

TikTok concludes first Rising Voices initiative

By [Emily Stander](#) 8 Jul 2021

TikTok hosted its first-ever incubator programme, Rising Voices, over a period of six weeks and have announced the winners of a special grant for those who took part in it.



TikTok Rising Voices grant recipients

The initiative was focused on supporting local content creators of colour through digital skills development and content amplification. Creators were asked to apply to the programme by submitting content, and 100 creators were selected to take part.

Rising Voices was possible through the collaboration with the National Film & Video Foundation (NFVF). Makhosazana Khanyile, CEO of the NFVF, said, "The NFVF is proud to have been chosen to partner with

TikTok on this groundbreaking initiative. The opportunity to mould young content creators into future entrepreneurs that will learn to take advantage of all forms of media and monetise their ideas is one we are happy to support. Congratulations to all the young people that were chosen to take part and we look forward to future collaborations.”

The initiative offered mentorship, master classes and special training on content creation in an effort to support and uplift the content creators who took part. The aim of the initiative was to grow an even-handed and representative content ecosystem in South Africa,

Rising Voices

The initiative performed well over the period of six weeks:

- 9,800 videos were created
- 839m views were generated overall
- 4.9m followers gained overall
- 2.1m shares generated overall

The main areas of focus for the initiative were growing a diverse account for the content creators, making sure they were able to collaborate and effectively connect with the community, and ensuring they were able to build their personal brand effectively.

Lala Taku , executive producer for *The Estate* and a creative industry consultant, was one of the hosts of the master classes which happened during the initiative.

Even though she is a giant in the industry now, she ran into multiple challenges with being a Black woman working in the creative industry. Taku believes that initiatives like Rising Voices are essential for growth in representation and making space for content creators of colour. “We have to be intentional about the work that we want to do and opening up space,” she said. “Initiatives like this are very exciting, where we can give space to young, Black creatives.”

Grant recipients

The Rising Voices initiative officially concluded with the announcement of which 20 creators received part of a R860,000 grant.

Boniswa Sidwaba, the TikTok content operations manager for sub-Saharan Africa, said, “Through Rising Voices, our goal has always been to uplift and empower creators of colour on the platform, providing the necessary support to help them express themselves. With the right tools at their fingertips, we were truly spellbound by the incredible talent that came to light over the last six weeks.”

View the full class of the Rising Voices initiative [here](#).

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