



‘A view from the edge gives the best perspective’

www.creative-edge.eu

People, production and place – the three pillars of Creative Edge

Creative Edge held its first meeting in December 2011. Now in December 2013, the Creative Edge project is coming to the end of its life cycle. Over the course of the project, Creative Edge put in place a number of measures to promote creative industries in peripheral regions. The project addressed three pillars of the creative economy: people, production and place. Supports for creative people aimed to increase the employability of young creative people through skills development, access to capital supports and network development. Creative Edge initiatives in this area involved mentoring, a talent voucher scheme and the MyCreativeEdge employment bank. The production pillar focused on assisting creative businesses to network and also access international markets. MyCreativeEdge is a central initiative that made up the production pillar. Also linked to production, the place aspect of the project focused on bringing life back to vacant buildings, developing them as work spaces for creative businesses. The place pillar also involved mapping the creative economy in the partner regions. Bringing the three pillars of the creative economy together, the Creative Edge Policy Toolkit will bring the experience of the Creative Edge initiatives together to help assist the development of creative economies in other peripheral places.

Members of the Creative Edge team



Contents

Page 1	People, production and place – the three pillars of Creative Edge
Page 2	Creative people and nurturing creative talent
Page 3	Creative people and nurturing creative talent (continued)
Page 4	Creative production and support for creative business
Page 5	Peripheral creative places and policy development
Page 6	Final update on project activities

In this issue...
 Creative Edge will finish its work at the end of December 2013. In this issue we provide an overview of the project's achievements.

Creative people and nurturing creative talent

Nurturing emerging creative talents to be better prepared when entering the employment market was one key goal of the Creative Edge project. Initiatives that support this goal are the Creative Edge Mentorship Programme, Creative Steps and the MyCreativeEdge creative talent employment bank.

Creative Edge Mentorship Programme

The Creative Edge Mentorship Programme connected creative talents in the early stages of career development in creative industries with experienced creative entrepreneur mentors. The Creative Edge partners that developed and drove the programme were Film i Västerbotten in Sweden and Kemi-Tornio University of Applied Sciences in Finland.

The Mentorship Programme was run by an overall coordinator and also depended on the participation of 'mentees' and 'mentors'. A call for applications from creative talents was launched in November 2012. Coordinators selected a number creative talent mentees and chose suitable mentors to pair them with. Creative Edge aimed to be innovative in pairing mentees and mentors, looking at linking people across creative industry sectors, and from different careers areas. For example an individual developing a career as a screenwriter might learn valuable skills from a producer mentor. A graphic designer could learn from a mentor in advertising. Mentors and mentees were advised to meet at least once a month for two hours. Mentees had goals to achieve by the end of the programme and at each meeting the mentor brought the mentee closer to achieving these goals.

The programme ran from January until June 2013. It proved a valuable initiative, with lessons learned by all involved. From the Creative Edge perspective we learned there is no one size fits all approach to mentoring. Personalities and learning styles can be suited to a structured or flexible approach. Regardless of the approach taken by mentors and mentees, the coordinator must ensure progress towards goals is being made so mentees gain valuable skills from their participation in mentoring.

MyCreativeEdge supports creative talent

The MyCreativeEdge website provides a forum for established creative businesses, but also new creative talent in the Creative Edge partner regions to showcase their work and skills (more information on page 4).

Emerging creative talent looking for work can present their skills to potential employers on the 'employ a creative' section of the website. This acts as an employment bank, and creative talent profiles can be browsed by businesses looking to employ someone with creative skills.

New creative talent also have access to the MyCreativeEdge Forum, where there are networking opportunities and resources for creatives.

mycreative edge

A showcase of new creative talent.
Create a beautiful and dynamic online portfolio to showcase your work to potential employers and clients.

www.mycreativeedge.eu

MyCreativeEdge.eu markets the portfolios of new creative talent from the West of Ireland, Northern Ireland, Västerbotten (Sweden) and Northern Finland.

CREATIVE TALENT SHOWCASE YOUR WORK

Create your free online portfolio now

Creative Steps

Coordinated by Kemi-Tornio University of Applied Sciences, Creative Steps brought young, creative talents from Finland, Sweden, Ireland and Northern Ireland together to work on projects from international businesses and organisations. Creative Steps matched emerging creative talent with existing business needs and helped creative talents gain experience in the business world.

Creative Steps involved workshops, lectures and cultural site visits, held both in Finland and Northern Ireland. The workshops and lectures covered topics such as creative and business thinking, market communications, future market trends, consumer trends and methods to generate creative ideas. Workshops were designed to be interactive, combining brainstorming sessions with exercises, such as tin foil modeling. Outside of the face to face teaching, learning and communication in the virtual environment was also important. The Creative Steps participants from Finland, Sweden, Ireland and Northern Ireland were divided into four international multi-skilled teams to work on their projects. Participants had a wide range of talents, and included students and graduates of screen-writing, film production, journalism, graphic design, art, digital media and visual arts. Participants worked on their projects in teams, and were also in direct contact with the business or organisation that initiated the idea for the project. Projects focused on areas such as improved product design, new product design and communication of concepts through visual mediums. After face to face workshops and lectures, students continued to work on their projects for a further two weeks and the final results were presented one month after the workshops. Each team created a Facebook group and held Skype meetings.

The Creative Steps initiative was a great success with positive feedback received from the students, graduates and businesses that took part. Locating the workshops in Finland and Northern Ireland gave participants a chance to experience local culture. The overall atmosphere of the programme was praised for being relaxed, yet still a valuable learning experience. Participants did find continuing their work remotely a challenge, and valued the face to face workshops more highly than online interaction. However online communication in internationally focused initiatives such as Creative Steps, that brings international teams together, is vital. Connecting young talents with businesses gave students a confidence and skills boost. The programme also involved businesses outside of the creative sector, highlighting the role of creative skills in the wider business world. The programme has the potential to be replicated internationally.

Creative Steps team at work



MyCreativeEdge Talent Voucher Scheme

Another opportunity for young creative talents run through MyCreativeEdge was the MyCreativeEdge Talent Voucher Scheme. Business members of MyCreativeEdge could apply for a voucher to contract a new creative talent member to work on a specific assignment for them. New creative talent from the West of Ireland, Västerbotten (Sweden) and Northern Finland were eligible to benefit from the scheme. Talent vouchers provide a means for graduates, and those in the early stages of career development, to work on specific short projects with established businesses. Ten talent vouchers were available through MyCreativeEdge to a maximum value of €2,000.

Creative production and support for creative business

Another central pillar of the Creative Edge project was creative production. This pillar focused on supporting creative businesses through initiatives such as Creative Hubs and the MyCreativeEdge website.

Creative Hubs

Vacant buildings in towns and villages can be turned into a resource when innovative thinking is applied. The Creative Hub concept puts life back into vacant buildings by facilitating creative businesses to access unused commercial premises on a non-profit basis. This provides businesses with access to premises at a low cost and also enriches towns and villages putting life back into their streets. Craigavon Borough Council, member of South East Economic Development in Northern Ireland has developed a number of Creative Hubs in Northern Ireland through the Creative Edge project.

To facilitate the development of Creative Hubs, public meetings were held in Northern Ireland to engage with interested stakeholders, such as potential landlords and creative business tenants. The first of the Creative Hubs to launch was the Lurgan Creative Hub that began in March of this year. Three more Creative Hubs at Armagh, Banbridge and Newry will be in place before the end of project. A model to facilitate replication of the Creative Hub concept in other places is also being developed by Craigavon Borough Council.

MyCreativeEdge

Marketing is a significant cost for businesses and international exposure is much sought after. The Creative Edge initiative, MyCreativeEdge is a website that provides creative industry businesses, freelancers and jobseekers, in the Creative Edge partner regions in the west of Ireland (counties Donegal, Sligo, Leitrim, Roscommon, Mayo, Galway and Clare), Northern Ireland (council areas of Ards, Armagh, Banbridge, Craigavon, Down and Newry & Mourne), northern Finland (Lapland and North Ostrobothnia) and Västerbotten in northern Sweden, the opportunity to showcase their work, at no cost.



MyCreativeEdge also provides an avenue for consumers and businesses to explore creative products and creative suppliers from across Europe's northern edge. The following creative sectors are showcased on the site: advertising and publishing; architecture; arts; crafts; design; digital media; fashion and jewellery; film and video; music and theatre; photography; software and gaming; and TV and radio.

Creative business and freelancer members of MyCreativeEdge each have their own profile page in the 'Creative Showcase' section of the site. The 'Employ a Creative' section (discussed on page 2) allows young creative talents to promote their skills to potential employers. There is also a members' area, the MyCreativeEdge Forum, providing networking opportunities, opening national and international links between creative businesses.



Creative Edge partner, the Western Development Commission pioneered MyCreativeEdge. The Creative Edge partner organisations are the contact points for MyCreativeEdge in their own regions. Interest has grown steadily since the website launched in June. There are a total of 451 MyCreativeEdge members, and 288 have created profiles on the site. In the five months since its launch, MyCreativeEdge has received a total of 20,000 unique visits with a total of 27,000 visits. The top locations for visitors were Ireland, United States, England, Sweden, Northern Ireland and Finland.

It's simple to create a profile on MyCreativeEdge.eu. Apply to join at: <http://www.mycreativeedge.eu/register/>

Peripheral creative places and policy development

Mapping the creative economy

A central part of the Whitaker Institute's work for Creative Edge was mapping the creative economy in the partner regions. To do this, Creative Edge constructed two databases, the first focusing on creative industries, and the second on culture. The databases are an inventory of cultural and creative industries in the project partner regions and are where data was sourced for mapping the creative economy. Mapping was carried out for each of the partner regions creative industries and also their festivals and cultural spaces. The result is a set of online, dynamic maps that show the breath of creative and cultural industries in the Creative Edge region. Creative Edge's creative economy mapping will be published on www.creative-edge.eu this month.

Cultural mapping projects have benefited the creative economy when carried out in other places. Cultural mapping was pioneered in Britain in the late 1990s. The UK Department for Culture Media and Sport set up the Creative Industries Task Force and it produced the Cultural Industries Mapping Document in 1998. The British Council report *'Mapping Creative Industries: A Toolkit'* highlights how the mapping document was the first attempt to map creative industries at the national scale. It focused attention on the sector and had a ripple effect. The importance of the creative sector began to gain recognition. It progressed understanding of the sector and informed policy. It was a springboard for further measurement of the sector, which led to the establishment of initiatives such as 'Creative London' and 'Creative Britain'.

We hope that our mapping of the creative economy catches the attention of policymakers so that more focus is placed on supporting and developing the creative economy in peripheral places.

Policy Toolkit for Creative Industries in Peripheral Regions

Development of a policy toolkit for creative industries in peripheral regions is another key part of the Whitaker Institute's work for Creative Edge. The toolkit has been informed by the partners' wide experience of the creative economy in this context, from their own work for their organisations, and also their specific work for Creative Edge. The toolkit focuses on developing the creative economy in peripheral places from the policymakers, creative industry and education perspective. Creative Edge aims to further consult with stakeholders before the final toolkit is published later this month.

Creative Edge events

A number of events were supported and run by the Creative Edge project. Creative Edge also supported creatives to attend events such as the Creative Summit and the FilmArc Master Class held in Skellefteå in Sweden.

Film i Västerbotten partnered with a number of creative events with the support of Creative Edge. These included the Creative Summit conference in Skellefteå, the gaming conference GAMEDEV and the MOVE film festival in Umeå.

The Creative Edge seminar series was run by South East Economic Development member Craigavon Borough Council in Northern Ireland between January and May. The seminars focused on topics of general interest, but also areas of interest to creative businesses such as: the art of presenting craft; modern architecture; video, film and imaging; business sustainability; and innovation in the creative sector.

Participants at the craft seminar organised by Craigavon Borough Council



Final update on project activities

The Creative Edge project received €1.1 million in funding through the European Union's Interreg 4B initiative under the Northern Periphery Programme (NPP) and brings together universities, development agencies and industry bodies from Ireland, Northern Ireland, Finland and Sweden. The main objective of the project is to promote the active participation of local creative organisations and businesses in global markets while also aiding them in their ability to attract and utilise local emerging creative talent in these markets. The project finishes its work at the end of December. Some of our final activities for Creative Edge are outlined below:

- Partners are working on preparation and publication of project reports and models, such as the Creative Edge Policy Toolkit for Creative Industries in Peripheral Places, the Creative Hub model and the Creative Steps report.
- The Creative Edge conference 'How Creative Industries Contribute to and Shape Peripheral Regions Societies and Economies' takes place on December 2nd in Taibhdhearc na Gaillimhe in Galway, Ireland.
- Creative Edge partners are working on an application for 'Creative Momentum', a project continuing on from the work of Creative Edge. Partners will submit an application for funding to the Northern Periphery and Arctic Programme 2014-2020 when a call for project proposals is made.

NUI Galway Contact Details:

Angela Sice
Development Officer
The Whitaker Institute for Innovation and Societal Change
National University of Ireland, Galway
Galway, Ireland
Phone: +353-91-492817
Email: angela.sice@nuigalway.ie

Written and compiled by:

Aisling Murtagh
Creative Edge Research Assistant
The Whitaker Institute for Innovation and Societal Change
National University of Ireland, Galway
Galway, Ireland
Phone: +353-91-494327
Email: aisling.murtagh@nuigalway.ie

www.creative-edge.eu



CREATIVE **EDGE**