COMANITY

Everything you wanted to know about COMANITY but were afraid to ask

What's in a name?

COMANITY - A 'Community Animateur' Inclusive Training programme for Youth

What's COMANITY's 'vision'?

You can get a good idea of COMANITY's 'vision' by looking at its 'Theory of Change'.

Theory of Change tells the project 'story' – from the 'presenting problem' it addresses through to the change it hopes to make on that problem at the end of the project and beyond (i.e. the project's expected 'impacts').

Connecting the presenting problem and expected impacts are:

- Activities – actions carried out by COMANITY, that lead to…….
- Outputs – things that are produced by these activities, that lead to……
- immediate outcomes - changes in awareness and knowledge, that lead to…….
- intermediate outcomes- changes in behavior and structures.

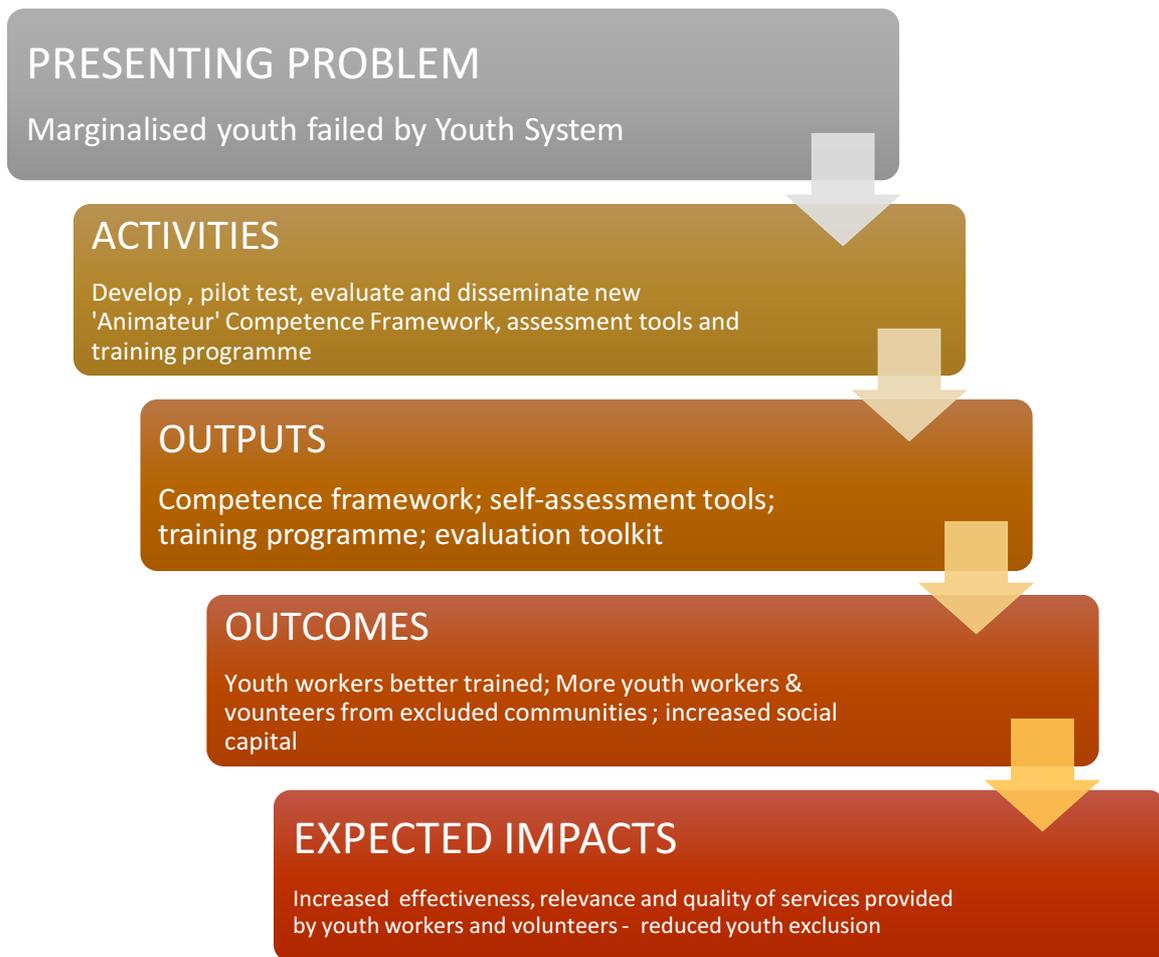Underlying this 'change journey' are 'theories' (assumptions and hypotheses), for example:

- A theory of what is causing the 'presenting problem'
- A theory of what is needed to bring about the desired solution
- Assumptions that if we take Action 'X', this will produce Output 'Y', which will then lead to Outcome 'Z'.

These theories, hypotheses and assumptions need to be tested as the project develops and, if necessary, revised in light of evaluation evidence.

A (very simplified) Theory of Change for COMANITY is presented in the Figure below. It shows:

The '***presenting problem'*** COMANITY addresses is:

The youth system is failing disadvantaged and marginalized young people. Rising youth unemployment, increasing NEET rates, loss of 'community' and its replacement by precarious on-line relationships; loss of faith in mainstream institutions and a large increase in the influx of young migrants into EU countries are fueling increased demand for youth services that can address increasingly complex, multi-dimensional issues and problems. The trouble is, as demand rises, supply of quality youth services is shrinking because of 'austerity' measures and cuts to social services.

PRESENTING PROBLEM

Marginalised youth failed by Youth System

ACTIVITIES

Develop , pilot test, evaluate and disseminate new 'Animateur' Competence Framework, assessment tools and training programme

OUTPUTS

Competence framework; self-assessment tools; training programme; evaluation toolkit

OUTCOMES

Youth workers better trained; More youth workers & vounteers from excluded communities ; increased social capital

EXPECTED IMPACTS

Increased effectiveness, relevance and quality of services provided by youth workers and volunteers - reduced youth exclusion

COMANITY's 'theory' about the *causes of this problem* is:

- In this problem context, youth services can only succeed by increasing their efficiency and effectiveness and increasing their intake of volunteers – particularly from excluded communities. But marginalised young people don't trust mainstream youth services. They don't volunteer because they don't have time, money or motivation. At the same time, youth services don't have the skills to reach out to and engage with disadvantaged youth. They know they can rely on affluent communities for volunteers, so they take this easier option. But affluent volunteers don't have the skills to engage with marginalized young people either.

COMANITY's *solution* to this problem is:

- Create a new role for youth services – the 'Community Animateur' – that bridges the gap between the mainstream system and marginalized communities. Recruit and train young people from marginalised communities to carry out this role, as well as training existing youth workers to become 'Community Animateurs'.

COMANITY's longer term *expected impacts* are:

- Increased effectiveness, relevance and quality of services provided by youth workers and volunteers and, in the long term, reduced youth exclusion

COMANITY's *immediate outcomes* are:

- An increase in youth workers' awareness of the factors preventing engagement with marginalized communities

- An increase in youth workers' competences in working with marginalized young people
- An increase in marginalized young people's awareness of the potential benefits in collaborating with youth organsiations
- An increase in their social interaction competences

COMANITY's *intermmediate outcomes* are:

- Youth workers become better at engaging with more marginalized young people
- More young people from marginalised communities become engaged in youth work – as volunteers or workers
- There is an increase in the social capital of marginalized communities.

Which 'good practices' will COMANITY use?

COMANITY is a 'Key Action 3' project. To get funded, KA3 projects are required to demonstrate potential for "disseminating and/or scaling up good practices on inclusive learning initiated in particular at local level". Two sets of good practices will be transferred into COMANITY and built on:

- Share-my-European City (SME-City)
- IGUANA

SME City - http://sharemycity.org/index.php - was funded under the 'Prevention of and Fight Against Crime' programme. It developed the concept of the 'Social Mediator' (Portieri Sociali or Social Gatekeeper) whose role is to make a bridge between young people on the margins and other community actors. SME-City developed 'disruptive' innovations aimed at encouraging different community groups - particularly the young - to collaborate in new and unfamiliar ways. One way of doing this was through programmes of events organised in settings that were normally 'off-limits'. In Perugia this entailed the 'Strani Eventi' Programme.

Perugia - Strani Eventi

In Perugia, the Municipality, working with a range of stakeholders including business, civil society, the University and youth organisations explored ways of reducing alcohol and drug-related youth anti-social behaviour. Young people worked as 'Portieri Sociali' to curate new ways of bringing together different – and disconnected – members of the community through 'Strange Events' that increased civic participation and strengthened social capital – for example "Night of the Tango'. In London, events combined entertainments (Music, Performance, Interactive Art etc), workshops, food sharing, Dance, Play and Creative workshops - and involved diverse community groups to increase mutual awareness, participation and have an impact on social cohesion

The 'Porteri Sociali' is the prototype for the Community Animateur

The second good practice incorporated in the Community Animateur programme is taken from the IGUANA project www.iguana-project.eu). IGUANA focused on modernising school systems by addressing the factors contributing to 'stuckness' and resistance to change. The foundation for the programme was a competence framework for school innovation, based on two competence domains: Emotional Intelligence competences (EI) and Organisational Intelligence competences (OI). Competence self-assessment tools were developed to enable school leaders and staff to assess their competence levels against the framework. The results of the self-assessment were integrated into a 'Competence Assessment Summary' which highlighted strengths and weaknesses in an individual's competence profile. The report was then linked to an accompanying competence development training programme individually tailored to an individual's self-assessment results. Users had access to a Content Repository of learning material categorised by the individual and organisational

competences covered in the framework and self-assessment tools. It was supported by a 'Knowledge Community' – combining on-line support (webinars; learning materials; on-line 'clinics') with off-line support (workshops, group Action Learning Sets) - to enable users to carry out assignments using their acquired competences, share their experiences and benchmark the results.

The self-assessment tools, Content Repository and Knowledge Community were incorporated within an open access on-line platform based on 'Ning'. The platform was designed with a simple user interface that allowed educators to easily click onto the two competence domains, navigate their way around the self-assessment tools and download their Competence Summary
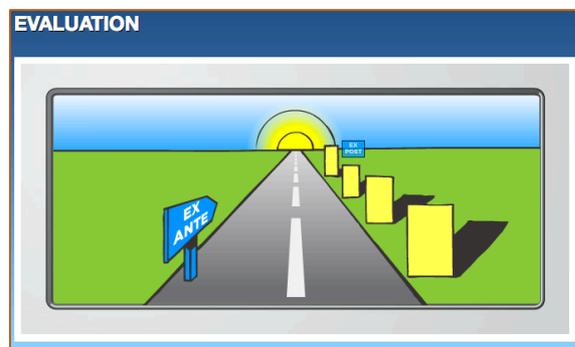
Each competence was illustrated by an animated video that explains what the competence is about and how it applies in school practice. The animation was accompanied by a voice over in English, with sub-titles for different language versions, and a text version of the voice over, scrolled on screen below the animation
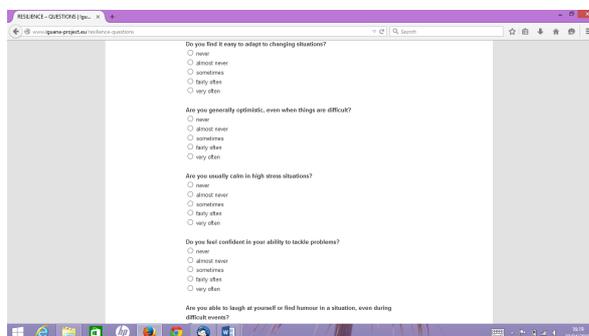
Each competence was assessed by a set of question items, using Likert scales, to enable the user to self-assess their level of competence on each EI and OI competence

An algorithm calculates an overall competence level score for each competence. The tool provides an instant summary of the score for each competence and provides recommendations for the user on the learning resources that could be accessed from the Content Repository to help improve the user competence level. It is printable and also automatically e-mailed to the user

The IGUANA competence framework, assessment tools and learning programme will form the basis for the 'Community Animateur' programme.