

The Creative and Cultural Industries and the Future of Latin America's Economy

A symposium co-sponsored by American University's Center for Latin American and Latino Studies and the Inter-American Development Bank's Culture, Creativity, and Solidarity Affairs Division and Culture Center.

Date: November 25, 2013

Time: 9:00am to 12:30pm

Location: Abramson Family Recital Hall, Katzen Arts Center, American University

This symposium's overarching question is: *What is the potential relevance of Latin America's creative and cultural industries to its overall economy?*

Key guiding questions include:

- How best to identify the economic value or impact of the creative and cultural industries?
- How best to understand the creative and cultural industries as a source of exports?
- How to better vertically integrate the creative sector into the economy as a whole?
- What is the relationship of the creative sector to economic development to cities?
- What are the points of entry into the region's creative economy for the next generation?
- What data do we have currently and what are still missing to best promote this sector?
- How can information about the cultural sector's contributions circulate more effectively?
- What existing policies and practices at the national or municipal level are good models?
- What should we expect from the creative economy going forward?

Discussion of these issues will be informed by new data and analytics, including data on "the economic impact of creative industries in the Americas" generated by Oxford Economics, applications of cultural satellite accounts to identify the contribution of the cultural sector to national GDP by the NEA as well as others, additional data currently being generated by the IDB's Creative and Cultural Economy Laboratory, and other pertinent sources enabling a better understanding of the relationship of the creative sector to the economy as a whole for the present and the near future.

This symposium will be organized as a structured round-table event. And speakers will reflect a range of expertise and national perspectives. Approximately half will be brought from Latin America and half will either be American University faculty or faculty from U.S. institutions, with a relevant professional focus on the region's creative industries. The goal will be to represent an appropriate mix of backgrounds and perspectives. In addition, the symposium will seek to convene participants from across academic, policy, and practitioner communities concerned with the creative industries, as well as from the private sector, and from among cultural producers themselves.

The discussion will be divided into two panels. Each panel will include 3-4 speakers and a moderator. Symposium panelists will apply their specific expertise to offer initial conclusions about how best to understand and to apply these data. They also will seek to connect these data to related considerations of the significance and role of the creative and cultural industries across Latin America, with the goal of articulating next steps and best practices for researchers and decision-makers in the promotion of the creative industries.

Each panel speaker will be expected to offer initial comments of no more than 5-10 minutes in length, after which the majority of the symposium will take the form of questions and answers, and discussion between panelists and the rest of the symposium participants and assembled audience. Specifically,

Panel 1:

The first panel will provide a direct analysis of new data describing Latin America's creative industries. An ongoing challenge for any discussion of the economic importance of the arts and culture has been to clearly identify and describe this impact through appropriately descriptive metrics and indicators. But, new methods for assessing the diversity, productivity, and consumption of cultural goods and services, as well as growing investment in the creative economy and its contributions to the larger economy, are now available. This panel will discuss new methods of assessment and collection of sector-specific data, while also addressing what these data can tell us about the growing importance of culture industries in Latin America.

Panel 2:

The second panel will go on to connect these data to broader questions, policies and topics addressing the region's creative and culture industries. These include consideration of the unique status of cultural products, as at once economic goods and services and important vehicles for national and local identity. This panel will also explore the future of the region's creative sector as it relates to national economic development goals, the relationship of cultural producers to cities, important and emerging sectors of relevance such as tech start-ups and new social media, and regional and international frameworks for incentivizing culture industries. Finally, this panel will consider several exemplary or innovative policies and practices at the national or municipal levels across different countries, which hold promise for both supporting and advancing the creative economy.

This symposium is intended to articulate an agenda, which will in turn serve as the basis for three more topically-focused symposia on more specific key aspects of the bigger picture, to follow in the spring of 2014. Led by a key participant in the first symposium, each subsequent meeting will address a particular question introduced and highlighted during the initial event.

The results of this seminar will also serve as the basis for multiple dissemination products. These might include: a symposium website, a web portal intended to encourage a better networked "community of practice" in this arena, a white paper summary report and conclusions intended for decision-makers in the creative fields, a short documentary film with a focus on the economic contributions of the creative industries in the region, a decision-makers handbook for the creative industries, and a how-to start-up kit intended for national culture ministries in the region.