



COMPETENCE FRAMEWORK

**Building Competence for Community Animators and Leaders:
A Three-Domain Framework**

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Overall Approach & Design Principles

Overall Approach

The over-arching approach to designing the MYSTIC competence framework takes as its starting point the CEDEFOP definition of competence:

“Competences usually refer to practices in the workplace and, by extension, to wider social and personal practices. Accordingly, learning outcomes are validated by their connection to competences”.

In line with this definition, knowledge, skills and attitudes are considered within competences as an open set of changeable examples rather than a discrete set of immovable structural entities (Valenta et. al.,2012). Competences are therefore defined as a dialectical progression of knowledge, skills, attitudes and purposes, where broader competence areas derive from the socio-economic context and are translated into learning outcome examples. This perspective is core to recent initiatives that have developed to standardize competences at the EU level – for example the European Digital Competence Framework recently developed by the European Commission’s Joint Research Centre, JRC-Seville.

Since knowledge, skills and attitudes are embedded in and illustrated by examples of learning outcomes, they are not seen as essential requirements but examples of how a competence can manifest itself through observable instances of the application of a person’s knowledge, skills and attitudes. The Learning Outcomes are particularly important for MYSTIC because they directly link to the online training course structure and content and to the assessment approach, which is a ‘quiz-based’ tool designed to assess the extent to which a Community Animator or a Community Leader is able to apply competences in their practice by choosing the right option in challenging youth work situations.

Competence Framework Structure

The state-of-the-art review suggests that the MYSTIC competence framework design should be built around three high level competence domains:

- Domain A – Contextual Competences. This speaks to the need for Community Animators and Leaders to understand the landscape of youth work, as well as the landscape of ‘left behind communities’ and the lived experience of marginalised young people. It also covers the use of ‘collaboration intelligence’ skills like empathy, intercultural communication and relationship management that are required to support co-working and sense-making across sometimes entrenched boundaries.
- Domain B –Core A&L Competences. This focuses on supporting Community Animators and Leaders to acquire the essential ‘Animator’ and ‘Leadership’ knowledge and skills that will in turn support vulnerable young people to realise their potential. It covers key areas like sourcing, evaluating and managing resources and content; providing advice and support to marginalised young people and understanding the tools that can be used to empower them.
- Domain C –Operational Competences. This domain focuses on using the knowledge and the tools acquired in Domains A and B to design and deliver innovative programmes that aim to change young peoples’ lives for the better, including a specific focus on using digital tools to deliver innovation. These three domains are each associated with three competence areas. Each competence area covers three specific competences, providing 27 competences in total within the framework, as shown below in Figure 5.

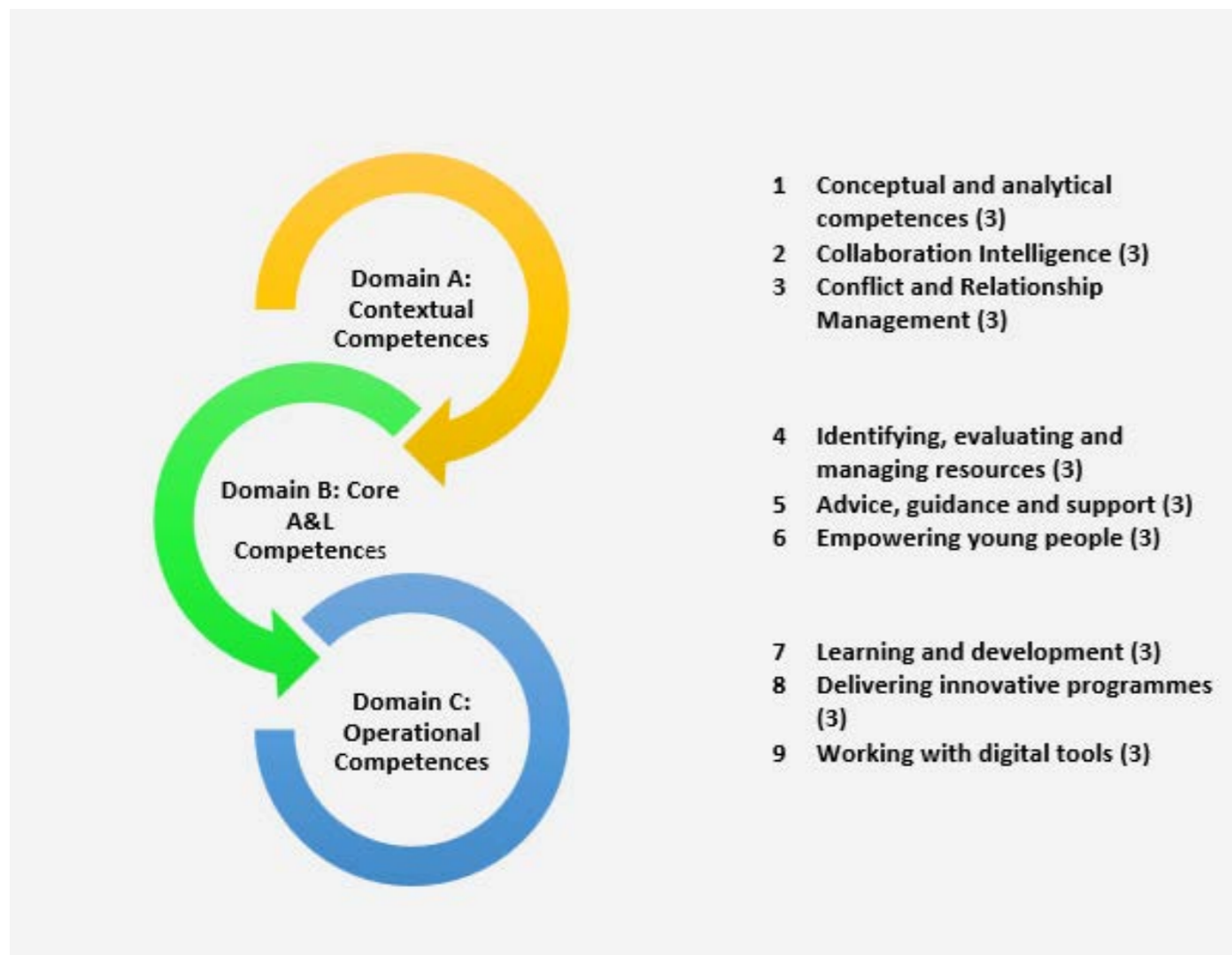


Figure 5: MYSTIC Competence Framework

The transition from Domain A through B to Domain C in effect marks a progression, following Bloom's taxonomy, from 'remembering and understanding' through 'applying and analysing' to 'evaluating and creating', as illustrated in Figure 6.

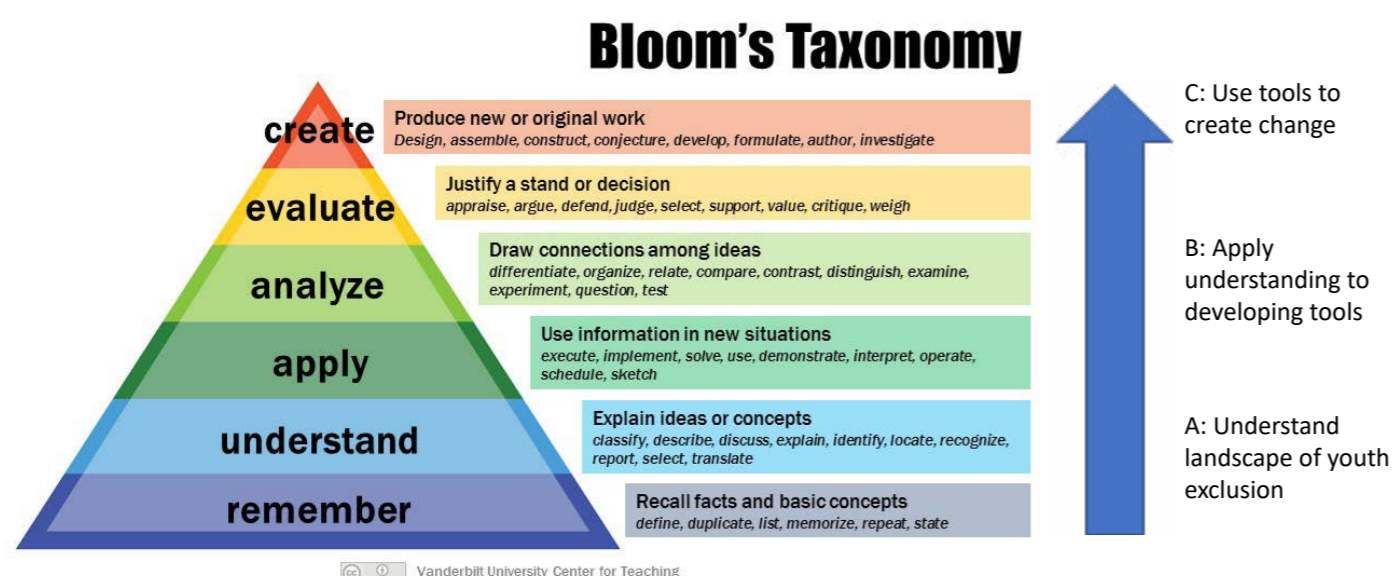


Figure 6: Progression through the competence domains

Table 3 provides a summary of the competences in the framework by competence domain and area together with a short description of each competence.

Table 3: MYSTIC competence framework summary		
Domain A: Contextual competences		
Area	Competence	Description
1. Conceptual and analytical competences	1.1 Understanding marginalisation	Understand the factors that lead to the marginalisation of young people, and their consequences
	1.2 Community Mapping and Lifeworld Analysis	Use information management competences to map community structures, stakeholder groups and the lifeworlds of young people
	1.3 Critical thinking	Understand and apply critical thinking to question stereotyping and entrenched beliefs about young people
2. Collaboration intelligence	2.1 Empathy	Ability to sense other people's emotions and imagining what someone else might be thinking or feeling with regard to a position on young people
	2.2 Emotional self-awareness and self-confidence	Ability to have a positive view of oneself, and understand one's own emotions and their effects on one's behaviour
	2.3 Adaptability and resilience	Ability to cope with and adapt to challenges in situations working with young people that, for example, reflect intractable and oppositional positions
3. Conflict and relationship management	3.1 Assertiveness	Ability to express ones' thoughts, feelings and beliefs without violating the rights of young people
	3.2 Intercultural communication and social responsibility	Ability to develop a positive and productive interaction with young people from different cultural backgrounds and perspectives
	3.3 Conflict management and mediation	Ability to recognise and manage conflicting positions and behaviours, for example gang culture, in a constructive and ethical manner in working with young people

Table 3: MYSTIC competence framework summary		
Domain B – Core A&L competences		
Area	Competence	Description
4. Organising and managing resources	4.1 Identifying appropriate resources to support open access of information for young people	Ability to identify information needs of young people and relevant sources of information to address these needs
	4.2 Identifying and providing appropriate resources to support civic engagement and collaborative working	Identification and application of appropriate resources in collaborative civic participation and development projects and programmes
	4.3 Using information to support the social inclusion of young people	Capacity to use information to help young people become better informed and make better choices and decisions
5. Advice, guidance and support	5.1 Active Listening	Giving full attention to what young people are saying and expect, taking time to understand the points being made, asking questions as appropriate, and not interrupting at inappropriate times
	5.2 Supporting informed choices and decisions	Actively looking for ways to help young people develop their capacities, choices and decision-making
	5.3 Overcoming barriers	Support young people in identifying and meeting participation and development needs and overcoming any barriers
6. Empowering young people	6.1 Supporting active participation and empowering marginalized young people	Working with young people to explore radical and emancipatory ways of changing their situation
	6.2 Promoting creativity, problem-solving and out of the box thinking	Designing projects and activities that enable young people to solve problems in radical ways
	6.3 Designing inspiring learning and development programmes	Designing collaborative projects and programmes to maximize young people's creativity and talent in ways that help them develop

Table 3: MYSTIC competence framework summary		
Domain C – Operational competences		
Area	Competence	Description
7. Learning and development	7.1 Planning and delivering learning and development programmes	Knowledge and application of project design and planning methods and practices to support young peoples' development and civic participation
	7.2 Learning and development environments	Understand, choose and configure the right teaching tools for different learning situations
	7.3 Learning and development guidance and support	Use appropriate learning and development methods and tools to enhance interaction with young people, individually and collectively
8. Delivering innovative programmes	8.1 Accessibility and inclusion	Ensure accessibility to learning and development resources and activities for all vulnerable young people, including those with complex needs
	8.2 Actively engaging vulnerable young people	Know how to attract and retain 'hard to reach' young people to participate in learning and development programmes
	8.3 Choosing the right mix	Combine different delivery platforms, content and activities, including outdoor and cultural activities to deliver innovative learning and development programmes
9. Working with digital tools	9.1 Understanding on-line life	Keep up to date with the online behaviours and Media & Information Literacy needs of vulnerable young people and provide support to meet them
	9.2 Online safety, security and responsible use	Take measures to ensure young peoples' physical, psychological and social well-being online and support them to use digital technologies responsibly
	9.3 Digital content creation and use for empowerment	Incorporate learning and development activities in youth work which require learners to express themselves through digital means, modify and create digital content in different formats and identify and solve problems

Progression levels

Progression levels are intended to help participants in the MYSTIC programme understand their personal strengths and weaknesses, by describing different stages or levels – ‘proficiencies’ - of competence development. The proposed progression approach in the MYSTIC competence framework works in two ways. Firstly, as discussed above, progression is embedded within the competence framework structure itself, which moves from the acquisition of ‘contextual’ competences in Domain A, through acquiring the Animator and Leadership competences and tools needed in Domain B, to acquiring more advanced and complex competences that enable Community Animators and Leaders to apply these skills and tools to deliver innovative programmes that help change young peoples’ lives for the better, in Domain C. Second, each competence within the framework has three levels of proficiency:

- Level 1: Basic level
- Level 2: Intermediate level
- Level 3: Advanced level

The three progression levels are in line with EU-wide competence frameworks like the DigCompEdu framework developed by the European Commission’s Joint Research Centre, JRC-Seville, which has 6 progression levels ranging from A1 – ‘Newcomers’ – who can recall facts and basic concepts – to C2 ‘Pioneers’ – who can develop new practices, and the DTPF framework, which has 3 progression levels

Stage 1: Exploring – practitioners assimilate new information and develop basic digital practices;

Stage 2: Adopting – practitioners apply their digital practices and expand them further;

Stage 3: Leading – practitioners pass on their knowledge, critique existing practice and develop new practices.

In MYSTIC, progression levels are incorporated in the Training Course, discussed in Section 5 below. Each module of the training course incorporates ‘quizzes’ that use ‘situational knowledge-based questions’ that assess the extent to which trainees can apply the competences covered by the module in actual practice. These quizzes are graded on level of difficulty corresponding to ‘Basic’, ‘Intermediate’ and ‘Advanced’. Equally the interactive game requires programme participants to adopt the most appropriate response to ‘critical incident’ situations. By progressing through the different levels in the game, participants demonstrate their increasing mastery of the competence areas on which the training course is based.

It is important to note that, because of the way proficiency and progression levels are built into the design of the MYSTIC competence framework, there is no justification for developing and running two separate versions of the training programme for Community Animators and Community Leaders respectively.

Elaborated Competence Framework

Putting the approach into practice, presented below is the MYSTIC Competence Framework in detail. This describes the three competence domains, their associated competence areas and competences and Learning Outcome Examples for each competence, broken down into knowledge, skills and attitude examples.

Domain A: Contextual Competences 1/1

Competence Area	1: Conceptual and analytical competences
Competence title	1.1: Understanding marginalisation
Competence description	Understand the factors that lead to the marginalisation of young people and their consequences
Knowledge examples	Knows how intersectionality works and how different structural factors combine to constrain opportunities for disadvantaged young people
Skills examples	Ability to critically review different theories and research on youth marginalisation
Attitude examples	Avoids stereotyping young people

Competence Area	1: Conceptual and analytical competences
Competence title	1.2: Community Mapping and Lifeworld Analysis
Competence description	Use information management competences to map community structures, stakeholder groups and the lifeworlds of young people
Knowledge examples	Understands that each young person belongs to a number of different communities within which he/she plays a different role
Skills examples	Applying ethnographic techniques to understand situation of young people in their communities
Attitude examples	Recognises that community and identity are socially constructed

Competence Area	1: Conceptual and analytical competences
Competence title	1.3: Critical thinking
Competence description	Understand and apply critical thinking to question stereotyping and entrenched beliefs about young people
Knowledge examples	Knows how to identify inconsistencies and errors in reasoning
Skills examples	Can evaluate a point of view to determine how strong or valid it is
Attitude examples	Willing to question ideas and assumptions rather than accepting them at face value

Domain A: Contextual Competences 2/3

Competence Area	2: Collaboration intelligence
Competence title	2.1: Empathy
Competence description	Ability to sense other people's emotions and imagine what someone else might be thinking or feeling with regard to a position on young people
Knowledge examples	Understand the advantages of recognising young peoples' emotions and how they relate to their view of the world
Skills examples	Ability to step into someone else's shoes, for example to explore how it feels to have limited aspirations
Attitude examples	Realise the benefits of understanding how young peoples' emotions affect how they view the world

Competence Area	2. Collaboration intelligence
Competence title	2.2: Emotional self-awareness and self-confidence
Competence description	Ability to have a positive view of oneself, and understand one's own emotions and their effects on one's behaviour
Knowledge examples	Understands how awareness of one's emotions in certain situations facilitates a balanced behaviour in conflict situations
Skills examples	Takes time to take stock, and reflect on recent events, on one's behaviour/ reactions and on the emotions behind them.
Attitude examples	Acknowledge the importance of reflecting how one's emotions affect one's actions

Competence Area	2. Collaboration intelligence
Competence title	2.3: Adaptability and resilience
Competence description	Ability to cope with and adapt to challenges in situations working with young people that, for example, reflect intractable and oppositional positions
Knowledge examples	Understands the factors that lead to behavioural 'stuckness' – for example an entrenched and illogical position on a subject - and repetitive behaviour
Skills examples	Takes the lead in getting young people to think out of the box with regard to an entrenched position
Attitude examples	Recognises the importance of acting on opportunities to improvise in a teaching and learning situation when they arise, so as to improve learning outcomes.

Domain A: Contextual Competences 3/3

Competence Area	3. Conflict and relationship management
Competence title	3.1: Assertiveness
Competence description	Ability to express ones' thoughts, feelings and beliefs without violating the rights of young people
Knowledge examples	Being aware of and understanding the different behaviours that young people can apply in social anxiety situations
Skills examples	Ability to assert one's rights while offering consideration for others
Attitude examples	Takes ownership of one's feelings whilst not blaming others. Recognises that young people should not take responsibility for the behaviour of others or for situations which are beyond their control.

Competence Area	3: Conflict and relationship management
Competence title	3.2: Intercultural communication and social responsibility
Competence description	Ability to develop a positive and productive interaction with young people from different cultural and ideological backgrounds in order to better understand how their perspectives are formed.
Knowledge examples	Understands own biases and behaviours when addressing stereotypes about young people.
Skills examples	Ability to raise identity-related awareness within the group and encourage group members to reflect on their own identity and how this impacts on their positions and perspectives
Attitude examples	Readiness to confront and be confronted and dare to deal with the complexity of culture and its dimensions in the group as they impact on positions and perspectives

Competence Area	3: Conflict and relationship management
Competence title	3.3: Conflict management and mediation
Competence description	Ability to recognise and manage conflicting positions and behaviours, for example around gang culture, in a constructive and ethical manner in working with young people
Knowledge examples	Knows the key critical incidents that typically give rise to conflict in situations when working with different groups of young people
Skills examples	Ability to manage conflict situations
Attitude examples	Open-ness and fairness in respect of different opinions and positions

Domain B: Core Community Animator and Leader Competences 1/3

Competence Area	4. Organising and Managing Information and Resources
Competence title	4.1 Identifying appropriate resources to support open access to information for young people
Competence description	Ability to identify information needs of young people and relevant sources of information to address these needs
Knowledge examples	Knows which sources of information can be accessed
Skills examples	Skill to organize existing appropriate information resources
Attitude examples	Recognises that young people have particular needs for information

Competence Area	4. Organising and Managing Information and Resources
Competence title	4.2 Identifying and providing appropriate resources to support civic engagement and collaborative working
Competence description	Identification and application of appropriate resources in collaborative civic participation and development projects and programmes
Knowledge examples	Knowledge of different participation and developmental resources
Skills examples	Skill to assess young people's participation and developmental needs
Attitude examples	Is comfortable with addressing and applying the principles of non-formal learning when designing a programme with a particular focus on 'learner-centeredness', 'transparency', 'democratic values', 'participation' and 'social transformation'

Competence Area	4. Organising and Managing Information and Resources
Competence title	4.3 Using information to support the social inclusion of young people
Competence description	Capacity to use information to help young people become better informed and make better choices and decisions
Knowledge examples	Knows which sources of information should be used to address the different knowledge needs of young people in different situations
Skills examples	Identifies the information relevant to an issue or a question
Attitude examples	Is comfortable with uncertainty when dealing with and using the collected information

Domain B: Core Community Animator and Leader Competences 2/3

Competence Area	5. Advice, Guidance and Support
Competence title	5.1 Active Listening
Competence description	Giving full attention to what young people are saying and what they expect, taking time to understand the points being made, asking questions as appropriate, and not interrupting at inappropriate times
Knowledge examples	Knowledge of the various dimensions and elements of active listening and non-verbal communication
Skills examples	Pays attention to body language
Attitude examples	Non-judgmental and engaging attitude Listens openly, without judgement

Competence Area	5. Advice, Guidance and Support
Competence title	5.2 Supporting informed choices and decisions
Competence description	Actively looking for ways to help young people develop their capacities, choices and decision-making
Knowledge examples	Knowledge of human behaviour and performance; individual differences in ability, personality, and interests; learning and motivation
Skills examples	Considering the relative costs and benefits of potential actions to choose the most appropriate one collaboratively with the group members
Attitude examples	Openness to alternative life pathways for young people

Competence Area	5. Advice, Guidance and Support
Competence title	5.3 Overcoming barriers
Competence description	Supports young people in identifying and meeting participation and development needs and overcoming any barriers
Knowledge examples	Knowledge of the dynamics of participation and development processes
Skills examples	Skill to establish a supportive relationship with young people
Attitude examples	Empathy, honesty and respect

Domain B: Core Community Animator and Leader Competences 3/3

Competence Area	6. Empowering young people
Competence title	6.1 Supporting active participation and empowering marginalized young people
Competence description	Working with young people to explore radical and emancipatory ways of changing their situation
Knowledge examples	Knowledge of principles of participatory / emancipatory / empowerment pedagogy
Skills examples	Application of empowerment theory and practice
Attitude examples	Dares to share emotions and insights honestly and respectfully

Competence Area	6. Empowering young people
Competence title	6.2 Promoting creativity, problem-solving and out of the box thinking
Competence description	Designing projects and activities that enable young people to solve problems in radical ways
Knowledge examples	Demonstrates an understanding of factors that support and block creativity
Skills examples	Using 'Feytag's pyramid' to encourage a group of young people to develop an idea for a project in the form of a story
Attitude examples	Courage to explore radical and disruptive approaches

Competence Area	6. Empowering young people
Competence title	6.3 Designing inspiring learning and development programmes
Competence description	Designing collaborative projects and programmes to maximize young people's creativity and talent in ways that help them develop
Knowledge examples	Knowledge of principles and various methods for the development of young people's creativity and talent
Skills examples	Application of blended learning environment to develop young people's creativity
Attitude examples	Courage to improvise, adjust and deal with unknown and unpredicted situations

Domain C: Operational Competences 1/3

Competence Area	7. Learning and development
Competence title	7.1 Planning and delivering learning and development programmes
Competence description	Knowledge and application of project design and planning methods and practices to support young peoples' development and civic participation
Knowledge examples	Knowledge of methodologies used in youth training
Skills examples	Skill to choose, adapt or create an appropriate method to suit a particular group and their needs
Attitude examples	Openness and sensitivity to socio-political contexts of young people

Competence Area	7. Learning and development
Competence title	7.2 Learning and development environments
Competence description	Understand, choose and configure the right teaching tools for different learning situations
Knowledge examples	Knowing which tool to use when and for what purpose
Skills examples	Understanding the time learners require to deploy learning tools in a task and building time into the task so they can interpret the task, assess their options, choose a strategy and correct it if necessary
Attitude examples	Flexibility in considering different teaching tools for different circumstances and learning objectives

Competence Area	7. Learning and development
Competence title	7.3 Learning and Development Guidance and support
Competence description	Use appropriate learning and development methods and tools to enhance interaction with young people, individually and collectively
Knowledge examples	Knows how to offer timely and targeted guidance and assistance
Skills examples	Can use tools, e.g. e-mail or chat, to respond to young people's questions or doubts
Attitude examples	Willing to experiment with and develop new forms and formats for offering guidance and support

Domain C: Operational Competences 2/3

Competence Area	8. Delivering innovative programmes
Competence title	8.1 Accessibility and inclusion
Competence description	Ensure accessibility to learning and development resources and activities, for all young people, including those with complex needs
Knowledge examples	Understands young peoples' expectations, abilities, uses and misconceptions, as well as contextual, physical or cognitive constraints to their involvement in learning and development programmes
Skills examples	Able to consider and respond to potential accessibility issues when selecting, modifying or creating learning resources and seeks to provide alternative or compensatory tools or approaches
Attitude examples	Sensitive to different needs and capabilities of young people

Competence Area	8. Delivering innovative programmes
Competence title	8.2 Actively engaging young people
Competence description	Knowing how to attract and retain 'hard to reach' young people to participate in learning and development programmes
Knowledge examples	Understands the barriers that need to be overcome to engage hard to reach young people in a programme
Skills examples	Uses a range of 'hooks' to create a relevant, rich and effective learning environment, e.g. by addressing different sensory channels, learning styles and strategies
Attitude examples	Open-ness to new, real-world contexts, which involve young people themselves in hands-on activities

Competence Area	8. Delivering innovative programmes
Competence title	8.3 Choosing the right mix
Competence description	Combining different delivery platforms, content and activities, including outdoor and cultural activities to deliver innovative learning and development programmes
Knowledge examples	Knows the physical and mental health benefits for young people realised through participating in outdoor activities
Skills examples	Ability to design and implement an extra-curricular cultural activity
Attitude examples	Sensitive to the importance of eco-awareness and sustainability values in shaping young peoples' future

Domain C: Operational Competences 3/3

Competence Area	9. Working with digital tools
Competence title	9.1 Understanding and guiding young people's on-line lives
Competence description	Understand and keep up to date with the online behaviours of young people and support them in maximizing the benefits of digital technologies in their lives
Knowledge examples	Knows which social media are currently used by young people and under which circumstances
Skills examples	Guides young people in respecting behavioural norms, appropriately selecting communication strategies and channels, and being aware of cultural and social diversity in digital environments
Attitude examples	Willingness to explore new online trends and behaviours

Competence Area	9. Working with digital tools
Competence title	9.2 Online safety, security and responsible use
Competence description	Take measures to ensure young peoples' physical, psychological and social wellbeing online and support them to manage risks and use digital technologies safely and responsibly
Knowledge examples	Is aware of the main risks and risk-taking behaviours that affect young peoples' lives online
Skills examples	Develops and implements strategies to effectively prevent, identify and respond to digital behaviour that negatively affects young peoples' health and wellbeing (e.g. trolling)
Attitude examples	Responsible attitude to the use of digital technologies

Competence Area	9. Working with digital tools
Competence title	9.3 Digital content creation and use for empowerment
Competence description	To incorporate learning and development activities in youth work which require learners to express themselves through digital means, and to modify and create digital content in different formats.
Knowledge examples	Knows how to support young people to express themselves through digital means, and to modify and create digital content in different formats
Skills examples	Implements development activities in which young people use digital technologies to express themselves and produce digital content, e.g. in the form of text, photos, other images, videos
Attitude examples	Boldness in using experimental and disruptive digital tools to empower young people



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