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### The testing is over!

**T**he testing of the HCT Creative Thinking Manual was one of the most important steps within the HCT project; it gave us the possibility of finally showing the work that we have done over the past months. We were able to obtain feedback from the different kinds of professionals and students who'll be using our creative thinking manual within their daily activities. We have found this recent process very enlightening and encouraging.

Now that the testing is over, we are embarking on the final phase of our project. We will use the input that you gave us to tweak our Creative Thinking Manual to further suite the needs of all our target groups.

Within this issue you will find testimonials from people who participated in the testing and want to share their experience with you.

## Creative Thinking and Continuous Learning

Continuing learning refers to all organised training activities delivered to provide enterprises with support at particular stages of their life, such as reorganisation and innovation.

Professional people from the area of Vocational Education and Training, who participated in the initial Focus Groups and during the Testing Phase, have all shown a strong interest in the HCT project. The new thinking tool that we have tested during the past few months will hopefully support them in their ongoing training activities.

All participants have been actively involved and have shown a special interest in the final product. The participating trainers have also appreciated the opportunity to get to know a new tool they can apply and integrate into their training methodology in the future.

All the professional participants have agreed that the HCT project may well answer some of the needs of craft enterprises, who are looking for an effective and flexible thinking tool, that will enable innovation in order to get their thinking more out 'of the box' and inspire them to develop new strategies and methods in order to face the challenges of globalisation.

Two factors seem to have contributed to such a strong interest in the HCT project. On the one hand, the high qualifications of the target group and their awareness of the crucial role of innovation, on the other hand the growing need for specific tools to promote creative thinking.



## Testimonials from testing phase

***I had a light bulb moment in a café*** - I am telling you this story to offer you some inspiration for realising your own ideas.



I have been a practicing artist for fifteen years working in architectural glass (see *The Space in Between*) and this new journey all started when I bumped into my friend Deb Astell in a local park. The recession had well and truly settled in and I was realising that there would be very little public art opportunities around. While chatting away, Deb asked if I wanted to be involved in a pilot Creative Thinking workshop for a project that Capture Arts had been working on (HCT) she told me that there would be some

workshops around creative thinking and that I could participate and test a new thinking tool that was being developed, I jumped at the chance, intuitively knowing it was just what I needed.

It was at these workshops during some creative thinking sessions that I managed to unblock my brain, allowing new ideas and thoughts to flow through. Afterwards I felt elevated and alive but also like I had been asleep for the last 10 years.

Some time later I was sitting in a café and had a eureka moment, I decided to develop a new thinking tool myself for creative people called *My Ideas Book*, <https://www.myideasbook.com> the rest is history!

*Binitia Walia - London, UK, 2011*

***Art has always been in my life*** - I recently attended the focus groups and participated in the testing of the HCT materials, I thoroughly enjoyed being part of these phases of the project. I especially value the people I met in the group, who gave me the possibilities of coping with whatever challenges that life has to offer.

Before joining the HCT local testing group, my life had always been very demanding in terms of discipline, rules, schemes and priorities and the best that I could achieve relied purely on making the best use of my rationale intelligence.

When I follow my young artists, when I organise events, when I play the piano or read books, I always left a window open to creativity, though sometimes not a very big window!

Due to my participation in this project, I have discovered to my delight that my memories help my creativity, and without this connection I think I wouldn't be able to understand my young students, to encourage their desires and to enable them to learn through their own curiosity.

In my opinion creativity is essentially a fundamental connection with something about ourselves, it doesn't follow rules, schemes or disciplines; like a happy little child who loves running, climbing trees, jumping from high walls and exploring the world that surrounds them. Creativity is art and it helps us to lead the way for a life long journey of exploration, this is what I realised thanks to this experience.

*Caterina Castronovo - Palermo, Italy, 2011*

## The Cultural and Creative Industries (CCI)

Various countries globally and in the European Union are stimulating, encouraging and supporting the Cultural and Creative Industries.

During October 2010 the European Commission announced that it was launching a scheme worth €100,000,000 to support CCI. There are various reasons why this is happening, one of them being that consumer trends show that the market for unique experiences is growing and that with the increasing affluence of developing countries there will be an increased demand for such products and services which are produced and marketed by CCI.

One of the sectors within CCI is the crafts sector which because of globalisation and the proliferation of technologies is encountering some very formidable challenges. The Handmade Creative Thinking project comes at a crucial time for the crafts sector. Craftspeople, craft micro-businesses and SME's have found the creative thinking tools being developed by the HCT project useful in helping themselves to turn the challenges they are facing into more possible opportunities.

We suggest that you visit our website at <http://www.handmadecreativethink.eu> and register so you keep yourself informed. On our website you will gain access to the training modules that will be developed during the project.

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