



CraftWise

**A Collaborative Apprenticeship Program
for Youth and Crafts Professionals**

C-Skills Report

**Craft Sector Knowledge, Innovation, Learning & Labour
Study Report**

Short Version

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CRAFTWISE: A Collaborative Apprenticeship Program for Youth and Crafts Professionals

WP2 –C-Skills (Craft Sector Knowledge, Innovation, Learning & Labour Study)

C-Skills Report

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1. Introduction

The CRAFTWISE project is a Collaborative Apprenticeship Programme (CAP) development initiative funded under the Erasmus+ KA220-YOU Cooperation Partnership scheme, working across five countries — Romania, Türkiye, Greece, Spain, and Belgium — to strengthen the transmission of craft skills between experienced practitioners and the next generation of designers.

This report summarises the findings of CRAFTWISE's research phase: a comparative study combining primary research (online questionnaires, semi-structured interviews, and focus groups) with secondary research (national desk reviews of policy, education, and labour-market context) across the five partner countries. The research engaged two groups central to the craft sector's future — craft professionals (artisans, workshop owners, and craft educators) and young designers (students and early-career designers across a range of creative disciplines) — and examined their training pathways, the strengths and gaps in current provision, and their skill needs across four competency domains: theoretical and cultural knowledge, practical/technical mastery, digital and technological skills, and business and entrepreneurial competence.

The findings presented here form the evidence base for the Collaborative Apprenticeship Programme (CAP) that CRAFTWISE is now designing. This summary makes that evidence accessible to a wider audience — other Erasmus+ consortia and project coordinators, policy makers and craft-sector institutions, and members of the public interested in the CAP.

This summary condenses the ~63-page C-Skills Report. The complete report, including full data tables, country-by-country breakdowns, and methodological detail, is available on request.

2. Methodology

The research used a mixed-methods design combining three complementary instruments, implemented sequentially in each country: online questionnaires (210 completed responses from craft professionals and 173 from young designers, across all five countries), semi-structured interviews (26 with craft professionals, 27 with young designers), and mixed-group focus groups bringing craft professionals and young designers into direct dialogue. Each partner country focused on a locally significant craft: traditional lime mortars and masonry repair in Romania, shoemaking in Greece, a broad multi-disciplinary range with particular attention to ceramics in Spain, bookbinding and paper craftsmanship in Belgium, and ebru (Turkish marbling) in Türkiye.

The research proceeded in three phases (November 2025–August 2026): national secondary research on policy, education, and labour-market context; primary data collection, supported by two custom AI-based analysis tools built on the Claude API — a Research Analysis Assistant (hosted at craftwise-analysis.netlify.app) and a National Report Assistant — that helped partners systematically analyse questionnaire, interview, and focus-group data; and a synthesis phase consolidating five national reports into this comparative report.

Several limitations should be kept in mind when reading the findings: sample sizes vary considerably by country (Romania's craft professional sample alone accounts for nearly two-thirds of the combined total); questionnaire samples in all five countries are predominantly female;

several national samples are geographically concentrated in a single city or region; and the craft domains studied differ substantially across countries, which shapes the specific training realities each community reports.

3. Participant Overview

3.1. Participant Demographics

Across all five countries, questionnaire samples show a consistent female predominance — the sole exception being the Belgian craft professional interview cohort. Most national samples are also geographically concentrated in a single city or region (Istanbul, Athens, Madrid, Brussels/Wallonia, and Braşov for Romanian young designers), while sample sizes and craft-discipline representation vary considerably by country — a pattern that should be kept in mind when reading the comparative findings that follow. Table 1a and Table 1b below present these figures in consolidated, country-comparative form for Craft Professionals and Young Designers, respectively.

Table 1a. Craft Professionals: Participant Demographic Profile by Country

Table 1a — Craft Professionals

Participant Demographic Profile by Country | Source: national OQ/Interview/Focus Group Overview documents (WP2 C-5088)

Variable	Türkiye	Romania	Greece	Spain	Belgium
N (OQ)	30	132	15	16	17
N (Interview)	5	5	5	6	5
N (Focus Group)	2	2	2	2	1
Age Group (dominant)	35–44: 46.7% (n=14)	45–54: 34.1% (n=45)	35–44: 53.3% (n=8)	25–34: 43.8% (n=7)	45–54: 41.2% (n=7)
Gender (% Female)	83.3% (n=25)	80.3% (n=106)	80.0% (n=12)	68.8% (n=11)	76.5% (n=13)
Location (dominant)	Istanbul: 93.3% (n=28)	Wide distribution across Romania; no single-city majority (Braşov –10–12, Bucharest –8–10 mentions)	Athens: 66.7% (n=10)	Madrid: 43.8% (n=7)	Brussels: 41.2% (n=7); Wallonia: 35.3% (n=6)
Education (dominant)	Bachelor's: 63.3% (n=19)	Bachelor's: 43.9% (n=58)	Bachelor's: 53.3% (n=8)	Bachelor's: 43.8% (n=7)	Bachelor's: 70.6% (n=12)
Experience (dominant)	11–20 yrs: 66.7% (n=20)	5–10 yrs & 11–20 yrs: 29.5% each (n=39 each)	11–20 yrs: 40.0% (n=6)	<5 yrs & 5–10 yrs: 37.5% each (n=6 each)	11–20 yrs: 52.9% (n=9)
Current Position (dominant)	Trainer/instructor: 93.3% (n=28)	Craft practitioners: 40.3% of selections	Workshop owner: 73.3% (n=11)	Craft professional/artisan: 75.0% (n=12)	Artisan: 88.2% (n=15)
Pedagogical Certification	100% hold some form (n=30)	49.2% hold some form (n=65)	26.7% hold some form (n=4); 73.3% none	12.6% hold some form combined	58.8% hold some form (n=10)
Working Environment (dominant)	Public institution: 86.7% (n=26)	Individual workshop: 53.8% (n=71)	Individual workshop: 80.0% (n=12)	Individual workshop: 87.5% (n=14)	Individual workshop: 58.8% (n=10)
Work Organisation (dominant)	Employed by institution: 90.0% (n=27)	Self-employed: 58.3% (n=77)	Self-employed: 86.7% (n=13)	Self-employed: 62.5% (n=10)	Self-employed: 47.1% (n=8)
Main Income Source (dominant)	Training/teaching: 73.3% (n=22)	'Other'/non-craft: 40.9% (n=54)	Craft production: 46.7% (n=7)	Craft production: 37.5% (n=6)	Craft production: 35.3% (n=6)
Main Discipline (dominant)	Ceramics/tile/glass (13 resp.); Textile (9 resp.)	Textile & fibre crafts: ~25–26% (leading cluster); wide range across wood, metal, ceramic & decorative arts	Ceramics / Weaving / Leather: 20.0% each (n=3)	Highly diverse — 16 distinct fields, no dominant	Ceramics: 35.3% (n=6)

Note: As five country combined total is calculated, consistent with export methodology. Red dots = data gap or item requiring confirmation.

Table

1b. Young Designers: Participant Demographic Profile by Country

Table 1b — Young Designers

Participant Demographic Profile by Country | Source: national OQ/Interview/Focus Group Overview documents (WP2 C-Skills)

Variable	Türkiye	Romania	Greece	Spain	Belgium
N (OQ)	60	60	15	19	19
N (Interview)	6	6	5	5	5
N (Focus Group)	12	2	5	5	5
Age Group (dominant)	18–24: 55.0% (n=33)	25–34: 51.7% (n=31)	25–34: 86.7% (n=13)	18–24: 73.7% (n=14)	25–34: 57.9% (n=11)
Gender (% Female)	88.3% (n=53)	88.3% (n=53)	80.0% (n=12)	68.4% (n=13)	68.4% (n=13)
Location (dominant)	Istanbul: 40.0% (n=24)	Brasov: 35.0% (n=21)	Athens: 86.7% (n=13)	Madrid: 100% (n=19)	Brussels: 63.2% (n=12)
Education Status (dominant)	Undergraduate: 58.3% (n=35)	Undergraduate: 35.0% (n=21)	Undergraduate: 46.7% (n=7)	Undergraduate: 57.9% (n=11)	Graduate student: 47.4% (n=9)
Field of Study (dominant)	Industrial/Product Design: ~23.3% (14 resp.)	Design: 20.0% (n=12); Visual arts: 16.7% (n=10)	Footwear design/construction: 20.0% (n=3)	Fashion-related: 78.9% (n=15)	Textile & industrial design: 21.1% each (n=4)

Note: No five-country combined total is calculated, consistent with report methodology. Red italic = data gap or item requiring coordination.

3.2 Participant Profiles

Craft Professionals. Each national report also identifies recurring profile types among participants. The dominant profile is an institutionally-employed craft trainer in Türkiye (typically affiliated with Enstitü İstanbul İSMEK), an established mid-career self-employed practitioner in Romania, a self-employed practitioner-educator based in Athens in Greece, an early-career independent artisan (*autónomo*) in Spain, and an established independent maker-entrepreneur in Belgium. A recurring cross-country pattern is a wide divergence in formal pedagogical certification — from universal in Türkiye to a minority in Greece (26.7%) and Spain (12.6%) — despite widespread engagement in teaching everywhere.

Young Designers. The dominant profile is an undergraduate design student with a personal interest in traditional crafts in both Türkiye and Romania, a student engaged in wearable or materials-based design based in Athens in Greece, a fashion and textile student based in Madrid in Spain, and a material-focused graduate designer working in textile, jewellery, or object design in Belgium. Career-change or non-linear entry pathways into craft recur as a secondary theme among both groups in several countries, notably Greece, Spain, and Türkiye.

4. Comparative Findings

4.1 Training Pathways & Learning Experiences

Contextual Background. The five countries situate craft within very different legal and institutional frameworks. Belgium has formal statutory recognition of artisan status since 2014, while Romania still has no dedicated legal framework for the craft sector, leaving practitioners under general enterprise rules. Formal craft education is integrated into national VET systems in Greece, Spain, Türkiye, and (regionally) Belgium, but sits largely outside mainstream education in Romania. Institutional scale also varies enormously — Türkiye's İSMEK network alone received over 174,000 applications for handicraft programmes in 2023–2024. Across all five countries, however, traditional master–apprentice transmission is under pressure from an ageing practitioner population and limited generational succession. In Greece, the sector has shifted over

the past decade from a heritage-only framing toward a creative-industries one, but remains only partially regulated under general small-business rules. In Spain, craft regulation is fully decentralised across the seventeen Autonomous Communities, producing wide variation in certification and training provision across the territory.

Craft Professionals. Self-taught and informal learning is the dominant training pathway for craft professionals in Romania (65.9%), Greece (60.0%), and Spain (81.3%). Belgium (52.9%) and Türkiye (90.0%) are the exception, both reporting formal higher education as the dominant pathway. Family transmission is meaningful in Romania (29.5%) and Greece (20.0%) but essentially absent from the questionnaire data in Belgium and Türkiye. Formal apprenticeship as a named pathway is comparatively rare everywhere (11.8%–40.0%), yet interview data in every country describe apprenticeship-style relationships — named as such or as shared workshop mentorship — as among the most valued learning experiences: a clear gap between how rarely it is formally selected and how highly it is valued in practice.

Young Designers. Personal passion and creativity is the dominant motivation for design study across all five countries (78.9%–100.0%). Reported exposure to traditional crafts during education is high everywhere (65.0%–98.3%), but interview data in Greece, Spain, Belgium, and Türkiye consistently complicate this figure: participants repeatedly describe the craft content in their formal education as superficial, inconsistent, or effectively absent, despite high questionnaire-level exposure rates. Where young designers do report meaningful craft engagement, it is typically self-initiated, occurring outside or after formal education rather than embedded in design curricula — a pattern documented in all five countries.

Comparative Insights. The data point to two broad national patterns in how craft expertise is built: predominantly informal and self-directed (Romania, Greece, Spain) versus predominantly formal-institutional (Belgium, Türkiye) — though in the latter two countries, interview participants consistently describe formal education as insufficient on its own, requiring supplementation through apprenticeship or sustained self-directed practice. Among young designers, the recurring cross-national finding is a structural gap between formal design education and craft heritage transmission: high reported exposure at the questionnaire level sits alongside qualitative accounts of superficial or absent formal craft instruction, with meaningful engagement typically happening outside the curriculum rather than within it.

4.2 Strengths & Gaps in Current Training

Contextual Background. The findings below draw on primary research data; the structural and institutional context shaping current training provision in each country is presented in section 4.1 and provides the frame for reading these results.

Craft Professionals. Across the five countries, craft professionals converge on business and entrepreneurship skills as the most significant training gap — from 43.3% (Türkiye) to 68.2% (Romania) citing it as missing — while theoretical/cultural knowledge or advanced technical skills are consistently rated the most valued and worth preserving (highest: Türkiye 83.3% for theoretical/cultural knowledge, Belgium 82.4% for technical skills). Intergenerational knowledge transfer is assessed as functioning effectively by only a small minority in most countries (6.7%–17.6%), attributed to distinct structural causes: economic pressure and knowledge-withholding in

Romania, urbanisation and migration in Greece, geographic isolation and ageing in Spain, and institutional closures (the Institut Diderot) in Belgium. Türkiye is the exception, with more positive interview accounts despite similarly cautious questionnaire data (70.0% rating transfer only partially effective), attributed to the continued expansion of public craft education. Several country-distinctive concerns also emerged: Spanish craft professionals raised historical gender barriers in institutional support — noted distinctively among the five countries; Turkish interviews identified an erosion of traditional material knowledge and the formal non-recognition of the *icazet* (the master-granted authorisation).

Young Designers. Business and entrepreneurship again emerges as the most acute gap among young designers, ranging from 26.7% (Greece) to 73.7% (Belgium) — the highest such figure recorded in this section. Perceived professional-readiness gaps are stark and consistent: 88.4% of Romanian respondents, 81.7% of Turkish respondents, and 73.7% of Belgian respondents report only partial or no adequate preparation for professional practice, with interview data across all five countries attributing real competence development to post-graduation practice and internships rather than formal coursework. Advanced technical skills are simultaneously the most valued training element in several countries (Spain 84.2%, Belgium 78.9%) and, in Spain, also the most frequently cited gap — a valued-yet-insufficient pattern.

Comparative Insights. Business and entrepreneurship skills are the single most consistently identified training gap across this entire section — among craft professionals, ranging from 43.3% (Türkiye) to 68.2% (Romania), and among young designers, from 26.7% (Greece) to 73.7% (Belgium) — establishing this as the most cross-cutting deficiency found in current training everywhere.

Theoretical/cultural knowledge and advanced technical skills consistently rank as the most valued and least-often-missing competencies for both groups, though which of the two ranks first varies by country (theoretical/cultural in Romania, Spain, and Türkiye; technical in Greece and Belgium).

Digital skills gaps are moderate-to-significant for craft professionals in Belgium (52.9%), Türkiye (60.0%), Spain (50.0%), and Greece (40.0%), and comparatively minor in Romania (25.8%); among young designers, digital gaps are less pronounced everywhere relative to business and communication gaps.

Craft professionals and young designers sometimes diverge sharply within the same country: in Spain, technical skills are the single most valued training element among young designers (84.2%), yet craft professionals are far more likely to flag them as missing (62.5% vs. 21.1% for young designers); in Romania and Greece, young designers rate communication and collaboration gaps considerably higher than craft professionals do.

On professional readiness, the pattern is broadly negative for young designers across the sample: 88.4% in Romania, 81.7% in Türkiye, and 73.7% in Belgium report only partial or no adequate preparation, with interview data everywhere attributing real competence-building to post-graduation practice rather than formal coursework.

4.3 Skill Needs

Contextual Background. Secondary research corroborates the primary findings below across four recurring skill domains — theoretical/cultural knowledge, technical mastery, digital competence, and business/entrepreneurial skills. Distinctive structural findings include Romania's dual technical gap (erosion of utilitarian crafts alongside a deprofessionalisation risk among self-taught new entrants); Türkiye's "knowledge silo," in which the most technically skilled masters hold the lowest digital literacy, keeping valuable techniques offline and invisible to global markets; and a shared business-skills deficit across all five countries — weak pricing strategies, underdeveloped branding, and difficulty accessing funding despite its nominal availability. Greece's secondary research further identifies an underemphasis of craft history in formal curricula as limiting practitioners' ability to communicate authenticity for tourism and export markets, while Spain's highlights the extinction risk facing traditional techniques as the master–apprentice model falters. In Belgium, traditional techniques such as joinery, plastering, and sgraffito face disappearance due to an ageing workforce and limited generational renewal.

Craft Professionals. Business and entrepreneurship skills rank as the top or near-top personal development priority for craft professionals in Romania (37.9%), Greece (53.3%), Spain (50.0%), and Belgium (52.9%); advanced technical mastery is most frequently named as critical for the future overall (63.6%–76.5% in Romania, Belgium, and Türkiye). Türkiye is the exception throughout this section: digital skills, not business skills, are the leading personal development need (50.0% — the only country where this is the case), which likely reflects the sample's concentration in institutionally employed, formally educated teaching roles rather than independent practice. Distinctive country notes: Spanish interview data includes a structural reframing — one participant argued that administrative/fiscal facilitation and public recognition of the sector matter more than individual skill-building; Belgian interviewees called for subsidies and fair remuneration for knowledge-transmission activities.

Young Designers. Business skills are similarly the leading or near-leading personal priority for young designers in Romania (35.0%), Spain (36.8%), and — most acutely — Belgium (68.4%, the highest figure recorded for any country or group). In Spain, the gap is stark: 47.4% see business skills as important for the future, but only 10.5% say their education currently provides them. Greece is the exception, with technical skills leading (46.7%); Türkiye's young designers show no dominant priority at all — needs are spread evenly across technical, digital, business, and collaboration skills (18.3%–26.7% each), a diffuse pattern not seen elsewhere, and interview data likewise shows no shared consensus among six participants.

Comparative Insights. Business and entrepreneurship is the most consistently identified personal skill gap among craft professionals in four of five countries (Romania, Greece, Spain, Belgium); Türkiye is the sole exception, with digital skills outranking business skills as the leading personal need — most plausibly reflecting the concentration of Turkish craft professionals in institutional teaching roles rather than independent practice.

A recurring structural pattern across Romania, Greece, and Belgium is a divergence between the skill most valued for the future and the skill identified as a personal gap: technical mastery is repeatedly affirmed as a settled strength — in Greece, zero craft professional respondents name it as a personal need despite unanimous interview affirmation of its importance — while business

competence is consistently experienced as the active, unresolved deficit. Türkiye again departs from this pattern, with digital rather than business needs dominant.

Digital skills show real cross-country variation: a leading future priority for craft professionals in Spain (62.5%) and Greece (53.3%), and the dominant personal need uniquely in Türkiye (50.0%); among young designers, Türkiye again stands out, with digital skills as the single highest-ranked future competency (61.7%) — a pattern not replicated elsewhere.

Communication and collaboration skills reveal a consistent paradox: young designers rate them highly as a future priority (up to 70.0% in Romania) but almost never name them as a personal development gap (0.0% in Greece and Belgium survey data) — suggesting respondents see communication as a skill to build alongside technical and business competence rather than instead of it, or simply do not recognise communication gaps as readily as business or technical ones.

Across all five countries, qualitative data converges on a consistent reading of what "business and entrepreneurial competence" means in practice: pricing, financial management, marketing, digital visibility, and legal/administrative literacy — dimensions respondents in every country describe as inadequately addressed by current training, regardless of which group feels the gap most acutely.

4.4 Digitalisation & Economic Challenges

Contextual Background. Across all five countries, digital tools have become central to marketing and visibility but remain only lightly integrated into actual production and business management — a shared structural tension. Distinctive examples include Türkiye's emerging use of CNC milling and 3D scanning to document complex stone motifs in regions such as Mardin; Spain and Belgium's fablab networks (e.g., Fablabs Brussels, Micro Factory) giving artisans low-cost access to digital fabrication; and a consistent generational digital divide everywhere, with older, highly skilled masters generally holding the lowest digital literacy. Economically, craft professionals across all five countries navigate fragmented support ecosystems and bureaucratic funding barriers that are structurally difficult for small-scale manual producers to access. In Romania, digital adoption is generationally stratified — older practitioners largely avoid digital tools while younger artisans use social media and e-commerce more fluently — and the main funding channel, Start-Up Nation, pits craftspeople against larger SMEs without dedicated craft status. In Greece, social media (Instagram, Facebook, TikTok) has become the primary marketing channel even for traditional practitioners, and a new national digital platform for Greek crafts is being developed under the Recovery and Resilience Facility.

Craft Professionals. Craft professionals report mostly positive or mixed effects from digitalisation everywhere — highest in Türkiye (63.3% positive) and lowest in Belgium (23.5% positive; 47.1% report no significant impact, the highest such figure recorded). Across all five countries, interview data consistently affirms that core craft execution remains irreducibly manual — most emphatically articulated in the Turkish data around ebru. On economic pressures, rising material costs and pricing/valuation difficulties are the most cited concerns everywhere, though the leading concern varies: rising material costs dominate in Türkiye (76.7% — the highest figure recorded for this category), pricing/valuation ties with competition from mass production in Spain (62.5% each), and irregular income leads in Romania (58.3%). A recurring coping strategy across

Romania, Greece, Belgium, and Türkiye is income diversification, most commonly through teaching — stated most starkly in Türkiye, where one practitioner noted that without institutional teaching income, their craft would generate no independent income at all.

Young Designers. Social media dominates digital familiarity among young designers in Romania (80.0%) and Greece (86.7%), while digital design software leads in Belgium (94.7% — the highest figure recorded) and Türkiye (75.0%); Spain shows both tied (57.9%). A consistent cross-national gap separates creative-technical digital fluency from commercial digital capability: e-commerce platform familiarity is low almost everywhere — 3.3% in Romania, 5.3% in Belgium, 15.8% in Spain, 21.7% in Türkiye — with Greece the exception (40.0%). Distinctive findings include a Greek interview account of an entire decades-old workshop pattern archive existing only in physical form with no digital backup, and explicit naming of AI tools (ChatGPT, Claude) as transformative by Spanish and Turkish interview participants.

Comparative Insights. Digitalisation's perceived impact among craft professionals varies considerably: Türkiye records the highest positive figure (63.3%), Belgium the lowest (23.5%) and the highest "no significant impact" figure (47.1%). Outright rejection of digitalisation is rare everywhere — no respondents in Greece, Spain, Belgium, or Türkiye report a mostly negative impact, and Romania records only 3.0%. Across all five countries, digitalisation is valued for communication, visibility, and research, while core craft execution is consistently described as resistant to digital substitution.

Among young designers, the tool categories they are most familiar with differ by country (social-media-led in Romania and Greece; design-software-led in Belgium and Türkiye), likely reflecting differences in the disciplinary composition of each national sample — but low familiarity with e-commerce tools is a near-universal pattern, pointing to a cross-national gap between creative/communicative digital fluency and commercial digital capability.

On economic pressures, rising material costs and pricing/valuation difficulties recur as the leading concerns everywhere, with the specific ranking varying by country. Bureaucratic and tax burden is a significant qualitative theme in Romania, Greece, and Belgium (taxes described as absorbing roughly half of revenue in Romania; a 24% VAT rate in Greece; heritage-preservation-related administrative barriers in Brussels). Across all five countries, interview data converges on a structural undervaluation of craft labour and expertise relative to time and skill invested — though the specific mechanism differs: insufficient compensation for restoration expertise in Romania, customer resistance to fair pricing in Spain, dependence on institutional teaching income in Türkiye, and the framing of craft businesses as selling time rather than materials in Belgium. Income diversification, chiefly through teaching, recurs across Romania, Greece, Belgium, and Türkiye as a coping strategy for craft professionals.

4.5 Future Expectations & Training Improvements

Contextual Background. The institutional and policy context shaping existing training and support mechanisms in each country is presented in sections 4.1 and 4.4; relevant good-practice projects are addressed separately in the policy recommendations (section 6).

Craft Professionals. Business education and market-oriented projects dominate as the most recommended concrete improvements among craft professionals in Romania (63.6%), Greece (73.3%), Spain (56.3%), and Belgium (50.0%). Türkiye departs sharply from this pattern: closer collaboration with designers is by far the most recommended change (80.0% — the highest figure recorded for any single recommendation across all five countries), reflecting the sample's institutional concentration and a distinctive interview theme of reframing craft as a commercial livelihood rather than a hobby, with several participants proposing the application of craft techniques to contemporary commercial products. Positive institutional models cited across countries include university–ministry collaborations in Greece, the ADA Project (University of Granada) in Spain, and La Cambre in Belgium; funding-related closures (Belgium's Centre des Métiers d'Art du Hainaut) and misaligned digital-only grant schemes (Greece) were raised as cautionary examples.

Young Designers. Most young designers across the five countries see craft as offering both stability and creativity, or primarily as a creative/experimental pursuit; viewing it as a stable professional career alone remains rare everywhere (under 10%) except Greece (40.0%). Project-based collaboration is the most or near-most preferred working model in four of five countries (57.9%–86.7%), while long-term apprenticeship consistently receives the lowest or joint-lowest endorsement (26.3%–53.3%) — a preference for shorter, more flexible collaborative formats over sustained traditional apprenticeship.

Comparative Insights. Recommendations for training improvements diverge most sharply in Türkiye, where design collaboration (80.0%) dominates over business education (33.3%) — the inverse of the other four countries, where business education and market-oriented projects consistently rank first or second. This suggests Turkish craft professionals, structurally concentrated in institutional teaching roles, experience the absence of design partnership as more pressing than business-skills development.

Young designers' collaboration preferences point to a structural divergence from craft professionals: while young designers across the sample favour shorter, more flexible formats — project-based collaboration over long-term apprenticeship — craft professional interview data in Romania and Spain explicitly advocate for immersive, prolonged, values-based learning models. This tension over preferred collaboration duration recurs across multiple national contexts.

The qualitative data converge strongly, however, on bidirectional and reciprocal collaboration as the ideal model everywhere — one of the more robust cross-national findings in this section: Belgian focus group data articulates the principle that "the artisan is also a designer"; Turkish interview participants propose reverse mentorship, with young designers leading contemporary-tool sessions for craft professionals; Spanish participants describe designers developing craft understanding while artisans gain digital competency; and Greek and Romanian data likewise frame collaboration as mutual, collegial learning rather than hierarchical transmission. This consistent preference for two-way rather than one-way knowledge transfer is a defining feature of how both craft professionals and young designers, across all five countries, envision the future of collaboration between the two groups.

4.6 Self-Assessment Insights

Craft Professionals. Craft professionals across all five countries rate practical technical mastery as their strongest self-assessed competency (means: 3.75–4.70, highest in Türkiye, where 96.7% rate themselves Advanced or Expert), with theoretical/cultural knowledge as a consistent secondary strength. Business competence is the lowest-rated domain in four of five countries (2.38–2.88); Türkiye is the exception, scoring business competence relatively higher (3.60) while digital proficiency becomes its weakest domain instead (3.23) — the only country where this ordering occurs.

Young Designers. Among young designers, technical mastery leads self-assessment in Romania, Greece, and Belgium, while digital competence is highest in Spain and, distinctively, in Türkiye — the only domain in which Turkish young designers outscore Turkish craft professionals. Business competence is, without exception, the lowest-rated domain among young designers in all five countries (1.87–2.50), with 53.3%–80.0% of respondents reporting no knowledge or only basic awareness of it.

Comparative Insights. Business competence is the single most consistent finding in this section: the lowest self-assessed domain among young designers in all five countries without exception, and among craft professionals in four of five (Türkiye being the sole exception, where digital proficiency is weakest instead). This directly corroborates the section 4.3 findings, where business and entrepreneurship skills were identified as the leading personal development priority among craft professionals in four of five countries and among young designers in Romania, Spain, and Belgium — self-assessment data independently confirming what respondents had already named as their own skill gap.

The relationship between digital and technical competence diverges by country: young designers report higher digital competence than craft professionals in Spain, Belgium, and Türkiye, while craft professionals score higher in Romania and Greece — indicating digital competence is mediated by national context and disciplinary background rather than simply generational.

Craft professionals consistently outscore young designers in both practical technical mastery (gaps of 0.40–1.40 points) and theoretical/cultural knowledge (gaps of 0.60–0.86 points) in every country, reflecting accumulated professional experience.

Across all five countries, the domain rated lowest in self-assessment — business competence in four countries, digital competence in Türkiye — corresponds directly to the domain most frequently named as a personal development priority in section 4.3, for craft professionals in all five countries and for young designers in Romania, Spain, and Belgium. This alignment confirms that the gaps identified throughout this report are not only externally observed but actively recognised by respondents themselves. The one exception: young designers in Greece and Türkiye name technical skills, not business competence, as their top personal priority, despite business competence being their lowest-rated domain.

5. Cross-Country Insights

Cross-Country Patterns

Business and entrepreneurship competence is the single most consistent pattern across all five partner countries and both target groups. Business skills were the most frequently cited missing training element or programme shortcoming among craft professionals in four of five countries (section 4.2); confirmed as the leading personal development priority among craft professionals in four of five countries (section 4.3); and confirmed again as the lowest self-assessed domain among young designers in all five countries without exception, and among craft professionals in four of five (section 4.6). This convergence across three separate sections (4.2, 4.3, 4.6), five countries, and both respondent groups establishes business and entrepreneurial competence as the most robustly documented gap in this report.

Self-directed and informal learning consistently defines how craft knowledge is acquired, though its weight against formal education varies by country (section 4.1): self-taught learning dominates in Romania, Greece, and Spain, while formal higher education dominates in Belgium and Türkiye. Even where formal education predominates, interview data across all five countries converges on the same finding — practitioners consistently describe it as insufficient on its own, requiring supplementation through apprenticeship or sustained self-directed development.

A persistent gap between high reported craft exposure and its actual depth recurs across young designer data in Greece, Spain, Belgium, and Türkiye (section 4.1): questionnaire exposure rates of 89.5%–98.3% sit alongside interview accounts of participants who report no meaningful craft content in their formal education — one of the more robust cross-national findings in this report.

Practical, hands-on, and experiential learning is valued above theoretical instruction across all five countries and both target groups (sections 4.1, 4.2, 4.5), though this concerns the mode of learning rather than its content: theoretical and cultural knowledge remains the most valued training element among craft professionals in Romania, Spain, and Türkiye, and among young designers in Romania and Türkiye.

Craft professionals and young designers show a consistent complementary structure in self-assessment (section 4.6): craft professionals outscore young designers in practical technical mastery and theoretical/cultural knowledge in every country, while young designers show comparable or superior digital competence in several (Spain, Belgium, Türkiye). This complementarity is echoed qualitatively everywhere, with participants from both groups independently describing their ideal future collaboration as reciprocal and bidirectional rather than hierarchical.

Meaningful Differences

Türkiye's craft professional sample is structurally distinct in a way that shapes its findings throughout sections 4.1–4.6: 90.0% entered through university education, 90.0% are institutionally employed, and 86.7% work primarily within public institutions (predominantly Enstitü İstanbul İSMEK) — an employed teaching workforce rather than independent practitioners. This accounts for Türkiye's divergence on several measures: its comparatively higher business-competence self-assessment (3.60 versus 2.38–2.88 elsewhere), its distinctive prioritisation of designer collaboration over business education as a reform priority (80.0%, the highest single recommendation recorded across all five countries), and its identification of digital proficiency, rather than business competence, as its weakest self-assessed domain.

Belgium and Spain represent opposite ends of a generational and experiential spectrum among craft professionals. Belgium's sample is the most senior and experienced (no respondents under 35; 88.2% with 11+ years of experience); Spain's is the youngest and least experienced (43.8% aged 25–34; 75% with fewer than ten years' experience). This shapes differing priorities: Belgian data emphasises institutional and infrastructural concerns (funding cuts, the shift toward adult career-changer learners), while Spanish data reflects a stronger emphasis on the absence of formally recognised training infrastructure for many craft specialties.

Young designers' perceived viability of craft as a career does not correlate simply with the structural conditions of each country's craft sector: in Türkiye, where the craft professional sector is the most institutionally dependent for income among the five countries, 58.3% of young designers still view craft as offering both stability and creativity, while in Belgium 10.5% express no interest in craft as a career at all.

The role of family transmission diverges sharply by country (section 4.1): present at meaningful levels in Romania (29.5%) and Greece (20.0%), lower in Spain (18.8%), and entirely absent from the quantitative data in Belgium and Türkiye — the erosion of family-based transmission is concentrated in two specific national contexts, not uniform across the partnership.

Tensions and Contradictions

A tension exists between the high value placed on communication and collaboration skills as a future competency and the near-total absence of communication as a self-identified personal development gap among young designers (section 4.3). In Romania, Greece, and Spain, communication ranks among the top three future-skill priorities (70.0%, 60.0%, 52.6%), yet in no country do young designers identify it as their primary personal need — in Greece, the figure is 0.0%. This may mean respondents see communication as something to develop alongside technical and business skills rather than as a discrete gap, or that current assessment instruments are not capturing a dimension of communication competence respondents themselves experience as lacking. *This is reported here as a descriptive observation in the data, not a resolved finding.*

A further tension appears between technical competence being simultaneously highly valued and identified as insufficiently developed — particularly among Spanish craft professionals, where 62.5% cite advanced technical skills as missing despite technical mastery being one of the most valued elements of existing provision (section 4.2). A related pattern appears for digital skills among Belgian and Greek craft professionals, where digital competence is among the least valued elements of existing training yet among the more frequently cited missing elements. *This is reported here as a pattern in the data rather than a resolved finding, since the underlying cause — whether respondents distinguish between foundational and advanced competence within the same skill category, or are expressing dissatisfaction with depth rather than presence of training — cannot be determined from the data as collected.*

A contradiction is evident between long-term apprenticeship as a formally selected learning pathway and its qualitative significance in practitioner accounts (sections 4.1, 4.5). Traditional apprenticeship is selected at comparatively low rates by craft professionals in all five countries (11.8%–40.0%), and young designers rank it as their least or joint-least preferred future collaboration structure in four of five countries (26.3%–53.3%), Romania being the exception.

Yet in every country's interview data, apprenticeship-style relationships — named as such or described as shared workshop mentorship — are identified as among the most valued and formative learning experiences. This divergence between low formal selection and high qualitative valuation suggests respondents may be reacting against the term "apprenticeship" and its traditional connotations — extended duration, hierarchical structure, limited compensation — rather than against sustained, mentored, hands-on learning itself. *This interpretation extends beyond what the data directly states.*

6. Policy Recommendations

The findings above carry implications not only for CRAFTWISE's own training design, but for craft-sector policy and funding more broadly. This section translates the report's curriculum and collaboration priorities into recommendations for policy makers, funding bodies, and craft-sector institutions, followed by country-specific considerations most directly relevant to policy design.

Sector Policy Priorities

The convergence of primary research findings (sections 4.2, 4.3, 4.6) with desk-based skills-gap analysis from all five partner countries points to four sector policy priorities, ordered by the consistency and urgency with which they are documented.

1. Business and Entrepreneurial Competence. This is the single most consistently documented gap across the entire dataset — the lowest self-assessed domain among young designers in all five countries, and the leading personal development priority among craft professionals in four of five (section 5). Secondary research from Romania, Spain, Belgium, and Türkiye independently flags business competence as a critical structural deficit in their craft sectors. Craft-sector funding mechanisms and professional recognition frameworks should treat business and entrepreneurial training as a precondition for support, not a supplementary offering — specifically covering value-based pricing (as distinct from the cost-based pricing several national sources identify as the dominant but insufficient default), brand identity and storytelling, and funding-navigation support that reduces the administrative burden consistently reported as a barrier across all five countries. Relevant models include the Crafting Europe iAtelier programme (Spain), which bridges craft practice with business and digital entrepreneurship training; the CRAFTS+ Erasmus+ project (Greece), which built business modelling and branding curricula for ceramic micro-enterprises; and the CRAFTOUR initiative's Innovative Business Models pillar (Belgium/EU), which offers directly applicable model contracts addressing fair remuneration, credit, and authorship in artisan–designer partnerships.

2. Digital and Technological Competence. Secondary research from all five countries documents a consistent pattern: digital adoption concentrates on social media and promotion, with limited integration into production, e-commerce, and business development. A generational digital divide is documented everywhere, most acutely in Türkiye, where the most technically skilled masters hold the lowest digital literacy — a "knowledge silo" that keeps valuable techniques offline. Policy should fund digital-skills provision that distinguishes three dimensions: digital marketing and visibility; e-commerce and digital sales — addressing the gap between creative-technical digital fluency and commercial digital capability documented in four of five countries; and digital tools

for production and documentation, positioning digital technology as coexisting with manual production rather than displacing it. Relevant models include DigitARTE (Spain/Ministry of Culture), targeting practitioners over forty and in rural areas; Enstitü İstanbul İSMEK's hybrid model combining in-person craft training with asynchronous online theory (Türkiye); and Belgium's fablab infrastructure (Fablabs Brussels, Micro Factory).

3. Technical Mastery and Knowledge Transmission. Technical mastery is the area of greatest self-assessed strength among craft professionals in all five countries, yet secondary research documents significant vulnerabilities in its transmission: the erosion of the master-apprentice model in Romania, Greece, and Spain; the decline of complex technique mastery in Türkiye as practitioners prioritise faster, more commercialised methods; and the risk of disappearance facing heritage-specific crafts in Belgium (sgraffito, joinery, architectural restoration). Policy frameworks should fund and protect sustained, workshop-based mentorship models rather than assuming short-format programmes can substitute for them. Relevant models include the summer camp model sustained by Transylvania Trust, Pro Patrimonio, and Bunești School (Romania) — intensive apprenticeship-model programmes embedded in active restoration projects; the Stemnitsa Gold and Silversmithing School (Greece), staffed largely by its own alumni; and the MINDCRAFTS project (Belgium/Mad'in Europe), whose hands-on workshops demonstrated stronger youth engagement than digital-only approaches.

4. Theoretical and Cultural Knowledge. Theoretical and cultural knowledge is the most valued training element among craft professionals in three of five countries and the element most frequently named as worth preserving — yet secondary research identifies a structural gap between the symbolic recognition of craft heritage and its systematic pedagogical treatment, most sharply articulated in Türkiye, where training prioritises technical execution over the cultural code behind traditional motifs. Cultural heritage policy should fund the pedagogical operationalisation of craft history and cultural meaning, not only its symbolic recognition — a function that also serves market positioning, since Greek and Spanish secondary research both note that communicating provenance and cultural significance is increasingly critical for premium-market and export access. The CRAFTOUR initiative's Understanding and Valorisation pillar offers a directly relevant framework.

Policy Frameworks for Intergenerational Knowledge Transfer

The comparative findings across sections 4.1–4.6 point toward a structurally complementary, rather than hierarchical, relationship between craft professionals and young designers as the empirically grounded model for training design. Craft professionals outscore young designers in practical technical mastery and theoretical/cultural knowledge, while young designers show comparable or superior digital competence in Spain, Belgium, and Türkiye. Interview and focus group data independently arrive at the same conclusion in every country — from the Belgian principle that "the artisan is also a designer" to Turkish proposals for reverse mentorship, in which young designers lead contemporary-tool sessions for craft professionals. Funding and programme-design frameworks supporting craft-sector knowledge transfer should structurally require reciprocal, bidirectional models, rather than defaulting to one-directional (master-to-apprentice-only) transmission.

However, self-assessment data also reveals a shared weakness a collaboration model alone cannot resolve: business competence is the lowest-rated domain among young designers in every country and among craft professionals in four of five (Türkiye the exception) — confirmed independently across sections 4.3, 4.6, and secondary research from all five countries. Neither group is well positioned to independently manage the pricing, financial planning, and commercial navigation sustainable creative careers require, so business-competence development should be an explicit, shared learning objective for both groups — not assumed as background knowledge either side brings.

Policy and programme design should also address documented structural barriers to collaboration: Romanian data identifies access opacity — young designers not knowing who relevant craft experts are or how to reach them — as a precondition that must be resolved first; Turkish data identifies the need for intermediary figures bridging traditional knowledge and contemporary design as a structural necessity; and Spanish data stresses that in-person engagement is foundational, with online formats seen as diminishing effectiveness. Funded collaboration programmes should therefore include structured onboarding, facilitated introduction pathways, and dedicated in-person contact time. Programme design should also navigate a preference tension: young designers everywhere favour project-based, outcome-oriented formats over long-term traditional apprenticeship, while craft professional interview data in Romania and Spain advocates for immersive, prolonged, values-based learning — a tension best addressed through discrete, outcome-oriented projects with built-in, recurring mentorship touchpoints.

Country-Specific Considerations

Romania. Policy should establish formal legal recognition for the craft sector, which currently leaves practitioners without professional status and reinforces structural informality. Romania's craft professional sample (132 respondents, nearly two-thirds of the combined five-country total) reflects sector breadth but coexists with extreme fragmentation — no standardised training pathways, limited professional networks, practitioners often working in isolation — compounded by mass emigration disrupting knowledge transfer and low domestic purchasing power. Policy should prioritise access and visibility alongside the sector priorities above; with only 8.3% of young designers seeing craft as a stable career, economic-viability concerns need to be addressed directly to sustain youth engagement.

Greece. Policy should link cultural-value communication training to tourism and export strategy — Greece's strong cultural tourism sector gives the theoretical/cultural knowledge priority specific commercial relevance beyond its general educational value. The sample's concentration in Athens, and the focus group's exclusive composition from the shoemaking sector, should be kept in mind when generalising findings elsewhere. With 40.0% of young designers already viewing craft as a stable career and a further 26.7% seeing it as combining stability and creativity, policy can build on an existing base of positive career perception.

Spain. Policy coordination is needed across the seventeen Autonomous Communities' fragmented regulation, certification, and support structures — a feature Spain's own secondary research flags as requiring a regional lens. Spain's craft professional sample is also the youngest and least experienced among the five countries (43.8% aged 25–34; 75% with under ten years' experience), placing craft professionals structurally closer in career stage to young designers than elsewhere,

with implications for how collaboration should be designed. Spain's widest disciplinary range (16 distinct fields) is both an opportunity and a design challenge; policy should also account for the rural–urban divide between artisans in España vaciada and design-oriented makers concentrated in Madrid and Barcelona.

Belgium. Policy should protect and reinvest in existing training infrastructure before it erodes further: the documented closures of the Institut Diderot and the Centre des Métiers d'Art du Hainaut indicate already-reduced institutional capacity. Belgium's craft professional cohort is the most senior and experienced among the five countries (no respondents under 35; 88.2% with 11+ years' experience), paired with a young designer cohort in which 47.4% view craft primarily as a creative/experimental path and 10.5% express no career interest in it at all — a motivational gap programme design should address through a clear mutual value proposition. Belgium's secondary research prioritises the transition from education to employment, suggesting policy attention should extend to post-programme pathways, not only the training experience itself.

Türkiye. Policy should complement rather than duplicate existing public provision — 90.0% of Turkish craft professionals are institutionally employed and 86.7% work primarily within public institutions such as Enstitü İstanbul İSMEK, meaning the Turkish craft professional population consists predominantly of employed educators rather than independent practitioners. Policy support should target what these systems do not currently address: designer collaboration, commercial market access, and bidirectional knowledge exchange. Türkiye's secondary research also highlights the role of municipalities and lifelong-learning institutions, and the tension between heritage preservation and market-driven pressures on traditional crafts. The exceptionally strong prioritisation of designer collaboration among Turkish craft professionals (80.0%, the highest single recommendation figure recorded across all five countries) suggests that framing policy support around creative partnership and co-production is likely to resonate particularly strongly in the Turkish context.

7. Conclusion

This report has synthesised comparative primary and secondary research on craft skills and training across Romania, Türkiye, Greece, Spain, and Belgium, carried out between November 2025 and August 2026 to build the evidence base for CRAFTWISE's Collaborative Apprenticeship Programme.

The most robust finding is business and entrepreneurial competence: the lowest self-assessed domain among young designers in all five countries and among craft professionals in four of five, the leading personal development priority among craft professionals in four of five countries, and independently flagged as a critical structural deficit by desk-based analysis in all five countries. This convergence across data sources, countries, and respondent groups establishes it as a gap neither group is currently equipped to address alone.

A second consistent pattern concerns how craft knowledge is valued and acquired: practical, hands-on, mentored learning is described as more formative than classroom instruction everywhere, even where formal education is the dominant entry pathway; and high questionnaire-

level exposure to traditional crafts among young designers is complicated, in four of five countries, by interview accounts of little meaningful craft content within formal education.

The relationship between craft professionals and young designers is structurally complementary — craft professionals lead in practical technical mastery and theoretical/cultural knowledge everywhere, young designers show comparable or superior digital competence in Spain, Belgium, and Türkiye — and both groups independently describe their ideal future collaboration as reciprocal rather than hierarchical, providing the empirical basis for a bidirectional collaboration model.

These shared patterns coexist with meaningful national differences (Türkiye's institutionally concentrated craft professional sample; Belgium and Spain's opposite generational profiles; the sharply varying role of family transmission) and several tensions the data leaves genuinely open rather than resolved: communication skills are highly valued for the future yet rarely named as a personal gap; some skills are simultaneously valued and reported missing; and apprenticeship is formally selected at low rates even as apprenticeship-style relationships are consistently described as the most formative learning experiences.

The findings should be read alongside this report's stated limitations: sample sizes vary considerably by country, questionnaire samples show a pronounced female majority everywhere, several national samples are geographically concentrated, and the craft domains studied differ substantially across countries.

These findings will be carried forward into CRAFTWISE's training programme design and disseminated to policymakers, educators, vocational training providers, and craft networks, supporting the transferability of the research beyond the partnership itself.

This summary condenses the ~63-page CRAFTWISE C-Skills Report. Full data tables, country-by-country breakdowns, and methodological detail are available in the complete report: https://craftwise.europeanprojectshub.eu/wp-content/uploads/2026/09/CRAFTWISE-WP2-C-Skills-Report_Final.pdf

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