

# **CULTURE, THE ECONOMY AND THE CREATIVE AND CULTURAL INDUSTRIES (CCIS):**

## **AN AFRICAN PERSPECTIVE**

### **INTRODUCTION**

The “cultural dimension of development” was recognised as early as the 1960s in the post-colonial era when economic and developmental models from other contexts were applied with limited success to newly-independent states in which the culture (value and belief systems, traditions, worldviews, etc) of the local intended beneficiaries militated against such models.

At least since the 1990s, much emphasis has been placed on the creative and cultural industries as potential drivers of economic growth, and thus of human and social development.

African Union ministers adopted the Plan of Action on Cultural and Creative Industries in 2008 in Algiers as a means of contributing to development in Africa.

This paper seeks to explore the relationship between culture and the economy.

In particular, the paper will seek to

- a. interrogate and define the creative economy, the cultural and creative industries from within African conditions
- b. critique the relevance of the creative and cultural industries as drivers of development in Africa
- c. argue for the creative and cultural industries in Africa beyond economic reasons and
- d. suggest ways in which those interested in the cultural dimension of development in Africa may support such development

### **ORIGINS AND DEFINITIONS OF THE CREATIVE AND CULTURAL INDUSTRIES AND THE CREATIVE ECONOMY**

UNESCO’s website on culture states that

The concept of *cultural industries* – the creation, industrial reproduction and mass distribution of cultural works – is not new. In 1948, Theodore Adorno and Max Horkheimer coined the term. Half-a-century has passed since they developed the concept and during this time the ways of creating, producing and distributing cultural products has changed dramatically. Cultural industries have incorporated, in addition to adapting to technological advances and the evolving place of media in society, sophisticated production processes and large-scale distribution methods to reach global markets.<sup>1</sup>

The website goes on to speak about how the concept evolved further in the 1990s in Australia and the United Kingdom towards the notion of the *creative economy* which placed “an emphasis on creativity, technological change and as a comparative advantage in business development.”

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<sup>1</sup> <https://en.unesco.org/creativity/sites/creativity/files/digital-library/What%20Do%20We%20Mean%20by%20CCI.PDF>

The term “creative industries” arose out of this evolution and were defined famously by the UK’s Department of Communications, Media and Sport (DCMS) in 2001 as “those industries which have their origin in individual creativity, skill and talent which have a potential for job and wealth creation through the generation and exploitation of intellectual property”.<sup>2</sup>

The DCMS taxonomy recognised nine creative sectors: advertising and marketing; architecture; crafts; design (product, graphic and fashion); film (including television, radio and photography); information technology (including software and computer services); publishing; museums, galleries and libraries and finally, music, performing and visual arts.

The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) Creative Economy Network defines the creative economy as “the knowledge-based economic activities upon which the ‘creative industries’ are based”.<sup>3</sup>

For them, the creative industries

...include advertising, architecture, arts and crafts, design, fashion, film, video, photography, music, performing arts, publishing, research and development, software, computer games, electronic publishing and TV/radio...the lifeblood of the creative economy...also considered an important source of commercial and cultural value

UNESCO defines the cultural and creative industries as

Those sectors of organised activity that have as their main objective the production or reproduction, the promotion, distribution or commercialisation of goods, services and activities of content derived from cultural, artistic or heritage origins.<sup>4</sup>

This definition places an “emphasis on goods, services and activities of a cultural/artistic and or heritage nature, whose origin lies in human creativity, whether past or present”. But importantly, these are not goods, services and activities for their own sake or for social functions, but rather are part of a “value chain that allows goods, services and activities to reach a public and market.”

The primary “cultural domains” that are included in UNESCO’s definition are Cultural and Natural Heritage (museums, archaeological sites and historical places, etc), Performance and Celebration (performing arts, festivals, fairs, etc), Visual arts and crafts (fine arts, photography, crafts), Books and Press (books, newspapers and magazines, libraries, book fairs), Audio-Visual and Interactive Media (film and video, television and radio, video games), and Design and Creative Services (fashion, graphic design, interior design, architectural services, advertising).

Secondary domains are Tourism and Sports and Recreation (gambling, theme parks, etc) with all of these including intangible cultural heritage (oral traditions and expressions, rituals, languages and social practices).

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[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/523024/Creative\\_Industries\\_Economic\\_Estimates\\_January\\_2016\\_Updated\\_201605.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/523024/Creative_Industries_Economic_Estimates_January_2016_Updated_201605.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> <https://unctad.org/en/Pages/DITC/CreativeEconomy/Creative-Economy.aspx>

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.unesco.org/new/en/culture/themes/creativity/creative-industries/>

The value chain for these industries would include education, creation, production, distribution, consumption and archiving/preservation, with jobs and opportunities for wealth generation being created at all parts of the value chain.

The Inter-American Development Bank describes the creative economy of Latin America and the Caribbean as the Orange Economy, defined as the “group of linked activities through which ideas are transformed into cultural goods and services whose value is determined by intellectual property”.<sup>5</sup>

The “Orange Economy” comprises three categories

Category 1: Goods rooted in individual creativity and/or heritage that cannot be mass-produced i.e. visual arts, theatre, dance, puppetry, orchestras, gastronomy, cultural tourism, historical sites, etc.

Category 2: Cultural goods and services that can be mass-produced and disseminated e.g. books, films, television programmes, recorded music, etc.

Category 3: New Media and Content Software such as video games, digital platforms, software creation and applications, animation, graphic arts, jewellery, interactive audio-visual content, architecture, fashion and advertising.<sup>6</sup>

The African Union’s Plan of Action on Cultural and Creative Industries in Africa define cultural industries as follows:

The concept of cultural industry is, in essence, the mass production and distribution of products which convey ideas, messages, symbols, opinions, information and moral and aesthetic values.<sup>7</sup>

The Plan goes on to say that “a cultural product conveys and disseminates ideas, opinions and values peculiar to its own environment”.

Some have drawn a useful distinction between the creative and cultural industries; while both have cultural content (values, ideas, worldviews, beliefs, etc), creative industries are those more aligned to the UK’s DCMS definition i.e. industries that have their origin in individual creativity, skill and talent, while cultural industries are those sectors in which individual creativity is absent and are instead premised on historical, communal and natural heritage e.g. museums, archaeological sites and traditional cultural festivals.

## **CRITIQUE AND ANALYSIS**

One of the main reasons – if not the main reason - for the emphasis on the creative and cultural industries and on the creative economy in cultural policy research and advocacy in recent times, is the need for the arts, culture and heritage sector to prove its worth to politicians and other decision-makers in the public and corporate sector. With the arts

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<sup>5</sup> <http://conexionintal.iadb.org/2017/08/02/economia-naranja-en-america-latina/?lang=en>

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.investincolombia.com.co/news/943-what-is-the-orange-economy.html>

<sup>7</sup> [https://au.int/sites/default/files/pages/32901-file-auc\\_plan\\_of\\_action\\_def.pdf](https://au.int/sites/default/files/pages/32901-file-auc_plan_of_action_def.pdf)

generally regarded as luxuries – relative to other basic human and social needs - within many societies, when economic recessions take hold or changes in government occur that reflect a less-state-intervention ideology, it is this sector that most feels the brunt of subsidy cuts.

To counter this, the arts, culture and heritage sector initially embarked on economic impact studies, and then more broadly, on research that speaks convincingly in the language of politicians and of government generally: the language of job creation, economic growth, contribution to the Gross Domestic Product and sector resilience.

By providing evidence primarily of the economic value of the arts, the sector believes that government will provide greater investment in and sustained support for the arts, and that the arts, culture and heritage sector, rather than be dismissed as a step-child of society, can stake its claim as a stand-alone, respected economic sector, along with economic sectors such as mining, financial services, tourism and the like.

Needless to say, much of this research and advocacy has been undertaken in relatively wealthy Global North societies, where the economic, social and human development conditions are quite different to those in the Global South generally, and in Africa in particular. However, notwithstanding this, such has been the success of the “creative economy” evangelists with impressive figures underlying the contribution of the creative and cultural industries to job creation and the economy, that numerous African countries and the African Union itself have embraced the creative and cultural industries as a key parts of their cultural policies, with little interrogation of the different conditions in which these policies need to be pursued.

Ironically then, the same misapplication of economic models and strategies to more traditional societies in the post-colonial era that led to the recognition of the “cultural dimensions of development” is being applied in the imposition of “creative economy” or “cultural and creative industries” strategies to African conditions, generally under the guise of the “cultural dimension of development”.

### **Opportunities and Risks associated with the creative and cultural industries in cultural policy advocacy**

While recognising the need to advocate for the arts, culture and heritage sector, and while there is considerable appeal in an industry that can stand on its own feet economically, it is imperative to highlight the opportunities and risks associated with a creative industries – as defined thus far - strategy. It is necessary to do so wherever there is a cultural policy emphasis on or preference for the creative and cultural industries; it is even more necessary to do so within an African context where – generally – the conditions are less favourable for a policy that foregrounds the creative economy.

The potential opportunities for the arts, culture and heritage sector by emphasising a creative economy approach to cultural policy include the following:

1. greater sustainability for the sector through generating its own income, and so greater independence of thought and freedom of expression can be practiced without genuflecting to the public sector or other funders
2. being responsible for their own income, arts enterprises and artists can better plan their programmes rather than having such planning dictated by dependence on external sources

3. generating their own income will also encourage and free enterprises and artists to take risks, to be more innovative, to stay ahead of their competitors – a classic feature of the free market economic system
4. the more sustainable and impactful the sector in economic terms (job creation, income-generation, etc), the belief is that it would be more likely to attract government support and private sector investment
5. linking the arts to the economy encourages more all-round skills within the creative sector, more taking responsibility for their own viability, more marketing, financial and management skills
6. international/regional markets are available and are promoted by instruments such as the UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions that encourages preferential treatment for creative goods and services from the Global South.
7. understanding and practising the arts as businesses, identifies and creates opportunities for support services and enterprises in other areas of the value chain (education, production, distribution, consumption, preservation) but also boosts related industries e.g. hospitality, transport, etc.

On the other hand, the risks associated with a policy emphasis on the creative and cultural industries include the following:

1. by shifting the primary responsibility for the arts and culture sector to the market, it allows government to relinquish its responsibilities to the sector
2. a creative industries approach perpetuates art as an elitist activity i.e. those with disposable income, who have cars to travel to cultural infrastructure, will have access to the arts while the less-resourced (the overwhelming populations of Sub-Saharan Africa) will be excluded
3. publicly-funded infrastructure is privatised or given a brief to generate its income so that programming is geared towards the generation of income rather than that which serves cultural or artistic needs e.g. theatres being used for conferences, church services, weddings
4. infrastructure e.g. theatre buildings, is supported by the public purse, but there is little support for creation and production, and even less to develop a market for these products at the subsidised infrastructure
5. in this scenario, the needs of large scale companies e.g. international impresarios, are catered for as they bring in the income to warrant and sustain such infrastructure, while smaller companies – the primary feature of the creative economy - have less access
6. in the case of the visual arts and craft, heritage and tradition may be compromised or sacrificed on the altar of consumerism where stereotypical or culturally superficial demands of the tourist market drive production rather than authentic design and craftsmanship
7. with the need for box office (market-related) income, artists no longer do what is right or speak truth to power but rather what will sell in the market place
8. some genres are more sustainable in the market than others; the generic creative industries approach does not recognise differences and undue pressure is placed on less market-sustainable genres regarding them as the poorer cousins and causing tension within the creative sector as some are rewarded and others punished or neglected; in this way, the sector is divided and ruled
9. generally, the private sector does not like to be associated with controversy or to alienate government particularly in less democratic countries so that the more the sustainability of the sector is linked to selling products to or through sponsorship from the private sector, the more freedom of expression will be compromised
10. the market does not correct historical imbalances in the distribution of infrastructure, skills, access to capital, etc so that the role of the public sector, particularly in less-

resourced countries, is crucial, but will be diminished by a creative industries approach that prioritises the market

In addition to the above, advocates of the creative economy and creative and cultural industries approach in the formulation of cultural policy may be guilty of the following:

1. the emphasis on creativity and innovation could include just about every other industry, or key components of other industries, all of which require innovation and creativity to grow, so that advocates of the creative economy for policy purposes can be accused of opportunism by co-opting “creative and innovative” dimensions of the economy so as to justify and reinforce the numbers i.e. their contribution to the GDP or to the economy
2. sectors included in the creative economy may very well be components of other sectors of the economy e.g. computer gaming is part of the IT sector, or architecture is part of the construction industry, so that there may be a “double-dipping” in counting the contribution of different sectors to the economy
3. by focusing on, or co-opting those sectors that do well in the market economy e.g. gaming, the general concept of the “creative industries” prejudices and so undermines other sectors e.g. dance, theatre, opera, etc that are less likely to be sustainable purely in the market, but are, for example, labour-intensive thus providing jobs

Ironically then, rather than advance and support the arts, culture and heritage sector, a ‘creative and cultural industries’ emphasis invites and facilitates a “divide-and-rule” approach from the authorities, with those that can legitimately provide an economic contribution being favoured above those that have other forms of value such as social value and value in terms of human development, but which make less economic contribution.

This was the South African experience when government adopted the Cultural Industries Growth Strategy in 1998 which appeared to be inclusive, but in reality only concentrated on film, contemporary music, publishing and craft as these were deemed the most likely to be sustainable in the market place and/or to create jobs.

By justifying the sector in the economist language of politicians and government officials, creative economy advocates risk devaluing the arts, culture and heritage sector and its broader contribution to civilisation.

### **Characteristics of creative and cultural industries**

From the definitions and descriptions of the creative economy and of the creative and cultural industries above, the following characteristics may be distilled:

1. innovation and creativity
2. sound intellectual property/copyright regimes as the basis for wealth creation for the creators
3. the capacity to produce and distribute creative products e.g. books, at scale
4. the implied existence of markets – local and/or international – for creative products, and without which creative and cultural industries would simply not exist
5. diversified economies in which the range of “cultural domains” are present
6. infrastructure and skills at all levels of the value chain, in each sector of the creative industries
7. technology to assist in the creation, production, distribution, consumption and preservation of creative products

For creative and cultural industries to thrive, at least the following would seem to be required:

- a. an adequate skills base (creative practitioners with sufficient technical skill and talent, entrepreneurs with an understanding of the arts sector, trained personnel at all levels of the value chain in each discipline, etc)
- b. access to capital to fund the creation, production and distribution of creative goods
- c. effective intellectual property regimes and collection agencies
- d. adequate infrastructure – including technology – run by trained personnel to support education, creation, production, distribution, consumption and preservation and
- e. adequate markets to support the sustainability and profitability of creative producers

### **Are the creative and cultural industries really a driver – real or potential – of development in Africa?**

While Africa has fifty-five countries that vary substantially from region to region and country to country, it may be true to say that – generally – within Sub-Saharan Africa, and outside of South Africa, the conditions that allow for the existence and growth of the creative industries, are fragile and may not even exist in some countries.

If one uses the analogy of “raw material” for the artistic talent that exists on the African continent, then in the same way as many African economies do not have significant manufacturing sectors to transform the continent’s substantial raw materials into higher income-generating products, so, few societies recognise and thus have invested in translating their artistic talent and creativity – the “raw material” of the cultural sector into “creative industries”.

First, there is an absence of infrastructure – artists’ studios, equipped theatres, reliable and fast internet, modern computer technology, printing houses, etc – in many African countries.

Secondly, there is a dire lack of skilled human resources at all levels of the value chain in most artistic sectors outside of North Africa and South Africa.

Third, copyright regimes – while they may exist on paper – are poorly implemented and policed, so that wealth creation through the exploitation of intellectual property does not happen as easily and on the same scale as in Global North countries. Piracy is regarded as a major scourge in the creative sector with the Nigerian film industry, for example, losing millions of dollars to illegal copying and distribution of the products. It is not that income is not generated through the film industry; it is that income is generated far beyond the copyright owners. In the context of poverty and inequality on the continent, the moral and social factors need to be taken into account beyond the technical and legal rights of ownership.<sup>8</sup>

Fourth, with 27 of the world’s poorest 28 countries in Africa (half of the number of African countries) and with an average poverty rate of 41% for Sub-Saharan Africa, these are unlikely conditions in which the creative industries may thrive.<sup>9</sup> People struggling simply to

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<sup>8</sup> <https://themediainline.co.za/2016/04/the-who-and-how-of-pirates-threatening-the-nollywood-film-industry/>

<sup>9</sup> <http://www.worldbank.org/en/region/afr/publication/poverty-rising-africa-poverty-report>

survive are not markets for literature, computer games, fashion and the like, and it is both cynical and myopic to advocate the creative and cultural industries as possible poverty alleviators when fundamentally, they exclude the poor. Even in South Africa with its diversified economy and relatively large creative industries market, 3000 sales would constitute a best-seller book, hardly sufficient for a writer to make a living.<sup>10</sup> The National Arts Festival in South Africa undertakes an economic impact study from time to time and shows impressive figures in contributing to the GDP of Makhanda (Grahamstown) where the festival takes place each year; however, notwithstanding more than forty years of the Festival, it has had no impact on reducing the 70% unemployment rate in the town.

Fifth, most Africans – with estimates of more than 80%<sup>11</sup> - work or generate income in the informal sector, and this would include most artists and creative practitioners. This means that the generation of revenue for the national fiscus through taxes is extremely limited in many African countries so that an emphasis on the creative and cultural industries – whose benefits lie in their being integrated into the formal economy – is inconsistent with prevailing conditions. Many artists would resist being regulated or being brought into the formal economy as they are reluctant to be taxed by governments from whom they have experienced limited benefits. To pursue cultural and creative industries as development strategies without addressing issues of governance in most African countries, is to render the approach a non-starter.

Sixth, while there are many highly skilled and creative individual artists, there is much cultural activity that takes the form of communal practice undertaken more for social than economic ends, even though such activities might have an economic dimension or income-generating potential through tourism, for example. To commercialise such practices for the purpose of developing the African creative economy, is potentially to undermine and compromise the social and cultural ends of such practices.

Seventh, economies do not only comprise free-market elements; in many African countries, a large part of the formal labour force is employed by government as teachers, nurses, civil servants, etc. Generally, there are elite parallel markets with those with disposable income able to buy good education, decent medical care and even private security, while those with less resources are dependent on government subsidies for schools, hospitals and police respectively. This does not mean that only the private sector within education or medical is counted as the “education industry” or the “medical industry” respectively; both the subsidised and private components are part of their respective industry. Similarly, within the arts, culture and heritage sector, the subsidised and the market-oriented components are part of the same “creative economy”, with subsidised infrastructure often serving as the basis for private profiteering, and with creative practitioners moving freely between and generating income from the subsidised and private sectors.

Given all of these factors, it is unhelpful to use the generic term “creative and cultural industries” to refer to all artistic, cultural and heritage activity on the continent. At best, the creative and cultural industries should be viewed – not as an all-inclusive term – but only as one dimension of arts, culture and heritage practice on the African continent.

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<sup>10</sup> <https://businesstech.co.za/news/general/134230/the-shocking-number-of-books-the-average-south-african-author-sells/>

<sup>11</sup> [https://www.ilo.org/global/about-the-ilo/newsroom/news/WCMS\\_627189/lang--en/index.htm](https://www.ilo.org/global/about-the-ilo/newsroom/news/WCMS_627189/lang--en/index.htm)



The “creative and cultural industries” would be part of the “Creative Economy” which – in terms of the realities of the African experience and conditions – would more appropriately be defined as:

Those areas of human, social and economic activity that are premised on or linked to individual or collective artistic creativity or cultural heritage, and which have the capacity to generate income whether on an ad hoc or ongoing basis, whether in a not-for-profit or for-profit capacity, and whether in the formal or non-formal sector, or any combination of these.

This definition is more inclusive of the range of activities in the arts, does not give priority to the private, market-driven sector or to “copyright industries” and recognises the actual conditions as they prevail on the continent, rather than attempt to impose definitions that resonate in the Global North on African conditions that militate against these.

The African creative economy would thus not emphasise or solely focus on the creative and cultural industries or art, culture and heritage for economic development; the African creative economy would include art, culture and heritage for human development, for social development and for economic development, recognising the differences between and the value of each in strategy and funding, and locating policy within the actual conditions that prevail within a particular country, region, city or community.

Additionally, the African Creative Economy would be a mixed economy, including elements of a traditional economy (non-monetary exchanges, with bartering elements) and a market economy (where some elements of the arts sector can survive in the free market), rather than a mixed economy in the usual sense of combining features of a command economy and a free-market economy.

### **New Zealand creative sector research as a learning example**

The most recent research into the creative and cultural industries and the ability for creative practitioners to make a sustainable living within these, was released on 20 May by Creative New Zealand and NZ On Air. It states “the majority of creative professionals covered in the survey have difficulty making a sustainable living from their principal artform or creative practice”.<sup>12</sup>

The average income for creative professionals was \$16 000 less than the average New Zealander salary, and is significantly less if other forms of income – other than from their creative work – are removed.

New Zealand’s economy is larger than \$200 billion, with a population of about 4million, an average life expectancy of 80 and 100% school attendance for its population, all indicators of a healthy society, with excellent development and economic indicators.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> <http://www.creativenz.govt.nz/news/research>

<sup>13</sup> <https://data.worldbank.org/country/new-zealand>

If creative practitioners struggle to make a living in these conditions, how much more difficult would it be to live sustainably from one's creative practice in African conditions as described earlier?

The New Zealand experience confirms the limitations of a "creative and cultural industries" approach to economic growth, to human and social development, job creation and poverty alleviation on the African continent. Again, it is not that the creative and cultural industries should not be part of the cultural policy bouquet in African countries; it is rather that – rather than being the preeminent dimension of such policy – they should be given the appropriate weight that an analysis of the country's economic, social and developmental conditions allow.

## **ECONOMIC GROWTH AS AN INDICATOR OF DEVELOPMENT**

As indicated above, one of the primary motivations for the emphasis on the creative and cultural industries in policy terms is its real or potential contribution to economic growth, and thus to the availability of resources to undertake human and social development.

The UN Development Programme's Human Development Index suggests that sub-Saharan Africa has the poorest human development indicators that measure life expectancy, health, literacy and general well-being. Of the 37 countries in the Low Human Development Category of the HDI, 32 are African countries.<sup>14</sup>

With poverty and informal employment being a defining feature of many Africans' lives, the Sustainable Development Goals are most relevant to this region.

It is understandable therefore, that decision-makers and policy-makers concerned with development would emphasise economic growth – and in the case of the arts, culture and heritage sector, the creative and cultural industries as contributors to economic growth - as without resources, human and social development will remain stagnant.

The Chinese government introduced economic reforms in the early 1980s so that the country's economy grew at a substantial pace year on year, averaging between 7-10% annually. As a consequence, it is estimated that more than 600 million people were lifted out of poverty in China between 1981 and 2015, the latter being the deadline for the Millennium Development Goals.<sup>15</sup> China thus attests to the symbiotic relationship between economic growth on the one hand and human and social development on the other.

On the other hand, the African experience is substantially different.

One of the contributing factors in China's economic growth is its access to raw materials from the African continent which has played a not insignificant role in the rapid and sustained GDP growth of many African countries. The International Monetary Fund indicated that 7 of the top ten fastest-growing economies in the world in the first decade of this century, were on the African continent.

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<sup>14</sup> <http://hdr.undp.org/en/content/human-development-index-hdi>

<sup>15</sup> <https://www.rt.com/business/318502-china-poverty-elimination-plans/>

Continentially, Africa has sustained an economic growth rate of 3% or more, with some countries like Chad, Sudan, Equatorial Guinea, Mozambique, Rwanda, Ivory Coast, Djibouti, and Ghana achieving annual GDP growth rates of 7% or more.<sup>16</sup>

Yet, although poverty has decreased as a percentage of Africa's population (43% in 2012 as opposed to 56% in 1990), given the increase in the population during that period, there are more poor people in 2012 (330 million) than in 1990 (280 million).

Simply to promote or create policies that emphasise economic growth in order to contribute to human and social development, is ahistorical and not evidence-based in Africa where economic growth has tended to be mostly of the jobless kind, and where elites and multi-nationals have benefited so that the gap between rich and poor has grown substantially. Seven of the ten most unequal societies in the world are in Africa.

After the 1994 democratic elections in South Africa, an arts, culture and heritage policy was adopted that was premised on a human rights approach i.e. that "everyone shall have the right to participate in the cultural life of the community and to enjoy the arts" (Article 27 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights).

With the same motivations outlined earlier (seeking to advocate for the arts, culture and heritage sector by using the economist language of decision-makers and politicians), the Department of Arts and Culture adopted the Cultural Industries Growth Strategy (CIGS) in 1998 that emphasised four areas of the creative industries in particular: film, publishing, music and craft.

Notwithstanding more than twenty years of investment in and support for these sectors as potential contributors to meeting the country's triple challenges of poverty, unemployment and inequality, there are now more people living in poverty than in 1998 (55% of the population), the gap between rich and poor has increased (the top 20% earns 70% of the national income) and the number of unemployed stands at record levels (26%).

Some of the lessons to draw from this are:

- a. government will focus on those sectors of the "creative industries" that they consider the most strategic to their priorities, leading potentially to the neglect of other sectors and to the divide-and-rule of the sector by pitting the subsidised against the unsubsidised
- b. while the creative and cultural industries may indeed make some contribution to the economy in terms of tax revenues and the creation of jobs, they cannot and should not be burdened to respond to the major developmental challenges of African countries when other, more resourced and equipped sectors of the economy have been unable to meet these challenges
- c. the creative and cultural industries are not islands, but are integral to the economy generally and to society in general so that if the economy struggles, it has a direct impact on the creative sector too, with less disposable income meaning less support for creative products
- d. ironically, given that the creative and cultural industries are harnessed in policy terms to address poverty, inequality and unemployment, by their very nature – producing products that require payment – they exclude those whom they are supposed to

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<sup>16</sup> African Economic Outlook, 2018

benefit i.e. the poor and the unemployed, leading to, or perpetuating social divisions, polarisation and inequality.

The World Bank's projection for Sub-Saharan Africa is that economic growth will rise in 2019, but it will remain insufficient to reduce poverty significantly. It states that there are many challenges such as public debt levels and debt risk, the availability of good jobs has not kept pace with the annual number of entrants into the labour force and conflict and political fragility as well as policy uncertainties are key factors that impact on economic growth and on poverty reduction.

Poor governance and poor institutional factors also have a debilitating impact on economic growth generally, on the creative and cultural industries in particular, and – most importantly – on the use of available economic resources to invest in human and social development.

A silo emphasis on economic growth or on creative and cultural industries as drivers of development outside of an integrated approach that addresses governance, social institutions and the prevalence of poverty and inequality in Africa, is a non-starter, and certainly unsustainable.

The issue for Africa then is not one of economic growth, but rather the kind of economic growth: does it create jobs, does it help to distribute wealth more equitably, is it sustainable over a long period of time? What are the policy and structural interventions required to support and sustain an economy that sustainably address the continent's key human and social development needs? What governance issues need to be addressed e.g. is freedom of expression curtailed, and how does this impact on the growth of the creative and cultural industries in particular?

Arts, culture and heritage policy – which would include but not necessarily prioritise the creative and cultural industries – would need to be based on thorough research and rigorous interrogation of the political, economic, social and cultural conditions of each country, rather than appropriate a one-size-fits-all approach.

## **CULTURE AND THE ECONOMY**

There are different economic models globally, all of them based on different ideological – or cultural premises – and in turn, all of them shaping the culture (values, belief systems, identities, etc) of those who live and work within those economic paradigms.

The cultural dimension of development was first recognised in the 1960s during the post-colonial era, where individualist, risk-oriented and profit-driven models of economic development that were formulated in “the west”, did not resonate with the more communalist social structures of the intended beneficiaries.

According to Intelligent Economist, there are broadly four basic economic models, that are underpinned by ideological and cultural paradigms and that impact on social development and on human identity and behaviour.<sup>17</sup>

The first is the Traditional Economy, mostly agriculturally and rurally-based, dependent on nature, with societies relatively closely knit. Technology would be relatively basic, but the

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<sup>17</sup> <https://www.intelligenteconomist.com/types-of-economies/>

economy would be sustainable as it would be driven not by large-scale and quick-fix profiteering, but by the community's needs and interests.

In the Command Economy, the State is a major player and is engaged in all parts of the value chain, including the planning and distribution of resources. The state owns all the major utilities – transport, electricity, water, etc – and is able to create and provide jobs and services for citizens at affordable rates. The state keeps the profits and is able to invest these as it sees fit e.g. in education, health, security, etc.

The Market Economy on the other hand is premised on individual self-interest with entrepreneurs creating products and competing with each other for markets who will buy their products. This competition will promote innovation, the pursuit of higher quality and cheaper prices in the pursuit of markets. Government may have some regulatory functions, but is largely absent. Due to fierce competition and the motivation for greater personal wealth, huge inequality is created and there is little care for the poor or the environment. Climate change has been attributed to the need of the industrialised nations and market economies in particular to grow and keep generating profits in the short-term, at the expense of the environment in the long term.

Finally, Mixed Economies comprise a combination of the Command Economy and the Market Economy. The motivation for a Mixed Economy is to have the best of both capitalism (the generation of wealth and resources) and socialism (the allocation of resources to take care of the needs of all citizens). The Scandinavian countries are held up as good examples of mixed economies.

Each of these kinds of economies form the basis of societies in which citizens acquire values, belief systems, worldviews, identities that develop who they are, how they relate to others within their society and how they relate to others in the world, and particularly those from economies and social structures different to theirs.

Individual belief and value systems and broader social cultures are thus directly linked to economic systems, and vice versa. The two largest economies in the world have fundamentally different economic systems, the one being a rapidly free market economy (the United States), while the other – China – is a mixture of a command economy and a mixed economy, or what some would label as “state capitalism”, driving and facilitating economic growth, while using the generated resources to provide housing, education, health care, jobs and a decent standard of living for its citizens.

With mainly agriculture-based economies and with many citizens living in rural areas, many African countries have features of the Traditional Economy, which in terms of values, beliefs and worldviews, affirm humanity, social relationships and a symbiotic engagement with the environment, but which are – generally - unable to provide for the social development needs of education and health that modern societies demand.

Politically-connected elites rule in many African countries, so that their needs – rather than the interests and needs of the citizens – come to determine the economic paradigms of their respective countries. In this scenario, state institutions and private sector interests overlap and wealth accumulation for the elites become a priority and contribute to growing inequality and the stagnation of the alleviation of poverty on the continent. African values of ubuntu – I am because you are - are annulled by “foreign” consumerist values that are acquired by elites, values that reflect the individualistic, profiteering and self-enriching values of free-market economies.

Economic models and societies are not rooted in stone; those who inhabit them can make choices about the kind of economy they want, based on the values, world views and beliefs that most citizens share.

On a continent that enriches the wealthy, where the gap between rich and poor grows daily, the creative and cultural industries – rather than addressing poverty and inequality – may in fact, be exacerbating and perpetuating it, by making creative products available to the rich, and excluding the poor.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

1. The policy approach to arts, culture and heritage in Africa cannot simply appropriate a Global North creative and cultural industries or creative economy approach given the fundamentally different conditions that exist on the continent. The creative and cultural industries should be part of a bouquet rather than the only or even the primary emphasis of arts, culture and heritage policy.

Depending on the conditions that prevail in a particular country, policy should encompass art, culture and heritage for human development, for social development and for economic development simultaneously.

2. A creative and cultural industries strategy in African countries cannot – or rather, should not - be developed in isolation from other aspects of cultural policy. Rather, the political, economic, social and cultural conditions in the country need to be thoroughly research and analysed, and an appropriate arts, culture and heritage policy – rather than simply a creative and cultural industries strategy – should be devised.
3. The monetary value of remittances from Africans working outside their countries exceeds the value of aid, with the World Bank indicating that remittances to Sub-Saharan African countries amounted to \$38 billion in 2017. If the emphasis is on the creative and cultural industries is to drive economic growth and alleviate poverty, then a key strategy should be to encourage and allow African creative practitioners to work abroad to repatriate some of their income to the African continent.
4. The creative and cultural industries have two key values: economic value and cultural value. While the economic case for the creative and cultural industries in the African context is at best, suspect, the case for investing in African creative and cultural industries because of their cultural value is far more convincing.

Consumers of creative products such as films and television, imbibe the values, worldviews and beliefs embedded within these products. Africans import creative goods far more than they export, so that they internalise the values and worldviews projected through such goods.

Similarly, Africans tend to watch and consume international media stations and their perspectives on world events. There are no African channels that project African perspectives on local and world events into the international arena.

In the international market of ideas, Africa is largely absent.

For this reason alone, it is necessary to invest in Africa's creative and cultural industries to produce quality content that enables Africa to be a global player in

influencing debates, strategies and policies rather than simply being a recipient of these created on its behalf by others.

## **CONCLUSION**

The creative and cultural industries are not the answer, or even an answer to African challenges of human and social development. It may be one dimension of a broader arts, culture and heritage policy that is adapted and nuanced according to the actual conditions in each country, but such policies cannot be developed and implemented as if an island and unrelated to broader political, social, economic and cultural factors.

African citizens need to agitate for economies – and policies - that reflect their values and beliefs, rather than simply adopt those created in different conditions and which may be inappropriate to African conditions.

Ultimately though, the case for the creative and cultural industries in Africa is less an economic one, and more because of the cultural content, and the potential of African stories, movies, theatre, literature, dance, television series, visual arts and design to globalise and affirm African values, ideas, beliefs and perspectives.

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