



WOMEN POWER

African women filmmakers from eight countries gathered in Harare to discuss and map a way forward for them to position themselves in the film industry. International Images Film Festival hosted the African Women Filmmakers' Hub Inaugural Meeting, which was sponsored by Ford Foundation, where women shared their experiences and the challenges they face in the industry.

Representatives from Kenya, Malawi, Ghana, Senegal, Rwanda, Tanzania, Côte d'Ivoire and the host Zimbabwe got the chance to speak openly about the barriers that they face in penetrating the industry as women filmmakers and how they have managed to overcome some of them.

'Change should come from women', as women have for a long time stood by the sidelines and watched their male counterparts take them for granted and also not given them a voice. Most of the films made are a male's perspective of women and it is now the time to hear what women have to say about themselves. In saying this it does not mean that there are no men who support their cause, a few have really done a good job in supporting and bringing out the vision of women - 'thumbs up' to them! However, most have not really done justice to the image of women.

Women have taken a stand to help change the imagery about them and also balance the narratives that have been predominately male. They are empowering themselves and each other and will no longer wait for an outsider's assistance.

Women filmmakers have set up a secretariat that will spearhead their cause of promoting women in film across Africa and the world, where they will set up film hubs in different countries.

This hub will be a meeting place for both upcoming and established filmmakers and share their works, experiences and ideas. The member countries will take turns in hosting conferences, with Kenya being the first.

Some of the objectives of this hub will be to do research on films and women who are in film. They will host workshops, do documentation of works found, on-the-job training of filmmakers and mentorship programs among other.



The African Women Filmmakers' Hub inaugural meeting was a serious affair, with some lighter moments

The hub will create a database for women filmmakers, do outreach programs, both in urban and rural areas, as they want to create films from the grassroots. There will also be collaborations, a move that will see women from different areas within the industry come together brainstorm their ideas to come up with one big thing. Women have never really got an opportunity to express themselves and explore their talent, yet there is no story more important than a woman's. What some of the women filmmakers lack is support and these hubs will provide just that.

Giving back to their communities, the members will host community screenings in different areas and countries and they will also work on increasing women's film festivals across the globe.

POST PRODUCTION BOOT CAMP IT'S ALL ABOUT QUALITY

IIFF held its Post Production Boot Camp, with participants who included directors and editors wanted to know what it takes to produce good quality films.

Workshop facilitator, Olaf Koschke did not disappoint, as he shared his knowledge and experience with filmmakers on the amount of work that goes into professional post production. The participants were told that the first thing that they need to consider in post production is 'what are you producing for - television or

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cinema?' Most film makers have fallen short of the audience expectation because they tend to overlook a number of aspects in filmmaking.

Most local productions which might have been shot properly die in the post production process, and the boot camp was the right learning platform for filmmakers to come and share their experiences and also get expert advice on how they can improve their productions. Good quality productions are what keep the audience coming back for another screening. In the age of the internet, open source software was also touted as a way for local filmmakers to access top drawer editing software.

Koschke walked the participants through one of the new software packages on the market which is open source, as opposed to using pirated versions of Final Cut or Premier Pro.



Workshop facilitator Olaf Koschke giving pointers to the attentive participants

Sound is an integral part of an enjoyable film experience and this Post Production Boot Camp saw the internationally experienced facilitator imparting skills that he has amassed over a career spanning over two decades.

MUFAKOSE: LET'S DO THIS ALL YEAR ROUND...



Entrance to the IIFF venue, Rutendo Hall in Mufakose

'ILUNGELLO', a film that and seeks to shed light on an ancient South African tradition of bride abduction, couldn't have been screened in a more fitting venue than Rutendo Hall in Mufakose. Culture, tradition, modernity, education, freedom of choice and love clash in this well-crafted film. Looking at all these themes, one might see the need for re-introducing the culture and tradition of 'Bioscope' in the urban areas. The predominantly adolescent audience showed passion for film by their deep concentration. What is clear is the need to do this throughout the year. Mufakose is IIFF's primary outreach community venue and each year,

audiences need to be built 'from scratch'. But if these screenings were to be strategically screened throughout the year, a solid audience base would be built for the premier screening during the festival.

It is a good thing when interests coincide, which is the case in Mufakose, where the community has a strong interest in film and IIFF has shown a strong interest to showcase high quality films there.

Back to the film 'Ilungelo', a strong take away from the film is the concession by the Chief, who is the guardian of the culture and tradition of the village, to accept and listen to the people. It's argued that culture is dynamic and for the girl child to succeed in life, those guarding the cultural goalposts must be willing to allow culture to move with the times, as portrayed in the film. That said, 'Ilungelo' really is a solid film worth watching!

SWEDES - WHAT A NICE BUNCH!

The Swedes are known for the Nobel Prize, the famed Vikings, for being an environmentally conscious nation. Not only that, they also have what could be described as one of the world's best social programmes; they take care of their elderly, still send their young to school for free...one could easily say that YES they are a nice bunch!

Which then makes you wonder when a Swede says "I am sorry but they are just too many of them....too many black people around" or even worse when a grown man throws sand into a woman's face in front of her two small children and hurls insults at them. The film 'NICE PEOPLE' is a very interesting look at the issue of migrant integration. As a continuation of the running theme in their film selection, IIFF in collaboration with the Swedish Embassy hosted at the Alliance Française, a cocktail before the screening of 'Nice People'. The truth is, of all the films on the 'immigrants' theme, 'Nice People' has a certain unvarnished truth that

made it both painful to watch (if you are African) and also inspiring (if you are human). 'Nice People' is a powerful tale of one person's drive to integrate his townfolk of Borlange and the Somali nationals seeking refuge, through the sport of Bandy.

Integration is about finding common ground and Patrick Andersson, brings the town of Borlange together through sport, with a little help from his friends. The documentary narrative is cleverly driven by the Somali Bandy team's count down to the world championships. For the migrant Somali youths, it is a chance to represent their country at a world championship and for the people of Borlange, it's an opportune time to show people why their town motto is "Nice People", because at the end of the day, they really ARE nice people.