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FAME WEEK AFRICA
TREND REPORT

2026

FOREWORD



Africa's creative industries are no longer asking for permission to be part of the global conversation—they are shaping it.

Over the course of FAME Week Africa 2025, one message came through consistently in conversations with creators, producers, buyers, brands, policymakers, and investors: African creativity is thriving, but the market is maturing. Passion and potential remain abundant, yet the industry is increasingly focused on structure, scalability, ownership, and long-term value.

This trend report is grounded in those conversations—on stage, on the exhibition floor, and behind closed doors—alongside wider industry analysis and global market signals. It reflects a shift we are seeing across film, television, music, fashion, and emerging formats such as micro-dramas: a move from hype to strategy, from experimentation to execution, and from isolated success stories to sustainable creative businesses.

As Africa's creative economy grows in confidence and complexity, so too does the responsibility to build ecosystems that support creators while attracting investment, enabling collaboration, and unlocking global markets. The trends outlined in this report highlight where momentum is building, where

pressure points remain, and where the greatest opportunities lie for those willing to think beyond single projects and short-term wins.

FAME Week Africa exists to accelerate these conversations—to connect ideas with opportunity, talent with markets, and creativity with commerce. We hope this report serves not only as a reflection of where the industry stands today, but as a practical guide for navigating what comes next.

The future of Africa's creative sector will be defined by those who can tell bold stories, own their IP, understand their audiences, and build businesses that last.



FROM CONVERSATION TO CONVERGENCE: THE STATE OF AFRICA'S CREATIVE ECONOMY



Africa's creative sector enters 2026 at an inflection point. Insights drawn from conversations with delegates, buyers, creators, policymakers, and brands at FAME Week Africa—supported by wider industry reporting—point to a clear shift: creativity remains abundant, but the market is demanding stronger structure, clearer monetisation pathways, and scalable intellectual property (IP).

This report outlines the key trends shaping **film, television, micro-dramas, music, and fashion** in 2026. Across all sectors, the same signals recur: IP ownership matters more than ever, distribution strategy is critical, hybrid revenue models are accelerating, and proof of audience value is now non-negotiable.

1. FILM: FROM PASSION PROJECTS TO INVESTMENT-READY IP

African film enters 2026 with unprecedented visibility and ambition, but also with a more demanding commercial environment. Conversations at FAME Week Africa revealed a clear shift in how films are being evaluated by funders, sales agents, distributors, and platforms. While originality and cultural authenticity remain essential, they are no longer sufficient on their own. The market is increasingly rewarding projects that demonstrate commercial logic, scalability, and long-term value.

Historically, many African films were financed as standalone works—often dependent on grants, soft funding, or single-territory broadcasters. In 2026, that model is under strain. Buyers are asking harder questions earlier in the development process: Who is the core audience? What problem does this film solve for a platform or distributor? Where does it travel beyond its country of origin? And how does it generate value beyond its first release window?

As a result, film projects are increasingly being developed as investment-ready packages rather than

isolated artistic expressions. This means attaching credible talent early, securing partial financing before market, clarifying rights ownership, and articulating a realistic distribution strategy that may include festivals, theatrical release, streaming platforms, FAST channels, or regional broadcasters. Projects that can show optionality—multiple pathways to market—are viewed as lower risk.

Another defining shift is the growing importance of IP extensibility. Films that can logically expand into series adaptations, spin-offs, podcasts, books, or branded collaborations are particularly attractive. This does not mean every film must become a franchise, but it does mean filmmakers are being encouraged to think beyond a single runtime and consider how their worlds, characters, and themes could live across formats.

Policy and infrastructure developments are also shaping the landscape. Increased dialogue around continental collaboration, co-production treaties, and harmonised audiovisual frameworks signals a future in which African films can circulate more easily across

borders. For producers, this creates both opportunity and responsibility: opportunity to access larger markets, and responsibility to meet higher delivery, compliance, and reporting standards.

In 2026, we also expect to see greater alignment between film and short-form ecosystems. Micro-dramas and digital-first storytelling are increasingly being used as proof-of-concept tools—allowing filmmakers to test

tone, audience appetite, and character resonance before committing to long-form production.

Outlook for 2026: African films that succeed will be those that balance creative boldness with commercial discipline. The future belongs to filmmakers who understand not only how to tell powerful stories, but how to position those stories within a complex, competitive global marketplace.



2. TELEVISION: VOLUME, VELOCITY, AND HYBRID MONETISATION

Television remains one of the most powerful storytelling and employment engines in Africa's creative economy, but its operating model is evolving rapidly. In 2026, the defining characteristics of African television will be volume, speed, and flexibility. The traditional binary between free-to-air broadcasters and subscription streamers is giving way to a far more complex ecosystem of hybrid platforms.

At FAME Week Africa, commissioners and producers consistently highlighted the pressure to deliver more content, faster, and at lower cost—without sacrificing audience engagement. Subscription growth across the continent continues, but it is uneven and increasingly constrained by price sensitivity. As a result, advertising-supported and hybrid monetisation models are playing a larger role in commissioning decisions.

FAST (Free Ad-Supported Streaming TV) channels and AVOD platforms are becoming especially important for library content and high-volume formats. For rights holders, these models offer a way to monetise existing catalogues, reach wider audiences, and extend the lifespan of content that may have already completed its initial broadcast or streaming window.

From a creative perspective, this environment favours

formats that are repeatable and adaptable. Long-running scripted dramas, telenovelas, daily or weekly series, and returning unscripted franchises continue to dominate demand. These formats offer predictability for platforms and advertisers, while creating sustained employment and skills development within the industry.

Another key shift is the expectation that content can be re-versioned easily. Dubbing, subtitling, vertical edits, short-form cut-downs, and social extensions are no longer optional add-ons—they are core to a project's value proposition. Producers who design content with modularity in mind are better positioned to sell across multiple platforms and territories.

Rights structures are also under closer scrutiny. Platforms increasingly seek flexibility, while producers are pushing back to retain IP ownership and secondary exploitation rights. In 2026, successful television businesses will be those that negotiate smartly—balancing short-term cash flow with long-term asset building.

Outlook for 2026: African television will reward scale, reliability, and adaptability. Producers who can consistently deliver quality at volume, while navigating hybrid monetisation and rights complexity, will be best placed to thrive.



3. MICRO-DRAMAS: SHORT-FORM AS A SERIOUS IP PIPELINE

Micro-dramas represent one of the most significant structural shifts in African screen storytelling heading into 2026. Once viewed as experimental or purely social-media-driven content, micro-dramas are now emerging as a legitimate IP development and monetisation pathway.

Designed for mobile-first platforms, micro-dramas consist of short, episodic scripted stories—often between 30 seconds and two minutes per episode—built around strong hooks, emotional immediacy, and frequent cliff-hangers. In African markets, where mobile devices are the primary screen for millions of people, this format aligns naturally with audience behaviour.

What makes micro-dramas particularly powerful is their efficiency. They are cheaper and faster to produce than traditional television or film, require lower data consumption from audiences, and generate rapid feedback through views, shares, comments, and completion rates. This creates a real-time development loop that allows creators to refine stories based on audience response.

From an industry perspective, micro-dramas are becoming a talent discovery engine. Writers, directors, and performers who might not yet have access to

traditional commissioning structures can build audiences independently. Platforms, broadcasters, and brands are increasingly scouting digital-native creators with proven engagement metrics rather than relying solely on traditional CVs.

Commercially, micro-dramas open multiple revenue paths. Brand integration is particularly effective in this format, as products and services can be woven directly into narratives rather than inserted as disruptive advertising. Creator funds, platform revenue sharing, and direct fan monetisation models further support sustainability.

Crucially, micro-dramas are also functioning as proof-of-concept IP. Successful short-form stories are being adapted into long-form series, films, podcasts, and even stage productions. For investors and commissioners, this reduces risk by demonstrating audience demand before significant capital is deployed.

Outlook for 2026: Micro-dramas will not replace traditional screen formats, but they will increasingly influence how stories are developed, tested, cast, and financed. They represent a powerful bridge between grassroots creativity and formal industry structures.



4. MUSIC: STREAMING BUILDS REACH, LIVE BUILDS CAREERS

African music continues its global ascent, with genres from across the continent achieving unprecedented international reach. By 2026, however, industry conversations make it clear that visibility alone is not enough. The sustainable music businesses of the future will be built on diversified revenue streams, with live performance and brand partnerships at the core.

Streaming platforms have played a crucial role in amplifying African music globally. They provide scale, discovery, and data insights that were previously unavailable. For emerging artists, streaming remains a powerful entry point into the market. However, per-stream revenues are rarely sufficient to sustain careers on their own.

As a result, the centre of gravity is shifting toward live experiences. Touring—both within Africa and across the diaspora—is becoming a primary revenue driver. Brands are playing an increasingly active role in this ecosystem, sponsoring tours, festivals, and experiential activations that align music with lifestyle, youth culture, and identity.

In 2026, artists and managers are also becoming more sophisticated about rights management. Ownership of masters, publishing, and performance rights is receiving renewed attention, particularly as AI-generated content and unauthorised usage pose growing risks. Data ownership—knowing who your audience is and how they engage—is becoming as valuable as the music itself.

Another emerging trend is the professionalisation of artist teams. Managers, booking agents, brand strategists, and legal advisors are no longer luxuries reserved for top-tier acts; they are increasingly essential at earlier stages of an artist's career.

Outlook for 2026: Artists who treat their careers as businesses—controlling IP, leveraging data, and building strong live and brand strategies—will be best positioned to turn cultural impact into long-term financial sustainability.



5. FASHION: SUSTAINABILITY, STRUCTURE, AND SMARTER SCALE

African fashion stands at a critical juncture in 2026. Global interest in African design continues to rise, yet the industry faces increasing pressure to demonstrate sustainability, scalability, and operational discipline. The narrative is shifting from visibility to viability.

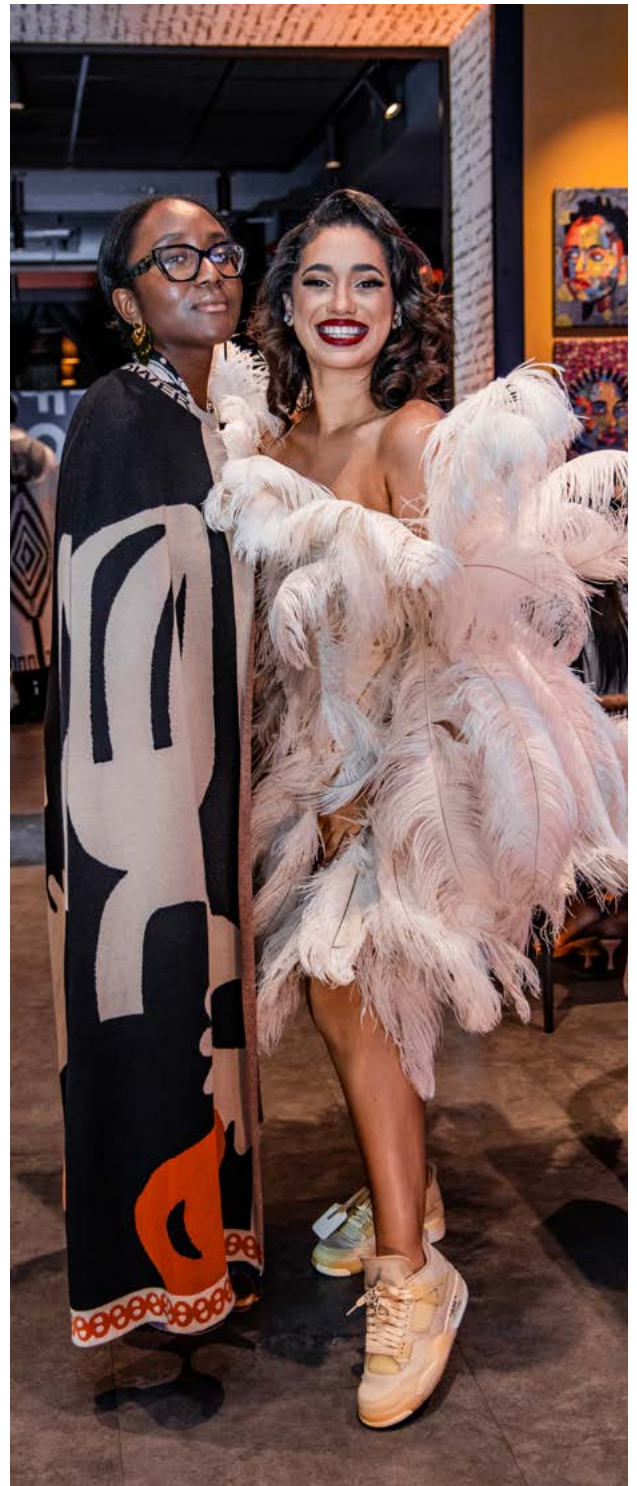
Sustainability has moved from a marketing differentiator to a baseline expectation. Buyers, collaborators, and consumers are scrutinising sourcing, labour practices, and environmental impact. Designers are responding by investing in transparent supply chains, ethical production methods, and storytelling that authentically reflects their values.

At the same time, African fashion brands are reassessing how they scale. Rapid expansion—often driven by social media hype—has proven risky without the infrastructure to support consistent quality and delivery. In 2026, there is a growing preference for controlled, strategic growth: selective wholesale partnerships, direct-to-consumer channels, and limited-edition drops that preserve brand equity.

Policy and regulatory developments are also influencing the sector. Efforts to address unfair competition from ultra-low-cost imports are beginning to create a more balanced playing field for local designers and retailers. This creates opportunities for brands that can compete on quality, originality, and customer experience rather than price alone.

IP protection remains a major concern. As African designs gain global exposure, safeguarding intellectual property—both legally and through strong branding—will be essential.

Outlook for 2026: The most successful African fashion brands will be those that combine creative excellence with operational strength, sustainability, and disciplined growth strategies.



CROSS-SECTOR THEMES DEFINING 2026

Across all creative industries, four themes consistently emerged:

1. **IP is the primary asset** – Ownership and control of IP underpin long-term value.
2. **Distribution beats hype** – Reach, access, and repeatability matter more than buzz.
3. **Hybrid revenue models are the norm** – Subscription, advertising, sponsorship, and live experiences increasingly coexist.
4. **Data and accountability are essential** – Investors and partners expect measurable audience and commercial outcomes.



WHAT THIS MEANS FOR FAME WEEK AFRICA

FAME Week Africa's role as a convening platform is more critical than ever. In 2026, its value lies not only in showcasing creativity, but in enabling:

- Market-ready packaging of African IP
- Cross-border collaboration and co-production
- Connections between creators, buyers, brands, and policymakers
- Practical conversations about monetisation, scalability, and sustainability

CONCLUSION:

2026 IS THE YEAR OF CONVERGENCE

Africa's creative economy is not slowing down—but it is maturing. 2026 will reward creators and companies that align creativity with commercial clarity, local authenticity with global ambition, and storytelling with strategy.

The future belongs to those who build not just great content—but great creative businesses.



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