



CULTURAL AND CREATIVE INDUSTRIES

Breaking Barriers, Driving Change: Unveiling Gender Dynamics in the Cultural and Creative Industries

Gender Study 08/2023 - Executive Summary

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BACKGROUND

Women in the Cultural and Creative Industries (CCI) are important change agents. They change structures, serve as role models, and bring diverse voices into galleries and onto international stages and screens.

In the ever-evolving landscape of the CCI, the issue of gender equality is of paramount importance. As these industries serve as crucial platforms for artistic expression, social change, innovation and economic growth, it is imperative to understand and address the gender-based challenges that persist within them.

Recent statistics highlight the pressing need for an in-depth examination of gender dynamics within the CCI worldwide. In the U.S. film industry, for example, only 37% of all **speaking roles**^[1] and a mere 15% of **directors**^[2] were women. Similarly, in the music industry, only 22% of **artists** in 900 popular songs were women^[3], and in the publishing sector, female authors faced challenges in achieving equitable recognition and representation.

According to UNESCO's "Gender & Creativity: Progress on the Precipice" report^[4], women's representation in managerial positions within the creative industries remains significantly lower when compared to men.

A mere **15%** of directors in the film industry are women

The report also points towards gender pay gaps, limited access to resources, and an underrepresentation of women in decision-making roles. These barriers impede women's progress and limit their full participation and contribution to the CCI.

Additionally, the 2022 UNESCO report "Reshaping Policies for Creativity"^[5] highlights the disparities faced by women in the creative sector.

It reveals that women's representation in cultural occupations and creative industries remains below their male counterparts, with significant variations across countries. The report emphasises the need for targeted policy and project interventions to address these inequalities and foster an inclusive environment that empowers women.

^[1] San Diego State University, Center for the Study of Women in Television and Film (2022): [It's a Man's \(Celluloid\) World: Portrayals of Female Characters in the Top Grossing U.S. Films of 2022](#)

^[2] Statista Research Department (2023): [Distribution of movie directors in the U.S. 2011-2022, by gender](#)

^[3] USC Annenberg Inclusion Initiative (2021): [Inclusion in the Recording Studio? Gender and Race/Ethnicity of Artists, Songwriters and Producers across 900 Popular Songs from 2012-2020](#)

^[4] UNESCO (2021): [Gender and creativity: progress on the precipice](#)

^[5] UNESCO (2022): [Reshaping Policies for Creativity](#)

SCOPE OF ANALYSIS

To better address inequalities and promote an inclusive environment, the supra-regional project, Cultural and Creative Industries, commissioned a gender analysis. It highlights gender-based differences in terms of the relative distribution of resources, opportunities, constraints and power in the CCI.

The Cultural and Creative Industries project is implemented by the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) on behalf of the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) and in cooperation with the Goethe-Institut.

It improves employment and income opportunities for creative professionals in six partner countries; Lebanon, Jordan, Iraq, Kenya, Senegal, and South Africa, and operates mainly in the music, fashion, design and animation sectors. In addition to promoting the development of entrepreneurial, digital, creative and technical skills through training programmes, the project aims to strengthen the framework conditions and the ecosystem of the cultural and creative industries.

The gender analysis covers four CCI sub-sectors – fashion, music, new media/animation, and design – and focuses on the project's six partner countries. One aim for this gender analysis is to ignite a transformative dialogue and inform evidence-based project activities. What sets this analysis apart from existing studies is the fact that it not only illuminates intricacies within four different CCI sub-sectors but also delves into the multifaceted dimensions of gender across six countries spanning sub-Saharan Africa and the Middle East.

Here the supra-national project has fostered active and close engagement with key stakeholders, ensuring a comprehensive exploration of gender dynamics. By conducting a meticulous three-level-analysis based on desk research, stakeholder interviews and focus group discussions, the research sheds light on the challenges and opportunities faced by women in their pursuit of meaningful careers and entrepreneurial ventures.

At the first level of analysis, the research examines the *entrepreneurial and creative culture* prevalent in the six countries. Moving to the second level, the research encompasses the *business and investment climate*. The third level of analysis revolves around *multi-stakeholder partnerships and practices*.

Entrepreneurial and Creative Culture Stereotypes

The study investigates the cultural barriers and deep-rooted gender-based stereotypes that impact women's career choices. By unravelling these societal norms, the factors that hinder or empower women can be illuminated, thus paving the way for informed interventions that can redefine traditional notions of gender roles.

Business and investment climate Environment

The research includes an exploration of crucial aspects such as access to resources, policies, working conditions, personal and work-life balance, employment and gender pay gaps, fiscal policies, and labour market reforms. By uncovering these complexities, the analysis provides insights into areas that demand reform and policy realignment, thereby fostering an environment conducive to gender parity.

Multi-stakeholder partnerships and practices Partnerships

The study examines inclusive contracts and conventions with other players, inclusive communication and marketing mechanisms and action plans, as well as networking with other stakeholders. By assessing these collaborative efforts, it is possible to identify successful strategies and areas for improvement that can drive positive change and foster a more inclusive and diverse CCI ecosystem.

The analysis aims to inspire evidence-based dialogue, informed decision-making, and targeted interventions to dismantle gender barriers. By shining a spotlight on the entrepreneurial and creative culture, business and investment climate, as well as multi-stakeholder partnerships and practices, it is possible to illuminate pathways towards a more inclusive and equitable society.



I. ENTREPRENEURIAL AND CREATIVE CULTURE

In line with prevailing norms and beliefs found in most sectors and regions worldwide, the CCI within the six countries of research are also subject to the influence of patriarchal cultures which shape beliefs and stereotypes surrounding the role of women in society.

NEW MEDIA & ANIMATION

Stereotypes Affecting Women's Career Access

Gender barriers and stereotypes in the new media and animation sector are most evident in women's limited access to careers. In South Africa and Kenya a prevailing gender stereotype exists, suggesting that technical and digital studies and careers are predominantly for men. Consequently, this discourages women from pursuing these paths. While in Lebanon the majority of graduates in the field of new media and animation are women, gender barriers still hinder their access to the labour market. Although the sector is still predominantly male, it is becoming more inclusive with the advent of international companies in these countries bringing more women into their studios. In South Africa, predominantly white men are employed, while black women remain underrepresented in the industry.

Navigating Societal Stereotypes and Cultural Expectations

Societal stereotypes and parental expectations play a significant role in shaping women's attitudes and interest in sectors such as new media production, visual effects (VFX) creation, and animation design. Women often experience a sense of displacement within these fields due to a prevailing culture of homophily where they are undervalued and perceived as lacking ambition or interest.

FASHION & DESIGN

Gender Roles, Stigmas and Emerging Opportunities

In the fashion industry, men often encounter social barriers when trying to enter the sector. Fashion professions carry social stigmas, such as being associated with school dropouts which limits family support for those choosing to pursue fashion studies. While women make up the majority of the workforce, they still face challenges due to gender roles and stereotypes. For example, women designers are frequently labelled as tailors rather than recognised as genuine entrepreneurs.

Notably, the fashion sector exhibits a unique characteristic where LGBTQI+ individuals experience comparatively lower levels of discrimination compared to other sectors.

Data on the stereotypes and cultural barriers women face in the design sectors is limited. However, participants from the MENA region affirm that product design is considered a hobby for women rather than a valuable job. Nonetheless, in urban areas in Lebanon, more female designers are emerging.

SOCIAL CHANGE

MUSIC

Acceptance in Specific Spaces and Professions

Women have found acceptance in specific professions and spaces within the music sector. These include traditional music and singing, as well as dancing in community gatherings like schools or churches. In these areas, women have been able to showcase their talents, contribute to cultural preservation, and create connections with their communities. They play important roles in preserving traditional music and have opportunities to express themselves creatively through dance. However, gender disparities and biases still exist, and efforts towards gender equality and inclusivity are necessary for women to thrive in all areas of the music industry.

Navigating Gender Bias: Struggles Faced by Women Defying Norms

Women face specific challenges when they defy gender norms, especially in male-dominated spaces within the music industry such as urban music, nightclubs, or being disc jockeys. These challenges often manifest in the form of censorship and policing of their behaviour and artistic expression. When women challenge the established gender norms within these spaces, they can encounter resistance and backlash from both industry gatekeepers and the general public.

Nightclubs, which are often associated with a party culture and nightlife entertainment, can pose additional challenges for women who defy gender norms. Female DJs or performers may encounter prejudice and scepticism regarding their technical skills or ability to command the crowd. Stereotypes and biases can lead to doubts about their legitimacy and capabilities, making it harder for them to establish themselves in the industry.

Moreover, female performers who are also mothers face amplified stigma and scrutiny. The music industry often expects artists to prioritise their careers and be constantly available for tours, performances, and promotional activities. This expectation clashes with traditional gender roles that place emphasis on motherhood and domestic responsibilities. Women who choose to balance their music careers with motherhood may face judgment, pressure to conform, and obstacles in advancing their careers due to the perceived conflict between these two roles.

Potential for Social Change in the CCI

The CCI possess significant potential to foster social change and promote gender equality. Creative approaches are being employed to disrupt patterns of sexism within the industry and in society at large. Fashion designers challenge traditional gender norms and stereotypes through their innovative collections.

Children's animation films portray women as powerful heroines, reshaping narratives and inspiring young audiences. Artists actively address themes of inclusion and equality through their work, aiming to dismantle stereotypes and representations of women, challenge toxic aspects of masculinity, and show support for the LGBTQI+ community. These collective efforts within the CCI contribute to a more inclusive and equitable future.





II. BUSINESS AND INVESTMENT CLIMATE

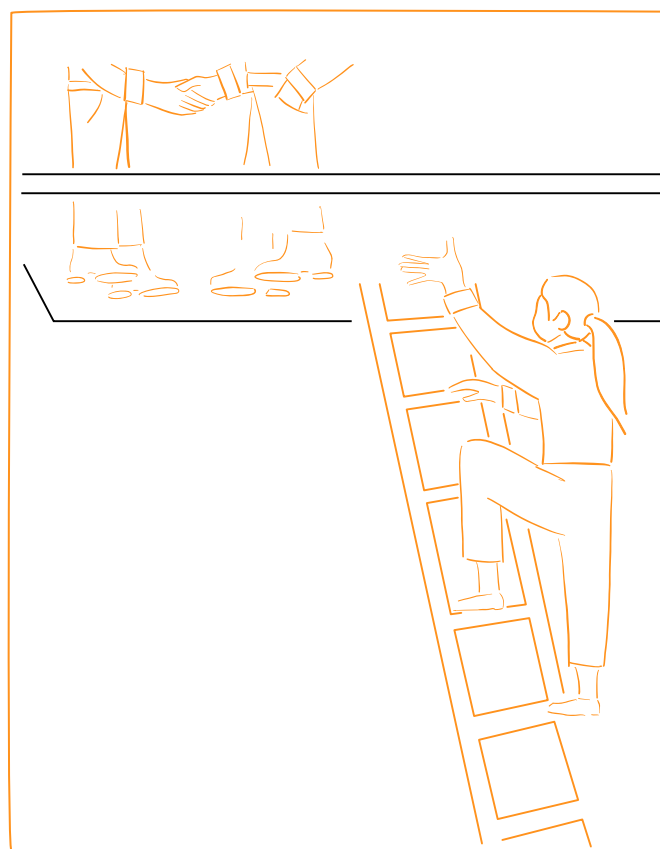
Women in the CCI face the detrimental effects of gender-based labour division. They are significantly underrepresented in roles and positions traditionally associated with male occupations. This gender segregation becomes further compounded by vertical segregation, wherein women, within the same sub-sectors, encounter lower-paid jobs and limited representation in managerial positions. This disparity is evident across various domains, including music production, animation film direction, and more.

NEW MEDIA & ANIMATION

The labour market within the new media and animation sectors is presently skewed towards male dominance. However, there is a gradual emergence of women, particularly in animation production. Despite this progress, women continue to face obstacles when it comes to accessing essential resources for new media projects, such as internet connectivity, particularly in rural areas. Additionally, women face resource-related difficulties in this sector, especially regarding securing funds. In the new media and animation field, the high costs involved present a significant barrier for women, who often lack the cultural privilege of relying on family support. Furthermore, women experience lower earnings and limited access to career development opportunities, even when including grants and mentoring programmes. These challenges hinder their advancement within the industry.

FASHION & DESIGN

In the fashion sector, informal and migrant female workers are more vulnerable to precarious employment, poor working conditions due to reduced bargaining power, and lack of social protection. The design sector, including architecture and product design, remains predominantly male-dominated. Women persistently face hurdles in achieving equitable representation within these fields.





MUSIC

Within the music sector, the presence of a “boys’ club effect” further marginalises women. This effect refers to a phenomenon where men establish exclusive relationships and integrate one another, often side-lining women from the sector and impeding their ability to thrive and advance. This is particularly evident in management and programming roles.

CROSS-SECTORAL FINDINGS

Work-Life Balance Impacts Women’s Career Progression

Women disproportionately bear the weight of unpaid care work within their households, often shouldering the responsibility of caring for children, elderly relatives, or individuals with illnesses or disabilities. Additionally, women frequently experience career breaks due to maternity periods. In a labour-intensive sector characterised by unstable working hours, frequent travelling and late-day activities, reconciling these demands with household responsibilities becomes more challenging for women.

This burden further limits their ability to make decisions regarding their own mobility which is particularly crucial for artists. Moreover, women encounter additional challenges related to travel for work, such as a lack of funding or safety concerns.

Financial Constraints Impede Women’s Advancement

Across all sub-sectors, women face resource-related difficulties that hinder their advancement and limit their creative pursuits. One of the major obstacles is the struggle to secure adequate funding. Women encounter disparities in accessing financial resources, which restricts their ability to develop, produce, and showcase their artistic endeavours.

Limited access to loans, grants, and venture capital disproportionately affects women’s entrepreneurial ambitions in many different sectors, preventing them from realising their creative visions on an equal footing. This gender-based constraint is particularly exacerbated in the CCI, where the sector is often perceived as high-risk and not given due recognition by many financial institutions.

Digital Gender Divide

Women’s exclusion from the CCI is further compounded by the presence of the digital gender gap. This gap not only restricts women’s access to emerging opportunities in the digital economy but also hampers their ability to fully harness the creative potential that digital platforms offer, particularly within the new media sector. In addition to the new media sector, digital skills have become indispensable across various sub-sectors of the CCI.

From online marketing to promoting gigs or products, and seizing networking opportunities, a significant portion of career-building activities within the CCI have transitioned into the digital sphere.

Gender-Based Violence and Sexual Harassment

Gender-based violence and sexual harassment pose significant concerns across all sectors, with prominence in the music industry. Women often feel unsafe and perceive the sector as hostile due to these issues. Reporting instances of sexual harassment becomes challenging due to a prevalent culture of silence, and the presence of comprehensive protection policies and effective support mechanisms for victims to report such incidents safely and anonymously remains extremely limited.



III. MULTI-STAKEHOLDER PARTNERSHIPS AND PRACTICES

CROSS-SECTORAL FINDINGS

Existing Strategies Lack Gender Sensitivity

In general, cultural policies across various sectors and countries lack gender sensitivity. However, it is worth noting that in Kenya, primary CCI development strategy documents have a specific focus on women.

In 2020, the Kenyan Ministry of Sports, Culture and Heritage published its National Music Policy that states: The Government shall ensure that women and men, persons with disabilities, the elderly and other special rest groups actively participate in the music sector through provision of equal opportunities in education, performance and employment.

Civil Society and Private Sector Initiatives Are Bridging the Gap

To bridge this gap in gender-sensitive public policies, civil society and private sector initiatives have emerged as valuable avenues for providing targeted support to women in the CCI. These initiatives serve as entry points for addressing the specific needs and challenges faced by women within the industry.

There has been a rise in local non-profit organisations and international women's networks dedicated to supporting young women professionals across various creative sectors.

These organisations offer a range of comprehensive support, including capacity-building programmes that enhance technical and entrepreneurial skills. Some initiatives specifically target refugees, while others focus on promoting women's participation in the sector through campaigns and activities. Additionally, vocational training centres have been established to provide high-quality training in CCI fields. These collective efforts aim to empower and equip women with the necessary tools to succeed in their chosen CCI disciplines.

In Jordan, Turquoise Mountain provides training to young people (with a particular focus on women) in traditional crafts which include woodwork, stone-carving, embroidery, and jewellery. Various training programmes equip participants with both technical and business skills. Turquoise Mountain operates a showroom that serves two purposes: to showcase the designs of young entrepreneurs and to facilitate networking among them. Turquoise Mountain empowers young designers by giving them the opportunity to participate in international trade fairs. In 2022, several female jewellery designers had the opportunity to exhibit at a trade fair in Berlin and travel for the first time without a male companion.

Women-owned business support funds play a crucial role in empowering women entrepreneurs by providing comprehensive training and support programmes. These initiatives encompass a range of services, including mentoring, business capacity building, and confidence-building activities. These innovative capacity-building strategies are useful to women and offer flexible financing mechanisms tailored to the specific needs of creatives in the industry.

In Kenya, HEVA Fund launched a finance and business support facility which exclusively targets women-owned or women-led, early-stage enterprises. The facility provided working capital and financial support for the acquisition of production assets. In addition, the women received training on topics such as product development and investment in production technology. The initiative is an example of how targeted funding in combination with comprehensive training can empower women in the CCI.

Collaborative efforts and joint initiatives are essential in creating safe work environments that are free from gender-based violence, allowing women to express themselves freely.

In South Africa, the non-profit organisation Africa Beyond 4IR (AB4IR) aims to bridge the digital and gender gaps in townships' access to technology. In collaboration with the private sector and development partners, the Drone Divas programme was initiated to train women in drone operations and entrepreneurship. After the training, the top ten participants get the opportunity to complete a three-month internship with a private sector company.

International cooperation actions target women's entrepreneurship in the CCI. Specific international programmes provide support through networking, funding, visibility, mentoring, and more. The private sector, especially in the digital field, plays a key role by integrating gender diversity criteria and creating global opportunities.

The Power of Role Models and Visibility

Communication efforts are highlighting female role models, fostering dialogue, and dispelling counterproductive myths and stereotypes. By actively involving men in these discussions, communication actions contribute to promoting gender equality and inclusivity within the industry.

Muthoni Drummer Queen – a Kenyan rapper, singer, producer and founder of two festivals – has initiated the perFORM Music Incubator. The multi-disciplinary music business and artist development programme supports creators from six music professions, from performing artists to sound and light engineers. To create more female role models, all of the incubator's slots for performing artists go to women.



Limited Mainstreaming in Trade Unions and Professional Organisations

Within trade unions, professional organisations, and institutions, there is a notable deficiency in mainstreaming capacities and a lack of comprehensive knowledge regarding women's rights and gender issues. Consequently, many women creators are unaware of these organisations and do not feel adequately represented by them. Nevertheless, certain professional associations are committed to addressing gender inequality and violence against women. It is through their advocacy efforts that women can access resources on an equal basis and find relief from discrimination within these sectors.

In Senegal, the Association des Métiers de la Musique du Sénégal (AMS) / Association of Music Professions is a professional umbrella organisation working to combat gender inequality and violence against women in the music sector. Their activities include for example the implementation of social dialogue and collective negotiations.



RECOMMENDATIONS

Important insights have been gathered throughout the analysis which examined gender aspects in six countries across four CCI sub-sectors. At the end of this report, recommendations are provided for the improved integration of gender aspects into the creation of programmes for the supra-regional Cultural and Creative Industries project.

It is crucial to emphasise that this gender analysis is contextual and serves as an initial steppingstone towards the development of a comprehensive roadmap for gender mainstreaming at all stages of the project's programme creation cycle.

Given the unique nature of the CCI as a catalyst for social and cultural transformation, it is essential to capitalise on the creative endeavours initiated by women and men to combat gender stereotypes and discrimination against women, gender minorities, and individuals with disabilities. By harnessing these projects, we can contribute to building a more inclusive and equitable society.



Key recommendations include:

Awareness & Sensitisation

- Foster awareness regarding women's participation in the creative economy and the income, job, and business potential it offers, involving men and leaders in these activities
- Promote success stories and role models of women in the CCI
- Promote awareness on gender-sensitive value chains within the CCI
- Launch awareness-raising campaigns targeting young women to encourage their interest in male-dominated technical professions, particularly in the music sector and in creative digital sectors
- Raise awareness about sexual harassment in the CCI and collaborate with civil society organisations and unions to address and prevent it
- Promote the representation of women and marginalised groups in the CCI



Data & Evidence

- Support the collection of sex-disaggregated data by collaborating with trade unions, professional unions, universities, and international networks such as **Women in Music** or **Women in Animation**

Ecosystem Strengthening

- Provide support to advocacy institutions, including professional associations, NGOs, and unions, that advocate for gender-responsive decent work conditions in the CCI
- Support initiatives that create safe spaces for women in the CCI
- Assist civil society organisations with targeted activities for women in the CCI
- Support business support organisations in their training programmes for women in CCI to improve business skills, digital literacy, negotiation skills and confidence
- Organise women-oriented hackathons and competitions to encourage women's participation and innovation
- Provide targeted access to market for women-led businesses

Policy & Global Partnerships

- Capitalise on the commitment to gender equality in the new media and animation sector by collaborating with major companies
- Collaborate with key international partners to drive gender equality initiatives





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