Rural Canvas Project

Fostering Rural Resilience through Creativity and Arts-driven Entrepreneurship

www.rural-canvas.eu

Baseline Report 2021

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1. Introduction

RURAL CANVAS is a project that aims to bring the two worlds of arts and creative industries on one hand, and rural areas in Europe on the other, to boost employability and entrepreneurial skillset of artists and creative workers, foster interdisciplinarity and facilitate rural resilience as a result.

"Artists and creative workers already possess important skills relating to this profession itself, but to make them more effective, innovative, and interdisciplinary, these skills need to be complemented with entrepreneurial and 21CS, in the context of real-life, project learning opportunities. While there are programs and projects that do foster hard entrepreneurial skills in arts and creative industries, research has shown that these professionals lack the right mind set or 21CS – soft skills such as perseverance, risk-taking, resilience, global stewardship are all essential in pushing through entrepreneurial endeavours and projects, especially in volatile and uncertain 21st century contexts.

A New European Agenda for Culture clearly voices the vital need for artists and creative workers to develop and hone their entrepreneurial and transversal skills (European Commission, 2018). To follow this line of thinking, this project will complement the skills artists and creative workers already possess and complement them with entrepreneurial hard skills and soft 21CS, forming thus a skill triangle that would make artists and creative workers better equipped. To enable the uptake of skills through "learning by doing", the project will allow adult learners to design their own projects to foster rural resilience and to do so supported by expert mentors."

2. Skills

"*Skills are the ability to apply knowledge and use know-how to complete tasks and solve problems. In the context of the European Qualifications Framework, skills are described as cognitive (involving the use of logical, intuitive, and creative thinking) or practical (involving manual dexterity and the use of methods, materials, tools and instruments)*" (European Parliament and the Council, 2008).

After an extensive research on the different skill definition papers and related publications, it has been agreed to use specific existing tables of skills, for both categories of entrepreneurial and 21st century soft skills.

The table used by EntreComp (see: source) for the Entrepreneurial skills was adopted and used also for the list of 21st century soft skills.

1.1. Entrepreneurial skills

Competences	Hints	Descriptors
1.1 Spotting opportunities	Use your imagination and abilities to identify opportunities for creating value	• Identify and seize opportunities to create value by exploring the social, cultural, and economic landscape • Identify needs and challenges that need to be met • Establish new connections and bring together scattered elements of the landscape to create opportunities to create value
1.2 Creativity	Develop creative and purposeful ideas	• Develop several ideas and opportunities to create value, including better solutions to existing and new challenges • Explore and experiment with innovative approaches

		• Combine knowledge and resources to achieve valuable effects
1.3. Vision	Work towards your vision of the future	• Imagine the future • Develop a vision to turn ideas into action • Visualise future scenarios to help guide effort and action
1.4 Valuing ideas	Make the most of ideas and opportunities	• Judge what value is in social, cultural, and economic terms • Recognise the potential an idea has for creating value and identify suitable ways of making the most out of it
1.5 Ethical and sustainable thinking	Assess the consequences and impact of ideas, opportunities, and actions	• Assess the consequences of ideas that bring value and the effect of entrepreneurial action on the target community, the market, society, and the environment • Reflect on how sustainable long-term social, cultural, and economic goals are, and the course of action chosen • Act responsibly
2.1 Self- awareness and self- efficacy	Believe in yourself and keep developing	• Reflect on your needs, aspirations and wants in the short, medium, and long term • Identify and assess your individual and group strengths and weaknesses • Believe in your ability to influence the course of events, despite uncertainty, setbacks, and temporary failures
2.2 Motivation and perseverance	Stay focused and don't give up	• Be determined to turn ideas into action and satisfy your need to achieve • Be prepared to be patient and keep trying to achieve your long-term individual or group aims • Be resilient under pressure, adversity, and temporary failure
2.3 Mobilizing resources	Gather and manage the resources you need	• Get and manage the material, non-material and digital resources needed to turn ideas into action • Make the most of limited resources • Get and manage the competences needed at any stage, including technical, legal, tax and digital competences
2.4 Financial and economic literacy	Develop financial and economic know how	• Estimate the cost of turning an idea into a value-creating activity • Plan, put in place and evaluate financial decisions over time • Manage financing to make sure my value-creating activity can last over the long term
2.5. Mobilizing others	Inspire, enthuse and get others on board	• Inspire and enthuse relevant stakeholders • Get the support needed to achieve valuable outcomes

		• Demonstrate effective communication, persuasion, negotiation, and leadership
3.1 Taking the initiative	Go for it	• Initiate processes that create value • Take up challenges • Act and work independently to achieve goals, stick to intentions, and carry out planned tasks
3.2 Planning and management	Prioritize, organize and follow-up	• Set long-, medium- and short-term goals • Define priorities and action plans • Adapt to unforeseen changes
3.3 Coping with uncertainty, ambiguity, and risk	Make decisions dealing with uncertainty, ambiguity and risk	• Make decisions when the result of that decision is uncertain, when the information available is partial or ambiguous, or when there is a risk of unintended outcomes • Within the value-creating process, include structured ways of testing ideas and prototypes from the early stages, to reduce risks of failing • Handle fast-moving situations promptly and flexibly
3.4 Working with others	Team up, collaborate and network	• Work together and co-operate with others to develop ideas and turn them into action • Network • Solve conflicts and face up to competition positively when necessary
3.5. Learning through experience	Learn by doing	• Use any initiative for value creation as a learning opportunity • Learn with others, including peers and mentors • Reflect and learn from both success and failure (your own and other people's)

Source: EntreComp: The Entrepreneurship Competence Framework, Margherita Bacigalupo, Panagiotis Kampylis, Yves Punie, Godelieve Van den Brande, 2016[1]

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1.2. 21ˢᵗ century skills

"It should be noted that the "21st century skills" concept encompasses a wide-ranging and amorphous body of knowledge and skills that is not easy to define and that has not been officially codified or categorized. While the term is widely used in education, it is not always defined consistently, which can lead to confusion and divergent interpretations. In addition, several related terms—including applied skills, cross-curricular skills, cross-disciplinary skills, interdisciplinary skills, transferable skills, transversal skills, non-cognitive skills, and soft skills, among others—are also widely used in reference to the general forms of knowledge and skill commonly associated with 21st century skills. While these different terms may not be strictly synonymous, and they may have divergent or specialized meanings in certain technical contexts, these diverse sets of skills are being addressed in this one entry for the purposes of practicality and usefulness".

Source: https://www.edglossary.org/21st-century-skills/

Competences	Hints	Descriptors
1.2.1. Critical thinking, problem solving, reasoning, analysis, interpretation, synthesizing information	Solid knowledge of dialectic, semiotics and phenomenology theory	• Understand the complexity of concepts, be able to both formulate and structure one
1.2.2.Research skills and practices, interrogative questioning	Solid knowledge of academic practices and use of knowledge databases	• Be able to go deep into any question raised and explore every possible angle of perception suitable to its understanding
1.2.3. Creativity, artistry, curiosity, imagination, innovation, personal expression	Self-awareness and openness	• Imagine your own version of an activity, outside of known patterns and models

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1.2.4. Perseverance, self-direction, planning, self-discipline, adaptability, initiative	Good psychological condition and centred life-energy	• Face all difficulties and barriers with a positive mind-set and a structured method of moving forward
1.2.5. Oral and written communication, public speaking and presenting, listening	Linguistic literacy and public speaking practice	• Produce a text or a public speech on any initiative or project and be able to discuss it with anyone involved
1.2.6. Leadership, teamwork, collaboration, cooperation, facility in using virtual workspace	Solid knowledge of work ethics and group psychology	• Understand flat hierarchy and specification of tasks as an asset to the goals of any endeavour
1.2.7. Information and communication technology (ICT) literacy, media and internet literacy, data interpretation and analysis, computer programming	• additive manufacturing • 3D-printing • embedded systems and materials • cloud computing skills	• Stay in touch with any new tech-tool and learn how to use it on your field of action
1.2.8. Civic, ethical, and social-justice literacy	Solid awareness of the political	• Be informed of the legal and civic issues of your work and of your social context • Read history
1.2.9. Economic and financial literacy, entrepreneurialism	Intersection with the entrepreneurial skill set	• Set priorities on the skills you need in your activity, related to finances
1.2.10. Global awareness, multicultural literacy, humanitarianism	Invest time in staying informed by following different sources of information	• Empathy is necessary for the survival of any society
1.2.11. Scientific literacy and reasoning, the scientific method	Basic knowledge of mathematics and of the philosophy of sciences	• Look for definitions, start by identifying the questions and the fields of thought involved
1.2.12. Environmental and conservation literacy, ecosystems understanding	Awareness of all environmental issues, follow-up of all info related to the ecological issues	• Understand oneself as part of the ecosystem and not as a mere user of it

1.2.13. Health and wellness literacy, including nutrition, diet, exercise, and public health and safety	Awareness of the importance of a healthy body and a healthy society	• As new as "Mens sana in corpore sano" but still valid

3. Relevance of skills and intersection potential

One can easily, after reading the above lists and definitions of skills, conclude that there are several intersections between them, even sometimes repetitions and not easily detectable differences.

When it comes to 21st century soft skills, the main problem of similarities isn't so much the one with the list of the entrepreneurial skills, but very much so the one with the already possessed skills by artists and creatives, namely creative skills such as: creativity, collaboration, team-working, etc. This has a very simple explanation in the often-ignored fact that many of the so-called soft skills were inspired, defined, and practiced by artists and creatives before being listed and promoted for larger categories of adult learners.

But precisely the fine-tuning and filtering through the sub-definitions and lists of the skills could help identify those of them, very much needed and so far, neglected by artists and creatives.

4. Drivers and Barriers for skill development

In addressing people from the creative sector with general statements, such as "Art and creative industry have so far been in the realm of individual expression ("art for art's sake") and for leisure purposes", one is entering a dangerous path of demonstrating ignorance of the very nature of Art and its function in societal architecture, as well as a complete lack of art history knowledge. In fact, the sole idea that art and creativity have ever been for "their

own sake", or that they too can be addressed as products for "leisure purposes", is academically and scientifically wrong, whatever angle is used, sociological, economical, psychological or – worse – philosophical.

This could, in a project that is mainly focused on helping creatives to become aware of their needs for some additional skills, from both areas of entrepreneurial and 21st century soft skills, become the biggest barrier of all, since it would be an ideologically dangerous approach of what the role and nature of Art and, subsequently of the so-called creative industries is, in our western world. Talking to artists as if they were ignorant and self-absorbed is the best way to drive them away from such an important initiative, as this one.

This makes one fact obvious, when it comes to the upcoming work of the Rurart Alliances: the strongest driver for skill development will be the participation of creatives in the fabrication of the Skill Prioritisation Map, which will help them own the interest of acquiring these skills and the awareness of their importance for the project as a whole, but also will enable the other stakeholders to develop an understanding of the definitions and facts about creative work and artists, which is a condictio sine qua non for the success of this endeavour.

5. Good practice cases

"*Making sure professionals are equipped with the right sets of skills to face current and future challenges is key - both for the survival of businesses and for securing individual careers. At European and national levels skills development has been given centre stage in public policy strategies with the aim of combating unemployment and of safeguarding the quality and competitiveness of our economies. Professional training agendas are however complex fields of action that require the*

involvement of a variety of stakeholders and a constant awareness of the developments and needs on the ground. Creative Skills Europe, the European Platform on Employment and Training in the Audio-visual and Live Performance sectors, is a project which aims at collecting information and at developing tools to help the sector adjust its skills to the realities of the field. Run by a partnership of European trade unions, employers' organisations, and national skills bodies, Creative Skills Europe built on the intelligence of the sector on its evolutions and needs. It looked at creating national and European synergies, and at inspiring new types of actions, both at company level and in a collective way at sector level. Its objective was to steer discussions on the evolving skills needs in our sectors and to promote initiatives to respond to those needs. After a first phase of activities (2014-2016) that led to the identification of key trends impacting skills and competences in our sectors, it was decided to pursue the cooperation from the perspective of the concrete needs emerging from the field. In 2017-2018 four thematic workshops were organised in different European cities on the topics of innovation, HR management, the digital environment, and the role of social dialogue. During those encounters, available intelligence about our labour markets was shared, qualitative analyses on key trends were studied, and good practices of skills solutions were presented by stakeholders representing education and training bodies, institutions, and industry representatives".

Source: https://www.creativeskillseurope.eu/skills-for-tomorrow/

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Project Partners

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