

The Creative Wealth of Nations

Development seen from a more holistic perspective looks beyond the expansion of material means and considers the enrichment of people's lives. The arts are an indispensable asset in taking a comprehensive approach toward the improvement of lives. Incorporating aspects of international trade, education, sustainability, gender, mental health, and social inclusion, *The Creative Wealth of Nations* demonstrates the diverse impact of applying the arts in development to promote meaningful economic and social progress. Patrick Kabanda explores a counterintuitive and largely invisible creative economy: whilst many artists struggle to make ends meet, the arts can also be a promising engine for economic growth. If nations can fully engage their creative wealth manifested in the arts, they are likely to reap major monetary and nonmonetary benefits from their cultural sector. Drawing from his own experience of the support music provided growing up amidst political and economic turmoil in Uganda, Kabanda shows us the benefits of an arts-inclusive approach to development in Africa, and beyond.

PATRICK KABANDA is a Juilliard-trained organist and a Fletcher-trained international affairs professional. He received Juilliard's William Schuman Prize for outstanding achievement and leadership in music in 2003, and from 2012 to 2013 he was a Charles Francis Adams Scholar at The Fletcher School. Besides concertizing and lecturing worldwide, he has taught at Phillips Academy, consulted for the World Bank's Office of the Senior Vice President and Chief Economist, and contributed to the *World Development Report 2016* and UNDP's *Human Development Report 2015*. He was awarded the 2013 Presidential Award for Citizenship and Public Service from Tufts.

The Creative Wealth of Nations

Can the Arts Advance
Development?

PATRICK KABANDA

Foreword by
AMARTYA SEN



CAMBRIDGE
UNIVERSITY PRESS

Cambridge University Press
978-1-108-42357-1 — The Creative Wealth of Nations
Patrick Kabanda, Foreword by Amartya Sen
Frontmatter
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CAMBRIDGE
UNIVERSITY PRESS

University Printing House, Cambridge CB2 8BS, United Kingdom
One Liberty Plaza, 20th Floor, New York, NY 10006, USA
477 Williamstown Road, Port Melbourne, VIC 3207, Australia
314–321, 3rd Floor, Plot 3, Splendor Forum, Jasola District Centre,
New Delhi – 110025, India
79 Anson Road, #06–04/06, Singapore 079906

Cambridge University Press is part of the University of Cambridge.
It furthers the University's mission by disseminating knowledge in the pursuit of
education, learning, and research at the highest international levels of excellence.

www.cambridge.org
Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9781108423571
DOI: 10.1017/9781108528832

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First published 2018

Printed in the United Kingdom by Clays, St Ives plc

A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Names: Kabanda, Patrick, author.

Title: The creative wealth of nations : can the arts advance development? /
Patrick Kabanda, Dr.

Description: New York : Cambridge University Press, 2018. | Includes
bibliographical references and index.

Identifiers: LCCN 2017055355 | ISBN 9781108423571 (hardback)

Subjects: LCSH: Economics – Sociological aspects. | Creative ability in business. |
Cultural industries.

Classification: LCC HM548 .K33 2018 | DDC 650.1–dc23

LC record available at <https://lcn.loc.gov/2017055355>

ISBN 978-1-108-42357-1 Hardback

ISBN 978-1-108-43768-4 Paperback

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accuracy of URLs for external or third-party internet websites referred to
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Cambridge University Press
978-1-108-42357-1 — The Creative Wealth of Nations
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For my mother

Contents

Foreword by Amartya Sen	<i>page</i> ix
Prelude	xi
Acknowledgments	xiii
OVERTURE	
From Sustainable to Meaningful Development: The Role of the Arts	1
PART I THE ARTS, THE ECONOMY, AND DEVELOPMENT	
1 An Untapped and Unmeasured Economy: On the Value of the Arts	15
2 Arts in Education: Cultivating Creative Minds for Development	44
3 The Arts and Environmental Stewardship	67
PART II TRADE IN SERVICES: A THREE-PART SUITE	
4 International Trade in Cultural Services	81
5 Artists without Borders in the Digital Age	116
6 On Cultural Tourism	138

viii CONTENTS

PART III VARIATIONS ON A THEME	
7 The Unsettled Question of Women in the Performing Arts	161
8 The Arts in Mental Health, Social Healing, and Urban Renewal	177
PART IV RONDO: A ROUND-UP OF DATA	
9 Creative Data Collection	199
FINALE	
On Imagination and Choice	221
Annexes	225
Notes	235
Glossary of Selected Musical Terms	272
References	275
Index	315

Foreword

How can the arts promote development? At one level, the answer is absolutely obvious. Development seen in a human perspective, rather than grossly in terms of the expansion of material means, must take note of the enrichment of people's lives. The arts cannot but have a major role in making our lives richer and finer. In this sense, the creative wealth represented by the tradition and practice of the arts is constitutively a part of the process of development.

Despite the obviousness, this basic point is worth stressing, since the temptation to impoverish the understanding of the inclusive nature of development by an exclusive concentration on material objects or convenience, rather than the quality of human lives, is distressingly common in the literature of growth and development.

This, however, is only the beginning of a complex story, and it is the larger account with which Patrick Kabanda is concerned in his brilliant analysis of the arts and how they can promote development in many different ways. If the poorer countries of the world, thoroughly challenged as they are with many economic, social, political, and medical problems, have to search rationally for channels of progress and enrichment of human lives, the role of music, drama, dance, and other such activities has to be seen *also* in terms of their economic contributions, among the other benefits they provide.

Kabanda brings out how the arts can enrich the economies of the world, even when they are stricken by material poverty: Through generating saleable commodities from which the world can benefit and for which the rest of humanity would be ready to make a material contribution, thereby enriching the economic life of people in poorer nations. The complementarity between the economic and the cultural is a major theme of this book, and Kabanda has brought out beautifully

X FOREWORD

how the two could be viewed together in understanding the role of the arts in *The Creative Wealth of Nations*.

Kabanda writes with great facility and clarity. I am impressed to see how his well-known skills as a musician – and Patrick Kabanda has exceptional musical talents with tremendous creativity – can easily be combined with his proficiency in describing difficult problems and their solutions in a lucid and powerfully communicable form.

This is a lovely book on a very important subject. It is fun to read and to reflect on, but it is also an immensely important contribution to the broadening of the understanding of the process of development and human progress. The battle to eradicate poverty need not be seen as an exercise of blood, sweat, and tears. Julius Caesar complained about Cassius, “He hears no music; seldom he smiles.” Music and smiling are important not only for a livable human life, but also as a part of a creative process, which has profound economic and social implications, even as it enhances cultural lives. The celebration of creativity in the arts can work hand in hand with the appreciation of the diverse sources of economic progress.

Amartya Sen

Prelude

When I was a child, I lived in two worlds. The first world was a creative one, filled with music, a teeming treasure of sounds that stretched from church to nature. It included thunderous organ chords, melodious tube fiddles, and raspy frog choruses. My second world, meanwhile, was more sober in nature, marked with political instability, hardships, and poverty. These two worlds came together in a loud cacophony that is my home country, Uganda.

Like many so-called developing countries, Uganda is no stranger to strife. As the story often goes, many of us grew up wearing imported second-hand clothes, which some say crashed our textile industry. Many of us walked to school for miles barefoot, only to be spanked for lateness or poor grades. Potholes ruled the roads (they still do), turning some streets into muddy swimming pools after heavy rains.

The list of problems goes on and on, frequently overshadowing the reality and progress of developing countries, and detracting from the visibility of their creative wealth. As a musician, the arts world helped me understand how culture can enrich our lives. When HIV/AIDS descended on Uganda, infecting even fellow classmates who were just coming of age, a Ugandan singer, Philly Lutaaya, took it upon himself to sing messages raising awareness of the disease across the country. When artillery rocked my home city of Kampala, escaping to sing in a choir kept my spirits high. When I was hungry, I bought food using income from playing and teaching music. Simply put, my first world guarded me; it overrode my second world.

I was fortunate to escape my second world and to continue my education in the United States. After studying music at The Juilliard School in New York and teaching at Phillips Academy in Massachusetts, intrigued by my “two-world” experience, I began to consider the possibility of mobilizing the arts behind development, in Africa and elsewhere. And so, I decided to complement my music

vocation with studies in international affairs. The idea was to explore how creative output promotes development. The outcome was a thesis on music and international trade and more recently, a working paper that became the basis for this book.

The Creative Wealth of Nations considers both monetary and nonmonetary contributions of the arts to development. Drawing on examples from around the world, it touches on such areas as arts education, environmental stewardship, intellectual property, nation branding, digital technology, tourism, gender equality, mental health, social healing, urban renewal, and creative data collection.

Heeding advice from my writing guru, William Zinsser, I more or less pivot on the performing arts just to bite off one corner of the subject I can chew over now to sustain my zest. By the performing arts, I mean generally dance, drama, and music. Although most examples in this book center on music, examples from dance, theater, and movies are also provided. For the sake of readers unfamiliar with some musical terms, I provide a glossary for those used here.

The book, however, has a comprehensive purpose. It takes a broader perspective – namely, it deals with the performing arts as an exemplar of the wider contribution of the arts to human welfare. After all, from architecture to dance, painting to poetry, the arts tend to feed off each other. This is true, whether they inspire us to innovate, deal with the inevitable, or push us to not only ask questions, but also critically assess the answers we get.

The message of this book rings loud and clear: the importance of the arts is undervalued. As someone whose life has been enriched by music, I must join those challenging this undervaluation, building a case for a strategy that captures the diverse contributions of culture to human welfare. Such creative wealth can unleash all sorts of possibilities – possibilities that harmonize with what meaningful development is all about. That what motivated me to focus on this subject was fueled by personal conviction is to concur with Robert and Michèle Root-Bernstein that feeling and intuition are not impediments to rational thought. They lie at the heart of its foundation.

Acknowledgments

This book draws on my working paper called “The Creative Wealth of Nations” and other related research. I am grateful for the support from former World Bank Senior Vice President and Chief Economist Kaushik Basu, whose intellect and compassion I much admire.

Many investigations that led me to work with Basu germinated at The Fletcher School, where, under Carsten Kowalczyk, I wrote my thesis “Where Culture Leads, Trade Follows,” a work on advancing Ugandan music in international trade in services. I recall our debates on the lack of data and what to include and what to exclude. Of particular note is the fact that Amartya Sen encouraged me to engage with the World Bank on this rather unusual subject matter in the field of modern economic thought. As we joked, he wanted to make sure that I sit at the right hand of the chief economist. I have very much learned from Sen, whose book *Development as Freedom* greatly anchored my thinking, and whose intellectual guidance and kindness I admire – he could easily write another book called *Development as Kindness* or *Development as Compassion*. And, speaking of Sen, his faculty assistant, Chie Ri, who dealt with countless emails and assisted in a variety of matters, remains as helpful as ever.

I have had the great luck of having people – some friends, some strangers – who have provided useful comments. These include Karole Armitage, Jessica Hoffmann Davis, Alicia Hammond, Sunil Iyengar, Anna Langdell, Sheila Braka Musiime, Elly Oloo Nyamwaya, Blair A. Ruble, Nandana Sen, Craig Whitney, whose editing prowess no doubt improved the readability of the book, and Daniel Willingham. Many thanks also to the anonymous reviewers. Their comments greatly enabled me to improve the manuscript.

My research for the United Nations Development Programme’s *Human Development Report 2015* pushed me to examine the

xiv ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

question of women in creative work. Many thanks to Astra Bonini, Selim Jahan, and Shantanu Mukherjee for the opportunity to work with their team and for their comments. Uwe Deichmann gave me an opportunity to contribute to the *World Development Report 2016* and also commented on my background paper on music for development in the digital age.

Many thanks to Laurie Carter, the former vice president for Arts Education at the New Jersey Performing Arts Center (NJPAC) for inviting me to write reports for the Center's arts education digital strategy. Also, thanks to Alison Scott-Williams, the current vice president for Arts Education, and to John Schreiber, the Center's president and CEO, for reviewing my discussion on NJPAC's contribution to Newark's renewal.

I am grateful to all whose insights and comments enriched my analysis. They include: former World Bank president James D. Wolfensohn, Abdul-Rahman B. Akande, Trine Bille, William Caruso, Diane Coyle, Maitreyi B. Das, Sylvie Debomy, Shanta Devarajan, Makthar Diop, Morten Jerven, Joost de Laat, Neil Fantom, Benny Gandy, Colum Garrity, Bodel A. Gnintedem, Phillip J. Hay, Jeremy Andrew Hillman, Samali Kajubi, Laurent Kemoe, Guido Licciardi, Shiva S. Makki, Gerardo Martinez-Freyssinier, Peter G. Moll, Edward Mountfield, Josses Mugabi, Maelle Noe, Fabio Pittaluga, Vijayendra Rao, Dilip Ratha, Felipe Buitrago Restrepo, Natalie Schorr, Joseph Senyonjo, Sally Torbert, Giorgio Valentini, and Albert G. Zeufack; and Professors Miguel E. Basáñez, Diana Chigas, Jeanne Fromer, John Hammock, the late Gerre Hancock, Alan K. Henrikson, Karen Jacobsen, Ian Johnstone, the late Calestous Juma, Harjeet Khosla, Lawrence Krohn, Nathalie Laidler-Kylander, the late William Martel, Greg Morris, Robert Nakosteen, the late Marilyn Neeley, Peter M. Rojcewicz, Jeswald W. Salacuse, Julie Schaffner, Bernard L. Simonin, Charlie W. Steele, Joel P. Trachtman, Christopher Tunnard, John Weaver, Michael Woolcock, and Samuel Zyman.

While at Phillips Academy, Temba and Vuyelwa Maqubela encouraged me to research the role of music as social action in

southern Africa. I am equally indebted to the musicians I interviewed, especially J. S. Mzilikazi Khumalo and Richard Cock. Berklee College of Music President Roger H. Brown and Juilliard President Joseph W. Polisi accepted my invitation to speak at Fletcher via the Charles Francis Adams Lecture series. Their ideas on the arts and international affairs strengthened my thoughts on why this topic matters. Also, thanks Paulett Folkins and Karen Mollung for arranging these lectures, and to Dean Gerard F. Sheehan, whose office made these visits possible. I had brief but useful discussions with Harvard's Howard Gardner and Joseph Nye, and I wish to acknowledge their interest in my ideas.

At the World Bank, and Stephen MacGroarty and David Rosenblatt considered my initial draft. I received logistical support from several people, including Dipankar M. Bhanot, Laverne L. Cook, Saida D. Gall, Gabriela E. Calderon Motta, Mikael Ello Reventar, Mihaela Stangu, Jason Victor, and Roula I. Yazigi. Meanwhile, Nancy Morrison edited my previous draft and worked way more than she was contracted to do.

At Cambridge University Press, I am grateful to the team, including the commissioning editor Phil Good and his assistants, Toby Ginsberg and James Gregory, for their contribution to this project. Many thanks also to the content manager, Bethany Johnson, for working swiftly on getting the book through the press, and to the commissioning editor, Maria Marsh, my initial contact at the Press. A word of thanks must also go to Arc Indexing, Inc. and others whose services were invaluable, including the copy-editor, Matthew Bastock, and the production manager, Saranya Jeeva Nath Singh of Integra. Also, a number of organizations and scholars, from Geneva to Tokyo, Nashville to Varna, granted me permission to use their research, including illustrations and excerpts. Long live their generous gestures.

Many people have helped this book move from strength to strength. Since our memory is bounded, as Hebert Simon said, I apologize to anyone I have missed, but I am thankful to the following

xvi ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

individuals: the Hon. Arthur Bagunywa, Barnard Birungi, the late Saulo B. Bulega, Mary Belanger, Christy Scott Cashman, Charlie Clements, Nick Danforth, Karen L. Dean, Susu Durst, Neil and Hannah Fairbairn, Haishan Fu, Ellen M. Greenberg, Johanna Grüssner, Lillemor Grüssner Sarah Jackson-Han, Jim Hellinger, Helen T. Herpel, Yuko Hori, Elizabeth Joseph, the late Senteza Kajubi, Fred E. Kirumira, Jim and Louise Kamihachi, David Katuramu, Gregory Kee, Claudia Krinsky, Margo Lamb, Patty Lemmerman, Henry Lippincott, Glenn Little, Ellen E. Mashiko, Maria Matovu, Nancy Miller, Derek and Linda Mithaug, Tariq Muhammad, Budala Mukasa, James Mulondo, Angela Musoke, the late Frank Mwine, Don and Sarah Myracle, Fr. Francisco Nahoe, Fatuma Nalubwama, Dale and Connie Nash, Deborah Nash, George and Mary Neureither, Tony Newman, Takemichi Okui, Carroll Perry, Pete and Ronnie Peterman, Gerard Pierce, Wayne and Barbro Pollock, the late Nathaniel E. Porter, Bertie and Natalie Ray III, Catherine Rielly, Brad Rockwell, Pete Sauerbrey, Andrew Scott, Patrick Scott, Miriam Seltzer, Kanthan Shankar, Doug and Linda Sjostrom, Dirk ten Brink, Philip Theruvakattil, Robert and Elizabeth Torregrossa, Jonathan Vickery, the late Bishop Orris G. Walker, Nathaniel Waxman, Carol Weisel, Dale and Dorothy Whetter, Greg Williams, the late Ralph C. and Barbara T. Williams, Craig and Heidi Whitney, James Wolford, Jean P. Young, and members of the English Chapel, St. Mary Anne's Episcopal Church, and Trinity Episcopal Arlington.

I dedicate this book to my mother, Gladys Nalwoga, who dealt with a kid who wanted to do nothing but play music. Ugandan music geniuses Samuel Kimuli and Michaiah Mukiibi inspired my artistic aspirations, causing one spectator to comment: "It is as if their fingers itch if they do not play music!" My fingers have yet to itch from playing music. But they might have itched from writing this book. I will therefore have reason to feel well rewarded if readers will find this discussion meaningful and act on advancing the arts in development.