

SOUND CONNECTS FUND

PROJECTS & LEARNINGS

Accelerating the development and increasing the capacity of the cultural and creative industries in Southern Africa.



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A man in a white shirt is performing a handstand on a stage. The lighting is blue and purple, creating a dramatic atmosphere. The man is in the center of the frame, with his body arched and his head pointing down. The background is dark with some blurred lights.

'SOUND'

**A strong
connecting
force
across
many
sectors**

ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

African Organisation for Standardisation : **ARSO**

African Union : **AU**

African Union Commission : **AUC**

Cultural and creative industries : **CCIs**

European Union : **EU**

International Federation of the Photographic Industry : **IFPI**

Gross domestic product : **GDP**

Monitoring and evaluation : **M&E**

Morija Museum & Archives : **MMA**

Music In Africa Foundation : **MIAF**

National Arts Council : **NAC**

Organisation of the African, Caribbean and Pacific States : **OACPS**

Southern African Development Community : **SADC**

Sound Connects Fund : **SCF**

PREFACE

Over the past 40 months, the Music In Africa Foundation, in partnership with Goethe-Institut, implemented the Sound Connects Fund (SCF). This initiative focused on accelerating development and strengthening the capacities of the cultural and creative sectors in Southern Africa. It has been an absolute privilege to witness these projects come to life, transitioning from mere proposals into fully fledged enterprises that are now making positive change in our region.

This report is important for a number of reasons: it documents the inspiring efforts of 36 beneficiary organisations as they sought to address some of the region's biggest challenges, and illustrates the potential and impact of creativity on societies and economies.

More specifically, it examines the daily operational procedures implemented by each organisation for the funded projects, and outlines each project's goals and approaches while highlighting its achievements and outcomes. The aim of the report is to enhance the capabilities of professionals, leaders and organisations. Furthermore, it proposes ways to improve access to financing and increase visibility and market access for cultural and creative practitioners.

It is my hope that practitioners and organisations in the cultural and creative industries will be inspired by these incredible projects. I also hope that the good work captured herein can be replicated across the SADC region in the future.

I would like to give special thanks to the SCF team members who have worked tirelessly to support the funded organisations throughout the implementation of these projects. Without them, the high level of success would not have been reached. Gratitude is also extended to the ACP-EU Culture programme and all of our partners who provided support, consultation and research across the nine focus countries during the conceptualisation and implementation processes.

Katlego Taunyane
SCF Regional Coordinator



INTRODUCTION

THE CULTURAL AND CREATIVE INDUSTRIES IN SOUTHERN AFRICA

The cultural value of artistic expression is indisputable. Africa's broad cultural and creative goods sector employs about half-a-million people and generates \$4.2 billion in revenue annually.¹ The products of Africa's cultural and creative industries (CCIs) are becoming increasingly popular worldwide, particularly from regions like Southern Africa, which is home to rich histories, traditions, music and art.²

The cultural renaissance propelled by the Fourth Industrial Revolution has seen socio-political and economic discourse migrating to online spaces, and with it an increase in demand for new formats and content. Between 2019 and 2021, Southern Africa saw an increase of 23% in these online spaces. Consequently, there is now broader global access to the creative works and cultural diversity of Southern Africa. This has opened up new opportunities to discover and invest in the creativity of a region with a population of 125 million people and a median age of 17 to 26 years.

THE CHALLENGE

Despite the contribution of the CCIs to the African economy, the sector is confronted with systemic challenges that prevent it from reaching its full potential. In addition to the shortage of professional education and skills development, the lack of infrastructure poses one of the most significant challenges for the CCIs in Southern Africa. Examples include the absence of suitable event spaces and weak technical infrastructure, both resulting from limited access to funding. This is particularly problematic for small businesses and individual artists.

THE OPPORTUNITY

The African creative sector harbours a substantial talent pool comprising formally and informally skilled creatives and cultural entrepreneurs. There

is a need for increased emphasis on producing high-quality content, goods and services, and on enhancing visibility. Crucial concerns such as access to finance and critical markets must be addressed adequately.

The African Union's Agenda 2063 acknowledges Africa's strong cultural identity and common heritage as integral to the continent's socio-economic development.³ This is due to the potential of the CCIs to stimulate other industries, such as tourism, media, investment banking and digital economies.

KEY OPPORTUNITIES TO BE EXPLORED INCLUDE:

1. Emerging creators and new markets

Thanks to the widespread use of new media technologies and the constantly evolving digital revolution, emerging artists from Southern Africa have greater access to new markets and audiences than ever before.

2. Southern Africa's cultural reawakening

In recent years, governments and policymakers in Southern Africa have realised the importance of the CCIs as an avenue to boost socio-economic development.⁴ As such, policies are being developed to support entrepreneurship and formalisation channels for artists to create economically sustainable careers, which will, in turn, stimulate ancillary industries such as



cultural tourism and contribute to the wider region's GDP.

3. Potential global investment

The technology boom has heightened the visibility for African art forms, with some commentators noting that "content is the new crude oil".⁵ The relatively untapped economic potential of the CCIs in Southern Africa has captured the interest of global investors and, if properly managed, could attract much-needed foreign direct investment.

With a thorough understanding of the opportunities and challenges in the region, the Sound Connects Fund sought to accelerate development towards increased capacities and sustainable structures of the CCIs in Southern Africa.

THE SOUND CONNECTS FUND

Sound does more than entertain; it communicates and brings people together. This is evident in the collaborative nature of "call and response" and the participatory rituals of dance and music, which embody the spirit of ubuntu – a sense of community and togetherness that lies at the heart of African culture.

Inspired by the soundscapes of the African continent and beyond, the Sound Connects Fund (SCF) employs sound as a unifying element between different creative disciplines, countries and people. It aims to contribute to the development of more sustainable CCIs within Southern Africa.

The SCF is a collaborative effort implemented by the Music In Africa Foundation (MIAF) in partnership with Goethe-Institut and funded by the Organisation of the African, Caribbean and Pacific States (OACPS) and the European Union (EU). As part of its mandate, the SCF focuses on enhancing the CCIs in Southern Africa. It achieves this goal through grant funding and comprehensive capacity-building programmes for arts, culture and creative industry organisations.

The SCF provided support to grantees in various sectors, including the performing arts, visual arts, animation, film, gaming, photography, videography and related disciplines. The recipients are based in Angola, Botswana, Eswatini, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, Zambia and Zimbabwe. Africa's CCIs are ripe for investment and growth opportunities, with African creative products like film, festivals, traditional music and digital goods gaining global popularity. Africa's expanding digital economy positions the CCIs for growth, particularly among the continent's young and urban populations.

THE SCF IS COMMITTED TO ACCELERATING CCI DEVELOPMENT IN SOUTHERN AFRICA, FOCUSING ON THREE KEY OUTCOMES:

1. Improving the capacity of creative professionals, leaders and organisations to enhance the contribution to the social and economic development of the cultural and creative sectors of Southern Africa.
2. Improving access to financing to support the creation and sustainability of businesses and organisations in the cultural and creative sectors of Southern Africa.
3. Increasing visibility and market access of creative practitioners and artists from Southern Africa.

These focal points are integral in laying the foundation for future growth and success in these vibrant sectors.

THE GRANTEES

With a substantial financial boost, 36 creative organisations with innovative and viable concepts demonstrated their initiatives' scalability and market relevance by transforming their ideas into real-life, sustainable solutions. The learnings from these projects, representing a cross section of the CCIs in the Southern African Development Community (SADC) region, offer valuable insights for additional interventions in similar contexts. By defining key topics, the SCF translated the challenges observed in the region into action points to strategically support the growth of the CCIs across Southern Africa.

The creative organisations and projects highlighted in this report leverage technological advancements to develop new and improved products, processes and services that take local contexts into account. Many have taken simple actions to remove barriers to creative expression, and some have adopted commercialisation mechanisms to amplify their work and meaningfully contribute to a growing creative economy. Capacity building and cultural education programmes have been central for many of the grant organisations. The SCF grant organisations were required to demonstrate proficiency in one or more of the specific focus areas listed below.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FOR CCI PRACTITIONERS IN SOUTHERN AFRICA

The SCF grantees offered a blend of programmes that include training and capacity building, mentoring and bursary support to hubs, thus building foundational and advanced skills. Key areas include enhancing business acumen, like market identification and income diversification, alongside nurturing technical expertise in digital, sound and video editing. Integral to this approach is also an emphasis on intellectual property rights and self-promotion strategies, equipping creative practitioners to navigate and thrive in the competitive global market.

INCUBATION OF TALENT AND SERVICES IN THE PERFORMING ARTS

The SCF grantees were dedicated to incubating performing arts talent to support their growth. Projects focused on South-South collaborations designed to build strong networks, encourage cross-cultural exchanges, and enhance the overall mobility within the CCIs. This includes artist residencies, exchanges, new talent programmes and competitions. Projects prioritised initiatives that promise long-term benefits, ensuring that creative professionals experience sustainable growth and make a significant impact in the global cultural landscape.

AFFORDABLE ACCESS TO PROFESSIONAL SERVICES AND FACILITIES

The grantees were eager to respond to the demand for professional services and infrastructure. This is especially crucial for underrepresented groups and people with limited access to services and facilities. A number of projects provided free or low-cost access to a variety of essential resources – from high-quality venues and professional recording and editing studios to key services such as legal, videography, photography and publicity support. This resulted in a notable increase in the quality and quantity of creative outputs, and could provide opportunities for formal education and training.

SUSTAINABLE OPPORTUNITIES FOR SHOWCASING QUALITY PRODUCTS

Some SCF-supported projects revolutionised the way creative products are showcased, offering sustainable opportunities for practitioners to reach wider audiences and engage in rapid mobility and exchange. These platforms

encompass a diverse range of opportunities, including festivals and venues offering regular events such as residencies, concerts, theatre performances and vibrant trade fairs. Additionally, festival circuits were being developed to actively foster sustainable mobility ecosystems for creatives. Conferences and other network-building platforms complemented these initiatives – all designed to amplify the reach and impact of creative practitioners.

DISCOVERY PLATFORMS

Some programmes pioneered the development of platforms, both digital and physical, to elevate the presence and accessibility of local creative products and services in their countries. These platforms aim to build lasting awareness and enable the discovery and distribution of creative outputs across local, regional and international markets. The initiatives range from streaming services and audio-visual apps to innovative online distribution methods, including tailored websites and digital tools. The integration of radio, podcasts, TV and chat platforms further expands this reach.

EXPORT-FOCUSED INITIATIVES

The SCF-funded initiatives focused on bridging the gap between local creatives and international markets, by supporting the distribution of CCI goods and services from Southern Africa to regional, continental and international markets. This is achieved through strategic partnerships, trade missions and market development programmes. An intersectional approach ensures inclusivity to prioritise historically underrepresented groups such as women, indigenous communities and people with disabilities.

SUPPORTING STARTUPS AND SUSTAINABLE SERVICES

Projects funded by the SCF were able to play a critical role in bolstering business startups and organisations that offer sustainable services within the creative sector. These services encompass a wide range of activities, including app development, effective distribution, publishing models and intellectual property management. By empowering these startups and organisations, the initiatives contributed significantly to the sector's adaptability in a rapidly evolving marketplace.

DEVELOPMENT OF CULTURAL AND CREATIVE EDUCATION PROGRAMMES

SCF-backed programmes developed cultural and creative education initiatives targeting young audiences, women and other underrepresented groups. Emphasising visual literacy and audience development, these educational programmes were integrated into state educational and civil society platforms, nurturing a new wave of informed and skilled creative professionals.

AWARENESS AND ADVOCACY

The challenges and complexities within the creative economy, particularly in relation to policy and legal frameworks, require a nuanced understanding to unlock its full potential. Addressing this, SCF-funded research activities not only scrutinised policy and the legal aspects that impact CCIs but also fuelled advocacy efforts to engage governments in substantive dialogue. By cultivating comprehensive knowledge, these initiatives empowered practitioners and stakeholders to make well-informed decisions.

GOOD PRACTICE DIGITAL PLATFORMS

In an effort to streamline access to information about funding and innovative technologies, the grantees had the opportunity to develop digital platforms based on good practices. Such platforms serve as comprehensive repositories of financing opportunities and cutting-edge technological approaches, aiding practitioners in navigating the digital age's evolving landscape.

ENTREPRENEURSHIP TOOLS

Creative players often encounter challenges in launching and growing their businesses, and therefore require access to a range of resources, tools, advice and funding. In response, the SCF grantees provided essential support to improve artists' capacities as creative entrepreneurs. Utilising technological advancements, this support was tailored to meet local needs, helping them to overcome barriers to creative expression. The grantees also implemented commercialisation strategies, enabling artists to expand the reach and influence of their work regionally and internationally.

PART 1

IMPROVING THE CAPACITY OF CREATIVE PROFESSIONALS, LEADERS AND ORGANISATIONS

It is key for skilled and experienced stakeholders to drive the cultural and creative industries (CCIs) in order to transform and accelerate them. This is particularly true in Southern Africa, a region with incredible potential that is in need of effective developmental efforts to empower its operators and allow it to compete in the global arena.

The grant projects presented in this section cover a wide range of skills – such as creative entrepreneurship training, the exploration of traditional art forms, a relearning of cultural arts, and the discovery of new-age technologies like digital animation and production. Powered by innovative thinking and a collaborative spirit, these projects sought to upskill artists, managers, producers, leaders and creative professionals with critical skills. These included copyright law, entrepreneurship, brand strategy and communications, and further extended to performance, online marketing and audio-visual production. Expertise in these areas is essential and could represent a paradigm shift in the quality of the creative products produced in the region, further laying the building blocks for a robust infrastructure where the CCIs can thrive.



MAPUTO FAST FORWARD ACADEMY

CULTIVATING MOZAMBIQUE'S CREATIVE PULSE (IDEIAS COM FUTURO)

Maputo Fast Forward Academy offers residencies to emerging and established Mozambican artists to help them develop their skills and build their careers by providing a platform to showcase their talents.

Implementing organisation	16Neto, Limitada
Duration of the grant	7 months
Region of implementation	Mozambique
Target group	Young artists, researchers, performers, producers and technicians in Mozambique

THE CONTEXT

In Mozambique, a nation rich in artistic talent and cultural diversity, there is a critical need for more structured and comprehensive support systems for the arts. Despite the abundant creativity and unique stories among local artists, they often face significant barriers due to the scarcity of creative hubs and platforms for collaboration and showcasing their work. This gap not only hinders the growth and flourishing of individual artists but also limits the community's access to diverse artistic expressions. Addressing this issue is essential for catalysing cultural exchange, fostering economic growth and fully realising the potential of Mozambique's vibrant cultural landscape.

THE PROJECT:

MAPUTO FAST FORWARD ACADEMY

Maputo Fast Forward (MFF) Academy was established by 16NetO to support emerging and established Mozambican artists. The academy offers residencies to artists to help them develop their skills and careers. It also conducts comprehensive research to strengthen knowledge of Mozambique's artistic heritage and provides a platform for showcasing talents at the 2024 Maputo Fast Forward Festival.

The academy ran a musical experiment called New Kids, which involved casting, mentoring and training young artists and technicians in the Mozambican cultural sector to improve their professional skills and display their creativity, culminating in a musical show.



In addition, the academy has established an online platform to share the MFF's creative productions and host the trilingual Radar magazine. This platform and magazine are primary channels for disseminating the academy's activities and engaging an international community.

THE THEORY OF CHANGE

In Mozambique, the scarcity of creative hubs has isolated artists with immense potential. By offering residencies, the MFF Academy has become a catalyst for artistic development, fostering the growth of skills and careers. It delves into Mozambique's artistic history through comprehensive research, ensuring the cultural narrative is preserved and enriched. The academy's commitment to showcasing talent is epitomised in the 2024 Maputo Fast Forward Festival.

The online platform and Radar magazine serve as the pulse of the academy, disseminating its vibrant cultural activities and fostering a global community of cultural engagement. The digital outreach through these platforms ensures that its cultural impact echoes far beyond the local community.

ABOUT 16NETO

16NetO is a lively cultural centre in Maputo that blends art, music, education and creative entrepreneurship through exhibitions, concerts, workshops, festivals and talks. It co-launched the Gala-Gala festival and TELA visual arts platform in 2020 and spearheaded the Maputo Fast Forward initiative in 2021 to nurture and showcase emerging talent. 16NetO has built strong relationships with various cultural players in the city, ranging from emerging artists to well-established institutions and festivals. It advocates for international collaboration and intellectual exchange.

COLLABONATION

BREAKING DOWN BARRIERS THROUGH ARTISTIC COLLABORATION

(SIHLANGANISA IAFRIKA NGEMCULO)

CollaboNation aims to boost the visibility of creative talent in the region, encourage cultural exchange across Southern African countries and enhance the skills of creative practitioners in the CCIs.

Implementing organisation	House on Fire
Duration of the grant	12 months
Region of implementation	Eswatini, Botswana, Lesotho, Mozambique, Zimbabwe
Target group	Music artists and creative professionals in the Southern African region, including Eswatini, involved in various industries such as video production and fashion

THE CONTEXT

African musicians account for just 0.3% of the top 10 000 streamed artists worldwide, highlighting the need for more significant support for emerging talent.⁶ Collaborations have emerged as a critical driver of success for African artists, providing opportunities for cross-pollination of fan bases, exposure to new markets and breaking down cultural barriers. Music collaborations have contributed significantly to the growth of the African music industry. Eswatini is not immune to these challenges.

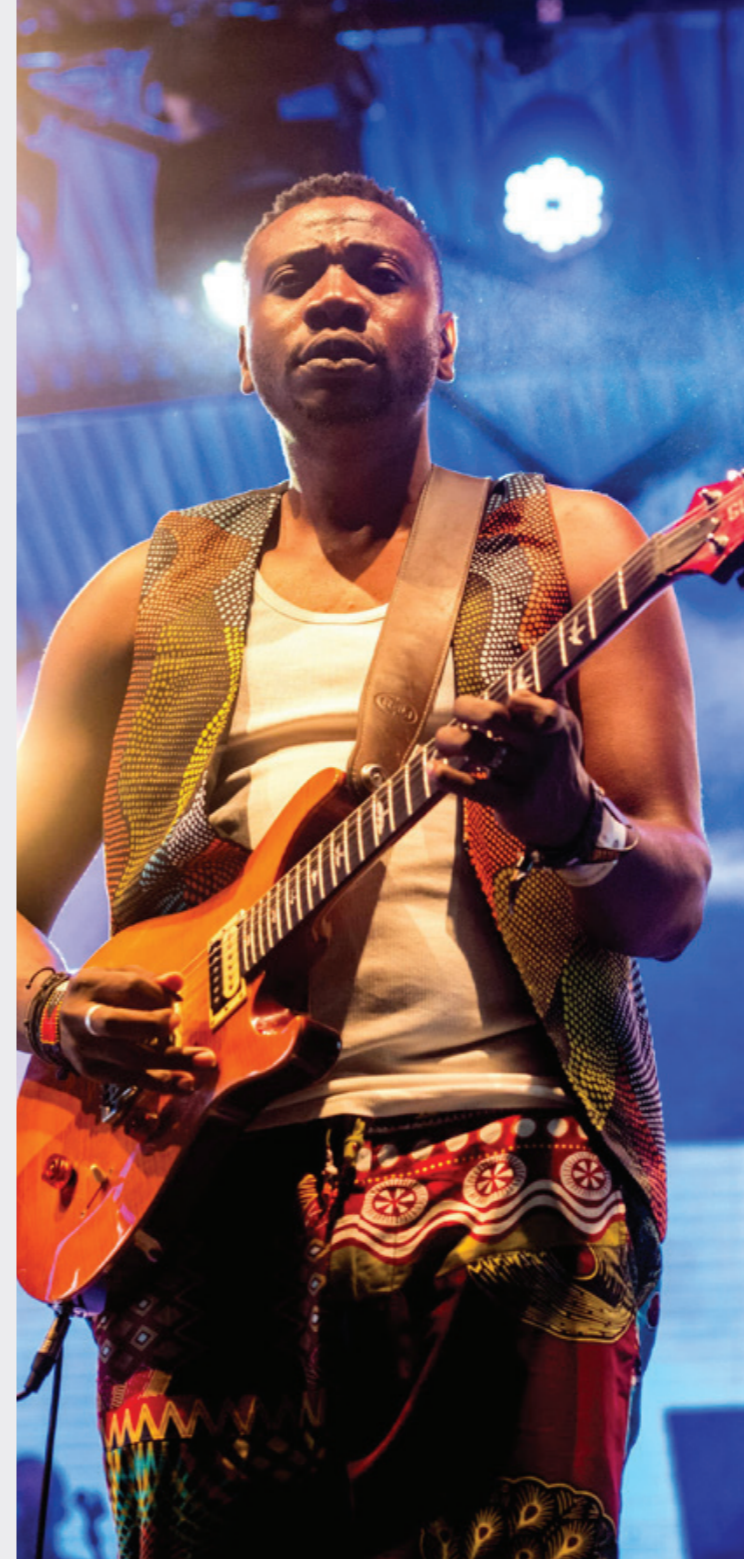
THE PROJECT: COLLABONATION

House on Fire established the CollaboNation project with several objectives: the project aimed to boost the visibility of creative talent in the region, encouraged cultural exchange across Southern African countries and enhanced the skills of creative practitioners in the CCIs. The project unfolded in two rounds of collaborations, each featuring artists from different Southern African countries. These collaborations were bolstered through comprehensive technical and logistical support, enabling artists to partner with

renowned regional producers. This collaboration facilitated the creation of cross-border musical compositions that transcended traditional genre boundaries.

To promote these cross-border music collaborations, the project utilised a one-month artist call-out process. This call-out was strategically promoted through House on Fire's digital platforms and traditional publicity channels, aiming to attract applications from artists across the region. A selection committee evaluated the artists based on their creative talent and alignment with House on Fire's socio-political values, emphasising diversity, tolerance and the inclusion of under-represented groups.

The project employed three strategies to enhance visibility and engagement: first, it punctuated the selection process with events like press launches; second, it produced a documentary series highlighting the artists' journeys; and third, it leveraged media networks to amplify key messages. These efforts attracted prominent stakeholders, including the EU ambassador to



Eswatini and the Eswatini Council of Arts and Culture, as well as coverage in print media like Times of Eswatini and Eswatini Observer. Additionally, regional and national musicians were actively involved in key events.

Selected artists received mentorship and skills development and were invited to participate in the MTN Bushfire Festival under the theme "Bring Your Fire". This festival served as a platform to showcase the musicians' talents and provided a stage for filming the documentary series, further promoting their work.

THEORY OF CHANGE

The CollaboNation project emerged to energise the music space, fostering regional unity, artistic evolution and socio-economic upliftment. Documenting artist collaborations illuminated the diverse creative processes, inspirations and aspirations, showcasing glimpses into the artists' native lands and their dreams for the region's musical future. Through strategic dissemination on social media, the project resonated with 200 000 accounts and reached an estimated 350 000 readers via traditional media.

Committed to uplifting Africa's artistic essence, House on Fire seamlessly aligned with the project, cementing an arena for a vibrant creative nexus rallying behind this transformative endeavour. The initiative not only unified artists across borders through mobility support and content co-creation but also spotlighted collaborations like CollaboNation 1 with Thobile Makhoyane (Eswatini) and The Hood Brodz (Mozambique) and CollaboNation 2 featuring Mokoomba (Zimbabwe) & Morena Leraba (Lesotho).

With an evolving media partnership infrastructure, the project envisions perpetuating interest and fostering avant-garde cross-border collaborations in Southern Africa, solidifying its legacy for the future.

ABOUT HOUSE ON FIRE

House on Fire is an event management and promotions company in Eswatini, known for its MTN Bushfire Festival and The Standard Bank Lujju Food & Lifestyle Festival. House on Fire also operates a music/theatre venue and an art gallery and highlights its commitment to arts education through its annual Schools Festival. Other interventions include hosting the Arts Round Table to support the regional creative economy and contribute to the social and economic development of the cultural and creative sectors throughout Southern Africa. MTN Bushfire festival is the oldest and largest music and arts festival in Eswatini, with a socially conscious mandate to address vital social and environmental issues, inspire inclusivity and promote an ecologically sustainable lifestyle among attendees.

DIGITAL ARCHIVES

DIGITALISING THE CREATIVE SECTOR OF MALAWI (CHAFIKILE ANTHU AMBILI CHIKHALE MPAKA MPAKA)

Digital Archives is an accessible online platform for music professionals to monitor, regulate and collect royalties.

Implementing organisation	Copyright Society of Malawi (COSOMA)
Duration of the grant	24 months
Region of implementation	Malawi
Target group	COSOMA members, rights holder Associations, broadcasters online platforms, universities/academia

THE CONTEXT

Malawi's creative industry faces significant challenges in protecting and enforcing intellectual property and copyrights. The country has some of the highest music piracy rates in the world, with over 85% of music consumed being illegal, depriving artists of their rightful earnings.⁷ Artists struggle to collect royalties and other forms of remuneration, partially due to an outdated intellectual property legal framework. Furthermore, many artists lack the knowledge and resources to enforce their rights, leaving them vulnerable to exploitation and piracy.

THE PROJECT: DIGITAL ARCHIVES

Copyright Society of Malawi (COSOMA) created an accessible platform for music professionals to monitor, regulate and collect royalties. On the platform, each artistic work was marked and catalogued with a unique digital signature, meaning authors could map its use and collect royalties more effectively. A total of 107 individuals participated in the project, including government departments, policymakers, cultural institutions and the media community.



THE THEORY OF CHANGE

To better regulate musical works online, COSOMA launched the Digital Archives project, implementing specific strategies to navigate the complex digital copyright landscape. The project made use of digital signatures and broadened data accessibility to track the use of musical products effectively. By providing these digital signatures, COSOMA improved the surveillance and administration of collective royalties for copyrighted material. This led to the successful digital conversion of many works – including texts, images, videos and audio – enhancing the proficiency of collective rights management for COSOMA.

The project's approach included the implementation of awareness campaigns and educational workshops to engage stakeholders from academia, the creative industry, cultural institutions, policymaking circles and government bodies, promoting an integrated sectoral response. Efforts were focused on tackling issues such as the protection of intellectual property rights, enforcement of copyright laws and curbing

music piracy, thereby affirming the transformative influence of digital solutions. With the realisation of its impact, especially in the preservation and endorsement of Malawi's cultural legacy and the enhancement of tourism, the Digital Archives project gained recognition from the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Wildlife. Furthermore, the project maintained active collaboration with media outlets, including newspapers like Malawi Nation and the African News Agency. These partnerships were instrumental in raising awareness and ensuring that a diverse range of artists became aware of the services provided by the Digital Archives.

ABOUT THE COPYRIGHT SOCIETY OF MALAWI

COSOMA's mission is to promote and protect copyright and licensing rights and ensure rightsholders receive fair compensation for their creative contributions. COSOMA collaborates with rightsholders' associations and provides financing to Southern African CClIs to create a thriving creative ecosystem that benefits artists and the community.

REAPPROPRIATING LESOTHO'S CULTURAL HERITAGE THROUGH NEW MEDIA

REIGNITING LESOTHO CULTURE

(HO TSOSOLOSA BOCHABA BA BASOTHO)

The Morija Museum & Archives created an online library of Sotho art forms, focusing on Lesotho's cultural heritage, recognising informal learning and broadening educational opportunities in the arts.

Implementing organisation	Morija Museum & Archives
Duration of the grant	12 months
Region of implementation	Morija and all of Lesotho
Target group	Traditional music players, educators, students (Lesotho College of Education), urban musicians, digital artists

THE CONTEXT

The Sotho community is renowned for its rich culture dating back to the 15th century. However, this great heritage, especially the use of unique traditional musical instruments, is in danger of being lost. There are a multitude of reasons for this, ranging from education systems not placing an adequate stake on cultural practices and customs, little to no coverage by media on the risks of 'culture loss', weak uptake of customs by the younger generation and a lack of sufficient research on Basotho culture. The rapid proliferation of the internet has allowed for knowledge and heritage to be archived online. However, there are not enough online platforms where people can appreciate and learn about Sotho culture. All these issues make it harder to keep this valuable heritage alive and make it difficult to fully comprehend the depth of its roots and articulate a clear justification for its protection.⁸

THE PROJECT: REAPPROPRIATING LESOTHO'S CULTURAL HERITAGE THROUGH NEW MEDIA

The Morija Museum & Archives (MMA) project has actively preserved and promoted Basotho music and culture. However, many of the instrumentalists are ageing and there has been little revived interest from young people to learn and preserve this disappearing art form. MMA trained young artists and cultural practitioners on different indigenous instrumentalisation forms. Starting with a much-needed mapping exercise, MMA compiled a research paper on indigenous Basotho musical instruments, offering new insights and cultural context. In this catalogue, MMA created an online library of Sotho art forms, held workshops with media experts to suggest changes in arts and education policy, and further set out recommendations focused on recognising informal learning and broadening educational opportunities in the arts. The recommendations have



been shared with the government, and a working group was set up to turn these recommendations into an actionable roadmap in collaboration with Lesotho's National Arts, Culture & Heritage Policy.

THE THEORY OF CHANGE

MMA's transformative programme aimed to rejuvenate Lesotho's cultural essence through in-depth research, educational tools and innovative media like videos. The dual objectives were to safeguard vanishing traditions and to democratise accessibility to cultural knowledge. This vision was realised through the development of scholarly research articles, tailored digital content that catered to educational trainers, and musical revival programmes aimed at safeguarding and invigorating traditional arts and crafts.

Simultaneously, as the Ministry of Culture was reshaping its policies, a synergistic partnership emerged. MMA's policy suggestions, which now await governmental evaluation at various tiers, sought to solidify the enduring resonance of Lesotho's cultural legacy.

Key outcomes from this initiative are the following:

- 1. Digital platform:** A holistic digital repository featuring educational content, music and videos.
- 2. Education kits:** Collaboration with educational entities like Lesotho College of Education (LCE) and the National Curriculum Development Centre (NCDC) birthed a Basotho ethnomusicology study kit.
- 3. Animation:** A 20-minute animated video rooted in local folklore was crafted with the expertise of regional artists and musicians.

The initiative's broader impacts are noteworthy. They span from equipping educators with resources aligned with Lesotho's Arts & Entrepreneurship Curriculum to ensuring open access to pivotal resources on a user-friendly online platform. Furthermore, a fortified alliance with the Ministry of Culture is helping shape a cultural policy that reflects contemporary needs and visions for coming generations. In 2023, the government of Lesotho launched Project-Re, which seeks to "inspire and lead Basotho to reconnect with founding values". The cultural components are informed, in part, by the work of the MMA initiative.

ABOUT MORIJA MUSEUM & ARCHIVES

Founded in 1956, Morija Museum & Archives (MMA) is Lesotho's oldest museum. Located in the town of Morija, the museum is a treasure trove of Basotho heritage. It offers a mix of research, exhibitions and educational programmes. The museum is also a go-to place for international history and culture scholars. MMA is part of the Cultural Precinct, including the Morija Arts Centre and The Hub @ Morija. The arts centre organises art shows, workshops and music events. The Hub trains young people in IT and filmmaking. Known for hosting the popular Morija Arts & Cultural Festival from 1999 to 2013, MMA continues to make Morija a key centre for cultural activities in Lesotho.

MUSIC BUSINESS SCHOOL

UNDERSTANDING THE BUSINESS SIDE OF THE MUSIC INDUSTRY

(PUNDUTSO YEMIMHANZI)

The Music Business School targets aspiring music industry professionals, managers, producers, musicians and anyone interested in the business side of the music industry, to increase graduates' career options and help them generate income.

Implementing organisation	Music Crossroads
Duration of the grant	18 months
Region of implementation	Malawi, Mozambique and Zimbabwe
Target group	Music industry professionals, managers, producers, musicians and anyone interested in the music industry's business aspects

THE CONTEXT

The music industries in the three operating countries – Malawi, Mozambique and Zimbabwe – grapple with shared challenges, primarily due to the absence of a robust music industry infrastructure, which includes a scarcity of crucial support such as established institutions like record labels, booking agents and publishing houses.⁹ This lack not only hampers career opportunities for emerging artists but also, compounded by inadequate public and private sector funding and limited platforms for networking and collaboration, stifles their potential for widespread recognition and success.¹⁰

THE PROJECT: MUSIC CROSSROADS ACADEMIES' MUSIC BUSINESS SCHOOL

The three Music Crossroads Academies of Malawi, Mozambique and Zimbabwe launched the online Music Business School. The one-year programme targets aspiring and established music industry professionals, managers, producers, musicians and anyone interested in the business side of

the music industry. The programme is designed to increase graduates' career options and help them generate income. Modules on the e-learning platform cover diverse topics such as music consumption trends, publishing and licensing, as well as topics such as touring, copyright, royalties, administration, management, marketing and entrepreneurship. The platform also features insights from experienced musicians on subjects such as strategies to prevent royalty losses. The Music Business School's first cross-border project focused on touring and booking, which culminated in the hybrid Sounds of Africa event for performances at festivals outside Malawi, Mozambique and Zimbabwe. The Music Business School's internship programme allowed students to engage with international and regional artists to gain practical experience in the festival industry. Completing the programme not only empowered participants with experience in the Southern African festival landscape but also provided a platform to collaborate on a regional scale and deepen their understanding of the festival circuit.



THEORY OF CHANGE

The Music Business School, driven by its set objectives, emphasised the importance of a supplementary and inclusive curriculum, aiming to democratise music education for all, including those without formal training. This initiative addressed the often inadequate preparation of graduates for the music industry's realities. Launching the e-learning platform equipped students with critical skills for the music business, expanding their career prospects and revenue streams beyond just teaching and performing.

Since its inception, the programme has trained 94 students across Malawi, Mozambique and Zimbabwe, collaborating with esteemed institutions like the University of Zimbabwe and partners such as UNESCO and Nhimbe Trust. This expansive network enriched the music talent in these countries and promoted cross-border interactions and real-world performance applications. Students also had opportunities for regional collaboration, exposure to the festival circuit and performances alongside international artists through the school's internship programme.

The school's approach revolved around three pillars ensuring sustainable success in the music

industry: Upskilling musicians with the right tools and knowledge; connecting artists to performance application platforms; fostering a supportive intra-regional learning network.

By adopting these pillars, the Music Business School not only paved a roadmap to longevity for its graduates but also fortified its brand and network, ensuring its enduring presence in the industry.

These experiences culminated in the significant achievement of winning the UNESCO Bangladesh Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman – Creative Economy Prize (US\$50 000) in June 2023.

ABOUT MUSIC CROSSROADS

Music Crossroads leverages the power of music and education to empower the next generation of African musicians, equipping them with the necessary tools and support for successful music careers. Music Crossroads engages with over 200 000 young musicians and reaches more than a million listeners. It offers a two-year professional music education programme that enables young musicians to nurture and express their creative talents within their cultural contexts.

NAKHODHA AND THE MERMAID – SEA SOUND

CREATING CLIMATE CHANGE AWARENESS THROUGH INDIGENOUS MOZAMBIKAN KNOWLEDGE (NAKHODHA)

YC Films launched *Nakhodha and the Mermaid – Sea Sound*, an immersive film, using innovative technologies, local poetry and sea chants, empowering young people on Mozambique Island to preserve culture and raise awareness of pertinent issues affecting the community, such as climate change and cultural genocide.

Implementing organisation	YC Films
Duration of the grant	8 months
Region of implementation	Northern Mozambique
Target group	Trainees from fishing communities, emerging creative artists, traditional coastal communities

THE CONTEXT

Like many African countries, Mozambique boasts a vibrant history of oral traditions and a heritage deeply rooted in resilience. However, preserving and incorporating these traditions into contemporary cultural sectors, such as the film industry, presents complex challenges. The film industry in Mozambique grapples with a range of issues, including limited access to resources,¹¹ the need for capacity building among creative professionals and restrictions on foreign investments. Simultaneously, coastal communities¹² are confronting the erosion of their cultural heritage, further threatened by conflict and climate change effects such as rising sea levels, ocean acidification and extreme weather. The fishing traditions central to these communities are under stress from environmental changes, with critical cultural practices and accompanying rituals and songs at risk of vanishing. This not only

affects community identity but also diminishes economic prospects. Given Mozambique's position as the third most susceptible country to climate change impact,¹³ the need to safeguard both the cultural and economic well-being of its fishing communities has become increasingly critical.

THE PROJECT:

NAKHODHA AND THE MERMAID – SEA SOUND

YC Films launched *Nakhodha and the Mermaid – Sea Sound*, an immersive film empowering young people on Mozambique Island to preserve culture and raise awareness of pertinent issues affecting the community, such as climate change and cultural genocide. Drawing from the assortment of cultures on the island, the project used innovative technologies and virtual technology to weave an intricate 33-minute audio-visual experience consisting of local poetry, music and sea chants,



immersing participants in the heart of the sea. The project engaged 49 artists to record, film and perform 20 Swahili songs. Six local artists were trained in spatial audio recording and 360-degree filming. Collective intellectual property rights in the community were established and digital distribution was initiated. Training was provided by experts from across the Southern and East Africa regions, opening up opportunities for networking and visibility. The project team further engaged with key development partners, including UNESCO, the US Mission to Mozambique, the Ministry of Culture and Tourism and the provincial government to secure financial commitments towards sustaining the initiative.

THE THEORY OF CHANGE

The *Nakhodha and the Mermaid – Sea Sound* project successfully leveraged new media to safeguard and enliven African cultural heritage. Anchored in the belief that local talent engagement and regional support could unlock new investment in social advocacy media, the project has surpassed cultural and technological expectations. It has championed the preservation of intangible cultural heritage, established Mozambique as an innovative creative hub through VR/XR technologies and developed a digital platform enhancing the global presence

of Swahili culture. Significantly, it has fostered a sense of ownership by enabling the community to establish collective intellectual property rights. Bolstered by an additional US\$161 000 in funding from the US government and partnerships with entities like CNN, the project demonstrates the transformative influence of immersive technology in marrying tradition with innovation. The initiative's impact is notably profound in promoting gender equality and climate advocacy, with a focus on elevating women in technology and media fields (32 of the 49 participants are women). Beyond its cultural footprint, it has tangibly improved livelihoods and amplified the voices of the local community. This approach shows promise of moving from strength to strength.

ABOUT YC FILMS

YC Films is a production company in Mozambique that creates audio-visual content infused with African tradition and culture. The company aims to preserve and promote Southern African cultural heritage and enable cross-cultural exchanges. Through artistic and cultural enclaves, YC Films empowers creative professionals, leaders and organisations, using film and artistic expression to drive positive social change and progress within the community.

QUACK QUACK DUCK

ENCOURAGING, SUPPORTING AND COMPLEMENTING ZIMBABWEAN HERITAGE STUDIES AND VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS SYLLABI (DZIDZA KWAWAKABVA)

The Quack Quack Duck Project is a 26-episode 2D animated series, designed to complement the Zimbabwean primary syllabus for Heritage Studies and Visual and Performing Arts, and enhance learners' educational experience about their culture and traditions.

Implementing organisation	Chaftop Animation Studio
Duration of the grant	12 months
Region of implementation	Zimbabwe
Target group	Young creatives and primary school children

THE CONTEXT

Zimbabwe's animation sector shows potential but contends with hurdles, including an enduring economic downturn that discourages investment in new media. This financial strain hampers studios' content quality, training opportunities and global competitiveness, deterring youth from animation careers.¹⁴ Additionally, narrow distribution channels restrict audience reach and revenue. Social issues like poverty, illiteracy and limited technological access further limit youth engagement with domestic animation.

THE PROJECT: QUACK QUACK DUCK

Chaftop Animation initiated the Quack Quack Duck project to enhance the educational experience of primary school students in Zimbabwe. Aiming to transform their engagement with heritage studies, the project introduced an interactive arts-based curriculum with resources for both school and home use. The studio selected 37 emerging talents, including voice actors,

musicians, animators and writers, providing them with training in 2D animation and children's content creation. Collaborating with local cultural groups like the Sunduza Dance Theatre ensured the cultural authenticity of their content. The collaborative effort resulted in a 26-episode 2D animated series, Quack Quack Duck, designed to complement the Zimbabwean primary syllabus for Heritage Studies and Visual and Performing Arts. The series features siblings Themba and Lihle, who embark on an educational adventure with Quack the Duck, learning about their culture and traditions.

THE THEORY OF CHANGE

Quack Quack Duck strategically set out to reinforce and invigorate traditional Zimbabwean culture by capturing and celebrating indigenous music and dance. To realise this, the project team implemented a comprehensive plan to record these art forms, thereby creating a digital archive that reflects the cultural wealth of the nation.



Central to the project's strategy was the synergy with the Zimbabwe Primary School Syllabus for Heritage Studies. Ensuring that the content produced was educational and syllabus-compliant, the project cemented its role within the educational framework, enhancing its potential for long-term integration and impact.

Chaftop Animation Studio engaged a diverse group of young creatives, from teenagers to mid-career artists, exemplifying that high-quality, culturally significant content could pave the way for industry growth and investment. This engagement involved intensive upskilling programmes – blending modern animation techniques with traditional art forms to foster a new wave of culturally rich media content.

Visibility and awareness were addressed through a multi-channel approach, leveraging newspaper features, a social media campaign and partnerships with radio stations, collectively reaching an audience of over a million people. Locally, Chaftop Animation is poised to distribute educational materials to schools, furthering the reach and educational impact of the project.

The project's educational strategy, especially the distribution of the animated series to over 5 000 schools, highlights its commitment to supporting the national curriculum. The approach has become a testament to the synergy between cultural preservation and contemporary media, showcasing the possibility of sustainable artistic careers through mentorship from established professionals. By equipping young talents with new technological skills, the project has opened avenues for professional growth, commissioning opportunities and a future in the creative industries. The animation development side of the project has not only produced 26 episodes to aid in education but has also kindled a sense of hope and possibility for a new generation of artists in Bulawayo.

ABOUT CHAFTOP ANIMATION STUDIO

Chaftop Animation Studio in Bulawayo, Zimbabwe, focuses on developing young creatives through training programmes that build expertise in virtual arts content creation. The studio enhances its artists' visibility and market presence by aligning with DISCOP Africa¹⁵ to distribute digital content globally, expanding its reach within Southern Africa and beyond. Their content varies from children's programmes to social advertisements and educational products.

RACKLESS ABUTU RESIDENCY

PROVIDING PLATFORMS FOR EXPERIENTIAL EXPRESSION (KUPATSA ANTHU MWAYI OCHITA LUSO LAWO)

The Rackless Abutu residency programme is designed to empower diverse creative professionals, including musicians, artist managers, booking agents and more with the essential skills and knowledge required to thrive in the dynamic music industry.

Implementing organisation	Modzi Arts
Duration of the grant	11 months
Region of implementation	Zambia
Target group	Artist managers, artists

THE CONTEXT

Zambia's artistic landscape faces unique challenges. The country grapples with a severe shortage of functional artistic spaces, as only 17% of such spaces are currently operational, while a staggering 68% of Zambians languish in poor conditions. The professional art and cultural scene remains predominantly male-dominated and the scarcity of suitable artistic venues constrains the sector's growth and hinders artists' ability to showcase their work and collaborate with fellow creatives. This deficiency in accessible spaces impacts women and the youth, especially those living in rural areas, who struggle to access these venues to nurture their artistic talents. The gender imbalance in the Zambian CCIs exacerbates the challenge. Men predominantly occupy key roles, leaving women and young artists with fewer opportunities and less representation, limiting the diversity of perspectives and voices in the creative landscape.

THE PROJECT: RACKLESS ABUTU RESIDENCY

Modzi Arts launched and executed the Rackless Abutu residency programme, designed to support diverse creative professionals, including musicians, artist managers, booking agents and more. This initiative aimed to empower participants with the essential skills and knowledge required to thrive in the dynamic music industry. The residency programme featured a series of masterclasses led by seasoned music educators and industry experts. To provide a comprehensive experience for creative professionals, Rackless Abutu offered workshops focused on crafting compelling electronic press kits (EPKs), developing impactful biographies, producing visually captivating music videos and refining photography skills. The workshops enabled participants to establish a robust online presence and connect with a broader audience. Their profiles were subsequently shared on the Music In Africa directory.¹⁶



Additionally, the project team provided invaluable guidance on various music distribution channels, shedding light on royalty collection and publishing strategies to help participants generate sustainable income from their creative works. Residents were encouraged to delve into Zamrock's history for inspiration, translating into the audio sampling of outputs rooted in Zambia's rich cultural heritage. This inspiration can be heard through the residents' production techniques and design. One hundred and nineteen beneficiaries were part of the initiative, including residents, mentors and managers.

Aimed at providing a comprehensive upskilling curriculum, classes covered topics such as artist management, music export and touring, marketing, music distribution, royalty collection, publishing, DJ production and performance, collaboration across art genres, and the history of Zambian music. Modzi Arts partnered with Akum Agency and Zimbabwean artist manager Marcus Gora to mentor residents. Furthermore, the residency offered upskilling for creatives to collaborate and build partnerships with other artists in select markets outside Zambia, including many of Southern Africa's well-known festivals.¹⁷

THE THEORY OF CHANGE

Rackless Abutu's initiative championed the growth, visibility and sustainability of artists through targeted activities. By offering workshops in artist management and booking, it equipped aspirants with vital skills and introduced them to trade events for international collaborations and exposure. The unique blend of interdisciplinary collaboration, coupled with delving deep into the Zamrock heritage, resulted in a novel, authentic Zambian sound, blending contemporary elements with rich traditions.

Meanwhile, Modzi Arts confronted the prevalent gender exclusion in Zambia by championing women in the music industry. Of the 38 residents they supported, over half were women. These women were not only trained in music production and management but also given a platform to amplify their often overshadowed artistry. Thanks to this initiative, artists can tap into a vast network of resources and partners across the region, such as Akum Agency, First Floor Galleries, and the expansive Zamrock musician network.

ABOUT MODZI ARTS

Modzi Arts is an NGO and art association based in Ibex Hill, Lusaka, Zambia. It empowers artists by providing access to education through immersive residency programmes in performing and visual arts. The centre aims to elevate citizens' critical consciousness by providing stimulating platforms for debates on various artistic topics. At the same time, it works towards strengthening networks within the artistic community by nurturing connections and collaborations between artists and the art market.

RHYTHMIC AFRICA UNEARTHED

**JOURNEYING INTO THE HEART OF TRADITIONAL AFRICAN FOLK MUSIC TO CREATE NEW SOUNDS FOR A VISUAL AUDIENCE
(HO HLAHLOBA LEFA LA AFRIKA LE RUILENG)**

Rhythmic Africa Unearthed is a music documentary by Quihaba FX exploring Botswana's traditional folk music, showcasing the rich cultural heritage of various Tswana communities and presenting a fusion of modern and traditional music.

Implementing organisation	Quihaba FX
Duration of the grant	12 months
Region of implementation	Gaborone, Botswana
Target group	Folk musicians, youth and local communities

THE CONTEXT

The availability of high-quality edutainment content that captures the deep cultural, traditional, ethnic, geographical and creative diversity of Africa remains limited.¹⁸ Contributing factors include the absence of well-developed content distribution channels for local creatives, limited investment¹⁹ and a scarcity of large and small-scale production houses exploring local and regional cultures.²⁰ A compelling demand exists for quality content that showcases Africa in a positive light and emphasises local talent.²¹

THE PROJECT: RHYTHMIC AFRICA UNEARTHED

Rhythmic Africa Unearthed is a music documentary by Quihaba FX exploring Botswana's traditional folk music. The project focused on producing a pilot episode, a trailer and a sizzle reel for the series. It also developed a creative treatment detailing the 13-episode series (pre-production bible) and a music video, showcasing the rich cultural heritage of various

Tswana communities and presenting a fusion of modern and traditional music. The pilot episode is premised on an adventurer and musical ambassador who travels throughout Africa to uncover ancient wisdom inherent in the craft of traditional African folk musicians. Production of the pilot saw the engagement of local contemporary musicians to enrich the musical experience. Highlighting African culture through picturesque scenery, scene design and rhythmic soundscapes, the episode unpacks music's role in the spiritual lives of the Naro tribe, a subgroup of the San community of Southern Africa.

Engaging 38 creative artists from different ethnic backgrounds, each subsequent episode culminates in a unique fusion of past and present as a contemporary musician remixes the folk musicians' work and integrates local vibes of the traditional music into a piece of their work. The completed documentary will explore the history of different communities' instruments, musical



arrangements and unique heritage, bringing to life the rituals, social celebrations, aesthetic pleasures, entertainment, cultural events and various ceremonies that revitalise the backbone of the culture. A scholarly article was created to showcase the social significance of community heritage to a broader audience. The article explores the themes of the documentary, such as inclusivity, minority rights and the importance of tradition, and emphasises these to the academic community.

THE THEORY OF CHANGE

Rhythmic Africa Unearthed was underpinned by the theory that a unique African documentary series, rich in contemporary and historical musical narratives, would heighten awareness of the continent's musical heritage. To this end, Quihaba FX assembled a team of creatives to produce a pilot and trailer for the prospective 13-episode series. Strategic partnerships with Creative Cactus (post-production support), Ledikwe Futures (administrative support and script review) and Taolo Music (sound mixing) bolstered the production, resulting in a pilot, trailer and a robust portfolio to lure potential investors.

Crucially, Rhythmic Africa Unearthed adopted a hands-on, immersive approach to script development. Instead of solely relying on

desk research, it engages deeply with local communities, conducting interviews to derive authentic story inspirations. A notable episode, 'A Song by Ostrich to her Beloved Gemsbok', came to life through a collaboration with Kuru Development Trust, a San community organisation. This partnership allowed for co-creation, feedback and iterative script refinement. By transitioning from mere narration to truly inhabiting the narrative, the project ensured profound engagement with minority groups, often overlooked in storytelling.

This endeavour, while shining a light on Africa's vast cultural milieu, also served as a beacon for local talent. The meticulously crafted pilot represents the continent's vast cultural and creative wealth. Armed with its existing network and a compelling marketing portfolio, Quihaba's trajectory is now set towards securing additional funding, showcasing the pilot as a vibrant proof of concept to potential investors in the creative arts.

ABOUT QUIHABA FX

Quihaba FX is a media production company in Botswana that offers branding, video production, animation, photography, event management and website development services to promote the visibility of creative professionals and artists from the country.

SADC NETWORKING & FINANCIAL PROJECT

ENHANCING THE ADMIN SIDE OF THE CREATIVE ECONOMY (EXCELÊNCIA ADMINISTRATIVA)

The SADC Networking & Financial Project is designed to empower practitioners to apply principles of professionalism, executive competence and transparency to their project management practices, providing tailored essential administrative skills and networking opportunities for cultural project management.

Implementing organisation	Sipatsi Consulting e Gestão de Projetos
Duration of the grant	8 months
Region of implementation	Maputo, Mozambique
Target group	SADC creative project managers involved in the SCF

THE CONTEXT

Sound project management skills can provide a competitive edge in the creative sector. However, given the relative novelty of the creative industries in Mozambique, there is a skills deficit, with burgeoning professional services still acclimatising to roles as project managers, agents, executives, sound engineers, etc.²² Furthermore, although many organisations and professionals in SADC have some hands-on experience, there are few to no platforms for them to share best practices with other practitioners at a regional level. Training gaps are compounded by macro, national and regional economic conditions and local regulatory requirements.²³ For instance, economic stability can impact the availability of resources and funding for cultural organisations and projects. Government policies and subsequent support can influence the project's success. However, it is worth noting that international economic trends affect the availability of international funding and partnerships.

THE PROJECT: SADC NETWORKING & FINANCIAL PROJECT

Sipatsi Consulting organised an eight-month training programme to empower practitioners to apply principles of professionalism, executive competence and transparency to their project management practices. Taking a data-driven approach to training, Sipatsi Consulting held regional online exchanges, identifying key problem areas and challenges organisations face in Southern Africa and providing tailored essential administrative skills and networking opportunities for cultural project management. Twenty-one representatives from 11 regional organisations attended, many of which were Sound Connects Fund (SCF) grantees. The workshops provided targeted instruction in cultural and project management, and the training materials were uploaded onto a developed website for broader access. The centralised digital platform is a repository of knowledge and evidence, empowering cultural practitioners with essential



resources to inform decision making and facilitate professional growth. Renowned producers in the creative industries were called upon to support the provision of the capacity-building sessions. These included filmmakers such as Joao Luis Sol de Carvalho and Ivan Laranjeira (Brazil) and auditors such as Rui Mindlane.

THE THEORY OF CHANGE

The Sipatsi Consulting programme's theory of change embarked on a transformative mission to revolutionise SADC's cultural and creative sectors. By deploying targeted interventions, the programme empowered these organisations to function with increased efficacy.

Central to the programme was disseminating vital administrative, financial and project management knowledge. Such insights not only capacitated professionals to manage projects with finesse but also instilled a culture of ethical practices. Harnessing the power of digital platforms, reach and influence were expanded. Through a strategic blend of YouTube videos, Facebook posts and engagement with regional hubs like the SADC Development Finance Resource Centre, the programme's message resonated far and wide.

Recognising overlooked yet vital topics led to a comprehensive training regimen. Risk management, procurement and project budgeting were addressed head-on. Such holistic training demystified intricate processes within the creative industry, ensuring practices aligned with global and regional benchmarks. By fostering a culture

of professionalism, the initiative honed and streamlined management systems in the creative arena.

All the insights, strategies and resources were amalgamated into a digital platform, offering a reservoir of knowledge. This valuable hub promises to be a resource for stakeholders within the SADC's cultural and creative sectors.

Future plans include

strengthening ties with platform end-users to broaden its network to accommodate experts from varied domains like the European Union and cultural producers. The growing global footprint of the platform is evident from budding partnerships with giants like Siemens, governments and even TV stations.

Understanding the intricacies and challenges of a fledgling industry, Sipatsi proactively sought solutions. By integrating international filmmakers, producers and auditors as trainers, it enhanced industry visibility and demystified complex policies, facilitating a symbiosis between local talent and global brands. With figures like Pablo Ribeira highlighting its role in building a robust support structure for the creative space and Sol de Carvalho emphasising its contribution to the quality of African art, the significance of Sipatsi's efforts is undeniable.

ABOUT SIPATSI CONSULTING E GESTÃO DE PROJETOS

Sipatsi Consulting e Gestão de Projetos specialises in project management, providing financial, administrative and event management services tailored to project managers in Mozambique's cultural and entertainment industry. It aims to uphold professional integrity and ethical transparency while providing access to new networks and opportunities. Sipatsi Consulting works towards improving access to finance and supporting the establishment and sustainability of businesses and organisations.

SULA CREATIVE HUB AND SOUND LAB

STRENGTHENING THE CULTURAL AND CREATIVE INDUSTRIES IN MALAWI

(KULIMBIKITSA LUSO)

The Sula project provided artists with comprehensive, certified training and entrepreneurial skills, recognising the crucial balance between artistic flair and entrepreneurial vigour and empowering them to sustain their creative ventures.

Implementing organisation	University of Malawi's Department of Fine and Performing Arts
Duration of the grant	18 months
Region of implementation	Malawi
Target group	Malawian artists (aged 18-35) needing access to formal arts training

THE CONTEXT

Malawi's CCIs contribute about 3.4% to the country's GDP and promise immense growth potential in the digital age. With a culture rich in art, practitioners in the arts are seeking new opportunities to develop skill sets to meet this opportunity with action. The Department of Fine and Performing Arts has been providing arts training for over 40 years.²⁴ While this training has been beneficial, it has become evident that many full-time young artists in the country who cannot access formal university education require training to help them thrive in the CCIs. Furthermore, a significant number of their own arts graduates choose to pursue jobs outside the creative sector.²⁵ This trend is often attributed to a desire for job security as graduates perceive employment in other fields to be less risky than starting their own artistic ventures,²⁶ as well as a lack of preparedness for the ever-changing CCIs. There is, therefore, a growing demand for professional

training in the arts for graduates and artists who have never received formal training to meet their aspirations.²⁷

THE PROJECT: SULA

In collaboration with the Department of Fine and Performing Arts and UNESCO, the Sula project provided artists with comprehensive, certified training and entrepreneurial skills, empowering them to sustain their creative ventures. Through intensive training, the programme brought together practitioners from various fields – including painting, ceramics, sound engineering, stage lighting and writing – to enrich their techniques and styles. Culminating in a vibrant exhibition of their works, the participants showcased paintings and performances crafted during the five-day training course. The programme also featured an incubation initiative, offering targeted entrepreneurial training and seed funding to promising creative businesses.



The curriculum was well-rounded, encompassing music production, sound engineering and digital marketing modules. The university provided a space to nurture creativity, known as the specialised Sula Sound Lab. Through the Sula Sound Lab, artists received tailored training, coaching and mentorship to meet industry demands and individual needs.

THE THEORY OF CHANGE

The Sula project not only breathed new life into the Malawian arts scene but also meticulously structured its approach, ensuring holistic development for its participants. Central to this was developing a robust curriculum encompassing syllabuses across all 14 planned fields. This comprehensive curriculum provided a solid foundation, ensuring the artists were versed in every discipline.

While the project honed artistic talents across various disciplines, from painting to cinematography, it also recognised the crucial balance between artistic flair and entrepreneurial vigour. Hence, it trained 120 artists, guiding them to master their craft and the business aspects. This comprehensive training was further complemented by a business incubation scheme for 40 select creatives. Recognising the initial hurdles faced by artists in commercialising their craft, the project went a step further, providing

seed funding to 10 promising artists, ensuring their journey from raw talent to commercial success was as seamless as possible.

Furthermore, artists were given platforms to display their refined works, introducing them to prospective clients and markets. But beyond mere exposure, they were instilled with a business mindset through specialised courses in digital marketing, sound engineering and management. The Sula Sound Lab stood as the embodiment of this dual focus, offering tailored mentorship and networking opportunities.

By anchoring its collaboration with the University of Malawi, the Sula initiative bridged the chasm between raw talent and structured training, promising a continually bright and sustainable future for Malawi's arts scene.

ABOUT THE UNIVERSITY OF MALAWI'S DEPARTMENT OF FINE AND PERFORMING ARTS

The Department of Fine and Performing Arts at the University of Malawi is dedicated to nurturing highly skilled professionals within Malawi's CCIs. Their main objective is to equip individuals and organisations with the necessary skills and knowledge to thrive in the fast-paced and ever-changing creative and cultural landscape.

ZAMBEZI CONNECTS

ADVOCATING FOR CHANGE THROUGH DIALOGUE AND EXCHANGE (KUTAURA CHOKWADI)

The Zambezi Connects project worked on activities supporting creative talent while simultaneously moving the needle on civic engagement, developing and supporting emerging creatives and creative startups in and around Southern Africa.

Implementing organisation	Magamba Network
Duration of the grant	16 months
Region of implementation	Botswana, Mozambique, Zambia, Zimbabwe
Target group	Female creatives and young creatives (aged 18 – 35)

THE CONTEXT

Young people make up over 67% of Zimbabwe's population, and yet the dwindling civic space has meant that their voices are muted in public discourse. This is true, too, for young creatives working to produce art that reflects their realities. In this context, Southern Africa's socio-political challenges in recent years have had a detrimental impact on the creative and cultural sectors. Economic instability and societal polarisation across the region have been cited as key barriers to the growth of these sectors.²⁸ The COVID-19 pandemic further exacerbated these challenges, inhibiting the emergence of new creative hubs and businesses.²⁹ A decline in funding from the public and private sectors has also posed significant challenges for creatives seeking resources for their projects.³⁰ Finally, a lack of community support hampers artists' ability to showcase their talents and generate income. This shortage of support and opportunity manifests as limited platforms for artists; an issue identified as a common barrier globally, and across the Southern African region.³¹

THE PROJECT: ZAMBEZI CONNECTS

The Zambezi Connects project was a three-fold regional campaign to develop and support emerging creatives and creative startups in and around Southern Africa. Dubbed as a "cultural disruptor", Zambezi Connects worked on activities supporting creative talent while simultaneously moving the needle on civic engagement. First, it collaborated with a previously incubated organisation, PaDen, which focused on empowering comedians. PaDen's incubation included skills development in scriptwriting and comedic performance. Additionally, it equipped performers with skills needed for community advocacy and self-sustainability.

Second, it facilitated creative exchanges and women's poetry/rap competitions (cyphers) for regional skill sharing and collaborative music production. Lastly, Zambezi Connects hosted exhibitions featuring two acts performing at two Magamba festivals. Overall, the project fostered peer-to-peer learning and collaboration opportunities through Creative South Network exchanges and the Regional Women's Cypher.



THE THEORY OF CHANGE

The project's guiding principle hinges on using social activism and disruptive art to tackle the manifold challenges in Southern Africa's creative and cultural sectors. This multifaceted strategy not only equips artists with skills and resources but also elevates their role in advocating for societal change.

Zambezi Connects, under the PaDen initiative, equipped artists with essential skills, incubation support and platforms to display their craft. The project emphasised collaborative learning and advocacy, with events like women's cyphers and festivals promoting collective development and addressing gender imbalances in decision-making roles. A case in point: the women's cyphers facilitated the creation and distribution of music to amplify women empowerment.

In Southern Africa, where gender norms often shape careers, Zambezi Connects and Magamba transformed the path of Mildred Moyo. As an emerging lighting designer in Zimbabwe, her skills were honed and, with additional funding, she led two illuminating workshops, encouraging more women into a traditionally male-dominated field.

Through this mentorship, Mildred's trailblazing journey became an emblem of change.

In essence, this project nurtured creatives, bolstering their skill set and fostering a robust community spirit. Every intervention spurred artists to weave social justice narratives into their creations, be it comedians using humour to address societal truths or poets championing women's roles through verse.

ABOUT MAGAMBA NETWORK

Magamba Network leverages digital platforms to enhance civic space and engage young people in national issues. Its programmes, such as Digital X and Arts4Change, serve as citizen journalism platforms and a creative hub, while its music-based programmes amplify the voices of Zimbabwe's youth. Since its establishment in 2007, Magamba Network has supported over 2 000 creatives and startups via its creative hub, Moto Republik. It has established networks among creative hubs in Southern Africa using the Creative South Network. This platform connects African creatives to explore innovative solutions for the creative economy.

OPEN ARMS MUSIC PROJECT

EMPOWERING NAMIBIAN SOUND ARTISTS THROUGH THEORY AND PRACTICE

(EEENGHULUNGU DEMBAKO)

The Open Arms Music Project is a multifaceted initiative designed to empower young Namibians in various critical aspects of the music sector, including media training, online music distribution, revenue streams, monetising digital content, working with record labels, copyright law, intellectual property, royalties and funding opportunities.

Implementing organisation	The Open Arms Trust
Duration of the grant	7 months
Region of implementation	Namibia
Target group	Young emerging artists

THE CONTEXT

Namibia's music industry faces lack of infrastructure, with a deficit in recording studios, venues and production facilities impeding the progress of young musicians.³² Economic constraints further restrict access to professional training, equipment and marketing. Geographic disparities exacerbate inequalities in music education and industry access, particularly for those in remote areas. In addition, formal music education is scarce, limiting knowledge in music theory and business management. Young musicians also struggle with copyright law and intellectual property management. Recognition, both locally and internationally, is hampered by limited promotional platforms.³³

THE PROJECT:

OPEN ARMS MUSIC PROJECT

Open Arms Music Project is a comprehensive and multifaceted initiative that delves into various critical aspects of the music sector. These encompass media training, online music distribution, revenue streams, monetising digital

content, working with record labels, copyright law, intellectual property, royalties and funding opportunities. The project is strategically designed to empower young Namibians by offering capacity-building programmes across six provinces. These programmes are developed and executed closely with industry experts and relevant government bodies.

After the conclusion of a series of workshops, Open Arms Music Project selected one artist from each region to record, mix and master a primary music sample. Additionally, the project provided support for uploading these samples onto various digital streaming platforms.

THE THEORY OF CHANGE

Open Arms Music Project is grounded on the theory of change that by providing young musicians in Namibia with the necessary knowledge, skills and resources, they can cultivate sustainable careers in the music industry.

The project's capacity-building and skill-development activities provided comprehensive access to critical knowledge relevant to the music industry. As a direct result of these activities, participants emerge from the project with heightened capacities and enhanced skills, which they can invest in their career development. For instance, participants can leverage insights gained on music production techniques, copyright laws, online distribution strategies and other aspects of the music sector to support their respective career ambitions.

Moreover, Open Arms Music Project has made it possible for artists from across Namibia to participate by offering recording and distribution opportunities for original music in six accessible regions. This approach has enabled the representation and amplification of diverse community voices, including those from remote areas. The culmination of these efforts leads to the overarching impact of nurturing the growth of a sustainable music industry in Namibia. This long-term impact extends beyond individual musicians

and encompasses the cultural and economic development of the nation. By empowering young artists, the project contributes to the vitality of the music sector, enhancing its contribution to the broader society.

ABOUT OPEN ARMS TRUST

The Open Arms Trust was established in 2005 in Namibia to actively empower individuals and communities by providing education across the academic, social and economic domains. The organisation focuses on enhancing community health, promoting environmental awareness, supporting small business creation, implementing solar energy projects and improving financial and social media literacy. The Trust collaborates with different organisations, liaising to direct expertise and resources to remote communities that are often overlooked due to their challenging locations and limited resources. This work ensures the protection of rights, preservation of the environment and economic stability of the communities they serve.



ZOMBA CITY FESTIVAL 2023

CREATING A HAVEN FOR ARTISTIC EXPRESSION (KULIMBIKISA LUSO PAMODZI)

Zomba City Festival (ZCF23) promoted the city as a tourist destination and showcased its cultural heritage. The festival featured artistic expressions, including poetry, theatre, film, fashion, visual arts and music. Over 150 artists participated, with a special focus on empowering women artists and young talent.

Implementing organisation	Pakachere Backpackers & Creative Centre
Duration of the grant	3 months
Region of implementation	Malawi
Target group	Local artists, performers and volunteers

THE CONTEXT

Southern Malawi is a region facing various social and economic challenges and has some of the country's highest poverty rates, with the National Statistics Office recording that 51% of the population in this region is living in abject poverty. High levels of unemployment and limited opportunities for creative expression among the youth are pressing issues. Zomba is a picturesque city in Southern Malawi whose potential as a cultural and tourist destination is yet to be fully realised.

THE PROJECT: ZOMBA CITY FESTIVAL

ZCF23, held in Zomba, Southern Malawi, was a four-day event that promoted the city as a tourist destination and showcased its cultural heritage. The festival featured artistic expressions, including poetry, theatre, film, fashion, visual arts and music. Key highlights included performances by six Malawian female artists backed by a full band and participation from refugees from the Dzaleka Refugee Camp. The festival took an inclusive approach by offering free shows on selected days. In addition to the main event, ZCF23 organised pre-event activities, which included training

and support for emerging artists and aftercare programmes. Twenty young Malawian creatives received training and worked in the festival's event office to gain practical experience. The festival involved volunteers from Tumaini in its organisation and has initiated a podcast series post-event to share the stories of the artists involved.

THE THEORY OF CHANGE

The approach behind ZCF23 was centred on a strategic vision to elevate Zomba as a key cultural and tourist destination while simultaneously empowering the local artistic community. This multifaceted methodology prioritised showcasing a diverse array of artistic talents, coupled with active involvement and development of artists, particularly women and the youth.

At its core, the festival integrated various art forms – from traditional to contemporary – to reflect Zomba's rich cultural tapestry. This was complemented by an inclusive strategy, ensuring accessibility to a broader audience, notably through free events, democratising the experience of art and culture.



Educational and developmental aspects were crucial to the festival's approach, focusing on nurturing emerging talents. This entailed providing training and support to budding artists, extending beyond skill enhancement to include aftercare and professional guidance, and fostering sustainable artistic career paths. Community involvement and collaboration were significant elements of the festival's strategy. Involving refugees and engaging local volunteers in its organisation, the festival evolved beyond an event into a platform for social cohesion and cultural exchange. This community-centric model was key in fostering a sense of collective ownership and pride in Zomba's cultural offerings.

Post-festival initiatives, such as the podcast series, aimed to sustain the festival's momentum and impact. This digital extension was not just about extending the festival's presence but also about creating a lasting legacy to continue promoting and celebrating Zomba's artists and cultural narrative. In essence, ZCF23's holistic approach was aimed at creating a sustainable cultural ecosystem in Zomba, positioning the festival as a catalyst for long-term cultural, social and economic enrichment.

Efforts are underway to position Zomba as a cultural and tourist destination, providing local artists with increased opportunities and exposure. Of note, the 2023 festival saw increased media visibility with features in popular news media (such as Malawi24 and Malawi Plus) and government channels (for example, features on the Ministry of Tourism website). This communications effort has further contributed to government support for this initiative. Looking ahead, these efforts will sustain Zomba's status as a dynamic cultural and tourist hub, supporting local arts community growth.

ABOUT PAKACHERE BACKPACKERS & CREATIVE CENTRE

Pakachere Backpackers & Creative Centre is dedicated to promoting creativity and the arts through tourism in Southern Malawi. It provides a platform for emerging artists, empowers the local community and contributes to the socio-economic progress of Zomba as a cultural and tourist destination. The centre has actively participated in various cultural and creative initiatives over the years, positioning itself as a significant player in the local arts scene.

PERFORMING ARTS BUSINESS AND DIGITAL DISTRIBUTION

ELEVATING ZIMBABWE'S DANCE THROUGH SKILLS AND STANDARDS

(CHENGETAI-NHAKA)

The Performing Arts Business and Digital Distribution capacity-building project targeted the enhancement of digital management, business skills and the standardisation of salaries and performance fees among cultural and contemporary dancers in Zimbabwe.

Implementing organisation	Chenhaka Trust
Duration of the grant	7 months
Region of implementation	Zimbabwe
Target group	Emerging contemporary dancers in Zimbabwe

THE CONTEXT

The dance sector in Zimbabwe has faced several pressing challenges for some time. These issues include inadequate development of skills among dance professionals, lack of social security, lack of financial stability and the need for standardised payment structures for dancers. High levels of unemployment among artists further exacerbate the social and economic context. This situation is particularly difficult for artists living outside the capital city Harare who face increasingly limited access to opportunities.

THE PROJECT: PERFORMING ARTS BUSINESS AND DIGITAL DISTRIBUTION

The capacity-building project targeted the enhancement of digital management, business skills and the standardisation of salaries and performance fees among cultural and contemporary dancers in Zimbabwe. The project involved a 15-day capacity training in the Mashonaland region, with participants from

various provinces participating in a comprehensive programme. The training covered five modules: management and financial literacy, artistic freedom and decent work, compliance, digital distribution skills and booking tour management.

The project reached out to dance professionals through partnerships with associations like the National Association of Zimbabwe and government ministries, utilising these networks for disseminating information and recruiting participants. The facilitators for the training were selected based on their expertise and practical experience in the field, with representatives from the National Arts Council of Zimbabwe and managers of prominent dance groups among the trainers. This national programme empowered participants from all 10 provinces of Zimbabwe, with plans to select individuals for further training based on their performance through an exam at the end of the programme.



THE THEORY OF CHANGE

The theory of change for this project is anchored in the belief that targeted training and the strategic selection of mentors can significantly elevate the professionalism and sustainability of the dance sector in Zimbabwe. By meticulously choosing mentors with practical expertise and a secure track record in the dance industry, such as seasoned facilitators from the National Arts Council of Zimbabwe and experienced dance group managers, the project ensures that the training provided is practical and directly applicable to the participants' careers.

The project leverages strong partnerships with government ministries and key arts associations to facilitate the dissemination of information and recruitment of participants. These alliances are crucial, as they lend credibility to the training and ensure that the programme is aligned with the industry's standards and expectations.

Incorporating these elements into the theory of change, the project expects that when dancers, groups and associations are empowered with enhanced business acumen through mentors of high calibre and supported by robust institutional partnerships, they can navigate the professional landscape more effectively. This support system is projected to improve contract negotiations, standardised remuneration and better working conditions for dancers.

As a result, the dance professionals are anticipated to produce quality work that resonates with market demands, leading to increased revenue streams through digital platforms and live performances. Furthermore, the project posits that a greater commitment to tax compliance and the adoption of decent work principles will contribute to the sector's development and recognition, thus promoting economic growth and cultural enrichment in the region. The continued mentorship and further training opportunities affirm a commitment to long-term development, ensuring the project's impacts are sustainable and that the dance sector in Zimbabwe experiences a transformative shift towards a more structured and equitable industry.

ABOUT CHENHAKA TRUST

Chenhaka Trust is a non-profit organisation established in 2011 to promote and support Zimbabwean artists, particularly in dance and the performing arts, while preserving Zimbabwe's rich cultural heritage. Chenhaka Trust empowers dancers and cultural performers to succeed in today's fast-paced world by providing comprehensive training, support and advocacy. The organisation operates in Bulawayo, Kadoma and Mutare. The name Chenhaka Trust originates from the Shona phrase *chengetai-nhaka*, which means "let's preserve our heritage".

PART 2

IMPROVING ACCESS TO FINANCING TO SUPPORT THE CREATION AND SUSTAINABILITY OF BUSINESS AND ORGANISATIONS

Access to financial resources has long been perceived as a barrier towards accelerating the growth of the CCIs in Southern Africa. However, through strategic partnerships and interregional collaborations, pathways to sustainable and inclusive financing options are indeed possible.

The projects highlighted in this section illustrate a two-pronged approach. First, they seek to stimulate local markets by engaging local vendors and artisans as well as tourism and other similarly placed industries towards a shared vision of sustainability. Second, they demonstrate how artistic products created by and for the Southern African market are ripe for foreign direct investment.



GULE 2.0

TRANSFORMING LIVES THROUGH EXPRESSIVE ART (UKUCHINJA IMIKALILEYESU MUFYAKUCHITACHITA)

Gule 2.0 boosts local performing arts by training talent, fostering partnerships and showcasing Zambian artists to global audiences. Participants were trained in diverse skills such as casting, directing, sound engineering and storytelling.

Implementing organisation	Circus Zambia
Duration of the grant	12 months
Region of implementation	Lusaka, Zambia
Target group	Dance and theatre performance groups

THE CONTEXT

Zambia's performing arts industry is renowned for its vibrant atmosphere and skilled circus performers, who have made significant contributions to the sector.³⁴ However, the industry would greatly benefit from opportunities for education and collaboration. Aspiring artists have limited access to professional groups and mentors, highlighting the need for programmes directed at skills enhancement.³⁵ There is also room for improved marketing strategies for national visibility and platforms to showcase talent to facilitate access to international markets.³⁶

THE PROJECT: GULE 2.0

Gule 2.0 boosts local performing arts by training talent, fostering partnerships and showcasing Zambian artists to global audiences. The project organised a series of eight capacity-development masterclasses, where nine performing art groups from Zambia engaged with local and international experts, training facilitators and speakers to equip them with the necessary tools and knowledge to excel in their craft. Participants were trained in diverse skills such as casting, directing, sound engineering and storytelling. Networking sessions

were hosted to foster collaboration among the artists. The Gule 2.0 Festival showcased the creatives' work and was supported by a digital campaign with engaging visual content to market the festival.

THE THEORY OF CHANGE

Gule 2.0's theory of change centred around magnifying the visibility of Zambian performing artists, underpinned by collaboration, talent nurturing, skill enhancement and international exposure. This was realised by tapping into renowned international experts and bolstering ties with a global practitioner network. These artists, having honed their sound engineering, storytelling and acrobatic prowess, played pivotal roles in varied productions, thus diving deeper into interdisciplinary synergies and widening their horizons. Their refined skills then took centre stage at the Gule 2.0 Festival.

The festival was instrumental in offering artists a stage to present their craft to a wider audience while facilitating collaboration and enhancing visibility. Beyond the festival's duration, strategic digital campaigns, encompassing a dedicated

website and social media endeavours, maintained this momentum. Addressing core industry challenges, Gule 2.0's holistic approach made strides in eradicating barriers like inadequate educational prospects and limited collaborative platforms. Consequently, the participants witnessed a boost in their professional capacities, leading to commendable performances and increased job opportunities.

Although circus performance is deeply rooted in African cultural narratives, it often languishes in the shadows, seldom gaining mainstream acceptance. Yet, the initiative's success resonated to such an extent that the government invited Circus Zambia for a nationwide tour. Additionally, an endorsement from the Zambian Art Council for a subsequent Gule Festival underscores the transformative impact of Gule 2.0 on the sector.

Securing international avenues for Southern African artists, particularly in niche art forms like circus performance, is a challenging endeavour. Circus Zambia, bolstered by Gule 2.0, tackled this issue, ensuring local talents received the recognition they deserve. Strategic affiliations

with entities like Alliance Française, Lagos Fringe Festival experts and media stakeholders, including the National Arts Council, Modzi Arts and Barefeet Theatre, ensured that Gule 2.0's performances continually raised its visibility profile. Highlighting its success, a participant's association with the initiative led to his recruitment by a prestigious New York-based firm.

ABOUT CIRCUS ZAMBIA

Circus Zambia is a social enterprise that uses circus acts and arts to empower Zambia's youth. Born from the shanty towns of Chibolya, where opportunities for young people remain scarce, Circus Zambia seeks to provide life skills, social development, educational support and income-generating opportunities. In 2018, the organisation established a 250-seat theatre with a creative hub that features a music studio, theatre space and dance areas. Circus Zambia's ultimate goal is to increase the visibility of Zambian performance artists. It achieves this through the Gule 2.0 Festival, which provides a platform for young people to showcase their skills and enhance their personal and professional development.



MACUTI FESTIVAL

CELEBRATING CULTURAL HERITAGE

(WIWANANA ORERA)

Macuti Festival celebrates local cultural traditions, focusing on the Tufo dance and providing a focal point for promoting local intangible practices to highlight diversity and sustainability.

Implementing organisation	Gabinete de Conservação da Ilha (GACIM)
Duration of the grant	8 months+
Region of implementation	Mozambique
Target group	Local communities and local cultural associations

THE CONTEXT

In 1991, Mozambique's island of Ibo was declared a UNESCO World Heritage site due to its exceptional cultural value and heritage, including traditions, dances and artistic works. The island is home to people of diverse backgrounds and cultures, including Swahili, Asian, European and indigenous communities.³⁷ The sharing of small living spaces by family groups reflects an everyday reality on the island, influenced by structural, socio-economic and cultural factors. Problems such as unemployment and poverty (mainly in Macuti) have led to various socio-economic problems.³⁸

THE PROJECT: MACUTI FESTIVAL

The Island of Mozambique's 'City of Macuti' is a vibrant cultural destination renowned for its Macuti-adorned houses made from coconut leaves. This area features the Tufu traditional dance originating from Arab culture in the 10th century, alongside other cultural expressions and legends. With the support of the Sound Connects Fund, GACIM launched the annual Macuti Festival, which celebrates local cultural traditions, focusing on the Tufo dance. At the festival, the Makua heritage of the Island³⁹ is showcased with women performing the Tufu dance to the

accompaniment of instrumentalists. This dance is a crucial element of their identity, often led by respected figures and religious leaders. During the first Macuti Festival, 33 local cultural agents were trained in entrepreneurship, cultural marketing and small business management. At the same time, new cultural groups were trained in theatre and safeguarding intangible practices. The festival provided a focal point for promoting the island's local intangible practices to highlight diversity and sustainability. This culminated in two live shows, which initiated a dialogue among stakeholders, including government, regional experts and the private sector. In addition, Macuti Festival has established a cultural collaboration platform between associations on the Island of Mozambique and the capital Maputo. Three cultural events were held in Maputo, sensitising audiences in the capital of the rich history of the Island of Mozambique. The project has also started building a school for traditional instruments.

THE THEORY OF CHANGE

The Macuti Festival aimed to enhance entrepreneurship and improve cultural marketing and management skills among local creatives. It achieved this by providing specific training and



presenting live performances. To initiate this transformation, the festival's inaugural event staged captivating performances by local artists and Maputo's Timbila Cheny Wa Gune's group, and created a space for cultural exchange, enhancing stakeholder engagement and cooperative efforts. It spotlighted local artists by including notable regional musicians like Zakes Batwini and Ami Faku in the programme, elevating local talents to a broader audience.

Macuti Festival's strategic activities were instrumental in setting up a foundation for the ongoing preservation and development of the island's cultural heritage. These activities functioned as a means of empowerment for cultural professionals. Additionally, the festival created a new market for local cultural entrepreneurs and tourists, contributing to the island's sustainable socio-economic growth. The success and credibility of the festival's model were substantiated by support from significant cultural institutions, including the Directorate of Conservation and the Ministry of Culture and Tourism, promising even greater endorsement for its next edition.

Macuti Festival's approach demonstrated the power of cultural initiatives in galvanising community engagement, drawing the attention of key figures like the Secretary of State for the Province of Nampula, local administrators and the Municipality of the Island of Mozambique. This engagement signalled a revival for "the tiny island paradise that time forgot", catalysing local markets with the new economic potential that the festival introduced.

ABOUT GABINETE DE CONSERVAÇÃO DA ILHA

GACIM is a Mozambique Island-based conservation agency that focuses on the protection and management of the island's cultural heritage. Its work encompasses the safeguarding of architectural, historical and archaeological sites alongside environmental conservation and the promotion of cultural tourism. Through technical support and institutional training, GACIM collaborates with various public and private stakeholders. Its goal is to enhance the accessibility of Mozambique's natural resources, bolster conservation initiatives and support the sustainable development of the nation's CCIs.

PROMOVENDO O ACESSO AOS PRODUTOS DE ARTES E CULTURA PARA CRIANÇAS NA PERIFERIA DE MAPUTO

IMMERSING YOUTH IN THE CREATIVE ARTS (ACESSO CULTURAL INFANTIL)

This project was designed to promote access to arts and culture, from painting and sculpture to traditional music, on the outskirts of Maputo, underpinned by a firm belief in the transformative power of cultural and artistic education for young people, especially those in peri-urban areas.

Implementing organisation	Xiluva Artes
Duration of the grant	8 months
Region of implementation	Mozambique
Target group	Children and teenagers in Marracuene, Mozambique, including those with special needs; teachers; professionals in the arts; women

THE CONTEXT

Access to arts education greatly impacts children's and teenagers' cognitive, social and emotional development. Young people who participate in arts education perform better in other subjects, have higher levels of creativity and critical thinking, and are more likely to become civic-minded and engaged citizens.⁴⁰ Mozambique's lack of access to arts education poses a significant challenge to the development of the creative industry. The revised national curriculum further exacerbates this situation by reducing the content of artistic and musical education. Access to public art schools is limited, and those that exist are located in the capital city.

THE PROJECT: PROMOVENDO O ACESSO AOS PRODUTOS DE ARTES E CULTURA PARA CRIANÇAS NA PERIFERIA DE MAPUTO

The project, centred in Marracuene, was launched by Xiluva Artes to immerse local youth in the creative arts. Initially, a sequence of 15 workshops was organised, focusing on various disciplines, from painting and sculpture to traditional music. These sessions, facilitated by 10 skilled artists from the local community, nurtured the talent of over 200 participants. The results were then displayed, where 50 artworks were exhibited, and a vibrant showcase of music and dance was performed for the local community, drawing an audience of 500 people. In parallel to the practical workshops, the project used digital platforms to bridge the gap in arts education. A dedicated YouTube channel was launched, broadcasting 20 instructional videos on Mozambican music, each attracting an average of a thousand views.



Teachers were trained in utilising digital tools to assist students and increase impact.

Furthermore, Njingiritana Festival, a cornerstone event, featured the artworks and performances of the workshop participants and attracted key industry stakeholders among its 300 attendees. The festival included five round-table discussions on the arts in educational development, potentially influencing policy on a larger scale. Twenty-five local teachers attended specially designed masterclasses to integrate arts into their curricula, with the potential to impact the learning experience of over 1 000 students. The project also facilitated three public debates on the role of technology in arts education, drawing in 40 experts and contributing to policy discourse. Finally, the project's crowning community effort was the creation of three large-scale murals, conceptualised and executed by the young artists, symbolising the transformation of Maputo's youth from cultural consumers to creators.

THE THEORY OF CHANGE

The project is underpinned by a firm belief in the transformative power of cultural and artistic education for young people, especially those in peri-urban settings. Its core aim was to enhance the quality and reach of cultural offerings for young people by upskilling teachers with technology, driving critical policy debate, and facilitating hands-on artistic experiences. Workshops and performances were mediums to expand cultural appreciation and spark interest in the arts as a viable career, also addressing employment in the cultural domain. The multifaceted approach – from teacher training to policy dialogue and artistic workshops – provided a comprehensive cultural education model. Moreover, the production and dissemination of

digital content created a sustainable resource for children to access arts education, breaking down geographical and socio-economic barriers and reinforcing the project's dedication to inclusive cultural learning.

Strategically crafted partnerships were a huge contributor to the project's success. Foundation Sur Le Niger ensured cultural diversity and enrichment by enabling musician Adama Keita's participation, thus bringing West African artistic influence to the Mozambican context. Local governmental support from the Marracuene District included practical logistics and meaningful contributions like crayon donations, reflecting the depth of official commitment to the arts. Galeria do Porto de Maputo was integral for foundational events and sustained support, providing a physical and technical base for ongoing educational activities. Furthermore, converting a private residence into a workshop space signified the project's grassroots engagement, creating an intimate setting for cultural exchange through African drumming and showing the community's active role in the initiative. Each partner's contribution solidified the project's structure, enabling a diverse yet unified approach to cultural education and engagement.

ABOUT XILUVA ARTES

Xiluva Artes was founded in Maputo to address the city's lack of creative learning spaces for people of all ages. Led by seasoned musicians and educators, it offers instruction in music, dance, painting and literature. Additionally, it organises diverse events, offers artist agency services, provides consultancies, assists with literary recording and publication, and runs the Xiluva School of Arts.

SOUNDS OF NAM MUSIC TOUR

SHOWCASING NAMIBIAN MUSICAL TALENT (EHOLO LOVASHIKI-XUMBA)

Sounds of Nam Music Tour addressed emerging artists' challenges, such as lack of exposure and the need for more performance opportunities and marketing avenues.

Implementing organisation	FreeYourMind Entertainment
Duration of the grant	10 months
Region of implementation	Namibia
Target group	Local entertainment specialists, artists, event producers

THE CONTEXT

The Namibian music industry is growing, but artists from smaller towns and remote areas face limited resources, scarce performance opportunities and weak marketing support. These factors limit their opportunities to develop creative skills and transform their talents into sustainable livelihoods. Many musicians experience inadequate media coverage to support their work, therefore event producers and local entertainment specialists play a crucial role.

THE PROJECT: SOUNDS OF NAM MUSIC TOUR

Sounds of Nam Music Tour is a platform created by FreeYourMind Entertainment for upcoming musicians in Namibia to perform alongside established artists. The tour happened over 10 months in 10 towns nationwide, starting and ending in Windhoek. A social media marketing campaign encouraged aspiring artists to submit video auditions using the hashtag #SoundsofNam. The most promising artists were selected to perform at the shows alongside popular musicians such as Yeezir and DJ Castro. A team of filmmakers documented these journeys and performances as part of a 10-episode series.

With monthly live shows and performance episodes, Sounds of Nam Music Tour addressed emerging artists' challenges.

THE THEORY OF CHANGE

The Sounds of Nam Music Tour addressed the barriers faced by up-and-coming musicians in Namibia through a deliberate series of actions. The tour provided artists with a platform to reach a broader audience, significantly more than just staging events; it was an effort to document and honour Namibia's rich musical heritage. The organisers put together a vibrant line-up and spearheaded an assertive social media campaign, which garnered substantial online viewership, with over 1 million views and attracting upwards of 10 000 attendees. These figures are indicators not only of the tour's extensive reach but also of its profound impact in promoting new talent.

To enhance the tour's efficacy, the team deployed a multifaceted promotional strategy. This included an interactive social media campaign featuring announcements of competition winners before performances, which boosted engagement and extended their audience reach to approximately 400 000 users across various platforms. Strategic partnerships were pivotal to the tour's success.



Collaborations with entities like Eagle Media FM and MTC Windhoek Fashion Week bolstered the tour's message and ensured that even artists from remote areas achieved national acclaim. Media partnerships were also crucial, with exposure extending to prominent newspapers and television networks, thereby elevating visibility for the musicians.

The tour's success was not confined to digital engagement; it also realised a significant uptick in physical attendance at live shows, with audiences increasing from 200 to 370 music lovers. This growth in live audience numbers reflects the tour's capacity to engage and expand in-person attendance, which is essential for the artists' longevity. These performances were enriched through partnerships with local retailers and filmmakers, presenting a comprehensive approach to promoting not just the musicians but the broader creative sector.

ABOUT FREEYOURMIND ENTERTAINMENT

FreeYourMind Entertainment is a content production company in Namibia that believes in the transformative power of artistic expression. Originating in the comedy world, it has evolved to offer diverse entertainment experiences to create social synergies and inspire audiences to strive for socio-economic liberation. Its primary goal is to increase the visibility and market presence of creative practitioners and artists from Southern Africa by providing a platform to showcase their work.

TRADITIONAL AND INDIGENOUS COMMUNICATION SYSTEMS

PROMOTION OF TRADITIONAL AND INDIGENOUS COMMUNICATION SYSTEMS FOR THE PEOPLE OF EASTERN ZAMBIA, MALAWI AND MOZAMBIQUE (KAMPHEPO KA YAZI YAZI)

The Traditional and Indigenous Communication Systems project started with specialised training in live recording and 'outside broadcasting', supplemented by procuring advanced equipment to empower young broadcasters. Guidance from media veterans enabled the station to mentor up-and-coming broadcasters and widen its audience across Southern Africa.

Implementing organisation	Breeze FM
Duration of the grant	8 months
Region of implementation	Zambia, Malawi, Mozambique
Target group	Women, men and youth

THE CONTEXT

Preserving traditional ceremonies and cultural heritage in Zambia, Malawi and Mozambique faces noticeable challenges. While these ceremonies hold significant cultural, social and spiritual value, they vary widely in nature and scale, from small, closed initiation events to large, nationally recognised gatherings. Despite their importance, these traditions face the threat of fading away, risking the loss of important cultural practices and values for future generations.

THE PROJECT:

TRADITIONAL AND INDIGENOUS COMMUNICATION SYSTEMS

The Traditional and Indigenous Communication Systems project was based on a partnership among several community radio stations: Dzimwe

Community Radio and Nkhotakota Community Radio in Malawi, Radio Angonia in Mozambique, and Chikaya FM and PASME Radio Station in Zambia.

The project started with specialised training in live recording and outside broadcasting, supplemented by procuring advanced equipment to empower young broadcasters in these communities. Ahead of its first broadcast, the team engaged in a study tour to exchange knowledge with counterparts at Zambian and Mozambican radio stations. These interactions facilitated the recording of cultural festivities, notably the Kulamba ceremony, across various locations, including Malawi, Mozambique and Katete, giving the team valuable practical insights. Guidance from BBC Media Action veterans further



empowered the Breeze FM team, enabling the station to mentor upcoming broadcasters and widen its audience across Southern Africa.

The project then focused on capturing and disseminating traditional music and dance from local ceremonies. It navigated the cultural sensitivities to gain the endorsement of traditional leaders, culminating in the recording and inter-station distribution of 107 songs. The project also involved transforming artist stories into documentaries and podcasts, thus diversifying the traditional narrative forms. Furthermore, the Creators Connect Industry night in Lusaka presented a strategic opportunity for local industry figures to discuss navigating the CCI markets and ensure the endurance of creative endeavours.

THE THEORY OF CHANGE

The Breeze FM project is designed to broaden the reach of African cultural expressions by collaborating with local radio stations and key broadcasters such as the Zambian Broadcasting Corporation and Zambia News and Information Services. To ensure ongoing operations and reach, Breeze FM has entered into two memorandums of understanding for content and news sharing

with partner stations in Malawi and Mozambique. Additionally, the project has embraced digital platforms, uploading traditional songs to streaming services, which aids in generating income for local artists.

The project strongly focuses on enhancing training, establishing secure environments for cultural expression, protecting intellectual property and advancing gender equity within the industry. Breeze FM's efforts have successfully brought to light diverse stories and ceremonies, reinforcing the value of African traditional arts.

As a multifaceted radio station, Breeze FM has become an attractive medium for advertisers, drawing interest from

cultural leaders, creative entities and various businesses. This engagement has led to a unique business model that not only honours regional traditions but also supports the economic vitality of communities.

The initiative's digital presence has seen significant traction, with traditional ceremony recordings attracting numerous views. This visibility, combined with an ad-based revenue model and a royalty fund for artistic works, ensures that the community gains from its rich cultural contributions. It highlights Breeze FM's role in encouraging best practices and positive community impact.

ABOUT BREEZE FM

Breeze FM, situated in Chipata, Zambia, broadcasts across the Zambezi Valley – including Victoria Falls and Hwange – in languages like Ndebele, English, Nambya and Tonga, embracing the area's cultural diversity. The station fosters community upliftment in the Eastern Province by broadcasting information crucial for local development. Additionally, Breeze FM spotlights local creatives, offering them exposure to wider audiences and enhancing the region's appreciation of local content.

ZIMBABWE ONLINE THEATRE TELEVISION

EMPOWERING YOUNG THEATRE PRACTITIONERS (KUDZIDZISA)

The Zimbabwe Theatre Academy Trust (ZTAT) launched Zimbabwe Online Theatre Television (ZOTT), an initiative which saw the training of 33 emerging theatre practitioners, procurement of high-quality equipment and the creation and recording of 12 original short plays.

Implementing organisation	Zimbabwe Theatre Academy Trust (ZTAT)
Duration of the grant	8 months
Region of implementation	Zimbabwe
Target group	Theatre makers, online audiences, local theatre practitioners, Zimbabwean theatre sector

THE CONTEXT

Zimbabwean theatre has been plagued by a lack of adequate funding.⁴¹ Nevertheless, the COVID-19 pandemic unexpectedly impacted what seemed to be a dire outlook for Zimbabwean arts – it increased the demand for online content. This was met with the challenge for creators of acquiring the necessary equipment and expertise to migrate their art online.⁴² Limited resources, infrastructure and capacity compounded these challenges. To overcome them, theatre practitioners needed the skills and resources to navigate digital platforms effectively, and to create high-quality digital content for platforms like YouTube and Facebook to reach diverse audiences. Empowering scriptwriters, producers and performers to bridge the gap between traditional and digital modes of presenting and distributing theatrical works became imperative.⁴³

THE PROJECT:

ZIMBABWE ONLINE THEATRE TELEVISION

Leveraging the opportunity to reach a wider audience and gain access to international markets, ZTAT launched the ZOTT initiative, which saw the

training of 33 emerging theatre practitioners, procurement of high-quality equipment and the creation and recording of 12 original short plays. ZOTT also used online and traditional media publications, an endeavour that secured over 150 000 views of the plays globally.

Unpacking untold stories, it was important for ZOTT to reflect the realities of the theatre performers through an interview series streamed on FollowSpot TV. The project provided training and a platform for Zimbabwean theatre makers to showcase their talents and create digital productions accessible to global audiences. Thirty-three (33) young theatre makers (16 women and 17 men) were trained in digital skills, performance techniques and technology in theatre production. This was done through a virtual workshop, through which a module for Theatre for the Screen was developed for the Zimbabwe Theatre Academy.

THE THEORY OF CHANGE

In a nation grappling with economic strife for nearly three decades, traditional employment



avenues for young artists are dwindling. However, ZOTT has carved out a digital domain for these artists, tapping into the surging demand for online entertainment. The initiative has not only addressed the skills gap but also provided a platform for performers to monetise their talent sustainably. With the support of significant partners like the Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation, NRTV, 3KTV, Mirazvo Productions and EarGround, ZOTT popularised this content in a burgeoning online sphere while fostering intraregional knowledge exchange.

Under the initiative, artists underwent multifaceted training, particularly in theatre production, culminating in the creation of 10 distinctive digital theatre plays. These productions found a home on the ZOTT platform, showcasing the confluence of traditional theatre and modern digital presentation. The initiative's collaborative ethos, particularly evident in the Theatre for the Screen module, extended its influence, elevating the broader CCI in Zimbabwe.

The compounded success of ZOTT transcends skill development. It has birthed an online theatre channel equipped for production uploads and monetisation, offered schools invaluable theatre resources, and notably expanded the reach of Zimbabwean theatre to international audiences. Recognising the potential, ZOTT is already fostering ties with regional broadcasters, including DStv promising a future where Zimbabwean theatre could be a staple across Southern Africa's screens.

ABOUT THE ZIMBABWE THEATRE ACADEMY TRUST

ZTAT explores and celebrates culture, community and social issues through theatrical expression. ZTAT acknowledges theatre as a catalyst for social transformation and employment opportunities for the youth and women. It orientates young creatives to develop better performance skills, self-confidence, self-respect and agency. These skills nurture a proficient and accomplished workforce essential for a thriving professional theatre industry.

PROJECT ROLL-A-DICE

CELEBRATING NAMIBIA'S RICH CULTURE THROUGH ENTERTAINMENT TRIVIA (UUDANO WEENDUNGE)

The Swift 30 game show and the Swift 30: The Game Show board game were designed to celebrate Namibia's rich and diverse culture through engaging entertainment trivia. It is developed with local creative and cultural experts to provide an educational experience.

Implementing organisation	Afroprint Line Trading CC
Duration of the grant	7 months
Region of implementation	Namibia
Target group	Local creative professionals and organisations

THE CONTEXT

Namibia's creative industry faces the challenge of promoting its unique narratives in a diverse cultural landscape. Due to limited resources for research and documentation, preserving cultural narratives is challenging. Integrating these stories into modern creative expressions poses a significant obstacle. Moreover, Namibia's diverse cultural heritage needs to be recognised and validated within the broader creative sphere. The sector is responsible for preserving the past and ensuring that it remains an integral part of current and future creative endeavours, thus ensuring a dynamic and continuous cultural legacy.

THE PROJECT: PROJECT ROLL-A-DICE

The project took a two-pronged approach: firstly, the production of Swift 30: The Game Show and secondly, the Swift 30: African Cultural Edition board game. The game show Swift 30 is an evolution of the above-mentioned board game. It is developed with local creative and cultural experts to provide an educational experience. Each episode lasts 26 minutes and features contestants showcasing their knowledge of Namibian culture, music, food, famous people,

places and languages. The game incorporates local content and will be available on streaming platforms like YouTube and the Swift online platform. More than mere entertainment, these platforms amplified Namibian narratives, ensuring their stories resonated far and wide.

Furthermore, recognising the richness of Namibia's cultural diversity, the project dedicated resources to research and documentation. This ensured the preservation of cultural narratives and their integration into contemporary creative works. Economically, the project sought to revolutionise, introducing channels for creatives to achieve financial stability and ensure the sector's prosperity.

THE THEORY OF CHANGE

Swift 30's theory of change centres on Afroprint's mission to elevate Namibia's creative industry for economic and cultural empowerment.

It started with a deliberate investment in the creative community through resource provision and tailored training programmes. These inputs formed the basis of the project's strategy.



Building upon this foundation, Afroprint Line Trading CC produced tangible outputs, including creative content, platforms and board games, demonstrating the company's commitment to nurturing Namibia's creative talents.

The ultimate impact is two-fold: empowering local creatives with the skills and knowledge needed to thrive, and increasing the visibility of Namibian creatives locally and internationally, fostering a more economically diverse and vibrant creative industry.

DStv Namibia is airing the Swift 30 game show on channel 285 every Friday from 6.30pm until 22 December. The show was produced in partnership with One Africa TV.

ABOUT AFROPRINT LINE TRADING CC

Afroprint Line Trading CC is a local professional creative brand based in Windhoek, Namibia. The organisation manufactures unique items that promote Namibian information dissemination and eco-fashion while showcasing the beauty of Namibia and Africa. Their products are made by upcycling off-cuts (fabric waste) and blending artisan textiles with fashion-forward designs, all handcrafted to reflect various organisations, cultures and individual personalities. Afroprint Line offers a diverse product range, including bags, clothing, games and design, and decor items for personal and corporate use.

PART 3

INCREASING VISIBILITY AND MARKET ACCESS FOR CULTURAL AND CREATIVE PRACTITIONERS AND ARTISTS

For far too long, the creative efforts of artists in Southern Africa were simply unseen by the global market, with access to local and regional markets remaining a challenge. By engaging the power of social media, cultivating an online presence and engaging in partnerships with a wide range of stakeholders, as well as creating professional conditions to showcase art, the projects highlighted in this section increased the market presence for Southern African creatives.

From media houses, event venues and festivals to the halls of decision-making bodies, SCF projects highlighted that visibility on its own is just the first step to accelerating and diversifying the CCIs and supporting income generation for creatives. What is required is ensuring that an enabling environment exists for the collective efforts of similarly minded practitioners to survive and thrive through the art they create.



CREATIVE X-HUB

CULTIVATING ENTERPRISE IN CREATIVITY (KUYENCA)

X-Hub is a cultural and creative business incubator with communal spaces for collaboration among creative professionals. It hosts musical performances, art exhibitions and workshops. The incubator provides fully equipped studios for audio and video production specialists.

Implementing organisation	Khuzula
Duration of the grant	18 months
Region of implementation	Maputo, Mozambique
Target group	Artists, cultural managers, young professionals and students

THE CONTEXT

Mozambique's creative and arts industries face several challenges.⁴⁴ The lack of sufficient start-up investment hampers growth,⁴⁵ while limited resources and infrastructure hinder creatives from producing high-quality content and exhibiting their artistic talents under professional conditions.⁴⁶ Before establishing X-Hub (founded by Khuzula), Mozambique needed a comprehensive centre for nurturing professional skills in cultural and creative businesses.

THE PROJECT:

X-HUB, THE CREATIVE BUSINESS INCUBATOR

X-Hub is a cultural and creative business incubator in Maputo, Mozambique, newly developed by Khuzula. The facility has communal spaces for collaboration among creative professionals and hosting musical performances, art exhibitions and workshops. The incubator provides fully equipped studios for audio and video production specialists. X-Hub provides access to internet connectivity and versatile meeting and catering facilities, making it a suitable space for hosting events such as album launches, press conferences and presentations. Through the project, X-Hub also offered advisory services, mentorship and networking

opportunities for creative practitioners to create high-quality goods and services, skills training programmes, subsidised branding, web design, publishing and digital marketing services. Cultural events were streamed using digital marketing tools, and the online resources and links continue to be used by the participants to catalogue, trade and promote local artists' cultural goods.

THE THEORY OF CHANGE

X-Hub was conceived as a comprehensive support centre for Mozambican artists and creative professionals. The driving vision was two-fold: to enhance the country's artistic footprint and to act as a replicable blueprint for African nations.

In essence, X-Hub isn't merely a platform to fine-tune products and services; it's a holistic incubator. Here, emerging artists – 198 in the inaugural cohort – master their craft, absorbing technical skills crucial for business growth, mentored by industry experts. Beyond artistic finesse, participants benefit from business advisory, networking avenues and opportunities to showcase their work both locally and globally.



What sets X-Hub apart is its multifaceted approach: nurturing talent, fostering business acumen and amplifying visibility – all essential ingredients in professionalising Mozambique's creative sector. It's an anchor in an unpredictable industry, offering resources and market access, ensuring that art isn't just a passion but a viable livelihood. Beyond its core offerings, X-Hub adds a community touch, hosting art exhibitions and performances, elevating talent and nurturing an appreciation for the arts.

The initiative's impact isn't just anecdotal. Tangible success is evident with artworks gaining attraction in local and global media, reaching an audience of over half a million. Online creations amassed nearly 7 000 views. To cement its future, X-Hub has garnered endorsement and funding for its next phase from key stakeholders, including the Ministry of Culture and Tourism.

But perhaps X-Hub's most significant validation is its scalability. Its success isn't confined to its premises but has sparked interest in replication,

showing a feasible, high ROI model for arts and culture support. The initiative's influence is far-reaching, with places like Nampula Province already extending invitations for an X-Hub outpost. This continued momentum signifies not just X-Hub's triumph but a bright future for Mozambique's creative space.

ABOUT KHUZULA

Khuzula is a media company that specialises in innovation of the creative industry, from event production and artist development to literary publishing and project consulting. Among its standout initiatives is the two-day AZGO Festival, which enriches Maputo's cultural landscape by fusing local and international music, film and dance performances. Additionally, Khuzula offers the MODIGI service aimed at assisting with content monetisation. The company's ultimate objective is to enhance the quality of artistic endeavours, professionalise industry practices and catalyse artistic and cultural advancement within the country.

EPHEMERAL TALES

COLLABORATIVE DIGITAL STORYTELLING FOR HIGH-QUALITY PRODUCTION AND GLOBAL DISSEMINATION (KUSIMBISA)

Creative digital storytelling workshops and personalised mentorship sessions were held for animators, musicians, producers and screenplay writers, covering video production, animation and storytelling techniques.

Implementing organisation	Kay Media
Duration of the grant	8 months
Region of implementation	Zimbabwe
Target group	Emerging young creatives in music and animation

THE CONTEXT

The creative economy in Africa contributes an impressive US\$58.4 billion annually with new media content, especially animation, poised as a pivotal driver. Animation and digital storytelling present significant income-generating opportunities within the cultural and creative sectors.⁴⁷ In Zimbabwe, the growth of the animation industry faces significant challenges, including the fragile economic context, lack of investment and the prevalence of informal work arrangements, all leading to a relatively underdeveloped industry. This is exacerbated by the absence of proper infrastructure to create high-quality products,⁴⁸ inadequate professional training and knowledge-sharing opportunities for creatives,⁴⁹ and ineffective distribution channels for reaching audiences and selling animation products.⁵⁰

THE PROJECT: EPHEMERAL TALES

Creative digital storytelling workshops and personalised mentorship sessions were held for 11 Harare animators, musicians, producers and screenplay writers. The workshops covered video production, animation and storytelling techniques. The group of creatives came together to co-produce Ephemeral Tales, a four-part animated musical series that draws inspiration from Zimbabwe's unique urban culture. The participants also engaged in pre- and post-production activities, including scriptwriting, storyboarding, character design, animation and sound design. The series explores social issues affecting young people with captivating narratives like Stavo's.⁵¹



THEORY OF CHANGE

Kay Media's theory of change revolved around nurturing and empowering under-resourced artists. Recognising that equipping these creatives with enhanced skills and amplifying their voices could catalyse both individual growth and broader socio-economic development, they embarked on this mission. By offering specialised training in digital storytelling and animation and placing a premium on cross-background collaboration, they carved a unique space in content creation. This focus led to producing locally relevant content informed by unique perspectives and innovative animation techniques.

Embracing the role of a cultural disruptor, Kay Media used advanced animation to bring local stories to life, ensuring they resonated with a vast online audience. Strategic partnerships played a key role in this endeavour. Collaborations with platforms like Chaos Club Digital Africa was particularly fruitful, yielding over 18 000 views for the content on this platform alone. Their animated content garnered a remarkable digital footprint of over 500 000 across Africa and globally, underscoring the untapped potential of the creative sector.

A pressing issue has always been market access. By forging ties with regional platforms, such as Chaos Club Digital, Kay Media not only amplified their content's reach but also ensured that emerging artists' voices echoed across local and global corridors. This approach drew interest from both private companies and developmental agencies, showcasing the transformative potential of authentic, locally sourced stories in redefining the media and animation landscape continent-wide.

ABOUT KAY MEDIA

Kay Media is a Zimbabwean multimedia company that produces and distributes local content through informative and entertaining stories to audiences across the continent. Its content ranges from animation to audio-visual products and further extends to written pieces such as blogs. Its aim is to establish an audience for creative local media and facilitate the integration of high-quality digital products within the creative economy, branding and advertising industries.

LUANDA STUDIO ROOM

PLATFORMING EMERGING AFRICAN ARTISTIC TALENT (FOMENTANDO A INTEGRIDADE NA DIVERSIDADE ARTÍSTICA)

MOVART Gallery introduced a residency programme tailored for women artists in Luanda, which served as a haven for emerging African women artists, providing them with a vital space for creative exchange and skill development.

Implementing organisation	MOVART
Duration of the grant	10 months
Region of implementation	Luanda, Angola, Lisbon and Cape Verde
Target group	Artists and curators, the public, Angolan and international artistic community; MOVART collaborators

THE CONTEXT

Art, deeply rooted in cultural traditions, holds immense significance across societies. Yet in Angola, emerging artists, particularly those venturing into contemporary themes,⁵² struggle for recognition due to socio-economic challenges and limited investment. The overwhelming emphasis on traditional art restricts diversity in exhibitions, sidelining the evolving contemporary art landscape. The shortage of galleries further curtails artists' exposure. Furthermore, gender inequality is a significant problem, as women artists face significant barriers to entry and are often excluded from the art world. Compounding these challenges, limited internet access for nearly 70% of Angolans hampers artists from harnessing digital technologies to broaden their market reach and trade their cultural creations efficiently.⁵³

THE PROJECT: LUANDA STUDIO ROOM

MOVART Gallery introduced a residency programme tailored for women artists in Luanda, which served as a haven for emerging African women artists, providing them with a vital space

for creative exchange and skill development. Amid the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic, MOVART Gallery transformed its spaces into the MOVART Studio, a platform dedicated to artistic research and production. Within this programme, artists enjoyed immersive residencies focused on exploring African ancestry and producing artworks.

It also featured artist talk sessions in person and online. In the spirit of fostering cultural exchanges between Lisbon and Luanda, MOVART organised an art exhibition to showcase the works of resident artists and curators. This exhibition included individual and group pieces and was hosted at its Lisbon location. To amplify the voices of these artists, MOVART initiated a podcast collaboration featuring their work alongside contributions from local musicians. This podcast was distributed on major platforms like Spotify and Apple Music. The proceeds from art sales were shared between sustaining the project and supporting the artists' careers. As a result, the artists had the opportunity to participate



in prestigious art fairs worldwide, encouraging their continued involvement in events like ARCO MADRID 2023 and Cape Town Art Fair 2023.

THE THEORY OF CHANGE

The Luanda Studio Room set forth with the vision of amplifying the voices of emerging African women artists, hinging its strategy on the transformative potential of intercontinental exchanges with Lusophone nations in Africa and the diaspora. Through curated residencies, artists gained valuable insights from renowned figures like Ana Silva, Jose Eduardo Agualusa and Allison Mistura, extending their networks beyond Africa. A testament to the initiative's foresight, artworks created during these residencies were monetised, with profits channelled back into the programme to sustain subsequent editions.

The initiative's podcast series, backed by a visibility strategy, fostered dialogue between the Global North and the Global South on contemporary art and music, ensuring artists earn for their contributions. With eyes set on the horizon, exploratory engagements in Mozambique and Cape Verde are underway, reinforcing MOVART Studio's dedication to nurturing artists and reshaping Angola's contemporary art scene.

Bridging gaps, the project celebrated the confluence of multidisciplinary Lusophone artists, offering them a global stage to showcase their artistry and, in the process, draw from intertwined histories. A notable episode from their podcast series delves deep into shared legacies of the South African Border War with Namibia and the Angolan Battle of Cuito Cuanavale. Events like Lisbon Art Weekend and the MOVART Podcast Project are more than just platforms; they're sanctuaries where artists revisit collective traumas, celebrate shared cultures and engage with a worldwide audience comprising investors, curators and enthusiasts, further securing the project's longevity.

ABOUT MOVART

Arte em Movimento (MOVART) is a platform for showcasing experimental and travelling art exhibitions in and around Luanda, Angola. In 2017, the project established a permanent location on the famous Luanda Marginal,⁵⁴ further cementing its presence in Angola. The main goal of MOVART is to promote contemporary African art from the continent and further promote works by artists from the African and Portuguese diaspora to a global audience.

MTC WINDHOEK FASHION WEEK

SUPPORTING AND PROMOTING NAMIBIAN FASHION GLOBALLY AND AT HOME

(MANGURURA SIDIVISO SOGE: LIRONGA, GWANEKESA, LIKIDA)

MTC Windhoek Fashion Week (MTCFWF) launched the Fashion Meets Sound initiative, in which 20 creative professionals (designers, musicians and artists) were engaged in cross-learning opportunities and invited to co-create innovative art that fused music and fashion design.

Implementing organisation	MTC Windhoek Fashion Week
Duration of the grant	18 months
Region of implementation	Namibia, Zambia, Mozambique, Angola
Target group	Namibian and international designers, Namibian musicians, sound engineers and models

THE CONTEXT

The Namibian fashion industry faces significant growth challenges, notably limited funding and underdeveloped infrastructure for foreign investment. Over 40% of small to medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in the nation grapple with financing needs.⁵⁵ Additionally, there is a shortage of professional development, showcasing avenues and education in the CCIs. This deficit hinders designers and entrepreneurs, curbing skills development and global competitiveness. Furthermore, the industry's constrained global market exposure and visibility limit its potential for international recognition and expansion.⁵⁶

THE PROJECT:

MTC WINDHOEK FASHION WEEK

Through the Sound Connects Fund, MTCFWF launched the Fashion Meets Sound initiative. Designers from Angola, Mozambique and Zambia were featured in this exchange, expanding regional media reach. To stimulate the local

market, nationwide pop-up shops were rolled out across all 14 regions, featuring the work of the 20 creative professionals. In the lead-up to Fashion Week, Fashion Pitch Nights were held where designers were empowered with business knowledge and resources to help them grow in the industry. Fashion Week took on a musical flare, emphasising collaboration between local designers, models and musicians, creating unique soundtracks for runway shows.

Citing the need for greater arts education, workshops in high schools in Oshana, Otjozondjupa and Khomas were conducted. The workshops were followed by a design competition and the winning designs were converted to 2D animations under the guidance of professional animators. One hundred and seven students participated in these workshops. In addition, MTCFWF supported charitable projects through its Fashion for Good programme and collaborated with television programmes like Waka Waka Moo,



a children's television programme in Namibia, to nurture young talent and provided paid practical training internships for tertiary students. Students also got to have their designs produced and shown as part of the Fashion Week Showcase.

THE THEORY OF CHANGE

MTCFWF stands as a beacon for Namibian fashion creatives, confronting industry obstacles such as limited resources and visibility. With a strategic framework centred on skills transfer via workshops and masterclasses, Fashion Meets Sound illustrated the potential of a vibrant local market for music and fashion. This vision ensured that local creatives not only held a significant regional imprint but also provided a platform for young designers to emerge onto the global fashion stage.

As a result, a rich tapestry of high-calibre content emerged, intertwining the worlds of fashion, music and animation. Strategic alliances propelled Namibian fashion brands onto the world stage, ushering in employment and expansive networking avenues. MTCFWF's media collaboration strategy significantly enhanced its visibility. By joining hands with radio, TV and social media platforms, impressive audiences of over 67 400 on YouTube and 150 000+ radio listeners were achieved. Broadening its horizons, MTCFWF extended its influence to neighbouring countries like Zimbabwe and Botswana through media partnerships and exchange programmes, epitomising its commitment to sustained growth.

In Namibia, creators benefitted from valuable masterclasses and internships, while high school students tapped into their creativity through design-centric roadshows, with select designs earmarked for display during Windhoek Fashion Week. Such local events ignited fervour for Namibian arts, shaping a template that invigorated the indigenous market.

MTCFWF boosted the confidence and visibility of young Namibian designers on multiple levels. At its core, Fashion Meets Sound championed arts education, offering students an experiential departure from traditional theory-heavy content by connecting them with active industry experts. Regionally, by collaborating with renowned brands like Namibia Diamond Trading Company and Jeep, and events like Zambezi Bream Festival, MTCFWF has magnified visibility for its participants. Its impact resonates across Southern Africa, as evidenced by the interregional Batho Fashion Week in Botswana and contributions from designers across Botswana, South Africa and Zimbabwe.

ABOUT MTC WINDHOEK FASHION WEEK

MTCFWF aims to boost the presence of Namibian-made fashion brands in the region and globally. It unites diverse industry professionals⁵⁷ from Namibia and the SADC region. By providing a platform for creatives to showcase their talents, MTCFWF encourages networking opportunities, market access and skills development. Throughout the year, MTCFWF organises various events that unite the fashion industry and the public, reinforcing the growth of the creative economy.

PROJECT NGANDU

CREATING PLATFORMS AND STAGES FOR TELLING NAMIBIAN STORIES THROUGH ART AND CREATIVE CONTENT

(MUKURO GWANATUVENYE)

Project Ngandu focused on strengthening existing platforms such as the Ngandu Festival and Ngandu TV digital streaming platform that hosts the Rock the Boat musical production. The project leveraged the rich stories often forged in remote areas and showcased them to a wider audience.

Implementing organisation	Ngandu Events
Duration of the grant	8 months
Region of implementation	Rundu, Namibia
Target group	Creatives and local entrepreneurs, Namibian audience and youth, marginalised Kavango community

THE CONTEXT

Namibia's unique landscape has made it the ideal site for many Hollywood blockbusters, from the Mad Max franchise to 2001: A Space Odyssey. Nevertheless, the stories of Namibians themselves are rarely televised or popularised, and the art created in these conditions faces challenges, including relatively weak industrial infrastructure, lack of investment opportunity and market access. Known for big skies and beautiful deserts, the lack of connectivity for the sparsely populated country means that the creative industry requires additional support in developing demand-driven services and establishing sound brands that are marketable and sustainable.⁵⁸ Because remote areas like Kavango East and West have limited access to infrastructure or markets for selling creative goods, few activities are conducted in these areas, thus limiting the visibility of unknown stories.

THE PROJECT: PROJECT NGANDU

By taking an approach that sought to "not reinvent the wheel", the project leveraged the rich stories of remote areas. The Rock the Boat

live performances were only physically attended by a few performers, the production team and instrumentalists. However, their publication online reached thousands across the country and beyond. Each episode, set on a floating stage on the Okavango River in Rundu, aired on Ngandu TV. It featured performances by top Namibian musicians styled by local fashion designers. The project wrapped up both Season 1 (final episode) and Season 2, totalling 10 episodes, of Rock the Boat. Due to COVID-19 restrictions, Ngandu Festival was scaled down to a series of social cafés promoting business empowerment for creative entrepreneurs, mainly from Kavango East and West. The one-day event featured local experts' fireside chats, workshops and talks, offering practical business tips for creatives. Entrepreneurs also exhibited and sold their products.

THEORY OF CHANGE

The Ngandu Projects' theory of change was strategically crafted to empower local creative entrepreneurs in Namibia and celebrate its culture, specifically through the Ngandu Festival and the Rock the Boat musical. This effort,



bolstered by a series of social cafés and a creative summit, engaged over 2 300 artists and service providers. As a testament to its success, Ngandu solidified a growing audience for Namibian content.

Despite the pandemic's constraints, Ngandu Festival was a significant networking hub. Here, local creative entrepreneurs had the chance to connect, share ideas and absorb practical business insights from local professionals. The Rock the Boat episodes on Ngandu TV, meanwhile, achieved a consistent viewership ranging from 750 to 1 000 views per episode, highlighting the initiative's pivotal role in enhancing Rundu's creative economy. This growth and impact did not go unnoticed, earning the project recognition from the Namibian Arts Council and securing a new funding partner for sustained momentum.

The success of Ngandu was further amplified through collaborations with major brands, including FNB Namibia and Coca-Cola. However, an unanticipated production challenge emerged: the necessity of executing performances in a single take. Far from being a setback, this hurdle inadvertently became a catalyst for growth. It demanded artists and production teams, including a videographer hailing from rural Namibia, to elevate their skills. This videographer, after receiving robust training, excelled in the realm of independent filmmaking.

Artists associated with Rock the Boat underwent a transformational journey. They progressed from using backing tracks to delivering live performances, a shift that not only made them more marketable but also landed them invitations to numerous festivals. Furthermore, the strategic decision to shift events from the urban pulse of Windhoek to the remote reaches meant to cater to a wider audience inadvertently became a boon for skills development. Faced with the challenge of single-take recordings in these areas, both the performers and production teams had no choice but to push the boundary, collectively raising the bar for the entire initiative.

ABOUT NGANDU EVENTS

Established in 2018, Ngandu Events is dedicated to exhibiting the artistic talents of creators and artists in Namibia. Through hosting events, producing film and media content, and fostering connections between professionals, entrepreneurs, strategic partners and potential investors, they encourage and advance artists' works. Ngandu Events also offers internships that provide valuable experience to aspiring creatives. In addition to its main operations, the company has launched Ngandu Festival and Ngandu TV, a digital streaming platform that hosts the floating stage music production Rock the Boat.

BAREFEET YOUTH ARTS CARNIVAL FESTIVAL

THEATRE AS A TRANSFORMATIVE MEDIUM FOR ZAMBIAN YOUTH (IMITIKULA EMPANGA)

Barefeet Theatre enhances the vibrancy of the arts scene through five distinctive programmes, culminating in the annual Barefeet Youth Arts Carnival Festival. This event is a dynamic platform for the youth and aspiring artists to immerse themselves in the arts, employing theatre as a transformative medium.

Implementing organisation	Barefeet Theatre
Duration of the grant	7 months
Region of implementation	Zambia
Target group	Emerging young artists

THE CONTEXT

In Lusaka, Zambia, the prevailing challenge is the lack of employment opportunities for unskilled youth, which is at the forefront of the city's concerns. Despite Zambia's rich cultural diversity, young artists in urban areas like Lusaka face significant barriers due to limited access to education and resources. These challenges hinder their ability to showcase their talents and reach broader markets. Moreover, historical disparities contribute to social divisions, emphasising the need for initiatives focused on skill development and job creation for unskilled youth to promote social cohesion and economic stability.

THE PROJECT:

BAREFEET YOUTH ARTS CARNIVAL FESTIVAL

Barefeet Youth Arts Carnival Festival is a vivid celebration, uniting artists from various backgrounds to exhibit an array of performances spanning music, dance, theatre and visual arts. The project engaged in workshops aimed

at honing the artistic abilities of the young participants. These included contemporary dance workshops, where participants are trained in modern movement; floats and puppets workshops, which instil the craft of creating vibrant carnival elements; and costume design workshops, which impart the flair of fashioning performance attire and parade outfits. Beyond creative skills, the project offered practical networking, marketing and financial management training to bolster the participants' professional acumen. Barefeet Youth Arts Festival showcased the artistic talents of young people who participated in the training and workshops. A notable performance, Home, is a poignant physical theatre and dance piece woven from the personal narratives of the youth, displaying their proficiency in contemporary dance and physical theatre. Following the festival, ongoing mentorship was provided, offering the young artists sustained guidance to further their artistic pursuits and navigate a path towards economic self-sufficiency.



THE THEORY OF CHANGE

Barefeet's approach to fostering artistic growth among young people is multifaceted and hands-on. At the heart of its operation lies the Barefeet Youth Arts Carnival Festival, an annual event involving young individuals and emerging artists in experiential learning through art. Theatre is used not just as a form of entertainment but as a developmental tool that anchors the festival's activities.

The festival's structure is workshop-centric, facilitating skills building in contemporary dance through interactive sessions where movement and expression are demystified and taught as tangible skills. In the floats and puppetry workshops, participants don't just learn about carnival elements – they get their hands dirty, literally building the floats and puppets that will bring the carnival to life. Costume design is approached similarly; it's not just about sketching ideas but also about translating them into wearable art for performances and parades.

Professional skills training is conducted through a practical lens, with direct applications in networking, marketing and financial management

tailored to the unique demands of the creative industries. The culmination of this how-focused methodology is the festival itself, where participants apply what they've learned in a live environment, engaging with audiences through performances that include Home – a testament to their newly acquired contemporary dance and physical theatre skills.

Finally, Barefeet ensures that the learning doesn't end with the festival. Post-festival mentorship extends the cycle of hands-on learning, enabling participants to refine their skills and navigate the arts sector with continued expert guidance.

ABOUT BAREFEET THEATRE

Barefeet Theatre, located in Lusaka, Zambia, is a dynamic organisation that harnesses the power of the arts to promote cultural diversity, empower the youth, challenge stereotypes and drive positive social change. Founded in 2006 by young artists (most of whom are former street children), Barefeet Theatre is driven by a mission to inspire, educate and entertain. The organisation aims to create a movement where artists from diverse backgrounds can have a platform to explore their talent and aspire to artistic excellence.

MUSICABLE

HARMONISING TALENT, AMPLIFYING INCLUSION (KUBATANIDZA)

The Musicable project, rooted in advocacy for musicians with disabilities in Zimbabwe, provided targeted support to artists, offering expertise in branding, songwriting and navigating the music industry's complex landscape. Each artist received tailored equipment for home recording to overcome the barriers of inaccessible recording studios.

Implementing organisation	POVOAfrika Trust
Duration of the grant	6 months
Region of implementation	Zimbabwe
Target group	People with disabilities, with a specific focus on upcoming women in music in Zimbabwe

THE CONTEXT

Zimbabwe's music industry, like many others in Africa, faces numerous challenges, such as socio-cultural biases and infrastructural deficits. Women artists, especially those with disabilities, have long been marginalised. This marginalisation extends beyond cultural and societal issues, impacting economic and political levels. Despite a rich pool of talent, people with disabilities (PWDs), and women in particular, have encountered significant barriers due to physical, mental and systemic challenges.⁵⁹ The United Nations' definition of PWDs as "individuals with long-term impairments that may hinder their full participation in society"⁶⁰ underscores the gravity of the issue.

THE PROJECT: MUSICABLE

The Musicable project, rooted in advocacy for musicians with disabilities in Zimbabwe, provided targeted support to Sithandazile Gumbo, Jacqueline Mpofo and Chipu Muchegwa. Industry veterans Pauline Gundidza, Vuyo Brown and Raven Duchess mentored these artists, offering expertise in branding, songwriting and navigating the music industry's complex landscape. Each

artist received tailored equipment for home recording – microphones, headphones, pop filters, mic stands and audio interfaces – to overcome the barriers of inaccessible recording studios. This setup empowered them to produce music autonomously. Collaborations with mentors led to producing original songs, which aired on major radio channels like Star FM and ZiFM, giving the artists significant public exposure. Furthermore, Musicable's initiative extended to organising industry panels and radio interviews, fostering a dialogue on disability inclusivity with stakeholders such as the National Art Gallery of Zimbabwe. These discussions aimed to catalyse a broader movement towards equitable access for disabled artists within Zimbabwe's cultural space.

THE THEORY OF CHANGE

Musicable set out to address the challenges faced by women with disabilities in the music industry by fostering networks and linkages with mainstream artists. This was based on the theory of change that if this enabling environment were fostered and adequate equipment was provided, then women with disabilities could grow in their



careers and fulfil their artistic ambitions. This involves focusing on key areas to support artists: education and skills enhancement through mentorship; providing access to recording equipment and platforms; integrating artists with disabilities into the mainstream music scene; building a supportive community for artists; and implementing a consistent process for evaluating and refining our initiatives.

As a result of these efforts, artists with disabilities are empowered to pursue successful careers in music, challenging prevailing societal perceptions of disability within the music industry. This promotes a broader recognition and support for diversity and equal participation, the creation of stronger networks and collaborations within the music industry and a gradual shift towards a more inclusive music landscape. For example, during the project, the artists were able to perform at popular festivals in Zimbabwe and the wider Southern Africa region, including Shoko Festival and Jacaranda Festival. Musicable's strategy ultimately reshapes the music industry to be more welcoming and equitable. It acknowledges the talents of artists with disabilities, offering them more chances to shine. This contributes to a significant cultural transformation, fostering

an environment where diversity and equal representation become the norm in the music world.

A key learning is the recognition of the project's significant impact and the broader need for such initiatives. The consistent inquiries about why Musicable was not a national initiative highlighted its clear necessity. Additionally, the implementing team's heightened awareness of the limited spaces accommodating differently abled individuals has been transformative. This experience has positioned them as proactive disability advocates within the music industry, underscoring the project's role in fostering a more inclusive and aware music community.

ABOUT POVOAFRIKA TRUST

POVOAfrika Trust was registered as a non-profit, apolitical, private, voluntary organisation to spearhead arts, culture and sustainable development obligations for social development in Zimbabwe. POVOAfrika Trust is also proactively involved in sustainability initiatives to address the ever-dynamic changes in the climate and environment through support from various technical development partners from the government, civil society and the corporate sector.

THE LESOTHO RAP ARCHIVE PROJECT

UNEARTHING LESOTHO'S HIP-HOP CULTURE AND AMPLIFYING ITS VOICE

(LIKAMANO TSA BOSECHABA LESOTHO HO EA KA LEIHLO LA 'MINO OA RAP LE BONONO BA HIP HOP)

The Lesotho Rap Archive Project has spearheaded, documented and uplifted the hip-hop culture in Lesotho. The project successfully archived the works of over 50 rappers, capturing the essence of the Southern African music scene.

Implementing organisation	Sky Alpha HD
Duration of the grant	7 months
Region of implementation	Lesotho
Target group	Basotho residents in Lesotho, music enthusiasts and the broader African music community

THE CONTEXT

In Lesotho, a nation where rural traditions are deeply ingrained, the music scene has gradually embraced hip-hop alongside its traditional rhythms. This shift has been further accelerated by urbanisation and the COVID-19 pandemic, which emphasised the need for modern entertainment platforms and affirmed the importance of preserving Lesotho's rich musical heritage. However, the country's musicians, who mostly operate informally, face a significant challenge: their work and contributions are largely undocumented by national cultural institutions and international music archives. This lack of documentation and recognition hinders their growth and access to resources. Furthermore, the consumption of art in Lesotho is limited by a general lack of visual and literary education, which affects the appreciation and understanding of diverse art forms.

THE PROJECT:

THE LESOTHO RAP ARCHIVE PROJECT

The Lesotho Rap Archive Project successfully archived the works of over 50 rappers. It also produced three music videos showcasing the talent of notable artists. The project visited Botswana and Zimbabwe to gather insights and conduct interviews for its Southern African Hip Hop podcast series. This research aimed to draw parallels between the Lesotho music scene and its regional counterparts, focusing on the indigenous languages used in rap and the preparation of artists' materials. It was a daily practice to host two or three rappers at various times, record their sessions, and edit the recordings to create the podcast episodes scheduled to be released at the conclusion of the project.



The project conducted online educational workshops for emerging artists. These workshops covered instrument building, artist education, songwriting and arts writing. The facilitators, chosen for their expertise and industry experience, led the participants through practical training in management and financial literacy, artistic freedom and decent work, compliance, digital distribution and booking tour management. The project will be concluded with a public exhibition showcasing the work and achievements of the participating artists.

THE THEORY OF CHANGE

The Lesotho Rap Archive Project embarked on an ambitious mission to document and elevate the local hip-hop community. The project was conceived to archive, share and educate about Lesotho's rap and hip-hop, transforming it into an interactive platform for artistic exchange and learning, thus enriching Lesotho's cultural narrative.

Over 50 rappers were archived, and their stories were brought to life through music videos, showcasing the evolving hip-hop scene in Lesotho. Research and podcast development extended the project's reach, drawing parallels with neighbouring countries' music scenes. Educational workshops were conducted, where rappers honed their skills in music production and industry navigation, guided by experienced facilitators. These interventions were designed to empower artists with professional management capabilities, aiming to create a sustainable hip-hop community.

Ultimately, the project's culmination in a public exhibition showcased the artists' growth and fostered regional and international connections, celebrating Lesotho's hip-hop culture's enriched presence. By capturing the narratives of over 50 rappers and spotlighting them in music videos, the project sought to bolster the region's hip-hop identity. It ventured into cross-border research and podcasting to weave a richer tapestry of Southern African hip-hop culture. Central to the project's strategy was the belief that educational workshops and expert-led training would refine artists' skills, equipping them with the tools to navigate the music industry effectively. The project's collaborative ethos, involving skilled facilitators, underpinned its efforts to enhance artists' career management capabilities.

Envisioned outcomes included a strengthened artistic community, enhanced regional connectivity and a vibrant representation of Lesotho's hip-hop on both local and international stages. The project's ultimate showcase, a public exhibition, was anticipated to cement these achievements, propelling the artists and their craft to new heights of recognition.

ABOUT SKY ALPHA HD

Established in 2019, Sky Alpha HD is Lesotho's pioneering online radio station. Its mission is to redefine the scope of contemporary broadcasting, delivering a blend of entertainment, current affairs and educational content. With a foundation deeply rooted in the vibrant heritage of Basotho culture, Sky Alpha HD curates its programming to resonate with both local listeners and a global audience, bridging cultural gaps through the airwaves.

NATIVE PRACTICES OF MOZAMBIQUE

CREATIVITY, SPIRITUALITY AND CULTURE TO RESIST CLIMATE CHANGE: A VIDEO EXPLORATION OF MOZAMBIQUE'S NATIVE PRACTICES SHAPING ART, TRADITION AND CLIMATE IMPACT (PÁTICAS NATIVAS)

The Native Practices of Mozambique project undertook a comprehensive effort to chronicle the customs of the Chopi, Macua and Nyau groups, examining the impact of climate change on their traditional ways.

Implementing organisation	Nzango Artist Residency
Duration of the grant	8 months
Region of implementation	Mozambique
Target group	Indigenous communities, young artists and the general public in Mozambique

THE CONTEXT

Mozambique has a rich tapestry of Bantu traditions across various regions, characterised by diverse agricultural, fishing and livestock practices and various songs, dances and spiritual customs. These practices are deeply intertwined with the people's relationship to their natural environment. However, there is a concern about how global climate change impacts these native practices, particularly in rural areas. Historically, documentation and research projects on these traditions have been led by outsiders, often making the material inaccessible to Mozambican people. There is an ongoing effort to reclaim this narrative by Mozambican artists and researchers, ensuring that the rights to such cultural documentation remain within the country and are freely accessible to all interested parties.

Beyond the capital of Maputo, where cultural events and artistic exchanges are prevalent, other regions like Inhambane, Nampula and Tete often face neglect and a lack of opportunity, with limited

access to resources and training. The challenges are compounded by these rural populations' vulnerabilities to climate change, threatening their traditional way of life and creative expressions. There is a strong push to decentralise cultural activities, enhance public cultural spaces and provide modern, high-quality training to artists in these less-favoured areas. This is seen as essential to fostering socio-economic growth and preserving the cultural heritage of Mozambique amid the pressures of climate change and globalisation.

THE PROJECT:

NATIVE PRACTICES OF MOZAMBIQUE: CREATIVITY, SPIRITUALITY AND CULTURE TO RESIST CLIMATE CHANGE

The Native Practices of Mozambique project undertook a comprehensive effort to chronicle the customs of the Chopi, Macua and Nyau groups, examining the impact of climate change on their traditional ways. The project conducted in-depth research into the groups' cultural practices,



created audio and visual records, and analysed how traditional communities adapted their cultural practices in response to changing natural cycles and climate impacts. The project culminated in an artistic endeavour by Mozambican musician and music producer, Matchume Zango, who developed an interdisciplinary creative piece inspired by the documented elements. This culminated in an acoustic video performance presented live in Maputo. Further, the project transformed the Nzango Artist Residency website into an interactive platform hosting the multimedia content gathered. In parallel, the initiative ran workshops for young artists in provincial capitals to equip them with the knowledge and skills to integrate traditional music and dance with contemporary art forms. These efforts sought to empower a new generation of Mozambican artists, fostering innovation while preserving cultural heritage in the face of environmental challenges.

THE THEORY OF CHANGE

The project's theory of change was based on the idea that conducting thorough research and documentation of the Chopi, Macua and Nyau groups' cultural practices and sharing them via an interactive platform would enhance the resilience of these traditions in the face of climate change. Through this project, communities were able to understand the effects of environmental changes on their customs, which helped them to adapt

better and preserve their heritage. The audio-visuals that were captured of these practices, presented through contemporary artistic expressions, such as Matchume Zango's acoustic video performance, proved to be an effective way to foster a dialogue between the old and the new, enriching both the cultural landscape and the community's adaptive capacity.

Additionally, the project equipped young artists with the skills to blend traditional music and dance with modern techniques, which fostered a new wave of artistic innovation. This educational component was seen as crucial for the sustainability of Mozambique's cultural heritage.

ABOUT NZANGO ARTIST RESIDENCY

The Nzango Artist Residency fosters artistic exchange in Southern Africa. This hub facilitates sustainable partnerships, music production and cultural preservation within and beyond Mozambique. Focused on documenting traditional music, it offers workshops, audio-visual production and instrument construction, propelling music circulation via recordings and digital media. As a safe space for artistic development, it has drawn global collaborations, enhancing the visibility of African music. Located in semi-rural Matola, the residency extends cultural activities from urban centres to peripheral regions, enriching the local and international community's access to Mozambican artistry.

VUKUBONE SOUND LAB

EMPOWERING SOUND ARTISTS TO CRAFT VIBRANT SONIC NARRATIVES ACROSS BORDERS

(KWAKHA UMCULO LOSEZINGENI LOLUCOPHELELE)

The Vukubone Sound Lab project – for emerging sound artists, including singer-songwriters, producers, sound designers, DJs and podcasters – involved a ‘crash course’ in copyright laws, digital marketing, branding, entrepreneurship, financial management and understanding the African music/creative ecosystem.

Implementing organisation	Antidote Culture Foundation
Duration of the grant	7 months
Region of implementation	Eswatini
Target group	Emerging Eswatini sound artists, including producers, sound designers, singer-songwriters, DJs and podcasters

THE CONTEXT

In Eswatini, sound artists possess significant potential yet face notable obstacles.⁶¹ They lack essential facilities and equipment, which hampers their ability to produce and perform. Knowledge gaps in intellectual property, copyright laws and entrepreneurship limit their prospects for monetisation within the local creative industry. Additionally, there is a shortage of mentorship opportunities, leaving artists without the necessary guidance. Furthermore, a notable under-representation of women in leadership positions within Eswatini’s music sector highlights a need for more inclusive practices. These factors collectively impede the growth and development of the country’s creative talents.

THE PROJECT: VUKUBONE SOUND LAB

The project included a six-week accelerator programme for emerging sound artists, including singer-songwriters, producers, sound designers, DJs and podcasters. The programme was divided into two phases: the first entailed a crash course in copyright law, digital marketing, branding,

entrepreneurship, financial management and understanding the African music/creative ecosystem. This educational component was delivered by facilitators from diverse regions, including Eswatini, South Africa, Rwanda and Germany, with partnerships providing storytelling and grant proposal writing expertise.

The second phase focused on project development, where participants were required to create individual and collaborative pieces, utilising a newly constructed studio in the city centre. Mentorship from local and international professionals, including a mentor from South Africa with experience at Apple Music and Spotify, and a podcast mentor from Zimbabwe, supplemented the training. Participants worked on their projects under mentor guidance, culminating in a performance at a major city event hosted by the Mbabane Municipality.

THE THEORY OF CHANGE

The theory of change for the Vukuboni Sound Lab is founded on the premise that providing

artists with access to comprehensive training, state-of-the-art facilities and expert mentorship can address key challenges in Eswatini’s music industry. The programme enhanced their professional capacity by equipping emerging sound artists with knowledge in digital marketing, branding, entrepreneurship and intellectual property.

The accelerator programme was structured into two phases: an initial educational phase emphasising industry knowledge and a subsequent project development phase offering practical studio experience. The involvement of international experts and local mentors broadened participants’ perspectives, enabled skill acquisition and fostered a culture of collaboration.

Despite challenges in achieving gender diversity, the lab provided a 40% female participation platform, a significant step towards inclusivity. The programme’s culmination with live performances showcased the artists’ growth and paved the way

for future professional opportunities. By closing the knowledge gap, providing practical experience and encouraging collaboration, the Sound Lab catalysed the growth of a more professional, inclusive and sustainable music industry in Eswatini.

ABOUT THE ANTIDOTE CULTURE FOUNDATION

The Antidote Culture Foundation emerged in response to the developmental needs of Eswatini’s CCIs. Established in January 2022 by forward-thinking young entrepreneurs, known for bringing Eswatini’s music to the online world through Antidote Music, the Antidote Culture Foundation is focused on fostering a robust cultural creative economy. It combats youth unemployment and enhances living standards through sustainable artistic careers. The Foundation’s efforts are centred on nurturing spaces conducive to cultural expression, thereby driving positive social change and advancing the cultural and creative sector for the betterment of the youth in Eswatini.



MUSIC4MALAWI

NURTURING MALAWI'S ARTISTIC TALENT THROUGH COMPREHENSIVE TRAINING AND CULTURAL ENGAGEMENT (MALO OTUKULA LUSO NDIKUGAWA GWERO KWA OIMBA)

The Music4Malawi project equipped young creatives with a broad range of skills through various initiatives, enhancing the capacity of emerging talent. Specialised workshops offered guidance in artist management and audience engagement strategies while addressing content management within copyright frameworks.

Implementing organisation	Ntha Foundation
Duration of the grant	8 months
Region of implementation	Malawi
Target group	Young artists and creatives

THE CONTEXT

Malawi's creative industry is fundamental for cultural expression and contributes significantly to economic growth and social cohesion. However, the sector faces challenges, particularly for young artists, such as inadequate infrastructure and insufficient business training.⁶² While the government is taking steps to create a supportive policy environment, including introducing copyright laws, there is a pressing need for concrete implementation. Strengthening institutional capacities and establishing formal funding facilities are crucial to unlocking the industry's potential, promoting job creation and enhancing economic contribution.

THE PROJECT: MUSIC4MALAWI

The Music4Malawi project equipped young creatives (including musicians, producers, DJs, talent and event managers, media practitioners and artist stylists) in Malawi with a broad range of skills through various initiatives. The project was multifaceted. Firstly, the Nyenyezi

Fellowship provided a month-long business and entrepreneurship incubation, enhancing the capacity of emerging talent. Secondly, specialised workshops offered guidance in artist management and audience engagement strategies while addressing content management within copyright frameworks.

Over three months, the Digi Savvy programme delivered extensive branding and digital media training. Then, Kwathu Upgrade produced insightful podcasts by women working formally and informally in the music industry – explaining their experiences and highlighting their journeys. Lastly, the project facilitated a B2B panel discussion as a research tool to document current industry insights where established musical acts shared their experiences. The NMN Battle of the Bands show also fostered original content creation, allowing participants to draw on Malawi's cultural heritage and present their work to a broader audience, supported by mentorship from seasoned Malawian creatives.



THE THEORY OF CHANGE

The Music4Malawi project, initiated by the Kwathu Creative and Innovation Centre, commenced with a pool of young and aspiring artists and creatives in Malawi. It drew upon the core belief that by investing in these talented individuals, their inherent skills could be harnessed to drive significant contributions to the nation's economic and cultural development. The primary inputs included funding, expert trainers, curriculum development and industry collaborations.

The project systematically translated these inputs into tangible outputs. It provided comprehensive training programmes that equipped participants with digital, entrepreneurial and creative skills. Additionally, it established a nurturing environment through business development training and incubation, enabling creative entrepreneurs to thrive. The project facilitated collaboration and networking opportunities, creating valuable connections among participants and industry professionals. Furthermore, it initiated art dissemination strategies to elevate the visibility and recognition of the participants' work.

The Music4Malawi project achieved a series of notable outcomes through its strategic approaches. Participants emerged with enhanced skills, ready to navigate the dynamic landscape of the creative industry. Creative startups blossomed, contributing to economic growth and innovation. Collaboration and networking led to exchanging ideas and a vibrant creative community. Art dissemination efforts amplified participants' visibility, enriching Malawi's cultural tapestry.

ABOUT NTHA FOUNDATION

Ntha Foundation is an NPO organisation that drives creativity and innovation in Malawi, fostering a vibrant ecosystem for the sustainable economic growth of the creative industry. It empowers and nurtures creative talent by sharing resources like the Kwathu Creative and Innovation Centre.

JISABU – COVER VERSIONS OF ANGOLAN ORAL TRADITION

BRINGING ANGOLAN PROVERBS TO LIFE THROUGH AUDIO AND FILM
(TRAZENDO A TRADIÇÃO PARA O PRESENTE)

Jisabu was predicated on the belief that audio-visual content in traditional languages would enhance children's and the youth's understanding and connection to Angola's cultural heritage and therefore the aim was to present Angolan proverbs in a musical and animated format.

Implementing organisation	Nine Filmes (SU) Lda
Duration of the grant	7 months
Region of implementation	Angola
Target group	Young creatives, illustrators, musicians, animators and language specialists

THE CONTEXT

Angola's history bears the scars of a protracted civil war, leaving deep wounds in the nation's social fabric. This turmoil has resulted in a considerable knowledge gap in culture and language among the youth, exacerbated by an educational system that often overlooks preserving traditional wisdom and linguistic diversity.⁶³ Angola's challenge is repairing these social fissures and rekindling interest in its cultural heritage. It necessitates imaginative approaches to ensure that the rich oral traditions of the past are preserved and made appealing and understandable to the younger generation, fostering a renewed sense of identity and cohesion.

THE PROJECT:

JISABU – COVER VERSIONS OF ANGOLAN ORAL TRADITION

Nine Filmes Su (Lda) produced 100 audio segments and 10 animated films to present Angolan proverbs in a musical and animated format. These pieces were crafted to enhance

comprehension and appeal to children and the youth, utilising local, traditional languages to foster a connection with Angola's cultural heritage. The audio-visual materials will be distributed via national TV, radio and free downloads to reach a broad audience. The films, subtitled in Portuguese, serve as educational tools, especially targeting preschools to integrate into their curricula, despite indigenous languages not being part of the official school syllabus. Although some challenges were experienced in aligning agendas and validating content, collaboration with universities and the National Institute of Language was essential for gaining insights and for building knowledge integrity.

THE THEORY OF CHANGE

The theory of change for Jisabu was predicated on the belief that audio-visual content in traditional languages would enhance children's and the youth's understanding and connection to Angola's cultural heritage. Engaging the auditory and visual senses created an immersive educational



experience, fostering a stronger connection between the youth and their cultural heritage. The content is used as two-way learning material, which connects learners to ancestral teachings.

Collaborative efforts with linguistic experts and educational institutions ensured content validity and facilitated the embedding of linguistic preservation within the fabric of cultural education. This initiative has thus been pivotal in addressing the pressing need for linguistic and cultural preservation in Angola's challenging historical context.

ABOUT NINE FILMES (SU)LDA

Nine Filmes (SU) Lda is an audio-visual production company specialising in the creation of corporate, institutional and creative content in the form of (radio) ads, documentaries and short and animation films, offering a complete range of services from ideas, scriptwriting, location scouting, filming, music, voice overs, editing, transcription and subtitling.

BUILDING THE ECOSYSTEM OF CREATIVE AND CULTURAL INDUSTRY FOR THE FILM AND DESIGN SECTORS IN SOUTHERN AFRICA (BECCI-SA)

(CHABANA SA KHOMO)

BECCI-SA's activities included conducting masterclasses to develop emerging filmmakers' capacities in film production and to further the creation of an original film entitled *Le Eme Ka Lekoa*.



Implementing organisation	Gender Entrepreneurship Empowerment Media Institute (GEM)
Duration of the grant	7 months
Region of implementation	Lesotho, Botswana and South Africa
Target group	Film industry professionals

THE CONTEXT

The film and television industries in Lesotho and Botswana have considerable barriers within their value chain that hinder effective development and regional integration, especially with South Africa's more established industry.⁶⁴ Lesotho's motion picture sector remains untapped, lacking essential political support to realise its economic potential. Missed commercial opportunities from cultural symbols, like Lesotho's Seanamarena (blanket) featured in *Black Panther*, exemplify lost financial benefits. The absence of strategic government action and macroeconomic insight contributes to stagnation. Moreover, global value chains demonstrate fragmented production across borders, highlighting the need for policy-led efforts to streamline regional film industry integration within the SADC region.

THE PROJECT:

BUILDING THE ECOSYSTEM OF CREATIVE AND CULTURAL INDUSTRY FOR THE FILM AND DESIGN SECTORS IN SOUTHERN AFRICA (BECCI-SA)

The GEM Institute executed BECCI-SA to bolster the film industry's value and supply chain in Lesotho, Botswana and South Africa. The project's activities included conducting masterclasses to develop emerging filmmakers' capacities in film production and further the creation of an original film entitled *Le Eme Ka Lekoa*, which highlighted local talent. Research articles further accompanied the developed feature to provide insights into the regional film industry, revealing challenges and entry points that could be leveraged.

By maximising the magnified impact of its networks in the implementation countries, the project managed the sales and distribution of the film. Furthermore, it built partnerships with fashion designers to celebrate and integrate the cultural heritage of the Basotho and Batswana communities into film and fashion.

THE THEORY OF CHANGE

The theory of change revolved around empowering the film industry in Lesotho and its neighbours by enhancing skills, creating marketable content and forging sustainable, culturally diverse collaborations. By delivering onsite masterclasses and fostering a community of practice, the project nurtured filmmaking talent and improved the quality of creative cultural products. This approach contributed to building individual and organisational portfolios, boosting the local creative economy and the sector's recognition as a significant economic driver.

Through the development of tangible outputs (i.e., the film), the empowerment of local talent, and a strong vision to transform the film industry through stories that highlight the lived experiences of women and girls, BECCI-SA

gained new partnerships with entities such as the National Commission for UNESCO,⁶⁵ European Union, Motion Pictures and Kanye Bulletin.

ABOUT GEM INSTITUTE

Gender Entrepreneurship Empowerment Media Institute (GEM Institute) is a women-led organisation that empowers young women and girls through coaching, entrepreneurship mentorship and inclusion in frontier areas of technology and climate advocacy. It has gained recognition for using technology and the cultural industries to develop value and supply ecosystems, working with schools and farmers to advocate for climate action. The institute has made significant educational impacts, training 10 000 girls and 450 teachers in coding through the Africa Code Week programme, hosting conferences and launching the Annual Green Arts and Tech Awards. Its efforts were acknowledged with a championship-winning award from the World Summit on the Information Society Forum in 2022, underlining its contribution to cultural diversity, identity, linguistic diversity and local content.

FUNDAÇÃO FERNANDO LEITE COUTO

PROMOTING LITERARY CULTURE IN MOZAMBIQUE THROUGH AUDIO-VISUAL BOOKS (DEIXE-OS APRENDER)

The FFLC Children's Books and Audiobooks Collection project has sought to promote a literary culture in communities with limited access to reading materials.

Implementing organisation	The Fundação Fernando Leite Couto (FFLC)
Duration of the grant	7 months
Region of implementation	Mozambique
Target group	Children and teachers in urban and rural communities with limited access to books

THE CONTEXT

In Mozambique, children's literature is scarce, particularly literature that resonates with local culture and languages. This shortage is a barrier to improving literacy rates among young readers. The deficit of accessible, culturally relevant books is due to several factors. Economic constraints limit publishing and distribution. Additionally, historical educational neglect has resulted in an infrastructure that struggles to support wide-ranging literacy initiatives.⁶⁶ The situation is further complicated by the linguistic diversity of Mozambique, where many indigenous languages are spoken, yet most available children's books are in Portuguese, the official language. This linguistic mismatch often renders the content less engaging and not accessible for young learners, impacting their reading development and literacy proficiency.

THE PROJECT:

FUNDAÇÃO FERNANDO LEITE COUTO

The FFLC Children's Books and Audiobooks Collection project has sought to promote a literary culture in communities with limited access to

reading materials. It achieved this through three key categories of activities.

The project commenced by assembling a team of three authors and three illustrators who crafted initial drafts of three engaging children's books. A creative writing workshop was held to enrich and transform their drafts into their final narrative form. Simultaneously, illustrations were meticulously crafted and refined. Audio and video versions of the books were produced by hiring a recording studio, selecting three narrators and enhancing the content with sound design, sound effects and music. The final phase included implementing six reading workshops based on the materials produced, featuring comprehensive methodologies, exercises and evaluations to refine the creative output further.

Three books have been published and successfully launched, together with their audiobook versions; the books were also produced as videos. Final products were delivered, including audio-video, and 100 units of each title were delivered to the



Kulemba Association, a national organisation dedicated to promoting children's and young adult literature.

Reading workshops were seamlessly integrated into the Beira Book Fair in September 2023, and the remaining books were strategically placed in local bookstores, ensuring the project's sustainability and long-term impact.

THE THEORY OF CHANGE

At the core of FFLC's theory of change lies a profound belief in the transformative power of access to captivating reading materials and the active promotion of literacy. The envisioned outcome is a Mozambique where literacy permeates through the social fabric and becomes an intrinsic part of all communities, irrespective of socio-economic status.

Through the Children's Books and Audiobooks Collection project, FFLC has invested substantial resources, including the creative talents of authors and illustrators, state-of-the-art recording facilities and a dedicated team of educators. These inputs were essential for crafting engaging literary products and conducting impactful reading workshops.

The project has generated several key outputs, such as three children's books in Portuguese, along with audio and video adaptations of these books. It has also established a series

of structured reading workshops. While the books are in Portuguese, not in indigenous languages, the inclusion of diverse formats like audio and video helps tackle the issues of access and engagement with reading material. These elements form the core of the initiative. FFLC's strategic focus on enhancing skills in crafting high-quality children's literature is yielding significant outcomes. Notably, it is

nurturing a passion for reading among children and educators, which is also reaching out to families and communities, leading to beneficial changes. This approach, though not directly addressing linguistic diversity, still contributes to enhancing literacy and promoting inclusive education.

By empowering individuals with the essential tools to read, learn and grow, the project aims to break down barriers to education and foster personal development. This contributes to the broader mission of advancing literacy and education throughout Mozambique. Ultimately, the project's impact extends beyond individual lives, affecting entire communities and enriching the nation's educational landscape.

ABOUT FUNDAÇÃO FERNANDO LEITE COUTO

FFLC is a cultural centre and foundation founded in 2015, in Maputo, Mozambique. Named after the Portuguese-Mozambican writer Fernando Leite Couto, it was established by Mia Couto, a renowned Mozambican writer, to promote Mozambican arts, culture and literature. The Foundation hosts a broad cultural spectrum of programmes and supports young Mozambican authors through scholarships and awards. It features a small library, café and event space, which has hosted works by notable Mozambican artists, musicians and photographers, making it a significant cultural hub in Maputo.

PART 4

LEARNINGS



INTRODUCTION

In the African context, there is a vital need to take stock of the good work done by CCI organisations as they work towards the development of the sector. In this section, we have selected a number of the Sound Connects Fund (SCF) projects as case studies to illustrate important learnings or operational approaches that can be beneficial to other practitioners in the future. We have divided the learnings into broad categories that were observed during the implementation and execution of the projects.

It must be noted that in certain contexts these learnings can be expanded to mean ‘value drivers’ – meaning that they reflect the unique nature of the CCIs in the SADC region and can therefore contribute to the success and sustainability of the organisations active within the sector.

DISCLAIMER: This section mentions various projects to highlight specific points. These references are not exhaustive and are only used to illustrate the learnings. Also, referencing any project doesn’t imply superiority or inferiority over others. Similarly, the learnings are not exhaustive.

SUSTAINABILITY

Sustainability stands out as a key learning. Nearly all SCF project implementors aimed for self-sustainability beyond the funded period, questioning their role in contributing towards viable, creative communities through efforts in areas such as job creation, capacity building, environmental protection, etc.

The examples below show some of the projects' approaches towards sustainability.

SUSTAINABLE PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

- The cultural organisation Khuzula in Mozambique successfully developed and implemented a sustainability plan for their project, X Hub. The X Hub incubation facility employs a mix of revenue models, including subsidised payment plans for creatives, a multifaceted fundraising strategy and the inclusion of complementary income generators such as a recording studio, consultation services and events.
- The CollaboNation project in eSwatini secured additional funding to continue beyond its funded life. This may be attributable to sustainable planning and development by the implementors, which allowed them to perfectly align the project with their existing projects, and to successfully fundraise for future iterations of the initiative.
- The Native Practices of Mozambique project had an interesting concept fusing artistic activities and environmental/climate-focused activities. Through the project, communities were able to understand the effects of environmental changes on their customs, which helped them to adapt better and preserve their heritage.



COLLABORATION

Collaboration was observed as a key attribute for success in many SCF projects. Collaboration can exist in various formats and often achieves best results when contextualised and applied keenly by all parties. Below are some noteworthy examples of collaboration observed at different organisations and projects.

CROSS-REGIONAL COLLABORATION

- In Eswatini, the organisation House on Fire built their entire project on collaboration. Aptly titled CollaboNation, the project aimed to connect the continent through a series of unique regional music collaborations. CollaboNation supported the weaving together of Africa's rich and diverse musical genres, bringing together artists from four countries to unite in music and reach a wider global audience.
- Through Music Crossroads Academies' digital Music Business School in Malawi, Mozambique and Zimbabwe, cross-regional learning and performance enabled students from various countries to exchange experiences and insights. This approach created a platform for collaboration and cultural exchange, establishing a sense of unity among emerging artists and broadening their understanding of the global music landscape, enhancing their professional development.
- Collaborative efforts, such as the joint initiative between the SCF and the Creative Europe Programme that brought JMI Global to Zimbabwe, played an instrumental role in setting up a regional centre in the SADC region for arts administrators and artists from Europe and Africa. Implementing similar approaches would greatly strengthen the value of the CCIs.
- Breeze FM's Traditional and Indigenous Communication Systems project in Zambia allowed for regional partnerships among media outlets to enhance cultural and professional exchange and promote a shared understanding of heritage. At the same time, establishing networks for content sharing facilitate a more efficient distribution and increase the impact of cultural promotion efforts.

COLLABORATIVE EDUCATIONAL VENTURES

- Training through the Nakhodha and the Mermaid – Sea Sound film project in Mozambique, provided by regional experts, underlines the importance of collaborative education. Such initiatives not only build capacity within the community but also create networks that extend beyond national borders, opening doors for future collaborations and exchanges. By involving universities, synergies between academic research in culture, technology and the creative industry are created, facilitating the development of new educational curricula that reflect the needs of a modern and progressive creative industry while staying rooted in cultural heritage.

PARTNERSHIPS

Partnerships can be categorised as falling under Collaboration. They are presented separately in this chapter for better contextualisation. Partnerships are widely considered to be a key recipe for success in business, as they offer many benefits, including, but not limited to, resource pooling, market expansion, cost reduction and network creation.

It is no surprise that almost all SCF projects employed some form of partnership in their implementation. Below are some of the learnings observed.

STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS WITH GOVERNMENT AND LOCAL AUTHORITIES

- In Mozambique, the collaboration between X-Hub, local authorities and educational institutions demonstrates the power of strategic alliances and institutional support vital for the sustainability and development of the creative sector. The Ministry of Culture and Tourism's endorsement and funding for the next phase of X-Hub underscores the importance of governmental involvement in the arts. This support boosts the project's credibility and provides a resourceful foundation for the sector. The upcoming phase, featuring a fully owned building for X-Hub, promises to alleviate financial burdens like rent, further stabilising the project's infrastructure.
- In Windhoek, a strategic partnership was established between SCF grantee MTCFWF and the office of the First Lady of Namibia. The partnership arose through a networking event that brought together key figures in the fashion industry, creatives, and South African designer David Tlale. The collaboration aims to promote industry advancement through joint ventures and sets the stage for future collaborations. The First Lady's community development-focused campus, which was recently established, will play a crucial role in directing the involvement of MTCFWF. This alliance offers emerging fashion designers a unique opportunity to learn from experienced professionals, promote skill sharing and align with community development goals.
- In Eswatini, Antidote Music successfully implemented its accelerator project through a partnership with the Eswatini National Council of Arts & Culture, which was the lead in the SCF application.

CROSS-GENERATIONAL PARTNERSHIPS

- The Music Crossroads Academies' digital Music Business School in Malawi, Mozambique and Zimbabwe bridges generations in the music industry by connecting artists through mentorship and internships. Cross-generational partnerships between experienced artists and emerging talents allowed for the sharing of industry knowledge and the fusion of traditional and contemporary music styles. Through this collaboration, learning experiences are created, invigorating the music community and blending diverse perspectives.

DIGITISATION

Digitisation has been widely embraced in arts industries across the globe. It was evident during the implementation of SCF that practitioners in SADC are increasingly keen to explore the various possibilities of digital technologies as a means to not only preserve their heritage but also as a way to upgrade systems from analogue formats to more modernised digital systems. Examples are provided below to show how different projects approached digitisation.

DIGITISATION TO PRESERVE CULTURAL PRACTICES AND HERITAGE

- In Lesotho, Morija Museum & Archives used technology to create an online cultural library. This initiative allows for the documentation and preservation of cultural practices and traditional arts while making them readily available to a broader audience, thereby enhancing cultural exchange and education. By cataloguing indigenous musical instruments and recording stories, techniques and historical context on a digital platform, Morija Museum & Archives ensures that the richness of Basotho culture is maintained and passed down through generations, maintaining its relevance and vibrancy.
- Through the Native Practices of Mozambique project, documenting and sharing the cultural practices of the Chopi, Macua and Nyau groups with the help of an interactive platform gives an inside view into cultural resilience in the face of climate change. The repository is available to all and provides a catalogue that other artists can continue to build from for generations to come.
- The Quack Quack Duck project in Zimbabwe embraced the importance of digitalisation in preserving cultural artefacts for future generations. Implementing digital archives can be a strategic approach for other projects, ensuring the protection and universal accessibility of cultural expressions. This method allows cultural heritage to transcend both time and geographical boundaries, making it a vital tool for long-term cultural preservation.
- In Zambia, the strategic use of digital platforms by Breeze FM's Traditional and Indigenous Communication Systems project to share cultural content can be applied for wider audience engagement and cultural transmission. This approach significantly boosts the visibility and endurance of cultural heritage, making it globally accessible while overcoming geographical limitations.

DIGITAL EXPANSION OF ARTS EDUCATION

- In Mozambique, Xiluva Artes' utilisation of digital platforms with instructional videos and online teaching tools improves access to arts education, particularly in public art schools. By creating easily accessible digital libraries, the project offers a scalable approach for others to broaden their impact. This digital strategy effectively transcends geographical limitations, enabling a more extensive and inclusive reach in arts education.
- The Jisabu – Cover Versions of Angolan Oral Tradition project underscores the importance of educational systems and curricula development for sustaining and preserving linguistic diversity and cultural traditions, using modern digital techniques, especially in contexts where indigenous languages are overlooked.
- In Angola, content created through the Jisabu – Cover Versions of Angolan Oral Tradition project was designed as an interactive learning tool, enlightening the youth about their heritage while reconnecting them with ancestral wisdom.

INTEGRATING CULTURAL CONTENT IN EDUCATION

- The Quack Quack Duck project in Zimbabwe successfully merged cultural heritage with educational materials – a practice that other projects can adopt to enrich learning experiences. This approach strengthens cultural identity within the education system, fostering a deep appreciation of traditions among younger generations. Simultaneously, it enhances academic curricula, providing a well-rounded educational experience that respects and incorporates cultural heritage.
- Swift 30 started as a trivia board game, but through a game show, the ordinary board game gained transformative meaning – engaging hundreds of thousands of viewers with content and increasing public discourse on Namibian culture and the arts. This demonstrates how traditional gaming formats can be innovatively adapted to serve educational and cultural purposes, reaching a wide audience and fostering greater appreciation and understanding of cultural heritage.



INCLUSIVITY

Projects that are more inclusive tend to have a bigger impact in the communities they serve. Inclusivity can be broad, ranging from how an implementer consults potential beneficiaries before deploying interventions to the mix of activities, artforms, beneficiaries, collaborators, etc. Some examples are provided below.

NATIONAL ENGAGEMENT

- The Fashion Meets Sound project in Namibia demonstrated that localised activities, such as setting up pop-up shops across the country, are vital for engaging and activating local markets in the creative industries. This approach promotes regional talents and builds a national audience, cultivating a broader appreciation and support for local creatives.
- The Musicable project in Zimbabwe benefitted from organising performances and panel discussions outside the capital city Harare. This strategy provided an opportunity for musicians from differently abled communities to participate and learn various approaches to enter the music market.

COMMUNITY INTEGRATION

- Through inviting the local communities and opening the doors to the broader public, cultural spaces like the X-Hub in Mozambique become more vibrant and accessible to creatives from all walks of life.

SHIFTING MINDSETS ABOUT DISABILITIES

- Establishing a platform for artists with disabilities, like the Musicable project in Zimbabwe, helps to overcome reservations towards people with disabilities and change people's perceptions about the capabilities of people with disabilities in the music industry. By giving voice to traditionally marginalised communities, such projects can make lasting positive shifts in the CCIs.

CROSS-MARKET EXPERIMENTATIONS

- Fashion Meets Sound in Namibia marked the establishment of a novel music market within the creative sector. By synchronising catwalks with unique musical compositions, an innovative platform was created that highlighted the fusion of sound and style and opened avenues for musicians and designers to explore new forms of artistic expression. This initiative confirms the potential for cross-disciplinary collaborations to create new market opportunities and expand the scope of both the fashion and music industries.

ADVOCACY

Implementing projects in the CCIs gives practitioners stronger perspectives and understandings of opportunities and the challenges that can be addressed through policies and other societal shifts. More advocacy championing the interest of the CCIs and its creators will contribute to a better ecosystem in SADC. Interestingly, there were not many examples of advocacy in the SCF projects, which perhaps demonstrates the challenges and advocacy opportunities for the CCIs in SADC.

CREATING CAPACITY FOR ADVOCACY

- In Zimbabwe, the Zambezi Connects project focused partly on capacitating creatives with the relevant skills to advocate for change in their community and become self-sustainable. This is important in shaping creative communities that are able to continuously advocate for change.
- The SCF team placed a strong emphasis on advocacy and policymaking in the region. A study was commissioned focusing specifically on the impact of policies in the CCIs across nine countries, namely Zimbabwe, Zambia, Malawi, Mozambique, Angola, Namibia, Botswana, Lesotho and Eswatini. At the closing Sound Connects Conference in Maputo, the grantees had the opportunity to learn and share ideas on policymaking and advocating for change through policies.

POLICY INFLUENCE AND EDUCATIONAL INTEGRATION

- The integration of policy dialogues into community events, like festivals and round-table discussions and the provision of masterclasses for educators, as witnessed through the Xiluva Artes project in Mozambique, offers a replicable model for other projects seeking to influence educational policies. Such a strategy not only allows skills-transfer but also ensures active engagement in policymaking, potentially leading to significant, long-lasting enhancements in the integration of arts into educational curricula.

ADVOCACY FOR POLICY REFORM

- Among other activities, the Morija Museum & Archives project in Lesotho sought to provide evidence-based data to governments as a way to advocate for support in safeguarding and promoting the country's cultural heritage through policy and legal frameworks.

IP AWARENESS

The CCIs are based largely on copyrights from which revenues are generated. Creative communities that are more informed about intellectual property (IP) tend to make wiser financial decisions than those that are not. This is why IP awareness is such an important aspect to consider in cultural projects.

COMMUNITY-CENTRIC INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY

- Establishing collective IP rights within the Mozambique Island community through the Nakhodha and the Mermaid – Sea Sound film project created a protective environment for new and existing cultural assets, highlighting how local ownership and control over cultural expressions can ensure communities benefit economically from their heritage.

PROTECTING INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY RIGHTS

- The Traditional and Indigenous Communication Systems project in Zambia, implemented by Breeze FM, showcases how safeguarding IP can empower artists economically. This, in turn, contributes to their financial stability and promotes the preservation of cultural practices. Implementing innovative financial strategies that incorporate community benefits into the revenue generation process can enhance the economic stability of the respective regions. This provides a holistic approach to fostering both cultural and economic growth.

BUILDING CAPACITIES FOR IP MANAGEMENT

- Music Crossroads Academies' digital Music Business School in Malawi, Mozambique and Zimbabwe offers comprehensive education on various aspects of the music business, from royalties to touring. Supplemented by mentorship from experienced musicians, the school is able to fill the gap of adequate training and support. Its e-learning platform provides access to education for those without formal education. Moving forward, achieving official accreditation for the programme will enhance its credibility and provide graduates with a recognised qualification, helping them secure employment in the music industry.
- In Malawi, the Music4Malawi project carried out training workshops and collaborative projects that brought together artists to create new musical products and performances. Training in IP empowers creatives to maximise on earning opportunities and facilitates a more informed and responsible artistic community.
- Sula in Malawi was implemented by the Department of Fine and Performing Arts at the University of Malawi, in collaboration with M-Hub, a tech and innovation hub. Among other topics, the project enabled beneficiaries to learn about the importance of IP in their crafts.

INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT

Adequate infrastructure is crucial in creating an enabling environment for CCIs to thrive. Performance venues, working spaces, rehearsal spaces, strong internet connections, technology and many other aspects are required to shape a healthy environment for the arts. Below are a few examples from some of the SCF projects.

HUBS

- In Mozambique, X-Hub's infrastructural investment provided artists with a dedicated environment and essential facilities, allowing them to produce and showcase high-quality work. Without such spaces and reliable internet access, creators face significant barriers.
- In Malawi, the Sula project established the Luso Entrepreneurship Hub and an incubator programme that provided a selection of artists with support and funding to set up their creative businesses.

INFRASTRUCTURAL INNOVATION

- In Mozambique, the Nakhodha and the Mermaid – Sea Sound film project's media-focused approach highlights how technology can be used to transcend traditional storytelling. By incorporating VR and spatial audio, oral traditions can be preserved and propelled into the global digital arena. YC Films' infrastructural innovation shows new approaches to adapting heritage into a modern context, replicable to other cultural sectors.

BUILDING INFRASTRUCTURE FOR INCLUSION IN THE MUSIC INDUSTRY

- The Musicable project in Zimbabwe provided home recording equipment and accessible stage equipment to participating artists, giving them a foundation to launch their careers. A roadmap/ toolkit can be used for future projects and infrastructure, to upscale existing facilities and cater for more musicians with disabilities. This will ensure greater diversity, equality and inclusion in the creative industry.



HERITAGE

Cultural projects can contribute immensely to the perseverance of cultural heritage in the communities in which they are implemented. It was clear through the SCF that practitioners are mindful of the influence of their work on heritage. This included attention to practices and traditions, as well as meanings that are important in the communities that the projects were implemented. Some examples are provided below.

LEARNING FROM CULTURAL PRACTICES

- The Native Practices of Mozambique initiative used art to show how environmental changes impacted Mozambican customs and how people adapted to preserve cultural heritage. The audio-visual presentations of these practices through modern artistic expressions helped stimulate a dialogue between the old and new ways of life. This enriches both the cultural landscape and the community's ability to adapt and become active contributors to more sustainable ways of living.
- In Mozambique, the Nakhodha and the Mermaid – Sea Sound project was positioned as the first Mozambican VR immersive experience capturing the rich Swahili oral heritage of the coastal fishing people of the Island of Mozambique. The project showcases and archives the songs, chants and stories of the coastal communities. It worked with emerging creatives and talents from different fields including film, music, storytelling and IT.
- In Botswana, the Rhythmic Africa: Unearthed project enabled implementors to travel around the country immersing themselves in different cultures (Kalanga, Herero, Birwa, Kgalagadi, Mbukushu, etc.). In each village, they showcased the artistic offering of the community while also documenting findings for dissemination to a wider audience.
- The Reappropriating Lesotho's Cultural Heritage's transformative programme aimed to rejuvenate Lesotho's cultural essence through in-depth research, educational tools and innovative mediums like videos. The dual objectives were to safeguard vanishing traditions and to democratise accessibility to cultural knowledge. This vision was realised through a range of interventions, including research, documentation, a film, a digital repository and workshops.

BUILDING HUMAN CAPITAL IS KEY

- The Native Practices of Mozambique project provided young artists with the skills to blend traditional music and dance with modern techniques, fostering a new wave of artistic innovation. This educational component was considered crucial for the preservation of Mozambique's cultural heritage and illustrated a model for human capital development in the creative industries.

REIMAGINING GAMING IN CULTURAL CONTEXTS

- Traditionally, gaming is perceived as a form of entertainment with limited cultural or educational value. In Namibia, Roll-A-Dice's reimagining of gaming's potential in society reflects a broader trend where games are increasingly recognised for their potential to educate and foster cultural appreciation and engagement. In the case of Swift 30, gaming became a medium to explore and celebrate Namibian culture, transforming the perception of gaming from mere entertainment to a valuable cultural and educational tool. This shift is crucial in contexts where preserving cultural heritage and using own narratives and resources to develop local products is essential.



CLOSING REMARKS

As the Sound Connects Fund reflects on the profound impact of sound and artistic expression on the cultural tapestry of our continent, we are reminded of the invaluable contributions made by the CClIs to our economies and societies. The rapid growth of the youth demographic, the cultural transformation in Southern Africa and the increasing global interest in African art forms all signify a vibrant future for the CClIs in the region.

This report showcases the impactful work of 36 creative organisations across various sectors, from performing arts to digital platforms, education and research. These initiatives have demonstrated the potential for sustainable growth, inclusivity, collaboration and innovation within the CClIs in Southern Africa. Their experiences shed light on both the boundless potential and the systemic challenges faced by the CClIs in the region. Their stories are of a region brimming with creative energy yet hindered by many challenges, which have been mentioned in this report and addressed by the grantees. Within these challenges, they have identified remarkable opportunities.

These opportunities, coupled with the SCF's strategic approach, pave the way for a transformative journey. As we move forward, let us continue to celebrate the richness of sound and artistic expression in Africa, recognising its power to unite, inspire and bridge cultural divides.

While this report marks the conclusion of the Sound Connects Fund, the Music In Africa Foundation and Goethe-Institut and all involved partners remain committed to the initiative's mission. We shall continue exploring opportunities to continue this important work. We invite all stakeholders to join us as we seek to maintain momentum. Together, we can amplify the voices of Southern Africa's creative practitioners, forging a vibrant and resilient creative landscape for generations to come. Thank you for your unwavering support and dedication to the CClIs in Southern Africa and congratulations to all the Sound Connects Fund grantees on their remarkable achievements!

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TEXT AND EDITING:

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CONTRIBUTORS:

Simbarashe Mudhokwani
Linda Kaoma
Christine Mbisi
Priscilla MwasingaW
Eddie Hatitye

FINAL EDIT AND PROOFREADING:

Jacana Media
Kalin Pashaliev
Eddie Hatitye
Carolin Christgau

LAYOUT AND COVER DESIGN:

Trevor Ou Tim

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