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AFRICAN HUB

**FOR SUSTAINABLE CREATIVE ECONOMIES:
COLLABORATIVE ACTIVITIES AND SHARED LEARNING.
AN IMPACT REPORT.**



Roberta Comunian
Lauren England
Brian J. Hracs
Avril Joffe
Waithira Kibuchi
Vuyolwethu Madyibi
Ogake Mosomi
Folakemi Ogungbe
Duro Oni
Cornelius Onyekaba

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report critically reflects on the collaborative activities, impact and shared learning that emerged during a two-year international follow-on grant funded by the Arts & Humanities Research Council (AHRC) in the UK (AH/W00688X/1).

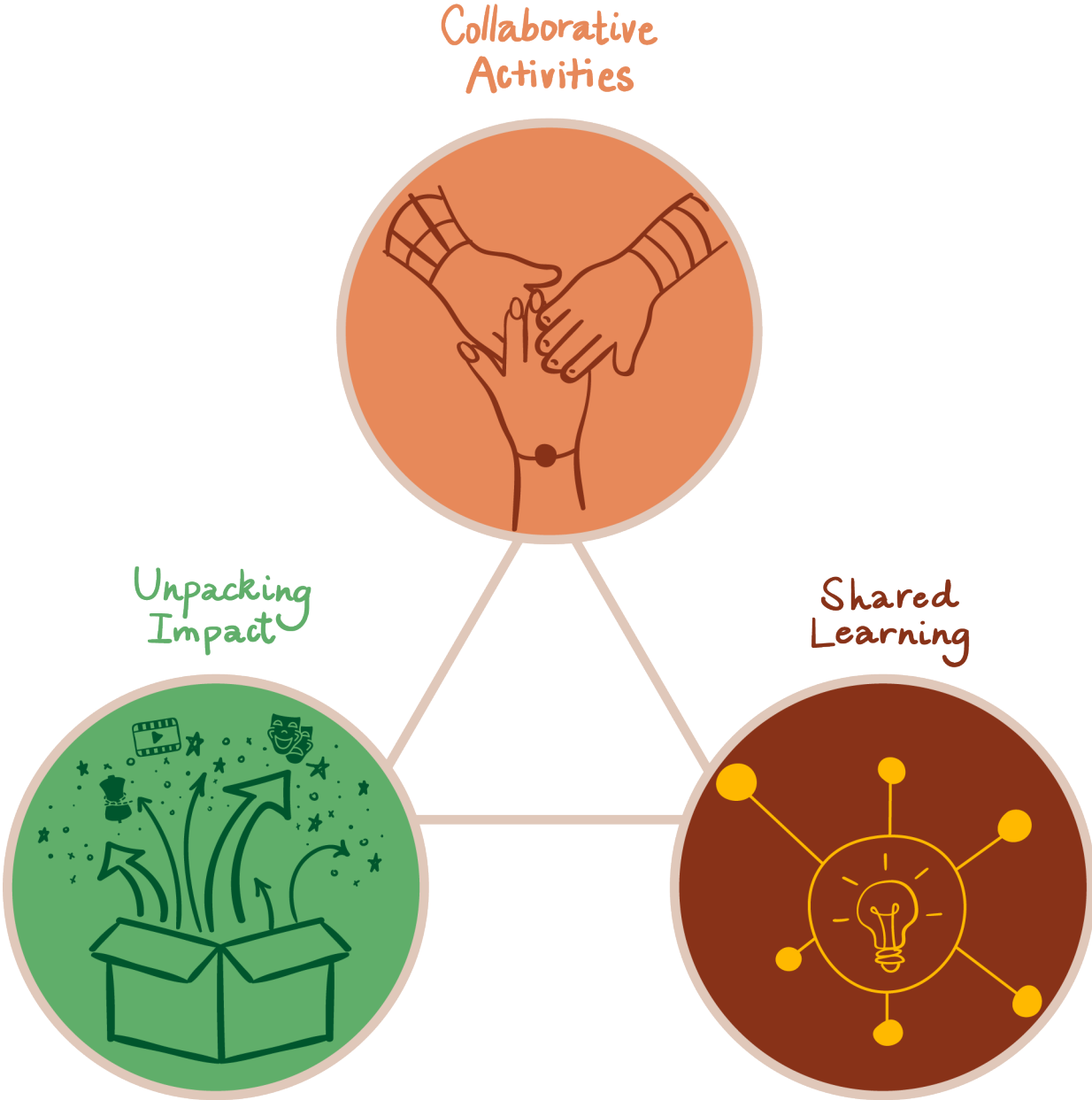
The African Hub for Sustainable Creative Economies project (AHSCE) was proposed and established with the overall aim of supporting the development of sustainable creative economies in Africa by engaging African Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) and empowering them to interact with their local creative economies. It proposed that strengthening the capacity of HEIs to interact with key stakeholders in the sector, including graduates, creative entrepreneurs, creative intermediaries and policymakers, could have a positive and sustainable impact on the individuals, communities and sectors involved. In doing so, it aimed to empower the development of a more innovative and diverse workforce, by offering access to practical knowledge and supporting collaborative opportunities.

In this report, we highlight the **collaborative activities** and journey undertaken with our international academic team across King's College London (UK), University of Southampton (UK), University of Nairobi (Kenya), University of Lagos (Nigeria) and University of Witwatersrand (South Africa). We also illustrate the ways in which each African partner – supported by key intermediaries and sector partners – engaged with their respective creative sectors: Fashion, Theatre, and Film and Digital Media. In each country and sector, we built bridges with creative practitioners, intermediaries, academics, graduates and policymakers through a series of online events (*Creative Imagination Workshops*) and launched a small grant initiative (*Collaborative Voucher Scheme*) to support 25 creative projects that showcased creative collaborations and engagement with the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) while also providing valuable knowledge about the value of collaborations in creative economies to the academic partners, participants and wider community.

In the central part of the report, we reflect on the **range of impacts** that the overall project and the creative projects supported through the *Collaborative Voucher Scheme* had. For example, learning about the rewards and challenges of international research collaborations. AHSCE has also built new bridges and pathways for academia to engage with creative economies and support their development. From the comments of academics and creative practitioners who delivered the 25 funded projects, it is evident that the AHSCE project had an impact and contributed to a range of UN SDGs. It is also clear that participants experimented and learned about how to collaborate and the importance of collaboration. Specifically, they learned about the value of collaborating with academia, and working across sectors as well as co-producing and collaborating with young people and other communities.

In the final part of the report, we reflect on the **shared learning** that the AHSCE supported and the legacy of the project. We share important policy reflections in relation to the importance of funding and business support; enhancing knowledge and skills; protecting creative workers, valuing creative careers and celebrating and supporting creativity. The role of the *Knowledge*

Hub, which developed via the website, YouTube channel and social media accounts associated with the project, is also highlighted. Indeed, part of the project's legacy is the ability to share knowledge about creative economies in Africa in the years to come. Finally, the launch of a new Africa-Europe Clusters of Research Excellence (CoRE) on Creative Economies: Cultures, Innovation and Sustainability with the support of the African Research Universities Alliance (ARUA) and The Guild of European Research-Intensive Universities (The Guild) will enable further fruitful collaborations and knowledge sharing in the years to come and continue to build capacity and impactful research to address future challenges.



COLLABORATIVE ACTIVITIES



THE AHSCE PROJECT

RESEARCH BACKGROUND

During 2017-2020 our AHRC funded international research network grant (*Understanding and Supporting Creative Economies in Africa: Education, Networks and Policy* AH/P005950/1) engaged with three countries: Kenya, Nigeria and South Africa. Our work focused on identifying how creative economies could be better understood and supported.

One of the main findings was the emergence of the role of 'creative intermediaries' – like our project partners – as key individuals and organisations that support Africa's creative development (Comunian et al. 2021b). Amongst these creative intermediaries, Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) emerged as having great potential for contributing to the sustainable development of local creative economies. However, they also face a range of barriers in engaging with and contributing to the sector. While some barriers were locally or nationally specific, there were nevertheless a range of common issues and examples of best practice and leadership with the potential to be expanded upon, shared, and adapted across the continent.

Some of the barriers identified were: (a) the low profile of the creative economy within policy bodies, HEIs and international research networks; (b) the low profile and lack of understanding of creative careers and creative arts degrees amongst families and potential employers; (c) the lack of connections or opportunities (including networks, conferences and common platforms) for exchange between HEIs,

creative intermediaries and policymakers – nationally and across the continent; (d) the lack of opportunities for creative entrepreneurs to access academic knowledge.

BARRIERS

There were however interesting examples of collaborations and engagement. For example, the **Lagoon Gallery at the University of Lagos** enabling students to showcase and work with professional artists; the **South African Cultural Observatory** developing knowledge for evidence-based cultural policy and for the benefit of the sector; the **Cultural Policy and Management's traineeship programme at the University of the Witwatersrand** placing students in creative organisations as part of the curriculum; and the **Department of the Arts & Design at the University of Nairobi** engaging students with live-briefs from industry.

Clearly, HEIs and other creative intermediaries have the potential to connect students with the creative economy, but they can also support creative entrepreneurs, community groups and policy organisations to further develop their knowledge and practices to become more sustainable and inclusive. Extensive work funded in the UK by the AHRC (Comunian and Gilmore, 2015; Shiach and Virani, 2017; Ashton and Comunian, 2019) shows that universities are well placed to engage with multiple stakeholders like our project partners and policy agendas within the creative economy.

KEY TERMS & IDEAS

CREATIVE ECONOMIES

To better understand this report, it is vital to define what we mean by creative economies and how the term connects with other terms used in the literature, namely creative and cultural industries (CCIs), creative economy (CE) and creative and cultural policy (CCP).

Since the 1998 DCMS Mapping Document attempted to define the creative industries in the UK much attention has been paid to trying to measure and define the sector internationally. The **creative industries** (DCMS, 1998) have however been considered a very narrow model to adopt internationally and have been widely criticised for their commercial focus, strongly connected to their need to emphasise economic contributions. The creative industries definition clashed and overlapped with the previous terminology (namely cultural industries) which instead placed more emphasis on the fields of cultural production included. The use of the term creative and cultural industries (CCIs) in our research acknowledges this broader and more encompassing understanding.

The work of UNCTAD (2010) positions the **creative economy** more strongly in an international framework. They see it as an **evolving concept connected with the potential of creative activities and goods to generate economic impact and development**. UNESCO's framework for cultural statistics (UNDP and UNESCO, 2013) also recognises this as an ecosystem of activities, connected to cultural domains and CCIs but expanding to more sectors of society (for example education and preservation) and relating

both to intangible and tangible culture. In this respect, within this report, we want to build on the view presented by UNDP and UNESCO (2013: 12) that the "creative economy is not a single superhighway, but a multitude of different local trajectories found in cities and regions in developing countries". We push this argument further by suggesting that it is crucial to acknowledge that **there is not one single creative economy but a multiplicity of creative economies which can feature overlapping and diverging agendas**. This accounts for the range of business models and objectives which often extend to the social sphere (Comunian et al., 2020) as well as for new accounts of the connections between creativity and cultural development (De Beukelaer, 2015; Wilson et al., 2020).

CREATIVE INTERMEDIARIES

Part of learning about creative economies involves acknowledging and exploring the motivations, values and experiences of different institutions, companies and individuals that work towards supporting and developing them. Within the CCIs, including art, music and fashion, cultural intermediaries are widely acknowledged as key players (Jakob and Van Heur, 2015; Comunian et al., 2022). These individuals share common characteristics, including high levels of cultural capital, and positions within subcultures, scenes, industries and organisations, which contribute to and validate their legitimacy and authority (Maguire and Matthews, 2014). Indeed, beyond individual human actors, intermediaries can be organisations, events, spaces and socio-technical actors, such as music streaming platforms (Jansson and Hrats, 2018). The varied motivations of intermediaries have also extended to include education or preservation and to

embrace more supporting and enabling roles, rather than purely working at the interface between creatives and markets/ audiences. Thus, unlike earlier definitions, cultural intermediaries do not necessarily position themselves between producers and consumers in relation to translating or curating content or defining the cultural value of specific cultural artefacts. Rather, as discussed by Comunian et al. (2022), **they tend to locate themselves 'alongside' producers – acting as co-producers and facilitating access to a range of resources and support services – or 'behind' producers, providing finance, advice or other forms of initial training.**

CREATIVE ENTREPRENEURS

Creative entrepreneurs are key actors in CCI and drivers of economic, social and cultural development (Naudin, 2017). These are individuals who are alert to opportunities, persuasive and creative in the artistic sense but also able to exploit such opportunities economically (Shane 2003). They do this by leveraging resources (personal skills, social networks, capital/ funding, space, support etc.) from different areas and combining them (Lounsbury and Glyn, 2019) to achieve their goals. The goals and motivations of creative entrepreneurs can vary considerably across a spectrum of cultural, artistic, social, environmental and economic goals (Bridgstock, 2013; Brydges and Hrac, 2019).

Creative entrepreneurs typically negotiate self-employment (and its associated risks), and maintain a level of autonomy in their work (Naudin, 2017). Creative entrepreneurs are also understood as having to balance tensions between art/ creativity and the market when developing sustainable enterprises (Eikhof and Haunschild, 2007; England, 2022). While

there are high levels of competition among creative entrepreneurs, cooperation, peer exchange and being embedded in social networks are understood as being vital to creative entrepreneurship and market development (Potts et al., 2008; Loots et al., 2018). Creative entrepreneurs, therefore, interact with a wide range of actors within creative economies, including creative intermediaries (see above), and can be highly collaborative (Hrac, 2015).

While there is a large body of critical scholarship on entrepreneurship and its downsides - including precarious working conditions, low pay and uneven gendered experiences (Scharff, 2017; McRobbie, 2018) - entrepreneurship itself (rather than the conditions of entrepreneurship or entrepreneurial labour) is largely believed to be beneficial to creative economy development, as well as contributing to wider social and economic development goals. We see this clearly in the work of African creative entrepreneurs where there are strong connections to wider policy agendas including gender equality (England et al., 2022), youth employment, poverty alleviation, education (Abisuga-Oyekunle et al. 2021) and more. The work of creative entrepreneurs, particularly in developing economy contexts can, therefore, be seen as sitting at the intersection of economic, cultural, social and educational policy (Comunian et al., 2021; Hrac et al., 2021). It is also important to note that the work of creative entrepreneurs is embedded within their social and geographical context (Naudin, 2017). Therefore, it is important to develop our understanding of the contextualised experiences and practices of creative and cultural entrepreneurs specifically in Africa.

CREATIVE ECONOMIES AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Over the last two decades the **creative economy has become a prominent feature in international development and trade relations**; recognised in particular for its high growth, including in the global South and in South-South trade, the social, economic and political importance of the creative economy continues to grow (UNCTAD, 2022). Previously considered the **'Missing Pillar'** in sustainable development (British Council, 2020), culture – and the creative economy more specifically – are also now championed as having significant potential for contributing to achieving Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the broader objectives of the UN 2030 Agenda (UNEN, 2023). Indeed, 2021 was named by the United Nations as the "International Year of Creative Economy for Sustainable Development", focusing on the capacity to promote innovation, inclusive economic growth, and opportunity for all.

Particular alignment with SDGs 4 (Quality Education), 5 (Gender Equality), 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth), 9 (Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure), 10 (Reduced inequalities), 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities), 12 (Responsible Consumption and Production), 16 (Peace and Justice and Strong Institutions), and 17 (Partnership for the Goals) are noted (UNEN, 2023). Furthermore, the high proportion of women and youth in the creative economies of the world presents considerable opportunities for inclusive economic development and the empowerment of women and youth, thus contributing to SDG 1 (No Poverty). By extension, the benefits of arts and culture for mental health and wider well-being can also contribute to SDG 3 (Good Health and Well-being). Specific SDG targets also refer

explicitly to culture and creative economy development (British Council, 2020).

PROJECT PARTNERS & STRUCTURE

As represented in Figure 1, the project builds on previous AHRC international research network collaborations but also the disciplinary strength of the African Co-Is' departments, namely:

- * Performing Arts for the University of Lagos (Co-I Professor Duro Oni and Dr Onyekaba) working with Kininso Koncepts and The Crown Troupe of Africa.
- * Fashion for the University of Nairobi (Co-I Ms Mosomi) working with the Kenya Fashion Council.
- * Film and Digital media for the University of Witwatersrand (Co-I Ms Joffe) working with the South African Screen Federation, Tshimologong Precinct and the South African Cultural Observatory.

Within each African partner institution, the project employed a **'Creative Partnerships Coordinator (CPC)'** for 12 months to undertake a series of collaborative innovation activities. The CPC worked closely with the department staff members to map existing collaborations and opportunities for new collaborations with project partners, entrepreneurs, creative intermediaries and policymakers. CPCs also worked with each other to ensure the projects progressed consistently. Each CPC also received support and mentoring from the UK and local partners across the project and the impact of the project on their career development can be explored in the section **Unpacking Impact.**

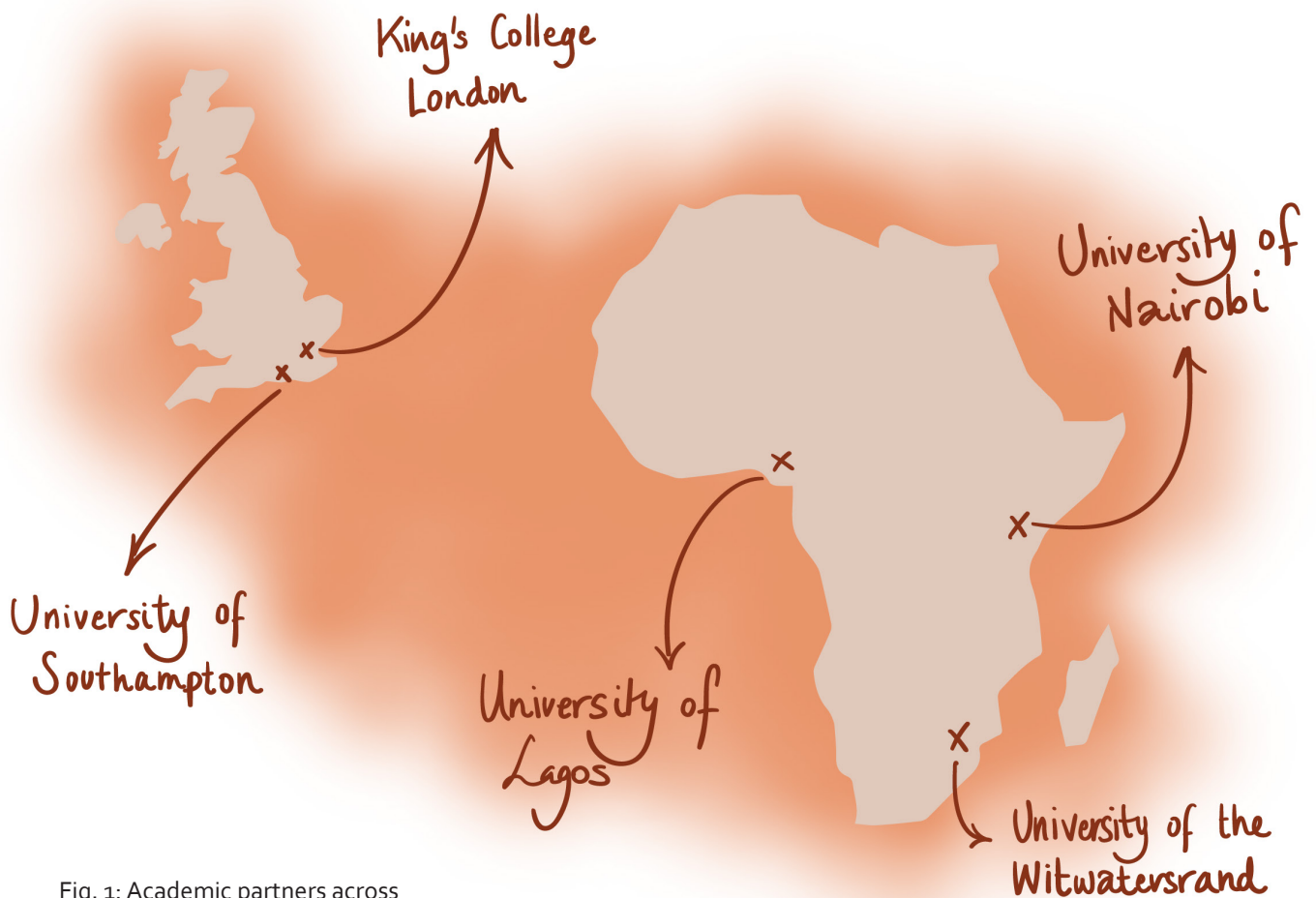


Fig. 1: Academic partners across Africa and the United Kingdom

PROJECT AIMS & OBJECTIVES

The overall aim of the project was to **support the development of sustainable creative economies in Africa by engaging African HEIs and empowering them to interact with their creative economies and entrepreneurs working alongside sector project partners.** It proposed that strengthening the capacity of HEIs to interact with key stakeholders in the sector (graduates, creative entrepreneurs, creative intermediaries and policymakers) could have a positive and sustainable impact on the individuals, communities and sectors involved. In doing so it aimed to empower the development of a more innovative and diverse workforce, by offering access to practical knowledge and supporting

collaborative opportunities.

The project was built on equitable partnerships with three African HEIs and local creative partners.

The project had three **main objectives:**

1. To support and strengthen connections between African HEIs and creative entrepreneurs (nationally and across the continent) through collaborative knowledge sharing and innovation activities.
2. To contribute to sustainable entrepreneurship by collecting and sharing career development stories and practical knowledge with creative entrepreneurs across Africa, working alongside sector project partners and paying particular attention to gender representation and how diverse cultural heritage can be represented.
3. To strengthen the profile of research on creative economies and creative

MAIN OBJECTIVES

entrepreneurship as a key development area for Africa, by scoping potential collaborations with the African Research Universities Alliance (ARUA) which includes all of our African university partners.

The project engaged more closely with eight of the SDGs: 4 (Quality Education), 5 (Gender Equality), 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth), 9 (Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure), 10 (Reduced Inequalities), 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities) and 12 (Responsible Production and Consumption). In adopting a partnership model and promoting collaborations across the UK and Africa, as well as across African countries, the project also engages with SDG 17 (Partnerships for the Goals).

PROJECT ACTIVITIES & OUTPUT

The project had three components (see Figure 2), each leading to specific outputs which are summarised and shared in this report. These are outlined in more detail in the next section **Collaborative Journey**.

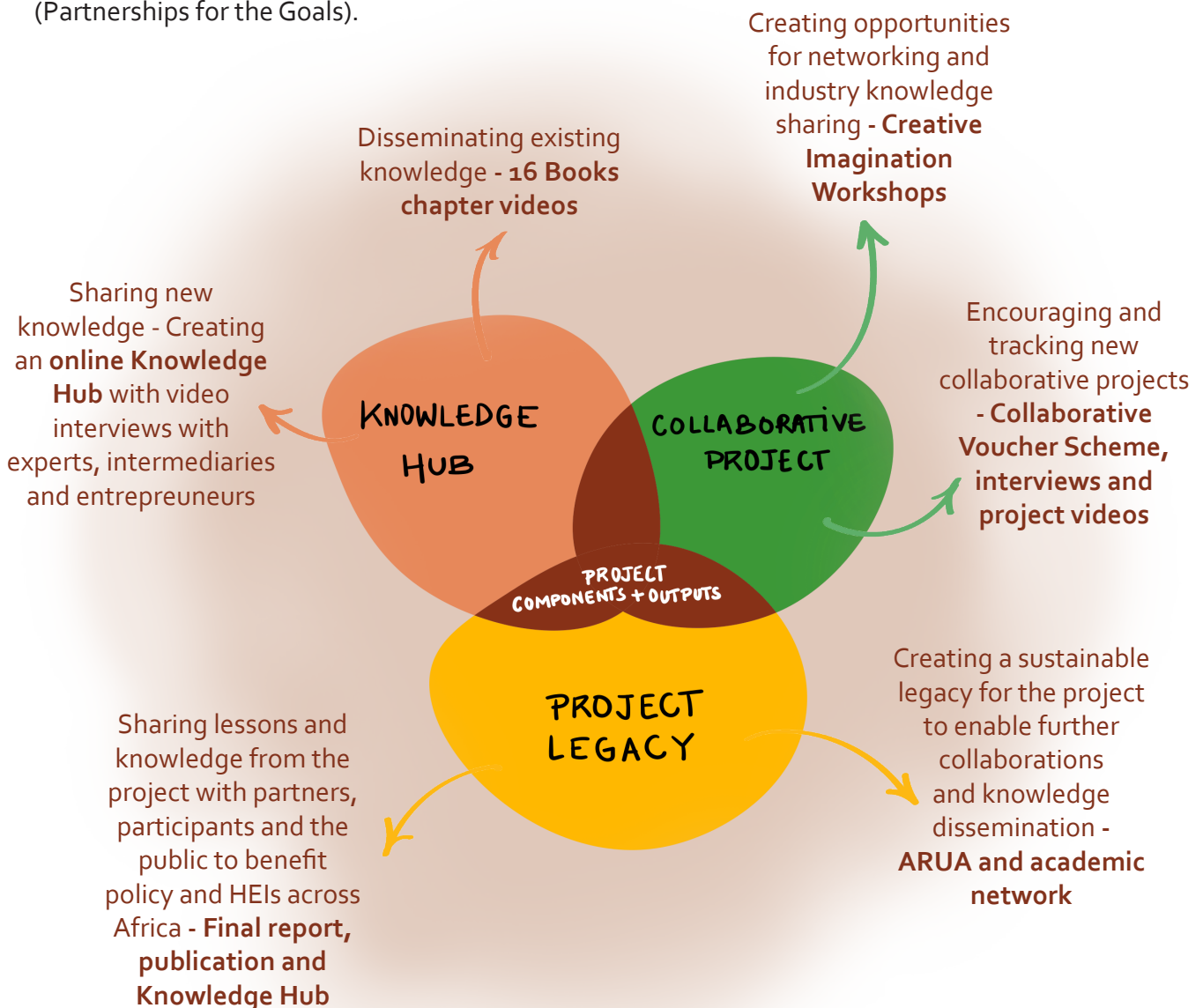


Fig. 2: Project components and key outputs

KEY STAKEHOLDERS

The project used new collaborative and interdisciplinary modes of interaction (see **Collaborative Journey**) to make a significant impact on CCIs practitioners, creative graduates and wider communities as well as policy organisations. There were three key stakeholder groups and within these groups, we tried to **ensure diversity and representativeness by including female voices and voices from a range of ethnic groups and age groups**. The work with these key stakeholders is also aligned with the UN SDGs.

✳ Emerging creative workers and entrepreneurs, including those in education or recently graduated, looking to the creative economy as a viable career choice. For this group, the AHSCE provides insights into specific careers and roles within creative economies. We have signposted recent graduates to existing and newly developed resources to support the development of their business skills. There was a specific emphasis on women and ethnic minorities who may have less access to knowledge about these careers and forms of work. This is aligned with the importance of developing a diverse workforce and SDGs 4 (Quality Education), 5 (Gender Equality) and 10 (Reduced Inequality)

✳ Established creative entrepreneurs, with at least five years of work experience, operating in a range of industries and organisations. For this target group, the AHSCE provides short videos and resources to reflect on their work and business models as well as input from other sectors (design, finance, sustainability, innovation, internationalisation etc.). Here we address the importance of creative economies in supporting SDGs 8 (Decent work and economic growth) and 9 (Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure)

✳ HEIs, academic leaders and policy makers. For this group, the materials developed provide inspiration and reflection on the role of HEIs in supporting creative economies. The materials offer evidence of the role that HEIs do and should play in supporting sustainable creative economies. This includes the opportunity for African HEIs to take leadership on developing collaborative knowledge across the continent for the benefit of creative economies. The AHSCE resources also serve as a free and easily accessible resource to support teaching and research on creative economies. This connects with the role of creative economies in supporting SDGs 4 (Quality Education), 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities) and 17 (Partnerships for Goals).

COLLABORATIVE JOURNEY

This section provides some reflections on our journey during the research project and outlines our methodological approach. The project started in November 2021 and was completed in March 2023, with final reflections and reports being completed in the following months. The project had three main phases: 1) Disseminating existing knowledge; 2) Developing collaborative projects and knowledge sharing; 3) Reflecting on collaborative learning and legacy building. These phases ran concurrently throughout the project. Each institution acted as a thematic Hub and focused its work on an area of the creative economy to allow specific expertise to be developed and shared across the AHSCE and in connection with project

partners (see Figure 3). In Nigeria the focus was Performing Arts, in Kenya the focus was Fashion and in South Africa the focus was Film and Digital Media.

During the initial phase, we also held planning meetings with all Co-Is and recruited three *Creative Partnership Coordinators* (CPCs), one in each of the Hubs. The CPCs worked closely with the department staff members, the UK team and with each other to share challenges and strategies while learning from each other. This also enabled common decisions to be taken across the UK team and the three African teams to support equitable partnership building. The CPCs received support and mentoring from the PI and Co-Is across the project.

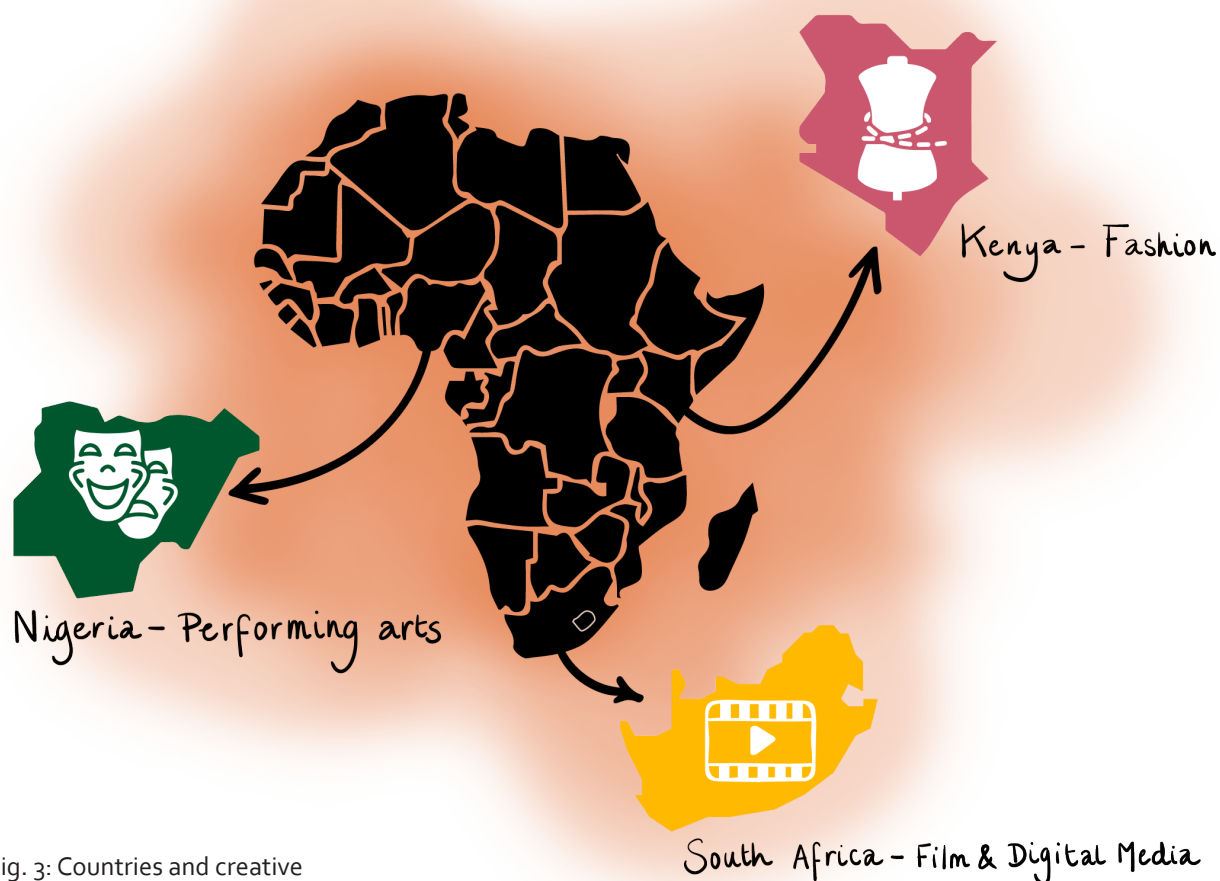


Fig. 3: Countries and creative sectors covered by the project

PHASE ONE : KNOWLEDGE HUB

This phase focused on disseminating existing knowledge from academic research associated with the project and sharing new knowledge about creative economies via a new virtual Knowledge Hub platform (see further information in section *Producing and Sharing Knowledge: Knowledge Hub*).

DISSEMINATING EXISTING KNOWLEDGE

A key objective for this phase was to **make the research and findings from the *Understanding and Supporting Creative Economies in Africa* project accessible to wider audiences**. The research network had produced two edited collections: *Higher Education and Policy for Creative Economies in Africa* (2021) and *Developing Creative Economies in Africa: Spaces and Working Practices* (2022). In total, the two volumes included 16 chapters, all authored or co-authored by or with individuals working in HEIs or creative organisations in Africa. Each chapter was turned into a short (5-10

minute) illustrated video, organised into two distinctive YouTube playlists (see Figure 4), and shared via the project website and social media channels.

CREATING AND SHARING NEW KNOWLEDGE

To create new relevant knowledge about the sectors investigated by each project partner, each CPC conducted 10 interviews with creative entrepreneurs and 5 with creative intermediaries in their respective sectors and locations. The **aim** was to capture and share knowledge about career development and working/business practices (entrepreneurs), and about support services and infrastructure that creatives can access and benefit from (intermediaries). Interviewees were invited to record a short (5-10 minute) video version of their interview, highlighting the most important aspects of their work and sharing industry insights and advice for creatives. Video interviews were shared on the [AHSCE YouTube channel](#) under the heading 'Creative Insights' (Figure 5) on the AHSCE Knowledge Hub blog and via social media channels.



Fig. 4: Visual identity of video chapters developed for the Knowledge Hub



Fig. 5: Visual identity of AHSCE YouTube interviews with creative entrepreneurs and intermediaries.

PHASE TWO: DEVELOPING COLLABORATIVE PROJECTS

The second phase of the project concentrated on developing and following new collaborative projects, encouraging further knowledge sharing between the African HEIs partners and their local creative economies. Working closely with the three new CPCs, the UK team and African HEI partners developed a series of *Creative Imagination Workshops* and launched a *Collaborative Voucher Scheme* to support collaborations between creatives and between HEIs and local creatives.

CREATIVE IMAGINATION WORKSHOPS

Between May and June 2022, we held a total of 12 online *Creative Imagination Workshop* events across the three Hubs (see Table 1-3). Each workshop was hosted by the local Hub PI and the UK

team and included a guest speaker. The different events attracted between 15 and 62 participants each. In total, 493 participations were recorded across the three Hubs' online events and discussions, with additional AHSCE team members joining from across the Hubs to support each other.

The launch events introduced attendees to the AHSCE project and the whole team. At this stage, we also provided attendees with initial information about the forthcoming *Collaborative Voucher Scheme* and encouraged networking with potential future collaborators via an online platform, Padlet. Padlet provided a virtual 'meeting' space for participants to make introductions, offer commentary, and contribute to ongoing discussions on Hub themes (see below). The platform also made it possible for participants to look for potential partners for the *Collaborative Voucher Scheme*.

Three themes identified in advance by the local Hub and UK teams sparked initial discussions at the launch events.

In **Nigeria**, the themes were:

- ✳ Making Theatre Viable in Nigeria: economic and business challenges
- ✳ The sustainability of creative partnerships in the Performing Arts
- ✳ Theatre contribution to social change and development

In **Kenya**, the themes were:

- ✳ Kenyan cultural identity and heritage in fashion
- ✳ Entrepreneurship and innovation in fashion
- ✳ Technology and digital media in the fashion industry in Kenya

In **South Africa**, the themes were:

- ✳ Developing Digital Film Hubs
- ✳ Supporting women in Film
- ✳ Developing alternative film screening venues

These discussions then formed the basis of themed events (see Tables 1-3) where participants could go deeper into topics they were interested in, make connections and generate ideas for collaborative projects in order to apply for the Collaborative Voucher Scheme.

Participants were encouraged to continue networking beyond the online events, facilitated by the Padlet (where they could find information about potential collaborators) and by the local CPCs who assisted in brokering connections between potential collaborators.

Table 1: Creative Imagination Workshops South Africa

 AHSCE SOUTH AFRICA HUB	
Launch Event 09/05/2022 19 participants	Keynote/Guests: Ms Basiami Segola, (Vice-chair of SASFED), Ms Lesley Williams (CEO of Tshimologong) Three thematic breakout rooms: 1: Developing Digital Hubs to support filmmakers to engage with digital technologies 2: Alternative Screening Venues to develop youth audiences 3: Supporting Women in Leadership and Entrepreneurship
Event 1 14/06/2022 28 participants	Developing Digital Film Hubs. Keynote/ Guests: Unathi Lutshaba (SACO Executive Director), Dr Alasambom Nyingchuo (University of Bamenda, Cameroon), Mr Skhumbuzo Mvelase (NFVF), Mr Aya Dlova (Manager Cortex Hub), Mr Sthembiso Mphehle (Filmmaker, Tshimologong Precinct).
Event 2 22/06/2022 35 participants	Women in Film. Keynote/Guests: Prof Urmilla Bob (University of KwaZulu-Natal), Ms Zanele Mthembu (Newsroom Africa), Ms Thandi Davids (Producer, Executive)
Event 3 28/06/2022 28 participants	Developing alternative film screening venues. Keynote / Guests: Ms Amy Shelver (SACO), Ms Jacqueline Motsepe (KwaZulu-Natal Film Commission), Ms Sivu Giba (independent documentary filmmaker), Mr Jonathan Gimple (Atlas Studios), Mr Mocke Jansen van Veuren, Mr Neo Monyamane, Prince Massingham (Kliptown and Eldos Digital Film and Arts initiatives) and Ms. Beverley Mitchell (Independent Producers Organisation).
Event 4 05/06/2022 28 participants	Creative Voucher Scheme Briefing.

Table 2: Creative Imagination Workshops Nigeria


 AHSCE NIGERIA HUB	
Launch Event 10/05/2022 31 participants	Keynote/Guests: Professor Sunny Ododo (Chief Executive of the National Theatre) Three thematic breakout rooms: 1: Theatre contribution to Social Change and development: practices 2: Making Theatre Viable in Nigeria: economic and business challenges 3: The Sustainability of Creative Partnerships in the Performing Arts
Event 1 08/06/ 2022 15 Participants	Making Theatre Viable in Nigeria: economic and business challenges. Keynote/Guests: Mrs Bolanle Austen-Peters (B.A.P. Productions/Terra Kulture, Lagos).
Event 2 09/06/2022 19 Participants	The sustainability of creative partnerships in the Performing Arts. Keynote/Guests: Mr Israel Eboh (National Association of Nigerian Theatre Artistes, NANTAP).
Event 3 10/06/22 24 Participants	Theatre contribution to social change and development. Keynote/ Guests: Mr Segun Adefila, theatre artist, dancer, poet and thinker (co-founder of Crown Troupe of Africa).
Event 4 15/06/2022 44 Participants	Creative Voucher Scheme Briefing.

Table 3: Creative Imagination Workshops Kenya

 AHSCE KENYA HUB	
Launch Event 16/05/2022 41 participants	Keynote/Guests: Dr Samuel M. Maina (Chairman, Department of Art and Design, The University of Nairobi) and Mr Isaac Maluki, (Deputy Chair of the Kenya Fashion Council). Three thematic breakout rooms: 1: Fashion, cultural heritage, and identity 2: Fashion, entrepreneurship, and innovation 3: Fashion, technology, and digital media
Event 1 14/06/2022 37 participants	Kenyan cultural identity and heritage in fashion. Keynotes / Guests: Ms Chepkemboi Mang'ira, Founder of OwnYourCulture and Ms Esther Kute (Technical University of Kenya).
Event 2 17/06/2022 62 participants	Fashion, entrepreneurship innovation. Keynotes/Guests: Mr Bevern Oguk (Creative Entrepreneur and Fashion Designer, BOGUK) and Ms. Wakiuru Njuguna (Partner and Investment Manager at HEVA Fund).
Event 3 21/06/2022 41 participants	Technology and digital media in the fashion industry in Kenya. Keynotes/Guests: Mr Peng Chen (Co-founder and CEO of HustleSasa) and Ms Nthenya Mwendwa (Founder of The Label.Saba).
Event 4 21/06/2022 41 participants	Creative Voucher Scheme Briefing.

COLLABORATIVE VOUCHER SCHEME

The *Collaborative Voucher Scheme* was an initiative to enable creative practitioners in Kenya, Nigeria and South Africa to develop unique and innovative short-term (up to 6 months) collaborative projects that contribute to sustainable creative economies and connect with UN SDGs.

A call was distributed to the participants in the *Creative Imagination Workshops* to submit proposals for between £500-£1,000 (in local currency) to kick-start collaborations between attendees or between attendees and academic researchers that supported future innovations and developments for the creative economy. **The funding could be used to pilot an idea, pay for time to develop the idea, hire venues or source skills, materials and equipment to take it forward.** All proposals were required to be connected to the local theme and one (or more) of the SDGs.

Up to 10 Vouchers were available for groups of two or more individuals at any career stage to develop a collaborative project/idea. At least two collaborators had to have attended a *Creative Imagination Workshop* and applicants were strongly encouraged to connect with others at the events and via the Padlet in advance. Collaborations with the local academic partners were encouraged, but also with academics at other institutions and between creative and/or community practitioners (non-academics). Mixed-experience collaborations, practices of mentoring and collaborations that placed emphasis on inclusivity were also encouraged. Interdisciplinary partnerships were also welcomed, as long as they retained a connection with the local Hub theme.

To apply, collaborators submitted an online application form explaining their project idea and intended outcomes/impact and including a budget, timeline and CVs for each of the applicants. To support applications to the *Collaborative Voucher Scheme* we hosted an additional briefing session about the scheme where prospective applicants were provided with guidance about the scope of the scheme and eligibility criteria and had the opportunity to ask questions.

Applications were reviewed and shortlisted by academic leads and a joint decision was made about which applications to support. Projects were selected based on: the quality of the proposal; relevance to the local theme and SDGs; budgets that were appropriate and represented good value for money; evidence of good partnership fit and that the applicants had the knowledge, skills and experience required to successfully deliver the project; benefit to the applicants' creative and/or professional development and benefit to wider local or national creative economies were also considered, including potential for longer-term partnership development. **8 projects were funded in Kenya, 9 in Nigeria, and 8 in South Africa.**

Once the projects and collaborations were selected the CPCs followed the collaborations for 6 months to capture and share knowledge and learning from the projects. This included three meetings with the CPC to discuss the initial development of the project (month 1); reflect on the collaboration and activities taking place (month 3); and reflect on the project outcomes, impact, opportunities emerging and challenges experienced (month 6).

Each project has a dedicated page on the AHSCE website including an introductory

blog post written by the CPC and a short video capturing the process and activities which took place.

The collaborative projects were all showcased on the AHSCE YouTube channel under three playlists: [Creative Collaborations Kenya](#), [Creative Collaborations Nigeria](#), and [Creative Collaborations South Africa](#) (Figure 6). These were shared on social media to inspire others and support further collaborations in the future.

PHRASE THREE: REFLECTION ON COLLABORATIVE LEARNING AND LEGACY BUILDING

The final phase provided space for reflection on the project's collaborative process and on what we have learned about collaboration and creative economy development from the collaborative projects and interviews with intermediaries and entrepreneurs. The initial reflections on this learning are included in this report in the sections *Impact on the Project Team and Partners*, *Learning about Collaborations and Policy Recommendations*.

We have also concentrated on creating a legacy for the project by scoping potential collaborations with the African Research Universities Alliance (ARUA) which includes all of our African university partners. This will include further academic networking, as well as knowledge sharing with African HEI leaders and management, to think



Fig. 6: Visual identity of Collaborative Voucher Scheme project videos shared on the AHSCE website and Youtube channel.

about ways the knowledge developed through this project could kick-start new opportunities for African research in this area. The project team are hosting a special session on Creative Economies at the 2023 ARUA conference at the University of Lagos and **have established a Cluster of Excellence in Creative Economies in partnership with an even wider range of HEIs in Africa and Europe.**

COLLABORATIVE RESEARCH JOURNEY - BENEFITS AND CHALLENGES OF ONLINE COLLABORATION

This project was proposed during the Covid-19 pandemic when there were restrictions on travel (locally and internationally) and international travel prospects longer term remained uncertain. This project therefore relied exclusively on online collaboration between the UK team and African Hub partners and online events for the *Creative Imagination Workshops* and *Knowledge Hub* activities. This reliance on online communication and events brought certain benefits and challenges for collaboration between the UK and African teams and between event participants and other contributors to the project.



Key benefits included wider geographical engagement for the *Creative Imagination Workshops* and *Collaborative Voucher Scheme*. *Online interactions* enabled and encouraged a greater diversity of participants and collaborative projects beyond the Hub locations of Lagos, Nairobi and Johannesburg. Outside of the main AHSCE events, *Collaborative Voucher Scheme* participants were encouraged to meet in person – if feasible – and many did so, although some still relied on online communication between collaborators based in different parts of the country.

When arranging meetings with *Collaborative Voucher Scheme* groups and Knowledge Hub interviews with entrepreneurs and intermediaries online interaction also provided greater flexibility with scheduling and engagement with geographically dispersed participants. This was important to work around the busy schedules of the contributors - many of whom were freelancers and independent entrepreneurs - and helped to boost engagement (Kibuchi, Ogungbe and Madyibi, 2023). The online format also presented a lower barrier to entry by removing travel costs, although the reliability and cost of data and internet access/connectivity posed challenges across the three Hub countries. Hosting online events and interviews nevertheless allowed better audio recording and documentation

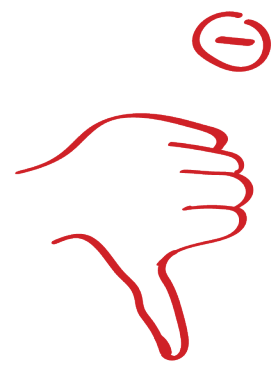


BENEFITS

of Hub activities, particularly of larger *Creative Imagination Workshop* events. **Working online also meant that the UK team were able to participate in all Hub events over a longer period of time and it enhanced opportunities for knowledge and resource sharing between the CPCs and across the team overall.** By reducing the need for travel (domestic and international) there was also a reduced environmental impact for the overall project.



The primary challenges and limitations of online collaboration across the three Hub countries were related to internet infrastructure issues and costs of data, and in particular, load shedding – prolonged scheduled power outages – in South Africa. This impacted event attendance, scheduling and recording capacity for interviews. We also acknowledge the reduced networking capacity at *Creative Imagination Workshops* compared to in-person events, as (partly due to connectivity issues) a number of participants kept cameras off and subsequently engaged individually rather than collectively with the discussions, thereby limiting their capacity for new partnership building (Kibuchi, Ogungbe and Madyibi, 2023). Overall uptake of the Padlet platform was also somewhat limited among participants, as most were first-time users and found it difficult to navigate the app (Kibuchi, Ogungbe and Madyibi, 2023). Further discussions on the benefits and limitations of AHSCE activities can be found in the next section *Unpacking Impact*.



CHALLENGES

UNPACKING IMPACT



IMPACT ON THE PROJECT TEAM AND PARTNERS

The AHSCE project has had a range of impacts not only for participants in the *Collaborative Voucher Scheme* (see section *Impact via Collaborative Voucher Scheme projects*) but also for the academic partners and sector collaborators who supported and enabled the project. In this report, we also wanted to include an element of self-reflexivity, highlighting the challenges and rewards of working internationally. We hope these reflections are valuable for future academics engaging with international collaboration. They are also an important legacy we take forward in disseminating research outputs and building the Africa-Europe Clusters of Research Excellence (CoRE) on *Creative Economies: Cultures, Innovation and Sustainability* and can hopefully influence policy, intermediaries and HEIs leaders, especially in relation to removing barriers and promoting more networks across African HEIs and international institutions.

COLLABORATIONS ACROSS HIGHER EDUCATION AND CREATIVE ECONOMIES: CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR AHSCE PARTNERS IN AFRICA



AHSCE KENYA

Ms Ogake Mosomi, project co-investigator and lead for AHSCE Kenya at the Department of Art and Design, University of Nairobi, in dialogue with Prof. Lilac Adhiambo Osanjo, Dean of Faculty of the Built Environment and Design, University of Nairobi, reflect on some of the challenges and rewards experienced at the academic and institutional level.

REWARDS: Personally, the project enabled me to engage with different stakeholders within the creative economy in Kenya. It has also given me experience working on a grant with different partners locally and abroad and opened my eyes to the complexities and richness of collaborative projects. It has been a very positive experience for me overall. Members of the department had the opportunity to participate in the online events and some also benefitted from the voucher scheme. It gave them the opportunity to collaborate with others from the industry and share their different perspectives during the events, in essence bringing together academia and industry.

CHALLENGES: Personally, it has been challenging to balance the needs and requirements of the grant with our university's administrative structures and my teaching and administrative workload. There have been instances where certain tasks have taken much longer than they should have because the two "organisations" are very different and that needs to be navigated. Paying / funding external projects (for the Voucher Scheme) was challenging because the university and the grant work in different ways. The way that money is disseminated and accounted for has strict procedures which are different for the grant and for the University of Nairobi. This is to ensure transparency is maintained throughout the process. In the end we were able to establish a system that fulfilled the requirements of all the collaborators.

LESSONS LEARNT AND FUTURE

PERSPECTIVES: This grant has taught me to be flexible in order to adapt and navigate between different organisations needs. The international collaboration is a great way to exchange ideas and learn new ways of doing things. These connections are important and add value to my personal experience as an academic and practitioner. The structures of the grant have given me insight that I can use for future opportunities such as this one. The exposure and capacity building that the project provided to me as a young academic is invaluable and I feel more confident now with my research work.



REWARDS: The involvement has expanded the local and international network; built capacity in proposal preparation and reporting; report writing and publication. Locally the support has enabled the development of a vibrant fashion entrepreneur's hub. It has contributed to PhD research by Joan and journal publications. The department has expanded its capacity to engage in collaborations. It has definitely exposed us to more sector players including the British Council, Kenya Fashion Council and many entrepreneurs. It changed the administrative processes a little bit. We experienced more control by the partners and funders, more accountability and transparency even in the identification of support staff.

CHALLENGES: The University was responsive to the challenges imposed by the pandemic, so much of the business was conducted online and we were able to move ahead. Reaching the sector was not difficult because of the involvement of the Kenya Fashion Council. The University has a good infrastructure that supports collaborations (local and international) through the grants and legal departments who were always available to advise where needed. Research and collaborations are a major activity for all staff and at the departmental level, the administrative staff have set procedures that assist in the implementation of projects such as this one.

LESSONS LEARNT AND FUTURE

PERSPECTIVES: We can open our doors to more international collaborations by looking at the benefits they may bring towards the growth of our department and the individuals within it. The university, particularly the Department of Art and Design, operates very closely with the creative sector, and continues to position itself as the centre for research, training and innovation for the creative sector. This can be seen in several activities that it continues to undertake.

AHSCE NIGERIA

Prof Duro Oni, FNAL and Dr Cornelius Onyekaba, project co-investigators and leads of AHSCE Nigeria at the Department of Creative Arts, University of Lagos, in dialogue with Professor Bolanle Olufunmilayo Oboh Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academics & Research), University of Lagos, reflect on some of the challenges and rewards experienced at academic and institutional level with the project.

REWARDS: The project was very rewarding to us in many ways as co-investigators and, most importantly, as a department; it allowed us to carry out funded collaborative work with major practising performing groups across the country and, by so doing, expand our knowledge of some innovative and outstanding creative activities taking place in other parts of Nigeria, outside of Lagos and the Southwestern zone. Hosting the Creative Partnership Coordinator (CPC) in our department for the entire duration of the project also offered us the opportunity to gain some insights into hosting such people in the future. We were also always conscious that the project was simultaneously



taking place in two other African countries and the United Kingdom; this made us see our task in Lagos as vital to the collective success of the entire project.

CHALLENGES: The process of recruiting the CPC for the project took quite a while because of bureaucratic bottlenecks that were later overcome. Another major challenge was getting the project off the ground in terms of getting the university (management, especially) bursary (finance section), on the same page with what the collaboration required from both parties. This was essentially due to regulation guiding foreign exchange transactions by the Central Bank of Nigeria. The process of administering the voucher scheme to a successful conclusion in terms of monitoring and following up on beneficiaries and making sure that they worked within the guidelines regulating the use of the funds was also challenging. However, one of the most challenging aspects was convincing the participating groups of the rationale behind paying them their vouchers based on the official exchange rate of the British Pound to the Nigerian Naira, (N400 to the Pound sterling) which at that point had a differential of about N300,000 between the official and the unofficial market rates. Finally, Prof. Duro Oni gave so much time and goodwill to the research but was not captured on the project document for any form of honorarium

as compensation for time and resources expended.

LESSONS LEARNT AND FUTURE PERSPECTIVES: The AHSCE project has served as a learning curve for us, and going forward, we have come to appreciate the various procedures for facilitating international collaboration of this magnitude. We are sure to leverage the AHSCE experience and sustain a robust collaboration with all the groups that took part in the project, while at the same time building bridges to connect with future collaborators and other groups in the creative economy sector.



REWARDS: I was the Director of the Research Management Office of the university during the take-off point of this project, and I still remember facilitating the memorandum of understanding between the King's College, London and the University of Lagos. It is gratifying to know that such a big project with so many divergent components is now in its final phase of report writing. From the perspective of the university management, I believe that the AHSCE project was very timely and compliments the current "Future Ready" philosophy of the Prof. Folasade Ogunsola-led team, especially in the area of promoting a university life that is hinged on a mutually beneficial town and gown relationship.

CHALLENGES: No doubt the progress of the project was slowed down because it took some back and forth before the various collaborators were able to arrive at an amicable agreement. On the part of the University of Lagos, we have an experienced team of experts in the Research Management Office, and their experience came in handy in administering the funds for the project in partnership with the Bursary unit of the university. The university is satisfied with the fact that the bursary unit and the co-instigators were able to successfully administer the £10,000 Creative Voucher Scheme for creative economy groups across Nigeria.

LESSONS LEARNT AND FUTURE PERSPECTIVES: The Department of Creative Arts has always served as a creative hub that provides unique creative services to the university, and her products are one of the most sought-after talents servicing the burgeoning Nigerian entertainment industry. I, therefore, believe that the funding provided by the AHRC to encourage collaboration between creative economy organisations and HEIs through the African Hub for Creative Economy project is a step in the right direction, with present and future benefits for the university. In the future, we look forward to bigger collaborations between the King's College London and the University of Lagos across other disciplines while sustaining and growing the present partnership.

AHSCE SOUTH AFRICA

Ms Avril Joffe, project co-investigator and lead for AHSCE South Africa at the School of Art, Department of Cultural Policy and Management, University of Witwatersrand, in dialogue with Dr Munyaradzi Chatikobo, Head of Department, Cultural Policy and

Management, University of Witwatersrand, reflect on some of the challenges and rewards experienced at academic and institutional level with the project.



REWARDS: The AHSCE project was timely as it complemented our engagement with the various actors in the cultural and creative sectors who provide practical workshops to our postgraduate students.

It enabled a strong partnership with the lead film federation, SASFED; the digital hub, the Tshimologong Precinct, that is both part of Wits as well as integrated into our sister department, Digital Arts; and with the premier research body, the South African Cultural Observatory whose work is already core to our curriculum. Through the grant, we were able to employ a recent graduate as a CPC and also to work with a sister department such as Film and Television through the voucher scheme. All of this positioned the Department as a key intermediary in the cultural and creative sector; one that the team will continue to nurture and expand post this grant.

CHALLENGES: A area of complication were the confusing hierarchies between the lead PIs (UK), Hub PI (SA) and the CPC (SA) as work was fast paced with multiple sets of instructions coming from both the Lead PIs and the Hub PI that at times led to misunderstandings that perhaps could have been avoided if regular meetings between

the three parties were held. One such miscommunication required substantial time spent with the legal team to resolve this and develop a project amendment to satisfy all parties. An important area for consideration is joint ownership of research findings (interviews, data from projects, networks) between researchers and project participants in the respective hubs.

LESSONS LEARNT AND FUTURE PERSPECTIVES: One lesson is to better integrate the work of such projects into the curriculum and involve our growing cohort of students more actively, for example doing background research, attending workshops, assisting in interview transcriptions or learning about the challenges faced by film and digital media entrepreneurs. Another is to ensure that multiple players in the larger university system are on board the project from the very beginning: the research office, the finance teams and the school administrative head and bookkeeper, as well as the School and departmental HOD and departmental administrator.



REWARDS: The AHSCE project's impact was that it compelled us to take a moment to reflect on our role as an intermediary working in the HEI and connected to the creative organisations in the sector. Without this project, we wouldn't have paused in the busyness of

delivering a curriculum, research and HEI administration. The grant and partnerships created by this project meant we were able to carve out the time needed for these important sectoral engagements and encouraged us to consolidate and nurture existing and new relationships. The CPM department is grateful to have been a part of this grant.

CHALLENGES: Administering funded projects through universities bureaucratic processes is always a challenge as departments are required to fulfil research, financial, and legal requirements. The situation was made even more difficult by international checks and processes making this even slower. We also encountered some challenges with some project partners who failed to understand the complexities of the Wits Financial processes. This nearly tarnished the image of the department, but the project team moved swiftly to manage the situation. IP issues were also not easy to manage despite stipulations in the contract, but again the project team resolved the matter amicably.

LESSONS LEARNT AND FUTURE PERSPECTIVES: Now we have an ethical obligation to engage more intentionally with the various players in the sector by embedding these engagements explicitly into our teaching and research activities. Key learnings drawn from the KCL team is the professionalism and media savvy nature and hence visibility and management of the project's public information on social media and project-specific websites – an area of work that CPM wishes to improve in all of its projects.

DEVELOPING NEW CREATIVE HUMAN CAPITAL BETWEEN ACADEMIA AND THE CREATIVE SECTOR: EXPERIENCES OF AHSCE CREATIVE PARTNERSHIP COORDINATORS



Waithira Kibuchi, Creative Partnership Coordinator, AHSCE Kenya – University of Nairobi.

I learnt of the AHSCE project through my contacts at the Department of Design at my alma mater, the University of Nairobi, where I periodically hold guest lectures. I pursued my undergraduate degree in design at the department, specialising in fashion and textiles, and later obtained my Master's degree in Fashion Business Management from the University of Westminster. I worked in various fashion management roles in the ensuing years, such as heading the design department of a leading womenswear retail brand, co-founding a Made-in-Kenya online retail brand, and offering fashion product development consultation to emerging and established fashion brands. Coordinating research at the intersection of higher education, creative entrepreneurship, and

business support was an extraordinary opportunity to expand my outlook on the fashion industry.

My years of experience working in the industry were crucial to each phase of the project. I had an intimate knowledge of opportunities and challenges within the sector, a sense of practical solutions to overcome some of the barriers and an existing network of stakeholders within the industry.

Commencing the project with the *Creative Imagination Workshops* encouraged the participants to engage with novel ideas and perspectives. The enthusiasm for these workshops highlights the need for regular fashion gatherings or meetings, virtual or in-person, where stakeholders can share their experiences and learn from each other. The workshops also provided a platform for potential voucher scheme collaborators to meet. Once selected, it was fulfilling to observe the collaborators flesh out and execute ideas that some of them had earmarked for 'some day'. It was also exciting to witness the birth of longer-lasting collaborations, such as UndaMeta, now registered as a limited liability company.

The limited amount of funding available under the voucher scheme may have been deemed too small by some potential participants, but it inspired creativity and resourcefulness in the selected *Collaborative Voucher Scheme* projects. Collaborators leveraged their personal and professional networks to gain access to services that may have otherwise been inaccessible due to their financial cost. This suggests that a frugal approach may be suitable for early-stage ideas as it allows the collaborators to evaluate their commitment to the project and build a resilient working model.

Implementing the AHSCE project in the final quarter of the year, the busiest time in fashion and academic calendars, required participants in the voucher scheme and the knowledge hub interviews to make an extra effort to contribute. This was notable and well appreciated. Similar projects would also do well to consider the risk posed by collaborations between two entrepreneurs, as they seem more vulnerable to shocks in their personal or business environment. Collaborations between an academic and an entrepreneur, or between three or more entrepreneurs, may be more resilient.

The AHSCE project leaves a legacy of boosting existing relationships and catalysing new connections within the creative industry. It demonstrates that having academia and creative entrepreneurship in the same spaces allows individuals to communicate and collaborate, drawing from shared and disparate experiences to face individual and collective challenges. The experience of coordinating the project has heightened my awareness of the synergies within the fashion ecosystem and their relationship to the larger creative economy. I hope to leverage the networks, knowledge and skills gained during the project to a future career spanning research, education and creative practice.



Folakemi Ogungbe, Creative Partnership Coordinator, AHSCE Nigeria – University of Lagos.

Before AHSCE, I was working as a lecturer at the National Film Institute and also doubling as the Head of the Digital Media Unit at the Nigerian Film Corporation. I have a PhD in Film Studies from the Department of Theatre Arts, University of Ibadan, I earned my B.A. and M.A. also from the same department. The AHSCE gave me the visibility I needed at that stage of my career. It also exposed me to modern research execution through the use of technology. All the events and interviews happened through video conferencing. I was able to use apps like Padlet for data gathering. All communications and correspondences at the backend and on the field were virtual. I never thought that this was possible. I thank the AHSCE for sharpening my research skills.

I worked with Waithira from Kenya and Vuyolwethu from South Africa. We clicked and formed a sisterhood. It was not just about work alone. Their work collaboration was so helpful, I could easily reach out to them if I was not sure about a process, and when the work got very intense, we pushed one another to the finish-line. I also saw the possibilities of future collaborations across cities in Africa.

The *Collaborative Voucher Scheme* practitioners in Nigeria that I worked with made me realise that beyond the initial training that HEIs give to the industry, there are no concrete collaborations going on. It is important that collaborations happen between HEIs and the CCIs as this will result in a win-win situation for both parties and an accelerated development for the creative industry in Nigeria.

Some of the findings from the research can positively impact the creative industry. I especially love “The Blind Minstrel” project which involved a University teacher at Ibadan and two of his former students-turned-practitioners based in Lagos. At the end of the experimental production, the lecturer confessed to seeing things differently now and says he is willing to try his ex-students’ approach again as well as collaborate with them in the future. This was a beautiful experience for me, watching from the side-lines.

The project was not only focused on Lagos which is a very good thing. We had projects from Eastern Nigeria, Northern Nigeria, Abuja, Benin, Lagos and Ibadan. The experiences of the groups differed according to their geographical locations. Nigeria is a heterogeneous country of more than 300 ethnicities and I am happy that the project was able to cut across these geographies. The feel from all the CVS groups however is almost the same. There is a need for more HE/CCI partnerships. They also realised that they could achieve a lot of creative collaboration virtually. There were inter-ethnic and inter-state collaborations which was achieved with hybrid participation. Babatunde Ojobaro, who is based in Lagos/Ibadan was able to collaborate with counterparts in Zaria on the “Fill the Blood Bank” project. He confessed to a change in some of the stereotypes that he had about people

in Northern Nigeria and that the project gave him a paradigm shift. He also stated that he is willing to try again, doing collaborations with creatives that are not in his geographical location. There were also collaborations between the old and experienced and the young and upcoming. In the case of the “Young Nigerian Thespian” project, the young and upcoming led the team of two. This was an interesting mix as they both had a lot to learn from each other.

These experiences are quite impactful to the creative economy of Nigeria, especially the Theatre field. It is disruptive to the nature of how things were done before and it has exposed HEIs and CCIs to the endless possibilities in collaborative ventures.



Vuyolwethu madyibi, Creative Partnership Coordinator, AHSCE South Africa – University of Witwatersrand.

My Higher Certificate in Theatre and Performance from the renowned Market Theatre Laboratory laid the foundation for my artistic pursuits and a love for performance and movement. Following this, I enrolled at Wits University and completed a Bachelor of Arts Honours in Applied Theatre, focusing on Theatre in Education, Communities, and Social Contexts. This program equipped me with the tools to utilize drama as a powerful

vehicle for social change and community engagement. Prior to my academic pursuits, I embarked on a learnership at Big Fish, School of Digital Filmmaking, which allowed me to explore the world of digital filmmaking, adding another dimension to my creative skillset. I also entered the world of media and communication as a Voice of Wits FM radio host and content producer. My involvement in radio added yet another layer to my experiences, providing me with exposure to the world of broadcasting and media.

The role of Creative Partnerships Coordinator (CPC) has played a significant role in shaping my career trajectory, as it builds upon my previous experiences as an artist and arts administrator. Overall, the CPC role has been a pivotal step in my career, consolidating my project management, administrative, and leadership skills and allowing me to make meaningful contributions to the arts community, fostering a promising path for my future endeavours in the cultural sector.

Working with project leaders in the UK and Africa and the CPCs provided me with the opportunity to engage in cross-cultural communication. Interacting with individuals from different backgrounds, perspectives, and communication styles broadened my understanding of cultural nuances and enhanced my ability to collaborate effectively across borders. Additionally, it exposed me to global perspectives on the Cultural and Creative Economies of Africa. Furthermore, it facilitated networking and the establishment of international partnerships as building connections with professionals from other countries expands our professional network, fostering potential future collaborations and knowledge-sharing opportunities.

The *Collaborative Voucher Scheme* practitioners emphasized the significance of collaboration within the South African film industry. Through their work, the practitioners displayed a genuine passion for the further development of the film industry in South Africa. All voucher scheme projects had a strong developmental element to them and demonstrated a connection with the local community. This suggests that the practitioners are not only concerned with creative expression but also focused on nurturing talent, supporting emerging filmmakers, and fostering growth within the industry. My experience with the *Collaborative Voucher Scheme* practitioners taught me about the power of collaboration, the importance of a developmental focus, and the potential of the film industry to drive positive change in South Africa.

The project's emphasis on developing knowledge and networks can lead to greater collaboration and information sharing within the creative industry. This can result in a more informed and connected film industry, fostering innovation and growth in South Africa, ultimately benefiting individuals, communities, and the broader economy. By empowering HEIs to interact with creative entrepreneurs, the project provided valuable support and resources to budding entrepreneurs, including graduates and other creative professionals. This support can contribute to the growth and success of creative businesses and ventures.

Future development of Africa's creative economy should prioritize empowering HEIs, promoting knowledge sharing and networks, supporting creative entrepreneurs, incorporating socially impactful projects, and fostering sustainability and inclusivity. Recognizing

African academic work, policy support, international collaboration, and a focus on continuous learning are also crucial for the sustainable growth of the creative economy in Africa.

CONNECTING CREATIVE ECONOMIES AND ACADEMIA: AHSCE PROJECT PARTNERS

AHSCE project was supported by five sector-specific organisations in Kenya, Nigeria and South Africa. Their help was invaluable in reaching the sector, promoting the CVS and events and building the Knowledge hub. Here we present some of their views and hopes for the sector. These are some of their reflections on creative economies development and academia.



Kenya Fashion Council

The establishment of the Kenyan Fashion Council (KFCO) was a result of the collaborative consolidation of multiple stakeholders within the Kenyan Fashion Industry with the aim to further the interests of the Kenyan Fashion and Creative Industry and its designers to support global leadership. KFCO works hand in hand with: Fashion and Creative Industry Players, Institutions teaching Fashion Design/Textile/ Production, Media in Fashion, legal professionals within the industry and the Government to create a functional Kenyan Fashion and Creative Industry that is credible, dynamic and economically sustainable.



Mr Sydney Owino, Member of the Board of the Kenyan Fashion Council (KFCO), Nairobi (Kenya), reflects on the importance of access to creative education and integration of experience into formal learning.

Universities need to identify fashion houses that are creating change and endeavour to supply them with talent year in year-out through placements. Start with part-time internships from Year one and continue throughout the length of the course. This will not only enable the students to gain experience but give the fashion houses the opportunity to select the best talents within. By doing so we can elevate the creative economy.

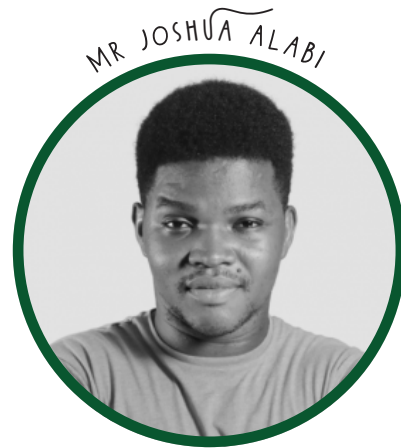
Regarding courses offered, I feel like universities should be able to allow established designers to enroll in short courses which are about 4-6 months, that are specific to their needs. I might just want to take a course in draping, nothing else. 2. Patternmaking on its own, not fabrics, just patternmaking. 3. PR and Marketing. Just like that.

Universities should also reduce the cost of fees so that even those coming from areas like Kibera and who are talented but cannot afford full degree courses can benefit, so that those who didn't finish school or couldn't afford to go to university, can do a course and get employment.



KININSO KONCEPTS
PRODUCTION

Kininso is a creative/cultural organisation established with the aim of inspiring greatness and making relevant statements through storytelling and deep-rooted research in culture and tradition, geared towards creating a unique story-telling technique and innovating new performance styles. As storytellers, they do not only entertain, inform and educate, they also challenge and transform the intellectual, social and cultural perspective of our communities. Kininso is an inclusive hub that utilises creativity, technology, stories and design innovation to tell authentic African and contemporary stories, challenge the status-quo and shift perception. They have trained and supported young people locally and internationally in different creative endeavours and expanded knowledge on the business of creativity. They are constantly in search of new ways of engaging youth thereby creating advocacy works that orientate and sensitise our communities on social issues such as health, impunity, corruption, justice and equality, violence, human rights and gender.



Mr Joshua Alabi, Founder and Creative Director, Kininso Concepts, Lagos (Nigeria), reflects on the challenges of the theatre sector and the key role of universities.

Performance venues are a major challenge for creatives as these spaces are expensive. As a result, creatives are forced to find alternative spaces to perform, such as outdoor venues. This can be challenging, as these spaces may not be suitable for performance or accessible to all audiences. There is also no government funding for the arts, so artists must rely on private donations or crowdfunding to support their work. This makes it difficult to stage performances, and can also lead to artists feeling undervalued and unsupported.

The University community can support art by opening up their spaces. These spaces can be used by artists, with the clause that 30% of the production team should be students from the university. This helps students learn from professionals while studying and also bridges the gap between professional artists and the Academic art space. By supporting the arts, universities can help to create a more vibrant and creative community.

At Kininso Concepts, we believe in process sharing and capacity building. This we have done by facilitating workshops and designing training programs for students

in universities. One of these programs is the "Undergraduate Training Program." This program is designed to equip students who are interested in the creative industry and want to pursue this path after their time in university. We train and mentor these students in their chosen area of speciality, such as cinematography, art directing, editing, animation, lighting, and sound design, empowering these students with the knowledge and skills they need to succeed in the creative industry. This program provides students the opportunity to learn from experienced professionals and to get hands-on experience in the creative industry. Students who complete the program are well-prepared to start their careers in the creative industry.



The Crown Troupe of Africa is a total-theatre company comprising artists whose forte is the creation of new but socially relevant works. The company came to light and was professionally established in June 1996.

The company comprises artists who share a common belief in the viability of the Arts as a tool for social re-engineering, a major motive of our dedication to creating works that are socially relevant, thought provoking and empowering. Crown Troupe is famous for their groundbreaking, unique and innovative rendition of works which are flexible enough to be performed in conventional and unconventional performance spaces.



Mr Segun Adefila, Artistic Director, Crown Troupe of Africa, Lagos (Nigeria), reflects on the resilience of the creative sector and the importance of sustained engagement between academia and practitioners.

The performing arts in Nigeria rely mainly on its resilience for sustainability. This, however, should not be the mainstay of a vital industry. The depth of the creative outputs could be deeper, but being a liberal engagement, the lackadaisical approach to art engagement by a considerable number of the practitioners tends to trivialise the vital role of the arts.

In the past, there was a robust symbiotic relationship between academia and the practitioners of arts. Great works like Oba Koso - Duro Ladipo, and Lanke Omuti-Kola Oghunmola, are products of this relationship. This has waned and there's a dire need for its resuscitation, for the sustainability of both parties.

The Crown Troupe of Africa has engaged with academia on several levels. The company has toured and performed at the Universities of Ilorin, Ibadan, Abuja, Calabar, Ife, Jo's, Lagos and Lagos State University. These engagements have allowed for an interface with these university communities. In 2016 for instance, courtesy of the British Council, Crown Troupe toured the Universities of Abuja, Calabar and Lagos

State University on a Shakespeare Project during which workshops, performances and general interactions between the members of Crown Troupes and hosting schools were robust.



The South African Cultural Observatory (SACO) is the national research centre dedicated to the development of a comprehensive cultural information system for South Africa. Conceived of in 2013, through the Mzansi Golden Economy (2011) strategy, and then Department of Art and Culture, the SACO is a project of the South African Department of Sport, Arts and Culture (DSAC) hosted by the Nelson Mandela University in partnership with the University of KwaZulu-Natal, Rhodes University, and several research partners led by Andani.Africa.

The SACO was officially established in 2015 to develop a more sophisticated understanding of South Africa's cultural and creative economy – and to map trends, develop statistics, gather economic data across the arts, culture and heritage sectors and the cultural and creative industries (CCIs). It is also responsible for informing decision and policymakers.

Since then, it has been fundamental in shaping new knowledge, tools, and insights into South Africa's cultural and creative economy. In 2019, DSAC incorporated sports into its ambit of policy making and government support mandating the SACO to map the economic impact of sports in South Africa.



Ms Unathi Lutshaba, Executive Director of the South African Cultural Observatory, reflects the creative sector in South Africa and its connection with academia.

Universities are crucibles for creativity, and thus are in a good position to also test and measure the importance, genesis, impact, and effects of creativity in a cross-cutting way. The very bedrock of the scientific method centres on creative experimentation. Because of this, universities are 'safe' spaces for needed experimentation, hypotheses, iteration, and failure in research studies. Creativity and ideas are also the fundamental currency of the entire university system. As a result, there is a major incentive to understand not only how these inputs feed the university engine, but also the creative sectors themselves.

Research matters here – and the quicker the better. Universities also play a trans- and multi-disciplinary role on linking creativity, innovation and insight to performance, analysis, measurement, and evaluation in a way that other institutions are not always capable of. They also provide the structures, talent, and tools to conduct empirical study, experiment with new methods, and flow insight into curriculum and ecosystems in an agile way. This nimbleness is especially important for the creative sector which

tends to evolve faster than other industries and embrace transformation more rapidly. Prompt and relevant research that quickly assesses the status quo and impact of fast-moving developments in the creative sector can act as a powerful insight portend for what's to come in other industries and help society prepare for new trends and realities – many of which are shaped by creative sectors like animation, VR, AR, AI, and all kinds of design industries.

Although universities are powerful in their ability to break through silos, they can also create them. The goal is for universities to remain open; and intra-university systems and disciplines to embrace collaboration across fields to improve learning, sharing and innovation cultures, especially in a high-paced, technology-fuelled world.

There are many areas where universities can work more closely with creative economies, but I'll identify three:

- ✳ Continuous learning: Learning for those trained by universities, and those close to or associated with the university, should not stop once a degree is attained. Universities should work to nurture and support past and existing graduates, staff and communities, and flow cutting-edge creative economy insights, training and skills/capacity in a continuous loop that ensures innovation systems and IP production are high.
- ✳ Community engagement and embeddedness: The creative sector and creative economies need more support than traditional industries. Universities can focus on procurement that prioritises securing products/ services from graduate creatives and business owners; invest in infrastructure that supports creative practice and marketplaces; and create spaces where creative experimentation can take place

for the just sake of it – because that's what innovation demands: learning curves.

- ✳ Translating research insight into relevance for life: Research that is not shared is doomed to die on a shelf. The university has a big role to play in not only publicising creative economy research but also translating it into something meaningful for creatives and communities benefiting from the tangible and intangible benefits of creativity and culture. Seminars, outreach, participation in policymaking, and showcasing the research-output-to-reality-of-lived-lives continuum is key to making research relevant.

UK HIGHER EDUCATION: BUILDING BETTER INTERNATIONAL COLLABORATIONS WITH AFRICA

Professor Roberta Comunian, principal investigator on the project based at the Department of Culture, Media and Creative Industries at King's College London, in dialogue with UK co-investigators, Dr Lauren England, Lecturer at King's College London and Dr Brian J. Hrats, Associate Professor at the School of Geography and Environmental Science, University of Southampton, reflect on their learning and experience during the project



REWARDS: Sharing and discussing research ideas and concepts with creative practitioners and partners across Africa has been the most rewarding element of the project. Learning from practitioners, their every challenge but also their passion and drive for change has been truly inspiring. While the project engaged with wider ideas of impact and the UNESCO SDGs, I was surprised by how much those goals were shared and embraced across all the funded projects; the agenda to alleviate inequality, improve working conditions and business models, and make communities more sustainable was truly at the heart of each project and I am proud of how much the practitioners have all achieved.

CHALLENGES: As project lead the challenges have been mainly connected to the bureaucracy that comes with international contracts and collaborations. While checks and protocols need to be in place and are necessary, there is often little understanding of administrative staff in universities about the importance of finding working solutions and understanding different research contexts internationally. When working internationally it is important to think that even administratively, things might operate differently and not everyone can adopt our own frameworks. The working solution was always eventually found, but a better understanding of international research work would have made the process smoother.

LESSONS LEARNT AND FUTURE PERSPECTIVES: The project has confirmed the important role that HE can play in creating more sustainable creative economies globally. HE needs to take more responsibility in ensuring that the sector is not only well-trained but prepared for the financial, managerial and policy challenges that it faces. It is also important that more international collaborative grants enable researchers across Africa and between the UK and Africa to also think of new future global trajectories of the sector, that will still hold the value of promoting diverse cultures and sustainable practices in emerging global markets.



REWARDS: Watching the Collaborative Creative Voucher Scheme projects evolve, and seeing the amazing variety of creative outputs created was hugely rewarding. The insights shared across the project have also sparked many ideas for extending research on sustainable creative economy development in Africa. The project strengthened our existing collaborations with the HEI partners in Africa, but it has also generated a much wider network which can support future research and impact activities.

CHALLENGES: This project was an ambitious undertaking, involving many different parts, often happening simultaneously. This was quite difficult to manage at times, especially as a

geographically dispersed team, and it required a great deal of flexibility and adaptability from all parties. Combined with bureaucratic delays (on all sides), being able to extend the duration of the project was, therefore, critical to enable the delivery of all desired impact activities.

LESSONS LEARNT AND FUTURE PERSPECTIVES: The project has highlighted both the potential and limitations of online collaboration tools, for research, networking and supporting creative work. For future research and partnership building, a hybrid format could be more effective, particularly if seeking to support new collaborations among creatives and academics where trust building is key. The project has also taught us valuable lessons about how resources can be shared between HEIs and with creative economy stakeholders – what works and what doesn't – which will inform future research and impact activities.



REWARDS: The project enabled me to engage with new creative sectors and locations which was very rewarding. In particular, working closely with the Lagos Hub allowed me to learn about Theatre and Performing Arts in Nigeria. It was also interesting to see how my previous experience of researching fashion in Canada and Europe compared with what is going on in Kenya's fashion sector.

As a geographer, I have always been fascinated by how space and context shape activities and experiences, such as creative entrepreneurship, and this project has allowed me to really broaden my understanding. It was also immensely rewarding to work closely with all the members of the project team and to interact with so many amazing creatives and intermediaries through the workshops. Finally, the impact focus of the project provided a real sense of purpose, and a gratifying feeling of making a small positive contribution to people's lives.

CHALLENGES: While the use of technology and online events allowed us to interact with more participants spread across greater distances in a very positive way, it is difficult to establish the same connection without meeting and interacting in person. It would have been nice to be able to physically travel to Lagos, Nairobi and Johannesburg in person but, with COVID restrictions, it was not possible. Another challenge was simply keeping up with all of the people, activities and projects across the three hubs.

LESSONS LEARNT AND FUTURE PERSPECTIVES: The complexity and ambition of the project has reinforced the importance of developing effective organisational structures and working with skilled, enthusiastic and motivated collaborators. Another lesson is the importance of understanding local contexts including cultural norms and conditions when trying to facilitate events and collaborative projects. Learning local knowledge through immersion and working with local team members was critical to many aspects of the project. This project has really inspired me to think about how I can continue engaging with creative economies in Africa in the future.

IMPACT VIA COLLABORATIVE VOUCHER SCHEME PROJECTS

AHSCE supported 25 collaborative projects between September 2022 and March 2023: 8 in Kenya, 9 in Nigeria and 8 in South Africa. The selected projects (see *Collaborative Journey*) covered a range of sectors around the core themes addressed by each Hub. Overall, we worked with 63 individuals. Many identified themselves with multiple roles and profiles, but overall, their many occupations were described as: academics (18) creative practitioner/entrepreneur (42) and community organisation (3). Most projects stemmed from new collaborations – established during the *Creative Imagination Workshops* – but some included known partners. Out of 25 projects, 11 involved academics (within

the partner universities but also beyond) and 14 included a collaboration with early careers researchers or practitioners.

All projects engaged with one or more of the UN Sustainable Development Goals (Figure 7). In particular, as seen below, the most popular SDG addressed was SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth) but others of similar importance were SDG 4 (Quality Education), SDG 12 (Responsible Production and Consumption), SDG9 (Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure), SDG 10 (Reduced Inequalities), SDG11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities), SDG17 (Partnerships for the Goals) and SDG5 (Gender Equality).

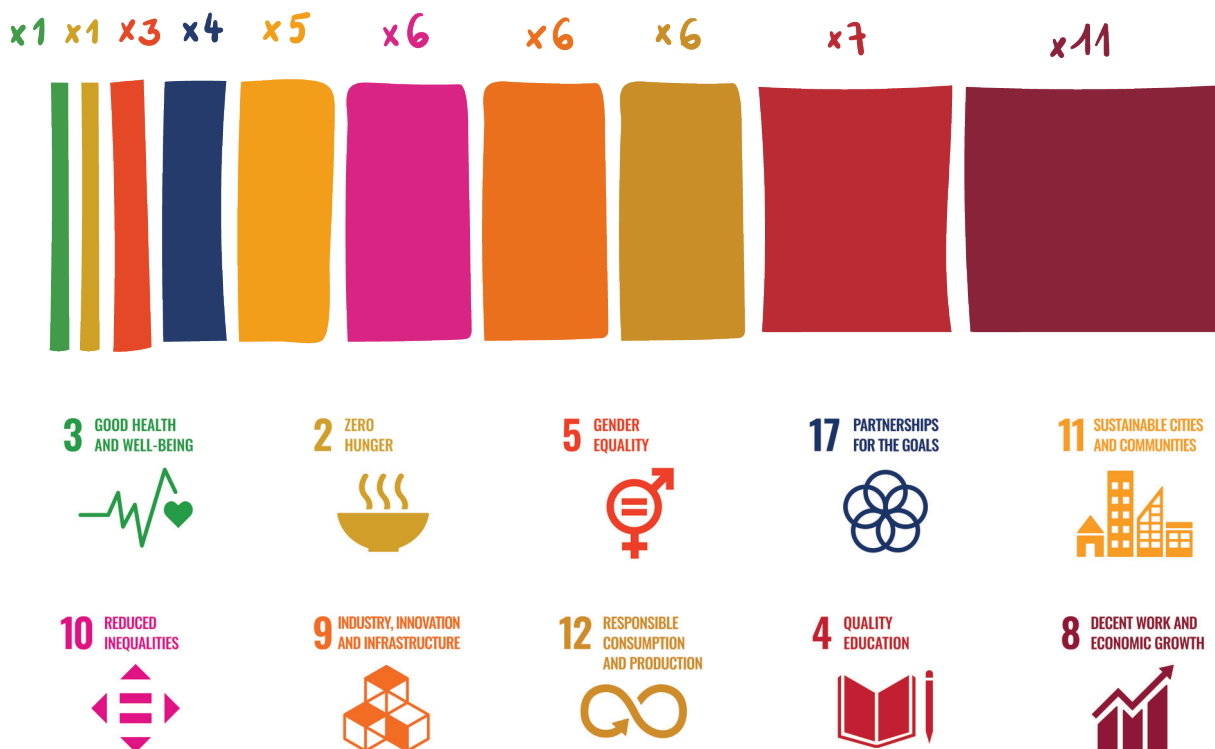


Fig 7: UN Sustainable Development Goals addressed by the Collaborative Voucher Scheme projects.



SUPPORTING COLLABORATIONS ACROSS THE FASHION SECTOR IN KENYA

The collaborative projects supported in Kenya had a strong engagement with SDGs 12 (Responsible Production and Consumption) and 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth) as top priorities. However, the social agenda was also very present with projects targeting SDGs 5 (Gender equality), 10 (Reduced inequalities), 9 (Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure) and 4 (Quality Education).

A BRIDAL KIONDOO explored the development of a contemporary version of the kiondoo, a traditional hand-woven basket given to women on their wedding day as a rite of passage. The bridal kiondoo will serve as a coming-of-age symbol for the modern woman. The new kiondoo designs can be used within a wedding ceremony and afterwards. The team also worked with a filmmaker, Derrick Aswani, to capture their process and the final designs were photographed by Daks Lineker.

Winnie Odande (Dande Styles) and Ivy Nitta (Kiondoo Culture)



ENHANCING INNOVATIVE ENTREPRENEURSHIP AMONG THE YOUTH

proposed new collaborations to resolve challenges such as waste management in their communities. It enhanced the design curricula to include sustainability. The training engaged youth with practices of reusing, recycling and reducing discarded fabric and materials to produce handmade fashionable accessories to make decent income.

Dr Juliet Isika (Kenyatta University) and Adonijah Ombura (Kenyatta University)

4 QUALITY EDUCATION



8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH



MALI SAFI is a documentary showcasing Kenyan fashion through the lens of sustainable techniques and processes. Taking a deep dive into the techniques and processes of sustainable fashion in Kenya and capturing them in this documentary created awareness of the impact of fast fashion on the environment, influencing slow fashion and equipping fashion designers with knowledge on how to adopt these methods.

Anita Barbara (Art Director), Grace Ndunge (Zaqara Kenya), Charles Guthua (Filmmaker)

9 INDUSTRY, INNOVATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE



12 RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION



LUO WOMEN AND POWER IN FASHION

explored Luo culture in fashion through videography and photography. It created a new collection with a cohesive visual identity and travelled to Lake Victoria to document a journey of cultural exploration, showcasing the beauty and pride of the Luo community.

Sharon Wendo (Epica Jewellery), Idah Aluoch (Paxwear) and Judy Rose Semo (Nyandisa Styling)

8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH



12 RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION



VAZI presents a limited genderless capsule collection that epitomises a seasonless approach to style and promotes diversity, inclusivity and sustainability. Designed and made in Kenya, the collection uses fabric and style, rather than gender, as the starting point for creative design. These pieces will challenge some of the stereotypes around gender norms, supporting the wearer's fluid identity and reducing unconscious bias and inequalities.

Imani Migwi (Manciny) and Bevern Oguk (BOGUK)

10 REDUCED INEQUALITIES



12 RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION



UNDAMETA aims to lead fashion in emerging markets towards a sustainable future. UndaMeta is an online platform that offers curated, African-inspired surface pattern designs for sale. The platform creates a link between print designers, fabric makers, and fashion producers.

Teresa Lubano (Shop Nanjala) and Dr Francisca Odundo (University of Nairobi)

8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH



9 INDUSTRY, INNOVATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE



WORK IN PROGRESS designed and produced a line of tote bags using upcycled materials sourced from Nairobi's environs. Using materials that would otherwise be discarded and working with a local production facility contributed to the project's sustainability. The team created a unique, durable accessory that can be used

by as wide a population as possible, further contributing to a circular economy.

Bryan Emry (Fashion Stylist), Anthony Muisyo (Digital artist) and Magati Maosa (Multidisciplinary Visual Artist)

8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH



12 RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION



WASTE TO WEAR is a sustainable fashion brand that uses pre-consumer discarded textiles from local fashion houses to make new fashionable products. The team worked together to address a textile management problem for fashion producers, particularly small-scale brands producing locally in Kenya, by collecting their textile waste and giving it a new life. The project aims to encourage local fashion enterprises to practice ethical fashion through proper waste management.

Joy Wanja (KOVU Couture), Stephanie Musombi (Lutia Kobehlo), Immaculate Wangari (Social Media Expert) and Jeremy Omukoba (Photographer)

4 QUALITY EDUCATION



12 RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION



SUPPORTING COLLABORATIONS ACROSS THE PERFORMING ARTS SECTOR IN NIGERIA

The collaborative projects supported in Nigeria had a strong engagement with SDGs 4 (Quality Education) and 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth) as top priorities. However, the social agenda was also prominent, with projects targeting SDGs 5 (Gender Equality), 10 (Reduced Inequalities), 11 (Sustainable Cities and

Communities), 17 (Partnerships for the Goals), 2 (Zero Hunger) and 3 (Good Health and Well-Being).

ART FOR LIFE brought together theatre practitioners for a two-day practical workshop session focusing on creating socially relevant and devised works of art that appeal to a wide range of audiences. It also involved seeking new ways for the theatre business to thrive using business, storytelling and branding skills.

Joshua Alabi (Kininso Concepts), Segun Adefila (Crown Troupe of Africa)

8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH



9 INDUSTRY, INNOVATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE



AWARENESS OF THE INHERITANCE OF THE GIRLCHILD IN IGBOLAND

was a theatre production that created awareness that the girl child or woman has the right of inheritance in her home and her husband's. This project connects gender equality and explored the ability of both academia and theatre to support social change.

Dr Maureen Ndu (Madonna University, Okija), Emmanuel Orisunmibare (StageAlive Production, Ibadan), Professor Molinta Enendu (Madonna University, Okija)

5 GENDER EQUALITY



10 REDUCED INEQUALITIES



THE BLIND MINSTREL was a site-specific theatre performance about a young blind girl who sings on the street for alms. The project was timely in addressing some challenges in Nigerian society including girl-child marginalisation and discrimination

against people living with disabilities. The project experimented with site-specific theatre for the first time ever in the city of Ibadan.

Leke Gbolade (Xtheatre Company), Babatunde Ojobaro (Theatre Hub Africa), Dr Chukwuma Okoye (University of Ibadan)

4 QUALITY EDUCATION



10 REDUCED INEQUALITIES



FOOD FOR ALL: ZERO HUNGER was a stage play set in Ibadan, one of the rural areas where hunger is a predominant issue. The play engaged audiences with strategies and ideas for achieving Zero Hunger, including campaigning and food banks. **Emmanuel Orisunmibare (StageAlive Production, Ibadan) and Monsuru Olajide (Lead City University, Ibadan).**

2 ZERO HUNGER



11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES



THE ENTERPRISE OF ACTING offered opportunities for young people to acquire key skills and competencies in the theatre, with special attention on actor/performer training and business management in the arts. This enables the sustainability as well as the growth and development of the creative sector in Nigeria.

Israel Wekpe (University of Benin) and Israel Eboh (Theatre director, producer)

8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH



17 PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS



THEATRE FOR DEVELOPMENT exposed children and youths in primary and secondary schools in Egbeda to the art of theatre. It created a performing arts community initiative that positively engaged youths in an artistic practice and taught them about Nigerian and African culture.

Awele Dekpe (Production Manager) and Seun Awobajo (Footprints of David Arts Academy)

4 QUALITY EDUCATION



8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH



FILL THE BLOOD BANK used drama, dance, music and spoken word to campaign for free and voluntary blood donors to save lives. Access to free and safe blood is a global need especially in developing nations. The performance encouraged the community to attend and donate.

Ayodele Obatomi (Ahmadu Bello University), Franklin Zaure (Ahmadu Bello University) and Babatunde Ojobaro (Theatre Hub Africa)

3 GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING



11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES



VOICE IT: AN ART(IVISM) INCUBATION PROGRAMME was an immersive, interactive, incubation programme designed to contribute to the artistic development of young Nigerian creatives. The project included different strata of creative endeavours such as playwriting, spoken word, directing, acting, storytelling, dance and production management. **Jerry Adesewo (Arojah Theatre Company), Makinde Adeniran (Creative director) and Ola Awaakan (Broadcast journalist)**

4 QUALITY EDUCATION



8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH



SUPPORTING COLLABORATIONS ACROSS THE FILM AND DIGITAL MEDIA SECTOR IN SOUTH AFRICA

The collaborative projects supported in South Africa had a strong engagement equally across four SDGs: 10 (Reduced Inequalities), 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities), 9 (Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure) and 17 (Partnerships for the Goals). Other SDGs involved included 4 (Quality Education), 5 (Gender Equality) and 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth).

DEFINING AUDIO-VISUAL SECTOR ROLES

identifies and analyses both above and below-the-line occupations across the Film and TV value chains. Recognising the importance of a well-defined workforce within the creative ecosystem, the research is poised to drive positive change within the South African creative industry. Through comparative international analysis, the research extracts invaluable insights that could be adapted and implemented across South Africa.

Unathi Malunga (Executive Director South African Screen Federation)



EKASI DOCUMENTARY FILM SCREENINGS

screened selected documentary films with the aim of addressing a lack of interest in cinema through the sourcing and screening of various local and international documentaries which focus on thematic

issues. The screening took place in the Soweto Book Café and engaged local communities in discussions and critical reflections on the themes addressed by the films.

Tonderai Chiyindiko (actor and creative industries consultant-researcher), Thami Mazibuko (owner, Soweto Book Café) Traver Mudzonga (art director and researcher) and Sithembile Nyanda (actress, Atlas Studios)



FILM FESTIVAL ASSOCIATION SOUTH AFRICA (FFSA)

explored and made the first steps towards the establishment of an Association of South Africa film festivals. The project intends to support local communities and district festivals – bringing together film festivals under one roof – in order to coordinate their calendars and share audiences among the festival directors. It provides a unique forum for practitioners, participants and leaders within the film festival arenas from across the country to exchange information and ideas and address common issues of common concern impacting the film festival industry.

Lindi Ndebele-Koka (Industry Champion, Project Executive & Advisor) and Sithembiso Mphehle (Animation Producer)



GIRLS IN GAMING mentored and nurtured young girls' skills in interactive digital media through technical skills as well as awards and incentives given exclusively to the girls to encourage engagement. In an

age of increased digital and technological innovation, the project solicited the interest of young girls to pursue technical education by building a fair, equal and safe environment in the local gaming ecosystem.

Khanyisile Zondi (Project Manager Techsprung Media), Xolile Vundla (Technologist and entrepreneur) Aya Dlova (Impact Project Manager)

5 GENDER EQUALITY



8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH



MAPPING FILM FESTIVALS IN SOUTH AFRICA: THE IMPACT OF COVID-19

mapped and followed the processes of adaption and innovation taking place across South African film festivals during the Covid-19 pandemic, across periods of lockdown and restrictions. The project findings have also contributed to the establishment of the FFSA and made it an association aware of the changes and impact that Covid-19 has had on the sector.

Fiona Drummond (PhD candidate Rhodes University), Delon Tarentaal (Lecturer, Rhodes University) and Jen Snowball (Professor, Rhodes University)

9 INDUSTRY, INNOVATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE



17 PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS



RURAL FILM ART SCREENINGS

showcased films and used them to develop an audience platform with community participation in arts and culture. The project trained the participants on what it means to understand the use of filmmaking and screened creative films to share awareness on important topics. The project re-created an audience and platform for rural creative youth and creatives that reside in the rural Eastern Cape and drives tourists back to the area.

Sivuyisiwe Giba (Director of SivuBuhle Media) and Khanyisile Zondi (Project Manager Techsprung Media)

10 REDUCED INEQUALITIES



11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES



TSHUMA MO! is a 1D interactive map showcasing the perimeters of all townships in Gauteng along with their respective free WiFi hotspots. Users will be able to identify WiFi hotspots closest to their current location/township. The project responds to the importance of developing the ICT sector and the need to broadcast and distribute content to communities who do not have access to wifi regularly. It is an important attempt to establish a distribution network for digital content.

Nokwanda Shabangu (Digital Content Editor) and Zanele Mthembu (Executive producer and film and TV professional)

10 REDUCED INEQUALITIES



11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES



KLIPTOWN BEEHIVE DIGITAL FILM CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT

enabled the team to explore, plan and experiment with a range of methodologies towards formalising educational interventions, working towards a training programme that could capacitate unemployed youth (and adults) to work in ongoing and future productions of the Beehive Collective, as well as accessing further studies.

Mocke J van Veuren (University of Witwatersrand), Prince Massingham (writer and arts educator) and Neo Monyamane (Filmmaker)

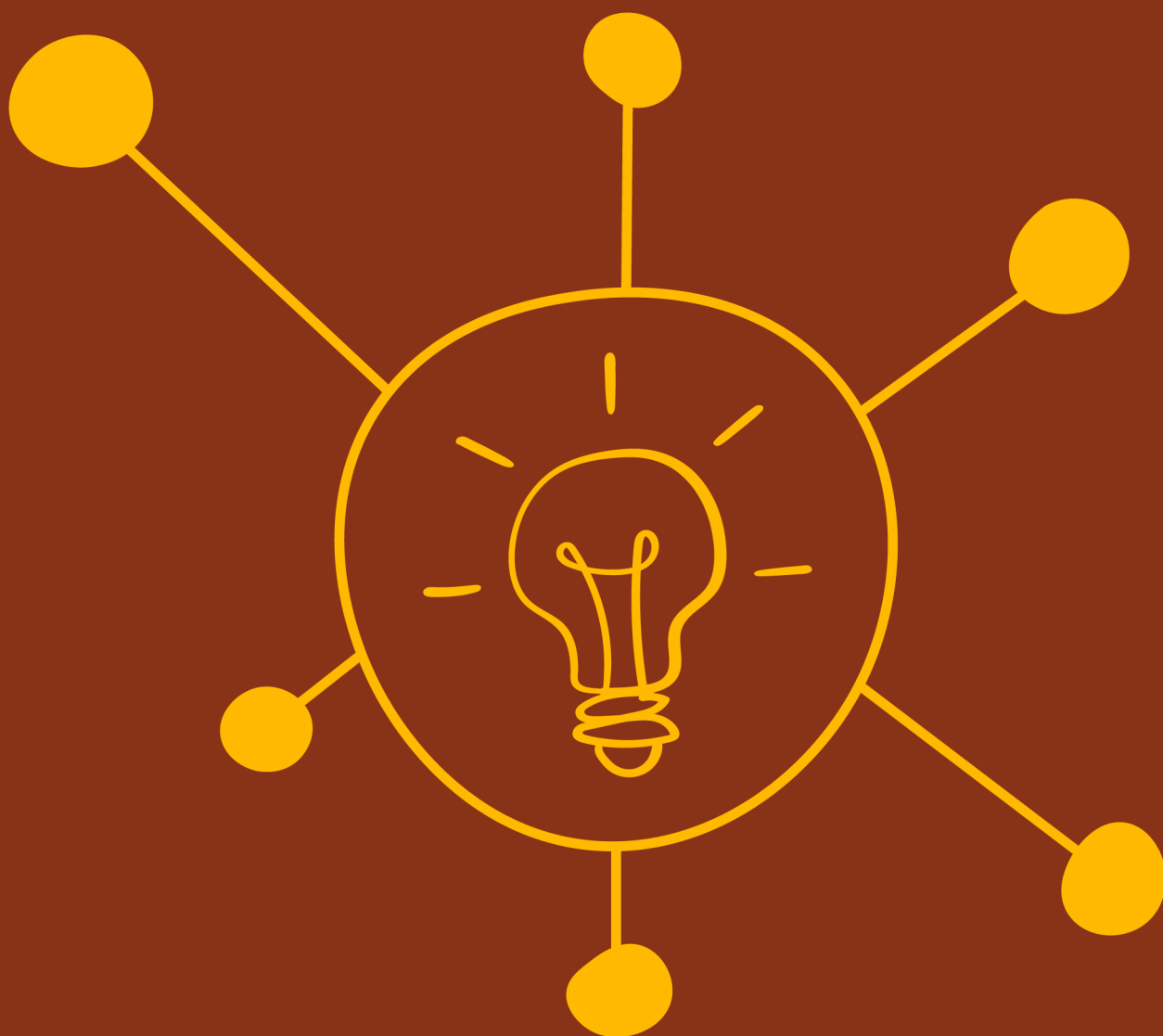
4 QUALITY EDUCATION



8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH



SHARED LEARNING



LEARNING FROM THE COLLABORATIVE VOUCHER SCHEME

As part of the *Collaborative Voucher Scheme*, we distributed a short survey to the participants on completion of their projects and gathered some collective feedback from their collaborative journey.

Out of the 63 participants across the 25 projects, we received 45 survey responses. The survey results presented an overwhelmingly supportive picture, with most participants strongly agreeing that:

1. The CVS was well-managed, and working with the research team and university was smooth (79% strongly agree).
2. The CVS gave me new insight into the role that universities and university collaboration can play in local creative economies (80% strongly agree).
3. The CVS gave me new insight into the role that creative industries can play in supporting sustainable development (79% strongly agree).
4. The CVS has led to potential new collaborations or new business opportunities (80% strongly agree).

Across all four statements, no participant expressed disagreement (0% somewhat disagree; 0% strongly disagree).

At the core of AHSCE activities and especially for the *Collaborative Voucher Scheme* was the need to learn and understand more about collaboration and, specifically:

- * Collaborative practices between academia and the creative sector;
- * Collaborating across different creative sectors and between practitioners;
- * Collaborating with communities and young people.

Here we reflect on what *Collaborative Voucher Scheme* project participants learned by taking part in the project. We also share their critical reflections on the rewards and challenges of collaboration.

WORKING ACROSS ACADEMIA AND PRACTICE: REWARDS AND CHALLENGES

Many project participants reflected on the value of the opportunity offered by the voucher scheme to break down barriers and create collaborative links and shared practices between the creative sector and academia. The value and benefits were different depending on the project as well as the participants' prior experience. For many, the project arrived at a moment when they found it hard to talk with academia or simply engage in an exchange and dialogue. Some mentioned that previous experiences of collaboration had been hindered by short-termism or the struggle of HE to find channels for collaboration and to value collaboration within busy academic schedules. As one participant explained: "when we go for collaboration [...] they don't always think about whether this is the benefit or these are the benefits for the University, for the department, for the students". One participant – an alumnus – reflected: "because we are in the field, doing practical stuff, applying the knowledge we've taken from the school. We thought there would be more collaborations [with the

school]. I mean, this is the first one ever". This is precisely the kind of intervention that AHSCE wanted to make in creating channels for collaboration. Similarly, it was acknowledged that while the idea of collaborating between academia and practice is not new, it had not previously been capitalised on. As one academic participant put it: "I think the town and gown relationship, it's not a novel idea, it has always been there. But we are shying away from it". Participants recognised that more needs to be done to enable collaboration, to create effective channels – like in the case of the *Collaborative Voucher Scheme* – that connect and broker between the two spheres. As another academic participant described: "I think we tend to do this publication for publication's sake, I'm not excluding myself. We need to be doing research in areas that have human faces, in areas that can empower people, in areas that can make our community better".

Creative practitioners saw the opportunity of working with academics as one that allowed them to reach a different level of visibility and reflection. For example:

"We can do a form of publication and reach you know, both international and local audiences through book publications, conferences and all, so people get to see how viable theatre is in you know, impacting society and seeing this collaborative and cross-disciplinary research [...] the marriage between both Art and Sciences".

For individuals working within academia, the scheme offered the opportunity to really explore their value as creatives, engaging both their research and teaching with their creative practice, which often remains separated in silos. As one participant asserted: "I also felt like I was actively contributing in synergy - both as

a scholar and as a design professional. This interdisciplinary role pushed me to be a more agile leader, critical thinker, and entrepreneur". Other academics mentioned the value of applying academic knowledge to real-world experience. For example:

"The research was interesting, but it really came alive when we were able to share our results with a key stakeholder in the industry. Her insights helped us to see what the industry needs were and to share some ideas from both sides. It was great to feel that our work was feeding into what the creative economy in South Africa needs in a real and practical way".

Yet, other academics raised the importance of acquiring visibility within their own institutions and arguing for the value of creative HE, with one academic describing this as "making waves" within their own institutions:

"[with this project] we have registered our existence and presence before the University. They have recognized us as people in the theatre [...]. And they've seen us as people who are capable and willing to package this type of production for the purposes of the University. I will have also made an impression before the University administration, whom I'm sure are contemplating seriously having a drama unit".

However, challenges were also highlighted, for example, the different foci that practitioners and academics might have – especially when commercial pressures might come into play. As one practitioner explained:

"One major issue we had with the movie was trying to merge the academics with the professionals. I mean, you know, the

academics are very, very particular in terms of, I mean, all the theories, but for the professionals, we're much more concerned about the commercial value of what we're doing".

Another issue was trying to work with the university teaching cycle and thinking about when it was most appropriate to create events and to work with the community and stakeholders within and outside the campus. Overall, participants recognised that the projects facilitated networking between academics and industry professionals with the potential of "creating opportunities for future research and collaborations".

COLLABORATING ACROSS CREATIVE SECTORS AND BETWEEN PRACTITIONERS

For many, the *Collaborative Voucher Scheme* project was an opportunity to work with partners from a different creative sector and to experiment. As this participant highlights:

"[the scheme] was key in creating a space for other creatives and I to collaborate on a fashion documentary that otherwise would have taken a long and strenuous process financially to achieve [...] I have also had the pleasure of meeting extremely talented creatives on this project who I have partnered with on new projects. This type of funding is needed to elevate African creatives globally and for us to tell our own stories".

Often, creatives commented on the collaboration as an opportunity to refresh their ideas while also providing inspiration and time to think, which is not always

available with the pressure of making a living and delivering projects. As one participant highlighted: often creatives are "neck deep into making their work better and do not have that skill of business negotiation or reaching out to people for help and all of those things". Therefore, collaboration becomes a way of working and thinking collectively rather than as usual in an individualistic way. As one participant put it: "the most important lesson is collaborating and letting all go, [...] once we deal with the I-Factor, and it becomes the We-Factor or the Us-Factor, then [...] something good will always, always come out of it".

Many also felt that collaboration challenged them to leave behind individualistic projects and ideas and to embrace the ideas of others. Indeed, the scheme offered an opportunity to think of collaborative work and practice and its value within their personal work and careers and professional development. This – especially for younger and early career professionals – was also a chance to connect with more experienced individuals and benefit from their knowledge and input. As one participant reflected: "It is a perfect combination, because he has more experience with theatre, and I have more experience in film".

Many highlighted how meeting with like-minded individuals was generative, creating opportunities for innovation – bringing new ideas, breaking boundaries or working at the boundaries, for example, between fashion and filmmaking or theatre and community development. As one participant explained: "Innovation requires collaboration. The CVS initiative did well to bring together professionals in various disciplines with a shared vision and a burning will to impact and elevate the

arts on the African continent". Some of these collaborations involved participants at different stages of their careers or in different hierarchical structures (like academia). However, the collaborative spirit connecting everyone's work often served to flatten those hierarchies in a positive way. As one participant pointed out: "I was expecting some distance [...] I mean, you wouldn't even know that I'm talking to a Prof when giving my suggestions because that title was not in place, it was all about the project". The same perspective was discussed by another participant in relation to their approach to younger members of the team:

"He is not a novice. Even if he does not have the title now it does not mean that he won't have it tomorrow. This world is a very small place, things revolve, people still meet on another platform in another space, in another, and anything can still happen. When you're collaborating with people, you put all those in focus and become a human being".

The project also offered opportunities for career development and CV enhancement by adding skills, experiences or a valuable collaboration with an expert in the field. As one participant described: "I have three feathers now in my cap...I ran a workshop, I did the performance and I wrote the play, the musical, so three. You know and that's huge for me, especially the workshop just facilitating, being co-facilitator".

There was a clear impact of working together and the work being created was the unique result of bringing different skills, ideas and experiences together. As one participant explained: "two heads are better than one, you know, there are certain things that if we had done it alone, we would have done it but we wouldn't

have gone as far, and it wouldn't have been as easy as it was collaborating with him [...] I'm sure it's the other way around too".

For many participants potential for ongoing collaboration was identified and they had a positive outlook on how they might develop further work and projects in the future.

As one put it: "and it is also the beginning of more collaborations to come, most especially amongst the three of us [...] In the near future, we will still have things to do together because of this. So, this is more like an eye-opener for us".

COLLABORATING WITH COMMUNITIES AND YOUNG PEOPLE

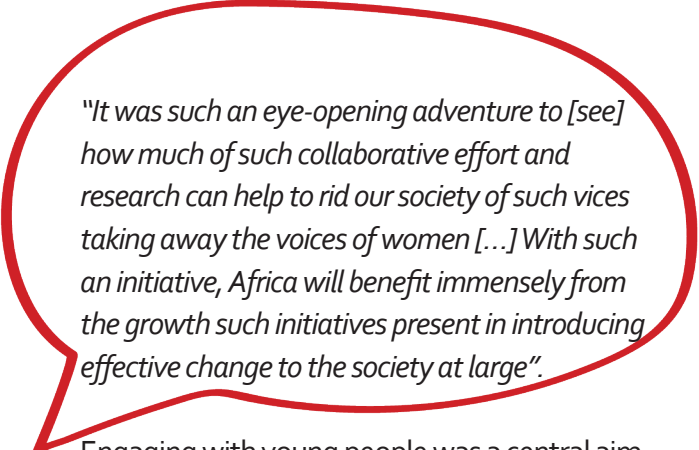
Many of the funded projects involved collaborations with a range of communities (from specific cultural groups or different geographical locations) and many others engaged specifically with young people (from school children to young graduates).

For some practitioners, this was the first opportunity to learn about collaboration with these groups. As one participant reflected: "[This project] has given me immense value by providing a platform to work with children and young adults and show them the importance of using the performing arts to broaden their education and life experiences". In some cases, the projects also gave creative and academics a wake-up call, in terms of seeing their contribution to society more broadly. One academic mentioned that the project reminded them of the value of their engagement in society: "I have learned not to fall into a trap of being an armchair scholar". For another practitioner, it was about giving back by using their theatre

skillset, while for another, it was about gaining “the opportunity to look beyond being a creative, using art to speak for my immediate environment”.

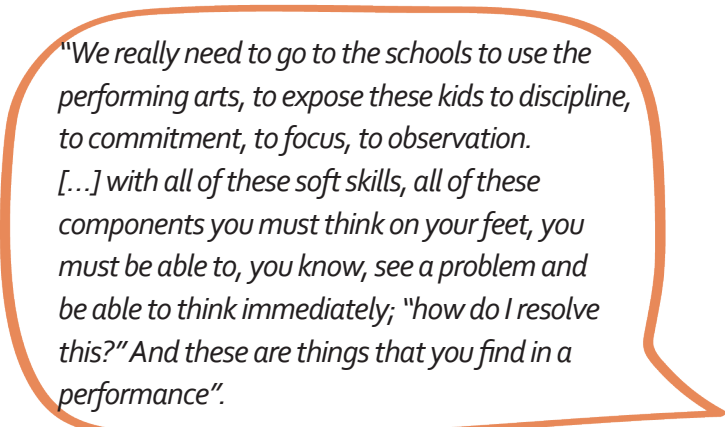
The projects have been embraced by the communities, especially as they all engaged with showing how art (from music, and design to theatre and film) can create platforms for important conversations on subjects such as mental health, hunger, disabilities, inequalities, and cultural heritage. All projects highlighted the added value and impact that these creative activities can have and many - as discussed in Impact via *Collaborative Voucher Scheme* projects - engaged with the UN Sustainable Development Goals. As one participant reflected: “I believe that more initiatives like this are needed to support the growth of the African Creative Industry in order to build a sustainable future for younger generations”. While another highlighted how this type of collaborative work gave them the opportunity to work on what they were passionate about “film, community and impact”. In relation to reaching and engaging with SDGs, many practitioners highlighted that arts and creativity can contribute as ways to engage, disseminate and present critical topics and issues that need to be addressed by communities. As one participant described: “The project unlocked new possibilities for theatre’s engagement in social intervention. It evidenced creative, effectual and exciting modes of disseminating valuable and effective messages on the need for social and cultural development”.

Working with a range of community partners has, of course, also presented several challenges; from coordinating school calendars to connecting with community spaces and buildings as well as gaining the trust of local community or group leaders to be able to deliver the projects. However, participants reported that the transformative power of the project was eye-opening:



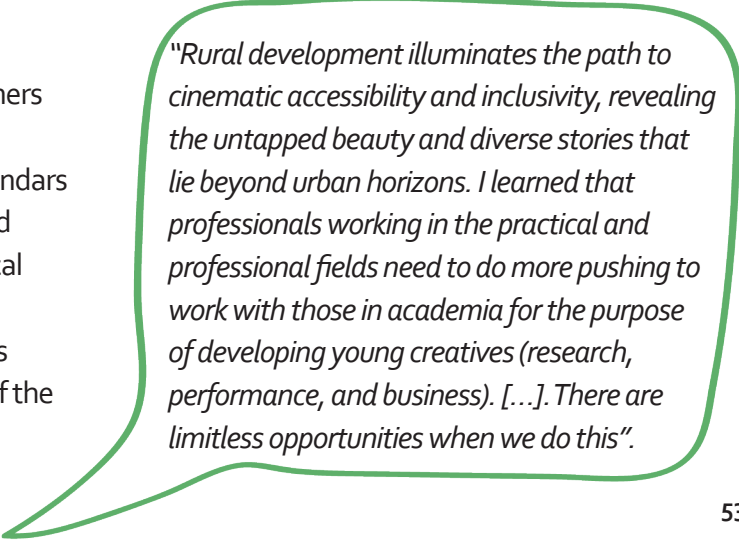
“It was such an eye-opening adventure to [see] how much of such collaborative effort and research can help to rid our society of such vices taking away the voices of women [...] With such an initiative, Africa will benefit immensely from the growth such initiatives present in introducing effective change to the society at large”.

Engaging with young people was a central aim of many projects – from children who have little access to arts, film and cultural experiences to recent graduates who need support in thinking about their careers and what is needed to make a difference in the sector. As one participant outlined:



“We really need to go to the schools to use the performing arts, to expose these kids to discipline, to commitment, to focus, to observation. [...] with all of these soft skills, all of these components you must think on your feet, you must be able to, you know, see a problem and be able to think immediately; “how do I resolve this?” And these are things that you find in a performance”.

Ultimately, in many projects, there was a need for inclusion, allowing for different stories to be told and different traditions and cultures to be shared and celebrated. The emphasis on young people and training a future generation of creatives (within and outside academia) was central to allowing those stories and processes of inclusion to continue. As one participant put it:



“Rural development illuminates the path to cinematic accessibility and inclusivity, revealing the untapped beauty and diverse stories that lie beyond urban horizons. I learned that professionals working in the practical and professional fields need to do more pushing to work with those in academia for the purpose of developing young creatives (research, performance, and business). [...] There are limitless opportunities when we do this”.

SHARING KNOWLEDGE WITH THE SECTOR: KNOWLEDGE HUB

One of the key components of the *African Hub for Sustainable Creative Economies* has been the development of a virtual knowledge hub (hereafter referred to as a 'Knowledge Hub'). The *Knowledge Hub* consists of three interconnected elements:

PROJECT WEBSITE

The site includes all the data and information developed throughout the project but as the project comes to an end, this information will be archived (but still accessible). The *Knowledge Hub* content will become the dominant content with an active blog (Figure 8) remaining open for relevant news and to promote and share relevant research that is published in the coming years with everyone (www.creative-economies-africa.org)

YOUTUBE CHANNEL

The YouTube channel (Figure 9) currently includes over 60 videos, but more are added regularly. The videos are organised under the following headings:

- ✳ *Creative Insights* (interviews with practitioners, entrepreneurs and intermediaries across Kenya, Nigeria and South Africa)
- ✳ *Creative Collaboration Stories* (video stories of the 25 projects funded by AHSCE during the past 12 months and their outcomes/learning)
- ✳ *Higher Education and Policy for Creative Economies in Africa* (8 video chapters

from the Book) and *Developing Creative Economies in Africa: Spaces and Working Practices* (8 video chapters from the Book)

- ✳ Finally, the category *Open Access* (where academics from across the globe can provide video summaries of their research on creative economies in Africa).

SOCIAL MEDIA CHANNELS

AHSCE has developed a range of active social media channels (Figure 10), on Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, YouTube and Instagram to promote the content from the blog and YouTube channel and reach as many people as possible with the knowledge that might be relevant to their work.

Through these multiple coordinated channels, the Knowledge Hub has become a point of reference to support creative entrepreneurship in Africa and raise the profile of African academic work and collaborations engaging with sustainable creative economies development in Africa. All the knowledge produced was developed with ease of access in mind, with practical advice, understandable content and opportunities for further engagement. The Knowledge Hub has facilitated equitable partnerships between the African and UK HEI partners and other intermediaries and project partners while remaining open to other African HEIs, researchers and creative entrepreneurs interested in sharing their knowledge.

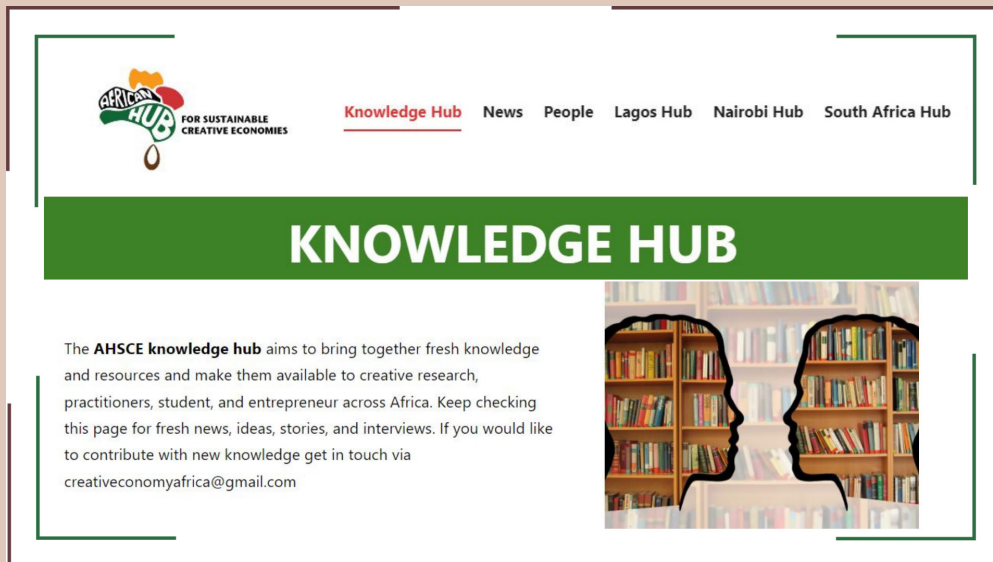


Fig. 8: The AHSCE Knowledge Hub blog

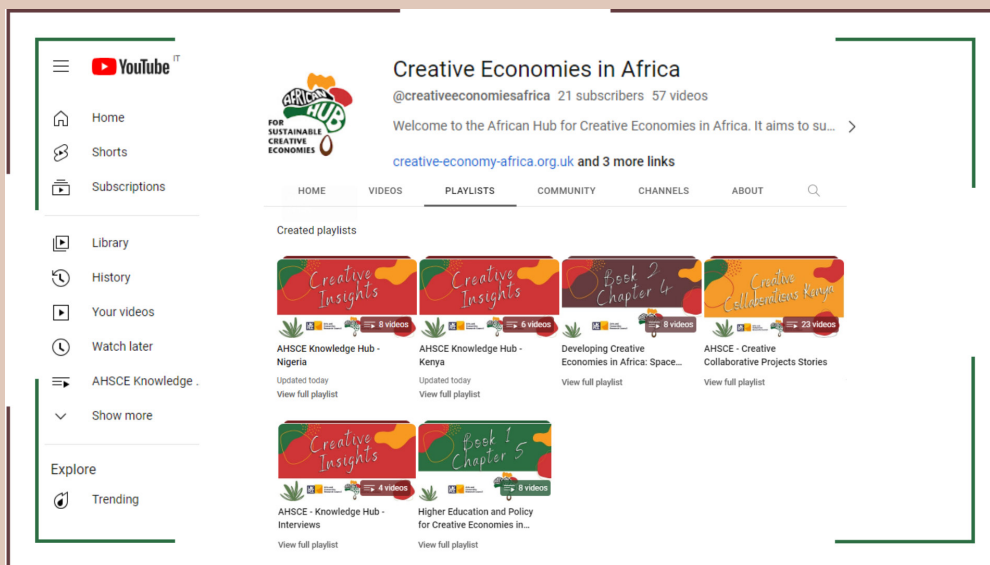


Fig. 9: The Creative Economies in Africa YouTube channel



Fig. 10: The AHSCE project social media channels

LEARNING FOR POLICY AND DEVELOPMENT

During the project, through workshops, focus groups and interviews, we asked creative entrepreneurs and creative intermediaries about the **challenges and barriers** in their respective sectors and national contexts. In so doing, we also asked participants to reflect on **potential solutions** and to **suggest policies and supports**. These discussions highlighted a range of sector and location-specific **issues**. For example, the need for greater security for theatre audiences in Nigeria, the prohibitive cost and inaccessibility of camera equipment for filmmaking in South Africa and the difficulty in obtaining appropriate fabrics and materials for fashion designers in Kenya. However, in this section, we focus on a set of overarching challenges and policy recommendations that resonate across the cases, summarised in Figure 11.

FINDING FUNDING AND BUSINESS SUPPORT

It is not surprising to report that the most common challenge highlighted by individuals working in the CCIs is accessing appropriate and sustainable funding for their businesses and activities. As one theatre director in Nigeria explained: “Talent is not one of the challenges, but funding is a huge challenge”. As in many markets around the world, the abundance of ambitious creative talent outstrips the level of funding and financing available. On one hand, national governments and local councils struggle to protect and allocate arts and culture budgets.

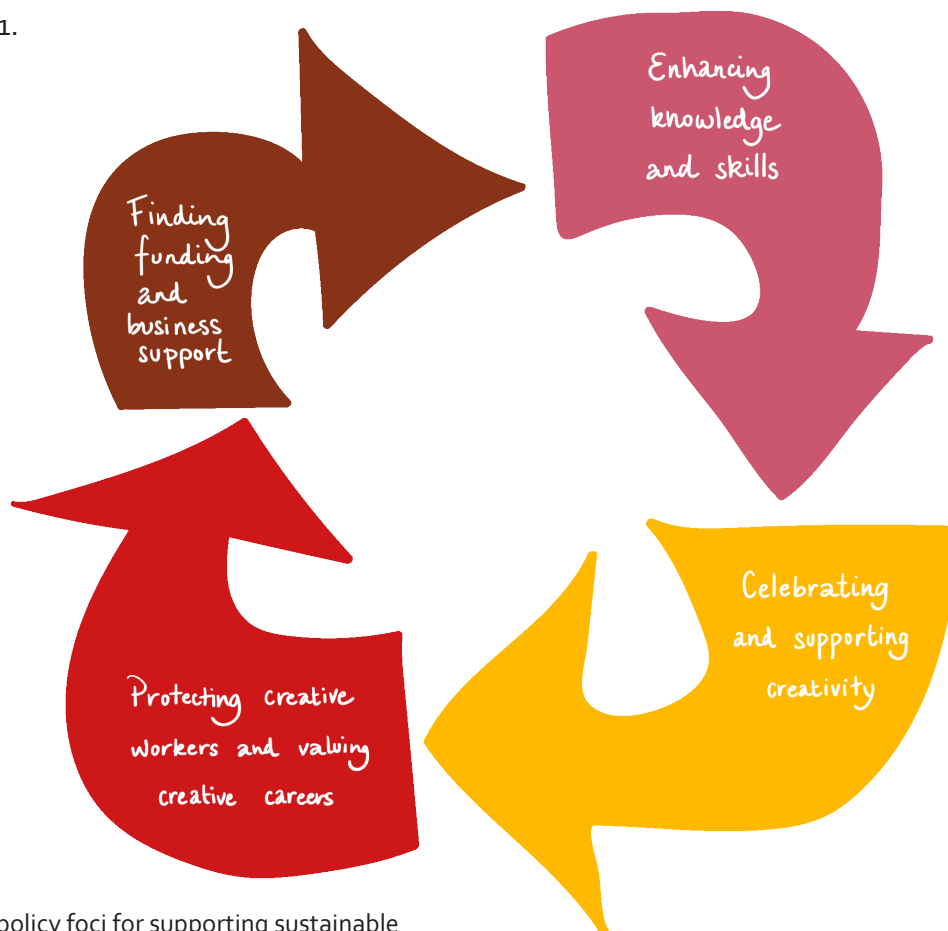


Fig. 11: Key policy foci for supporting sustainable creative economies development in Africa.



On the other hand, creative endeavors are typically regarded as high-risk investments by private sector financial institutions. To compound the problem, there is often a lack of understanding of how creative businesses work and the most appropriate ways to support them financially, whether through grants loans or investment (Njuguna et al., 2022). Indeed, while some respondents expressed the need for funding for equipment or materials others mentioned the importance of paying for space, staff or marketing. More broadly, the need for support at different stages including the initial start-up phase and subsequent expansion phases was mentioned repeatedly. Indeed, establishing sustainable business models and providing emerging creatives with support towards exploring opportunities to sustain their practices or businesses was a focus of some of the Collaborative Voucher Scheme projects across all African hubs. **THE ENTERPRISE OF ACTING** in Nigeria, for example, offered opportunities for young people to acquire key skills including business management in the arts. In Kenya, **ENHANCING INNOVATIVE ENTREPRENEURSHIP AMONG THE YOUTH**, trained young people to produce handmade fashionable accessories in a sustainable way, to make a decent income.

With respect to policy recommendations, effective financing for CCIs requires specific knowledge and understanding of CCIs (Mokuolo et al., 2021). Specialised intermediaries working within individual sectors and locations are better placed to provide effective financial support and we encourage governments to support and work with these actors. We suggest continuing efforts to understand the different levels and vehicles of funding to match the needs of creative entrepreneurs and businesses. For example, short-term

access to expensive equipment is often much more important and strategic than purchasing the equipment outright. Moreover, the terms of repayment for loans need to reflect the business development cycles and market realities of creative businesses. As one fashion designer in Kenya argued: "the typical monthly remittances which are provided by the banks would not really work for the fashion industry. You don't expect someone will have produced a design and will be able to sell it, break even and pay back the loan within a month".

HEIs can also play an important role in this space. They can provide incubation spaces and other short-term infrastructure for graduates and creatives to start or pilot projects and ideas (Ashton and Comunian, 2019). The work of the AHSCE in the past 12 months has shown that a limited amount of funding alongside knowledge and support can enable interesting projects and collaborations to get started. HEIs can also play an important role in providing rehearsal space, access to technology or tools for recent graduates and working with other partners to support their future journey. This does not have to happen in isolation, the work of the University of Witwatersrand with the Tshimologong Digital Innovation Precinct and of the University of Lagos with Unbashed Foundation showcase the important role that HEIs can play in facilitating access to infrastructure and funding for local creatives and recent graduates.

ENHANCING KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS

Although some creative entrepreneurs and creative intermediaries called for

higher levels of government funding to support their sectors, the majority of respondents were very realistic about budgetary pressures and realities. Rather than 'handouts', many expressed a desire for knowledge, information and skills that would help them develop their creative businesses and activities more effectively within the constraints of the funding landscape and competitive dynamics of their chosen marketplace. Indeed, a lack of knowledge of financial and business modelling, strategies to monetise creative content and general financial literacy were mentioned as key barriers to success. As one fashion designer from Kenya explained: "my main challenge with the business is not having a predictable cash flow situation [...] I don't have the capacity to do financial modelling, to do sales reports, to see trends about what's moving and what's not. Also, there's not a lot of consumer data around spending habits for customers".

A range of Collaborative Voucher Scheme projects addressed the lack of diverse skills, from business to technical to practical and helped to improve knowledge across the Hub sectors. In South Africa **GIRLS IN GAMING** developed the technical skills of young girls in interactive digital media, while in Nigeria **ART FOR LIFE** helped theatre practitioners enhance their business, storytelling and branding skills.

Tax policies also emerged as a central issue across the cases. Naturally, some respondents lamented the challenge of paying the required taxes, especially when starting up. As one fashion label director in Kenya explained:

"[we have asked the Kenya Revenue Authority] if we can have a tax holiday for designers who are starting out. Maybe you are given time, about five years, to just run

your business and do your records properly and build your business before starting to pay taxes. [As it stands] by the time you are figuring everything out, how to buy fabric and how to develop your business, you are not filing properly every month and after six months you have a penalty of Ksh 60,000 which is quite discouraging".

But most expressed frustration with simply understanding tax policies and how to be compliant. As one Director from South Africa explained: "We have brilliant artists who are terrified of their tax situation [and reluctant to apply for funding as a result]". Or as a writer in South Africa explained:

"When you have a production company in South Africa, it's important for your documentation to be in order, and I'm talking about your SARS compliance, I'm talking about your BEE, all these things, you know. So, those things should be things that we get to learn [...] But people don't know how to go about these things. I remember when I was sorting it out for my company, the SARS compliance, I don't know anything about the e-filing website, I was so confused. When I logged in, I'm like, I don't know what I'm doing. I went directly to SARS. They told me that they can't help me".

Beyond tax, respondents mentioned the challenge of finding and accessing relevant and contextually specific information to help develop and run their businesses. As a member of the British Council's Art Programme in Kenya puts it:

"So you will have young people who are really very talented in their craft but they are not yet clear on how this becomes a business, and how to run it [...] There is a lot of information out there. But a lot of it honestly is not contextual enough. So, you will have young people using models of

the independent music artist based on the American ecosystem and wondering why it's not working for them [...] The resources in our sector are often quite scarce, across these value chains. So oftentimes, you will not find a willingness to share resources and understanding".

Furthermore, internationalisation, is seen as a challenge and often there are barriers for creatives who want to make it globally. As an Art Photographer in Kenya explained:

"There are so few creatives [in Africa] who have moved on to global careers. There's a limited number of people I can speak to [...] I can speak to many creatives who are based in the West, who are based in New York, and who are based in London, but it's a lot harder to find a creative working globally based out of their home country in Africa. [I want to know] how do I operate as a creative who is based in a third-world country, but, and very much wants to stay there, rather than move to the West? How does that work? Has anybody done it successfully? Is there a guidebook for that?".

With respect to policy, suggestions include targeted tax clinics and financial literacy workshops. Creating more platforms which provide access to relevant information by location and sector was also mentioned as well as forums where creatives in Africa can seek and provide advice to others and answer 'Africa specific questions'. The AHSCE project *Knowledge Hub*, has tried to create a new online space for this to happen, in particular, the online interviews with key intermediaries introduced viewers to key organisations in their country operating in the sector and able to help. Experienced professionals shared the challenges of their journey in the sector and offer strategies and solutions. In this space, creative intermediaries and HEIs also have

a big role to play. For example, the British Council in Kenya has developed a course on understanding the creative economy in Africa. It is described by one respondent as:

"an entry point for emerging creative entrepreneurs to just get their feet wet and recognise how things are structured here. It uses examples from across the continent that are relevant to them. We aim to provide a really good starting point for creative businesses and then see our grant programs and our tenders as a potential next step, once there's an understanding of how to run your business, and what the needs are".

PROTECTING CREATIVE WORKERS AND VALUING CREATIVE CAREERS

Across many of the *Collaborative Voucher Scheme* projects, practitioners mentioned the importance of creating opportunities for more young people to enter creative careers and to value creative work as a potential future career.

In Nigeria, projects like **VOICE IT: AN ART(IVISM) INCUBATION PROGRAMME, YOUNG NIGERIAN THESPIAN and THE BLIND MINSTREL**; in Kenya projects like **ENHANCING INNOVATIVE ENTREPRENEURSHIP AMONG THE YOUTH**; and in South Africa like **GIRLS IN GAMING and RURAL FILM ART SCREENINGS** worked with school children and youth in remote or underprivileged locations to inspire young people to create, perform and use technology or storytelling. As noted by a collaborator from Nigeria, parents and the wider community were also engaged to enhance the understanding and appreciation of creative careers: "projects like this, which I think should happen a lot

more often, provided us the opportunity to correct some of the erroneous beliefs held by parents and guardians about the performing arts, as a profession meant only for the dropouts, and one which is not thriving”.

However, once working in the sector, creatives in Africa often struggle to navigate and negotiate complex and competitive markets with limited resources, training and knowledge. A particular challenge relates to the lack of protection for the rights and pay of individual workers. Respondents highlighted the prevalence of working on projects or selling products but then struggling to get paid or not getting paid at all. As one fashion designer in Kenya highlighted: “I've had friends of mine who work in different parts of the creative industry like photography, who've told me they've worked on campaigns and then didn't get paid [...] I feel like there should be at least some legal recourse or legal framework so that it makes clients feel like that's not an okay thing to do”.

Long and demanding hours are also common in the CCIs which many respondents raised as unsafe and unsustainable. As one film and tv director in South Africa explained:

“The working conditions are bad. The film industry not having a union, not having a structure because, in America, there are structures. Everyone has to abide by those structures in the film industry. The conditions, the expectations because they've normalised these bad working conditions we have in the industry, and now producers feel like if you don't, you're not doing a job. Like for instance, long hours of working. I mean, there are so many stories of people who have died coming from work”.

We note that a lack of protection and precarious working conditions are experienced by creative workers around the world, and that this has been challenged further by the Covid pandemic (England et al., 2022). However, in countries where there are higher levels of informal labour and economic uncertainty, a lack of formal regulation can exacerbate issues even further (Joffe et al., 2022). Recommendations for social safety nets ensuring the rights and status of artists and all cultural workers (UNESCO, 1980) provide useful international frameworks, but more research and data is needed on national creative economies, markets and the experiences and needs of creatives in different countries (Brydges and Hracz 2019). This can support the creation of effective policies and support sustainable and inclusive creative economy development.

There is also a sense that existing industry bodies are not well coordinated or able to effectively work together to support and develop creative talent. As one Theatre-Based Artistic Director in Nigeria described:

“The major failing of the creative industry is the fact that all the bodies within the sector are not working towards developing the actors and the artists. I believe that the so-called guilds that they have should be more people-oriented, as opposed to what they're doing right now. [For example] You could do a job for a producer, he doesn't pay you. And you are a member of NANTAP (National Association of Nigerian Theatre Arts Practitioners), and they wouldn't fight for you. For me those kinds of things are not right”.

As well as developing more effective, explicit and transparent labour laws and regulations to protect CCIs workers and

gathering more data to support evidence-based policymaking, policy suggestions include better integration of existing organisational bodies, establishing clear mandates and transparent governance systems. Enhanced collaboration between industry bodies and intermediaries can enable coordinated communication with policymakers providing appropriate channels are in place (see below). Once again, issues related to labour protection and precarious employment conditions are not an 'African' problem, as they are found in creative markets around the world (Joffe et al., 2022). Yet, context matters and each local market and industry features elements of specificity which shape the dynamics and experience of creative work. Therefore, it is useful to learn from other contexts and industries and to think about what supports and policies have been effective but in so doing it is crucial to craft bespoke solutions which acknowledge local conditions and uniqueness (Joffe 2021).

CELEBRATING AND SUPPORTING CREATIVITY

While acknowledging efforts by local and national governments as well as industry bodies to develop, enhance and promote Fashion, Theatre and Film and Digital Media respondents were eager for more support and recognition of the important and growing role that CCIs play in African economies. Particular emphasis was placed on producing for domestic markets and getting Kenyans, Nigerians and South Africans to appreciate, value and consume local creative content. As one fashion brand director in Kenya explained:

"The government support has been great. Ministry of Industrialization, we work closely

*with them, we have worked with KEPROBA (*Kenya Export Promotion and Branding Agency) so that we're able to teach our designers to showcase what we are doing. And you know, just like the designers, educate Kenyans, and let Kenyans know. We have been able to do work on the strategy for Kenya - Buy Kenya Build Kenya - and we are glad that this is something being implemented. Fashion Fridays, as well. It's something that we worked on. And you know, it's big now and I think also British Council have been trying to also emphasise on that, so we just try to see how do we make Kenyans wear what is made locally and celebrate what is made locally".*

Many of the collaborative projects aimed to promote underrepresented cultural content, stories or heritage. In so doing they highlighted that the creativity of local artists, communities, scriptwriters, and designers needs to be better understood, appreciated and valued by consumers and audiences. For example, in Kenya **LUO WOMEN AND POWER IN FASHION** showcased the beauty and pride of the Luo community and fashion through videography, photography and the creation of a new fashion collection. In South Africa **RURAL FILM ART SCREENINGS** and **EKASI DOCUMENTARY FILM SCREENINGS** raised awareness and enhanced community engagement with film and cinema.

Finally, many respondents mentioned the need for policy continuity. We were told that it is common for new policies to be announced regularly and others to be discontinued without notice. New governments tend to shake things up to make their mark without always carefully considering what is working and what needs improvement. As one Actor in Nigeria asserted:

"We have some good policies but one of the major disadvantages for us is that each government comes on its own, and does what he or she pleases, without recourse to what has been. So when there's a new government, we have to start all over again, we have to start befriending them again, we have to start lobbying again, we have to start from the beginning again".

As with access to information, the landscape needs to be clear and stable for creatives to operate effectively. In simple terms, new or incoming Governments should continue effective policies and make things clear when changes are made to improve policies. As with the recommendation above, more research and data collection on creative economies and industry/market development in Africa can provide an evidence base for policy continuation and improvement or highlight where and how a new policy could be implemented effectively.



LEGACY AND FUTURE RESEARCH

Beyond the lifespan of the funded project and the learning shared in this report, the *Knowledge Hub* will provide an enduring and valuable legacy for the AHSCE project. It will continue to provide a point of reference for creative economy stakeholders in Africa (Figure 12). It will also continue to raise the profile of creative economies as important career pathways and areas of work and provide a meaningful focus on teaching and research in this area. In so doing, it will also provide knowledge for the ongoing development of new creative initiatives across the continent.

For all the stakeholders - from creative entrepreneurs, intermediaries, academics and graduates as well as policymakers - we will continue to update the *Knowledge Hub* with news, activities, interviews, and research videos. The project team is committed to showcasing research on Africa's creative economies going forward via other funding or resources when possible. This includes inspirational stories and examples of best practices and knowledge from experienced and successful entrepreneurs. This content could be used as teaching resources and to raise awareness and appreciation of the value of creative education (to assist recruitment and course development and to leverage institutional support and partnerships). The content also illustrates the work of intermediaries and the needs of the sector in relation to policy. Another aim is to make the hub truly pan-African by encouraging research from other African countries and projects to be featured and shared through the Hub.

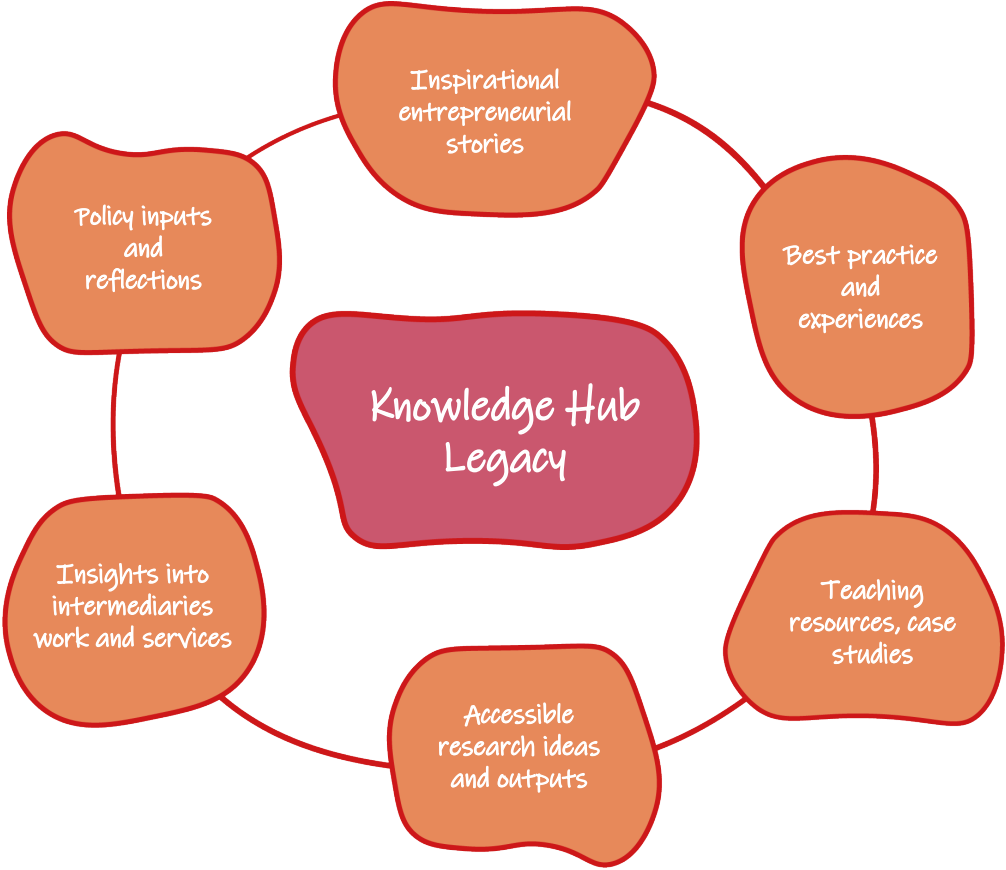


Fig. 12: The AHSCE Knowledge Hub legacy and future.

Finally, the launch of a new Africa-Europe Clusters of Research Excellence (CoRE) on *Creative Economies: Cultures, Innovation and Sustainability* with the support of the African Research Universities Alliance (ARUA) and The Guild of European Research-Intensive Universities (The Guild) will enable fruitful collaborations and knowledge sharing to continue. This CoRE will examine the transformational potential of cultural and creative economies and aims to identify, empower, and protect the value of creativity for inclusive and sustainable growth and development. Building on the AHSCE project, at its heart will be research and capacity building that will shape the next generation of scholars and engaged researchers, specifically addressing three core research themes:

- ✦ Sustainable and inclusive business models and markets for the creative industries underpinned by technology and sustainability;
- ✦ Innovation, creation, protection and development for cultural and creative producers;
- ✦ Heritage, communities, socio-cultural value and inclusive development models.



Fig. 13: Africa-Europe Clusters of Research Excellence (CoRE) logo



The African Research Universities Alliance (ARUA) is composed of eighteen leading universities in Africa, expanding and significantly enhancing the quality of research done in Africa by African researchers. ARUA develops local research excellence through collaboration to find solutions to the development problems of Africa. It is set to become a pan-African network for bringing research and academic excellence to the fore throughout the region by developing strong and viable research universities.

The Guild of European Research-Intensive Universities (The Guild). Founded in 2016, The Guild comprises twenty-one of Europe's most distinguished research-intensive universities in sixteen countries and is dedicated to enhancing the voice of academic institutions, their researchers, and their students. The Guild is committed to the pursuit of excellence, the importance of truth-seeking and trust-building as the foundation of public life, and the creation of new knowledge for the benefit of society, culture, and economic growth.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Roberta Comunian is Professor of Creative Economies at the Department for Culture, Media and Creative Industries at King's College London (UK). She is interested in the relationship between public and private investments in the arts, art and cultural regeneration projects, cultural and creative work, careers, and creative social economies. She has also undertaken research on knowledge transfer and creative industries and the role of higher education in creative economies through funded AHRC grants. She is recognised internationally for her work on creative graduates in the UK and their career trajectories. She has contributed extensively on the development of sustainable creative economies through EU and internationally funded projects.

Lauren England is a Lecturer in Creative Economies at the Department for Culture, Media and Creative Industries at King's College London (UK). She is interested in creative enterprise and education with a focus on craft and sustainable development in both global North and global South contexts. She has published research on the evolution of craft skills, craft and fashion entrepreneurship, higher education and social enterprises and the impact of COVID-19 on creative workers. In addition to ongoing research on creative economy development and fashion entrepreneurship in Africa, Lauren is also researching urban cultural policy relationships for small arts organisations in London.

Brian J. Hracz is an Associate Professor at the School of Geography and Environmental Science at the University of Southampton (UK). He is interested in how digital technologies and global competition are reshaping the marketplace for cultural products and the working lives and spatial dynamics of entrepreneurs and intermediaries in the creative economy. He has published articles about the music and fashion industries, curation, the mobilities of 'talent' and culturally driven economic development. In addition to his ongoing work on creative economies in Africa, he is also currently researching the processes and spatial dynamics of curation and the trans-local nature of cultural scenes.

Avril Joffe is the Post Graduate Coordinator of the Cultural Policy and Management Department at the Wits School of Arts, University of the Witwatersrand in Johannesburg (South Africa). She is an economic sociologist with experience in the field of cultural policy, culture and development and the cultural economy on the African continent. Avril works in the intersection of academia and practice in fields such as culture in urban life, culture and the cultural economy in realising a just and sustainable development, fairness in international cultural cooperation, decent work and the rights and status of artists and cultural professionals as well as teaching pedagogy for post graduate studies in the cultural economy.

Waithira Kibuchi is Creative Partnership Coordinator for AHSCE at the University of Nairobi (Kenya). She holds a Master's degree in Fashion Business Management from the University of Westminster and a Bachelor's degree in Design from the University of Nairobi. She believes in reflecting on who we are and how we got here to contribute to the practice, networks, and knowledge that foster sustainable creative entrepreneurship and help shape the societies we strive to build. Her commitment to supporting collaboration and innovation has been shaped by experiences and relationships built across higher education institutions, business support organisations, and the private sector while working in fashion product development.

Vuyolwethu Madyibi is Creative Partnerships Coordinator for the AHSCE at the University of Witwatersrand (South Africa). She obtained a Bachelor of Arts Honours in Applied Theatre, focusing on Theatre in Education, Communities, and Social Contexts from the University of the Witwatersrand. She has prior experience in the world of digital filmmaking. Currently a MA in Cultural Policy and Management candidate at Wits University, Vuyolwethu envisions a future where artists are not only empowered creatively but also equipped with the necessary tools to thrive in an ever-changing arts industry. Through her research and expertise, she aims to shape policies that promote inclusivity, accessibility, and sustainable funding for arts organizations of all sizes.

Ogake Mosomi lectures at the School of the Arts and Design, University of Nairobi (Kenya). She is the thematic head for Fashion and Textiles. Her ongoing PhD focuses on developing practical training approaches for fashion designers and looking for ways to strengthen linkages between industry and academia. Most recently, Ogake published a paper analyzing current skills development in Kenya's clothing and fashion industry. She has also been a Business Mentor for various creative incubators run by Metta Kenya and the British Council (Kenya), which aim to assist the youth on entrepreneurship & inclusion in the creative industries. Ogake is also a practicing fashion designer specializing in creating high-end, bespoke bridal gowns, which is in line with her passion to change perceptions about local design.

Folakemi Ogungbe is a Creative Partnerships Coordinator for the AHSCE at the University of Lagos. She is the Head, Digital Media Unit of the Nigerian Film Corporation and the National Film Institute. She has served as a facilitator for the Corporation at strategic training sessions for the youth across Nigeria. She has also served as a Production Manager in various documentary productions for the Corporation. She holds a PhD in Theatre Arts from the University of Ibadan, Nigeria. Her research trajectory covers specific topics in Film Studies and Performing Arts. She is a fellow of the Lagos Studies Association (LSA) and won a slot at Graduate Student Mentorship Program at the LSA in 2019.

Duro Oni is Fellow of the Nigerian Academy of Letters, University of Lagos (Nigeria). Professor Duro Oni's research interests are in Theatre Arts Design and Aesthetics and the Nigerian Film Industry. He was Deputy Vice-Chancellor at the University of Lagos from 2013 to 2017, Dean Faculty of Arts from 2009 to 2013 and Head, Department of Creative Arts from 2006–2009. He was also the Chief Executive of the Federal Government Parastatal, Centre for Black and African Arts and Civilization from 2000-2006. Professor Duro Oni has ten books and over 60 articles in national and international outlets.

Cornelius Onyekaba, is a bio-dramatist, theatre/film scholar and a seasoned carnival and festival curator, University of Lagos (Nigeria). He was a former college teacher, film production manager, and journalist with the Sun Newspaper in Nigeria. He is currently a Senior Lecturer of theatre and film studies at the Theatre Arts Unit of the Department of Creative Arts, University of Lagos. Cornelius is author of the following biographic plays: Sola Fosudo is Coming, Adefolahan: The Musical in honour of High-Chief Winnifred Awosika and the twin quintessential Fela Son of Kuti and Fela and the Kalakuta Queens musicals. In 2005, he initiated the University of Lagos Annual Carnival which is known as Unilag-Africaribbean Carnival.

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This report charts a journey of research, collaboration, and impact for the development of sustainable creative economies in Africa. The international research team showed us the value of working across knowledge sharing, capacity building, and research engagement. The report includes essential reflection on the challenges of international collaborations, the administrative barriers, and the obstacles that need to be overcome to make collaborative research across Africa and Europe happen. The learning shared here will influence the work of future researchers in the field and beyond.

Professor 'Funmi Olonisakin, Vice President (International, Engagement & Service), King's College London

This report is an excellent showcase of the range of collaborations that African universities are establishing with their national creative industries, local practitioners and policymakers. The contribution that universities can make to the creative economies has great potential for the sustainable development of Africa. The opportunity for this project to continue and engage with more African universities through the new Africa-Europe Cluster of Excellence on 'Creative Economies: Culture, Innovation and Sustainability', led by ARUA and The Guild, offers great hope to empower researchers, practitioners and communities to grow and achieve greater impact.

Professor Ernest Aryeetey, Secretary-General, ARUA

The AHSCE has done pioneering work on the 'missing pillar' of sustainable development, translating new knowledge into cultural and economic practices, acquiring in turn rich experiences in south-south and north-south collaboration. I am delighted that, based on these firm foundations, the AHSCE has become the centrepiece of an Africa-Europe Cluster of Excellence on 'Creative Economies: Culture, Innovation and Sustainability', led by ARUA and The Guild. With a long-term focus on becoming the leading knowledge and innovation hub for the creative economies of Africa, the Cluster not only fulfils its original key ambition to foster collaboration within the ARUA network; it does much more, by bringing together African universities and other partners within and beyond ARUA and attracting new European partners across the English Channel.

Professor Jan Palmowski, Lead on Africa-Europe Clusters of Research Excellence, The Guild