

Kauma Brief Encounters

Report 2022

Global Frameworks for Creative Exchange

Collaboration with C-DaRE, Coventry University, UK

KAUMAARTS

Research Centre
Dance

Coventry
University 

Table of Contents

Executive Summary	page 3
Forward	page 4
Rationale of Analytical Approach.....	page 5
Analytical Aims.....	page 6
Method	page 7
Findings.....	page 8
Critical Reflections	page 11
Recommendations.....	page 12
Kauma Arts: Next Steps	page 15
Biographies of Featured Artists.....	page 16
Biographies of Kauma Arts Team.....	page 19
Biographies of Coventry University's Centre for Dance Research (C-DaRE)'s Team	page 20
Thank You's	page 21

Executive Summary

The Global Frameworks for Creative Exchange: Kauma Brief Encounters project has been a milestone achievement for the Kauma Arts (KA) Team, Kauma Arts Tribe members and their respective communities of the African Diaspora. The three month project (January -March 2022) was a collaboration between Coventry University's Centre for Dance Research (C-DaRE) and KA which brought together researchers, artists, consultants and policy makers. The project was funded by the QR Policy Fund and Research England and was directed by Rosa Cisneros (C-DaRE) and Mercy Nabirye (KA). Team members included Jade Ward (C-DaRE), Heather Benson (KA), Jess Choi (KA) and Maria Polodeanu (Reel Master Productions) and together they coordinated two Kauma Brief Encounters (KBEs), a number of films and held internal meetings to develop and analyse the KBE Manifesto¹ and this report. The pilot project allowed the relevant parties to develop an action plan, assess the previous KBEs and Manifesto, and author a key set of policy recommendations. Through engagement with the key stakeholders a number of recommendations have been identified but for the sake of this report and a more pragmatic approach to change, the report will focus on three of those recommendations that seem most urgent given the current dance landscape.

This report, whilst adopting analytical tools and a strategic approach, aims to emulate and protect three emerging core beliefs:

1. Dance practices and strategies that promote and advocate for the African Diaspora community groups already exist and **need to be further explored**
2. The solutions to the challenges are already known by the community members and **need to be evidenced and reported on to improve wider sector policies and practices**
3. The work needed to overcome the challenges is already taking place and needs to be **further supported to scale up**

Considering the above context, this report aims to:

- i. highlight the language and practices of the KA Tribe members and their communities to honour, value and strengthen existing and new ways of communicating and working;
- ii. analyse and critically reflect on the work KA has carried out to date and consider research and government priorities concerning arts and culture;
- iii. pose recommendations that advance the agenda for creatives of the African Diaspora, whilst encouraging them to share and celebrate their work on a national and global scale.

We call for a new regenerative model that incorporates innovation, entrepreneurship and strategy that moves with needs-driven changes. We believe this will better support the Tribe members and African Diaspora communities that we aim to serve, whilst strengthen the social and economical value of creativity and culture for, from and within the African Diaspora.

¹ Kauma Brief Encounters – kaumaarts.com

Forward



The extraordinary times we are experiencing globally have impressed on us a need to change the way we connect, relate, work, and regenerate together in a shared cultural space. It is with this thought in mind that the collaboration between Coventry University Dance Research team (C-DaRE) and Kauma Arts developed.

This level of taking stock, garnering voices, to evidence and report on the practices and strategies in the diverse communities we find ourselves in or build as makers, is crucial. It helps to strengthen legacies and posterity the world over. It calls for collective support and understanding at many levels if we are to hold on to our connectivity as a global community.

This analysis is timely and a step towards adapting models of change for our arts, artists, and forms.

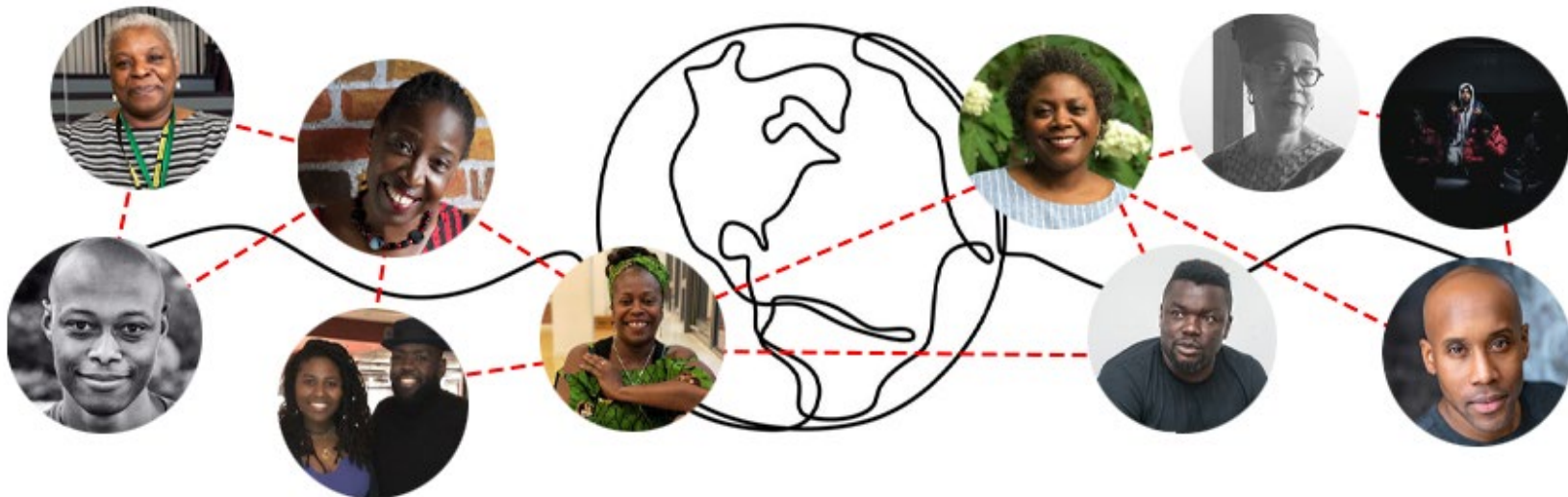
Dr Mercy Nabirye FRSA FWL

Rationale of Analytical Approach

Amongst a myriad of adoptions and awakenings, the pandemic has increased our awareness of the fragility and interconnectivity of our social, economic, and technological worlds. Nothing in our lives exists in isolation and must be considered as part of a whole.

We, as a global community, have not only endured the hardships of the COVID-19 pandemic, but also the aftermath of growing racial frustrations, financial precarity and dire uncertainty of our social fabric. All of which leading to exponential increases in health and wellbeing issues across the entire globe. If we are to value and stay true to the emerging core beliefs of the project, it is vital to produce a report that holds the people and communities above any analytical ambitions. We must strive for approaches that seek to understand and advance the people and the places they live in and connect with, by continuing to provide opportunities for iterative dialogue and reflections.

Considering this a participatory approach to analysis was adopted and used to underpin the process. Initially this included the creation of a survey and interactive visual map. However, due to project time constraints neither option were implemented for the purposes of this report and instead are being woven into the next steps.



Analytical Aims

As highlighted in the manifesto, the issues we aim to address are complex and require much more time and effort than we have capacity for during this project. Considering this our analytical aims focus on the short-term goals identified in the Kauma Arts Manifesto, with the understanding of this work feeding into the medium- and long-term goals as our work progresses.

“ We however recommend that in the short term there should be a focus on new forms of exchange, coming together, discussion, self-care and community-care. The rationale for this is that the meetings and networking will create a context for strategic planning and action planning around each of the areas of focus that have been identified. We hope that individuals, organisations and groups might want to take up the advocacy of one of the forementioned areas. ”

Kauma Arts Manifesto. 2022.

Below are the four short term aims as stated in the manifesto:

1. New forms of exchange
2. Coming together
3. Discussions
4. Self and community care

The first three short-term aims are already gaining momentum through the existing approach and format of the KBE's and will be further explored in the context of relevant dance and arts, research, and government and policy content. The fourth short-term aim has also been woven into our policy brief in a way that address the complex issues we aim to solve from a more holistic stance. We hope that this approach will enable us to engage the entire system(s) involved and not just the segmented parts. Through achieving the short term aims from the manifesto we will create the content, agency and momentum needed to build our strategy and action plan, which forms a key outcome of the KBE project. We also hope that by highlighting the short term aims individuals, organisations and groups will have a better understanding of the KBE Manifesto and easier routes of engagement.

Method

The first stage of the process included transcribing Part 1 of the Global Creative Framework online session which informed the creation of the survey and visual mapping tool. The survey was built around the SWOT matrix and STEEPLE analysis models and aimed to deepen and develop our understanding of the realities that our Tribe members live, work, and create from and within. The SWOT matrix supports organisations to identify strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats whilst the STEEPLE analysis identifies social, technological, economic, environmental, political, legal and ethical factors. The STEEPLE framework was incorporated into the survey due to the legal and ethical components, which we hope, will allow us to honour, value and remain culturally sensitive to the intersections and complexities of the topics, people and communities involved. It is also hoped that by consulting these two analytical tools we can better understand the broader socio-cultural-economic contexts of each Tribe member and their communities, whilst imagining new and fruitful opportunities on a global scale. The tools also ensure we are not blindsided by our own micro-environments but instead encouraged to consider the macro drivers of agency and change, whilst remaining sensitive to the specific needs of the communities the project engages with. We also understand that new models are required for new ways of working and propose that art focused organisations need to focus on models of regeneration in replacement for sustainability. In order for our communities to thrive we must champion and support innovation, entrepreneurship and strategic action.

However, as previously stated, due to project time constraints, it was decided that the tools would be incorporated into our next steps instead of acting as two stand-alone activities for the report that would require large amounts of time, organisation, and management. Instead, secondary data was analysed, and themes were created inductively using patterns of language already identified from the manifesto and previous work carried out by Kauma Arts.

The second stage of analysis involved drawing from relevant key sources. Four UK sources were chosen for being mentioned by either the Kauma Arts team and/or the artists, individuals, groups, and organisations who took part in the KBEs. These were organised into four key categories to ensure there was a breadth of content being explored and a key document was chosen from each source. These were:

Focus – Creatives of the African Diaspora – **Source** – One Dance UK – **Document** – Dance of the African Diaspora (DAD) Mapping Report

Focus – Arts and Culture – **Source** – Arts Council England (ACE) – **Document** – Strategy 2020-2030

Focus – Research – **Source** – UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) – **Document** – UKRI equality diversity and inclusion strategy: draft for consultation – UKRI

Focus – Race and Ethnic Disparities – **Source** – UK government – **Document** – Policy paper: Inclusive Britain: government response to the Commission on Race and Ethnic Disparities

Findings

A succinct and summarised version of findings from each source is presented below under the five themes. The themes were derived from the manifesto's five areas of focus and their accompanying recommendations. Each document was coded using the area of focus as themes and the recommendations as coding guidance.

Area of focus/Theme:

1. Leadership and Management

Recommendation/coding guideline:

Leadership should focus on a specific area of the field for development, set specific aims and objectives and deliver activities using a pan-Africanist approach and making room for consultation.

Summarised findings:

The perceived absence of skills needed from DAD practitioners needs to be addressed using evidence and data to drive equity and diversity. This should involve investment, support, visibility and more diverse routes into the sector from ethnically diverse backgrounds. National Portfolio Organisations will be pivotal in the advancement of the DAD sector, and will need to actively contribute to the growth of the sector by setting out clear expectations for leaders and management.

Area of focus/Theme:**2. Lobbying and policy reform****Recommendation/coding guideline:**

Enter into conversation with leaders of cultural organisations about their programmes and how they are produced taking into consideration their limitations.

Summarised findings:

A commitment to open conversations, networking and sharing information between art organisations and creatives, including open and active engagement from National Portfolio Organisations which is then measured, reported on, and used to inform policy. This should be taken from a top-down approach where arts and cultural policy call for explicit changes. Leaders and managers of organisations need to increase the pathways for DAD practitioners and institutions and clearly identify ways to support and close the skills gap of DAD practitioners. This should be considered as a policy or declaration of support, particularly from NPO's.

Better understand the delivery of the four national Universal Offers (reading, health and wellbeing, digital and information, and culture and creativity) carried out by museums and libraries across the globe and how they can be used to review current systems, make suggestion for improvements and drive arts and cultural policy change.

Area of focus/Theme:**3. Developing new formats of exchange, funding and finance****Recommendation/coding guideline:**

Form collectives, identify areas of needs, engage stakeholders and supporters and focus on supporting needs of the collective or bring change to the wider arts ecology. Seek expert advice. Looking into your networks for expertise and support each other in-kind if there are limited finances.

Summarised findings:

Maintain a commitment to and support for international showcasing and touring opportunities. Embrace innovation and adopt technologies that broaden access to new audiences and finance. Champion the economic value of creativity and culture and highlight the broad social benefits of the investment in the arts.

Area of focus/Theme:**4. Rethinking education/training/supporting young practitioners****Recommendation/coding guideline:**

Training organisations should collaborate with arts organisations to nurture the link between education and the workplace. It should be a two-way discussion.

Summarised findings:

Investment for the future needs to happen now and should start in the pre-school years. Continue to nurture the relationship between cultural organisations and the Department for Education and advocate the value of creativity in education by encouraging the Department for Education to build on its current investment in Music Education Hubs, National Youth Music and Dance organisations and create clear industry pathways.

Area of focus/Theme:**5. Making space for self-care and community-care****Recommendation/coding guideline:**

Listen to your own needs and those of others and create spaces for recuperation. Develop forums for this specifically.

This approach enabled us to identify our own agenda and aims within key organisations, and more importantly highlight the disparities between the KA agenda and the outputs of the identified organisations.

Summarised findings:

Nurture and expand on systems of self and community care to protect, support, and encourage creative leaders in recognising and supporting positive changes, particularly the ones that are already happening in communities.

Critical Reflections

These critical reflections are framed by the findings and stem from a combination of the original KBEs, the KBE Manifesto, Part 1 of the Global Frameworks for Creative Exchange Project (1 March 2022) and attempt to capture the essence of all the work undertaken. This strand of the research will be further developed using the survey responses and completed mapping document as part of our next steps.

- We want to do things our way that respond to the needs of our communities;
- Our leaders need to step out from behind the scenes and stand at the front;
- We need to take things beyond conversations and move into action;
- We need to map who is involved and what they are doing/providing;
- We need to seek out colonial offerings;
- We need to stretch and expand;
- We work with an attitude of gratitude;
- We need to include younger voices;
- We must look after ourselves;
- We need to be online.

Kauma Arts: Recommendations

Our recommendations are interconnected and create a unified and holistic approach to our vision of developing a more inclusive, diverse, and equal dance sector. We believe that we will achieve our vision by:

- Spotlighting African Diaspora artists (support, develop and curate African Diaspora screendance and performances for film and festivals)
- Building stronger African Diaspora networks across the globe (build on our relations with individuals, artist and organisation in Nigeria, Kenya, Canada, and America, among others)
- Celebrating and showcasing African Diaspora artists (organise, manage, and curate work to take place in museums, libraries and other cultural spaces across the country and globe)

Further recommendations, and accompanying rationale, include:

- Kauma Arts to nurture a developmental strand to our work
 - o Rationale: We see this as the most efficient way of supporting our vision considering key arts and culture priorities such as the Art Council's 2020-2030 strategy.
- Switching out 'sustainability' for 'regeneration'
 - o Rationale: We champion approaches that support innovation, entrepreneurship, and advancement. A sustainability model in its essence attempts to keep everything the same, whilst a regenerative model changes and adapts according to need.

“ **It’s about bringing people together.** ”

Dr Mercy Nabirye (KA Founder & Director)

People, Place and Powers

Sustainability is often associated with maintaining social, economic, and environmental factors with approaches being applied across entire ecosystems. Regeneration, however, concerns continually evolving our systems to be reflexive, adaptable, and progressive. Ultimately, regeneration means breathing new life into, reviving, and renewing our places and people by harnessing our creative and communicative powers.

To successfully work on a global scale, whilst encouraging and celebrating cultural heritage and diversity, we must provide much more than a rigid model of sustainability. Instead, a model where creativity and culture are open to needs-led innovation and culturally appropriate change is needed. We believe that a regenerative model could become the backbone of our work and could be structured in our online platforms under:

- i. Place
- ii. People
- iii. Powers

These three headings would act as the main strands to our work, all of which underpinned by the research we have undertaken as part of this report. Each heading would act as a ‘landing page’ for artists and creatives of the African Diaspora and would include information, sources and opportunities for further connections, dialogue, and collaborations to take place.

Pledges and Progress

A key finding from the KBEs was that creatives and artists do not have time to pause, reflect or nurture new connections or collaborations. However, community responsibility, ownership and agency are key themes being driven by government departments concerned with art and culture. Ultimately the agency rests with us; it is in our hands, our feet, and our bodies. The progress that we seek is in the act of coming together to connect and collaborate. Considering this we propose a sector wide commitment in supporting artists of the African Diaspora. Our online platforms could provide spaces for individuals and organisations to ‘pledge’ a commitment to support the African Diaspora community. With prompts and support from the Kauma Arts team, as part of their new development strand, pledgers could provide brief progress reports, in a variety of mediums that complement their skills, needs and styles. These reports would be shared on our online platforms, with instant global reach. The impacts of simply seeing someone push for progress and change have far reaching implications for agency. Kauma Arts would then work to cultivate and nurture online conversations that would highlight and promote the value of needs-based interventions whilst identifying improvements that benefit everyone in the arts sector.

This approach provides a solution to the lack of time and energy artists have for making connections and nurturing collaborations. By providing strategic focus and taking responsibility for the ‘heavy lifting’ associated with connecting and collaborating Kauma Arts would position itself as a key leader for sector change. **This approach could be developed into a strategic framework that includes KPBs (Kauma Progress Briefs) that would act as progress/outcome reports and KISs (Kauma Indicators of Success)** which would analyse reported outcomes, identify indicators of success and build a better understanding of what works best. These recommendations build on the use of technologies and champion innovation and diversity in reporting, analysing and knowledge creation.

Kauma Arts: Next Steps

Seek further support, funding, and partnerships to continue to:

- provide a safe space for diverse voices to be heard.
- explore further each of the recommendations.
- develop iterations of the original Manifesto, briefs and analysis reports to align with the changing nature of the needs of the sector.
- disseminate the survey and push for engagement to ensure we continue to guide our actions based on the needs of the community.
- collate and share the survey results to evidence the impacts, actions and connections borne from the KBE sessions.
- use the findings, along with the report and policy brief to create a strategic action plan that will specify targets, measures, and reporting.

Biographies of Featured Artists

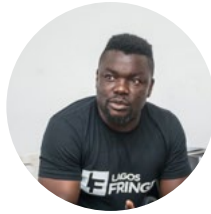


Sam Tebandeke

<https://kiasitv.vhx.tv/>

Sam is a Ugandan based creative in Nairobi, Kenya. An alumnus of the Maisha Film Lab (2008 & 2009), Samuel has gone on to write for TV and film. His debut short film, Another Beautiful Day, released mid-2017 was screened at Durban International Film Festival 2019. His short film, Ten O'clock screened In Competition at PÖFF Shorts Film Festival 2019 in Estonia.

Sam is the founder of PageSix Management, the largest database in the East African region of film professionals working in front of and behind the camera.



Kenneth Uphopho

www.thelagosfringe.org

Kenneth is a Director, Actor, Writer, Festival Director, and Acting Coach.

He has practiced as a professional dancer & choreographer for over 7 years before committing to theatre & festival management. With an incredible team, he runs PAWSTUDIOS, Lagos Fringe, and Abuja Fringe.

He loves spending time with Family, Books, Nature, and Travel.



Carolyn Lilly

www.feeltherhythmproductions.com

Carolyn Lilly has been a dancer for 20 years with experience in many styles; African, African Contemporary, Caribbean, Horton, and Jazz. She is the director of Feel the Rhythm Productions and has promoted African Dance in the Diaspora for over 12 years in the UK.

Since forming Feel the Rhythm Productions (FTRP) in 2007, Carolyn has developed a vast network of artists exploring the Diasporic genres in the UK, pioneering a market for the work in London.

Carolyn has brought some great names to London and has worked with Merlin Nyakam, George Momboye, Lolita Babindamana, Dr C. Kemal Nance, and many more. Through her work with FTRP, she has developed and solidified a reputation as a producer of high-quality work within the community.



Sandra Golding

www.movingtubalance.co.uk

Sandra Golding MA RSMT is the U.K's leading African Holistic Dance Practitioner, CEO of Moving Tu Balance.

She is an advocate for the healing power of African Holistic therapeutic movement, bringing dance medicine into every home. Her dedication and passion for the survival of African and Caribbean dance has resulted in the development and delivery of African holistic dance a complementary therapeutic dance, movement education within the community, with a focus on the Health and wellbeing of the individual and their relationship with their bodies and connection with nature.

Sandra currently teaches online, community dance, and wellbeing classes; running participatory events for those 50 years plus.



Beverly Glean MBE

www.riedancetheatre.org

Beverley Glean MBE is the Founder and Artistic Director of IRIE! dance theatre. She has worked in the field of Dance of the African Diaspora (DAD) for over 30 years. She has trained and worked alongside artists from the Caribbean, West Africa, Europe and the USA. Beverley founded IRIE! dance theatre in 1985.



David Blake

www.blakearts.org

David Blake is an international performer, director, choreographer, educator and producer. He is the founder and creator for Blake Arts, an arts collective that offers holistic artistic development and training as well as content creation, focused on the stories of artists from the Afro Caribbean Diaspora. David is a 2020 Black British Theatre Awards (BBTA) recipient for "Best Teacher for Performing Arts as a Subject" and is currently playing the role of "Banzai" in Disney's The Lion King in London's West End.



wivdrawn Collective

@wivdrawn on Instagram

leaders of the unknown.

wivdrawn is a collective of creative individuals including directors, artists, producers, and engineers, hailing from North, North West, and West London, UK.

As a collective, wivdrawn covers all areas within the media industry. Music artistry ranges from R&B, Trap, Rap to international sounds.

wivdrawn includes: Wildboy – a platinum producer and engineer, Teeeezy C – a director and videographer, Joey Cuban – an upcoming bilingual artist, and Wivdrawn Kolumbia – a creative director and artist.



Afro Van Connect

www.afrovanconnect.com

Afro Van Connect was founded in 2019 as an artist collective focused on creating platforms for creatives of African descent to come together and express themselves. The organisation empowers the voices of African descent youth through conversation, collaboration, creation, and performance.

They bring together young vibrant creative minds dedicated to innovating authentic solutions, to increase the visibility of the underrepresented diaspora communities.

They offer a creative capital platform where shared opportunities and resources are designed to support liberating education and community sustainability.

Afro Van Connect is based in Vancouver, Canada, located on the unceded traditional territory of the Skwxwú7mesh Úxwumixw (Squamish), Tsleil-Waututh, and xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam) First Nations.



Denise Saunders Thompson

www.iabdassociation.org/

Denise is the President & CEO of The International Association of Blacks in Dance (IABD), a non-profit service organization that preserves and promotes dance by people of African ancestry or origin. Since beginning her tenure in 2010, she is responsible for growing the organization's annual operating budget from \$200,000 to \$1.5 million and more than doubling the Association's membership to over 6,800 in the last five years. Most recently, Saunders Thompson secured the organization's largest single individual gift, totalling \$3 million.



Vivine Scarlett

www.danceimmersion.ca

Vivine is Founder and Executive Director for dance Immersion, an organization that supports dancers and dances of the African Diaspora. Her inspired journey continues to provide a variety of platforms that serve Canadian artists of African ancestry, with opportunities that have laid a foundation for continued growth and representation.

Biographies of Kauma Arts Team



Dr Mercy Nabirye
Founding Director

Mercy Nabirye FRSA, FWL, formed Kauma Arts following her tenure in a series of leadership and management positions across the creative industries. Her career spans over 30 years in leadership roles across artforms, developing and implementing flagship programmes for change and strategic development. She is inspired to push boundaries.



Heather Benson
Project Manager +
Consultant

Heather Benson is a dance artist, producer, and lecturer that has worked within the USA, UK and beyond. Now residing in London, Heather – a former company member of Dallas Black Dance Theatre II, Urban Bush Women and Philadanco!, serves as a Horton Technique lecturer at Roehampton University and Company Manager of Tavaziva Dance. In addition to her performance and teaching experience, Heather supports individuals and organisations as a project manager, strategic consultant and creative producer.



Jess Choi
Communications +
Marketing Consultant

Jess Choi is a communications and marketing consultant and graphics and web designer. She has extensive experience in fundraising, communications, and sales working with non-profit arts and cultural organisations. She specialises in developing commercial partnerships, individual giving, event management, website design and development, digital marketing, and creating integrated fundraising and communications strategies.



Freda Morrison
Support Administrator

Freda Morrison is a college student, soon embarking on university studies in the field of Digital Marketing and Business Management. She supports the team with administrative logistics on projects online and also updates useful data for its members in the digital hub. She stays motivated to push boundaries, stay creative, & build a foundation for her future career.



Dr 'Funmi Adewole Elliot
Advocate

'Funmi is a practitioner-researcher with a background in performance, journalism and education. Her research interests include Contemporary African culture, Modernity, Interculturalism, Dance as a profession and Choreography.

Biographies of C-DaRE Team



Rosa Cisneros
C-DaRE, Coventry University (UK)

Rosamaria Cisneros is a professional dancer, curator, dance historian, Romani studies scholar, EDI-consultant and film maker. She has over 25 years of experience as a professional dancer and her lived experience as a member of the BAME/Global Majority community artist/researcher gives her unique and specific expertise in developing projects that are inclusive of marginalized communities. Her doctoral research in sociology researched intersectionality, Roma women and counternarratives and was awarded Summa Cum Laude. Her ongoing research brings together dance, marginalised communities and digital technologies.

Cisneros leads several UKRI and EU-funded projects that make dance, archives and education accessible to vulnerable groups and ethnic minorities and sits on a number of boards based in the UK and Europe. Cisneros is a co-editor for academic journals and brings conceptual grounding in debates around decolonising dance, archives and practice research. Through her consultancy work for the International Council on Archives, leading their ethical archives project, and Chair of the Equality and Diversity Task Force for Europeana Foundation, she has advised several political organisations on the value dance and cultural heritage can have on transforming social, political and artistic environments.



Jade Ward
C-DaRE, Coventry University (UK)

Jade Ward is a student researcher, educator, yoga teacher, dancer, and dedicated community activist. Her background is predominately in education and the VCSE sector, working in a diverse range of educational and community focused settings. Jade began her PhD in January 2021 with Coventry University's Centre for Dance Research (CDaRE) and is investigating the potential benefits of hip hop dance and culture on mental health, wellbeing and citizenship with the projects partner organisation, Street Factory CIC.



Maria Polodeanu
Reel Master Productions

Raluca Maria Polodeanu is a freelance creative from Coventry, UK. Her work is based on large scale projects that have a research, heritage and dance focus. She is helping creative businesses and artists share their work online using audio-visual and design. With a background in media production and marketing, Maria started the Reel Master Production company, which activates cultural projects in the region. A few names she collaborated with are the Center for Dance Research from Coventry University, Coventry City of Culture 2021, Birmingham City University, Warwick University and other medium-sized art organisations around the West Midlands, UK.

Thank You

GLOBAL FRAMEWORKS FOR CREATIVE EXCHANGE COLLABORATION PARTNERS



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KBE SUPPORTERS

Cake to Differ
Wendy Fisher-Stephens

We wish to thank all our featured artists, presenters, attendees, partners, sponsors, co-facilitators, and the Kauma Arts Team.