INSTITUTIONALISING FILM PRODUCTION SPACES: AN APPRAISAL OF FILM VILLAGES IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

The evolution of film villages in Nigeria represents a significant yet underexplored dimension of the country's cinematic infrastructure and creative economy. This study offers a critical appraisal of the emergence, development, and contemporary relevance of film villages within the Nigerian film industry (Nollywood). Tracing their evolution from informal, location-based production hubs to purpose-built film villages such as Tinapa Film Studios, Kunle Afolayan Film Village, and KAP Hub, the paper examines how these spaces have responded to Nollywood's changing production needs, aesthetic ambitions, and global aspirations. The study examines the roles of state intervention, private investment, tourism policy, and technological advancement in shaping the sustainability of film villages. It further analyses the challenges confronting these infrastructures, including inadequate funding, policy inconsistency, limited maintenance culture, and uneven integration into the broader film value chain. This paper argues that, while film villages hold immense potential to enhance production efficiency, preserve cultural heritage, stimulate film-induced tourism, and professionalise Nollywood's production culture, their impact remains constrained by structural and institutional limitations. The study concludes that a coherent national film infrastructure policy, strengthened public-private partnerships, and strategic integration of film villages into Nollywood's global distribution networks are essential for maximising their developmental potential.

Keywords: *Film villages, Nigerian film industry infrastructure, cultural production, creative economy*

Introduction

The Nigerian film industry, popularly known as Nollywood, has undergone significant structural and conceptual transformations since its emergence in the early 1990s. Initially characterised by low-budget and rapidly produced films, Nollywood has developed into one of the world's largest film industries by volume, while its production practices, genres, technologies, distribution networks, and institutional structures have continued to evolve (Haynes, 2016). Scholars have documented this transformation from different perspectives, including the industry's production practices, cultural significance, industrial organisation, locations, and changing relationship with formal media and creative infrastructures (Barrot, 2011; Haynes, 2016; Bud, 2025). Bud (2025) has also drawn attention to the importance of locations and production infrastructures in understanding how Nollywood operates, demonstrating that filmmaking is shaped not only by filmmakers and technologies but also by the spaces in which production takes place.

Despite Nollywood's prolific output and cultural resonance, infrastructural challenges have remained an important concern in the development of the industry. Film production has historically depended substantially on existing houses, streets, natural environments, and other

locations adapted for filming. Such location-based production practices have enabled Nollywood to maintain its flexibility and relatively low production costs, but they can also create logistical challenges relating to access, control, electricity, security, noise, weather, and the availability of suitable settings. The growing demand for higher production values and more organised production environments has therefore generated increased interest in dedicated film-production spaces. In recent years, film villages have emerged as innovative responses to these challenges. These are purpose-built environments that consolidate set spaces, logistical support, accommodation, and cultural settings for filmmaking. Their emergence signals an important development in the organisation of Nigerian film production, particularly as Nollywood increasingly engages with new production technologies, streaming platforms, international audiences, tourism, and changing aesthetic ambitions. Film villages therefore warrant attention not simply as filming locations, but as emerging forms of production infrastructure with potential implications for the professionalisation and institutionalisation of Nollywood.

The emergence of film villages in Nigeria also reflects a growing relationship between film production, cultural representation, creative enterprise, and tourism. Purpose-built environments can provide controlled and reliable spaces for production while reproducing historical, rural, urban, and culturally specific settings. They may also provide opportunities for training, employment, hospitality, and film-induced tourism. However, the establishment of such spaces raises questions about their sustainability, institutional support, utilisation, maintenance, and integration into the wider film value chain. Against this background, this paper critically appraises the emergence, development, and contemporary relevance of film villages in Nigeria. It traces their evolution from informal, location-based production hubs to purpose-built film villages and examines their contributions to Nollywood, particularly in relation to production efficiency, cultural preservation, skills development, and tourism. It further considers the roles of state intervention, private investment, tourism policy, and technological advancement in shaping their sustainability, while analysing the challenges confronting these emerging production infrastructures.

Origins and Conceptual Foundations

The development of film villages in Nigeria is rooted in longstanding efforts to establish structured production infrastructure for the Nigerian film industry. Evidence of formal interest predates the recent emergence of privately developed film villages. In 2006, the Federal Government's reform programme led to the establishment of a Ministerial Technical Committee mandated, among other responsibilities, to develop guidelines and modalities for the establishment of film villages in Nigeria and to advise on acceptable structural and technical requirements. The Nigerian Film Corporation subsequently identified the establishment of film villages as part of its proposed film infrastructure programme, with plans for "one-stop" film destinations incorporating studios, sound stages, post-production facilities, hotels, cineplexes, theme parks, and recreational facilities (Nigerian Film Corporation, 2015). These initiatives

indicate that the idea of a dedicated film-production environment had entered Nigerian film policy discourse before the emergence of the current generation of privately developed film villages.

The need for such infrastructure is connected to the production conditions under which Nollywood developed. Early Nollywood production depended extensively on location shooting and the adaptation of existing domestic, commercial, and public spaces for filmmaking. Tsika (2024), in *African Media in an Age of Extraction: Nollywood Geographies*, demonstrates the importance of space and location to Nollywood's production history, while Bud (2025) examines the relationship between location production, built environments, and the development of studio-based production practices in Nigeria. Bud's research is significant to the present discussion because it identifies two related trajectories in Nollywood production: location production and the emergence of a new studio system. This spatial dimension provides an important basis for understanding the movement towards dedicated film-production environments.

The contemporary emergence of film villages can therefore be understood as part of this gradual movement from dispersed location-based production towards more controlled and organised production spaces. In 2021, the Lagos State Government and Del-York International Group announced plans for a film city and entertainment-industry campus designed to provide spaces in which film and creative-industry professionals could live, work, and learn, with production facilities and supporting infrastructure integrated into the development (Storyland Studios, 2021). Similarly, Henry-Great's (2022) architectural study, *A Proposed Film Village for Nollywood Production of Nigeria*, approaches the film village as a specialised production environment requiring appropriate spatial planning, acoustic design, studios, and supporting facilities. These developments suggest that the film village is increasingly conceived not simply as a filming location but as an infrastructure designed around the practical requirements of film production.

Conceptually, therefore, a film village may be understood as a dedicated or purpose-built production environment in which sets, production facilities, accommodation, technical services, and related creative activities are organised to support repeated audiovisual production. This understanding extends the conventional idea of a filming location. Rather than providing only a backdrop for a particular scene, the film village creates a relatively stable spatial environment in which filmmakers can exercise greater control over production conditions. International research on film villages also demonstrates that such spaces can extend beyond filmmaking into tourism and cultural consumption. Suni and Komppula (2012), for example, examine Finland's SF-Film village as a movie-tourism destination and show how a production site can acquire additional value as a visitor attraction. More recent research by Yi et al. (2022) further demonstrates that the sustainability of film-induced tourism depends on the integration of film, culture, tourism, technology, markets, and administrative management.

In Nigeria, this expanded conception is evident in the development of facilities such as the KAP Film Village and Resort, Africhatta Film Village and Resort, BAP Film Village, and the Asaba Film Village. KAP Film Village and Resort was launched in Igbojaye, Oyo State, in 2022;

Africhatta Film Village emerged in Oyo State under the direction of Ibrahim Chatta; and BAP Film Village was unveiled by Bolanle Austen-Peters in Epe, Lagos State, in 2024. These privately developed facilities combine filmmaking spaces with elements of accommodation, recreation, cultural representation, or training, demonstrating the increasingly multifunctional character of film-production spaces in Nigeria (TheCable, 2024; QED.NG, 2024). Asaba provides a different model because its film infrastructure developed through state intervention. The city was designated a UNESCO Creative City of Film in 2023, and the Federal Ministry of Arts, Culture and the Creative Economy identifies its film village as an important component of the city's film ecosystem, including film conferences, artist-residency programmes, and support for emerging talent (Federal Ministry of Arts, Culture and the Creative Economy, n.d.).

The concept of the film village in Nigeria must therefore be located at the intersection of production infrastructure, spatial organisation, cultural representation, creative-industry development, and tourism. Its significance lies not simply in providing ready-made backgrounds for filmmakers but in creating an environment capable of reducing some of the logistical pressures associated with dispersed location production while supporting other activities across the film value chain. The development of these spaces also raises questions about ownership, investment, maintenance, accessibility, workforce, public policy, and long-term sustainability. Film villages should consequently be examined as emerging institutional infrastructures within Nollywood rather than merely as alternative filming locations.

Global Film Villages as Production Infrastructure and Spatialised Cinema

The expansion of audiovisual production across national borders has increased the importance of physical production infrastructure. Susan Christopherson and Michael Storper (1986) demonstrated that the geographical organisation of motion-picture production has been shaped by the relationship between dispersed location shooting and concentrated production capabilities. Christopherson and Storper showed that vertical disintegration encouraged production activities to move among specialised firms while major production centres continued to benefit from agglomerated labour, services and technical expertise. The spatial organisation of filmmaking therefore depends on more than access to attractive locations. Production requires coordinated facilities, skilled labour, equipment, services and institutional support (Christopherson & Storper, 1986; Storper & Christopherson, 1987).

Film villages represent one response to the infrastructural requirements of sustained screen production. A film village can be defined as a purpose-built or designated production environment containing permanent or semi-permanent filming locations alongside facilities that support repeated audiovisual production. Ramoji Film City in Hyderabad provides a major example. The India Cine Hub records studio floors, production locations, set construction, props, costumes, accommodation, catering and post-production resources within the Ramoji complex. Ramoji Film City covers approximately 2,000 acres and contains more than 500 filming locations, allowing multiple productions to operate through an integrated production environment.

The Ramoji model also demonstrates the movement from the traditional studio backlot towards a more extensive film-city infrastructure. Ramoji Film City combines production spaces with hotels, restaurants, tourism facilities, live entertainment and themed attractions. Ramoji Film City consequently operates as a production facility and a destination for film tourism. The Ramoji Film City model demonstrates how screen infrastructure can generate economic activity beyond the immediate production process through hospitality, tourism, entertainment and associated services.

India provides evidence of a wider institutional movement towards integrated film-city development. India Cine Hub identifies film cities in Mumbai, Hyderabad and Noida and reports that state governments and private investors are developing additional integrated studio facilities in anticipation of production demand. India Cine Hub associates film cities with the attraction of filmmakers and the provision of integrated audiovisual services.

African film infrastructure presents a different but important dimension of the film-village concept. Tinapa in Calabar incorporates Studio Tinapa and Nollywood Studio alongside accommodation, entertainment and commercial facilities. Tinapa therefore demonstrates an African attempt to connect screen production with a larger leisure and commercial environment. The presence of studios, a previewing theatre, a mini amphitheatre and hotel facilities demonstrates the possibility of combining film production with hospitality and entertainment infrastructure in a single spatial development.

Film villages also require consideration as components of creative production systems. John Howkins (2001) places creativity, intellectual property and creative production at the centre of the creative economy. Stuart Cunningham (2009) connects creative-industry development with changing economic and policy conditions, while Hasan Bakhshi, Stuart Cunningham and Juan Mateos-Garcia identify investment, knowledge exchange and spillover effects as important rationales for public intervention in cultural and creative industries. Film villages can therefore be examined through the concentration of production resources, technical labour, creative expertise and commercial services rather than through physical scenery alone.

Andy Pratt's (2004) analysis of creative clusters provides further support for understanding film villages as production systems. Pratt distinguishes creative clusters from simple concentrations of firms and argues for attention to spatial, temporal, regulatory and industry-specific conditions. Film villages correspond with such production-system concerns because film production depends on specialised labour, equipment, suppliers, technical services and institutional arrangements operating in close geographical proximity.

The global significance of film villages also emerges from the transnational organisation of screen production. Toby Miller, Nitin Govil, John McMurria, Richard Maxwell and Ting Wang (2005) examine the material organisation of global Hollywood and the international division of cultural labour, demonstrating the importance of production locations, labour arrangements, ownership structures, investment and technological change in the organisation of global screen

industries. Film villages can therefore function as physical nodes through which national screen industries participate in transnational production systems.

Film villages consequently represent more than collections of constructed sets. Film villages constitute production infrastructures, creative-industry concentrations, cultural representations and spatial instruments for organising screen labour. The global film village requires analysis through economic geography, creative-industry theory and spatial theory because production infrastructure influences where filmmaking occurs, how filmmaking labour is organised, what cultural environments are reproduced and how national screen industries connect with international production networks.

Conceptual and Theoretical Foundations for Analysing Film Villages

A film village differs from a temporary film set and a conventional studio backlot. A temporary set is constructed for a specific production, while a backlot provides permanent constructed environments for repeated filming. A contemporary film village extends the backlot by combining filming locations with production facilities, technical services, workshops, accommodation and, in some cases, tourism and entertainment. Ramoji Film City illustrates this integrated model through studios, constructed sets, production services, accommodation and catering. Christopherson and Storper (1986) link motion-picture production to specialised firms and geographical concentration, while Storper and Christopherson (1987) explain the industry through flexible specialisation and regional agglomeration. Film villages therefore concentrate production resources while allowing specialised firms and workers to remain organisationally distinct.

Lefebvre's (1991) production of space provides the principal spatial framework. Lefebvre's spatial triad comprises spatial practice, representations of space and representational spaces. Spatial practice concerns the organisation and use of physical space. Representations of space concern planned and technically conceived environments. Representational spaces concern lived experience, symbols and meanings. Applied to film villages, the framework examines production routines, crew movement and equipment circulation; architectural plans, government schemes and investment proposals; and the cultural meanings attached to reconstructed environments. The framework therefore connects infrastructure, planning, filmmaking and cultural representation.

Howkins' (2001) creative-economy perspective provides the economic dimension by directing attention to creativity, intellectual property, production investment and commercial value. Cunningham (2009) extends this perspective by examining creative industries through economic development and government intervention. Bakhshi et al. (2013) identify investment costs, knowledge exchange, spillovers and employment as important grounds for public intervention. These perspectives enable assessment of film villages through investment, employment, skills development, knowledge circulation and policy support. Pratt's (2004) creative-production-system approach further positions film villages as interconnected systems of

specialised labour, firms and services. Set construction, costume, equipment supply, cinematography, sound, accommodation, catering and post-production can therefore be analysed as linked production activities rather than isolated services. Miller et al. (2005) provide the transnational dimension by examining the international movement of production capital, labour and technology. Film villages can consequently function as local production nodes connected to international audiovisual networks.

Historical Development of Film Villages and the Nigerian Production Transition

The modern film-village model developed from the studio backlot and the concentration of production facilities around permanent studio sites. Hollywood studios established constructed streets, domestic interiors and specialised exterior locations to reduce dependence on changing public locations and maintain greater control over production. The United States motion-picture industry subsequently developed geographically concentrated production systems supported by specialised labour, equipment suppliers and production services (Christopherson & Storper, 1986; Storper & Christopherson, 1987). The European model followed a related path. Studio Babelsberg, established in 1912, developed permanent studio facilities for large-scale production, while Pinewood Studios, opened in 1936, combined sound stages, workshops, production offices and exterior filming areas. Pinewood currently maintains 30 stages and three exterior backlots, demonstrating the continuing importance of integrated physical production infrastructure. The Asian film-city model expanded the backlot concept into large-scale production and tourism complexes. Ramoji Film City, established in Hyderabad in 1996, occupies more than 2,000 acres and combines filming locations with studio facilities, accommodation and visitor attractions. Ramoji Film City reports production activity involving approximately 200 film units annually and more than 3,500 films produced across Indian languages. Hengdian World Studios, established in 1996 through the construction of Guangzhou Street for *The Opium War*, subsequently developed more than twenty major shooting bases representing different historical periods, alongside studios, hotels and supporting creative businesses. The Asian model demonstrates the movement from isolated backlots towards large production ecosystems combining filmmaking, hospitality, tourism and related services.

Nigeria followed a different historical route. Nigerian filmmaking developed largely through location-based production rather than through a mature studio system. John McCallum's research on Nollywood production records a movement from Lagos between 1992 and 1996 to Enugu and surrounding locations, followed by production activity in Aba and rural communities around Onitsha. From approximately 2008, Asaba and surrounding communities became major production locations. McCallum records estimates that approximately 60 percent of Nigerian films were shot in Asaba in 2015. Jade Miller's account similarly identifies Asaba as a major location for Nollywood production after the movement of Igbo marketers towards Onitsha and the increasing use of Asaba as a production centre. The Nigerian location-based system created a distinctive production ecology. Houses, hotels, streets and other ordinary built environments

became filming resources. The house scene examined by James Y. McCallum developed through relationships between filmmakers and property owners, especially in Enugu and later Asaba. Production therefore depended on access to existing residential and commercial spaces rather than permanent constructed environments. Asaba subsequently became an important location-shooting centre, with location managers, property owners, artisans, actors and production workers forming an informal production network.

The transition from location production to dedicated film villages had an important precursor in Hubert Ogunde's Ososa initiative. Hubert Ogunde established a film village at Ososa, Ogun State, in 1982 as a shooting facility for Ogunde film productions. *Aropin N'tenia* and *Ayanmo* were filmed at the Ososa facility. The Ososa initiative predates the commercial expansion of Nollywood in the 1990s and therefore demonstrates that purpose-built Nigerian film infrastructure has a history extending beyond the contemporary Nollywood era. The subsequent history of the Ososa film village also exposes an important institutional problem. The Ososa facility was closely associated with Hubert Ogunde's personal creative and managerial leadership. After Hubert Ogunde's death in 1990, the film village ceased operating as an active production facility. Wemimo Ogunde later explained that attempts to sustain the film village encountered difficulties, while the Ogunde Museum became the principal functioning heritage institution at Ososa. The Ososa experience demonstrates that physical infrastructure alone cannot guarantee institutional continuity. Sustainable film villages require succession structures, financing, professional management, continuous production activity and institutional partnerships.

The emergence of Asaba provides a second stage in Nigerian film-village development. Asaba did not begin as a purpose-built film village. Asaba first developed through intensive location-based production, supported by accessible houses, hotels, local labour and established links with the wider Nollywood production and distribution economy. Academic research records Asaba's emergence as a major production location from approximately 2008. Delta State subsequently moved towards dedicated infrastructure through the development of the Asaba Film Village at Anwai. The planned complex includes studio and editing facilities, workshops, guest accommodation, hostels, shooting huts, an amphitheatre and administrative facilities. Delta State government documents record the Film Village as a public investment project, while the Delta State Investment and Development Agency records the commissioning of the Film Village and Leisure Park as part of the state's tourism and investment programme. The Asaba transition is significant because public infrastructure followed an already established production ecosystem. Asaba demonstrates a movement from filmmakers adapting existing urban and residential spaces towards government-supported provision of dedicated production facilities. The Nigerian Film Corporation had already established a national institutional mandate for developing film-production facilities, training, archiving, technical assistance and international collaboration since 1979. The Asaba Film Village consequently represents part of a longer institutional movement towards structured film infrastructure rather than an isolated development.

A further stage has emerged through private investment. Kunle Afolayan opened KAP Film Village and Resort at Igbojaye, Oyo State, in April 2025. KAP Film Village contains more than twelve production sets across a 50-acre estate, including colonial architecture, modern urban environments, traditional village settings, forest locations and waterfront environments. Accommodation, catering, equipment storage, production offices and crew transportation form part of the production facility. KAP Film Village therefore represents a shift from location-dependent production towards privately financed, purpose-built and commercially integrated production infrastructure. The Nigerian trajectory can consequently be traced through four identifiable stages. The first stage involved Hubert Ogunde's early purpose-built experiment at Ososa in 1982. The second stage involved the expansion of location-based Nollywood production through Lagos, Enugu, Aba, Onitsha and Asaba. The third stage involved the conversion of established production centres such as Asaba into dedicated public film infrastructure. The fourth stage involves privately financed complexes such as KAP Film Village and Resort. The historical movement demonstrates a gradual shift from dependence on ordinary residential and commercial environments towards purpose-built production spaces capable of integrating filming, accommodation, technical services, tourism and creative enterprise.

Notable Film Villages and Production Hubs in Nigeria

Nigeria's film-village landscape contains different infrastructural models rather than a single standardised form. Ososa represents an early filmmaker-led model. Asaba represents the transition from an informal location-production hub to public investment in dedicated infrastructure. KAP Film Village represents contemporary private investment in an integrated production and hospitality complex. Hubert Ogunde's Film Village at Ososa remains historically significant because the Ososa initiative preceded Nollywood's commercial emergence. Hubert Ogunde established the film village in 1982 as a shooting facility for film productions, with *Aropin N'tenia* and *Ayanmo* among the productions filmed at the site. The subsequent decline of production activity after Hubert Ogunde's death demonstrates the vulnerability of filmmaker-centred infrastructure when institutional succession and sustainable financing are absent. The continuing Ogunde Museum preserves the cultural legacy of the Ososa enterprise, while the film village has not returned to sustained production use.

Asaba provides the strongest example of production-centre evolution. Asaba initially functioned through location shooting, with houses, hotels and other existing spaces serving as production environments. Academic research places Asaba at the centre of Nigerian location production from approximately 2008, following earlier production concentrations in Lagos and Enugu. The Federal Ministry of Art, Culture, Tourism and the Creative Economy identifies Asaba as a major film-production centre and records Asaba's designation as a UNESCO Creative City of Film in 2023. The Ministry also identifies the Asaba Film Village as part of the city's film infrastructure and creative development strategy. The Asaba Film Village represents an infrastructural response to an already established production economy. The Anwai complex was

designed to provide pre-production, production, post-production and exhibition resources, including studios, editing suites, workshops, accommodation, hostels and shooting facilities. The Asaba case therefore demonstrates how a production hub can move from informal use of existing urban spaces towards dedicated public infrastructure.

KAP Film Village and Resort represents a different model based on private creative entrepreneurship. Kunle Afolayan officially opened the Igbojaye, Oyo State facility in April 2025. KAP Film Village provides more than twelve constructed production environments across a 50-acre estate and integrates accommodation, catering, equipment storage, production offices and crew transportation. Productions including *Anikulapo*, *Anikulapo: Rise of the Spectre* and *Ijogbon* have used the facility. KAP Group further connects the film village with film production, post-production, streaming, cinema, hospitality and training, creating an integrated private creative enterprise.

Award winning filmmaker, Kunle Afolayan set the ball rolling with his Kunle Afolayan Productions (KAP) film village and resent in Igbojaye, Oke Ogun, Oyo State in 2022. The village was used for the *Anikulapo* series and other productions. According to Adigun, Afolayan reveals his vision for the film village before it commenced operations.

> I think this is going to create a big relief for the generations to come, when we want to shoot films, we always look for people's houses, begging them and you do not have control, but with this kind of place, we have the confidence to commence shooting at our convenient time, we can easily decide on our own about the weather and other factors, but you can not do that if you are renting the place or if you are tied to a time from the house owner. (Afolayan as cited in Adigun, 2024)

The beautiful landscape that dotted the location of the film village is captured in this description of the way to the village:

> We came here in November, 2024 for suitable location for a film, but on getting here, I thought about it and I felt this is just a beautiful place, if you are coming from Ibadan, get to Iseyin, leaving Iseyin and on your way here, you will hardly see mountains, rocks and valleys like you see here, when you come to Okaka till you get to out, you won't find those natural ambience, but from Igbojaye to Komu-Baba Ode, the places are surrounded with all these natural gifts that people are taking advantage of. (Afolayan as cited in Adigun, 2024)



Fig. 1 Some of the lodgings in KAP Film Village
Source: https://www.kapfilmvillageandresort.com/film-village.html?utm (KAP Film Village & Resort)

Major deduction from Afolayan's observation, is the fact that, many tourist destinations around the world do not have half of endowment of the location but because of how they are positioned, how they are structured and a lot of government support, they get loans and people fly there from all over the world. The intention, Afolayan contends, is to replicate global standard in tourism for people from Lagos, Abuja and other areas to come down for shooting and relaxation. In furtherance of this goal, the film studio is spiced up with apartments for lodging and a bar. Inspite of these facilities in the village, the major challenge is that of workforce for services and maintenance of the facilities. The film maker has to travel as far as Ibadan to hire workers.



Fig. 2 KAP Film Village at night
Source: https://www.kapfilmvillageandresort.com/film-village.html?utm
(KAP Film Village & Resort)

Closely related to this vision of Afolayan is the Africhatta Film Village and Resort owned by popular actor, Ibrahim Chatta, which has hosted several actors and producers. The film village and resort is located in Oyo State and sits on about 74 acres of land. It consists of thatched houses with drawings portraying the aesthetics of Yoruba culture as well as stable for horses and other animals. The facility, which is set in a serene and picturesque location, offers a quiet atmosphere for artistic expression. It is also equipped with modern infrastructure, such as studios and state-of-the art equipment. This has in turn attracted many filmmakers to the location after it commenced operation.



Fig. 3 Africhatta Film Village
Source: https://app.advcollective.com/nigeria/others/cultural-haven-africhatta-film-village-and-resorts?utm (Adventure Collective – Africhatta Film Village)

Several filmmakers have used the facilities at the film village. A TV series, *Eleran* was shot entirely in the film village, with production team applauding the facilities and supporting staff for enhancing their production quality. Other films that have been shot there include *Oko Iyabo* and *Ajoje*. The facility has also hosted prominent figures in the film industry, namely, Deyemi Okanlawon, Muyiwa Ademola, Lateef Adedimeji, Iyabo Ojo, Adebimpe Oyelade, Toyin Abraham and Niyi Akinmolayan have made use of the location. Abraham shot scenes for her movie, titled *Iyalode* at the film village. On his part, Chatta looks forward to upgrading the village with more facilities. In addition to being a filming location, the village has also hosted several workshops and training programmes for filmmakers.



Fig. 4 African architecture at Africhatta Film Village
Source: https://app.advcollective.com/nigeria/others/cultural-haven-africhatta-film-village-and-resorts?utm (Adventure Collective – Africhatta Film Village)

Another recently unveiled village is that of award-winning film director and producer, Bolanle Austin – Peters which occupies 10,000 – acres of land in Epe, Lagos State. Austen-Peters shot her Neflix film, *House of Gaa* at the village. The film village began as a large expanse of land with greenery and dense forestation before it was transformed to its current state. The BAP film village, like other film villages, was planned for commercial purposes that include recreation, film production and training workshops.



Fig. 5 An African setting in BAP Film Village
Source: https://lifestyle.thecable.ng/bolanle-austen-peters-unveils-10000-acre-film-village-in-epe/?utm (TheCable – BAP Film Village, Epe)

In addition to privately developed film villages, Delta State Government established the Asaba Film Village as part of the Delta State Leisure Park and Film Village project. The integrated facility was formally commissioned in Asaba on 25 January 2023 by former Vice President Atiku Abubakar during the administration of Governor Ifeanyi Okowa (Okungbowa, 2023). The project was conceived to strengthen tourism, cultural development and the creative economy, with the film village providing an amphitheatre, editing studio, shooting huts, hostels, guest rooms, staff

quarters, clinic, eatery and other production-support facilities (Okungbowa, 2023). The project also adopted a private-sector management model. Contemporary reporting records the concession of the leisure-park component to Woodfield Farms Limited, operators of Omu Resort, to promote professional and sustainable management (Okungbowa, 2023). Delta State investment documents subsequently continued to identify the Leisure and Film Village as an investment opportunity for private participation, demonstrating the government's intention to combine public infrastructure provision with private-sector involvement in tourism and related creative activities (Delta State Government, 2025).



Fig. 6 A bird-eye view of Asaba Film Village
Source: https://www.contemporarygroupng.com/film-village-asabas-new-marvel/
(Contemporary Group)

At one point, it was reported that government was partnering with Nollywood stakeholders so that the industry itself would help manage the film village and integrate it into broader film production activities. Nestled in the picturesque town of Asaba in Delta, stands testament to Nollywood's growth. Its infrastructure resembles a small town within a town, featuring intricately designed sets, residential quarters and crew, postproduction facilities and more. The village's layout is akin to a miniature film city, purpose-built to bring stories to life (Adigun, 2024).

The choice of Asaba, as a film village location, Adigun (2024) contends.

> Is strategic, its serene, natural surroundings on Ugbolu-Illah road provide the perfect backdrop for filmmakers, making every scene come to life with an authentic touch. Not to mention its proximity to the Niger River, further offering a diverse range of filming locations, from lush green landscapes to river front settings.

An added advantage is Asaba's accessibility because of its proximity to Onitsha and Asaba International Airport that makes it a logical location for Nollywood productions. The Asaba film village is therefore set to play indispensable role in Nollywood growth. Its facilities have served as the backdrop for countless blockbusters. For the broader complex, the leisure park portion has

already been concessioned to a private operator (Woodfield Farms Limited, operators of the Omu Resort in Ibeju-Lekki), indicating a model where private companies manage specific parts under government oversight. Asaba's Film Village is a key part of why Asaba has been designated to UNESCO creative city of film, recognizing its film production infrastructure and cultural importance.

Contribution of Film Villages to Nollywood

Film villages contribute to Nollywood through production control, cultural production, skills development, local economic activity and the consolidation of screen-industry infrastructure. The significance of the contribution becomes more apparent when the facilities at KAP Film Village, Africhatta Film Village and Asaba Film Village are examined against the production conditions that have shaped Nigerian filmmaking. Production efficiency constitutes a major contribution. KAP Film Village and Resort in Igbojaye, Oyo State, provides more than twelve constructed environments covering colonial architecture, contemporary urban streets, traditional compounds, a royal palace, forest locations and an indoor sound stage. The facility also provides generator backup, equipment storage, production offices, catering, crew accommodation, security and crew transportation. KAP Film Village therefore brings several production requirements into a single location and reduces the need for separate arrangements for sets, accommodation, equipment storage and basic production services (KAP Film Village & Resort, 2026). The practical value of such integration is demonstrated by the use of KAP facilities for *Anikulapo*, *Anikulapo: Rise of the Spectre* and *Ijogbon*. The opening of KAP Film Village in April 2025 also received federal and state government recognition as an investment in Nigeria's creative infrastructure (Lawal, 2025).

Asaba demonstrates a different contribution through the institutional consolidation of an established production centre. Asaba became a major location for Nollywood production before dedicated film infrastructure emerged. The Asaba Film Village subsequently provided purpose-built production spaces and associated facilities, while Asaba's designation as a UNESCO Creative City of Film in 2023 gave formal international recognition to the city's film-production ecosystem. The Federal Ministry of Art, Culture, Tourism and the Creative Economy identifies film production, artist residencies, international film conferences and talent development among Asaba's creative activities. The Asaba case therefore demonstrates that film-village infrastructure can consolidate an existing production economy rather than simply create filmmaking activity in an area without an established industry base (Federal Ministry of Art, Culture, Tourism and the Creative Economy, 2026).

Cultural production constitutes a second major contribution. KAP Film Village contains traditional Yoruba, Igbo and Hausa compound settings alongside palace environments, colonial buildings and natural landscapes. Africhatta Film Village and Resort in Oyo State similarly incorporates thatched structures and architectural elements associated with Yoruba cultural aesthetics. Such constructed environments give filmmakers access to repeatable representations

of historical, rural and cultural settings without reconstructing locations for every production. Ibrahim Chatta's Africhatta Film Village has already hosted film and television productions, including *Eleran*, demonstrating practical use rather than merely planned cultural infrastructure (Chima, 2024).

The cultural function extends beyond screen production. Film villages can connect cinematic representation with cultural tourism by allowing audiences and visitors to encounter architectural forms, landscapes and production spaces associated with Nigerian stories. KAP Film Village was developed as a combined production and hospitality destination, while Oyo State has explicitly linked the facility with tourism development and regional economic activity. Governor Seyi Makinde's 2025 address at the opening of KAP Film Village identified road access, electricity provision and tourism development as necessary components of the facility's long-term viability. The linkage between filmmaking and tourism consequently depends on supporting infrastructure beyond the film village boundary (Makinde, 2025).

Film villages also contribute to professional capacity through the concentration of filmmakers, technical workers and creative services. Asaba's UNESCO Creative City profile identifies artist residencies, international film conferences and talent-support programmes among the city's film activities. Such programmes create opportunities for knowledge exchange outside conventional university-based training. The contribution becomes more significant in an industry where practical production experience remains an important route into employment. UNESCO's 2025 intervention in Nigeria's cultural and creative industries further identifies skills development, professional capacity, partnerships and effective policy as major requirements for strengthening the creative economy (UNESCO, 2025). Film villages can therefore function as practical sites for production learning when training programmes are deliberately integrated into the facilities.

The economic contribution extends into surrounding communities. Film production generates demand for accommodation, food, transport, security, construction, costume, makeup, equipment services and other forms of local labour. KAP Film Village incorporates accommodation, catering, equipment storage, security and transportation as part of the production environment, while the surrounding Igbojaye area has become connected to the facility through road and tourism development initiatives. Oyo State's commitment to improving the road to KAP Film Village demonstrates the extent to which film infrastructure can create demands for public investment beyond the boundaries of a privately owned production site (Makinde, 2025).

The contribution of film villages, however, remains constrained by infrastructure outside the production sites. KAP Film Village provides generator backup, but the commissioning ceremony exposed continuing dependence on additional public infrastructure. Governor Seyi Makinde stated in April 2025 that the state had purchased a transformer and planned connection to the national grid together with a solar-hybrid mini-grid. The state government also committed to rehabilitating the road connecting Igbojaye and the film village. The evidence demonstrates an important limitation. A professionally equipped film village cannot fully remove production

constraints when electricity, roads and connectivity beyond the facility remain inadequate (Makinde, 2025).

The proposed Lagos Film City project illustrates the scale of infrastructure required for further industrial consolidation. The Kebulania project in Epe is planned as a 100-hectare creative-industry development containing film and television studios, post-production and visual-effects facilities, a data centre and dedicated power infrastructure. The project description explicitly identifies unreliable electricity and generator dependence as major cost pressures in Nigerian film production. The proposed infrastructure therefore responds to a production problem that individual film villages cannot resolve independently (NTU Centre for African Studies, 2025).

Funding and institutional coordination remain further concerns. Nigeria's Federal Government has introduced the Creative Economy Development Fund and Creative Leap Acceleration Programme and has identified studio infrastructure, production equipment and content technology as eligible areas for creative-economy investment. The Federal Government also commenced wider reform of cultural and creative-economy policies in collaboration with UNESCO and the Nigerian Economic Summit Group in 2025. Such interventions provide an emerging policy environment for film infrastructure, but the long-term effectiveness of film villages will depend on sustained access to finance, professional management, reliable utilities, production patronage and integration with national creative-industry policy (Federal Ministry of Information and National Orientation, 2025; UNESCO, 2025).

The evidence from KAP, Africhatta and Asaba therefore suggests that film villages are contributing to Nollywood through different infrastructural pathways. KAP demonstrates integrated private production and hospitality infrastructure. Africhatta demonstrates the use of culturally specific constructed environments for contemporary production. Asaba demonstrates the institutional consolidation of an established filmmaking centre and the international recognition of film as a component of urban creative development. The differences among the three cases also demonstrate why a single model of the Nigerian film village is inadequate.

Conditions for Sustainable Film-Village Development

Sustainable film villages require more than constructed sets. KAP's continuing need for grid electricity, alternative power generation and improved road access demonstrates the importance of external infrastructure. Asaba demonstrates the value of municipal and state-level creative policy. Africhatta demonstrates the potential of privately developed cultural production spaces. The evidence supports a development model based on reliable power, road and digital connectivity, diversified production use, professional facility management, skills partnerships, tourism integration and access to creative-industry finance.

UNESCO's 2025 programme in Nigeria identifies skills development, policy formulation and institutional partnerships as central components of stronger cultural and creative industries. Nigeria's Creative Economy Development Fund and related initiatives provide emerging financial mechanisms for creative enterprises and production infrastructure. Film villages should therefore

be incorporated into national and state creative-economy planning rather than treated as isolated private projects (UNESCO, 2025; Federal Ministry of Information and National Orientation, 2025).

Conclusion

Film villages are beginning to alter the infrastructural conditions of Nollywood. KAP Film Village demonstrates integrated private production infrastructure. Africhatta demonstrates culturally specific production environments. Asaba demonstrates the institutional development of an established film-production centre. The principal contribution lies in the movement from dependence on improvised locations towards dedicated spaces capable of supporting repeated production, cultural representation, skills development and tourism. The evidence also establishes a necessary qualification. Film villages cannot independently resolve Nollywood's infrastructural difficulties. KAP's continuing dependence on external power and road improvements demonstrates the importance of public infrastructure, while the national policy reforms initiated from 2025 indicate the need for stronger institutional coordination. The future effectiveness of Nigerian film villages therefore depends on the relationship between privately or publicly developed production sites and the wider infrastructure, financing, skills, tourism and policy systems supporting Nollywood.

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