

EUROPEAN ACADEMY ON YOUTH WORK - WORKSHOP REPORT

Appraiser: 360° Professional Development Appraisal Service
for Trainers

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TOPIC DISCUSSED, COUNTRIES OF THE PROJECT

Appraiser is a competence assessment platform for trainers. It offers free solutions for professional development which include self-assessment and feedback from participants, colleagues and organisers, as well as collegial support. The platform is adapted to the needs and practices of trainers in the youth field.

Partners (countries):

- International Youth Work Trainers Guild <http://iywt.org/> (Europe, registered in Germany),
- Badgecraft <https://www.badgecraft.eu/> (Ireland),
- Lithuanian Association of Non-formal Education <https://www.neformaliai.lt/en/> (Lithuania),
- Associazione Interculturale NUR <https://www.assonur.org/sito/> (Italy),
- COOBRA Cooperativa Braccianti <http://www.coobra.at/> (Austria)
- and Ha Moment <http://hamoment.org/> (Portugal)

METHODOLOGY



1. Welcome and introduction- round of sharing: What is the identity you are bringing into this room today? What brought you here and what are curious about?
2. Habits and preferences – interactive discussion: A conversation about habits and preferences (of people present), about (self)assessment and development of their competences: What do they practice? How do they practice? What could motivate them to do it more regularly?
3. Introduction to Appraiser – interactive presentation: Introducing Appraiser, its background, core principles and objectives; introducing insights from research and survey in the trainers' community; introducing the overview of main elements and functions of Appraiser
4. Engaging with Appraiser – hands-on exploration of the digital solution (individual work with a laptop or a smart device, but in a support group), while also providing to the team: those who are trainers – completing self-assessment of competences; those who are trainers – testing wireframes for collecting feedback from their reality figures; those who are not trainers – testing wireframes for providing feedback to trainers
5. Transferring Appraiser – interactive discussion: How applicable are tools like Appraiser in the international youth work field? How can competence-based assessment tools be developed further and mainstreamed in the international youth work field?

KEY ISSUES RAISED SUCH AS CHALLENGES

The profile of people who came to the Appraiser workshop was fairly diverse and included youth workers, trainers, facilitators, NA/SALTO representatives and managers of youth centres. Therefore, their realities were different, which was noticeable when sharing main reasons for attending the workshop. Nevertheless, the main reasons, which also coincided with the main challenges Appraiser is trying to address, were:

- Investing time and effort into doing continuous (self)assessment of competences, as well as investing time and effort for providing feedback to others
- (Having a tool for) Doing self-assessment in a quality and comprehensive way
- (Having a tool for) Overcoming limits of accuracy and “objectivity” of self-assessment
- Being too critical or too “rude” when doing self-assessment (and difficulty of focusing on positives)
- Coming to an understanding if competences are valid and applicable and whether a competence-based approach is the ‘right’ way to go
- (Having a tool for) Giving feedback which would be accurate and relevant for professional growth
- Using 360 appraisal in trainers’ pools, especially those managed by NAs, and not introducing it and using it as top-down approach
- Taking into consideration the cultural dimension of approaching feedback
- Dealing with privacy of assessment outcomes, especially when the process takes place in trainers’ pools and organisations

INNOVATIVE RESPONSES TO THOSE CHALLENGES

The innovative responses offered by Appraiser are not attempting and pretending to address all of those challenges or to address them fully, but rather to tackle some of them through:

- Using design thinking (*design thinking is an innovation process, which puts people (users) and their needs in the centre of the creative process and makes sure that the team gets to know their potential users, their habits and preferences, before starting the developments. It is a non-linear process that is, in Appraiser, managed through a well-planned design cycle: 1) observation and research; 2) ideation; 3) prototyping; and 4) building and implementation*) in its development, which enables extensive needs assessment and user profiling and should result in a tool that responds to the needs of the training community to a high degree (hopefully)
- Being a digital tool, which should contribute to reducing the effort and time needed for doing the self-assessment
- Offering different levels of self-assessment, which allow to go in different levels of depth when assessing competences and should increase quality of self-assessment
- Using 360 approach assessment, which should increase accuracy by providing diverse perspectives of feedback givers (colleagues, participants, contractors)
- Providing the possibility for peer support in the form of collegial trios, who should help processing assessment results and help in planning further professional development and, at the same time, increase accuracy and decrease a ‘too critical’ attitude
- Investing in an appreciative approach, which aims to put an emphasis on strengths rather than (just) weaknesses (this is yet a challenge to be resolved)
- Creating and providing guidelines for each step of the assessment process, which should support quality and a comprehensive 360-degree process

KEY TRENDS IDENTIFIED (COMMONALITIES BETWEEN COMMENTS/ PARTICIPANTS)

I am unsure, if they could be understood as trends, but the following came up in several comments and reflections from the participants:

- Understanding the importance of assessment of competences for the professional development of trainers / youth workers, which could imply also the need for professionalisation
- On the other hand, lack of time and willingness to invest effort into complex assessment processes
- Customisation of the tool / content: be that in the form of customising the competence areas / competences, adjusting the rating scales or customising the overall process for a particular pool of trainers
- Discussion around anonymity and privacy of the assessment process and its outcomes, in pools / groups of trainers, but also towards the external public
- As mentioned before, the issue of being too critical/too “rude” and focusing on weaknesses rather than strengths was popping up at different moments during the workshop (e.g. a couple of trainers said that they would absolutely never use “Exceptional Strength” from the rating scale when assessing themselves)

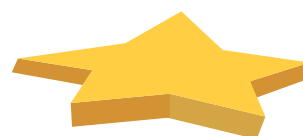
FEEDBACK FROM PARTICIPANTS

In a short reflection at the end of the workshop, the participants shared how they felt the appraisal process was useful, albeit complex, and Appraiser quite ambitious in its attempt to encompass 360-degree appraisal based on the ETS (European Training Strategy) competence model for trainers. Many of them would be willing to try it out, but are aware that it requires time and effort. There was an interest also to bring it to pools of trainers managed by National Agencies, which would mean additional work on customising the tool. Several trainers said that the language of the ETS competence model for trainers is too complex for them and that it needs to be simplified and further explained. Finally, one quote: *“A project like this shows, how a European strategy, like the ETS, can be put into daily life as a support instrument for the professional development of each individual trainer (and with this also for professionalisation of youth work).”*

LINKS TO FURTHER RESOURCES OR INFORMATION ABOUT YOUR PROJECT AVAILABLE ONLINE



IYWT Guild – Trainers Appraisal: <https://iywt.org/project/appraiser/>
Appraiser: <https://appraiser.badgecraft.eu/>



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