

Evidence Brief

BRIDGING THE GAP IN SENEGAL'S CREATIVE SECTOR: POLICY PATHWAYS FOR INCLUSIVE GROWTH

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Authors

Roger Philbert Dusabe, Everlyne Kalea, Ousmane Faye, Venantius Bbaale Kirwana

Executive summary

This evidence brief is derived from a study of young women creatives across Senegal, highlighting both their substantial contributions and the persistent gendered constraints shaping their careers. While most respondents work full-time, aspire to long-term creative professions, and report high levels of fulfillment, they face significant gender-based inequities. Participants reported subtle but pervasive discrimination, including rejection of creative ideas, unequal access to opportunities, and gender-based harassment such as intrusive comments, sexual propositions, and unwanted physical contact. These behaviors are often tied to power imbalances, with women facing retaliation for refusing advances. Additional barriers such as childcare demands, domestic responsibilities, and the concentration of creative infrastructure in Dakar further restrict women's participation. Addressing these inequities requires coordinated, multi-level action across government, industry bodies, enterprises, donors, civil society, and educational institutions.

Introduction

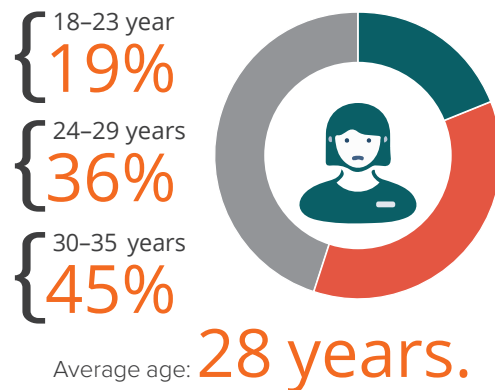
In Senegal, the Cultural and Creative Industries (CCIs) are an essential driver of development, with potential estimated at USD 600 million by 2030. Women and youth play a pivotal role as producers, innovators, and cultural trendsetters across visual arts, music, fashion, crafts, and digital media. Despite this dynamism, the sector remains characterized by entrenched gendered disparities that constrain women's participation and advancement. This evidence brief highlights key evidence from a multimethod study conducted by LAREM at Cheikh Anta Diop University (UCAD), combining a quantitative survey of 500 young creatives (77% women) with qualitative interviews, focus groups, and photovoice exercises.

“Some technicians refused to perform tasks simply because it was me, a young woman, telling them what to do.” (Cultural administrator, 33)

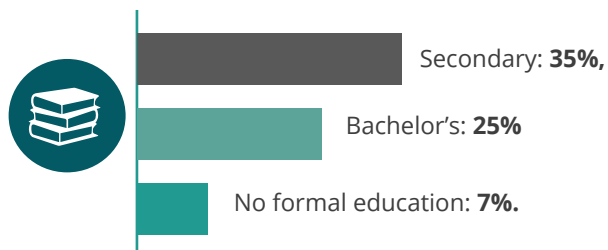
“Sexual harassment, I've experienced so much of it... he took the role I was supposed to play and gave it to someone else.” (Storyteller/slam poet, 28)

CHARACTERISTICS OF INTERVIEWED WOMEN CREATIVES

AGE



EDUCATION LEVEL



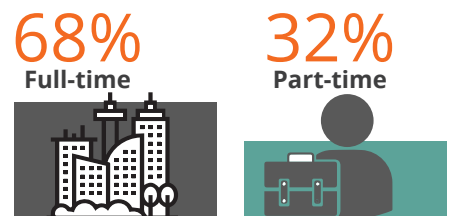
TRAINING



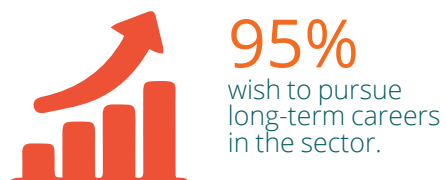
MARITAL STATUS



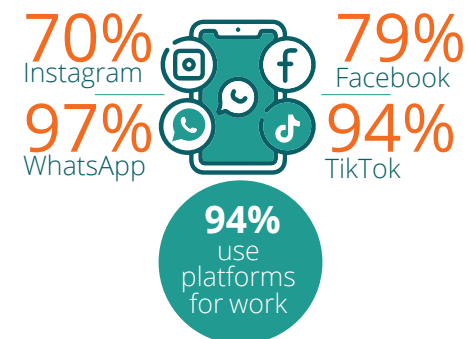
EMPLOYMENT



LONG-TERM CAREER ASPIRATION



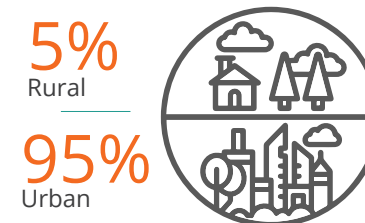
SOCIAL MEDIA USE



CARE WORK

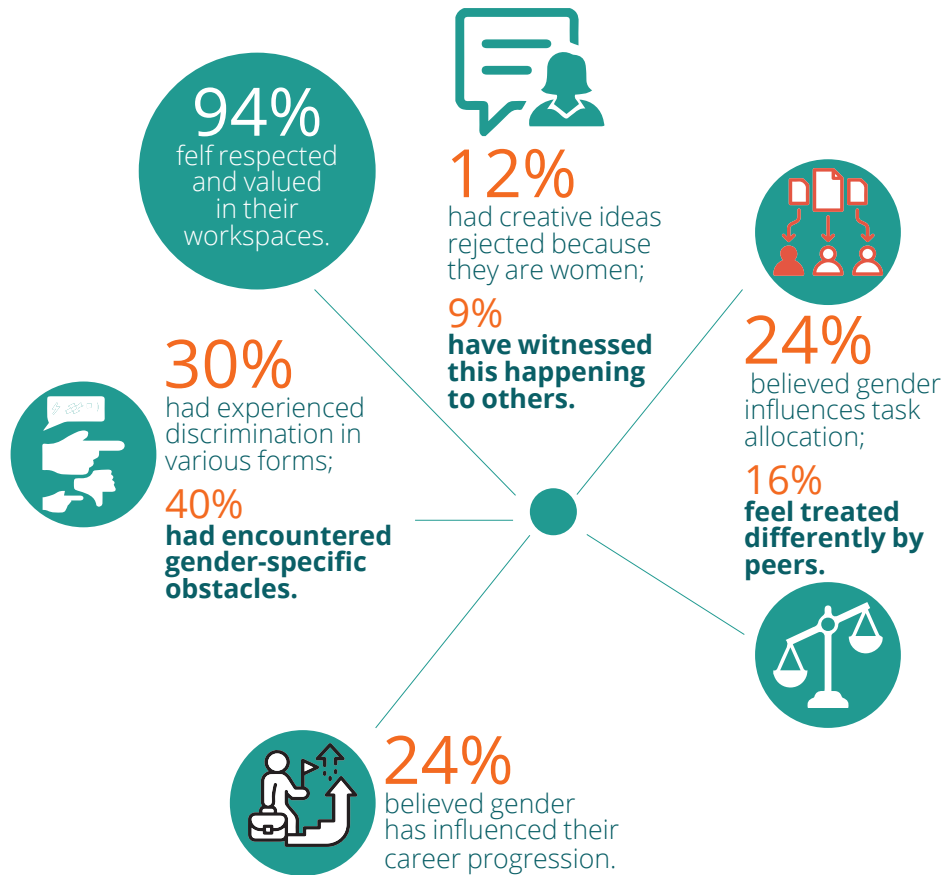


RESIDENCE

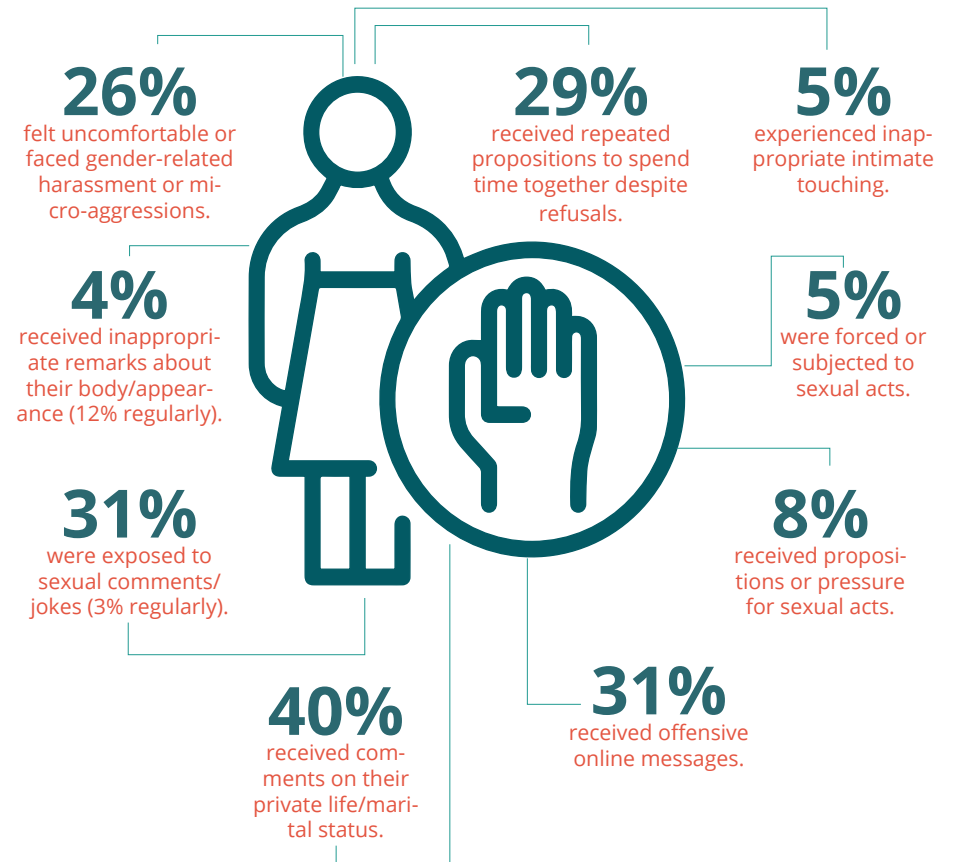


Emerging evidence

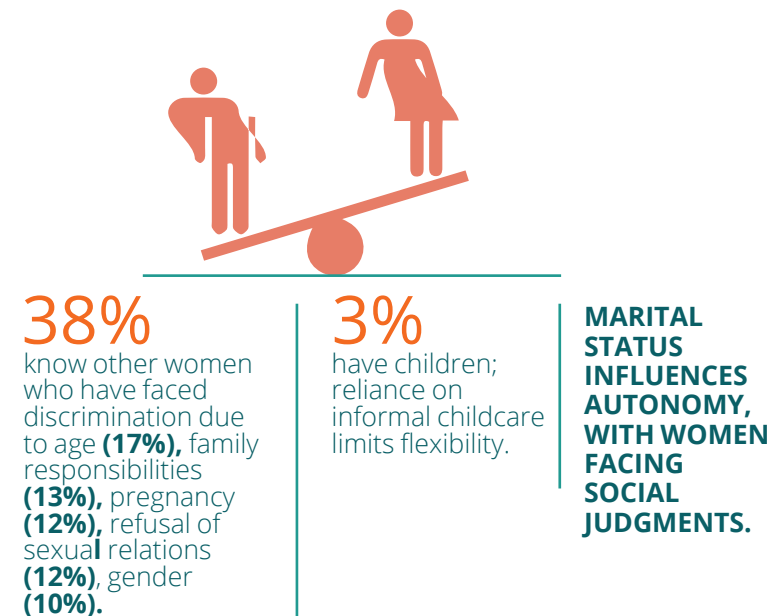
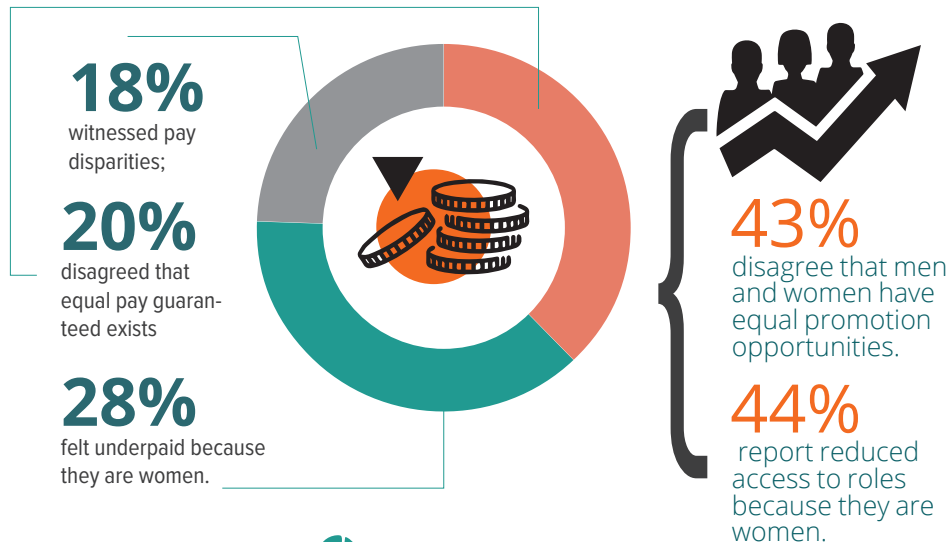
A Experience of Workplace Gender-Based Discrimination



B Women's Harassment Experiences in Creative Workplaces



C Experiences of Workplace Gender Equity, Pay Gap, and Other Challenges



25%
have faced systemic discrimination (criteria unrelated to skills).

45%
perceive the existence of equal treatment rules; **27% do not.**

89%
feel safe with colleagues; 93% feel included and recognized.

4%
feel their opinions ignored; **2% feel excluded from decisions; 10% face recurring criticism.**



D Dignifying and Fulfilling Work



99%

describe work as dignifying;
96% as fulfilling.



90%

satisfied with career
path; 78% feel they have
development prospects
(22% feel stagnation).

“ I missed out on a concert opportunity for refusing advances.” (Singer, 28)

“ I was given 50,000 francs per performance and the men were given more. When I asked why, I was told: you don't have responsibilities, no children, no husband.” (Actress, 33)

E Cross-Cutting Structural Challenges



95%

of activities concentrated in Dakar—rural marginalization.

**ABSENCE OF A CLEAR CULTURAL POLICY;
CONFUSION BETWEEN PROJECTS AND
STRATEGY.**

**DISTANCE BETWEEN ACTORS AND
DECISION-MAKERS.**

**ARTISTIC WORK DEVALUED, PERCEIVED AS
NOT “PRODUCTIVE.”**

“ Some technicians refused to perform tasks simply because it was me, a young woman, telling them what to do.” (Cultural administrator, 33)

Conclusion

This evidence brief reveals that while most young women creatives in Senegal work full-time, report high fulfillment, and aspire to long-term careers, they face persistent gender-based inequities. These include discrimination, unequal pay, harassment linked to power imbalances, and constraints from childcare and urban concentration. Despite these barriers, their resilience and commitment underscore the sector's transformative potential.

POLICY AND PROGRAMMATIC RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Government

- The Ministry of Culture and Historical Heritage should develop a gender-responsive national cultural and creative industries policy and lead the decentralization of cultural infrastructure beyond Dakar.
- The Ministry of Women, Family, and Child Protection should establish confidential zero-tolerance anti-harassment systems and expand childcare support services within creative workplaces and hubs.
- The Ministry of Labour, Social Dialogue and Relations with Institutions should enforce pay transparency through standardized contracts, labour protections, and regular wage audits in the creative sector.
- The National Agency of Statistics and Demography together with the Ministry of Digital Economy and Telecommunications, should strengthen sex-disaggregated data collection, monitoring, and reporting systems for the creative industries.
- The Ministry of Finance and Budget and the Ministry of Territorial Governance, Development and Regional Planning should support equitable financing and regional expansion of creative infrastructure and services.

“*I turned down a marriage proposal because the guy didn't want me to go to work early.*” (Cultural administrator, 26)

“*You have to value yourself, know your worth, and assert yourself. It's necessary for us and for the future generation.*” (Rapper-singer, 27)

“*The State doesn't know our criteria. Often, leaders don't know the people in our sector.*” (Shoemaker, 32)

“*When you say 'I'm an artist,' people think it's a game.*” (Rapper, 27)

2. Creative Associations and Guilds

- Adopt sector-wide codes of conduct.
- Set gender-equity targets for leadership and programming.
- Provide legal and psychosocial support for GBV survivors.
- Strengthen mentorship for young women creatives.

3. Creative Enterprises

- Institutionalize anti-harassment training.
- Ensure transparent contracting and standardized pay.
- Adopt family-friendly policies.
- Strengthen physical and digital safety.
- Conduct regular gender audits.

4. Donors and Development Partners

- Fund gender-transformative programs and norm-change initiatives.
- Provide tailored financing for women-led enterprises.
- Support capacity-building in digital skills and rights awareness.
- Invest in gender-disaggregated research.
- Require safeguarding compliance in partnerships.

5. Civil Society and Women's Rights Organizations

- Lead norm-change campaigns challenging stereotypes.
- Provide GBV prevention and response services.
- Produce advocacy content on gender equality.
- Facilitate peer-support networks for women creatives.

6. Educational Institutions

- Integrate gender equality into creative curricula.
- Promote female mentors and role models.
- Establish incubation hubs supporting women-led ventures.
- Create accessible training pathways without academic prerequisites.

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