



## Aspire 2 Create: Review and Revisions from June 2014/ Updated in September 2015

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### **1. Master Class 1 Review:**

#### ***a) Identity and Learning Styles***

During the first Master Class it became obvious that the artists and creative professionals didn't identify themselves as 'trainers' but rather as artists that transfer skills and knowledge through a range of learning facilitation methods including mentor/coach/tutoring roles. The knowledge is transferred through practice and there was a strong preference for practical activity. These individuals prefer a pathway of learning that they deliver to the people they work with and this pathway is practical, non-formal, person-centred and collaborative, experiential and reflective. However, for the purposes of this document I will refer to these individuals as Artist Trainers (AT). It was clear from the 1<sup>st</sup> Master Class that from a pedagogical point of view any training for Artist Trainers would need to replicate this process. The previous ATs had a period of 2 years to absorb, test, reflect, refine, 'own' and use the framework. Masterclass 1 had been very ambitious in trying to accomplish the following 3 objectives, simultaneously, with partners:

- a) To introduce the history and concepts of the Euro-Aspire Framework;
- b) To prepare Candidates to undertake the Recognition and Validation process
- c) To help them understand the Assessor's role in this particular Framework.

#### ***b) Validity of the Euro-Aspire Framework***

The Euro-Aspire framework and tool-kit was developed for this specific profile of AT. However, the context in each country is very different and the awareness of the need for the validation of non-formal learning across a spectrum from minimum with Eastern European partners to maximum in UK and Italy, despite the 2012 Directive about this given to all European countries concerning the validation of non-formal and informal learning.

#### ***c) Levels 5 and 7 in the Framework***

Another issue that arose in the first Master Class was the difference between ATs who are operating at Level 5 and those which are operating at Level 7. There is no directive that requires individual ATs to have to progress to Level 7. Level 5 is Competent and Level 7 is Proficient. This can be translated quite simply into those



who are working 'operationally' at Level 5 and those who are working 'strategically' at Level 7. The Euro-Aspire Framework has its Levels referenced to the European Qualifications Framework and to the National Occupational Standards for the closest Sector in the UK.

The EQF Level 7 key criteria are as follows:

- i) *I am a Mentor of other professionals within the sector*
- ii) *I possess Critical Knowledge of the Practice and Sector*
- iii) *I engage in Innovation within the Practice or the Sector or both*
- iv) *I transform Complex and Unpredictable Work Contexts*
- v) *I make a Public Contribution on behalf of the Profession*

The EQF Level 5 key criteria are as follows:

- i) I possess a Comprehensive Knowledge of the Field of Practice and the Boundaries of the Sector
- ii) I manage Work Contexts in which there is Unpredictable Change
- iii) I am able to Develop Creative Solutions to Abstract Problems
- iv) I am able to Review and Develop the Work Performance of Myself and Others
- v) I engage in Continuing Professional Development

#### **d) Levels 5 and 7 in Practice**

It is vital to understand what differentiates these two levels in practice. This means being able to answer the three following related questions:

1. *How can we recognise the 'strategic' role in the actual practice of ATs?*
2. *How did the ATs, who can demonstrate the competencies and expertise required for Level 7, acquire these and what types of work or practice could enable this jump from Level 5 to Level 7?*
3. *How does working at Level 7 impact the quality, scope and scale of work inputs, outputs and processes?*

Answers to these questions could inform and extend this inquiry in a meaningful way that would help to promote the framework as both a validation tool and a development tool for ATs and their respective employers and commissioners.

Provisional exploration and indicative answers for the purposes of writing this paper was supported by an Action Learning set of 4 ATs, of which I am a member:

Question 1: *How can we recognise the 'strategic' role in the actual practice of ATs?*

*Indicative answer:*

- i) Ability to locate their own practice and the practice of others within the wider context of their peers;
- ii) Ability to sustain their own practice and to identify sustainability issues and suggest potential strategies for others to sustain their practice;



- iii) Ability to innovate, recognise and learn from mistakes and to apply that learning in the same and new contexts, as appropriate;
- iv) Ability to reflect on and review own practice and that of others using peer-developed or other critical frameworks and theories to determine if the practice-in-context is accountable to stakeholders and is fit for purpose and participants;
- v) Ability to make connections with their peers in the sector and other external stakeholders;
- vi) Understanding the implications of the different aspects of the work;
- vii) Ability to communicate effectively by listening and asking the right questions to get to the heart of what is wanted, needed or required from stakeholders;
- viii) Ability to prioritise and make decisions about what is important and what is less important in a range of delivery contexts.
- ix) Ability to confidently work with content, context and process in the 3 key areas of integrated practice: artistic, knowledge transfer and social development to skillfully deliver a broad range of aims and objectives.

*Question 2: How did the ATs, who can demonstrate the competencies and expertise required for Level 7, acquire these and what types of work or practice could enable this jump from Level 5 to Level 7?*

*Indicative answer:*

- i) being an AT that manages and supervises other ATs;
- ii) being promoted to a more strategic role in a cultural or other organisation;
- iii) working for several organisations with different approaches or/and an International dimension;
- iv) adapting their practice to different contexts and witnessing a shift along different spectra
- v) being accountable to stakeholders for particular outcomes and regularly reviewed against these;
- vi) setting up and running their own business contracting directly with stakeholders and possibly other ATS;
- vii) coming into AT sector from another sector in which these competencies were acquired;

*Question 3: How does working at Level 7 impact the quality, scope and scale of work inputs, outputs and processes?*

*Indicative answer:*

- i) AT expertise is matched to opportunities and constraints to improve quality;
- ii) greater understanding, clarity and discernment is used to define and address issues concerned with scope, scale, inputs and outputs and expertise is harnessed to identify and engage appropriate strategies to deliver agreed outcomes to stakeholders;



- iii) supervision and mentoring of others so that they engage effectively in a project or programme by keeping the big picture in mind and paying attention to the fine detail and enabling effective management of contributions and processes.
- iv) recognition and delivery of the different outputs, balancing the differing priorities of various stakeholders and managing tensions within complex relationships e.g. earned income and innovation; participation rates and depth of experience; and artistic objectives and cost;

The answers to these questions for the application of Euro-Aspire to the new Cultural Enterprise practice may also provide insight for this role in the next year of the Aspire 2 Create project.

## 2. Andragogical (Pedagogy for Adult Learning) Review:

### a) *The validity of the transferability of the Euro-Aspire Framework*

ATs engage in a process of 'practice-theory-practice'. The Euro-Aspire Framework recognizes this and engages with ATs using common strategies of design thinking and other creative processes. These strategies are '*reflection in action*' and '*reflection on action*'. These are already carried out by many ATs in their work and practices.

### b) *Theoretical basis*

Schon<sup>1</sup> (1983,1987) describes these 2 processes as types of 'knowing-in-action':

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- i) "Reflection-in-action helps us as we complete a task. It is that process that allows us to reshape what we are working on, *while* we are working on it. It is that on-going experimentation that helps us find a viable solution. In this, we do not use a "trial-and-error" method. Rather, our actions are much more reasoned and purposeful than that. If something isn't working correctly (doesn't seem right, doesn't seem to move you closer to the goal) then you "reflect" (a conscious activity) in the action-present..... , knowing-in-action is often that tacit information that we know about doing something—it is often left unexplained or unmentioned when we describe what we do. It is revealed in skillful performance. Reflecting-in-action is generally called forth when a surprise appears in the process of accomplishing the task. And that surprise causes one to question how the surprise occurred given our usual thinking process.....Many of the "surprises" you will encounter will appear because the knowing-in-action on which you draw is largely skills that you perhaps developed in other fields. Thus, the surprises occur because your old model doesn't work without modification for the new task. You reflect-in-action and find out what is different and how you can change your thinking to address this new task."





- ii) “Reflection-on-action ..... is provided by final reflection papers..... “lessons learned,” and also any time (written or otherwise) in which you evaluate your own process..... We reflect *on* action, thinking back on what we have done in order to discover how our knowing-in-action may have contributed to an unexpected outcome.

### c) *The Euro-Aspire Process*

In the Euro-Aspire Framework, ATs are guided through the process of Self-Assessment in which they identify incidences of their practice against the competences of the Framework. They may not have previously considered the extent of their own competences in the 3 key areas of their practice: *Artistic Practice*, *Knowledge Transfer to Others* and *Developing Social Potential of Others*. They may have regarded or still regard one competence group important and another, unimportant before using the framework. The Framework mirrors the competences embedded in their tacit practice. ATs are therefore challenged to view their practice using two different frames of reference. The first frame is that of before the AT engaged with the Euro-Aspire process and the second frame is whilst engaging with Euro-Aspire. ATs select the ‘critical’ incidents, activities and artefacts that they consider to demonstrate meeting a specific competence at the appropriate level of the framework using the self-assessment tool. They also engage in a peer review called the Professional Dialogue, a process in which they are asked to explain these incidents etc. from their own perspective and demonstrate how they can link these to the EA Framework perspective and during this part of the process they are enabled to see any shifts in their thinking or identify different perspectives or parameters being assimilated into their knowing-in-action. ATs are facilitated to demonstrate that they are engaging in thinking within these two frames and they are questioned about their own action to uncover what this action tells them about what they know. As a direct result of this process ATs can be recognised and validated.

### 3. Euro-Aspire Approach Review:

ATs are used to meeting people 'where they are', engaging them in creative activities and transforming arts and non-arts contexts and delivering a range of emphasis and outcomes relating to arts and creative practices, learning facilitation and social development. The practices of ATs across Europe are very diverse and operate along various spectra: from formal to informal; from artist-led to stakeholder-led; from art-centered to participant-centered; from subsidized to entrepreneurial; from local to international; from historical to innovative; from short-term to long-term; from brief encounters to long term relationships; from rigidity to fluidity; from conforming to anarchical; from emphasis of individual talent to emphasis of collaborative talent; In any approach to the transferring of Euro-Aspire, tensions will need to be managed between these spectra and also between the 2 ends of each spectrum!

ATs will expect their own particular practice to be acknowledged and valued. So an approach which classifies and divides into discrete groups or clusters will not be wholly accurate or helpful because ATs can and do shift their practice, depending on various personal, sector-based and external drivers. Therefore, it is important that



the practice is mapped in such a way that ATs can recognise and locate their own practice(s) alongside their peers in a non-divisive, non-classified way which is driven by a shared perspective and still offers critical potential.

It is also important that the process which enables ATs to do this is engaging, experiential, reflective, person-centred and collaborative as these are familiar ways of working and learning to ATs. The quality framework applied to AT work needs to be sensible and usable and to give a critical perspective whilst maintaining a fluidity that can be based on where one's specific practice is located along these various spectra, as this will depend on the internal and external drivers and the specific country contexts. The process of locating both the common practice of ATs in a specific country and an individual AT on these spectra is equivalent to using an AT GPS tool! This could be developed in an on-line facility but is currently outside the remit of this particular project.

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- i) <sup>i</sup> Schon, D.A [www.uiowa.edu/~c07w120/reflection.doc](http://www.uiowa.edu/~c07w120/reflection.doc)) and Schön, D. A. (1987). *Teaching artistry through reflection-in-action*. In *Educating the reflective practitioner* (pp. 22-40). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass Publishers)

#### 4. Next steps for Aspire 2 Create: Trainer Visits

The plans to carry out Trainer Visits to each Partner Country will enable each partner and their candidates to have the opportunity to understand the rationale of the framework and the framework-in-use in the validation process without having the distraction of having to reference it to any other countries or candidates. The trainer who is visiting partners will be able to deal solely with their concerns and issues and be able to take candidates through the process of validation focusing on 3-5 of the competences, for which they will have been given notice to prepare. The Trainer Visits will act as a contrasting strategy from the Master Class to carry out the transfer of the Framework. These can then be compared with Master Class 1 and 2 using the Evaluation questionnaires that have been designed for the Trainer Visits.

#### 5. Between Master Class1 and Masterclass 2:

Partners had expressed their feelings about Masterclass 1 about the following:

- overload with information;
- a sense of frustration with the formal language of the European Qualifications Framework;
- a lack of transferability of the exact meaning and implications of the terminology to certain country contexts;



- a great deal of fuzziness about how to compile a portfolio to demonstrate professional competences using the framework;

Therefore, A2C leadership responded to a clear and definite need for some highly contextualised opportunities for Artists in each Partner country to be taken through the Validation process 'slowly and surely' so that they could understand it and prepare for Validation. Assessor visits were made to each partner over the summer period to take this strategy forward and to test it. According to the feedback after the Assessor visits, these were, without a doubt, the most successful method of transferring the framework as all partners expressed greater clarity, a sense of engagement and preparedness, which they had not expressed before.

Also, the partnership meeting in Croatia had led to a clearer understanding of how the Framework might be adapted for Cultural Enterprise feeding in the results of the research. The Italian, Estonian, UK and Slovakian Partners had candidates who were interested in this development and noted that 3 different roles were experienced across the partnership and embedded in the term Cultural or Creative Enterprise Advisor or Entrepreneur. These roles were

1. Artist Development and Management;
2. Cultural Development and Management;
3. Creative Business Development and Management

New documents were produced and circulated following Masterclass1 that aimed to make the Framework clearer and expressed the competences in more detail and adapted the original Euro-Aspire tool-kit to make it easier to use and more visually attractive. However, there was still some feedback from partners concerning the formal language of the documents despite, these having been further adapted, in response to the Artist Candidates and some of the partners.

## **6: Review of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Masterclass:**

The 2<sup>nd</sup> Masterclass was held on Thursday 13 –Friday 14 November 2014 at Chocolate Factory 2, London. 11 people attended the Masterclass as 'Trainers' with some partners as observers. Candidates and observers acknowledged the progress made after the Assessor visits, and then proceeded to go on review the latest Level 7 document. This document was considered to be less formal in tone with greater clarity about the application of the framework and validation towards the gaining of an award or qualification at Level 7. It used the same competencies as the framework but also gave a clearer indication of the requirements to achieve the level of the EQF rather than any of their National Qualifications Frameworks. The discussion centered on the use of terminology and the differences between country contexts. A clear consensus was reached on the adoption of a 'nuts and bolts' version of the Framework which could be translated and fully contextualized for different countries. Candidates were then invited to test Moodle by up-loading files and it soon became apparent that further work was needed to make this a seamless



process. Issues were raised and agreements made about data protection, child protection and intellectual property. The session ended with a short film about the value and transferability of Open Badges for informal learning which was met with interest but significant reservation giving a consensus to focus solely on Moodle as a platform.

The candidates then focused on 3 tasks for Cultural Learning practitioners:

- a) uploading candidate portfolios;
- b) completing the self-assessment tool and linking relevant excerpts of the candidate portfolio to each of the specific competences;
- c) professional dialogues;

Then the 4<sup>th</sup> task related to the key technical areas identified by the research for the role of Creative Entrepreneur Adviser were as follows:

#### **A. Intervention in the Cultural and Creative Sectors (CCS)**

- a) Awareness of Infrastructure of regional, national or international CCS;
- b) Access CCS networks at a regional, national or international level;
- c) Develop CCS infrastructure by nourishing, educating, connecting, investing, focusing, extending etc.
- d) Engage in entrepreneurial activities in the CCS or other relevant sectors;
- e) Connect artists and creatives to consumer and business markets by advocacy, negotiation, mediation or brokering activities;

#### **B. Commercial insight, innovation and Intellectual property**

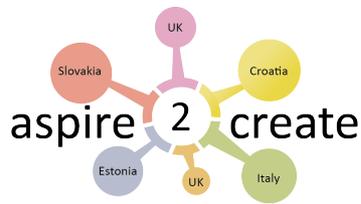
- a) Engage in Business or Career planning activities for CCS;
- b) Appraise potential and actual opportunities for accessing finance appropriate to CCS;
- c) Appraise potential and actual opportunities for developing and exploiting intellectual property, other knowledge assets and goods relevant to the experience economy within regional, national or international contexts;
- d) Identify, develop or appraise individual and collaborative business structures and models for specific social and commercial enterprises in CCS;

#### **C. Business and Project Realization**

- a) Realize and evaluate a project or business in CCS or other relevant sectors from conception to completion;
- b) Identify development needs and to construct and negotiate a change management programme to address these and to evaluate the impact and effectiveness of the programme;
- c) Administrate a project or business in CCS or other relevant sectors;
- d) Engage in problem-solving and innovate within the CCS;

#### **D. Marketing and Communications**

- a) Communicate effectively with stakeholders through written and audio-visual material and in face-to-face contexts e.g. in business plans, promotional videos and pitches;
- b) Market CCS projects, businesses and products to business and consumer



markets using social and other media to build and exploit communities of interest;  
c) Identify, appraise and exploit potential and actual branding opportunities in the CCS and other relevant sectors;  
d) Add value to CCS projects, businesses and products through public relations and advocacy in regional, national or international contexts;

The technical competences for the creative and cultural enterprise roles were matched to the Euro-Aspire Framework alongside the transferable competencies of sharing knowledge and skills and developing social potential. The 1<sup>st</sup> day ended with this positive step into the Year 2 programme, after a great deal of engagement, discussion and hard work from all participants.

The 2<sup>nd</sup> day demonstrated the differences in competencies between Level 5 and Level 7. Everyone confirmed that they understood the differences and the competences for each of the 2 groups of potential candidates. This led on to a discussion about the proposed Masterclass 3 for validating Level 5 candidates and any further Level 7 candidates in Cultural Enterprise. For Level 7 candidates to act as the mentors of Level 5 candidates they would require further training. All candidates validated at Level 7 by the end of December were invited to access the Peer Reviewer Training Programme delivered via moodle, email and/or skype to prepare for inducting and mentoring the next 11-12 candidates. The following requirements for supporting new candidates were identified, prioritized by the team in line with resources and actioned:

**a) Kick-off briefing with Candidates**

- Induction for what counts as evidence;
- Simulation of the Validation process;
- Connecting each competence with relevant piece of evidence;
- Peer dialogue and review;

**b) Collective Support for assessors: a network of assessors (peer support);**

- National language version, if desired;
- Tutorials and workshops on line/face-to-face (Slovakia) using examples;
- List of standardized technical details for evidence (formats, resolutions, space, size etc.);
- Technical support for local organization and the candidate (space, camera, projector, lap tops etc.);
- On-Line tool admin support (opened account, problem solving etc.);
- An Open Channel of support (on-line mentoring, problem-solving, advising etc.)



**c) Moodle site :**

- User Friendly Levels 3,5,7;
- Structure resembling self-assessment tool;
- Technical (admin) Support;
- Video Promo: Why? What? Who? How?
- Level descriptions and goals;
- Identify as artist established
- Identify purpose as social action

At the end of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Masterclass there was some concern about transferring the methods of assessment for Level 5 candidates to the new Level 7s and some were uncomfortable with the way that other candidates were interpreting and intending to use the framework. These were difficult to resolve as they expressed ideological positions and contexts rather than issues. One of the key benefits gained through reflecting on a painful collective learning experience concerned the face-to-face professional dialogues. The 2<sup>nd</sup> Masterclass highlighted the following critical success factors for international professional dialogues:

- The need for assessors to have had access to a candidate's portfolio and self-reflective statements and have signed-off these off as complete before the Professional Dialogue occurs;
- The need to avoid technical issues with equipment or to be able to quickly resolve these so that participants don't have to repeat the Professional Dialogue;
- Extra time for interpretation for English and other Mother-tongue dialogues and also those held in English but with participants with English as a second language;
- The provision to ensure that everyone has access to an interpreter if they required one, as a matter of fairness.
- The need for limiting the ability of assessors to modify the process for different candidates rather than to follow a specific standard process that ensures fairness but adapting as necessary for equality requirements;
- The need for standardization conversations between assessors across country contexts;
- The need for recorded Professional Dialogues to be sampled and moderated by a third Assessor;
- The need for understanding country and partner preferences or constraints in relation to compressing, uploading files and formats containing the recording of the Professional dialogues;

In Masterclass 2, a problem-solving and experiential approach explored how the assessment process devised in the Euro-Aspire Framework avoided formal values and connotations and maintained a non-formal learning context. The critical success factors for an International Professional Dialogue mentioned



above and the concern of current candidate about their 'readiness' to engage with mentoring and 'assessing' new candidates clearly indicated that the term 'assessor' was not accurate nor helpful and that individuals validated at Level 7 were not properly equipped to engage in this process, despite having been through it themselves. It must be recognized that individuals are primarily artists and not formal educators or technicians and that the Euro-Aspire Framework was developed within a Community of Practice for recognition and validation of non-formal learning. Therefore, the proper term is 'Peer Reviewer' rather than 'Assessor' and the process of Peer Reviewing using the framework in a number of diverse contexts and across Levels is complex and requires further experiential learning and support.

The learning in Masterclass 2 was at times tough and complex but, in critical reflection, highly valuable thanks to the goodwill, challenges, ideas, advice and support from partners, particularly those used to engaging in VET and work-based assessment schemes. The twelve statements below are based on the lessons learnt from Masterclass 2:

- A. The Euro-Aspire Framework is adaptable in all countries but needs to be translated and fully contextualized in each partner country and targeted to the correct role and sector;
- B. The unique aspects of the non-formal context of the framework need to be communicated in a stronger narrative; e.g. Artist-Led; Peer Reviewers; Recognition and Validation Process;
- C. The most successful method of transferring the Framework and supporting the candidates in a single country is to schedule a visit to individual partner countries. The Masterclass format provides rich discussion and learning, enables broader cross-cultural professional network development and is a useful way of gaining consensus but it can equally get bogged down in complex and highly contextual positioning without the time resource to fully address the relevant issues, needs and concerns of each partner and their candidates;
- D. The availability of evidence to all Peer Reviewers needs to take place at least 2 weeks prior to the Professional Dialogue so that the Portfolio and Self Reflective statements can be checked against the competences, particularly if the On-Line environment fails or is limited by internet issues on the day.
- E. A standardized approach to key aspects of the Peer Review process involving 2 Peer Reviewers with each Candidate should be communicated to all and used, including the way in which candidates are addressed at the beginning, during and then at the end of the Professional Dialogue. This needs to be a positive enabling experience for all candidates. The Professional Dialogue is an opportunity for the Peer Reviewers to feedback on the portfolio in relation to the appropriate Level; to respectfully probe for more depth of discussion or information in relation to a specific competence or a specific part of the





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- portfolio and to re-frame the question to the candidate or to enable the candidate to connect their work to the question.
- F. More care must be taken to address special needs including facilities for Professional Dialogues in the Mother-tongue and using English as a second language.
  - G. There needs to be a contract between the candidate and the Peer Reviewers that articulates the responsibilities on both sides e.g. **candidates:** *intellectual property, authorship and plagiarism, adequate preparation and cost* e.g. **peer reviewers:** *fairness, validity and reliability of assessment, privacy, child protection and procedure for appealing against assessment decisions.*
  - H. The beta version of the Aspire2Create templates that were circulated at the meeting in Croatia are usable and effective e.g. the self-assessment form, the assessors form and the professional dialogue check-list (although lines/spaces for signatures of candidate and assessors need to be put in place on these documents)
  - I. The level descriptors need to have concrete examples so that candidates know exactly how to show that they meet or can meet these.
  - J. The space and equipment needs to be functional and ready to record and upload the Professional Dialogue and the internet needs to be available for accessing the links that may make up a digital portfolio or partners could consider a requirement for be a physical copy of the portfolio on DVD.
  - K. The Recognition and Validation Scheme requires an Internal Verification role (IV) or 3<sup>rd</sup> Peer Reviewer who examines the submissions of candidates across time and country and the External Verification role can be provided via a certificating authority which samples, quality assures and moderates this process.
  - L. The Cultural Enterprise candidates need to use the same tools and follow the same process as that used for Cultural Learning.

### 7. In between Masterclass 2 and 3:

A follow-up visit to Slovakia was made to address the specific concerns of the candidates and testing the newly developed standardization process and to re-run the professional dialogues of the Slovakian candidates. A native Italian speaker was identified to be the 3<sup>rd</sup> Peer Reviewer for Professional Dialogues taking place in Italian. The 3<sup>rd</sup> Masterclass was adapted to consist of a Peer Reviewers Training Programme intensive workshop with an open session observing Slovakian Peer Reviewers working with their Candidates. The development team began to engage in building a highly innovative open source moodle technology solution to enable candidates to link competencies in the framework to items in their portfolio in an organic and intuitive way. This process continued throughout the 2nd year and was based on consultation, research and development. The tool was developed to have the ability to change the parameters to accommodate different pathways using the framework and to replace the cumbersome process of completing a paper-based



version of the tool, scanning and uploading it. This was done in partnership with synergy learning.

Peer Reviewer Trainees who were all successfully validated candidates at Level 7 were identified by mid-February 2015. There was a kick-off briefing on Moodle and an Individual Partner briefing on Skype with collective coaching sessions on Skype for 1 to 1. Four sessions on the following 7 topics were delivered before the 3<sup>rd</sup> Masterclass in Bratislava:

**Session 1:**

- Cultural Learning
- Creative Enterprise Adviser
- Competences at Levels 5 and 7;
- Developing Glossary of terminology/country contexts;
- Peer Review and the Validation Process;

**Session 2:**

- Technical Aspects
- Compile appropriate relevant short clips, documents and other evidence
- Link evidence to competencies in the 3 strands with relevant notes for assessor;
- Supporting candidates to use the Self-Assessment Tool

**Session 3:**

- Using the Assessment Tool to assess the evidence against the competences;
- Operating a Professional Dialogue: Dos and Don'ts;
- Asking the Candidate appropriate questions;
- Seeking specific examples and explanations;

**Session 4:**

- The role of the External Validator and the moderation process;
- Grievance and Appeals procedure;

## 8. MasterClass 3: The Peer Reviewer Training Programme

The Peer Reviewer Training Programme and the open session with the Slovakia candidates addressed the whole process and shared discussion, questions and answers in an open workshop.

The following areas were covered:

**Peer Review:**

- work context
- conclusion about meeting competencies or not
- discussion of the final decision between peer reviewers
- peers in community of practice are making the validation decision supported by a standardized process
- Fairness – Equal chances for everyone to get a good assessment.



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- Review procedures and practices must be clear and not disadvantage any individual.
  - Reliability - There must be consistency in the interpretation of evidence of meeting the competencies from one peer review to the next across time and consistency of interpretation across all reviewers.
  - Validity – peer reviews must be appropriate for their intended purpose.
  - Safety - procedures should be suitable to the candidates needs and practicable and manageable to deliver in terms of time and resources.
  - Types of evidence –include observation of projects, products, outputs, activities, work, performance, critical reviews, references, testimonials, feedback, etc.

#### **Non-formal community of practice context:**

- license
- horizontal
- social and cultural community
- innovation and non- conventional
- experience and capability
- less formal and more experiential
- drawn from experience
- leadership/ confidence
- more open

#### **Roles:**

- Peer Reviewer 1/Mentor (PR1);
- Peer Reviewer 2/Internal Reviewer (PR2);
- External Moderator for Certification Purposes (EM)
- All these people are *practitioners* and able to check the *level* against the *criteria determined by their community of practice*;

#### **Core components:**

- High context knowledge and experience
- Core values
- Mentoring
- Self-assessment
- 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> reviews portfolio/level
- 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> reviews professional practice reflections/level
- 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> reviews professional dialogue/level



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- 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> peer review report
  - Full or sample review external moderator/level
  - External moderation report

### **Core values:**

- Recognition and validation of work-based learning by a community of practice;
- Benchmarking of this validation to formal qualifications via national and European qualifications frameworks;
- Diversity
- Open ways of learning
- Different Contexts
- Capability
- Identity
- Experience
- Practice-led
- Horizontal
- Practice: Innovation/Creativity/Cultural aesthetics

### **Time commitment:**

- Peer Reviewer 1/Mentor: up to 20 hours per candidate
- Peer Reviewer 2/Internal Verification: up to 10 hours per candidate
- Peer Reviewer 3/External Verification: up to 3 hours per candidate

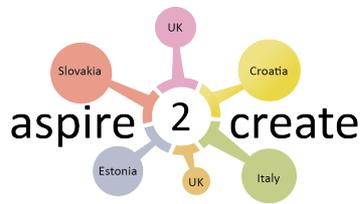
### **Sequence:**

- Induction
- Self-assessment and mentoring
- 1<sup>st</sup> Peer Review
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Peer Review (Verification)
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Peer Review (Moderator)

## **9. The Peer Training Programme**

The Peer Reviewer Training Programme continued after Masterclass 3 with at least 2 observations of every Peer Reviewer working with at least 2 candidates in at least 2 Professional Dialogues. Constructive positive feedback was given to Peer Reviewers to improve their performance and all were able to successfully carry out a professional dialogue.

This feedback from these observations was aggregated and circulated with the following key points:



- Make sure that the questions are not too long or don't have more than 2 component parts.
- Make sure that you don't ask or lead the candidate to consider external issues which are not directly relevant to the candidate's practice or his/her reflections on practice.
- Listen fully to the candidate's answer to the first question and then make sure that the second question is related to the first question and requires some deepening of the answer to the first question.
- There can be a direct connection or an indirect connection between the candidate's answer to the first question and the content of the second question.
- The second question cannot be answered by pure description but only through narrowing the focus and requiring some analysis of one or more aspects of the practice e.g. methods applied to other contexts, synthesis of two or more elements, or practice-theory-practice insight, contextual understanding of the practice in country, sector etc.
- If the candidate clearly misunderstands the question then rephrase the question asking them to address what you are actually asking without giving them hints towards the answer or asking leading questions e.g. do you think that...(giving them the answer)
- If the candidate gives a response with generalizations without any concrete examples then ask for specific examples in a specific time, place, group etc. with a specific purpose, problem, outcome etc.
- Prepare the candidates for the first questions but don't prepare them for any of the actual second questions as follow-up questions need to be based on the candidate's actual answers to the first questions in the dialogue.
- Each candidate needs to be familiar with the 3 strands of practice and how these relate directly to their practice in their own country context. This may mean changing the actual terminology in translation but keeping the spirit of the meaning intact e.g. non-formal learning as learning in the workplace, community, and using strategies other than formal teaching or tutoring.
- The introduction to the Professional Dialogue is short and gives the name of the candidate, the location and time in that location, the names of the 1<sup>st</sup> Peer Reviewer (located in that country location and validated in that pathway) and the 2<sup>nd</sup> Peer Reviewer (located elsewhere and validated in that pathway), any interpreter and any internal or external verifier, assessor or observer.
- The time allocated per question/answer with any allowance for translation needs to drive the approach of the Peer Reviewer1, who is responsible for ensuring that the candidate has the proper amount of time to consider each of the questions. Candidates need



to be advised to answer the questions directly and concisely without too much subsidiary information unless requested to do so.

- Peer Reviewers are required to contextualize the practice of the candidate alongside their own practice and that of other peers at the relevant level.
- Even though the Peer Reviewers will be familiar with the Candidate's portfolio they should not answer for the candidate or give the candidate their desired response even when the candidate omits the obvious or struggles to answer the question. However, the Peer Reviewer can always rephrase the question to ensure that the candidate has grasped the purpose or relevance of the question to the candidate's practice.
- If candidate has satisfied the peer reviewer and is continuing to speak or repeat the same information, the peer reviewer must politely interrupt and move on to the next question. If there is time at the end of the professional dialogue, the candidate could be invited to add something else to the dialogue.
- The peer reviewer will require time to consider the approach and content of the 2<sup>nd</sup> question and the candidate will require time to consider his/her answer to that second question and so this aspect of the professional dialogue should not be rushed. A good question from the Peer Reviewer will be thought-provoking and require a considered response from the candidate.

#### **10. Certification of the Recognition and Validation Process:**

Several options for certification were initially explored and then one key contender was identified and the potential for collaboration was pursued within the UK. These options were:

**Youthpass**- not specific enough nor appropriate as only valid for Young people

**Europass**- based on 5 documents not specific enough; doesn't support high level validation without formal qualifications;

**OCR** – limited understanding of practice in the Creative and Cultural Sector

**EdExcel/Pearson**- Formal education based with some apprenticeships in Creative Roles but lagging behind practice and Further Education separation of 'knowledge' and 'practice';

**AIM** – 2<sup>nd</sup> choice; subgroup from an Open College Network with strong non-formal adult education values;

**Scottish Qualifications Authority** – 1<sup>st</sup> choice; engaged by the Cultural and Creative Sector Skills Council in the UK to validate and Certicate all their Apprenticeship programme; Long history of working with transferable skills and the recognition of non-formal and informal learning; experience of similar professional group awards e.g.in play-leadership;



Discussions were had with SQA staff, who were knowledgeable and supportive and could provide a structure that didn't negatively impact the non-formal and practice-based learning at the heart of the proposed validation and certification.

### **11. Review of the outcomes of the Project:**

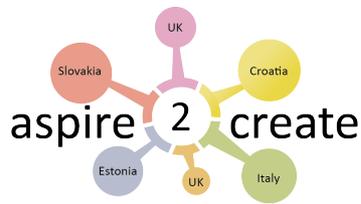
Final Review of Aspire2 Create by delivery team Denise Stanley with Enzo Pellegrini and David Garcia:

#### **Strengths**

- a) Common On-Line Learning environment with multi-location, one-stop repository of all documents, track-ability and accountability of interactions and engagement as activity is recorded;
- b) International Benchmarking of practice at a Pan-European level;
- c) Peer Review process by practitioners with Higher Level Skills operating at EQF Level 7 with clearly defined roles, sequence of activities, boundaries and responsibilities;
- d) Mix of face-to-face and on-line activities connecting peer networks in each country;
- e) Breaking down the barriers between formal assessment and non-formal and informal learning through open source plug-in created to map diverse materials across framework of competencies in an organic and intuitive way;
- f) Peer Reviewer training programme to equip practitioners for the peer review process developed and tested as 'fit for purpose';
- g) Good use made of interpreters throughout the recognition and validation process for people whose mother-tongue was not English because this was factored in and tested, even when the dialogue took place in English with non-native speakers;
- h) Informative animation explaining the stages and rationale of A2C Programme with a Euro-centric approach;
- i) Direct comparison of Framework competencies at specific levels with relevant and appropriate contextual support material of practitioners to meet the competencies irrespective of engaging in regional, national or international activities;

#### **Weaknesses**

- a) Resource heavy on the technology side requiring its own dedicated server and on-demand staffing;



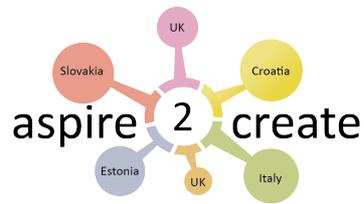
- b) Closer interface between the development of the process and content for the on-line learning environment and the process of improving the capacity of platform and software to facilitate all users e.g. clear standardised protocols and directives for users in relation to the file formats of uploaded materials;
- c) The recording of Professional Dialogues needs to take place within the on-line learning environment so that all activity is captured in the relevant place in the repository and this is therefore accessible to all appropriate users in the required identical format;
- d) Timing of the implementation phases of problem-solving, design and implementation in relation to structural technological and platform issues in relation to the timing of individual practitioners going through the recognition and validation programme for both pathways;
- e) Site moderation policy wasn't developed as this wasn't required in A2C as all users were engaged in face-to-face relationships;
- f) Strong dependence of text-based documents rather than developing and using strong info-graphics;

### **Opportunities**

- a) Strong potential for certification in UK and potential transfer to other countries;
- b) Replicable process across job-role and meeting international standards and moderated by specific roles-in county or regional context;
- c) Raising and Making visible higher level competencies of creative and cultural workforce impacting national statistics, inward investment, employer skills awareness and contractor awareness of freelancers competencies;
- d) Increasing mobility of practitioners across EU as common bench-marked practice competencies and levels;
- e) New jobs/new roles for high quality EQF Level 7 Validated and trained Peer Reviewers across EU;

### **Threats**

- a) Lack of certification that transfers across EU means different models with different applications of standards and therefore international benchmarking and practitioner mobility opportunities are lost;
- b) Aspects of the process are adopted/adapted and reconfigured to relocate the programme back in the formal sector relying only on formal assessment processes and losing the political and social equity agenda of recognising non-formal and informal learning in its own right with award bearing value



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opposed to a part-award requiring access to formal education to complete a valid award;

- c) Lack of available, accessible CPD funding for cultural and creative industries workers in SMEs or as freelancers to have their competencies recognised and validated and benchmark their practice internationally;
- d) Lack of incentives, beneficial schemes or industry forces to attract and engage individuals into CPD for mobility, visibility, quality standards, new jobs and new roles;