

AFRICAN KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE (AKE): *A Creative Media Venture Program*



***A new integrated model for skills and enterprise
development for Africa***

WHAT IS AKE?

In today's world, the changes to which education and training need to respond include globalisation and the demands for new and emerging skills required by knowledge-based economies and new media production and services. These new skills incorporate the extensive use of digital technologies which are changing many existing sectors and enabling the emergence and proliferation of new industries and digitally-based services.

The Global –Schools and Communities Initiative (GESCI,) an international NGO founded by the United Nations in 2003, is pioneering an innovative training and enterprise program model combining culture and digital media technology dubbed 'African Knowledge Exchange (AKE) – 'A Creative Media Venture'. Participants develop industry- standard digital media production skills and acquire and apply their entrepreneurial skills to set up small enterprises in the cultural industries arena. The creation of small start-ups is an integral part of the program as well as a range of supports for their development and sustainability in the digital creative media sector.

AKE(African Knowledge Exchange) is a knowledge partnership, established by GESCI and the Ministry for Foreign affairs of Finland to identify new technology-driven training scenarios that enable new skills development which will facilitate employment and job creation in the emerging knowledge societies in Africa.

The program addresses the changing global jobs and employment contexts driven by new technologies in the contexts of growing youth unemployment which is particularly affecting youth.



AKE Participants in the GESCI Digital Media Studio and Lab

A NEW MODEL FOR SKILLS AND ENTERPRISE DEVELOPMENT IN THE CULTURAL ARENA...

AKE is a first in the trialling and development of a new integrated model for skills and enterprise development, which responds to job creation and employment needs.

GESCI has developed , trialled and implemented in Africa the AKE model which combines the best practices of skills training and those of corporate business 'Living labs' approach.

The model has been applied in the cultural arena, supporting the up-skilling of creative and artistic African youth through the deepening of their technical, leadership and entrepreneurship skills for employment and self-employment in the creative digital media industry.

...COMBINING BEST PRACTICES OF SKILL TRAINING AND CORPORATE BUSINESS LABS

The program is offered to talented Kenyan artists seeking to master the latest digital technologies to develop and market high quality cultural products and services. .

Artists are provided full access to a range of digital media equipment, software and tools in GESCI's digital media production studio, allowing them to improve their creative media skills in three core inter-related digital media – Animation, Games Design & Apps and Music & Sound Production - and to jointly develop multi-media projects/products to industry standards.

Participants work individually and in project-driven teams to develop multi-media products, guided and mentored by industry and media experts and business practitioners with the view of marketing the most successful products and services and creating start-ups.

They are encouraged to develop authentic culturally inspired prototypes and products drawing on African cultural expression.

AKE UNIQUE FEATURES

GESCI's AKE – Creative Media Venture program is unique in that it features:

- High level skilling and collaboration in three inter-related digital media (animation, games design and music & sound) leading to the development of industry-standard multi-media projects;
- A seamless transition from skills development to start-up creation with the support of industry, media experts and mentors;
- A Living Lab “action research” methodology, which includes monitoring, evaluation and learning applied in the area of creative media skills to start-up creation;
- A focus on African cultural expression in story, art, song and dance, which inspires participants to explore their own culture when developing the multi-media projects.

PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION

The AKE – Creative Media Venture program model is in development in Kenya since 2013 where in 2012/2013 and 2014/15 GESCI enrolled 16 and 20 students respectively for the program.

Moving forward, the 2016 AKE - 'A Creative Media Venture' course has 20 students enrolled with a focus on consolidating and deepening the digital skills development for the digital creative media (DCM) industries to industry standard, carry out market research and to produce marketable products which would prompt the formation of start-ups.

The program, which continues to be refined, will be ready for scaling up on the African continent starting 2017.

The model underpinning the AKE – Creative Media venture program will be adapted and applied to serve the needs of other industries starting 2017.

AKE participants teams developed two multimedia projects in 2013-2015 - '*Child Soldiers*' and '*The Sound of the City*' – featuring the integration of three core areas (sound music and games).



"...The course has been an eye-opening experience. The exposure to team work and collaboration was rewarding. Research and planning were key components and various aspects of the process were taught in a holistic way..."

ROBERT ODHIAMBO, PRACTITIONER



"...the exposure to team work by working closely with fellow students in animation and games design was rewarding..."

GRACE SHANI, STUDENT

AKE 2017-2020 PROGRAM

AKE-Creative Media Venture will be offered in 4 African countries in 2017-2020. Countries will cover the geographical and linguistic regions of Africa (Eastern Africa, Western Africa, Southern Africa and a small island and Anglophone, Francophone and Lusophone Africa.

The program will be a one-year program.

GESCI will run three editions of AKE-Creative Media Venture from 2017 to 2020.

In 2017, AKE's integrated model for skills and enterprise development will be adapted to another sector to be jointly agreed on with African Ministers of Youth, Sports and Culture.

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