

2025



GOETHE
INSTITUT



YEAR IN REVIEW

A year of fostering cultural exchange,
promoting mutual understanding,
and broadening horizons

REPORT SCOPE AND BOUNDARY

*This is the initial report of Goethe-Institut Kenya. It covers January – December 2025. In some areas, information from 2024 is included to provide context. The report focuses on our activities in culture, language, library and other specialized programmes in Kenya. To compile the report, data was sourced from internal records, programme reports and staff input. Due to internal policy requirements, financial statements are not included. This report is targeted at our esteemed clients, partners, team members, funding bodies and community members. It is intended to bring visibility and a comprehensive understanding of our work to readers.

SNAPSHOT

62 YEARS in Kenya

70+ cultural and literary events in 2025

25 members of staff

35 teachers of German

14,000+ visits to the library in 2025

3,140 German language course participants, and **14,470** Examination candidates in 2025

446,673 Website visits **24.7K+** on Instagram **37K+** on Facebook **1.3K+** on LinkedIn

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Denijen Pauljević as Stevan performing during *This Plot is not for Sale* - a Kenyan German coproduction tackling cultural stereotypes and the remnants of colonialism
©Humphrey Gateri



Dear partners and friends of the Goethe-Institut Kenya,

2025 has been a rich and intense year, full of encounters, creative impulses and joint successes. It has been the 62nd year we operate in Kenya, and I am grateful when I state that our ties with the country and its people grow stronger with each year. We fulfil our mission - strengthening cultural exchange and promoting the German language - thanks to the close cooperation with our partners. Among them are: Docubox, Down River Road and the Macondo Literary Festival as well as numerous schools throughout the country.

We have further improved the quality of German language learning, trained new teachers, welcomed numerous students and helped those wishing to relocate to Germany by providing sound and reliable information about the process and its challenges.

We are passionately committed to cultural exchange and strengthening the cultural sector in Kenya. Festivals such as *Rewind*, *Remix*, *Reclaim*, film series, masterclasses, concerts and panel discussions in cooperation with local organizations bear witness to this. We operate in - as well as outside - Nairobi. In 2025, for instance, we engaged with cultural organizations in Kisumu, Lodwar, Mombasa and with schools in Eldoret, Meru, Kajiado among other places.

Additionally, we provide spaces for in-depth training for cultural practitioners. A workshop entitled *How to Write about Culture* gave emerging journalists and critics the opportunity to hone their skills, and the *Sasa Nairobi Fellowship* supported five artists in search of conceptual artistic practice. From time to time, artists, writers and curators from Germany and other countries have shared their work and their insights with us. Birgit Kohler from the Arsenal Institute for Film and Video Art paid us a visit, providing a masterclass on film curation, the journalists and authors Ilija Trojanow and Daniel Schulz enjoyed passionate discussions with Kenyan students, and filmmaker Jide Tom Akinleminu travelled all the way to Turkana to inspire upcoming filmmakers in the North of Kenya.

Together, we have established meaningful connections between languages, cultures and people. We want to continue this path in 2026 with high-quality German language courses, exchange programmes and scholarships, innovative cultural projects and strong support for cultural practitioners and the creative community.

I would like to thank you all for your trust and partnership. Let us continue to work together to create spaces for transnational dialogue, self-reflection, learning and inspiration.

Cristina Nord
Director, Goethe-Institut Kenya



Dear learners of German and friends of the Goethe-Institut Kenya,

In 2025, like the recent years before it, we have experienced increased enthusiasm for German language courses and examinations. We diversified our offerings to include in-person, blended learning and online courses to respond to the different needs of our students. We also expanded our classrooms to another location: Kibondeni College, in 2024. In 2026, we will have more classes at the German School Nairobi. It is my pleasure to see the dedication applied by our students, majority of whom have progressed from beginner to advanced language levels with us. This is a testament to loyalty and trust that we do not take for granted.

Time and time again we have observed our students grow professionally and expand their social ties from learning German at the Goethe-Institut. I have witnessed many taking up careers in fields such as teaching, engineering, IT and health in German organizations both locally and abroad. Some utilize the language to study business and STEM-oriented courses in German speaking countries. Others, mainly secondary school students, take part in workshops, exchange and youth programmes, through our partnerships, in which they gain international experience.

The Comprehensive Migration and Mobility Partnership Agreement that entered into force in late 2024 has been the biggest catalyst for German language learning. It has attracted many Kenyans to seek out opportunities in Germany. The Goethe-Institut is proud to support those prospective immigrants who wish to relocate for work, study or reunification with their families. We equip them with quality education and certified examinations which ensure easier navigation to the new country, as well as expand their skills in general.

Learning a new language is also a gateway to a new culture and way of life. Our diverse library complements the learning experience by providing various materials that span art, film, theatre and photography books from across the continent and beyond. We also have magazines, films and newspapers with news from Germany.

Our online library that contains over 20,000 resources allows our geographically diverse audience convenient access from wherever they are.

In 2026, we will continue with the same momentum: providing quality German language courses to our growing community.

Meshack Muendo
Head of Language Courses and Examinations

VISION

For cultural exchange, mutual understanding and trust

As the globally active cultural institute of the Federal Republic of Germany, we are committed to fostering understanding between Germany, Europe, and the world. This mission is based on our association's objectives and the framework agreement with the Federal Foreign Office.



Participants of *How to Write about Culture* workshop at the Goethe-Institut, Auditorium ©Humphrey Gateri

STRENGTHEN INTERNATIONAL CULTURAL COOPERATION BY ORGANIZING A BROAD VARIETY OF CULTURAL EVENTS.

We provide training, advice, and networking opportunities for cultural practitioners in partnership with Kenyan partners and support the development of sustainable structures in the cultural and creative sector.

GOETHE-INSTITUT KENYA FOCUS AREAS

PROMOTE KNOWLEDGE OF THE GERMAN LANGUAGE.

We offer language courses ranging from general German courses to job-oriented language training and seminars on social and cultural awareness. Our offerings include online courses, self-learning programs and certified exams.

PROVIDE INFORMATION ABOUT CULTURAL, SOCIAL, AND POLITICAL LIFE IN GERMANY.

Our online library hosts about 20,000 downloadable German-language eBooks and physical books, audio books, materials for German language learners, magazines, films and newspapers on different subject areas.

Participants of *How to Write about Culture* workshop at the exhibition: *Looking into the Mad Eye of History Without Blinking* by Ugandan artist Canon Griffin Rumanzi, curated by Trevor Mukholi at Nairobi Contemporary Art Institute (NCAI) ©Humphrey Gateri

PROGRAMMES



REWIND, REMIX, RECLAIM



Sculpture work by Sebawali Sio showcased as part of *Rewind Remix Reclaim* festival ©Humphrey Gateri

In July 1985, the United Nations invited delegates to the Third World Conference on Women in Nairobi. 1,400 delegates from 157 countries gathered in a convention center near the government district. On the campus of the University of Nairobi, just a few steps away from the current location of the Goethe-Institut Kenya, women from all over the world came together in parallel: representatives of non-governmental and grassroots organizations, celebrities, official envoys from the Soviet Union and Iran, as well as dissidents. They sat on the lawn and in lecture halls and exchanged ideas, gave speeches, sang and drummed, published a newspaper, learned self-defense practices, and argued bitterly about issues that are still debated today: the headscarf, Israel and Palestine, the North-South divide and its consequences.

The Centre Audiovisuel Simone de Beauvoir in Paris sent director Françoise Dasques, a member of Les Insoumuses, a collective of feminist filmmakers, to record her observations. Dasques' documentary film "La conférence des femmes - Nairobi 85" formed the basis for an eleven-day multidisciplinary festival that took place in Nairobi from July 15 to 25 in 2025.

The *Rewind, Remix, Reclaim* Festival, was organized by the Alliance Française de Nairobi and the Goethe-Institut Kenya with the support of the German-French Cultural Fund. It was aimed at exploring the legacy of the World Conference on Women and the Forum, to examine the artistic, political, and activist practices of the past, to assess their relevance today, and to ask what might be relevant in the current East African context. The program included workshops, discussions, film screenings, an art exhibition, yoga and self-defense classes, a city walk focusing on the history of women in Nairobi, performances, a concert, and DJ sets. Participants included Nicole Fernández Ferrer, who currently heads the Centre Audiovisuel Simone de Beauvoir, Ethiopian-Kenyan artist Tizzita, Ugandan photographer Sarah Waiswa, and Birgit Kohler from the Arsenal Institute for Film and Video Art in Berlin.



Concert featuring African Women's Orchestra as part of *Rewind Remix Reclaim* festival ©Paul Munene

The Nairobi-based regional office of UN Women also participated by hosting a panel discussion with Maria Nzomo on the opening night. The professor and diplomat, now in her mid-70s, was the first woman in Kenya to earn a doctorate in political science. She vividly remembers July 1985 and the atmosphere on the campus of the University of Nairobi. The men, she says, complained about the presence of so many women and claimed that it smelled too much like perfume.

"I got a chance to listen to these wonderful artistic women yesterday evening at the Goethe-Institut Nairobi and it was beautiful and inspiring"

Instagram stories, 19th July

After watching Françoise Dasques' documentary in the packed cinema hall of the Alliance Française, some viewers wondered whether anything has changed at all in the past 40 years. What was discussed in 1985 is still relevant in 2025, be it female genital mutilation, care work, or the experience of violence through war and civil war situations. In the discussion following the screening between Sheba Hirst, director of the NBO Film Festival, and Nicole Fernández Ferrer, it became clear how important it is to develop an awareness of history. Only by knowing what was thought, discussed, filmed, and described in the past, what people fought against and for, can we assess what remains to be done, which tools are suitable for the task, and which paths lead astray. Only then can we prevent the mistakes of the past from being repeated.

Dasques' "La conférence des femmes - Nairobi 85" was also echoed in the exhibition on display at the Alliance Française and the Goethe-Institut. Several East African artists conceived and created commissioned works in the run-up to the festival after engaging with the film. They, too, attach importance to recovering lost knowledge. Tizzita, for example, prints the face of Field Marshal Muthoni, a militant fighter against the British colonial regime, on a translucent fabric and hangs it in a row with Angela Davis and the Ethiopian Queen Zewditu. Cécile Fatiman, a voodoo priestess who played a decisive role in the Haitian Revolution in 1791, also makes an appearance in this gallery of ancestors. Sebawali Sio, a young Kenyan artist, explores water in all its forms in her sculptures and paintings. During the opening, she talked about a river goddess from West Africa, Mami Wata, who inspired her.

"It was grounding. Emotional. And such a timely reminder of just how deeply women have shaped this country's story."

LinkedIn Post, 22nd July

For Tizzita and Sebawali Sio, confronting the past leads to mythological figures, heroines, and unbroken role models. In the discussion following the opening, there was much talk of "female spirituality," of cyclical processes, of water as a female element. It becomes clear how much looking back—whether to factual or imagined pasts—gives strength to a present that is perceived as precarious.



Wanjari Gakuru, curator of Rewind Remix Reclaim festival ©Paul Munene

How did you approach curating *Rewind, Remix, Reclaim* festival?

The festival was a chance to build on the gains of the 1985 conference and find possible ways forward. My goal was to create a bridge between several feminist realities and a sense of continuity through intergenerational panel conversations, film screenings, comedy performances and art exhibitions.

What observations did you make about the audience's perspectives on feminism?

There were a lot of women in attendance which showed me that there is a hunger for community and safe spaces to discuss feminist issues. Thinking back to the Q&A sessions, men's voices were also heard; some in allyship and others not. Overall, I feel most attendees had a desire for continuous learning on the subject.

Why do you believe cultural institutions like ours play an important role today, especially in Kenya?

Cultural institutions are very important. They stand in the gap and offer crucial material and financial support for the arts space. Everything from free rehearsal spaces to green lighting experimental ideas or works by marginalized communities are what allows the sector to continue to thrive.

What trends/themes are you currently excited about in the culture sector?

There is an increase in local language production across music, arts and digital media, especially among the younger generations. I'm glad to see more appreciation of individual cultural identities.

“Women everywhere and across time simply desire a better world for themselves and others.”

How is the role of the curator transforming in today's cultural space?

To my mind, a curator's task is to spotlight key issues and voices then bring them to the fore. It is also very important that they build communities and networks that last well beyond the planned event. It is about considering everyone in the equation, both participants and invited guests.

SOUNDS THAT BLEND GENRES



Music is no doubt a big part of culture, and the Kenyan music scene is steadily growing in diversity with artists carving out niches for themselves. Statista, a global statistics and market data platform, indicates that the traditional music industry in Kenya is experiencing mild growth – a development they claim is influenced by “a resurgence of cultural pride, increased accessibility to live performances, and the ongoing integration of traditional music into mainstream media”. As a result, Kenyans are gaining an appreciation for local music. It is with this in mind that we seek to constantly introduce upcoming talent to new audiences with The Jam, a concert series that has endured for several years.

Left: Mubba, Tanzanian jazz bassist, songwriter and composer performing at Goethe-Institut, Auditorium as part of the Mubi Arts Program ©Humphrey Gateri



Drummer performing during *Je Suis* concert by Freed Mushaga ©Humphrey Gateri



DJ Shishi performing her set during *The Jam* concert series ©Humphrey Gateri

In 2025, we presented line-ups featuring a healthy mix of established and emerging artists, creating a unique fusion of old-school, afro-fusion, contemporary pop, and Kenyan rap among others. Some of the artists we've featured this year include Shad Mziki, Andia, Wendy Kay Muthoka, N'jiru, Billy Black, Nasibi, and Clark Keeng. The intimate live experience creates a platform for these artists to cross-connect with each other's fan bases while offering a wholesome experience on a Friday to usher in the weekend. The musical sets have been completed each time with eclectic sounds by Deejays including Dj Karri, Shishi, Kiptala and NowisGood.

We complement this series with single-act concerts from local artists and others from within the region. From Checkmate Mido's "Ua" – a sonic experience that celebrates love - to Li-boi's experimental stage performance "Hisia" featuring fellow artists where music, stories and the voices of instruments took audiences on the raw, unfiltered journey of self-discovery.

"This space is iconic to Kenyan culture"

Instagram comment, 16th September

Under the Goethe MObiArts programme, Mubba, jazz bassist, songwriter and composer from Tanzania, flew in to perform a solo concert in July. He was among four Sub-Saharan Africa artists from different disciplines who were selected to travel across the continent, thereby engaging with local artist scenes. With this project, we promoted cultural diversity and intercultural dialogue which provided access to new audiences and additional creative markets for African artists. Ultimately, the programme supported regional talent and strengthened cooperation within Sub-Saharan Africa.

The Jam concert series was curated by Tangaza Magazine this year.

THE UNTOLD BUSINESS OF MUSIC

There's no denying that musical talent is in ample supply in Kenya. However, most artists, especially emerging ones, experience challenges in income generation which are caused by weak royalty infrastructure, piracy, and possibly unfavorable royalty-sharing models.

Anyiko Owoko, renowned music publicist, identified this as an impediment to the growth and sustainability of many artists. Since 2024, she has curated the Industry Talks series to provide deep business and marketing insights for creatives in the music industry. The panel sessions within the series acquaint music industry professionals with renowned professionals in various relevant fields who share their expertise. This year, we've imparted knowledge on areas around:

- **The art and business of writing music for film and tv:** which introduced artists to alternative avenues for revenue by highlighting the role of music in storytelling and the collaboration between composers and filmmakers.
- **Music licensing for ads, film & tv:** artists tend to focus on touring and merchandise because of their immediate sales return. However, royalties, publishing and licensing are three of the most important ways musicians can generate income, empowering them to utilize long-term avenues to stay afloat.
- **Content creation in music and culture - shaping Africa's narrative:** for today's creatives, success is no longer defined solely by talent or output, but by the ability to document, package and share one's story in compelling, culturally reso-



nant ways across multiple platforms. Professionals learnt the business of content, utilizing it as a modern-day currency for visibility, influence, and connection.

- **The intersection of music, culture and corporate branding:** which explored how brands can go beyond traditional endorsement strategies by partnering with established, authentic artists and creatives. By aligning with artists whose music already lives in the hearts of their listeners, brands can tap into an existing emotional connection – creating campaigns that feel organic, credible and memorable.
- **Curating festivals – crafting lineups & experiences that speak volumes:** Festivals serve as a level playing field for both emerging and established talent, while offering unique opportunities to showcase new projects and connect with audiences. The session unpacked the curator's role and what it takes to orchestrate an unforgettable festival.

**The full sessions of each edition are archived for 30 days on our Facebook page: Goethe-Institut Nairobi. They are also available on YouTube on the VIP ACCESS channel by Anyiko Owoko.*

Above: Anyiko Owoko, curator of the Industry Talks series, moderating one of the sessions ©Humphrey Gateri

IMAGINE FREEDOM

UNPACKING DEMOCRACY AND GOVERNANCE IN KENYA



How informed are Kenyans on their rights and responsibilities?

Can citizens hold and challenge difficult and contradicting realities?

What happens in the absence of structured engagement, and how has the digital space contributed to this end?

These are some of the pertinent questions addressed during Imagine Freedom sessions - a conversation series and visual arts project that examines the social, political and cultural dynamics affecting democracy and governance in Kenya from the national to the individual level. Curated by Wanjeri Gakuru, the project was sparked by the leaderless youth-led protests that took place in 2024.

Panel discussions under this series have hosted notable contributors in the political and human rights space such as Faith Odhiambo, President of the Law Society of Kenya (LSK); Christine Mungai, news editor for Pan-African newspaper *The Continent*; Dr. Mamka Anyona, the host of *A Certain Amount of Madness* podcast; Keith Ang'ana, founder of civic and political advocacy group *Bunge la Mayut*; Nora Mbagathi, Executive Director of Katiba Institute; and Justine Wanda, stand-up comedian, writer, and political satirist.

Left:
An attendee engaging in Q&A session during *Imagine Freedom* panel ©Humphrey Gateri



From left: Faith Odhiambo, Keith Ang'ana, Christine Mungai and Wanjeri Gakuru during the second session of *Imagine Freedom: Where do we go from here?* ©Wakitanga Visuals

According to Dr. Mamka Anyona, political education serves as a basis for civic education for citizens to understand where they receive their roles, responsibilities and rights. She commended Kenyans for not relenting after the protests as they further explored whether the constitution serves their fundamental issues. The Afrobarometer *African Insights 2025* report highlights that Kenyans led (among 39 countries surveyed) in "frequent political discussion": about 32% of Kenyans report discussing politics frequently, plus another 39% "occasionally," for a combined 71%. This points out that politics is of high interest to Kenyans compared to other Africans. With her podcast, Dr. Mamka offers long-form content to promote political understanding which may otherwise not have been achieved within platforms that feature short-form content.

Similarly, Nora Mbagathi lauded the curiosity of Kenyans but warned against the risk of constitutional literacy existing in few bubbles. She encouraged cross-engagement across urban and rural settings to promote the empowerment of a wider audience. Additionally, she addressed the risk of misinformation and disinformation which arise from misinterpretation of facts by an audience desperate to make sense of the constitution without proper guidance.

"Loved every minute!"

Instagram comment, 17th April

The discussions also covered voter apathy and called for a focus on implementation rather than constant amendment of Kenya's young constitution. It was made clear that Kenyans need to seek out civic education to confront the status quo in politics that may not be favorable to most of the citizens in the country.

We intend to continue with the conversations in 2026. In addition, Imagine Freedom will produce a publication featuring artworks, poetry, essays, interviews and podcasts of the project in the same year.

* The full recordings of the discussions are archived for 30 days on our Facebook page: [Goethe-Institut Nairobi](#).



Programmes

MYRIADS OF FORMS AND SHAPES

At the very beginning, there was a compelling thought: Documentary film cannot be reduced to content. It is an art form.

To learn more about this art form and its manyfold expressions on the continent, we partnered with Docubox, an organization supporting independent African filmmakers. Seven to eight times a year, we screen documentary films from Africa. Normally, African filmmakers have directed them. However, some are directed by Europeans with African heritage. We have been fortunate to host some of them who have travelled to Nairobi, engaged in in-depth conversation after the screenings, and held two-day masterclasses for upcoming Kenyan filmmakers. In April, for example, Cece Mlay from Tanzania presented *THE EMPTY GRAVE*, which she co-directed with Agnes Lisa Wegner, and in June, Dieudo Hamadi from DRC showed *DOWNSTREAM KINSHASA* at the Goethe-Institut.

Above:
Film still from *Downstream to Kinshasa* documentary by Dieudo Hamadi
©Downstream to Kinshasa



Film still from *Faya Dayi*, a documentary by filmmaker Jessica Beshir ©Faya Dayi

To a certain extent, the conversations after the screening focus on the subject matter of the film in question: for example, the unsettling legacy of the colonial past in *THE EMPTY GRAVE*. The film tackles the obstacle-ridden search by two Tanzanian families for the skulls of their ancestors. German colonial officers executed those two men during the Maji Maji uprising. Afterwards, they sent their skulls to Germany. Today, nobody knows where to locate them, which is a heavy burden for the family members. Not only for them: Mlay and Wegner film German high school students who have just learnt about the Maji Maji uprising, the executions, and the abduction of human remains. They are shocked, but not speechless as they ask why so little is undertaken to make up for the crimes German colonial officers committed.

“As a filmmaker, the opportunity last year to bring *THE EMPTY GRAVE* to audiences and fellow filmmakers in Nairobi through the Goethe-Institut gave me the opportunity to engage more deeply with the broader context of the film’s relevance,” says Mlay. “Conversations around the central themes of loss, love, and colonial violence, alongside a shared understanding of historical erasure and how cinema can help us navigate and revive our histories served as a powerful reminder of the collective nature of filmmaking. Making, showing, and sharing work together is critical to sustaining a diverse cinema that can speak restoratively to our past.”

In *DOWNSTREAM KINSHASA*, we follow a group of people with disabilities on an arduous journey. They were wounded during the Six-Day-War in 2000, which was a series of armed confrontations between Ugandan and Rwandan forces around the city of Kisangani. Via boat, they travel to the capital

with the intention of demanding compensation payments. However, the politicians who should receive them do not make themselves available. Doors remain closed, guards treat them with disrespect. Still, they do not give up, just like the great-grandchildren of the Maji Maji fighters in *THE EMPTY GRAVE*. Thus, both films are powerful testimonies to the perseverance and quiet resilience of the people they portray.

At the same time, the questions raised during the conversations are related to the form and the style of the films: How did Dieudo Hamadi meet the people he portrays? How did he manage to build trust? And how does this relationship manifest in the spatial structure of the film? Where is the camera positioned? How does one film in a space that is very tight, like the cramped boat on its way to Kinshasa?

In Cece Mlay’s case, the questions tackle the aspect of timing. How fast is the editing? How is the pace of the film? The filmmaker explains why the takes in *THE EMPTY GRAVE* are quite long, comparing the pace of a film with the rhythm of breath. The harder the subject matter, the less it helps when one is out of breath. One needs time to grasp what the images show. Only then does the audience enjoy the opportunity to draw their own conclusions, as opposed to being manipulated into certain emotions by relentless voice-overs and soundtrack.

Our film screening series explores documentary films’ myriads of forms and shapes together with the audience, and it supports upcoming Kenyan filmmakers who want to learn more about the wealth of possibilities offered by the documentary form. In 2026, the series will continue under the title *KAMERA KWANZA*.



Film still from *Le Spectre de Boko Haram* documentary by Cyrielle Raingou ©Le Spectre de Boko Haram



Film still from *The Empty Grave* documentary by Cece Mlay ©The Empty Grave



Ibrahim Snoopy, Filmmaker ©Ronny Heine

“Memory, identity, displacement, family: these themes shaped my life, and that’s why my next film is a personal story, a homage to all third culture kids and a tribute to all remittance workers around the world.”

What was the inspiration behind the film KHARTOUM?

We wanted to make a poetic film about the city of Khartoum and the elements that shape it from people, sounds, locations, smells and many more things that create the city.

What did you learn about the role of filmmaking in connecting the Sudanese community?

I’ve been making films for 10 years, and what I’ve learned is that you can bring different people from different backgrounds for one purpose under one roof, which is to enjoy and experience a film without caring about each other’s background or ethnicity, but just pure enjoyment.

In what ways do cultural institutions create meaningful spaces for creativity, dialogue, and belonging?

The role cultural institutions play is as important as that of cinema theaters for a film. They bring communities together and help amplify the film’s voice to a different audience other than movie goers, where dialogue that is needed in that specific community sparks after each screening.

What conversations do you hope the film will spark within your community and internationally?

I’d love to see actions being made toward the people that we are representing, in a more tangible way. People are still suffering from the war in Sudan, and urgent action needs to be made.

What projects or stories do you hope to explore next?

My next project is exploring multiple themes: Memory, identity, displacement, family and many more. These themes shaped my life, and that’s why my next film is a personal story, a homage to all third culture kids and a tribute to all remittance workers around the world.

KHARTOUM was shown in June 2025 at the Goethe-Institut. The audience was mostly Sudanese, and the evening turned into a lively, emotional and touching exchange about the war, exile, memories, and those still in Sudan. Ibrahim Snoopy, co-director of KHARTOUM (2025) is a Sudanese filmmaker, storyteller, and cinematographer whose work explores identity, displacement, and resilience. As a cross-cultural child, his perspective bridges cultures and amplifies unheard voices, especially from communities affected by conflict and migration. His visual style blends Sudanese heritage with contemporary narratives, often highlighting themes of social justice. Ibrahim has contributed to films like SEROTONIN (2018), KHARTOUM OFFSIDE (2019), JOURNEY TO KENYA (2020), FROM ARGENTINA TO SUDAN (2022), THE SALON (2023), SUDAN REMEMBER US (2024). The latest film he co-directed, KHARTOUM (2025), which spotlights the ongoing war in Sudan, premiered at Sundance and was subsequently shown during the Berlinale, winning the Berlinale Peace Award in 2025, affirming his impact as a powerful visual storyteller.

SASA NAIROBI

A VISUAL ARTS FELLOWSHIP



Left: Part of *Fabric of Resilience*, an installation by Sachy Atieno; right: part of *Light and Voices of Creation*, an installation by Sammy Mutinda, as part of *The Ties that Bind* exhibition © Humphrey Gateri

The *Sasa Nairobi Artist Fellowship* aimed at giving artists the space and resources to present concept-based exhibitions. The fellowship programme attempted to bridge the gap between artistic scholarship, research and practice and is designed to provide structured support to mid-career artists and curators to help them advance to the next stage in their careers.

The two-year-long fellowship offered five artists an opportunity to develop their practice and engage more deeply with artistic discourses and research-based approaches. The first

year (2024) focused on learning, exploration, experimentation and sharpening of the artists' research questions. It took the form of lectures on specific topics such as East Africa Art History, African Modernism, introduction to performance art, public art and concepts in sculpture. It also explored theories and advancements in curatorial practice through in-person and online presentations by guest artists and cultural practitioners. What's more, it featured group discussions, writing workshops, one-on-one mentorship sessions & consultation, career enhancement excursions, and opt-in practical sessions on how to find, apply for and manage artistic grants.

The Ties That Bind exhibition was the culmination of the fellowship in 2025. Bringing together the artists' practices, the exhibition was diverse in aesthetics and themes – each piece an invitation into a unique artistic realm, but also an opportunity to see what unites these young upcoming artists.

Beyond that, the exhibition shed light on the societal shifts and lingering questions that shape contemporary Kenya. The artists' works located themselves at the intersection of personal and collective identities, asking us to (re)consider the ways in which we relate to each other and the world around us.

Wallace Juma investigated our relationship with the natural environment, and how its destruction affects and reshapes communities. The fading photographs of Joel Lukhovi mirrored a similar destruction and spoke towards the entanglement of personal and public memories. In Sachy Atieno's installation, the experiences and labour of women were expressed and negotiated through fabrics. While rooted in the detachment of a personal bond with her father, Precious Narotso took that experience and developed it into a much larger consideration on family relations, trauma and grief. In Sammy Mutinda's installation we moved towards the challenges of locating the self and tuning out the world around us.

In addition to the exhibition, the showcase featured artist talks with the participating artists, delving deep into the development of the practice and how the programme has influenced their approach.

“*The Ties that Bind*” exhibition was curated by Niklas Obermann.

Right: Part of *Wilt*, an installation by Precious Narotso, as part of the exhibition *Ties that Bind* ©Humphrey Gateri



NAFASI CO-PRODUCTION FUND

With the goal of supporting cultural practitioners in smaller towns outside of Nairobi, the Goethe-Institut Nairobi invited applications for the Nafasi Co-production fund. In 2025, the fund supported three innovative collaborative projects grounded on collective artistic collaboration that explored new art forms in the areas of visual art, music, dance, theatre, and new media. The fund listed collaborative approach as a prerequisite, where artistic input and development of the project were shared between the artists or collectives involved. The grants were offered to Little Theatre Club, Ateker International Film Festival, and NAAM Festival.



LITTLE THEATRE CLUB (LTC)

The historic and vibrant performing arts institution located in Mombasa remains a cornerstone of the region's artistic and cultural scene. Under the Nafasi scope, it equipped five members of its team with skills in accounting, project management, and team leadership in a bid to improve internal management processes within the organization. Additionally, LTC carried out two theatre productions which were focused on building and strengthening local artists that were involved in the plays.

The Platform, a monthly event focused on granting previously trained artists an opportunity to host their shows, elevated the status of Mombasa's theatre scene to a higher level of recognition and engagement.

Left:
Dance performance at Little Theatre Club ©Little Theatre Club



Film still from the documentary *Portrait of a Lone Farmer* by filmmaker Jide Tom Akinleminu ©Portrait of a Lone Farmer

ATEKER INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL (AIFF)

AIFF is an initiative by Ateker Creatives Lab, a community-based organization in Lodwar, Turkana with a mission to empower and elevate the voices of young creatives, filmmakers, and marginalized communities through storytelling and cultural expression.

Through the fund, Danish-Nigerian filmmaker Jide Tom Akinleminu showcased his documentary *PORTRAIT OF A LONE FARMER* during this year's festival and facilitated a three-day masterclass with emerging filmmakers from Turkana (a similar approach to our regular film screenings as highlighted earlier). Two of the participants came from Kakuma refugee camp.

NAAM FESTIVAL

Over the past two years, the collaboration between NAAM Festival and the Goethe-Institut Nairobi has played a transformative role for the creative communities across the Lake Victoria region, particularly in Kisumu. Through the Kanda La

Ziwa (KLZ) Residency and the subsequent Nafasi Lokohala Creative Workshops, NAAM Festival engaged over 29 young artists and cultural practitioners from 16 creative groups around the region. The partnership has enhanced professional capacities for practitioners in areas such as financial management, project design, organizational development, leadership, and sustainable event management.

The partnership has not only strengthened NAAM Festival's ability to design and deliver cultural programs that generate tangible economic and social value but also helped foster new artistic synergies with creatives. "Perhaps the most inspiring outcome has been the co-creation of *Minwa Lolwe - Our Mother Lake*, an original multi-performance stage piece that reimagines ancient folk tales through music, storytelling, and environmental reflection. This artistic process reinforced our commitment to ecological and cultural justice, while nurturing stronger regional networks among creatives who share our vision for a just and sustainable cultural ecosystem," NAAM Festival.



LIBRARY

From left: Sarah Atoch and Sitawa Namwalie during the second edition of *Women in Literature*. ©Humphrey Gateri

CELEBRATING FEMALE VOICES IN LITERATURE

One of our literary highlights in 2025 was the inaugural “Women in Literature” series that featured different styles of writing from the female perspective. So far, we have recognized female actors, influencers and trendsetters across generations.

Starting us off were three young writers: Scholar. V. Akinyi, who writes to give voices to children and their seemingly forgotten worldviews; Munira Husein, the author of *HIGHLAND CACTUS*, *UNFIT FOR SOCIETY*, *A CURVE OF DARKNESS* and co-author of academic and fictional works; and Verah Omwocha, an award-winning Kenyan writer, book editor and reviewer.

Conversations centered around the depiction of women in literature by authors guided either by the male or female gaze. Interestingly, the authors also noted a current trend by women authors to shift to autobiographical writing. As well, they challenged the physical description of African women,

and spoke on the intersection of class, sexuality and identity of women in literature.

The second edition was dedicated to poetry. From trailblazing pioneers to today’s award-winning performers, the gathering honored the past, engaged the present, and inspired the future of women’s poetry in Kenya. The full-house event encompassed poetry performances that focused on contemporary issues affecting women such as femicide and historical injustices, spoken word pieces by Nyash and Camilla Aoko in honour of women, and a panel discussion with powerful poets: Nekoye Ommeh, Sitawa Namwalie and Stella Kivuti. The discussion that followed touched on the evolution of poetry in Kenya and how we can influence future poets and challenges faced by female poets in their craft.

We continue these crucial female conversations in 2026, further creating another community from our already established AMKA literature forum.

AMKA LITERATURE FORUM



Every last Saturday of the month. 10am sharp. For over 20 years!

The Goethe-Institut has hosted the enduring AMKA literature forum. In partnership with AMKA, an organization that promotes creative space for women, the forum invites upcoming writers and literary critics to share and discuss stories, poems and current literature trends. By providing a space to listen to the voices of established and budding writers, the forum aims to enhance creativity.

“A big thank you to Goethe-Institut Nairobi and AMKA for creating such an enriching space for literary conversations. Looking forward to many more!”

LinkedIn Post, 20th March

Starting out as a forum only for women, it has evolved to include male authors. Once writers submit their stories and poems to amkaforum@gmail.com, a selection of those that will be critiqued is made. On the day of the event the selected pieces are read aloud, and the audience gives their various feedback. “AMKA is important because it gives a space for writers to grow,” says Muthoni wa Gichuru, one of the moderators of the event series. “Writers get honest feedback, and those who take it well really grow in their writing.” She refers to the likes of Okwiri Odour, Makena Onjerika (both

Caine Prize Winners), and Faith Oneya (short story writer and journalist).

Every month, the moderators are joined by different guest authors. This year some of them included Sam Kahiga, Hellen Mwangi, Betty Kilonzo, Keith Ang’ana and Ciku Gitonga. In the past, we’ve also hosted Oxford University Press Regional Director, John Mwazemba. To increase reach, the forum has expanded to include a digital format. The event is live-streamed on our Facebook page: Goethe-Institut Nairobi, to include those who can join in remotely.

Additionally, the forum travels to different destinations as part of its community outreach programme. Notably, we’ve been hosted by Lang’ata Women’s Prison where we met passionate writers who express their creativity through literature. From poetry and letters to creative storytelling and essays, the talented women eloquently penned their aspirations, fears, hopes and dreams. “These creative writing workshops encourage women to express themselves through poetry, short stories and essays. [...] Women narrate their experiences, hopes and reflections with remarkable honesty. The visits form a beacon of transformation, unlocking minds and the future. Inmates who once felt forgotten are now discovering knowledge, creativity and self-worth. It is proof that when you give women the tools to learn and express themselves, even while behind bars, you give them the power to change their lives,” says Jane Manyonge, participant of our AMKA Literature Forum.

AUTHORS FROM GERMANY



Literature is a critical gateway for cultural exchange. Our regular book readings have been part of the library services for several years now. They serve to connect with authors and unpack themes illustrated in literary pieces. These gatherings invite the audience to reflect and draw parallels between literature and what is currently happening in society.

These readings mostly feature authors: some local, others international. Daniel Schulz, German author of *WIR WAREN WIE BRÜDER* (*We Were Like Brothers*) was one of them this year. His novel tells the story of a young boy growing up in Eastern Germany after the fall of the Berlin Wall. Through his journey, the book explores themes of belonging, change, and the challenges of a transforming society.

These book reading sessions are not solely confined to our space at the Goethe-Institut. By interacting with high-school students from different parts of the country, we enrich conversations by including different points of view from our younger generation. Daniel’s book reading tour began in schools teaching German around Kenya and culminated in a thrilling exchange at our library. His sessions were particularly insightful for those planning to relocate to Germany. They offered a deeper understanding of themes within the broader migration context by looking into German society and history.

Similarly, German Bulgarian author Ilija Trojanow read one of his literary text: *SZENEN AUS DER SAVANNE DER JUGEND* (*Scenes from the Savannah of Youth*) during his visit later

in the year. In this text, he reflected on his childhood and teenage years in Nairobi, Kenya, where he lived from 1972 to 1984. Since we hosted him at his alma mater, The German School Nairobi, the young students were curious about how life at the school has evolved since Ilija was there. As the conversation progressed, they opened up about issues around identity, acclimatizing to a different culture, and navigating prejudice and discrimination in Kenya.

These platforms also offer insights about career progression for emerging authors and address challenges when it comes to writing. These spaces are not only important in raising awareness about pertinent issues but also serve as areas to form communities based on shared challenges and aspirations. Besides that, such discourse addresses critical social issues and developments with the aim of fostering knowledge, criticality and understanding. We take great satisfaction in creating these spaces for enthusiasts and authors to come together. Under our book reading and AMKA literature forum programmes, we featured over 15 local and international writers in 2025.

Above:
Daniel Schulz, author of *Wir waren wie Brüder* during his book reading at Goethe-Institut, Library ©Humphrey Gateri

Page 30:
Participants during Amka Literature Forum at State House Girls High School ©Julian Manjahi



Library and terrace section of the Goethe-Institut ©Humphrey Gateri



Gaming Community Meet Up at Goethe-Institut, Library ©Humphrey Gateri

ENGAGING YOUNG MINDS

Our revitalized library hosts something for everyone – including our young readers. What’s more, we’ve paired their literature offerings with exciting workshops and performances categorized for different age groups.

Woodways is a non-verbal performance that aided 2-4-year-old kids in using wood to make rhythm and distinguish various textures to enhance their creativity. The kids also used materials such as seeds, firewood, sticks and paper to create items. With the interactive workshop, *Animation Films Screenings and Magical Tales Adventure*, 4 – 8-year-olds were invited on an exciting journey into magical worlds. Through guided storytelling, playful activities, and creative expression, participants explored the art of crafting simple, imaginative stories. Plus, they developed their communication and teamwork skills. The kids also watched short animation films in partnership with Uli and Tata.

For our 9-12-year-olds, we offered a *Dance and Storytelling Workshop*. It allowed participants to explore movement, to express emotions and tell simple stories. They worked on age-appropriate dance and movement activities inspired by familiar narratives and characters.

Teen Stage Craft Lab was reserved for our more mature age group. The hands-on dramaturgy workshop for teens explored the art of storytelling and performance. Participants learnt dramatic structure, character development, and narrative techniques while working on creating their own compelling stories and stagecraft.

Our partner within the kid’s and teens’ events is Zamaleo ACT (*Zamaleo Arts & Culture Trust*). They are based in Nairobi and focus on African expressive cultures, especially through storytelling, oral traditions, music, dance, and movement.

GAMES CONNECT

The *Gaming Community Meet Up* is part of the Games Connect regional project of the Goethe-Instituts in the sub-Saharan Africa region. The goal of this initiative is to build a more sustainable, tight-knit and well-connected gaming landscape in Africa. Our first Community Meet up was introduced in late 2025 and invited various players in the gaming ecosystem in Kenya. It provided participants with a well-rounded experience that blends knowledge sharing, professional growth and interactive engagement.

The panel comprising players discussed how cultural storytelling, AI and eSport are shaping Kenya’s video games industry. What followed was a workshop on elevator pitch training for the gaming community: how do you confidently and clearly pitch your game or brand in a short time frame? This naturally led to a hearty discussion that resulted in immense knowledge sharing among participants.

MEIN WEG NACH DEUTSCHLAND

MY PATH TO GERMANY



From left: Director at Goethe-Institut Kenya, Cristina Nord; German Ambassador to Kenya, Sebastian Groth; Head of Culture at the German Embassy, Kerstin Pfirmann; and Principal Secretary for Diaspora Affairs, Roseline Njogu ©Zachary Ndirangu

After a successful 2-year period of our pre-integration project, *Living and Working in Germany*, we were proud to announce its next phase under the new name: *Mein Weg nach Deutschland* (My path to Germany). To celebrate, we hosted a gathering with project contributors at the Park Inn by Radisson in Westlands on 2nd October 2025. The gathering was co-hosted by our long-standing partners in labour migration, the Delegation of German Industry and Commerce for Eastern Africa.

The project is co-funded by the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF) of the European Union. It supports persons from Kenya, Uganda, Rwanda and Burundi who are relocating to Germany for professional or personal reasons. The support involves hosting information sessions and intercultural workshops for prospective migrants via in-person and online forums. These sessions include various topics such as visa application process, statutory insurance policies, and navigating discrimination and racism. Addressing these issues enables a smoother integration process for East Africans relocating to Germany.

Additionally, a good understanding of the experience of our target audience is integral in the success of this project. Through the sessions we guide prospective migrants from the very beginning on all major events until they settle in their host country. That's why upon their arrival in Germany, we connect them with welcome coaches and other partners to further enhance their transition process.

Our activities under the programme also include equipping the target audience with learning and exam preparation strategies as they attend our German language courses and sit for examinations.

H.E. Sebastian Groth, the German Ambassador to Kenya; Hon. Roseline Kathure Njogu, the Principal Secretary State Department for Diaspora Affairs; and Mr. Festus Mutuse representing the State Department for Labour and Skills Development highlighted the critical role of cultural sensitivity in facilitating smooth transitions, deepening integration, and reinforcing the partnership between Kenya and Germany. Cristina Nord,

the director of the Goethe-Institut Kenya stated that we need to champion mobility as a transformative force.

Since the project's inception, we have recorded successes and challenges. We have also learnt valuable lessons that have continually added meaningful insights to discussions on labour migration within Kenya and beyond. The gathering offered an opportunity to address these challenges. It was filled with impactful conversations and exchange of ideas, tackling emerging issues such as brain drain and misalignment in the global recruitment process. Additionally, it offered the chance for actors in the labour migration space to (re)connect.

Since the project's inception in 2023, 7,000 people within East Africa have been impacted - most of whom are from Kenya and Burundi. Of these beneficiaries, over 100 migrated to Germany. To increase our reach, we created a WhatsApp channel (Mein Weg nach Deutschland - East Africa) dedicated to the programme that currently has over 5,000 followers.

NETWORKING FOR ECONOMIC GROWTH

In October 2025, The Delegation of German Industry and Commerce for Eastern Africa (AHK Eastern Africa) hosted a dynamic two-day job fair designed to connect Kenya's skilled workforce with German companies, development organizations, and international employers, offering opportunities for internships, employment, and networking. We were onsite to share information about learning the German language and preparing for life and work in Germany.

As a precursor of the job fair, we also co-hosted two webinars in March and September with AHK, which provided our participants with insights into the exhibitors and sectors represented at the job fair, as well as the qualifications that employers were seeking.

Earlier in the year in March, our Cooperation partners Centre Multiculturel Allemand (CMA), hosted the inaugural Burundian-German Job Fair at the University of Burundi which brought together several German cooperations who shared insights for Burundians looking to relocate for professional reasons.

LANGUAGE

STRENGTHENING GERMAN LANGUAGE LEARNING

Bildungskooperation Deutsch (BKD), which translates to "German Language Education Cooperation", is a programme that works with local schools and institutions, educational authorities, and language teachers worldwide to support learning and teaching German. The programme offers services like teacher training, methodology support, cultural- and language-learning programmes, exam coordination, resource/ material distribution, and cooperation with local institutions.

For 29 years, the BKD has organized the German Cultural Festival (GCF) - a celebration of German language, culture, and traditions by students learning German in high schools around Kenya. It features poetry, music, play and dance performances. The festival is designed to promote cultural exchange among teenagers, deepen understanding of German heritage, and create a fun, immersive experience for participants.

The well-loved festival also offers an opportunity for healthy competition among participants and an avenue to network with fellow German language learners.

In addition, BKD recognizes the efforts made by teachers of German through the Teacher of the Year Award (TOYA). 2025 marks the 7th year of the initiative which brings together

members of the German Embassy, the Goethe-Institut Kenya, the Teachers Service Commission (TSC) as well as winners from previous years. It also marked the entry of a new category: Best Upcoming Teacher, to distinguish early-career educators from those with years of experience. By doing so, we celebrate both seasoned teachers and those making a promising start in the profession. These awards incentivize German teaching in schools in Kenya. As estimated by the German Embassy in 2024, the numbers of Kenyan learners stood at around 10,000.

The awards are limited to a specific region every year. This year, the TOYA and Best Upcoming Teacher Award went to Tony Chantry of Naisula School and Olympia Musula of St. Joseph Girls' Kibwezi High School respectively. As part of the award, Tonny received a 2-weeks scholarship to Germany and Olympia, a 2-weeks scholarship for teaching observation (job shadowing) within the country courtesy of the Goethe-Institut Kenya.

SCHOOLS: PARTNERS FOR THE FUTURE

This is a global initiative of the German Federal Foreign Office launched in 2008, supported and implemented in part by the Goethe-Institut. Translated in German as *Schulen: Partner der Zukunft (PASCH)*, its goals are to promote German language learning worldwide, strengthen international educational cooperation, build long-term connections with Germany, and support students and teachers at partner schools. The PASCH programme supports over 2,000 schools in more than 100 countries. In the East African region, PASCH is present in eight schools:

- 4 schools in Kenya (Kaaga Girls' High School, Mother of Apostles Seminary, Alliance Girls High School, and German School Nairobi)
- 2 in Uganda (Kibuli Secondary School and Mengo Senior School)
- 1 in Rwanda (Green Hills Academy)
- 1 in Burundi (Lycée du Saint-Esprit)

As one of the key implementing partners of the initiative, Goethe-Institut Kenya:

- provides German teachers, training, and teaching materials
- organizes student exchanges, competitions, and cultural projects
- offers scholarships for students and teachers
- promotes innovative German language teaching methods, and
- strengthens ties between German institutions and partner schools.

In 2025, the initiative conducted numerous PASCH alumni meetups to provide networking sessions and testimonials about life in Germany. Secondly, they offered scholarships to 10 of the best-performing students as part of their annual summer courses conducted in Germany for three weeks. As well, four scholarships were extended to the accompanying teachers for a three-week seminar on didactics of German as a Foreign Language.

STUDENT TEACHER PLACEMENT IN SCHOOLS ABROAD

SCHULWÄRTS!, officially titled in English as “Student Teacher Placement in Schools Abroad” is a programme that arranges and provides funding for the placement of German citizen student teachers at Goethe-Institut partner schools (PASCH) abroad. In 2025, we received one student teacher who was placed in Mother of Apostles Seminary for three months. The goals of this programme are to nurture lasting relations between the Goethe-Institut and the partner schools and to promote the internationalization of teacher training in Germany. During their placement, student teachers oversee planning and executing their teaching assignments themselves

as well as carrying out extracurricular projects. Through the programme, students and the student teachers can gain:

- International and intercultural experience
- A heightened sensibility for and competence in handling cultural and linguistic diversity in the classroom
- Inside experience of international educational cooperation projects with comprehensive support
- Theoretical knowledge and practical skills in preparatory and follow-up seminars

PRE-UNIVERSITY STUDY PROGRAMME

Our pre-university study programme, “*Studienbrücke*”, enables direct access to study opportunities in Germany. Launched in Kenya in 2024, the programme prepares students for STEM-related (Sciences and Mathematics) and economic undergraduate degrees in Germany by offering a series of trainings and courses, to orient them both academically and culturally. It takes between 6 - 9 months to complete. The rigorous preparation process includes various courses:

- **B2 - C1 German language courses:** To effortlessly undertake STEM-related or economic courses in Germany, an intermediate-advanced level understanding of German language is required.
- **TestDAF exam training:** The Test of German as a Foreign Language is recognized by all universities in Germany for all degree programmes. It prepares students linguistically, enabling them to work on communicative tasks that they will also have to master during their studies.
- **STEM subject-specific training:** Otherwise known as “*Fachsprachliche Vorbereitung in den MINT-Fächern*”, it educates students on terminologies used in different STEM-related subjects in German. It is a preparation of the TestAS format training that test subject mastery.
- **TestAS format training:** This aptitude test for international applicants helps prospective students assess whether their abilities and skills are suitable for studying in Germany. It also helps German universities make fair, objective and accurate decisions in their admission and selection procedures.
- **Intercultural training:** These sessions sensitize them on transculturality, diversity, inclusion, empowerment as well as dealing with cross-cultural conflicts and challenges.
- **Fit for higher education in Germany:** The “*Fit für Studium in Deutschland*” is a short course to understand the education system and the introduction to the German higher education system in Germany.
- **Introduction to scientific writing:** an introductory course to research writing.

*Visit the microsite: *Studienbrücke*, our website to view the charges for this package stated above.



Students at the Goethe-Institut Terrace ©Humphrey Gateri



Students at the Goethe-Institut library ©Humphrey Gateri

Participant of *How to Write about Culture* workshop at Nairobi Contemporary Art Institute (NCAI) where the exhibition: *Looking into the Mad Eye of History Without Blinking* by Ugandan artist Canon Griffin Rumanzi, curated by Trevor Mukholi was showcased ©Humphrey Gateri

IMPACTS AND OUTCOMES





Participants of *How to Write about Culture* workshop at the Goethe-Institut, Auditorium ©Humphrey Gateri

The workshop on *How to Write about Culture* in October 2025, trained writers and journalists to strengthen their skills in reporting on and documenting arts and culture. Among challenges involved in the week-long programme was critiquing *MEMORIES OF LOVE RETURNED*, an essayistic film by Ugandan-American filmmaker, Ntare Guma Mbaho Mwine. This workshop was part of Goethe-Institut's mission to support the local cultural scene by enhancing capacities of journalists covering the cultural sector. In doing so, we aim to strengthen cultural journalism and criticism. The engaging sessions were facilitated by experienced voices including Faith Oneya, Muhunyo Maina, Jim Chuchu and more.



Faith Linyoni, Founder and entrepreneur ©Freesky

What drew you to focus on writing about culture, and do you have a specific niche within it that you're passionate about?

My love for the arts in Kenya and globally as well is what drew me to write about culture, wanting to share my curiosities with the world. I'm passionate about a lot of things and my writing is on diverse topics. I am keen on intersectional feminism which encompasses a lot of complexities.

How do you see cultural journalism in Kenya impacting the society today?

Cultural journalists have the power to further conversations that Kenyan artists and culture workers are involved in. A lot of good work is being done, and culture journalists can report on it to the relevant audiences to help the industry grow.

In your opinion, what kind of support do cultural journalists require the most?

Skill sharing workshops like the one Goethe-Institut had was great. Funding projects by cultural journalists as well as government support to formulate sustainable policies would also help.

What was your experience from the "How to Write about Culture" workshop?

I had a great experience at the workshop. The facilitators were well informed and engaged and it was great to connect with colleagues. I took a lot of notes.

“Cultural journalists have the power to further conversations that Kenyan artists and culture workers are involved in.”

How should fact-checking evolve in an age shaped by AI and rapid digital communication?

Fact checking should be automated especially for those who have the responsibility of sharing knowledge with others.

Faith Linyoni is a writer, entrepreneur and co-founder of The Black Spirit Artists' Way where she contributed writing and illustrations for the first anthology titled Home. Her work has been published by Zeit Magazin (Germany) and The East Africa Contemporary. She is the founder of Ulimi Green and Doctor Deni. She holds a degree in Economics and Statistics from Kenyatta University.

PUSHING BOUNDARIES FOR GERMAN LANGUAGE LEARNING

We've experienced continued interest in learning German language at our institute in 2025. This has consequently led to a high number of course participants and examination candidates. In 2022, 4,790 candidates sat for examinations with us. Since then, the numbers have risen to a staggering 14,470 candidates in 2025 alone, marking a tripling of exam numbers in 3 years.

This demand arose due to the increased number of Kenyans wishing to relocate to Germany for study, work or family reunification who must master the language to integrate easily in the country. We will be offering examinations on a weekly basis in 2026 to cater to this growing market.

Additionally, our flexible modes of learning include:

- in-person,
- online blended (online learning that is part-individual, part-group with weekly guidance from teachers and that utilizes digital learning materials), and
- online live (online learning with physical books) courses.

These present our students with options that suit their preferences, lifestyles and locations. Our online options, which were conceptualized in 2020 to respond to the challenges of the pandemic, have now become an essential and highly valued service due to their convenience.

To cater to the call for more language courses, we trained 40 teachers of German in 2025, 6 of whom will join our workforce in 2026. These teachers primarily teach the A1, A2, and B1 (beginner and intermediate) levels.

Our second location, Kibondeni College, has enabled us to host more examinations and language courses. In 2026, we will have more classes at the German School Nairobi.



“Learning a new language fosters tolerance, which is an important aspect in understanding different cultures.” Kelvin Mutulis, Teacher of German at Goethe-Institut Nairobi ©Dan Binama

How do you create an engaging and supportive environment for learners?

Students should be encouraged to recognize that making mistakes in class is part of the learning process. Mistakes provide us with opportunities to learn.

What challenges do students often face when learning German, and how do you help them overcome them?

This is linked to the first question: the fear of making mistakes especially when speaking. Just like a small child learning to walk, learners should not be afraid of “falling down” until they get their balance and walk steadily. I have seen learners who completely refuse to participate actively in class and don't take any initiative. They are then confronted with the same situation in an exam environment which is unfortunate.

What expectations or standards come with teaching at the Goethe-Institut?

As a teaching consultant, apart from very high qualifications demanded from us, we need to be up to date with the changing trends in the German culture and language to offer competitive value to our students.

How does learning a new language open doors to different perspectives or identities?

Learning a new language fosters tolerance, which is an important aspect in understanding different cultures. We are in

a world with people from different backgrounds and there is no better way of confronting stereotypes, prejudices and cultural differences than learning a new language. I echo Nelson Mandela's famous saying: “If you talk to a man in a language he understands, that goes to his head. If you talk to him in his language, that goes to his heart”.

How do you measure real progress by students beyond tests and grades?

Real education should bring about change in attitude and offer new perspectives in life. I see our students who started learning German when they were so reserved and detached. After a few months going through the language classes, one can tell that they have developed new perspectives and a more open mindset.

What skills do tomorrow's language learners need most?

Communication is still the most integral part of language learning. Other than that, tomorrow's language learner will need critical thinking ability to sift through the information overflow that we are currently experiencing. With the advancement of information technology, they will also need to know how to leverage digital tools to keep up with the ever-changing world.



Teachers of German during a teacher training workshop at United Kenya Club ©Godfrey Owii

TEACHER TRAININGS FOR EXCELLENCE

Under our German Language Education Cooperation programme (BKD), we regularly offer trainings for teachers of German. Most of them take an in-person format and are hosted in Germany. Not only does this present an avenue for teachers from different countries to connect, but it also exposes them to everyday life in contemporary Germany. In 2025, we focused on improving their digital literacy competencies in classrooms. These skills allow them to compete with a fast-changing world, improve their learners' experience by utilizing audiovisual tools.

To offer these trainings to a wider audience, we provided regional seminars for the teachers (two in Kenya, one in Bujumbura, one in Kampala). We also explored aspects of lesson planning and creative lesson design in teaching German as a foreign language. Narrowing down the scope of the seminars this way strengthens the regional community of teachers and encourages an understanding of their specific pain points.

We have also offered German language scholarships to the teachers to improve their teaching skills and strengthen their qualifications for teaching advanced or specialized courses:

- nine Pedagogical Exchange Service scholarships at vocational schools and academic secondary schools

- seven online scholarships for methodology/didactics in on-line teaching (three in Kenya, one in Burundi, one in Rwanda, two in Uganda)

SCHOOL VISITS

We were thrilled to host a total of 13 high schools as part of our school visit programme. With these visits, we continue to actively promote the German language and familiarize the younger generation with our work and let them into our space.

Students learning German from various high schools interacted with our staff, accessed learning materials from our library and got to know the benefits of furthering their knowledge of the language after school, all while having good fun! They also learnt about programmes they can take part in after school or during holidays such as the pre-university study-bridge programme and "Mein Weg nach Deutschland" (My Path to Germany).

Similarly, we visited more than 15 schools and Teacher Trainings Colleges in Burundi, Kenya, Rwanda and Uganda, interacting with pupils and teachers and providing information about career prospects with German.



Jackline Muthoni, teacher of German and trainer during a teacher training workshop at United Kenya Club ©Godfrey Owii



Nicholas Ndege, teacher of German and trainer during a teacher training workshop at United Kenya Club ©Godfrey Owii

THE YEAR IN PICTURES



- 1 Artist Talk as part of *The Ties that Bind*, an exhibition that brought together 5 artists' practices who were part of Sasa Nairobi Fellowship ©Humphrey Gateri
- 2 Jaridu, a dance performance by Jared Onyango ©Humphrey Gateri
- 3 Checkmate Mido performing his sophomore album *Ua* ©Humphrey Gateri
- 4 Zine from the exhibition *Qinfolk* highlighting the artists involved and the curatorial approach ©Juelz Laval
- 5 Namikoye Wanjala next to her artwork during the *Qinfolk* exhibition opening ©Juelz Laval

- 6 *Stories woven in Fabric* workshop by Sachy Atieno as part of *The Ties that Bind* ©Humphrey Gateri
- 7 From left: Gisemba Ursula as Kathi and Theresa Seraphin as Pete performing *This Plot is not for Sale* ©Humphrey Gateri
- 8 Niklas Obermann, curator of *The Ties that Bind* ©Humphrey Gateri
- 9 *Stories woven in Fabric* workshop ©Humphrey Gateri
- 10 Film maker, Zippy Kimundu, during the screening of her film: *Our Land, Our Freedom* ©Humphrey Gateri

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Macondo Literary Festival
Make-it-in-Germany
Martin-Roth-Initiative
Mengo Senior School
Mother of Apostles Seminary
Naam Festival
Nadharia
NBO Film Festival
NBO LitFest
NCAI
Niklas Obermann
Open Ground Wuppertal
PEN Kenya
Pungulu Pa Productions
Qwani
Santuri East Africa
Sifa Arts (Playreading KE)
Soma Nami Bookshop
Spielart Festival Munich
Start A Library Fund
State Department of Diaspora, Ministry of Foreign Affairs
State House Girls
Tangaza Magazine
The MIST
TICAH
University of Nairobi - Literature Department
UN Women
WAI Network
Wangari the Storyteller
Wanjeri Gakuru
Zamaleo Acts
Zippy Kimundu

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