

Gender-Based Inequities In Uganda's Creative Sector



January, 2026



Table of contents

Table of contents	2
List of figures	3
Acronyms and abbreviations	4
Executive Summary	5
Acknowledgement	8
Authors	9
1.0 Introduction	11
2.0 Background	12
3.0 Methodology	14
4.0 Findings	19
A. Socio-Economic Demographics	19
B. Work-Related Characteristics	20
C. Workplace Challenges	22
D. Gender Pay Gap	24
E. Career Expectations of Young Women in the Creative Sector	25
F. Experiences of Harassment in the Workplace	26
G. Gender Equity and Gender-Based Challenges	28
H. Dignifying and Fulfilling Work	30
I. Emerging Trends in Uganda's Creative Industry	31
J. Policy and Programmatic Opportunities	33
5.0 Discussion	35
6.0 Conclusion and Recommendations	37
References	40
Appendices	43
Appendix 1: Some of the Key Creative Sector Policies in Uganda	43
Appendix A: Social demographic characteristics of young female creatives.	50
Appendix B: Perceptions on the state of workspace environment in the creative sector	51
Appendix C: Workspace challenges	52
Appendix D: Gender-pay gap	53
Appendix E: Career expectations of young women in the creative sector	53
Appendix F: Experiences of harassment	54
Appendix G: Gender equity and gender-based challenges	55
Appendix H: Dignifying and fulfilling work	58



List of figures

Figure 1: Excerpt from the photovoice session	21
Figure 2: Excerpt from the creative representation session	24
Figure 3: Excerpt from the photo voice session	25



Kampala Kasubi Tombs





Acronyms and abbreviations

FGD	Focus Group Discussions
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
IDI	In-depth Interview
ILO	International Labour Organization
KII	Key Informant Interviews
MGLSD	Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development
UBOS	Uganda Bureau of Statistics
UNCTAD	United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
URSB	Uganda Registration Services Bureau



Executive Summary

Uganda's creative sector has emerged as a strategic driver of economic diversification, youth employment, and cultural identity. The sector is currently included in National Development Plan IV (NDP IV), signaling growing government recognition of its potential to drive economic diversification and address youth unemployment. The sector generates an estimated US\$576 million annually, equivalent to 3% of Uganda's gross domestic product, and employs nearly 386,000 people. Women comprise a slight majority of the workforce (55.8%), and nearly half (48.7%) are aged 14–30. Yet despite women's substantial participation, persistent gender inequalities continue to shape access to opportunities, safety, earnings, and leadership, while rigorous evidence on women's lived experiences remains limited.

This study examined gender inequities in Uganda's creative sector through a mixed-methods approach that combined a survey of 401 young female creatives with qualitative evidence from focus group discussions, key informant interviews, in-depth interviews, and participatory methods such as photovoice and storytelling.

Findings from the study revealed that while the creative sector offers meaningful work and self-expression, it remains deeply shaped by gendered inequalities. Although 87% of respondents described their work as dignifying and 80% as fulfilling, nearly one in six expressed a desire to quit due to harassment or hostile work environments, and one in four reported exclusion from decision-making processes.

More than one-third (37%) of young women reported discrimination based on gender, while 64% faced gender-related barriers such as unequal task assignments, mobility restrictions due to family responsibilities and safety, and caregiving burdens. Traditional gender norms reinforced by spousal control, family expectations, and workplace bias continue to limit access to opportunities and leadership positions.

Gender-based harassment remains pervasive, affecting nearly four in ten (42%) respondents. 25% of study participants reported being pressured for sexual favors, and 44% had been propositioned or coerced, often at the expense of career advancement. Verbal harassment, online abuse, and unsafe workspaces have





become normalized, particularly in male-dominated creative subsectors where power imbalances are pronounced.

Economic inequities persist. 57% of respondents had witnessed gender pay gaps, while 36% personally experienced pay disparities. Women's weaker bargaining power, compounded by caregiving responsibilities and the high informality of creative work, leaves many without contracts, consistent pay, or access to benefits such as maternity leave or health insurance.

While 73% of participants use social media for creative work, digital opportunities remain uneven. Urban creatives benefit from online visibility and monetization, while rural women face poor connectivity, high data costs, and limited digital literacy. Online harassment and weak intellectual property protections further constrain participation.

The sector's high informality, weak institutional protections, and absence of gender-sensitive workplace policies exacerbate vulnerability, particularly for women with disabilities. Yet, the study also highlights opportunities for reform. The study recommends a coordinated multistakeholder response.

- Law enforcement agencies, justice institutions, and the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development (MGLSD) should strengthen survivor-centered reporting, investigation, redress, and enforcement of labor protections and intellectual property rights in the creative sector.
- Parliament, MGLSD, Uganda Registration Services Bureau (URSB), and the Ministry of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) should reform and enforce gender- and disability-responsive workplace policies, standard contracts, and intellectual property regimes across creative subsectors.
- Local governments and industry associations should decentralize services by establishing regional creative hubs to expand access to training, dispute resolution, and professional networks, particularly for rural women and creatives with disabilities.
- Guilds, associations, and development partners should invest in mentorship pipelines, business and technical skills development, and career progression frameworks to professionalize creative work and strengthen women's leadership.
- Civil society organizations, media councils, and cultural leaders should drive social norm change and survivor-centered accountability to prevent harassment, discrimination, and exclusion.
- Uganda Bureau of Statistics (UBOS), MGLSD, and sector agencies should establish a national creative industry observatory and reporting mechanisms to strengthen data systems, accountability, and evidence-based policymaking.



**The study recommends a coordinated
multistakeholder response.**





Acknowledgement

The International Center for Research on Women (ICRW), Africa Regional Office, provided overall leadership and stewardship of the Behind the Scenes (BtS): Young Women and Gender Inequities in Africa project, including its conceptualization, strategic direction, coordination, and implementation oversight. The Implementation of the project was made possible through the collective efforts of individuals and institutions committed to advancing safer, more inclusive, and equitable creative industries across Africa. We extend our deepest appreciation to the young women creatives, artists, cultural practitioners, policymakers, industry stakeholders, and community actors who generously shared their experiences, reflections, and expertise throughout the research and engagement processes. Many participants spoke with honesty and courage about the opportunities and challenges shaping their professional and personal lives. Their voices and lived experiences form the foundation of this evidence and continue to inform the project's vision for meaningful change within Africa's cultural and creative sectors.

We are especially grateful to the Country Principal Investigators, Youth Researchers, field mobilisers, and institutional partners whose commitment and professionalism made the successful implementation of the study and related activities possible. We acknowledge the valuable contributions of the Organization for Social Science Research in Eastern and Southern Africa (OSSREA)



National Theater Uganda



in Ethiopia, the University of Rwanda, the University of Cape Coast in Ghana, the University of Lagos in Nigeria, LAREM in Senegal, and ICRW teams in Uganda and Kenya. Their collaboration strengthened the project's participatory and youth-centred approach to evidence generation and engagement.

We also appreciate the support provided by government institutions, creative industry associations, civil society organisations, and academic partners that contributed to consultations, validation processes, and dissemination efforts across the participating countries.

This report was developed with support from the Mastercard Foundation.

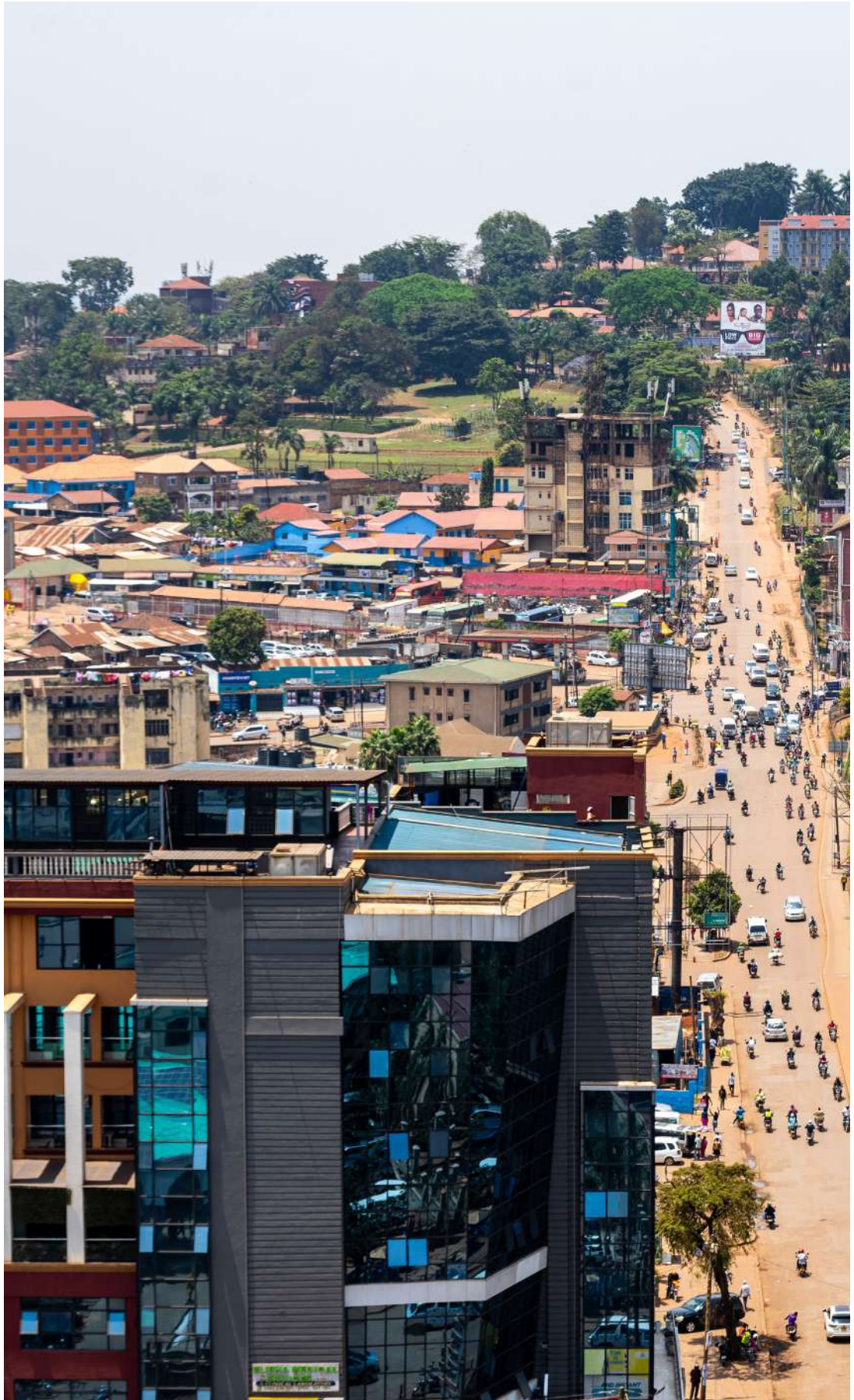
Disclaimer

This report was produced in partnership with the Mastercard Foundation. This report is shared as a public good and may be freely used, cited, and built upon for non-commercial purposes. The views expressed do not necessarily represent those of the Foundation, its staff, or its Board of Directors.

Authors

Kirabo Suubi, Venantius Bbaale Kirwana, Matilda Sang, Mercy Bridget Alupo, Adong Eunice, Atuhura Zalia Balinda, Karungi Patricia, Murungi Daniella, Namuddu Diana Angella, Namanya Franklin, Natukunda Denise, Najjuma Solome, Nakayovu Sumayya, Namagembe Shamim, Ojok Micheal, Osaliza Kedrith and Chimaraoke Izugbara.







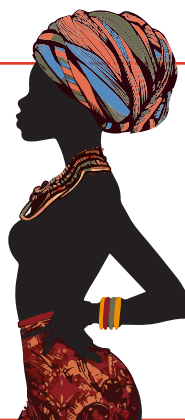
1.0 Introduction

On the global scene, the creative sector is a powerful driver of economic growth, surpassing traditional sectors in its contribution to gross domestic product (GDP), innovation, and youth employment.¹ Across Africa, the sector is increasingly recognized as both an economic and socio-cultural engine,² reshaping cultural narratives, advancing national identities, and opening new economic frontiers. Uganda is no exception. As the country pursues economic diversification, the creative sector has emerged as a cultural force and a driver of inclusive growth, transforming talent into livelihood.

However, global and regional evidence consistently shows that women's participation in creative industries is shaped by entrenched gender norms and power inequalities, resulting in unequal access to opportunities, resources, leadership positions, and earnings.³ These hurdles hinder women's advancement and prevent them from fully participating in and contributing to the creative sector.⁴

In Uganda, although women comprise more than half of the creative workforce, rigorous evidence on how gender dynamics shape their participation and progress in the creative sector is limited. Our study responds to this gap by examining the lived realities of young female creatives in Uganda to glean insights into existing gender inequities and provide rigorous evidence to guide effective strategies that address the sector's gendered disparities and barriers. Informed by the 2009 UNESCO Framework for Culture Statistics⁵ and contextualized to the Ugandan context therefore the study covers nine key creative domains of (1) cultural and natural heritage; (2) visual arts, design, and crafts; (3) books and press, (4) performing arts; (5) music; (6) audiovisual production; (7) creative support services; (8) new media; and (9) gastronomy. The core research question guiding this study is: How do gender norms and power dynamics influence the pathways, creative journeys, and aspirations of young women in Uganda's creative sector?

The study examines the lived realities of young female creatives in Uganda to glean insights into existing gender inequities and provides rigorous evidence to guide effective strategies that address the sector's gendered disparities and barriers.



¹ UNESCO, *Re|shaping Policies for Creativity: Addressing Culture as a Global Public Good*.

² United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, *Creative Economy Outlook 2022*.

³ GLZ, *Cultural and Creative Industries - Breaking Barriers, Driving Change: Unveiling Gender Dynamics in the Cultural and Creative Industries*; UNESCO, "Gender & Creativity: Progress on the Precipice, Special Edition"; UNESCO, *Re|shaping Policies for Creativity: Addressing Culture as a Global Public Good*.

⁴ UNESCO, "Gender & Creativity: Progress on the Precipice, Special Edition"; UNESCO, *Re|shaping Policies for Creativity: Addressing Culture as a Global Public Good*.

⁵ UNESCO, "The 2009 UNESCO Framework for Cultural Statistics (FCS) - UNESCO Digital Library."



2.0 Background

Globally, the creative sector contributes 3.1% of GDP and 6.2% of total employment, sustaining an estimated 50 million jobs, half held by women and proportionally more by youth aged 15–29 than any other industry.⁶ At the continental level, Africa's creative economy has been identified as the fifth-largest creative market globally, reflecting both its economic scale and growth potential.⁷ Uganda, like many other countries in sub-Saharan Africa, is experiencing a rapid economic shift, with the creative sector playing a crucial role in growth, innovation, and employment. The comprehensive employment and demographic breakdown for Uganda's creative sector comes from the 2014 national mapping conducted by the government of Uganda and UNESCO, which found that the sector contributes US\$576 million annually, about 3% of national GDP, and employed approximately 386,000 people by 2013, up from 250,000 in 2009. Women accounted for 55.8% of this workforce, and nearly half (48.7%) were young people aged 14–30.^{8,9} These numbers underscore the sector's potential to advance national development priorities, including job creation for youth, Uganda's largest demographic group.

Yet this economic promise is constrained by deep-rooted gender inequities. Existing global and regional evidence shows that women creatives are disproportionately concentrated in lower-paying, less visible roles, while men dominate leadership positions and higher-value segments of creative production.¹⁰ In Uganda, studies estimate that up to 63% of women in the creative sector experience gender-



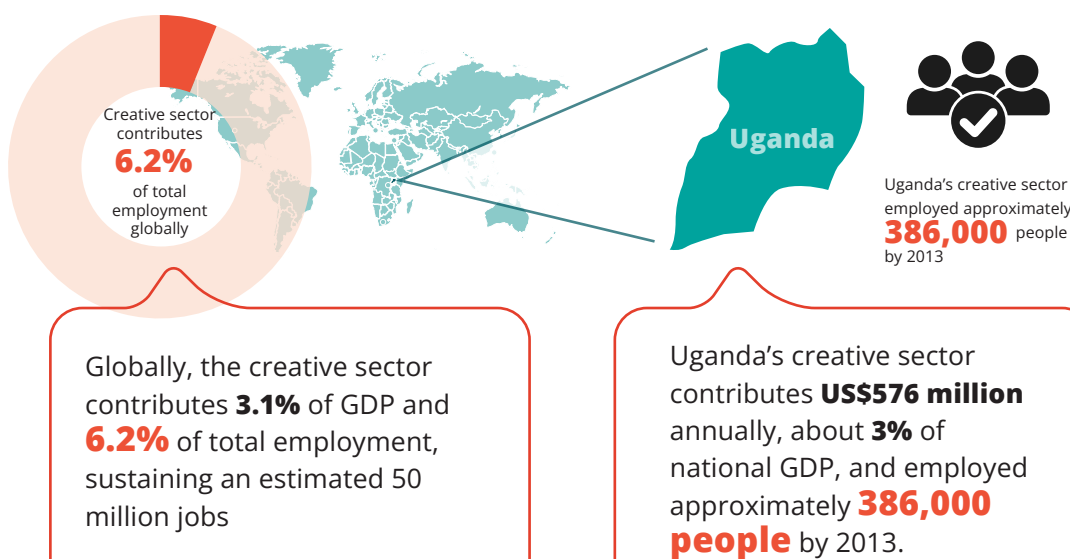
⁶ UNCTAD, *Creative Economy Outlook 2024, Technical and Statistical Report*.

⁷ Afreximbank Research and University of Business and Integrated Development Studies, *Estimating Potential Economic Contribution of Cultural and Creative Industries in Africa*.

⁸ Lucy Ilado, "Cultural Wealth, Budgetary Poverty."

⁹ Grace Natabaalo et al., *Uganda's Culture and Creative Industries in a Digital Age*; Caribou Digital, *Uganda's Culture and Creative Industries in a Digital Age: A Landscape Review*.





related challenges that restrict their career mobility, earning potential, and safety.¹¹ Gender norms and unequal power relationships at home, online, and in workplaces continue to determine which roles women can access, how they are compensated,¹² and whether they can remain in the field long-term. The gender inequities in the sector often prevent women creatives from building productive, dignified, and meaningful careers.^{13,14} To maximize the potential of the creative economy, there is a need for Uganda to address injustices that limit the agency and dignity of female creatives, supporting their participation, access, and safety.¹⁵



¹⁰ GIZ, *Cultural and Creative Industries - Breaking Barriers, Driving Change: Unveiling Gender Dynamics in the Cultural and Creative Industries*; UNESCO, "Gender & Creativity: Progress on the Precipice, Special Edition"; UNESCO, *Closing the Gap*.

¹¹ PANAF, *Challenges and Aspirations of Women in Uganda's Cultural Industry*.

¹² UNESCO, *UNESCO Reports Persistent Gender Inequalities in Cultural and Creative*; UNESCO, *Closing the Gap*.

¹³ Mastercard Foundation, "Africa's Creative Goldmine: Unlocking Growth Amid Gendered Challenges."

¹⁴ Handy and Rowlands, "Gendered Inequality Regimes and Female Labour..."

¹⁵ UNCTAD, *Creative Economy Outlook 2024*.



3.0 Methodology

3.1 Study Objective

The overall objective of the study was to:

- generate and share evidence on gender-based inequities affecting young female creatives in Uganda's creative sector; and
- provide evidence-based recommendations and best practices to help stakeholders promote gender equity within the creative industries and workplaces.

Specifically, the study sought to: 1. Generate evidence on the nature, dynamics, and implications of gender-based inequities faced by young female creatives in Uganda. 2. Provide evidence-based recommendations and best practices that stakeholders can use to support gender equity within Uganda's creative industries and workplaces.

3.2 Research Design

This study employed a participatory, mixed-methods research design, combining quantitative and qualitative approaches including a structured survey, focus group discussions (FGDs), in-depth interviews (IDIs), key informant interviews (KIIs), photovoice, storytelling, and creative representation. This enabled the collection of rich, contextual data on perceptions, experiences, aspirations, and challenges of young female creatives in Uganda.

3.3 Scope and Study Sites

The study was conducted across Uganda's four major regions: Central, Northern, Eastern, and Western. Districts in these regions were selected based on feasibility, accessibility, and the presence of active or emerging creative communities, which enriched the diversity of the creatives and geographies covered in the study.

Data collection was conducted across Uganda's four major regions. In the Central Region, data were collected in Kampala, Masaka, Rakai, Kalangala, and Mityana. The Eastern Region included Jinja, Namayingo, Soroti and Amuria. In the Western Region, fieldwork took place in Mbarara, Kabale, Rubanda, and Isingiro, while in the Northern Region, data were collected in Gulu, Arua and Amuru.





3.4 Study Population, Sampling, and Data Collection Methods

3.4.1 Quantitative Component

Study Population: Young female creatives aged 18–35 years working across diverse creative subsectors, including performing arts, design, publishing, crafts, visual arts, digital content creation, and cultural heritage participated in the survey. Special attention was given to women with disabilities and rural creatives. In the qualitative component, besides the young female creatives, industry stakeholders, and institutional actors representing different roles and perspectives within Uganda’s creative ecosystem participated in the study.

Sampling Design: Purposive sampling was used with a maximum variation (heterogeneous) approach, ensuring diversity. Within each district, young female creatives were selected to ensure inclusion of different creative subsectors, age, disability status, career stage (emerging and established), urban and rural contexts, and representation of active creative communities. In contexts where creative communities were less visible, limited peer referral was used solely to facilitate access to eligible participants. This approach was appropriate given the absence of a comprehensive sampling frame for Uganda’s creative sector and the study’s aim to document gendered inequalities across different contexts rather than achieve statistical representativeness.





Data Collection:

Quantitative data were collected using Computer-Assisted Personal Interviewing via the Kobo Collect platform. The structured survey was adapted from the *Equileap Gender Equality in the Workplace Questionnaire*. The tool captured socio-demographic characteristics, creative work profiles, access to opportunities, income levels, and gender-based challenges. The survey interview lasted 30–45 minutes.

Qualitative data were collected using the following methods:

IDIs: IDIs were conducted with 20 young female creatives to explore personal experiences, barriers, and aspirations in their creative journeys. Each interview lasted approximately 30–45 minutes.

FGDs: Seven FGDs, each comprising six to eight young female creatives, were conducted across regions to discuss shared experiences of workplace dignity, gender equity, and inclusion. Sessions lasted 60–90 minutes.

KIIs: Ten KIIs were conducted with male and female policy makers in Uganda's parliament, ministries, departments, and agencies. Others were guild leaders of creative associations, creatives, and scholars in the creative arts to understand institutional and systemic enablers or barriers to gender equity in the sector.

Photovoice: A group of 12 young female creatives captured photographs illustrating gendered challenges, gender equity, and opportunities in creative work. These were interpreted collectively through participatory discussions and used to generate narratives for advocacy and awareness-raising.

Storytelling and Creative Representation: A group of six young female creatives was purposively selected. The participants created artworks; poems, songs, short films, and visual pieces, depicting their lived realities as women in the creative sector. These outputs provided qualitative evidence that complemented interviews and discussions.

All tools were developed in English, translated into five local languages, including Luganda, Runyakole, Lusoga, Atesot, Acholi, Lugbara, and pretested for clarity, contextual sensitivity, and accuracy before data collection. Interviews were conducted in languages in which respondents were most comfortable.



IDs



IDs were conducted with 20 young female creatives to explore personal experiences, barriers, and aspirations in their creative journeys

FGDs



Seven FGDs, each comprising six to eight young female creatives, were conducted across regions

KIIs



Ten KIIs were conducted with male and female policy makers in Uganda's parliament, ministries, departments, and agencies

Photovoice



A group of 12 young female creatives captured photographs illustrating gendered challenges, gender equity, and opportunities in creative work



Storytelling and Creative Representation

A group of six young female creatives was purposively selected





3.5 Data Quality and Analysis

The research team was trained ahead of data collection, and routine data checks were conducted. Electronic data collection minimized entry errors and enhanced real-time validation. Qualitative data were audio-recorded and transcribed verbatim. Where audio recording was not permitted, detailed field notes were taken.

Qualitative data were imported into NVivo for thematic analysis. The research team developed a unified codebook and applied it consistently across all transcripts to ensure analytical rigor. Both a deductive strategy that drew on the topic guide and an inductive one that enabled themes to develop from transcribed material facilitated the identification of key and common themes. Ongoing and iterative investigation of the research responses and narratives allowed categories, relationships, and features to emerge in the data. Data from photovoice and storytelling were analyzed within the same framework to ensure comparability and triangulation. Where applicable, verbatim quotes from the respondents are used to illustrate topical issues and expound on the quantitative findings. **Quantitative data** were cleaned and analyzed in Stata using descriptive and inferential methods aligned with the study's analysis plan. Findings from both data strands were integrated during interpretation, producing a coherent narrative that captured both statistical trends and lived experiences of young women creatives.

3.6 Ethical Considerations

Ethical approval for this study was granted by The AIDS Support Organization (TASO) Research Ethics Committee, number TASO-2024-431. A research permit was secured from the Uganda National Council for Science and Technology, number SS3483ES. Participation was voluntary, with written informed consent obtained from all respondents. Enumerators received training in trauma-informed interviewing and participant safeguarding, with clear referral mechanisms for participants who disclosed distress or gender-based violence. To ensure the confidentiality of responses, participants' identifying information has been thoroughly expunged from the datasets and reports.

3.7 Working Definitions

For conceptual clarity, the study adopted the following operational definitions:

- Creative sector/creative economy: Industries leveraging individual creativity, skill, and talent for wealth and job creation through intellectual property.¹⁶
- Young female creatives: Women aged 18–35 actively engaged in creative production, performance, or services in formal or informal settings.
- Dignified work: Work that provides fair income, respect, and safe conditions, consistent with the ILO's *Decent Work* framework.¹⁷
- Gender-based barriers: Social, structural, or institutional constraints that restrict women's equal access to opportunities, leadership, or resources due to gender norms or discrimination.

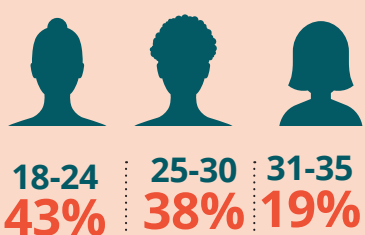




4.0 Findings

A. Socio-Economic Demographics

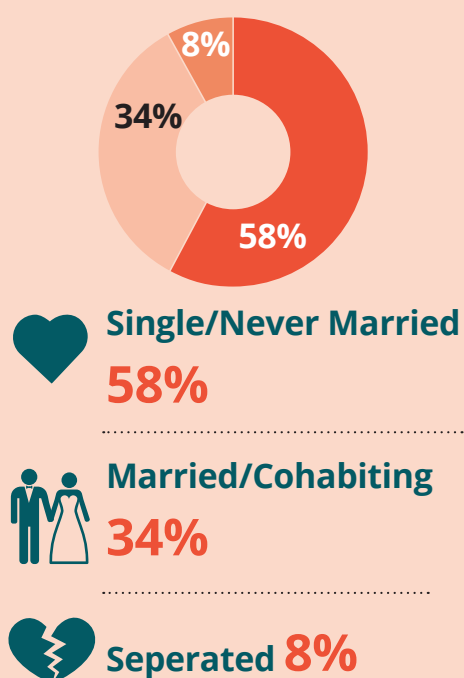
Age of respondents



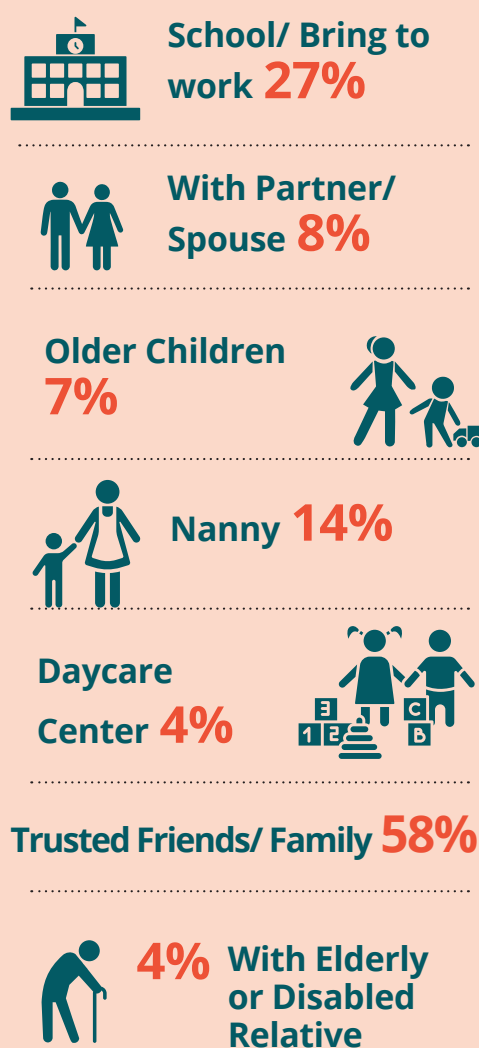
Education Level



Relationship & Family Status



Childcare Arrangements



Parents 53%





A total of 401 young female creatives participated in the survey. The majority (43%) were aged 18–24 years, 38% were between 25–30 years, and 19% were 31–35 years. The average age was 25.7 years (± 4.9). Among the respondents, 36% had completed secondary education, 19% held a certificate or diploma, and 17% had a bachelor's degree. Only 3% had no formal education. Slightly more than half (53%) had some form of training in the creative sector.

Most respondents were single or never married (58%), 34% were married or cohabiting, and 8% were separated. More than half (53%) had children; among those with children, 36% had 1–2 children and 17% had more than two. Childcare arrangements varied: 27% relied on schools or took children to work (27%), while others depended on partners or spouses (8%), older children (7%), nannies (14%), or daycare centers (4%). About one-third (33%) depended on informal arrangements, trusted friends or family. Sixteen percent of respondents lived in households with at least one member requiring special care, such as an elderly or disabled relative.

B. Work-Related Characteristics

i. Creative Subsector

Most of the survey respondents worked in design-related fields (43%), including fashion, jewelry, and graphic design, followed by performing arts (24%), traditional cultural expressions (20%), visual arts (15%), audiovisuals (8%), advertising and marketing (5%), creative services (4%), and publishing and printed media (2%).

Social norms shape these distributions. Young female creatives indicated that women were often perceived as naturally suited for “feminine” creative roles such as tailoring, crafts, and hairdressing, while men dominated technical areas such as videography and film production. In a discussion group, one woman mentioned, *“In acting and hairdressing, there are always more women. Even in crafts and tailoring”* (FGD – Masaka, actress). A KII respondent explained, *“People usually associate women with certain roles... those women who pursue male-dominated fields are viewed as unconventional or rebellious.”* (KII – Kampala, film producer).

ii. Employment Type

Three of five young female creatives were engaged in full-time work, while about one-third worked part-time in the creative sector. Participants in the study noted that men generally had greater flexibility to work full-time, particularly in roles requiring long or late hours, while women were constrained by household responsibilities.

iii. Social Media Use

Seventy-three percent of survey respondents used at least one social media platform for creative work. WhatsApp (97%) and TikTok (79%) were most common, followed by Instagram (44%), Facebook (44%), X (22%), and Telegram (15%). Half used social media primarily for professional purposes, while the rest used it socially or recreationally.



iv. Gender Composition and Inclusion in Workspaces

Most (84%) of young female creatives worked in teams, while four worked independently. Among those with colleagues, 59% worked mostly with women, 23% with men, and 18% in mixed-gender environments.

Although most (88%) felt respected and valued for their contributions, 32% had witnessed women's ideas being dismissed, and 26% had personally experienced their creative input being ignored. This survey finding aligns with qualitative findings during IDIs and FGDs, in which some female creatives attributed the disregard for women's creative contributions to deeply rooted patriarchal norms that continue to shape perceptions and decision-making in the sector.

Figure 1: Excerpt from the photovoice session



*"Dismissing
women's ideas"*
**by Daniella
Murungi**

Others highlighted the absence of female role models and the lack of women in leadership, noting that in male-dominated subsectors such as music production or film directing, among others, women's perspectives are often overlooked, and decisions tend to serve men's interests. This reflects how societal norms continue to shape perceptions of women's roles in creative leadership. A KII respondent who is a leader in of a creative association mentioned,



“You know, the creative sector is dominated by men, so most times, they make decisions that favor them, without thinking about the women. And as women, if we don’t stand up and get into those leadership positions, we can never get what we want. I find a lot of challenges, because I find myself sitting at a table with 20 men, and I’m the only lady.” (KII, musician)

Another key informant reinforced this observation:

“...it’s a male-dominated world, and there will be situations where they [women] always have to play to the sentiments of the men in the industry; you’ll find all studios are run by men. I don’t know of a studio engineer who is a woman, never seen one.” (KII- musician and policy maker)

C. Workplace Challenges

i. Gender-Based Discrimination

Over one-third (37%) of survey respondents reported feeling discriminated against because they are women. Qualitative findings further showed that many were underestimated, denied opportunities, or forced to prove themselves more than men. One creative explained,). Another said, *“As women, we have a long way to go to be recognized... most of us have to do inappropriate things to get up there.”* (IDI- Jinja, performing artist).

And another creative added:

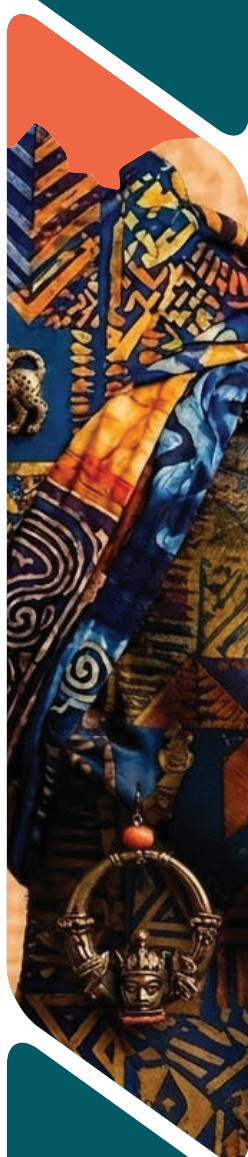
“Some sexists believe that men do art, and women don’t do art. How are you going to convince someone like that that you will be able to paint something for them? They believe that such opportunities are for men. For a woman to paint, it will lack a certain touch because it is made by a woman. That is a big challenge.” (IDI – Jinja, artisan painter)

ii. Gender-Related Barriers and Care Work

A majority of survey respondents (64%) cited gender-related obstacles in their work, including unequal task assignments and care burdens. Domestic responsibilities, especially after marriage or childbirth, limited time and mobility. One creative explained her situation, which she feels reflects the broader context in Uganda:

“...I don’t have time. I have children. I have to cook for my husband, not to lose my family... So, when a woman gets married, other responsibilities come, and that reduces her opportunities. At some point, you find a woman neglecting her talent because of the family responsibilities she has.” (IDI-Isingiro, tailor)

Spousal restrictions influenced by traditional gender norms also limit women’s opportunities, further reinforcing inequality. One woman noted, “...even if I wanted to progress, there are limits from my husband. A lot of men don’t want us to succeed. They believe that when we do, we would undermine them.” (IDI, Kabale)





iii. Career Progression Challenges

Over one-third (37%) of survey respondents believed their gender had influenced their career advancement. Nearly 30% reported that colleagues treated them

differently because of being a woman. Stereotypes about women's competence and assumptions about favoritism or sexual exchange were common. A creative mentioned, *"They think since creative 'X' just joined the industry... she might have slept with the director"* (FGD-1, Kampala). Several participants opined that for women to be recognized, they needed to work more than men. One creative explained, *"... women must work twice as hard as men to prove themselves."* (FGD, Mbarara).

Discrimination in task assignment further reinforced workplace inequality and inhibited career progression. Thirty-two percent of women reported being denied tasks because they are women, while 44% were assigned non-professional duties such as cleaning, making tea, or welcoming visitors; 9% experienced this regularly. These practices reflect how gender stereotypes continue to shape perceptions of women's value and capability in professional spaces.



"...they [men] undermine us. They feel like we are too small to reach high... They tend to see that we cannot do it better because we are women."
(IDI-Isingiro, Fashion designer)

iv. Regressive Policies and Practices

Forty-five percent of survey respondents said there were no adequate gender discrimination safeguards. A KII respondent described policies that directly penalized women:

"I once worked in an organization where contracts were issued to staff, but for women, there was a clause stating that you should not get pregnant. This is unfair because pregnancy is a woman's right, even if it may affect productivity for a period. Such restrictions are a serious issue for women in the creative sector." (KII-arts scholar)

Another recurrent theme in the qualitative findings was the absence of workplace policies or practices that adequately accommodate women's needs. Women also reported the lack of facilities accommodating menstrual, pregnancy, or childcare needs. Women recounted, *"As a woman creative... if I'm on my period and having terrible cramps, I'm still expected to work. They say, 'Are you the first one to get a period?'"* (IDI-Kampala, DJ). Another narrated, *"...this girl had her cramps. There was no first aid box, no painkillers... the director was mad that she was wasting his time"* (FGD- Kampala, Actress). Another creative mentioned,

"...we've seen mothers come with their children... but they are torn between paying attention to the child and focusing on the learning process because there is no place where children can play or be in a nursery." (FGD- Mbarara, Creative trainer)



Figure 2: Excerpt from the creative representation session



“Creative work under the weight of unpaid care and domestic work”

by Esther Nakaziba

D. Gender Pay Gap

i. Perceptions on the Current State of Gender Pay

Gender-based pay disparities are pervasive, with 57% of survey respondents reporting that they had witnessed unequal pay between men and women. Respondents described a negotiation environment where women’s financial vulnerability weakened their bargaining power. Creatives explained, *“A man will say, ‘I want UGX 200,000,’ and refuse if it’s not met. But as a woman, you may accept UGX 20,000 because you left your home with hungry children.”* (IDI-Kampala, Actress). A KII respondent mentioned, *“Men will outrightly negotiate their pay and get it. Women often get a pay cut simply because they are women.”* (KII-creative trainer)

Findings show that younger women are especially vulnerable. One creative said, *“When you do not look like a mother or someone responsible, they think you don’t need higher pay, and they exploit you.”* (IDI – Kampala, actress)

ii. Lived Experiences of Pay Disparities

Just over 35% of survey respondents reported personally experiencing pay disparities. Creative storytelling and photovoice sessions reinforced these realities, with several participants visually depicting experiences of unequal pay, confirming the persistence of structural undervaluation of women’s labor. During an IDI, a video model shared her experience of being devalued, both literally and in terms of how she was treated:

“The challenge with video vixen is that those people who give us gigs don’t pay well. We once went somewhere, and they left us in a warehouse where we shot the video from. They don’t value you as long as the job is done... Some leave you when you don’t even have transport, yet you’ve worked for them.” (IDI-Kampala, video model).

Figure 3: Excerpt from the photo voice session



E. Career Expectations of Young Women in the Creative Sector

i. Career Expectations and Motivation

Despite facing systemic barriers, most young female creatives surveyed (90%) expressed determination to pursue long-term creative careers. However, some reported burnout and disillusionment. As one participant summarized, *“We don’t cope, we quit.”* (FGD-2, Kampala).

ii. Progression and Satisfaction

Nearly three-quarters (73%) of the surveyed young female creatives described themselves as doing well professionally. Most (76%) reported that their talents were valued, 79% felt appreciated, and 90% said they received constructive feedback. Yet nearly a quarter (23%) reported exclusion from decision-making, pointing to the persistence of subtle gender hierarchies even in collaborative settings. As a Kampala creative noted, *“Treat me like I’m adding something to the team, not like you’re doing me a favor.”* (FGD-Kampala, dancer).

Gender inequity in career advancement was reported by 40% of the respondents, especially women with disabilities who faced compounded barriers. They mentioned that customers frequently judge their abilities based on their physical condition rather than their skills, leading to reduced opportunities and exclusion. During an IDI, one seamstress with a disability in Masaka district explained,

“People first look at my disability before they look at my work. Even when I studied the same skills as others, they assume I cannot deliver. Customers often walk away, comparing my disability with the work they want done, and I lose opportunities because of that.”



Another creative with disability said, *“Because I am disabled, some customers believe that the table mats I make are ‘disabled’ as well, simply because of my physical condition.”* (IDI-Gulu, seamstress).

iii. Mentorship and Skill Development

Study participants closely linked career growth to access to mentorship and professional networks. Those without guidance reported stalled progress. One creative reported, *“We were three who formed that group. We failed to continue because of various reasons, for example, lack of experts among us to help or correct us.”* (IDI-Kalangala, Performing artist). Another mentioned, *“It was challenging at the beginning because I had no one to refer to or ask for anything, because no one was doing what I was doing.”* (FGD-Jinja, bag designer).

On the other hand, creatives credited structured mentorship programs for transforming their trajectories. One of them narrated,

“I came into the Creative DNA program... it really helped me open up my doors, to see the level of help that I can actually get, professional, legal, quality control. It gave me the confidence to continue, knowing I’m not alone on this journey.” (IDI-Kampala, fashion designer).

iv. Coping Strategies

Findings show that coping mechanisms adopted by young female creatives included persistence, networking, and informal peer mentorship. However, others withdrew from the sector due to persistent discrimination and lack of support. Participants emphasized the need for equitable policies, mentorship, and accessible training programs to sustain women’s ambitions and retention in the creative workforce.

F. Experiences of Harassment in the Workplace

i. Prevalence of Harassment

Harassment is a major and recurring concern in Uganda’s creative sector: 42% of survey respondents reported experiencing gender-based harassment at work, highlighting a pervasive culture of sexism and exploitation that undermines women’s professional dignity and safety.

Findings show that young female creatives experienced different forms and patterns of harassment. Uncomfortable comments about women’s bodies and appearances were the most common form of harassment. Nearly 8 in 10 (79%) received such comments, and close to one-third experienced them regularly. An FGD participant explained, *“Sometimes people will give you a job after seeing how you look like, if you’re a woman. But for men, they’ll give you a job based on what you can do.”* (FGD-1, Kampala)

Sexualized jokes and nicknames were widespread: 73% of respondents reported hearing sexually suggestive jokes, 52% were referred to by sexual nicknames, and 44% received inappropriate online messages.



Harassment was reported to be persistent and invasive. One in every two respondents (52%) reported receiving unsolicited personal messages unrelated to work, and another 51% reported receiving sexually explicit texts or emails. Twelve percent said this happened to them regularly.

Sexual propositions and coercion were also commonly experienced, with 44% reporting being sexually propositioned or pressured into sex, and 8% experiencing this regularly. One female musician described, *"If you are a woman and you want to do a song, most producers... want sex in return for releasing it."* (FGD-1, Kampala).

A musician with a disability similarly noted:

"Sometimes you struggle to collaborate with more established musicians but because you are a woman, first of all they must have sex with you... You must first be abused sexually, then you may get something." (IDI-Gulu, musician).

ii. Forced Sexual Propositions and Loss of Opportunities

One in four young female creatives surveyed (25%) reported being forced or pressured to have sex, and 3% said this occurred repeatedly. The consequences of resisting often extended to professional exclusion. Several women noted that rejecting sexual advances led to loss of job opportunities: *"Sometimes you refuse to adhere to those things [sex requests] and then you lose out on those opportunities."* (KII-performing arts).

Participants lamented the lack of safe reporting systems within the creative industry. One actress explained,

"We have about four known cases of rape here, yet the rapists are still free because there are no organizations in the industry that can intervene or hold them accountable... Directors often give young girls roles only after raping them." (IDI-Kampala, actress)

iii. Recent (<12 months) Harassment

Recent experiences shared by women in the study paint a grim picture of persistent violations. In the past year alone, 76% of young female creatives reported receiving unsolicited remarks about their appearance, 65% heard sexual jokes, and 63% received



If you are a woman and you want to do a song, most producers... want sex in return for releasing it." (FGD-1, Kampala)





comments about their private or marital lives. Nearly half (46%) were subjected to remarks about their sexual life, and 39% said they were referred to by sexualized nicknames. Over half (53%) were repeatedly asked to spend time with someone after refusal, 49% faced obscene gestures or sounds, and 45% received sexualized messages or emails.

Physical harassment was also reported: 33% experienced unnecessary touching (11% regularly), 32% were touched on intimate body parts (7% regularly), and 18% said they were forced or pressured into sex at least once. Although 72% of respondents reported feeling safe with colleagues, qualitative evidence revealed that safety was uneven, especially where power imbalances existed. One dancer shared, *“If our boss wants you [sex] and you refuse, he creates a situation that makes you quit.”* (IDI-Kalangala, dancer). These findings reveal that harassment in Uganda’s creative sector is both systemic and normalized, cutting across professional ranks and creative domains.



“If our boss wants you [sex] and you refuse, he creates a situation that makes you quit.”

IDI-Kalangala, dancer



G. Gender Equity and Gender-Based Challenges

While earlier sections detailed the day-to-day experiences of bias, harassment, and exclusion faced by young female creatives, this section examines the broader and systemic dimensions of gender inequality that underpin those realities. It explores how inequities are embedded in recruitment, advancement, compensation, and institutional culture, shaping the overall environment for women’s participation and progression in Uganda’s creative sector.

i. Discrimination in Job Entry and Access

More than a third of survey respondents (37%) reported encountering discriminatory job advertisements, including gender or age restrictions. Employers were often perceived as favoring men, citing women’s caregiving roles as barriers to performance. A KII respondent explained, *“They prefer employing men because they think women come with a lot of baggage... If she’s married, she’s got children... all those things hinder her from being proficient.”* (IDI- Mityana, actress).

ii. Safety and Mobility Constraints

Safety concerns emerged as a major barrier that limited young women’s participation. About 43% indicated that they avoided certain jobs due to late working hours or security risks. Nearly 25% avoided opportunities simply because they were young women. A participant remarked, *“Men can defend themselves, but us, we are beaten, robbed, and raped.”* (IDI-Kampala, video model).



iii. Domestic and care work Pressures

Domestic and childcare responsibilities were recurring issues in the study, seen as major barriers to career progression. Twenty-five percent of the survey respondents avoided job applications due to caregiving roles, and 13% avoided work during pregnancy, which was often viewed as a professional liability. An actress explained, *“When you produce [have a child], that’s a whole year wasted... In creative work you can’t waste a full year in reproducing.”* (IDI-Kampala, actress). Respondents mentioned that some workplaces imposed pregnancy restrictions in appearance-based roles, reflecting regressive norms that commodify women’s bodies in creative industries.

iv. Intimate Partner and Social Control

Seventeen percent of survey respondents reported avoiding opportunities due to restrictions imposed by intimate partners. An interviewee explained, *“I have to return home at the exact time prescribed by my husband... This makes it very challenging to do my work.”* (IDI-Amuru, seamstress). Another 16% avoided jobs due to parental or societal disapproval. Together, these patterns reveal how gender norms and social control curtail women’s professional independence.

v. Harassment, Bias, and Unequal Treatment

Fear of mistreatment directly influenced women’s career decisions. Twenty-four percent avoided jobs due to unequal pay, 22% for fear of sexual harassment, 15% due to expected male favoritism, and 10% due to anticipated verbal abuse, both online and offline. Such avoidance behaviors show how harassment not only harms individuals but also shrinks women’s participation pipeline in the sector.

Perceptions of fairness in promotions, pay, and benefits were sharply divided. Slightly more than half of survey respondents (51%) disagreed that men and women have equal promotion chances, 49% disagreed that women get equal pay and wage increases, and 46% perceived disparities between men and women in benefits. Nearly half (47%) viewed bonuses as inequitable. These perceptions reflect persistent gender gaps in advancement opportunities.

Gender discrimination was widely reported. Thirty-five percent of survey respondents experienced pay disparities, 36% faced limited opportunities, 36% reported harassment or hostile workplaces, and 31% faced gender stereotyping. A quarter (25%) encountered pressure for sexual favors, 28% received poor credit for their work, 18% cited inadequate safety accommodations, and 15% reported unmet childcare needs.

vi. Observed Impacts on Female Peers

Respondents also observed discrimination among their peers. Fifty-five percent saw peers lose or receive low wages, 52% observed low morale, 44% saw reduced access to projects, and 41% identified psychological distress. Thirty-seven percent said peers had considered quitting the sector entirely due to inequity.

Collectively, these patterns reveal systemic inequality rooted in workplace cultures, weak institutional safeguards, and gendered social expectations. As one KII respondent noted, *“There’s that male dominance attitude... A female artist might be paid less, required to do more, or dismissed simply because she has challenges men don’t face.”* (KII- performing artist).

H. Dignifying and Fulfilling Work

Despite the numerous challenges, the majority of young female creatives expressed pride and satisfaction in their work. Eighty-seven percent of survey respondents described their work as *dignifying*, and nearly 80% found it *fulfilling*. Their interpretations of dignified and fulfilling work varied but centered on passion, self-expression, respect, and fair treatment. For many, personal satisfaction outweighed societal judgment. As one professional illustrator explained:

"Fulfilling work means you love the way you're treated... it pays well and on time, and people respect you for it." (IDI – Gulu, seamstress).



"The dignity I get from my work depends largely on how I view it. Society may label certain jobs as undignified, yet those who do them may see them as highly dignified. As a cartoonist, I've faced comments like, 'What does a cartoonist know about politics?' meant to belittle my role. But such remarks only reveal the speaker's ignorance of what cartooning is, a form of communication, like writing." (KII – professional illustrator).

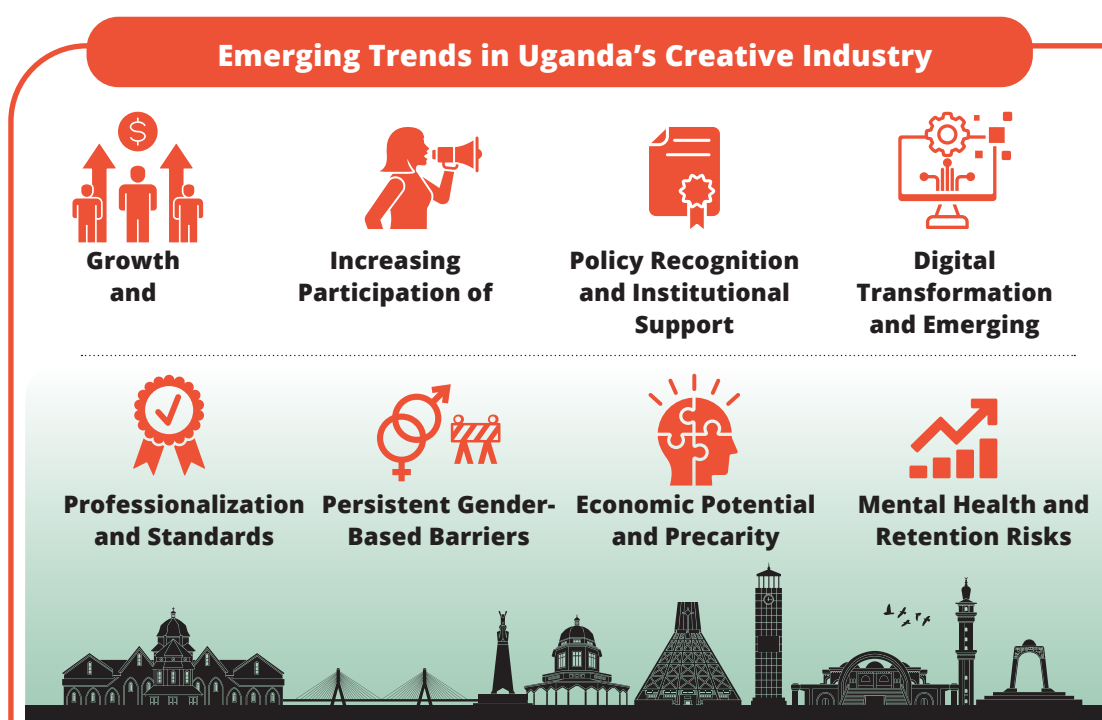


"Valuing creative contribution"
by Solome Najjuma

Others associated dignity with practical and economic benefits. *“On my side, a job is dignifying if I am able to get benefits from it, and it prospers me... as long as I can feed my children and pay their school fees.”* (IDI – Mityana, actress). Several creatives linked fulfillment and satisfaction to both respect and fair pay. *“Fulfilling work means you love the way you’re treated... it pays well and on time, and people respect you for it.”* (IDI – Gulu, seamstress). Another interviewee said, *“Money may not be so satisfying, but when the working conditions are good, no mistreatment, no pressure to accept demands, then the job is satisfying.”* (IDI-Kalangala, dancer).

Findings from the photovoice, storytelling, and creative representation exercises further illustrated how young female creatives conceptualize dignified versus undignified work. In their photographs, songs, and poems, they portrayed dignified work as environments where they are respected, their opinions are heard, and their contributions are valued. Dignity was also tied to clear terms and conditions of work and to workplaces that consider women’s unique circumstances, such as pregnancy or childcare responsibilities. In contrast, undignified work was depicted as settings where women are overlooked or excluded, assigned tasks based on sexist assumptions, or subjected to harassment and disrespect. Here are some excerpts:

I. Emerging Trends in Uganda’s Creative Industry



Uganda’s creative industry is undergoing rapid transformation, expanding in scale, scope, and visibility, and increasingly recognized as a driver of economic growth, cultural innovation, and youth employment. This evolution is generating new opportunities but also introducing structural and ethical challenges that will shape the sector’s future.



Growth and Inclusivity

Unlike many traditional sectors, the creative industry is perceived as open and inclusive, attracting people from diverse backgrounds and abilities. As one film director explained, *"The creative sector... welcomes everybody, irrespective of age or your look... even if you're lame or blind, I'm doing a blind movie, it welcomes everybody"* (IDI-Kampala, film director). Kampala's nightlife alone now sustains hundreds of bands and performance groups, more than regional counterparts such as Nairobi, providing livelihoods for young people. As one industry leader noted, *"It's flourishing. The opportunities are there... so many young people feel they are doing something. They are earning a living... there's strong progress."* (KII-creative trainer)

Increasing Participation of Women

The study findings show a visible rise in women entering creative work. Many respondents described the sector as one of the few spaces where women can build careers outside traditional professions. Respondents attributed this progress to global gender advocacy, shifting cultural norms, and a growing recognition of women's creative potential.

Policy Recognition and Institutional Support

The inclusion of the creative industry in the National Development Plan IV marks a milestone in institutional recognition. The Ugandan government now lists it among the 10 priority sectors expected to drive growth over the next five years, with explicit focus on youth employment. A policy informant noted, *"...government chose it as one of the 10 sectors expected to drive Uganda's economy... they are taking interest in supporting this growth so it can absorb more labor."* (KII-policy maker).

Digital Transformation and Emerging Professions

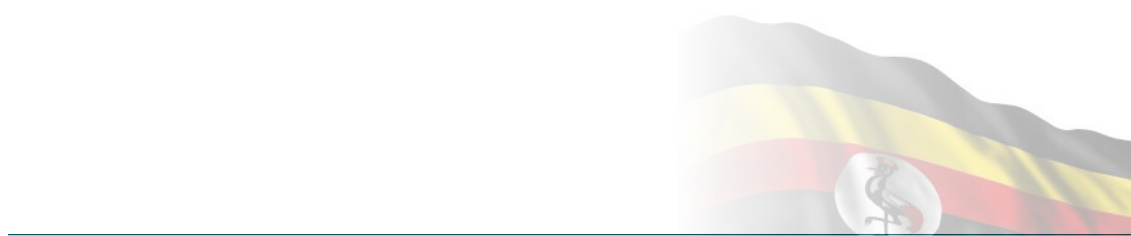
Digital technologies are reshaping production, distribution, and monetization. Affordable smartphones and platforms such as YouTube, TikTok, and Instagram have lowered entry barriers and opened new income streams. As one key informant observed, *"All you need is a smartphone... there are platforms, local and international, where people are uploading and monetizing... fashion houses are using Instagram to reach their market."* (KII-creative association leader).

The digital shift has expanded opportunities for young women, many of whom are earning a living online. However, monetization remains unreliable due to weak payment systems and poor enforcement of intellectual property rights. Digital harassment also disproportionately affects women, forcing some to self-censor or withdraw from online spaces. Rural creatives, particularly women, face further exclusion due to poor connectivity, high data costs, and limited digital literacy.

Professionalization and Standards

As the sector grows, the need for professionalism, mentorship, and clear standards is increasingly evident. Some respondents cited mentorship, legal support, and training as key to improving confidence and income, and others highlighted the absence of





such structures as a barrier. This points to an urgent need for industry-wide training and regulation to ensure quality outputs, credibility, and fair practice.

Persistent Gender-Based Barriers

Despite progress, gender inequities remain entrenched. Over one-third (36%) of young female creatives reported harassment or hostile workplace conditions, 25% experienced pressure for sexual favors, and 35% reported pay disparities compared to men. These patterns show that industry growth alone will not close gender gaps without deliberate structural and policy reform. However, a recent review of key national creative sector policies in Uganda found that only around one-third of them include a focus on gender (see Appendix 1).

Economic Potential and Precarity

While 87% of young female creatives described their work as dignifying and nearly 80% as fulfilling, income instability remains high. The predominance of informal arrangements leaves many creatives vulnerable, especially women without contracts, consistent pay, or access to social protections such as maternity leave and health insurance.

Mental Health and Retention Risks

High competition, harassment, and unstable income contribute to burnout and mental health strain. More than 37% of young women said they had considered quitting the industry, but 76% expressed intent to stay long-term, reflecting strong passion for their craft. Sustaining commitment to creativity requires addressing the systemic risks that undermine dignity and safety in creative work.

J. Policy and Programmatic Opportunities



Participants in the study identified a set of policy and programmatic priorities to strengthen the creative industry, improve worker protections, especially for women, and unlock its full economic potential.





Strengthen Workplace Protections

Given the sector's informality, respondents emphasized the need for gender-responsive workplace policies. Key recommendations included formal contracts, enforcement of minimum wage standards, and protections for child creatives. A KII respondent advised, *"What the government can do is implement gender inclusiveness through policies that enforce workplace protections and increase financial support for women."* (KII-creative trainer). However, creatives are skeptical about the enforcement of inclusive policies. A creative remarked, *"Even in sectors where the government is paying people, the government itself is underpaying... so how do you ask for a minimum wage for the private sector? Let the government start with itself."* (KII-film director).

Build Collective Power

Creatives called for stronger unions and professional associations, particularly for women and new-media professionals, to advocate for fair treatment and policy reform. Collaboration among existing associations, often fragmented and Kampala-based, was seen as critical to amplifying collective influence and extending support to regional creatives. A KII respondent noted, *"The associations are the first collective unit to create a safe space for members... the unity of these associations is so important."* (KII-policy maker).

Tackle Sexual Harassment and Unsafe Workspaces

Sexual harassment emerged as an urgent concern requiring survivor-led advocacy and effective reporting mechanisms. One participant reflected, *"If they rape me or sexually harass me, and I keep quiet... maybe if I had taken that man to prison, this other girl wouldn't have been his victim."* (IDI-Kampala, film producer). This underscores the need for accessible, trusted channels for reporting abuse and clear enforcement within the sector.

Shift Social Norms

Respondents emphasized that discriminatory norms, shaped by childhood gender socialization, are at the root of many industry inequalities. Without cultural change, they argued, policies will have limited effect.

Expand Training and Professional Development

Many creatives highlighted the need for structured mentorship and business training to professionalize the sector. Programs should include financial literacy, negotiation skills, and intellectual property management. As one respondent noted, *"It is talent, but we need it polished... so that when you're on a professional set, you know your terms, not just theirs."* (IDI-Kampala, Playwright-producer).

Recognize the Sector's Economic Role

Participants also called for stronger government recognition of the creative industry's economic contribution, backed by tangible investment and integration into national development priorities. They noted that while the sector is now listed in the National Development Plan IV, public funding and political support remain limited. One of the sector leaders mentioned, *"When the President says science is the thing, it's like they threw art away. But science can't survive without art."* (KII- creative association leader).





5.0 Discussion

This study offers one of the most comprehensive insights into the gender-based inequities affecting young female creatives in Uganda's creative sector. The study underscores that Uganda's creative sector is both a site of opportunity and of deep vulnerability for young female creatives. The industry is expanding rapidly, driven by digital technologies, youth participation, and formal recognition in the National Development Plan IV. However, women in the sector face systemic barriers rooted in gender norms, informality, and unequal power dynamics, as well as unpaid domestic and care burdens, which limit their ability to fully benefit from this growth. These barriers are further magnified for women with disabilities, who experience "double marginalization" at the intersection of gender and disability.



The gendered division of labor is evident and problematic. Female creatives are concentrated in low-paying and less visible roles, while men dominate leadership and high-value opportunities.¹⁸ Recent global evidence shows that women in cultural and creative sectors remain underrepresented in managerial and decision-making roles, with unequal access to fair remuneration and professional recognition compared to men.¹⁹ This mirrors broader patterns in Uganda's labor market, where women's participation in decision-making remains limited.²⁰ For women with disabilities, discriminatory perceptions further devalue their work, echoing findings that disability in Uganda is strongly associated with stigma and exclusion from economic opportunities.²¹ Such systemic exclusion highlights how gender norms and stereotypes restrict women's access to leadership and creative autonomy.²²

More urgently, harassment and coercion have become normalized hazards of creative work, with 42% of the survey participants reporting experiencing harassment, and one in four reported being forced or pressured to have sex. Although some survey respondents

¹⁸ Tidyebwa, *Baseline Study and Stakeholder Mapping for Public Investment in Uganda's Culture Sector*.

¹⁹ UNESCO, *UNESCO Reports Persistent Gender Inequalities in Cultural and Creative*; UNESCO, *Closing the Gap*.

²⁰ Tidyebwa, *Baseline Study and Stakeholder Mapping for Public Investment in Uganda's Culture Sector*; Kasirye, *Addressing Gender Gaps in the Ugandan Labour Market*; Uganda Bureau of Statistics, *The National Labour Force Survey 2021 – Main Report*.

²¹ Abimanyi-Ochom and Mannan, "Uganda's Disability Journey," 2014; Mitra et al., "Disability and Poverty in Developing Countries: A Multidimensional Study."

²² Handy and Rowlands, "Gendered Inequality Regimes and Female Labour..."



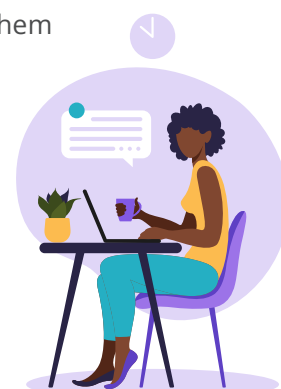


reported a sense of safety within their immediate teams, qualitative narratives also revealed that harassment is widespread, particularly in environments marked by power imbalances, and it can include sexual exploitation as a condition for professional advancement. These findings are consistent with national studies that have documented high levels of sexual harassment across Ugandan workplaces²³ and with regional evidence showing that women in informal creative economies and male-dominated spaces face heightened vulnerability.²⁴ Importantly, participants described how reporting harassment often led to retaliation or exclusion, reflecting policy gaps such as the absence of guild accountability, weak enforcement of anti-harassment frameworks, and inadequate reporting channels. These findings align with earlier research showing that informality in Uganda's labor market exacerbates women's vulnerability to abuse²⁵ where silence is being structurally enforced, and oppressors, perpetrators, and predators operate with impunity.

Young women repeatedly emphasized that dignity, not just income, is an important component of their creative labor. Female creatives associated dignified work with respect, recognition, fair terms of engagement, and consideration of unique needs such as pregnancy or childcare. Undignified work, by contrast, was linked to harassment, disregard for contributions, and sexist task allocations. These findings resonate with the ILO's (1999) Decent Work agenda, which emphasizes dignity and equality as central to sustainable livelihoods. For women with disabilities, the challenge was compounded by entrenched ableist attitudes, which undervalue their outputs and limit their bargaining power. This finding resonates with recent research on disability, which highlights how intersecting gender and disability identities constrain economic participation and bargaining capacity.²⁶

Digital transformation represents an emerging opportunity but also brings its own new challenges.²⁷ Platforms such as TikTok and Instagram are creating new professions and lowering entry barriers, but monetization challenges remain due to weak payment systems and limited intellectual property enforcement.²⁸ Moreover, online harassment disproportionately affects women.²⁹ For women in rural areas and those with disabilities, digital inequalities, ranging from limited access to assistive technologies to rural connectivity challenges, further exclude them from participation.³⁰ Unless addressed, these divides risk reinforcing existing inequities rather than dismantling them.

Overall, the findings align with regional evidence that Africa's creative economy holds transformative potential but often reproduces structural inequalities that need to be addressed to ensure that the sector is truly accessible to all populations, which is crucial not only from an equity perspective, but also to optimize the sector's economic growth potential.³¹



²³ Akina Mama wa Afrika, *Experiences of Sexual Harassment Against Women in the World of Work in Uganda*.

²⁴ UNESCO, "Gender & Creativity: Progress on the Precipice, Special Edition"; Akina Mama wa Afrika, *Experiences of Sexual Harassment Against Women in the World of Work in Uganda*; International Labour Office, *Women and Men in the Informal Economy: A Statistical Picture*.

²⁵ UN Women, "Gender Pay Gap and Labour Market Inequalities in Uganda"; International Labour Organization, *Women in Business and Management: The Business Case for Change*.

²⁶ Abimanyi-Ochom and Mannan, "Uganda's Disability Journey," 2014.

²⁷ Caribou Digital, *Uganda's Culture and Creative Industries in a Digital Age: A Landscape Review*.

²⁸ Nattabi et al., *CREATING DECENT AND PRODUCTIVE JOBS THROUGH DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION IN UGANDA*.

²⁹ "Tech-Facilitated Gender-Based Violence."

³⁰ Caribou Digital, *Uganda's Culture and Creative Industries in a Digital Age: A Landscape Review*.

³¹ African Union, "Concept Note on 2021 as the Year of Arts, Culture and Heritage in Africa"; Wangusa, *Mapping The Current Landscape Of The Culture And Creative Industries In Uganda*.



6.0 Conclusion and Recommendations

The findings from this report reveal that while Uganda's creative sector holds immense potential for economic growth, youth employment, and cultural identity, it is undermined by entrenched gender inequities, harassment, and systemic neglect. Young female creatives face multiple and intersecting barriers, ranging from sexual harassment and discriminatory hiring practices to unsafe workspaces and the undervaluation of their contributions. Women with disabilities encounter even greater exclusion, as stigma tied to both gender and disability limits their bargaining power and access to opportunities. Unless these barriers are addressed, the sector will continue to marginalize women and other vulnerable groups, weakening its ability to drive inclusive development.

Uganda's creative sector stands at a pivotal juncture. Its expansion can either reinforce inequality or serve as a model of inclusive growth. Seizing this opportunity to ensure the latter requires urgent reforms, including safeguarding against harassment, enforcing fair pay, making infrastructure and financing accessible, and embedding disability inclusion in all policies and programs. By prioritizing dignity, equity, and safety, Uganda can unlock the full potential of its creatives and position the sector as a cornerstone of national transformation.

Recommendations

Based on the study findings, a multi-stakeholder approach is needed to address gender inequities and enable young female creatives in Uganda to thrive. The following recommendations are proposed:

Recommendations of Uganda's Creative Industry

-  **1. Strengthen Legal and Policy Frameworks**
-  **2. Law enforcement and access to justice**
-  **3. Strengthen Institutional Capacity**
-  **4. Decentralized Creative Sector Services**
-  **5. Promote Gender Equity, Disability Inclusion, and Social Norm Change**
-  **6. Expand Skills Development**
-  **7. Strengthen Professionalization Pathways**
-  **8. Leverage Digital Transformation**
-  **9. Data, Monitoring, and Accountability**





1. Strengthen Legal and Policy Frameworks

The Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development (MGLSD) should enforce gender- and disability-responsive workplace policies covering sexual harassment, discrimination, and fair compensation in the creative industry.

- MGLSD should mandate the use of standard contracts across creative subsectors to protect creatives from exploitation.
- Uganda Registration Services Bureau (URSB) should strengthen implementation and public awareness of the intellectual property rights protections to ensure creators, especially women, earn fairly from their work.

2. Law enforcement and access to justice

The Uganda police force, the Ministry of Justice and constitutional affairs, and industry associations should

- Engage with cultural sector stakeholders to build the capacity of police units and the judiciary to enforce relevant sector laws, including copyright infringement, abusive conduct, contract violations, and workplace safety.
- Support police and judicial actors to strengthen understanding of creative sector laws and policies through structured capacity-building and engagement.

3. Strengthen Institutional Capacity

Creative industry associations and guilds, with support from the MGLSD and development partners, should:

- Strengthen guilds and associations with funding and governance support to represent members effectively and provide safe, confidential reporting mechanisms for harassment.

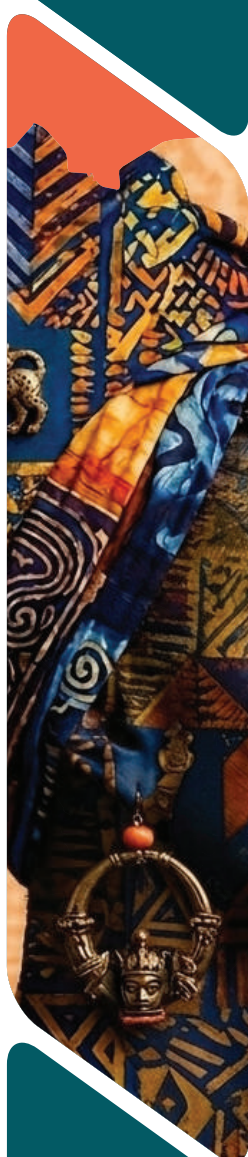
4. Decentralized Creative Sector Services

Local governments, MGLSD, and industry associations should:

- Establish and resource regional creative hubs beyond Kampala, ensuring equitable access to training, dispute resolution, and industry events, particularly for underserved women and creatives with disabilities.

5. Promote Gender Equity, Disability Inclusion, and Social Norm Change

MGLSD, Uganda Human Rights Commission, civil society organizations, media councils, and community leaders should:



- 
- Integrate gender- and disability-transformative approaches into sector programs to tackle stereotypes and stigma.
 - Engage men, cultural leaders, and influencers as allies in preventing harassment and promoting inclusive leadership.
 - Support survivor-led and disability-led advocacy platforms to amplify lived experiences and demand accountability.

6. Expand Skills Development

The Ministry of Information and Communication Technology (ICT), the Ministry of Education and Sports, development partners, and industry associations should:

- Deliver technical and business training tailored to women, youth, and creatives with disabilities.
- Provide financial literacy and business development programs to enable sustainable monetization of creative work.

7. Strengthen Professionalization Pathways

Industry associations, guilds, and development partners should:

- Create structured mentorship pipelines linking established professionals with emerging talent.
- Develop career progression frameworks, codes of practice, and recognition systems that enhance standards, credibility, and labor protections within creative subsectors.

8. Leverage Digital Transformation

The Ministry of ICT, private tech companies, and telecom operators should:

- Expand affordable access to digital tools and platforms for content creation, distribution, and monetization.
- Build partnerships to strengthen digital skills, online safety, and intellectual property protection, with specific outreach to rural women and persons with disabilities.

9. Data, Monitoring, and Accountability

Uganda Bureau of Statistics, MGLSD, academic institutions, and industry associations should:

- Establish a National Creative Industry Observatory to track employment, earnings, gender, and disability participation, and harassment data.
- Introduce sector-wide reporting and follow-up mechanisms for labor violations and harassment, with clear referral pathways.





References

Abimanyi-Ochom, Julie, and Hasheem Mannan. "Uganda's Disability Journey: Progress and Challenges." *African Journal of Disability* 3, no. 1 (2014): 6. <https://ajod.org/index.php/ajod/article/view/108>.

Abimanyi-Ochom, Julie, and Hasheem Mannan. "Uganda's Disability Journey: Progress and Challenges." *African Journal of Disability* 3, no. 1 (2014): 108. <https://doi.org/10.4102/ajod.v3i1.108>.

Afreximbank Research, and University of Business and Integrated Development Studies. *Estimating Potential Economic Contribution of Cultural and Creative Industries in Africa*. Afreximbank, 2024. <chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/https://media.afreximbank.com/afrexim/Estimating-Potential-Economic-Contributions-of-Cultural-and-Creative-Industries-in-Africa.pdf>.

African Union. "Concept Note on 2021 as the Year of Arts, Culture and Heritage in Africa." 2021. chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/https://au.int/sites/default/files/documents/40121-doc-e_draft_concept_note_on_2021_as_the_year_of_arts_culture_and_heritage_in_africa_.pdf.

Akina Mama wa Afrika. *Experiences of Sexual Harassment Against Women in the World of Work in Uganda*. Akina Mama wa Afrika, n.d. Accessed September 19, 2025. <chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/https://www.akinamamawaafrika.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/Sexual-Harassment-Study.pdf>.

Caribou Digital. *Uganda's Culture and Creative Industries in a Digital Age: A Landscape Review*. Caribou Digital Publishing, 2023. <https://cariboudigital.net/ugandas-culture-and-creative-industries-in-a-digital-age-landscape-review>.

GIZ. *Cultural and Creative Industries - Breaking Barriers, Driving Change: Unveiling Gender Dynamics in the Cultural and Creative Industries*. 2023. <chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/https://thedocs.worldbank.org/en/doc/cc8cef9784690358cfe4eda77bb85f84-0460012023/original/GIZ-Cultural-and-Creative-Industries-Gender-Study-Executive-Summary.pdf>.

Grace Natabaalo, Lulu Jemimah, and Savita Bailur. *Uganda's Culture and Creative Industries in a Digital Age*. 2025. <https://caribou.global/publications/uganda-culture-and-creative-industries-review/>.

Handy, Jocelyn, and Lorraine Rowlands. "Gendered Inequality Regimes and Female Labour..." 2014. <chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/https://www.wsanz.org.nz/journal/docs/WSJNZ282HandyRowlands24-38.pdf>.

International Labour Office. *Women and Men in the Informal Economy: A Statistical Picture*. Third edition. 2018. https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---dcomm/documents/publication/wcms_626831.pdf.



International Labour Organization. *Women in Business and Management: The Business Case for Change*. ILO, 2019.

Kasirye, Ibrahim. *Addressing Gender Gaps in the Ugandan Labour Market*. Policy brief. Kampala, Uganda, 2011.

[chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/https://elibrary.acbfpact.org/acbf/collect/acbf/index/assoc/HASH95c1/5fc7a738/cbd3d58a/](chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/https://elibrary.acbfpact.org/acbf/collect/acbf/index/assoc/HASH95c1/5fc7a738/cbd3d58a/f4.dir/EPRC%20Policy%20Brief%20NO%2012.pdf)

[f4.dir/EPRC%20Policy%20Brief%20NO%2012.pdf](chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/https://elibrary.acbfpact.org/acbf/collect/acbf/index/assoc/HASH95c1/5fc7a738/cbd3d58a/f4.dir/EPRC%20Policy%20Brief%20NO%2012.pdf).

Lucy Ilado. "Cultural Wealth, Budgetary Poverty: Bridging the Gap for Uganda's Creative Sector." *CFAfrica*, 2025. <https://cfcafrica.org/cultural-wealth-budgetary-poverty-bridging-the-gap-for-ugandas-creative-sector/>.

Mastercard Foundation. "Africa's Creative Goldmine: Unlocking Growth Amid Gendered Challenges." 2025. <https://mastercardfdn.org/en/articles/africas-creative-goldmine-unlocking-growth-amid-gendered-challenges/>.

Mitra, Sophie, Aleksandra Posarac, and Brandon Vick. "Disability and Poverty in Developing Countries: A Multidimensional Study." *World Development* 41 (2013): 1–18. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/j.worlddev.2012.05.024>.

Nattabi, Aida, Regean Mugume, Justine Luwedde, and Mary Kajumba. *CREATING DECENT AND PRODUCTIVE JOBS THROUGH DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION IN UGANDA*. September 1, 2024. <https://doi.org/10.13140/RG.2.2.21853.52965>.

PANAF. *Challenges and Aspirations of Women in Uganda's Cultural Industry*. Lobbying & Advocacy. 2023. <https://panaf.org/news/challenges-and-aspirations-of-women-in-ugandas-cultural-industry/>.

"Tech-Facilitated Gender-Based Violence: Overview." ICRW, 2019. <https://www.icrw.org/publications/technology-facilitated-gender-based-violence-overview/>.

Thangavel Palanivel. "How Cultural and Creative Industries Can Power Human Development in the 21st Century." 2019. <https://hdr.undp.org/content/how-cultural-and-creative-industries-can-power-human-development-21st-century>.

Tidyebwa, Amos. *Baseline Study and Stakeholder Mapping for Public Investment in Uganda's Culture Sector*. Selam, 2024. <chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/https://mglsd.go.ug/wp-content/uploads/2024/12/CFCA-Report-Uganda-v3.pdf>.

Uganda Bureau of Statistics. *The National Labour Force Survey 2021 – Main Report*. UBOS, 2021.

UN Women. "Gender Pay Gap and Labour Market Inequalities in Uganda." UN Women – Africa, 2023. chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/https://africa.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/2024-03/report-gender_pay_gap_and_labour_market_inequalities_in_uganda.pdf.



UNCTAD. *Creative Economy Outlook 2024*. Geneva, 2024. https://unctad.org/system/files/official-document/ditctsce2024d2_en.pdf.

UNCTAD. *Creative Economy Outlook 2024, Technical and Statistical Report*. United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, 2024. chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/https://unctad.org/system/files/official-document/ditctsce2024d2_en.pdf.

UNESCO. *Closing the Gap: UNESCO Supports Gender Equality in the Cultural and Creative Sectors | Diversity of Cultural Expressions*. July 2, 2025. <https://www.unesco.org/creativity/en/articles/closing-gap-unesco-supports-gender-equality-cultural-and-creative-sectors>.

UNESCO. "Gender & Creativity: Progress on the Precipice, Special Edition." 2021. <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000375706/PDF/375706eng.pdf.multi>.

UNESCO. *Re|shaping Policies for Creativity: Addressing Culture as a Global Public Good*. 2022. <https://www.unesco.org/creativity/sites/default/files/medias/fichiers/2023/01/380474eng.pdf>.

UNESCO. "The 2009 UNESCO Framework for Cultural Statistics (FCS) - UNESCO Digital Library." 2009. <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000191061>.

UNESCO. *UNESCO Reports Persistent Gender Inequalities in Cultural and Creative*. April 20, 2023. <https://www.unesco.org/en/articles/unesco-reports-persistent-gender-inequalities-cultural-and-creative-industries>.

United Nations Conference on Trade and Development. *Creative Economy Outlook 2022*. UNCTAD, 2022. https://unctad.org/system/files/official-document/ditctsce2022d1_en.pdf.

Wangusa, Ayeta Anne. *Mapping The Current Landscape Of The Culture And Creative Industries In Uganda*. British Council, Bayimba Foundation, 2023. <https://bayimba.org/mapping-the-current-landscape-of-the-culture-and-creative-industries-in-uganda/>.



Appendices

Appendix 1: Policy and legal frameworks related to the creative sector in Uganda: 2000 – 2026

	Legal and Policy Document Name	Core objectives/aims	Impact on the Creative Sector	Gender and Other Considerations
1	National Development Plan IV 2025/26 - 2029/30	● Sustainably increase production, productivity, and value addition in tourism, ICT, and financing ● Enhance human capital development along the entire life cycle ● Support the private sector to drive growth and create jobs ● Strengthen good governance, security, and the role of the state in development ● Build and maintain strategic sustainable infrastructure in transport, housing, water, industry, and ICT	● The plan prioritizes Cultural and Creative Industries in line with its prioritization logic ● Its strong focus on ICT infrastructure and innovation means growth of digital creative industries ● Improved access to finance and markets for creative enterprises as part of private sector-led growth and job creation strategies ● Tourism includes cultural tourism, which creates more demand for crafts, heritage sites, music, film, and festivals ● Promotes literacy through human capital development, which directly benefits writers, publishers, and libraries	● One of the expected outcomes of the plan is empowered women, which highlights gender considerations ● Emphasizes gender equality as a cross-cutting priority, aiming for gender parity at all levels through gender-responsive planning, budgeting, recruitment, and monitoring.
2	Copyright and Neighbouring Rights (Amendment) Act 2026	● To protect authors' intellectual property rights, incentivize content creation, and ensure fair revenue distribution.	● Protect authors' and owners' copyright and neighboring rights, fostering growth in the publishing sector. ● Permits creatives to obtain royalties so they can profit from what they create.	● The Act does not explicitly mention how to address gender equity, or the challenges faced by women in this sector.
2	National Library Act (Amendment) 2024	● Establishes the National Library of Uganda (NLU) Board that is responsible for:	● Enhances access to research, reference, and creative resources through public and rural libraries	● Creates guidelines and inspection standards, potentially

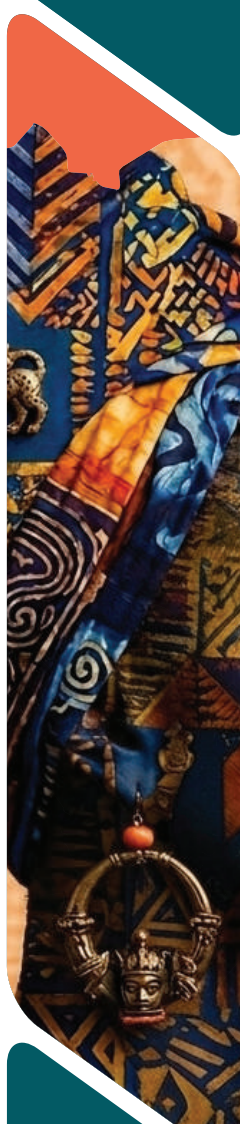


	Legal and Policy Document Name	Core objectives/aims	Impact on the Creative Sector	Gender and Other Considerations
		● Formulates public library policies, setting standards, and inspecting compliance. ● Offers advisory and technical librarian services ● Promotes adult literacy, rural libraries, reading campaigns, national bibliography, cataloguing, and legal deposit	● Promotes reading culture, essential for writers and other creatives ● Provides national bibliographic control, supporting publishing, literary scholarship, and cultural preservation.	ensuring inclusive access to infrastructure for all.
3	Museum and Monuments Act 2023	● Consolidates and reforms legislation governing cultural and natural heritage, replacing the 1967 Historical Monuments Act. ● Strengthens administrative frameworks for effective management and classification of public, private, district, and regional museums. ● Protects both tangible and associated intangible heritage, formalises control over monuments, museums, collections, and works of art.	● Broadens the definition of museums to include private and local decentralized cultural infrastructure. ● Aligns with global museum standards (inclusivity, accessibility, sustainability), improving how artists and communities engage and exhibit. ● Enhances legal protection for cultural expressions, supporting creative industries, cultural tourism, and heritage-led community development.	● Does not include any explicit provisions directly addressing gender
4	The Uganda Communications (Film, Documentaries and Commercial Still Photograph) Regulations 2019	● To regulate the industry to foster professionalism and ensure socio-cultural sensitivity in visual content production through licensing requirements, content restrictions.	● Contributes to employment in the film sector and ensures socio-cultural sensitivity. ● Provides a framework for the establishment of the National Film Fund and tax incentives to support filmmakers.	● Encourages women's participation in film-making but doesn't outline specific measures on how to do so.





	Legal and Policy Document Name	Core objectives/aims	Impact on the Creative Sector	Gender and Other Considerations
		- To promote local film production, and ensure protection of intellectual property, create jobs, and ensure professionalization. - To safeguard national security, cultural values, and public morality through content oversight	- Encourages training and skills development for creatives. - Promotes the production of films that reflect Uganda's diverse cultural heritage and fosters storytelling that contributes to national identity. - Creates more opportunities for local content to be developed, showcased, and distributed while protecting the rights and interests of Ugandan creative professionals	
5	Data Protection and Privacy Act 2019	To safeguard individual privacy by regulating how personal data is collected, processed and shared.	- Imposes data management obligations creatives handling personal data, such as during film production, photography, or digital content creation. - Increases accountability on creatives to take compliance seriously.	Does not specifically address how data protection policies should consider gender-specific risks or challenges.
6	The Stage Plays and Public Entertainment Rules, 2019	- Regulate public entertainment, including stage plays, music, and other performances. - Provide a framework for the classification, approval, and licensing of public performances - To ensure public decency, safety, security, and compliance with cultural and national values during public performances	- Introduces a formal licensing which may enhance professionalism and public trust. - Encourages content standardization and quality but may limit creative freedom through censorship. - Provides a platform for legal recognition of artists and performers.	- Limited explicit reference to gender or support for marginalized groups. - Rules apply uniformly but implementation may disproportionately affect groups with less access to resources for example women and rural performers.

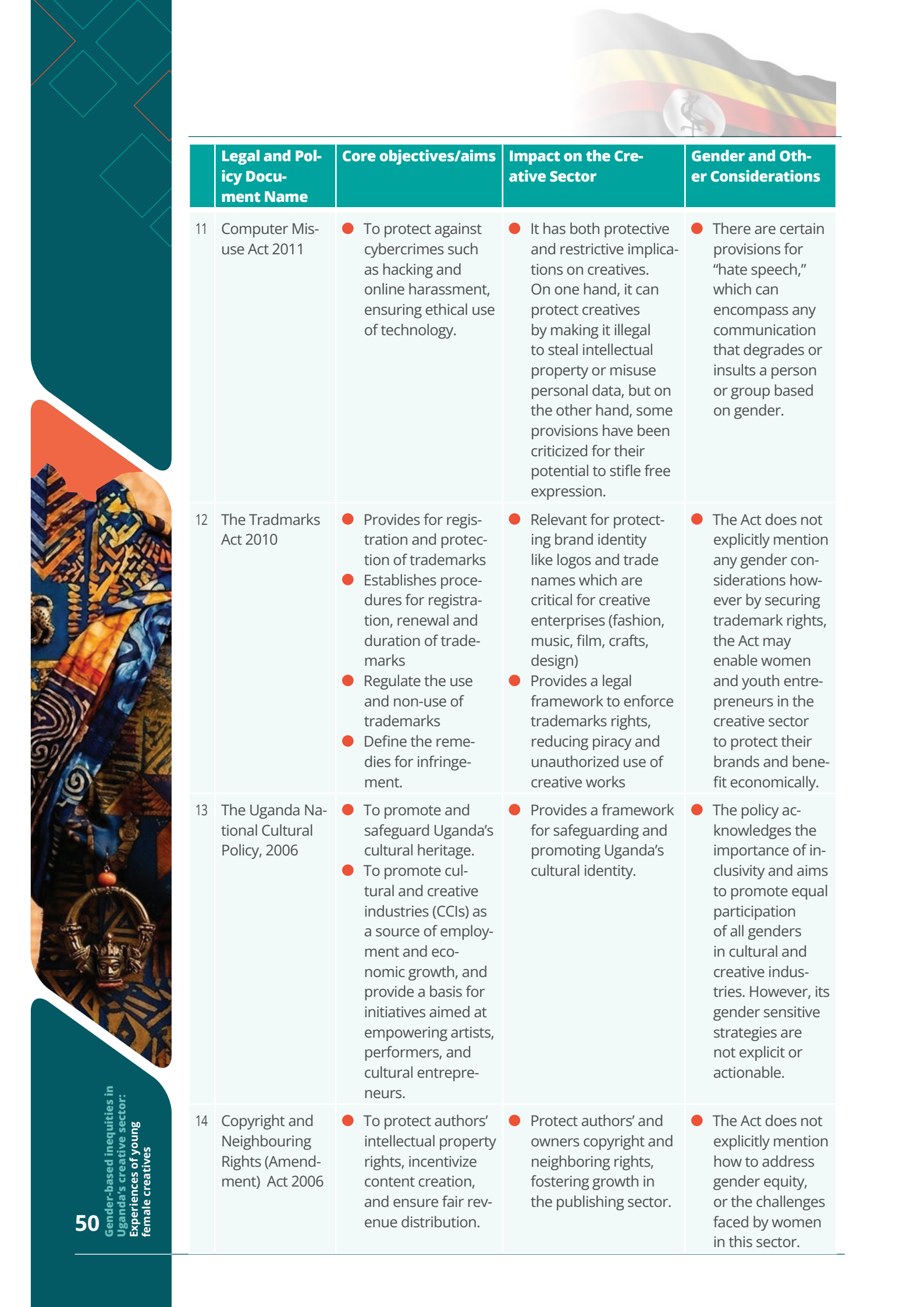



	Legal and Policy Document Name	Core objectives/aims	Impact on the Creative Sector	Gender and Other Considerations
7	The National Intellectual Property (IP) Policy 2019	● To provide legal protection for innovations such as interventions, designs and creative works to ensure that creators are rewarded for their work. ● To close gaps in IP enforcement. ● To enable IP stakeholders create, protect, and commercially exploit research results, innovations, new technologies, and creative works.	● The policy provides a designed approach for protecting intellectual property rights, giving creatives all rights to their work to be able to control and benefit from it. ● By protecting IP rights, the policy supports the commercialization of creative works, allowing creators to generate income from their ideas and works.	● Lacks explicit measures to ensure gender equity in creative works like music, film, software, books and distribution.
8	National ICT Policy Frameworks 2014	● To foster innovation, ensure digital inclusivity, and enhance the capacity of the ICT sector.	● Promotes innovation in software and digital content creation, including gaming and interactive media. ● Improves copyright protection, supports the development of local production studios, and encourages innovation across media, advertising, visual arts, and IT-enabled services. ● Enables Ugandan creative businesses to access new platforms and markets, including digital, e-commerce, and multimedia channels	● The policy recognizes the gender digital divide and aims to promote gender equality in ICT access, use, and benefits. - ● The solutions mentioned include equal opportunities for women and men in ICT education, training, and employment, women's empowerment, reducing barriers and digital literacy for Women
9	Industrial Property Act 2014	● Provide for the grant and regulation of patents, utility models and industrial designs	● Protects innovations, designs and creative technologies ensuring creators can benefit economically.	● The absence of gender-specific considerations in the Act leaves a gap in addressing inequalities and challenges faced by women in



	Legal and Policy Document Name	Core objectives/aims	Impact on the Creative Sector	Gender and Other Considerations
		● Provide legal framework for industrial property management and enforcement. ● Facilitate the acquisition and transfer of technology ● Promote inventive and innovative activities in Uganda	● Encourages local innovation in areas like industrial art, crafts and product design. ● Provides a legal framework to enforce industrial property rights which stops imitation and exploitation.	the creative and communication sectors. ● Limited explicit reference to gender or support for marginalized groups.
10	Uganda Communications Act 2013	● To regulate the communications sector, which includes telecommunications, broadcasting, radio communication, postal communications, data communication, and infrastructure.	● Subjects creatives to provisions concerning content that may be deemed offensive, indecent, or contrary to public morality. ● Strict enforcement of these regulations can stifle freedom of expression and limit creativity, as creators may fear censorship or legal repercussions. ● Requires licensing requirements among content broadcasters to obtain licenses, which can indirectly affect creatives who depend on these platforms to distribute their work. ● High licensing fees or restrictive licensing terms that disadvantage smaller creators or startups. ● Empowers the Uganda Communications Commission (UCC) to have authority over digital platforms, impacting creatives who rely on social media or online distribution channels. These regulations may impose additional compliance burdens on digital creatives.	● The absence of gender-specific considerations in the Act leaves a gap in addressing inequalities and challenges faced by women in the creative and communication sectors.





	Legal and Policy Document Name	Core objectives/aims	Impact on the Creative Sector	Gender and Other Considerations
11	Computer Misuse Act 2011	To protect against cybercrimes such as hacking and online harassment, ensuring ethical use of technology.	It has both protective and restrictive implications on creatives. On one hand, it can protect creatives by making it illegal to steal intellectual property or misuse personal data, but on the other hand, some provisions have been criticized for their potential to stifle free expression.	There are certain provisions for "hate speech," which can encompass any communication that degrades or insults a person or group based on gender.
12	The Trademarks Act 2010	- Provides for registration and protection of trademarks - Establishes procedures for registration, renewal and duration of trademarks - Regulate the use and non-use of trademarks - Define the remedies for infringement.	- Relevant for protecting brand identity like logos and trade names which are critical for creative enterprises (fashion, music, film, crafts, design) - Provides a legal framework to enforce trademarks rights, reducing piracy and unauthorized use of creative works	The Act does not explicitly mention any gender considerations however by securing trademark rights, the Act may enable women and youth entrepreneurs in the creative sector to protect their brands and benefit economically.
13	The Uganda National Cultural Policy, 2006	- To promote and safeguard Uganda's cultural heritage. - To promote cultural and creative industries (CCIs) as a source of employment and economic growth, and provide a basis for initiatives aimed at empowering artists, performers, and cultural entrepreneurs.	Provides a framework for safeguarding and promoting Uganda's cultural identity.	The policy acknowledges the importance of inclusivity and aims to promote equal participation of all genders in cultural and creative industries. However, its gender sensitive strategies are not explicit or actionable.
14	Copyright and Neighbouring Rights (Amendment) Act 2006	To protect authors' intellectual property rights, incentivize content creation, and ensure fair revenue distribution.	Protect authors' and owners copyright and neighboring rights, fostering growth in the publishing sector.	The Act does not explicitly mention how to address gender equity, or the challenges faced by women in this sector.



	Legal and Policy Document Name	Core objectives/aims	Impact on the Creative Sector	Gender and Other Considerations
			● Permits creatives to obtain royalties so they can profit from what they create.	
15	Access to Information Act, 2005	● To create an open culture where public authorities are transparent in their operations and are held accountable to citizens. ● To grant individuals the legal right to access information held by public authorities.	● Creative professionals can use the Act to obtain information on policies, budgets, grants, and opportunities affecting the arts and creative industries. ● Creative organizations and individuals can seek transparency regarding government programs and funding initiatives tailored to the creative sector.	● The Act acknowledges broader human rights by ensuring that all Ugandans including vulnerable groups can access information.
16	Uganda Registration Services Bureau Act 2004	● To register patents, industrial designs, copyright, and neighboring rights, business entities, documents required under the relevant laws ● To evaluate from time to time the practicability and efficacy of the relevant laws and advise the government accordingly. ● To administer and give effect to the relevant laws	● It protects creatives' work and give them a chance to protect their original ideas and monetize their intellectual property. - The Act establishes the Uganda Registration Services Bureau (URSB) as the central authority for registering patents, businesses, and trademarks.	● It ensures equal access to business registration for both men and women, helping to formalize women-owned businesses.

Compiled by ICRW, Behind the Scenes Project Team in Uganda



Appendices A through H present survey questions and results that comprised the quantitative portion of the study.

Appendix A: Social demographic characteristics of young female creatives.

Table A1: Social demographic characteristics of young female creatives

VARIABLE	CATEGORY	FREQUENCIES	PERCENTAGES
Self-identity	Female	401	100
	Others	0	0
Age groups	18-24 years	172	42.89
	25-35 years	229	57.11
Education level	None	10	2.49
	Primary	96	23.94
	Secondary	146	36.41
	Certificate/Diploma	77	19.2
	Bachelor's Degree	69	17.21
	Postgraduate	3	0.75
Professional training in the sector	Yes	214	53.37
	No	187	46.63
Marital status	Married/cohabitation	137	34.16
	Separated	30	7.48
	Single-never married	233	58.1
	Widowed	1	0.25
Type of residence	Urban	279	69.58
	Rural	122	30.42
Spouse working (if married)	Yes	121	90.3
	No	13	9.7
Has Children	Yes	210	52.37
	No	191	47.63





Variable	Category	Frequencies	Percentages
Number of children	None	191	47.63
	1-2 children	143	35.66
	>2 children	67	16.71
Childcare support while working	Takes child to work	56	26.67
	Partner/Spouse	16	7.58
	Babysitter/nanny	29	13.81
	Daycare center	8	3.81
	Older children	15	7.14
	Children at school	57	27.14
	Others	69	32.86
Household member needs special care	Yes	65	16.37
	No	332	83.63
Number of persons requiring special care	1 person	62	95.38
	2 people	3	4.62

Appendix B: Perceptions on the state of workspace environment in the creative sector

Table B1: Perceptions of the young female creatives about the state of the workspace environment in the creative sector

Question	Category	FREQUENCY	Percentage
Do you feel respected and valued for your creative work?	Yes	353	88.03%
	No	48	11.97%
Have you ever witnessed instances where creative ideas presented by women were dismissed or not taken seriously?	Yes	129	32.17%
	No	272	67.83%
Have you ever had your creative ideas dismissed or not taken seriously because you are a woman?	Yes	106	26.43%
	No	295	73.57%

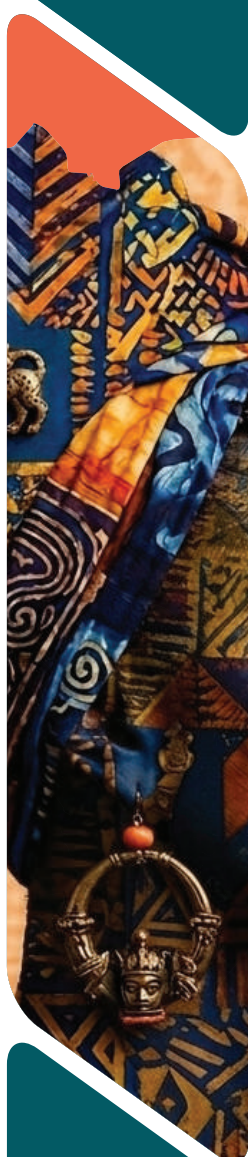




Appendix C: Workspace challenges

Table C1: Challenges female creatives face in the workspace

Statement	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
I have not felt discriminated against because I am a woman	43 (10.72%)	105 (26.18%)	32 (7.98%)	142 (35.41%)	79 (19.7)
As a creative, I have never encountered barriers or challenges related to my gender	44 (10.97%)	84 (20.95%)	18 (20.95%)	201 (50.12%)	54 (13.47%)
The people I work with as a creative do not consider being a woman in letting me do things	31 (7.73%)	127 (31.67%)	65 (16.21%)	129 (32.17%)	49 (12.22%)
My being a young woman has not influenced my career progression as a creative	39 (9.73%)	111 (27.68%)	52 (12.97%)	148 (36.91%)	51 (12.72%)
My peers/colleagues do not treat me differently because I am a woman	20 (4.99%)	100 (24.94%)	59 (14.71%)	170 (42.39%)	52 (12.97%)
There are adequate policies and practices in place to prevent gender discrimination	68 (16.96%)	111 (27.68%)	109 (27.18%)	92 (22.94%)	21 (5.24%)
I have ever felt uncomfortable or faced harassment/ microaggressions based on my gender	73 (18.2%)	136 (33.92%)	24 (5.99%)	131 (32.67%)	37 (9.23%)
I feel included and valued as a team member during collaborative projects	13 (3.24%)	24 (5.99%)	74 (18.45%)	202 (50.37%)	88 (21.95%)
Male and female creatives have equal opportunities for promotion and growth	60 (14.96%)	129 (32.17%)	46 (11.47%)	111 (27.68%)	55 (13.72%)





Appendix D: Gender-pay gap

Table D1: Gender-pay gap issues in the creative sector

Statement	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
I have ever been underpaid for my creativity because I am a woman	60 (14.96%)	124 (30.92%)	31 (7.73%)	102 (25.44%)	84 (20.95%)
Industry policies ensure equal pay for similar work	68 (16.96%)	122 (30.42%)	99 (24.69%)	94 (23.44%)	18 (4.49%)
I have witnessed unequal pay between women and men	38 (9.48%)	86 (21.45%)	49 (12.22%)	164 (40.9%)	64 (15.96%)
I am generally paid less than male colleagues for the same work	54 (13.47%)	146 (36.41%)	63 (15.71%)	101 (25.19%)	37 (9.23%)

Appendix E: Career expectations of young women in the creative sector

Table E1: Career expectations of young women in the creative sector

Statement	Response	Count	Percentage
I have the goal of a long-term career in the creative industry	Strongly agree	238	59.35%
	Agree	111	27.68%
	Disagree	19	4.74%
	Strongly Disagree	21	5.24%
	I don't know	12	2.99%
I feel that I am thriving in my career	Strongly agree	93	23.19%
	Agree	201	50.12%
	Disagree	49	12.22%
	Strongly Disagree	39	9.73%
	I don't know	19	4.74%
I have been given equal opportunities for career advancement just like my male counterparts	Strongly agree	41	10.22%
	Agree	167	41.65%
	Disagree	73	18.2%





Statement	Response	Count	Percentage
I am satisfied with my career progression and opportunities as a female creative	Strongly disagree	87	21.7%
	I don't know	33	8.23%
	Strongly agree	41	10.22%
	Agree	167	41.65%
	Disagree	73	18.2%
	Strongly disagree	87	21.7%
	I don't know	33	8.23%

Appendix F: Experiences of harassment

Table F1: Experiences of harassment in the workspace

Type of experience	Never	Yes, Sometimes	Yes, regularly
Comments on your appearance or body	95 (23.69%)	215 (53.62%)	91 (22.69%)
Suggestive jokes of a sexual nature	139 (34.66%)	203 (50.62%)	59 (14.71%)
Comments on private life or marital status	150 (37.41%)	201 (50.12%)	50 (12.47%)
Referred to by a sexual nickname	246 (61.35%)	127 (31.67%)	28 (6.98%)
Comments on sexual life	216 (53.87%)	150 (37.41%)	35 (8.73%)
Suggested to spend spare time with someone after refusal	187 (46.63%)	172 (42.89%)	42 (10.47%)
Uses of obscene gestures or sounds	203 (50.62%)	165 (41.15%)	33 (8.23%)
Mail/text messages of sexual nature	222 (55.36%)	146 (36.41%)	37 (9.23%)
Mail/text messages unrelated to work making you uncomfortable	217 (54.11%)	147 (36.66%)	37 (9.23%)
Provocative/offensive online messages	247 (61.6%)	128 (31.92%)	26 (6.48%)
Touching intimate parts	273 (68.08%)	101 (25.19%)	27 (6.73%)
Touching other body parts unnecessarily	193 (48.13%)	164 (40.9%)	44 (10.97%)
Sexual proposition/pressure	253 (63.09%)	122 (30.42%)	26 (6.48%)





Type of experience	Never	Yes, Sometimes	Yes, regularly
Forced/pressured to have sex	328 (81.8%)	61 (15.21%)	12 (2.99%)
Denied work/tasks because you are a woman	275 (68.58%)	105 (26.18%)	21 (5.24%)
Given additional tasks unrelated to work	219 (54.61%)	148 (36.91%)	34 (8.48%)
Advised on how to behave/act because you are a woman	132 (32.92%)	198 (49.38%)	71 (17.71%)

Appendix G: Gender equity and gender-based challenges

Table G1: Gender Equity and gender based challenges (Specific treatments women in the creative sector experience due to their gender)

Statement/Question	Response	Count	Percentage
Marital status	Yes	233	58.1%
	No	81	20.2%
	N/A	87	21.7%
Plans to get married	Yes	124	30.92%
	No	168	41.9%
	N/A	109	27.18%
Number of children	Yes	182	45.39%
	No	123	30.67%
	N/A	96	23.94%
Plans to have children	Yes	115	28.68%
	No	182	45.39%
	N/A	104	25.94%
Doctoral/Medical proof not pregnant	Yes	50	12.47%
	No	215	53.63%
	N/A	136	33.92%
Something else not related to skills/education	Yes	162	40.4%
	No	140	34.91%
	N/A	99	24.99%
Ever had a creative job application/project bid rejected	Yes	148	36.91%
	No	253	63.09%
Reasons for rejection (multiple choice examples)	Gender	25	6.23%





Statement/Question	Response	Count	Percentage
	Pregnancy	7	1.75%
	Age	23	5.74%
	Care responsibilities	4	1%
Know female creatives denied work/bid for work for similar reasons	Gender	99	24.69%
	Pregnancy	140	34.91%
	Age	132	32.92%
	Care responsibilities	133	33.17%
	Refused sex	156	38.9%
Encountered jobs ads with unrelated criteria	Yes	149	37.16%
Prevented from applying due to: safety concerns	Yes	171	42.64%
Being a young woman	Yes	99	24.69%
Childcare/domestic responsibilities	Yes	101	25.19%
Pregnancy	Yes	52	12.97%
Husband/boyfriends	Yes	66	16.46%
Concerns that men would be preferred	Yes	59	14.71%
Concerns about being sexually harassed	Yes	88	21.95%
Concerns about being verbally abused offline/online	Yes	40	9.98%
Poor pay compared to men	Yes	95	23.69%
Concerns about parental/societal approval	Yes	62	15.46%
Other reasons	Yes	74	18.45%

Table G2: Opportunities for men and women in the creative sector

Statement	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Men and women have equal opportunities for promotion	Strongly disagree	69	17.21%
	Disagree	134	33.42%
	Neutral	34	8.48%
	Agree	102	25.44%
	Strongly agree	62	15.46%
	Strongly disagree	54	13.47%



Statement	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Equal pay for men and women employed in the same position and do the same job	Disagree	144	35.91%
	Neutral	50	12.47%
	Agree	116	28.93%
	Strongly Agree	37	9.23%
Equal opportunities for wage increase for both men and women	Strongly disagree	44	10.97%
	Disagree	151	37.66%
	Neutral	59	12.47%
	Agree	117	29.18%
	Strongly agree	39	9.73%
Men and women have equal opportunities for compensation/benefits	Strongly disagree	42	10.47%
	Disagree	143	35.66%
	Neutral	53	13.22%
	Agree	123	30.17%
	Strongly agree	40	9.98%
Men and women have equal opportunities for bonuses	Strongly disagree	41	10.22%
	Disagree	149	37.16%
	Neutral	50	12.47%
	Agree	121	30.17%
	Strongly agree	40	9.98%

Table G3: Forms of gender discrimination that the female creatives have personally experienced

Form of Gender Discrimination	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Pay disparity compared to men		139	34.66%
Limited opportunities		144	35.91%
Stereotyping		124	30.92%
Harassment and hostile environment		143	35.66%
Poor credit and recognition for their work		114	28.43%
Pressure for sex		100	24.94%
Working in a space/project with little or no accommodations for their safety		74	18.45%
Working in a space/project with little or no accommodations for their childcare needs		59	14.71%





Appendix H: Dignifying and fulfilling work

Table H: Dignifying and fulfilling work

Statement	Category	Frequency	Percentage
I consider my work dignifying	Strongly disagree	7	1.75%
	Disagree	25	6.23%
	Neutral	20	4.99%
	Agree	143	35.66%
	Strongly agree	206	51.37%
I consider my work fulfilling	Strongly disagree	9	2.24%
	Disagree	43	10.72%
	Neutral	30	7.48%
	Agree	173	43.14%
	Strongly agree	146	36.41%
I am content with my work	Strongly disagree	10	2.49%
	Disagree	51	12.72%
	Neutral	43	10.72%
	Agree	174	43.39%
	Strongly agree	123	30.67%
People value unique strengths	Strongly disagree	14	3.49%
	Disagree	15	3.74%
	Neutral	68	16.96%
	Agree	218	54.36%
	Strongly agree	86	21.45%
People support me to meet responsibilities	Strongly disagree	8	2%
	Disagree	47	11.72%
	Neutral	75	18.7%
	Agree	208	51.87%
	Strongly agree	63	15.71%
I get helpful feedback	Strongly disagree	5	1.25%
	Disagree	6	1.5%
	Neutral	30	7.48%
	Agree	250	62.34%
	Strongly agree	110	27.43%



Statement	Category	Frequency	Percentage
I always safe	Strongly disagree	7	1.75%
	Disagree	32	7.98%
	Neutral	72	17.96%
	Agree	216	53.87%
	Strongly agree	74	18.45%
Opportunities for growth aligned with goals	Strongly disagree	20	4.99%
	Disagree	65	16.21%
	Neutral	62	15.46%
	Agree	192	47.88%
	Strongly agree	62	15%



NOTES



Laboratoire de Recherches



UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST

In partnership with



University of Lagos



Organization for Social Sciences
Research in East and Southern Africa



University of Rwanda