

# Report

## IO1 - Building Bridges - Potentials & Tools

### 1/ Information about your organisation

How it is structured (local and/or, regional and/or national, and/or European)?  
Who from which level is involved in the project?

**GIONET** is an association committed in the improvement of young people's life, promoting social inclusion opportunities. It is present at national level through its own members from 4 different Italian regions:

- Emilia Romagna: CEFAL, CIOFS,
- Veneto/Emilia Romagna: SCUOLA CENTRALE FORMAZIONE
- Toscana: ZEFIRO
- Marche: COOSS
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At European level, GIONET is an associate member of the YES Forum Network.

### 2/ In which situations have you observed some difficulties in the cooperation or communication between Juniors and Seniors?

Level of work with young people:

Junior educators better understand the youth communication styles, they are more familiar to myths, habits and ways of being of young people, so in some situations they can understand the real users' needs better than their Senior colleagues.

Level of youth workers:

In terms of communication skills, Juniors appear much more competent than Seniors in handling digital tools and social media, but it also makes them less agile in managing face to face relationships, particularly with high-positioned roles and interlocutors.

In terms of coordination skills, Juniors have some difficulties in leading groups of young people, as they lack the necessary experience to properly face possible conflicts or specific situations. A mentor/tutor siding them is crucial in these contexts.

Besides, it often happens that Juniors do not clearly see what the consequences of their actions can be, lacking a holistic perspective. They are often idealists and dream to change things, but they sometimes overestimate their power and make mistakes.

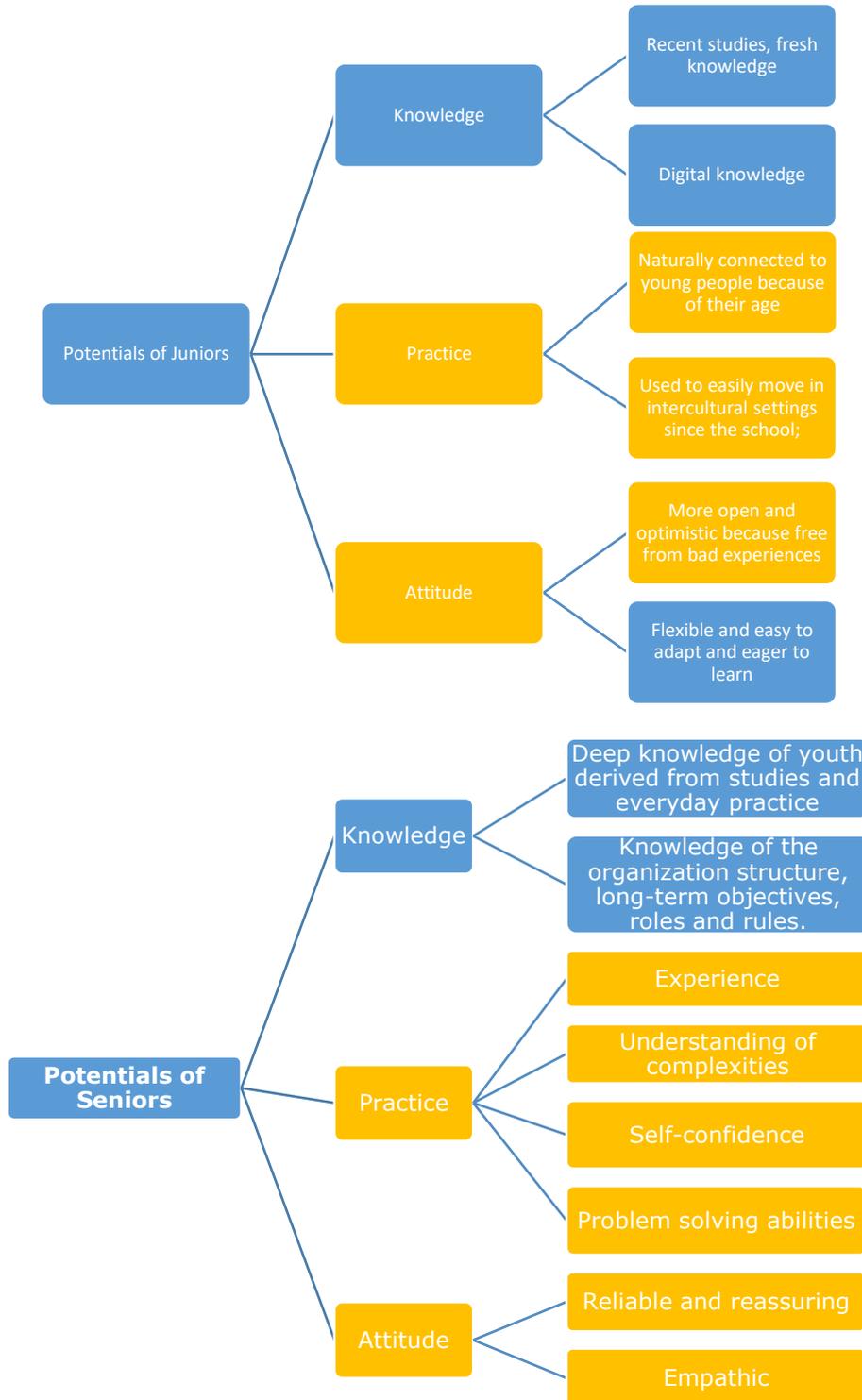
Level of organisation:

Seniors have undoubtedly a holistic knowledge of the organization and a wide understanding of its dynamics, complexities and functioning, which allows them to make proper decisions and limit possible damages and risks. On the other, this knowledge can bring them to follow a one-way approach to problems, which Juniors can help to widen with their fresh and unbiased ideas. This is why the intergenerational exchange, communication and cooperation should be encouraged, to become a mainstreamed practice within organizations.

### 3/ Potential map of Juniors and Seniors

One map / target group (J & S)

Explicit and tacit strength can be color highlighted



## 4/ Optimisation of communication and cooperation between the Juniors and Seniors

How could you optimise the communication and cooperation between the Juniors & Seniors?

Which methods are useful

### Informal:

- Learning by doing allows you to make mistake and learn from them, either by yourself or with the help of more experienced colleagues;
- Natural transfer, which consists in the creation of informal occasions for dialogue and observation;
- Dialogue and observation necessary for a good transfer of skills.

### Formal:

- Periodic meetings among colleagues, to discuss problems and possible solutions;
- Formal moments of transfer of information in both directions, identifying which competences are being transferred;
- Mentoring and senior's supervision;
- Formal training in methods and approaches used within the organization and learning by the operative modalities of other organizations.

## 5/ Impact and Recommendation

Which impact have you observed and which recommendations could you make?

During this first phase of the project, the observed impact is limited to a small sample of beneficiaries, mainly colleagues (both junior and senior) informally involved in the analysis of the dynamics interesting specific skills and their transfer between different generations.

The impact has been wider for those participating to TC1, as the workshop allowed a deeper discussion on the enquired topics and proposed activities tailored to the identification of effective methods and good practices.

Consequently, the suggestion is to promote thematic and collaborative events (as workshops are), when a specific issue needs exploration and analysis: common activities, co-creation events and discussion can generate unexpected value and suggest solutions to specific problems interesting the organization as a whole.

### Level of work with young people

Emotional distance is very important: a border has to be established between educator and the young person they work with and for, and the junior has to learn how to reach a balance between empathy and professional relationship.

### Level of youth workers

- Juniors' digital skills are acknowledged: nonetheless, it has to be given the right weight to digital skills, as the youth work requires personal and face-to-face relationships, the capacity to listen and to identify the real needs, which cannot be accomplished through digital tools.
- Flexibility and adaptability are very important, because frequent changes occur in the social field and in the users' needs. If not flexible, and educator/social worker risks the burn-out. Teaching juniors to be flexible is a fundamental aspect.

#### Level of organisation

- Experience in the field is important, but it is equally essential to have a theoretical basis on the approach to work, the organization objectives and policies.
- Theory and practice should never be split: they should always be interconnected.

## 6/ Process during the IO 1 (working group of the partner)

What was your approach, how did you proceed to achieve this result?

Before the workshop, the Italian team exchanged ideas on the process, methods and approaches to be proposed at TC1. It mainly occurred among the members of GIONET, which required the involvement of the different member organizations staff (mainly COOSS, Zefiro and SCF). Periodic online meetings were organized to structure the workshop, with a view to the results to be achieved. It was during these meetings that the idea of proposing a questionnaire emerged: asking the same questions to a given number of Junior and Senior youth workers in different countries, would have ensured the possibility to compare data, to identify differences and similarities and to facilitate the work of the IOs to come. The proposal was welcome by the partner and the questionnaire co-creation became one of the activities proposed during the TC1 in Bologna.

After the workshop, the team shared the workshop preliminary results with other persons working in different youth social fields, and some suggestions were collected, which are reported in chapter 5.