

Report	Research Programme
Project	<b>Leonardo ASPIRE Project</b>  Lifelong Learning Programme

**Leonardo da Vinci  
Lifelong Learning programme**

**ASPIRE  
Research Programme**

**Interim Report: October 2010**

## **ASPIRE WORKPACKAGE 2 – RESEARCH PROGRAMME**

**Interim report:**

**30 October 2010**

The ASPIRE formative Research Programme began with desk-based research, which was aimed at gathering inputs for thought, the further scoping of the project and engaging in a deep analysis of the main constituent elements that appear to make up the context of the Non Formal Learning Sector (NFLS) in creative industries. One key area was to endeavour to place the organizations in the partnership within one or more learning philosophies. This was carried out in order to position the direction, approach and scope of the primary research with partners. The primary research aimed at achieving a number of closely-related objectives including an understanding of each of the partner organizations, their community and institutional capital. It also examined the relationships between trainee and trainer, the working contexts and probed the concept of internal and external legitimacy and cultural fit of current assessment mechanisms and validation systems through both small focus groups and the partnership forum.

The secondary research was carried out by the VIA team and Denise Stanley, a creative industries educational consultant working with the Collage Arts team. The primary research directives came out of discussion following discussion based on a literature review paper and an essay. I have included the key principles from the essay, which give the various considerations and philosophical approaches to the task of focusing the primary research, leading the analysis and inducting a model that fits the sector and that can act as an entry point or facilitate an exchange mechanism to the European Qualification Framework (EQF) and other national qualifications frameworks. The results of the research programme, so far, have provided some very rich qualitative data that does not fit neatly across the 4 categories but does give clear directives in terms of the direction of ASPIRE and gives an understanding of the location of the sector and possible interfaces with other stakeholders and how to uphold the integrity of the sector and to facilitate and further the validation and progression rights of the learner through partnership and within the EQF and other appropriate frameworks. I have included, here, a distillation of these principles (A1) together with a list of the literature (A2).

### **A1. Guiding principles for the ASPIRE research programme**

- We are dealing with complexity so need to avoid over simplification.
- We are striving to capture the intrinsic so we will try to detect the ‘core’ through use of narratives.
- We need to include passion and enthusiasm as well as values and civilisation so we will consider the trainer as an actor.
- We need to include spirit, mood and intentionality in learning so will use the terms kindness, playfulness and decisiveness to represent this.
- Identity is a question of how others understand what I am doing as well as how I understand so we will use a scaffolding model that focuses on individual, team and institutional scaffolding i.e. the social construction of capital.

- ‘Maximisers’ go for the perfect and ‘satisficers’ go for good enough so we consider all groups will experience these positions and will plan for this.
- Glue is the perfect metaphor for coherence, or social power needed in modern society so we will explore what this glue is and how it works in the sector.
- There is a striking similarity between everyday life and an actor on stage and the difference is consciousness so we will explore the relationship between trainer and trainee as it works through impulse-receptiveness, mirroring-good mood and status-respect.
- Tacit knowledge is like some kind of infectious matter from body to body so we will make an effort to systemize the issues on knowledge conversion from tacit into explicit and vice versa.
- To more fully understand the transferring of tacit knowledge we will examine the role of the trainer (on behalf of the trainee) to bring ambitions to the forefront and acknowledged by trainee and others.
- When considering three physical and metaphorical positions available to the trainer: in-front (instructor, status, ‘one-way’, role-taking), along-side (dialectical, playmate, authentic person, mutuality) behind (damage control, supporting trial and error) we will approach trainer as having a portfolio of skills and competences that enable improvisation and ‘on demand’ skill sets and acting by ‘intuition’ or insight not rules.
- As a social pedagogue, the trainer has an agenda besides the obvious learning target (learning a dance or learning how to mix music-recording tracks etc) and that is the achievement of a the trainee as a person, who masters his own life. The trainer’s knowledge is embodied in the action, which seems spontaneous so we will engage with the idea that the trainer’s competences are structured in such a way as to form a tool box in order to act as a social pedagogue and focus on the process and use instant interaction.
- Knowledge in action is the condition for meaningful human interaction so we will explore how to qualify the knowledge in action not how to replace it with rules, procedures and evidence about effects.
- The social pedagogical agenda deals with game (knowledge-in-action) and narratives (stories about what is important), bait (as in a trap) and bearing (as in a compass). The social pedagogical work on mood is achieved through mediation (dissolving conflict), moderation (of temperaments) and modelling (creating dreams, visions, and hopes for the future) so we will examine the trainer’s use of this social pedagogical agenda.
- The major task is the transfer of know how (the process of learning) from a restricted habitual formation by means of role-taking, bearings, narratives, mediation, moderation, modelling etc. in a learning situation which is tinted by social pedagogy and also to some extent described and understood (by trainer) in a vocabulary of social pedagogy and into a new, common understanding, which is shared by trainer and trainee. This new understanding – if the process is successful – is ‘empowerment’ so we will endeavour to map this process in practice.

- Individual recognition of achievement of knowledge, skills and competences is possible or can be adjusted to serve the informal and nonformal learning settings – and that must be the main factor in the validation in the Aspire project so we will also consider the outcome of learning settings as an assessment of aesthetic production, rather than just personal achieved qualifications because some of the importance or effectiveness by the trainer may depend on the trainees (tacit) knowledge of the achievements of the trainer.
- Aesthetic deals with an aspect of all kinds of human life and creation of artefacts, production, design and communication – it has a cultural emphasis on human activities in societies or classes with a minimum of wealth, since it transcends simple, biological survival skills so we will recommend a design-development schedule with 4 levels of considering the outcome of the product in order to get a comprehensive idea of a larger range of implications, including those intended to catch the intrinsic factors: spirituality (philosophy, values, myths, identity), contextual expression (history, narrative, setting, interactions, storyline, style), principles, concept (principles of production, shaping and function), material product (production details, materials, principles of production).
- You cannot really plan a course of life for youngsters. You must rely on a complex number of unknown factors (due to the initial values of modern life) and also rely on chance so we will examine how we can increase the possibilities of chance – so to speak – by enhancing the settings, the role-taking, the narratives etc. in the environments of the trainee.
- Disasters, dangers and death matter or at least the emotions and sentiments attached are very much part of the agenda in creative work so we will explore the concept of creating a safe space for the content and process of creative work.

## **A2 Literature that makes connections between: Youth, education, competencies, arts, (postmodern) society:**

Boys-Reymond, Manuela du and Blasco, Andreu López (2003): Yo-yo transitions and misleading trajectories: towards integrated transition policies for young adults in Europe. In *Young people and the contradictions of inclusion, towards integrated transition policies in Europe*. Ed. By Andreu López Blasco, Wallace McNeish, Andreas Walther, Bristol

Deasy, Richard J. ed.) (2002): *Critical Links: Learning in the Arts and Student Academic and Social Development*. Arts Education Partnership

This Compendium summarizes and discusses 62 research studies that examine the effects of arts learning on students' social and academic skills. The research studies cover each of the art forms and have been widely used to help make the case that learning in the arts is academic, basic, and comprehensive. *Cost*

Fiske, Edward B. (ed.) (1999) *Champions of change. The impact of the arts on learning*.

The Arts Education Partnership

This report compiles seven major studies that provide new evidence of enhanced learning and achievement when students are involved in a variety of arts experiences

Gadsden, Vivian L (2008) : *The arts and education: knowledge, pedagogy, and the*

discourse of learning. In: review of Research in Education 32:29

Gale, Richard (2005): Aesthetic Literacy and the "living of lyrical moments". In: Journal of cognitive affective learning 2 (1)

Haynes, F. (2008). What counts as a competency in the arts? Paper presented at the Australian Association for Research in Education Conference. Retrieved march 2010 from <http://www.aare.edu.au/93pap/haynf93103.txt>

Jacobs, Rachel (2009): Measuring Aesthetic development: A national dialogue. Paper presented at the 2009 AC SA National Biennial Conference. Curriculum: a national conversation (Australia). Retrieved 11-3-2010 at <http://www.acsa.edu.au/pages/page484.asp>

Langager Søren : Wild learning -social and pedagogical work with marginalized youth. Unpublished, DPU DK

Langager Søren(2003): Social pedagogy and "at risk" youth: societal changes and new challenges in social work with youth. In: The diversity of social pedagogy in Europe, ed. Jakob Kornbeck and Niels Rosendal Jensen

Miles, Steven: the art of learning: empowerment through performing arts. (2003) Young people and the contradictions of inclusion, towards integrated transitionpolicies in Europe. Ed. By Andreu López Blasco, Wallace McNeish, Andreas Walther, Bristol

Mørch, S, Stalder, Barbara S.(2003): Competence and employability. In: Young people and the contradictions of inclusion, towards integrated transitionpolicies in Europe. Ed. By Andreu López Blasco, Wallace McNeish, Andreas Walther, Bristol

Owen-Smith, Patricia (2008): rescuing the affective: teaching the mind and the heart. In: Journal of cognitive affective learning 4 (2)

Pais, José Machado, Pohl, Axel (2003): Of roofs and knives: the dilemmas of recognising informal learning. Young people and the contradictions of inclusion, towards integrated transitionpolicies in Europe. Ed. By Andreu López Blasco, Wallace McNeish, Andreas Walther, Bristol

Russell, Robert L. and Hutzler, Karen: Promoting social and emotional learning through service-learning art projects. In: Art Education, 60:3

### **Literature about EU / frameworks for competencies**

Bjørnavold, Jens, and Coles, Mike (2008): Governing education and training; the case of qualification frameworks. In. European journal of vocational training 42/43.

Cedefop (2009): European guidelines for validating non-formal and informal learning. Retrieved 6-04-2010 at: [http://www.nvr.nu/files/European%20guidelines\\_2009.pdf](http://www.nvr.nu/files/European%20guidelines_2009.pdf)

Cedefop (2007): (valid)ation of non-formal and informal learning in Europe. A snapshot 2007

Retrieved 11-03-2010 at: <http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/EN/publications/12954.aspx>

Cedefop (2009) : European guidelines for validating non-formal and informal learning.

Retrieved 11-3-2010 at:

[http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/etv/Upload/Information\\_resources/Bookshop/553/4054\\_en.pdf](http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/etv/Upload/Information_resources/Bookshop/553/4054_en.pdf)

DG Education and Culture (EU) (2007): Key competences for lifelong learning. European reference framework

European Commission (2008) : Explaining the European Qualifications framework for lifelong learning. Found on 11-3-2010 at: [http://ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-policy/doc/eqf/brochexp\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-policy/doc/eqf/brochexp_en.pdf)

How can the EQF be used as a reference point for all qualifications -including those developed by industry sectors, enterprises and professions. Background note for the discussion in workshop 3 at the "Implementing the European Qualification Framework" conference 3-4 june 2008 in Brussels. Retrieved 11-03-2010 at [http://ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-policy/doc2076\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-policy/doc2076_en.htm)

Otero, Manuel Souto, Jo Hawley and Anne-Mari Nevala (eds): European Inventory on Validation of Informal and Non-formal Learning. 2007 Update. A final report to DG Education and Culture of the European Commission

Retrieved on 11-03-2010 at

<http://www.ecotec.com/europeaninventory/publications/inventory/EuropeanInventory.pdf>

### **A3. Introduction to the reports**

The purpose of these short summary reports is to give an update on the progress of the ASPIRE research programme so I have included here the stages that have been accomplished in the programme, so far, with references to specific support documentation in the appendices attached to this document.

Research stages accomplished:

- a) A literature review (VIA Literature review-appendix 1);
- b) An exploratory essay concerning philosophy and approaches to learning based on the literature review and to set the principles and direction of the research (see VIA Essay-appendix 2);
- c) The first partners meeting in Arnhem (appendix 3)
- d) The formulation of a hypothesis of the sector in all countries having 3 overlapping zones informal learning, social pedagogy and artistic practice. (see notes from meeting (1) in Aarhus-appendix 4);
- e) The questionnaire 'mapping exercise' to test the hypothesis by examining the extent of the learning, social and professional creative practice networks in each of the partner organizations in the sector (Questionnaire-appendix 5 and Questionnaire responses-appendix 6);
- f) The questionnaire examining the range of resources, activities, practices and user and trainer profiles within the organizations (Questionnaire-appendix 5 and Questionnaire responses-appendix 6);
- g) Examining the trainer-trainee relationship in the context of the practice and the context and neighbourhood of the organization through loosely directed video

- narrative. (Video narrative brief- appendix 7 and video narratives –appendix 8)
- h) The discussion of all of these findings with the whole partnership through small focus groups and partnership forum occurred in Malaga. (Minutes of the meeting in Malaga-appendix 9)
  - i) The review of the Malaga meeting and directives for the next stage of the project (Review of Malaga meeting-appendix 10)
  - j) The formulation of a hypothesis to use video as a tool for formative assessment and to capture shifting narratives and to reject a one-size-fits all model (Notes following meeting (2) in Aarhus-appendix 11);
  - k) The construction of a philosophical and practical approach to the validation of trainers in the sector and several parameters to test these in the organizational context (Draft Paper from team at VIA and Denise Stanley-appendix 12)
  - l) The action-research ‘testing’ of the proposed model in one context to act as material for discussion/review in the November meeting in London. This was carried out in Rome, at Mulab within 2 different learning contexts (one-very informal and one- rather more formal) using different trainers and with the same trainees. (video footage-appendix 13)
  - m) The action-research ‘testing’ the observational method of assessment executed whilst trainer and trainer-mentor are watching the video as a means to externalize, objectify , reflect and discuss the practice. This also occurred in Rome by Mulab and related directly to k) and was also recorded on video for discussion/review by the partners in the November meeting in London. (video-footage –appendix 14 and notes from VIA of Rome session –appendix 15)
  - n) The London meeting aimed to reach a legitimate model of validation that was fit for purpose and had the potential to transfer across to the EQF (London-agenda-appendix 16)

#### **A4.Summary report: What motivates participation in non-formal and informal learning in the creative industries sector**

The questionnaires revealed a very mixed trainee profile that varies slightly within each country context, (with the exception of very limited resources project, Artquimia) but there is significant participation by diverse communities. The summarised statistics are as follows:

##### **Collage Arts:**

##### **Trainee profiles:**

47% female, BME 70% disability 10% sexual orientation 6%

##### **WAC:**

##### **Trainee profiles:**

75% BME; 55% female; disability 10%

##### **Mulab:**

##### **Trainee profiles:**

30% BME; 40% female;

##### **Artquimia:**

##### **Trainee profiles:**

10%BME; 5% female;

##### **New Arts:**

##### **Trainee profiles:**

33%female; 64%Bme

**Primary research done in the NFLS in Creative industries give the following reasons for trainees engaging within the sector:**

- Advice
- Quality of trainers and didactics
- Inclusion: we talk to them
- Close and familiar learning environment
- Level and quality of learning
- No similar offer
- Trainers have the same background as learners
- Credibility and knowhow of trainers and their know-how,
- Activities are of interest;
- To work with other creative people
- To reach the same goals together in a project helps make you stronger;
- To turn a hobby into paid work,
- To get the chance in a disadvantaged situation to learn about your talents
- To develop yourself to work independently
- To take responsibility for your own freedom.
- Students of the street teach each other.
- For and by young people.

**Trainees are referred to the organisations from various social, learning and employment/creative practice agencies:**

**social:** youth offending team, youth centres, drug rehabilitation, ethnic minority centres, community centres, refugee councils, disability support projects, social care teams, probation service, social services, hostels;

**learning:** interim education centre, pupil referral unit, student support centres, information, advice and guidance organisations, FE Colleges, wac: education welfare officers, specialist schools, head of years in schools;

**employment/creative practice:** job centre plus, other arts organisations;

**Trainee destinations include:**

Vocational education, higher education institutes, apprenticeships, other creative organisations, freelancers in creative practice and organisations e.g. record companies, self-production, managers, events and TV production companies;

**Experiences on offer to trainees include:**

Placements, employment, working on/participating in events, workshops, courses, networking, social, European links, visits to companies and studios, involvement in local productions, one-to-one coaching, working with high level professionals, using professional equipment, owning and decorating work space environment, contact with formal study and learning materials, participating in group projects, participating in performances;

**Resources available to trainees include:**

studio workspace, technical equipment, venue, meeting rooms, performance-space, café, training, advice, documentation, staff;

**What personal development is available for trainees:**

map and review skills, courses, in-house training, attendance at conferences, seminars and events, shadowing, mentoring, coaching, orientation in the job market, training needs analysis, creating links and connections;

**What support services are available for trainees:**

Information, advice and guidance, learning opportunities, business support.

**Strategies employed to promote trainee take up of the offer:**

Involving professionals at the highest level we can, using knowledge of the industry and reference models, working to industry standards;

**What creative practices are taught to trainees:**

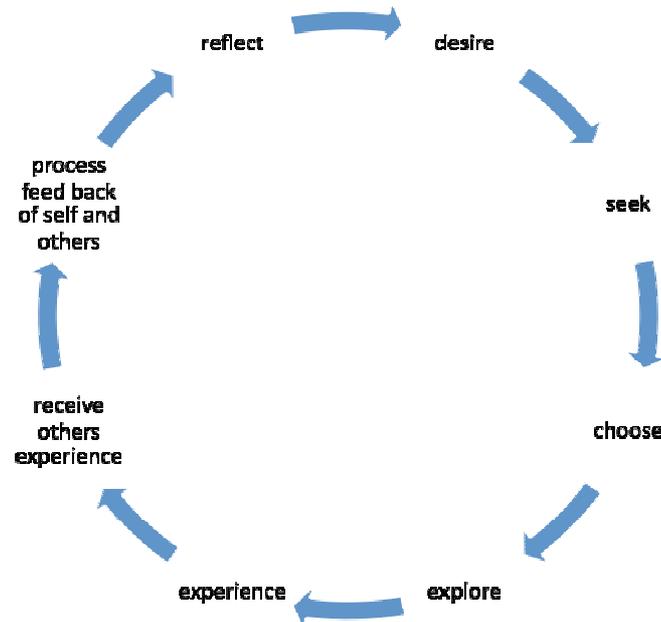
music production, music business, events, media, dance, drama, vocals, video, music technology, digital design, performance;

The initial thesis developed through the desk-research process was that the ASPIRE non-formal organizations in creative industries share a common landscape incorporating 3 distinct but overlapping zones. These 3 zones are: informal education, social pedagogy and artistic practice. An inductive model was developed during the Malaga meeting from discussion with the partners to show how the motivation of the trainees is instrumental in the cycle of increasing and furthering active and voluntary participation in a community of artistic practice.

The Non Formal Learning process in the creative industries: Practice, Participate, Progress



## Extended model



The process can be described as:

**The trainer** interacts with the trainee in this process thus stimulating motivation, activity, productivity and reflection -a continuing process of negotiating “meaningfulness”

- Facilitate experience
- Encourage interaction
- Provide feed-back
- Encourage reflection
- Support choices

This process contains elements of play, trial and error, being in and managing chaos, working with boundaries and structures, discovery, uncertainty, taking risk, being outside ‘one’s comfort-zone’, changing contexts, working with constraints, testing limits, developing artistry, making arte facts. (so, it is in no way a linear process!)

**The trainee** is in a process of negotiating narratives: prior narratives vs. new narratives

The trainee makes progress:

- artistic practice
- individual progression
- social participation

From the desk research, in “STEP the way forward” (2005) Denise Stanley identifies some of the forces that attract people to the NFLS organisations in creative industries in London:

“Forces that attract people to the Creative and Cultural Industries include having fun, participating in a social situation, having or wanting to develop their talent, motivation and enthusiasm, getting recognition and enjoyment in their work, access to creativity. Others are referred by agencies or other people or wanting/needing certain skills, flexibility and the life-style tolerance often associated with the Creative and Cultural Industries. Some seek employment and challenge. Strategies that ... (NFLS organisations in creative industries)... use to strengthen and build this ‘force of attraction’ include the provision of welcoming, safe, social space regulated by tolerance and understanding of the creative process; visible positive role-models and explicit values like social inclusion, shared ownership, fun, and pro-activity; recognising and developing individual talent through information-advice-guidance, mentoring, delivering a person-centred curriculum with appropriate challenges, skills and experience, advocacy and supported progression routes; encouraging and supporting innovation by providing access to participation and resources, focusing on creative outputs and providing opportunities for sharing or showing work.

Stanley (2005) goes on to explain that the “key features on offer to ... beneficiaries are social inclusion, safe creative space, practice-led and process driven creative activity, person-centred learning which offers choice and flexibility and support and development for aspiring new and existing creative employees, free-lancers and businesses. Beneficiaries are enabled to develop a number of skills fundamental to running a successful enterprise. These skills include the capacity to create, to maintain fluidity, to manage innovation and professional relationships, to maintain several emerging potential strategies simultaneously, to be able to work within time, resource and legal constraints and to be able to deliver a product;” (ibid)

In summary, the learners within the context of ... (this type of).. organisation can expect to receive the following services:

- a) Holistic individual support, creative fostering and sponsoring into creative activity;
- b) Opportunity and access to participation, inclusion, resourcing, actualising in a social context;
- c) The receiving of recognition for achievement, integration, reward, enculturation;
- d) Support for progression, developing a forward strategy, exit strategy, stay/involvement strategy, alumni, advocacy.

From the primary research it is clear that in the NFL sector, specific learning experiences or creative practice events have a range of learning outcomes, some intended, some unintended, some independently driven by the practitioner/learner or practitioner/tutor, and some incidental to the environment and circumstances. All of these learning outcomes are valued in their own right by ASPIRE NFLS organisations.

Several excerpts from the final ASPIRE joint ‘thinking papers’ will complete this report. Firstly to consider that “a key factor in motivating ‘hard to reach’ people who do not engage in mainstream learning institutions is that ‘community matters’. The NFLS engage learners in ‘something bigger than the self’. “The emphasis of creative practice is on community, shared humanity, creativity, visions, the dialogues between individuals and communities, old and new stories, familiar and strange voices, learning to value self and others and making a valuable and valued *contribution as part of something bigger than, and more vital than, yourself.* “

Secondly to consider that the” “Yo-yo” transitions of young people:

Today:

*In the context of de-standardised transitions.... it becomes difficult for young people to feel either young or adult (... young adults has become widespread and may extend until 35 years). The traditional dualism of young versus adult, student versus non-student, inactive versus active (in terms of employment), single versus married has been dissolved and substituted by a wide variety of intermediate and reverse transitory stages<sup>1</sup>.*

The young find themselves in “yo-yo transitions”. They experience reversible steps in the process of transition. In and out of positions in education, employment, training and consultations, social status – maybe even social institutions and prison to the most disadvantaged.

This is our field of action. It is however not greatly acknowledged. A quotation from the same source states that transitions policies “tend to *re-standardise* young peoples transitions. They create a fiction, or a..

*...logical line of linearity that is not adjusted to the non-linear trajectories (that is yo-yo) existing in the life course of many young people. Many of these policies tend to create an artificial order in a social structure which is naturally chaotic (Pais, 2002, 88)”*

The authors see the problematic situation in the light of a *systematic* perspective and a *subjective* perspective – as social work at any time ought to. The systematic point of view aims for a *successful* social integration, whereas the subjective point of view reveals the very important experience of *satisfaction* (in the eyes of the young himself!). Now, success and satisfaction should work together. If they do not – you fail:

*Success without satisfaction may lead to dropping out, while satisfaction without success may work out in the short term but will run out of resources in the mid to long-term (Walther et al, 2002a).*

This calls for mentoring, strategies of inclusion, and cross-workers, “ildsjæle”<sup>2</sup>

and finally, the General Picture: “Fuzzy Learning”

“We now have a picture of individuals in a community of practice operating in different settings. They are located at the margins of education and the margins of creative industries and they attract individuals at the margins of society to come and learn how to be a practitioner. They exist in a mix of surroundings across Europe, in reclaimed buildings and local neighbourhoods. They clearly do not have the ‘stamp’ of authority of the status quo like schools, colleges or local authority youth services and other educational and social bureaucracies. The forces of standardisation that construct so many aspects of our societies for the reason of economies of scale, compliance or submission are intolerable to the creative person and creative culture.

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<sup>1</sup> Bois-Reymond and Blasco: Yo-yo transitions and misleading trajectories: towards Integrated Transition Policies for young adults in Europe (page 4).

<sup>2</sup> The Ildsjæl in the classroom, Anne Bramford, Wimbledon School of Art, Kunstrådet 2006

The NFLS creative communities of practice diffuse a sense of community ownership, of positive creative subversion and they blur the boundaries between action, learning and being. This we will call *fuzzy learning (in an ecological setting)*.

Learning to create, learning to perform, learning to be fully myself, learning to be with others, learning to inhabit and shape the environment, learning to take responsibility, learning to be accountable, learning to shape my future, learning to participate in a community and to shape the future of others. It is also installing the process of re-valuation through creative and collaborative practice. Discovering a new mechanism to re-value your own self, your talents, your contribution now and your prospects in the future; valuing others for the same; valuing creative space that you can safely explore creative practice individually and collectively. This gives younger people, particularly a sense of personal and professional development and the acquisition of a creative portfolio, songs, poems, performances. “

#### **A5: Summary report: the comparative factors of the NFLS in creative industries organizations in each partner country?**

##### **The ASPIRE PARTNER ORGANISATIONS: a summary**

In the STEP report (2010) by Julian Sefton-Green there is an analysis of the general comparative factors of the NFLS STEP partnership, which includes all current partners except New Arts and VIA. However, the comments made of MULab (Rome) and Artquimia (Malaga) are equally true New Arts (Arnhem). “ the London partners focused more explicitly on working with minority ethnic workers .... Partners in Rome, Malaga ... have reached out to fractions of the cultural labour force who suffer exclusion within local cultural markets, not on the whole because of poor education or poverty but through lack of diversification of employment skills and the need to stimulate these local markets through the introduction of training to the cultural economy.

The key determinant on the growth and sustainability of the cultural industries is clearly the economics of the City or metropolitan region. Partly a question of population density, Cities are the sites for national and global flows as well as the locations for large international media companies. In most European countries cultural industries are highly skewed towards one region (usually the capital city) and public sector heritage, museum, famous concert halls and national performing companies are often managed from these locations. A key feature of this clustering effect is the large pool of creative labour, a density of training institutions and the even larger hinterland of activity including a non-formal economy and an underemployed labour force. Needless to say these locations also attract the largest density of ethnic minority populations<sup>3</sup>.” (ibid)

“They perform two other key functions. They are both community based thus attracting specific aesthetic or art based cultures; and act as a non-formal training centre supporting a wide range of community and other social inclusion programmes. This means they are often the focus for a wide range of ‘Youth’ activities leading to

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<sup>3</sup> Brandellero, A. (2009). *Crossing cultural borders? Migrants and ethnic diversity in the cultural industries*. Amsterdam: European Cultural Foundation.

progression in other kinds of training and education as well as to livelihoods in the cultural industries. As a network or meeting place, as well as the hosts for a range of training programmes they facilitate a wide range of employment opportunities. This is different in kind and scale from other partners in important ways. In Malaga, the Spanish partner acts a more unified locus for a range of regional initiatives, often Youth and social inclusion focused. Obviously the different scale of a smaller region like Malaga means that the access to a varied cultural market is not always possible. There is not the same range of creative sub-sectors available and a more limited labour pool. The effect of using training in the cultural industries as part of a larger strategy of social inclusion and of a return to education (present in London) may play a larger role in defining the nature and quality of the operations of this partner.

This same 'strategic' use of training and employment in the creative industries motivates the Italian partner. Rome is of course the capital city though not as nationally dominant as London is in respect of the UK. Like the Spanish partner, local regional needs of NEETS<sup>4</sup> determines activities and a multi-sectoral (i.e. not exclusively cultural industry) approach dominates activity led by the partner. In both cases, partners do not have the same historical relationship with cultural industries and needed to establish their own status in this sector. A challenge complicated by the fact that in Spain and Italy the cultural sector is not as recognised and part of local regional regeneration and economic strategies as it is in the UK." (ibid)

**The video narratives of each organisation provide a qualitative approach and should be viewed as part of this section (appendix 8)**

A brief description that sets the ASPIRE context for each organisation.

- a. MuLab, founded in 2004, the main interest in the Aspire project is to develop common competencies in the creative industries and working collaboratively with others aiming to achieve standards of accreditation in the sector.
- b. Prevista, established some 15 years as a partnership project enabler and capacity builders. On Aspire provides project management support and co-ordination, quality assurance and evaluation services.
- c. New Arts College and New Arts Experience, both of which work with young people not in mainstream school. The latter develops films/dvds for use in education/schools.
- d. WAC provides social inclusion as a way to engage young people outside of mainstream education. 60% of the trainers used by WAC have come up through the training programmes WAC has developed over the years and is keen to develop formal standards of accreditation for trainers.
- e. ArtQuimia, a small music creation/experimental school and is described as the smallest, less established organisation in the partnership. The Aspire project has provided an opportunity for ArtQuimia to grow and develop.
- f. Collage Arts, benefits from experiences coming from both formal and informal learning settings and experience driven learning are most important. The Aspire project provides an excellent vehicle – a learning journey and intellectual

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<sup>4</sup> The Audit Commission (2010) 'Against the Odds: Re-engaging young people in education, employment or training.' London: the Audit Commission.

challenge for how learning has developed/is developing within the non-formal learning sector.

- g. VIA, is a new member of the partnership and is humbled to be involved in such an established partnership and with long-established organisations. The main role of their work is to develop pedagogical learning materials.

During the Malaga meeting common factors between the NFLS in creative industries partners were identified, following the viewing of the narratives by the partners.

These were as follows (Malaga meeting notes-appendix 9):

- Restrictions
- Time involved engaging with bureaucracies for funds
- Belief in ability of every young person to achieve something
- Really care about young people and their future paths
- \*Passion, dedication, inspiration, commitment
- Small enough to be personal
- Not satisfied with the status quo
- Concern for young people
- Family feel
- The way we work with young people-our ethos
- Concrete future
- Political climate
- Challenging Racism
- Hope
- Trainers support
- Social help
- \* Working in a creative way using creative tools and art-forms
- Same trainer profiles as trainees
- Sustainability of organisation/projects
- Safe comfortable environment
- \* Good relationships with trainers/projects
- Reinforces non-formal learning
- Important to have trainers who are just like trainees
- Use the passion of the youngsters to create their own future
- We all have problems with politics

- Discipline
- Positive
- Use creativity in maximising resources
- Frustration/anger with political systems
- Lack of resources/funding
- Friendliness
- Use performing arts as an outlet
- Develop creative potential and direction
- Do
- Passion for trainees
- Support
- Confidence in the trainees, the trainer and self-confidence
- Facilitate trainees ambitions
- Facilitate self-expression

Issues for all partners that were raised for discussion following the videos:

- Self-motivated learners
- Home
- Whatever it takes to remove the barriers and offer seamless support
- Diversity
- \*Progression
- \* Dare to show whole person
- Facilitate and give responsibility
- Small, safe and independent
- Good energy
- Others don't want to work with these young people
- Sustainability, tired, finance
- Continuity
- Don't destroy their dreams
- Resilience rather than flexibility
- Constructive prevention of disaster with 2<sup>nd</sup> generation immigrants
- Friendly and sympathetic but not friends

- Tracking students. contacting students, recruiting students
- What are the boundaries
- Rehearsal
- Community

These similarities and shared issues represent a community of interest and a shared practice that recognises itself as a sector with common philosophy, approach and challenges.

#### **A6: Review of formal creative industries vocational qualifications pathways**

**This work has already been carried out by a previous Leonardo project, STEP, which involved almost all the current ASPIRE partnership, and so it is particularly useful to inform our work in this area. The STEP report, “Local Histories, Policy Contexts and Institutional Futures: STEP at the crossroads” by Julian Sefton-Green (2010) examined this area in the partner countries by observing the challenge of ‘finding and utilising appropriate accreditation frameworks...they are profoundly complicated by the effect of working in the cultural industries and the different place occupied within that sector by each partner. The ‘unequal’ nature of this sector across Europe, with some countries like the UK having developed cultural industry polices, also skews this effect.”**

Sefton-Green goes on to say that NFLS organisations in the creative industries “are not working in fields or in ways which make it easy to locate them within the EQF. The orientation of their qualifications is different in terms of preparing STEP workers for employment at scale or elsewhere. In some cases (e.g. England, Spain) the number of workers is very small. .... Italy are using forms of accreditation offered by national (or regional governmental) structures. In Spain there is no relevant accrediting authority let alone qualifications for work in this area. In Italy the qualifications have to be harmonised within local structures.....In Spain the absence of comparator levels and even equivalent contexts mean that the partners find it difficult to operate with any sense of norms. The reverse is true in the English context. ... Italy sits between Spain and England in having local norms but a more fluid context. ....CEDEFOP developed a model of an inventory of processes both to act like (and in concert with) the EQF in offering a process of harmonisation but also to draw attention to core principles underpinning the diverse practices associated with the validation and accreditation of non- and in- formal learning. The inventory is underpinned by ideas about *standards* (how they are determined, agreed and implemented), *modules* (that is how experience – inevitably a continuum –can be broken into ‘chunks’ of learning), *pathways* (how people can access and then progress through these forms of curriculum co-construction ) and finally the *converging roles of stakeholder and social partners* – especially important when they have often been imagined more in opposition or as hostile gate-keepers rather than as integrated parts of a whole system. This aims to provide a whole-system approach to learning where the learner can access and control learning as a natural part of what it means to be a citizen.” (ibid)

There are some further specific statements from the partners concerning the use of their own accreditation and qualification pathways (see appendix 15 MULAB/ARTQUIMIA gaps papers).

In the European context creative and cultural industries are viewed as an opportunity for economic development and there are now a number of consortia working inside formal education (European music conservatories [http://ec.europa.eu/culture/our-policy-development/consultation/EU\\_organisations/B-17-O-European\\_Association\\_Conservatoires\\_AEC.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/culture/our-policy-development/consultation/EU_organisations/B-17-O-European_Association_Conservatoires_AEC.pdf)) and formal education and arts organisations (ArtesNetBook [http://www.elia-artschools.org/images/activiteiten/20/files/ArtesNetBook%20\(2\).pdf](http://www.elia-artschools.org/images/activiteiten/20/files/ArtesNetBook%20(2).pdf)).

This excerpt from "European Union gets creative about innovation (Europe Unit issue 10 June 17, 2010) gives the overview:

“The recent publication of the European Commission Green Paper Unlocking the potential of Cultural and Creative Industries is part of a drive to harness the potential of culture as a catalyst of creativity and innovation in the context of the overarching EU 2020 strategy. The Green Paper defines cultural and creative industries (CCIs) as “those industries producing and distributing goods or services which at the time they are developed are considered to have a specific attribute, use or purpose which embodies or conveys cultural expressions, irrespective of the commercial value they may have. Besides the traditional arts sectors (performing arts, visual arts, cultural heritage – including the public sector), they include film, DVD and video, television and radio, video games, new media, music, books and press”.

The aim of the Green Paper and ensuing public consultation is to increase the capacity of the creative industries to experiment, innovate and succeed as entrepreneurs, to provide easier access to funding, and to help the CCIs to develop in their local and regional environment, with the view to strengthening global presence and mobility."

This is an area that NFLS organisations in creative industries can potentially build stakeholder partnerships and further the mobility of workers and rationalisation of the validation process and range of qualifications. These stakeholder relationships are crucial to driving the external legitimacy of the framework and to the success of the validation proposals.

The UK sector skills council for creative and cultural skills, CCS, is currently reviewing the qualification pathways for the creative sectors under their remit. “Our current Sector Qualifications Strategy (SQS) is due to expire in 2011, so we are taking the opportunity to refresh this document based on consultation with key stakeholders, including industry and Awarding Organisations. The refreshed Sector Qualifications Strategy will set out a clear strategy, agreed with industry, to inform future qualification development across each of our sub-sectors. It will also set out a strategy to inform the rationalisation of existing qualifications to ensure that they are fit for purpose and fully reflective of and responsive to the changing needs of industry.” Creative & Cultural skills\_SQS review process 2010-2011 from their website, [ccskills.org.uk](http://ccskills.org.uk).

## **A7: Trainer profiles and Trainer competency framework**

One of the key features of the NFLS in creative industries organisations is that Trainers are from the same background as the trainees. Full Trainer profiles are given in appendix 6. Trainer competency is currently based on an interpretive assessment framework carried out in the form of a continuous dialogue / feed-back process on certain criteria progress in relation to (stimulating the trainees) informal learning, in

relation to (stimulating/guiding/training the trainees) creative practice and in relation to (stimulating the trainees) social engagement/participation.

Comments from partners during the Malaga meeting concerning the current training of trainers are included here and are as follows:

- a) There is a difference between the engagement of a hired trainer and those that are 'home grown'
- b) Importance of having continuing professional development for creatives that are trainers to ensure that they can train/teach.
- c) Developing an awareness of discrimination, including how they create their learning materials, how they allow the group to work with and refer to one another, and how the material that is being developed is non-discriminatory.
- d) There is a need for development and implementation of creative learning methods – e.g. asking questions is a key competence in teaching. The didactic and pedagogical is often forgotten.
- e) There is a need for higher level training/tutoring for there to be a focus and a necessary emphasis to develop the technical input.
- f) Ability of a teacher/trainer being able to quickly observe, orientate and signpost individuals into a variety of situations – as in coaching and mentoring. Therefore it is about having an ability to make sound judgements – matched to technical and creative know-how and the reality of how the industry/sector works and/or what alternative opportunities there are to help individuals find an appropriate place within their chosen genre. Understanding the needs of the market and the job opportunities that exist is really critical.
- g) Evidence has to be produced of continuing professional development, industry development, abreast of latest findings, being a member of professional bodies, and the like. It's the foundation of life-long-learning.
- h) There has to be an organisational responsibility to ensure that the trainers used are appropriately qualified and keep abreast of industry developments e.g. Ofsted, Investors in People, and any other similar external inspections. Those organisations that are progressively minded generally do require/offer continued learning and development as a matter of best practice.
- i) When there is a general level of competency it is more likely that a trainer will start to specialise.
- j) Validation of the training e.g. student-led validation – is a democratic way of exposing where trainers are not up to date / up to the mark in terms of their understanding of the industry.
- k) Importance of having the framework developed on a small scale so that testing and credibility is built in a common-interest/aspiration group.

Following the primary and secondary research carried out in this area the partnership have been able to identify an interpretive framework for the sector, which has been through preliminary testing in Rome and discussed in both Malaga and, more recently, in London. The section below is based on excerpts from the paper in appendix 12.

The interest of the EU in non-formal and informal learning is driven by the need to validate learning, which occurs outside of a formal process. This validation process provides the opportunity to measure the deepening and broadening of skills, knowledge and experience of individuals within a (formal, non-formal, informal) learning process and the framework is a means of identifying levels of knowledge and skill sets. The EQF and National QFs endeavour to provide a yardstick against which to set the appropriate measures of the particular learning outcomes in any practice. If the values and components of a practice do not comfortably fit this outcome model and cannot equate to the qualification framework, then there is clearly a need for an independent interpretive framework. However, for any validation to occur that is recognised by the EQ or NQ frameworks, the interpretive framework will require one or more 'gateways' or 'currency exchange' points between itself and the EQ and National frameworks. This is the aim of the Aspire project.

### **The Trainer**

The partnership have identified the group that would most benefit from an external validation that a 'gateway' strategy to the EQ and NQ frameworks could bring are those individuals who are 'externally unqualified' but internally appointed *trainers* working within the community of practice. This group is, therefore, a key focus of the Aspire partnership.

### **Basic Framework**

We have identified 3 discrete areas of work for the trainer in the sector: *artistic practice, social pedagogy and informal learning*. Our interest is to enable the trainers to demonstrate their abilities, capabilities, performance and progression across the 3 above areas in a natural setting, congruent with the values of the sector. This process should on the one hand contribute to an informal assessment and accreditation of the individual trainer, whilst providing an opportunity to demonstrate and evidence the mechanism for the training and appointment of trainers in the sector and on the other hand it should give the trainer the opportunity to gain awards/credits for competencies that are defined in competency catalogues that can be translated across to EQF/NQFs.

### **“One size” does not fit all**

What trainers do is comprehensive and complex. It does not fit in what can be learned in any special existing curriculum: there are many pathways to a destination. The sector are not interested in an assessment that can merely result in an equivalent with a formal education. We would need data that matches the descriptions of a plethora of programmes in Europe as described in the language of the various NQFs, this would lead to a need for an infinite assessment. A 'one size first all' assessment would be too extensive and at the same time fail to see the unique competencies-mix as this is far greater than the sum of individual elementary competencies..

We believe that we need assessments that make sense in our context, that are standardised to an extent that they enable us to define and consolidate the sector as a whole, and that they can function as pier heads to existing educational and employment opportunities. It is essential that it is possible to carry out the assessment process in harmony with and respect for the basic values in the sector.

### **Aspire assessment should involve video sequences**

Assessments always raise the question of who is the assessor. We need either authorised experts who can give legitimate judgements or we need assessor independent instruments. As the range of possible qualifications and competencies is

very broad we will not rely on assessor independent instruments. Even though we do have experts we do not currently have a body that can authorize these. Therefore, we are proposing a middle way. This is to use our experts and to document the assessment process and content using video sequences.

If we can make assessments on the basis of using video sequences recording the dialogue between the assessed and assessor then the assessors would equally have the freedom to express themselves about their practice. This would give the sector rich, qualitative assessments on 'relevant dimensions' chosen from among a variety of dimensions referring to particular video sequences, summed up in an assessment of (explicit) knowledge, skills and competencies and highlighting the ability to adapt the use of skills to different contexts. This assessment material will provide the evidence base for mapping across to EQF levels. The main purpose of the assessment is to evidence the formative aspect by providing a reproduction of the dialogue between the expert and the trainer on the assessment outcome and on zones of proximal development that will be included in an individual's portfolio.

### **First grasp of the Assessment Framework:**

Indicators that require qualitative assessment :

1-beginner; 2-almost competent; 3-competent; 4-experienced 5-expert;

The three assessment areas:

#### Artistic practice:

Artistic skills<sup>5</sup>

Technical skills

Situational leadership of creative process (kindness, decisiveness, playfulness)

#### Social pedagogy:

Building relationships

Stimulating and managing inclusion

Engaging people in activities

Participation in community

#### Non-formal learning:

richness of elements considered in planning

ability to evaluate and learn

variety of roles applied in practice (front-side-back)

ability to interplay with group dynamics

managing own relationship with group

delivering individual support, mentoring and coaching

#### Bridging strategy:

Part A -Mapping for the NFL sector:

Assessment as part of a continuous portfolio: formative/appointment

Part B-Mapping for equivalence as a pier-head to other employment sectors + educational programmes:

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<sup>5</sup> Artistic skills are very specifically connected to arts and practices in question. Acting, dancing, playing an instrument, sound engineering etc requires different kinds of skills – many of which have a rich track record in history.

Additional and creative points to the artistic and aesthetics and the related matters as well as social pedagogy and non-formal learning you could find in the Essay produced in the Aspire project

knowledge, skills and competencies mapped in order to ‘exchange’ for the equivalent areas on the EQF scale.

### **To fit the culture of Non- and in-Formal Learning (NFL): Dialogue and feedback**

This proposed assessment fits the culture of the NFL sector and is congruent with the use of continuous informal assessment as a diagnostic tool. Continuous informal assessment is currently used in the sector for giving information in a positive and affirming role about the strengths and weaknesses of the practitioner in relation to self-directed or negotiated goals. This on-going formative assessment is embedded in the feedback received in conversations with staff, audience and peer reactions, throughout any devised or self-negotiated participation or individual experience. The assessment will need to take the form of a dialogue between trainer and assessor using video sequences of practice in various contexts. This dialogue will be recorded and used as formative assessment as part of the trainer’s and the assessor’s *portfolio* and can be used as part of an *evidence* base as required. This recorded feedback dialogue will be broad enough to take into account the various feedback sources provided to the practitioner through different mechanisms in the sector.

Feedback is used to show how much personal progress an individual has made in relation to their own particular ‘starting point’, how they are managing their learning and developing their own practice in relation to their own particular histories and their current life circumstances, and how broadly or narrowly focused and well-informed their aspirations are. All these elements play a part in determining the level of support a practitioner may need on entering, learning, progressing and leaving the NFL sector in order to reach and/or further develop their professed personal and creative practice goals. The giving of this type of feedback is necessarily driven by a *person-centred* approach and the cultural norms of the non-formal learning environment are the sole means of guiding the approach to giving and receiving feedback. This occurs through an implicit or explicit ‘*social contract*’ or social code that operates between people at all levels in the organisation and throughout the learning and practice environment and its extensions i.e. performances etc that occur off-site.

### **EU: Framework of Quality (EQF) in Lifelong Learning**

According to standards on key competences for lifelong learning recommended by the European Parliament and the Council of 18 December 2006 “Growing internationalism, the rapid pace of change and the continuous roll-out of new technologies mean that Europeans must not only keep their specific job-related skills up to date but also possess the generic competences that will enable them to adapt to change”<sup>6</sup> and in addition from the same source: “In particular, building on diverse individual competences, the differing needs of learners should be met by ensuring equality and access for those groups who, due to educational disadvantages caused by personal, social, cultural or economic circumstances, need particular support to fulfil their educational potential”(ibid.).

### **EU: Learning levels**

We might agree with the European expression in the paragraph above as the formal and political framework. However, in the paragraph prior to that embedded in the statements lies the idea of an updated paradigmatic view on upbringing, education, learning methods and social pedagogy. These embedded terms are ‘own particular starting point’, ‘person-centred approach’, ‘cultural norms’ and ‘social code’. This

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<sup>6</sup>

<http://eur-lex.europa.eu>

idea is part of (late modernity) and we shall call it the '*learning ecology*'. It is strongly opposed to old-time disciplinary, one-way communicating pedagogy of the authorities in households, schools and industry. It is part of a general education or *Bildung*.

The European Qualification Framework was established in 2006 by the EU commission. The recommendation outlines an overarching framework to be set in Europe to facilitate comparison of qualifications and qualifications levels in order to promote geographical and labour market mobility as well as life long learning. The core of the framework consists of 8 qualifications levels described through learning outcomes – incorporated in a matrix with columns: Knowledge, Skills and Competences.<sup>7</sup>

The 8 levels are described by only positive statements, no jargon and with the aim to apply definite and concrete (avoiding terms like 'appropriate', that would depend on an (unknown) actual context). The outcome of the lower levels are considered contained by the higher, so that the levels are accumulating in content. Each level should be read in relation to the preceding level etc. (and you may consider even a level beyond level 8).

The levels are divided by means of:

- the complexity and depth of knowledge and understanding;
- the degree of necessary support or instruction;
- the degree of integration, independence and creativity required;
- the range and complexity of application/practice;
- the degree of transparency and dynamics of situations.

All these concepts are important.

The program is *overarching*: it is considered to be a Meta-Framework, the framework of all frameworks in all educational settings in all EU countries. It is to be used for formal as well as informal and non formal learning, work and study situations, academic and vocational learning and contexts, and for initial as well as continuing education or training. All nations are expected to adjust their NQ frameworks (or whatever it may be called nationally) into the EQF, although this is voluntary. The EQF aims to support the labour market and life long learning. The three 'columns' of knowledge, skills and competence have been agreed on through research, carried out in several countries in order to pick up the best, overall coverage in a simple conceptual way. It was pragmatically chosen to be comprehensive rather than precise in a technical way.

The program focuses on *outcome* rather than competencies, because it is not intended to be used to classify individual competencies, partly because an individual may very well possess knowledge that does not correspond with any competence or skills. The outcome focus is not related to any specific EU education, school, university or context in any Country, it is an abstract or average kind of framework.

If a specific person is considered to have a match in a complex way, that is she seems to have knowledge at level 5, but some skills are at level 3 and competencies at some other level, you should consider the columns of secondary importance. A choice is made that provides the best fit along the three columns at an appropriate level. Due to

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<sup>7</sup>

the diversity of qualifications at national and sector level there will never be a perfect of absolute fit to the EQF levels –the principle of best fit has to be applied instead.

The EU text here referred to states, that although it is fair to acknowledge so called key or meta-competencies such as

-learning to learn

-ethical competence

they have not been included because they cannot be seen independently from the other knowledge, skills and competence they are seen as integral part of other columns.

But in the creative industries and in particular the NFL context, a range of competencies might be considered as very important, rather than an actual outcome.

### **EU: European Reference Framework (ERF) – another approach<sup>8</sup>**

EU offers another well-written and comprehensive study on the concept of competences: European Reference framework (ERF). It deals with the key competences that citizens require for their personal fulfilment, social inclusion, active citizenship and employability in our knowledge-based society. It is considered an important tool for training providers and so it is relevant for the Aspire programme. The connection between the EQF and the ERF is not clear but we believe that the EQF is an official standard for the long term application of all European learning contexts into a common framework, whereas the ERF is a policy for citizenship. It possesses no standards but only some recommendations on good practice within large scale learning programmes. The ERF identifies 3 concepts, which are very similar to the EQF: all competencies are a mix of *knowledge, skills and attitude (mark: not competences!)*.

Attitude contrasts with the other two elements because it encapsulates very clearly the ‘soft’ or social, ethical and aesthetical dimensions of learning and personal development. The framework addresses those particular policy makers who deal with disadvantaged people in order to ensure that there is “equality and access for those groups who, due to educational disadvantage caused by personal, social, cultural or economic circumstances, need particular support to fulfil their educational potential”

There are 8 distinct areas, which are remarkably similar to the EQF levels, and these are described with a short definition and comments regarding the 3 elements (knowledge, skills, attitude):

1. Communication in the mother tongue
2. Communication in foreign languages
3. Mathematical competence and basic competence in science and technology
4. Digital competence
5. Learning to learn
6. Social and civic competences –(both personal and democratic-civic approaches)
7. Sense of initiative and entrepreneurship
8. Cultural awareness and expression.

All of these areas are of great importance to the NFLS but perhaps the last 2 items are of special significance concerning the creative industries. They do imply in the description a number of buzz-words that we recognise in our practice:

Knowledge of (7): Identify available opportunities; business activities; fair-trade, creativity; social enterprise.

Skills: proactive project management, negotiation, ability to judge strengths and weakness, risk-taking.

Attitude: initiative, pro-activity; independence, innovation.

Knowledge of (8): Cultural heritage; works, including popular works: linguistic diversity, aesthetic factors of daily life. Skills :appreciation and expression of self and others. Attitude: artistic self-expression, participation in cultural life.

### **Approaching “learning ecology”**

The ERF elements, then, seem to have a much better fit with the philosophy, practice and aspirations of the NFLS in creative industries than the EQF. The blend of creative practice, non-formal learning and social elements that exists in the NFLS is based on a similar mix of hard and soft skills, personal and professional lives, individual and community roles and responsibilities. Learning does not take place in a vacuum nor can it be entirely the responsibility of the learner. We all grow up in a particular *learning ecology* and sometimes that learning ecology doesn't provide the context to fully develop and realise our educational and human potential. Learning is a responsibility that is shared between the individual learner and those significant others that form the learning community with its underpinning ecology. There is a greater responsibility on the community for managing this process than on the individual learner. This view-point raises specific questions about the capacity of any community or community of practice to support a number of individual learners with diverse needs and brings to mind issues related to the number and profiles of people in apprenticeships, graduate training schemes and the ratio of teachers to pupils in primary and secondary education and the roles of researchers, teachers and professionals in further and higher education. This is an issue to explore more fully.

The non-formal learning sector in creative industries aims to engage people in creative practice to develop transferable skills using creativity as a catalyst and to produce creative practitioners who are proficient, wise and strategic. It is impossible to train someone as a creative practitioner to know everything in an industry, which is rapidly and constantly changing. It is impossible to train someone as a creative practitioner who knows how to make something using techniques and technologies that also continuously change. It is more important to enable someone to learn how to be a creative practitioner i.e. *to vision, explore, play, produce, create, perform, exploit, commit, synthesise, synergise, adapt, adopt, practise, develop themselves, work as a team, promote, market, influence, convince, sell, earn*, ....how to develop a creative practice as these demands will continuously be required of creative practitioners. Creative practice enables the individual to include, blend and transform aspects from their personal, social and professional lives. They learn *...to map, reflect on and develop their individual learning ecology (talents, educational background, learning contexts), social ecology (socio-political-economic-geographic-gender-sexuality) and creative ecology (artistic, cultural, ethnic, religious, spiritual)* ...and use these as the both raw material and the pathways to become creative practitioners.

### **Transitional gateways**

If we focus on the practice and the application of skills and deduce theory from practice we are using a strategy of reflective practice. We can use reflective practice in dialogue to track personal and professional development by monitoring the following aspects of each of the individuals in the community:

Aspirations  
Horizons  
Surface learning  
In-depth learning  
Achievements (scope and scale)

These clearly belong entirely to the individual, if personal and professional development is the responsibility of the individual. However, if the responsibility for personal and professional development of individuals belongs to the community of practice, then these, too, belong to both the individual and the community as they develop the learning community as well as the learning individuals. This is the key step for the sector to move towards its own community development and it will bring with it those individuals that are its constituency, both experienced and inexperienced.

The objective certification can be viewed not just as a stand-alone record of achievement but rather as a *community awarded 'licence to practice'* that marks the *transitional gateway* from the sector into another area of employment or education i.e. another community of practice. This transitional gateway needs to be a purpose-built bridge that engages the community of practice with the receiving destination (HE or employer) in the task of making a successful transition from one community to the other. This bridging programme would consist of a forwarding strategy from the community of practice and an inducting strategy from the receiving community. There is already a tendency in the NFLS for leavers joining a new community to be supported by the old community of practice, much as in the way some families can support their fledgling adults in Higher Education.

### **Return of “Fitness” considerations**

In the NFL sector, specific learning experiences or creative practice events have a range of learning outcomes, some intended, some unintended, some independently driven by the practitioner/learner or practitioner/tutor, and some incidental to the environment and circumstances. All of these learning outcomes are valued in their own right by NFL sector organisations. If a formal qualification is being delivered within experiences or events taking place within the NFL sector context, then specific qualification-related learning outcomes are assessed and validated in accordance with the relevant qualification documentation. Expectations and success criteria will vary among a diverse group of Practitioners. ASPIRE aims to construct/adopt a model, which would enable all centres to be able to conduct the systematic assessment of practitioners, and to enable the development of an individual history of their progress. This process needs to be constructed, so that assessment informs instruction, facilitates the tapping of prior knowledge and builds on prior experience. The model of learning in the NFL sector is interactive and collaborative and, therefore, the assessment processes needs to reflect this and be contextualised in the same or similar environment to get the best cultural fit.

### **Audio-visual tools: inspirations**

The use of audio-visual tools, techniques and processes is embedded within many of creative NFL sector organisations. The availability of trained AV practitioners, AV equipment and AV knowledge of creative genres is almost a given. So, a practice-based assessment model that operates using an AV environment is, therefore, likely to have a good fit with culture and competencies.

The use of video scenarios as an assessment tool has been used extensively in the health sector with nurses and other health practitioners. This type of assessment works on the basis of praxis. Praxis is a set of practices that are informed by reflection. This type of assessment asserts that actions are informed and deliberate and that practitioners are aware of why they do what they do. The assessment situation uses open-ended questioning to plumb the depths of understanding e.g. why?, How? It searches for a deeper and broader understanding and practitioner opinions are valued and not minimised. It is an enquiry-led model of assessment. What do we know? What do we want to know? What have we learned? This could be applied to NFL sector in creative practice for assessment and validation purposes. Video may be currently used by NFL sector organisations in teaching and recording performances. It can also be used to record and capture workshop scenarios and can be used by individuals and groups as a means to self-reflect on practitioner knowledge, skills and attitudes and as tool for formative and summative assessments. It can take place in any NFL sector environment or extended environment and could be a means of providing the required *evidence* to demonstrate progress and achievement as well as a means of assessing *tacit knowledge* and observational evidence. Furthermore, the use of designed video for more complex scenarios could *provide role models and problem-solving opportunities* to extend the learning of facilitators as Continuing Professional Development as well as practitioners entering these roles. The initial group of practitioners that ASPIRE is aiming to pilot an assessment and validation exercise with, is the ‘Cross workers’, a group of peer motivators that require formal validation to work as facilitators, trainers, mentors in the NFL sector or elsewhere. This model would be particularly suited to this group. If we are to proceed with an observational practice model then we need to achieve a consensus with ASPIRE partners on what we are trying to achieve and how we are planning to achieve it.

### **“It is helpful to be comfortable and have fun”**

We aim to solve the dilemma of avoiding a ‘one-size fits all’ check-list by establishing a sub-common tool for investigating the processes of documentation in terms of video-based performances and dialogues attached. This approach will facilitate a broader understanding of community learning.

The three principles of Bandura<sup>9</sup> are useful in thinking through this process. They are: The highest level of observational learning is achieved by first organising the modelled behaviour symbolically and then enacting it overtly. Coding modelled behaviour into words, labels or images results in better retention than simply observing.

Individuals are more likely to adopt a modelled behaviour if it results in outcomes they value.

Individuals are more likely to adopt a modelled behaviour if the model is similar to the observer and has admired status and the behaviour has functional value. Or to put it simply the behaviour is valued for function, status and results!

The sector needs to construct a scaffolding of expectations and to identify the ‘lines of looking’ and the ‘points of interest’. To this end we need a directive of where to address concern and attention. We may need to collect and engage with the stories, tales, metaphors and narratives of the sector as these are likely bearers of significance or truth even when they do not refer to any actual occurrence. The practitioner may have a subconscious understanding of her/himself as an actor in a legend, fairytale or quest. The model can have a more common sense approach than the knowledge-

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<sup>9</sup> [Http://tip.psychology.org/bandura.html](http://tip.psychology.org/bandura.html)

skills-competencies triangle of the EQF by focusing on the intrinsic mechanisms within the video production. This is the next in-depth stage of the research programme.

### **Inspirations from former EU initiatives etc**

We face a double expectation concerning legitimacy. The first and most important at this stage is the “internal legitimacy”, i.e. we must make great effort to ensure all partners have their say in this process and that we establish validity with the community of practice and practitioners in each country. The next legitimacy-item deals with the broader stakeholders and finally with the EQF and the communities relationship within the creative industries.

The summary paper of the previous Leonardo project, STEP indicates that being part of the project had an important impact on the participants review of their own practice in the development of efficient and supportive validation and accreditation processes and the consolidation of the definition of modules, learning moments and learning progressions.<sup>10</sup>

This project differs in that, Aspire has a goal, which maybe actually beyond the scope of the project in progress. This consists not only of a supplier perspective but also at the external legitimacy of its work and at the demand perspective.

The suppliers’ perspective is emphasised by Jens Bjornavold<sup>11</sup> in his outlook on conditions in Europe concerning non-formal and informal learning with the need for “door-openers” to education. The demand side is noted as needing mobility and the option of a “second chance” for the learner to reach full learning potential and the industry to obtain qualified workers.

Bjornavold contrast the summative (recognized by institutional bodies) with the formative (aiming to deepen and broaden learning) approaches to validation (ibid p46). Bjornavold stresses several times, that “..it is essential for status and trust that the summative element of validation is based on the same standards which apply in the formal system...(and) the need to link the validation of non-formal and informal learning to the same standards of those used by formal education and training...referring to the same standards is important for the overall credibility of validation.” (ibid page 48-49)

Two standards of validation are available:

**a) Occupational** standards dealing with “...what people need to do, how they will do it and how well they do it. Occupational standards thus have to be written as competences and formulated in terms of outcomes.”

**b) Education-training** standards “...will focus on what people need to learn, how they will learn it and how the quality and content of learning will be assessed... in terms of input (subject, syllabus, teaching methods, process and assessment” (ibid p52)

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<sup>10</sup> “Local Histories, Policy Contexts and Institutional Futures: STEP at the crossroads (*executive summary*)” by Dr. Julian Sefton-Green, page 5

<sup>11</sup> The Copenhagen Declaration 2002 and table of principles, Bjornavold, CEDEFOP 2009, page

The first set of standards are associated with vocational occupations – the second set is close to the academic world. The automatic tendency will be that the second set of standards, designed for the education and training systems and the dominant practice of documentation in writing etc. will prevail. How can validation in our sector develop if it is unable or unwilling to map standards from an internal system to external system of validation?

Bjornavold lines up a number of key challenges after presenting three snap-shots on countries, who have made a significant headway concerning the validation of non- and informal learning (exemplified by France and Finland); a medium-level of development (Sweden, Luxemburg); and a low level (Kroatien, Litauen):

1. The individual has to be at the centre of any strategy on validation.
2. A shift to learning outcomes in education and training policies and practises is crucial for validation.
3. The role of standards is crucial to validation.
4. Validation must balance the formative and the summative functions of validation.
5. Transferability is a “must”.
6. Methodological convergence is necessary.
7. Validation has to take into account ethical issues.
8. Cost-benefit issues have to be addressed.
9. The sustainability of validation approaches and systems is an issue.
10. “Mainstreaming” validation of non-formal and informal learning – the role of National Qualifications Frameworks.

Aspires ambitions are more to the side of “community and collaborations” - rather than explicit focus on individuality. Still we must be aware of Bjornavolds points of considerations in order to meet the goal of “currency” or bridging to EQF.

### **Learning and Assessment are divorced – they should be reunited**

The Aspire Framework will need to include many forms of knowledge, skills and competencies . It will also need to be able to assess in several “settings e.g. this may refer to a kind of *staging*; to a social situation in ordinary daily life, to an approach to the future (“set” by yourself or others), and even to a “set up”, a constructed scene to explore ethical and social issues. These settings are crucial since we want to address the qualifications gained in social life, productive life and artistic life – and not in the neutralised “scholastic life” of the traditional educational systems.

The concept of setting is useful and tends to equalise through enabling diversity in assessments, but it is also difficult to deal with in generalising terms such as a Frameworks of Qualifications. Therefore we face a paradox or even a dilemma:

The Framework must be a short cut – and yet we cannot allow it to be exactly so, if we consider our targets needs. The final Framework must turn out rigid.

But we might add some guidelines of procedures and primary considerations by the assessors confronting the Trainers in order to avoid prejudiced sentiments, opinions etc. The framework will be rigid but the assessment will necessarily be predominantly formative or performative. This fits with current thinking about the need to re-connect learning and assessment and an example of this type of assessment strategy is given below.

“...learning and assessment have become divorced from one another.”<sup>12</sup>

This claim is stated as the starting point by the authors in order to establish the outlines of a more sensible way of assessment in the informal, vocational and professional learning. They “emphasise a need for more authentic, learner-friendly methods to encourage (the learners) engagement and retention.”

The idea is to promote an assessment *for* learning rather than assessment *of* learning in order to consider the assessment processes as part of learning. This entails, that different kinds of artefacts may be part of an assessment (such as portfolios, products, coursework) – accordingly contribute in a “summative” of the accredited outcomes, but it is in the form of formative or performative outcome.

So, the ASPIRE partnership is moving towards adopting a legitimate *internal* framework. We have a number of suggestions to take forward to the Aspire group meeting in November 2010 including:

- Creating and testing an observational practice model of assessment using video;
- Creating and testing an interpretive framework based on using video as a learning and assessment tool;
- Ensuring that there is a transfer point into (and out of) EQF for the cross worker assessments;

List of appendices:

Appendix 1: A literature review

Appendix 2: An exploratory essay concerning philosophy and approaches to learning based on the literature review and to set the principles and direction of the research

Appendix 3: The first partner s meeting in Arnhem

Appendix 4: The formulation of a hypothesis of the sector in all countries having 3 overlapping zones informal learning, social pedagogy and artistic practice. (see notes from meeting (1) in Aarhus;

Appendix 5: The questionnaire ‘mapping exercise’ to test the hypothesis by examining the extent of the learning, social and professional creative practice networks in each of the partner organizations in the sector (Questionnaire -appendix 5 and Questionnaire responses-appendix 6);

Appendix 6: The questionnaire responses from each of the partner organizations in the sector

Appendix 7: Video narrative brief for partners

Appendix 8: Video narratives; partners

Appendix 9: Minutes of the meeting in Malaga-appendix 9)

Appendix 10: Review of Malaga meeting

Appendix 11: Notes following meeting (2) in Aarhus;

Appendix 12: Draft Paper from team at VIA and Denise Stanley

Appendix 13: Video footage of workshops in progress from testing in Mulab

Appendix 14: Video footage of trainer-expert trainer session

Appendix 15: Notes from VIA of the Mulab session

Appendix 16: Agenda for London

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<sup>12</sup> Watson and Robbins: “Closing the chasm: reconciling contemporary understandings of learning with the need to formally assess and accredit learners through the assessment of performance”, Research Papers in Education, Vol 23.No 3. Sept. 2008. Routledge