

# *The 'Creative Village': a creative entrepreneurship framework for catalysing Africa's creative and cultural industries*

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## CHAPTER 10

# THE ‘CREATIVE VILLAGE’: A CREATIVE ENTREPRENEURSHIP FRAMEWORK FOR CATALYSING AFRICA’S CREATIVE AND CULTURAL INDUSTRIES

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### ABSTRACT

*This chapter explores a practical way of realising Africa’s creative and cultural industries (CCIs) potential as a new frontier for development. It answers the question of how can young African creatives be nurtured to build creative enterprises? Using insights from extant literature identifying some of the key contextual challenges, we developed and deployed a prototype innovative platform called the ‘Creative Village’ to address these challenges in a practical way at one of Africa’s biggest Music reality TV shows in Nigeria. A qualitative multistakeholder data collection approach called the Ecosystem Insights*

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*Approach (EIA) was adopted to explore these challenges and the appropriateness of the proposed Creative Village solution.*

*Findings identify some key constraints that creatives face such as weak structures and infrastructure, weak artist education, low levels of investment, and the underdevelopment of the music value chain. We conclude that the creative entrepreneurship framework called the 'Creative Village' and its key features is a viable way of jumpstarting and catalysing the already vibrant yet under-tapped CCI in Africa but this platform must be built on five philosophical pillars: An inclusive platform for individual talents regardless of their gender, location or disability to find expression; developing a holistic, professional creative entrepreneur who understands their craft and the business of their craft; creating a platform that allows for different dimensions of authenticity to thrive; a platform that unifies different players in the Nigeria music ecosystem through the right partnerships; a platform that enhances local markets and connects musicians to regional and international market.*

**Keywords:** Ecosystem; creative village; media; music enterprise; African entrepreneurship

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## INTRODUCTION

Despite an over-reliance on oil and other extractives, Africa's greatest advantage has always been its human capital. The median age in Africa's vast and increasing population will be nineteen by 2030 (World Economic Forum, 2016). This signals a robust youthful continent and suggests a massive talent pool of creative energy as the next frontier of the continent's development (MusicAlly, 2020a). The COVID-19 pandemic as well as other global geopolitical trends has accelerated this agenda. As the virus shock has made all sectors volatile, with declines in both oil and non-oil sector GDP in most parts of the continent, African states are forced to look to other revenue generating possibilities. Key sectors such as agriculture, technology, tourism and the creative industries (film, fashion and music) have underpinned a lot of sustainable recovery agendas for many African states (Africa Report, 2020).

What is clear is that Africa's creative industries have the potential to serve as profitable investment areas yet many African nations struggle to leverage the potential of the CCIs. As Lobato (2010) suggests, a recurring theme in the research of cultural industry in Africa and other developing regions is 'the understanding of how these countries can effectively leverage their cultural assets and integrate them into global economic networks, thus providing new sources of revenue, employment and growth' (p. 338). Consequently, the focus of relevant stakeholders is on the development of case studies and policy advice that can assist in realising this objective. Although the CCI literature in Africa has explored the key challenges and the business prospects of the sector especially in job creation

(e.g. Milićević et al., 2013; Snowball et al., 2017), very few have presented a practical case study addressing some of the well-known key concerns. It is within this gap that we intend to contribute to the literature.

This chapter therefore presents a case study to answer the question: How can young African creatives be nurtured to build the creative enterprises that will build Africa's economy? In answering this question, we sought to understand the most significant entrepreneurial challenges the African context poses to young creatives attempting to build sustainable careers in the industry as well as to explore viable ways of transforming them into creative entrepreneurs who understand their craft and the business of their craft.

## **THE POLICY CONTEXT OF AFRICA'S CREATIVE AND CULTURAL INDUSTRIES**

The African Union (AU) themed year 2021 is the year of the arts, culture and heritage in alignment with Aspiration 5 of the Agenda 2063 (DeGhetto et al., 2016; Ndizera & Muzee, 2018). Aspiration five states 'An Africa with a strong cultural identity, common heritage, shared values and ethics' (African Union, 2022). The goal of this aspiration according to the AU is to enable an African cultural renaissance 'inculcating the spirit of Pan Africanism; tapping Africa's rich heritage and culture to ensure that the creative arts are major contributors to Africa's growth and transformation; and restoring and preserving Africa's cultural heritage, including its languages' (African Union, 2022). The purpose of this declaration was to enable member states of the AU and Regional Economic Communities (RECs), working with key stakeholders in both the private and public sector, to collaboratively actualise policies and programmes towards establishing a more robust and sustainable creative industries sector (AU Echo, 2021). This is also meant to increase advocacy for the adoption of the Charter for African Cultural Renaissance (which to date has only been ratified by 14 of the 55 members states) and the Plan of Action on Cultural and Creative Industries in Africa which aims to build a thriving cultural ecosystem. AQ4

Besides this Pan-African policy, which is yet to be fully adopted by key member states, individual countries and some RECs also have their own cultural policies. For instance, Nigeria has had a cultural policy since 1988 (with almost the same objectives as the newer policies being enacted (Joshua & Omotoso, 2016). Yet, as Ndizera and Muzee (2018) argued although Agenda 2063 has been created with the right vision and the right approach (bottom-up), in its implementation it will encounter similar setbacks which have prevented previous long-term plans from being successful. According to them, these include 'limited finances, lack of ownership, lack of political will, diverse and sometimes conflicting interests, and lack of ideological backup to sustain the vision' (p. 142). Thus, unless adequate measures are put in place to overcome these challenges, Agenda 2063 may be added to the pile of numerous other planning documents which were never implemented or perhaps as young creatives on the continent interpret it – a tale of

many broken promises. This unfortunately has been the African story on policies. The implementation and sustenance of often well-written policies are the biggest hurdle the continent needs to overcome, and this is true for the development of CCIs as well.

## **CHALLENGES AND POTENTIAL OF AFRICAN COUNTRIES CCIS: REFLECTIONS ON NIGERIA**

The extant literature on CCIs in Africa has extensively discussed many of the key challenges and potential of the industry. Broad themes emerging from the literature that have focussed on key challenges of CCIs in Africa have identified issues around defining the scope of CCIs, policy challenges, ineffective value chains, uncoordinated stakeholder interventions in the industry and so on. Similarly focus on the potential of African CCIs have often been discussed around their capacity for innovation, wealth creation towards poverty reduction, job creation towards eradicating unemployment, instilling cultural values as well as keeping the African cultural identity intact (see Joshua & Omotoso, 2016; Lobato, 2010; Maiwada et al., 2012; Snowball et al., 2017 as prime examples).

The consensus of these different literature is that the contribution of Africa's CCI to the global market is very minimal. Despite this, Nigeria's Nollywood is globally acclaimed as the second largest film producer in the world, which releases well over 1000 titles a year without assistance from the government, NGOs or international film festivals (Lobato, 2010). Similarly, Nigeria is known as the 'The musical Heartbeat of Africa' best known for its distinctive Afrobeat sound, which combines jazz, traditional Ghanaian and Nigerian music to give a unique style (Rotinwa, 2020) with a combined ability of generating a forecasted US\$10.8 billion in 2023 in Nigeria's Entertainment and Media (E&M) market alone (PwC, 2020a). Similarly, in fashion, the desire for African fabrics has resulted in cross-over designs with major global designers now incorporating African print in their best-selling ranges.

Music export from Africa continues to generate conversations and growing interest across the world with the rise of the 'Afropop' genre and the most recent Grammy wins by young African talents, all of which have shown strong promise. Netflix's strong African content is a further testament to the potential the film sector has on the continent. The same can be said of African fashion that has remained increasingly popular and profitable on the global scene. In other words, Africa's creative and cultural industries (CCIs) have opened the continent to global opportunities through the impact of its music, film, and fashion. According to PwC's Entertainment & Media Outlook 2019–2023 report, total recorded music revenue in Nigeria was \$32m in 2019, or \$0.15 per head. That is far lower than the per-capita totals in China, Turkey and Russia; markets renowned for being unwilling to spend money on music (Nigeria's GDP per capita was just \$5,900 in 2017, less than a third that of China). At the same time, music income is on the increase, and PwC predict that Nigeria would be the world's fastest-growing

E&M market over the coming five years thanks to the boom in mobile internet consumption. Africa's music industry is set for sustained growth thanks to the adoption of streaming. Whilst recorded music continues to decline, music streaming revenue is estimated to increase by 40% over the next two years in Nigeria resulting in revenues of \$17.5 million by 2023 (MusicAlly, 2020b).

Yet, the literature on the challenges of the Nigerian music industry identifies why the market has not become the juggernaut it should be on paper. Yoel Kenan of Africori cites: 'a lack of education' in the African music industry, adding: 'we've got great new entrepreneurs, managers, labels and artists who don't always have the experience' (Gilbert, 2020). In other words, a lot of creatives in Africa know their craft but are vastly uneducated on the business of their craft and are therefore unable to build sustainable enterprises from their crafts. Besides this, there is also an underperforming publishing environment where copyright infringements are considered the order of the day (Gilbert, 2020). Building on the lack of copyright infrastructure, the International Confederation of Societies of Authors and Composers (CISAC, 2019) found that whilst Europe brings in more than half of music collections worldwide, Africa's contribution was 0.8%, in comparison to the Asia-Pacific (15.7%) and Latin American (5.4%) regions.

Monetisation is also a significant challenge with consumers often unwilling to pay for music, and many artists unwilling to charge for it. Film and music are largely financed through the informal economy (UNESCO, 2015) as the formal creative industry has long suffered from a lack of access to capital, due to traditional risk-averse banking and the inability to meet collateral requirements. PwC reports that digital infrastructure is poor and that whilst mobile internet access is available almost everywhere in Nigeria, quality and reliability vary enormously. Paul Okeugo (Chocolate City Group) says, 'There are also challenges around enabling payments from people who don't have credit cards and also piracy' (MusicAlly, 2020b). On a more practical level poor infrastructure (epileptic power supply, bad roads, limited rehearsal facilities and equipment rental companies) also pose significant challenges for music production as it increases the time and cost to create content (U.S. Department of Commerce, 2020).

As the African music business continues to grow, so does the need for disruptive innovation and new ways of doing things, and bypassing traditional infrastructures and adopting a 'pull' model as opposed to the usual 'push' approach. (Christenson & Ojomo, 2019). In advancing this agenda, despite many promises by governments in the form of policies, very little is being done to actualise this shift. The wide-scale reforms necessary across the areas of monetary policy, trade policy and the regulatory business environment have not been as progressive as expected. This has left Artists, music producers, record labels and other creative stakeholders with limited choice but to take it upon themselves to keep building what could one day be a multi-billion dollar CCI.

In summary, the extant literature reviewed identified some of the key challenges and potential of CCIs in Africa. We built an intervention around some of



these challenges as an empirical case study and as a contribution to the literature on how these challenges can be resolved in Africa. How we designed this intervention, collected and analysed data will be the focus of subsequent sections.

## METHODOLOGY

### *Our Solution*

The study set out to answer the question: How can young African creatives be nurtured to build the creative enterprises that will build Africa’s economy? In addressing our research question, we built our understanding of some of the key issues plaguing CCIs in Africa from the extant literature as discussed in the previous section. We categorised the challenges from the previous section into three: poor education, ineffective monetisation and weak value chains. Our proposition was that African creatives who will build the enterprises that will build Africa’s economy must be:

1. Creatives who understand the business of their craft.
2. Creatives who can build businesses with sustainable and scalable business models.
3. Creatives who are connected to the local, regional and global ecosystem for improved market access and value chain enhancement.

Our proposed solution to these needs is called the *Creative Village*’ – an innovative virtual platform designed and deployed to systematise talent discovery, education and market linkage processes. The *Creative Village* concept embeds talent discovery + education + incubation + acceleration + market connection platform.

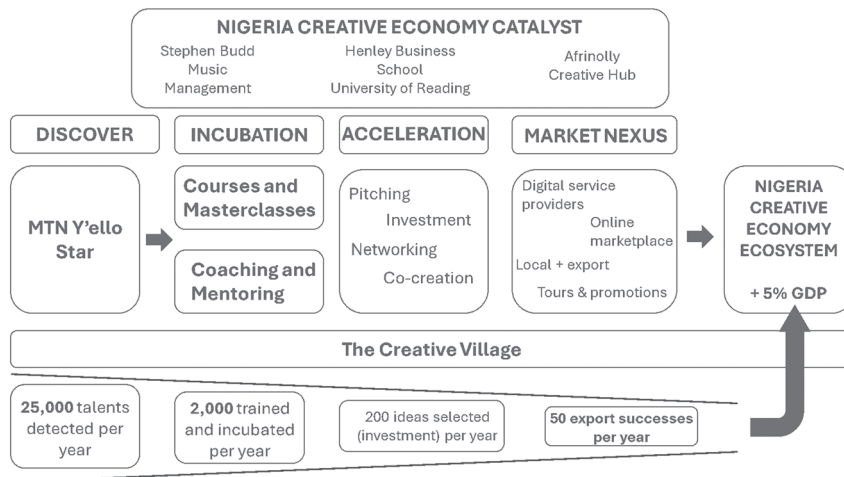


Fig. 10.1. A Diagrammatic Representation of the ‘Creative Village.’

Source: Authors’ own.

### Research Design

To test the *Creative Village*, a prototype platform was built and fully deployed for one of Nigeria's biggest music reality TV shows – MTN Yello Star music talent competition. MTN Yello Star Music Reality Show is a new MTN Nigeria project that encapsulates a music reality show and youth empowerment initiative. It was launched in 2020 and the first edition was successfully concluded on 13 December 2020. The project was designed to search for, discover, nurture, expose and launch music talents (youths) in Nigeria. Discovered talents were assembled in an incubation hub where their skills and talents are honed through masterclasses, coaching, mentoring and practical sessions by renowned lecturers, and distinguished music artists. Through the technical partner, Afrinolly Creative Hub, MTN Yello Star have partnerships with Henley Business School UK for Creative Entrepreneurship, Berklee College of Music USA for Music Training and Music Business; and Yusef Malik (six times Grammy Award winner) for mentorship.

This competition therefore provided the perfect project to deploy and test our prototype of the *Creative Village* platform and to infuse other key features of the concept especially the incubation (e.g. music and business education) and some elements of acceleration (e.g. mentoring with industry experts) and market linkage (e.g. exposure to being heard by leading producers and record label owners) into the music reality TV show.

The components of the digital platform prototype include:

- Call-To-Entry (including database and content management system).
- Online Audition (no expenses for physical auditions).
- Online Certified Masterclasses from Henley UK and Berklee Music College USA.
- Online engagement with Industry Experts for mentoring and Peer-to-Peer Forum.
- Content Provision (performance shows and lifestyle contents).

As the prototyping was going on, real-time data collection was happening simultaneously.

We adopted a multistakeholder research (Winn & Keller, 2001) approach we called 'Ecosystem Insights Approach' (EIA) to conduct user feedback and market feasibility of the *Creative Village* concept. The EIA investigates the feasibility of the proposed innovation by keeping the intended end-user at its core (to gain a deeper understanding of their pains and needs) whilst gathering insights from other stakeholders within the music industry ecosystem to understand how the needs of the end-users align or misalign with gaps in the industry. The blend of these two perspectives helped our evaluation of the idea of the *Creative Village* and its feasibility as a catalyst for Nigeria's creative economy and by extension Africa. The rationale for this approach is that the Nigerian music industry landscape is so complex that seeing the challenge through the lens of the end-users alone is not sufficient in ensuring the intended broader impact of our proposed innovation. This further helps us engage in quality data triangulation.

### *Data Collection and Analysis*

We collected data from two major sources:

1. **End-User Focus Groups:** Focus Groups are group discussions organised to explore a specific set of issues such as people's views and experiences of something (Colucci, 2007; Kitzinger, 1994). By asking a series of questions and allowing participants to engage in rich discussions around these questions, we captured qualitative data from fourteen end-users who were also the highly talented contestants in the MTN Yello Star music competition auditioned and selected through the *Creative Village* platform prototype. Open-ended questions were asked and insights collated around core needs and challenges as young creative talents in Nigeria, expectations for the future, and overall experience with key features of the Creative Village platform (Auditioning, masterclasses, mentoring, etc). This enabled us to capture powerful personal stories of the real challenges young creatives face was crucial at this phase of our engagement with the end-users.
2. **In-depth stakeholder interviews:** In-depth stakeholder interviews were designed to gather insights into the state of the Nigerian music industry especially the key challenges, gaps and opportunities for improving the industry. Seven key industry stakeholders were identified and interviewed who together share decades of experience doing business in the Nigerian music scene and have a track record of working with young creative talents from Nigeria. These stakeholders spanned key aspects of the Nigerian music industry value chain. To ensure the excessive local biases are checked, two UK-based stakeholders with vested pan African interests and one US-based Nigerian artiste, songwriter and instrumentalist were also interviewed to bring some balance to the opinions of Nigeria-based stakeholders. These stakeholders were agents, record label owners, producers, talent managers, music lawyers, marketers, and experienced musicians.

Data was analysed using Thematic Analysis (TA) (Joffe, 2012). TA 'is a method for systematically identifying, organising, and offering insight into patterns of meaning (themes) across a data set' (Braun & Clarke 2012, p. 57). We followed a six stages process for the data analysis. We started by familiarising ourselves with the data, generated initial codes, searched for themes, reviewed potential themes, and finally named the themes (Clarke et al., 2015).

## FINDINGS

The key themes emerging from the data are presented in two sections. First, we present a detailed description of the key CCI challenges from the perspectives of both the young creatives and the industry stakeholders. The submissions confirmed the challenges found in the literature but provided a more practical analysis of these issues. Secondly, key themes arising from the experiences of the end users of the creative village platform were presented in the form of key principles

that could make platforms like the Creative Village become the types of solutions that will nurture the creative entrepreneurs that will build the businesses that will build Africa.

*Challenges of African CCIs*

A summary of key themes and codes emerging from the data is presented in Fig. 10.2. Three key themes emerging under the broad umbrella of challenges include: Weak infrastructure, Underdeveloped value chain as well as Artiste and consumer education.

*Weak Structures and Infrastructure*

A first submission on a critical note was the weak structures that has typified the Nigerian and African creative industry. The essential structures that allow for the generation of appropriate economic activities from creative talents are largely missing and where present inadequate to support the large talent pool. The stakeholders and artists argued some of these key elements would include inadequate

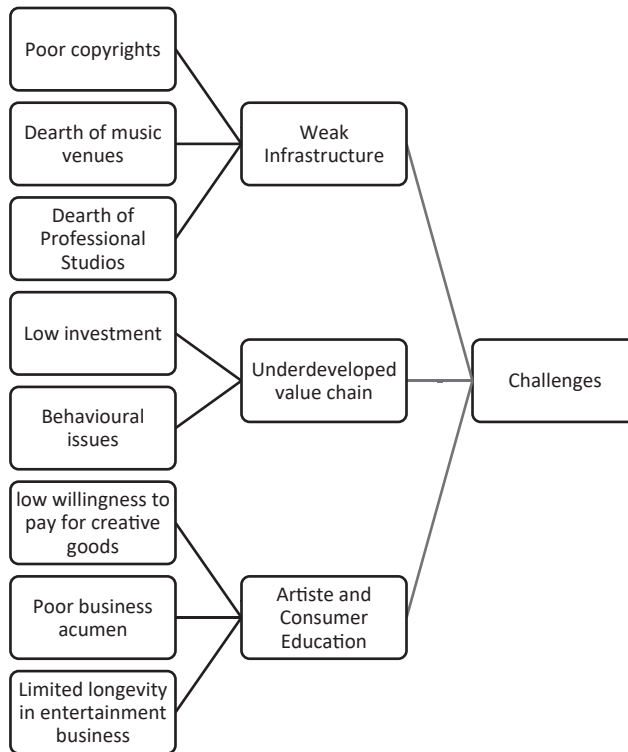


Fig. 10.2. Key Themes on Challenges of CCIs. Source: Authors' own.

infrastructure, insufficient legal protection and copyright management and low levels of investment overall. The infrastructure challenge included a shortage of music venues, professional studios and others such as operationalising local and foreign touring. The inadequacy of these basic infrastructure implies the quality of output is often affected and is linked to the limited chances of attaining commercial success.

As one of the industry stakeholders said

What is the level of our infrastructure? So, we are actually in a pretty terrible state, if we want to be sincere with ourselves. 99% of the studios that exist are, owned studios. Even the record labels don't have professional studios. So, it brings the question of the quality of the output. – Participant 1

Likewise, there have been significant ongoing challenges with establishing effective royalty management systems and legal structures that can guarantee copyright infringements are adequately compensated. It is not the availability of the right laws that is the issue but their enforcement and length of time in following through on court cases. With the royalty collection and management system, the organisations involved have faced significant internal and external crises that have crippled their activities thereby hindering a major potential revenue stream for local artistes within the country.

#### *Artiste and Consumer Education*

Education was identified as a deficient yet significant need in the industry. The education theme that emerged from the stakeholder interview had two strands. Music education for artistes and consumer education. There is a dearth of 'hard' and 'soft' music education for artistes including technical music skills such as vocal training, instruments training, and the music business education component which is also almost non-existent in a structured format. Without these, a lot of talented but musically uneducated talents are emerging resulting in significant long-term issues. Examples of musicians being duped by their managers because they had very little understanding of their business models and revenue streams or the prevalent issue of signing contracts that put artistes at a disadvantage were some of the consequences of weak music education systems.

Education in the sense that it's going to cover all the many lackings that the industry currently has now – the education and musicianship education and sound engineering, education and all the all the valuable skills that we've lost ... just for people to be informed. – Participant 2

On the other hand also is the need to educate consumers out of seeing creative talent and their outputs as items to consume freely. This is a significant issue as the willingness to pay for creative products by the masses is quite low and has also fed into the culture of piracy. The strong sense of entitlement by consumers to free creative output is almost cultural yet incorrect. A shift in consumer behaviour and attitude towards appreciating the creative talent of artistes enough to pay for their creativity can therefore only be achieved through deliberate education. This implies helping consumers understand that what it means to be a true fan includes willingness of pay for artistes' products and investing in their craft

through proper patronage. This trend was also identified as being responsible for stifling creativity amongst artistes such that there is a widespread belief that only certain types of music sung in certain ways sell in certain circles.

#### *Underdevelopment of the Music Industry Value Chain*

The underdevelopment of the entire music industry's value chain is another critical factor. In the Nigerian music industry today, there are misconceptions about the role of each point of the value chain. Most artistes are one-man, one-stop shops that try to do everything or keep their activities tightly controlled within a close circle. For example, it is difficult to make a living being a song writer hence most song writers end up wanting to perform their own songs but may not necessarily be good singers.

You cannot speak of an industry that does not cater for the value chain. So, you can have a few successful artists, I mean a handful ... maybe ten. Ten people can never make an industry, so I wouldn't say we don't have an industry I will say we have weak structures ... it is difficult, very difficult to be successful or to have a sustainable career. – Participant 3

Likewise, artistes who utilise song writers think it weakens their credibility as creatives because their songs are not self-written or self-composed. Also, the fact that the revenue structure within the industry relies a lot on shows means those who are meant to be specialists along the value chain vie to be the visible person on the microphone so that they can attract the gigs that will make them money. This has been further compounded by the poor royalty collection systems/infrastructure within the industry which limits earning potential. Hence, existing financial institutions do not consider artistes as investable due to the wider industry constraints that limit the ability of artistes to build sustainable business models in support of their ventures.

#### *The Creative Village Experience*

Data from the focus group interview on the experience of the artists on the *Creative Village* platform (see Fig. 10.3) and its key features generated the following key themes as elements that are necessary for young creatives to build sustainable creative ventures: Inclusion, Authenticity, Education, Access and Connectivity.

#### *Inclusion*

The notion of inclusion was divided into gender, location and disability. The industry may not be as inclusive for women as it could be and is skewed in favour of male artistes. Closing the gender gap through dedicated investment in female acts underpinned this submission. Similarly, having any chance of success is often associated with being in certain major cities thereby excluding talents from other parts of the country in as much as people living with disabilities, yet talented have often found it difficult travelling to major competitions for auditions. The Creative Village enabled more participants from diverse locations in Nigeria, women and people living with disability to get involved. This was linked to the social challenges

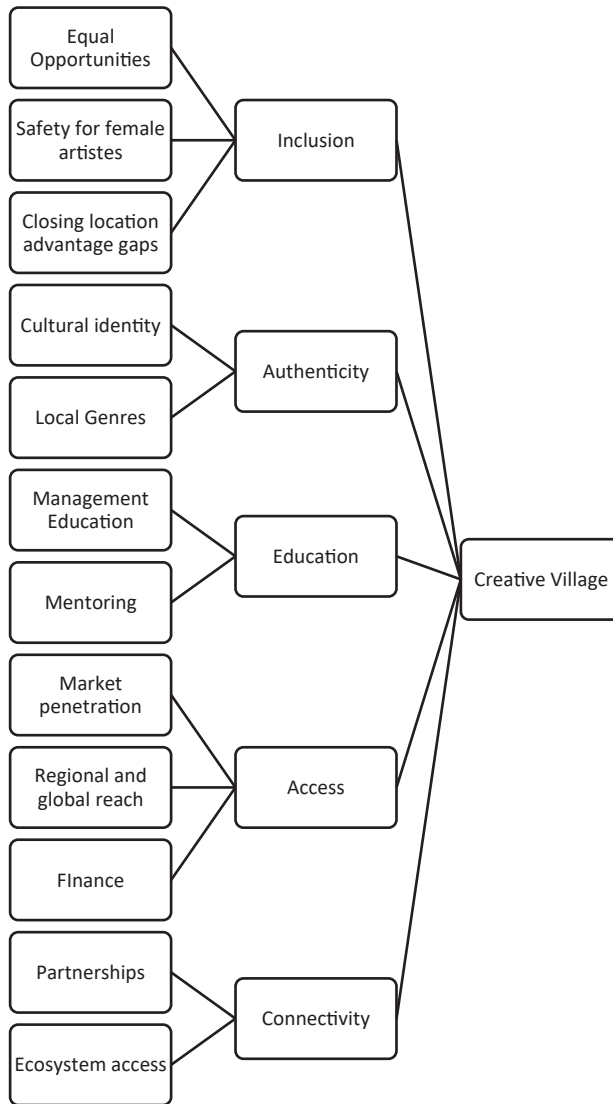


Fig. 10.3. Key Themes on the 'Creative Village' Experience. Source: Authors' own.

female artistes face with accessing industry opportunities, especially the objectifying of female talents and associated sexual exploitation tendencies raises the palpable fear of not being treated at par with male acts for their talents.

So I would try my best to put more women in the industry, so that the ones that are there don't have to try and kill themselves to remain there. – Participant 4

Likewise, the challenge of talent discovery underpinned the latter point which prompted the recommendation for investment in adequate discovery platforms similar to the *Creative Village*. The overreliance on music talent hunt competitions is not sustainable and the reference made to the adequacy of discovery platforms suggests some sort of systematisation of talent discovery processes beyond talent competitions.

### *Authenticity*

A second theme emerging from the Creative Village experience was the concept of authenticity. Participants felt that the platform enabled them to remain true to their artistic and cultural identity which is essential to global success. As some of the participants argued, in a market where 'Americanisation' sells, having local music genres and encouraging young creatives to be true to their craft was a key advantage since the true essence of CCIs is in their authenticity which gives each culture its uniqueness and value. As one of the participants alluded:

Our local music genres have a lot of value and being able to infuse them into the work we do is a part of the creative freedom this kind of platform provides. – Participant 5

### *Education*

A third theme was education. Upon seeing the impact of the masterclasses delivered jointly by Henley Business School (covering the business of music) and Berklee College of Music (focussing on technical music skills), the young creatives felt the limited access to music and music business education is a significant hurdle. They acknowledged that as the Nigerian music landscape is already competitive, running on talent alone can be limiting and the place of skill and a better understanding of how the industry works limits how opportunities are spotted, evaluated and harnessed. As some of the participants suggested:

Being a part of the Henley Business School Masterclass has been a paradigm shift for me and has activated a lot in me. It has shown me how to understand the structures of the industry by showing me opportunities in the industry – Participant 6

I've learned not to leave my music to chance. I have to be deliberate with my music and should treat my music like any other product as it deserves to be pushed to the market. I've also learned from Henley how to push my music thank you. – Participant 7

Remarkably, education was also associated with improving the overall quality of artistry which in turn improves attractiveness to investors willing to invest in talent development structures as well as in individual artists. This notion begins to position each artist as a kind of 'start-up' that can attract investment to start, stabilise and scale their craft.

### *Access*

Artistes and young creatives have the key challenges they collectively agree to face: Access to platforms and the right opportunities as well as access to funding. The transition of aspiring artistes into commercially viable acts is usually hindered by limited access to finance. The deployment of finance according to



the end-users is more towards marketing and promotion on relevant platforms and not necessarily with production costs which though could be challenging is mitigated by the abundance of low-cost producers in the industry. This for the end-users was also linked with increasing chances of discovery by the right stakeholders if their talents are on display at a well-known, purpose-built venue to which access is easier.

Like create a platform where musicians that are not well known, can actually come back, put their best foot forward. Over time, they actually start making big bucks. – Participant 7

I will first start with a platform like Freedom Park of Bagobiri. So it's a platform where artists have opportunities for gigs and networking, performance and also developing our theatre arts. – Participant 8

This factor was interpreted on one hand as finding the right platform to connect meaningfully with other acts, and key players in the value chain including record labels. The *Creative Village* provided a weekly platform through the competition for these young creatives to produce music and to get connected to local, regional and global markets thereby improving access which hitherto may have been out of reach.

### *Connectivity*

The connectivity to a wider ecosystem was also mentioned as a key element the *Creative Village* enabled. With the proliferation of upcoming artists pushing content on social media, building a strong marketing strategy backed by the wider ecosystem was identified as crucial. Participants argue that the importance of being a part of an ecosystem is that it could foster the right kinds of partnerships that can become win-win for all parties involved. Also, the issue of isolation artistes face, where they create content alone, market alone and doing everything like a one-man shop could be mitigated by enabling connection to the ecosystem. As one of the participants suggested:

I know popular artiste who deployed N30million (£45,000) towards the production and marketing of a single track. That money did not come from him alone and he is not on a record label. He leveraged partnerships within the ecosystem to produce that track. – Participant 9

### *Contributions*

Indications from the two data points suggested there are obvious systemic issues within the Nigerian and indeed African CCIs, yet the potential of CCIs to become a major contributor to the national GDP of African countries is quite evident and promising. What seems clear, especially in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic and the virtual delivery of the pilot programmes shows the African market is ready for this innovation and the youth whose lifestyle revolves around content consumption on the internet are willing and ready to seize opportunities that are presented to them. The key components of the *Creative Village* as shown earlier in Fig. 10.1 indeed meet the key gaps in the market and has the potential to transform young creatives into creative entrepreneurs building sustainable businesses that will build Africa.

This practical case study of the *Creative Village* as a purpose-built platform, deployed and studied for its impact is a major contribution to the literature on African CCIs as it offers practical and empirically backed solutions to the key challenges many prior studies have found. This advances policy beyond words into clear actions with measurable impact which can be scaled for further sustainable impact. Another key contribution is that this study has drawn its insights from multiple stakeholders placing the young creatives at the centre of the agenda. This methodological approach to understanding African CCIs is crucial for policy formation and implementation and allows for breaking the silos amongst ecosystem players.

## CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this study suggests that the availability of the right platform that is inclusive and systematises talent discovery, incubation, acceleration and connection to the market is an important first step in harnessing the potential of African CCIs. The *Creative Village* presents a quick win in that, it will immediately provide the much-needed opportunities to teeming aspiring creatives to get their discovery and professional development journeys started at low cost. This approach provides a much-needed head start in getting these creatives ready for the ongoing revolutions within the industry for the regional and global opportunities that are emerging and will soon place a demand on their talents. What data has indicated quite clearly is that the *Creative Village* platform and indeed any intervention introduced at this stage of the African creative industry development must be built on at least five philosophical pillars:

- An inclusive platform for individual talents regardless of their gender, location or disability to find expression.
- Developing a holistic, professional creative entrepreneur who understands their craft and the business of their craft.
- Creating a platform that allows for different dimensions of authenticity to thrive for example, cultural authenticity that will revive local music genres.
- A platform that has unifies different players in the Africa creative ecosystem through the right partnerships.
- A platform that enhances local markets and connects musicians to regional and international markets.

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