

# Strengthening the Film Industry in Kenya and Rwanda

## The challenge

Until the COVID-19 pandemic, economic growth in Kenya and Rwanda has been stable for several years and above the African average. Both countries are focussing strongly on developing their digital capabilities and competitiveness. This accelerated digital transformation and led to increased growth across many sectors. The local media, TV and film industries in Kenya and Rwanda, however, have not yet realised their full growth potential.

Since the film and media sector emerged in the two countries, demand for new and specialised skills profiles has increased. This demand is not yet met, as the sector lacks well-trained and experienced professionals in the various trades for film professionals. Women are particularly underrepresented in the local film industries in Kenya and Rwanda. In addition, there is a need for coherent national strategies and their respective implementation to incentivise local and international (co-)productions.

The desire for growth, qualification and professionalisation of filmmakers, private production companies and public institutions of the region is very pronounced. This is due to the potential income and employment creation that local productions, regional distribution and international cooperations can bring, and the demand to express culture and creativity through audio-visual content for a continuously growing audience.

## Our approach

The project “Education and Training of Media Professionals in Africa” has the objective of strengthening the film industry in Kenya and Rwanda. It seeks to improve the framework conditions for the film industry and increase opportunities of skills development. For this, it helps formulate and

implement improved national strategies for the promotion of the film and media sector, paving the way for international cooperation. Such improved strategies by the governments in Rwanda and Kenya contribute to a strengthened film industry.

In Rwanda, the project advises the Rwanda Development Board with its Rwanda Film Office on the implementation of national film strategies. For Kenya, the Kenya Film Commission, under the Ministry of Information, Communications and

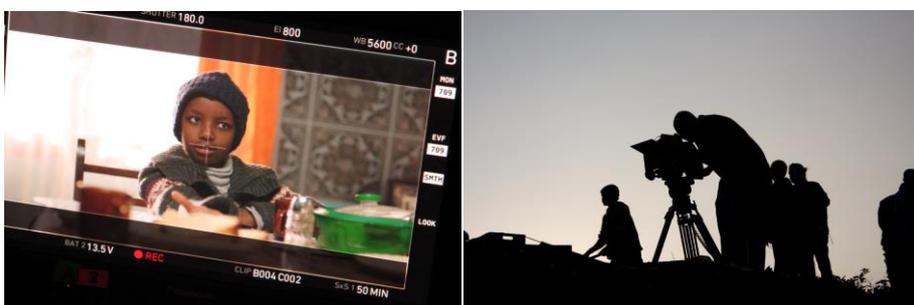
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Technology, Innovation and Youth Affairs, takes on the role as main partner and is mandated as a state agency to develop, promote and market the film industry locally and internationally.

On the skills development aspect, two partner organisations offer sector-specific training and exchange programmes in Kenya and Rwanda. The tailor-made approaches of the two non-profit agencies, Some Fine Day Pix in Kenya and Media Education Babelsberg in Rwanda, focus on a combination of



theoretical and practical measures for a selected number of talents by using blended (virtual/presence) learning formats.



*The training courses cover all aspects of film making from script writing to post-production.*



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*And Action: In practical training elements, young film makers are realizing their project ideas and grow together as a crew.*

Through the digital learning platform Atingi, a virtual classroom is used for interactive online sessions.

On the side of the practical experience, film makers design and produce their own short-movies or series under the mentorship of industry experts. This approach seeks to supply talents in the industry with a greater amount of knowledge to build up their careers. For a broader professional audience, relevant information for production and marketing is shared via webinars and podcasts series as well as regional exchange formats. This knowledge exchange among media professionals as well as public institutions is further promoted by participation African network meetings and platforms (e.g. CiniDB.Africa).

#### Achievements after 12 months

Filmmakers Trained	110
Days of Training	185
Short Films Supported	3

Furthermore, the project addresses the commercial marketing and distribution of film products. Through initiatives like the Film Empowerment Programme of the Kenya Film Commission, the project supports producers in building market linkages with television channels, cinemas, video platforms and festivals.

Another way of supporting the entrepreneurial aspect of film making is a collaboration with the ICT Innovation Center in Kigali. With improved services and a new strategy, the Center becomes a hub for aspiring start-ups and brings together professionals from both the ICT and film

sectors. It particularly promotes cross-sector collaboration and innovative ideas around animation, virtual reality and gaming.

## The benefits

The filmmakers can apply their improved skillsets to create more high-quality productions. This generates higher income and increases the potential of employment in the two countries. The introduction of digital learning and exchange formats, such as the Atingi platform and CiniDB.Africa, contributes to the regional collaboration and digital skills. Blended learning approaches, combining digital and in-class formats, can provide more flexibility in access, increase the sustainability and promote international as well as regional exchange.



Although the film industry is an international business and a driver of globalisation, local ownership and contextualization are key prerequisites for all interventions. This project is an opportunity to portray an authentic image of Kenyan and Rwandan society to the international audience. At the same time the Kenyan and Rwandan audience will have more opportunities to watch films, series and documentaries made and produced by local filmmakers.

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