



NATIONAL ARTS COUNCIL
OF NAMIBIA

ARTS PULSE

February 2026

Newsletter - Issue 4

VOICE OF THE ADMINISTRATOR



Dear Creative Community,

It is my pleasure to welcome you to Issue 4 of Arts Pulse. This edition reflects a period of meaningful growth across the Cultural and Creative Industries, marked by investment in education, support for artistic production, regional cultural development, and expanding international engagement.

As we continue in 2026, NACN remains committed to strengthening the sector through bursaries, grants and mobility support that enable creatives to develop their craft, access new platforms and contribute to national development priorities. It is encouraging to witness the tangible impact of these programmes, from local exhibitions and festivals to international showcases and academic advancement.

We are also pleased to confirm that Grant Fund Cycle 1 for 2026/2027 is officially open. We encourage eligible artists, organisations and cultural practitioners to apply and take full advantage of this opportunity. Your continued participation, accountability and excellence ensure that public investment in the arts remains impactful and sustainable.

Thank you for your dedication, professionalism and passion. Together, we continue to build a creative sector that is resilient, innovative and globally connected.

Warm regards,

Gretta Gaspar

NACN Administrator

IN THIS EDITION

This fourth edition of Arts Pulse, the official newsletter of the National Arts Council of Namibia (NACN), captures a dynamic period marked by investment in talent, artistic excellence, and expanding opportunities across the cultural and creative industries.

A central feature, Investing in Creative Futures: NACN Awards 10 Bursaries for 2026, celebrates the 2026 NACN Bursary recipients and reaffirms the Council's commitment to education and professional development within the arts sector. Readers are introduced to this year's beneficiaries, alongside an Alumni Bursary Spotlight on Heather Erdman, reflecting the long-term impact of NACN's support.

The Grant Recipient Spotlight series highlights the work of Emmanuel Enkara and Hage Mukwendje, including his compelling exhibition, "Faces That Refuse to Fade." This edition also features the Mobility Fund Recipient Spotlight on Ndako Nghipandulwa, showcasing how international exposure strengthens Namibia's creative voice globally.

In our Creative Spotlight, Yenda Summer Festival Vol. 4 takes centre stage for its role in strengthening Katima Mulilo's creative economy. A visual recap in Moments from Yenda Summer Festival captures the energy, talent, and community spirit that defined the event.

Beyond individual achievements, this issue turns to the global landscape in Global Arts Policy in Focus, highlighting the latest 2026 developments from the International Federation of Arts Councils and Culture Agencies (IFACCA). Readers will also find details on the Grants Call for Funding: Cycle 1 (2026/2027), encouraging continued participation and growth within the sector.

The newsletter concludes with NACN contact details for further engagement and collaboration, along with a special Valentine's Day message celebrating creativity, passion, and the power of the arts.

The Council remains dedicated to empowering artists, strengthening institutions, and building a resilient and globally connected creative sector.

Find us at the Government Park, NACN Office, Room 018, contact us via email: administrator@artscouncilnam.org / 061 293 3311 / 0811 450 641 for enquiries

Investing in Creative Futures: NACN Awards 10 Bursaries for 2026

The NACN Bursary Programme remains a strategic investment in the development of the country's Cultural and Creative Industries (CCI). By supporting priority areas in arts, the programme contributes directly to the objectives of Namibia's National Development Plan 6 (NDP6), which recognises the creative economy as a driver of innovation, youth empowerment, employment creation and economic diversification.

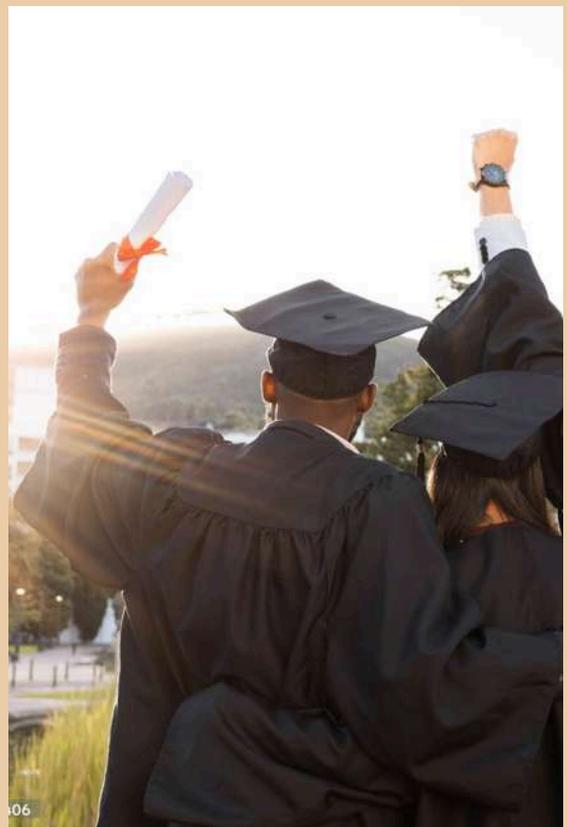
The bursary prioritises focused disciplines such as digital arts, animation, architecture, film, heritage conservation, arts education, cultural policy and design, aligning with NDP6's emphasis on skills development and strengthening knowledge-based industries.

The programme is also implemented in alignment with the Government of the Republic of Namibia's Subsidized Education Funding Model, which seeks to expand equitable access to tertiary education while ensuring sustainability and accountability in public funding. This alignment ensures that creative disciplines are fully integrated into national education reforms and funding mechanisms.

For the 2026 academic year, NACN awarded 10 bursaries to students studying at six universities, both locally and abroad. Of these, five bursaries were awarded for Master's degree programmes, reflecting a strong focus on advanced training and professional specialisation within the creative sector.

These awards span institutions in Namibia and internationally, strengthening both local capacity and global exposure for Namibian creatives. By supporting studies across diverse disciplines, the programme contributes to building a skilled and adaptable creative workforce equipped to respond to industry demands and emerging opportunities.

Through this continued investment in higher education, NACN is not only supporting individual academic journeys but also strengthening the long-term sustainability of the creative sector. The bursary programme remains a key mechanism through which national policy commitments are translated into meaningful opportunity for the next generation of creative leaders.



2026 NANC BURSARY RECIPIENTS

Yvonne Lipenda

Master of Social Sciences in Heritage Conservation

University of Pretoria
South Africa



Vauanekua Muatjetjeja

Master of Philosophy in Arts & Design

University of Namibia (UNAM)



Leeroy Haizaya

Master of Arts in English Studies

University of Namibia (UNAM)



Heinrich Autanga

Master of Arts in English Studies

University of Namibia (UNAM)



Kambamba Kafunda

Bachelor of Architecture Honours

Namibia University of Science and Technology (NUST)



Chantell Uiras

3D Animation

Namibia University of Science and Technology
(NUST)



Erick Nengola

3D Animation

Namibia University of Science and Technology
(NUST)



Michael Namaseb

Script Writing for Film

Namibia University of Science and Technology
(NUST)



Muningandu Hoveka

Master: Cultural Critique

Zurich University of Arts
Switzerland



Ndayola Ulenga

London Academy of Music & Dramatic Art
United Kingdom (UK)



Alumni Bursary spotlight: Heather Erdmann



Heather Erdmann is a Namibian photojournalist and visual storyteller whose career journey reflects the meaningful impact of the NACN Bursary Programme. From developing her skills through formal training in visual arts and photography to building a professional career in national media and earning international recognition, her story illustrates how targeted educational support can empower creatives to grow, excel, and contribute to the cultural and creative industry.

Tell us about your self?

My name is Heather Erdmann, and I am a Namibian photojournalist and visual storyteller. I hold a Visual Arts Diploma from the College of the Arts in Katutura (2011–2013) and a National Diploma in Photography from the Cape Peninsula University of Technology (CPUT) (2016–2018).

Tell us about your education journey and how NACN's bursary supported you?

NACN's bursary was instrumental in supporting my education, allowing me to focus on developing my skills in photography and visual storytelling. With this support, I am now able and fortunate to live out the realities of visual storytelling by exploring social documentary photography. My journey has allowed me to participate in national and international exhibitions and has earned me international recognition, including being shortlisted among the top 30 participants for the WIPO Photography Prize for Indigenous Peoples and Local Community Youth (2021–2022).

What are you currently doing and what are your future plans?

Currently, I work as a photojournalist at New Era Publication Corporation (NEPC), covering news, entertainment, and sports. On weekends, I document Rehoboth's local stories; from small human-interest features to high-profile cases and ministerial visits; capturing anything newsworthy.

Looking ahead, I aim to continue upskilling my photography and visual journalism expertise, contribute to Namibia's creative and arts sectors, and one day sit at high-level decision-making tables to help transform the industry. My ultimate goal is to influence national policies, strengthen the creative sector, and create opportunities that empower artists, ensuring Namibia's artistic talent is recognized and nurtured locally and internationally.

Grant Recipient Spotlight: Emmanuel Enkara



Tell us about yourself?

My name is Emmanuel Enkara, Founder and Executive Director of ENK Public Art Group, a registered non-profit organisation that commissions and facilitates public art initiatives locally and internationally. I previously served as a Board Member of the Namibian Arts Association and as a Council Member of the National Arts Council of Namibia, with my term concluding in May 2025.

My journey began as a performer, but in 2019 I transitioned into arts management. I created an independent creative platform that hosted exhibitions, film screenings, music tutoring, and community art events. ENK Public Art Group was conceptualised later that year. Since then, we have completed over 20 public art initiatives under the guidance of a fully functional seven-member board. My primary objective is to create sustainable opportunities that allow artists to earn and grow within Namibia.

Give us an overview of the Project?

The Spoken Walls Project is an ENK concept focused on typography murals in residential areas. Each mural carries a positive message. Collectively, the murals form a complete poem representing the spirit of a town. Local poets contribute lines that are translated into large-scale visual works.

Once completed, residents and visitors can actively engage with the murals as a visual journey, piecing together the poem while experiencing their surroundings differently. The project connects visual art, literature, tourism and community engagement, with sustainable making of public art space.

How has NACN's grant helped you achieve your project objectives?

The grant from the National Arts Council of Namibia enabled us to execute this beginning phase of the project successfully. We completed two murals and hosted a mural workshop that trained 13 emerging muralists. The funding allowed us to compensate the participating artists fairly and demonstrate our ability to deliver structured, impactful public art initiatives. Whilst contributing to strengthening the role of public art in city-making and further towards NDP6 intentions.

Where are you now and what you look forward to in 2026?

Currently, ENK is stable, compliant, and expanding its experience base. In 2026, we are focused on securing consistent funding partnerships to expand public art public to more towns, supporting more visual artists financially, and contribute to creative urban renewal. I remain committed to advocating for public art as a unique and meaningful contributor to Namibia's cultural, educational, and tourism sectors.

“My primary objective is to create sustainable opportunities that allow artists to earn and grow within Namibia”

THE MURAL WORKSHOP

MURAL WORKSHOP

Call for Upcoming Muralists

DMU Public Art Group invites 10 upcoming muralists to take part in a two-day practical Mural Workshop, in-located at the Ntshabeni Arts Association.

To be considered, submit a maximum of 3 artworks (PNG, PDF or JPG format) showcasing your creativity and artistic style. The selected artists will have the opportunity to learn from experienced public art professionals, explore digital mural design principles & techniques and gain insights into the growing field of contemporary mural creation in Namibia and beyond.

Submission Deadline: 26 October 2025
 Submit via Email or WhatsApp
 publications@arts-council-nam.org or +264812629919
 Workshop Date & Time: TBA

Supported by The National Arts Council of Namibia

Facilitated by DMU Public Art Group



Creative Spotlight: Yenda Summer Festival Vol. 4 Strengthens Katima Mulilo's Creative Economy



The Yenda Summer Festival Vol. 4, held on 6 December 2025 at the Zambezi Waterfront in Katima Mulilo, marked another milestone for one of the region's fastest growing cultural events. With an estimated attendance of 5,600 people, a 45% increase from the previous year, the festival continues to position itself as a dynamic platform for music, culture and community engagement in Namibia

Bringing together local and national talent, the festival delivered high-energy performances that kept audiences engaged throughout the day. Attendees travelled not only from within Namibia but also from neighbouring Botswana and Zambia, highlighting the event's growing regional appeal. The seamless combination of DJs and live artists created an atmosphere that celebrated both established and emerging voices in the creative sector.

Beyond entertainment, the festival generated meaningful economic and social impact. Local vendors were given space to sell food, beverages and products, directly contributing to income generation and small business growth

in Katima Mulilo. Hospitality, transport and accommodation services also benefited from increased activity, reinforcing the role of arts and culture in stimulating regional creative economies.

The event further demonstrated strong digital engagement, with over 2,000 posts and stories shared across social media platforms, generating hundreds of thousands of impressions and significant audience interaction. This digital visibility amplified the festival's reach and strengthened its identity as a youth-driven cultural experience.

Supported by the NACN, the Yenda Summer Festival aligns with NACN's mandate to strengthen creative communities, expand access to arts platforms beyond major cities, and promote inclusive participation in the cultural and creative industries. By investing in regional events such as Yenda Summer Festival, NACN contributes to artist development, community pride, and the long-term sustainability of Namibia's creative ecosystem.

MOMENTS FROM YENDA SUMMER FESTIVAL



Grant Recipient Spotlight: Hage Mukwendje



*Windhoek based visual artist Hage Mukwendje's practice is rooted in memory, storytelling, and the layered histories that shape identity and belonging. Working across painting and mixed media, his work explores how stories are preserved, shared, and sometimes erased, inviting audiences to reflect on connection, land, and collective memory. With support from the National Arts Council of Namibia's Grant Fund, he presented *Faces that Refuse to Fade*, a body of work that powerfully affirmed the importance of artistic presence and remembrance.*

Tell us about yourself?

My name is Hage Mukwendje, and I am a visual artist based in Windhoek. My practice centres primarily around painting and mixed media, combining acrylic, collage, and found materials to explore themes of memory, land, and human connection. My work is deeply informed by storytelling traditions from my upbringing in northern Namibia, where memory is shared and carried collectively.

Give us an overview of your work and your project that was funded by NACN?

With the support of the National Art Council of Namibia, I was able to realise my recent exhibition *Faces that Refuse to Fade*, presented at the National Art Gallery of Namibia. The exhibition brought together a series of large-scale mixed media works shaped by my understanding of beauty as something relational and active, a space through which memory can be held, complexity preserved, and erasure quietly resisted. Through portraiture and layered materials, the project invites viewers to encounter stories that continue to exist across generations, despite attempts to make them disappear.

How has NACN's Grant Fund assisted you and your my project?

The NACN Grant Fund played a crucial role in enabling the production of this body of work. In many cases, artists struggle to fully realise their work due to a lack of resources, and in the same way that people and their stories can be forgotten, so too can artists and their artistic voices. *Faces that Refuse to Fade* speaks about presence that resists disappearance, and thanks to the NACN support, both the works and the stories they carry were given the possibility to exist, to be seen, and to refuse erasure.

Where are you now and what are you looking forward to in 2026?

I am currently continuing my studio practice and preparing for an upcoming exhibition in Helsinki Finland opening 02/07/2026. I am looking forward to taking more time to explore my artistic language in a deeper and more intuitive way, learning new techniques and allowing my work to grow through experimentation, collaboration, and exchange with others. Creating remains my way of understanding the world and staying connected to the stories I carry, and I hope to keep sharing this journey through future projects and encounters.

Hage Mukwendje's Exhibition: Faces that refuses to fade



Mobility Fund Recipient Spotlight: Ndako Nghipandulwa



Self-taught Namibian visual artist Ndako Nghipandulwa reached a significant milestone in 2024 when he was invited to participate in the Afrikin Art Exhibition during Miami Art Week. The exhibition was held alongside the internationally renowned Art Basel Miami Beach, offering a powerful platform to present his work to a global audience of collectors, curators and fellow artists.

Nghipandulwa is widely recognised for his distinctive nail and string artworks, a meticulous technique that explores texture, form and intricate line work. In addition to this medium, he works with oil and acrylic painting, creates murals and produces small sculptures. For the Miami showcase, he presented three large-scale nail and string pieces, demonstrating both technical precision and conceptual depth.

“Being included in such a significant international platform was both an honour and an important milestone in my artistic journey,” Nghipandulwa reflected.

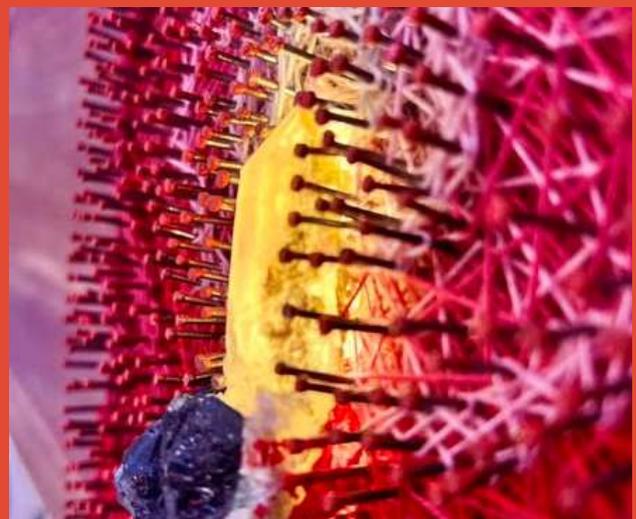
The opportunity was made possible through the National Arts Council of Namibia’s Mobility Fund, which supported his travel to the United States. According to Nghipandulwa, the value of the experience extended far beyond exhibiting the work itself. “Being physically present at the exhibition was invaluable.

It allowed me to engage directly with the organisers, fellow artists, collectors and visitors,” he said. His participation also enabled him to attend various events throughout Miami Art Week, broadening his professional network and exposing him to diverse perspectives within the global art community.

The impact of the engagement has already created further international prospects. As a direct result of connections made during the exhibition, Nghipandulwa has been invited to exhibit in the Netherlands alongside an artist he met at the event. He is currently preparing for a solo exhibition scheduled for August, while simultaneously developing work for the Netherlands showcase and preparing submissions for the Afrikin Art Fair in Miami in 2026.

“I look forward to continuing to grow internationally while contributing meaningfully to Namibia’s creative landscape,” he said.

Nghipandulwa’s experience underscores the importance of mobility support in enabling Namibian artists to access global platforms, expand professional networks and bring international exposure back into the local creative ecosystem.



Global Arts Policy in Focus: IFACCA's Latest Developments in 2026



Image: Ms Magdalena Moreno Mujica during her presentation at the event. Credit: Ministry of Education and Culture, Uruguay.

The International Federation of Arts Councils and Culture Agencies (IFACCA) continues to be a key global platform for arts councils, ministries of culture and public cultural agencies as they navigate cultural policy and creative sector development in 2026.

IFACCA's monthly policy digest "ACORNS" kicked off the year with a focus on emerging global issues affecting the creative economy. The January 2026 edition underlined the growing importance of international cooperation on matters such as intellectual property protection, the role of culture in broader public policy debates, and the implications of digital technologies and artificial intelligence for artists and cultural workers. It also highlighted ongoing policy developments in several African countries, including cultural policy reviews in Ghana and Ethiopia, and intellectual property strengthening in Nigeria, reflecting how creative policy dialogues are progressing globally.

In addition, IFACCA news from early 2026 showcases national initiatives that place culture and creativity at the centre of development strategies.

For example, Sierra Leone declared 2026 as its "Year of Culture and Creativity," reinforcing the country's commitment to cultural identity, creative enterprise and inclusive economic growth, underlining how culture is increasingly recognised as a pillar of national development.

Across regions, IFACCA continues to share updates on cultural events and programmes that foster exchange, such as the Asia-Europe Cultural Festival (AECFest) 2026, scheduled to take place with a main programme in the Netherlands and events in Singapore, promoting long-term artistic collaboration between continents.

Through these activities and its ongoing strategy, which emphasises connection, knowledge exchange and evidence-based cultural policy, IFACCA remains a vital international resource. For NACN and other members, the federation's work provides valuable insights into global cultural trends, emerging policy frameworks, and collaborative opportunities that can inform and strengthen the country's own creative sector policies and programmes in the year ahead.

**GRANTS CALL
FOR FUNDING
CYCLE 1
2026/2027**

NACN invites artists, creatives and cultural practitioners to apply for Grant Cycle 1 funding.

Application forms are available at NACN office, regional Arts Extension Officers, or download from website.

visit www.artscouncilnam.org and see how we can support you on your creative journey.

**SUPPORTING
CREATIVITY,
INNOVATION, AND
INCLUSIVE GROWTH
IN LINE WITH NDP6.**



**APPLICATIONS
OPEN**

06-02-2026

DEADLINE

06-03-2026

**APPLY
NOW!**

About NACN Grant

NACN Grant is a financial support programme designed to assist artists, cultural practitioners, and creative organisations to develop, produce, and present artistic work. The grant supports a wide range of creative activities, including artistic projects, capacity building, research, festivals, training initiatives, and sector development programmes.

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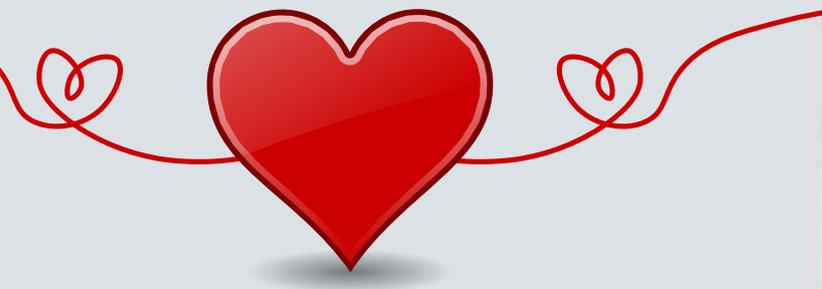
Enquiries

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HAPPY

*Valentine's
Day*

This February, we celebrated the love that fueled creativity and connected our artistic community. Happy Valentine's Day to all the creatives who pour their hearts into shaping the cultural and creative stories.



www.artscouncilnam.org