

CraftWise

A Collaborative Apprenticeship Program for Youth and Crafts Professionals

# C-Skills Report

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

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# CRAFTWISE: A Collaborative Apprenticeship Program for Youth and Crafts Professionals

## *C-Skills Report*

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# 1. Introduction

## 1.1 Purpose of the Research

This report presents the findings of the comparative primary and secondary research conducted within Research Work Package (WP2) of the CRAFTWISE project, a Collaborative Apprenticeship Programme (CAP) development initiative funded under the Erasmus+ KA220-YOU Cooperation Partnership scheme. The research was designed to generate a structured and evidence-based understanding of the current landscape of craft education, skills development, and professional practice across five partner countries: Romania, Türkiye, Greece, Spain, and Belgium.

More specifically, the research aimed to identify existing training pathways and learning experiences within the craft sector; explore current challenges and gaps in craft and design education; assess the skill needs of both craft professionals and young designers across four competency domains: theoretical and cultural knowledge, practical technical mastery, digital and technological skills, and business and entrepreneurial competence; and capture expectations and perspectives on the future of craft training and collaboration. By bringing together insights from both craft professionals and young designers, the research sought to reveal complementarities, mismatches, and opportunities for collaboration between the two groups. The findings presented in this report serve as the evidence base for the design of the Collaborative Apprenticeship Programme under WP3.

## 1.2 Scope within CRAFTWISE (Research Work Package)

This research was conducted within the Research Work Package (WP2) of the CRAFTWISE project, which focuses on mapping needs, practices, and opportunities within the craft and design ecosystem across the five partner countries. WP2 adopted a community-driven and participatory approach, engaging both craft professionals and young designers as key stakeholders throughout the research process. The primary objective of WP2 was to produce a structured and comparative understanding of skill needs across different domains, gaps in existing education and training systems, and opportunities for strengthening collaboration between generations and disciplines. The outputs of this research directly inform the development of the Collaborative Apprenticeship Programme under WP3, ensuring that the training model is grounded in real needs and field-based evidence.

## 1.3 Structure of the Report

The report is organised as follows. Section 2 describes the research methodology, including the overall design, target groups, data collection methods, and country-specific implementation details. Section 3 presents the participant overview, covering the demographic and professional profiles of research participants across all five partner countries. Sections 4.1 through 4.6 present the primary research findings organised thematically: training pathways and learning experiences; strengths and gaps in current training; skill needs; digitalisation and economic challenges; future expectations and training improvements; and self-assessment insights, with each section also including contextual background drawn from secondary research. Section 5 presents cross-country insights synthesising patterns, meaningful differences, and tensions emerging across the five countries. Section 6 presents the implications of the combined research

findings for the design of the Collaborative Apprenticeship Programme. Section 7 concludes the report by summarising its principal findings and outlining how they will be carried forward into Training Work Package (WP3) and the dissemination of the research

## 2. Methodology

### 2.1 Research Design

The CRAFTWISE WP2 research adopted a mixed-methods design, combining quantitative and qualitative data collection to ensure both breadth and depth of analysis across five partner countries. The design integrated three complementary instruments: online questionnaires to collect structured and comparable data on participant profiles, training experiences, and skill needs; semi-structured individual interviews to explore personal learning journeys, professional experiences, and contextual insights in greater depth; and focus groups to capture interactive dialogue between craft professionals and young designers, surface shared understandings and differences in perspective, and observe the relational and communicative dimensions of collaboration between participant groups. This triangulated approach enabled the research to validate findings across different data sources, capture both measurable trends and nuanced individual experiences, and explore the structural and relational dynamics between the two target groups.

The research design supported comparative analysis between craft professionals and young designers within each partner country and across the five-country sample, allowing for the identification of both shared needs and nationally specific conditions. The three instruments were implemented sequentially rather than in parallel: questionnaires first, followed by interviews, and concluding with focus groups, allowing each phase to build upon the patterns emerging from the previous one. In all five partner countries, this sequential logic is explicitly documented.

### 2.2 Target Groups

The research engaged two primary target groups representing key actors within the craft and design ecosystem across the five partner countries.

Craft professionals are individuals actively engaged in craft and traditional arts practices, including independent artisans, workshop-based practitioners, and those involved in craft education and knowledge transmission. Participants varied in terms of experience, specialisation, and professional context across partner countries, ranging from independent solo practitioners and workshop owners to institutionally employed educators, most notably in Türkiye, where the craft professional sample is predominantly composed of instructors affiliated with public craft education networks. Craft professionals contributed practical, experience-based knowledge regarding production processes, material use, and the transmission of traditional craft practices.

Young designers are students and early-career individuals in design and related creative fields, drawn from diverse educational backgrounds including product design, visual communication, fashion and textiles, fine arts, architecture, and other applied disciplines. Young designers contributed perspectives shaped by formal education, contemporary design practice, and

familiarity with digital tools and innovation processes. The inclusion of both target groups enabled the research to explore established practices and emerging perspectives, and to identify potential areas for collaboration, knowledge exchange, and mutual learning between generations and professional communities.

### 2.3 Data Collection Methods

*Online Questionnaires*

Separate online questionnaires were developed for each target group, one for craft professionals and one for young designers, and administered via Google Forms across all five partner countries. Both instruments covered participant profiles and professional or educational backgrounds; training experiences and learning pathways; perceived skill needs and areas for development; and perspectives on craft education and future opportunities. Questionnaire dissemination strategies varied by country and are described in section 2.4. Across the five partner countries, the craft professional questionnaire received a combined total of 210 completed responses, and the young designer questionnaire received 173 completed responses.

*Semi-Structured Interviews*

Semi-structured individual interviews were conducted with participants from both target groups in all five partner countries, exploring personal learning journeys, professional pathways, perceptions of current training provision, skill needs, and expectations for future collaboration. Interviews were conducted online in Romania, Spain (primarily), and with young designers in Türkiye; craft professional interviews in Türkiye were conducted primarily in person. A total of 26 craft professional interviews and 27 young designer interviews were completed across the five partner countries. All interviews were recorded and transcribed to enable systematic qualitative analysis.

*Focus Groups*

Focus group sessions were organised in all five partner countries as mixed-group discussions involving both craft professionals and young designers. Sessions were designed to capture interactive dialogue between the two communities, explore shared understandings and differences in perspective, and identify potential areas of collaboration and tension. In Romania, one focus group was conducted online via Zoom, bringing together two craft professionals and two young designers. In Spain, two focus groups were held, one conducted face-to-face within the context of a ceramics class involving eleven participants (10 attendees and 1 craft professional), and one conducted online with six participants (5 young people and 1 craft professional). In Greece, one focus group was conducted in person at the premises of the associated partner crafts school, bringing together two craft professionals and five young designers, all active in the shoemaking sector. In Belgium, one mixed focus group was organised online, bringing together one craft professional and five young designers in a facilitated discussion. The Turkish focus group, conducted online, was the largest across the five partner countries, comprising two craft professionals and twelve young designers. Across all five countries, focus group sessions were recorded and transcribed to enable systematic qualitative analysis.

## 2.4 Country-Specific Implementation

### *Romania*

The primary research in Romania was implemented by Innovation Education Lab (iEL). The craft domain selected for the Romanian research was traditional lime mortars and masonry repair, situated within the broader field of heritage building restoration, a domain encompassing the theory and chemistry of lime-based repair, material preparation, and practical application on historic masonry structures. This selection was driven by the pressing documented need for skilled practitioners within the Romanian heritage sector, the existence of an active professional community with strong views on training and transmission, iEL's associated partner network, and alignment with Romania's recognised cultural heritage policy priorities. Craft professionals were reached through social media (including a promoted Meta campaign), WhatsApp networks, and targeted email outreach to associated partner organisations, including Silvia Demeter-Lowe Architect and ABMEE. Young designers were reached primarily through two faculties of Universitatea Transilvania din Brașov, the Faculty of Civil Engineering and the Faculty of Wood Furniture Design and Wood Engineering, supplemented by social media and WhatsApp outreach. The sequential implementation covered questionnaire dissemination, eleven individual interviews (five craft professionals, six young designers), and one focus group (two craft professionals, two young designers), all conducted online via Zoom. A notable sampling consideration is that the craft professional questionnaire sample is notably highly educated (over 80% holding university-level qualifications), reflecting the heritage restoration orientation of the outreach strategy rather than the broader Romanian craft sector.

### *Greece*

The primary research in Greece was implemented by ANCE. The craft domain selected for the Greek research was shoemaking, chosen for its cultural and economic relevance within the Greek craft ecosystem and for the opportunities it offered to explore the relationship between traditional craft knowledge and contemporary design practices. Craft professionals were reached primarily through stakeholder networks identified during the project's initial mapping phase, supplemented by personal contacts, professional networks, and the associated partner crafts school, which facilitated contact with experienced shoemaking professionals. Young designers were reached through social media outreach, personal contacts, and networks connected to creative education and practice. The focus group was conducted in person at the premises of the associated partner crafts school, bringing together two craft professionals and five young designers active in the shoemaking sector. A notable sampling consideration is that interviews with craft professionals were only partially conducted with shoemaking specialists; alternative profiles from weaving, pottery, and jewellery making were included due to the limited availability of shoemaking professionals willing to participate, broadening the perspective beyond the selected craft while capturing common challenges across disciplines.

### *Spain*

The primary research in Spain was implemented by Defoin. The research was not restricted to a single craft domain but was intentionally designed as an open and inclusive process across a broad range of artisan disciplines, with particular attention given to ceramics due to its strong historical and cultural relevance within the Spanish craft ecosystem. Craft professionals and

young designers were reached primarily through Defoin's communication channels — social media platforms and the organisation's newsletter — supplemented by direct email outreach and existing professional and personal networks developed through previous projects. Participants who indicated interest in follow-up research activities through the questionnaire were contacted directly for interview participation; additional participants were identified through Defoin's professional networks. Most interviews were conducted online via Microsoft Teams, with one conducted by telephone. Two focus groups were organised: one conducted face-to-face within the context of a ceramics class involving both artisans and young participants, and one conducted online and promoted through Defoin's social media channels. A notable feature of the Spanish sample is the breadth of craft disciplines represented, including fashion design, esparto craftsmanship, sculpture, ceramics, and others, which reflects the diversity of the Spanish artisan ecosystem rather than a sampling deviation.

***Belgium***

The primary research in Belgium was implemented by Mad'in Europe. The craft domain selected for the Belgian research was bookbinding and paper craftsmanship, represented primarily through the practice of Grégoire Vigneron, founder of Tokowo, a Brussels-based artisan specialising in traditional bookbinding, paper restoration, and contemporary paper craftsmanship. This craft was selected for its combination of technical expertise, cultural heritage, conservation skills, and artistic expression, and for the strong opportunities it offers for collaboration with designers. Craft professionals were recruited through Mad'in Europe's existing European craft community, professional contacts, and partnerships with Belgian craft organisations, workshops, cultural institutions, and training centres. Young designers were reached through higher education institutions, design schools, universities, and professional contacts within the creative industries. Interviews were conducted online via videoconferencing platforms and lasted between 45 and 60 minutes. One mixed focus group was organised online, bringing together one craft professional and five young designers. A notable sampling consideration is that while the case study focused on bookbinding, additional interviews were conducted with professionals from ceramics, woodworking, jewellery, and paper arts to capture transversal challenges affecting the Belgian craft ecosystem more broadly. Geographically, most respondents were located in Brussels and Wallonia, with comparatively limited participation from Flanders.

***Türkiye***

The primary research in Türkiye was implemented by PUHU Research and Consultancy. The craft selected for the Turkish research was *ebru*, the traditional art of Turkish marbling, one of several classical Turkish decorative arts represented within the broader dataset alongside tezhip, calligraphy, and miniature painting. Craft transmission in the ebru field typically occurs through a dual system combining formal university education in Traditional Turkish Arts and the traditional usta-çırak (master-apprentice) relationship, culminating in the *icazet*, the traditional certificate of mastery granted by a recognised master. Craft professionals were reached primarily through Enstitü İstanbul İSMEK (Eİİ), Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality's public craft and arts education network, which holds Associated Partner status within CRAFTWISE. Engagement with Eİİ required a structured multi-stage institutional approval process involving meetings with Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality's EU Relations unit, the Directorate of Lifelong Learning,

and Academic Development specialists before reaching *ebru* instructors directly. One additional craft professional, an independent practitioner, was reached through a personal contact; outreach to independent artisans through the *Türkiye'nin Ustaları* platform did not yield participant engagement. Young designers were reached through an open call disseminated via Instagram, Facebook, and LinkedIn, which generated substantial engagement with motivated applicants subsequently invited to individual interviews and a focus group. A methodological consideration of direct relevance to the interpretation of Turkish craft professional findings is the near-total concentration of the sample within the Eİİ institutional network: 93.3% of questionnaire respondents and all interview participants are Istanbul-based, and the large majority are formally employed by or affiliated with Eİİ, meaning that the dataset may understate the perspectives of craft professionals operating outside public institutional structures.

### 2.5 Analytical Approach and Limitations

The CRAFTWISE Research was implemented across three sequential phases, each building directly on the previous, between November 2025 and August 2026. In the first phase, all five partner organisations conducted country-specific desk research reviewing existing literature, policies, institutional frameworks, and good practices in craftsmanship, vocational training, digitalisation, and entrepreneurship. To ensure consistency across partners, PUHU Research developed a National Report Template specifying the structure and scope of secondary research outputs. Findings were presented and discussed at an internal online workshop in April 2026, attended by representatives from all five partner organisations, enabling cross-national comparison and methodological alignment before fieldwork commenced. Each partner produced a secondary research report covering the national craft sector landscape, education and training ecosystem, professional and labour market realities, digitalisation and entrepreneurship context, relevant projects and good practices, and a desk-based skills gap analysis across four competency domains.

In the second phase, primary data were collected through the three instruments described in section 2.3. To support methodological consistency across a consortium in which partners vary in research background and capacity, PUHU Research developed a Fieldwork Guideline and a Question Kit defining the questionnaire instruments and their national adaptation parameters. An AI-supported Analysis Guideline was additionally developed by PUHU Research to provide partners with structured analytical prompts for systematic thematic analysis of qualitative data. Two dedicated AI-powered tools were built by PUHU Research to operationalise this guideline in practice: a Research Analysis Assistant, hosted at craftwise-analysis.netlify.app, and a National Report Assistant. Both tools were built on the Claude API and made accessible to all consortium partners, enabling structured interrogation of online questionnaire responses, interview transcripts, and focus group records through guided analytical prompts. The outputs of this AI-supported analysis fed directly into national report drafting across all five partner countries.

In the third phase, each partner produced a National Report synthesising both secondary and primary research findings from their country. Although the original project design envisaged the C-Skills Report as a consolidation of primary research findings, the secondary research outputs proved sufficiently rich and directly relevant to the primary findings that they were integrated into the present report as contextual background within the thematic findings. PUHU Research

synthesised the five national reports into this C-Skills Report using the common structure established at the outset of the research process.

Quantitative questionnaire data were analysed descriptively, with findings reported as frequencies and percentages across response categories. Qualitative interview and focus group data were analysed thematically. Where both data types address the same theme, findings are presented in an integrated manner, with quantitative data establishing distributional patterns and qualitative data providing contextual elaboration and individual-level nuance.

Several limitations apply to the dataset as a whole and should be borne in mind when interpreting the findings presented in this report. First, sample sizes vary considerably across partner countries — Romania's craft professional questionnaire sample (n=132) represents nearly two-thirds of the combined five-country total, giving Romanian data disproportionate weight in any aggregated reading of cross-country findings. Second, all five country samples show a pronounced female majority across both target groups in the questionnaire data, with the Belgian craft professional interview cohort the only exception (1 female, 4 male), which may limit the generalisability of findings to male practitioners and designers. Third, geographic concentration is a feature of several national samples: craft professional samples in Greece, Spain, and Belgium are drawn predominantly from a single city or sub-national region, and the Turkish craft professional sample is concentrated almost entirely in Istanbul. Fourth, the craft domains selected or emerging across partner countries differ substantially — from lime mortars and masonry repair in Romania to shoemaking in Greece, ceramics and a broad multi-disciplinary range in Spain, bookbinding and paper craftsmanship in Belgium, and ebru in Türkiye — which should be taken into account when comparing findings across countries, as craft-specific contexts shape both the nature of training challenges and the professional realities reported by participants.

# 3. Participant Overview

## 3.1 Participant Demographics

This section presents the demographic profile of research participants across the five CRAFTWISE partner countries — Romania, Greece, Spain, Belgium, and Türkiye — drawn from national reports based on online questionnaires (OQ), semi-structured interviews, and, where available, focus groups. Data are presented separately for craft professionals and young designers, with each country's figures reported as stated in the national source data. No combined five-country totals are calculated within this narrative; a comparative reference table is provided separately.

**Craft Professionals**

In Türkiye, the online questionnaire for craft professionals was completed by 30 respondents, the interview sample comprised 5 participants, and the focus group included 2 craft professionals. The sample was strongly female-dominated (83.3% of questionnaire respondents), concentrated in the 35–44 age bracket, and predominantly experienced practitioners, with 66.7% reporting 11–20 years of professional experience. The large majority (90.0%) were employed by

an institution — primarily İSMEK, the Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality's public craft and arts education network — and 93.3% of respondents were based in Istanbul.

In Romania, the questionnaire was completed by 132 respondents, with 5 interview participants and 2 focus group participants. The sample was 80.3% female, concentrated in the 45–54 age bracket, and predominantly self-employed (58.3%). Educational attainment was notably high, with 80.3% holding university-level education or higher. The sample was geographically distributed across multiple regions of Romania.

In Greece, the questionnaire yielded 15 valid responses, with 5 interview participants and 2 focus group participants. The sample was 80.0% female, concentrated in the 35–44 age bracket, and overwhelmingly self-employed (86.7%), working predominantly from individual workshops or ateliers. The sample was geographically concentrated in Athens.

In Spain, the questionnaire was completed by 16 respondents, with 6 interview participants and 2 focus group participants. The sample was 68.8% female, more evenly spread across age brackets than in other countries (with the largest group, 43.8%, in the 25–34 bracket), and predominantly self-employed (62.5% autónomo), working from individual workshops (87.5%). The sample was geographically concentrated in Madrid.

In Belgium, the questionnaire was completed by 17 respondents, with 5 interview participants and 1 focus group participant. The sample was 76.5% female in the questionnaire, though the interview cohort showed an inverse pattern (1 female, 4 male). No respondents under 35 were recorded in the questionnaire sample, and the sample was weighted toward experienced, mid-to-late-career practitioners with high educational attainment. The sample was geographically concentrated in Brussels and Wallonia/Liège.

**Young Designers**

In Türkiye, the online questionnaire for young designers was completed by 60 respondents, with 6 interview participants and 12 focus group participants. The sample was 88.3% female in the questionnaire, split between the 18–24 (55.0%) and 25–34 (45.0%) age brackets, and highly multidisciplinary, with Industrial and Product Design the largest cluster. The majority (58.3%) were current undergraduate students.

In Romania, the questionnaire was completed by 60 respondents, with 6 interview participants and 2 focus group participants. The sample was 88.3% female, evenly split between the 18–24 (48.3%) and 25–34 (51.7%) brackets. The sample was geographically concentrated in Transylvania, with Brașov alone accounting for 35.0% of respondents.

In Greece, the questionnaire yielded 15 valid responses, with 5 interview participants and 5 focus group participants. The sample was 80.0% female, concentrated in the 25–34 bracket (86.7%). The focus group sample was disciplinarily narrow, composed exclusively of participants connected to the shoemaking and footwear sector.

In Spain, the questionnaire was completed by 19 respondents, with 5 interview participants and 5 focus group participants. The sample was 68.4% female, concentrated in the 18–24 bracket (73.7%), and heavily concentrated in fashion-related fields (78.9%).

In Belgium, the questionnaire was completed by 19 respondents, with 5 interview participants and 5 focus group participants. The sample was 68.4% female in the questionnaire, with 15.8% identifying as non-binary or other. The sample was split between the 25–34 (57.9%) and 18–24 (42.1%) brackets, and predominantly at advanced educational stages (47.4% graduate students).

Across all five countries, both target groups show a consistent female predominance in questionnaire samples; among interview samples, the Belgian craft professional cohort (1 female, 4 male) is the only exception. Most samples also show marked geographic concentration in specific cities or regions — Istanbul, Athens, Madrid, and Brussels (together with Wallonia for Belgian craft professionals), and Brașov for Romanian young designers — while the Romanian craft professional sample is geographically distributed. Sample sizes and data availability vary considerably: focus group participation ranges from one craft professional (Belgium) to twelve young designers (Türkiye), and craft discipline representation, employment status, and educational attainment differ substantially by country. 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-Skills)*

| 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 (Brașov ~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 practitioner: 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.); Tezhip (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: No five-country combined total is calculated, consistent with report methodology. Red italic = 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) | Brașov: 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 confirmation.*

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### 3.2 Participant Profiles

This section presents a qualitative synthesis of participant profiles across the five CRAFTWISE partner countries, drawn from each partner's national report. Each national report identifies four recurring profile types among craft professionals and four among young designers, synthesised from questionnaire, interview, and — where available — focus group data. These profiles are presented as descriptive typologies rather than individual case accounts, and should be read as country-level syntheses rather than as a complete account of every research participant.

**Craft Professionals**

In Türkiye, the dominant profile is the institutionally employed craft trainer — typically a female practitioner aged 35–54, employed within Enstitü İstanbul İSMEK, holding a craft-specific teaching certification and, in some cases, a traditional *icazet*. Secondary profiles include the practitioner-educator combining institutional employment with independent workshop activity, the multi-role educator working across public and private settings, and the senior master-level practitioner whose authority rests on traditional apprenticeship lineage rather than formal education.

In Romania, the dominant profile is the established mid-career practitioner — typically female, aged 35–54, university-educated, self-employed, and working primarily in textile and fibre crafts (the leading discipline cluster, ~25–26% of the sample) though spanning a wide range of other traditions. Secondary profiles include the experienced heritage or restoration specialist working in contexts connected to architectural conservation, the early-career practitioner entering craft via hybrid academic and institutional pathways, and the practitioner deriving primary income from teaching rather than craft production. This heritage/restoration-specialist profile is drawn primarily from interview data, where four of five participants worked in conservation-adjacent fields; the broader questionnaire sample (n=132) reflects a wider range of craft disciplines.

In Greece, the dominant profile is the mid-career, self-employed practitioner-educator based in Athens, combining craft production, workshop ownership, and non-formal training. Secondary profiles include the vocationally trained practitioner with a materials-based specialism (e.g. shoemaking, weaving), the career-changer entering craft from an unrelated professional background, and the long-standing veteran practitioner, present only marginally in the data.

In Spain, the dominant profile is the early-career independent artisan (autónomo), typically aged 25–34, formally educated but economically vulnerable, often supplementing craft income with unrelated work. Secondary profiles include the emerging workshop owner-entrepreneur, the experienced multi-role practitioner and educator combining production with institutional collaboration, and the practitioner at the threshold of craft entry, transitioning from an adjacent professional field.

In Belgium, the dominant profile is the established independent maker-entrepreneur, typically aged 45–54, self-employed, academically trained, and working in disciplines such as ceramics or jewellery. Secondary profiles include the practitioner-educator integrating teaching as a co-equal professional dimension, the collective or cooperative practitioner working through structures such as SMart (a cooperative that lets professionals work autonomously while benefiting from

employee status and administrative support), and the senior specialist practitioner in late career, concentrated in disciplines such as bookbinding and papermaking.

**Young Designers**

In Türkiye, the dominant profile is the undergraduate design student with an existing personal interest in traditional crafts, typically female, aged 18–24. Secondary profiles include the socially and entrepreneurially oriented recent graduate applying craft within sustainability or social-innovation frameworks, the art education student approaching craft pedagogically, and the interdisciplinary or transitional student with an exploratory, non-linear educational trajectory.

In Romania, the dominant profile is the undergraduate design or visual arts student, concentrated in Brașov and other university cities. Secondary profiles include the postgraduate or advanced student with a specific interest in heritage or restoration, the recent graduate navigating the transition to professional practice, and the student from an adjacent technical or social science discipline (architecture, engineering) with an emergent relationship to craft. This adjacent-discipline profile is similarly concentrated in the interview sample, where four of six participants studied architecture or engineering; the questionnaire sample (n=60) shows architecture representing 13.3% of respondents.

In Greece, the dominant profile is the undergraduate or postgraduate student engaged in wearable or materials-based craft design, based in Athens. Secondary profiles include the career-transitioning young professional entering craft from an unrelated field, the young designer with a familial or personal connection to a craft tradition, and the entrant from a related creative profession seeking differentiated market positioning.

In Spain, the dominant profile is the fashion and textile student with an interest in craft-intensive practice, based in Madrid. Secondary profiles include the recent graduate navigating the transition from design education to professional practice, the non-fashion design student (interior or product design) with a more peripheral relationship to craft, and the non-formally educated young creative pursuing an autodidactic pathway.

In Belgium, the dominant profile is the material-focused graduate designer working in textile, jewellery, or object design. Secondary profiles include the socially and conceptually oriented designer (social design, visual communication), the early-career industrial or product designer engaging with craft instrumentally, and the undergraduate student designer at an early, less consolidated stage of formal education.

Across all five countries, craft professional profiles consistently reflect established, often self-employed or institutionally embedded practitioners with substantial professional experience, while young designer profiles consistently centre on students and recent graduates at the early stages of professional formation. A recurring structural pattern across all five national syntheses is the wide divergence in formal pedagogical certification among craft professionals, ranging from universal (Türkiye, 100%) to majority-held (Belgium, 58.8%) and approximately half (Romania, 49.2%) to minority-held (Greece, 26.7%; Spain, 12.6%) — despite widespread engagement in teaching and training across all five contexts. Career-change or non-linear entry pathways into craft practice — whether among established professionals or young designers —

appear as a secondary but recurring theme in several countries, notably Greece, Spain, and Türkiye.

# 4. Comparative Findings

## 4.1 Training Pathways & Learning Experiences

### *Contextual Background*

The five CRAFTWISE partner countries - Romania, Greece, Spain, Belgium, and Türkiye - each situate craft within distinct conceptual, legal, and institutional frameworks that reflect different historical trajectories, cultural priorities, and economic conditions. Across all five contexts, the meaning of "craft" has evolved over time, moving from definitions rooted in material need, guild tradition, and intergenerational transmission toward more expansive framings that encompass creative industries, cultural tourism, heritage preservation, and contemporary design. This evolution has not been uniform: some countries have developed formal legal recognition for craft as a professional category, while others continue to operate without dedicated regulatory frameworks; some have integrated craft into national VET systems, while others rely primarily on non-formal and informal learning pathways. Understanding these national contexts is essential for interpreting the primary research findings presented in this section, as the training pathways and learning experiences reported by craft professionals and young designers are directly shaped by the structural conditions, institutional actors, and transmission mechanisms that characterise each country's craft ecosystem.

In Romania, the concept of craft encompasses two distinct but related categories that have developed along separate historical and institutional trajectories. The first is traditional craftsmanship (meșteșug), understood in a historical and cultural sense rooted in centuries of rural and urban practice — from the guild traditions of Transylvanian towns to the folk craft heritage of regional ethnographic communities. The second is modern artisanship (artizanat), an informal designation for small-scale handmade production oriented toward contemporary needs and tastes, which may or may not draw on traditional techniques. While the former carries the weight of cultural heritage policy and is associated with living heritage recognition, the latter operates largely as a subcategory of the small and medium-sized enterprise sector without dedicated legal standing. This definitional duality reflects a broader structural ambiguity: despite a 2020 draft law specifically dedicated to traditional craftspeople, which was declared unconstitutional by the Constitutional Court, Romania still lacks a dedicated legal framework for the craft sector, leaving practitioners operating under general enterprise rules (Tracks4Crafts, 2024b). Over time, the most economically resilient craft forms have proven to be those producing visually appealing final consumer goods — pottery, wooden decorations, clothing, carpets, and religious icons — while utilitarian crafts and intermediary production processes have declined sharply in the face of industrial substitution. The sustainability of traditional crafts is further shaped by Romania's six UNESCO-inscribed intangible cultural heritage elements in the craftsmanship domain, including Horezu ceramics, traditional wall-carpet craftsmanship, and the art of the traditional blouse with embroidery on the shoulder (altiță), which provide frameworks for visibility and transmission even in the absence of comprehensive legal protection. Formal craft education sits outside the mainstream VET system: the closest institutional equivalents are technical high schools and professional schools oriented primarily

toward industry, and a network of 41 Popular Schools of Arts and Crafts subordinated to County Councils, whose diplomas carry limited formal recognition and whose provision is described as insufficiently specialised (Tracks4Crafts, 2024b). Non-formal provision — delivered through NGOs, ethnographic museums, and specialised camps — is predominantly oriented toward cultural appreciation and awareness rather than professional formation, leaving a persistent gap between initial engagement with craft and sustained technical development. Historical data from 2007 indicates that most traditional craftspeople were self-taught (31%), with nearly as many having learned through apprenticeship (29%), suggesting that informal and practice-based pathways have long dominated over formal education. Since Romania's EU accession in 2007, large-scale migration to Western Europe — Romania occupying first place in the EU for permanent emigration across the decade 2015–2024 — has further disrupted intergenerational transmission by removing prospective apprentices from rural craft communities (Zamora, 2024).

In Greece, the concept of craft (χειροτεχνία / παραδοσιακή τέχνη) broadly refers to the production of handmade or small-scale objects based on traditional techniques, artistic skills, and manual expertise, with deep roots in Greek mythology and material culture — the goddess Athena credited in ancient sources with inventing weaving, goldsmithing, pottery, and architecture (Mastroianni, 2023). Historically, Greek craftsmanship was embedded in household economies, regional trade traditions, and religious practice, with distinct regional identities — ceramics in Crete, Sifnos, and Rhodes; silversmithing in Ioannina; marble carving on Tinos; silk weaving in Northern Greece — shaping both the range and the geographic distribution of craft production. Over the past decade, the sector has undergone a significant conceptual repositioning, increasingly framed within the creative and cultural industries rather than as a purely heritage or ethnographic category, with growing attention to its role in cultural tourism, design innovation, and export potential (OECD, 2022; IME GSEVEE, 2026). This repositioning has been accompanied by renewed institutional interest, including the development of a national digital platform for Greek crafts supported through the Recovery and Resilience Facility, aimed at mapping craft professionals, enhancing visibility, and supporting networking and market access (Greece 2.0, 2023). The sector remains only partially regulated: craft activity is registered under general small business frameworks, and many professionals operate as micro-enterprises or in semi-formal arrangements, particularly in tourism-linked and seasonal contexts. Formal craft education exists within the VET system through institutes of vocational training, specialist schools such as the Stemnitsa Gold and Silversmithing School and the Tinos Art School, and recent Recovery Fund-supported programmes delivered through the University of West Attica — though coverage is uneven and many disciplines lack formally recognised educational pathways (CEDEFOP, 2023). The master–apprentice model remains active in family workshops and small artisanal businesses, and non-formal provision through initiatives such as the Rizarios Handicraft School and the Askardamykti School plays a significant complementary role, though without systematic links to professional certification or employment pathways (Ministry of Culture and Sports, 2023). Several craft forms — traditional weaving, basketry, woodcarving — face risks of disappearance due to an ageing practitioner population, long skill acquisition periods, and limited intergenerational transmission (Greece 2.0, 2023).

In Spain, the conceptualisation of craft has undergone a profound evolution over the past decade, transitioning from a strictly ethnographic and heritage-based definition — historically synonymous with manual skill passed through lineage and rooted in a specific sociocultural identity and geographical location — toward a more expansive category encompassing a broad

spectrum of techniques, materials, and creative philosophies shaped by the digital revolution and global market trends. In current administrative terms, the School of Industrial Organisation (EOI) and the Ministry of Industry define the artisan as a natural or legal person whose economic activity consists of producing utilitarian, decorative, or artistic objects through processes personally supervised by the artisan, with direct manual contribution as the most significant component — an emphasis on quality, authenticity, and process that distinguishes artisanal production from industrial manufacture (EOI, 2015). However, there is no single national definition: the decentralised structure of the seventeen Autonomous Communities delegates the regulation and classification of artisanal activities to the regional level, producing significant variation in professional certification, training provision, and sector visibility across the territory (González et al., 2023). The most economically visible craft branches are wooden furniture (accounting for 41% of craft companies), textiles and clothing, jewellery, ceramics, leathers and footwear, metal, and glass, with Andalucía, Cataluña, the Comunidad Valenciana, and Madrid collectively hosting more than half of the nation's craft businesses (Círculo Fortuny / KPMG, 2022). Several Spanish craft traditions carry international recognition through the UNESCO Representative List, including the artisanal ceramic styles of Talavera de la Reina and the traditional techniques of artisanal glass production (Ministerio de Asuntos Exteriores, n.d.). Within the last five years, the sector has increasingly identified with high-end and luxury segments, where artisanal originality is positioned as a competitive advantage against mass-produced industrial goods — while simultaneously facing the threat of cheap imitations that undermine both pricing and the reputation of authentic artisanal products. A notable tension has emerged between established traditional artisans and an emerging cohort of young professionals with university backgrounds in design, architecture, or fine arts who have entered craftsmanship through maker culture and DIY movements, bringing design fluency and digital marketing capacity but sometimes lacking the deep material-specific technical competence possessed by traditional masters. Formal craft education is structured within the VET system under the professional family of Artes y Artesanías, though professionals widely report a disconnect between formal curricula and the practical and business realities of the craft labour market (González et al., 2023). The traditional master–apprentice model is described as rapidly disappearing, driven by the high economic and temporal costs of apprenticeship and difficulty in attracting young people willing to accept low-wage entry positions (González et al., 2023).

In Belgium, craft acquired formal institutional recognition through the federal Law of 19 March 2014, implemented in 2016, which defines the artisan as an individual or entity engaged in manual production, transformation, repair, or restoration activities requiring specific know-how rooted in quality, tradition, creativity, or innovation — with artisan status granted under conditions including small-scale activity, manual production, and fewer than twenty workers (SPF Économie, n.d.). This legal framework, which allows recognised professionals to use an official "Certified Craft" label, represents a more formalised institutional structure than exists in most other partner countries, yet the sector in practice remains only partially structured: as of 2026, approximately 3,003 certified artisans are registered, a figure that includes food-related crafts such as chocolate and beer and therefore does not fully represent the breadth of non-food craft practice (SPF Économie, n.d.). The Belgian craft sector encompasses traditional and heritage-based practices such as stonework, woodworking, and restoration; contemporary and creative crafts including jewellery, design, and artistic production; and hybrid practices combining craftsmanship with innovation, sustainability, or digital tools — reflecting a sector that has evolved considerably from a purely heritage-centred conception toward a broader

creative economy framing. Regional specificity is pronounced: Wallonia has a strong heritage-craft presence, particularly in architectural restoration and stone and wood crafts; Brussels represents a hybrid urban context where sgraffito, mosaic, stained glass, and ornamental work are closely tied to Art Nouveau architectural heritage; and Flanders supports traditional craftsmanship through cultural heritage frameworks and institutions such as the Museum of Old Techniques (Mad'in Europe et al., 2025b). Several traditional practices — joinery, plastering, roofing, decorative finishes, sgraffito, and mosaic — face risks of disappearance due to an ageing workforce and limited generational succession. Training and education policies are decentralised across three linguistic communities, with no unified national framework for crafts; VET systems in Flanders and Wallonia incorporate dual learning (alternance) pathways, and regional bodies including IFAPME, SYNTRA, and FOREM offer recognised certifications, while non-formal provision through specialised centres and heritage institutions plays an equally significant complementary role (Mad'in Europe et al., 2025a; Mad'in Europe et al., 2025b).

In Türkiye, handicrafts are understood as forms of production carried out manually, without the use of machines, and based on skill, experience, and mastery; the Turkish Language Association defines handicrafts as production activities performed with simple hand tools, and craftsmanship as work meeting material needs through learning, experience, manual skill, and mastery (Turkish Language Association, n.d.). This dual definition signals that craft in the Turkish context refers not only to the production of objects but to the embodied knowledge and technical competence required for their making, a framing with deep roots in pre-industrial societies where handicrafts emerged primarily to meet basic needs and gradually evolved into culturally embedded forms of production shaped by local traditions, environmental conditions, and social practices (Güven, 2024; Oransay, 2012). The scope of the term has changed significantly over time: Öztürk notes that it has gradually expanded, with different labels applied in different periods-village handicrafts, home industry, small-scale industry products, touristic handicrafts and that technological development, industrialisation, and changing lifestyles have contributed to conceptual ambiguity regarding what should be included under the term in contemporary usage (Öztürk, n.d.). The range of crafts covered is extensive, spanning textiles and garments, kitchen utensils, musical instruments, carpets, kilims, and other everyday objects, alongside the classical decorative Turkish arts, marbling (ebru), calligraphy (hat), illumination and gilding (tezhip), and miniature painting (minyatür), which developed in relation to manuscript production and courtly artistic traditions and carry UNESCO intangible cultural heritage recognition alongside çini tile-making (UNESCO Turkish National Commission, n.d.). Industrial production and socio-economic change have reduced the everyday function of many traditional crafts, transforming some into ornamental or touristic objects and contributing to the simplification or imitation of authentic techniques, while others have survived through adaptation, reinterpretation, or institutional preservation (Güven, 2024; Öztürk, n.d.). A defining structural feature of the Turkish context is the scale of institutional provision through the national lifelong learning system: Enstitü İstanbul İSMEK received 174,443 applications for handicraft programmes in the 2023–2024 period, with 106,994 participants, though the average applicant age of 46 and only 11.6% of participants under thirty indicate that engagement remains concentrated among older cohorts (Enstitü İstanbul İSMEK, 2026). Formal craft education is incorporated into the national VET system through competency-based curricula developed by the Ministry of National Education, which explicitly references *meşk,* the traditional learning method based on direct master-to-apprentice transmission, as a recognised pedagogical model,

though the *usta-çırak* (master-apprentice) relationship is under pressure in contemporary professional contexts, with research in historical clusters such as the Grand Bazaar documenting the difficulty of attracting young apprentices to time-intensive traditional techniques (Ministry of National Education [MEB], 2023; Tarcan & Cox, 2019).

### *Craft Professionals*

In Romania, the quantitative survey data indicate that self-taught learning constitutes the dominant training pathway among craft professionals, with 65.9% of respondents identifying this as part of their learning journey. Formal vocational education was reported by 32.6%, and family transmission by 29.5%. Non-formal workshops were cited by 26.5% and university-level education by 20.5%, while traditional apprenticeship represented the least frequently selected pathway at 12.1%. Respondents characteristically combined multiple learning pathways simultaneously, suggesting that craft learning in Romania is not organised around a single dominant mode of transmission but rather involves a pluralistic integration of informal, formal, family-based, and workshop-based experiences. The interview data with five craft professionals reinforces this picture: all five had pursued formal education, in most cases at postgraduate level, reflecting the heritage conservation and architectural restoration orientation of this cohort, while professional competence was consistently described as having developed through subsequent or concurrent practice-based experience — workplace learning, construction site placements, museum work, and in two cases international placements that exposed participants to techniques and professional cultures not available domestically.

In Greece, questionnaire data reveal a pronounced reliance on informal and self-directed learning, with non-formal workshops and self-teaching each selected by 60.0% of respondents, apprenticeship by 40.0%, formal vocational education by 26.7%, family transmission by 20.0%, and university or higher education by only 6.7%. The plurality of pathways combined by individual respondents is a defining characteristic of the data. Interview data with five craft professionals elaborate considerably on this picture: four of the five combined formal education — vocational, higher, or specialist school-based — with direct apprenticeship under named or recognised masters, while the fifth participant's craft knowledge was rooted in family transmission and embodied learning before a later reorientation toward professional weaving practice following formal study in an unrelated field. A consistent and explicit theme across all five interviews was the framing of craft education as a career-long process rather than a bounded phase of initial formation, with two participants explicitly stating that "you never stop learning" in their craft.

In Spain, the training pathways of craft professionals are characterised by a marked predominance of informal and self-directed learning over formal institutional provision. Self-taught learning emerges as the single most common pathway in the questionnaire data, selected by 81.3% of respondents, followed by non-formal workshops at 56.3% and apprenticeship at 31.3%; formal institutional pathways are notably limited, with university or higher education and formal vocational education each selected by only 6.3%. The interview data with six craft professionals reveal considerable diversity across individual trajectories, spanning formal study, multi-generational family transmission, apprenticeship with master artisans, and sustained self-initiated exploration over developmental periods ranging from five to

forty-four years; in several cases, learning initiation was circumstantially driven, such as one participant whose ceramic training began when a school happened to open in her city.

In Belgium, formal higher education emerges as the dominant learning pathway in the questionnaire data, selected by 52.9% of respondents — one of two countries, alongside Türkiye, in which formal tertiary education represents the single most common pathway for craft professionals. Non-formal workshops follow at 47.1%, self-taught learning at 35.3%, formal vocational education at 17.6%, and apprenticeship at only 11.8%. Notably, no respondent identified family transmission as a learning pathway, indicating the near-complete absence of intergenerational craft knowledge transfer within family contexts among this cohort. The interview data with five craft professionals reveal two broadly distinct trajectories: formal institutional training at specialised craft schools such as the Académie des Beaux-Arts and La Cambre, and apprenticeship-style learning through shared workshop environments with experienced practitioners — with one self-taught participant explicitly noting difficulty in mapping their own development onto institutional training frameworks.

In Türkiye, university or higher education emerges as the overwhelmingly dominant learning pathway in the questionnaire data, selected by 90.0% of respondents, while family transmission was entirely absent from the quantitative data, the highest formal-education concentration among the five countries, with family transmission absent as in Belgium. Non-formal workshops ranked second at 23.3%, followed by apprenticeship at 16.7% and formal vocational education at 13.3%. The interview data reveal that formal university education and master-apprentice training function as two distinct but frequently overlapping pathways: three of five participants first encountered their craft through university programmes in Traditional Turkish Arts, and three subsequently underwent extended master-apprentice training leading to the receipt of an icazet, the traditional authorisation granted by a master. Enstitü İstanbul İSMEK, Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality's public craft and arts education network, featured in the professional trajectories of four of the five participants. One participant offered a sustained critique of university-based craft education, arguing that the typical three-hour-per-week format with pre-prepared materials cannot produce genuine mastery compared with full atelier-based immersion.

### *Young Designers*

In Romania, personal passion and creativity constitute the near-universal primary motivation for design study, reported by 93.3% of questionnaire respondents, with family or mentor influence cited by only 3.3%, indicating that design study is predominantly self-initiated within this group. With respect to craft exposure, 65.0% of respondents reported some level of exposure to traditional crafts, while 35.0% reported none; among those with exposure, informal and self-directed learning constitutes the largest single category at 40.0%, while formal coursework was reported by only 15.0%. The interview data confirms this pattern, with meaningful engagement with traditional crafts, where it occurred, attributable to self-initiated informal exploration or brief specialised non-formal programmes rather than systematic provision within mainstream design or architecture curricula; one participant explicitly named this absence as a gap in their own programme.

In Greece, questionnaire data indicate that 93.3% of respondents reported some form of exposure to traditional crafts during their education, with exposure pathways distributed across formal coursework (60.0%), workshops and short courses (60.0%), and self-initiated informal learning (40.0%). Personal passion and creativity were the dominant motivation, cited by 86.7% of respondents. The interview data complicates the high exposure rate reported in the questionnaire: two of five participants had formal, structured exposure to traditional techniques within dedicated craft or design programmes, while two others reported no exposure during formal university education, beginning to learn only through non-formal programmes after completing their degrees — a discrepancy the data note may reflect differences in how exposure was understood across the two instruments. A structural distinction between craft-dedicated and general higher education programmes was explicitly articulated by two interview participants who attended general universities.

In Spain, personal passion and creativity were cited as a motivation by 100.0% of questionnaire respondents, the only fully universal motivational response recorded among young designers across the five countries. With respect to craft exposure, 89.5% of respondents reported some form of contact with traditional craft practices, with informal or self-initiated learning the most common pathway at 57.9%, followed by formal coursework at 26.3%. The interview data with five young designers reveal considerable variation in depth of exposure: three participants encountered craftsmanship as an integral component of their formal design curricula, while two described more peripheral forms of craft contact, with one having no direct craftsmanship contact during formal education at all.

In Belgium, personal passion and creativity were selected by 78.9% of questionnaire respondents, while social or cultural impact was reported by 52.6% — the highest proportion citing social or cultural motivation among the five countries. With respect to craft exposure, 94.7% of respondents reported some form of craft exposure, with formal coursework the most common pathway at 63.2%, followed by workshops or short courses at 52.6%. The interview data indicate considerable variation in the nature and depth of exposure, ranging from structured studio workshops and stonemasonry internships to encounters limited to technical content oriented toward machinery, with one participant acquiring craft exposure entirely outside formal study through peer connections during an Erasmus exchange.

In Türkiye, personal passion and creativity were the primary motivation for 86.7% of questionnaire respondents, followed by the desire to combine creativity with innovation at 61.7%. Exposure to traditional crafts was near-universal in the questionnaire data, with only 1.7% of respondents reporting none; workshops and short courses were the most common pathway at 55.0%, closely followed by formal coursework at 51.7%. The interview data complicates this picture significantly: the majority of participants reported that their formal education programmes offered little or no meaningful engagement with traditional crafts, with craft content largely confined to isolated electives, model-making exercises, or design history courses. The most substantive and sustained craft engagement across the group was consistently self-initiated and occurred outside formal education, with one participant explicitly distinguishing theoretical knowledge of traditional crafts from genuine hands-on engagement.

*Comparative Insights*

Across all five countries, self-directed and non-formal learning emerges as a consistently prominent feature of craft professional training pathways, though its relative weight varies considerably. Self-taught learning is the single most frequently reported pathway in Romania (65.9%), Greece (alongside non-formal workshops, 60.0%), and Spain (81.3%), while Belgium and Türkiye stand apart in this respect: Belgian craft professionals report formal higher education as their dominant pathway (52.9%), and Turkish craft professionals report university education at an even higher rate (90.0%). This divergencesuggests two broadly distinct national patterns, one in which craft expertise is built predominantly through informal and self-directed means (Romania, Greece, Spain), and one in which formal institutional education constitutes the primary entry point (Belgium, Türkiye), though in both Belgian and Turkish interview data, formal education is consistently described as insufficient on its own, requiring supplementation through apprenticeship, shared workshop practice, or sustained self-directed development.

Family transmission shows marked cross-country variation: present at meaningful levels in Romania (29.5%) and Greece (20.0%), reported at a lower level in Spain (18.8%), and entirely absent from the quantitative data in both Belgium and Türkiye. Traditional apprenticeship as a formally selected pathway is comparatively low across all five countries, ranging from 11.8% in Belgium to 40.0% in Greece, yet in every country's interview data, apprenticeship-style relationships — whether named as such or described as shared workshop practice, mentorship, or master-apprentice training — are identified as among the most valued and formative learning experiences, indicating a consistent gap between the low rate at which apprenticeship is selected as a formal category and its qualitative significance in practitioners' own accounts.

Among young designers, personal passion and creativity are the dominant motivation across all five countries, ranging from 78.9% in Belgium to a full 100.0% in Spain. Exposure to traditional crafts during education is reported as high or near-universal in questionnaire data in Greece, Spain, Belgium, and Türkiye (89.5% to 98.3%), and at a lower level in Romania (65.0%), where interview data confirm rather than contradict the quantitative picture. In the four high-exposure countries, this quantitative exposure rate is complicated or partially contradicted by qualitative accounts: participants in Greece, Spain, Belgium, and Türkiye each describe substantial variation in the depth and structural integration of craft exposure, with several explicitly reporting no meaningful craft content within their formal education despite questionnaire-level exposure rates suggesting near-universal contact. This pattern — high reported exposure at the quantitative level alongside qualitative accounts of superficial, inconsistent, or entirely absent formal craft instruction — recurs across multiple countries and represents one of the more consistent cross-national findings in this section.

A further point of convergence across all five countries is that, where young designers report meaningful and sustained engagement with traditional craft, this engagement is frequently self-initiated and occurs outside or following formal education, rather than being systematically embedded within design or architecture curricula. This pattern is explicitly documented in Romania, Greece, Spain, Belgium, and Türkiye alike, suggesting a structural gap between formal design education and craft heritage transmission that is not confined to any single national context.

## 4.2 Strengths & Gaps in Current Training

### *Contextual Background*

The strengths and gaps identified in this section are drawn primarily from primary research data collected across the five partner countries through online questionnaires, semi-structured interviews, and focus groups. The structural and institutional conditions shaping current training provision — including formal VET frameworks, non-formal learning pathways, and the role of public and heritage institutions in each national context — are presented in section 4.1 and provide the contextual frame within which the findings below should be read.

### *Craft Professionals*

In Romania, theoretical and cultural knowledge is identified as the dominant strength of current craft training, valued by 62.9% of questionnaire respondents and considered worth preserving by 58.3%. Business and entrepreneurship skills represent the most significant gap, identified as missing by 68.2% of respondents — the single highest proportion across all competency areas — and cited as the most significant programme shortcoming by 53.8%. The interview data deepens this picture: three of five participants identified a structural absence of integration between theory and practice, with one stating directly that theory should never exist without practice. All five interview participants identified insufficient practical training as a critical programme failure, with the focus group corroborating this through evidence of the collapse of formal vocational infrastructure and a severe imbalance between theory-heavy instruction and practical knowledge transmission. On intergenerational knowledge transfer, only 13.6% of questionnaire respondents affirm it is functioning effectively, with economic pressures, the deliberate withholding of complete knowledge by some practitioners, and a culturally inhibited reluctance to ask questions — identified specifically in the focus group data — cited as contributing barriers.

In Greece, advanced technical skills were identified as the most valuable aspect of training by 60.0% of questionnaire respondents, while theoretical and cultural knowledge was most frequently cited as worth preserving (60.0%). Business and entrepreneurship skills represent the most significant personal training gap (66.7%) and, jointly with advanced technical skills, the most significant programme shortcoming (53.3% each). The interview data identifies the absence of formal, state-supported educational infrastructure as a fundamental deficiency for craft disciplines lacking officially recognised schools or university pathways, with one participant explicitly contrasting this with Türkiye's state-funded ceramics programmes. All five interview participants unanimously identified apprenticeship and direct learning from master craftspeople as essential and irreplaceable. On intergenerational knowledge transfer, only 6.7% of questionnaire respondents consider it functioning effectively, with interview data attributing this to urbanisation, migration, and the disruption of family and community-based transmission.

In Spain, theoretical and cultural knowledge was identified as the most valued training element by 56.3% of questionnaire respondents, while advanced technical skills represent the most frequently cited gap, identified as missing by 62.5%. Business and entrepreneurship skills were identified as the primary shortcoming of current programmes by 68.8% of respondents. The interview data identifies fragmentation across distinct subjects lacking coherence, the absence of business management training, the lack of formal recognition and standardised training

pathways for most craft specialties (also raised in the focus group data), and — distinctively among the five countries — historical gender barriers in access to institutional support for women pursuing artistic crafts, raised by one participant. On intergenerational knowledge transfer, only 12.5% of questionnaire respondents consider it functioning effectively, with all six interview participants describing it as currently ineffective or broken, attributing this to geographic isolation of artisans, digitalisation, and demographic ageing within the sector.

In Belgium, advanced technical skills are identified as the most valuable aspect of training by 82.4% of questionnaire respondents — the highest proportion recorded for this category among the five countries — and as worth preserving by 81.3%. Digital and technological skills represent the most frequently cited gap (52.9%), while business and entrepreneurship skills and communication and collaboration skills are jointly identified as the most significant programme shortcomings (66.7% each). Notably, no questionnaire respondents identified communication and collaboration skills as worth preserving. The interview data identifies a consistent demand for greater integration of digital tools and software, alongside concern about insufficient guidance on transitioning to independent professional practice. On intergenerational knowledge transfer, only 17.6% of questionnaire respondents affirm it is functioning effectively, with the focus group identifying the closure of the Institut Diderot and financial barriers to paid apprenticeships as structural failures extending beyond individual programme design.

In Türkiye, theoretical and cultural knowledge is identified as the most valuable training element by 83.3% of questionnaire respondents — the highest proportion recorded for this category among the five countries — and as worth preserving by 73.3%. Digital and technological skills represent the most significant gap, identified as missing by 60.0% and as a current shortcoming by 56.7%; business and entrepreneurship skills follow closely as a shortcoming, cited by 53.3%. The interview data identifies a distinctive concern not raised elsewhere: the erosion of foundational material knowledge, with practitioners pointing to the replacement of traditional material preparation methods with commercially available substitutes. The non-recognition of the icazet — the traditional master-granted authorisation — within the formal education system was also identified as a systemic credentialing gap. On intergenerational knowledge transfer, the assessment is comparatively more positive than in other countries: 70.0% of questionnaire respondents consider it only partially effective, but all five interview participants affirmed that transmission is occurring, particularly through the expansion of public craft education via Enstitü İstanbul İSMEK and Halk Eğitim networks, with concerns centred on depth rather than the existence of transmission itself.

### *Young Designers*

In Romania, theoretical and cultural knowledge is identified as the most valuable element of current education by 66.7% of questionnaire respondents, closely mirroring the pattern among craft professionals. Business and entrepreneurship skills represent the most significant gap, identified as missing by 55.0%. Notably, 56.7% of respondents state that current programmes do not adequately prepare them for professional practice, and a further 31.7% answer partially — a combined 88.4% acknowledging significant preparedness gaps, with zero respondents affirming adequate preparation. The interview data identifies the absence of structured practical internships, business and entrepreneurship skills, and comprehensive financial literacy as

recurring deficiencies, with one participant arguing financial literacy should be as mandatory and structured as foreign language instruction.

In Greece, advanced technical skills and theoretical and cultural knowledge were equally identified as most valuable by 53.3% of questionnaire respondents, while advanced technical skills were simultaneously identified as the most significantly missing element by 66.7% — indicating that this domain is both highly valued and considered insufficiently developed. Responses on professional preparedness were notably mixed: 26.7% felt sufficiently prepared and 26.7% only partially prepared. The interview data converges strongly on hands-on, practical workshop experience as the most valuable educational element across all five participants, with the absence of opportunities for deep specialisation identified as the most significant gap by three participants.

In Spain, advanced technical skills are by far the most valued training element, cited by 84.2% of questionnaire respondents — the highest figure recorded for this category among young designers across the five countries. Business and entrepreneurship skills represent the most acutely felt gap, cited as missing by 68.4%. On professional preparedness, 57.9% report feeling only partially prepared. The interview data identifies missing formation in economic management and commercial strategy as a recurring theme, with one participant describing their education as operating within an academic "bubble" disconnected from real sector functioning.

In Belgium, advanced technical skills are identified as the most valuable training element by 78.9% of questionnaire respondents. Business and entrepreneurship skills represent by far the most significant gap, cited as missing by 73.7% — the highest such figure recorded among young designers across the five countries. Only 5.3% of respondents affirm that current programmes sufficiently prepare them for professional practice, while 63.2% assess preparation as only partially adequate. The interview data identifies the absence of training in entrepreneurship, profitability, and client acquisition as critical deficiencies, with one participant noting that programmes fail to develop students' professional networks.

In Türkiye, theoretical and cultural knowledge is identified as the most valuable element of current education by 73.3% of questionnaire respondents, identical to the craft professional ranking, indicating cross-group consensus. Business and entrepreneurship skills represent the most significant gap, cited as missing by 65.0%, the highest proportion across any category for this group. Only 10.0% of respondents feel that current programmes adequately prepare them for professional practice, with 81.7% expressing partial or complete dissatisfaction. The interview data identifies the disconnect between formal education and professional practice as the most widely shared concern, attributed primarily to a lack of industry-experienced instructors, alongside gaps in production process literacy — graduates lacking practical knowledge of how to commission work from manufacturers or artisans.

### *Comparative Insights*

Across all five countries, business and entrepreneurship skills emerge as the single most consistently identified training gap among craft professionals, ranging from 43.3% in Türkiye to 68.2% in Romania, and among young designers, ranging from 26.7% in Greece to 73.7% in Belgium. This consistency across both respondent groups and all five national contexts

establishes business and entrepreneurship preparation as the most cross-cutting deficiency identified in this section.

Theoretical and cultural knowledge presents a consistent pattern of being among the most valued and least frequently cited as missing across both craft professionals and young designers in all five countries, with Türkiye (83.3%) and Belgium (82.4%, for advanced technical skills) recording the highest valuation figures among craft professionals. This pattern holds even where countries diverge on which specific competency is rated most highly: Romania, Spain, and Türkiye each rank theoretical and cultural knowledge as most valued among craft professionals, while in Greece (60.0%) and Belgium (82.4%) advanced technical skills rank first; in Greece, theoretical and cultural knowledge is nonetheless the element most frequently cited as worth preserving (60.0%).

Digital and technological skills are identified as a significant gap among craft professionals in Belgium (52.9% missing) and Türkiye (60.0% missing), and as a moderate gap in Spain (50.0%) and Greece (40.0%), while Romania records a comparatively lower figure (25.8%). Among young designers, digital skills gaps are comparatively less pronounced across all five countries relative to business and communication gaps, though Türkiye records the highest figure at 43.3%.

A divergence in emphasis between craft professionals and young designers is visible across multiple countries. In Romania, young designers place greater value on communication and collaboration skills (53.3%) than craft professionals (27.3%). In Greece, young designers identify communication and collaboration skills as missing at a notably higher rate (53.3%) than craft professionals (26.7%). In Spain, craft professionals more frequently cite advanced technical skills as missing (62.5%) than young designers (21.1%), despite young designers rating technical skills as their single most valued training element (84.2%) —a divergence between the two groups, in which young designers combine high valuation of technical skills with a low rate of reporting them as missing.

On intergenerational knowledge transfer, assessments are predominantly negative or cautious across all five countries, though Türkiye stands apart with comparatively more positive interview accounts despite questionnaire data showing 70.0% considering transfer only partially effective. Structural explanations recur across multiple national contexts: economic pressures and the withholding of complete knowledge (Romania), urbanisation, migration, and the disruption of family-based transmission (Greece), geographic isolation, digitalisation, and demographic ageing (Spain), institutional closures (Belgium, citing the Institut Diderot), and a generational mismatch in learning styles and expectations (Türkiye, identified in focus group data). The erosion of foundational material knowledge — practitioners substituting traditionally prepared materials with commercial alternatives — was raised distinctively in the Turkish interview data and does not appear as a theme in the other four countries.

A further point of convergence concerns the gap between formal education and professional readiness among young designers: in Romania, 88.4% combined report partial or no adequate preparation; in Belgium, 73.7% report only partial adequacy or worse; and in Türkiye, 81.7% express partial or complete dissatisfaction. Spain and Greece show somewhat more mixed assessments, though in neither country does a majority affirm full professional preparedness.

Across all five countries, interview data attributes meaningful professional competence development to post-graduation practice, internships, or sustained personal initiative rather than to formal programme content alone.

### 4.3 Skill Needs

*Contextual Background*

The skill needs identified in this section are drawn primarily from primary research data collected across the five partner countries. Desk-based analysis of the craft sector in each country corroborates and contextualises these findings, pointing to structural gaps in four interrelated domains — theoretical and cultural knowledge, technical mastery, digital and technological competence, and business and entrepreneurial skills — as consistent features of the sector across all five national contexts.

In Romania, theoretical knowledge is symbolically valued but structurally undervalued: craft history is preserved through the expectations imposed on folk craftspeople yet is not accompanied by systematic knowledge transfer mechanisms, resulting in fragmented and non-cumulative understanding dependent on individual mentors. On the technical side, the sector faces a dual gap — the erosion of utilitarian and process-based crafts through technological substitution, and a risk of deprofessionalisation among new entrants whose self-directed learning lacks the rigour of structured apprenticeship pipelines. Digital adoption is stratified along generational and professional lines, with older practitioners largely avoiding digital tools and younger artisans using them tactically rather than strategically. Business competence represents the most acute deficit: pricing strategies are weak in a low-purchasing-power context, branding capabilities are concentrated among a minority, and access to public funding is constrained by bureaucratic complexity and limited administrative capacity (Tracks4Crafts, 2024).

In Greece, the underemphasis of craft history and cultural heritage in formal and non-formal curricula limits younger practitioners' ability to communicate authenticity and cultural significance — capacities increasingly critical for tourism, export, and premium market positioning. Technical gaps are concentrated in key disciplines including weaving, woodcarving, metalwork, ceramics, and decorative arts, where the ageing of master artisans and the decline of structured apprenticeship pathways create risks of technique loss that informal and family-based transmission cannot fully compensate. Digital adoption is uneven across generations and regions, with rural and older practitioners showing low engagement with e-commerce and platform management despite the sector's growing dependence on digital visibility. Business gaps are critically underdeveloped, with micro-enterprises struggling with competitive pricing, coherent branding, and access to EU and national funding despite its availability (IME GSEVEE, 2026).

In Spain, the most pressing theoretical gap lies in the failure of formal VET programmes to instil a deep understanding of the historical and cultural value of craft — producing practitioners who can execute techniques but struggle to communicate provenance and heritage in ways that resonate with contemporary consumers and premium markets. The primary technical gap is the extinction risk of traditional techniques as the master–apprentice model falters and tacit knowledge is lost; economic pressure additionally drives some practitioners to simplify

processes or substitute materials, contributing to quality decline. Digital gaps are acute among artisans over forty and those in rural areas, despite Spain's overall high national level of basic digital skills, with low adoption of advanced tools such as 3D scanning, digital modelling, and data-driven marketing limiting the sector's innovation and global competitiveness. Business skills represent the sector's weakest point: weak pricing strategies that fail to account for labour time and unique value, insufficient branding and visual identity, underuse of funding opportunities due to administrative complexity, and a culture of individualism that prevents cooperative formation and constrains capacity for internationalisation (González et al., 2023; EOI, 2015).

In Belgium, theoretical and cultural dimensions of training are present but structurally fragmented across three linguistic communities and regions, with their strongest expression in non-formal and heritage-focused settings rather than formal curricula. The symbolic recognition accorded to craft history — through UNESCO ratification and the Certified Craft label — has not translated into structural support, formal educational integration, or economic stability for heritage practitioners. Traditional techniques including joinery, plastering, roofing, sgraffito, and mosaic are at risk due to an ageing workforce, limited generational renewal, and the decline of structured apprenticeship models, with transmission now depending on individual initiative and informal networks rather than coordinated national systems. Digital adoption is primarily concentrated in communication and marketing functions, with e-commerce and production-integrated digital tools remaining marginal, and significant generational and territorial disparities limiting uptake among older and rural practitioners. Business sustainability is fragile: irregular income, limited scalability of manual production, fragmented visibility, and a decentralised and difficult-to-navigate support ecosystem leave many sole-proprietor artisans unable to access the regional and European funding schemes nominally available to them (Mad'in Europe et al., 2025a; Mad'in Europe et al., 2025b).

In Türkiye, the primary theoretical gap lies in the disconnect between technical execution and the philosophical and historical foundations of traditional crafts: training programmes — particularly in non-formal settings — prioritise the how of production while neglecting the why of symbolic meaning and cultural evolution, leading to a gradual loss of the cultural code embedded in traditional motifs and techniques (Öztürk, n.d.). The erosion of the usta-çırak relationship has created a significant void in high-level technical mastery, with complex time-intensive techniques declining as younger practitioners prioritise faster and more commercialised production methods; the transition from functional utility to souvenir production has further lowered quality thresholds, proliferating products that mimic traditional aesthetics without adhering to essential technical standards (Kahveci, 1998; Tarcan & Cox, 2019). Digital gaps are structurally hindered by a knowledge silo in which the most technically skilled masters hold the lowest levels of digital literacy, keeping valuable traditional techniques offline and invisible to global markets, while younger artisans use digital tools primarily for social media rather than for production integration, archiving, or e-commerce analytics (Efilti & Celebi, 2020; Hamzaoğlu et al., 2022). Business gaps are systemic: undervaluation of labour against industrial competition, insufficient brand identity development, and the bureaucratic inaccessibility of institutional support mechanisms such as KOSGEB grants collectively prevent the sector from transitioning toward sustainable entrepreneurship (Kaymas, 2020; Bıyık & Er, 2025).

*Craft Professionals*

In Romania, advanced technical mastery is identified as most critical for the future by 63.6% of questionnaire respondents, followed by business and entrepreneurship skills at 57.6%. When asked to identify their single strongest personal need, business skills are identified by 37.9% of respondents — the highest proportion across all competency areas. The interview data identifies specialised deep expertise, communication, and adaptability as future priorities, with one participant warning that the erosion of craft specialisation into undifferentiated generalism represents a systemic threat to craft quality. The focus group situates individual skill needs within a systemic frame, identifying national heritage infrastructure and institutional coordination as deficiencies extending beyond individual practitioner skill gaps.

In Greece, business and entrepreneurship skills were selected most frequently as critical for the future, cited by 60.0% of questionnaire respondents, followed by digital and technological skills at 53.3%. Business skills were also identified as the single strongest personal development need by 53.3% of respondents — by far the most frequently cited area, with notably zero respondents selecting technical skills as a personal need. The interview data unanimously affirms technical mastery as foundational and non-negotiable, with three of five participants additionally identifying digital communication and online presence as increasingly critical for market access.

In Spain, business and entrepreneurship skills are identified as most critical for the future by 68.8% of questionnaire respondents — the strongest single-area consensus recorded across the five countries for this competency — with digital and technological skills following closely at 62.5%. Business skills are also identified as the strongest personal development priority by 50.0% of respondents, with no respondents identifying theoretical and cultural knowledge as a personal need. The interview data reveals a distinctive structural reframing from one participant, who argued that facilitating administrative and fiscal management for artisans and achieving public recognition of the sector are more fundamental than individual competency development.

In Belgium, advanced technical mastery is identified as most critical for the future by 76.5% of questionnaire respondents — the highest figure recorded for this competency among craft professionals across the five countries — followed by business and entrepreneurship skills at 52.9%. Business skills are also identified as the strongest personal development priority by 52.9% of respondents. The interview data identifies specific dimensions of the business skills gap, including self-promotion, market visibility, and understanding of regulatory frameworks and fair competition rules, with one participant calling for systemic support through subsidies and fair remuneration for knowledge transmission activities.

In Türkiye, advanced technical mastery is identified as most critical for the future by 46.7% of questionnaire respondents, followed closely by theoretical and cultural knowledge at 40.0% —whereas in the other four countries business and entrepreneurship skills rank first (Greece, Spain) or second (Romania, Belgium) as a future priority. Distinctively, digital skills are identified as the strongest personal development priority by exactly half of respondents (50.0%), the only country in which digital skills rather than business skills represent the leading personal need among craft professionals. The interview data reveals divergent emphases: one participant prioritised technical depth and experimental innovation, while two others identified

self-promotion and marketing as the most urgent future competency, and one participant pointed specifically to persistent difficulty pricing labour-intensive, research-based work.

*Young Designers*

In Romania, communication and collaboration skills are identified as most important for future careers by 70.0% of questionnaire respondents — the highest proportion across all competency areas — followed closely by theoretical and cultural knowledge (68.3%) and technical skills (66.7%), with the top three categories separated by only 3.3 percentage points, indicating an evenly distributed view of future requirements. Business skills are identified as the strongest personal development priority by 35.0% of respondents. The interview data raises a distinctive concern around technology-induced atrophy of independent analytical reasoning, with one participant arguing that dependency on calculators and computers has diminished autonomous judgement in professional contexts.

In Greece, advanced technical mastery and business and entrepreneurship skills are identified as equally critical for future careers, each selected by 80.0% of questionnaire respondents — the highest joint figure recorded for any competency pairing among young designers across the five countries. Technical skills are also identified as the most common personal improvement need at 46.7%, while notably no respondent selected collaboration and communication skills as a personal priority. The interview data reveals that three of five participants identified business and entrepreneurship as essential for professional sustainability, with one participant expressing specific uncertainty about legal business structures, tax management, and self-employment practicalities.

In Spain, advanced technical mastery is identified as critical for future careers by 89.5% of questionnaire respondents — the highest figure recorded for this competency among young designers across the five countries. Business skills are identified as the strongest personal development priority by 36.8% of respondents, with the data noting that perceived future importance of business skills (47.4%) substantially exceeds their reported current availability in education (10.5%). The interview data confirms this gap directly, with four of five participants identifying business and entrepreneurship as a priority improvement area, and one explicitly attributing this to absent academic training.

In Belgium, advanced technical mastery is identified as important for future careers by 63.2% of questionnaire respondents, with digital and business skills following at 52.6% each. Business skills are identified as the strongest personal development priority by 68.4% of respondents — the highest such figure recorded among young designers across the five countries. All five interview participants identify communication and/or business skills as their strongest area for personal improvement, with several specifically citing digital communication, social media presence, and image editing as practical skill gaps.

In Türkiye, digital and technological skills are identified as the most critical future competency by 61.7% of questionnaire respondents — the only country in which digital skills, rather than technical mastery or business skills, rank as the top future priority among young designers. Personal development needs are distributed relatively evenly across technical (26.7%), digital (25.0%), business (23.3%), and collaboration (18.3%) skills, in marked contrast to the more

concentrated patterns observed in other countries. The interview data reveals a notably diverse and non-overlapping set of future priorities across six participants, with no shared consensus emerging — ranging from craft knowledge as a differentiator in an AI-driven economy to storytelling, problem-finding, and entrepreneurial adaptability.

***Comparative Insights***

Business and entrepreneurship skills emerge as the most consistently identified personal development priority among craft professionals across four of the five countries — Romania (37.9%), Greece (53.3%), Spain (50.0%), and Belgium (52.9%) — with Türkiye representing the sole exception, where digital skills (50.0%) outrank business skills (26.7%) as the leading personal need. This near-universal pattern among craft professionals indicates that business and entrepreneurial competence is the most widely and acutely felt individual skill gap across the partner countries, with Türkiye's distinct profile likely reflecting its craft professional sample's structural concentration in institutionally employed, formally educated teaching roles rather than independent practice.

Among young designers, business skills are similarly identified as the leading or near-leading personal development priority in Romania (35.0%), Spain (36.8%), and Belgium (68.4% — the highest figure recorded for any country or group), while in Greece technical skills lead (46.7%) and in Türkiye personal needs are distributed evenly across four domains without a single dominant priority. This divergence in the Turkish young designer data — echoing the diffuse pattern observed in their future-skill priorities — distinguishes Türkiye from the other four countries, where personal development needs cluster more tightly around one or two competency areas.

A recurring structural pattern across several countries is the divergence between the skill most highly valued for future practice and the skill identified as the strongest personal gap. In Romania, advanced technical mastery is the top future priority for craft professionals (63.6%) yet ranks behind business skills as a personal need (16.7% versus 37.9%). In Greece, technical mastery is unanimously affirmed as foundational in interviews, yet zero craft professional questionnaire respondents identify it as a personal improvement need. In Belgium, technical mastery again leads as a future priority (76.5%) while business skills dominate personal development needs (52.9%). This pattern — in which technical competence is regarded as a settled strength while business competence is experienced as the active deficit recurs across craft professionals in Romania, Greece, and Belgium, with Türkiye again the partial exception given its comparatively higher emphasis on digital rather than business needs.

Digital and technological skills show notable cross-country variation in relative weight. Among craft professionals, digital skills are identified as a leading future priority in Spain (62.5%) and Greece (53.3%), and as the dominant personal need uniquely in Türkiye (50.0%), while in Romania and Belgium they register at comparatively lower levels (28.8% and 35.3% respectively as future priorities). Among young designers, Türkiye stands out with digital skills as the single highest-ranked future competency (61.7%), a pattern not replicated in any other country, where digital skills typically rank third or fourth among future priorities.

Collaboration and communication skills receive their strongest endorsement as a future priority among young designers in Romania (70.0%) and Greece (60.0%, alongside Spain at 52.6%), yet in no country do young designers identify communication skills as their primary personal development need — in Greece, the figure is 0.0%, and in Belgium, 0.0% in survey data, though interview data in Belgium reveals communication and business concerns described jointly. This consistent gap between the high future value placed on communication skills and the near-absence of communication as a self-identified personal gap recurs across multiple countries and may indicate that respondents perceive communication competence as something to be developed alongside, rather than instead of, technical and business skills, or alternatively that respondents do not recognise communication deficits in the same direct way they recognise business or technical gaps.

The qualitative data across all five countries converges on a shared theme: business and entrepreneurial competence is consistently described, and elaborated upon in interviews, as encompassing pricing, financial management, marketing, digital visibility, and legal or administrative literacy — dimensions that respondents in Romania, Greece, Spain, Belgium, and Türkiye alike identify as inadequately addressed by current education and training provision, regardless of which group expresses the gap as most personally urgent.

### 4.4 Digitalisation & Economic Challenges

*Contextual Background*

Across the five CRAFTWISE partner countries, the relationship between digitalisation and craft practice is characterised by a shared structural tension: digital tools have become increasingly central to marketing, visibility, and market access, while their integration into production processes and business management remains limited, uneven, and strongly differentiated by generation, geography, and professional orientation. Alongside this digital landscape, craft professionals across all five countries navigate economic and business environments marked by fragmented support ecosystems, bureaucratic barriers to funding, and structural constraints inherent to small-scale manual production.

In Romania, digital adoption in the craft sector is stratified along generational lines, with older traditional craftspeople largely avoiding digital tools — perceiving them as difficult to learn and potentially compromising to craft authenticity — while younger entrepreneurial artisans use social media, e-commerce, and digital fabrication tools with greater fluency. Social media, particularly Facebook, Instagram, and increasingly TikTok, has been widely used for at least a decade for promotional purposes, though conversion rates have declined as advertising costs have risen and audience attention has fragmented. E-commerce remains underdeveloped, with offline and on-site sales predominant and many traditional craftspeople supplying third-party shops that promote their own brands without acknowledging the artisans themselves. The primary public funding mechanism accessible to craftspeople is the Start-Up Nation scheme, which offers €50,000 grants and awards bonus points to projects in craft-relevant sectors including textiles, woodwork, paper, and furniture; however, craftspeople compete for these funds against medium-sized industrial businesses without the benefit of dedicated craft status, and bureaucratic complexity, user-unfriendly procedures, and the cost of professional grant-writing services represent significant barriers to access. The only dedicated public funding

scheme — the National Programme for the Support of Crafts and Artisanship — is primarily oriented toward a national craft fair rather than structural sector development (Startupcafe, 2025; Programul, 2022).

In Greece, digital tools have become essential to communication, marketing, and sales even for traditional craft practitioners, with social media platforms — particularly Instagram, Facebook, and TikTok — serving as primary marketing channels for many small-scale artisans where physical retail or tourism-based sales are limited. E-commerce adoption is growing but uneven: some artisans operate personal websites or sell through international platforms such as Etsy, while others rely primarily on physical sales, with challenges including limited digital literacy, logistics management, and online pricing strategies. Digital tools are less frequently integrated into production processes, though sectors including jewellery design and woodworking increasingly experiment with digital design software and hybrid production methods. The creation of a national digital platform for Greek crafts under the Greece 2.0 initiative represents a significant infrastructure investment aimed at mapping the sector and facilitating networking, though its effectiveness depends on practitioners' capacity to engage with digital tools (Greece 2.0, 2023). Craft professionals can access various funding and support mechanisms through national cultural programmes, EU-funded initiatives, and entrepreneurship schemes, but awareness and accessibility remain uneven — particularly among small-scale producers, rural artisans, and older professionals — and administrative complexity in grant applications constitutes a persistent structural barrier (European Commission, 2024; IME GSEVEE, 2026).

In Spain, digitalisation has established itself as the primary driver of competitiveness in the craft sector, with marketing and commercialisation representing the domain of most radical transformation: by 2015, 62.2% of craft companies used the internet to search for business opportunities and 70% for marketing purposes, and an increasing number of artisans have adopted an approach integrating ICT, 3D printing, and digital distribution to reach global markets. The emergence of fablabs and digital fabrication laboratories has enabled artisans to experiment with new technologies and materials without prohibitive individual investment costs, while also introducing sustainability and environmental footprint considerations into craft practice. A pronounced generational divide persists: younger artisans use social media dynamically for community building, networking, and storytelling, while older professionals treat it more as a static digital storefront. The support environment for craft entrepreneurship is multi-layered but poorly understood by many artisans: public funding is available at national, regional, and local levels, but craft-specific grants have increasingly been folded into general SME support programmes, making them harder to navigate for small workshops. By 2015, only 10–23% of craft companies were aware of public or private initiatives specifically aimed at innovation, and EU grants — while highly valued — are often perceived as inaccessible due to administrative complexity (EOI, 2015; González et al., 2023).

In Belgium, digitalisation is increasingly shaping the craft sector in relation to communication and market access, but adoption remains uneven across practitioners and sub-sectors, with digital tools not systematically integrated into production processes — particularly in traditional and heritage crafts. Social media platforms, especially Instagram, have become central visibility and marketing tools, particularly among younger and design-oriented practitioners, while e-commerce remains complementary rather than dominant, with many artisans continuing to rely on physical markets and direct sales. The availability of shared infrastructures — including

fablabs such as the Fablabs Brussels network, co-working spaces such as Micro Factory, and hybrid gallery-workshop models such as NOJ, Nebel, and Hectare Galerie — provides important access to digital fabrication tools and collective market visibility, particularly for early-career professionals unable to invest in individual workshops. Significant generational and territorial disparities persist, with older and rural artisans facing limited digital skills, lack of confidence, and reduced access to training. The business support ecosystem is relatively well-developed but fragmented across three regional structures — VLAIO in Flanders, FOREM and Wallonie Entreprendre in Wallonia, and hub.brussels in Brussels — and available schemes, including Start Digital and Upskills Wallonia, are not always adapted to the specific realities of small-scale craft professionals, with awareness remaining uneven and administrative capacity a persistent barrier (Mad'in Europe et al., 2025a; Mad'in Europe et al., 2025b).

In Türkiye, the digital transformation of the craft sector is characterised by a significant divide between traditional production methods and modern marketing requirements: while digital tools remain largely absent from actual production — given that the value of traditional craft products is inherently tied to handmade authenticity — emerging research documents a shift in high-precision fields, with CNC milling, 3D scanning, and parametric modelling increasingly used in regions such as Mardin to document and reproduce complex stone motifs, and digital environments being used to expand applications of traditional arts including ebru, calligraphy, and miniature in contemporary graphics and design (Hamzaoğlu et al., 2022; Kizilaslan & Kozlu, 2021). Social media and informal social commerce through direct messaging represent the primary digital channels for independent artisans, while heritage preservation has gained a digital dimension through initiatives such as the Turkish Digital Textile Archive (TUDITA). A pronounced intergenerational digital gap exists in which older masters — who hold the highest levels of technical skill — frequently lack the digital literacy required for an online presence, while younger practitioners are adept at digital branding but may lack deep technical craft knowledge (Union of Historical Towns, n.d.; Efilti & Celebi, 2020). The business environment is supported by KOSGEB grants, the Turkish Tradesmen and Artisans Confederation (TESK), local Chambers of Artisans, and women's cooperatives, alongside the Ministry of National Education's integration of entrepreneurship and business management modules into the 2023 Traditional Arts curriculum; however, bureaucratic complexity in grant applications acts as a deterrent for sole practitioners, and a persistent communication gap between formalised institutional structures and the localised, often rural, reality of craft production constrains effective access to available support (Kaymas, 2020; MEB, 2023).

### *Craft Professionals*

In Romania, 53.0% of questionnaire respondents report digitalisation as having a mostly positive impact, with a further 27.3% reporting mixed impact — together 80.3% experiencing positive or mixed effects. The interview data shows no participant reporting negative effects, with benefits identified in communication, research, AI-assisted information retrieval, and computer-aided design efficiency, while all interviewees consistently affirm that core craft execution remains fundamentally manual. On economic challenges, irregular income is the most frequently cited barrier (58.3%), followed by pricing and market valuation difficulties (43.9%). The interview data identifies bureaucratic complexity and tax burden as dominant themes, with one participant reporting that taxes absorbed approximately half of earned revenue, and another describing

declining investment in heritage restoration as a structural demand problem rather than a skills shortage.

In Greece, 40.0% of questionnaire respondents report a mostly positive impact from digitalisation, 26.7% report no significant impact, and an equal 26.7% report mixed impact —no respondent reports a mostly negative impact. The interview data identifies social media and online platforms as having significantly improved market visibility, though two participants articulate a philosophical tension between digital culture's speed orientation and craft's inherent slowness. On economic challenges, pricing and market valuation and rising material costs are tied as the most frequently cited concerns, each at 46.7%. The interview data identifies a 24% VAT rate and significant administrative burden, with one participant noting that most craft-related grants exclude solo practitioners and that digitally focused funding mechanisms fail to address basic operational costs such as rent and insurance.

In Spain, 50.0% of questionnaire respondents report a mostly positive impact, with 37.5% reporting mixed impact — together 87.5% acknowledging digitalisation as a present and consequential force. The interview data reveals a consistent distinction between digitalisation's value for business and visibility functions and its more problematic effects on learning and craft authenticity, with one participant taking the most critical position among all five countries, viewing technologies such as 3D printing as corrosive to traditional craft authenticity. On economic challenges, pricing and market valuation and competition with mass production are tied as the most frequently identified pressures, each at 62.5% — among the highest such figures recorded across the five countries. The interview data identifies severe customer resistance to fair pricing as a systemic and emotionally straining issue, with practitioners reporting that customers frequently request discounts despite full awareness of material and time costs.

In Belgium, the largest single group of questionnaire respondents (47.1%) reports no significant impact from digitalisation — the highest such figure among the five countries — with only 23.5% reporting mostly positive impact, the lowest positive figure recorded. The interview data identifies the shift from printed catalogues to social media as introducing new professional demands disconnected from artisanal expertise, with one participant noting an unsuccessful personal attempt to learn digital drawing and expressing a deliberate preference for non-digital methods. On economic challenges, pricing and market valuation and rising material costs are jointly identified by 58.8% of respondents. The interview data identifies acute material cost inflation, citing paper price increases of up to 20% every three months, alongside the structural observation that craft businesses sell time and expertise rather than materials, a vulnerability compounded by administrative barriers and heritage preservation requirements specific to the Brussels context.

In Türkiye, 63.3% of questionnaire respondents report a mostly positive impact from digitalisation — the highest such figure among the five countries — with a further 30.0% reporting mixed impact and no respondents reporting negative impact. The interview data presents the most structurally distinct account among the five countries: all five participants emphasise that ebru's tactile, sensory-dependent practice cannot be meaningfully replicated digitally, with one participant explicitly warning that digital simulation applications replicating the visual effect of ebru without material engagement create a dangerous knowledge deficit. On economic challenges, rising material costs are by far the most acute pressure, cited by 76.7% of

respondents — the highest figure recorded for this category across all five countries. The interview data identifies teaching and institutional employment, particularly through Enstitü İstanbul İSMEK, as the only economically sustainable income model for most practitioners, with one participant stating directly that without institutional employment, ebru would generate no independent income.

*Young Designers*

In Romania, social media platforms dominate digital familiarity at 80.0%, substantially exceeding digital design software at 43.3%. The interview data reveals considerable variation by discipline, with one participant reporting comprehensive familiarity with BIM and structural analysis software while explicitly critiquing the gap between curriculum content and industry expectations, noting that an industry-standard platform expected by employers is not taught within their university programme.

In Greece, social media platforms are similarly dominant at 86.7% familiarity, with digital design software and e-commerce platforms each at 40.0%. The interview data identifies a distinctive concern around physical archive vulnerability: one participant observed that an entire workshop archive of design patterns and cutting tools, accumulated over decades, existed solely in physical form with no digital backup, representing a risk of irreversible knowledge loss not raised in any other country's data.

In Spain, digital design software and social media platforms are equally prevalent at 57.9% each. The interview data is distinctive in explicitly naming artificial intelligence tools — specifically ChatGPT and Claude — as a significant force transforming the sector, identified by one participant as part of both creative development and task automation, a theme more explicitly named here than in the other four countries' young designer interview data.

In Belgium, digital design software shows near-universal familiarity at 94.7% — the highest such figure among the five countries — with social media platforms at 78.9% and 3D modelling and digital fabrication tools at 63.2%. By contrast, e-commerce platforms are familiar to only 5.3%, and no respondents identified digital portfolio platforms as tools with which they are familiar — indicating, as in several other countries, a pronounced gap between creative-technical digital fluency and business-facing digital competency.

In Türkiye, digital design software shows the second-highest familiarity among the five countries' young designers at 75.0% (after Belgium's 94.7%), with social media platforms at 61.7% and 3D modelling and digital fabrication tools at 50.0%. The interview data confirms strong command of professional design software alongside growing engagement with AI tools, though with divergent orientations — one participant uses AI purposefully for converting technical drawings into 3D visualisations, while another expressed unease about AI increasingly replacing traditional design processes. E-commerce platform familiarity remains comparatively low at 21.7%, and the interview data identifies structural barriers — including intellectual property protection concerns, customs and logistics costs — as obstacles to digital commerce distinct from those raised in other countries.

*Comparative Insights*

Assessments of digitalisation's impact among craft professionals vary considerably across the five countries. Türkiye records the highest proportion reporting a mostly positive impact (63.3%), followed by Romania (53.0%) and Spain (50.0%), while Belgium records the lowest positive figure (23.5%) and the highest proportion reporting no significant impact (47.1%). Notably, no questionnaire respondents in Greece, Spain, Belgium, or Türkiye report a mostly negative impact from digitalisation, and in Romania this category accounts for only 3.0% (n=4) — indicating that outright rejection of digitalisation is rare across all five countries, even where adoption remains limited. Across all five countries' interview data, a consistent qualitative theme recurs: digitalisation is valued for communication, visibility, research, and market access, while core craft execution is consistently described as irreducibly manual and resistant to digital substitution — articulated most emphatically in the Turkish data regarding ebru, but echoed in Romanian, Greek, Spanish, and Belgian interview accounts alike.

Among young designers, social media platforms are the most familiar digital tool category in Romania (80.0%) and Greece (86.7%), while in Belgium and Türkiye digital design software leads (94.7% and 75.0%, respectively), and in Spain the two categories are tied (57.9% each). This divergence may reflect differences in educational orientation across countries — with Belgian and Turkish young designer samples drawing more heavily from technical and product design disciplines. A recurring pattern is the comparatively low familiarity with e-commerce platforms among young designers in Romania (3.3%), Belgium (5.3%), Spain (15.8%), and Türkiye (21.7%), with Greece (40.0%) the relative exception, indicating a cross-national gap between creative and communicative digital fluency on one hand and commercial digital capability on the other.

On economic challenges among craft professionals, rising material costs and pricing and market valuation difficulties recur as leading concerns across all five countries, though their relative ranking varies: rising material costs is the single most cited challenge in Türkiye (76.7%), while pricing and market valuation lead or tie for first place in Greece (46.7%) and Spain (62.5%, tied with competition with mass production). Irregular income is the leading concern in Romania (58.3%) and a secondary concern elsewhere. Bureaucratic and tax burden emerges as a qualitatively significant theme in the interview data from Romania, Greece, and Belgium — Romanian taxes described as absorbing approximately half of revenue, a 24% VAT rate in Greece, and administrative barriers compounded by heritage preservation requirements in Brussels — while Belgian interview data additionally document acute material cost inflation, with paper prices rising by up to 20% every three months. Across all five countries, interview data converges on the structural undervaluation of craft labour and expertise relative to time and skill invested, though the specific mechanism differs by country: insufficient compensation for restoration expertise in Romania, customer resistance to fair pricing in Spain, dependence on institutional teaching income in Türkiye, and the characterisation of craft businesses as selling time rather than materials in Belgium.

A further point of cross-national convergence concerns income diversification as a coping strategy among craft professionals: practitioners in Romania, Greece, Belgium, and Türkiye are each described in interview data as relying on supplementary income — most commonly teaching — to sustain craft practice financially, with the Turkish data presenting this most

starkly, with one participant stating that without institutional teaching employment, their craft would generate no independent income at all.

### 4.5 Future Expectations & Training Improvements

*Contextual Background*

The future expectations and training improvement priorities identified in this section are drawn primarily from primary research data collected across the five partner countries. The institutional and policy context shaping existing support mechanisms and training initiatives in each country — including formal VET frameworks, non-formal learning pathways, and sector support ecosystems — is presented in sections 4.1 and 4.4 and provides the frame within which the findings below should be read. Relevant projects and good practices identified through secondary research are addressed in section 6, where they are considered in relation to their implications for the design and delivery of the Collaborative Apprenticeship Programme.

*Craft Professionals*

In Romania, stronger business education is the most recommended concrete change, identified by 63.6% of questionnaire respondents, followed by more market-oriented projects at 59.8%. The interview data identifies Britain as a positive international model of state-invested craft and heritage training, alongside domestic community-based heritage organisations. All five interview participants emphasised practical, hands-on experience as the most critical missing element, with one proposing the extension of summer practicums from six or seven days to fifteen or twenty days.

In Greece, more market-oriented projects is the most strongly endorsed recommendation, selected by 73.3% of questionnaire respondents — the highest figure recorded for this category among the five countries. Stronger business education and more digital training are jointly ranked second at 33.3% each. The interview data identifies a recent university-Ministry of Culture collaboration programme, funded by the Recovery Fund, as a positive model that recognised weaving as a serious field of knowledge, while criticising "Digital Upgrade" funding schemes for being fundamentally misaligned with craft business needs — one participant noting that grants for laptops or cameras miss what craft businesses actually require, such as rent or insurance support.

In Spain, stronger business education and more market-oriented projects are each recommended by 56.3% of questionnaire respondents, representing the strongest consensus recorded for this question in the Spanish data. The interview data presents two distinct visions: one participant emphasises integrating management, economic, and market adaptation competencies into training, while another prioritises recovering an immersive, values-based apprenticeship model centred on cohabitation and direct experience rather than discrete skill extraction. The ADA Project at the University of Granada is identified as a positive model of direct designer-artisan co-creation, while an international apprenticeship programme linked to Homo Faber is criticised as structurally inequitable for compensating apprentices without equivalent recognition for master artisans.

In Belgium, stronger business education and more market-oriented projects are jointly the most recommended changes, each selected by 50.0% of questionnaire respondents. More digital training follows at 43.8% — notably higher than in most other countries. The interview data identifies La Cambre and institutions in Flanders and Liège as positive examples of quality training, while noting the closure of the Centre des Métiers d'Art du Hainaut due to funding constraints as a significant loss. BeCraft is identified as a positive sector support example, particularly for reducing professional isolation. A demographic shift toward adult career-changers as the primary apprenticeship population is also noted.

In Türkiye, closer collaboration with designers is by far the most widely recommended change, selected by 80.0% of questionnaire respondents — the highest figure recorded for any single recommendation across all five countries and a markedly different priority profile from the other four countries, where business education and market-oriented projects dominate. More market-oriented projects follows at 46.7%. The interview data reveals a distinctive and consistent emphasis on reframing craft as a livelihood and economic activity rather than a hobby, with three participants independently proposing the application of craft techniques to contemporary commercial products such as scarves, leather goods, and jewellery as a pathway to economic viability.

***Young Designers***

In Romania, 45.0% of questionnaire respondents view crafts primarily as a creative or experimental pursuit, 33.3% as offering both stability and creativity, and 8.3% as a stable professional career. The interview data points to economic concerns, with one participant identifying structural barriers including a shift in architectural fashion away from craft-intensive detail and the dominance of prefabricated industrial construction elements as threats to long-term craft career viability.

In Greece, 40.0% of questionnaire respondents view crafts as offering stable professional careers, with a further 26.7% seeing it as combining stability and creativity —while 26.7% view it primarily as a creative or experimental path. Project-based collaboration is the most strongly endorsed collaboration structure, at 86.7%. The interview data reveals coexisting optimism and realism, with two participants articulating an integrated vision of craft as simultaneously professional and creative, while three others prioritise the creative dimension while expressing significant uncertainty about long-term economic viability.

In Spain, 63.2% of questionnaire respondents view crafts as offering both stability and creativity, while 21.1% view it primarily as a creative or experimental path and 15.8% are uncertain; no respondent selected stable professional career alone. Joint hands-on workshops are the most preferred collaboration structure at 68.4%. The interview data is more cautious than the questionnaire suggests, with three participants describing craftsmanship as creatively fulfilling but economically precarious, though two others identify emerging market opportunities arising from technological saturation and the advancement of artificial intelligence — a theme not raised in this form in the other four countries.

In Belgium, 47.4% of questionnaire respondents view craft primarily as a creative or experimental path, 42.1% see it as offering both stability and creativity, 5.3% see it mainly as a

stable professional career, and 10.5% express no interest in craft as a career. Project-based collaboration is the most preferred structure at 68.4%, while long-term apprenticeship receives the lowest endorsement among the five countries at 26.3%. The interview data identifies competition from mass production and fast fashion as a significant structural challenge, with two participants proposing hybrid professional models combining craft with other income-generating activities.

In Türkiye, 58.3% of questionnaire respondents view crafts as offering both stability and creativity, 28.3% primarily as a creative or experimental path, and 6.7% mainly as a stable professional career, while 3.3% express no interest and 3.3% are uncertain. Collaboration preferences are notably distributed across multiple models without a dominant single structure, with project-based collaboration leading narrowly at 66.7%. The interview data reveals that five of six participants reject a binary view of craft as either a stable career or creative path, though two acknowledge that financial viability requires integration with industry or other disciplines.

***Comparative Insights***

Recommendations for concrete training improvements among craft professionals diverge most sharply in Türkiye, where collaboration with designers (80.0%) dominates by a wide margin over business education (33.3%) — the inverse of the pattern in Romania, Greece, Spain, and Belgium, where business education and market-oriented projects consistently rank as the top one or two priorities. This suggests that Turkish craft professionals, whose sample is structurally concentrated in institutional teaching roles rather than independent practice, experience the absence of design partnership as a more pressing barrier than business skills development — a pattern distinct from the other four countries' more uniformly commercial framing of training gaps.

Young designers' perceptions of craft as a career path vary substantially across the five countries. In every country, the largest or second-largest share of respondents falls into either the 'both stability and creativity' or the 'creative or experimental path' category, while the proportion viewing craft mainly as a stable professional career remains below 10% everywhere except Greece (40.0%). This variation does not appear to correlate straightforwardly with the structural profile of each country's craft professional sector — for instance, in Türkiye, where the craft professional sector is heavily institutionally dependent for income (section 4.4), 58.3% of young designers view craft as offering both stability and creativity.

On collaboration structures, project-based collaboration is the most or near-most preferred model among young designers in four of the five countries — Greece (86.7%), Spain (57.9%, second to joint workshops), Belgium (68.4%), and Türkiye (66.7%) — with Romania also recording strong support (70.0%). Long-term apprenticeship receives the lowest or joint-lowest endorsement among young designers in Belgium (26.3%), Spain (31.6%, jointly with mentorship), Türkiye (36.7%), and Greece (53.3%, jointly with three other structures), while in Romania (53.3%) it ranks above equal co-creation partnerships (43.3%), suggesting a cross-national preference among young designers for shorter, more flexible collaborative formats over sustained traditional apprenticeship structures. This stands in some tension with craft professional interview data in Romania and Spain, where participants explicitly advocate for immersive, prolonged, values-based learning models — indicating a structural divergence in

preferred collaboration duration between craft professionals and young designers that recurs across multiple national contexts.

The qualitative data converge on bidirectional and reciprocal collaboration as the ideal model across all five countries: Romanian focus group data emphasises collegial rather than hierarchical relationships; Greek interview data include a young designer describing collaboration as an interactive process in which experienced professionals and younger practitioners learn from each other; Spanish interview participants describe collaboration as mutually enriching, with designers developing craft understanding while artisans gain digital competency; Belgian focus group data identifies the principle that "the artisan is also a designer"; and Turkish interview participants propose reverse mentorship, with young designers facilitating contemporary tool sessions for craft professionals. This consistent preference for bidirectional rather than unidirectional knowledge transfer represents one of the more robust cross-national findings in this section.

A distinctive finding from Türkiye, not replicated elsewhere, is the explicit emphasis — raised independently by craft professional interview participants — on demonstrating clear commercial pathways and applying craft techniques to contemporary products as a strategy for both attracting new learners and sustaining existing practitioners, reflecting the structural economic pressures on Turkish craft professionals' income documented in section 4.4.

### 4.6 Self-Assessment Insights

#### *Craft Professionals*

Across all five countries, craft professionals consistently rate practical technical mastery as their strongest self-assessed competency. In Romania, the mean is 4.02; in Greece, 3.87; in Spain, 3.75; in Belgium, 4.18; and in Türkiye, 4.70 — the highest figure recorded for this domain among the five countries, with 96.7% of Turkish respondents rating themselves at Advanced or Expert level. Theoretical and cultural knowledge consistently occupies a secondary position of strength across four of the five countries, with means of 3.33 in Romania, 3.27 in Greece, 3.44 in Spain, and 3.76 in Belgium; Türkiye records the highest figure for this domain as well, at 4.27.

Business competence is the lowest-rated domain among craft professionals in four of the five countries: 2.50 in Romania, 2.73 in Greece, 2.38 in Spain, and 2.88 in Belgium. Türkiye departs notably from this pattern, recording a comparatively higher business competence mean of 3.60, though still with considerable internal variation and a notable minority scoring at the lowest levels. In four of the five countries, digital tool proficiency ranks above business competence but below technical and cultural knowledge — Romania (3.00), Greece (2.93), Spain (2.88), and Belgium (2.94) — while in Türkiye, digital proficiency is distinctively the weakest domain at 3.23, lower than business competence, the only country in which this ordering occurs.

#### *Young Designers*

Among young designers, practical technical mastery is the highest-rated domain in three of the five countries — Romania (2.62), Greece (3.47), and Belgium (3.53) — while Spain (3.11) and Türkiye (3.48) record their highest ratings in digital competence. Spain stands apart structurally:

digital competence (3.32) is the highest-rated domain for Spanish young designers, exceeding practical mastery, a pattern also observed in Türkiye, where digital tool proficiency (3.58) is the single highest-rated domain across all four competencies and the only domain in which Turkish young designers outscore Turkish craft professionals.

Business competence is, without exception, the lowest-rated domain among young designers across all five countries: 1.87 in Romania — the lowest figure recorded across any country or group — 2.40 in Greece, 2.47 in Spain, 1.89 in Belgium, and 2.50 in Türkiye. The proportion of respondents reporting no knowledge or only basic awareness in business competence is substantial in every country: 80.0% in Romania, 78.9% in Belgium, 57.9% in Spain, 53.3% in Greece, and 53.3% in Türkiye.

***Comparative Insights***

Business competence emerges as the single most consistent finding across this section: it is the lowest-rated self-assessed domain among young designers in all five countries without exception, and among craft professionals in four of the five countries, with Türkiye as the sole exception where digital proficiency, rather than business competence, registers as the weakest domain. This near-universal pattern directly corroborates the qualitative and quantitative findings reported in section 4.3, 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.

A structural divergence exists between craft professionals and young designers in the relationship between digital and technical competence. Young designers report higher digital competence means than craft professionals in Spain (3.32 versus 2.88), Belgium (3.26 versus 2.94), and Türkiye (3.58 versus 3.23), while craft professionals score higher in Romania (3.00 versus 2.53) and Greece (2.93 versus 2.53). In Spain and Türkiye, young designers' digital competence also exceeds their own technical mastery. This indicates that the relationship between generational digital fluency and professional technical depth is not uniform across the five countries: in some national contexts (Belgium, Spain, Türkiye) younger respondents demonstrate a genuine digital advantage over older practitioners, while in others (Romania, Greece) the gap between the two groups in digital competence is narrower or reversed, suggesting that digital competence is not simply a function of age cohort but is mediated by national educational context and disciplinary background.

The gap between craft professionals' and young designers' self-assessed practical technical mastery is substantial in every country, ranging from 0.40 points in Greece (3.87 versus 3.47) — the narrowest gap — to 1.40 points in Romania (4.02 versus 2.62) — the widest gap recorded This consistent direction of the gap, with craft professionals always outscoring young designers in practical mastery, reflects accumulated professional experience as a determinant of self-assessed technical confidence across all five national contexts, though the magnitude of the gap varies considerably.

In theoretical and cultural knowledge, craft professionals outscore young designers in every country where comparable data exists, with gaps ranging from 0.60 points in Greece to 0.86 points in Spain (3.44 versus 2.58), with Belgium at 0.81 and Türkiye at 0.72 points, indicating

that this gap, like the technical mastery gap, is a consistent cross-national pattern rather than a country-specific finding.

Across all five countries, a recurring structural observation connects the self-assessment data to the skill needs findings reported in section 4.3: among craft professionals in every country, the domain rated lowest in self-assessment — business competence for four of the five countries, and digital competence for Türkiye among craft professionals — corresponds directly to the domain most frequently identified as a personal development priority in the questionnaire and interview data. This alignment between self-perceived competence and expressed training demand holds for craft professionals in all five countries and for young designers in Romania, Spain, and Belgium, reinforcing that the gaps identified throughout this report are not merely externally observed deficiencies but are also recognised and actively reported by respondents themselves. Among young designers in Greece and Türkiye, however, technical skills lead as the personal development priority (46.7% and 26.7% respectively) 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 across both target groups. In section 4.2, business skills were the most frequently cited missing training element among craft professionals in Romania (68.2%) and Greece (66.7%), and the leading programme shortcoming in Spain (68.8%) and Belgium (66.7%, jointly with communication and collaboration skills), while in Türkiye digital skills led on both measures (60.0% and 56.7%). In section 4.3, business skills were confirmed as the leading personal development priority among craft professionals in four of five countries. In section 4.6, business competence was the lowest self-assessed domain among young designers in all five countries without exception, and among craft professionals in four of five countries. 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 emerges as a defining feature of how craft knowledge is acquired, though its relative weight against formal education varies by country (section 4.1). Romania, Greece, and Spain show self-taught learning as the dominant pathway among craft professionals (65.9%, 60.0%, and 81.3% respectively), while Belgium and Türkiye show formal higher education as the dominant pathway (52.9% and 90.0%). Despite this divergence, interview data across all five countries converges on a shared finding: even where formal education predominates, practitioners consistently describe it as insufficient on its own, requiring supplementation through apprenticeship, shared workshop practice, or sustained self-directed development.

A persistent gap between high reported exposure to traditional crafts and the depth or structural integration of that exposure recurs across young designer data in all four countries with high reported exposure (section 4.1). Questionnaire data in Greece, Spain, Belgium, and Türkiye show craft exposure rates between 89.5% and 98.3%, yet interview data in each of these

countries reveals participants who report no meaningful craft content within their formal education despite this high questionnaire-level exposure. This pattern — high reported exposure quantitatively, contradicted or complicated qualitatively — is one of the more robust cross-national findings in section 4.1.

Practical, hands-on, and experiential learning is valued above theoretical instruction across all five countries and both target groups, documented consistently in sections 4.1, 4.2, and 4.5. Interview participants in every country identify workshop-based practice, mentorship, and direct material engagement as more professionally formative than classroom-based instruction, and this preference is echoed in the consistent demand across all five countries for more market-oriented, practice-based training (section 4.5).

This preference concerns the mode of learning rather than its content: questionnaire data in section 4.2 show theoretical and cultural knowledge as the most valued training element among craft professionals in Romania, Spain, and Türkiye and among young designers in Romania and Türkiye, indicating that a preference for practice-based learning formats coexists with a high valuation of theoretical and cultural content.

The relationship between craft professionals and young designers shows a consistent complementary structure across self-assessment data (section 4.6): craft professionals outscore young designers in practical technical mastery in every country, and in theoretical and cultural knowledge in every country for which comparable data are reported, while young designers demonstrate comparable or superior digital competence in several countries (Spain, Belgium, Türkiye). This complementarity is echoed qualitatively in every country's interview and focus group data, where participants from both groups independently describe an ideal future collaboration as reciprocal and bidirectional rather than hierarchical.

### Meaningful Differences

Türkiye's craft professional sample is structurally distinct from the other four countries in a way that shapes its findings throughout sections 4.1 through 4.6. With 90.0% of Turkish craft professionals having entered through university education and 90.0% reporting institutional employment, with 86.7% identifying public institutions as their primary working environment (predominantly within Enstitü İstanbul İSMEK), this sample reflects an employed teaching workforce within a public education network rather than independent practitioners. This structural difference accounts for Türkiye's divergence from the other four countries 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 across the five countries, with no questionnaire respondents recorded under 35 and 88.2% reporting 11 or more years of experience; Spain's sample is the youngest and least experienced, with 43.8% in the 25–34 bracket and 75% reporting fewer than ten years of experience. This divergence shapes

differing priorities: Belgian craft professional interview data emphasises institutional and infrastructural concerns, including funding cuts and the shift toward adult career-changer learner populations, while Spanish data reflects greater diversity of entry pathways and a stronger emphasis on the absence of formally recognised training infrastructure for many craft specialties.

Young designers' perceived viability of craft as a career path varies substantially and does not correlate in any simple way with the structural conditions of each country's craft sector. For example, in Türkiye, where the craft professional sector is the most institutionally dependent for income among the five countries, 58.3% of young designers view craft as offering both stability and creativity, while in Belgium 10.5% of young designers express no interest in craft as a career.

The role of family transmission in craft knowledge acquisition diverges sharply by country (section 4.1). It is present at meaningful levels among craft professionals in Romania (29.5%) and Greece (20.0%), recorded at a lower level in Spain (18.8%), and entirely absent from the quantitative data in both Belgium and Türkiye — indicating that the erosion or absence of family-based transmission is not a uniform phenomenon across the partner countries but is concentrated in two specific national contexts.

### 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 and collaboration skills rank among the top three future-skill priorities for young designers (70.0%, 60.0%, and 52.6% respectively), yet in no country do young designers identify communication as their primary personal need — in Greece, the figure for this is 0.0%. This pattern suggests either that respondents perceive communication competence as something to be developed in parallel with, rather than as a discrete gap alongside, technical and business skills, or that current assessment instruments are not capturing a dimension of communication competence that respondents themselves experience as lacking. This pattern is reported here as a descriptive observation in the data rather than a resolved finding.

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

A contradiction is evident in the relationship between long-term apprenticeship as a formally selected learning pathway and its qualitative significance in practitioner accounts (section 4.1, section 4.5). Traditional apprenticeship is selected at comparatively low rates by craft professionals across all five countries (ranging from 11.8% in Belgium to 40.0% in Greece), and young designers rank long-term apprenticeship as their least or joint-least preferred future collaboration structure in four of the five countries (ranging from 26.3% in Belgium to 53.3% in Greece), with Romania the exception (53.3%, ahead of equal co-creation partnerships at 43.3%). Yet in every country's interview data, apprenticeship-style relationships — whether formally named or described as shared workshop practice, mentorship, or master-apprentice training — are identified as among the most valued and formative learning experiences. This divergence between low formal selection and high qualitative valuation suggests that respondents may be reacting against the term "apprenticeship" or its traditional connotations (extended duration, hierarchical structure, limited compensation) rather than against the underlying practice of sustained, mentored, hands-on learning itself — though this interpretation extends beyond what the data directly states.

# 6. Implications for CAP (Collaborative Apprenticeship Program)

## Curriculum Priorities

The convergence of primary research findings across sections 4.2, 4.3, and 4.6, corroborated by desk-based skills gap analysis from all five partner countries, points to four curriculum priorities for the CAP, ordered here by the consistency and urgency with which they are identified across both data sources.

### Business and Entrepreneurial Competence

Business and entrepreneurial skills represent the single most consistently documented gap across the entire CRAFTWISE dataset. In primary research, business competence is the lowest self-assessed domain among young designers in all five countries (section 4.6) and the leading personal development priority among craft professionals in four of five countries (section 4.3). In secondary research, desk-based skills gap analysis from all five partner countries independently identifies business skills encompassing pricing, branding, market positioning, and funding access —as a critical structural deficit in their respective craft sectors. Secondary research recommendations from Romania, Spain, Belgium, and Türkiye each flag business and entrepreneurial competence as the priority theme requiring deepest investigation in primary research, with Romania specifically identifying the gap between cultural value and economic sustainability, Spain highlighting the market paradox between institutional discourse promoting luxury segments and the micro-enterprise reality of most workshops, and Belgium identifying professional sustainability and the transition from education to employment as central concerns.

The CAP should treat business and entrepreneurial training not as a supplementary module but as a core curriculum component integrated throughout the programme. Specifically, the curriculum should address value-based pricing — distinguishing it from cost-based pricing, which several secondary sources identify as the dominant but insufficient approach (Türkiye: MEB, 2023; Spain: EOI, 2015); brand identity and storytelling, identified across Romania, Greece, Spain, Belgium, and Türkiye as a competency gap (in Romania, branding capabilities

are described as concentrated among a minority of practitioners); and funding navigation, with particular attention to reducing the administrative barriers that consistently prevent craft practitioners from accessing available support mechanisms across all five countries.

Relevant good practices for this curriculum domain include the Crafting Europe iAtelier programme (Spain), which explicitly bridges craft practice with business and digital entrepreneurship training; the CRAFTS+ Erasmus+ project (Greece), which developed tailored business modelling and branding curricula for ceramic micro-enterprises; and the CRAFTOUR initiative (Belgium/EU), whose Innovative Business Models pillar provides directly applicable frameworks for partnerships between artisans and design companies, luxury brands, and cultural institutions, including model contracts addressing fair remuneration, credit, and authorship — dimensions identified as critically absent across multiple national contexts.

**Digital and Technological Competence**

Digital competence emerges as a significant and structurally embedded gap across all five countries, though its character and urgency vary by national context. Secondary research from all five countries documents a consistent pattern: digital tools are adopted primarily for social media and promotional purposes, while their integration into production workflows, e-commerce, and strategic business development remains limited. The desk-based analyses from Romania, Greece, Spain, Belgium, and Türkiye each identify a pronounced generational digital divide, with older craft professionals demonstrating the lowest digital literacy — in Türkiye framed explicitly as a knowledge silo in which the most technically skilled masters hold the least digital fluency (Union of Historical Towns, n.d.; Efilti & Celebi, 2020). Spain's secondary research specifically calls for the primary research to distinguish between passive digital use and active digital entrepreneurship, a distinction that primary research findings in section 4.4 broadly corroborate, with interview data across multiple countries describing social media adoption that is high in frequency but low in strategic effectiveness.

The CAP curriculum should address digital competence across three distinct dimensions: digital marketing and visibility, encompassing social media strategy, personal brand development, and platform management; e-commerce and digital sales, with particular attention to the gap between creative and communicative digital fluency on one hand and commercial digital capability on the other documented in four of the five countries (section 4.4); and digital tools for production and documentation, including — where relevant — digital fabrication, archiving, and design software, recognising that this dimension is more advanced and discipline-specific than the marketing dimension. Türkiye's secondary research highlights the importance of addressing how digital technologies coexist with manual production rather than displacing it, a principle that should inform the pedagogical framing of digital content across all five partner countries.

Relevant good practices include the DigitARTE programme (Spain/Ministry of Culture), which delivers targeted digital skills training for cultural and creative professionals including artisans, with specific provision for practitioners over forty and those in rural areas; Enstitü İstanbul İSMEK's hybrid model combining face-to-face craft training with asynchronous online theoretical modules (Türkiye), demonstrating how digital delivery can extend reach without displacing hands-on learning; and the fablab infrastructure in Belgium (Fablabs Brussels, Micro

Factory), which provides shared access to digital fabrication tools within collaborative production environments.

**Technical Mastery and Knowledge Transmission**

Technical mastery is consistently identified across primary research as the area of greatest self-assessed strength among craft professionals in all five countries (section 4.6), and as the most valued training element in Greece and Belgium (section 4.2). However, secondary research from all five countries identifies significant vulnerabilities in technical skill 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 and more commercialised production methods; and the risk of disappearance facing heritage-specific crafts in Belgium, including sgraffito, joinery, and architectural restoration trades. Spain's secondary research specifically calls for investigation into the informal substitutes currently replacing the master–apprentice model and their effectiveness in preserving tacit knowledge, a question that primary research interview data across multiple countries touches on without fully resolving.

The CAP should address technical transmission not as a uniform curriculum component but as a discipline-specific and context-sensitive dimension, recognising that: the depth of technical mastery required for professional practice exceeds what short-format programmes can deliver (documented in interview data from Greece, Spain, and Türkiye); the most valued technical learning experiences across all five countries involve sustained, embodied, hands-on practice in authentic workshop environments rather than classroom-based instruction; and the CAP's collaborative structure — pairing craft professionals with young designers — creates a natural mechanism for technical knowledge transfer provided that sufficient contact time and workshop access are built into programme design.

Relevant good practices include the summer camp model sustained by Transylvania Trust, Pro Patrimonio, and Bunești School in Romania — intensive, one-week apprenticeship-model programmes embedded in active restoration projects, representing some of the most practice-grounded provision in the Romanian landscape; the Stemnitsa Gold and Silversmithing School (Greece), whose staff are largely alumni ensuring continuity of traditional metalwork knowledge within a formal certification framework; and the MINDCRAFTS project (Belgium/Mad'in Europe), whose hands-on learning-by-doing workshops demonstrated strong youth engagement and confirmed the superiority of practical over digital-only approaches in stimulating craft interest.

**Theoretical and Cultural Knowledge**

Theoretical and cultural knowledge is consistently identified across primary research as the most valued training element among craft professionals in three of five countries (section 4.2) and the element most frequently considered worth preserving. However, secondary research from all five countries identifies a structural gap between the symbolic recognition of craft heritage and its systematic pedagogical operationalisation: craft history is implicitly valued but structurally undervalued in formal curricula across Romania, Greece, Spain, and Belgium, while in Türkiye the disconnect between technical execution and the philosophical and historical foundations of traditional crafts is identified as a primary theoretical gap (Öztürk, n.d.; Kahveci, 1998).

Türkiye's secondary research specifically identifies the loss of the cultural code embedded in traditional motifs and techniques as a consequence of training programmes that prioritise the how of production over the why (Öztürk, n.d.)

The CAP should integrate theoretical and cultural content not as a separate module but as a dimension woven through technical and collaborative learning — contextualising craft techniques within their historical evolution, regional specificity, and cultural meaning. This framing serves both transmission and market positioning functions: as secondary research from Greece and Spain notes, the ability to communicate provenance, cultural significance, and heritage value is increasingly critical for premium market access, tourism, and export. The CRAFTOUR initiative's Understanding and Valorisation pillar provides a directly relevant framework, documenting the discourse on craft and design history and the boundary between cultural appropriation and cultural appreciation — dimensions that should inform the ethical and intellectual foundations of the CAP curriculum.

### Craft Professionals and Young Designers Relationship

The comparative findings across sections 4.1 through 4.6, corroborated by secondary research from all five partner countries, point toward a structurally complementary rather than hierarchical relationship between craft professionals and young designers as the appropriate model for the CAP.

Primary research self-assessment data (section 4.6) documents a consistent pattern across all five countries: craft professionals outscore young designers in practical technical mastery in all five countries and in theoretical and cultural knowledge wherever comparable data are reported, while young designers demonstrate comparable or superior digital competence in Spain, Belgium, and Türkiye. This complementarity — technical and cultural depth on one side, digital fluency and contemporary design orientation on the other — is consistently documented across the dataset and provides the empirical basis for a reciprocal collaboration model. Interview and focus group data across all five countries independently arrive at the same conclusion: participants from both groups describe ideal future collaboration as bidirectional and mutually enriching rather than unidirectional, with Romanian focus group data emphasising collegial rather than hierarchical relationships, Greek interview data describing mutual learning between experienced and younger practitioners, Spanish interview data describing mutual learning, Belgian focus group data articulating the principle that the artisan is also a designer, and Turkish interview data proposing reverse mentorship in which young designers facilitate digital tool sessions for craft professionals (section 4.5).

However, the self-assessment data also reveals a shared weakness that the collaboration model between craft professionals and young designers alone cannot address: business competence is the lowest-rated domain among young designers in every country and among craft professionals in four of the five, with Türkiye the exception. Neither craft professionals nor young designers are well positioned to independently manage the pricing, financial planning, marketing, and commercial navigation that sustainable creative careers require. This finding — consistent across primary research (sections 4.3, 4.6) and secondary research — indicates that business competency development must be explicitly embedded in the CAP as a shared learning objective

for both participant groups, rather than assumed as background knowledge that either brings to the collaboration.

The CAP should also account for the structural barriers to effective collaboration between craft professionals and young designers identified across multiple national contexts. Romania's primary research identifies access opacity — young designers not knowing who relevant craft experts are or how to contact them — as a foundational precondition for collaboration that must be addressed before any programme can function. Türkiye's focus group data identifies the need for intermediary figures who understand both traditional knowledge and contemporary design as a structural necessity rather than an optional facilitation role, and emphasises that young designers must acquire genuine foundational knowledge of a craft before attempting to collaborate with masters. Spain's interview data stresses the importance of in-person, direct engagement as foundational to effective collaboration, with one participant explicitly arguing that online formats diminish effectiveness through limitations on direct contact. These nationally specific barriers suggest that the CAP's collaboration framework should include structured onboarding mechanisms, facilitated introduction pathways, and sufficient in-person contact time — rather than assuming that proximity alone will bridge the generational, disciplinary, and communicative gaps between the two participant groups.

Young designers' collaboration structure preferences (section 4.5) consistently favour project-based and workshop-based formats over long-term traditional apprenticeship across all five countries, with long-term apprenticeship recording the lowest or joint-lowest endorsement in four of the five countries. This stands in some tension with craft professionals' interview data in Romania and Spain, where participants explicitly advocate for immersive, prolonged, values-based learning. The CAP should navigate this tension by structuring collaboration around discrete, outcome-oriented projects with built-in mentorship touchpoints — providing the relational continuity that craft professionals identify as necessary for meaningful knowledge transfer, while accommodating the format preferences and time constraints of young designer participants.

### Country-Specific Considerations

In Romania, the CAP must account for the absence of a dedicated legal framework for craft, which leaves practitioners without formal professional status and creates structural informality that shapes both their economic behaviour and their engagement with training programmes. The scale of the Romanian craft professional questionnaire sample — 132 respondents, nearly two-thirds of the combined five-country total — reflects the breadth of the Romanian craft sector, but this scale coexists with extreme fragmentation: no standardised training pathways, limited professional networks, and a documented tendency for practitioners to operate in isolation. Secondary research specifically flags the need to interpret primary research findings through the lens of structural factors including institutional fragmentation, mass migration disrupting knowledge transfer, low domestic purchasing power, and policy ambiguity positioning crafts between culture and SME policy. The CAP in Romania should therefore prioritise access and visibility — connecting isolated practitioners with structured learning and collaborative opportunities — alongside the business and technical curriculum priorities identified above. The young designer cohort's orientation toward craft as primarily a creative or experimental path (45.0%, with 8.3% viewing it mainly as a stable professional career, section

4.5) suggests that CAP implementation in Romania will need to address economic viability concerns directly and demonstrably to sustain youth engagement beyond initial participation.

In Greece, the CAP must account for the absence of formal educational pathways for most craft disciplines and the concentration of the primary research sample in Athens, which limits the geographic representativeness of the findings. The focus group's exclusive composition from the shoemaking and footwear sector introduces a disciplinary narrowing that should be borne in mind when applying focus group findings to CAP design across other disciplines. Greece's secondary research identifies the inability to communicate cultural significance and authenticity as a particularly acute gap in the Greek context — given the country's strong cultural tourism sector and the premium market potential of Greek craft heritage — suggesting that the theoretical and cultural knowledge curriculum priority has specific commercial relevance in the Greek national context beyond its general educational value. The fact that 40.0% of young designers in Greece view craft mainly as a stable professional career, with a further 26.7% seeing it as combining stability and creativity (section 4.5), suggests a motivational context in which CAP engagement can build on existing perceptions of craft's career viability.

In Spain, the CAP must navigate the regional fragmentation inherent to the seventeen Autonomous Communities' governance of craft regulation, certification, and support, a structural feature flagged explicitly in Spain's secondary research as requiring interpretation through a regional lens. The youngest and least experienced craft professional sample among the five countries (43.8% in the 25–34 age bracket, 75% with fewer than ten years of experience) suggests a craft professional cohort that may be closer in career stage to young designers than in other partner countries, with implications for how the relationship between craft professionals and young designers is structured and facilitated. The widest disciplinary range of any partner country's craft professional sample (16 distinct fields) presents both an opportunity for diverse cross-disciplinary collaboration and a challenge for designing curriculum content that is relevant across highly heterogeneous craft practices. Spain's secondary research additionally flags the rural–urban divide, the contrast between artisans in España vaciada facing logistics and connectivity constraints and design-oriented makers in Madrid or Barcelona — as a nationally specific contextual factor that should shape how CAP delivery is structured and accessed.

In Belgium, the CAP must account for the decentralised governance structure across three linguistic communities, which produces uneven access to training provision and support mechanisms depending on region and language. The most senior craft professional cohort among the five countries — no respondents under 35, 88.2% with 11 or more years of experience — combined with a young designer cohort in which 47.4% view craft primarily as a creative or experimental path and 10.5% express no interest in craft as a career (section 4.5) creates a specific motivational challenge for CAP design in Belgium: engaging a senior, experienced craft professional cohort with a young designer cohort of mixed enthusiasm will require careful framing of the mutual value proposition. The documented closure of established training institutions, including the Institut Diderot and the Centre des Métiers d'Art du Hainaut, indicates that the CAP enters a context of reduced institutional capacity, in which it may partially compensate for lost provision rather than simply complementing existing infrastructure. Belgium's secondary research identifies the transition from education to employment and the conditions enabling effective intergenerational transmission as the priority analytical themes,

suggesting that CAP design should explicitly address post-programme pathways and professional integration, not only the apprenticeship experience itself.

In Türkiye, the CAP must account for the structurally distinct craft professional sample, 90.0% institutionally employed and 86.7% working primarily within public institutions such as Enstitü İstanbul İSMEK, which means that Turkish craft professional participants are predominantly employed educators within a municipal public system rather than independent practitioners. This structural difference has direct implications for how the CAP positions itself relative to existing public provision: it should complement rather than replicate the institutional training already delivered through Enstitü İstanbul İSMEK and Halk Eğitim networks, focusing on dimensions those systems do not currently address — particularly designer collaboration, commercial market access, and bidirectional knowledge exchange. Türkiye's secondary research highlights three nationally specific considerations: the significant role of municipalities and lifelong learning institutions in craft education; the tension between cultural heritage preservation and market-driven pressures on traditional crafts; and the multi-layered learning ecosystem combining formal education, non-formal municipal programmes, and workshop-based learning that should be taken into account when designing CAP delivery. The strong prioritisation of designer collaboration over all other reform priorities among Turkish craft professionals (80.0%, section 4.5) — the highest single recommendation figure recorded across all five countries — indicates strong existing motivation for CAP participation among this group, and suggests that framing the CAP around creative partnership and co-production may resonate particularly strongly in the Turkish context.

## 7. Conclusion

This report has synthesised the findings of the comparative primary and secondary research conducted within WP2 of the CRAFTWISE project across Romania, Türkiye, Greece, Spain, and Belgium. The research was implemented in three sequential phases between November 2025 and August 2026. It combined country-specific desk research with questionnaires, interviews, and focus groups involving craft professionals and young designers. Secondary research findings were integrated as contextual background for each thematic section. The purpose of the research was to establish an evidence base for the design of the Collaborative Apprenticeship Programme. To that end, it examined existing training pathways, strengths and gaps in current provision, skill needs across four competency domains, and expectations regarding the future of craft training and collaboration.

The most robust finding of the research concerns business and entrepreneurial competence. It is the lowest self-assessed domain among young designers in all five countries and among craft professionals in four of five. It is also the leading personal development priority among craft professionals in four of five countries. Desk-based skills gap analysis from all five partner countries independently identifies it as a critical structural deficit in the craft sector. This convergence across data sources, countries, and respondent groups establishes business competence as a gap that neither group is currently equipped to address on its own.

A second consistent pattern concerns how craft knowledge is acquired and valued. Participants in all five countries identify practical, hands-on, and mentored learning as more formative than classroom-based instruction. Where formal education is the dominant entry pathway,

practitioners nonetheless describe it as insufficient without supplementation through workshop practice, apprenticeship, or self-directed development. This preference concerns the mode of learning rather than its content: theoretical and cultural knowledge remains among the most valued training elements in several countries. Among young designers, high questionnaire-level exposure to traditional crafts is complicated, in four of the five countries, by interview accounts describing little meaningful craft content within formal education.

The relationship between craft professionals and young designers is structurally complementary. Craft professionals outscore young designers in practical technical mastery in every country, and in theoretical and cultural knowledge wherever comparable data are reported. Young designers demonstrate comparable or superior digital competence in Spain, Belgium, and Türkiye. Participants from both groups describe an ideal future collaboration as reciprocal rather than hierarchical. This complementarity provides the empirical basis for a bidirectional collaboration model.

These shared patterns coexist with meaningful national differences. The Turkish craft professional sample consists predominantly of educators employed within a public institutional network rather than independent practitioners, which shapes its divergence on several measures. The Belgian and Spanish craft professional samples occupy opposite ends of the generational and experiential spectrum. The role of family transmission in craft knowledge acquisition also varies sharply by country. Several tensions in the data remain unresolved. Communication and collaboration skills are highly ranked as future competencies yet rarely identified by young designers as a personal need. Certain skills are simultaneously valued in existing training and reported as missing from it. Apprenticeship is selected at comparatively low rates by craft professionals as a formal learning pathway, and long-term apprenticeship receives limited support among young designers as a collaboration structure, while apprenticeship-style relationships are consistently described as among the most formative learning experiences. These tensions are reported as open questions rather than resolved findings.

Taken together, these findings translate into four curriculum priorities for the Collaborative Apprenticeship Programme. The first is business and entrepreneurial competence, treated as a core component integrated throughout the programme. The second is digital and technological competence across marketing, commercial, and production dimensions. The third is technical mastery and knowledge transmission, designed as a discipline-specific and context-sensitive dimension. The fourth is theoretical and cultural knowledge, woven through technical and collaborative learning. The findings further indicate that the relationship between craft professionals and young designers should be structured through facilitated onboarding, sufficient in-person contact, and discrete, project-based collaboration with built-in mentorship. Business competence should be a shared learning objective for both groups. Implementation will also need to respond to the distinct institutional, regulatory, and demographic conditions of each partner country.

The findings should be read in light of the limitations set out in section 2.5. Sample sizes vary considerably, and the Romanian craft professional questionnaire sample carries disproportionate weight in any aggregated reading. Questionnaire samples also show a pronounced female majority , several national samples are geographically concentrated, and the craft domains represented differ substantially across countries.

The findings of this report will be carried forward into Training Work Package (WP3), where they will inform the structure and content of the Collaborative Apprenticeship Programme's training modules. The report will be translated into partner languages and disseminated to policymakers, educators, vocational training providers, and craft networks, supporting the transferability of the research beyond the partnership. The research has also produced a transferable methodological resource: the AI-supported Analysis Guideline and the Research Analysis Assistant and National Report Assistant developed by PUHU Research enabled partners with varying research backgrounds to conduct structured analysis of qualitative data, and may be adapted for comparable multi-country research. By grounding programme design in the documented needs of both craft professionals and young designers, the research aims to ensure that CRAFTWISE delivers an apprenticeship model that is relevant, sustainable, and adaptable across different European craft contexts.

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### Additional Resources

- Bokrijk Vaklab — https://www.bokrijk.be
- Museum of Old Techniques (MOT) — https://www.mot.be
- Fablabs Brussels — https://fablabs.brussels
- hub.brussels — https://hub.brussels
- VLAIO — https://www.vlaio.be
- Wallonie Entreprendre — https://www.wallonie-entreprendre.be
- IFAPME. Catalogue des formations qualifiantes. https://www.ifapme.be
- Le Forem. Formations pour apprendre un métier. https://www.leforem.be