

Kenyan film industry to get a boost

By [Carole Kimutai](#)

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A creative content task force has been formed to spearhead the promotion of the residual capacity and economic potential of Kenya's broadcast and film industry. The initiative by the Kenya ICT Board is expected to promote Kenya's underutilised creative content economy.

The task force's first initiative will be to launch an awareness campaign called Mzuka aimed at sensitising sector players, business prospects and investors on the residual capacity and the economic potential of the sector. "Mzuka's main objective is to create a framework for formal recognition of the industry and its sub-sectors," said Michael Onyango, vice-chair of the creative content task force.

The creative content economy, which includes the broadcast, film, music, art, publishing, advertising, animation and gaming industries, contributed an estimated KSh25 billion to the Kenyan economy in 2010. This amounted to just one per cent of the economy, compared to 5.1% in Jamaica, 11.2% in the US and four per cent in Latvia, according to Zimele Asset Management Company.

"Creative content has the potential for wealth and job creation through generation and exploitation of intellectual property," says Sammy Muvelah of Zimele.

Seeking global exposure

According to Onyango, it is this underlying potential that the task force is seeking to expose on the global arena. It aims to make Kenya the continental hub of creative content within two years. As a first step, it is in creating a database of players, investors and stakeholders within the creative content economy over the next six months.

Confirming the immense capacity of the creative arts, the Creative Economy Report 2010, published by UNCTAD, shows the sector expanded in the face of a global recession. While global trade in manufacturing and industry shrunk by 12%, the knowledge-based creative sectors continued to expand, reaching US\$592bn and achieving an annual growth rate of 14% from 2002 to 2008.

However, Africa's total contribution in the creative economy is almost negligible. Only one in ten African countries have established performing and recording industries. Yet Nigeria's film industry, commonly known as Nollywood, is now worth US\$250m to US\$300m, while Kenya's film industry is contributing Sh65m, according to a Kenya Film Commission study done in 2008.

The creative content task force was formed at the behest of the permanent secretary of information and communications, Dr. Bitange Ndemo, after a visit by Yvonne Mwende, one of the creators of the blockbuster movie, Avatar. The movie made US\$2.9bn in sales.

ABOUT CAROLE KIMUTAI

Carole Kimutai is a writer and editor based in Nairobi, Kenya. She is currently an MA student in New Media at the University of Leicester, UK. Follow her on Twitter at @CaroleKimutai.

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