

Needs analysis report

Greece & North Macedonia



CRAFTS+

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1. Introduction

Traditional craftsmanship and the related skills and knowledge constitute an indispensable cultural heritage. Craftsmanship is not static; it evolves and connects people, forming cultural bonds and identities. It serves as a repository of knowledge worldwide, bringing communities together in creation and influencing creativity in the global market. Preserving traditional craftsmanship means protecting a rich heritage of skills and artistry, essential for maintaining cultural diversity. Nevertheless, the imperative to modernize craft practices is paramount to ensure their relevance and sustainability in contemporary contexts. As technology advances and consumer demands shift, embracing modern techniques and innovations can revitalize traditional crafts, making them more accessible, efficient, and appealing to new generations. This evolution not only preserves heritage but also positions crafts as vibrant contributors to today's creative and economic landscapes.

A main objective of the CRAFTS+ project is to develop customized training and capacity-building materials in order to address the need for the enhancement of skills in crafts (ceramics) design and development, so as to enable sharing knowledge and information for improving practice in crafts - ceramics and support individual practitioners develop sustainable income/business model.

The project is addressed to:

- Crafts Practitioners seeking to enhance their craft skills or delve into business and marketing aspects.
- Crafts Hobbyists looking to explore diverse pottery techniques and facets.
- Crafts Educators aiming to expand their knowledge and impart it to their students.
- Entrepreneurs interested in exploring the crafts and pottery sector for business growth opportunities.

The purpose of the report includes the following elements:

- to analyse and disseminate interesting and representative practices and initiatives related to crafts and training, with attention to ceramics, from local to EU/global level
- to recognize which competences are important for practitioners in the ceramics sector & adult educators

This report is an essential tool that provides a framework for all the Crafts+ project activities, and especially for the elaboration of the Crafts+ training toolbox. These results constitute the basis for developing the Crafts+ training course, so as to respond to the target group needs and offer tailor-made learning opportunities that will contribute to the development of essential entrepreneurial/business competencies for crafts practitioners and educators.





2. Methodology – Research design

The research design for the production of this report includes a blend of qualitative and quantitative data. The information includes insights from local market experts (representatives of the main target groups), gathered by semi-structured interviews.

In the context of the qualitative research activity, the project partners:

- Conducted desktop research, using specific templates, to identify: a) good practices of adult education in the field of crafts and specifically ceramics, b) existing initiatives on the topics of crafts with specific focus on ceramics, as a sub sector of creative industries, and entrepreneurship with a focus on transition from informal to formal micro business related to the needs for the competences of the target groups.
- Created 3 different questionnaires, so as to conduct semi-structured interviews with 3 distinct profiles: a) crafts entrepreneurs b) academic professors/adult trainers c) members of associations of ceramic crafts. The questionnaires (available in Annex) combine a pre-determined set of open questions (questions that prompt discussion) with the opportunity for the interviewer to explore particular themes or responses further, diversified according to each interviewee profile.
- Developed a survey tool, which contains open and closed questions, and items related to specific criteria in the context of the training needs research activity, assessed using a Likert scale from 1-low to 5/10-high, as per level of respondents' agreement with the respective statement.

The following table illustrates the information gathered to formulate this report, along with the tools devised for carrying out the research and analyzing the data, as per the agreement made by the partnership. The research employs both qualitative and quantitative methodologies.

INFO TO COLLECT	METHOD	TOOLS APPLIED
Literature review, good practices & initiatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Desktop research	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Template for good practices• Template for initiatives
Data/Insights for upskilling needs & training methods	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Semi structured interviews• Data collection via online survey	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Templates for interviews (one per profile)
Recognition of upskilling needs & training methods	Analysis of: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Interviews• Survey data• Good practices/initiatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Thematic analysis• Descriptive statistics





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The research design and instruments were devised to facilitate target group analysis for the Crafts+ training initiative. Its primary aims include identifying the characteristics of potential trainees for the program, understanding their needs to tailor the training content effectively, and exploring potential additional beneficiary groups who could also profit from similar training modules. This research serves as a structured approach to gather insights into the characteristics, needs, and preferences of the intended trainees, thereby aiding in the design and customization of the training program to maximize its efficacy and relevance.

3. Overview of the ceramic sectors

3.1 Overview of the ceramics sector in Greece

The term "ceramic" originates from the ancient Greek word "keramos," meaning "potter's clay." Clay containers and other artifacts are prevalent in Greek archaeological museums, reflecting their abundance in excavations, with around 80,000 decorated vases discovered in Attica alone. Over centuries, ceramics have evolved, with many Greek regions still hosting pottery workshops producing aesthetically valuable objects. Particularly for islands, pottery remains integral to their identity, each region's ceramics distinguished by colors, patterns, and regional terminology.

While the significance of this tradition was somewhat overlooked in the past, there's now a growing interest in traditional ceramics, prompting efforts to document and preserve local techniques. The Greek Ministry of Culture has recognized the ceramic traditions of Sifnos and the Kourtzi family from Lesbos as part of Greece's intangible cultural heritage. Concurrently, contemporary ceramists advocate for pottery as an independent art form, exploring its historical and contemporary roots and diverse expressive possibilities. They are "rediscovering" clay for conceptual art, contributing to a ceramic renaissance showcased in an increasing number of exhibitions and venues.

While there's a growing interest in traditional techniques by the Greek state, it's also crucial to acknowledge current trends, technological advancements, and sustainable materials and practices in ceramics. The vast majority of companies in the sector in Greece use traditional techniques, with a great lag in modernisation. For this reason, the products they produce are mainly decorative. Their production process, their organisation and their mentality create difficulties in adapting to new imported know-how, especially for the production of utilitarian products of greater economic interest.

The lack of knowledge and continuous training of craftsmen often leads to simple copying, resulting in increased competition. In Greece there is an extremely deficient educational





process in this sector: there are very few state educational institutions and state diplomas and a complete absence of ceramics courses at school.

Despite being ranked 12th among European countries in the Ceramic Household & Ornamental Article Manufacturing industry, Greece faces a challenging trend of declining market size. According to IBIS World, the industry's value stands at €13.5 million in 2024, with an average annual decrease of 8.5% between 2019 and 2024. This persistent decline underscores the need for strategic interventions to revitalize the sector and harness its cultural and artistic heritage to drive innovation and sustainability. While traditional techniques and heritage remain integral, embracing modern trends, technology, training and sustainable practices will be crucial for the industry's future resilience and growth. Efforts to leverage both tradition and innovation can position Greece's ceramics sector as a dynamic contributor to the national economy and cultural landscape in the years ahead, following the example of other Southern European countries, such as Italy and Spain.

3.2 Overview of the ceramics sector in North Macedonia

North Macedonia, is country rich in cultural heritage, particularly in traditional pottery. The craft has been influenced by various cultures over the centuries, contributing to a diverse array of forms and techniques. Pottery is one of the oldest skills practiced in North Macedonia, with evidence dating back to the Neolithic era. Early pottery was hand-shaped without the use of a potter's wheel. Over time, influences from classical cultures, ancient Balkan and Slavic traditions, Byzantine, and oriental styles have shaped the evolution of Macedonian ceramics.

The cities of Skopje and Prilep have long-standing traditions in pottery making, with archaeological records showing continuous production from prehistoric times through antiquity and the Middle Ages. Prilep, in particular, was a notable center for pottery in the medieval period, especially known for producing water vessels.

The Slavs who settled in the Balkans incorporated many cultural elements from the peoples they encountered, including advanced pottery techniques influenced by Roman and Byzantine practices. During the Ottoman period, the craft remained predominantly in the hands of the Christian population, though it was renamed "chumlekchii" in the Turkish language. Çanakkale pottery from Turkey also influenced the shapes and styles of ceramics produced during this time.

Distinct regional styles developed in Macedonia, with each area contributing unique forms and techniques to the country's ceramic heritage. For example, Debar vessels are known for their weight and monumental quality, while Veles is famous for its baroque-shaped vessels, similar to those from Çanakkale. These regional variations reflect the adaptation of external



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influences to local production capabilities and artistic interpretations, forming a distinctive pottery style.

Pottery production in Macedonia has traditionally been concentrated in areas with high-quality clay deposits, often found along river valleys and old lake basins. Historically significant pottery centers include Skopje (with the village of Drachevo), Veles, Resen, Struga, Debar, Tetovo (village of Blace), Prilep, Kicevo (village of Vraneshtica), Radovich (village of Gabrovci), Strumica, and Berovo.

Today, the number of active potters in Macedonia has dwindled to about three dozen. Specific locations include two potters in the village of Zletovo (municipality of Probishtip), two in Kumanovo, one in Veles, two in Negotino, one in Kavadarci, one in Strumica, and one in Resen. The western part of Macedonia has around twelve potters, primarily in the village of Vraneshtica, which stands as the last significant stronghold of pottery in the country.

At present, there is only one ceramic colony in North Macedonia, an annual event held in the city of Resen. This colony gathers ceramic crafters from the region and provides valuable networking opportunities for artisans. Most of these artisans work not only with ceramics but also with other materials, showcasing their versatility. Those interested in learning ceramic crafts often take practical courses from masters in the villages. Traditional ceramic products, primarily used for food and drink, are especially popular during religious holidays.

Additionally, ceramics play a central role in the focus of museums in North Macedonia, where the restoration and preservation of archaeological items are prioritized. Museums regularly offer training and educational courses for students and professionals, and occasionally organize workshops for young children as part of school visits, fostering an early appreciation for the craft.

This rich yet endangered tradition underscores the importance of developing targeted training courses. These should address the varied skill levels of practitioners, from beginners to masters, and emphasize both traditional techniques and modern business practices. By fostering a comprehensive understanding of pottery's historical and cultural significance, alongside practical and entrepreneurial skills, these programs can ensure the sustainability and revitalization of Macedonia's ceramic heritage.

Public high school of fine arts and design "Lazar Lichenoski" is the only secondary school where you can study art and design in the area of ceramics. The programme only offers arts courses and one course on business and entrepreneurship.





4. Research elements, Analysis & Results

This chapter presents the results of the Crafts+ research, aimed at delineating effective strategies for enhancing the training of artists and ceramists within the ceramics sector. Through a multifaceted approach encompassing the presentation of good practices, examination of entrepreneurial initiatives, analysis of semi-structured interviews with key stakeholders, and a comprehensive statistical survey, this study aims to understand the details of craftspeople working with ceramics and figure out what specific training they need. By combining information from different research methods, it permits partners to gain insights and create custom courses that match the changing needs of people in the ceramics field. This will help them grow professionally and keep the ceramics industry strong over time.

4.1 Good practices & initiatives

The partners identified 10 good practices in the field of education/training for crafts with particular focus on ceramics and mapped 9 entrepreneurship initiatives, from local to global level. Below you will find a brief description and links for the identified good practices and initiatives.

4.1.1 Presentation of good practices

- **Ceramics in Europe – Online, EU-based:** <https://www.ceramicsineurope.eu/>

[Ceramics in Europe](https://www.ceramicsineurope.eu/) is an online educational platform born from the CERDEE project, funded by the EU. This project aimed to enhance entrepreneurship among ceramists in Central Europe. It involved a network of knowledge institutes, SMEs, regions, and museums. Project partners collaborated to create a joint knowledge pool, assessing existing knowledge and economic potential. Deliverables included EU-wide trainings and education outreach activities, supported by IT-tools for accessibility and marketing. The platform acts as a hub for knowledge, marketing, and cooperation, featuring educational material, a database of ceramists in Europe, and e-learning tools. It builds upon a previous project, "Ceramics and its Dimensions," and involves 8 official partners and 14 associated partners across 6 countries. With a budget of 2.2M€, CerDee has established a networking hub and organized workshops, events, and exhibitions. The platform offers up-to-date information and techniques, focusing on ceramists' business development in Central Europe.

The platform Ceramics in Europe comprises a good practice joint initiative in terms of educational tools in the ceramics sector, created by knowledgeable partners across central Europe. The CERDEE project and its educational platform have many similarities with the scope of CRAFTS+ and therefore is of particular relevance as a good practice initiative, on the subject of ceramists, training and entrepreneurship.

- **TeachinArt – Online, based in US:** <https://www.teachinart.com/>

TeachinArt offers comprehensive e-courses in various art disciplines, including ceramics, led by professional full-time artists. Their video demonstrations are detailed and engaging, providing practical tips and techniques based on real-life experiences. Instructors, who have international experience and recognition, are dedicated to promoting the arts and supporting fellow artists. The platform values student feedback and incorporates it into their curriculum. Unlike traditional workshops, online classes minimize distractions, allowing for focused learning. TeachinArt celebrates its diverse student body and aims to foster a global teaching society where students can actively participate in knowledge sharing. With its professional instructors, detailed videos, practical instruction, and vibrant community, TeachinArt stands out as a premier platform for artistic education.

TeachinArt stands out as a good practices in ceramics education for its artist-centric approach and online learning model. Founded by artists, it caters to the needs of fellow artists, fostering a supportive environment for growth. Its online platform enables global access to quality education, democratizing artistic learning. With professional-led courses, TeachinArt excels in both education and business, becoming a leading platform in ceramics education.

- **The Ceramic School – online, based in Austria:** <https://ceramic.school/>

The Ceramic School is on a mission to spread the love of ceramics, inspire, connect, and teach fellow enthusiasts worldwide. As traditional ceramic courses face closures, The Ceramic School aims to bring comprehensive online courses to the masses. Renowned ceramic artists will guide students from the comfort of their own homes, offering a diverse learning experience. With a thriving community of over 200k fans and a supportive Facebook group, The Ceramic School embraces technology, design, inspiration, and social networking to create opportunities and share the passion for ceramics.

The Ceramic School exemplifies good practice by combining exceptional educational offerings with an entrepreneurial spirit. By bringing high-quality ceramic courses online, it makes them accessible to a global audience, led by renowned ceramic artists who inspire and provide comprehensive instruction. The platform fosters a supportive community of learners and promotes the love of ceramics through innovative features like The Ceramics Directory, which serves as a centralized hub for the ceramics community worldwide. Its integration of technology, such as Facebook Live, facilitates interactive teaching and community engagement. Furthermore, The Ceramic School's involvement in design, pottery supply sales, and sharing inspirational content demonstrates its commitment to nurturing both the artistic and business aspects of ceramics. Overall, The Ceramic School's dedication to education, entrepreneurship, and fostering a global ceramics community makes it a commendable initiative that educates, inspires, and connects enthusiasts worldwide.



- **KORKODILOS, ceramic studio in Athens, GR:** <https://korkodilosathens.gr/>

Korkodilos, a ceramics workshop founded by visual artist Alexandros Douras in Athens, Greece, offers a unique and holistic approach to ceramic education. Unlike traditional workshops, Korkodilos aims to create a warm, inviting atmosphere that stimulates the senses and promotes contemporary design and art. Classes focus on practical application rather than theory, allowing students to learn through hands-on experience and play. The core structure includes monthly classes for all skill levels, emphasizing individual project organization and independent work. Membership options provide access to the workshop and equipment for experienced individuals, while private events, corporate bonding sessions, and kids' classes offer tailored experiences for various groups. Korkodilos also offers online classes, delivering materials and instruction directly to students' homes. With a team of experienced educators and specialists, Korkodilos stands out for its comprehensive approach to ceramic education, fostering creativity, self-expression, and personal growth through clay.

Korkodilos distinguishes itself through its commitment to flexibility, customization, and adaptability in catering to diverse needs and preferences. Offering a range of options such as private classes, corporate bonding events, kids' classes, and online learning, Korkodilos tailors experiences to individual, group, or company requirements. This adaptability has earned it a reputation as one of Athens' most esteemed ceramic studios, making it a compelling case study. With comprehensive offerings in training and entrepreneurship for individuals of all skill levels, both in-person and online, Korkodilos excels in meeting diverse needs. Their expertise in organizing tailored workshops and events further sets them apart, serving as a model for other pottery studios in the education sector.

- **Centre for the Study of Modern Pottery – Museum, Educational Centre in Athens, GR:** <http://potterymuseum.gr/>

The Centre for the Study of Modern Pottery – G. Psaropoulos Foundation, established in 1987 by Betty Psaropoulou and later becoming a Foundation in 1993, is a museum, research, and educational organization dedicated to Greek pottery from the 16th to the 20th century. Supervised by the Culture, Sport, and Finance Ministries, it operates as a non-profit foundation with the aim of discovering, collecting, preserving, studying, and presenting all aspects of pottery art. The Center offers various educational activities, including programs for schools and individuals with disabilities, pottery workshops for adults, summer camps, and museum educational kits. Their comprehensive ceramics program consists of three annual cycles, covering fundamental techniques in ceramics and advancing to specialized courses in pottery construction, decoration, and firing. Led by archaeologist and ceramist Nikos Liaros,





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the program includes guest potters and collaborations with scientific institutions and universities, enriching the curriculum with specialized seminars and themed excursions.

The Center conducts on-the-spot investigations throughout Greece, capturing traditional workshops and furnaces, recording the pottery production process, and participating in scientific conferences and workshops. Their collection of over 3,000 ceramic objects represents almost all regions of Greece that developed pottery production in modern times. The archive-library covers a wide range of topics related to ceramics, archaeology, history, folklore, and ethnology. The permanent exhibition showcases traditional workshops and vessels from the early 19th to mid-20th century, providing visitors with a comprehensive understanding of Greek traditional pottery through visual material, re-enactments, and displays. Seasonal exhibitions feature traditional and modern ceramics, as well as other art exhibitions, to attract a diverse audience and promote the rich heritage of Greek pottery.

The Modern Pottery Study Center stands out as a good practice due to its comprehensive approach to ceramic art education and preservation. By offering diverse workshops, access to resources, expert-led seminars, and engaging exhibitions, the center provides an immersive learning experience. Supervised by the Ministry of Culture, it actively contributes to preserving and promoting the cultural heritage of ceramics through educational programs and collaborations with institutions. Its proactive initiatives engage the public and foster a deeper appreciation for ceramics, making it a model for successful integration of education, preservation, and promotion in the field.

- **Askardamykti, School of Technical Professions & Greek Traditional Crafts in Athens, GR:** <https://www.askardamykti.com/>

Askardamykti is a lifelong learning center and creative space that blends art, learning, and entrepreneurship. Guided by their manifesto, they believe in the transformative power of art and the importance of acquiring knowledge. Their philosophy emphasizes the coexistence of different arts, fostering creative exchange and personal growth. Askardamykti cultivates technical skills alongside artistic expression, empowering individuals to embark on their professional journeys as "modern craftsmen." With fields of study ranging from shoes and clothes to pottery and interior design, they offer mini workshops and independent online courses. Participants receive necessary materials and tools, engage with instructional videos, and have the option for live meetings with instructors. Additionally, their youth entrepreneurship seminars provide guidance and support for individuals starting their own ventures. Askardamykti creates a unique environment where creativity, knowledge, and entrepreneurship converge, fostering lifelong learning and personal development.

Askardamykti stands out as a best practice initiative in arts & crafts education. By integrating art, learning, and entrepreneurship, it offers a holistic approach to education that prepares





individuals for real-world success. The center's emphasis on technical skill development, artistic expression, and the coexistence of different arts fosters a vibrant and immersive learning environment. Furthermore, their commitment to providing online courses expands access to education, allowing individuals to enhance their skills from anywhere, reaching a broader audience.

- **Sifnos Pottery Museum, Museum - Educational Centre in Sifnos island, GR:** <https://sifnospottery.gr/>

The Sifnos Pottery Museum is dedicated to promoting and preserving the rich pottery heritage of Sifnos through a range of cultural, educational, and recreational activities. By showcasing exhibitions, offering ceramics courses, and hosting seminars, the museum actively promotes the cultural identity of the island on an international level. It serves as a hub for celebrating the art of pottery, contributing to the preservation of Sifnos' unique cultural heritage for generations to come. Activities of the museum include: Ceramics Courses with the aim to generate ideas, seminars covering the evolution of the art and periodic exhibitions with participation of visitors and ceramists from Greece and abroad.

The Sifnos Pottery Museum is a special institution that promotes and preserves the pottery traditions of Sifnos through cultural, educational, and recreational activities. With its emphasis on cultural heritage and educational initiatives, the Sifnos Pottery Museum stands as a distinguished institution, enriching the community by fostering a deeper understanding and appreciation of pottery art.

The Sifnos Pottery Museum stands as an exemplary model of best practices in the pottery sector, seamlessly blending cultural preservation with educational activities. Notably, the museum's collaboration with the local municipality and the Ministry of Culture has led to the planned establishment of a Pottery School within its premises, further enhancing its value and impact. This showcases the museum's ability to adapt and evolve, leveraging its rich heritage and centuries-old pottery tradition to contribute to and transform the sector.

- **Crafts Council UK - Ceramics Skills Courses, UK:** <https://www.craftscouncil.org.uk/>

The Crafts Council UK offers a comprehensive range of ceramics skills courses designed to cater to both beginners and experienced practitioners. These courses encompass a variety of techniques, including pottery wheel throwing, hand-building, glazing, and surface decoration. Taught by skilled instructors, the courses provide hands-on experience and detailed guidance, ensuring participants gain a deep understanding of the craft. The curriculum is structured to accommodate different learning paces and styles, fostering a supportive environment where learners can explore their creativity and enhance their technical skills. The courses are taught by experienced ceramic artists and educators who provide hands-on training in studio



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settings. Participants have the opportunity to learn traditional and contemporary ceramic skills and techniques.

These courses significantly contribute to the development of ceramic craftsmanship in the UK and EU by offering accessible, high-quality training opportunities. By equipping individuals with essential skills and knowledge, the Crafts Council UK helps to sustain and grow the ceramics community. The courses not only preserve traditional techniques but also encourage innovation and artistic expression, fostering a vibrant and dynamic ceramics culture. Additionally, by making these courses widely available, the Crafts Council UK supports career development and entrepreneurial ventures within the ceramics industry, bolstering the economic viability of this important craft sector.

- **Ecole Nationale Supérieure d'Art de Limoges (Ensad Limoges), FR:**
<https://www.ensad-limoges.fr/en/>

Ecole Nationale Supérieure d'Art de Limoges (Ensad Limoges) is a prestigious art school in France, celebrated for its specialized training in ceramics alongside other artistic disciplines. The school offers a rigorous and comprehensive curriculum that covers various aspects of ceramic art, including design, sculpture, and functional pottery. Students benefit from state-of-the-art facilities and the expertise of distinguished faculty members, fostering an environment of creativity and technical excellence. Ensad Limoges is dedicated to providing its students with a profound understanding of both traditional and contemporary ceramic practices.

The ceramics program at Ensad Limoges provides comprehensive education in ceramic techniques, design, and theory. Students have access to well-equipped studios and workshops. Ensad Limoges significantly influences the ceramics field in France by nurturing talent and fostering innovation. Its rigorous curriculum and emphasis on artistic expression drive the advancement of ceramic craftsmanship. The school's graduates are well-equipped with the skills and creative vision necessary to excel in the ceramics industry, contributing to its evolution and sustainability. By promoting both traditional techniques and contemporary approaches, Ensad Limoges ensures the ongoing vitality and relevance of ceramic arts. The institution's commitment to excellence and creativity helps to maintain France's esteemed reputation in the global ceramic's community.

- **Ceramics Ireland:** <https://www.ceramicsireland.ie/>

Ceramics Ireland is a vibrant membership organization committed to advancing the art of ceramics throughout the country. It offers a variety of workshops, masterclasses, and events year-round, tailored to ceramic enthusiasts at all stages of their artistic journey. These programs, conducted by seasoned professionals, explore diverse techniques such as wheel throwing, hand-crafting, glazing, and surface decoration. Ceramics Ireland also hosts





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exhibitions and community gatherings, creating a dynamic platform for learning, sharing, and celebrating the craft of ceramics.

The organization invites renowned ceramic artists from Ireland and abroad to conduct workshops and masterclasses on various topics such as throwing, hand building, surface decoration, and kiln firing techniques. Ceramics Ireland plays a crucial role in the growth and development of the ceramics community in Ireland by offering valuable learning opportunities through its workshops and masterclasses. These hands-on experiences enable participants to enhance their technical skills and deepen their knowledge of ceramics. The organization's initiatives foster a sense of community and collaboration among ceramic artists, encouraging the exchange of ideas and techniques. By nurturing both emerging and established artists, Ceramics Ireland helps to sustain and invigorate the country's rich tradition of ceramic arts, ensuring its continued evolution and relevance.

- **Keramik-Handwerk e.V. (KHW), DE:**
https://www.etsy.com/uk/market/keramik_handwerk

Keramik-Handwerk e.V. (KHW) is a prominent professional association dedicated to advancing ceramic craftsmanship in Germany. It serves as a pivotal resource for ceramic craftsmen by providing a variety of training courses, seminars, and workshops. These offerings cater to both aspiring artisans and established professionals, covering essential techniques and fostering a deeper understanding of ceramic artistry. KHW's commitment to education and skill development contributes significantly to the preservation of traditional ceramic practices while promoting innovation and contemporary approaches in the field.

KHW organizes training programs led by experienced ceramic artists and experts in various areas of ceramic production, including traditional techniques, design, and marketing. The training initiatives led by Keramik-Handwerk e.V. (KHW) play a crucial role in preserving and promoting traditional ceramic craftsmanship in Germany. By offering practical skills training and professional development opportunities, the association equips participants with the knowledge and techniques necessary to excel in the ceramics industry. Furthermore, KHW facilitates networking within the ceramics community, fostering collaboration and exchange of ideas among craftsmen. This collective effort not only strengthens the skills and capabilities of individual artisans but also ensures the continuity and vibrancy of Germany's ceramic heritage in a modern context.





4.1.2 Presentation of initiatives in the crafts ceramic sector - Greece

- **THREESOME CERAMICS, studio and ceramic art shop in Athens, GR:**
<https://threesomeceramics.com/>

The Threesome Ceramics is an exceptional workshop space that operates primarily as an open studio, allowing students to work at their own pace while receiving guidance and learning various techniques. The freedom of creative expression is invaluable within this environment. Founded by Vicky Topalidou and Christina Papadopoulou, the Threesome Ceramics comprises two spaces—a gallery where art exhibitions are held, and a fully equipped studio where all the creative work takes place. With a clear direction of functioning as an open studio, the space encourages harmonious coexistence, collaboration, and co-creation among participants. The studio also offers classes and workshops, providing opportunities for individuals to learn, experiment, and progress together in their ceramic journeys, with each person following their own aesthetic and skill-based path. The transformative nature of the Threesome Ceramics studio allows individuals to discover their own unique style and explore their artistic visions, tailored to their personal motivations and interests. It offers services for Hobbyists, Arts & Crafts enthusiasts, Athenian residents & visitors.

Threesome Ceramics stands out as a special initiative due to its combination of artistic entrepreneurship and an initiative designed by artists themselves, embodying a unique blend of artistic vision and business acumen. Threesome Ceramics is not only known for its educational offerings, but what truly sets it apart is its business model. Founded by two artists, the studio seamlessly combines their artistic skills with a hybrid approach, serving as an art shop, exhibition space and a training center. This innovative blend allows them to leverage their expertise, offering a space where art enthusiasts can both purchase artwork and engage in creative learning experiences. Threesome Ceramics stands as a testament to how artists can successfully merge their talents with entrepreneurial endeavors, creating a dynamic and multifaceted studio environment.

- **Elektra Ceramics- Handmade ceramics shop (physical & online) in Athens, GR:**
<https://elektraceramics.com/>

Elektra Ceramics is a respected pottery studio and online platform offering unique and high-quality handmade ceramic creations. From functional tableware to intricate sculptures, Elektra's collection showcases a harmonious blend of traditional techniques and contemporary design. Elektra Ceramics Studio also offers engaging workshops and team building workshops for small and large groups centered around clay. These hands-on experiences provide participants with the opportunity to explore their creativity and learn pottery techniques under the guidance of the creator. It is a place that welcomes Ceramics enthusiasts, hand-made product seekers, Athenians & visitors and has also an online users via its digital e-commerce platform.



Elektra Ceramics exemplifies how a personal passion for ceramics can evolve into a successful micro-business. What started as a love for creating unique ceramic pieces has blossomed into a thriving enterprise that combines artistic expression with entrepreneurship. Elektra Ceramics serves as a prime example of a thriving micro-business within the crafts and creative sector. Through their exceptional craftsmanship and artistic vision, they have achieved remarkable success in creating and offering unique ceramic creations. Their achievements demonstrate the potential for small-scale enterprises to thrive in the creative industry and achieve impactful results.

- **Visalo ceramics, handmade ceramics shop & café in Chania, GR:**
<https://www.instagram.com/visaloceramics/>

Visalo ceramics is a small ceramics workshop, combined with a café, located in Askyfou, Chania, a meeting point for Ceramics enthusiasts, hand-made product lovers and locals. What makes it truly special is their strategic use of social media platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, and Facebook. Through effective online marketing and engagement, Visalo Ceramics has successfully made a significant impact in the digital realm, supporting the long-term sustainability of their business in a small village setting.

Visalo ceramics serves as a compelling case study due to its unique integration of a ceramics workshop and café, combined with its successful utilization of social media platforms. This innovative approach demonstrates how a small business in a remote location can leverage digital marketing strategies to create a strong online presence and attract customers. The combination of traditional craftsmanship, a cozy café atmosphere, and effective online marketing makes Visalo Ceramics a noteworthy case study in creative entrepreneurship and sustainable business practices.

- **Serene Home, creative studio & online shop based in Thessaloniki, GR:**
<https://www.serenehome.eu/>

Serene Home is an online shop that specializes in offering an exquisite selection of clay-centric home decor products. With a strong emphasis on creativity, environmental consciousness, and sustainable practices, Serene Home curates a unique range of thoughtfully designed items that bring tranquility and elegance to living spaces. Serene Home's commitment to craftsmanship and their deep-rooted passion shines through in every clay-based product they offer. It is platform that attracts Individuals interested in sustainable and eco-friendly living, Interior designers and decorators, Gift shoppers and Ceramics enthusiasts.

Serene Home stands out as a special online shop due to its strategic use of contemporary digital marketing, which includes a visually appealing website, engaging social media presence, and a strong brand identity. By effectively promoting their unique selling point of



sustainability and eco-friendly living, Serene Home has identified its niche in the market and offers a distinctive and memorable shopping experience for customers.

Serene Home is a prime example of best practices in the crafts and creative industry. With their clay-based home decor products and strategic digital marketing, they excel in engaging their audience and promoting sustainability. Their success showcases the ideal combination of craftsmanship, creativity, and modern marketing techniques for businesses in this industry.

- **Spiro Ceramics, pottery studio in Heraklion, GR:** <https://spiro.gr/>

Spiro Ceramics is a pottery studio and online platform that specializes in creating handcrafted ceramic pieces. Their collection includes functional and decorative items that highlight the beauty of clay. With a focus on craftsmanship and unique designs, Spiro Ceramics offers a range of high-quality ceramic products. Clients consist of home décor enthusiasts, interior designers and ceramic enthusiasts.

Spiro Ceramics stands out as a remarkable case study in the ceramics industry. Founded by Spiros Rokanas, who made a transition from silversmithing to ceramics, the studio proudly displays his exquisite handcrafted creations. Spiros's ongoing pursuit of knowledge, inspired by his mother's expertise, has fueled his passion for ceramics and served as the driving force behind the establishment of this business.

Spiros Rokana's remarkable journey in the ceramics field serves as an inspiring example of the power of passion and self-education. Despite lacking a formal ceramic art background, Spiros's unwavering dedication and commitment to continuous learning, workshops, and extensive reading enabled him to master the handbuilding technique. His story underscores the significance of training and educational programs in fostering artistic and entrepreneurial growth.

4.1.3 Presentation of initiatives in the crafts ceramic sector – other countries

In North Macedonia, the ceramics crafts industry is facing a critical decline. Despite a rich tradition in pottery and ceramics, the industry is slowly dying. One of the primary reasons is the lack of new artisans entering the trade, largely due to the insufficient profits it offers. Younger generations are deterred by the limited financial prospects, leading to a decrease in skilled craftsmen and a gradual loss of traditional techniques.

To address this issue, it is crucial to draw inspiration from successful international examples. The discussants have put forward some international cases which might be helpful in the process of re-development of the ceramic crafts sector.



By integrating innovative approaches, North Macedonia could revitalize its ceramics industry in relation to crafts. Encouraging online education, offering entrepreneurial support, and creating networking opportunities could attract new talent. Additionally, promoting the cultural and historical significance of ceramics can inspire pride and interest in preserving this important craft. Through these efforts, the industry might not only survive but thrive once again.

Here are some additional good practice cases which might be helpful in redevelopment of the ceramic crafts sector in North Macedonia:

- **Buchan Pottery, Scotland:** <http://www.studiopottery.com/>

Buchan Pottery, located in Scotland, exemplifies a successful integration of ceramic craftsmanship and business acumen. This pottery studio not only produces high-quality ceramics but also operates as a thriving business enterprise. Buchan Pottery specializes in handcrafted ceramics inspired by the local landscape and traditional Scottish designs. They have successfully combined artistic excellence with sustainable business practices, fostering community engagement and supporting local artisans. Through workshops, retail sales, and collaborations with local businesses and artists, Buchan Pottery contributes to the cultural and economic vitality of the region while promoting the artistry and heritage of Scottish ceramics on both national and international stages.

Buchan Pottery has significantly impacted the local economy by combining ceramic craftsmanship with effective business strategies. Through retail sales and workshops, they have fostered community engagement and supported local artisans. By emphasizing sustainable practices and showcasing Scottish designs, Buchan Pottery has enhanced the region's cultural identity while contributing to its economic growth through tourism and local partnerships.

- **Fiskars Village, Finland:** <https://fiskarsvillage.fi/>

Fiskars Village, is renowned for its vibrant arts and crafts community, including a strong presence in ceramic arts. The village hosts several ceramic workshops and studios where artists create and sell their works. Fiskars Village emphasizes sustainability and craftsmanship, promoting local ceramic artists through exhibitions, markets, and collaborative projects. This community-based approach not only supports artistic innovation but also contributes to the economic development of the region by attracting visitors interested in high-quality, locally-made ceramics.

Fiskars Village plays a pivotal role in the economic sustainability of its community by promoting local ceramic artisans and their businesses. The village's emphasis on craftsmanship and sustainability attracts tourists and buyers interested in unique, locally-made ceramics. By hosting workshops, exhibitions, and markets, Fiskars Village supports





artistic innovation and business development, fostering a thriving ceramics industry that benefits both artisans and the local economy.

- **Atelier NL, Netherlands:** <https://www.ateliernl.com/>

Atelier NL is a design studio based in the Netherlands that specializes in ceramic art and design. Known for their innovative approach to ceramics, Atelier NL combines traditional craftsmanship with contemporary design principles. They collaborate with local artisans and businesses to create bespoke ceramic products that emphasize sustainability and local materials. Atelier NL's commitment to craftsmanship and business innovation has garnered international acclaim, with their works featured in galleries and exhibitions worldwide. Their approach not only promotes Dutch ceramic heritage but also sets a benchmark for sustainable and socially responsible practices in the ceramics industry.

This approach not only enhances product authenticity but also strengthens local supply chains and supports regional economies. Atelier NL's commitment to sustainability attracts environmentally conscious consumers and distinguishes them in the global market. Their business practices not only promote Dutch ceramic heritage but also drive economic growth through ethical and innovative approaches to production and distribution.

4.2 Crafts+ Survey

The survey tool consisted of 8 questions regarding **demographics** (gender, age, country of origin, rural/urban based, occupation in crafts and income, 3 questions assessing professional specific skills (level of craftsmanship, education/training received and type), and 2 questions for product and service placement to better understand the profile of respondents.

Following, 5 questions assess **attitudes, perceptions, upskilling needs, beneficial training topics and engaging training methods & learning tools** for the target group, further developed in a total of 34 items which was assessed using this Likert scale from 1-low to 5 or 10-high, as per level of respondents' agreement with the respective statement and 5 open questions were included as well, so as to enable participants to give personal meaning to their answers about **barriers and opportunities** and include any other aspects that they perceive as important to be stressed. Lastly, 2 multiple choice questions were included on **current training status and willingness to learn**.

A total of 37 responses from Greece were received. 13 respondents were obtained from North Macedonia. The full list of items and results are displayed below, as well as remarks about the survey results are further analyzed in the discussion part. Graphs illustrating the survey results are available in Annex.



Respondents profile in Greece & results

The survey data reveals a diverse profile among respondents within the ceramics community. In terms of gender distribution, there is a notable majority of female respondents, comprising 56.8%, while male respondents represent 35.1% of the sample. Additionally, 8.1% identify as non-binary, indicating a representation of gender diversity within the community.

Regarding age demographics, the majority of respondents fall within the 25-40 age range, with the highest concentration in the 25-30 bracket. However, there is also notable participation from older age groups, with 6 respondents above the age of 50.

Concerning primary income sources, a significant portion, accounting for 56.8%, derives their income from other economic activities. Only 1 out of 5 of the respondents stated that the primary source of income comes from the practice in crafts.

Furthermore, the survey reflects varying levels of craftsmanship among respondents, with 35.1% identifying as beginners, 43.2% as intermediate, and 21.6% as master craftsmen. In addition, the majority of the respondents live and practice in urban areas. This spectrum of skill levels underscores the importance of tailored training programs that cater to the diverse needs and expertise levels within the ceramics community. With regards to educational background about 62% of the respondents have received formal education and the majority of them hold a high-school diploma.

Last but not least, the responses for the target market and products placement reveal that 54.1% of sample work on functional ceramics intended for daily use, so there is an emphasis on practicality and utility in consumer preferences. This is complemented by the 21.6% segment dedicated to souvenirs aimed at tourists, suggesting a niche market catering to visitors seeking cultural.

Additionally, 24.3% of the sample works with artistic ceramics, underscoring a demand for pieces intended for display in galleries and museums, indicative of an appreciation for craftsmanship and aesthetic value. Those answers reflect a diverse consumer base with varied preferences, emphasizing the importance of offering a range of ceramic products to cater to different market segments and maximize market penetration.

Assessing training needs and competencies

The table below illustrates the findings about attitudes, perceptions, upskilling needs, preferred training topics, and effective learning methods and tools tailored to the target group and relevant comments per category. A comprehensive understanding of the target audience's viewpoints and requirements was sought. The results provide a detailed examination of their needs and preferences serving as a roadmap for the development of tailor-made aimed at enhancing professional development and fostering innovation within the crafts sector.



No	Item- Question	Average scores	Comments
1	Your product / service will improve by enhancing your skills and knowledge of (1=low impact, 5=high impact)		
1.1	Composite materials	3.88 / 5	Overall, respondents see the greatest potential for improvement in aspects related to new designs, new equipment/tools, and technology, with slightly lower emphasis on composite materials.
1.2	New designs	4.22 / 5	
	New equipment and tools	4.22 / 5	
1.3	Technology (3D printers/scanner, CNC, etc.)	4.06 / 5	
1.4	Other	3.52 / 5	
2	What is the best way to engage in learning new skills or re-skilling, (1=least wanted, 10=most wanted)		
2.1	E-learning/ Online learning	6.4 /10	Workshops, networking, and individual coaching/mentoring are rated highest, suggesting a preference for interactive and experiential learning methods.
2.2	Individual coaching, mentoring	7.02/10	
2.3	Case studies	6.46/10	
2.4	Networking (seminars, conferences)	7.42/10	
2.5	Blended training programmes	7.1/10	
2.6	Workshops	7.72/10	
2.7	Formal courses	6.62/10	
2.8	Hard copy textbooks and printed material	6.1/10	
2.9	Multimedia content	6.68/10	
3	Most important needed skills and competences required for business development (1=least needed, 10=most needed)		
3.1	Leadership skills	7.22/10	Communication skills, understanding customer needs, and strategic planning are deemed most critical, emphasizing the importance of customer-centric approaches and strategic foresight.
3.2	Financial skills	7.58/10	
3.3	Decision making skills	7.34/10	
3.4	Assuming responsibility and taking risk	7.4/10	
3.5	Communication skills	7.81/10	
3.6	Teamwork competencies	7.2/10	
3.7	Excellent knowledge of the present business	7.92/10	



3.8	Understanding of customers' needs	7.94/10	
3.9	Strategic planning	7.94/10	
3.10	Negotiation skills	7.86/10	
4	What do you need learn in order to become a sustainable business (scale by importance 1=lowest, 10=highest)		
4.1	Business plans	7.94/10	Marketing and promotion emerge as the highest priority, highlighting the significance of market visibility and customer engagement for sustainability.
4.2	Accounting	7.18/10	
4.3	Legal issues	7.18/10	
4.4	Marketing and promotion	8.04/10	
4.5	E-sales	7.9/10	
4.6	Networking	7.62/10	
4.7	History and tradition	6.74/10	
4.8	Other	6.46/10	
5	Main barriers that hinder the development of business in the ceramics sector? (rate by impact: 1=least impact, 10=most impact)		
5.1	Legal and administrative	7.1/10	Financial constraints and legal/administrative hurdles are seen as the most significant obstacles, underscoring the need for policy support and industry collaboration to address these challenges.
5.2	Financial (lack of government subsidies and accessible bank loans)	7.64/10	
5.3	Lack of professional unions and associations	6.76/10	
5.4	Lack of lifelong learning opportunities in ceramics	6.92/10	

Finally, only 8 out of 37 respondents have received training and the majority of them stated that they are/would be interested to receive support for business issues.

Open Questions (OQ)

OQ1. Please address what are the financial barriers which prevent a successful business in the ceramic sector. Feel free to propose solutions.

- *"Regulatory simplification, sustainable practices, fair labor laws, IP protection, trade agreements, accessible financing support success."*
- *"Legal and administrative barriers in the ceramic sector include complex regulations, environmental compliance costs, labor restrictions, IP protection challenges, and*





trade barriers. Solutions involve simplifying regulations, promoting sustainability, fair labor practices, strengthening IP laws, and negotiating trade agreements."

- *"Regulatory complexity, compliance costs, environmental rules, labor regulations, and trade barriers."*
- *"Legal complexity, compliance costs, bureaucratic hurdles, and trade restrictions hinder success. Simplify regulations, streamline processes, and promote international cooperation for solutions."*
- *"Simplifying regulations, streamlining administrative processes, and promoting international cooperation can help overcome these obstacles and facilitate business success in the ceramic sector."*

OQ2. Please address what are the financial barriers which prevent a successful business in the ceramic sector. Feel free to propose solutions.

- *"Financial barriers in the ceramic sector include limited access to capital for equipment, research, and expansion, high operational costs, and insufficient investment in innovation and market development."*
- *"Financial barriers in ceramics include limited capital for equipment, research, high operational costs. Solutions: financing programs, investment incentives."*
- *"Limited capital, high costs, insufficient investment. Solutions: financing support, cost-saving measures, investment incentives."*
- *"limited access to capital, high operational costs, and insufficient investment in innovation"*
- *"limited access to capital for investments in equipment and technology, high operational costs, and challenges in securing financing for research and development."*

OQ3. Can enhancing the capacities of the professional unions and associations of ceramics improve the business environment for the ceramic practitioners?

Yes, by advocating for favorable policies and reforms, providing networking opportunities, and offering resources and support for industry growth and development.

OQ4. In which way lifelong learning opportunities in ceramics can help you with your business in ceramics?

- *"Enhances skills, innovation, adaptability."*



- *"Enhance skills, innovation, adaptability, market competitiveness, and product development."*
- *"Yes, through advocacy and support."*
- *"fosters innovation, and keeps practitioners competitive and adaptable to industry changes, improving overall business performance."*
- *"Lifelong learning opportunities in ceramics can help businesses by continuously improving skills, fostering innovation, staying abreast of industry trends, and enhancing product quality and competitiveness."*

Respondents profile in North Macedonia & results

The age distribution of respondents in the survey reflects a diverse range within the ceramics community. The majority of respondents fall into the 40-50 age range, comprising 42.86% of the survey participants. This demographic likely represents experienced practitioners who have established themselves in their careers and are seeking further development and opportunities within the ceramics sector.

The 25-30 age group and the 35-40 age group each constitute 15.38% of respondents, indicating a significant presence of younger to middle-aged individuals who are actively engaged in ceramics. These age groups represent a blend of emerging talents and mid-career professionals who bring fresh perspectives and energy to the craft. Unlike the above mentioned group, who in most cases are working only in ceramic crafts, this group, we believe, uses ceramic crafts for additional value to their handcrafts.

A smaller yet notable proportion, 14.29%, consists of respondents above the age of 50, demonstrating a continued dedication and involvement in ceramics among more seasoned practitioners who contribute their expertise and knowledge to the community.

The age distribution among respondents shows a predominant presence in the 40-50 age range (42.86%), indicating a significant representation of experienced practitioners in ceramics. The correlation between age and skill level could indicate that older practitioners in the 40-50 age range have had more time to refine their craftsmanship and establish themselves within the industry. Conversely, younger practitioners may be at earlier stages of their careers, exploring and advancing their skills with enthusiasm and innovation. This



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intergenerational dynamic enriches the ceramics community by blending traditional expertise with fresh perspectives, ensuring a dynamic and evolving landscape for the craft.

The survey findings indicate varied living and practicing environments among ceramic practitioners. A notable number, 50% of respondents, live and practice in urban areas, reflecting access to diverse markets, resources, and cultural influences conducive to ceramic artistry. Conversely, 42.86% reside in urban areas but practice in rural settings, suggesting a preference for quieter, more spacious environments conducive to ceramic production.

A smaller proportion, 7.14%, lives in rural areas while practicing in urban settings, possibly leveraging urban markets for sales and networking opportunities while enjoying the peacefulness of rural life for their creative process. These findings underscore the flexibility and adaptability of ceramic practitioners in choosing environments that best support their artistic processes and business strategies, highlighting the importance of geographic context in shaping their craft and career trajectories.

The survey is taken by mainly crafts people who are either artists or are in the crafts entrepreneurship. The results show that the practitioners both live in rural and urban areas and their practice is based on their space availability. However, it is important to note that the living and practicing in urban areas is dominant.

What is evident is that there is not many full time (professional) practitioners that are still active. Although the age of the practitioners ranges from 30-50 years of age.

Related to the income they receive from the ceramic crafts, the survey results indicate that a significant majority, 92.31% of respondents, primarily derive their income from other economic activities beyond ceramics. This finding underscores that for most practitioners in the ceramics sector, their craft serves as a supplementary source of income rather than a primary livelihood. This may reflect the challenges in achieving sustainable income solely from ceramic practices, highlighting the need for initiatives that support economic stability and growth within the field.

Conversely, 7.69% of respondents rely on their ceramic practice as their primary source of income. While a smaller proportion, this group represents individuals who have successfully established their ceramic endeavors as a viable profession. Their experiences can offer valuable insights into strategies for income diversification and sustainability within the ceramics industry, which could benefit others seeking to strengthen their economic foundations through their craft.





For those whose primary income does not come from ceramics, a significant portion, 35.71%, earns between 5% to 10% of their income from ceramics, indicating a supplementary role in their overall financial portfolio. Similarly, another 35.71% generates between 15% to 25% of their income from ceramics, suggesting a more substantial contribution to their earnings. Additionally, 21.43% of respondents derive only 10% to 15% of their income from ceramics, while a smaller group, 7.14%, earns, something higher, 25% to 35% from their ceramic activities.

These findings illustrate a varied reliance on ceramics as a source of income among practitioners, highlighting its flexibility in complementing other economic activities. This diversification may reflect the challenges and opportunities within the ceramics sector, where balancing artistic passion with financial stability remains a priority for many practitioners.

Among ceramic practitioners whose primary income is derived from ceramics, the survey reveals a predominant reliance on direct sales to customers, accounting for 61.54% of sales channels. This direct interaction with customers highlights a personalized approach to marketing and selling ceramics, often involving craft fairs, studio visits, or exhibitions.

Online sales also play a significant role, with 15.38% of practitioners utilizing digital platforms to reach a broader market. This method offers scalability and accessibility, enabling artisans to showcase and sell their work globally. Galleries serve as another important sales channel, equally representing 15.38% of respondents. Collaborating with galleries provides exposure in curated spaces, appealing to collectors and art enthusiasts. Only, a smaller proportion, 7.69%, engages in business-to-business sales, indicating partnerships with retailers or wholesalers to distribute their ceramics commercially. This shows the lack of understanding of corporate culture and how businesses work.

However, these diverse sales channels demonstrate the adaptive strategies employed by ceramic practitioners to sustain their income, leveraging both traditional and digital avenues to reach diverse customer segments effectively.

Related to their level of skills mastery, the survey results indicate a diverse range of expertise among ceramic practitioners, reflecting a dynamic community at various stages of skill development. Beginners constitute 25% of the respondents, highlighting a significant group of individuals who are in the early stages of their skills development and likely being into different kind of crafts rather than ceramics.



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Intermediates, making up 42% of the respondents, represent the largest segment. This group is actively building upon their existing skills, seeking to refine techniques and expand their expertise. Masters, who comprise 33% of the respondents, showcase a substantial presence of highly skilled and experienced practitioners within the community.

This distribution emphasizes the importance of tailored training and development programs that address the specific needs of each skill level. Providing targeted support for beginners, advanced training for intermediates, and opportunities for masters to further enhance their craft and mentor others will foster a robust, skilled, and collaborative ceramics community. This approach ensures that all practitioners, regardless of their current level, have access to the resources and opportunities necessary for growth and success.

The educational background of the surveyed ceramic practitioners reveals a predominant reliance on non-formal education, with 77% of respondents indicating they have acquired their skills through informal means such as apprenticeships, workshops, or self-teaching. This highlights the significant role of experiential and hands-on learning in the ceramics sector, suggesting a need for more accessible and structured educational opportunities to formalize and enhance these skills. Aside from the skills related to ceramics, we believe that they need business related education as they are all individuals rather than trying to establish entities.

Among the 23% of practitioners who have received formal education, the majority, 64%, hold a high school degree, while 36% have attained a university degree. This distribution indicates that while some practitioners pursue advanced academic qualifications, a considerable number still rely on secondary education as their highest level of formal training.

The disparity between non-formal and formal education underscores the importance of developing comprehensive training programs that cater to various educational backgrounds. Enhancing formal educational pathways and integrating them with practical, non-formal learning experiences could bridge the gap, providing a well-rounded foundation for both aspiring and existing ceramic practitioners while focusing on developing business entities.

The target market in the ceramics sector is primarily focused on functional ceramics, which constitute 54% of the market. Functional ceramics include items such as tableware, cookware, and other utilitarian objects that are both aesthetically pleasing and practical. This significant portion reflects a strong demand for everyday ceramic products that combine functionality with artistic design, appealing to a broad audience looking for quality and utility in their household items.





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Artistic ceramics account for 31% of the market, representing a substantial interest in unique, handcrafted pieces that serve as decorative art. These items often include sculptures, vases, and bespoke pieces that showcase the craftsmanship and creativity of the artist, attracting collectors and art enthusiasts who value originality and artistic expression.

Lastly, souvenirs sold to tourists make up 15% of the market.

These products typically include small, affordable items that capture the essence of the local culture and heritage, appealing to visitors who want to take home a tangible memory of their travels. This segment, though smaller, plays a crucial role in promoting local culture and supporting the economy through tourism.

Assessing training needs and competencies

Related to the skills needed in order to improve their product the respondents showed interest in material, equipment and design.

Composite materials were highlighted for their potential to innovate traditional ceramic craftsmanship, offering durability and new aesthetic possibilities. The emphasis on new designs underscores a desire to refresh product lines and cater to evolving consumer preferences effectively. Similarly, investing in new equipment and tools emerged as critical for enhancing production efficiency and precision.

Technology, including advanced manufacturing tools like 3D printers and CNC machines, was identified as pivotal for streamlining design processes and improving overall workflow. These technological advancements are seen as essential for maintaining competitiveness and meeting contemporary market demands.

By focusing on these areas identified in the survey, ceramic crafts practitioners can strategically enhance their skills and capabilities, ensuring they remain at the forefront of innovation within the industry while meeting the expectations of modern consumers.

Related to enhancement of the model of how they conduct their business they expressed willingness to effectively engage in learning new skills or re-skilling in the ceramics sector, workshops are rated highest at 8.9, indicating a strong preference for hands-on, interactive learning experiences. Networking through seminars and conferences follows closely at 8.7, highlighting the value of connecting with peers and industry experts for knowledge sharing and collaboration. Both individual coaching or mentoring and blended training programs are equally favored, each rated at 8, underscoring the importance of personalized guidance and a mix of learning modalities. Formal courses, with a rating of 6.7, provide structured education but are less preferred compared to more interactive methods. Multimedia content (6.1) and hard copy textbooks and printed material (6) offer supplementary learning resources, though less attractive options. E-learning or online learning is moderately favored at 5.7 and case



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studies, rated at 5.2, are least preferred, suggesting a lesser interest in theoretical examples compared to practical, direct learning experiences.

To foster business development in the ceramics sector, several skills and competencies are essential. Understanding customers' needs ranks highest at 8.6, emphasizing the necessity of aligning products and services with market demands. Excellent knowledge of the current business environment, rated at 8.4, is critical for staying competitive and informed. Financial skills, rated at 8.2, are crucial for effective budgeting and financial management. Both communication and negotiation skills are highly valued at 8, vital for building relationships and securing favorable terms. Strategic planning, with a rating of 7.6, underscores the importance of long-term vision and direction. Decision-making skills, teamwork competencies, and the ability to assume responsibility and take risks, all rated at 7.5, highlight the need for cohesive collaboration and sound judgment. Lastly, leadership skills, rated at 6.1, are important for guiding teams and driving business initiatives, though slightly less critical compared to other competencies.

Learning to develop comprehensive business plans and mastering marketing and promotion are both rated highly at 8.6, emphasizing the importance of strategic planning and effective communication to attract and retain customers. E-sales, with a rating of 7.8, highlights the necessity of online sales capabilities in reaching broader markets. Understanding legal issues (7.7) ensures compliance and protects the business from legal pitfalls. Networking, rated at 7.5, is essential for building relationships and opportunities within the industry. Accounting knowledge, with a rating of 6.2, provides the financial literacy needed for sound fiscal management. Surprisingly, the highest importance is placed on understanding history and tradition, rated at 10, reflecting the deep value placed on cultural heritage and its role in crafting authentic, meaningful ceramic products that resonate with customers and honor the craft's legacy.

The development of businesses in the ceramics sector faces several significant barriers. Legal and administrative obstacles, rated at 6, present a moderate impact, indicating that regulatory complexities and bureaucratic processes can impede business operations. Financial barriers are more pressing, with a rating of 7.2, reflecting the substantial impact of limited government subsidies and inaccessible bank loans, which constrain the financial stability and growth potential of ceramic businesses. The absence of professional unions and associations, rated at 5.6, also hinders development by limiting advocacy, networking, and collective bargaining opportunities for practitioners. Additionally, the lack of lifelong learning opportunities in ceramics, rated at 6, underscores the need for continuous skill development and professional education to keep up with evolving techniques and market demands..





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Respondents commented on the open question about barriers related to entrepreneurship:

- complex laws related to registration of business;
- complex process for maintaining small business;
- lack of clear procedures for registration the business and lots of administration for new employees;
- slow process for conducting business with public administration
- lack of IP protection;
- complex regulations related to manufacturing, environmental standards, safety protocols, and taxation. Navigating these requirements can be time-consuming and costly.

Related to the financial barriers which prevented them for opening a legal entity, the respondents noted:

- high taxes; no incentives for individuals to start business; no incentives for new employees
- banks are reluctant to provide loans;
- taxes are high for small businesses too many parafiscal payments.
- lack of loans for new businesses
- lack of access to government grants
- Tax compliance and reporting requirements can be burdensome for small businesses.
- Complex tax laws and regulations may require hiring professional assistance, adding to operational costs.
- Capital costs, raw material expenses, market fluctuations, competition, operational overheads.

The respondents mentioned that they need an association or a chamber which can provide them with support and in particular to advocating for this needs, provide legal guidance and help with governmental administration related to running a business. Also, they mentioned that the support can be also provided in workshops and know-how sharing as part of the lifelong learning process. At the moment the chamber of crafts does not have the capacity to help in the above mentioned needs. Related to government loans, it was mentioned that there are no grants nor loans which related to the needs of the ceramic crafts practitioner. Even the small / micro loans which are to help start a business are not assessable all the time.

In conclusion, the future of training courses for ceramic crafters should be tailored to accommodate the diverse demographics, skill levels, and economic aspirations observed





among respondents. Courses should prioritize practical skill development aligned with market demand, foster intergenerational knowledge exchange to leverage the expertise of seasoned practitioners, and integrate innovative approaches to appeal to younger generations. Emphasis should be placed on entrepreneurship, marketing, and business acumen alongside artistic and technical training, ensuring that ceramic crafters are equipped not only to create exceptional art but also to thrive as sustainable entrepreneurs in a dynamic global landscape. By addressing these key insights, training programs can effectively support the growth, innovation, and longevity of the ceramic arts, preserving cultural heritage while embracing contemporary trends and opportunities.

4.3 Interviews

4.3.1 Greece

A total of 3 interviews were conducted in Greece with 2 entrepreneurs in the ceramic sector and an educator with profound knowledge of the current state of relevant education offer in Greece (formal and non-formal training) and upskilling needs in the sector. Through the interviews thematic analysis selecting quotes as anonymous, the following key topics were emerged that reflect specific training needs in the crafts and ceramics sector, for artists and amateurs who wish to generate income, but also for adult trainers who work with these profiles.

Communication, collaboration and networking: Effective communication involves conveying ideas clearly and listening attentively to others. In the context of crafts businesses, entrepreneurs need to communicate with customers to understand their needs and preferences, with suppliers to negotiate terms and prices, and with employees or partners to ensure smooth operations. Collaboration entails working together with others to achieve shared goals. In crafts businesses, collaboration might involve partnering with other artisans to create unique products, teaming up with local stores or online platforms for distribution, or collaborating with artists or designers for new product ideas. By collaborating, entrepreneurs can leverage complementary skills and resources, expand their reach, and access new markets. Networking and collaboration with businesses and other artists is also of vital importance increase visibility and reach of artworks to target audiences. Networking involves building and maintaining relationships with individuals and organizations within and beyond the crafts industry. This includes attending industry events, joining professional associations, and engaging with peers and mentors. Networking helps entrepreneurs stay updated on industry trends, gain valuable insights and advice, and identify potential opportunities for partnerships, collaborations, or business growth. The following quotes extracted by the interview scripts, depict the need to develop this skill set:



- *“after setting up my own gallery, I started collaborating with museum shops and art spaces that showcase my craft in various ways, so that people engage to the process of this art, which is really important.”*
- *“It's quite important, it can open up ways for you to see new things you haven't seen before, and new techniques. There should definitely be a circle, either personal or professional, with people with the same interests. In my case, in several projects that have come my way, many times I have worked with friends who have the "know how" in other areas and could each give their inputs so that we could work together finally make it happen perfectly.”*
- *“Young ceramicists can find opportunities for collaboration by going out, meeting people, going to the right places, going to ceramics studios, starting to talk to people in the industry, going to see the Fine Arts, going to exhibitions. I was abroad for many years but in the last few years since I've been back in Greece I've been approached by other people because of my involvement, plus people I knew before, who have introduced me to other people. If someone is alone and wants something more targeting they can go to a ceramics course, surely from there they can meet other people and people with the same interest more easily.”*
- *“It's very important to find partners and channel the work and actions that need to be done to make something work professionally. Invest in a good and functional team.”*

Managing Logistics & Financial aspects: As revealed during the research *“...I also have to consider things like logistics, putting down the income - expenses, that I need to have ‘so much’ income to cover my studio, etc.”*. Logistics involves efficiently managing the flow of materials, products, and information throughout the supply chain. For craft businesses, logistics includes sourcing raw materials, organizing production processes, and ensuring timely delivery to customers. Effective logistics practices minimize costs, reduce delays, and optimize inventory levels, ultimately improving customer satisfaction and competitiveness. In addition, financial skills are essential for budgeting, forecasting, and managing the financial aspects of the business. Entrepreneurs need to understand cash flow, profit margins, and pricing strategies to ensure the business remains sustainable and profitable. Being able to understand basic financial statements and boost financial acumen is essential. It would be beneficial for practitioners and entrepreneurs to attend a basic accounting seminar to better comprehend these terms, having support by a professional accountant for their business activities: *“Managerial and financial skills are quite important in the sector”, “I would certainly advise him/her to find a good accountant to explain how things should be done and a good team to support him/her professionally, and even to attend a simple accounting seminar for entrepreneurs”*. However, it was also revealed that artists should think of additional revenue streams as supplement for their income: *“people should not expect to be able to make a living out of pottery, for example. They will need to be cautious and work a lot. In the end the desired result will come out, but they should consider a financial support by their families (in case they are starting at a young age) or another job. It requires patience, persistence and... energy! The costs and time required are enormous.”*.



Digital Marketing & branding: Digital marketing and branding are powerful tool for reaching potential customers and collaborators and promoting a ceramic business: *“to be honest I don't follow much of what anyone does, except for certain individuals who I like their work and I follow them through their digital channels”, “It is very positive to have an idea of how everything works, also to have a clear plan in his mind, to spend time on good pictures of his work and on social media. The social media part is very important. I don't do it too much either, but almost all of my clients have come from there.”, “The truth is, if you do something and no one has ever seen it, it's like it never happened. It's important for people to see what you're doing. You have to be active and promote your work in a nice way to the public.”.*

While digital marketing involves the creation of a strategy to be employed via digital channels such social media pages and email campaigns, it is important to link and convey the brand in a compelling way for the target audience: *“It's more about thinking about what the “story” behind what you're doing is. People really like to see that there is a story behind the item and that someone wants to say something with it.”, “It plays an important role. Even for the ceramists to sell their creation through social media, we see that usually the most successful ones show the process through digital channels for people to see it and get something back from the artist.”.*

Nevertheless, it was also stressed that *“The whole social media strategy is okay to do it yourself at first, but later on you have to find someone to do it professionally, which is hard. Each person should reduce their energy to what they are good at doing. In the beginning it makes sense to do it all, although in the future it is too much.”, so once the business is up and running, collaborating with an expert can bring more fruitful results.*

Green practices, new materials and tools: The focus on sustainability has always led to finding new material and tools to transform current practices. New environmentally friendly ceramic materials are being developed, such as those obtained from renewable sources or recycled materials, or made with Inkjet digital printing, which can reproduce a very wide range of surfaces. Similarly, recent technological advancements bring newness to artistic practices worldwide and a central challenge for educators and practitioners is *“The knowledge of the constant renewal of technology and related tools, the need to create new utilitarian and decorative products.” and “Dealing with the processing of clay, art and primitive techniques requires knowledge of the behaviour and suitability of the material, dedication and, above all, love for the object.”.*

As stated in the interviews: *“The revolution in electronics and information technology, which automated production, led to the fourth industrial revolution, based on digital, algorithms, the Internet, Big Data, real-time analysis, and brings together all technologies, robotics, artificial intelligence, genetics, biotechnology, molecular biology, nanotechnology, 3D printing, blurring the boundaries between the physical, digital, biological”.*

Sales strategy: One of the first decisions that a crafts practitioner needs to make is the type of products to be offered, considering factors such as your target audience, price range, and manufacturing capabilities when selecting the product range: *“The first thing is to have a clear mind of what I'm making, why I'm making it, who I'm targeting, who else is making something*



similar to mine, in the business part, how much they sell it and how much I sell it". Shaping an attractive storytelling can boost sales and recognitions of one's artwork: "you have to find something that you can sell... What I do is something unique, I don't do the same type of ceramics. That is, both the style and the designs are something that takes me "out of the box". It's a great competitive advantage. Things would be very different if I did traditional Ceramics.... what you do, somehow has to stand out". It is also crucial to follow the industry trends and clients' preferences: "When you're doing something to sell, it's about what is trending at the time."

The need for provision of educational and training opportunities for crafts practitioners for professional progress also emerged during the interviews. It was reported that many artists are mostly learning through experience, on their own, or for the ones that attend a specific course/programme the structure of the training does not suit the needs of practitioners to enhance their creativity, learn from fellow students and collaborate. *"I didn't learn art from a teacher.....I joined a school, where, unfortunately, it didn't give everyone the opportunity to create something different - we all did the same thing and so no one could basically learn from the person next to them. So, I don't think I can credit one person for teaching me my craft; it's something I developed on my own."* There is also absence of formal education opportunities as *"Not such a program exists in an academic environment"* and *"In foreign academic institutions there are many interesting ones. In Greece (and the Balkans) there are no basic studies"*. As of the structure of the aforementioned programmes: *"Curricula should include sufficient theoretical and practical training. There is no magic way."*

However, it was also noted that being talented can offset the absence of formal/informal education as *"generally speaking, someone may have never studied art and be an amazing artist, or one might have done dozens of studies and not be talented BUT know how to create art - and I respect that"* and having a studio/workshop space is important for practice and progress. This is also stressed by one interviewee with relevant educational background: *"I've finished Fine Arts... I've done other studies in similar things but also programming, robotics, etc. I'm mostly self-taught. The studies were there, but on my own I've learned what I've learned mostly."*

Last but not least, the need for modernization of business practices combined with strengthening the VET and adult education was also stressed during the interviews, as a comparison of the state of the art in other EU member states. Specifically, it was mentioned that: *"The vast majority of companies/entrepreneurs in the ceramic sector in Greece use traditional techniques, with a great lag in modernisation. For this reason, their products are mainly decorative. Their production process, the level of organisation and their mentality make it difficult for them to adapt to new imported know-how, especially for the production of utilitarian products, which are of greater economic interest. The lack of knowledge and continuous training of craftsmen often leads to simple copying, resulting in increased competition. At the same time, other European countries, such as Italy, Britain, Spain and Portugal, have a much better organised ceramics sector. For example, Spain and Portugal, also two countries in the south of Europe, have a more industrialised sector with a very large-*



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scale production. Also in these countries, the ceramics sector is consistently supported by public policy through public education, universities, VET (Vocational Education and Training) and other institutions.”

4.3.2 North Macedonia

A total of five interviews were conducted in North Macedonia, involving professionals, individuals, in the ceramics sector, as well as trainers working with young people. These interviewees were selected based on their extensive knowledge in ceramic crafts as well as their awareness of the current needs in the sector related to education and training.

The interviewees put forward areas which needed most work and for which there was a gap in the training for ceramic crafts. Given the responses we got from the survey the analysis was focused on the business entrepreneurship subfields and focusing on establishing startup in the ceramic crafts.

Communication, Collaboration, and Networking:

Lack of soft skills training in high schools such as communication and cooperation is evident. These two components are crucial for establishing business as well as differentiates from poor and excellent sales. In the ceramics business, entrepreneurs must be able to understand the artistic preferences of the customers.

In many classes ceramic artisans cooperate with other artisans which in turn creates unique products. Moreover, on non-artistic side, artisans need to cooperate with local stores or online platforms for distribution which requires communication and networking skills. This helps entrepreneurs leverage complementary skills, expand their reach, and access new markets.

Networking is essential for increasing visibility and reaching target audiences. Artisans this way building and maintain relationships with individuals and organizations both within and beyond the crafts industry. It is crucial for artisans to attend industry events, join professional associations, and engage with peers and mentors. Effective networking keeps entrepreneurs informed about industry trends, provides valuable insights and advice, and uncovers potential opportunities for partnerships, collaborations, or business growth.

Managing supplies, logistics and financial issues: The research highlighted the importance of logistics and financial management for ceramic artisans. Each artisan owns a workspace or at least shares with another artisan. This entails running permanent supplies, organization of space, bills for the space etc. this falls under financial management as a broad area. Given the limitations of the space the artisans said they need efficient management of the flow of materials, products, and information throughout the supply chain. The supply chain entails





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monitoring the process of sourcing raw materials, organizing production processes, and delivery to customers while minimizing costs, reduce delays, and optimize inventory levels etc.

In addition, financial skills are crucial for budgeting, forecasting, and managing the business's financial aspects. Understanding cash flow, profit margins, and pricing strategies help them ensure they remain profitable. Therefore, financial literacy is essential.

Digital Marketing and Branding: The artisans are aware that digital marketing and branding are essential tools for reaching potential customers and collaborators. This also goes for the promotion of their ceramics business. Although the ceramic crafts in many cases require a visit to the shop, very important aspect is social media as it brings customers to the shop.

Digital marketing involves, per their understanding, creating strategies for digital channels such as social media pages and email campaigns as well as linking and conveying the brand to the target audience. What is crucial is the story by the product, the inspiration and the process it undergo.

Green Practices, New Materials, and Tools: Artisans responded that they are aware that the trend moves towards adopting new materials and tools to transform traditional practices. This especially focusses on using environmentally friendly ceramic materials - renewable materials, recycled clay and additives. They understand the technological advancements however the costs by which they come does present a challenge for practitioners but also for educators.

They are aware that the need to keep up to date with the technology and new materials however the market size does not allow for bigger investments. The return on investment is very low therefore not able to invest by themselves.

Sales Strategy: Sales, as the respondents mentioned, depend on the customers, type of product, place and method of sales. The artisans are planning their production based on the potential for sales and maximum price. In most cases, artisans would have a stock of traditional ceramic which they can sale to tourists as well as products which they will sell to other customers which they prefer more functional or art crafts. Most of their knowledge comes from firsthand experience as well as self-thought via online courses on sales. They pointed out that education equips them with the knowhow and skills in ceramic crafts but not in the sales, marketing etc. There is no opportunity in the formal education for these skills. The interviewees expressed that the vocational education needs to be reformed and this needs to include the arts schools which are not part of the VET system. They specified that there is not parallel educational component which can prepare the students to learn and be skilled in business i.e. put their skills into business.

Finally, the respondents mentioned the dissatisfaction of the structure of the formal educational system in North Macedonia. The high school trains them in becoming a sculptor while their skills in crafts is developed through more alternative skilling pathways. In addition,





the market dictates the creativity of the ceramic crafters due to lack of support from institutions. Therefore, the market is flooded with ornamental crafts with traditional motives sold to tourists. Should they have a continuing support from the governing bodies they would be more inclined to create more artistic and more creative pieces in general.

5. Discussion on research results

The exploration of good practices and initiatives within the crafts and ceramics sector offers valuable insights into effective approaches for education, training, and entrepreneurial endeavors. The identification of exemplary practices and innovative entrepreneurship initiatives showcases a diverse range of strategies and models that contribute to the advancement of the field. Initiatives such as Ceramics in Europe and TeachinArt demonstrate the power of online platforms in democratizing access to education and fostering global collaboration among ceramists. These initiatives leverage technology to create comprehensive learning environments, providing a wealth of resources and opportunities for skill development and entrepreneurship. Similarly, The Ceramic School and Korkodilos exemplify the fusion of traditional craftsmanship with modern pedagogical methods, offering immersive and dynamic educational experiences that cater to diverse learning needs. By embracing innovation and collaboration, these initiatives not only enhance the skills and knowledge of ceramics practitioners but also contribute to the sustainability and growth of the industry.

Furthermore, the entrepreneurship initiatives highlighted, such as Threesome Ceramics and Elektra Ceramics, underscore the intersection of artistic creativity and business acumen within the ceramics sector. These initiatives demonstrate how individual passion and talent can be transformed into successful ventures that not only contribute to economic prosperity but also promote artistic expression and cultural enrichment. Through innovative business models and strategic marketing efforts, these initiatives attract a wide audience of enthusiasts and customers, fostering a vibrant ecosystem of creativity and commerce. Additionally, the emphasis on sustainability and community engagement, as in the case of Visalo Ceramics and Serene Home, reflects a growing awareness of environmental and social responsibility within the industry. These initiatives prioritize ethical practices and conscious consumerism, aligning with broader societal values and aspirations for a more sustainable future. Overall, the integration of good practices and entrepreneurship initiatives highlights the multifaceted nature of the ceramics sector and the diverse opportunities for innovation, collaboration, and growth.

Following, the survey data provides a comprehensive overview of the demographics, skill levels, and preferences within the ceramics community, shedding light on the diverse needs and competencies of practitioners in the sector. With a majority of respondents identifying as female, the data highlights the gender diversity within the community, reflecting a broad





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spectrum of perspectives and experiences. Additionally, the age distribution reveals a concentration of respondents within the 25-40 age range, with notable representation from older age groups, emphasizing the intergenerational participation and knowledge exchange within the community.

Furthermore, the survey underscores the varied sources of income among respondents, with a significant portion deriving income from other economic activities, rather than solely from ceramics practice. This diversity in income sources reflects the multifaceted nature of careers within the ceramics sector, indicating a need for training programs that address both artistic and entrepreneurial skills. Moreover, the distribution of craftsmanship levels among respondents, ranging from beginners to master craftsmen, underscores the importance of tailored training programs that cater to the diverse skill levels and expertise within the community.

In terms of market preferences, the survey reveals an increasing demand for functional ceramics intended for daily use, as well as artistic ceramics aimed at galleries and museums. This diversity in product placement highlights the importance of offering a range of ceramic products to cater to different market segments and maximize market penetration. Additionally, the survey data identifies key areas for improvement and skill development, including new designs, technology adoption, and marketing strategies, indicating a desire for continuous learning and innovation within the sector.

Lastly, the responses to the open-ended questions on financial barriers and the role of professional associations in improving the business environment provide valuable insights into the challenges and opportunities facing ceramics practitioners. Suggestions for regulatory simplification, sustainable practices, and financial support underscore the need for policy reforms and industry collaboration to address systemic barriers to success. Likewise, the recognition of lifelong learning opportunities in enhancing skills, fostering innovation, and improving business competitiveness highlights the importance of ongoing education and professional development within the ceramics community.

Commenting on the results of semi structured interviews, several key themes were revealed that underscore specific training needs within the crafts and ceramics industry. These themes reflect not only the requirements for artists and amateurs seeking to generate income but also the essential skills for adult trainers working with these profiles.

✓ Communication, Collaboration, and Networking:

Effective communication and collaboration are paramount for success in crafts businesses. Entrepreneurs must communicate with customers, suppliers, and partners effectively. Collaboration with other artisans, local stores, or online platforms can lead to unique product offerings and access to new markets. Networking plays a crucial role in staying updated on industry trends, gaining insights, and identifying opportunities for growth. The interviews





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highlighted the importance of collaboration for visibility and engagement with target audiences.

✓ **Managing Logistics & Financial Aspects:**

Efficient logistics management, including sourcing materials and organizing production processes, is essential for craft businesses. Financial skills are crucial for budgeting, forecasting, and managing business finances. The interviews emphasized the need for entrepreneurs to understand cash flow, profit margins, and pricing strategies. Additionally, basic accounting knowledge and collaboration with professional accountants were suggested to ensure financial sustainability.

✓ **Digital Marketing & Branding:**

Digital marketing and branding are powerful tools for reaching potential customers and promoting ceramic businesses. Creating a digital presence through social media and showcasing artwork online can attract clients and collaborators. It's important for artists to convey their brand story effectively and invest time in high-quality visual content. While initial self-management of social media may suffice, collaborating with professionals for digital marketing expertise can yield better results as the business grows.

✓ **Green practices, new Materials, and tools:**

The focus on sustainability drives innovation in materials and techniques within the ceramics sector. Artists and practitioners need to stay updated on new environmentally friendly materials and technological advancements. Knowledge of the latest tools and practices, combined with dedication and love for the craft, is essential for adapting to industry changes.

✓ **Sales Strategy:**

Craft practitioners must strategically select products based on target audience preferences and industry trends. Offering unique products and crafting compelling brand stories can boost sales and recognition. The interviews highlighted the importance of understanding market trends and being innovative in product offerings.

✓ **Educational and Training Opportunities:**

There is a clear need for educational and training programs tailored to the needs of ceramics practitioners in Greece. While many artists learn through experience or self-teaching, structured training programs that offer both theoretical and practical components are lacking. The absence of formal education opportunities in both countries compared to other European countries was noted, highlighting the need for modernization and strengthening of vocational education and training (VET) programs.





Overall, the interviews underscored the importance of continuous learning, collaboration, and adaptation to modern business practices for success in the ceramics sector in Greece. Addressing these training needs can contribute to the growth and sustainability of businesses within the industry.

6. Conclusion

Displaying briefly the major components of this report, the study provides information regarding the good educational practices and business practices in the field of crafts and particularly in ceramics at EU level, as well as the methodology and results of the qualitative & quantitative research. The analysis of good practices and initiatives, survey data set and interviews revealed the skill areas of importance for the target group. Suggestions are included for the development of the training course that follows this project activity, so as to contribute to the enhancement of fundamental key skills related to entrepreneurship, in order to tackle with labour's market challenges.

The results illustrate that Communication, collaboration and networking, Managing Logistics & Financial aspects, Digital Marketing & branding, Green practices, new materials and tools and Sales strategy are among the top priority topics for practitioners in order to strengthen business aspects of their operation and seek opportunities for growth. It was also revealed that there is a need for modernization of training in adult education by offering interactive learning in the form of workshops, peer sharing and networking, as well as individual coaching/mentoring sessions.

Addressing the identified training needs and fostering collaboration between industry stakeholders, policymakers, and educational institutions is crucial for the growth and sustainability of the ceramics sector. By embracing innovation, collaboration, and continuous learning, the ceramics community can thrive in an ever-evolving market landscape, creating economic opportunities while preserving and promoting cultural heritage and artistic expression.

As illustrated in the journal of the Kings Foundation “Nurturing a new generation of makers is essential for the proliferation of craft, with a need for adequate training, support and role models to encourage those with a desire to learn”.



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ANNEXES



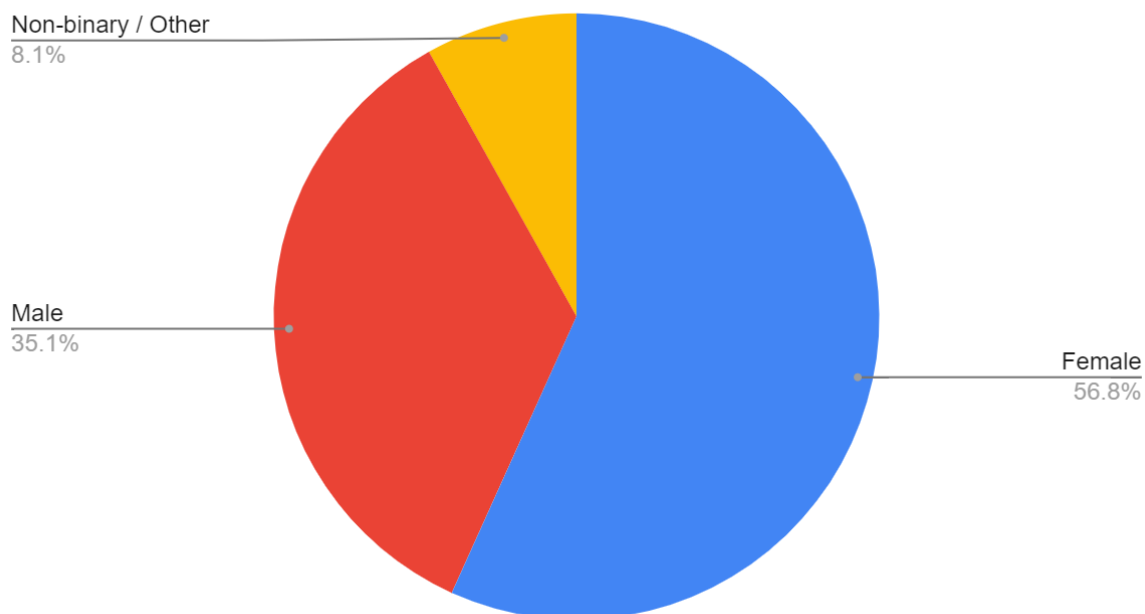


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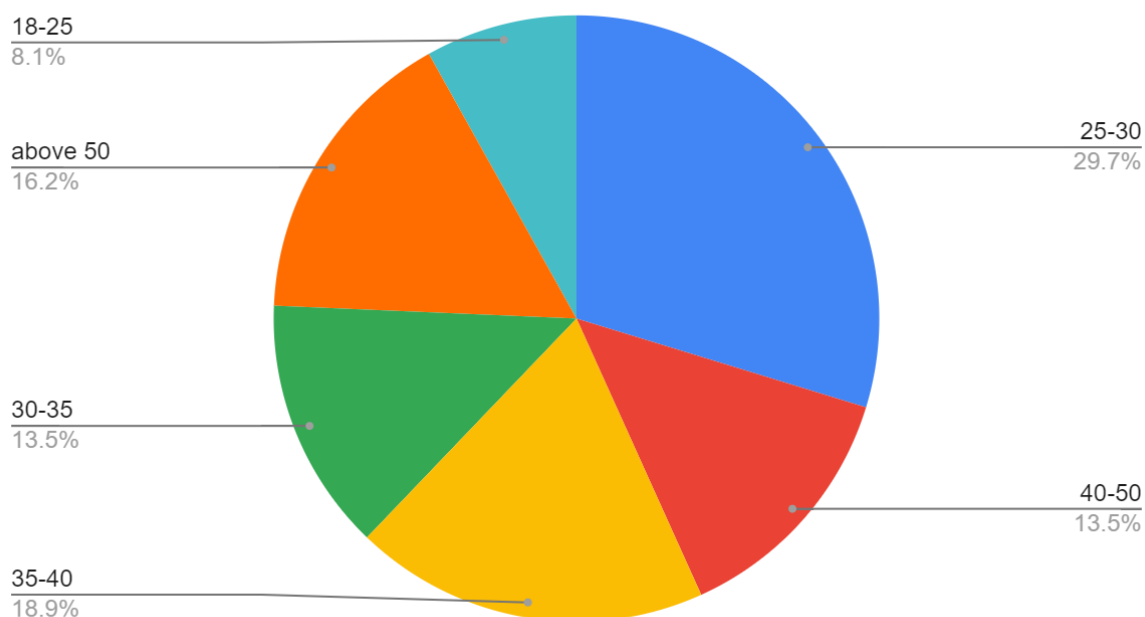
ANNEX I - Survey results Greece

Participants profile:

Gender



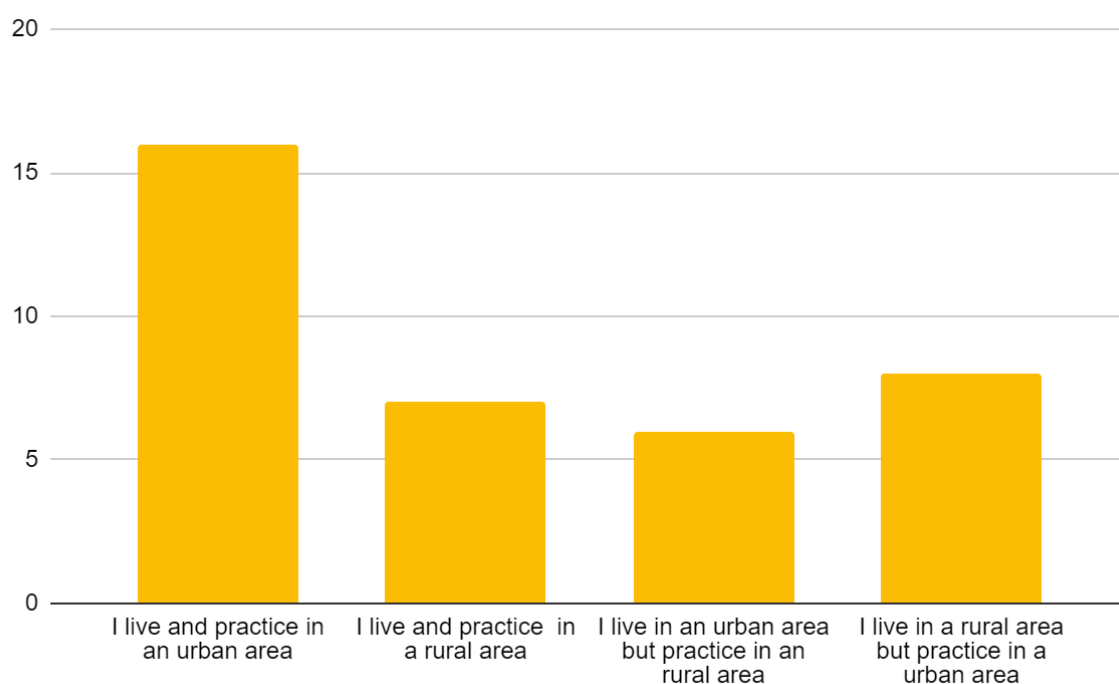
Age group





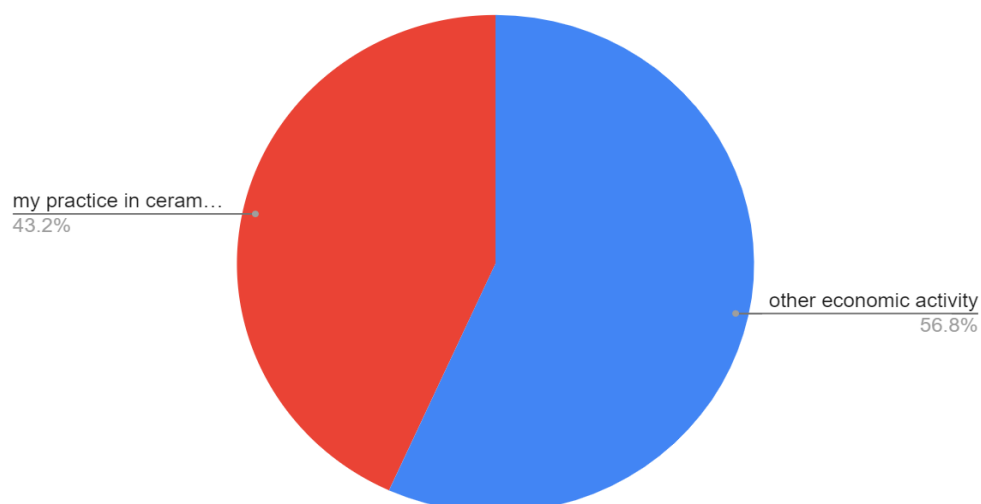
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Rural/urban area



Ceramic practice and income

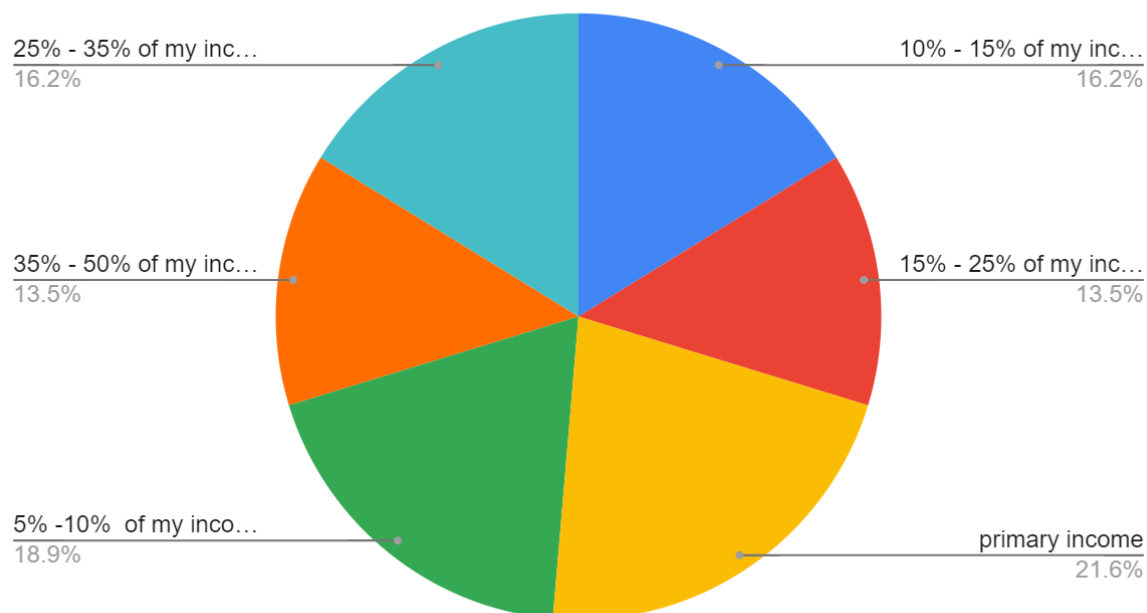
My primary income is from





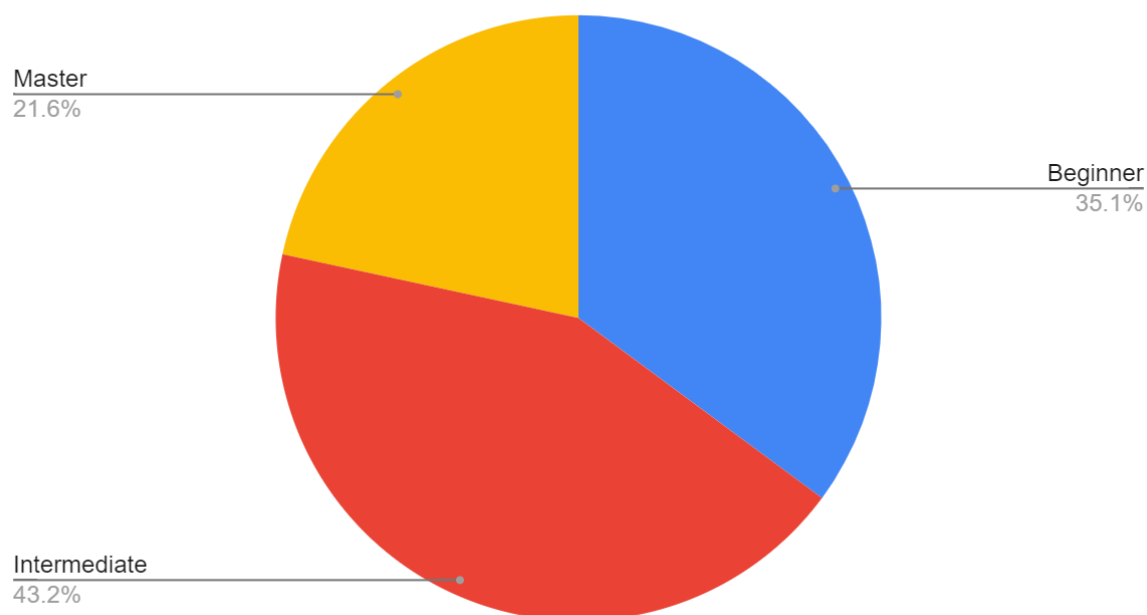
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Income from ceramics practice



Professional skills

Level of craftsmanship

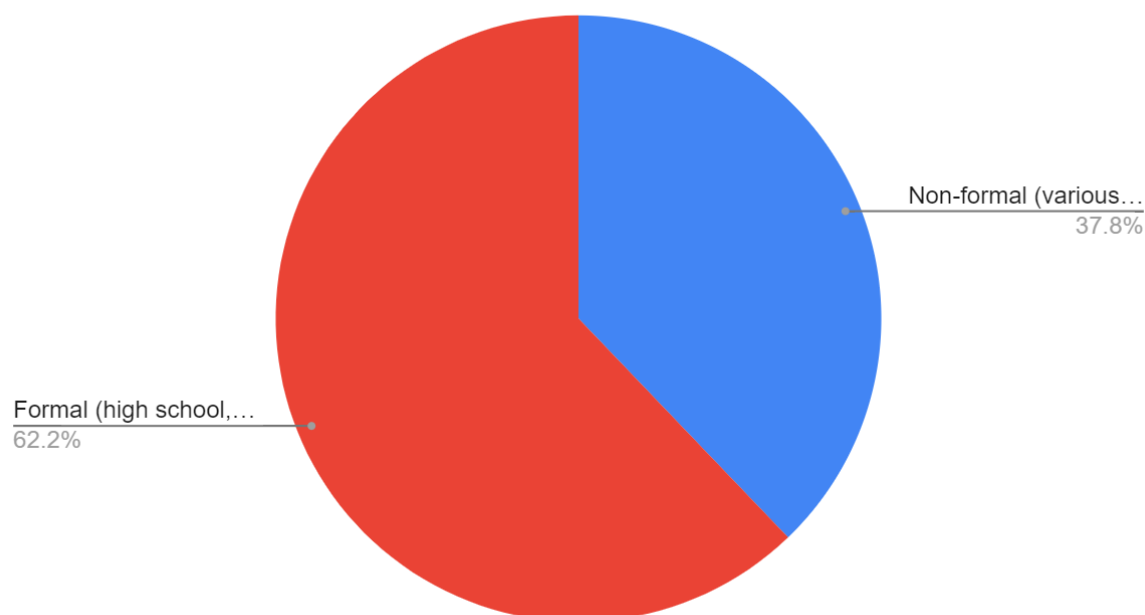




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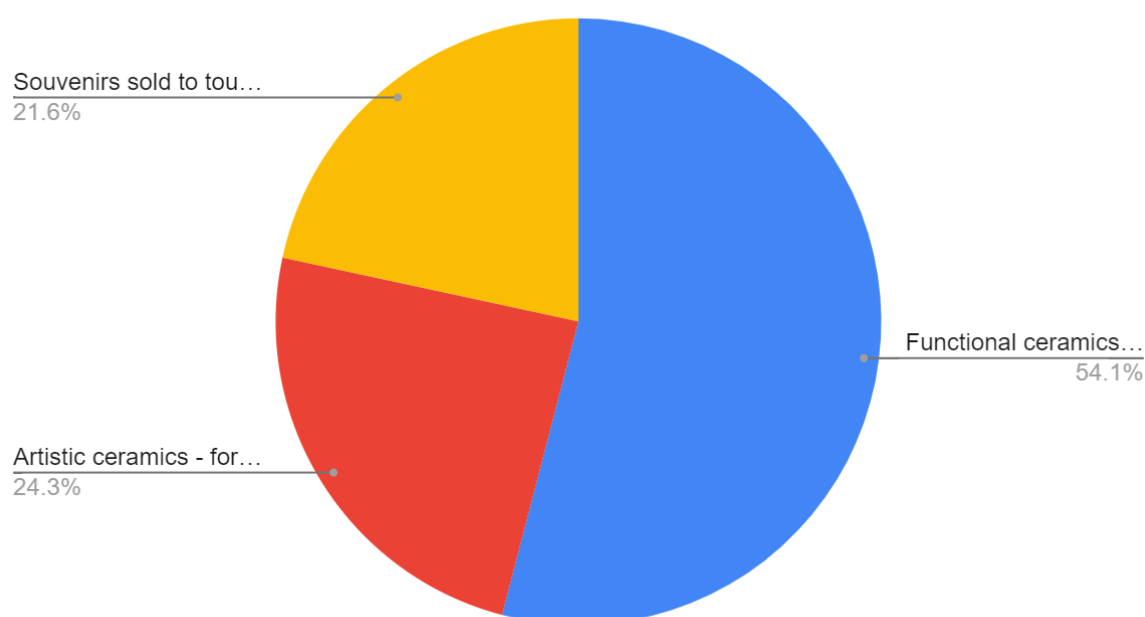
Education

Your education as ceramic practitioner is

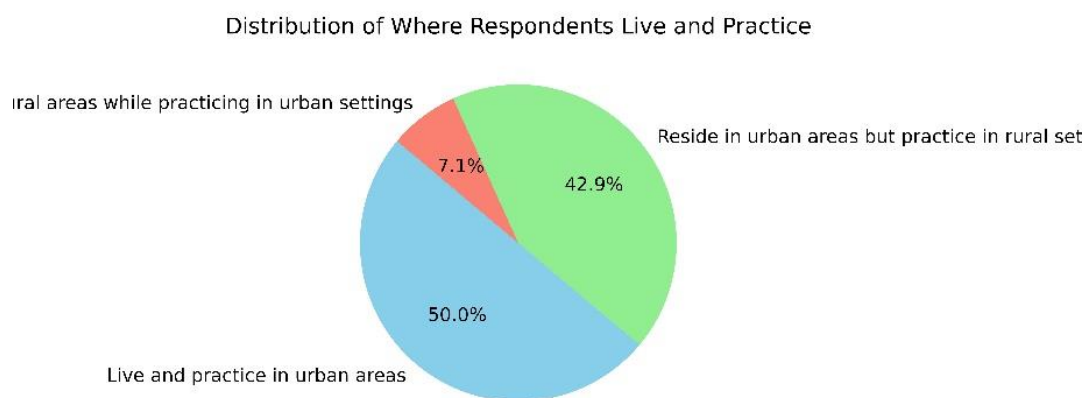


Target market

My target market is focused on



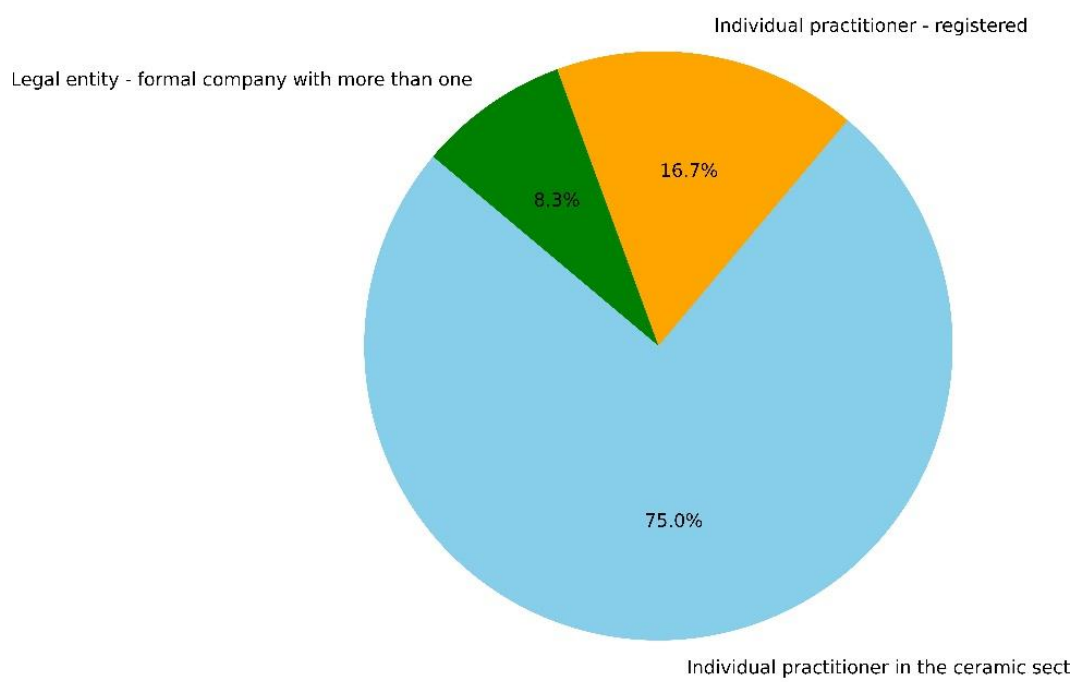
ANNEX II – Survey results North Macedonia





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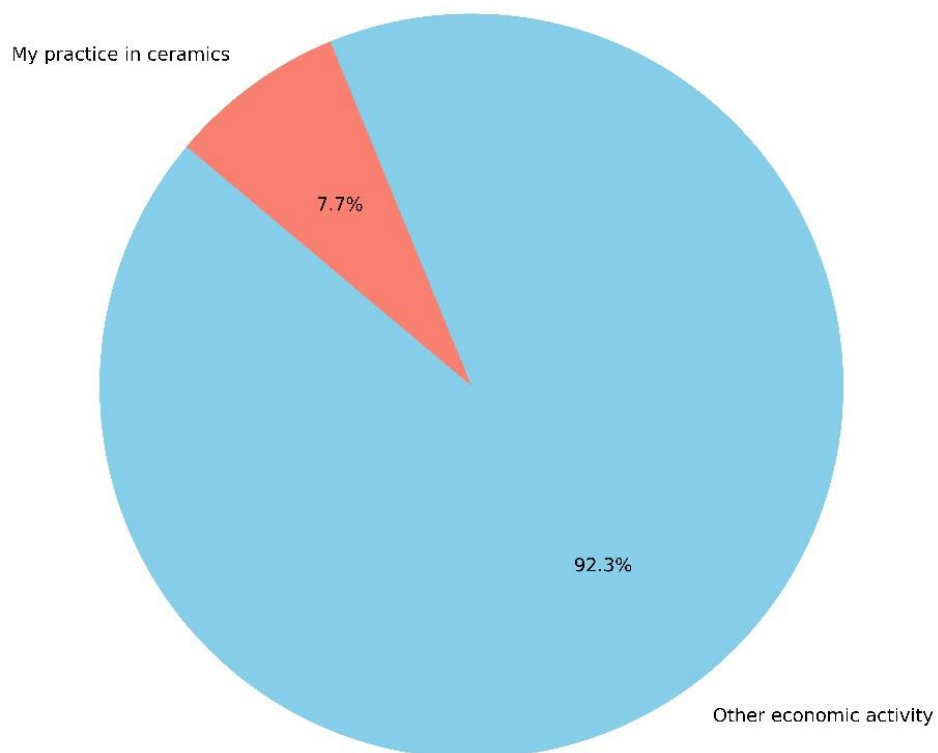
Ceramic Practice Types



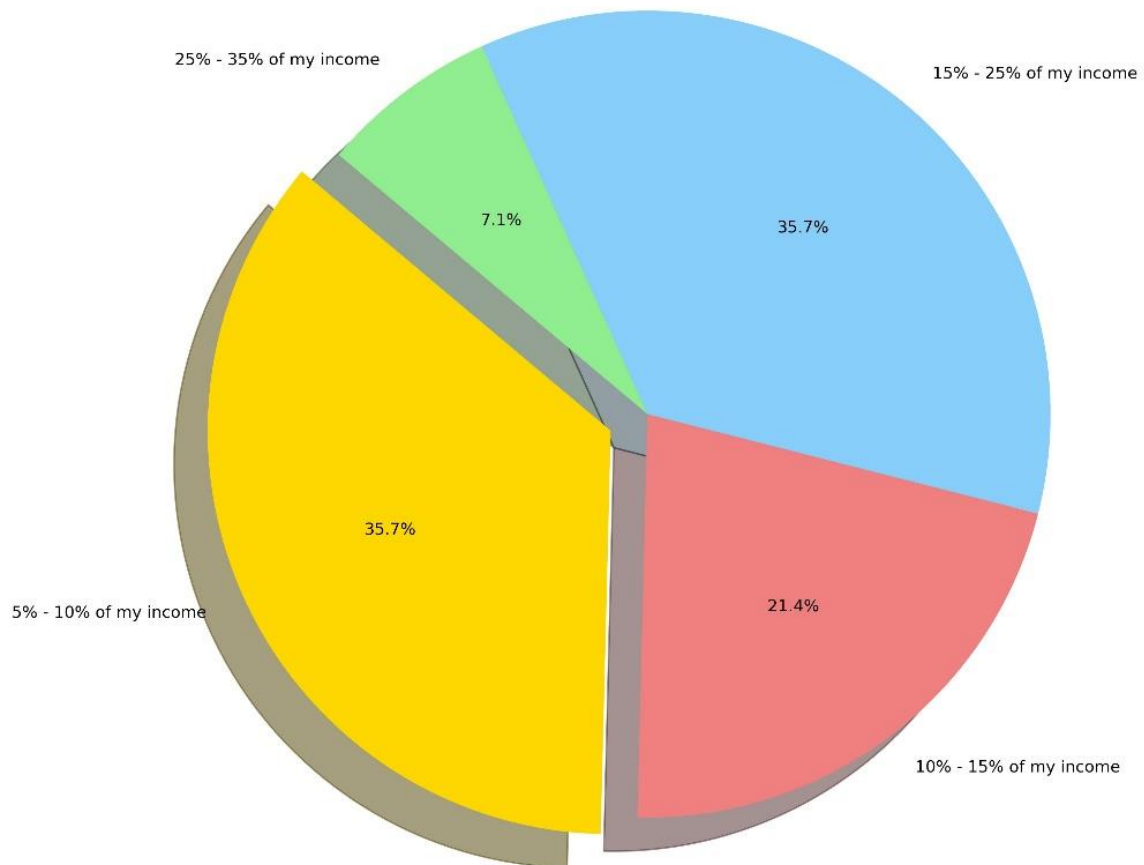


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Primary Income Sources



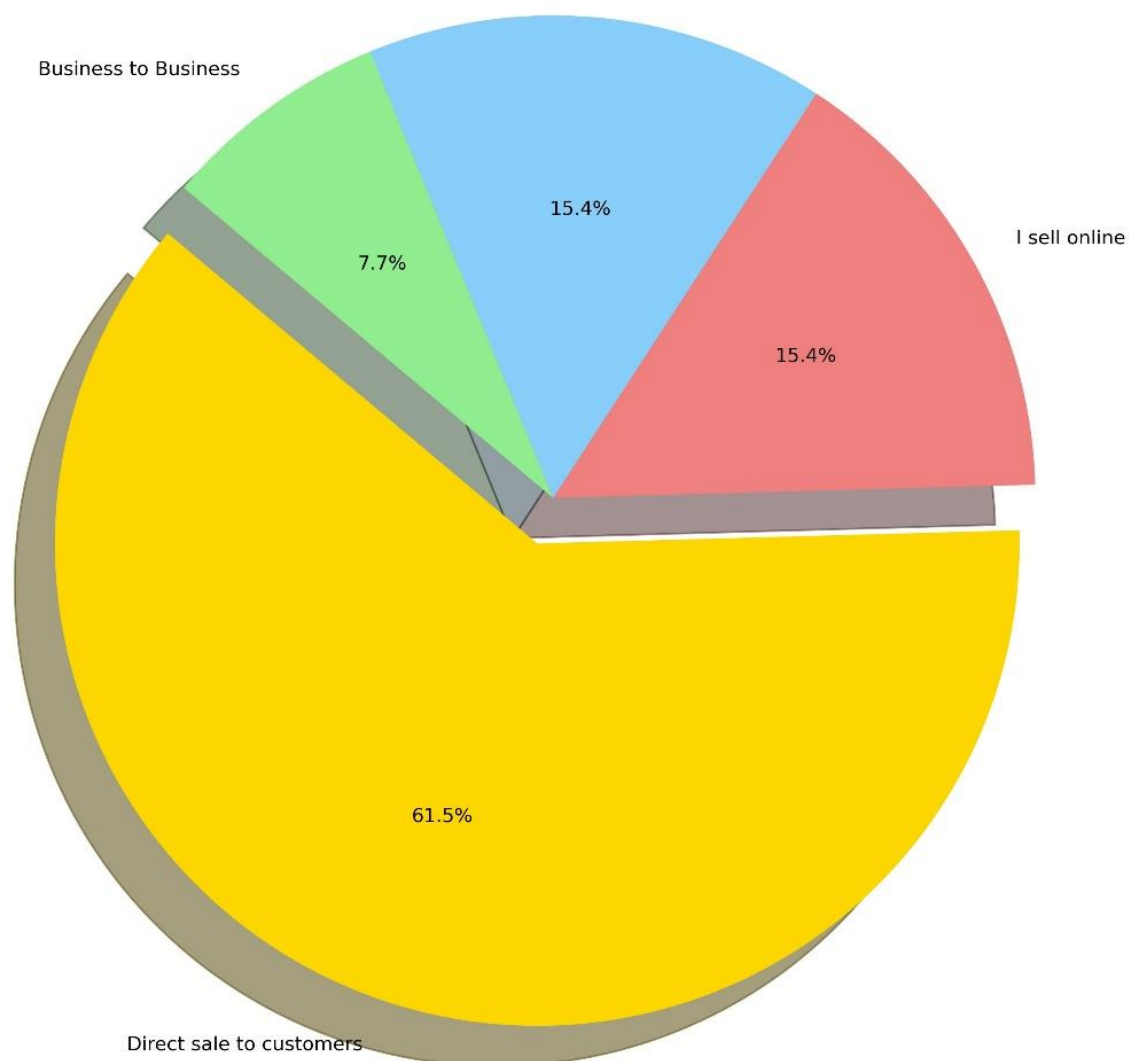
Income Distribution from Ceramics Practice





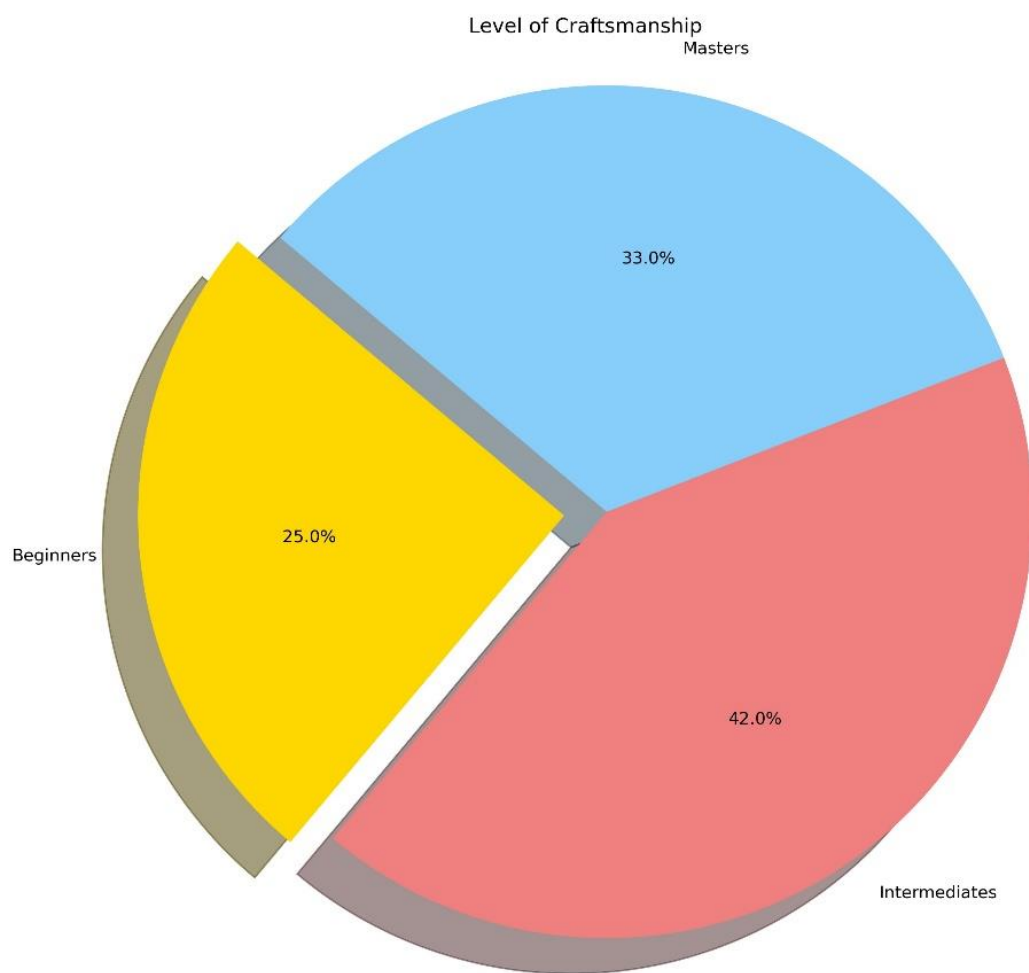
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Main Channel of Sales for Ceramics Practice





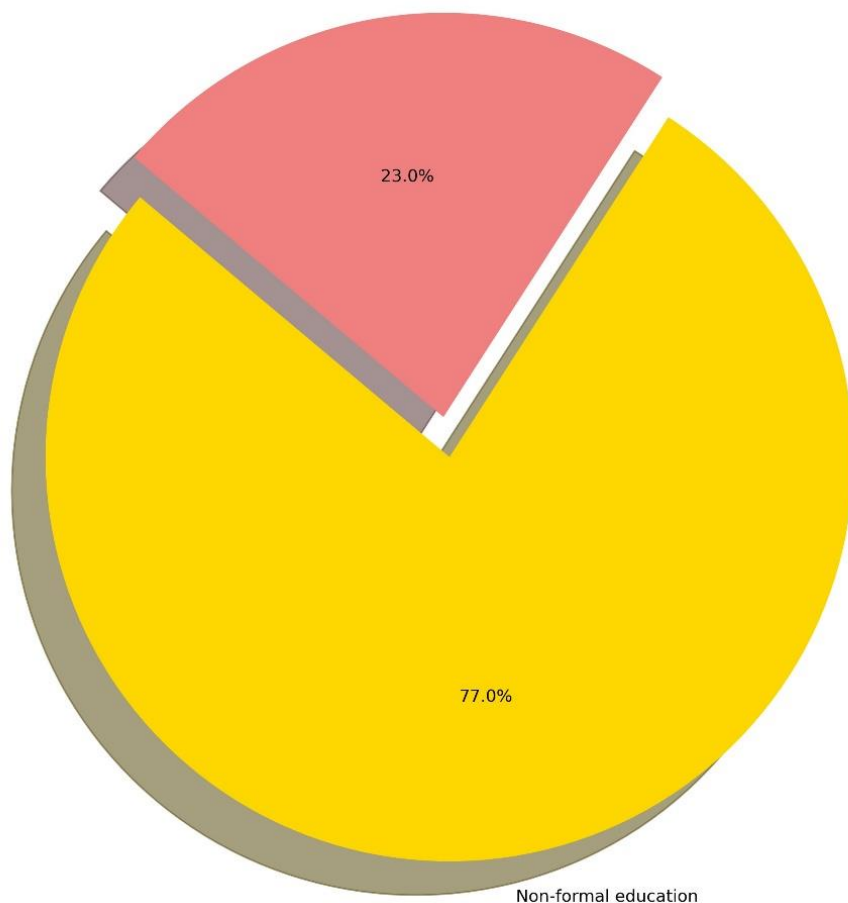
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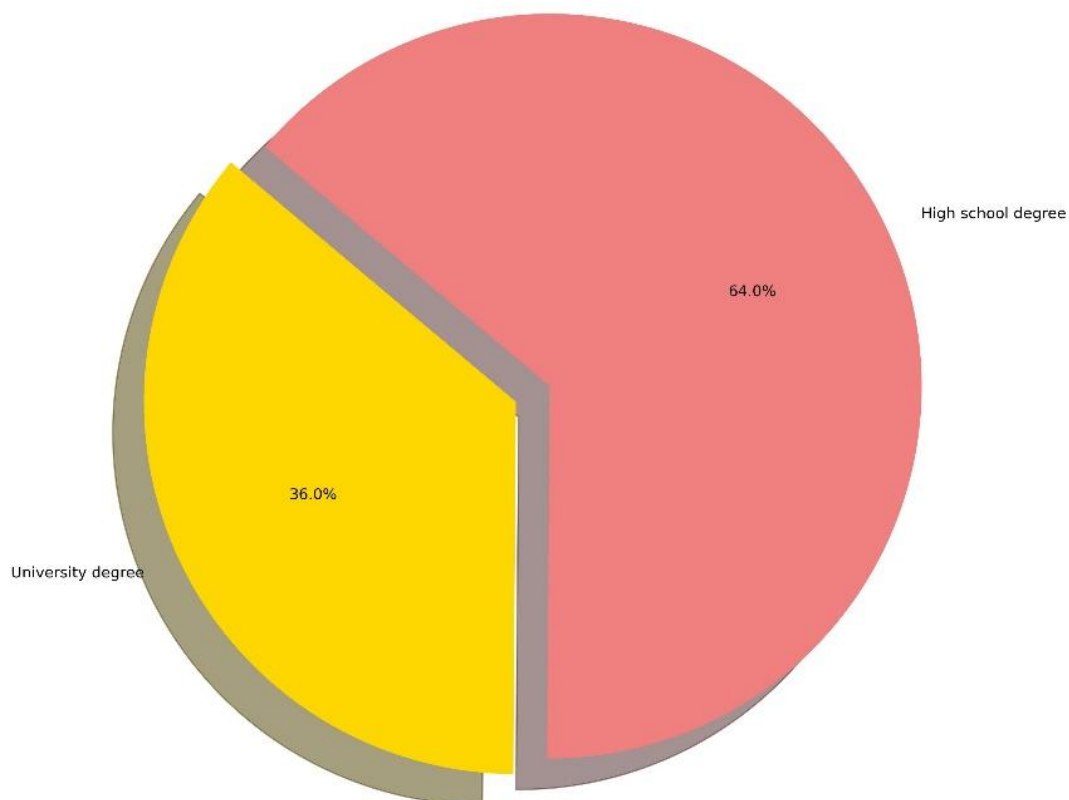
Education as Ceramic Practitioner
Formal education





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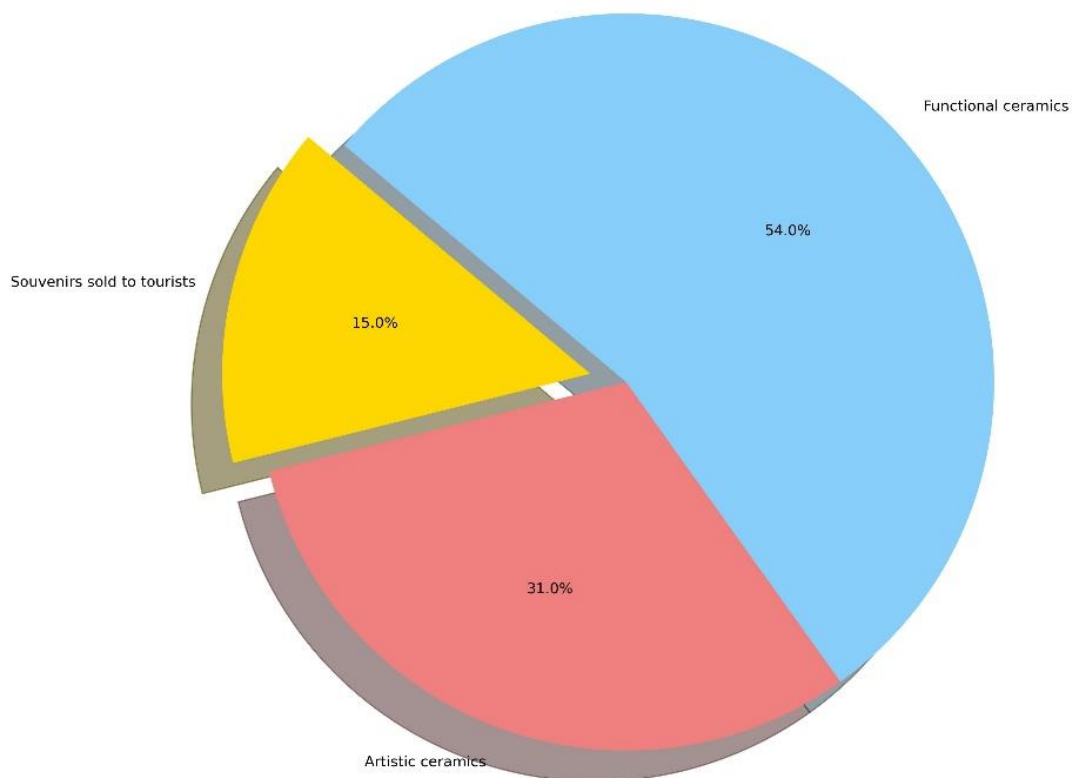
Formal Education Levels as Ceramic Practitioner





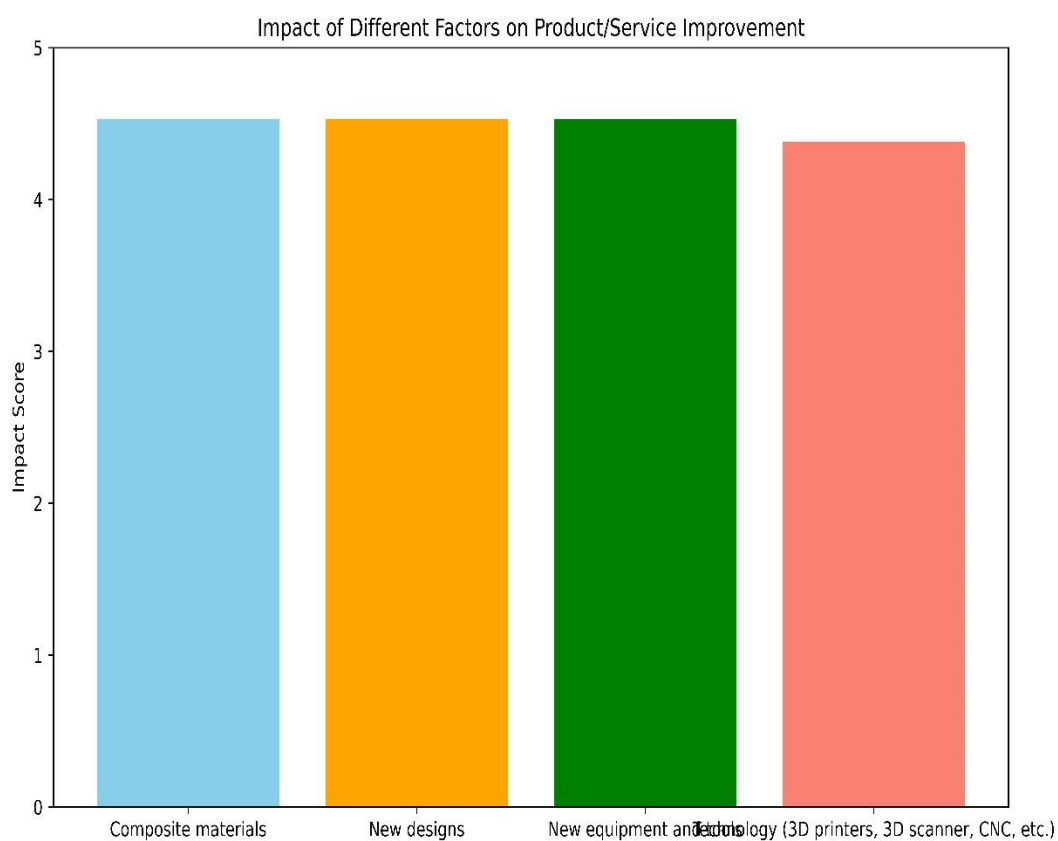
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Target Market Focus as Ceramic Practitioner



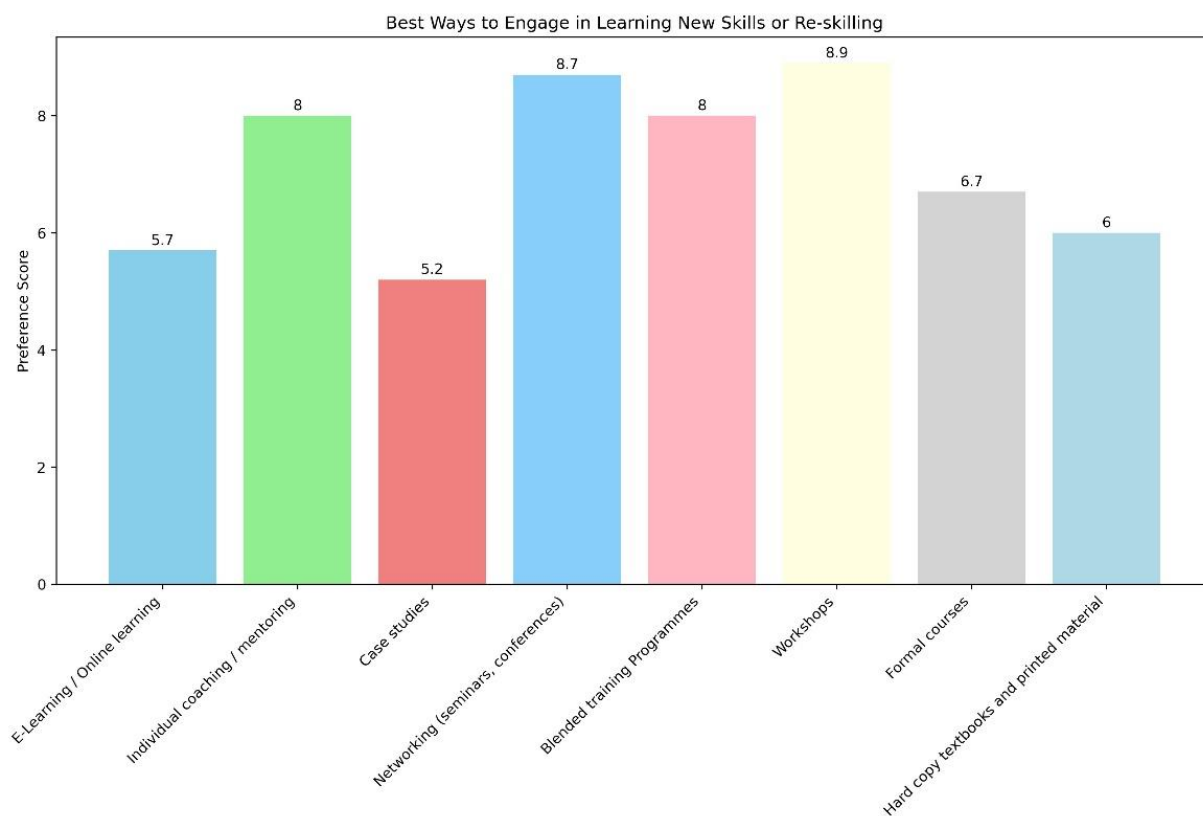


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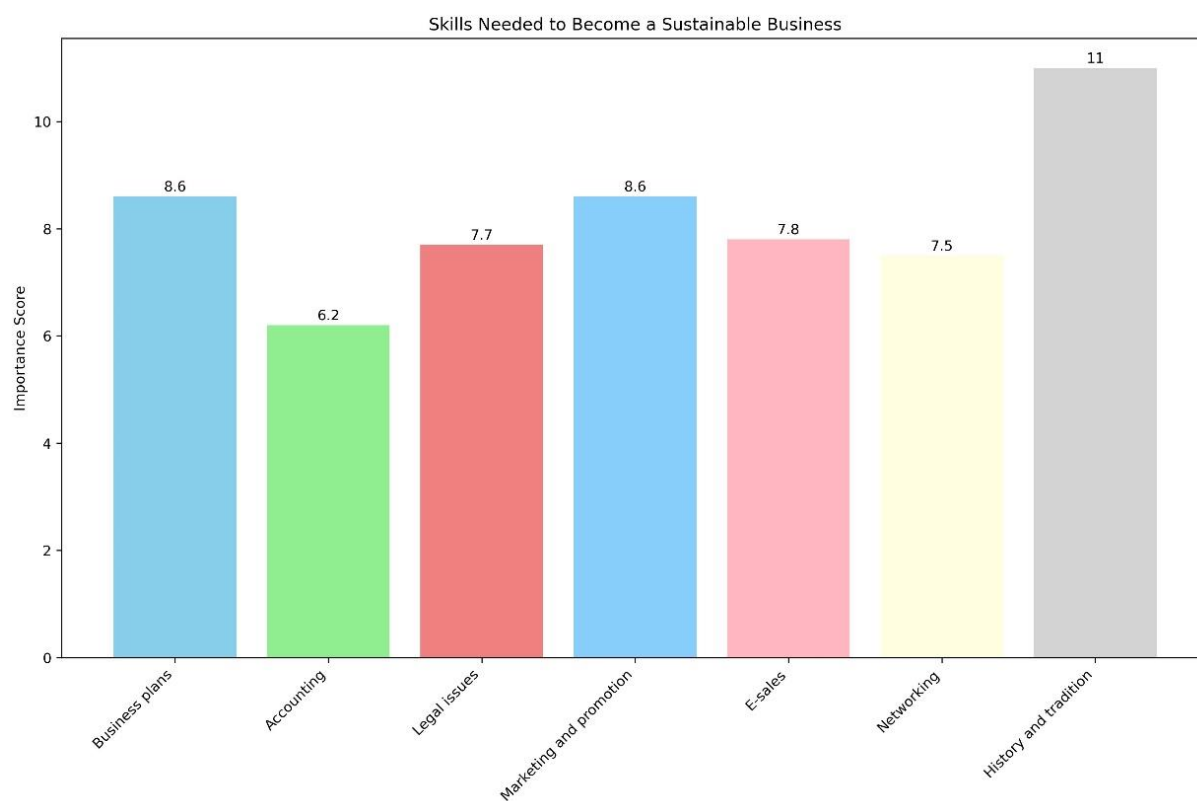
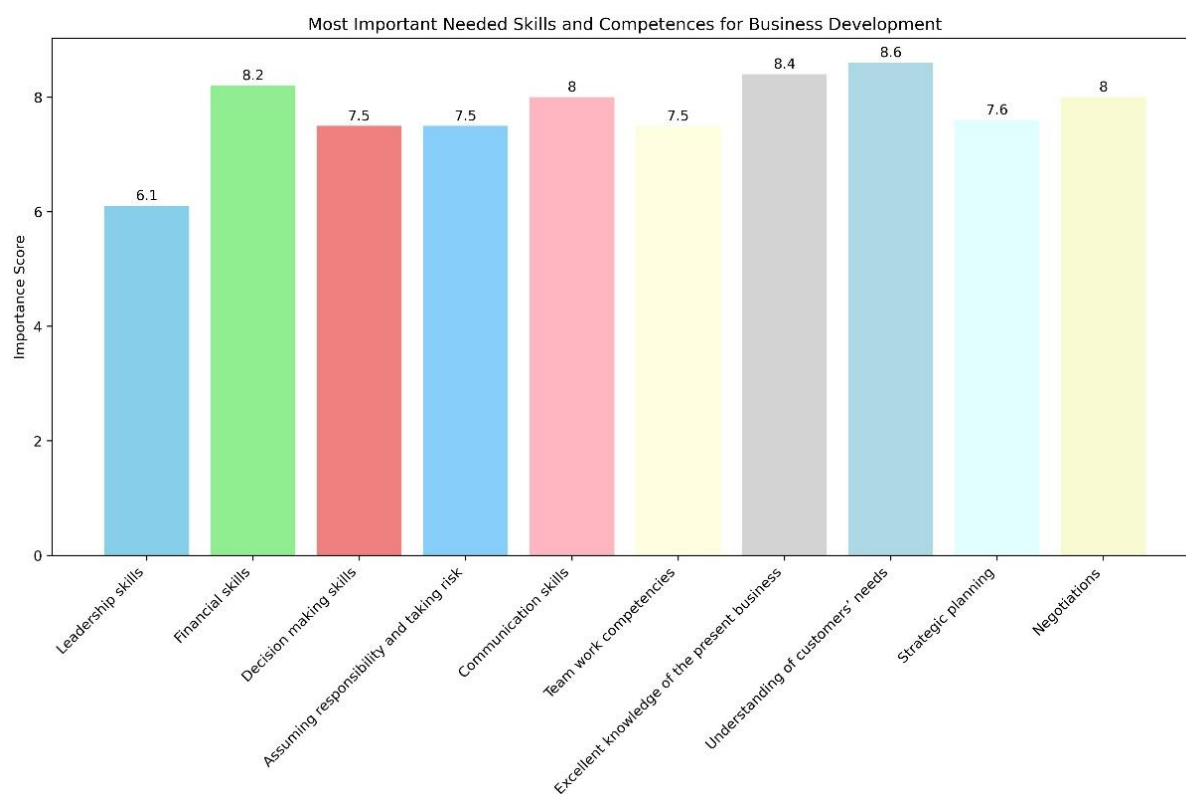


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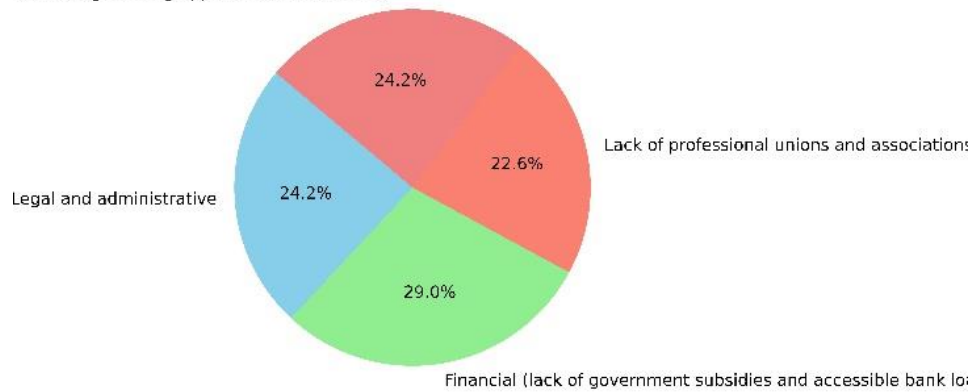


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Impact of Barriers on the Development of Business in the Ceramics Sector

of lifelong learning opportunities in ceramics





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ANNEX III - Interview questions

For Associations of Ceramic Crafts

Introduction:

Start by providing a brief introduction of your role within the Association of Ceramic Crafts and your involvement in the ceramic crafts industry?

Association and Industry Overview:

2. Association Initiatives:

Could you discuss some key initiatives or programs that the Association of Ceramic Crafts has been involved in to support professionals in the industry?

3. Industry Trends:

From your perspective, what are the current trends shaping the ceramic crafts industry, and how is the association addressing or adapting to these trends?

Professional Development:

4. Education and Training:

How does the Association of Ceramic Crafts contribute to the education and training of professionals in the field?

5. Collaboration with Educational Institutions:

Are there collaborative efforts with educational institutions to ensure that emerging professionals are well-prepared for the industry?

6. Challenges in Professional Development:

In your opinion, what are the main challenges professionals face in terms of professional development within the ceramic crafts industry?

Entrepreneurship and Business Development:

7. Support for Entrepreneurs:

How does the association support members who are looking to establish their own ceramic crafts businesses?

8. Business Networking:

Could you share insights on the role of networking and collaboration within the association for the benefit of business development?

9. Success Stories:

Are there any notable success stories within the association where members have successfully developed businesses from their ceramic crafts expertise?





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Industry Challenges:

10. Challenges Faced by Professionals:

From your perspective, what are the current challenges that ceramic crafts professionals commonly face, and how is the association addressing these challenges?

11. Industry Advocacy:

How does the association advocate for the interests of ceramic crafts professionals at a broader industry or policy level?

Future Outlook:

12. Anticipated Changes:

What changes or developments do you anticipate in the ceramic crafts industry in the coming years, and how is the association preparing for these changes?

13. Association's Vision:

Can you share the association's vision for the future and how it aligns with the evolving needs of professionals in the ceramic crafts field?

Closing:

14. Advice for Aspiring Professionals:

If you could offer advice to emerging professionals aspiring to excel in the ceramic crafts industry, what would it be?

15. Closing Thoughts:

Any additional thoughts or insights you'd like to share regarding the role of the association in supporting the ceramic crafts community?

For entrepreneurs

Introduction:

Could you please introduce yourself and share a bit about your journey as a successful entrepreneur in the ceramic crafts industry?

Entrepreneurial Journey:

2. Entrepreneurial Background:

Can you provide insights into your entrepreneurial background within the ceramic crafts industry? What motivated you to start your own business?

3. Learning Through Experience:

How much of your entrepreneurial success do you attribute to formal education, and how much to hands-on experience and learning through your business journey?





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Essential Entrepreneurial Skills:

4. Key Entrepreneurial Skills:

From your perspective, what specific entrepreneurial skills do you believe are essential for someone entering the ceramic crafts industry as a business owner?

5. Missing Entrepreneurial Courses:

Are there any specific courses or training programs that you believe are currently missing for upcoming ceramic crafts practitioners who want to become successful entrepreneurs?

Business Development:

6. Business Planning:

How important is a well-structured business plan in the ceramic crafts industry, and what elements do you think should be covered in such a plan?

7. Marketing and Branding:

What role does effective marketing and branding play in the success of a ceramic crafts business? Are there specific areas where emerging practitioners may need more guidance?

8. Financial Literacy:

In your experience, how critical is financial literacy for entrepreneurs in the ceramic crafts field, and what financial skills are most beneficial?

Challenges Faced:

9. Common Challenges:

What challenges did you encounter when establishing your business, and how did you overcome them? Are there common challenges that emerging entrepreneurs in ceramic crafts should be prepared for?

10. Adaptability:

How important is adaptability in responding to market changes and evolving trends in the ceramic crafts business?

Networking and Collaboration:

11. Networking:

How has networking and collaboration played a role in your entrepreneurial journey, and how can upcoming practitioners benefit from similar strategies?

12. Industry Collaborations:

Are there specific areas where collaboration with other artists or businesses has been particularly beneficial? How can emerging entrepreneurs explore collaborative opportunities?

Advice for Upcoming Entrepreneurs:

13. Advice for Startups:





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If you were mentoring someone starting a ceramic crafts business, what advice would you give them in terms of education, training, and business development?

14. Skills Development:

Are there specific skills you wish you had developed earlier in your career? What advice do you have for upcoming entrepreneurs in terms of skills development?

Closing:

15. Closing Thoughts:

Any additional thoughts or insights you'd like to share regarding the entrepreneurial side of the ceramic crafts industry and the training needs of upcoming practitioners?

For educators

1. Opening:

Can you please introduce yourself and provide an overview of your role in academia or as a high school teacher in the field of ceramic crafts?

Educational Landscape:

2. Overview of Ceramic Arts Education:

Can you share insights into the current state of ceramic arts education in academic settings and high schools? What programs or courses are typically offered?

3. Curriculum Development:

How is the curriculum for ceramic arts developed, and what considerations are taken into account to ensure students receive a well-rounded education in the field?

Skills Development:

4. Key Skills for Students:

What key skills do you believe are crucial for students interested in pursuing a career in ceramic crafts, both at the academic and high school levels?

5. Hands-on Experience:

How important is hands-on experience and practical application in the learning process for ceramic arts students?

Integration of Entrepreneurial Skills:

6. Entrepreneurial Education:

To what extent is entrepreneurial education integrated into the ceramic arts curriculum at the academic and high school levels?





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7. Industry-Relevant Skills:

Are there specific skills or knowledge areas related to entrepreneurship that you believe should be integrated into the education of aspiring ceramic crafts professionals?

Challenges and Opportunities:

8. Challenges in Ceramic Arts Education:

What challenges do educators face in providing effective ceramic arts education, and how can these challenges be addressed?

9. Opportunities for Improvement:

Are there areas within the current educational framework where improvements or innovations could better prepare students for careers in ceramic crafts?

Collaboration with Industry:

10. Industry Collaboration:

How do academic institutions and high schools collaborate with the ceramic crafts industry to ensure that students are well-prepared for the professional landscape?

11. Guest Lectures and Workshops:

Do you engage industry professionals in guest lectures or workshops to provide students with real-world insights and experiences?

Preparing Students for Entrepreneurship:

12. Entrepreneurial Courses:

Are there specific entrepreneurial courses or modules within the ceramic arts curriculum, and how effective have they been in preparing students for entrepreneurship?

13. Business Planning Projects:

Have there been projects or initiatives where students are involved in business planning or entrepreneurial projects within the context of ceramic crafts?

Advice for Students:

14. Advice for Aspiring Students:

If you could offer advice to high school students or those entering academic programs in ceramic arts, what would it be, particularly in terms of entrepreneurship?

Closing:

15. Closing Thoughts:

Any additional thoughts or insights you'd like to share regarding the intersection of education, ceramic crafts, and entrepreneurship?

