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ENGLISH EDITION

MAGAZINE

K-WORLD

Bimonthly news publication for African entrepreneurs and investors, July - August 2026, No. 21

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Special Report

The Cultural Economy in Africa

Markets, capabilities and the circulation of value in the creative industries.

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On the cover

Talent becomes a capability when it can be passed on. In workshops, studios and creative businesses, passing know-how on gives it continuity and enables a team to sustain production. ▸▸ *Report page 26*

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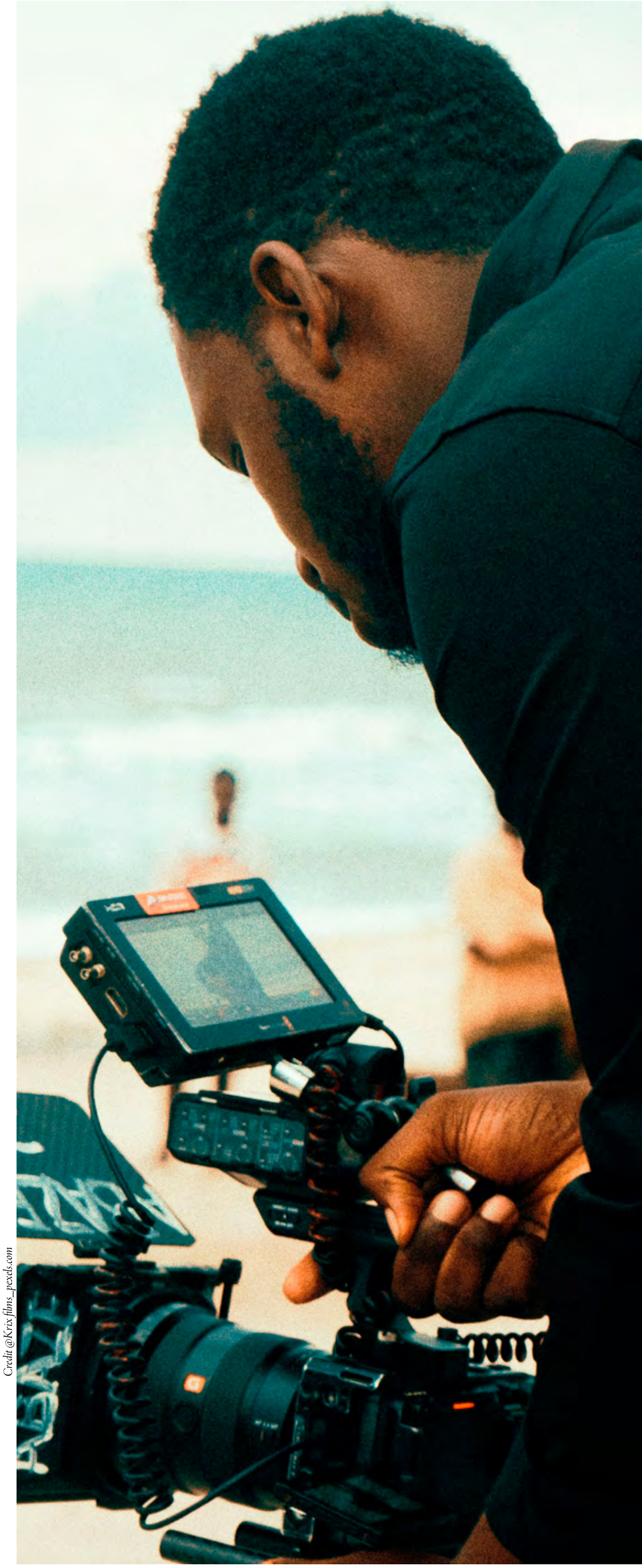

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Editorial

Twenty issues already… and still the same desire to understand!

by Nathalie DAOUDA

When I think back on the twenty issues of K-World published so far, I do not see a neatly ordered collection of answers. I see, above all, questions, encounters, convictions sometimes confirmed, sometimes challenged… and that enduring desire to understand what lies behind what we observe.
You know me a little by now: questions often interest me more than answers that have settled too comfortably 😄.

With each issue, our curiosity has been matched by a growing commitment to rigour. We have learned to slow down, return to the facts and follow the mechanisms through to their concrete effects. African realities rarely fit neatly within a single category or model. K-World has matured by observing them as they are lived and as they change.

That is how, for this twenty-first issue, we came to explore the world of African cultural and creative industries.

Their vitality is familiar to us. It accompanies us through life, shapes our imaginaries and travels far beyond the places where it is created. The economic conditions that allow this energy to endure are far less visible. That is where K-World 21 has chosen to focus.

Other very practical concerns also find their place in this issue. What would it take for savings to finance more productive assets? Under what conditions does public procurement genuinely strengthen the capabilities of local suppliers? What price does a business pay for access to reliable electricity?

Continuity also depends on what happens within the organisation itself. Can a business continue making decisions, learning and serving its customers beyond its founder? What remains of an investment in a machine when the skills, spare parts or information required to maintain it are unavailable? And when a still-viable business goes through a crisis, under what conditions can it be reorganised and preserved?

I like having these questions sit side by side in the same issue. They are part of the everyday reality of companies, where capital, skills, energy, governance and the production system inevitably intersect. They also bring us back to the idea, present in K-World from the beginning, that economic capacity is measured not only by what has been created or acquired, but by what can continue to function over time.

This issue also marks a step that means a great deal to me. For the first time, K-World will be available in English.

Our perspective has always travelled beyond linguistic boundaries. This new edition will simply help the ideas, experiences and analyses we share

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travel further. It will allow new readers to join the conversation and, I hope, enrich it in turn.

I want readers to find the same K-World in both languages, with the same freedom of thought, the same attention to local realities and the same rigour.

To those who have been with the magazine since its earliest days, I want to say thank you. Your loyalty, your responses and sometimes your disagreements have sustained this adventure. To those who are discovering us through this issue, welcome to our world.

Twenty issues later, I have no fewer questions. I simply have more experiences, voices and readers with whom to explore them. And I am glad of it.

I hope you all enjoy the issue.

Hotep!

Special Report

The Cultural Economy in Africa

Markets, capabilities and the circulation of value in the creative industries.

The **Ojude Oba festival** is a major cultural event celebrated annually in Ijebu-Ode, southwestern Nigeria. It traditionally takes place on the third day after the Muslim festival of Eid al-Kabir to pay homage to the traditional ruler, the Awujale of Ijebuland. This historic gathering has become a powerful symbol of cultural unity, bringing together Nigerians of all faiths. The event is world-renowned for its spectacular fashion parade, featuring age-grade groups dressed in sumptuous traditional fabrics such as Aso Oke. Finally, warrior families perform a majestic and colourful equestrian parade in front of the royal palace.

Sources : The Guardian Nigeria, Vanguard News Nigeria, Premium Times Nigeria

Ojube Oba Festival - Ogun State (Nigeria) - Credit @ OladeleOlaniyi_pexels.com

Introduction to the Special Feature

The Creative Economy Begins in Real Life.

People do not necessarily think of themselves as "buying culture". They choose a hairstyle, order an outfit for a celebration or give physical form to the memory of someone they have lost. Each decision can create work for a producer, turn a need into an order and end in payment. That is the first visible trace of creative demand.

By The Editorial Team

At a hair salon in Sègbèya, Cotonou, the price list reveals one such transaction. Cornrows start at XOF 3,000. Braids are priced according to the requested style, length and density, while special designs are priced separately.

Those few lines contain the essentials of an economic exchange. A client chooses a style and explains what she wants. The stylist brings technique, time and experience to the job, alongside any materials required for the service. The agreed result is delivered at a stated price. The transaction is already identifiable before it appears in a statistical category.

Most accounts of the cultural and creative industries begin with established sectors such as music, film, fashion, design, publishing and the visual arts. These categories are essential to data, public policy and value-chain analysis. Demand starts earlier, with the choice that prompts a purchase.

A person may want to present themselves in a particular way, or a family may be preparing for an important occasion. A community has a celebration to organise; relatives have a memory to preserve. In each case, a need prompts a creative choice. That choice becomes an order, mobilising work that results in a product or service and a payment.

The transaction becomes visible through this progression.

Start With What People Are Trying to Do.

The ways in which people present themselves, make a home, learn, celebrate, express faith, seek entertainment, pass knowledge on and preserve memory do not fit neatly within sector boundaries. Yet each of these pursuits can generate specific creative work.

Self-presentation may involve hairstyling, clothing, photography or make-up. A celebration may call for outfits, scenography, music, images or specially designed objects. Memory may be expressed through a portrait, a story, a ceremony or an object created to represent a person and their life.

Credit@Jagaba_pexels.com

The creative economy does not encompass every expense associated with these occasions. Only the part that is commissioned, produced and paid for because of its form, meaning, use or the experience it creates belongs to the transaction under examination.

Sector classifications can scatter this demand across several categories and obscure the range of producers serving it. Established businesses, workshops, studios, neighbourhood businesses and independent professionals serve that demand on different operating cycles. Identifying the buyer, the work required, the agreed result and the payment confirms that a transaction occurred. It does not yet reveal the size or depth of the market.

When a Shared Occasion Leads to an Order.

Preparations for Tabaski, or Eid al-Adha, in Dakar in 2026 show how a shared occasion becomes work for tailoring workshops. Fabric purchases and negotiations begin before the festival, after which orders accumulate with tailors. In workshops interviewed by the Senegalese national daily Le Soleil, some professionals had stopped accepting new clients while others worked late into the night to finish the garments they had promised.

This saturation does not reveal the profit earned. The workshops' accounts, input costs, deposits received and final payments are not available. It nevertheless shows that a collective occasion can generate identifiable demand, with an expected product, a deadline and working capacity to mobilise.

The creative transaction does not cover the entire budget devoted to Tabaski. Here, it lies in the garment ordered and the work required to design, fit and make it. Other festival spending follows its own economic paths and cannot be included in an estimate of the creative economy without evidence.

The transaction is therefore visible in the tailor's order book long before it appears in an aggregate for the cultural and creative industries. The festival gives the purchase its meaning and deadline. The workshop turns that expectation into a tangible good.

When Memory Takes Shape.

In Greater Accra, some Ga families commission figurative coffins shaped to evoke the occupation, status or passions of the deceased. A fish, a camera, a vehicle or an object associated with a profession may provide the starting point for the design.

Making one brings several crafts together. Craftspeople must interpret the family's request, design the form, shape and sculpt the wood, then paint and finish the object. Workshops interviewed by the Associated Press indicated a production time of around two weeks and prices starting at approximately USD 700, depending on the materials and complexity of the design.

The figures neither represent Ghanaian funerals as a whole nor describe every practice within Ga communities. Within that scope, the exchange is clear. A family expresses a commemorative intention, which a workshop interprets and turns into an object that is designed, made, delivered and paid for.

Memory initiates the creative work without losing its social meaning. The object is not merely a decorative addition to funeral expenditure. Its form represents the deceased and responds to a request expressed by the family. The economic dimension lies precisely in turning that intention into a commission.

Three Situations, One Common Mechanism.

The hairstyle created in Cotonou, the outfit ordered in Dakar and the figurative coffin made in Greater Accra are not three versions of the same market. Their frequency, prices, producers and meanings cannot be compared. They nevertheless share a sequence: an intention defines what is needed; a professional interprets it and applies their skill; the agreed result is delivered and paid for.

Taken together, the cases reveal a varied economic landscape. They do not establish a homogeneous continental market, and a few observed prices cannot measure one. They show that everyday needs, collective occasions and acts of remembrance already generate paid creative work in Cotonou, Dakar and Greater Accra.

The next questions are practical. Who places the order, what do they expect to receive, who produces it, how is the price set, and what evidence confirms that the exchange took place? Together, the answers turn demand from a broad cultural intuition into an observable economic fact.

What Statistics Do Not Fully Capture.

Official statistics have to organise this variety into structures that can be used across activities and countries. The 2025 UNESCO Framework for Cultural Statistics divides the cultural and creative ecosystem into several domains and stages of value generation. Its classification guide connects those domains with the

Credit@Kenechukwu Emmanuel_pexels.com

statistical instruments available to observe them. These tools also show why measurement remains difficult across activities delivered through different media, organisations and business models.

In July 2026, the UNESCO Institute for Statistics indicated that the international indicator framework for culture and the cultural and creative industries was still under development. Comparable data continue to depend on the classifications, surveys, registers and statistical capabilities of individual countries.

Activities missing from the data do not automatically belong to the cultural and creative industries. Yet a verifiable transaction can take place without appearing in an aggregate labelled “creative economy”. Sector-based statistics may therefore miss creative functions that people already commission and pay for.

Starting with demand helps narrow that gap. Once an order has been identified, the analysis can trace it back to the occupations, capabilities, channels and economic categories involved.

Seeing the Market Without Inflating It.

Clear boundaries prevent this wider lens from inflating the market. In Sègbèya, the observed transaction is the hairstyling service, not the client’s entire beauty budget. In Dakar, it is the garment ordered and the tailor’s work, not all spending associated with Tabaski. In Greater Accra, it is the coffin that is designed and made, not the total cost of the funeral.

The three examples cannot be added together to produce a market figure. Estimating market size would require the number and frequency of orders, their average value, their geographic scope and the exact share of creative work within each item of expenditure. Those data are not available. The cases answer an earlier question. They show how to recognise a creative transaction before attempting to measure the market.

For entrepreneurs, institutions and investors, this is a practical starting point. Existing orders reveal where buyers already spend and which capabilities producers need to serve them more consistently. The opportunity lies in responding better to that demand, making each exchange easier to trace and strengthening the businesses and professionals who turn needs into goods, services and experiences.

The creative economy therefore begins in real life, when an intention mobilises work and becomes a transaction. For a business or investor, that trace opens the analysis. Order frequency, margins and the ability to deliver will then show whether the activity can grow and receive capital. ■

Major life situations and the cultural economies they activate.

A creative transaction becomes visible when an intention mobilises work and results in a deliverable that is paid for.

❶ Life Situations

Present Oneself • Make A Home • Learn • Celebrate
Express Faith • Seek Entertainment • Pass On • Remember

They may mobilise forms, images, stories, objects, experiences and skills.

❷ From Intention to Transaction

Intention → Expectation → Work → Deliverable → Payment

❸ Three Observed Transactions

Sègbèya, Cotonou
Present Oneself
Hairstyling
Strating at
XOF 3,000
Observable price list.

Dakar, Tabaski 2026
Celebrate
Made-to-Order Garment
Observable Order
Order books closed to new clients before the deadline.

Greater Accra
Ga Communities
Remember
Figurative Coffin
Starting at
≈ 2 weeks, ≈ USD 700
Identifiable Order, production and Payment

The transaction appears when intention meets productive capability and leads to payment.

Methodological note: *These three transactions come from different places, uses and price levels. They cannot be compared or added together.*

Analysis

Cultural Markets Run on More Than One Clock.

A religious festival, a tourist season or an events calendar creates a window within which operators have to organise orders, allocate production capacity and plan spending. Revenue then depends on the volume of demand actually served, payments collected and costs incurred. Reading these rhythms helps distinguish social recurrence from genuine economic predictability.

By The Editorial Team

In March 2024, the Ghana Tourism Authority and the Beyond the Return Secretariat invited organisers to submit events for possible inclusion in the official December in GH calendar. Applications were due by 30 April for a season running from 15 November 2024 to 15 January 2025.

The call set in motion a selection and preparation cycle several months before audiences arrived. It did not specify when each organiser booked a venue, hired suppliers or paid the first deposits. It nevertheless revealed the central economic gap: the public season lasted two months, while the first operating decisions had to be made much earlier.

By the time audiences arrive, producers may already have begun work, committed capacity and incurred costs.

A Known Date Creates a Planning Horizon.

Creative goods and services respond to different rhythms. Some belong to everyday life; others accompany weddings, births, funerals or commemorations. Religious festivals concentrate orders around a known deadline, while tourist seasons and cultural programs bring several offers together within the same period.

These calendars create different lead times and operating needs. A routine service may be prepared and paid for within a short cycle. An outfit for a festival has to be ordered, fitted and delivered by a fixed date. An event may require months of coordination for a few hours or days of operation.

A known deadline provides a planning horizon. Demand volume, revenue and market stability still have to be established from records of orders, volumes delivered, payments received and costs incurred across comparable cycles. Until that history exists, the calendar remains a useful commercial signal rather than evidence of economic performance.

Credit@Bobography_pexels.com

In Dakar, a Deadline Meets Production Capacity.

By early May 2026, preparations for Tabaski were under way at Tilène Market in Médina, Dakar. Customers were examining fabrics, comparing prices and looking for tailors who could still take an order. One customer told Le Soleil that she had started early to protect her budget and find a professional with room in the order book.

In the workshops around Gueule-Tapée Market, orders were piling up. Accessories, trimmings, electricity and workspace rent were among the costs mentioned. Some professionals were working until four in the morning. Tailor Mbaye Cissé had already stopped accepting new orders so that he could deliver the outfits he had promised.

The mechanism is clear. The festival sets the delivery deadline. The order book defines how much work the workshop can complete before then. Closing it signals that this particular workshop has reached capacity. Longer hours may absorb part of the surge, but working time imposes a physical limit. Beyond it, the workshop has to refuse orders or risk late delivery.

This saturation marks the workshop's production limit, but it reveals neither profit nor an immediate case for investment in equipment. The report provides no figures for orders refused, margin per outfit, deposits, final payments or off-season activity. Those data are needed to distinguish a temporary bottleneck from a lasting need for more capacity.

In Ghana, Preparation Starts Before the Public Season.

For December in GH, the relationship between calendar and capacity unfolds over a longer cycle. The March call for events scheduled between November and January confirms that programming begins well in advance, without revealing the financial commitments of any one event.

After the 2022–2023 season, Ghanaian organiser George Quaye described large venues as scarce and expensive, with limited capacity. He also pointed to production costs and the risk that higher ticket prices would reduce attendance. In his account, several events merely broke even or lost money.

His comments come from an organiser rather than audited accounts or a representative sample. They nonetheless establish a credible mechanism and an important limit: concentrated demand during a visible season does not guarantee that the productions serving it will be profitable.

The calendar shows when demand is expected. Event economics then depend on venue and production costs, ticket revenue actually collected, additional income and the timing of those receipts. The public season and the financial cycle do not necessarily run on the same clock.

From Attendance to Revenue and Margin.

The economics of a December event require separate measures. Attendance captures the audience brought together. Revenue comprises the amounts generated by that audience and by other contributors. Margin appears only after those receipts are set against the full cost of production.

Operators interviewed by MyJoyOnline in 2025 said that some shows distributed a substantial share of tickets free of charge to fill venues. They also described an event economy combining ticket sales, sponsorship, partnerships and exhibitor fees, sometimes supplemented by investor funding.

These accounts do not show the weight of each stream or support a calculation of average profitability. They nonetheless separate attendance from ticket revenue and total operating revenue. Investor funding has to be separated from operating revenue, while margin can be calculated only against the full cost of production. A full venue may bring together paying customers, guests, partners and people connected to the production.

An audience can still build recognition, attract partners and support future editions. Its contribution to revenue has to be traced through the number of paid tickets, the average price collected per ticket and other income streams, all set against the full production cost. Capital contributions remain separate from operating income.

Production and Cash Run on Different Clocks.

A creative activity unfolds across at least three moments: the point at which an order is accepted or a project is committed, the period of production and the collection of payment. The intervals between them determine how long an operator has to mobilise resources before the related revenue arrives.

In Dakar, the sources document rising orders, longer working hours and several operating costs, but not the timing of input purchases, deposits or final settlement. In Ghana, they establish advance planning, expensive venues and several types of revenue without providing a matched budget for the contracts, expenditure and receipts of a single event.

Matched records would reveal the financial exposure created by the calendar. Without them, neither a working-capital requirement nor a case for additional capacity can be calculated. For a private financier, the deadline organises questions about advances, expected receipts, how long cash remains committed and the source of repayment. The answers determine whether an investment case exists.

From Recurrence to Predictability.

Tabaski and December in GH return every year. Their recurrence identifies periods when demand may concentrate, while the number of orders, revenue and costs may vary from one cycle to the next. A predictable market requires more than a succession of peaks.

Businesses build predictability by retaining the economic history of these occasions. A workshop can compare when orders began to arrive, when it closed its order book, how many requests it refused and which payments it collected. An organiser can track paid tickets, invitations, revenue by source, venue costs and production expenditure.

These records help teams prepare, secure inputs, reserve scarce resources and anticipate cash requirements more accurately. They also inform investment decisions. Additional equipment or infrastructure has to be assessed against its cost, its use beyond the peak and the additional demand it enables a business to serve.

The Dakar and Ghana cases provide no evidence of such use beyond the peak. They show which records would be needed to move from a recurring season to measurable performance.

What the Calendar Reveals.

A calendar locates the start of the preparation cycle, the period in which demand is likely to concentrate and the point at which a producer reaches the limit of available capacity. It also identifies the evidence still needed to assess revenue, cash exposure and the repeatability of performance.

In Dakar, one tailor’s closed order book shows how a religious deadline can bring a specific workshop to its production limit. In Ghana, applications opening in March place December in GH within a cycle that begins well before the public season. Operators also make clear that high attendance alone is insufficient evidence of profitability.

Cultural markets therefore run on several clocks: the clock of public occasions, the clock of production, and the clock of spending, payments and receipts. Their alignment shapes an operator’s ability to turn a recurring deadline into economically predictable activity.

The calendar is the temporal infrastructure of demand. It tells a business when to prepare and what evidence to retain. Repeated records of orders, payments and costs will show whether a recurring occasion supports predictable economic activity. ■

Credit@Abdullah Sambo_ZionTVGH_pexels.com

Main working sources: *Hafsa Obeng, Ghana News Agency, "December in GH 2024: Call for Event Submissions Opens"; Le Soleil, "Préparatifs Tabaski 2026 : entre rush chez les tailleurs et cherté de la couture"; GBC Ghana Online, "December in Ghana: Events Organisers Are Not Making Any Good Money This Season – George Quaye"; MyJoyOnline, "Half of December Shows in Ghana by Your Favourite Artistes Were All Free – Ruddy Kwakye".*

Location: Accra, Greater Accra Region, Ghana
Snapshot taken during a lively cultural festival in Accra, showcasing traditional attire and jewellery.
Sources : Pexels.com

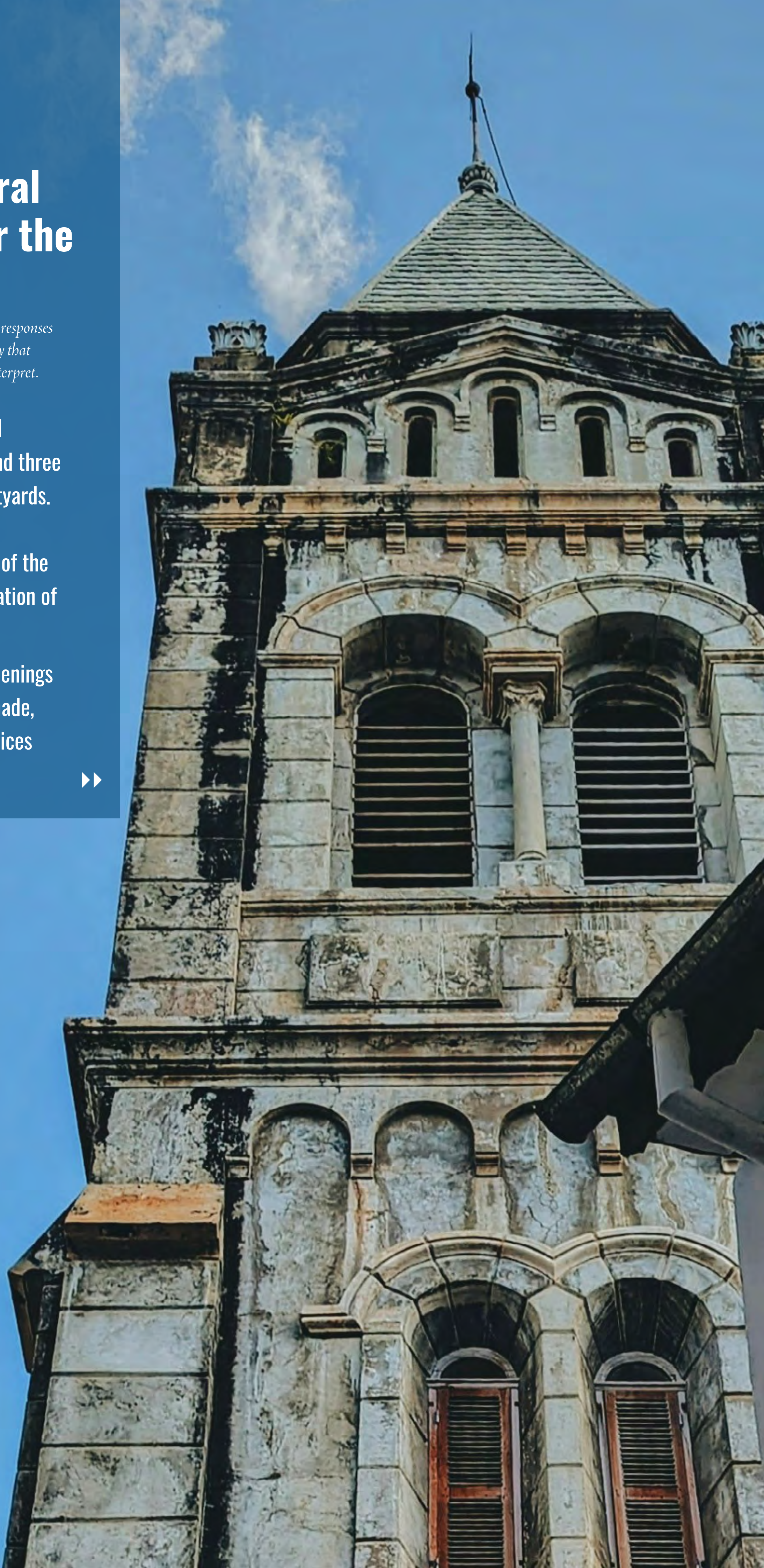
Mini-Series #01

An Architectural Vocabulary for the Present.

Spatial organisation, material choices and responses to climate form an architectural vocabulary that contemporary designers can read and reinterpret.

At Abomey in Benin, the royal palaces were organised around three successive, hierarchical courtyards. Walls and gateways governed movement towards the heart of the palace and made the organisation of power visible.

At Stone Town in Zanzibar, openings encourage air to circulate. Shade, room layout and material choices respond to climate and use. ▸▸



Stone Town, Zanzibar, Tanzania - Credit@Samuel Mwamburi_Unsplash.com

Sources: (1) Palais royaux d'Abomey - Portail du patrimoine culturel du Bénin
(2) The Use of Local Materials for the Interior Quality of Swahili Building Design in Tanzania - Luiana Makundi ; Jacob Lutta — University of Dar es Salaam
(3) Conservation and Design Guidelines for Stone Town — Timber Elements - Stone Town Conservation and Development Authority (STCDA), Zanzibar
(4) Burkina Institute of Technology (BIT) - Kéré Architecture
(5) Stone Town of Zanzibar - UNESCO World Heritage Centre

At Koudougou in Burkina Faso, the Burkina Institute of Technology brings a local vocabulary into a contemporary university program. Completed in 2020, it combines cast-clay walls, locally sourced eucalyptus, staggered modules and roofs designed to support ventilation.

Set out in a clear design brief, these choices can be understood and adapted from one project to another. Taken together, they provide a design capability across different programs.

Continued use keeps that architectural vocabulary alive. ■

Burkina Institute of Technology (BIT), Koudougou, Burkina Faso - Credit @ Kéré architecture

#MiniSeriesKWorld

Analysis

Cultural Grounding Shapes Creative Renewal.

Places hold languages, stories, techniques, aesthetics and memories that can continually feed contemporary creation. People make these resources productive by understanding them, interpreting and transforming them, and recognising their origins.

By The Editorial Team

In 2016, Esther Mahlangu received wood trim panels prepared for the interior of a BMW 7 Series. She brought to them a visual language she already knew intimately. The South African artist had learnt its principles from her mother and grandmother, and understood its compositions, balances, colours and scope for variation.

The new surface introduced its own constraints. The patterns had to fit the dimensions of each panel, find their place within the cabin and withstand the finishing process before installation. Mahlangu adapted her practice to this environment while preserving the continuity between transmitted knowledge, her own artistic practice and the contemporary form of the object.

BMW supplied the prepared panels. Their distinctiveness came from Mahlangu's ability to transpose a visual grammar formed long before the collaboration.

The case makes the productive function of cultural grounding visible. A deeply understood repertoire supplies principles of composition, meanings and methods that guide new design decisions.

A Resource That Guides Creative Decisions.

Creative work takes shape through a sequence of choices. Designers give form to an object, build a narrative, shape an atmosphere or conceive the experience offered to an audience. Some of those decisions draw on knowledge developed and transmitted over time.

A technique holds the memory of the materials, tools and gestures required to achieve a result. A language connects concepts, images and sounds that influence how a story is told. An aesthetic system establishes relationships between forms, colours and meanings.

Here, material refers to this repertoire of knowledge available for design. It extends beyond visible motifs. It includes the logic needed to understand why a form exists, what it means, how it may vary and the conditions under which it remains coherent.

Cultural grounding connects a

BMW Art Car at Iziko South African National Gallery, 2024. - Credit@ Clint Strydom © Esther Mahlangu and BMW AG (02/2024)

contemporary creation to the knowledge that helped shape it. The same source can support several interpretations according to the creator, medium and intended use. Its depth creates a durable space for exploration.

In economic terms, cultural abundance lies in the range of creative decisions supported by a repertoire. Archives, languages, objects and practices preserve part of it. Its living continuity rests with people who explain, practise and transmit it.

Interpretation Shapes the Work.

Turning this material into contemporary creative work requires research and interpretation. Creators study sources, observe uses, speak with practitioners and examine the relationships between forms and meanings. That knowledge helps them select relevant elements and adapt them to the intended medium.

This is a form of research and development. K-World observed in Issue 19, devoted to cultural reclamation, that research and development helps creators understand, formalise, adapt and improve resources found within a place. In the cultural and creative industries, that process turns historical, aesthetic or technical depth into contemporary design capability.

Mahlangu's intervention makes the mechanism visible within a single object. The form of the wood trim and its integration into the car set the technical frame. Her knowledge of the Ndebele visual language supplied the resources needed to compose within it.

Innovation arises in the relationship between a repertoire the creator has mastered and a new use. It relies on understanding the source as well as mastering the medium to which it is adapted.

This interpretive capability allows a language to feed several narrative worlds, a technique to find its way into different objects or a memory to inspire experiences for distinct audiences. The depth of the underlying knowledge gives creators room to design new forms without mechanically repeating the same sign.

When Meaning Enters the Design Process.

In Ghana, the use of Adinkra symbols in the set of Ghana's Most Beautiful shows a different way in which cultural knowledge shapes production. A study by Sika Koomson describes how symbols were selected for their meanings and adapted to the program's set design.

The set has to work at studio scale, remain legible on camera and accommodate three-dimensional forms, lighting and movement. In this environment, Adinkra contributes both visual form and a layer of meaning to the production's identity. The symbols enter the design of the space itself and locate the program within a recognisable Ghanaian context.

Cultural material guides several decisions by the production team. It influences composition, atmosphere and the coherence of the environment presented to the audience. Its origin remains identifiable as the form enters contemporary television production.

The cases draw on different forms of knowledge. Esther Mahlangu interprets a living practice transmitted within her family and community. For Ghana's Most Beautiful, a design team draws on a documented symbolic system. In both, the quality of the transformation depends on the knowledge guiding the choices.

Neither case measures the commercial effect of cultural grounding or supports a general conclusion about other productions. They show, more precisely, how knowledge rooted in a particular context enters a contemporary design process.

Building a Capability for Renewal.

Continuous research, documentation and interpretation allow organisations to turn this material into productive capability. Records of provenance, the meanings attached to forms and the lessons drawn from earlier work gradually build an organisational memory.

Each project can then strengthen the next. Technical trials improve command of different media, collaboration opens access to other forms of knowledge, and observation of use clarifies which forms work in a new context.

The first result then provides a base for learning and for developing new objects, content and experiences without mechanically reproducing the same expression.

For an entrepreneur or investor, this capability is visible in the continuity of creative direction, the range of applications and the team's ability to explain its decisions. An organisation that retains the memory of its research and experience gradually expands its design repertoire.

That continuity also depends on relationships with the people who carry the knowledge being used. Attribution preserves the trace of origin and makes contributions visible. Authorisation and value-sharing arrangements depend on the creation, the community and the applicable law.

The cases make the transformation visible and, in Mahlangu's case, provide explicit individual attribution. They establish neither collective consent, remuneration for people who carry the knowledge being used, nor systematic value sharing. Cultural abundance does not place this material outside questions of permission, attribution or responsibility.

Respecting this boundary also protects productive capability. People who master a language, gesture, symbol or memory can clarify meanings, identify sensitive uses and open new paths for interpretation. The quality of the relationship supports both the depth of research and the continuity of creation.

Cultural grounding functions as an innovation infrastructure rooted in place. Research reveals the available resources, interpretation turns them into design decisions and productive experience broadens their applications over time.

Its continuity rests on people who understand, practise and transmit the knowledge involved. As that knowledge circulates and deepens, it supports creative renewal while strengthening the shared human capability on which future work depends. ■

Main working sources: *BMW Group, "BMW Individual 7 Series by Esther Mahlangu"; Sika Koomson, "Symbolic Splendour: Integrating Adinkra Symbols in Ghana's Most Beautiful Set Design"; Boatema Boateng, The Copyright Thing Doesn't Work Here: Adinkra and Kente Cloth and Intellectual Property in Ghana; K-World Issue 19, "Repenser l'ingénierie endogène et structurer les filières".*

Symboles Adinkra - Credit@DesignINKZ_stock.adobe.com

Analysis

From Individual Talent to Shared Capability.

Know-how creates value in the hands of the person who has mastered it. Transmission places that value within a team able to share responsibility, deliver a result and continue the work across successive projects. Talent then forms part of productive human capital.

By The Editorial Team

A Team Ready to Produce.

In October 2021, the Africa Digital Media Academy (ADMA) in Rwanda assigned fifteen students to cover the country's national skills competition. Two ADMA graduates led the team. Together, they produced live broadcasts, videos and photographs, and conducted thirteen interviews. Their work covered the full sequence from preparation to postproduction.

Each contribution had to feed into the work of others. Footage moved into editing. Interviews required preparation, direction and processing. Content had to be ready at the expected time. The graduates translated their experience into instructions the students could use, while the students made their own decisions under real production conditions.

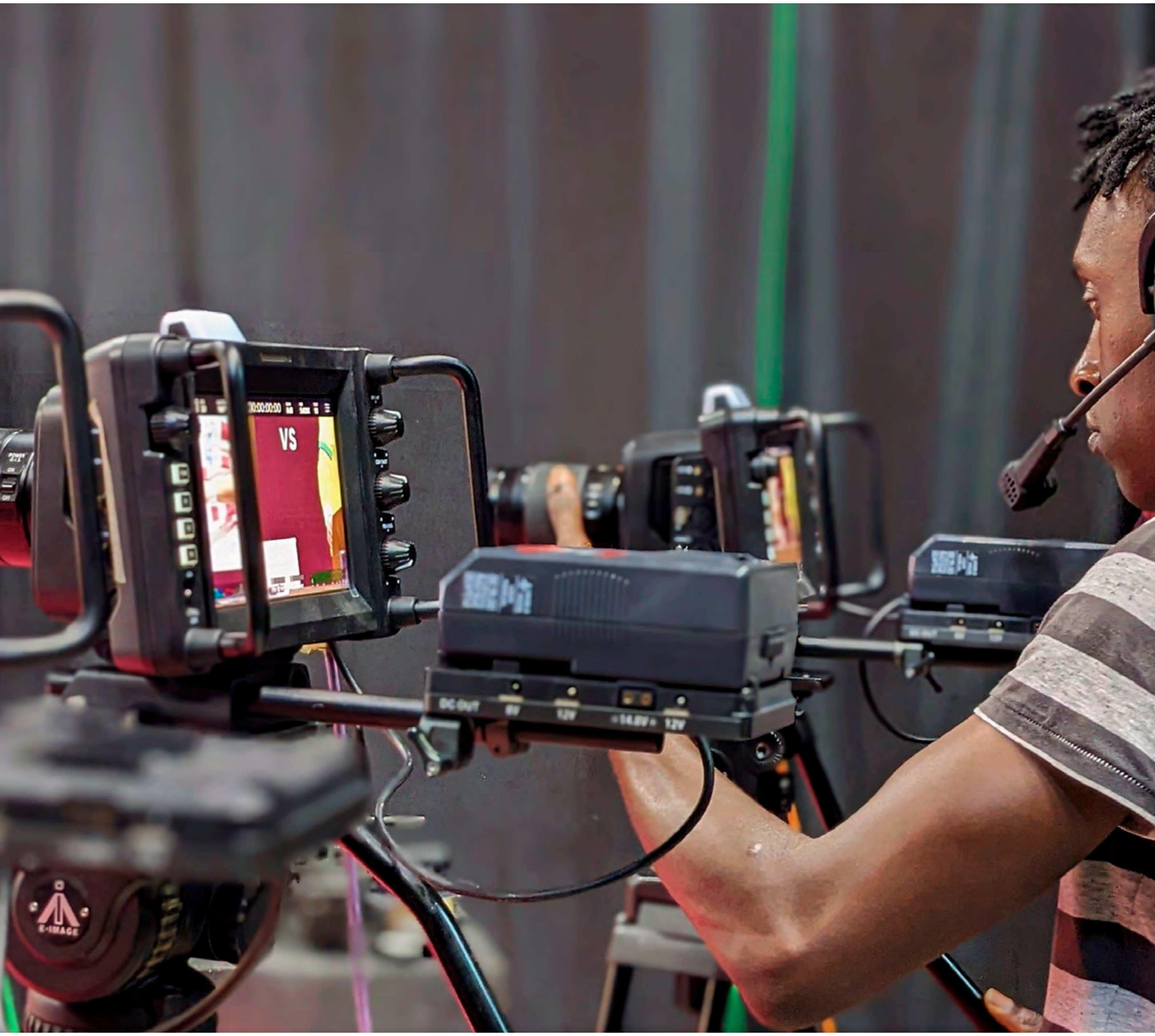
Collective capability lies in this continuity. It connects skills, responsibilities, equipment and a timetable around an identifiable result. For the organiser, it provides a team able to take responsibility for the assignment. For the producing organisation, it distributes the work and opens the prospect of further projects without concentrating execution in one person.

That capability gives talent an economic reach. A writer, craftsperson, designer, technician or director holds distinctive know-how. When practitioners articulate and transmit that knowledge, and connect it with complementary skills, it enters an organised production process.

Making Knowledge Shareable.

Much creative know-how remains embodied in gesture, habit and experience. A master craftsperson recognises the tension in a material. An art director sees the balance of a composition. An editor knows when a sequence has found its rhythm. These decisions often appear intuitive because practice has refined them over time.

K-World Issue 19 described the move from practice to protocol as



Credit@Isaiah Ekele_pexels.com

the work of making tacit knowledge transmissible, testable and open to improvement. A protocol may remain oral, visual or gestural. It might take the form of a narrated demonstration, a model, an order of execution, guided repetition or a few control points. Its purpose is to reveal the decisions that shape the result.

In a textile workshop, this shared language helps an apprentice recognise an accurate cut or a well-resolved finish. In an audiovisual team, it guides the preparation of a shot, file naming, footage handover and the checks that make images usable in postproduction. In both settings, experience gradually becomes available to others.

Families, workshops, professional communities, schools and digital platforms already support this circulation. Each route can organise observation, practice, correction and progression. Together, they widen the possibilities for learning throughout a professional life.

The experienced practitioner is then able to entrust part of the work to someone else without abandoning the required standard. The learner knows what remains to be mastered before taking on more responsibility. The organisation gains reference points for bringing in new members and allocating tasks. For the client, delivery is carried by a team that can be mobilised when needed.

Learning Through Production.

ADMA organises its teaching around tasks and projects in live broadcasting, video, graphic design and animation. Students practise and demonstrate their skills through the work they produce.

A project gives know-how an immediate destination. The learner has to understand a request, hold a role, use the available equipment, meet a deadline and deliver work that others can use. Production reveals which gestures are already secure, where guidance is still needed and how each contribution fits into the whole.

Repetition then consolidates learning. A first production establishes reference points. Later projects give learners room to correct their gestures, refine their decisions and take responsibility for more complex tasks.

The short production cycles observed in Nigerian cinema illuminate the same mechanism at another scale. Each project places teams in a sequence of making, releasing, observing responses and beginning again. Experience accumulated on one production moves into the next.

Every project delivers content, an object or an experience. It also prepares the team for the following cycle. Sharing methods, corrections and working solutions reduces the time needed to learn, supports delegation and strengthens continuity.

When Experience Circulates Back.

Transmission gains another dimension when someone who has been trained returns to guide new learners.

ADMA identifies Faustin Niyigena as a graduate who went on to work for the Rwandan newspaper The New Times. His author profile and published work confirm that he was working professionally. He later returned to share his experience with students.

His path makes a practical loop visible. Skills acquired through training enter a professional environment, deepen through production and return to a new team as advice, correction and responsibility gradually entrusted to others.

The two graduates who led the students at the national skills competition volunteered their time. The case therefore documents a one-off production and mentoring assignment. It also shows that transmission requires time to prepare, demonstrate, observe and correct. A durable organisation has to plan for this work and assign resources to it.

When the workshop, studio or company gives this function a defined place, accumulated experience supports the integration of new skills and the preparation of a next generation. Transmission becomes part of productive activity itself.

Conditions for Continuity.

In its 2024 fact sheet, ADMA reports 410 graduates and a 91% employment or self-employment rate. It attributes the figure to Rwandan government surveys conducted in 2017 and 2023, although the detailed reports are not publicly available within the approved source set.

A Rwanda Development Board study of 994 beneficiaries from a different vocational training program provides a broader view of what shapes the next stage. Continuity depended in part on whether businesses survived, whether equipment suited the work, whether finance was available and whether demand remained regular.

Transmission makes skills deployable. Sustaining their use requires active workshops, studios and companies, accessible equipment, regular orders and income that allows professionals to continue their careers.

For operators, funders and training institutions, the number of people trained is therefore most useful when read alongside the work produced, the responsibilities assumed, the duration of professional pathways and the ability of teams to serve new orders.

Productive capability lies in a team's ability to carry knowledge into delivery and do so again. Its full value emerges when that shared capability meets the other professions, equipment and decisions that production requires. ■

Main working sources: *Africa Digital Media Academy, "ADMA Produces All Event Media Coverage for Rwanda's National Skills Competition", "Training Methodology" and "ADMA Graduates Now Employed as Professionals in the Industry Share Their Knowledge"; The New Times, Faustin Niyigena author profile; Rwanda Development Board, Rapid Response Training Programme — Tracer Study Report; K-World Issue 19, "Repenser l'ingénierie endogène et structurer les filières".*

Credit@Josh Toxic_pexels.com

Mini-Series #02

The Craft Behind Elmina's Makai Hairstyle.

Along Ghana's coast, a cultural form endures through a craft that is taught, practised and paid for.

Elmina is a coastal town in Ghana's Central Region. Each year, the Bakatue Festival gathers the community around the lagoon. During the celebration, Makai remains visible among groups of women who sing and dance.

Once associated with priestesses, it is now worn more widely. The hairstyle may feature one, two or three upright points. Their number and shape were associated with symbolism and the wearer's status.

To build the form, the hairdresser sections the hair, braids it with thread and may join the ends with ribbon. Materials have changed, but the work still demands precision.

Sources: Historical Roots of Makai Hairstyle of Elmina People of Ghana - Lydia Botsio ; Osuanyi Quaicoo Essel ; Emmanuel R. K. Amissah — University of Education, Winneba. High cost of utility tariff is unbearable – Ghana Hairdressers and Beauticians Association laments - Beverly Broohm — MyJoyOnline ; Ghana Hair Dressers and Beauticians Association (GHABA).

Fante traditional hairstyle, associated with the Makai forms mentioned in the article. - Credit @ Kureng Workx_pexels.com

In the salon, Makai is part of a professional practice. Each appointment requires a workstation, products, tools, water and electricity.

According to the Ghana Hair Dressers and Beauticians Association, higher water and electricity costs feed into prices and may lengthen the intervals between visits. The salon economy therefore depends on clients returning with some regularity.

For different clients and occasions, a hairdresser draws on a wider repertoire of styles. Passing on the Makai technique keeps this cultural form alive within the profession. ■

#MiniSeriesKWorld

From life situations to productive capabilities.

When skills, resources, organisation and control can be mobilised together to deliver a good, service or experience consistently, they form a productive capability.

❶ An intended use

Present Oneself • Celebrate • Learn • Seek Entertainment
Pass On • Make A Home • Express Faith • Remember

The need exists before the capability required to meet it consistently.

❷ What must work together

SKILLS
Learn • Practise • Pass On

RESOURCES
Materials • Equipment • Spaces

PRODUCTIVE CAPABILITY
Deliver a good, service or experience consistently.

ORGANISATION
Roles • Coordination • Information • Schedule

CONTROL
Prototype • Verification • Correction • Validation

DELIVER • REPEAT

❸ Operating signals

ADMA - RWANDA
15 students + 2 volunteer graduates

A team able to produce together

THE BLACK BOOK - NIGERIA
Team • Spaces • Equipment • Schedule

Coordination absorbs the unexpected

PANAH - KENYA + ROYALTY - GHANA
Prototype • Monitoring • Control • Deadline

Quality is built before delivery

Productive continuity depends on the strength of these connections.

Methodological note:
DI02 draws on the productive capabilities documented in A04 to A06. It does not anticipate distribution, rights or finance, which are addressed later in the special report.

Analysis

What Holds Creative Production Together.

A film and a school uniform draw on very different materials, professions and timelines. Both depend on work that is largely invisible by the time of delivery: connecting people, resources and decisions until an intention becomes a usable product.

By The Editorial Team

At Tarkwa Bay, the road ended before the location chosen for the filming of The Black Book. The team continued by boat to transport the generator and trucks. The crossing never appears on screen. Some of the film's images would not exist without it.

What the Screen Leaves Behind.

A finished work absorbs much of the labour that made it possible. The viewer encounters characters, rhythm, places and a story. The journeys, trade-offs and adjustments disappear behind the screen.

Beforehand, a script, performers, technical crews, locations, equipment, a timetable and financial resources all had to work together. Creation takes shape through this set of decisions long before the final image appears.

The Black Book moved through locations with very different demands. Tarkwa Bay required a particular logistical solution. The pandemic then halted production and disrupted the timetable on which commitments had been built. The team resumed the project, reorganised the sequence of work and kept the necessary resources in place until completion. A further two years of postproduction turned the material captured on set into a delivered film.

At each stage, one decision changed the conditions of the next. Moving a day of filming affected an actor's availability, an equipment rental, access to a location or the presence of a crew. The producer worked at the centre of these dependencies, translating artistic choices into executable decisions, assigning responsibility and maintaining continuity when events departed from the plan.

This role turns contingencies into action. Each contributor knows what to do, which information to use and when the work is due. Distinct contributions retain their function and converge in a finished form. The film's release on Netflix marked the completion of that chain.

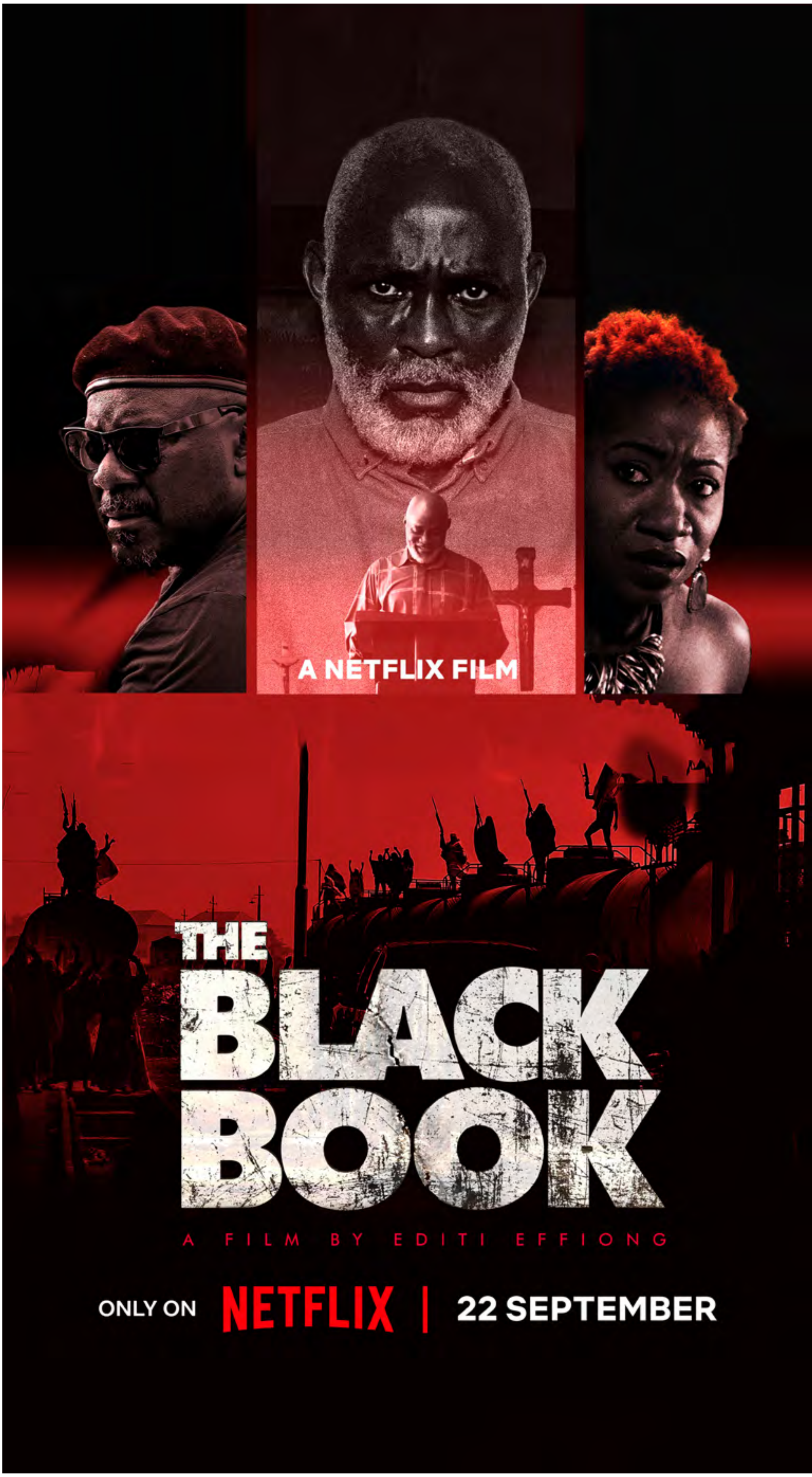
Everyday products depend on the same coordinating work. Their use often makes the requirement more tangible because it imposes a date, a size and a price. At the start of the school year, a uniform has to fit the pupil, remain affordable to the family and be available on time. Between selecting a fabric and that ordinary scene lies a chain of decisions and work.

From Cloth Selection to the School Day.

In Burkina Faso, the introduction of school uniforms made from Faso Dan Fani began with a pilot in 2023–2024 in Ouagadougou, Bobo-Dioulasso, Koudougou and Sabou. In September 2024, the initiative was extended to public and private schools. Pupils were expected to wear the fabric at least on Mondays and Thursdays, although the initiative was not compulsory. Schools and parents could choose motifs and designs, then contract directly with Faso Dan Fani producers.

This arrangement distributed demand across many local orders. Each school had to agree a design, estimate quantities, connect families with producers, secure the fabric and organise garment making. The freedom given to school communities allowed them to adapt the uniform to their setting. It also placed much of the coordination in their hands.

The Fédération nationale des tisseuses du Burkina Faso had identified the difficulty in 2023. A proliferation of motifs fragments volumes and complicates fabric availability. Price



Credit@IMDb.com

differences weigh on family decisions, while traceability and protection against counterfeits require common organisation. The federation proposed distributing production more clearly across areas, simplifying motif choices and bringing prices into closer alignment.

The implications become concrete at workshop level. In February 2025, Caroline Venegda and her colleagues were preparing nearly 400 uniforms for Lycée Nicolas de Preux in Ouagadougou. Behind one school's choice lay the metres of fabric to source, the sizes to prepare, the work to allocate and the date by which several hundred pupils needed their uniforms. The case remains a local order, but it reveals the passage from a decision to production under way.

At the end of the 2024–2025 school year, the ministry reported a declared implementation rate of 25.48%. The figure measures the adoption reported by schools. It does not capture artisans' income or the number of uniforms actually delivered. It shows that the national initiative was still moving gradually into everyday use.

In May 2026, the federation said it had completed substantial orders for schools. It also pointed to the continued use of imported thread, uneven organisation across areas and the need for greater standardisation in weaving. Productive capabilities were present and already in use. Their continuity depended on sound connections between inputs, orders, workshops and places of use. Cultural grounding helped sustain demand; organisation determined whether it reached people as an available product.

Where Coordination Creates Value.

The film and the school uniform belong to different markets, contracts and production rhythms. They reveal the same work required to carry an intention into use.

For The Black Book, coordination sat within a production team able to translate artistic choices into a timetable, technical requirements and trade-offs. In Burkina Faso, it was distributed among the state, schools, families, professional organisations, weavers and tailors.

This work may sit with a company, federation, contract, network or set of rules. It functions when responsibilities are legible and information moves between the people who need to act. Value forms at these interfaces: the location meets the equipment, the motif meets the required volume, the material arrives when the relevant skill is available and production reaches its intended use.

A late material delivery immobilises the work waiting for it. Access rules, maintenance and pricing determine whether shared equipment is genuinely available within a production schedule. The quality of the finished product depends on the strength of these connections between contributions.

These interfaces can also give rise to economic services that often remain out of view. Production offices, supplier networks, planning tools, order tracking and shared workshops reduce uncertainty between participants. When they serve several projects, they become offers in their own right and spare teams from rebuilding the same coordinating mechanisms for each production.

When the viewer watches the film or a pupil puts on the uniform, this work recedes behind the experience. Its disappearance means that coordination problems were absorbed before they reached the recipient.

Creative production depends on the ability to carry talent, cultural material, equipment and decisions together through to delivery. Coordination makes that delivery possible. Finishing then has to turn the result into a promise that can be recognised and fulfilled again. ■

Main working sources: BusinessDay Nigeria, "The Black Book: When Tech Founders Turn Nollywood Producers"; Burkina Faso Council of Ministers, meeting report of 4 September 2024; Burkina 24, "Port du Faso Dan Fani en milieu scolaire" and "La FENATI dresse un bilan satisfaisant et mise sur le '100 % local'"; Studio Yafa, "Uniforme Faso Danfani, une obligation qui peine à s'imposer"; Burkina Faso Ministry of Basic Education, Literacy and the Promotion of National Languages, "Évaluation du contrat d'objectifs du MEBAPLN".

AI-generated image - Credit@Magnific.com

Analysis

The Economics of a Consistent Finish.

The quality discovered at delivery is built much earlier. It begins with the pattern, prototype, craft and checks, but also with the date promised and the care with which each stage preserves the original intention.

By The Editorial Team

In a 2016 report on Panah, a Nairobi workshop, a garment began with a sketch. The idea still had to be translated into a pattern, developed as a sample and tested through fittings before production started. The process reveals a simple point: much of the final quality is determined before the fabric for the order has been fully committed.

Before the Final Stitch.

Panah works with designers who arrive with a drawing but do not always have the means to turn it into a product. The pattern gives proportion to the idea and carries it into a sample. That sample already reveals the garment's construction and allows the team to anticipate its behaviour on the body during a fitting. Production then moves through cells, with checks on measurements and quality before release. At the time of the report, cut-make-trim services began at KES 10,000 per garment, depending on complexity and the required finish. Finishing shaped both the process and the price.

This sequence changes how we understand the final detail. An error found in a pattern or sample may still be corrected with little material. Discovered after a batch has been made, it brings alterations, extra hours, wasted fabric and sometimes a new delay. Finishing is therefore the continuity of checks that allows the original intention to travel through production without losing its form.

A small 2025 study of Ghanaian studios gives an order of magnitude for that trade-off. Using miniature prototypes before moving to full scale, 25 designers reported that average development time fell from 8.4 to 3.6 hours and average cost from GHS 420 to GHS 155. Across eight anonymised businesses, the share of designs requiring complete rework fell from 31% to 12%, while monthly fabric expenditure fell from GHS 4,750 to GHS 2,850.

The sample size, absence of published raw data and lack of independent audit rule out treating these figures as a sector average or as evidence of sales growth. They nevertheless expose the cost of decisions made too late. A miniature does not replace full-scale validation. Fabric behaviour, drape and movement do not always translate between scales, which is why most

Credit@Royaltybynanasei_Instagram.com

studios in the study retained a hybrid approach. The miniature conserves resources; full-scale validation tests the garment as it will actually be made and worn.

Timing Is Part of the Promise.

The promise includes a date of availability. A well-executed garment may still miss the event or use for which it was ordered. The delivery date therefore forms part of the experience, even when the delay began much earlier.

The process studied at Royalty by Nanasei in Ghana allows that chain to be traced. It follows the order, measurements, technical sheet, material purchase, pattern cutting, sewing, cleaning, quality assurance, finishing, packaging and delivery. Across 313 records, the average lead time was 11.87 days, while surveyed clients generally expected their garment within five working days or by the agreed date.

The final delay accumulated through waiting, travel, incomplete information and decisions revisited. A poorly recorded measurement slowed pattern cutting; material purchased late pushed back sewing; a defect found during inspection returned the garment to work already considered complete. Time revealed the quality of the organisation as clearly as the quality of the craft.

Working with company managers, the study's authors proposed a process that would reduce lead time to four to six days. This was a scenario, not a measured result after implementation. The map remains instructive. Setting a credible delivery date requires knowing where the order stands, what it lacks, who needs to act and how long each passage takes. Finishing is inseparable from the movement of information.

What Client Silence Conceals.

Quality is also judged through the experience of the person receiving the product, with one particular difficulty: dissatisfied clients do not always make their dissatisfaction visible.

In Sekondi-Takoradi, a survey of 410 consumers and 36 makers of custom garments examined four related dimensions: aesthetics, construction, finishing and service. Expectations exceeded perceived performance in all four. Most dissatisfied clients did not seek redress. An absence of complaints may therefore suggest that the product fulfilled its promise when the dissatisfaction has simply remained outside the workshop's records.

A second survey of 445 clients in Ho found gaps in reliability, assurance and the tangible elements of service. Fabric selection and finishing were among the improvements sought. Clients assessed the garment alongside the commitment made, the premises and the professional's ability to inspire confidence.

Both studies remain specific to their Ghanaian settings. Neither establishes a continental defect rate or the commercial effect of an improvement. They show why reviews, returns and complaints are insufficient on their own as a quality system. A workshop needs its own records of rework causes, measurement errors, wasted material, actual lead times and corrections. Those records make past experience usable for the next order.

Finishing is a system of skills and control. It draws on product development, pattern cutting, prototyping, maintained equipment, reliable technical sheets, production checks, order tracking and the handling of returns. Some functions remain in the workshop; others may develop into specialist or shared services for several designers and brands.

An exceptional gesture may always produce a remarkable garment. An economic offer acquires consistency when its quality can be prepared, repeated and corrected without rebuilding the process for every order. Finishing protects the producer's material and time, the designer's intention and the use expected by the buyer.

A stable promise does not yet secure a sale. It gives distribution an offer clear enough for a buyer to find and pay for, and for the producer to deliver without the experience unravelling along the way. ■

Main working sources: *Business Daily Africa, "Designer Who Makes Patterns for High-End Fashion Houses"; James Tetteh Ademtsu, Justine Abaguri Adjuri and Aidam Kokui Yayra, "From Concept to Creation: The Role of Creating Miniature Fashion Design Prototypes in Accelerating the Production Process"; David King Boison et al., "Application of Lean to Improve Customer Lead-Time in the Fashion Industry in Ghana: A Case Study of Royalty by Nanasei"; N. O. Sawyerr, "Consumers' Evaluation of the Quality of Custom-Made Garments Manufactured by Micro and Small Scale Enterprises in Sekondi/Takoradi Metropolis, Ghana"; D. K. Afetorgbor, "Client's View of Service Quality, Performance and Satisfaction of Small-Scale Garment Producers in Ho Municipality, Ghana".*

Mini-Series #03

Attiéké, from Field to Market.

Processing cassava close to where it is grown helps attiéké reach more distant markets.

The route to market begins close to the cassava field.

Freshly harvested cassava can begin to deteriorate within 24 hours. Early-stage processing therefore stays close to production areas.

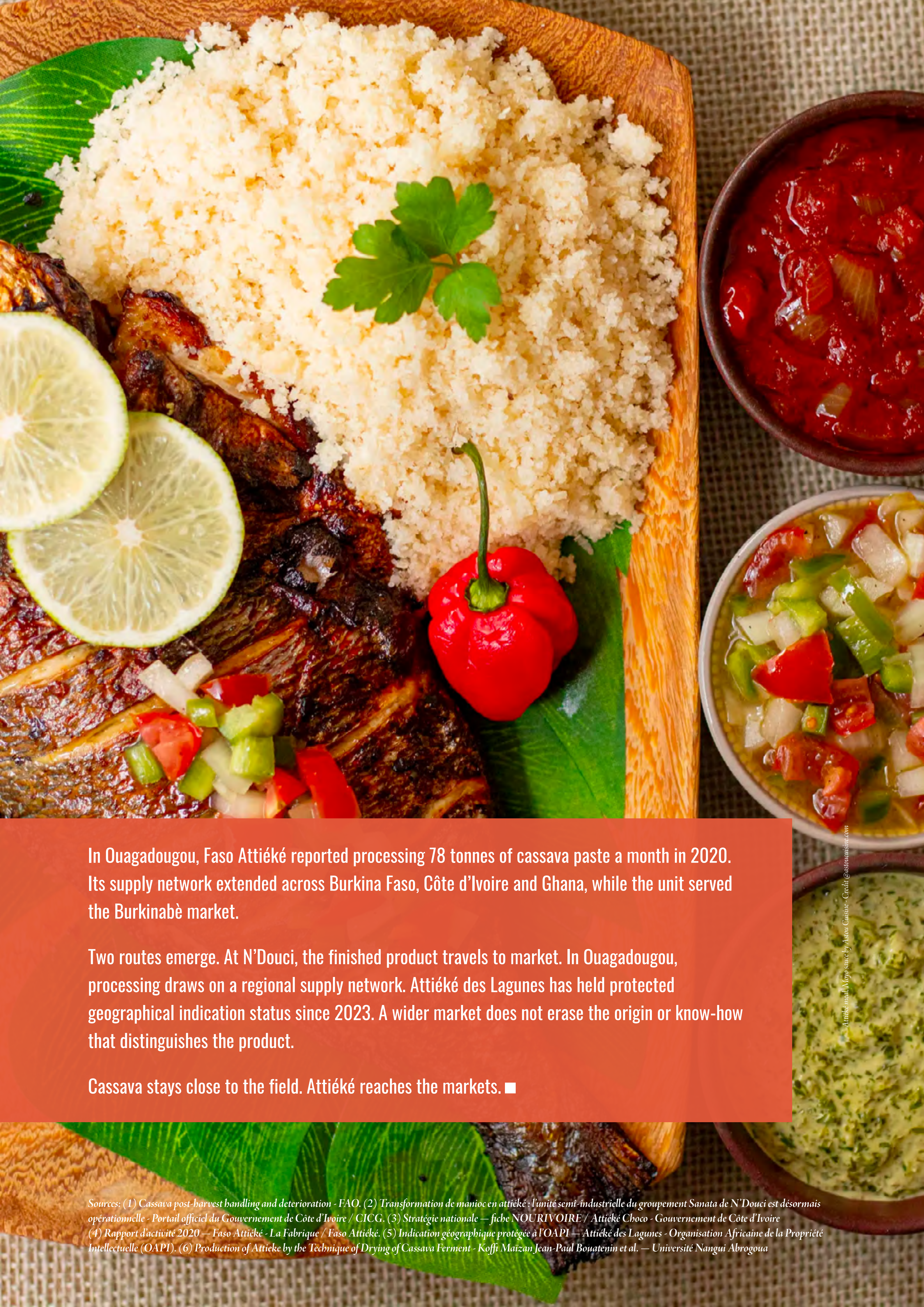
At N'Douci, the Sanata cooperative's semi-industrial unit has a stated capacity of 300 kilograms of attiéké per hour. It supplies the local market and Abidjan.

Programme A Scala, "Attiéké des lagunes" - Credit @UNDP/Marie Raison_Flickr.com

Fresh attiéké has a short delivery and consumption window. Once dehydrated, it keeps longer and can be sold farther afield.

NOURIVOIRE reports a production capacity of five tonnes a day for Attiéké Choco. Its dehydrated attiéké, sold through supermarkets and across the subregion, has a stated shelf life of up to one year.

Program A Scala, "Attiéké des lagunes" - Credit @UNDP / Marie Raison_Flickr.com



In Ouagadougou, Faso Attiéké reported processing 78 tonnes of cassava paste a month in 2020. Its supply network extended across Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana, while the unit served the Burkinabè market.

Two routes emerge. At N'Douci, the finished product travels to market. In Ouagadougou, processing draws on a regional supply network. Attiéké des Lagunes has held protected geographical indication status since 2023. A wider market does not erase the origin or know-how that distinguishes the product.

Cassava stays close to the field. Attiéké reaches the markets. ■

Attiéké meal, Moyo sauce by Astou Cuisine - Credit @astoucuisine.com

Sources: (1) Cassava post-harvest handling and deterioration - FAO. (2) Transformation de manioc en attiéké : l'unité semi-industrielle du groupement Sanata de N'Douci est désormais opérationnelle - Portail officiel du Gouvernement de Côte d'Ivoire / CICG. (3) Stratégie nationale — fiche NOURIVOIRE / Attiéké Choco - Gouvernement de Côte d'Ivoire (4) Rapport d'activité 2020 — Faso Attiéké - La Fabrique / Faso Attiéké. (5) Indication géographique protégée à l'OAPI — Attiéké des Lagunes - Organisation Africaine de la Propriété Intellectuelle (OAPI). (6) Production of Attieke by the Technique of Drying of Cassava Ferment - Koffi Maïzan Jean-Paul Bouatenin et al. — Université Nangui Abrogoua

Analysis

The Route from Visibility to Revenue.

Creative work can travel far without producing dependable income. Distribution supplies the commercial route. It makes the offer purchasable, carries it through payment and delivery, and shapes how much margin, data and control remain with the operator.

By The Editorial Team

In 2024, the storefronts of creators using Selar received 44 million visits. The Nigerian platform also reported NGN 9.88 billion in payouts and more than 240,000 creators. These figures measure scale at different points rather than following the same users from visit to payout. They yield neither a conversion rate, an average income nor the share retained by each creator after their own costs.

The gap between visits and payouts is where distribution operates. It presents the offer, enables the purchase and carries the proceeds back to the operator. Visibility creates the encounter. Distribution gives it a commercial route.

From Attention to Purchase.

A familiar offer may still be difficult to buy. The product may be unavailable at the right moment, the payment method inaccessible or the delivery uncertain. A missing point of contact after the sale introduces another break. Interest in the work can survive all of these failures while the purchase itself disappears.

Distribution maintains continuity across the journey. It connects presentation, availability, payment, delivery and after-sales support. One digital platform may bring the functions together, or a store, payment provider and logistics operator may divide them. The sale depends on the reliability of the links between them.

Selar provides a concrete example for digital products. The platform combines a storefront, payment and content delivery, while the creator remains responsible for the offer and for directing attention towards it. Its terms also show how the choice of channel affects the economics of a sale. For a transaction in naira, the displayed standard fee is 4% plus NGN 50, with payout scheduled for the following day. Proceeds from sales in some other currencies remain unavailable for longer.

Fees determine how much of the sale remains with the creator; payout schedules determine when that cash becomes usable. A delay extends the working-capital requirement, while limited access to buyer information weakens the preparation of later

Credit@The Yuri Arcurs Collection_Magnific.com

sales. The channel belongs inside the business model because it shapes both margin and customer access.

Audience, transaction and payout describe three different levels of performance. Audience records potential attention. A transaction confirms that a specific offer was purchased. A payout confirms that the money reached the operator. Growth at one level does not guarantee progress at the next.

Who Carries the Sale.

A physical product makes the architecture more visible because it still has to travel. On 31 July 2026, the Beninese shop Sosoden displayed 1,311 reviews and nine years of activity on ANKA. The record says nothing about revenue, margin or return rates, but it documents a long transactional presence and sustained buyer feedback.

Under its vendor terms, ANKA is the official seller to the end customer. It legally purchases the product from the vendor before reselling it, then handles payment, transaction-related taxes, invoicing and part of the administrative processing. This arrangement shifts several responsibilities to the intermediary and gives the buyer a repeatable transaction framework across several markets.

That service comes with deductions and control over settlement. Terms published in April 2026 combine a fee generally set at 12% with a further 4% charged on the total order value, including delivery. The vendor remains exposed to the cost of the product, shipping and certain refunds.

The intermediary reduces friction and gives the buyer a more predictable framework. It also sets some of the rules and controls access to data and settlement. A channel is stronger when responsibilities are clear and the vendor retains sufficient margin, useful information and credible alternatives.

Ownership of the infrastructure adds another layer. ANKA was founded in Côte d'Ivoire before its acquisition in 2025 by Global Shop Group, a company based in New York. The platform may continue to serve African vendors while ownership and control sit elsewhere. The origin of the service, the location of its operations and the place where decisions are made are distinct when assessing dependency and retained value.

Revenue Reveals the Channel.

The digital music platform Mdundo shows the strain created when audience growth outpaces reliable revenue. In June 2025, the platform reported 40.5 million monthly active users. Annual revenue at its Danish parent company reached DKK 11 million, with negative EBITDA of DKK 5.5 million. The company attributed part of the revenue decline to billing problems at two telecom partners that accounted for most of its subscription revenue. The connection between usage and collection had weakened.

In February 2026, Mdundo replaced monthly active users with paying subscribers as its main non-financial indicator. In the final quarter of 2025, it recorded 9.9 million payments from 906,000 unique paying users. The data do not support a conversion rate, but the new indicator brings management closer to the economic act it is trying to stabilise.

Reach alone is not enough for an investor. Channel analysis follows the share of revenue contributed by each route, the amount retained after deductions, settlement times, returns and defaults, access to customer data and the concentration of critical dependencies. It also examines alternative routes, because a large audience cannot indefinitely compensate for fragile billing, delivery or collection.

The same architecture creates room for specialist businesses in payment, logistics, catalogue management and customer relations. They earn their place by making transactions more reliable, lowering their total cost and producing information that improves later sales.

A creative company need not own every link in the chain. It does need to know which functions are decisive, what they cost, which information returns to the business and what would happen if a channel became unavailable. Visibility becomes a commercial asset when a dependable route allows the buyer to complete the purchase and the producer to access the corresponding revenue.

That first sale does not end the work's economic journey. Rights will then determine whether it can be identified, reused and remunerated beyond the initial transaction. ■

Main working sources: *Selar, "2024 in Review: N9.88 Billion Paid and Over 1.5M Users Empowered" and "How to Sell Online with Selar / Pricing"; ANKA, "Fees, Settlement, Taxes and Vendor Terms"; verified buyer reviews for Sosoden on ANKA; TechCabal, "Global Shop Group Acquires Ivorian Brand ANKA"; Mdundo.com A/S, Annual Report FY 2024/25 and H1 Report FY 2025/26.*

Credit@pressmaster_Magnific.com

From spending to the production cycle.

The amount paid by the customer remunerates several functions. The share that remains available can finance the next cycle.

❶ One amount, several functions

Amount paid by the customer → Channel • Payment • Distribution • Producer • Rights / Obligations • Own costs → **Available share** ↓ Can finance the next cycle

❷ Two documented routes

PHYSICAL PRODUCT - ANKA

- ✓ Customer
- ✓ Payment
- ✓ ANKA / Documented fees
- ✓ Seller
- ✓ Shipping / Possible return
- Value available after own costs?

The channel and some fees are documented. The seller's full account is not.

DIGITAL CONTENT - CIRCUITS, NIGERIA

- ✓ Viewer
- ✓ Pay-per-view ticket - from NGN 1,000
- ✓ Platform
- ✓ Licence / Minimum guarantee
- ✓ Additional performance-based payment
- ✓ Producer
- Net cash after own costs?

Producers have access to sales data. The exact commission and net cash position are not published.

❸ Operating signals

WANZAMI - NIGERIA

Up to 70% announced for filmmakers
Announced share ≠ documented individual income.

YOUTUBE - NOLLYWOOD

Redeployable advertising revenue
For some producers, this revenue helps finance the next project.

The cycle begins again when the transaction leaves value that can genuinely be redeployed.
Knowing who receives that value then becomes decisive.

Methodological note:
DI03 compares a documented physical route with a documented digital route from the special report. It does not reconstruct a typical margin; it shows what is and is not yet traceable. Rights and finance are addressed later in the special report.

Mini-Series #04

How Many Lives Can a Character Have?

As a character moves from one format to another, its future also depends on the rights that make each return possible.

Some readers will remember Kimboo. In Côte d'Ivoire, the character appeared on screen in a 1989 animated series. Ten years later, Kimboo returned in print with Cap sur Tombouctou, published by Nouvelles Éditions Ivoiriennes.

The series and the book already document two lives for the character. The current chain of rights, however, is not sufficiently visible to establish who could authorise a new use.

Credit @ IMDb.com

Sources: (1) Kimboo - IFcinéma — Institut français
(2) Kimboo, Cap sur Tombouctou - Africultures — notice bibliographique ; Nouvelles Éditions Ivoiriennes
(3) Du dessin animé à la bande dessinée : le personnage de Dadou revient avec son humour dans un fanzine bimestriel - Culture Congolaise
(4) Strika Entertainment's Supa Strikas has expanded locally and internationally - Media Update
(5) Moonbug picks up South African series Supa Strikas - aNb Media

Bana Boul Returns.

In 2026, Dadou, the character from Bana Boul, moved from animation into a fanzine published every two months, with distribution announced in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Belgium.

Supa Strikas Scales Up.

In South Africa, Supa Strikas expanded from comics into animation and circulated across several markets before Moonbug acquired the franchise in 2019.

Each new format adds another life to the character; the asset lies in the ability to return its stories, images and rights to circulation. ■

Analysis

How Rights Extend a Work's Economic Life.

A sale captures one use of a creative work. Further value rests on a traceable origin, identified contributors, clear permissions and a record of where and how the work is used. Rights carry that history into the next transaction.

By The Editorial Team

In 2008, the South African publisher Modjaji Books released Whiplash, Tracey Farren's first novel. The story was later adapted for cinema under the title Tess. In 2017, the publisher released a film tie-in edition of the novel under the same title. A creation first brought to market as a book had reached the screen, then returned to bookshops in a renewed form.

Public sources disclose neither the contracts, the allocation of revenue nor the profitability of these uses. Still, the sequence shows how one work can support several commercial forms. The opportunity rests on the ability to identify the work, establish authority over the proposed use and agree the terms of the next transaction.

Preparing a Work for New Uses.

Legal protection does not by itself make a completed work an economic asset. A future user must be able to identify who has authority over an adaptation, translation, distribution or reproduction, the limits of that authority and the remuneration attached to it.

That clarity enters financing decisions early. In South Africa, the National Film and Video Foundation requires companies applying for development funding to hold exclusive rights or a valid option for at least twelve months. A project drawing on a pre-existing work must also submit its chain of title and proof of copyright. The legal record sits alongside the budget and the capabilities of the team as evidence of investment readiness.

The chain of title records how each contribution enters the project and who may authorise its use. It sets out the rights holders, permitted uses, territories, duration, possible exclusivity, remuneration and any conditions for reversion. A gap in that chain can delay financing, narrow distribution or place too much risk on a partner.

Archives and metadata complete the record by linking each version to its contributors, identifiers and documented uses. A preserved work is still hard to use commercially when permissions are unclear. A contract also loses practical force when the work or its rights holders can no longer be found.

Credit @Donidas_Magnific.com

Between Use and Payment.

Authorisation is only the beginning of the payment route. The user has to be licensed, the royalty collected and usage data obtained. The work must then be matched to its rights holder, distribution rules applied and the payment delivered. Revenue can stop at any stage.

The Bureau Burkinabè du Droit d’Auteur makes the stages visible. For 2025, it reported XOF 391.6 million in royalties collected. After statutory deductions, XOF 265.8 million was available for distribution to 4,574 beneficiaries. A further XOF

508.2 million, allocated between 2022 and 2025 but not collected by beneficiaries, was due to be put into payment with the 2025 distribution.

The figures provide no average income, allocation by work or measure of the overall performance of Burkina Faso's creative industries. Their value lies elsewhere. They separate amounts collected, net sums available for distribution, rights allocated and money actually received by beneficiaries. The word royalty often hides these different economic states.

Data quality governs the movement from one state to the next. In South Africa, CAPASSO's rules provide that incomplete information about broadcast works limits the initial distribution to the share of usage reports received. The balance remains in a suspense account. For certain catalogue music, registered titles, identifiers, composers' names and other metadata are required to track use and assign payment.

Collective management cannot substitute for enforcement. In March 2025, Benin's copyright and neighbouring-rights bureau, BUBEDRA, sought support from the High Authority for Audiovisual and Communication regarding several Beninese media outlets using works without paying royalties. The legal rights, repertoire and collection body were in place, yet collection still depended on compliance and the ability to enforce payment.

The Catalogue as a Capital Asset.

Across many works, the infrastructure that administers rights acquires value of its own. Warner Music Group invested in Africori in 2020, took a majority interest in 2022 and completed the acquisition in February 2025. Its announcements pointed to Africori's distributed catalogue, artist network and ability to bring African repertoire into a global system. Africori represented more than 7,000 artists at the time.

Public information about the transaction remains limited. The purchase price, the precise nature of the rights owned or administered and the revenue reaching creators have not been disclosed. What is observable is the acquisition of a business organised around catalogues, contracts, data and routes to market, rather than the purchase of a collection of works in isolation.

Catalogue value is read through the rights owned or administered, their duration, territories, exclusivity and reversion clauses. Reported revenue has to be compared with documented uses, payments and disputes. Platform concentration, metadata quality and the volume of undistributed sums reveal how securely the underlying value is governed.

The asset logic changes when cultural expressions are held by communities. The African Regional Intellectual Property Organization (ARIPO) administers the Swakopmund Protocol, which gives beneficiary communities a role in the states concerned and provides for prior informed consent and equitable benefit-sharing. Within that framework, registration or commercialisation of an inherited form remains subject to community rights and the applicable consent and benefit-sharing rules. Application of the protocol must still be verified for the state, competent authority and national law concerned.

The economic life of a work is carried by identifiable rights, authorised uses, reliable tracking and enforceable payment. Demand and the user's ability to pay remain decisive. A catalogue is a governed system of works, contracts, data and payments.

Revenue from those uses is uncertain and often arrives late. New production begins before every earlier use has paid out. Finance has to bridge that interval and follow the real cycle of creation. ■

Main working sources: *Modjaji Books, "Book to Movie: Tess by Tracey Farren"; National Film and Video Foundation, "Development Funding"; Bureau Burkinabè du Droit d'Auteur, "Répartition des droits de février 2026"; CAPASSO, Membership Rules 2024 — Updated; High Authority for Audiovisual and Communication, Benin, "Paiement des redevances du droit d'auteur"; Warner Music Group, "Warner Music Group Completes Its Acquisition of Africori"; ARIPO, Swakopmund Protocol on the Protection of Traditional Knowledge and Expressions of Folklore.*

Analysis

Matching Capital to the Production Cycle.

The size of a financing offer says little about its usefulness on its own. Timing, duration, risk absorption and the cash flow available for repayment determine whether capital supports the production cycle or arrives after the expenditure it was meant to finance.

By The Editorial Team

Between April 2020 and March 2021, Ghanaian garment companies fulfilled a public order for protective equipment organised in five phases. The arrangement provided 50% at the start to finance inputs, with the balance due after delivery. Some companies obtained materials on supplier credit by relying on the confirmed order. The ministry later confirmed the production of 23 million masks for the Ministry of Education.

This emergency public contract shows the difference made by timing, but it reveals neither the costs, the margins nor the receipts of the anonymised companies. Paid before delivery, the advance allowed materials to be purchased and workshops to begin work. Available only at the end, the same amount would have recognised the completed production without helping to trigger it.

Capital at the Moment of Expenditure.

A confirmed order reduces uncertainty about demand, but it does not immediately pay for fabric, labour, transport or subcontracting. Between the purchase order and settlement, the company carries a gap shaped by procurement, production, acceptance and payment terms.

In the Ghanaian arrangement, the buyer advance covered part of this working-capital requirement without creating a debt repayment schedule. Delivery closed the economic loop by unlocking the remaining 50%. The identified buyer reduced demand risk, while producers retained execution risk. An unavailable material, defect or delay could still prevent acceptance and immobilise the cash already committed.

Supplier credit shifted another part of the requirement. The confirmed order made a future cash flow visible, giving suppliers a basis on which to wait for payment. One production cycle combined an advance, supplier terms and the company's own resources, each entering at a different stage.

A sector analysis of Ghana's garment industry places some cycles at six to nine months from purchase order to final payment, even though materials, training and freight are financed much earlier. Ghana Exim financing at 13.5% was still regarded as costly

Credit@lcd2020_Magnific.com

by several operators interviewed. The International Labour Organization prepared the analysis through a program funded by Norway and Switzerland.

The burden of a given interest rate changes with the expected margin, cycle length and certainty of payment. A profitable order becomes fragile when interest accrues for several months or the balance is held back by disputed acceptance. Expenditure before each milestone, advance terms, buyer quality, acceptance criteria and time to collection all belong in the financing decision.

Capital That Can Wait.

A film absorbs cash while the work remains unfinished and its route to market uncertain. Financing has to carry production costs, elapsed time and the disruptions separating the project from commercial release.

The Black Book had a reported budget of USD 1 million. The Nigerian investment vehicle VEMA states that it invested USD 250,000 in the project and describes an eighteen-month production period. The project nevertheless ran out of cash before completion. Producer-director Editi Effiong reports that he liquidated two bitcoins before investors agreed to extend their financing. The interruption caused by the COVID-19 pandemic was also reported to have cost twelve shooting days and up to 20% of the original budget.

The investment manager links the investors' return to Netflix's acquisition of the film. The contracts, disbursements and supporting payment records are not public. VEMA's reported return remains the claim of an interested party, not a sector benchmark. Capital entered before the asset was complete, while repayment relied on a future commercial event rather than recurring revenue already in place.

The rights attached to the film are also part of the financing structure. The financier needs to know who can authorise distribution, which revenues are assigned to the investment, the order in which contributions will be recovered and what control remains with the producer. Project investment is not automatically an equity interest in the company; its nature depends on the contracts, economic rights granted and revenue-sharing arrangements.

Due diligence covers the budget, disbursement schedule, contingency reserve, completion risk, distribution and the order in which contributions are recovered. A promising project may still require a financing horizon or risk appetite that conventional debt cannot provide.

The Cash Flow Behind Equipment Finance.

Equipment finance follows the longer life of an asset. Frequency of use, savings, additional revenue, maintenance costs and the currency of repayments shape the cash available to service it.

Equipment used irregularly may reduce a unit cost without generating enough cash to repay the debt. Across several orders, the same asset can support revenue beyond a single project, provided maintenance, insurance and replacement are included in the model.

The financing period should follow the asset's economic life rather than its purchase price alone.

A buyer advance, supplier credit, project investment and equipment finance enter at different moments and recover their capital from different flows. The right combination allows an order, catalogue or item of equipment to support more than one production.

The operating calendar connects orders, expenditure, milestones, receipts, rights and assets. It replaces a general shortage of finance with a precise account of what capital has to carry, when it has to arrive and which cash flow will bring it back.

A repeatable cycle gives a company a stronger base for serving another territory. Expansion will still test access to buyers, payments, contracts and distribution, as well as the timelines that allow capital to return. ■

Main working sources: *Cynthia Akua Chichi et al., "The Power of Collaboration: Resilience of the Apparel Industry in Ghana during the COVID-19 Pandemic"; Republic of Ghana, 2022 Programme Based Budget Estimates — Ministry of Trade and Industry; International Labour Organization, "Sector Systems Analysis of the Textiles and Clothing Subsector in Ghana"; Volition Capital Investments, "VEMA — The Black Book Case Study"; Editi Effiong, "Investment Lessons from Raising Funds for The Black Book"; BusinessDay Nigeria, "The Black Book: When Tech Founders Turn Nollywood Producers".*

Mini-Series #05

What a Rhythm Puts to Work.

Audiences follow the music. Around that movement, the functions that turn preference into transactions take shape.

How Far Would You Travel to Dance?

In 2017, Angola's Valor Económico documented dance schools and professionals in Luanda offering paid classes and performances centred on semba and kizomba. Their clients included visitors from abroad.

Classes and performances pay dance professionals directly. Travel also creates transactions in transport, accommodation and food. Their presence points to an audience willing to travel and pay. The harder task is to create reasons and occasions to return.

Credit @ stockbusters_Magnific.com

Sources: (1) Quando a dança se torna um negócio — Valor Económico
(2) SAMRO Report 2024 — Blue Label Telecoms
(3) Ticketmaster expands presence in Africa with acquisition of Quicket - Ticketmaster
(4) UMG announces majority investment in iconic Afrobeats label Mavin Global - Universal Music Group
(5) Don Jazzy: From Mo' Hits to Mavin Global, a Nigerian music industry blueprint - BusinessDay Nigeria

When Music Played Abroad Generates Royalties.

In South Africa, the Southern African Music Rights Organisation, or SAMRO, collects and distributes royalties for the repertoire it manages. When a work is used abroad, partner collecting societies identify the use and collect the sums due before passing them to SAMRO.

In 2024, foreign royalty income reached ZAR 35.8 million, up from ZAR 25.5 million in 2023. SAMRO links the increase to the international success of South African music, particularly amapiano, and to improved collection outside the country.

The figure covers SAMRO's entire repertoire. It shows the scale of the mechanism, not the earnings of amapiano alone.

Credit @ Magnific.com

#MiniSeriesKWorld

One Ticketing System, Many Events.

South Africa’s TicketPro provides ticketing and transaction services across entertainment, sport and transport. Its sales, payment and access-management tools serve several uses.

Quicket extends the same function across several African markets. When Ticketmaster acquired the South African platform in 2024, Quicket was already expanding operations in Nigeria, Uganda, Kenya, Zambia and Botswana.

A ticket belongs to one event. The capacity to sell it, collect payment and manage access can serve an entire calendar.

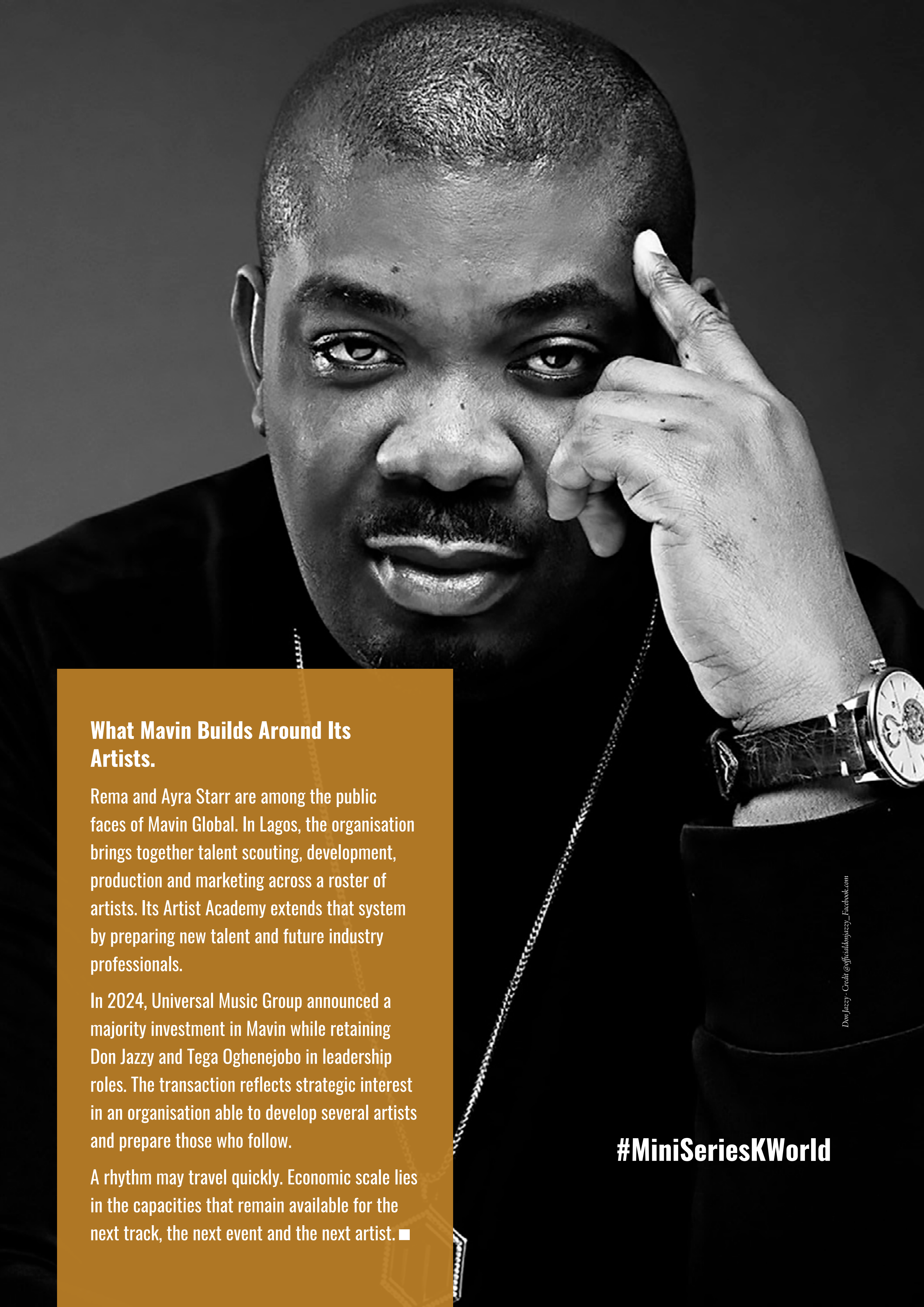
Credit @ The Yuri arcurs Collection_Magnific.com

What Mavin Builds Around Its Artists.

Rema and Ayra Starr are among the public faces of Mavin Global. In Lagos, the organisation brings together talent scouting, development, production and marketing across a roster of artists. Its Artist Academy extends that system by preparing new talent and future industry professionals.

In 2024, Universal Music Group announced a majority investment in Mavin while retaining Don Jazzy and Tega Oghenejobo in leadership roles. The transaction reflects strategic interest in an organisation able to develop several artists and prepare those who follow.

A rhythm may travel quickly. Economic scale lies in the capacities that remain available for the next track, the next event and the next artist. ■



Don Jazzy - Credit @officialdonjazzy_Facebook.com

#MiniSeriesKWorld

Analysis

A Creation's Journey Begins Before the Border.

In the cultural and creative industries, entry into a new market begins well before the first sale. A textbook, song or digital service finds its place as uses, partners and transaction conditions form around it. Recreating those conditions from one country to the next is a regional capability in its own right.

By The Editorial Team

The System Behind a Textbook.

A textbook fulfils its promise when a teacher puts it to use and a pupil finds the words, images and references needed to learn. Reaching the classroom at the right time requires more than a finished manuscript. The book has to match the curriculum, secure the necessary approvals and remain affordable to the school, family or public authority paying for it.

Between the pupil who uses the book and the institution that buys it lies a chain bringing together authors and illustrators, knowledge of local languages, editorial design, manufacturing and distribution. Serving another market means assembling that sequence again with partners who understand learning practices, buyers and the local calendar.

Longhorn Publishers makes this work visible at regional scale. The Kenyan group develops educational content and reports activity in Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Rwanda, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Cameroon. Publishing remains its core business, but its catalogue enters each market through a distinct educational, institutional and commercial system.

Content is developed before approval, printed before delivery and sometimes paid for only after the books received have been verified. The publisher carries editorial work, inventory and working capital while distributors organise access to schools. None of these stages is visible to the pupil opening a textbook. Each one determines whether the book is there when it is needed.

Longhorn's 2025 accounts show what happens when those calendars no longer align. In Kenya, the completion and approval of new materials linked to curriculum reform slowed purchasing decisions. Group revenue fell by 56%, while the late start of public procurement shifted KSh 463 million of revenue into the following financial year. The educational need had not disappeared, but its conversion into orders still depended on an institutional decision and a purchasing timetable. Editorial work had already been funded, and the company still had to carry its operating cycle.

The accounts also expose the risk embedded in work already completed.

Credit @Magnific.com

Longhorn recognised a KSh 47.86 million impairment on prepublication costs and reported a KSh 66.282 million provision for obsolete inventory at year end. In the same year, reported revenue in Cameroon reached KSh 124.69 million, up from KSh 82.238 million in the previous financial year. One regional portfolio therefore contained markets at very different stages of development.

Those different rhythms define regional scale. A local partner contributes market knowledge, relationships and responsibility for execution. To sustain the work while a market grows, that partner needs a clear role, real decision-making room and remuneration proportionate to the responsibility carried.

Rebuilding the Route from Listening to Payment.

Music begins in a different part of

daily life. People listen to relax, return to an artist's work or share a familiar reference. Content travels quickly, but its place in a market still depends on the route that turns listening into payment.

For Mdundo, that route relies heavily on telecommunications operators. To the user, the subscription is a simple offer available on a phone. The platform organises the catalogue and listening experience; the operator identifies the subscriber and handles billing. Artists give the audience a reason to enter the service and return.

In the third quarter of its 2025/26 financial year, Mdundo processed about 8.1 million subscription transactions through its telecommunications partners, down from 9.9 million in the previous quarter. The company attributed the change to billing instability at several important operators. The decline occurred in the technical connection that converts use into collection.

The expansion of Mdundo's music game shows how that connection is rebuilt elsewhere. Following an initial launch in Uganda, the product was extended to Kenya, Tanzania, Zambia and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The company says it adapted the content and payment conditions to each market. Paid transactions were subsequently recorded in all five countries.

The purchase provides the clearest signal. Familiar content, a short format and an accessible means of payment prompted an actual transaction. Management still described the activity as a proof of concept, with an expected contribution of approximately DKK 100,000 in the 2025/26 financial year.

Those first payments turn real use into knowledge for the company. Repetition will reveal whether the product establishes durable demand and whether the technical, commercial and creative relationships behind it endure. For creators, the decisive test is whether those listening habits generate revenue.

A Learning Account for Each Market.

Longhorn contributes publishing expertise and a catalogue; Mdundo contributes a platform and content. Their regional value rests on locally organised capabilities that connect an offer to its users and then to payment. Each market therefore follows its own cycle.

A learning account brings the economics of that cycle into view. It records the expenditure required to adapt the offer, the time before the first transactions, the reliability of the chosen channel and the working capital committed while activity develops. It also clarifies the local partner's function, the responsibility assumed and the value retained. For a financier, the account links commercial presence to the transactions from which committed capital may be repaid.

With that account, the company calibrates its commitment without destabilising the original business. It deepens a channel that produces regular transactions, repairs one that weakens the operating cycle or defers entry where the economics remain unclear. The financing requirement grows more precise when tied to actual expenditure, the pace of development and the future source of repayment.

Experience in one market gradually informs the method used in the next. It improves preparation, financing and the allocation of responsibility while allowing each local market to keep its own rhythm.

Building the Region, Corridor by Corridor.

This regional capability sits within a continental architecture that is still taking shape. The Protocol to the Agreement Establishing the African Continental Free Trade Area on Digital Trade was adopted on 18 February 2024, with annexes published in 2025. Together, they set out a common framework intended to facilitate intra-African digital trade. As of 14 August 2026, the African Union's official treaty register gave no date of entry into force. Commercial decisions therefore continue to follow the rules actually applicable in each territory and corridor.

The continental framework gains economic meaning through reliable corridors. For a publisher, reliability means delivering an order and receiving payment within a period compatible with its operating cycle. In digital music, it rests on a user paying, a partner executing the transaction and the revenue reaching the business.

Continuity across those transactions gives the regional market its economic substance. A company achieves scale by reproducing its organisation from one territory to another, absorbing what it learns without weakening what it has already built. Once the same capability serves enough companies, creative works and markets, it supports a business in its own right. ■

Main working sources: Longhorn Publishers PLC, Annual Report and Financial Statements for the year ended 30 June 2025; Mdundo.com A/S, Jan to Mar 2025/26 Quarterly Statement; African Union, Protocol to the Agreement Establishing the African Continental Free Trade Area on Digital Trade; African Union, OAU/AU Treaties, Conventions, Protocols & Charters.

Credit@Magnific.com

Mini-Series #06

Behind Kano's Horsemen.

The Durbar brings into view trades and a leather economy active far beyond the ceremony.

At Kano's Durbar in northern Nigeria, the emir, dignitaries and groups of horsemen gather during major Muslim festivals. The order of the procession, the riders' dress and the care given to their horses form part of a public representation of authority.

The scene takes shape long before the parade. Saddles and harnesses are made, maintained and repaired. Textiles are woven, dyed or embroidered; metal is worked; horses are prepared and trained. During the Durbar, trades that usually operate apart become visible in one public tableau.

Once the procession ends, horse care, equipment repair and the transmission of equestrian practices continue.

Sources: (1) Institutional report — Durbar in Kano — Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity
(2) About KASCO — activities and product lines
(3) Z-Tannery Ltd — Nigeria Exporter profile
(4) Announcement - Kano visit day two: Mukhtar drives digital innovation, leather value addition
(5) African Press - Kano tannery operators raise concern over extinction threat

One City, Several Scales.

In the same city, leather is worked for other uses and other markets.

At Kofar Wambai, Kano’s historic quarter, the Majema, traditional artisan tanners, continue their activity. Accounts gathered by local media report capital constraints, pressure on hide prices and an increasing role as suppliers to modern tanneries.

At another scale, industrial tanneries process larger volumes and serve export markets. During an official visit in 2026, KANOTAN’s management reported capacity of up to 50,000 hides a day and close to 1,000 jobs.

Between craft workshops, industrial processing and access to export markets, continuity remains partial.

Those interfaces determine how much value Kano retains locally. ■

Credit @Bobest Imagery_ Pexels.com

#MiniSeriesKWorld

Opinion piece

What if Africa finally looked at its Cultural Economy through its Own Eyes?

by Patrick DADY

Patrick DADY - Credit @UVK Studio

We should sometimes be wary of concepts that travel too well. They arrive perfectly packaged, complete with definitions, classifications, indicators and, if possible, an acronym serious enough to make its way straight into official reports. Cultural and Creative Industries – the famous CCIs – are something of a case in point.

We have long overlooked a simple truth: culture is not merely a source of spiritual enrichment. It is also an economic activity. Yet when it comes to Africa, one question should precede all others: are we certain that we are seeing the whole of our cultural economy? If we rely solely on categories shaped by other historical and social realities, we risk concluding that our cultural economy is marginal, even as it unfolds before our eyes every day, in all its dimensions.

Our challenge may not only be to develop Africa's cultural industries, but first to learn how to recognise them.

Consider a family ceremony – a wedding, baptism, funeral, customary celebration, religious observance or initiation ceremony. At first glance, it belongs to the social, family or spiritual sphere. Now consider the same ceremony through the eyes of an economist – which I am not. It involves tailors, hairdressers, jewellers, decorators, caterers, photographers, videographers, musicians, chair-rental providers, transport operators, hotels and sometimes event-management firms. In recent years, a second economy has emerged around it: content shared on social media and promotion for designers, decorators, artists and photographers. How many professions have come together in this one ceremony? How much income has been distributed? How many small businesses have taken part?

This may be the first paradigm shift we need to make: start with our actual cultural practices and trace the economic activity they generate. In Africa, culture is not confined to museums, theatres, galleries or performance venues. It circulates through the marketplace, finds expression in a family courtyard, and is passed on in a workshop. It is eaten and worn. It accompanies our births, marriages, initiations and deaths. It lives in our languages, gestures, rhythms and stories. Each of these expressions generates economic activity.

Consider the pagne. From a distance, it is a piece of fabric. Seen from Africa, it can signal belonging, accompany mourning, celebrate a marriage,

Mask Festival, Benin 2026 - Credit@Présidence de la République du Bénin_Flickr.com

indicate status or convey a message. But above all, follow the money. The fabric has to be produced or imported, transported, distributed and sold. The design has to be imagined. The tailor takes the measurements, then cuts, assembles and accessorises it. It is then photographed and shared on social media, sometimes before being sold internationally. Through the diaspora, a creation born in Cotonou, Dakar or Kinshasa can find customers in Paris, Brussels or Montreal. We need to stop speaking merely of a garment and start talking about an industry.

Gaani is a major traditional festival celebrated annually in Nikki, the historical capital of the Baatonu Empire in northern Benin. This centuries-old event brings together the Bariba and Wassangari peoples to honour their rich, shared cultural heritage. At the heart of the festivities, local chiefs and dignitaries reaffirm their allegiance to the sovereign (the Sinaboko) during a grand ceremonial gathering. The crowd comes alive to the rhythm of sacred drums, traditional dances, and the spectacular equestrian parades for which the event is renowned. Today, the celebration extends beyond Benin's borders, attracting thousands of visitors from Nigeria and across the sub-region.

Sources: Government of the Republic of Benin, Imperial Palace of Nikki, Africanews, Petit Futé Bénin.

Festival Gaani 2019, Nikki - Bénin - Credit @République du Bénin_Flickr.com

This is what is at stake. We often look for industry wherever we find large companies, machinery and formally employed workers, even though patterns of use can be highly structured while the organisation itself remains fragmented.

We look for the factory, but the industry is already at work. The sculptor in his workshop, the neighbourhood tailor, the independent hairdresser, the percussionist hired for ceremonies, the instrument maker, the jewellery seller, the decorator and the cook all create value. They possess practical know-how. They pass on skills. They respond to demand. Yet much of this economy remains outside conventional mechanisms for financing, social protection, insurance and intellectual property protection.

The usual response to this observation would be to say that we need to formalise. But first we must know exactly what we intend to formalise. Imposing a standardised economic model on a cultural practice without understanding how it works can weaken the very thing we want to develop. We should therefore reverse the logic: rather than asking how to fit our cultural practices into the categories of the modern economy, we should ask how to build tools capable of measuring the real economy thriving before our eyes.

The question becomes even more interesting when it touches on the sacred. In Benin, former President Patrice Talon made the economic development of national culture and heritage part of his vision for the country from an early stage. This direction has sometimes been captured, provocatively, by the phrase “commercialise Vodun”. On one side lie the sacred, rites, divinities, initiation and mystery; on the other, the market, hotels, restaurants, tourists and revenue. At first glance, these two worlds seem difficult to reconcile. Yet once we move beyond the provocation, the phrase raises exactly the question that concerns us. Commercialising Vodun should obviously not mean selling Vodun. A divinity is not a product. An initiation rite is not a tourist attraction. A Vodun convent is not a theme park. But a real economy exists around Vodun, and we must learn how to organise it. The distinction is fundamental: we should not sell Vodun, but build an economy around its cultural value without commodifying what belongs to its sacred essence.

The Vodun Days in Ouidah illustrate this approach. A destination economy is developing around a spiritual and cultural heritage: hotels, restaurants, transport, heritage tourism, performances, crafts, communications and events. Vodun thus becomes an asset for the territory. But this form of value creation can be sustainable only if control is retained over the boundary between what may be shown and what must not be shown, between what belongs to cultural tourism and what remains within the spiritual realm. It becomes more sustainable still when those who keep this culture alive share in the value created. Here lies a welcome paradox: a culture can generate wealth without becoming a commodity. But that economy still has to be organised.

The question is also a legal one. Our intellectual property systems are largely built around an identifiable creator. But how do we protect a motif, story, song, form of know-how or symbol passed down by a community over several generations? To whom do they belong? To the individual who practises them today? To the community? To the state? And when companies appropriate this heritage, industrialise it and then market it internationally, who should benefit from the value created? We know this model well: we provide the inspiration; others organise the value chain; the product then returns to our markets under an international brand, and we innocently marvel at the resulting creativity. It is time to redefine how the roles are shared.

African cinema illustrates this potential perfectly. The continent abounds in stories, myths, heroes, languages and cosmologies. Behanzin, Sundiata, Shaka, the Amazons of Dahomey, Yoruba worlds, Manding narratives, Fulani traditions and Bantu cosmologies: all of this is extraordinary raw narrative material. These worlds can inspire books, films, series, comics, animation, video games, educational content and cultural tourism. Other countries understood this mechanism early on. The United States built global industries around its superheroes;

Japan around manga. South Korea has turned music, cinema and gastronomy into instruments of economic power. Why could Africa not do the same with its own stories? The problem is not a lack of imagination. It lies in our ability to turn imagination into economic assets and, above all, to retain a significant share of the value produced.

African music already shows that this is possible. Afrobeats, Amapiano, Coupé-Décalé, Mbalax and other forms have demonstrated that a creation deeply rooted in a local world can win a global audience. There is an important lesson here: becoming universal does not always require becoming less African. Our distinctiveness can be a competitive advantage.

Gastronomy should also be fully included in this discussion. A dish tells the story of a farming system, a territory, a set of techniques and a history. Thiéboudiène, attiéké, gari, jollof… I will carefully avoid deciding which country makes the best jollof, out of a basic concern for regional diplomatic stability. Each of these dishes can structure value chains: agricultural production, processing, packaging, restaurants, franchises, distribution and exports. Why should gastronomy be any less cultural or industrial than the sacred, music or cinema? We may already possess products capable of becoming major international brands, yet continue to regard them solely as our mothers' recipes – mothers who are certainly conducting R&D without ever having thought to create an "Innovation" department in their kitchens.

That is probably the heart of the matter. We readily repeat that Africa is creative. But creativity is a long way from being an industrial policy. Between an idea and an economy lie businesses, finance, skills, contracts, infrastructure, rights, distribution channels, digital tools, data and markets. The challenge, then, is less to create more cultural value than to capture more of the value already being produced. And to capture it, we must begin by measuring it better.

This points to a major statistical undertaking: making visible the economy that current instruments render invisible. The point is obviously not to reject Western categories simply because they are Western, but to stop treating them as our only starting point. Instead of asking what cultural and creative industries Africa has, let us ask in which dimensions of our daily lives culture can create value.

Suddenly, the scope of our cultural and creative economy becomes much broader. It includes ceremonies, clothing, hairstyles, gastronomy, rites, heritage, crafts, architecture, music, dance, languages, oral traditions, tourism, traditional knowledge, digital activity and much more besides. The project of building African cultural industries should not be about industrialising culture itself, but about building the capabilities needed to finance, produce, protect, distribute and export African cultural creation – and to remunerate its creators. A culture that cannot sustain those who pass it on may eventually weaken. Yet a culture wholly subjected to the market may eventually forget what it sought to transmit. The true African paradigm for the cultural and creative industries probably lies between these two risks.

Africa's creative economy is undoubtedly far larger than we think.

It needs less to be invented than to be recognised, measured, organised, protected and enabled to create value. In the global economy, one rule remains unforgiving: what you do not know how to identify, someone else will eventually find a way to extract value from it. And what you do not know how to protect, someone else may eventually sell back to you.

Let us decisively change our perspective and look at our cultural economy from Africa itself.

All that remains is to reveal our K-World of splendours and wonders, in the thousand colours of humanity. ■

Conclusion of the Special Report

Building What Carries Creative Work Further.

Behind every film, song, collection or game, a business capability carries the work further. A studio welcomes a team into a functioning production space, a payment rail accepts familiar currencies, and rights or distribution connect the work to its audience. Repeated use across productions and markets reveals the value of these capabilities. Capital gives them the time and discipline to carry one creation into the conditions for another.

By The Editorial Team

After the Film, the Studio Remains.

A team arriving at Cape Town Film Studios finds sound stages, workshops and equipment ready for use. It buys time, technical continuity and the freedom to concentrate on production. Once the team leaves, the same facilities remain available for the next production.

The studio lists five sound-stage buildings with a combined area of 8,745 square metres. Its accounts offer one measure of activity. Revenue rose from ZAR 87.7 million in 2023 to ZAR 96.6 million in 2025, while profit from continuing operations remained positive, ranging from ZAR 19.1 million to ZAR 23.6 million across the three published years. Successive projects put the asset to work; after each shoot, it remains ready to generate revenue again.

The public data do not disclose occupancy rates, pricing, client concentration or maintenance investment. They establish revenue and positive profit over three years, but not the depth of demand or the complete return on capital. A film makes talent visible; the studio retains a reusable capability. Its investment appeal then depends on use, costs, maintenance and governance.

The Same Logic Travels from Studio to Payment.

Cape Town makes this logic tangible in physical space; Carry1st reveals its digital counterpart. The company developed Pay1st to enable purchases of games and digital content through local payment methods. In October 2024, that rail was extended to Audiomack passes offered in local currency across twelve African countries.

For the listener, paying for a subscription becomes a familiar act. Audiomack reaches markets where payment methods differ, while

Credit @Magnific.com

Carry1st brings infrastructure first developed for gaming into music. Processing and settling payments locally gives another creative product a route to revenue.

The partnership's volumes, revenue and margins have not been published. The evidence establishes portability across sectors, not profitability. Transaction frequency, margin per transaction and settlement reliability provide the next tests. Together, they will show whether each new user strengthens the economics of the capability.

Capital Follows the Revenue Unit.

Film and music put capital to work on different rhythms. A studio earns its next unit of revenue through another day of use; a payment rail, through another transaction settled correctly. Those rhythms shape the instrument, duration and source of repayment. An investor examines occupancy and upkeep in one case, and frequency, unit margin and settlement quality in the other.

At Cape Town, several forms of capital came together in an identifiable structure. The project presented in 2008 combined private capital with two public contributions. The provincial government invested ZAR 30 million in exchange for a 10% equity interest, while the City of Cape Town committed ZAR 30 million to access infrastructure. In 2022, Wesgro recorded ZAR 30 million received from the studio and due to the provincial department as investment proceeds. That record establishes the proceeds, not the return. Calculating the return would still require the full set of cash flows, costs and exit terms.

eMedia now owns 50% of the studio and exercises joint control. That ownership position places the company inside decisions on maintenance, further resources and any eventual exit. In digital infrastructure, governance extends to data and settlement. An investor therefore connects documented use, operating economics, decision rights and risk. The evidence should distinguish each step from announcement to agreement, deployment, collection and repayment. That alignment determines the capital that fits.

Credit @seventyfour_Magnific.com

Before the Billion, Every Stage Needs Its Own Verb.

As the sums grow, the path of evidence must remain readable. In October 2024, Afreximbank signed a EUR 245 million facility with New World Television to finance, among other purposes, the acquisition of sports broadcasting rights. The Confederation of African Football had awarded the Togolese operator free-to-air and pay-television rights, in English and local languages, for sub-Saharan territories during the 2023–2025 cycle. The financing is linked to an identifiable asset and distribution perimeter. The signed facility establishes commitment; disbursement, revenue and repayment will test execution.

The scale changes again with the Africa Film Fund, announced under CANEX with a target of up to USD 1 billion for the audiovisual value chain. At the date of verification, the fund was still being operationalised and its parameters had yet to be published. Proof now requires a named investment, its terms and capital actually deployed.

What Remains for the Next Creation.

Shared capabilities bring the investment map into focus when their use, economics and governance remain legible. A studio, payment rail or rights portfolio allows creative work to travel beyond a single project. Capital earns its place by helping that capability endure, provided the evidence connects use to revenue, risk to responsibility and today's asset to the work that follows. ■

Main working sources: *eMedia Holdings, Historical Financial Information of eMedia Holdings Limited and subsidiaries — 2025; Cape Town Film Studios, Sound Stages Overview; Videovision Entertainment, The R430 Million 'Dream' Project Realised; Wesgro, Annual Report 2022/23; Carry1st, Partnership with Africa's most popular music streaming — Audiomack; Afreximbank, Afreximbank enters deal for EUR 245 million facility with NWTV for African sports broadcast rights acquisition; Confederation of African Football, CAF concludes historic media rights agreement with New World TV; CANEX Africa, Africa Film Fund.*

Behind every film, song, collection, or game, a company makes the next step possible.

Credit @Ron Lach_pexels.com

Analysis & Perspectives

Productive Enterprises

Productive capability is built in the workshop and in how a company keeps capital moving, turns demand into activity, secures its energy supply, passes on responsibility, maintains its equipment and decides, when the balance breaks down, what can still be preserved. ■

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Analysis

After Capital Moves On, the Business Remains.

A transaction may bring new resources, allow a founder to sell part of a holding, make room for a long-term institution or help a family regain control. In every case, capital moves more than money. It reallocates ownership, risk, decision-making and time. Its value also lies in what the business remains able to do once the transaction is complete.

by The Editorial Team

In 2018, EUR 19 Million Changes Hands.

In 2018, Pétro Ivoire's founding family sought to regain control of the company. Vantage Capital provided EUR 19 million of mezzanine debt for a leveraged management buyout, or LMBO. The sum might suggest an injection intended to open service stations or purchase equipment. Its first purpose was to buy out the shares held by Amethis and the West Africa Emerging Markets Growth Fund, known as WAEMGF. Pétro Ivoire remained at the centre of the transaction without receiving the money directly.

That distinction offers the first key to reading a private investment. Before considering the percentage acquired, the expected return or the name of the instrument, identify who pays, who receives the money and what change the transaction makes possible.
The same word, investment, covers funding for the company, payment to a departing shareholder or the transfer of ownership to a new group.

Three Transactions, Three Purposes.

Pétro Ivoire's trajectory makes those purposes visible without collapsing them into a single fundraising story.

In 2013, Amethis acquired 39% of the company from two of its three founders. The money went to the sellers. Pétro Ivoire gained a new shareholder, and Amethis announced two board seats, but the purchase of existing shares did not by itself add cash to the company. Ownership changed hands.

In 2016, Amethis and WAEMGF invested through a capital increase and convertible bonds issued by Pétro Ivoire. This time, the company received the funds. The announcement said that the transaction would strengthen its financial position and finance investment, although neither the amount nor the detailed use of proceeds was made public.

The 2018 LMBO organised a third movement. Vantage's debt enabled

Credit @chandlervid85_Magnific.com

the two investors to exit and the founding family to regain control, while Geogas entered the capital. The new configuration allowed some actors to leave and others to continue the business. It also introduced repayment obligations into the transaction structure, although the contractual source of repayment is not public.

Six Terms for Following the Money.

Purchase of existing shares. As in 2013, the investor pays the shareholder selling the stake; the company does not receive that money.

Capital increase. The company issues new shares, sells them to investors and receives the proceeds to finance its activity.

Convertible bond. Money is lent to the company and may be converted into an equity interest under agreed conditions.

Mezzanine debt. Financing positioned between a conventional bank loan and equity, generally carrying greater risk and cost, and used here to support a buyout.

LMBO, or leveraged management buyout. A company is acquired by its management team, here alongside the founding family, using debt as part of the financing.

Liquidity or exit. The route through which an investor recovers capital by selling a stake, having it repurchased or receiving repayment of debt.

What Each Side Commits.

The investor commits capital, accepts risk and waits for value to form or debt to be repaid. In return, the investor seeks remuneration, reliable information and protections proportionate to the risk carried. The entrepreneur shares part of the future value or commits the company's cash flow to repayment. Some decisions also become subject to rights granted to a third party.

Governance gives this relationship a working form. It defines the information that circulates, the decisions retained by management and those requiring investor consent. If it is too weak, the capital provider lacks visibility. If it reaches too far, the company loses room to respond to its market.

A transaction shifts ownership, control and risk faster than it transfers knowledge, relationships or authority. Capital gives that transition time, but it does not complete the work on its own.

When the Investor Exits, Who Owns the Business?

In 2022, Amethis sold its remaining interest to Côte d'Ivoire's national social security institution, the Caisse nationale de prévoyance sociale. Sika Finance estimated the stake at about 15.5%. The money went to the exiting investor rather than to Pétro Ivoire, yet the transaction brought a long-term Ivorian institution into the ownership of a productive local company.

African savings therefore have more than one route into productive enterprise. They finance new capacity directly or acquire the stake of an investor whose mandate has reached its term. Local anchoring is not automatic. An African company, a manager based on the continent, a regional fund and the institutions subscribing to that fund are separate realities. The analysis still has to identify who saves, who manages, who decides and who ultimately bears the risk.

Across the period covered by the Amethis and Vantage transactions, Pétro Ivoire's reported network grew from 34 stations in 2013 to 72 in 2018 and 78 in 2022. That trajectory does not isolate the contribution of any one financing. A 2024 Bloomfield rating based on the 2023 accounts also reported CFAF 48.21 billion of financial debt against CFAF 3.27 billion of equity, alongside reduced profitability and financial imbalance. Those figures do not show that the LMBO created the position. They show that expansion can coexist with a demanding financial structure.

Amethis exited through two transactions, in 2018 and 2022, while Vantage announced the full exit of its mezzanine investment in December 2022. Prices, returns and detailed repayment terms remain private. In 2022, Pétro Ivoire also raised almost CFAF 29.5 billion on the regional bond market to finance 22 projects and refinance debt, according to the stated objectives. The company therefore entered a new cycle in which it carried the repayment directly.

When the Agreement Stops Working.

HealthPlus in Nigeria shows what happens when the amount announced, the cash delivered and decision-making authority no longer tell the same story. BusinessDay reported that Alta Semper committed USD 18 million in 2018, beginning with a USD 10 million tranche. That tranche was said to confer a 53.8% interest. Proshare, in an analysis based on non-public agreements, described a board shared between the investor and the founder, with an independent chair jointly appointed.

The balance of the funding, management and the exercise of governance later became matters of public dispute. TheCable reported that a 2020 court order required the parties to maintain the status quo without deciding the merits. In 2022, mPharma announced the acquisition of Alta Semper's majority interest. The sources reviewed do not establish fault. They show that an equity majority does not necessarily make authority workable, and that a financial commitment does not have the same effect as cash actually disbursed.

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What the Transaction Must Leave Behind.

Before discussing valuation or expected return, the parties should be able to describe the transaction in language understood by those who will operate the business afterwards. A clear account begins with the change sought and the destination of the cash. It identifies what the company will do that it could not do before, which ownership, information and decision rights will be shared, and how the capital will be remunerated. It also defines the response to slower growth, the route to exit or repayment and the capabilities the business must retain once the investor has gone.

Depending on the need, those answers point towards a capital increase, a sale of shares or acquisition debt. Sometimes, they reveal that the proposed transaction fits the need poorly. A temporary requirement does not always justify surrendering a permanent stake in the company. Preserving ownership through debt is no victory if repayment weakens the activity.

Depending on the transaction, the investor leaves behind an ownership structure, a debt obligation or new rules for decision-making. The founder entrusts part of the value already accumulated and part of the responsibility for what follows.

Capital moves on. The quality of its passage is visible in the business that remains. ■

Main working sources: *Amethis, Amethis' 2nd Equity Investment; Africa Global Funds, Amethis Completes Capital Increase in Petro Ivoire; Amethis and Vantage Capital, Vantage Capital Supports Amethis and WAEMGF's Exit from Pétro Ivoire; Vantage Capital, Petro Ivoire — First LMBO in the WAEMU Region and Vantage Capital Exits Petro Ivoire; Amethis, Successful Exit of Pétro Ivoire; Sika Finance, La CNPS acquiert la participation d'Amethis dans Pétro Ivoire; Bloomfield Investment Corporation, Pétro Ivoire Financial Rating; DC/BR UMOA, Pétro Ivoire 6.80% 2022–2029; BusinessDay Nigeria, Proshare, TheCable and mPharma on HealthPlus.*

Time is required between the order and delivery. Capital is required between delivery and payment.

Analysis

When Government Places the Order, Who Finances the Wait?

A public-sector order may give a manufacturer enough visibility to justify investment. It may also immobilise working capital, expose the company to currency risk and leave it waiting after delivery. In Ethiopia, pharmaceutical procurement by the Ethiopian Pharmaceutical Supply Service shows how public demand shapes a market before payment arrives, and why payment discipline is also a form of industrial policy.

by The Editorial Team

Production Starts Before the Money Arrives.

When a manufacturer wins a line in a public tender, the first thing it receives is a timetable rather than revenue. It reserves production capacity, buys raw materials and components, obtains foreign currency, mobilises staff, produces and delivers. Unless an advance is paid, settlement follows only after the goods have been inspected and accepted. Between award and final payment, the order sets the factory in motion without necessarily providing the cash required to execute it.

On 12 December 2023, the Ethiopian Pharmaceutical Supply Service, or EPSS, published detailed results for a tender reserved for manufacturers operating in the country. The notice identified medicines, quantities, successful companies, prices, delivery locations and a six-month deadline. Some lines provided for a 30% advance and the balance on delivery; others required payment on or after delivery.

The document makes demand tangible, but it does not show which volumes were ultimately ordered, which deliveries were accepted or when advances and balances reached suppliers' accounts. The central economic question therefore remains open. Who finances the interval between contract award and payment?

The Public Buyer Sets the Pace.

Manufacturers invest more readily against demand they can anticipate. In pharmaceuticals, the prospect of repeated orders may justify a new production line, certification, a laboratory or staff training. It also spreads those costs across several cycles rather than a single purchase.

EPSS has used framework agreements since 2017 to organise orders over time. In 2025, it published another tender restricted to local manufacturers, while a directive adopted that year strengthened the architecture. Its provisions include multi-year agreements, advances,

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volume sharing between several suppliers and graduated preferences based on value added in the country. Together, these tools allow a public buyer to turn dispersed purchases into an industrial horizon.

That horizon remains fragile when a price fixed well in advance no longer reflects the cost of inputs or currency movements, or when expected call-off orders arrive irregularly. A 2024 Addis Ababa University study, based on 84 responses collected within EPSS, identified weaknesses in communication, volumes actually ordered and contract monitoring. Investment follows observed regularity; duration written into an agreement is not enough.

Predictable demand opens the market to companies able to prepare and invest. Unstable demand favours those able to carry inventory or an unpaid invoice for longer. The way government orders therefore shapes the supplier market as much as the award itself.

The Wait Eventually Chooses the Suppliers.

Manufacturing in Ethiopia does not remove dependence on imported active ingredients, packaging, equipment or spare parts. Wages, energy, quality control and maintenance also require financing before delivery. For the 2023 tender, foreign-currency support was announced for some inputs and several lines included an advance, although the public documents do not establish whether those resources arrived when needed.

Late payment immobilises more working capital, pushes the company towards borrowing or defers maintenance and investment. The supplier then enters the next tender with less room to manoeuvre. A policy intended to broaden local supply consequently risks favouring the companies whose balance sheets already finance the wait.

The tension appears in aggregate results reported by Addis Fortune in January 2025. According to the assessment cited, local manufacturers delivered 47% of contracted quantities in the portfolio reviewed, while medicines worth 4.1 billion birr went undelivered over two years. Manufacturers pointed to working capital, foreign exchange, inputs and payment delays; EPSS also cited production capacity and delivery schedules.

The data identify neither a supplier nor a lot nor a single cause. They do reveal a loop. Irregular orders make investment riskier, insufficient capacity weakens delivery and late payment reduces the resources available for the following cycle. Buyer and suppliers lose the common rhythm on which both depend.

The mechanism becomes clearer in Kenya. A study across four counties, based on 70 interviews, links late budget disbursement to accumulated debt, slower procurement and suppliers that delay, reduce or reprice their offers. For the 2024/25 financial year, Business Daily Africa reported that the public agency KEMSA owed suppliers KSh 5.71 billion. Collection from its own public-sector clients took an average of 487 days against a stated 45-day policy.

Delay travels from the budget to the public buyer and then to the supplier. Each additional day becomes a working-capital requirement carried somewhere in the chain. Payment discipline functions as productive infrastructure because it returns capital to circulation early enough to finance the next batch and keeps companies with less financial strength in the market.

Discipline does not weaken quality control. The buyer still needs to inspect, accept or reject a delivery against the required standards. It also needs a predictable process, documented reasons for rejection and payment within the announced period once the delivery has been validated. Quality protects the patient; procedural clarity protects the ability to produce again.

What Local Procurement Should Leave in the Economy.

In this industry, the word local rarely describes a single reality. A foreign-controlled company may manufacture, employ and invest in the country, while a locally owned business may depend heavily on imported inputs. The degree of anchoring changes according to whether the measure is headquarters, ownership, factory activity or value retained in the economy.

The 2025 directive grades preference according to value added in the country. Such a preference only works if the calculation remains verifiable and the public objective is explicit. Developing skills, securing supply, reducing selected imports, attracting investment or strengthening local control lead to different choices. None removes the requirements of quality, full cost and continuity.

A 2025 ministerial study of thirteen large manufacturers estimated that local production covered 14.4% of national medicine demand and 36% of public supply. The two percentages use different denominators, but together they show the importance of the public buyer to manufacturers operating in the country. Through its calendar, prices, controls and payments, government influences activity far beyond a single contract.

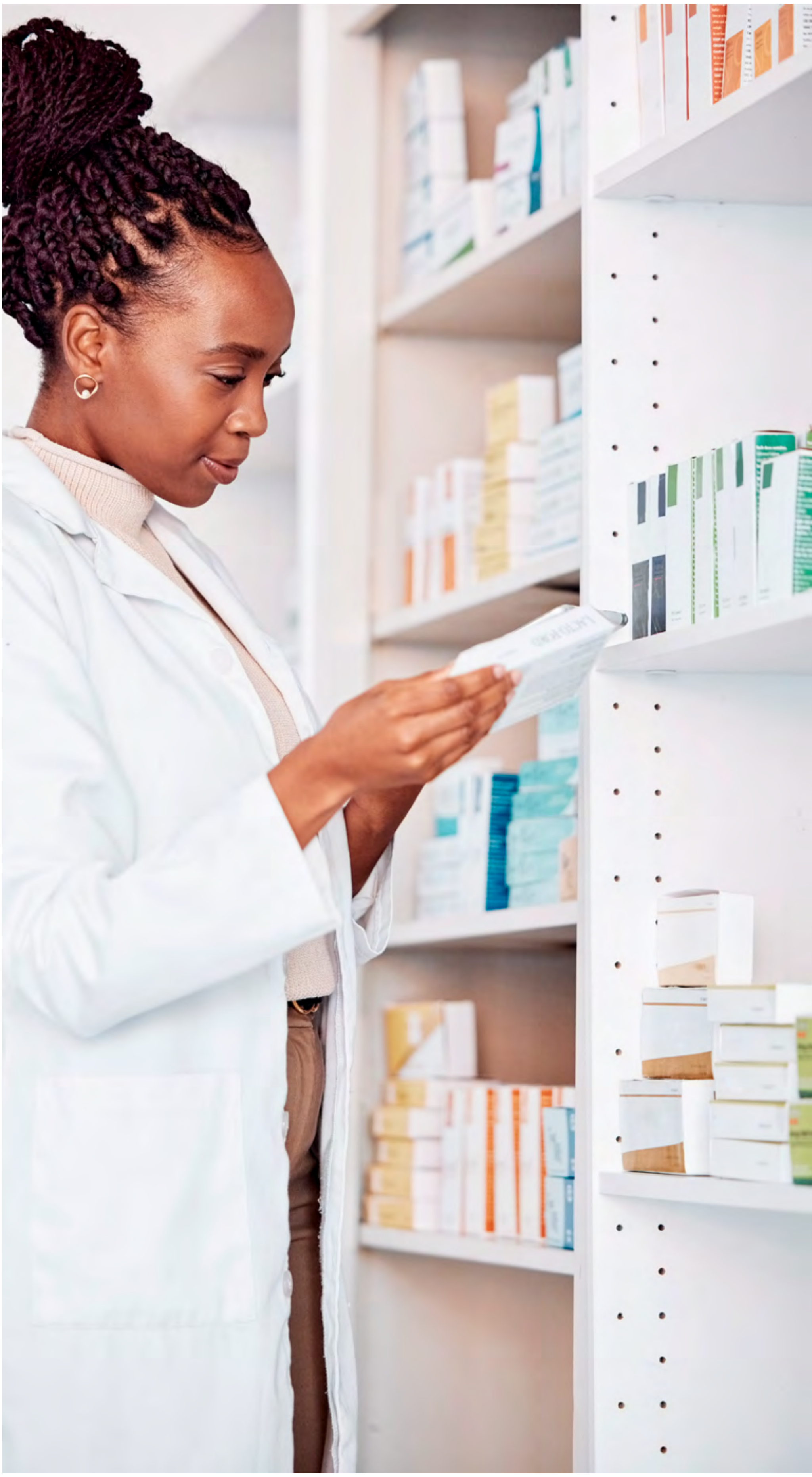
Depending on its design and execution, that leverage supports capacity across several companies or creates dependence on a dominant customer. Volume sharing limits concentration in principle, yet the number of successful bidders offers only a partial picture of competition. Effective competition depends on several companies being able to produce at the accepted price, receive payment, continue investing and return for the following tender.

The Next Order Reveals the Real Result.

In the EPSS case, the result will be visible at the supplier. An order offers a credible horizon only when the manufacturer executes it without exhausting the business, meets the quality requirements and, once paid, regains the means to produce, invest and compete again.

When government buys medicines, it also sets the financial tempo of an industry. The rhythm of orders, inspections and settlement determines how quickly capital returns to circulation. The public contract closes with payment; the supplier market reveals itself in the order that follows. ■

__Main working sources:__ Ethiopian Pharmaceutical Supply Service, Procurement Directive No. 1066/2025 and Award Result NCB/EPSS6/RDF-R/PH/04/23; Muluembet Tesfaye, Addis Ababa University, Assessment of the Practices and Challenges of Pharmaceuticals Framework Contract Agreement Procurement; Addis Fortune, Finance Shortfalls Entangle Pharma Supplies, Distributions; Ethiopia Ministry of Health, Special Bulletin of the 27th Annual Review Meeting of the Health Sector; Anita Musiega et al., Health Policy and Planning, Examining the Influence of Budget Execution Processes on the Efficiency of County Health Systems in Kenya; Business Daily Africa, Hospitals Turn to Expensive Drugs on Lower KEMSA Supplies.



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Analysis

The Factory Pays for More Than Electricity.

At its plant in Kano, Rumbu Industries combines grid power, diesel generators, uninterruptible power supplies and solar generation to keep a continuous production process moving. The electricity bill records only part of what that continuity costs. Capital tied up in backup systems, maintenance and the losses left by an interruption also reach the factory floor.

by The Editorial Team

Power Is Part of the Production Process.

Rumbu makes polypropylene mats and twine at a site designed to operate around the clock. Enerwhere, the supplier of its solar project, reported an average power requirement above 500 kW and warned that an interruption could quickly clog the machinery. For this factory, reliable electricity reaches the line with the timing, load and stability the process requires.

Around 2017, the Kano Electricity Distribution Company grid was reported to provide about 60% of the site's annual energy. Diesel generators supplied the balance, while uninterruptible power supplies provided another layer of backup. Those assets could also fail. A 73 kilowatt-peak solar installation was then added to the mix, with a public inauguration reported in March 2018.

The system is therefore more revealing than any one technology. Rumbu did not ask a single source to guarantee production. It assembled several forms of supply, each with a different role and a different failure mode. The public sources show the architecture, but they do not disclose the site's bills, diesel volumes, equipment prices, financing terms or incident history. Nor do they connect each interruption with the number of conforming units ultimately delivered.

Two factories may receive the same number of hours of electricity and still receive a different productive service. The relevant difference lies in the load that must be maintained, the time the line can tolerate without damage and the conditions required for a safe restart. The industrial process defines the need before the available technology defines the solution.

The Meter Sees Only One Layer of Cost.

The meter records electricity purchased from the grid. Fuel invoices and stock records can trace what the generators consume. The business also pays for the system built around that energy. Generators, power supplies, solar panels, controls, installation, finance, maintenance, spare parts and eventual replacement all mobilise capital. Some of those costs leave the bank account immediately; others should be spread across the useful life of the asset.

The losses that the continuity system did not prevent must then be added. Some interruptions still reach the production line, product quality or delivery. They can require cleaning, restarting, further energy use and, in some cases, scrap, repairs or expedited transport.

The cost of reliability therefore brings three realities together over the same period: the energy consumed, the means used to maintain continuity and the residual losses. Related to conforming units actually delivered, it becomes comparable with gross margin, unit cost and actual capacity use. A solution with a lower cost per kilowatt-hour may still cost the factory more if it protects production less effectively.

An Outage Outlives the Loss of Supply.

An interruption does not necessarily end when power returns. In a continuous process, the generator may start only after the line has stopped. Material may have to be removed, settings restored and the affected batch inspected. Missed production may be recovered later, but overtime, additional energy or an accelerated delivery can transfer the cost into another part of the operation.

A delayed order is not automatically a lost sale. The cost of the incident includes what was actually spent or destroyed, from restarting production to rejected materials, repairs and contractual penalties. The corresponding margin enters the calculation only if the sale is definitively lost. What the factory recovered should not remain in the loss column.

Research across firms in 84 developing countries between 2006 and 2019 links power constraints with lower capacity use, sales and productivity. Evidence from Ghana's manufacturing SMEs during the 2012–2015 electricity crisis also shows that owning a generator did not fully protect firms from productivity losses. Backup capacity can reduce exposure without guaranteeing that it starts in time, carries the useful load or preserves the production already in process.

For Rumbu, the sources mention the risk of clogged machinery but do not report how often it occurred, how long cleaning took or what scrap, repair or delay followed. No amount can responsibly be attached to those incidents. Their absence from the energy account is nevertheless a management signal. An unmeasured loss can continue to weaken the margin.

Solar Changes the Mix, Not the Measurement Problem.

When the 73 kWp system was commissioned, Enerwhere projected more than 100 MWh of annual generation, about NGN 6 million in yearly savings and a simple payback of less than four years. Those figures described the supplier's business case. The public record does not establish the annual output achieved, the diesel displaced, the savings realised or the payback reached.

The published capacity alone cannot reveal the system's annual contribution or its behaviour during an outage. Grid power and generators remained part of the architecture. A second phase of 300 kWp was announced, but its public commissioning could not be established from the approved sources.

A grid-connected installation can reduce daytime electricity purchases without carrying a critical load on its own or guaranteeing the quality of a restart. Lower bills and industrial continuity therefore require different measures. An older study at Seven-Up's Ilorin plant related energy cost to litres produced. Its figures are not a current benchmark, but the shift in perspective remains sound: energy acquires economic meaning through the conforming product it helps the factory deliver.

Credit @Seventyfour_Magnific.com

Reliability Belongs in the Unit Cost.

Rumbu makes a familiar industrial reality visible. Continuity requires assets, operating routines and cash. No single piece of equipment supplies the entire service. Grid power, diesel, power supplies and solar generation may all deliver electricity while providing different protection to the production process.

The value of these systems is judged by the cash they consume and by what they protect. A company that relates the full cost of its system to conforming production can measure its effect on margin and capacity without confusing projected savings with realised results.

A kilowatt-hour remains a unit of energy. For the factory, the decisive unit is the product that leaves the line at the required quality and reaches the customer. The price of reliable power is written into that unit. ■

Main working sources: *Enerwhere, Enerwhere Commissions First Industrial Rooftop Solar Plant in Kano, Nigeria; Rumbu Industries Limited; News Agency of Nigeria, reported by P.M. News; Nigerian Electricity Regulatory Commission, Continuity of Service Guidelines and MYTO 2015 Kano DisCo Tariff Order; J. T. Oladeji, LAUTECH Journal of Engineering and Technology; Ablam Estel Apeti and Alpha Ly, Energy; Ama Baafra Abeberese, Charles Godfred Ackah and Patrick Opoku Asuming, The World Bank Economic Review.*

Analysis

Handing Over Without Stopping the Business.

In March 2019, South Africa's Bidvest announced Mpumi Madisa as its next chief executive. She would take office eighteen months later, after a career inside the group that began in 2003. The decisive detail lay less in the name of the future leader than in everything the organisation set in motion before handing her the title.

by The Editorial Team

The Founder's Centrality First Creates Value.

A young company often gains speed from the founder's central role. Decisions remain coherent, relationships carry personal credibility and the knowledge behind early compromises sits close to the person who made them. This concentration often serves the company well for years.

The risk lies in a company that can no longer decide or serve without returning to the same person. An organisation chart may display several executives while information, relationships and final arbitration remain concentrated elsewhere. A credible handover makes the company's knowledge, decisions and operating capacity accessible to others without diminishing the founder's contribution.

Bidvest was founded in 1988 and listed in Johannesburg early in its history. Its ownership had therefore been open for decades by the time Brian Joffe left executive leadership. Shares had already changed hands. The ability to act still had to move from one leader to others.

Bidvest Passed the Baton Twice.

Before 2016, Bidvest already described a decentralised model made up of numerous businesses led by operational teams with their own responsibilities. Daily execution did not rest solely at group level, although the precise boundaries of that autonomy are not public. The structure had begun distributing the capacity to act before the founder stepped away.

In May 2016, Bidvest separated its foodservices operations and listed them as Bidcorp. Joffe left executive leadership of Bidvest and Lindsay Ralphs succeeded him. Joffe nevertheless remained a non-executive director of Bidvest and became chair of Bidcorp. The handover was therefore not a sudden disappearance. Scope, role and authority were redistributed across two listed companies and several leaders.

Credit @Alenabutor_Magnific.com

Bidvest's board described the first succession as the result of several years of preparation and said that the separation was completed with minimal disruption. That assessment belongs to the company. The continued operation of Bidvest under Ralphs is observable, but it does not reveal every delegation, relationship or decision that moved during the transition.

Madisa's route created a second test. She had held responsibilities in a subsidiary, a division, at group level and on the board before being named chief executive-designate in March 2019. Over the following eighteen months, she worked alongside Ralphs and gained exposure to the group's files, forums and operating rhythm. The formal appointment followed this period of shared work.

Madisa took office on 1 October 2020, during the Covid-19 crisis. Ralphs had still been leading Bidvest when the shock began, so the episode tested an entire transition already in progress rather than a single day of succession. Under the new chief executive, the group continued to operate, acquire, dispose of assets and publish financial results.

That continuity does not prove that succession caused Bidvest's performance. The decentralised structure pre-dated the transition, divisional teams remained active and the portfolio continued to change. It establishes a narrower and more useful point. After the founder, and then after his first successor, the organisation continued to decide and account for its actions.

The Title Matters Less Than Authority in Practice.

Ownership, governance and management do not always move at the same speed. Ownership defines economic and voting rights. Governance organises oversight. Management provides a mandate. Information, relationships and operating knowledge determine whether that mandate can be exercised in practice. A formally valid appointment can coexist with decisions that still travel back to the predecessor through an unofficial route.

Real decisions make authority observable. The future leader gains access to critical files, participates in real trade-offs, commits resources and answers for decisions before an identifiable board. The chief executive cannot remain the sole carrier of that capacity. The organisation remains exposed if a strategic customer knows only one person, if useful data are inaccessible or if a critical routine survives only in someone's memory.

Credible transitions put these capacities to use before the formal handover. An absence, a disagreement, an incident or a complete operating cycle can then test whether action continues without an automatic return to the founder. The intention to delegate matters less than the demonstrated ability of others to act.

SEDIMA and Java House Follow Different Timelines.

SEDIMA in Senegal offers a different rhythm. Anta Babacar Ngom joined the family company in 2009, held several roles and became chief executive in 2016. Her operational withdrawal was reported in 2023, while Seynabou Seck was publicly identified as chief executive in 2025. The available sources report that ownership remained within the family. They do not establish how far control, critical relationships or organisational memory moved with the change in management.

Java House makes another configuration visible. Between 2012 and 2025, the East African restaurant chain passed under the control of several investors through partial and then complete sales. Its operations and nearly one hundred outlets remained visible at the time of the latest announced transaction. The transition agreements, systems, recipes, relationships and decision rights are not public. Changes of ownership are established; the internal mechanism that carried the organisation through them is not.

The Founder Changes Position.

A completed handover does not require the founder to deny what was built or sever every connection with the company. The founder may remain a shareholder, director or adviser. Experience continues to create value so long as the organisation does not suspend each decision while waiting for its validation.

The passage begins before the announcement and continues after it. Files open to others, relationships carried by more than one person and decisions made through agreed channels all carry the transition forward. When an unexpected event no longer sends the company instinctively back to its founder, the title has finally caught up with the organisation. ■

Main working sources: *The Bidvest Group Limited, Annual Integrated Reports 2016, 2019 and 2020, Group Overview and Board of Directors; News24/Fin24, Bidvest CEO to Step Down After Listing Food Unit Separately and Bidvest Appoints Mpumi Madisa as Chief Executive-Designate; Reuters, published by Moneyweb, Bidvest Confirms Madisa as CEO-in-Waiting; Vie-Publique Sénégal, Anta Babacar Ngom; Seneweb and Nema Info on SEDIMA; Business Daily Africa and Alterra Capital/Phatisa on Java House.*

Analysis

A Machine's Real Test Begins When It Stops.

In 2006, engineers arrived in Akure to measure a flash dryer that Nigerian manufacturer Nobex had already built. The machine worked, but it consumed too much fuel and processed too little cassava. The work that followed showed a local team improving technology around real production. The harder test would come with a serious breakdown and reveal whether the same capability could return the machine to service.

by The Editorial Team

The Machine Learns in Akure.

Fresh cassava leaves processors little time. The root deteriorates quickly after harvest, so drying has to preserve quality while maintaining a throughput and cost acceptable to the market. The machine has to answer to the material, the available fuel and the product expected at the end of the line.

When teams from the Federal University of Agriculture, Abeokuta and the Natural Resources Institute studied the Nobex dryer, they encountered equipment already designed and integrated by Nigerian engineers. Their joint work began with measurement, then turned to the parts limiting performance.

The heat exchanger, cyclones, finishing and feeding system were modified through trials and feedback from processors. The Natural Resources Institute reported fuel consumption falling from 374 to 65 litres per tonne of dry product and throughput rising from about 100 to 330 kilograms per hour. These figures come from a program partner and do not apply to every machine or operating condition. Their value lies chiefly in the path taken by a local team able to observe, understand, modify and test.

That ability changes the relationship with technology. The process no longer has to bend around an untouchable object. The machine evolves in response to the cassava actually handled, the operators' movements and the constraints of the plant. Local fabrication is at its strongest when knowledge remains close to the need and experience from the factory floor returns to the workshop.

Improvement is still only the first half of the story. A dryer may pass its trials, reach customers and even be exported while leaving one decisive question unanswered. How long will production remain idle when a component fails?

A Breakdown Reveals What the Organisation Knows.

AI-generated picture _Credit @Magnific.com

Once the line stops, published performance gives way to a sequence of practical decisions. Someone has to recognise the symptom, identify its cause, find the right drawing and obtain the part. The organisation also needs to know who intervenes, who bears the delay and when production is ready to restart without compromising quality or safety.

Knowledge remains concentrated if every diagnosis leads back to the designer. The operating organisation gains real command of the machine once another technician diagnoses the fault, makes or orders the part and verifies the restart. A repair creates additional value when it also corrects a procedure or informs the next version of the equipment.

Public sources on Nobex establish local fabrication, collaboration with researchers and several technical improvements. They do not follow a complete breakdown from stoppage to restart. Long-term availability, repair time, access to parts and the real cost of service therefore remain unknown. This gap does not diminish the documented engineering work. It marks the boundary between technical improvement and durable productive capability.

A 2017 survey of users of agro-industrial machinery in Oyo State provides context rather than a measure of Nobex. Among respondents, 34.6% waited until the off-season, roughly six months, before carrying out maintenance. A stoppage may persist because the necessary skill, part or cash is unavailable at the moment it is needed. Proximity alone does not establish maintainability.

At Godilogo, the Material Answers Back.

At Obudu, Godilogo Farms had first acquired a dryer from Brazil. The equipment did not achieve the moisture level required for the cassava processed on site. A locally designed and manufactured installation was commissioned in 2008 with an announced capacity of 250 kilograms of flour per hour.

Use soon added its own lesson. Wet cassava cake formed an arch inside the hopper and repeatedly blocked the feed. The team resized the feeder around the material's actual properties instead of asking the material to conform to the machine. The indexed study announced a 64% increase in capacity after the modification. The complete protocol and the persistence of that result over time remain to be confirmed, but the incident generated new knowledge about how the material moved through the equipment.

Godilogo does not establish a general victory of local machinery over imported equipment. The Brazilian dryer was unsuited to the observed requirement; the locally made solution still has to pass the tests of restart, safety and cost. The decisive difference lies in the ability to act on the technology rather than wait for an inaccessible answer.

Imported equipment also fits within a service organised locally. Henan Jinrui says it maintains an office and warehouse in Nigeria, with spare parts and technical support. That declared infrastructure prevents importation from being equated with abandonment after the sale. Without data on stock, response times and completed interventions, however, it remains a commercial promise rather than evidence of service.

What the Repair Leaves Behind.

Maintenance belongs inside production because the stoppage often costs more than the repair. Holding a spare part ties up a little capital today to protect tomorrow's output. Training a technician reduces dependence on distant expertise. A service contract pays for availability before the fault occurs. Across a fleet of machines, these choices can support workshops, technical centres and specialised suppliers.

The purchase price therefore describes only one part of the investment. Two comparable machines also differ in the time they lose, the batches they downgrade and the ease with which production returns to its required level. The cheaper machine at entry may prove more expensive if every incident suspends activity for weeks.

Local solutions deserve priority because they help keep knowledge, technical employment and the capacity to improve the tool close to production. That priority gains credibility through clear requirements for documentation, parts, safety and performance after repair. It does not lower the standard of proof.

For Nobex and Godilogo, the public record follows the machine through improvement but stops before a complete maintenance history. The missing ledger would connect an actual failure to its cause, the part used, the downtime, the cost and the quality of the restart. When several technicians repeat that path and turn the incident into a better version, the machine is no longer merely made or installed locally. It is mastered over time. ■

__Main working sources:__ Natural Resources Institute, Homegrown Manufacturing Equipment Boosts Cassava Sales for African Farmers; Natural Resources Institute, Better Biscuits, Better Lives; BusinessDay Nigeria, Nobex Pioneers Standard in Africa's Cassava Processing Value Chain; Calestous Juma, The New Harvest; A. Balami, D. Adgidzi and I. Kwaya, Modification and Testing of a Cassava Flash Dryer Feeder Unit; T. O. Dauda et al., Evaluation of Maintenance Culture of Some Agricultural Processing Machine in Oyo State; Henan Jinrui corporate materials.

Analysis

Saving What Can Still Produce.

In March 2019, Group Five Construction entered business rescue in South Africa with 119 projects in progress. Some could still be completed; others needed a new owner or an orderly stop. Each decision affected clients awaiting delivery, employees, creditors and other businesses whose prospects were not identical to those of the group. Restructuring began by separating the failing structure from the productive activity that could still retain value.

by The Editorial Team

1 19 Projects, No Single Answer.

Group Five had expanded across construction, engineering, materials and concessions in Africa and beyond. In 2018, Group Five Construction absorbed R880 million of cash in its operations. Its working-capital requirement was estimated at R3.6 billion through the end of 2019. Pressure came from a slowing South African construction market, losses on several contracts, including the Kpone power project in Ghana, and guarantees that had become difficult to carry.

The scale of the group made a uniform response dangerous. Nearly 180 companies across 38 countries did not possess the same prospects. A project close to completion still offered delivery to the client and the prospect of cash. A profitable subsidiary still offered an acquisition target. Elsewhere, continuing an underpriced contract would only deepen the loss.

The difficulty therefore extended beyond the balance sheet. A construction project connects a client, operating teams, financiers and several suppliers around one timetable. Abrupt abandonment transfers the cost far beyond the distressed company. Continuing without finance risks producing the same outcome later, after consuming more resources and delaying more payments.

South Africa's business rescue procedure created protected time to examine the alternatives and negotiate an outcome preferable to immediate liquidation. That time had value only if the decision moved below the name Group Five. The relevant unit was a project, subsidiary, asset or team rather than the group in its former shape.

Finish, Transfer or Sell.

Group Five Limited, the listed holding company, and Group Five Construction followed two separate procedures and two separate plans. Their assets, liabilities and creditor classes were not interchangeable. For secured creditors

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of Group Five Construction, the 2019 plan projected a recovery of 66 to 78 cents for each rand claimed, compared with 18 cents under the liquidation scenario presented at the time. Other classes followed different calculations, and the historic shareholders were not expected to receive a return under those plans.

Creditors were voting between quantified paths rather than for the symbolic preservation of a familiar group. The plans received 96.1% of votes cast for Group Five Construction and 100% for Group Five Limited.

These were distinct majorities in distinct procedures. Adoption opened the less dramatic work behind the word rescue. Selected projects had to be completed, exits organised, operating businesses sold and activities without a sustainable path closed.

In 2019, the sale of Group Five Projects to the Teichmann group was announced with the transfer of about 500 jobs, mainly elsewhere in Africa. Two years later, Everite, a fibre-cement manufacturer described as profitable and cash-generative, was sold for R600 million with more than 500 employees.

These transactions show how restructuring moves activity without extinguishing it. An activity changes owner, teams enter another organisation and some contracts continue. The public sources do not establish the later performance of each entity or the fate of every partner. The preservation of production depends on the buyer's means, the effective transfer of contracts and a workable horizon for the activity.

What Remained in 2026.

The end of the Group Five Limited and Group Five Construction procedures was announced on 30 June 2026, more than six years after they began. The practitioners reported that secured and preferential creditors had been paid. Concurrent creditors, broadly the ordinary unsecured class, had either been paid or fully provided for. That distinction prevents the result from being summarised as full cash repayment to every creditor.

The same practitioners reported that 101 of the 119 projects had been completed or preserved, about 60 disposals had been made and fewer than 15% of the 5,862 employees in their account had been retrenched. These figures come from the actors running the process, not from an independent audit of its impact. They nevertheless describe a restructuring brought to formal substantial implementation, with projects taken to an outcome, activities transferred and creditor claims addressed through the payments and provisions reported by the practitioners.

The former Group Five did not return in its previous form. The listed company was delisted, while skills, contracts, jobs and assets followed different paths. For a client, a completed project has a different consequence from an abandoned site. For transferred employees, continuity of activity matters more than continuity of the name at the top of the organisation chart. For creditors, the result lies in the amount recovered and the time required to recover it.

The restructuring therefore did more than rearrange the liabilities of two companies. It redistributed viable capabilities among several actors. The ecosystem enters the assessment in a precise sense. It is the set of productive relationships that the chosen solution avoids breaking without reason, not a promise that every stakeholder will be protected.

Ellies Had Ten Weeks to Stop.

Ellies Holdings shows that protected time also risks prolonging losses. Known for satellite-reception equipment before moving into energy, the group entered voluntary business rescue on 31 January 2024. Bank finance for its planned acquisition of Bundu Power, a transaction of roughly R200 million, had not been secured. On 10 April, the practitioner concluded that the holding company had no reasonable prospect of rescue and moved towards liquidation.

Ten weeks were enough to establish that the proposed route forward was not financed. The decision did not necessarily assign the same fate to every asset, subsidiary or the brand. It prevented the holding company from retaining protection without a credible horizon while losses and uncertainty continued to travel through its relationships.

Procedures within the OHADA area use different names and follow different rules. They nevertheless impose the same economic discipline. Protected time serves the company and its ecosystem only when it supports a realistic, financed outcome preferable to immediate closure.

Restructuring neither requires every structure to survive nor distributes sacrifices at random. It identifies what still has a market, capabilities and a practicable financial path, then organises its passage into a configuration able to sustain it. Depending on the case, the company continues within a smaller perimeter or its activities carry on elsewhere. When nothing credible can still be financed, stopping in time prevents the failure from spreading further than it should. ■

Main working sources: *Republic of South Africa, Companies Act 71 of 2008, Chapter 6; Group Five Limited and Group Five Construction business rescue plans and practitioner announcements; News24/Fin24, Group Five Creditors Choose Business Rescue over Liquidation; Moneyweb, New Path Being Forged for Business Rescue in South Africa and Sale of Subsidiary Saves Hundreds of Jobs at Group Five; Business Day and Engineering News on Everite; The Bulrushes, practitioners' closure announcement of 30 June 2026; Ellies Holdings JSE SENS announcements; OHADA AUPC.*

Credit @Fernanda Knak_pexels.com

Depending on the circumstances, the company continues in a scaled-down form, or its operations carry on elsewhere.


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