



**“The G20 can play a significant role in forming global consensus on collective policy making in the area.”**

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Image Source: Agah Nugraha Muharam, an Indonesian artist and graphic designer, is performing a sktech about Creative Economy and the G20 Indonesia during the World Conference on Creative Economy (WCCE) in Bali, Oct 5-7, 2022. Source: Photography courtesy of WCCE, 2022. All rights reserved ©.



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## Creative jobs will drive the post-pandemic world of work

The current wave of globalization fueled by rapid technological advancement has forever transformed our consumption and production patterns. This has also led to an increase in the demand for non-routine, analytical, and interpersonal skills in the occupations and a sharp decline in the mid-level routine, manual jobs, creating both, opportunities and challenges for the global youth population. While the highly skilled and better equipped workforce benefits through greater and better opportunities, the ones involved in routine, manual jobs will most-likely be pushed out. In this context, the discussion on “creative economy”

has been gaining worldwide attention for making the future of work more just, inclusive, and sustainable. At its core, creative economy is a nexus of vocations, and the most fundamental building block of this nexus is a creative individual. In his seminal work *The Rise of Creative Class* in 2002, Richard Florida noted that every individual has creative potential. This drives innovation in any industry. Hence, creative industries become those economic sectors that systematically harness such creativity to innovate their industrial processes. Employment in such industries naturally demands a diversion from traditional mechanical and repetitive forms of work. The creative sector comprises of a diverse range of knowledge-based industries such as design, architecture, arts and crafts, advertising, research and development, publishing, fashion, films, videos, photography, music, performing arts, software, and computer games.<sup>1</sup>

International Labour Organisation (ILO) estimates that over a billion workers entered the job market between 2018 and 2021, most of whom are from low-and lower-middle-income countries of the Global South, where the unemployment rates are already skyrocketing, especially among the youth. According to the ILO estimates, youth in the global south are twice as likely to be unemployed or trapped in low-quality jobs than in the rest of the world. Creative industries are being seen as the drivers of job creation and future growth. UNESCO notes that the culture and creative industries (CCI) employ almost 30 million people globally

and in fact employ more people aged 15 to 29 than any other. Therefore, these emerge as a critical driver and facilitator of long-term growth, with annual worldwide sales of USD 2,250 billion and more than USD 250 billion in exports.

However, the recent pandemic posed significant challenges. It amounted to a loss of around 144 million potential jobs in 2020. It essentially pushed us back to the 2015 poverty levels, effectively destroying the progress gained under the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda. The creative sector also suffered this global catastrophe. Before the pandemic, the creative economy was proliferating and generating new jobs in every region, predicted to account for up to 10 percent of global GDP by 2030. The crisis has brought this exceptional growth to a standstill, exposing the fragility of a sector dominated by micro-businesses, informal work practices, and few tangible assets. Alone in 2020, it lost 10 million jobs globally. Only 13% of businesses and 9% of freelancers were reported making a profit in 2020, using digital technology to reach new customers and audiences. (Buchoud et al., 2021).

Besides numerous challenges, the pandemic has brought with it some opportunities as well. The creative economy has always been a torchbearer when it comes to adoption of new technologies. When pandemic struck, it showed to the world how digital technology can be a one-stop panacea for a multiple structural shortcoming. The intensification of the consumption and production of digital cultural content

became one of the most widespread adaptations of the sector. In India, OTT platforms grew 31% from April to July 2020. Most distributors in China, Indonesia, Malaysia, and other Asian countries reported over a 100 per cent increase in viewership, adding millions of new viewers. Similarly, computer games registered millions of new consumers. Further, as we move back to the 'new normal' of digital mode of interaction, the creative economy shows strong prospects of catering to growing demand and consumer aesthetic preferences.

While the sector undoubtedly offers excellent opportunities for growth, in order to leverage these opportunities, the nations need to build industry-specific policies. Firstly, since a large proportion of workers in the creative economy are self-employed, building networks or clusters such as community hubs and maker spaces can help in collaboration and achieving economies of scale. Secondly, start-up grants and microfinance designed explicitly for the creative sector would help in experimentation and innovation. Further, formal and quality education for the creative youth is necessary to generate jobs in the sector. Lastly, we need to link creative entrepreneurs and SMEs with regional and international buyers.

Creative jobs today, are a significant element of any economy, contributing massively to the global GDP. The pandemic has exposed numerous fragilities in the creative sector and highlighted the importance of digital technology in ensuring

sustainable and inclusive growth. Integrating digital developments to strengthen creative jobs requires a comprehensive collective and coordinated approach. The G20 can play a significant role in forming global consensus on collective policy making in the area. We are at an inflection point currently, as far as the G20 is concerned. The first inflection point as we all know was when South Korea took over the G20 presidency in 2010, and it put development very strongly on the agenda, by bringing out the Development consensus. Before that, there was very little discussion on development issues at the G20-level. Now, we are at another historic moment when three developing countries will chair the G20 back-to-back: Indonesia will be followed by India and then Brazil. So, this is the perfect time for us to focus on creative jobs at the G20 platform and build on the momentum that has been created to really put the issue very strongly on the agenda not just for the next three years but for continued discussion and policy support.

#### Reference

1. See the Creative Economy Programme webpage (UNCTAD, n.d.)