

**DIGITAL\_BRIDGES**  
SIMULATED PRACTICE FOR SKILLS  
DEVELOPMENT IN SOCIAL SERVICES AND  
HEALTHCARE

22 SEPTEMBER 2015



# NEEDS

- Importance of health & social services is increasing as society grows older and unemployment and relocation across Europe increases.
- A key part of the sector deals with vulnerable people.
- Education & training pivotal in developing those who work with vulnerable people.
- Strong emphasis on learning and assessing skills in real practice environments (“practice learning”).
- Logistical challenges in arranging practice opportunities and there are other challenges; e.g. risks associated with work-based learning and safety of service users.

# MEETING NEEDS

- To address challenges, this project has developed an immersive 3D game driven by emotional AI, to provide a safe environment where students/staff who deal with vulnerable people can learn by interacting with NPCs in a simulation of a real world service.
- Trainees navigate their way through choices to arrive at the best resolution. Scenarios can be replayed by trainer/mentor.
- Provides a measurable, controlled environment where learners can gain a command of the basics of their job role with minimal resources and zero risk to the public, providing a sound basis from which to progress to real work practice placement.
- The project has also developed a pedagogy around the use of the simulated practice learning environment and a curriculum for simulated practice learning aligned with ECTS/ECVET.



# WHERE WE ARE

- Developed pedagogy and curriculum for simulated practice learning.
- Developed 3D game for simulated practice learning for vulnerable people (have chosen childhood practice to evaluate this approach).
- Currently developing training for teachers/mentors/assessors.
- Ran first multiplier event in the UK at the end of August 2015.
- Ran workshop at IFSW (International Federation of Social Workers European Region) start of September
- Running workshop at Scottish learning Festival tomorrow
- Slightly ahead of schedule and could be piloting towards the end of 2015

# ADVICE & GUIDANCE

- Communication
  - Partner meetings vital
  - Require regular contact in between (eg. fortnightly skypes)
  - Maintain a project management platform (eg. Basecamp/Asana)
  - Regularly review progress against schedule and adapt as necessary
- Maintain risk register and update regularly
- Try to identify issues as early as possible and seek an amicable solution if at all possible
- Continuous QA throughout project (ideally appoint external evaluator at an early stage)
- Keep record of all dissemination activities during project

# PARTNERS

- University of the West of Scotland, UK
- Scottish Social Services Council, UK
- Vytautas Magnus University, Lithuania
- University of Sofia/Education & Innovation Centre, Bulgaria
- Context Learning, Finland
- Melius, Italy

# CROSS-SECTORAL APPROACH

- Project requires a cross-sectoral approach to deliver the outputs:
  - Health/social care: Partners who deal with vulnerable people to understand the underlying issues and be able to develop these as “scenarios”
  - Education: Partners with expertise in pedagogy to determine how best to represent scenarios in games in such a way that will result in high-quality learning
  - Computing: Partners with expertise in gaming technology to develop the game
  - Policy: Partners who can develop and influence policy changes resulting from the findings from the project

# BENEFITS & IMPACTS

- Specific minimum targets have been set :
  - 500 HE/VET students and social services professionals trained using the game;
  - 200 teachers/teacher trainers trained;
  - Community of Practice with at least 500 members.
- Project will also develop:
  - policy & practice guidance for policy-makers/decision makers on the affordances of simulated practice environment.
  - best practice case studies to provide guidance to teachers about how to best use the game in their teaching
  - use case scenarios that demonstrate how the environment could be extended to cover other practice learning areas.