

Highlights from

IN SITU Webinar #1, “What contributes to the viability of creative small-scale enterprises (CCIs) in non-urban areas?,” 28 September 2023

Programme/list of speakers: <https://insituculture.eu/in-situ-webinar-series/>

Recording of Webinar #1: <https://youtu.be/iMsQzLCCH7c>

IN SITU: Place-based innovation of cultural and creative industries in non-urban areas is a four-year project funded by the European Union’s Horizon Europe research and innovation programme (Grant Agreement no. 101061747) that combines research and experimental actions to advance the innovation-related practices, capacities, and potential of cultural and creative industries (CCIs) based in non-urban areas of the EU countries.

Contact us at in-situ@ces.uc.pt or visit <https://insituculture.eu/>

Webinar #1 notes were compiled by Claudia Carvalho and Lorena Sancho Querol, October 2023.

FOCUS

Key points and interconnections relating to the title of the webinar which can inform IN SITU and associated initiatives.

INTRODUCTION

- IN SITU focus - Needs, challenges, opportunities, appropriate structures to support cultural and creative work in non-urban areas + impact of cultural creative work in non-urban areas;
- Webinar focus - space for practitioners, professionals, academics, etc. to share experiences and knowledge to strengthen the vitality of SME CCIs in non-urban areas.

PROJECTS AND INITIAL INSIGHTS PRESENTED

Ralph Lister, UK

Take Art, arts organisation, SouthWest England, grassroots social org | www.takeart.org

Sparse Plus: Supporting and promoting arts in rural settlements of Europe |

www.sparse.eu

SPARSE (2018-2021) 5 partners from 5 countries

SPARSE PLUS (2023-2027) - 11 partners from 9 countries



Key aspects of viability:

- Resilience: to keep going if funding does not come right away, partners were hard to find
- Adventurousness and curiosity + open minded + confidence + opened to be challenged
- Risk taking - do things we don't know how to do but we have the skill set
- Entrepreneurialism - having new ideas but also securing the funding
- Identifying a USP that is unique for your project
- Share creative thinking and equality of commitment to other partners
- Fundraising
- Vision and good judgements
- Modesty and realism - arts do not solve all society problems
- Long-term thinking and long-term projects
- Partnership and collaboration (grassroots community engagement - local connections) with conflict and resistance
- Networking to offer moral support
- Research - making the invisible visible - advocacy (relation to groups that promote the field - e.g., org arts in rural European areas)

Key focal points:

- to join together to make the case for an equitable resource allocation to support the rural cultural infrastructure rather than see the bulk of resources going into urban areas
- to develop a portfolio mentality so practitioners and arts agencies are not reliant on one source of income – look for plural funding

Musa Hlatshwayo, South Africa

Stand Foundation, an independent non-profit organisation to promote, support and celebrate contemporary South African dance and theatre

Mhayise Productions, Durban, South Africa | <https://www.facebook.com/groups/97009486886/>

Stand practices and methodologies:

- Growing our own team - “moving into dance” - vision and work - inter-racial society through dance + trainees and participants for developing capacities (from semi-rural areas) to become artists and trainees that can come back to their own communities (use skills locally - benefiting the community)
- “My Body, My Space festival” - Community-oriented environmentally friendly festival (Forgotten Angle Theater Collaborative) - site-specific works in deep rural areas - inviting partners (pool of community-based artists)

- Reconceiving and redefining partnerships - long-term interaction that gives you the possibility to exchange goods but also other practices + partnering with local schools and various organisations
- Collaborating across disciplines - creative ways of fundraising or saving and promoting business skills
- Relaying social entrepreneurship practices with the services and products they offer - e.g., dance groups performing “services” in their own communities

Martha Michailidou, Greece

Panteion University of Social and Political Sciences

Coral ITN | <https://coral-itn.eu> - network of 15 PhD Students and supervisors/15 PhD thesis, Marie Curie action funding

- Different formations of work (dynamics, business models, networks, etc.)
- Mission: exploring the impact of collaborative workspaces in rural and peripheral areas in the EU (how they differ from urban ones) + influencing policies (transformations in the world of work and specifically in the field of cultural and creative industries) + enhance business networks + support cultural and creative industries through these new approaches + what different concepts of work in rural areas (left-behind places) + what support mechanisms in rural spaces of coworking spaces in order to become community hubs?

Emerging insights noted:

- Tangible and intangible benefits of co-working spaces in rural areas, e.g., sharable resources, to struggle against isolation, knowledge exchange
- Co-working spaces (CWS) as microclusters - knowledge communities with more impact at local level for complementarity and articulation in an informal way
- Important parameters: job creation, increase of social capital, knowledge transmission, new skills transfer, new partnerships, contribution to the entrepreneurial culture

Ella Bjorn, University of Lapland, Finland

SmartCulturProject, Horizon2020 | <http://www.smartcultour.eu/>

- Goal: Develop sustainable cultural tourism in different regions in Europe based on creative place making
- Approach: 6 different Living Labs, 3 in urban contexts and 3 in rural areas + development of arts-based methods and service-design tool to ideate sustainable tourism interventions

- Different social sectors in the Living Labs (municipalities, cultural sector, indigenous communities, etc.) - interventions based on respect towards nature
- Use different arts-based and service-design tools - to inspire local creative tourism entrepreneurs in their services and methods - help to make tourism more sustainable and year around

Insights noted:

- Creative tourism initiatives organised by the Sámi communities - label developed - a mark of authentic project and preservation of cultural heritage - makes their product viable and differentiated - solution to beneficiate local companies in the area and scale up business dynamised by the local Sámi community - ecosystem building for creative companies based on local knowledges
- Development of digital skills of local communities + local events for promotion and collaboration with different service providers

Martin Gómez-Ullate, Extremadura University and Instituto Politécnico de Castelo Branco, Spain

Project Erasmus +; Cultural+; Learnvil; CERV-Network of Towns | <https://www.learnville.eu/> | <https://www.innovationplace.eu/fund/cerv-2023-citizens-town-nt-networks-of-towns/8380>

- Focus: cultural heritage in Cultural+
- Cultural entrepreneurs and mediators

Lidia Varbanova, National Academy of Theatre and Film Arts, Bulgaria

Advantages of rural areas:

- Low cost for working in small rural areas
- Sense of community, neighborhood feeling, unique traditions
- Greater access to specialised resources and expertise

Why are small and rural CCI important from an economic and social viewpoint?

- Potential to attract investment
- Viability beyond individual businesses - impact in the community
- Try to reduce unemployment rate
- Preserve cultural heritage



- Promote the local production and consumption - this is not in the local policies - need to lobby the policy makers

How do entrepreneurs collaborate in rural areas?

- Collaboration and networking, including education institutions, government bodies, community organisations, etc.
- Seek funding from various resources
- Attend diverse events that are beyond culture
- Explore technologies and digital platforms
- Collaborate with education institutions
- Partner with tourism industry

How to be more proactive in small-scale enterprises?

- Identify the niche market(s)
- Look outside of localities and have a global perspective
- Innovation and adaptability
- Risk mitigation strategies
- Strong community connections
- Diversify funding streams
- Power of volunteers

GENERAL DISCUSSION

- New class in rural areas - rural creative in rural areas: The emergence and growth of creative workers in rural areas has been fueled by: rising rents in big cities + changing demographics of creative sectors, with need for more space, cheaper spaces, and private spaces + effect of Covid-19 pandemic
- A lot of people from Northern countries moving from urban into more rural areas: need to integrate with others + bring with them their needs and urban styles to rural areas → new entrepreneurial activities generated with them + more interest in the quality of life
- Partnerships - stakeholders, individuals, funders + create a steering group that is representative of all stakeholders - openness to change if it is needed
- In South Africa - creatives moving to work in rural communities - this is a political move of moving to 'home towns' in rural areas, reconnecting with own cultural roots, a decolonising perspective and act
- Diversified portfolio of organisations + lobbying + diversified business models (connection with public policies and have representation in public policies - how to be validated?): how can we lobby? Media, personal relations, conversations outside culture, try different types of networks



POLL RESULTS

During the webinar, an informal poll was conducted of participants on the topic:

“What do you think most contributes to the viability of creative small-scale enterprises (CCIs) in non-urban areas?”

Written-in responses (sorted into general themes):

Cultural events/production

- Public events and sharing with spectators
- Coproductions
- Seed funding to enable local initiatives
- Proper approach to advertisement

Relation to other sectors/dimensions of society

- Education (make people aware of the importance of CCIs), networking and participating in events
- Research, capacity and infrastructure
- The dialogue between generations

Sustainability

- To create an organization and funding to be able to develop a consistent and structural base, to retain the knowledge, the experience, the know how, to keep and extend the network
- Combining external linkages with local capabilities
- Starting capital
- Money and a strong strategy
- Individual endurance
- Investment in startups
- Belief
- Cultural amenities and rich cultural capital
- Partnerships, financing, communication

Networking

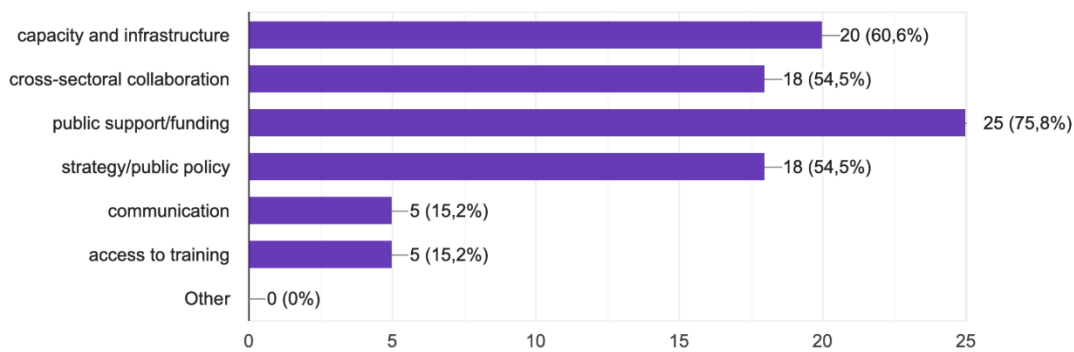
- Connecting with a wide range of participants and supporters.....plus reasonable costs for all. And the ease to connect, support, encourage and challenge as needed.
- Exchange of experiences



- Collaboration and openness to new areas
- Making them much more visible internationally is one of the keys
- Community and market policy is more indirect in impact, is my experience
- Specific small community support if there is some, easier reach to certain resources (space, help, etc.)
- Networking - Private-Public, Local-International
- Public support - funding and networking with other enterprises with similar experiences, conditions and interests
- Community participation

What are the 3 main challenges you identify in the CCI ecosystem?

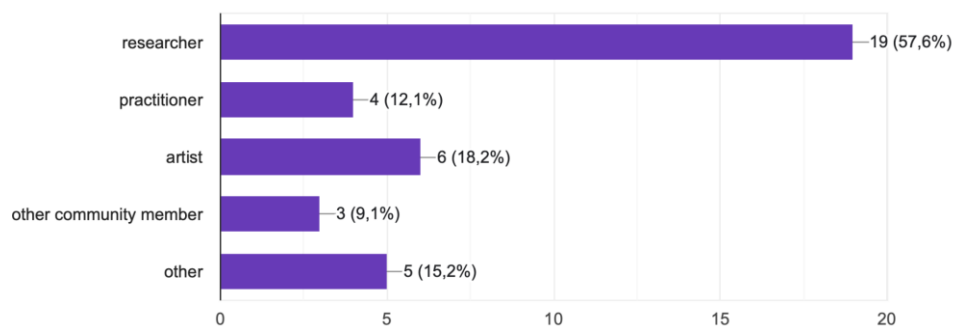
33 respostas



Other information from the poll providing a profile of respondents in the Webinar:

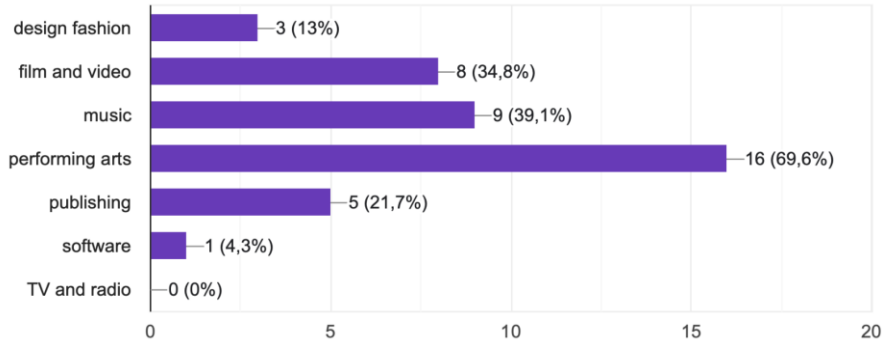
Please tell us something about your professional profile. You can choose more than one option.

33 respostas



In which professional field do you operate. You can choose more than one field.

23 respostas



In which continent is your project/CCI located?

32 respostas

