

AFRICAN KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE (AKE)

Creative Media Venture

POLICY FORUM RECOMMENDATIONS 2017





The focus of the African Knowledge Exchange (AKE), GESCI's Creative Digital Media project, is to support the digital up-skilling of creative and artistic youth to work and create work in the new and growing Digital Creative Media (DCM) industries.

AKE is an innovative, creative skills and start-up programme, which applies digital technologies to culturally-based content in the animation, mobile games, apps and music/sound production environments. The programme responds to the rapidly changing global job market and its demand for new skills. Employment environments are now mostly technology-driven, leading to higher outputs and greater economies of scale but with fewer workers being hired. Traditional jobs and services increasingly demand technology know-how. AKE focuses on local entrepreneurship as an empowering, and cost-effective solutions to systemic problems of youth unemployment.

While AKE concentrates on skills and enterprise development in the cultural industries, the researched implementation model is generic in form and applicable to any service industry.

The 2016-2017 final phase of the project called 'Creative Media Venture' focused on deepening

youth participant entrepreneurial skills towards development of start-ups for small business enterprises. A Living Lab (LL) research component which was conducted in parallel with the project implementation focused on the **implementation and modeling** of the creative-skills-entrepreneurial training.

On March 28th, 2017 GESCI-AKE convened a policy forum attended by participants from the Digital Creative Media industry, NGOs, Kenya's Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, Ministry of Culture, Art and Sports, Ministry of Public Affairs, Youth and Gender, national and regional entrepreneurs and the African Union. The Forum included demos and national, regional and international expert discussions.

At the heart of the forum's discourse was an intensive teamwork break-out session to discuss the **Living Lab '7 theses' research findings** on the AKE model implementation and their implications for skills development in formal and informal education and training provision.

Thesis 1: No one solution or context matters

Thesis 2: Entrepreneurship cannot be cloned

Thesis 3: Everything is Entrepreneurial

Thesis 4: Digital matters but so does physical space

Thesis 5: Find a Niche: Cultural competence matters for GESCI

Thesis 6: No success without collaboration

Thesis 7: Support should continue forever

The following recommendations present the participant policy ideas and recommendations for action in response to the 7+1 theses research findings.



Participants at the AKE Policy Forum in March, 2017

Theses 1&2: Context Matters & Flexible Education

General Recommendation

Develop **contextual, flexible approaches** for learning and skills development that respond to the growth and needs of young entrepreneurs.

New approaches for learning and skills development were made concrete by participant practical suggestions. The most tangible suggestion centred on the concept of **project-based, problem-based or opportunity-focused targets as the central focus** of learning environments.

Specific recommendations

Education and business sector stakeholders should collaborate so that the opportunities and problems in new model approaches can truly reflect reality

Public private partners should encourage a fundamental mindset change and advocacy for alternative educational-biz oriented models

Partners should engage in defining and providing ideological as well as financial support for new approaches of peer-to-peer learning, problem-solving, internships and mentorships

Theses 3&4: Digital and Physical Space and Entrepreneurship

General Recommendation

Develop the learning hub as an **agile space, that is continually transforming as a response to different entrepreneurial needs** of the student, members, industry, and technology changes.

Are capacity building and training spaces reflecting requirements related to what is happening in the industry? It is hard to imagine that any hub or organisation could independently be able to create agile and transforming spaces, so, again, the forum participants proposed **education and business curriculum and practice regulatory frameworks** oriented towards start-ups as key.

Specific Recommendations

Education and business stakeholders should consult and learn from policy, industry, research and practitioner chains to inform investment in ICT and new models and spaces for capacity building and training

Partners should focus on curriculum development that is geared towards and informed by the needs of the market – meaning that education provision includes entrepreneurship and life skills, interdisciplinary education, as well as access to digital tools that are informed by the needs of the market

These 5&6: Collaboration and Finding a Niche

General recommendation

Develop education for youth entrepreneurship models that include **collaboration, niche**



projects, and innovation oriented processes (including innovation ideas, prototyping, marketing, mentoring, partnerships etc.)

Collaboration is a science and an art form. Very few teams work creatively and smoothly without specific frameworks. The multi-stakeholder forum highlighted several forms of support to young entrepreneurs that they would find beneficial **for their company or industry**.

Specific Recommendations

Industry stakeholders should collaborate with young entrepreneurs to provide relevant and timely skills development opportunities via industry oriented internships and mentorships, case studies and sponsorships.

Education sector stakeholders should gear provision towards innovative practice and innovation skills development that are embedded in the innovation for profit niche

There is a need for education sector policy makers and providers to implement existing policies for 21st century skills development and to incentivise new policies towards innovative design in upscaling and disseminating working models of edu-buiz capacity building models (like the AKE model and its niche focus on Cultural and Creative Media industry).

Theses 7&8: Continuous Support, Employment & Job Creation

General recommendation

There is a requirement for leadership and vision for **system overhaul from 'once off training' to 'continuous support systems' for youth training and retraining outreach** via models and labs linked to industry sectors

The shift from "once-off-training" to continuous support systems for youth training and retraining outreach via models and labs linked to industry sectors needs leaders and leadership, in order to happen.

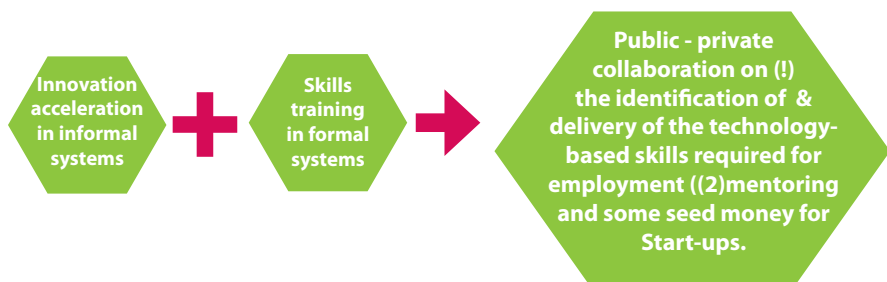
Specific Recommendations

Educators should integrate comprehensive skills training in formal systems and training accelerators in informal systems.

Providers should change the role of digital hubs to create conducive environments for entrepreneurship to thrive.

Educator and business partners should engage in creating an edu-biz training continuum to enable continuous support systems that are adaptable and responsive to the speed of market changes and skills needs.

One recommendation is a "**value chain**" of training, envisioned in the policy forum as follows:



About Digital and Cultural Media Industries

The cultural industries in Africa are on a growth path from a low base and the incorporation of digital technologies will provide increased opportunities for self-employment. The cultural and creative sector is one of the fastest growing in the world, driving the creative digital and knowledge economies. It generated a turnover of €950bn+ and contributed 2.6% to the overall level of European GDP, employing 6.5 million and is as competitive as other industry sectors for profitability and productivity. Africa's rich cultures and its expression in both traditional and digital media has the potential to be a world player in the cultural industries sector, nationally, continentally and internationally.

About the GESCI AKE Initiative

The early phase of this initiative focused on ICT-based skills on digital technologies to a standard that is commercially relevant using modern digital tools and software for productions in the creative media areas. The next phase of the project included practical entrepreneurial advice, guidance and mentoring from existing industries and experts and finally, followed by the establishment of start-ups which have marketable products or services to offer in the marketplace. The project is now in its final phase whereby the training studios have become "centres of practice" and have reached out to the industrial and commercial community to incorporate their advice and mentorship. The seven start-ups established are Artari Kreations ; Verb House Production Company; Boisch Enterprises; Ioniccode Software developers; Makossirri Entertainment; KIWO film start up and Tripple Touch Entertainment. **See Figure 1.**



What Participants said the AKE Experience and Policy Forum

"The forum has been a great place to share ideas and network and slow to come up with solutions for the problems plaguing industry"

"Such forums need to be embraced to instil discussion and ideology sharing"

"The concept of culture and digital technologies are extremely vital - it will continually lead to emerging jobs and new entrepreneurs. It should be promoted widely."

"X-perts from Local Government representatives from Education, ICT Ministry, should have interaction with industry from Entertainment and Film industry"

"Longer incubation period for the start-ups for the purpose of monitoring progress and also get mentorship and proper guidance"

"This is quite informative and dynamic interaction - especially in sharing of ideas"

"The question is not whether there are opportunities and funding - but how to ensure that young people take up"