# BRIDGE²¹

## Community of Practice Handbook

In association with the Erasmus+ project:

## Teaching for Tomorrow (TfT)

Erasmus+

# Contents

# Introduction

1. A Community of Practice: A vision

2. Why create a community of practice?

3. Requirements for success

4. Supporting a community of practice

# What is a "Community of Practice"?

▶ A professional learning community that leverages community-type action/interactions/strategies to define a common purpose and direction for whole school change



▶ A vehicle for collaboration, communication and shared ownership that allows teachers to use 21C skills in their professional life, both in and out of the classroom.

▶ A group of teachers who plan and reflect together in subject/mixed groups, where co-teaching and observation practices are encouraged

# Why create a community of practice?

- To develop a more value-based, student-centred and up-to-date model of education within the school
- To improve and stay current in teaching practices and approaches
- To lead by example: to model, for the students, practices of collaboration and teamwork and other 21C skills



- To improve engagement and motivation of the members within the school organization
- To meet the expectations of the local community – students, parents, and other education stakeholders

# Requirements for success

▶ Clear goals and a common sense of purpose

▶ A core group of teachers and management leading the whole school

▶ Strong and supportive leadership structures

▶ Regular meetings: teachers, management, inter-departmental and year-group teams

▶ Core members leading the whole school in continuous professional development(CPD) afternoons/days

▶ Core members acting as role-models for colleagues and students

▶ Teachers sharing experiences online

# Supporting a Community of Practice

▶ Top-down – Management

  ▶ Find time and schedule "community" meetings in which you can introduce the ideas and discuss what and how things can be achieved.

  ▶ Encourage teachers to participate and learn from other teachers

  ▶ Provide an online space for sharing experiences



▶ Bottom-up – Teachers

  ▶ At your community meetings you can advise each other and start promoting such lessons to the others.

  ▶ Encourage your colleagues to visit each other's lessons to learn from, and give advice to, each other

  ▶ Encourage co-creation of lesson plans, resources, etc.

# Teacher's Guide

1. Getting Started

2. Individual teachers

3. Teams of teachers

4. Impact

# Getting Started

▶ **B**uild on good practice that already exists
  - Identify collective values and principles
  - Ensure there is quality leadership and strong goals

▶ **Define the aim of the project/community**
- For example, "we want to…"
  - be up-to-date
  - shift of focus from individual academic achievement to collaborative teamwork
  - focus on Inclusive education
  - student-centred learning



▶ Clarify **why** change is required
- For example, "we want to…"
  - create a motivating, engaging and less-stressful environment
  - help everyone achieve their full potential
  - develop continuous learning and innovation for all

# How to Start – Individually

▶ Get acquainted with the material offered in the Bridge21 Handbook / TFT webpage.

▶ Try to use some elements of the model in your own lessons.

▶ Consult and revise the handbook material again.

▶ Analyse what worked well and what elements need to be changed.

▶ Try different elements of the model several times.



▶ Ask students for feedback at the end of the lesson (what they would do differently to improve the results).

▶ Try all the elements during one day or week to experience the model.

▶ Improve your skills, concentrate your attention on more details (e.g. assessment, different learning styles, the usage of technology etc.).

▶ Try to have such lessons regularly.

# Continuing as a Team of Teachers

▶ Find time for cooperating meetings with your colleagues (on average, every one-two months), where you can introduce ideas and discuss how they can be done.

▶ Demonstrate and model the method for your colleagues

▶ Encourage your colleagues to visit each other's lessons to learn from and give advice to each other as TFT lessons can be used in every school subject.

▶ Use your cooperating meetings to review and discuss results of the lessons, give advice to each other and start promoting such lessons to the others.

▶ Ask for support from your school administration to encourage other teachers to participate

▶ All participating teachers should provide feedback on either the whole method or elements of it.

▶ Experienced teachers can start motivating the ones who are uncertain about using the new methods.

▶ Organise a project day for your students where the whole model is followed during one day; it can be one class of students experiencing the method in one subject or in different subjects.

# The Impact

Through engagement in a community of practice, schools can experience several positive changes:

▶ A defined and shared mission, vision and values for the school

▶ The establishment of team meetings in year groups and/or by subjects



▶ Whole school continuous professional development opportunities

▶ More inclusive education

▶ A shift of focus from individual academic achievement to collaborative teamwork

# Resources for Teachers

1. Theory of Change – Definition

2. Theory of Change – Guiding Questions

3. Sample Theory of Change

# Theory of Change – What is it?

Completing a theory of change exercise is one useful exercise a school/group of teachers can do to begin to develop a community of practice.

A "theory of change is a theory-based approach to planning, implementing or evaluating change at an individual, organisational or community level… A theory of change articulates explicitly how a project or initiative is intended to achieve outcomes through actions, while taking into account its context" (Laing & Todd, 2015, p. 3).

A theory of change exercise can help describe or illustrate an organisation's or project's **goals** and its **change** process. It defines all of the necessary and sufficient conditions, or **building blocks**, and how they interconnect to achieve the long-term goals.

# Theory of Change: Guiding Questions



A journey?

1 Where have we been?

3 Where do we want to go?

Vision

2 Where are we now?

5 How will we know we have arrived?

4 How shall we get there?

FINISH

## 1. What do you hope to change *in your context*, through engagement in a community of practice?
- Come up with a problem/change statement
- What is the current situation with regards to this?

## 2. Who are the stakeholders and beneficiaries?
- Who needs to change in order to address the problem?
- Who will you need to work with and influence?

## 3. What is the endpoint?
- What might it look like if the problem were solved? What do you want to see change?
- How will you know you have been successful?

# Theory of Change:
# Guiding Questions (cont'd)

## 4. How can a community of practice (CoP) help achieve these goals?

- In what ways do you hope participation in a CoP can help?
- What do you already do that we can learn from?

## 5. Barriers

- What are the negative factors that might be barriers?
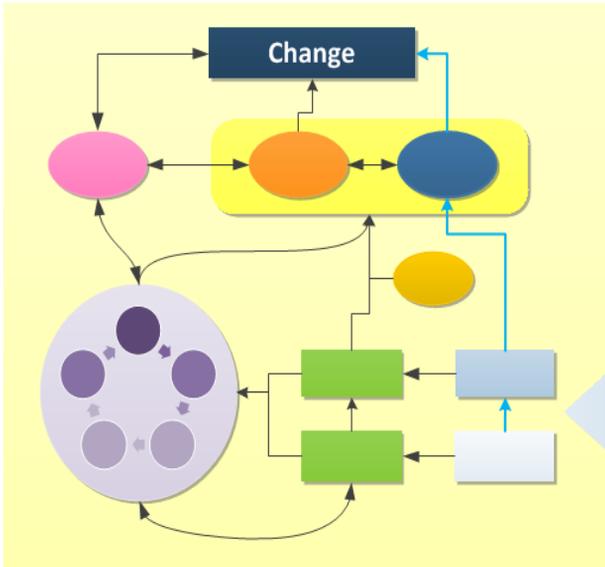- What action can you take to mitigate against these potential barriers?

A journey?

FINISH

1. Where have we been?

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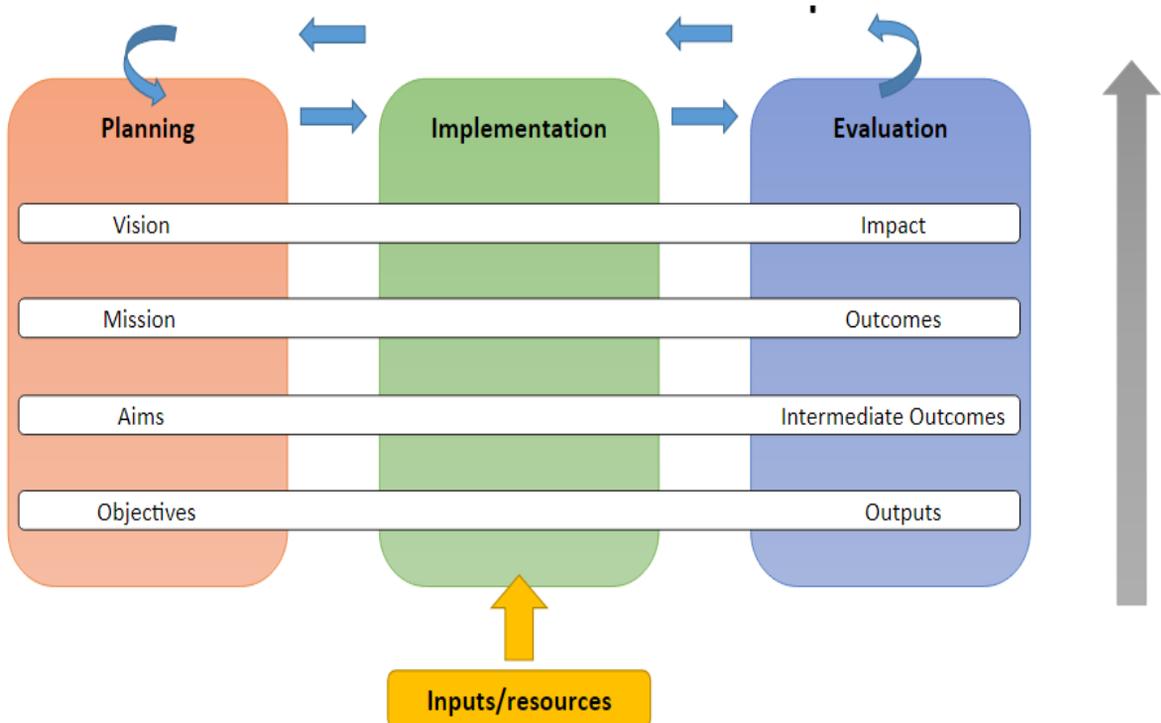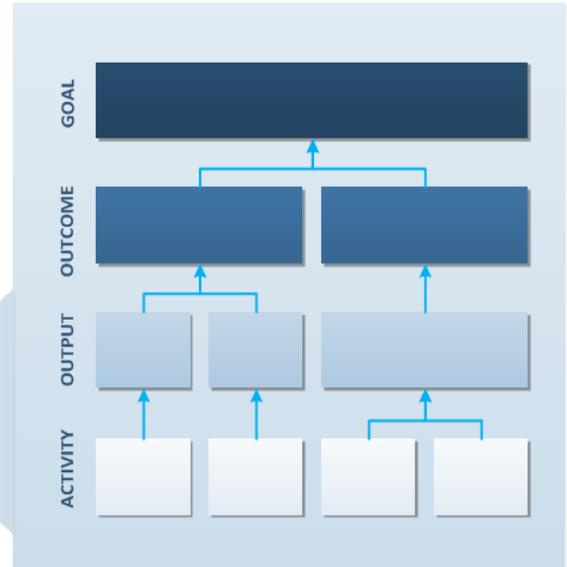# Theory of Change: Templates for Planning

## Theory of Change
Shows the big picture with all possible pathways – messy and complex



## Logical Framework
Shows just the pathway that your program deals with – neat and tidy

# Background Research and References

# Research

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