

Introduction

The Creative Development Project (CDP) is a newly established not for profit organisation. It is dedicated to harnessing the capacity of creative industries to support social and economic development, primarily in developing countries. It is a pioneering and unique initiative.

The work of the CDP: three key areas

The work of the CDP will be specifically focused on three key areas. These are areas where creative industries can be/ have traditionally been supported through public policy interventions, which can bring about tangible and measurable results.

The CDP will seek to provide new and insightful research into these areas. Sometimes this work will be driven by internally generated ideas, sometimes it will be driven by requests and engagement with external partners.

In addition, the CDP will provide practical consultancy and project management that helps to deliver results consistent with the organisation's aims – as well as commercially sustainable initiatives which can provide genuine access to markets for companies/ individuals from the developing world. Specifically, these will involve exploiting the potential of emerging, digital technology to support pro-poor opportunities and targeted promotional activity at industry specific events. Theory will be linked closely to practice.

The organisation will also seek to understand what lessons can be learned from the developed world and how these can be translated into a development context? This information will be communicated to public policy practitioners in an attempt to help develop best practice regarding interventions.

- **Economic development** – Creative industries provide real jobs and opportunities for economic development. The CDP will seek to develop new research into what delivers results. How can public policy support effective economic growth through harnessing the potential of the creative economy?
- **Civil society** – Many of the creative industries, from film, to music and journalism, have the potential to create a more open society and allow a more informed and evolved debate about the forces that govern our world. The CDP will explore how creative industries can play a role in this complex equation.
- **Social engagement** – The creative industries have the power to engage elements of society that otherwise may feel disconnected. The creative industries have traditionally provided a voice to the dispossessed and allow a self-expression, which is fundamental to how we as individuals engage with their environments. Through helping develop, support and evaluate practical initiatives in developing countries – and applying key lessons from the UK and elsewhere – the CDP will help to maximise the effective social role that cultural projects can play.

Structure and partnerships

The CDP is registered as a Community Interest Company and was established by Mike Todd and Geseth Garcia, who are both directors of a Manchester based media and communications company. In addition, both have extensive international development experience and Mike Todd has been an associate of international development think tank 'The European Stability Initiative' for a number of years.

One of the medium term aims of the CDP is to establish a board of non-exec directors made up of representatives of academia, NGOs and creative industry practitioners.

The CDP will also aim to establish a number of key strategic partnerships with organisations with which it has common cause. While retaining its independence, the CDP will aim to develop close ties with organisations such as the UK's Department for International Development, the British Council, UNESCO, UNCTAD, UNDP and NGOs such as the Open Society Institute.

The CDP and the University of Manchester

Manchester is a leading international centre for both the creative industries and international development research. It is the ideal home for the Creative Development Project and the CDP will seek to maximise the skill and experience base the city has.

Specifically, the CDP seeks to establish a long term relationship with the University of Manchester, especially the Brookes World Poverty Institute (BWPI), to give academic weight and rigour to its work – and credibility in the policy debate. In addition, the organisation would like to establish a strong relationship with the Business School to ensure an effective focus on the practical business side of the creative economy. How can these skills be translated to a development context?

As a first step, the CDP has successfully bid for NWDA innovation voucher funding to support initial research into this area, carried out in partnership with the BWPI, to develop greater clarity and focus regarding the organisation's planned activities. Where are the knowledge gaps and how can the CDP's work have the greatest impact?