



NATIONAL ARTS COUNCIL
OF NAMIBIA

ARTS PULSE

March 2026

Newsletter - Issue 5

VOICE OF THE ADMINISTRATOR



Dear Creative Community,

It is my pleasure to welcome you to the 5th edition of our magazine, marking a moment of reflection and progress as we close the first quarter of the year. This edition celebrates growth within the creative sector and welcomes positive change, including our close look to the activities happening in the creative sector, whose leadership will continue to guide the advancement of the sector.

We are also pleased to announce the first quarter Grant Cycle that has kicked off, reaffirming our commitment to supporting artists, organisations, and cultural practitioners.

As we celebrate 36 years of independence, we recognise that freedom provides the foundation for creativity to thrive. May this milestone inspire continued innovation, cultural pride, and opportunity for our creative community.

Thank you, and enjoy this edition.

Gretta Gaspar
NACN Administrator

IN THIS EDITION

The National Arts Council of Namibia presents the fifth edition of its Arts Pulse newsletter for March 2026, capturing a period of strong momentum and meaningful progress across the country's creative sector.

This edition reflects a continued commitment to nurturing talent, strengthening artistic excellence, and expanding opportunities within the cultural and creative industries. We will reflect on the achievements of the first quarter, including the rollout of the first grant cycle and setting a renewed tone for support to artists, organizations, and cultural practitioners. The edition also coincides with Namibia's 36th year of independence, acknowledging the role of freedom in enabling creativity and innovation.

A key focus of this edition is investment in creative futures, highlighted through the recognition of international exposure and the long-term impact towards the professional development within the arts sector. The newsletter celebrates a historic milestone in fashion, as Ms Melissa Poulton takes to the global stage at Paris Fashion Week, marking an important moment of international recognition for local talent. It also showcases the Ten Minas Initiative, which demonstrates how the performing arts can be used as a powerful tool for public awareness, particularly in addressing malaria through community-driven storytelling and education.

The edition further explores the implications of Namibia's Sixth National Development Plan (NDP6), positioning the arts, culture, and creative industries as key contributors to economic growth, job creation, and national identity. It underscores the importance of improved governance, stronger intellectual property systems, and expanded platforms for artists. On a regional level, attention is given to the role of festivals in driving sustainable development across Southern Africa, drawing from insights shared during a UNESCO-hosted webinar that examined the cultural, social, economic, and environmental impact of festivals in the region.

In addition, the work of a grant recipient, Ms Lahiah Musinani is highlighted for advancing community-based arts practice through workshops in tie-dye, mural painting, and printmaking, demonstrating how creative skills development can foster both economic empowerment and cultural preservation. The edition also reflects on global discourse through the release of IFACCA's extended report on culture as a public good, reinforcing the role of culture in policy and sustainable development. We will finally conclude by celebrating the achievement of a Namibian cultural leader selected for an international fellowship, further positioning Namibia within a growing network of global cultural exchange and leadership.

Find us at the Government Park, NACN Office, Room O18, contact us via email: administrator@artscouncilnam.org / 061 293 3311 / 0811 450 641 for enquiries



Meet the Fashion Designer

Melissa Poulton's Journey to Paris: A Milestone for Namibian Fashion

In 2025, Namibian fashion reached an extraordinary milestone when designer Melissa Poulton, founder of the brand House of Poulton, stepped onto the global stage at Paris Fashion Week. Her showcase marked a historic moment as she became the first Namibian designer to present a collection on one of the world's most prestigious fashion runways.

Poulton's collection, La Dolce Vita, captivated audiences with designs inspired by Namibia's breathtaking landscapes, resilience, and cultural strength. The collection reflected a deep appreciation for Namibia's natural beauty while combining contemporary elegance with African storytelling through fashion. Her work was met with admiration from international audiences, demonstrating the power and potential of Namibia's creative industries.

Reflecting on the experience, Poulton shared her gratitude for the support that made this achievement possible. "Standing here at Paris Fashion Week would not have been possible without the support I received. This has been a fantastic experience, and I was deeply honoured to represent Namibia on this global stage," she said from Paris.

This remarkable achievement was made possible through the combined support of partners who believe in elevating Namibian talent. O&L Leisure supported Poulton's global debut through its Namibia Through Our Eyes campaign, which aims to promote Brand Namibia and showcase the nation's cultural excellence internationally.

Equally important was the support provided by the National Arts Council of Namibia (NACN), which sponsored Poulton through its grants programme. By providing financial assistance and institutional backing, NACN enabled the designer to access one of the most influential fashion platforms in the world. This support demonstrates the crucial role that public arts funding plays in empowering Namibian creatives to expand their reach beyond national borders.

The NACN's support reflects its broader mandate to create an enabling environment for artists and cultural practitioners. By investing in emerging and established creatives alike, the Council continues to unlock the creative potential of Namibians and strengthen the country's cultural presence internationally.

Melissa Poulton's journey to Paris is not only a personal achievement but also a powerful symbol of what Namibian creativity can accomplish when talent is supported through strategic partnerships and national arts funding. Her presence on the Paris runway represents a proud moment for Namibia and a reminder that the country's creative industries have the capacity to compete on the world stage.

As Namibia continues to nurture its creative sector, milestones such as Poulton's Paris Fashion Week debut serve as inspiration for young designers and artists across the country. With continued support from institutions like the National Arts Council of Namibia, the future of Namibian fashion and the broader creative industries looks brighter than ever.

WHAT IT MEANS FOR NAMIBIA'S CREATIVE AND CULTURAL INDUSTRIES: NDP6

Namibia's Sixth National Development Plan (NDP6) is the country's roadmap for economic and social development from 2025 to 2030. For the first time, the arts, culture, and creative industries are clearly recognised as sectors that can contribute to economic growth, employment creation, and national identity. For artists, cultural practitioners, creative entrepreneurs, and institutions such as the National Arts Council of Namibia (NACN), NDP6 represents an important shift: culture is no longer viewed only as heritage or entertainment, it is increasingly recognised as a strategic economic sector.

The Four Pillars:

1. Economic Growth, Transformation, and Resilience.
2. Human Development and Community Resilience.
3. Environmental Sustainability.
4. Good Governance and Effective Public Service Delivery.



What is NDP6?

NDP6 is Namibia's national planning framework that sets priorities for development across sectors including infrastructure, education, innovation, tourism, and the creative economy. The plan recognises that creativity, innovation, and cultural expression are valuable national resources that can drive both economic and social development. Within the plan, the creative industries fall under the broader theme of Human Development and Community Resilience, acknowledging that culture contributes not only to economic activity but also to social cohesion and identity.

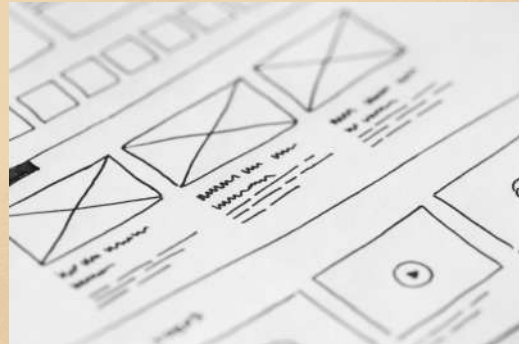
A key ambition of NDP6 is to build an enabled and thriving arts and creative industries ecosystem that positions creativity as a national resource for social and economic development. In practical terms, this means strengthening the full creative value chain—from the creation and production of artistic works to their distribution and consumption. The plan recognises a wide range of creative sectors, including music, film and audio-visual production, visual arts and crafts, design and fashion, literature and publishing, as well as cultural heritage and traditional knowledge systems. By strengthening these interconnected sectors, Namibia aims to unlock the economic and cultural value of its creative talent.

NDP6 also introduces clear economic targets for the creative industries. By 2030, the plan aims to increase employment in the creative sector from approximately 0.2% of the national labour force to 2%, reflecting a significant expansion of opportunities for artists, producers, designers, and other creative professionals. The plan also aims to grow the sector's contribution to the national economy to 2.8% of Gross Domestic Product, while increasing the export of creative goods and services to 1.5% of Namibia's total exports. These targets highlight government's intention to position the creative industries as a meaningful contributor to the national economy.

To achieve these ambitions, NDP6 outlines several priority areas for development. One important focus area is creative infrastructure. Artists and cultural enterprises require appropriate spaces and facilities in which to produce and present their work. This includes studios, rehearsal spaces, galleries, performance venues, and creative hubs. Investment in such infrastructure will help ensure that artists have access to the tools and environments necessary to develop and present their work professionally.

Another priority area is skills development and capacity building. Many creative practitioners possess exceptional artistic talent but may require additional support in areas such as business management, marketing, digital production, and entrepreneurship. Through targeted training programmes and professional development initiatives, the plan seeks to strengthen the capacity of artists and creative entrepreneurs to build sustainable careers. Skills development in areas such as project management, financial literacy, and digital technologies will also help creatives navigate an increasingly competitive global marketplace.

WHAT IT MEANS FOR NAMIBIA'S CREATIVE AND CULTURAL INDUSTRIES: NDP6 ...CONTINUED



Strengthening intellectual property systems is also identified as a key component of the creative economy. For artists to earn sustainable livelihoods, they must be able to protect, manage, and monetise their work. NDP6 emphasises the importance of improving awareness and systems around copyright, licensing, and rights management. A stronger intellectual property environment will enable artists to retain ownership of their creative outputs while generating income from their work across different markets.

The plan further highlights the importance of research, data, and statistics related to the creative industries. One of the challenges facing the sector is the lack of reliable data about its size, economic contribution, and employment potential. Improved research and sector mapping will make it possible to better understand the creative economy and to design policies and programmes that respond effectively to the needs of artists and creative businesses.

NDP6 also emphasises expanding opportunities for young people and women in the creative sector. The arts offer accessible pathways for entrepreneurship, innovation, and self-employment, particularly for youth. Through targeted training initiatives and increased access to funding opportunities, the plan aims to encourage broader participation in cultural and creative activities across the country.

Heritage and cultural preservation also remain an important component of the plan. Namibia's cultural traditions, indigenous knowledge systems, and historical heritage form an essential part of the country's identity. NDP6 promotes initiatives that document and preserve traditional knowledge, strengthen heritage tourism, and protect cultural sites and practices. These initiatives not only safeguard Namibia's heritage but also create opportunities for community development and cultural tourism.

If effectively implemented, the plan could unlock significant opportunities for Namibia's creative sector. Creative goods and services may reach new regional and international markets, allowing Namibian artists to showcase their work globally. The expansion of the sector could also generate new employment opportunities, not only for artists but also for technicians, designers, producers, and other professionals working across the creative value chain. In addition, festivals, heritage sites, and cultural experiences can strengthen tourism offering while promoting the country's rich cultural diversity.

Institutions such as the National Arts Council of Namibia, the National Theatre of Namibia, the National Art Gallery of Namibia, and the College of the Arts Namibia will play a crucial role in supporting the implementation of these ambitions. Through funding programmes, training initiatives, policy advocacy, and industry support, these institutions contribute to building an enabling environment for Namibia's creative talent to flourish.

Ultimately, the success of NDP6 will depend on collaboration between government, cultural institutions, the private sector, and the artists themselves. With sustained investment and strategic partnerships, the plan has the potential to transform Namibia's creative and cultural industries into a dynamic sector that generates employment, strengthens cultural identity, and positions Namibia's creativity on the global stage.

Did you know?

Did you know that the National Arts Council of Namibia (NACN) plays a key role in shaping and supporting Namibia's creative and cultural industries? Here are a few interesting facts that highlight the impact and importance of the Council.

1. Established by Law

The NACN was established through the National Arts Council Fund Act, No. 1 of 2005, which gives the Council the legal mandate to support, develop, and promote the arts in Namibia.

2. Supporting Creativity Across Many Sectors

The NACN supports a wide range of artistic disciplines including visual arts, crafts, music, theatre, dance, literature, film, fashion, and other creative services. This means the Council contributes to almost every corner of Namibia's creative ecosystem.

3. A Champion for Namibian Talent

Through its funding programmes and initiatives, the NACN has supported hundreds of artists, cultural organisations, and creative projects across the country, helping creatives bring their ideas to life.

4. Connecting Namibia to the World

The NACN works with international organisations and partners to create opportunities for artists to participate in global programmes, festivals, residencies, and exchanges.

5. Supporting Arts in All Regions

The Council's work is not limited to the capital city. The NACN strives to ensure that artists from all regions of Namibia can access opportunities and support for their creative work.

6. Building a Sustainable Creative Industry

Beyond funding, the NACN promotes professional development in areas such as creative entrepreneurship, intellectual property, and project management to help artists build sustainable careers.

7. A Platform for Cultural Expression

The NACN plays an important role in preserving and promoting Namibia's diverse cultural heritage while encouraging innovation and contemporary artistic expression.

8. Artists Helping Artists

The Council is guided by a board made up of individuals with experience and passion for the arts and culture sector, helping ensure that decisions reflect the needs of the creative community.

Malaria Awareness Through Performing Arts: Ten Minas Initiative



In an innovative effort to promote public health awareness, the performing arts group Ten Minas has launched a creative initiative that uses theatre and performance to educate communities about malaria prevention. Supported through a grant from the National Arts Council of Namibia (NACN), the project demonstrates how the arts can play an important role in addressing social challenges while strengthening community engagement. Over a two-week reporting period ending on 10 March 2026, the group conducted rehearsals and pilot activities aimed at raising awareness about malaria, its causes, and practical prevention measures. By combining storytelling, performance, and community interaction, the initiative delivers important health messages in a way that is engaging, accessible, and culturally relevant.

The NACN grant programme plays a critical role in supporting initiatives such as this one. Through its funding mechanisms, NACN invests in creative projects that contribute to the growth and sustainability of Namibia's arts sector while also creating meaningful impact in communities. The grants are structured to support artists and organisations across six key areas, namely Arts Development, Cultural Exchange and Mobility, Capacity Building and Professional Development, Cultural Heritage and Preservation, Research and Documentation, and Community Arts and Social Impact. By supporting projects that fall within these areas, NACN helps ensure that arts and culture continue to contribute to national development, education, and social awareness.

A key component of the Ten Minas project involved the development of three educational scripts focusing on different aspects of malaria awareness. The first script explains the importance of Indoor Residual Spraying (IRS) and how spraying inside homes helps reduce mosquito populations responsible for spreading malaria. The second script focuses on the causes of malaria, particularly its transmission through mosquito bites, while the third highlights prevention methods, encouraging communities to use insecticide-treated bed nets, maintain clean environments, support IRS programmes, and seek early treatment when symptoms arise.

To bring these messages to life, performers participated in several weeks of rehearsals, where actors refined their delivery, timing, and audience engagement techniques. These rehearsals not only strengthened the quality of the performance but also built the performers' capacity to communicate complex health messages in an accessible and entertaining way.

Malaria Awareness Through Performing Arts: Ten Minas Initiative...continued

The initiative also included a community pilot performance, which served as a test run for the programme. Community members attended the performance, actively engaged with the actors, asked questions, and shared feedback on the messages presented. The strong level of participation confirmed that theatre can be a highly effective tool for raising awareness and encouraging dialogue around public health issues.



During this initial phase, the project achieved several key milestones. The team successfully developed three targeted educational scripts and strengthened the performers' skills through regular rehearsals. The pilot performance demonstrated strong audience interest and participation, confirming the value of using the performing arts as a platform for community education. Most importantly, the project has laid a strong foundation for expanding the initiative to reach more communities.

Building on this momentum, Ten Minas plans to refine the scripts based on feedback received during the pilot performance to improve clarity and impact. The team will also collaborate with local health authorities to align the performances with broader malaria prevention campaigns. In addition, monitoring tools such as pre- and post-performance surveys will be developed to assess changes in community knowledge and attitudes toward malaria prevention. The next phase of the initiative will see the group embark on a community roadshow, bringing the performances directly to rural areas where malaria awareness remains crucial.

Scheduled performances will take place in several locations, including .

- *Maporeza (13 March 2026),
- *Kulisuka (14 March 2026),
- *Magongo (16 March 2026),
- *Katwitwi (17 March 2026),
- *Mpungu (18 March 2026)
- *Nankudu (19 March 2026)



Although still in its early stages, the project clearly illustrates how strategic investment in the arts can contribute to both cultural development and social wellbeing. Through the support of the NACN grant programme, Ten Minas is not only advancing the performing arts sector but also using creativity as a powerful tool to inform, educate, and empower communities in the ongoing fight against malaria.

Creating for the Future: Southern Africa's Festivals Drive Sustainable Development



Southern Africa's vibrant arts and cultural festivals showcase more than entertainment, they preserved heritage, strengthened communities, stimulated economies, and promoted sustainable practices. Despite facing challenges such as limited funding, environmental impact, and declining ticket sales, these festivals proved their importance in driving local development and sustainable growth.

On 19 February, UNESCO hosted a landmark webinar to present the findings of its regional study, *Creating for the Future: Harnessing Southern Africa's Arts and Cultural Festivals for Sustainable Development*. The study explored the cultural, social, economic, and environmental impact of festivals across the region and highlighted how they contribute to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).



Breakout Box – Festival Spotlight:

MTN Bushfire (Eswatini): Celebrated inclusive community engagement and eco-conscious practices.

Lake of Stars (Malawi): Showcased music, arts, and economic opportunities for local artists.

Maitisong Theatre Festival (Botswana): Highlighted performing arts and regional talent exchange.

Creating for the Future: Southern Africa’s Festivals Drive Sustainable Development...continued

The event brought together government officials, UN agencies, festival organizers, civil society representatives, artists, private sector partners, and media to explore how festivals can drive sustainable development.

The webinar featured a welcome by Elena Constantinou (UNESCO), a report presentation by Eduardo Saravia (Sound Diplomacy), and moderation by Salmi Shigwedha (Kasi Vibe Festival, Namibia), followed by reflections from festival representatives, including MTN Bushfire (Eswatini), Lake of Stars (Malawi), Maputo Fast Forward (Mozambique), Maitisong Theatre Festival (Botswana), and Mosi Day of Thunder Festival (Zambia). Participants discussed the festivals’ impact on culture, society, economy, and the environment, highlighting lessons in collaboration, sustainable management, and regional integration.



The session concluded with an interactive Q&A and calls to action, reinforcing how festivals serve as platforms for gender equality, social inclusion, and climate action advocacy, and reminding stakeholders that Southern African festivals are not only entertainment hubs but also key drivers of employment, cultural preservation, and sustainable development.

Festival Reflections:

- MTN Bushfire (Eswatini): Jiggs Thorne, House on Fire
- Lake of Stars (Malawi): Sharmila Elias-Taijala, DOPE Malawi
- Maputo Fast Forward (Mozambique): Elodie Finel
- Maitisong Theatre Festival (Botswana): Kgopiso Tibe
- Mosi Day of Thunder Festival (Zambia): Bessie Malilwe Chelemu, Ministry of Tourism

Grant Recipient Spotlight: Lahiah Musimani



The NACN, through its Grant Cycle 3, 2025 under the Multiple Discipline category, successfully supported a dynamic and impactful-arts workshop aimed at empowering communities through creative skills development. Hosted over a 12-day period, the workshop brought together community members, youth, and learners to explore practical art forms including tie-dye (batik), printmaking, and mural painting.

The workshop was successfully implemented despite time constraints and logistical challenges. Participation levels met expectations, with attendees drawn from both the community and local educational institutions. The initiative created a vibrant learning environment where participants were introduced to new artistic techniques while also gaining insights into the creative economy.

Participants demonstrated strong commitment throughout the programme, producing a variety of artworks and actively engaging in all activities. The workshop not only met its artistic objectives but also fostered confidence, collaboration, and entrepreneurial thinking among attendees.

Hosted at the Ombili Community Centre and supported by a local school, the workshop aimed to:

- Introduce participants to tie-dye, mural painting, and printmaking
- Promote arts entrepreneurship and self-employment opportunities
- Empower youth and women with practical, income-generating skills
- Raise awareness of the arts as a tool for cultural preservation and communication

The programme targeted a small group of participants as a pilot initiative, allowing for focused engagement and hands-on learning. Interestingly, many participants were later identified as university students, which added an additional layer of engagement and curiosity to the sessions.

Programme Activities

Tie-Dye (Batik) Training

Facilitated by Lahiah Musimani, participants were introduced to the fundamentals of tie-dye. They experimented with a range of patterns including spiral, diagonal, and rainbow designs. Each participant received fabric and t-shirts, which they dyed using hands-on techniques such as folding, binding, and colour mixing. The process also included fabric preparation, dye application, and curing methods, ensuring a comprehensive understanding of the craft.

Printmaking

Under the guidance of Mr. Edward George, participants explored stencil-based printmaking. They learned how to design, cut, and transfer patterns onto stencils before printing onto fabric. Equipped with basic tools such as cutter knives, rulers, and pencils, participants developed technical skills and produced high-quality printed textiles.

Mural Painting

Facilitated by Mr. Lazarus Makuti, the mural component focused on public art and community expression. After consultations with school management, the school hall was selected as the mural site due to its visibility. Participants prepared the wall, transferred designs using projection and stencilling techniques, and collaboratively painted a large-scale mural. This activity not only enhanced artistic skills but also fostered teamwork and community pride.



Grant Recipient Spotlight: Lahiah Musimani....continued

“This workshop gave us skills we can use to generate income and build our future.”



“The mural gave us a sense of pride—it is something the whole community can see and appreciate.”



Participation and Impact

The workshop attracted a diverse group of participants, including:

- Community members
- Youth
- Women
- Learners

Participants expressed strong appreciation for the skills acquired, noting that the training provided practical opportunities for income generation. Several attendees indicated their intention to begin producing and selling handmade products at local markets.

Socially, the workshop strengthened community cohesion and inspired a greater appreciation for the arts. Economically, it introduced viable pathways for self-employment and small business development.

While the workshop achieved its objectives, several challenges were encountered:

- Delays in funding disbursement resulted in a shortened implementation period
- Limited access to materials due to public holidays and supplier restrictions
- Poor wall conditions affected mural quality
- Weather conditions impacted participant health and productivity

Despite these challenges, facilitators adapted effectively, ensuring that all core components of the workshop were delivered.

This workshop stands as a strong example of how NACN funding continues to transform lives through the arts. By equipping individuals with practical skills and fostering creative expression, the programme contributes meaningfully to community development and economic empowerment. Importantly, it highlights the role of the arts in promoting self-reliance, reducing dependency, and unlocking new opportunities, particularly for youth and women.



Culture as a Public Good

NAVIGATING ITS ROLE IN POLICY DEBATES

ifacca.org

IFACCA Releases 2024 Extended Report on Culture as a Public Good

The International Federation of Arts Councils and Culture Agencies (IFACCA) has released its 2024 Extended Report titled *Culture as a Public Good: Navigating its Role in Policy Debates*, as part of its Sustainable Futures series. The publication brings together perspectives from eight international experts, including Dwinita Larasati, Matina Magkou, Sonia Montecino, Maru Mormina, Farai Mpfunya, Pablo Raphael, Tarisi Vunidilo, and Stephen Wainwright, who reflect on how culture functions as a public good in different global contexts.

The concept of culture as a public good gained renewed international attention following the UNESCO World Conference on Cultural Policies and Sustainable Development – MONDIACULT 2022, which emphasized culture as a key driver of sustainable development and called for its recognition as a global public good within the United Nations agenda beyond 2030. In May 2024, culture was also acknowledged in the revised draft of the Pact for the Future, further strengthening its role within global policy discussions.

The report arrives at a critical moment as several international milestones approach, including the United Nations Summit of the Future in September 2024, the 10th World Summit on Arts and Culture to be hosted by IFACCA and Arts Council Korea in Seoul in May 2025, and the MONDIACULT 2025 conference, which took place in Barcelona in September 2025.

Through diverse regional perspectives, the report highlights the complex and evolving nature of culture as a public good. Rather than proposing a single definition, it encourages continued dialogue and reflection on how cultural policies, governance frameworks, and public investment can support culture as a shared and socially valuable resource.

The publication also presents several recommendations, including recognising culture in both its symbolic and sectoral forms, protecting culture as an irreducibly social good, avoiding the commodification of culture beyond purely economic frameworks, addressing systemic inequalities, and ensuring that cultural policy development remains inclusive, practical, and responsive to diverse communities. The report contributes to ongoing global discussions on how culture can be better integrated into sustainable development agendas and public policy frameworks.

https://ifacca.org/media/filer_public/5e/41/5e416ea9-47c5-4d3e-959e-074d624da3bb/ifacca_-_culture_as_a_public_good_report_-_july_2024_-_english.pdf

Congratulations to Ms Isabel Katjavivi on Her Selection to the IFACCA–Globus Fellowship 2026 Cohort



We are proud to congratulate Ms Isabel Katjavivi, Deputy Director: Arts Promotion and Creative Industry Development, on her selection as a Fellow in the prestigious International Federation of Arts Councils and Culture Agencies (IFACCA)–Globus Fellowship 2026 cohort.

Developed and delivered in partnership with the Nordic Culture Fund, the IFACCA–Globus Fellowship is a tailored hybrid learning and exchange programme designed for mid-career and senior representatives of IFACCA National Member institutions across Africa, Asia, the Caribbean, Latin America, and the Pacific. The programme provides a dynamic platform for global dialogue, knowledge exchange, and leadership development in cultural policy and creative industry advancement.

From the African region, the 2026 cohort includes distinguished representatives from Botswana, Eswatini, Namibia, Tanzania, Togo, and Zimbabwe. Ms Katjavivi's inclusion in this global fellowship reflects not only her professional excellence and dedication to arts promotion, but also Namibia's growing presence and leadership within the international cultural policy landscape.

We extend our sincere appreciation to our colleagues at the Nordic Culture Fund for their generous support and partnership in making this initiative possible.

We look forward to following Ms Katjavivi's fellowship journey and will continue to share updates on the cohort's activities and engagements throughout the year.

Once again, congratulations on this remarkable achievement.

What is the IFCD?

The main instrument for international cooperation and assistance of the 2005 Convention



The International Fund for Cultural Diversity (IFCD) is a multi-donor fund established under Article 18 of the 2005 Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions. Its purpose is to promote sustainable development and poverty reduction in developing countries that are Parties to the 2005 Convention.

It does this through support to projects that aim to foster the emergence of a dynamic cultural sector, primarily through activities facilitating the introduction and/or elaboration of policies and strategies that protect and promote the diversity of cultural expressions as well as the reinforcement of institutional infrastructures supporting viable cultural industries. The IFCD promotes South-South and North-South-South cooperation, while contributing to achieving concrete and sustainable results as well as structural impacts, where appropriate, in the cultural field.

The IFCD invests in projects that foster the emergence of dynamic cultural and creative sectors in the Global South

The IFCD is one of the few United Nations funds that supports arts and cultural bodies, government institutions and non-governmental organizations in the Global South to develop stronger cultural and creative industries (CCIs) in their countries. It funds innovative projects across the globe within the fields of cinema, performing arts, visual arts, and media arts, as well as design, music, and publishing. By working together, we are building lasting change so that everyone can express and enjoy diverse cultural expressions. We invest in people who might otherwise not have the chance to upgrade their skills and networks. We also invest in developing and implementing policies that are based on evidence and are inclusive. The goal is to support communities to build thriving cultural and creative industries.

Since the IFCD was launched in 2010 as part of the UNESCO 2005 Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions, we have invested more than US\$ 12.6 million in 164 projects across 76 developing States.

Cultural Diversity at the Heart of Global Creative Development

The work of the Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions, adopted under the framework of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, seeks to protect and promote the richness of cultural expressions across the world. At its core, the convention affirms that cultural creativity belongs to all humanity. Beyond economic value, cultural diversity strengthens social cohesion, identity, and shared understanding among communities. Member states are encouraged to maintain openness to global cultural exchange while safeguarding their right to design cultural policies that support local creativity.

The convention recognises cultural goods and services as more than commercial products; they are carriers of meaning, values, and identity. It establishes a global framework for cultural cooperation, creating opportunities for cultures to interact, grow, and flourish in mutually beneficial ways.

Through the International Fund for Cultural Diversity, the convention also promotes sustainable development and poverty reduction by supporting creative sectors, particularly in countries where cultural goods and services face challenges in production, access, and dissemination.

Importantly, the convention emphasises the role of civil society, artists, and practitioners in advancing cultural diversity. It also underscores that cultural diversity can only thrive when fundamental human rights including freedom of expression, information, and communication are protected.

The intended beneficiaries are broad and inclusive, with special attention to women, indigenous peoples, minorities, and artists, especially those in developing countries.

By advancing international cooperation and solidarity, the convention continues to support a world where cultural expressions are freely shared, celebrated, and sustained for future generations.

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On this Independence Day, we honour the journey of freedom in Namibia and recognise the invaluable contribution of the creative and cultural sector to nation building.

The creative community continues to strengthen our national identity, preserve our heritage, and drive economic and social development through innovation and talent. As we celebrate independence, let us reaffirm our commitment to supporting artists, nurturing creativity, expanding opportunities, and growing a sustainable creative economy.

**May our creativity continue to shine as a symbol of freedom, unity, and progress.
Happy Independence Day!**

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