

Creative and Cultural Disciplines in Higher Education and Industry in Kenya

This chapter is an analysis of the creative and cultural industries activities or courses in the target universities, the creative and cultural disciplines at two levels in the institutions of higher learning: as a subject and as an activity which gives rise to, for example, music students and student musicians, as much as art students and student artists. Where the two thrive side by side, it is thanks to an enabling environment created through policy and practice, the former covering curricular provisions, and the latter recognising the role of the (mostly) performing arts in the life of the institution. The chapter then explores case studies of the selected institutions of higher learning in order to establish a clearer understanding of the practice(s) therein.

The Creative and Cultural Disciplines

The rapid growth of university education has opened access to higher education for Kenyan youths. With the start of self-sponsored programmes, the delinking of university admission from bed-space and the high output of high school graduates ready to take up space in higher education, there has been scope for expansion of the disciplines on offer. Whereas the arts were first introduced in higher education as components of teacher education curriculum, they have today grown to take their space as stand-alone areas of qualification. The public universities have sustained music and theatre as elements of student cultural activities, so that even universities that do not teach either of the subjects present students at both national music and drama festivals. Yet, there are institutions that teach music, drama (theatre), film, fine art, graphics, design etc., producing practitioners and administrators for the industry. The experience of educators and learners in these programmes is worth interrogating in order to note the relevance and impact of this higher education provision for the development of the industry.

Theatre and Film

In 1902 Kenya was declared a British protectorate and the institution of a colonialist government marked a significant change in its traditional performance. With the missionaries on the one hand, condemning it as pagan, and the administrators on the other creating a new social structure, an unfavourable condition was created for traditional performance. Mwangi Gichora (1996:131) states that the colonialists enlarged villages to get cheap labour and this created a lack of communal land, which led to the decline of many of the major celebratory and ritual occasions. This social change may have disrupted the life patterns of the people, but it did not kill traditional performance. Wherever it could thrive, the artistic performance began to take on a new dimension, that of resistance. Ingrid Bjorkman (1989:30) identifies a Kikuyu cultural festival that was alive during the colonial period:

The traditional Iregi theatre... was active at the turn of the century. The Intuika festivals, held by the Kikuyu once [in] a generation and probably the most important occasion for manifesting their longing for freedom, were prohibited by the British in the early 1930s. The theatre was becoming increasingly militant and anti-British. In [the] 1930s, resistance was more culturally than politically motivated. Many songs, some still sung today, were composed then.

That some of the songs are still sung today shows how deeply rooted the traditional performance was in the lives of the people as the creative elements were preserved and passed on. This further demonstrates the capacity of the song to survive even without the written word, with memory playing a vital role. Because it does not necessarily require a special occasion and can be sung anywhere, the song was a vehicle for relaying important messages across generations.

In the late 1930s the colonialists introduced Western theatre. David Kerr (1995: 134) states that the Donovan Maule Theatre, founded in 1948, was the focus for white expatriate drama, offering skillfully produced versions of London West End hits, intermingled with a judicious selection of such European classics as Shakespeare, Goldsmith, Wilde, and Gilbert and Sullivan. While the education system and the missionaries tried to alienate them from their traditional performance, Kenyans were also kept out of the newly built theatre clubs reserved exclusively for whites. The objective of these clubs was to entertain the colonialist and give him a sense of home and togetherness. At this point, white men did not see that the Western theatre could be useful to their purposes of colonisation in Kenya.

Within the drama allowed by the colonialists, the Kenyan was featured as a clown.¹ This drama was permitted because it made the Kenyan look foolish in the face of western ideals. The view glorified the West, and those Kenyans who were alienated from their cultural roots saw themselves as being backward if they followed their traditional ways. To stress this negative image of the Kenyan, Ngugi wa Thiong'o (1992:38) notes that:

The social halls encouraged the concert, a kind of play-let, with simple plots often depicting the naïve peasant who comes to the big town and is completely perplexed by the complexities of modern life, the stupid peasant who goes to speak to telephone wires asking them to send money to his relatives and leaving a bundle of notes under the telephone pole....

Apart from concerts in social halls, this drama was also broadcast because the radio had the capability to reach more people than stage performances. This made it an ideal mechanism to spread Western culture countrywide to wealthy Kenyans who could afford a radio at the time. The concert or play-let that wa Thiong'o talks about was created because the play as a form was still new to Kenyans. The satirical concert was very common in youth theatres in churches as a supplement to play-lets on biblical stories. Coupled with an education system that treated Western culture as the ideal, the vision of the typical villager as ignorant, backward and primitive has persisted to this day, especially among urban youths. In the *Cambridge Guide to Theatre*, Kimani Gecau and Ngugi wa Mirii (1995:598) trace this attitude to Athumani Suleiman who created a character of slapstick drama called *Mzee Tamaa* (Greedy Old Man) at the Kenya National Theatre (KNT) in the 1940s. He was named 'greedy' because of his craving for Western ideals and property that existed in the city. A replica of this character is still viewed on Kenya Broadcasting Corporation television and his greed for various good things in the city is still as fresh as ever. Suleiman also satirised the settlers' Kiswahili, and made fun of the colonialists' clumsy attempts to speak the language. The humour gave Kenyans a ground on which they discovered that there were things they could do better than the colonialists. It also gave them the space to provide an answer to the drama that satirised Kenyans as ignorant of Western norms. A negative aspect of the humour is that it made Kenyans accept the state of being under colonial rule as they began to see the colonialist as being part of their society. This is because they laughed out their frustrations in the theatre which made them forget the view that the colonialist was an unwelcome alien. One informant says that after the performances the people would be keener to listen to the whites speak Swahili.² This gave the colonialist a new face as an entertainer rather than an oppressor. In accepting the colonialist, the process of alienation had begun as some Kenyans admired the 'superiority' of their colonisers. To this day, the youths, especially in the city, view popular Western media culture as being better than their own.

The drama of Suleiman cleared the way for other satirical performances on television like *Vitimbi*, a television comedy popular with youth that relies largely on satire. *Vitimbi* portrays Ojwang, a stereotype Luo ignoramus who is out of touch with 'modernity' and cannot speak English or Kiswahili well.³ From Suleiman's satire of the colonialists, the satire was now turned on the rural Kenyan in the television programme. The rural people are still viewed as backward and ignorant in relation to the modern city. Much later satires include *Redikyulass* (a corruption of Ridiculous), *Trukalass* (True Colours) and *Red Korna* (Red Corner), which were

aired on Nation Television (NTV) and Citizen Television respectively.⁴ Today we have several television comedy shows like Churchill Live, Laugh Corner, Comedy Club, and Kenya Corner among others, here are also competitive reality shows based on comedy. These performances satirise politicians exposing their ignorance but largely dwelling on the ignorant rural folk who cannot measure up to the city standard of seeing and doing things.⁵ They ironically expose the success of the colonialists in alienating Kenyans from their tradition on the one hand but also the ability of the performers to interrogate the Kenyan social scene. It is also noteworthy that the titles of the new television satires are in English. Speaking good English and behaving like a Westerner is still viewed as an ideal, mostly among the youth, because of their admiration for Western movies, music and lifestyle that they access through television and videos.

Soon after Suleiman's slapstick drama, Kenyan groups producing full-length plays began to emerge. Gecau and Mirii (1995) note that the first Kenyan African drama group was formed in 1940 and was called the Nairobi African Dramatic Society (NADS). The group took the initiative to take drama to the people as they performed plays in different parts of the country. Although it is not clear what type of plays this group performed because of lack of documentation, this marked an important stage in the development of theatre because the Kenyans themselves had taken hold of the play form and were using it for their own entertainment. This is what was to inspire the emergence of indigenous theatre which Gecau and Mirii (1995) state was characterised either by an acceptance of 'the junior partner' tag or the struggle to find its own voice and direction. The implication here is that Kenyans viewed themselves as inferior to the professional productions staged by expatriate companies. Coming at a time when the colonialists had established Western-style theatres, the establishment of the group was a bold move towards a new form of expression. Later on we see a theatre by the youth emerging, which embodies resistance to colonial rule. Wa Thiong'o (1992: 39) notes that:

The revolt of the petty-bourgeoisie in the area of theatre had roots in the fifties with Alliance High School, Thika, Mangu, Kagumo and other prominent schools producing a counter-Shakespeare and G.B Shaw tradition with their own scripts in Kiswahili. At Alliance High School there were *Nakupenda Lakini* by Henry Kuria... (1954); *Maisha ni Nini* by Kimani Nyoike (1955); *Nimelogwa nisiwe na mpenzi* [sic] by Gerishon Ngugi (1956); *Atakiwa na Polisi* by B.M Kurutu (1957) which all ended with performances at Menengai Social Hall in Nakuru, the heartland of settlerdom.

The revolt against Western theatre and drama here was just the beginning of what was later to develop more powerfully in the Schools' Drama Festival and alternative theatre spaces like bars spearheaded by Wahome Mutahi. It is worth noting that wa Thiong'o documents this revolt before the inception of the schools' festival in 1959.

The introduction of theatre in to the schools had more to do with proficiency in language than any other objective. With the introduction of modern schools at the turn of the twentieth century, an important stage for the development of drama and performance in the country had begun. To promote the English language as a basic means of communication, the colonialists introduced Western drama in to the curriculum. Mbughuni (1984: 249) states that what the colonialists first found to be important was to introduce English as an official language and then teach it from nursery to university level. In addition, students in East Africa preparing for the school certificate examination were expected to have read at least twenty-five books from a selected list of works in English literature. To give the development of English language better grounding, drama was introduced in to the schools to help students master the language as they enacted the published plays. This was the birth of the competitive schools drama festival. Although it began as a colonial initiative to establish English language more firmly in schools, the festival has turned out to be very effective in encouraging and developing performance in Kenya.

The present plight of theatre outside the school festival however, presents a poor picture. It is best captured by one director and playwright, Andrew Mwaura, who observed that Kenyan theatre is on its deathbed and is in serious need of revival. In September 2012, Mwaura staged a play about Kenya's 2010 constitution and citizen participation. Despite working on it for five months, hiring professional actors and a director, and advertising on local radio stations, the play failed to attract an audience. In a personal interview with this producer, he decries that theatre does not bring in money and that it is very difficult to break even. In his case, the play only attracted an audience of twelve on the opening night and the ticket proceeds for the entire period was US\$115 as opposed to his expectation to raise US\$2,300. He now works in film and documentary production for television and DVDs.

This is the scenario in the theatre scene. An interview with several directors who run theatre groups and companies reveals that, to survive, some of the groups have resorted to performing school set-books.⁶ That way they are assured of an audience because many teachers are interested in exposing their students to theatre as an aid in teaching the texts. The only theatre space that is assured of an audience is within schools, colleges and university drama festivals. The competitions draws thousands of participants across the country as the learners challenge each other in plays, dances, poetry and narratives.

The current status of the universities is such that only Moi University, Kenyatta University and the University of Nairobi teach theatre as a subject. In Kenyatta University it is offered to students who also take film studies. Here are also on its website that the objectives of the department of Theatre and Film Technology is:

to produce dramatists and film directors to actors and bring out personnel that will be used to man cultural centres and teach drama in Kenyan schools. It will train film directors, actors and film technicians.⁷

This is a noble objective but the Teachers Services Commission does not employ graduates of theatre or film. The graduates, therefore, have a hard task looking for relevant employment and the only obvious way of survival is to join the numerous theatre groups already mentioned above. One other means of survival has been to get contracts from schools during the first term of the year (January to April) to help script and train students for the annual drama festival. This however has its challenges: many of the youths graduating from high school after attending the drama festival now return to help direct school plays because they have no avenues to continue their talent elsewhere. There is a large number of such youths across the country. In 2013, their role in the festival was questioned by the Ministry of Education officials after one of them wrote and directed a controversial play that was deemed an incitement of one community. The Ministry then issued a decree that schools should not contract anyone who is not a teacher to work with the learners in the theatre. This makes the situation difficult for the graduates of theatre from the universities.

The Rise of Film and its Present Status

In 1909 Cherry Keaton, a wildlife photographer filmed the American President Theodore Roosevelt when he came on a wildlife safari to Kenya. This was arguably the first 'film' to be made in Kenya. Since then the film industry has developed rather slowly. Part of the reason for the slow development was the cost of production. Barasa (2013) notes that in the colonial era, films consisted mainly of hunting expeditions, travelogues and fictional films like *Mogambo*, *The Snows of Kilimanjaro*, *Trader Horn* and others which showcased the conflict of Europeans battling with dangerous elements of nature and a new culture in Africa while at the same time loving the breath-taking scenery and warm people. He further notes that Africans were not involved in shooting the films, except perhaps to serve as extras and porters.

After independence, however, there was a liberalisation of the arts that swept across the country. At the University of Nairobi, Ngugi wa Thiong'o led the change by first changing the name of his department – the English department to the Department of Literature. The introduction of Oral Literature to define Kenyan indigenous performances was mooted and was soon included in the curriculum. The Kenya Institute of Mass Communication was inaugurated to train Africans in film-making and replace the Europeans who had been working at the Kenya Broadcasting Corporation.

Barasa also observes that the first Swahili film *Mlevi* was made by Ragbir Singh in 1968 and inspired Kenyan film-making. Alan Root, a wildlife filmmaker who was born in London and moved to Kenya, produced several acclaimed films including *Mysterious Castles of Clay* that won an Oscar nomination in 1978.⁸ International filmmakers began paying more attention to Kenya and this resulted in films such

as the seven-Oscar success, *Out of Africa*. Other films that tickled the interest of Kenyans in movie production included Sharad Patel's *The Rise and Fall of Idi Amin* (1981), *Saikati* (1993) and *Kolormask* (1986).

A newer a however dawned, after 2000, when it became possible to shoot films using an affordable video camera and edit on a computer. This led to an influx of more players who came to try their hand at video/film production. Since 2000, therefore, feature films on DV technology production have increased significantly in Kenya. They included *Dangerous Affair*, *Project Daddy*, and *Money & the Cross* by Njeri Karago, *Babu's Babies* by Christine Bala, *Naliaka is Going* by Albert Wandago, *The Price of a Daughter* and *Behind Closed Doors* by Jane Murago-Munene, *The Green Card* by Brutus Sirucha, *Malooned* by Bob Nyanja, *All Girls Together* by Cajetan Boy among others.⁹ With more of the local producers trying their hands at film-making, theyouths have shown more than a passing interest in the endeavour.

At the moment, many such films have come through and the rate at which the industry is growing indicates a promising momentum that will propel the success story further. The Cinema of Kenya website notes that the film *Nairobi Half Life* was nominated in 2012 for the 'Best Foreign Language Film' at the 85th Academy Awards. This was the first time a Kenyan film has been nominated in the category. It is further noted that the film was received with critical acclaim, and has won five awards to date: 'Best Picture' at the Kenyan 2012 Kalasha Film Awards, 'Best Actor' at the Durban International Film Festival, 'Breakthrough Audience Award' at the AFI Fest and 'Audience Awards' at two different film awards; the Film Africa Festival, London and the Festival di Cinema Africano.¹⁰ In a CNN commentary Jim Stenman said of the film:

A hard-hitting Kenyan movie about gang culture has become the country's first-ever film to be considered for an Oscar. "Nairobi Half Life" has just been shown at Film Africa 2012, which is currently taking place in London – having already made history as the most successful theatrical release for a local film in Kenya, according to its producers.¹¹

Nairobi Half Life is only a small peek at the potential of film production in Kenya.

With a new constitution that demands that all the broadcasters in Kenya include 40 per cent local content, the stage seems set to motivate local filmmakers to help fulfil this requirement. However, the situation is still far from the ideal. Craig Rix captures the situation accurately when he says that our broadcasters are not helpful, and communication between independent producers and commissioners is often fraught with tensions because commissioners can access cheap content from South America and Korea and cannot understand why originally produced local content costs more than the globally syndicated old content they serve up on our screens.¹² To further aggravate this situation many of the media houses have resorted to in-house productions that allow them more control over the content of the programmes but also cut down on costs.¹³ This has created 'hegemonies' of

sorts that lock out fresh ideas and new content. First, because the budgets allocated to these projects are fixed and, second, because the people involved do not want to lose their 'employment' or source of livelihood. The result of such a situation is that a small group of people are tasked with producing seasonal programmes to sustain the many hours of airtime. It goes without saying that it also denies the local filmmaker revenue to develop and share their ideas. A filmmaker who invests in a production will not make any money if they go the television way.

Rix captures a very fundamental aspect in the film industry stating that, film has been considered a way to beam propaganda to the masses in Kenya, and has never been central to the philosophy of nationhood and art, nor used by leadership to build identity. He goes on to note that as a medium, it was officially filed under the Ministry of Information rather than the Ministry of Culture.¹⁴ Its perceived role is to inform rather than reflect our culture.¹⁵

Developments in the universities are also illustrative. Moi University has taught film now for eight years and Kenyatta University only had its first graduates of film in 2012. The University of Nairobi is only just establishing an independent discipline in Theatre and Film studies to augment the School of Journalism courses that it has offered for more than ten years now. The graduates from these universities are yet to make comprehensive headways in the industry because of lack of opportunities.

A new development in 2012 and 2013 has provided a way forward that may be beneficial not only to the graduates of film courses but also the film industry in the country. The Ministry of Education in collaboration with the University of Nairobi, has introduced the Kenya Schools, Colleges and Universities Film Festival. This means essentially that the skills of film production will be required in the learning institutions which will not only boost countrywide interest in film but also open spaces for comprehensive capacity building among teachers. It will also introduce children to elements of film production at a younger age and thus give them an early opportunity to choose careers in the industry.

The Kenyan film industry exhibited its potential from soon after independence in the 1960s. But the response of HE did not come until 2008, almost fifty years later, when Kenyatta University opened its doors as the first public institution to offer film education in the country. Prior to this, there were a few private film institutions that offered courses in film, though they were very expensive, thus out of reach for the common citizen. A few NGOs based in the slum areas offered basic film education to the residents there. The entry of Kenyatta University with a Bachelor of Theatre Arts and Film Technology programme, therefore, aroused excitement within the film sector. Since then, two other public universities have entered the scene. The Multimedia University of Kenya introduced a Bachelor of Film and Animation programme and the University of Nairobi, in partnership with the Kenya School of Mass Communications are rolling out new programmes. This has given hope for a more affordable film education in Kenya. The expectations of the industry

are that a graduate from this programme should be able to write, shoot, direct and edit a film. It should give them the opportunity they need to gain competence in playwriting, stagecraft and design, acting for theatre, directing a play, theatrical make-ups, stage props design, and so on. These areas require in-depth training with the right equipment, mentorship and guidance from the lecturers assigned. The greatest challenge between the industry and HE is the fact that the best personnel to train students in these fields are practitioners, most of whom do not have masters or doctoral degrees in the relevant fields; so they are technically unqualified to teach in the university. Hence the need to work with master practitioners in the programmes and the call for the Commission for University Education to recognise master artists as specialists and ‘doctors’ in their art and trade. This will provide an avenue for HE to interact more closely with the industry and provide more relevant, or practical, education to the students. The other challenge these institutions grapple with is the acquisition of expensive equipment that keeps changing with the fast evolving technological advancements.

Drama and Performance

Whereas film studies and activities are relatively new in the education sector, their predecessors, drama and theatre, have been significant elements in the Kenyan school programme. Their presence in primary and secondary schools contributes to learners’ educational experience, where they are effectively employed in co-curricular situations. This trend is carried on to higher levels of education where university and college leadership play a role in providing students with opportunities to perform and practice.

The most popular manifestation of drama and performance in the Kenyan education environment is the Kenya Schools and Colleges’ Drama festival. While theatre and film are either perceived as disciplines for the university or as entertainment activities that people engage in for income generation and employment, the Kenya Drama Festival is an annual extravaganza that brings young artists together. As a countrywide event, it accommodates learners from kindergarten to institutions of higher learning to show-case talent on a competitive platform. The national level competitions take place over a period of ten days.

Higher education participation in the drama festival involves a variety of post-secondary institutions, also referred to as tertiary institutions. The institutions offering tertiary education form separate categories of performance, and do not compete against the nursery, primary and secondary schools. The current format of the festival organisation started in 1980 when the festival committee, under the auspices of the Ministry of Education, launched the Kenya Primary Schools Festival. It was amalgamated with the Colleges Drama Festival. During this period, the only higher institutions that participated in the event were Teachers Training Colleges. By putting them together with primary schools, the organisers tried to

link the Teachers Colleges to primary schools where the student teachers would eventually end up practising.

It is important to observe that Graham Hyslop played an important role as signposting the development of drama and music in Kenya. Early dramatists and musicians like Henry Kuria and Arthur Kemoli were students of Hyslop. The actual participation in the festival by colleges goes back to 1977 when drama lecturers from the University of Nairobi produced two plays *The Trial of Dedan Kimathi* by Ngugi wa Thiong'o and Micere Mugo, and Francis Imbuga's *Betrayal in the City*. Ngugi wa Thiong'o and Micere Mugo were disenchanted with Kenneth Watene's version of *Dedan Kimathi: A Play* and composed *The Trial of Dedan Kimathi* to portray their corrected account of history. Besides taking these performances to FESTAC in Lagos, Nigeria, the university also presented them at the drama festival that was held at the Kenya National Theatre in November 1977. This separate festival ran in this mode until 1982. Thereafter, the colleges, primary and secondary schools festivals were amalgamated.

Today HE institutions participating in the drama festival fall under two categories – E and F:

- *Category E: Colleges* (Technical Colleges, Polytechnics, Institutes of Technology and Teacher Training Colleges). Within this broad tertiary education category, they are allowed to enter items as plays, cultural creative dance, modern creative dance, dramatised verse (solo), dramatised verse (choral), narrative, film and stand-up comedy. There are additional classes for special needs learners catering for plays in Kenyan Sign Language (for the hearing impaired) and dramatised dance for the same group of learners.
- *Category F: Universities*. Where they are allowed to enter items as plays, cultural creative dance, modern creative dance, dramatised verse (solo) dramatised verse (choral), narrative, mime and stand-up comedy.

These festivals are the spaces that have nurtured talent during the time the students are in college and after college. While in college a student could have two to four years to learn and participate from the festival; some students and new lecturers learn the art of script writing, acting, story-telling, miming, dramatisation of poetry, dancing and dance choreography, and attempts at comedy and film making. Over and above this and depending on the roles the Principals and Vice-chancellors decide to play, students are sponsored to participate in the various levels of the festival, culminating in the ten-day national event.

The leadership in some of higher institutions have taken up the challenge of supporting drama and theatre disciplines by creating a space for learners' to interrogate the theory of art and by participating in the Schools and Colleges festivals. This approach is very instrumental in talent and skills development in performing and creative arts. It is, therefore, a positive approach that contribute to the development of personnel for the industry.

It is important to observe that not all post-secondary institutions offer drama/theatre as a discipline. In fact as indicated elsewhere in this text, only specific universities such as University of Nairobi, Moi University, Kenyatta University, and Maseno University do. The festival committee, KNDF, provides an excellent alternative source of training or skills development in drama/theatre through workshops and seminars carried out at the regional and national levels. Of particular interest is the composition of those who facilitate these learning opportunities that KNDF organises for teachers, tutors and lecturers from the universities and colleges. The facilitators are mainly drawn from among the universities, especially those with academic qualifications in these or cognate disciplines and also from a sprinkling of practitioners who have honed their skills and expertise either as script writers, directors, performers or producers.

These workshops cover virtually all aspects of drama/theatre taught at the university. They include scripting and characterisation play, dance, verse and narrative, and the film; story-telling; acting and stage management; the role of the director; dance choreography; adjudication, the art and pitfalls. Research is yet to establish the level and types of knowledge transferred from these practical sessions that are conducted year in year out, but casual observation reveals a positive impact on practitioners' skills.

Several people who have taught drama and theatre in the institutions earlier mentioned in this chapter. They include the late Prof. Francis Imbuga, the late Opiyo Mumma, Prof. Austin Bukonya, Dr David Mulwa, Dr Wasambo Were, Prof. C. J. Odhiambo, Prof. Oluoch Obura, Evans Mugarizi, Prof. Peter Barasa, Dr Simon Otieno, Dr Basil Okongo, Prof. Emmanuel Mbogo and Mr Otumba Ouko among others. These pedagogues also served as facilitators at the festival workshops. They certainly must have brought a lot from their lecture halls to enrich the workshops just as they would have brought back into the teaching of drama/theatre much of what they had propagated at the workshops..

How does the university administration get involved in this whole scenario? Their first level of involvement is that they allow the lecturers, who are their employees, time off to attend or facilitate the workshops and festivals. In addition, where the festival organisers are notable to pay for faculty members who are producers, performers and facilitators, the institutions and their leadership provide the funding to send them to these workshops. In this and many other ways the university leadership and management find avenues for supporting the growth and development of the arts both in their theoretical expression and impractical performance or demonstration.

Art and Design

Art and design are taught and learned at various institutions of higher learning in Kenya. Some of the programmes initially started off as teacher education

programme, notably at Kenyatta University, before, diversifying into professional training with time. There are, however, institutions that have worked towards the preparation of arts practitioners. These include the University of Nairobi, through the department and later school of Design, and the Kenya Polytechnic, the precursor of the Technical University of Kenya. These two institutions have continued to churn out professional artists and designers in the industry. In other institutions, such as Kenyatta University, the focus has been more on producing art and design teachers given the high number of Bachelor of Education students in the department of Fine Arts. This scenario has propelled the growth of both the industry and the education sector. This has also seen students who wanted to be practitioners gaining access to institutions that permitted them to specialise, thereby catering for the growth of the student artists as well as the art students.

At Kenyatta University, the Bachelor of Arts (Fine Art) programme focuses on studies in what is commonly referred to as Art and Design. The four-year programme, following a 3:2:1:1 structure, requires learners, as is common with BA programmes, to study Art and Design alongside two other disciplines in the first year. In the second year, they add another discipline to this, so that the last two years are focused totally on Art and Design. The specific areas of study in the introductory year include an introduction to drawing as well as two- and three-dimensional design. These bloom into Art and Design Appreciation, Drawing, Painting, Graphic Design, Printmaking, Fabric Design, Sculpture, Ceramics and Multimedia Crafts from the second year. These courses are grouped into four to give learners two groups of electives, distinguished as Two-Dimensional areas of study for Group I and Three-Dimensional for Group II. This arrangement, from so early in the student's career, recognises the artists' strengths and other inclinations, thus affording learners the opportunity to focus on their areas of strength or interest.

The Bachelor of Education programme provides a specialisation in art as a teaching subject. Following the 3:2:2:2 structure it caters for education courses in all the four years of learning. This is merged with one other subject/discipline in the first year, after which learners focus on education and Art and Design for the rest of the programme. Within this large cluster of art is found the various forms of visual arts, as are in the Bachelor of Arts programme, here also divided into the two groups of electives. Learners are exposed to all areas of the discipline during their first year, but focus on one of two groups during the remaining three years of the programme. This course is to train arts educators for the secondary level of education.

The programmes in both courses include traditional techniques of clay extraction, basic jewellery, familiarisation with materials and tools, design fundamentals, and under multimedia crafts, leatherwork, mosaic and collage. Graphic design progresses to advertising design, book layout and design as well as illustration. The courses take learners from conceptualisation, through design

and into the production/generation of the resultant work of art, with studies highlighting both materials and technique. Learners are exposed to knowledge and skills in the various media of art and design, with the art students and teachers receiving similar treatment. At the end of the course, graduates can go into design, illustration, production, etc., and to fit comfortably in to small or big enterprises where they perform as creative and cultural industrialists.

Part of the training involves long stretches of times spent in studio which result in the finished works displayed in art exhibitions. Learners start early in their training to be able to participate professionally, learning to participate in the various activities that characterise the profession. This includes analysis of materials of the trade, interrogation of techniques, development of design acumen, development of design and fabrication skills, as well as interpretation of developed works, following the various trends that characterise various art forms. Through analysis, one gets to develop an understanding of the art forms, how they come together and how various artists use/employ resources. This provides a framework in which learners can develop their own styles and activities, leading to creative designs and application of resources.

The institution relies on educators who are both practitioners and instructors in the discipline. They are called upon, both within and without the institution, to provide designs and materials that require the use of their skills, knowledge and experience. This provides appropriate examples for learners, who also take part in related activities at their own levels. For example, the statue of Dedan Kimathi located outside the Hilton Hotel on Kimathi Street within the Central Business District of Nairobi City, was produced by a team from the university.

As the initial teacher education institution in the visual arts, Kenyatta University's Fine Art/Art and Design programme graduates teach all over the country, with some mixing professional practice with teaching. In this way, the institution exerts a lot of influence on what the country perceives as Art and Design, as well as arts education, simply from the number of graduates who have gone out having been inducted into a philosophy espoused by their alma mater.

Music and Dance

Music and dance are usually practised as one artistic expression in Kenya. In a country whose word for 'music' frequently translates to 'song', singing is the most common expression of music. This is often done to the accompaniment of melodic, harmonic and rhythmic instruments and body percussion.

Part of the indigenous knowledge and education was conveyed through songs in early childhood, testified to by the themes of children's songs (Akuno 2005). The place of song and dance in the socialisation of the young rests on the special place that music has in people's social activities and functions. With appropriate music for every occasion of life, and every significant cultural activity

carried on the wings of music, each individual to take part in music making. This meant a measure of music learning for all, to enable meaningful participation in cultural activities. Colonisation and missionary activities did not change the role of music, but the type of music 'allowed' and practised reflected the culture of the colonisers. This led to a significant amount of negligence in the practice of indigenous music, and its value as instructional material and learning resource.

The growth of formal education, with a heavily Western content, meant that the study of music, as led by missionary or expatriate teachers, was bound to follow a Western cultural orientation in both content and mode of delivery. The learning of music took on elements of music literacy and choral performance, with the piano or organ being taught in the hope of producing church-based musicians and music educators.

Although the Kenyan culture draws no demarcation between song and dance, it is not so in the teaching of music which has somehow laid emphasis on the sound as opposed to the movement element of the expressive art. The music curriculum is heavily Western in content. Denyer (1979) has observed this trend at Kenyatta University College where teachers are trained. The practice has gone on to influence many generations and define the nature of knowledge imparted in music and dance, and how these are taught in the higher institutions. In recent times, however, efforts are targeted at making the content reflective of the locale of teaching and learning. Research projects by students in music classes have led to an appreciation of the aesthetics of Kenyan music. This research has included investigating the musical sounds, instruments of music, performance occasions, teams, and in some instances, the significance of music in the studied society.

One of the authors of this book remembers visiting a village close to the Kenya–Tanzania border with his students, a whole class. They spent a week there interacting with musicians and music administrators. The opportunity to observe musicians performing, to learn from them their musical practices, how they came up created the music and the instruments, what they called the specific activities, steps, and instruments, taught them a lot on how music worked in the indigenous economy. They observed first-hand the significant place that music held in social life, its place in cementing relationships, and could therefore later relate to some of the processes that were observed in these performances as significant to social cohesion and negotiation of relationships.

While the content of music education was predominantly Western in cultural orientation and theoretical in delivery for a long time, the experiences described above opened learners' eyes to the similarities and differences in the practice of indigenous music and its application to learning. And as educators were still grappling with this reality, the African Renaissance movement began to take root, and the desire for the understanding and practice of indigenous music led to various ways of engaging with the indigenous art form.

Over the years indigenous music has been complemented by contemporary music, resulting in substantial technological changes in the way music is produced, distributed and consumed. In particular, the developments of new formats such as the long-playing record, the audio-cassette, the compact disc, and so on, have led to significant structural changes throughout the music industry's value chain. But the effects of these developments have been relatively minor in comparison to the potentially far-reaching impacts on the music industry by the revolution in communications technologies which began a decade or so ago and which is still unfolding. The digital revolution in music – the capacity to store musical sounds as computer files, to copy and reproduce them on personal computers, and to transmit them over the internet – is having profound effects on all participants in the music business, from the songwriter and recording artist through to the ultimate consumer (Throsby 2002). The growth and development of the music industry in Kenya has been closely associated with both the recording and broadcasting industries. The recording industry has evolved from the big multinational companies that controlled most recording franchises in the country since the inception of the industry in the 1940s to new technology that enabled musicians to establish small home-based studios. This has enabled most musicians to record their music cheaply and thus venture into the enterprising creative industries.

Ondieki (2010) identified Jambo Records, which was established around 1930 but was first documented in 1946 as the first recording studio in Kenya. Similarly, the dissemination of Makwaya style began in 1954/55, when the African Inland Church (AIC) mission at Kijabe established a recording studio (Kidula 2000). Kenya has since been the centre of the music and media industry in East Africa, attracting international music industry players in a number of projects to Nairobi: such as the East African Records Limited (EAR) with its record pressing plant; the Columbia Broadcasting System (CBS) with its modern recording studio; the South African Gallo Records; as well as the Electric Musical Industries' (EMI). Since the mid-1980s, cassettes have gradually replaced vinyl discs to become the main medium of recorded music. The development of computer based recording technologies in Kenya in the 1990s saw the mushrooming of recording studios owned by the musicians themselves and not the record companies. This has been evolving and, at the moment, musicians can easily record their music without being controlled by the record company markets. This has led to the present revolution in the music industry in Kenya. It is important to note that despite these facilities being available, they are not affordable to all musicians, especially those from the lower and lower-middle classes.

The 1990s marked a new era of democratisation that resulted in a new generation of urban Kenyan musicians, particularly Hardstone and Kalamashaka who nurtured and pioneered the emergence of Kenyan hip-hop. This culture

officially set off with the recording of *Uhiki* by Hardstone, a song sung in a mixture of Kikuyu, English and Kiswahili, and other local languages, opening up a new music space in Kenya (Mugambi 2001; Samper 2004; Nyairo and Ogude 2005; Wetaba 2009). The enthusiasm that resulted allowed room for the otherwise marginalised youth to emerge into the public entertainment sphere. According to Samper (2004:37), 'Kenyan rap is a hybrid cultural form that is deeply implicated in the definition and negotiation of youth identity'. He observes that Kenyans have taken a Western art form and made it their own by using Sheng,¹⁶ drums and African-inspired beats, and addressing local realities as their theme. Samper (2004), Mungai (2004; 2007), Ogechi (2005), Nyairo and Ogude (2005) and Wetaba (2009) have been instrumental in giving insights into the popular music culture. Nyairo and Ogude (2005), for example, offer an interesting analysis of the song 'Unbwogable' by Gidi Gidi and Maji Maji, and the employment of its text for a political cause. Samper (2004) gives a captivating analysis of the use of Sheng by Kenyan youth rappers. He notes that the hip-hop culture in Kenya is fairly strong and growing, particularly with regard to the youth's use of street language (Wetaba 2009). Through the music industry in Kenya, many artists are able to earn a livelihood. They not only get to be famous, but also make money from it.

This book is will not the first to draw from a compelling historical example of how, under the right conditions, a few entrepreneurs can jump-start a music industry to the great benefit of an underdeveloped economy, such as happened in the US city of Nashville (Throsby 2002; Schultz and Gelder 2008a; 2008b; Penna and Finger 2004). The usefulness of an example drawn from one of the world's wealthiest countries may not be immediately obvious, but Nashville's history provides surprisingly relevant lessons. Like much of sub-Saharan Africa today, early twentieth-century policymakers pinned Nashville's economic hopes on industrial development founded on access to raw materials and large, government-funded public works projects. These hopes were never fully realised, but Nashville found success anyway – from its creative industries. Today, Nashville enjoys enviable economic success as the 'Music City, USA'. It is home to a multi-billion-dollar country music industry and a thriving, diversified economy. Music creates billions of dollars of wealth for Nashville's economy, employing tens of thousands of people in the music business and even more in related businesses (Schultz and Gelder 2008a).

According to Schultz and Gelder (2008a), a recent study estimates that music contributes over US\$ 6 billion a year to Nashville's economy. About 20,000 jobs in the Nashville area are directly related to music production, accounting for over US\$ 700 million in annual wages. Nashville is home to '80 record labels, 130 music publishers, more than 180 recording studios, 40 national producers of ad jingles, 27 entertainment publications and some 5000 working union musicians'.

The study estimates that 35,000 additional local spill-over jobs exist because of the music industry in fields such as music-related tourism.

Some lessons from the Nashville experience yield several specific suggestions of how to emulate the growth model for Kenya. A few essential reforms could provide a more stable and reliable environment for creativity in Kenya. These include a political commitment to prioritise creative clusters, combating piracy and provision for remedies, training of judges and copyright lawyers, a hands-off approach in the private organisations supporting the creative industries such as the collective agencies and associations, but most importantly restructuring the education curriculum towards professional training and development. According to Schultz and Gelder (2008a), a virtue of this bottom-up approach is that resource-constrained policymakers need not embrace broad, expensive solutions. The focus on grass-roots solutions is in keeping with much recent thinking on development, which calls for more context-specific, results-oriented, entrepreneurial projects that empower locals, and, in this case, the Kenyan youth. This is only feasible with proper training and higher education that is industry-responsive.

Since Nashville is a relatively small city with a population of 1.2 million people, the music industry's benefits to the local economy are particularly substantial. The Nashville model offers many useful insights and makes the case that creative industries are a significant, but thus far largely unfulfilled, opportunity for less developed regions and countries. In Kenya, where abundant creative talent exists, but local circumstances are otherwise trying, the creative industries, and in particular music, may be one of the best stakes for economic development. The music industry, in particular tends to rely less on sophisticated infrastructure or capital-intensive investment. This book can not at give all the answers to the challenges of the music industry in Kenya, but it can provide a detailed examination of obstacles faced by the Kenyan creative and cultural industries, yielding several specific suggestions on how Kenya might emulate the grass-roots growth model that made Nashville what it is today. A few essential reforms could provide Kenyan musicians with a more stable and reliable environment to harness their creativity.

Music has emerged as a significant economic industry with foundations that provide avenues for individuals to move into the cash economy (Throsby 2002). In the country today, small-scale recording studios and companies have sprung up, serving the fast expanding local broadcasting networks and retail outlets. Some of the musicians involved either begin with live performances for payment and if successful and motivated they move into broadcasting or recording for local market, and others that start with recording and then go into live performances. Since the copyright enforcement regime is not effective, the costs to the users are small; so the returns to the composers and performers are similarly constrained.

This scenario compounds the over-saturation of the local market with poorly produced products since a majority of these are produced by individuals who lack training in the industry.

The reality at the moment is that most popular musicians in the country struggle through harsh economic hardships to reach the limelight, despite obvious musical endowment. Some musicians are lucky to be associated with local record labels, but majority not only have to worry about copyrighting their works, but must also work out the means of production, promotion and marketing by themselves to penetrate the market. Those who can manage through these hurdles, combining artistry with entrepreneurship, are usually not able to sustain their careers for long (Emielu 2008). In the live performance scene, the high cost of musical instruments still remains a major challenge to the industry. Consequently, there is a need for professionalism and institutionalisation of the music industry, as the much-needed engine that will power development through music in Kenya.

Since the music industry is a multi-sector enterprise, there is an overriding need for training and specialisation along well-defined lines of creativity. The starting point for this will be professional and systematic training in HE institutions. The current situation where anybody can walk into a recording studio and become a 'star' does not represent a sustainable form of empowerment. If the industry is institutionalised, then musicians can be trained to specialise in specific areas like song writing, arrangement and production, music marketing and promotion, management of artists, studio engineering, band management, film music/jingles, performance, music journalism, festival and event management, dance and choreography among other branches of specialisation. In this case, involvement in the music industry will not necessarily be in the area of performance or making records, to which it is currently confined today. The emphasis will be on training and acquisition of relevant skills for empowerment along specific lines of interest and capabilities. These trained personnel will constitute a solid human resource base which will be self-sustaining through a network of 'masters' or specialists who are already empowered, and 'masters or specialists in training' who are going through the process of empowerment. Coupled with the above is the need to evolve professional bodies that will standardise and regulate practice while serving as agents for re-tooling and upgrading of skills in the industry.

Regarding music education, there is a need to seriously revise and 'decolonise' the music curriculum at all levels of education while ensuring that the content of education reflects the immediate needs of the society. The need for a socio-cultural and industry-relevant music education is of utmost importance, and make music studies an integral part of the school and HE curriculum. The first higher education institution in independent Kenya to provide instruction in music was Kenyatta University, with a department of music established in 1965. Since the

primary focus of the institution then was to train teachers, the content of the music programme was geared towards sufficient command of concepts and skills to facilitate knowledge transfer. Today, music is taught in four public universities, and two church-based private universities in Kenya, leading to qualifications in teacher education and music practice.

Kenyatta University was initiated as a teacher training institution in 1965 on a former colonial army barracks, whereupon landing at the end of incarceration during the Mau Mau political emergency, the first president of Kenya, the late Mzee Jomo Kenyatta, stated that he wished the place became a place where people worked not with the gun, but with the pen (KU 2010). As a teacher training college, the mandate of Kenyatta College was to provide the much needed workpower for the secondary schools, becoming the first tertiary institution to train people in the arts. Music was particularly favoured by the presence of George Ssenoga-Zake and George Kakoma, the two Uganda nationals who, along with Washington Omondi, Peter Kibukosya and Gershom Manane were the five who created the Kenya National Anthem. Through the transfer of the Faculty of Education from the University of Nairobi in 1978, the institution became the Kenyatta University College (KUC), a constituent college of the University of Nairobi, offering degree and diploma qualifications in education as well as the sciences and humanities. The department of fine art was among the departments that were transferred in 1978 from Nairobi University to KUC. In 1985, KUC became Kenyatta University, a fully-fledged university, having been granted a charter.

Kenyatta University thus became the first university offering music education in this country. The music training was offered under the Bachelor of Education degree where one could either specialise in music and another teaching subject or take double major in music and be classified as a specialised teacher. Today, Kenyatta University's Department of Music and Dance offers not only the Bachelor of Education degree (music and another teaching subject option) but also Bachelor of Music, Bachelor of Arts, and Bachelor of Music Technology. This development of professional music courses, though neither adequate nor timely, is noted as representing significant growth towards responding to the industry and market demands. These changes have only happened in the twenty-first century, notwithstanding the fact that Nairobi was the East and Central African hub for the recording industry and the music industry in general. People travelled from as far as the Congo Zaire, Tanganyika, Zambia, Uganda, Malawi and other countries to record in Nairobi. It is inconceivable that no university thought of offering music related courses, such as music business, music production, music technology, artist and repertoire training, and other related courses. Instead, when the second university offering studies in music, Maseno University, established a music department, the direction they took was towards the same field of music education that Kenyatta University was already specialising in.

These steps towards the development of the creative disciplines at the university level can be seen to have a direct impact on, or to be directly impacted by, activities in the industry. It does appear that there is a close link between what and how universities teach, and who does what in the industry. It is critical to follow this link if higher education is going to contribute to the growth and health of the creative and cultural industries in Kenya.

Notes

1. This was the same throughout East Africa.
2. We gathered this from an informal conversation with Henry Indangasi, in April 1999.
3. A television programme on the Kenya Broadcasting Corporation that has been on for more than thirty years.
4. *Redikyulass* was aired on Nation TV between 1998 and 2001 when the three university students who performed on it broke away from the station to form a private company. It is still aired periodically today. *Trukalass* was an attempt to replace *Redikyulass* and is still on Citizen TV.
5. Ethnic accents spice up comedy in Kenya, <http://www.artmatters.info>, accessed 18 July 2006.
6. Interview carried out at the Kenya National Theatre, 3 December 2012.
7. Kenyatta University Theatre Arts And Film Technology Department, <http://www.ku.ac.ke>, accessed 17 June 2013.
8. Alan Root, <http://www.wildfilmhistory.org>, accessed 17 May 2013.
9. Cinema of Kenya, <http://en.wikipedia.org>, accessed 21 June 2013.
10. *ibid.*
11. Jim Stenman, 'Gangster movie Kenya's first Oscar contender', <http://wildfilmhistory.org>, accessed 8 February 2013.
12. Craig Rix, 'Film special: back to the future', <http://kenyayetu.net>, accessed 27 March 2013.
13. These are productions that are sponsored directly by the media houses and include their equipment and personnel as crew members with selected actors and actresses.
14. In the new Kenyatta government it has been placed under the Ministry of Sports, Culture and Arts.
15. Craig Rix, *op. cit.*
16. Sheng is a fast growing language among the youth in Kenya where they formulate new words, de-contextualise the meanings of existing words, or simply cut and mix sections of words from English, Kiswahili or indigenous languages, thus developing a new language.