



GESCI runs innovative skills-to-enterprise program targeting the creative media industry in Kenya

Nairobi, 15 April 2016. GESCI, an international NGO founded by the United Nations, is running an innovative program combining culture and digital technology dubbed 'African Knowledge Exchange (AKE): - A Creative Media Venture'.

The recently begun one-year program in Nairobi is offered to talented Kenyan artists seeking to master the latest digital technologies to develop and market high quality cultural products and services.

AKE III will combine the best practices of skills training and those of corporate business Living Labs to develop participants' digital, leadership and entrepreneurial skills for employment and self-employment in the creative media industry.

Twenty artists are enrolled in the program this year, coming from the mobile games and apps, animation and music production & sound industries.

Artists will have access to the full 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 inter-related digital media – animation, games design and music& sound - and to jointly develop multi-media projects to industry standards.

In a second phase of the program, participants will be guided and mentored by industry and media experts and business practitioners with the view of marketing their products and services and creating start-ups.

A cross-cutting course, 'Culturally Inspired Music and Sound', will ensure the cultural originality and authenticity of the prototypes and resulting products.

The AKE III program is unique in that it features:

1. 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 ;
2. A seamless transition from skills development to start-up creation with the support of industry, media experts and mentors;
3. A Living Lab "action research" methodology, which includes monitoring, evaluation and learning applied in the area of creative media skills to start-up creation;
4. A focus on Kenyan cultural expression in story, art, song and dance, which will inspire the participants to explore their own culture as they develop the multi-media projects.

The Living Lab model underlying the program has been developed in partnership with Aalto University Media Lab in Finland. It builds on research conducted on the needs of the digital creative media industries in Kenya and the response that alternative technology -infused upskilling projects such as AKE can provide.

GESCI's AKE initiative addresses the issue of youth unemployment through the development of informal skills - to- enterprise programs responding to industry needs. It is envisaged that the model developed by the AKE- Creative Media Venture will be applied to other sectors over the course of the next few years.

About GESCI: The Global e-Schools and Communities initiative (GESCI) is an international non-profit organisation based in Nairobi, Kenya. GESCI was founded in 2003, on the recommendation of the United Nations. GESCI's mission is to assist governments in their efforts to promote socio-economic development, through the successful and widespread integration of Information and Communications Technologies (ICTs) for the development of knowledge societies. For more information on GESCI visit www.gesci.org

For more information: Victor Omondi, AKE Manager, GESCI, victor.omondi@gesci.org tel.+254/203746032

Press contacts: Thanh-Hoa Desruelles, Senior Expert, Advocacy, Partner Relations and Communication, GESCI, thanh-hoa.desruelles@gesci.org tel. + 33 / (0) 6 72 65 44 25;

Shaylor Mwanje, Intern, Communications, GESCI, shaylor.mwanje@gesci.org tel. +254 /20 3746062