

Sustainability through Creativity

From Cultural Heritage to Scalable Impact Models in Sustainable Entrepreneurship

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Abstract

This paper explores the role of creativity through art and fashion as a strategic approach to advancing sustainability, social responsibility, and inclusive economic development. Moving beyond purely conceptual frameworks, the study focuses on how cultural heritage, traditional knowledge, and craftsmanship can be transformed into scalable impact models that integrate social inclusion, economic value, and sustainability. The research adopts an interdisciplinary and practice-based approach, combining perspectives from sustainable development, cultural heritage preservation, and social innovation. The proposed approach also contributes to the development of sustainable entrepreneurship models by integrating traditional craftsmanship, creative industries, and inclusive economic participation. Particular emphasis is placed on the role of museum and artistic contexts in shaping sustainability narratives, fostering public engagement, and creating high-quality, culturally grounded experiences.

The paper presents two case studies from Serbia. The first examines a museum-based exhibition that explores themes of sustainability, nature, and human connection through artistic expression, demonstrating the potential of art as a medium for awareness and behavioral change. The second case focuses on a community-based initiative in Loznica aimed at empowering women, particularly from marginalized and underrepresented groups, through skills development in sewing, design, and creative production. This initiative contributes to social inclusion, economic empowerment, and the preservation of intangible cultural heritage.

Building on these case studies, the paper introduces a model for transitioning from local initiatives to scalable impact frameworks. It highlights how creative industries can connect tradition with contemporary markets, positioning cultural heritage within new value chains that emphasize quality, authenticity, and responsible production. This approach opens opportunities for application across different contexts, including European cultural and social development frameworks as well as emerging markets focused on innovation and sustainability.

The findings suggest that integrating creativity, cultural heritage, and social inclusion can generate new pathways for sustainable development, strengthen community resilience, and support the creation of inclusive economic models. This approach aligns with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, particularly SDG 5 (Gender Equality), SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth), and SDG 12 (Responsible Consumption and Production).

Keywords: Sustainability, creative industries, cultural heritage, sustainable entrepreneurship, women empowerment, social impact, scalable models, inclusive development.