

Until the future arrives!



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I shall start this text by trying to answer the question posed: “Education in the Cultural and Creative Industries (CCI): what will the ideal future be like? (or who knows what the ideal future will be like)”. A very open approach. Or at least open enough to be able to talk about many different things and perhaps too open to avoid losing people along the way.

I believe that there is no right or wrong answer to the question. Therefore, I shall try to put forward my own opinions. I believe that these opinions are well-founded, but the reader will decide. Obviously, I do so from my perspective, which is no more than what I see, hear and smell, what I touch and

experience, which, to a large extent, is from my field of work. I do so from experience that, in this case, is linked to project management related to Higher Education and previously, in a rather more distant past (ladies and gentleman, I am getting on, which is a good sign) to the management of cultural projects. Let me point out that I will partially answer the question, that is, as far as I can and wish to. Those who know me are only too aware that I am more of a person of the present or rather of the meanwhile, and the future is somewhat confusing for me.

Having made this brief introduction, which is less important for those reading that he who seeks to brush off the strange feeling of facing a blank sheet of paper, let’s try and answer the question. First of all, I dare say that the **ideal future of Education (University of Higher Education) for the Cultural and Creative Industries shall not differ significantly from the future of that of other areas, at least not in terms of formats and strategies.** For example, the dual model, the connection between Company and University, the constant updating of the curriculum, lifelong learning and micro-credentials, integration of soft skills, etc.

However, while I am writing this, I realise that the starting point, i.e. the present rather than the future, does differ between the areas of knowledge that play a role in the cultural or creative sectors (especially cultural) and those of other fields. Let’s dwell on this for a moment. **Thinking about what Higher Education should be like in relation to some industries, whatever they may be, inevitably leads us to draw attention to these industries.** In my view, this is the first element to be taken into consideration. Speaking generically about Education in CCIs is deluding ourselves.

We cannot compare industries related to cultural sectors and industries related to the creative sectors, nor can we compare the creative or cultural sectors with each other. Even the idea of “industry” does not make sense in all cases (sectors). By means of example, in the same way that we cannot treat the creative sector of Architecture as the creative sector of Video Games or the cultural sector of the Performing Arts, neither would it be reasonable to compare the University required for them.

Beyond the subject divergence, these sectors have some different dimensions, which are also characterised by different levels of maturity. Putting Culture, Creativity (as a capacity, rather than a competence) and Art into the same bag lacks the same logic as blurring the figure of Artist, Creative person and Creator (I would even mention the manager).

Like in training, the future of research applied to CCIs will share many elements with research applied to different sectors, in my opinion, (please note that in this brief exploration, I am focusing on applied research, excluding basic research and performative research, which deserve a separate paper).

The disciplines are increasingly breaking out of their silos and collaborating across different (diverse) disciplines to build more complex and comprehensive projects. Like disciplines and knowledge areas, sectors and industries related to them are doing so. In other words, CCIs are not detached from this ever increasing collaboration dynamic. Indeed, they probably have the collaboration experience more deeply instilled in their DNA than some industries and sectors, although this collaboration does not need to be obvious with the Faculties and Higher Education Schools or university students.

This brings me from the second mission of the University, Research, to the third fully related mission, knowledge transfer to Society, which in spite of its name, fits into the university parameters, instead of the parameters to which it is understood that they should adapt to: those

of Society. Although **we understand knowledge transfer to be aimed specifically at Industry (one part of Society), its management continues to be complicated when moving in an academic paradigm.** This may appear to be evident for some and highly debatable for others - I have already mentioned that the test was my own reflection -, it is more blatant in some disciplines, many of which are integrated in CCIs, not necessarily used to formal or official collaboration with entities.

In any case: Society. We are not just talking about Industry. This equation is even more complicated. Could talking about transfer to society perhaps lead us to think of Transfer as Transformation? (pensive emoticon with hand on chin). Understanding it like this would take us from talking about University-Company collaboration to talking about University-Company-Society cooperation. In other words, talking about commitment.

In the end, it turns out that Culture is at the centre of everything. It is not just a professional sector, it is a social question. It is not just about training for Culture, but rather Culture is the driving force to educate ourselves in all of these aspects. It is not just a matter of training professionals, it is educating ourselves as navigators in a changing and impetuous sea.

All reflection involves so many implications that it is inconceivable to embrace the future without stopping to think about the present, to divide it into pieces and see which part should be tackled and when. As there are large and small companies and industries and the progress of the former cannot

interrupt that of the latter, and vice-versa (careful), **commitment to Society as a whole demands a profound and progressive exercise. Education has constantly been involved in this and continues to be involved.** Little by little, as can only be the case, but adapting to change. Educating professionals, educating to innovate, educating to contribute socially, educating to foster intersection, educating to be entrepreneurs and educating to connect with entities.

Put this way, it seems that Higher Education (university or professional) plays many roles, perhaps too many to think of it beyond the rest of the links in the educational chain. Without disregarding the fact that we should respond from within the socio-economic paradigm in which we are immersed... can the right response be given without looking in from the outside, moving out of a system and structure that structures us? Are we generating responses or are we reacting to what is happening or what we believe will happen?

It does not all lie in Education, be that Higher Education or otherwise, nor does it lie in the educational agents. On this path, they are (or should be) accompanied by Academics, Industry, Society, the Administration, the world in which we live. We are part of the ecosystem and the steps need to be taken as a team. This ecosystem reflection is what is behind initiatives like KSIgune, the Basque Higher Education and Research ecosystem for CCIs. A shared exercise which is made up of representatives of the different propellers that make up the CCI ecosystem in the Basque Country.

Connecting and co-creating for the common good, moving away from a relational project model towards one sustained on alliances and shared agendas among agents. These are part of the values of Euskampus Fundazioa, which acts as a facilitator of the KSIgune ecosystem. It is not by chance that the Creativity World Forum is actually the coming out of a project that it has been managing for more than a year, working with people and entities worldwide, and from all of its work areas, Education has been chosen as one of the pillars for the evolution of the Basque CCIs. All of these elements, which may appear to be unrelated, form part of the same strategy that talks of Education, Innovation, Industries, Governance, Territory. There is still a lot to improve, a lot to be done. And this is precisely why we must continue.

The ideal Education of the future for citizens is one in which skills, abilities and talent, co-exist with knowledge, thought and values. **We must not forget that Training and Educating are different yet complementary things and Education must be**

present everywhere and throughout life. Higher Education should be as unspecific as it is precise, as practical as it is theoretical, as applied as it is basic (essential), with a big picture that is in-depth, digital, tangible, innovative and traditional. Holistic. As I mentioned, this is precisely why we must continue working until the future arrives.

* **Click here** if you want to know what we are and what we could become.

This article is part of the series “**Education in the Cultural and Creative Industries**” created by KSIgune - Higher Education and Research Cluster for CCIs in the Basque Country, in the framework of the Creativity World Forum 2024. The experts, authors of the articles, have participated in the thematic area “Education in CCIs” coordinated by KSIgune.

The complete series is available at www.ksigune.eus

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Euskampus Fundazioa is an organisation working to **connect** people, disciplines and institutions (following the Quintuple Helix innovation framework), to **co-create** knowledge and solutions for the common good.

In the field of CCIs, Euskampus Fundazioa has been commissioned by the Basque Government as the coordinator entity of **KSIgune** – Basque Higher Education and Research Cluster for CCIs, which promotes and supports the development of education, training, research & innovation and transfer projects based on cooperation between Higher Education Institutions and agents of the cultural and creative sectors.