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BRIEFLY

ABOUT THE SURVEY

The survey on the needs of cultural organizations, groups, and initiatives in Ukraine was conducted as part of the CASCADE project, funded by the Swedish Institute and implemented by East Hub Trans Europe Halles (SE), a TEH sub-network coordinated by the project partners IZOLYATSIA Foundation (UA) and TEH member Malý Berlín (SK). Other CASCADE project partners include Salaam Cinema (AZ) and the Culture and Management Lab (GE).

The CASCADE project aims to strengthen the professional capacity of independent cultural centers in the Eastern Partnership countries. Its key objectives are to assess the needs and resources of cultural organizations, create conditions for horizontal exchange between them, support local leaders, and develop cooperation with local communities. As part of the project, partners conducted national surveys, the results of which to form the basis of training programmes adapted to the local context.

This survey on the situation with cultural organizations in Ukraine was conducted by the IZOLYATSIA Foundation. The purpose of the survey was to collect empirical data on the needs and challenges faced by cultural organizations in their daily activities, in particular, in cooperation with local authorities and communities, as well as in the context of developing their own institutional capacity.

The survey includes questions on organizational structure, resources, facilities, human and professional challenges, access to funding, local activities, international cooperation, and audience engagement. Attention is also paid to assessing the skills of the organizations' teams.

The survey was distributed via social media, partners' networks, professional communities, etc.

The results of the survey formed the basis of this analytical note.

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OVERVIEW OF SURVEY PARTICIPANTS

2.1. List of participants

The survey involved 95 respondents.

National institutions (subordinated to the Ministry of Culture and Strategic Communications of Ukraine): National Historical and Cultural Reserve "Chyhyryn".

Municipal cultural institutions:

Cultural centers and spaces: Bolhrad City Council Culture and Leisure Center, Kremenchuk City Art Gallery, Ternivka City Culture and Leisure Center, Lychkivka Culture and Leisure Center, Petrivsko-Romenka Community Culture, Leisure, Tourism and Sports Center, Talniv House of Culture, Makukhiv Branch of the PMTG Culture and Leisure Center, Palchykivka Branch of the PMTG Culture and Leisure Center, Svatova-Luchka City Folk House.

Libraries: Ternopil Regional Library, Petropavlivka Central Public Library, Library of Kholodna Balka, Chortkiv Public Library, Zaporizhzhia City Public Library System, Kherson Regional Universal Scientific Library named after Oles Honchar.

Museums and reserves: Pokrovsk Historical Museum, Yevhen Kibrik Ascension Art Museum, Kherson Regional Museum of Local Lore, Khmelnytskyi Regional Museum of Art, Bashtanka Museum of Local Lore, Sumy Regional Council State Historical and Cultural Reserve "Posulia", Les Kurbas Memorial Museum Estate, Trakhtemyriv State Historical and Cultural Reserve.

Philharmonic societies and theaters: Zhytomyr Regional Philharmonic named after Sviatoslav Richter, Rivne Regional Philharmonic, Khmelnytskyi Regional Academic Music and Drama Theater named after M. Starytskyi, Mykolaiv Academic Art Drama Theater.

Civil society organizations and initiatives: Cultural Code Pokrovsk+, Art Space Kolomyia, Ukrainian People's Council of Donetsk and Luhansk regions, National Platform for Resilience and Cohesion of the Ukrainian Independent Center for Political Studies, Creators of Changes, Power of Ideas, Cultural Activists of Zbarazhchyna, Svitanok of Yakovlivka Village, Chervonohrad Community Development Foundation, TI 100, Kultprosmil, Toloka Association, Map of Renovation, Fortress Ung Cultural Initiatives Center, Zvyagel City Organization of Women, LITECO, Dyvna Ukraina, Horizon-17, Kryla Civic Activity Support Center, Magic Runes, Pro.Pro.Lab, Strategy of the Future, Creative Platform, Free Thread, Mizh Dzherem, Persona Center for Innovative Development, Petrivski Bees Youth Association, Slavic Cultural Center Zadzerkallia, Izyum Recovery, Museum for Change, Pravopolis, Creative Area of Thinking, Ostvitsia Historical Reconstruction Club, Institute of Contemporary Art, Frontera Literary Platform, and Lokalist Festival of Pryirpinnya.

Local authorities:

Department of Culture and Tourism of Donetsk Regional State Administration, Institute of Urban Culture of Ternopil, Department of Culture of Zymnovodivka Village Council, Department of Culture of Ternopil City Council, Department of Culture, Youth and Sports of Snihurivka City Council, Department of Culture, Tourism, Youth and Sports of Chernechchyna Village Council, Department of Culture, Family, Youth and Sports of Horodnya City Council.

Charitable foundations: Dniprovska Zavoloka, SOS Civil Defense Headquarters, Izolyatsia Platform of Cultural Initiatives, Solyana Fortress, All Will Be Well Ukraine.

Business/private sector: Delight shadow theater, Portal-21 architectural and construction company, Basis design bureau, Kyiv Cultural Cluster, several individual private entrepreneurs.

International or hybrid initiatives: the Ukrainian-Danish Youth House, the Ukrainian cultural and educational center VOLKUA, the EU's Creative Europe programme.

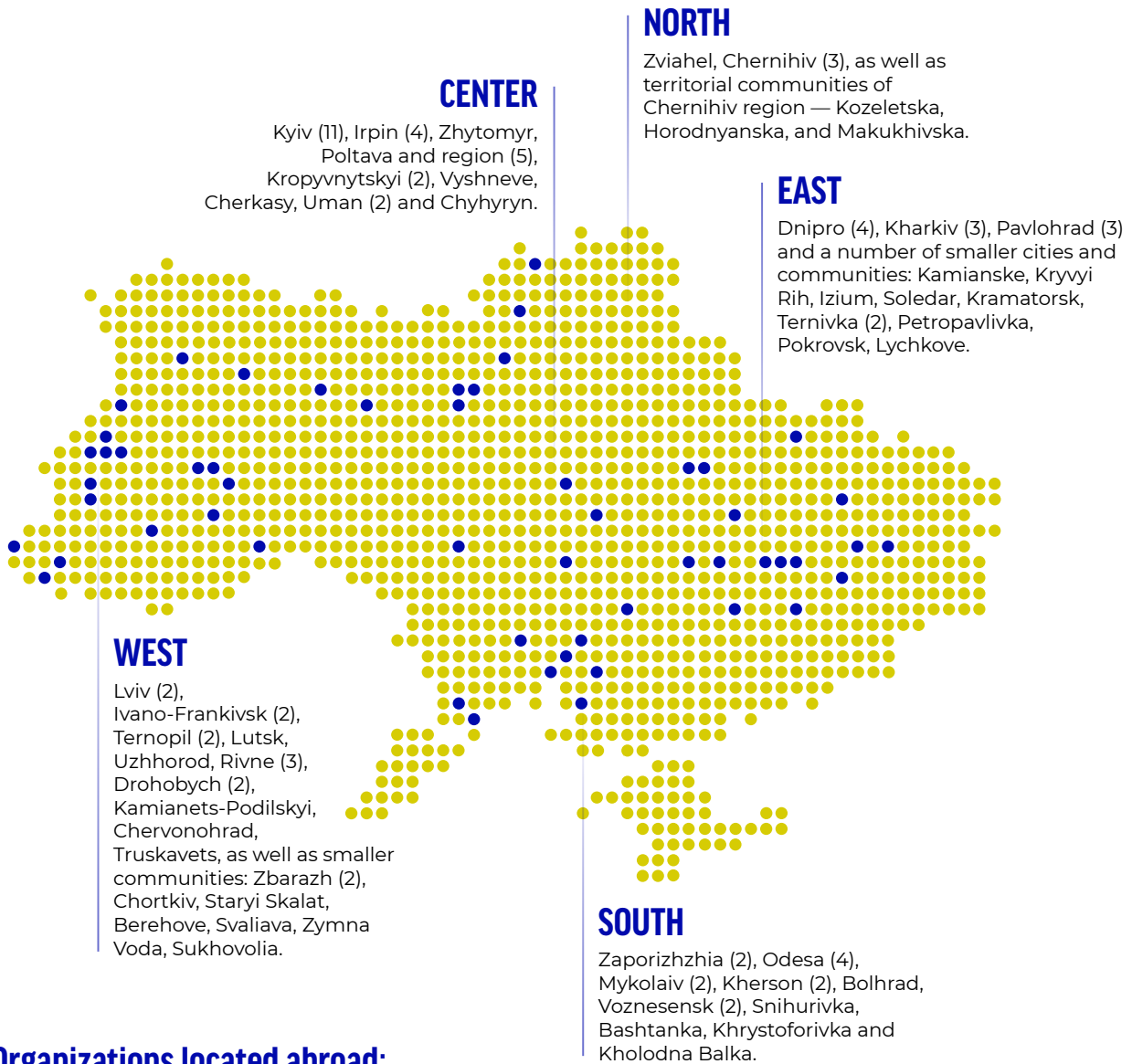
Others: two independent artists.

All respondents except for two independent artists represent officially registered organizations.

35.8% of surveyed organizations have been in business for over 21 years, 32.6% — for 4 to 10 years, 17.9% — for up to three years, and 13.7% — for 11 to 20 years.

2.2. Geography

The respondents' activities are concentrated in large cities, small communities and rural areas. Most of the organizations operate at the local level, some — cover several regions, and some — operate throughout Ukraine or abroad.



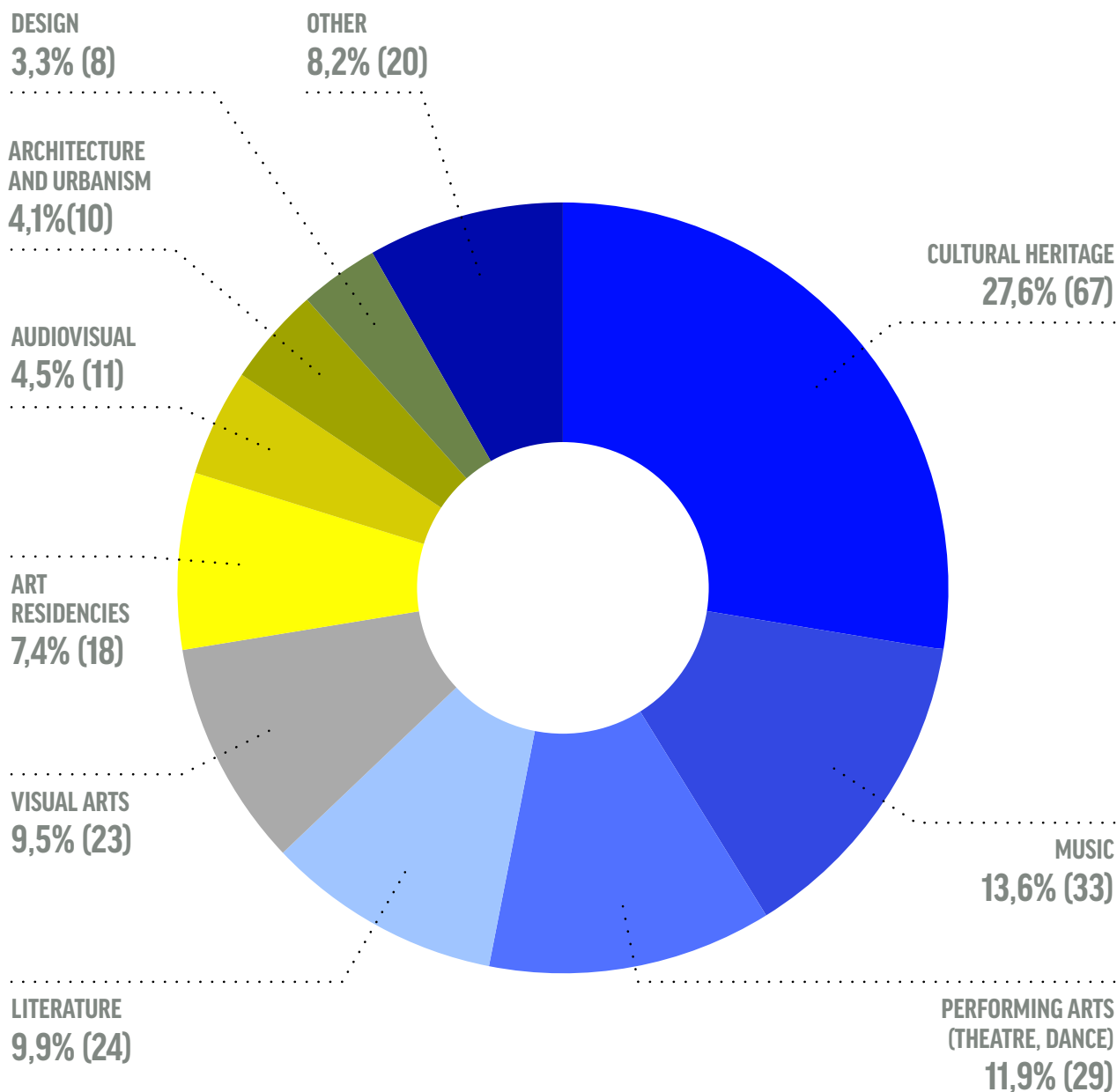
Organizations located abroad:

Kaunas and Vilnius (Lithuania), Toruń (Poland), Ulm and Munich (Germany).

11 surveyed organizations were displaced from the temporarily occupied territories or areas of active hostilities. The places of previous location of the organizations include Avdiivka, Sloviansk, Lyman, Svatove, Bakhmut district, Pokrovsk, and Donetsk.

2.3. Sectors of work

WHICH CULTURAL SECTOR DO YOU WORK IN ? (MULTIPLE ANSWERS POSSIBLE)



The most common sectors that surveyed organizations represent are: cultural heritage (67), music (33), performing arts — theater and dance (29), literature (24), visual arts (23), art residencies (18), audiovisual sector (11), architecture and urbanism (10), and design (8). Some respondents also mentioned activities in the field of education, historical memory, ecology, psychological support, social cohesion, civic participation, and others (20).

2.4.

Position within organizations

The survey participants mainly represent the management level within their organizations. Half of the survey participants represent leadership positions. Another third of respondents hold management or programming positions. Thus, the survey allows us to assess **both the operational and strategic needs** of the cultural sector.

2.5.

The size of teams

The **majority of respondents represent small teams**: 56% of respondents work in teams of 1 to 9 people. This group is mainly formed by public and charitable organizations. Accordingly, large teams with 20 or more employees account for 28% of respondents. These are mainly municipal and national cultural institutions, as well as government agencies that have a long history of work — more than 20 years.

3.

ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

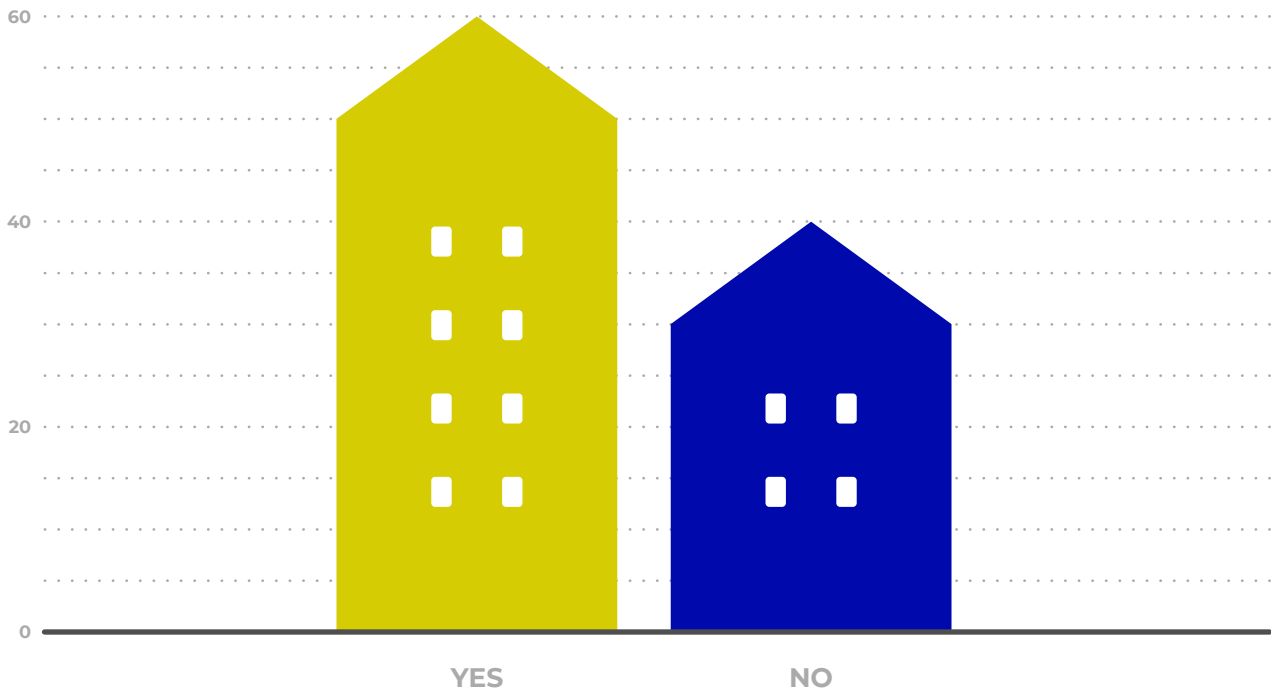
3.1. Space and equipment

More than half (60%) of the survey respondents indicate that they **have their own space** that they use for cultural events. At the same time, 40% of respondents indicate that they do not have their own space for cultural events.

If we try to trace certain patterns, it is primarily municipal cultural institutions such as museums, libraries, cultural centers, etc. that have spaces for events, and less often representatives of the independent sector. Typically, it is civil society organizations and charitable foundations that do not possess their own space, although there are other cases as well, such as some government organizations, nature reserves, etc. also operate without their spaces for events.

Thus, space as an in-house resource is only a selective practice for cultural organizations, primarily state and municipal ones.

DOES YOUR ORGANIZATION / INITIATIVE / GROUP HAVE ITS OWN SPACE USED FOR CULTURAL EVENTS?



Chairs and tables are the most commonly owned equipment in organizations (66% of respondents), although they are not always in good condition and in sufficient quantity. In addition, projection equipment is also rather common — 59% of respondents own it, and 20% mention that it is modern equipment.

Basic sound equipment is owned by 55% of respondents, with the majority rating its condition as average or below average. However, the **situation with specialized equipment** for concerts and shows is worse: 35,7% of respondents have lighting equipment, and only 29,5% have full sound equipment. Most of the equipment of both types is outdated or insufficient.

52,7% of respondents indicate that they have a separate **conference hall or room**. Potentially, if organizations are open, such a space can be an additional resource for the community to hold cultural events and other activities. 42,1% of respondents indicate that their **organization has a coworking** space, and 14,7% mention that it is a modern space. Although there is a lack of details about the functionality and purpose of coworking spaces, it can be assumed they can be a resource for strengthening community interaction.

Among other needs, a number of organizations noted a **lack of computer equipment**.

Although only a part of the respondents have space, and the overall quality of equipment in cultural spaces for events is relatively low, the survey showed that there are still organizations that own high quality equipment and spaces, including coworking, conference rooms, etc. These are good practices and experiences that should be shared through **exchange and networking programmes** for cultural organizations.

3.2. People

In terms of the staffing structure, survey results show **three main employment models**, all three of which received almost the same number of responses:

- 31,6% of organizations have full-time employees;
- 35,8% work with people under contract/outsourcing;
- 32,6% have both full-time and part-time employees.

It can be concluded that the way of professional interaction with people depends primarily on the legal status of the organization. State and municipal organizations hire people, while representatives of the independent sector (in particular, NGOs and charitable foundations) mostly work with people on a contractual basis or combine the two forms.

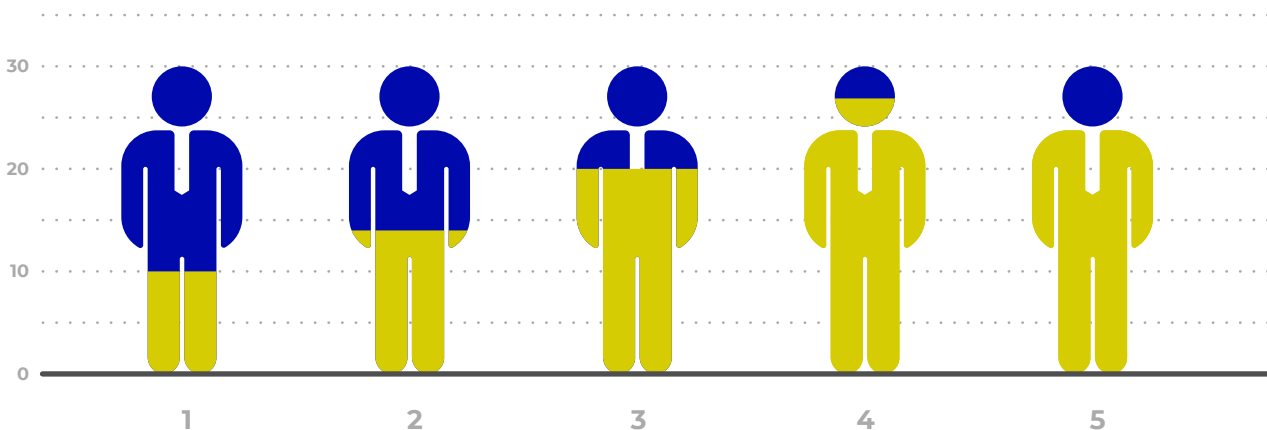
The absolute majority of surveyed **organizations involve volunteers in their activities** — 63,2% of respondents indicate that volunteers are involved in some areas of their work, and another 27,4% of organizations indicate that they involve volunteers in all activities. This is a good practice that is worth looking at in more detail. Involvement of volunteers can mean both a targeted participatory approach or professional development practice, and the lack of ability to pay for work that should actually be payable.

3.3. Relations with local authorities

53,7% of respondents highly appreciate the **relations between their organization and local authorities**, another 21,1% — rated them as neutral. These indicators show a positive trend — the foundation for further development of cooperation and partnerships has already been laid.

HOW WOULD YOU EVALUATE YOUR RELATIONS WITH LOCAL AUTHORITIES?

1 - low level of cooperation, 5 - high level of cooperation



Typical formats and topics of interaction mentioned by the survey participants:

- **Subordination:** the cultural institution is fully funded and dependent on the local authority or is a structural unit of the local authority;
- **Coordination of actions:** cultural organizations coordinate with local authorities at the documentation level, obtain permits, etc;
- **Official partnership:** cooperation on the basis of a memorandum, joint implementation of projects, submission of joint projects for grant funding;
- **Information support:** media coverage of events, participation of local authorities representatives in events;
- **Free allocation of spaces:** the local authorities provide spaces for the work of organizations and/or certain cultural events, there are also examples of spaces being provided at reduced rates;
- **Infrastructure support:** assistance in preparing spaces for cultural events, as well as assistance in repairing and equipping them;
- **Financial support:** for projects run by cultural organizations;
- **Cooperation around specific events:** involvement of local authorities in the preparation and holding of specific events;
- **Cultural heritage:** assistance in moving and preserving the cultural heritage of the community;
- **Local cultural strategy:** involvement of cultural organizations in the development of the city's cultural development strategy;
- **Joint visits to the de-occupied territories** and organization of events there;
- **Research projects:** involving representatives of cultural organizations in conducting research on the local context of the community;
- **Working groups:** involvement of representatives of cultural organizations in working groups of local authorities or public councils;
- **Social cohesion:** involvement of cultural organizations in increasing the level of social cohesion in the community.

According to our observation, cooperation between cultural organizations and local authorities can be divided into episodic (or one-time), when it comes to short-term cooperation around a specific event or need, and strategic (ongoing) — when it comes to long-term cooperation, joint action and equal partnership. In addition to cases of direct management, **about 25% of respondents in this survey show signs of strategic cooperation with local governments.**

34,7% of respondents indicate that they or their organization are **members of advisory bodies**, coordination centers, and working groups within local authorities. In particular, the responses included: city council, public council, barrier-free infrastructure group, youth group, IDP group, working group on public safety and social cohesion, street renaming commission, commissions on awards and competitions, etc.

36,2% of respondents indicate that they **received funding from local authorities.** The vast majority of these are municipal cultural institutions, although there are also a few representatives of the independent sector.

In order to learn about new opportunities from local authorities the survey participants most often use:

- official pages of local authorities in social media;
- websites of local authorities;
- groups and communities in social media;
- newsletters and direct emails from local authorities;
- [the Hurt portal](#) (Гурт) and [Hromadskyi Prostir](#) (Громадський простір).

3.4.

Contribution to the community

The **survey answers demonstrate that cultural organizations are actively involved in social processes in their communities**. In particular, 77,9% confirmed that their organization was part of a civic initiative. At the same time, 57,9% of respondents initiated such initiatives several times, and 26,3% initiated public initiatives many times.

One of the tools of local democracy in communities is the **participatory budget** (public budget). 56,2% of participants said that their communities had participatory budgets, but only 32,6% confirmed that they participated in this programme.

Communities also have other tools for civic participation, including public hearings and discussions, electronic applications and petitions, and internships for young people. Learn more about this in the [Co-creative Communities toolkit for change-makers](#) from the NGO Insha Osvita.

65,3% of survey participants note that they **consider themselves to be a leader** of public opinion, which emphasizes the role of culture in society. However, this question was formulated in such a way that it is unclear whether it referred to the social capital of the organization or its individual representative.

4.

SKILLS

DEVELOPMENT

Skills and competencies needs identified in the survey

The survey showed that **the development of professional competencies remains one of the key challenges for the sector.** The priorities are allocated below according to the life cycle of the organization — from basic stabilization to expanding international cooperation.

The survey contains some data on region, type of employment, cultural sector, and age of organizations, however does not allow for a full analysis of skills needs in terms of specific categories (e.g., specific needs in frontline regions or in the field of cultural heritage). More in-depth statistical analysis is needed to identify differences in the needs of individual groups. The information below covers general trends.

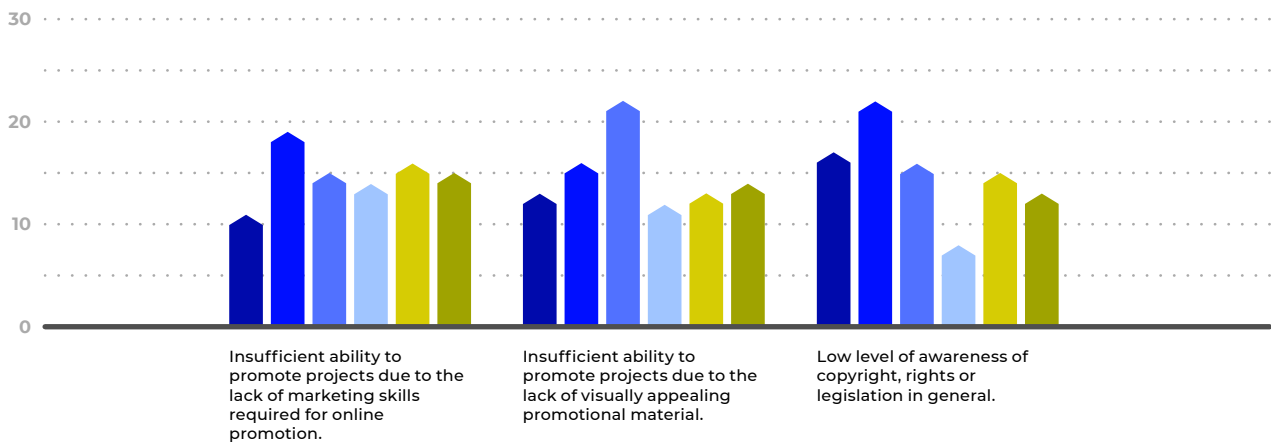
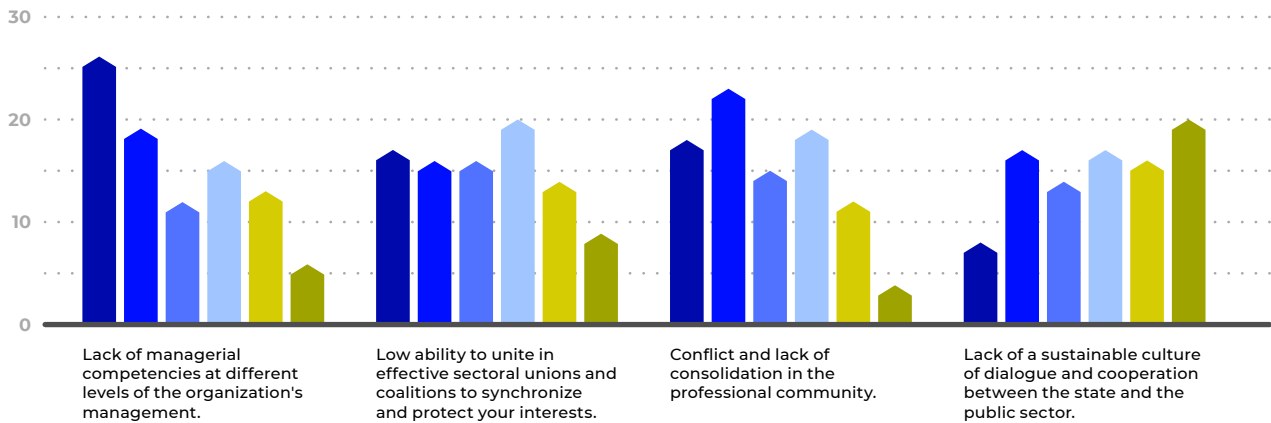
4.1.

Basic needs: stabilization and sustainability

According to the survey, **the primary need for cultural organizations is to strengthen financial sustainability**. Despite a general understanding of the basic principles of financial management and grant writing, survey participants noted the need to deepen their skills in strategic resource planning, cash flow management, and diversification of income sources.

PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCIES AND SKILLS:

0 - is not important, 5 - is a priority

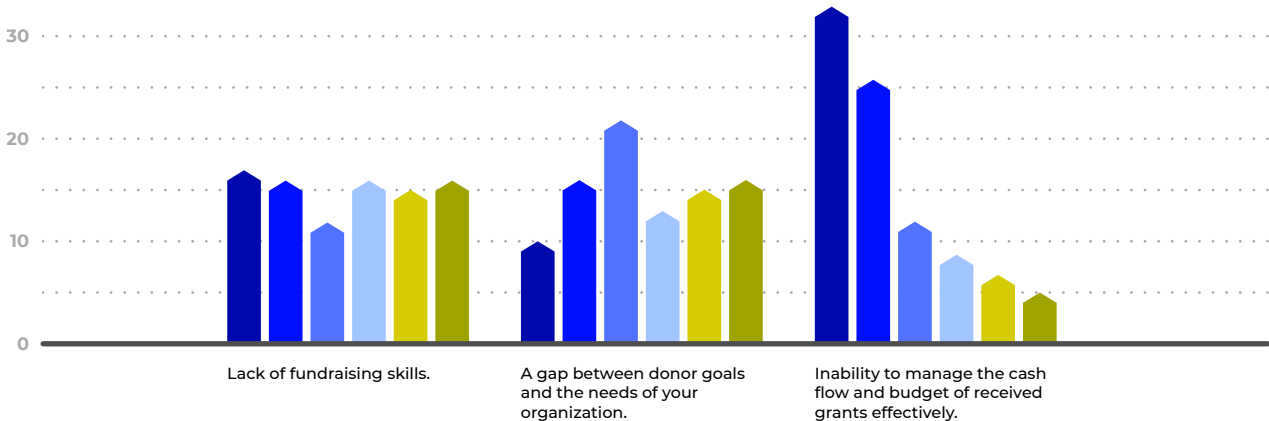
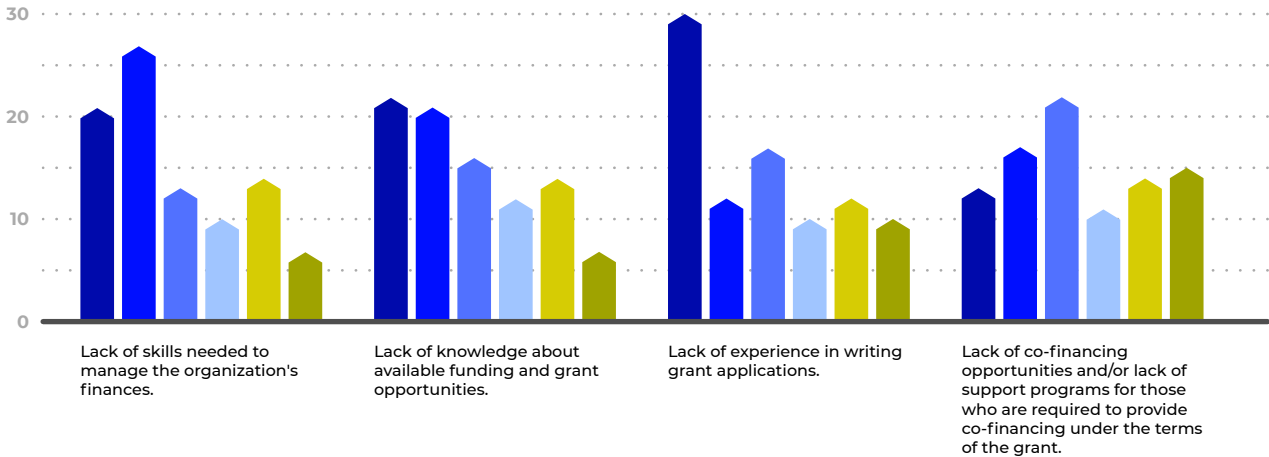


Fundraising was identified as one of the most in-demand areas of development.

Organizations need not only fundraising skills, but also a better understanding of how to adapt their projects to requests of donors and narrow the gap between their own needs and the expectations of those awarding grants.

FUNDRAISING AND FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT:

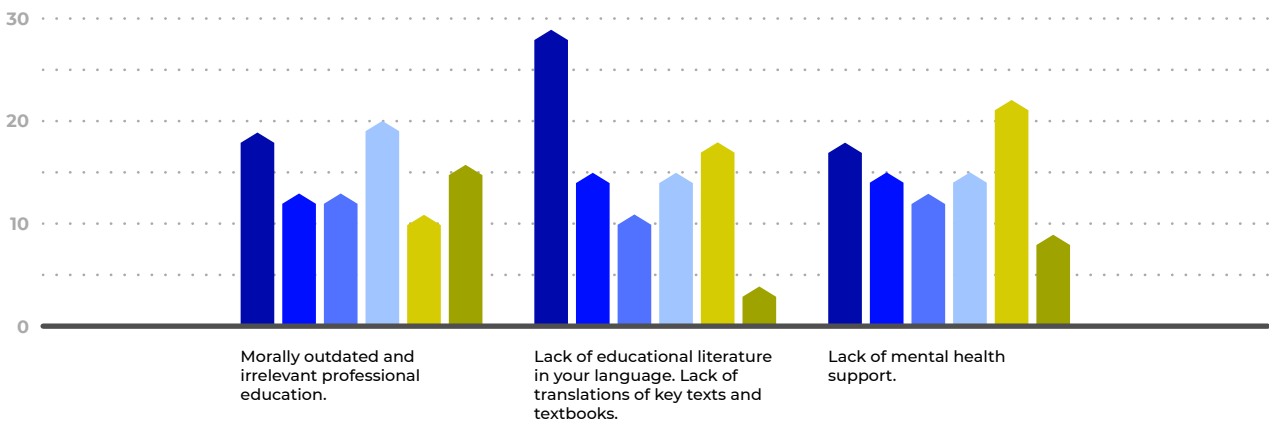
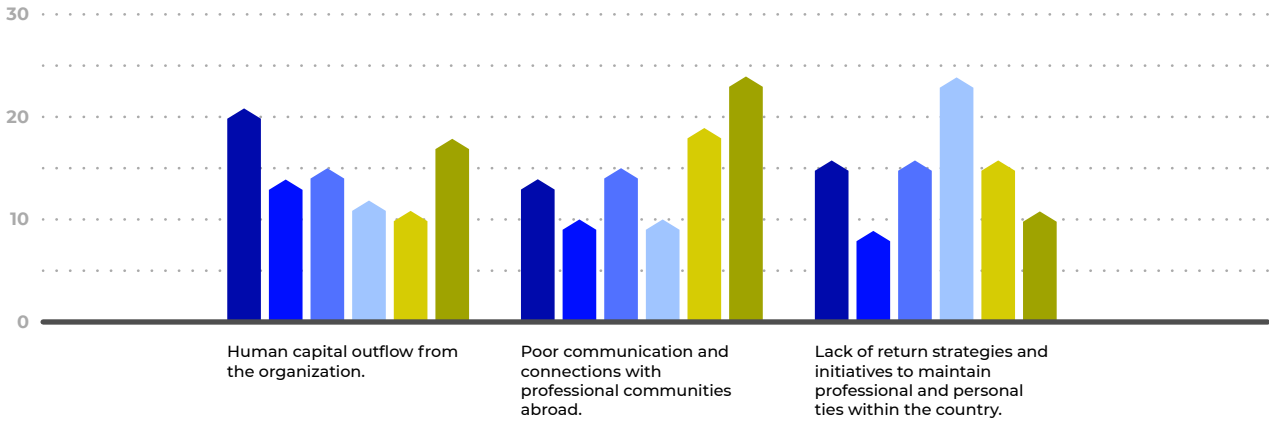
0 - is not important, 5 - is a priority



In addition, **the need to develop crisis management skills** was recognized as important. War, staff outflows, and seasonal fluctuations have a significant impact on the work of organizations. Particular attention should be paid to supporting employees' mental health and preventing professional burnout, as well as to launching programmes aimed at the return of specialists.

HUMAN RESOURCES:

0 - is not important, 5 - is a priority

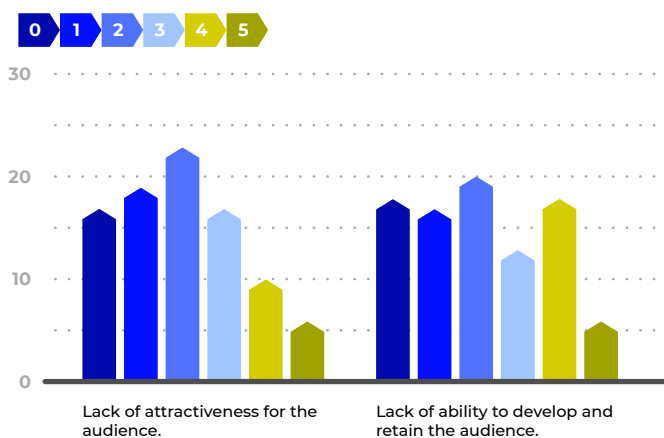


4.2. Development and expansion of influence

At the next level of priorities, survey participants identified the need to develop marketing competencies. Lack of skills in promoting organizations and projects online, a lack of high-quality visual materials, and **a general lack of audience engagement strategies hinder the growth of the influence for organizations.**

AUDIENCE DEVELOPMENT:

0 - is not important, 5 - is a priority



Survey participants also emphasized the importance of being able to maintain and develop communities around their organizations. The lack of tools for working with the audience is becoming a significant limitation for sustainable development.

Although the respondents do not consider the issue of the attractiveness of a cultural product for audiences to be particularly relevant, it is worth investigating whether they are guided in this assumption by their own opinions or rely on data from the audience surveys.

Design thinking skills (including user research) are rarely used by cultural organizations in Ukraine to create new products or services. If these skills are not applied, the ability to retain the audience will be secondary, as the main question will be around the quality of the product and the existence of demand for it.

Consolidation of the sector through the creation of professional associations and unions is also recognized as relevant to promote common interests and influence cultural policy.

The absence of a culture of dialogue between the government and cultural institutions is recognized as one of the most acute problems and requires appropriate competencies on both sides.

Another important topic is the skills of monetizing cultural products. The demand for knowledge in the field of social entrepreneurship and the development of sustainable business models was voiced by some of the respondents.

4.3. Going international

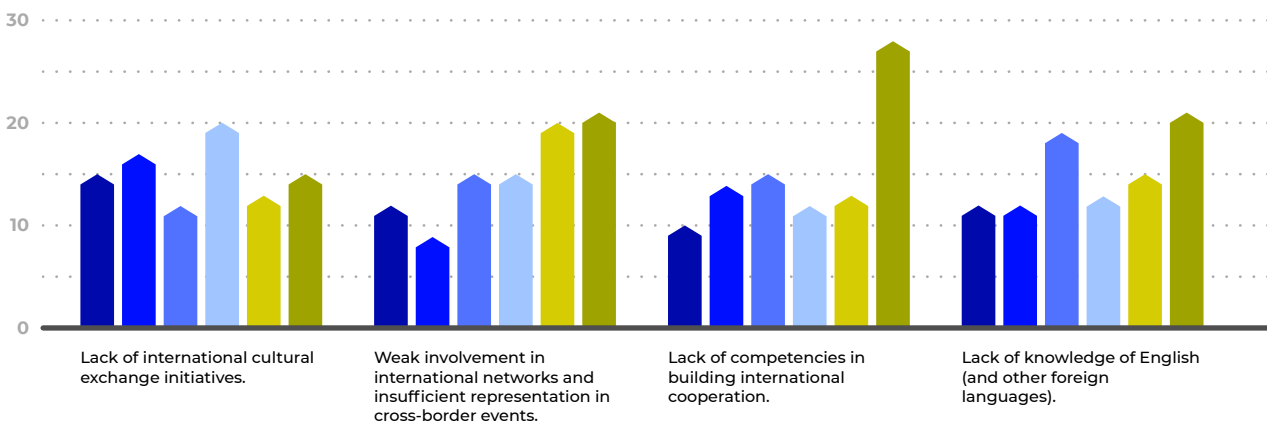
The survey participants mentioned the main barriers for their international work:

- insufficient knowledge of English;
- weak involvement in international networks;
- limited participation in cross-border initiatives.

Competencies in developing international cooperation, establishing partnerships, and effectively presenting oneself on international platforms are among the most sought-after skills.

INTERNATIONAL NETWORK:

0 - is not important, 5 - is a priority



At the same time, the need for basic knowledge of intellectual property rights and legislation in general has become urgent, which affects both the quality of international cooperation and the ability to advocate for one's own interests in general.

4.4.

Other important challenges

Additional barriers mentioned by survey participants include:

- outdated legislative framework in the cultural sector;
- limited access to innovative vocational education;
- outflow of personnel due to the war;
- poor communication with international professional communities;
- problems of interaction with local communities and authorities.

The organizations also pointed to the need to develop international cultural exchange initiatives and create programmes to support professional ties within the country.

5.

KEY

OBSERVATIONS

The need to develop professional skills

Survey participants indicate an urgent need to strengthen their skills in financial management, fundraising, marketing, crisis management, and international cooperation. Education and professional development remain key needs of the cultural sector.

Financial instability as a common challenge

Lack of sustainable funding remains a critical barrier to the development of most organizations. Often, their resources are directed to operational activities without the opportunity for strategic planning or investment in organisational capacity building.

Difficult but mostly positive relations with local authorities

In addition to cases of direct management, about a quarter of respondents note the strategic nature of their cooperation with local authorities. Joint projects and the allocation of spaces are positive examples. At the same time, much of the cooperation remains sporadic or formal, which limits the sustainability of partnerships.

Space and resources: limited and uneven

Having your own space and equipment is important, yet not a universal practice for organization. Municipal organisations have more resources, while CSOs often work in rented or shared spaces. The quality of even basic equipment (chairs, tables) in some organizations is below average. The quality of specialized equipment (sound, light) is in many cases insufficient for organizing high-quality cultural events.

Community engagement: potential for growth

Many organizations define themselves as opinion leaders in their communities. The active involvement of volunteers indicates high civic engagement, but there is potential for deeper development of social cohesion programmes and participation of cultural organizations in local development processes.

Uneven support between large and small communities

Organizations in large cities have more access to donor programmes and media attention, while initiatives in small towns and villages face the lack of material resources, human resources, and opportunities for public visibility.

The impact of war: mobility, adaptability and burnout

Organizations have demonstrated high adaptability to the ongoing war. At the same time, the war has caused an outflow of personnel, damage to infrastructure, restrictions on mobility, and increased the level of professional burnout, which requires special support programmes. Accessibility of cultural infrastructure and inclusivity of programmes is also a relevant issue.

Limited international cooperation

The complicated procedures of bringing international partners to Ukraine during the full-scale invasion and the low level of English proficiency among representatives of cultural organizations affect the level of their involvement in international projects and partnerships.

The cultural sector in Ukraine shows high resilience and adaptability even in times of crisis. At the same time, it needs systemic support to develop institutional sustainability and professional skills of its people, as well as access to resources, and expanded opportunities for engagement with communities and local authorities.

6

RECOMMENDATIONS

On further research

- **Study the interaction of cultural institutions with local authorities.** In order to identify effective practices, it is recommended to study different models of cooperation and to compile checklists or guidelines for developing sustainable and systematic cooperation.
- **Study the potential of coworking and other alternative spaces in cultural institutions.** An in-depth analysis of the spatial infrastructure (condition, functionality, openness to the community) will identify opportunities for the development of community interaction centers within cultural organizations.
- **Analysis of volunteering practices in the cultural sector.** Since volunteering has proven to be one of the key elements of the viability of organizations, it is worth evaluating the degree of maturity of this practice (the nature of volunteer participation, its sustainability, organizational models of support, motivational factors).
- **Study barriers for teams in small towns and villages to access opportunities.** A separate study is needed to analyze the limitations for organizations in small communities in terms of funding, visibility, and staffing.
- **Analyze the involvement of cultural organizations in other local democracy instruments.** This questionnaire did not aim to investigate the involvement of cultural organizations in various instruments of public participation other than participatory budgeting. In the future, it is recommended to expand the scope and study other approaches.
- **The fatigue of online questionnaires among respondents is evident.** For future research, it is recommended to explore other tools and formats for collecting information.

On strengthening the capacity of organizations

- **Determine the logic of access to spaces and equipment.** Priority may be given to supporting organizations that do not have their own spaces or work with outdated equipment. Programmes can include grants for renting and/or equipping spaces, as well as developing approaches to sharing resources or creating inter-organizational spaces. Synergies between organizations with access to infrastructure and those that are good at working with audiences are critical.
- **Support for infrastructure development.** It is worth promoting the modernization and technical support of conference rooms, coworking spaces, etc. as important resources for the community, provided that there is a strategic understanding of how this maximizes the role of cultural organizations. That is why training in design thinking and theory of change can help teams balance resources and impact.

- **Strengthening the networking of organizations.** Creating platforms for sharing experiences in managing spaces, human development, and advocacy for common interests. Institutional support programmes for professional associations and intermediary organizations.
- **Stepping out of bubbles.** Creating programmes and opportunities where cultural organizations of different forms (municipal, state, independent) collaborate — it is about sharing experiences and forming connections between those sealed environments.
- **Expanding local presence.** Initiating programmes to strengthen cultural infrastructure in small towns and communities.
- **Strengthening the security infrastructure of cultural organizations** (shelters for events, storage facilities for cultural heritage).

On the development of skills

- **Financial sustainability and fundraising.** Capacity building programmes should focus on the development of strategic planning, financial management, income diversification, and the ability to communicate with donors about real needs.
- **Collaboration.** Cultural understanding of civic engagement tools and knowledge of trauma-informed approaches is essential.
- **Crisis management and team support.** Training programmes should include topics on burnout prevention, crisis management, succession planning, and change management.
- **Design thinking.** Skills of in-depth analysis of audience needs and development of a programme portfolio based on the theory of change.
- **Marketing and working with audiences.** It is necessary to strengthen competencies in audience research, digital communications, community development, promotion of cultural products, and monetization of activities.
- **International cooperation.** It is worth developing skills of participation in international networks, knowledge of foreign languages, presentation skills and partnerships at the international level. Even small experiences, especially professional exchanges or collaborations, will be useful for beginners.
- **Legal literacy.** Capacity building programmes should include the basics of intellectual property rights, contract law, and interaction with government institutions.
- **Rethinking the existing cultural and symbolic capital** of communities (toponymy, places of memory, historical and cultural heritage sites, etc.) becomes relevant.

Other recommendations

- **Strengthening cooperation with local authorities.** Using successful examples, recommendations for local authorities on how to strengthen strategic cooperation with cultural organizations in communities should be developed.
- **Support for mobility.** Creation and support of international and internal exchange programmes for cultural organizations.
- **Integration of inclusion and accessibility.** Supporting initiatives to develop accessible spaces and programmes for people with disabilities and other vulnerable groups.
- **Focus on regional strategies.** Development of support programmes tailored to the specifics of the regions, especially the frontline areas.
- **Institutional advocacy.** Strengthening the role of professional associations in advocating the interests of the cultural sector at the local and national level.

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