



BUILDING BRIDGES, BUILDING SKILLS

BRICKS - Building Bridges, Building Skills: Enhancing Non-Formal Craft Education for Sustainable Cultural Transmission

NATIONAL REPORT, COUNTRY: GEORGIA



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Introduction

This document presents the national findings collected within the framework of the BRICKS : Building Bridges, Building Skills: Enhancing Adults' Non-formal Craft Education for Sustainable Cultural Transmission project. BRICKS is funded by the European Union under the ERASMUS+ 2024 programme (KA220-ADU – Cooperation Partnerships in Adult Education). Its aim is to strengthen the visibility, quality, and recognition of non-formal adult education within the craft and heritage craft sectors across Europe.

Non-formal craft education plays a crucial role in safeguarding traditional knowledge, supporting professional development, and ensuring the transmission of skills to future generations. Yet, this field remains insufficiently structured and often poorly understood within national education frameworks. Through coordinated research and multi-country analysis, BRICKS seeks to bridge this gap and lay the foundations for a more coherent and accessible non-formal learning ecosystem for craftspeople, educators, and organisations.

This national report forms part of a wider comparative study conducted in Belgium, Poland, Georgia, and Italy. It outlines the key characteristics of non-formal craft education at national level, examines existing training and certification models, identifies challenges encountered by practitioners, and gathers insights directly from craft professionals through a dedicated survey.

The BRICKS Project and its European approach

Rationale & needs

The goal of this national report is to document the current state of non-formal adult education in the traditional and heritage craft sector within each partner country. It aims to provide a coherent overview of existing training pathways, legal and policy frameworks, validation mechanisms, challenges, and good practices, complemented by direct insights gathered from craft educators and learners.

The report contributes to the wider comparative study carried out in Belgium, Poland, Georgia, and Italy, forming part of the evidence base that will present the mapping of non-formal education in the partner countries.

Objectives

- Study the existing non-formal adult education models and challenges in the crafts sector of partner countries.
- Support partner organisations, craft educators, and master craftspeople to expand opportunities, quality, and accessibility of adult non-formal education in heritage craft (HC) and traditional craft (TC).
- Increase the outreach of BRICKS and ensure spill-over effects at national and European levels.

Through this research, BRICKS has produced:

- A consolidated state of the art on non-formal adult craft education in the four partner countries;
- Improved understanding among partners and educators of existing models and potential areas for development;
- Increased awareness of the role and value of non-formal craft education at national and European level.

For the report, the terms *craftsmanship*, *handicraft*, *traditional craftsmanship* (including artistic crafts, fine and applied arts, folk art, and related domains) and *traditional knowledge* are used in line with the project's glossary.

Partners

The BRICKS project is built upon a consortium of partners that are deeply rooted in the craft and cultural heritage sector, bringing together complementary expertise in training, advocacy, cultural preservation, and innovation. The partnership between Belgium, Georgia, Poland, and Italy reflects both geographical diversity and a shared commitment to addressing the key challenges identified in the non-formal craft education path: skills transmission, lack of recognition, limited funding, and generational renewal.

The project is led by **Mad'in Europe (MIE – Belgium)**, which plays a central coordinating and strategic role. Founded in Brussels in 2013, MIE has developed a strong positioning at the European level, focusing on enhancing the visibility and recognition of heritage professions, including traditional crafts, fine crafts, building crafts, and conservation-restoration. Its mission is to highlight the contribution of these professions to employment creation and sustainable development, positioning them as key assets in achieving the objectives of the European Green Deal. MIE also places strong emphasis on the transmission of skills to new generations, advocating for the recognition of crafts as professions of excellence rather than marginal activities. This positioning directly responds to several challenges identified in the survey, particularly those related to lack of visibility, limited institutional recognition, and the need to reframe crafts within contemporary socio-economic debates.

The project benefits from the expertise of the **Georgian Arts and Culture Center (GACC - Georgia)**, an organisation with more than 25 years of experience in the fields of cultural heritage, creative industries, and international cooperation. GACC operates within a context where traditional crafts are deeply embedded in cultural identity but are increasingly at risk due to economic pressures, migration, and limited institutional support. As an accredited NGO to the UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage Convention, a member of the European Crafts Alliance, and the official representative of Europa Nostra, GACC plays a key role in the preservation, promotion, and sustainable use of Georgian cultural heritage. Its activities include educational programmes, support for cultural entrepreneurship, and international networking, aiming to strengthen the economic viability and resilience of craft-based sectors. GACC's positioning reflects many of the structural issues highlighted in the BRICKS project, particularly the urgency of safeguarding endangered skills and creating sustainable pathways for new generations of artisans.

The **National Museum in Gdańsk (Poland)** contributes to connecting craft education with museum practice, heritage preservation, and public engagement. As one of the oldest museums in Poland and a national cultural institution under the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage, it plays a central role in the collection, conservation, and dissemination of artistic and cultural knowledge. Its scope includes not only Polish and European art, but also ethnographic and intercultural heritage, making it

a key actor in interpreting and transmitting material culture. Through its educational activities, exhibitions, and research, the museum contributes to the public understanding of crafts and heritage, reinforcing the link between non-formal education and broader cultural ecosystems. Its involvement in BRICKS ensures that the project integrates institutional knowledge and heritage-based perspectives, complementing more practice-oriented approaches.

Artex – Centre for Artistic and Traditional Craftsmanship in Tuscany (Italy) brings over 30 years of experience in supporting and developing the craft sector. Established on the initiative of Confartigianato and CAN – the two main Italian crafts associations, Artex operates as a key reference point for artistic and traditional crafts at regional and international levels, working closely with public institutions such as the Tuscany Region and the Municipality of Florence. Its activities focus on promoting craftsmanship, enhancing its competitiveness, and fostering innovation, particularly through the integration of digital technologies and sustainable practices. Artex’s positioning is particularly significant in a context where craftsmanship is both economically relevant and culturally embedded, yet faces increasing challenges related to global competition and generational transition. By combining training, business support, and policy engagement, Artex plays a crucial role in bridging traditional knowledge and contemporary market dynamics.

Across all partner countries, a common element clearly emerges: partners are not external observers of the sector, but active actors within it, working directly with artisans, learners, institutions, and communities. This ensures a practice-based and experience-driven perspective, allowing the project to address real challenges and develop operationally relevant solutions.

The strength of the consortium lies in this combination of local embeddedness and transnational vision. Each partner contributes specific expertise—ranging from European advocacy (Belgium), to heritage preservation and international cooperation (Georgia), institutional and cultural transmission (Poland), and innovation and sector development (Italy)—while the project framework enables comparison, exchange, and mutual learning.

Ultimately, the partners act as bridges between knowledge and practice, connecting heritage and innovation, local realities and European strategies, individual learning experiences and systemic development needs.

Through this collaborative approach and their direct experience in the field, the consortium contributes to repositioning non-formal craft education as a strategic domain, capable of supporting skills development, sustainability transitions, and the preservation of cultural heritage in contemporary Europe.

Methodology

The national findings presented in this report are based on a two-step research process conducted by all BRICKS partners using a shared methodological framework to ensure comparability across Belgium, Poland, Georgia, and Italy.

1. Desk Research

Each partner conducted structured desk research using a common template developed within the consortium. The research examined:

- Legal and policy frameworks for non-formal adult education;
- Existing training pathways in traditional and heritage crafts;
- Validation and certification mechanisms;
- Roles of institutions and organisations active in non-formal craft education;
- Examples of good practices and the relationship between formal and non-formal learning.

Sources included national legislation, governmental and regional documents, sector reports, academic literature, and publicly available information from craft and heritage institutions.

2. Survey

A multi-country survey was jointly designed to gather direct insights from:

1. Organisations or individuals providing non-formal craft education, and
2. Learners participating in non-formal craft training.

The questionnaire was disseminated nationally by partners through professional networks, associations, training centres, and online platforms. All responses were collected centrally by Artex S.Cons.R.L. and shared with partners in accordance with GDPR and the project's data management plan. The survey explored training practices, motivations, barriers, skills needs, and expectations regarding certification.

COUNTRY STATE OF ART: GEORGIA

1. Legal and Policy Frameworks for Non-Formal Education

In Georgia, non-formal education is primarily defined within the framework of vocational education legislation. The Law on Vocational Education of Georgia refers to non-formal (often termed informal) education as: *a component of the lifelong learning system, involving the acquisition of knowledge, skills, responsibility, and autonomy outside formal education systems.*

This definition aligns with European approaches to lifelong learning and recognizes non-formal education as an important pathway for skills development, particularly for adults and those outside formal education systems.

The law also introduces the concept of recognition of prior learning, enabling individuals to validate competencies acquired through non-formal and informal learning.

Non-formal education in Georgia is regulated at the national level, and the key documents include:

1. Law on Vocational Education of Georgia¹: Main legal framework regulating vocational and non-formal education. It defines non-formal/informal education, establishes the system for recognition of non-formal and informal learning outcomes, links non-formal education to the National Qualifications Framework (NQF)
2. Vocational Education Strategy 2024–2030². National strategic policy document which emphasizes: the importance of lifelong learning expansion of non-formal education opportunities, upskilling and reskilling of the adult population, Recognizes non-formal education as a complementary pathway to formal education
3. The Law of Georgia “On development of Quality of Education” defines structure and objectives of the National Qualifications Framework (NQF), as well as the institutional roles and responsibilities related to the development, management, approval, and monitoring of NQF legislation. It also address the establishment and functioning of the electronic qualifications registry, the procedures and rules governing the recognition of non-formal education, and the role of the classifier of fields of study within the qualifications system.
4. Order of the Minister of Education №188/6³. Defines the rules and procedures for recognition of learning outcomes acquired through non-formal education and regulates assessment procedures, certification mechanisms, provides a practical framework for implementation of recognition
5. Government Ordinance №459⁴ establishes conditions for obtaining the right to recognize non-formal education, fees and administrative procedures, applies to institutions authorized to

¹ <https://matsne.gov.ge/en/document/view/23608?publication=13>

² <https://mes.gov.ge/uploads/files/17.10-Final-Vocational%20Education%20Strategy%202024-2030.docx>

³ <https://matsne.gov.ge/en/document/view/1197912?publication=0>

⁴ Resolution of the Government of Georgia No. 459 as of 20.09.2019 on approval the rules and conditions for obtaining the right to non-formal education recognition

<https://www.matsne.gov.ge/ka/document/view/4660403?publication=0>

conduct validation

6. National Qualifications Framework (NQF) of Georgia⁵. Provides the structure for classification of qualifications, alignment of formal and non-formal learning outcomes, enables integration of non-formal learning into the formal system through validation.

All the above-mentioned frameworks and regulations are adopted at the national level. There are no specific regional policies, no local-level regulatory frameworks, no sector-specific regulations (e.g. for crafts or cultural heritage)

Based on the above mentioned it can be concluded that Georgia has a clear legal basis for defining and recognizing non-formal education. The system is aligned with European lifelong learning principles, however as stated in the Vocational Education Strategy 2024-2030 “...there is less practice in terms of the recognition of non-formal education, which is an important mechanism in terms of promoting lifelong learning. Currently, 11 institutions have the right to recognize non-formal education in 11 fields of study. However, it is important to scale up in this direction and raise public awareness of the opportunities to recognize non-formal education.”. This is especially true for the craft sector which still faces limited access to recognition mechanisms and has no dedicated sector specific policy for non-formal education.

2. Non-Formal Learning Pathways and Support Instruments in Heritage Crafts

In Georgia, non-formal education plays a key role in the transmission of traditional and heritage craft skills, largely complementing and, in some cases, substituting formal education pathways. Available studies indicate a significant share of non-formal education. The fact that according to the existing studies from 2012⁶ and 2022⁷ more than 60% of actors acquired skills through non-formal education, highlighting its practical importance despite the lack of structured support.

Non-formal learning opportunities exist in several forms. The most common include:

- workshop-based courses offered by private studios, usually fee-based and flexible in structure
- apprenticeships with master craftsmen, often informal and based on direct mentorship
- on-the-job training within craft enterprises
- short-term courses organised by NGOs, typically within donor-funded projects and often free of charge

⁵ <https://eqe.ge/res/20191007105945NQFofGeorgia.pdf>

⁶ The Heritage crafts in Georgia, Comprehensive Research and Development Strategy of the Sector in frames of EU Eastern Partnership Culture Program funded project project Strengthening Creative Industries in Azerbaijan, Georgia and Armenia: Heritage Crafts – Common Platform for Development 2012, Tbilisi, Georgia <https://gaccgeorgia.org/pdf/GACC%20Crafts%20Sector%20StudyGEO.pdf>

⁷ Georgia Craft Research Report by Kim Bagley Arts University Plymouth 2022 <https://www.britishcouncil.ge/sites/default/files/crafting-futures-georgia-final-report.pdf>

- Workshops and courses offered by museums
- initiatives by religious and community institutions, including the Patriarchate of Georgia
- municipal art schools, mainly targeting younger learners
- self-directed learning, including online resources and peer learning
- transmission of knowledge within family

Despite this diversity, these pathways are not systematised and operate independently from each other.

In terms of support mechanisms, there are no specific legal or financial instruments supporting non-formal craft education. There are:

- no dedicated subsidies or voucher schemes
- no tax incentives
- limited access to public funding (except of few public body initiatives)

Most initiatives rely on project-based funding, private resources, or participant fees, which affects their continuity and accessibility.

3. Good Practices in Craft-Based Non-Formal Learning

The system of craft-based non-formal learning in Georgia is fragmented and represented by several types of the organisational structure. Here are the main categories and examples

Courses offered by the Public Bodies or agencies. Having the stable state funding these kinds of opportunities are characterised with the stability of implementation over the years. The tuition may be free or with an affordable price. The good examples in this category can be mentioned:

- Summer School of the Open Air Museum (National Museum of Georgia)
A recurring initiative providing short-term courses in textiles, woodcarving, and metalwork, with a strong focus on awareness-raising and public engagement.
- Educational Mini-Gallery of Folk Crafts s⁸ (Gori)
The entity was established as a joint initiative of NGO and local municipality within the EU funded project. After the project's life span, it is fully run by the Tourism Department of Gori Municipality. The Mini-Gallery offers courses for children and adults, linking craft education with tourism and local cultural development.

Courses offered by the Civil Society Organisations. These kinds of courses are mostly project-based and unsustainable. Although they contribute to the safeguarding of craft traditions and engagement

⁸ <https://acesse.one/3dpz384>

of new audiences, in most cases, they are fragmented. The good cases within this segment are:

- Heritage Resource Centre⁹ which represents one of the outcomes of the Sustainable Rehabilitation of Heritage Site Programme, implemented (2017-2021) by ICOMOS Georgia and funded by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Norway. The Center runs the short courses in traditional building techniques such as Earth Based Mortar Conservation and Application, Wood Conservation etc.
- Adult Education Centres (DVV International Georgia)¹⁰ - A network of centres providing vocational and community-based learning, reaching approximately 12,000 beneficiaries annually, including vulnerable groups.
- From regional initiatives, the MOSAICA studio¹¹, located in Zugdidi town, should be mentioned, which represents a hub in Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti region uniting traditions, innovation, professional development, and heritage-sensitive commercialisation. Professional development of crafts actors through informal education, such as trainings, master classes, and competence workshops offered by MOSAICA studio, as well as by its partner businesses within its pavilions, is one of their goals. Acting as a mixed service provider MOSAICA overtakes the role of the main developing agency of the crafts industry in the region through engaging along two complementary paths: technical support to crafts actors including skills transfer and creative tourism development. MOSAICA studio consists of diverse functional demo spaces for craft actors and supporters. One will experience wood, metal, ceramic, and textile live facilities and pavilions as well as a guest house and a café concept

Courses offered by the Private companies.

- White Studio¹² - One of the known ceramic companies holds regular masterclasses for people who are interested in the industry or just want to learn this artform, as well as apprentice opportunities to become artisans and run semester programs through their academy to develop the next generation of artists and ceramic makers.
- Estia Handmade Art, founded in 2014, creates handmade household items through a blend of artistic techniques, with a primary focus on ceramic art. The studio also offers workshops and short or long-term courses for children and adults mainly in ceramic, but also in painting, decoupage, felt-making, and other crafts. Its ambition is to unite traditional craftsmanship with modern artistic approaches and techniques.
- Company Kasta is an example of a socially responsible company which on its own expenses runs a crafts training center focused on the long term courses in artistic processing of wood,

⁹ https://icomos.org.ge/en/heritage_resource_centre

¹⁰ <https://www.dvv-international.ge/georgia/profile>

¹¹ <https://mosaicstudio.ge/ge/>

¹² <https://whitestudio.ge/workshop/?srsId=AfmBOooST9wNYsYnVFJufTscVi29UECOhb4IYPi1erlfvBYQXPTezj1k>

stone carving and stained glass.

Private educational organizations active in the field of heritage crafts are a novelty for Georgia.

- Kettari Academy¹³ is specialized in creative industries. The academy provides courses and state-recognized vocational training programs designed to meet the evolving demands of the field. Recently the Academy introduced two craft courses Intro to Ceramic World and Batik Technology and Management of Craft Workshops.

Another key component is the **network of courses and parish schools of the Patriarchate of Georgia** operating across the country. Their main focus is the preservation and development of ecclesiastical art traditions, including gold and silk-thread embroidery, icon-making in metal and wood, enamel work, and crosses. In parallel, they also support the continuation of traditional national crafts such as embroidery, enamel art, and felt-making.

Of course these are only some examples of the non-formal education initiatives across the county illustrating the different formats and approaches.

4. Articulation Between Non-Formal and Formal Education

Non-formal education in the Georgian craft sector primarily complements formal education, but in certain areas it also compensates for its limitations.

Formal vocational education provides a structured and theoretical basis, but often lacks:

- sufficient hands-on training
- direct engagement with traditional techniques

Non-formal education addresses these gaps by offering:

- practical, skills-based learning
- flexible and short-term training formats
- direct interaction with craftsmen and real production environments

In some craft fields where formal education programmes are limited or outdated, non-formal pathways function as the main mechanism for skills transmission.

Georgia's VET legislation and related policy documents have established the legal framework for the validation of non-formal and informal learning (VNIFL). The procedures were updated in 2019 in line with EU recommendations, enabling recognition of non-formal and informal learning across all levels of vocational qualifications within the National Qualifications Framework.

¹³ <https://kettariacademy.ge/en/home/>

The VNIFL process includes four stages: submission of application, documentation, assessment, and certification. First, the applicant submits a request and receives consultations from a certified consultant, who helps identify and document prior learning outcomes gained outside formal education. The documented evidence is then assessed against relevant vocational education standards or modules by a specially established commission. Based on the assessment results, the institution may recognize specific learning outcomes, award part of a qualification, or grant a full vocational qualification and corresponding certificate or diploma. The process can only be conducted by institutions authorized by the National Center for Educational Quality Enhancement (NCEQE).¹⁴ Assessment is based on national VET standards and may lead to the award of a full qualification or part of it. Validation can only be carried out by authorised VET institutions or legal entities delivering recognised vocational programmes. By 2023 there were only nine VET centres¹⁵ authorised to offer validation services and from them only one - College Iberia¹⁶ runs the crafts program particularly artistic processing of wood.

Hence the application of the system of validation of non-formal education in craft sector faces significant problems such as:

- low awareness - the actors are not aware of the possibilities
- administrative barriers - there are too few institutions offering the recognition of non-formal education in the field and hence the limited qualifications
- associated fees - the cost of the procedures depends on the requirements of the assessment but can't be lower than 500 GEL.

Overall, the relationship between the two systems can be described as complementary but weakly integrated.

5. Governance of Craft Education Policies

There are no dedicated policies specifically addressing education in heritage crafts in Georgia. The sector is covered under general vocational education and lifelong learning policies, which are developed at the national level. Key institutions include the Ministry of Education and related agencies such as the National Centre for Education Quality Enhancement (NCEQE).

At the same time:

- Regional and local authorities have limited formal roles
- mMunicipal involvement is mainly project-based rather than strategic

¹⁴ არაფორმალური განათლების აღიარების გზამკვლევი. №1 პროცესი და შესაბამისი ეტაპები. 2020 <https://l1nq.com/za10fyk>

¹⁵ National Qualifications Framework - Georgia, European Training Foundation, 2021, <https://www.etf.europa.eu/sites/default/files/document/Georgia.pdf>

¹⁶ <https://iberia.edu.ge/en/home/>

This governance structure results in:

- Lack of a coherent national strategy for craft education
- Limited coordination between stakeholders (education, culture, labour market)
- Dependence on individual initiatives and external funding

6. Research and Monitoring of Skills Transmission in the Craft Sector

In Georgia the research and monitoring of non-formal learning in the craft sector are limited and unsystematic.

Currently, there is:

- no national monitoring system
- no regular data collection on participation or outcomes
- no specific indicators related to craft skills or non-formal education

Most available information comes from:

- project-based studies (e.g. The Heritage crafts in Georgia, Comprehensive Research and Development Strategy of the Sector, Georgian Arts and Culture Center, 2012; Samgrelo-Zemo Svaneti Crafts Sector, Georgian Arts and Culture Center, 2021; Study of Artisan Sectors in Keda, Khulo, Borjomi, Akhalkalaki, TeTritskaro, Kazbegi, Lagodekhi and Dedoplistskaro Municipalities, Georgian Heritage Crafts Association, 2021 etc.)
- international initiatives (e.g. ETF-related analyses), for example European inventory on validation of non-formal and informal learning, 2023 update, Country Report: Georgia¹⁷. Analytical and reference document developed by the European Training Foundation which provides an overview of Georgia's validation system, strengths and implementation gaps

While these studies provide useful insights, they do not constitute a continuous evidence base. As a result:

- policymaking is not fully data-driven
- skills gaps and labour market needs are not systematically assessed

Strengthening research and monitoring mechanisms would be essential for improving the visibility, quality, and sustainability of non-formal education in the craft sector.

¹⁷ <https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/files/georgi1.pdf>

Survey results from Georgia

As mentioned, the methodology involved the jointly designed survey for obtaining information directly from entities providing non-formal craft education, and Learners participating in non-formal craft training.

1. Methodological Framework of the Survey

The survey on "Non-formal Craft Education for Sustainable Cultural Transmission" in Georgia was conducted as part of the research activities under Work Package 2 (WP2) of the BRICKS project. It complements the review of existing legislative and policy documents and aims to provide a better understanding of the current state of non-formal craft education in Georgia.

The survey and data collection process gathered responses from a broad range of stakeholders, including craft organizations, artisans, educators, students, trainees, and other participants involved in non-formal craft education. Data were collected in 2025 through a questionnaire developed in Google Forms and distributed electronically, providing a recent overview of the national context.

The questionnaire was jointly developed by all BRICKS project partners to ensure a common methodological approach while allowing for adaptation to the specific circumstances of each participating country. It combines closed-ended questions, enabling quantitative analysis, with open-ended questions designed to capture qualitative perspectives, experiences, and recommendations. The questionnaire was translated into the languages of the partner countries and disseminated through targeted outreach activities. The closed-ended questions included both single- and multiple-response options to reflect the diversity of non-formal craft education programmes, their target groups, and the organizations delivering them.

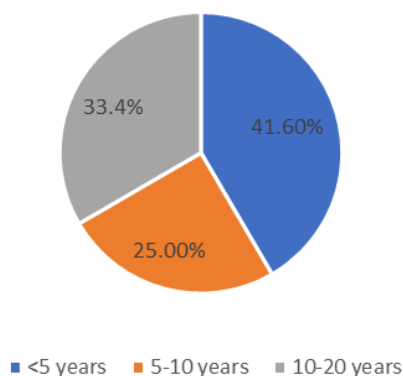
2. Scope and composition of the sample

The survey sample was relatively small. Total 16 responses have been collected: 12 non formal education providers - workshops, master craftsmen or training organisers and 3 learners. The low number of answers was expected as the online surveys are often distributed and most of the actors are not willing to participate. The in-person interviews would have the better reach but this approach requires the larger resources both financial and human.

3. Typology of the surveyed non-formal education providers

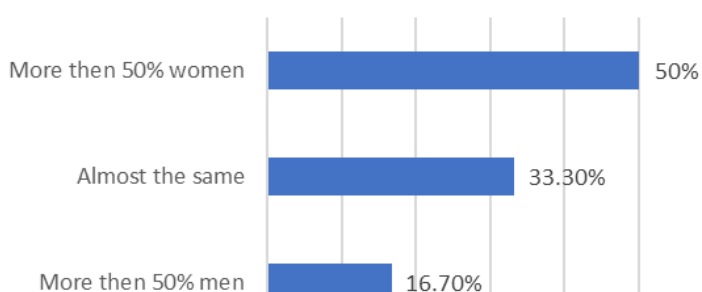
The survey showed that the entities active in the non-formal education are both newcomers and ones with more than 10 years of experience. It agrees with the general observation of the appearing new courses, training etc. within the crafts ecosystem in recent years.

How long was Organisations Transmitting Crafts Skills

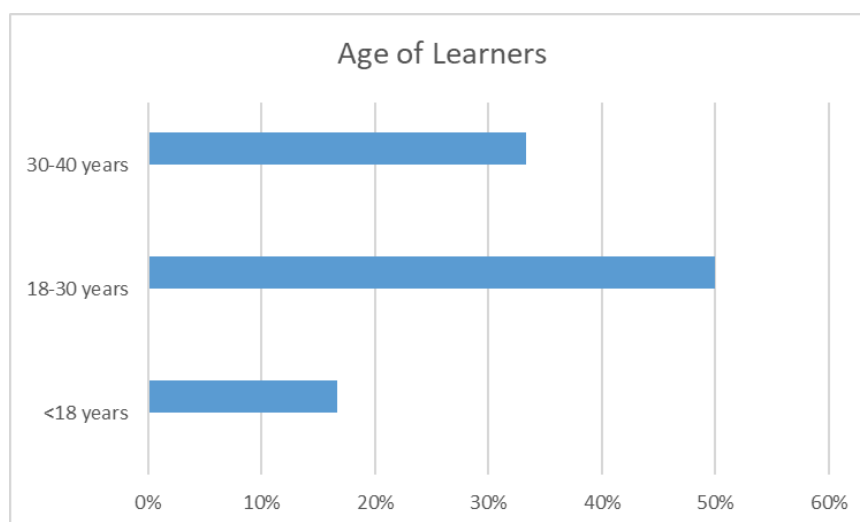


As for the learners, half of the responding providers report that women make up more than 50% of learners. 33.3% describe the gender balance as almost equal, while 16.7% report a majority of men. Although this distribution probably is the small sample.

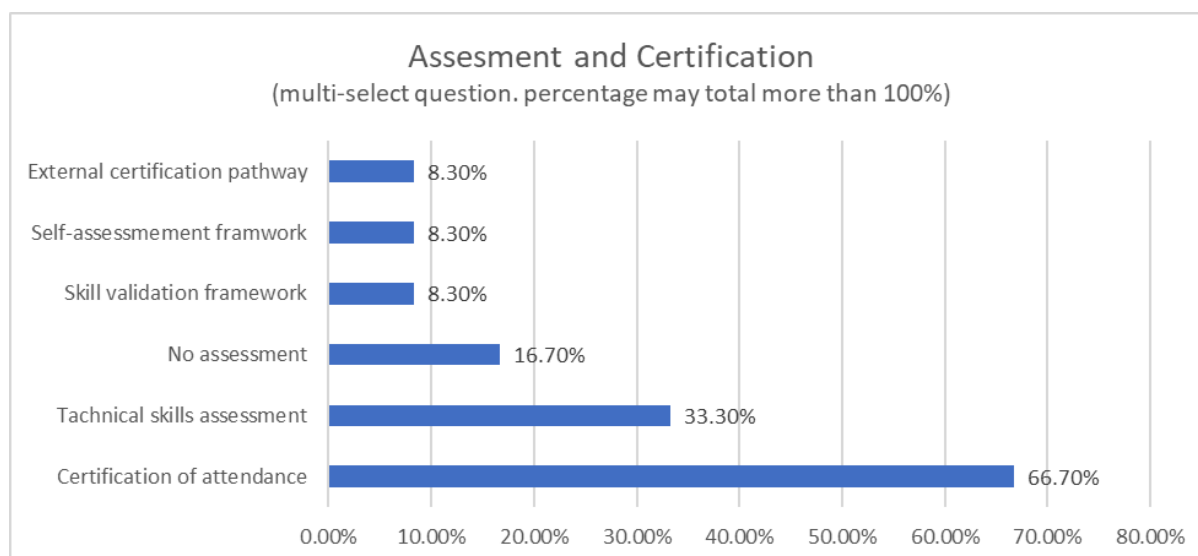
Gender Ratio of learners



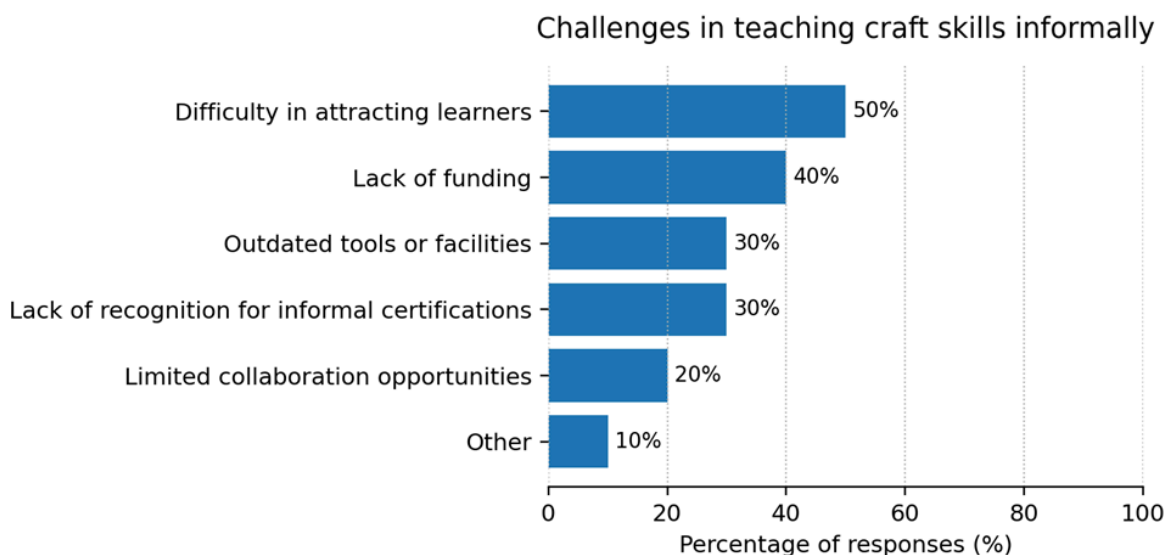
The most frequently reported average learner age is 18-30. This suggests that, within this small sample, young adults are a key group for non-formal craft education. But it should be noted that the project focus was adult education, so the non-formal education providers working with the youngest group were not the exact target of the research.



The most interesting data obtained from the survey was related to the tuition process. The majority of the courses were less than 6 months. Only 16.7% stated that their offers are longer.



Certification of attendance is the most common practice. More formal skills assessment or validation frameworks are present in some responses, but they are not universal across the sample. Moreover, the external certification pathway and validation frameworks present mainly in the same providers which more advanced organisational systems.



Base: non-formal education providers, n=10. Multi-select question; percentages may total more than 100%.

The most frequently mentioned challenges are difficulty attracting learners, lack of funding, limited collaboration opportunities, lack of recognition for informal certifications, and outdated tools or facilities.

4. Brief note on learner responses

Only three learner responses, so their answers should be used as illustrative examples rather than a basis for percentage-based conclusions. Both learner respondents are women and both refer to textile-related learning. Both also report that the course was free and that they received a certificate of attendance. Their motivations relate to upskilling, personal or professional development, and the continuation of traditional craft practices.

5. Survey results - general overview

The survey sample was relatively small and cannot be considered fully representative, the responses reveal several important tendencies regarding non-formal craft education in Georgia. Most participating organizations and workshops were strongly connected to local cultural traditions and regional heritage, focusing on crafts such as felt-making, weaving, wood processing, mosaic restoration, metalwork, enamel, and textile techniques. Many respondents emphasized the use of traditional methods, locally sourced natural materials, and, in some cases, recycled resources.

Training activities were largely practice-oriented, with most organizations reporting that practical work constituted the main part of the learning process.

The survey also suggests that non-formal craft education mainly attracts young adults and middle-aged learners, often including unemployed individuals, people seeking professional upskilling, or those pursuing crafts as a personal interest or hobby. In several cases, courses were offered free of charge through project funding or grants, while other organizations relied on participant tuition fees. Certificates of attendance were commonly issued, although formal assessment and wider recognition of acquired competences appeared less developed.

A recurring issue highlighted by respondents was the difficulty of attracting and retaining young people in craft professions, particularly in the regions. Many organizations linked this challenge to limited economic opportunities in the craft sector and the low recognition of informal certifications. Additional needs frequently mentioned included improved equipment, access to modern digital tools, stronger collaboration networks, and greater institutional or financial support for informal craft education initiatives.

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS TO NATIONAL STAKEHOLDERS

A more coordinated and accessible approach to non-formal craft education could significantly improve skills transmission, employment opportunities, and the sustainability of traditional crafts in Georgia.

1. Develop a dedicated national framework for craft education

Introduce a targeted policy or strategic direction within existing vocational and lifelong learning frameworks to address the specific needs of traditional and heritage crafts.

2. Make recognition of non-formal learning more accessible

Simplify validation procedures, encourage VET and private companies to acquire the validation authorisation, reduce administrative barriers and costs, and actively promote recognition mechanisms among craftspeople and training providers.

3. Introduce flexible, practice-based certification

Develop skills-based certification systems (e.g. micro-credentials) tailored to hands-on craft learning and aligned with the National Qualifications Framework.

4. Support craftspeople as educators

Create formal pathways to recognise experienced craftspeople as trainers or mentors, strengthening intergenerational knowledge transfer.

5. Establish financial support mechanisms

Introduce targeted funding tools (grants, vouchers, subsidies) to improve access to non-formal craft training, especially for youth, rural populations, and career changers.

6. Strengthen local learning ecosystems

Support workshops, craft centres, museums, and community spaces as key training environments, ensuring their sustainability and accessibility.

7. Improve coordination, visibility, and data

Enhance cooperation between stakeholders, develop a national mapping of training opportunities, and establish basic monitoring systems to support evidence-based policy development.

Glossary

Craftsmanship / Handicraft

Manual production of objects using specific skills, tools, and techniques, typically carried out in small workshops or by independent craftspeople. It may include contemporary or traditional practices.

Traditional Craftsmanship

A broad term encompassing traditional, artistic, and heritage-based practices, including fine arts, applied arts, folk art, and regionally specific craft techniques.

Heritage Craft (HC)

Craft activities and techniques that hold cultural, historical, or regional significance and contribute to the safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage.

Traditional Craft (TC)

Craft practices rooted in long-standing techniques, materials, or regional identities. Often transmitted through intergenerational learning.

Non-formal Education (NFE)

According to the research of the BRICKS project, non-formal education in heritage crafts refers to “community-based, hands-on learning outside formal systems, where adults gain skills through mentorship and intergenerational exchange. It plays a key role in preserving craft traditions, promoting inclusion, and supporting regional development”. For more definitions, click [here](#).

Certification

Any process that validates or recognises the skills, knowledge, or competences acquired through formal, non-formal, or informal learning.

Competence

A combination of knowledge, skills, and attitudes required to perform specific craft tasks or professional activities.

Learning Outcomes

Statements describing what a learner is expected to know, understand, and be able to do after completing a learning activity or training process.

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