Creative Universe Summit 2026

High Level Brief | As at 21 October 2026

Creative Universe Summit 2026 takes place on Friday 13 November 2026 at Henley Business School Africa. This brief brings every stakeholder up to date on the vision, programme, speakers and partnerships, and asks for your input.

Summit at a glance

Theme	Turning African creative potential into a global economic powerhouse
Campaign call	Back it. Moving from recognising creative talent to backing creative businesses
Date and time	Friday 13 November 2026, 10:00 – 18:00 SAST
Venue	Henley Business School Africa, 1 Witkoppen Road, Paulshof, Johannesburg
Hosts	Henley Business School Africa and Leaders in Motion Academy (LIMA)
Audience	Creative entrepreneurs, investors, producers, distributors, industry partners, policymakers and academics. 2025 drew about 250; 2026 target to 300
Format	One-day summit: keynotes, a plenary panel, three parallel breakaways, Legends Corner, exhibitions and an evening networking session
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Vision

African creativity already shapes global culture; the summit exists to turn that influence into African-owned businesses, intellectual property, skilled jobs and exports. Creative Universe has grown from under 20 people in 2024 to about 250 in 2025, and is working toward training 1,000 creatives by 2030.

Objective for the day: every session moves the room from admiring creative talent to backing creative businesses, and ends with a specific action.

Core messages

- Creative people build economic value: businesses, jobs and IP.
- Business capability turns talent into enterprise.
- African ideas, and African-owned IP, can compete and create value globally.
- Collaboration and investment open markets and make growth possible.

What "Back It" asks of each group

Group	The ask
Creative entrepreneurs	Build the business behind your creativity
Investors and funders	Back African creative businesses
Sponsors	Back the programme, the pitch and the next cohort
Industry partners	Open markets and create commercial opportunities
Government and academia	Fund, research and strengthen the ecosystem
Media and audiences	Attend, share and amplify

Tone for all summit material: bold, clear, ambitious, human, commercial, proudly African and action-focused.

Programme and speakers

11 speakers are confirmed, 14 invitations await a response, 2 invitees are unavailable and have been asked to nominate a proxy, and 4 roles are still to be appointed.

Time	Session	Speaker	Role	Status
10:00 – 11:15	Arrival, registration and exhibitions: gaming and e-sports, VR experience, photo booth			
11:15 – 11:40	**Welcome and opening (Henley and LIMA)**	Barry van Zyl	Welcome	Confirmed
		Thato Moraka	Welcome	Confirmed
11:40 – 12:20	**Opening keynotes**	Prof Jon Foster-Pedley, Dean and Director, Henley Business School Africa	Keynote	Wendy to confirm
		Hon. Stella Tembisa Ndabeni, Minister of Small Business Development	Keynote	Awaiting response
12:20 – 13:15	**Main panel: Creativity as a serious economic opportunity**	Sithembile Ntombela, CMO, South African Tourism	Panellist	Confirmed
		Ben Ainsley, HM Deputy Trade Commissioner – Africa, UK Department for Business and Trade (reply due 23 Oct)	Panellist	Awaiting response
		Representative, SEDFA / Department of Small Business Development	Panellist	Awaiting response
		Director-General, Department of Sport, Arts and Culture	Panellist	Unavailable – proxy requested
		John Vlismas, Partner and Head of Strategy, OGO Productions (reply due 23 Oct)	Moderator	Awaiting response
13:15 – 13:30	Break			
13:30 – 14:30	**Breakaway 1: Market diversification and transformation in the creative economy**	Martin Hiller, Portfolio Director, FAME Week Africa	Panellist	Confirmed
		Dr Pepe Marais, Joe Public	Panellist	Awaiting response
		Greg Maloka	Panellist	To be appointed
		To be named	Moderator	To be appointed
13:30 – 14:30	**Breakaway 2: Technology and AI as enablers of the creative economy**	Nicola van Niekerk, Canal+	Panellist	Confirmed
		Sello Mmakau, Telkom	Panellist	Awaiting response
		Representative, Africori (meeting being set up)	Panellist	Awaiting response
		Representative, Apple	Panellist	Awaiting response
		Antos Stella, Music Arena	Panellist	Awaiting response
		Dr Puleng Makhoalibe, CEO, Alchemy Inspiration	Moderator	Awaiting response
13:30 – 14:30	**Breakaway 3: Funding creative businesses**	Dr Ziyanda Mzamo, Corporate Service Executive, Kagiso Trust	Panellist	Confirmed
		Princess Tsakani Nkambule, Group CEO, Endoni Holdings (tentative)	Panellist	Tentative
		Shaun Samuels, Managing Director, SGS Consulting	Panellist	Awaiting response
		Michelle Constant, CEO, American Chamber of Commerce	Panellist	Awaiting response
		Richard Mazini, Chief Investment Officer, SEDFA	Panellist	TBD
		Representative, CANEX (Afreximbank)	Panellist	Seeking contact
		To be named	Moderator	To be appointed
14:30 – 15:30	**Legends Corner: Legacy, ownership and the next generation**	Yvonne Chaka Chaka, singer, songwriter, entrepreneur; Founder, WoMan Radio	Panellist	Confirmed
		Robert Trunz, entrepreneur and music producer; Founder, M.E.L.T 2000	Panellist	Confirmed
		Nicky B, producer and presenter, The World Show, Kaya FM 95.9	Moderator	Confirmed

Time	Session	Speaker	Role	Status
15:30 – 15:50	**Closing keynote and Back it call to action**	To be named	Keynote	To be appointed
15:50 – 16:00	**Close and segue to entertainment**	To be named	MC	To be appointed
16:00 – 17:00	Entertainment and exhibitions: finger snacks, wine and whisky tasting			

Status key: green = confirmed; yellow = awaiting response; red = unavailable, proxy requested; grey = to be appointed.

Partners, sponsors and exhibitors

WoMan Radio is confirmed as a partner. Sponsorship decisions and further media partners are still open.

Area	Status
Implementing partners	Confirmed: Henley Business School Africa, Leaders in Motion Academy
Programme funder	Confirmed: DSAC, through the Mzansi Golden Economy
Media partners	Confirmed: WoMan Radio. Further media partnerships being sought, SABC follow up. Kaya FM budget constraint.
Sponsors	Awaiting responses from Coca-Cola, Diageo and Nando's
Exhibitors	Being confirmed: gaming and e-sports, VR experience, photo booth and others

Introductions to further media partners, sponsors or exhibitors are welcome.

Your input on timings

We welcome your views on the running order and any proposed adjustments.

1. **Add a proper lunch.** Guests arrive at 10:00 and the only food is at 16:00. Extend the break to 30 minutes (13:15 – 13:45) and start breakaways at 13:45.
2. **Add a changeover before Legends Corner.** Breakaways end as Legends Corner starts in plenary. Allow 10 minutes to move rooms, or shorten breakaways to 50 minutes.
3. **Right-size the breakaways.** Breakaways 2 and 3 have six panellists (in case of unavailability).
4. **Secure the close.** Confirm the closing keynote, and script the Back it call to action so the MC can lead it if needed.
5. **Appoint moderators first.** Two moderators, the MC and the closing keynote are still open; moderators should join speaker preparation calls.

Next steps

Milestone	Date
Outstanding speaker replies	23 October 2026
Speaker packs issued	30 October 2026
Speaker preparation calls	Week of 2 November 2026
Summit day	13 November 2026