



PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS 2018
Streetwork and mobile youthwork

Foreword

The establishment and development of the work fields of streetwork and mobile youthwork in Germany has always been subject to a wide and shared public debate and a regionalized conceptual differentiation. This regionalized differentiation is both the result of a historically grown consolidation of understandings of the work fields against the background of a lack of generally accepted definition as well as the consequence of a needs-based focus and therefore a stronger emphasis on the local offers.

However, street work and mobile youth work always have a common basis, which is crucial for understanding the work fields. Without the methods of outreach work, work in the community, individual work, and group work, as well as the working principles underlying the working fields, street work and mobile youth work are unthinkable and unperformable. The present standards are based on a multi-year discussion, participation, and further development process of the Bundesarbeitsgemeinschaft Streetwork / Mobile Jugendarbeit e.V. They represent an up to date state of the professional discussion and serve as a guide for the (further) development of concepts and as a recommendation for the design of the necessary framework conditions.

1. Self-image streetwork and mobile youthwork

The basis for professionalism in the fields of streetwork and mobile youthwork is the right to a dignified existence guaranteed by the Basic Law and the social state principle anchored there. The human image underlying the working fields is based on the ethical principles of human dignity and the equality of all human beings. Based on the fact that opportunities for participation are often limited in the context of society as a whole, the professionals working in the fields of streetwork and mobile youthwork, in the understanding of an advocacy of the service user, deal in particular with disadvantaged people who are excluded from social participation, threatened by exclusion, and self-exclusion.

Therefore, it is the task of streetwork and mobile youthwork to build bridges, open access to all areas of society, and reduce exclusion processes.

2. Definition of streetwork and mobile youthwork

Streetwork and mobile youthwork are outreach, low-threshold, advocacy, supportive and to the service users and their lifeworld oriented independent fields of work, which unite specific methods and working principles of social work in a socio-pedagogical action concept. Their theoretical foundations can be found mainly in the lifeworld orientation and social space orientation.

Streetwork and mobile youthwork can differ in their service users and by the respective legal foundations.

3. Ethical and legal principles

Streetwork and mobile youthwork are work fields of the profession of social work and therefore follow its basic goals. These are based on the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the ethical principles of Social Work^{1,2}. The resulting global goals and stances of the professionals of these fields are:

- Respect for the dignity of all people
- Respect for the right to self-determination
- Promoting the right to participation
- See and treat people in their entirety
- To work with resources and recognize strengths, empowerment
- Promote social justice
- Reduce discrimination due to individual or group-related characteristics
- Recognize diversity
- Distribute resources more equitably
- Challenging unjust policies and practices
- Working in solidarity, work towards an inclusive society

The legal foundations of streetwork and mobile youthwork are found in the social codes.

Mobile youthwork is based on s 1 (3) and s 9 (2-3) Social Code, Book VIII and finds its concretion in s 11 (youth work) and s 13 (youth social work) Social Code, Book VIII.

Streetwork and mobile youthwork are provided by non-statutory agencies, independent providers of youth, and welfare services as well as by public agencies.

4. Service users of streetwork and mobile youthwork

Streetwork and mobile youthwork is focused on people for whom the public and semi-public space is an important part of their lifeworld, especially for those who can not be reached by, are rejected by or cannot reach facility-centered services. The focus is on disadvantaged people who are excluded from social participation, threatened by exclusion, and self-exclusion.

If there is a specific need and with the mandate given from the service users, streetwork and mobile youthwork can also be extended to private rooms and to persons from their social environment.

The age of the main service users of mobile youthwork is framed by the responsibility of Social Code, Book VIII (until the age of 27) and is prioritized by streetwork offers through the respective conceptions and the local needs.

¹ Deutscher Berufsverband für Soziale Arbeit e.V. (DBSH): ForumSozial. Die Berufliche Soziale Arbeit 4/2014. Berlin: 2014

² International Federation of Social Workers: Statement of ethical principles. Stockholm: 2012

5. Goals of streetwork and mobile youthwork

Streetwork and mobile youthwork prevent or reduce stigmatization and exclusion of their service users. They offer them lifeworld-oriented support that supports their social inclusion and improves living conditions.

This leads in the following goals:

- Streetwork and mobile youthwork support and accompany their service users in the development and implementation of their life perspectives.
- Streetwork and mobile youthwork build and maintain strong relationships with the service users.
- Streetwork and mobile youthwork strengthen the self-help potential of their service users and expand their possibilities for action by opening up and making resources available.
- Streetwork and mobile youthwork support their service users in accessing further help systems through counseling, support, and mediation.
- Streetwork and mobile youthwork open up and find, together with the service users, relevant public and semi-public spaces for them.
- Streetwork and mobile youthwork accompanies and initiates both emancipatory and self-effective processes of the service users as well as group-related learning processes of solidarity and mutual support.
- Streetwork and mobile youthwork are known and accepted by as many people in the social environment as possible.
- Street work and mobile youth work initiate, maintain, and use networks that are thematically oriented to the needs of the service users.
- Streetwork and mobile youth work see themselves as advocates of the service users, with the primary goal of strengthening empowerment and participation.
- Streetwork and mobile youthwork use public relations to make the realities of their service users visible and to achieve understanding and acceptance.
- Streetwork and mobile youthwork contribute to identifying missing or inadequate offers, making them public, developing social policy intervention strategies, and thus influencing social and children's services planning.
- Streetwork and mobile youthwork contribute to the further development of the work fields and represent their own professional interests at local, state, and federal level.

These goals are substantiated locally on the basis of a current social space analysis and the resulting needs. These regional objectives are defined in the respective conceptions.

6. Guiding principles of work

In order to reach the service users, and consequentially the desired goals, the following working principles apply in all areas of activity.

Orientation on needs and lifeworld

Streetwork and mobile youthwork appreciate their service users with all their strengths and issues in the context of their lifeworlds and social relationships, and they provide a contact person for the entire range of questions and challenges that arise. At the same time, service users with all their needs and interests are seen as experts for themselves and their environment. The guiding principle is a dialogue at eye level with the service user and the joint reflection of their possibilities for action in relation to their life situations. This is accompanied by activation for one's own interests and the most possible independent structuring of one's own life situation.

Diversity

The concept of diversity emphasizes the differences between group or individual characteristics, but at the same time demands their recognition. Diversity aims to create equal opportunities for people who are disadvantaged by group or individual characteristics. For the work of streetwork and mobile youthwork, diversity is both a cross-sectional task as well as the stance of the employees. Objectives are recognition of differences and protection against discrimination. Since gender and culture are central criteria of social and individual localization, a discussion of their social functions and effects on the service users of streetwork and mobile youthwork in the sense of diversity is necessary.

Gender sensitivity

Gender, which means the (social) gender, as well as the social gender relations are not given naturally, but are socially constructed. In this knowledge the professionals support the realization of gender equality and the reduction of social inequality and discrimination. At the same time, the service users are supported in developing their gender identity. This is made possible by offering spaces for development for experiencing sexuality and for overcoming restrictive gender concepts to promote diversity. This requires the knowledge of the results of gender research and gender theories as well as the reflection of understanding one's own role and gender perspectives of the professionals.

Transculturality

Transculturality assumes that modern cultures can not be sharply distinguished. They permeate each other, their transitions are fluid, and they permanently develop. In this sense, similarities between different people can always be discovered, regardless of their origin, cultural characteristics or social attributions. The communicative task of streetwork and mobile youthwork is to look for similarities that facilitate understanding first. For this, constant self-reflection and further education in a team context are necessary.

Inclusion

Inclusion is focused on improving the opportunities for participation and fulfillment of the service users of streetwork and mobile youthwork, in order to approach social justice. For this purpose, exclusionary, and discriminatory social mechanisms have to be reduced and economic and structural prerequisites have to be created. Streetwork and mobile youthwork are committed to improving the opportunities for participation and realization of their service users, both in their individual work as well as in their political and social discourse.

Participation

Participation is a consistent working principle. People are encouraged to work on their own issues and needs independently, to recognize and implement action steps. Here, the professionals always have an accompanying instead of a leading function. The empowerment and motivation of young people to participate in social and political negotiation processes is action-guiding.

Appreciation, respect, and acceptance as the basis for the relationship

In order to build a successful working relationship, access to, and interaction with the service users requires an empathetic attitude. People need an open, accepting way of working that respects people's ways of life, ideas, strategies, and constructions, and appreciates them through communication at eye level as experts in their lifeworld. The service users are taken as persons as a whole, in the knowledge of our own prejudices. Therefore, offers of streetwork and mobile youthwork are basically open to all people.

Voluntariness

The contacting, the duration, and the intensity of the contact are decided by the service users within the frame of the offers. Besides that, streetwork and mobile youthwork offer regular contact possibilities.

In specific justified individual cases / situations the contact can also be stopped by the professionals

Low threshold and flexibility

An attempt is made to minimize any conditions, requirements, or other obstacles that prevent the establishment of sustainable contacts or the access to helpful offers for the service users. Times, places, and offers of the work are adjusted flexibly and openly to the needs of the people.

Supportive approach

People have fundamental rights to social participation and the socio-spatial occupancy of environment and spaces. Streetwork and mobile youthwork advocates and supports people's rights and their development. The supportive approach does not refer to individual world views or the behavior of the service users, but to stand up for social justice and against marginalization and segregation of the service user group.

Protection of trust, confidentiality, and anonymity

Without a mandate from the service user, streetwork and mobile youthwork does not share personal information with others. They do not keep any personal files and also pay attention in their reports to not document any personal case histories. An exception is the obligation to provide information and documentation in the case of risk to a child's or youth welfare³.

Confidentiality, transparency, and interest in each other are essential in dealing with the service user in a trustfully environment.

³ § 8a SGB VIII – Schutzauftrag bei Kindeswohlgefährdung

Transparency

The employees of the work fields behave in an open, honest, and authentic manner towards the service user and make clear which intentions, possibilities, and limits their actions have. Transparent action is, therefore, a key competence in difficult situations, e.g. when there are limits of support or secrecy due to the lack of right to refuse to give evidence in court.

Professional understanding of roles

The employees of the work fields are aware of their professional roles as professional helpers and guests in the environment of their service users and maintain an appropriate relationship between necessary proximity and professional distance. The professionals have the right to define the role of understanding and the appropriate boundaries; this is not dictated by attributions from the outside.

Professional policy demarcation

Streetwork and mobile youthwork clearly differ from security and regulatory policies distances itself from any instrumentalization. They are offers of social work based on trust and must be clearly recognizable to the service user. A dialogue with police and regulatory authorities in the sense of e.g. round tables and crime prevention councils are however possible under the appropriate data protection regulations.

These working principles are crucial, mutually dependent, and shape all offers of streetwork and mobile youthwork.

7. Methods

Within the socio-pedagogical concept of action, the work fields of streetwork and mobile youthwork combine different methods of social work: outreach work, work in the community, individual work, and group work. In addition, quality assurance and public relations are necessary as cross-sectional tasks. The methods mentioned here are designed on the basis of a lifeworld/social space analysis. Depending on the regional (urban vs. rural) and conceptual orientation (social space or community vs. scene), the prioritization of the methods described here varies.

7.1. Outreach work

This includes continuous and focused visits of people in their self-selected spaces. This term is based on an extended understanding of space.

The focused visit is used for contacting and keeping in contact as well as getting to know the lifeworld of the service users and to constantly update the knowledge about it. This serves to build a trust-based, sustainable relationship.

The professionals experience the different lifeworlds in their guest role and get to know them. The social environment is recorded and can be included in the work. Outreach work recognizes and names missing social structures as well as inadequate infrastructures.

7.2. Work in the community

Streetwork and mobile youthwork work to improve the living conditions of the service users in the community and make an active contribution to the conceptual and structural development of the community by intervening and lobbying.

It is important to transport the needs and topics of the service users to the appropriate places, to

develop resources and make them useful in order to shape the community together with the service users. The work fields support the development of social and cultural life with the goal of coexistence in the spirit of solidarity.

Streetwork and mobile youthwork work together with municipal offices, organizations, institutions, independent agencies, and local actors. Working in the community also initiates and strengthens social networks between citizens and professionals. Networking should not be seen as a goal, but as an instrument to develop solutions in cooperation.

7.3. Individual work (individual offers)

The individual work in the context of streetwork and mobile youthwork is an individual offer to strengthen the autonomy and self-determination of the service users. The professionals offer support and guidance in coping with everyday life and in specific issues. The available resources of the service users will be opened up and activated. Possible are forms of crisis intervention, target-oriented transfer into other support services, longer-term guidance, or counseling phases. Beneficial for successful individual work is the offer of intensive relationship work regardless of current or acute problems of the service users.

Streetwork and mobile youthwork are links between the service users and the support system and, through comprehensive advice and support, help to reduce threshold fears and make further help offers available.

7.4. Group work (clique or scene-related offers)

The goal of group work within streetwork and mobile youthwork is to exploit structural, social, and emotional resources of peer groups. The resulting synergy effects and conflicts are used to support and guide self-determined and self-directed development processes. The development of social skills, but also the ability of young people to design their own living spaces, to organize and carry out leisure activities and events are in the foreground. Here, streetwork and mobile youthwork support and guide appropriately and adequately.

Under socio-pedagogical aspects, low-threshold, lifeworld related projects, and educational work are initiated. In addition, together with the service users, sportive and experience-oriented activities as well as other leisure activities are planned and carried out. Group work can be used to support and accompany group processes through group counseling and can intervene in case of acute need and potentially contribute to prevention. In order to raise public awareness of specific issues, the work fields also promote discussion and panels on political and other relevant topics as needed, and react against the exclusion of cliques and scenes.

7.5. Cross-cutting issues

Public relation

The work approach streetwork and mobile youthwork, the offers, and contact options as well as information about the project agency are permanently displayed in a transparent way by various means. Possibilities for this can be: flyers, brochures, homepage, presence in social networks, various advertising media as well as the continuous co-operation with the regional and supra-regional media (press, radio, TV). Prior to that, the seriousness, sensitivity, and format has to be verified.

Quality control

The agencies of streetwork and mobile youthwork are responsible for ensuring that their teams provide high-quality, describable, concept-based services, ensuring that quality is not only maintained, but undergoes a constant review and adjustment process.

It is important to distinguish three levels of quality assurance.

The quality of the results can be checked by measuring the degree of achievement of the goal and, if possible, quantifying it.

The process quality can be checked by the coherence of the action concepts and offers in the respective work fields.

The structural quality is largely determined by the framework conditions.

The results of the review of the three dimensions of quality need to be discussed and accepted in context. They are used as material from which changes, improvements, and innovations can be proposed. These suggestions serve as a basis for decisions to shape further work.

Basically, each project requires a conception and a service description, which are the basis for the work, regularly evaluated and updated. These can be supplemented by content and financial concepts for leisure projects and events (planning and evaluation activities). The conceptual work also includes keeping of statistics, preparation of documentation and reports in order to enter into a professional exchange with politics, science, administration, and the professional public. The protection of private information and data of the service users deserves special attention.

The necessary reflection of the work is ensured by regular team discussions and team coaching, practice counseling, supervisions, peer consultations and case discussions, and in keeping a time sheet. Quality assurance also includes participation in external and internal seminars and trainings as well as subject specific self-study. In addition, an interdisciplinary networking with other professionals and committees is derived from the working principles and methods.

8. Framework conditions of streetwork and mobile youthwork

In order to be able to work effectively and efficiently, streetwork and mobile youthwork need stable framework conditions adapted to the respective concept. The conditions are all prerequisites whose existence or provision fall under the responsibility of the agencies or funders.

Personnel conditions

- Recruitment of sufficiently qualified personnel with (social-) pedagogical university degree
- Personal aptitude
- At least 2.5 full time equivalents (the diversity of the teams should be based as far as possible on the diversity of the service users)
- Permanent employment contracts
- Tariff payment - according to german collective agreement (TVöD-SuE / S 12)
- Overtime regulation and flexible working hours, arrangements for night, weekend, and holiday work
- Additional human resources for the needs-based design of offers in quantitative and qualitative terms
- Additional human resources for administrative and organizational activities
- Written agreement of the work assignment and job description with appropriate updating
- Caring according to the duty of care (e.g., health care and resources for continuing education)

and training)

- Providing the safety of professionals in high-risk areas such as outreach work, i.a. through teams of at least two people

Material conditions

- Suitable low-threshold and barrier-free premises
- Needs-based equipment of all professionals with the necessary communication devices
- Adequate budget for: freely available hand money, office organization, administrative costs, fees, material
- Refund of travel expenses, funds for mobility (e.g. car, bicycle)
- Funds for activities, programs, and freetime offers
- Educational and methodical-didactical work material

Structural conditions:

- Networking and cooperation as part of the work assignment
- Qualified service cards with photo
- Protection of legitimate expectation and data privacy have to be guaranteed
- Assured legal assistance by the agency

Professional support / reflection:

- Time, resources and funds for
- Qualified training in the work fields
- Regular social space analyzes and needs assessment
- Concept development
- Planning, peer consultation, team support, team discussion
- Quality assurance / evaluation
- Supervision, coaching, crisis intervention
- Willingness for further training, participation in professional events
- Professional literature

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