

## **UTILITARIAN ART CENTRES IN SUSTAINABLE HUMAN DEVELOPMENT: AN APPRAISAL OF THREE CONTEMPORARY NIGERIAN MODELS**

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### **ABSTRACT**

*The development of people was the main focus of the United Nations Human Development Report (HDR) first published in 1990. Since then, other similar reports have advanced the need for poverty alleviation, entrepreneurial creativity, people economic empowerment, professional partnerships and economic sustainability. The developing world has been targeted for these indications, Africa being in the centre. This paper is a research into one avenue whereby people can be developed creatively, economically and culturally through utilitarian art. Utilitarian art, which combines aesthetics with function, has contributed to the material culture and economic sustainability of many human groups and can stimulate social innovation. This paper looks at three Nigerian models of art practice in people focused development. The models are grass-roots centers, where utilitarian arts are facilitating youth and women empowerment, both economically and vocationally. The centres are in Nigeria at Ogidi-Ijumu in Kogi state, Idumuje- Ugboko in Delta state and Omu-Eleni in Ogun state. These artistic and vocational centres, founded and run by visual artists, have successfully over decades, trained and empowered many rural dwellers to be independent and economically sustain themselves in their environment. Based on field research, the paper analyzes the processes in the development, continuity, impact and contributions of the centres to the socio-cultural and economic development of their locations.*

**KEYWORDS:** *Art, Contemporary, Development, Nigerian, Utilitarian*

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