

# Building Beyond

Cycle 2

# Impact Report



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Fonds

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# Introduction: Building Beyond

Building Beyond is a learning structure where 12 creative thinkers and doers come together to reimagine questions around urban spaces and communities within the African continent. Through Building Beyond the Prince Claus Fund and Creative Industries Fund support practices that engage with the relational worlds of communities and public space in this setting, and seek to foster conversations on how resilience, humanity, and creativity in our urban environments can create opportunities for communally imagined realities in the city.

The fellows work together with mentors throughout the year to develop a body of work and receive guidance and an active exchange of ideas and opportunities for collaboration. The programme consists of two Labs (week-long mentoring intensives, one in a city in Africa and one in the Netherlands), monthly online masterclasses, peer-group sessions and one-on-one sessions with mentors. Each participant receives an award of €10.000 to invest in their practices.

Building Beyond aims to accelerate professional practice and leadership and creatively address societal challenges by:

- Recognising potential leaders in the field of design, architecture and the digital space and bring them together with mentors in a year-long programme aimed at developing a body of work.
- Supporting emerging artists, designers, creatives and thinkers whose practice relates to design, public space, architecture, activism, policy, and the digital space to propose new methods for investigating challenges relating to their city, its surroundings and its communities.
- Stimulating experimental out of the box practices that move beyond disciplinary and thematic boundaries that consider community needs and desires while promoting the inclusion of women and other marginalised groups.
- Providing participating artists with a supportive and learning network of solidarity to feed their practice in the long run.
- Contributing to discourse around the themes of the programme in a meaningful way
- Stimulating active exchange of ideas and meaningful connections (peer to peer / mentors).
- Network expansion, increasing professional opportunities (peer connections and exchange with the Dutch field).

## Second cycle

The second cycle of the Building Beyond programme took place throughout 2023, with the fellows selected through an open call in late 2022.

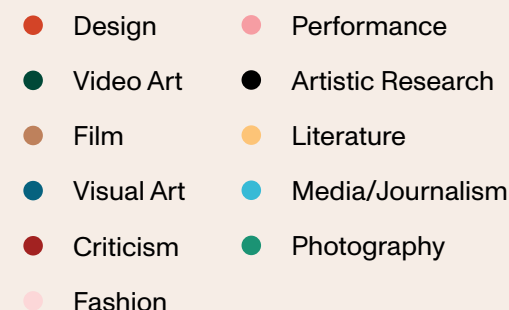
The final selection of the twelve participating artists was made by the Prince Claus Fund and Creative Industries Fund teams. The selection includes practitioners working in a wide range of design fields including architecture, urbanism, digital design, visual arts, photography, research and performance. In the selection attention was paid to diversity of geographical spread and artistic discipline. The final selection consists of 5 female, 4 male and 3 non-binary practitioners. They are from and working in Benin, Egypt, Ethiopia, Kenya, Libya, Mozambique, Nigeria, South Africa and Tanzania.

The first lab week took place in Accra in May 2023. The second lab week took place in Amsterdam in October 2023. Fellows came together in Amsterdam and Rotterdam. They also participated in a public event organised together with the Nieuwe Instituut, titled Reimagining Future African Cities.

The mentors who guided the recipients throughout the process were Ola Hassanain, Khensani Jurczok-de Klerk, Hicham Bouzid and Nzinga B. Mboup.

For more information on the individual practices of fellows, please see the [Prince Claus Fund website](#).

## What discipline(s) do you work in?



# Goals & Methodology

This report presents the results and learnings from the second cycle of Building Beyond, with the goals of:

- Keeping our funding partner sufficiently informed of the results of each programme cycle
- Informing any adjustments made to the programming year-to-year

The report focusses on understanding the impact of the programme through the experiences and understanding of those involved in it. These experiences, gathered through reflection sessions and reporting, have been qualitatively analysed following the Prince Claus Fund's Theory of Change to provide a broader understanding.

The first part of the report, Learning from the programme, draws on the insights from group reflection sessions that took place at the mid-point of the programme (June 2023) and at the close of the programme (January 2024). These sessions focussed the cohort's shared experience of the programme administration and content, as well as the relationship with the mentors and within the group itself. Reflection sessions were also held with the mentors, and their perspective is used to supplement the report where needed. Sessions were held on the basis of confidentiality, and all quotes from these sessions are

reproduced with the consent of the fellows (some are reproduced anonymously at the request of individual fellows).

The second part of the report, Individual Impact, builds on reporting received from the fellows following the close of the programme. The reporting consisted of a combination of open and multiple choice questions, and focussed on the experience of fellows outside of the programme. 10 of the 12 fellows fully completed the report, with another partially completing it. The results of this reporting give insights into the outputs and short-term outcomes of the programme.

As data gathering for this report took place during and immediately following the programme, this report does not give significant insight into the long-term outcomes of the programme. An overarching review at the close of the third year of the programme will present longer term insights from across all cycles.

# Executive Summary

## Learning from the programme

- Programme administration was efficient and effective. Core aspects of the programme should be communicated both verbally and in writing in the early stages of the programme.
- The multidisciplinary makeup of the programme was very appreciated. At the same time, the selection of guest speakers was felt to be too heavily focussed on architecture.
- The lab week in the Netherlands showcased the strengths, but also some potential difficulties, of building connections with the Dutch field.
- Peer-to-peer connections were a strength of the programme, and more time could be made to further develop these through collaborative work earlier in the programme

## Individual impact

- Through the programme, fellows developed new professional perspectives, ways of approaching concepts and thinking about their own work.
- The flexibility of the trust-based funding allowed fellows to shift their work based on the learnings from the programme.
- Fellows who have shown works in the last year have reached new audiences locally and internationally.
- Social impact includes creating spaces of safety and freedom as well as sparking dialogue, and will likely continue to grow as more fellows show work following the programme.

# Culture is

# building beyond.

Photo by Kwasi Darko from the lab week in Accra

# Learning from the programme

## Programme administration

As in the first cycle of Building Beyond, programme administration is praised by fellows. The implementing team was seen as highly efficient, effective and thoughtful, both online and during the two in-person lab weeks. The organisation of these two weeks in particular was seen as smooth and well considered, though some fellows still feel a desire for more moments of rest during the packed schedule of the weeks.

In particular fellows praised the standard of ongoing communication during the programme. Both online and in person, fellows received practical information in a timely and useful manner, with one saying: **“The organization is incredible. I will give that to all of the organizers. We just start to think about questions, and before I can even draft an email they are already sending out information answering my question.”** - Mikail Jassat

However some improvement could still be made to the way that key programme elements are communicated. Despite the implementing team specifically focussing from on communicating the nature of the programme

clearly, based on last year’s learning, the unusual nature of the programme meant that some fellows still experienced uncertainty in the early months of the programme. While compared to cycle one there was less uncertainty about the nature and structure of the programme, the nature and limits of the trust-based funding offered through the programme was still a source of anxiety to some fellows. In particular, the need to communicate clearly, both verbally and in writing, that fellows are permitted to use funding received through the programme to cover daily living expenses, and that no financial report or proof of spending will be expected from them, cannot be overstated.

Another area in which stronger communication in the early stages of the programme would have been appreciated is the needs and expectations around the programme publication. Several fellows expressed having felt torn between their desire to invest significantly into this collaboratively produced publication, while feeling frustrated at the lack of a specific production budget that would have matched this level of work. The clustering of work on the publication towards the end of the programme also contributed to this mismatch of expectations. More explicit discussion of the scale of expectation around the publication, as well as the limitations on budget, at an early stage of the programme, might help fellows more fully align their sense of the work and plan their time proportionately.

## Concepts & content

The fellows were extremely positive about the guest speakers who joined over the course of the online sessions; urbanism and design researcher Mpho Matsipa; architect Meriem Chabani; architect, urbanist and former Building Beyond participant Salma Belal; architect Margarida Waco and artist Jota Mombaça. Two additional guests joined as part of cross-bencher sessions at the end of the programme; cultural producer and former Building Beyond participant Russel Hlongwane and architectural designer/researcher Thandi Loewenson. Fellows found the speakers to be **“incredible”** and described being exposed to **“new worlds”** through them – one also mentioned that the selection went beyond obvious choices, to introduce them to voices they would not have otherwise encountered. Although it was felt that the selection as a whole was overly focussed on architectural practice, they mostly found the speakers themselves and their presentations to be very interesting – even when their work was less immediately relevant to each participant’s practice.

However the focus on architectural work within the content of the programme was a recurring concern in both sessions, and was also raised by one of the mentors. Fellows described a mismatch between the highly multidisciplinary cohort, which included people approaching the built environment in diverse ways, and the programme content, which focussed heavily on practices with architectural outputs. There is a

high level of interest in processes, and the link between theoretical concepts and practical work, and while this is interesting to hear from architects, artists in the group feel they would derive more usable knowledge from seeing how other artists working with similar themes connect the ideas to practice.

**“There’s so much of us here who are artists, curators. I mean, some people come from architecture, but I think also some people are leaving architecture in a way, or leaving it as a main discipline.”** - anonymous  
**“Maybe we need some navigation towards the output being art. So I can see the process and I see art.”** – Rania Atef

The most effective content for the group was the moments in which the programme addressed different forms of creative process. There is a close attention among fellows to the (sometimes unexpected ways) that practitioners move between theoretical and practical knowledge. In both reflection sessions, fellows expressed a desire to dive deeper into questions of artistic process, particularly from across different disciplines.

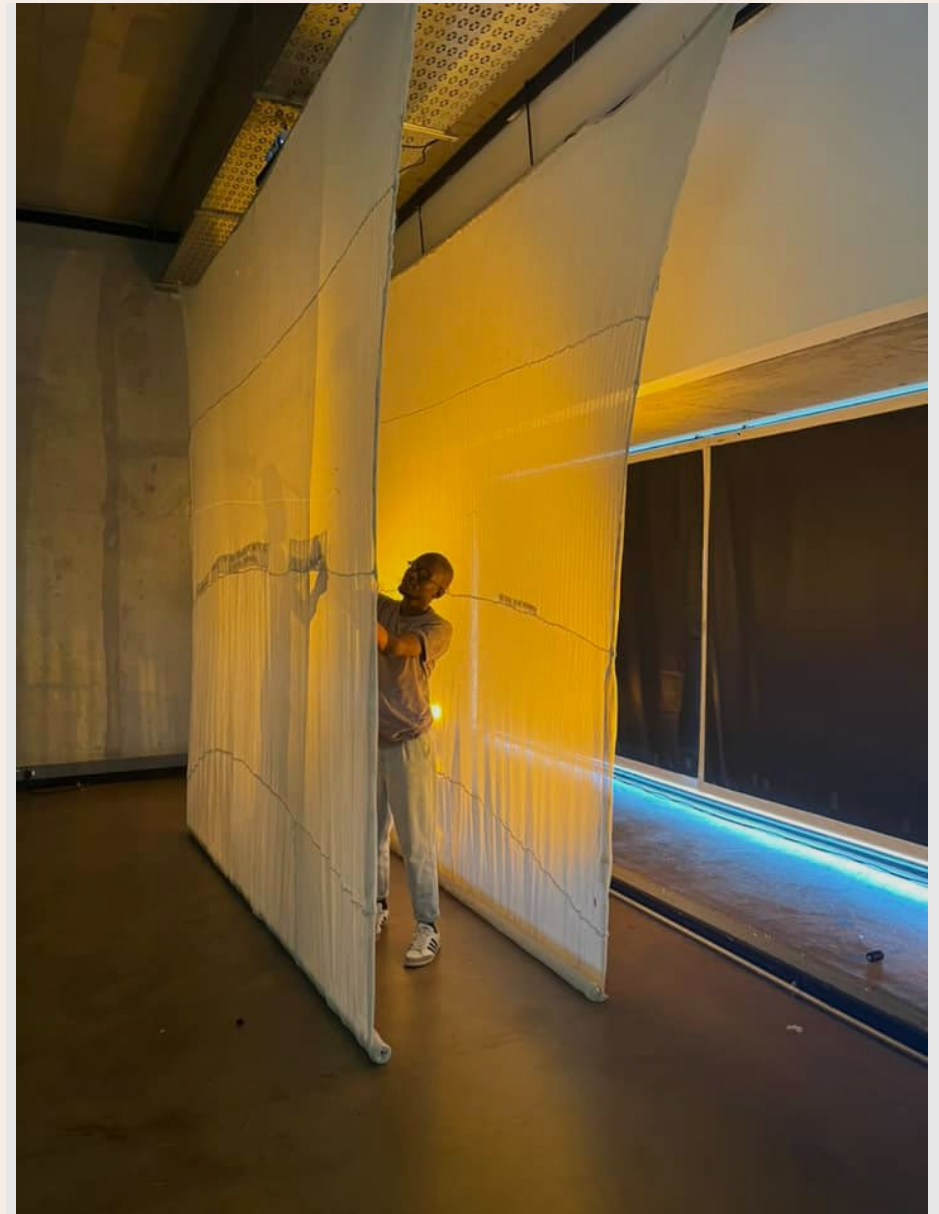
**“When you are in a space of working through a project, what guides you through all those processes? I think that kind of information will be very valuable.”** – Wezile Harmans

Despite the desire for more disciplinary diversity and process thinking, the cross-disciplinary thinking they have been exposed to throughout the programme has

been deeply meaningful to fellows. Several used the metaphor of language learning to describe the impact of this way of thinking, sharing their feeling that the programme had provided new tools with which to consider their own practices.

**“Even if the language and the main conversation isn’t from the form that I’m working with, it’s given me tools or even language to think with something that I had not encountered before.” - Rose Jepkorir**

Fellows were also positive about the cross-bencher sessions, which were introduced towards the end of the programme and looked at ways for fellows to work on the presentation of their practice. The sessions were described as useful and practical for the development of the fellows' practices in future.



Above Wezile Harmans

## Navigating difficulties

Beyond the guest speakers, fellows were generally appreciative of the site visits and meetings that took place as part of the lab week. However both fellows and mentors raised their experience of certain encounters within the Netherlands lab week as problematic in tone and content. These exceptions are worth examining in some detail, as they provide useful insights into the tensions that can arise out of the imbalances of place and power present in building international cultural networks and connections.

In particular, specific encounters were described between the fellows, who are based in and whose practices are deeply rooted in the African continent, and practitioners based in the Netherlands who claim expertise on Africa as a subject. While techniques, tactics and tools can be shared between these groups, the difference of the subject position experienced by the Netherlands-based practitioners was sometimes shocking to the fellows. Mentors also understood these encounters as illuminating the dynamics of global power inequality that exist within the disciplines of architectures and urbanism.

The response of fellows varied; a few shared that they had felt a certain kind of empowerment from these encounters, describing how the contrast made them more convinced of the importance of their own expertise and that of the group as a whole. In his report, Mikai'l the Muezzin wrote **“engaging with practitioners like [these]**



Above by Kwasi Darko from the lab week in Accra

sounded an important call to action for me. I realised that if we don't represent ourselves, and work to amplify other African practitioners' voices... others are going to tell our stories for us and they often can tell stories that are unjust, incomplete or miss the point entirely." Others however found the encounters entirely unproductive, finding that the defensive reaction to critique any precluded real learning on either side.

Across these different interpretations, there was a general consensus from fellows and mentors that the implementing team had responded well to these encounters in the moment. The group was appreciative of the fact that the team recognised the problematic dynamic directly, instead of needing it explained to them by the cohort.

Several people (both mentors and fellows) made suggestions of changes to the selection criteria and/or procedure that might be made, so that encounters during lab weeks can be arranged in a way that is sensitive to the politics of whose expertise is acknowledged. One mentor also suggested developing a protocol of care for how to deal with any unpleasant situations that do arise in future.

# Culture is

# social change.



"To say that I have observed a social change is ambitious for now, but for sure I was able to make the first important steps."  
Ana Raquel Machava

## Mentorship

In general, fellows found in the mentors a new perspective through which to view their own work, particularly in the one-on-one sessions. The multidisciplinary selection of the group of mentors was particularly highlighted by several fellows, as it opened up different ways of seeing their own work.

The exact needs of the fellows with regards to the mentors varied. Some felt a strong desire for clear critical feedback, while others were more interested in having someone to bounce ideas off, engage with them critically, or suggest reading material. In their reflection session, the mentors also commented on the diversity of the relationships they had built with the different fellows. For this reason the flexibility and diversity of the mentors as a group was very appreciated. **“They made me realise this more elements into the specific project that I’m working on, and looking at the space, the maturity and the people and all - I guess I’ve discovered more layers through the mentors.”** – Wezile Harmans

The individual contact with mentors, both in one-on-one sessions and informally throughout the programme, was extremely valuable, and there was a general desire for more one-on-one time with the mentors. A few fellows also expressed that they would have appreciated more flexibility in the timing of their one-on-one meeting within the programme. Since the pace at which fellows learned what they needed from the

mentors varied within the group, this would help them schedule it at a moment where it would have the greatest impact,. Quite a few found that informal conversations with the mentors during the lab weeks were some of the most pivotal moments of the programme.

As in cycle 1, fellows initially felt some uncertainty about how they should relate to the mentors. They described the group of mentors as incredibly welcoming and open, but felt a certain level of anxiety about reaching out, and a fear of bothering them or imposing on busy schedules. Mentors also shared their experience of feeling torn between wanting to give as much as they could to the fellows, but feeling the need not to overstretch themselves given the high time commitment of the role. Clear communication about expectations and capacity, as well as making sure this capacity is realistic, early in the programme, may help ensure a less anxious relationship to the mentors in the early stages. This uncertainty seemed to have been largely resolved however by the second reflection session.

**“My experience with the mentorship was also a sense of friendliness and openness, and an extension and investment in us, in a sense, an openness to us”** Jepkorir Rose Kiptum

## Mentors perspective

Reflection sessions with the mentors shed light on the nuances of how the four mentors understood their role within the programme. Two of the four mentors who participated in the second cycle of Building Beyond had taken part in the first cycle, while two were new to the programme and to the structure of mentorship. This allowed for productive discussion on the changes to the programme structure that had been made following the first cycle. The need for more formalised structure had been one of the main learnings of the first cycle, and mentors were positive about the way that this had been acted on. Mentors new to the programme found it more accessible, while returning mentors found it easier to manage their time.

The balance between formal structure and organic development remains a part of how mentors think about the programme however. Mentors shared (and the fellows' sessions also reflected) the need to remain flexible enough to meet the different needs of different fellows within the structure. The diversity of fellows' needs from the mentors – in terms of the time they needed to open up, how they balanced the theoretical and the practical questions they had, and the extent to which they oriented themselves towards processes or outputs – meant that different fellows interacted differently with mentors throughout the year. Within group, sub-group and one-on-one sessions, mentors have been focussed on ensuring that the diverse voices and needs of the fellows were heard and met.

All of the mentors understood their role as being fundamentally supportive, with one of them describing the position of a mentor as being **“a lot about listening and asking questions, more than it is about providing answers.”** As such they felt the same tension described by the fellows, wanting to make themselves available but aware of their own limits in terms of time and energy.

**“The mentorship role this year was very much being a person who can make themselves disposable as an anchor and a mirror. So being able to kind of reflect ideas back in a way that they can evolve, and at the same time being a reminder about certain things that one might need to revisit.”** – Khensani Jurczok-de Klerk

A recurring concern from the mentors, of time management in the planning of the programme, has already been acted on in the design of the third cycle. Focussing the bulk of the planning labour intensive in person sessions at the start of the programme is expected to ease the pressure on mentors throughout the year, as well as producing a more focussed programme in terms of content.

## Network

Getting to meet and spend time with each other was one of the most meaningful parts of the Building Beyond programme for fellows. Peer-to-peer learning from each other's practices was a significant part of the learnings from the programme, as was the emotional support of being able to connect to practitioners with similar experiences. For this reason the make-up of the cohort was a big part of the success of the programme.

There was a huge appreciation for the focus of the programme on the African content, which let fellows focus on what they had in common instead of justifying or explaining their perspectives. The multidisciplinary makeup of the group was also a strength, allowing them to learn from each other's work and processes. **"It makes a huge difference, how little I have to translate myself. Not just in terms of language, but in terms of context... So this is a really diplomatic way to say that it's very important that everyone here is actually from the continent."** – anonymous

Given the value of this connection, many fellows expressed a desire for more moments for collaboration and sharing. Particularly during their in person meetings in the lab week, they felt that more time should have been allocated for them to spend getting to know each other's work, determining possible forms of collaboration or thinking together and advising each other. The publication brainstorming was one element that allowed for this well, and it was generally appreciated.

**"A part that I wish was more present during both lab weeks is activities for us, the participants together. We had a lot to do with the publication's brainstorming, and I think that was very interesting. I enjoyed it the most because we got to interact more with each other. But I hoped we would have more of such activities regarding our project development struggles we've been facing."**  
– Blquees Zuhair

Having interacted over the course of the programme with two of the cohort from the first Building Beyond cycle, several of the fellows were also excited about the possibility of further network-building with different cycles, and expressed interest in a Building Beyond alumni network.

# Individual Impact

This part of the report traces the impact of the Fellows Award on the practices of the individual recipients, their subsequent impact on their contexts and the issues their work addresses. It draws primarily on the reports submitted by recipients in February 2024, following the close of the programme. These reports illustrate how the different elements of the programme worked together to deepen the cultural practice and impact of fellows active at the cross section of arts and culture, public space and community. Almost all fellows discussed in detail the impact of the programme on their thinking about and approach to urban life in Africa, and how the programme inspired them to create further change in their contexts and across the continent

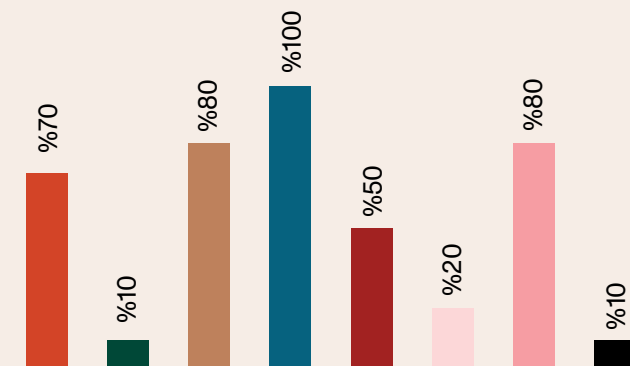
The first section follows the structure of the Prince Claus Fund's Theory of Change to examine how the primary outputs of the programme; trust-based funding, connections and recognition, were received by the fellows.

## Outputs

### Trust-based funding

Fellows invested the €10.000 received through the award into a hugely diverse range of projects, including a magazine, a series of nightlife events, and exhibitions. The ways in which fellows choose to use the trust-based funding they receive offers an insights into the needs of artists at this stage of their career. All of the

- Purchase/hire of equipment for your work
- Rent of workspace
- Living Expenses
- Payment for collaborators
- Other production costs
- Training
- Travel
- Have not spent yet



responding fellows used at least some of the funding received to cover payments for collaborators, reflecting the collective nature of the work produced through this programme. Living expenses and travel were also highly represented.

Even more importantly, the trust-based nature of the funding created time to experiment with new methodologies and concepts, and to invest fully into the development of projects. Rania Atef, for example, wrote that “the financial stability gave me the space to write less applications for grants and funding that consumes a huge time and energy from me.”

## Connections

The collective nature of the Building Beyond programme was deeply felt and movingly described by the fellows. Conversations within the group, both intentionally planned and spontaneous, inspired new ways of approaching practice, positioning work, and powerful motivation in difficult circumstances. Wezile Harmans wrote that; “My first important step was to engage. To be present with the mentors, cohort and with my practice. Through this engagement process, I learnt the importance of conversation. A conversation at some point played a vital role when was in the process of making work. I was vulnerable, uncertain and went through errors, conversation with people close to me and some I met along the way definitely held me.”



Above Coolies Crown by Mikail the Muezzin

Blqees Zuhair was one of several fellows to also describe the impact of connections made during the two lab weeks. For her, the “collaborative atmosphere [of the programme], enriched by guest sessions and site visits in Ghana, significantly broadened my perspective, allowing me to delve into the multifaceted nature of urban landscapes through the lens of local artists and institutions.”

## Recognition

The reports offered comparatively less reflection on the impact of the recognition given through the programme, perhaps because reporting was gathered immediately following the program’s end. Nevertheless, a few fellows did describe tangible impacts of this recognition. Mika’il the Muezzin in particular wrote that “Before this program, my personal practice had also not received institutional recognition to the scale of this program. Building Beyond and the cachet that Prince Claus Fund and Creative Industries NL brings to the table has bolstered my practice pursuits and in just in the past 5 months I received support from various institutional partners”

# Culture

# is

# making

# impact.

“This programme really helped me develop my work in researching and archiving queer nightlife in my region and further. It helped me think of the work more thoughtfully, considering feminist and queer theories” – Arafa Hamadi

## Outcomes

This final section examines how these have led to meaningful outcomes; connections, artistic and professional development, reach among audiences and societal impact in context.

### Connections

At the output level, the discussion of connections looks at how fellows experienced these peer-to-peer connections, on an outcome level we see how these encounters helped the fellows to grow their practices. The connection outcomes we expect to see through the Fellows Awards Programmes revolve around peer-to-peer connections made within the cohort, such as tangible peer-to-peer learnings, or the impact of solidarity within the group. The environment created within the programme, by mentors and by the Prince Claus Fund and Creative Industries Fund teams, was cited as a key reason fellows were able to benefit from these connections. Several fellows described the impact of conversations with individual mentors as having been vital for them in their creative development, prompting specific tangible changes in practice.

Fellows described the inspiration they received from each other. Many wrote how these conversations have deepened their practices, citing specific advances in thinking about research, archiving and approaches to space. Wezile Harmans wrote **“I was inspired by my fellow cohorts, the amount of work and engagement**

**they are actively participating in their communities and how they take “research” as their practice and embraced it.”** They gained advice on specific parts of their project and problems they were facing from peers and mentors whose work covers similar areas – and request more time in which to do this structurally and after the programme ends.

Beyond these concrete peer-to-peer learnings, people feel psychologically strengthened by the connections made through the programme. Artistic practice can feel lonely, and meeting other practitioners in similar circumstances helps them feel more confident in their path. Blqees Zuhair wrote **“Equally transformative was witnessing the adaptability and innovation of my peers. This mosaic of creativity not only broadened my perspective but also instilled a deeper appreciation for the collective spirit of the arts community.”**

### Reach

Many of the fellows have taken the year to focus on the development of new work, much of which is yet to be shown in public – this outcome is therefore not fully developed so far. However a few have been able to reach wide audiences through large scale platforms, such as Olufemi Hinson Yovo, who participated in a discussion as part of the Venice architecture biennale in 2023, and Chidumaga Uzoma Orji, whose tedx talk has been viewed over 1000 times.

However the most prominent reach achieved so far is local to the fellows' own particular contexts, as we would expect given the committed community-orientated practices of the fellows. Some of the fellows describe the events and exhibitions they have created during the year of the programme, such as Arafa Hamadi, who organised six inclusive and safe nights at the ALTÆR event space in Dar-es-Salaam over 2023, and Ana Raquel Macheva, and Jepkorir Rose Kiptum, who have both developed exhibitions showing their own work and that of other artists from their contexts. Jepkirir Rose Kitum shared her learnings from the exhibition; **“we were happy that we had many people coming to engage with our work and also allowing us to read what our audiences needs are. especially in terms of space. what we learnt is, even in the formal spaces, people want to hang out! what we make when other people come into our work is more that the coming together, it is the social space we make together.”**

Wezile Harmans also writes about reaching out to local audiences who do not see themselves as connected to art through studio visits and conversations, and the impact of these connections. **“Where I come from, people see art as a place for privileged and they have no clue how they can relate...I have been able to invite some to my studio or visit them, engage in conversations and we talk about all the things around societal issues”**

## Development

Developing new professional perspectives, ways of approaching concepts and thinking about ones own work is one of the most important outcomes of Building Beyond.

The content of the programme prompted profound reflection and a deepening understanding of the nature of urban spaces and communities within the African continent. A number of fellows described this deepened engagement with the topic in their reports, including Chidumaga Uzoma Orji, who shared that “after so many conversations and sharings, I am definitely more conscious and invested in re-configuring our urban spaces and committed to doing so through my practice”, and neec nonso, who wrote that the award and participation in the programme had **“instilled in me a deeper understanding of the social, political, and human rights implications surrounding urban development and societal inequality.”** Encounters within the programme also informed fellows thinking on related subjects they brought with them to the programme, such as Arafa Hamadi who writes **“This programme really helped me develop my work in researching and archiving queer nightlight in my region and further. It helped me think of the work more thoughtfully, considering feminist and queer theories”**

Almost as important was the development prompted by the programme in fellows' relationship to different methodologies – particularly research-based

methodologies. A number of fellows shared that the role of research in their practices has deepened, with Olufemi Hinson Yovo writing that **“I still think the same but I am more concerned in building up on research. Instead of rushing into building I can now dedicate half of my practice into research project in the built environment here in Cotonou.”** Other fellows reached a deeper understanding of their practice more generally. For Chidumaga Uzoma Orji, **“Participating in the mentorship programme has given me the space to see my practice less as a series of creative productions and more of an ongoing concern where each project bleeds into the other towards an over-arching artistic mission.”**

These different developments in conceptual approaches are already being expressed through the production of new work, and this will only increase in the coming years. On a practical level, the award has helped lay the foundation for future work, with Ana Raquel Machava sharing how the funding through the award had made it possible for her to formally register and open a bank account for her new magazine project. For Mika'il Jassat, learnings through the award have already made it possible for him to secure further funding from a range of institutional partners and put his practice on a more sustainable path – he writes **“The programme has changed how I talk about my work. It has given me the nomenclature and references which help me to articulate my ideas to other stakeholders and institutional partners.”**

## Societal

The fellows work through the year, bolstered by the Fellows Award and programme, is already beginning to create meaningful change in its engagement with people. By opening up moments for dialogue around social and political narratives through art, they are contributing to healthier societies. Blqeess Zuhair writes **“While it’s challenging to quantify the exact social or political changes resulting from my work, the increased dialogue and engagement with art suggest a growing recognition of its value in fostering cultural understanding and social cohesion.”**



Above Work by Jepkorir Rose Kiptum

Fellows Olufemi Hinson Yovo and Chidumaga Uzoma Orji have seen increased responses to their work, online and in person. In their reports they describe meaningful engagement – as Uzoma writes **“I have noticed more affirmation of the project I applied with - people seem to connect with it more and it’s inspiring more debates and conversation which is the ultimate aim.”**

Wezile Harmans is also conscious of the need to allow societal impact to emerge organically, in order for it to make a lasting difference to the way people live their lives. He writes **“I have always let the public decide how to engage with my work. I want them to decide for themselves when to engage and when they do, they must take their time. This is an exercise of consent and free will, the antithesis to the rushed and controlled world we live in”**. Through the discussions that have emerged out of peoples responses to his work, he feels he has been able to **“share to them this is another form of collective remembering and healing , and this important for the world to know such angles to heal are there and [they] not the only person who is facing that particular problem.”**

Fellows have built on their learnings from the programme to build knowledge for their communities. Arafa Hamadi in particular has worked collecting interviews **“from space makers around the continent”** and created **“key guidelines for creating space for marginalised people in our countries where traditional activism may be difficult.”** The importance of recording

and sharing knowledge from and for African practitioners is illustrated by the difficulties observed during the lab week in the Netherlands.

Arafa Hamadi has also used the resources of the award to create safe spaces where people are free to be themselves within Dar-es-Salaam, through the ALTÆR nightlife events they have organised.

One story stands out as emblematic of the potentially transformative nature of Building Beyond. In his report neec nonso described his experience during the Accra lab week, seeing the plight of Accra residents subject to forced evictions. Relating this to similar



Above Work by neec nonso

evictions within his own context in Lagos prompted a radical change of direction for his work. Facilitated by the flexibility of the funding, which allowed him to completely rethink the project he had intended to invest the award in, and supported by the mentors, neec has been begun work on what he describes as “**activism projects**”. He writes “**during the course of the programme, i shifted my attention from the celebratory and ‘good-feel’ to the kind that will rile and wake up the participants of my work and make them act!**”

We expect that the societal impact of this programme will only grow as works created through it are shown more widely. For many of the fellows, the programme represents the beginning of a larger process. Ana Raquel Machava writes “**To say that I have observed a social change is ambitious for now, but for sure I was able to make the first important steps.**”



F o n d s