

no
business



as usual

interesting

"We need more of these opportunities where there's no bias, whether it's gender, race or the number of years you've been in the industry."

Carey Nyambura Kung' u,
Artist and Painter

What is needed to enable sustainable success for female entrepreneurs in Kenya's creative economy? A harsh truth has been revealed in a study commissioned by the Cultural and Creative Industries project which is run by the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) in cooperation with the Goethe-Institut.

In Kenya and beyond, creatives crave essential knowledge for promoting sustainable business growth. Notably, female entrepreneurs encounter distinctive obstacles when seeking access to business resources and support within the creative economy.

Business Skills Training for Creatives: In response to this pressing challenge, the [HEVA Fund](#), in partnership with the [Cultural and Creative Industries project](#), has developed a 12-week training programme that is tailored to address these issues. This programme is designed to tackle the obstacles encountered by female entrepreneurs in Kenya by furnishing them with bespoke backing that empowers them to realise their utmost potential as resourceful business owners.

The Creative Industries Business Skills training programme excelled in its methodical approach to meet the precise requirements of creative entrepreneurs. It covered an extensive range of topics vital for successful operation within the creative industry such as acquiring comprehensive knowledge about operating a creative business, maximising digital integration, researching financing possibilities, practising financial management, and developing practical marketing and branding strategies. Training content specified to Kenya covered business registration and the protection of intellectual property.

Gender-responsive Training Setup

Recognising the gender disparity within the cultural and creative industries, HEVA Fund and GIZ have made strides to bridge the gap. To ensure equal opportunities for all, the application process was thoughtfully designed to promote inclusivity and diversity. Research has shown that social barriers and age limitations act as a deterrent for women applying for training. Consequently, to combat this issue, the HEVA Fund has removed age limitations for female applicants and established an all-female training group.

This led to a broader range of applications from female candidates. Additionally, the women-only training offered a secure environment for personal and professional development.

Online Training and Scholarships

Given the demands of juggling multiple responsibilities, the training was delivered through online platforms. The versatility and convenience of this medium proved particularly beneficial for female entrepreneurs, who often face additional domestic and caregiving responsibilities. To support the participating talents, the Goethe-Institut provided financial aid in the form of scholarships. This enabled the continuation of business operations during the COVID-19 pandemic and provided creatives with the opportunity to dedicate time to the training programme while mitigating the risk of income loss.

A Collaborative Approach for Lasting Impact

The Creative Industries Business Skills training programme resulted from a cooperative undertaking between various key partners. The HEVA Fund, which is focused on providing financing and knowledge support for Africa's creative industries, spearheaded the development of the curriculum and implementation of the training with support from GIZ. The Goethe-Institut had a crucial role in selecting participants and awarding scholarships to guarantee a diverse and skilled group could profit from the programme. Additionally, three experienced instructors contributed to the training's efficacy, thanks to the Kenya Industrial Estates, known for its competence in providing support and business incubation services to small and medium-sized businesses.

From Nairobi, Kampala, Kigali, Arusha, Lamu to Dar es Salaam, the HEVA Fund has been actively involved in generating insights, rolling out investments and innovating financial models to facilitate the growth of the creative economy in East Africa since 2013.

Their investments have benefited over 100 creative businesses and projects, while more than 8,000 practitioners in fashion, digital media, television, live music, and gaming have received direct support.

women



training

In the world of creative entrepreneurship, a relentless pursuit of knowledge, progress, and practical expertise is apparent. With this in mind, we present this interview with Sylvia Omina, the founder of the sustainable jewellery brand, Omina Otsieno, to gain insight into her personal quest for proficiency and understanding.



Sylvia Omina, founder of the sustainable jewellery brand *Omina Otsieno*

Omina

Sylvia, what was your experience with the HEVA Fund Business Skills Training?

Participating in the HEVA Fund Business Skills Training was an enriching experience for me. The programme provided a comprehensive and structured curriculum that catered specifically to my needs. The modules, particularly Understanding Creative Entrepreneurship and Knowing Where my Money Is, were instrumental in shaping my approach towards running a sustainable creative business.

What impact did the training have on you personally and on your business?

Personally, the training instilled in me a newfound confidence and a deeper understanding of the business aspects of the creative industry. It helped me clarify complex financial concepts and provided practical tools to manage my finances effectively.

As for my business, I observed higher growth in terms of revenue as compared to other years and a more streamlined operational structure. The training empowered me to make informed decisions that positively influenced my business path.

Are there specific skills or competencies that you were able to improve?

One of the most impactful skills I acquired was financial literacy. Before the training, I found it challenging to navigate financial statements and budgeting effectively.

However, with the knowledge and templates gained from the Knowing Where Your Money Is module, I was able to develop a financial strategy for my business. This led to an increase in profitability and better resource allocation.

How did you experience the women-only training?

The women-only training provided a unique and empowering environment. It created a safe space for open discussions about challenges faced by women in the creative industry. A tangible result was a WhatsApp group which was formed that exists to date and is still active and beneficial to us. The training content was tailored to address gender-specific issues and encouraged networking and collaboration among female entrepreneurs. This environment cultivated a strong sense of friendship amongst us and provided and still provides invaluable mutual support, which I deeply appreciated.

Are there any successes that took place in your business after the training that you want to share?

Since completing the training, my business has experienced remarkable growth. I was able to secure partnerships with local suppliers and expand my product line, leading to increased market visibility and customer engagement. Additionally, the financial management skills I acquired paved a way for me to secure funding, which is dedicated towards a new capsule collection and will be released later in the year. I've had the privilege of experiencing significant milestones and successes in my business journey.

For example, being chosen as one of the two African designers for the Fashion Impact Fund's #FashionGivesCampaign was a true honour. These successes have not only elevated my business but have also reinforced my dedication to creating positive change within the fashion industry and beyond. I am excited about the future and remain committed to continuing this journey of empowerment and innovation. This coming October I am officially starting to practically learn about organic dyes which I intend to feature in the upcoming capsule collection.

interview

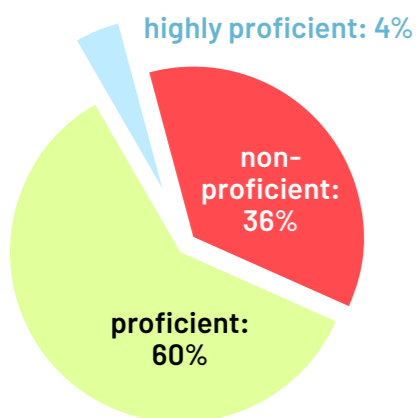
Participants were asked about the impact of the training.

They reported that their entrepreneurial and soft skills had improved the most.

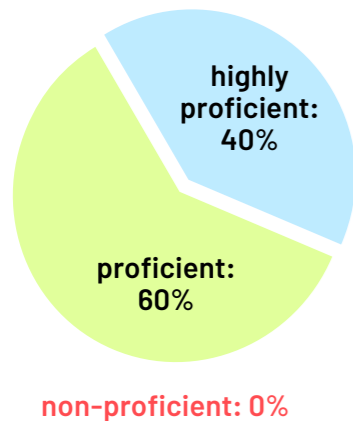
As part of an endline survey, **40%** of the participants rated their proficiency on Creative Entrepreneurship Business Strategy as "highly proficient", whereas at the baseline only **4%** of the participants indicated that they were "highly proficient".

The number of participants who had no proficiency dropped from **36%** to **0%**.

Baseline Proficiency



Endline Proficiency



What do Cultural and Creative Industries in Kenya need? Kenyan creatives spill it all!

Curious about the project's positive impact? In this video, several trainees share their experiences and aspirations as creatives in Kenya.



creativity



Learnings

A Gender-responsive Training Setup: To address the gender gap in cultural and creative industries, the submission process for applications should be designed to promote inclusion and diversity. For instance, consider eliminating age limitations for women and provide flexible schedules.

Flexible Online Delivery: An online training programme can help creatives balance their workloads. The participants appreciated the availability of training session recordings. The recordings were shared immediately at the end of each week and allowed participants to review the newly gained knowledge.

Practical Days: Integrate a few practical and in-person training sessions to the programme. These can range from inviting established creative professionals as guest speakers to site visits or guided working sessions. In-person sessions can be beneficial to the collaborative learning process through peer-to-peer knowledge sharing and network building.

Financial Support: Financial support in the form of scholarships allows participants to continue their businesses and make time for their studies.

about the project

The project Cultural and Creative Industries is jointly implemented by the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH and the Goethe-Institut on behalf of the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ).

It improves employment and income opportunities for creative professionals in six partner countries; Lebanon, Jordan, Iraq, Kenya, Senegal, and South Africa and operates mainly in the music, fashion, design and animation sectors. In addition to promoting the development of entrepreneurial, digital, creative and technical skills through training programmes, the project aims to strengthen the framework conditions and the ecosystem of the cultural and creative industries.



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