



# BRIDGE

Building Bridges –  
Potentials & Tools  
Framework concept



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## Part 1

### Framework concept, Building Bridges – Potentials & Tools

# How to build a bridge between generations?

Younger and more experienced professionals have different approaches and ways of thinking in their work and this can also lead to conflicts. How can we deal with this, find a way to work together constructively? How can we raise the awareness about this issue? What are potentials of the Juniors and Seniors?

It is very advisable to know what makes my younger or my older colleague tick and to know what makes him tick just that the way he does.

We have developed this framework concept from the results of this process. All methods presented were developed and applied in the BRIDGE project. Each partner has developed and applied their own methods; thus, all partners have worked with different methods.

In the framework concept you will find methods to:

- raise awareness for the issue and strengths and weaknesses of both generations,
- find out the potentials of both generations.
- and visualise the findings with a potential map.

#### Please note:

**What we present here is a selection of methods that we find interesting for the whole process. After presenting the methods, we give you examples of some results. These are the results of the individually used methods and should not be generalised or understood as representative. That means they only serve as an example, nothing more. Everybody else will certainly come to different results.**

With this framework we would like to support organisations who work with young people in the youth, social field and education, vocational training to deal with these questions and to find ways for good quality youth work for all generations. How can one find a good way to reach that aim? The answer is as simple as complex: By building a bridge between younger (Junior) and “older”, more experienced (Senior) youth workers.

## A) Objectives

If you want to deal with the intergenerational issue and build a bridge between the generations, we recommend you to define some objectives.

The 1<sup>st</sup> objective is to raise the awareness of youth workers on the issue, as it is not necessarily self-evident that the generational issue can have an impact on the work of youth workers. For this, we suggest that you reflect on strengths and potentials of Juniors and Seniors in several steps. This will provide you with a wide range of information and insights.

The 2<sup>nd</sup> objective of the working process is to cluster these results and visualise them with the help of the knowledge map. You can find the description of what a knowledge map is on page 20.

Finally, we will look at the 3<sup>rd</sup> objective to improve communication and cooperation between the generations: What and how can one generation learn from the other?

Or briefly:

- Raise awareness for intergenerational issue
- Overview of the potentials of Juniors and Seniors with a potential (knowledge) map
- Try to learn from each other.

The aim is to build a bridge between Juniors and Seniors: to listen to the perspective of the other generation, to understand it and to be able to deal with it. This promotes communication and cooperation between youth workers and thus provides good services for the young people they work for or with.

## B) Framework

### 1. Target group

To avoid ambiguity, it is important to define from the very beginning what Junior and Senior means. After numerous discussions, we agreed on the following:

- Juniors = less than 10 years of experience in the field of youth work
- Seniors = more than 10 years of experience in the field of youth work.

You could for example form a working group with Juniors and Seniors who work directly with the target group (young people). It is also quite enriching to have management staff with youth work experience participating, as they have an overview of structure and work processes of the organisation.

There are various possibilities of how to compose the working groups:

- Juniors and Seniors can work together in the same team or centre – and they can just as good don't know each other. They can work in the same work field – or not.
- Working with tandems, i.e. Juniors and Seniors who already work together on a daily basis, helps to go even deeper. This is because they can, in addition to the working group meetings, further exchange, reflect on the topic and their experiences throughout the working process in light of their daily collaboration. Moreover, they can directly implement their experiences as both are sensitised for the topic.

The setting up a working group with youth workers from the same team can additionally enable a check-up of each individual's potentials and the way how each team works. All methods can be used regardless of how the working groups are composed.

## 2. Meetings

Regular meetings with the working group are preferable. We recommend 5-6 meetings à 2 hours within 6 months, depending on the resources of the youth workers or the organisation. The meetings can be held face-to-face or digital. To avoid spilling over into other topics, we recommend to define a specific topic for each meeting.

## 3. Thematic implementation

Depending on the composition of the working group and the organisations objectives, different approaches are possible, e.g.:

- Open approach with Juniors and Seniors that are not working in the same field
- Teams working in the same field
- Focus on a specific topic (e.g. introduction of new junior staff, page 26)

## C) Implementation

Our recommendation is to use different methods with different questions and different perspectives. Thus you will be able to shed light on the topic from many perspectives. In this concept you will find a variety of methods that we have used in the BRIDGE project.

### 1. Getting into the topic

#### 1.1 Preparing yourself by asking the right questions

First of all, we recommend that you start well prepared (in terms of content). The following guiding questions are helpful:

- In which work-related situations have you experienced differences between the generations?  
E.g. between younger and more experienced colleagues.
- Have you already experienced work-related misunderstandings due to generation?  
E.g. between younger and experienced colleagues.

#### 1.2 Getting to know each other

What do we know? A very general and broad question that is not easy to answer. Because knowledge includes skills, knowledge, qualifications and personal or social competences.

##### Method:

At this point, the participants' entire knowledge in a professional or personal sense, is taken into consideration. This means: the subjective perspective is explicitly asked for. You could select the following focuses:

- Imprinting und experiences: What has shaped me, what are my experiences?
- Skills (acquired and learned)?
- Abilities (that we have)?
- Learning objectives (optional)?

##### Proceedings:

- Everybody reflects these issues on his own
- The results are discussed in tandems (junior-senior)
- The results are compiled and discussed in the working group.

This method serves as an introduction to the topic. It is not meant to highlight differences in knowledge between the generations. However, it is very valuable for the further working process. It helps to become familiar with knowledge in general, and where we got it from.

And it also serves the aim to get to know each other better, to identify differences and similarities and to exchange about them. Furthermore, it is helpful as the participants learn to listen to each other and to build understanding for the other generation. Finally, it creates confidence in the working group. Please keep in mind that this exercise can be quite subjective instead of objective or professional.

#### Example "Getting to know each other"

Imprinting + Experiences		Skills (acquired and learned)		Abilities (that we have)		Learning objectives	
Junior	Senior	Junior	Senior	Junior	Senior	Junior	Senior
Generation Y	Trade Union	Radicalisation prevention	Set up a centre	Creativity	Net-working	Learning from the "older" generation	Learning from Juniors
Equal treatment of women	Sport club	Sensitive language	Different fields of work	Empathy	Empathy	When do I need support?	Handing over, being able to trust
Volunteering	Cooperation with justice	Dance	Creating synergies	Adaptability	Constructive attitude	Strengthen self-confidence	Being able to sit back

### 1.3 Knowledge cluster

There are different approaches to elicit and cluster knowledge of youth workers. Here are some possibilities:

#### Job-oriented knowledge:

- Knowledge
- Attitude
- Practice

#### Life-oriented knowledge:

- Imprinting und experiences: What has shaped me, what are my experiences?
- Skills (acquired and learned)
- Abilities (that we have)
- Learning objectives (optional)

#### Essential life skills according to the World Health Organisation (WHO) are:

- Communication and interpersonal skills
- Decision-making and problem solving
- Creative thinking and critical thinking
- Self-awareness and empathy (emotional intelligence)
- Assertiveness, self-control
- Resilience (treat all problems as opportunities)

#### Explicit - tacit:

- Explicit knowledge is documented knowledge that is tangible for others, e.g. in the form of work instructions, documented processes, reports or drawings.
- The term „tacit knowledge“, on the other hand, refers to knowledge that is often referred to as experiential knowledge.

### 1.4 Input

No matter what approach you choose, it is interesting to organise an external input. This may come from the field of organisational development or may be a more scientific input on youth work, e.g. on knowledge, skills, on the training of professionals that has changed or on the structure of youth work in your country.

## 2. Objective 1: Raising awareness for intergenerational issues

What are potentials or strengths of the Juniors and Seniors and what knowledge do they have? Are there significant differences between the generations? If so, where and on which topics is that? The following methods will help you to find out.

### 2.1 Strengths of Juniors and Seniors

At this point of the process the aim is to collect and cluster the strengths of both generations.

Both generations are supposed to answer the following questions:

- What are the strengths of the Juniors?
- What are the strengths of the Seniors?

### Method 1: Strengths

Participants indicate individually the perceived strengths of Juniors and Seniors, write them down on post-its and put them on a white poster. In a next step, the participants try to group the strengths in “clusters”.

#### Example “Strengths of Juniors and Seniors”

Strengths of Juniors	
<b>Digital</b>	Digital competences, socialised in a digital global word
<b>Enthusiasm</b>	Creativity, curiosity, fresh spirit, thirsting for knowledge, ready to take risks, not conservative
<b>New</b>	Perspectives, thinking outside the box, open-minded, open for new working methods, curiosity, creativity, not biased, updated education
<b>Flexibility</b>	Flexibility, empathy, fresh eyes, familiar with new techniques, more efficient, more up to date with topics and methods, wider range of methods
<b>Peer-to-peer</b>	Shared experiences with youth, digital skills, speaking the same/ similar language with young people, closer to target group

Strengths of Seniors	
<b>Experience</b>	Experienced, long-term thinking, resource-oriented, result-oriented, realistic work approach, wisdom, networking, perceived authority, diplomacy, self-assured, dare to make decisions, being trusted, “mother/father” figures for young people
<b>Knowledge</b>	Knowledge of their own organisation, familiar with structures, workflow, knowledge about other organisations
<b>Resilience</b>	Serenity, relaxed, awareness of works dynamics, capacity to detect problems quickly, capable to face stressful situations
<b>Networking</b>	Methods, contacts, organisational understanding, phone communication, personal contact very important, creativity and imagination important
<b>Peer-to-peer</b>	Shared experiences with youth, digital skills, speaking the same/ similar language with young people, closer to target group

**Method 2: Strengths and weaknesses**

Each participant gets a total of 4 post-its with different colours. The colours refer to the questions. The participants have one minute per post-it, without exchanging with the others. All participants answer all questions, one post-it per question.

The four questions are:

- What are 5 strengths of Juniors?
- What are 5 weaknesses of Seniors?
- What are 5 strengths of Seniors?
- What are 5 weaknesses of Juniors?

The results are compiled on a flipchart and discussed later on.

**Example “Strengths and weaknesses of Juniors and Seniors”**

Strengths of Juniors	Weaknesses of Seniors	Strengths of Seniors	Weaknesses of Juniors
New view	Severe	Realistic approach	Academic
Creativity	Arrogant	Empathy	Complaining
Motivation	Not in the age-group	Security	Low self-confidence
More energy	Authoritarian	Experience	Hesitant
Thirsting for knowledge	Obstinate	Authenticity	Absent

**2.2 What are the differences between Juniors and Seniors?**

To deepen the process, it is recommended to differentiate the potentials or strengths according to both perspectives (reflection about myself and about the other generation). This method is just doing that: It delivers the answers differentiated according to the perspectives. This leads to a deeper exchange between the participants and to a very detailed overview.

We recommend two approaches:

- Use the method with given possible answers
- Use the method with open possible answers.

**Possible answers are given:**

The options to answer can be elicited by the working group itself. Various options to categorise can be found on page 8. Regardless of the possible answers given, the steps of the exercise remain the same as in methods explained before:

- Everybody reflects these issues on his own
- The results are discussed in tandems (one Junior and one Senior)
- The results are compiled and discussed in the working group.

**Example:**

These are the results of our online questionnaire. The youth workers (Juniors and Seniors) were asked to rate their own and the other generation’s essential life skills (according to the WHO) from “not at all” to “completely”. With this method we can cluster the results according to generations but also according to perspectives (own perspective, and how the other generation is seen). More information about the online questionnaire as method can be found on page 19.

In the following tables, the answers “strongly” and “completely” were put together. What does the percentage mean? For example, 67% of the Juniors think that they are completely or strongly able in as far as “Decision and problem solving” are concerned, whereas only 45% of the Seniors think that the Juniors are completely or strongly able in the field of “Decision and problem solving”.

Strengths of Juniors	Junior’s perspective	Senior’s perspective
Decision making and problem solving	67%	45%
Assertiveness and self-control	61%	46%
Resilience	55%	52%
Self-awareness, empathy	87%	51%
Communication, interpersonal skills	74%	53%
Creative and critical thinking	65%	58%

Strengths of Seniors	Senior’s perspective	Junior’s perspective
Decision making and problem solving	85%	67%
Assertiveness and self-control	77%	68%
Resilience	82%	57%
Self-awareness, empathy	93%	70%
Communication, interpersonal skills	92%	69%
Creative and critical thinking	81%	61%

**Answers are open:**

Without a given option, it is much more difficult to answer the question: „What are the potentials of Juniors and Seniors?“ Where, how do we start? You have to decide if you want to offer certain focal points.

For example, concerning:

- Knowledge, Attitude, Practice
- Level of work with young people, colleagues, and on the organisational level.

Regardless of the focus participants can deal with the questions in several ways:

- Everybody reflects these issues on his own
- The results are discussed in tandems (one Junior and one Senior)
- The results are compiled and discussed in the working group.

This exercise helps to non-judgingly highlight the differences between the generations. And it also:

- Gives an overview of the potentials and differences of the two generations
- Helps us to better get to know the potentials of the two generations.

**Example “Potentials of Juniors and Seniors: own perception and perception about the other generation”**

Juniors		Seniors	
Own perception	How they perceive the Seniors	Own perception	How they perceive the Juniors
<b>Organisation level</b>			
Distance to employer and work	Identification with employer	Identification with employer	Distanced and critical
Informal approach to hierarchy		Formal handling to the hierarchy	
<b>Work level</b>			
No working routine, work processes are questioned	Knowledge about work process	Knowledge about the organisation, structure, work process	Work process not well known
Digital communication	Oral communication	Oral communication	Informal and written communication
Decisions are easily made, can be revised		Decisions are made after an overview of the consequences	
<b>Work with target group</b>			
Proximity to the target group	Distance to the target group	Distance to the target group	Proximity to the target group
<b>Work life balance</b>			
Private life is important		Professional life is important	
<b>Current topics of the society</b>			
Easy handling of personal data		Careful handling of personal data	
Diversity (gender) is one of the topics of the junior generations		Difficulty in dealing with social changes	
<b>Other</b>			
Critical attitude of Generation Y		Holistic approach	

### 3. Objective 2: Potential maps

Potential maps or knowledge maps are graphical representations of knowledge in organisations. They are used in knowledge management or in organisational development and give an overview of the knowledge of an organisation. According to the Free University of Berlin, they are used "for the reflection and transfer of knowledge, for the introduction of new employees or for the development of specialists and managers"<sup>3</sup>.

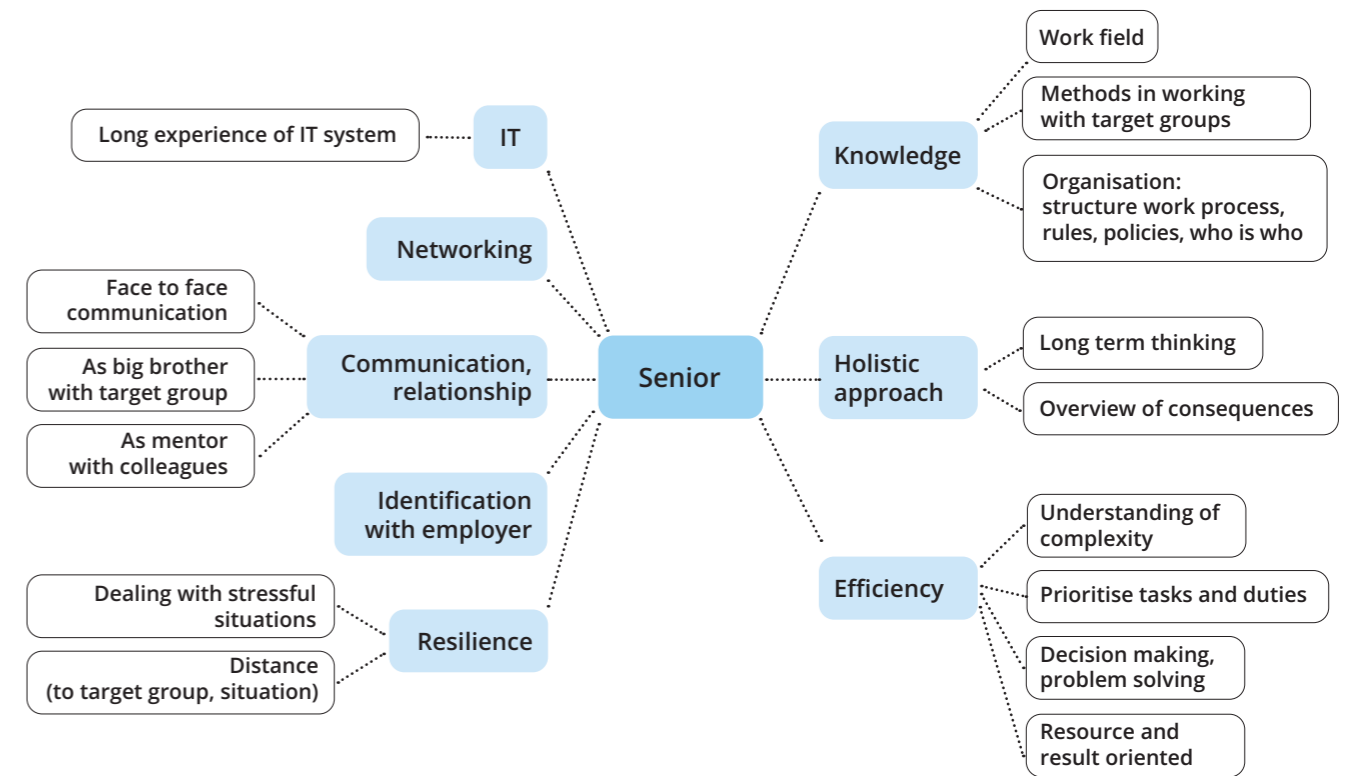
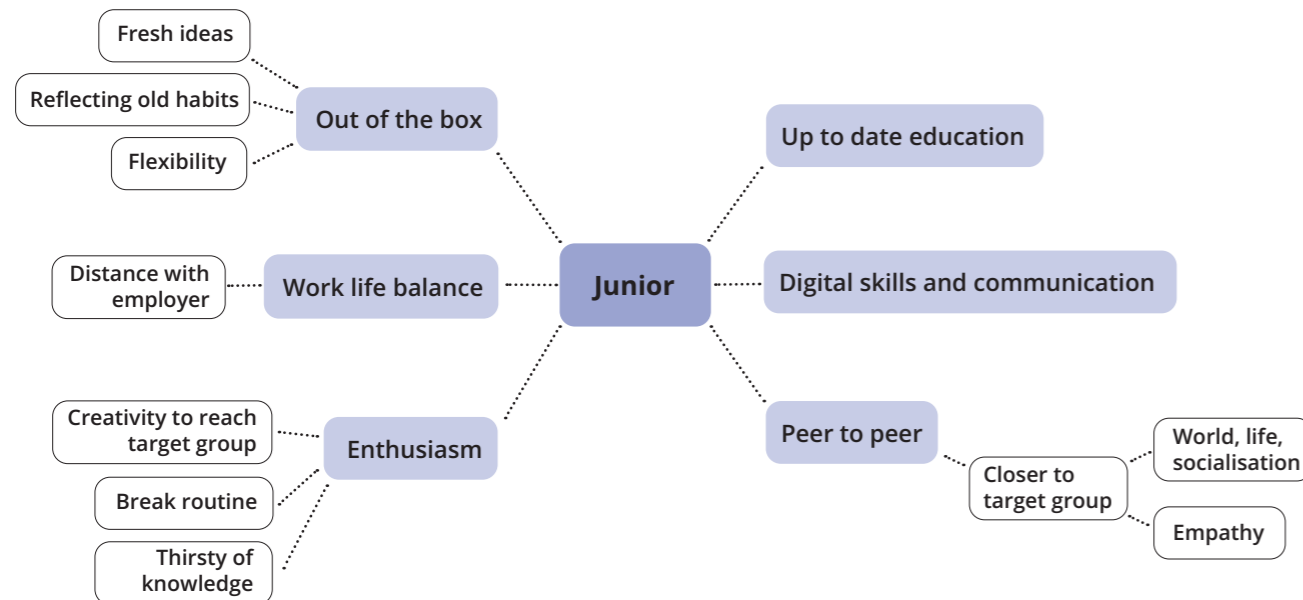
There is not ONE knowledge map, as it is adapted e.g. to the needs of the organisation (or a department or team) or a working field.

It is very advisable to develop different maps, with different focuses, such as:

- Juniors, Seniors
- Knowledge, attitude, practice
- Level of work with target group, work with colleagues or level of organisation
- Explicit, tacit knowledge.

The results of objective 1 „Raising awareness of intergenerational issues“ serve as a basis for developing a potential map.

#### Example "Potential map with the focus on Juniors and Seniors"



Further examples with other focuses can be found in the annex pages 3-5:

- Knowledge, attitude, practice,
- Work with target group, work with colleagues,
- Skills (communication).

### 4. Objective 3: Learning from each other

As we have seen, Seniors and Juniors have different potentials. How can we build a bridge between the generations so that they learn from each other, about each other and with each other? How can we improve cooperation and communication between the generations to avoid misunderstandings or bad moods in teams?

To improve cooperation, it is helpful to know:

- What would I like to learn from or share with the other generation?
- How can this knowledge transfer take place?
- Level of work with target group, work with colleagues or level of organisation
- Explicit, tacit knowledge.

#### 4.1 What can we learn from each other?

Guiding questions can be:

- What do I want to learn from the other generation?
- What do I think is important to share with the other generation?

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.fu-berlin.de/sites/abt-1/referate/1c/personalentwicklung/wissen-weitergeben/wissenslandkarten/index.html>



The participants can deal with the questions in several steps:

- Everybody reflects these issues on his own
- The results are discussed in tandems (one Junior and one Senior)
- The results are compiled and discussed in the working group.

You can find various ways of clustering knowledge on page 8.

### Example „What can we learn from each other?“

Juniors		Seniors	
Learn from Seniors	Share with Seniors	Learn from Juniors	Share with Juniors
<b>Relationship with employer</b>			
Create opportunities for identification with the employer	Understanding the criticism of the Juniors	Allow more distance to the employer	Allow meaning of identification with employer
Learning to trust the relationship between employee and employer (reliability)	Healthy relationship, my employer is not my friend	Employer is not necessarily my friend, more distance to the employer	Understand, appreciate the reasons for this relationship
<b>Work level</b>			
Recognise benefit and sense of the processes, structures	Allow changes of processes	Allow and accept questions and criticism	Security through existing processes and structures
Get to know work processes and workflow -> fewer errors	Understand why the work processes and workflow are the way they are	Work processes and workflow process is useful but perhaps can be improved; for this a neutral view is important.	Learn about the organisation (structure, process, overarching knowledge)
Oral communication	Informal expression is not impolite	Informal expression is not impolite	Try the oral communication
<b>Work with target group</b>			
Reflect on my own role as a professional youth worker, allow distance to the target group	Recognise and allow closeness despite distance	Impartiality in dealing with the target group	Act as a role model

### 4.2 How can we learn from each other?

Juniors and Seniors complement each other in their potentials. How can they learn from each other? Which methods are suitable for knowledge transfer?

In principle, team-building methods are quite suitable. Apart from team building, other methods (formal and informal) have a positive impact to specifically address the „intergenerational“ issue. The difference between formal and informal is not always clear. For some, evaluation/feedback can be informal, but if it is used systematically by the organisation, then it is more formal. The distinction lies in whether it is embedded in the organisation and its work processes.

#### Method:

In a brainstorming session, the participants in the working group:

- Discuss which methods are suitable?
- Cluster results according to formal and informal methods.

#### Example:

You can find the results of the online questionnaire here.

Both Juniors and Seniors were asked about the most effective formal and informal methods to transfer skills to and from the other generation, and they were asked to choose the 3 most effective methods. As the respondents chose more than one option, the percentage results do not add up to 100%. One interpretation of the results is that 74% of the Juniors think that “learning by doing” is one of the most effective informal methods.

### Informal Methods

Figure 1: Informal Methods of Skills Transfer (Junior's Perspective)

What are the most effective **informal methods** to transfer skills to (or acquire skills from) a Senior in your experience?

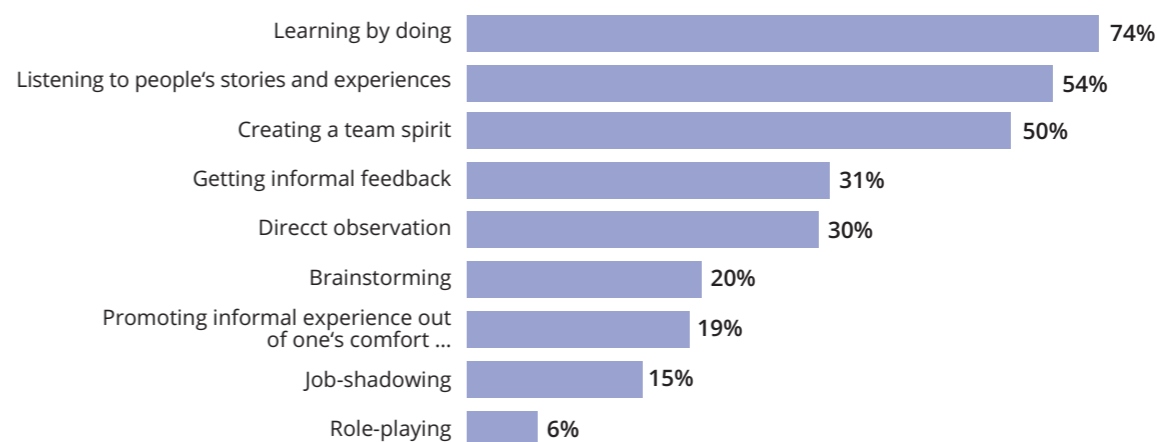
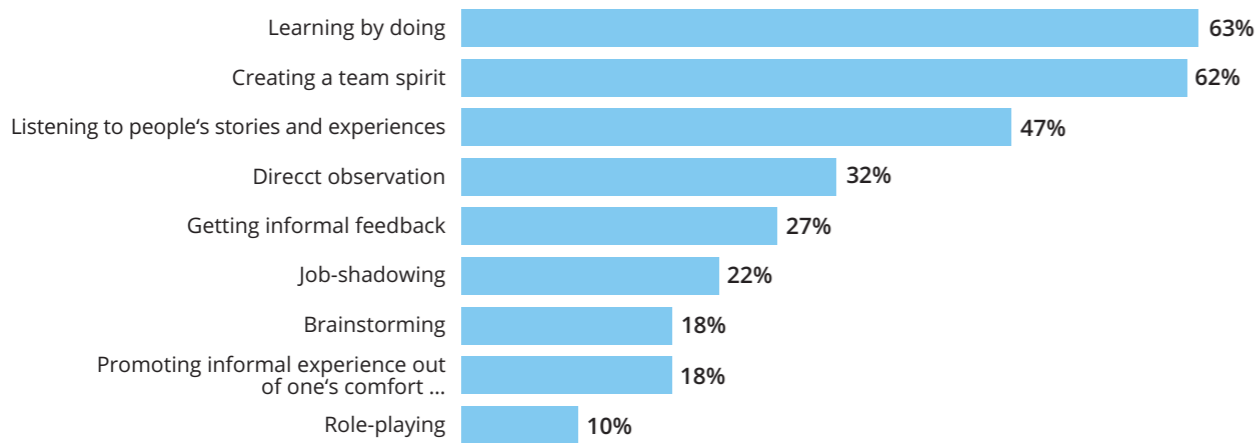


Figure 2: Informal Methods of Skills Transfer (Seniors' Perspective)

What are the most effective **informal methods** to transfer skills to (or acquire skills from) a Junior in your experience?



## Formal Methods

Figure 3: Formal Methods of Skills Transfer (Junior's Perspective)

What are the most effective **formal methods** to transfer skills to (or acquire skills from) a Senior in your experience?

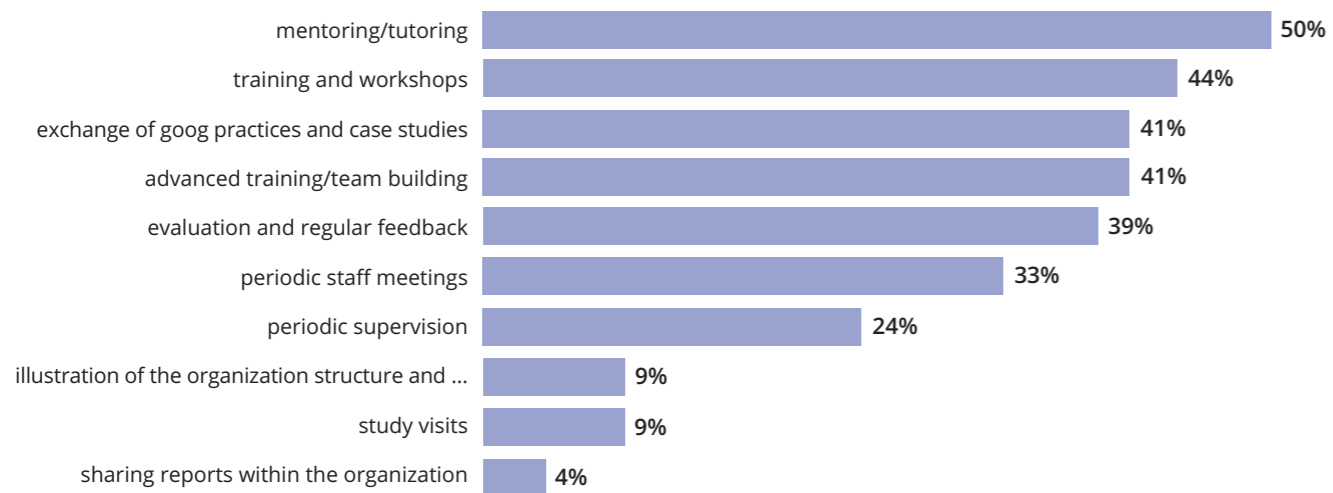
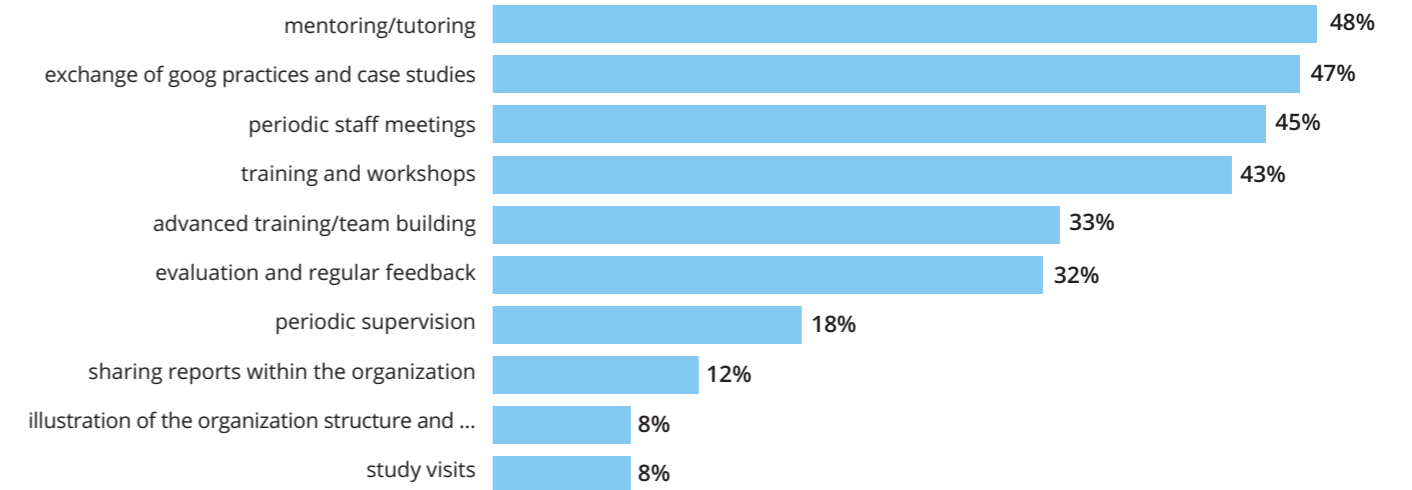


Figure 4: Formal Methods of Skills Transfer (Senior's Perspective)

What are the most effective **formal methods** to transfer skills to (or acquire skills from) a Junior in your experience?



In the second report of the BRIDGE project, "Crossing Bridges - Transfer & Anchor", we present methods for knowledge transfer and knowledge management.

## 5. Online questionnaire

If you want to get more feedback from youth workers on this issue so that the results are more „evidence-based“ and systematic, you can also conduct a qualitative and/or quantitative survey within your organisation. This will provide you with additional information from youth workers and also with feedback from youth workers who are not yet aware of the issue. Furthermore, you can compare or cluster the data in a simple way, e.g. by generation (e.g. potentials of Juniors), by perspective (e.g. potentials of Juniors according to Seniors) or by item (potentials).

In the framework of the BRIDGE project, we conducted an online questionnaire. The questionnaire was developed during a European workshop with Juniors and Seniors. We decided to use a quantitative method to analyse the results. For a systematic and methodical quantitative approach, the questionnaire was developed in cooperation with a sociologist. More expertise was needed for the technical implementation, as the survey was online, and for the analysis of the results.

For this questionnaire we had two focuses:

- Skills (6 essential life skills according to the World Health Organisation - WHO)
- Methods to transfer skills (formal and informal).

Possible answers were given. Depending on the question, respondents could either give a rating to the skills (from “not at all” to “completely” over “don’t know”) or choose the three most effective methods to transfer skills. Most of the results of the analysis are included in this framework as examples.

You can find the questionnaire in the annex pages 6-12.

#### *Example of results*

According to our survey, Seniors evaluate their skills significantly more positively than they evaluate Juniors’ skills. So, in the Seniors’ perspective, their own skills all are better than those of the Juniors. However, Juniors differentiate between the skills and evaluate themselves and Senior’s accordingly. Juniors evaluate Seniors much better than themselves for the following skills: “Decision-making and problem solving”, “Assertiveness, self-control” and “Resilience”. On the other hand, they evaluate themselves more positively than the Seniors for the following skills: “Self-awareness and empathy”, “Communication and interpersonal skill” and “Creative and critical thinking”. However, the differences in percentage points are not very high. You can find the results in detail on page 11.

When it comes to informal methods to transfer skills to and from the other generation, both groups find the same 3 methods to be most effective: “Learning by doing”, “Creating a team spirit” and “Listening to people’s stories and experiences”. However, for Seniors “Creating a team spirit” is more effective than “Listening to people’s stories and experiences”.

Concerning the formal methods, Juniors think that “Mentoring/tutoring”, “Training and workshops”, “Advanced training/team building” and “Exchange of good practices and case studies” are the most effective. On the other hand, Seniors consider “Mentoring/tutoring”, “Exchange of good practices and case studies” and “Periodic staff meetings” to be most effective. You can find the results in detail on pages 17-19.

## 6. Focus on the introduction of new young youth workers

When considering potentials and differences between Juniors and Seniors, one also thinks about the introduction of the new young youth workers. During the introduction, Juniors are very often taught:

- Tasks
- Usage of IT equipment
- Filing of documents
- Data protection
- Workflows.

But what about the way we want to work together?

With the intergenerational issue, one can focus on the introduction of the new young employees

### **6.1 Aim of the introduction**

- Improve the process of introduction of new employees
- Develop the role of mentors

### **6.2 Implementation**

Develop a template for introduction and mentorship. Juniors and Seniors take a close look at the organisations current documents and update them. Both perspectives are considered:

- Seniors perspective: what should the Junior know and learn?
- Juniors perspective: what does the Junior want or need to learn?

This leads to an exchange where Juniors and Seniors learn about each other and the other generations perspective. One can also try to find out how to keep the knowledge of the Seniors who will soon retire in the organisation.

#### *Example*

One partner realised that there was room for improvement in how a new employee is introduced at the workplace. The organisation also lacked a structured way to keep the competence of senior staff who is about to retire within the organisation.

During a workshop, the partner identified some areas to work with:

- Improve the introduction of a new employee
- Find structures for transferring knowledge and competence from Senior to Junior staff
- Be more attentive for the new knowledge and competence a Junior staff could bring into the organisation.

Two groups were working on these topics in several meetings, one Senior and one Junior staff in each group, developing the documents for introduction and mentorship. The mentor will support the new employee in four fields:

- Role related
- Task related
- Structure
- Relation based.

New employees were asked to share their points of view concerning the introduction plan. Both parts, the introduction plan and the mentorship, are anchored at management level. The documents are regularly checked and adapted. In the annex (page 13), you can find the template for mentorship.

## D) Learning outcomes

The BRIDGE-project was a very exciting process for all the partners and the youth workers involved and has changed a lot for the Juniors and Seniors. They benefited hugely as they:

- Learned to listen more attentively to younger or older colleagues and be less biased than before,
- Learned to question the way how one accompanies a young person,
- Learned to see the importance of having mentorships within teams,
- Carry out an analysis of the team,
- Became aware of the necessity to have the management backing up the process,
- Observed an increased awareness of how important it is to preserve the know-how within the organisation.

“The Bridge project has risen the important question of preserving knowledge, experience and expertise in our organisation” said one youth worker involved in the project. Knowledge Management is the theme of the second part of the BRIDGE project, „Crossing Bridges - Transfer & Anchor “.

We do have a lot of information now. What are we going to do with it?

The main question is: What can I do and deduce with all this information for ...?

- ... the work with the target group,
- ... the work among colleagues,
- ... the organisation, as employees.

You will find more information in yet another report of the BRIDGE project “Bridging the gap - Policy brief”.

### 1. Dealing with each other is key

Basically, what we have learned is that stigmatising one generation or the other is not very beneficial for a team. Instead it is important that we really meet and get together, as we do in international youth work, “building a bridge”. This includes:

- Exchanging opinions and experiences in order to understand the other perspective,
- Finding a solution or a compromise.

### 2. No significant differences between countries

During the whole process we observed, that there is no difference between countries. The “conflict line” lies between Juniors and Seniors, regardless of their origin or work experience. The online survey did not bring about any significant differences and thus confirmed these findings.

It might be an issue linked to language, but it just as well might not be. Working in this project for everyone means working in a foreign language, all coming from different sectors of youth work, working in different kinds of organisations (local, regional, national). It is not always easy to clearly specify one’s thoughts in detail, especially when time is limited. Thus it is not easy to grasp differences between the countries.

## 3. Similarities with the international youth work

Interestingly we observed that there are many parallels with International youth work. In the field of international cooperation, two organisations from different countries, with different languages, working methods etc. work together and develop projects together. One of the main challenges in international cooperation is, to understand communication, attitude and actions of the partner, and to communicate in a foreign language. Therefore, intercultural competences are of great importance: understanding and accepting differences and reflecting one’s own identity or culture.

We find a very similar situation in our project, the difference being that instead of working with another country, we work with different generations and therefore with different working methods, approaches, competences, dynamics, environments, levels of knowledge, attitudes or postures, to name but a few. It is like two systems interacting with each other in the sense of systemic practice in the social work. Systemic practice seeks to make sense of the world through relationships, focusing on for example the whole family system (or friends, colleagues...) rather than on individuals.

## 4. BRIDGE as an inclusive approach

Considering different perspectives building bridges also has something of inclusion and a diversity-conscious approach. This piece of work is a very good example of an inclusive approach.

The EU Commission also puts a focus on this with the Inclusion and Diversity Strategy<sup>4</sup>, and with the Implementation guidelines<sup>5</sup> “so that difference becomes a positive source for learning rather than the cause for negative competition and prejudice”.

The bridge between generations, as inclusion, “requires a change of attitude to embrace people’s diversity and differences, instead of getting rid of them”<sup>6</sup>.

**Please access and read the Annex here:**



<sup>4</sup> Erasmus+, Inclusion and Diversity Strategy - in the field of Youth, European Commission (2014)

<sup>5</sup> Implementation guidelines, Erasmus+ and European Solidarity Corps Inclusion and Diversity Strategy, European Commission (Version 1 – 29/04/2021)

<sup>6</sup> INCLUSION FIRST, Nationale Inklusions- und Diversitätsstrategie für Erasmus+ und das Europäische Solidaritätskorps, vorgelegt von JUGEND für Europa (2018)

## Legal notice

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### **Refer to our documents:**

BRIDGE – Preface & Introduction  
Building Bridges – Potentials & Tools (Framework concept)  
Crossing Bridges – Transfer & Anchor (Handbook)  
Bridging the Gap – Policy Brief

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