

British Council

Evaluation of the Sub Saharan Africa Arts and Culture Programmes

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Key findings and recommendations

1.1 Key findings

The Sub Saharan Africa (SSA) Arts Programme has continued to provide impacts for participants and delivery partners alike in the third year of this evaluation. Both participants and delivery partners identified skills development as both a motivation for participating, and an outcome of participating in the programme. In particular, participants highlighted an increase in networking skills and an increase in their business skills as a result of participating in the Arts programme. This is broadly similar to year 2 of the programme.

When considering the economic value of participating in the British Council's programmes, participants reported tangible economic benefits from participating in showcasing activities. This includes increased sales and increased value of sales. Participants also highlighted experiencing both enhanced profiles and enhanced access to commercial opportunities through the Arts programme. Of particular note is the increased role of showcasing opportunities as a means of raising participants' profile both nationally and internationally.

As in previous years, the Arts programme in SSA has a positive impact on favourability towards working in partnership with organisations based in the UK. Delivery partners identified this to be directly linked with having a long standing and successful relationship with the British Council. Additionally, both participants and delivery partners reported enhanced awareness of opportunities to connect with artists and creative professionals both within SSA and in the UK as a result of the Arts programme.

Participants particularly highlighted the opportunities for networking and partnership as a key success from their involvement with the Arts programme. They also noted that the British Council created a supportive environment, which enhanced the overall impact of the programme.

For delivery partners, the British Council is perceived to be a supportive partner, providing organisations with the right balance of autonomy and guidance in the

delivery of programmes. This has enhanced their levels of satisfaction with working with the British Council, helping to create stronger relationships.

British Council staff have also commented on the strength of relationships with delivery partners, recognising how crucial these relationships are to effective delivery across SSA. The British Council has also worked to further its partnerships with individual governments across SSA during year 3, recognising that this can help to elevate the reputation and positioning of the creative industries. More broadly, staff spoke about the importance of adapting programmes to fit into the localised context in each country, allowing for activity to embed into local creative ecosystems has been key to the success of the Arts programme over the last year.

1.2 Key learnings and recommendations

Time is a crucial factor in the delivery of the Arts Programme. Participants seek to have increased time to allow for deeper engagement with the British Council and delivery partners want the opportunity to be engaged longer term for sustained and substantial impacts. Exploration of multi-year programmes and/or contracts with delivery partners to embed learning in the longer term.

The use of social media for communications activities continues to be something that participants and delivery partners wish to see grow, with requests for more timely promotion on social media. However, the processes involved for approving content on British Council platforms (which includes clearance with centralised coms teams) means that it is difficult for this to be put into practice. Clearer communications about what is and is not possible in relation to promotion on British Council channels to manage the expectations of delivery partners and participants and mitigate any potential dissatisfaction.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, there is also a clear steer from participants that they have a need for more grant opportunities to support their development. Recognising that the British Council has only limited funds available, there could be benefit from creating a British Council alumni network, that can help participants to access follow-up support and peer learning, as well as signposting to other grant providers.

2. Context and methodology

2.1 Context

BOP Consulting was commissioned in September 2021 to undertake the evaluation of the British Council Sub Saharan Africa (SSA) Arts Programme. This report presents interim findings of programme activities conducted in Year 3 of the programme (April 2023 to March 2024). As with the year 2 report, this report reflects on ongoing activity as part of the Arts Programme, which is due to complete its current iteration in March 2025. To that end, the evaluation takes a light-touch review of progress, recognising that some activity planned for Year 3 is still ongoing, as well as reflecting wider contextual factors that have impacted on the delivery of year 3.

The report looks across the full breadth of the Arts Programme within the region, and draws on evidence produced by projects, as well as 11 case studies drawn from across the Arts Programme. There are three areas of focus for the analysis: the development of art and heritage knowledge, artistic practice, entrepreneurial skills and networks; the extent to which arts and cultural organisations raise their profile, showcase their arts and increase the economic value of their partnerships; and levels of awareness and opportunities for SSA and UK to share experiences through arts, heritage and culture.

It is important to acknowledge that the impacts of the Arts Programme discussed in this report have, in some cases, occurred against a backdrop of political instability and security challenges. Political unrest in some SSA countries has led to significant delays in project timelines, while security concerns have resulted in the imposition of curfews and unpredictable internet outages. These issues have caused considerable delays and complications in the implementation of projects, as noted by British Council staff.

2.1.1 The SSA Arts Programme

The SSA Arts Programme was created in 2020 with the overarching aim of supporting young people (aged 18-35) to acquire skills and knowledge, using

arts as an enabler, and to create bilateral connections between SSA countries and the UK.

At an overarching level, the SSA Arts Programme aims to achieve the following vision:

- Supporting the creation of new art and sharing this art to audiences both online and in-person
- Sharing skills and knowledge between creative communities in the countries of SSA and the UK
- Creating new connections between young people in the countries of SSA and the UK
- Contributing to changing reciprocal perceptions between Africa and the UK to stimulate new understanding

To reach this vision, the British Council created three programmes – also referred to as impact areas – and five sub-programmes which are all reliant upon delivery partners (e.g., artists, arts professionals, arts organisations, hubs and collectives) who have the knowhow and local networks to guide and support country level programme delivery. Figure 1 provides a high-level summary of each of the programmes. Further details can be found in Appendix 1.

Figure 1 SSA Arts Programme Framework

Impact area	Sub-programme	Description
Cultural Exchange	Cultural Exchange (subsequently known as Culture Connects)	Provides grants to cultural organisations, festivals, artists, and creatives between the countries of SSA and the UK to create art, build networks, collaborate, and develop markets and share artists' work with audiences
Creative Economy	Creative Economy	Provides grants to organisations supporting the creative economy and providing young people with the skills, opportunities, and knowledge they need to build sustainable creative enterprises.

		This includes mentoring, business incubation and acceleration, and peer networks, for cultural and creative organisations and institutions based in the UK and SSA
Creative Economy	Ignite Culture Fund	An open grant fund for creative organisations to successfully develop new ventures, programmes, and projects for their target communities and demographics, with the aim to make their own work and the work of their target communities more sustainable
Shared Global Challenges	Cultural Heritage for Inclusive Growth	Research programme exploring cultural heritage for inclusive growth as a global concept with local solutions. The projects are community- and people-led and are devised and managed with local partners on the ground, supporting local communities to promote their own cultural heritage, leading to economic growth and improved social welfare
Shared Global Challenges	New Narratives	Contributes to changing reciprocal perceptions between Africa and the UK to stimulate new understanding which will unlock new connections and collaborations for mutual benefit

Source: British Council

2.2 Methodology

For this report, we have used the following research methods to understand the extent to which the British Council is meeting its outcomes in this region.

- Baseline partner and beneficiary surveys
- End of activity partner and beneficiary surveys
- REF data and Arts Impact Indicators
- Case studies

Partner and beneficiary surveys

Both the baseline and end of activity surveys were developed to be used with delivery partners and beneficiaries across the full breadth of the Arts Programme. The baseline surveys asked partners and beneficiaries to assess their awareness of the British Council's programme, their existing skills and competencies, and the extent to which they are already established in the Creative and Arts Sector. Surveys were provided in English and French, and were delivered online using the British Council's Decipher platform. Due to British Council's decision to discontinue the use of Decipher as the official platform, survey results from delivery partners could not be retrieved.

The follow up surveys were designed to be used at the end of programme activity, allowing partners and beneficiaries to reflect on their experience of the British Council's programmes. This second tranche of surveys explored a range of impact areas and provided opportunities for both fixed and open-text responses. As much as possible and where relevant, questions in the follow up survey have been designed to allow for direct comparison with the baseline survey. This allows both for progress over time to be measured, and assessment of the level of attribution resulting from involvement with the British Council's Arts Programme.

To maximise responses to both surveys, surveys were circulated by individual country managers. This included using tailored messages to ensure greater levels of uptake.

The demographic breakdown of survey respondents can be found in Appendix 3. Due to the duration of activities covered within this year, and a lack of tracking between the surveys, not all participants taking part in the baseline survey also completed the end of activity survey and vice versa. To that end, there are limitations in the extent to which it is possible to understand the full impacts that the Arts Programme has on its participants and delivery partners.

REF data and Arts Impact Indicators

To supplement the data from the surveys and establish an understanding of the extent to which progress is being made against the Arts Programme Theory of Change, we have made use of data submitted as evidence for the British

Council’s Research and Evidence Framework (REF data) and supplemented this with evidence to support the Arts Impact Indicators.

Both REF data and Arts Impact Indicators are collected globally against a range of different metrics. We have identified the key metrics with relevance to this evaluation and alignment with the Theory of Change.

The full suite of data submitted for this evaluation can be found in Appendix 2, where it has been broken down into each of the three different impact areas (Creative Economy, Cultural Exchange, and Shared Global Challenges).

We have also used the data, where relevant, to bolster case studies and provide quantitative evidence against the three overarching goals.

Case studies

11 case studies were conducted with delivery partners and beneficiaries from across each of the impact areas within the Arts Programme. The selected case studies are listed in Figure 2. whilst the full case studies are provided as a standalone appendix.

Figure 2 List of case studies

Case study title	Impact area
British Council showcasing: CANEX	Creative Economy
Creative DNA	Creative Economy
Creative Hustles (showcasing)	Creative Economy
Cultural Producers Programme	Creative Economy
Culture Responds to Global Challenges - Braid Fund	Culture Responds
Delegations	Culture Connects
Design Futures	Creative Economy

Film Lab Africa	Creative Economy
Ignite Culture	Creative Economy
SoCreative E-Learning Programme	Creative Economy
Sub-granting model	#N/A

Source: BOP Consulting, 2024

3. Development of knowledge, artistic practice, skills and networks

This section explores the impact of the SSA Arts Programme in developing participants' and delivery partners' knowledge, artistic practice, skills and networks.

Key findings

- The primary **motivation for participating in the Arts Programme is skill development and business profile enhancement**, with participants and delivery partners aiming to acquire business skills, expand networks, and access funding to grow and sustain creative enterprises effectively.
- Participating in the Arts Programme has significantly **enhanced participants' and delivery partners' business, networking, and sector-specific skills**.
- Participants experienced **an average 14% increase in business-related skills and confidence post-programme**, reflecting in their strategic skills, business planning, and financial management.
- The programme has also **facilitated an increase in networking skills**, with participants being provided with opportunities to create new connections and partnerships, further enriching their positioning within the creative economy.
- The findings in this impact area are broadly consistent with those from 2022/2023, particularly regarding participants' motivations for attending the Arts Programme, as well impact observed on enhanced skills, knowledge and networks.

3.1 Skills development and raising the profile of creative businesses are major reasons for participating

Developing new skills and knowledge within the SSA creative economy has been cited most frequently as a motivation for participating in the Arts Programme. This motivation is highlighted by participants' and delivery partners' intent to **learn from successful practices globally and locally**, to better **navigate and grow within the creative industry**.

“ I decided to participate in the programme to enhance my knowledge of talent management. This programme is a great opportunity for me to learn more about how I can maximise my potential as well as develop strategies that will help me attract and retain talent. (Scripts and Bars participant, Zimbabwe)

“ I was interested in getting to know how the Creative Economy ecosystem operates and what key stakeholders are involved in it. (Creative Economy participant, Uganda)

Evidence from across a range of Creative Economy projects cited acquiring **business skills to monetise a creative business** as the main motivation for participating. Skills and knowledge that participants hoped to gain from their participation included **establishing a creative business** and scaling the branding of their creative business.

“ I wanted to learn how to turn my creative hustle into a business and ultimately make money from my passion. (Scripts and Bars participant, Zimbabwe)

“ Our goal was to support the creative economy in Zimbabwe to enable artists and arts organisations to develop innovative,

sustainable and profitable businesses. (SoCreative delivery partner, Zimbabwe)

Managing to **raise the profile of businesses** and **gain more exposure** was widely mentioned across the Creative Economy programme's key expectations.

“ We wanted to raise the profile of our organisation by taking part in such impactful funded projects. (Ignite Culture participant, Kenya)

Moreover, for Creative Economy and Culture Connects participants, meeting like-minded people and having the chance to **connect with other creatives** and **expand their networks** was a motivation for attending.

“ I figured that it would stretch my network and help to enhance my skills and knowledge of the creative industry. (Scripts and Bars participant, Zimbabwe)

Other than gaining skills and expanding participants' networks, the Arts Programme is also seen as **a vital source of funding** for beneficiaries and delivery partners alike. They appreciate the grant opportunities provided by the British Council as in general similar opportunities are scarce yet essential for sustaining and expanding their creative projects.

“ It presented an opportunity to improve the dance spaces and choreographic skills of artists in Tanzania, Rwanda and Uganda. Very few grants support training and this is one of them. (Ignite Culture participant, Tanzania)

“ We launched a project to build a community for and upskill Rwandan women photographers and wanted to grow this project to include storytellers across platforms. We felt that the Ignite Culture Grant was the perfect resource to support our

project and therefore applied it to create the African Women Storytellers Programme. (Ignite Culture delivery partner, Rwanda)

The delivery partners involved were motivated by the opportunity to **support and empower artists**. They particularly mentioned opportunities created specifically for women as a gap in the current provision, and one that they had been able to fill with the support of British Council funding.

“ We wanted to connect and inspire practitioners working at the grassroots level. (Culture Grows delivery partner, Kenya)

“ We saw a gap that needed to be filled and the Ignite Culture programme offered the assistance and guidance that we needed. Over 40 business ladies have been impacted and equipped with the skills necessary for business continuity. (Ignite Culture delivery partner, Uganda)

Finally, reaching **underserved artists and minority groups** is an important motivator for many delivery partners, helping to foster inclusivity and diversity within the creative sectors as a result of the opportunities provided by the British Council.

“ Since we work in both contemporary and traditional art and culture spaces, we hoped we could help reach underserved practitioners with small grant opportunities. (Braid Fund delivery partner)

Overall, participants and delivery partners alike approached the British Council Arts Programme projects with a strong motivation to develop their skills and elevate their creative enterprises. The findings about how these motivations were translated into impact are captured in the following sections.

3.2 Participants gain new knowledge, skills and capabilities

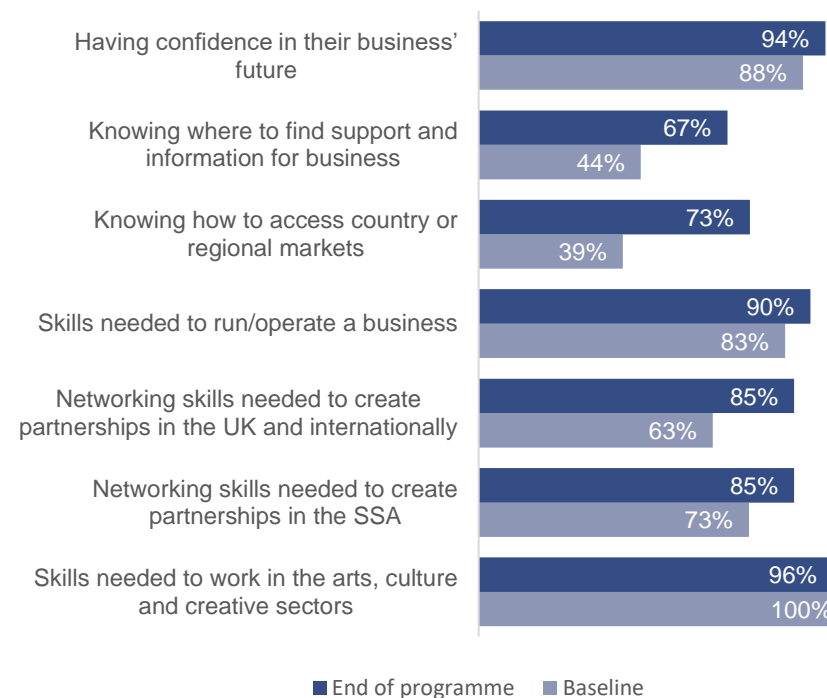
The SSA Arts Programme has contributed to the growth of participants' and delivery partners' knowledge, skills and capabilities.

The programme has had a substantial positive impact on participants' skills across various areas. As seen in Figure 3, most dimensions we have tested for have seen a noticeable increase as a result of participants taking part in the Arts Programme.

The Arts Programme's focus on the creative enterprise economy helped participants **develop a range of business skills, and improve their confidence in their business' future**. There was an overall average increase of 14% in the proportion of participants who felt they had the required business-related skills and confidence after participating compared to before¹. This reflects a significant improvement across most categories, highlighting the effectiveness of the Arts Programme in enhancing relevant business skills and knowledge (Figure 3).

While there is generally an increase in the level of agreement for each of the measured areas after attending the Arts Programme compared to before, there is a slight decrease in the perceived skills needed to work in the arts, culture and creative sectors. This decrease could be attributed to two potential factors: the possibility of a different composition of respondents at the baseline compared to the end of the programme surveys, or a more refined understanding by the participants of the essential skills required to work in the sector, leading to a more accurate self-assessment.

Figure 3 Participants that agreed and strongly agreed to having these skills and competencies before and after attending the Arts Programme



Source: BOP Consulting, 2024

¹ The average increase in skills was calculated by subtracting the baseline survey average from the end-of-program survey average. This involved averaging the responses (agree and strongly agree) across all skill competencies shown in Figure 3.

3.2.1 Business skills

The most substantial increases are observed in the skills and knowledge areas directly related to **networking, market access, and finding support**. This suggests that the programme was effective in enhancing both the practical business skills of participants and their strategic understanding of how to position themselves in the creative sector.

Figure 4, reporting post-programme skills and competencies, shows that nearly all participants (94%) reported an improved understanding of the creative economy, with 88% having seen improvements in their strategic skills and business planning, and 74% reporting improved financial skills and planning.

Figure 4 Improvement in participants' skills and competencies after participating in the Arts Programme (some improvement and major improvement)



Source: BOP Consulting, 2024

Discussions with the British Council country teams have confirmed the trends noticed in the quantitative data with regard to the impact of the Arts Programme on acquiring or improving participants' business skills.

For example, Creative DNA Uganda has seen significant success when it comes to the enhanced skills of fashion designers, with most designers reporting an increase in their skills.

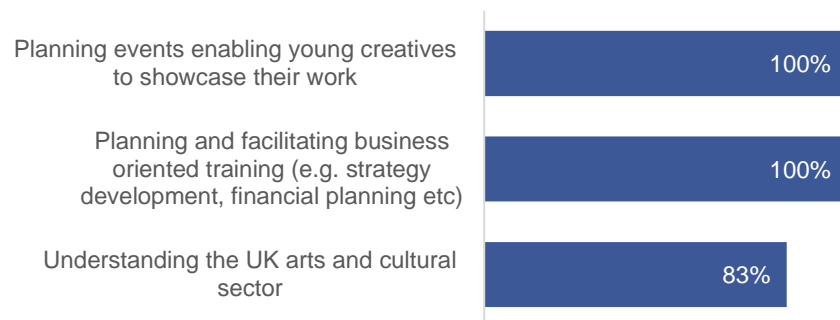
“ I've sat in some of their sessions (Creative DNA) and you could see people made it obvious that what they do is a business, not a hobby. After taking part in the incubation, their business skills and how to run these creative enterprises, how they do simple basic things of bookkeeping and making records of sales are really improving. This is something noticeable for me during the course of the year.” (British Council staff member, Uganda)

In South Africa, the British Council country team have noticed a yearly increase in the quality of proposals developed, giving the sense that the arts sector overall is advancing in its professionalism and experience. This contributes to a sense from staff that the British Council's Arts Programme has an attributable role into developing the skills of creative practitioners, which in turn affects the uplifting of the overall creative ecosystem accessing the British Council's offer from an entry-level ecosystem of a more established and professional mid-level community.

“ Our programme focuses on 18 to 35 year old participants, but increasingly what we came to see was that given the quality of proposals, the opportunities for grants were speaking to a specific readiness of creative practitioners. What increasingly started to happen is that the people that we were working with were starting to become a little bit more mid-career. (British Council staff member, South Africa)

Through the research it can be seen that not only participants benefit from improved skills as a result of the Arts Programme. Organisations delivering the Arts Programme with the British Council have also reported a positive impact on their skills across various areas, as seen in Figure 5.

Figure 5 Delivery partners' confidence (very confident and confident) in the following aspects after delivering a project in the Arts Programme



Source: BOP Consulting, 2024

3.2.2 Networking skills

“ Collaboration and networking are powerful for the growth of a business. (Creative DNA participant, Ethiopia)

Participants saw significant improvements in their networking skills for creating partnerships within the SSA, as well as with the UK and internationally. Participants report being equally confident in their skills for creating partnerships in the SSA region and internationally (85% post-programme). However, there has been a greater increase in their ability to develop partnerships internationally compared to the baseline (63%), suggesting that the Arts Programme has been particularly beneficial in harnessing skills that encourage international collaboration and exchange (Figure 3).

When thinking particularly about networking skills, many respondents highlighted that the Arts Programme has developed their capability in this area. The extent to which it has also facilitated networking opportunities will be explored in section 5.

British Council country teams also highlighted activities when enhancing the networking skills of beneficiaries has been front and centre of programming. For example, through Ignite Culture in Rwanda, African Women Storytellers organised an experience for women to write and share their stories. This project has been highlighted as an example of enhancing storytelling skills and developing networking skills in a supportive environment.

3.2.3 Skills and knowledge needed to work in the arts, culture and creative sectors

“ I was particularly interested in gaining a deep understanding of the creative sector and its opportunities. (SoCreative Africa participant, Ghana)

Participants and delivery partners have gained skills and knowledge specific to work in the creative economy. After participating in the Arts Programme, 96% of surveyed participants reported having skills needed to work in cultural sectors (Figure 2), while 94% reported an increased understanding of the creative economy in general (Figure 3). It is worth noting that, while 96% reported having the skills needed to work in cultural sectors post-programme, in the baseline survey it was 100%. Due to the lack of tracking between the surveys, not all participants taking part in the baseline survey also completed the end-of-activity survey and vice versa. This could be a cause for the discrepancy in the percentage of participants reporting having skills needed to work in the cultural sectors. Another reason could be that, as a result of project activity, participants became more aware of what working in the sector entails, being more realistic about the skills required and possessed.

Meanwhile, delivery partners were asked about their understanding of the UK arts and cultural sector. 83% of delivery partners reported an increase in their understanding of the UK art and cultural sector as a result of participating in the Arts programme.

“ The programme grants one exposure to networks and collaborations, allowing you to know others in the ecosystem.
(SoCreative Africa delivery partner, Zimbabwe)

4. Participants and cultural organisations raise their profile, showcase their arts and increase the economic value of their partnerships

This section explores the impact of the SSA Arts Programme, as it seeks to increase the profiles of artists and professionals.

Key findings

- Participants **report enhanced access to commercial opportunities** both with other SSA-based artists and creative professionals, and those based in the UK
- Established partnerships and showcasing opportunities are at a point of **translating into tangible economic benefits for SSA creative businesses.**
- British Council country teams reveal that, in their experience, they have witnessed participants particularly raise their profile and business viability through **showcases and participation in high-profile events** such as fashion weeks, Creative Economy Week, and international cultural festivals.
- The findings related to this impact area are broadly the same to the ones noted in the 2022/2023 impact report, with a notable difference playing the role of showcasing opportunities in raising the profile of participants.

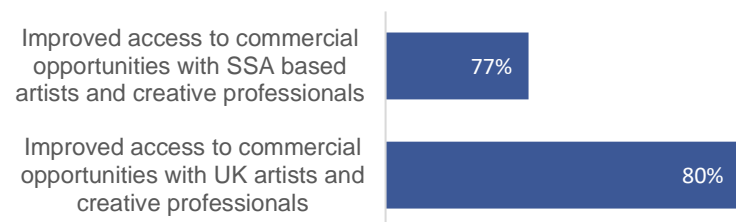
4.1 Participants report enhanced access to commercial opportunities

Figure 6 explores participants' opinions regarding their access to commercial opportunities with SSA and UK artists and creative professionals after participating in the Arts Programme.

The programme has improved participants' access to commercial opportunities with UK artists and creative professionals (80% some or a major improvement) whilst 77% of participants report having improved access to commercial opportunities with SSA-based artists and creative professionals.

The findings show that there is a greater improvement in access to commercial opportunities with UK artists and creative professionals compared to those based in the SSA. This suggests that the Arts Programme is more effective at enhancing connections and potential business opportunities with UK-based artists and creatives than with those in SSA. However, it is also possible that existing commercial opportunities within SSA are already well-utilised, meaning the programme's impact in improving access there appears less significant. In contrast, the opportunities for commercial engagement with UK artists and creative professionals might represent new and expanding areas for collaboration. These findings are consistent with those from the 2022/2023 impact report, with participants reporting better access to commercial opportunities with UK creatives than SSA creatives as a result of the programme.

Figure 6 Some improvement and a major improvement in the access to commercial opportunities as reported by participants after participating in the Arts Programme



Source: BOP Consulting, 2024

4.2 Creative businesses raise their profile and viability at home and internationally

Analysed qualitative data shows evidence to support the idea that **partnerships and showcasing opportunities are at a point of translating into tangible economic benefits for SSA creative businesses**. This is evidenced through the Arts Programme’s provision of support, tools, and skills for developing creative businesses. Equally important are the networking, collaboration opportunities and showcasing opportunities accessed by participants.

4.2.1 Impact reported by participants

Participants recognise the impact of the Arts Programme on **raising their profile**, particularly by contributing to **growing and expanding their business reach**. They commend the support, tools and business skills acquired through the programme, emphasising the positive effect it has had on the expansion of their business.

For some participants, particularly those in more established Creative Economy projects such as Creative DNA and Scripts and Bars, business growth is an impact that has already started to materialise.

“ When we applied for the creative DNA micro-grant, one of our primary goals was to (and still remains to be) expand the reach of our business to a global audience. Through the grant provided, we have taken the necessary steps towards achieving this and we believe that our success in this particular British Council programme (Creative DNA) will allow us to identify future programmes which may have similar significance in providing our business with the necessary information and resources to do so. (Creative DNA participant, Kenya)

“ Being able to connect with other creatives who operate in the environment has allowed me natural access to an audience and market for my work. (Scripts and Bars participant, Zimbabwe)

Participants noted **improvements in networking, collaboration, and partnership opportunities, as particular drivers for potential business growth**. The ability to connect with other creatives and potential business partners, both locally and internationally, was frequently mentioned as a key benefit of the programme. This has been particularly valuable for those looking to establish or enhance their creative business profiles in competitive markets.

The programme has equally enabled some participants to develop strategic partnerships and put them in a good position to **capitalise on these opportunities**. These opportunities resulted so far in increased partnerships that, with time, are expected to grow into access to new markets and increased revenue.

“ I was exposed to the Northern UK creative ecosystem, and I’m currently exploring the possibilities of working with some of those acquaintances. (Biennials Connect participant, Kenya)

While there are success stories from participants whose creative businesses have benefitted from a raised profile and viability, some suggest that the British Council could connect them with potential partners/clients in the UK, thus helping them directly scale up to the exportation of their brand. Project alumni suggest that there is a need to extend their collaboration with the British Council post-project and would like the organisation to also help facilitate the connections with potential partners and clients.

“ Actually working towards connecting project alumni with potential partners/clients from within the UK would be helpful. This can allow us to scale up to exportation of our brand, culture and products. (Creative DNA participant, Kenya)

4.2.2 Impact reported by British Council teams

Discussions with British Council country teams reveal that, in their experience, participants seem to be particularly **raising their profile and business viability through showcases and participation in high-profile events** such as fashion weeks, Creative Economy Week, and international cultural festivals. This has led to increased visibility and opportunities for economic engagement, as well as directly inspiring the creatives involved in the Arts Programme.

“ We are just aiming to be able to support more creatives to exhibit their work and to showcase the work. So whether that be in Rwanda or other SSA countries or the UK even, I think we will have more opportunities to provide additional support for cross-cultural exchanges. (British Council staff, Rwanda)

This year, Creative Economy Week was noted as a particularly impactful event, **enhancing the visibility of the British Council Arts Programme and the reach of its projects**. For example, in Uganda, Creative Economy Week reached 26 million people with an interest in policy, textiles and fashion.

With many of the delivery partners and participants being represented in the event, the visibility and high profile of Creative Economy Week has the potential

to result in economic impact for the delivery partners and participants showcasing. Meanwhile, in Zimbabwe, British Council staff recognised that Creative Economy Week served as a platform for fostering mutual support among delivery partners from various sectors. The collaborative atmosphere reduced the existing competitive tension over funding and provided a unique networking opportunity. As partners were able to support each other's events, this collaborative environment created has the potential to strengthen the local creative sector and eventually convert into tangible economic benefits.

“ We had a successful reach during our Creative Economy Week. It was a milestone for us in terms of the creative economy work we're doing. Having that reach of 26 million people with interest in policy, textiles, fashion in Uganda, and speaking around opportunities has been great. (British Council staff member, Uganda)

British Council staff across SSA recognise that impact may look different across the Arts Programme pillars, programmes, and even countries. For example, Creative DNA, as one of the flagship programmes of the Creative Economy strand, in receipt of a significant proportion of funding, and tried and tested across multiple countries, has registered a range of direct successes in raising the profile of participants and increasing the economic value of their partnerships. These impacts range from obtaining **follow-on opportunities to showcase at international Fashion Weeks, to securing residencies at global fashion brands, to opening a business**.

Creative DNA Ethiopia, now in its second year after a pilot phase, has significantly expanded its impact by collaborating with a local delivery partner to tailor a module specifically for the local market in Ethiopia. Key achievements for participants include showcasing work in high-profile settings, including Fashion Week in Ethiopia, features in Vogue, a residency at Balenciaga, opening new shops, and acting as delegate representatives for Ethiopia at Portugal Fashion Week, Paris Fashion Week, and the Cairo International Trade Forum.

The impact of the Arts Programme has also **been increasing the visibility of and promoting the cultural significance of certain sectors**. This can, in the longer term, convert into tangible economic impact for creative businesses. In Senegal, for example, a project focused on film started by organising screenings of local films. The project has experienced high attendance, which was not only continuous but growing from one screening to the next. This was seen as a means to help raise the profile of the film sector in Senegal. Additionally in Sudan, the British Council was awarded a contract from the European Union to manage the European Film Festival in Sudan for a three-year period. This involved organising training sessions for filmmakers to enhance their skills and establish connections with other film professionals across the UK, the SSA region, and Europe. It also served as a platform for screening and highlighting locally produced films. Notably, the festival included Sudan's first drive-through film event, which was very well attended.

“ In these past years we've done three European Film Festivals. We have done the first drive-through film and film in the festival in Sudan. And I think it's the first one in the SSA, because I don't think that anyone did that. (British Council staff member, Sudan)

Other projects are particularly designed to **support minority groups of artists to refine and showcase their work**. For example, Queer Catalyst in South Africa is an initiative that supports queer animators through workshops and mentorship. Over an eight-week period, participants received guidance from experienced designers/animators, with two standout projects being showcased at the Fak'ugesi Festival. The supported one of the delegates to attend the Belfast International Arts Festival.

5. Awareness and opportunities for SSA and UK to share experiences through arts, heritage and culture

This section explores the impact of the SSA Arts Programme as it seeks to increase awareness and opportunities to create connections, to share skills and knowledge in the SSA, UK and internationally.

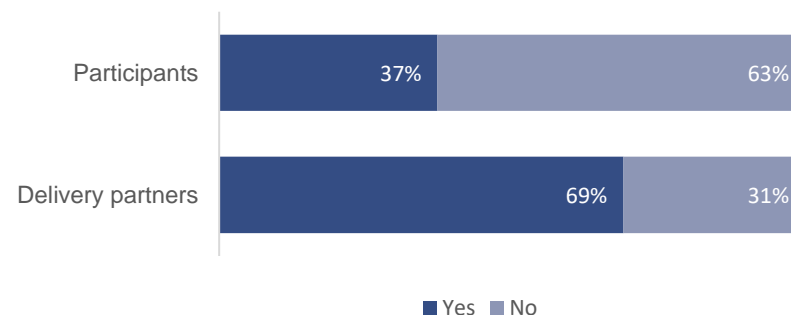
Key findings

- The SSA Arts Programme has enhanced awareness among participants and delivery partners of opportunities to connect with artists and creative professionals within SSA and the UK
- Participants and delivery partners in the SSA Arts Programme express a generally favourable view towards establishing long-term partnerships with the UK
- For several delivery partners, perceiving the UK favourably is the result of a successful long-standing relationship with the British Council
- The findings in this impact area are in line with the results from the 2022/2023 impact report. A difference this year is that, while quantitatively participants report good levels of awareness of opportunities for engagement with other creatives, qualitative responses emphasise this less.

We asked participants and delivery partners whether they engaged with UK or internationally-based artists and creative professionals prior to participating in the Arts programme. While delivery partners generally have a track record of engaging with international artists and creative professionals (69%), for the

majority of participants (63%), taking part in the SSA Arts Programme was the first time they engaged with their UK and international counterparts (Figure 7).

Figure 7 Engagement with UK or internationally-based artists and creative professionals prior to participating in the programme



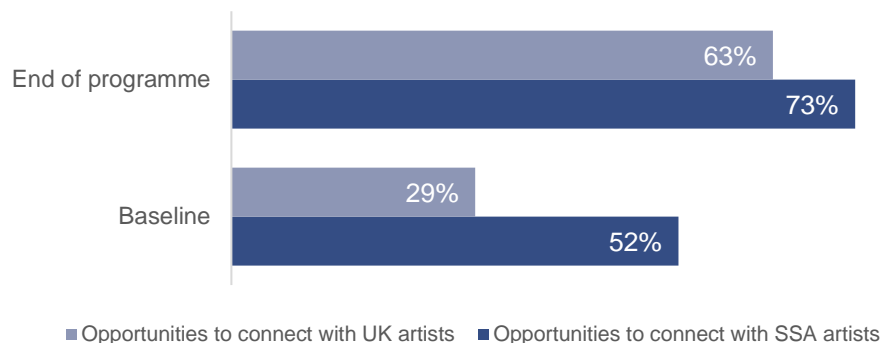
Source: BOP Consulting, 2024

5.1 Increased awareness of the opportunities to connect with SSA and UK artists and creative professionals

Across various projects in the Arts Programme, both participants and delivery partners have seen a substantial increase in their awareness of opportunities to connect with artists and creative professionals from both SSA and the UK.

Before joining the Arts Programme, 52% of participants were aware of opportunities to connect with fellow SSA artists and creatives, and only 29% knew about similar opportunities with their UK counterparts (Figure 8). However, after taking part in the programme, participants' awareness of these opportunities significantly increased, with 73% becoming more aware of SSA-based connections and 63% recognising possibilities to connect with UK-based partners.

Figure 8 Participants' reported awareness of opportunities to connect with SSA/UK artists and creative professionals before and after participating in the programme (agree and strongly agree responses only)



Source: BOP Consulting 2024

While quantitative data from participants shows an improved level of awareness of opportunities to connect with UK and SSA artists, qualitative responses emphasise this less than in the 2022/2023 impact report. Whereas participants in year 2 highlighted an increased understanding of the importance of making connections and engaging in meaningful engagement, not only did participants this year not identify this as an area of learning, they also reported that they have either not expanded their connections or were not given the opportunities to do so. The nature of the data collection mechanisms means that it is not possible to firmly identify the cause for this change. However, one possible cause is that responding participants in this year already had this knowledge so did not attribute any learnings to the British Council. Alternatively, there could have been differences in delivery that led to these changes, particularly in light of the delays experienced in commencing programming. It is also important to recognise that the evaluation speaks with a sample of respondents rather than the entire cohort. Whilst the sample aims to be representative, the difference seen here could be the result of something as simple as those participants who did experience increased learning not participating in the end of activity survey.

Delivery partners, due to their roles as established organisations in the cultural ecosystem, typically have a higher awareness of national and international collaboration opportunities. While we do not have access to baseline data from delivery partners, the end of programme survey showed that nearly all delivery partners (96%) have increased their awareness of opportunities to connect with SSA artists and creative professionals as a result of engagement with the British Council. Additionally, 65% of delivery partners have become more aware of opportunities to connect with UK artists and creative professionals.

“ I met a lot of creatives during the activities who were very interested in collaboration. (Creative Economy participant, Uganda)

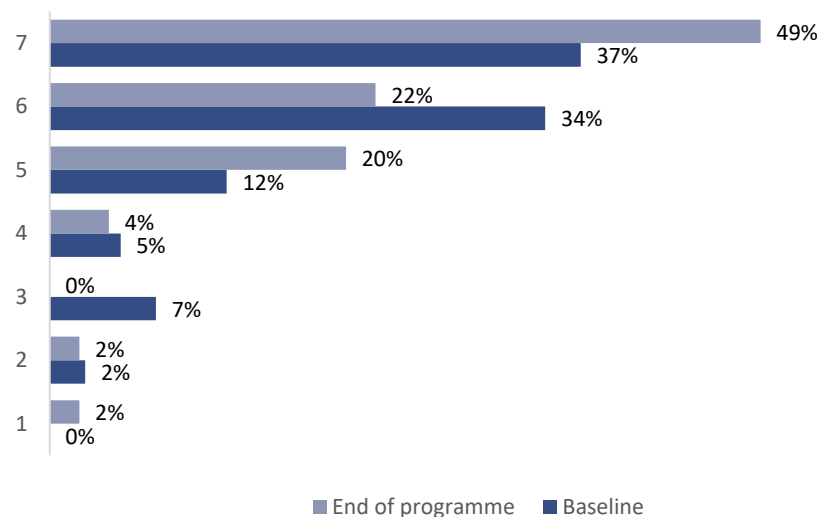
“ As a result of our collaboration, we have networked by various UK, SSA and international experts and artists who we are working with to enhance the quality of the arts in East Africa. (Art Creatives delivery partner, Uganda)

5.2 SSA creatives are favourable towards partnering with the UK

In the context of Creative Economy projects, both participants and delivery partners were surveyed to gauge their views on establishing long-term partnerships with the UK. The findings reveal a generally favourable outlook on partnering with the UK.

As a result of participating in the British Council's Arts Programme, participants and delivery partners generally express a positive view of the UK as a potential long-term partner. 71% of participants rated their favourability as either 6 or 7 (out of 7) both before participating in the programme, and at the end, indicating an already developed perception of the UK (Figure 9). However, almost half of the participants gave the maximum rating at the end of the programme, compared to 37% before, indicating a slight increase in how favourable they perceive the UK as a partner.

Figure 9 Participants rated how favourably they perceived the UK as a long-term valuable partner for them and their business. (1 – not at all favourable; 7 – extremely favourable)



Source: BOP Consulting, 2024

Delivery partners exhibit a stronger inclination to consider the UK as a long-term partner, with all of them rating their favourability as 6 or 7 (where 7 is the highest rating). Whilst the survey does not ask about motivations for providing scores, there are several possible reasons for this existing favourability including past positive experiences collaborating with UK-based creatives, organisations, and institutions. These successful past interactions have probably established a track record of achievements, fostering trust and confidence in the UK as a valuable and dependable partner.

For several delivery partners, **perceiving the UK favourably is the result of a successful long-standing relationship with the British Council.** This long-term relationship suggests a deep-rooted trust and mutual benefit between the British Council and its established delivery partners. Delivery partners point to

the flexibility and support provided by the British Council in developing relevant programming as a central element to their perception of the UK.

“ We have been in partnership with the British Council for 90% of our existence and, ever since, our creative enterprise has benefited immensely from opportunities to grow, learn and widen our networks. (Creative Economy delivery partner, Zimbabwe)

There is a strong emphasis on the value of cultural exchange that comes with partnering with UK-based entities. **An SSA-UK collaboration is perceived by delivery partners as an opportunity for cultural exchange that enriches the artistic landscape and fosters meaningful connections between communities.**

“ We chose "extremely favourable" because of our strong belief in the UK as a long-term valuable partner. Our mission is to create vital spaces for artists in East Africa, particularly in theatre. Collaborating with the UK offers unparalleled opportunities for cultural exchange, enriching our artistic landscape and fostering meaningful connections between our communities. (Art Creatives delivery partner, Uganda)

British Council staff members advocated for a broader perspective on partnerships and collaborations. They emphasised the need to expand beyond traditional bilateral collaborations between SSA and the UK, suggesting the viability of partnerships that include not only Western countries but also other continents and global networks. This approach aims to create more inclusive and extensive connections, moving beyond the traditional model of cultural relations historically championed by the British Council to embrace a more diverse range of international collaborations.

“ I think there's a hunger from people, not just from South Africa, but I think there's a hunger from people globally to just work with each other and not necessarily with the Western world only. [...] It can also be the SSA that has skills to teach and share, and we can all learn from each other, including the western world.
(British Council staff member, South Africa)

6. Key successes and learnings attributed to the Arts Programme

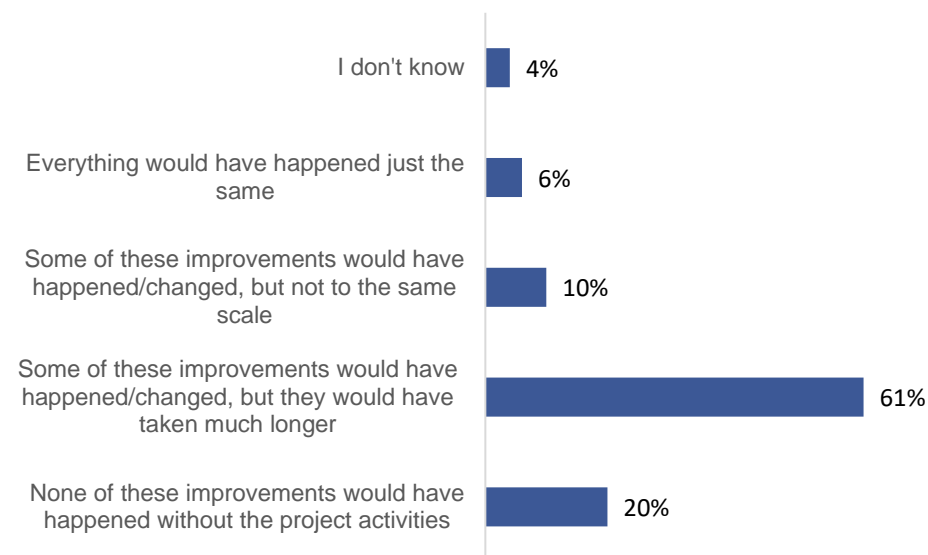
This concluding section of the report aims to unpick the lessons and key success factors enabling the effective impact of project activities across SSA Arts Programme.

A majority of participants in the Arts Programme report that the changes in skills and competencies explored throughout this report are a direct result of the British Council's projects. 20% of participants believe that the improvements in skills would have not happened without the programme, while 61% say it would have taken longer for the improvements to happen were it not for the Arts Programme (Figure 10). These findings demonstrate that participating in the Arts Programme has had a direct impact on acquiring new skills and competencies relevant to the creative ecosystem.

The relevance of the Arts Programme for participants and delivery partners is also revealed by the data showing the likelihood of recommending the British Council to their networks (Figure 11).

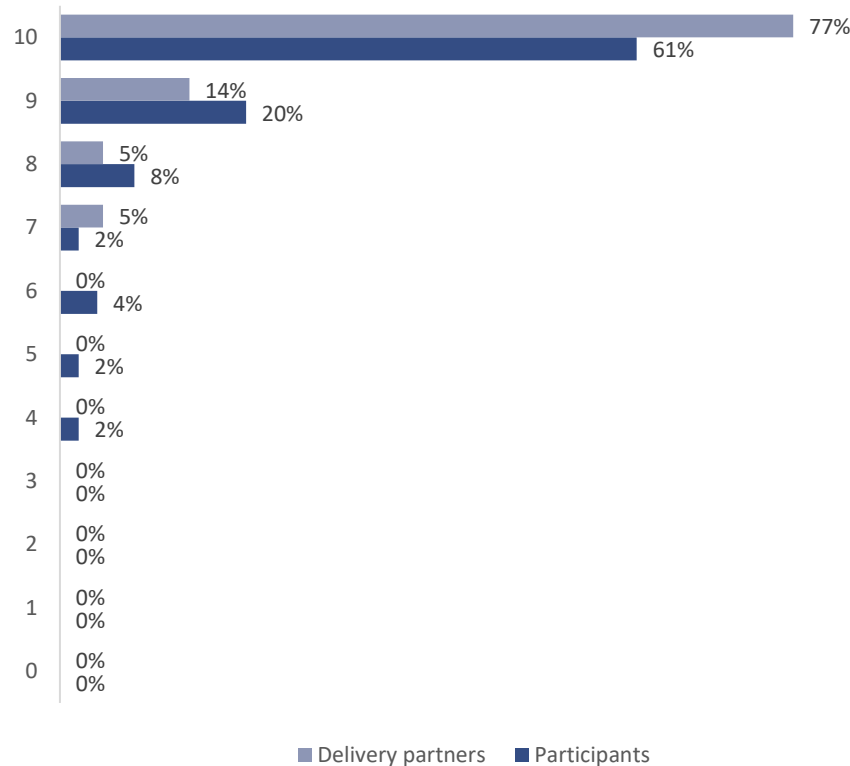
- While participants and delivery partners rate the British Council's activity highly, they have also noticed particular challenges regarding timely communication and promotion of activities. Participants and delivery partners express the desire for more awareness and communication about the British Council programmes on social media, and beyond. One specific issue noted was the lack of updates on the British Council's website regarding ongoing projects, which affects project visibility and recognition. There is also a call from participants to improve communication channels and create access points for broader audiences, including using non-internet-based methods.
- Moreover, the predominance of English-based requirements in British Council communications and open calls has limited engagement in non-English speaking regions. This has been marked as perpetuating elitist ideas related to the British Council in those areas, although it should be noted that the British Council is making efforts to counter this (e.g. providing communications in French in Senegal).

Figure 10 Extent of participants' attribution of skill and competency improvements to the arts programme



Source: BOP Consulting, 2024

Figure 11 Ratings of how likely participants and delivery partners are to recommend the British Council to their networks



Source: BOP Consulting, 2024

6.1 Key successes

6.1.1 Participants:

- **Impactful programmes:** Participants highlight the impact of British Council programmes on skill development, knowledge acquisition, and exposure to new opportunities. They view the programmes as being relevant, effective in delivering knowledge and valuable for personal, professional and business growth.
- **Forging opportunities for networking and partnership:** A success highlighted by participants is the networking opportunities, which have allowed them to connect with peers, make new friends, and find potential business partners.

“ It has been quite enlightening engaging with fellow peers through this programme and actually gaining new friends and potential business partners that I've been talking to quite a bit throughout the programme and most likely even after. (Scripts and Bars participant, Zimbabwe)

- **Creating a supportive environment:** Participants noted the supportive environment created by the British Council teams and delivery partners, which has helped increase how impactful the programme was.

6.1.2 Delivery partners

- **Autonomy, trust and support given to delivery partners:** Delivery partners appreciate the autonomy given by the British Council, allowing them to design and implement projects with minimal interference. This autonomy seems to be a significant factor in their satisfaction and the perceived effectiveness of the programmes.

“ British Council is a good partner, very supportive. British Council does not interfere in how the programmes should be delivered, but rather respond to the market and allow the partner to curate

as much as possible in response to the key indicators.
(SoCreative delivery partner, Zimbabwe)

- **The reputation and success of the Arts Programme:** Delivery partners note that the Arts Programme has a genuine impact, demonstrating the effectiveness of the collaboration with British Council in achieving tangible outcomes.

“ We have seen first-hand the benefits of working with British Council and we would like other organisations in SSA to also benefit. (Art Creatives delivery partner, Uganda)

6.1.3 British Council staff

- **Embedding into the local creative ecosystems and identifying synergies:** For example, in Ethiopia, utilising established platforms like Fashion Week Ethiopia, which already have an audience and connections, has been more effective than creating separate events for Creative DNA showcasing. This approach leverages existing ecosystems and enhances the impact of the Arts Programme, embedding it in the local creative ecosystem.
- **Developing a collaboration with the strategic vision of the government for the arts:** Building partnerships with local ministries, such as in Rwanda, can contribute to elevating the creative industries, aligning efforts with governmental goals. Moreover, in Zimbabwe, a strategic partnership with the National Arts Council has helped the SoCreative programme reach nearly 300 creatives from 8 different cities, expanding the impact of the programme.
- **Local contextualisation of programmes:** Adapting programmes and curricula to fit local cultural and operational realities, has been shown to improve their relevance and effectiveness. Various British Council teams (e.g. Mauritius, Rwanda etc) have commissioned mapping and research projects to determine the direction of their programme and to ensure it is aligned with the cultural context they are operating in.
- **Maintaining strong relationships with delivery partners:** Maintaining strong relationships with delivery partners is crucial for the success of the

British Council Arts Programmes, as these are primarily delivered through such partnerships. This is especially important in countries with smaller cultural ecosystems, where there are limited organisations available for collaboration. Moreover, with British Council’s budget constraints, it is essential for staff to leverage their existing connections with creative organisations that are already well-acquainted with the British Council's operations.

6.2 Key learnings and recommendations

6.2.1 Programme structure, design and duration

- Some participants expressed the need for the programme to include more follow-up support for businesses, as well as suggesting a British Council alumni network to be created.
- “ Working towards connecting project alumni with potential partners/clients from within the UK would be helpful. This can allow us to scale up the exportation of our brand, culture and products. (Creative DNA participant, Kenya)
- Many participants expressed a need for more grant opportunities to support their creative projects and ease their way into the market.
- Some participants recommended having increased time allocations for activities to allow deeper engagement.
- Delivery partners recommend longer-term programmes (3-5 years) for more substantial impacts.
- Participants to delegations recommended that per diems or allowances could be adjusted to cover personal expenses, allowing participants to focus more on the programme content.
- “ Increasing the per diems, so that they not only cover food during the programmes but also cover the expenses the artists might not be covering when they are off work. Most of the time they

are in the programme without full concentration because they are worried about the bills they are to face back home after the delegation/project. (Cultural Exchange London Fashion Week participant, Uganda)

- British Council staff members have also reported delayed payments to delivery partners, affecting timely project execution and relationships with delivery partners.

6.2.2 Communication, transparency and promotion

- Participants and delivery partners express the desire for more awareness and communication about the British Council programmes on social media, and beyond. One specific issue noted was the lack of updates on the British Council's website regarding ongoing projects, which affects project visibility and recognition.
- There is a call from participants to improve communication channels and create access points for broader audiences, including using non-internet-based methods.
- Participants suggest decentralising programmes to reach and benefit creatives in remote areas, not only those in large cities.
- The predominance of English-based requirements in British Council communications has limited engagement in non-English speaking regions, perpetuating perceptions of exclusivity.

6.2.3 Programme administration and reporting

The following learnings have been collated from British Council staff members across the SSA Arts Programme countries. As these learnings refer to the programme administration from the British Council's side, they have not been referred to in the main body of the report.

- British Council staff have noted that obtaining approvals from multiple stakeholders for communications campaigns has led to significant delays in updating social media posts. Consequently, many posts become outdated and lose relevance by the time they are published.
- Some regions face challenges due to insufficient staffing. While other regions highlight that with reduced budgets, there is limited ability to maintain relationships with creative partners and stakeholders, affecting the scale and impact of projects.

Appendix 1: Programme level data

Creative Economy

Figure 12 SSA KPIs and Arts Impact Indicators for the Creative Economy programme in 2023-24

SSA KPIs for REF	Face to face	Online	Total
Number of non-UK nationals participating in British Council arranged cultural activities face to face	171,882		171,882
Number of non-UK nationals participating in British Council arranged cultural activities in exhibitions, festivals and fairs			
Number of non-UK nationals participating in British Council arranged cultural activities face to face and in exhibitions, festivals and fairs (exc Virtual or Arts content online)			
Number of non-UK nationals participating in British Council arranged cultural activities in meaningful online engagement		1,199,589	1,199,589
Number of people reached via British Council arranged or British Council promoted activities in specific target groups / locations as specified by FCDO.			
Number of arts and culture organisations we work with in the UK			
Number of arts and culture organisations we work with overseas			
Arts Impact Indicators			
No of artists and creative professionals supported with new skills worldwide (broken down by online/F2F)			
Number of new connections / relationships formed including digital			
Number of new sustainable partnerships created			

Source: British Council 2023

Culture Connects

Figure 13 SSA KPIs and Arts Impact Indicators for the Cultural Exchange programme in 2023-24

SSA KPIs for REF	Face to face	Online	Total
Number of non-UK nationals participating in British Council arranged cultural activities face to face	12,800	-	12,800
Number of non-UK nationals participating in British Council arranged cultural activities in exhibitions, festivals and fairs			
Number of non-UK nationals participating in British Council arranged cultural activities face to face and in exhibitions, festivals and fairs (exc Virtual or Arts content online)			
Number of non-UK nationals participating in British Council arranged cultural activities in meaningful online engagement	-	237,969	237,969
Number of people reached via British Council arranged or British Council promoted activities in specific target groups / locations as specified by FCDO.	-	-	-
Number of arts and culture organisations we work with in the UK			
Number of arts and culture organisations we work with overseas			
Arts Impact Indicators			
No of artists and creative professionals supported with new skills worldwide (broken down by online/F2F)			
Number of new connections / relationships formed including digital			
Number of new sustainable partnerships created			

Source: British Council 2023

Shared Global Challenges

Figure 14 SSA KPIs and Arts Impact Indicators for the Shared Global Challenges programme in 2023-24

SSA KPIs for REF	Face to face	Online	Total
Number of non-UK nationals participating in British Council arranged cultural activities face to face	9,004	-	9,004
Number of non-UK nationals participating in British Council arranged cultural activities in exhibitions, festivals and fairs		-	
Number of non-UK nationals participating in British Council arranged cultural activities face to face and in exhibitions, festivals and fairs (exc Virtual or Arts content online)		-	
Number of non-UK nationals participating in British Council arranged cultural activities in meaningful online engagement	-	97,854	97,854
Number of people reached via British Council arranged or British Council promoted activities in specific target groups / locations as specified by FCDO.	-	-	-
Number of arts and culture organisations we work with in the UK			
Number of arts and culture organisations we work with overseas			
Arts Impact Indicators			
No of artists and creative professionals supported with new skills worldwide (broken down by online/F2F)			
Number of new connections / relationships formed including digital			
Number of new sustainable partnerships created			

Source: British Council 2023

Appendix 2: End of programme survey respondents' demographics

Figure 15 Demographics table

	Participants	Delivery partners
Countries		
Ethiopia	4	2
Ghana	27	1
Kenya	8	2
Nigeria	2	2
Rwanda	0	0
Senegal	5	0
South Africa	0	2
Sudan	0	0
Tanzania	0	1
Uganda	6	5
Zimbabwe	19	6
Gender		
Female	21	-
Male	40	-
Non-binary	1	-
Female-led organisation		
Yes	-	18
No	-	7

	Participants	Delivery partners
Disability / Disability-led organisation		
Yes	1	2
No	64	20
Project		
CreativeDNA	15	3
Culture Grows	0	2
Ignite Culture	0	0
Cultural Protection Fund	2	1
Art Creatives	6	3
Lit in Ghana Event	3	0
Cultural Producers Programme	0	0
Design Futures Lab	0	0
Talkaoke Skills Labs	0	0
Scripts & Bats	19	1
Cultural Exchange – London Fashion Week	1	0
SoCreative Africa E-Learning Programme	5	3
New Narratives	0	2
Cultural Exchange Delegates Programme	0	0
Creative Economy	8	3
FILMLAB Africa	1	1
Sustainable Together	1	0
Creative Hustle	1	0
Other	7	5

Attended / delivered a BC programme before		
Yes	24	18
No	37	5

Source: BOP Consulting, 2023

BOP Consulting

BOP Consulting is an international consultancy specialising in culture and the creative economy.

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