FRAME GANG

European Framework of Competences for Community Professionals in Gang Environments

Development of a European Competency Framework for Community Professionals working in gang related environments

www.framegang.org

Project

FRAME GANG – European Framework of Competences for Community Professionals working in Gang Environments

Partners

Fundação "O Século"	
IPS_Innovative Prison Systems	
Center for Promoting Lifelong Learning (CPIP)	
Aeropagus – Human Development and Social Integration Regional Center	
Charity and support fund "Garstycios grudas"	
PPKC – Psychological support and counselling centre	
University of Sassari (UNISS)	
ISES – Istituto Europeo per la Ricerca Socio Economica	

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Executive Summary

The European Competency Framework for Community Professionals working in gang related environments (ECF-Gang) is an evolving tool that provides a reference of 15 competences as required and applied when working in gang related environments, using a common language for competences, skills and proficiency levels that can be understood across Europe.

The ECF-Gang was developed by the partnership of FRAME GANG – European Framework of Competences for Community Professionals in Gang Environments (2015—1-PT01-KA201-013159), a project co-financed by ERASMUS+ programme (KA2 – Strategic Partnerships for adult education), under the scope of Intellectual Output 2, "Development of a European Competency Framework for Community Professionals Working in Gang Related Environments".

Led by PPKC with the support of IPS_Innovative Prison Systems, the ECF-Gang was achieved through three activities, namely: *i*) Developing a common list at partnership level, of competence areas; *ii)* Listing of reference competencies for each identified area and *iii)* Developing the common centralised framework for all the contributions of partners, in English language.

The aim of this document is to describe the ECF-Gang, providing its aims, stages of development and methodological grounding. First, we will highlight the importance of the framework, as well as the objectives that are intended to be achieved. Then, we will explain the ECF-Gang in detail and the used methodological approach for its construction. The structure of the Framework will also be presented and explanations will be given to its correct use.

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Introduction

In 2015, the project European Framework of Competences for Community Professionals in Gang Environments (FRAME GANG) was approved by the European Commission. FRAME GANG is a 3-year transnational European project, coordinated by Fundação "O Século" (Portugal) and with partner organisations from Portugal, Romania, Italy and Lithuania. The FRAME GANG project aims at fostering stability in the European local communities' context by upgrading and developing the competences in the field of "gang work". The project puts forward a work plan to develop pilot tools, materials and a training methodology that identify the competences needed, for engaging within local communities affected by gang crime, to harness their local knowledge and meaningfully increase their understanding and capacity to act in gang environments. Its main objectives are:

1. Produce current and appropriate occupation/work profiles for those working with gangs and the impact of gang crime in communities across Europe, a profile relevant within each European partner country and against which new learning outcomes can be identified.
2. Identify in each partner key sectors, organisations and job roles working with gang crime and with the impact of gang crime (police, probation, youth work, health, social services, education, communities).
3. Identify through desk and DACUM consultative research in each partner country the knowledge, skills and competences required to develop capacity and ensure improved and more successful engagements with gangs and gang members operating in order to reduce gang crime in the future.
4. Develop the European Framework of Competencies under the form of an interactive online tool capturing: major areas of competencies for each area, proficiency levels related to EQF and examples of knowledge/skills/attitudes. This will be the fundamental tool to give a common language between professionals, employers VET providers and communities.

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It is expected for the FRAME GANG partnership to develop 3 Intellectual Outputs / tangible deliverables:

O1. Definition of the European gang context, professionals working in it and their profiles	O1/A1.1 – Set the research methodology; O1/A1.2 – Deliver desk research activities; O1/A1.3. – Deliver field research activities, based on the results of the desk research activities. O1/A1.4. – Common structure, with a recommendation paper.
O2. Development of a European Competency Framework for Community Professionals working in gang related environments	O2/A2.1. – Developing a common list at a partnership level, of competence areas; O2/A2.2. – Listing of reference competencies for each identified area; O2/A2.3. – Developing the common centralised framework with all contributions of the partners, in English language;
O3. Development of an on-line platform to support the structure and content of the previous outputs	O3/A3.1. – Following the model of the European e-Competence Framework, the Output Leader will set up the space and structure of the profile tool; O3/A3.2. – Partners will provide the content of the previous two outputs to be uploaded onto the platform; O3/A3.3. – The Output Leader will finalise the on-line space and prepare it for deployment.

The ECF-Gang is the second deliverable of the project, bringing forward the efforts of practitioners in the field from Portugal, Lithuania, Italy and Romania.

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Rationale

The European Competency Framework for Community Professionals working in gang related environments (ECF-Gang) was conceived as a "navigation tool" for professionals that support communities affected by gangs, presenting major areas of competencies, specific competencies, proficiency levels connected to EQF, and examples of knowledge/skills.

As the literature shows, compared to non-gang members, gang members commit a disproportionate amount of violent crimes and offenses. Gang behaviour and gang involvement result in short-term and long term negative outcomes for gang-involved youth, their friends and families, and the surrounding communities (United States of America, 2014). While different types of professionals are constantly dealing with gangs and its effects in their workplace environment (whether in a community, a classroom, or a hospital), they lack a common language and mutual understanding of how to address this phenomenon.

In this line of thought, this navigation tool will help all relevant professionals understand what is needed to address gang behaviour and its negative outcomes, supporting a common understanding in a broad application context.

Hence, the ECF-Gang is innovative in recognising that new knowledge and skills are required for the professionals that deal with gangs and the results of gang crime (e.g.: police, security firms, probation service, social workers, teachers/trainers and community activists, volunteers…). Further, the ECF-Gang is based on competence Areas and competences, instead of job profiles, being competence-based approaches more flexible and fostering local personalisation.

Given all the above, the ECF-Gang was built with the following objectives:

1. Building a common understanding of the skills, knowledge and competences needed for professionals working in gang afflicted environments;
2. Providing the learner with a toolkit for effective intervention and communication in a gang related environment;
3. Equipping the learner with the knowledge and understanding of how to work safely in a gang-related environment;
4. Providing an understanding of the social contexts, factors and forces that create, sustain and promote gangs and gang membership;
5. Understanding and applying relevant perspectives from social psychology to facilitate improved practice in working with gangs.

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Methodological approach

The starting foundation for the development of the EFC-Gang was Intellectual Output 1, "Definition of the European gang context, professionals working in it and their profiles", namely the results of the desk and DACUM consultative research conducted in each partner country (Romania, Italy, Lithuania and Portugal). In specific, the desk research allowed for an overview of the gang phenomena in each partner country and for an identification of the professionals working in the communities affected by gangs, violent youth and street violence. Following this, the DACUM (Develop A Curriculum) methodology was used to engage the professionals working in the communities in analysing their own professions regarding gang related issues. The field research activities have resulted in a country report on the profile that shows the duties and tasks performed in the occupation. The profile also lists necessary worker traits and attitudes, general skills and knowledge, and the tools and equipment the worker uses, all in the context of working with gang afflicted communities.[1]

Based on the above, the development of Output 2 was structured around the following steps:

A2.1. Developing a common list at partnership level, of competence areas;

A2.2. Listing of reference competencies for each identified area;

A2.3. Developing the common centralised framework for all the contributions of partners, in EN language;

[1] For more detailed information about Output 1, please download the full Research Report at http://www.framegang.org/library.html

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1. Developing a common list of competence areas

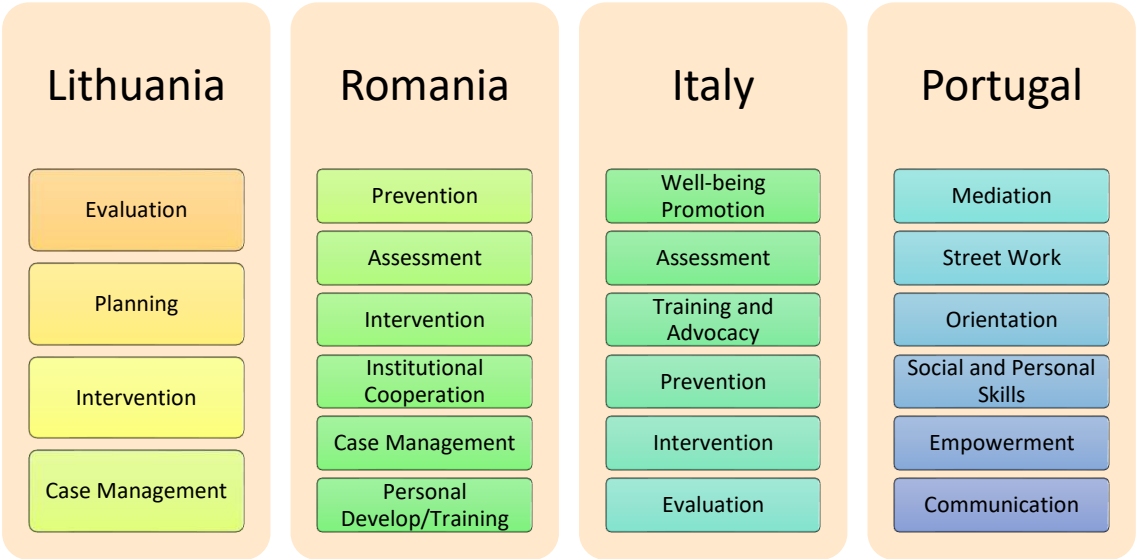
The first activity started with a short-term staff training event in Kaunas, where the partner organisations together with relevant stakeholders working in the field (social workers, psychologists, community workers, etc.) reviewed the previous output's results, ran exercises on competency identification and detailing, and also discussed the working methodology.

A clarification, among partners, was made regarding **the concept of competence.**

According to the EQF - European Qualification Framework - (European Commission, 2017), a competence is '*the proven ability to use knowledge, skills and personal, social and/ or methodological abilities, in work or study situations and in professional and personal development*'. As such, competence is a construction of these three elements: knowledge, skills and attitudes. Our approach is consistent with this definition, since it encompasses social and personal abilities, as gang-related competences are holistic units that express complex behaviours. Following this this view, **competence areas** are a set of competences clustered according to specific criteria.

Based on Output 1 "Definition of the European gang context, professionals working in it and their profiles", all relevant professions in gang and community work context were listed. Then, common areas of activities, when working in communities afflicted by gangs and interacting with gang issues, were identified, providing the criteria for the establishment of competence areas.

As such, different areas of competence were identified, by partner country:



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Based on the above, partners identified the following six **common competence areas**: Planning; Assessment; Personal Development/Training; Prevention; Intervention and Case Management.

2. Listing of reference competencies for each identified area

After having the common competence areas, partners were asked to pinpoint all relevant competencies that different professionals from community need to have in order to run activities targeted at gang environments in their national contexts (Portugal, Romania, Italy and Lithuania). It was decided that partners had to select between 4 and 10 competencies for each area, providing a short operational description.

The subsequent task was to create a list of common competences to all countries represented in the project. As such, the partnership gathered 28 common competences, distributed as follows:

a) Planning - 4 competences, namely:
   - Planning and organising;
   - Strategic decision making;
   - Developing others;
   - Values & Ethics;

b) Assessment - 4 competences, namely:
   - Needs assessment;
   - Follow-up;
   - Vocational assessment;
   - Risk and safety assessment;

c) Personal development/training - 5 competences, namely:
   - Knowledge of restorative practices;
   - Resilience;
   - Adaptability;
   - Understanding the specifics of a Gang
   - Specific literature on youth gangs;

d) Prevention - 4 competences, namely:
   - Normative behaviour promotion;

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- Civics and citizenship promotion;
- Positive youth development;
- Family engagement;

e) Intervention - 7 competences, namely:
- Networking;
- Community empowerment;
- Mediation;
- Community resources application;
- Counselling;
- Outreach methods and strategies;
- Advocacy;

f) Case Management - 5 competences, namely:
- Effective communication;
- Cultural sensitivity;
- Mentoring;
- Conflict management;
- Empathy;

Once the first dimension was downsized, the same occurred with the second dimension – Competences – reduced to a total of 15 competences, distributed as follows:

1. Planning - 3 competences, namely:
- Planning and organising;
- Strategic thinking;
- Values and ethics;

2. Assessment - 2 competences, namely:
- Needs assessment;
- Risk assessment;

3. Personal development - 3 competences, namely:
- Interpersonal and group relationships;
- Emotional Resilience;
- Crisis intervention and prevention;

4. Prevention - 3 competences, namely:
- Youth mentoring;

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- Family learning;
- Community engagement;

5. Intervention: - 4 competences, namely:
- Networking;
- Mediation;
- Counselling;
- Outreach

3. Developing the common centralised framework

For the structure of the ECF-Gang, the partners analysed and evaluated other existing frameworks and agreed finally to adopt a four-dimensional approach, based on the European e-Competence Framework and its four dimensions (www.ecompetences.eu):

Dimension 1	Six competence areas: **Planning; Assessment; Personal development/training; Prevention; Intervention; Case management**
Dimension 2	A set of **reference Competences** for each area, with a generic description for each competence. Aim - to identify an average of 4 to 10 competencies for each area. Each competence will have a definition.
Dimension 3	**Proficiency levels** of each Competence (related to EQF): from e-1 to e-5, which are related to EQF levels 3-8.
Dimension 4	**Samples of knowledge and skills** (look example) relate to Competences in dimension 2. They are provided to add value and context.

This structure is based on competence areas (dimension 1) and competences (dimension 2), instead of job profiles, providing a more flexible approach and fostering local personalisation. Within dimension 1 “Competence areas”, concepts are more general and fitting different professional profiles considered relevant to the community professionals, while in dimension 2: “Competences””, descriptors are specific and directly related to community afflicted by the gang phenomenon contexts. Dimension 3 provides level assignments that are appropriate to each competence; and dimension 4 provides short sample specifications of knowledge and skills but the list is not exhaustive.

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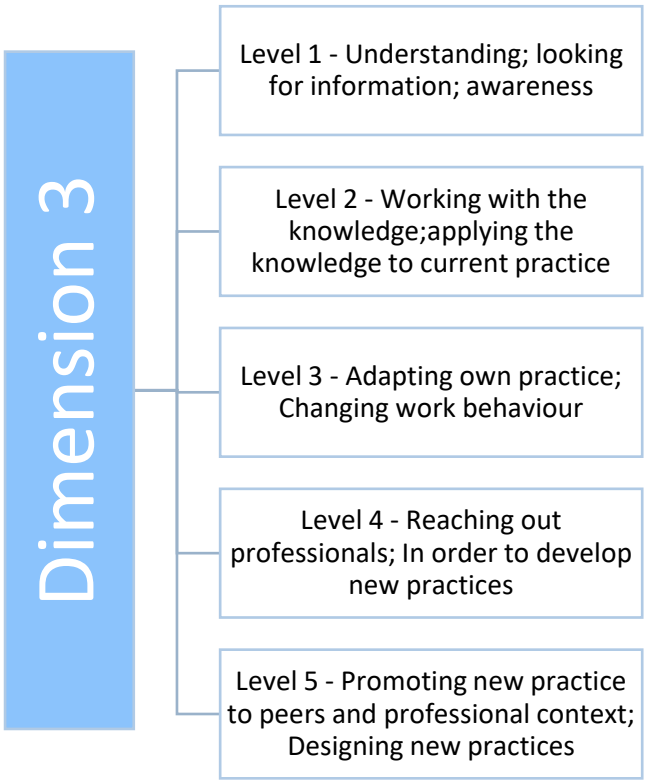
3.1. Dimension 3: the ECF-Gang Levels

The purpose of levels within a framework is to provide benchmarks with which framework users can readily identify performance at a predefined capability level.

Levels are often described and given a numeric abbreviation. For example, the European Qualifications Framework (EQF) uses eight levels (1 to 8). To provide consistency, each level is identified through a common set of parameters; for EQF, the descriptors deployed are knowledge, skills and competence.

Within the EQF, competence is described in terms of responsibility and autonomy, and Competences, Skills and Knowledge are described in terms of height, depth and breadth within an increasing context complexity.

For each ECF-Gang competence, suitable proficiency level specifications have been constructed, ranging from level 1, the lowest to level 5 the highest, based on a behavioural dimension, as shown in the table below:



Both perspectives – the ECF-Gang and the EQF – are interrelated as qualifications contribute to competence development. It is possible to build a bridge between the two frameworks by using comparable levels.

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The next paragraphs describe the EQF levels approach and the methodology adopted by the ECF-Gang to relate to the EQF in a transparent way.

After discussion, the partnership decided that the proficiency levels should cover the levels 1 and 2 of the EQF (European Qualifications Framework), since this navigation tool was developed to be used by community professionals that work in gang environments, without having any responsibility or formal training to address the phenomenon. The proficiency levels were readjusted and described as follows:

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ECF-Gang Proficiency Levels	EQF levels	Knowledge	Skills	Competences
Level 5	8	Knowledge at the most advanced frontier of a field of work or study and at the interface between fields.	The most advanced and specialised skills and techniques, including synthesis and evaluation, required to solve critical problems in research and/or innovation and to extend and refine existing knowledge or professional practice.	Demonstrate substantial authority, innovation, autonomy, scholarly and professional integrity and sustained commitment to the development of new ideas or processes at the forefront of work or study contexts including research.
	7	Highly specialised knowledge, some of which is at the forefront of knowledge in the field of work or study, as the basis for original thinking and/or research Critical awareness of knowledge issues in a field and at the interface between different fields.	Specialised problem-solving skills required in research and/or innovation in order to develop new knowledge and procedures and to integrate knowledge from different fields.	Manage and transform work or study contexts that are complex, unpredictable and require new strategic approaches; take responsibility for contributing to professional knowledge and practice and/or for reviewing the strategic performance of teams.
Level 4	6	Advanced knowledge of a field of work or study, involving a critical understanding of theories and principles.	Advanced skills, demonstrating mastery and innovation, required to solve complex and unpredictable problems in a specialised field of work and/or research.	Manage complex technical or professional activities or projects, taking responsibility for decision-making in unpredictable work or study contexts; take responsibility for managing professional development of individuals and groups.
	5	Comprehensive, specialised, factual and theoretical knowledge within a field of work or study and an awareness of the boundaries of that knowledge.	A comprehensive range of cognitive and practical skills required to develop creative solutions to abstract problems.	Exercise management and supervision in contexts of work or study activities where there is unpredictable change; review and develop performance of self and others.
Level 3	4	Factual and theoretical knowledge in broad contexts within a field of work or study.	A range of cognitive and practical skills required to generate solutions to specific problems in a field of work or study.	Exercise self-management within the guidelines of work or study contexts that are usually predictable, but are subject to change; supervise the routine work of others, taking some responsibility for the

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				evaluation and improvement of work or study activities.
	3	Knowledge of facts, principles, processes and general concepts, in a field of work or study.	A range of cognitive and practical skills required to accomplish tasks and solve problems by selecting and applying basic methods, tools, materials and information.	Take responsibility for completion of tasks in work or study; adapt own behaviour to circumstances in solving problems.
Level 2	**2**	Basic factual knowledge of a field of work or study	Basic cognitive and practical skills required to use relevant information in order to carry out tasks and to solve routine problems using simple rules and tools	Work or study under supervision with some autonomy
Level 1	**1**	Basic general knowledge	Basic skills required to carry out simple tasks	Work or study under direct supervision in a structured context

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3.2. Dimension 4: Knowledge & Skills

In dimension 4, partners had to identify samples of knowledge and skills included in each competence identified and defined in dimensions 2 and 3. Accordingly, dimension 4 details examples of core elements / components related to the contents of the competences. The main aim of this dimension is to provide added value and context to the framework users, and it is not intended to be exhaustive.

Definitions used in the ECF-Gang:

- **Knowledge** represents the "set of know-what" (e.g. youth development theories, mediation tools...) and can be described by operational descriptions;
- **Skill** is the “ability to carry out managerial or technical tasks”. Managerial and technical skills are components of competences and specify some core abilities that form a competence.

Since the partnership agreed to build this tool to be an operational tool for lifelong learning process of community professionals, and the basis for a structured educational development in training providers, the dimension 4 of ECF-Gang was developed according to Bloom’s Taxonomy approach of Educational Objectives for the Cognitive Domain and it’s six categories, namely (Anderson & Krathwohln (2001):

1. Knowledge;
2. Comprehension;
3. Application;
4. Analysis;
5. Synthesis;
6. Evaluation;

This approach allows a differentiation between cognitive skill levels and calls attention to learning objectives that require higher levels of cognitive skills and, therefore, lead to deeper learning and transfer of knowledge and skills to a greater variety of tasks and contexts.

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Cognitive Level	Illustrative Verbs	Definitions
Knowledge	arrange, define, describe, duplicate, identify, label, list, match, memorize, name, order, outline, recognize, relate, recall, repeat, reproduce, select, state	remembering previously learned information
Comprehension	classify, convert, defend, discuss, distinguish, estimate, explain, express, extend, generalize, give example(s), identify, indicate, infer, locate, paraphrase, predict, recognize, rewrite, report, restate, review, select, summarize, translate	grasping the meaning of information
Application	apply, change, choose, compute, demonstrate, discover, dramatize, employ, illustrate, interpret, manipulate, modify, operate, practice, predict, prepare, produce, relate schedule, show, sketch, solve, use write	applying knowledge to actual situations
Analysis	analyze, appraise, breakdown, calculate, categorize, classify, compare, contrast, criticize, derive, diagram, differentiate, discriminate, distinguish, examine, experiment, identify, illustrate, infer, interpret, model, outline, point out, question, relate, select, separate, subdivide, test	breaking down objects or ideas into simpler parts and seeing how the parts relate and are organized
Synthesis	arrange, assemble, categorize, collect, combine, comply, compose, construct, create, design, develop, devise, explain, formulate, generate, plan, prepare, propose, rearrange, reconstruct, relate, reorganize, revise, rewrite, set up, summarize, synthesize, tell, write	rearranging component ideas into a new whole
Evaluation	appraise, argue, assess, attach, choose, compare, conclude, contrast, defend, describe, discriminate, estimate, evaluate, explain, judge, justify, interpret, relate, predict, rate, select, summarize, support, value	Making judgements based on internal evidence or external criteria

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The EFC-Gang structure and overview

The European Framework of Competencies for Community Professionals working in Gang Environments is structured from four dimensions. These dimensions reflect different levels of competences requirements for a better work performance for professionals working in and with community afflicted communities and are specified as follows:

- **Dimension 1:** reflects four areas of competence, namely: Planning, Assessment, Personal development, Prevention and Intervention;
- **Dimension 2:** defines a set of competences for each area, with reference definitions for 15 different competences in total;
- **Dimension 3:** sets out proficiency levels of each competence (level 1 to level 5), which are related to EQF levels 1 to 8;
- **Dimension 4:** provides samples of knowledge and skills related to the competences in dimension 2, intended to add value and context and not to be considered exhaustive.

Dimension 1 - Competence Areas	Dimension 2 – Competences	Dimension 3 – Proficiency levels
Planning	1. Planning and Organising	**Level 1** Understanding; looking for information; awareness **Level 2** Working with the knowledge; applying the knowledge to current practice **Level 3** Adapting own practice; Changing work behaviour **Level 4** Reaching out professionals, networking; In order to develop new practices **Level 5** Promoting new practice to peers and professional context; Designing new practices
	2. Strategic Thinking	
	3. Values and Ethics	
Assessment	4. Needs Assessment	
	5. Risk Assessment	
Personal development	6. Interpersonal and group relationships	
	7. Emotional Resilience	
	8. Crisis Intervention and Prevention	
Prevention	9. Youth Mentoring	
	10. Family Learning	
	11. Community Engagement	
Intervention	12. Networking	
	13. Mediation	
	14. Counselling	
	15. Outreach	

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<table>
<tr><td rowspan="7">Planning</td><td colspan="3">1. PLANNING AND ORGANISING</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="3">The ability to set a work strategy related to national policy on gangs (adapted from: Harvard University).</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Proficiency Level – the level of competency proficiency one must command to successfully perform job functions in a gang related context</td><td>Samples of knowledge and skills</td></tr>
<tr><td>Level 1</td><td>• Knows/understands of national / regional / local policies and programmes relating to gangs;
• Identifies responsible authorities for gang related policies and programmes;</td><td rowspan="5">Knowledge of:

✓ Public Policies;
✓ Gang Prevention programs;
✓ Gang culture.

Ability to:

✓ Apply Public policies;
✓ Adapt existing Gang prevention programmes;
✓ Apply good practices;
✓ Identify local action plans;
✓ Identify local community groups;
✓ Operate with public policy documents;
✓ Communicate with youth;
✓ Mediate with youth involved in gang contexts.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Level 2</td><td>• Understands how and if the gang related policies and programmes impact one’s work;
• Adjusts activities/processes based on knowledge, needs and constraints of gang related policies and programmes;</td></tr>
<tr><td>Level 3</td><td>• Adapts one’s current practice in accordance with national / regional / local policies and programmes relating to gangs;
• Recognises limitations and challenges of national / regional / local policies and programmes relating to gangs;
• Understands the European context of the gang phenomenon;</td></tr>
<tr><td>Level 4</td><td>• Develops a plan to counteract the limitations and challenges of national / regional / local policies and programmes relating to gangs;
• Re-redesigns or creates new processes and systems to get around obstacles using good practices from the European context;</td></tr>
<tr><td>Level 5</td><td>• Promotes the change of gang related policy at national / regional / local policies;
• Proactively scans environment to identify long-term risks and proactively designs contingency plans for dealing with the gang phenomenon.</td></tr>
</table>

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<table>
<tr><td rowspan="7">Planning</td><td colspan="3">2. STRATEGIC THINKING</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="3">The ability to obtain information and identify key issues and relationships relevant to achieving a long-range goal, or vision after developing alternatives based on logical assumptions, facts, available resources and constraints that exist in a community afflicted by gangs (adapted from: Harvard University)</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Proficiency Level – the level of competency proficiency one must command to successfully perform job functions in a gang related context</td><td>Samples of knowledge and skills</td></tr>
<tr><td>Level 1</td><td>• Takes into consideration identified needs and trends in the local community afflicted by gang phenomenon into own strategic plans;
• Identifies team objectives to be consistent with strategic plan, taking into consideration specific aspects of gang context;</td><td rowspan="4">Knowledge of:

✓ Gang reality;
✓ Gang culture and context;

Ability to:

✓ Develop strategies based on knowledge on gang culture/reality or context;
✓ Maintain an in-depth understanding of the gang context and culture, it’s weaknesses and the available resources to fight this phenomenon;
✓ Set appropriate milestones to the strategy stablished.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Level 2</td><td>• Implements strategic objectives and adapts own professional plan according to local community needs;
• Applies strategic objectives to own profession working plan within the gang context;</td></tr>
<tr><td>Level 3</td><td>• Conducts reviews and gathers information from relevant sources to support development of a strategic plan;
• Changing own interaction with local community based on strategic objectives related to minimizing the impact of gangs on local communities;</td></tr>
<tr><td>Level 4</td><td>• Leads and directs a strategic plan to address and outline the future direction of the project;
• Establishes strategic performance measures to allow continuous assessment and adjustment of program direction;
• Develops and implements relevant policies by building coalitions with the appropriate gang professionals;</td></tr>
<tr><td>Level 5</td><td>• Anticipates a demographic change in gang related contexts and establishes a vision to achieve change through the formulation and implementation of objectives and priorities;
• Designs approaches and procedures to develop a strategic plan supporting key national goals and objectives related to gang context.</td></tr>
</table>

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Planning

3. VALUES AND ETHICS

The ability to serve with integrity and respect in personal and organisational practices, and sensitivity to the fundamental values and ethics of the agency/organisation/sector and the profession. It includes the capacity for sound ethical judgment in an ethically complex youth or gang environment and in the face of pressures and constraints. Building respectful, bilingual, diverse and inclusive environments in communities affected by gangs. (adapted from: PMC Training, 2017)

Proficiency Level – *the level of competency proficiency one must command to successfully perform job functions in a gang related context*		**Samples of knowledge and skills**
Level 1	• Treats youth, their families and the community fairly and with respect; • Understands the procedures, policies and/or legislation needed in a gang context; • Demonstrates overall personal integrity and orientation towards fundamental values to one's function;	**Knowledge of:** ✓ Professional values ✓ Ethics; ✓ Responsibility; **Ability to:** ✓ Recognise and manage personal values, allowing professional values to guide the practice; ✓ Make sound and ethical judgements in a ethically complex environment; ✓ Tolerate ambiguity in resolving ethical conflicts; ✓ Respect other visions and values ✓ Apply strategies of ethical reasoning to arrive at principled decisions.
Level 2	• Acts consistently with professional values and ethics; • Uses applicable professional standards and established procedures, policies and/or legislation when taking action and making decisions regarding a gang context;	
Level 3	• Adapts new processes and structures to deal with difficulties of confidentiality or security in gang contexts; • Identifies and considers different ethical aspects of a gang situation/environment when making decisions; • Identifies and balances competing values when selecting approaches or recommendations for dealing with a gang related situation.	
Level 4	• Acts in accord with values and ethics when significant cost or risk is associated with doing so; • Promotes and advises, youth and their families, in fair and consistent dealings with others, and helps them deal with ethical dilemmas; • Interacts with others (co-workers, youth, youth families and community, within a gang context) fairly and respectfully;	
Level 5	• Defines, communicates and consistently exemplifies the youth needed values and ethics in a gang environment; • Identifies underlying issues that impact negatively in the gang context and takes appropriate action to rectify the issues; • Develops new practices and new techniques, within gang contexts, to encourage youth, their families and the community to act ethically and fairly.	

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Assessment	4. NEEDS ASSESSMENT		
	The ability to identify specific needs of groups and communities in order to determine the right interventions for meeting those needs, in a gang related context. (Adapted from: Altschuld & Kumar, 2010)		
	Proficiency Level – *the level of competency proficiency one must command to successfully perform job functions in a gang related context*		**Samples of knowledge and skills**
	Level 1	• Understands the specific needs of communities afflicted by the gang phenomenon; • Is aware of the key players in the community involved in gang activities; • Identifies key issues related to gangs in local communities;	**Knowledge of:** ✓ Techniques to gather information; ✓ Existent needs assessment tools; **Ability to:** ✓ Apply methods and techniques to gather information about needs in the gang context; ✓ Use observation skills; ✓ Use interviewing skills; ✓ Work with needs assessment tools that are relevant to a gang related context; ✓ Interpret the collected data in a gang related context; ✓ Report the needs assessment results.
	Level 2	• Applies the knowledge about the needs to current practice, in a gang context; • Identifies suitable tools and practices to analyse the needs of a gang afflicted community;	
	Level 3	• Implements needs assessment tools in one's professional practice based on the specificity of gang afflicted communities; • Changes own practice according to identified needs in the local community affected by gangs;	
	Level 4	• Cooperates/networks with relevant professionals in related fields (juvenile delinquency, social work, education, emergency units, etc) in order to obtain best tools for assessing gang afflicted community needs;	
	Level 5	• Creates and disseminates complex maps of specific needs related to the gang context in local community; • Relates and interacts with relevant stakeholders that are either sources of information or potential beneficiaries.	

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Assessment	5. RISK ASSESSMENT		
	The ability to review information related to various types of risks, in order to make decisions and any actions required to limit/reduce the danger involved in a specific situation or context related to the gang phenomenon (adapted from: Restorative Justice Council Competency Framework, 2015)		
	Proficiency Level – *the level of competency proficiency one must command to successfully perform job functions in a gang related context*		**Samples of knowledge and skills**
	Level 1	• Understands and distinguishes the risks involved in local communities affected by gangs; • Identifies the nature of various types of risks and of potential stress, that may increase risk, to oneself and to others;	**Knowledge of:** ✓ Risk Management; ✓ Existent Risk Assessment Tools; **Ability to:** ✓ Manage risk assessment tools and techniques; ✓ Use observation skills; ✓ Use Interviewing skills; ✓ Work with risk assessment tools that are relevant in a gang related context; ✓ Interpret data collected in a gang related context; ✓ Risk of evaluation results report compiling;
	Level 2	• Identifies and understand conditions that can be a potential risk factors in communities affected by gangs; • Identifies suitable tools and practices to analyse the risks within the gang context;	
	Level 3	• Implement risk assessment tools in one's professional practice based on the specificity of gang afflicted communities; • Changes own practice according to identified risk factors in the local community affected by gangs;	
	Level 4	• Provides efficient reviews of information in emergency situations, in gang contexts; • Cooperates/networks with relevant professionals in related fields (emergency units, police, fire workers, etc.) in order to co-develop best practices to fight the gang phenomenon; • Identifies relevant stakeholders for cooperation in the field of risk assessment.	
	Level 5	• Creates and disseminates complex maps of specific risk factors related to the gang context in local community; • Develops new practices that allow the reduction of risk factors present in a afflicted gang community;	

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Personal Development	6. INTERPERSONAL AND GROUP RELATIONSHIPS		
	The capacity to develop and maintain personal and group relationships that aid not only in completion of work assignments and information exchange in the gang context, but also to foster more positive and constructive relationships with youth, gang members and communities (adapted from: Lynwood USD Classified Personnel, 2007; C-PAL, 2011);)		
	Proficiency Level – *the level of competency proficiency one must command to successfully perform job functions in a gang related context*		**Samples of knowledge and skills**
	Level 1	• Engages in personal and group relationships in communities afflicted by the gang phenomenon, responding appropriately to their needs, feelings and concerns;	**Knowledge of:** ✓ Relationship functioning/construction/maintenence; ✓ Work group and Group working; **Ability to:** ✓ Demonstrate compassion, sensitivity and treat others with respect; ✓ Create a comfortable environment where youth feels free and safe to express opinions and feelings; ✓ Manage different people, with different attitudes and opinions.
	Level 2	• Forms, maintains, and fosters relationships with youth and team members for the purpose of carrying out work activities as efficiently as possible in gang related contexts;	
	Level 3	• Initiates the development of professional relationships with experts in the gang phenomenon and maintains good information exchange in order to achieve optimal effectiveness and independent work processes;	
	Level 4	• Identifies, develops and strengthens relationships, networks and partnerships for the purpose of carrying out work activities as efficiently as possible in gang related contexts;	
	Level 5	• Identifies, establishes and strengthens relationships, networks, and partnerships with the community, and outside stakeholders in order achieve mutual assistance, and develop working practices to assist the communities afflicted by gangs.	

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Personal Development	7. EMOTIONAL RESILIENCE		
	The ability to experience and 'bounce back' from negative emotional experiences generated by gang interaction, by flexibly adapting to the changing demands / specificities of gang youth (adapted from: Tugade and Fredrickson, 2004); it refers to effective coping and adaptation when faced with hardship and adversity (adapted from: Collins, 2008), such as in gang contexts, street violence and emergency situations generated by violent behaviour.		
	Proficiency Level – *the level of competency proficiency one must command to successfully perform job functions in a gang related context*		**Samples of knowledge and skills**
	Level 1	• Pursues objectives with energy and persistence, understanding the challenges of gang contexts, street violence and emergency situations generated by violent behaviour; • He/she Is aware of techniques that allow effective coping and adaptation in communities afflicted by gang;	**Knowledge of:** ✓ Methods and techniques to deal effectively with pressure; ✓ Coping techniques; ✓ Emotional intelligence and Positive Psychology; **Ability to:** ✓ Use methods and techniques to deal effectively with pressure; ✓ Maintain focus under adversity; ✓ Quickly recover from setbacks.
	Level 2	• Accepts ownership of and responsibility for own work in the context of a gang afflicted community; • Adjusts activities/processes based on the feedback from the local community in a specific gang related context; • Understands the reasons for obstacles and finds ways to overcome the challenges experienced in gang contexts;	
	Level 3	• Maintains performance after disappointment or rejection resulting from work in the context of a gang afflicted community; • Adapts own professional working methods to gang contexts in order to achieve objectives; • Assists others in dealing with the challenges of gang afflicted communities and how they generate disappointment/rejection;	
	Level 4	• Remains enthusiastic of others after disappointment or rejection resulting from work in the context of a gang afflicted community; • Adapts own professional working methods, in gang environments, very quickly, based on professional input from gang related specialists and based on the needs of local communities; • Re-redesigns or creates new processes and systems to get around obstacles generated by gangs, with the involvement of other relevant stakeholders;	
	Level 5	• Makes decisions through weighing up the cost benefit and risk implications that a gang environment can generate; • Stays in course in the face of adversity resulting from work in the context of a gang afflicted community, while ensuring the motivation and commitment to others, supporting the local communities • Proactively scans environment to identify long-term risks and proactively develops new and effective contingency plans with the local community in a specific gang related context.	

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Personal Development

8. CRISIS INTERVENTION AND PREVENTION

The ability to deal with complex situations arising from the gang phenomenon, create durable networks of people with appropriate gang related experts, and unsure that knowledge is utilised to improve resilience in the face of crisis generated by youth gangs (adapter from: Alexander, 2013); Ability to teach youth new skills and abilities to prevent crisis. Awareness of early signs of building crisis or triggers for each person and taking early steps to avert crisis (adapted from: NAAD).

Proficiency Level – *the level of competency proficiency one must command to successfully perform job functions in a gang related context*		**Samples of knowledge and skills**
Level 1	• Knows the signs of increased agitation or indicators of potential crisis behaviour related to the gang phenomenon; • Accepts and implements suggestions for improved ability to prevent and respond to gang related crisis; • Seeks help from other relevant professional stakeholders when guidance is needed;	**Knowledge of:** ✓ Conflict resolution techniques; ✓ Crisis Prevention techniques; ✓ Intervention techniques ; **Ability to:** ✓ Understand and apply techniques for conflict resolution, crisis prevention, intervention and resolution; ✓ Identify potential crises, and implement procedures to de-escalate a situation or minimize the likelihood of danger; ✓ Support and promote the youth' capacity to problem solving.
Level 2	• Identifies the signs of increased agitation or indicators of potential crisis behaviour related to the gang phenomenon; • Identifies potential gang related crisis; • Creates a safe and healthy environment when communicating with youngsters involved in gang activity;	
Level 3	• Uses positive behaviour techniques to prevent gang-related crisis and promote health and safety; • Implements procedures to de-escalate complex situations arising from the gang phenomenon or its minimisation; • Demonstrates effective listening and promotes the ability of youngsters involved in gang activity to problem-solving;	
Level 4	• Uses appropriate and approved intervention approaches to resolve a gang related crisis; • Co-develops action plans with gang related specialists and relevant stakeholders from the community to prevent gang related crisis; • Assists youngsters in identifying and responding to potential gang related crisis, helping them to identify signs and trends in their behaviours and strategies that stop or reduce the crisis process;	
Level 5	• Supports the local community in identifying and learning alternative coping skills and how to avoid or reduce triggers to crisis; • Develops and strengthens durable local networks of people with expertise in gang phenomenon and crisis intervention to boost the prevention of gang related crisis.	

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Prevention	9. YOUTH MENTORING		
	Ability to provide support and guidance in order to empower youngsters involved in gang cultures/contexts to make good decisions, maintaining a prosocial approach involving young people in their communities in a productive and constructive manner (adapted from: Winton, 2014).		
	Proficiency Level – *the level of competency proficiency one must command to successfully perform job functions in a gang related context*		**Samples of knowledge and skills**
	Level 1	• Interacts empathically with youth involved in gang culture and understands their needs and problems; • Knows the local context and environment where the gangs are embedded (cultural background);	**Knowledge of:** ✓ The communication/social code of gangs and youth; ✓ Youth culture/gang subculture; **Ability to:** ✓ Interact with youngsters and gangs in order to influence them and promote a change in their behaviour; ✓ Create links between gangs and communities.
	Level 2	• Transfers previous experiences and acquired knowledge (either in other correlated fields) achieved in gang's context; • Influences attitudes and behaviours of youth embedded in gang contexts, empowering their actions;	
	Level 3	• Influences attitudes and behaviours of youth embedded in gang contexts, empowering their actions; • Plans and manages the needed activities with the available resources within gang contexts; • Adapts the intervention to gang contexts according to the available resources	
	Level 4	• Networks with other relevant stakeholders/institutions/local communities, in order to increase youth mentoring feasibility, in gang contexts. • Organises specific activities, in gang environments, appealing to young people; • Promotes youngsters' pro-social approaches in gang context/culture;	
	Level 5	• Plans and implements different and useful mentoring activities for youngsters in gang contexts; • Manages different tools for measurement of achieved results in communities afflicted with gangs.	

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Prevention	10. FAMILY LEARNING		
	Ability to develop, within a gang context, relationships with youngsters' families, working collaboratively with them, and to motivate youngsters to join extra-scholar activities such as sports, music, art, voluntary activities, community work (adapted from: Gullotta, Adams, Montemayor, 1998).		
	Proficiency Level – *the level of competency proficiency one must command to successfully perform job functions in a gang related context*		**Samples of knowledge and skills**
	Level 1	• He/she is aware on how to interact with families, understanding their needs, in a gang context; • Understands the time issue (the problem of time management for families) and its constrictions in a gang afflicted community;	**Knowledge of:** ✓ Motivation techniques; ✓ Family envirements and dynamics; **Ability to:** ✓ Manage different cultural backgrounds and people; ✓ Have empathy towards parents and their needs (such as time management problem); ✓ Influence and involve gangs/youngster's families and institutions; ✓ Keep the parents informed and aware them for the social issue of juvenile crime; ✓ Promote the central role of families in the youngsters' learning.
	Level 2	• Understands the different cultural backgrounds of families, in a gang environment; • Influences youngster's families in order to promote a pro-social life style to fight gang affiliation/involvement in the community;	
	Level 3	• Works collaboratively with families and youth emerged in gang culture; • Promotes awareness activities about gang's issues;	
	Level 4	• Promotes networks among different stakeholders involved in the local communities to develop new practices; • Promotes networks among youth' families and communities afflicted by gangs;	
	Level 5	• Plans and manages the implementation of activities, within gang contexts; • Develops new projects with the families of young people, increasing their awareness in primary gang prevention.	

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Prevention	11. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT		
	The ability to engage and enable communities enhancing the control over their lives, through the development of its resources in order to face juvenile crime and social gang issues (adapted from: Center for the Study of Social Policy, 2011).		
	Proficiency Level – *the level of competency proficiency one must command to successfully perform job functions in a gang related context*		**Samples of knowledge and skills**
	Level 1	• Understands different cultural dynamics in communities afflicted with gangs; • Understands gang afflicted community needs;	**Knowledge of:** ✓ Cultural dynamics in communities affected by gang issues; ✓ Community work; **Ability to:** ✓ Make communities aware of gangs' problems/issues; ✓ Develop community abilities and strategies in order to face gangs issue; ✓ Apply methods to promote social inclusion of gangs and youngsters.
	Level 2	• Influences the community with targeted and appropriated actions, in the gang context; • Manages efficiently the community resources (facilities, funds, existing networks, etc.), to fight gang affiliation/involvement;	
	Level 3	• Promotes effective actions in order to face gangs' problems; • Interacts with communities afflicted by gangs;	
	Level 4	• Encourages children and youth to participate in social, civic and work life, in order to fight gang involvement; • Connects with experts in the field in order to develop new practices and apply them in a gang context; • Manages the different networks among stakeholders in communities afflicted by gangs;	
	Level 5	• Plans and manages the engagement of communities, to fight the gang culture/affiliation; • Develops new strategies and practices and applies them to gang environments; • He/she is recognised as a stakeholder for gang issues.	

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Intervention	12. NETWORKING		
	The ability to build and actively maintain working relationships and/or networks in gang afflicted communities, involving all relevant stakeholders for private and public context, gang members, youth, families, etc. (adapted from: University of Guelph, 2010);		
	Proficiency Level – *the level of competency proficiency one must command to successfully perform job functions in a gang related context*		**Samples of knowledge and skills**
	Level 1	• Identifies the different stakeholders in the local community, their relationships and existing networks related to gang context; • Identifies basic geographic and structural features that define, support and inhibit outreach in the gang affected community;	**Knowledge of:** ✓ Outreach strategies; ✓ Team building; **Ability to:** ✓ Access sources of information and builds key contacts; ✓ Connect with Resources; ✓ Apply correctly community resources; ✓ Build relationships with the community; ✓ Build relationships with employers.
	Level 2	• Adopts outreach strategies based on population, behaviour or identified risks that are suitable to a gang affected communities; • Adapts flexible strategies to the youngster characteristics and circumstances within their broader cultural context of gangs and gang phenomenon;	
	Level 3	• Promotes to the local community, including gang members, awareness and respect for cultural factors and norms, affecting their decision-making processes and their potential responsiveness to outreach strategies in gang affected community; • Adapts flexible strategies to the youngster characteristics and circumstances within their broader cultural context of gangs and gang phenomenon;	
	Level 4	• Uses appropriate and accessible formats for conveying information for both local community and gang members; • Helps create networks, establishes partnerships and linkages with other community workers and organisations aiming care coordination and enhancing resources, in gang environments; • Supports gang members and potential gang members, in finding and using resources, and assists in creating and supporting connections among gang affected community members and caregivers;	
	Level 5	• Shares accurate and culturally-appropriate gang information with youngsters, families and community, including information about possible "warning signs" even after the desired changes occurred. • Offers and generates multiple, clear examples of desired changes and their potential outcomes, in a gang environment;	

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<table>
<tr><td rowspan="7">Intervention</td><td colspan="3">13. MEDIATION</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="3">The ability to facilitate communication related to gang phenomenon within or between systems, whenever it is in any way difficult or non-existent, being assumed either as a response to conflict situations or as a tool for meeting people, groups or communities, facilitator of the dialogue and preventive of situations of escalation of the conflict (adapted from: Freire&Caetano, 2014; University of Guelph, 2010; Lawmentor)</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Proficiency Level – the level of competency proficiency one must command to successfully perform job functions in a gang related context</td><td>Samples of knowledge and skills</td></tr>
<tr><td>Level 1</td><td>• Understands mediation as a relevant and effective tool for crisis situation mitigation, generated by gang related contexts;</td><td rowspan="5">Knowledge of:

✓ Crisis situation mitigation;
✓ Mediation principles and aims;
✓ Restorative practices;

Ability to:

✓ Intervene in crisis;
✓ Manage conflict;
✓ Mediate to the community;
✓ Facilitate community circle;
✓ Perform mediation between informal and formal education;
✓ Perform legal mediation.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Level 2</td><td>• Provides effective support, under supervision, to actors involved in a crisis situation by reducing risks, further damage/victimization and conflict management, in a gang context;</td></tr>
<tr><td>Level 3</td><td>• Uses strategies for effectively resolving conflicts, within gang contexts;
• Creates an environment where conflict is resolved appropriately by adapting own professional practice to specific needs of gang afflicted communities;</td></tr>
<tr><td>Level 4</td><td>• Intervenes in/on social situations of significant multiculturality, in order to achieve the recognition of the others and their collective identities, in a gang context.
• Seeks experts in youth / gang mediation in order to develop new and more effective practices;</td></tr>
<tr><td>Level 5</td><td>• Finds points of agreement and make those in conflict agree, on a fair result, taking in consideration all the relevant characteristics of gang contexts, juvenile delinquency, street violence phenomenon;
• Uses available networks to improve mediation in an afflicted gang community;
• Designs innovative practices for effectively resolve conflicts within gang contexts.</td></tr>
</table>

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Intervention

14. COUNSELLING

The ability to apply a range of helping approaches and techniques with individuals, families and groups that lead to a better understanding about themselves and about others, improving their social functioning, enhancing their skills in fulfilling social roles, and making necessary or desired changes in their lives (adapted from: The University of Montana, 2012; McCain, Gill, Wills & Larson, 2004);

Proficiency Level – *the level of competency proficiency one must command to successfully perform job functions in a gang related context*		**Samples of knowledge and skills**
Level 1	• Recognises oneself as a professional working in a gang development context; • Knows youth rights and laws, the juvenile delinquency context and street violence phenomenon, related to gang culture/affiliation.	**Knowledge of:** ✓ Youth rights and laws; ✓ Juvenile delinquency context; ✓ Street violence phenomenon; **Ability to:** ✓ Operate on the field; ✓ Communicate with Youth; ✓ Assess and make individual planning; ✓ Maintain and enhance the relationships with families and community; ✓ Supports professional integration | Career exploration.
Level 2	• Respects and cares for all community, and understands the need of being open minded and non-judgmental in a gang context; develops trusting relationships, and maintains awareness of diversity and youth/gang culture; • Recognises and addresses the need for intervention (*e.g.:* drug or alcohol abuse, domestic abuse or violence, and depression), in gang environments;	
Level 3	• Co-produces with filed professionals and community members new professional practices relevant for the gang phenomenon; • Adapts professional practices to include ethics and boundaries, confidentiality, while related to gangs' aspects;	
Level 4	• Facilitates person-centred planning, and involves community members including gangs, in their own planning process; • Creates new counselling networks, in the gang context, in order to increase the projects' feasibility; • Engages and builds relationships with family members or other significant people;	
Level 5	• Involves families, guardians, and advocates (when appropriate) and other people from community. • Tracks progress and develops new and effective strategies as needed, according to the needs/characteristics of the gang context.	

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Intervention	15. OUTREACH		
	Ability to be involved in on-going outreach efforts to supports communities afflicted by gangs, first and foremost "meeting people where they are" and co-producing involvements strategies for gang / potential gang members (adapted from: The Community Health Worker Initiative of Boston,2007)		
	Proficiency Level – *the level of competency proficiency one must command to successfully perform job functions in a gang related context*		**Samples of knowledge and skills**
	Level 1	• Identifies and understands the use of outreach gang strategies and methods to bring services/solutions to where a population or group resides and works, and at community sites such as street, grocery stores and outdoor community spaces;	**Knowledge of:** ✓ Outreach gang strategies and methods; ✓ Work field; **Ability to:** ✓ Bring services to the field; ✓ Adapt outreach strategies; ✓ Know/understand the community; ✓ Promote the use of proper information in the community; ✓ Create supporting connections.
	Level 2	• Identifies basic geographic and structural features that define, support and inhibit outreach in the gang affected community; • Adopts outreach strategies based on population, behaviour or identified risks that are appropriate to gang affected community;	
	Level 3	• Adapts flexible strategies to the youngster characteristics and circumstances within their broader cultural context of gangs and gang phenomenon; • Promotes to local community, including gang members, awareness and respect for cultural factors and norms affecting their decision-making processes and their potential responsiveness to outreach strategies in gang affected community;	
	Level 4	• Uses appropriate and accessible formats for conveying information for both local community and gang members; • Helps create networks and establish partnerships and linkages with other community workers and organisations with the purpose of care coordination and enhancing resources, within a gang context;	
	Level 5	• Shares accurate and culturally-appropriate information with youngsters, families and community, including information about possible gang "warning signs" even when desired changes already occurred. • Develops new practices, by supporting gang members and potential gang members in finding and using resources.	

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Concluding remarks

As shown in the literature, gangs present a serious challenge to communities across the word, since little is known about the dynamics, characteristics and trends (Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, 2010). The ECF-Gang will help the community professionals working in gang related environments by presenting the needed competencies, knowledge and skills to deal, combat and prevent this phenomenon, aiming at reaching a common language and mutual understanding of how to address this issue.

The present tool was developed with the partners' consensus, backed up by theoretical and literature references that were combined with the partnership's expertise and practical experience in the field. However, some methodological challenges were encountered while developing this tool:

- Making the partners' views explicit;
- Achieving agreement on possible choices and decisions;
- Formalising the decisions;
- Structuring the decisions and choices within the ECF-Gang.

This navigation tool, as explained before, linked DACUM (as a tool to create curricula) with Bloom's Taxonomy and the EQF levels. Those tools are destined to guide the lifelong process of professionals and to provide pedagogical structure for training providers interested in developing a new educational experience. The partnership is quite aware of the challenges and opportunities involved in building a common European framework, considering the topic of concern (youth gang and violence), its singularity and context-driven features. It is, therefore, important to note that the ECF-Gang is open to improvements and upgrades since professionals with long practical and theoretical experience might consider adding other areas of competency or competences.

The ECF-Gang navigation tool will be available in an online platform to support its development and further connection with educational / training resources at national (in the partner countries) and international levels.

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FRAME GANG

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