



NATIONAL ARTS COUNCIL
OF NAMIBIA

ARTS PULSE

April 2026

Newsletter - Issue 5

VOICE OF THE ADMINISTRATOR



Dear Creative Community,

Welcome to the 5th edition of the National Arts Council of Namibia newsletter. This edition marks an important milestone as we acknowledge the appointment of the new National Arts Council of Namibia (NACN) Council for the 2026–2029 term. The newly appointed Council brings together diverse expertise and leadership that will help guide the continued growth, professionalisation, and sustainability of the cultural and creative industries.

As reflected throughout this edition, the creative sector continues to create meaningful impact through literature, theatre, international partnerships, and cultural policy development. These stories remind us of the important role arts and culture play in promoting innovation, youth empowerment, economic growth, and national identity.

We thank all artists, practitioners, stakeholders, and partners for their continued contribution towards strengthening the creative ecosystem and hope you enjoy this edition.

Gretta Gaspar
NACN Administrator

IN THIS EDITION

This edition highlights key developments shaping Namibia's cultural and creative industries. We explore the upcoming Forum on Green Industrialisation and the opportunities it presents for the creative sector through innovation, sustainability, local value addition, and investment. The newsletter also announces the appointment of the new National Arts Council of Namibia (NACN) Council for the 2026–2029 term and reflects on the Council's continued role in supporting artists, cultural practitioners, and the broader creative economy.

Readers can also learn more about NACN's work through our "Did You Know?" section, showcasing funding, capacity building, regional outreach, partnerships, and efforts to strengthen transparency within the sector.

This edition further celebrates Namibian creativity through the launch of Hilma Weber's children's book *Adventure Namibia Vol. 2: From the Desert to Etosha*, while highlighting the successful End of the Month theatre production in Tsumeb, which demonstrated the impact of NACN funding on youth empowerment, skills development, and community engagement.

Internationally, we feature the Creative Industry Institute Africa's benchmarking visit to Bazaar Berlin, where lessons were drawn for strengthening Namibia's participation in global creative markets and developing a future Namibian Pavilion. We also reflect on developments within global cultural policy networks, including a farewell note from IFACCA Chair Kajsa Ravin and the appointment of Avril Joffe as IFACCA–Globus Fellowship Lead.

Lastly, this edition introduces the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) and explores how intellectual property systems and WIPO programmes can support Namibia's cultural and creative industries through stronger protection, monetisation, market access, and professionalisation of creative work.

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



CALL FOR PROPOSALS

Deadline:
29 May 2026

Grants for Creative & Artistic Practitioners

AFRICA-EUROPE PARTNERSHIPS FOR CULTURE

SOUTHERN AFRICA

Implemented by



LIVE NOW: Grants for Artists and Creatives

This grant invites artists and creatives to engage with heritage narratives from six Southern African countries, reimagining them through a contemporary creative lens. Selected participants will receive a €6,000 grant and take part in a six-month Heritage Narrative process phase, culminating in three coproduced creative works.

Who can apply:

Artists, creatives and artistic practitioners from the six Southern African countries: Botswana, Eswatini, Lesotho, Namibia, South Africa and Zimbabwe

For more information: www.goethe.de/aepc - Apply via Goethe Application portal

Application deadline: 29 May 2026



Funded by
the European Union

Implemented by:



GREEN INDUSTRIALISATION AND THE FUTURE OF NAMIBIA'S CREATIVE ECONOMY

The upcoming Forum on Green Industrialisation presents an important opportunity for Namibia to strengthen economic growth through innovation, sustainability, and local value addition. The Forum will focus on green industrialisation, including sustainable raw materials value chains, renewable hydrogen, agribusiness, automotive manufacturing, and the vibrant cultural and creative industries (CCI), all aimed at fostering an environment ripe for investment and economic development.

The inclusion of the cultural and creative industries within this strategic conversation signals growing recognition of the sector's economic contribution and potential. Namibia's creative sector continues to play a significant role in employment creation, entrepreneurship, tourism promotion, cultural preservation, and youth empowerment. By positioning the CCI sector alongside other key industries, the Forum creates new pathways for creatives to participate in national development and industrial growth.

The creative industries stand to benefit in several ways from this focus on green industrialisation. Increased investment opportunities could support the growth of local fashion, craft, design, film, music, and digital creative enterprises. Sustainable production practices and ethical sourcing can also strengthen the competitiveness of Namibian products in international markets where environmentally conscious and fair-trade products are increasingly in demand.

In addition, the emphasis on local value addition aligns strongly with the creative sector's objectives of transforming raw cultural talent, indigenous knowledge, and locally sourced materials into marketable products and experiences. This creates opportunities for creatives to collaborate across sectors such as tourism, manufacturing, technology, and trade.

The Forum further provides an opportunity to advocate for stronger infrastructure, improved market access, innovation support, and policy development for the creative industries. As Namibia continues to position itself as an emerging creative and investment destination, collaboration between government, industry stakeholders, development partners, and creatives themselves will be essential. For the creative and cultural industries, this is more than an economic discussion, it is an opportunity to shape a sustainable future where creativity, culture, and innovation contribute meaningfully to national development, job creation, and global competitiveness.

GOVERNMENT APPOINTS NEW NATIONAL ARTS COUNCIL OF NAMIBIA (2026–2029)

The Ministry of Education, Innovation, Youth, Sports, Arts and Culture has announced the appointment of a new Council for the National Arts Council of Namibia (NACN) for a three-year term, effective from 1 March 2026 to 28 February 2029.

Established through the National Arts Fund Act No. 1 of 2005, the NACN serves as Namibia’s statutory body responsible for promoting, supporting and developing the arts sector. The Council administers the National Arts Fund and supports programmes and initiatives that contribute to the growth and sustainability of the cultural and creative industries.



The newly appointed Council brings together professionals with expertise in finance, governance, communications, cultural development, performing arts and public sector administration. Their collective experience is expected to strengthen the strategic direction of the Council and further support the advancement and professionalisation of the creative sector.

The NACN continues to play an important role in supporting artists and cultural practitioners, promoting access to arts and culture across the country, preserving Namibia’s cultural heritage, and strengthening the creative industries as contributors to economic growth, innovation and employment.

The newly appointed Main Members are:

- Ms Dangos Naomi Jimmy
- Mr Lot Ndamanhomata
- Mr John Kasinda
- Ms Lizette Ferris
- Mr Mbumba Erastus Haitengela
- Ms Isabel Katjavivi
- Mr Josef Kondjeni Ihemba

Alternate Members include:

- Mr Titus Kanyanda
- Ms Esmeralda Katjikuru
- Mr Simon Mushaandja
- Mr Lukas Katamba
- Ms M’kariko Amagulu

Cabinet has further encouraged Government institutions to work closely with the NACN to maximise support for the creative industries, particularly in empowering youth, entrepreneurs and small and medium enterprises within the cultural sector. The Ministry expressed confidence that the new Council will contribute meaningfully towards advancing Namibia’s cultural landscape and positioning the creative sector as a key driver of social development, cultural identity and economic growth.

Guess what?

Every grant awarded by NACN is an investment in Namibia's cultural and creative economy.

1. Our Legal Foundation

Did you know that the National Arts Council of Namibia (NACN) was established through the National Arts Council Act (Act No. 1 of 2005) to support and promote the arts sector in Namibia?

2. Funding the Creative Sector

Did you know that NACN funding is distributed through different cycles each financial year, supporting projects across diverse creative disciplines such as music, theatre, visual arts, and literature?

3. Beyond Funding: Capacity Building

Did you know that NACN not only provides financial support but also focuses on capacity building for artists, training in entrepreneurship and project management?

4. Reaching All Regions

Did you know that regional outreach is a key priority for NACN, ensuring that artists from all 14 regions of Namibia have access to funding and development opportunities?

5. Connecting Namibia to the World

Did you know that NACN plays a role in fostering international cultural exchange by supporting Namibian artists to participate in festivals, residencies, and markets abroad?

6. Strengthening Partnerships

Did you know that NACN works closely with stakeholders such as government ministries, international partners, and creative hubs to strengthen the creative ecosystem?

7. Arts for Community Impact

Did you know that funded projects are required to contribute to community development by promoting cultural expression, social cohesion, and youth empowerment?

8. Improving Systems and Transparency

Did you know that NACN is currently reviewing and strengthening regulations to improve transparency, accessibility, and impact in the distribution of arts funding?

LAUNCH OF ADVENTURE NAMIBIA VOL. 2: FROM THE DESERT TO ETOSHA

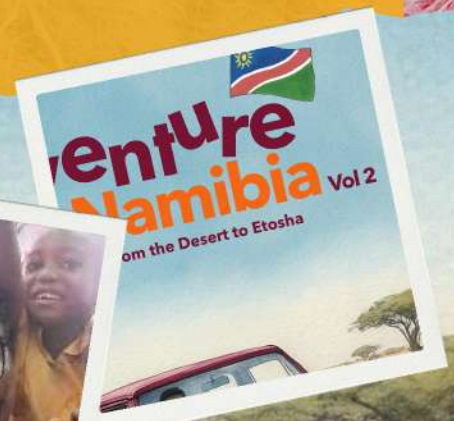
Namibian children's author Hilma Weber is set to launch her latest children's book, *Adventure Namibia Vol. 2: From the Desert to Etosha*, continuing a heartfelt journey that celebrates Namibia through the eyes of young explorers.

Hilma Weber was a recipient of funding support from the National Arts Council of Namibia (NACN) under Cycle 3 for Literature in 2025. This support has contributed to her ongoing efforts to develop meaningful, locally relevant children's literature that encourages reading while celebrating Namibian identity and storytelling.

The new volume follows the adventures of Fina and Peter as they travel across some of Namibia's most iconic destinations, including the Namib Desert, Sossusvlei, Swakopmund, Walvis Bay, Damaraland, Twyfelfontein and Etosha National Park. Through the story, children are invited to discover Namibia's landscapes, wildlife, geography and cultural heritage in a fun and engaging way. Hilma's work continues to place emphasis on early literacy and age-appropriate storytelling that reflects the experiences, identity and richness of Namibia and the African continent.

The launch of *Adventure Namibia Vol. 2: From the Desert to Etosha* marks another important contribution towards strengthening Namibian children's literature and creating stories that resonate with young readers both locally and internationally.

The book launch will take place on 27 May 2026 at The Village from 15h30 to 17h00.





End of the Month Theatre Production Brings Laughter, Skills, and Opportunity to Tsumeb

The vibrant town of Tsumeb came alive at the end of January 2026 with the successful staging of End of the Month, a professional comedy theatre production written and directed by Peter Linyondi (ShephART) and implemented by Tsum Arts Collective. Funded under the National Arts Council of Namibia (NACN) Cycle 3 (2025/2026), the project stands as a compelling example of how targeted arts funding can empower communities, nurture talent, and stimulate local creative economies.

At its core, the production set out to entertain, educate, and engage the community through relatable storytelling rooted in everyday socio-economic realities. Delivered through comedy, the performance struck a balance between humour and reflection, encouraging audiences to connect with shared experiences while appreciating the value of live theatre.



The project brought together a dynamic team of 11 core production members and actively engaged 25 youth participants, providing them with hands-on experience in acting, stage management, and production coordination. Beyond the stage, the initiative also contributed to the local economy by contracting six local vendors and creating paid creative employment opportunities an important step in strengthening arts entrepreneurship at grassroots level.

Despite the modest audience turnout of 30 to 40 attendees, the production achieved significant impact in terms of capacity building and institutional growth. Notably, the project helped to strengthen internal systems within Tsum Arts, positioning the collective for more structured and sustainable operations in future.

Tsum Arts Collective, a community-based performing arts organisation, continues to play an important role in shaping the cultural landscape of Tsumeb. With a mission to use comedy theatre as a tool for both entertainment and social reflection, the collective is steadily building a platform for local creatives. Its vision to establish End of the Month as a recurring theatre platform and eventually expand into a fully-fledged performing arts movement, speaks to the long-term ambition of fostering a thriving creative ecosystem in the region.



The rationale behind the project is deeply rooted in the realities of Tsumeb, where access to consistent live theatre remains limited and opportunities for creatives are often scarce. By creating a structured production process from rehearsals to performance the initiative provided much-needed exposure and professional development for emerging artists. It also laid the groundwork for a potential Tsumeb Youth Theatre & Arts Festival, signalling exciting possibilities for the future.

Implementation of the project followed a well-structured approach. Pre-production activities included script adaptation, casting, and detailed planning. Rehearsals were conducted over a period of nearly three weeks, from 10 to 27 January 2026, at UN Park and the Tsumeb Guest House Theatre, with participants committing to daily sessions. The team completed 15 structured rehearsals, achieving an impressive attendance rate of over 80%, reflecting strong commitment and enthusiasm among participants.

Marketing and audience mobilisation efforts leveraged digital platforms such as Facebook, WhatsApp, Instagram, and TikTok. Through posters, behind-the-scenes content, and community outreach to schools and stakeholders, the project generated local interest and visibility. Technical production elements including stage, lighting, sound, costumes, and props were carefully coordinated to ensure a professional-quality performance. The final production, staged at the Tsumeb Guest House Theatre, was followed by a post-performance evaluation to capture lessons and insights for future improvement.

Overall, End of the Month aligns strongly with NACN's mandate to promote, develop, and preserve arts and culture in Namibia. More than just a theatre production, the project represents a meaningful investment in people, skills, and creative expression, demonstrating how the arts can serve as both a mirror to society and a catalyst for opportunity.



HAPPY

WORKER'S DAY. 1 MAY 2026



CIIA Benchmarks International Best Practices at Bazaar Berlin

The Creative Industry Institute Africa (CIIA), with support from the National Arts Council of Namibia through the Mobility Fund, undertook a benchmarking and capacity-building visit to Bazaar Berlin, one of Europe's leading cultural and trade fairs. The international event hosts over 500 exhibitors from 58 countries and attracts more than 35,000 visitors annually, making it a significant platform for creative entrepreneurs, fair-trade products, and cultural exchange.



Namibia was officially invited to participate in this year's Bazaar Berlin as part of the 25th anniversary celebrations of the Berlin–Windhoek Twin Cities partnership. The invitation created an exciting opportunity to showcase Namibian craft, fashion, art, and fair-trade products on an international stage. However, due to the late timing of the invitation and the extensive planning and logistics required for meaningful participation, CIIA opted to conduct a strategic benchmarking visit instead, with the aim of laying a strong foundation for a full Namibian national pavilion in 2026.



The delegation consisted of Ms. Olivia Heinonen, Development Manager at CIIA and coordinator of the Sister Cities in Action Berlin–Windhoek Tandem Project, and Ms. Shareen Thude, General Manager of the Craft Centre, who brings extensive experience in the arts, craft, and tourism sectors.

The visit focused on understanding how African countries such as Ghana, Kenya, and South Africa successfully present and market their creative products internationally. The delegation examined pavilion design, branding, product selection, pricing strategies, logistics, and marketing approaches to identify lessons that could benefit Namibian creatives and entrepreneurs.

CIIA Benchmarks International Best Practices at Bazaar Berlin...continued

One of the key highlights was the Ghana Pavilion, coordinated by the Ghana Export Promotion Authority. The pavilion brought together multiple exhibitors under a unified national brand, showcasing fashion, jewellery, crafts, skincare products, and food items. The model demonstrated how coordinated government support and strategic planning can help creatives gain visibility, generate income, and build sustainable participation in international markets.

The delegation also met with Namibia's newly appointed Ambassador to Germany, Hon. Jerobeam Shaanika, who expressed strong support for strengthening international partnerships within the creative sector. Discussions highlighted the growing potential of Namibian craft, art, and fashion products in European markets, particularly in Germany.

Additional engagements were held with representatives from the Berlin State Office for Development Cooperation, the Senate Department for Economic Affairs, Energy and Public Enterprises, and partners involved in the Berlin–Windhoek Sister Cities in Action project. Stakeholders emphasized that participation in Bazaar Berlin could significantly strengthen the cultural and economic relationship between Berlin and Windhoek while elevating Namibia's creative industries internationally.



The delegation also participated in an International Fair Trade Practices panel discussion, where conversations focused on the challenges faced by Namibian creatives in obtaining formal fair-trade certification due to accessibility barriers and strict international requirements. The discussions further highlighted the need for Namibia to develop a more structured fair-trade framework for local creatives and producers.

Observations from the Bazaar revealed significant opportunities for Namibia, particularly as participation from Southern African countries remains limited. Products such as craft, fashion, beauty products, art, and certified organic goods have strong market potential within the European Business-to-Consumer (B2C) environment.

Looking ahead, Bazaar Berlin 2026 has already been confirmed for 4–8 November 2026, with country pavilion confirmations due by the end of May 2026. To prepare for this opportunity, CIIA plans to work closely with stakeholders including the Ministry of Education, Innovation, Youth, Sport, Arts and Culture, the Directorate of Arts, the National Arts Council of Namibia, the Namibia Investment Promotion and Development Board, the Craft Centre, Turipamwe, the Namibia Tourism Board, Fly Namibia, and Brand Namibia.

With focused planning, strategic partnerships, and coordinated support, the envisioned Namibian Pavilion at Bazaar Berlin 2026 has the potential to unlock greater access for Namibian creatives to both European B2C and B2B markets, while positioning Namibia as a competitive and culturally rich creative destination on the global stage.

A farewell note of gratitude from Kajsa Ravin, Chair of IFACCA



Image: IFACCA Board in Barcelona (as at September 2025) for MONDIACULT 2025 including (L-R): Rafael Ivorra Zaragoza (Ministry of Culture, Spain); Iain Munro (Creative Scotland); Julie Diphofa (National Arts Council of South Africa); Humberto López La Bella (National Secretary of Culture, Paraguay); Kajsa Ravin (Swedish Arts Council); Magdalena Moreno Mujica (IFACCA); Adrian Collette AM (Creative Australia); Nguyen Phuong Hoa (Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism, Viet Nam) and Emile Kairua (Ministry of Cultural Development, Cook Islands). Photo credit: IFACCA.

Kajsa Ravin reflects on her six years as Director General of the Swedish Arts Council and Chair of IFACCA, highlighting a period marked by global challenges such as the COVID-19 pandemic, geopolitical tensions, and pressures on the cultural sector. Despite these difficulties, IFACCA played a vital role in fostering international dialogue, collaboration, and action to safeguard artistic freedom and cultural rights. She recalls key milestones, including IFACCA's engagement with UNESCO's Mondiacult and the successful hosting of the 9th World Summit in Stockholm (2023) and the 10th World Summit in Seoul. These gatherings emphasized the importance of artistic freedom, cultural rights, and global cooperation, while also addressing emerging issues such as the impact of AI on the arts. In her closing remarks, Ravin expresses gratitude to IFACCA's leadership and members, underscores the continued importance of their work in a world facing multiple crises, and encourages ongoing commitment to strengthening arts and culture globally as she steps down from her role.

"Thank you for letting me be part of the IFACCA family; it has truly been an honour."

Kajsa Ravin
Chair IFACCA



Image: IFACCA Members gather in Stockholm, Sweden in May 2023 for the 9th World Summit on Arts and Culture. Photo credit: Susanne Kronholm.



IFACCA-Globus Fellowship Lead



The National Arts Council of Namibia (NACN) notes with great interest the recent appointment of Ms Avril Joffe as the IFACCA–Globus Fellowship Lead. This important development within the global cultural policy landscape reflects a continued commitment to strengthening international collaboration, knowledge exchange, and capacity building in the cultural and creative industries.

Avril Joffe brings extensive expertise as an economic sociologist and independent researcher, with a long-standing focus on cultural policy, the cultural economy, and the role of the arts in development. Her work has significantly contributed to shaping discourse and practice in cultural governance, particularly within developing contexts.

She currently serves as a Visiting Researcher at the Wits School of Governance and holds the UNESCO Chair in Cultural Entrepreneurship and Policy at the University of the Witwatersrand in Johannesburg. In addition, she is actively engaged in several global platforms, including the EU/UNESCO Expert Facility Group for Cultural Policy and Governance, the Global Creative Economy Council, and the International Cultural Relations Research Alliance. She also contributes to the advisory panel of the Horizon Europe IN SITU programme, which focuses on place-based innovation in cultural and creative industries, particularly in non-urban areas.

The IFACCA–Globus Fellowship is designed to foster international dialogue, support peer learning, and strengthen policy leadership across regions. It provides a platform for cultural policymakers, researchers, and practitioners to engage with shared challenges and opportunities, particularly in advancing inclusive, sustainable, and context-responsive cultural ecosystems.

From the perspective of NACN, such initiatives are critical in advancing the objectives of cultural policy development, especially in regions like Africa where knowledge exchange and capacity building remain key to unlocking the full potential of the creative sector. The fellowship's emphasis on global collaboration and locally grounded solutions aligns with Namibia's own priorities in strengthening the cultural and creative industries.

NACN acknowledges this milestone and looks forward to the continued impact of the IFACCA–Globus Fellowship in shaping forward-looking cultural policies and fostering meaningful international partnerships.

What is the WIPO?

WIPO was created to promote and protect intellectual property (IP) across the world by cooperating with countries as well as international organizations



The World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) is the United Nations agency dedicated to supporting innovators and creators by ensuring that their ideas are protected and can move safely into the marketplace, ultimately contributing to improved lives globally.

WIPO delivers this mandate by offering services that help creators, innovators, and entrepreneurs protect and promote their intellectual property (IP) across borders. It also serves as an international forum for engaging with emerging and complex IP issues. In addition, WIPO provides reliable IP data and information that inform decision-making worldwide, while its impact-driven projects and technical assistance programmes are designed to ensure that the benefits of intellectual property are accessible to all, everywhere.

What do they do?

- Provides a global forum where Member States develop balanced intellectual property (IP) rules suited to a rapidly changing world.
- Delivers international services that help protect IP rights and resolve disputes across borders.
- Supports innovation ecosystems through smart digital tools that improve access to knowledge.
- Offers targeted assistance to help countries unlock the value of IP for economic growth and development.
- Supplies trusted, multilingual data and insights that inform decision-making, policy development, and progress.

How can the CCI benefit from WIPO programming?

The Cultural and Creative Industries (CCI) can draw significant value from the programmes and services of the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO), particularly in strengthening how creative work is protected, managed, and monetised. In practice, this translates into several key benefits:

Stronger protection of creative work

- Artists, designers, filmmakers, musicians, and writers can safeguard their creations through copyright, trademarks, and related rights, reducing piracy and misuse while maintaining ownership.

Improved income generation and monetisation

- WIPO programmes support creators in understanding how to license, sell, and commercialise their work, helping turn creativity into sustainable livelihoods.

Capacity building and skills development

- Through training, workshops, and technical assistance, creatives and institutions gain practical knowledge on intellectual property management, contracts, royalties, and rights negotiations.

Access to global markets

- By facilitating cross-border IP protection systems, WIPO enables creatives to distribute and promote their work internationally with greater confidence and legal backing.

Support for policy and institutional development

- Governments and cultural agencies can use WIPO expertise to strengthen national IP frameworks, ensuring they are responsive to the needs of the creative sector.

Dispute resolution mechanisms

- Creators and businesses can access international platforms to resolve IP-related conflicts more efficiently, without lengthy court processes.

Data and research for informed decision-making

- WIPO's databases and analytical tools provide insights into trends, markets, and IP usage, helping creatives, entrepreneurs, and policymakers make strategic decisions.

Promotion of innovation and collaboration

- By linking creators with global innovation ecosystems, WIPO encourages partnerships, co-productions, and new business models within the CCI.

For a country like Namibia, this kind of support aligns closely with ongoing efforts to professionalise the sector, strengthen intellectual property rights, and expand market access for local creatives, ensuring that cultural expression is not only preserved, but also economically empowered.

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