

SUSTAINABLE CREATIVE CAREER DEVELOPMENT PATHWAYS FOR YOUNG PEOPLE IN TANZANIA: A CASE STUDY

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ABSTRACT

Tanzania has a rich and diverse cultural history based in community cultural life. However, at present, young people have limited opportunity to exploit this richness of traditional knowledge and engage in creative jobs as their means of future sustainable employment. Hence, the significant challenge remains: how to *integrate* and enhance the traditional knowledge in a learning strategy, while there is no “inter-ministerial action and institutional mechanisms” (United Nations 2008, 33-35) to promote creative employment for young people. This article reports on a case study that examined how the two Ministries of Culture and Education might work together to support Tanzania’s young people to secure, and engage successfully in creative jobs. The case study employed mixed methods, incorporating questionnaires, interviews and focus groups. The study was undertaken in Dar-Es-Salaam, Mwanza, Bagamoyo, Dodoma, Lindi and Morogoro from July to October, 2012. This paper discusses some of the issues and argues that there is no practical utilization of traditional knowledge and skills in “putting education to work” (UNESCO 2012, 170) for the better prospects of young people and to reveal the story of their lives. Although this study is specific to Tanzania, the case may also apply to other developing countries.

Key Words: *creative career, career pathways, young people, learning strategy, creative expressions*

Introduction

Most literature defines creativity as an attribute of people or a process by which creative people apply original ideas, knowledge and skills in new ways so as to achieve a measurable goal (Bentley and Kimberly 1999, 10; United Nations 2008, 9-10). Traditionally, Tanzania like most African countries had, and still has, creativity in the form of measurable social elements embedded in traditional knowledge and skills, science, technology, agriculture and medicine, which can be strong areas for a creative career development pathway for young people.

However, the survival of the traditional creative expression, knowledge and skills is at stake due to a lack of systematic ways of passing them on. At the same time, the education system, in Tanzania, undermines these very treasures. As Amadou Hampate Ba (1960) coined (in one

of the UNESCO meetings) the now famous phrase, *'in Africa, the death of an old man is like the burning of a library in advanced countries'* (Hampaté Bâ 1960). Indeed, this concept reflects the prevailing situation where the passing away of any elder in the local communities' denotes a loss of the treasure, knowledge and skills embedded in them. Subsequently, the loss happens due to ignorance - lack of knowing that culture and knowledge are two main aspects in learning, connecting the past with the future to form a two way learning in a man's life.

The crucial point to make here for clarification is that related to an African adage that goes, *'it is ignorance that makes the chicken go to bed hungry while sitting in the bucket of corn'* (Ndungane 2010). To illustrate this, Tanzania has to exploit and fully utilize the existing richness of the traditional cultural expressions in supporting young people to explore and 'create their own artistic language' through arts education (Bamford et al 2009, 21), thus, build artistic vibrancy and sustainable creative career pathways.

In that regard, this paper critically discusses culture and strategies for the promotion of creative career pathways for young people. At the same time, it discusses the existing gaps, limitations and related literature on ways towards the attainment of sustainable creative career development opportunities. Furthermore, the paper reports and relates the views and experiences of participants as per the data collection field results connected to the creative career development pathways. Finally, this paper assesses and gives some recommendations on how to draw sustainable creative career development pathways for young people in Tanzania.

Culture and creative career development pathways

Culture stands as a living substance, and thus, reflects the everyday experiences and interpretations of people's lives. Hence, young people from their birth, and as they grow up in their families, tend to learn new things from their elders, peers and other social environments. Furthermore, nurturing the creative minds of young people in any society is necessary so as to raise a generation of innovators (Schwartz 2013).

On the other hand, numerous studies have attempted to define what a career is and steps towards designing a career pathway respectively. To illustrate, (Banks et al 1992; Crompton and Sanderson 1990; Reid 1999; Robinson, Murrells and Marsland 1997) assert:

A career refers to paid work and implies continuous commitment to employment, with a progression on through a series of hierarchical positions in an occupation or a given organisation... it is more to do with the total experiences of adult life incorporating domestic life, leisure, and recreational as well as work (Banks et al 1992; Crompton and Sanderson 1990; Reid 1999; Robinson, Murrells and Marsland 1997).

However, the key problem with the explanation is that a career addresses the employer and employee relationship. While, a creative career development pathway has to include self-employment, and therefore, encourage young people to consider personal responsibilities for

their future goals. Equally important, Bridgstock (2011) has written of how ‘evidence from labour force studies and economic modelling suggests that many creative workers are engaged in a *boundary-less career*’ whereby many individuals are free and do manage their jobs as self-employed (Bridgstock 2011, 13-14).

Subsequently, promoting creative career pathways needs a sense of commitment and as Davis (2004) points out, four basic steps are essential in designing a career pathway. These include:

- (1) *Identification* – involves the identification of creative young people who would be an asset to the industry and have interest, ambition and inspiration.
- (2) *Career mapping* – incorporates deliberate efforts in finding and putting clear opportunities within the cultural and creative industries to go in line with the interests, ambitions, goals and commitments of creative young people.
- (3) *Skills auditing* – this is a step by which the interested and identified (young people) have to prove if they are ready to engage fully in the cultural and creative industries. Thus, identification of knowledge and skills currently in them and what further skills they need to thrive in society is compulsory at this level.
- (4) *Development planning* – this refers to the drawing of a road map towards the end goal. Therefore, learning, training or courses in their respective related areas of choice and interest follow so as to equip them with the ability to produce creative work that is unique and appropriate (Davis 2004, 4-6).

Perhaps the most serious disadvantage of this approach (as put by Paul Davis 2004) is that related to the commitment of policy makers in Tanzania, who, like in most developing countries, – tend to ignore or give less attention to young people’s creative interests in their cultural and education policy plans. Hence, most developing countries’ governments consider arts and culture as options (World Bank 1998).

Because of this, and aspects relate to other rights for young people, the United Nations (1996), in World Program of Action for Youth (WPAY) to the year 2000 and beyond, stipulates a well-structured policy framework, and gives practical guidelines for both national action and international support. Furthermore, the WPAY focuses on ways to assist governments in strengthening the national capacities, and thus, improve the well-being, livelihood and effective participation of young people in their respective societies. On the whole, the UN has developed a system – wide Action Plan on Youth that focuses on five priority strands. These include employment, entrepreneurship, education (incorporating education on sexual reproductive health), citizenship and protection of rights and political inclusion (United Nations 1996, 4-7).

Young people and employment trends in Tanzania

While there are a variety of definitions of the term *youth* and *young people* – this paper use the words interchangeably to refer to the target population including the age range, hence, the chronological age in western cultures differs from that in African settings (Leshabari and

Kaaya 1994, 4). In that regard, and for the purpose of this paper, youth refers to young people aged 10 to 35 years. Currently, youth constitutes more than 50 per cent of the 49.9 million Tanzanians in accordance to the 2012 Tanzania population and housing census report (National Bureau of Statistics 2013). Evidently, Tanzania has a good number of young people that could engage in creative jobs and productive works effectively.

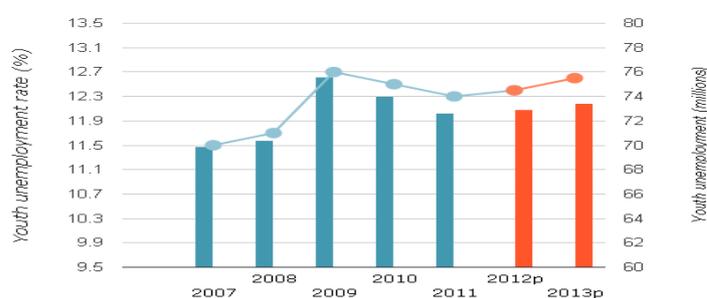
On the other hand, the 2006 Integrated Labour Force Survey (ILFS) shows that approximately 2, 194,392 persons were unemployed, which is equivalent to 11.7 per cent of the Tanzania labour force as compared to 31.4 per cent for 15 to 34 years olds. In contrast, unemployment estimates for the year 2011, (the current data) range to 2,368,672 persons, which is equivalent, to 10.7 per cent of the Tanzanian labour force population (National Bureau of Statistics 2011). In that regard, Tanzania has no population problem but a population of young people with employment problems.

Furthermore, the International Labour Organisation (2013) recently released a report titled ‘Global Employment Trends for Youth 2013: A generation at risk’ that contends as follows:

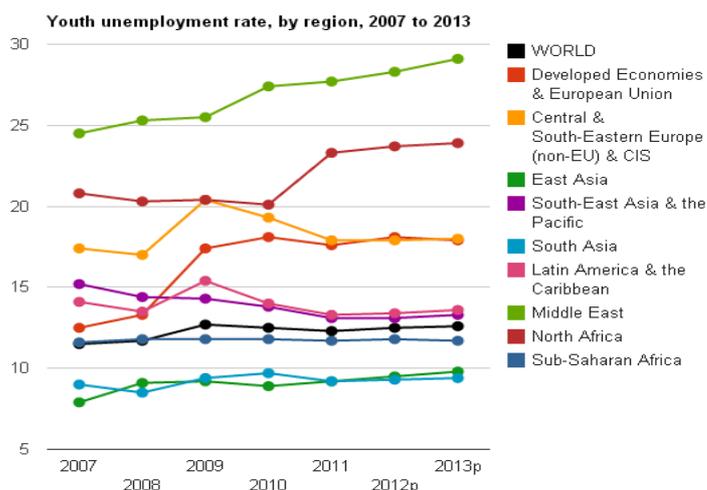
Although the regional youth unemployment rate in sub-Saharan Africa is lower than in other regions, it is significantly higher than the adult unemployment rate. Compared with an adult unemployment rate of 5.9 per cent in 2012, youth are twice as likely to be unemployed with an estimated youth unemployment rate of 11.8 per cent in 2012 (ILO 2013, 27).

Additionally, the ILO – Global Employment Trend for Youth 2013 highlights that ‘two thirds of working age youth in some developing countries are either unemployed or trapped in low-quality jobs’, and, the data show that over 75 million young people worldwide are in search of employment (ILO 2013, 27-35). The following figures 1 and 2 reflect the global youth unemployment trends and projections from 2007 up to 2013:

Figure 1: Youth unemployment trends



Source: International Labour Organisation (ILO) (2013)

Figure 2: Youth unemployment by region, 2007 to 2013

Source: International Labour Organisation (ILO) (2013)

It is beyond the scope of this paper that young people in Tanzania as one of the developing countries within the sub-Saharan Africa region face the labour market challenges. This is well examined by the ILO survey. However, the crucial point to make here is how the two Ministries of Culture and Education might work together to support Tanzania's young people to secure, and engage successfully in creative jobs.

Tanzania, like many developing countries, has well-structured policies in relation to the promotion of sustainable creative career pathways for young people. However, the lack of 'pragmatic initiatives in translating ideas, aspirations and intentions into actions so as to facilitate policy implementation' (Biram 1999), has stood as a serious stumbling block in meeting the underlined cultural and education policy objectives in Tanzania.

Limitations and challenges towards creative career development pathways for youth

Current limitations that restrict the promotion of creative career pathways for young people in Tanzania are related to the lack of 'inter-ministerial actions and institutional mechanisms to assist' (United Nations 2008, 33-35). Taking into consideration the new global economy and employment trend, and, as Nestor Garcia Canclini (1992) points out:

instead of the death of traditional cultural forms, we now discover that tradition is in transition, and articulated to modern processes. Reconversion prolongs their existence. To reconvert cultural capital means to transfer symbolic patrimony from one site to another in order to conserve it, increase its yield, and better the position of those who practice it (Canclini 1992, 31).

To illustrate, through arts education, young people are most likely to embrace the cultural heritage and create their own artistic language (Bamford et al 2009, 21). Such a focus, will contribute to the quality of artistic creations or rather 'recycle their skills by transferring them to another area' (Canclini 1992, 32).

Findings from the Integrated Labour Force Survey (ILFS), show that new entrants within the labour market in Tanzania ranges from 800,000 to one million annually, and all compete for only 40, 000 existing job opportunities in the formal sector (National Bureau of Statistics 2011). Evidently, many talented young graduates are on the streets, without jobs, and therefore, preventing Tanzania from reaping the potential benefits of the growing educated youth population – as a reliable workforce for the country’s sustainable development. As Hearn and Bridgstock (2012) argues:

Effective student learning is based in adaptive, realistic and adaptable career identity, which in turn is grounded in knowledge of the world of work, along with self-knowledge (Hearn and Bridgstock 2012, 116).

Hence, the lack of employing traditional approaches so as to impart knowledge and essential skills for the youth, economic and labour market survival has remained as a significant setback towards the creation and promotion of creative career pathways for young people in Tanzania.

Research Methodology

This paper presents the preliminary results of a case study based on ‘*Strategies for youth employment in Tanzania: A creative industries approach*’. The study employed mixed methods incorporating questionnaires, interviews and focus groups. The researcher chose this approach because it ‘can provide a fuller description and/or more complete explanation of the phenomenon being studied by providing more than one perspective on it’ (Denscombe 2007, 118).

The sampling method aimed to secure a majority of key policy makers, educational stakeholders and cultural actors. Hence, it was a convenience sample, but with consistent attention paid to obtaining representation from relevant geographical, gender and industry segment (Denscombe 2007, 13).

Between 7 August, 2012 and 17 September, 2012, the researcher organised 19 voluntary participants for face-to-face interviews. Each interview lasted for one and a half hours and was audio and video recorded. The carefully selected participants included government officials, policy makers, law enforcers, planners, and decision makers within government ministries, institutions, departments, and related agencies within the arts and cultural sector who were likely to contribute well to a discussion of the issues concerned. During the interview sessions, participants discussed aspects of educational and cultural policy in Tanzania by addressing questions such as:

1. To what extent has the education system inspired youth to discover and improve their creative talents in Tanzania?
2. What future policy and program interventions are recommended to enhance Tanzania’s creative workforce?

For the focus groups, the researcher invited people who had: (i) first-hand experience within the arts and cultural sector, and (ii) knowledge and understanding as activists and experts

within the cultural and education sectors. Hence, these people were likely to contribute well to an exploration of the issues concerning the betterment of the future for the young in Tanzania. They were divided into five groups, each comprising between 6 and 9 participants. Each session was of one and a half hours to two hours duration, and each involved an audio and video recording.

The researcher distributed questionnaires to creative industries' stakeholders aged 15 to 35 years. These cultural actors were invited because they were remarkably familiar with the challenges and opportunities within the arts and cultural sector, and could evidently contribute substantially to a discussion of how best to promote creative work to young people in Tanzania. A total of 57 people agreed to take part in completing a paper-based questionnaire with Likert scale answers (strongly agree-strongly disagree).

Data gathering methods included recordings of focus groups and interviews, individual field notes, some video clips and photographs. In order to meet the study goal, and this being empirical research, the researcher employed both qualitative and quantitative data analysis techniques. As Bryman (2008) and Neuman (2006) contends, coding is a key step in research and assists in examining each respondent's answers, grouping them into categories and comparing them, including creating tables, graphs and statistics that help in answering the research question (Bryman 2008, 237-305; Neuman 2006, 14).

Results and Discussion

Education system and employment

The results of this study indicate that policy makers, law enforcers and some society members never acknowledge arts and culture as one of the key driving forces for the national economy or that they represent employment creation opportunities for youth. The following quotes from the respondents, illustrate this:

I see the education system encouraging learners to cram what teachers say! So, the teaching and learning system has very much adopted the 'banking concept of education' as mentioned by Paulo Freire! This is a challenge! – (Interview: 10th of August, 2012).

Yeah...I have an example of a young boy who in his final examination wrote poems instead of answering the exam questions! When asked (...) why? The boy answered:

'You know, what I studied was none of my priority! My dream is to become a musician. I think that is my area of choice (work) to lead my life, and thus, help my beloved mother to shake out of the extreme poverty through my creative talent' (Interview: 12th of September, 2012)

Cultural and Education policy in identification and creative career mapping

The majority of the participants in the interview sessions felt that the current cultural and education policy lacked strategic planning and valid programming. Thus, there was no physical framework established within the scope of identification, mapping and profiling creative skills embedded in young people for their future better lives. The following quotes

describe the prevailing situation:

I say, there is no deliberate effort in identification and profiling creative skills- in young people – (Interview: 10th August, 2012).

I think, the challenge is big and lies at the implementation level...with that trend of ignoring arts education (...) can't help in the identification of creative skills in young people in Tanzania – (Interview: 17th of August, 2012).

Impact of education and creative skills auditing

The perception by most respondents in answering the question, *'To what extent has the education system inspired youth to discover and improve their creative talents in Tanzania?'* was that the current education system lacked the well-structured ways in nurturing the creative talents of youth. These include ways to motivate, identify and improve the creative talents of young people in line with the promotion of the traditional creative expressions. Hence, these stand as fundamental aspects that are not given priority by either parents or the government. The majority of the respondents felt western education (with a priority on 'white collar jobs') and globalization are civic aspects that have blocked the transmission of the traditional values to youth. Based on the above mentioned perception, comments made by respondents included:

With the globalization – Tanzanians should never allow to be swept away and lose their cultural heritage. Let young people be exposed to their culture and base their creative works as done by our elders – (Focus group: 18th of September, 2012).

The problem or rather challenge lies at the type of education system we have. This is very much based on western/colonial type with a priority in 'white collar jobs' – (Interview: 10th August, 2013).

Policy and creative jobs development planning

In giving answers related to the research question *'What future policy and program interventions are recommended to enhance Tanzania's creative workforce?'* most respondents expressed their feelings as follows:

The government must harmonize the public policies to give priority to issues at hand... like this of youth employment – (Interview: 10th August, 2012)

I think Tanzania has to learn through its mistakes. The Tanzania Trust Fund (Mfuko) started in 1998 must be given priority and strengthened. We must not depend on donors – (Interview: 14th August, 2012)

Copyright and Neighbouring Rights law strengthening is compulsory so as to make creative people benefit from their works (Focus group: 2nd August, 2012).

Hence, the results correspond with what the United Nations (2008) suggests – the policy framework of the creative industries is multidisciplinary in nature; therefore, policies that cut across disciplines require inter-ministerial actions and institutional mechanisms to assist (United Nations 2008, 33-35).

Conclusions and Recommendations

This paper provides an account of, and basic steps for, the need to integrate and enhance traditional knowledge in a learning strategy in Tanzania. Additionally, the paper briefly explains strategies towards designing and promoting a creative career pathway as a step to reconvert the cultural capital of youth by making them 'recycle their skills', and improve the quality of their artistic creations (Canclini 1992, 32). Hence, the paper also explains the employment trend for young people and gives some limitations and challenges towards creative career development pathways for youth in Tanzania. Finally, the paper incorporates the case study's findings depicting feelings, desires and intentions of the cultural actors, policy makers and related cultural sector beneficiaries.

The study outcomes, show limitations, and challenges and gives some recommendations that include but are not limited to the *strengthening of arts education and training system, incorporating entrepreneurship skills for learners, and copyright and neighbouring rights law enforcement*. Other findings are *market enhancement of creative goods, activities and services, funding and start-up capital to creative artists, qualifications and employment opportunities for artists within the private and public sectors*. However, taking into account the drastic changes in the global economy and employment trend, 'fresh policy thinking is needed' (Hearn and Rooney 2008, 2), and deliberate initiatives are compulsory so as reduce the labour market challenges facing young people in Tanzania. Indeed, the promotion of creative career pathways could assist not only in enhancing creativity and innovation; – it will also increase employment opportunities for youth in Tanzania.

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