

The Tomorrow Party: Imagining a Sustainable Festival Ecosystem in Senegal

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PROJECT SUMMARY

The Tomorrow Party convened Senegal's festivals community for a one-day creative policy lab that blended creativity, ideation and collaboration with the aim of imagining what a sustainable ecosystem of festivals could look like in the future. Held on 12 April 2025 at Instituto Cervantes in Dakar, it brought together 60+ organisers, artists, policymakers, partners and journalists to articulate shared priorities, imagine near-future scenarios and agree practical steps toward a stronger, fairer festival ecosystem. Designed and led by Dr Estrella Sendra (King's College London) in collaboration with EUNIC Sénégal, the event sat within the [Labellisation des festivals programme](#) and used playful, non-hierarchical facilitation to surface needs and solutions.

The day unfolded in three acts: naming present aspirations, imagining futures, and plotting the routes to get there. Along the way it strengthened networks across the scene and recognised participants' contributions with certificates. The format prioritised co-creation and playful experimentation, and was documented and distilled into a collective manifesto so that insights could inform future support, policy dialogue and funding pathways, extending impact beyond the room.

HOW DID THE PROJECT COME ABOUT?

The Tomorrow Party emerged from Dr Estrella Sendra's earlier policy work and training with EUNIC Senegal. Through this project, she developed an institutional collaboration between King's College London and EUNIC Sénégal, to recommend a sector-shaping, future-focused event that would lead to a manifesto with policy recommendations, rather than a traditional report. Co-design with Dakar-based collaborators translated that idea into an accessible, three-act participatory format aimed at documenting shared priorities and building a collective mandate.

EUNIC aligned the Tomorrow Party with the finale of its four-month [Labellisation des festivals programme](#) (Jan–Apr 2025), delivered by EUNIC Sénégal, with Dr Estrella Sendra leading the capstone event. EUNIC contributed €2,000 and, together with existing trust and strong local production support, this enabled an efficient, well-resourced delivery. Estrella also facilitated the programme's Artistic Direction/Curation module. Hosting at Instituto Cervantes ensured a central, trusted venue and kept leadership shared and grounded.



Scan for video!

WHAT HAPPENED?

On Saturday 12 April 2025, the Tomorrow Party gathered more than sixty organisers, curators, artists, partners, policymakers and journalists at Instituto Cervantes in Dakar. The day was opened by cultural manager from Instituto Cervantes (EUNIC Sénégal) Javier Mantecón and was framed deliberately as a party rather than a formal training. It began with music, greetings and time to reconnect across projects before moving into a short welcome and outline of the day led by host Mamyto Nakamura. Documentation was coordinated throughout by Estrella Sendra and Laura Feal so conversations could be written up and shared.

Participants moved through a three-act structure. In Act I, they surfaced current aspirations and needs, drawing on past successes. Act II invited them to imagine and embody a desired festival future; responses ranged from beatboxing to poetry, keeping the tone playful and non-hierarchical while centring local creativity. Act III focused on translating ideas into action: groups mapped immediate steps, longer-term routes, and policy recommendations. The team's goal was to document rather than extract by co-writing a short manifesto to circulate back to participants, funders and policymakers, followed by participation certificates for attendees.

The day retained a convivial feel from start to finish—closing with a DJ set—and attendees later received the co-written manifesto and certificates, which they can use in advocacy and future funding bids. As one participant reflected, the format “allows us to see festivals differently, to break out of the conventional molds... and explore more innovative approaches,” underlining the value of the collective, celebratory approach. You can watch a video from the day [here](#) or by scanning the QR code above.



«**The Tomorrow Party allows us to see festivals differently, to break out of conventional molds and explore more innovative approaches.**»

Sokhna Fatou Kiné Sene
External Liaison
Festival Duo Solo Danse

WHAT WAS THE PROJECT'S IMPACT?

The Tomorrow Party generated concrete, portable outputs that travel beyond the room: a co-written manifesto that sets out priorities, expectations and named commitments, and participation certificates that attendees can use in advocacy and funding bids. By crediting contributors and consolidating the day's discussions, the manifesto gives organisers, partners and prospective funders a common reference point, making it easier to align support with clearly articulated sector needs.

It also shifted practice and policy conversations. The playful, non-hierarchical format created a rare forum where festival organisers and institutional partners could speak frankly, surface specific gaps (governance, financing, training and access) and convert them into time-bound next steps. Participants were also consequently able to network with stakeholders and policy-makers. For King's, this enabled direct engagement in francophone West African policy and funding discussions through an applied, co-produced method; for EUNIC Sénégal, it operationalised earlier recommendations and helped shape thinking about future support mechanisms.

Networks and visibility were strengthened. Bringing 60+ actors together—including journalists—expanded contacts across roles and seniority, fostered new collaborations, and captured who-does-what-by-when for follow-up. Press coverage extended the conversation to wider public and policymaking audiences, helping to legitimise organisers' priorities and sustain momentum after the event.

Finally, the approach leaves a usable template. The three-act, co-designed "Tomorrow Party" model—with built-in documentation and celebration—now exists as a replicable blueprint for future convenings in Senegal and beyond. It offers a practical route to translate training outcomes into policy-relevant insights, and a method King's and partners can adapt for other regions and cultural sectors.

ESTRELLA'S TOP TIPS FOR IMPACT

1. **Co-design on the ground with trusted local collaborators.** Meet in person, appoint in-country partners for hosting, documentation and reporting, and adapt the budget/format to local needs so the event “lands” culturally.
2. **Time your event to ‘piggy-back’ existing programmes and bring the whole ecosystem into the room.** Align with training milestones, and deliberately invite policymakers and journalists alongside practitioners to widen reach and accountability.
3. **Build in tangible take-aways and a follow-up pathway.** Issue participation certificates, co-write and circulate a manifesto to participants and decision-makers, and secure media coverage to keep momentum beyond the day.

FURTHER READING

- Sendra, Estrella; Feal, Laura; Nakamura, Mamito; Sy, Ken Aïcha; Sarr, Rokhaya Daba; Mayitoukou, Luc (2025). 'THE TOMORROW PARTY OF FESTIVALS IN SENEGAL: Manifesto for a sustainable festival ecosystem in Senegal' [Report]. King's College London, EUNIC Senegal, Dakar-London, 12 April 2025. Available from: <https://kclpure.kcl.ac.uk/portal/en/persons/estrella.sendra/publications/>
- England, Lauren and Sendra, Estrella (eds.) (2025) *African Urban Creativity: Exploring Creative Economies Within and Beyond Cities*. London: Routledge.
- Feal, Laura, and Sendra, Estrella (2025). 'Curating Africa in Contemporary Film Festivals in Senegal: An Analysis of the Constellation of Collaborations'. In: Petty, S. (ed.) *African Film Festivals and Transnational Flows of Living Cultural Heritage*. Framing Film Festivals. Cham: Palgrave Macmillan: 35-56. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-88590-7_3



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