UPSKILL
Up Skilling cultural managers:
matching skills needs by improving vocational training:

First research report[1]

This research report describes the first skills, competences and attributes assessment carried out by the partners during the first meeting in Rome (December 2013) and second meeting in London (March 2014).
This document is an evolving document that will be implemented with the feedbacks and ideas of cultural managers encountered during the two years' project.
The first step of the Upskill project was to identify the skills, competences and attributes needed by cultural managers today to face the challenges stirring the cultural sector at European level.
Why Upskill? Why we think Upskill is relevant today?

Background:

1. What is happening in Europe in the cultural sector today?

European cultural organisations are going through a critical phase due to many different factors connected to the economic crisis, including the austerity measures that are limiting funds for culture; emerging forms of cultural participation and artistic creation; the demographic move; and the digital shift. The cultural and creative sector is an important source of economic value and impact. Cultural organisations, usually in the form of social enterprises, not-for-profit organisations or NGOs (including galleries, museums, archives, libraries operating in the third sector, and others active in the arts, heritage and conservation sector), have a significant impact on local, regional and national communities. They generate significant job opportunities for young people, social entrepreneurs and those wishing to develop or change careers.

2. The case for investing in Upskilling Cultural managers

Europe-wide austerity measures will impact on both those organisations in receipt of public subsidy and the potential spending power of purchasers. In addition, new technologies and digital platforms are developing at a rate that presents considerable new opportunities and challenges for businesses. The most direct way to tackle these challenges is to invest in leadership development to train effective, highly-skilled managers who are fully equipped to provide innovative and strategic leadership in key areas including providing direction, working with people, using resources and facilitating change.
However, research indicates that cultural managers do not always assess their own skills needs, and rarely invest in the new skills and competencies they may need to deliver successful projects and business growth. In developing an effective and usable training programme tailored to the

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needs of employers, this project will set out to challenge the generally held belief that leadership and management skills are something you 'pick up' on the job, and provide clarity about which specific skills and behaviours managers need to display.

3. Challenges facing the sector

In order to run an arts organisation successfully, it is necessary to develop managerial staff who combine business and entrepreneurial skills with an in-depth understanding of the arts. Whilst business qualifications alone are rarely sufficient, the education sector is failing to provide those who tend to become cultural managers with business and entrepreneurial skills.

4. Skills needed to meet these challenges

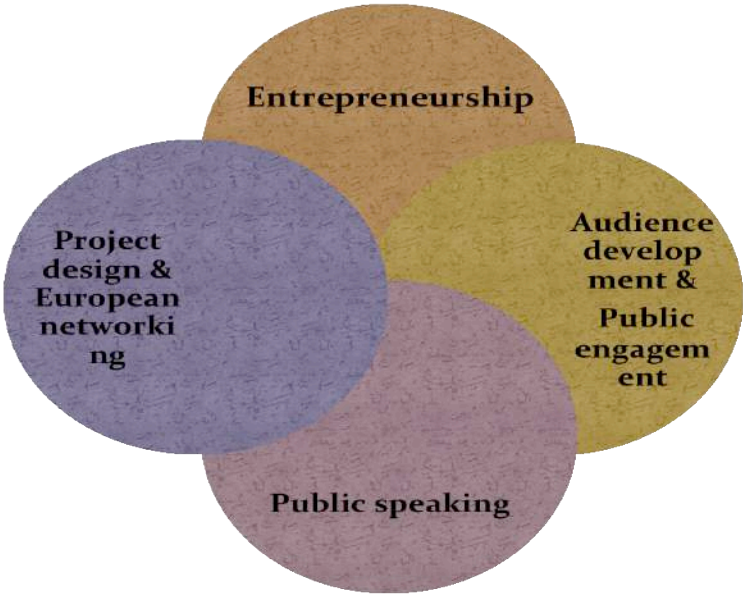
Entrepreneurial skills are inherent to effective creative practice. Stronger entrepreneurial skills will allow cultural leaders to create commercial opportunities for cultural organisations, and to contribute to the growth of larger, more sustainable businesses. However, there are many cultural managers who underestimate the value of entrepreneurial approaches, do not understand what entrepreneurialism entails and how it relates to creative practice, or are unsure how entrepreneurial skills are best learned, taught and embedded throughout their organisations. The Key Competence Framework identifies entrepreneurship as a combination of creativity, innovation and risk-taking which allows an individual to turn ideas into action. It also refers to an individual's ability to plan and manage projects in order to achieve objectives.

5. Barriers to investment in training

Although these skills gaps have been clearly identified, the cultural sector is an area of the economy where formal investment in training is often difficult to implement. This is in large part due to the atypical businesses structure and patterns of employment particular to the sector, which can act as barriers to the successful implementation of long-term strategic planning. The sector is dominated by small and medium enterprises and freelancers. From the employer perspective, small businesses have less time and money to train staff, and portfolio working, seasonal productions and contract-based work make it difficult to offer anything more than ad hoc, on-the-job training. Consequently, few businesses in the sector pre-empt future human resources requirements by planning staff development, instead choosing to access training only as and when the need arises. Clearly, there is a need for flexible training provision which is tailored to the needs of business practices and employment structures unique to the cultural sector.

SKILLS MAPPING:

In the first meeting in Rome, the partners answered to the questions: What are the skills and competences that a cultural manager should improve today? What skills, competences and attributes are important in our field?
Using visual tools, the partners mapped out skills, competences and attributes that can be related around 4 main areas:



The mapping of skills showed that in the cultural sector is important to develop the following competences:

CREATIVE THINKING
SELF-CONFIDENCE
SELF-AWARENESS
CONNECTION TO THE CONTEXT
BEING INNOVATIVE/DISRUPTIVE
FLEXIBILITY
RESILIENCE
PROACTIVITY
BE ABLE TO MOTIVATE OTHERS
GROUP WORKING
PROBLEM SOLVING
BRINGING DIFFERENT PEOPLE TO WORK TOGETHER
ABILITY TO INTERVIEW PEOPLE
LISTENING TO PEOPLE
GOOD SUPERVISING SKILLS
CREATIVITY COMPETENCES
SEE THINGS IN A BIGGER PICTURE,
FIND CONNECTIONS
TO START INNOVATIVE PROCESS
BE CURIOUS
ASK QUESTIONS
FLEXIBILITY
DESIGN ORIENTED
LEARNING TO SELL YOURSELF
PLANNING SKILLS
FINANCIAL SKILLS
KEEP EVERYTHING UNDER CONTROL
HAVE FUN

COMPARING IDEAS
INVESTIGATE
FUNDRAISING
LUST
PUBLIC SPEAKING SKILLS
RISK TAKING
POSITIVE SELF-CRITICISM
NETWORKING
GAME ORIENTED
BEING ABLE TO ANTICIPATE TRENDS
RESEARCHING SKILLS
KNOWING YOUR SECTOR….

A mix of hard and soft skills, although soft skills are predominant. Creativity and skills and competences related to the entrepreneurship sphere are extremely important.
The results of the skills mapping matches somehow with the Entrepreneurship and cultural awareness and expression competence described by the EU recommendation on the 8 Key Competences for lifelong learning: http://europa.eu/legislation_summaries/education_training_youth/lifelong_learning/c11090_en.htm
Entrepreneurship: Sense of initiative and entrepreneurship is the ability to turn ideas into action. It involves creativity, innovation and risk-taking, as well as the ability to plan and manage projects in order to achieve objectives. The individual is aware of the context of his/her work and is able to seize opportunities that arise. It is the foundation for acquiring more specific skills and knowledge needed by those establishing or contributing to social or commercial activity. This should include awareness of ethical values and promote good governance.
Cultural awareness and expression which involves appreciation of the importance of the creative expression of ideas, experiences and emotions in a range of media (music, performing arts, literature and the visual arts).

Useful references are:

The competency model is based on three areas:
http://www.projectcream.eu/files/2012/04/2.1_Competency-model-for-research.pdf

../Dropbox/Leo_partnerships_UPskills/Research/skills_and_competencies art_cultural manager.pdf

Fig. 1 This word cloud shows the most frequent words

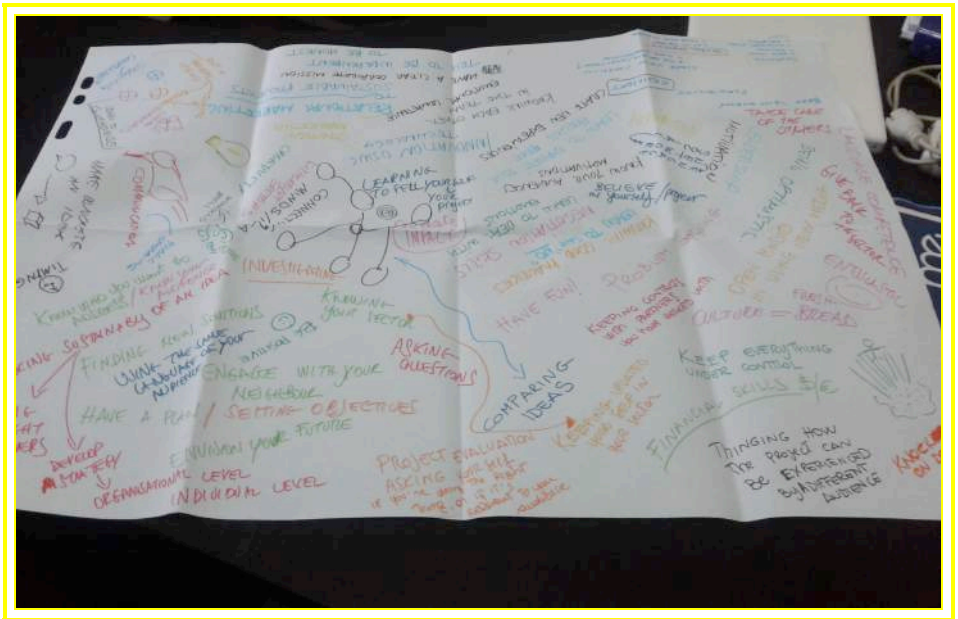


Fig. 2 Skills mapping meeting in Rome, December 2013

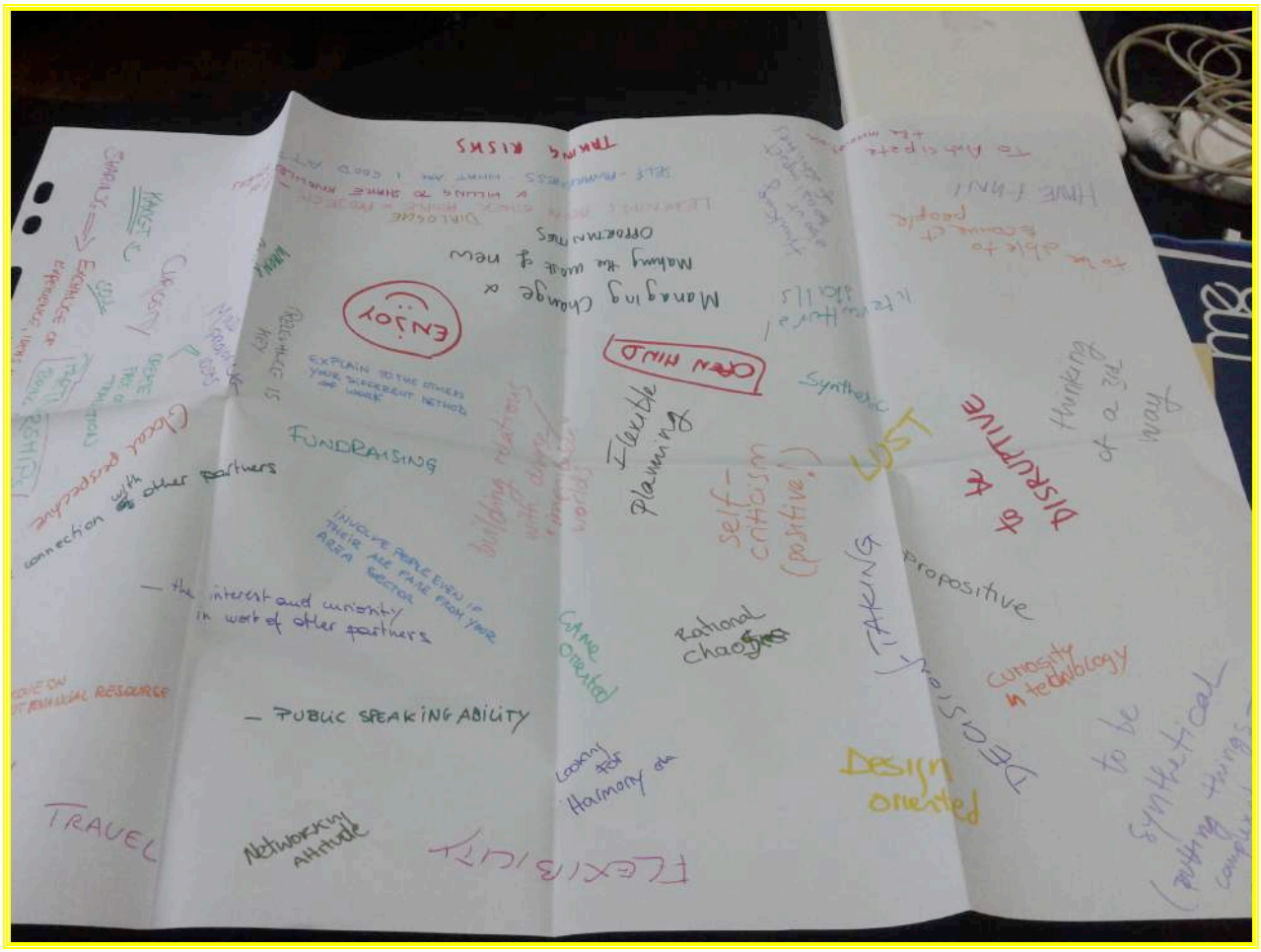


Fig. 3 Skills mapping meeting in Rome, December 2013

But what are the appropriate training paths to transfer those skills and empower cultural managers?

In the meeting in London participants split into four smaller groups to workshop good training methodologies around the four following themes:

- audience development;

- change management;

- planning ahead in an uncertain climate;

- identifying your own skills gaps.

Main observations:

- Importance of embedding yourself in new economic and social context that surrounds you so that you can create sustainable change.

- Evidence gets you through the door;
- Become friends with business leaders in your area so you can feed into strategic and economic positioning;
- DIY cultural policy making. Use the fact the cultural sector is different to make people interested in what you do;
- From project to policy;
- Managing the change: Skills to manage the power, distribution of power, allow people to that change, be able to communicate that change;
- Rethink: Place people back into the process in a creative way;
- Users' perspective is important;
- Key skills for audience development: loyalty to the public, marketing strategies, bring people with other competences into the cultural sector;
- Importance of peer to peer learning and sharing knowledge;
- Bring the informal learning into the training process: we do not learn only through formal training (mentoring);
- Be aware of your organisation mission, values, strategic development, impact and products.

During the Upskill project partners will research innovative training paths by sharing knowledge and meeting cultural managers on the field.

VOCABULARY (Bibliography and links)

Key competences for lifelong learning are a combination of knowledge, skills and attitudes appropriate to the context. They are particularly necessary for personal fulfilment and development, social inclusion, active citizenship and employment.

Key competences are essential in a knowledge society and guarantee more flexibility in the labour force, allowing it to adapt more quickly to constant changes in an increasingly interconnected world. They are also a major factor in innovation, productivity and competitiveness, and they contribute to the motivation and satisfaction of workers and the quality of work.

Fig 1 The following graphic differs slightly from the EU recommendations, which mentions attitudes instead of attributes

The following refer to the EU recommendation on the 8 Key Competences for lifelong learning: http://europa.eu/legislation_summaries/education_training_youth/lifelong_learning/c11090_en.htmEntrepreneurship: Sense of initiative and entrepreneurship is the ability to turn ideas into action. It involves creativity, innovation and risk-taking, as well as the ability to plan and manage projects in order to achieve objectives. The individual is aware of the context of his/her work and is able to seize opportunities that arise. It is the foundation for acquiring more specific skills and knowledge needed by those establishing or contributing to social or commercial activity. This should include awareness of ethical values and promote good governance

Formal, Non-Formal and Informal Adult Education: Formal learning usually takes place in schools, universities or training institutions and leads to a diploma or certificate. Non-formal learning includes free adult education within study circles, projects or discussion groups advancing at their own place, with no examination at the end. Informal learning can be found everywhere, e.g. in families, in the workplace, in NGOs, in theatre groups, or can also refer to individual activities at home, like reading a book.

Validation of Competences: The process of assessing and recognising educational and training content, knowledge, skills and competences acquired during a specific learning and/or training experience.

Validation of non-formal and informal learning: European countries are increasingly emphasising the need to recognise the full range of an individual's knowledge, skills and competences – those acquired not only at school, university or other education and training institutions, but also outside the formal system.

http://ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-policy/informal_en.htm

References:

http://www.projectcream.eu/files/2012/04/2_Research-survey.pdf

http://www.projectcream.eu/files/2012/04/3.1_new_curriculum_framework_EN.pdf

Agenda New skills for New jobs http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=958&langId=en

Education and training work programme 2020
http://europa.eu/legislation_summaries/education_training_youth/general_framework/ef0016_en.htm