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**| RESEARCH ARTICLE****Capacity Building and Policy Support: A Critical Analysis of the UNESCO-Aschberg Programme for Emerging Artists and Cultural Professionals in Ghana****Benjamin Oduro Arhin Jnr***Department of Music Education, University of Education, Winneba***Corresponding Author:** Benjamin Oduro Arhin Jnr, **E-mail:** boarhin@uew.edu.gh

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**| ABSTRACT**

This study investigates the role of the UNESCO-Aschberg Programme for Artists and Cultural Professionals in strengthening the capacity of emerging artists in Ghana. Grounded in an interpretivist epistemology, the research examines how the Programme addresses key challenges of informality, limited funding, and inadequate social protection that hinder professional growth in the sector. The study is guided by three objectives: to analyse the Programme's role in promoting supportive policy frameworks, assess the effectiveness of its capacity-building initiatives, and identify barriers to access. The methodology employed a comprehensive qualitative approach, integrating document reviews, a survey of 47 participants (14.2% of the 330-strong cohort), and direct observation of the programme, which achieved an 82.5% attendance rate from its national cohort of 400. Thematic analysis of the data revealed that the Programme successfully elevated discourse on cultural policy and significantly enhanced participants' professional capabilities and legal awareness. However, persistent challenges such as logistical barriers, informational gaps, and broader structural sector issues were identified. The study concludes that while the UNESCO-Aschberg Programme serves as a vital catalyst, its long-term efficacy requires strategic adaptations. Recommendations include decentralising activities, launching targeted advocacy campaigns, and leveraging digital tools to bolster learning networks. These findings offer critical insights for policymakers and cultural institutions seeking to optimise support for emerging artists and cultural professionals in Ghana and across Africa.

**| KEYWORDS**

UNESCO Aschberg Programme, capacity building, artists, cultural professionals, cultural policy, Ghana.

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**1. Introduction**

The cultural and creative industries (CCIs) are increasingly recognized as significant drivers of sustainable development, economic growth, and social cohesion (UNCTAD, 2021). In Ghana, a country with a rich and diverse cultural heritage, the potential of the CCIs remains underutilized, partly due to structural weaknesses. Emerging artists and cultural professionals often operate in an environment characterized by informal practices, limited access to funding, inadequate social protection, and a lack of understanding of the legal and policy frameworks that govern their work. This precarious situation hinders their professional growth and the sector's overall contribution to the national economy.

Central to these efforts is the recognition of artists not only as cultural producers but also as professionals entitled to social and economic protections. In this context, international capacity-building programmes play a crucial role in bridging these gaps. The UNESCO-Aschberg Programme, established to promote the status of artists and improve

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governance of culture, serves as a key intervention. By focusing on the pillars of artistic freedom, the status of the artist, and the diversity of cultural expressions, the programme aligns with the principles of the 2005 UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions, which Ghana has ratified (UNESCO, 2005). This research aims to critically analyze the role of the UNESCO-Aschberg Programme in Ghana, specifically examining its contributions to policy formulation, legal frameworks, and the direct capacity building of its emerging creative practitioners.

## **2. Literature Review and Theoretical Framework**

The theoretical underpinning of this study draws from two key areas: cultural policy and capacity building theory.

Effective cultural policies are not merely about supporting the arts but about creating an enabling environment where creativity can flourish. Scholars like Miller and Yúdice (2002) argue that cultural policy is inherently linked to questions of citizenship, identity, and rights. The "status of the artist" concept, central to the Aschberg Programme, refers to the legislative and regulatory measures that recognize the unique nature of artistic work, including labor rights, tax regimes, and social security (Trade, 2018). In many African nations, including Ghana, the status of the artist remains a nascent policy area, often lacking specific legal instruments for its enforcement.

Capacity building extends beyond simple training. It involves a process of strengthening the abilities of individuals, organizations, and systems to perform functions, solve problems, and achieve objectives (Arhin Jnr, 2025b; UNDP, 2009). In the context of CCIs, this includes enhancing skills in artistic creation, but critically, also in cultural management, entrepreneurship, advocacy, and policy engagement (Arhin Jnr, 2025b; O'Connor, 2016). For emerging artists, understanding intellectual property rights, contract law, and cultural governance is essential for transitioning from informal practice to sustainable professional careers (Arhin Jnr & Acquah, 2025).

## **3. Theoretical Framework**

### **3.1 Cultural Policy and the Status of the Artist**

This study draws from two theoretical perspectives-cultural policy and capacity building-to contextualize the evolving discourse on the "status of the artist" within the African creative sector.

Cultural policy extends beyond state patronage of the arts to encompass frameworks that shape creative production, participation, and access. Miller and Yúdice (2002) posit that cultural policy is deeply intertwined with citizenship, identity, and human rights, positioning artists as central agents in the social fabric. The "status of the artist," as articulated in UNESCO's (1980, 2019) frameworks and the Aschberg Programme, underscores the need for legislative measures that safeguard artistic labor. These include fair taxation systems, social security, intellectual property rights, and freedom of artistic expression.

In the African context, however, the implementation of such policies remains inconsistent. Many African nations, including Ghana, the status of the artist remains underdeveloped, with little legal recognition or institutional infrastructure to support creative work. Consequently, artists often operate in informal economies, facing precarious work conditions and limited access to state welfare systems. The absence of coherent cultural policy frameworks perpetuates systemic vulnerabilities and hinders the sustainability of creative industries.

Based on the principles of these theories, the National Commission on Culture (NCC) developed a proposal to the UNESCO Aschberg Programme, focusing on capacity building through the revision of Ghana's cultural policy. The proposal aimed to train artists and cultural professionals in Ghana to align their performance practices with the revised policy, thereby enhancing their capacity and contributing to the growth of the cultural and creative industries in Ghana.

### **3.2 Capacity Building Theory**

Capacity building theory complements cultural policy by emphasizing the development of human, institutional, and systemic capabilities that enable sustainable growth. According to Eade (1997), capacity building involves empowering individuals and organizations to improve their performance and achieve long-term resilience. In the cultural sector, this translates to equipping artists with skills, resources, and institutional support necessary to thrive within competitive and dynamic environments.

Institutional capacity is particularly critical for implementing cultural policies effectively. As Wyszomirski (1995) notes, cultural policy outcomes are contingent on the ability of institutions to translate policy intentions into actionable programs. In contexts like Ghana, where administrative and infrastructural weaknesses persist, the integration of capacity building principles into cultural governance becomes a strategic necessity. Strengthening the skills and networks of artists and cultural managers can foster both creative autonomy and socio-economic sustainability.

### **3.3 Interlinkages between Cultural Policy and Capacity Building**

The intersection of cultural policy and capacity building establishes a holistic approach to creative sector development. Cultural policy provides the normative and legislative framework, while capacity building ensures the human and institutional resources required to implement such policies. For instance, UNESCO's (2018) *Re|Shaping Cultural Policies* report emphasizes the dual need for policy reform and investment in professional development within the arts sector. When effectively aligned, these two domains create an ecosystem that supports artistic innovation, fair labor practices, and cultural diversity.

### **3.4 Artists and Cultural Professionals Capacity Building**

While cultural policy defines the principles of artistic recognition and rights, capacity building operationalizes these ideals by equipping artists and institutions with the tools for sustainable development. Bridging the gap between policy rhetoric and practical implementation remains a pressing challenge. Addressing this requires a coordinated approach involving government agencies, educational institutions, and international bodies to ensure that the African artist is both protected and empowered within the global cultural economy (Arhin Jnr & Acquah, 2025; Ayiku, 2021; Collins, 2022).

Conversely, static or outdated cultural policies risk marginalizing communities and stifling innovation, thereby impeding national development (Antwi et al., 2025). The UNESCO-Aschberg Programme aims to counteract these impediments by strengthening legal frameworks that protect artists' rights and intellectual property, which are vital for fostering a sustainable creative economy in Ghana (Arhin Jnr et al., 2024). Furthermore, the program's emphasis on legal literacy empowers artists to navigate complex contractual agreements and intellectual property rights, safeguarding their creative outputs and ensuring equitable compensation (Antwi et al., 2025). This is particularly important in a rapidly evolving global creative landscape where robust legal protections are essential for economic viability and international competitiveness (Antwi et al., 2025). By addressing these foundational issues, the UNESCO-Aschberg Programme directly contributes to a more formalized and resilient creative sector, moving beyond informal practices that often disadvantage artists in Ghana (Darkwah et al., 2024; Nyarko & Debordes, 2024). This study posits that by bolstering these legal and policy infrastructures, the programme cultivates an environment where artists can transition from precarious, informal engagements to formalized, economically sustainable careers (Arhin Jnr et al., 2024).

Moreover, the program's interventions extend beyond individual artist empowerment to encompass broader sector development by advocating for policies that integrate creative industries into national development strategies, thus recognizing their substantial contribution to the Gross Domestic Product and employment (Diabour et al., 2021). This strategic integration is critical for leveraging the full potential of Ghana's creative economy, as a robust policy environment significantly influences the art market and its development (Lu & Wang, 2023). This study specifically examined how the UNESCO-Aschberg Programme enhances the professional standing and economic opportunities for Ghanaian artists and cultural professionals. The effectiveness of these policy interventions in creating a

supportive ecosystem that not only nurtures artistic talent but also ensures the sustainable development of Ghana's cultural and creative industries (Antwi et al., 2025; Edeh et al., 2023). It was imperative to explore how the program facilitates the enforcement of intellectual property rights for artists, a critical component for economic and cultural sustainability in the creative sector, particularly given the challenges observed in other developing contexts (Van den Bosch, 2009). This includes evaluating the mechanisms through which the programme supports the development of policies that recognize the importance of creative artists in promoting tourism and economic growth (Arhin Jnr et al., 2024; Essel, 2013). This research aims to critically analyze the role of the UNESCO-Aschberg Programme in Ghana, specifically examining its contributions to policy formulation, legal frameworks, and the direct capacity building of its emerging creative practitioners. This approach directly supports the national interest in developing the tourism, arts, and culture industry, thereby remarkably impacting the nation's economic revenue (Nkrumah-Abraham & Amponsah, 2025; Arhin Jnr et al., 2024). This aligns with broader efforts across Africa to leverage cultural and creative industries for sustainable development and wealth creation (Abisuga, 2021; Edeh et al., 2023). The mode training of artists and cultural professionals through workshops and residencies, addresses critical skill gaps and fosters innovation, further contributing to the national economy (Elvis et al., 2020). This comprehensive approach not only elevates the professional status of Ghanaian artists but also strategically integrates the creative sector into the national economic framework, fostering both cultural preservation and economic prosperity (Arhin Jnr et al., 2024; Lakshana et al., 2024). The UNESCO-Aschberg Programme's focus on policy and legal reform is critical for transforming the informal practices prevalent in Ghana's creative sector into formalized, economically viable industries (Nkrumah-Abraham & Amponsah, 2025; Arhin Jnr et al., 2024).

The cultural and creative industries are increasingly recognized as significant drivers of sustainable development, economic growth, and social cohesion. In Ghana, a nation rich in cultural heritage, these industries hold substantial untapped potential for national development, extending beyond mere economic indicators to encompass social well-being and cultural identity (Arhin Jnr et al., 2024). However, the sector in Ghana often faces challenges such as limited infrastructure, insufficient funding, and a lack of formalized structures, impeding its full realization and impact (Arhin Jnr et al., 2024; Essel, 2013). Despite these hurdles, the creative arts significantly contribute to cultural tourism and economic growth, highlighting the urgent need for strategic interventions and robust policy frameworks to support artists and cultural professionals (Arhin Jnr et al., 2024; Fredua et al., 2020). Therefore, understanding the role of initiatives like the UNESCO-Aschberg Programme becomes paramount in analyzing how targeted interventions can mitigate these challenges and unlock the sector's full potential (Arhin Jnr et al., 2024; Diabour et al., 2021; Essel, 2013). The creative industries are not only crucial for economic growth through employment generation and tourism but also for preserving national heritage and fostering social cohesion (Antwi et al., 2025; Heilbrun & Gray, 2001). This is particularly true for Ghana, where small and medium enterprises, including those within the creative industry, constitute a significant portion of all businesses, generating substantial employment (Essel, 2013). Despite this, many innovations within these informal sectors often go unrecognized and unsupported, necessitating new policies that address financial and skill constraints to foster long-term growth and development (Fu et al., 2018). Against this backdrop, the UNESCO-Aschberg Programme serves as a vital international intervention, aiming to bridge existing gaps through targeted capacity building and policy advocacy for emerging artists and cultural professionals in Ghana (Li et al., 2024). By focusing on the pillars of artistic development, governance, and policy formulation, the programme seeks to transform the often-precarious working conditions of creatives into more stable and professionally recognized opportunities (Kromidha et al., 2022). This research endeavors to investigate how the programme's initiatives in policy and legal framework development contribute to formalizing the creative sector, thereby enhancing its contribution to Ghana's sustainable development goals (Antwi et al., 2025; Salvador & Comunian, 2024). Specifically, it examines the efficacy of UNESCO-Aschberg in fostering an environment where cultural tourism can thrive through enhanced marketing and communication strategies, thereby contributing more substantially to the national GDP (Arhin Jnr et al., 2024). This includes an assessment of how policy frameworks can incentivize creative tourism, a dynamic approach that fosters economic growth while preserving cultural heritage (Suriyankietkaew et al., 2025). Such frameworks are crucial for transforming informal practices into formalized, economically viable industries, ensuring that the benefits of cultural tourism are both sustainable and equitably distributed among stakeholders (Antwi et al., 2025). Artists and cultural

professionals in Ghana have been noted to face significant challenges, including a lack of robust legal frameworks for intellectual property protection and insufficient support for marketing and branding their work on an international stage (Arhin Jnr et al., 2024; Essel, 2013). These issues collectively restrict their capacity to fully contribute to cultural tourism and broader economic development, limiting the potential for job creation and community empowerment through Ghana's rich cultural assets (Arhin Jnr et al., 2024). Issues of business planning in the arts and culture industry and inadequate access to financial resources further exacerbate these challenges, hindering the professionalization and commercial viability of creative endeavors (Arhin Jnr et al., 2024). The UNESCO-Aschberg Programme, by promoting the status of artists and improving governance of culture, addresses these structural weaknesses by bridging the gaps in capacity building training (Essel, 2013). According to scholars (Arhin Jnr et al., 2024; Essel, 2013; Gocer et al., 2024) Ghana possesses immense potential in its creative industries, evidenced by its rich cultural traditions and indigenous designs, which are increasingly sought after by global consumers. but lacks the strategic frameworks and supportive policies necessary to fully harness this potential for national development (Arhin Jnr et al., 2024; Amoah et al., 2023; Amoako et al., 2022). The Programme's focus on capacity building through international partnerships and exchange programs is essential for exposing Ghanaian artists to global best practices and fostering a more competitive creative sector (Arhin Jnr, 2025a). Such initiatives are crucial for enhancing the visibility and marketability of Ghanaian cultural products, ultimately contributing to the nation's socio-economic growth, similar to how other developing countries have leveraged their artistic outputs for economic independence (Essel, 2013). The initiative was a proposal submitted by the National Commission on Culture to the UNESCO Aschberg programme to bolster Ghana's creative industries and promote its cultural heritage (Nkrumah-Abraham & Amponsah, 2025). This proposal highlights the need for a comprehensive framework that integrates cultural considerations into national development strategies, moving beyond fragmented approaches (Zhang et al., 2024). It aims to strengthen institutional capacities, enhance professional skills, and foster an enabling environment where artists can thrive and contribute meaningfully to the national economy (Dobrevia & Ivanov, 2020). The proposal was approved and there was call for a National Expert capable of coordinating the program's implementation and ensuring its alignment with Ghana's specific cultural development goals (UNESCO, 2023).

#### **4. Methodology**

The training sessions were held in four zones across the country, covering all the 16 regions in Ghana as indicated in Figure 1. NCC opened registration link that participants used in registering to be selected for the training. The scope of the UNESCO Aschberg programme in Ghana encompassed a defined population of 400 emerging artists and cultural professionals, who formed the basis for its recruitment and capacity-building objectives. According to NCC more than 400 participants registered so they had to selected 400 based on the agree targeted number of the people for the training. Purposive sampling was used to select 25 participants from each of the 16 regions in Ghana, ensuring equal representation from various domains in the creative economy. The training sessions took place in four zones across the country. To ensure inclusivity in the cultural and creative industries, the National Expert suggested adopting the Singapore Model of the Creative Economy, showcased in Figure 1, for participant selection. This model prioritizes diversity and equal opportunities, as seen in Singapore's efforts to foster a vibrant cultural economy by nurturing key ingredients like a cohesive multicultural society, strong intellectual property laws, and a robust climate for creative businesses and entrepreneurship. To achieve gender parity, a 50-50 ratio of male and female participants was proposed to the NCC. This approach echoes Singapore's strategic initiatives to grow its creative economy, recognizing the sector's potential to generate income, jobs, and social inclusion while promoting diversity and human development.

<b>ARTISTS &amp; CULTURAL PROFESSIONALS in the Creative Economy</b>		
<b>ARTS &amp; CULTURE</b>	<b>DESIGN</b>	<b>MEDIA</b>
<b>Photography</b>	<b>Software</b>	<b>Publishing</b>
<b>Visual Arts</b>	<b>Advertising</b>	<b>TV &amp; Radio</b>
<b>Performing Arts</b>	<b>Architecture</b>	<b>Digital media</b>
<b>Arts and Antiques</b>	<b>Interior</b>	<b>Film and Video</b>
<b>Trade</b>	<b>Graphic Design</b>	
<b>Craft</b>	<b>Industrial Design</b>	
	<b>Fashion</b>	

*Figure 1. Creative Economy Domains by Singapore*

This research is grounded in a qualitative research paradigm, adopting an interpretivist epistemology to understand the complex social realities and subjective experiences of emerging artists and cultural professionals in Ghana (Scotland, 2012). To ensure methodological rigour, a mixed-methods qualitative approach is employed, facilitating data triangulation and thereby enhancing the validity, reliability, and depth of the findings (Cohen et al., 2002). The study integrates four primary data collection techniques: a comprehensive document reviews, a targeted survey, and direct observation. The convergent design of these methods allows for a multi-faceted exploration of the UNESCO-Aschberg Programme’s impact and the broader ecosystem for artistic capacity building.

**4.1. Document Review**

The foundation of this research is a systematic document review. This analysis will critically examine two key corpuses of texts. The first comprises official documents related to the UNESCO-Aschberg Programme, including its foundational reports, project evaluations, and published outputs. The second involves national policy documents, such as drafts of Ghana’s National Cultural Policy, relevant legislative acts, and strategic frameworks for cultural development. This empirical-based research were supplemented by a review of academic literature on global cultural policy and capacity-building models. The document review serves to establish the formal policy context, trace the Programme’s stated objectives and operational history, and identify the official discourse surrounding cultural work. As Bowen (2009) notes, document analysis provides data that is stable, unobtrusive, and rich in the context it provides, thereby framing the empirical investigation within its proper institutional and historical setting.

**4.2 Survey**

To complement the deep, qualitative insights from the document review and the observation with broader, generalizable trends, a survey were administered to a larger cohort of artists and cultural professionals. The use of closed-ended questions is a standard practice for generating quantifiable data that is easy to aggregate and analyze (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2017). Furthermore, Likert scales are a validated tool for measuring the intensity of attitudes or perceptions, providing a qualitative depth that transforms simple awareness into a measurable level of understanding or agreement (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2017).

### **4.3. Participant Observation**

Furthermore, the research incorporated periods of participant observation at relevant cultural events, workshops, or artist gatherings, where feasible. This ethnographic technique allowed the researcher to move beyond reliance on self-reported data and witness firsthand the dynamics of cultural participation, networking, and knowledge exchange. Observations were centered on participant interactions, the practical application of newly acquired skills, and the informal dialogues that occurred beyond structured sessions. This approach provided invaluable contextual data on the authentic, "lived" culture and dynamics within the artistic community. (Emerson et al., 2011).

### **4.4 Data Analysis**

The analysis followed an iterative process. Qualitative data from the document reviews, closed-ended survey responses, and field notes from observations were transcribed and analyzed using thematic analysis. This involved a systematic process of coding to identify initial codes, which were then collated into potential themes, reviewed, and refined to accurately represent the dataset (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The quantitative data from the survey were analysed using descriptive statistics (e.g., frequencies, percentages) to provide a clear profile of the respondent pool and to highlight key trends. Crucially, the findings from all four methods—document review, survey, and observation were integrated and compared in a triangulation protocol. This process was not only seek convergent findings to bolster confidence in the results but to also explore contradictions and silences across the datasets, thereby producing a comprehensive, nuanced, and critically engaged understanding of the research problem.

### **4.6 Researcher Positionality and Ethical Rigour**

A central consideration for this study is the positionality of the researcher, who served as the National Expert and project coordinator for the UNESCO-Aschberg Programme in Ghana. This role involved direct responsibility for facilitating the capacity-building activities and cultural policy development that form the core subject of this research. This insider status provides unique advantages, such as deep contextual understanding and established trust with participants (Mercer, 2007). However, it also presents a potential for bias, as the researcher has a vested interest in demonstrating the programme's usefulness and success.

To mitigate these inherent biases and uphold the highest standards of ethical research, several strategic measures were rigorously implemented.

Throughout the research process, from design to data analysis, the researcher engaged in continuous reflexivity. This involved critically self-examining personal assumptions, values, and potential influence on the research process (Berger, 2015). A reflexive journal was maintained to document and scrutinize decision-making and interpretive processes, ensuring they were driven by the data rather than preconceived notions.

As outlined in the methodology, the study employed a mixed-methods approach, combining document analysis, surveys, and observation. This allowed for the cross-verification of findings. For instance, participants' critical feedback gathered anonymously in surveys were weighed against more positive official reports, ensuring a balanced and nuanced analysis that reflects multiple perspectives (Creswell & Pano Clark, 2017).

All participants were provided with informed consent forms that explicitly guaranteed their anonymity and the confidentiality of their responses. They were assured that their critical feedback would not affect their current or future relationship with UNESCO or any affiliated institutions. This was crucial for encouraging candid responses about the programme's challenges and limitations without fear of reprisal.

The research instruments, particularly the survey questions were deliberately designed to elicit both positive and negative feedback. Questions explicitly probed for barriers, failures, unintended consequences, and areas for improvement, creating a structured space for critical discourse that counterbalances any potential bias towards reporting only success.

A comprehensive audit trail was maintained, including raw data, field notes, and records of the analytical process. Furthermore, this positionality statement itself serves as an act of transparency, acknowledging the researcher’s role and the steps taken to ensure the study’s integrity (Nowell et al., 2017). By integrating these practices, this research strives not for an unattainable neutrality, but for a rigorously managed and ethically grounded inquiry that accurately represents the multifaceted realities of the UNESCO-Aschberg Programme, including its strengths, its shortcomings, and its complex impact on the ground.

## **5. Results and Discussions**

### **5.1 The Implementation of the Capacity Building**

The UNESCO Aschberg Programme, launched in 1956, has been a beacon of support for emerging artists and cultural professionals worldwide. In Ghana (Figure 2.), where creativity and cultural expression are integral to the nation’s identity, the programme has the potential to make a transformative impact. Being the first of its kind in Ghana, the project aimed to training 400 emerging artists and cultural professionals with the skills, knowledge, and networks necessary to thrive in their respective fields.



*Figure 2. Map of Ghana*

Source: Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Regional Integration (2024)

Through a comprehensive approach that combines extended training sessions, effective communication, media involvement, mentorship, networking opportunities, and digital platforms, this programme seeks to foster innovation, creativity, and cultural diversity. By leveraging local expertise, partnerships, and resources, we can unlock the full potential of Ghana’s creative sector, driving growth, and promoting cultural exchange.

In response to the 2022 UNESCO-Aschberg Programme call for projects, the National Commission on Culture of Ghana submitted a proposal titled “Empowering Artists through Policy Formulation and Robust Legal Framework:

An Engagement with Artists on Inputs into Cultural Policy, Copyright and Other Relevant Laws.” (“Obi nnim ɔbrepon ashɛsi: Nobody knows the humble beginning of a great person”) The project’s primary objectives were to equip artists within the performing and visual arts domains with knowledge on existing policies and legal frameworks governing the culture and creative space, and to include emerging artists in consultation processes leading to new reforms and regulatory frameworks. This initiative aimed to empower artists, including those with disabilities and young people, to cultivate cultural, policy, and legal understanding underlying their craft.

In partnership with UNESCO, a national expert was engaged to design and implement a comprehensive training program, conduct consultations, and provide recommendations for the revision of Ghana’s Cultural Policy. Through this project, 330 emerging artists benefited from the training conference sessions held across four zones in Ghana. The primary objectives of the entire training project include:

- **Skill Enhancement:** Equipping artists and cultural professionals with the necessary skills and knowledge to thrive in an ever-evolving cultural landscape.
- **Cultural Preservation:** Ensuring the preservation and promotion of diverse cultural heritage through effective training methodologies and aligning of the Cultural Policy of Ghana with the practices of artists and cultural professional.
- **Legal Framework & Artists Freedom of Expressions:** Ensuring artists and cultural professionals are aware of the legal frameworks and
- **International Collaborations:** Fostering international collaboration and exchange among artists and cultural professionals for cross-cultural enrichment.

## **5.2 Participatory Planning, Stakeholder Engagement and Training Modules Development**

The development of the training curriculum was initiated through a structured, multi-stage consultative process with national stakeholders. An initial planning meeting was held on November 27, 2023, at the Adabraka GNAT Hall, where stakeholders outlined their expectations and proposed core topics for the training modules. To ensure relevance and ownership, a second validation meeting was convened on December 14, 2023, at the Head of Local Government Conference Hall, where the draft modules developed by the National Expert were reviewed and approved by the stakeholders. Following this validation, the final modules were formally disseminated via the National Commission on Culture (NCC) to all participating institutions, allowing selected trainees to review the content in advance of the sessions. The resulting training manual was built directly upon the expertise of a diverse cohort of thirty-nine (39) key sector stakeholders. Their collaborative input during the consultative forum ensured the curriculum was grounded in the practical needs of Ghana’s creative community.

The six core topics established through this process were:

1. **Cultural Policy Review:** An overview of the 2004 Cultural Policy to align training with national frameworks and current industry practices.
2. **Arts Entrepreneurship:** Business plan drafting, company registration, and strategies for sourcing funds, grants, and sponsorships.
3. **Intellectual Property Rights:** An overview of IP laws in Ghana, addressing proof of ownership, piracy, copyright infringement, and related offenses.
4. **Professional Business Management:** Essential practices for artists, including company law, contracts, taxation, insurance, security, and occupational hazards, alongside quality production, marketing, and distribution.
5. **Cultural Diplomacy:** The interplay between cultural diplomacy and international cooperation, positioning artists as agents of social transformation.
6. **Legal Frameworks & Artistic Freedom:** An analysis of constitutional rights, legal frameworks, and the freedom of artistic expression in Ghana.

This participatory design process guaranteed that the training directly addressed the most pressing legal, business, and policy challenges identified by the artistic and cultural sector itself.

To ensure the capacity-building training was relevant, contextually appropriate, and grounded in the actual needs of the Ghanaian creative sector, its development was guided by a participatory and multi-stakeholder planning process (Arhin Jnr & Acquah, 2025). This approach aligns with established principles of community-driven development, which posit that involving beneficiaries and key institutional actors in the planning stages fosters greater ownership, enhances project relevance, and improves long-term sustainability (Chambers, 1997; UNESCO, 2015).

A broad and inclusive range of thirty-nine (39) stakeholders was systematically engaged in consultative meetings to co-design the training topics and facilitate an inclusive participant selection process. This diverse cohort was deliberately constituted to represent the entire ecosystem of the creative industries, including:

- **Rights Management & Professional Associations:** Key collective management and professional bodies such as the Ghana Music Right Organization (GHAMRO), Copy Ghana, the Musicians Union of Ghana (MUSIGA), the Ghana Association of Visual Artists (GAVA), and the Ghana Actors Guild.
- **Educational & Training Institutions:** Leading academic departments from the University of Ghana, University of Cape Coast, University of Education, Winneba, and the National Film and Television Institute (NAFTI) (now Institute of Film and Television under the University of Media Arts and Communication) to ensure pedagogical rigour and alignment with formal training.
- **Government & Regulatory Bodies:** Critical public sector agencies including the National Film Authority, Ghana Tourism Authority, Museums and Monument Board, and the Office of the Copyright Administrator to integrate national policy perspectives.
- **Media & Dissemination Channels:** Influential media houses like Joy FM and Peace FM, as well as the Ghana Journalists and Bloggers Associations, to ensure public engagement and discourse.
- **Strategic National Entities:** High-level committees and forums such as the Ghana Cultural Policy Review Committee, Ghana Culture Forum, and the Multi-stakeholder National Team to ensure strategic alignment with national cultural development goals.

This comprehensive engagement strategy was instrumental in mitigating top-down planning biases and ensuring the programme accurately reflected the on-the-ground realities and priorities of the sector. By leveraging the collective intelligence of this network, the process enhanced the legitimacy and inclusivity of the capacity-building initiative from its inception, embodying what Cornwall (2008) describes as a move towards more democratic and effective forms of participatory governance.

To ensure nationwide reach and maximize accessibility for participants across Ghana's 16 regions, the capacity-building training was delivered through a decentralized zonal strategy. This approach established four central training hubs in strategically located cities, each serving as a catchment centre for multiple surrounding regions. The deliberate selection of these hubs-Tamale, Kumasi, Cape Coast, and Accra-were guided by principles of logistical pragmatism and equitable access, aiming to reduce travel burdens and costs for participants, which is a critical factor in promoting inclusive participation in professional development initiatives (Trade, 2018).

The specific zoning structure was designed to create geographically coherent clusters, as detailed in Table 1. This model aligns with best practices in decentralized service delivery, which emphasize bringing training to participants rather than centralizing it in the capital, thereby mitigating the urban-rural participation gap often seen in national programmes (World Bank, 2009).

**Table 1. Zonal Deployment of Capacity Building Training**

<b>Zone</b>	<b>Training Centre</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Region Served</b>
<b>1</b>	Tamale	May 28, 2024.	Upper East, Upper West, Northern, North-East, Savannah
<b>2</b>	Kumasi	May 30, 2024.	Ahafo, Ashanti, Bono, Bono East
<b>3</b>	Cape	June 5, 2024.	Central, Western, Western North
<b>4</b>	Accra	June 7, 2024.	Eastern, Greater Accra, Oti, Volta

This logistical framework was instrumental in operationalizing an inclusive and participant-centred training model. By situating the training within reasonable proximity to participants' home regions, the programme demonstrated a commitment to overcoming geographical barriers and fostering broader, more equitable engagement from the national creative community.

The training programme was designed with an equitable recruitment target of 25 participants from each of Ghana's 16 regions, aiming for a total national cohort of 400 individuals (as detailed in Table 2). While this target was largely met across most regions, the Eastern and Volta regions recorded the lowest participation rates. This uneven geographic distribution is a common challenge in large-scale initiatives and can often be attributed to localized logistical or informational barriers.

Feedback from attendees was predominantly positive, with participants across the zones expressing significant satisfaction with the training content and delivery. However, a recurring theme in the qualitative feedback was a request for an extended duration of the training. This sentiment aligns with principles of adult learning, which emphasize the need for sufficient time to process, practice, and internalize new and complex skills (Brookfield, 2015). For those who were absent, the primary reason cited was delayed receipt of notification, highlighting a critical area for improving communication channels and lead times in future iterations of the programme.

To amplify the impact and ensure broader public engagement, the programme incorporated a strategic media partnership. Media representatives were embedded in each zonal training session, resulting in subsequent newspaper articles and reports. This proactive engagement with the press served as a vital tool for public dissemination, extending the programme's reach beyond direct participants to policymakers and the general public, thereby fostering a wider societal dialogue on cultural policy and capacity building, as advocated by UNESCO (2018).

**Table 2. Attendance Ratio**

<b>Zone</b>	<b>Regions in the zone</b>	<b>Actual attendance percentage (%)</b>	<b>Expected participants</b>
1.	Northern, Upper East, Upper West, and North East regions.	92 (92%)	100
2.	Savannah, Bono East, Bono, Ashanti, and Ahafo regions.	108 (86.4%)	125
3.	Western, Western North and Central regions.	56 (74.67%)	75
4.	Eastern, Greater Accra, Oti and Volta.	74 (74%)	100
<b>Total Attendance = 330</b>		<b>(82.5%)</b>	<b>400</b>

The training program was designed with an equitable recruitment strategy, targeting 25 participants from each of Ghana’s 16 regions for a total national cohort of 400 individuals. This approach aligned with the principle of ensuring broad and fair access to capacity-building opportunities across the national territory (Trade, 2018). However, participant registration revealed disparities, with the Eastern and Volta regions recording the lowest attendance.

Feedback from participants who attended was overwhelmingly positive, yet a common critique emerged regarding the training’s duration. Participants across multiple zones indicated that while the content was valuable, additional days would have been beneficial for a more comprehensive understanding and skill application. This feedback resonates with established principles of adult learning theory, which emphasize the need for sufficient time for reflection, practice, and the assimilation of complex new concepts (Knowles et al., 2014).

For those who were absent, the primary reason cited was delayed notification of the training schedule. This points to a potential breakdown in the communication chain and highlights a critical logistical challenge in large-scale, multi-regional programs, where timely information dissemination is a known hurdle for maximizing participation (Dutta-Bergman, 2005).

To amplify the program’s impact beyond direct attendees, a strategic media engagement plan was implemented. Media representatives were invited to each zonal training session. Their subsequent publications in various newspapers served as a force multiplier, ensuring wider public and stakeholder coverage of the initiative. This practice of leveraging media for dissemination is a recognized strategy for enhancing the reach and public value of development projects (Waisbord, 2014).

### **5.3 Survey Respondent Demographics and Regional Disparities**

The survey, disseminated via a dedicated Telegram channel to maximize accessibility for the digital-savvy target demographic (Suarez-Lledo & Alvarez-Galvez, 2021), garnered a total of 47 responses. The gender distribution of the respondents, illustrated in Figure 3, reveals a notable skew: 64% (n=30) identified as male, 34% (n=16) as female, and 2% (n=1) preferred not to disclose. This demographic snapshot is critical for contextualizing the findings, as it suggests that the programme’s reach, or at least the survey’s response rate, was not gender-balanced, reflecting a common challenge in many cultural and technical fields where male participation is often overrepresented.

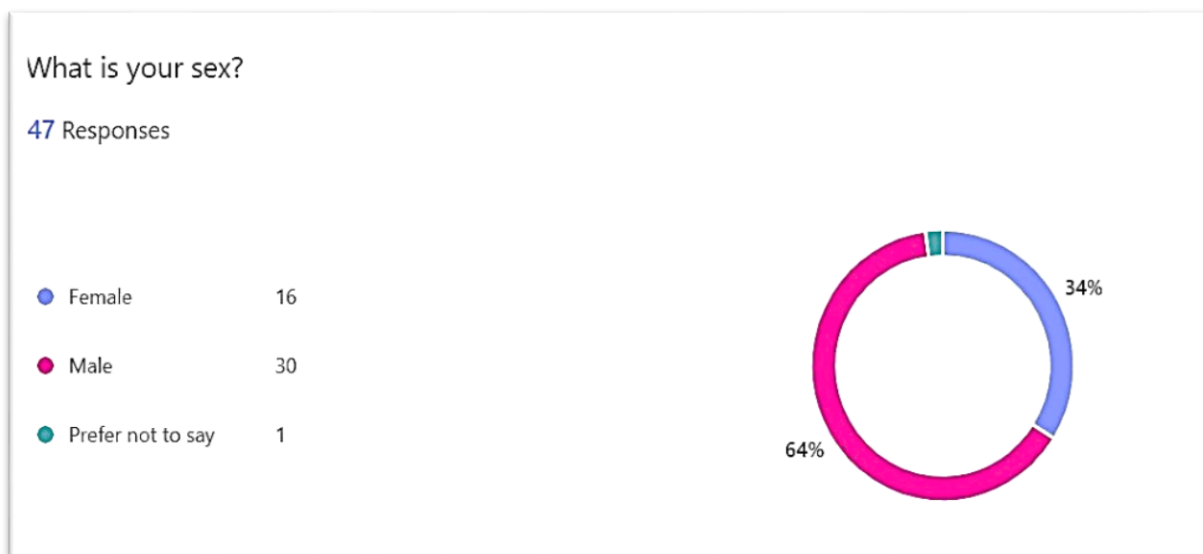


Figure 3. Gender Distributions

A more pronounced disparity is evident in the geographic distribution of participants, detailed in Figure 4. The data indicates a heavy concentration of respondents from the Northern region, which constituted 49% (n=23) of the total sample. The Central region followed with 17% (n=8), while the Upper East, Ashanti, Greater Accra, and Western regions were each represented by 3 participants. The remaining regions were significantly underrepresented, with only 1 or 2 participants each. Crucially, four regions—Ahafo, Bono East, Savannah, and Western North—had no representation whatsoever.

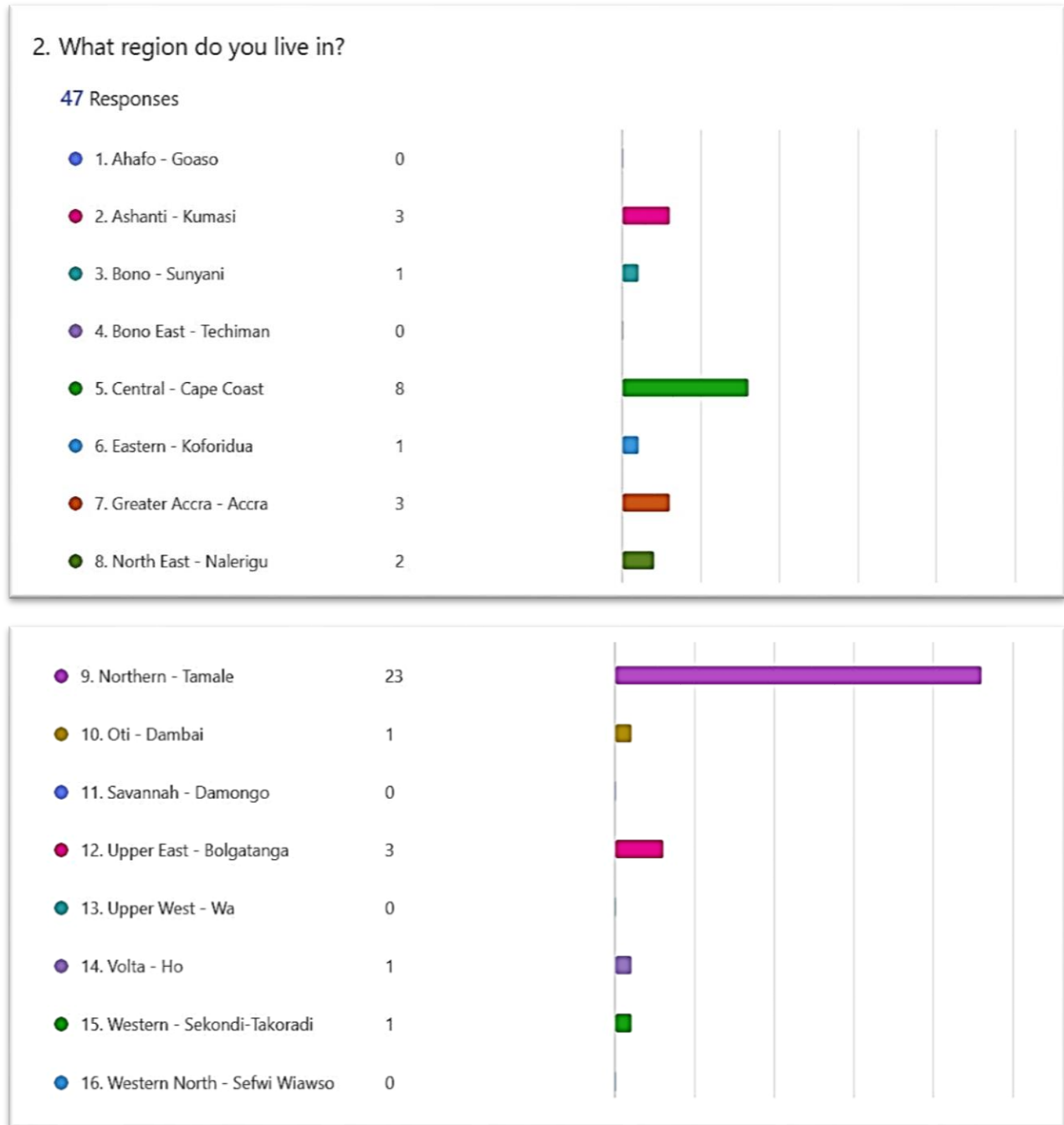


Figure 4. Regional Distribution of Survey Participants

This analysis highlights a significant regional imbalance in survey engagement. The dominance of the Northern region contrasts sharply with the low participation from the western and middle belts. While the Central region shows a strong presence in the south, the complete absence of data from four regions indicates potential critical

gaps in either the initial programme's outreach, the effectiveness of the survey's dissemination within those areas, or underlying structural barriers to participation. Such geographic clustering can limit the generalizability of the survey's findings and underscores the imperative for more targeted and equitable engagement strategies in future initiatives to ensure all voices are captured (Cohen et al., 2002). The data suggests that reliance on a single digital platform like Telegram, while efficient, may have inadvertently excluded communities with lower digital penetration or less active engagement on that specific channel.

### 5.4 Religious Demographics of Survey Respondents

Figure 5 outlines the religious composition of the survey respondents, providing insight into the sample's diversity. The data indicates that Christians form the majority, constituting 64% (n=30) of the participants. Muslims represent a significant minority at 26% (n=12), while African Traditional Religion (ATR) and other faiths are represented by 2% (n=1) and 9% (n=4) of respondents, respectively.

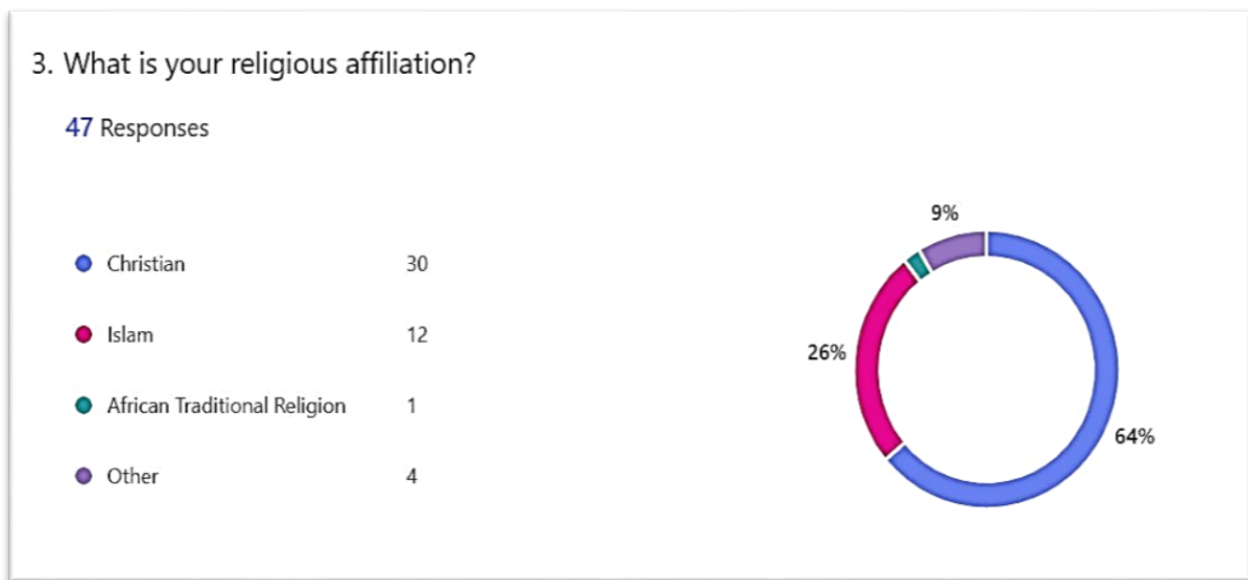


Figure 5. Religious Affiliation of Survey Respondents

This distribution largely mirrors the national religious landscape of Ghana, where Christianity is the dominant faith, followed by Islam and a smaller population practicing ATR or other religions. However, the minimal representation of ATR practitioners in the survey, compared to their presence in the national cultural fabric, may suggest a potential gap in the programme's outreach or engagement with communities and artists whose work is deeply intertwined with indigenous spiritual traditions. This underrepresentation is a critical consideration, as the UNESCO (2005) Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions emphasizes the importance of including all cultural communities, including those defined by religious or spiritual practice.

The significant Muslim presence and the small but diverse "Other" category underscore the necessity for culturally responsive and inclusive programme design. As argued by Ladson-Billings (1995), effective pedagogy and engagement must acknowledge and value the diverse backgrounds of participants. Therefore, the religious demographics of the cohort highlight both the programme's alignment with national trends and a critical opportunity to ensure future initiatives are more inclusive of the full spectrum of Ghana's religious and cultural diversity, particularly in representing the unique perspectives of ATR-affiliated artists.

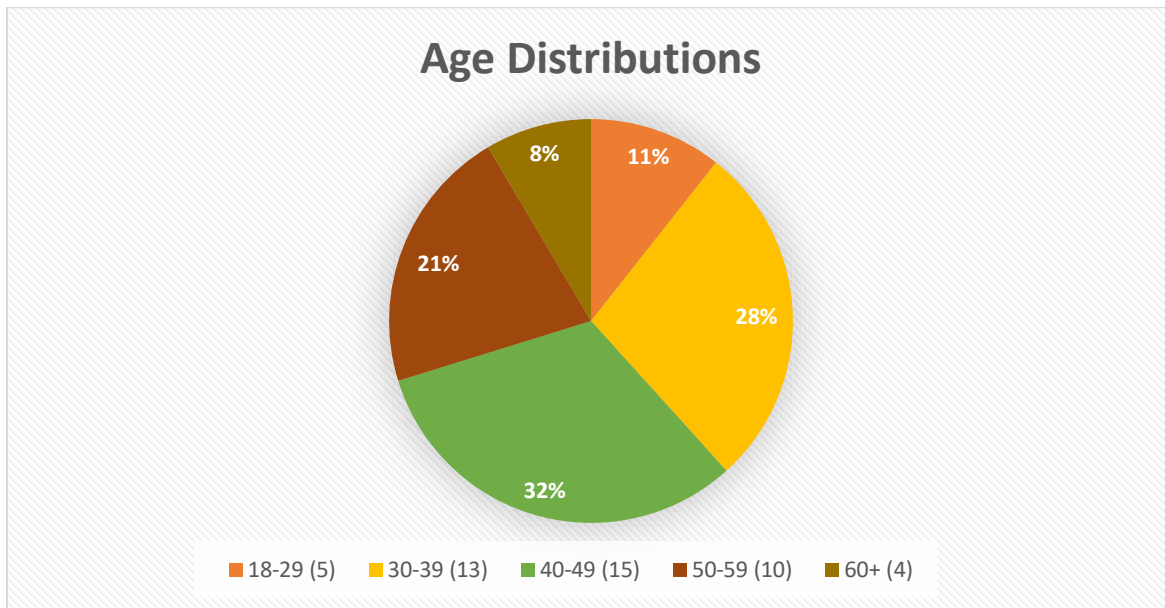


Figure 6. Age Distribution of Survey Respondents

Figure 6 illustrates the age distribution of the survey respondents, which spans a 35-year period from 1965 to 2000. The data reveals a clear concentration of participants within the 1980s and 1990s generational cohorts. Specifically, individuals born in the 1980s constitute the largest group, representing 48.9% (n=23) of the sample, followed by those born in the 1990s at 27.7% (n=13). This indicates that the survey cohort was predominantly composed of individuals who are currently in their 30s and 40s.

The central tendencies of the dataset further confirm this profile. The average (mean) year of birth is 1983, and the median year is 1982, both corresponding to an age of approximately 41-42 years. The mode, 1982, with five respondents, reinforces that this mid-career stage is the most common demographic profile captured by the survey. Older generations (born in the 1960s and 1970s) and the youngest cohort (born in the 2000s) were represented in smaller numbers, at 6.4% (n=3), 19.1% (n=9), and 8.6% (n=4) respectively. This demographic profile suggests the programme's outreach or appeal was strongest among emerging to mid-career artists and cultural professionals.

#### 5.4 Creative Domains of Responses

Analyzing the demographic characteristics of respondents, particularly their creative domains, is essential for contextualizing the survey's findings and identifying potential sampling biases that may influence the interpretation of results (Cohen et al., 2002). The distribution of respondents across creative sectors, as illustrated in Figure 7, reveals a distinct concentration.

The data shows a dominant representation from the Performing Arts domain (e.g., dance, theatre, comedy, poetry), comprising 72.3% (n=34) of the sample. This is followed by the Art and Craft domain at 23.4% (n=11), indicating a significant, though secondary, cohort of visual artists. Other domains are notably less represented: Music (10.6%, n=5), Publishing (6.4%, n=3), with Heritage Sites, Design, and Film each constituting 4.3% (n=2) or less.

This skewed distribution suggests that the programme's outreach, or the survey's dissemination, was most effective within performance-based artistic communities. The strong presence of Performing and Visual Arts aligns with their high visibility in many cultural ecosystems (Trade, 2018). However, the underrepresentation of domains like Film, Design, and Publishing is significant. This may reflect a "core-periphery" dynamic often observed in cultural policy, where certain sectors receive more attention and resources than others (Hesmondhalgh, 2019).

Consequently, while the findings offer valuable insights into the experiences of performing and visual artists, they may not fully capture the specific challenges and perspectives of professionals in underrepresented, often more

commercially-oriented creative industries. For future initiatives and research, a more targeted strategy is needed to ensure equitable engagement across the entire spectrum of the creative economy, thereby yielding a more comprehensive and representative understanding of the sector’s needs (Belfiore, 2011).

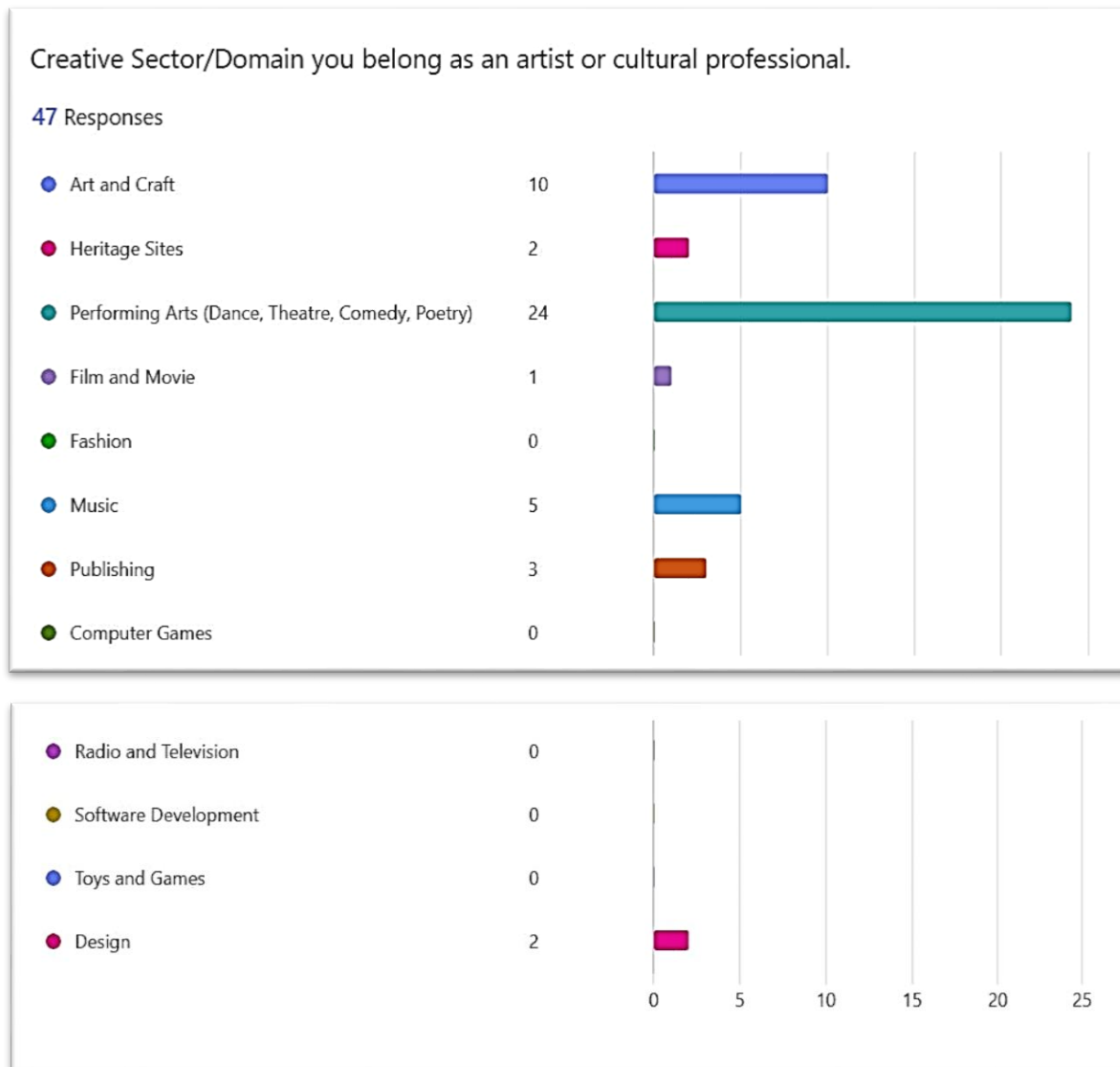


Figure 7. Distribution of Respondents by Creative Domain

**5.5 Analysis of Participant Feedback on Training Efficacy**

The demographic data presented in Figure 8 provides essential context for interpreting the participant feedback, as the characteristics of a sample can significantly influence their reception and perception of a training program (Cohen et al., 2002). The survey results reveal a nuanced and somewhat contradictory picture of the training’s effectiveness, highlighting a clear disparity between its conceptual value and its logistical execution.

A central and critical finding is that a significant majority of participants (approximately 70%) expressed strong disagreement that the training duration was adequate. This overwhelming sentiment suggests that the attempt to cover six comprehensive training manuals in a single day was pedagogically unsound. This aligns with principles of adult learning, which emphasize the need for sufficient time for reflection, practice, and the assimilation of complex

information (Brookfield, 2015). The condensed format likely compromised the depth of learning, despite the quality of the material.

Despite this significant logistical shortcoming, the training demonstrated substantive impact on participant knowledge. A majority (over 60%) strongly agreed that their understanding of intellectual property, copyright, and cultural policy frameworks improved significantly (Arhin Jnr, 2025a). This indicates that the curriculum content was relevant and valuable, effectively addressing key knowledge gaps as intended (Bokova et al, 2015). Furthermore, over 55% of participants strongly agreed that they learned new things, confirming the program’s success in delivering novel information.

However, this positive cognitive outcome did not fully translate into overall satisfaction. A notable proportion of respondents (around 30%) were neutral or disagreed that the program met their expectations. This divergence between learning gains and fulfilled expectations underscores a critical point: the perceived success of a capacity-building initiative is not solely dependent on content quality (Arhin Jnr, 2025b) but is equally contingent on its structural delivery (Knowles et al., 2014). The variations in feedback regarding organization and time allocation for specific topics further substantiate the conclusion that while the program was conceptually strong, its compressed timeline posed a major impediment to its overall perceived effectiveness and participant satisfaction.



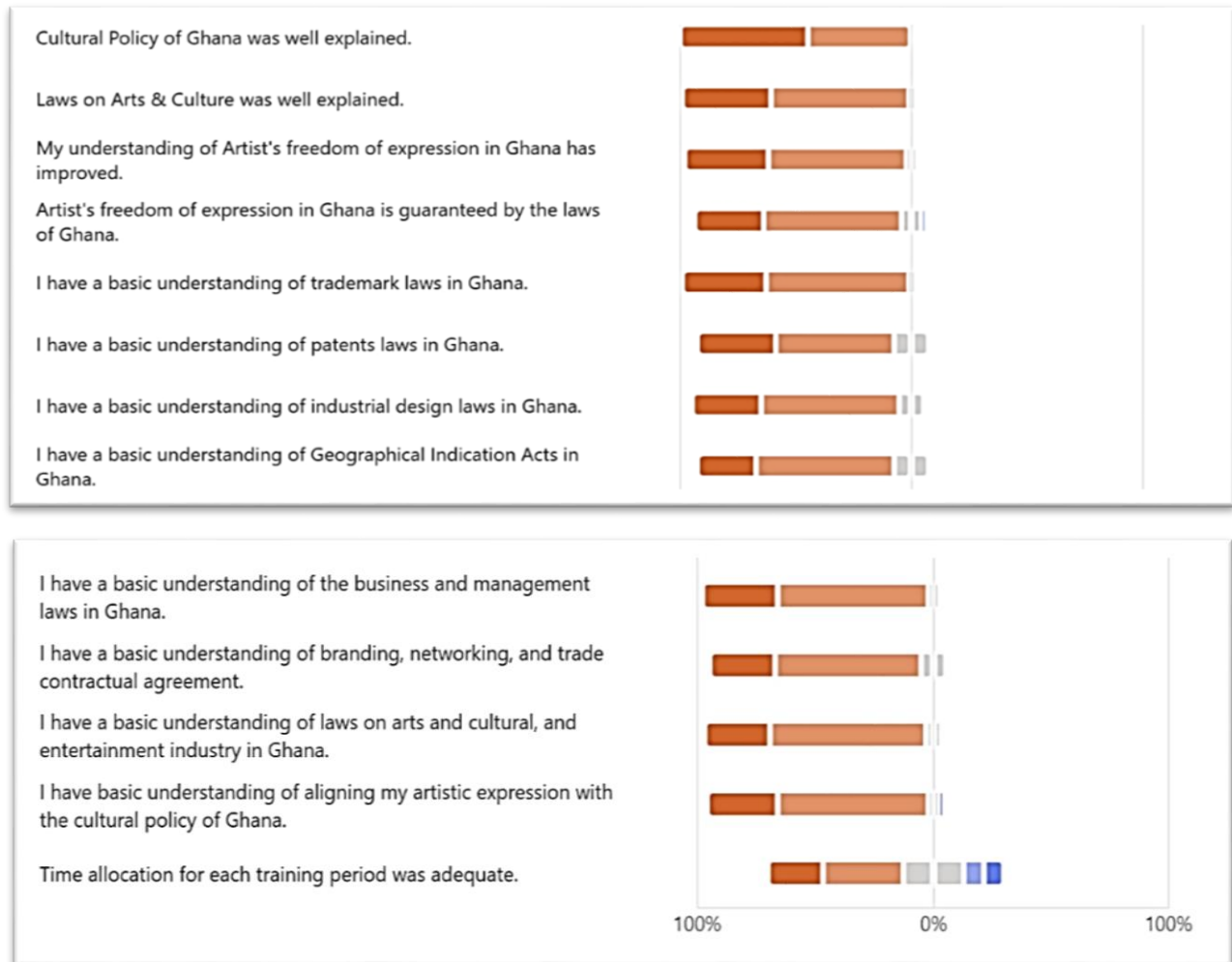


Figure 8. Participant Demographics and Training Feedback

In summary, the data paints a picture of a program with high potential and strong foundational content, whose impact was ultimately constrained by a delivery model that did not allow for the deep, reflective engagement that adult learners require.

### 5.6 Post-Training Analysis of Legal and Policy Understanding

Figure 8 illustrates participants' self-reported understanding of key legal and policy topics following the one-day training session. The data presents a generally positive yet nuanced picture of knowledge acquisition. Overall, approximately 70% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they had attained a basic understanding of the covered topics, suggesting the training was successful in building a foundational level of confidence across a broad range of subjects (Arhin Jnr. 2025b).

The effectiveness of the training appears to vary by topic. A high level of comprehension was reported for core intellectual property and rights-based frameworks, with 80% of respondents indicating a good grasp of constitutional rights and artistic freedom, as well as intellectual property rights and copyrights. Similarly, 75% reported understanding protection against unfair competition law. This suggests that the training was particularly effective in delivering content related to fundamental legal protections for artists, a core objective of many cultural capacity-building programs (Arhin Jnr, 2025b; Trade, 2018).

However, the data reveals specific areas where understanding was comparatively less robust. Topics such as revenues and taxation, legal and regulatory frameworks for the cultural sector, and cultural diplomacy and international cooperation saw agreement rates drop to the 65-70% range. These subjects, often more complex and procedural, may require more dedicated time or specialized instructional methods to achieve the same level of comprehension as foundational rights (Arhin Jnr, 2025).

A notable minority of 10-15% of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed with having a basic understanding, with one respondent exhibiting significant knowledge gaps across most topics. An additional 5-10% remained neutral, indicating uncertainty. This distribution is consistent with principles of adult learning, which acknowledge that learners in a heterogeneous group were assimilated information at different rates and depths, especially in a condensed format (Brookfield, 2017).

In short, while the training successfully imparted a general sense of confidence in key legal areas, the findings highlight specific, complex topics like cultural diplomacy and taxation where knowledge gaps persist. This indicates a need for targeted follow-up sessions or advanced modules to ensure comprehensive and equitable understanding across all participants, moving beyond foundational awareness to practical, applicable knowledge (Merriam & Bierema, 2013).



Figure 9. Participants Understanding of Legal and Policy Topics

The findings presented in Figures 9 and 10 offer critical insights into participant engagement, knowledge progression, and overall perceptions of the training. Collectively, this data contributes to a comprehensive and triangulated understanding of the programme’s effectiveness in building the capacity of emerging artists and cultural professionals in Ghana (Cohen et al., 2002).

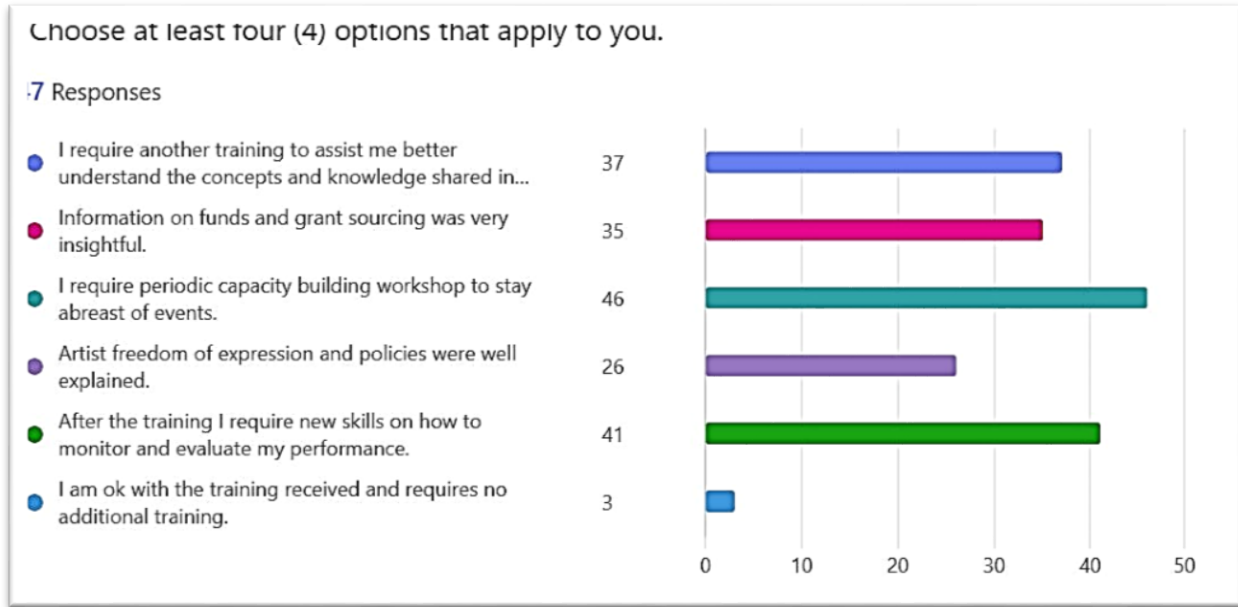


Figure 10. General impression about the training

By correlating engagement metrics with self-reported learning outcomes, the analysis moves beyond mere participation counts to assess the programme’s substantive impact on participants’ understanding of key legal and policy frameworks (Trade, 2018). These insights are vital for evaluating the programme’s role within the broader ecosystem of cultural sector development and for informing the design of future, more targeted capacity-building initiatives that effectively address identified gaps.

**Time allocation for each training period was adequate.**

- Strongly agree 23.4%
- agree 34%
- Neutral 25.5%
- Disagree 8.5%
- Strongly disagree. 8.5%

Figure 11. Response on Time Allocation

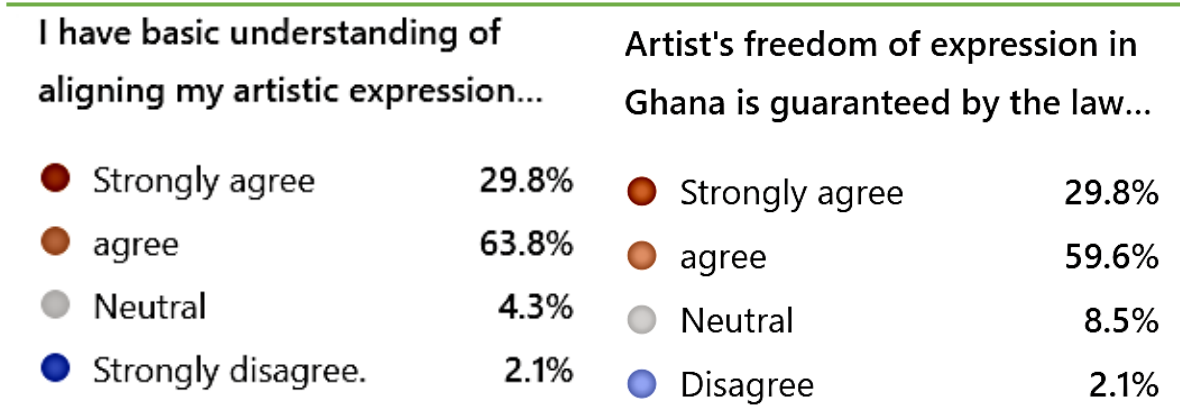


Figure 12. Response on Artist Expression of Freedom

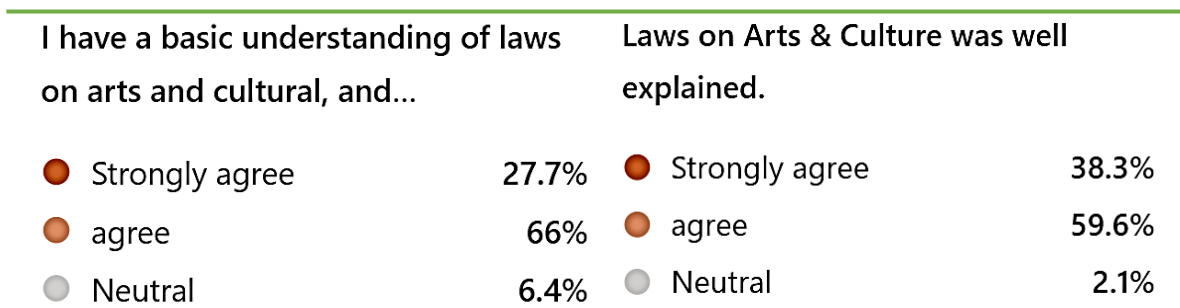


Figure 13. Arts & Culture Laws

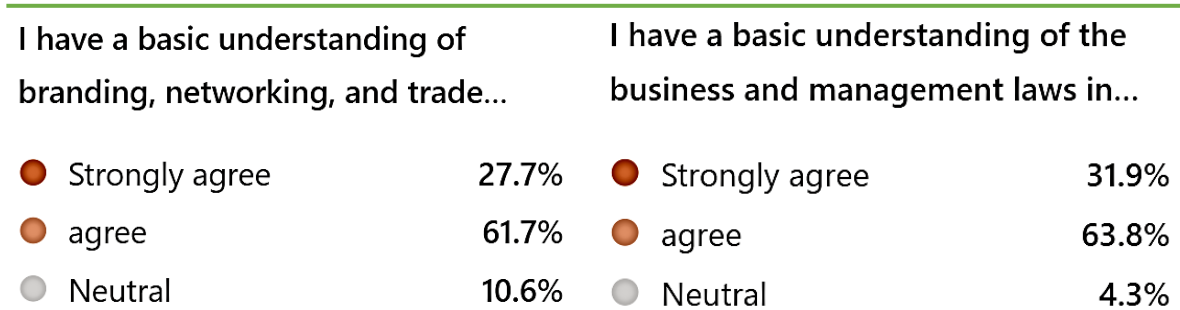


Figure 14. Responses on Branding, Networking, Trade, Business & Management Laws

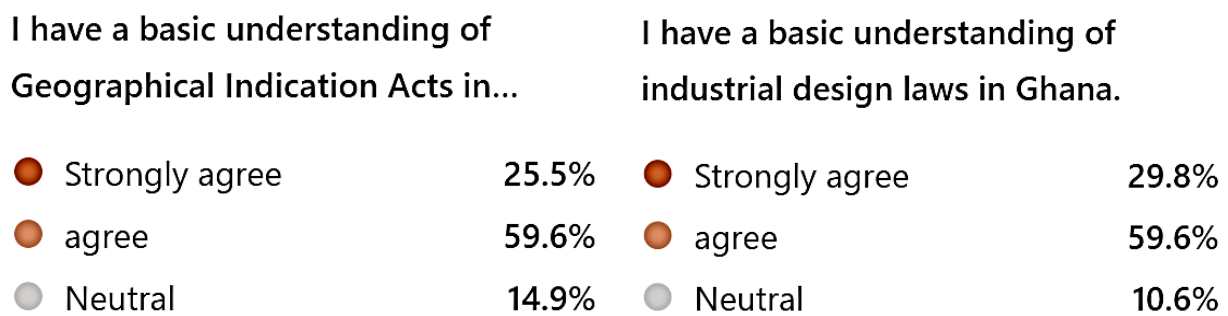


Figure 15. Response Graphical Indication Act & Industrial Design Laws

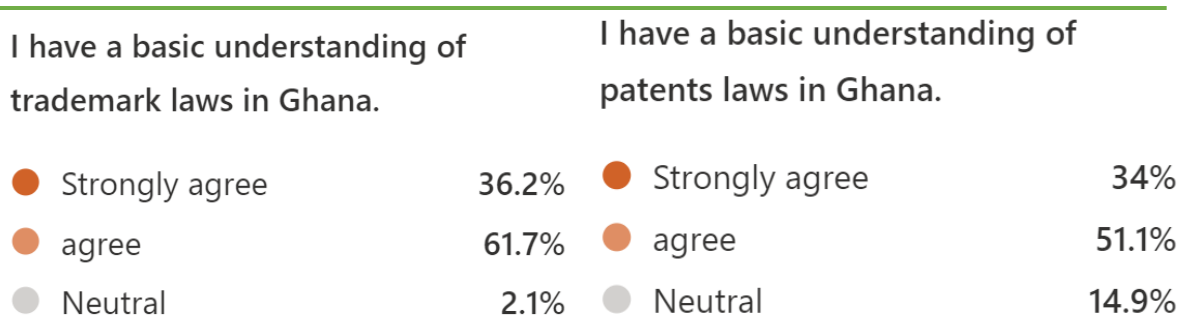


Figure 16. Response on Trademark and Patent Laws in Ghana

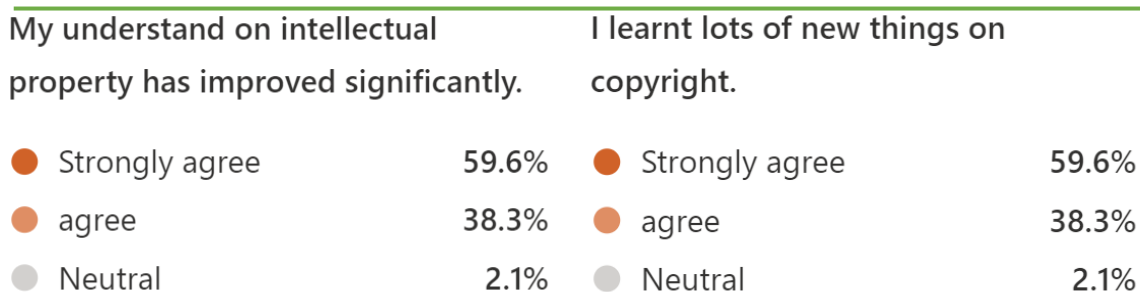


Figure 17. Response on Understanding Intellectual Property and especially Copyright

The analysis of Figures 11 through 17 indicates that the capacity building and policy support interventions met their objectives with an average success rate of 77.6%. This high rate of achievement substantiates the conclusion that these initiatives had a significant and positive outcome on the target demographic of artists and cultural professionals in Ghana.

## 6. Summary of Observations, Analysis of Impact, and Recommendations for Consideration to Inform Future Decision-Making.

Table 3 synthesizes the study’s findings, linking observations to impacts and recommendations for future policy and program development.

Table 3. Summary of observation, impact and recommendation

No.	Observation	Impact	Recommendation
1.	The training sessions conducted between 9am and 3pm proved to be the most productive, yielding high engagement and retention rates among participants. However, the condensed one-day format took a toll on their energy levels, leading to noticeable signs of exhaustion. Specifically, participants’ focus began to wane after 3pm, departures became hurried, and involvement in post-3pm	The effective learning hours were from 9am-3pm. One-day training led to exhaustion and after 3pm most participants were in a hurry to return to their respective residences. To avoid these issues in future training programs, it is essential to reconsider the format. Limiting sessions to the 9am-3pm window would help maximize engagement. Additionally, breaking up	Three days per each location repeating every quarter or half yearly as a Continuous Professional Development (CDP). The effective implementation of this project will necessitate a multi-faceted approach, involving additional resource persons and resulting in associated costs. To guarantee that the initiative accurately reflects the breadth of the creative industry, UNESCO should consider collaborating with other

activities dwindled significantly.

Given the importance of these topics:

1. Overview of 2004 Cultural Policy Review Document to Align with Industry Practices.
2. Business Plan Drafting, Business Registration and Sourcing for Funds, Grants, and Sponsorship.
3. Overview of Intellectual Property Laws in Ghana: Dealing with Proof of Ownership, Piracy, Copyright Infringements, and Other IP Related Offenses.
4. Business Administration and Management Practices for Artist and Cultural Professionals: Company Laws, Contract, Taxation, Insurance, Security, Occupational Hazards - Quality Production, Marketing, Networking, and Distribution.
5. The Interplay of Cultural Diplomacy and International Cooperation; Artists as Agents of Social Transformation.
6. Legal Framework, Constitutional Rights and Artistic Freedom of Expression in Ghana.

2. The participant selection criteria prioritized by National Commission on Culture (NCC) staff, comprising approximately 85% of training participants.

training into multiple days would alleviate fatigue, allowing participants to absorb information more effectively. Scheduling critical content before 3pm would also ensure that key takeaways are conveyed when participants are most receptive. Moreover, incorporating relaxation and rejuvenation time into the agenda would help mitigate burnout.

Despite targeting emerging artists and cultural professionals from the community, the training session's participant demographics revealed a notable disparity. The number of community-based participants was substantially lower than NCC staff members, indicating a need for improved outreach and inclusivity strategies.

stakeholders. By implementing these adjustments, future training initiatives can prioritize participant well-being and productivity, ultimately enhancing the overall learning experience.

To ensure diverse representation and inclusivity, participant selection should adhere to a quota-based system. Each key stakeholder, including government agencies, private sector organizations, civil society groups, and industry associations, should be allocated a specific quota to select participants for the training sessions.

3. The National Commission on Culture's (NCC) implementation of this novel project presented significant communication challenges. Due to the lack of established protocols and clear communication channels, ambiguity surrounded venue changes, date adjustments, and scheduling for various project phases, including pre-training, training, and post-training activities. During the project, it became clear that the National Commission on Culture (NCC) was responsible for coordinating with key stakeholders, including the UNESCO Ghana Commission, the Ministry of Tourism, Arts, and Culture (MoTAC), and the UNESCO Accra Office.

This ambiguity had far-reaching consequences, impacting stakeholders' understanding and participation. Specifically, it led to confusion, frustration, delays or missed participation, reduced engagement.

To address the immediate challenges, a thorough project evaluation should be conducted by UNESCO to identify communication gaps.

In the long term, standardized communication protocols should be developed for future projects. NCC staff should receive training on effective communication strategies, and stakeholder feedback mechanisms should be incorporated. Additionally, a project management information system (PMIS) should be established for real-time updates.

UNESCO's support is crucial in addressing these challenges. Technical assistance for communication protocol development, capacity-building training for NCC staff, and allocation of resources for project management and communication infrastructure are essential. Regular monitoring and evaluation will also ensure project effectiveness.

For future projects, communication strategies should be integrated into project proposals, and sufficient budget allocation should be made for communication activities. Stakeholder engagement and participation in project planning should also be ensured.

By implementing these measures, UNESCO can enhance project effectiveness, stakeholder satisfaction, and overall impact, ultimately contributing to the successful empowerment of emerging

- |    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
|----|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | artists and cultural professionals in Ghana.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| 4. | Throughout the discussions, intellectual property knowledge stood out as a pressing concern, with participants repeatedly highlighting the need for better understanding and protection of their creative rights.                   | To complement the condensed training session, the National Expert launched the IP Zone Podcast, accessible on YouTube and various digital stores, providing a sustainable platform for continued intellectual property education and community engagement.                                                                               |
| 5. | Time constraints, limited resources, and a condensed six-topic agenda limited opportunities for in-depth engagement.                                                                                                                | These limitations affected the level of engagement and potential for meaningful interaction.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| 6. | The participants extended their sincere appreciation to the UNESCO Aschberg programme for sponsoring and initiating this pioneering project in Ghana, acknowledging its uniqueness and significance.                                | Despite encountering significant obstacles, the National Commission on Culture (NCC) exhaustively explored all avenues to ensure the successful implementation of this project, showcasing its dedication and resilience.                                                                                                                |
| 7. | The survey's results should be interpreted with caution, as the limited response rate of 14.2% (47/330) may not provide a comprehensive representation of the project's effectiveness, warranting additional evaluation strategies. | Although the response rate of 14.2% (47/330) may limit generalizability, the feedback gathered serves as a constructive foundation for evaluating program effectiveness and informing future project improvements.                                                                                                                       |
| 8. | An inconsistency was noted in the program's target audience, as participants and survey respondents included individuals aged 50+, which                                                                                            | The project's efficacy in empowering emerging artists and cultural professionals in Ghana is                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
|    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | UNESCO can expand its reach and engagement by launching an Intellectual Property podcast, available on various distribution stores, as a valuable resource for Continuous Professional Development (CPD) among stakeholders, fostering a broader understanding of intellectual property rights and their significance in the digital age |
|    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | Considering the success and limitations of this project, UNESCO is encouraged to allocate additional funds to support expanded training programs in the future, ensuring sufficient time for comprehensive coverage of complex subjects.                                                                                                 |
|    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | To effectively implement the culture policy, UNESCO and the government of Ghana should provide the National Commission on Culture (NCC) with additional financial resources, particularly for staff development, to enhance its capacity to promote awareness and accessibility among its members and stakeholders.                      |
|    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | For comprehensive evaluation, National Experts and project reporters should utilize diverse assessment platforms, including qualitative and quantitative methods, to ensure robust and accurate findings.                                                                                                                                |
|    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | UNESCO or any project application should establish clear demographic parameters. The NCC themed the project around the Akan proverb,                                                                                                                                                                                                     |

challenges the conventional understanding of 'emerging artists'.

Theme:

Akan Proverb: "Obi nnim obrepɔn Ashesi" (Nobody knows the humble beginning of a great person)

questionable, given the participant demographic skewing significantly older (average age 50-60 years) than the intended target audience. The project's theme, 'Nobody knows the humble beginning of a great person,' focuses on empowering young artists and cultural professionals, providing a nurturing foundation for their growth and development. This approach recognizes the critical importance of early support in fostering long-term creative potential.

'Nobody knows the humble beginning of a great person,' highlighting the importance of early development and growth, and underscoring the value of investing in emerging talent.

To better serve the creative community, future initiatives should concentrate on young artists and cultural professionals in the 18-35 age range, providing foundational support during a critical period of artistic growth.

9. A stakeholder proposed establishing an Artists and Cultural Professionals Help Desk to facilitate linkages with the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), capitalizing on its potential to boost income, reduce poverty, and enhance economic inclusion across the continent.

This initiative would provide a vital support system for creatives, enabling them to navigate the AfCFTA's vast market opportunities, simplify customs procedures, and access critical information for business growth.

NCC should establish a collaborative relationship with the AfCFTA Secretariat, headquartered in Accra, Ghana, to explore potential opportunities for implementing the Artists and Cultural Professionals Help Desk. This partnership would facilitate the exchange of expertise, resources, and knowledge, enabling the NCC to leverage the AfCFTA's framework for promoting cultural and creative industries across Africa.

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## 7. Conclusions

The project successfully achieved its primary objective of empowering emerging artists and cultural professionals in Ghana. This is substantiated by the direct training of 330 individuals, representing 82.5% of the initial target, in essential legal frameworks and cultural conventions. The training sessions served as a critical platform for knowledge sharing, professional networking, and direct capacity building, equipping participants with practical skills for their creative careers (Arhin Jnr, 2025b; Bridgstock, 2013).

A key factor in the project's success was its participatory methodology. The consultative approach, which engaged a wide spectrum of stakeholders from the outset, fostered a strong sense of ownership and collaborative spirit within the creative sector. This inclusive strategy is widely recognized as a best practice for ensuring the relevance and sustainability of cultural development initiatives (Belfiore, 2011).

The knowledge imparted-particularly on intellectual property, cultural rights, and national regulatory frameworks-directly enhances the professional capacities of individual artists. This, in turn, is poised to contribute to the broader growth and development of Ghana's creative economy. By building a more informed and legally literate artistic

workforce, the project's outcomes align with and support the strategic objectives outlined in Ghana's new national cultural policy (Government of Ghana, 2024), reinforcing the sector's role in sustainable development (UNESCO, 2005).

While logistical challenges, such as the condensed training schedule, were noted, the project's overall impact in strengthening human capital within the creative sector establishes a solid foundation for its continued growth and formalization.

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