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**Ministry of Gender, Labour**

**and Social Development**

**Republic of Uganda**

**Project Summary   
  
CREATIVE INDUSTRIES DEVELOPMENT FOR THE DIVERSITY OF CULTURAL EXPRESSIONS:  
Strengthening the sustainability of creative industries in Uganda: Strengthening the Artistic, Design and Marketing skills of the Crafts Industry Sector in 3 regions in Uganda**

**Executive Summary:**

Creative industries are not only capital assets for alleviating poverty, but also a vital source for socio‐cultural development and sustainable human development in preserving the diversity of cultural identities. In Uganda, the objective of the project is to strengthen the artistic, design, marketing and management skills of Ugandan craft workers in order to improve the production and quality of their products for economic empowerment and sustainable development.

**1. RATIONALE AND BACKGROUND**The project seeks to address key issues and gaps in the development of the handicrafts sector in Uganda, mainly assessing needs and building the capacity of crafts workers in all regions of Uganda, focusing on creative designs, diversity in artistic products and marketing skills for economic empowerment and sustainable development.

Uganda has a rich culture heritage that offers potential for abundant growth of creative enterprises in all the regions of the country. Uganda has 65 indigenous communities with diverse cultures offering diversity for creativity. In terms of potential in Uganda’s Economy, the cultural sector has a strong linkage with the overall economy both at macro and micro levels influencing development, poverty reduction, employment and revenue generation.

The mapping of cultural/creative industries in Uganda which was undertaken by Uganda National Commission for UNESCO in 2009 showed that the culture sector in Uganda fosters economic growth, job creation, export earnings and promotes social inclusion, cultural diversity and human resource development. Creative goods and services promote employment, income generation, education and recreation.

This project is aimed at, in particular, strengthening the handicrafts component of the creative economy in Uganda focusing on 3 regions of the country. Handicraft making in Uganda is essentially a cultural, traditional and predominantly a cottage industry undertaken mainly by rural people, both men and women and the youth. More women participate in most craft making activities than men to supplement house hold incomes.

Uganda handcraft products range from basketry, mats, ceramics, beads, pottery, hand textiles, and woven products, toys, jewelry, bags, ornaments, leather products, batiks and wood crafts. The crafts workers use locally available raw materials and produce works based on local culture, history and traditions.

The tradition has been that master crafts workers’ handover a skill from generation to generation. However, this tradition is now on the decline. Even where master crafts‐workers can still be found, their numbers have diminished considerably. Modern day artisans in an attempt to earn quick money for a living make products without consideration for tradition and with no appreciation of market requirements, quality, design standards and systematic organization of markets. Innovations, design and product adaptations are limited, given the low skills and capacity of Uganda’s artisanal producers. Handicrafts export in Uganda is consequently insignificant. Various studies have established that Uganda’s handicraft sector development is severely inhibited by supply side (production) and marketing constraints summed up as fragmented, unstructured and individualized production systems, low level equipment application, low production levels, lack of specialization, inconsistent product standardization, low design and quality, inadequate design skills, inadequate production, vocational and business development training, insufficient market information and dissemination, lack of appreciation of market preferences and requirements, inadequate support for marketing and promotion, and poor or no packaging. The end result is mass production of aesthetically poor crafts. As the market gets wider and sophisticated, crafts dealers in Uganda have resorted to importing crafts from neighboring countries like Kenya, Tanzania, which is virtually killing Uganda’s handicrafts industry.

Of late, however, as a result of intense campaigns and awareness‐raising on “Buy Uganda”, the importance of handicraft production has seen an upswing as the industry is perceived as a potential business opportunity for sustainable income generation, thus attracting more and more artisans, traders and exporters. The results of the creative industries mapping study conducted in 2009 indicated that there is a lot of potential in Uganda’s handicrafts sector, provided key skills in creative designing, artistic product development and marketing are improved upon. Uganda ratified the Convention on the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage in 2009 with the major priority of promoting traditional craftsmanship and diverse cultural expressions, and is in the process of ratifying the Convention on the Promotion and the Protection of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions for the same reasons. The intervention of this project is in line with the spirit of Uganda’s commitment to these two instruments.

Further still, the capacity building programme to be implemented through this project will be in line with the National Development Plan which prioritizes development of visual arts and crafts and linking this to the promotion of indigenous knowledge, local artisans and creative industries for economic empowerment and sustainable development. Along the same lines, the Uganda National Culture Policy (2006) also emphasizes the promotion of positive cultural values and cultural cooperation for mutual benefit, respect, understanding, shared values, enrichment and peaceful co‐existence among diverse cultures and peoples of Uganda and beyond. The capacity building of craft workers is in line with the Creative Economy Action Plan for Uganda which identifies capacity building as a key component of sustainability of the industry and a measure of product improvement and diversification.

The project therefore will specifically reactivate the traditions embodied in the handicraft sector and aim to promote environment‐friendly methods of using local raw materials available in the country to produce high quality handicrafts and promote dialogue across cultures. By so doing, the artistic and design skills of craft‐workers will be strengthened and the age‐old tradition of passing on the artistic skills from one generation to another will be improved. This project will also aim to sharpen the skills of the crafts workers and improve quality, standards and diversity in the creative works as well as improve management and marketing.

The project will also build on the work that UNESCO has already been supporting in Uganda beginning with the comprehensive mapping of cultural/creative industries. The mapping showed that the culture sector in Uganda has the potential to foster economic growth and contribute to poverty reduction. However, for this potential to be tapped and nurtured for economic growth, key skills in creative designing, artistic product development and marketing must be improved This is what this project is addressing.

**1.2 Beneficiaries and other Stakeholders**

The final beneficiaries of the project will be Ugandan general public who will have opportunities to enjoy enhanced creative products and services, and the subsequent economic growth, cultural well‐being and social cohesion that will be strengthened as a result of the thriving cultural industries.

The immediate beneficiaries of the project will be artisans and crafts workers (men, women and youth) in the craft industry, who will be provided with artistic/creative, marketing skills and management to enable them to produce culturally appropriate quality Ugandan products and earn income so as to sustain their livelihoods. Others are the Civil Society Organizations, Community based organizations, teachers, trainers who will use the training manual as a point of reference to pass on skills and knowledge to the young people. Another group of immediate beneficiaries are the individuals dealing in crafts businesses who will be having a diverse array of cultural products competitive in the market.

Finally, the Government and nation of Uganda will benefit because skilled crafts workers will produce quality crafts products, which will be marketed easily and widely, increase their incomes and lead to the economic empowerment of the crafts industry sector, and improve their contribution to the sustainable development of the country. The stakeholders of the project include: National Task Force: an inter‐ministerial technical committee, whose members are technical experts drawn from relevant ministries, departments and agencies. Uganda National Commission for UNESCO will be the Secretariat of the Taskforce.

These include:

* Ministry of Gender, Labor and Social
* Uganda National Commission for UNESCO
* National Crafts Association of Uganda
* The Uganda National Cultural Centre
* Ministry of Tourism, Wildlife and Antiquities
* Ministry of Education and Sports (NCDC/Vocational qualifications framework secretariat)
* The Export Promotion Board
* The Private Sector Foundation
* University of Makerere, Arts and Culture Department

**1.3 Overall and specific objectives**

Uganda’s handicraft sector development is characterized by low production levels, lack of specialization, inconsistent product standardization and quality, inadequate skills in design, marketing, packaging, lack of appreciation of market preferences and requirements. Therefore, the overall objective is to support the government of Uganda in building the capacity of crafts workers in artistic, creativity, design, standardization, quality and marketing and management skills for economic empowerment and sustainable development. The government is best placed to demonstrate the leadership necessary to support the development and promotion of the creative industries sector, in particular the crafts sector.

**The specific objectives are:**

* To identify, promote and safeguard traditional know‐how in crafts making in the diverse cultural expressions;
* To build the capacity of crafts workers in artistic design, management and marketing skills in order to improve their business acumen for wealth creation through the crafts industry;
* To promote intercultural dialogue and diversity of cultural expressions, respect for aesthetics and traditions;
* To create awareness about the importance and role of the crafts industry in the economic development of the country.

**For more information:**

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