

**(RE)CRAFTING SUSTAINABILITY THROUGH THE CREATIVE INDUSTRIES:
PERSPECTIVES FROM THE GLOBAL SOUTH**

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Abstract

The global North offers abundant evidence of the varied and compelling benefits of the creative industries. Countries such as the United States of America, the United Kingdom, and Italy, among others, have documented research and data on the value chain of the cultural and creative industries, and underscored their contribution to their respective GDP. These sectors are not only major drivers of the economy, but have demonstrably contributed to sustainable livelihoods, and alleviated a number of predicaments such as unemployment, gender inequality and inertia on the part of youth populations. The same cannot be said about the global South. In spite of the diversity in resources, cultures, and histories that exist in the global South, the riches and innovativeness that come with the arts and creative industries remain largely untapped.

Strategies for the development and management of the creative industries, their associated resources and activities are interrogated in this article. Particularly, the article examines ways of managing African-oriented values, tenets, and practices from the cultural and creative industries within the backdrop of the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Botswana is one of the UN Member States that adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and has enthusiastically started implementing the goals and targets. In February this year, the country's SDGs Implementation Roadmap was launched. The Roadmap indicates pathways of coordination, monitoring, and resource mobilization, among others. What this article does is to articulate strategic priorities for the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals that are the most relevant and urgent for the region, and how these could be advanced through the creative industries. Illustrations are drawn from Botswana and South Africa predominantly to corroborate the arguments and propositions made in the article, but these are indicative of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) region.

Introduction

This essay explores the social and economic significance of cultural and creative industries (CCIs) in advancing the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Specifically, it interrogates the landscape and potential of Botswana's cultural and creative industries in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and proposes strategic approaches for their implementation at national level.

Notably, most of the Goals are already an integral part of Botswana's national developmental priorities as articulated in the country's *Vision 2036*; the national framework that echoes Botswana's aspirations for prosperity for all through sustainable economic development, human and social development, sustainable environment through optimal and responsible utilization of natural resources, and good governance, peace and security. Also worth noting are the pathways and milestones pertaining to some of the international frameworks and/or conventions that the country has ratified and has had a successful track record of implementing. Good illustrations are the UNESCO *Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage* and the *Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage* that Botswana ratified in 1972 and 2010 respectively. Regrettably, Botswana has not yet ratified the UNESCO *Convention for the*

Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions—the international policy framework that speaks the most to the cultural and creative industries. This makes it pertinent for the country to embrace and urgently implement the SDG goals, particularly those that promote these sectors. This project addresses the relation between the practice of cultural and creative industries in Botswana and their relevance to the efficient implementation of the following goals: Goal 1: End poverty; Goal 5: Achieve gender equality; Goal 8: Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all; Goal 9: Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation; Goal 11: Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable; and Goal 17: Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the Global Partnerships for SDGs. While it is true that the CCIs can effectively be deployed to achieve all the SDGs, it is argued in this essay that there is a need to prioritize and capitalize on those that address the specificities of the Botswana socio-cultural landscape and economic context.

The terms “cultural industries” and “creative industries” are understood in this essay as formations and practices of cultural and creative conceptualization, production, and consumption whose economic value is anchored on aesthetic appeal and historic or heritage elements. To echo the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) *Creative Economy Report*, cultural industries are the “economic activities that produce cultural goods and services”; and those industries that “combine the creation and commercialization of contents which are intangible and cultural in nature” (2010: 5). The concept of “creative industries” has also been understood in accordance with the United Kingdom’s Department of Culture, Media and Sport model as industries “requiring creativity, skill and talent, with the potential for wealth and job creation through the exploitation of their intellectual property” (UNCTAD 2010: 5). The model advanced by the UNESCO Institute for Statistics is also useful in elaborating on “industries in core cultural domains” such as museums, performing arts, festivals, television, film, radio, and so forth; and “industries in expanded cultural domains”, such as musical instruments, sound equipment, and software, and audio-visual hardware (2013, 22). South African creative industries scholar Mike Van Graan (2007: 12) offers the following definition of the creative industries:

those areas of social and economic activity that are premised on—or closely allied with— ... individual or collective intellectual or artistic creativity, innovation and originality, or ... the preservation, teaching and celebration of cultural heritage including language and which have the capacity to provide work and generate income for the original creators as well as for others involved in education and training, production, distribution, documentation and support for creative products or cultural experiences, whether in a not-for-profit capacity or for commercial gain.

Concerning the Botswana scenario, these models and definitions capture the nation’s agenda for economic diversification through entrepreneurial activities that move the economy away from over-dependence on the mining and extractive industries. Industries that incorporate music, dance, theatre, film, fashion, advertising, literary arts, publishing, craft production, design, architecture, and heritage performance, among others, which embody the notions of cultural authenticity and creative entrepreneurship are relevant to Botswana’s creative economy. Their sustainable practice is discussed here within the backdrop of the implementation of the SDGs.

Foundations for an Action-oriented Agenda

The following propositions underscore the perspective from Botswana and by extension the global South regarding ways to achieve the SDGs through the cultural and creative industries.

Policy design and implementation: a major step in the strategic development of the CCIs was the adoption of the 11th Sector on Creative Industries as one of the key drivers of Botswana's economy. This decision by the State marked a change in the political will to develop the cultural and creative industries and to enable creative professionals to benefit from their skills and entrepreneurial activities. However, so far there is no CCI policy. The only document that exists—and for which there are no sustainable measures of administration, coordination, and monitoring—is the 2001 draft *National Policy on Culture*. Consequently, there are no policy-aligned implementation structures and processes to maximize the outcomes and economic outputs of Botswana's CCIs. It is argued here that policy design and action are critical to the achievement of national goals and priorities and that a Policy on the Creative and Cultural Industries would enhance the country's efficient implementation of the SDGs.

More importantly, there is a need for a Fiscal policy on the domestic front that will bring together the mandate and goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. What this translates to is the need to review tax policies and to identify innovative ways to incentivise art professionals, businesses and the Private Sector for their corporate social responsibility initiatives. Hence, sustainable budget policies that are geared towards the promotion of CCIs are integral to the implementation of Sustainable Development Goals.

CCIs in Education: it is necessary to review the role of educational policies in inculcating skills and conversations about the economic and social value of the arts. The education system that privileges STEM education as enthusiastically embraced in Botswana to the neglect of the arts, especially at tertiary education level, is inimical to the development of CCIs. Policy design and action is needed for STEAM [Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics] education to restore the arts and humanities in a world that seems to gravitate towards the view that the SDGs are best achieved through prioritization of STEM.

Currently, arts and culture education is taught only at elementary state schools in Botswana as part of the core curriculum. While this is a necessary and welcome strategy, the mainstreaming of cultural and creative industries must occur in the secondary schools and tertiary institutions as well. Skills of cultural and creative entrepreneurship should be mainstreamed in the curriculum to train arts entrepreneurs and to lay a foundation for sustainable careers and arts businesses.

Establishing CCI institutes: as part of reinforcing arts education, policy action, and promoting good governance and sustainable livelihoods through the CCIs, it is important to train cultural leaders and creative professionals who will lead the sector and industry. This could be achieved through the establishment of CCI institutes throughout the continent. The African Arts Institute (AFAI) and Arterial Network in South Africa currently stand as best

practice models for the training of cultural leaders who graduate as CCI experts and play advisory roles to governments in their respective countries. Cultural leaders and CCI experts are able to interrogate social, economic and political challenges from their immediate context, specifically those that their local communities and civil society organizations are facing, and can find solutions for these challenges. Quality and trained leaders in the CCIs are therefore needed to grow the industries and to use their expertise to advise on the use of CCIs in implementing the SDGs.

Investing in Infrastructure for the CCIs: the cultural and creative industries scene in Botswana and other countries in the region is characterized by a lack of appropriate and sustainable resources. Proper infrastructure, buildings, and funds necessary for maximum productivity are a big challenge for most CCI practitioners. Research from Botswana indicates that there is a dire need for spaces for training, rehearsal, and production as well as financial support for local talent. Support in this regard—from the Botswana Government, the Private sector, and development partners—will enable CCI practitioners to fully and efficiently implement the SDGs.

Sector-specific plans and timelines: another crucial consideration in the drive to implement the SDGs is to create Sector plans that specifically address the different categories of CCIs. Closely linked to governmental departments, networks from the Civil Society, and the Private Sector, the plans will enhance the implementation of policies and promote sustainable communities and livelihoods. Sector plans are also efficacious ways to assign responsibility for the SDGs and the respective 169 targets.

Related to this is the need to define mechanisms of monitoring and evaluation. The argument here is that quite often the challenge in developmental plans is not so much in designing frameworks and policies as it is in implementing, evaluating, monitoring, and accounting for assigned tasks. Once these challenges are addressed, Botswana will be on track in respect of a focused implementation of the SDGs.

Appropriate administrative host: one of the biggest challenges regarding the development of the CCIs in Botswana has been the notion of finding an appropriate “home” for creative entrepreneurial activities. This is not too surprising, given the newness of these industries. At the moment, CCI programs, projects, and activities are administered under a number of ministries, including the ministry responsible for youth empowerment, sport and culture development, the ministry responsible for tourism, the ministry that oversees trade and industry development, and the ministry for gender and rural development. This creates unnecessary overlaps in coordination and monitoring. Yet, upon closer reflection, even countries such as the UK have undergone similar trajectories. The CCIs in the UK have been operationalized and administered under what was initially the Ministry of Culture, later to be re-designated as the Ministry for Culture, Creative Industries and Tourism, which was then re-named the Ministry for Culture, Communications and the Creative Industries. In order to best promote the CCIs and to maximize their potential in advancing the SDGs,

Botswana and other countries in the region need to critically reflect on and determine an appropriate administrative organization for the cultural and creative industries.

Research and strategic dialogue: one of the challenges that have been identified in the *Botswana SDGs Roadmap: a Guide to Implementation of Sustainable Development Goals* is data unavailability. This calls forth the critical role of universities and research institutions in undertaking proper research on the CCI fields. Currently, there is no up-to-date and consolidated research that provides evidence of the economic value and contribution of the CCIs to Botswana's GDP. A more robust and comprehensive research that maps Botswana's creative economy is therefore needed prior to devising ways of using collaborative arts to implement the SDGs. Without this research, the mission of striving to maximize the power of CCIs to accomplish the SDGs will remain elusive.

Support is further needed for researchers to investigate, benchmark with the models of creative economy from developed countries, and to design a Botswana-oriented model for the operationalizing of CCI priorities and activities. By extension, sustainable mentoring and capacitation programs are necessary. There is a need to invest in research funding for scholars and graduate students whose areas of expertise are the arts and CCIs. For, instance, an Endowment Fund for outcome-based scholarships for arts, culture studies, and CCI students would advance the implementation of the SDGs.

Along the same lines, it is necessary to invest in processes that function to leverage dialogue between CCI experts, researchers, practising professionals, and policy experts in order to use collaborative arts and culture to help achieve the SDGs. Policy experts are needed to plan, design, review, and to advise the Government on implementation of the CCI policy once it is institutionalized. This process is essential to ensure sustainable means of enabling CCI Rights owners to benefit from the CCI fiscal policy, to monitor platforms of CCI practice and administration, and to enhance mechanisms of reporting progress regarding the implementation of SDGs. The research will further inform public policy on poverty eradication, promoting sustainable communities, and enhancing sustainable livelihoods.

Locational specificities: the cultural value of *Botho/Ubuntu* [human integrity] is a foundational tenet for most African societies, Botswana inclusive. Re-crafting investment in sustainable livelihoods, in the preservation of life, and in fostering the perception of peace and social cohesion as commodities will advance the SDGs. The aim here is to capitalize on Botswana's spiritual fibre as a way to achieve the SDGs. When, according to Botswana cultural consciousness, it is said that *motho ke motho ka batho ba bangwe* [literally, a person is a person because of other people around them] the points of emphasis are human life preservation and collective consciousness. Another example, the idiomatic expression *mosadi ke thari ya sechaba* [a woman is the bearer of the nation] draws attention to notions of resilience, life preservation, contribution to national development, and hence the need for women to enjoy equitable rights to resources. Also, the national imaginary captured in the anthem *Fatshe leno la rona; ke mpho ya Modimo; A le nne ka kagiso* [This land is ours; granted as a gift from God; Let it remain at peace] evokes the notion of responsible utilization the land, natural resources preservation, and the value of national peace.

The UN/UNESCO Creative Economy report states that “the creative economy is not only the most rapidly growing sectors of the world economy, but also a highly transformative one in terms of income-generation, job creation and export earnings” (2013, p.9). While this resonates and applies to the creative space of the global South, in most contexts, the transformative power of the creative industries goes beyond these economic impacts to underscore their socio-political impact. The industries are not just valued as zones of creativity and spaces for the creation of economic value. They appreciate as forms of cultural capital; highlighting returns in investing in intercultural dialogue, cultural diversity, and peace. Hence, CCIs are crucial platforms to use to promote social cohesion and can advance the SDGs in an invaluable way.

CCIs animate universal messages: This is another prevalent perspective from the global South. The goals of Agenda 2030 are universal in their conceptualization. CCIs are powerful platforms to underscore and to make these goals vivid and impactful. Consider the following observation by the World Bank:

Natural resources play a dominant social, economic and political role in 81 countries, accounting for a quarter of global GDP and half the world’s population. Africa alone is home to about 30% of the world’s mineral reserves, 10% of the world’s oil, and 8% of the world’s natural gas. But all too often these natural resources have become a source of conflict rather than opportunity. Many resource-rich countries also suffer from poverty, corruption, and conflict stemming from weak governance.

The World Bank can emphasize this message through its various platforms. But it is films such as *Blood Diamond* with the horrific images of the atrocity surrounding conflict diamonds that stay permanently fixed in the minds of audiences. Arguably, it is the CCIs that best captivate the atrocity and disseminate messages about the moral obligation to practice good governance and to preserve and improve lives through sustainable and responsible use of the extractives and natural resources.

Further, in Botswana, interlinks between human life, life on land, and life below water is particularly prominent and urgent. CCIs are crucial platforms to use in the advocacy for action that ensures sustainable forest management, use of ecosystems, ending poaching, and protecting wildlife while simultaneously protecting human life. Investment in the creative industries for advocacy and policy action will enhance the implementation of the SDGs targets and bring financial benefits to CCI professionals and practitioners.

Leveraging Global Partnerships: the 2018 International Conference on Sustainable Development (ICSD) theme “Breaking down silos; Fostering collaborative action on the SDGs” aptly anchors the vitality of partnerships to reinforce the effectiveness of experts, institutions, and governments in the implementation of the SDGs. It is a commendable gesture for example to bring professionals from the global context to engage on global conversations around the SDGs from the perspective of culture and the arts. Thus, the Sustainable Development Solutions Network elaborates the UN’s goal # 17 by fostering dialogue across various borders.

The role of development partners offers illustrative evidence of the efficiency of global partnerships for development and for the achievement of the SDGs. A good illustration in the context of Botswana is the vital role that the European Union has been playing in capacitating and providing financial assistance to Civil Society Organizations in the country. Several Non-Governmental Organizations and Community-Based Organizations have benefitted from the support of EU and its partnership with the Botswana Government to grow the sector.

More collaborative North-South, South-South, and national partnerships are thus vital to enhance the use of CCIs to promote and achieve the SDGs. There is a need, for instance, to interrogate on a global scale the use of African cultural material in Euro-American CCIs—such as films and fashion design. A case for illustration is the recently-released Marvel blockbuster movie “Black Panther” which used many African cultural elements such as the Basotho people’s Heritage Blanket for inspiration and representation of the fictional African tribe of Wakanda. Bombi Mavundza (2018) writes, “Black Panther director Ryan Coogler travelled to South Africa where his encounter with the Basotho inspired the look for the fictional tribe.” Mavundza elaborates that the marketing manager Tom Kritzinger of Aranda Textiles, a South African-based company that has intellectual property rights over the heritage blanket, laments the lack of impact on sales to their company, even though he acknowledges the benefits of increased visibility of the blanket on the global market. “Aranda did not directly supply the movie with blankets, Kritzinger says, and the company is not sure where those came from,” writes Mavundza. Arguably, the use of an iconic cultural element such as the Basotho heritage blanket—even as inspiration—should benefit the Rights Owners. More importantly, without proper research and acknowledgement of the rights owners, the origins, and cultural significance of the heritage blanket, the film and its producers become susceptible to the charge of cultural appropriation and/or cultural imperialism. Global Partnerships between organizations such as WIPO and continental CCI bodies could enhance dialogue and provide solutions to global issues such as these.

Creating African markets: there is a dire need to create and/or revitalize markets for the creative and cultural industries from the global South. Expanding market avenues located nationally, continentally, and in the global context will reinforce the efficacy of CCIs in attaining the Sustainable Development Goals. More importantly, youth populations and vulnerable groups such as women and girls can be active participants in fostering innovation, promoting vibrant and sustainable cities, and enjoying the benefits of productive employment.

Conclusion

It is envisaged that these strategic processes and observations will inform the sustainable use of cultural and creative industries to achieve the SDGs identified in this essay. While these sectors and the overall creative economy landscape still remains to be cultivated and solidified in the context of Botswana, the value of CCIs in the country is conspicuous. The value of CCIs is evidenced through their appreciation as acts of identity formation, for the performance of history and identity, for their aesthetic appeal, for the advancement of unity

and social cohesion, for reinforcing cultural and human integrity, and as important platforms of employment creation and economic diversification. They are therefore bankable and sustainable processes to deploy to achieve the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

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