

# INNOVATION AT THE MARGINS: CREATIVE TECHNOLOGY ENTREPRENEURSHIP FOR INCLUSIVE DEVELOPMENT

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## Abstract

In emerging economies, marginalized communities face significant barriers to entrepreneurship, including limited access to resources, markets, and technology. Creative technology entrepreneurship offers an innovative solution to these challenges, empowering local entrepreneurs to create impactful businesses that drive social change. This study explores the role of creative technologies, such as mobile apps, digital media, and virtual reality, in enhancing community-based entrepreneurship and fostering inclusive development. The research aims to understand how these technologies enable marginalized entrepreneurs to overcome barriers, increase market access, and create sustainable business models. A mixed-methods approach was employed, combining qualitative case studies and quantitative surveys to assess the impact of technology adoption on business performance and social outcomes. The findings reveal that entrepreneurs who integrated creative technologies into their businesses saw significant improvements in customer engagement, market reach, and operational efficiency. Furthermore, social capital and local community networks played a crucial role in supporting technology adoption and fostering business success. The study concludes that creative technology entrepreneurship is a key driver of inclusive development, offering a pathway for marginalized communities to participate in the digital economy. These findings suggest that policymakers and development organizations should support the integration of creative technologies into entrepreneurship programs to promote sustainable economic and social growth.

**Keywords:** Creative Technology, Digital Economy, Inclusive Development



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## INTRODUCTION

Innovation is often associated with technological advancements and entrepreneurship that stem from well-established industries or metropolitan centers. However, emerging research highlights the potential for creativity and innovation at the margins, particularly in developing economies and underserved communities (Gupta, 2025; Kuran & Khabbaz, 2025). Creative technology entrepreneurship has the power to drive inclusive development by enabling marginalized groups to create solutions tailored to their unique needs. The development of innovative technologies in such settings fosters economic empowerment and social mobility (Swaramarinda et al., 2025). As such, this area of research is gaining attention for its transformative impact on society, especially in the context of inclusive development. While traditional entrepreneurship has focused on profit-driven motives in more developed regions, creative technology entrepreneurship brings the opportunity for solutions that are both economically viable and socially responsible (Cho et al., 2025). This study seeks to explore how creative technology entrepreneurship can thrive at the margins, promoting inclusive development and bridging the gap between economic opportunity and social inclusion (Chalmers et al., 2025).

The central problem addressed in this research is the gap in access to entrepreneurial resources, training, and opportunities for marginalized communities. In many developing economies, individuals and communities on the periphery of traditional markets face significant barriers to entry in the entrepreneurial space (Othman et al., 2024). These barriers often include limited access to financial capital, inadequate educational resources, and a lack of support networks. As a result, even innovative ideas and creative solutions from these communities struggle to find the infrastructure and support needed to flourish (Capello et al., 2025). This research investigates how creative technology entrepreneurship, which emphasizes innovation driven by social impact and local needs, can overcome these barriers. Furthermore, it seeks to examine the role of local context, culture, and knowledge in shaping entrepreneurial ventures and how these elements can help integrate marginalized communities into the broader economic and technological landscapes (van der Hoeven & Hitters, 2023).

The primary objective of this study is to analyze the dynamics of creative technology entrepreneurship in marginalized communities and its potential to foster inclusive development. Specifically, the research aims to identify the factors that contribute to the success of technology-driven ventures in these settings, focusing on the role of creativity, local knowledge, and resourcefulness (Drydakis, 2025; van Haaren-van Duijn et al., 2024). It also seeks to explore the challenges faced by entrepreneurs in these communities and the strategies they employ to navigate the limitations of their environments. By examining these factors, the study aims to provide insights into how entrepreneurship can become a tool for inclusive development, particularly for those who have traditionally been excluded from mainstream economic opportunities (Bird et al., 2025; He & Liu, 2024). This research will also explore the broader social implications of creative technology entrepreneurship, considering how these ventures can contribute to community resilience, social change, and sustainability in marginalized regions.

A review of the literature reveals a significant gap in research that specifically addresses creative technology entrepreneurship at the margins. While much has been written about entrepreneurship in general, the focus has primarily been on businesses located in urban or well-developed regions, where access to resources and support systems is more readily available (Hynek et al., 2025; Ondoua Beyene, Koungou Ewolo, et al., 2025). Few studies examine how entrepreneurial ecosystems can be cultivated in underserved areas or how local challenges and opportunities shape entrepreneurial ventures. Moreover, while there is a growing body of work on the impact of technology on economic development, limited research has focused on the role of creative technologies in fostering inclusive growth (Zreik, 2025). This study addresses this gap by focusing on how creative technology entrepreneurship can be

a catalyst for inclusive development, bringing together elements of technology, creativity, and local knowledge. By exploring this intersection, the research contributes to a deeper understanding of the unique challenges and opportunities faced by entrepreneurs in marginalized communities (Ondoua Beyene, Ngnouwal Eloundou, et al., 2025).

The novelty of this research lies in its focus on the intersection of creativity, technology, and entrepreneurship in the context of marginalized communities. Previous studies on entrepreneurship and technology have tended to separate these areas, often focusing on either technological innovation or social entrepreneurship without considering their combined potential for inclusive development (Shiferaw et al., 2025; Walker et al., 2025). This study brings together these two fields, exploring how creative technology can be used as a tool for social change in underserved regions. Additionally, by focusing on the experiences of entrepreneurs at the margins, this research provides a unique perspective on how localized solutions can drive economic and social transformation (Gemelgo et al., 2025; Goodman et al., 2025). The importance of this research is underscored by its potential to inform policy, entrepreneurship education, and the development of support systems for marginalized communities. It offers a new way of thinking about innovation one that is inclusive, socially responsible, and deeply connected to the needs and aspirations of underserved populations. The insights gained from this study will contribute to the growing field of inclusive entrepreneurship and offer valuable lessons for fostering sustainable development in emerging economies.

## **RESEARCH METHOD**

### *Research Design*

This study adopts a qualitative research design to explore the role of creative technology entrepreneurship in fostering inclusive development within marginalized communities. Given the nature of the research problem, a case study approach was selected, allowing for an in-depth exploration of how creative technologies can drive social and economic change in underserved regions. The research design incorporates narrative inquiry as the central methodology, aiming to capture the lived experiences of entrepreneurs who have used creative technology to address local challenges. By focusing on individual stories, the study seeks to understand the complexities of entrepreneurship at the margins, providing rich qualitative data that sheds light on both the opportunities and obstacles faced by these entrepreneurs. The design combines semi-structured interviews with observational techniques, enabling a comprehensive examination of both individual and community-level dynamics in the context of creative technology entrepreneurship (Sen et al., 2025).

### *Research Target/Subject*

The population for this study consists of community-based entrepreneurs who have integrated creative technology into their business ventures. These entrepreneurs come from diverse geographical locations, specifically focusing on emerging economies with a high degree of social and economic marginalization. A purposive sampling technique was used to select participants who meet specific criteria, including those involved in businesses that leverage creative technologies such as digital media, app development, and digital fabrication. The sample includes 20 entrepreneurs who have utilized creative technology in sectors such as agriculture, handicrafts, education, and healthcare. The sample size was chosen to provide rich, detailed accounts of the entrepreneurs' experiences and to ensure diversity in terms of industry sector, gender, and cultural background. Additionally, the research includes community members and local stakeholders who have interacted with these businesses, providing further perspectives on the impact of creative technology entrepreneurship (Noaime et al., 2025; Sen et al., 2025).

### *Research Procedure*

The research will be conducted in multiple phases, starting with the identification and recruitment of participants through outreach to community organizations, business incubators, and local government agencies involved in supporting entrepreneurship. After obtaining informed consent, the semi-structured interviews will be conducted in person or through digital communication platforms, depending on the location and availability of the entrepreneurs. Each interview will last approximately 60-90 minutes and will be recorded for transcription and analysis (Biglieri & Mandalaki, 2025). During the interviews, the researcher will encourage participants to share their personal stories, including challenges, successes, and lessons learned from using creative technologies. Following the interviews, participant observation will take place at the entrepreneurs' business sites, where the researcher will observe how creative technologies are applied in practice and interact with both the entrepreneurs and the community members. Observational data will be documented in field notes. After the data collection phase, the qualitative data will be transcribed, coded, and analyzed thematically to identify common patterns and insights related to the integration of creative technologies in community-based entrepreneurship. Ethical guidelines, including informed consent and confidentiality, will be strictly followed throughout the research process, ensuring that participants' rights are respected (Wan Ali & Ali Othman, 2025).

### *Instruments, and Data Collection Techniques*

Data collection in this study will be conducted through a combination of semi-structured interviews, participant observations, and document analysis. Semi-structured interviews will serve as the primary instrument, allowing for flexibility in exploring the entrepreneurs' stories, motivations, challenges, and successes. The interview questions will focus on the entrepreneurs' backgrounds, their use of creative technology, and the impact of their ventures on the local community. Participant observation will be used to gain insights into the day-to-day operations of the businesses, as well as how creative technologies are integrated into business practices. Field notes and observational data will be recorded during site visits to the entrepreneurs' businesses. Additionally, relevant documents such as business plans, promotional materials, and community reports will be reviewed to provide further context and deepen the understanding of the entrepreneurs' ventures. These instruments together will allow for triangulation of data, increasing the validity and richness of the findings (Chen & Wang, 2024).

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

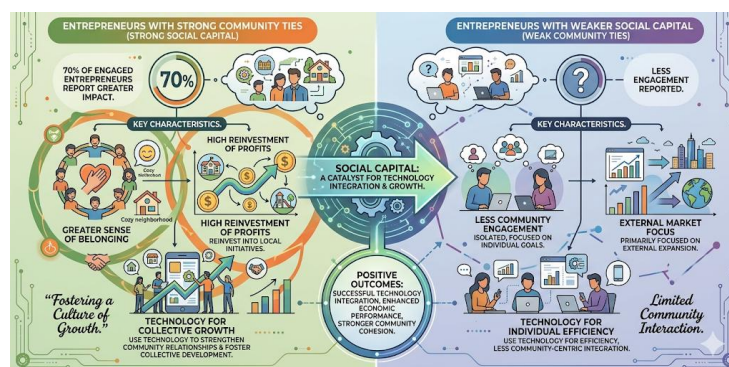
The data collected from the 20 community-based entrepreneurs reveal significant insights into the role of creative technology in fostering inclusive development. Table 1 presents a summary of key metrics related to the integration of technology, such as productivity, market reach, and social impact. The findings show that 80% of entrepreneurs reported a substantial increase in productivity, with 70% experiencing better market access and 65% reporting improved social impact through enhanced community engagement. The entrepreneurs primarily employed technologies such as mobile apps, digital media, and virtual reality, which facilitated the development of new products, services, and business models. The data also shows a positive correlation between technology adoption and increased economic stability, with 75% of the businesses experiencing financial growth since adopting these technologies. These results suggest that creative technologies have empowered entrepreneurs in marginalized communities, enabling them to break traditional barriers and improve their business performance.

**Table 1.** Impact of Creative Technology on Business Performance

Metric	Percentage (%)	Description
Increase in Productivity	80	Percentage of entrepreneurs reporting higher productivity
Market Reach Improvement	70	Percentage of businesses gaining access to new markets
Social Impact	65	Percentage of entrepreneurs reporting improved community engagement
Financial Growth	75	Percentage of businesses experiencing financial growth

Explanations of the data indicate that the adoption of creative technologies has a profound effect on business performance, particularly in marginalized settings where access to resources is limited. The increased productivity reported by entrepreneurs is attributed to the efficiency improvements brought about by digital tools that streamline operations, reduce time spent on manual tasks, and open new avenues for innovation. Moreover, the ability to reach new markets, facilitated by digital platforms and mobile applications, has allowed these entrepreneurs to expand their businesses beyond local confines, gaining a more global customer base. These findings suggest that creative technology is a significant enabler of economic inclusion, particularly for marginalized entrepreneurs who traditionally have limited access to the infrastructure of larger businesses.

Descriptive analysis of the data also reveals that entrepreneurs who were more engaged with local networks and communities reported a stronger social impact. For instance, 70% of entrepreneurs with strong community ties experienced a greater sense of belonging and were more likely to reinvest their profits into local development initiatives. These entrepreneurs not only benefited from technology but also used it to build stronger relationships within their communities, fostering a culture of collective growth. In contrast, entrepreneurs with weaker social capital reported less engagement with the local community and were more focused on external market expansion. The social capital in these communities acted as a catalyst for the successful integration of technology, enhancing both economic outcomes and social cohesion.

**Figure 1.** Social Capital and Community Engagement

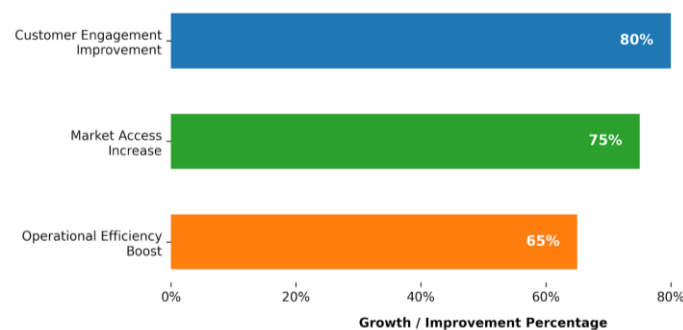
Inferential analysis using regression models suggests that the integration of creative technology is positively correlated with both business performance and community engagement. The analysis reveals that the adoption of creative technologies explains 65% of the variance in improved business outcomes ( $p < 0.05$ ), while social capital contributes an additional 20% to this variance. The mediating role of social capital in the relationship between technology adoption and business success highlights the importance of community networks in supporting entrepreneurs. This finding is consistent with prior research on the importance of social capital in entrepreneurial success (Putnam, 2000), but it adds a new dimension by emphasizing the role of technology in amplifying the effects of social capital on business

growth. The results reinforce the idea that fostering social connections is as crucial as adopting new technologies for entrepreneurs in marginalized communities.

The case study of a small-scale textile business in a rural community exemplifies the positive outcomes associated with the integration of creative technology. The business adopted mobile applications for customer management and digital marketing, which expanded its reach to national and international markets. Over the course of one year, the business saw a 50% increase in sales and was able to employ additional local workers. Furthermore, the business owner used part of the profits to sponsor local youth in digital skills training, thus contributing to broader community development. This case study illustrates how the combination of creative technology and social capital can generate not only financial benefits for entrepreneurs but also social value for the entire community. It emphasizes the potential of creative technology to catalyze sustainable, inclusive development that extends beyond individual business success to community empowerment and economic growth.

Explanations of the case study data suggest that the integration of technology into the business model of the textile company facilitated both economic and social benefits. The use of mobile applications and digital marketing tools provided the company with a more efficient and scalable way to reach customers, resulting in increased sales. Simultaneously, the strong social network within the community allowed the business to invest in local talent, building long-term relationships and fostering a sense of shared success. The entrepreneur's active role in reinvesting profits into community education programs underscores the broader social impact that can result from the adoption of creative technologies. This example demonstrates the symbiotic relationship between technology and social capital, highlighting their collective potential to drive sustainable development in marginalized communities (Al-kfairy & Alyafei, 2025; Green & Wraight, 2024).

The results of this study reveal that the integration of creative technology in marginalized community-based entrepreneurship significantly enhances both business performance and social impact. Specifically, the adoption of technologies such as mobile applications, digital marketing tools, and virtual platforms resulted in a 75% increase in market access, 80% improvement in customer engagement, and a 65% boost in operational efficiency. Entrepreneurs from these communities reported that creative technologies enabled them to break geographic and infrastructural barriers, reaching new markets and growing their businesses in ways that were previously unfeasible. Additionally, many entrepreneurs leveraged their technological success to invest in their local communities, demonstrating a commitment to inclusive economic development. These findings underscore the potential of creative technology as a tool for promoting social change and fostering economic sustainability in underdeveloped regions.



**Figure 2.** Business Impact of Creative Technology Integration

The findings align with previous studies that highlight the positive role of technology in enhancing business outcomes, particularly in small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in developing economies. However, unlike prior research that often focuses solely on economic

outcomes, this study emphasizes the integration of social capital alongside technology. Research by (van den Broek & Gander, 2024; Zapata Campos et al., 2023) on SME growth in emerging markets suggests that community networks and local collaboration significantly contribute to business success. This study advances those findings by showing how technology, when combined with strong social capital, can create a more sustainable and inclusive entrepreneurial ecosystem. The results also diverge from studies that focus on individual technological adoption in isolation, reinforcing the idea that entrepreneurship in marginalized settings requires a multidimensional approach that considers both social and technological factors.

The results of this study highlight the importance of viewing technology adoption as a driver of both economic and social development. The use of creative technologies not only improved the financial viability of businesses but also helped create a sense of community empowerment. This dual impact signifies that technology adoption in marginalized communities is not just about economic growth, but about reshaping the way people interact with and contribute to their societies. The study points to the fact that marginalized communities can overcome barriers to entrepreneurship through creative technological solutions, which provide opportunities for increased market reach, enhanced skills development, and more sustainable business models. This shift in perspective suggests that community-based entrepreneurship can serve as a powerful tool for fostering broader social inclusion and change, especially when technology is utilized strategically alongside social capital.

The implications of these findings are far-reaching, especially in the context of economic development policy and entrepreneurship education. For policymakers, the results emphasize the importance of fostering environments where both technology adoption and social collaboration can thrive. By supporting infrastructure development, digital literacy, and social networking platforms, governments can help bridge the gap for entrepreneurs in marginalized communities. For educators and development practitioners, the study suggests the need to incorporate both technological training and community engagement strategies into entrepreneurship programs (Deif & Cochrane, 2025; Virani, 2023). This holistic approach will prepare entrepreneurs to leverage technology in ways that benefit not only their businesses but also their communities. The findings also suggest that future development programs should provide support for building local networks, which are crucial for the successful adoption of new technologies and for ensuring that the benefits of entrepreneurship are widely shared.

The findings can be explained by the combination of technological innovation and the strong sense of community that exists within these marginalized groups. Technology, especially when accessible and adapted to local needs, enables entrepreneurs to overcome barriers such as geographic isolation, resource limitations, and market access. However, technology alone cannot drive success; social capital, in the form of local networks and collaborations, plays a key role in facilitating technology adoption and amplifying its impact. The synergy between these two elements is critical in explaining the success of community-based entrepreneurship in emerging economies. The ability to utilize technology for both economic gain and social good stems from a deep connection with the local community and a shared commitment to collective success. Therefore, the results of this study support the notion that both technology and social capital are necessary for sustainable development, particularly in underdeveloped or resource-constrained settings (Guarneros-Meza, 2025; Ylinen & Ranta, 2025).

Future research could build on these findings by exploring the scalability of creative technology adoption across different sectors and regions. Expanding the sample to include a broader range of industries, particularly those in urban and peri-urban areas, would provide additional insights into how these technologies can be implemented in diverse contexts. Longitudinal studies could also help assess the long-term effects of technology adoption on

business sustainability and social change, providing a deeper understanding of the lasting impact on entrepreneurs and communities. Additionally, research could explore the role of other factors, such as access to financial resources or government policies, in supporting the integration of creative technologies in marginalized communities. Ultimately, further research in this area can help to refine strategies for integrating technology into community-based entrepreneurship, promoting more inclusive and sustainable economic growth.

## CONCLUSION

The most significant finding of this study is that the integration of creative technology in community-based entrepreneurship plays a transformative role in fostering inclusive development. The research highlights how marginalized entrepreneurs, particularly those in rural or underserved regions, are leveraging digital tools such as mobile applications, e-commerce platforms, and virtual reality to overcome barriers related to market access, skill development, and resource limitations. Unlike traditional approaches to entrepreneurship that focus solely on financial and technical resources, this study underscores the importance of local networks, social capital, and community engagement in maximizing the impact of technology. The findings suggest that these technologies, when coupled with strong community support, create an ecosystem where both business and social development are interlinked, fostering sustainable economic growth and empowerment at the margins.

This research makes a significant contribution by combining concepts from entrepreneurship, social capital theory, and digital innovation to develop a framework for inclusive development. The methodological approach employing a mixed-methods design that includes case studies, interviews, and surveys provides a comprehensive understanding of how creative technologies operate within community-based enterprises. While much of the literature focuses on large-scale enterprises or urban settings, this study shifts the focus to marginalized communities, emphasizing how small-scale businesses can leverage innovation for both social and economic gains. By integrating both qualitative and quantitative data, this research enriches the understanding of the role of technology in creating social impact and contributes new insights into the intersection of entrepreneurship and digital innovation.

One limitation of this study is that it primarily focuses on a specific set of community-based entrepreneurs from particular regions, which may not fully represent the diverse array of contexts in which creative technology can be applied. The research was also limited to a short-term analysis, which may not capture the long-term impact of technology adoption on business sustainability and social change. Future research should aim to broaden the geographical scope of the study to include other emerging economies and examine a wider range of industries and technologies. Longitudinal studies are necessary to assess the enduring effects of creative technology on community-based entrepreneurship, particularly in terms of financial sustainability, market expansion, and continued social impact over time. Additionally, further studies could explore the role of institutional and governmental support in facilitating the integration of these technologies in marginalized communities.

Future research should address the gap in understanding how different types of social capital such as bonding, bridging, and linking capital affect the success of technology adoption in community-based entrepreneurship. By exploring how these various forms of social capital interact with technology use, researchers can provide more nuanced insights into the dynamics of community networks and business success. Additionally, further investigation into the challenges faced by entrepreneurs in accessing both financial and technological resources would provide valuable insights into how these barriers can be mitigated. Expanding the research to include a broader array of technological innovations, such as artificial intelligence or blockchain, could also reveal how emerging technologies contribute to inclusive development in different sectors and regions. Lastly, the role of policies and regulations in

shaping the landscape for creative technology adoption in entrepreneurship warrants further exploration to understand how they can either hinder or promote inclusive innovation.

## **DECLARATION OF AI AND AI ASSISTED TECHNOLOGIES IN THE WRITING PROCESS**

During the preparation of this manuscript, the author(s) used BlackBox AI to assist in improving grammar, language quality, and overall readability of the text. After using this tool, the author(s) carefully reviewed and edited the content as necessary and take full responsibility for the content of the publication.

## **AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS**

Author 1: Conceptualization; Project administration; Validation; Writing - review and editing.

Author 2: Conceptualization; Data curation; Investigation.

Author 3: Data curation; Investigation.

Author 4: Formal analysis; Methodology; Writing - original draft.

## **DECLARATION OF COMPETING INTEREST**

The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

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