

Cultural Skills research summary

Examining the cultural skills gaps and shortages in the Western Balkans

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About this report

The purpose of this report is to present an overview of the skills gaps and shortages of the cultural sector across the Western Balkans: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia. The research project was commissioned and funded by local British Council teams and the UK-based Cultural Skills team. The research was carried out over a six-month period using mixed methods: desk-based research, semi-structured interviews with cultural professionals, and online surveys with professionals and students. The participants were selected from a wide-ranging database of contacts of the local British Council staff and the research team's extensive network.

This report starts with a general overview of the Western Balkans and the cultural sector across the region. It gives an overview of cultural policy, along with key players of the cultural and cultural education sectors in each of the six countries. It goes on to identify the main skills gaps and shortages across the sub-sectors. The primary aim of this report is to provide evidence-based recommendations for the Cultural Skills team and the local British Council teams to introduce additional programmes in the region that would help overcome the challenges uncovered by this research. The report also outlines the list of potential partners, and special considerations that should be accounted for when devising and implementing such programmes.

It is important to acknowledge that this research project is limited due to time constraints and subject to uncertainties beyond the control of the authors. It provides insights into skills gaps and shortages in the cultural sector in only a handful of cities in each country across a number of sub-sectors. It does not, therefore, provide a comprehensive overview of the cultural and higher education sectors in the entire region, nor of each of the cities. The findings from this research should be used to support the development of new skills training programmes. This should be in close consultation with UK and Western Balkan experts as well as with potential partners and possible co-investors. Colleagues from the British Council in the region will also be involved in this process.

Acknowledgements

We would like to show our sincere gratitude to the experts and teams from each country involved in the research, for their wonderful collaboration and valuable contribution. They dedicated their time and have shared their knowledge, expertise, competences and links with us.

This research would not have been possible to conduct, without the kind support and help of many individuals, professionals, representatives from organisations and young people that willingly took part of it. We would like to extend our sincere thanks to all of them.

Foreword

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Following a turbulent history since the Second World War, the six countries that make up the Western Balkans region; Albania,

Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia, are not only geographically close to one another, they also share the same aim of working towards accession into the European Union. While it is not reasonable to view these six countries as one individual bloc, it can prove efficient to work across the six countries to address shared challenges and draw upon shared opportunities. This is particularly clear in the cultural sector, where all six countries face similar challenges in developing the sector as a competitive industry.

This research enables us to better understand the nuances of the cultural sector across these six culturally diverse countries and understand how to address common

challenges both sensitively and effectively. The Cultural Skills team strengthens cultural relations between the UK and the rest of the world through sharing knowledge and developing mutual benefit. With UK and international partners we build sustainable cultural skills programmes that develop the skills of those practitioners and institutions across the whole of the UK and internationally, supporting the artistic, social and economic benefits of a thriving and dynamic cultural sector.

The research provides clear guidance on where UK expertise could be valuable to the cultural sector in the Western Balkans in order to help develop international connections, share learning and experiences, and ultimately enhance the cultural sector and creative industries more widely.



Simon T Dancey
Director, Cultural Skills team



Introduction and overview

The main aim of the cultural skills research in the Western Balkans is to identify skills gaps and shortages that affect the arts and creative industries in the Western Balkans countries, to better inform the development of new programmes and partnerships.

The objectives of the research project in the Western Balkans include:

- Provide a contextual overview of the Western Balkans' cultural and creative sector landscape (cultural policy, funding, growth, etc.), its cultural-education landscape (availability of technical arts training, apprenticeships, continuing professional development courses, etc.) and its socio-economic landscape.
- Recognise and identify the professional shortages in the cultural and creative sector.
- Identify the cross-sectoral and technical skills gaps in the sector.
- Identify the current offer of educational and skills training for the sector.
- Identify potential partners and co-investors.
- Identify and propose the most relevant business model for future programming.
- Identify areas of potential impact by the British Council from professionals in the field.
- Provide recommendations on programme structure, topics and target audience.

This research was initiated by the Cultural Skills team from the British Council and was undertaken by the Performing Arts Centre Multimedia in Skopje. It was conducted across six countries in the Western Balkans:

Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia, with a team of experts from the countries involved. Each country involved had a team that included experts (responsible for writing the country report) and researchers (responsible for collecting data and carrying out the analysis).

The methodology used for the research was proposed by the British Council's Cultural Skills team and further discussed and contextualised for the Western Balkans countries, together with the main experts involved. It included desk research in each country, six focus groups with young people (an average of 20 per group, one group per country, mostly students from different educational programmes within the cultural and creative sector), 282 semi-structured interviews conducted with professionals and experts from different fields: crafts, gaming and animation, film, theatre, dance, fashion, design, architecture, heritage and museums; visual arts, music and festivals, literature and publishing. It also included an online survey, which was completed by 511 professionals across the region.

One of the limitations of the research was the number of responses from the online surveys. The researchers aimed to collect a minimum of 100 responses per country, but in four countries (Albania, Kosovo, Macedonia and Serbia), the final number of responses is under 100.

The research explores four or five identified major cities and areas in each country. The research covered:

Albania: Tirana, Gjirokastra, Shkodra, and Durres

Bosnia and Herzegovina: Sarajevo, Banja Luka, Tuzla, Zenica and Mostar

Kosovo: Prishtina, Prizren, Mitrovica, and Gjakova

Macedonia: Skopje/Kumanovo, Bitola/Ohrid, Stip/Strumica and Tetovo/Gostivar

Montenegro: Podgorica/Cetinje, Niksic, Kotor/Boka Kotorska and Pljevlja/Bijelo Polje

Serbia: Belgrade, Novi Sad/Subotica, Nis and Kragujevac.

While time constraints and practicalities have made it impossible to cover every profession and sub-sector, each of the researchers has worked to incorporate a range of voices from different levels, including government policy through to individuals from private and not-for-profit organisations, and across a range of artistic disciplines.

This research provides illustrative and informative insights into emerging skills gaps and shortages and a general overview of the situation in the cultural and educational field, as well as identifying the potential strategic and delivery partners and possible co-investors for future programme development. The research gives a wider picture of the cultural and creative sector in the Western Balkans and could contribute to better understanding of the skills gaps and shortages across the sector in this region.

Introduction to the region

The term Western Balkans covers six countries which are in the process of accession to the European Union. Of the six countries where this research took place, five are former republics of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, and so developed under very similar general social conditions. Albania, the only country covered by this research which was not part of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, was under communist regime until the transition in 1991. Yugoslavia was one of the founders and leaders of the Non-Aligned Movement, meaning that the five countries which made up Yugoslavia were for several decades under the equal influence of the West and the East of the politically divided world. This legacy, together with the formation of sovereign countries followed by wars and severe crisis, means that the Western Balkans is still considered to be 'a powder keg' of Europe, with many differing political and religious ideologies within the region.

As for the region's economic situation in general, around one-third of the population lives in poverty and there is great discrepancy in the development of capital cities, cities in general, and the rest of the region. Economic growth among the Western Balkans countries reflects two distinct growth patterns. On the one hand, the economies of Serbia and Albania, which account for over half of the region's gross domestic product (GDP), experienced steady acceleration as sustained fiscal consolidation efforts and structural reforms led to a rebound in private consumption and investment, helping to boost Serbian exports. On the other hand, growth slowed in Kosovo, Macedonia and Montenegro as private investment softened due to political uncertainty in Macedonia, and external imbalances regarding import and export costs widened in Montenegro. Meanwhile, with relatively slower progress in structural reforms in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the region's second-largest economy is growing steadily, with low import prices supporting consumer growth.

Despite variability in growth rates across the region, the economies of all six countries have continued to grow since 2015. Table 1 shows the annual percentage GDP growth for all six Western Balkans countries, and for the UK, for comparison. This economic growth has created more jobs, and coupled with lower commodity prices, is helping to reduce poverty. While unemployment remains high across the region by comparison to other countries, levels fell in all countries except Montenegro, where unemployment levels rose.¹ Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo and Macedonia are the countries with the highest unemployment rates, at 25 per cent, 28 per cent and 24 per cent, respectively. Albania consistently has the lowest unemployment rate at 14 per cent, although this is still far short of the five per cent unemployment rate recorded in the UK.²

The external deficit narrowed in Serbia, thanks to recent private sector-friendly reforms that spurred exports in a range of areas. At the same time, the external deficit widened in Montenegro and Albania. There, large infrastructure projects supported growth, but the related expansion in capital goods imports combined with low commodity prices exacerbated external imbalances. For the first time since the global financial crisis, the average public debt-to-GDP ratio in the Western Balkans stabilised. Public revenues grew in most countries. Serbia and Albania continued consolidating expenditures. In some countries, revenue gains in 2016 were partially offset by discretionary increases in wages and social benefits.

Table 1: Annual percentage GDP growth (2013–2016)

	2013	2014	2015	2016
Albania	1.1	1.8	2.6	3.5
Bosnia and Herzegovina	2.4	1.1	3.0	2.0
Kosovo	3.4	1.2	4.1	3.4
Macedonia	2.9	3.6	3.8	2.4
Montenegro	3.5	1.8	3.4	2.5
Serbia	2.6	-1.8	0.8	2.8
United Kingdom	1.9	3.1	2.2	1.8

Source: World Bank, Databank Jobs. Available online at: <http://databank.worldbank.org/data/reports.aspx?source=Jobs>

1 Data and information related to the economic situation in the region is taken from the World Bank Group's Western Balkans Regular Economic Report (spring 2017). Available online at: www.worldbank.org/en/region/eca/publication/western-balkans-regular-economic-report

2 World Bank, Databank Jobs. Available online at: <http://databank.worldbank.org/data/reports.aspx?source=Jobs>

To grasp the complexity of the Western Balkans' cultural sector, we should be aware of its historical layers; from prehistory, antique civilisations, old and living religions, empires, through to the present-day states with various political solutions – all having their own issues with ideology and violence and an accurate expression in the cultural life of the region. We must also understand its horizontal structure, whereby the sector is strongly divided by the three large groups of interests into public, private and civil. The public cultural sector, highly influenced by the wider political landscape, suffers from the frequent shifts in this landscape (represented through the boards of public institutions) and the absence of clear performance standards and evaluation of its human resources.

Private companies exist only in big cities and the development of this sector revolves around the regulation of mergers and acquisitions of companies. Although the creative industries are not new to the region, they tend not to be categorised as 'cultural operators'. That is why many organisations, for example in the areas of animation, gaming, design, crafts and fashion, do not perceive themselves, and are not perceived by others, as having a cultural mission.

These organisations are also not perceived as being strong contributors to the economy. Finally, due to the change in international support after the official beginning of political transition, and the weak culture of individual and corporate philanthropy, the civil sector is persistent in its striving for secure public funding. As for research and development activities dedicated to the cultural sector as a whole, they exist on the levels of policy and management to some extent, but not on the level of professional practice.

The educational co-operation between the UK and the Western Balkans countries could start from the fact that these peoples belong to the same culture and share many common worldviews, but use different languages. While over one billion of the world's population can communicate in English to some extent, only around 30 million can communicate in Bosnian, Montenegrin and Serbian (which are extremely similar), two million can communicate in Macedonian, and less than eight million in Albanian. That would make a population of around 40 million people globally who communicate in these three languages. The language situation is explained to provide a better understanding of communication issues within the region.

Key findings

The general findings from the research highlight the lack of qualified individuals in the cultural and creative sector in the Western Balkans. The findings also recognise a need for better-quality higher education for young people who wish to enter the cultural and creative sector in the future, as well as a need to upgrade the knowledge and experience of professionals working in the cultural and creative sector in the region. This section explores findings common to all six countries, followed by a focus on each of the six countries in more detail.

Preparedness for work

When asked about the preparedness for work of young people, the majority of the participants in all six countries think that graduates are not well prepared for professional engagement in the cultural sector. According to the respondents, young people coming to work in the cultural sector at entry-level positions do not have the necessary qualifications to perform technical roles (stage technicians, exhibition designers, etc.), academic or creative roles, or business support roles (marketing, business development, etc.). At the same time, the majority of respondents also believe that senior professionals working in the cultural sector suffer from a shortage of suitable qualifications, skills or experience.

The findings from the focus groups in all six countries support the findings from the online survey; young participants believe that there is a lack of qualified human resources in the cultural and creative sector.

They feel they have no possibility of getting a place to work to their full potential and even those studying in artistic disciplines do not feel that a career in the cultural sector would be valued by wider society. The roles that are available are not seen as financially secure and, as such, they have no motivation to stay in the region. This leads to brain drain, due to the entire political, economic, and socio-cultural situation in the Western Balkans region. In all countries young people believe that they need to go abroad to gain professional experience, so they gain exposure to alternative and new working practices and processes. They would also like to have better education (basic) and to have a chance to upgrade it, to be more skilful in different fields, such as entrepreneurship and business management, finance, strategic planning, communication skills, etc. The most important issue is that the young people see their new skills as integral to keeping their professional status sustainable and respectable.

It is worth mentioning that when senior professionals were asked about young people and their skills in semi-structured interviews, most of them thought that young people should be primarily trained in technical skills, while current professionals should be trained in cross-sectoral skills. On the other hand, when young people were asked about senior professionals, all of them believed that they need technical and cross-sectoral skills, but also English language proficiency. While English language is commonly taught across the region today, the young people involved in this research identified it as a barrier among the older generation who may not have learned English, or may not have put their knowledge into practice and therefore lack confidence. This barrier not only limits their ability to develop an international network and collaborate internationally, but also restricts their attendance at international training programmes and seminars which are delivered in English and even means they may be unable to access many online resources.

Among the reasons given for a lack of qualified individuals in the cultural and creative sector in the Western Balkans, respondents pointed to a mismatch between educational provision and sector requirements. While educational programmes do

exist across the region, the research indicated that these programmes were not delivered to the standard required. Programmes also neglected to incorporate sufficient practical knowledge, meaning that graduates have theoretical knowledge but little understanding of how to put it into practice, and respondents indicated that critical or creative thinking is not a focus in these programmes. There is a need for better-quality higher education, with opportunities to upgrade knowledge and experience in different forms such as through specialisation short courses, as well as the possibility of gaining practical experience (sharing international best practices and expertise). All of this is needed in both cross-sectoral and technical skills.

Exposure to international best practice has often been highlighted as an important missing area, especially among young people who took part in the research. There are not many programmes or opportunities for young people or senior professionals in the sector to learn about best practice around the world, to enhance their standards, or reach an international level for creative production and quality. One of the obstacles to this could be a shortage in English language proficiency, especially among senior professionals, as detailed previously.

Skills gaps and shortages

A cross-analysis of the skill gaps and shortages across the six countries reveals some common problems and areas for future focus.

It is a significant finding that at all levels of research, the majority of respondents (students, young people and professionals/experts) from all fields and ages agree that there is a great shortage of qualified and skilled professionals in the cultural and creative sector across all six countries. Skill gaps and shortages are wide-ranging, and a combination of cross-sectoral and technical skills are needed and missing in the sector. Within the cultural and creative sector, education is defined as an area requiring investment, followed by cultural heritage, museums, music, film, theatre, cultural events, and animation and gaming.

Cross-sectoral skills

When respondents in all countries were asked what kinds of cross-sectoral skills are missing from the cultural sector, the findings identified the following: English language, policy development, general cultural management (including event management and marketing), strategic planning, critical thinking and critical writing, audience development and audience engagement, entrepreneurial and business skills (including proposal writing and income generation).

Strategic planning: Most of the professionals interviewed in all six countries emphasised that there is not a strategic approach in the cultural and creative sector. Practices are focused on short-term rather than longer-term goals. Public cultural policies, as well as cultural organisations, are lacking in a thorough analysis that would reveal the real needs, problems and deficiencies. Some of the interviewees recognised this research as an example of the analysis needed to further develop strategic plans in culture. Emphasis should be on developing strategic planning skills, providing continuity in the cultural sector's practices and reducing ad hoc activities.

Audience development: Audience development outlines what should be undertaken to meet the needs of existing audiences and to attract new audiences. It is also important to underline the need to link arts and audience, something which is currently missing in the Western Balkans. The need for audience development is important for all segments of the cultural sector, particularly public cultural institutions which face a big problem of attendance of their cultural offer.

Critical thinking and writing: According to the results from the research, critical thinking and writing skills are lacking in all areas of the cultural sector. Critics' reviews tend to be positive and complimentary rather than offering real, freely expressed opinions. Thus, most

of those interviewed feel that short programmes led by international experts in critical thinking and creative writing could take place in the region. These skills are considered highly needed when considering the political, social and cultural climate in Macedonia in the past ten years, where freedom of expression and freedom of media were hardly visible.

Entrepreneurial and business skills:

The majority of the respondents consider that all the areas of the cultural sector (education, cultural heritage, museums, theatre, performing arts, visual arts, etc.) are lacking entrepreneurial and business skills. None of the respondents had received training covering the subject of entrepreneurship and business in relation to culture and creativity. Almost all young people agreed that there is a shortage of resources to support the study of culture and business. All respondents emphasised the need for such training as a way to further develop and enhance the sector.

General cultural management (including event management and marketing): Almost all respondents agree that there is a need for skills, knowledge and exchange of good practice and experience in this particular field. Individuals working in the cultural sector, including those in managerial positions, lack these skills as they were not covered during their education. Some respondents agree on the need for cultural event management development training. Respondents from the public sector

state that they need additional marketing training, since the institutions they work in do not have clear marketing strategies. Young people also expressed an interest in these kinds of skills to increase their competency in the global market.

Technical skills

Respondents in all six countries think that there is a lack of professional and qualified technical staff in all subsectors. While most technical workers operating in the cultural sector are highly experienced, almost all of them lack professional education, since technical education is hard to come by in the region. Respondents highlighted that both technical education and hands-on experience were essential to keep up to date with processes and equipment.

The most necessary are:

Engineering skills – lighting and sound design: Professionals in these fields are mainly self-taught and do not have specific education and experience. Some cultural institutions or private companies (for example those involved in film and theatre productions) have to hire foreign professionals. There are only a few opportunities in the Western Balkans for formal education in this particular field, so very few individuals get the opportunity to receive training in these skills. Professionals who already have some technical skills could reap significant benefits from additional training to further develop their skills.

Restoration, conservation and protection:

When it comes to cultural heritage and museums, the lack of these skills is particularly visible. There are no specialist education programmes or adequate training programmes to supplement formal educational programmes. The cultural heritage and museums field lacks experts when it comes to the quality of restoration, conservation, etc. The cultural sector in all countries involved really needs a strategic approach to creating these skills through promoting specialisation in the subject at regional or international universities, or through organising short training programmes.

Custodian and curatorial activity:

According to the respondents, innovative ideas, although limited, were more likely to be generated among a more age-diverse group within the cultural institutions. Respondents also feel there are insufficient options to exchange information, best practice and new trends within cultural institutions with colleagues from other countries. Within cultural institutions, the age profile of individuals has been recognised as contributing greatly to the lack of innovation in the curatorial sector, and that should be further examined.

Across the six countries, there were numerous common skills gaps, particularly in relation to cross-sectoral skills gaps and the need for enhanced technical training programmes at entry level. However, nuances in the specific needs were identified in each country, and these are discussed in the next section.



Country-specific findings

Albania

The most common skills gaps identified in Albania focused on cross-sectoral skills needed (at both entry level, and in continued professional development). These include: project proposal writing and reporting, organisational management, management of cultural events, festival management, digital marketing and networking, business planning and development, fundraising and advocacy. There was also a strong focus on the need to enhance digital skills across the sector, in particular for digital marketing and the development of new digital cultural products/ services. Research participants suggested that training programmes should cover activities in developing an engaged audience via virtual platforms such as social networks and websites.

In addition, technical skills are needed, such as lighting design, exhibition curating, sound engineering, post-production film activities for those who want to enter specific areas and be adequately prepared for work. These programmes should therefore be aimed at young people who are either working in entry-level positions within the sector or those who are looking towards gaining employment in the sector in the future.

Bosnia and Herzegovina

The research in Bosnia and Herzegovina highlighted a particular need for entry-level training

programmes to be enhanced to better support individuals who are new to working in the cultural sector. A carefully designed and carried-out educational programme that would supplement the existing formal system of education for culture would reinvigorate and strengthen the cultural and creative sectors in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Research participants identified that regardless of a specific skill or area, all training should include practical and experiential approaches. Training in cross-sectoral skills such as entrepreneurial and business skills, general and project management and leadership is a priority, especially for young people who want to enter the sector. Programmes aimed at young people should be more extensive in terms of time (long courses, specialisations, even 'summer schools'). Their interest in digital and new media means that there is potential to deliver these programmes across a range of online or multimedia platforms.

Although training in technical skills should also be available for young people (as practical training is chronically deficient in formal education), the research found that the main focus should be on mid-career professionals who want to hone and update their technical skills. Technical professions in theatre and cinema seem to be particularly in need of additional training to further develop their skills specifically in the areas of technical sound skills, lighting design, costume design and make-up.

Kosovo

Based on the overall analyses and outcomes of the research, the findings highlighted that there is an immediate need to develop programmes in Kosovo which focus on entrepreneurial and business skills including policy, management and leadership, strategic planning and legal competency. Soft skills were also highlighted as a key area of development, including teamworking, collaboration and networking and communication, as well as more sector-specific skills such as audience development and exposure to international best practices in the sector.

When asked about technical skills, research participants indicated that specialised training programmes are needed which focused specifically on engineering skills such as lighting and sound engineering, restoration, exhibition design, conservation and protection, production, archiving and documentation.

Macedonia

In order to fulfil the cultural skills gaps in Macedonia, the research findings indicate that programmes should be divided in two directions: long-term basic training which covers both theoretical and practical aspects; and more advanced specialised training. The areas suggested for inclusion in long-term study programmes are: cultural management, critical thinking and critical writing, and entrepreneurial and business skills in the cultural

sector. Research participants felt that entrepreneurial and business skills and critical thinking and critical writing could be incorporated into existing curricula, the area of cultural management would be best covered as part of a new programme or module, covering topics like cultural policy, strategic planning, audience development and marketing. The research also found that it would be valuable to develop basic training programmes in technical subjects to support budding conservators, restorers, curators, lighting and sound engineers and stage managers. These programmes would be best if developed with a view to complementing existing skills training programmes. While it may prove difficult to establish links with suitable training providers such as universities and colleges who already provide training programmes, it was anticipated that delivery of these programmes through existing providers would result in a broader market at this basic training level.

The other direction highlighted to address skills gaps is specialised advanced training programmes aimed at mid-career professionals already working in cultural institutions or organisations. Professionals working at this level shared their experiences as part of the research process and indicated that it would be valuable to develop programmes covering areas such as strategic planning; audience development (particularly of museums, theatres, and community centres); policymaking (at a local, national and organisational level);

marketing; entrepreneurial and business skills for the cultural sector; critical thinking and critical writing; and technical training courses for lighting and sound engineers, stage managers and video managers. Research participants further specified that training programmes must be decentralised, and not just held in Skopje.

Montenegro

Throughout the research, respondents highlighted a range of shortcomings of the cultural sector. Specifically, they raised the key issue of a mismatch between educational provision and market demand, meaning that skills are lacking in key areas such as strategic planning, creation of cultural policies and high-quality innovative and creative thinking. Research participants also indicated that the sector was not viewed as professional, they felt that there was a lack of opportunity for advancement among those working in the sector, and that there is a demand to hire regional or foreign professionals due to the lack of qualified local professionals.

For young people and those willing to enter into the cultural sector, as well as professionals currently working in the cultural sector, the recommendations provided by the research, according to the gaps in the sector, are mainly focused on cross-sectoral skills: entrepreneurial and business skills (such as project proposal writing), finance (including budgets and financial management),

English language proficiency and international exposure to best practices.

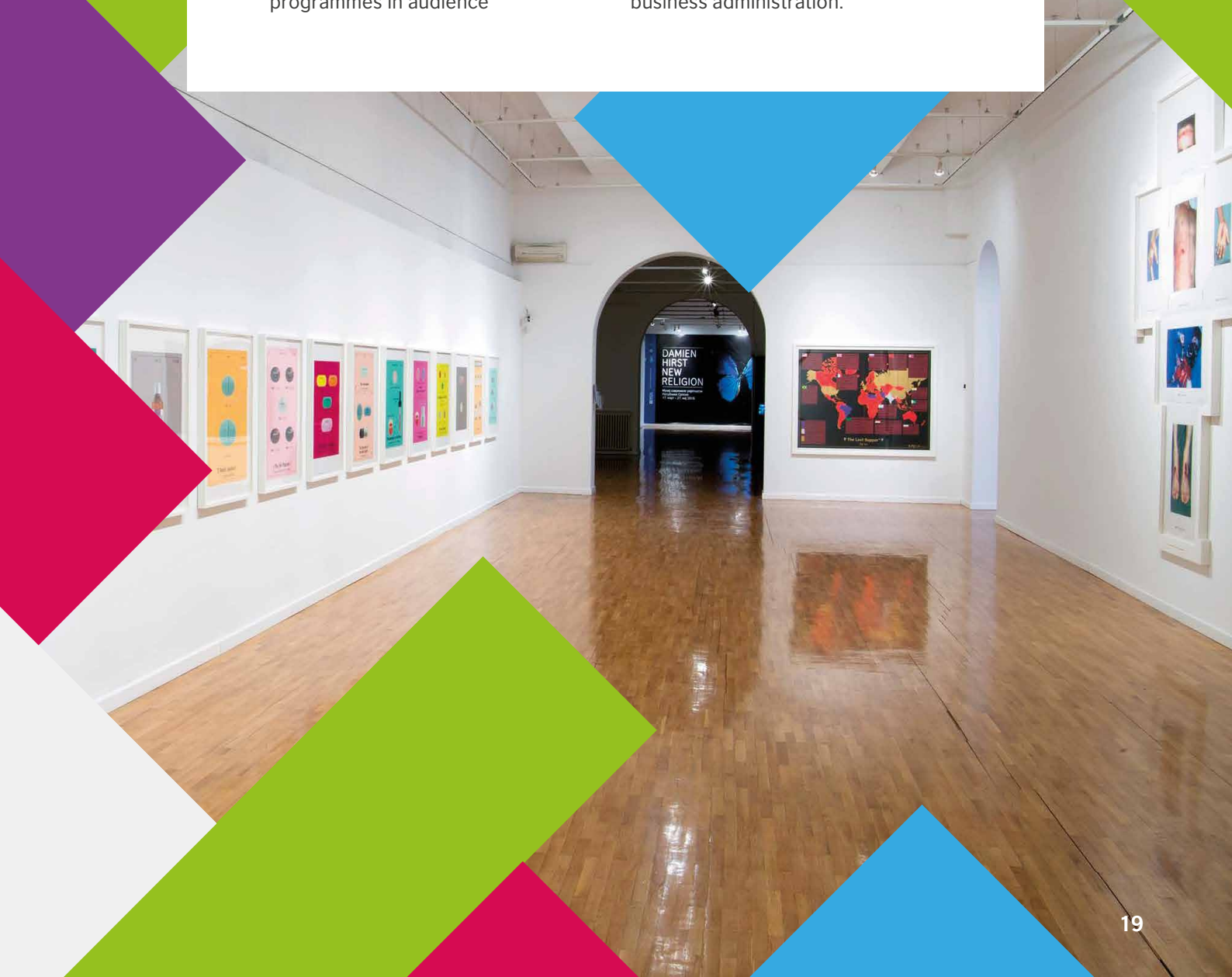
Technical skills programmes are more important for those wishing to enter the cultural sector rather than existing professionals, but individuals currently working in the cultural sector would also benefit. The research reveals the greatest need for education in lighting and sound design, set and costume design, 3D modelling, exhibition design, conservation and restoration skills and crafts.

Serbia

The research highlighted three priority areas for programme development in Serbia. First, research participants highlighted the challenge they faced in developing international links because of the language barrier. The promotion of language-enabling opportunities for professional development would provide professionals who need it with the language skills and the confidence to converse in English. If these programmes were to be combined with the offer of study visits or summer schools, in addition to classroom and distance-learning services, then professionals could not only develop their English skills but they could put them into practice while gaining first-hand experience of international best practice. Second, the research highlighted that, while training programmes exist in Serbia to support the cultural sector, this provision could be greatly enhanced

by improving the quality of existing programmes and introducing new training programmes which addressed key areas of need throughout formal education for the arts, creative industries and heritage. This kind of provision exists in the UK and one way to formalise the qualifications and level of training would be to develop an accreditation system for Serbian schools and universities by UK universities and professional associations. Another would be to offer 'train the trainer' programmes in audience

development, leadership, human resources management and policymaking, led by UK experts. The third area of focus is the need for more continuous professional development programmes to help address cultural skills shortages and gaps. Gaps exist in the following cross-sectoral skills: audience development, strategic planning, international exposure to best practices, policy development and implementation, critical thinking and writing, and entrepreneurship and business administration.





St. Ignace	St. Bartholomew	St. Matthew	St. Simon	St. Thomas
6,548	185	4,062	282	
1,120	3,180	2,130	130	
1,208	3,180	2,130	130	

Conclusions and recommendations

Across the research as a whole, it can be concluded that, in the Western Balkans region, a serious strategy for building human capacity in the cultural sector needs to be developed which incorporates and responds to the specific differences across the six countries.

The cross-cutting analyses of the needs of young people and professionals in the cultural and creative sector in the Western Balkans countries reveal some common areas for improvement.

There is a need for serious intervention and the creation of long-term general and basic training that could be part of formal education. While this kind of intervention would incur significant challenges, particularly in relation to educational reform, respondents generally agreed that this would be ideal, given that some educational provision does already exist. It would therefore be better to work with this existing provision rather than compete against it. This would satisfy the basic need for good theoretical and practical cultural knowledge. In this area, help is needed in the design of special study programmes taught by experts (such as visiting professors, international experts).

The areas that should be covered with long-term study programmes are:

- cultural management (to develop existing study programmes in a regional context, and also to design new curricula that would include cultural policy, strategic planning, audience development and marketing at faculties related to culture and the creative sector)

- critical thinking and critical writing (design of a new long-term programme, or inserting it as a part of already existing curricula)
- entrepreneurial and business skills in the cultural sector (including them as a part of already existing curricula at the faculties of art)
- study programmes for conservators, restorers and curators
- study programmes for lighting and sound engineers and stage managers (long-term; at public universities).

As detailed in the country-specific findings, the development of programmes for a predominantly younger audience, which is more engaged with new technology and the various platforms available to them, brings with it an opportunity to use these platforms to enhance programme delivery. The research recommends the incorporation of visiting professors and international experts, but there is potential to explore how these international links are made, and it is not explicitly the case that face-to-face interaction is essential.

In addition, there is a need for specialised advanced training programmes that could be short and intensive, but continuous. The optimal should be three- to ten-day intensive training courses run by a

combination of Western Balkans and foreign experts that would provide theoretical and practical knowledge and skills. The target group of the training courses would be senior professionals who work in cultural institutions or organisations. The areas that should be covered by the courses are:

- strategic planning
- audience development (particularly of museums, theatres and community centres)
- policymaking (local, national and organisational)
- marketing
- entrepreneurial and business skills for the cultural sector (training courses specially designed for professionals already working in the cultural sector)
- critical thinking and critical writing (short training courses run by experts)
- technical training courses for the lighting and sound engineers, stage managers, and video managers.

There is also a need to create opportunities for exchange programmes for young people and professionals. These could be long-term residencies (three to six months) and the young people and professionals would have the opportunity to exchange good

practice and to acquire practical knowledge of working in prominent institutions in their field of interest. Opportunities should also be created for educated professionals to return to their home country and share their new-found knowledge and experience with the cultural sector. Respondents recognised the challenges of establishing an exchange programme, in particular relating to the cost and recruitment of suitable partners on both sides, but they felt that, ideally speaking, these challenges would be worth enduring for the benefits that such an opportunity would provide to those involved.

Further research, data collection and documentation is needed across the cultural and creative sector. This will enable a deeper understanding of the sector and will help in convincing the Western Balkans public bodies to be more open and have participative approaches. Specifically, further research would be useful in the cultural heritage and museum sector. While the challenges that the sector faces are well known to those working in the sector, no research exists which suitably illustrates these challenges, and what could be done to improve things to those outside the sector. It would be beneficial to conduct research which explores the capacities, resources and programmes that are available and how the audience could be developed.



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