

## EVALUATION QUESTIONS

### UK Options and Appraisal

Completed by Rinova

#### UMBRELLA QUESTIONS – WHAT WILL WORK BEST IN YOUR COUNTRY:

Since the original research Rinova has further reviewed the VET landscape in the UK. In reviewing VET qualifications in the creative sector, our research highlighted the erosion of a national structure of occupational standards in favour of piecemeal market-based provision, driven now, not by the Sector Skills Councils, but by the Awarding Bodies. In the CCIs the Sector Skills Councils have abandoned the role of defining national occupational standards, which leaves them casting about for a new role as a training provider and seeking to respond to the main thrust of national policy, which is directed at the growth of Apprenticeships. In theory these will be based around national standards. In practice, in the CCIs, these are undeveloped and in the absence of a nationally funded industry lead body, it is hard to see how these will be put in place. There are also real questions as to whether and how small scale micro-businesses and creative freelancers which make up a large proportion of the CCIs, will have the capacity to take on apprentices in the numbers foreseen, without an effective co-ordinating infra-structure. In short, VET provision in the CCIs is patchy, complex and very difficult to navigate, which compounds the difficulties for young people seeking to enter and make a career in the sector.

In terms of progression and sustainability, one route through which Rinova will continue to develop the peer mentoring model is through further projects, such as CREUS, a new Erasmus Plus programme, also led by Collage Arts (with Rinova and MuLab among the project partners), which explores the role of mentoring in the CCIs specifically in non-conventional spaces. This is carrying forward the experience and tools developed in TME and other projects around the role of the mentor and will work with a pool of 25 mentors and 100 young people across 5 European countries. Rinova is also participating in an Erasmus Plus project to train crafts teachers in digital skills and this will also build on peer mentoring models. Collage Arts is also developing commercial relationships with clients to engage young people in creative projects (learning by doing) that build on the experience of their Secret Cinema, sexual health film, immersive 1920s event and other projects. The methodology is that through creative assignments and projects, which Collage has been building over a period of years, and with the guidance of experienced practitioner mentors, the young people learn to develop teamworking and practical project skills to build their employability and also connect young people with industry networks and opportunities. The “real world” nature of the projects encourages a fast learning rate and understanding of industry expectations. Rinova continues to deliver Talent Match in North London until 2019, although this delivery extends to young people in all sectors and is not specifically targeted at the CCIs. Rinova continues to seek funds to develop projects especially around entrepreneurship support in the creative sector.

The CLOCK Curriculum continues to develop recognition through accreditation of the skills of cultural practitioners in a transnational European context, rather than a narrowly national one. In the current UK VET environment, as far as we are aware, it is exceptional as a non-formal learning qualification in having this European dimension. It is also a significant model of the use of peer-to-peer mentoring using virtual technology to connect communities of practice across national boundaries.

As a project partner in the European crafts project referred to above, Rinova is developing a curriculum targeting crafts teachers which aims to support their use of digital tools. We are consulting with Crafts Council and other crafts organisations and networks, who have identified that there is a gap in access to this training. Again, this has the European dimension in that it aspires to integrate with the EQF and European Reference Framework for VET.

### **THE TME PROCESS:**

We have learnt from the TME process the importance of participative co-working in developing and sharing understanding of the complex cultural differences across different European countries and in connecting up mentors within a transnational community of practice. This may well be the most significant impact of the project, even if it does not lead young people to achieve accredited qualifications. Certainly, the most productive and creative moments during the project took place during the transnational meetings and training and learning events, which generated intense and concentrated participative problem-solving, reflection and exchange. One of the strengths of the project has been how it has enabled a pooling of the accumulated experience and commitment of the project partners, and the sharing of this experience with a younger generation of emerging creative mentors. The importance of these mobilities experiences for the younger participants cannot be over-estimated.

The methodology of validating existing experience and practice has been empowering. The process of Prepare, Observe, Apply, Review provided a practical methodology for a reflective investigation of working practice. It has also generated a wide range of documentary material that plays an important part in showing how mentoring is delivered. The project has delivered learning outcomes through the process of showing and doing, but it has sometimes been difficult to demonstrate this, without means to invest in the assessment process.

Multiplier events have extended awareness and debate about the role of mentoring in different countries. However, they have also exposed that this is a very undeveloped professional role in most countries, without any effective infra-structure to develop and deliver specialist sector-specific qualifications.

### **YOUNG PEOPLE:**

Rinova did not specifically recruit or target participants. This was done through Collage Arts and the Talent Match programme. Peer advocacy and recruitment has been a crucial tool. The methodology has been through the generation of specific multi-disciplinary co-creation projects, such as the Secret Cinema and the 1920s event, which required team working and a wide range of roles, thus engaging a diverse group of

participants. These were supplemented by specific courses, for example in filmmaking or scriptwriting, which have provided peer progression routes. The Talent Match model through which young people direct and lead the project themselves, with guidance and steering from the mentors, has encouraged active peer advocacy and peer progression and enabled Collage Arts to reach and build trust within marginalized groups and communities.

Financial incentives are obviously important to young people who come from poor backgrounds. However, the provision of a nurturing and secure environment and the building of bonds with others through teamworking are equally important in fostering confidence and motivation. In order to enter a creative career, a young person needs to be able to demonstrate skills and aptitude and build a portfolio, before being able to pitch successfully for paid work. Apprenticeships can provide an accessible environment for this progression, but the model of an apprenticeship, being based on an employment contract, is not tailored to the entrepreneurial mind-set of a creative start-up. Rinova is a UK Intermediary Organisation for Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs, which provides a model for start-up businesses to receive mentoring from experienced entrepreneurs through intensive transnational mobilities of between one and six months.

The creative projects that Collage Arts offers and the specialist skills and long-developed experience of working with marginalized and diverse groups, are important because they are an accessible pathway for building transferable skills for many young people who have not had a successful experience with formal education. We are able to cite numerous stories of the transformation that can be seen in motivation and confidence through engagement in TME and the peer progression pathways that it offers. The model of working directly with industry employers as clients in creating a brief for young people has been a successful way of introducing entrepreneurial skills and an understanding of the process of pitching and responding to a client brief, and the demands of delivering to expectations. The mentors (most of whom began as mentee participants) are an important role model here, in transmitting their creative business approach, and also introducing young people to networks not only through visits to exhibitions, filmsets, production studios and so on, but also through generating an understanding that networks operate at all levels, starting with those immediately around you.

#### **VM ROLE:**

The broad definition of the Vocational Mentor as someone who “supports young people to gain access to work and opportunities in Europe’s Creative and Cultural Industries” is a sufficiently inclusive definition. The question of its feasibility is related with the economic structure of the creative industries, and the capacity of the sector to invest in its future training and development in a context of severely reduced public provision in the UK, especially for the young. There are many factors that come into play, which were outlined in the UK country report. The working practices of the Creative Industries are in many ways distinct from the career structures of other sectors of the economy – for example the importance of networking, and of generating a creative portfolio or showcase, an entrepreneurial approach to seeking opportunities and the absence of a validated career pathway, the creative use of digital technology and the

nature of a portfolio career. It is necessary for young people to encounter role models who work within this sector, in order to understand how to access opportunities and progress. And it is necessary that those who offer careers advice, guidance and signposting for young people, understand the sector, its entry routes and work practices.

### **CCI CONTEXT AND EMPLOYER NEEDS**

Those who provide mainstream careers and employability advice need access to professional training to help them understand how the sector works and provide effective guidance. Also to be taken into account are the high level of transferrable skills that can be developed, which support employability both in creative and non-creative roles in other sectors of the economy, the importance of job-satisfaction in engaging creatively with work, and the new “flat” collaborative work models that have been so successfully applied in the digital and creative economy. The Talent Match model of a “Journey of Change” is a recognition that preparing young people for a satisfying working life is not just a matter of preparing and sending them to an endless and often futile round of job applications. Listening to young people is also crucial and giving them agency to direct their own destinies. Rinova has been engaged in innovative programmes by which young people engage directly with the policy-makers who affect their lives.

The model being developed at Collage Arts has recognized the importance of engaging with employers (both in and beyond the CCIs) as *clients*. This is a significant response to withdrawal of public funding for youth training, and has some potential to connect back with the roll out of apprenticeships. But it is distinct from the apprenticeship model because of its entrepreneurial aspect in engaging young people directly in responding to client needs, as well as in building their experience and their creative portfolio as a groundwork for launching a career. This brings it much closer to the working practice of the sector and also to the digitally connected skills and mindset of the young. The Creative Mentor is a vital part of the process in providing assurance and guidance and in making the connections to relevant networks.

### **QUALIFICATIONS AND OCCUPATIONAL STANDARDS**

As stated above, the framework of vocational training for the CCIs in the UK is currently confused and difficult to navigate. The UK’s decision to leave the European Union also creates great uncertainty about the European dimension of the UK’s qualifications, as well as raising practical anxieties for many young people who do not have a secure UK citizenship, or who wish to travel and work across national boundaries in Europe.

We have explored the CLOCK curriculum as a potential framework providing accreditation of informal learning skills in a transnational European context. However, cost is a barrier for many. A key question attaching to qualifications in the CCIs is their value in the labour market. To put it baldly, the validation offered by any vocational qualification needs to be recognised by potential clients or employers, if it is to be worth the investment. Most of the CCI sub-sectors do not have “gatekeeper” professional bodies (architecture is an exception) that can define and regulate entry standards. In the absence of effectively

implemented national standards it is hard for any CCI vocational qualification to achieve brand recognition with employers within the UK. The European dimension, particularly when supported by digital networks, does offer something distinctive, which answers to the needs of young people, even though taking this route would appear in the current climate in the UK to be swimming against the tide.

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18 May 2018