POLICY BRIEF

by GESCI-AKE and Aalto University Media Lab Helsinki

Linking New Skills, Business Opportunity and Job Creation for Cultural Industry Development in Africa

Executive Summary

This policy brief highlights the key insights learned from the GESCI-AKE 2014/2015 *Creative Media Skills Course* for digital creative industries, as well as for related educational initiatives and policy approaches.

Conducted via a collaborative *Living Lab* research project -- including questionnaires, interviews, and formal and informal observations and participation by practitioners, instructors, and industry representatives -- the research highlight four core aspects of creative industries: Innovation, leadership, market-based content creation, and sustainability. The research underlines the urgent industry needs for talent-base that can respond to opportunities. It also documents practitioners' need, as well as a sense of market need, for producing social value through original Kenyan media products.

The research brings forth an emerging hybrid model that combines innovation and education, and that fosters creativity, skills, as well as leadership qualities and entrepreneurial knowledge. It highlights the need for local content by local talent. It also suggests several possible policy responses to support such a model.

Please go to our blog for additional information on the research process and outcomes at
**https://thesoundofthecity.wordpress.com/ - or just scan:**

1.   Introduction: Kenyan Prospects of Creative Industries and Digital Innovation

Digital evolution is advancing in many non-Western countries, creating new markets and job opportunities. Kenya is among the countries on the rise, albeit its growth index is slower than of the top tier countries. While the mobile phone penetration is close to three quarters of the population, and the innovation environment in the country has flourished creating international fame, institutional support for digital innovations has not developed with the same speed.[1]

Different Stakeholders, Different Innovation Models

ICT innovation models in Kenya do not follow those in the global North, or even those in the rapidly growing Asian digital economies. In terms of the overall outlook of the Kenyan society and the institutions involved in innovation, understanding how the roles played by many

different stakeholders in **the innovation ecosystem** (policy, business, end-users, international, local, for-profit and not-for-profit actors) – is essential in grasping the shape of new technologies and markets that will emerge. In many African contexts, international funders or other partners are playing a role in incubating innovation. [2]
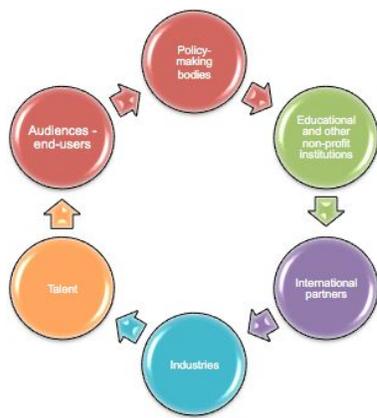
These ecosystems, often formed around innovation hubs (or *Living Labs*, see **Section 2**) can add substantial value for entrepreneurs and startups through brokering relationships with clients, funders, and partners.[3] Especially the South Africa's digital creative media industries and training institutions are regarded as very advanced in Africa. Other countries in which there is some, albeit not as extensive, development include Kenya, Nigeria, Egypt, Mozambique, Madagascar, Ghana, Algeria, Tunisia, and the Republic of Congo.[4]

Cultural Opportunities and Challenges

A growing body of evidence points to the trend that Kenya is becoming well-known, not only for its tech innovations and incubators that have reached world fame[5], but also for its **locally inspired content** that has begun to reach both local, regional, and global audiences[6].

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[1] Digital Evolution Index (2015): http://fletcher.tufts.edu/eBiz/Index

[2] http://www.global.asc.upenn.edu/app/uploads/2015/01/Marchant_Who-is-ICT-Innovation-for.pdf

[3] http://www.infodev.org/infodev-files/mlabs_and_mhubs_business_model.pdf

[4] http://www.gesci.org/assets/files/AKE%20research%20-%20Full%20Report.pdf

[5] Some of the internationally most well-known: http://www.ihub.co.ke/ , http://www.ushahidi.com/ , http://www.ilabafrica.ac.ke/ , http://www.safaricom.co.ke/personal/m-pesa

[6] http://filmmakerafrica.co.za/african-animation-repositioning-world-stage/ ; in Kenya recently: http://www.thisisthenest.com/

Indeed, the role of **culture** has been stressed globally as one of the key drivers of development, as evident in the United Nations research and discussions towards the Sustainable Development Goals (or, "Post-2015 Goals"). The UN Development Group highlights the power of cultural productions to "make an important contribution to poverty reduction, as a resilient economic sector that provides livelihood opportunities". In addition, "education strategies should aim to develop cultural literacy and equip young people with the skills to live in a multicultural and diverse society, in both economic and social terms".[7]

At the same time, in the Kenyan context, research indicates that the big challenge of the employers in the creative cultural industry is that the bulk of the applicants for work are those without qualifications and/or experience: many individuals learn the skills needed on their own, because of their passion for their field.[8] Another factor is the degree of participation of women in this sector to fully utilize the country's human resources to the best advantage of the field.[9] Also, some claim that often acclaimed innovations do not translate into sustainable, successful businesses. The skills of, and models for, entrepreneurship need to be further developed.[10]

Mobile Promise

As already the GESCI Policy Brief of 2013 noted, "changing consumer behaviour is becoming more and more favourable to the growth and development of Digital Creative Media industries, driven by the power of mobility and devices, such as increasing engagement of the consumers with digital creative content and rise in their readiness to pay for content".[11] An example of this is the growing industry for value-added apps and services for smart devices: In Kenya, Mozambique and Nigeria, TV and media services are increasingly being accessed using smartphones. These channels can be accessed by consumers via an app on their devices. This is influencing the development of local and regional content. Innovations such as this give rise to further market trends such as multi-screen consumer behavior.[12]

To add to the potential, foreign private equity investment in Africa is increasing rapidly. The interest of investors has shifted from fixed assets to services.[13] This will pave the way for opportunities for more tech innovations and related cultural products and services as well. And

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[7]
http://www.unwomen.org/~/media/headquarters/attachments/sections/what%20we%20do/dialogues-on-implementation-of-the-post-2015_lr_web%20(1).pdf

[8] http://www.uis.unesco.org/culture/Documents/acri-report-unearthing%20-the-gems-kenya-2012.pdf

[9] http://unctad.org/en/PublicationsLibrary/webdtlstict2014d1_en.pdf

[10] http://www.technologyreview.com/notebook/426971/frustrated-innovation/

[11] http://www.gesci.org/assets/files/AKE%20research%20-%20Full%20Report.pdf

[12] http://www.ericsson.com/res/docs/2014/emr-june2014-regional-appendices-ssa.pdf

[13]
http://www.economist.com/news/business/21640327-private-equity-investors-are-getting-hot-africa-businesses-there-need-all-capital?zid=304&ah=e5690753dc78ce91909083042ad12e30

there are some signs that if planned well, and coupled with some bigger donors, crowdfunding campaigns might bring some additional money to innovation projects.[14]

Role of Policy-Making in the Ecosystem

Kenya has a new cultural policy since 2009. In very general terms, Kenyan policy-making has been geared towards **protecting** cultural products (e.g., copyrights). The challenges lie in the visibility and livelihood of cultural creators.[15] However, for instance the draft policy recommendations for the music industry illustrates numerous mechanisms (ranging from education to incentives and funding) that can be used to not only **support** but actively **encourage** creative industries.[16] In the global markets for digital creative goods, supporting local culture, then, can be seen as a protective measure as well as as a measure encouraging innovation, education, and employment.[17]

The speeding up of digital evolution process in Kenya, and in the region, will need attention to the innovation ecosystem[18], in particular to innovation **policy-making**, as well as concrete **educational models** that are (ideally) created in collaboration of for-profit and not-for-profit local and international partners and that respond to the needs of the **industry.** Finally, at the micro-level of the ecosystem, there is an urgent need to further fuel the strong innovation culture in Kenya and ensure that **young professionals** are equipped to enter the market creating new innovations. As the case of "Nollywood" has proven, grasping this multi-focused, "market-oriented" approach in understanding the different stakeholders is a prerequisite for creative success, locally and abroad.[19]

2.   Approach: The Living Lab Model

This policy brief highlights core components and lessons-learned from the GESCI's 2014/2015 *Creative Media Skills Course*[20] via a *Living Lab* research project.[21] It focuses especially on take-aways relevant for policy-making purposes, in terms of *Linking Education and Business Models towards Building a Cadre of Creative Media Entrepreneurs for the Cultural Industries*.

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[14]
http://smartmonkeytv.cmail2.com/t/ViewEmail/r/CDD4E896DD8E6AA22540EF23F30FEDED/3E5AE509D8F49070C45D7BC1A387288D

[15] http://www.acpculturesplus.eu/sites/default/files/2015/02/05/fiche_328447_uk.pdf

[16] http://www.musicpolicy.or.ke/wp-content/uploads/2014/08/MUSIC-POLICY-FINAL.pdf

[17] whc.unesco.org/document/6856

[18] http://www.global.asc.upenn.edu/app/uploads/2015/01/Marchant_Who-is-ICT-Innovation-for.pdf

[19] http://www.ijbmer.com/docs/volumes/vol4issue4/ijbmer2013040401.pdf

[20] http://www.gesci.org/ake-feb-2015-graduation.html

[21] See the account of the LL process: https://thesoundofthecity.wordpress.com/

Living Labs: What, Why, How

A "Living Lab" (LL) is a design process model in which innovation happens hand in hand with research. Living labs have become a key tool in **creative industries** as well as in **policy-making** because they have radically mixed the roles of those who innovate. They are about the co-creation, exploration, experimentation and evaluation of innovative ideas. They involve user or client communities, not only as observed subjects but as co-creators. They exemplify a model for collaborative, open innovation. Living Labs are most often used in a regional context, for example in developing policy solutions within a city. LL integrates research and innovation processes within a triangular citizen – government – industry partnership. LL can also be used within companies to come up with new ideas and products. In that situation, end-users and different experts of product research and development, technology, marketing and sales, all work together throughout the product design and testing process.[22]

It has been argued that in the African context, Living Labs Africa respond to particular challenges in relation to available rural infrastructure, educational and employment opportunities and resultant migration (particularly of youth), to urban environments nationally, as well as internationally. There are a sizable number of successful Living Labs in Africa including two regional ones, as well as country-specific ones in Mozambique, South Africa, and Tanzania:[23]
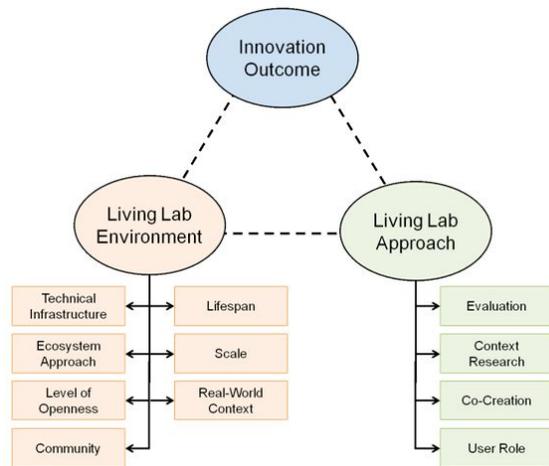
GESCI-AKE 2014/2015 Creative Media Skills Course as a Living Lab

The *GESCI-AKE 2014/2015 Creative Media Skills Course Living Lab* (henceforth also GESCI-AKE LL) was defined by two core components. First, taking the **ecosystem** approach, the LL structured stakeholders into 2 groups: "community of interest" and a "community of practice". Community of practice members encompass training centers, universities, tutors and participants, industry affiliates and enterprises. The community of interest encompasses the Government, as well as GESCI and donors. GESCI and the AKE project team coordinated and facilitated both communities "in terms of a shared vision and purpose; concrete and attainable goals and objectives; mutual respect and open communication; good record keeping; and a way for success."[24]

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[22] A collection of Living Lab literature can be found at: https://thesoundofthecity.wordpress.com/resources/
[23] http://www.ist-africa.org/home/default.asp?page=livinglabs
[24] Living Lab Framework - AKE 2014.

The focus of the *Creative Media Skills Course* was in pedagogy and innovation through **local content and combining traditions with current trends**, with the joint theme for animation, game development, and music: "The Sound of the City". For example, in the music cluster this meant guiding participants in the art of storytelling, as well as recording and production, based on "how the traditional techniques of African chants and songs influence modern rap music", and studying the ways "music uses language and folklore to tell stories and how this aspect can be important to the current scene in hip-hop, how music contributes to street languages."[25]

The GESCI-AKE Living Lab Research Component

The research component in the *GESCI-AKE 2014/2015 Creative Media Skills Course* was designed taking into account t**he novel use of Living Labs in education design**. Hence, the basic premise was that the Living lab would have two specific, albeit intersecting, sets of processes and goals**: (product) innovation-related and educational ones.**[26]

The research was a combination of background research, survey research and thematic interviews:

1. *Background research* provided information on previous Living Lab models, their possibilities and best practices. It included literature review as well as expert interviews.[27]

2. *Two survey research questionnaires* focused on three issues: a) getting information and feedback from various stakeholders of this LL project; b) obtaining information on best practices while doing creative collaboration; and c) finding out the most important take-aways from the event where final innovations were demonstrated and different stakeholders interacted.[28]

3. *Thematic individual and focus group interviews* were conducted throughout the whole LL process. They were used to gain deeper insight on the keywords of leadership, innovation, teamwork and sustainability. In addition, an open stakeholder dialogue was conducted as the conclusion of the showcase.[29]

4. In line with the collaborative, transparent nature of the LL research methodology, a *research blog*[30] was used, where the course participants and GESCI staff were encouraged to participate in discussions on topics related to entrepreneurship, creativity, and Living Labs.

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[25] Cultural Music Syllabus for *GESCI-AKE 2014/2015 Creative Media Skills Course.*
[26] See: https://thesoundofthecity.wordpress.com/2014/11/15/research-design-first-proposal/
[27] See https://thesoundofthecity.wordpress.com/ for selected interview summaries and for the list of literature
[28] See the full-length questionnaire here: https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1egdDxeUVyEACZiysDaIz93SGz4RFwQxl0nf3fvKUxAg/viewform
[29] See the dialogue documented here: https://thesoundofthecity.wordpress.com/2015/02/06/the-showcase-live-blog/
[30] https://thesoundofthecity.wordpress.com/

3. **Results: Main Lessons from the LL Research**

Results from the LL research are summarized here within four keywords, which not only describe some of the factors of *GESCI-AKE 2014/2015 Creative Media Skills Course*, but also describe the key challenges and possibilities in Living Lab models and, building broader innovation ecosystems.
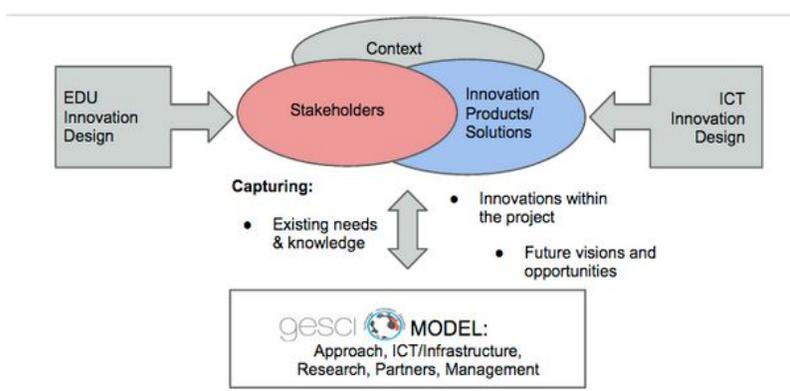
The keywords used here are **leadership**, **innovation**, **content** and **sustainability**.

1. **Leadership** is the key.
   a. Leadership should be seen **broadly**: not only as selecting good individual leaders with good leadership abilities, but also as organizing the whole innovation ecosystem in a way that the workflow within a LL project becomes clear to both the participants and stakeholders. This is also in line with learnings from other LL projects.[31]
   b. Leadership is related to the question of **implementation**: a good and inspiring management is a key to building successful ecosystems related to innovation, creativity and technology.[32]
   c. **Leadership is one of the entrepreneurial skills** that needs to be cultivated.
   d. A good program leader can identify core issues in the field that may extend beyond technology or creative content. One of such issues is the l**ack of women** in the field. Another is **financial constraints** that some practitioners may face. Leadership means **understanding diversity as a resource**, and supporting diversity and individual growth of students in a collaborative setting.

> *I feel there should be a wider consideration ... for example working as a group of five or six in one project creates room for slow learners and shy people to not really feel an ownership or responsibility in the project. But when you break it down to smaller teams like two people they have more responsibility and so they feel a great deal of ownership and that generates passion to create something even better.*
> - **Survey Questionnaire**

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[31] http://www.infodev.org/infodev-files/mlabs_and_mhubs_business_model.pdf

[32] See policy recommendations in The Business Model of mLabs and mHubs at http://www.infodev.org/infodev-files/mlabs_and_mhubs_business_model.pdf and policy recommendations in Using Locational Data to Improve the Science of Delivery at https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/19316

2. **Innovation**: It takes different forms — and it should be given time.
   a. Innovation in general is not only creating **new** ideas and concepts, but also **improving** and fine-tuning existing ideas and concepts. It is seen as a process where existing skills are used - not so much as a process, where new skills are acquired while innovating.

   > *"Innovation is a means to essential communication, enabling new social values, and globalization is bringing out the local innovation and need for local culture."* – A participant in the Showcase discussion

   b. Innovation with other experts from different fields requires time to find **common ground, vocabulary, and ways of working**. Free exchange of ideas is clearly desirable and beneficial to innovative processes.
   c. Students appreciate **the opportunity to experiment** (and fail - to learn). Intensive trainings may often end up being rushed, as getting used to collaboration, balancing brainstorming and feedback of teams vs. specialized tasks performed individually take time.
   d. Learning to receive and give feedback and **peer critique** are also an essential part of learning — and project innovation.
   e. Innovation means also **practitioner involvement in curriculum development**.

3. **Content**: Educational and thematic.
   a. **The need for a hybrid model was one of the main outcomes.** Everyone also needs basic entrepreneurial skills, and these are learned through learning-by-doing, mentoring and one-one-one tutoring. They are good ways in improving the skills. Today's innovation professionals need to understand business skills and be able to market their talent and projects.
   b. Participants appreciate both **individual** guidance/projects/mentoring as well as the **collaborative** effort. The combination of individual mentoring/attention and collaborative practices are important for a Living Lab environment that aims to innovate, as well as to educate.
   c. The thematic focus of the GESCI-AKE LL on **local content** was highly appreciated by all stakeholders: practitioners feel strongly they want to contribute to creating social-cultural value; other stakeholders feel there's a market niche that needs to be filled.

   > *When it comes to animation the African story has not yet been told to the world... Africa with all its serene scenery, game reserves culture and other things has not yet been shown to the world!*
   > - A practitioner interviewee

d. Content creation needs adequate **tools**. There is a challenge to get international industry-standard tools to Kenya.
e. At the same time, **storytelling** is considered one of the essential skills for the industry.
f. **More needs to be known about the consumers** in order to respond to the (job) market and innovation needs. We also need to know more about regional and global markets that are emerging.
g. **Policy support is essential for local content in many ways** -- this is a question of broader cultural, educational, and innovation policies.
h. A Living Lab model combining business and educational needs and goals could be very beneficial in **other fields** than creative industries, as well.

4. **Sustainability**: Needed in two areas.
   a. Sustainability is a key challenge in two ways: in terms of **professions** (innovation/creativity, and business skills are needed); and in terms of **content** (sustainability of job creation thought innovative content and local focus).

> In regard to our country: there are thousands of potential people who can be transformed into creative artists but institutions are few who render creative aspect training. Besides being creative and having the ability to animate additional business skills are needed in order for one to make it in the market.
> - A practitioner interviewee

   b. Implementing enough **networking** to the content, "**team spirit"** needed for a working LL project is gained**, and it also extends the benefits of training**. A major advantage of a Living Lab -type of educational-innovation project is that it can teach not only skills but **build alliances and partnerships** beyond the training/project itself.
   c. **Sustainability in terms of collaboration and follow-up.** LL projects are goal-oriented: when a certain goal is reached, the project is concluded. Participants' requirements differ somewhat on this aspect: even after a project is concluded, participants wish to continue in the same field, and even by continuing the "concluded" project, or with meetups. This result is in line with results from other research: special attention should be put to sustainability i.e. continuity, both from organizational and individual perspectives. [33] Project-based educational model is not enough.

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[33] See policy recommendations in The Business Model of mLabs and mHubs at http://www.infodev.org/infodev-files/mlabs_and_mhubs_business_model.pdf and policy recommendations in Using Locational Data to Improve the Science of Delivery at https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/19316

d. **Incentives** for sustainability. Several participants mentioned incentives (equipment, start-up grants, etc.) as possible drivers for sustainability that could be built into the course.

4.   Summary Conclusions

The findings of the Living Lab Research can be summarized as:

Existing needs and knowledge
1. In Kenya, there is an existing, and growing, **multi-stakeholder innovation ecosystem** that offers new opportunities for new collaborations and innovations.
2. However, the industry requires **building up the talent-base** that can respond to opportunities. There are indications that local content will be in demand.
3. The practitioners of the GESCI-AKE project recognize that need and express s**trong interest in creating Kenyan digital media content**, for **local and global** markets.

Innovations within the GESCI-AKE LL project
4. The LL project has brought about the need for a **new hybrid educational model** that combines content innovation and skills training, and that fosters creativity as well as leadership qualities, management knowledge and practical entrepreneurial skills.
5. In such a model, **local content can be the driver**, the key theme, for education-business innovations and practitioner talent-building.

Future visions and opportunities
6. To build such a model, GESCI-AKE can draw from existing education-business collaborations, developing that into an AKE model, and becoming **a leader in the field**.
7. In its next face, the GESCI-AKE programme can **test and hone the hybrid model** by incorporating more collaborations with the industry elements into the curriculum.
8. The hybrid program can also create **sustainability incentives**, from meetups and networking to other entrepreneurial assistance, to support the continuing success of its practitioners in the job market.
9. A part of developing the model will also be gaining more understanding of the local - global markets t**hrough research and collaborations with relevant organizations**.
10. **Widening partnerships** can be an essential source or resources, not only to collaborations with businesses but with research institutions and other Living Labs.
11. The next phase of the GESCI-AKE program can also inform **how the hybrid model might be used in other areas of training**.
12. Such future developments can be supported by (national) policy in **multiple sectors**: culture, economy, and education.

5.   Possible policy responses

The following policy responses can be considered in addressing the key findings regarding **innovation, leadership, content, and sustainability** of the *GESCI-AKE 2014/2015 Creative Media Skills Course.* Please see specific implications of the findings to different stakeholders as the Appendix.

Knowledge Creation:
1. **To support content creation:** Conducting a national-regional study on consumer markets for local digital cultural products (possibly in collaboration with other national and international actors). Gathering data on the use of mobile services and content is key here.

2. **To support innovation:** Supporting additional qualitative Living Lab innovation-research efforts for LLs involving educational components in order to fully understand the potential of digital innovations and education processes that promote innovation processes.

3. **To support innovation, leadership, and sustainability:** Conducting mapping of best practices and policy solutions for well-functioning education-industry partnerships: Internships? Case projects? Teacher-industry practitioner exchanges? Partnerships in getting industry-standard hard and software? A consecutive follow-up for GESCI: Which businesses might be the best partners for what policy measures?

Pedagogical / Educational Responses:
4. **To support innovation, content, and sustainability**: In education, creating innovation outcomes, not only educational outcome. - And training models that are linked to innovation outcomes not only training models that are linked to technical skills and knowledge outcomes.

5. **To support innovation, content, leadership, and sustainability:** Training and supporting the emergence of innovators and entrepreneurs, all while enhancing technical skills and artistic vision. This would mean including business courses, perhaps even a "media management" track in the curricula. The inclusion of the skills is essential for job creation. Many DCM businesses are "small shops" creating content for specific niche markets.

6. **To support innovation, content, leadership and sustainability:** Providing industry/market-responsive training that is also tailored by, and for, individual participants. Here, the existing skillsets but also the participants knowledge of the markets they feel they can and want to serve, can inform the curriculum.

7. **To support innovation, content, and leadership:** Carefully selecting the trainees in order to form a well-function collaborative training cohort, representing talent and gender

diversity. This can help to promote women's entry in the DCM industries -- a field that tends to be very male-dominated.

8. **To support innovation and content:** Providing one-on-one mentoring for participants in addition to collaborative projects, to improve their existing skills and abilities.

9. **To support innovation, content, and sustainability:** Developing a technology-based platform to support the multistakeholder ecosystem. This can include, e.g., a virtual talent showcase and repository of talent contact information.

Community Creation:

10. **To support innovation, content, leadership, and sustainability:** Offering other specific incentives for practitioners (e.g., innovation competitions; start-up mini grants; etc.)

11. **To support innovation, content, leadership, and sustainability:** Fostering young professionals' meetups, associations, and other semi-structured events that allow for networking for collaborations and job opportunities.

In general:

12. **To support innovation, content, leadership, and sustainability:** Multi-sector policy support to educational - business partnerships as their mission falls under education, entrepreneurship and employment, culture, social value, and innovation.

APPENDIX: Implications of *Linking Education and Business Models towards Building a Cadre of Creative Media Entrepreneurs for the Cultural Industries* to the different stakeholders

	Micro-level: Practitioners	Meso-level: Institution - GESCI	Macro-level: Policy Implications
Hybrid model	Learning skills and business practices	New ways of collaboration with the industry	New outlooks on the relationship between education and business innovation
Local – global markets	Learning to 'research' the markets and own existing knowledge; learning social value creation	New ways of collaboration with the industry; further research	New collaborations/outlooks on the marketplace
Innovation	Creating innovative products for the market-place through training	Becoming one of the central hubs for innovation via training	Policy support for cutting-edge initiatives; infrastructure; local culture
Leadership	Learning leadership skills: how to balance personal goals and skills with collaboration	Providing strong edu and inno leaders within training projects to ensure successful outcomes	Policy support= leadership for cutting-edge initiatives; infrastructure; local culture
Content	Competitive edge as a professional	Competitive edge as an organization	Competitive edge in national/regional creative industries
Sustainability	Employment; own business; sustainability of employment	Sustainability: in education (content), networking; ongoing model development	Supporting sustainability through policy measures
= Success	Meaningful learning experience and jobs	Meaningful learning experience and jobs for the students + the hybrid model servicing the industry = cutting-edge in ICT innovation education	Job creation, innovation creation, knowledge creation (of markets, audiences, educational and business models)