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British Council's Creative DNA fashion programme adjusts grant facility to support creative businesses through challenging times brought on by COVID-19

Through strategic partnerships in Kenya and the UK the Creative DNA (CDNA) programme explores three areas of work namely; research & insight, policy and advocacy and business support. Through the focus on research and insight the British Council will publish a needs analysis report for the Kenyan fashion sector produced by Collective RW and independent UK researcher Jan Miller; a case study on one of Kenya's oldest markets, Uhuru Markets in partnership with HEVA Fund; as well as an analysis of the potential use for alternative fibers and raw materials in Kenya led by the Kenyan chapter of Fashion Revolutionaries.

The British Council is working with local fashion designers to boost the growth of a sustainable creative industry in the face of the Covid-19 pandemic through a programme aimed at developing their skills, knowledge and global networks. Led by Kenyan partner, Metta Nairobi, and supported by UK based partner Fashion Scout, 11 fashion businesses will be immersed in a 12-month incubator programme between February 2020 and February 2021 that includes a bootcamp, a digital fashion showcase, competitive seed funding and a UK study visit scheduled for 2021. In response to the COVID-19 pandemic and the challenges this has and will continue to pose on creative businesses in Kenya, the CDNA programme will make available 11 seed grants valued at Ksh 3,580,000 from the initial Pre - COVID 19 allocation of five seed grants that were each valued at KSH 655,000. This has been done to increase the ability of all participants to innovate and chart a new path for their businesses.

In response to the potential risks associated with a physical fashion showcase the programme will be presenting an innovative, digital fashion showcase scheduled for an online launch in August 2020. With support from a Creative Director, each designer will have a curated digital room that highlights their work and inspiration. The showcase will increase the visibility of the 11 designers and ideally grow their customer base in Kenya and the UK.

The British Council's Programme Manager Kenya and East Africa, Sandra Chege says: "COVID-19 presented an opportunity to reimagine the impact of this programme and work with partners to ensure the businesses receive the creative, financial and business support they need to withstand the impact of the pandemic on the industry. The cohort has put forward pragmatic plans for the seed funding and we look forward to working with the team to strengthen their skills and networks and make connections with their peers in the UK."

Ms. Sandra Chege adds that "we are excited about the potential of the digital showcase to show bold and contemporary work from Kenya and connect with a global audience in new and impactful ways."

With support from the Foreign Commonwealth Office (FCO) this programme will also publish a needs analysis report for the Kenyan fashion sector produced by Collective RW and independent UK researcher Jan Miller. The paper is an in-depth analysis into the Kenyan Fashion ecosystem

and provides recommendations for sector improvements on existing supply chains, fashion business models, access to markets and finance, education among others.

With support from the British Council, HEVA Fund, will publish a case study on one of Kenya's oldest markets, Uhuru Market which has one of the highest concentration of tailors, primarily focused on uniform making. The findings of the action research is poised to inform a national strategy on the textile industry, whose implementation will help the local garment manufacturing sector, and also reduce Kenya's reliance on imported clothing.

In partnership with the British Council, Fashion Revolution Kenya will publish an analysis of the potential use for alternative fibres and raw materials in the development of Fashion textiles in Kenya. The findings of this recently completed paper are highly anticipated as it comes at a time when COVID-19 has disrupted international supply chains, specifically China, the world's largest manufacturing hub. The Kenyan Textile and Apparel industry is at a pivotal stage as there are many governmental initiatives set up to grow the sector. 'The industrial shutdown may have a silver lining for climate change as global populations have had no choice, but to source locally and travel less.' Wangari Nyanjui, Chair, Fashion Revolution Kenya.

Notes to Editors:

Sub-Saharan Africa Arts is a British Council programme creating connections between creatives from: Ethiopia; Kenya; Rwanda; South Sudan; Sudan; Tanzania; Uganda; Zambia; Zimbabwe; Malawi, Mozambique, Mauritius, Namibia, Botswana, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Ghana, South Africa and the UK.

Sub-Saharan Africa Arts believes in: making new art happen; showcasing new art to audiences; sharing skills and forging networks between the creative sectors of the UK and SSA.

Creative Enterprise: the British Council offers individuals and organisations training in business and digital skills, networking events, access to new markets and connections to resources. You can read about the Creative Enterprise [programme here](#)

Our work in Fashion in Kenya: in addition to the Creative Enterprise training outlined above, the British Council has supported research in the fashion sector.

Have a look through the resources below

<https://www.britishcouncil.org/east-africa-arts/research-landing>

<http://www.hevafund.com/news/tag/Creative+Industries+Ease+of+Doing+Business+Reports>

Creative DNA Partners

Fashion Scout: Fashion Scout, the international showcase for fashion pioneers, is the UK's largest independent showcase for emerging and established design talent during London Fashion Week. Fashion Scout is renowned for championing, nurturing and showcasing creative design talent from around the globe.

Metta Nairobi: Metta is Nest Groups' physical and digital entrepreneurs' network, where they bring together founders, entrepreneurs, policy-makers, academics and investors to collaborate.

Nest Group we is committed to creating collaborative environments that help corporates, startups, and our investors scale and succeed.