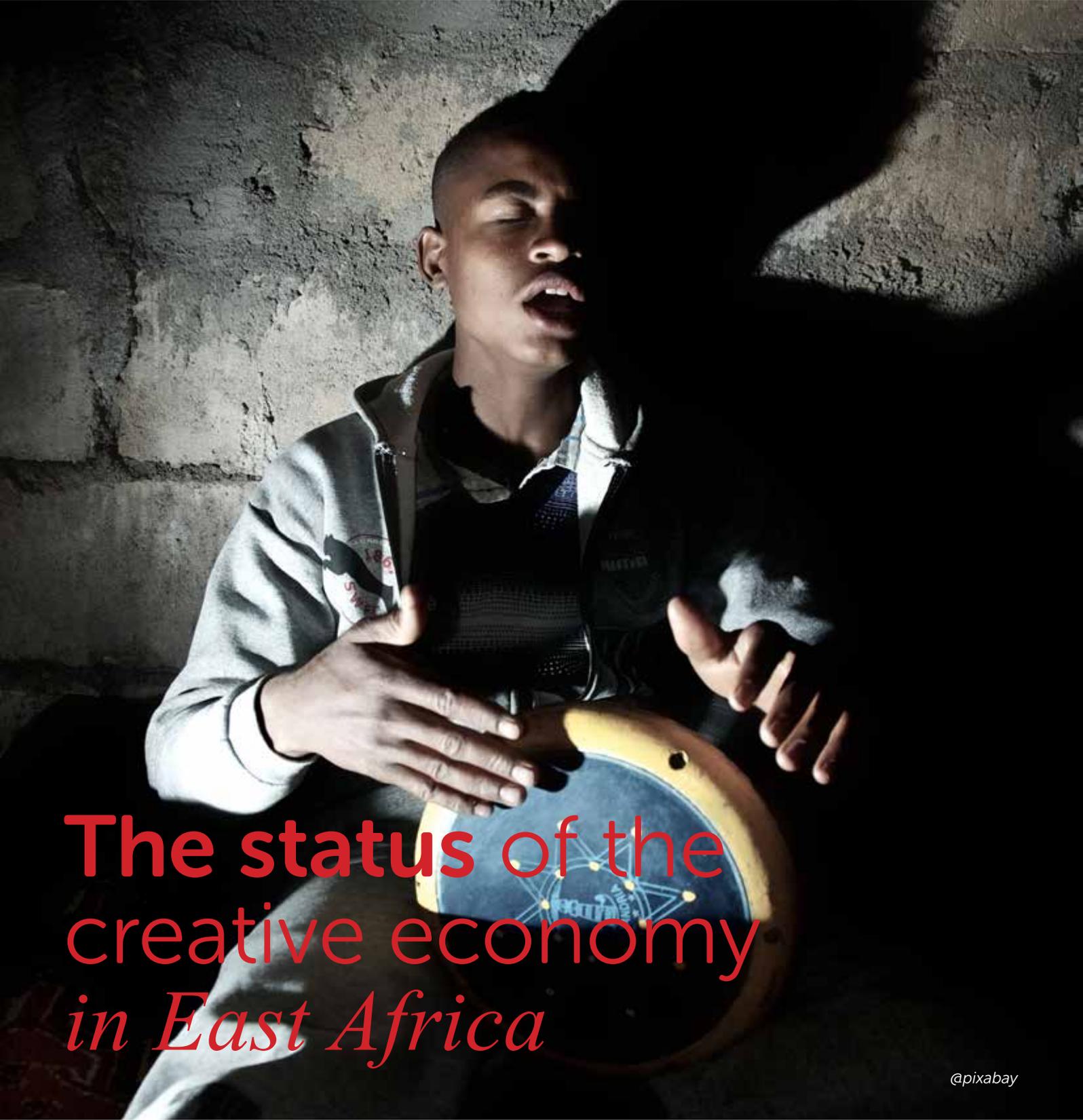


Ubunifu  
Report  
2016

A young man is shown from the chest up, playing a djembe drum. He is wearing a grey zip-up hoodie over a dark shirt and a patterned tie. His eyes are closed, and his mouth is open as if he is singing or speaking while playing. The background is a rough, textured wall. The lighting is dramatic, with strong shadows.

**The status of the  
creative economy  
*in East Africa***

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@hivos/ricfrancis

## *ABBREVIATIONS*

DCMS – Department of Culture, Media and Sport

CCI - Creative and Cultural Industries

CEWG –Creative Economy Working Group

ROEA –Regional Office For East Africa

VPOs – Venture Philanthropy Organizations

SPOs – Social purpose organizations

SB – Social Businesses

CITF - Creative Industries Task Force

UNCTAD – United Nations Commission for Trade and Development

ICT – Information and Communication Technology

CKU – Danish fund for Cultural Development





## *EXECUTIVE SUMMARY*

This report maps out the creative and cultural industries in East Africa, evaluates challenges facing the sector and highlights opportunities that could inform development of innovative, self-sustaining and impactful programmes, interventions and model of supporting the creative and cultural sectors in East Africa. The insights in this report are an extract of the findings of a research conducted across East Africa in 2015. The report focuses on six main categories of the creative and cultural industries, namely literary arts, performing arts, visual arts and crafts, media arts, cultural heritage and design. The report concludes that the creative and cultural sectors face challenges at four different levels that include little or inconsistent engagement between sectors players and the relevant government institutions hence apparent unbalanced development of the creative and cultural sector; disorganised , mismanaged, fragmented or non-existent associations and guilds in creative and cultural industries; underdeveloped artist hubs and communities that are facing sustainability and relevance challenges; and low artistic entrepreneurship leading to revenue loss as a result of weak business models.

These challenges emanate from a fast shrinking space for freedom of expression in East Africa characterised by intolerance towards critical media, CSOs, sexual and gender minorities; enactment of laws and regulations that seek to limit civic liberties. Despite these challenges the creative industries do offer countless opportunities to actively engage governments in the region to improve the policy and legislative environment to support the sector's sustainable growth; strengthening guilds and associations to make them more responsive to the needs of their members; supporting the hubs and communities in the development of relevant programmes for the artist communities and working with entrepreneurs or entrepreneurial organizations in building the individuals capacity of creative and cultural entrepreneurs, increasing the quality of their products and services while helping them to gain access to local and international markets.

A holistic approach bringing together the government, the private sector, the media, development partners, and industry players will certainly contribute to a vibrant creative and cultural industry in East Africa. The creative and cultural industries require enablers willing to create platforms that will increase the sector's impact in the region and improve the livelihoods of many people dependent on the sector.



@GinGin1971

## 1 INTRODUCTION

The creative and cultural sector in East Africa has received a lot of donor support in the last ten years with mixed results. Many of the donors have funded organizations or programmes whose impact may not be too clear, with some donors aligning their programme funding in the creative and cultural sector to a human rights based approach. Several donors have also funded infrastructure for the creative and cultural sector hoping to boost the sector's fortunes.

Several approaches to funding have been adopted by different donors that have raised praise and criticism from artistes and the industry in general. Artistes have for a long time complained of lack of support, inadequate or lack of infrastructure, knowledge and capital to advance their arts. Donors have stepped in for many years to address some of these needs. Concerns have been raised that donor support to the sector has created dependency, curtailed creativity and stifled the entrepreneurial growth of creative artistes. All this has happened amidst growth of a new crop of young, aggressive and independent artistes who with or without much donor support have been successful in their arts. There is need to further interrogate these success stories and critically revisit factors that contribute such successful artistes in absence of donor support.

Hivos has been interacting with this new crop of artistes through partnerships with multidisciplinary arts centers and hubs across East Africa. Hivos would like to build up on the potential and aggressive nature of these artistes to increase the impact that the creative and cultural sector has in society.

Notwithstanding the successes and failures that development partners have had in the past, Hivos remains committed to supporting the sector. During the last four years, Hivos has re-evaluated its strategy in relation to the kind of support offered to its partners in the creative and cultural industries. Hivos will place more emphasis on impact investment in the sector, social innovation and social entrepreneurship approaches, sustainability and improving the policy environment within which the sector operates. This report thus provides insights on the overall direction that Hivos intends to take in support of the creative and cultural industries in East Africa.









more liberal media landscape with regards to content production, embrace local content although the quality of productions needs to improve as the industry acquires better production skills across the board. Migration to the digital TV platforms in the region has seen the introduction of more local channels hence contributing to increased demand for content from local producers. Radio stations continue to be dominated by Western and West African music in all East African countries. Sensitive productions particularly those that tackle liberal topics like LGBT and sexual freedom continue to be banned across the board due to what has been described as ‘erosion of African cultural values and promotion of foreign cultural values.’

### 3.2 TECHNOLOGY

While East Africa continues to adopt new information technologies at a faster pace than the rest of the continent, adoption of technological skills in the creative and cultural space continues to be slow due to expensive technological infrastructure and connectivity. The technology community is experimenting with various digital distribution tools for music and film content although the problem of piracy is still rampant in the region. Telco companies still dominate the distribution of ringtones which has been a lucrative source of revenue for musicians in the region. The Telco's however, continue to impose exploitative measures where they keep a bulk of the profits achieved from music sales . Social media like Facebook, Twitter and platforms like WhatsApp, instagram, sound cloud, pinterest and others have become avenues of acquiring new audiences and for artists to popularize their work online however these don't have revenue models that allow artist to make a return on their work.



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## 7 FUNDAMENTAL REQUIREMENTS FOR A SUSTAINABLE CREATIVE AND CULTURAL SECTOR

Based on the study carried out of the different regions around the world, four key factors stand out for a sustainable creative and cultural sector in any country. Implementing a programme that touches on all the four will lead to a holistic and long term impact on the creative and cultural sector, versus having an approach that only tackles one area of the sector and therefore has limited impact on the overall sector. These four fundamental requirements are:

### 7.1 RESPONSIVE GOVERNMENT POLICIES AND PROGRAMMES

As the research of different countries around the world has shown, government policies, legislation, incentives and programmes are the most powerful interventions for artists in any country. Many successful countries have well established arts and culture ministries, arts councils and different innovative programmes run by the government (for example UK government support for creative economy, the Art Bank in Canada, Rouanet law in Brazil etc.) However they are also the most difficult to influence due to lack of prioritization of the creative and cultural sector in the East Africa region.

### 7.2 STRONG ASSOCIATIONS AND GUILDS

Countries that have vibrant arts and culture industries also have the industry players organized into associations and guilds that help improve standards, harmonize compensation for artistes, and serve as platforms for learning. They can also engage the government or other sectors with a united front so as to pile consistent pressure to have their concerns and needs addressed. The current state of associations in East Africa is that they are fragmented, disunited and lack a common consistent agenda of how to engage the government and different industries to ensure that the standards in the industry consistently improve as do the lifestyles of artists in the sector.

### 7.3 VIBRANT ARTISTIC COMMUNITIES, HUBS OR COMPANIES

Artistic communities and hubs that are based within well run and sustainable institutions tend to outperform their counterparts who may not be well organized. Artistic communities can play a big role in ensuring that artistes and other cultural players get the training they require, access to markets, access to financing or be part of programs that improve their skill, knowledge or livelihood as artists. Artistes communities that have good managers, a well-crafted and implemented strategy as well as efficiently run and professional operations tend to create a lot of sustainable and measurable opportunities for artists in their respective wider communities.

### 7.4 EMPOWERED ARTISTES

From the research carried out in the different markets, it is clear that artistes who are empowered with business, management and technical knowledge concerning their crafts, tend to develop and sustain more successful careers over their lifetime. Empowered artistes are able to make wiser decisions concerning the direction that their artistic forms take and how to build a successful enterprise from their work. The skills and knowledge in question range from business management, marketing, legal as well as innovation. These skills have to be imparted alongside technical skills that are geared towards improving the existing skill of talented artistes.





people un

## 9 OPPORTUNITIES IN THE CREATIVE INDUSTRY IN EAST AFRICA

Based on the research done locally and globally on the creative and cultural sectors, there are four main opportunities for engagement in the creative industry in East Africa. These opportunities need to be approached in an integrated and holistic manner.

### 9.1 GOVERNMENT ENGAGEMENT

A good creative ecosystem will be good in stimulating the sector, in turn it will simulate citizen's engagement in a creative way (cultural activism) that will in turn curb abuse of power, enforce transparency and promote sustainability for the artists who can now freely express themselves while earning a sustainable income in the process.

Our analysis of the best practices has identified that a thriving creative economy has a government that recognizes the importance of art and have policies that acknowledges the industry in terms of its economic impact in job creation, tourism promotion, export potential and general wealth creation.

The governments have dedicated ministries and/or arts councils prioritizing the arts with large funds dedicated from parliament or huge allocation from treasury. The governments value arts, culture and heritage as central to their identities, industry and economies. Well-structured and funded arts councils are accountable and report annually on their strategy implementation and impact of their programmes in addition they have decentralized structures of arts management by government with regional arts council and enforcement bodies.

There are two opportunities of engaging the governments in East Africa:

#### **The East Africa Culture and Sports Council**

In November of 2007 in Arusha, a draft proposal on the establishment of the East African culture and sports council was drafted. The council was created to be a body that would oversee and promote the culture and sports regionally, to date the council is the official regional body that oversees the creative industry in the region. The council acts as the principal advisory organ regionally on matters related to culture and sports.



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Members of the councils include: Heads of culture in the Ministries responsible for culture, heads of sports in the Ministries responsible for sports, heads of the National Sports councils, heads of the National Council of Culture and Executive Secretary.

Under the leadership of the council the EACC has created an East African Film Network (EAFN) that is expected to champion the development of film culture and the arts. This body is an independent body from the any governmental institution though it gets support from the EAC.

The council so far has partnered with the three nations to come up with a regional arts festival known as JAMA festival. The council is a milestone in the development of the creative economy in the region despite the challenges it faces that include:

- Lack of information from East African commission and lack of collaboration with artistes;
- Lack of a representative arts body or bodies to work with EAC commission;
- Lack of arts education in schools although all countries are now gearing up to return arts into the curriculum;
- Lack of research from the region, and;
- Lack of harmonized legislation to manage the creative sector

### Engaging the East African cultural council

The creation of an independent regional arts council consisting of members from the East African countries would be a big boost to the creative economy in the region. This council would be the official body that would engage the EACC council. The council would do research and get data on the creative economy in EA, organize regional events promote cultural activism in the region.

### Opportunities for Government programmes in Individual countries (Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania)

Challenges across the three regions as far as government is concerned are homogenous. There is generally poor funding for offices that deal with the sector in all East African countries. They are often not seen as a priority since other issues like security, education and health take higher priorities in government budgets in the region.

The ministries tend to be highly uncoordinated. This can be attributed to the changing political environments in each country. In the last 10 years, the departments that work with the creative sector have been shifted from one ministry to another depending on the priorities of the regimes in power. This has happened in all the East African countries.





## 9.2 ASSOCIATIONS AND GUILDS SUPPORT

Across East Africa, the Arts and Creative industry has several associations that cater to the needs of the stakeholders. Some of these associations are government supported and run. For instance the Uganda Music Union is an office set up under the Uganda Music Copyright Society. Other associations are run by individuals or a section of artistes who have taken it upon themselves to rally together towards the same cause. This current state of affairs presents an opportunity for identification of areas in which the various associations can come together in executing their agenda.

Artistes don't know that these associations exist. The research did not come across any database that has these associations registered anywhere. The existing associations across the region are fragmented and disorganized. They may be representing artistes similar in their craft but they are not necessarily working together despite the commonality of their cause. There are no defined policies by which the organizations are run. What is clear is a lack of leadership and management capacity and dependence on donor funding. As a result, these associations are not able to attract and retain the right caliber of staff to manage their affairs. Support to these associations should include enhancing their capacity through targeted management, brand building, artiste management and finance training.

Unfortunately this fragmentation is not just common amongst associations but amongst the artistes too. They choose to work with associations run by common affiliates and 'friends' in the industry or private individuals or sponsors. Rivalry among associations is another common underlying factor. This has resulted in duplication of roles by different associations.

These associations' activities are largely dictated by the amount of funding they receive. This then dictates their budgets and priority activities to be implemented. This in a way curtails the artistic license of the artistes as creativity is sacrificed at the altar of maintaining donor support and undertaking activities that promise to sustain donor support. Most of the associations have no research and knowledge agenda for themselves, further making it difficult to find credible data about the industry.





## Opportunities on Associations and Guilds

### Funding of Awards ceremonies and festivals

Very few award ceremonies or festivals are properly organized by the current associations. Some of the challenges they face in this process is funding for the events. These awards are limited to regions. Apart from Kisima Awards and the Pearl of Africa awards that cut across all the three regions, there is no other award ceremony that boasts the same outreach.

### Capacity Building for Associations

Creating opportunities for capacity building for industry players is another way in which the work being conducted by these organizations can be enhanced. Having continuous professional development courses, artiste management, and finance, operational planning and strategy are just some of the areas the training would cover. As a result, the associations would probably evolve from fully funded to self-supporting organizations that are sustainable. Capacity building would also revolve around improving the welfare and business opportunities for the artistes. Involving other sectors such as Insurance, Banking and medical sector to tailor make products or schemes that are targeted towards the artistic community.

### Research

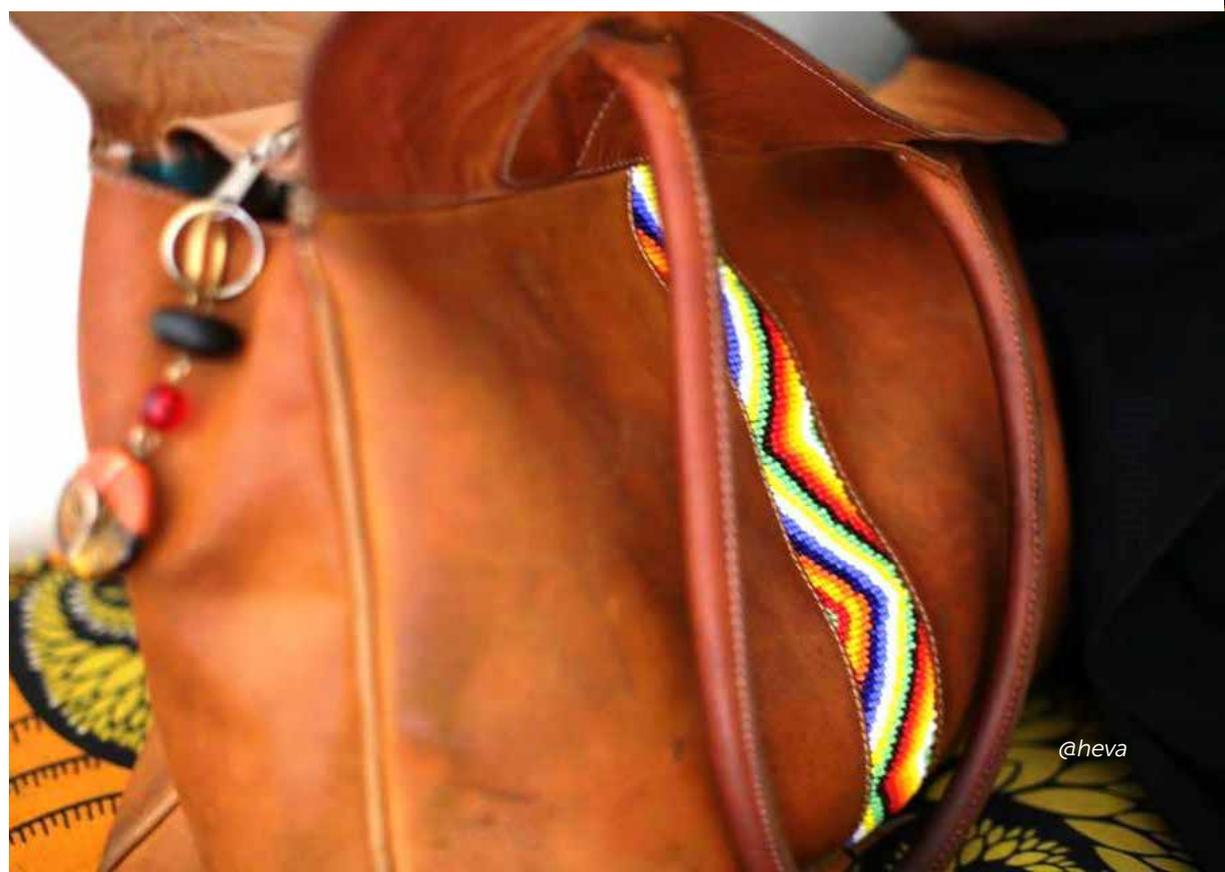
Creating a resource center for industry stakeholders is another opportunity. Despite the mushrooming of Hubs that claim to have resource facilities, information is still hard to come by. An online information and resource sharing portal about the industry that would have templates, legal advice and other useful information for artists across the region is critical.

### Linkages with Global Associations and Markets

Fragmentation of associations makes it a challenge for them to access international organizations that have similar interests. The existence of a representative at the EAC should provide a networking platform to ensure adequate representation at a regional or global fora.

### Rural and Urban Artistes

There is an opportunity for promoting new artistes particularly from the rural areas. These artistes are marginalized from mainstream media due to factors such as lack of infrastructure to support their craft and a localized fan base as a result of lack of exposure to the urban market. Programmes that provide a platform for artiste at both ends of the spectrum to associate and promote their craft are needed.



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## 9.4 ENTERPRISE DEVELOPMENT FOR ARTISTES

Individual artistes and cultural entrepreneurs face different challenges when carrying out their trade as artistes. Various forms of research in East Africa as well as around the world has showed that artists seem to lack professional skills as well as business skills that could enable them to run their art enterprises profitably and sustainably. A study of successful artistes showed that:

- They are consistent and always produce high quality work, and seek to improve their skills and talent continuously;
- They have a niche or clear target market that they have identified;
- They have a business focus;
- They have longevity and are passionately dedicated to their artwork;
- They pursue a commercial angle, and not development partner dependent;
- They have a lot of corporate sponsors or corporate clients buying their artwork;
- They aggressively and consistently build an audience starting from small audiences;
- They build themselves into brands that can be extended beyond their music into merchandise and products and endorsements;
- They have international exposure having travelled the world and been exposed to different standards of art work and forms, and;
- They have media and online exposure (blogs and social media).

The above lessons from successful artists can be used to package a capacity building programme.

### Challenges for Artistic Entrepreneurs

The individual artists studied across the region within the artistic hubs and communities collectively face the following challenges:

- They continuously face copy cats of their art work with rampant piracy and their artwork being sold on the black market;
- Certain industries are controlled by cartels (few companies control the value chain) and brokers;
- There is a lack of distribution outlets and channels for their artwork;
- They face a lot of corruption particularly when dealing with regulatory bodies or distributors;
- They lack the business acumen necessary for them to manage their art as a business;
- They face a complex and bureaucratic business environment;
- They lack access to financing and many financiers do not understand how they can finance the arts sector;
- They lack proper publicity and the ability to do brand building;
- They lack access to high quality production equipment;
- They face international competition from firms that replicate art en masse and sell cheaply;
- They lack information on how to build markets locally and internationally;
- They face challenges in trying to collaborate with corporate sector (endorsements etc.) due to the fact that the corporate do not know how to value their work and impact, and;
- They lack access to legal protection and information.

### Opportunities in Enterprise Development

There is a great opportunity to address the individual artist challenges by investing in a programme that selects the best ideas and talented artists who are passionate about social impact across the different art forms, develops them to a scalable level and catapults them into the African and global markets.





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