
Developing/Exploring the Social Investment Models for the Sustainability of Intangible Cultural Heritage

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In the first decade of the 21st century, the increasing visibility of cultural and creative industries in cities across Africa has been emblematic of the African renaissance — characterized by the growth of per capita and household incomes, the aggressive transformation of urban spaces, rapid adoption of digital communication, growing diaspora remittances and increased foreign direct investment. Most of all, there has been a growing sense of self-esteem and vastly improved and globally consumed cultural expression through music, film, gaming, fashion and contemporary art, and other cultural products and experiences driven by the dynamism and innovation of Africa’s young men and women.

The renowned Cameroonian philosopher Achille Mbembe, in his paper, *Africa in The New Century*, says that this renaissance process “has been rendered even more powerful by its convergence with two parallel developments. The first is the emergence of the digital technologies of the information age, and the second is the financialization of the economy”. Across the continent, young men and women continue to leverage their cultural assets and knowledge — in design, language inventories, music styles and poetry, traditional crafting,

healing and wellness practices, food preparation and cuisines, visual languages, and storytelling — to break the glass ceiling, and to make their mark in the continent and around the world.

We have been inspired by the inventions and expressions of the constellations of artists, artisans and creative practitioners, including; Nigeria's Burna Boy, Kenya's visual artist Cyrus Kabiru, South Africa's Laduma Ngxokolo of the eminent brand Maxhosa; Reni Folawiyo founder of Alara, the distinctive Nigerian fashion concept store; Omoyemi Akerele, pioneer and catalyst of Lagos Fashion Week; Ethiopia's leather designer Meron Seid; Lola Pedro, Nigeria's brewer of the Pedro's Premium Ogogoro or cane spirit; Ethiopia's fine art photographer Aida Muluneh, Amaka Osakwe designer at Maki Oh, Painter Esther Mahlangu, South Africa's music producer and DJ, Nkosinathi Innocent Maphumulo (also known as Black Coffee), to Nigeria's writer Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, among thousands of others.

Alongside these notable up-shoots, there are countless other founders in cities across the continent who make up a galaxy of interconnected enterprises, ventures, gigs, and hustles which we refer to as the creative and cultural industries. These in-turn provide livelihoods and personal fulfillment to millions more while defining contemporary urban lifestyles as they serve their fellow citizens at home and abroad.

This surge has also attracted cautious institutional interest with early commitments coming from, among others, the creative industry finance initiative for Fashion, Film, ICT and Music by the Central Bank of Nigeria; the fashion investment program by the Africa Development Bank; the creative industry facility by AfreximBank; and the series of investment facilities for film,

music, gaming, and fashion by East Africa's HEVA Fund. These initiatives are signaling increasing confidence in the cultural and creative industries, providing information necessary for commercial investment and positive actions from governments.

It is important to consider that while market dynamics materialize these industries, they are at the same time providing a transcendental service for their audiences and communities. Despite the tension between artistic practice and commercial value, these services continue to reward their audiences with subjective payoffs, including reassurance, confidence, positive well-being, and, importantly, a vibrant discourse in decolonization. These are extraordinary services that intangible cultural heritage continues to provide communities, especially as we much during a crisis, greatly contributing to the industries' resilience.

As we enter the second decade of the 21st century, we are confronted by the profound shocks and disruptions triggered by the COVID-19 crisis, which has not only slowed us down but also gone ahead to provoke critical questions to any "business as usual" posture. While we pose these questions, we also address the reality of culture and creative industries in the meantime. We listened to music and watched films and our children played with toys. We preserved the food and traditional practices we enjoyed redecorating our houses during the shutdown last year. And now we have been reminded of the power of culture and creative industries and going forward. This realization has to be realized; it is not just an expression, but it should be the industry.

To seize this understanding, we must quickly move from needing to be convinced of the viability of the creative industries in Africa and to accept

that the African renaissance opportunity not only constitutes an investment in the artist to animate his mandate in his society today (and by extension their enterprise) but a pay-forward scheme for those who want to be co-producing the realities of the second most populous and youngest continent now and over the course of the 21st century.

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Heva fund in Kenya, we've been doing this during the last eight years, we've supported the music industry's growth from the traditional sites to the contemporary. We've explored film making from feature film making to short-form film making, helping communities get capacities to do this with supported development of gaming and cultural heritage stories. We evaluated fashion, fabric production, cultural festivals, theatres, and we've done this through financial facilities, looking at how finance can respond to culture and creative industries.

Our people have the skills and technology to enter new markets, follow audiences, and have quite digital capabilities. And I even started to systematize some of the work they do. This was meant to increase the participation of women and youth. In this new line of cultural productions, we've seen the emerging new products and experiences coming to the mainstream space. We've seen new practices being discovered at the mainstream place.

For eight years, Inclusion has been top out of my mind; Then how do we include gender and define the participation of older people and young people together? And how do we bring on board refugee communities and communities

who are marginalized? Conservation and preservation have also been top out of my mind; how do we finance practices that bring all positions into the contemporary space. Also, cohesion and integration are the top of strategy; how does ICH continue in the new generation to increase cohesion among people, especially in times of crisis, individualization of a community?

It's also been clear that we need to be aware and careful about how we continue to financialize the ich space without disrupting the community's rights. How do we continue to support centralization and generation of engagement?

Indeed, as we look for this decade, our commitment to remain we have to continue to build sustainable financing mechanisms. We have to explore both commercial mechanisms and social mechanisms. We have to provoke ethical engagement and creative cultural industries because the industries will continue to grow the ich we want. It seems that the next decades will be one of the most consequential yet for the cultural and creative industries in Africa. In the following year, because of this emergency, we are bound to witness increased pressure on (and disruption of) practices, business models, supply chains, and delivery of intangible cultural heritage. This, if left to proceed uninterrupted, will, unfortunately, lead to the bankruptcy and closure of many practices and severe job losses. However, with the necessary investment, business support and innovation, the more agile propositions will survive and will embark on a slow recovery:

- Questioning old norms.
- Looking to understand the post-COVID-19 reality through experimentation and research.
- Stabilizing operations.

- Reinventing new positions.

Only then can these find new growth, adopt new technologies and discover the new benefits of intangible cultural heritage.