



Crafts Council

Craft Education - WCCE Knowledge Exchange Programme Report

In November 2023 delegates from across World Crafts Council Europe membership gathered in Rotterdam for one of a series of sessions, as part of their Knowledge Exchange Programme (KEP). The topics for these sessions emerged from debates during the General Assembly and Annual Conference. The Rotterdam KEP session focused on Craft Education.

Delegates introduced their contexts and work which then lead to wider discussions. Throughout the session a scribe interpreted our conversation into a graphic recording (below), this is a summary of the main points from these discussions:

- There was a consensus that, as a group, we could easily describe what craft education (and therefore 'craft knowledge') looks like (see below for a graphic representation of this). This was done by identifying or 'coding' elements that were similar across the projects or activities delegates shared. These outcomes were wider than educational or learning - they included soft skills. We agreed that an 'universal' approach to the positive impact of craft education for children and young people would help us (individually and collectively) campaign for increased opportunities to offer craft education.
- It was recognised that our conversation in Rotterdam represented just the tip of the iceberg in terms of who was delivering high-quality craft education. We all knew of colleagues and other organisations that are working at grassroots level to deliver craft education.
- Fundamentally we know why craft education is important, but this is not universally understood, most importantly by our policy makers who determine education strategy, determine our budgets, who determine political priorities.

Do we need to better understand why people do not understand the importance of craft education?

- We also agreed that craft education is not democratically accessible - it is not automatically offered to all children but should be.

What is needed to change this?

What works?

What is needed more to do this?

What can we do together?

What other industries (such as sport) have models we can learn from?



- In response to these questions a number of ideas were suggested:
 - PR campaign - hard hitting lobbying messages about the importance of craft
 - Education manifesto with clear calls for change and action
 - Mapping of excellent practice through case study template which would highlight categories i.e. Industry briefs / museum-linked activity / NEET etc.
 - An audit of what resources already exist and how do make best use of each others resources to avoid duplication and to make best use of resources Possibility a European-wide resource hub that tags and databases being part of a funding bid to Creative Europe bid?
 - Introduction of an European-wide award scheme for craft education would raise profile of work and celebrate those doing excellent work tangible benefit for those who are making a difference
 - Core competencies for craft educators agreed and shared with community as a way to support development of craft educators and demonstrate professional practice.
- The discussion spent much time considering ways to influence EU policy makers. We discussed at length the importance of the 17 UN Sustainability Goals and their relevance to craft education and potential as mechanism to increase craft's value and investment.

In conclusion, the KEP was an intense and rich sharing of practice, ideas and dreams. Our conversations provided the starting point for further work which would lead to a development of a strategy and action plan that would bring together members across Europe, including the UK.

