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### **Creative Industries: A Contributing Factor in the Revival of Tanzanian Economy**

Vicensia Shule

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## **Introduction**

This paper presents the state of creative industries in Africa. Out of many creative works, it uses examples from film and music industry as their visibility can provide ground for arguing for the need for including creative industries in the process of reviving national economies. The paper is divided into three major parts addressing issues from the state of creative industries, challenges and encounters; and a conclusion that provides a way forward. Since most of the people are faced with poverty, diseases, illiteracy and corruption there should be a holistic approach to curb such problems which not only retard economic development of an individual at the family level but also at the national levels.

The concept of creative industries is somehow similar to cultural industry even though there are differences. For this paper I'll use both concepts interchangeably. UNESCO describes cultural industries as those that "combine the creation, production and commercialisation of contents which are intangible and cultural in nature. These contents are typically protected by copyright and they can take the form of goods or services" (Buitrago & Mo, 2009, p. 6). Using Tanzania as a case, this paper addresses the need for having creative industries as a contributing sector to the national economies. Even though there are various creative works from film, photography, music, theatre/drama, dance, literature, crafts, fashion design, advertising and so on in Tanzania music and film are among the leading genres (Buitrago & Mo, 2009, p. 6).

The paper provides the current state of creative industries and challenges it faces as it has been left out of the strategies to revive national economies. The discussion will not only provide a base for national debate on the contribution of creative industries in the national economy but also provide awareness to both the African governments and the so called development partners

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(donors) on the importance of the creative industries. As a result, it will also inform local stakeholders on their contribution to the national economy.

### **The State of Creative Industry: Culture and Development**

Research from various parts of the world reveals the dynamism of the creative industries as opposed to the pre conceived assumptions. The United Nations report of 2008 for example, shows such evidence of the potential of the creative industries to the national economies (United Nations, 2008). Relating creative industry and culture will offer an avenue to relate development and economic growth. Therefore the symbiotic relation between culture and development can justify the contribution of culture in African national economies. According to Falola (2003, p. 8) “few people disagree that culture is important in seeking answers to Africa’s economic underdevelopment”. According to Njogu & Mugo-Wanjau (2007, p. 189), “when used as a dynamic process, culture could be a tool for social change and art can be used for the creation of awareness, behaviour modulation, advocacy, therapy and the mobilization of social support”. Epskamp (2006, p. 42) defines culture and development as “a framework [...] in which cultural factors and actions influence the process of sustainable development at local level”.

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Culture Organization (UNESCO), which Kerr (1995, p. 149) refers to as a ‘prestigious agency’, plays a role in associating culture with development in the enhancement of the so called developing economies (a euphemistic coinage for underdeveloped economies). According to UNESCO:

Development and economy are part of people’s culture. Unlike the physical environment, where we dare not to improve on the best nature provides, culture is the fountain of our progress and creativity. Once we shift our view from a purely instrumental role of culture to awarding it a constructive and creative role, we have to see development in terms that encompass cultural growth (in Ndagala, 2007, p. 16).

Furthermore, Epskamp (2006, p. 29) shows that regardless of the 1950s attempts to portray culture “as a factor of resistance, a formidable opponent to change”, the opposite has been proved. Taking examples of consciousness and ideology-shaping done by theatre in socialist countries like China and Cuba, it is evident that theatre has a direct role to play in development (1991, p. 23). Epskamp (Epskamp, 2006, p. 1) also shows clearly how “during the 1970s cultural activities including theatre did indeed contribute to the fall of the Marcos regime in Philippines and the Samosa regime in Nicaragua”.

The initiative for culture and development (not cultural development) started in Africa years before UNESCO recognition. Good examples include The Accra Conference of 1975, the Lagos Plan of Action of 1980 and the Lome Agreement of 1984, all of which discussed and agreed on the essential nature of culture for the sake of African development (Diagne & Ossebi, 1996, p. 29). In Tanzania, the Ministry of Culture and Youth was among the first ministries to be formed in 1962, when Tanganyika became a Republic. As Nyerere established the ministry he argued that it was essential in the fight against neo colonialism, imperialism and in order to regain 'national pride' (Askew, 2002, p. 160; Lange, 2002, pp. 54-55). Is by having nation pride where people can build confidence and believe in themselves that they can bring change to their social life and economy in general.

Globally the relationship between culture and development emerged vigorously during the Mexico Conference, known as the Mondia Cult of 1982. This was the time when research publications and reports showed clearly the challenge of 'development' in the developing countries. This was said to be the case in Africa, due to non-attachment to culture (Diagne & Ossebi, 1996 pp.28-29; Epskamp K, 2006 p.32). Ndagala (2007, p. 3) points out that culture was not seen as a fundamental force for development. Before, the emphasis was on social service provision – health, education and infrastructure. Even donors directed their focus to social services, thinking that it would result in a rapid development of agricultural and industrial sectors. Therefore economic growth was perceived to be the quick solution to poverty. To rectify the situation, in 1988 UNESCO launched the UN World Decade for Cultural Development (WDCD 1988-1997). This was followed by several initiatives including the World Culture and Development Commission Report (*Our Creative Diversity*) of 1995, which laid a foundation for how to achieve development through culture (Diagne & Ossebi, 1996, p. 28; Epskamp, 2006, pp. 32-33).

The result of the UNESCO initiatives of 1982 and 1988 was the replication of cultural policies/reports/papers in various parts of Euro-America. For example, in Canada by the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) in 1991 (*Society, Culture and Sustainable Development*), in the Netherlands by the Netherlands' Directorate General of International Cooperation (DGIS) in 1991 (*World of Difference: A New Framework for Development Cooperation During the 1990s*), in Sweden by the Swedish International Cooperation Agency

(SIDA) in 1995 (*The Role of Culture in Development*), the British Council's *Arts and Development* paper of 1995, Finland's *Culture and Development* document of 2000 by the Department for International Development of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Finland and the Humanist Institute for Development Cooperation, Netherlands (HIVOS) *Policy Document Arts and Culture: Towards Cultural Diversity and Pluralism* of 2002 (Epskamp, 2006, pp. 34-36). These bilateral donor institutions and their culture and development documents have been key financial donors of creative industries in Tanzania and other parts of the world. Their support has in some way played part in retarding the contribution of creative industries to the national economy as they support some creative arts especially performing arts to be offered for free (Shule, 2011a).

With the same 'global' wind leaning towards culture and development, the IMF and World Bank also became interested. For example, in 1998, the World Bank in collaboration with UNESCO held a conference in Washington DC entitled *Culture and Development at the Millennium: The Challenge and The Response*. This was followed by several similar conferences held by banks in Paris and Florence in 1998 and 1999 respectively (Epskamp, 2006, p. 36). These were seen as 'new' initiatives for the International Financial Institutions (IFIs) to talk about culture and development. Before, the IFIs believed that by lending money with strict conditions to poor countries, they would boost development (Ndagala, 2007, p. 4)

Critics of the IMF and World Bank claim that these institutions cannot at any time give a positive deliberate stance to empower the marginalized or those who have been impoverished by their policies (Depelchin, 2005, p. 129). Therefore such a decision to integrate culture in development in IMF/World Bank projects has more to do with political and economic gain than social. Cerny (2008, p. 38) questions the IMF and World Bank transformation to global governance via cultural support. He says:

International regimes and global governance institutions have not only sought more autonomy but have also transformed their policy goals to a more complex, evolved neoliberal approach. For example, the World Bank's shift in the mid-1990s to giving priority to poverty reduction goals over harsh structural adjustment policies has changed the discourse of global governance towards more socially-oriented goals, although how much it has changed the substance of policy is hotly debated (Cerny, 2008, p. 38).

Furthermore, Amartya Sen ([...], p. 1)<sup>2</sup> in his article *Culture and Development* elaborates on how “the world of banking and that of culture are not thought to have much in common” so it is impossible to accommodate the two phenomena (capital accumulation and culture) in the same basket. As expected, the World Bank deals with culture only in relation to environmental issues, i.e. cultural heritage as it is regarded as one of the ‘bankable’ activity (Epskamp K, 2006 p.36).

### **Process of Reviving African Economies**

Tanzania as for many African countries, have embarked into various processes to revive their tottering economies. Regional integrations schemes have been one of them. Although there have been success stories from such mechanisms, it is important to diversify and modify such mechanism to include non traditional activities, creative industry being one of them. The Tanzania Cultural Policy has clearly identified cultural industries as part and parcel of national economic development (Wizara ya Elimu na Utamaduni, 1997). The major challenge of the policy is that it addresses creative industries from formal perspective while most of the creative industries are informal. Reliable mechanisms to document the contribution of various creative industries to the nations’ economies are yet to be established. This also contributes to the non recognition of the sector in the national economy. Thus being the case, it becomes difficult if not impossible to derive a mechanism to collect tax from responsible authorities.

One could argue that creative industries in Tanzania are underdeveloped. They lack both systematized distribution and established marketing channels. For example piracy affects both film and music industries. Copyright infringement and trading on counterfeits goods are major challenges and they endanger the sustainability of the industry. Even though there is Copyright Society of Tanzania (COSOTA), what it does to its capacity is less than satisfactory. While both film and music productions have committed audience/consumers, the society is faced by lack of awareness on the consequences of buying a pirated copies of music CD or film.

Since independence in 1961 and the establishment of the Ministry of Culture in 1962, still much has been done through donor support. The dominance of foreign aid in the creative industries sidelines the whole notion of it being central to the economy. According to the National Art Council (BASATA), there are about 6 million Tanzanians who belong to creative sector

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<sup>2</sup> In the original document of Amartya Sen, both publication year and the publisher are unspecified.

(Buitrago & Mo, 2009, p. 6). This is about 15% of the total population. With such figure it is arguably government needs to pay serious attention to this percentage of its population. Similarly if creative arts such as theatre can bring political and social change, it is evident that creative industries especially film and music if well utilized can bring economic change.

It is from such premise that the government has recognised the need and the value of creative industries. The main challenge has remained, how to achieve such a dream. Proper tax collection mechanisms should be established so as to minimise piracy and importation of counterfeit goods. The enhanced tax collection system will portray the actual contribution of film and music in the Tanzanian economy. It will also call upon stakeholders to improve their creativity and quality of both film and music production so as to reach larger audience. The tax collection from film and music productions will also nullify the assumption that creative industries are unsustainable and dependent to government and foreign donor support.

## **Conclusion**

It is not easy to argue about the contribution of creative industries without showing numbers and figures. Since there are no actual figures, the assumption suggests that multidisciplinary research should be done to fill such gap. It is also on the same note that the assumption of the contribution should not be ignored as examples from Nigeria and other parts of the continent suggest that creative industries if well administered can contribute effectively to the national economies.

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