

THE POTENTIAL OF THE CREATIVE ECONOMY FOR WOMEN'S ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT IN IORA COUNTRIES

Women's economic empowerment in IORA nations can be imagined in terms of the wealth of people's heritage and skills rather than in terms of a deficit model of capacity or knowledge. IORA countries have a comparative advantage in many areas of the creative industries due to their rich cultures. Gender equity, equality and empowerment can be informed by people's strengths rather than perceived weaknesses while acknowledging the importance of balancing human rights with cultural assets. This allows for a focus on women's agency and creativity as well as labour force participation.

- World trade in creative goods and services is one of the fastest growing sectors of the global economy, more than doubling from 2002 to 2011, when it reached US\$ 624 billion.
- In this period, developing countries averaged 12.1% annual growth in the export of creative goods.

UNDP Administrator Helen Clark has said: "The cultural and creative industries are important engines of economic growth. They generate jobs and income and contribute to individual and community well-being in both developed and developing economies" (UNDP 2013).

Creative industries are those that have their origin in individual and community creativity, skill, and talent, and have potential for job creation through the generation and deployment of ideas or imagination. Creative industries range from advertising and social media to agribusiness, design, and handicrafts and provide a platform to support the sustained empowerment of women. In communities across the world, rich cultural value and traditional designs have been protected and nurtured by women through creative industries (UNIDO Newsletter: Gender #4). The relationship between culture, creativity, industry and trade is outlined below.

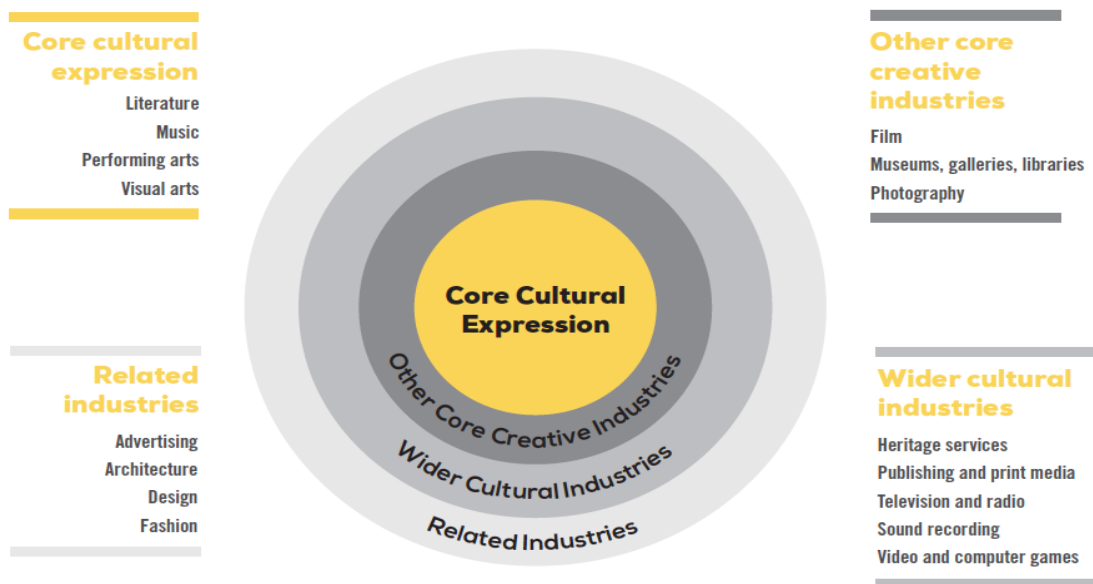


Fig. 1 The Creative Economy: Modeling cultural and creative industries (UNESCO & UNDP 2013: 22)

Indonesia, Australia, Malaysia, Singapore, India, Dubai and Thailand have relatively strong creative industries and infrastructure with excellent potential, given more targeted support, in other IORA countries. Indonesian Tourism and Creative Economy Ministry's Mari Elka Pangestu said in February 2014 that "with the pace of growth, the [creative] industry's contribution to the nation's total income would reach around Rp 700 trillion (US\$58.8 billion), up 9 % from last year" (Jakarta Post 2014).

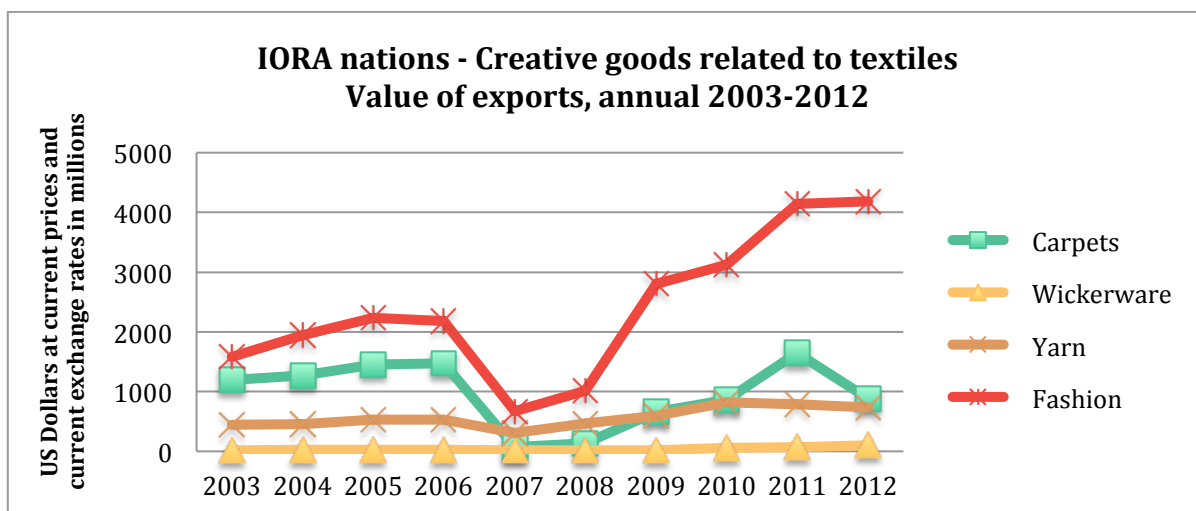


Fig. 2 Value of IORA exports in creative goods related to textiles 2003-2012 (source: UNCTADstat)

The total value of fashion exports for IORA countries was over \$4 billion in 2011-2012. Fashion is driven by local cultures and heritage factors as well as national, global and popular trends and tastes. The sector is one potential arena for shaping women's empowerment with positive value chain effects for both textiles and tourism.

POLICY & PROGRAM OPTIONS

Create a multi-scalar IORA approach promoting women's pathways to economic empowerment via the creative industries with policies and plans shaped at local, provincial, national, regional and international levels. Focus on both processes and outcomes and consider short and long term perspectives. Build in monitoring mechanisms from the outset.

Research & Planning

- IORA situation analysis- women's participation and agency in creative industry value chains, followed by national mapping, planning and policy processes (including strengthening funding, partnerships, infrastructure and regulatory mechanisms)
- IORA framework for cultural statistics and indicators (UNESCO UIS model)
- IORA Creative Economy Strategy (regional, harmonized with national strategies informed by local knowledge)

Regional Events

- IORA Fashion Week- clothing, textiles, jewelry and other accessories
- IORA Creative Economy Awards
- IORA Women's Expo/ Trade Fair
- IORA Tourism Fair (Seychelles 2014)

References

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