

# Characterization of Cultural and Creative Industries: The Case of Tijuana-Ensenada, B.C.

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**Abstract.** Since the latter half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the concepts of cultural industry and creative economies have become increasingly prominent in specialized literature and its popular dissemination. Two reasons explain this: first, the role played by the intangibles of knowledge and creativity in these industries and the broader economy, and second, the importance of these industries for economic and social development in many regions. In Mexico, the last two decades have begun to see a cultural and creative pole emerge in the cities of Ensenada and Tijuana, in Baja California. First came the region's wine industry, which boasts a history going back two centuries. This was later coupled with the development of local gastronomy, with Ensenada named UNESCO Creative City of Gastronomy in 2015. Lastly, a substantial craft beer industry has become established in Baja California's most populated areas, driven by the boom in the industry in California, USA. Thus, Ensenada-Tijuana has the potential to become a cultural and creative pole, but there is insufficient information available to estimate this potential. Mapping the CCIs in the region is therefore a considerable challenge. Against this backdrop, this research offers an initial situational analysis of the ecosystem of creative industries in Ensenada and Tijuana, Mexico, with a focus on youth inclusion processes. The industry mapping methodology proposed by Colombia's National Consulting Center (CNC) (2019) was used as the basis to design a survey for young creatives, which included 15 items aimed at identifying the *main areas of interest* and the *creative disciplines* that young people are engaged in, as well as the *challenges* and *opportunities* they encounter in these industries. This project constitutes an initial characterization of the CCIs in the cities of Ensenada and Tijuana, classifying the young creatives in this ecosystem and identifying the primary economic activities in the sector.

## 1 Introduction

Since the latter half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the concepts of cultural industry, creative industry, and economy have become increasingly prominent in specialized literature and its popular dissemination. There are two reasons for this: firstly, the role played by the intangibles of knowledge and creativity in these industries and the broader economy, and secondly, the importance of these industries for economic and social development in many regions [1-5].

Authors like Castells and Hall [6] and Florida [7] maintain that promoting the emergence of cultural and creative industries (CCIs) transforms regions into poles of global attraction, bringing an influx of capital and talent and generating an opportunity for economic development and an improved quality of life. The variety and breadth of these creative industries is clear, with activities including advertising, architecture, art, design, fashion, filmmaking, publishing, performing arts, games, and R+D. This list could also include gastronomy, some craft production, creative tourism, and high-value-added wine production.

In this sense, creative industries are of special interest in Latin America and other developing regions and are emerging as one possible means of exploring new opportunities that go beyond a strictly technological approach. These industries boost the growth of these regions and serve as protagonists of other paths of innovation [7-8].

In Mexico, the last two decades have begun to see a cultural and creative pole emerge in the cities of Ensenada and Tijuana, in Baja California. First came the region's wine industry, which boasts a history going back two centuries. This was later coupled with the development of local gastronomy, with Ensenada named UNESCO Creative City of Gastronomy in 2015. Lastly, a substantial craft beer industry has become established, driven by the boom in the industry in California, USA [9].

Thus, the region has the potential to become a cultural and creative pole, but the information available is insufficient to estimate this potential. Mapping the CCIs in Ensenada and Tijuana is therefore a

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considerable challenge. In this context, the starting point for this research is the following question: What is the composition of the CCI ecosystem in Baja California, with a particular focus on the role of young creatives and gender inclusion in the region's key strategic actors?

To answer this question, our general objective was to describe the ecosystem of cultural and creative industries in Ensenada and Tijuana, Baja California, by mapping the strategic actors in these industries. We also established the following specific objectives: 1) Classify the strategic actors that make up the ecosystem of creative industries in the municipality of Ensenada, Baja California; 2) Conduct a situational analysis of the ecosystem of creative industries and youth and gender inclusion processes in the municipalities of Ensenada and Tijuana, Baja California.

The creative industries are increasingly recognized as drivers of innovation, entrepreneurship, and economic growth [10-11]. Young creatives play a crucial role in this sector, contributing to cultural transformation and regional development [12]. These industries thrive on continuous innovation, balancing novelty with familiarity to attract consumers and stabilize demand [10]. The social nature of creativity in these industries is emphasized, with entrepreneurship and innovation being key factors in their growth [13]. Institutions and supportive environments are essential for harnessing creative potential, particularly among youth [12]. Various sub-sectors within the creative industries, such as advertising, arts, design, and media, offer opportunities for wealth and job creation when supported by appropriate policies and strategies [12]. As these industries continue to evolve, they present valuable settings for exploring the dynamics of innovation, value creation, and cultural exchange [10-11].

Globally, CCIs have positioned themselves as a sector with the potential to become a driver of development. Given that these industries employ elements associated with the essence of their corresponding regions, they offer products and services that are both original and built on a long history. This makes them both difficult to substitute and highly prized by consumers.

Another important component is the ability to innovate through a model based on local cultural and creative elements but with a global reach and resonance. Notable features of these industries include distinctive, distinguishing elements that impart a unique character strongly valued by consumers.

Accordingly, and given the importance of research into the CCIs, this study seeks to promote the development and consolidation of the ecosystem of these industries, by generating and disseminating information to support decision-making processes that will aid their growth.

## 2 Theoretical framework

Since the late 20<sup>th</sup> century, various leisure activities have been rescaled and revisited by the CCIs. They are seen as an economic phenomenon associated with public policies of economic growth and social development, but also as a cultural phenomenon that incorporates the new values generated by the knowledge/information society that forms the intellectual foundation of capitalism. Cultural industries are considered a public good based on models of centralized production (media) and real-time consumption (art events), and they also include models of commercial industries, like film and television with a cultural label. On the other hand, creative industries are supported by industrial policies on technology and education and are considered private goods. They operate in decentralized networks of production and distribution of digital content and consumption mediated by new technologies, under the banner of creativity as a driver of economic development.

The creative economy and CCIs are relatively new concepts, developed in some industrialized countries during the 1990s. Despite originating in Australia, it was in the United Kingdom that these concepts gained the most momentum, in reference to circles of creation, production and distribution of goods and services in sectors where creativity is an essential dimension. These two countries began to see cultural sectors as creators of national wealth and economic performance, and not merely as activities that demanded public funding for their intrinsic, non-market value [3]. Sánchez and Kuri [14] note:

An important debate is emerging on the role of cultural and creative industries as tools for urban regeneration and factors in local economic development. Cunningham [2] sets out the foundations of the knowledge-based economy, in terms of its relation to culture and creativity and the growth and diversification of the regional economy. Higgs et al. [15] mapped the creative economy in the United Kingdom, while Lazzeretti et al. [1, 12] and Flew and Cunningham [3] highlight the role played by the cultural and creative industries in economic development. Stevens [17], on the other hand, describes the relationships between territory and the cultural industries and explores the location and distribution options for these industries and the labor supply – in other words, the concentration patterns of the stock of productive capital and its spatial location and specialization in the area.<sup>1</sup>

The CCIs encompass activities that require creativity, skills, and talent to boost wealth and job creation through intellectual property [18]. Accordingly, the British model of creative industries uses digital technology and intellectual property to propose a new vision of these activities, which would otherwise have

<sup>1</sup> This is the authors' own translation of the original text in Spanish.

been included within the prevailing models of cultural industries in the European Union.

Within the European Union, Lazzeretti et al. [1] point to a trend among southern countries to retain the term “cultural industries,” given their immense cultural and artistic heritage that they have successfully exploited, whereas countries in northern Europe lean toward the term “creative industries,” placing emphasis on activities associated with the knowledge economy and information and communication technology (ICT).

The ten industries or productive activities selected in the British models are to some extent unique, but the efforts to quantify the value of creative production in the domestic economy and in national exports have also helped other countries and regions to develop their own models.

The CCIs are included in the so-called creative economy. According to a UNESCO [19] classification, cultural industries include music, writing, art, fashion, design, and the media, as well as craft-intensive technology and production, while the creative industries comprise a broader range of production activities that includes goods and services based on innovation and research and development (R + D), like movies, museums, galleries, and photography. In any case, and following UNCTAD [20], these activities are identifiable by the fact that human creativity forms the basis of their contribution, by their dual nature as both products and symbolic goods, and lastly, by the fact they allow for some degree of recognition of intellectual property.

Recent research on cultural and creative industries (CCIs) in Latin America highlights their potential as drivers of social and economic progress, despite limited managerial attention in the Ibero-American context [21]. Key trends include innovation, sustainability, and digitization [21]. Cultural networking has emerged as a prominent strategy for competitiveness and diffusion of goods and services among Latin American CCIs, facilitating knowledge exchange and collaboration [22]. However, the lack of established state or organizational support structures hinders the sector's growth [22]. The rise of the digital creative economy presents both challenges and opportunities for the Caribbean region [23]. Research emphasizes the need for formalization, support, and development of cultural activities to harness the potential of the creative economy as a sustainable economic driver in Latin America and the Caribbean [23].

In Mexico, there have been various efforts to identify the economic contributions of CCIs. Initially, research has focused on the cultural sector and its characteristics and infrastructure, both nationally [24] and locally [25], the contributions of these copyright-protected [26] and intellectual property-protected [28] industries, their link with the sociocultural environment [28], and employment distribution associated with these industries in this region [18].

### **3 Methodology**

To achieve a better understanding of the cultural and creative industries in the cities of Ensenada and Tijuana,

Baja California, we proposed a descriptive study following the industry mapping methodology presented by Colombia's National Consulting Center (CNC) [30]. Initially, we characterized the participation of young members of the CCIs through an online survey.

The focus of the survey was to characterize young people involved in CCIs, identifying their main areas of interest and creative disciplines, as well as the challenges and opportunities they encounter in these industries. The survey contained both closed-ended questions (e.g., Likert-scale items, multiple choice) for quantifiable data on demographics, areas of interest, and challenges faced, as well as some open-ended questions to allow respondents to provide more detailed insights into their experiences and aspirations. This combination allowed for a comprehensive, data-driven snapshot of youth involvement in the creative industries.

To ensure the survey captured a representative view of young creatives in Ensenada and Tijuana, we employed a convenience sampling strategy to identify and recruit participants who are actively engaged in the CCIs in the region. The sample targeted young people between the ages of 18 and 35, as this group is typically seen as the most active demographic in emerging creative industries. The survey was distributed online to facilitate broader outreach, particularly given the geographic spread across Ensenada and Tijuana. Links to the survey were shared through social media platforms, email newsletters, and partnerships with local organizations that work with young creatives.

The quantitative approach was chosen at this stage of the research to provide a broad, data-driven overview of youth participation in the cultural and creative industries (CCIs) in Ensenada and Tijuana. This method allows for the collection of standardized data from a larger, diverse sample of young creatives, enabling the identification of key patterns, challenges, and opportunities within these industries. This approach is particularly suited for mapping the ecosystem and providing a comprehensive, statistically significant understanding of the role of young creatives in the region.

While the current phase of the research focuses on quantitative analysis, future stages will incorporate qualitative methods to provide a more comprehensive and nuanced understanding of the dynamics within Baja California's cultural and creative industries. This approach will allow for a deeper exploration of the personal experiences, motivations, and challenges of young creatives, enriching the overall findings.

The research represents an initial effort to characterize the cultural and creative industries (CCIs) in the region, focusing on youth participation before expanding to include professionals already established in the sector. In future phases, both quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis techniques will be employed to build a more complete picture of the CCI landscape.

At this stage, the research led to the classification of key strategic actors within the creative industries ecosystem in Ensenada and Tijuana. A quantitative instrument was specifically designed to target young creatives, aiming to characterize their involvement in CCIs. This initial survey provided an overview of their contributions to these industries, while also identifying the factors that influence their career development and creative pursuits.

## 4 Results

The results of the survey of young creatives describe the experiences, concerns, and expectations of young people from Ensenada and Tijuana who identify as belonging to the cultural and creative industries (CCIs), strengthening their visibility through their own experiences.

### 4.1 Demographics

The survey targeted young people aged 15 to 29 years currently in the CCIs, whether as independent professionals, salaried employees, interns, volunteers or students. Of these, 55.2% identify as female, 38% as male, and 5.2% as non-binary (see Figure 1).

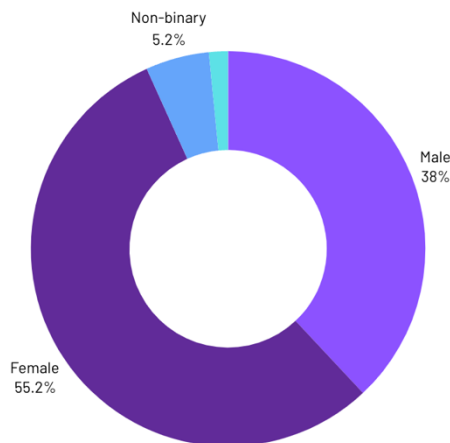


Figure 1. Gender of survey respondents.

One important consideration in characterizing young people in the creative economy is to address the needs and challenges they face. In total, 5.6% of all respondents reported living with a disability. This information is essential to develop inclusive policies, education programs, and appropriate healthcare services, thus promoting equal opportunities and the full participation of all young people regardless of their status in society. Furthermore, collecting data on disability in the population also helps to raise awareness of the importance of inclusion (see Figure 2).

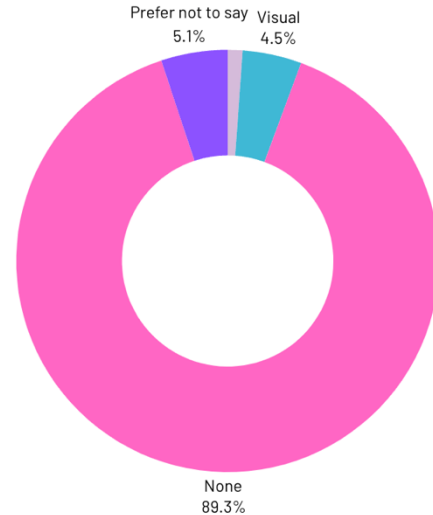


Figure 2. Disability status of young creatives.

Participants were also asked about their educational background (see Figure 3). Most had studied engineering, architecture or design (44%), art education or music (23%), or administrative sciences, tourism and marketing (18%). These were followed by renewable energies (4%), philosophy and humanities (3%), health sciences (1%), enology or gastronomy (1%), and languages (1%).

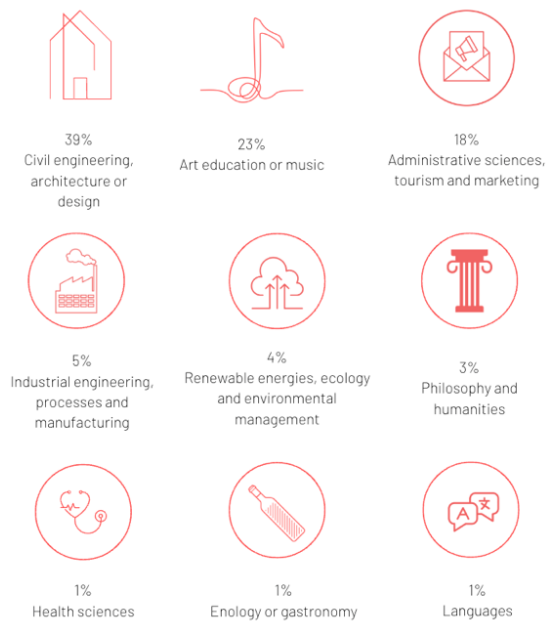


Figure 3. Educational background of young creatives.

### 4.2 Inclusion processes

Our analysis of how long participants had been in the CCIs (see Figure 4) found that most had spent less than 2 years in the sector (51%). This was followed by 3-5 years (33%), 6-10 years (8%), and over ten years (8%).

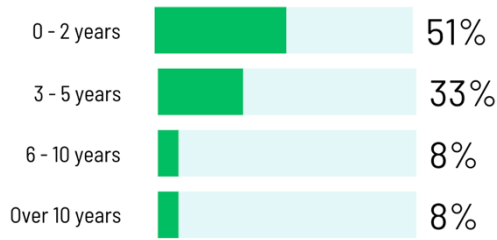


Figure 4. Time spent in the CCIs

The two main ways in which young people are currently involved in the CCIs are as university students, at 50%, and as independent artists, at 18% (see Figure 5).

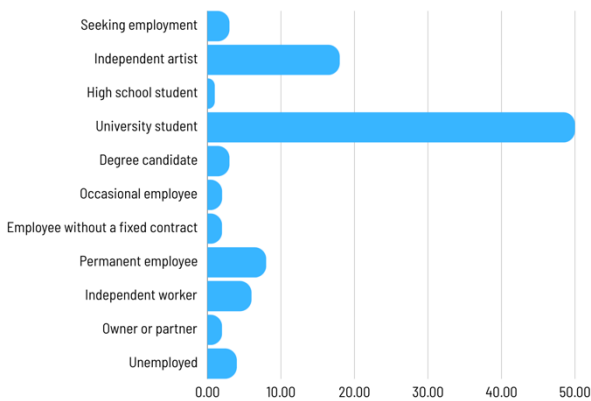


Figure 5. Current form of involvement in the CCIs.

As for the subsector of CCIs in which participants currently work or would like to in the future (see Figure 6), the responses show the visual and plastic arts as the most common subsector, at 18%, followed by marketing at 17%, the performing arts and entertainment (9%), architecture (9%), and digital design and programming (9%).

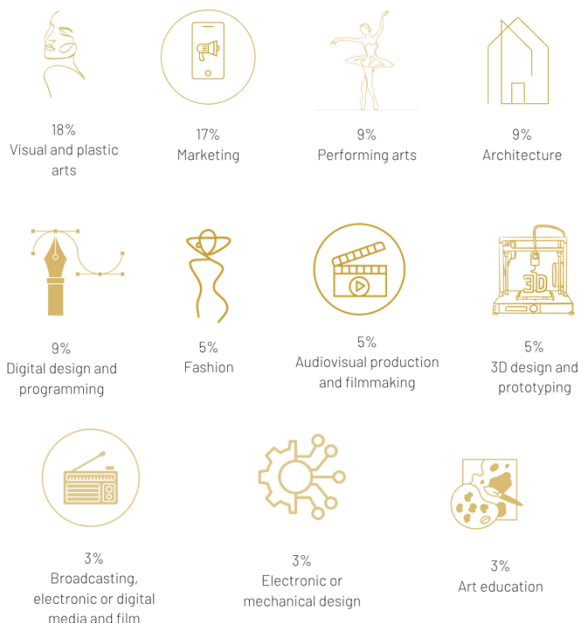


Figure 6. CCI subsectors where participants currently work or would like to in the future.

The following subsectors were also cited, albeit less frequently: fashion (5%), audiovisual production and filmmaking (5%), 3D design and prototyping (5%), broadcasting, electronic or digital media and film (3%), electronic or mechanical design (3%), and art education (3%).

### 4.3 Discrimination

Mexico's National Council to Prevent Discrimination [30] notes that young people are one of the most numerous age groups in the country. It is important to bring attention to the prevalence and nature of young people's experiences of discrimination in different contexts, like in education, employment, and wider society.

This helps to identify systemic problems of discrimination and prejudice that can have an adverse effect on the young. Giving young people a voice and allowing them to share their experiences of discrimination increases awareness of these issues and promotes a more inclusive and equitable environment for all, helping to build a fairer, more tolerant society.

Against this backdrop, the young people surveyed were asked if they had experienced any form of discrimination or harassment in the previous five years. Most reported no experience of any form of discrimination. However, the remaining participants reported most commonly experiencing discrimination based on sexual orientation, sex, age, skin color, socioeconomic status, disability, and place of residence (see Figure 7).

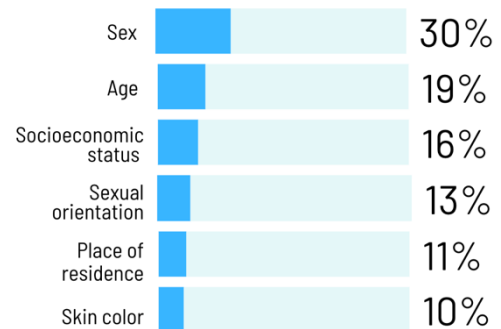


Figure 7. Discrimination.

Separately, our analysis of employment precarity shows that most have no employment benefits (40%), while 29% have health insurance, 9% have a savings fund, 8% have an AFORE retirement account, and 7% have life insurance (see Figure 8).

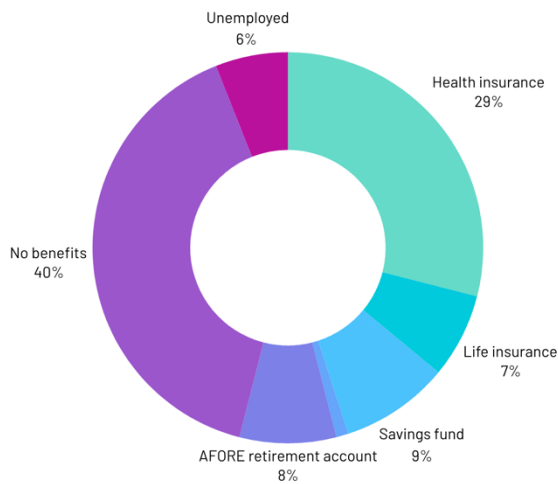


Figure 8. Services or benefits received by young creatives.

#### 4.4 Priorities

Young creatives were asked what they saw as priorities for young people’s continued engagement and success in the creative industries over the next two years. The five most common responses are presented in Figure 9.



Figure 9. Priorities for the success of young people in the CCI.

Recent research highlights the importance of supporting young creatives in the creative industries. Key priorities include promoting entrepreneurship, particularly in the IT sector, which shows significant export potential and resilience to external factors [31]. Reducing barriers to higher education and improving career opportunities are crucial, with a focus on aligning education systems with local business growth patterns [32]. Access to healthcare and professional networking are also emphasized. Community youth arts programs play a vital role in engaging marginalized youth, fostering social cohesion, and developing creative skills [33]. These programs can serve as incubators for youth creativity and entrepreneurship. Importantly, young people should be empowered to envision and shape the

future of their communities, with adults supporting their creative work and ceding power where possible [34]. This approach is particularly crucial in times of crisis and social change.

#### 4.5 Entrepreneurship

Understanding young creatives’ interests, motivation, and involvement in business and entrepreneurial activities is key to identifying the economic and creative potential of this generation. Furthermore, with an understanding of the specific perspectives and challenges of young entrepreneurs, it becomes possible to create resources and opportunities to help them develop their entrepreneurial skills, drive innovation, and contribute to the economic growth of the community and the country as a whole.

Our survey found that over 38% of young people have used their own capital to support their work in the CCI, while 23% have received assistance in the form of grants and 17% have not engaged with any of the business development models. Also mentioned, to a lesser extent, were announcements for applications for professionalization (5%), public-private partnerships (4%), and incubators (3%).

Participants were also asked if they had applied for and/or received any monetary or in-kind assistance from the government for their business or practice, to which less than 15% responded that they had. The assistance programs that they reported applying for include the 2019-2020 Young Creators Program, 2022 State Government Youth Scholarships, and a scholarship for graduate students in 2021-2023.

The three visibility strategies most commonly employed by young creatives to position themselves in the creative economy are social networks (32%), networking and cooperation (31%), and fairs and conventions (19%).

### 5 Conclusions

Characterizing young people in the cultural and creative industries is essential for several reasons. One major reason is the fact they represent a significant portion of the population and are often at the forefront of cultural and creative trends. Understanding their cultural preferences, tastes, and values is crucial for companies and creators hoping to reach and connect with this demographic. Identifying their interests can serve to guide the production and distribution of cultural content and products, which can translate into greater commercial and cultural success.

Cultural and creative industries are an important driver of the global economy, creating jobs and providing a significant contribution to GDP. As a growing workforce in these industries, young people play a vital role in their development and sustainability. Understanding their professional aspirations, educational needs, and specific employment challenges allows policymakers and companies to adapt

employment and talent development strategies to realize the full potential of this emerging workforce.

Furthermore, young creatives play an essential role in expressing cultural diversity and promoting social inclusion, as their perspectives shape contemporary culture and drive positive representation in society. By identifying the challenges and opportunities faced by young people in these industries, we can inform policies and strategies that nurture talent, foster innovation, and ensure the sustainable growth of creative sectors, ultimately maximizing their economic and cultural impact.

Lastly, by characterizing young people in the cultural and creative industries, we have identified challenges and opportunities that can help to establish more effective policies and strategies to support and nurture young talent, boosting innovation and sustainable growth in these crucial industries for contemporary culture and today's economy. In short, characterizing younger individuals in these industries is key to supporting informed decision-making and harnessing their full creative and economic potential.

Future research could expand on these findings by exploring the impact of digital technologies and social media on young creatives' career trajectories, as well as their role in shaping global creative trends. Additionally, further studies could examine the intersection of youth participation with other demographic factors, such as gender, ethnicity, and socioeconomic status, to better understand the diverse experiences and challenges faced by young creatives in different cultural contexts.

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