communities (ex. libraries, community houses, schools). The youth workers travel in a car, where all their equipment and gear is carried with. Arguments for this strategy: activities are provided in the communities where young people live. Basic equipment is being used. Drawback of this strategy: is implemented once in a week or two. Who uses this strategy: free lance educators, sports coaches and other specialists.

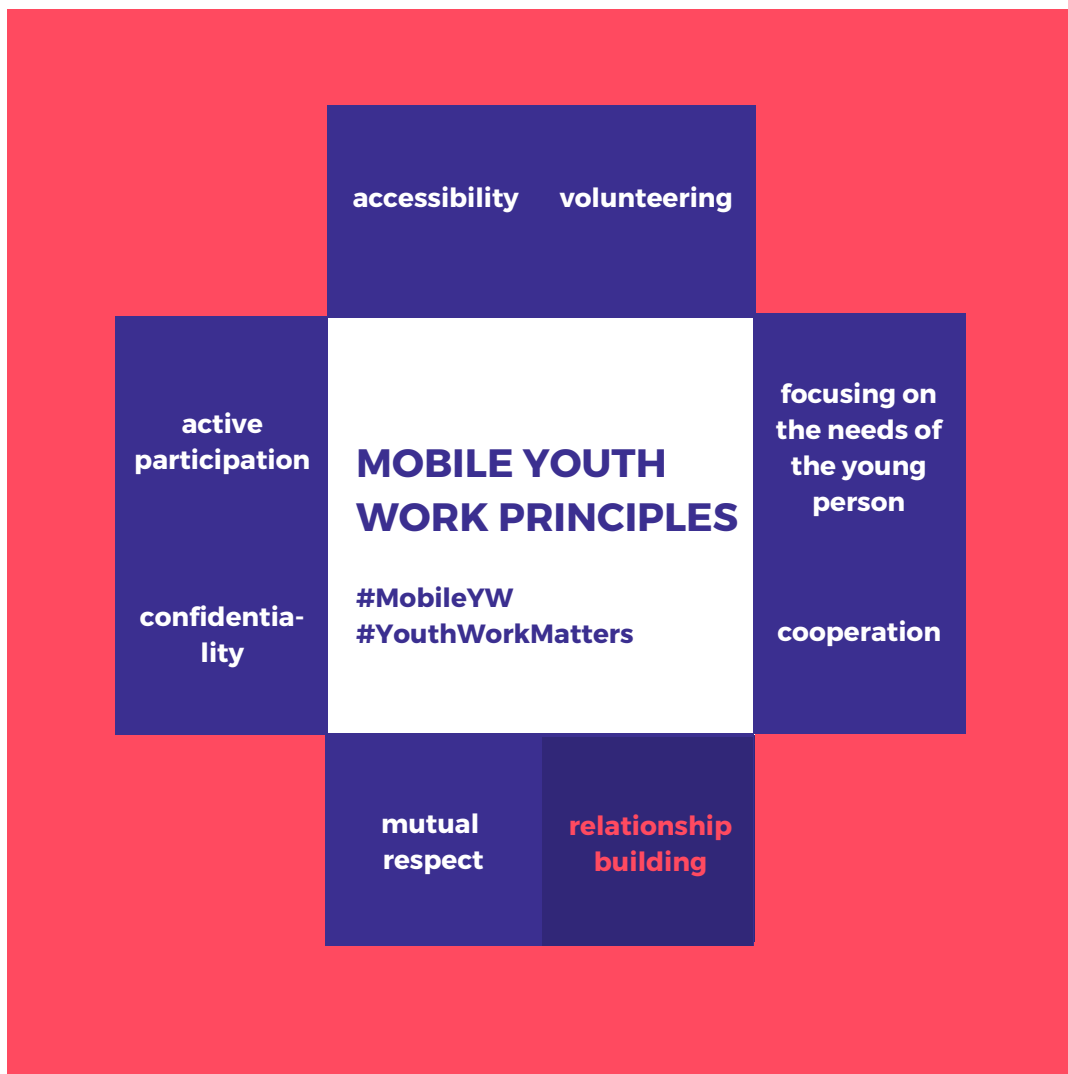
Mobile youth work principles

The mobile youth work provisions further support implementation of youth policy on the local level and allows to provide youth services to a larger number of young people. While planning and implementing the mobile youth work services, it is important to follow certain principles:

- a)** accessibility - the activities and offers of the youth work organization should not depend on the young person's membership in the youth work organization, there should be no participation fees, requirements to be able or able to perform youth work activities, or other factors that may limit young people's participation in activity opportunities. All mobile youth activities are carried out in the free time of young people in an accessible place. Information on mobile youth work activities must be disseminated through means and methods accessible to young people and the community;

- b)** volunteering - all engagements and involvements made during youth work activities (including communication with a youth worker) shall be based on young people's volunteer choice
- c)** focusing on the needs of the young person - mobile youth workers shall take into account the needs of young people, their life situation and conditions, and work with young people to address issues that are of interest to and relevance to the young person;
- d)** cooperation - a mobile youth worker shall promote cooperation between institutions, organizations, state and municipal institutions and shall engage in existing cross-sectoral or interdepartmental cooperation;
- e)** relationship building - mobile work with young people builds a relationship of trust between the mobile youth worker and the young person. The task of a mobile worker is to establish a relationship with the young person, focusing on the young person's daily life and interests;
- f)** mutual respect - mobile youth workers must respect the lifestyle chosen by young people, which may differ from their personal values.
- g)** active participation means involving young people in the joint decision-making of young people and those involved in mobile work with young people. The active participation of the young person is the WAY and the expected RESULT of the mobile work with young people;
- h)** confidentiality - with the assistance provided by staff involved in mobile work with young people and the personal information shared by young people is not disclosed, collected, passed on to other institutions and third parties without the young person's consent.





Mobile work with young people must follow the following main stages:

- a) the stage of theoretical and practical research of the environment. This phase is designed to get acquainted with the history, social, economic and cultural context of the specific area where mobile work with young people is planned;
- b) study of the situation of young people. This stage is intended to get acquainted with the environment, culture of the area where mobile work with young people is planned, to distinguish groups of young people, to find out the prevailing communication between young people, to mark gatherings of young people;

- c) introduction and employee identification phase. This stage is designed to meet as many young people as possible and explain to them the tasks of the mobile worker;
- d) the relationship strengthening phase. This phase is designed to build a relationship of mutual trust between the young person and the mobile worker;
- e) support and intervention phase. This stage is designed for targeted action with youth groups: to promote dialogue between young people and the community, to carry out individual work;
- f) the stage of completion of the process. This stage is intended to complete the processes, to evaluate the activities of mobile work with youth, to change employees - to help a new employee to adapt.

Mobile work with young people is carried out on the basis of three forms of social work, which can be implemented separately or in combination with each other:

- individual work with youth;
- working with youth groups;
- working with the community.

III. TOOLS FOR MAPPING LOCAL COMMUNITIES

In the framework of Mobile Youth work, with Mapping we define the social-environmental analysis that aims to provide necessary information to carefully plan Mobile Youth Work activities. In particular, it is important to well-know the context of the area where activities will take place and if there is a real need for this kind of approach. In general, the information gained through mapping and reconnaissance will inform projects of key contacts and regular meeting places, local issues and assist in building relationships with other support services.

The relevant information that is possible to collect through a mapping process can be summarised in:

- Learn more about a community or area of their community
- Identify service strengths and opportunities
- Identify potential contractors
- Examine the level and quality of services for a particular area or group
- Convene and connect youth organizations; review relationships and the level of collaboration among organizations; identify new ways of working together
- Engage critical community leaders in strategic planning
- Identify expertise that can be shared across programs
- Create a resource directory or database of area services and organizations
- Improve personal connections
- Increase informal connections and networking between programs
- Identify cost-sharing or fund-pooling opportunities; find new funding opportunities or strategies
- Conduct a needs assessment before developing a new program or service
- Establish a common way to group or categorize services and/or profile organizations

Possible sources of information can be both digital or local, it is highly recommended to make a previous analysis through internet or people you may know somebody living in the area, just to have a general overview about the place, the services, current weather, accessibility of the area, but also start to build possible contacts through phone calls or email.

Example of possible local sources:

- Existing youth service staff and service users
- Other local agencies
- Local service directories
- Statistical information
- Local press and media
- Local community groups and forums
- Minutes of local meetings e.g. community council, tenants associations, council and committee meetings
- Libraries, local shops and businesses



Once the logistics are set, before to start the mapping, it is important to plan a strategy with your team (at least two people) that should take into consideration the information already collected, the personalities of the team members and the social environment you expect to meet.

So it can be useful to answer this questions:

What would be good strategies for connecting with people, how should you approach and engage with people you meet? (Enter-strategies)

A kind and respectful approach is always a good start, as well as to adapt the level of your language to the interlocutors in order to be “understandable”. Asking direct questions sometimes can make people feel uncomfortable, so sometimes it can be useful to start a conversation from a different side. If you are going to interact with a group of people, try to understand who the leader is and to get his sort of “authorisation” to enter in places or to ask questions. In general, ask questions that will allow you to keep the conversation alive, the interlocutors feel comfortable and that gives you the data you are seeking for.

When you should exit a situation or engagement? (Exit strategies)

It is suggested to agree on a signal (verbal AND non-verbal) that allows all members of the mapping team to understand that a situation is going side-way or that a member is in danger or in general doesn't think is the moment to end that situation.

In this phase:

DO NOT

- Never be alone, never leave you partner/partners
- If a partner wants to exit, do not disagree (save for evaluation)
- Do not enter situations where you do not feel safe or comfortable
- Do not trespass or invade privacy
- Do not put yourself in harm's way

In case you need to record video or audio, do not forget to plan it according to the current GDPR to ensure privacy and confidentiality.

An accurate mapping can benefit the whole project in short-term since it will give you the chance to design and plan the activities according to the real need of the local youth and community. In a long term perspective, it will allow you to ensure a relevant impact because you will have enough information to prevent risks, adapt the methodology and empower the learning process of the young people participating in the planned Mobile Youth Work activities.

Benefits of mapping can be summarized in:

- Familiarises staff with the local geographic area
- Identifies areas where young people may be contacted
- Can assist in identifying potential contacts
- Assists in highlighting local issues
- Allows staff to develop their profile within the local area
- Assists staff in building co-working relationships
- Forms the basis for agreeing future work activities
- May assist in defining best times/days for shifts
- Pinpoint gaps or redundancies

The need for mapping can be considered as a wider activity than just the identification of where and when young people can be contacted.



IV. CROSS-SECTORAL COOPERATION IN MOBILE YOUTH WORK

By cross-sectoral we generally understand that this is something which is relating to or affecting more than one group, area, or section. This is basically what mobile youth work is about and in order to have its sustainability and holistic impact, it should be in close cooperation with the specific stakeholders where it is taking place. They can be different and in most of the cases are quite particular for each country and even regions within it. Still, we can list some of the key and most common groups which we can face when we're planning and implementing mobile youth work activities.

Public Authorities and institutions

Generally, on a local, level mobile youth work is building up a close relation with municipalities, schools and cultural houses.

The municipalities from one side can be the initiators of the mobile youth work activities and something that they have a full capacity to implement. In that way they can offer wider implementation of the policies for young people in the whole area of their municipality not only the main city or village they are located. On the other hand, they can seek for or this kind of support can be offered to them from other municipalities or organizations in order to provide those types of activities. If we assume that the second case is more common it is essential to set a good relationship with the municipality. In that way you can share information about the demographic profile of the young people, the challenges they are facing and the current measures they are taking as their policies to overcome them. Along with that the municipality can introduce you to other local authorities and institutions.

Schools with their teachers can help in getting more information about the young people and also to be used as a place where they can be reached at the planning phase of the activities. Firstly from their schedules you can get an idea of their curriculum and the free time hours of young people, what type of extra activities are offered by the school, first hand observations for the profile of the young people.

Secondly you can have primary interaction with the young people in order to probe what type of activities would be interesting for them or even to make a survey, focus groups or interviews. In some rare cases when there aren't any other options you can negotiate to use the school infrastructure to implement the mobile youth work activities there (yet is advisable to avoid this, because young people associate the premises with their formal education which can have negative influence on their motivation to participate).

Cultural houses could be the places where the activities can be implemented. Typically they are well known and visited by young people in different types of activities or events. So it would be natural for them to attend mobile youth work also there or to be used as a place for promotion if there's another location.

Community

It's very difficult to divide the community into groups and to define each one and its role and relation with mobile youth work. Still the willingness to work towards wider visibility and mutual understanding of the mobile youth work and its importance among all of the members has a key role on the direct impact of the activities and their further development. If they know what you are doing and what's the idea behind it, they will be supportive and responsive towards your activities and needs. Especially if the target group you are working with are underaged young people it is necessary to spend additional effort to work with their parents. When they are well informed, they will be willing to allow their children to be involved in the activities and offer their help when needed.

Bussiness

It's one of its main priorities to keep and give space for the young people to realize their potential staying in the area. So in their face usually you can find a trustful partner which can offer material or even financial support for the activities.



NGOs

Probably there are different organizations which are working on a local level and are active in the youth field. You can relate to them, even to school and students councils. Seeking their partnership will allow us to communicate with the active part of the young people of the community. By sharing resources and information we can have a solid basis where the mobile youth work can start and to develop their achievements and involve new perspectives.

Mobile youth work could serve as a bridge between all of the stakeholders and young people, linking them, seeking their common goals and supporting them on the way of empowering youth. It's very important to work together through open communication and shared vision. To have clear agreements and amity from the very beginning in order to be united and trustful in the face of young people.

V. BUILDING A RELATIONSHIP WITH YOUTH

By cross-sectoral we generally understand that this is something which is relating to or affecting more than one group, area, or section. This is basically what mobile youth work is about and in order to have its sustainability and holistic impact, it should be in close cooperation with the specific stakeholders where it is taking place. They can be different and in most of the cases are quite particular for each country and even regions within it. Still, we can list some of the key and most common groups which we can face when we're planning and implementing mobile youth work activities.

Motto: "We cannot always build a future for our youth, but we can build our youth for the future." - Franklin D. Roosevelt

Youth years can be, in the same time, a beautiful and challenging period in the life of any person. Building relationships with youth, as a youth worker, can be at the same time a challenging, beautiful and meaningful experience. Each young person is a unique individual, so building a relationship with youth cannot be a standardised step by step experience, but an individualised and de-standardised path. From our authentic experiences as mobile youth workers we can extract some main points and suggestions that might be useful for people who are working or volunteering for/with youth groups. Here are some lessons learned from our experience:

- Young people are very open to keep the communication both online and Of course, we should also not forget that there are still so many young people who don't have access to digital means – they don't have the competencies or the equipment or none of them. So we should find a way to work with them as well!
- Every time you plan an activity for the youth group, plan it with the young people, remember the idea "Nothing for us without us!"
- Food is always a good idea in building a relationship with youth because during teenage years the metabolism is different, the body and the brain need more food in order to grow and develop;
- If the young people like the youth activities, they will bring their friends at the next meetings;
- Young people really need to be listened about their problems, they need support and counselling sometimes, so if you are not able as a youth worker to offer the listening and the piece of advice they need, you can ask the support of a professional counsellor, maybe for studies or career for youth;
- Board Games activities and fun are very good ideas in building and keeping a relationship with Youth;
- Cooking or movie sessions are also good ideas;
- Just listen to the needs of the young people from the community and adapt the activities according to their needs and wishes that can help them grow and develop soft skills.

From our experience gained during the project "Mobile Youth Work: Shaping European Practices", focus group activities with youth workers and young people with different experiences, from different places or countries, can help a lot in understanding the similarities and differences in working with young people and how to build a relationship with Youth. Building a relationship is not always easy, because relationships are always built on trust, reciprocity, understanding, empathy, responsibilities and keeping your promises toward the other person.

Therefore, in the case of Mobile Youth Work activities, it is very important to be constant in the meetings, to keep a good level of communication with the young people, to really listen to them and make them feel that the Youth Worker and the group can be a safe space where they can be themselves, where they can share ideas and thoughts without being judged. Also, it is very important not to criticise the person, but the behaviour if something is wrong. Last but not least, during the COVID19 pandemic, even though the face to face activities with youth could not be continued everywhere like before, it was and it still is very important to keep the communication groups active, to involve the young people in the NGO's online activities, or in the open air activities, in a safe environment with all the safety rules applied, so that the relationship that has been build will last and that our youth can be build for the future and ready to overcome any obstacles, with the lessons learned from the past.

P.S.: In terms of recommendations and good practices regarding the relationship with youth in Youth Work, here are 6 ways in how to build a better Relationship with Youth that might help :

1.**Be *genuine***: get to know the young person, their personality, interests and future goals. This will build trust and cultivate a meaningful relationship.

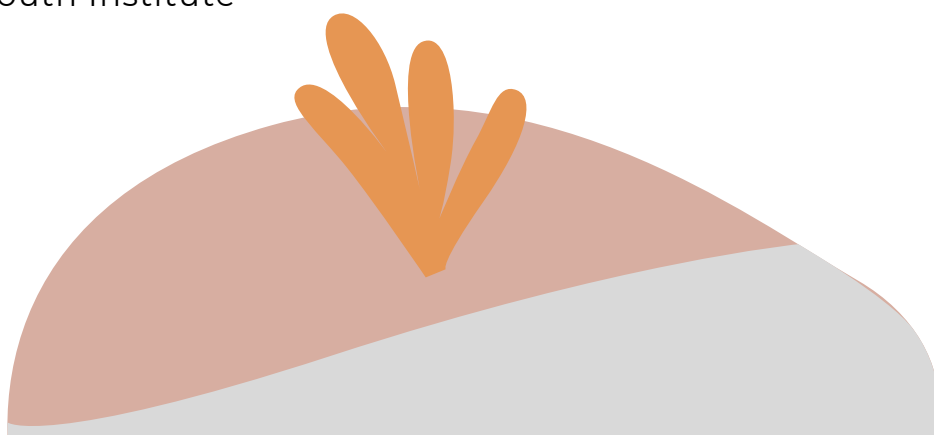
2.**Listen**: put away the phone, turn your attention towards them and make appropriate eye contact. Be fully present and don't think about how you will respond. Paraphrase what it is said. This shows you are listening and encourages them to open up.

3.**Create a *psychologically safe space for youth to discuss what is on their minds***. Don't rush to judgement, ask clarification questions to understand issues from their perspective.

4.**Provide *perspective***: Adults can help youth to consider different aspects of a situation. When obstacles can seem overwhelming, mentors can help to put those challenges into perspective and offer guidance.

5.**Foster *decision making skills***: help youth explore options and consider consequences and seek help when needed. Ask "How?" and "What?" questions, they encourage youth to think critically. Avoid "Why?" questions, because they often make a person feel defensive.

Acknowledge *success*: celebrate their accomplishments and their ability to navigate their challenges. This will strengthen their ability to persevere towards larger goals." (source: YouTube: 6 Ways to Build Better Relationships with Youth by The Family & Youth Institute)



VI. YOUTH WORKER RULES LIST TO BE AGREED BEFORE WORKING WITH YOUTH

Mobile youth work is based on building relationships, including between young people and youth workers. Before starting to work with young people, youth workers must not only be aware of the rules governing the work with children and young people, but also agree on internal rules so that everyone on the mobile youth team has clear conditions. The rules cover the various work-related aspects that most often determine what a youth worker is not allowed to do. The list of rules shall include information that may be specific to the particular area in which the mobile youth work takes place.

As a minimum, it is recommended that the list of rules include information on:

- Time (from – to) and days when a youth worker support is available to young people;
 - Contact information for contacting youth workers on work issues;- Procedures for youth workers how to provide support to young people individually and in groups;
 - Positive and equal treatment of all young people by youth workers;
 - Form and frequency of reports on mobile youth work, way of describing the work process;
 - Communication and exchange of information between youth workers;
 - Evaluation and feedback meeting frequency and arrangements for youth workers;
 - Decision-making procedures in the youth work team;- Safety rules for youth workers, such as
- Always carry an identity document or identifier with a picture, organization name and job title or department, expiration date and contact number.
 - Always work at least in pairs.
 - Record places where you plan to go, take notes.
 - Be aware of potentially dangerous places in the area.
 - Inform the local police who you are and what you will do in the area.
 - Do not give young people a home address or a private telephone number.

- Prohibitions for youth workers on the use of all intoxicants and smoking.
- Confidentiality conditions, including storage of information.
- Child protection policy and procedures.
- First aid and the nearest security authorities.

In addition to the national and EU rules that must be observed when working with children and young people, it is recommended that mobile youth workers supplement and adapt the list of rules to the specifics of their work.

VII. PROFESSIONAL BOUNDARIES FOR A YOUTH WORKER

Professional boundaries are clearly identified for most of the professionals who work with children according to their field, for example, in health care, formal education and social care. For those who are involved in youth work and non-formal education, like mobile youth workers, professional boundaries are not always clearly marked and they vary considerably between countries. Many countries do not have specific national policy on youth work, or it is a part of a broader policy. For quality youth work these policy approaches should include legislative acts to define and to regulate youth work as a profession, they should contain information of mechanisms such as codes of ethics and professional standards for youth workers. Whatever the situation in the legislation is, when we think about professional boundaries, there are 3 important questions every youth worker who implements mobile youth work should have answers to:

1. Why are professional boundaries important in my work?
2. How are my professional boundaries established?
3. How can I minimize the risk of boundary crossing?

Before looking for the answers, let us clarify what we mean by “professional boundaries”.

Boundaries can be defined as the rules and limits in someone's interactions and relationships with others, indicating what is acceptable and unacceptable behaviour. **Professional boundaries** are the legal, ethical and organisational frameworks that protect both young people and youth workers, from physical and emotional harm, and help to maintain a safe working environment. **Personal boundaries** are the physical, emotional and mental limits that help people to protect themselves from being drawn too much into someone's lives and from being manipulated or violated by others. The professional boundaries can be described as the framework within which "the youth worker-young person" relationship happens and the line between them - a sense of professional identity and self-definition which determines a system of limits and expectations.

1. Why are professional boundaries important in my work?

Professional boundaries provide safety for a mobile youth worker and for a young person. They help youth workers to protect themselves and to prepare for many sensitive situations which could happen when working with youth. If mobile youth workers have identified their boundaries before they have started to do work, they more likely not only know what their role is, but most importantly – they are aware of what their role is not. And also, if mobile youth workers have agreed with young people to abide their ground rules, including boundaries, then it is much easier for both sides to build a relationship and reduce misunderstandings.

Professional boundaries are keeping youth worker's professional power in control. Young people could be vulnerable or at risk from violent, exploitative or otherwise inappropriate behaviour and should not come across with such behaviour in their relationships with mobile youth workers. When working with young people, youth workers must pay attention to the limits of their supportive and caring attitude towards young people, so that these relationships do not slide into a personal involvement in a young person's life.

Professional boundaries

- help to stay focused on mobile youth workers' responsibilities and their role in providing an appropriate service to youth;
- maintain physical and emotional safety for both the mobile youth workers and the young people, keeping their own limits;
- help the mobile youth workers from being too involved in solving all of the young person's problems.

2. How are my professional boundaries established?

There are three sets of factors that impact professional boundaries – organisational, personal and client's profile (in mobile youth work cases – client is a young person). **Organisational factors** are roles, culture, structure of the organisation, management, supervision and training of the organisations team members. **Personal factors** that impact on professional boundaries are a dual relationship with a young person, youth workers personal vulnerability and the tendency to react in predictable ways to certain situations. **Youth profile factor** is the capacity of the youth group to communicate about their boundaries and to understand the relationship “youth worker–young people”. And it is the impact of transferring feelings that comes in the context of “youth worker-young person” relationships.

At the beginning of work with youth groups, mobile youth workers should find a way to make matters of professional and personal boundaries clear. Professional boundaries can be established within the professional youth workers' codes of conduct, by national or international law, code of youth workers' ethics and within the organisation where mobile youth workers work.

- Firstly, the team can become acquainted with the different types of documents that includes ethical issues and the professional quality standards
- Codes of Ethics, Codes of Ethical Practice for Youth Workers, Codes of Conduct of Associations of Youth Workers, National Qualification Standards for Youth Work, statements of values and principles, etc. In these documents mobile youth workers can look for particular international or national legislation in regard to safe work practices with young people, the values and principles of ethical youth work practice.

- Secondly, it is very important that the team members have to agree between themselves what will be the boundaries during their mobile youth work meetings. These boundaries for youth workers can be developed in the organisation internally and included in the employee's contract or in the group of youth workers as the mobile youth work team agreement. For example, youth workers can express their thoughts and suggest what overstepping professional boundaries means for them:

- when youth worker talks about young person's behaviour with his parents;
- when youth worker meets young people in café;
- when young person is borrowing money from youth worker;
- when youth worker buys products and services from young people;
- when young person has the personal number of the youth worker;
- when youth worker is informing institutions about misbehaviour of youth;
- when youth worker is involving young person into activities which are bringing financial benefit for others;
- when youth worker is deciding what is best for the young person's personal development;
- when youth worker after the meeting drives a young person home with his car;
- when youth worker is participating in birthday party of a young person;
- when youth worker is working with young people after his working hours;
- when youth worker is solving psychological issues of a young person.

- Thirdly, youth workers have to agree with the young people. The creation of a safe environment involves the communication of the very clear boundaries which youth and youth workers have. In order to build a relationship on trust and mutual respect, youth workers and young people have to be clear about the ground rules. When communicating with youth it is more informally and these are conditions for both sides for working together. Depending on the situation, for example, the place, the youth profile, the aims of mobile youth work and different obstacles, youth worker team and youth group agrees about the ground rules, including the consequences if they are violated.

3. How can I minimize the risk of boundary crossing?

If a mobile youth worker has answers to previous two questions – why are professional boundaries important and how to establish them, then the next level would be to make sure that these boundaries are not violated. No matter how many risk prevention plans are made, relationships that involve young people are unpredictable and boundaries now and then will be crossed or blurred, depending on the particular difficult situations, stress, timing and other specific organisational, personal and youth profile factors. When that happens, it is a youth worker's responsibility to deal with it according to previously established action plans and to avoid it becoming a pattern.



In order to minimize the risk of boundary crossing a youth worker:

- must have clear understanding of what is ethical and professional behaviour,
- must be aware of a set of factors (organisational factors, personal factors, youth profile factors) that can compromise professional boundaries,
- should be alert to potential or actual conflicts of interests and to be willing to address the emotional impact on him/her when working with youth,
- must be provided with an opportunity for consultations or supervision and the meetings should be on a regular basis.

If there is a situation when a youth worker has doubts about his/her action - is it crossing boundaries or not, and has no one to ask for an opinion, then it is suggested to accept it as the violation of boundaries and not to act.

VIII. ENTRY AND EXIT STRATEGIES

Working as a mobile youth worker, how and when you engage youth and local communities in the early phase of establishing a mobile youth work service is essential.

You are an intruding on their lives and need to be aware that you need to approach both the youth and the communities with respect. We are therefore proposing that you develop both a strategy for how to enter interactions and how you leave them.

We are suggesting that mobile youth workers work in pairs, for their own and the youths safeguarding. This means that there needs to be an agreed upon plan for how you approach young people or communities, and how you exit these interactions.

When entering a situation, both partners need to agree that you would like to enter the situation. If one or the other feels uncomfortable or not safe, you need to take that into account and choose not to enter the situation. It is very important to stay together, and not for one partner to enter, and one partner not to enter.

Before you engage, plan for what to do: What is your aim with the interaction? How will you present yourself? How will you greet? What are you wearing? Are you going to have any logos/marks to show who you are?

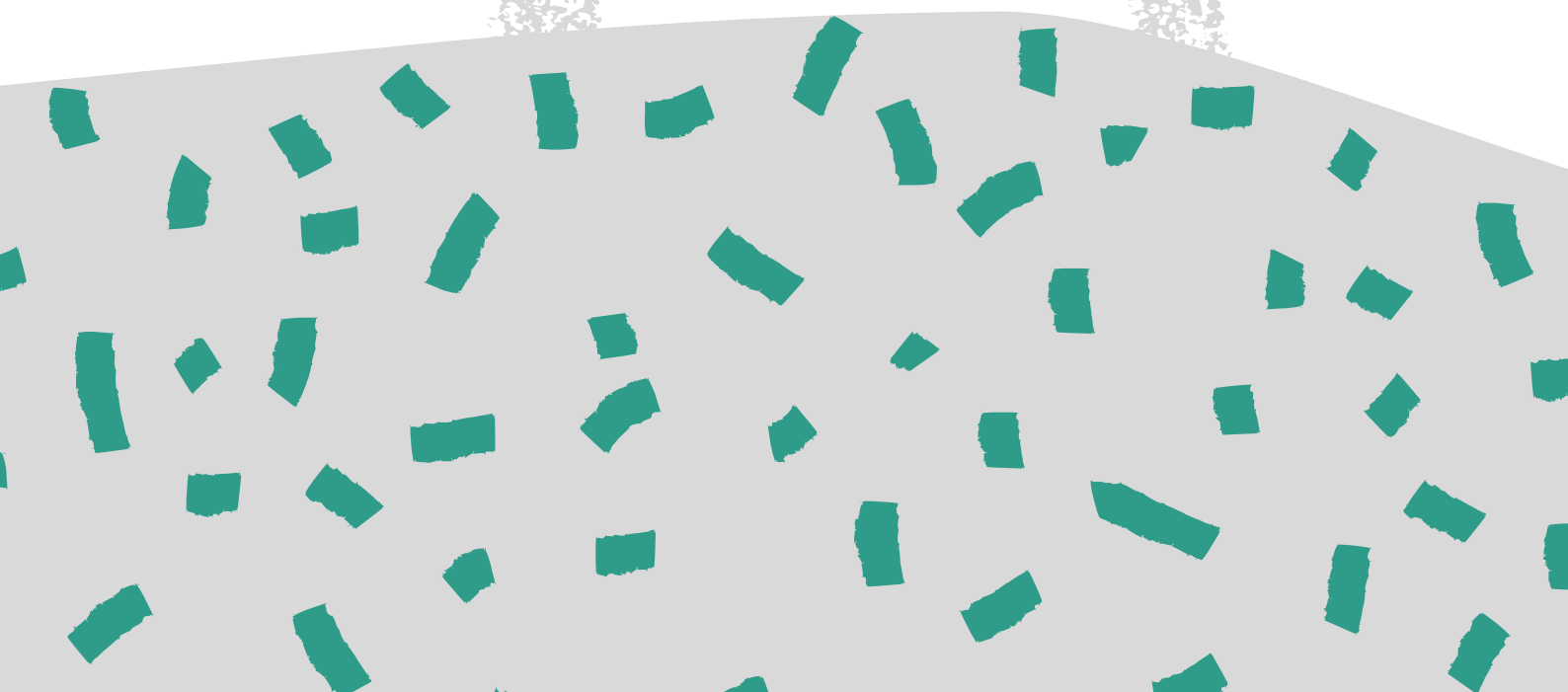
Remember that different stakeholders could be met with a different approach. If you are meeting a community elder or public officer, your strategy could be very different from meeting a group of youngsters. A stakeholder analysis could be a helpful tool to map out who you need to interact with, and what the aim and form of that interaction should be.

You also need to have a plan for how to exit the interaction. How long should you stay? Have your aims been met?

For exit strategies you should also plan for what to do if the situation starts to feel unsafe. You should agree upon code words so that you can make your partner aware that the situation has changed and that you need to leave. In case you are not able to communicate verbally, you should also agree on nonverbal codes. You should also have different forms of codes.

One to make it clear that you feel that the interaction is coming to an end, and you should start to round off the interaction. You should also have a code for: we need to end this immediately. This could be used if you see something that makes you want to leave the situation right away (you see a knife, drugs, are getting bad attention)

It is important that both partners respect each other's directions. If you are being told by your partner that you need to leave right away, but you have not reacted to something, remember that your partner could have seen something you have not picked up. Do not second guess your partner if he or she indicates that you need to exit the situation, even if you feel safe.



IX. RISK ASSESSMENT

Risk Assessment is how we assess the risk of our activities and make plans for what we can do to eliminate or reduce the risk of our work.

It is done by identifying and analyzing future events that may negatively impact individuals, assets, and the environment. We will then make judgments "on the tolerability of the risk on the basis of a risk analysis" while considering influencing factors (i.e. risk evaluation)

In the form under you will see that we have identified a hazard or threat and looked at what the cause may be. We have then made an evaluation of how often we think this will occur (probability) and how much it will affect us (consequence). The combination of how often something occurs, and how big the consequences could be, will give us an assessment of the risk.

Hazard/ threat	Cause	Probab- ility (1-4)	Conse- quence (1-4)	Risk	Prevention	Responses	Respon- sible
Minor Injuries	Things not working correctly, user mistakes, broken stuff	4	5	1	Keep up maintenance of place and equipment	Have first aid kit and first aid training	Youth center
Bullying	Social environment	2	2	4	Create rules with youth about how we treat each other	Intervene, Report, Investigate, implement action, Keep records	Youth center
Minor mental health issues		3	2	5	Have knowledge about how to deal with mental issues	Have a separate room where you can have a private conversation with youngsters	Youth center
Mental health crisis		2	3	5	Pay attention to changes in behavior	De-escalate, Keep calm, listen, do not judge, Stabilize, Remove weapons/drugs/ prescribed medicine, Contact professional help	Mental health instituti ons
Abuse	Family, Adults, peers	3	4	7	Pay attention to changes in behavior	Contact professional help	Social services

After the risk is analyzed, you look at what we can do to prevent this from happening or reduce the impact if it happens. You find out what your response will be, and who is responsible for follow up.

The form under can help you determine how urgent you need to respond, and how to make assessment of probability or consequences

Probability	Consequence	Actions	
4 - Frequent (event occurs multiple times a year)	4 - Catastrophic	6+	Take immediate action
3 - Probable (event occurs yearly or more seldom)	3 - Critical	4-5	Risk reduction measures
2 - Likely (event occurs every 10 years or more seldom)	2 - Dangerous	0-3	Simple preventive measures
1 - Unlikely (event occurs every 50 year or more seldom)	1 - Neglectable		

As youth workers we are responsible for safeguarding both the youth we work with, and ourselves as youth workers, and we recommend that all youth workers spend time analyzing how this can be done in a good way. A systematic approach to this work is important in everyday youth work and can save lives!

A risk assessment plan should be updated frequently, and would normally contain between 20 to several hundred points depending on the complexity of your work.

X. RESOURCES NEEDED FOR MOBILE YOUTH WORK

In Lithuania quality standards define minimal requirements for mobile work with youth provision. This service is provided by youth work organizations, such as open youth centers, non-governmental organizations, and even social services. 1 year of experience is required to be able to get state funding.

Organizations carrying out mobile work with youth must have at least 2 employees working at least half of the position for mobile work with youth. One of these staff members must have at least 1 year of experience working with young people. In order to ensure gender equality, it is recommended that the mobile youth work team be made up of two members of the opposite sex. One worker working in mobile work with young people must have an education in the field of social sciences (ex. social work, social pedagogy, psychology or education sciences)

In the context of mobile youth work, the mobile youth work team must have pre-prepared proposals for youth activities that can be offered to young people. An organization active in youth work must organize meetings of the youth work team at least once a week, conduct interviews, provide opportunities for staff working with youth work, receive individual or team supervision, and provide favorable conditions for the continuous training of mobile workers in youth work.

XI. ADVOCACY OF MOBILE YOUTH WORK

It is quite common for a youth worker to have to explain and prove the need to develop youth work over and over again to decision-makers and stakeholders. This situation is even more common when there is a need to introduce something new, untried in youth work. If mobile youth work with youth has not been implemented so far, then the team of youth workers has to reckon with a process called advocacy of mobile youth work.

The term **advocacy** implicates a broad range of activities, causes, and organizations, from mobilizing political participation, to action on behalf of others, to service provision, and often is used synonymously with lobbying.

Advocacy is about figuring out what needs to change and deciding on a plan to get there, making sure as many people as possible know about the problems we're looking to tackle so that they can support us, understanding who has the power to make the change, and how we can convince them to do that.

There are countless definitions that will not be listed in this article, but let us keep in mind that when we talk about advocacy of mobile youth work, we understand it as a process that should lead to positive changes in the lives of young people. And regardless of the parties involved in advocacy of mobile youth work, it aims to defend the interests of young people in particular. The current situation and the development process of mobile youth work may differ from country to country, region to region and especially to rural areas, so it is not possible to identify the right path for advocacy of mobile youth work. However, before starting the advocacy of mobile youth work, the team is advised to go through a set of 6 step questions:

1. What needs to be changed?
2. Who can make the changes happen?
3. How can I influence them to make these changes?
4. Who can work with me?
5. What are the possible obstacles and risks?
6. How will I monitor and evaluate the process?

1. What needs to be changed?

As a mobile youth worker, you and your colleagues most likely have an opinion or thoughts about issues or challenges young people face in the area where you work.

- Identify an issue or problem.
- Be clear and precise about it.
- Choose an issue that is relevant to you and you have some knowledge about it.
- Write down for whom it is a problem and why?
- What are the causes of this problem?
- What are the consequences?
- Why is it important to solve the problem?

When looking for the answers, try to gather some evidence, for example, case studies, research data on the topic and ask directly to those for whom this is an actual problem. This evidence will be useful for the arguments.

- Define the goal and objectives. What exactly do you want to achieve in a long term? What steps will you take to achieve your goal? Set measurable objectives of your advocacy strategy, so you can monitor during the process.
- How will you know the goal has been achieved? What exactly would have changed?

2. Who can make the changes happen?

To be able to achieve your goal, you will need to identify key people who have the power to help with your issue.

- Identify the people who make decisions about youth, youth work development, youth policy in the city. Those people have direct power to influence the changes you are seeking. Usually they are politicians, policy makers, members of councils, community leaders.
- Think who can help and influence those decision makers? Are there any groups or individuals that can advise and suggest changes? For example, teachers, parents, non-governmental organisations, youth clubs, youth councils.

Work with the local community, including all youth related institutions is crucial to a mobile youth work development. And it is important to identify all those who can support a team of youth workers in their work.

3. How can I influence them to make the change?

In order to make the changes happen, you have to prepare your arguments and be ready to bring your goal to those who have the power and who are somehow a part of a decision-making process. You should have identified these persons in the second step. Then it is time to develop the right approach and to choose the right tools to reach these people effectively.

- Make a list of those people whose support you already have and do not have.
- Why should these people support your goal? Is it important for them who will benefit from your actions? How are these people connected with your target group? Whose interests they support?
- Analyse each person or a group of persons who can help you and what is important for them. Choose your approach and prepare arguments according to this person's or group's extent of the impact, goals, duties, principles and other relevant information.
- How can you reach those people? How you will communicate with them, how you will share your goal with them?
- List different tools you will use for advocacy and decide which ones would be the most effective ones. For example, most commonly used are – factsheets, detailed reports and study cases about your issue, involvement of the media and social media, meetings, public events, petitions, demonstrations, etc.
- Prepare a clear message that can inspire people to take some action for your cause. Your message must include information about the problem, your suggestions and plan, what support your goal needs and what you ask from the decision-makers / influencers? Remember that your arguments are crucial in advocating. Collect all evidence you can, from a different perspective and various sources. Evidence is a very powerful piece of information. Arguments are based on evidence and facts. Also, personal stories can contribute to the argument.

4. Who can work with me?

In this step you should look around and find like-minded people and groups who can be your allies in making the changes

- Think about individuals and organisations who can reach and influence more people. Are there any coalitions or networks who are working on similar issues? Are there any who could also gain from reaching your advocacy?
- Who can support your goal and help you do more? Think about different resources which these organisations and individuals can bring if you are working together.



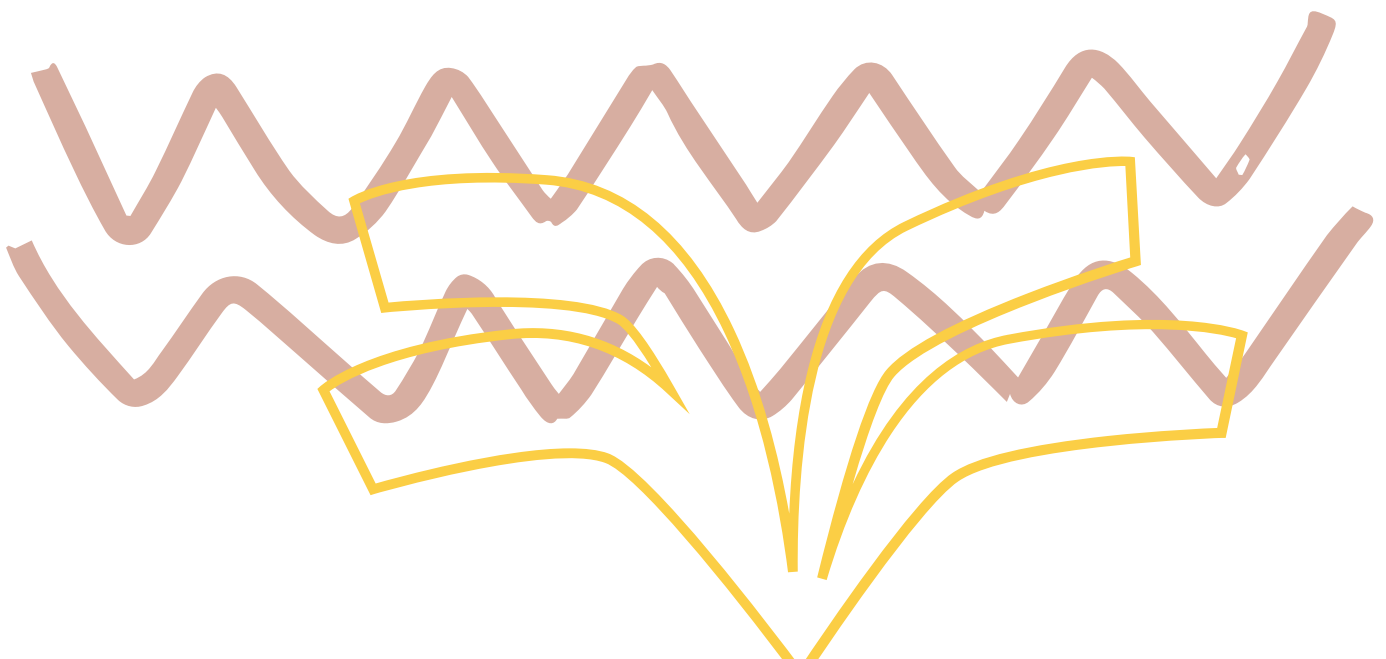
5. What are the possible obstacles and risks?

- Think about possible situations when something could go wrong in your process. Identify potential obstacles and risks according to the problem you are trying to solve.
- What could be possible solutions?
- Prepare yourself for difficult questions from your opponents.

6. How will I monitor and evaluate the process?

When you have answered the previous questions and before you begin with your advocacy campaign, think about a few criteria that you could use in evaluation. Think about monitoring as the supervisor method that keeps you and those involved to stick to the timeline and activities you have planned.

- What will be your main milestones? How and when you will track whether everything is going according to your plan?
- When and how you will evaluate if you are achieving the goals and objectives? Who will be responsible for evaluation? What kind of information do you need to gather for your evaluation?
- How will you compile and save the results of evaluation? Make sure to document the evaluation and save evidence, for example, videos, photos, written documents.



XII. YOUTH WORKER PROFILE AND TEAM OF MOBILE YOUTH WORKERS

When looking for an answer to the question specifically - who is a mobile youth worker, we definitely can see similarities in work tasks with a youth worker, but in reality, we know that a typical youth worker does not exist. As diverse are young people and their needs, so is the necessity for a diverse youth worker. Mobile youth workers have multiform educational and experience backgrounds and their duties involve quite diverse activities. However, despite variety of national youth work systems and development of a local settings, certain background and individual contexts, there are some indications of youth workers being differentiated upon the basis of the setting where youth work takes place:

- Those who provide intervention-based youth work (characterised by open and street youth work) who are qualified social workers or pedagogues, and are generally professional salaried youth workers;
- Those involved in youth organisations and NGOs being primarily volunteer based;
- A tradition of staff in the formal youth work sector. Therefore, it is primarily those qualified as social workers or pedagogues that are found in that area of youth work activities.

Mobile youth worker's work is based on the same core principles as youth workers and this publication will not list all the characteristics of a youth worker. When it comes to youth workers, we understand as youth workers work with young people in a wide variety of non-formal and informal learning contexts, typically focusing on their young charges' personal and social development through one-on-one relationships and group-based activities. While acting as trainers/facilitators may be their main task, it is just as likely for youth workers to take a socio-educational or social work-based approach. In many cases, these roles and functions overlap.

Some specifics that we should keep in mind when referring to a mobile youth worker:

- the work environment is outside cities and regional centres;
- the work with young people usually takes place in a public place, institution or premises other than a youth center;
- mobile youth workers should work in pairs;
- preferably, mobile youth workers should be both genders;
- a mobile youth worker should have at least one year's experience as social worker or in working with young people involving social work tasks;
- direct contact with young people is regular, but it may not be every day;
- mobile youth workers are not primarily event organisers or entertainment staff for young people;
- mobile youth worker is more like a moderator, who does not give direct instructions to youth, but helps to carry out their initiatives.

For mobile youth work to be successful, two mobile youth workers must work together to implement it. The practice of mobile youth work indicates that long-term planning requires two employees. Mobile youth work is challenging and individual work or group work with young people is multifaceted. It requires complex knowledge and skills - more than helping young people to solve problems, not so much as organizing leisure activities. Therefore, it is desirable that the mobile youth work team includes a social worker or a person with social work experience.

Teamwork is also necessary so that when faced with problem situations and / or experiencing conflict situations, the other employee can see the situation from the sidelines. Also, in moments of emotional experience, sharing with a colleague can help reduce the aggravation of the experience. If possible, the team involves volunteers who help to organize mobile youth work activities and get involved in various organizational tasks.

Before starting to implement mobile youth work it is important to identify the team involved - mobile youth workers, volunteers, consultants, the head of the organization or department and others who will be involved in achieving the common goal. Organizing team work, evaluating results, identifying successes and failures, emotional support, feedback within the team - these are just the main principles that apply to the successful work of the team. Regardless of the size of the team, it must be taken into account that its operation will require resources and support.



XIII. QUALITY IN MOBILE YOUTH WORK

What is quality in youth work and what indicators we should use to measure it- is a complex question. One should focus on the things that really matter and impact the quality of services delivered to young people and experiences of users. On the other hand, we should not overlook the assessment of how mobile youth work provisions support other areas of local youth policy and youth work.

Mobile youth work shall be a planned framework of activities/services, so it has to be carried out in accordance with the annual activity plan, which sets out the annual priorities for mobile youth work in a specific area. Such plan shall include both quantitative and qualitative indicators:

- the number of unique young people (young person, regardless of the number of times they have participated in the activities) with whom regular contact is maintained (two or more times during the implementation of the action plan);
- the share of newly involved young people;
- a percentage of the number of young people participating in mobile youth work activities on a regular basis (two or more times during the implementation of the annual action plan);
- the average number of young people participating in one activity;
- the number of activities that encourage young people to become involved in society and the results sought;
- the number of activities aimed at individual work with young people and the results sought;
- the number of activities aimed at working with youth groups and the results sought;
- the number of mobile work team trips for mobile work and the expected results;
- the conditions created for young people to get involved in social activities that develop young people's social skills;
- empowerment of the participation of young people with less opportunities in their social environment in mobile youth work activities by promoting their social integration;
- the conditions created for the young person to be motivated to participate in activities that meet his or her needs, and the skills necessary for entrepreneurship and the labor market are encouraged to improve.

The achievement of indicators is measured on the basis of the following criteria:

- completeness - indicators must be complete, their method of calculation must be clearly described;
- specificity - indicators must be quantitative and qualitative;
- regularity - mobile work with young people is provided at a specific, agreed with the young people and known in advance, at a regular, constant schedule known to the young people, at least once every two weeks.

In Lithuania, the quality standard for Mobile youth work has been created in order to reflect specificity and complexity of this particular youth work form.

Quality standard

DEFINITION

Mobile youth work is one form of youth work, aimed at young person and enabling them to participate in activities that are carried out in accordance with their needs and his or her living environment where Youth Centers does not exist.

PREPARATION

It is important to conduct needs analysis and community analysis prior to launching mobile work with youth services:

- Explore which target groups will be assigned your services (for boys, girls, what needs and interests of your target group).
- What kind of activities would be interesting for young people in the community?
- Find out what activities exist. Do not overlap.
- Identify the real goals for activities. Goals should be clearly communicated to the community.
- Find out which institutions will affect your activities? Who can you intercede? Who will cooperate with?

It is important to get support from community members, especially opinion leaders, in preparing for the provision of services.

It is important to emphasize the flexibility, efficiency, financial and educational aspects of mobile services.

PRINCIPLES AND ACTIVITIES OF MOBILE YOUTH WORK SERVICES

To develop young people's social and life skills.

Create a secure, open, informal, non-binding environment that a young person can come to have friends with and interact with peers.

Help young people to identify their needs, feelings, fears, learn to recognize them, understand and learning to manage it.

Empower young people – help to discover and identify the resources and talents of young people.

Assist and counsel young people: advise and inform, assist in problem situations.

To provide individual youth work services.

Helping young people develop local initiatives to solve daily problems they face.

Reliability and confidentiality - the foundation of mobile services.

SERVICE PROVISION

Mobile youth work must be provided on a regular basis according to a schedule known to young people.

It is important for mobile youth work services to arrive and leave in time to comply with an agreement with young people.

It is recommended that the services would be provided from 15 o'clock till 20 o'clock.

The space in which the services are provided must be easily accessible to young people.

It is advisable to go to institutions located in the area that will allow young people to enter and provide them with opportunities to carry out their activities, such as community houses, cultural centers, libraries, etc.

YOUNG PEOPLE ENGAGEMENT

Plan your outreach strategies:

- How will you inform young people about activities?
- What information channels will you use (school, social networks, newspapers)?
- Maybe you could use informational meetings, flyers, posters, other...

Create a clear message to invite young people.

Focus on groups of young people, invite young people and their friends.

PUBLISHING RESULTS AND WORK WITH THE COMMUNITIES

Identify the qualitative and quantitative performance indicators you will measure achievements.

Do not forget that a mobile worker communicates to politicians – he explains them how young people live in rural areas.

Take time to evaluate activities, organize results and publish them.

Organize regular meetings with the community to show what you have achieved.

Consult with the community: ask for opinion, clarify their expectations and needs.

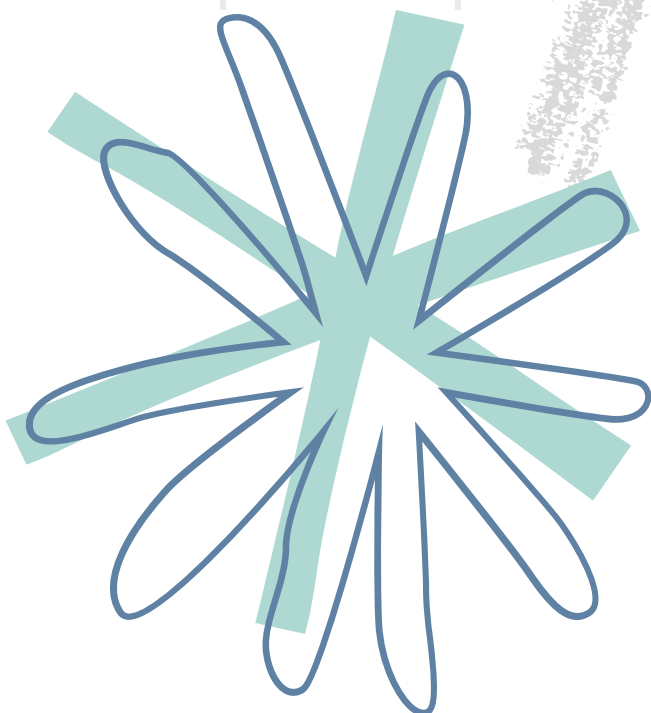
TEAM OF YOUTH WORKERS

Youth workers providing mobile youth work services should work in a team, to ensure their safety, the needs of the young people, to plan and evaluate activities.

It is recommended to have workers of both genders.

One of the youth workers should spend about 20%

The purpose of this document is to help those who want to provide quality mobile youth work with young people in rural areas. The standard provides a definition of mobile work with young people and provides



XIV. INDIVIDUAL COUNSELLING & COUNSELLING TECHNIQUES

Individual counseling is a personal opportunity to receive support and experience growth during challenging times in life. Individual counseling can help one deal with many personal topics in life such as anger, depression, anxiety, substance abuse, marriage and relationship challenges, parenting problems, school difficulties, career changes, etc.

Individual counseling is a process through which clients work one-on-one with a trained psychologist in a safe, caring, and confidential environment. Counseling allows individuals to explore their feelings, beliefs, and behaviors, work through challenging or influential memories, identify aspects of their lives that they would like to change, better understand themselves and others, set personal goals, and work toward desired change.

The Process of Counseling

The counselling process is a planned, structured dialogue between a counsellor and a client. It is a cooperative process in which a trained professional helps a person, called the client, to identify sources of difficulties or concerns that he or she is experiencing. Together they develop ways to deal with and overcome these problems so that person has new skills and increased understanding of themselves and others.

Step 1: Relationship Building

The first step involves building a relationship and focuses on engaging clients to explore issues that directly affect them. The first interview is important because the client reads the verbal and nonverbal messages and makes inferences about the counselor and the counseling situation. Is the counselor able to empathize with the client? Does the client see the counselor as genuine? In order to develop a strong relationship with your client, you can demonstrate understanding by using verbal and nonverbal cues, as well as reflections and paraphrasing.

Some steps for Relationship Building for the Counsellor:

- Introduce yourself
- Invite client to sit down
- Ensure client is comfortable
- Address the client by name
- Invite social conversation to reduce anxiety
- Watch for nonverbal behavior as signs of client's emotional state
- Invite client to describe his or her reason for coming to talk
- Allow client time to respond
- Indicate that you are interested in the person

Step 2: Problem Assessment

While the counselor and the client are in the process of establishing a relationship, a second process is taking place, i.e. problem assessment. This step involves the collection and classification of information about the client's life situation and reasons for seeking counseling.

Step 3: Goal Setting

Like any other activity, counseling must have a focus. Goals are the results or outcomes that the client wants to achieve at the end of counselling. Sometimes, you hear both counselor and client complain that the counseling session is going nowhere. This is where goals play an important role in giving direction.

Guidelines for setting goals

- should relate to the desired end or ends sought by the client
- should be defined in explicit and measurable terms
- should be feasible
- should be within the range of the counsellor's knowledge and skills
- should be stated in positive terms that emphasize growth

Step 4: intervention

The intervention process is about choosing the appropriate counseling techniques that will encourage growth within your client. There are different points of view concerning what a good counselor should do. At this stage, different approaches and techniques can be used based on the experience and knowledge of the counselor, looking for the most workable approach to the specific needs of the client.

Between those stages we can put one small but important topic - **Empower to Create Own Solutions**: Empowering your client is not about providing them with all the answers. It is about empowering them, with your counseling skills, to find their own solutions.

Step 5: evaluation, follow-up, termination or referral

For the beginning counselor, it is difficult to think of terminating the counseling process, as they are more concerned with beginning the counseling process. However, all counseling aims towards successful termination. Terminating the counseling process will have to be conducted with sensitivity with the client knowing that it will have to end. Counselors are always mindful of avoiding dependency and are aware of their own needs. Preparation for termination begins long before the end of the process. It is important to leave our „doors open” for future meetings when the need arises.

Termination is not just regarded as an end of a successful relationship, but must be also considered when it seems counseling is not being helpful. Think of this as a means of empowering the client.

This stage has the role to review progress and provide closure to the client-counselor relationship.

Counseling skills

When we talk about individual counseling, the most powerful and most important tool is the counselor themselves. In order for them to be successful, they need to be equipped with the necessary skills through which to achieve good results so that the process is beneficial to the client.

Here are some of the most important counseling skills:

Listening/Observing: Listening is one of the most valuable counseling skills in the therapeutic relationship. It can be used in three ways:

1. *Attending:* Attending is the ability to be physically present for the client. It means giving them your undivided attention and making appropriate eye contact, mirroring body language, and nodding. These attending behaviors show your client that you care.
2. *Active listening:* Active listening occurs when you are listening with all of your senses. According to the Perinatal Mental Health Project, active listening involves listening with your body, heart, ears, eyes, and mouth.
3. *Verbal listening:* This is a form of showing you are listening through the words that you use. These verbal cues are used to show attention and to encourage more exploration from the client. This can be as simple as 'yes', or 'go on'. It can also be in the form of paraphrasing or repeating a word of emotion that the client has just said.

Asking Questions: Questions are helpful in the therapeutic environment because they allow you to learn more about your client. The type of questions that you ask will set the tone of the session and the entire counseling process. Questions occur in two forms.

1. *Closed:* A closed question is the practice of asking a question that can be answered as a 'yes' or 'no'. Closed questions should generally be avoided in the counseling relationship, as they do not encourage deeper exploration.
2. *Open:* An open question is necessary to gather information. An open question is one that cannot be answered with a simple 'yes' or 'no' and it requires reflection or exploration on the client's end. Every open question should be intentional and therapeutic.

Reflection: Reflections are used in the counseling process to accurately describe the client's state from their verbal or nonverbal cues.

1. *Feelings reflections:* Reflections allow clients to hear the feelings they have just expressed. Sometimes you have to look for the descriptive feeling in a client's statement. It can also be helpful to look at a client's nonverbal feeling cues.



2. *Restating/Rephrasing*: Restating and paraphrasing can build a stronger client therapist relationship. Rephrasing a client's statement allows you to better understand what a client has just said and to gain further clarity, if you have gotten it wrong.
3. *Affirmation*: Affirmation is a form of encouragement that is used to affirm behaviors or life choices. Affirmation is important for empowering clients. A few common affirmations include affirming progress that a client has made toward a goal or encouraging a client to do what is important to them.

Empathy:

Empathy is the ability to put yourself in someone else's shoes. It is much more than sympathy in that you are able to show your understanding of your clients feeling surrounding an experience.

Genuineness:

Begin genuine is creating congruence between yourself and your words. Every therapist is different and will provide a different therapeutic process. It is important to remain genuine in all counseling techniques and verbal and nonverbal cues.

Unconditional Positive Regard:

Demonstrating unconditional positive regard is the idea of accepting your client for who they are. It is a means of expressing warmth and respect.

Counselor Self-Disclosure:

This is a tricky counseling skill to maneuver. A general rule to follow is to only share personal information that is beneficial to the therapeutic process. It might also be used to help the counselor relate better with their client.

Counseling techniques

When we talk about counseling techniques, we must note that they are directly related to the psychological theories and approaches from which they derive. There is no way to fully understand any technique if the reader does not know in depth the relevant theory and the field from which it arises. For this reason, we offer you several articles through which you can deepen or refresh your knowledge in the relevant field.

C. Wayne Perry, Basic Counseling Techniques: A Beginning Therapist's Toolkit-
Counseling theories / approaches

- Behavioral psychology
- Cognitive psychology
- The Humanistic Perspective in Psychology
- Social Psychology principles
- Client-centered Therapy – What is it? What is not?

Individual Counselling in the context of Mobile Youth Work

In mobile youth work, when we want to work individually, we need to spend extra time on it because the conversation requires a level of intimacy, safe environment, to be sure that no one will interrupt by coming in, and so on. This means that once you have a strong relationship with the young people, you can negotiate extra time for individual interviews. The most appropriate time is before the mobile working time, specifically agreed with the young person: e.g. we know that the young person needs council, so we agree beforehand (by phone, online or during a previous mobile meeting) that we will meet with him / her before the mobile work activities take place at a specific location. It should be noted that the need for council may also occur unexpectedly during mobile youth work activities. Therefore, it is important to make an agreement among the team members in advance in which cases one of the youth workers can retreat and talk to the young person individually. It is also recommended that the team consider whether it is in all cases that the spontaneous situation of having to communicate with the young person individually is a priority over the other activities. This requires extra effort, but could be arranged in order to achieve quality work and help for young people

IMPORTANT!

If we identify more serious deficits or problems, we must consult a professional therapist and / or refer relevant young people to specialized care. We must be careful and not engage in individual counseling if we do not have the appropriate training and education.

XV. EVALUATION & RESEARCH TOOLS FOR MOBILE YOUTH WORK

Evaluation

There are numerous definitions of what Evaluation is. Here are some of them:

Evaluation is a process that critically examines a program. It involves collecting and analyzing information about a program's activities, characteristics, and outcomes. Its purpose is to make judgments about a program, to improve its effectiveness, and/or to inform programming decisions (Patton, 1987).

Patton, M.Q. (1987). *Qualitative Research Evaluation: Methods*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publishers.

Evaluation is the systematic and objective assessment of an ongoing or completed project or activity, including its implementation and most importantly outcomes or positive changes. - SALTO

In short, evaluation is the process of collecting and analyzing data and information. This helps us to assess how far we have come with the implementation of our activities, as well as to assess the extent to which the expected results have been achieved. Evaluation is an important step in our work, as it allows us to understand what changes are needed to achieve better results.

In the context of mobile youth work we have several areas that we can measure:

- The impact on young people directly involved in the activities;
- The impact on the community - indirectly involved young people, parents, teachers, the local community;
- The impact on decision makers and various stakeholders - business, schools, cultural centers, other NGOs;
- The impact on youth workers carrying out the activities.

Given the specifics of mobile youth work, we must be clearly aware that by conducting it, we not only influence the young people we work with, but improve the overall local environment. But in order to be able to say it, we need to prove it. That is why it is important to plan ahead the activities by which we will measure what we have achieved and to choose adequate tools with which to do it.

Research tools

Fortunately, there are many instruments we can use to measure. Some of them can be used for any of the directions, and with others we have to be careful and precise. In the following lines we will give you examples of different tools that you can use, and we must note that our list is not exhaustive and you can always look for a tool that would best suit the specifics of your work and measurement.

Impact on young people

Given that mobile youth work is a long process (at least 1 year) we can measure:

- Immediate impact of each of our visits - this can be done at the end of the activities planned for the day through group reflection, a short questionnaire and / or a Google form
- Accumulated impact - can be done at the end of each month or every 3 months. Questionnaires with scales, closed and open questions can be used, which include indicators of our pre-set goals. For example: if we set a goal that we want young people to be able to work in a team, it is good to measure the extent to which they have improved their teamwork skills.
- Long-term impact - done after the first year, and may continue for several years afterwards, to track how these activities have affected the personal, professional and civic growth of young people. This is the most complex impact to measure, as there is still no consensus on how we measure the development of social and soft skills. Here we can use individual interviews, focus groups, questionnaires. For more reliable results, it is recommended to use more than one tool.



Impact on the community

If we have met the quality standards of mobile youth work, then our work will inevitably affect the community. Maybe it's good at some point to ask the young people themselves what they want to change / see differently in their community. In this way, we will get indicators to measure later. Here the measurement can be done:

- By monitoring and keeping notes, by monitoring the implementation of initiatives conducted by young people for their community and checking their performance indicators.
- Through interviews with people from the community who were not directly involved in the activities.
- Through a survey among the local population.

Impact on decision makers and various stakeholders

An important part of the implementation of mobile youth work is the involvement of various stakeholders. It is good in the preparation stage to set indicators related to them and what change or support we want from them. Example: established partnerships with at least 4 local companies to support our activities; establishment of an advisory youth council to the mayor; supported 2 initiatives of young people from the local government. If we have clearly set indicators, then we will be able to measure what the impact is.

Surveys, questionnaires, interviews, focus groups can also be used here.

Impact on youth workers

Monthly reports can be used to monitor what is happening to youth workers. Interviews can also be conducted every few months to assess the impact on youth workers. If the youth workers themselves are not so experienced, it is appropriate to provide supervision in order to avoid crisis situations.

Sample Questions for Focus group

Here are sample questions for conducting a focus group with young people, direct participants in activities of mobile youth work:

1. Tell me about your experience with youth activities – any other youth activity that you have been part of before? (Informal, NGOs, summer camps, campaigns, etc)
2. Are there any other youth communities that you are part of at the moment – they can be online or offline ones.
3. Can you tell us how you got to be part of the youth group in ... (specify community)? Who approached/convincing you to join the activities?
4. What was the first activity that you joined?
5. How did you find the first activity/meeting?
6. What convinced you to come to the next activity?
7. How did the communication happen between the activities?
8. Who was the leader of your activity? (And what made him/her/it a leader?)
9. Can you describe one of the meetings?
10. How were you planning the next meeting? (Setting tasks, communication channels, etc.)
11. What did you find as being the most attractive about these meetings?
12. What are the main outcomes of these meetings? (a. for yourself, b. for the community)
13. Are there things that you would have changed in these activities? (What? And Why?)
14. How did you feel being part of the youth group through these activities?
15. Who do you see these activities continuing?
16. If yes, how would you see them in the future?
17. What would be your role (personal and group) in continuing the process?
18. Would you need help to keep them going?
19. If yes, what kind of support (resources – human, logistics, communication, etc.)?

If you choose a character to describe you before these activities and you after these activities, who would be these characters (asking about the change and asking for reasons that would describe the change).

XVI. DEALING WITH DIFFICULT CASES

To give heads up for youth workers and organizations planning to start implementing mobile youth work we want to introduce several difficult cases that practitioners are facing when providing services. We will provide a short case and a comment what could be done in similar situations:

Case 1

You are planning to start mobile youth work activities in a new community. You meet with local politicians, teachers and community leaders to tell about your services, and the principles of mobile youth work. The reactions you here are: "It would be best if you would give us money and we would solve all over problems, we know the best what to do", "Who will pay for electricity and cleaning of the place?", "Everything is ok in our community, all needs of young people are satisfied". What is your plan?

Possible interventions: sometimes mobile youth work teams are seen as competitors and also communities are closed and don't want to show people from the side that something is not taken care or services are not provided. Several meetings are organized to see the need for mobile youth work, some with adults others with young people. The need can be seen in a different way. Its is important to start with preparatory meetings, and also invest time and resources into piloting. Conclusion upon need and efficiency of services can be made only after 6 months of piloting.

Case 2

You are two male mobile youth workers on gathering data in one of the communities. On the street you just met a group of young men who you have met with on a number of occasions recently. The young men are drinking and one becomes abusive towards you. Your colleague challenges the young man in a way that you feel is confrontational and is increasing the tension.

Possible interventions: safety of the youth worker is the most important. It is recommended to stop the contact with the youngsters and leave the area. You can not know how a drunk person will react. Next time when the young people are sober you should approach them.

Case 3

You have recently decided to start activities of mobile youth in a new village. After implementing mapping and local analysis you found out that young people gather in an old abandoned house in the community for several years already. You and your colleague enter the house and try to connect with young people. It does not work out and youngsters kick you out. What are your next attempts to make connections?

Possible interventions: it is recommended to try to establish contact in neutral grounds, other places which would be neutral for young people. Young people can be invited to events or discussion. Positive emotions need to be created between youngsters and youth workers, it will be a basis for future work.

Case 4

Youngsters express their interest in sports activities. It is winter time and the only way to do it is in the sports hall of the school nearby. The school headmaster in the past did not support the idea of mobile youth work in their community. How you will get access to the facilities.

Possible interventions: one of the functions of youth workers is to be an intermediary. First of all you have to approach the headmaster for a discussion. If that does not work you always can find someone who would support your idea for example the mayor, the priest or local administration representative.

Case 5

You are implementing mobile youth work activities in the community already for 6 months. You have established a space, there is trust to local young people. Local young people want to use the space more often, not only 1 time a week when you come. You trust one of the youngsters, who is helping you a lot during the activities, you give him the key to the youth space. After a few weeks you are called by the local politician who claims that the space for mobile youth work was used for a party with alcohol during the weekend.

Possible interventions: this is part of the youth workers you have made an intervention with youngsters, find out their story, also discuss the consequences. Also, don't forget to meet with the politician, to present your action plan and how you will prevent similar situations happening. Also you have to check your local reality, in some countries it would not be possible to give the keys to premises to youngsters due to legal responsibility for equipment and premises.

XVII. USING DIGITAL TOOLS IN MOBILE YOUTH WORK

One of the most valuable aspects of Mobile youth work is that it happens face to face in the young people's community. Still this has its limitations because youth workers have restricted time which they can spend with youngsters.

In order to fill those gaps and to establish sustainable relationships, youth workers can use digital tools in the different stages of their work with diverse aims and objectives. We can cluster them in 3 main groups - communication, training and reflection.

Communication

As the Mobile youth work activities are taking place in a variety of locations it is very important to have a good preparation and promotion of activities in advance. Social media channels are one of the most popular and working ways of reaching and engaging young people. At the beginning mobile youth workers can use the existing channels of their local partners and networks and afterwards to establish new, exclusive profiles which are only for the activities and aren't their personal ones. This boundary is necessary to be set at the beginning in order to position themselves as professionals. Also a crucial point is to have good research which is the most popular among the young people because in some communities those could be Facebook and Instagram, as for others tiktok, Whatsapp or else. It's a common mistake to assume that and by that to harm the activities and even to push away the young people instead of attracting them. When the picture is clear and if possible the young people themselves choose the ways to communicate, the promotion of the activities can continue and these channels can be used as well as places for sharing good practices and having a visual trace of the implemented activities.

If there is a need for distance work or follow up activities and even 1 on 1 meetings, mobile youth workers can use communication platforms such as Skype, Zoom, Microsoft Teams, Google Hangouts Meet, Discord and etc. Within them there are different options which can support, deepen and diverse the interaction making it more dynamic and attractive for the participants and allowing the youth workers to advance their work.

Training

If we are planning to have training or seminars in parallel with the mobile youth activities which are held on the field, the platforms mentioned above could be used as a space for that. However if the mobile youth workers want to have a more structured approach they can use commercial digital learning environments like Moodle and Google Classroom. There they can build up whole educational programmes and courses which could be used for short or long term activities and as a meeting point for young people from the different communities they are working in. All of them can share their achievements there, exchange ideas and even start common projects. They can be implemented in digital or physical environments which also can be used for increasing the motivation of the participants in the mobile youth work activities.

Reflection

The personal experience and self-reflection of the participants is something which shouldn't be underestimated. On the contrary young people should be encouraged to do that not only in the activities they are taking part of but also on their own. In recent years personal blogs or even vlogs are getting more and more popular and with the rise of social media influencers, more recognizable from the young people. This can be one of the options - to start a personal blog or to use their existing profiles to share their experience among their peers and followers. Another tool which is gaining more recognition in the youth field as well as a variety of NGOs and business organizations is Badgecraft. Through their multilingual platform organisations and individuals can earn, create, issue, share, sort and display badges online, plus use them to communicate achievements in the places which matter.

Using digital tools in mobile youth work can support the whole process of the planned activities and as well to bring a great added value to them. Yet it is essential to seek the balance between in person and on-line interaction in order to support and respond to the needs of the young people, not to create new ones or to overwhelm them. This can support the building of a holistic long term relationship within the mobile youth work activities.



XVIII. WHEN TO STOP MOBILE YOUTH WORK SERVICES?

There can be several different reasons to stop provision of mobile youth work services in a specific location. On one hand, it can happen because of negative developments:

- lack of support and cooperation with the local community;
- no access to proper meeting venues or places;
- decreasing number of young people in the community the or number of youngsters involved in the activities;
- funding issues;
- lack of mobile youth workers;
- changed priorities of municipality etc.

But on the other hand, there can be a handful of positive reasons to terminate mobile youth services. For example, if the results of youth work (numbers, impact etc) are visible in the community, they might establish an Open space or Open youth center, therefore mobile services would no longer be needed. Also, if young people are empowered (enough) they can start self-organizing activities, establish local NGO. Sometimes, young people just “grow-out” of youth work activities and move on into the education or labour market.

Having all this said, it is important to continuously monitor the need for mobile youth services and the impact of it.

If mobile youth work is achieving the envisioned results and the community indicates that there is a need for youth work services on a regular basis (3-4 days per week) then it gives a clear indication that a youth centre should be opened. In the upcoming years “one-stop shop” Open youth centres will be the new trend in the youth field.

One stop shop is a youth centre that provides the following services:

- Open centre
- Mobile youth work in communities
- Working with NEET youngsters
- Providing youth information and counseling services, services of psychologist
- Implementing international youth work: developing projects, sending young people to mobility activities

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