



Mapping of the Mauritian creative ecosystem

⁰¹ Overview of the **British Council**

1.1 Introduction to the British Council

The British Council is the United Kingdom's international organisation for cultural relations and educational opportunities, operating in over 100 countries. In Mauritius, it supports the growth of the Culture and Creative Industries (CCI) through capacity building, international collaborations and fostering cultural expression.

Its initiatives aim to amplify the economic, social and cultural impact of the creative industries, positioning them as vital contributors to Mauritius' national development. The organisation plays a key role in bridging local talent with global opportunities, thereby enhancing the cultural ecosystem.



+100

Operating
countries



Contents

| | |
|---|----|
| 1. Overview of the British Council | 2 |
| 1.1 Introduction to the British Council | 2 |
| 2. Introduction | 8 |
| 2.1 Mauritius' cultural context | 8 |
| 3. Summary of the purpose, objectives and questions | 9 |
| 3.1 Purpose of the report | 9 |
| 3.2 Objectives of the report | 10 |
| 3.3 Key research questions | 11 |
| 4. Methodology of the research | 12 |
| 4.1 Research approach | 12 |
| 4.2 Qualitative and quantitative data collection | 13 |
| 4.3 Stakeholder involvement | 13 |

| | |
|---|----|
| 5. The Mauritius creative cultural ecosystem | 14 |
| 5.1 Background and historical context | 14 |
| 5.2 Key cultural movements and creative enterprises | 15 |
| 6. Roles in the creative ecosystem | 16 |
| 6.1 Key sectors of the creative ecosystem | 16 |
| 6.2 Sector-specific analysis | 17 |
| 6.3 The role of educational institutions, government agencies and NGOs | 18 |
| 7. The Interplay of heritage, innovation and socio-economic development | 19 |
| 7.1 Heritage and its influence on the creative industries | 19 |
| 7.2 Innovation in the Mauritian creative sector | 21 |
| 7.3 Impact on socio-economic development | 22 |
| 8. Key sectors within the creative ecosystem | 23 |
| 8.1 Visual arts | 23 |
| 8.1.1 Introduction to the visual arts sector | 23 |
| 8.1.2 Main representatives and institutions | 24 |
| 8.1.3 Links and overlaps with other sectors | 27 |
| 8.1.4 SWOT analysis | 28 |
| 8.1.5 Talking points | 31 |
| 8.1.6 Key recommendations for the visual arts sector | 31 |
| 8.1.7 Case study | 33 |
| 8.1.8 Concluding insights | 35 |
| 8.2 Music | 36 |
| 8.2.1 Introduction to the music sector | 36 |
| 8.2.2 Main representatives and institutions | 37 |
| 8.2.3 Links and overlaps with other sectors | 39 |
| 8.2.4 SWOT analysis | 41 |
| 8.2.5 Talking points | 43 |
| 8.2.6 Key recommendations for the music sector | 44 |
| 8.2.7 Case study | 45 |
| 8.2.8 Concluding insights | 28 |
| 8.3 Performing arts | 49 |
| 8.3.1 Introduction to the performing arts sector | 49 |

| | |
|--|----|
| 8.3.2 Main representatives and institutions | 50 |
| 8.3.3 Links and overlaps with other sectors | 51 |
| 8.3.4 SWOT analysis | 52 |
| 8.3.5 Talking points | 54 |
| 8.3.6 Performing arts recommendations | 54 |
| 8.3.7 Case study | 55 |
| 8.3.8 Concluding insights | 57 |
| 8.4 Craft | 58 |
| 8.4.1 Introduction to the craft sector | 58 |
| 8.4.2 Main representatives and institutions | 59 |
| 8.4.3 Links and overlaps with other sectors | 60 |
| 8.4.4 SWOT analysis | 61 |
| 8.4.5 Talking points | 63 |
| 8.4.6 Key recommendations for the craft sector | 63 |
| 8.4.7 Case study | 65 |
| 8.4.8 Concluding insights | 67 |
| 8.5 Film and multimedia | 68 |
| 8.5.1 Introduction to the film and multimedia sector | 68 |
| 8.5.2 Main representatives and institutions | 69 |
| 8.5.3 Links and overlaps with other sectors | 71 |
| 8.5.4 SWOT analysis | 72 |
| 8.5.5 Talking points | 73 |
| 8.5.6 Key recommendations for the film and multimedia sector | 74 |
| 8.5.7 Case study | 75 |
| 8.5.8 Concluding insights | 77 |
| 8.6 New media | 78 |
| 8.6.1 Introduction to the new media sector | 78 |
| 8.6.2 Main representatives and institutions | 80 |
| 8.6.3 Links and overlaps with other sectors | 82 |
| 8.6.4 SWOT analysis | 83 |
| 8.6.5 Talking points | 85 |
| 8.6.6 Key recommendations for the new media sector | 85 |
| 8.6.7 Case study | 87 |
| 8.6.8 Concluding insights | 89 |
| 8.7 Literature | 90 |
| 8.7.1 Introduction to the literature sector | 90 |
| 8.7.2 Main representatives and institutions | 92 |

| | |
|---|------------|
| 8.7.3 Links and overlaps with other sectors | 95 |
| 8.7.4 SWOT analysis | 96 |
| 8.7.5 Talking points | 98 |
| 8.7.6 Key recommendations for the literature sector | 98 |
| 8.7.7 Case study | 100 |
| 8.7.8 Concluding insights | 102 |
| 8.8 Fashion and design | 103 |
| 8.8.1 Introduction to the fashion and design sector | 103 |
| 8.8.2 Main representatives and institutions | 104 |
| 8.8.3 Links and overlaps with other sectors | 106 |
| 8.8.4 SWOT analysis | 108 |
| 8.8.5 Talking points | 110 |
| 8.8.6 Key recommendations for the fashion and design sector | 110 |
| 8.8.7 Case study | 111 |
| 8.8.8 Concluding insights | 113 |
| 8.9 Other sectors | 114 |
| 8.9.1 Introduction to the 'other' sector | 114 |
| 8.9.2 Main representatives and institutions | 114 |
| 8.9.3 Links and overlaps with other sectors | 116 |
| 8.9.4 SWOT analysis | 117 |
| 8.9.5 Talking points | 119 |
| 8.9.6 Key recommendations for the 'other' sector | 119 |
| 8.9.7 Case study | 121 |
| 8.9.8 Concluding insights | 123 |
| 9. Unlocking potential - Creative producers | 124 |
| 9.1 Introduction to creative producers | 124 |
| 9.2 Challenges faced by cultural producers | 126 |
| 9.3 Concluding insights | 128 |
| 10. Industry highlights: findings and recommendations | 129 |
| 10.1 The rise of interdisciplinary innovation in Mauritius' creative industries | 129 |
| 10.2 SWOT analysis of the interdisciplinary sector | 130 |
| 10.3 Concluding insights | 131 |
| 11. Sustainability and growth in CCIs | 132 |
| 11.1 Findings on sustainability in the CCIs | 132 |
| 11.2 Recommendations for advancing sustainability in CCIs | 134 |
| 11.3 Concluding insights | 135 |

| | |
|--|-----|
| 12. Navigating language in creative sectors | 136 |
| 12.1 Language dynamics in creative sectors | 136 |
| 12.2 Recommendations for overcoming language barriers in CCIIs | 137 |
| 12.3 Concluding insights | 137 |
| 13. Sector perspectives: Mauritius' creative economy | 138 |
| 13.1 Concluding insights | 139 |
| 14. Sector engagement insights in Mauritius' CCIIs | 140 |
| 14.1 Concluding insights | 141 |
| 15. Capacity building for Mauritius' creative industry | 142 |
| 15.1 Concluding insights | 144 |
| 16. Key funding gaps in Mauritius' creative sector | 145 |
| 16.1 Concluding insights | 147 |
| 17. Operational strategies and sustainability models | 148 |
| 17.1 Business models | 149 |
| 17.2 Scaling model opportunities | 151 |
| 17.3 Conclusion | 155 |
| 18. Closing summary and future outlook | 156 |
| 18.1 Vision for the future | 156 |
| 18.2 Final reflections and insights | 157 |
| 18.3 Findings from other reports | 158 |
| 18.4 Path forward | 161 |
| 19. References | 162 |

02 Introduction

2.1 Mauritius' cultural context

Mauritius, celebrated for its breathtaking landscapes and rich cultural heritage, also features a dynamic Culture and Creative Industries (CCI) sector that significantly contributes to its socio-economic development. This report, developed through research from March to October 2024, explores the CCIs of Mauritius, highlighting key areas for creative practitioners and mapping the cultural ecosystem. The study emphasises the importance of collaboration with local and international stakeholders from Africa, the UK and beyond.

The analysis also focuses on both physical and virtual spaces that facilitate cultural expression, and profiles institutions and NGOs active within the Mauritian creative economy. Through this research, the report identifies critical gaps and offers actionable recommendations to enhance British Council initiatives in support of Mauritius' CCIs.



03 Summary of the **purpose, objectives and questions**

3.1 Purpose of the report

The purpose of this report is to deliver a comprehensive analysis of the CCI in Mauritius and to provide insights into how this sector affects the socio-economic landscape of the island. The specific aims of the report are to:

- **Assess the current landscape:** Map existing cultural ecosystems and identify major players and sectors within the creative industries.
- **Identify areas for growth:** Highlight gaps in the market, recommending areas where further investment and policy support are needed.
- **Enhance collaboration:** Foster better engagement among local creatives and international partners, enhancing the global connectivity of the Mauritian creative economy.
- **Inform policy and decision-making:** Offer data-driven recommendations for policymakers to strengthen support for the CCIs.
- **Drive innovation and sustainability:** Explore ways to ensure the creative industries' sustainability and growth in the long term.



3.2 Objectives of the report

The objectives of this report are to:

- 1. Map the cultural ecosystem:** Provide a detailed overview of the cultural and creative industries in Mauritius, including the identification of key stakeholders, institutions and sectors that shape the creative landscape.
- 2. Highlight opportunities for growth:** Identify areas where the cultural and creative industries can expand, emphasising gaps in resources, market demand and potential for further development.
- 3. Strengthen stakeholder collaboration:** Facilitate improved partnerships between local creatives, cultural institutions and international partners, aiming to enhance cultural exchange and collaboration within the region and beyond.
- 4. Support policy development:** Offer actionable insights to assist policymakers in forming strategies that nurture and sustain the growth of Mauritius' cultural and creative industries.
- 5. Encourage sustainable practices:** Promote sustainable models for growth and innovation within the creative sector, ensuring that development is both economically viable and environmentally responsible in the long term.
- 6. Expand cultural accessibility:** Explore and document both physical and virtual spaces for cultural expression, aiming to increase accessibility and participation in cultural activities across the island.

3.3 Key research questions

1. Sector overview and integration:

What are the strengths and weaknesses of the CCIs in Mauritius and how are they integrated into key sectors like tourism, education and technology?

2. Barriers and policy effectiveness:

What challenges do creative practitioners face and how effective are current policies in promoting and supporting the CCIs?

3. Opportunities for growth: What opportunities exist for international collaboration and how can digital transformation support the growth of CCIs?

4. Sub-sector needs and sustainability:

What specific needs do sub-sectors within the CCIs have and how can sustainability be integrated into their development?

5. Educational support and cultural inclusivity:

How can education support the growth of CCIs and how can these industries promote cultural inclusivity?



04 Methodology of the research

4.1 Research approach

To meet the objectives and answer the research questions, this study employed a combination of qualitative and quantitative research methods, ensuring a holistic understanding of Mauritius' creative landscape. The methodology included:

- 1. Desktop research:** Reviewing literature and existing reports on the Mauritian creative economy to establish foundational knowledge and identify trends.
- 2. Case studies:** Examining successful initiatives within Mauritius' CCIs to extract best practices and lessons learned.
- 3. Surveys:** Distributing surveys to creative practitioners aged 18 to 65 to gather quantitative data on their experiences, needs and challenges.

4. Interviews: Conducting in-depth interviews with stakeholders, such as policymakers, industry experts and creative practitioners, to gain qualitative insights.

5. Roundtable discussions: Hosting discussions with local and international stakeholders to identify collaboration opportunities.

6. Site visits: Exploring physical and virtual spaces for creative expressions, assessing their role in the broader cultural ecosystem.

This mixed-method approach allowed for comprehensive data collection, ensuring that diverse voices and perspectives were represented.



4.2 Qualitative and quantitative data collection

The research combined both qualitative and quantitative data collection techniques to ensure a thorough understanding of the creative and cultural industries (CCIs) in Mauritius. Qualitative data was gathered through interviews, case studies and round-table discussions, providing in-depth insights into the experiences and perspectives of creative practitioners and stakeholders. Quantitative data was collected through surveys distributed to practitioners aged 18 to 35, enabling the identification of trends, needs and challenges across the sector.

4.3 Stakeholder involvement

Stakeholder involvement was a key component of this research, ensuring that the findings were rooted in the realities of those directly affected by the creative industries. Stakeholders included policymakers, industry experts, creative practitioners and representatives from local and international organisations. Their participation in interviews, round-table discussions and site visits provided valuable insights into the challenges and opportunities within the CCIs, helping to shape recommendations that are relevant and actionable.

⁰⁵ The Mauritius creative **cultural ecosystem**

5.1 Background and historical context

Mauritius is renowned for its vibrant cultural diversity, shaped by a rich tapestry of African, Indian, European and Asian influences. This unique cultural heritage forms the foundation of the country's Culture and Creative Industries (CCIs), which are vital to national identity and socio-economic growth. These industries span a wide range of artistic and cultural expressions – from traditional crafts to modern digital media –contributing to social cohesion, economic opportunities reflecting the island's diverse history.

The cultural landscape of Mauritius is profoundly shaped by its complex history of colonisation and immigration. Successive periods of Dutch, French and British colonisation, along with waves of African, Indian and Chinese immigration, have resulted in a vibrant cultural mosaic. The blend of traditions, languages and religious practices continues to shape the island's creative sectors, providing a strong foundation for a thriving CCI ecosystem.





5.2 Key cultural movements and creative enterprises

Several cultural movements and creative enterprises are central to shaping Mauritius' creative ecosystem:

- **Sega music and dance:** Rooted in African and Malagasy traditions, sega has evolved into an iconic cultural expression, symbolising Mauritius' rich heritage through music and dance.
- **Indo-Mauritian culture:** The Indo-Mauritian community has significantly contributed to the cultural landscape with festivals, music and classical dance forms such as Bharatanatyam and Bhojpuri music.
- **Creole language and literature:** Creole serves as a key medium of cultural expression, with a growing literary scene exploring themes of identity, heritage and the post-colonial experience.
- **Visual arts and craftsmanship:** Visual arts, including painting, sculpture and textile arts, draw inspiration from the island's natural beauty and cultural diversity, providing platforms for both traditional craft and contemporary works.
- **Cultural festivals and events:** Festivals like The Kreol International Festival promote community engagement and serve as platforms for artistic innovation, bringing local talent into the international spotlight.
- **Creative entrepreneurship:** Entrepreneurs in fashion, design and digital media leverage Mauritius' cultural heritage to create innovative products that resonate locally and globally, driving economic growth.



⁰⁶ Roles in the **creative ecosystem**

6.1 Key sectors of the creative ecosystem

The Mauritian CCI ecosystem spans multiple sectors, each contributing to the overall vibrancy and economic impact of the creative industries:

- | | | |
|-------------------|-----------------------|----------------------|
| 1 Visual arts | 4 Craft | 7 Literature |
| 2 Music | 5 Film and multimedia | 8 Fashion and design |
| 3 Performing arts | 6 New media | 9 Other/emerging |

6.2 Sector-specific analysis

Roles in the creative ecosystem

1

Enablers

Schools, clubs and programmes provide essential education and training for building the professional capacities of artists and fostering emerging talent

2

Creators

Artists, curators, writers and practitioners generate cultural and artistic content, forming the backbone of the ecosystem

3

Businesses

Managers, publishers and retailers distribute resources and provide platforms for creative work to reach wider audiences

4

Facilitators

Cultural hubs, NGOs and centres foster collaboration, provide resources and showcase artists' work

5

Consumers

Artists and the public engage with and support cultural content, offering feedback and financial backing



6.3 The role of educational institutions, government agencies and NGOs

The ecosystem is supported by various actors, each playing a crucial role in facilitating the growth and sustainability of Mauritius' creative industries:

Entities identified

- **Individual artists:** painters, musicians, performers, writers, and filmmakers.
- **Organisations:** art galleries, music studios, production houses, design studios.
- **Institutions:** educational entities like Mahatma Gandhi Institute, University of Mauritius and governmental bodies.
- **Informal groups:** community-based collectives, grassroots networks and craft cooperatives.
- **Private sector players:** corporate sponsors, private galleries and studios.
- **International collaborators:** foreign cultural institutions such as the British Council, Alliance Française and Goethe-Institut.

Roles and functions

- Individual creators innovate and express cultural identity.
- Organisations and institutions facilitate training, production and exhibitions.
- Informal groups promote accessibility and inclusivity.
- Private sector and international collaborators drive economic opportunities and global reach.

Characteristics

Defining features:

- **Scale:** predominantly small to medium-sized entities with a focus on localised impact.
- **Scope of work:** multidisciplinary, covering traditional and modern art forms.
- **Focus areas:**
 - **Visual arts:** reflects cultural identity through painting, sculpture and digital art.
 - **Music:** a blend of traditional (sega) and contemporary genres (EDM, jazz)
 - **Performing arts:** integrates traditional dances like sega with modern theatre and multidisciplinary performances.
 - **Craft:** heritage-based weaving, pottery and basketry infused with modern trends.
 - **Film and multimedia:** focuses on local storytelling and international collaborations.
 - **New media:** experiments with AR/VR, digital art and interactive experiences.
 - **Literature:** explores themes of identity and post-colonialism.
 - **Fashion and design:** blends traditional textiles with sustainable practices
 - **Emerging sectors:** culinary arts, interactive storytelling and digital innovations.
- **Operational strategies:** heavy reliance on collaborations, resource-sharing and digital platforms for global reach.



07 The interplay of heritage, **innovation and socio-economic development**

7.1 Heritage and its influence on the creative industries

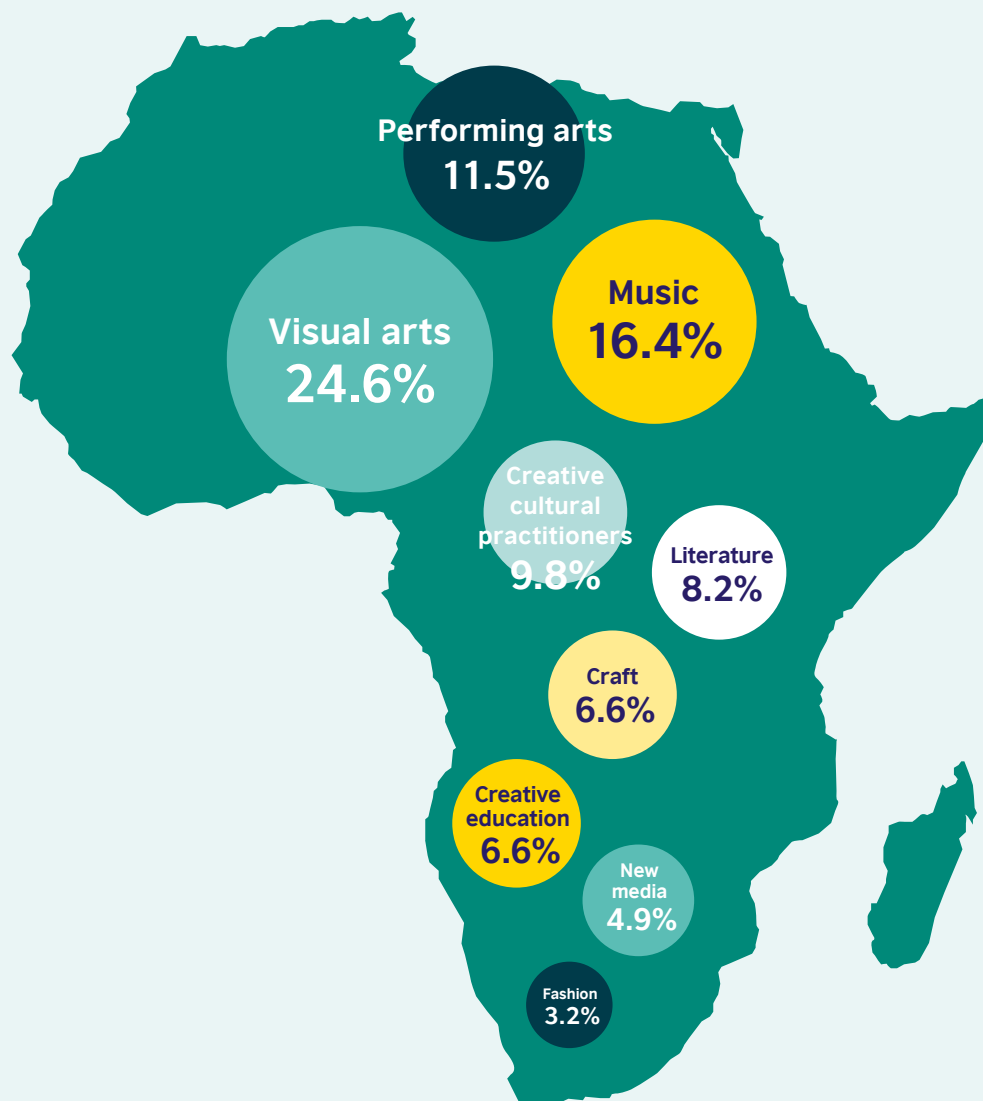
Mauritius' creative industries thrive on the interplay between cultural heritage and artistic innovation. This dynamic relationship manifests in various sectors, contributing to both social cohesion and economic growth. Traditional forms of music, dance, cuisine and visual arts preserve the island's multicultural identity, while innovations in digital media, contemporary art and creative entrepreneurship position Mauritius as a cultural hub in the region.

- **Music and dance:** Traditional genres (like sega) and modern adaptations (like seggae) incorporate social commentary, addressing issues of identity and inequality while resonating with contemporary audiences.
- **Cuisine:** Mauritian cuisine is a fusion of African, Indian, Chinese and European influences, reflecting the island's multicultural heritage. Culinary innovation continues to evolve, with local ingredients being integrated into global cuisine.
- **Visual arts:** The visual arts sector plays a critical role in reflecting Mauritius' cultural and environmental narratives, with public art initiatives providing spaces for artistic engagement.
- **Cultural festivals:** Festivals celebrating cultural diversity not only foster social cohesion but also drive economic activity, tourism and international collaboration.

Mauritius' rich cultural heritage has laid a strong foundation for a thriving creative economy. Artistic expression, innovation and cultural preservation intersect to create opportunities for economic growth, international collaboration and community development. However, to fully realise the potential of Mauritius' CCI, there is a need to address existing challenges, such as infrastructure development, market access and financial support. By strengthening the roles of enablers, creators, businesses, facilitators and consumers, Mauritius can build a more sustainable and globally connected creative economy.

The cultural diversity and historical depth of Mauritius continue to shape its creative and cultural industries, positioning the island as a dynamic hub for creativity. This unique blend of tradition and innovation drives both economic development and cultural sustainability. By addressing the challenges faced by each sector and fostering collaboration among stakeholders, Mauritius has the potential to further elevate its CCI on both the local and international stage.

Sector breakdown of respondents





7.2 Innovation in the Mauritian creative sector

Innovation within Mauritius' creative industries is a catalyst for growth, leveraging the island's rich cultural heritage and contemporary technological advancements. This section examines the transformative impact of technological innovation, entrepreneurship and cross-sector collaborations as observed through survey responses.

Technological advancements

Adopting advanced technologies like AR, VR and digital platforms has revolutionised the way creative content is produced and consumed in Mauritius. Survey responses indicated a significant uptake of digital tools among artists, allowing them to enhance interaction with audiences and expand their reach both locally and globally. For instance, one respondent highlighted the use of digital galleries to reach international art collectors, demonstrating the sector's innovative approach to overcoming geographic isolation.

Entrepreneurial initiatives

Entrepreneurship is thriving within the creative industries, merging Mauritius' cultural assets with modern business practices. Respondents noted several start-ups in fashion and multimedia that have successfully integrated traditional designs with contemporary mediums. This blend not only preserves cultural heritage but also appeals to global markets, showcasing Mauritius' unique identity through innovative products.

Cross-sector collaboration

The creative industries in Mauritius benefit greatly from collaborations across various sectors. According to survey feedback, partnerships with the tourism sector have been particularly fruitful, with creative enterprises contributing significantly to Mauritius' tourism offerings through cultural festivals and locally made products that attract tourists seeking authentic experiences.

Conclusion

Innovations driven by technology, entrepreneurial spirit and cross-sector collaborations are key to the sustained growth of Mauritius' creative industries. Survey responses underscore the importance of continued support for these innovations to maintain competitiveness and relevance in the global market.

7.3 Impact on socio-economic development

The creative industries in Mauritius significantly contribute to socio-economic development by creating jobs, enhancing social cohesion and promoting cultural preservation. This section reflects on the responses from creative professionals regarding the impact of these industries on Mauritius' socio-economic landscape.

Economic Contributions

Creative industries are vital for economic diversification in Mauritius, offering new job opportunities and generating income. Respondents from the survey highlighted the role of creative sectors in providing sustainable employment to a diverse demographic, including traditionally marginalised groups. One key finding was the creative sector's ability to adapt and thrive even in challenging economic conditions, attributed to its innovative approaches and flexibility.

Cultural Preservation and Social Cohesion

According to the research responses, the creative industries play a crucial role in preserving the cultural heritage of Mauritius. Programmes that focus on traditional crafts and performances help maintain cultural practices that might otherwise be lost.

Additionally, these industries foster a sense of community and belonging, uniting people across different backgrounds through shared cultural expressions.

Enhancing Global Identity

Mauritius' creative industries significantly contribute to the country's global identity, portraying it as a culturally rich and vibrant nation. Participants in the survey noted the success of international cultural exchanges and festivals in promoting Mauritian culture on the global stage, thereby enhancing the country's cultural diplomacy efforts.

Conclusion

The socio-economic impact of Mauritius' creative industries is profound and multi-faceted. As evidenced by the survey, these industries not only support economic growth and job creation but also play a critical role in cultural preservation and in enhancing Mauritius' reputation internationally. Continued investment and policy support are essential to leveraging the full potential of these sectors for sustainable development.

08 Defining sectors of the **creative landscape**

8.1

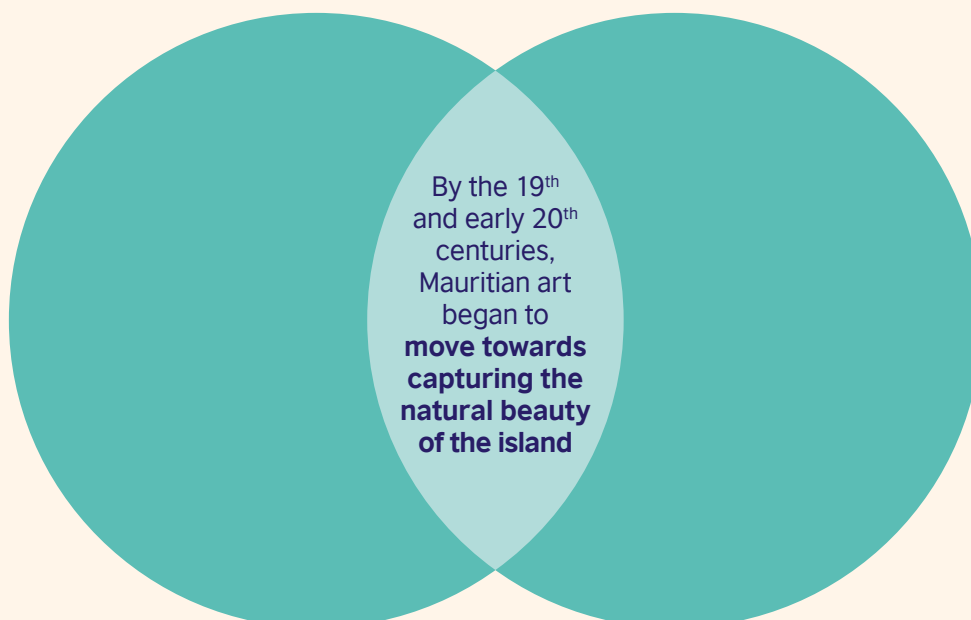
Visual art

8.1.1 Introduction to the visual arts sector

The visual arts sector in Mauritius is a vital and growing facet of the island's broader creative and cultural industries (CCIs). Deeply shaped by the island's history of colonisation, migration and cultural exchange, the visual arts in Mauritius reflect the rich tapestry of influences from Africa, India, China and Europe.

Artists in Mauritius work in diverse mediums such as painting, sculpture, photography, digital art and mixed media, with their creations often mirroring the island's multicultural identity and its ongoing journey towards self-expression and modernity.

Historically, visual arts in Mauritius have roots in both functional and spiritual artistic traditions. Early art was often tied to religious practices, with Indian, African and Chinese settlers creating works for religious rituals and ceremonial purposes. Alongside this, Creole artisans developed ornamental crafts that contributed to the aesthetic and cultural landscape of the island. By the 19th and early 20th centuries, Mauritian art began to move towards capturing the natural beauty of the island, with landscapes and vibrant depictions of daily life becoming common themes. This period played a key role in documenting the tropical ambience and contributing to the formation of a cultural identity tied to Mauritius' natural environment.



As Mauritius moved towards independence in 1968, the visual arts sector began to undergo a transformative shift. Post-independence, artists began to challenge colonial narratives and explore themes related to national identity, cultural self-expression and social commentary. Key figures, such as Firoz Ghanty and Ismet Ganti, who led movements like Groupe 1, sought to create art that resonated with the local population, breaking away from elite and colonialist depictions of Mauritian life. This marked a pivotal moment in the evolution of Mauritian art, as artists began to see their work as a tool for nation-building and cultural assertion.

In recent decades, the visual arts sector has continued to evolve, with contemporary Mauritian artists exploring a broad spectrum of themes, from post-colonial identity to environmental sustainability and the affects of globalisation. New forms of artistic expression have emerged, influenced by global trends and enabled by digital technologies. The government has played a supporting role, launching initiatives, such as the Mauritius Arts Expo and the Artist Incubator Scheme, which have provided platforms for both emerging and established artists to gain exposure and develop their craft.

Today, the visual arts in Mauritius serve as a powerful medium for expressing the island's unique identity and addressing contemporary social, political and environmental issues. The sector is not only a reflection of the island's past but also an active participant in shaping its cultural future. By fostering creativity and innovation, Mauritius' visual arts sector continues to contribute to the country's cultural richness and offers significant potential for both economic growth and international recognition.

8.1.2 Main representatives and Institutions

Support for the visual artists in Mauritius comes from a mix of educational institutions, government agencies, non-profits and cultural organisations. These institutions play a critical role in nurturing local talent, providing educational resources, exhibition opportunities and financial support: all essential to the growth of the visual arts sector.

Educational Institutions

Educational bodies, such as the Mahatma Gandhi Institute and the Mauritius Institute of Education offer comprehensive art programmes that cultivate foundational skills in the visual arts. These institutions also organise workshops, seminars and exhibitions, providing essential platforms for artistic development and public engagement. Additionally, the University of Mauritius contributes to the sector through courses in media and creative arts, while also hosting cultural events and exhibitions that spotlight local talent.

Governmental support and institutions

Government bodies, such as the Mauritius Creative Industries and Intellectual Property Office (MCIPO), play a significant role in supporting artists by advocating for creative professionals and facilitating access to resources, including intellectual property protection. The National Arts Fund provides some financial support to artists, although it is often limited and insufficient to cover full production and exhibition costs. Despite the financial challenges, institutions like the Mauritius Museums Council and the National Heritage Fund work to integrate visual arts into the broader cultural identity of the island, promoting both local talent and the preservation of the nation's artistic heritage.

The National Art Gallery – when functional – has been central to showcasing diverse artistic creations, but the lack of a permanent national gallery remains a significant gap. This limits the visibility of artists and places pressure on a few key venues like the Caudan Arts Centre – a modern performance and arts space that frequently hosts cultural events.

Non-profit organisations and arts associations

Non-profit organisations and arts associations are vital to the ecosystem, providing networking, exhibition opportunities and creative space for artists. CALM – Cool a l'île Maurice for instance, creates a platform organises exhibitions and facilitates artist interactions, fostering a collaborative environment. Various artist residencies further support this by offering space for creative exploration and collaboration, contributing to the growth of artistic talent in Mauritius.

Private galleries and cultural Centres

Private galleries, such as the Imaaya Art Gallery, have contributed to the local arts scene, but many have struggled to remain financially viable due to the small size of the local art market. The closure of several galleries in recent years highlights the difficulty of sustaining a private gallery without consistent market demand.

However, cultural centres like the Nelson Mandela Centre for African Culture Trust Fund provide additional venues for artists to engage with local communities and showcase their work, creating alternative spaces for visibility and interaction.

Foreign cultural institutions and artist collectives

Foreign cultural institutions, such as the Goethe-Institut, Alliance Française and the British Council, are key players in the visual arts sector, supporting both emerging and established artists. These institutions provide platforms for artists to reach wider, more diverse audiences and facilitate cultural exchanges that enrich the local arts scene.

Additionally, Mauritius has seen the emergence of artist collectives that foster community among creatives from various disciplines. These collectives, sometimes formed around specific styles or concepts, offer artists the opportunity to collaborate, share resources and learn together. They serve as important hubs for creativity and experimentation, especially in the absence of more structured governmental support for the arts.



Smart cities as cultural hubs

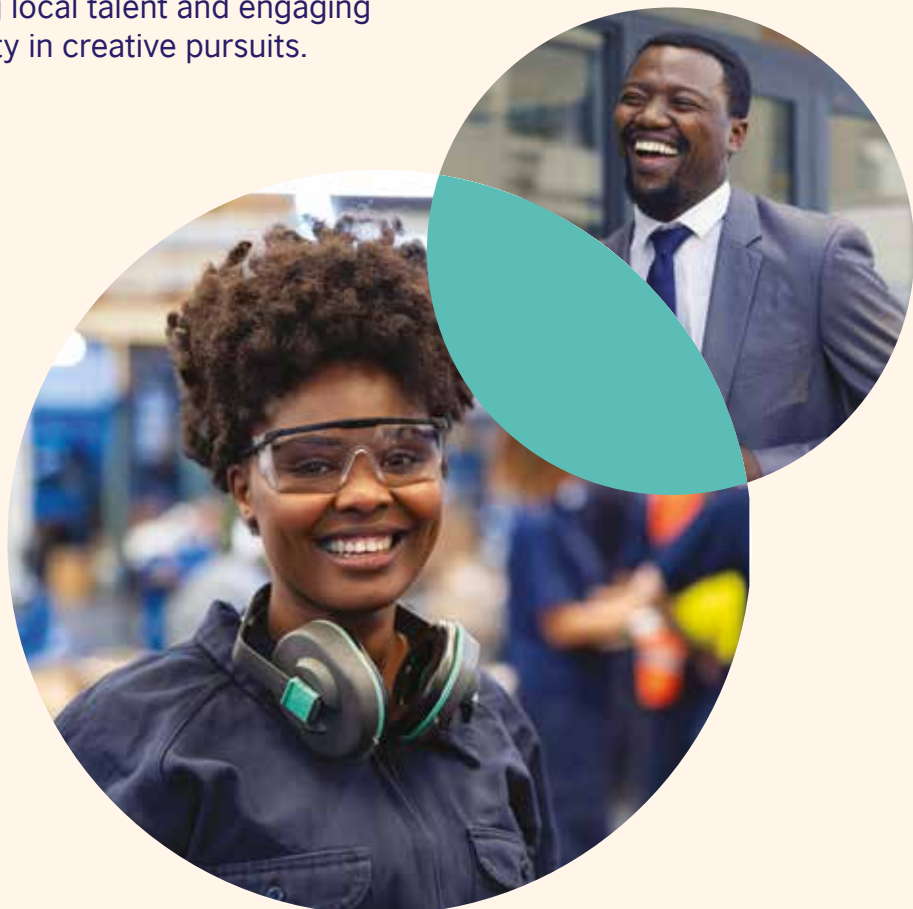
Mauritius' smart cities, such as Moka and Beau Plan, have emerged as vibrant cultural hubs that foster artistic exploration and innovation. These areas are not only designed for economic growth and sustainable living but also prioritise creative expression and cultural diversity.

Moka: a cultural nexus

Moka stands out as a beacon of artistic and cultural activity in Mauritius. Highlighted for its role in fostering creative communities, Moka celebrates cultural diversity through a variety of events, traditions and institutions. The region's commitment to artistic exploration enriches the visual arts scene, making it a significant contributor to Mauritius' cultural landscape. With its focus on blending modern development with cultural heritage, Moka has become a key location for promoting local talent and engaging the community in creative pursuits.

Beau Plan Creative Park: a dynamic cultural space

Beau Plan Creative Park complements Moka as a hub for innovation and culture. This space provides an ecosystem where artists, entrepreneurs and creative professionals can collaborate and thrive. Through workshops, exhibitions and networking opportunities, the park serves as a platform for fostering creativity and driving cultural engagement. Its emphasis on sustainability and collaboration aligns with the broader goals of Mauritius' smart city initiatives, making it a cornerstone for cultural and economic development.



8.1.3 Links and overlaps with other sectors

The visual arts sector in Mauritius intersects with various industries, showcasing its potential to influence and collaborate across different fields. In the **tourism sector**, art plays a significant role in promoting local culture, as demonstrated by events like Porlwi by Light, an urban festival that combines visual art with music and performances. These events engage diverse audiences and enhance Mauritius' image as a vibrant cultural destination. There are also growing connections with the **fashion** and **craft** sectors, where artists experiment with textile design, upcycling and other creative disciplines, further bridging the gap between traditional and contemporary practices.

Visual arts also intersect with **education**, as institutions incorporate artistic disciplines into their curricula to foster skill development. Collaborations with educational bodies, through residencies, workshops and mentorship programmes, can create pathways for aspiring artists and support the next generation of creatives. The sector also contributes to preserving Mauritius' cultural heritage by reinterpreting traditional themes in contemporary art, creating bridges between generations and celebrating the island's identity.

Public art has emerged as a tool for urban development and community engagement, transforming spaces into cultural hubs and fostering social connections. Expanding such initiatives can further enhance public spaces and promote cultural pride while attracting tourism.

Additionally, **sustainability** has become a recurring theme in the visual arts, with artists increasingly using recycled materials and addressing environmental concerns through their work. These efforts align with global trends and reinforce Mauritius' reputation as an eco-conscious destination.

There are growing but underdeveloped overlaps with **music** and **film**, presenting opportunities for collaboration across creative disciplines. Digital platforms and **technology** offer new avenues for visual artists, particularly through the digital art and NFTs, though access to advanced tools remains limited due to high costs. Efforts to improve accessibility through training programmes or funding can unlock these opportunities.

Corporate partnerships are another area of potential growth, where visual art can enhance branding, Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiatives, and workplace environments. Such collaborations not only provide financial support for artists but also strengthen the corporate sector's connection with local culture. Moreover, increasing the global visibility of Mauritian artists through exhibitions, residencies and international fairs could elevate the sector, providing access to new markets and networks.

Finally, the visual arts can also contribute to **health and wellbeing** through art therapy and community programmes, addressing mental health and fostering social development. By exploring these connections and opportunities, the visual arts sector can further integrate with other industries, driving innovation, cultural preservation and economic growth in Mauritius.



8.1.4 SWOT analysis

S

Strengths

- Cultural diversity
- Highly talented and multi-disciplinary artists
- Global reach through digital platforms
- Emerging entrepreneurial opportunities

W

Weaknesses

- Limited access to financial support
- Small and saturated local market
- Lack of infrastructure and exhibition venues
- Complex administrative processes

O

Opportunities

- International exposure
- Potential for integration with cultural tourism
- Potential for stronger government and private sector partnerships

T

Threats

- Competition from imported art
- Lack of formal representation and artist protection
- Political and institutional barriers

Opportunities

Despite these challenges, there are significant opportunities for growth within Mauritius' visual arts sector, driven by both local and international factors.

1. Cultural tourism: The growing emphasis on cultural tourism presents a substantial opportunity for visual artists to showcase their work to international visitors. Mauritius' multicultural identity, along with its scenic landscapes, provides a strong platform for marketing visual arts through exhibitions, murals and cultural events. This avenue could potentially expand artists' visibility and offer new revenue streams.

2. International collaborations: Mauritius' geographical location and historical ties to Africa, Asia and Europe offer numerous opportunities for international collaborations. These include artist residencies, joint exhibitions and partnerships with foreign cultural institutions such as the Goethe-Institut, Alliance Française and the British Council. By fostering such collaborations, Mauritian artists can reach broader audiences and engage in cross-cultural dialogues.

3. Digital platforms: The increasing use of digital platforms and social media is enabling many Mauritian artists to expand their reach in international markets. The growing interest in digital art, animation and new media technologies is opening up new avenues for artistic expression, allowing artists to create immersive and interactive experiences. These platforms provide greater visibility and access to global audiences, bypassing traditional market limitations.

4. Sustainability and environmental art: Mauritius' rich biodiversity and ecological challenges offer visual artists a unique opportunity to engage in environmental advocacy through their work. Many artists are exploring themes related to sustainability, climate change and conservation, often using recycled materials and promoting environmental awareness. This focus aligns with global trends in sustainability and provides artists with a platform to contribute to critical environmental conversations.

5. Government initiatives: According to the Ministry of Arts and Cultural Heritage's Annual Report for 2022-2023, the government is committed to elevating the arts and cultural heritage sector as a major economic pillar. This includes expanding support schemes for artists organising local festivals, boosting the film industry and introducing new legislation, such as the Status of Artists Bill, which aims to professionalize the sector. Additionally, the establishment of platforms like the National Art Gallery and various funding schemes will help increase visibility for local artists and foster professional growth.

6. Financial support and strategic expansion: The National Arts Fund plays a pivotal role in supporting a wide range of artistic projects. In its seventh call for projects, the fund disbursed Rs 2,252,569.20 to various initiatives, contributing to the sector's development. Government efforts to provide institutional support through platforms for visibility and art appreciation further indicate a strategic focus on expanding the visual arts sector in Mauritius.

Challenges

The visual arts sector in Mauritius faces a range of structural and market challenges that hinder its development and long-term sustainability. Many of these challenges are connected to inadequate infrastructure, insufficient financial support and a lack of formalised training and education for new artists.

1. Limited infrastructure: There are few exhibition spaces and galleries available for artists, with the majority concentrated in urban areas like Port Louis and Caudan. This limits access for rural artists and reduces opportunities for wider community engagement. Additionally, there is a lack of publicly funded art spaces where artists can exhibit their work freely.

2. Funding gaps: Although initiatives such as the National Arts Fund offer some financial assistance, bureaucratic processes are slow and the funds provided rarely cover the full costs of production and exhibition. Private sector sponsorship is difficult to secure, as funding is often selective and tends to prioritise projects that align with corporate interests. The Mauritius Museums Council and the National Heritage Fund provide some financial support, but it is often insufficient for the broader needs of the sector.

3. Small market: The local art market is small and saturated, making it difficult for visual artists to find buyers for their work. This limits the financial sustainability of the sector and reduces opportunities for growth, both locally and internationally. Many artists struggle to reach global markets, further restricting their financial success and visibility.

4. Lack of art education and training: There is limited formal art education in Mauritius, particularly in specialist areas such as curating, digital art and art criticism. Art education is not a priority in the national curriculum, making it difficult to nurture new talent. This gap affects the professionalisation of the sector, as many emerging artists lack access to the necessary training to develop their skills and careers.

5. Professionalisation and policy gaps: The sector suffers from a lack of technical expertise for specialised projects and inadequate policies to support artists in becoming recognised professionals. The absence of a well-defined policy framework, including mechanisms for royalty collection and artist status recognition, undermines the growth potential of the sector.

6. Cultural erosion and transmission issues: A decline in cultural bearers and the erosion of traditional values pose a significant threat to cultural preservation. This issue is compounded by a lack of mechanisms to transmit these values to younger generations, further endangering Mauritius' rich cultural heritage.



8.1.5 Talking points

For the sector to grow and flourish, certain areas need targeted development.

- **Art residencies and workshops:** There is a strong need for more artist residencies, workshops and skill-building programmes. International collaborations should be encouraged to bring in foreign expertise and exposure.
- **Policy and funding reform:** Greater investment is needed from both the government and private sectors. Policies that offer tax incentives for businesses supporting the arts, alongside grants and subsidies for artists, would help grow the sector.
- **Capacity building and education:** Expanding art education in schools and creating specialised programmes for aspiring artists would be crucial in cultivating future talent. Moreover, mentorship and training programmes in digital art, curating and arts management are necessary for bridging skill gaps.
- **Decentralisation:** Expanding the reach of the visual arts beyond the capital to rural areas would engage a broader segment of the population and create opportunities for artists from all regions of Mauritius.

8.1.6 Key recommendations for the visual arts sector

- **Leverage visual arts to address social issues:** Stakeholders should promote initiatives where visual arts are used to address social challenges, such as mental health, environmental sustainability and social justice. Emphasising art's role in fostering social impact could attract additional support from government and private partners.
- **Promote inclusivity and intersectionality:** Develop policies and programmes that promote inclusivity and diversity in the visual arts sector. This could include creating mentorship programmes, forming artist unions and establishing platforms that specifically support marginalised artists, addressing barriers related to gender, race and sexual orientation.
- **Elevate fine art and non-commercial artistic expression:** The government and art institutions should work to elevate non-commercial, experimental and fine art. This can be achieved through more galleries, curated exhibitions and public art initiatives that value cultural and intellectual contributions, reducing the overemphasis on commercialisation.

- **Enhance art education and research opportunities:** Invest in specialised art education, research opportunities and artist residencies to support professional development. Collaborative initiatives with international institutions should also be explored to further enhance the training and growth of local talent.
- **Encourage sustainable art practices:** Support sustainable art practices through subsidies or grants for artists using eco-friendly materials and processes. This aligns Mauritius with global trends in sustainable art and design, encouraging wider adoption of environmentally friendly practices.
- **Support community-driven art projects:** Increase public funding for community-based art projects that foster cultural engagement and strengthen community ties. These projects make art more accessible to underrepresented communities, helping cultivate a sense of belonging.
- **Strengthen the export capacity of Mauritian art:** Facilitate the export of Mauritian art by supporting participation in international art fairs, exhibitions and collaborations. A government-backed initiative could provide logistical and financial support to help Mauritian artists enter and succeed in the global art market.



8.1.7 Case study

Why focus here?

Many visual artists expressed frustration with the lack of exhibition spaces, inadequate financial support and the difficulties of balancing personal artistic pursuits with commercial demands. This prevents the sector from reaching its full potential both locally and internationally.

Key data points

- An artist mentioned the lack of venues for exhibitions as a major drawback, making it difficult for artists to gain visibility and confidence
- Several respondents expressed the need for curatorial support to guide artists in navigating the commercial and artistic aspects of their work

Case study: Evan Sohun – championing visual arts in Mauritius

Introduction

Evan Sohun is an independent visual artist with 22 years of experience in Mauritius. As a self-employed artist, he has contributed significantly to the local art scene, blending commercial and non-commercial elements into his work. His journey reflects both the challenges and opportunities within Mauritius' visual arts sector, highlighting the gaps in support structures while showcasing the creative potential emerging in the country.

Professional background

As a visual artist, Evan has specialised in various mediums, from painting on canvas to wall art, continuously pushing the boundaries of visual expression in Mauritius. His career, spanning over two decades, reflects his ability to adapt and grow within an industry that is still developing. Operating independently, he manages his artistic projects while contributing to the broader cultural narrative of Mauritius.

Key challenges

The visual arts sector in Mauritius faces several key challenges. Financial sustainability remains one of the biggest obstacles, with artists like Evan struggling to access necessary art materials, such as large-size art paper, due to scarcity. Additionally, the lack of art studios or spaces for creation presents a significant barrier for artists seeking a dedicated environment to work in.

Exposure and visibility are other pressing issues. With a limited number of galleries and exhibition platforms, many artists, including Evan, find it challenging to connect with both local and international audiences. The absence of institutional support means that artists must often navigate these challenges independently, relying on their own networks and research to secure opportunities.

Cultural and economic impact

Mauritius' visual arts sector is characterised by its cultural diversity, which Evan incorporates into his work. However, the economic impact of the visual arts remains niche, with the market primarily catering to corporate clients, art collectors and galleries. Although visual arts offer a unique platform for expressing cultural identity, the financial stability of artists is fragile, with many needing side jobs in related industries to sustain their practice.

Evan notes that while there is potential for growth, the market for art in Mauritius is still developing. Corporations and collectors invest in art, but a more widespread appreciation and support for the visual arts are needed to make the sector more economically viable.

Sustainability and innovation

Sustainability within the visual arts sector in Mauritius is still in its infancy. While some local and international productions incorporate sustainable practices, such as reducing plastic waste and using digital media, there is limited awareness and engagement in sustainability among visual artists. Evan has engaged with NGOs to promote social change through art, particularly using murals to create a positive impact on communities. However, he acknowledges that more widespread adoption of sustainable practices is necessary.

International collaboration

International collaboration plays a crucial role in expanding the horizons of visual artists in Mauritius. Evan has participated in several international projects, including comic festivals in Reunion Island, France as well as joint exhibitions in Cape Town and Madagascar and conferences in Germany. These experiences have broadened his artistic approach and provided valuable insights into global art scenes. However, Evan points out that engaging with international galleries or markets can be difficult without an intermediary or proper support structure, making it challenging for Mauritian artists to gain international recognition.

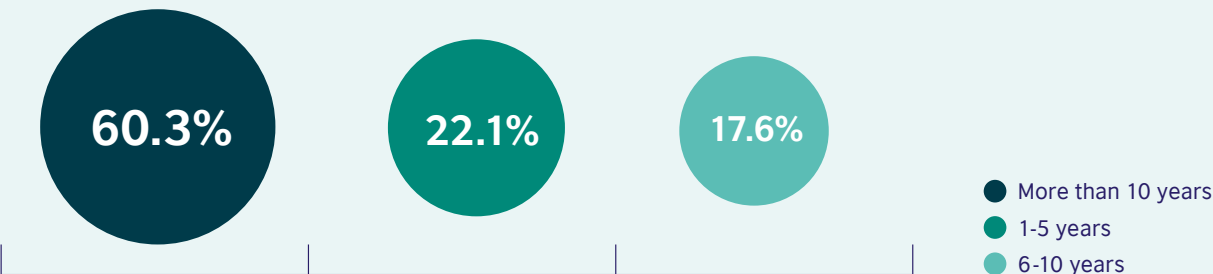
Conclusion

Evan Sohun's experience as an independent visual artist reflects both the creative potential and the significant challenges within Mauritius' visual arts sector. While the diversity of the island's culture offers fertile ground for artistic expression, the lack of financial support, exhibition spaces and international collaboration opportunities limits the growth of local artists. Evan remains optimistic about the future, noting the emergence of talented young artists and the increasing awareness of the need for collaboration and collective action. To ensure the sector's sustainability, Evan recommends the establishment of national art institutions, improved funding models and stronger support for international exchanges. As the sector evolves, there is a clear need for greater investment in both the economic and cultural value of visual arts in Mauritius.

8.1.8 Concluding insights

In conclusion, the visual arts sector in Mauritius has immense potential due to its rich cultural heritage, talented artists and increasing opportunities for international exposure through digital platforms. However, to unlock this potential and drive significant growth, several challenges need to be addressed. These include fostering inclusivity, sustainability and export opportunities, while also tackling issues such as limited financial support, competition from imported goods, bureaucratic hurdles and inadequate market access. Expanded infrastructure, more diverse funding sources and increased exhibition spaces are essential to enhancing the sector’s impact. Collaborative efforts from policymakers, private sector partners, and art institutions are crucial to providing the necessary resources and infrastructure. With strong government-private sector partnerships, the visual arts sector can thrive, contributing more significantly to Mauritius’ cultural and economic development.

Respondent breakdown in the creative and cultural industries based on years of activity



1-5 years: a considerable portion of respondents in the CCIs have between one and five years of experience, indicating a growing presence of newer participants who are finding their footing within the industry.

6-10 years: a segment of respondents has been active for six to ten years, demonstrating established individuals who are continuing to develop their careers while navigating the sector’s challenges.

More than 10 years: a significant number of respondents have over 10 years of experience in the CCIs, highlighting the presence of long-term professionals who have likely witnessed the industry’s evolution over time.

8.2 Music

8.2.1 Introduction to the music sector

The music sector in Mauritius is a vibrant expression of the island's multicultural heritage, deeply rooted in its historical evolution and reflective of its diverse population. Music has long been a vital cultural force in Mauritius, with its origins tracing back to the fusion of African, Indian, European and Chinese influences introduced by migration and colonialism. The traditional genre of sega, with its rhythmic sounds and expressive lyrics, emerged from the African slave population as a form of cultural resistance and has since become synonymous with the island's national identity. Recognised by UNESCO as an Intangible Cultural Heritage, sega remains at the heart of Mauritian music, symbolising resilience, cultural pride and the joys and struggles of daily life.

Mauritius has a rich musical landscape that extends far beyond sega. The island has nurtured a diverse array of genres, including seggae (a fusion of sega and reggae pioneered by the influential artist Kaya), jazz, hip-hop, electronic dance music (EDM) and Indian classical music.

This eclectic mix reflects both the global influences that have shaped Mauritian society and the unique local adaptations that give the music its distinctive character. Over the years, pioneering musicians, such as Ti Frère, Serge Lebrasse and Menwar, have been instrumental in preserving and evolving traditional sounds while introducing innovative styles to the local and global stage.





The contemporary music scene in Mauritius is marked by an ongoing blending of traditional and modern influences. New generations of artists are exploring fresh genres, utilising digital tools and pushing the boundaries of their craft, all while staying rooted in the island's cultural legacy. The sector continues to be a key aspect of the Mauritian cultural fabric, serving as both a form of artistic expression and a unifying force for its diverse communities.

With its deep historical roots and capacity for innovation, the music sector in Mauritius stands as a powerful testament to the island's dynamic cultural identity. Its continued evolution and international appeal underscore the potential for even greater global recognition, making it a cornerstone of the nation's creative industries.

8.2.2 Main representatives and institutions

Support for the music sector in Mauritius comes from a blend of educational institutions, government agencies, non-profit organisations and cultural centres. These institutions play a crucial role in nurturing local talent, offering platforms for performance and providing financial and technical support, all necessary for the growth and sustainability of the music industry.

Educational institutions

Mahatma Gandhi Institute (MGI)

The Mahatma Gandhi Institute is a key educational institution offering music programmes that cover both traditional and contemporary music forms. It provides courses in music theory, performance and composition, cultivating a strong foundation for aspiring musicians. MGI also organises cultural events and performances, giving students opportunities to showcase their talent.

Conservatoire National de Musique François Mitterrand

This conservatory focuses on classical music education, providing structured training in instrumental music, theory and performance. The institution plays an important role in developing the technical skills of musicians in Mauritius, contributing to the growth of the classical and contemporary music scenes.

University of Mauritius

The University of Mauritius offers courses in the performing arts, including music, that contribute to the broader creative industries. Through workshops, seminars and public performances, the university provides a platform for students to engage with both local and international music, while also promoting interdisciplinary collaboration.

Governmental support and institutions

Ministry of Arts and Cultural Heritage

As the main governmental body overseeing the cultural sector, the Ministry of Arts and Cultural Heritage plays a vital role in shaping policy and providing financial support to musicians and music-related events. The ministry organises national music festivals and talent development programmes as well as grants aimed at promoting Mauritian music.

Mauritius Society of Authors (MASA)

MASA is responsible for managing intellectual property rights, ensuring that musicians are fairly compensated for their work. The institution also advocates for copyright protection and helps promote music-related activities, ensuring the growth and recognition of Mauritian artists.

Mauritius Broadcasting Corporation (MBC)

The MBC plays a key role in promoting local musicians by providing them with radio and television platforms to showcase their work. The broadcaster regularly airs local music performances and interviews with artists as well as covering major music events, enhancing the visibility of Mauritian music both locally and internationally.

Non-profit organisations and music associations

Music Mauritius Foundation

This non-profit organisation focuses on the development of music in Mauritius, particularly for underprivileged communities. Through music education programmes, workshops and performance opportunities, the foundation helps young and emerging artists to develop their skills and gain exposure.

SOS Poverty

Working within the arts sector, SOS Poverty engages with marginalised communities, using music as a tool for social change. Their programmes include music workshops and events that offer opportunities for self-expression and cultural engagement, helping to uplift communities through music.

Private music venues and studios

Jam Inn Music Studio

A leading music production studio in Mauritius, Jam Inn provides high-quality recording facilities for local musicians. It serves as a hub for creative collaboration, production and talent development, helping Mauritian artists reach both local and international audiences.

Caudan Arts Centre

This modern performance space regularly hosts concerts and music festivals, giving local musicians a platform to perform in front of live audiences. The Caudan Arts Centre plays an important role in supporting the live music scene in Mauritius, offering performance opportunities for emerging and established musicians alike.

Foreign cultural institutions and international support

British Council and Alliance Française

These foreign cultural institutions are key supporters of the Mauritian music sector. They organise workshops, concerts and cultural exchanges, creating opportunities for Mauritian musicians to collaborate with international artists and reach global audiences. Their initiatives also help promote cultural diversity and cross-cultural learning through music.

UNESCO

Following the recognition of sega music as an Intangible Cultural Heritage, UNESCO provides significant support for its preservation and promotion. The organisation funds various programmes aimed at sustaining traditional Mauritian music and encourages initiatives that celebrate cultural heritage.

Artist collectives and collaboration

MAMA JAZZ

This collective brings together jazz musicians from across the island, fostering collaboration and providing performance opportunities. Through regular events, workshops and jam sessions, the collective nurtures the jazz music scene in Mauritius, promoting innovation and artistic exchange.

Nou Le Morne

Located near the UNESCO World Heritage site, this artist network includes musicians dedicated to preserving and promoting traditional Mauritian music. The collective offers a space for creative collaboration, focusing on the blending of traditional and contemporary music styles.

Babani Soundsystem

Babani Soundsystem is a Mauritian collective of DJs, musicians and producers who blend traditional Indian Ocean rhythms with modern electronic influences. Their music incorporates genres such as sega, shatta, dembow and dancehall, creating a unique sound that reflects the cultural diversity of Mauritius.

8.2.3 Links and overlaps with other sectors

The music sector in Mauritius intersects with various industries, contributing significantly to the island's cultural identity and economic development. In the **tourism** sector, music plays a central role in promoting Mauritius' vibrant heritage. Events, such as the Pure Music Festival and La Isla 2068 Music Festival, celebrate both traditional and contemporary Mauritian music, engaging tourists and elevating the island as a cultural destination. There is potential for further integration, such as incorporating live performances into hotels, restaurants and resorts to create immersive tourist experiences.

The music sector also connects with **fashion** and **craft**, where musicians collaborate with designers and artisans to create visually compelling performances and music videos.

Stage costumes, album artwork and promotional materials often involve the talents of designers and artists, blurring the lines between music and fashion. These collaborations enhance the overall creative output, offering a richer audience experience.

Connections with **visual arts** and **film** are gradually developing, as musicians work with filmmakers to produce music videos and soundtracks. Live performances often incorporate visual art elements, adding depth to the audience experience. While these collaborations are still in their early stages, they present opportunities for growth and innovation.

The rise of **digital platforms and technology** has opened new possibilities for the music sector, allowing Mauritian artists to share their work globally on platforms like YouTube, Spotify and Apple Music. However, the high costs of producing professional-grade content and limited access to advanced tools remain barriers to fully embracing digital opportunities. Training in digital marketing and content monetisation could help musicians build sustainable careers.

There are growing opportunities for **education and skill development** in the music sector. While traditional music forms are celebrated, formal training in contemporary music production, sound engineering and music business management is limited. Collaborations with educational institutions could provide pathways for aspiring musicians and industry professionals to gain essential skills.

The role of music in **cultural heritage preservation** is crucial, as it helps safeguard traditional genres like sega and bhojpuri. Initiatives to document and archive these styles could ensure their continuity while inspiring innovation in contemporary music. Music can also foster community engagement and social impact, with programmes targeting youth and marginalised groups offering platforms for self-expression and skill-building. Music therapy initiatives could further contribute to mental health and social development.

Corporate partnerships represent another untapped potential, where music can be integrated into branding, Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiatives and events. Collaborating with businesses could provide financial support for musicians while strengthening the corporate sector's connection with local culture. Additionally, **export and global market access** remain key opportunities for the music sector. International partnerships, music exchange programmes and participation in global music fairs and festivals could elevate Mauritian artists on the global stage.

To enhance the **sustainability** of the music sector, incorporating eco-friendly practices into music festivals and events could align with Mauritius' reputation as an environmentally conscious destination. Implementing sustainability measures, such as reducing waste and using renewable energy, could further position Mauritius as a leader in green cultural events.

By addressing these areas, the music sector in Mauritius can strengthen its role as a cultural cornerstone, an economic driver and a key player in the global creative industry.



8.2.4 SWOT analysis

S

Strengths

- Rich cultural heritage
- An array of music festivals and live events
- Global reach through digital platforms

W

Weaknesses

- Limited professional infrastructure – studios, etc
- Lack of industry support
- Inadequate music education

O

Opportunities

- Cultural tourism growth
- Global digital reach
- International collaboration

T

Threats

- Financial barriers
- Piracy and copyright issues
- Competition from international music

Opportunities and challenges in the music sector in Mauritius

The music sector in Mauritius offers several opportunities for growth and development, but it also faces significant challenges that need to be addressed to unlock its full potential.

Opportunities

- **Cultural tourism:** Mauritius' vibrant music scene, especially genres like sega, presents an excellent opportunity to develop cultural tourism. Music festivals and events, such as Pure Music Festival, which attract both local and international audiences, provide platforms for artists and boost the island's economy through tourism.
- **Digital platforms:** The rise of digital platforms like YouTube, Spotify and Apple Music presents new opportunities for local musicians to gain international exposure. This shift enables artists to reach global audiences without relying solely on local markets, which can be limited.
- **Collaborations and cultural exchange:** Opportunities for international collaborations are growing, with platforms provided by organisations like the British Council and UNESCO. These collaborations open doors for Mauritian musicians to engage with global artists, learn new techniques and participate in international festivals.
- **Youth engagement:** The younger generation of musicians in Mauritius is highly creative and willing to experiment with new genres, including electronic music and hip-hop. This demographic presents an opportunity for innovation and the modernisation of traditional genres like sega.
- **Government support:** Recent government initiatives, including the Artist Incubator Scheme and the Art Acquisition Programme, aim to nurture emerging talent and support the music sector's development. These programmes provide resources, mentorship and financial backing for both established and new artists.



Challenges

- **Financial barriers:** One of the primary challenges for Mauritian musicians is the lack of financial support. Artists often rely on personal savings or small-scale sponsorships from private companies. Funding for music production, live performances and international collaborations is limited, which restricts the growth of the sector.
- **Inadequate infrastructure:** The lack of adequate recording studios, rehearsal spaces and performance venues hinders the professionalisation of the music industry. Affordable spaces for music production and live performances are scarce, limiting artists' ability to create high-quality work.
- **Market access:** Mauritian musicians struggle to access international markets. Although digital platforms offer some opportunities, many artists lack the knowledge or resources to fully capitalise on them. Additionally, the local market is small and the demand for music is often overshadowed by international music, which reduces opportunities for local musicians.
- **Lack of professionalisation:** The industry remains largely informal, with musicians facing challenges related to artist management, legal support and access to structured contracts. This informality prevents many musicians from scaling their careers or achieving long-term sustainability.
- **Limited music education:** There is a gap in formal music education and training in Mauritius. Few institutions provide comprehensive programmes that equip musicians with the technical and business skills necessary for success in the music industry. This gap restricts the development of new talent.

8.2.5 Talking points

Key areas of interest within the music sector include:

- **Cultural tourism:** Leveraging the connection between music and tourism, especially through festivals and cultural events.
- **Digital transformation:** Embracing digital platforms to reach international audiences and increase music distribution.
- **Cultural preservation:** Using music as a tool to preserve and promote traditional Mauritian genres, such as sega, while integrating modern influences.



8.2.6 Key recommendations for the music sector

- **The integration of music** with other creative industries, such as film, visual arts and digital media, can open up new revenue streams and artistic collaborations.
- **Government support** for music festivals should be expanded to include more diverse genres and provide financial backing for new artists.
- **Increased focus on digital rights** management is needed to protect artists from piracy and ensure that they receive fair compensation for their work.
- **Enhance infrastructure:** Invest in more recording studios, performance venues and rehearsal spaces to support musicians' creative processes.
- **Expand digital literacy:** Offer training programmes on digital platforms and online marketing to help artists increase their global reach.
- **Professionalise the sector:** Develop structured contracts, legal frameworks and professional networks to support artists in navigating the music industry.
- **Strengthen educational programmes:** Introduce formal music education at all levels and provide workshops and training on music production, sound engineering and artist Management.
- **Foster international collaborations:** Encourage collaborations with international artists and organisations to increase exposure and create new opportunities for Mauritian musicians.

8.2.7 Case study

Why focus here?

The music industry is recognised as a critical cultural asset, but respondents indicated challenges with professionalisation, lack of government support and limited platforms for exposure.

Key data points

- One respondent noted the difficulty of sustaining a career in classical music in Mauritius due to limited opportunities, forcing talented musicians to leave the country.
- A music producer mentioned the need for financial support and infrastructure to professionalise the industry and provide musicians with better opportunities.

Case study: Anonymous alias A.N.

Introduction

A.N, an independent music performer and producer, has been a prominent figure in the Mauritian music scene for 20 years. As a DJ, pianist and singer, she has dedicated her career to promoting original music while navigating the evolving music industry in Mauritius. Her work highlights the sector's strengths, challenges and potential for future growth, particularly in terms of creativity and innovation.

Professional Background

A.N is an experienced music performer and producer specialising in live performances and music production. Her extensive background as a solo pianist, singer and DJ has allowed her to shape her craft while advocating for greater creativity and originality within the local music scene. Over her two decades of experience, she has performed both independently and in collaboration with other artists, contributing to a more diverse and vibrant music sector in Mauritius.

Key Challenges

The music industry in Mauritius faces several pressing challenges. One of the most significant issues that A.N. highlights is the lack of originality among emerging artists, many of whom prefer creating covers instead of original compositions. Financial constraints further hinder the development of new music, with limited resources for production and promotion. Intellectual property rights also remain a concern, with artists struggling to ensure fair compensation for their work.

To address these challenges, A.N. believes that more education and training opportunities are needed to help artists develop their creativity and industry knowledge. Additionally, better financial support, including government grants and partnerships with businesses, would allow artists to invest in their work and receive fair compensation for their efforts.

Cultural and economic Impact

The music sector in Mauritius is deeply influenced by the country's multicultural heritage, resulting in a rich diversity of genres. However, A.N notes that while Mauritius' strong tourism industry offers an opportunity to increase visibility for local artists, the sector's economic potential remains limited. The small local market restricts the revenue artists can generate from their music and international streaming platforms like Spotify do not have a significant impact on visibility for Mauritian musicians.

Despite these challenges, A.N believes that the sector's diversity is one of its greatest strengths. The blend of traditional sega rhythms with contemporary styles has helped to promote Mauritian culture and live performances remain a key avenue for connecting with audiences both locally and internationally.

Sustainability and innovation

Technology has had a significant impact on the music industry in Mauritius, with digital platforms like Spotify, YouTube and social media enabling artists to reach wider audiences. A.N has embraced these tools, using Instagram, TikTok and other platforms to engage with her audience and promote her music. However, the lack of affordable physical equipment and limited local streaming platforms present barriers to broader adoption of technology within the industry.

A.N emphasises the need for more creative and original approaches to music, particularly as the world shifts toward a digital landscape. She advocates for greater support in adopting new technologies and using digital tools to enhance the reach and sustainability of Mauritian music.





International Collaboration

International collaboration is a growing trend within the Mauritian music sector, particularly in genres like Afrobeat and reggae/seggae. A.N has experienced the benefits of such collaborations, including increased visibility and larger audiences. However, she also points out the challenges of navigating different copyright laws and the logistical difficulties of working with international partners. Improved access to digital tools and reduced travel costs would help facilitate more effective international collaborations.

Conclusion

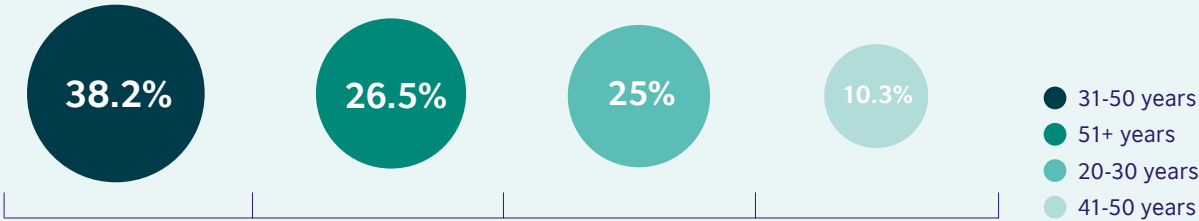
A.N's journey as an independent music performer and producer highlights the potential of the Mauritian music sector, as well as the obstacles it faces. While the industry is evolving, with new genres and young artists emerging, financial constraints, intellectual property concerns and limited access to resources hinder its growth.

A.N remains optimistic about the future, calling for more education, funding and technological support to help artists thrive in an increasingly digital world. By fostering creativity and originality, Mauritius' music industry can continue to grow, promoting the country's rich cultural heritage on both local and international stages.

8.2.8 Concluding insights

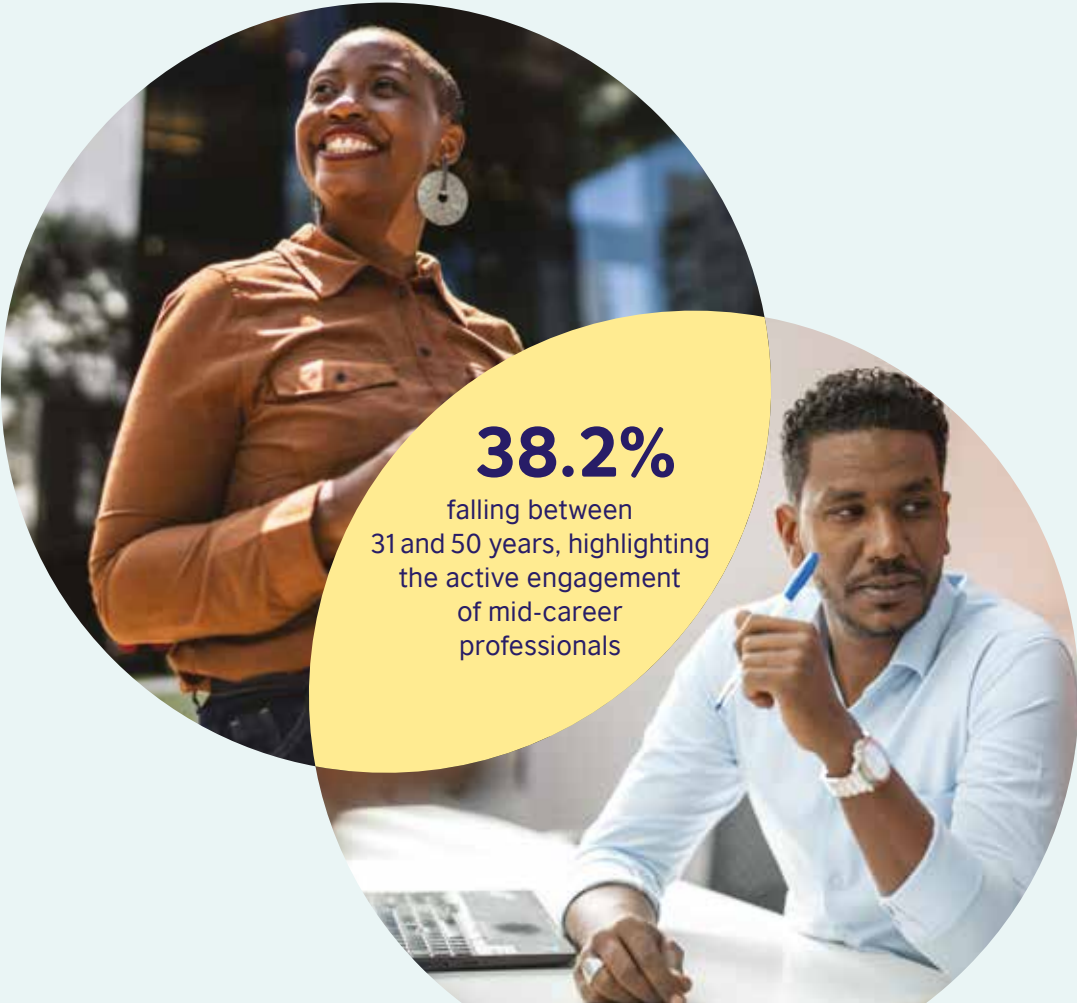
In conclusion, the music sector in Mauritius holds significant potential for growth, particularly through cultural tourism and digital platforms. However, it faces challenges such as financial barriers, inadequate infrastructure and the need for formalised training and professional support. The combined efforts of governmental bodies, private organisations, international institutions and NGOs are crucial in providing the necessary financial, artistic and cultural backing for local musicians. With the right strategies, investments and continued collaboration, the music industry in Mauritius can thrive, playing a vital role in both the country's cultural identity and its international recognition.

**Respondent breakdown in the creative and cultural industries
by age groups**



The age distribution from the survey indicates a diverse spread, with the largest group (38.2%) falling between 31 and 50 years, highlighting the active engagement of mid-career professionals in Mauritius’ creative industries, while a significant proportion (26.5%) of respondents are 51+, reflecting the deep experience and long-term commitment of senior creatives.

In contrast, younger participants aged 20 to 30 make up 25%, underscoring the growing interest among emerging talents. However, the 10.3% representation of those aged 41 to 50 suggests potential gaps in mid-career retention or growth within the sector.





8.3 Performing arts

8.3.1 Introduction to the performing arts sector

The performing arts sector in Mauritius is a vibrant and evolving part of the island's cultural landscape, reflecting its diverse heritage of African, Indian, Chinese and European influences. This dynamic sector encompasses a variety of disciplines, including music, dance, theatre and multidisciplinary performances, each serving as a medium of artistic expression and cultural dialogue. The rich cultural history of Mauritius is deeply rooted in traditional forms, such as sega, a genre that originated in the African slave communities and has since become a powerful symbol of Mauritian identity. Over centuries, sega and other traditional performances have evolved, blending indigenous rhythms with narratives from the island's diverse cultural settlers. These art forms continue to play a significant role in Mauritian society, serving not only as entertainment but as a means of preserving cultural heritage and offering social commentary.

In the contemporary scene, Mauritius' performing arts sector integrates these traditional elements with modern influences, reflecting the island's complex, multicultural reality. Artists are increasingly exploring new forms of expression, experimenting with global trends and addressing social issues through their work. The sector has gained substantial institutional support, with the Ministry of Arts and Cultural Heritage playing a central role in promoting cultural activities and nurturing talent. Educational institutions like the Mahatma Gandhi Institute further support the sector by offering formal training in both traditional and contemporary performance arts, helping to cultivate the next generation of performers and ensuring sustained development within the industry.

Recent years have seen notable advancements in the performing arts, including a resurgence of live performances as theatres, concert halls and outdoor venues regain popularity post-global - health crisis.

The island has also seen the emergence of modern performance venues, such as the Caudan Arts Centre, which serve as focal points for local and international acts, fostering cultural exchange and enhancing access to the arts.

Additionally, the sector has embraced technological integration, with the pandemic accelerating the shift towards digital platforms and virtual performances. This adaptability has opened new avenues for creative expression, enabling artists to engage with audiences beyond the island's borders.

The Mauritian government has demonstrated its commitment to the performing arts through initiatives like the National Arts Fund, which provides financial support to artists and projects. These investments are crucial for maintaining the vitality of the sector, encouraging both the preservation of traditional forms and the exploration of innovative practices. The performing arts not only enrich the island's cultural identity but also contribute to its economic landscape, particularly through tourism and cultural exchange.

In summary, the performing arts in Mauritius are a vital and dynamic part of the island's cultural heritage, actively shaping its contemporary cultural narrative. The sector's ongoing commitment to tradition and innovation, supported by government initiatives and modern venues, ensures that it will continue to make significant contributions to the cultural richness and economic health of Mauritius.

8.3.2 Main representatives and institutions

The performing arts sector in Mauritius thrives through a range of educational institutions, government agencies, non-profits and private organisations that foster talent and provide platforms for performance, training and exposure.

Educational institutions

The Mahatma Gandhi Institute (MGI) and the Conservatoire National de Musique François Mitterrand are key institutions offering comprehensive programmes in music, dance and theatre. MGI's School of Performing Arts focuses on blending traditional and contemporary arts, while the Conservatoire provides formal music education and regularly hosts events, contributing to the local cultural landscape.

Governmental support

The Ministry of Arts and Cultural Heritage plays a central role in promoting performing arts through policy, funding and infrastructure development. In collaboration with the Ministry of Education, initiatives like the National School Arts Festival introduce arts at an early age, fostering young talent across the island. The National Drama Festival, also organised by the Ministry, serves as a key platform for local theatre artists to gain exposure.

Venues and event management

The Caudan Arts Centre, located in Port Louis, is a premier venue offering state-of-the-art facilities for concerts, theatre productions and multidisciplinary performances.

Otayo, a leading event-management company, supports the sector by organising and promoting various events, including concerts and festivals, ensuring logistical efficiency and broadening artist exposure.

Sponsorship

Private companies, such as the Rogers Group and SBM Group, also support the arts through Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) sponsorships, ensuring continued investment in large-scale performances and events.

Media and international support

The Mauritius Broadcasting Corporation (MBC) plays a pivotal role in giving artists a platform through television and radio, showcasing local performances to a national audience. International cultural institutions, the British Council, Alliance Française and the Goethe-Institut facilitate cross-cultural exchanges, offering local artists opportunities to connect with global audiences.

Troupes and dance companies

Local performing arts collectives, like Komiko Troupe, along with professional dance companies contribute to a vibrant arts scene with performances across theatre, comedy and dance.

In conclusion, the performing arts sector in Mauritius is supported by a robust network of institutions, ranging from educational bodies to international cultural institutions, ensuring the continued growth of the sector despite challenges in infrastructure and funding.

8.3.3 Links and overlaps with other sectors

The performing arts sector in Mauritius intersects with various industries, contributing to a vibrant and dynamic creative ecosystem. In the **tourism** sector, traditional performances like sega play a pivotal role in cultural tourism. Music festivals, dance performances and theatre productions attract local and international audiences, enhancing the cultural tourism experience and positioning Mauritius as a rich and diverse destination.

There is a growing connection for **visual arts**, with **multidisciplinary** performances that combine dance, theatre and visual art. These collaborations create immersive experiences and open opportunities for artists to work across disciplines, enriching the creative landscape of the island.

The rise of **digital platforms** has expanded the reach of the performing arts. The COVID-19 pandemic accelerated the use of online mediums for live and recorded performances, allowing artists to connect with global audiences and experiment with new formats. However, access to affordable, high-quality production tools and training remains a challenge for many in the sector.

The performing arts also have potential for further integration with **education**, as workshops, school programmes and community outreach can cultivate new talent and foster appreciation for Mauritius' cultural heritage. This can be particularly impactful for engaging youth and preserving traditional art forms.

Additionally, the performing arts can intersect with **fashion** and **craft**, particularly through costume design, set production and the use of traditional crafts in stage aesthetics. These elements enhance performances while providing platforms for artisans to showcase their work.

There is an opportunity to strengthen ties with **film** and **music**, as theatre productions can inspire soundtracks, scores or adaptations for screen, while live performances often involve collaborative input from musicians and composers. Expanding these synergies could increase creative outputs and revenue streams.

Finally, **corporate sponsorships** and **CSR initiatives** could play a more significant role in supporting the performing arts. Partnerships with businesses can provide financial backing for productions while aligning brands with cultural and community engagement efforts.

The performing arts sector in Mauritius has vast potential for growth and deeper integration across industries, fostering innovation, cultural preservation and economic development.

8.3.4 SWOT analysis

S

Strengths

- Rich cultural heritage
- Integration with tourism and creative industries
- Global reach through digital platforms

W

Weaknesses

- Limited infrastructure – venues, etc
- Inconsistent funding
- Lack of formal education

O

Opportunities

- Cultural tourism expansion
- Youth engagement
- International collaboration

T

Threats

- Cultural undervaluation
- Economic challenges
- International competition

Opportunities and challenges in the performing arts sector in Mauritius

The performing arts sector in Mauritius, rich in cultural heritage, faces numerous challenges that hinder its growth, but also present several opportunities for development.

Opportunities

- **Cultural tourism expansion:**
As Mauritius continues to thrive as a tourist destination, there is a significant opportunity for integrating the performing arts into cultural tourism. By promoting local talent through festivals and events, the sector can attract international audiences and enhance its global profile.
- **Technological advancements:**
The rise of digital platforms offers new avenues for the performing arts. Virtual performances can reach global audiences and multimedia innovations create opportunities for creative experimentation.
- **International collaboration:** Partnering with international artists and institutions could provide Mauritian performers with greater exposure, skill development and access to global markets.

Challenges

- **Lack of infrastructure:** There is a shortage of dedicated spaces for rehearsals, performances and workshops. Traditional venues like those in Port Louis and Rose-Hill have deteriorated, limiting opportunities for both artists and audiences.
- **Resource limitations:** The sector struggles with inadequate infrastructure, funding and resources. Without proper rehearsal spaces, performance venues and financial backing, artists are constrained in achieving their full potential.
- **Inconsistent support:** While some government initiatives, like the National Arts Fund, provide assistance, there is no comprehensive framework to consistently nurture and support talent, limiting long-term growth.
- **Cultural perception:** Performing arts in Mauritius are often undervalued and artists struggle to gain recognition and respect within society, affecting the broader development of the sector.
- **Financial constraints:** A lack of consistent funding and financial support makes it difficult for artists to secure grants or sponsorships, stunting the creation and showcasing of work. The absence of regular financial support limits the development of sustainable careers in the arts.
- **Insufficient education and training:** There are limited formal education and training opportunities specifically for the performing arts. Mentorship programmes for early-career creatives are scarce, further hindering the sector's growth.
- **Limited professionalisation:** The industry remains largely informal, with a lack of structured management, contracts or unions to protect artists' rights. Many artists operate independently, lacking professional networks or representation.
- **Market access:** Mauritian performers face challenges in accessing both local and international markets, with a small domestic audience and limited global exposure reducing opportunities for innovation and growth.

8.3.5 Talking points

Key areas of interest within the performing arts sector include:

- **Youth engagement:** There is a growing interest among younger generations in experimenting with new forms of performance, including contemporary dance, fusion theatre and digital media performances. Engaging the youth in these creative processes can foster innovation and ensure the future growth of the sector.
- **Cross-cultural collaborations:** Opportunities exist to blend traditional Mauritian performances with contemporary global trends, fostering unique artistic collaborations. This can help promote Mauritian culture on an international scale while enhancing creative exchange.
- **Training and mentorship:** There is significant potential to develop formal training programmes and mentorship opportunities, particularly for emerging artists. Offering such programmes can address the skills gap and ensure the sustainability of the sector.

8.3.6 Performing arts recommendations

- **Cultural promotion:** There should be an increased focus on promoting the cultural significance of the performing arts within Mauritius. This includes educational initiatives to raise awareness of the arts from a young age, as well as campaigns to change public perceptions of the value of the arts.

- **Public-private partnerships:** Encourage collaboration between the government, private sector and arts organisations to foster a thriving creative environment. Joint marketing campaigns, sponsorships and funding initiatives can promote local talent and help Mauritian performers achieve greater success both locally and internationally.
- **Infrastructure development:** Invest in building or renovating dedicated spaces for rehearsals, performances and workshops. This would provide much-needed support to local performers and enable the sector to grow.
- **Financial support:** Introduce more grants, residencies and financial assistance programmes to help artists sustain their careers. The Government and private sector should work together to provide regular financial support for artists and creative projects.
- **Professionalisation of the sector:** Establish unions or associations to protect artists rights and promote professional standards. Formalising contracts, management structures and artist representation would help professionalise the industry and ensure fair treatment of artists.
- **Market access:** Create initiatives that help Mauritian performers access international markets. This could include promoting local talent through creative trade fairs, festivals and digital platforms.
- **Training and education:** Develop formal education programmes and workshops tailored to performing arts. Partner with international institutions to provide mentorship and training opportunities for emerging artists.

8.3.7 Case Study

Why focus here?

Respondents from the performing arts sector express concerns about the lack of professional infrastructure, insufficient funding and limited platforms for artists to showcase their work. Despite the abundance of talent, many highlighted that performing arts struggle with inadequate government support and high costs associated with accessing venues and producing performances.

Key data points

- A dance teacher noted difficulties in finding affordable spaces to rent for rehearsals and performances.
- A creative director highlighted the limited involvement of the public in paid cultural events, especially in rural areas.

Case study: Estelle Lasémillante – championing the performing arts in Mauritius

Introduction

Estelle Lasémillante, a dedicated Theatre Support Officer at Caudan Arts Centre, has played a pivotal role in shaping the performing arts landscape in Mauritius. With five years of experience in administration, production and artistic project management, Estelle has been a key figure in navigating the challenges of the sector and creating opportunities for artists to thrive. Her contributions highlight the key challenges and opportunities faced by the performing arts sector in Mauritius.

Professional background

Estelle works at the Caudan Arts Centre, a private sector company part of Caudan Development Ltd. As Theatre Support Officer, she oversees various aspects of performing arts management, including organisational support for productions and providing essential services like rehearsal and creation spaces. Her expertise lies in administration and project management, ensuring smooth coordination for numerous artistic initiatives.

The Caudan Arts Centre, where she is based, has become an important venue for local talent, although the sector as a whole faces significant financial and logistical challenges.

Key challenges

The performing arts sector in Mauritius, including actors, musicians and theatre practitioners, faces several hurdles that hinder its growth. Estelle notes that despite a rich pool of talent, the industry struggles with a lack of affordable venues, insufficient government support and difficulties in professionalisation.

The financial burden of artist fees and production costs outweighs the returns from small audience sizes, making it difficult for many performances to be sustainable. The performing arts, though culturally vital, are not seen as a viable source of livelihood for many practitioners, especially in rural areas where access to cultural events is limited due to high organisation costs and lack of public interest.

Estelle also points out that there is no comprehensive policy to support emerging talents in the country. The lack of structured programmes to nurture the next generation of artists prevents the sector from reaching its full potential.

Cultural and economic impact

Estelle believes that the performing arts sector holds immense cultural and economic value, particularly in terms of promoting Mauritian culture, generating jobs and attracting tourism. However, the high production costs and limited audience base make it challenging for performers and organisations to sustain themselves. Rural areas are especially deprived of performances due to the costs involved, which further exacerbates the cultural divide between urban and rural populations.

Additionally, cross-cultural collaborations, while beneficial, face challenges due to a lack of funding and resources. Estelle's involvement in international partnerships through Caudan Arts Centre has exposed local performers to global practices, but long-term sustainability remains elusive without proper support.

Technology and innovation

Estelle also highlights the growing importance of technology in the sector. From projection mapping in set designs to digital marketing efforts through platforms like Instagram and TikTok, technology has expanded the artistic possibilities available to Mauritian performers. However, there is also a pressing need to preserve traditional forms of performance, such as sega tambour and storytelling, which risk being overshadowed by modern innovations.

Inclusivity and diversity

Inclusivity in the performing arts sector is another challenge that Estelle has observed. Despite the growing number of festivals and artistic performances, marginalised groups, including the LGBTQ+ community and people with disabilities, face significant barriers. Limited accessibility to venues and ticket pricing further restrict the sector's reach. Estelle has been working towards finding solutions for greater inclusivity, though systemic support is necessary to make lasting changes.

Conclusion

Estelle Lasémillante's career reflects both the immense potential and the persistent challenges of the performing arts sector in Mauritius. Through her work at Caudan Arts Centre, she has provided vital support to artists, helping them navigate financial and logistical obstacles while contributing to the promotion of Mauritian culture. For the sector to flourish, investments in infrastructure, policy reform and support for emerging talents are essential. Estelle's journey illustrates the importance of collaboration, innovation and inclusivity in creating a vibrant and sustainable future for the performing arts in Mauritius.





8.3.8 Concluding insights

The performing arts sector in Mauritius is at a crucial juncture. With its rich cultural heritage, there are immense opportunities to integrate the arts into the country's cultural tourism and international collaborations. However, the sector faces significant hurdles, including a lack of infrastructure, financial constraints and limited formal training and education tailored to the performing arts.

In addition to these challenges, the undervaluation of the arts within society and the inconsistent support from both public and private sectors limit the sector's potential. Artists struggle to access local and global markets due to a small domestic audience and a lack of international exposure.

To address these challenges, it is essential to promote the cultural significance of the arts within Mauritius. This can be achieved through educational initiatives and campaigns aimed at shifting societal perceptions and fostering appreciation for the arts from a young age. Encouraging public-private partnerships is also critical. Joint efforts in marketing, funding and infrastructure development can provide the necessary support to local artists and enhance the sector's global reach.

Ultimately, with strategic investment in infrastructure, consistent funding, formal education and increased public-private collaboration, the performing arts sector in Mauritius can thrive. These actions will not only elevate the sector's contribution to the economy but also strengthen its role in preserving and promoting Mauritius' rich cultural identity.

8.4 Craft

8.4.1 Introduction to the craft sector

The craft sector in Mauritius is a vibrant and essential part of the island's cultural identity, reflecting its rich and diverse history. Rooted in the island's multicultural heritage, the craft sector embodies the blend of African, Indian, Chinese and European influences that shape Mauritian society. From traditional techniques passed down through generations to modern innovations that embrace global trends, Mauritian crafts tell the story of a nation built on cultural fusion.

Mauritius' craft traditions are deeply intertwined with its historical development, where crafting was not only a form of livelihood but a vital expression of cultural identity. Traditional crafts, such as weaving, basketry, pottery and woodwork, have been central to the daily lives of Mauritians, often serving practical purposes while preserving the customs and symbols of different communities. These craft traditions have been adapted and reinterpreted over time, making them both a link to the past and a contemporary medium for artistic expression.

The sector is closely tied to the tourism industry, which remains one of Mauritius' key economic drivers. Tourists are often drawn to the unique, handmade items that reflect the island's rich history and cultural diversity. Crafts, such as hand-woven baskets, intricate jewellery, wood carvings and eco-friendly products made from recycled materials, are highly sought after as souvenirs that embody the essence of Mauritius.

This connection to tourism enhances the visibility of local artisans and offers a platform for the promotion of their work beyond local markets.

The government has made some strides in recognising the potential of the craft sector, with initiatives such as the 'Made in Moris' label, which aims to promote local products and enhance their marketability. However, more robust policies and investment are needed to support artisans and ensure the sector's sustainable growth. Artisans themselves are also increasingly focused on sustainability, integrating eco-friendly practices into their work by using recycled materials and promoting the value of handcrafted, ethically produced goods.

In recent years, there has been a growing movement to elevate Mauritian crafts beyond their traditional boundaries, blending them with contemporary design and global trends. This evolution reflects a desire to preserve cultural heritage while adapting to modern markets and consumer demands. The sector's ability to innovate while maintaining authenticity positions it as a unique contributor to both cultural preservation and economic development.

Ultimately, the craft sector in Mauritius is not only a reflection of the island's cultural diversity but also a potential driver of its economic future. With greater support, investment and recognition, the sector has the opportunity to expand its influence, offering both local artisans and the broader economy a path towards sustainable growth and international recognition.



8.4.2 Main representatives and institutions

The craft sector in Mauritius is supported by a variety of governmental bodies, non-profits and private organisations, each playing a critical role in promoting and sustaining this culturally significant industry.

Governmental support

The Ministry of Industrial Development, SMEs and Cooperatives spearheads initiatives aimed at fostering innovation, technology enhancement and productivity within the craft sector. The Ministry's efforts focus on equipping artisans with the skills and tools to modernise their practices and expand market reach. Additionally, SME Mauritius plays a supportive role by helping artisans develop sustainable and authentic products, while integrating the sector into the tourism value chain through projects like the Sustainable Island Mauritius Project (SUS-ISLAND).

Trade and business support

The Mauritius Chamber of Commerce and Industry (MCCI) provides essential services to the craft sector, particularly in areas such as trade, import-export facilitation and business operations. The MCCI is instrumental in ensuring that artisans can access both local and international markets, thereby enhancing the economic potential of the sector. The 'Made in Moris' label, in partnership with MCCI, further promotes high-quality local products and supports the sector's growth through sustainable practices.

Non-profit organisations and associations

Non-profits, such as Bazart Kreasion and the Association Mauricienne des Femmes Chefs d'Entreprises (AMFCE) play pivotal roles in empowering artisans, particularly women, by offering networking opportunities, skill-development programmes and platforms for showcasing their work. These organisations ensure that the craft sector remains a viable and sustainable source of income for local communities.

Traditional crafts preservation

Organisations like the Association des Artisans des Planteurs de Pandanus du Sud-Est (AAPPSE) focus on preserving traditional crafts such as Pandanus weaving. AAPPSE works with women from disadvantaged backgrounds, combining cultural preservation with economic empowerment. Similarly, the Imiloa Collective and Beautiful Localhands build capacity for artisans by focusing on traditional crafts and the use of indigenous materials, contributing to both cultural preservation and economic sustainability.

Inclusivity and empowerment

Initiatives aimed at inclusivity, such as the Youth with Disabilities Empowerment Platform (YWDEP) and Hope House, offer specialised training and mentorship to persons with disabilities, ensuring that the craft sector provides opportunities for all members of society. These programmes are critical to promoting an inclusive craft industry that empowers individuals from diverse backgrounds.

Tourism and craft

The success of the craft sector is closely linked to tourism, with hotels like Otentik Bazar at Attitude Hotels and Lux Resorts and Hotels supporting artisans by hosting workshops and providing spaces for them to sell products directly to tourists. These hotels emphasise sustainability, using recycled materials and promoting eco-friendly packaging, thus aligning with global trends in eco-tourism and enhancing the visibility of Mauritian cultural heritage.

In conclusion, the craft sector in Mauritius is supported by a robust network of institutions, ranging from government bodies, SMEs and Cooperatives to non-profit organisations. Together, these entities work to modernise artisan practices, preserve traditional crafts and empower local communities, particularly women and marginalised groups. Additionally, partnerships with the tourism sector and sustainability initiatives contribute to the sector's growth. However, continued investment in infrastructure and market access is essential to ensure the long-term success and global integration of the Mauritian craft industry.

8.4.3 Links and overlaps with other sectors

The craft sector in Mauritius intersects with multiple other industries, creating a dynamic and interconnected cultural landscape. In **tourism**, the craft industry plays a pivotal role by offering cultural experiences that attract visitors. Local crafts, including handwoven baskets and intricately carved wooden artefacts, are highly sought after by tourists. Initiatives like craft markets, artisan workshops and guided cultural tours provide immersive experiences while expanding market access for artisans.

The sector is closely tied to the **performing arts** and **music**, particularly in the production of costumes, props and set designs for traditional performances like sega. This synergy extends to contemporary performing arts, where handcrafted items are prominently featured in festivals and theatrical productions, linking these creative domains seamlessly.

Sustainability has become a key focus within the craft sector, with many artisans adopting **eco-friendly** and recycled materials. These practices align with Mauritius' environmental goals, showcasing the sector's commitment to sustainable development. Such efforts not only attract consumers seeking ethical and environmentally conscious products but also contribute to global environmental initiatives.

Education plays an essential role in ensuring the sustainability of the craft sector. Programmes in schools, community centres and cultural hubs aim to pass down traditional skills and techniques to younger generations. These initiatives safeguard Mauritius' rich craft heritage while fostering innovation and contemporary interpretations within the sector.

There is a strong connection between the craft sector and **fashion** through collaborations in textile production, embroidery and jewellery design. These partnerships expand the creative potential of the craft industry and strengthen Mauritius' reputation as a hub for creative industries.

The rise of **digital platforms** has revolutionised the craft sector, enabling artisans to showcase and sell their creations to a global audience. E-commerce and social media have become vital tools for marketing, networking and skill-building. Online workshops and collaborations further enhance the sector's visibility and accessibility, connecting Mauritian artisans with international markets and creative opportunities.

8.4.4 SWOT analysis

S

Strengths

- Rich cultural diversity and heritage
- Strong link to tourism industry
- Unique handcrafted products
- Eco-friendly craft trend

W

Weaknesses

- High cost of imported raw materials
- Lack of market access
- Minimal governmental support
- Limited infrastructure to create and showcase

O

Opportunities

- Cultural tourism growth
- International partnerships
- Demand for sustainable crafts
- Government support potential

T

Threats

- Competition from imported goods
- Limited domestic market
- Loss of traditional techniques
- Inconsistent policies

Challenges and opportunities in the craft sector in Mauritius

The craft sector in Mauritius faces multiple challenges that limit its growth and potential, despite the promising opportunities that exist. Key issues include:

Challenges

1. High cost of raw materials:

The reliance on imported materials significantly affects the profitability of local artisans. These costs create financial pressure and make it difficult for artisans to sustain their craft practices.

2. Limited market access:

Artisans face difficulties in accessing both local and international markets due to a lack of structured and supportive marketplaces for selling their crafts. This restricts their ability to generate a consistent income.

3. Competition from imported goods:

Mauritian crafts compete with mass-produced, cheaper goods imported from countries like China and Indonesia. This challenge makes it harder for local artisans to gain a foothold in the market.

4. Lack of infrastructure and support:

The absence of dedicated spaces like galleries, workshops and markets to display and sell crafts further hampers the growth of the sector. Additionally, there is limited government and institutional support, with insufficient promotion and financial backing for local artisans.

5. Insufficient training and development opportunities:

Artisans have expressed the need for more training, particularly in modern techniques, sustainable practices and business development. This would help them innovate and diversify their craft offerings.

6. Perception and awareness:

Local crafts are undervalued, both by Mauritian residents and tourists. More efforts are needed to raise awareness about the cultural and historical significance of Mauritian crafts.

Opportunities

1. Cultural tourism:

With Mauritius being a popular tourist destination, the craft sector has the potential to tap into cultural tourism by offering unique, locally made products to a global audience.

2. International collaboration:

There are opportunities for Mauritian artisans to engage with international craft councils and networks, gaining exposure, skills and access to new markets. Such partnerships can also foster innovation through cross-cultural exchange.

3. Sustainability and eco-Conscious crafting:

The increasing consumer demand for sustainable, eco-friendly products presents a significant opportunity for artisans. By incorporating recycled or natural materials into their crafts, artisans can align their offerings with global environmental trends.

4. Government and institutional support:

Initiatives like the 'Made in Moris' label provide a platform for promoting Mauritian-made crafts. With enhanced government and private sector support, this could become a powerful tool for marketing local crafts, both domestically and internationally.



8.4.5 Talking points

Areas that require further exploration and development within the craft sector in Mauritius include:

- **Increased export potential:** Exploring opportunities for local artisans to export their products to international markets, with a focus on high-quality, authentic crafts that can compete globally.
- **Integration with technology:** Leveraging digital platforms to promote and sell local crafts, providing artisans with greater visibility and access to a broader audience.
- **Heritage preservation:** More initiatives are needed to preserve and revive traditional Mauritian crafts, with a focus on passing skills to younger generations through structured education programmes.
- **Artisanal innovation:** Encouraging innovation by blending traditional techniques with contemporary designs that cater to global trends while maintaining cultural authenticity.

8.4.6 Key recommendations for the craft sector

To address the challenges and capitalise on the opportunities in the craft sector in Mauritius, the following comprehensive recommendations are proposed:

1. Enhanced government support:

The government should increase financial backing for local artisans through targeted grants and funding initiatives. Policies, such as tax incentives and subsidies for raw materials, would reduce production costs and make local crafts more competitive. Strengthening initiatives like the 'Made in Moris' label can enhance the visibility and credibility of Mauritian crafts domestically and internationally.

- ##### 2. Creation of artisan hubs:
- Establish dedicated spaces, such as craft markets, galleries or artisan hubs, where local craftspeople can showcase and sell their products. These hubs would provide greater visibility to both local and international audiences, facilitating consistent market access and boosting sales.



3. Training and development

programmes: Skill-building workshops and training programmes should focus on modern design trends, sustainable practices and business development. These programmes must also prioritise preserving traditional crafts by passing skills on to younger generations, ensuring the survival and evolution of Mauritian heritage crafts.

4. Promotion of Mauritian crafts

internationally: Strengthen collaborations between the government and private sector to promote Mauritian crafts through international trade missions, fairs and exhibitions. Expanding the global presence of Mauritian artisans can open new markets and increase demand for local, handmade products.

5. Digital integration: Encourage artisans to adopt digital platforms for promoting and selling their crafts. E-commerce platforms and online marketplaces can help artisans reach international consumers, providing new revenue streams and reducing reliance on local markets. Workshops on digital literacy and marketing strategies should be included in development programmes.

6. Public Awareness Campaigns:

Launch nationwide campaigns to raise awareness of the cultural and economic value of local crafts. These campaigns should focus on changing perceptions of handmade products, encouraging Mauritian residents and tourists to support local artisans. Highlighting the role of crafts in preserving cultural heritage can foster a deeper appreciation and drive demand for locally made goods.

7. Sustainability focus: Emphasise eco-friendly and sustainable practices in the craft sector. Training artisans in the use of recycled and sustainable materials can reduce production costs and align local crafts with global sustainability trends, tapping into markets that prioritise eco-conscious products.

8. Collaboration with the tourism

industry: Foster greater collaboration between the craft sector and the tourism industry, including partnerships with hotels, resorts and tour operators. Tourists value unique, locally made products and integrating crafts into the tourism experience will provide artisans with consistent opportunities to sell their work and create sustainable demand.

8.4.7 Case study

Why focus here?

Respondents in the craft sector noted high material costs, limited government support and competition with imported goods. These challenges stifle the growth of local artisans, despite the craft sector's potential to contribute to tourism and the economy.

Key data points

- A ceramic artist pointed out how the cost of importing materials and limited marketing restrict their ability to expand their business.
- Tourists are often disappointed by the lack of locally made craft products, indicating a gap in supply that could be filled by local artisans.

Case study: Shivani Ragavoodoo – pioneering sustainable craft in Mauritius

Introduction

Shivani Ragavoodoo is the Founder and Creative Director of Cahaya, a for-profit sustainable craft business in Mauritius. With six years of experience in weaving and accessory production, Shivani has become a key figure in the craft sector, advocating for sustainable design and showcasing Mauritian cultural heritage through modern interpretations.

Professional background

As the founder of Cahaya, Shivani specialises in creating handcrafted products with a focus on sustainability. Her expertise extends to marketing and weaving, which has allowed her to innovate within the craft sector, blending traditional techniques with modern design elements. Cahaya remains a small business, employing two full-time staff, but it has gained recognition for its eco-friendly practices and cultural storytelling through craft.

Key challenges

The craft sector in Mauritius, while growing, faces several challenges. For Shivani, competition from mass-produced items and limited access to high-quality raw materials are major obstacles. Artisans often lack business skills, which hinders their ability to scale. Additionally, accessing markets and navigating complex funding applications pose significant challenges for many small craft businesses. Despite these barriers, the sector offers key opportunities for growth, particularly through eco-conscious trends and tourism demand.

Cultural and economic impact

Craft production in Mauritius reflects the country's diverse cultural heritage, with influences from Africa, India and Europe. Popular crafts include pandanus weaving, pottery, wooden carvings and textile production.

These crafts are integral to the tourism industry, attracting both local and international customers. The sector also plays a significant role in job creation, particularly for rural women. Shivani's work at Cahaya highlights how local crafts can contribute to both the economy and cultural preservation.

Sustainability and innovation

Sustainability is at the heart of Shivani's craft business. Many of her products use renewable materials like pandanus leaves and natural dyes, contributing to the broader movement towards eco-friendly design in Mauritius. Upcycling and sustainable practices are increasingly being showcased, particularly in textiles, with local artisans finding ways to reduce waste while creating new marketable products. The growing interest in sustainability presents significant opportunities for artisans like Shivani to expand their business both locally and internationally.

Marketing and distribution

Shivani markets her products primarily through local artisan markets and online platforms such as Etsy. However, access to digital marketing tools and training remains limited for many artisans in rural areas. The rise of digital platforms offers significant potential for growth, but artisans need better access to these tools to maximise their reach and sales. Shivani emphasises the importance of partnerships with tourism operators and government initiatives to promote craft products in international markets.

Support and funding

The craft sector in Mauritius benefits from some government grants and NGO-driven microloans, but the application processes are often complex and difficult for artisans to navigate. While programmes like SME Mauritius and She Trades provide valuable training, more advanced business and marketing education is needed. Shivani advocates for clearer funding structures and more accessible loans for small businesses like Cahaya, to help artisans scale and reach international markets.

Conclusion

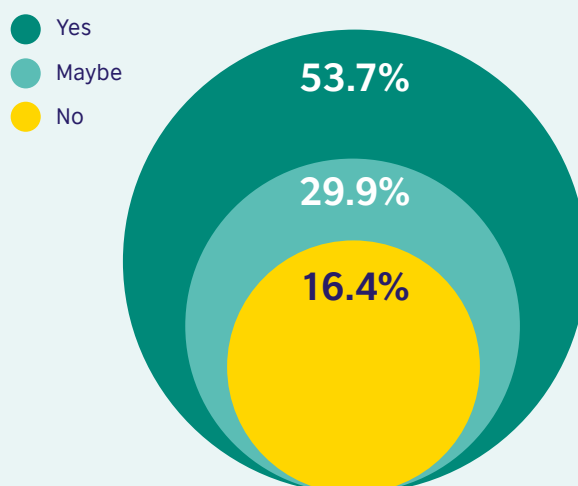
Shivani Ragavoodoo's journey as a craft entrepreneur demonstrates both the challenges and opportunities within Mauritius' craft sector. Her commitment to sustainability, coupled with her ability to innovate traditional techniques, positions her as a leader in the industry. For the craft sector to thrive, greater investment in digital infrastructure, improved access to funding and stronger collaborations between public and private sectors are essential. With the right support, Mauritius' craft sector, exemplified by businesses like Cahaya, has the potential to make a lasting impact on both the economy and cultural heritage.

8.4.8 Concluding insights

In conclusion, the craft sector in Mauritius demonstrates significant potential for growth and plays a pivotal role in the cultural and creative industries (CCIs). The sector's strengths include a rich cultural heritage, diversity of skills and untapped potential to attract tourism. However, it faces several challenges, including the high cost of importing materials, inadequate government support and a lack of infrastructure and platforms for artisans to showcase their work. The competition from cheaper, imported crafts and limited opportunities for training and professional development also hinder its growth.

To fully realise the potential of the craft sector, there is a clear need for policies that provide better access to funding, encourage government and private sector collaboration and foster skill development. Investment in creative hubs, co-working spaces and digital platforms, alongside tax incentives and educational programmes, would significantly enhance the sector's impact on the Mauritian economy. With the right support, the craft industry could become a major contributor to job creation, cultural preservation and international recognition for Mauritius.

Do you believe creative and cultural industries (CCIs) play a significant role in Mauritius' economy?



Yes: many respondents believe that CCIs contribute significantly to the economy by showcasing talent, creating jobs and supporting tourism.

No: a minority of respondents express scepticism, pointing out that the government does not offer support for the creative sector, which prevents CCIs from achieving their full economic potential.

Maybe: some respondents are uncertain, citing both potential and shortcomings.

8.5 Film and multimedia

8.5.1 Introduction to the film and multimedia sector

The film and multimedia sector in Mauritius is rapidly emerging as a pivotal part of the nation's cultural and economic framework. Though relatively young, this sector is gaining significant momentum due to Mauritius' unique offering of breathtaking landscapes and rich cultural diversity, making it an attractive destination for both local and international film productions. Mauritius, with its stunning beaches, mountains and diverse environments, offers filmmakers a wide variety of scenic backdrops, all within close proximity. This natural beauty, coupled with the island's vibrant blend of African, Indian, Chinese and European influences, has positioned Mauritius as an increasingly popular filming location.

The establishment of the **Mauritius Film Development Corporation (MFDC)** in the late 1980s marked the formalisation of the island's film sector, which has since evolved into a burgeoning industry. Over the past decade, Mauritius has experienced a surge in international interest, thanks in part to the government's **Film Rebate Scheme**, which was introduced in 2013 and expanded in 2016. This incentive programme, offering up to 40% rebates on qualified production expenditures, has been instrumental in drawing global film productions to Mauritius, particularly from Bollywood, Hollywood and other major film industries.

While the international appeal of Mauritius as a film destination has grown, the local film industry is still in its infancy.

Local filmmakers often face numerous challenges, including limited access to funding, professional training and state-of-the-art equipment. The domestic market for films remains small, which limits the financial viability of large-scale productions. Nevertheless, the sector holds immense potential, especially as digital platforms and streaming services continue to rise, providing new opportunities for distribution and audience reach.

Mauritius' rich storytelling traditions, deeply rooted in its multicultural heritage, offer untapped narrative possibilities that could set the island apart on the global stage. The local film industry has yet to fully capitalise on this cultural wealth, but with growing interest in diverse and multicultural stories, there is significant scope for Mauritian filmmakers to showcase their unique perspectives to the world.

The government has identified the film and multimedia sector as a **strategic component** of its broader economic diversification efforts. As part of this strategy, significant investments are being made in infrastructure.

In conclusion, the film and multimedia sector in Mauritius is on an upward trajectory, driven by its natural beauty, cultural diversity and strong government support. While there are challenges to overcome, particularly for local filmmakers, the sector is poised for significant growth and is expected to play an increasingly important role in the nation's cultural and economic development. With the right investments in training, infrastructure and industry partnerships, Mauritius has the potential to become a key player in the global film and multimedia industry.



8.5.2 Main representatives and institutions

The film sector in Mauritius is supported by a diverse array of governmental institutions, private organisations and international collaborations. These entities work together to foster talent, facilitate productions and promote Mauritius as a key destination for filmmakers.

Governmental support

The Mauritius Film Development Corporation (MFDC) is the central governmental body responsible for promoting the island as a film production destination. It provides essential logistical support to filmmakers and manages the Film Rebate Scheme, which offers up to 40% rebates on qualifying production expenses. This initiative has attracted numerous international productions, helping to boost the island's visibility in the global film industry. Additionally, the Economic Development Board (EDB) supports the sector by promoting Mauritius as an investment hub for film and multimedia, aligning it with the country's broader economic diversification strategy.

Educational institutions

The Mahatma Gandhi Institute (MGI) and the University of Mauritius offer programmes in media and film studies, nurturing young talent and equipping them with the necessary skills to enter the industry. These institutions also collaborate with local filmmakers, providing opportunities for students to engage in practical film projects and internships that enhance their professional development.

Venues and production facilities

Mauritius is home to several production facilities and filming locations that cater for both local and international film productions. The Caudan Arts Centre and Ciné City are popular venues for film screenings and festivals, creating platforms for filmmakers to showcase their work. These spaces, coupled with the island's diverse landscapes, make Mauritius an attractive location for a wide range of film projects, from feature films to documentaries.

Sponsorship

Private companies often contribute through Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiatives, sponsoring local film festivals and supporting independent film projects.

Media and international support

The Mauritius Broadcasting Corporation (MBC) is a key player in the media landscape, offering filmmakers a platform to air their productions and reach a national audience. International institutions like the British Council and the Goethe-Institut contribute to the growth of the sector by fostering cultural exchanges and co-productions, enabling local filmmakers to collaborate with global professionals and access international markets.

Film festivals and industry events

Events, such as the Phare International Film Festival, provide vital platforms for local and international filmmakers to showcase their work. These festivals not only celebrate the art of filmmaking but also serve as important networking opportunities, allowing industry professionals to connect and collaborate on future projects.

In conclusion, the film sector in Mauritius is supported by a robust network of institutions, from government bodies to educational organisations and international partners. Together, they ensure the continued growth of the industry and its integration into the global film market, despite ongoing challenges in infrastructure and funding.



8.5.3 Links and overlaps with other sectors

The film and multimedia sector in Mauritius intersects with various industries, fostering collaboration and growth across the creative economy. The **tourism** industry benefits significantly from the film sector, as international productions showcasing Mauritius' breathtaking landscapes serve as powerful marketing tools. Films, TV series and multimedia content shot on the island inspire visitors by highlighting its natural beauty and cultural appeal. Further collaboration between the tourism and film sectors could include promoting Mauritius as a filming destination and creating tourism-focused content to enhance visitor experiences.

Mauritius' rich multicultural history offers a wealth of narratives for filmmakers, with **cultural heritage and storytelling** playing a central role. Films and multimedia projects rooted in local heritage provide opportunities to preserve and share Mauritius' cultural identity with global audiences. By focusing on stories that reflect the island's diverse traditions and contemporary challenges, the sector can produce content that resonates both locally and internationally.

The overlap with **education** is evident through programmes offered by institutions like the University of Mauritius and the University of Technology, Mauritius, which nurture professionals in media, communication and design. However, there remains a critical gap in specialised training for areas such as film direction, editing, animation and technical production. Targeted educational initiatives and partnerships with industry leaders are needed to bridge this gap and equip professionals with advanced skills.

Advances in **technology and innovation** have propelled multimedia production into new domains, such as virtual reality (VR), augmented reality (AR) and digital animation. These technological advancements link the sector to innovation hubs and IT services, fostering an environment where technology-driven storytelling can thrive and create new opportunities for content creation.

The sector plays a vital role in **advertising and marketing**, producing high-quality visuals and engaging content for brands. This connection supports local businesses and creates new revenue streams for filmmakers and multimedia creators, strengthening the economic impact of the creative industries.

There are strong connections with **performing arts and music**, as actors, musicians and other creative professionals frequently collaborate on multimedia projects. Original scores, soundtracks and visual effects create a fusion of art forms that enhance the impact of films and videos, making them more engaging and memorable.

Environmental conservation and sustainability have also emerged as key themes within the film and multimedia sector. Films and documentaries addressing environmental issues serve as impactful tools for raising awareness and promoting conservation efforts. Collaborating with environmental organisations allows filmmakers to contribute to advocacy and education through visually compelling storytelling.

By leveraging these connections and opportunities, the film and multimedia sector in Mauritius can further establish itself as a vibrant and influential player in the global creative economy.

8.3.4 SWOT analysis

| | |
|--|---|
| S Strengths <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Scenic locations• Government incentives• Strategic location• Cultural heritage for storytelling | W Weaknesses <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Limited local infrastructure• Lack of funding• Shortage of professional training• Small domestic market |
| O Opportunities <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Digital platforms growth• International collaborations• Cultural storytelling for niche markets• Film tourism | T Threats <ul style="list-style-type: none">• International competition• Reliance on foreign Productions• Sustainability of local productions• Lack of policy focus on local content |

Opportunities and challenges in the film and multimedia sector in Mauritius

The film and multimedia sector in Mauritius is at a crossroads, with numerous opportunities for growth alongside significant challenges:

Opportunities

- **International collaboration:** Mauritius' Film Rebate Scheme and geographic location make it an attractive destination for international filmmakers. Continued focus on international collaboration could lead to increased foreign investment, providing local filmmakers with exposure to global markets and professional networks.

- **Digital platforms and streaming services:** The rise of digital platforms and streaming services offers new opportunities for local filmmakers to distribute their content internationally. This could help overcome the challenge of a small domestic market by providing access to global audiences.
- **Cultural storytelling:** Mauritius' multicultural background presents an opportunity to produce films that reflect the island's unique cultural heritage. Such stories, particularly those that emphasise African and Indian narratives, could appeal to both local and international audiences.

Challenges

- **Limited local infrastructure:** Despite attracting international productions, Mauritius lacks advanced production facilities and post-production studios. Local filmmakers find it difficult to access high-end equipment and resources to produce competitive films.
- **Funding issues:** The available financial support, like the Film Rebate Scheme, is often geared towards foreign productions, leaving local filmmakers with limited funding options. This creates competition for scarce resources.
- **Skill gaps and training:** There is a shortage of professional training programmes in specialised areas like screenwriting, cinematography and post-production. Aspiring filmmakers either have to seek training abroad or settle for short-term workshops, limiting local talent development.
- **Small domestic market:** Local productions face a small domestic market, which limits revenue opportunities. Imported content, especially from Hollywood and Bollywood, dominates the market, making it difficult for local films to gain traction.
- **Competition from imported content:** The influx of international films limits distribution opportunities for local productions, making it harder to secure funding and audiences.
- **Sustainability of local productions:** Tight budgets and the lack of post-production facilities make it difficult for local filmmakers to produce high-quality films that can compete globally.

8.5.5 Talking points

Several areas of interest have been identified for further exploration and development within the film and multimedia sector in Mauritius.

- **Expansion of local infrastructure:** There is a need for more investment in local production and post-production facilities to reduce the reliance on foreign resources and enable local filmmakers to produce high-quality content.
- **Training and education:** Specialised training in areas such as screenwriting, cinematography, editing and post-production should be prioritised. Establishing partnerships with international film schools and institutions could help bridge the gap in professional training.
- **Leveraging digital platforms:** Mauritius should focus on capitalising on the global shift towards digital media by promoting local content on streaming platforms, allowing filmmakers to reach international audiences and bypass the limitations of the domestic market.
- **Collaboration with tourism:** The sector could benefit from stronger collaborations with the tourism industry, using film and multimedia to showcase Mauritius as a cultural and tourist destination. Film tourism could create new revenue streams for both sectors.

8.5.6 Key recommendations for the film and multimedia sector

To strengthen the film and multimedia sector in Mauritius and address its challenges, the following recommendations are proposed:

- **Cultural preservation through film:** Local content should emphasise the preservation and promotion of Mauritius' rich cultural heritage. Storytelling that reflects the island's multicultural identity could help differentiate Mauritian films in the international market.
- **Encouraging international co-productions:** By forming co-production agreements with foreign film industries, Mauritius can bring in additional resources and expertise, offering local filmmakers opportunities for collaboration and growth.
- **Diversification of platforms:** Beyond traditional cinema, local filmmakers should explore other media formats such as documentaries, animations and digital shorts. These formats may require less financial investment and offer alternative paths to success in the multimedia landscape.
- **Infrastructure development:** To address the lack of local production resources, Mauritius should invest in advanced production and post-production facilities. These investments would allow local filmmakers to produce high-quality content without relying on foreign services.
- **Policy support for local content:** Advocate for policies that support local film production through tax breaks, increased funding and initiatives that foster local storytelling.
- **Increased Funding for local filmmakers:** Expand financial support for local filmmakers through grants, government funding and private investment. This will help reduce the reliance on foreign productions and promote the development of local content.



8.5.7 Case study

Why focus here?

The film and multimedia sector holds immense potential for Mauritius as global demand for content continues to rise. While the island offers a unique cultural backdrop and a talented pool of creatives, significant challenges remain, particularly in terms of funding, infrastructure and professional development opportunities. Respondents noted that Mauritius has yet to fully leverage its potential in this sector, which could position the country as a regional hub for film production, animation and multimedia content creation.

Key data points

- Respondents highlighted the difficulties in securing sufficient funding for film projects and the absence of adequate infrastructure to support large-scale productions.
- Several respondents pointed out the need for more formalised training and better access to industry-standard tools to develop the skills of local filmmakers and multimedia professionals.

Case study: Jon Rabaud – pioneering the film industry in Mauritius

Introduction

Jon Rabaud, a filmmaker with 13 years of experience, is the founder of Magic Wheel Pictures in Mauritius. His expertise spans directing, screenwriting and producing and he has been at the forefront of navigating the developing Mauritian film industry. Jon's work not only reflects the youth and potential of the industry, but also highlights the key challenges it faces in professional development, funding and international collaboration.

Professional background

As the founder of Magic Wheel Pictures, Jon operates as a solo independent filmmaker, producing content that aligns with his vision for Mauritian cinema. With a rich experience across multiple facets of film production, Jon has worked on both local and international projects, including productions with budgets up to \$25 million. His involvement in the industry highlights both his creative and entrepreneurial skills and he remains a key figure in the growing local film scene.

Key challenges

Jon identifies several challenges within the Mauritian film industry. One of the most pressing issues is the lack of formal training available to local talent, especially technical crew and actors, who often rely on learning by doing or attending occasional workshops led by foreign instructors. This makes it difficult to build a robust local film production sector. Additionally, the local industry heavily depends on international productions for job opportunities, as local production remains relatively low.

Funding is another major challenge. While government incentives like the Film Rebate Scheme attract international productions, Jon points out that the available funds for local projects, especially feature films, are often poorly conceived, with budgets disconnected from actual market prices. Moreover, short film funding is limited, which restricts the ability of emerging filmmakers to develop their craft.

Cultural and economic impact

The Mauritian film industry is still searching for its identity. However, Jon emphasises the crucial role that cinema plays in promoting the country's culture and heritage. Local films offer a unique opportunity to showcase Mauritius' diverse stories, landscapes and people to the world. Although the industry is young, the potential for it to contribute to the local economy and tourism is significant. Several Mauritian films released in 2023, for example, attracted a large number of tourists to screenings, underlining the industry's ability to engage both local and international audiences.

Despite its promise, the economic viability of the industry remains uncertain due to its heavy reliance on international productions. Jon believes that the growth of a local film industry would provide greater economic stability, offering more consistent job opportunities and developing homegrown talent.

Sustainability and innovation

Environmental sustainability is an emerging concern within the film industry in Mauritius. Local and international productions are beginning to adopt eco-friendly practices, such as reducing plastic waste on set and using digital copies of documents. However, Jon points out that more support is needed to enhance these practices across the board. Sustainable initiatives could further boost the appeal of Mauritius as a destination for international film productions, aligning with global trends toward eco-friendly filmmaking.

International collaboration

Jon highlights the importance of international collaboration for the growth of the Mauritian film industry. While Mauritius has been a popular destination for international shoots, true co-productions between Mauritian and international filmmakers remain rare. The development of local talent, coupled with more frequent participation in international festivals, could foster greater collaboration and lead to larger-scale projects in the future. To this end, Jon stresses the need for better support structures to help local filmmakers connect with international counterparts.

Conclusion

Jon Rabaud's journey as a filmmaker is a testament to both the challenges and opportunities within the Mauritian film industry. His experience underscores the need for more formal training, improved funding models and greater international collaboration to ensure the long-term viability of the sector. Jon envisions a future where Mauritian cinema finds its unique identity and plays a vital role in showcasing the country's rich culture to the world. As the local industry continues to develop, with better support and sustainable practices, Mauritius has the potential to become a vibrant hub for both local and international film production.

8.5.8 Concluding insights

The film and multimedia sector in Mauritius holds significant potential but faces several critical challenges that hinder its full development. Key issues, such as limited infrastructure, insufficient funding for local filmmakers and a shortage of professional training programmes contribute to the slow growth of the industry. The dominance of imported content and a small domestic market further exacerbate the difficulties faced by local filmmakers.

However, the sector also presents numerous opportunities. Mauritius' multicultural heritage offers a rich foundation for cultural storytelling that can appeal to global audiences, while the rise of digital platforms and international collaborations provides avenues for local content to reach beyond the island.

Co-production agreements with foreign film industries and diversification into new media formats such as documentaries and digital shorts offer alternative paths for growth.

To fully unlock the potential of the Mauritian film and multimedia sector, strategic investments in infrastructure, skill development and financial support for local productions are essential. Additionally, fostering policies that support local content creation and promoting international collaborations will be crucial in positioning Mauritius as a competitive player in the global film and multimedia landscape. By addressing these challenges and embracing these opportunities, the sector can contribute significantly to both the cultural and economic growth of the island.



8.6 New media

8.6.1 Introduction to the new media sector

The new media sector in Mauritius represents a dynamic fusion of creativity, technology and cultural expression, making it one of the most promising and innovative areas within the island's Creative and Cultural Industries (CCIs). This sector encompasses a wide range of digital and interactive forms, including digital art, video production, animation, interactive media, virtual reality (VR), augmented reality (AR) and gaming. As global technological advancements reshape creative industries worldwide, Mauritian artists and creators are increasingly leveraging these tools to express their artistic visions and engage diverse audiences both locally and globally.

In Mauritius, the digital media market is anticipated to experience significant growth in the coming years, with revenue expected to reach US\$58.11 million by 2024. Among the various segments, ePublishing is projected to be the largest, with an estimated market volume of US\$28.34 million in the same year. This growth is driven by increasing digital literacy, expanded Internet access and evolving consumer preferences for online content and services.

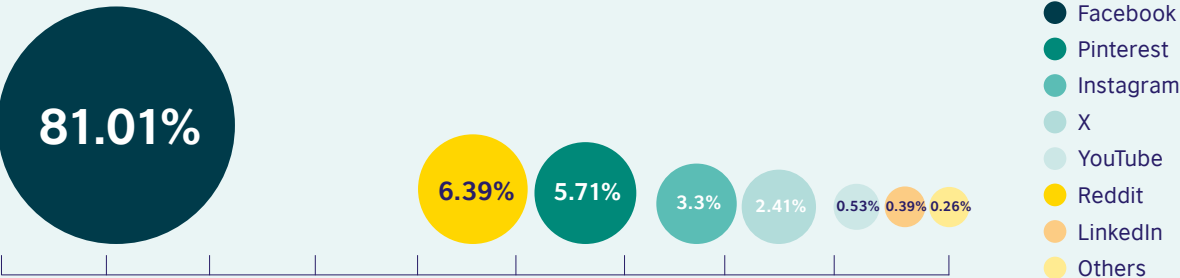
Historically, Mauritius has had a rich tradition of storytelling, cultural expression and crafting, which has now begun to extend into the digital realm. The growing accessibility of digital platforms and tools, combined with a high rate of Internet penetration and mobile connectivity, has paved the way for the rise of new media art and innovation.

In 2024, Mauritius had over 982,000 Internet users, representing 75.5% of the population and 820,000 social media users, providing fertile ground for the growth of digital and new media art. With 2.1 million mobile connections, the island boasts a significant level of digital engagement, allowing for the proliferation of interactive and mobile-dependent art forms.

The sector's development is also aligned with broader global shifts towards digitalisation, where the lines between art, technology and culture are increasingly blurred. This convergence has opened up new opportunities for Mauritian creatives to engage with both local and international audiences, positioning the island as a rising player in the global new media landscape. As the sector continues to evolve, it holds immense potential for contributing to Mauritius' cultural and economic growth, while offering new platforms for artistic experimentation and engagement.



Social media stats: Mauritius
Oct 2023 – Sept 2024



Source: StatCounter Global Stats

The social media chart highlights the engagement levels across different platforms such as Facebook, Pinterest, Instagram, X, YouTube and others over a set period. Facebook consistently dominates with the highest engagement, while platforms like Pinterest, Instagram and X show fluctuating but lower levels of activity. YouTube and Reddit maintain relatively low but stable engagement figures.

In relation to our survey responses, this chart indicates the growing importance of digital technologies in the creative and cultural industries (CCIs) in Mauritius.

As noted by participants in the responses, social media platforms provide a valuable means for visibility, collaboration and marketing of creative projects, as well as connecting with international audiences. However, there is also recognition of challenges, such as access to advanced digital solutions and the high cost of technology, which hinders full participation in the global digital economy.

This chart reflects the potential for further integration of digital platforms in boosting the CCI sector in Mauritius, aligning with calls for better digital infrastructure, training and funding support.

8.6.2 Main representatives and institutions

The new media art sector in Mauritius is backed by a diverse range of institutions, governmental initiatives and private organisations that provide the necessary infrastructure, funding and creative space for the industry to flourish. This support fosters the integration of technology with artistic expression, positioning Mauritius as an emerging hub for new media art in the region.

Governmental and institutional support

Economic Development Board (EDB):

The EDB plays a pivotal role in nurturing innovation within the new media sector through its *Proof of Concept Scheme* and *Pole of Innovation Grant Scheme*. These initiatives provide critical financial backing for projects that merge art and technology, making advanced tools and resources accessible to artists engaged in new media projects.

Mauritius Research and Innovation

Council (MRIC): MRIC enhances the collaborative spirit between local and international researchers with programmes like *Research and Innovation Bridges*, enabling the cross-pollination of ideas and technological advancements. This collaborative environment is invaluable for artists looking to incorporate cutting-edge technology into their work.

Ministry of Arts and Cultural Heritage:

The ministry supports the creative sector through funding opportunities, the organisation of cultural events and the promotion of new artistic movements, including digital and new media art. Its strategic role ensures the continued growth of the sector through robust cultural and creative industry policies.

Trade and business support

Business Mauritius: A key player in the broader business landscape, Business Mauritius offers new media artists access to a variety of resources, including training programmes, webinars and government-backed financial mechanisms. These are essential for fostering entrepreneurship and ensuring the financial sustainability of projects.

Development Bank of Mauritius (DBM):

The DBM offers loans and equity financing tailored for creative businesses, including those in the new media sector. Through this financial support, artists can access the capital needed to bring their projects to scale or explore new creative ventures.

SME Mauritius: Through grants and international fair participation programmes, SME Mauritius enables new media artists to gain global exposure. This international outreach is vital for emerging artists seeking opportunities to display their work beyond local markets.

Non-profit organisations and cultural institutions

House of Digital Art (HODA): As a dedicated cultural hub for digital art, HODA provides exhibitions, workshops and residencies for artists experimenting with new media. This platform allows for the exploration of innovative intersections between art, design and technology, encouraging creative experimentation.

National Art Gallery: Traditionally focused on visual arts, the National Art Gallery has increasingly incorporated new media into its exhibitions, providing artists with a physical and virtual space to showcase their digital works. This approach promotes diversity in Mauritian art and highlights the growing relevance of digital expression.

MediaCity Mauritius: Though not exclusively centred on new media art, MediaCity serves as an integrated multimedia hub that supports creative industries, indirectly benefiting new media artists by offering a platform for content creation and distribution on a global scale.

Educational and training institutions

University of Technology, Mauritius (UTM): UTM's *Creative Arts, Film and Media Technologies (CAFMT)* department provides comprehensive degree programmes in digital technologies and media production. This educational infrastructure ensures that students are trained in both the technical and creative aspects of new media, preparing them for careers in this rapidly evolving field.

Mahatma Gandhi Institute (MGI): MGI's School of Fine Arts bridges traditional and digital arts through specialised programmes that combine classic artistic training with modern technological tools. This interdisciplinary approach equips students with the skills needed to excel in both traditional and new media arts.

Financial support for artists

National Arts Fund (NAF): NAF offers the Digital Creative Art Grant, a financial lifeline for digital artists. This grant enables artists to develop virtual and digital projects, empowering them to experiment with technology while expanding the reach of their work to virtual audiences.

In conclusion, Mauritius has cultivated a robust ecosystem that supports the new media art sector, offering a blend of financial, educational and creative resources. Key players such as the EDB, MRIC and institutions like HODA and UTM ensure that artists have access to cutting-edge technologies and international platforms. With continued investment and innovation, Mauritius is on track to solidify its role as a leader in new media art within the region and beyond.

8.6.3 Links and overlaps with other sectors

The new media sector in Mauritius intersects with several industries, fostering innovation and creating opportunities for collaboration within the creative economy. In **tourism**, new media technologies, such as virtual reality (VR), augmented reality (AR) and interactive digital installations, enhance the visitor experience. These tools are used to create immersive cultural heritage experiences, virtual tours and digitally augmented exhibits, offering travellers a deeper connection to Mauritius' culture and history. This makes the island particularly appealing to tech-savvy visitors seeking unique and interactive experiences.

The integration of digital storytelling, computer-generated imagery (CGI) and interactive media creates significant overlap with the **film and animation** sectors. These technologies enable new media artists to collaborate with filmmakers and animators on groundbreaking multimedia projects that blend traditional storytelling with cutting-edge innovation. This synergy expands creative possibilities while pushing the boundaries of content production.

The **education** sector is also embracing the potential of new media, with institutions like the University of Mauritius and specialised training centres beginning to offer programmes in digital art, media and technology.

However, there remains a need for more targeted curricula to prepare students for careers in this rapidly evolving field. Expanding educational opportunities will ensure that future generations are equipped with the skills necessary to drive innovation in the new media sector.

New media is closely tied to **technology and innovation**, as advancements in software, hardware and digital tools fuel creativity. Mauritius' growing IT ecosystem supports the development of new media projects, enabling experimentation with emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence (AI), blockchain and immersive media. These innovations offer endless possibilities for creative expression and cross-sector collaboration.

The **advertising and marketing** industries increasingly rely on new media for dynamic and engaging content. Interactive advertisements, social media campaigns and digital branding strategies showcase the creative potential of new media, providing lucrative opportunities for artists and technologists. This integration strengthens Mauritius' position in the global digital marketing landscape.

New media also plays a crucial role in **cultural heritage and preservation**. Digital archiving, interactive storytelling and immersive exhibits allow Mauritius to document and share its rich history and traditions with global audiences.

These efforts make cultural heritage more accessible and relevant to younger generations while bridging the gap between traditional and contemporary art forms.

The rise of the **gaming** industry and e-sports provides another area of overlap. New media technologies, such as AR, VR and interactive design are integral to creating immersive gaming experiences and developing innovative e-sports platforms.

Mauritius has the potential to tap into this rapidly growing market by fostering collaborations between new media artists, game developers and tech companies. Initiatives to promote game design, development and e-sports events could position Mauritius as a regional hub for gaming culture and digital entertainment.

By leveraging these intersections, the new media sector in Mauritius can drive innovation, support economic growth and establish the island as a leader in the global creative and digital economies.

8.6.4 SWOT analysis (opportunities)

S

Strengths

- Rich cultural heritage
- Government support
- Growing digital interest

W

Weaknesses

- Limited access to advanced technology
- Lack of specialised training
- Small domestic market

O

Opportunities

- International demand for digital content
- International collaborations
- Expansion of VR/AR technologies

T

Threats

- Global competition
- Talent retention challenges
- Underdeveloped infrastructure

Opportunities and challenges in the new media sector in Mauritius

The new media sector in Mauritius is poised for growth, but it also faces several challenges that need to be addressed:

Opportunities

- **International collaboration:** Local new media artists can collaborate with international studios, production houses and tech companies. These partnerships would provide expertise, technology and resources, allowing local talent to access global markets.
- **Digital platforms for distribution:** With the rise of platforms like YouTube, Instagram and streaming services, Mauritian creators have new opportunities to showcase their work to a global audience. Digital platforms also offer avenues for monetisation through advertising, subscriptions and other revenue streams.
- **Cultural preservation through technology:** Mauritius' rich cultural heritage can be preserved and promoted using new media technologies. VR and AR tools offer immersive experiences, providing new ways for locals and tourists to engage with the island's cultural identity.

Challenges

- **Limited access to advanced technology and infrastructure:** The new media sector suffers from a lack of cutting-edge technology, such as high-end animation software, VR and AR tools. Additionally, Mauritius lacks advanced production facilities, including studios and post-production services, limiting local creators' ability to produce content that meets international standards.

- **Skills and training deficit:** There is a shortage of specialised training programmes in areas such as animation, interactive media, game development and digital production. Educational programmes in Mauritius often do not provide the technical depth required to prepare creatives for the demands of new media production. Many artists must seek costly training abroad, which is not accessible to everyone.
- **Financial constraints and market access:** Local creators struggle to secure funding for new media projects, as most financing mechanisms are directed towards larger industries. The domestic market for new media content is still small, limiting opportunities for creators to monetise their work or gain exposure.
- **Infrastructure deficiency:** Despite growth in the sector, the lack of high-end production facilities and access to advanced technology continues to be a significant barrier. This hinders local creators from competing on the global stage.
- **Limited market and monetisation options:** The relatively small domestic market and limited opportunities to monetise content locally make it difficult for new media creators to sustain their projects. Many rely on international audiences or platforms for growth.
- **Skills gap:** The lack of specialised training in areas such as VR/AR development, animation and interactive media design hampers the sector's development. Without significant investment in education and training, the industry will struggle to reach its potential.

8.6.5 Talking points

Several areas require further development and exploration to enhance the growth of the new media sector in Mauritius.

- **Virtual and augmented reality in tourism:** There is untapped potential in utilising VR and AR to create immersive tourism experiences that promote Mauritius' rich cultural and natural heritage. These technologies can add value to the tourism sector and provide new opportunities for local creators to collaborate with the tourism industry.
- **Collaborations between artists and tech companies:** Encouraging partnerships between digital artists and technology firms can drive innovation and expand the capabilities of the sector. Such collaborations would also foster the exchange of technical expertise and artistic creativity, advancing the field of new media art.
- **Cross-sector integration:** Exploring how new media can be integrated with sectors such as education, gaming and film will create more opportunities for local creators. Initiatives that link new media with traditional art forms, performance arts or interactive storytelling can offer new directions for creative expression.

8.6.6 Key recommendations for the new media sector

- **Encourage cross-sector integration:** Foster collaborations between new media artists and other sectors such as education, gaming and traditional arts. These cross-sector partnerships will expand the range of creative projects and offer new business opportunities for creators.
- **Monetization of new media content:** Explore alternative revenue streams for new media artists, such as crowdfunding platforms, digital advertising and subscriptions. Additionally, provide support for local creators to access global markets where demand for digital content is growing.
- **Incentivize cultural preservation through technology:** Develop initiatives that encourage the use of new media for cultural preservation, leveraging VR, AR and digital storytelling to bring Mauritius' heritage to life. This will position new media as a key player in both the cultural and tourism sectors.





- **Develop specialised training programmes:** Establish partnerships with international institutions to offer advanced training in areas like animation, interactive media, VR/AR development and digital production. Such programmes would help build the technical expertise needed to expand the sector.
- **Increase financial support for new media:** Expand funding options for new media projects through government grants, private investment and incentives designed specifically for technology-driven projects. This will reduce reliance on international platforms and support local creators in monetising their work.
- **Promote international collaboration:** Encourage local artists to collaborate with international studios and tech companies to gain access to global expertise, technology and markets. This would also foster innovation and elevate the quality of local productions.
- **Leverage digital platforms for global reach:** Support local creators in utilising global digital platforms for distribution, helping them reach international audiences and generate new revenue streams.

8.6.7 Case study

Why focus here?

The rapid rise of digital technologies is reshaping creative industries worldwide and Mauritius is no exception. Respondents indicated that while digital arts and new media offer promising opportunities, there are significant challenges related to access to advanced tools, infrastructure and training. Additionally, digital platforms could be a powerful means of sharing Mauritian culture globally, yet the sector remains underdeveloped.

Key data points

- Respondents mentioned the high costs associated with digital tools and the lack of accessible training for creatives to incorporate these technologies into their work.
- One respondent noted that digital arts have significant potential but currently lack the necessary support systems, such as funding and infrastructure, to thrive in Mauritius.

Case study: Astrid Dalais – Driving cultural innovation in Mauritius

Introduction

Astrid Dalais is a cultural entrepreneur, the Director of Move for Art and the Co-founder of 10 House of Digital Art in Mauritius. Her work is characterised by a deep commitment to cultural development and community engagement, combining creativity with a focus on public spaces. Astrid's initiatives are transformative, blending art, culture and technology to inspire collaboration, foster inclusivity and enhance Mauritius' cultural identity.

Professional background

As the leader of Move for Art, Astrid has spearheaded a variety of multidisciplinary projects that redefine public spaces. The agency, known for its innovative approach, has curated events that highlight the intersection of artistic expression and urban development.

One of Astrid's landmark achievements is co-founding 10 House of Digital Art, a cultural hub dedicated to integrating art, technology and society. Since opening in June 2023, the venue has become a centrepiece for digital innovation and creativity in Mauritius, hosting immersive exhibitions, installations and workshops. Astrid's expertise in artistic direction, scenography and cultural strategy has been instrumental in fostering the success of these ventures, which also include the groundbreaking Porlwi Festival, an event that redefined the cultural landscape of Port Louis.

Key challenges

Despite these successes, the cultural and creative industries in Mauritius face significant challenges. A lack of infrastructure limits opportunities for artists to showcase their work, especially in the realms of digital and multidisciplinary art.

Funding constraints are another persistent issue, with sporadic government support and limited financial resources stifling the sector's growth. Moreover, public and private stakeholders often undervalue the deeper dimensions of art, focusing solely on aesthetics rather than embracing its transformative potential. Astrid has addressed these challenges through her initiatives, creating innovative cultural spaces that prioritise inclusivity and sustainability, though maintaining momentum requires consistent advocacy and substantial resources.

Cultural and economic impact

Astrid's contributions have had a profound cultural and economic impact. Her leadership of the Porlwi Festival attracted hundreds of thousands of visitors, reconnecting Mauritians with their heritage and revitalising public spaces. Similarly, 10 House of Digital Art has engaged over 40,000 visitors within its first eight months, underscoring the growing public interest in digital and contemporary art. These projects have not only enriched the cultural fabric of Mauritius but have also fostered connections between art, tourism and urban development, showcasing the potential of culture as an economic driver.

Sustainability and innovation

Sustainability is a central theme in Astrid's vision for Mauritius. Through 10 House of Digital Art, she promotes eco-conscious practices, integrating them into immersive installations and events.

Her work modernises traditional art forms while preserving their cultural significance, ensuring that heritage remains relevant in contemporary contexts. Astrid envisions Mauritius as a cultural laboratory, a hub for regional and international exchanges that enhance sustainability and innovation in the arts.

Inclusivity and representation

Inclusivity has also been a hallmark of Astrid's work. She has championed projects that blend diverse artistic disciplines and cultural influences, ensuring that marginalised communities are represented and engaged. Her initiatives, such as the Porlwi Festival have celebrated Mauritius' rich cultural diversity, fostering a sense of unity and belonging among citizens of all ages and backgrounds. By creating spaces that are accessible and inclusive, Astrid has demonstrated the transformative power of art in bridging divides and strengthening community bonds.

Conclusion

Astrid Dalais's leadership and vision highlight the immense potential of the arts to transform societies. Through Move for Art and 10 House of Digital Art, she has created platforms for creativity, collaboration and cultural identity to flourish. To sustain and expand these efforts, Mauritius must prioritise stronger cultural policies, increased funding and cross-sector collaboration. Astrid's vision for the future emphasises the integration of art into public life, fostering a more inclusive, sustainable and creative society.



8.6.8 Concluding insights

The new media sector in Mauritius, while rich in potential, faces several challenges that hinder its full development. Key barriers include limited access to advanced technology and infrastructure, a shortage of specialised training programmes and insufficient financial support. The skills gap in areas like animation, interactive media and VR/AR further limits the sector's growth.

Despite these challenges, there are clear opportunities for progress, particularly through international collaboration, the use of digital platforms for global distribution and the integration of new media into the preservation of Mauritius' cultural heritage.

Respondents from the research emphasise the importance of investing in state-of-the-art facilities, enhancing professional training and encouraging cross-sector collaboration. The potential for leveraging new media technologies like virtual and augmented reality to create immersive cultural experiences also offers unique avenues for growth, particularly in tourism and education.

To fully realise the potential of the new media sector, strategic investments in infrastructure, skill development and financial support are crucial. By embracing global partnerships, expanding digital distribution and promoting cultural preservation through technology, Mauritius can position its new media sector as a competitive player in both the local and global markets. This will not only contribute to the economic growth of the island but also strengthen its cultural identity on a global stage.

8.7 Literature

8.7.1 Introduction to the literature sector

The literature and creative writing sector in Mauritius is a dynamic reflection of the island's rich cultural diversity, complex history and multilingual heritage. As an island nation that has been shaped by centuries of migration, colonialism and cultural exchanges, Mauritius has developed a literary tradition that embodies the voices of its diverse population. French, English and Creole are the primary languages used in literature, alongside other Indian languages like Bhojpuri, Hindi and Tamil, representing the various communities that make up the fabric of Mauritian society.

Historically, Mauritian literature was influenced by the colonial powers that ruled the island – first the Dutch, followed by the French and the British. During these periods, French and English dominated the literary landscape, with early writers focusing on themes related to exoticism, colonial encounters and the natural beauty of the island.

The colonial era provided a foundation for literary expression, but it was often Eurocentric in nature, reflecting the perspectives of colonial settlers and administrators. However, the local population began to find its voice and as Mauritius moved towards independence, its literature evolved to reflect the island's unique identity.

The emergence of Creole literature in the latter half of the 20th century was a transformative moment for Mauritian literature. Creole, once considered a secondary language or 'patois' became a vehicle for exploring the realities of Mauritian life, particularly among the working class. The contributions of writers like **Dev Virahsawmy**, who used Creole in his plays and poetry, helped elevate the language to a status of literary significance. Creole literature often addresses themes of social conflict, identity and the legacies of colonialism, offering a more authentic voice to the Mauritian experience.

Post-independence literature in Mauritius has seen a flourishing of themes centred on identity, cultural hybridity and post-colonialism. Mauritian writers have delved into the complexities of living in a multiracial society, grappling with issues of ethnicity, migration and national identity. Notable figures like **Ananda Devi**, **Shenaz Patel**, **Malcolm de Chazal** and **Carl de Souza** have produced works that explore the nuanced experiences of Mauritians, often addressing the intersections of race, gender and class. These writers have gained international recognition, placing Mauritian literature on the global stage.

One unique aspect of Mauritian literature is its engagement with the concept of '**coolitude**' a term coined by poet **Khal Torabully** to describe the cultural experience of Indo-Mauritians who descended from indentured labourers brought to Mauritius after the abolition of slavery. This concept merges the historical experience of indenture with contemporary themes of diaspora and cultural fusion, making it a cornerstone of Mauritian identity in the literary realm.

Mauritian literature is not confined to written forms alone. The island has a strong tradition of oral storytelling, passed down through generations. Oral narratives, folklore and myths play a crucial role in preserving cultural heritage, particularly within rural and Creole-speaking communities. These stories, often told in Creole, reflect the island's diverse history, blending African, Indian, European and Malagasy influences. The oral tradition serves as an essential counterpart to the written literary forms, enriching Mauritius' literary landscape.

In the contemporary literary scene, Mauritian writers continue to push boundaries by exploring global issues such as environmental concerns, globalisation and social inequality, while maintaining a focus on the local context. The integration of these themes reflects the island's position as a cultural crossroads where different heritages coexist and influence one another. The rise of younger writers and poets has injected fresh perspectives into the literary scene, offering new insights into the lives of Mauritians in the 21st century.

Educational institutions in Mauritius are playing an increasingly important role in nurturing the next generation of writers. Schools and universities are integrating literature and creative writing into their curricula, with a particular focus on promoting literature in Creole, French and English. These efforts are crucial in preserving the island's literary heritage and ensuring that future generations continue to engage with the diverse narratives that define Mauritius.

In conclusion, the literature and creative writing sector in Mauritius is a testament to the island's rich cultural tapestry. Through its multilingual and multi-ethnic approach, Mauritian literature captures the complexity of its people, offering a nuanced understanding of identity, history and the human condition. As the sector continues to evolve, it remains a vital part of the island's cultural landscape, contributing to both local and global literary conversations. With the right support and investment, Mauritian literature has the potential to reach even greater heights, solidifying its place as a unique and influential voice in the world of creative writing.



8.7.2 Main representatives and institutions

The literature and creative writing sector in Mauritius is bolstered by a range of institutions, governmental bodies and organisations that aim to nurture the island's rich literary heritage and foster its growth. While the infrastructure for supporting local writers continues to evolve, these key players provide essential support to writers, publishers and readers.

Governmental and institutional support

National Library of the Republic of Mauritius: The National Library serves as a central institution, preserving the nation's literary and cultural heritage. It is responsible for coordinating libraries across Mauritius, providing access to historical and contemporary literary resources. This library is instrumental in supporting the growth of local literature by ensuring that readers and writers have access to vital works and resources, promoting a culture of reading and writing.

Mauritius Council of Registered Librarians (MCRL): Established in 2002 under the Ministry of Arts & Culture, the MCRL serves as a corporate body representing library and information science professionals. It aims to enhance library services and promote literacy across the nation.

Trade and business support

Mauritius Society of Authors (MASA): Established under the Copyright Act of 1986 and later reaffirmed in the amended Copyright Act of 2017, serves as the primary collective management organisation for creators in Mauritius. Representing over 5,000 members across various creative fields – including music, audiovisual, theatre, publishing and literature – MASA is dedicated to the efficient collection and distribution of royalties, ensuring that artists receive fair compensation for their works.

Mauritius Broadcasting Corporation (MBC): The MBC supports the literature sector by broadcasting literary content on television and radio, featuring book reviews, author interviews and discussions on literary works. These programmes reach a broad audience, fostering a national culture of reading and writing by bringing literary discussions into the public eye.

Non-profit organisations and cultural institutions

Alliance Française de Maurice and Institut Français de Maurice: These institutions play a key role in promoting French-language literature in Mauritius organising literary events, workshops and readings for Francophone audiences. Their support celebrates and preserves Mauritius' strong French literary tradition while providing a platform for local writers and readers to engage with French literature.



British Council Mauritius and Goethe-Institut Mauritius: These organisations promote English and German literature, respectively, by hosting events that focus on cross-cultural dialogue and literary exchanges. By fostering relationships between local and international writers, these institutions enrich the Mauritian literary scene and promote global literary engagement.

Nelson Mandela Centre for African Culture Trust Fund: Since its establishment in 1986, this centre has played a pivotal role in promoting African and Creole culture in Mauritius through exhibitions, publications, meetings and performing arts.

National Arts Fund (NAF): NAF offers financial support for literary projects, including book publishing, writer residencies and literary festivals. This funding is critical for enabling writers to focus on their craft and for ensuring that literary projects receive the necessary financial backing to reach a wider audience.

Educational and training institutions

Mauritius Institute of Education (MIE): MIE plays a significant role in the literary sector by emphasising language arts in its curriculum and training educators to teach literature effectively. By cultivating a love for literature in schools, MIE helps nurture the next generation of readers and writers, contributing to the long-term development of the Mauritian literary scene.

University of Mauritius – Department of English: The Department of English at the University of Mauritius contributes to the literary sector by focusing on English-language literary studies. Through conferences, workshops and public lectures, the department encourages scholarly discourse and appreciation of literature. It plays a pivotal role in bridging local and international literary perspectives.



The Indian Ocean
Children's Book
Fair features book
sales with around
40 exhibitors,
engagements with
over 120 local
authors and
26 international
guests

Literary events and festivals

Salon du Livre de l'Océan Indien

This annual literary festival is a major event in Mauritius' literary calendar, attracting authors, publishers and readers from across the Indian Ocean region. The festival celebrates the diversity of literature in the region, providing a platform for Mauritian writers to showcase their work and engage in dialogue with international literary figures.

Indian Ocean Children's Book Fair

In its tenth year, this event showcases the diversity of youth literature from the Indian Ocean region and beyond. The salon features book sales with around 40 exhibitors, engagements with over 120 local authors and 26 international guests from regions including Madagascar, Mayotte, Mauritius and France, along with workshops, exhibitions and performances for all age groups.

In conclusion Mauritius' literature and creative writing sector is sustained by a network of institutions and organisations dedicated to nurturing literary talent and preserving the island's rich cultural heritage. With continued support from governmental bodies, non-profits, educational institutions and cultural organisations, the literary landscape of Mauritius is poised for growth. These key players work together to ensure that Mauritian literature evolves and thrives while engaging with global literary trends, contributing to the island's broader cultural and intellectual life.

8.7.3 Links and overlaps with other sectors

The literature and creative writing sector in Mauritius intersects with several other sectors, creating opportunities for collaboration and growth. One of the key overlaps is with **education**, where the literature sector is closely linked to the education system. Schools and universities play a crucial role in fostering an appreciation for literature, though there is potential to further integrate creative writing into school curricula. Promoting multilingual literary expression (in Creole, French, English and Bhojpuri) could better reflect the island's diverse culture and enrich students' learning experiences.

The sector also intersects with the **cultural and tourism sectors**. Literature is a key component of Mauritius' cultural identity and can be used to promote the island as a destination for cultural tourism. By leveraging the rich literary heritage of Mauritius in tourism campaigns and through hosting literary festivals, the island can attract international visitors enhancing both its cultural profile and tourism industry.

There is also a connection with **media and broadcasting**, where platforms such as radio, television and digital outlets offer writers opportunities to showcase their work. Interviews, book reviews and literary discussions on these platforms help increase visibility for local authors and foster a sense of community within the literary sector. **Digital media**, in particular, offers untapped potential for writers to reach broader audiences through blogs, podcasts and online storytelling.

The literature sector intersects with **publishing and printing**, which remains critical for producing and distributing written works. Supporting local publishers and ensuring the availability of resources for self-publishing can empower more authors to bring their stories to the public. Partnerships between writers and publishers can also promote the creation of works that appeal to both local and international audiences.

Additionally, the sector overlaps with **technology**, particularly in the growing field of e-books and digital publishing. Leveraging online platforms and mobile applications can enable Mauritian authors to reach a global audience and participate in the expanding market for digital literature.

Virtual book launches, online literary discussions and e-book sales can enhance accessibility and engagement with literature.

Cultural heritage and preservation also align closely with the literature sector. Written works serve as a medium for preserving Mauritius' diverse traditions, histories and cultural narratives. Encouraging the documentation of oral histories and folklore in written form can enrich the literary landscape and ensure these stories are passed on to future generations.

By leveraging these intersections, the literature and creative writing sector in Mauritius can play a transformative role in preserving cultural heritage, promoting education and contributing to the creative economy.

8.7.4 SWOT analysis

S

Strengths

- Rich linguistic diversity
- Growing interest in literary festivals
- Established authors
- Oral storytelling tradition

W

Weaknesses

- Limited publishing platforms
- Low public engagement
- Inadequate financial support
- Lack of professional development

O

Opportunities

- Growth of digital publishing
- International collaborations
- Government support

T

Threats

- Small domestic market
- Language barriers
- Global publishing competition

Opportunities and challenges in the literature and creative writing sector in Mauritius

The literature and creative writing sector in Mauritius presents a range of opportunities for growth but also faces several key challenges.

Opportunities

- **Multilingual literary expression:** The linguistic diversity of Mauritius offers writers the chance to create works that reflect the island's multicultural identity. Writers can leverage this diversity to produce literature that resonates with both local and international audiences, expanding the potential readership across multiple languages.
- **International literary festivals:** Mauritius has the potential to further develop its literary festivals. These festivals provide a platform for local authors to showcase their work globally and foster cross-cultural exchanges in literature.
- **Digital publishing and self-publishing:** The rise of digital publishing platforms offers Mauritian writers an alternative to traditional publishing routes. Self-publishing enables local authors to bypass the barriers of the traditional publishing industry, allowing them to reach a broader audience and increase their visibility both locally and internationally.

Challenges

- **Limited access to publishing platforms:** The local publishing industry is underdeveloped, with few established publishers to support the wide range of literary works produced by Mauritian writers. This forces many authors to seek publishing opportunities abroad, where they face financial and logistical challenges.

- **Funding and financial support:** There is a lack of financial support for writers, with few grants or funding programmes specifically dedicated to literature and creative writing. This makes it difficult for authors to publish, promote and distribute their work both locally and internationally.
- **Low public engagement:** The literature sector in Mauritius experiences low levels of public engagement. Reading is often seen as a luxury and access to books and literary programmes is limited, particularly in rural areas. This results in a limited audience for local writers, reducing their visibility and reach.
- **Lack of professional development opportunities:** There is a shortage of professional development programmes, workshops and mentorship opportunities for writers. This lack of support hinders emerging authors from improving their craft or learning from experienced writers.
- **Small local market:** The domestic readership is limited, making it difficult for writers to achieve commercial success. The small market limits the sustainability of literary projects and makes it challenging for writers to earn a living from book sales.
- **Inadequate literary infrastructure:** The absence of a robust network of publishing houses, literary agents and distribution channels stifles the growth of the literature sector and makes it harder for local writers to publish and distribute their work.
- **Cultural and language barriers:** While Mauritius is linguistically diverse, with Creole, French, English and Bhojpuri spoken, this diversity can also be a challenge. Works written in Creole or Bhojpuri may not gain as much international recognition as those written in French or English, limiting the global reach of some authors.

8.7.5 Talking points

There are several key areas of interest that require further exploration and development to strengthen the literature and creative writing sector in Mauritius.

- **Promotion of multilingual literature:**

Efforts should be made to promote literature in all of Mauritius' official languages (Creole, French, English and Bhojpuri) to reflect the island's rich linguistic heritage. There is also a need to develop programmes that encourage the translation of local works into other languages to reach broader audiences.

- **Literary education and workshops:**

The development of creative writing workshops, mentorship programmes and literary training for aspiring writers would help to nurture emerging talent and strengthen the sector's future. This could be facilitated by educational institutions, cultural organisations and literary festivals.

- **Digital and self-publishing**

platforms: Expanding access to digital publishing and self-publishing platforms can provide writers with new opportunities to publish their work. These platforms allow authors to reach a global audience and offer an alternative to traditional publishing methods, which are limited in Mauritius.

8.7.6 Key recommendations for the literature sector

To address the challenges and leverage the opportunities within the literature and creative writing sector, the following recommendations are proposed.

- **Investment in literary**

infrastructure: Develop local publishing houses, literary agents and book distribution networks to support the growth of the literature sector. These entities can help local writers navigate the publishing process, promote their work and reach both local and international audiences.

- **Strengthening literary education:**

Introduce creative writing workshops, mentorship programmes and literary training within schools and universities to cultivate emerging talent. This will provide aspiring writers with the skills they need to succeed in the literary world.

- **Promotion of multilingual literature:**

Promote the publication and distribution of literature in Creole, French, English and Bhojpuri, while supporting translation efforts to ensure that Mauritian literature reaches global audiences. This will strengthen the representation of Mauritius' diverse literary voices.

- **Support for digital and self-publishing:** Encourage the use of digital and self-publishing platforms to provide authors with new ways to publish and market their work. Financial and technical support for writers looking to self-publish could help overcome traditional publishing barriers.
- **Enhancement of public engagement with literature:** Develop initiatives that increase public engagement with literature, such as community reading programmes, book clubs and literary outreach in rural areas. This will help grow the local readership and foster a culture of reading.
- **Support for literary festivals and events:** Expand the scope of existing literary festivals and encourage international participation to position Mauritius as a hub for literary exchange. This could attract international authors, publishers and literary professionals, further promoting local literature.
- **Financial incentives for writers:** Provide grants, fellowships and residencies for writers to support the creative process and enable them to focus on their work without financial stress. These incentives can help nurture literary talent and contribute to the growth of the sector.
- **Cross-sector collaboration:** Explore opportunities for collaboration between the literature sector and other cultural industries, such as film, media and tourism, to create multimedia projects that promote Mauritian literature and heritage on a larger scale.
- **Strengthening literary education:** Introduce creative writing workshops, mentorship programmes and literary training within schools and universities to cultivate emerging talent. This will provide aspiring writers with the skills they need to succeed in the literary world.



8.7.7 Case study

Why focus here?

The literature sector in Mauritius, rich with multicultural influences, holds significant potential for both cultural preservation and economic growth. However, respondents indicated that the literary arts face numerous challenges, including limited access to funding, inadequate platforms for publication and a lack of marketing support. Despite the talent pool and the growing interest in local literature, the sector remains underdeveloped, especially in terms of reaching broader audiences, both locally and internationally.

Key data points

- Respondents emphasised the difficulty of accessing funding and platforms for publishing and distributing Mauritian literature, which limits opportunities for both emerging and established writers.
- One respondent noted the lack of ongoing dialogue and platforms to maintain discussions around literature, culture and heritage, further inhibiting the development of the sector.

Case study: Melisa Madanamootoo – navigating the literature and illustration scene in Mauritius

Introduction

Melisa Madanamootoo is an emerging illustrator and designer in Mauritius, with seven years of experience in the fields of interior design and illustration. As an independent creative professional, Melisa has faced several challenges related to visibility and support, but her work reflects the growing interest in locally produced literature and illustrated books. Her journey underscores the need for more recognition and infrastructure to support artists like herself in Mauritius.

Professional background

Melisa specialises in interior design and illustration and she published her first illustrated book in 2022. Despite her early success, she has struggled with gaining visibility and recognition within the local market, pointing out that building a reputation can be difficult without a strong network. Her experience reveals the limitations of Mauritius' literary infrastructure, where significant marketing efforts are often required to gain exposure.

Key challenges

The book publishing and literature sector in Mauritius faces several significant challenges. One of the primary issues is the lack of infrastructure to support the creative process, with limited dedicated galleries, art collectives and platforms for showcasing work. Melisa also notes the scarcity of events and festivals that promote local authors and illustrators, limiting opportunities for networking and exposure.

Another challenge is the lack of governmental support for the literary sector. Melisa feels that there are insufficient funding opportunities, literary awards and initiatives aimed at promoting local talent. Additionally, she emphasises the difficulties faced by emerging professionals in securing financial backing for projects, as well as the complexity and time-consuming nature of applying for grants.



Cultural and economic impact

While there is a demand for locally produced literature and illustrated books in Mauritius, the market remains relatively small, which can hinder authors and illustrators in terms of distribution and sales. Financial support through grants, fellowships and literary awards could help bridge this gap by encouraging new voices and supporting talent. Moreover, writing workshops and publishing seminars would be beneficial for professionals looking to improve their craft and stay innovative.

Melisa acknowledges that a career in writing, illustration or publishing in Mauritius is challenging, especially when it comes to generating a stable income. The limited market size, combined with the high cost of producing and promoting works, makes it difficult for artists to achieve financial stability in this sector.

Sustainability and innovation

Digital platforms have become increasingly popular in Mauritius as a means for authors and illustrators to promote and sell their work. Social media platforms like Facebook and Instagram, along with personal websites, are commonly used to expand the market beyond Mauritius. However, Melisa points out that financial constraints remain a barrier to digital publishing, as keeping up with the latest technological tools and software can be expensive.

Melisa believes that collaborations with international publishers could present a significant opportunity for growth, allowing local works to be translated and distributed abroad. These collaborations could help Mauritian artists gain recognition and access to larger markets.

International collaboration

Melisa has participated in international collaborations, using tools like Team Viewer and Drop Box to facilitate the process. These collaborations have allowed her to expand her network and benefit from working with international partners. However, she notes that building a strong network is crucial to engaging with global markets and this remains a significant barrier for many Mauritian authors and illustrators.

Conclusion

Melisa Madanamootoo's journey as an illustrator reflects both the potential and challenges within Mauritius' literature and illustration sector. While there is demand for locally produced work, the lack of infrastructure, funding and visibility makes it difficult for emerging artists to thrive. Melisa advocates for more literary events, festivals and government support to help promote local talent. As the sector continues to evolve, collaborations with international publishers and digital innovation will be key to ensuring its growth and sustainability.

8.7.8 Concluding insights

The literature and creative writing sector in Mauritius faces significant challenges that limit its growth and the visibility of local writers. The limited access to publishing platforms, lack of financial support and a small domestic market make it difficult for authors to publish and distribute their work both locally and internationally. Furthermore, low public engagement and the absence of professional development opportunities hinder the ability of emerging writers to improve their craft and reach a broader audience.

However, key opportunities identified by the respondents suggest that the sector has substantial potential. The linguistic diversity of Mauritius presents a unique advantage, offering writers the opportunity to create multilingual works that reflect the island's multicultural identity.

International literary festivals and the rise of digital publishing platforms provide additional avenues for Mauritian writers to showcase their work globally and bypass traditional publishing barriers.

To foster growth in the sector, stakeholders must focus on improving access to publishing, increasing financial support for writers and promoting literary engagement across Mauritius. Emphasising multilingual expression, nurturing the development of international literary events and encouraging digital publishing could position Mauritius as a hub for literature that bridges local culture with international audiences. By addressing the key challenges and capitalising on these opportunities, the literature and creative writing sector can thrive, contributing to the cultural richness and global presence of Mauritius.



8.8 Fashion and design

8.8.1 Introduction to the fashion and design sector

The fashion and design sector in Mauritius is an evolving component of the island's creative and cultural industries, blending its rich multicultural heritage with modern design innovation. Known primarily for its robust textile manufacturing sector, Mauritius has long been a key player in the global clothing supply chain. However, the island is now witnessing a growing shift towards fashion that emphasises local creativity, sustainability and cultural expression. The sector draws inspiration from the island's diverse population, with influences from African, Indian, Chinese and European traditions reflected in the designs, patterns and textiles used by Mauritian designers.

Mauritius' textile industry, historically focused on export-oriented manufacturing, laid the foundation for its emerging fashion sector. The island's strategic location in the Indian Ocean and its access to key markets in Africa, Europe and Asia have given Mauritian designers an edge in blending global fashion trends with local craftsmanship. Over time, Mauritius has transitioned from a hub for mass-produced garments to an increasingly important player in the world of haute couture and bespoke fashion, catering for a more discerning market that values unique designs and craftsmanship.

While the sector is still in its developmental stages, there is growing recognition of Mauritius' potential to establish itself as a fashion destination. The rise of local fashion designers and brands reflects the island's move towards value-added products that highlight creative design and sustainable practices. These designers often incorporate indigenous materials, embroidery and fabrics to create pieces that celebrate Mauritius' cultural diversity.

In recent years, sustainability has become a critical focus for the fashion and design sector in Mauritius. The global push towards eco-friendly fashion has resonated on the island, where designers and manufacturers are increasingly exploring sustainable materials, ethical production processes and circular fashion principles. Initiatives such as the '**Sustainable Island Mauritius**' project emphasise eco-conscious design and encourage local artisans to adopt practices that minimise waste and environmental impact. This shift towards sustainability not only aligns with global trends but also offers a significant opportunity for Mauritius to position itself as a leader in sustainable fashion.

The fashion industry is also beginning to intersect with **cultural tourism**, with visitors to Mauritius showing interest in purchasing locally made clothing and accessories that reflect the island's vibrant cultural heritage. Fashion shows and events such as **Mauritius Fashion Week** provide platforms for local designers to showcase their work and engage with international buyers, tourists and fashion enthusiasts. These events not only highlight the creative talent emerging from the island but also help to promote Mauritius as a hub for cultural and creative tourism.



The fashion and design sector in Mauritius benefits from government and institutional support aimed at promoting creative industries. Organisations such as the **Economic Development Board (EDB)** and **SME Mauritius** provide financial incentives and business development programmes that assist fashion entrepreneurs in growing their businesses. Additionally, collaborations with international fashion bodies, such as the **Academy of Design and Innovation (ADI)** and partnerships with **Dubai Fashion Week**, have helped elevate the visibility of Mauritian fashion on the world stage.

In conclusion, the fashion and design sector in Mauritius is at a pivotal point in its evolution. With its multicultural heritage, skilled craftsmanship and growing focus on sustainability, the island is well-positioned to become a key player in the global fashion industry. By addressing the challenges of funding, infrastructure and market access and by continuing to foster local talent and innovation, Mauritius' fashion sector has the potential to make significant contributions to the island's economy and cultural identity. The blend of tradition and modernity in Mauritian fashion ensures that it will remain a unique and influential force in the broader creative and cultural industries.

8.8.2 Main representatives and institutions

The fashion and design sector in Mauritius benefits from the support of key institutions, governmental bodies and organisations that promote local talent, provide business opportunities and integrate the island's unique cultural heritage into the global fashion landscape. These entities offer financial support, training and platforms for designers to showcase their work locally and internationally.

Governmental and institutional support

Economic Development Board (EDB):

The EDB plays a pivotal role in driving the growth of the fashion industry in Mauritius. Through initiatives like the SME Equity Fund and various business development programmes, the EDB provides financial incentives and grants to fashion entrepreneurs. These programmes help designers scale their businesses and access international markets, while also encouraging innovation and sustainability within the creative industries.

SME Mauritius: SME Mauritius supports small and medium-sized enterprises within the fashion sector by providing grants, mentorship and business management training. They facilitate participation in international trade fairs, offering local designers the chance to gain exposure and build their brands on a global platform.

Mauritius Export Association (MEXA):

MEXA supports the international expansion of the Mauritian fashion industry by offering market insights and export facilitation services. This guidance helps fashion designers and manufacturers navigate global trade markets, promoting the export of high-quality Mauritian fashion products to new audiences.

Mauritius Chamber of Commerce and Industry (MCCI):

The MCCI strengthens the fashion industry by providing business development support, networking opportunities and access to international trade fairs. Their services help designers expand their business operations and foster trade relationships, enhancing Mauritius' presence in the global fashion market.

Sustainable Island Mauritius Project: This initiative promotes sustainable practices within the fashion sector, encouraging designers to adopt eco-friendly production methods. By aligning with global trends toward ethical and sustainable fashion, the project positions Mauritius as a leader in green fashion production.

Educational and training institutions

Academy of Design and Innovation (ADI):

The ADI is the premier educational institution for fashion design in Mauritius, offering diploma and degree programmes in fashion design, textile technology and related fields. The academy equips future designers with the technical skills and creativity needed to succeed in the competitive fashion market. ADI's collaboration with international fashion bodies, including partnerships with Dubai Fashion Week, enables students and emerging designers to showcase their talent globally.

Mauritius Institute of Training and Development (MITD):

MITD provides vocational training in garment manufacturing, textile technology and pattern-making, ensuring that the fashion industry has access to a skilled workforce. By developing the technical skills required for high-quality garment production, MITD supports the growth and professionalism of the Mauritian fashion industry.

Fashion events and platforms

Caudan Arts Centre: Primarily a cultural venue, the Caudan Arts Centre also hosts fashion shows and exhibitions that highlight the work of local designers. As a creative hub, the centre fosters collaboration between fashion and other art forms, encouraging innovation and promoting the local fashion scene.

Hotel Hennessy – 'Backstage': Known for hosting regular fashion events and exhibitions, Hotel Hennessy provides a prestigious platform for local designers. Its fashion-themed events attract industry professionals, media and fashion enthusiasts, giving Mauritian designers significant exposure and helping to promote Mauritius as a fashion destination. These events are key networking opportunities, allowing designers to connect with influential figures in the fashion world.

Inclusivity and empowerment

National Empowerment Foundation (NEF):

NEF focuses on training and financially supporting marginalised communities, empowering artisans to integrate traditional craft techniques into contemporary fashion. This initiative promotes sustainable and socially responsible fashion, creating opportunities for economic empowerment through creative industries.

National Women Entrepreneur Council (NWECC): Established in 1999 under the Ministry of Gender Equality and Family Welfare in Mauritius, is dedicated to empowering women through entrepreneurship. It provides a comprehensive support system for aspiring and established women entrepreneurs by offering training programmes, business development resources and skill enhancement opportunities.

In conclusion, the fashion and design sector in Mauritius is supported by a comprehensive network of institutions and organisations dedicated to nurturing local talent and promoting global engagement. From financial backing by the EDB and SME Mauritius to educational support from ADI and MITD, designers have access to the resources they need to succeed both locally and internationally. With continued efforts from key platforms like Hotel Hennessy, the Mauritian fashion industry is poised for growth, making a lasting impact on the global stage.



8.8.3 Links and overlaps with other sectors

The fashion and design sector in Mauritius is closely linked to several other sectors, providing opportunities for cross-sector collaboration.

One significant connection is with **technology and innovation**, which offers tools like 3D printing, AI-driven design and virtual fashion shows to enhance creativity and production. Fashion-tech start-ups can also leverage Mauritius' growing ICT infrastructure to explore e-commerce platforms, virtual try-ons and blockchain solutions for supply chain transparency.

The sector also intersects with **arts and culture**, drawing inspiration from the island's vibrant visual arts scene and traditional crafts. Collaborations between designers and local artists, such as textile art projects or culturally inspired collections, can enhance the narrative and identity of Mauritian fashion.

Another important link is with **education and skill development**. Partnerships with institutions offering design and technical training, such as École de Design et des Arts Appliqués (EDAA), support the upskilling of workers in areas like tailoring, pattern-making and digital design, fostering innovation and global competitiveness.

The fashion sector naturally overlaps with the **creative economy and media**, with opportunities in costume design, advertising and digital content creation. Collaborations with influencers and digital creators also allow Mauritian fashion to gain visibility and connect with international audiences.



There is also a growing connection with **agro-industry and natural resources**. The sector can explore sustainable materials such as sugarcane fibres and plant-based dyes to create eco-friendly and biodegradable textiles, aligning with global trends in sustainable fashion.

The fashion sector intersects with the **health and wellness industry**, aligning with Mauritius' position as a wellness destination. Designers produce athleisure, spa wear and natural-fibre clothing targeted at health-conscious consumers, thus merging wellness with fashion.

Export and trade represent another significant overlap. Leveraging trade agreements like AGOA and EU partnerships allows the fashion sector to access niche markets and showcase Mauritian designs on a global stage.

Finally, the sector connects with **community development and social entrepreneurship**, offering opportunities to uplift rural artisans and empower women through craft-based industries. Initiatives focused on hand embroidery, traditional weaving and beadwork enable heritage preservation while supporting social and economic inclusion.

8.8.4 SWOT analysis

| | |
|--|--|
| S Strengths <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Strong textile manufacturing base• Rich cultural diversity• Interest in sustainable fashion• Government support | W Weaknesses <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Limited access to funding• Small domestic market• Limited high-quality materials• Skills gap |
| O Opportunities <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Leadership in sustainable fashion• Expansion into global markets• Integration with cultural tourism• International collaborations | T Threats <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Global competition• Economic vulnerability• Limited resources for scaling• Environmental challenges |

Opportunities and challenges in the fashion and design sector in Mauritius

The fashion and design sector in Mauritius presents a range of opportunities, but these are tempered by several significant challenges:

Opportunities

- **Sustainable fashion leadership:** Mauritius is well-positioned to lead in sustainable fashion practices, especially given its small scale, which allows for innovation in eco-friendly designs and ethical production methods. With increasing global demand for sustainable fashion, Mauritius can carve out a niche as a leader in this area, potentially attracting both international buyers and environmentally conscious tourists.

- **Expanding international reach:** The strategic location of Mauritius in the Indian Ocean, coupled with access to European, African and Asian markets, offers significant export opportunities for local fashion brands. By leveraging partnerships with international platforms, fashion bodies and events like Paris Fashion Week, Mauritian designers can expand their global footprint.
- **Fashion and cultural tourism:** With tourism being a major part of Mauritius' economy, fashion can become a key part of the island's cultural tourism offerings. By integrating fashion events, pop-up shops and local fashion into the tourism experience, the sector can increase its visibility and sales potential through international visitors.

- **Digital platforms and e-commerce:** The rise of digital platforms offers local designers the chance to bypass traditional retail challenges by using online marketplaces and e-commerce to reach global consumers. This provides a cost-effective way to market and sell products beyond the constraints of the domestic market.

Challenges

- **Limited access to high-quality materials:** Many local designers face challenges in sourcing high-quality fabrics and materials, especially those that are sustainably produced. This lack of access can limit the types of designs they can create and makes it difficult to compete with international brands that have more reliable supply chains.
- **High production costs:** The cost of producing fashion locally is relatively high, particularly for designers aiming for the luxury market. This poses a challenge for small designers who must compete with international brands that can offer lower prices due to economies of scale.
- **Skills and expertise gap:** While there is talent and creativity in the fashion sector, many designers lack the business, marketing and digital skills necessary to grow their brands on an international scale. Addressing this skills gap is critical to helping designers become globally competitive.
- **Small domestic market:** The Mauritian domestic market for high-end fashion is relatively small. As a result, local designers must rely heavily on exports or the tourism sector for sales, which makes them vulnerable to fluctuations in these external markets. This small market also limits opportunities for local designers to establish a strong customer base at home.
- **Sustainability and ethical practices:** Although there is a growing trend towards sustainable fashion, many local designers face challenges in adopting sustainable practices due to limited access to eco-friendly materials and the cost of incorporating sustainable methods into production.





8.8.5 Talking points

Several areas of interest have been identified that present opportunities for further development in the Mauritian fashion and design sector:

- **Sustainable fashion and ethical practices:** There is increasing interest in developing sustainable fashion practices that align with global trends. Exploring the use of eco-friendly materials, waste reduction and circular fashion models is key to the future success of the sector.
- **Business skills and digital platforms:** Investing in the development of business management skills and digital literacy for designers will help bridge the gap between creativity and commercial success. This includes building skills in marketing, branding and e-commerce.
- **Cultural integration and tourism:** Leveraging Mauritius' rich cultural diversity and promoting fashion as part of the island's tourism industry can open up new revenue streams and increase international visibility for local designers.

8.8.6 Key recommendations for the fashion and design sector

To capitalise on the opportunities and address the challenges facing the fashion and design sector in Mauritius, the following recommendations are proposed.

1. **Investment in infrastructure and skills development:** Increased investment in local fashion infrastructure, including production facilities, business training programmes and technical education is essential. Developing designers' business acumen and digital skills is crucial for helping them scale their businesses and compete internationally.
2. **Support for sustainable practices:** Encourage the adoption of sustainable fashion practices through government incentives and industry initiatives. Expanding access to eco-friendly materials and promoting the use of sustainable production methods will help position Mauritius as a leader in ethical fashion.
3. **Expansion of international reach:** Strengthen efforts to integrate Mauritian fashion into global markets by fostering international collaborations and supporting participation in global fashion events. This will help raise the profile of Mauritian designers and increase export opportunities.
4. **Promote fashion as a key part of tourism:** Incorporate fashion more prominently into the cultural tourism experience by organising fashion-related events, pop-up shops and collaborations with hotels and resorts to showcase local designs to tourists.
5. **Digital transformation and e-commerce development:** Facilitate the adoption of digital platforms and e-commerce solutions for local designers, enabling them to reach international consumers and bypass traditional retail challenges.

8.8.7 Case study

Why focus here?

The fashion sector in Mauritius is emerging, driven by cultural identity and creativity. However, financial support and access to international markets remain significant barriers, according to respondents.

Key data points

- A clothing company co-founder noted the lack of financial support for local fashion designers, indicating a gap in resources for growing the sector.
- Respondents also highlighted the importance of cultural identity in fashion, with potential for local fashion to reflect and promote Mauritian culture.

Case study: Araadhana Rambhojun – innovating sustainable fashion in Mauritius

Introduction

Araadhana Rambhojun is an upcycle designer and founder of A_Rad Creations in Mauritius. With six years of experience in fashion design, Araadhana has been a key advocate for sustainable fashion, navigating the challenges of the local fashion sector while promoting upcycling and eco-friendly practices. Her work reflects the increasing diversity of Mauritius' fashion industry and the growing importance of sustainability.

Professional background

As the founder and designer at A_Rad Creations, Araadhana specialises in upcycled fashion, transforming traditional and discarded materials into new, fashionable creations. With a strong focus on sustainability, her work stands out in Mauritius' fashion scene, where environmental concerns are becoming more prominent. Despite working independently, she has been able to develop a unique brand that highlights the possibilities of green fashion, leveraging her experience in design and entrepreneurship.

Key challenges

The fashion sector in Mauritius, while growing, faces several challenges. For Araadhana, one of the biggest obstacles has been securing space to showcase her work, as market and shop fees are often prohibitive for independent designers. While she uses platforms like Instagram and Facebook to promote her designs, the rising costs of participating in local markets make it difficult for small fashion businesses to gain visibility.

International exposure also remains a challenge due to high shipping costs, making it difficult to sell products overseas unless through bulk orders. Additionally, accessing funding or sponsors for organising fashion shows or participating in international collaborations is limited, particularly for small-scale entrepreneurs like Araadhana.

Cultural and economic impact

Araadhana notes that Mauritius' fashion sector is diverse, with a growing number of independent designers and online businesses. Fashion in Mauritius is heavily influenced by the country's cultural diversity, which she incorporates into her designs by repurposing traditional sarees into non-traditional outfits. However, the economic stability of a career in fashion is uncertain, especially for solo entrepreneurs. The fluctuating income, combined with the costs of promoting products and securing spaces for display, creates instability for designers in the local market.

Despite these challenges, the sector holds economic potential, especially with the rise of eco-conscious fashion. Araadhana believes that sustainable fashion can become a major driver of growth, with local markets encouraging environmentally friendly practices and designs. Collaboration with local artisans and participation in eco-friendly markets further supports this shift.

Sustainability and innovation

Sustainability is a central theme in Araadhana's work and in the broader fashion sector in Mauritius. Upcycling, eco-friendly packaging and reusing leftover materials are practices gaining traction among designers. However, accessibility to sustainable materials remains a challenge, as well as finding cost-effective platforms to showcase and sell products.

Araadhana envisions a future where sustainable fashion becomes more embedded in Mauritian culture. She predicts that second-hand and vintage fashion will grow, alongside trends like hiring outfits and promoting repair - and - mending services. These global trends could provide significant opportunities for fashion professionals in Mauritius, especially those looking to align with eco-conscious consumers.

Inclusivity and representation

The fashion sector in Mauritius is evolving to become more inclusive, though there is still room for growth. Araadhana emphasises that different fashion communities, from metal gigs to cosplay events, are becoming more accepted, showcasing the diversity within the sector. From her personal experience, Araadhana has not faced major issues related to inclusion, as many communities are encouraging of diverse and alternative fashion styles.

Conclusion

Araadhana Rambhojun's journey as an upcycle designer reflects both the challenges and opportunities within the fashion sector in Mauritius. Her commitment to sustainability and innovative use of traditional materials exemplify the growing eco-conscious movement within the local fashion industry. To further support this sector, increased funding for fashion shows, better access to international markets and more collaborative events within the industry are essential. Araadhana's vision for the future of fashion in Mauritius is one of inclusivity, sustainability and collaboration, ensuring that local designers can thrive in both local and global markets.



8.8.8 Concluding insights

The fashion and design sector in Mauritius, while burgeoning, faces several critical challenges that hinder its full potential. Key issues identified include limited access to high-quality materials, insufficient infrastructure for production and the lack of specialised training programmes that cater for the evolving needs of the industry. Additionally, small domestic demand and the dominance of imported fashion brands limit opportunities for local designers to establish themselves within the Mauritian market.

Respondents highlight the need for greater financial support and mentorship to help designers scale their businesses, innovate and create sustainable, high-quality products. A lack of professional development programmes that focus on contemporary design trends and sustainable fashion practices also hampers the sector's competitiveness.

However, the research reveals that there are significant opportunities for growth, particularly through the promotion of sustainable fashion and the integration of Mauritius' rich cultural heritage into modern design.

International collaborations and digital platforms offer Mauritian designers the chance to access global markets, showcase their unique cultural designs and expand beyond the local industry. There is also strong potential for leveraging the growing global demand for eco-friendly and ethical fashion, with Mauritius being well-positioned to lead in this area.

To unlock the potential of the fashion and design sector, it is crucial to invest in infrastructure, training, sustainable practices, as well as to foster international collaborations. With the right support, Mauritius can cultivate a vibrant fashion and design industry that not only thrives locally but also stands out on the global stage. This will contribute significantly to the country's economy while promoting its cultural identity through fashion.

8.9 Other

8.9.1 Introduction to the 'other' sector

The 'other' sectors within Mauritius' creative, fashion and cultural industries encompass a diverse range of fields that contribute significantly to the island's cultural identity and economic development. These sectors include educators, architecture, interior design, fashion stylists, curatorship, museum and heritage management. While often overshadowed by larger industries like fashion, music and the visual arts, these fields play a crucial role in shaping the cultural landscape and fostering the growth of Mauritius' creative economy.

Educators are essential in nurturing the next generation of creatives, imparting the knowledge, skills and critical thinking necessary for innovation. Their influence extends beyond the classroom, cultivating a creative mindset and ensuring the continued development of both the arts and culture sectors. Similarly, professionals in curatorship, heritage management and museum roles are key to safeguarding Mauritius' unique cultural narratives, ensuring that its diverse heritage is preserved, celebrated and shared with future generations.

The fashion sector, including fashion stylists, plays a vital role in the creative industries by blending local craftsmanship with contemporary design, representing the island's multicultural influences.

Fashion professionals help elevate Mauritius' global image as a centre for sustainable and innovative fashion, contributing to economic growth while reflecting the island's evolving cultural identity.

Architecture and interior design further contribute by blending tradition with modernity to create spaces that are both functional and culturally resonant. These fields not only shape the physical environment but also contribute to the cultural dialogue by incorporating design elements that reflect the island's unique identity.

Though often operating behind the scenes, these sectors are crucial to maintaining Mauritius' cultural heritage and driving creative innovation. Their contributions ensure the sustainability of Mauritius' broader creative, fashion and cultural ecosystem, highlighting their importance as key drivers of both cultural preservation and creative growth.

8.9.2 Main representatives and institutions

The 'other' sectors within Mauritius' creative and cultural industries - including architecture, interior design, curatorship, heritage management and education - operate within a more fragmented ecosystem compared to the more established sectors like fashion, music and visual arts. These fields contribute significantly to the cultural and economic landscape of Mauritius but often face challenges due to a lack of cohesive support, limited funding and minimal international exposure.

Governmental and institutional support

Ministry of Arts and Cultural Heritage:

The Ministry oversees many of the cultural initiatives in Mauritius, but its support tends to be more general, lacking the targeted programmes needed for niche sectors like architecture, interior design and heritage management. While efforts are made to promote cultural preservation, the specific needs of these sectors are often under-addressed.

Economic Development Board (EDB):

The EDB supports innovation and entrepreneurship across multiple sectors, including the creative industries. However, practitioners in fields like architecture, curatorship and heritage management often struggle to access specialised funding and resources. More targeted initiatives are needed to help these professionals grow their businesses and expand their reach into international markets.

Key sector-specific institutions

Mauritius Museums Council, Aapravasi Ghat Trust Fund and Le Morne Heritage Trust Fund:

These institutions play a critical role in preserving and promoting Mauritius' historical and cultural heritage. They manage national collections and cultural sites, contributing to both cultural education and tourism. However, these organisations face challenges such as limited funding, outdated infrastructure and a lack of professional development for staff, which hampers modernisation and growth within the heritage sector.

Institute of Architects of Mauritius (IAM) and The African Institute of the Interior Design Professions (IID):

These professional associations provide some degree of representation and advocacy for architects and interior designers. They offer platforms for networking and knowledge exchange, but the fragmented nature of these fields means that many practitioners work in isolation, without access to the mentorship, funding and specialised training necessary for further development.

Education and training institutions

Mahatma Gandhi Institute, University of Mauritius and Polytechnic Mauritius:

These educational institutions offer programmes that contribute to the development of creative professionals in fields like architecture, design and heritage management. However, these programmes often lack the specialised focus required to fully support professionals in these niche sectors, limiting innovation and growth. Greater emphasis on targeted curriculum development, particularly in areas like curatorship and heritage management, would help address the skill gaps in these fields.

While the 'other' sectors in Mauritius make significant contributions to the island's cultural and economic fabric, they face challenges due to underdeveloped networks, insufficient funding and limited professional development opportunities. Greater investment and structured support are needed to help these sectors thrive. A more collaborative effort between government entities, educational institutions and professional associations will be key to addressing these gaps and unlocking the full potential of Mauritius' diverse creative and cultural industries.

8.9.3 Links and overlaps with other sectors

The ‘other’ sectors in Mauritius are closely connected to several industries, fostering significant opportunities for collaboration and growth.

One of the key overlaps is with **tourism and hospitality**. Architecture, interior design and photography frequently contribute to this sector. Architects and designers collaborate with hotels, resorts and restaurants to create spaces that blend functionality with Mauritian cultural aesthetics, enhancing the overall tourist experience. Photographers play a vital role in tourism marketing, capturing captivating visuals of the island’s landscapes, cultural events and attractions to promote Mauritius as a must-visit destination.

There is also a strong connection with **heritage and cultural preservation**. Curators and museum professionals are essential in maintaining and showcasing Mauritius’ rich cultural heritage. Their work often overlaps with education, as museums and heritage sites serve as dynamic learning environments for both locals and visitors. Partnerships between heritage professionals and the tourism industry create opportunities to position Mauritius as a cultural tourism hotspot, further merging the realms of heritage and hospitality.

Another critical overlap exists with the **construction and real estate industries**. Architecture and interior design naturally intersect with these sectors, particularly as Mauritius continues to develop its urban and commercial infrastructure.

Creative professionals are increasingly sought after to deliver innovative designs that balance functionality, sustainability and cultural significance, shaping the island's evolving landscape while preserving its unique identity.

Education and industry also play a key role in these overlaps. Educators in creative fields often collaborate with professionals in architecture, interior design, fashion and heritage management to bridge the gap between academia and industry. Internships, workshops and real-world projects provide students with experiential learning opportunities, equipping the next generation of creatives with practical and innovative skills.

Another area of overlap is **public art and community engagement**. Public spaces often benefit from collaborations between architects, interior designers and cultural educators. Public art installations foster community engagement and cultural pride, aligning creative disciplines with placemaking initiatives to create vibrant and inclusive urban environments that resonate with local culture.

Finally, **sustainable design and eco-tourism** represent a growing intersection of architecture, interior design and tourism. Creative professionals integrate eco-friendly practices into their projects, appealing to the increasing demand for sustainable development. These efforts not only enhance Mauritius’ infrastructure but also strengthen its reputation as an environmentally conscious and culturally rich destination.

8.9.4 SWOT analysis (threats)

| | |
|--|--|
| S Strengths <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Cultural heritage preservation• Unique multicultural aesthetic | W Weaknesses <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Fragmented ecosystem• Lack of specialised training |
| O Opportunities <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Demand for sustainable design practices• International collaborations | T Threats <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Limited market and funding• Underdeveloped infrastructure |

Opportunities and challenges in the 'other' sector in Mauritius

The 'other' sectors in Mauritius offer a number of opportunities for growth, but also face significant challenges.

Opportunities

- **Blending modern design with cultural identity:** The unique multicultural heritage of Mauritius provides architects and interior designers with opportunities to create spaces that blend traditional Mauritian aesthetics with modern design, particularly in tourism-driven industries such as hospitality and hotel development.
- **Cultural preservation and education:** The heritage and museum sector has a vital role in preserving Mauritius' rich cultural and historical narratives.

Institutions like the Mauritius Museums Council and Aapravasi Ghat Trust Fund can leverage their position to promote cultural tourism and education, expanding the reach and impact of cultural heritage on both local and international audiences.

- **International collaboration:** The potential for cross-border collaborations offers significant growth opportunities. By aligning with international institutions, educational programmes and creative networks, professionals in architecture, interior design and curatorship can expand their knowledge, gain global exposure and tap into international markets.

- **Digital and modern educational platforms:** Educational institutions have the chance to develop more specialised programmes tailored to the evolving needs of the creative sectors, such as curatorship and design. Leveraging digital platforms for training and education could further enhance skill development and accessibility for a wider audience of emerging professionals.
- **Sustainable and eco-friendly practices:** As global trends shift towards sustainability, the use of local, sustainable materials in architecture and interior design presents an opportunity to position Mauritius as a leader in eco-friendly design. This could align the sector with global trends, attracting both domestic and international clients interested in sustainable development.

Challenges:

- **Fragmented ecosystem:** The 'other' sectors are highly fragmented, with many professionals working independently or in small firms. This isolation limits opportunities for collaboration, mentorship and resource-sharing, which hinders growth and innovation in these fields.
- **Lack of specialised training and professional development:** There are limited educational programmes that cater specifically for architecture, interior design and curatorship. This results in a shortage of specialised training and professional development opportunities for emerging talents, which restricts the sector's ability to keep pace with global trends.
- **Limited access to funding:** Professionals in this sector struggle to access targeted funding, as most support systems are not tailored to their unique needs. This lack of financial resources prevents many architects, designers and curators from scaling up their operations or reaching international markets.
- **Underdeveloped infrastructure for heritage management:** Institutions involved in curatorship, heritage management and museum operations face challenges related to outdated infrastructure and limited funding. This restricts their ability to modernise, expand and fully realise the potential for cultural education and tourism.
- **Limited market access and visibility:** The domestic market for the services provided by professionals in architecture, design and curatorship is relatively small. Additionally, the sector faces difficulty gaining international exposure and accessing global markets, limiting the potential for growth and financial sustainability.



8.9.5 Talking points

Several key areas of interest have been identified within the 'other' sectors that could be explored further to drive growth.

- **Cultural tourism integration:** Leveraging architecture, interior design and curatorship to enhance the cultural tourism experience in Mauritius by creating culturally resonant spaces and exhibitions.
- **Sustainable design and innovation:** Encouraging the adoption of eco-friendly practices in architecture and interior design, positioning Mauritius as a leader in sustainable development.
- **Multicultural and multilingual expression:** Using Mauritius' diverse cultural heritage in design and heritage management to create globally appealing projects that celebrate the island's unique identity.
- **Professional development and training:** Expanding specialised education programmes and professional development opportunities to address the skill gaps in architecture, design and heritage management.
- **International collaboration and exposure:** Promoting partnerships with international institutions to enhance knowledge sharing, access to markets and global recognition for local professionals.
- **Digitalisation and modernisation:** Supporting the modernisation of heritage institutions and exploring digital platforms for curation, education and design to reach a broader audience.

8.9.6 Key recommendations for the 'other' sector

To address the challenges and capitalise on the opportunities in the 'other' sectors, the following recommendations are proposed:

- **Enhance professional training and education:** Invest in specialised programmes and courses for architecture, interior design, curatorship and heritage management through partnerships with local and international institutions. This will address skill gaps and encourage innovation within these sectors.
- **Promote sustainable practices:** Encourage the use of eco-friendly materials and sustainable design approaches in architecture and interior design. This can be supported through subsidies or grants, aligning with global trends towards sustainability.
- **Strengthen collaboration and networks:** Facilitate greater collaboration between professionals in the 'other' sectors through local associations and international partnerships. Networking events, mentorship programmes and collaborative projects can foster knowledge sharing and collective growth.
- **Support cultural tourism:** Integrate architecture, interior design and heritage management into Mauritius' tourism strategy by promoting culturally significant spaces and exhibitions that enhance the island's appeal to both locals and international visitors.



- **Increase financial support:** Provide targeted funding mechanisms, such as grants and low-interest loans, specifically for professionals in the ‘other’ sectors. This will help them scale their operations, invest in new technologies and access international markets.
- **Modernize heritage institutions:** Invest in the modernisation of heritage and museum institutions, updating infrastructure and integrating digital technologies to improve accessibility and engagement. This can enhance cultural education and boost tourism.
- **Expand market reach through digital platforms:** Encourage the use of digital platforms for architecture, design and curatorship to reach a broader audience. This includes promoting Mauritian cultural projects through online exhibitions, virtual tours and digital design portfolios.
- **Foster multicultural and multilingual projects:** Support projects that celebrate Mauritius’ diverse cultural heritage by promoting cross-disciplinary collaborations that blend traditional and modern elements in design, curation and heritage preservation.

8.9.7 Case study

Why focus here?

Respondents frequently noted that existing educational programmes do not meet the needs of the creative industries. There is a need for more practical training and skill development in areas like project management, financial literacy and digital marketing.

Key data points

- A respondent highlighted the lack of educational support for emerging artists, pointing out that many lack the skills necessary to navigate the administrative and commercial aspects of the creative industries.
- Several respondents also mentioned that the current education system is too focused on traditional academic paths, leaving little room for creativity and bold ideas.

Case study: Dr Sabrina Ramsamy-Iranah – advancing creative education in Mauritius

Introduction

Dr (Mrs) Sabrina Ramsamy-Iranah is the Director of the Academy of Design and Innovation (ADI) in Mauritius. With over 23 years of experience in design and administration, Dr Ramsamy-Iranah has made significant contributions to the creative education sector in Mauritius, navigating its challenges while enhancing its relevance through policy reforms, digital integration and industry collaborations.

Professional background

As Director of ADI, an educational institution affiliated with the Ministry of Industrial Development, SMEs and Cooperatives, Dr Ramsamy-Iranah leads a team of over 50 employees dedicated to fostering creativity and innovation. Her expertise spans design and administration, which has positioned her as a key player in the growth and evolution of creative education in Mauritius. Under her leadership, ADI offers specialised programmes in fine arts, fashion design, graphic design and digital media, among others. These programmes integrate both global and local perspectives, emphasising Mauritius' rich cultural heritage.

Key challenges

Despite strategic policies and government incentives, Mauritius' creative education sector faces ongoing challenges, particularly in securing funding and improving infrastructure. The shortage of skilled professionals and outdated equipment limits the capacity for hands-on learning and inhibits the full potential of arts and design education. Furthermore, there is a skills gap in areas such as advanced digital technologies and entrepreneurial training, which are critical for the evolving creative industries.

Dr Ramsamy-Iranah identifies the limited resources for emerging fields like data-driven design, AI and virtual reality (VR) as a significant hurdle. Additionally, the film industry, in particular, struggles with inadequate distribution channels and international competition, which hinders its ability to achieve global reach.

Cultural and economic impact

Creative education programmes, such as those at ADI, contribute to the local economy by producing skilled professionals who support sectors like fashion, media, advertising and tourism. These programmes stimulate entrepreneurship, leading to the creation of new businesses and job opportunities. Graduates are well-equipped to handle modern tools and technologies and adapt to industry trends, enhancing their prospects in both local and international markets.

Through collaborations with local artisans, community-based projects and partnerships with cultural organisations, students gain hands-on experience while contributing to the preservation and promotion of Mauritius' cultural identity. Dr Ramsamy-Iranah emphasises that arts and design education plays a critical role in fostering innovation and contributing to Mauritius' economic and cultural development.

Inclusivity and diversity

Under Dr Ramsamy-Iranah's direction, ADI has implemented measures to ensure inclusivity and diversity in creative education. Scholarship and financial aid programmes provide opportunities for students from diverse backgrounds, and outreach initiatives engage under-represented groups. However, challenges remain in achieving equal access to resources and ensuring diverse representation in curricula.

To address these issues, Dr Ramsamy-Iranah advocates for expanding scholarship programmes, revising curricula to reflect global trends and promoting flexible learning options such as online courses.

Technology and innovation

Technological integration has transformed arts and design education at ADI. Students are exposed to cutting-edge tools, such as animation software and digital design platforms, fostering an innovative learning environment. However, Dr Ramsamy-Iranah believes that further advancements in digital technologies, such as AI and virtual collaboration spaces, could significantly enhance the sector. These improvements would provide students with more opportunities for real-time interaction with global markets, ensuring they remain competitive in the international creative landscape.

Conclusion

Dr Sabrina Ramsamy-Iranah's leadership at ADI reflects her commitment to advancing creative education in Mauritius despite the sector's challenges. By advocating for increased funding, enhanced infrastructure and global collaborations, Dr Ramsamy-Iranah has positioned ADI as a key institution contributing to Mauritius' cultural and economic development. Her vision for the future includes expanded industry partnerships, innovative curricula and sustainability-focused initiatives, ensuring that Mauritius remains at the forefront of the creative industries in the region and beyond.

8.9.8 Concluding insights

The ‘other’ sectors within Mauritius’ creative and cultural industries – comprising architecture, interior design, curatorship, heritage management, aspects of fashion and education – play an essential yet often under-recognised role in shaping the island’s cultural and economic landscape. Despite significant contributions to cultural preservation, design innovation and tourism, these sectors face considerable challenges due to their fragmented nature, limited funding and a lack of specialised training and infrastructure.

Key opportunities lie in leveraging Mauritius’ rich multicultural heritage, fostering international collaborations and integrating sustainable practices into design and heritage management.

The modernisation of heritage institutions and the promotion of cultural tourism can further enhance the visibility and economic impact of these sectors. Expanding professional development opportunities and providing targeted financial support are also critical steps toward unlocking their full potential.

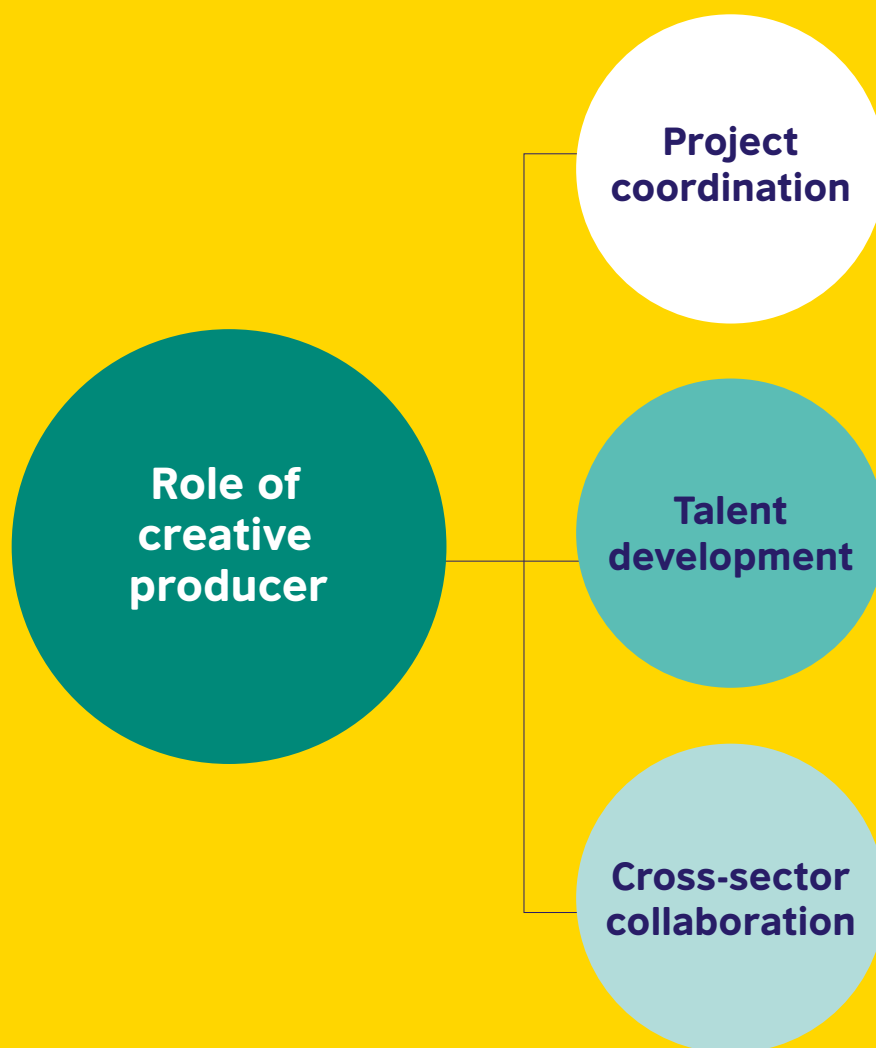
To ensure sustained growth, a more cohesive support system involving government bodies, educational institutions and professional associations is needed. By addressing the identified gaps and capitalising on emerging opportunities, the ‘other’ sectors can strengthen their role in Mauritius’ creative and cultural industries, contributing both to the island’s cultural identity and its global presence.



9. Unlocking potential – creative producers

9.1 Introduction to creative producers

Creative cultural producers play a vital role in the growth and sustainability of Mauritius' Creative Cultural Industries. Based on sector-specific feedback from the survey, key insights have been gathered to highlight the challenges, opportunities and unique experiences of producers working across film, music, visual arts and interdisciplinary sectors.



Key roles and responsibilities of creative producers

- **Project coordination:** Cultural producers often manage projects from conception to completion, overseeing budgets, timelines and logistics. Their work spans various sectors such as film production, event curation, gallery management and music recording.
- **Talent development:** Producers frequently play a crucial role in nurturing local talent, providing mentorship and facilitating access to resources such as funding, marketing and platforms for creatives to showcase their work.
- **Cross-sector collaboration:** Producers are also key facilitators of interdisciplinary projects, where they bring together talent from visual arts, music, film and other sectors to create collaborative works.



9.2. Challenges for cultural producers

- **Limited access to funding:** One of the most significant challenges for cultural producers is securing adequate funding. Producers often face difficulty acquiring financial resources for large-scale projects, particularly in the film and music sectors. Without the necessary capital, many are unable to take projects beyond the initial stages of development.
- **Infrastructure gaps:** Producers in the film and music sectors pointed out the lack of production facilities, professional recording studios and exhibition spaces. This lack of infrastructure hinders the quality of output and limits the capacity to compete in international markets.
- **Geographic isolation:** For producers aiming to engage with international markets or collaborate with global creatives, Mauritius' geographical isolation presents a significant challenge. This affects both the cost of collaborations and the ability to participate in global festivals, residencies and other opportunities.
- **Navigating bureaucratic processes:** Producers also reported that the complex administrative processes related to securing permits, applying for grants and dealing with regulatory frameworks are time-consuming and often unclear. These bureaucratic challenges slow down the project lifecycle and affect the momentum of creative production.

Opportunities for creative producers

- **Growth in cross-sector collaboration:** There is growing potential for producers to lead interdisciplinary projects that combine different art forms (e.g. visual arts and music). Producers can take advantage of the increasing interest in hybrid practices by facilitating collaborations between sectors and driving innovative, experimental projects.
- **Digital platforms for global reach:** Digital platforms provide a unique opportunity for producers to showcase Mauritian talent to international audiences without the need for physical presence. Online festivals, virtual exhibitions and streaming platforms are seen as key areas where producers can help local creatives gain visibility.
- **Cultural exchange programmes and international networks:** Cultural exchange programmes offer producers the chance to connect with international markets, access new funding streams and collaborate with global talent. These opportunities are key to expanding the scope of Mauritian creative projects beyond the local market.

Professional development needs for producers

- **Training in business and financial anagement:** Many producers cited a need for professional development in areas such as business management, financial planning and navigating international markets. These skills are essential for ensuring that creative projects are financially sustainable and can be scaled effectively.
- **Marketing and digital strategy:** With the rise of digital platforms, producers expressed the need for training in digital marketing and content promotion. Learning how to leverage social media, data analytics and digital distribution channels is becoming increasingly important for gaining visibility.

Market access and global exposure

- **Local vs. international market challenges:** Producers reported significant challenges in accessing both local and international markets. Many noted that while there is demand for local talent, opportunities for exporting creative products remain limited.
- **Need for distribution networks:** Producers in the film sector, in particular, highlighted the need for better distribution networks to ensure that locally produced content reaches audiences beyond Mauritius. Without adequate distribution channels, Mauritian films and music struggle to gain global traction.

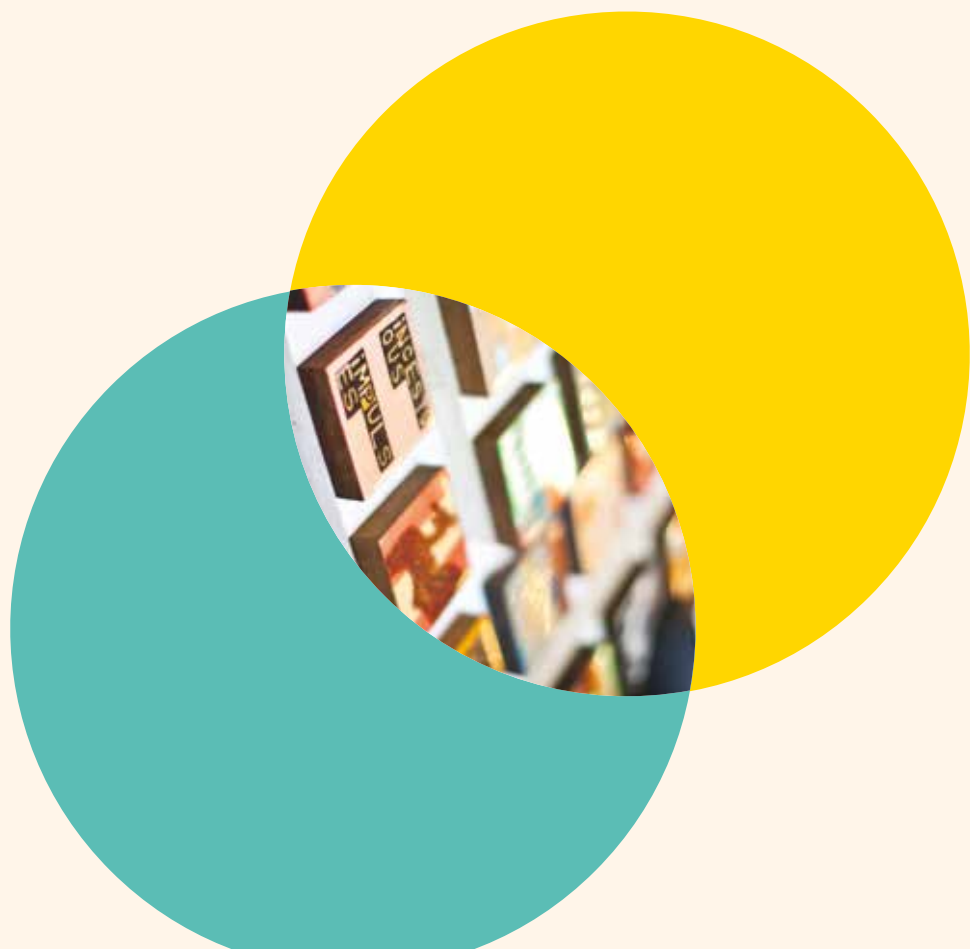


Policy and institutional support

- **Support for creative industries policy:** Producers strongly advocated for more robust policy frameworks to support the creative industries. This includes creating clearer pathways for funding, streamlining bureaucratic processes and developing infrastructure to support creative production.
- **Incentives for international collaboration:** Producers suggested that government incentives, such as tax breaks or grants for international collaborations, would help facilitate partnerships with global creatives and encourage participation in international festivals and residencies.

9.3 Concluding insights

Creative Cultural Producers are critical for the development of Mauritius' Creative and Cultural Industries, acting as both project managers and facilitators of artistic talent. The key findings from the sector-specific feedback highlight the significant challenges producers face, including funding gaps, infrastructure limitations and geographical isolation. However, they also show that producers are well-positioned for leveraging opportunities in cross-sector collaboration, digital platforms and international markets. Addressing the professional development needs of producers, along with enhancing market access and policy support, will be crucial to ensuring that Mauritius' creative industries thrive and remain competitive on the global stage.





10. Industry highlights: findings and recommendations

10.1 The rise of interdisciplinary innovation in Mauritius' creative industries

The interdisciplinary sector in Mauritius' creative and cultural industries is an emerging and innovative space where diverse disciplines – ranging from visual arts, architecture, design, performance, technology and education – intersect to foster new forms of cultural expression. This sector is marked by its collaborative nature, with professionals from various fields coming together to create groundbreaking projects that challenge conventional boundaries and introduce fresh perspectives.

Mauritius has seen a growing interest in interdisciplinary work, as it holds the potential to address complex, contemporary issues such as sustainability, cultural preservation and social justice.

Projects that combine architecture with digital technology or integrate performance art with visual design and environmental awareness, are becoming more common, indicating the sector's increasing relevance. For example, professionals in architecture and design have begun incorporating traditional Mauritian aesthetics into modern projects while integrating sustainable materials, aligning with global trends towards eco-friendly practices.

With its ability to combine diverse perspectives, the interdisciplinary sector is poised to influence not only artistic and cultural output but also education, tourism and technology in Mauritius. As the island continues to evolve as a global player in the creative economy, the interdisciplinary sector stands out as a key contributor to its cultural identity and economic growth.

10.2 SWOT analysis of the interdisciplinary sector

| | |
|--|---|
| S Strengths <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Collaborative innovation: merges arts, technology and design to create boundary-pushing, innovative projects.• Cultural Fusion: Blends Mauritius' heritage with modern elements to create rich, innovative work. | W Weaknesses <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Limited infrastructure: absence of formal frameworks, spaces and funding hinders interdisciplinary growth.• Skill gaps: lack of specialised training limits cross-disciplinary expertise. |
| O Opportunities <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Global networks: new tech and collaborations enhance visibility and market access.• Sustainability and culture: trends in sustainability and cultural preservation create opportunities for interdisciplinary work. | T Threats <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Fragmented support: limited government and institutional backing restricts growth.• Competition: established sectors may overshadow interdisciplinary efforts, limiting recognition and funding. |

Key recommendations for the interdisciplinary sector

1. Strengthen infrastructure and support systems: Develop dedicated spaces, funding mechanisms and formal frameworks that encourage interdisciplinary collaboration. This could include creating interdisciplinary hubs where professionals from various fields can work together on innovative projects.

2. Enhance education and training: Introduce specialised programmes in educational institutions to foster cross-disciplinary skills. Providing opportunities for training in areas such as design, technology and cultural studies will enhance the capabilities of professionals in the interdisciplinary sector.

- 3. Promote international collaborations:** Encourage partnerships with global institutions and creative networks to expose local talent to international markets and cutting-edge practices. Digital platforms can be leveraged to connect Mauritian creatives with global audiences.
- 4. Support sustainable and culturally relevant projects:** Align interdisciplinary work with global trends in sustainability and cultural preservation by supporting projects that reflect these values. This can attract both local and international interest in Mauritian interdisciplinary creations.
- 5. Increase government and institutional support:** Advocate for greater recognition and targeted support from government bodies and cultural institutions. More funding, policy initiatives and mentorship programmes are needed to help the sector scale and compete on a global level.
- 6. Raise awareness and market visibility:** Promote the unique contributions of interdisciplinary projects through exhibitions, festivals and online platforms. Highlighting the innovation and cultural relevance of these works can boost visibility and recognition both locally and internationally.

By focusing on these areas, Mauritius can unlock the potential of its interdisciplinary sector and establish itself as a leader in creative innovation on the global stage.

10.3 Concluding insights

The interdisciplinary creative sector in Mauritius holds immense potential to drive innovation, cultural expression and economic growth. By blending fields such as arts, technology, design and education, it offers a unique platform for addressing contemporary challenges and showcasing Mauritius' rich multicultural heritage. However, to fully unlock its potential, there is a need for stronger infrastructure, enhanced training and greater institutional support.

Promoting global collaborations, aligning projects with sustainability and cultural preservation trends and raising the visibility of interdisciplinary work will position Mauritius as a leader in creative innovation. With strategic investments and targeted support, the interdisciplinary sector can become a driving force for both cultural and economic advancement, elevating Mauritius' presence on the global creative stage.

11. Sustainability and growth in Mauritius' creative and cultural industries

Sustainability in the Creative and Cultural Industries (CCIs) in Mauritius has emerged as a key topic, particularly in light of the challenges faced by stakeholders in these sectors. The CCIs, encompassing various fields such as visual arts, music, film and crafts, contribute significantly to the economy and cultural identity of Mauritius.

However, issues related to environmental sustainability, resource management and support structures hinder their growth. This report explores the perspectives of industry professionals on the current state of sustainability within the CCIs, the challenges they face and their approaches to incorporating sustainable practices into their work.

11.1 Sustainability in the CCIs



1. Integration of sustainable practices:

Many stakeholders within Mauritius' CCI are aware of the importance of sustainability. Several respondents incorporate sustainable practices into their creative work, often by using recycled materials or reducing waste in their processes. For example, artists in the visual arts sector often reuse and repurpose materials, with some practitioners in fields like ceramics and textiles employing upcycled materials for their craft. The move towards sustainability is motivated by both environmental concerns and economic constraints.

- *One ceramic artist highlighted the inherent sustainability of their practice, noting that it is 'already eco-friendly'.*
- *Another respondent working in the visual arts noted that sustainability is integrated by 'using local materials and reducing environmental impact by choosing the right product'.*

2. Challenges in implementing

sustainability: Despite the growing awareness, there are significant challenges to making CCI in Mauritius more environmentally sustainable. The most common barriers identified by respondents include:

- **High costs of sustainable materials:** Artists and practitioners reported that acquiring eco-friendly materials is expensive and not always feasible. For instance, a visual artist mentioned the difficulty of accessing sustainable materials like clay.

- **Lack of support and infrastructure:**

There is limited financial and logistical support for artists to implement more sustainable practices. One respondent expressed the need for financial support to experiment with sustainability, stating that more resources are needed in order to adopt environmentally friendly approaches.

- **Inadequate waste management systems:** Several respondents pointed to the absence of recycling systems or support for reducing waste in their industries.

3. Digital technologies and sustainability:

The impact of digital technologies on sustainability within the CCI has been mixed. On the one hand, digital tools help artists reduce their environmental footprint by facilitating paperless practices and promoting their work online. For example, many respondents indicated that social media platforms and digital art submissions have reduced the need for printed materials and physical exhibitions.

On the other hand, digital technology requires significant energy consumption, particularly in fields like film and animation, where extensive data storage and processing are necessary. The use of advanced digital solutions is seen as both an opportunity and a challenge, with one filmmaker pointing out the environmental costs of energy-intensive digital processes.

4. Education and skill development for sustainability:

Respondents highlighted the need for better education and training to equip new entrants into the CCIs with the skills to adopt sustainable practices. While many practitioners are integrating sustainability into their work, they feel that existing educational programmes do not adequately address these needs. Skills, such as financial literacy, grant writing and sustainability practices, are seen as lacking among the younger generation.

- A filmmaker noted that financial and legal support for creatives is crucial for sustainability, as many artists struggle to navigate funding systems and implement sustainable solutions without adequate training.

5. Sustainable growth of CCIs through policy:

There is a clear need for stronger government and private sector partnerships to promote sustainability within the CCIs. Many respondents called for policies that encourage sustainable practices, such as:

- **Tax incentives** for businesses investing in sustainable creative practices.
- **Grants and financial support** for research and experimentation with sustainable materials.
- **Educational reforms** to include sustainability and creative entrepreneurship in curriculums.

Stakeholders also emphasised the importance of reducing bureaucratic barriers to accessing funds and creating platforms for sustainable creative projects. One respondent suggested introducing financial incentives and support for public art installations that focus on environmental themes.

11.2 Recommendations for advancing sustainability in CCIs

1. Increase access to sustainable materials:

- Develop government or private sector initiatives to subsidise the cost of eco-friendly materials, making them more accessible to artists and creators.
- Promote local production and distribution channels for sustainable materials like clay and upcycled textiles to reduce import costs and enhance availability.

2. Strengthen financial and logistical support:

- Establish grants or funding programmes specifically aimed at promoting sustainability in the CCIs, allowing artists to experiment with and implement environmentally friendly approaches.
- Create infrastructure, such as recycling centres and waste - management systems, dedicated to the CCIs to support the reduction and reuse of materials.

3. Foster digital sustainability:

- Encourage the use of energy-efficient technologies in the digital arts sector, especially in data-heavy industries like film and animation. This could involve investing in green-energy solutions for digital infrastructure.
- Promote the adoption of cloud-based services that prioritise low energy consumption and sustainability-focused platforms for artists' work and promotion.

4. Enhance education and training in sustainability:

- Integrate sustainability practices, environmental impact awareness and creative entrepreneurship into CCI-related educational curricula.
- Provide skill development opportunities, including workshops and mentorship programmes, that focus on grant writing, financial literacy and how to navigate funding systems to support sustainable practices in creative industries.

5. Develop policy and incentives for sustainable growth:

- Advocate for government-led tax incentives and financial rewards for businesses and artists who invest in sustainable practices within the creative sector.
- Simplify bureaucratic processes to make it easier for creatives to access funds and resources dedicated to sustainable development.

- Support public art projects and installations that incorporate sustainability and environmental themes, possibly through designated grants or public-private partnerships.

6. Encourage cross-sector collaborations:

- Facilitate partnerships between the CCIs and sectors such as tourism, agriculture and manufacturing to foster innovative, sustainable solutions that benefit both the creative industries and broader environmental goals.
- Create platforms for knowledge exchange between local artisans and international sustainable-practice experts to promote best practices in sustainability across various creative sectors.

11.3 Concluding insights

Sustainability within Mauritius' CCIs is gaining attention, but significant challenges remain. While individual artists and creative practitioners are making strides towards sustainable practices, broader systemic changes are needed. There is a pressing need for better access to sustainable materials, increased financial support and education reforms to ensure that the CCIs can contribute meaningfully to both the economy and environmental goals. With the right policies and support mechanisms, Mauritius' creative industries have the potential to not only sustain themselves economically but also lead the way in environmental stewardship.

12. Navigating language in creative sectors

Mauritius is a multilingual society, with languages such as French, English, Creole and others reflecting its diverse cultural heritage. Within the Creative and Cultural Industries (CCIs), language plays a crucial role in shaping artistic expression, communication and collaboration. This report explores the findings from industry professionals regarding language use in their work, the barriers they face due to language and how language can both aid and hinder the growth of the CCIs in Mauritius.

12.1 Language dynamics in creative sectors

Which language do you prefer?



1. Language as a reflection of cultural diversity:

Many respondents from the CCIs emphasise that the multilingual nature of Mauritius enhances creative expression. The use of multiple languages, particularly French, English and Creole, allows artists and creators to reach different audiences while staying true to their cultural roots. Some practitioners use language as a tool to reflect Mauritius' multicultural identity, using Creole in traditional arts or combining it with French or English for broader appeal.

- A theatre artist mentioned that their work incorporates both French and Creole, using language as a means to connect with diverse audiences.

- A writer highlighted the richness of Mauritian literature, which draws on its multilingual environment to create unique cultural products that appeal to both local and international readers.

2. Challenges due to language barriers:

While the diversity of languages enriches the creative landscape, language barriers can present challenges, particularly in terms of collaboration and market access. Several respondents expressed difficulty in navigating different linguistic environments when working with international partners or when marketing their work outside Mauritius.

- *One visual artist noted that a lack of proficiency in French or English can hinder collaborations with international entities.*
- *A filmmaker mentioned challenges in securing international distribution for their films due to language differences, indicating a need for better translation services and subtitling options to overcome this barrier.*

3. Language preferences in creative work:

Respondents revealed varying preferences for the languages they use in their creative practice, often depending on the nature of the work and the target audience. While many prefer using French or Creole for local audiences, English is frequently chosen for work aimed at international markets. Some practitioners also noted that they adapt their language use depending on the medium (e.g. literature versus film).

- *A literature practitioner expressed a preference for writing in French, while acknowledging the importance of translating their work into English for a global audience.*
- *A musician highlighted the use of Creole in their songs to maintain authenticity while also appealing to a broad local audience.*

4. Impact of language on international collaboration: The ability to collaborate with international partners is vital for the growth of CCI, but language differences can complicate such efforts. Respondents cited that international collaborations often bring exposure and funding but require adapting to different linguistic environments.

Some creatives face difficulties in accessing grants or opportunities due to the language requirements imposed by international institutions.

- *A respondent in the visual arts sector mentioned that while they have had successful collaborations with European partners, the language barrier occasionally slows down communication and affects project timelines.*

12.2 Recommendations for overcoming language barriers in CCI

Many respondents called for greater support in overcoming language barriers within the CCI. Suggestions included:

- **Training programmes** to enhance language skills, particularly in English, for creatives aiming to access international markets.
- **Translation and interpretation services** for creatives looking to collaborate internationally or showcase their work beyond Mauritius.
- **Government and institutional support** for language-focused initiatives that promote bilingual or multilingual work in CCI, helping to break down barriers to global collaboration.

12.3 Concluding insights

Language plays a dual role within Mauritius' CCI – it is both a strength, reflecting the island's rich cultural diversity and a challenge, particularly when it comes to accessing international markets and collaborations. While many creatives successfully integrate multiple languages into their work, language barriers can limit growth and opportunities. Enhanced support in language training, translation and international communication will be critical to the future success of the CCI in Mauritius.

13. Sector perspectives: Mauritius' creative economy

Based on the survey responses and sector-specific feedback, the following key sectors within Mauritius' Creative Cultural Industries have been identified as needing more focused support for their growth and sustainability:

1. Film sector

The film sector in Mauritius faces several critical challenges:

- **Infrastructure development:** The lack of adequate production facilities, equipment and skilled labour severely limits both the quality and quantity of local film production. Without the necessary technical infrastructure, filmmakers struggle to produce content that meets international standards.
- **Funding and investment:** Securing funding remains a major hurdle for film professionals, especially during the production and post-production stages. There is also a need for investment in distribution channels to ensure that local films reach wider audiences, both in Mauritius and internationally.
- **Skill development and training:** There is a demand for more comprehensive training programmes in areas like filmmaking, screenwriting and technical editing. Building a skilled workforce is essential to boost the sector's output and global competitiveness.

2. Music sector

The music industry also requires focused intervention:

- **Professional development:** Musicians face challenges in areas such as music production, marketing and management. Providing more training opportunities will help artists improve the quality of their work, navigate the industry better and expand their market reach.
- **Market access and exposure:** Musicians need better platforms to showcase their talent and connect with audiences beyond Mauritius. Facilitating international collaborations and tours would help Mauritian musicians gain exposure on a global scale.
- **Infrastructure and resources:** Access to quality recording studios and advanced equipment remains a significant barrier for musicians. Investing in better infrastructure will enhance the production quality of local music.

3. Interdisciplinary and hybrid practices

Artists working across multiple disciplines often struggle to find adequate support:

- **Recognition and funding:** The current funding structures are siloed, making it difficult for interdisciplinary artists to secure financial backing. More flexible and inclusive funding models are needed to support innovative, cross-sector projects.

- **Platforms for collaboration:** There is a need for more opportunities and events that encourage collaboration between sectors like the visual arts, music and film. These collaborations can drive innovation and help artists push the boundaries of traditional creative practices.
- **Visibility and marketing:** Interdisciplinary practices are often niche and face challenges in gaining visibility. Targeted marketing and audience development support are necessary to help these works reach broader audiences.

4. Visual arts sector

The visual arts sector, while culturally rich, faces significant obstacles:

- **Market Access:** Many visual artists struggle with limited access to both local and international markets. More support for galleries, exhibitions and online platforms is needed to promote their work and connect with buyers.
- **Financial sustainability:** Visual artists often rely on self-funding, which is unsustainable for long-term growth. More grant opportunities, residencies and financial support mechanisms are needed to enable artists to focus on their creative work without financial constraints.
- **Cultural exchange programmes:** Exposure to international markets and artistic communities can benefit visual artists. Cultural exchange programmes and residencies abroad would help artists expand their networks and gain new creative perspectives.

5. Cross-cutting needs

There are several overarching needs that cut across all sectors:

- **Policy support:** Stronger cultural policies are required to provide a clear framework for the growth of creative industries. This includes creating sustainable funding mechanisms, investing in infrastructure development and supporting international collaborations to help Mauritius compete in the global creative economy.
- **Sustainability and growth:** Creatives are concerned about the long-term sustainability of their practices. Ongoing mentorship, skill development and strategic partnerships are essential to ensure that creative businesses can thrive and contribute to economic growth.

13.1 Concluding insights

The film, music, interdisciplinary and visual arts sectors stand out as needing more focused support. Addressing these needs will require a combination of infrastructure investment, skill development initiatives, market access strategies and enhanced cultural policies. By prioritising these areas, Mauritius can better leverage its creative talent and rich cultural diversity to strengthen its position in the global creative economy.

14. Sector engagement insights in Mauritius' CCIs

Based on the feedback from respondents in the British Council's survey of Mauritius' Creative Cultural Industries, several key themes emerged across various creative sectors, highlighting both unique challenges and opportunities. These sectors include visual arts, music, film and interdisciplinary practices, each with distinct needs and prospects for growth.

1. Visual arts

- **Diversity and innovation:** Visual artists emphasised the richness and diversity of their work, which draws heavily from Mauritius' multicultural environment. This blend of cultural influences fosters innovation and allows for the creation of works that are both artistically unique and culturally significant.
- **Challenges in market access:** Many visual artists face difficulties accessing both local and international markets. There is a pressing need for better platforms and networks to showcase their work to broader audiences, both within Mauritius and globally.
- **Funding and resource constraints:** Limited funding and resources were identified as significant barriers. Many artists rely on self-funding, which restricts the scale and reach of their creative projects and limits opportunities for growth.

2. Music

- **Cultural integration and innovation:** Musicians highlighted the unique fusion of traditional and contemporary styles within the Mauritian music scene. This blend creates a distinct sound with potential for global appeal if effectively marketed.
- **Isolation and collaboration barriers:** Geographical isolation was frequently mentioned as a barrier, making it difficult for musicians to collaborate with international artists and producers. This limits exposure and reduces opportunities for growth and innovation.
- **Need for professional development:** Musicians expressed the need for more professional development, especially in music production, marketing and business management. This would help them navigate the music industry more effectively and reach wider audiences.

3. Film

- **Underdeveloped infrastructure:** The film sector faces significant challenges due to a lack of adequate production infrastructure, such as studios, equipment and skilled labour. This underdevelopment hinders the production of high-quality content and limits competitiveness in international markets.
- **Funding and distribution challenges:** Funding remains a major challenge for filmmakers, particularly in securing financial resources for both production and post-production stages. Additionally, limited distribution channels make it difficult for local films to reach wider audiences, especially outside Mauritius.

- **Opportunities in storytelling:** There is a strong potential for Mauritius to build a unique narrative voice in film, drawing from its multicultural heritage. However, this will require more support for script development, production funding and access to global film festivals and networks.

4. Interdisciplinary practices

- **Collaboration as a strength:** Artists working across multiple disciplines (e.g., visual arts and music) noted the creative potential of interdisciplinary collaboration. These blended approaches often result in innovative projects that stand out in the marketplace.
- **Challenges in integration and recognition:** Despite their creative potential, interdisciplinary artists often struggle to gain recognition and access to support. Current funding models and infrastructure are typically designed around single-discipline practices, making it difficult for these hybrid projects to find a foothold.
- **Need for a flexible support system:** There is a call for more flexible and inclusive support systems that recognise the value of interdisciplinary work. Respondents advocated for tailored funding opportunities, networking events and platforms that encourage cross-sector collaboration.

5. Cross-cutting themes

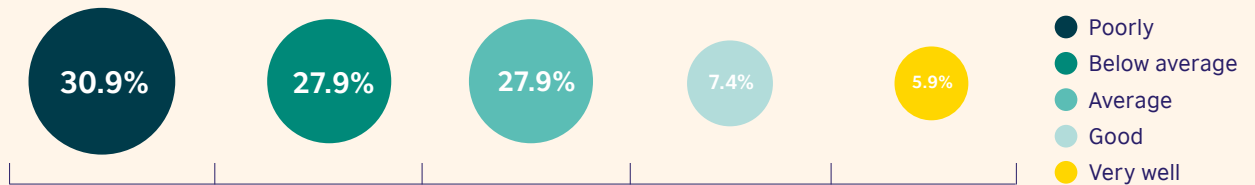
- **Policy and institutional support:** Across all sectors, there was a strong demand for more robust cultural policies and institutional support. Respondents believe the government could play a more active role in creating a supportive environment for the creative industries, particularly through policy development, funding opportunities and infrastructure investment.

- **Marketing and visibility:** Respondents from all sectors identified the need for better marketing and visibility as critical to expanding their reach. They expressed a desire for improved platforms to showcase their work both locally and internationally to attract new audiences and markets.
- **Sustainability and growth:** Many creatives are concerned about the long-term sustainability of their practices. This includes not only financial sustainability but also the need for ongoing professional development, mentorship and strategic partnerships to ensure the continued growth of Mauritius' creative industries.

14.1 Concluding insights

The sector-specific feedback from Mauritius' Creative Cultural Industries underscores the diverse needs and opportunities across different fields. While each sector faces its own unique challenges, common themes such as the need for enhanced funding market access, policy support and infrastructure development, resonate across the board. Addressing these needs through targeted interventions and cross-sector collaboration will be essential for advancing Mauritius' creative industries and unlocking their full potential.

How well do existing educational programs meet the needs of professional in your sector



15. Capacity building for Mauritius' creative industry

Based on the findings from the sector-specific feedback within Mauritius' Creative and Cultural Industries, several key skills are identified as essential for growth and sustainability in the industry. These skills span technical, creative, business and digital areas, reflecting the diverse needs of creatives working across various sectors such as film, music, visual arts and interdisciplinary practices.

1. Technical skills

- **Film production and post-production:** Skills in film production, including cinematography, lighting, sound design and editing, are crucial for the development of the local film industry. Advanced post-production skills, such as colour grading, special effects (VFX) and animation, are also needed to improve the quality of Mauritian film content and make it competitive internationally.
- **Music production and sound engineering:** Music producers and sound engineers need advanced technical skills to operate modern recording equipment, mix tracks and master final outputs. Quality music production will allow Mauritian musicians to create professional-level content for both local and international audiences.
- **Architecture and interior design innovation:** As the demand for sustainable and innovative design solutions grows, skills in green architecture, sustainable materials and smart design technology are becoming increasingly important in architecture and interior design sectors.





2. Business and management skills

- **Project management:** Many creatives struggle with managing large projects, especially in film and interdisciplinary practices. Effective project management skills, including budgeting, scheduling and team coordination, are needed to streamline production processes and ensure successful outcomes.
- **Marketing and branding:** Creatives, especially musicians, visual artists and interdisciplinary artists, require skills in marketing, branding and audience engagement. Understanding how to promote their work, build a personal brand and connect with their target audience will enable them to stand out in a competitive global market.
- **Entrepreneurship and business acumen:** Creatives need to develop entrepreneurial skills to grow their practices into sustainable businesses. This includes knowledge of business planning, financial management, contract negotiation and navigating legal aspects like copyright and intellectual property.

3. Digital and technological skills

- **Digital marketing and e-commerce:** With the rise of digital platforms, creatives need skills in digital marketing, including social media management, search engine optimisation (SEO) and data analytics. E-commerce knowledge is also crucial for visual artists and musicians to sell their work and reach international markets through online platforms.
- **Content creation for digital platforms:** The growing importance of online presence makes content creation skills essential, including creating videos, podcasts and interactive media for platforms like YouTube, Instagram and TikTok. Artists must learn how to generate engaging content that resonates with global audiences.
- **Website and app development:** Skills in website and app development will enable artists, designers and other creatives to create dedicated online spaces for showcasing and selling their work, interacting with their audience and building a professional online portfolio.

4. Creative and conceptual skills

- **Storytelling and screenwriting:** For the film and interdisciplinary sectors, strong storytelling and screenwriting skills are crucial. Creatives must develop the ability to craft compelling narratives that resonate with local and international audiences.
- **Creative collaboration:** Interdisciplinary projects often require artists from different sectors to collaborate. Skills in creative collaboration, including teamwork, adaptability and cross-discipline communication, are essential for the success of these hybrid works.

5. International collaboration and cross-cultural competence

- **Cultural exchange and collaboration:** Skills in working across cultures are vital for creatives looking to collaborate with international partners. Understanding different cultural contexts, market expectations and global trends is necessary for forming successful partnerships and producing culturally relevant work.

• Networking and partnership

development: The ability to build strong networks, both locally and internationally is key for creatives in Mauritius. Networking skills will help them find opportunities for collaborations, funding and mentorship, while also allowing them to establish connections that support long-term growth.

15.1 Concluding insights

For the growth of Mauritius' creative and cultural industries, a combination of technical proficiency, business acumen, digital expertise and creative collaboration is essential. By focusing on developing these skills, creatives will be better positioned to capitalise on new opportunities, expand their markets and ensure the long-term sustainability of their work. The implementation of targeted training programmes, mentorship opportunities and support systems will be crucial in fostering the growth and success of Mauritius' creative talent.



16. Key funding gaps in Mauritius' creative sector

Based on the feedback from survey responses and sector-specific insights, several pressing funding gaps have been identified within Mauritius' Creative and Cultural Industries. These gaps affect a wide range of sectors, including film, music, visual arts and interdisciplinary practices. Addressing these funding challenges is critical to supporting the growth and sustainability of the creative ecosystem.

1. Production and infrastructure development

- **Film sector:** One of the most significant funding gaps is related to production infrastructure in the film industry. Local filmmakers lack access to adequate production and post-production facilities, such as studios, equipment and editing suites. Funding for the development of these essential facilities is crucial for enabling higher-quality film production and supporting a larger volume of creative work.
- **Music sector:** Similar to film, musicians face challenges in accessing high-quality recording studios and equipment. There is a need for investment in music production infrastructure, including funding for the development of professional studios that can cater to both local and international artists.
- **Visual arts sector:** Visual artists often struggle to find suitable gallery spaces or exhibition platforms. Investment in physical infrastructure, such as modern galleries or public art spaces is lacking, limiting the visibility and market access of local artists.

2. Operational and project-based funding

- **Creative project development:** Across all sectors, creatives face challenges in securing adequate project-based funding. While small grants or limited funding streams may be available, they often do not cover the full scope of the project lifecycle, leaving creatives with funding gaps during production, execution and marketing stages. This is particularly true for large-scale projects like films, interdisciplinary performances and international collaborations.
- **Post-production and distribution:** Even when initial funding is secured, post-production stages often lack sufficient financial support. For the film and music sectors, this includes the costs of editing, mastering, marketing and distribution. Without adequate post-production funding, creative works cannot reach their full potential or be marketed effectively to global audiences.

3. Marketing and international expansion

- **International promotion:** A critical funding gap exists in marketing and promotion, especially for creatives seeking to expand their reach beyond Mauritius. Musicians, filmmakers and visual artists often struggle to access funding for promoting their work at international festivals, exhibitions or music tours. This lack of promotional support limits their visibility in global markets, reducing opportunities for collaboration and revenue generation.

- **Export and distribution channels:** There is little funding available for developing distribution channels for local creative products. In sectors like film and music, creatives need financial support to build or access platforms that can distribute their work to international audiences. Without investment in export capabilities, Mauritius' creative industries remain isolated from larger markets.

4. Skill development and professional training

- **Professional development:** Another significant funding gap lies in the area of skill development and professional training. Many creatives, particularly those in emerging sectors like interdisciplinary practices and digital media, lack access to affordable training programmes. Funding for workshops, residencies, mentorships and other professional development opportunities is needed to equip creatives with the skills required to compete internationally.
- **Business and entrepreneurship training:** Beyond creative skills, there is a lack of funding for business and entrepreneurship training, which is vital for creatives who need to manage their own projects and businesses. Access to funding for business training programmes would enable creatives to improve their financial management, marketing and operational skills, helping them scale up their work sustainably.

5. Sustainability and long-term funding

- **Sustainable practices:** While there is growing interest in sustainability within the creative industries, there is a shortage of funding specifically aimed at supporting sustainable and eco-friendly practices. For example, designers and architects interested in integrating sustainable materials into their work often struggle to secure the funding needed for research, development and execution.
- **Long-term investment:** Many funding streams are focused on short-term, project-based financing, leaving a gap in long-term investment opportunities. Creatives need access to consistent, long-term funding models that provide stability and allow for continued growth and innovation over time.

6. Funding for interdisciplinary and hybrid practices

- **Flexible funding models:** Interdisciplinary artists, who work across sectors like visual arts, music and film, face unique challenges in securing funding. Current funding structures tend to be siloed, focusing on individual disciplines. There is a lack of flexible funding models that can support hybrid practices and cross-disciplinary collaborations, limiting innovation and the creation of groundbreaking work.
- **Experimental and niche projects:** Funding gaps are particularly acute for experimental or niche creative projects that do not fit into traditional categories. These projects often push the boundaries of artistic expression but struggle to secure funding due to their unconventional nature or the perception that they carry higher financial risks.

7. Start-up and entrepreneurial funding

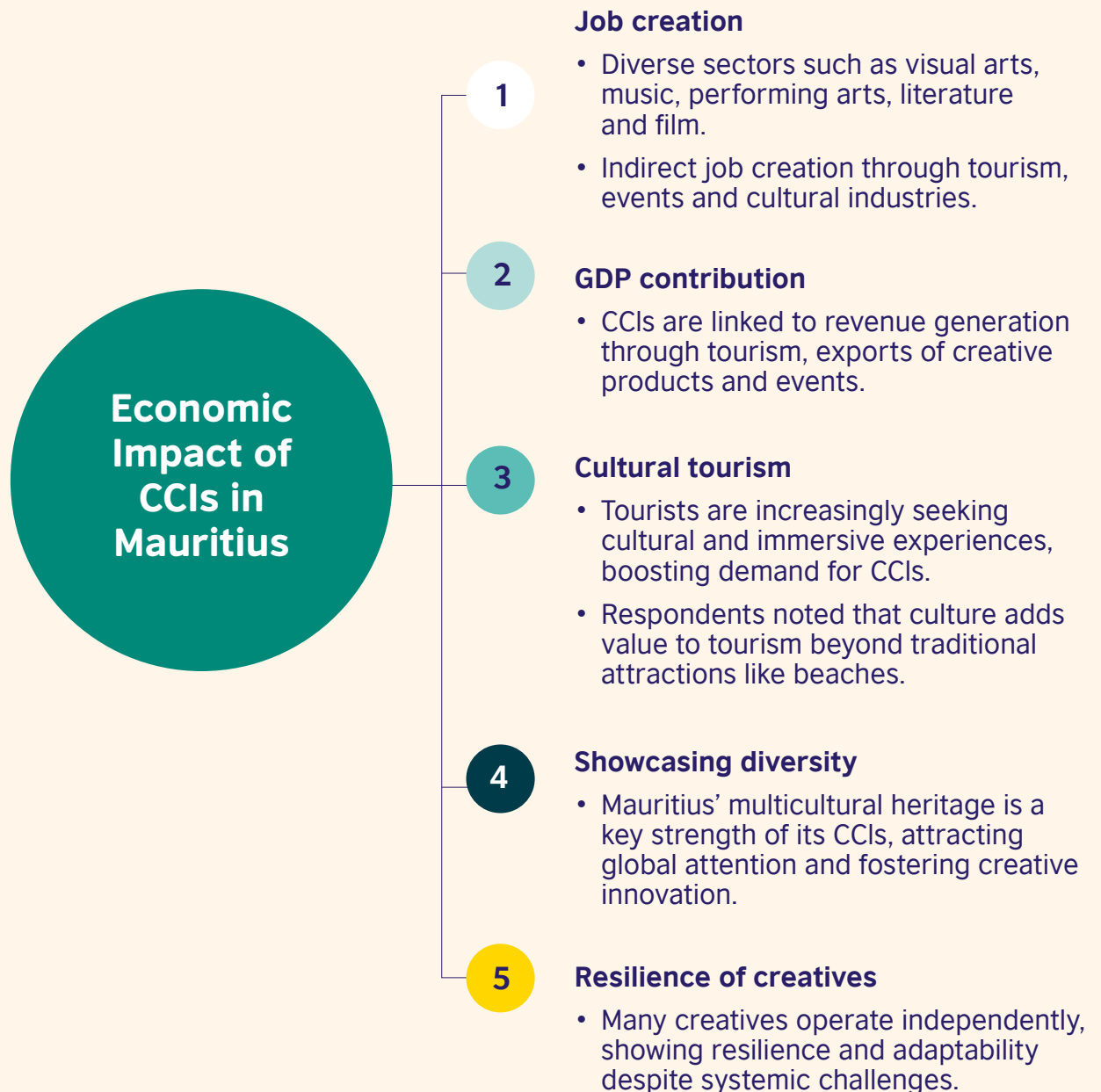
- **Creative start-ups:** For entrepreneurs in the creative industries, securing start-up capital is a major challenge. Many creatives who wish to start their own businesses – such as production companies, design studios or independent galleries – struggle to access seed funding or investment. Without start-up capital, these ventures are unable to scale up, limiting their impact and potential for innovation.
- **Access to equity financing:** There is limited access to equity financing for creative entrepreneurs who want to expand their businesses. Traditional financial institutions are often hesitant to invest in creative projects due to their perceived risk, creating a funding gap for creatives seeking to grow their businesses and enter new markets.

16.1 Concluding insights

The most pressing funding gaps in Mauritius' Creative and Cultural Industries include a lack of investment in infrastructure, inadequate project-based and operational funding, limited marketing and international promotion resources and insufficient support for skill development. Addressing these funding challenges will require targeted financial support, flexible funding models and a long-term vision that invests in both creative production and business growth. By filling these funding gaps, Mauritius can unlock the full potential of its creative industries, enabling them to thrive locally and compete on the global stage.



17. Operational Strategies and Sustainability Models



Operational strategies

The creative industries in Mauritius rely heavily on collaborations, resource-sharing and digital platforms to maximise their global reach and ensure sustainability. This collaborative approach allows local artists, creatives, practitioners and organisations to overcome financial and infrastructural challenges, facilitating both local and international growth.

Key strategies include:

- **Collaborations:** There is a strong emphasis on cross-sector partnerships, where artists and institutions collaborate with tourism, education and government bodies to amplify their reach. These collaborations not only enhance the visibility of local talent but also create new revenue streams by tapping into global markets.
- **Resource-sharing:** Many artists and organisations pool resources, such as funding, expertise and infrastructure, to reduce costs and increase collective impact. Shared workshops, co-working spaces and galleries provide affordable platforms for artists to produce and showcase their work.
- **Digital platforms:** Digital tools and platforms have become central to the global reach of Mauritian creative professionals. Social media, online galleries, e-commerce sites and streaming services like Spotify and YouTube allow local artists to bypass traditional barriers, such as limited exhibition space and local market saturation and gain international visibility.

17.1 Business models

Sustainability approaches

The creative industries in Mauritius exhibit a range of innovative business models to ensure financial sustainability and operational efficiency.

• Revenue streams:

- **Sales:** Local artists, especially in the visual arts and crafts, generate income through direct sales of artworks, handicrafts and designer products. Tourism plays a pivotal role in driving demand for these products, as many visitors seek authentic, locally made souvenirs.

- Workshops and performances:

Artists and organisations offer educational and interactive experiences such as workshops, performances and live shows, creating additional income while engaging the community and tourists.

- Online content monetisation:

Musicians and filmmakers have embraced platforms like YouTube and Patreon to monetise content through ads, subscriptions and direct fan support, which helps them sustain their practices independently of traditional revenue models.

- **Tourism:** The craft and performing arts sectors, in particular, benefit from Mauritius' tourism-driven economy, where cultural festivals, music events and handicrafts draw international visitors.

- **Funding mechanisms:**

- **Government grants:** The National Arts Fund supports a variety of creative projects, from visual art exhibitions to music and theatre festivals. However, the fund's limited scope means that many artists still struggle to secure adequate financial backing.

- **Corporate sponsorship:**

- Many creative projects, particularly large-scale public art installations and cultural festivals, receive support through Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) programmes. However, this funding is often selective and there is a need for more diverse private-sector investment in the arts.

- **International funding:** International grants and support from foreign cultural institutions, such as the British Council and the Goethe-Institut, offer opportunities for collaboration, exhibition and skill-building.

Innovative practices

- **Digital platforms:**

- The rise of social media platforms such as Instagram, TikTok and Facebook has made it easier for Mauritian creatives to showcase their work and connect with international audiences. For instance, local musicians are increasingly using digital platforms to share their music, grow fanbases and engage with global markets. However, the challenge remains that many artists lack access to the necessary tools to maximise the potential of these platforms.

- E-commerce platforms have become essential for craft businesses, allowing artisans to sell their work globally. The creation of local online platforms such as 'Made in Moris' also enables artisans to tap into global demand for Mauritian craft goods, including handwoven baskets, jewellery and eco-friendly products.

- **Eco-friendly craft:**

- There is a growing trend among Mauritian artisans to embrace sustainability. For instance, local craftspeople are increasingly using recycled materials in their work and focusing on eco-friendly methods. This aligns with global trends that emphasise sustainability in fashion and design.

- The eco-friendly movement is also gaining traction in the fashion and design sectors, with local designers incorporating sustainable fabrics and production methods into their collections, catering for global demand for ethically produced fashion.

- **Cross-sector collaborations:**

- There are increasing collaborations between the visual arts and tourism sectors, where artists work with tourism boards to create public art installations and murals that attract tourists. The 'Porlwi by Light' festival in Port Louis – combining visual arts with music and performances, is a prime example of such cross-sector collaboration.

- Similarly, collaborations between performing arts and fashion are becoming more common, with fashion designers working with performers to create costumes and stage designs that enhance performances. These types of collaborations enrich both sectors and create additional business opportunities.

Challenges

Despite the various innovative practices, several challenges persist:

- **Limited financial stability:** While government grants and private sponsorships provide some support, many artists are still financially unstable. A reliance on one-off grants and sporadic sponsorships makes it difficult for artists to sustain long-term careers.
- **Difficulty in securing partnerships:** Artists often struggle to establish long-term partnerships with the private sector or international institutions. The bureaucratic process involved in applying for funding and support often slows down project execution, limiting growth opportunities.
- **Bureaucratic processes:** The slow and complex application process for grants and funding often hinders timely support for creative initiatives, especially for smaller or emerging artists who may lack the resources or knowledge to navigate these processes.

17.2 Scaling model opportunities

Current opportunities

There are several areas where the creative industries in Mauritius can scale:

- **Cultural tourism:** The growing emphasis on cultural tourism in Mauritius offers significant opportunities for visual artists, musicians and performers to expand their reach. By aligning their work with the tourism industry, artists can showcase Mauritian culture to an international audience and tap into the tourism-driven market for arts and crafts.
- **Digital transformation:** The global shift to digital platforms presents Mauritian creatives with an unprecedented opportunity to expand their global reach. Social media, e-commerce and streaming platforms allow local artists to access new markets without the traditional constraints of physical venues or geographic limitations.
- **International collaborations:** There is a strong potential for Mauritian creatives and cultural practitioners to collaborate with international artists and institutions. Programmes such as artist residencies, joint exhibitions and cultural exchange programmes can expose Mauritian artists to new ideas, skills and markets.
- **Sustainability trends:** The increasing global focus on sustainability offers opportunities for Mauritian artists working in eco-friendly craft and design. By tapping into global demand for sustainable, ethically made products, the craft and fashion sectors in Mauritius can expand their reach.

Existing scaling models

Several models are already in place to support scaling efforts:

- **Public-private partnerships:** The government's efforts to support the arts through schemes like the Artist Incubator Scheme and the Film Rebate Scheme are crucial for scaling. These programmes provide critical financial and logistical support to help artists and filmmakers access international platforms.
- **Digital marketing for global exposure:** Artists are increasingly leveraging digital tools to build global visibility. Platforms like Instagram and YouTube enable Mauritian creatives to showcase their work to global audiences without requiring physical galleries or venues.
- **Collaborations with international cultural institutions:** Organisations like the British Council and the Goethe-Institut play a vital role in connecting Mauritian creatives with global opportunities. These collaborations foster cross-cultural exchanges and expose local artists to international standards and practices.

Barriers to scaling

Despite these opportunities, scaling presents significant challenges:

- **Insufficient infrastructure:** There is a lack of adequate infrastructure to support creative industries, particularly in rural areas. Limited access to exhibition spaces, recording studios and rehearsal spaces hinders growth, especially for emerging artists.

- **High costs of technology and training:** Access to advanced tools and technologies remains a significant barrier. Many artists are unable to afford the necessary equipment for digital art, multimedia projects or professional-grade recordings.
- **Skill gaps:** Many local creatives lack the business acumen and international marketing skills needed to navigate the global market. Training programmes focusing on digital literacy, copyright protection and entrepreneurship are essential for bridging these gaps.

Recommendations for scaling

Business development in CCIs

Objective: Lay the foundation for sustainable creative enterprises by fostering business acumen among artists and cultural practitioners.

- **Sector formalisation:** Encourage formal registration of creative enterprises to ensure access to financial resources, legal protections and market opportunities.
- **Value chain development:** Strengthen the creative value chain by integrating design, production, marketing and sales, ensuring that creatives retain a fair share of revenue.
- **Ecosystem building:** Promote collaboration between CCIs and sectors like tourism, retail and education to create cross-sectoral opportunities.

Start-ups and creative enterprises

Objective: Foster a culture of entrepreneurship within the CCIs.

- **Incubator programmes:** Establish creative business incubators to provide mentorship, workspace and resources for startups in fashion, film, crafts, digital media, etc
- **Government grants and incentives:** Offer grants to support the initial stages of creative start-ups, including design prototyping and product launches.
- **Collaborative hubs:** Encourage co-working spaces and shared studios that facilitate networking and resource sharing among creative entrepreneurs.

Micro-enterprises and homegrown industries

Objective: Empower small-scale creators and homegrown industries as vital contributors to the CCI ecosystem.

- **Support for artisans:** Provide technical and financial assistance to craftspersons and small-scale producers, enabling them to scale their operations.
- **Local brand development:** Promote branding and marketing initiatives for homegrown products to increase their visibility and competitiveness in domestic and international markets.
- **Community-led enterprises:** Encourage community-based cooperatives to promote collective growth and sustainable practices in CCIs.

Monetization strategies for artists

Objective: Enable artists to diversify their revenue streams and achieve financial stability.

- **Merchandising:** Encourage creatives to explore product merchandising, such as prints, clothing and collectibles, based on their artwork or performances.
- **Subscription models:** Introduce platforms for subscription-based access to exclusive content, including tutorials, live events and custom artwork.
- **Workshops and training:** Monetise skills through paid workshops, training sessions and educational content for aspiring creatives.

Digital distribution platforms

Objective: Harness digital technologies to expand market reach and revenue opportunities.

- **E-commerce solutions:** Develop or support platforms where creatives can sell their creations directly to consumers, bypassing intermediaries.
- **Streaming services:** Encourage participation in digital streaming platforms for musicians and filmmakers to reach global audiences.
- **Social media monetisation:** Train creatives to leverage tools like YouTube memberships, Instagram shopping and Patreon for audience engagement and income-generation.

Licensing and intellectual property

Objective: Protect creative works and enable revenue generation through licensing.

- **IP registration support:** Simplify the process for creatives to register copyrights, patents and trademarks for their works.
- **Licensing agreements:** Educate creatives on structuring licensing agreements to monetise their works for advertising, merchandise and media projects.
- **Enforcement mechanisms:** Strengthen enforcement of IP laws to deter infringement and protect artists' rights.

Market diversification and export strategies

Objective: Expand the presence of Mauritian CCIs in regional and international markets.

- **Market research:** Conduct studies to identify demand for Mauritian cultural products in African, European and Asian markets.
- **Cultural branding:** Position Mauritian CCIs as unique and high-value offerings rooted in the island's multicultural heritage.
- **Export incentives:** Provide logistical and financial support to encourage international distribution of art, music, crafts and fashion.

Enhancing regional and global reach

Objective: Increase the international footprint of Mauritian CCIs.

- **Retail collaborations:** Partner with global retail chains and e-commerce platforms to feature Mauritian products.
- **Distribution networks:** Build relationships with international distributors to streamline the export process for physical and digital products.
- **Showcasing events:** Participate in international expos, trade fairs and festivals to connect with buyers, distributors and cultural institutions.

Capacity building for business growth

Objective: Equip creatives with the skills and resources needed to scale their ventures.

- **Marketing skills:** Provide workshops on branding, social media strategy and market segmentation to help creatives effectively reach target audiences.
- **Entrepreneurship development:** Offer training on financial management, business planning and leadership to support creatives in managing scalable enterprises.
- **Digital marketing tools:** Familiarise artists with tools like SEO, email marketing and analytics to optimise their online presence.

Access to finance and investment opportunities

Objective: Facilitate diverse financial avenues to provide creatives with access to capital, fostering innovation, sustainability and growth in the cultural sector.

- **Microfinance and loans:** Establish microfinance programmes tailored for small-scale creatives, providing access to capital with flexible repayment terms.
- **Venture capital and angel investors:** Create networks that connect creative entrepreneurs with investors interested in funding innovative cultural projects.
- **Crowdfunding campaigns:** Promote crowdfunding as a viable method for creatives to finance their projects, leveraging platforms like Kickstarter and GoFundMe.

17.3 Conclusion

The creative industries in Mauritius are at a pivotal stage, leveraging innovative operational strategies, business models and sustainability approaches to navigate challenges and expand their global presence. By fostering collaboration, embracing digital platforms and tapping into sustainability trends, the sector has demonstrated resilience and adaptability in overcoming financial and infrastructural limitations.

Key opportunities for scaling include strengthening ties with cultural tourism, enhancing digital transformation and fostering international collaborations. However, persistent barriers such as limited infrastructure, high technology costs and skill gaps highlight the need for targeted interventions.

To achieve sustainable growth, stakeholders must invest in ecosystem building, capacity development and market diversification. Empowering creatives through access to finance, training in digital and entrepreneurial skills and streamlined access to international markets will ensure the long-term vitality of Mauritius' creative and cultural industries, securing their role as both economic drivers and cultural ambassadors on a global scale.



18. Closing summary and future outlook



18.1 Vision for the future

- **Exposure and marketing:**

Respondents expressed a strong desire for increased local and international exposure. Improved marketing strategies, better platforms for showcasing work and access to global markets were identified as critical needs to ensure that Mauritius' creative industries are recognised and appreciated on the global stage.

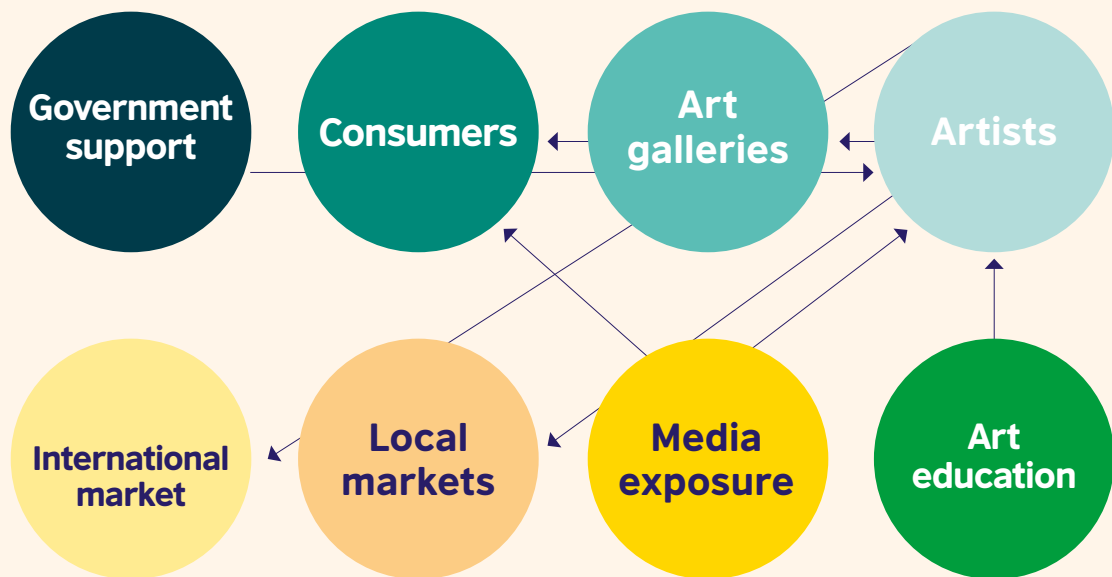
- **Political support and cultural policy:**

Creatives emphasised the need for stronger political backing and the development of a comprehensive cultural policy. Such policies should offer better protection for creatives, streamline funding processes and provide a framework for sustainable industry growth. Political will is seen as essential to unlocking the full potential of Mauritius' creative economy.

- **Sustainable development:** There is a growing interest in aligning Mauritius' creative industries with global trends in sustainability. Respondents envisioned a future where eco-friendly production methods, fair trade and ethical consumption are central to the development of the industry.

This would position Mauritius as a leader in sustainable creativity and open up new markets and opportunities.

18.2 Final reflections and insights



The key findings from the survey responses highlight a dynamic and diverse creative sector in Mauritius, characterised by talent and cultural depth but hampered by significant structural challenges. Addressing these challenges will require a coordinated approach that involves improving communication channels, streamlining funding processes and increasing political support.

By leveraging the island's multicultural heritage and fostering greater collaboration within the sector, Mauritius' creative industries can unlock new opportunities for growth and innovation. The focus should prioritise actionable steps to address these issues, ensuring that the creative sector continues to evolve and thrive on both the local and global stages.

The survey of Mauritius' Creative Cultural Industries reveals a dynamic, culturally rich and diverse sector that holds significant potential for both local and international growth. Respondents from across all sectors offered invaluable insights into the current state of the creative economy, highlighting both opportunities and pressing challenges.

18.3 Findings from other reports

Despite the positive developments in the creative and cultural sectors, the **Ministry of Arts and Cultural Heritage's Strategic Overview** outlines several challenges that hinder full integration into Mauritius' economic framework:

- **Policy framework development:** A comprehensive cultural policy is needed to unlock the sector's potential and address its specific needs.
- **Professionalisation of artists:** Legal and financial recognition, along with support systems, are required to elevate artists to professional status.
- **Cultural tourism promotion:** Mauritius' rich heritage is under-promoted as a cultural tourism destination, needing stronger global marketing strategies.
- **Sustainable heritage management:** Sustainable models for funding, maintenance and restoration of heritage sites are critical to their preservation.
- **Royalties mechanism:** There is a need for stronger mechanisms to ensure that artists receive fair compensation through effective royalty distribution.
- **Pandemic-related uncertainties:** The COVID-19 pandemic has introduced significant risks, requiring adaptable solutions to safely sustain cultural practices.



Complementing these findings, the **World Bank's Country Private Sector Diagnostic Report** highlights the importance of fostering entrepreneurship, innovation and sustainability in Mauritius. Although art and culture are not the primary focus, the report underscores the potential for creative industries to benefit from enhanced education, innovation and entrepreneurship, which could further integrate the sector into the country's broader economic growth.

Additionally, initiatives such as the **United Nations Global Compact Network in Mauritius** are advancing sustainable development by supporting the arts and culture industries. By integrating cultural initiatives into economic and social plans, these efforts emphasise the need for cross-sector collaboration to foster growth and sustainability in the creative economy.

The rise of cultural tourism in Mauritius: A driving force for creative and economic growth

Cultural tourism has emerged as a significant focus in recent government reports, driven by a resurgence in live performances, cultural events and a boost in tourism that reflects Mauritius' robust recovery from past economic challenges. The Strategic Overview highlights a notable increase in both the number and diversity of cultural events, ranging from traditional festivals celebrating Mauritian heritage to contemporary art exhibitions and film festivals, attracting both local and international audiences. This cultural vibrancy has fostered deeper appreciation among residents and tourists alike, enriching the understanding of Mauritius' diverse cultural landscape.

Tourism, a vital pillar of Mauritius' economy, has also seen a resurgence that directly benefits the creative and cultural sectors. Tourists are increasingly drawn to the island for its rich cultural experiences in addition to its natural beauty. This growth in cultural tourism has spurred investments in infrastructure, including galleries, museums, craft markets and performance spaces, supporting the broader arts community.

Creative Mauritius: uniting diversity, overcoming barriers and building for the future

One of the most prominent strengths of Mauritius' creative industries is its **multicultural environment**, which infuses the work of artists, producers, artisans, musicians, filmmakers and designers alike with unique and innovative perspectives. This diversity is a cornerstone of the creative sector, providing a competitive edge on the global stage. Additionally, **collaborations between disciplines** are fostering innovative practices, particularly in hybrid and interdisciplinary fields, where artists are pushing the boundaries of traditional art forms.

However, across all sectors, several **common challenges** emerged. **Funding** remains a critical issue, with creatives struggling to secure the financial resources necessary to produce, promote and distribute their work. The lack of tailored **funding models**, particularly for interdisciplinary and hybrid practices, limits the growth of the sector. Furthermore, **infrastructure deficiencies** – whether in the form of production facilities for film, recording studios for music or exhibition spaces for visual artists – hamper the ability of creatives to produce high-quality work and reach broader audiences. The absence of well-established **distribution channels**, particularly in film and music, further restricts the sector's international exposure.

Market access is another recurring theme, with many creatives voicing concerns about the limited opportunities to showcase their work both locally and internationally. Artists and musicians alike are calling for better platforms, networks and opportunities to present their work to wider audiences, including cultural exchange programmes, international collaborations and residencies. This challenge is compounded by **geographical isolation**, which makes it difficult for creatives to collaborate with international peers and access global markets.

Across the board, respondents emphasised the need for **professional development**, particularly in areas such as business management, marketing and digital skills. The creative sector's growth depends not only on artistic talent but also on the ability of professionals to navigate the complexities of running a sustainable creative business in an increasingly competitive global landscape.

Finally, there is a clear call for stronger **government and institutional support**. Respondents across all sectors are seeking more robust cultural policies that provide a clear framework for growth, with strategic investments in infrastructure, funding mechanisms and international collaborations. Without a well-defined cultural policy, many creatives feel unsupported, limiting the sector's ability to thrive and compete on a global scale.

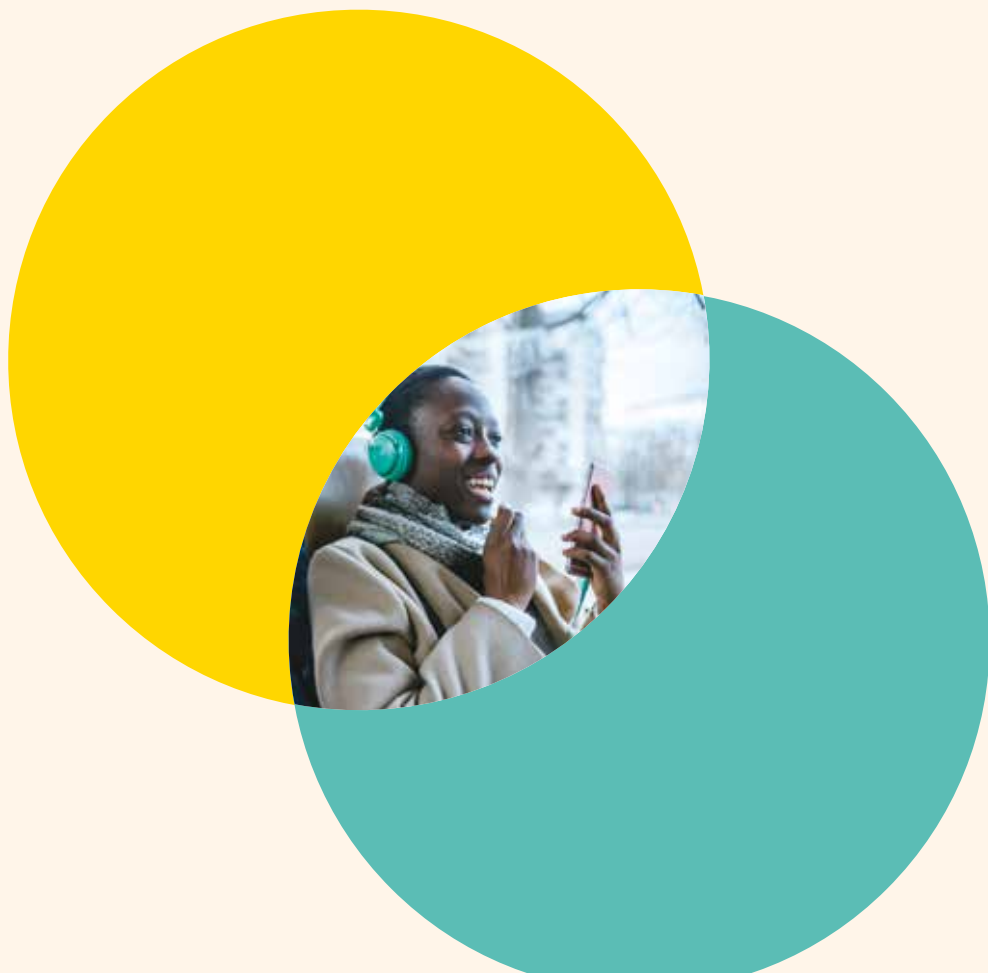
18.4 Path forward

To unlock the full potential of Mauritius' Creative Cultural Industries, a multi-faceted approach is required. This includes:

- Investment in infrastructure to develop the production facilities, galleries, studios and platforms necessary to support high-quality creative output.
- Revised funding models that are flexible and inclusive, particularly for interdisciplinary practices and emerging creatives.
- Enhanced professional development opportunities to equip creatives with the business, marketing and digital skills they need to grow sustainably.
- Stronger cultural policies that provide a roadmap for the future of the creative industries, ensuring that government support is aligned with the needs of the sector.

- Increased visibility and market access, both locally and internationally, through targeted initiatives like international collaborations, cultural exchange programmes and better online platforms.

By addressing these challenges, Mauritius can fully leverage its unique cultural diversity and creative talent, positioning itself as a key player in the global creative economy. The island's rich history, vibrant artistic community and innovative potential make it well-placed to thrive, provided that the necessary support structures are put in place. With strategic interventions and cross-sector collaboration, Mauritius' creative industries have the opportunity to drive significant cultural and economic growth in the years to come.



19 References

Reference page

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*The percentages in each category may not add up to 100% because:

- 1. Overlapping categories:** Respondents fall into multiple categories, especially when reporting challenges, sectors or the impact of technology. For example, someone faces both funding issues and market constraints.
- 2. Rounding off:** Percentages are rounded to the nearest whole number for simplicity, which also led to slight discrepancies in totals.
- 3. Non-mutually exclusive responses:** Some survey questions allow for multiple answers (e.g. some work in both visual arts and performing arts), leading to totals exceeding 100%.
- 4. Partial or unspecified responses:** In some cases, respondents did not have clear or complete answers, so the data doesn't cover every respondent.
- 5. Focus on key trends:** These summaries emphasise the most frequently reported responses rather than the full data set. Some minor or rare responses may be excluded for clarity.



