



# **Friends Guide Book on DROP IN CENTERS**

## *PUBLIC document - 2010 version*

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## **Introduction on the guide book**

### **Why a guide book?**

- To ensure best quality services to children, youth and adults
- To help social workers improve their work and solve the problems they face
- To share the knowledge and experience of the FI staff

### **Who uses this guide book?**

This guide book is to be used by all persons working in a Drop In Center as part of a Friends Program (staff or volunteers).

**This document is the public version of the guide book. For information about the full Guide Book and about collaboration with Friends-International, please contact Friends-International. [www.friends-international.org](http://www.friends-international.org)**

# **1. General understanding on drop in centers**

## **Definition of a Drop in center (DIC)**

A drop in center is a safe place providing targeted services to a defined target group without appointment, formal registration process or referral.

A drop in center can take different forms:

- it can target a very specific or very broad target group (Example: male sex workers between 18 and 24 years old in one specific area or all children and youth in a city)
- it can have a fixed location (building) it can be mobile (vehicle) or semi mobile (changing building regularly)
- it can provide a large variety of services or provide only limited specialized services (only legal advice or a certain medical service for instance)

What is called here Drop In Center can have different names: day center, youth center, mobile center... In most cases the centers have a local name for the target group to recognize easily.

Although Drop In Centers can take different forms based on the needs of the target group in different areas, these common guidelines can be used to ensure best quality services are provided.

## **The objective of DIC**

- To protect and save lives of its target beneficiaries (children, youth, adults...)
- To build futures of its target beneficiaries (children, youth, adults)

## **Target group of a DIC**

The target group of a Drop In Centre has to be part of the Friends Programs target group (see Friends Programs Charter)

It has to be defined precisely and clearly communicated to the target group

## **A DIC is an important part for many programs**

A DIC is essential to complement outreach activities and continuously collaborates with the outreach team (A DIC does NOT replace Outreach work: Outreach work should not be stopped when a Drop In Center is started)

DIC collaborates closely with other services of the Friends Programs and of the CYTI Network and with external referral partners.

# **2. The principles of a DIC**

Beneficiaries join services on a voluntary basis (open door policy to target clients).

All decisions are taken for the best interest of the child/youth.

DIC workers show respect to the beneficiaries, they do not have a judgemental attitude (especially when it regards their sexual identity or behaviors, their substance use patterns... or anything which could be seen by the part of the society as “bad moral”)

DIC workers are “professional friends”

DIC services are delivered in a development approach. Charity is not considered a solution to any issue.

DIC staffs ensure protection of clients in the center

The DIC is service oriented

The DIC is clean, safe, organized but needs to avoid luxury

DIC services can always be improved and need to constantly adapt to the changes in the environment (geographical, human, social, economic...)

DIC workers are positive and dynamic, they believe in everybody's capacity to change.

DIC workers express and practice the principle of confidentiality

DIC is fun and exciting in order to attract children and motivate them to come back. A DIC needs to change often (setting, activities...) in order to remain attractive.

DIC (location, opening times, services...) is designed and run with the full participation of the target group

### **3. What do I do in a DIC?**

A DIC aims at:

- 1-Saving / protecting the lives of children / youth
- 2 - Building the futures of the children / youth

A DIC is composed of different types of activities:

- Provide information / referral for moving away from streets
- Meeting / gathering / exchange information
- Recreation: art / self-expression, fun activities
- Education / life skills
- Social support / case management / counseling
- Specialized services: Drug related services, HIV/AIDS, information and referral for migrants, legal support...

A DIC can be a place for outreach teams to carry out specific activities that cannot be carried out on the streets

A DIC can be an emergency space (at times of police round-ups, times of natural disasters, times of unrest, etc.)

**3.1 - Initial contact:** *The first impression is essential for future relationship*

**3.2 - Protection activities:** *preventing children/youth/adults from getting hurt (based on clients lifestyle and needs)*

**3.3 - Development activities:** *ensuring that children/youth/adults develop their mind, their body and their brain*

**3.4 - Social integration activities:** *supporting beneficiaries to live in a family/environment and to access school/employment **through case management***

**3.5 - Specialized services**

**3.6 - Emergency services**

**3.7 - Collection and sharing of information:**

## **4. How do I do this ?**

**(Include does and don'ts relevant to your project)**

### **4.1 The prerequisites to open a DIC**

### **4.2 Technical organization of a DIC**

*Selection of locations*

*Organization of schedules*

*Ensuring safety*

*Materials*

### **4.2 Running a drop in center**

*Ensuring the Drop In Center is attractive to children and youth*

**Center rules**

*Case management*

*Information and Education*

*Meals and nutrition*

*Referrals*

*Media and visitors in a DIC*

### **4.4 Setting up a mobile drop in center**

### **4.5 The team**

*Composition of the team*

*Training of the team*

*Clothing of the team*

*Staff attitude*

*Staff safety*

### **4.6 child/youth participation**

### **4.7 Monitoring and evaluation of DIC**

### **4.8 Other points**

**Include does and don't s relevant to your project**

## **5. What should I do When I don't know what to do?**

- **I don't get excited, frustrated or upset**
- **I ask my team members, my team leader, my project manager**
- **If I am not in an emergency situation:** I tell the children/youth/adults that I will check and come back to them. I do not tell them things I am not sure about or that are untrue
- **If I am in an emergency situation and nobody can advise me:**
  - I do what I consider is the best for the child/youth. The priority is the physical and mental safety of the child/youth
  - On the same day or on the next day I ask my team leader or my project manager to discuss about the situation so I know how to react next time.

## **6. Reference and resource documents**

- Friends-International Child Protection policy and procedures
- Friends-Programs charter
- Example of daily reports frames
- Example of team weekly schedule
- Example of questionnaire for evaluation by beneficiaries

## **Annex: FAQs**

**How to make clients come to your center and come back again?**

**What to do if the police comes to the center to arrest clients?**

**Children are asking to sleep in the DIC at night because they have problems:**

**How to do when clients come on drugs in the center?**

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