



NATIONAL ARTS COUNCIL
OF NAMIBIA

ARTS PULSE

MAY / JUNE

2026

Newsletter - Issue 6

VOICE OF THE NACN ADMINISTRATOR



Dear Creative Community,

In this edition for May and June, we take a moment not only to share updates, but to recognise the people, spaces, and efforts that continue to give meaning to Namibia's creative journey. From the classrooms where new talent is being shaped, to stages where heritage is honoured and celebrated, and to the policy and funding spaces that quietly sustain this work, this issue reflects the many hands and hearts that keep our sector moving forward.

As administrator, I continue to be reminded that behind every opportunity is a person, and behind every achievement is a collective effort. It is this shared commitment that strengthens our work at NACN and keeps us grounded in service to the creative community.

We hope this edition offers you a sense of connection to that broader story, and to the people who make it possible.

Yours sincerely,

Gretta Gaspar

IN THIS EDITION

Welcome to the 6th Edition of the National Arts Council of Namibia (NACN) Newsletter, covering the months of May and June 2026. As I reflect on this period, I am reminded of the steady growth and resilience of the creative sector, and the many individuals and institutions whose dedication continues to shape its future.

This edition carries stories that speak to both achievement and opportunity, from the graduation of 61 students from the Namibia University of Science and Technology's Department of Digital Arts and Animation, marking an important milestone in the development of the digital creative ecosystem, to the inspiring Reformation Cantata Concerto, which paid tribute to the remarkable legacy of Magdalena Kambudu and her lifelong contribution to church music and education.

We also look ahead with anticipation to CANEX WKND 2026, a continental platform that continues to open doors for collaboration, investment, and market access for African creatives, including those from Namibia. Alongside these highlights, we share updates on the NACN Grants and Mobility Funding Cycle for 2026/2027, reaffirming our ongoing commitment to supporting artists, strengthening cultural institutions, and expanding opportunities for creative practice and professional growth. It is always encouraging to witness how these efforts come together, how education, performance, heritage, and policy intersect to build a more vibrant and sustainable creative economy. I hope this edition offers not only information, but also inspiration as we continue this shared journey of nurturing Namibia's artistic voice, both at home and on the global stage.

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

NACN OPENS GRANTS AND MOBILITY CALL FOR FUNDING CYCLE 2 (2026/2027)

The National Arts Council of Namibia (NACN) is pleased to announce the opening of the Grants and Mobility Call for Funding Cycle 2 of the 2026/2027 financial year, reaffirming its commitment to investing in Namibia's vibrant creative and cultural sector.

Recognising that access to funding remains one of the greatest challenges facing artists and creative practitioners, the NACN continues to provide financial support that enables artists to create, innovate, collaborate, and contribute to the country's cultural and socio-economic development. Through its quarterly grant cycles, the Council seeks to empower artists and organisations to pursue projects that strengthen the creative industries while addressing national development priorities.

Applications are invited across a broad range of artistic disciplines and activities, including studio arts such as painting, sculpture, printmaking, and drawing; participation in festivals, exhibitions, expos, and showcases; the presentation of fashion, theatre, dance, and music productions; talent development initiatives; participation in national events; and arts-specific research. The Mobility Grant also provides opportunities for professional exchanges and travel that contribute to artistic growth and collaboration.

To ensure that funded projects have meaningful social impact, applicants are encouraged to design projects that address at least four of the Council's six critical focus areas:

- Social protection and research;
- Unearthing and promoting marginalised and indigenous arts in rural communities;
- Addressing social challenges such as unemployment and gender-based violence;
- Supporting the participation and economic empowerment of women, youth, and persons with disabilities;
- Creating new artistic works through digital media and innovation; and
- Facilitating professional exchange through travel and mobility.

The NACN encourages artists, cultural practitioners, organisations, and creative entrepreneurs from across Namibia to take advantage of this funding opportunity and submit projects that demonstrate creativity, innovation, and a commitment to national development. Application forms are available from the National Arts Council of Namibia offices, through Arts Extension Officers in all regions, and can also be downloaded from the NACN website (www.artscouncilnam.org).

Applicants are reminded of the following important requirements:

- Online submissions will not be accepted.
- All application forms must be signed before submission.
- The submission of an application does not guarantee funding or the full amount requested.

The closing date for applications is Friday, 3 July 2026, at 16h00. Late applications will not be considered. The National Arts Council of Namibia remains committed to supporting artists and fostering an inclusive, resilient, and sustainable creative sector that reflects the diversity and richness of Namibia's cultural landscape.

NUST CELEBRATES 61 DIGITAL ARTS GRADUATES: A MILESTONE FOR NAMIBIA'S CREATIVE FUTURE



The National Arts Council of Namibia (NACN) is delighted to share in celebrating a remarkable milestone in Namibia's creative and digital arts landscape. The Namibia University of Science and Technology (NUST) recently hosted a vibrant graduation ceremony for 61 students from its Department of Digital Arts and Animation, an important achievement for the country's first dedicated academic department in digital arts, animation, filmmaking, and creative storytelling. The ceremony reflected the spirit of creativity and innovation that continues to define Namibia's emerging digital economy. It was brought to life through inspiring poetry performances, musical interludes, and heartfelt recognition of outstanding student achievement. Top performers from various short courses across the 2025 and 2026 cohorts were honoured with trophies, celebrating excellence, discipline, and artistic growth. Speaking on behalf of the Acting Vice-Chancellor, Prof. Andrew Niikondo, Ms. Miriam Dikua, Deputy Vice-Chancellor for Finance and Operations, delivered a powerful message that resonated deeply with graduates and guests alike:

"Namibia has never lacked talent. What we needed were opportunities."



Her words captured the essence of the day, a celebration of what becomes possible when talent meets opportunity, and when institutions, industry, and public partners invest meaningfully in creative development.

The ceremony also highlighted the importance of collaboration between academia, industry, and the creative sector. Certificates were presented by representatives of organisations that have invested in nurturing these emerging creatives through student sponsorships and industry partnerships. Among the distinguished guests were Ms. Florence Haifene, Deputy Director of the Namibia Film Commission, Mr. Roger Gertze, Country CEO of MultiChoice Namibia, and Ms. Gretta Gaspar, Funds Administrator of the National Arts Council of Namibia. Their presence underscored the shared commitment to building a strong, sustainable creative ecosystem in Namibia.

For NACN, this milestone reaffirms the importance of continued investment in creative education, skills development, and pathways into the professional arts and cultural industries. Graduates from programmes such as Digital Arts and Animation represent the future of Namibia’s storytelling across film, animation, digital media, and beyond, helping to position the country as a growing hub of creative innovation on the continent.

As we celebrate this achievement, we also look ahead with excitement. Applications for Semester 2 have been extended, offering a new cohort of aspiring creatives the opportunity to follow in the footsteps of these graduates and begin their own journey in digital arts and animation.

Interested applicants are encouraged to apply before Friday, 17 July 2026:
Apply for Digital Arts and Animation – NUST

The National Arts Council of Namibia congratulates all graduates, applauds the dedication of lecturers and partners, and reaffirms its commitment to supporting platforms that transform creative talent into sustainable careers.



CREATIVES SPOTLIGHT

CANEX WKND 2026: Advancing Africa's Creative Economy and Expanding Global Opportunities



The National Arts Council of Namibia (NACN) is pleased to highlight the upcoming CANEX WKND 2026, set to take place in Lagos, Nigeria from 5–8 November 2026. Recognised as one of the most important gatherings for the creative and cultural industries on the continent, CANEX WKND continues to position itself as a leading platform for dialogue, investment, collaboration, and innovation across Africa's creative value chains.

Held under the inspiring theme “One People, United in Culture, Creating for the World,” this four-day event will bring together creatives, policymakers, investors, and industry leaders from across Africa and the global community. The programme is designed to deepen conversations while expanding business-to-business and business-to-government engagement opportunities, reflecting the growing recognition of the creative industries as a powerful driver of economic growth and cultural exchange.

At its core, CANEX WKND provides a unique platform for showcasing and exhibiting creative goods and services while facilitating meaningful partnerships and investment opportunities. It also serves as a space for exploring how Africa's creative and cultural industries (CCIs) can better integrate into global value chains, particularly through trade, intellectual property commercialisation, and export development.

The CCIs continue to demonstrate their importance as engines of innovation and economic transformation. Beyond their cultural significance, they generate income through the commercialisation of intellectual property rights, create new employment opportunities particularly for youth and small and medium-sized enterprises and contribute to higher-skilled, knowledge-based sectors of the economy. With the rapid expansion of digital technologies, streaming platforms, and online distribution channels, creative industries have increasingly become one of the most dynamic and disruptive sectors globally.



However, despite this growth, Africa's creative economy continues to face structural challenges. These include limited access to finance due to perceived risk, gaps in technical and production capacity, fragmented value chains, weak linkages to high-value markets, and regulatory environments that are not yet fully aligned to support sector growth. As a result, many creative practitioners remain within informal or underdeveloped systems, limiting their ability to scale and compete globally.



It is against this backdrop that the African Export-Import Bank (Afreximbank) established the Creative Africa Nexus (CANEX) programme. CANEX was designed to address these challenges and unlock the full potential of Africa's creative economy through targeted interventions in access to finance, capacity building, trade facilitation, market access, digital solutions, and policy advocacy.



The objectives of CANEX include, among others:

- Increasing Africa's share of global cultural trade through targeted trade and investment promotion
- Deploying specialised financial instruments to support the creative and cultural industries ecosystem
- Facilitating technical and export-oriented capacity-building programmes
- Expanding access to high-value markets through strategic partnerships
- Advocating for regulatory harmonisation, particularly in relation to intellectual property rights and industry standards

Importantly, CANEX WKND also recognises that the creative and cultural industries generate value far beyond economic returns. They contribute to social cohesion, identity formation, cultural exchange, and inclusive development, making them central to people-centred and sustainable development agendas. For Namibia's creative sector, platforms such as CANEX WKND present important opportunities to engage with continental peers, explore new markets, strengthen institutional partnerships, and position Namibian creatives within the broader African and global creative economy.

The National Arts Council of Namibia encourages stakeholders across the arts and culture sector to follow developments around CANEX WKND 2026 and to actively explore opportunities for participation and collaboration as Africa continues to shape the future of its creative industries on its own terms.

CELEBRATING A LIFETIME OF MUSICAL EXCELLENCE: REFORMATION CANTATA CONCERTO HONOURS MAGDALENA KAMBUDU

THE REFORMATION CANTATA PRESENTS

A CONCERTO IN HONOUR OF DIRECTOR CANTUS, DIRECTOR MUSICES

Magdalena Kambudu

Honouring a loyal and devoted music icon, Kambudu kaELOC

13 SEPTEMBER 2025

Conductor: Simon Steven Mushaandja
Accompaniment: Namibian National Symphony Orchestra
Venue: Bennies Entertainment Park, Ongwediva
Time: 14h30

TICKETS
Children and pensioners: N\$ 65
General tickets: N\$ 100
At the gate: N\$ 150

FOR TICKETS CONTACT
+264 81 390 3222, +264 81 243 8643
+264 81 277 2410
Online tickets available at:
<https://www.webtickets.com.na>

NATIONAL ARTS COUNCIL OF NAMIBIA
webtickets
NNISO
METROPOLITAN

The National Arts Council of Namibia (NACN) proudly celebrates the success of the Reformation Cantata Concerto, held on 13 September 2025 at the Hifikepunye Pohamba Campus Hall in Ongwediva. The event brought together musicians, church leaders, arts practitioners, students, and community members in a moving tribute to Namibia's rich sacred music tradition and to one of its most distinguished pioneers, Magdalena Kambudu.

The concerto honoured Kanttorri Urkuri (Cantor-organist), Director Cantus, Director Musices Magdalena Kambudu for her exceptional contribution to church music and music education in Namibia. Over several decades, Kambudu has dedicated her life to nurturing generations of church musicians, strengthening sacred music traditions, and enriching Namibia's cultural and spiritual landscape. Her passion, leadership, and unwavering commitment have left an enduring legacy that continues to inspire musicians across the country.



The evening featured a memorable performance by the Reformation Cantata Choir, accompanied by the Namibian National Symphony Orchestra under the direction of conductor Simon Mushaandja. Audiences were treated to a repertoire of sacred choral works and classical cantatas, showcasing the beauty and depth of sacred music.

One of the concert's most distinctive features was the presentation of classical repertoire translated into indigenous Namibian languages. This innovative approach not only made the music more accessible to local audiences but also celebrated Namibia's linguistic diversity, demonstrating how classical music can be meaningfully adapted to reflect the country's unique cultural identity.

The programme was further elevated by outstanding performances from acclaimed Namibian opera singers Eslon Hindundu and Galilei Njembo, alongside an appearance by Tomas Shivute. Their participation added depth and prestige to an already remarkable evening, captivating an audience of approximately 300 attendees comprising students, lecturers, musicians, choristers, church leaders, arts practitioners, and music enthusiasts from across northern Namibia.



A particularly heartfelt moment came when the Teimbiitezimbuka Choir, founded by Magdalena Kambudu herself, performed two of her original compositions. Their performance offered a touching tribute to her lifelong dedication to sacred and choral music while highlighting the profound influence she has had on Namibia's musical heritage.

The evening concluded with the presentation of a special award to Magdalena Kambudu in recognition of her lifelong service to music, education, and the church. Tributes from colleagues, church leaders, and members of the arts community reflected on her extraordinary leadership and the lasting impact she has made in preserving and advancing sacred music tradition.



Beyond celebrating one remarkable individual, the Reformation Cantata Concerto demonstrated the vital role that music plays in preserving cultural heritage, fostering artistic excellence, and strengthening national identity. The event served as a powerful reminder of the importance of investing in the arts and of creating platforms that honour those whose work continues to shape Namibia's cultural legacy for future generations.

The National Arts Council of Namibia is proud to have supported this important initiative through a grant of N\$50,000. This investment contributed significantly to the successful delivery of the concerto and reflects NACN's ongoing commitment to supporting projects that preserve Namibia's cultural heritage, promote artistic excellence, and create meaningful opportunities for audiences and artists alike.

As NACN continues to champion the growth of the arts sector, events such as the Reformation Cantata Concerto demonstrate the enduring power of music to inspire, unite communities, and celebrate the remarkable individuals whose contributions enrich our cultural identity.

FROM THE BANKS OF THE KAVANGO RIVER TO A THRIVING CREATIVE ENTERPRISE

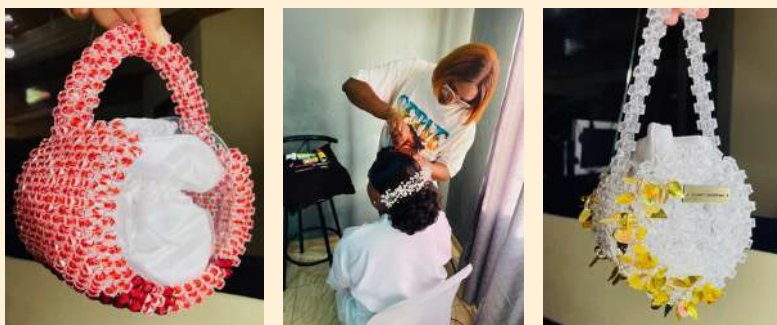


Elegence_beadsbyash

EMPOWERING CREATIVITY: FROM THE BANKS OF THE KAVANGO RIVER TO A THRIVING CREATIVE ENTERPRISE

The National Arts Council of Namibia (NACN) is proud to celebrate the achievements of its grant beneficiaries whose creativity, determination, and entrepreneurial spirit continue to strengthen Namibia's creative and cultural industries. One such inspiring story is that of lipinge Regina, Founder and Chief Executive Officer of Elegence_BeadsByAsh.

Born from the banks of the mighty Kavango River, Elegence_BeadsByAsh has grown into a proudly Namibian creative enterprise, producing handcrafted beaded handbags, jewellery, headbands, and bridal accessories that beautifully combine traditional craftsmanship with contemporary design. Today, the business serves clients across Kavango East, Kavango West, and throughout Namibia. As a beneficiary of the 2025–2026 National Arts Council of Namibia Grant Programme, lipinge's creative business received much-needed financial support that enabled her to overcome one of the biggest challenges facing many emerging artisans access to production materials. Limited funding had previously prevented her from purchasing beads and other essential materials in bulk, increasing production costs and limiting opportunities for growth and innovation.



Through the NACN grant, lipinge was able to procure quality materials in larger quantities, diversify her product range, and experiment with new bead designs that have elevated both the quality and appeal of her work. The funding also provided her with the opportunity to test new products in the market, strengthen her brand identity, and improve the sustainability of her business. Today, Elegence_BeadsByAsh is thriving. With readily available materials and an expanding collection of handcrafted products, the business is well-positioned to meet customer demand while continuing to celebrate Namibian creativity. The appointment of a brand ambassador has further increased the visibility of the brand, allowing lipinge's work to reach new audiences and inspire aspiring creatives within her community. Reflecting on her journey, lipinge describes resilience as the driving force behind her success. With the right support, determination, and a clear vision, she has transformed challenges into opportunities and continues to demonstrate the remarkable potential of Namibia's creative entrepreneurs.

Stories such as lipinge's illustrate the tangible impact of the National Arts Council of Namibia's investment in the arts. By providing financial support to artists and creative entrepreneurs, the Council contributes to enterprise development, job creation, cultural preservation, and the growth of a vibrant and sustainable creative economy.

The National Arts Council of Namibia remains committed to empowering artists across the country by creating opportunities that enable them to develop their talent, expand their businesses, and contribute meaningfully to the social and economic development. Every success story reinforces the Council's belief that when artists are empowered, communities flourish and the nation's cultural identity is strengthened.

IFACCA LAUNCHES REGIONAL CONSULTATIONS FOR THE 2027–2032 STRATEGY



Top images (L-R): Farai Mpfungya, Andrés Gribnicow and Yoonhyung Jeon. Bottom images (L-R): Toni Attard, Pavla Hivert and Letila Mitchell.

The International Federation of Arts Councils and Culture Agencies (IFACCA) has officially commenced the next phase of developing its 2027–2032 Strategy by appointing a team of distinguished regional consultants to lead consultations with National Members across Africa, the Americas, Asia, Europe, and the Pacific. The consultations form part of IFACCA's commitment to ensuring that its next strategic framework reflects the priorities, opportunities, and challenges facing arts councils and cultural agencies around the world. Members' contributions will play a vital role in shaping the organisation's future direction over the next five years.

Leading the consultations for the African region is Farai Mpfungya, a respected cultural leader with extensive experience in cultural governance, policy development, and creative sector advancement. Well known throughout the IFACCA network, Farai brings a deep understanding of the African cultural landscape and longstanding engagement with international cultural cooperation.

The regional consultation team also includes Andrés Gribnicow (Americas), Yoonhyung Jeon (Asia), Toni Attard and Pavla Hivert (Europe), and Letila Mitchell (Pacific). Collectively, they represent a wealth of expertise in cultural policy, international cooperation, creative industries, and strategic leadership. As a member of IFACCA, the National Arts Council of Namibia (NACN) welcomes this inclusive and collaborative approach to strategy development. The consultations provide an important platform for members to share their experiences, identify emerging priorities, and contribute to shaping a global agenda that responds to the evolving needs of the arts and culture sector.

Over the coming weeks, the IFACCA Secretariat will contact National Members to coordinate consultation meetings with their respective regional consultants. All feedback provided during the consultations will remain confidential and will inform the development of a draft strategy, which will later be circulated to members for further review and comment.

The NACN encourages active participation in this important process. By contributing to the consultations, members will help ensure that the voices and aspirations of the African creative and cultural sector are reflected in IFACCA's strategic vision for 2027–2032. Together, these contributions will strengthen international collaboration, support knowledge exchange, and reinforce the role of arts councils in advancing sustainable cultural development worldwide.

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