

BRIDGES

NOT BORDERS:

STORIES THAT UNITE



ANNUAL REPORT 2025

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Awards



Year Round Programmes





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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Building Bridges Across the African Film Ecosystem

The Durban FilmMart Institute (DFMI) works towards a world where African film professionals and stories move freely across borders, are globally competitive and widely celebrated. The Durban FilmMart (DFM) sits at the heart of this vision – serving as a bridge that connects creatives, markets, and opportunities across Africa and beyond. The DFM is an annual four-day co-production and film finance market, designed to catalyse partnerships that drive the growth and sustainability of the African film industry. Strongly supporting its objective to strengthen the professional capacity, sustainability, and global competitiveness of African filmmakers are the DFMI year-round programmes.

This suite of targeted initiatives addresses critical gaps in business skills, mentorship, access to industry knowledge, and networking opportunities. Key programmes implemented during the year included Animation Masterclasses and Mentorship, DFM Access, the DFMI Business Lab, the DFM Pitch and Finance Forum, the Future Mentors Programme and Talents Durban, with online platforms, viz, Filmmart.Africa and the DFMI Business Lab Podcast, reaching digital audiences.

The DFMI shows consistent year-on-year growth across key measures of the quantity and quality of its programmes.

The 2025 edition, which marked the 16th year of the DFM, saw 1,367 delegates from 68 countries gather in Durban for four days of panel discussions, pitches, networking sessions, and getting down to business. There were 176 speakers in 52 discussions, and 90 funders, sponsors, and exhibitors. Selected project participants who pitched in the market were presented a total of 39 awards, comprising cash prizes worth over R1,526,900.00; travel allowance for attendance and participation in 22 international festivals, markets, pitching forums, residencies, labs; and mentorship opportunities.

The DFM is respected by industry professionals.

230 (17% of the 1,367 delegates) evaluated the DFM a week after the event; of these:

- 92% believe that DFM is fostering connections across Africa;
- 88% made new, valuable connections;
- 90% believe that DFM is growing talent on the African continent;
- 84% believe that DFM is where African film business is done;
- 79% stated that they gained access to decision-makers at DFM to which they would not generally have access.

DFM contributes to Durban's profile and tourism revenue: 1,061 business tourists visited Durban for at least four days, and the rand equivalent value for publicity gain through broadcast media, print media and social media was R16,470,654.00. Any publicity about the DFM automatically raises the profile of the City of Durban.

Through its year-round programming, DFMI received 429 applications, from which 77 participants were selected across 21 African countries, with over 50% of participants identifying as female. As a spin-off of the DFMI Business Lab, a nine-episode podcast series was produced and launched in October 2025, extending the programme's learning to the wider industry and supporting the development of sustainable film businesses. To date, the podcast has recorded 389 combined streams, views, and downloads. The Filmmart.Africa online platform currently hosts 1,344 public accounts, with 78% of subscribers based in Africa, underscoring its growing role as a continental networking and knowledge-sharing hub.



CONTEXT AND BACKGROUND

The Durban FilmMart Institute is a non-profit company that facilitates local and international trade and investment in African film content.

VISION

To be the premier business hub of the African film industries in a world where African film industry professionals and products are globally competitive and celebrated.

MISSION

The mission of the Durban FilmMart Institute is to provide appropriate and effective programmes and services in order to promote, support and facilitate investment in the African film industries, so that African film industry professionals and products are competitive and celebrated globally.

OBJECTIVES

The Durban FilmMart Institute aims to:

- raise the visibility of projects from the African Continent and create networking opportunities with potential co-producers and other industry partners;
- provide year-round capacity-building programmes to develop emerging filmmakers;
- build a community of filmmakers that have access to year-round support;
- generate market access for African film industry professionals and content to international markets;
- facilitate access to funding for promising projects and accelerate the financing of participating projects through transnational cooperation.
- stimulate the production of African content and promote international co-production opportunities;
- encourage project collaboration between African filmmakers.



PROGRAMMES

16th Durban FilmMart (18 – 21 July 2025)

The annual Durban FilmMart is a pan-African finance and co-production market. This included an 8-week mentorship programme for projects in development that have been selected to pitch in the market.

18th Talents Durban (May – July 2025)

Training programme that provided screenwriters, directors and film critics with the necessary skills to develop their craft.

5th DFMI Business Lab (August 2025 – January 2026)

Digital programme of workshops on financial management, business skills, entertainment law and IP, and distribution strategies aimed at nurturing and empowering producers to develop sustainable careers.

4th DFM Access (May – August 2025)

Incubation programme that supported producers in shaping their stories, preparing their project presentations, and understanding the marketplace.

3rd Animation Masterclasses and Mentorship Programme (January – June 2025)

Development of animation projects focusing on story development, characterisation, and understanding the African animation landscape and project packaging.

2nd and 3rd Future Mentors (November 2025)

The Future Mentors Programme's mission is to address the scarcity of mentors originating from the African continent, while simultaneously equipping the next wave of mentors in Africa with the essential skills they need.

Filmmart.Africa

Filmmart.Africa is an online platform for film professionals to connect, present new projects, and access resources and support. The platform aims to provide up-to-date, trusted business information that will help the industry collaborate and develop.

This report will highlight the impact of the DFMI programmes and reflect how the vision and mission is realised through the various programmes hosted by the Institute, with focus on the flagship event – the annual Durban FilmMart.





3. DFMI PROGRAMMES

3.1 16TH DURBAN FILMMART (FLAGSHIP EVENT)

The premier film industry event in Africa, DFM 2025, took place from 18 – 21 July in Durban, under the theme “Bridges Not Borders: Stories That Unite”. The event successfully brought together 1,364 film professionals and filmmakers from 63 countries across the world. This year’s theme underscored the transformative potential cinema serves as a bridge, opening genuine exchange and collaboration that enriches storytelling capabilities across the industry.

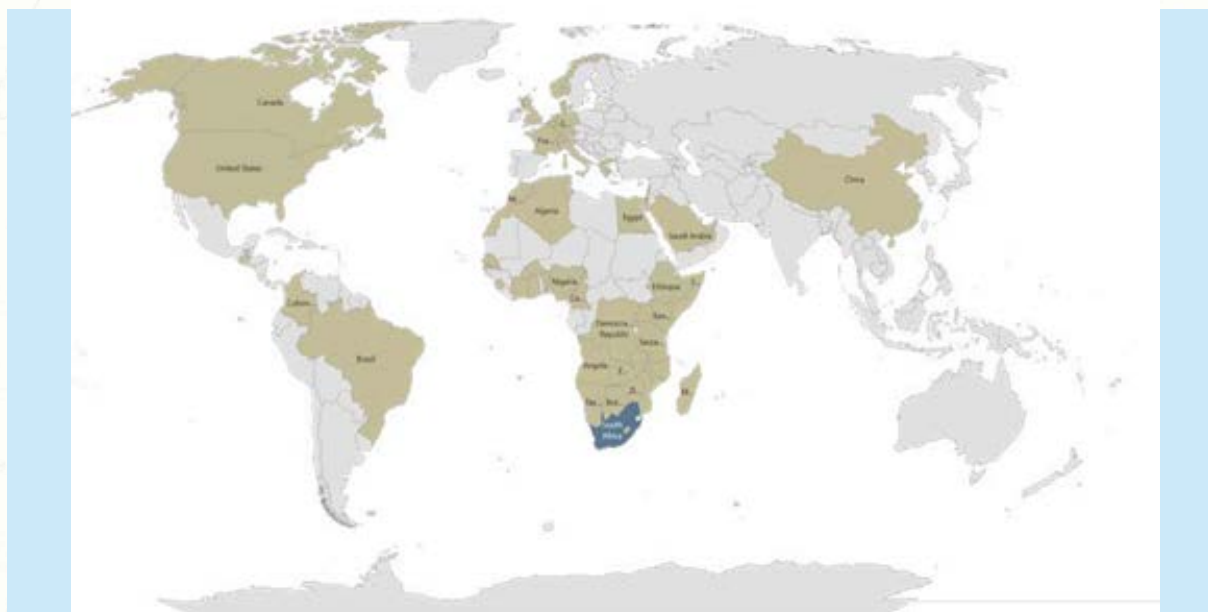
In an industry still navigating fragmentation, DFM 2025 aimed to create pathways for shared resources, knowledge exchange, and creative partnerships. These bridges connected not only different regions of the continent but also reached out to the African diaspora and Global South communities. Through meaningful dialogue, the event sought to break down the artificial barriers that have historically separated our worlds, allowing for more organic and equitable collaborations.

The 16th DFM featured a comprehensive programme designed to foster high-quality collaborations and provide valuable insights into the filmmaking process. Key components included fiction, episodic, documentary and animation projects in development, showcased in the Pitch and Finance Forum. The DFM Industry Programme presented keynote talks, masterclasses, panel discussions, lab presentations, and think tanks – and Exhibition and Networking opportunities were created.

The event recorded:

- 90 funders, sponsors, and exhibitors
- 30 live action and animation projects pitching
- 176 speakers in 52 discussions
- 39 awards with cash prizes worth over R1,526,900.00, participation in 22 international festivals, markets, pitching forums, residencies, labs, or mentorship programmes, including travel allowances awarded at the DFM Awards ceremony.
- 1,364 delegates
- 63 countries in attendance
- 5,609 accumulative audience in person

3.2 DFM 2025 DELEGATE PROFILE



Countries Represented:

Angola	Egypt	Madagascar	Senegal
Benin	Eswatini	Malawi	South Africa
Botswana	Ethiopia	Mauritius	Spain
Brazil	France	Mexico	State of Palestine
Burkina Faso	Germany	Morocco	Switzerland
Cabo Verde	Gabon	Mozambique	Tanzania
Cameroon	Gambia	Namibia	Tunisia
Canada	Ghana	Netherlands	Uganda
Colombia	Greece	Nigeria	United Kingdom
Comoros	Israel	Norway	United States
Côte d'Ivoire	Italy	Qatar	Zambia
Czech Republic	Jamaica	Réunion	Zimbabwe
DR Congo	Kenya	Rwanda	
Ecuador	Lesotho	Saudi Arabia	

DFM attracts a diverse mix of race, gender and age

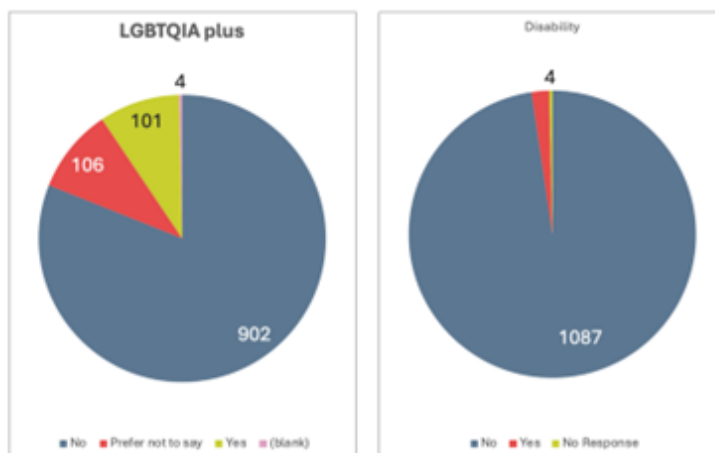
A positive testimony to the efforts to create an inclusive film industry



Analysis based on registration data

DFM is creating a safe and inclusive space

9.07% identify as LGBTQIA plus, 1.98% as disabled

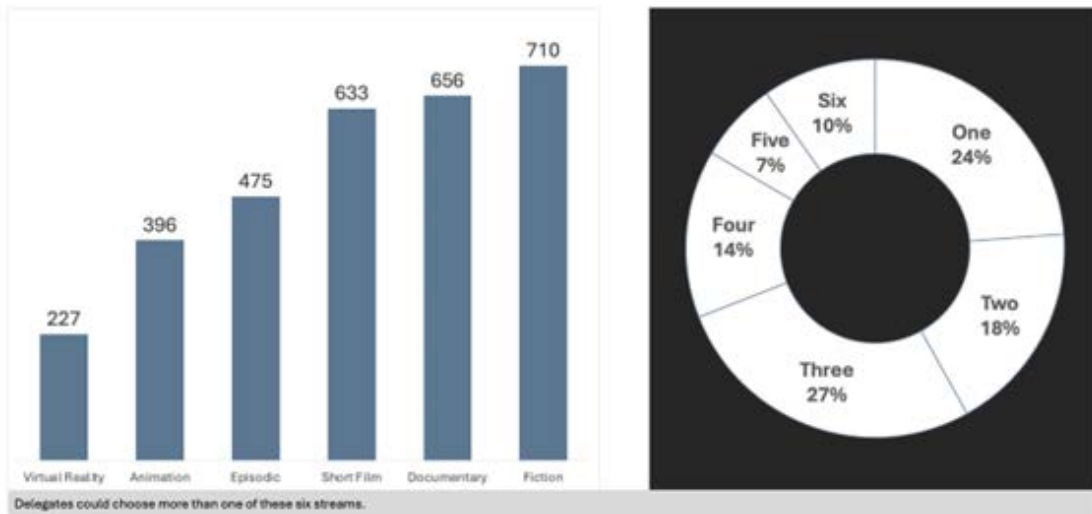


- 2024 saw the introduction of a **respect policy** which was highlighted at the start of every session.; this was carried through to the 2025 event
- To make the sessions inclusive for **visually impaired delegates**, panelist described their appearance before sessions started.
- Live translation aimed to create **language inclusivity**



Delegates are from a range of genres and formats

New methods of storytelling are still emerging



3.3 DFM INDUSTRY PROGRAMME

In 2025, 176 speakers took part in 52 panels, with an accumulative audience of 5609 delegates



The Durban FilmMart Industry Programme served as a platform to unpack the latest industry trends, challenges, innovations and advancements, across four days of talks with leading figures in cinema. The programme amplified individuals and institutions driving African and Global South cinema through collaboration, education, funding, and lobbying. It included insightful panel discussions, masterclasses, case studies and, for the second year in a row, a free law clinic.

Offering attendees first-hand accounts and hard-won industry knowledge about current shifts in funding, film practice, technological advancements as well as industry trends, panellists enjoyed lively exchanges with each other and audiences.



Keynote discussions, like the “DFM In Conversation” series and masterclasses, invited globally recognised film experts to openly share their expertise and experience, leaving delegates with invaluable information to inspire their own film journeys.

A firm favourite of this year’s edition was the “Talking Cents” strand, introduced in 2023. The series of carefully curated sessions is dedicated to the business of filmmaking, exploring the financial opportunities, challenges and trends relevant to filmmakers in Africa.

The programme gave special emphasis to technological advancements, with panel discussions on one of the most pressing issues facing filmmakers – the adoption of artificial intelligence across the film production pipeline and its impact on copyright. Another tech-focused panel explored a new innovation in film financing that blockchain technology presents.

Co-production sessions remained an important offering for delegates, to listen and learn about new opportunities for co-production within the continent, and in two masterclasses which explored international co-productions between African producers and Europe.

3.4 PITCH AND FINANCE FORUM

DFM 2025 showcased the work 30 official projects

30 pitch and finance forum participants presented their projects

	Animation	Documentary	Fiction
Projects	Eight	Eleven	Eleven
Countries	Cameroon, Cameroon/ France, Democratic Republic of Congo, Egypt, Morocco, South Africa South Africa/ Nigeria	Algeria, Cape Verde, Democratic Republic of Congo, Morocco, South Africa, Sudan, Tunisia, Zimbabwe	Algeria, Kenya, Rwanda, Senegal South Africa, Tanzania, Tunisia

The business of DFM is centred around the Pitch and Finance Forum, which selects projects in development to pitch to financiers. The pitching and one-on-one meetings create exposure and connection for projects but, more especially, the platform is there to help projects in development secure much-needed financial support, distribution and broadcasting deals.

Prior to the pitch and meeting days at DFM 2025, filmmakers underwent six weeks of individual mentorship from global and continental industry experts to prepare them for the market. The mentorship was designed to prepare them for an in-person pitch and to produce a seven-minute video pitch, which was sent to industry representatives who were not able to attend the market in person.

In addition to one-on-one mentorship, animation filmmakers had access to an 8-week masterclass series, presented by DFMI during the months of February and March. The masterclass series was specifically structured to upskill and prepare filmmakers for the international marketplace, and was presented by Beth Parker, Isaac Mogajane, Wendy Spinks, Ebele Okoye, Louis-Philippe Vermette, Chris Rose, Olivier Catherin, Dennis Alme de Visscher, Mounia Aram, and Sébastien Onomo.



The series covered creative elements such as story development, character development and visual representation, as well as business elements such as distribution and finance planning. At the end of the 8-week masterclass series, selected project teams were invited to participate in the Road to Annecy Animation Incubation Programme, presented by DFM's animation partners, Digital Lab Africa (DLA).

DFM Official Projects

Animation Official Selection

Animated fiction features:

Aisha Qandicha

Producer: Alyssa Harden

Director: Fatima Mahdar

Morocco

Au nom du Roi Njoya (In The Name of King Njoya)

Producer: Claye Edou

Director: Claye Edou

Cameroon

Crocodile Dance

Producer: Ingrid de Beer

Directors: Shofela Coker, Nadia Darries

South Africa, Nigeria

Kamaroza

Producer: Nouran Abdallah

Directors: Ahmad Abdelhameed, Islam Mazhar

Egypt

Kintuadi: Simon Kimbangu

Producer: Giresse Kassonga

Director: Benny Lusakueno

Democratic Republic of the Congo

Tribe

Producer: Debbie Crosscu

Director: Tendayi Nyeke

South Africa

Animated fiction series:

Mboudgui

Producer: Betty Sulty-Johnson, Lamissa Ouattara

Director: Bienvenu Wanso-Tissala

Cameroon, France

Nunu Rhu/The Girl With Wings

Producer: Ameera Faber

Director: Clare Louis

South Africa

Documentary Official Selection

Documentary Features

Akal

Producer: Karim Debbagh

Director: Basma Rkioui

Morocco

Climbing the Mountains

Producers: Kenji Accard, Sabrina Chebbi

Co-producer: Oualid Baha

Director: Sabrina Chebbi

Algeria

Golden

Producers: Rumbi Katedza, Ingrid Martens

Director: Rumbi Katedza

Zimbabwe

Kivu

Producer: Christian Bitwaiki

Director: Elise Sawasawa

Democratic Republic of the Congo

Plastic Atlantis

Producer: Pedro Soulé

Director: Samira Vera-Cruz

Cape Verde

Samaa Gafa (Dry Sky)

Producer: Aya Tallah Yusuf

Director: Ibrahim Omar

Sudan

The Salt of the South

Producer: Ramzi Laâmour

Director: Rami Jarbou

Tunisia

Un/Settled

Producer: Mehret Mandefro

Director: Sydelle Willow Smith

South Africa



Vuka (Hot Docs Fellow)

Producer: Rehad Desai
Director: Matthew Robinson
South Africa

Documentary Series

Planet Carnival

Producers: Thandi Davids
Co-producer: Luana Rocha
Director: Kurt Orderson
South Africa

Retour à Thiaroye (Return To Thiaroye)

Producers: Dhia Jerbi, Manon Lavaud, Victor Thomas
Director: Emilien Abibou
Tunisia
Fiction Official Selection

Fiction Features

'n Doop om Stilte (Baptism of Silence)

Producer: Casey Diepeveen
Directors: Kanya Viljoen, Emilie Badenhorst
South Africa

Al Assas (The Guardian)

Producer: Lynda Belkhiria
Director: Muhannad Lamin
Libya, Algeria, Canada

Bupya (Renewed)

Director: Claire Sheila Birungi
Producer: Oge Obasi
Rwanda

Dowar Alqamar (The Sunflowers of the Moon)

Producer: Sarra Maali
Director: ismaël
Tunisia

Le Sanglier (The Boar)

Producer: Yanis Gaye
Director: Mamadou Socrate Diop
Senegal

Nomvula (She Who Brings the Rain)

Producer: Kethiwe Ngcobo
Director: Sibusiso Khuzwayo
South Africa

Space Maasai

Producer: Wilson Nkya
Director: Priscilla Marealle
Tanzania

STERO

Producer: Juliana Kabua
Co-Director: Millan Tarus, Tevin Kimathi
Kenya

Fiction Series

High Flyers

Producer: Gabe Gabriel
Director: Ian Gabriel
South Africa

The Second Coming

Producer: Siyabonga Xaba
Director: Michael James
South Africa

VigilAunties

Producer: Dominique Jossie
Director: Loren Loubser
South Africa

Partner Projects

Palestine Film Institute (PFI) Spotlight

Minus 40

Producer and Director: Waseem Khair
Pitched at DFM by cinematographer: Ashraf Dowani
Palestine

Permission to Narrate

Director: Samir Salem
Producer: Linda Mutawi
Palestine

Ping Pong

Director: Saleh Saadi
Producer: May Jabareen
Palestine



Pitch Forum and Industry Representatives

The DFM has gradually moved away from the term “decision-makers” – we now call them “industry representatives”.

The selected projects pitched to 57 (in person) and 29 (online) industry representatives.

3.5 FINANCE FORUM MEETINGS

After the pitches were delivered, the selected projects were given the opportunity to meet the industry representatives for one-on-one meetings, which were pre-arranged for maximum output. The pitches were available to all DFM delegates, providing access to a wider audience.

Over the course of three days, 223 meetings organised by DFM took place in person, complemented by three additional days of online meetings for industry representatives who couldn't travel to Durban, where 92 meetings took place.

3.6 AWARDS PRESENTED AT DFM 2025

A record number of awards were presented on the final day of DFM, Monday, 21 July 2025. Awards varied from cash prizes, market participation awards, to mentorship, distribution and professional consultancy for projects across Pitch and Finance Forum and Talents Durban.

The event ended on a high with the presentation of 39 awards from 34 partners to the total of over R1.5 million (USD 80,000).

Category – Cash Awards:

National Film and Video Foundation Best Fiction – Grant of R100,000

The Second Coming (South Africa)

Producer: Siyabonga Xaba

Director: Michael James

National Film and Video Foundation Best Non-fiction – Grant of R100,000

The Salt of the South (Tunisia)

Producer: Ramzi Laâmour

Director: Rami Jarbou

National Film and Video Foundation Best Animation – Grant of R100,000

Crocodile Dance (South Africa, Nigeria)

Producer: Ingrid de Beer

Directors: Shofela Coker, Nadia Darries

Red Sea Film Fund Award of USD 5,000

Golden (Zimbabwe)

Producers: Rumbi Katedza, Ingrid Martens

Director: Rumbi Katedza

Red Sea Film Fund Award of USD 5,000

The Second Coming (South Africa)

Producer: Siyabonga Xaba

Director: Michael James

Red Sea Film Fund Award of USD 5,000

Climbing the Mountains (Algeria)

Producers: Kenji Accard, Sabrina Chebbi

Co-producer: Oualid Baha

Director: Sabrina Chebbi

Al Jazeera Co-production Award of USD 10,000

Climbing the Mountains (Algeria)

Producers: Kenji Accard, Sabrina Chebbi

Co-producer: Oualid Baha

Director: Sabrina Chebbi

Climate Story Labs Award of USD 10,000

The award is on behalf of Climate Story Labs Africa and Doc Society, in collaboration with UMI Fund.

Plastic Atlantis (Cape Verde)

Producer: Pedro Soulé

Director: Samira Vera-Cruz



Inkaba Award (Stained Glass TV) Award of USD 5,000 and consulting time

Inkaba, meaning “navel” or “origin”, speaks to where stories are birthed — a fitting symbol for bold new work seeking financing and co-production support.

The Second Coming (South Africa)

Producer: Siyabonga Xaba

Director: Michael James

CANAL+ Development Grant of EUR 5,000 with a development contract

Golden (Zimbabwe)

Producers: Rumbi Katedza, Ingrid Martens

Director: Rumbi Katedza

TRT Award of USD 5,000

The Guardian (Libya, Algeria, Canada)

Producer: Lynda Belkhiria

Director: Muhannad Lamin

MTN Group Digital Award of USD 5,000 (R100,000)

Nomvula (She Who Brings the Rain) (South Africa)

Producer: Kethiwe Ngcobo

Director: Sibusiso Khuzwayo

Sundance Institute Documentary Fund New Voices Award of USD 5,000 grant

Plastic Atlantis (Cape Verde)

Producer: Pedro Soulé

Director: Samira Vera-Cruz

The Whickers Bursary Award of GBP 3,000 for a first-time feature documentary director

Vuka (South Africa)

Producer: Rehad Desai

Director: Matthew Robinson

OIF-ACP-EU Award of EUR 2,500

Plastic Atlantis (Cape Verde)

Producer: Pedro Soulé

Director: Samira Vera-Cruz

Hot Docs-Blue Ice Docs Award of CAD 2,000

Climbing the Mountains (Algeria)

Producers: Kenji Accard, Sabrina Chebbi

Co-producer: Oualid Baha

Director: Sabrina Chebbi

Wrapped Talents Durban Prize of R10,000 cash prize; One-year Premium Subscription to Wrapped; and Featured spotlight on Wrapped

Trucker Man (South Africa)

Director: Shiefaa Hendricks

Category – Market/Event Participation Award

DFM Talents Durban Award

Flights and accommodation to participate in DFM Pitch and Finance Forum 2026

DESIGNING DIVIDE (South Africa)

Director: Jessie Ayles

Sørfond Award

Flights and accommodation to participate Participation in the Sørfond Pitch 2025

Baptism of Silence (South Africa)

Producer: Casey Diepeveen

Directors: Kanya Viljoen, Emilie Badenhorst

El Gouna Film Festival Award

Flights and accommodation to participate in CineGouna 2025

Samaa Gafa (Dry Sky) (Sudan)

Producer: Aya Tallah Yusuf

Director: Ibrahim Omar

The FIDADOC Award

Flights and accommodation to participate in FIDADOC Pan African Writing Residency 2026

KUMFOGA (Togo)

Dissirama Bessoga



Rotterdam Lab Award

Accreditation and accommodation to participate in the Rotterdam Lab 2026

Space Maasai (Tanzania)

Producer: Wilson Nkya

Director: Priscilla Marealle

Animation Production Days (APD) Award

Accreditation and accommodation to participate in Animation Production Days 2026

Tribe (South Africa)

Producer: Debbie Crosscup

Director: Tendayi Nyeke

Visions du Reel Award

Accreditation and accommodation to participate in the Visions du Reel Market 2026 (presentation in the Marketplace Pitching / Roundtables / One-on-One Meetings)

Akal (Morocco)

Producer: Karim Debbagh

Director: Basma Rkioui

Sheffield Doc Fest Award

Accreditation and accommodation to participate in Sheffield Doc Fest 2026

Plastic Atlantis (Cape Verde)

Producer: Pedro Soulé

Director: Samira Vera-Cruz

The DOK Leipzig Award

Accreditation and accommodation to participate in DOK Leipzig 2025

Akal (Morocco)

Producer: Karim Debbagh

Director: Basma Rkioui

DOK.fest München Award

Accreditation and accommodation to participate in the DOK.forum Marketplace 2026 (DOK Co-Pro Market or in DOK Preview Training)

Golden (Zimbabwe)

Producers: Rumbi Katedza, Ingrid Martens

Director: Rumbi Katedza

Category – Mentorship, Distribution and Membership

MAD Solutions Award

Sales and Distribution of one project in the Arab world. The award was presented to a project from the Palestine Film Institute Spotlight, presented at DFM 2025.

Ping Pong (Palestine)

Producer: May Jabareen

Director: Saleh Saadi

DocA Award

Consultation, training and granting of the impact campaign

Plastic Atlantis (Cape Verde)

Producer: Pedro Soulé

Director: Samira Vera-Cruz

EURODOC Award

Tuition and residential fees for one session in Euro Doc 2026 and 12 months-long membership

The Salt of the South (Tunisia)

Producer: Ramzi Laâmour

Director: Rami Jarbou

Fak'ugesi Residency Award

Participation in the Residency Programme

Kamaroza (Egypt)

Producer: Nouran Abdallah

Directors: Ahmad Abdelhameed, Islam Mazhar

Studio: Samaka

TFL Next IEFTA Award (supported by IEFTA)

Invitation to Film online workshop in 2025

Nomvula (She Who Brings the Rain) (South Africa)

Producer: Kethiwe Ngcobo

Director: Sibusiso Khuzwayo

Women Make Movies Award

Best Pitch by a Woman Filmmaker

- Acceptance into the Production Assistance Program, which includes the following additional benefits: Fiscal sponsorship, allowing filmmakers to raise grants in the U.S.



- Individualised fundraising, distribution, and ongoing project consultations, including feedback on rough cuts.
- A project page on WMM’s website to facilitate online donations.
- Access to WMM’s catalogue of more than 700 films.
- Social media support for crowdfunding campaigns, screenings, and events.
- Promotion of the completed film.
- One year of free WMM webinar on the business side of the business and case studies.
- Scheduled use of WMM’s NYC office, including the conference room for meetings or rough-cut screenings.

Plastic Atlantis (Cape Verde)

Producer: Pedro Soulé
Director: Samira Vera-Cruz

Impronta Films Consultancy Award

Consultancy Award offering up to four sessions over a 12-month period, for two documentary projects in development

Planet Carnival (South Africa)

Producers: Thandi Davids
Co-producer: Luana Rocha
Director: Kurt Orderson

Vuka (South Africa)

Producer: Rehad Desai
Director: Matthew Robinson

Triggerfish Mentorship Award

6-month mentorship of one-on-one sessions covering all the aspects of development, production and business/marketing for their project

Aisha Qandicha (Morocco)

Producer: Alyssa Harden
Director: Fatima Mahdar

Isiziba Award (Stained Glass TV)

40 hours of executive development and consultancy for a Talents Durban Story Junction participant.

Isiziba, meaning “a still and sacred water source”, reflects the quiet depth and potential of emerging talent — those still waters that run deep.

Watching Over You (South Africa)

Director Stephen Nagel

Talent Press Award Supported by FIPRESCI

1 Year Membership to FIPRESCI

Alice Johnson (Ghana)

Wrapped Talent Press Prize

Cash Prize and publicity support

Tshi Malatji (South Africa)

3.7 DFM INDUSTRY LOUNGE AND EXHIBITION

Africa is rapidly emerging as a hub for highly successful filmmaking, thanks to its breathtaking landscapes, exceptional talent, and cost-effective production environments. Durban FilmMart serves as the ideal platform to connect with this vibrant market, offering unparalleled opportunities to engage with emerging and established filmmakers, scriptwriters, producers, and creatives.

At the Durban FilmMart exhibition, delegates benefited from a specialised networking environment and gained direct access to vital resources, support and opportunities, curated by leading industry partners.

As a testament to their industry involvement, this year’s line-up showcased:

- Cine Connect
- Durban Film Office
- Downtown Music Africa
- Eastern Cape Development Corporation
- Embassy of Côte d’Ivoire
- Film Cape Town
- Film and Publications Board
- French Institute
- Gauteng Film Commission
- Industrial Development Corporation
- Independent Producers Organisation
- KZN Tourism and Film Authority
- MTN
- Network of Arab Alternative Screens
- Namibia Film Commission
- National Film and Video Foundation
- Panavision
- Sunshine Cinema
- Wesgro
- Wrapped



3.8 SPECIAL EVENTS

NEFTi Guerilla Filmmaking Competition

Three talented filmmakers took on the challenge of the NEFTi Guerrilla Filmmaking Competition, creating short films in just three days under the theme “Bridges Not Borders”.

Each director was given \$1,500 and a tight deadline to shoot, edit, and then present their work to the Durban FilmMart audience during NEFTi’s session, “The Art of Guerrilla Filmmaking”.

The competing films were:

- Asenathi Makanya – Becoming Whitney
- Nivolla Musaka – Control Room
- Ntuthuko Gumede – Roots

The winning six-minute film, *Roots* by Ntuthuko Gumede, was awarded a \$3,000 prize.

Introducing Film Cape Town

Film Cape Town hosted a networking cocktail party to meet the Film Cape Town team, exchange ideas, and discover new opportunities for partnership within the film industry – connecting with fellow filmmakers, industry professionals, and key stakeholders.



4. YEAR-ROUND PROGRAMMES

4.1 5TH DFMI BUSINESS LAB

The DFMI Business Lab was delivered from 18 August 2025 to 22 January 2026 as an 18-week digital programme, aimed at equipping early- to mid-career filmmakers with the practical skills required to manage sustainable production companies. The programme offered comprehensive training in financial management, business strategy, entertainment law, intellectual property, and distribution strategies, with a particular focus on enabling producers to engage effectively with global markets.

In 2025, the Business Lab received 309 applications and ultimately brought together 32 participants from 14 African countries, of whom 63% identified as female. Over the course of 35 interactive sessions (including a meet-and-greet and two pitch days), participants engaged in a total of one hundred percent of the planned workshops, achieving an average attendance rate of 81%.

This cohort benefited not only from technical and business knowledge but also from networking opportunities that strengthened professional relationships across regional and linguistic lines. The programme was delivered in English, with simultaneous French translation, while Portuguese translation was available, though not required for this edition.

In response to the 2024 evaluation, the Business Lab curriculum was refined through the extension of the co-production module and intellectual property modules with one extra session each, and the introduction of a new standalone session focused on lobbying.

A post-programme survey completed by 69% of Business Lab participants indicates that over 80% of respondents rated the programme as having significantly strengthened their professional skills, while more than 85% reported a strong likelihood of applying the learning in their future practice and would recommend the Business Lab to peers.



Programme Design

The programme included the following modules:

- Financial Management (Finance, Fundraising and Coproduction)
- Business Management
- Legal Framework – IP and Entertainment Law
- Distribution (Distribution and PR and Marketing Strategies)
- Pitch Days

Facilitators

- Nola Rae (South Africa)
- Tamara Dawit (Canada/Ethiopia)
- Layla Swart (South Africa)
- Claire Diao (France)
- Toni Monty (South Africa)
- Tina-Louise Smit (South Africa)
- Unathi Malunga (South Africa)
- Sidney Chiu (Canada)
- Njoki Muhoho (Kenya)
- Bongi Selane (South Africa)

4.2 BUSINESS LAB PODCAST SERIES

As a spin-off to the Business Lab, a nine-episode podcast series was produced. Launched on 28 October 2025, the series explored co-production, fundraising, financial management, entertainment law and IP, and distribution strategies. Each episode featured a Business Lab alumna interviewing a lab expert, extending the programme’s insights to the wider film industry and supporting the development of sustainable film businesses. The podcasts are available on [Filmmart.Africa](#), [Spotify](#), and [YouTube](#), and to date have a total of 389 streams, views, and downloads.

The DFMI Business Lab and Podcast series was funded by the DW Akademie and the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ).

**DFMI BUSINESS LAB
PODCAST**

DW Akademie | german cooperation



4.3 4TH DFM ACCESS



The DFM Access, supported by the National Film and Video Foundation PESP funding, took place between May and August 2025.

DFM Access was designed to support entry-level producers in strengthening their long-form or episodic projects. DFMI received 65 applications from South Africa, and 23 project participants were selected, of whom 50% identified as women.

The programme provided a nurturing environment for participants to refine their scripts, enhance their project packages, and build a clear understanding of the marketplace.

Through one-on-one mentorship and expert-led sessions, producers gained the tools to shape their stories, prepare compelling presentations, and chart their professional growth. The programme concluded with a pitch to an independent panel, which selected three projects to participate in the annual Durban FilmMart as official projects.

Programme Design

The programme included the following modules:

- Story Development Strategies
- Film Financing Landscape
- Legal Aspects of Film Production and Financing
- Market Readiness & Navigating the Industry
- International Co-production
- Strategic Development for a Film and TV Business
- Local and International Distribution and Marketing Landscape
- Project Packing and Pitching
- Pitch Presentations



The programme developed the following outcomes:

- Developed the skills of entry-level producers working on long-form or episodic projects.
- Improved participants' scripts, project packages, and pitching abilities.
- Provided tailored mentorship and expert guidance to shape strong, market-ready projects.
- Helped producers understand industry expectations and market dynamics.
- Selected standout projects to participate in the annual Durban FilmMart as official projects.

Facilitators / Trainers / Mentors

- Mmabatho Kau (South Africa)
- Carolyn Carew (South Africa)
- Rethabile Ramaphakela (South Africa)
- Toni Monty (South Africa)
- Unathi Malunga (South Africa)
- Mitchell Harper (South Africa)
- Neil Brandt (South Africa)
- Bongwiwe Selane (South Africa)
- Pascal Schmitz (South Africa)
- Thandi Davids (South Africa)
- Cait Painsengrouw (South Africa)
- Sean Drummond (South Africa)
- Jacintha de Nobrega (South Africa)
- Tracey-Lee Rainers (South Africa)
- Sihle Hlope – (South Africa) participant at the 1st edition of DFMI Future Mentors programme
- Tiny Mungwe (South Africa)
- Bongzi Ndaba (South Africa)
- Kethiwe Ngcobo (South Africa)
- Busisiwe Ntintili (South Africa)
- Teboho Pietersen (South Africa)
- Miki Redelinghuys (South Africa)
- Nicole Schafer – (South Africa) participant at the 1st edition of DFMI Future Mentors programme
- Bonie Sithebe (South Africa)
- Thandeka Zwana (South Africa)

4.4 FILMMART.AFRICA

Filmmart.Africa was launched in 2023 and further developed in 2025. Filmmart.Africa serves as a pan-African online platform where filmmakers can showcase projects, connect with collaborators, access industry resources, and stay informed about festivals and market opportunities.

During the reporting period, the platform underwent major technical and strategic upgrades, including migration to Azure hosting, enhanced mobile functionality, integration of an events page—which resulted in a six-fold increase in event listings—and improvements to CMS functionality to allow DFMI staff greater independence in managing content.

DFMI attended major African festivals and markets, including FESPACO, CANEX, and the Cairo International Film Festival, to promote Filmmart.Africa. Furthermore, MoUs were signed with key partners, including AFRIFF, Cairo Internataional Film Festival, Durban International Film Festival, FESPACO, Encounters SA International Doc Film Festival, Soweto International Film Festival, and Africa Games Week, to strengthen continental engagement through talent support, networking, and joint marketing. These partnerships have consolidated Filmmart.Africa's role as a central hub for African film professionals.

Objectives

The platform aims to:

- serve as a central, trusted digital hub for African film professionals, companies, and projects;
- facilitate meaningful connections and collaborations across the continent and internationally;
- offer up-to-date business information, resources, and funding opportunities for industry growth;
- provide a space to present, track, and support film projects in development;
- strengthen the visibility, professionalism, and global competitiveness of the African film industry.



User Figures on 26 January 2026

TOTAL	1,344 public Accounts
African:	1,054
International	100
Unknown	190
BREAKDOWN	
Africa	1,054
Asia	4
Europe	67
North America	27
Oceania	1
South America	1

Filmmart.Africa was funded by the DW Akademie and the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ).

4.5 2ND AND 3RD FUTURE MENTORS

The Future Mentors Programme was designed to support experienced film professionals in strengthening their capacity to mentor emerging filmmakers and contribute meaningfully to skills development across the continent. Building on the success of the initial Future Mentors Programme in Durban in 2024 and the Future Mentors for Labs in Ouagadougou in February 2025, DFMI implemented the second edition of this tailored mentorship programme in parallel in Dakar, Senegal, and Tunis, Tunisia.

DFMI received 55 applications from 16 countries, and 15 film professionals from nine African countries were selected, with 40% of participants identifying as female.

The programme provided a focused learning environment where participants refined their mentoring approaches, strengthened facilitation skills, and deepened their understanding of learner-centred methodologies. Through practical exercises and expert-led sessions, participants gained the tools to design, structure, and deliver impactful mentorship and training programmes within their respective contexts.

The five-day seminar was conducted in early November 2025.

For this edition, the programme curriculum and accompanying guide were translated into Arabic and French, and delivered by two lead trainers in each location, who were also involved in the participant selection process. The seminars were co-hosted with local organisations, Doc House in Tunis and Centre Yennenga in Dakar, expanding DFMI's reach and establishing new regional partnerships.

The programme continued to address the scarcity of African-origin mentors while equipping experienced industry practitioners with the skills to guide emerging talent using a structured and comprehensive methodology.

A post-programme survey completed by participants across both Future Mentors Programme cohorts indicates that over 80% of respondents rated the programme as having significantly strengthened their professional skills, while more than 90% reported a strong likelihood of applying the learning in their future practice and would recommend the programme to peers.



...hunts ... woman ... the p ... woman ...



Objectives

The programme aimed to:

- address the shortage of African-origin film mentors by building a strong mentorship pipeline;
- equip experienced film professionals with structured tools and methodologies for effective mentorship;
- strengthen the continent's capacity for training and nurturing emerging talent;
- provide freely accessible mentorship resources through the DFMI's online platform;
- prepare for the full rollout of a continent-wide mentorship programme that supports industry sustainability.

Core Components / Modules:

- What Is Mentorship? (Becoming A Mentor)
- Working with a Platform
- Mentorship Process
- Assessing Impact and Fostering Collaborative Relationships
- Presenting And Championing

Trainers

- Azza Chaabouni (Tunisia) (North Africa edition)
- Mayye Zayed (Egypt) (North Africa edition)
- Iman Djionne (Senegal) (West Africa edition)
- Yanis Gaye (Senegal) (West Africa edition)

The Future Mentors programme was funded by the DW Akademie and the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ).

4.6 FUTURE MENTORS LABS WORKSHOP AT FESPACO

DFMI's partnership with FESPACO (the Pan-African Film & TV Festival of Ouagadougou) reflects the "Bridges Not Borders" ethos by strengthening collaboration between African film labs and workshopping a shared mentorship language across the continent.

In February 2025, DFMI and FESPACO hosted a three-day gathering of Film Labs on the continent. Eighteen representatives of 14 labs met to discuss their work in providing professional support to filmmakers in the realisation of their films. The time together presented an opportunity for the DFMI to introduce the Future Mentors Programme, and for the group to have protected time together to gain a closer understanding of one another's process and practice, to learn from one another's approach, and to reflect and think through shared challenges.

Facilitated by Tiny Mungwe and Lauren Rosenberg, who were both part of the co-creation of the Future Mentor's Guide in 2022, the group was able to take a deep dive into the Guide, unpacking the freely available resource with representatives offering insights into mentorship from their own lab-specific experience and from the perspective of labs.

This introduction opened a door for labs to adapt the Future Mentors Guide for use within their own lab context and for their lab needs. Importantly, it allows for the Guide to remain responsive to the real-time needs of labs, as the feedback which emerged in response to it will be used to update the Guide.

Much was shared during the three days together with four key areas of focus for labs emerging, namely: Context and Capacity, Sustainability, Monitoring and Evaluation, and Audience Development and Distribution.



The last day was spent strategising around these key focus areas, allowing for new knowledge and points of connection to emerge and be shared amongst the group.

As Africa's leading co-production market, the DFMI is committed to African cinema and the professionals at its centre. Labs offer a vital source of ongoing professional support and expertise to projects and a crucial network that drives the continent's film industry forward.

Lab representatives in attendance were:

Alaka Film Lab – Eugénie Michel Villette and Madelin Roberts

Centre Yennenga – Ibee Ndaw

Climate Story Lab ZA – Tarha McKenzie

Creative Africa Lab – Romeo Umulisa

DocA – Mohamed Said Ouma and Renny Matsiko

Doc House – Soumaya Bouallegui

Doc Society / Story Lab – Emily Wanja

FIDA Doc – Hicham Falah

Great Lakes – Samuel Tebandeke

Institut Mouso – Angèle Diabang

Matatu Residency Patience Asaba and Ali Musoke

Mucii Pictures – Fibby Kioria

Nhanha Kuletivu – Natasha Craveiro

OuagaLab – Sam Genet

PALOP Film and Audiovisual Network – Samira Vera-Cruz

DFMI thanks the support from DW Akademie and the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) for the Future Mentors Programme.

4.7 3RD ANIMATION MASTERCLASS AND MENTORSHIP

This three-month online masterclass programme was designed to support animators in strengthening their projects through focused script development, visual representation, finance planning, project packaging, and pitching. DFMI received 56 animation applications, and eight projects from five African countries were selected, with a total of 16 participants taking part in the programme, with 44% identifying as female.

DFMI PITCH AND FINANCE FORUM ANIMATION 2025



The programme provided a nurturing environment for participants to refine their creative and production materials, enhance their project packages, and build a clear understanding of how to position their projects for the marketplace.

Through one-on-one mentorship and expert-led sessions, animators gained the tools to strengthen their stories, prepare compelling pitch presentations, and chart their professional growth. Each selected project was assigned a dedicated mentor.

The programme ran from January to March, with French interpretation provided.

Programme Design

The programme included the following modules:

- Business of Animation
- Idea to Production Greenlight
- Script Development: logline, script, writing technique, storyboard
- Visual Representation & character development
- Financial Plans
- Project Packaging for broadcasters, streamers, and festivals
- Pitching
- Distribution
- Case Study

Mentors

Justine Bannister (UK)

Olivier Catherin (France)

Facilitators / Experts

Beth Parker (UK)

Louis Phillipe Vernet (France/ Canada)

Chris Rose (UK)

Mounia Aram (Morocco)

Dennis Almer de Visscher (France)

Oliver Catherin (France)

Ebele Okoye (Nigeria)

Sebastien Onomo (France)

Isaac Mogajane (South Africa)

Wendy Spinks (South Africa)



5. IDENTIFYING AND NURTURING TALENT

18TH TALENTS DURBAN



Talents Durban was designed to support Africa's emerging screenwriters, directors, and film critics in strengthening their creative practice and advancing projects in development across fiction, documentary, animation, and hybrid forms, including film, television series, web series, and content for mobile platforms.

Founded in 2007 as a partnership between the Durban International Film Festival and Berlinale Talents, Talents Durban has, since 2019, been a project of the Durban FilmMart Institute, and forms part of the six international initiatives of Berlinale Talents.

From over 500 applications, 31 participants were selected for the 2025 edition, including 26 project creators and five film critics, representing 18 African countries, with 54% identifying as female.

The programme provided a nurturing environment for participants to develop their projects, refine their creative and professional skills, and engage critically with contemporary filmmaking practices.

Through a structured mentorship and training framework, participants gained the tools to strengthen their storytelling, sharpen their artistic vision, and position their work for local and international markets.

The 2025 edition ran from 19 May to 21 July and featured a comprehensive 10-week mentorship programme.

Objectives

- Talent Development
- Skills Enhancement
- Networking and Collaboration
- Content Creation and Innovation
- Industry Integration
- Global Recognition

Programme Mentors

- Mmabatho Kau (South Africa)
- Joel Karakezi (Rwanda)
- Laza Razanajatovo (Madagascar)



- Mayye Zayed (Egypt)
- Mamounata Nikiema (Burkina Faso)
- Rumbi Katedza (Zimbabwe)
- Francis Y Brown (Ghana)
- Karabo Lediga (South Africa)
- Domoina Ratsara (Madagascar)
- Tarek Mohamed (Egypt)

Talents Labs

- **Storytelling Lab:** Focused on six feature film scripts, six short film scripts, and four TV series concepts in development. Participants received mentorship from five dedicated industry professionals.
- **Animation Lab:** Included four animation projects, with a focus on character visual development and the business aspects of animation.
- **Doc Lab:** Supported six documentary projects, offering guidance on project development, with two mentors overseeing three projects each.
- **Talents Press:** Involved five film critics who covered the festival, producing film reviews, interviews, and social media content, mentored by an experienced film critic.

INDUSTRY PROGRAMME

The Durban FilmMart Industry Programme remains an important platform to amplify the work of emerging film professionals and talent. The programme included an array of new voices in its panels, masterclasses, and closed sessions, and, by doing so, encouraged emerging talent to share their passion, success and learnings through inclusion in critical conversations that drive African cinema forward, and inspire those who come to DFM seeking industry knowledge that will promote their own professional advancement.

Panel discussions that are critical to current industry needs and pain points help audiences grapple with new information and real-world expertise on offer, to add to their own toolkit for navigating their filmmaking practice and the film landscape in which they work. The mix of expertise on panels provided the opportunity for emerging talent to engage with established industry leaders, and through doing so, deepened the mutual knowledge exchange for panellists and audiences alike who are committed to making African cinema.

Key sessions included:

- *An African Model: Authentic Voices in Mentoring – Telling Our Stories Our Way* with Mmabatho Kau, Tiny Mungwe, Mamounata Nikiéma, and Fabio Ribeiro;
- *The African Aesthetic: What Makes African Stories Unique?* with Gabe Gabriel, Mmabatho Kau, Busisiwe Ntintili, and Thuli Zuma, and *Film as a Tool for Reimagining Africa* with Lerato Mogoatlhe, Mercy Wanjiku, Funmbi Ogunbanwo, and Tendayi Nyeke.
- *Understanding the Current Film Media Landscape* with Domoina Ratsara, Claire Diao, and Jennifer Ochieng;
- *Expanding the Frame – Building Bridges for Gender Inclusivity in Animation* with Kumbi Chitenderu, Nadia Darries, and Tshepo Moche.

Tracey-Lee Rainers, Vanessa Ann Sinden, Caroline Vos, and a “Spotlight on Durban Projects” with Happiness Mpase, Gugu Kunene, and Naomi Gumede were also important to platform emerging film professionals.





6. GLOBAL ENGAGEMENT ENSURING GLOBAL RELEVANCE

6.1 GLOBAL REACH AND IMPACT

DFMI's programmes continue to demonstrate strong continental and international relevance through the geographic diversity of participating filmmakers and audiences.

Over its sixteen-year history, DFMI has built an alumni network of over 1,400 filmmakers from Africa and the African diaspora, reflecting sustained long-term impact beyond individual programme cycles.

The table below provides an overview of the number of countries represented across DFMI's 2025 programme portfolio, illustrating the breadth of DFMI's pan-African engagement alongside growing international participation across its events, digital platforms, and knowledge-sharing initiatives.

Programme	Number of Countries represented
16th Durban FilmMart	63 – Africa and International
2nd & 3rd Future Mentors	9 African countries
4th DFM Access	1 – Open to South African participants only
5th DFMI Business Lab	14 African countries
Animation Masterclass and Mentorship	5 African countries
Business Lab Podcast Series	Streamed in South Africa, Botswana, Kenya, Ethiopia, Zimbabwe, Italy, Armenia, United States
Filmmart.Africa	User sign-ups were recorded from 45 African countries and 24 international countries
Future Mentors Labs Workshop at FESPACO	12 African labs

6.2 THE OBJECTIVE OF THE DFM INDUSTRY PROGRAMME

The objective of the DFM Industry Programme was to create the space for mutual exchange, with the aim to build bridges between film professionals in Africa, the diaspora, the Global South, and internationally. By creating the space for dialogue and the discovery of points of connection, the programme sought to inspire ongoing collaboration and collective action within film communities that champion African cinema.

The programme addressed African and global film industries and sought out voices from the Global South and North Africa, in particular, to include. This year's programme saw participation from filmmakers in South America, North Africa, the Middle East, Europe, and North America.

A wide range of discussions were programmed for the global market, which included:

- a copyright masterclass for creatives in the age of AI with law firm Irish MacLeod, and South African non-profit Lawyers for the Arts South Africa (LASA);
- building a new Black ecosystem for film professionals with respected industry frontrunners Joel Chikapa-Phiri, Jihan El-Tahri, Paul Garnes, and Samantha Kaine;
- an in-depth panel on the global funding landscape for African filmmakers with Selin Murat of IDFA Bertha Fund, Ford Foundation's Jon Sesrie-Goff, Dominic Davis of Sundance Institute, and Farai Ncube of the British Council;
- an in-depth panel on equity partners in independent film financing with Pape Boye, Akunna Cook, Khosie Dali, Wilson Nyah, and Marco Orsini;
- an exploratory conversation on technology's potential to revolutionise film financing through blockchain technology, with Nafia Kocks, Weaam Williams, and Bongani Morgan.



Co-production sessions were held with visiting delegations from Senegal and Zimbabwe, respectively, as well as:

- a discussion focusing on inspiring confidence amongst distributors and exhibitors for Global South content with Jeanne Deny, Laurent Sicouri, Monde Twala, Reem Maged, and Nicky Scheepers;
- sessions with the Senegalese and Zimbabwean delegations, respectively, to share their strategies to invite collaborations and potential co-production;
- a case study of an international co-production for an animated feature with acclaimed South African producer Isaac Mogajane and his Dutch co-producer, Bruno Felix, of esteemed production house Submarine.

The “DFM In Conversation” series featured leading voices in African and International cinema in a conversation-style masterclass for the benefit of our audiences, which charted the depth and breadth of our headline speakers’ career paths. These masterclasses offered a rare opportunity for attendees to connect with esteemed industry leaders who headline the market.

Through thought-provoking and intimate conversations, headline speakers shared personal and professional insights, lessons learned, and best practices that inspired audiences, leaving them with a roadmap to use in their own journeys to advance world-class storytelling.

Dora Bouchoucha – Trailblazing Tunisian producer Dora Bouchoucha is the founder of Nomadis Images and a pivotal figure in North African cinema. With an illustrious career spanning decades, Bouchoucha has produced award-winning films including *Hedi* (Berlin Silver Bear winner), and *Dear Son*. Her most recent production, *Behind the Mountains* (2023), received critical acclaim at the Venice Film Festival. Her expertise extends beyond production. She founded the Carthage Film Festival Projects workshop and has served on juries at prestigious festivals including Berlin and Venice. As a champion for Arab and African cinema, Bouchoucha brings invaluable insights on creating pathways for regional stories to reach global audiences.

Roger Ross Williams – Academy Award-winning director and producer Roger Ross Williams is an Oscar, Emmy, Peabody, and NAACP Image award-winning director, producer, writer, and the first African American director to win an Academy Award®, with his film, *Music by Prudence*. Williams directed *Life, Animated*, which won him the Sundance Directing Award, was nominated for an Academy Award®, and won three Emmys. Williams is the recipient of the Career Achievement Award from the International Documentary Association, The Woodstock Film Festival Maverick Award, The NYU Alumni Achievement Award, and an honorary doctorate from Lafayette College.

His production company, One Story Up, produced the acclaimed food series *High on the Hog*, an adaptation of Ta-Nehisi Coates’s *Between the World and Me*, the Ben Crump documentary *Civil*, the award-winning film *Master of Light*, and the Primetime Emmy award-winning feature documentary *The Apollo*. Williams’ first scripted feature, *Cassandra* from Amazon Prime Video had its World premiere at the 2023 Sundance Film Festival to universal acclaim.

He also released *The Supermodels* for Apple TV, *Stamped from the Beginning*, based on the book by Ibram X. Kendi, for Netflix, and the Emmy award-winning series *The 1619 Project* for Disney/Hulu. Williams is currently in development on his second feature film *Strange Arrivals*, starring Demi Moore and Colman Domingo for See-Saw Film.

Ramadan Suleman – Celebrated writer, director, and producer Ramadan Suleman – best known for his seminal film *Zulu Love Letter* and, more recently, the hit series *Spinners* – sits down for a rare opportunity to discuss his work and the future of South African cinema.



6.3 INTERNATIONAL DELEGATIONS

The 16th Durban FilmMart welcomed delegations from across Africa and the diaspora, including participants from labs as well as official delegations. These delegations were not only embraced by the DFM community but also actively sought engagement with DFM to deepen their networks, exchange expertise, and foster growth within their own industries. This two-way exchange underscores DFM’s commitment to being a hub for collaboration, capacity-building, and the sustainable advancement of African and diaspora film sectors.

Some of the organisations included, but were not limited to: The British Council, Nigeria; FESPACO; Climate Story Lab (CSL); Cape Town International Animation Festival (CTIAF); Cote D’Ivoire, Disabled Audiovisual Workers Network (DAWN); GIZ – Kenya; IFAS; IMPACT – Canada; La Réunion (official delegation); Latin America (delegates from Colombia, Mexico, and Brazil); Mozambique; Network of Arab Alternative Screens (NAAS); Netherlands; Next Narrative Africa Fund; Palestine Film Institute; FOPICA from Senegal; and the National Arts Council of Zimbabwe.

For the second-year running, the Palestine Film Institute (PFI) represented 3 feature films at the Durban FilmMart. The spotlight enabled filmmakers and producers to showcase feature films about Palestine to decision-makers and festival programmers on their own terms and provided a vital platform to engage with the global film community and participate in industry events. Delegates were also invited to engage with the filmmakers and representatives of the PFI at their shared stand with The Network of Arab Alternative Screens (NAAS) in the exhibition space.



Durban Film Office (DFO), the principal funder of Durban FilmMart (DFM), hosted a familiarisation (FAM) locations tour for international delegates as part of an additional offering to the 2025 market. Delegates from Canada, Brazil, Mexico, Colombia, and Ecuador were joined by local filmmakers on a guided tour through Durban, providing first-hand exposure to the city’s film-friendly infrastructure and diverse locations.



The tour showcased Durban's wide range of filming environments—from urban backdrops to natural landscapes—demonstrating the city's capacity to accommodate a variety of production needs and scales. This initiative strengthened delegates' understanding of Durban as a competitive and attractive destination for international productions, while creating opportunities for dialogue between visiting and local industry professionals.

The locations tour reinforced DFM's role as a bridge between global and local industries, using place-based experiences to spark collaboration and position Durban as a compelling setting for stories with global reach.

Video: Listen to Kathryn Fasegha's reflections on the locations tour here - <https://www.instagram.com/reels/DNf9ZZetmGw/>.

6.4 THINK TANKS 2025

As part of its commitment to fostering deep dialogue, critical reflection, and collective problem-solving across Africa, and now including the Global South, the Durban FilmMart hosted a series of closed Think Tanks in 2025 aligned with the theme "Bridges Not Borders: Stories That Unite". These Think Tanks were designed to create protected, generative spaces for filmmakers, producers, archivists, and industry organisations to engage with urgent structural, creative, and ethical questions shaping contemporary cinema.

The think tanks included **Global South Activities and Initiatives Towards Archival Justice**, **Collaborations in the Global South**, and **Training for Equitable Co-Production – Building Culturally-Responsive Frameworks**. Collectively, these sessions reinforced DFM's role as a convening platform for transformative exchange – bringing diverse stakeholders into conversation to share knowledge, challenge existing power dynamics, and co-develop strategies that strengthen equitable collaboration, sustainable ecosystems, and cross-border solidarity within the African and Global South film industries.

The reports from these sessions can be viewed here: xxxx



7. SURVEY REPORTS

Participants believe DFM is shaping the film landscape in Africa

Through creating connections and developing talent

UPDATED

92%
believe that DFM is **fostering connections** across Africa

78%
made new, **valuable connections**

90%
believe that DFM is **growing talent** on the African continent

84%
DFM is where African **film business is done**

DFM has created a space where African filmmakers and industry leaders come together to share knowledge, opportunities, and networks that continue to shape the future of our cinema.

"I would like to sincerely thank the DFM team for creating such a dynamic, professional, and welcoming space for filmmakers and industry professionals. Your commitment to nurturing African stories and connecting them to global opportunities is truly impactful."

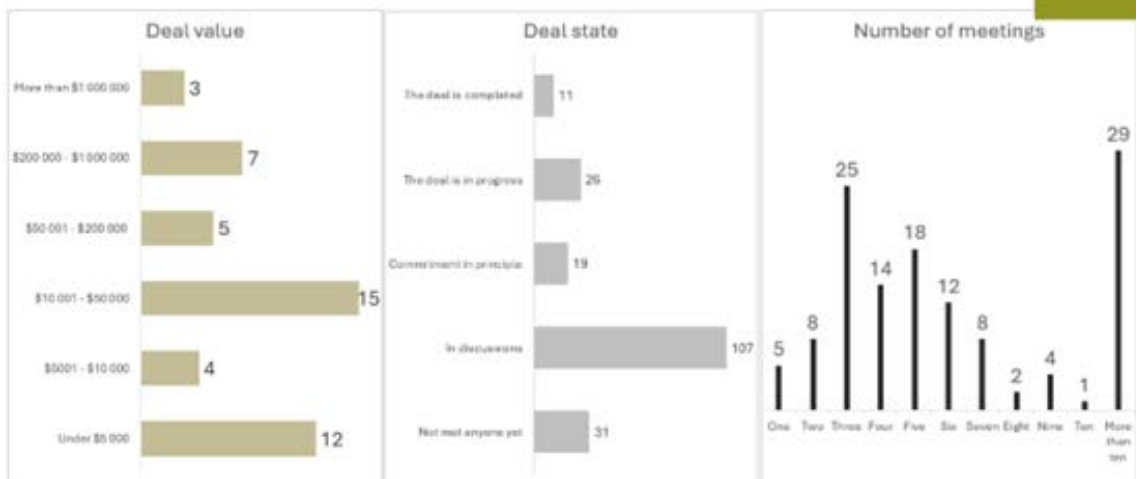
I appreciated having space to have meetings, and the absence of loud music between sessions facilitated easier conversations between attendees. It was very good for networking.

230 evaluated their experience through a web-based survey.

7.1 DURBAN FILMMART

DFM attracts filmmakers looking for a range of capital

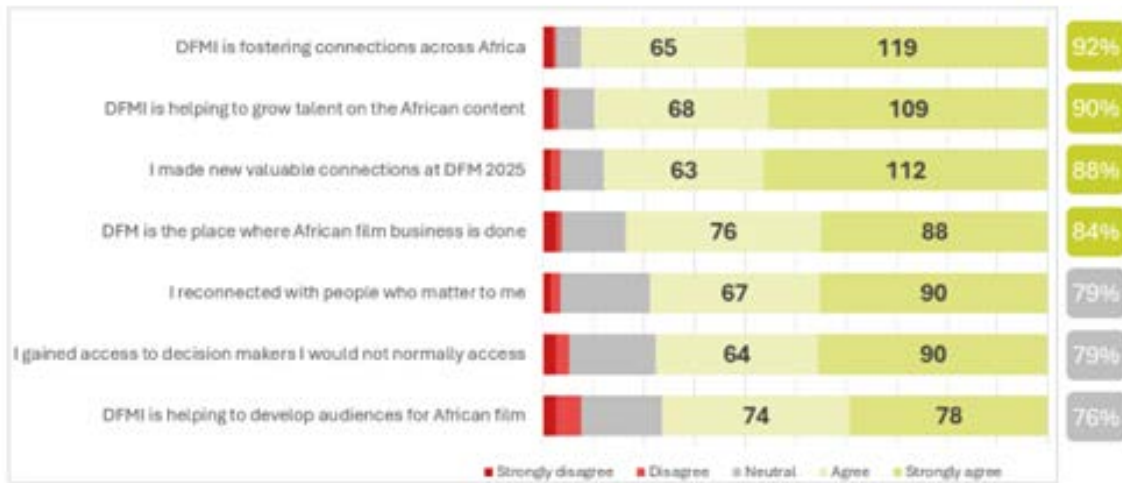
UPDATED



DFM is the place to meet and reconnect

the pulse of what is happening in the film industry on the continent

UPDATED

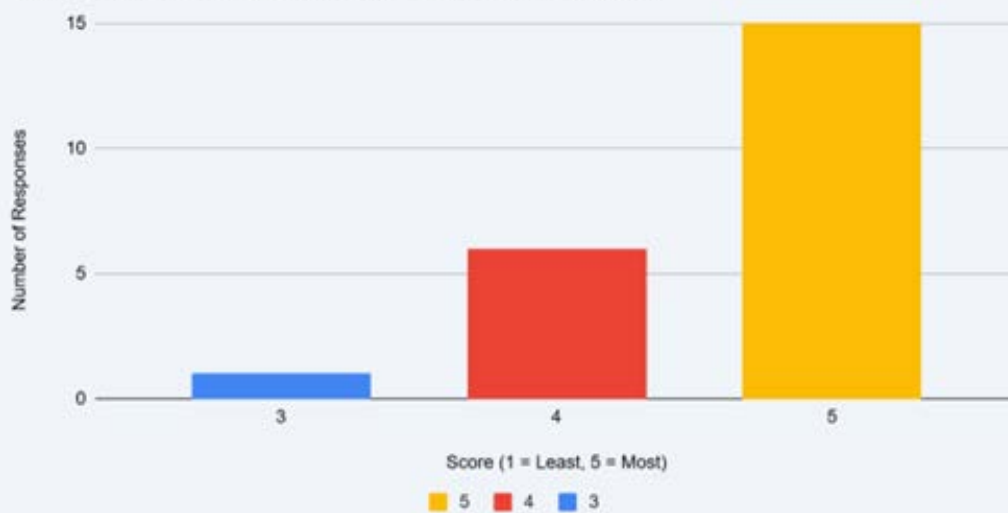


1364 delegates attended DFM, 280 (20%) evaluated their experience.

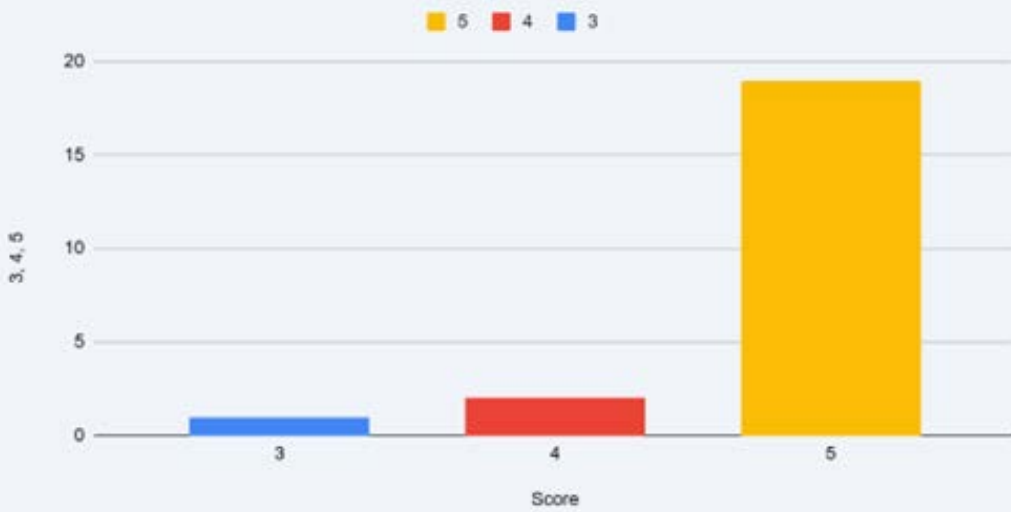
7.2 BUSINESS LAB

A post-programme survey completed by 69% of Business Lab participants indicates that over 80% of respondents rated the programme as having significantly strengthened their professional skills, while more than 85% reported a strong likelihood of applying the learning in their future practice and would recommend the Business Lab to peers.

Distribution of Responses: "Participating in this training programme has significantly strengthened my professional skills."



Distribution of Responses: 'I will be able to use the majority of what I learned in my future work'

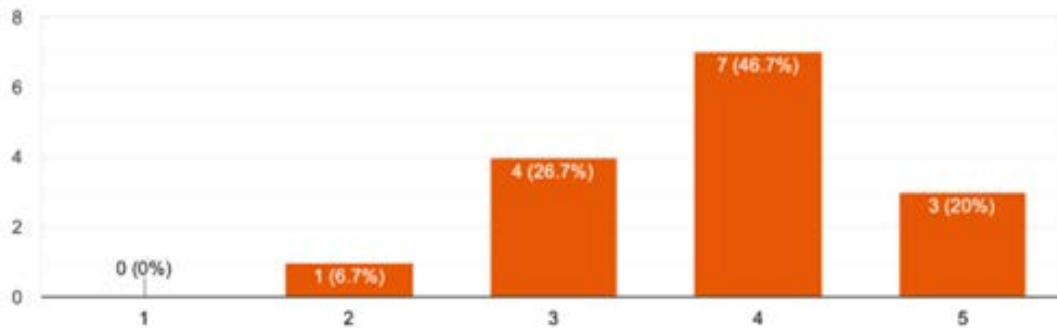


7.3 TALENTS DURBAN

The feedback from the participants of the 18th edition of Talents Durban reveals a generally positive experience, with many expressing that the programme met or even exceeded their expectations.

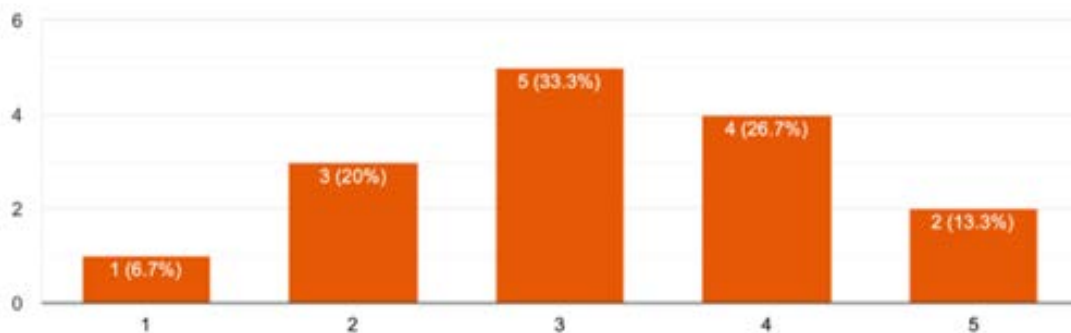
Rate the overall effectiveness of the mentorship

15 responses



Has your project/ status changed over the mentorship period?

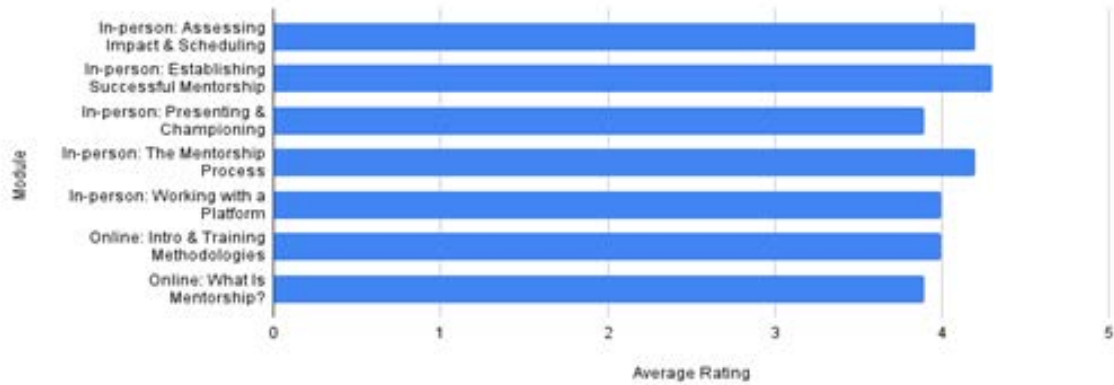
15 responses



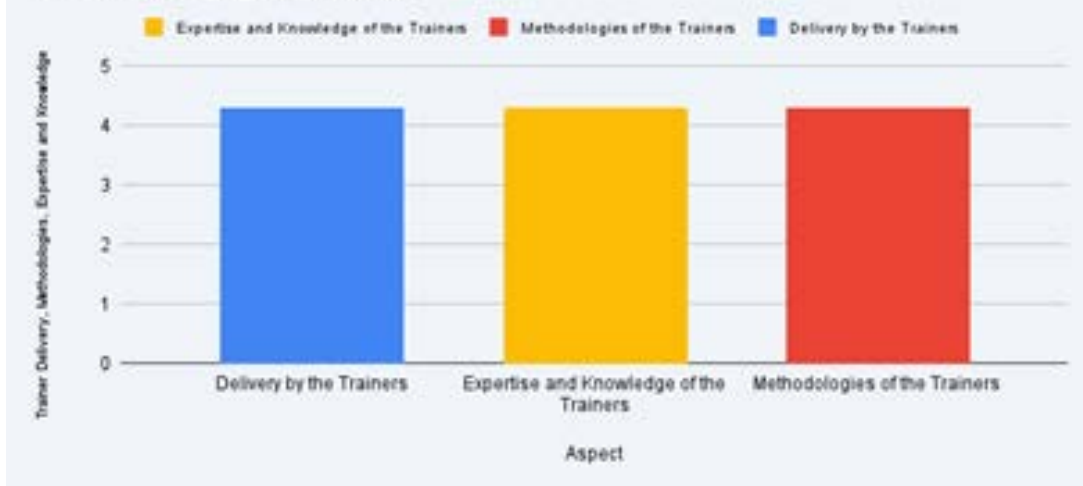
7.4 FUTURE MENTORS

A post-programme survey completed by participants across both Future Mentors Programme cohorts indicates that over 80% of respondents rated the programme as having significantly strengthened their professional skills, while more than 90% reported a strong likelihood of applying the learning in their future practice and would recommend the programme to peers.

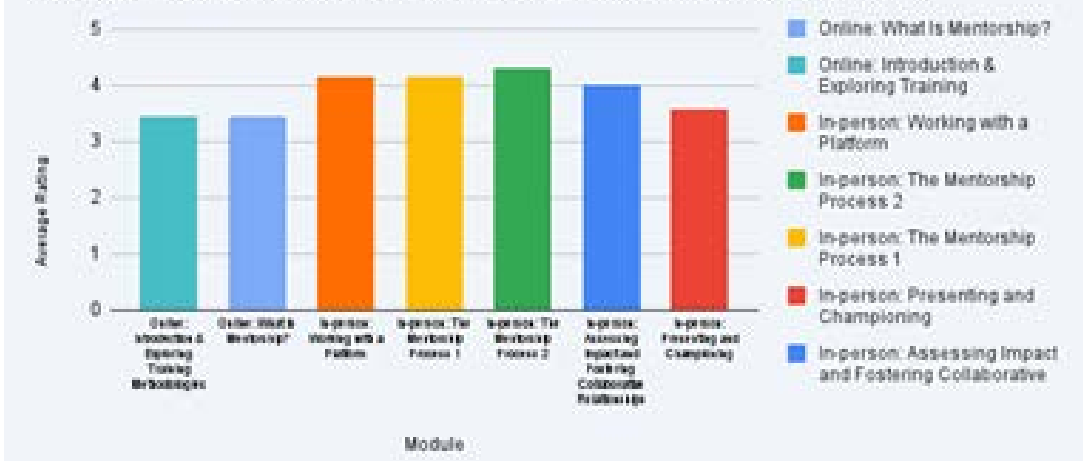
Average Rating Per Programme Module



Trainer Ratings_West Africa



Average Rating for Future Mentors Programme Modules (Scale 1-5)



Distribution of Trainer Ratings by Aspect (1 = Worst, 5 = Best)



8. MEDIA COVERAGE

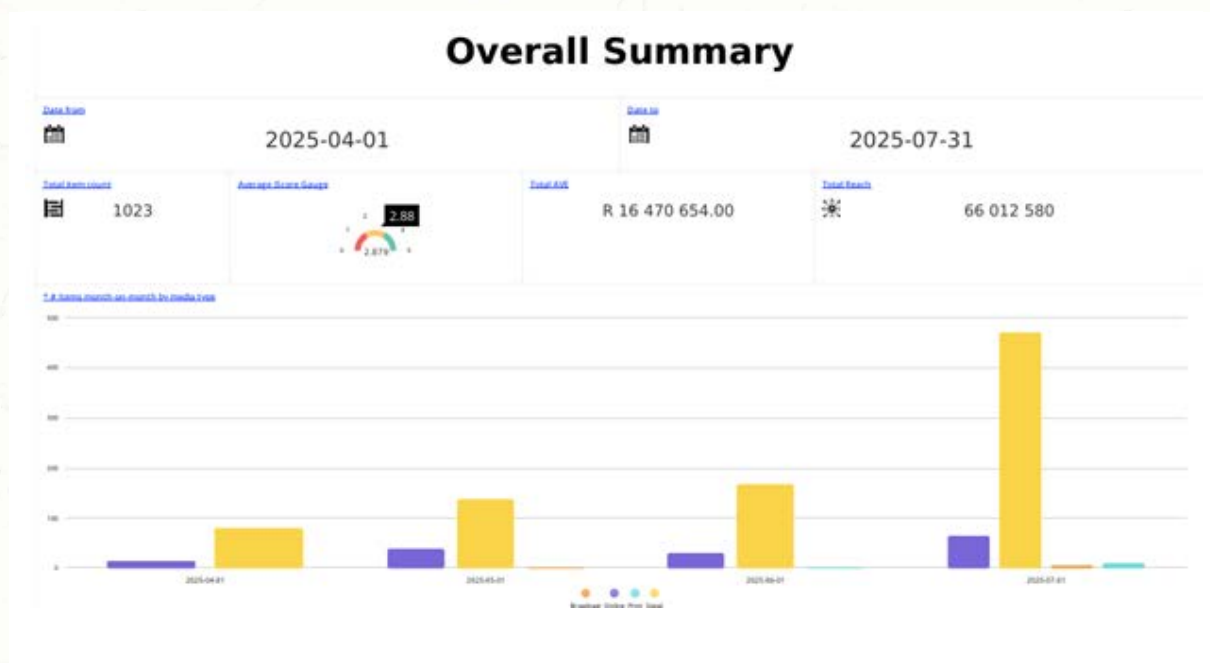
Providing media exposure for filmmakers is central to DFMI's mandate to promote alumni and the projects and professionals showcased at the market.

Marketing methodology implemented:

- Distribution of press releases to newsrooms across Africa and internationally.
- A social media campaign combining organic content and paid advertising.

Previous editions of DFM benefitted from dedicated Public Relations capacity and international media attendance, which supported strong global visibility. In 2025, communications activities were delivered within existing internal capacity. While core outreach continued, the scale of media engagement and event coverage was more limited than in earlier editions.

In 2025, DFM achieved the following media statistics:



	2025	2024	2023
Total Item Count	1,023	2,007	1,541
Total AVE	R16,470,654.00	R657,002,781	R362,202,780
Total Reach	66,012,580	235,674,877	434,063,614
Broadcast Media			
Count	7	19	23
AVE	R720,411.00	861,003	2,253,263
Reach	1,685,143	64,361,767	1,683,214
Online Media			
Count	149	337	156
AVE	R7,596,182.00	556,788,375	344,045,625
Reach	40,582,101	117,275,866	413,278,930
Print Media			
Count	12	35	63
AVE	R632,702.00	1,427,427	6,231,266
Reach	85,613	694,665	1,090,025
Social Media			
Count	855	1 616	
AVE	R7,521,359.00	97,925,976	
Reach	22,661,347	53,363,142	

Top Sources by AVE



Examples of Media presented: Print Media

market iq

Publication: Mercury - Main
Title: Durban FilmMart continues to unite Africa, one story at a time at DIFF
Publish date: 22 Jul 2025
Page: 6

Reach: 10610
AVE:R 61111.51
Author: MARYANNE ISAAC

Durban FilmMart continues to unite Africa, one story at a time at DIFF



WUPHANE ISAAC

KWAZULU-NATAL Tourism and Film Authority's (KZNATA) involvement in the film industry reflects a deeper vision - to create KwaZulu-Natal as a cinematic destination where stories are not only told, but truly come alive. The Durban International Film Festival (DIFF) is therefore more than a festival, it is one of the three anchor pillars of Film Month activities in KwaZulu-Natal and is flanked by the Simon Mabhona Awards and the Durban FilmMart.

Together, they form a powerful trilogy that showcases KZNATA's commitment to developing talent, promoting transformation and positioning KZN as a world-class film destination.

This year's edition of the Durban FilmMart (DFM) continued its mission to foster a thriving and dynamic African film industry in a world that often feels increasingly divided. In this task, yet the DFM has remained steadfast in its vision - breaking down barriers and building a more connected creative community across the continent.

In a time marked by deepening divisions, the Durban FilmMart Initiative has remained steadfast in its purpose: to diversity and democratise African cinema. Now in its 16th year and beyond, "Bridges not borders. Stories that unite", the DFM continues to champion a vision that celebrates diversity and nurtures creativity. Guided by a clear strategy, the DFM has established itself as a premier pan-African platform dedicated to showcasing African talent and expertise on the global film stage.

The DFM board and management have been intentional in driving the strategy forward, focusing on three core pillars:

- **Pitch and Finance Forum** - Carefully selected projects are given priority to connect with potential investors and distributors.
- **Networking and knowledge exchange** - Through masterclasses and panel discussions, the platform supports creative growth and distribution opportunities.
- **Industry development** - By facilitating engagement with filmmakers, financiers and



Opening night of the Durban FilmMart was hosted by Ntshona. Pictured are DFM director Mphahlele Bopape (center) alongside delegates, industry experts, Pitch and Finance Forum participants and longstanding DFM members from across Africa and the diaspora.

other key players, DFM helps filmmakers move their projects from development to production. Together, these pillars reinforce DFM's commitment to building a thriving and inclusive African film ecosystem.

Pan-African focus

The DFM uses cinema as a powerful tool for genuine exchange - connecting film professionals across Africa and the Global South to engage in meaningful dialogue that is premised on shared values and an exchange of learning and expertise. With key strategic components in mind, the DFM is intent on facilitating talent development by nurturing African filmmakers through mentorship and funding initiation. The DFM also facilitates co-productions and distribution deals that enable African cinema to remain relevant and evident on the world stage. It has proven to be a catalyst for enabling representation and inclusivity in the industry, by enabling the roles of those who were and are marginalised and by a number of groundbreaking projects to be - powerfully affirming its pan-African vision and commitment to championing African storytelling across borders.

Moreover, the DFM's official project selection for its 16th edition highlights bold and diverse voices shaping the future of African cinema, drawn from a highly competitive pool of live-action and animated submissions. In the context of premier co-production and film finance market, the DFM continues to serve as a vital launching pad for emerging and established African filmmakers.

The 2025 line-up includes eight animations, 11 fiction films and 11 documentaries - each chosen by African creatives in key roles. Through an open call and a rigorous review by three independent panels, around 30 projects are selected each year. These projects then undergo a six to eight-week mentoring and packaging programme, preparing them for the Pitch and Finance Forum - a dynamic platform for pitching one-on-one meetings and industry networking.

More than a showcase, this platform strength-

ens pathways to funding, co-production and global distribution.

Young local talent

The DFM, in partnership with Betanide Talents, presents the 18th edition of Talents Durban - a dynamic platform for emerging African film professionals. This initiative offered a vital space for all budding, industry actors and project development. Over six weeks, selected participants receive mentorship and the opportunity to present their work to key industry professionals. Following a highly competitive adjudication process, 20 projects and five films were selected for the 2025 edition. The line-up includes four animations, six documentaries, seven fiction films, four series, five short films and five film critics. Talents Durban is structured into four distinct categories: Storytelling Lab - script development and mentoring for feature, short and series; The Lab - practical guidance for documentary filmmakers; Animation Lab - industry mentorship for animators focusing on African visual narratives; and Talent Press - critical writing training for up-and-coming African film journalists.

Futura Abdullah

"Africa's Advertisers in Asia" is a dynamic animated TV series set in a futuristic Africa. A film project by Futura Abdullah has been selected for the 2025 Talents Durban programme. Recognised across all the standing emerging voices from across 16 African countries, the project reflects the spirit of bold and new storytelling.

"Too often, our kids grow up without seeing themselves reflected in the stories they consume. This series is my contribution to changing that narrative by offering something fun, inspiring and rooted in the richness of Africa," said Abdullah.

In this context, "Africa" evokes a historical and geographic concept rooted in our Africa, with cultural connections that may extend to the Great Lakes region and parts of southern Africa. Africa, a cultural explorer and natural knower, travels with her crew: Latanda, the tech genius; Jabari, the skilled contractor; Fatima, the tech-savvy hustler; and Kwesi, the fun-loving journalist. As they travel across Africa's diverse regions, they confront social issues of justice, the environment and cultural diversity. Akili and the crew learn life-changing lessons in empathy, teamwork and resilience. It is fast-paced and fun, packed with purpose where tradition meets tomorrow.

"The project is a natural evolution of a journey I began with the Akili storybooks and the Akili doll - born from a desire to create representation for African children who truly connect with it." Abdullah is also the producer of "Amani River", an animated TV special that was nominated for Best Animation across the African continent.

Sharon Gumbi, KZNATA Interim CEO and Film Month is a call to action - to diversify local content, attract investment and inspire the next generation of creatives.

"KZN Tourism and Film Authority is proud to support a slate of home-grown films that are not only being screened - but are the most anticipated local titles this year in Lucky Fish. It's about being locally, family and self-acceptance - in Durban to its core, local, loved and full of heart. We are equally proud of Gazi's War, a powerful film exploring homelessness, dignity and mental health care history.

"We also celebrate a dynamic selection of short films from emerging visual filmmakers in KZN. These works are bold, relevant and reflective of a new generation of storytellers carving out space by shifting the narrative. This year, Film Month is all about: storytelling rooted in place, powered by people," said Gumbi.

market iq

Publication: Daily News - Main
Title: Where stories live: KwaZulu-Natal marks Film Month with pride and purpose
Publish date: 16 Jul 2025
Page: 3

Reach: 8283
AVE:R 78650.88
Author: Staff Reporter

Where stories live: KwaZulu-Natal marks Film Month with pride and purpose



JULY marks Film Month in the Zulu Kingdom - a time when the KwaZulu-Natal Tourism and Film Authority (KZNATA) turns the spotlight on the province's vibrant film and television sectors.

It honours the power of storytelling, the resilience of the province's creative talent, and KwaZulu-Natal's growing influence in shaping the future of African cinema.

Film Month is more than a symbolic celebration; it's an opportunity to reflect on the province's dynamic role as both a backdrop and a driving force in its world-class talent and production infrastructure. KwaZulu-Natal continues to attract and inspire filmmakers from across the continent and beyond.

Film Month: Three pillars

Film Month is anchored by three premier events - the Durban International Film Festival (DIFF) held from July 18 to 26, Durban FilmMart (DFM) held from July 19 to 22, and the Simon Mabhona Awards KZN Film and Television Awards (KZNATA Awards) taking place on July 19.

Simon Gumbi, Interim KZNATA CEO, said: "These events shape the heartbeat of Africa's film calendar - nurturing emerging talent, industry leaders, investors and audiences."

KZNATA is the proud custodian of the Simon Mabhona Awards, which celebrate outstanding achievements in film and television. Through our support, the authority reaffirms its commitment to recognizing and uplifting the outstanding talent that drives KwaZulu-Natal's creative economy and defines the industry's growth, visibility and transformation within the local film and television industry.

Throughout the month, Film Month programming shines a light on the individuals and productions that have elevated the province's cinematic profile - from historic titles that shaped the industry to contemporary hits that

push creative boundaries.

"It also celebrates the industry's resilience, especially in the face of global challenges, and reaffirms the importance of sustained investment in the arts as a pillar of both cultural and economic development," said Gumbi.

Honouring KZN excellence

Now in its 12th year, the Simon Mabhona Awards celebrate excellence both in front of and behind the camera. This year, six KZNATA-supported films have earned nominations:

- **Best - Best Newcomer Actress** (Analia Caba, *Ellewa Nkomo*), Best Short Film
- **Emerald Holiday** - Best Production Design, Best Pan-African Film, Best Feature Film, Best Use of KZN as a Location
- **Golden Dreams** - Best Production Design, Best Screen Film
- **Masibane** - Best Production Design, Best Screenplay
- **Supporting Actor** (Mphahlele Bopape), Best Director (Mark Engel), Best Feature Film
- **Greyhound Golf** - Best Supporting Actress (Linda Sokhohle)

These nominations, Gumbi said, underscored the rich diversity and creative excellence of KZN's film landscape.

Storytelling powerhouse

Productions funded by KZNATA are earning widespread recognition both locally and internationally. These productions, shaped by powerful story-

telling and authentic local voices, are making their mark at global festivals and on major distribution platforms.

From award-winning features to breakthrough independent films, KZN-backed projects are shining a spotlight on the province's talent, landscapes and production capabilities.

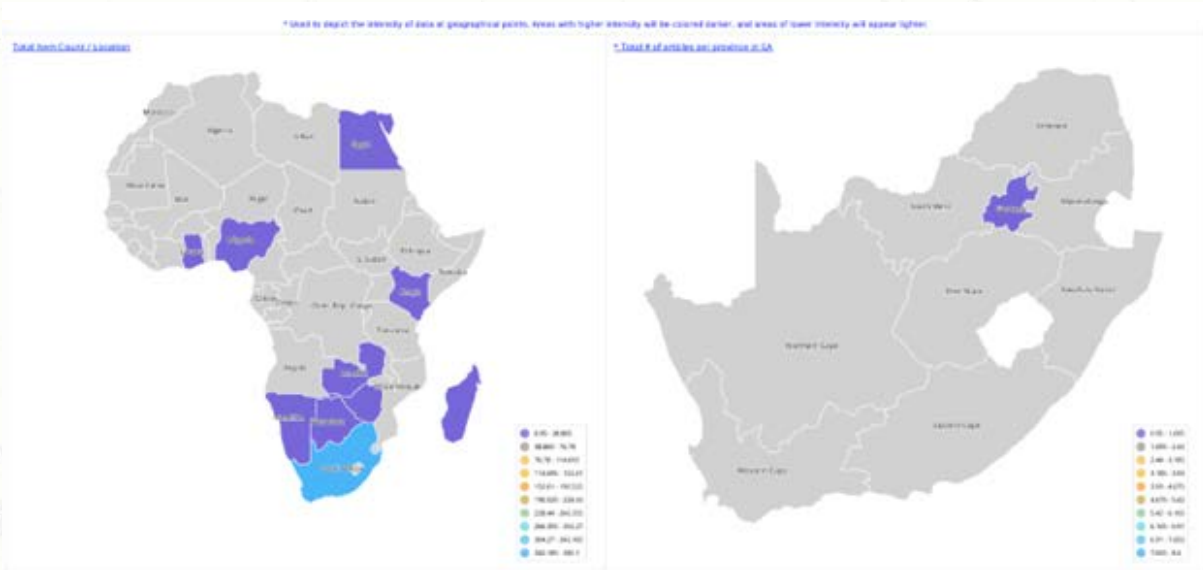
"This growing acclaim underscores the impact of the authority's investment in the creative economy - not only nurturing filmmakers but also positioning KwaZulu-Natal as a key player in African cinema and a destination of choice for international co-productions."

This year, KwaZulu-Natal producer Tiny Mungwe earned international recognition at the prestigious Cannes International Film Festival, where her documentary project *Witness: Hwange*, supported by KZNATA, was showcased as part of industry networking and content engagement - drawing the attention of global distributors and collaborators.

Witness: Hwange tells the compelling story of two women activists in South Africa and their decade-long struggle for decriminalisation and dignity.

Another powerful example of the entity's impact is filmmaker Kothibe Ngobese. Her documentary *And She Didn't Die*, funded by KZNATA, received four accolades at the 2025 Encounters South African International Documentary Film Festival during June. It was the winner of the Bonnie Locks Award for Best Edited SA Feature Documentary, as well as the runner-up for

Heat Map



Social Media Analysis

Platform	2025	2024
Facebook		
Facebook followers	17,884	16,777
Facebook reach	3,803,525	9,103,084
Instagram		
Instagram followers	11,340	8,088
Instagram reach	1,549,015	2,933,525
Twitter		
Twitter followers	9,786	9,728
LinkedIn		
LinkedIn followers	2,378	815
TikTok		
TikTok followers	292	269
TikTok views		901
TikTok likes	6,039	5,858



META OVERVIEW

APRIL - JULY 2025

VIEWS

13.56M

Facebook & Instagram

INTERACTIONS

31.84K

Facebook & Instagram

NEW FOLLOWERS

2673

Facebook & Instagram

REACH

5.35M

Facebook & Instagram

LINK CLICKS

37.49K

Facebook & Instagram

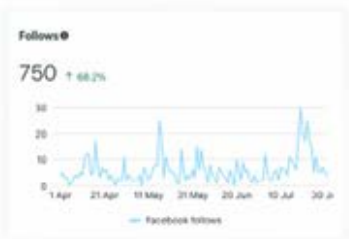
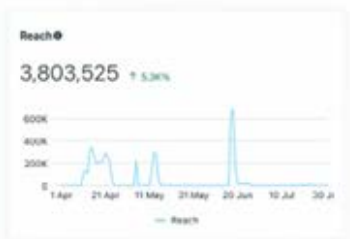
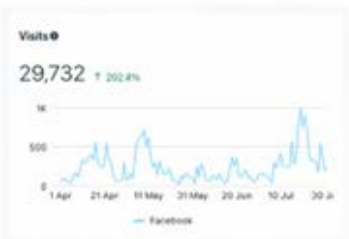
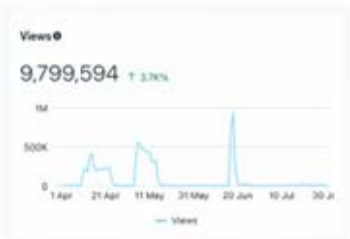
PAID IMPRESSIONS

12.97M

Facebook & Instagram

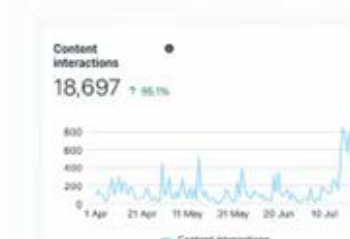
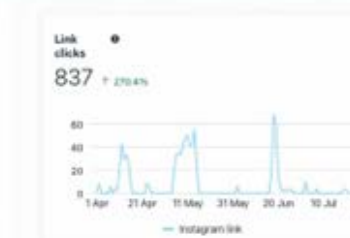
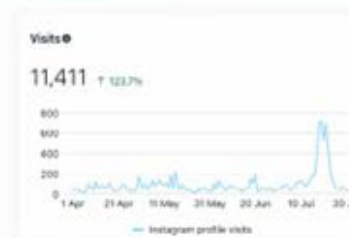
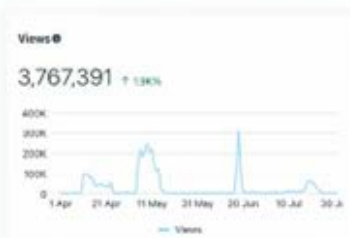
FACEBOOK OVERVIEW

APRIL - JULY 2025



INSTAGRAM OVERVIEW

APRIL - JULY 2025



9. COMMENTS FROM PARTICIPANTS AND PARTNERS

DFM 2025 Event, 16th Edition

"DFM was just a waw!

This was my very first time attending the Durban FilmMart, and I had two main objectives:

- *Acquiring films for Filmika*
- *Connecting with African cinema professionals*

I'm proud to say that both goals were fully achieved. I had the chance to meet producers, distributors, filmmakers, fund officers, and investors. I also connected with emerging actors, directors, and producers whose ambitions are to become leaders in their fields — and I truly believe they will.

Being part of this powerful and impactful festival was an honour. I deeply believe that Africa has everything it takes to move forward if we—as Africans—recognise the true value of our continent and work collectively towards what it really needs. Fortunately, this new generation is well aware of Africa's potential, and they are actively shaping its future." – DFM 2025 delegate

"DFM 2025 was a life changing experience. It continues to be my favourite market, and I made contacts there that will be very important for our project. Winning six awards was also mind-blowing and life-changing!" – DFM 2025 delegate

"I was reminded again how wonderful the DFM experience always is: the halls buzzing with conversation, and the people who attend are always as warm as the weather and willing to share insights and facilitate introductions. It is a welcoming experience for new filmmakers from across Africa. Great to see the animation screenings and also well done on a very impressive conference programme."

"This marked another powerful step in putting Mozambique firmly on the African audiovisual map – and in taking our stories further than they've ever gone before."

"It was my first sub-Sahara African trip, and it opened my eyes. Already convinced that Africa is home of many talents and stories, I am working with a South African production company and enjoying that, but your market showed many new opportunities!"

"This was my first time participating in the DFM, and it was an incredible experience. I had the opportunity to learn a lot about how cinema works in Africa. I maintained several contacts with other delegates, which allowed me to exchange experiences with other African countries."

"My experience was extremely positive: it was MAD World's first time at DFM, and I found it to be an unmissable event for African, Arab, and international cinema more broadly. DFM offers a week of wide-ranging, rich meetings, panels, and discussions with professionals from all over the world, each with varied and specialised experience and background. DFM is also the place to discover new, high-quality projects, carefully selected at all stages of development or production. You can feel that a real community of professionals has been created around DFM and that everyone takes great pleasure in coming back and meeting up there every year."



Future Mentors, 2nd and 3rd Edition – Senegal and Tunis

“The Future Mentors Programme gave me reflective tools to approach mentoring with adaptability, sensitivity, and the right amount of distance. It offered essential technical skills and, even more importantly, a rare community devoted to the transmission of knowledge – something vital in an industry undergoing profound change. The programme’s support was invaluable, shaped by a clear understanding of what mentors need today: connection and the feeling of being in the right place, where one’s competencies are truly recognised and given a meaningful framework.” – Maéva Ranaivojaona, Madagascar, 2nd Edition West Africa

“The Future Mentors Programme opened a door that I had been waiting for, allowing me to connect with African filmmakers despite Libya’s long isolation. What we learned was both valuable and deeply inspiring, and for me, this is just the beginning.” – Hussein Eddeb, Libya, 2nd Edition North Africa

“A mentor must have the humility to admit that they don’t know everything instead of misleading a mentee.” – Soro Azata, Burkina Faso, 2nd Edition West Africa

“A strong African film market is not just an industry; it is a strategic tool of soft power, shaping narratives, and reinforcing the strength of our continent.” – Giresse Kassonga, Democratic Republic of the Congo, 2nd Edition West Africa

DFMI Business Lab, 5th Edition

“This module [financial management] opened my eyes to the composition and constitution of a company. More specifically, audiovisual production companies. Something I hadn’t done in my production courses in my country.” – Business Lab participant on Financial Management with Nola Rae

“I think one of the greatest barriers and challenges as producers is navigating financing models and terminology. The session essentially demystified this and provided necessary information needed to approach finance plans and strategies for bringing investors and co-producers abroad.” – Business Lab Participant on Fundraising with Toni Monty

“The co-production module with Sydney was very informative, especially since I just went through an unsuccessful co-production experience. It was helpful for me to understand why things didn’t go as planned and to identify the mistakes I should avoid next time.” – Business Lab participant on Coproduction with Sidney Chiu

Can you give an example of how you have applied newly learned skills in your professional work?

“I have designed probably twice as many pitches as I would’ve without the lab since it kept me inspired and involved in this kind of work. I have implemented some of the skills in my day-to-day work as a producer and production manager, and I’ve used some of the knowledge in my own courses to inspire my acting students.” – DFM Business Lab Participant 2025

Can you give an example of how you have applied newly learned skills in your professional work?

“A recent example is an action short film I produced in January 2026. I was able to ensure all paperwork was fully in order, financials were aligned, and distribution plans were clearly mapped out. Drawing directly from the programme, I assessed the project’s readiness before production, identifying potential risks and opportunities early on. I also applied the skills that I learned around market positioning and audience strategy, which helped me make informed decisions about how to package and present the film to potential partners. Overall, the programme strengthened my ability to approach projects with both creative and strategic rigour, ensuring that every element of production and distribution was intentional and professional.” – DFM Business Lab Participant 2025



Talents Durban, 18th Edition

“One of the most valuable outcomes for me from the whole mentor talks session—though indirect—was walking away with a curated watchlist of essential African films and series across genres, formats, and eras. As someone who always struggled to access or even discover such works due to limited exposure and availability, this alone was a major highlight. It offered me a clearer lens on the cinematic language of the continent and filled a gap that I’ve long wanted to address.

The mentorship also helped me localise and contextualise my existing knowledge. Coming from a self-taught background and later formal training in international screenwriting and production, I gained insight into how to adjust and apply that experience within an African framework.” – Talents Durban 2025 Participant

DFM Access, 4th Edition

Can you give an example of how you have applied newly learned skills in your professional work?

“During my time at the Durban Film Mart Institute, I attended industry masterclasses and panel discussions that introduced me to advanced pitching techniques and international co-production strategies. I applied these newly learned skills by refining the pitch for my documentary project, incorporating clearer narrative hooks, market positioning, and visual references that aligned with international buyer expectations. As a result, our project has the potential to attract co-producers and distributors, demonstrating the direct impact of these skills on my professional work and the growth of my network within the African and global film industry.” – DFM Access Participant 2025

How will you use the tools gained from this training programme to develop your career in the film industry?

“I will use the tools gained from this training programme to strengthen both the creative and professional aspects of my career. The pitching techniques, co-production strategies, and industry insights will help me develop projects that are compelling, market-ready, and attractive to local and international partners. I will apply lessons on storytelling, audience engagement, and project packaging to enhance the quality of my films, while leveraging networking opportunities and practical guidance to secure funding, festival placements, and collaborations that advance my career in the South African and global film industry.” – DFM Access Participant 2025























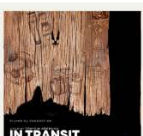









10. DFMI ALUMNI SUCCESS

Over the past 16 year 105 film projects from the DFM Pitch and Finance Forum and the Talents Durban programmes have been realised into completed films. Many have won awards while others screened in festivals and on streaming platforms locally and internationally.

Click <https://durbanfilmmart.co.za/alumni/#catalogue> for the full DFMI catalogue listing completed projects that participated in DFM and Talents Durban over the past 16 years.

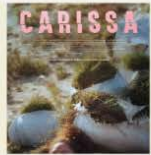
Image of social media posting.

 <p>#DFMIAlumni, Disco Afrika screening at the Luxor African Film Festival (LAFF) 2025!</p>	 <p>#DFMIAlumni, How to Build a Library world premiere at Sundance 2025</p>	 <p>#DFMIAlumni, Mother City premiere premiere at the Göteborg Film Festival 2025!</p>	 <p>#DFMIAlumni, Africa Mother premiere premiere at the Kitale Film Week 2025</p>	 <p>#DFMIAlumni, Our Land, Our Freedom, participating at the Kitale Film Week 2025</p>
 <p>#DFMIAlumni, Amazeeze Films world premiere at the Clermont-Ferrand Shorts Film Festival in 2025</p>	 <p>#DFMIAlumni, Where the Wind Comes From, selected in the IFFR 2025 Harbour.</p>	 <p>#DFMIAlumni, Five Fingers for Marseilles, screens at Hyde Park Picture House as part of Cinema Africa!</p>	 <p>#DFMIAlumni, On The Edge, is screening at the Clermont-Ferrand Short Film Festival in 2025</p>	 <p>#DFMIAlumni, Disco Afrika, screening at libraries in Austria 🇦🇹, Germany 🇩🇪, and Luxembourg 🇱🇺</p>
 <p>#DFMIAlumni, The Settlement (Al mosta'mera), world premiere in Berlinale 2025</p>	 <p>#DFMIAlumni, Abo Zabaal 89, selected the 29th edition of FESPACO 2025!</p>	 <p>#DFMIAlumni, Tongo Saa, Rising Up at Night, selected the 29th edition of FESPACO 2025!</p>	 <p>#DFMIAlumni, Mother City, selected the 29th edition of FESPACO 2025!</p>	 <p>#DFMIAlumni, Goodbye Julia, selected the 29th edition of FESPACO 2025!</p>
 <p>#DFMIAlumni, The Legend of the Vagabond Queen of Lagos, selected the 29th edition of FESPACO 2025!</p>	 <p>#DFMIAlumni, Disco Afrika , selected the 29th edition of FESPACO 2025!</p>	 <p>#DFMIAlumni, Our Land, Our Freedom, selected the 29th edition of FESPACO 2025!</p>	 <p>#DFMIAlumni, The Destiny of a Female Truck Driver, selected the 29th edition of FESPACO 2025!</p>	 <p>#DFMIAlumni, Eat Bitter (Suffer in Silence), selected the 29th edition of FESPACO 2025!</p>
 <p>#DFMIAlumni, Nzoning, selected the 29th edition of FESPACO 2025!</p>	 <p>#DFMIAlumni, Djeliya, Memory du Mandingue, selected the 29th edition of FESPACO 2025!</p>	 <p>#DFMIAlumni, In Transit, selected the 29th edition of FESPACO 2025!</p>	 <p>#DFMIAlumni, On The Edge, selected the 29th edition of FESPACO 2025!</p>	 <p>#DFMIAlumni, Mother City, screening at the Labia Theatre</p>
 <p>#DFMIAlumni, Tongo Saa, wins Silver Station of Yennenga, Best Feature Documentary, FESPACO 2025!</p>	 <p>#DFMIAlumni, Our Land, Our Freedom, wins the FESPACO PRO Yennenga Post-Production Award, FESPACO 2025!</p>	 <p>#DFMIAlumni, Nzoning, wins the FESPACO PRO Yennenga Post-Production Award.</p>	 <p>#DFMIAlumni, Capturing Water, premiere at the Joburg Film Festival 2025</p>	 <p>#DFMIAlumni, Black People Don't Get Depressed screens at the Joburg Film Festival 2025</p>





#DFMIAumni, Mother City, Don't Get Depressed screens at the Joburg Film Festival 2025



#DFMIAumni, Carissa, screens at the AFI Silver Theatre and Cultural Center!



#DFMIAumni, Disco Afrika, screens at the AFI Silver Theatre and Cultural Center!



#DFMIAumni, The Legend of the Vagabond Queen of Lagos, screens at the AFI Silver Theatre.



#DFMIAumni, How To Build a Library, screens at the AFI Silver Theatre and Cultural Center!



#DFMIAumni, Where the Wind Comes From, screens at the AFI Silver Theatre and Cultural Center!



#DFMIAumni, 50 Meters, screening at CPH:DOX 2025!



#DFMIAumni, How To Build a Library, screening at CPH:DOX 2025!



#DFMIAumni, Spaceman in Congo, screening at CPH:DOX 2025!



#DFMIAumni, Capturing Water, international premiere at Movies That Matter Festival 2025!



#DFMIAumni, Mother City, Dutch premiere at Movies That Matter Festival 2025!



#DFMIAumni, Why The Cattle Wait, wins Best Short Film Joburg Film Festival!



#DFMIAumni, Murder in Paris, Paris screening to mark 37 years since the assassination of Dulcie September.



#DFMIAumni, The Legend of the Vagabond Queen of Lagos, screens in Nairobi.



#DFMIAumni, Where the Wind Comes From, screening at the Istanbul Film Festival 2025!



#DFMIAumni, Uli & Tata's African Nursery Rhymes, the animated series, published as book series.



#DFMIAumni, Tongo Saa, nominated for Best Documentary at the Africa Golden Awards 2025.



#DFMIAumni, Mother City, nominated for Best Documentary at the Africa Golden Awards 2025.



#DFMIAumni, Our Land, Our Freedom, nominated for Best Documentary at the Africa Golden Awards 2025.



#DFMIAumni, Mother City, selected as a finalist for the Ladima Adiaha Award 2025!



#DFMIAumni, How To Build a Library, screening at the San Francisco Film Festival 2025!



#DFMIAumni, Where the Wind Comes From, screening at the San Francisco Film Festival 2025!



#DFMIAumni, Black Women and Sex, world premiere at the Black American Film Festival in Miami.



#DFMIAumni, Big Boys Don't Cry, selected at the Encounters South African Documentary Festival



#DFMIAumni, Black Women and Sex, screening at the Ant'Sary Doc Festival Madagascar



#DFMIAumni, Truck Mama, selected at the Encounters South African Documentary Festival



#DFMIAumni, How to Build a Library, selected at the Encounters South African Documentary Festival



#DFMIAumni, Womxn Working, selected at the Encounters South African Documentary Festival



#DFMIAumni, Capturing Water, selected at the Encounters South African Documentary Festival



#DFMIAumni, Abo Zabaal, selected at the Encounters South African Documentary Festival





#DFMIALumni, Black Women and Sex, wins Best Documentary at the Black American Film Festival.



#DFMIALumni, Aisha Can't Fly Away, screens at the Durban International Film Festival 2025!



#DFMIALumni, Black Burns Fast, screens at the Durban International Film Festival 2025!



#DFMIALumni, Fleas (Amazeze), screens at the Durban International Film Festival 2025!



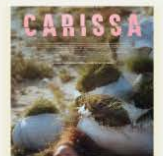
#DFMIALumni, God's Work, screens at the Durban International Film Festival 2025!



#DFMIALumni, The Home, screens at the Durban International Film Festival 2025!



#DFMIALumni, The Legend of the Vagabond Queen of Lagos, screens at the Durban International Film Festival.



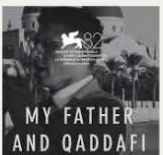
#DFMIALumni, Carissa, screening at the Blackstar Film Festival



#DFMIALumni, Our Land, Our Freedom, screening at the Binti Film Festival in Kampala.



#DFMIALumni, The Letter, screening at the Binti Film Festival in Kampala.



#DFMIALumni, My Father and Qaddafi, screening at the Venice Film Festival 2025



#DFMIALumni, Black Women and Sex, nominated as a finalist at Fame Week 2025



#DFMIALumni, Why the Cattle Wait, screens at the FAME Shorts Film Festival 2025



#DFMIALumni, Mother City, Wait, screens at the FAME Feature Documentary at the Ateker Film Festival 2025.



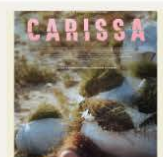
#DFMIALumni, Mami Wata, screening at the Mostra de Cinemas Africanos 2025!



#DFMIALumni, The Legend of the Vagabond Queen of Lagos, screening at the Mostra de Cinemas Africanos 2025!



#DFMIALumni, Our Land, Our Freedom, screening at the Mostra de Cinemas Africanos 2025!



#DFMIALumni, Carissa, screens nationwide at Ster-Kinekor cinema's in South Africa.



#DFMIALumni, Abo Zabaal, screening at the Afrika Film Festival Koeln 2025!



#DFMIALumni, The Settlement (Al mosta'mera), screening at the Afrika Film Festival Koeln 2025!



#DFMIALumni, How to Build a Library, screening at the Afrika Film Festival Koeln 2025!



#DFMIALumni, Our Land, Our Freedom, screening at the Afrika Film Festival Koeln 2025!



#DFMIALumni, Disco Afrika, screens nationwide in French cinemas.



#DFMIALumni, Aisha Can't Fly Away, screening at the Festival Villa del Cine



#DFMIALumni, Milisuthando screening at the Festival Villa del Cine



#DFMIALumni, Aisha Can't Fly Away, selected at the Lisbon Arab Film Festival 2025!



#DFMIALumni, Seeking Haven for Mr. Rambo, selected at the Lisbon Arab Film Festival 2025!



#DFMIALumni, Mother of All Lies, selected at the Lisbon Arab Film Festival 2025!



#DFMIALumni, A Son (Un fils), selected at the Lisbon Arab Film Festival 2025!



#DFMIALumni, Aisha Can't Fly Away, wins Best Debut Feature Film at the 11th Festival Villa del Cine!





#DFMIALumni, The Destiny of a Truck Driver, wins four awards, including Best Feature at the Kolkata Film Festival



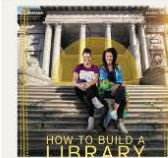
#DFMIALumni, Mother City, screens at the Festival des Libertés 2025!



#DFMIALumni, Eat Bitter, screens at Bantu Film Festival 2025!



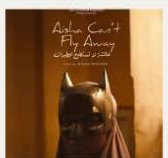
#DFMIALumni, Mother City, screens at Bantu Film Festival 2025!



#DFMIALumni, How to Build a Library, screens at the NBO Film Festival 2025!



#DFMIALumni, Mother City, screens at the NBO Film Festival 2025!



#DFMIALumni, Aisha Can't Fly Away, screens at the NBO Film Festival 2025!



#DFMIALumni, 50 Meters, screening at El Gouna Film Festival 2025!



#DFMIALumni, How to Build a Library, screening at El Gouna Film Festival 2025!



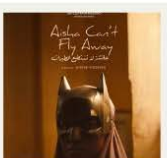
#DFMIALumni, Where the Wind Comes From, screening at El Gouna Film Festival 2025!



#DFMIALumni, The Settlement (Al mosta'mera), screening at El Gouna Film Festival 2025!



#DFMIALumni, The Woman Who Poked the Leopard, screens at Dok Leipzig 2025!



#DFMIALumni, Aisha Can't Fly Away, wins the Golden Palm - Grand Jury Prize at the Mostra de València.



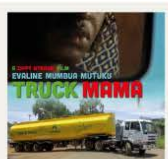
#DFMIALumni, Mother City, wins Best Documentary Feature at the 1st Kafuka African Film Festival!



#DFMIALumni, The Woman Who Poked the Leopard, screens at IDFA 2025!



#DFMIALumni, How to Build a Library, screens at IDFA 2025!



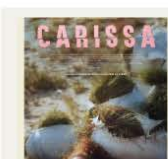
#DFMIALumni, Truck Mama, screens at IDFA 2025!



#DFMIALumni, Tongo Saa (Rising Up at Night), screens at the Festival Atriques en Vision



#DFMIALumni, Abo Zabaal, screens at the African Diaspora International Film Festival in New York.



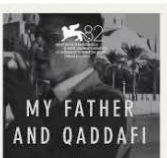
#DFMIALumni, Carissa, screens at the African Diaspora International Film Festival in New York.



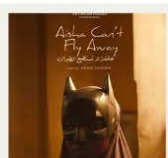
#DFMIALumni, Black Women and Sex, screens at the African Diaspora International Film Festival in New York.



#DFMIALumni, Mother City, screens at the African Diaspora International Film Festival in New York.



#DFMIALumni, My Father and Qaddafi, screening at the Marrakech International Film Festival 2025!



#DFMIALumni, Aisha Can't Fly Away, screening at the Marrakech International Film Festival 2025!



#DFMIALumni, My Father and Qaddafi, wins Best Documentary Award at Doha Film Festival 2025!



#DFMIALumni, Truck Mama, selected at the Red Sea Film Festival 2025!



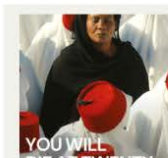
#DFMIALumni, The Settlement (Al mosta'mera), selected at the Red Sea Film Festival 2025!



#DFMIALumni, Amazeze, screens at the South African Indie Film Festival 2025!



#DFMIALumni, Watching Over You, screens at the South African Indie Film Festival 2025!



#DFMIALumni, You Will Die at Twenty, screens at the 36th Journées Cinématographiques de Carthage (JCC)





#DFMIALumni, Milisuthando, available to stream and rent in SA, US + Canada.



#DFMIALumni, How to Build a Library, receives a Special Jury Mention at the 2025 El Gouna Film Festival!



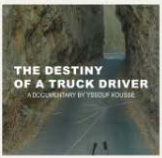
#DFMIALumni, The Woman Who Poked the Leopard, receives two awards at this year's DOK Leipzig!



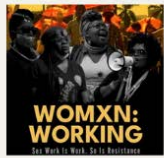
#DFMIALumni, Black Women & Sex, screens at the Soweto International Film Festival 2025!



#DFMIALumni, Amazeze, screens at the Soweto International Film Festival 2025!



#DFMIALumni, The Destiny of a Truck Driver, selected to screen at Entertainment Week Africa Festival 2025!



#DFMIALumni, Womxn: Working screening at the Festival International du Film au Féminin 2025.



#DFMIALumni, My Father and Qaddafi, wins the Jury Prize at the Marrakech Film Festival 2025!



#DFMIALumni, Amazeze, wins three awards at the South African Independent Film Festival!



#DFMIALumni, Where the Wind Comes From, screens at the 36th Carthage Film Festival



#DFMIALumni, The Settlement (Al mosta'mera), screens at the 36th Carthage Film Festival



#DFMIALumni, You Don't Die Two Times, screens at the 36th Carthage Film Festival



11. PARTNERS

The Durban FilmMart Institute, which organises DFM 2025, receives its primary funding from the Durban Film Office and the eThekweni Municipality.

The success of the annual Durban FilmMart is made possible through the generous support of various organisations and entities.

Funders, sponsors and exhibitors include the Ford Foundation; Netflix; Afreximbank; National Film and Video Foundation; NEFTI; Industrial Development Corporation; MTN Group Digital; French Institute of South Africa; IEFTA; KwaZulu-Natal Tourism and Film Authority; Independent Media Producers Association of Creative Talent (I.M.P.A.C.T.); Panavision; Panalux; Namibia Film Commission; Palestine Film Institute; Network of Arab Alternative Screens Cine Connect; Film and Publication Board; Directors Guild of South Africa; Eastern Cape Development Corporation; Côte d'Ivoire (Cultural Office); Downtown Music Africa; Next Narrative Africa Fund; GIZ; Sunshine Cinema; Wesgro; Independent Producers Organisation; Wrapped; Canal+ University; Bertha Foundation; Gauteng Film Commission; Film Cape Town; CNN Collection.

Additionally, the event benefits from partnerships with esteemed organisations and festivals.

The programme partners include the Durban International Film Festival; African Reel Collective; Africa No Filter; Animation SA; Berlinale Talents; Cape Town International Animation Film Festival; Dante Languages; Disabled Audiovisual Workers Network; Digital Lab Africa; Directors Guild of South Africa; Doc Society; Documentary Filmmakers' Association; Durban University of Technology; DW Akademie (supported by the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Developments); Encounters South African International Documentary Festival; European AudioVisual Entrepreneurs; Fipresci; Hot Docs Blue Ice Fund; Independent Producers Organisation; Sisters Working in Film and Television; South African Guild of Actors; Tempo; The Climate Story Labs Africa; The Fak'ugesi African Digital Innovation Festival; The Independent Black Filmmakers Collective; The South African Guild of Editors; Writers Guild of South Africa.





Création Africaine



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