

Ukraine Creative Spark Policy Forum 2020: summaries of key statements*

**The British Council in Ukraine is publishing summaries of key statements made by the Forum speakers. These statements do not necessarily reflect the British Council's own views on the subject.*

On state regulations

Importance of intersectoral interaction. The Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports of Ukraine, the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine, the Ministry for Development of Economy, Trade and Agriculture of Ukraine, and the Ministry for Communities and Territories Development of Ukraine – these are the institutions regulating the creative industries in various different aspects. Currently, their actions are often not synchronized. The development of business competences for the creative industries in higher education inevitably includes different policy areas: education, SME development, innovation, regional development, etc.

Ministries are not intended to manage the artistic process. They create the enabling landscape / infrastructure for its development. They are supposed to make state policy which will help arts infrastructure development. Good creative products with high added value is almost always the result of synergies among different players.

Support programmes for creative entrepreneurs do exist. Ukrainian entrepreneurs have obtained the opportunity of low-interest rate return for loans; this programme is unofficially called “5-7-9%”. Besides, the Small and Medium Business Development Office (SMEDO) is creating branches in different regions of Ukraine where it conducts trainings on drafting documents, developing business plans and attracting available financing.

Professionals are needed locally. In 2020, the strategy for regional development to 2027 is to be adopted; besides, 2020 is also the year when the decentralisation programme is due to finish. Communities need people who stimulate business. Universities have to train such people. There is recognition of this need already: some communities already invite students in economics for internships. Communities need experts taking care of economic development, forming strategy, developing business and cooperation between different businesses. Once they have strong entrepreneurial skills, creative industries experts can be such professionals. Heads of communities are responsible for launching economic stimulation processes.

On higher education

Focus on encouraging universities. The overcoming of obstacles in higher education, which prevented the development of business competences in the creative industries, started in 2014. The main achievement as of today is the dropping of the old standards and the establishment of new ones, which are more flexible and which do more than just define the limits. The next step would be encouraging and rewarding those universities who are more efficient and whose graduates are more successful in the labour market.

A framework approach to mastering business competences in the creative industries envisages the availability of several components: educational policy in general and higher education policy in particular, as well as regional development and export promotion policies. A framework approach does not provide step-by-step instructions for the development of the creative industries, rather it only provides clear indicators to be achieved.

Universities should prepare students in line with market needs. Universities are an important link in the creative industries development, yet the quality of education needs to be improved. Universities' graduates do not understand the market specifics and what is necessary to be a high-demand professional. Universities are not driven by students' employability potential. One of the reasons is the lack of high-quality management capability within many universities.

Students need an entrepreneurial mindset and the understanding of how to apply it. There are three main pillars of improving students' competences: creativity, actionability and available resources. This framework is a landmark for people interested in learning and skills development which can contribute to formatting a business-oriented mindset. Staff development is key. Professors have to inspire and be role models combining sectoral expertise with an entrepreneurial mindset.

Lack of practitioners and too much theory. Universities face two main challenges. Firstly, up to now, most academics do not have any connection with business themselves. Only a person with significant practical experience should teach. Currently universities lack such professionals from the market. Secondly, the most efficient method of learning in the creative industries is by developing real projects. In Ukrainian universities, the lecture format still prevails. Universities overseas have changed their specialisation from research institutions to universities creating start-ups and generating new projects. This is how students should learn – by doing.

Professors should be selected by independent commissions based on work efficiency. This way selection will be based not on sympathies but competition. Academics need to have a solid connection with the market and be practitioners. Furthermore, the Head of Department needs to be an elected position, and this role should be taken by academic leaders who are willing to initiate the creation of external partnerships and new programmes.

Arts and creative education needs better connections with business. The development of joint programmes, involving market professionals working with

students, learning by doing, etc. We need new policies defining who should develop joint and new programmes, how they should do it and with the use of which resources.

On (non) business

Creation of professional associations. To create a framework for mastering business competences in the creative industries, professional associations have to exist. Members of these associations will be able to provide recommendations on the type of experts lacking in the market and the skills needed. This will be a respective request for the education system.

Evaluation of impact. After the creative industries' ecosystem is formed and universities start to prepare graduates based on the market needs, there will be a need to evaluate such programmes. Evaluation will demonstrate to which extent business competences can help graduates release their potential and whether business skills impact on the income level of graduates in the future.

There are **four main intervention models** for the support of entrepreneurship and small business culture for the creative industries:

- Trainings and practical experience (training sessions, practice sessions, internships, mentoring)
- Competitions and awards (prizes, micro-competitions, student awards)
- Incubation services (business incubators, innovation centres at universities)
- Partnerships and joint programmes (experience exchange between universities, partnerships with business, international cooperation).

Lack of managerial skills in the creative industries and short-term planning. Art for the sake of art, and not for profit. Ukrainian Cultural Foundation (UCF) grantees often do not understand management language, and tend towards cultural short-term projects only. Grantees do not see the prospect of growing into a long-term organisation with a sustainable business model. According to the UCF statistics, a significant number of its grantees are non-for-profit organisations. They think only in terms of short-term projects, not strategically and not long-term.

Three key conclusions of the Forum:

- It is essential to enhance the capacity of the creative industries through skills development, practice and the setting-up of ecosystems to connect universities and business.
- Proactive approaches are needed (at leadership levels): higher education management has to create new programmes, explore market and business needs, invite experienced professionals to share their knowledge with their students. A framework approach to defining competences allows this.
- Unity of form and content: in order to form policy we need to understand the problem and have a vision for development. Only after relevant research can we try offering a solution. A policy by itself is not self-sufficient, implementation of that policy is also needed.