

World Creativity and Innovation Day

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The creative industry - including arts, fashion, crafts, advertising, design, entertainment, architecture, literature, media, software and more - has become a vital force in accelerating human development. They empower people to take ownership of their own development and stimulate innovative solutions that can drive inclusive and sustainable economic growth. If nurtured intentionally, the creative economy can serve as a source of structural economic transformation, socioeconomic progress, job creation and innovation, while contributing to social inclusion, advancing shared cultural values, and sustainable human development. The United Nations therefore designated 21 April as World Creativity and Innovation Day to raise awareness of the important role of creativity and innovation in all aspects of human development.

Compared with other sectors, the creative industry is generally inclusive and forward-looking, favoring youth and women, and offering eco-friendly solutions to development challenges. In Uganda, creative industries have existed for generations and provided viable avenues for job creation and revenue for the country, with arts, culture, creativity and tourism sectors alone estimated to generate approximately USD \$1.6 billion in FY 2018/2019 (Uganda Investment Authority).

With the rise of digital technologies, we are now seeing unprecedented changes and growing opportunities in the creation, production, distribution and consumption of creative goods and services.

Notwithstanding the great opportunities that the creative sector offers, the traditional financing market is not equipped to respond to the specific needs and challenges of the sector. These challenges tend to discourage investment in creative industries, leaving behind very interesting investment opportunities.

For Uganda, there is a need to integrate the opportunities and challenges related to creative industries into national development planning,

strategies and budgets, explore legal frameworks that protect the rights of creators and secure fair remuneration for them, enhance international, regional and south-south cooperation as drivers of creative collaboration and technology transfer, and adopt a whole of society and whole of

government approach to nurture the creative and innovation ecosystem. Uganda has a profound opportunity to explore policies that accelerate and sustain a dynamic creative economy that contributes to human development progress.

Alongside Government partners, the private sector, universities, startup ecosystem builders and development partners, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) continues to position Uganda's creative industries, and the innovative solutions that they birth, as catalysts for accelerating the country's sustainable development journey. Initiatives such as UNDP's Youth4Business Innovation and Entrepreneurship Facility, launched by H.E. Yoweri Kaguta Museveni, President of the Republic of Uganda, have enabled young creators and innovators to pilot products and solutions across a variety of sectors including agriculture, tourism, manufacturing, creative arts, renewable energy, and ICT. This initiative alone is expected to create at least 20,000 new decent jobs for youth, retool and skill 50,000 youth, and have a multiplier effect through the creation of over 100,000 indirect jobs.

Some of the success stories to grow and scale under the Youth4Business Facility include:

- Akellobanker, a mobile and web-based digital platform, which has enabled over 150,000 farmers and entrepreneurs in Eastern and Northern Uganda to access agricultural finance and inputs on credit, connect with clients online, and actively take part in the growing digital economy. Akellobanker plans to scale this initiative to reach 350,000 farmers across Uganda.

- Yo-Waste, a waste-management startup, that has connected recyclers with businesses and households to reduce waste transportation costs and save both environmental and economic resources. Their mobile application has connected over 1,000 households in Kampala and Entebbe to streamline waste collection, collecting 320 tons of waste monthly.

- Textfad, a textiles, fashion and design company, that utilize banana fiber as an alternative material to produce eco-friendly briquettes and textile products. By training over 500 young people in banana fiber extraction, weaving and tailoring, Textfad continues to encourage job creation in the green economy.

In addition, UNDP's Creatives Innovation Challenge has empowered 49 creative enterprises in the areas of visual and performing arts, fashion design, writing and publishing, digital media, film and animation, through business incubation and acceleration support equipping creative entrepreneurs with the knowledge, tools and skills to build profitable businesses with potential for job creation.

- Helton Traders, a textiles company that transforms plastic waste into high quality sewing threads, has benefited from business incubation support to procure machinery necessary for production, connect with stakeholders in Uganda's manufacturing industry, and attract investment in their innovative technology.

Uganda's creative economy presents an untapped resource for job creation and economic empowerment, particularly for youth and women. We have witnessed creativity and innovation drive economic growth and job creation in many African countries including South Africa, Nigeria, Kenya, Rwanda, Malawi and Zambia, and Uganda has much to learn from their respective journeys. This requires a whole of Government and whole of society approach to harness the full potential creativity and innovation, underpinned by the energy and ambition of youth.

As the world commemorates World Creativity and Innovation Day, it is critical to recognize the transformative power of creativity and innovation in driving sustainable development. By investing in entrepreneurship, fostering innovation, and nurturing creative industries, Uganda can unlock new pathways to economic prosperity, social inclusion and national development. Through strategic partnerships, policy interventions, and targeted investments, Uganda can harness the full potential of its creative and entrepreneurial talents to build a brighter future for all.



Hellen Munyasa, CEO Helton Traders produces high quality sewing thread from plastic waste.



Endiro Limited has adopted an inclusive business model equipping young people with knowledge, skills and tools to operate an Endiro Coffee franchise.



Charge Ko is an energy solutions provider of electric vehicles and battery-powered devices, powering Uganda's transition toward clean mobility.



Yo-Waste has connected recyclers with businesses and households to reduce waste transportation costs and save both environmental and economic resources.



The Makerere University Innovation Pod is one of 13 unipods to be established across the continent under UNDP's *timbuktoo* initiative, a new development model that aims to transform Africa's public universities into centres of innovation, creating a space for young people to leverage creativity for good.