

Films *made in Africa* on the rise

Strengthening the Film Industry in Selected Countries in Africa

In a backyard in Nairobi, two women are deeply immersed in conversation that appears to change their lives. It is a scene from a short film funded by German Development Cooperation. What the audience will not see: The small backyard is crowded with people. Director, sound technician, camerawoman, make-up artist, costume designer, producer – up to 120 people are involved at times in a film production in Kenya.

Scriptwriter, special effects specialist or film festival organiser: The film industry is a job engine

From script development, to production, to digital post-production (editing and sound) and eventually distribution of the film – around 5 million people work along a long and broad film value chain in Africa. In addition, there are supporting services such as casting and catering. But the industry's potential is far from exhausted. UNESCO estimates that the African film industry has the potential to employ 20 million people and generate 20 billion US dollars in revenue annually.

The digital transformation of the film industry

A large proportion of these jobs are now mainly performed in front of a digital device. Green screens put actresses in digitally created worlds, and motion capture transforms actors into fantasy creatures. On the audience side, the digital transformation has led to a change in consumption patterns. With a growing number of internet users (currently over 450 million people in Africa), the demand for information and entertainment services is increasing.

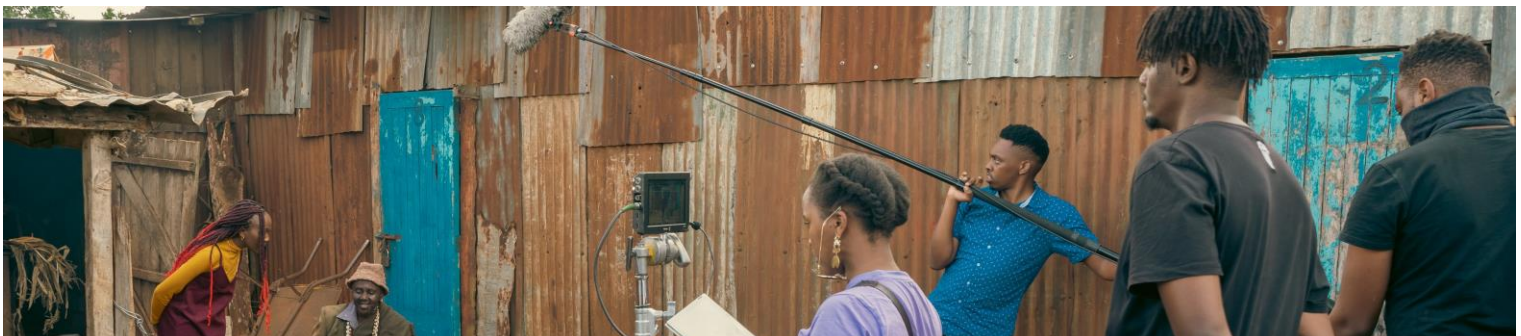
Demand for films *made in Africa* on the rise

The African video-on-demand platform *Showmax* successfully focuses on locally produced films and series; and *Netflix* is including more and more African productions in its programme, too. When African filmmakers tell their stories, they not only contribute to cultural heritage but also negotiate values and narratives in a changing social environment. As "agents of change", filmmakers express injustice, draw attention to the unseen heroes, or call for social change, for example by addressing post-colonial structures.

Project name	Strengthening the film industry in selected countries in Africa
Commissioned by	Bundesministerium für wirtschaftliche Zusammenarbeit und Entwicklung (BMZ)
Project region	Africa, with a focus on Kenya and Rwanda
Lead executing agency	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH
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Film as a cultural asset connects across borders and promotes social cohesion and dialogue

Films show what life is like for the "others" and thus promote empathy, respect, and appreciation for diversity. It is one among the many reasons why it is important that African film productions also reach audiences outside the continent, in Europe and North America: To break post-colonial patterns, some of which are still deeply rooted, and to portray the commonalities of diversity.



The international outreach of films *made in Africa* spreads curiosity for a dialogue and contributes to a growing cultural exchange.

Unfolding the potential

However, African filmmakers often face various challenges that prevent the full potential of the film industry from unfolding. This is also the case in Kenya and Rwanda: Without functioning public support programmes for the film industries filmmakers have limited or no access to funding, investment, or services. In addition, there is a lack of defined standards and framework conditions to ensure competitiveness and good working conditions in the film industry.

Development state funded film support programmes

To expand the state services for filmmakers, Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH on behalf of the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) is working together with the *Kenya Film Commission* and the *Rwanda Film Office* to establish sustainable, inclusive, and fair film support programmes for independent filmmaking in the respective countries. With piloting initiatives of film funding, financial support was provided to a total of 40 film projects in Kenya and Rwanda – gaining valuable experiences for the establishment of state funded film support programmes.

The two state-mandated film agencies will further be supported by the project in developing and establishing standards and guidelines for the sector. These include, for example, the certification of professional groups, the development of environmentally friendly production standards, the protection of copyright or the promotion of gender-sensitive working conditions.

On-the-job training for filmmakers strengthens international competitiveness

To reach international competitiveness and increase employment effects through high quality film productions, appropriate training opportunities in the film industry are needed.

In addition, the entrepreneurial skills of producers and service providers – for example acting agencies, cinemas, film festivals or companies in the field of special effects or equipment rental – are of great importance, too.

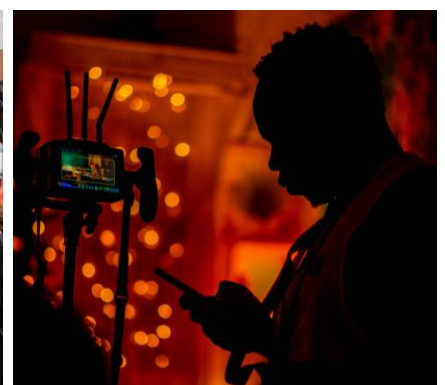
The project therefore partners with the non-profit agencies *Some Fine Day Pix* in Kenya and *Media Education Babelsberg* in Rwanda in the implementation of on-the-job master classes for filmmakers and other professionals in the industry. The effects of the master classes confirm the high relevance of training: Almost 60 % of the participants recorded an increase in income of at least 20 % within six months of completing the training.

Strengthening the economic participation of women

As women are underrepresented in the film industry, especially in technical fields and leadership positions, the project puts a special focus on designing master classes that provide suitable conditions and a safe place to women as well as filmmakers from the LGBTQI+ community.

Digital training opportunities for the African continent

Also beyond the borders of Kenya and Rwanda, young African filmmakers are provided with high quality training opportunities through the development of the *Digital Film School Africa*. This digital learning platform currently offers film students training opportunities in three film disciplines: production, scriptwriting, and documentary film. During the project duration learning opportunities in other disciplines will be developed. Through blended-learning formats at film schools, regional industry experts share their knowledge with a focus on African perspectives of visual storytelling. This is complemented by peer-to-peer sessions and self-study phases. The *Digital Film School Africa* was launched by the Ghanaian training institutes *Africa University College of Communication* and *YMCA Ghana*, with the support of the German non-profit association *Weltfilme*.





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National and international cooperation for sustainable success

In addition to high-quality training opportunities and state services for filmmakers, national and international cooperation play an important role in taking the African film industry to the next level.

The project therefore strengthens networking and exchange capacities within the film industry, including other actors from politics, education, the private and financial sectors, and civil society. This includes, for example, the preparation of international co-production agreements.

The project supported the partnership between the *Kenya Film Commission* and the *Kenya National Bureau of Statistics*. The two government bodies worked together to create a *Film Industry Satellite Account (FISA)*, which quantifies the contribution of the Kenyan film industry to the country's GDP. The data will help the *Kenya Film Commission* to mobilize investments into the film industry.

Strengthening the film industry as a contribution to achieving SDGs

Strengthening the film industry contributes to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs): Promoting labour market relevant and practical training opportunities in the film industry supports SDG 4 (Quality Education). Supporting state-mandated film support bodies in Kenya and Rwanda contributes to SDG 16 (Peace, justice, and strong institutions). Film content raises awareness of SDGs 5 (Gender Equality) and 10 (Reduce Inequalities). Last but not least, international networks and cooperation help to achieve SDG 17 (Partnerships).

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