

Creative Women in Lagos: A Network and Documentary Film

Dr Lauren England, Dr Eka Ikpe and Professor Roberta Comunian in partnership with Ituen Basi, Terra Kulture, Tribe XX Lab and Wy Art Foundation.

Videography by Cristina Cabral and Babatunde Kolawole.

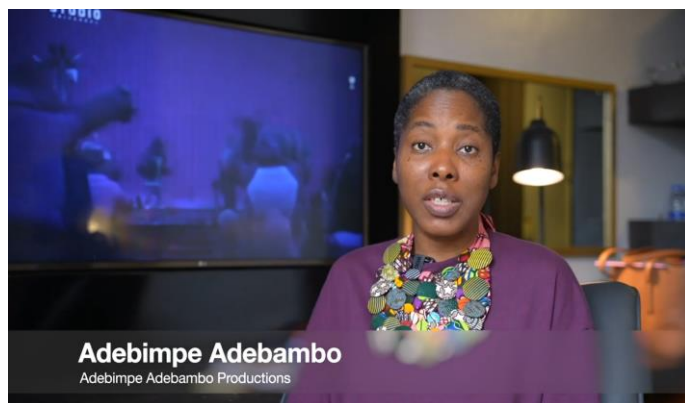


PROJECT SUMMARY

The *Creative Women in Lagos: A Network and Documentary Film* project brought together Dr [Lauren England](#) (Culture, Media and Creative Industries), Dr [Eka Ikpe](#) (African Leadership Center) and [Professor Roberta Comunian](#) (Culture, Media and Creative Industries) with filmmakers [Cristina Cabral](#) and Babatunde Kolawole ‘[Director Kay](#)’, and a range of cultural, entrepreneurial and community organisations in Lagos (Nigeria) including [Ituen Basi](#), [Terra Kulture](#), [Wy Art Foundation](#) and [Tribe XX Lab](#). They collaborated on a project focused on both facilitating knowledge exchange among female creative entrepreneurs in Lagos and raising greater awareness of their accomplishments and experiences through a documentary film.

A key aim of the project was establishing a network of women creative entrepreneurs well-placed to serve as a platform for sharing advice and fostering collaboration. Alongside this, Lauren, Eka and Roberta produced a documentary film, filmed and edited by Cristina Cabral with support from Babatunde Kolawole. The film was composed of interviews with influential Lagos-based creative entrepreneurs, Bolanle Austen-Peters (Terra Kulture), Ituen Bassey (Ituen Basi), Prof. Peju Layiwola (Wy Art Foundation), Emalohi Iruobe (Tribe XX Lab) and Chief Dr Nike Davies-Okundaye (Nike Art Centre) alongside voices from the network. The film contributes to understandings of the unique experiences, successes and challenges these women encounter in their professional endeavours.

From the project, a peer-led and maintained network has been set up in Lagos, providing ongoing support for female creative entrepreneurs in the city. The documentary film, completed in March 2024, has thus far been screened in London, Lagos and Nairobi. Efforts to further promote the film, as well as leverage it as a tool to shape future policymaking in Nigeria, are ongoing.



A still from the film uploaded to the [ce_africa](#) Instagram account featuring network member Adebimpe Adebambo

HOW DID THE PROJECT COME ABOUT?

Lauren and Eka and Roberta, three academics with research expertise in creative economy development in African contexts, had already collaborated on *Africa Fashion Futures*, a project focused on fashion designers in Lagos and Nairobi. This experience fuelled their interest in creative entrepreneurship and the specific challenges faced by women in the dynamic city of Lagos. This city, one of Africa's largest metropolises, presents a unique landscape with diverse local circumstances that significantly impact women entrepreneurs.

Motivated by their previous research, Lauren, Eka and Roberta sought to facilitate knowledge sharing among female creative professionals in Lagos. To achieve this, they consulted with their previous research collaborators and contacts in Lagos to establish a network through a dedicated workshop, able to help participants connect, share expertise, and collaborate.

In tandem with the network initiative, Lauren, Eka and Roberta embarked on the creation of a documentary film, working with filmmaker Cristina Cabral. It is also hoped that by showcasing these narratives through multiple screenings, including those targeted at policymakers, the project would be able to inspire positive policy changes and thereby improve the landscape for women engaged in creative work in Lagos.



The first network meeting at Terra Kulture
(Photography by Cristina Cabral)

WHAT HAPPENED?

In November 2023, Lauren, Eka, Roberta and Cristina travelled to Nigeria and hosted a one-day workshop at Terra Kulture in Lagos. This workshop brought together 17 female creative entrepreneurs to discuss their experiences working in creative industries. From this event, a WhatsApp group was created and has since been used actively by the network to share entrepreneurial opportunities (funding, events etc.) and offer peer-support.

Following the workshop, they filmed a selection of short interviews with participants, capturing key points from the discussion and their views on taking part in the event. They recorded further footage for the documentary film, visiting cultural organisations and businesses including Terra Kulture, the Nike Art Centre and the Ituen Basi retail space, workshop and factory site. Additional interview footage for the documentary was captured by Babatunde Kolawole in December-January 2024.

In early 2024, the film entered post-production. Cristina led the editing process, playing a crucial role in shaping the final product. Others collaborating on the post-production process included George Jennings (trailer), Christos Moralis (audio), Adetoro “Dracomantire” Adewale (soundtrack) and students from Mountain Top University, Nigeria, led by Dr. Florence Nweke (soundtrack).

Following completion, the film was released at a launch event on International Women’s Day 2024 held at King’s College London, featuring a panel discussion with network member Bolanle Okusanya-Feyita and partner Emalohi Iruobe (Tribe XX Lab). In April 2024, it was shown at a public screening at the MAD House at the University of Lagos, featuring a panel discussion with network members Folakemi Fatogbe and Jadesola Adigun, and Dr Florence Nweke (University of Lagos). The film was later disseminated at the Regional Studies Association international conference in Florence, Italy, and screened at ‘The African Leadership Centre’ in Nairobi, Kenya.

In addition to the documentary film, a series of four short videos were produced by George Jennings (CMCI postgraduate student). These recordings incorporated additional contributions from network members and addressed key issues raised at the original workshop: education, finance, business support, and networks. A multi-pronged dissemination strategy, encompassing social media platforms (Instagram, Twitter, LinkedIn), newsletters (King’s School of Global Affairs and Core Creative Economies), and targeted outreach to policymakers, has helped to ensure the documentary film and video shorts continue to gain traction.



Audience members during the film screening at
MAD House by Tikera at the University of Lagos
(Photography by MAD House)

WHAT WAS THE PROJECT'S IMPACT?

Following on from the original meeting in November, the *Women Creative Entrepreneurs* network was established. As Lauren, Eka and Roberta had planned, this network is being sustained independently by the network members and has been used as a forum to share funding opportunities, develop collaborations, seek advice and guidance and problem-solve. The network is interdisciplinary and multi-generational, enabling new connections to be made and facilitating knowledge sharing between those from different generations. As Dolapo Fatoki, a participant, reflected: 'it was an opportunity to meet 17 or 18 women who are doing wonderful things from around Nigeria...we just learn from each other... meeting women from such walks of life is quite inspiring'.

Viewers have responded very positively to the nuanced portrayal of women creative entrepreneurs in Lagos found in the film. Following the launch event at King's College London, all respondents to a post-screening questionnaire indicated an improved understanding of the challenges faced by these entrepreneurs and potential avenues for their support. Qualitative feedback similarly emphasises the film's impact. One attendee, reflecting on their experience as a viewer, noted that the film 'was really well made and told the story of women entrepreneurs in a clear and engaging way'. Another complimented the project's 'integrity', noting that they felt the film 'empowered the women it was about, [and was] sensitive to the issues at hand'.

Beyond celebrating the achievements of Lagos' female creative entrepreneurs, Lauren, Eka and Roberta sought to leverage the film as a tool for policy advocacy, hoping that the film might help secure positive changes that would directly benefit these women. The film was shared with Nigeria's Federal Ministry of Arts, Culture and the Creative Economy. Baba Agba, Special Adviser to the Minister, expressed gratitude for receiving the film and interest in further discussions regarding the issues raised. Additionally, a local government official attended the Lagos screening. Efforts to disseminate the film, and thereby draw wider attention to the particular experiences and challenges faced by women creative entrepreneurs in Lagos, continue apace.

LAUREN, EKA & ROBERTA'S TOP 3 TIPS FOR IMPACT

1. Working with local and industry partners is key if you want to create projects that speak to the needs of a community and support co-creation.
2. Generating and demonstrating impact, particularly in a policy context, takes time. A consistent effort and carefully planned criteria for measuring 'success' are required in order to effectively assess such outcomes over the long term.
3. Be realistic about expectations and commit to what can be delivered. Being respectful, upfront and accountable is essential if you are to maintain a mutually beneficial, rewarding relationship with project partners.

FURTHER READING

Eka Ikpe, Lauren England, Roberta Comunian, 'Fashion designers as lead firms from below: Creative economy, state capitalism and internationalization in Lagos and Nairobi', *Competition & Change*, 0:0 (2024), 1-25.

Lauren England, Eka Ikpe, Roberta Comunian, Ananya Jahanara Kabir, 'Africa Fashion Futures: creative economies, global networks and local development', *Geography Compass*, 15:19 (2021), 1-13.

Lauren England, Emalohi Iruobe, Roberta Comunian, 'Coworking, gender and development: The case of Tribe XX Lab', in Brian J. Hracs, Roberta Comunian, Lauren England (eds.), *Developing Creative Economies in Africa: Spaces and Working Practices* (Routledge, 2021), 77-93.

Roberta Comunian, Brian J. Hracs and Lauren England (eds.) *Higher Education and Policy for Creative Economies in Africa* (Routledge, 2020)

Founder of MAD House and CMCI alumnus, Bayo Omoboriowo (right),
in discussion attendees at the film screening in Lagos
Photography by MAD House



This project was funded by an AHRC Impact Acceleration Account hosted by the Faculty of Arts & Humanities at King's College London, and supported by the Faculty's Impact & Knowledge Exchange team.

For further information:
Email: ah-impact@kcl.ac.uk
Or visit: www.kcl.ac.uk/artshums/research/impact