

Cultural &
Creative
Industries

Skillnet

Bridging the Skills Gap in Ireland's Creative Industries

Based on insights gathered during our recent roundtable event hosted by Cultural & Creative Industries Skillnet, this presentation examines both industry-wide concerns and sector-specific challenges, highlighting potential solutions that could strengthen Ireland's creative ecosystem.

Together, we'll explore how collaborative approaches can elevate our creative industries to new heights of innovation and global competitiveness.



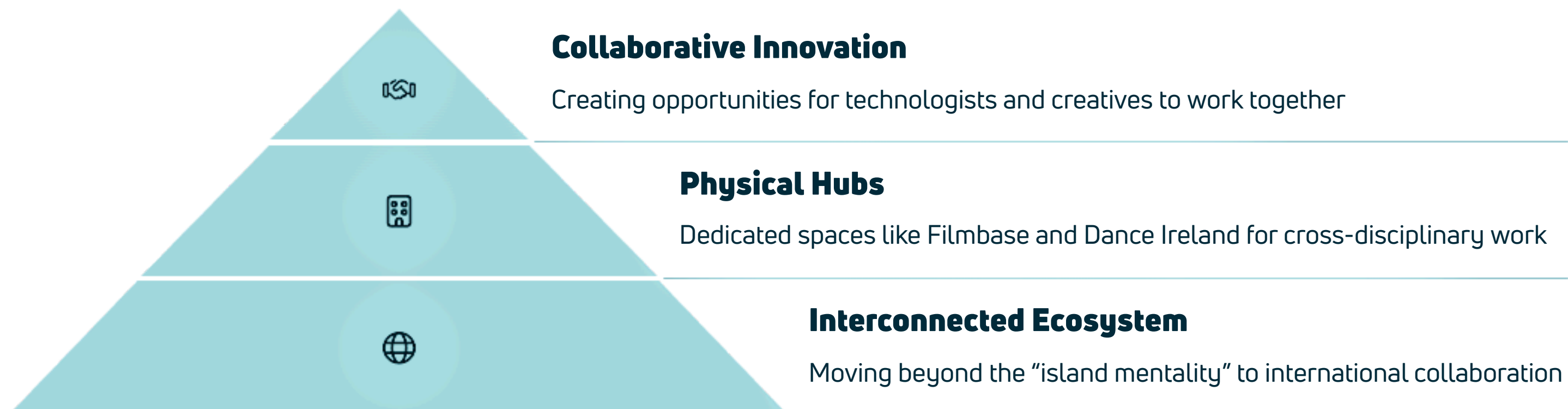
25th June 2025

BREAKING DOWN SILOS:

The **Need** for
**Interdisciplinary
SPACES**

Ireland's creative sectors currently operate in isolation, unlike the UK where agencies bring arts together cohesively. **We need physical spaces** that serve as creative crossroads, allowing new entrants and established professionals to connect face-to-face and share ideas across disciplines.

These interdisciplinary hubs could host hackathons, collaborative workshops, and **networking events that deliberately mix professionals** from different creative backgrounds. By breaking down barriers between sectors, we can encourage the innovation that emerges when diverse perspectives converge.



Bridging Education and Industry

The gap between education and industry **remains a significant challenge**. While universities and colleges provide essential foundations, course content may not always keep pace with evolving industry needs. We need structured programmes that connect students with real-world creative environments before graduation, complementing theory with hands-on experience.

Ongoing dialogue between industry leaders and educators will help ensure training remains relevant and future-focused. Career awareness initiatives at secondary level can also **build clearer understanding of creative pathways**, including the growing opportunities available across Ireland's regions.



University Outreach

Educating educators about evolving industry needs



Industry Access

Studio / Set tours for students doing their studies



Regular Check-ins

Industry shares upcoming challenges with training providers



Career Awareness

Educating second-level students about creative career paths

Training & Mentorship MODELS

KEY TAKEAWAY

Preference for bite-size, evening, and weekend training formats.

Hybrid models are ideal for longer courses. In-person time remains valuable.

Nominal fees increase commitment. Free courses see higher no-show rates.

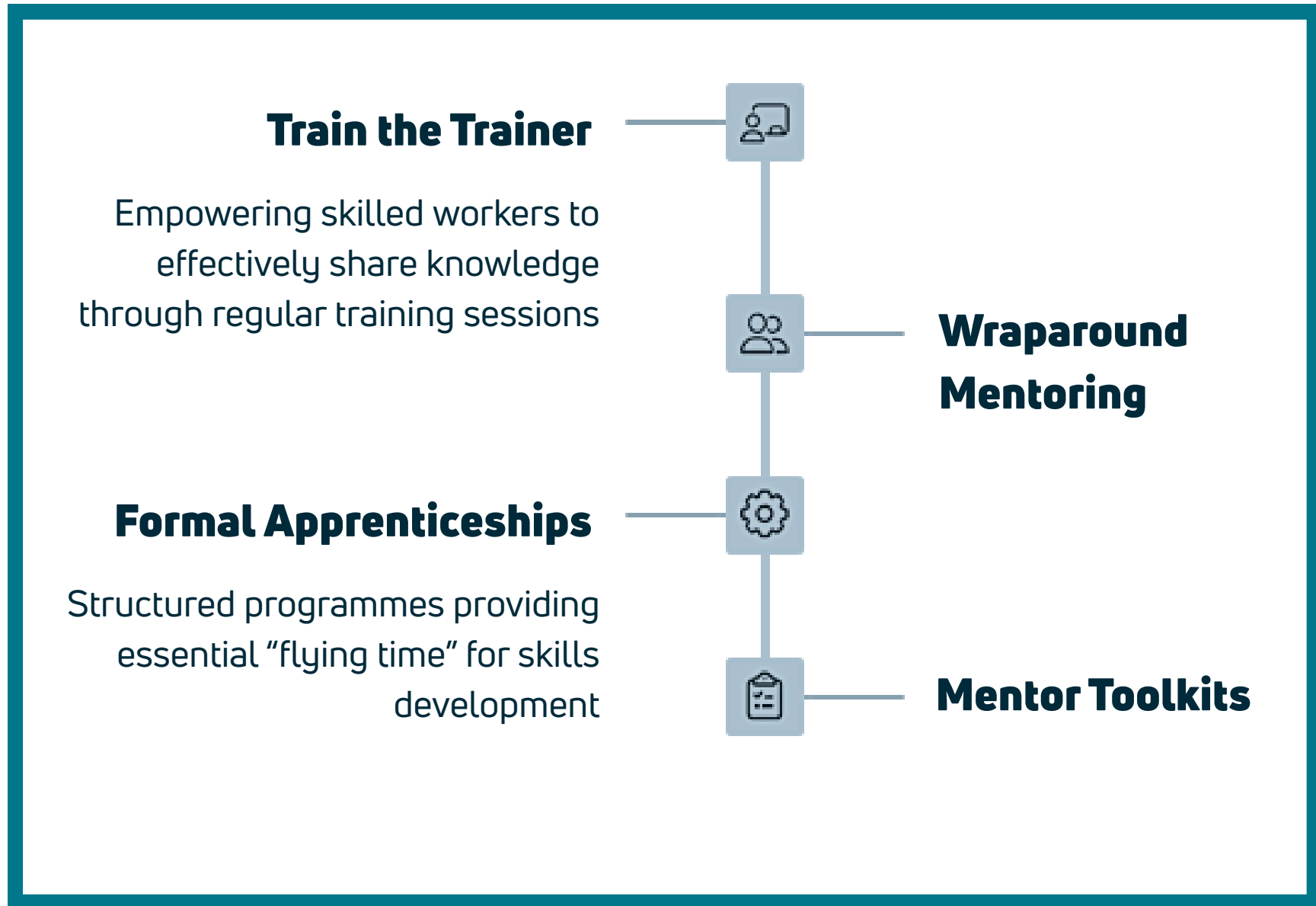
Soft skills, accountancy, and IP training are critical general gaps.

Effective training and mentorship are crucial for developing Ireland's creative workforce. The "Train the Trainer" approach enables skilled professionals to become confident educators, but **regular teaching practice is key** to maintaining that effectiveness.

Mentoring remains one of the most valuable tools for talent development - especially when supported by clear structures, best-practice toolkits, and appropriate safeguarding.

While other sectors benefit from well-established formal apprenticeship routes, the creative industries continue to lack this kind of structured, recognised pathway. Introducing formal apprenticeships could provide the **essential 'on-the-job' learning** experience the sector needs.

For working professionals, CPD-aligned courses and micro-credentials remain a strong preference: offering flexible, practical upskilling options that fit around freelance and project-based schedules.



Diversity, Equity and Inclusion **CHALLENGES**

Creating truly inclusive creative industries requires addressing barriers at every level. Financial constraints often prevent talented individuals from accessing training, while inaccessible spaces exclude people with disabilities from participating fully in the sector.

Meaningful EDI initiatives must go beyond surface-level compliance to create supportive environments where diverse talent can thrive. This includes addressing regional disparities by ensuring opportunities aren't concentrated solely in Dublin and implementing flexible delivery models that accommodate different needs.

ACCESSIBLE TRAINING

Be mindful of income levels when designing programmes. Those most in need of training often earn the least. Implement sliding scale fees and scholarship opportunities.

INCLUSIVE SPACES

Ensure venues are not only wheelchair accessible but also neuro-inclusive. Design environments that accommodate diverse sensory needs and learning styles.

EMPLOYER SUPPORT

Train employers in EDI principles and wellbeing practices. Move beyond tokenism to meaningful inclusion through ongoing support after hiring.

REGIONAL ACCESS

Host events and training opportunities outside Dublin to ensure geographic diversity. Create online and hybrid options to increase accessibility

AI INTEGRATION:

Opportunities and Challenges

AI is transforming creative industries, with roles already beginning to collapse and reconfigure. There's an urgent need for training in how to use AI tools ethically and effectively, alongside clear company policies that guide employees on appropriate AI utilisation in their work.

As technical skills become increasingly AI-augmented, soft skills grow more valuable. A Creative Innovation Hub focused on AI infrastructure could help Ireland stay competitive, while masterclasses by creative AI ambassadors could provide practical ethical guidance.

Surveying industry experiences with AI would help identify specific training needs.

AI LITERACY

Fundamental understanding of AI principles and applications needed across age roles

CHANGE MANAGEMENT

Supporting transition from legacy media to new AI-integrated workflows

ETHICAL FRAMEWORK

Developing clear policies on ethical AI use, GDPR compliance, and data protection

FUTURE ROLES

Training for new positions that AI will create as traditional roles evolve

Career Development and Sustainability

Career progression in creative industries requires both technical skills and a sustainable approach to work. Many departments lack HODs trained in supporting their teams' career development, while some newcomers exhibit reluctance to work their way up, unwilling to acknowledge knowledge gaps.

Communication skills for those in technical roles are often overlooked, yet they are essential for effective client interaction and the successful delivery of creative projects. Supporting wellbeing and promoting work-life balance is also critical for retaining talent in high-pressure environments. Finally, environmental sustainability training is increasingly important to ensure productions align with growing expectations for responsible and ethical practices.



Leadership Skills

HODs trained to support staff / crew career development



Client Communication

Enhanced client management skills for HODs and producers



Work-Life Balance

Wellbeing and career sustainability training



Environmental Practices

Sustainable production methods and certification

Key Recommendations and **NEXT STEPS**

Moving forward requires strategic investment in Ireland's creative skills ecosystem. By implementing these recommendations, we can **address the critical gaps** identified during our roundtable discussions and **strengthen the foundations of our creative industries.**

Cultural & Creative Industries Skillnet commits to facilitating these initiatives through ongoing stakeholder engagement, targeted funding applications, and regular progress assessment.

Together, we can build a more resilient, inclusive and globally competitive creative sector in Ireland.

Establish Creative Innovation Hub

Develop a central space that combines **training, collaboration, and access** to new tech, with a focus on AI and Virtual Production. The hub should support both in-person and remote participation.

Implement Tracking System

Create a system to track creative professionals' career progression - similar to Northern Ireland Screen's model of following 100 trainees. This would provide **valuable data on skills gaps and development** across the sector.

Launch Cross-Sectoral Training Programme

Develop a **recurring, annual traineeship** for production and admin roles across dance, festivals, events, and screen. Ideally structured like an apprenticeship, this programme should provide a **stable, long-term pathway**, not reliant on year-to-year funding. The aim is to build a **versatile talent** pipeline across creative sectors.

Sector Wide Strategic Actions

Expand focus on regional access and freelance-friendly models, including more upskilling in legal, ethical, and financial literacy across sectors

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