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youth café

toolkit

how to set up and run
a youth café in Ireland



APRIL 2010

Office of the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs

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Office of the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs

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Welcome!

Well, in Paris they have the Eiffel Tower, in New York they have the Statue of Liberty and in London they have Big Ben ... but Waterford has something that none of these cities have – Waterford has a Squashy Couch (that's our youth café!).

This toolkit has been developed to help guide **YOU** in starting up **YOUR OWN** youth café.

So, we were thinking about why we go to Squashy Couch and why would anyone go to a youth café. First of all, it's a break between school and home, and to be honest it's a break *from* school and home. It's safe and healthy, a secure environment where you get to meet people from other schools. You can pan out and relax, watch telly, do whatever, it's friendly so you don't have to worry.

Then it's a place where you're not judged, there's nobody looking at you and saying stuff about '*the youth today*', and the staff look after you, you don't get shunned or anything. You can have a proper conversation with the staff and they'll help you if you want information about anything.

In our café, the information around the walls is great. There's stuff about your own life and about things you can do. If you have a question, you can read the stuff on the walls and find out what you need to know and then the staff will help you if you need to go further.

We don't know what we'd do without Squashy. We've spent our youth here. The stuff we do on Friday nights is fun and brilliant: we've had band competitions, theme nights, Indian nights, American nights, movie nights, art clubs and that. It's in town and easy to get to. There's always something to do and someone to talk to.

So, **YOUR** café might be anything from a support for when things aren't so great to being a place to go and just sit and hang out with friends – and everything in between. The best part is that the young people get to make some decisions about where it is, what it looks like and how it's organised. Remember, **GREAT** youth cafés are flexible, so everyone can have a say.

What we hoped to achieve when we were setting up our café was a place where young people wanted to go, could have their say, create a 'home from home' and a place where being yourself is the 'norm'.

*Sometimes you want to go
Where everybody knows your name,
And they are always glad you came.
You wanna be where you can see
Our troubles are all the same.
You wanna be where everybody knows your name.*

These lyrics are as true to a youth café as they are to *Cheers!* So, get planning, get organising, but most importantly get talking to young people – and BEST OF LUCK!

Lyndsey, Vicky, Ellen, Niamh and Jamie
Squashy Couch, Waterford



Acknowledgements

Youth cafés have become increasingly common around Ireland in the last 10 years. Aware of the absence of any form of information to help people set up a youth café or to develop an existing one, the Office of the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs (OMCYA) recognised the need for this toolkit and commissioned research for it from the Child and Family Research Centre of the National University of Ireland, Galway (www.childandfamilyresearch.ie).

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Naoise Collins

Staff involved:

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Marie Hehir
Sarah Simkin

■ Squashy Couch, Waterford

Young people involved:

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Jamie Flynn
Brendan Gallagher
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Lewis Quinn
Elaine Tobin
Vicky Wall

Staff involved:

Maire Morrissey



■ **Youth Space, Ennis, Co. Clare**

Young people involved:

Cian McKeown (Youth Space member)
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Caoimhe McClafferty

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About the Child and Family Research Centre

The work for this report was conducted by the Child and Family Research Centre (CFRC), which is a partnership between the Health Service Executive (HSE) and National University of Ireland, Galway. Based in the School of Political Science and Sociology, the CFRC undertakes research, education and training in the area of child and family care and welfare.

The CFRC's objectives are:

- to understand child and family needs by producing scientific research and evaluations;
- to improve services for children and families through third- and fourth-level education, better service design and learning networks for service practitioners;
- to build research capacity in family support through applying best practice methodologies, developing researchers and supporting practitioner research;
- to influence policy for children by engaging with researchers, policy-makers, service providers, children and their families.

More information on the CFRC can be obtained at www.childandfamilyresearch.ie





PART I: INTRODUCTION

What is a youth café?

Using this toolkit

What is a youth café?

A youth café is a safe, dedicated, quality meeting space for young people ranging in age from 10 to 25 years. It is determined *by* young people *for* young people, in partnership with adults in the locality. In more general terms, a youth café offers the following to young people:

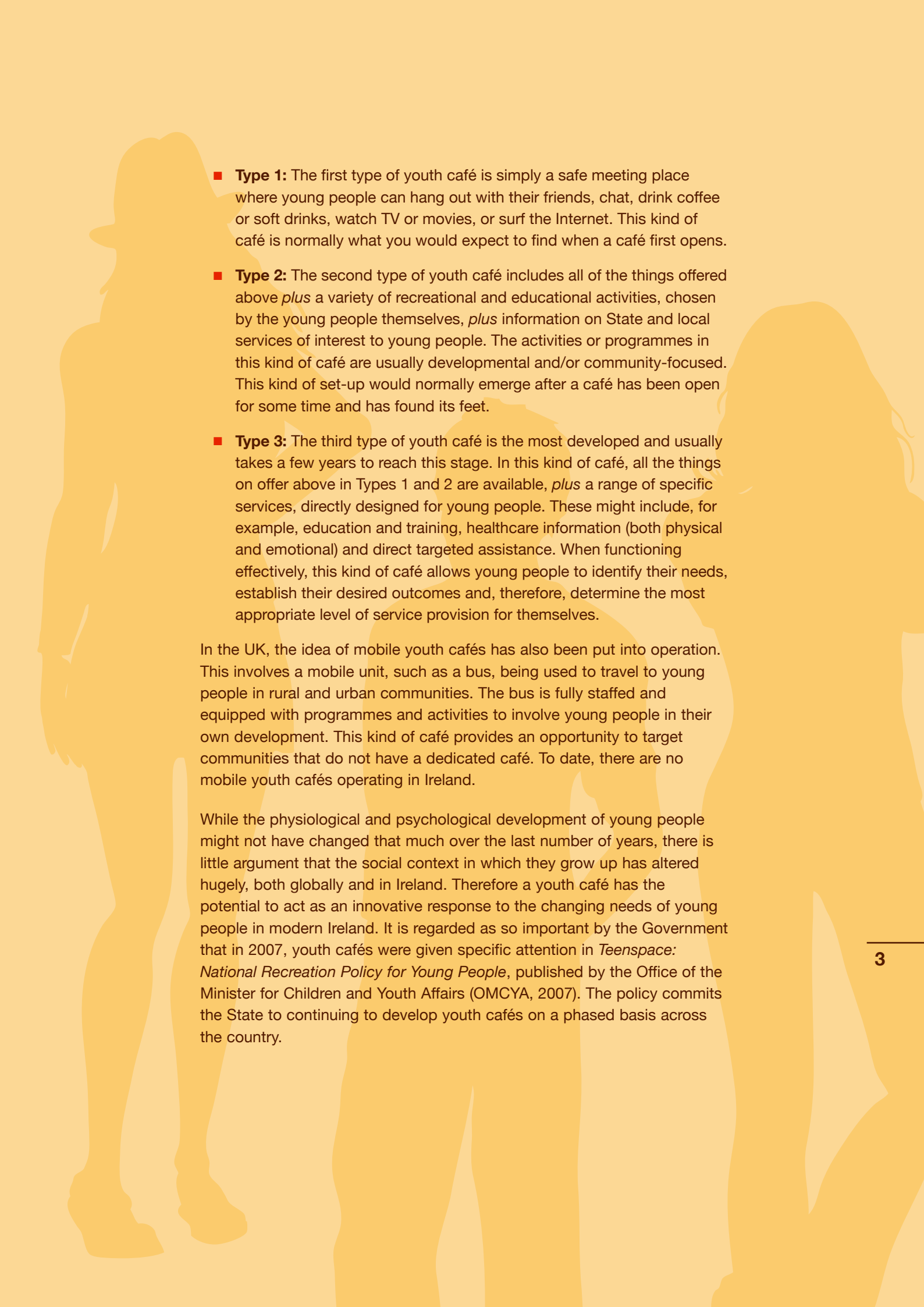
- a relaxed meeting space, which is safe, friendly, inclusive and tolerant;
- a place for both sexes and for young people from all social and cultural backgrounds to engage in social interaction with their peers in a safe and supportive drug- and alcohol-free environment;
- a location for relaxation, recreation and entertainment, and, where appropriate, as a site for information, advice or even direct care/service provision;
- a place where young people can develop good quality relationships with their peers and with adults.

Thus, youth cafés are all about meeting the needs of young people. A well-run café can be a source of support for young people and can offer them a secure base during times of immense change in their lives. A café can also act as a protective factor in young people's lives, helping them to face any issues or difficulties that arise and be more resilient as a result.

Over the years in Ireland, the major youth work organisations have traditionally worked with young people to address their needs. For this reason, there is a natural fit between youth work and the overall purpose of a youth café. Other types of organisations – be they statutory, community or voluntary – can also be central to the development and operation of youth cafés, and may often work in conjunction with the major youth work providers, always reflecting youth work principles in how best to work with young people.

An important point to remember is that youth cafés are not a panacea for all issues that young people face today. Rather, they are one part of a continuum of responses to meeting youth need in Ireland. Youth cafés further enhance the more traditional options provided by youth and community organisations, which have enabled young people to hang out with friends, get involved in local activities and access information.

There is no set model for a youth café. Each café is unique in its own way. What makes it so is the fact that in each locality, it works towards helping young people with a range of specific issues identified by those young people. In general, youth cafés in Ireland can be categorised into three different types:

- 
- The background of the page features three stylized, light-yellow silhouettes of young people. On the left, a person stands wearing a wide-brimmed hat. In the center, a person is shown from the waist up, wearing a jacket. On the right, a person is shown from the waist up, with long hair. These silhouettes are positioned behind the text, creating a layered effect.
- **Type 1:** The first type of youth café is simply a safe meeting place where young people can hang out with their friends, chat, drink coffee or soft drinks, watch TV or movies, or surf the Internet. This kind of café is normally what you would expect to find when a café first opens.
 - **Type 2:** The second type of youth café includes all of the things offered above *plus* a variety of recreational and educational activities, chosen by the young people themselves, *plus* information on State and local services of interest to young people. The activities or programmes in this kind of café are usually developmental and/or community-focused. This kind of set-up would normally emerge after a café has been open for some time and has found its feet.
 - **Type 3:** The third type of youth café is the most developed and usually takes a few years to reach this stage. In this kind of café, all the things on offer above in Types 1 and 2 are available, *plus* a range of specific services, directly designed for young people. These might include, for example, education and training, healthcare information (both physical and emotional) and direct targeted assistance. When functioning effectively, this kind of café allows young people to identify their needs, establish their desired outcomes and, therefore, determine the most appropriate level of service provision for themselves.

In the UK, the idea of mobile youth cafés has also been put into operation. This involves a mobile unit, such as a bus, being used to travel to young people in rural and urban communities. The bus is fully staffed and equipped with programmes and activities to involve young people in their own development. This kind of café provides an opportunity to target communities that do not have a dedicated café. To date, there are no mobile youth cafés operating in Ireland.

While the physiological and psychological development of young people might not have changed that much over the last number of years, there is little argument that the social context in which they grow up has altered hugely, both globally and in Ireland. Therefore a youth café has the potential to act as an innovative response to the changing needs of young people in modern Ireland. It is regarded as so important by the Government that in 2007, youth cafés were given specific attention in *Teenspace: National Recreation Policy for Young People*, published by the Office of the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs (OMCYA, 2007). The policy commits the State to continuing to develop youth cafés on a phased basis across the country.

Using this toolkit

This toolkit is designed for anybody involved in a youth café – you might just be starting out on the road to setting one up, you might be in the early stages of working on one and have some things already happening, or you might be involved in a well-established youth café.

This toolkit offers advice on 11 areas that are core to youth cafés, namely:

- involving young people in a youth café;
- partnership between adults and young people in a youth café;
- mission and activities/programmes for a youth café;
- role of staff and volunteers in a youth café;
- training for staff, volunteers and young people;
- design and location of the youth café building;
- management of a youth café;
- funding and sustainability of a youth café;
- promotion of a youth café;
- evaluation and monitoring of a youth café;
- policies for a youth café.

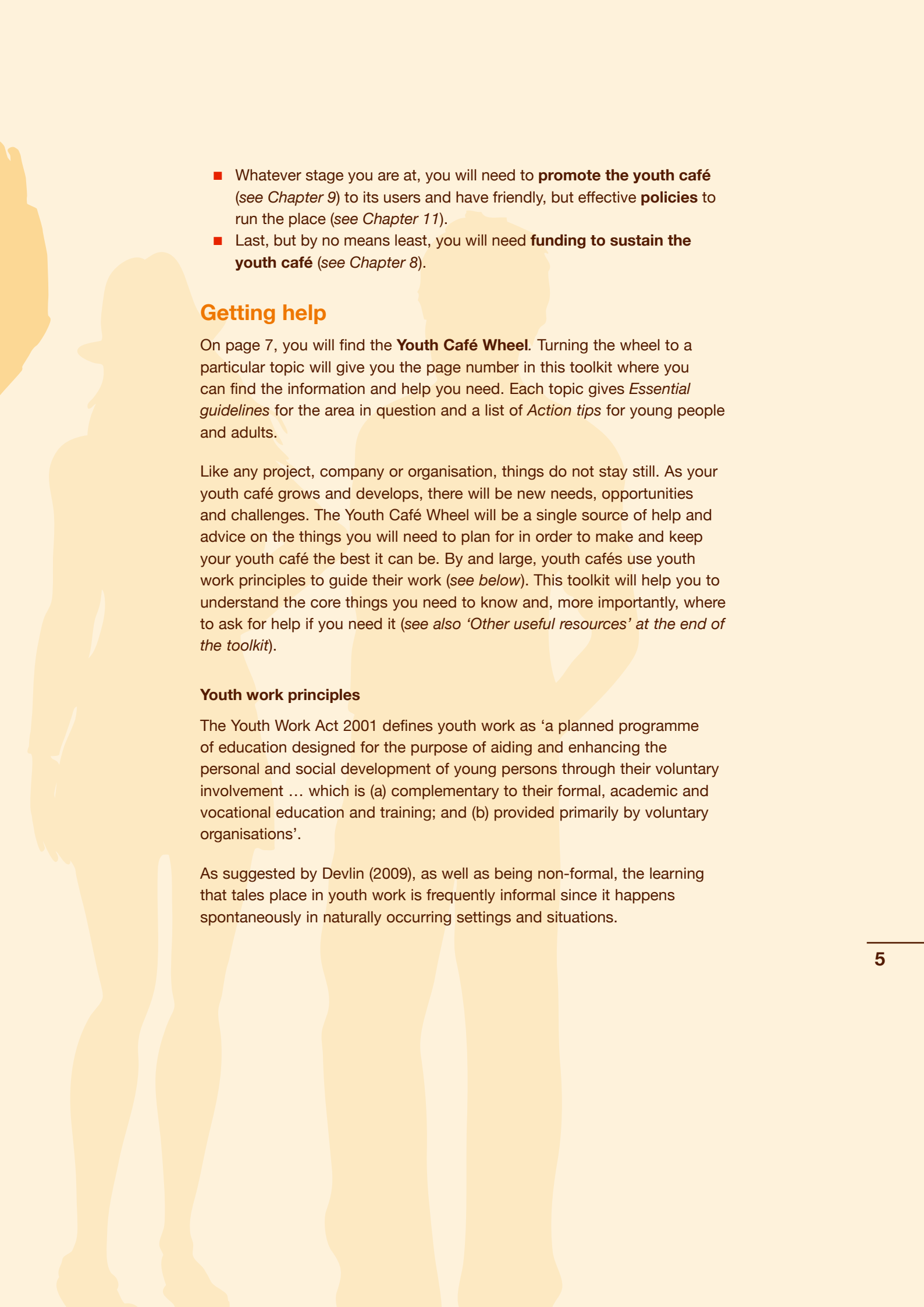
Founding principles

Of these 11 areas, **Involving young people in a youth café** and **Partnership between adults and young people in a youth café** are considered to be key founding principles for all youth cafés. Therefore, no matter what stage you are at with a youth café, you should take the time to read *Chapters 1 and 2* (pp. 10-13) for more information on these subjects.

Essential guidelines

Because at different points in the life of a youth café you will be facing different challenges and thinking about different things, you are going to find some of the remaining chapters more relevant than others. *Chapters 3-11* provide some essential guidelines on different aspects of youth cafés:

- People starting off will most likely be thinking about such things as what they want to do (**Mission and activities**, see *Chapter 3*), where they want to do it (**Design and location**, see *Chapter 6*) and who will help them do it (**Role of staff and volunteers**, see *Chapter 4*).
- People already up and running might have worked through these and be thinking more about developing skills (**Training for staff, volunteers and young people**, see *Chapter 5*) and running the café effectively (**Management of a youth café**, see *Chapter 7*).
- People who have an established youth café might be at the stage where they are trying to find out what young people think about it and are there ways that it can be improved (**Evaluation and monitoring**, see *Chapter 10*).

- 
- A background illustration featuring the silhouettes of three young people. On the left, a person is seen from the side, wearing a hat. In the center, a person stands with their back to the viewer, looking towards the right. On the right, another person is shown from the side, facing the central figure. They appear to be in a casual conversation.
- Whatever stage you are at, you will need to **promote the youth café** (see *Chapter 9*) to its users and have friendly, but effective **policies** to run the place (see *Chapter 11*).
 - Last, but by no means least, you will need **funding to sustain the youth café** (see *Chapter 8*).

Getting help

On page 7, you will find the **Youth Café Wheel**. Turning the wheel to a particular topic will give you the page number in this toolkit where you can find the information and help you need. Each topic gives *Essential guidelines* for the area in question and a list of *Action tips* for young people and adults.

Like any project, company or organisation, things do not stay still. As your youth café grows and develops, there will be new needs, opportunities and challenges. The Youth Café Wheel will be a single source of help and advice on the things you will need to plan for in order to make and keep your youth café the best it can be. By and large, youth cafés use youth work principles to guide their work (see *below*). This toolkit will help you to understand the core things you need to know and, more importantly, where to ask for help if you need it (see also '*Other useful resources*' at the end of the toolkit).

Youth work principles

The Youth Work Act 2001 defines youth work as 'a planned programme of education designed for the purpose of aiding and enhancing the personal and social development of young persons through their voluntary involvement ... which is (a) complementary to their formal, academic and vocational education and training; and (b) provided primarily by voluntary organisations'.

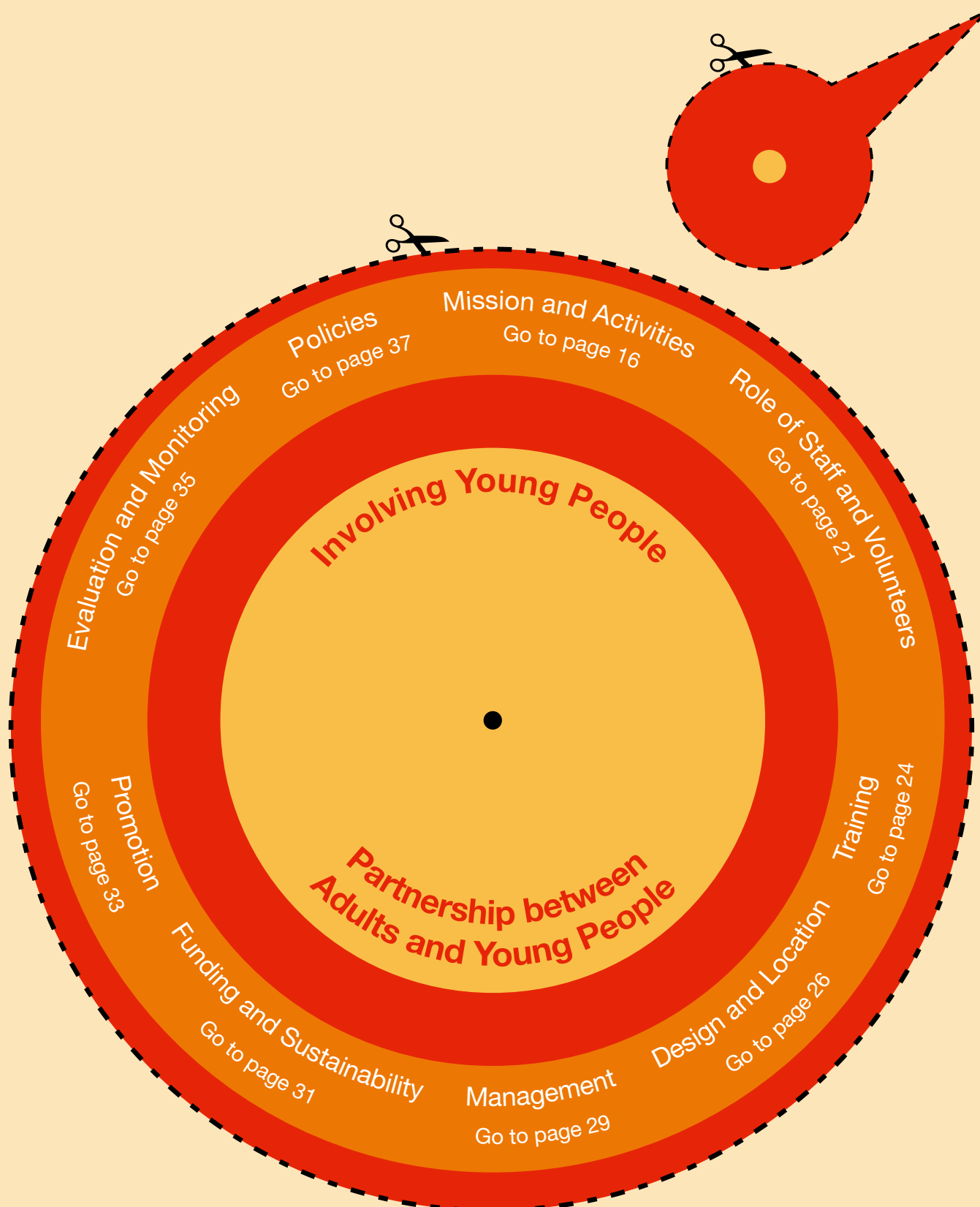
As suggested by Devlin (2009), as well as being non-formal, the learning that takes place in youth work is frequently informal since it happens spontaneously in naturally occurring settings and situations.



Youth Café Wheel

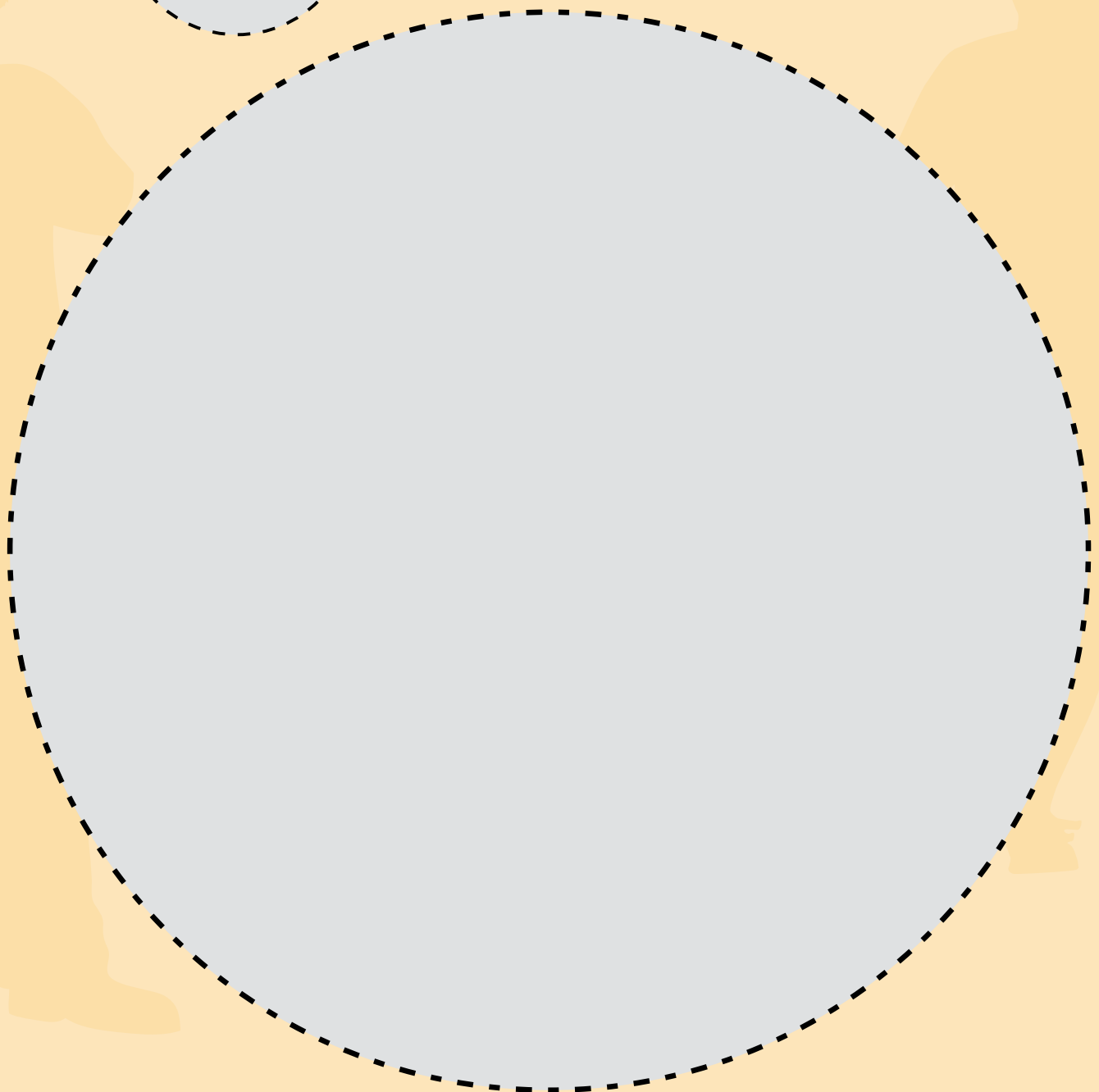
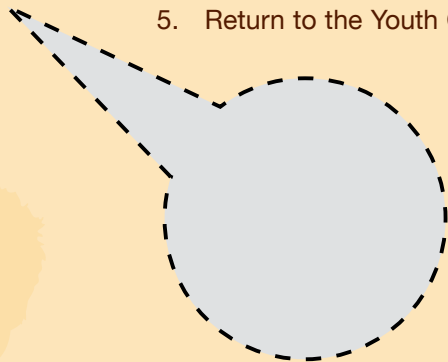
How to make

1. Carefully cut out the circle and the dial below.
2. Punch a hole through the centre of each piece.
3. Place the dial in the centre of the circle and push through a brass tack. Secure it on the reverse side.



How to use

1. **Involving young people in a youth café** and **Partnership between adults and young people in a youth café** are core principles to success. No matter what stage your café is at, you should read Chapters 1 and 2 first and keep them central to your thinking.
2. After this, check the remaining 9 topics listed on the Youth Café Wheel and decide which area, or areas, you need most help with.
3. Spin the *centre pointer* to the topic you have chosen to reveal the page number you need to turn to in the toolkit.
4. Go to that page.
5. Return to the Youth Café Wheel as needs arise and repeat Steps 2-4.





PART II: FOUNDING PRINCIPLES FOR YOUTH CAFÉS

- 1. Involving young people in a youth café**
- 2. Partnership between adults and young people
in a youth café**

1. Involving young people in a youth café

Essential guidelines

A core principle on which a youth café must be based is that it involves young people in all aspects of its workings from the very beginning. This echoes the now widely accepted belief that enabling child and youth participation in all areas of life in which they are involved is a universal right. The introduction of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child in 1989 provided a global bill of rights for all children (UN, 1989). Article 12 of the Convention states that children's views must be taken into account in all matters affecting them.

When young people are given responsibility for the various tasks involved in developing a youth café, an atmosphere of confidence will prevail, with people feeling secure and valued for their efforts. This level of involvement and participation will bring about an atmosphere of ownership and trust. Being involved in a youth café will give young people the opportunity to learn new skills, take on new roles and meet different types of people. It also allows them to be creative and develop their confidence. In addition, each young person has the opportunity to influence decision-making and change things for the better, while working in conjunction with their peers and adults.

Young people should be directly involved in a youth café at a number of different stages.

- First, by talking to their peers, they should research whether or not a café is needed and if so, find out what its aims and objectives might be. Interested adults can, of course, also contribute and help at this stage.
- Young people should become involved in the day-to-day running of the café. A good starting point is to establish a management committee that will make decisions about the setting up and running of the café. It is important that the management committee is representative of different ages, males and females, and different types of young people, e.g. ethnic groups and young people from each part of your local area. The number of people on the management committee will vary depending on the size of your café. It is important to consider the best way to involve adults – some cafés have a mixture of adults and young people, while others have two separate committees.
- Young people should be actively involved in the physical design of the café itself.
- They should also become involved in the promotion and marketing of the café, by talking to their peers and encouraging them to get involved.



Additional resources

- You can find additional information on why it is so important to involve young people in a youth café in the accompanying report, *Youth cafés in Ireland: A best practice guide*:
 - **Chapter 4, page 27 on 'Youth participation'**, which looks at the importance of youth participation, backed up by various Irish and international policies and legislation;
 - **Chapter 4, page 33 on 'Inclusive, accessible and flexible'**, which addresses the need for a youth café to be welcoming to *all* young people, whatever their culture, differences or abilities.
- You can also consult the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (available at: www.unicef.org.uk/tz/rights/convention.asp) and read the Irish 2002 report called *Hearing Young Voices* by McAuley and Brattman (available at: www.youth.ie).
- To help involve young people in a new youth café or in one that is up and running, make a list of all the places and methods you could use to get in touch with them, e.g. through schools, youth projects, sports clubs, the Internet, running promotional events and advertising (e.g. in Church newsletters, local papers, flyers, Bebo).

2. Partnership between adults and young people in a youth café

Essential guidelines

It is important to get all the support and advice you can from different people when setting up a youth café or when improving one already in operation. The key to a youth café being successful is the formation of a partnership between young people and adults. Many of the tasks young people involved in managing a youth café will need to do will need to be done alongside adults, such as professional youth workers. By talking to the local VEC Youth Officer or a representative from the local youth organisation, it will be possible to get help from professionals who have the necessary experience, knowledge and aptitude for working with young people. In addition, help will be available from adults who are just interested in helping out, like an older brother or sister or a neighbour.

In any given area, there will be many adults with the right skills, experiences and contacts. Somebody who runs a shop or a bar, for example, would be great to show you about stocktaking. Somebody already running a business might be able to help develop a plan for the café. One of the biggest challenges every café faces is having enough money to keep the café going; adults will have skills to help you fill in forms to apply for funding or suggest ways of raising money.

The experience gained by adults who have already being involved on committees will also be helpful when setting up a management committee to run the youth café. Some cafés have one committee for adults and young people together, or one for both. The most important thing adults can contribute is experience and helping young people to think about the best way to do things.

Partnerships do not just happen. They take a bit of thinking about and planning to be successful. Often having agreed negotiated rules – especially about things like respect, listening to each other and how to make sure young people are the main decision-makers – is very helpful.



Action tips

Action tips for young people

- Identify any adults you think might be interested and ask them to get involved.
- Spend time with adults talking about what you are interested in, what you like and do not like.
- Ask adults for specific advice when you need it. Lots of adults will be delighted to help out and be partners with young people, even if not directly involved.

Action tips for adults

- Be aware that in youth cafés, partnerships are mostly about what young people need and want.
- Trust young people's wisdom and insights.
- Facilitate young people's involvement – don't tell them what to do.
- Take a back seat in decision-making processes.

Action tips for everybody

- Put in place rules to make the partnership work:
 - be yourself;
 - respect each other;
 - listen to each other.
- Decide on the best structure for the partnership group by talking with each other – this might involve setting up a management committee.
- Give time for the partnership to develop – people have to get to know and trust each other.





PART III: THE TOOLKIT

Essential Guidelines

3. Mission and activities/programmes for a youth café

MISSION

Essential guidelines

One of the first jobs of the management committee will be to agree on the mission or purpose of the café. This is a statement that describes what the café is trying to do and why it is trying to do it. There are a few things to remember when developing a mission statement for your café:

- it should be only one sentence long – not more than 25 words;
- it should be written in plain English so that everyone can understand it;
- it should be possible to memorise it;
- it should be agreed on with young people and adults together.

It is really important that the mission statement reflects the overall aim of the café. **It needs to be realistic, feasible and based on identified and agreed needs.** If an idea fits with the mission statement, then just do it!

Some examples of mission statements are:

‘To be an alcohol-free social outlet for young people’
or

*‘To be a safe space for all young people in the community
to enjoy themselves’*

Going through the process of agreeing the mission statement is as important as the mission statement itself. It is important that everyone involved in the café can identify with and *own* the mission. If not, it will never be achieved. It is important, therefore, that everyone involved in the café is encouraged to speak up, however unusual their thoughts, discuss different ideas and debate opinions. This is the best way to end up with a strong mission statement – one that is based on the issues that matter to people. The final agreed mission statement is a shared vision to which everyone can refer at any point in the life of the youth café.



Action tips

Action tips for everybody

- Decide how you are going to agree your mission statement in advance (e.g. by a vote, use a sub-committee, etc).
- Make sure everybody has the chance to participate and have their say in what the mission statement might include.
- Brainstorm as many ideas as you can, even if some of them may seem a bit crazy at first.
- Keep your mission statement short, simple and memorable.
- Be clear on the purpose of the café.
- Be clear on what is feasible or possible.

Additional resources

- You can find additional information on the importance of developing a mission statement for a youth café in the accompanying report, *Youth cafés in Ireland: A best practice guide*:
 - **Chapter 2, page 17 on ‘Conceptual model and framework for youth cafés’**, which shows how the work of a youth café is related to building resilience for young people, as well as offering them social support.
 - **Chapter 4, page 32 on ‘A clear purpose’**, which discusses the need for a youth café to be clear about what it is trying to achieve.
- Here are some questions to help prompt the discussion when drawing up a mission statement:
 - Do we want to provide information and support services?
 - How do we create and maintain a friendly environment?
 - Will we offer a range of activities?
 - Will we have links with other services?
 - Is it a social outlet?
 - Is it a place to make friends?
 - What type of facilities do we have?
 - Is the café open to other groups?
 - What role do the adult volunteers/staff play, i.e. are they there to supervise or support?
 - Ultimately, what do we want the café to achieve?

ACTIVITIES AND PROGRAMMES

Essential guidelines

Once the café is set up, having a good variety of events and activities is a great way of getting young people in. A youth café should be a place where young people can express themselves and their talents. Therefore, it is vital that it be a place that allows people to be as creative as possible. To help decide on the activities and programmes, the management committee should set up an activities sub-committee whose job it is to generate ideas.

Activities can range from fun-based (recreational) to more serious discussion-based activities (educational). It is important to remember that the range of activities and services a café offers is related to the capacity within the café, as well as the competencies of the staff, whether paid or volunteer. Also, it is important to be aware of the activities that are allowed by the insurance policy covering the café. It is also worth remembering that the range of activities in a café will need to reflect the interests of the target group of young people, from 10 to 25 years of age. Working within these parameters in a creative way means that the activities are only limited by the imaginations of those involved.

When organising activities, it is important to ensure that they are well planned because people are much more likely to come back again if they have enjoyed themselves. Remember, things will go wrong – it is human nature. Learn from any mistakes that happen, so that events or activities can run as smoothly as possible in the future. Ensure that the planning and organising is not left to the same people all the time – share the workload and therefore the learning.

It is important to look at the size and layout of the café space to ensure that different groups can interact with each other. Variety nights or themed nights are always a great way of getting different groups of young people to come to the café together. Sometimes it might be useful to offer incentives for people to come, such as providing food or spot prizes.



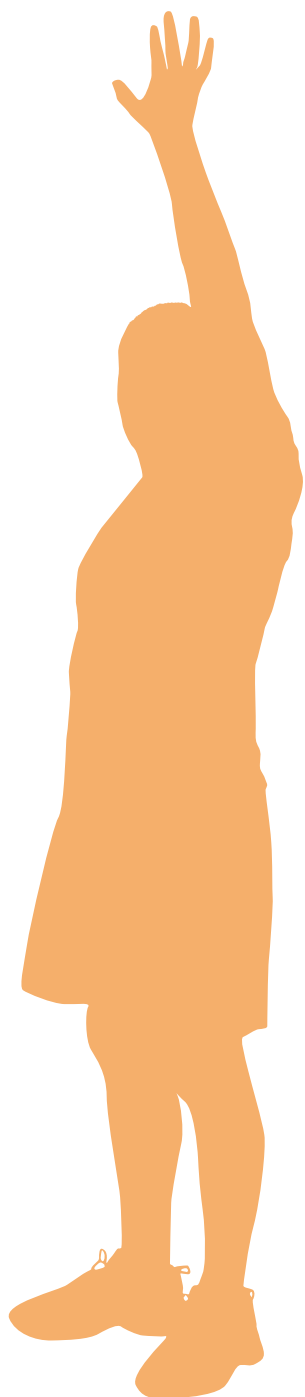
Action tips

Action tips for everybody

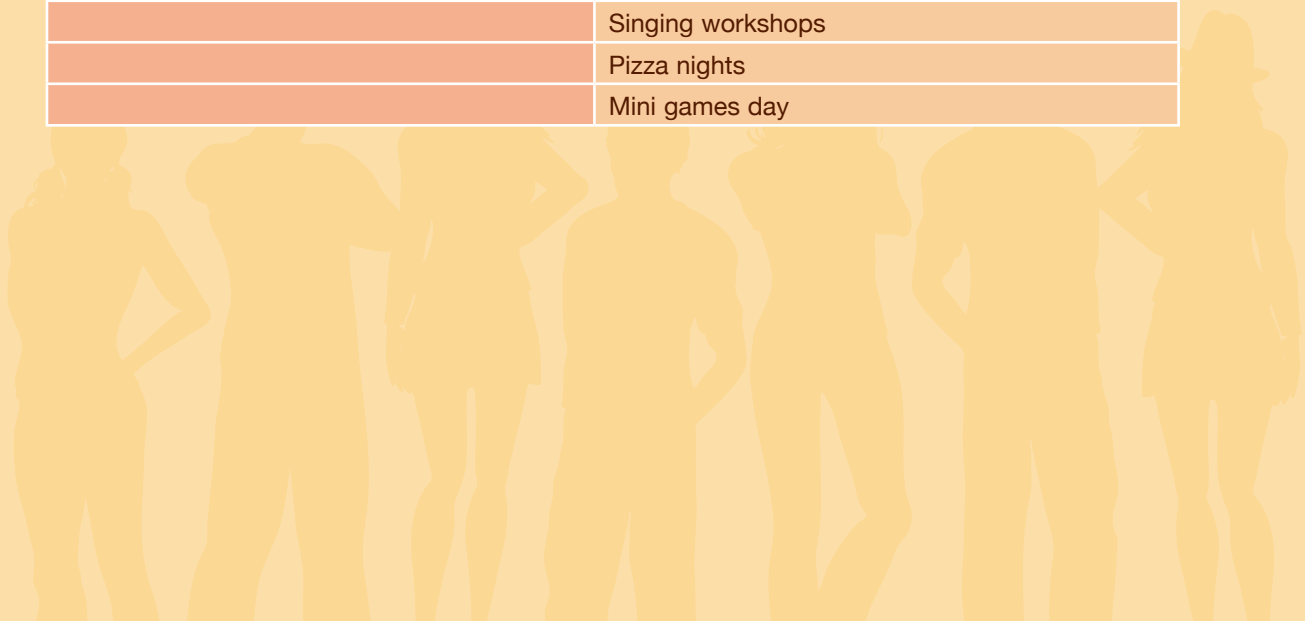
- Change your activities regularly and keep them fresh.
- Plan your activities carefully.
- Use sub-committees to share the load in planning and running activities.
- Don't be too disappointed if things don't work out – learn from your mistakes.
- Have a variety of activities – it will encourage different kinds of young people to visit the café.
- Use your imagination.
- But, remember, just hanging out is an activity too.

Additional resources

- You can find additional information on activities and programmes in a youth café in the accompanying report, *Youth cafés in Ireland: A best practice guide*:
 - **Chapter 5, page 42 on 'Activities and programmes'**, where the core points relating to what goes on in a youth café are discussed.
- Activities can range from fun-based (recreational) to more serious discussion-based activities (educational). You could use an *Ideas Club* in the café to generate ideas on activities. No matter what activities are organised, it is useful to ask:
 - What is the purpose of doing this activity?
 - What can young people achieve from the activity?
 - What are the requirements for the activity?
- The list on page 20 gives the most common educational and recreational activities found in youth cafés across Ireland. It may help you decide on a programme of activities for your café.



Educational activities	Recreational activities
First aid	Sports nights
Driving lessons	Games tournaments
CV preparation	Board/video games
Computer lessons	Background music
Guitar/instrument lessons	Talent competitions
Nurse and health information	Dance competitions
Homework club	Bebo
Book/library club	Movie nights
Grinds	Chess club
Group therapy	Working with community and voluntary agencies
Reading club	Music nights
Writing groups	Summer club
Addiction counselling	Outdoor activities
Safe pass courses	Holiday parties (Halloween/Christmas/Easter)
Debating	Buddy systems
Support groups (personal development)	Art projects (murals)
Bereavement counselling	Nature walks
	Quiz nights
	Poetry reading nights
	DJ workshops
	Group recording music sessions
	Meditation groups
	Soccer tournaments
	Hacky sack tournament
	Ballet
	Short movie-making
	Fancy dress parties
	Karaoke nights
	Disco nights
	Juggling workshops
	Kayaking lessons
	Singing workshops
	Pizza nights
	Mini games day



4. Role of staff and volunteers in a youth café

Essential guidelines

Staff and volunteers have a critical role to play in the workings of a youth café. It is essential that they are aware of the importance of their position and take great care with this privilege. Some of the key personal attributes for staff and volunteers who work in a youth café are:

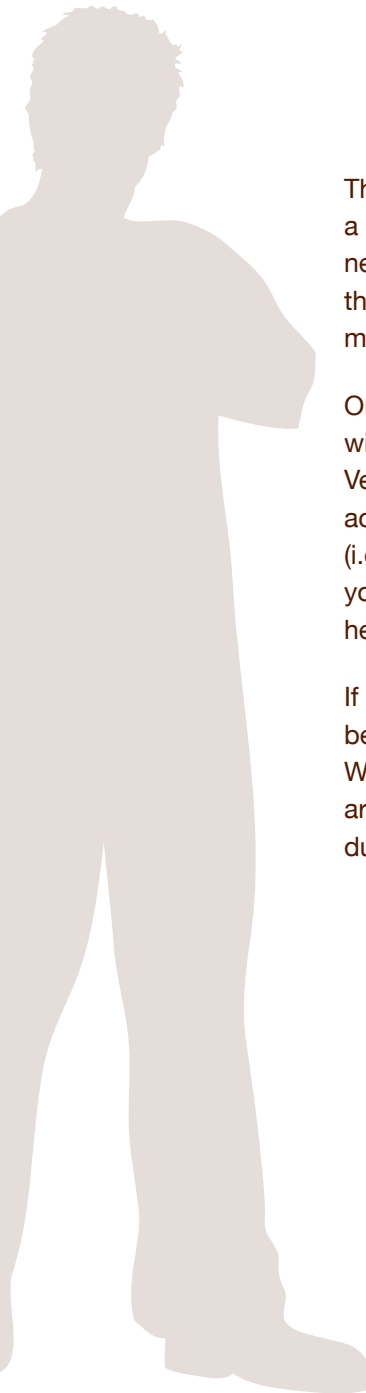
- an ability to communicate effectively;
- a commitment to training and self-development;
- the ability to offer support;
- an appreciation of and commitment to youth work principles, specifically the ability to empower and enable the young people with whom they work (*see also p. 5*).

One of the core roles for staff and volunteers is to be able to build relationships with their colleagues and the young people who use the café. A key to any relationship is the ability to communicate, which a lot of the time involves simply listening – being able to listen, without interrupting or saying your piece, can be one of the most difficult things to do. Another core part of communication is being able to raise someone's spirits with a chat or a gesture.

Staff and volunteers can also be a source of support for young people using the café, some of whom may be stressed. Young people in the café should see staff and volunteers as approachable and open, and feel secure that any information they impart will be treated in a confidential way, within professional guidelines (*see Chapter 11*). It is important to remember that support, reassurance and encouragement promote creativity in young people.

In a good youth café, staff and volunteers will always encourage cooperation and enable good interaction between themselves and young people. It is important that staff and volunteers respect other's opinions and make this central to the life of the café. A key role of theirs is to prevent groups with opposing opinions deciding on the level of cooperation between young people. Therefore, staff and volunteers are required to work towards inclusion of all young people, while also managing differences in a positive way.


Staff and volunteers will also be central in providing advice and information. However, it is important that they only offer advice if it is requested. Otherwise, they can just supply the relevant information, e.g. the deadline for registering to vote, information on college or factual information on the dangers of drugs. It is useful for staff and volunteers to be able to joke and have fun with young people. If staff and volunteers are enthusiastic and fun, it creates mutual respect and makes the café more desirable as a place in which to relax and chill out.



Through their work, staff and volunteers can develop a sense of trust and a place for nurturing relationships. One of the golden rules for them is to never be rushed – trust and relationships take time to build. In addition, they should be non-judgemental and unbiased. Working in a youth café is more than a job – it is necessary to be there in body and in mind.

One of the key roles for staff and volunteers is to protect the young people with whom they work. Since the establishment of the Garda Central Vetting Unit (GCVU) in 2002, all those who have substantial, unsupervised access to children need to receive Garda clearance. The host agency (i.e. the youth organisation involved with providing staff and training for youth cafés, like Foróige, Youth Work Ireland or Catholic Youth Care) can help with this process.

If a youth café has a professional youth worker as a staff member, it would be normal for the organisation they are affiliated to (e.g. Foróige, Youth Work Ireland or Catholic Youth Care) to determine their official duties, which are separate to the roles already discussed for staff and volunteers. These duties could include:

- **Administration:** Carrying out administrative tasks in relation to the café, e.g. ordering supplies, drawing up a duty roster.
 - **Organisation:** Enabling volunteers and young people to engage effectively and efficiently in café activities and programmes; recruiting volunteers and young people.
 - **Programme development:** Development of café resources and programmes to meet the needs of young people.
 - **Training:** Training volunteers and young people to enable them to perform their roles effectively.
 - **Consultancy:** Consulting with young people and volunteers in relation to problem-solving and other areas of concern and interest to them in the café.
 - **Information:** Identification and dissemination of accurate and appropriate information relating to issues for young people using the café.
- 

Action tips

Action tips for adults

- Always be ready to challenge your assumptions about what young people need and want.
- Involve young people in selecting adults who work in the youth café.
- Be open to exploring your own views, attitudes and approaches to working with young people.
- Know the young people (e.g. their names, their interests).
- Make building relationships and developing trust with young people your key goals.
- Always respond positively to young people when they seek help and support.

- Never be rushed, judgemental or biased.
- Be facilitative, not directive, i.e. suggest, don't boss.
- But remember, as an adult, you have particular responsibilities for young people's well-being.

Action tips for young people

- Put together a list of the qualities or attributes you want adults working with you to have.
- Remember that adults are people too, just like you.
- Expect the best from the adults in the café.

Additional resources

- You can find additional information on the role of staff and volunteers in a youth café in the accompanying report, *Youth cafés in Ireland: A best practice guide*:
 - **Chapter 4, page 35 on 'Quality relationships and volunteerism'**, which outlines the principles underlying the development of good relations between adults and young people.
 - **Chapter 4, page 36 on 'Strengths-based and respectful of individuality'**, which discusses the important guiding principle in a youth café that young people's strengths, not deficits, and their individuality are recognised. In some cases, however, the rationale for establishing a café *may* be based on the need to address specific deficits, such as, for example, drug use among young people.
 - **Chapter 5, page 41 on 'Role of staff'**, where being the 'right kind of person' to work with young people is discussed.
- Here are a few imaginative ways staff and volunteers can work with young people in a youth café:
 - A youth café could offer support to stressed students during examination time, e.g. set up an *Exam Café*, providing yoga, herbal tea, relaxing and supportive environment.
 - Encourage cooperation and respect for the views of others, e.g. a *Moving Debate* could be used to aid conflict resolution, raise a difficult issue or start a discussion.
 - An *information board* could be provided in the café, updated each week, giving information on all sorts of topics, without drawing too much attention to or overemphasising particularly sensitive ones.
 - To help build trust, the café could introduce a *Kit-Tea Savings Box*, where money is dropped in by members for tea and coffee – a little over one day, a little under the next. Also try an *Honour Bar*, where money for snacks can be dropped into a moneybox and change taken. Both are open to abuse, but the building of trust takes time – have a trial period.



5. Training for staff, volunteers and young people

Essential guidelines

Training for young people

To help young people become as involved as possible in the running of a youth café, it will be necessary for them to be trained in a number of different tasks. Before introducing training, the management committee should establish the levels of existing skills among the young people already involved. When planning subsequent training, it is important to remember to make the training suit the structure of the youth café and also to be clear about why the café is engaging in this training.

More subtle and indirect training for young people can often be more appropriate and useful than formalised training. If more structured formal training is needed, other existing programmes can be used, such as development group work or senior member training, offered by youth organisations or other agencies in your locality.

Training for staff and volunteers

Similar to training for young people, appropriate needs-based training is important for staff and volunteers. Therefore, the initial task in the café is to understand the level of training already undertaken by the staff and volunteers. By talking to other youth cafés, it will be possible to determine the most typical and central training that staff and volunteers will need. For example, training could be on issues such as:

- communication;
- information/advice;
- child protection;
- first aid;
- conflict resolution;
- 'sticky situation' training;
- facilitation skills;
- equality training;
- self-health for youth workers, including formal support.

It is important to remember that child protection training is obligatory for all those involved in working with children and young people (see *Chapter 11 for hints and tips*).

Action tips

Action tips for everybody

- Make a list of training needs for young people, volunteers and staff.
- Prioritise the most important training according to the needs of the café.
- Make a training plan (e.g. what is needed, who, when, how much).
- Find out if any of this training is available from organisations in the locality, some of which might be free.
- Update your training list based on ongoing needs.
- Remember that not all skill development needs a training course. Some of it can be done informally in the youth café, just by talking someone through a process, such as planning or stocktaking.
- Use peer-led training approaches where possible.

Additional resources

- You can find additional information on training for staff, volunteers and young people in a youth café in the accompanying report, *Youth cafés in Ireland: A best practice guide*:
 - **Chapter 5, page 56 on 'Training and education of staff and volunteers'**, which outlines the skills needed to work in a youth café, as well as aspects like formal supervision.
- When considering training for young people, it is important to know what training they need. Subtle, indirect hands-on training is often a useful way to introduce the concept. For example, skilled staff and/or volunteers could plan, prepare and cook a meal with young people. While eating it together, they could have an informal chat about issues in the café. A skilled youth worker can introduce team-building, planning, project management and conflict resolution without even mentioning the word 'training'.
- To encourage staff and volunteers to reflect on their need for training, time should be made available for them to consider how successful they thought each of their sessions were with young people in the café. This process should be positive. By adopting this approach, training for staff and volunteers will be needs-led and appropriate to their role in the café.
- You could also consult the work of the North–South Education and Training Standards Committee (NSETS) for Youth Work, which deals with the newly developed criteria and procedures for the professional endorsement of youth work education and training (YCNI, 2006; available at: www.ycni.org/youth_work_training/ns_educ_trg.html).

6. Design and location of a youth café building

DESIGN

Essential guidelines

One of the most important questions that needs to be asked about a youth café relates to its physical design. The top priority here is to ask young people what they want – this can be done via the management committee or via an open forum.

The layout of the café needs to be big enough for the purpose and suitable for the activities the café wishes to provide. It is important to be imaginative and creative with the space available, even a small one – it is often not necessary to have a huge space. It is also essential to realise that it is usually not possible to have everything required in a café at once. Facilities can be built up gradually and new things added as the café develops and new needs emerge. A simple rule of thumb when designing a café is to find out what young people want (e.g. a pool table, computers, Wi-Fi access, a stage for performance) and then see what will fit in the space available. Storage space also needs to be planned for – it is surprising how much space is needed to store equipment, food, bins and cleaning stuff.

Music is also really important. The café should get the best music system it can afford, as well as accessing a large variety of music genres to cater for all tastes. When doing this, consider copyright laws: music-users, such as broadcasters, venues and businesses, must pay for their use of copyright music by way of a blanket licence fee – you can get more information on this from the Irish Music Rights Organisation (see www.imro.ie). Also, from the beginning, the café needs to develop a system on what is listened to, which will avoid potential disputes.

The outside of the café needs to be eye-catching and inviting. If possible, the café should have an outside space that is not the main entrance, where young people can hang out and chat. It can be very daunting for new young people to walk past crowds standing outside the main door. Choose a logo, sign and signature colours that let people know that this is a youth café. The colours in the café should be vibrant, loud, cool or funky. It can be good to get advice from an interior designer, but usually the instincts of young people do the job.

If the café serves food, it should be affordable and have a balance of healthy options, e.g. home-made soups, fruit salads, vegetable bakes – a good guideline is *Make the healthier choice the easier choice*. The café must, of course, comply with environmental and health and safety

regulations, which can be obtained from the local Community Care Service. The café needs to be comfortable, a place where anybody would want to hang out and where they could sit for long periods of time. It should have friendly staff, lighting that is not too bright or harsh, and suitable furnishings – practical, durable materials that will last, but are still comfortable and attractive. Leather couches and swingy chairs may seem like a great idea at the time, but they won't last six months! Take a look at some catalogues for restaurant furniture and also see what the local cafés and restaurants have, and then decide on the look you want.

Finally, the café needs to have a catchy name. Involve all the young people in choosing this – maybe a brainstorming session could be used to generate ideas until a name emerges that sounds right. Once agreed, copyright it, so the café owns the name.

A key point when setting up a youth café is to *know your limits*. From the beginning, get the necessary information on budgets, food safety guidelines, health and safety issues, and environmental health considerations. Then, when deciding on the layout and design for the café, it is possible to work out what the café can and cannot have. Once all involved in the café know and understand the limitations, it is easier to accept if and when an idea has to be scrapped.

Additional resources

- You can find additional information on design issues for a youth café in the accompanying report, *Youth cafés in Ireland: A best practice guide*:
 - **Chapter 4, page 30 on 'A safe and quality space'**, which emphasises the importance of having a safe space, suited to the needs of young people.
 - **Chapter 5, page 52 on 'Building design and content'**, which examines each of these aspects in detail.
- To help find out what people want the café to look like, *Mood Boards* could be used. This involves collecting pictures from magazines and catalogues of furniture, tables, hang-out spaces, other cafés, getting paint charts and material swatches and putting together a collage of the potential look for your café. The final vote on what to adopt goes to the young people.
- Once the design plans for the café have been drafted, it is really worth your while talking to people in environmental health, health and safety, and fire safety. There is no point in making expensive purchases that cannot be used because they do not meet certain standards or in finding out later that the café needs to get an expensive piece of equipment not budgeted for.

LOCATION

Essential guidelines

The youth café needs to be situated in a centralised location and open to all. It should be on a well-lit street in a safe area and close to bus routes if possible since most young people in urban areas will either walk or travel by bus. When deciding on the building, it is important to shop around to get the best possible rent deal and location. Alternatively, when deciding on a building for the café, it may be possible to access and use an existing youth-friendly space in the locality, such as a community hall. Either way, the location of the café needs to be near where young people hang out. The café and its toilets must be accessible for wheelchairs.

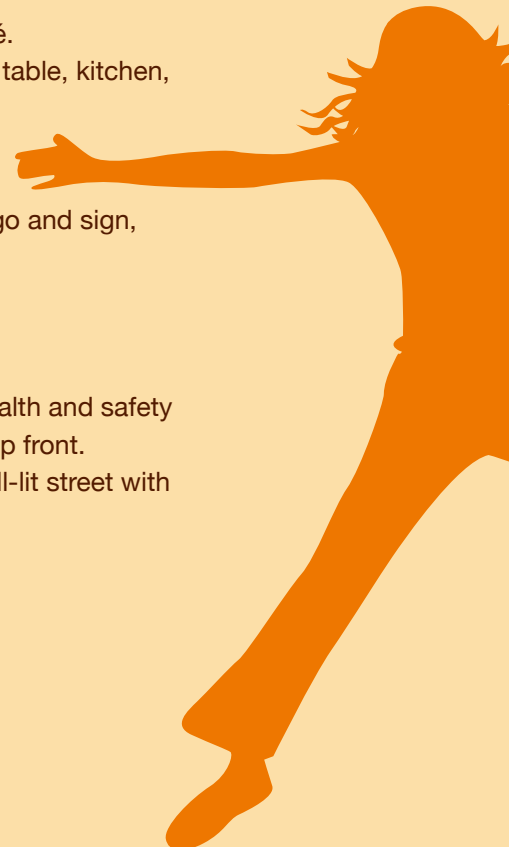
Additional resources

- You can find additional information on the location of a youth café in the accompanying report, *Youth cafés in Ireland: A best practice guide*:
 - **Chapter 5, page 49 on 'Location'**, which addresses core areas of this topic.

Action tips on Design and Location

Action tips for everybody

- Remember your mission – the overall purpose of the café.
- Find out what young people want in the space (e.g. pool table, kitchen, computers) and see what you can fit.
- Include some essential storage space.
- Make the outside of the café inviting and eye-catching.
- Brand your youth café – pick a catchy name, create a logo and sign, and decide on your café's signature colours.
- Have vibrant, loud and funky colours inside.
- Make the café and its facilities wheelchair-accessible.
- Pick practical, durable, yet comfortable furniture.
- Know your limits – you will be constrained by budget, health and safety issues and other guidelines. You need to find these out up front.
- For youth cafés in towns, pick a central location on a well-lit street with public transport.



7. Management of a youth café

Essential guidelines

As part of setting up a youth café, it will be necessary to get a lot of support and advice from different people. The motto behind any successful café is *'If you're not sure, ask!'*. One such area where help is normally needed is with the management of the café. As mentioned in Chapter 2, this will involve a partnership between young people and adults. For the management system to work, the top priority is for open communications between adults and young people. For example, young people need to have all the relevant information on budgets and the limitations of the café.

Key to the success of the café is the establishment of a formal structure in the form of a management committee. This is normally made up of adults and young people. Usually, officers are elected to run the committee, including a Chairperson, Secretary, Treasurer and Public Relations Officer (PRO). From the beginning, it is useful to establish some rules and procedures for the work of the management committee; for example, what happens if a person persistently misses meetings, how long does a meeting last, how many people need to be present to make it valid, who has the casting vote.

Meetings should be run formally by the young people themselves, with support from the adults. Records of meetings should be kept in the form of Minutes since this places value on the contributions. Feedback should be given through the Minutes on what is said and suggested, and on actions taken. Team-building exercises and time given to building a committee are important aspects in setting up a good management committee. Social aspects to the meetings are also important (e.g. coffee breaks and planning activities together) and will help the development process.

An important point here is that young people are experts about their own needs and their opinion matters. Therefore, the adults involved must value and use the opinions of young people. It is good practice to limit the time that people can stay on the management committee so that as many people as possible get a chance to be involved. It is not the management committee's job to do everything – it can always involve other people by having sub-committees for specific tasks, such as activities, fund-raising or promotions. Each new group should receive training on how committees work and what different people do on committees.

If the management committee is to work well, the young people involved need to have a sense of ownership of the committee and of the café. This can be achieved by:

- encouraging continuity of membership among young people;
- making sure the café is a place where they can have fun and shared enjoyment;
- ensuring that everyone has respect and takes responsibility to listen to each other;
- being involved in doing things, like running events or staffing the café;
- being involved in developing policy for the café.

Adult committee members can check-in individually with the young people regularly to see how they are doing and thus resolve any issues that might be going on between people on the committee. The management committee should have an input into the recruitment of staff for the café. At a minimum, young people should get to write up a list of questions to be put to the candidates and suggest acceptable responses. If possible, short-listed candidates should meet to have 'a chat' with the committee.

Action tips

Action tips for everybody

- The key to managing a youth café well is the effective involvement of young people and good partnerships with adults.
- Decide what kind of committee you want to manage the youth café. Whatever you pick, decide members' roles and responsibilities.
- Establish committee rules (e.g. frequency of meetings, taking Minutes, ensuring full participation in meetings).
- Set up sub-committees or small groups to focus on specific issues, e.g. activities, facilities, promotions and fund-raising.
- Particularly when the committee is starting up, have an agenda item on how well it is working.

Additional resources

- You can find additional information on the management of a youth café in the accompanying report, *Youth cafés in Ireland: A best practice guide*:
 - **Chapter 5, page 39 on 'Involvement of young people through partnership'**, which discusses the core issue of young people and adults working together in the day-to-day running of a youth café.
- To help set up the management committee, information on committee structures and how to get the best from your committee can be obtained from your local or national youth organisation.
- Similarly, a useful document on procedures for recruiting voluntary adult leaders can be obtained from your local or national youth organisation.

8. Funding and sustainability of a youth café

Essential guidelines

One of the key tasks associated with setting up a youth café is to identify where initial funding for the café can be obtained. This type of funding is called ‘seed’ or ‘pilot’ funding and is often provided by bodies such as the Crisis Pregnancy Agency, the Health Service Executive (HSE), local City/County Councils, local Drugs Task Forces or Government departments such as the Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs, and the Office of the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs. It is often the case that initial funding is only guaranteed for the first 2-3 years of the life of the café.

Filling out funding applications can be a tricky and complicated process. Therefore, it is essential for young people who want to establish a youth café to seek the advice and help of adults and/or youth workers in filling out these forms, prior to the management committee being established. In some cases, young people must be involved in the funding application or it will not be accepted by the agency in question.

In parallel to seeking initial funding, it is necessary to plan for where ongoing funding might come from in order to make the café sustainable. It might well get private funding from, for example, the local Lion’s Club. Raising your own funds is also a great way to learn about the value of money – people tend to be more careful with money they have earned themselves. So, fund-raising activities should become part of the normal life of the café and also work to publicise it, both locally among the community and among young people you want to attract to use it. It is crucial to plan well before the fund-raising event, by prioritising the needs of the café and then matching the fund-raising to this.

Consideration should also be given to seeking out help from possible partners – either from local groups or facilities, such as local sports partnerships, local arts officers, other youth cafés, youth centres, youth information centres, libraries, schools/colleges and leisure/sports centres. Such connections might provide not only staff, programmes or facilities, but could also be drawn on or linked with by the youth café for a range of different reasons. The café could also look at ‘in-kind support’, which means that, for example, child protection training is delivered by the HSE for free.

The sustainability of a youth café depends not just on what happens locally, but also to a large extent on wider political, economic and policy decisions. These decisions will often determine if funding is available for a youth café. It is important, therefore, for youth cafés to realise the importance of raising money from various sources if they want to continue

to exist. However, the level of sustainability of a youth café goes beyond funding. At a local level, sustainability can be helped by good practice in all areas of work in the café, all of which are dealt with in this toolkit.

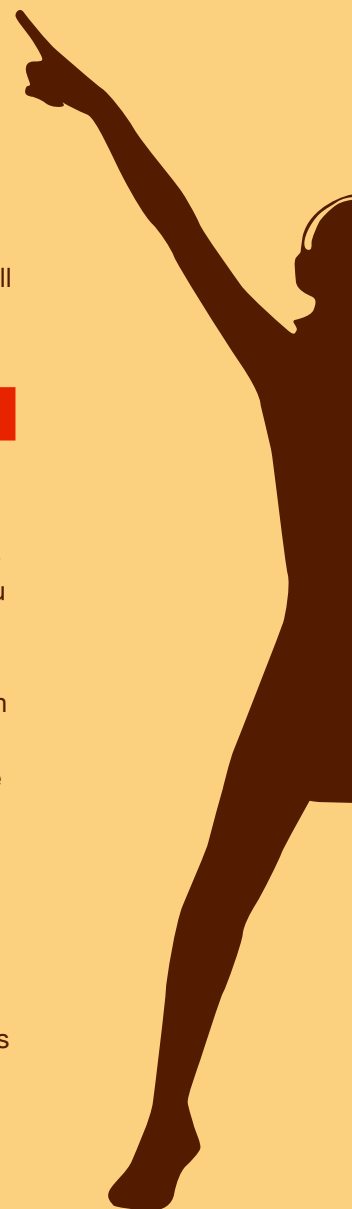
Action tips

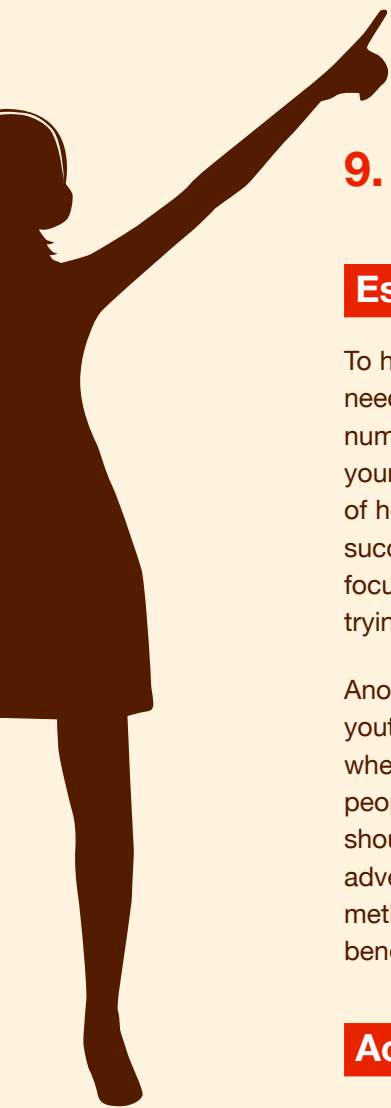
Action tips for everybody

- Remember that sustainability depends on good practice in all aspects of the day-to-day operation of the youth café. So do what you say you will and do it well!
- Be responsive to the needs of the young people in the locality.
- Based on your mission, devise a 3-year funding target and simple plan to include needs, sources, activities and targets.
- Put together on a single sheet of paper the key points about your café so that you always have this information easily available to give to potential funders.
- Identify relevant potential funding sources, both locally and nationally (see 'Other useful resources' at the end of this toolkit).
- Be aware that people who give you funds will almost always require the money to be spent on specific aspects of your activities, e.g. the VEC may fund you to run an educationally based programme, whereas the Arts Council may fund a range of creative activities.
- If you do not have the expertise in applying for funding, ask for help.
- Try to raise funds yourself, directly from the public, through specific activities. It's also good publicity for the café.

Additional resources

- You can find additional information on the funding and sustainability of a youth café in the accompanying report, *Youth cafés in Ireland: A best practice guide*:
 - **Chapter 4, page 37 on 'Sustainable'**, which examines the core issues of a youth café being financially sustainable, of young people feeling ownership of the café, and of it being accepted by the local community.
 - **Chapter 5, page 44 on 'Funding and ongoing sustainability'**, which offers ideas and techniques on how a youth café can be sustainable, both financially and otherwise.
- Look up The Wheel (www.wheel.ie), a support body for charity and community organisations, which provides useful information about funding.
- Invite all those who have provided funding to the café's opening night to say 'Thanks'. The event can also be used to show them where their money has gone and where they have received credit in advertising and promotion.





9. Promotion of a youth café

Essential guidelines

To help any youth café be a success, the management committee will need to work out a practical strategy on how best to promote the café. A number of options are available and the partnership between adults and young people will be key since many adults will have previous experience of how best to promote an idea within the community. In order to do a successful promotion, it is important that the mission of the café is the focus – the café cannot promote something if it cannot explain what it is trying to achieve.

Another important consideration is that at different times in the life of a youth café, there will be a need to promote it differently. For example, when a café is just starting off, promotion may focus on simply letting people know it exists. Once established, however, the promotional work should start to focus on broadening the base of those who use the café, by advertising specific activities and programmes. Probably the most effective method of promoting a café is by word of mouth which, when used to the benefit of the café, doesn't cost a cent.

Action tips

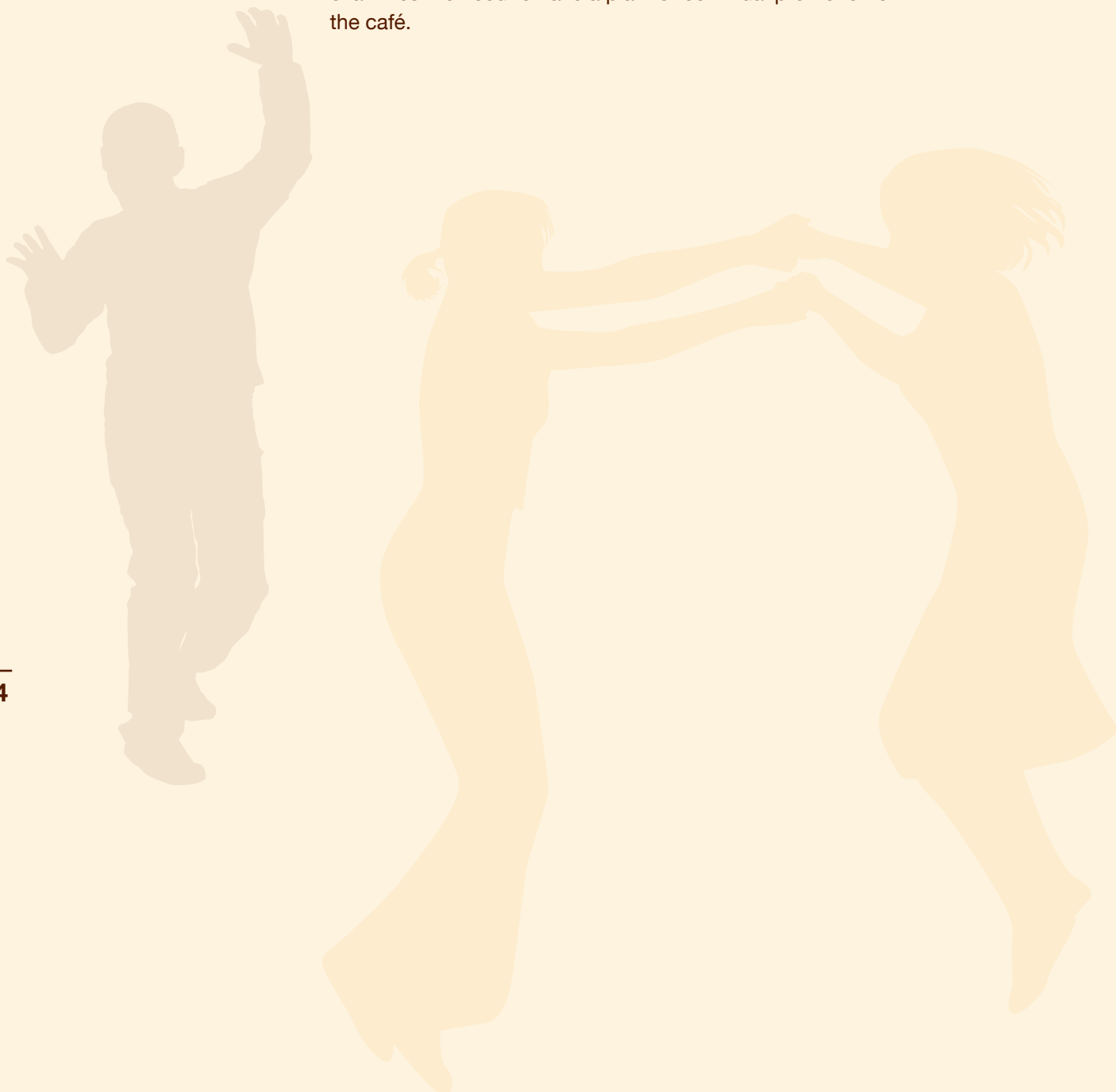
Action tips for everybody

- **Quirky events:** Catch people's attention and get them talking. Events like plays or music gigs have worked well for other youth cafés.
- **Media:** Use the media to publish articles written by young people and profiles of the café or the young people involved. It gives personality to the café.
- **Posters and flyers:** Eye-catching posters and flyers featuring your logo and signature colours should be put up where young people hang out, in schools, libraries and music shops.
- **Get a personality to endorse the café:** Some big name locally, who speaks up for the café, will encourage young people to come and have a look.
- **Get out there:** Visit schools and other youth projects and get them and their members behind the café.
- **Open days:** Invite people in. Contact groups and agencies involving young people in your area and ask them to come in for a look.
- **Word of mouth:** You cannot overestimate the power of word of mouth. Members of your management committee need to be out there talking about what is going on.

- **Personal touches:** Sending young people birthday lollipops, newsletters, invitations printed with their name – these kinds of small gifts always go down well and bring people in to see what is happening.
- **Launch:** Have a big splash and use your identity logo to promote.
- **Website or Bebo page:** Get people talking virtually about the café.

Additional resources

- You can find additional information on the promotion of a youth café in the accompanying report, *Youth cafés in Ireland: A best practice guide*:
 - **Chapter 5, page 54 on ‘Promotion of youth cafés’**, which examines the need to have a plan for continual promotion of the café.



10. Evaluation and monitoring of a youth café

Essential guidelines

A key part of the work of a café is to set targets so that it will be possible to reflect regularly on whether the café is meeting the needs of its users, the young people. It is crucial for the success of any café that monitoring and evaluation methods are incorporated as an ongoing process throughout the year and not just as a once-off exercise. As well as this, there has been a move in recent years towards developing services for young people that meet 'quality standards'. Youth cafés cannot automatically be regarded as quality youth services; however, using monitoring and evaluating methods ties in very well with this overall search for quality youth services.

There is an important difference between the concepts of 'monitoring' and 'evaluation'. Monitoring can be done every time the café is open. On entering the café, each young person is asked to sign in and by entering this information in a database, it is possible to establish if this young person has used the café before or not. If this is their first contact with the café, then additional information is required, such as age, date of birth, home address, involvement in other youth activities, contact details for parents and information on allergies and illnesses. It is also common to get young people to sign-up to play pool and the Playstation, for example. These lists can give a good indication of the popularity of certain activities – if there are no names down for a particular thing, maybe it is not popular and so could be replaced. Also, by monitoring the stock in the café shop, it will be possible to tell what foods are more popular than others and this may lead to re-assessing the shopping.

No matter how small or large the funding received, those who provide the money will want to see if the café is successful over time. In other words, each café will be asked to evaluate itself from time to time. This can be conducted in-house or by an external evaluator. Either way, this is a more detailed process than just monitoring people and events, like above. Monitoring tools will not yield the information required for funders or tell exactly what the young people were getting out of coming to the café. To evaluate itself, a café could organise focus group interviews with the young people and listen to what they have to say about the café. It could also design and hand out a survey to regular users, asking them specific questions to help evaluate whether the café was doing what it was supposed to be doing and if not, what possible changes could be made to fix this. Alternatively, all this work can be done by an external evaluator.

To help with the evaluation of a youth café, it is important that the management committee understands the objectives set out by the funders from the start and knows what outcomes they want the café to track. Each café will need to identify the key outcomes paramount to the success of the



café. In other words, what are the core outcomes it wants young people to have achieved after coming to the café over time? Each outcome can be measured against relevant indicators and targets. For example, a typical outcome for a youth café might be to work towards the 'engagement' of young people with the café; some simple indicators to show if this outcome has been achieved could be attendance figures at the café, frequency of attendance and the home location of the young people attending (i.e. are young people from all areas in the locality visiting the café). This method of evaluation helps inform both the reports required by the funders and the managing organisation as to whether the café is successful in meeting its aims and objectives.

Monitoring and evaluating a youth café is not about picking out its flaws, but rather about keeping it going in the right direction. The process will let it and others see what is going well and what can be tweaked if needs be.

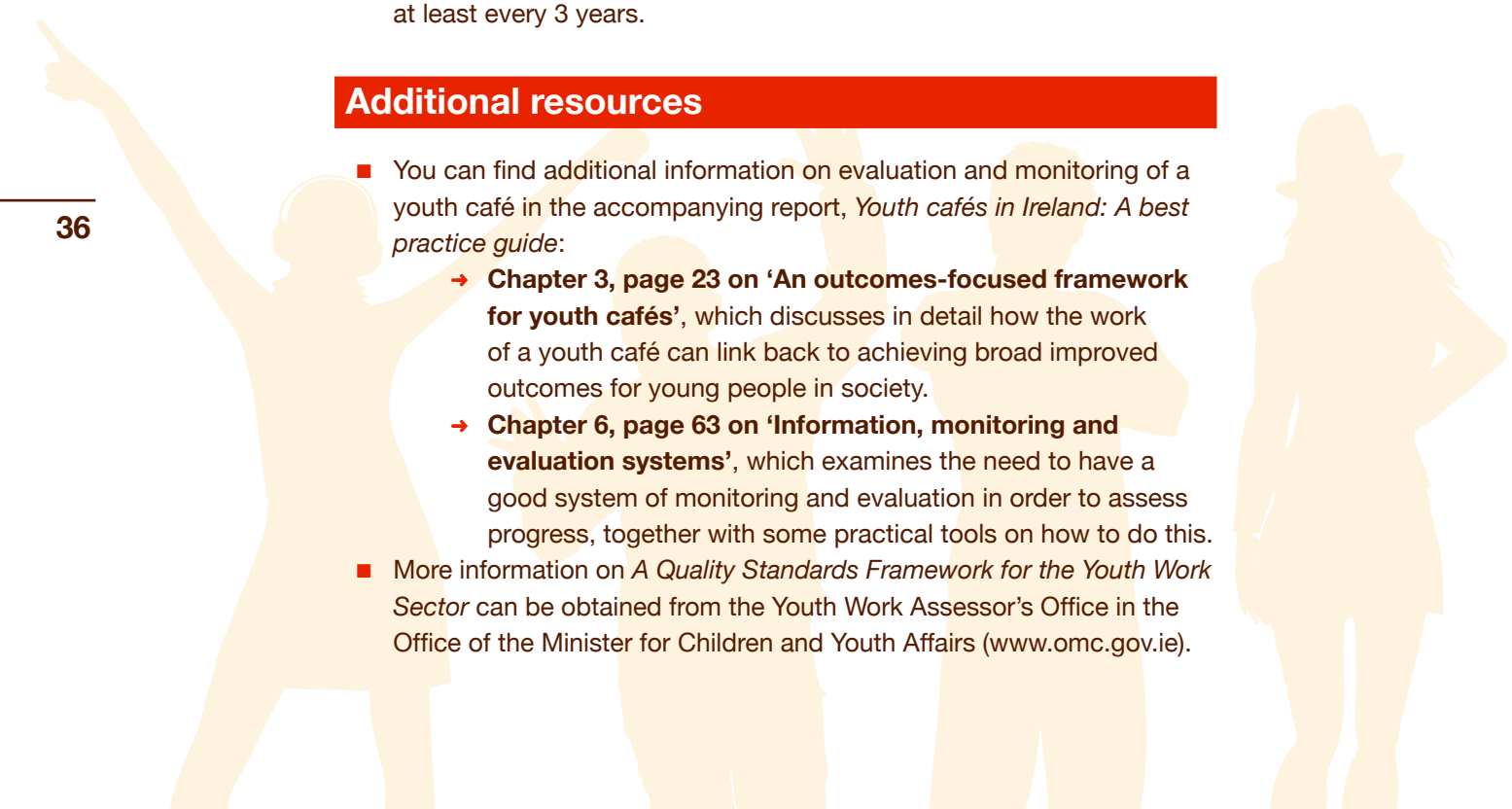
Action tips

Action tips for everybody

- Decide what you and your funders need to know on an ongoing basis about the operation of the youth café.
- Devise simple ways of recording information (e.g. a sign-in sheet for recording attendance) about the youth café's operations, quality and benefits.
- Get training on your legal and ethical responsibilities relating to data you collect about people (e.g. Data Protection Act).
- Have a *Customer Panel* in place to get regular feedback on the workings of the café.
- Undertake a fuller evaluation of the café, either internal or external, at least every 3 years.

Additional resources

- You can find additional information on evaluation and monitoring of a youth café in the accompanying report, *Youth cafés in Ireland: A best practice guide*:
 - **Chapter 3, page 23 on 'An outcomes-focused framework for youth cafés'**, which discusses in detail how the work of a youth café can link back to achieving broad improved outcomes for young people in society.
 - **Chapter 6, page 63 on 'Information, monitoring and evaluation systems'**, which examines the need to have a good system of monitoring and evaluation in order to assess progress, together with some practical tools on how to do this.
- More information on *A Quality Standards Framework for the Youth Work Sector* can be obtained from the Youth Work Assessor's Office in the Office of the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs (www.omc.gov.ie).



11. Policies for a youth café

Essential guidelines

For a youth café to run smoothly, it will need a set of core policies. These policies inform everyone involved about the boundaries within which the café runs. For the policies to work, it is essential that the young people are involved in drafting them – if they are not owned by young people, they may well fail. Remember that the café is a space for young people, so if anyone knows what will or will not work, they do.

Policies are not necessarily about rules. They should be brief, accessible and relevant, and serve the needs of the intended target group. They also need to be used and understood. Some of the policies should be about reflecting the positive impact that the café has on the lives of young people in the area. For example, the café is a place where young people can find out about clubs and groups they can get involved in – therefore, there could be a policy in the café on the promotion of clubs and groups to café users. To encourage and promote new friendships could be another policy.

Having too many policies can be off-putting. However, categories of policies that are commonly found in successful youth cafés are listed below. This is not a definitive list and can be amended depending on the needs of the area and the users of the café.

Policies on Respect

- Behaviour: Ensures that the café remains a safe, drug- and alcohol-free space for young people to hang out in.
- Respecting the property and games: Ensures that there are lots of fun things for the young people to do within the café.

Substance Misuse Policies

- Smoking.
- Alcohol.

Insurance Policy

- In general, the insurance for a youth café is arranged through the host agency or organisation.

General Policies

- Eligibility.
- Opening hours.
- Use of facilities (e.g. Playstation, Wi-Fi, pool table, TV): Time limits for use, eating and drinking around games.

- Computer use.
- Use of toilets.
- Behind the counter – who is allowed and not allowed.
- Theme nights – maximum number of people allowed in, staff involved.
- Outside groups using café.
- Promotion of other age-appropriate local events through the café.
- Management committee: For a committee to work well, everyone has to take responsibility for their assigned roles, take an active part in decision-making and be consistent in attendance.

There are also specific laws that are central to the running of a youth café and these also need to be made into active policies:

- child protection;
- health and safety;
- information-sharing guidelines;
- drugs and alcohol policy;
- insurance.

The key agency or organisation involved in your café (e.g. Foróige, Youth Work Ireland or Catholic Youth Care) will have information on these legal policies and will put them in place for all youth café staff and volunteers. Training will need to be provided in the policies.

Once agreed and written up, communicating the policies of the café to all users is very important. This can be done verbally, with the most important policies also displayed on the walls so that users know about them from their first visit. Remember, however, not to have too many rules on the walls as this may put people off. It is equally important to advertise the positive policies that the café has, such as *'encouraging and promoting new friendships'*.

Action tips

Action tips for everybody

- Draw up a list of issues you think may need to be regulated by policy.
- Most of the legal policies, such as child protection, exist in other youth cafés. Why not ask them for their policies, using them to help you create your own.
- Some local organisations will help you develop policies; for example, the local substance misuse team education officer will help with a drugs and alcohol policy, and the local HSE has officers who help groups draw up child protection policies.
- Your mission statement and aims and objectives can cover issues like eligibility and services that can be provided, e.g. health promotion materials.

Additional resources

- You can find additional information on how to develop policies for a youth café in the accompanying report, *Youth cafés in Ireland: A best practice guide*:
 - **Chapter 5, page 58 on 'Policies central to a youth café'**, which outlines the core legal requirements for running a youth café, such as child protection, health and safety, and insurance, as well as a number of other specific policies relating to, for example, alcohol and smoking.
- In 2009, the City of Dublin Youth Service Board launched its *Toolkit of Essential Guidelines for Good Youth Work Practice* (available at: www.cdysb.ie). This pack contains some really useful information for youth cafés, including:
 - Youth Workers and Young Person – a discussion.
 - Programme Provision and Development.
 - Policy and Service Development.
 - Guides to developing policies across 18 different areas, ranging from 'diversity and equality' to 'drugs and alcohol'.
 - A set of 16 sample forms common to youth work, ranging from 'parental consent' to 'records of trips away'.
 - A set of 4 other useful resources, which are key elements in youth work practice.
- When developing child protection policies for your café, consult the national framework for child protection as provided in the publication *Children First: National Guidelines for the Protection and Welfare of Children* (Department of Health and Children, 1999, revised 2009). You can also consult the following resources:
 - *Code of Ethics and Good Practice for Children's Sport* (Irish Sports Council, 2000);
 - *Code of Good Practice: Child Protection for the Youth Work Sector* (National Youth Work Advisory Committee, Department of Education and Science, 2002);
 - *Our Duty to Care: The Principles of Good Practice for the Protection of Children and Young People* (Department of Health and Children, 2002);
 - *Guidelines for the Protection and Welfare of Children and Young People in the Arts Sector* (Arts Council, 2006).





PART IV: TIP SHEETS

**A summary of the ACTION TIPS
from Chapters 2-11**

Action tips for PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN ADULTS AND YOUNG PEOPLE IN A YOUTH CAFÉ

Action tips for young people

- Identify any adults you think might be interested and ask them to get involved.
- Spend time with adults talking about what you are interested in, what you like and do not like.
- Ask adults for specific advice when you need it. Lots of adults will be delighted to help out and be partners with young people, even if not directly involved.

Action tips for adults

- Be aware that in youth cafés, partnerships are mostly about what young people need and want.
- Trust young people's wisdom and insights.
- Facilitate young people's involvement – don't tell them what to do.
- Take a back seat in decision-making processes.

Action tips for everybody

- Put in place rules to make the partnership work:
 - be yourself;
 - respect each other;
 - listen to each other.
- Decide on the best structure for the partnership group by talking with each other – this might involve setting up a management committee.
- Give time for the partnership to develop – people have to get to know and trust each other.

Action tips for MISSION OF A YOUTH CAFÉ

Action tips for everybody

- Decide how you are going to agree your mission statement in advance (e.g. by a vote, use a sub-committee, etc).
- Make sure everybody has the chance to participate and have their say in what the mission statement might include.
- Brainstorm as many ideas as you can, even if some of them may seem a bit crazy at first.
- Keep your mission statement short, simple and memorable.
- Be clear on the purpose of the café.
- Be clear on what is feasible or possible.



Action tips for ACTIVITIES AND PROGRAMMES FOR A YOUTH CAFÉ

Action tips for everybody

- Change your activities regularly and keep them fresh.
- Plan your activities carefully.
- Use sub-committees to share the load in planning and running activities.
- Don't be too disappointed if things don't work out – learn from your mistakes.
- Have a variety of activities – it will encourage different kinds of young people to visit the café.
- Use your imagination.
- But, remember, just hanging out is an activity too.



Action tips for ROLE OF STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS IN A YOUTH CAFÉ

Action tips for adults

- Always be ready to challenge your assumptions about what young people need and want.
- Involve young people in selecting adults who work in the youth café.
- Be open to exploring your own views, attitudes and approaches to working with young people.
- Know the young people (e.g. their names, their interests).
- Make building relationships and developing trust with young people your key goals.
- Always respond positively to young people when they seek help and support.
- Never be rushed, judgemental or biased.
- Be facilitative, not directive, i.e. suggest, don't boss.
- But remember, as an adult, you have particular responsibilities for young people's well-being.

Action tips for young people

- Put together a list of the qualities or attributes you want adults working with you to have.
- Remember that adults are people too, just like you.
- Expect the best from the adults in the café.



Action tips for TRAINING FOR STAFF, VOLUNTEERS AND YOUNG PEOPLE

Action tips for everybody

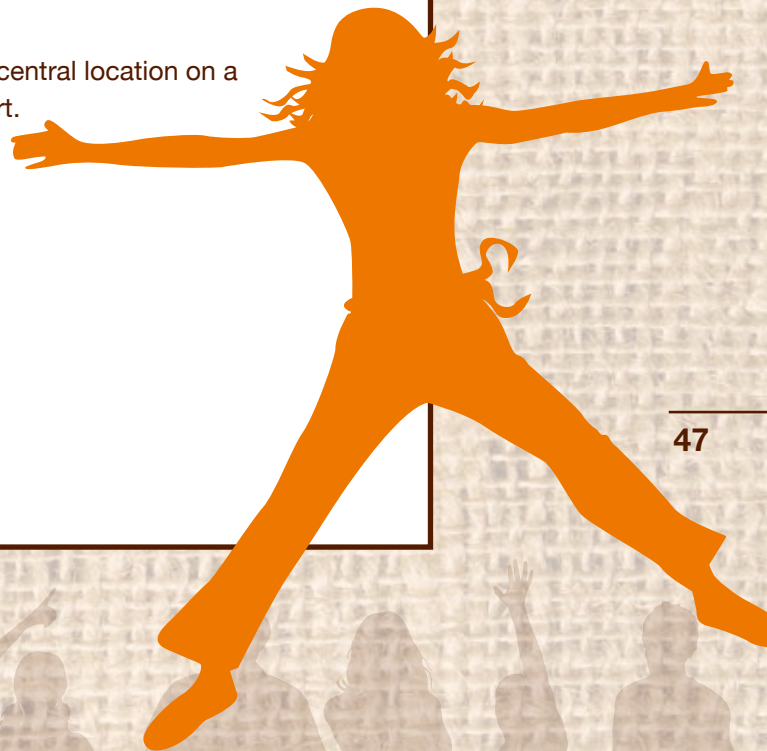
- Make a list of training needs for young people, volunteers and staff.
- Prioritise the most important training according to the needs of the café.
- Make a training plan (e.g. what is needed, who, when, how much).
- Find out if any of this training is available from organisations in the locality, some of which might be free.
- Update your training list based on ongoing needs.
- Remember that not all skill development needs a training course. Some of it can be done informally in the youth café, just by talking someone through a process, such as planning or stocktaking.
- Use peer-led training approaches where possible.



Action tips for DESIGN AND LOCATION OF A YOUTH CAFÉ BUILDING

Action tips for everybody

- Remember your mission – the overall purpose of the café.
- Find out what young people want in the space (e.g. pool table, kitchen, computers) and see what you can fit.
- Include some essential storage space.
- Make the outside of the café inviting and eye-catching.
- Brand your youth café – pick a catchy name, create a logo and sign, and decide on your café's signature colours.
- Have vibrant, loud and funky colours inside.
- Make the café and its facilities wheelchair-accessible.
- Pick practical, durable, yet comfortable furniture.
- Know your limits – you will be constrained by budget, health and safety issues and other guidelines. You need to find these out up front.
- For youth cafés in towns, pick a central location on a well-lit street with public transport.



Action tips for MANAGEMENT OF A YOUTH CAFÉ

Action tips for everybody

- The key to managing a youth café well is the effective involvement of young people and good partnerships with adults.
- Decide what kind of committee you want to manage the youth café. Whatever you pick, decide members' roles and responsibilities.
- Establish committee rules (e.g. frequency of meetings, taking Minutes, ensuring full participation in meetings).
- Set up sub-committees or small groups to focus on specific issues, e.g. activities, facilities, promotions and fund-raising.
- Particularly when the committee is starting up, have an agenda item on how well it is working.



Action tips for FUNDING AND SUSTAINABILITY OF A YOUTH CAFÉ

Action tips for everybody

- Remember that sustainability depends on good practice in all aspects of the day-to-day operation of the youth café. So do what you say you will and do it well!
- Be responsive to the needs of the young people in the locality.
- Based on your mission, devise a 3-year funding target and simple plan to include needs, sources, activities and targets.
- Put together on a single sheet of paper the key points about your café so that you always have this information easily available to give to potential funders.
- Identify relevant potential funding sources, both locally and nationally.
- Be aware that people who give you funds will almost always require the money to be spent on specific aspects of your activities, e.g. the VEC may fund you to run an educationally based programme, whereas the Arts Council may fund a range of creative activities.
- If you do not have the expertise in applying for funding, ask for help.
- Try to raise funds yourself, directly from the public, through specific activities. It's also good publicity for the café.

Action tips for PROMOTION OF A YOUTH CAFÉ

Action tips for everybody

- **Quirky events:** Catch people's attention and get them talking. Events like plays or music gigs have worked well for other youth cafés.
- **Media:** Use the media to publish articles written by young people and profiles of the café or the young people involved. It gives personality to the café.
- **Posters and flyers:** Eye-catching posters and flyers featuring your logo and signature colours should be put up where young people hang out, in schools, libraries and music shops.
- **Get a personality to endorse the café:** Some big name locally, who speaks up for the café, will encourage young people to come and have a look.
- **Get out there:** Visit schools and other youth projects and get them and their members behind the café.
- **Open days:** Invite people in. Contact groups and agencies involving young people in your area and ask them to come in for a look.
- **Word of mouth:** You cannot overestimate the power of word of mouth. Members of your management committee need to be out there talking about what is going on.
- **Personal touches:** Sending young people birthday lollipops, newsletters, invitations printed with their name – these kinds of small gifts always go down well and bring people in to see what is happening.
- **Launch:** Have a big splash and use your identity logo to promote.
- **Website or Bebo page:** Get people talking virtually about the café.



Action tips for EVALUATION AND MONITORING OF A YOUTH CAFÉ

Action tips for everybody

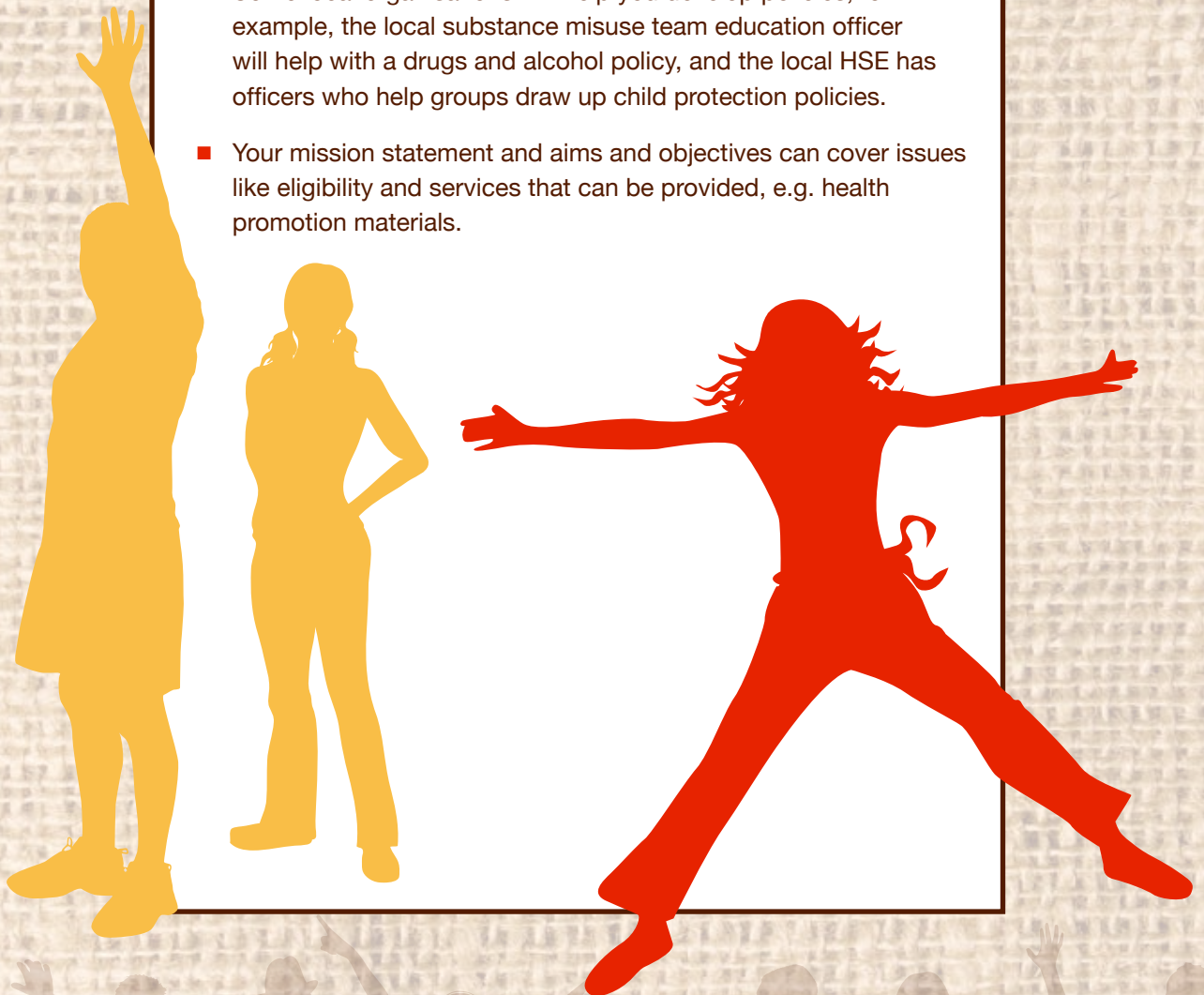
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- Have a *Customer Panel* in place to get regular feedback on the workings of the café.
- Undertake a fuller evaluation of the café, either internal or external, at least every 3 years.



Action tips for POLICIES FOR A YOUTH CAFÉ

Action tips for everybody

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- Your mission statement and aims and objectives can cover issues like eligibility and services that can be provided, e.g. health promotion materials.



Other useful resources

The following table (adapted from Bane and Mullarkey, 2007) provides a list of Government departments, agencies and other organisations you may wish to contact for specific help with your youth café. Information is given on who these agencies are, what they do and how to contact them. Depending on the stage your café is at, some of these agencies will be of more use than others. It is not an exhaustive list, but it is a starting point from which you can progress.

AGENCY	WHO THEY ARE	WHAT THEY DO	HOW TO CONTACT
Catholic Youth Care (CYC)	Catholic Youth Care (CYC) is a leading provider of youth services in the Archdiocese of Dublin. CYC was established in 1944 and set up in its present form in 1977. It is involved in the development of youth cafés in the Dublin, Wicklow and Kildare areas.	CYC's mission is to promote a youth work response that is caring, compassionate and Christian, and enables young people to participate more fully in the life of society and the Church.	Arran Quay, Dublin 7 <i>Tel:</i> (01) 872 5055 <i>Fax:</i> (01) 872 5010 <i>E-mail:</i> info@cyc.ie <i>Website:</i> www.cyc.ie
Chambers of Commerce	The Chambers of Commerce are a group of businesses that come together to represent the business interests of the member companies, to promote the competitiveness of business in Ireland and to enable the development of the chamber network in Ireland.	The Chambers of Commerce have four key areas of interest: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ strengthening the chamber network; ■ representing business interests; ■ supporting small to medium-sized businesses; ■ providing international links. 	Contact local businesses for key Chamber of Commerce contacts in each town. <i>Website:</i> www.chambers.ie
Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs	This Department was established by Government in June 2002, with some 240 staff in 6 locations, mainly in Dublin, Na Forbacha, Co. Galway, and Tubbercurry, Co. Sligo.	The Department is responsible for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ community development programmes; ■ local development; ■ the RAPID programmes for Revitalising Areas by Planning, Investment and Development; ■ coordination of the National Drugs Strategy; ■ volunteering; ■ rural development initiatives, including CLÁR, LEADER and INTERREG. <p>The Department also retains the responsibilities previously held by the former Department of Arts, Heritage, Gaeltacht and the Islands for the Irish language, the Gaeltacht and the development of Ireland's inhabited offshore islands.</p>	Dún Aímhírgin, 43-49 Mespil Road, Dublin 4 <i>Tel:</i> (01) 647 3000 <i>Fax:</i> (01) 647 3051 <i>E-mail:</i> eolas@pobal.ie <i>Lo-Call:</i> 1890 474 847 <i>Website:</i> www.pobal.ie

AGENCY	WHO THEY ARE	WHAT THEY DO	HOW TO CONTACT
Department of Education and Science	The Department aims to provide high-quality education to individuals (a) to enable them to achieve their full potential and to participate fully as members of society; and (b) to contribute to Ireland's social, cultural and economic development.	Priorities are the promotion of equity and inclusion, quality outcomes and lifelong learning; planning for education that is relevant to personal, social, cultural and economic needs; and enhancement of the capacity of the Department for service delivery, policy formulation, research and evaluation.	Marlborough Street, Dublin 1 <i>Tel:</i> (01) 889 6400 <i>Website:</i> www.education.ie
Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform	The remit of the Justice family of agencies and services stretches across a range of human concerns and touches on aspects of national life as diverse as the protection of life and property; the prevention and detection of crime; maintaining and promoting equality of treatment between people; the provision of services for the buying and selling of property; the management of inward migration to the State; supporting integration; and providing a Courts Service and other forms of investigative tribunals.	The broad aims of the Department are to maintain and enhance community security and promote a fair society through the development of a range of policies and high-quality services, which underpin: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ the protection and assertion of human rights and fundamental freedoms consistent with the common good; ■ the security of the State; ■ an effective and balanced approach to tackling crime; ■ progress towards the elimination of discrimination, the promotion of equal opportunities and tolerance. <p>The Irish Youth Justice Service (IYJS) is an executive office of the Department, with responsibility for leading and driving reform in the area of youth justice.</p>	Pinebrook House, 71-74 Harcourt Street, Dublin 2 <i>and</i> Montague Court, 7-11 Montague Street, Dublin 2 <i>Tel:</i> (01) 602 8202 <i>Lo-Call:</i> 1890 221-227 <i>E-mail:</i> info@justice.ie <i>Website:</i> www.justice.ie <i>and</i> www.iyjs.ie
Department of Social and Family Affairs	This Department is responsible for a range of social insurance and social assistance schemes.	The Department formulates appropriate social protection policies and administers and manages the delivery of statutory and non-statutory schemes and services, including provision for unemployment, illness, maternity, caring, widowhood, retirement and old age.	Áras Mhic Dhiarmada, Store Street, Dublin 1 <i>Tel:</i> (01) 704 3000 <i>Website:</i> www.welfare.ie

AGENCY	WHO THEY ARE	WHAT THEY DO	HOW TO CONTACT
FÁS	FÁS was established in January 1988, under the Labour Services Act 1987, to act as Ireland's national training and employment authority. Its aims are to promote a competitive and inclusive knowledge-based economy, in collaboration with stakeholders, by enhancing the skills and capabilities of individuals and enterprises.	FÁS provides a wide range of services to the labour market in Ireland, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ training and re-training; ■ designated apprenticeships; ■ recruitment service; ■ employment schemes; ■ placement and guidance services; ■ assistance to community groups; ■ advice for people returning to Ireland and those seeking employment elsewhere in the EU. 	FÁS Head Office, 27-33 Upper Baggot Street, Dublin 4 <i>Tel:</i> (01) 607 0500 <i>E-mail:</i> info@fas.ie <i>Website:</i> www.fas.ie
Foróige	Foróige provides a comprehensive range of youth work services through the operation of Foróige Clubs, Local Youth Services, Local Youth Development Projects and Youth Information Centres. It also provides three forms of youth cafés: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ youth health café; ■ youth café – as an add-on service to existing project; ■ volunteer-led youth café. 	The purpose of Foróige is to enable young people to involve themselves consciously and actively in their own development and in the development of society. This purpose challenges and supports young people to involve themselves in developing their character and talents.	Block 12D, Joyce Way, Park West, Dublin 12 <i>Tel:</i> (01) 630 1560 <i>Fax:</i> (01) 630 1568 <i>E-mail:</i> info@foroige.ie <i>Website:</i> www.foroige.ie
Health Service Executive (HSE)	The HSE is the single Government body responsible for ensuring that everybody can access cost-effective and consistently high-quality health and personal social services in Ireland. The service is delivered by making best use of resources allocated by Government.	The HSE is responsible for providing health and personal social services for everyone living in the Republic of Ireland. As outlined in the Health Act 2004, the objective of the HSE is to use the resources available to it in the most beneficial, effective and efficient manner to improve, promote and protect the health and welfare of the public.	Oak House, Millennium Park, Naas, Co. Kildare <i>Tel:</i> (045) 880400 <i>and</i> Parkgate Street, Business Centre, Dublin 8 <i>Tel:</i> (01) 635 2500 <i>Website:</i> www.hse.ie
HSE Children and Family Services	The HSE's Children and Family Services are responsible for providing services and support to children, parents and families all over Ireland.	A wide range of services are delivered, including public health nursing, child and adolescent health, child welfare and protection, pre-school services, family support, adoptions and tracing, fostering and residential care.	Oak House, Millennium Park, Naas, Co. Kildare <i>Tel:</i> (045) 880400 <i>and</i> Parkgate Street, Business Centre, Dublin 8 <i>Tel:</i> (01) 635 2500 <i>Website:</i> www.hse.ie

AGENCY	WHO THEY ARE	WHAT THEY DO	HOW TO CONTACT
Irish Youth Foundation	The Irish Youth Foundation (IYF) was founded in 1985 as an independent charitable trust, dedicated exclusively to meeting the needs of disadvantaged children and young people. Each year, approximately 10,000 children from around the country benefit from work carried out by groups funded by the IYF in areas such as homelessness, substance abuse, poverty and social education.	The IYF provides financial support through the following strategies: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ raising funds and making grants to children's groups and youth organisations throughout Ireland; ■ developing facilities and amenities for children and supplying vital equipment to youth projects; ■ assessing projects through its programme of action research to ensure that lessons learned in one situation can be applied elsewhere. 	35 Exchequer Street, Dublin 2 Tel: 01 671 9009 E-mail: info@iyf.ie Website: www.iyf.ie
National Youth Council of Ireland (NYCI)	The National Youth Council of Ireland (NYCI) is the representative body for national voluntary youth work organisations in Ireland.	The NYCI is a membership-led umbrella organisation that represents and supports the interests of 50 voluntary youth organisations. It uses its collective experience to act on issues that impact on young people. Its role is recognised in legislation through the Youth Work Act 2001 and as a social partner in the Community and Voluntary Pillar of the current National Social Partnership Agreement, <i>Towards 2016</i> .	3 Montague Street, Dublin 2 Tel: (01) 478 4122 Fax: (01) 478 3974 E-mail: info@nyci.ie Website: www.nyci.ie
Office of the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs (OMCYA)	The Office of the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs (OMCYA) is part of the Department of Health and Children. The role of the OMCYA, which was set up by Government in December 2005, is to improve the lives of children under the National Children's Strategy and to bring greater coherence to policy-making for children.	The OMCYA brings together staff from different Government departments working on a number of issues concerning children and young people, including early childhood care and education, youth justice, child welfare and protection, children and young people's participation, research on children and young people, and youth work. The OMCYA is responsible for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ implementing the National Children's Strategy (2000-2010); ■ implementing the National Childcare Investment Programme (2006-2010); ■ developing policy and legislation on child welfare and child protection; ■ implementing the Children Act 2001; ■ developing youth policy. 	Hawkins House, Hawkins Street, Dublin 2 Tel: (01) 635 4000 Fax: (01) 674 3223 E-mail: omc@health.gov.ie Website: www.omc.gov.ie

AGENCY	WHO THEY ARE	WHAT THEY DO	HOW TO CONTACT
Pobal (formerly Area Development Management/ADM)	Pobal's mission is to promote social inclusion, reconciliation and equality through integrated social and economic development within communities. Pobal is a not-for-profit company with charitable status that manages programmes on behalf of the Irish Government and the EU.	Pobal supports partnership approaches to decision-making in order to engage communities in the development process at local level and to promote coordination between communities, State agencies and other stakeholders. It encourages the piloting of new initiatives and is committed to contributing to policy development through the lessons learnt from the programmes managed.	Holbrook House, Holles Street, Dublin 2 <i>Tel:</i> (01) 240 0700 <i>E-mail:</i> inquiries@pobal.ie <i>Website:</i> www.pobal.ie
Údarás na Gaeltachta	Údarás na Gaeltachta is a Regional State Agency responsible for promoting the economic and social development of the Gaeltacht so as to facilitate the preservation and extension of the Irish language as the principal language of the region.	The work of Údarás builds on the policies of successive Irish Governments in maintaining and developing the Gaeltacht as a vibrant community where there is a sufficient level of economic activity to sustain the community and where the language is established at the heart of that economic activity.	Na Forbacha, Co. na Gaillimhe <i>Tel:</i> (091) 503100 <i>E-mail:</i> eolas@udaras.ie <i>Website:</i> www.udaras.ie
Vocational Education Committees (VECs)	VECs are established in accordance with the provisions of the Vocational Education Act 1930 and Amendments, and provide a range of education, training and support services for a variety of cohorts within local communities.	These education and training programmes include second-level, adult, youth, community and second-chance education (VTOS), post-Leaving Certificate programmes, prison education, Traveller education and a variety of EU-funded and cooperative training programmes.	Irish Vocational Education Association (IVEA), McCann House, 99 Marlborough Road, Donnybrook, Dublin 4 <i>Tel:</i> (01) 496 6033 or (01) 496 6248 <i>E-mail:</i> info@ivea.ie <i>Website:</i> www.ivea.ie
Youth Work Ireland (YWI) (formerly the National Youth Federation)	Youth Work Ireland (YWI) makes available the provision of voluntary youth services in Ireland, e.g. by supporting youth cafés via their local youth services network across the country. A good example of this is the Clare Youth Service, which operates a number of youth cafés (see www.clareyouthservice.org)	YWI provides quality services to young people and youth workers.	20 Dominick Street Lower, Dublin 1 <i>Tel:</i> (01) 872 9933 <i>E-mail:</i> info@nyf.ie <i>Website:</i> www.youthworkireland.ie

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