

Film project wins at intl film festival

A film project that debuted as a pitch at the 2011 [Durban FilmMart](#) has received international acclaim at the Berlinale International Film Festival's Talent Campus for its innovative and distinctive African storyline.



L to R: James Tayler and Sarah Muhoho

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The Boda Boda Thieves, a product of the collaboration between South African producer James Tayler and Kenyan producer Sarah Muhoho, was recently awarded the Highlight Pitch Award courtesy of the VFF (The German licensing agency for film and television producers) during the festival's Talent Project Market, a three day summit for emerging film-makers.

Taylor and Muhoho were talents at the festival's Talent Campus, which offers young producers and director's hands-on training and the opportunity to present their film projects to experienced co-producers and financiers through various programmes. The film was chosen as one of the ten projects to participate in the Talent Project Market - the only African film project in this year's selection. It was awarded first place by an international jury for a public pitch done by Muhoho. The film project also received a "special mention" for another coveted award, the International relations ARTE prize, which recognises excellence in script-writing of the film projects.

"The competition was tough and I feel very honoured and also deeply humbled by the support we have received in telling our uniquely African story on an international stage," said Muhoho, who accepted the €10 000 prize money.

The Boda Boda Thieves

The Boda Boda Thieves tells the East African tale of a poverty stricken family from Kampala, Uganda, that supports themselves through meagre earnings driving a motorcycle taxi, also known as a "boda-boda".

The film made an appearance at the Durban FilmMart 2011, a co-production and finance forum created through a

partnership between the Durban Film Office and the Durban International Film Festival, where it was selected as an official film project. At Durban FilmMart, the film was awarded the CineMart Rotterdam Lab Award courtesy of the International Film Festival of Rotterdam. The award granted Tayler the opportunity to attend CineMart 2012, the co-production and finance film market which takes place during the festival.

Muhoho, who is also regarded as a highly- respected actress in Kenya, came on board as a co-producer doing this period, bringing with her expertise as well as technical equipment.

The film project has since received funding from the National Film and Video Foundation ([NFVF](#)), the World Cinema Fund, the Hubert Bals Fund and the Global Film Initiative, an acknowledgement of great potential said Durban Film Office head Toni Monty. "This film is a prime example that African cinema is coming of age through recognition and admiration from an international audience," said Monty.

The script for *The Boda Boda Thieves* was initially developed during a workshop hosted by the International Three Continents Documentary and Film Festival held in Nantes, France in November 2010. The film was also invited to the Tarifa African Film Festival in Spain to pitch at the "Africa Produce" forum in June 2011.

Production of the project will take place in the coming months with casting, location scouting as well as script development and refinement already underway. "We have had experiences that have presented the perfect opportunities to expand the network and reach of our film, now it's up to us to make the best film we can" said Tayler who divulged that he had made contacts and genuine friendships from around the world.

"Proud identity of humanity, heritage and culture"

Both Tayler and Muhoho have both been "overwhelmed" at support and interest of the film, and have received favourable reviews at the film's originality and authenticity of the story as well as the characters involved. Both producers and the film's director Donald Mugisha of Uganda, are passionate about creating and developing content for African Cinema - which they believe expresses a "proud identity of humanity, heritage and culture".

"We hope to bring to life a great African story and also be part of impacting the local industry by sharing our skills as a collective from different countries by sharing our vibrant and unique narrative voice," said Muhoho.

Peter Rorvik, director of the Centre for Creative Arts and the Durban International Film Festival encourages local filmmakers to participate in film developmental initiatives, which "opens doors and provides a world of possibilities" for film projects. Said Rorvik, "We are very excited and proud when African stories succeed and make it to the big screen, it is evidence that Africa filmmakers are world-class competitors."

The 3rd edition of Durban FilmMart takes place from 20-23 July 2012 during the Durban International Film Festival and is open for documentary and fiction project submissions. The deadline for project submissions has been extended until 29 February 2012.

For more, go to www.durbanfilmmart.com