



Wednesday, January 21, 2015



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Kampala Fashion Week: Ugandan Fashionistas Get Their Day To Shine

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Published: December 2, 2014, 4:56 am



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Despite having their tradition Buganda clothes listed as one of the UNESCO “Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity”, making it an *ancient* artifact, Uganda is the last place one will expect fashion to be a big thing.

But at the Kampala Fashion Week last week, tickets ran out days before the event. For a whole week local designers patched their designer dresses, shorts and jackets on models strutting the catwalk. The show featured 10 Ugandan women and menswear designers, including President Yoweri Museveni’s daughter Natasha Karugire.

“In so many ways anything to do with being artistic is a struggle here, people don’t take it seriously,” Ugandan-born Britain-based designer Jose Hendo told [AFP](#) at the event.

Kampala Fashion Week come in the wake of similar events in east Africa in Burundi and Rwanda, while Nairobi Fashion Week will be held this week in Kenya’s capital. The events have got support from U.S. production firm [LDJ Productions](#) — who provide technical support for New York fashion week

[LDJ Productions CEO Laurie De Jong](#), whose team have also helped Mumbai, Miami, Toronto and Los Angeles get fashion weeks off the ground, told [AFP](#) that New York’s version was now one of the city’s top three revenue-producing events.

Introduction of the same fashion weeks in East Africa is now being termed as the region’s first push to boost a sector that has been hurt by rampant importation of substandard second hand clothes.

“My prayer and hope is that Ugandans will all wear our own clothes and that the second hand clothes market will fizzle out of our society,” said Karugire, who owns the J&kainembabazi label.

Kampala Fashion Week was founded by Gloria Wavammuno, 29, who interned for British men’s designer Oswald Boateng and has participated in fashion weeks in New York and Paris, showed off her jackets, raincoats and other accessories.