

Ukraine Creative Spark Policy Forum 2021:

Summary of Key Statements

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Higher education challenges in creative industries development

Opposition of real-world requirements and universal values. The dilemma known in Ukraine for 100 years now, since the Ukrainian Arts Academy was established (Vasyl Krychevsky, Mykhaylo Boychuk), is how to combine requirements of dynamic real world, employers' practices, and values to be conveyed by higher education (especially in arts). Higher education reform increases the shift towards practicalities and satisfaction of market requirements. Higher education is responsible for audiences development, i.e., gaining more art products consumers, developing taste and critical thinking, so education has to switch to long-term mode to become a sort of general practitioner in medicine and to stay ahead.

Financial autonomy. Higher education establishments (HEIs) obtained academic and human resources and (partially) organizational freedom, but the lack of financial autonomy still limits them. The remuneration the universities can propose is not competitive at the labor market, which makes it impossible to engage practitioners. Some universities solve this issue through interaction with business in the framework of the latter's social responsibility. Ministry of Education (MoE) understands the challenge and works to overcome it; providing financial autonomy for universities is a priority for higher education department. At the same time, the academic community is careful about financial autonomy which develops into harmful conservatism (e.g., the petition of Rectors' Association to come back to typical staffing plans in 2021).

Standards. Only in 2014, with the adoption of the new Law on Higher Education in Ukraine, we switched to standards which do not dictate education content but instead define competences and learning outcomes. However, even in these conditions the process of preparing and approving standards is so lengthy that the standards are already outdated at the moment of the approval. We need to learn to forecast competences, which will be in demand in five to ten years. British universities use an assumption that when students complete their studies, 30 per cent of jobs will be new, i.e. presently non-existent. In Ukraine it is advisable to more actively use international standards instead of own developments. The UK has minimal standards; instead, employment and income level of graduates are important indicators. During the following regulatory cycle in the UK more attention will be directed towards the quality of separate courses, not even study programs. Different education establishments should research practices in different ways – i.e., through innovations and different means of creating education content – and form a competitive educational space.

Opposition of formal and informal education. Higher education should expand the menu of educational products, e.g., offer non-degree programs of different duration and professional level. Informal and formal education should cooperate and ensure transitions during the study pathway. The flexibility of means and formats to provide education is also a relevant issue for British universities.

Data and data-driven decisions. The UK has a high match between education and employment: universities dispose of data about graduates' employment and income level (the standards require that graduates land a job within 15 months after the completion of studies). This became the result of higher education reform which tied university financing to these indicators and deepened cooperation with employers. The UK has a Centre of Data-Driven Policies and Decisions for Creative Industries. Data collection and analysis uncovered the importance of freelance work for creative industries and longer time needed to find a job – up to 3.5 years after the completion of studies.

Intersectoral cooperation. Education quality and population literacy depends on harmonization of different sectors and parts of the educational system; the UK has a practice of University Civic Agenda. Neither creative industries nor educational establishments in Ukraine are institutionally used to constant intersectoral communication, which is especially vital for creative industries where demand for competences quickly changes; presently these are mostly non-overlapping worlds.

Higher education instruments for creative industries development

Favorable national and regional policies. In the framework of industrial policy on creative industries development, UK government financed regional cluster programs with the key roles played by universities (consortium leaders); this encouraged deeper cooperation of universities with industries, formation of triple and quadruple spirals. In Ukraine, Ministry for Regional Development introduced Innovational Economy and Investments programs and establishment of creative economy centers; it finances the creation of a network of entrepreneurship support hubs where universities already participate but there is still significant potential to expand their cooperation. Several regions defined creative industries as their smart specialization and launched respective financing programs. For example, in 2021 Lviv region financed for the first time university projects in the framework of innovational technical development program (15 million UAH). At the same time, in Ukraine these programs and initiatives are still isolated practices; there is a lack of continuity and long-term focus of policy instruments (permanent programs, three- and five-year projects, etc.), unlike in the UK. Ukraine lacks systemic data collection and analysis in digital format to find out about the needs of creative industries (e.g., demand for qualified experts).

Dialogue platforms, partnerships and networks. In the UK, higher education reform and government industrial policy encouraged the emergence of clusters and constant dialogue between universities and industries. In Ukraine, there is no recognized platform or an annual forum to discuss common problems and to form a common vision between education and creative industries. Due to the lack of capable and representative business associations in creative industries there is a demand for other forms of dialogue platforms and instruments to find out the demand for experts and competences, standards development, etc. Employers don't have the rights and opportunities to influence education content. There is a demand for practical platforms for education community to discuss tools, support opportunities, etc. In 2021, Ukrainian State Arts Agency established a communication platform for social dialogue in arts education (vocational, pre-university, university) and film industry; a roadmap was developed to update professional and education standards, to form an education pathway for a future expert; gaps were identified in supply and demand in different professions in the industry.

Acceleration of reform in higher education and industries cooperation. As of November 2021, Ukraine has 181 professional standards; at the same time, the register of professions contains over 9,000 items. The establishment of National Qualifications Agency accelerated the reform; trainings are conducted for professional standards and dialogue platforms developers; qualification centers are established; and capacities to develop professional and

educational standards are enhanced (at the same time, there are challenges with standards, see above). There is a lack of overlaps between professional community (creative industries) and higher education (universities); there are a few leaders (Ukrainian State Arts Agency) creating these overlaps but there is a need for actionable business association (Office for Entrepreneurship and Export development can play a role) and awareness-raising among creative industries employers. Working groups at the Council of Creative Industries can also serve as such meeting point.

Professional development of teachers. The pandemic-associated digital breakthrough opened many new opportunities for learning among both students and teachers. Cooperation with international partners and the industry in the framework of regional clusters is important and widespread in the UK to expand the experience of teachers and to form interdisciplinary and interinstitutional collaborations.

Integration of practitioners in the learning process. Despite the lack of financial resources Ukrainian universities find opportunities to involve practitioners as regular guest speakers in the framework of dual education programs or as part of new formats, e.g., Indie Lab (film production lab for young cinematographers in Karpenko-Karyi Kyiv National University of Theatre, Cinema and Television). The UK has examples when 50 per cent of teachers are practitioners teaching specialized skills and competences (production, innovative techniques, etc.) and business (copyright, commercialization, etc.).

Development of business and entrepreneurial competences among students. Programs for developing entrepreneurial competences become more popular; universities involve entrepreneurship departments for teaching students in arts and other specializations close to creative industries (Kyiv National University of Technologies and Design), develop own selective disciplines (Poltava University of Economy and Trade), establish Centers for Creative Entrepreneurship Development (Semen Kuznets Kharkiv National University, Ukrainian Engineering and Pedagogic Academy) and innovative ecosystems (Tech StartUp School at Lvivska Politehnika). YEP!Incubator developed an academic course on entrepreneurship already taught in 85 universities all over Ukraine; the course was attended by over 7,000 students and delivered by 150 teachers who are provided opportunities for professional development and exchange of practices. The study component content of Diia.Business project implemented by Office for Development of Entrepreneurship and Export can also be used by universities for educational needs.

University Civic Agenda. UK has a widespread practice of developing university civic agendas defining the university's role in the development of community and society in general. In Ukraine, universities should also be involved in reforms, e.g., the reforms of providing cultural services and establishing Centers for Cultural Services in communities. To do this, it is necessary to analyze and develop audiences, understand the role of Centers, to develop and adapt services, which is a possible niche for an active role of universities in cooperation with communities. In Ukraine, there are examples of civic agendas among universities: Ukrainian Catholic University (Lviv) introduced a certification program "Culture Practitioners Workshop" for adults with work experience in the field of culture; Kharkiv State University of Design and Arts has an active cultural space of eco-posters "Fourth Block"; in Rivne, National University of Water Economy and Nature Use hosts a cooperation platform "Space" which, inter alia, held five festivals of creative industries open for local community.

Three main takeaways of the Forum:

- **HEIs need financial autonomy** for better cooperation with employers, development of new programs and engaging practitioners in teaching. The lack of financial autonomy deters innovations and lowers the competitiveness of universities, making

the proactive role of higher education in development of industries (not only creative ones) impossible.

- **National policy and reform for interaction of labor market and higher education are needed.** These are sustainable dialogue platforms between universities and industries, systemic development and renewal of professional and educational standards, data on supply and demand for experts and competences, etc. instead of the current self-regulating system. We need systemic architecture – from institutions responsible for forming demand from employers, speedy study programs reform and analysis of qualification gaps to the processes of intersectoral dialogue, financing programs to transform HEIs and separate study programs, etc.
- **HEIs should be more actively engaged in regional and local programs for creative industries development.** Authorities, especially in the regions, started implementing policies for development of creative industries and involving universities in their implementation; however, the amount of such programs is insignificant and the role of universities, limited. Universities can have a more active influence on policies and programs design and play a bigger role in their implementation through establishing creative hubs, strengthening entrepreneurial competences, reforming and launching new study programs, etc.