

Questions for successful CCE (Cultural & Creativity Entrepreneurs) (Argyro Skitsa)

- In 2-3 lines, briefly describe your business.

“Shedia stin poli” (aka “raft in the city”) is an Artistic Pedagogic non-profit organization and was created in Thessaloniki in 1999. Team members are educators, social scientists and young artists. Our vision is to contribute in efforts for an inclusive society. Our tools are Arts and creativity. Our actions include training courses, cultural and education projects, networking in local, national and European level.

- How did you become a CC Entrepreneur? Was there some kind of impulse / magic moment where you decided to become a CCE?

I born and grown up in a small city in South Greece (near Patras), near a Roma neighbourhood and an Institution for people with disabilities. I have very strong memories from theses. I started study music at 9 years and continued for many years (piano, theory and music pedagogy). I also studied in Faculty of Philosophy, Pedagogy and Psychology in Aristotle University of Thessaloniki. Working with youngsters with severe disabilities and also with children in schools, I saw the power of the Arts as a tool for communication, learning and inclusion. I had the chance to be an active member of a NGO for social inclusion of young people with disabilities and fewer opportunities and we organized open cultural events and art festival in Thessaloniki. That was a quite important period of inspiration for me. At 1999 I decided to create a cultural space based on the idea Arts for education and social change. In the group took part young teachers, social scientists and artists. Later on, on 2007, our group “Shedia stin poli”, became a legal body of civil society (non-profit organization) and we are continuing to work till today in the field of inclusion through Arts and creativity.

- What was your biggest challenge as CCE and how did you handle it?

The biggest challenge was to engage and inspire young people (especially students of education and Arts) to work together, believe in their potential as change makers and be part of creative art-educational projects in our local community. Also to keep going on and find new ideas connecting culture & Arts with social issues (human rights, children protection and resilience etc).

- What do you think: What is the secret to your success?

I think the important element for me is that I am always working in the frame of the team, with young people, sharing ideas, networking, cooperating and co-creating. I have never stopped to experiment, take risks and create new social/ educational/ cultural projects trying to bring together young people, groups and local or European organizations. I believe that culture and arts could contribute in development of awareness and sensitization in many fields.

- What is the most essential knowledge or know-how for CCE? What do you recommend other CCEs or ongoing CCEs to learn as soon as possible with regards to:

- 1st Sprint – Opportunities & Idea Identification

- 2nd Sprint – Start-up
- 3rd Sprint – Scale and Exit
- 4th Sprint – Case Studies

I think it is quite important to understand their expectations and motives and have strong self-awareness and self-reflection competence. Also, to continue to develop personal and social skills, extend their knowledge and capacity in their field, learn from the mistakes and difficulties and be updated. See the big picture, keep your vision clear and work to make it realistic and sustainable.