

Building the Creative Economy in Africa

Understanding Sustainability in the Creative Economy



Learning Unit 5

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Learning Unit 5: Understanding Sustainability in the Creative Economy

1. Introduction

Welcome to Unit 5!

In this unit, we will learn about sustainability. We will look at the **environmental, social, and cultural aspects of sustainability**, and you will learn **how to use sustainable practices** in creative industries and **understand their importance**.

In the last unit, we talked about how creativity and ethical business go together. We looked at ways to build fair and impactful businesses. In this unit, we will learn how to make sustainability part of your creative work. This will help your projects bring lasting benefits to your community, the environment, and culture.

Sustainability is more than just a popular idea; it is a way to solve today's problems. For creative businesses, it means using resources carefully, being fair, and protecting cultural traditions while staying modern. This unit will focus on **three key parts of sustainability: environmental, social, and cultural**.

2. Learning Objectives

By the end of this unit, you will be able to:

- Understand environmental, social, and cultural sustainability.
- Explain the importance of sustainability for businesses.
- Apply sustainable practices.
- Analyse how other businesses integrate sustainability.

Look out for **short activities** to complete throughout the unit. They will help you achieve the learning objectives mentioned above.

Transcripts for the videos can be found at the end of the unit.



3. Three Types of Sustainability

Sustainability in the creative economy goes far beyond environmental concerns - it's also about how we care for people and culture through our artistic choices.

In this section, we explore **three interconnected forms of sustainability**:

1.Environmental Sustainability	As artists, you can reduce your impact on the environment by using eco-friendly materials, cutting down on waste, and reusing resources. For example, instead of buying new supplies, you can upcycle old materials into unique art pieces, turning waste into something beautiful and meaningful.
2. Social Sustainability	Your art can also make a difference in people's lives. This means using fair and ethical practices, like working on projects that benefit your community. For instance, you could collaborate with local artisans to create a public art installation that reflects and supports the community's identity and needs.
3. Cultural Sustainability	Art can preserve and celebrate traditions. By integrating traditional techniques or stories into your modern work, you help keep cultural heritage alive. For example, you could use traditional weaving methods to create a contemporary art piece, blending old and new to inspire future generations.

3.1 Environmental Sustainability

In this section, you will learn about **what environmental sustainability is, why it is important** and some of the ways you can **make your creative business sustainable**.

What is Environmental Sustainability in the Creative Economy?

Environmental sustainability in the creative economy means reducing harm to the environment and using natural resources responsibly. It involves choosing eco-friendly materials, minimising waste, and adopting sustainable methods to create, share, and use creative products and services. The goal is to support ecological, social, and cultural well-being while continuing to innovate and express creatively.

Why is Environmental Sustainability Important in the Creative Economy?

- Creative industries often use materials, energy and create waste, which can harm the environment.
- Sustainable practices help ensure natural resources last longer and show social responsibility.
- Eco-friendly approaches can attract customers and partners who care about the environment.

What are the Methods for Environmental Sustainability?

There are many ways in which you can become environmentally sustainable in your creative business. We will explore some of them below.

1. Using eco-friendly materials

- One of the main aims of sustainable creative work is to reduce the carbon footprint. The carbon footprint is the total greenhouse gas emissions caused directly and indirectly by an activity or product. Creative industries can reduce their carbon footprint by rethinking energy use, materials, and transportation.
 - **Using organic materials:** A textile artist might choose organic cotton or bamboo instead of regular cotton, which uses more water and pesticides.
 - **Renewable energy at music festivals:** Many music festivals worldwide, including Africa's Lake of Stars Festival in Malawi, are adopting renewable energy sources to power stages, lighting, and sound systems. By using solar panels, wind turbines, and energy-efficient equipment, these festivals significantly reduce their carbon footprint.

Now look at the example of the **Choma Museum in Zambia**.



Activity 1: Sustainability Practices at Choma Museum

The Choma Museum was built to honour the traditions of the Tonga people, who live in Zambia, Zimbabwe and Botswana. This museum, based in Zambia, sells many products that are produced locally.

Now watch the following video:

[Video – Choma Museum Niche](#)

In this video, you saw some of the sustainability practices of the Choma Museum. The video highlights three aspects of material sustainability: the types of materials, how materials are collected and treated, and how materials are used.

- **Use of natural materials** like plant leaves and twigs. This reduces the distance that the raw materials have to travel.
- **Sustainable harvesting** involves taking only what is needed and allowing natural resources to recover from the harvest, ensuring long-term availability. Example: Wood and timber are harvested sustainably to avoid deforestation, ensuring the environment can regenerate.
- Materials are treated with **natural dyes** to avoid harmful chemicals that pollute water and soil. Non-toxic processing reduces environmental and health hazards, protecting ecosystems and artisans.



Reflection Question:

Why is it important to prioritise local and natural materials over synthetic ones in crafting?

Our Reveal:

- **Health Benefits:** Natural materials usually don't have harmful chemicals, which is better for the health of both artisans and consumers.
- **Supports Local Economy:** Buying local materials helps the regional economy by supporting local producers and artisans, creating jobs, and encouraging sustainable growth.
- **Reduces Carbon Emissions:** Getting materials locally means less need for long-distance transportation, which reduces pollution from shipping.
- **Preserves Cultural Heritage:** Using local materials supports traditional crafting techniques and keeps cultural heritage alive, ensuring skills and knowledge are passed down through generations.

How did your answers compare with those given above? Did you come up with other points that we had not spotted?



2. Minimising Waste

Reducing waste is a powerful way for creatives to contribute to environmental sustainability, especially in industries where materials are often discarded during production. By embracing zero-waste design, creating for longevity, and repurposing existing materials, artists and makers can transform excess into innovation while minimising their ecological footprint.

Reduce materials thrown away during production	Some companies use zero-waste design, making sure no materials such as scraps and offcuts go to waste, especially in fashion, product design, and architecture.
Design for longevity	Products are created to last longer, using durable materials and timeless designs.
Recover materials from old products	Repurposing materials is important for reducing the environmental impact of creative industries. Repurposing means using something in a new way. For instance, you can repurpose wastepaper, glass, metal or rubber into art. Repurposing can also lead to attractive products that can sell in the market.



Creative artists can create sculptures from recycled or biodegradable materials. For example, in the previous images, you can see how discarded coconut shells have been used to make artistic decorations. Handcrafted items like plates, placemats, and other domestic essentials are made from these types of sustainable materials.



Activity 2: From Trash to Treasure

Now you can watch this video about the company **Ocean Sole**. This organisation collects discarded flip-flops from beaches in Kenya and turns them into colourful animal sculptures. Their work not only creates art but also raises awareness about marine pollution and provides jobs for local communities.

[Video – Flip-Flop Art](#)

Let's also have a look at their website: [Ocean Sole](#)

Now that you've watched this and have seen the website, have a go at answering the following questions:

1. How does Ocean Sole help reduce marine pollution?
2. Why is repurposing old materials like flip-flops important for sustainability?
3. What other waste materials could be repurposed this way?
4. How does Ocean Sole create jobs for local communities?
5. Why is creativity important to Ocean Sole's success?

Our Reveal:

1. How does Ocean Sole help reduce marine pollution?

Ocean Sole collects old flip-flops from beaches and rivers and turns them into colourful art pieces. This helps clean the environment and raises awareness about plastic pollution.

2. Why is repurposing old materials like flip-flops important for sustainability?

Repurposing reduces waste, saves resources, and lowers environmental harm. Ocean Sole shows how waste can become valuable through creativity.

3. What other waste materials could be repurposed like this?

Other materials, such as plastic bottles, glass jars, metal, and fabric scraps, can also be transformed into useful or artistic products, helping to recycle and protect the environment.

4. How does Ocean Sole create jobs for local communities?

Ocean Sole employs local artisans to make sculptures from flip-flops, giving them stable incomes and supporting their families. They also teach communities about caring for the environment.

5. Why is creativity important to Ocean Sole's success?

Creativity turns waste into art, helping Ocean Sole solve environmental problems and create jobs. It shows how creative ideas can tackle big challenges.

How did your answers compare with those given above? Did you notice any other points that we hadn't spotted?

**Reflection Question:**

How can integrating sustainable items into daily life reduce environmental harm?

Our Reveal:

- Integrating sustainable items into daily life significantly reduces environmental harm by reducing waste and conserving resources.
- Handcrafted products such as plates and placemats made from sustainable materials can replace single-use plastics and non-biodegradable items. Single-use plastics are those designed to be used only once. Non-biodegradable materials do not break down easily and therefore act as a form of pollution. Reducing these in your arts can decrease plastic pollution and its harmful effects on ecosystems.

Now that you have explored how creative industries can be environmentally sustainable, let's take a look at Social Sustainability.



3.2 Social Sustainability

Social sustainability in the creative economy means that the creative industry not only contributes to economic development but also the well-being and equity in society.

What is Social Sustainability in the Creative Economy?

At its core, **social sustainability is about building fair and inclusive communities where everyone has access to basic needs and opportunities.** According to Sachs (1999), this includes equitable incomes, employment, goods, and services. Shirazi and Keivani (2017) add that fairness, democracy, and community engagement are essential, helping to create safe spaces, foster a sense of belonging, and enhance the quality of living environments. These **human-centered principles** focus on how creative practices can **strengthen communities, promote fairness, and drive innovation for social good.** In the creative industries, social sustainability means **balancing creativity and innovation with social responsibility.** Social responsibility means working with others in order to benefit the community. One can do this by improving the environment, addressing inequalities, building skills, or actively supporting local community development (Ratiu, 2013). Creative industries can empower communities, preserve cultural heritage, and provide a platform for inclusive and sustainable social transformation. This requires specific actions.

Equitable Opportunities	Helping all kinds of creatives get the money, tools, and spaces they need to share their work, no matter where they come from or who they are.
Fair Wages and Employment	Making sure creatives get fair pay and steady work to close income gaps.
Community Engagement	Working with communities to co-create cultural projects that meet their needs and build local pride.
Safe and Inclusive Spaces	Establishing secure and welcoming environments where everyone feels represented and valued.
Improving the Built Environment	Creating welcoming, creative spaces, like hubs, galleries, and theatres, that bring people together and strengthen community life

Why is Social Sustainability Important in the Creative Economy?

1. Encourages Social Cohesion

Creative industries play a vital role in bringing people together through shared cultural experiences. By involving communities in creative processes and celebrating cultural diversity, social sustainability helps strengthen social bonds. Art, music, theatre, and other creative platforms can act as tools for dialogue, fostering understanding and unity among groups, thus leading to social change. They can help communities to recognise their interconnectedness and shared humanity.



Case Study 1: The Lake of Stars Festival in Malawi

The Lake of Stars Festival in Malawi is a good example of how creative industries foster social cohesion through shared cultural experiences. This internationally renowned festival, held annually on the shores of Lake Malawi, brings together musicians, artists, and audiences from varied cultural, ethnic, and socioeconomic backgrounds to celebrate creativity and community. The festival features a wide array of performances, including traditional Malawian music, contemporary African pop, and international acts. By blending local and global influences, the festival celebrates Malawi's rich cultural heritage while promoting cross-cultural exchange. It also involves the community. For instance, local artisans, food vendors, and craftspeople participate in the festival, creating economic opportunities and fostering a sense of collective pride.

2. Drives Economic Equity

Social sustainability in creative industries drives economic equity by ensuring that the benefits of creative work are distributed fairly, providing opportunities to grassroots participants and marginalised communities. This helps bridge economic divides, empowering local creators and underserved groups to participate meaningfully in the creative economy. By promoting fair labour practices, equitable pay, and inclusive opportunities, creative industries can uplift individuals and communities and reduce inequality.



Case Study 2: The Choma Museum in Zambia

Ethics and Principles at the Choma Museum in Zambia and how they promote fair labour practices.

Watch the following video:

[Video – Ethics and Principles](#)

Our Reveal:

In the video, the Choma Museum staff emphasises the importance of listening to different voices. They discuss the value of the stories, knowledge, and experiences of marginalised groups and the importance of respecting them. They also emphasise the importance of fair trade, promoting ethical practices that ensure artisans are paid

fairly for their work, supporting local economies, and encouraging sustainability. Additionally, the museum focuses on creating safe spaces where individuals feel comfortable expressing themselves, sharing ideas, and participating in cultural activities without fear of judgment, discrimination, or harm.

3. Inspires Ethical Innovation

Social sustainability means using creativity to solve important social problems like poverty, inequality, or environmental issues. It encourages creators to make meaningful work that helps communities and promotes responsible practices. For example:

- An artist might create eco-friendly art to raise awareness about climate change.
- A designer could develop products to meet community needs, like affordable and sustainable housing.

These kinds of creative solutions not only address social challenges but also make creative industries more valuable and important for building a fair and sustainable future.



Case Study 3: Ocean Sole - How Creative Industries Can Solve Social and Environmental Problems.

Watch the following video:

[Ocean Sole in Kenya](#)

By collecting waste like flip-flops from beaches and waterways, Ocean Sole reduces plastic pollution and raises awareness about its harm. It also:

- **Creates Impactful Art:** The artisans turn flip-flops into colourful sculptures, which are sold locally and internationally to promote sustainability.
- **Gives Back:** The organisation reinvests its profits into community programs, environmental education, and waste collection projects.

Ocean Sole is a great example of how creativity can drive positive change while supporting communities and protecting the environment. Next, we will explore **Cultural Sustainability**.



3.3 Cultural Sustainability

Cultural sustainability means ensuring that the culture is respected and passed on to the next generation, while also being adapted to current-day needs.

What is Cultural Sustainability in Creative Economies?

Cultural sustainability refers to the use of traditional knowledge, techniques, and practices in current contexts, particularly within creative industries. This could be done in many ways, such as through the use of traditional arts, materials, techniques, motifs and patterns, or stories. This does not mean that the arts or the methods are simply transmitted without any change; they are often made meaningful for today through the use of new methods, instruments or even by diversifying who performs the arts.

Why is Cultural Sustainability Important for Creative Economies?

Cultural sustainability is important for creative industries because it

- **Helps preserve and share cultural identities and values.** By blending traditional knowledge, techniques, and practices into modern creative work, it keeps cultural heritage alive and meaningful in a rapidly changing world. This is especially important for industries like fashion, design, and media, which often draw inspiration from different cultural traditions. When done responsibly, it promotes diversity and inclusion while avoiding cultural appropriation. Cultural appropriation means using the cultural or social practices of another group to which you do not belong without proper respect or acknowledgement.
- **Boosts economic and social growth** by creating opportunities for local artisans, designers, and storytellers to reach global audiences while respecting their cultural expressions.
- **Goes beyond creativity**, addressing social values by giving respect and representation to marginalised communities. Honouring and uplifting diverse cultures helps correct historical inequalities and fosters a more inclusive creative space.
- **Helps to preserve cultural diversity and resilience**, pushing back against cultural homogenisation.
- **Supports environmental goals** by using traditional methods that often rely on natural, sustainable materials and community-focused production. This approach not only protects cultural ecosystems but also contributes to environmental sustainability.
- **Supports environmental goals** by using traditional methods that often rely on natural, sustainable materials and community-focused production. This approach not only protects cultural ecosystems but also contributes to environmental sustainability.

Practising **cultural sustainability** is both a **moral and practical way** to build a more **diverse, inclusive, and sustainable creative future**.



Activity 3: Keeping Cultural Heritage Alive

Now let us watch two weavers from the **Maamba Weaving Club at the Choma Museum**. Their story shows how traditional weaving skills are passed down through generations, from their grandmothers to them. This keeps their cultural heritage alive and adapts it to modern times.

[Keeping Cultural Heritage Alive](#)

Follow the captions on screen, as there is no transcript for this video.

Our Reveal:

This video highlights the importance of **sharing knowledge between generations**, because it is the key to preserving cultural traditions. It also shows how weaving is more than just a craft—it is **a way to tell stories and express identity**, reflecting the **values, history, and culture** of their community. This connects to the larger goals of keeping cultural traditions vibrant, supporting local economies, and promoting sustainable practices in creative industries.



6. Bringing the Three Types of Sustainability Together

Although each section has focused on one type of sustainability, it is likely that a business that aims to be sustainable tries to be environmentally, socially and culturally sustainable. Sustainability is often at the heart of their creative business. Below, we will look at one such example.



Case Study: AAKS Handcrafted Bags – Ghana.

Many of our earlier examples also had multiple forms of sustainability but in this section, we want to introduce you to another business, **Akosua Afriyie-Kumi's Studio (AAKS) Handcrafted Bags** from Ghana. You can also visit the AAKS website [here](#).

AAKS (Akosua Afriyie-Kumi's Studio) is a Ghanaian fashion brand. They specialise in producing handcrafted raffia bags. The bags are made using a very old weaving technique from northern Ghana, but this is combined with contemporary designs tailored for global markets. Let's take a look at how they embrace the three types of sustainability:

1. Environmental Sustainability

- The production process emphasises eco-friendly practices, avoiding harmful chemicals and waste. This aligns with both cultural and environmental sustainability goals.
- The bags are made using raffia fibres derived from palm trees, which are locally sourced and dyed using traditional methods, often incorporating natural pigments to achieve vibrant colours.

2. Social Sustainability

- AAKS helps preserve the traditional weaving techniques of northern Ghana, creating job opportunities for local artisans, particularly women. This empowers them economically and socially, while preserving the community's cultural heritage.
- By paying artisans fairly for their work and offering them a platform to showcase their skills, AAKS promotes ethical business practices and fair trade. This supports the well-being of individuals and communities involved in the production process.
- The brand's focus on empowering women in rural areas of Ghana through skills development and employment is a critical aspect of social sustainability, encouraging gender equality and increasing women's economic independence.

3. Cultural Sustainability

- AAKS employs local weavers from communities in northern Ghana who use indigenous basket-weaving skills passed down through generations. The process involves intricate hand-weaving, a technique rooted in the region's cultural heritage. While preserving the traditional weaving process, AAKS integrates modern aesthetics, ensuring the bags appeal to today's global audience.

So what is the impact of combining such sustainable practices?

1. Community Empowerment:

AAKS creates employment opportunities for local artisans, particularly women, offering fair wages and promoting financial independence within their communities.

2. Cultural Preservation:

By showcasing traditional Ghanaian weaving techniques to a global audience, AAKS ensures these practices remain relevant and valued, fostering cultural pride and continuity.

3. Global Recognition:

The brand has successfully positioned itself in international fashion markets, featuring in high-profile outlets and publications such as Vogue and Elle. This demonstrates how integrating traditional practices can elevate cultural heritage onto a global stage.

The AAKS example shows that integrating traditional knowledge into modern creative industries can be environmentally, socially and culturally sustainable. It is an inspiring model for how Africa's rich cultural practices can drive innovation in creative economies.

Now that you have learnt about sustainable creative businesses, we want to take you through the steps of **how you can make your own creative business sustainable**.



7. Creating Your Sustainable Creative Enterprise

In this section, we have an activity for you. As an artist, you will design a creative business that incorporates environmental, social, and cultural sustainability to preserve heritage, support your community, and promote eco-friendly practices. This activity will help you turn the sustainability concepts you have learned into practical ideas for a meaningful and responsible creative enterprise.



Activity 4: Your Sustainable Creative Enterprise

This process invites you to explore the rich tapestry of creative traditions within your community and reimagine them as sustainable enterprises. By grounding your ideas in local practices you begin to uncover how culture and sustainability can work hand in hand. Each step will guide you to reflect deeply, assess impact, and design with intention, ensuring your creative vision uplifts both people and planet. Let's begin by identifying the practices that inspire you and exploring how they can become catalysts for meaningful change. As you work through the steps, write your answers down.

Step 1: Identifying Local Creative Practices

Brainstorm your ideas by thinking about traditional practices, crafts, or cultural expressions in your community that inspire you. These could include:

- Basket weaving
- Music or dance
- Natural dyeing or eco-friendly crafting methods

Consider how these practices relate to sustainability.

- Do they use natural, renewable materials?
- Do they promote your local culture or encourage collaboration within your community?

Step 2: Analysing Sustainability

Analyse your chosen creative practice by asking:

1. Environmental Sustainability:

- Are the materials renewable or recyclable?
- Can I make the process more eco-friendly?

2. Social Sustainability:

- How can this practice benefit my community, such as by creating jobs or empowering others?
- Can it include women, youth, or marginalised groups?

3. Cultural Sustainability:

- How does this preserve or celebrate cultural heritage?

- How can I keep it authentic and avoid over-commercialising it?

Step 3: Designing Your Creative Enterprise

Build Your Business Plan

Use this framework to shape your idea:

- **Product/Service:** What will you create or offer?
- **Environmental Plan:** How will you reduce environmental impact?
- **Social Plan:** How will your business help the community and promote inclusivity?
- **Cultural Plan:** How will it preserve and celebrate cultural heritage?
- **Marketing Strategy:** Who is your audience, and how will you share your sustainability values?

Note: For more information on creating business plans, take a look at the additional resources listed at the end of this Unit.

Step 4: Sharing Your Vision

Present Your Business Plan:

- Prepare a 5-minute presentation to share your idea. Be creative, you can include visuals, sketches, or even samples of your product.
- Highlight how your enterprise incorporates all three types of sustainability.

We hope you found this unit insightful, as it provided an opportunity to explore the importance of **sustainability in the creative industries**. Throughout this unit, we examined how creative businesses can **incorporate environmental, social, and cultural sustainability into their practices to create lasting positive impacts**.



8. Conclusion

We hope you found this unit insightful, as it provided an opportunity for you to explore the importance of sustainability in the creative industries. Throughout this unit, we examined how creative businesses can incorporate environmental, social, and cultural sustainability into their practices to create lasting positive impacts.

What We Have Explored

- The key aspects of sustainability: environmental, social, and cultural.
- Practical strategies for integrating sustainability into your creative work.
- Examples of businesses that have successfully incorporated sustainable practices.

What Creative People Can Take Away

This unit has provided you with the knowledge and tools to make sustainability an integral part of your creative business. By understanding the environmental, social, and cultural dimensions of sustainability, you can ensure that your work not only supports your community but also helps protect the environment and preserve cultural heritage.

Reflecting on Learning Outcomes

By the end of this unit, you should have:

- A clear understanding of the three key areas of sustainability.
- Practical knowledge of how to apply sustainability principles to your creative projects.

Applying What You've Learned

This unit has equipped you with practical guidance to:

- **Incorporate sustainable practices into your work**, from using eco-friendly materials to supporting local communities.
- Use your **creativity** to **address** environmental, social, and cultural **challenges**.
- Create art and products that reflect your **commitment to sustainability** and inspire others to do the same.



Looking Ahead

As you move forward, remember that integrating sustainability into your creative business is a powerful way to make a lasting impact. Use the insights gained from this unit to continue building a responsible and innovative creative practice that benefits both you and your community. Thank you for joining us on this journey—your sustainable creative future is just beginning!

Interested in Finding Out More?

- [Unlocking Africa's Potential For Sustainable Growth Through The Creative Industry](#)
- [Investing in Africa's Creative Potential](#)

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9. Transcripts

Choma Museum Niche

Fitzborn: Hello, everyone. My name is Fitzborn Moleya. And today, I am excited to share with you a unique aspect of our Choma Museum. Our first niche is the art of basketry influenced by our local vegetation. Here at the museum, the diverse vegetation in our area plays a crucial role in the types of baskets we produce. It shapes our crafts but also raises community awareness about the importance of preserving our natural environment, our artisans, and hence embraces the beauty of nature using natural dyes derived from tree bark, which gives our baskets their distinctive earthy tones. These natural dyes are not only visually appealing, but also environmentally friendly as they are free from artificial chemicals. The skilled hands of our craftspeople transform basket, plant leaves, twigs and creeping vines into stunning baskets. This use of natural materials not only enhances the aesthetic appeal of our baskets but also increases their lifespan, ensuring durability and sustainability.

Kapasa: Now let's explore the second niche. The incredible versatility of our Tonga crafts. Traditionally, these exquisite handcrafted items played a vital role in daily life. Baskets served as domestic essentials, used as plates, storage bins, bowls, and even cooking sticks. This rich history reflects the ingenuity and resourcefulness of our ancestors. Today you'll see a beautiful evolution in the way these handcrafts are used. They've transcended their traditional roles and now add a touch of culture and heritage to more than living spaces and celebrations. Imagine walking into our home adorned with these beautiful handicrafts, baskets transformed into elegant wall decorations (I'll give an example of what's behind me.) Magazine racks, place mats, table runners, and even unique kitchen utensils. They are not just items. There are stories woven into the fabric of everyday life.

Thank you for joining me in discovering the versatile and creative world of handicrafts at Choma Museum. We can't wait to show you more in person and inspire you with our rich heritage and craftsmanship. Thank you

Emmanuel: The third niche is the special commitment that Choma Museum applies to the use of natural resources. The museum's craftsmen and women take particular attention to retain the natural characteristics of these raw materials. We do not use artificial dyes. For instance, we allow the timber and wood to breathe without varnishing it, so that it can be naturally preserved and conserved, retaining its natural characteristics. Utensils that are used in the kitchen for cooking and culinary, the same applies. We do not want to use toxic wood or toxic raw materials that may affect the users. The Choma Museum depicts various themes in these products. Village life; love; narrating different stories about nature, birds, our animals, retaining and talking, telling the story of our history, our culture, our heritage. So these items and matters of climate change, deforestation are taken into account to ensure that the environment is not affected by the production of these products. So we work towards sustainable use of natural resources to make our baskets; we harvest our wood and timber in a sustainable manner so that deforestation cannot take place. So in our in our bid to make baskets, we take into account both climatic, environmental and other factors, so that our heritage does not affect the environment and our heritage is presented to the world, is presented to the museum visitors in such a beautiful manner as it was done thousands of years ago.

From Trash to Treasure

Francis: Last year, we recycled over 500,000 flip-flops. We are making something which is so beautiful. My name is Francis Mutua. I'm a flip-flop artist. In my heart will save the world. More than 3 billion people in the world wear flip-flops. They are dumped and they go into our oceans. Flip-flops are brought to our shores by the tides of the Indian Ocean. We collect the flip-flops saving lives in the sea.

We first wash them, do the carving, do some sanding to smoothen them. In one day, we can make six to eight animals. Over 300 Kenyans are supported by employment and the collection of flip-flops. It's manual, not machine. It's something to be seen.

I love my work. I'm proud.

Ethics and Principles at Choma Museum

Kapasa: Hello there. My name is Kapasa Musonda Nell. I'm a craft development officer here at Choma Museum, and I'd like to talk about the core principles and values that guide us as a museum, especially in our collaboration with the communities.

Our first principle is all about listening and respecting the voices and opinions of our community. When managing customer needs, we don't just make decisions in isolation. We consult with the community, considering their domestic and family responsibilities. This ensures that we establish production many times that are realistic and respectful of their lives.

Secondly, we are committed to fair trade practices. A key aspect of this is allowing the weavers themselves to detect the prices of their crafts. This approach not only ensures fairness but also empowers our artisans into recognising their skills and the value of their work.

Lastly, as a museum, we've established safe spaces for our handicraft producers. Here, they can come together to express their concerns and ideas about the production line. These spaces foster an essence of community and collaboration, which is crucial for the continuity and sustainability of the handcrafted handcraft production. These principles are not just words-they're actions that reflect our commitment to ethical practices and community empowerment. At the Choma Museum and Craft Centre, we are not just preserving heritage; we are building a future that respects and uplifts every member of our community and that makes us proud. Thank you.

Ocean Sole in Kenya

Our oceans are filling with plastic. Ocean Soul is taking action. Ocean Soul supports beach cleanups and local communities create masterpieces out of the colourful flip-flops that they find on beaches and waterways. Based in Kenya on the remote shores of Kiwayu beaded work creates a living for local women in remote areas. Ocean Souls workshop in Nairobi supports 40 permanent workers, a recycling hub that creates ingenious eco sculptures, interior products, toys and unique fashion items to be sold around the world. Ocean Soul support, local ingenuity and artistic endeavour while saving our dolphins, whales, turtles and other marine life from human pollution.