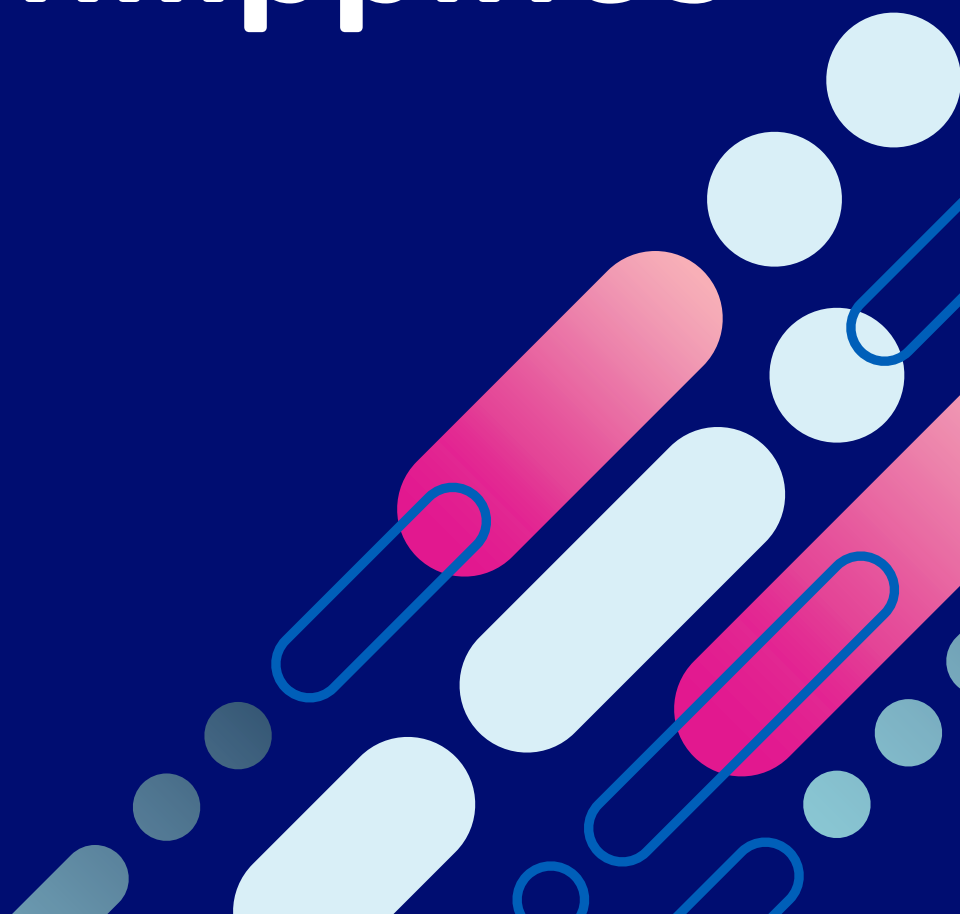
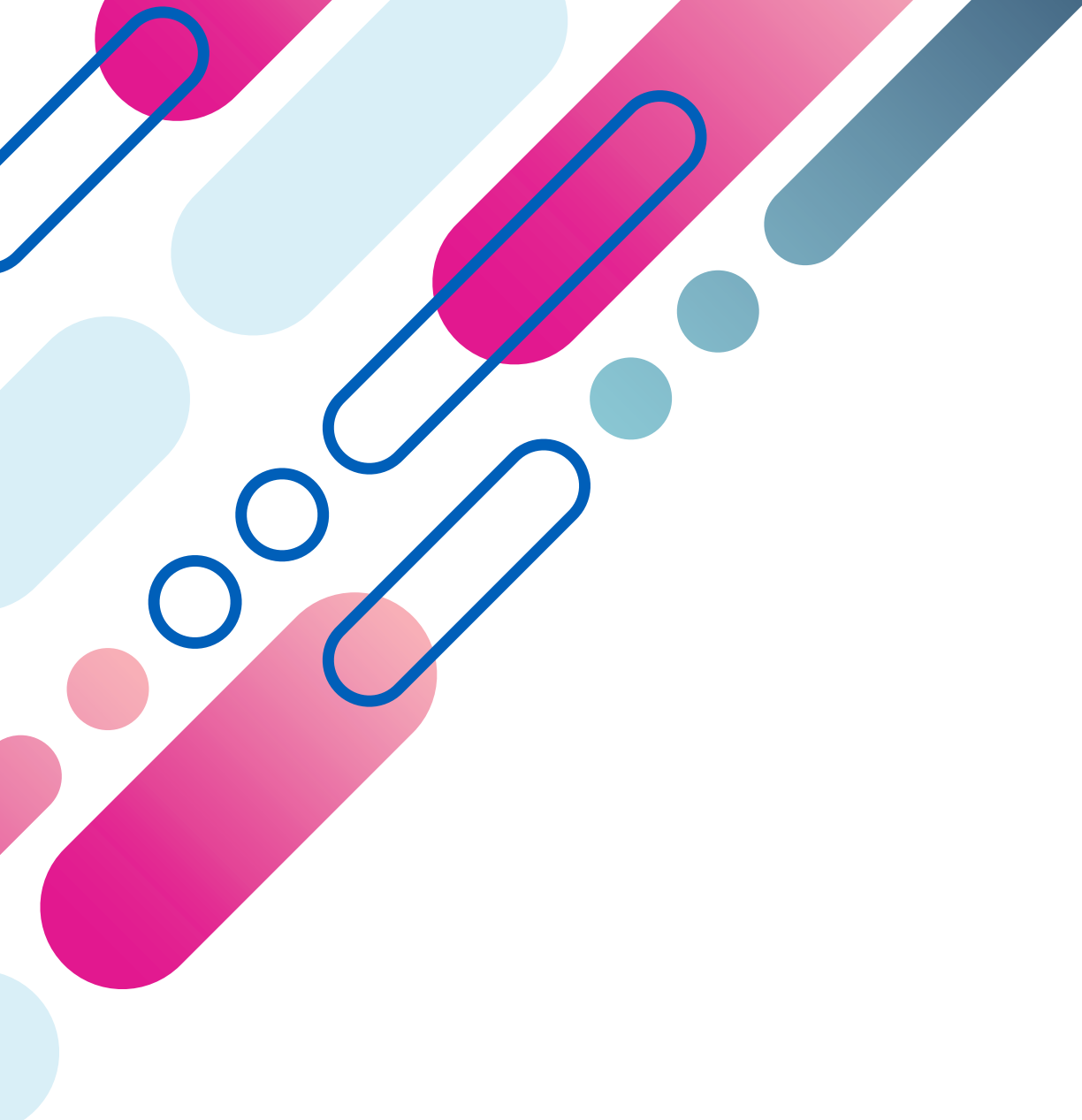


Creative Hubs for Good

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# Happy Nests — The social impact of creative hubs in the Philippines





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# Executive summary

## About this study

The creative economy is growing strategically in the Philippines with increased government and municipal interest. The goal is developing and maximising its value to a range of agenda, such as economic growth and competitiveness, inclusion and sustainability, and creative city-making. This includes a focus on creative hubs, with a plethora of new hubs emerging over recent years.



‘A creative hub is a place which brings creative people together. It is a convenor, providing space and support for networking, sustainability, and community engagement within the creative, cultural and tech sectors.’ (Fostering Communities: Creative Hubs in the Philippines)

This study builds on two previous reports published by the British Council, ‘The Philippine Creative Economy Toward a Baseline & Programme’ mapping and ‘Fostering Communities - Creative Hubs in the Philippines’. It aims to provide a profile of creative hubs in the Philippines and insights on the role creative hubs play in catalysing communities’ social and creative development. A two-step process using both secondary and primary data research was employed to generate insights on the social impact of creative hubs. The team analysed the existing database of 84 creative hubs who applied to the British Council’s Creative Innovators Programme and developed hub profiles based on size, focus and most significant impact. Field work was carried out in Manila and Cebu resulting in profiles of 11 hubs and two in-depth case studies.

Most of the creative hubs in the British Council’s Creative Innovators Programme applicant database have been operating for under five years and provide business support, collaborative opportunities, knowledge exchange, consultation, networking and mentoring. Hubs

describe themselves in a variety of ways and are usually composed of small and lean teams of up to six staff members with employees taking on multiple responsibilities. Most are located in Metro Manila, predominantly in the cities of Makati and Quezon. Cebu also has a concentration of creative hubs.

The most significant impacts and development priorities can be clustered as follows:

Providing a space, venue, platform for the artists
A central market-place for exposure and opportunities
Skills training, mentorship and talent development
Job creation
New products
Quality of life enhancement
Cultural preservation and talent retention
Resilience of the organisation and its business model



## Creative hub profiles

The study considered 11 mini case studies under impact categories of the individual, community and nation, derived from the work on self-worth (*halaga*) and community impact (*pakikipagkapwatao*) of F. Landa Jocano, a Filipino anthropologist and educator.

### Impact on the individual

- ASpace first introduced the concept of co-working to the Philippines in 2011 and operates a co-working programme, and provides space for events such as pop-up art galleries, craft workshops and film screenings.
- Husay Co. works to empower communities in and through the performing arts, organising its work into impact programmes, workshops and a creative agency.
- HUB:MakeLab is an artist-run initiative rooted in Escolta, Manila that provides space for a new wave of Filipino creative entrepreneurs, enabling individuals to make the shift from ‘making a living’ to ‘making as living’.
- PURVEYR is a multi-dimensional media brand that fosters the creative spirit through stories, objects and experiences from the Philippines, shifting Filipino perspectives of their creative culture by engaging audiences and communities through digital, print, events and retail.

- Toon City Academy is an effective pipeline for skilled animators for the industry, offering opportunities to people, who might have minimal education and skills, and for students with special needs and from provinces where access to animation is limited.

### Impact on the community

MATIC is a haven for product developers, designers, and students to touch, feel and experiment with materials, and is an enabling space for creators with a focus on events, training and workshops for young artists including cooperation with the University of Cebu.

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HoliCOW (Holistic Coalition of the Willing, Inc) supports the sustainability of the furniture sector. Activity is based on the ‘kalibutan way’ to emphasise the need to be concerned about the environment and giving value to every natural material they utilise.

Cebu Furniture Industries Foundation’s (CFIF) supports the growth of the Philippine furniture industry through promotions, training, education, and advocacy and operating a platform to showcase the sector. Cebu Design Week promotes the province’s furniture industry and works to make it relevant to contemporary markets.

Co.lab was founded as a co-working space in 2011 to develop an active community of practice and support for pioneers, start-ups, freelancers, innovators and change makers.

CraftMNL is a multi-disciplinary artist-run creative hub aiming to empower local makers and crafters by providing them with resources and showcasing platforms and supporting entrepreneurs, particularly those in the provinces and rural areas.

### Impact on a national level

The Design Center of the Philippines is an internationally recognised centre for design excellence and has collaborated with a wide range of creative hubs. It organises a multi-design festival across a number of cities involving around 60 hubs.

## Creative hub case studies

Two in-depth case studies were prepared. Pineapple Lab and Anthill Fabric Gallery are examples of creative hubs in the Philippines that embody the three types of social impact: Individual Impact, Community-Building-Impact and Nation-Building Impact.

### Anthill Fabric Gallery

The research team had a number of contacts with Anthill Fabric Gallery, visiting and meeting the team at the Gallery and finishing workshop in Cebu, and subsequently interviewing both Anya Lim, (Managing Director and Co-Founder of Anthill Fabric Gallery) and Jessica Ouano (Designer).

Anthill is ten years old and has been a pioneering organisation in terms of capacity building, training and impact. It works with partners in both urban and rural locations. Their approach is culture based, community centred and tied to value systems and ways of life. Their intention is to preserve culture and to support local communities to have sustainable livelihoods. Anthill have developed five programmes through which they work with weaving communities, covering financial literacy, business skills, creative development, professional accreditation and apprenticeships, and cultural appreciation.

The company is about to establish a not-for-profit arm for enterprise building with new partners. A creative entrepreneur unit and a creative enterprises module will support this approach and involves support in the form of training and field visits.

Anthill’s philosophy is one of encouraging self-sufficiency through ‘learning by doing’. It requires an immersive approach to build trust and mutual understanding. This approach has proven successful in winning the trust of communities who have learnt to be suspicious of large companies that can desert them when markets contract. The first community Anthill worked with (the Abra Community) is now sufficiently self-reliant to have developed their own client base and Anthill can focus on other weaving communities.

Anthill looks to set an example and set a benchmark on how social enterprise can operate in the creative sector. It is moving on from a Social Return on Investment (SROI) to an evaluation approach that includes more qualitative data and is capable of capturing unexpected impacts in the diaspora and through embedding creativity. An ecosystem and human-centred approach characterises Anthill’s work.

### Pineapple Lab

The research team visited Pineapple Lab and attended a programme of weekend workshops delivered in the Lab and nearby Museo ng Makati. A number of interviews were carried out, beginning with Andrei Pamintuan, Director and independent producer, and including Jodinand Aguilon from Pineapple Lab,

Dwayne Samarista, (Head of Planning Team in the Cultural Office of Makati City Government), and workshop leaders Daniel Darwin and Jame Pe Lim. The work of the Director in founding Fringe Manila led to him managing Pineapple Lab, a year round space for artists in Poblacion providing facilities for partnerships with artists, creatives, venues and community.

The venue is a dynamic hub producing a level of activity and impact that belies its modest scale. For example, the ISA Solo arts platform has the potential to become a biennale event and both the Fringe and Pineapple Lab are becoming beacons for diaspora artists.

Pineapple Lab is particularly important as a flag-bearer for gender equality and support for LGBTQIA+ and women artist communities and is known for programmes for the LGBTQIA+ community. Artists and staff we interviewed talked about having a context, mentoring and support to develop in terms of their own cultural identity and creative priorities: ‘a lot of artists need an organisation to harness their potential’.

Pineapple Lab is developing its strategic role, advocating for mandates and policies to develop more creative spaces and funding to support them. A willingness to engage with the city government is influencing an approach to urban development in the area that is founded on the diversity of culturally vibrant communities. Pineapple Lab demonstrates that creative hubs have a multiplier effect that impacts at both the social and economic levels.

## Comparators

In the UK the Creative Industries Policy and Evidence Centre (PEC) has identified different types of creative clusters and aligned these with five categories of development model:

Incipient clusters, with lots of new entrants, but low creative business survival rates
Creative Conurbations that are specialised in fewer sub-sectors
Creative Districts, with many different sub-sectors and micro-businesses
Creative capitals, with more large businesses and high-growth businesses
Creative challengers which have experienced fast creative growth in recent years

This framing of creative clusters could also be considered in the Philippines as a method of better understanding the developmental potential of different cities and areas, and as a useful way of collaborating with UK institutions in areas like research and investment models.

The PEC and Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) Creative Clusters programme provide models that could inform how research investment

can be applied in the Philippines. The latter comprises a number of thematic research hubs consisting of clusters of universities, each led by a university in a different part of the UK.

The Creative City Network of Canada (CCNC) is an example of a national strategic network supporting the work of local networks and organisations. There are 110 members that include municipalities and a non-voting category of organisations and individuals, all of who have access to a members’ portal. The focus is on knowledge exchange in the areas of local cultural policy, planning and research, and the aim is to develop the capacity of local cultural planning professionals which in turn will support local cultural development.

The Network is a partner in Canada’s Cultural Statistics Strategy, with the aim of providing an authoritative collection of cultural data. A comparable network could provide an effective mechanism to support professionals in any sector working to develop the creative industries in the Philippines.

## Characteristics of creative hubs

Creative hubs can be best understood as an ecology rather than as more traditional sectoral structures. Strategic and operating principles, like a virtuous economy that reinvests in development or cultural investment linked to social benefit, is as important as mapping and data.

Creative Dundee as an example of a creative hub taking a strategic lead: *'no-one asked them to do a creative industries strategy'*.

A lack of creative spaces has often been the driver for establishing a network such as Workshop and Artists Studio Provision Scotland (Wasps), one of Scotland's longest established networks.

Creative hubs and universities have formed effective partnerships in both the UK and the Philippines, with, in some cases, universities taking the lead.

Creative hubs as community development has an exemplar in the Stove Network in Dumfries which embraces creativity as a tool for wider society and adopts a community development approach and methods in its work.

### Creative hubs

Creative hubs provide sector support, such as the case of Creative Cardiff (CC) with a membership of 333 businesses and 1421 individuals from every part of the cultural and creative sector.

Creative Hubs can operate as a community of practice, such as IETM, a network that establishes priority themes with its membership and pursues them with projects and research.

Creative hubs can lead digital developments. Watershed in Bristol includes a Media Studio that is a research hub for a network of over 100 artists, technologists and academics to explore the future of mobile and wireless media.

Creative hubs act as local networks and Glasgow Connected Arts Network (GCAN) is a Community Interest Company that encourages and maintains public engagement, awareness and understanding of participatory arts in Glasgow.

Hubs in other sectors can provide learning and examples of social impact such as Medicity UK, a pharma incubator with bases in Nottingham and Glasgow.

## Assessing social value

There is a lack of a unified universally agreed definition of creative economy, and the Creative and Cultural Industries (CCIs) are missing from standard statistical frameworks. Local cultural leaders do not always see the benefit of cooperating and there are differing

views as to what cultural assets are. The approach of the research team was to adopt the widest possible definition of social impact, anything that was not defined as direct economic impact could potentially be considered social impact.

The Impact Hub Global Community uses the UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) as a lens to consider impact. It is a community of over 100 impact hubs in over 50 countries, including Impact Hub Manila.

Outcome mapping and harvesting encourages a team to introduce monitoring and evaluation at the planning stage and to link them to project implementation and management.

The Creative HubKit is published by the British Council and prepared by hubs in the UK and Europe. It covers all aspects of hub development, from vision to management to communications.

The Qualitative Impact Framework published by the Canada Council articulates the full range of of qualitative impacts the Council generates and adopts three overarching categories of impact: on grantees; on artistic work and practices; on national and international audiences, communities and society.

The social enterprise sector in Scotland is developing a new approach to measuring social impact using a cloud-based tool to map networks and social capital.

Creative People and Places (CPP) uses quantitative assessment of impact is an essential requirement for investing stakeholders and decision-making managements and headline aggregated data includes numbers of activities, attendances and local partners.

The Nesta DIY online toolkit is relevant for creative hubs and makes good use of video and case studies, and is based on a range of tools already tested by actors in the field.



## Social impact themes arising from the consultation

The social impact factors that arose in the consultation can be grouped under a number of themes:

Local creative economy, where creative hubs attach as much importance to social and creative impacts as economic ones.

Family and community resilience, where hubs work to enhance family life and target groups experiencing challenges.

Supporting creative communities, where the creative economy is not sufficiently developed to support fee levels and year round income for artists that in turn would support agency types of infrastructure.

Hubs support a sense of place and cultural identity by promoting the quality of Filipino creative outputs and through providing more inclusive developmental models for local communities.

Creative hubs adopt a holistic approach to inclusion, benefiting different generations and social groups, in both urban and non-urban situations, even in some cases offering a viable alternative to emigration.

Environmental impact is a central issue for many hubs that are actively developing and mainstreaming new production approaches.

**The creative sector already suffers from a perceived fragmentation which is in part due to the scale and diversity of operators, but also because companies do not conform to overarching categorisation.**

## Conclusions

There are limits to the value of typologies of creative hubs as a form of classification. Each hub is unique and most involve elements of a number of identified ‘types’. While a typology can be useful in understanding impact, it is important that strategy and support mechanisms are not organised around a typology that would exclude some creative hubs from targeted investment. The common characteristics of creative hubs represent the most important case for investment and an important creative movement or community of practice. The application of typologies can have the effect of making this movement appear fragmented as funders look to slot them into existing categories.

The hubs are in reality a community of practice and Cebu Furniture Industries Foundation demonstrates what is possible when this approach is adopted. By bringing a dispersed sector together and involving its constituents in wider themes of community, place and development creative hubs can make substantial strategic impact. Developmental frameworks that are effective for social enterprise are also likely to be successful for creative hubs in that they do not require domain based categorisation.

The creative hubs model has proven effective as a research and development vehicle that links the motivation and innovation of Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) with wider themes, from local regeneration and community development, to technological change and strategic planning. In an increasingly integrated cultural and creative sector there is a case for ensuring creative hubs prosper in every sub-sector and have a role to play in linking sub-sectors

together.

An evaluation framework and toolkit to support its implementation is needed for a range of reasons that can be summarised as informing decision making by creative hubs, and stakeholders making investment and resource allocations. The framework needs to include evaluation of outputs and processes. Simply providing a set of universally applied Key Performance Indicators to be applied across all creative hubs would not be effective. An immersive approach to implementation is required, with some resourcing of capacity to achieve this at local level and coordinate the work at national level.

The interviews carried out in the Philippines and in the UK as part of this research were consistent in emphasising

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the need to co-create an evaluation framework with the sector itself. The success of collaborative approaches in Cebu supports this view. The work of Anthill Fabric Gallery in developing both quantitative and qualitative evaluation tools should be considered a starting point for a creative hubs working group. The working group would formalise the existing relationships between the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI), universities, partners, and creative hubs around a developmental and evaluation plan.

An impact framework for creative hubs should be aligned with developments across the social enterprise sector as a whole and should include economic, social and cultural impacts. Separating out social and economic impact may downgrade the former.

Initially, a social impact survey form was drafted and disseminated to the 84 creative hubs who applied to the British Council’s Creative Innovators Programme. There was a low turnover of responses, which was a big challenge. Given this, there is an opportunity for each creative hub to designate an individual who will champion the monitoring and annual reporting of social impact. A more standardised tool needs to be designed for future social impact measurements for the creative hubs to identify their social impact baseline data. This measurement tool should cover the following social and cultural impact factors: number of individuals or grantees, communities and society, and national and international audiences who benefited from the creative hub.

**The need for a standardised set of**

**The creative economy will always appear fragmented if its impacts are scattered across the responsibilities and priorities of different government policies and departments.**

**evaluation questions and quantifiable evidence for creative hubs is essential if authoritative evidence of the sector’s impact is to be achieved.**

This framework needs to cover the scope of impact in relation to the National Priorities Plan, such as employment, trade, and health. The approach has to be simple and supported by government to ensure that results can be aggregated into a national picture of the sector that can also be compared internationally. It should also form the core of evaluation that municipalities undertake. Creative hubs contribute to many areas of social, economic and cultural life. Alignment with national government policies and priorities concerning areas like regeneration, health, education, heritage and culture should result in a small suite of evaluation indicators that can be applied across the creative sector and aggregated at national level.

Indicators of social impact in the creative hubs of the Philippines are also a set of principles and values. What are the

principles that a hub employs to pursue the economic, social and cultural impacts to which it aspires? What questions does it pose to ensure that it is delivering these impacts? Creative hubs are continually balancing economic imperatives with the social, cultural and creative principles that underpin their work.

Almost all creative hubs interviewed in this research impact on at least one of the following areas: locality; community; and creativity. In some areas it may be possible to develop proxy indicators to help demonstrate these impacts.

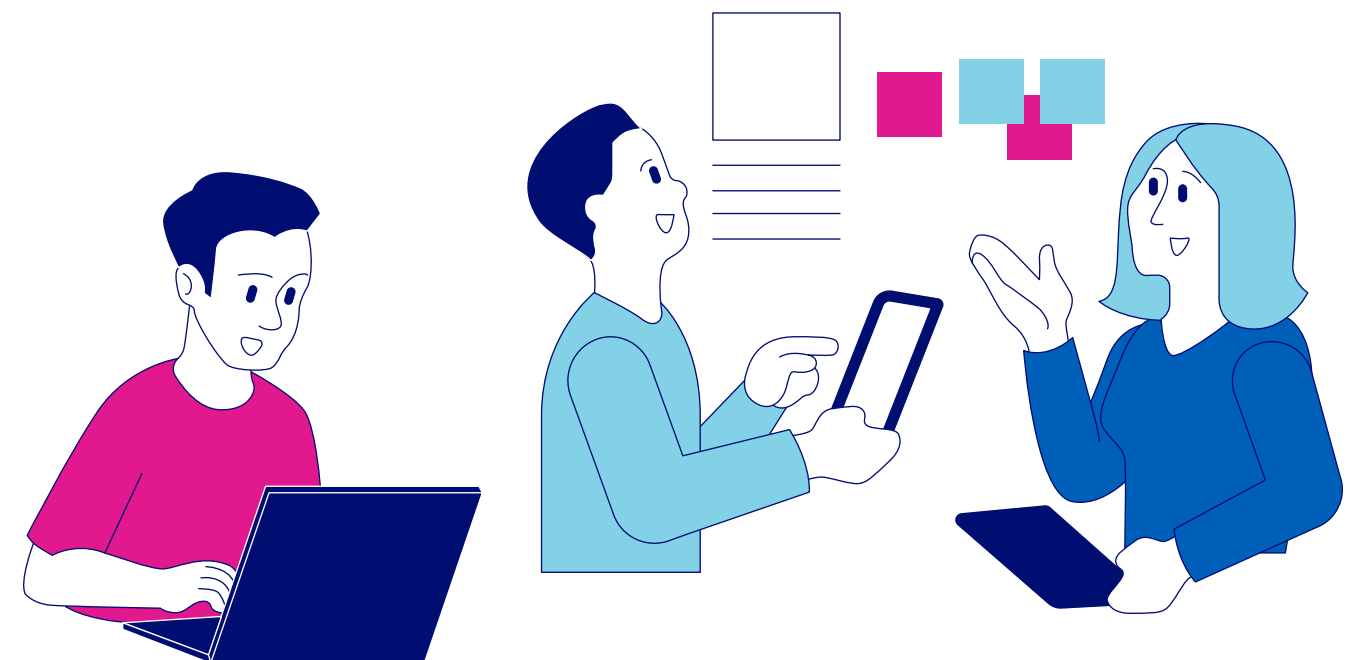
However, telling the story of creative hubs remains the most powerful method of communicating their impact and should accompany other forms of evidence.

The Creative People and Places (CPP) case study demonstrates how presenting stories of activities and portraits of participants completes the evidence picture.

There is little systemic evidence gathering being carried out by creative hubs. There are a number of reasons for this. The sector does not have a clear governmental ‘home’ at either national or local levels. No national sectoral framework or toolkit for capturing the impact of creative hubs has been developed. There are no resources to support hubs to develop and deliver evaluation of impact. Once a standard evaluation framework and toolkit is agreed, a cohort of creative hubs should be resourced to provide mentoring and support for its implementation.

**The creative economy will always appear fragmented if its impacts are scattered across the responsibilities and priorities of different government policies and departments.**

Establishing a national priority for creativity, not just the economic and spillover impacts of creativity is likely to be important for future development.





Creative hubs can be an effective resource for municipalities to deliver on their obligations to formulate cultural strategy, and provide guidance on standard terms and indicators to support the aggregation of data and benchmarking between local authorities. Creative hubs are well placed to take on responsibilities for strategy direction and support in the creative sector working in partnership with municipalities. Resources for taking on this role would

be needed. The SenScot network provides a relevant comparator, and the Cebu Furniture Collective a model of how this can be implemented.

Participation in the Creative Innovators Fellowship by hub managers has had a major impact. Expanding this programme and embedding it online as a community of practice is a simple and effective method to support creative hubs and collaborative working.

## Recommendations

- A working group should be established under the auspices of the Creative Economy Council of the Philippines to prepare an evaluation framework for creative hubs in the Philippines. The group should be led by a creative hub manager, and include representatives of different types of hub, Higher Education, municipalities and national government. However, the majority of members should be hub managers. The potential for alignment with a developmental and evaluation framework for social enterprise needs to be considered.
- The brief for the group should be drawn up by the DTI with input from the British Council and the directors of the two case studies (Anthill and Pineapple Lab) to establish a framework that includes quantitative and qualitative indicators for outputs and processes. Guidance for supporting this evaluation with stories (testimonial, video, artworks, etc.) should be embedded in a toolkit for organisations to implement the framework. The framework should provide for cross referencing to the UN's Sustainable Development Goals.
- The proposed working group should prepare core indicators that align with national policies and priorities, and particularly those in the Philippine national development plan. Where there is overlap with other sectors or departments, such as culture or trade, indicators should be agreed for application by both sectors.
- A set of indicators for municipalities should be developed that address the contribution creative hubs make to the priorities of municipalities, and particularly concerning place-making, quality of life, and regeneration. Proposals should be piloted by a small cohort of municipalities with sufficient capacity, led by the city of Makati.
- The work on impact evaluation by Anthill Fabric Gallery provides a strong platform for the development of an approach for creative hubs across the Philippines. This should form the starting point for co-creating the framework and toolkit, and for planning the required resourcing to embed the framework in the practice of creative hubs. Anthill Fabric Gallery should be commissioned to host a hubs seminar where its evaluation platform is presented as a basis for a generic evaluation approach.
- A Creative Hubs network or community of practice should be established to build on the impacts of the British Council Creative Innovators Fellowship. This should be a joint venture between the British Council and the DTI and should provide a range of networking resources, including an annual Creative Hubs conference, an online portal and thematic research initiatives.
- The DTI should lead a process of establishing national targets for the development and support of creative hubs across the Philippines. Aims should include establishing co-working and maker-spaces availability beyond the existing creative clusters and to support integrated working across creative sub-sectors. Creative hubs in the audio-visual sector also need to be considered in terms of social impact.
- Many creative hubs are actively engaged in Filipino heritage, delivering outcomes that have social impact in areas ranging from conservation in regeneration areas to up-cycling and new techniques to the use of traditional materials. A vehicle to encourage cross-sectoral working with museums and heritage is needed to optimise potential and encourage municipalities to support this type of living heritage activity.

