

Unesco report shows creators face projected revenue losses

The report says by 2028, the impact of Generative AI outputs is projected to result in global revenue losses of 24 percent for music creators and 21 percent for audiovisual creators.

BY BAMUTURAKI MUSINGUZI

Unesco has launched the latest edition of its flagship report *ReShaping Policies for Creativity*, which analyses a rapidly evolving cultural landscape shaped by digital transformation, Artificial Intelligence (AI), shifting global trade dynamics, and mounting threats to artistic freedom. A global monitoring report with data from more than 120 countries, it points out the need for stronger policies to protect creators from widening inequalities. According to the report, the future of creativity stands at a critical juncture.

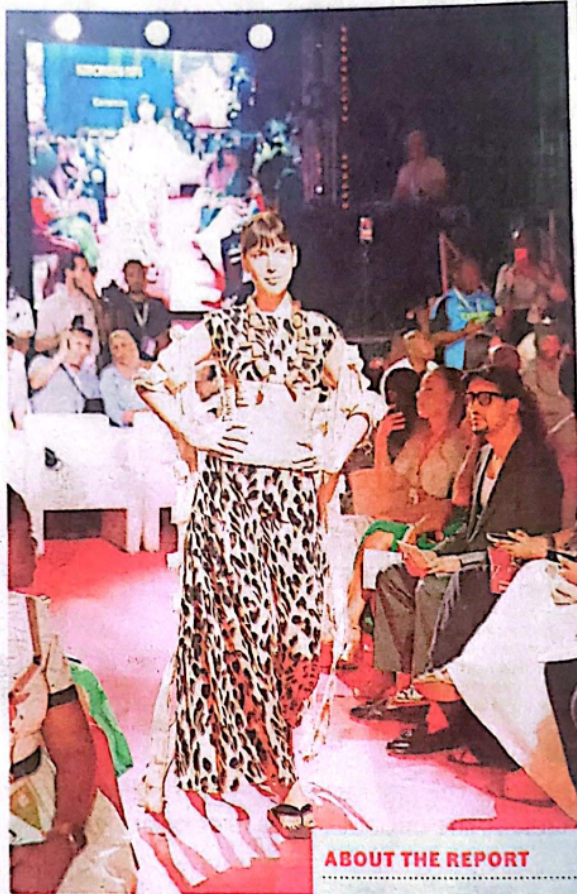
Today, most countries have established public bodies with mandates and budgets for culture, yet direct public funding for culture accounts for less than 0.6 percent of GDP and continues to decline.

While the global trade in cultural goods reached \$254 billion (\$159.59 trillion) in 2023, it is mostly dominated by the Global North. Furthermore, development aid for culture accounts for just 0.15 percent of total aid.

Digital transformation has fundamentally reshaped the creative landscape. Never has creative content been so abundant, nor the tools so widely accessible. Yet for many, stable employment and fair pay are out of reach.

These technological shifts are widening existing digital divides. In developed countries, 67 percent of individuals hold essential digital skills as opposed to only 28 percent in developing contexts. At the same time, the proliferation of AI-generated content, online harassment and censorship generate an increasingly hostile environment for creators, especially women, Indigenous Peoples, and other vulnerable communities.

The report underscores that while cultural and creative industries are in-



A model at the CANEX Fashion Show held at the sidelines of the Intra-African Trade Fair (IATF2025) in Algiers, Algeria, held from September 4-10, 2025. PHOTO/COURTESY OF AFREXIMBANK

creasingly recognised as drivers of economic growth, social cohesion and sustainable development, the systems supporting them remain fragile and uneven.

Although 85 percent of reporting countries include cultural and creative industries in national development plans, only 56 percent set specific cultural objectives—revealing a gap between

general commitments and actions. A persistent "visa wall" limits artistic mobility, with 96 percent of developed countries supporting outward mobility but only 38 percent facilitating inward mobility from developing nations.

Unesco says these challenges urgently call for collaborative global governance. As part of the Convention's critical platform for policy dialogue, *ReShaping Policies for Creativity* contributes to this collective endeavour. It offers updated insights on how countries are navigating these challenges and evidence-based recommendations to inspire policy action.

"Unesco's *ReShaping Policies for Creativity*, a decade-long global benchmark, calls for renewed and strengthened support for artists and cultural professionals as AI and digital transformations reshape the creative industries, offering a blueprint of over 8,100 policy measures," Unesco Director-General Khaled El Enany said.

Impact of digital divide

While digital technologies have broadened access to creative tools and audiences, they have also intensified inequalities and economic precarity. Digital revenues now represent 35 percent of creators' income, up from 17 percent in 2018, marking a structural shift accompanied by income instability and increased exposure to intellectual property infringements.

By 2028, the impact of Generative AI outputs is projected to result in global revenue losses of 24 percent for music creators and 21 percent for audiovisual creators. Essential digital skills are held by 67 percent of people in developed countries compared to just 28 percent in developing countries, reinforcing North-South divides.

Progress toward gender equality remains uneven. While women's leadership of national cultural institutions has increased globally—from 31 percent in 2017 to 46 percent in 2024—significant disparities persist: women represent 64 percent of leaders in developed countries but only 30 percent in developing countries.

Meanwhile, Unesco has spent more than two decades positioning culture and the creative industries at the heart of global policy, development planning and crisis response through the 2005 Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions.

ABOUT THE REPORT

The 2026 *ReShaping Policies for Creativity* report is the fourth edition in the series which monitors the implementation of this Unesco Convention. It is published with the support of the Government of Sweden and the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency. The organisation has helped over 100 countries design or reform cultural policies, focusing on areas such as supporting the digital transition of the creative sectors and empowering vulnerable communities to create, express and share their diverse cultural expressions.

CHEERS & JEERS

Good week for:

SC Villa, following a shootout win against fellow topflight club Bul FC in the Stanbic Uganda Cup after playing out an interesting 2-2 draw.

Uganda National Oil Company (Unoc), after 'strong-arming' Kenya Pipeline Company (KPC) en route to using the IPO to press for extensive veto powers and board representation. Unoc committed over Sh554.4 billion worth of shares before securing far-reaching

governance protections in return. This as it secured a 20.15 percent strategic stake in KPC.

Uganda, following the reception of its first consignment of 19,200 doses of Lenacapavir, a long-acting HIV prevention drug administered twice a year. The development is seen as a shot in the arm for the country's decades-long battle against an epidemic affecting more than 1.4 million citizens.

Bad week for:

The Aids Support Organisation (Taso), following a decision by Jinja High Court Judge Joanita Bushara that compels the entity to pay Sh190 million in damages for negligently diagnosing a man as HIV positive and placing him on antiretroviral therapy (ART) for seven years despite him being HIV negative.

Ms Molly Katanga, after Justice Rosette Kania of the High Court

ruled that she must show how her DNA came to be predominantly deposited on the firearm. The prosecution says Molly's DNA is the more predominant on the trigger house, which means that she used the gun to commit the murder of her husband, Henry Katanga, in

The M23 rebel group, following the death of its spokesperson, Wajid, after a drone strike by the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). The attack was in North