

Executive Summary



ready4future

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Kofinanziert durch das
Programm Erasmus+
der Europäischen Union

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ready4future

The *ready4future* project ("Professional qualification and complementary skills for self-employed and one-person companies in the trade fair and event industry") contributes to the modernization and internationalization process in vocational training and thereby actively supports the [European Skills Agenda](#) (Employment, Social Affairs & Inclusion).

In Times Of A Pandemic

The events industry is one of the hardest hit worldwide by the Corona pandemic. It is de facto the freezing of an entire industry and a professional ban for its players. This state of affairs has remained largely unchanged since the virus broke out in Europe at the beginning of 2020, leading to fundamental changes in the events industry, particularly extreme hardship for solo self-employed professionals. At the time of the project's submission, it was already clear that Corona was placing an extreme strain on the industry, but the scale and far-reaching consequences were not foreseeable in this form. It was in this particular context that the project consortium operated from October 2020 to October 2021.

Corona Reactions

For the consortium, external specialists from the event industry, education experts as well as directly concerned industry representatives and stakeholders, ready4future served as a transnational exchange platform to compare the different national reactions from the industry and politics, to identify best-practice models and to initiate necessary measures and educational but also economic policy thrusts.

In order to be able to address governmental and European support measures efficiently at all, figures, data and facts were urgently needed, which were not uniformly available to the strongly differing, less professionalized industry. The consortium actively participated in listing various studies and making them transnationally comparable.

These included:

[Rebuilding Europe \(The cultural and creative economy before and after the COVID-19 crisis\)/EY;](#)
[The OECD Covid-19 portal: Building a resilient recovery/OECD;](#)
[Inclusive Entrepreneurship/OECD;](#)
[Missing Entrepreneurs 2021/OECD;](#)
[Economische Impact Zakelijke](#)
[Evenementenmarkt/Eventplatform Netherlands;](#)

[Impact of the corona crisis on the Belgian event sector](#)/Expertisecentrum of the Karel de Grote Hogeschool;
[Studie zur gesamtwirtschaftlichen Bedeutung der Veranstaltungswirtschaft ZÄHL DAZU](#)/Interessengemeinschaft der Veranstaltungswirtschaft e.V.& R.I.F.E.L. e.V.
[Project COOP - Peanuts, een cöoperatieve voor de culturele sector](#)/STEPP vzw;
[WKO Eventnet: Zahlen, Daten, Fakten aus der Eventbranche](#)/WKO Austria

The Sector

The meta-analysis of the studies shows that, firstly, the event industry is one of the most important economic sectors in Europe, secondly, the proportion of self-employed people in the sector is above average compared to other industries, and thirdly, the economic situation of the majority of self-employed people is threatening their existence. The immediate consequences are: An enormous brain drain or talent/personnel outflow to other sectors and a lack of young talent, evidenced by a massive drop in the number of trainees and students. In addition, digital learning and examination offerings must be made immediately available and usable so that trainees, students, and participants in continuing education and training do not end up in an educational backlog. Partners from the consortium launched corresponding projects in their home countries and quickly created offers to avoid gaps in education, but also to increase the quality of e-learning and teaching.

These included:

[Azubi-Workshop step2future](#)/Deutsche Event Akademie;
[Eine Kooperation zwischen dem MBO College Hilversum und FABER AV zum Virtual Classroom](#)/ROC van Amsterdam;
[Online-Bildungsportal für Auszubildende in der Veranstaltungsbranche](#)/IGVW e.V.;
[Virtuelle Showcases für Lernende in der Veranstaltungsbranche Next Generation 2021](#)/svtb

The common success factor of these innovative learning and teaching opportunities is the interlinking of practice and theory through cooperation between training providers and industry companies. This relates specifically to the provision of technical expertise, professional project management and the corresponding partner network. As the best practice examples impressively show, cooperation with associations can be very helpful, but an Erasmus+ project such as *ready4future* also impressively demonstrates how a European project can quickly disseminate the necessary information, create synergies and build support networks.

The Self-employed

ready4future was launched with the ambitious goal of actively combating the acute threat of unemployment in the event industry. As the Corona crisis and the close observation and analysis of the labor market and their often atypical employment relationships in the project show, this danger particularly affects the solo self-employed.

However, it is important to distinguish two main types of solo self-employed here: On the one hand, high end - opportunity entrepreneurship, which can be characterized by high self-entrepreneurial skills, high qualification needs, high learning benefits, low precariousness, high individual freedom and professionalism; on the other hand, low end - necessity entrepreneurship, which is also characterized by relatively high self-entrepreneurial skills, but low qualification needs, rather mixed form of freedom and learning benefits, low professionalism and high precariousness.

For further differentiation and focus on the target group in the project, the following projects and studies were used:

[Erasmus+ GIVE – Guidance for Individual Vocations in Europe](#)/ÖSB;
[Entrepreneurial Strategies](#)/Zurich Center for Creative Economies;
[the entrepreneurial dimension of the cultural and creative industries](#)/Utrecht School of Arts;
[Initiative Kultur- & Kreativwirtschaft der Bundesregierung](#)/Kompetenzzentrum Kultur- und Kreativwirtschaft des Bundes;
[Local Employment and Economic Development \(LEED Programme\)](#)/OECD;
[Entrepreneurship](#)/Eurofund;
[Creative Freelancers](#)/The Creative Industries Federation;
[BEHIND THE STAGE FINAL REPORT](#)/PEARL Live Performance Europe;
[Self-employed](#)/UNI EUROPA;
[Handbook „Reaching the Full Potential of Social Dialogue for Atypical Workers“](#)/UNI MEI;
[The Role Of Public Policies In Developing Entrepreneurial And Innovation Potential Of The Cultural And Creative Sectors](#)/Report Of The OMC;
[Im Einsatz für Ein-Personen-Unternehmen \(EPU\)](#)/WKO Austria;
[Forschungsbericht 545: Selbstständige Erwerbstätigkeit in Deutschland](#)/Bundesministerium für Arbeit und Soziales;
[Perspektiven nach Corona: Vorschlag zu einer Arbeitslosenversicherung für Selbstständige](#)/Institut für Arbeitsmarkt und Berufsforschung

Socio-economic Framework

ready4future is aware of the political dimension and scope of the project and tries to discuss this in a cross-national comparison within the scope of what is possible in the project. This concerns, among other things, the exchange about the respective national access to social security systems, bogus self-employment, the organizations of self-employed persons in associations and trade unions, voluntary or mandatory unemployment insurance, health insurance, pension systems and more. During the reflection meetings within the consortium and through contributions from experts, advantages and disadvantages to the respective different national legislations were discussed and special national solutions within the EU countries were pointed out, such as the French system of *intermittents* and the Swedish social security system.

For such a multicultural and international working environment as prevails in the event industry, it is inherent to think and approach challenges and problem solving in all professional and labor market relevant topics transnationally. Networking in Brussels with the European employers' and employees' organizations made it possible to enter into intensive exchange and thus to better understand the efforts at the European level in order to be able to communicate these to their own national stakeholders in a next step. Here, the national industry associations from the consortium's environment are addressed in particular, and the consortium hopes to make a small but also decisive contribution to a uniform European framework that facilitates transnational work and holds out the prospect of a pan-European social security system. Especially for employees in the event industry, this would be a considerable advantage and an adaptation to their life and professional reality.

Project Core

With the focus on the project goal, the consortium is faced with the question of how to better support especially young, professionally inexperienced people, as well as career changers and immigrant workers who are affected by a lack of qualifications, competencies and skills, by a high risk of unemployment or precarious conditions.

Various approaches have been taken to achieve this:

Expert Discussions

Industry experts and career specialists discussed and analyzed which skills and competencies characterize the successful self-employed person. In several talks, the following five basic success factors were identified:

Flexibility, collaboration skills (teamwork), resilience (mental/physical), reflection and networking

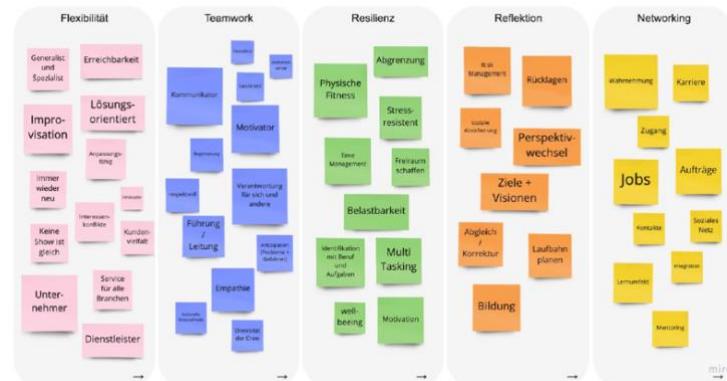


Fig.1 Skills and competences - success factors summarized (white board) from the expert interviews, discussions and surveys

Workshops

In a workshop, the consortium intensively discussed and reflected on the topic of Future Skills and their relevance for the self-employed in the event industry, but also for the education providers themselves. Title of the event: Skills for the 21st century - the 4K with education expert Andreas Schlegelmilch ([lernen Bohlscheid](#)). To meet this thematic challenge, external expertise was brought in and the workshop was externally moderated and professionally led.



Fig.2 From the perspective of the solo self-employed, entrepreneurs and freelancers: what do the 4Ks mean for us? Jamboard excerpt from the workshop



Fig.3 Reflection: What the 4K mean to me...What can I personally do, what can I do, what can be my first step?

Outcome:

- Intensive discussion of the 4Cs
- Transfer to industry (digital and green transformation), education providers and solo self-employed (Separate working groups with subsequent discussion)
- Raising awareness of the 4Cs within their own educational programs and trainings
- Not only the learning content, but also the learning transfer must be oriented to the 4Cs

Studies And Science

The focus on Future Skills was expanded and discussed in the consortium through specialist publications and project initiatives, including the following studies and initiatives relating to the topic of Future Skills:

[Future Skills Book](#)/Prof. Ulf-Daniel Ehlers;

[The Future of Jobs Report](#)/World Economic Forum;

[LEARNING Skills needs and gaps in the CCSI](#)/Creative Flip;

E+ [Careers Around Me](#)/University of Camerino(Italy);

[EntreComp: The Entrepreneurship Competence](#)

[Framework](#)/JRC Science For Policy Report

Conference: Learning To Be

The consortium actively participated in the conference [Learning to be - Building Resilience in the Event Industry Labor Market in Europe](#). This means that the *ready4future* project was not only presented and discussed at the conference, but individual partners from the consortium also participated in the panels or were involved in the expert discussions as experts. The dissemination and documentation of the conference was specifically supported by *ready4future*. The following topics were discussed with the expert participants:

- The State of Play of Microcredentials in the EU
- Certification Systems – Needs and Requirements from an Industry Perspective

- LifeLongLearning and Microcredentials + Mobility in the Event Industry
- From Theory to Practice –Steps towards a European Certification System

The discussion contributions and evaluations of the conference are described in detail in the storybook ready4future. The main outcomes of the conference for the event industry were that the first steps in the education sector towards *microcredentials* and European certification should and must continue to be taken boldly if the realities of life of the players, especially the self-employed, are to be addressed more specifically. Transnational work makes transnational recognition of qualifications through European certification systems urgently necessary. Education and qualification programs must be better adapted to the learning world and the learning rhythm of players in the event industry.

Microcredentials are a great opportunity to respond more precisely to these conditions. Universities (higher education) find it rather difficult to adapt to modern qualification and certification systems, but it can be an advantage for education providers and private institutions in vocational training to react quickly here and create appropriate offerings. The European instruments, for example [Europass](#), are available and are constantly being further developed.

In Cooperation With Erasmus And European Commission

Cooperation with Erasmus+ projects in connection with European standards and transparency systems.

The consortium discussed in particular the exchange with the Erasmus+ project partial certification in the field of event technology (short: [TeBeVAT](#)) and searched for connections and references.

The consortium ready4future supports the efforts of the *TeBeVAT* consortium in the next step to develop a software and to bring the product to market. Current challenges were discussed in the project:

- Validation: national or European level? (educational funding alism)
- Number of participants: lack of critical mass due to small sector size (Valikom)
- Rigid education system (training sovereignty of IHKs): change from qualification-oriented to competence-oriented training
- Financing: high certification costs and questionable cost bearing.

Proposed solutions discussed include higher scalability, a European solution because larger target group can be reached, harmonization of the education system, transparency and mobility, among others.

In the context of these proposed solutions and addressing the challenges of a European solution, the following systems and project outcomes were examined and discussed in more detail:

[European classification of Skills, Competences, Qualifications and Professions](#)/ESCO;
[A competency matrix for "Veranstaltungstechnik" developed in the German speaking EU countries](#)/ECVAET Matrix;
[The European Credit System for vocational training and training](#)/ECVET;
[Transparency in Arts Levels and Qualification](#)/TALQ Project;
[ETTE safety project](#)/ETTE;
[From ESCO TO LAAR](#)/The LAAR Project

In Cooperation With EU Pacts And EU Agendas

Active contribution and support of the European agenda in the field of education and the utilization of European statistics and reports.

The European agenda includes a wide range of activities, instruments, systems, publications, and projects that have a direct added value for the *ready4future* project and are included in the considerations. We are particularly pleased that instruments such as Europass are constantly evolving and being actively used by more and more people. The project supports the development and use of the Europass digital certificates ([European Digital Credentials For Learning](#)/Europass) through dissemination within its own network.

The Lifelong Learning initiatives are also supported by the consortium and are always considered in the project, e.g. through participation in workshops and conferences of EPALE Germany and Austria. These included the *Careers Around me* workshop at the [Euroguidance Symposium 2020](#), which addressed the questions of what *carrer management skills* are, how they can be developed, and what contribution they make to educational and career choices. Here, numerous overlaps with our own observations in the project emerged. This is also true for the focus on the European Skills Agenda and the participation in the ["Life Skills - Future of Adult Education?"](#)/EPALE conference.

In addition, European projects were also looked at more closely, which originate from other sectors, but provided

good transferable best-practice examples and interdisciplinary synergies and transfer opportunities were clearly recognizable. In particular, in the area of digital education and support. These included:

[STARTS \(Science, Technology & The Arts\)](#) /Initiative of the European Commission;
[WORTH Partnership project/COSME](#)

In order to better understand the European framework in vocational education and training and likewise to make figures, facts and data transnationally mappable, the following tools were used:

[Country Specific Reports on Key competences in vocational education and training \(VET\)](#)/CEDEFOP ReferNET
(Für [Austria](#), [Belgium](#), [Germany](#), [Netherlands](#));
[European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions/EUROFUND](#);
[EntreComp: The Entrepreneurship Competence Framework/JRC Science For Policy Report](#)

Conference On Future Learning

Seminar *ready4future Talks about the Future of Learning / The Art Of Learning.*

The consortium discussed together with trainers from the fields of training, coaching and consulting about modern ways of teaching and learning and their success factors with a focus on the target group of solo self-employed people:

Peer-learning and art-based-learning are two ways of imparting learning content that can have a great impact, especially on players from the event industry. In the exchange, course concepts were specifically discussed and the framework conditions of such Future Learning settings were discussed. Three approaches of Art- or Theater-based Training were examined and discussed with the invited responsible persons. One project is now actively integrating this form of learning for the first time into the master course for event technicians in Germany. The projects and trainings included:

[Szenische Trainings/Inszenio;](#)
[Projekt theater-based Training AL-Pro/IFAF Berlin;](#)
[ArtE – The Art Of Employability/Sozialforschungsstelle, TU Dortmund University](#)

From the consortium, other teaching formats, including project work, team workshop ideas were brought into the project. A project that offers transfer possibilities from university teaching for private education providers can be, for

example, the [Start Up Your Idea 5€ Business](#)/BBW - a learning competition that is also already very successful as a practical peer learning approach.

A best practice example that illustrates how crucial it is to sharpen one's own perception as an entrepreneur is [C hoch 3 – wirtschaftliches Empowerment](#)/Kreativwirtschaft Austria. In an exchange with their founder, another success feature of these courses and programs became apparent, namely the added value of networking or joining an existing network. These findings underline the research within ready4future - that a security and success formula for the self-employed is the quality of their network.

Discussions With Vocational Experts

Expert discussions with educational and career counselors

In the exchange with educational consultants of the ÖSB, the question arose as to how the target group of solo self-employed persons in the event industry can be more successfully addressed, advertised and enthused for educational programs. Based on the detailed knowledge of the target group acquired in the project, appropriate channels can be established and tailored offers can be designed. For example, a campaign based on the experiences and modules from the Erasmus+ project [step2mice](#)/Event Industry Integration would be useful. Likewise, elements from the successful [C hoch 3 – wirtschaftliches Empowerment](#) program already mentioned can be put to good use. Such networks can also be increasingly supported through the use of social media: [Social Media in Educational Guidance](#)/ÖSB.

But the crucial thing will be to activate peer-to-peer communication. And for education providers, the ability to communicate at eye level and actually respond to the needs of the target group. The reports from the symposium in Salzburg provide crucial insights precisely in this regard: [Working Poor im Fokus: Aufgaben für die Bildungsberatung](#)/ÖSB Consulting

Aligning educational programs with the realities of people's lives, learning with and from each other, and being in real connection and resonance - are the crucial factors of sustainable education and thus empowerment of individuals. Ready4future is guided by these principles and aligns the activities and thrusts of the project accordingly.

The ready4future Platform

Service for solo self-employed via the ready4future platform

Through the project work and analyses, three main areas were identified in which the self-employed should be actively supported:

Effective toolkits for the self-employed and their realities of life;

Contacts - such as platforms, associations and initiatives - for local, national and international networking;

and links to appropriate continuing education and training opportunities.

The consortium checks the contacts and links for their quality and the standards determined by the project. In the case of training courses, this includes, for example, their compliance with the European transparency system and standards, their content-related examination of the 4K (Future Skills), the digital and sustainable quality of the training offer, which also includes the criteria of lifelong learning.

In order to identify suitable toolkits, we looked across industry boundaries for low-threshold, practical tools and offerings in related disciplines, such as the creative industry or journalism, and tested them for quality and industry fit. This interdisciplinary approach opened the way to high-quality products.

The contact lists for networking emerge for the most part from direct contacts and connections of members of the consortium and were accordingly tested for their seriousness and consistency.

Network

[Creative Unite](#)/Artists & Creatives COVID-19 Recovery Resource Platform;

[Cultuur+Ondernemen](#)/ knowledge centre for entrepreneurship in the cultural and creative sector;

[Selbstständige ver.di](#)/Vereinte Dienstleistungsgewerkschaft; [wemakeevents.com](#)/PLASA;

[freelancersmaketheaterwork](#)/FMTW;

[eventsafetyalliance](#)/ESA;

[branchenhilfe ch](#)/svtb; [kunstenbond](#) Netherlands;

[De Vereniging Voor Freelance Event professionals](#)/VVFE;

[Interessengemeinschaft der selbständigen Dienstleister/Innen in der Veranstaltungswirtschaft](#)/ISDV e.V.;

[Verband der Selbständigen und Gründer Deutschlands e.V.](#)/VGSD e.V.

Toolkits

[So You Need Money? A Guide For Cultural And Creative Entrepreneurs Trough The Financing Jungle](#)/Creative FLIP;
[Work Of Art: Business Skills for Artist](#)/Creative Exchange: Springboard;
[LIFE OFF-STAGE: survival guide for creative arts professionals](#)/IETM;
[Creative Skills Europe](#)/PEARLE Live Performing Arts;
[ENTREPRENEURSHIP ROUTE: Increase Your Chances in 8 Steps, Business Guide For Artists and Creatives](#)/Cultuur+Ondernemen;
[Der Profilpass für die Selbständigkeit](#)/Deutsches Institut für Erwachsenenbildung - Leibniz-Zentrum für Lebenslanges Lernen e.V.;

Training

[Europäischer Wirtschaftsführerschein: EBCL](#)/WIFI Austria;
[Creative Skills Europe](#)/PEARLE Live Performing Arts;
[Multidisciplinary Skills for Artists' Entrepreneurship](#)/E+ MUSAE;

Project Outlook

As described in detail in this *Executive Summary* and the *Storybook*, the project consortium spent a year and more working intensively on the question:
How can self-employed people in the event industry be specifically strengthened through qualification and skills acquisition?

The challenge for the consortium was to identify and cluster the numerous topics. Then to initiate high-quality expert discussions and organize working groups.
The next step was to evaluate and document the contributions to the discussions, observations and results.

R4F Observations

Industry	Skills	Qualifications
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> new alliances	<input type="checkbox"/> collaboration	<input type="checkbox"/> future learning
<input type="checkbox"/> studies	<input type="checkbox"/> communication	<input type="checkbox"/> trainings
<input type="checkbox"/> green and digital	<input type="checkbox"/> critical thinking	<input type="checkbox"/> empowerment
<input type="checkbox"/> best practice	<input type="checkbox"/> creativity	<input type="checkbox"/> certification
<input type="checkbox"/> talents		

Padlet: <https://padlet.com/tommyneumann/Bookmarks>

Fig.4 Observations from the project work, clustered into the topics Industry, Skills and Qualifications with the respective subtopics

One result is the present *Executive Summary*, which concisely summarizes the main topics and the corresponding project activities and outcomes.

The *ready4future Storybook* contains detailed and transparent documentation of the dialogue process during the one-year project, a detailed summary of the challenges and reactions to the Corona pandemic, as well as minutes and recordings of the working meetings, conferences and transnational meetings, the extensive dissemination activities and more.

The *Storybook* can be used by interested parties as an example of good practice and inspiration for the implementation of an Erasmus+ project.

R4F Topics – project landscape - overview

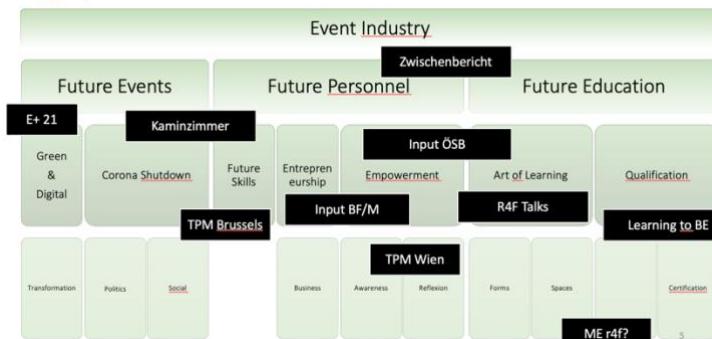


Fig.5 The Project Landscape and the thematic areas (green) and activities (black) mapped for better overview

ready4future has succeeded in creating an interdisciplinary, transnational network that disseminates the core messages from the project and promotes them further by intensifying cooperation. On the basis of this work and analysis, it is now possible for stakeholders in the event industry to better orient themselves in the European educational context, to define educational projects more precisely and to develop appropriate products as needed: The project results have already been incorporated into the course programs and designs of the participating educational institutions; in the field of educational consulting, a more precise understanding of the reality of life, needs and prerequisites of solo self-employed persons in the event industry could be used to improve the consulting service; industry associations have a better understanding of existing European tools and systems and how they can be harnessed and shared.

Compared to the situation in October 2020, it is clear how much mediation work has been done both internally and externally by *ready4future*. The initiated dialogue process with the aim to strengthen the industry and its stakeholders, primarily raised awareness among stakeholders and the

target group to face the challenges and to open up to the offered solution path.

This educational journey is a European one, it is supported by modern technology and focuses on the core elements of good education and the principle of learning together.

The ready4future consortium is optimistic about the future and is looking forward to continue its work in the European network and joint projects.

Credits

ready4future

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