

YouTube's Black Voices Fund initiative celebrates 2023 grantees

In a vibrant celebration held in Kenya, more than 100 Black creators from across the globe gathered to commemorate the success of the YouTube Black Voices Fund.



YouTube's latest Black Voices Fund gathering was held in Kenya. Source: Supplied.

Launched in 2020, this initiative was designed to invest in talent and amplify fresh narratives that showcase the authentic voices of the Black community. Since its inception, the programme has provided support to over 500 creators and artists, enabling them to expand their channels and reach a wider audience.

Sharing stories

“When we announced the \$100m fund to amplify Black and African voices and perspectives on our platform we wanted to create a space where Black people can share their own stories, in their own voices, with the world. The fund has, in many ways, created opportunities to amplify, celebrate and cultivate Black artistry for a global audience,” says YouTube managing director of Emerging Markets, EMEA, Alex Okosi.

“Being a part of the BVF programme Class of 2023 has literally changed my life. I moved from creating content in a room that I used to share with my sister, to getting my own space. I was also able to get better filming equipment like ring lights and tripods, I needed to increase the quality of my videos,” says Nigerian creator Osereme Egbor of Styleby Reme.

In addition to funding, creators also received one-on-one mentorship and classes on how to grow their revenue.

Growing channels

Kenyan creator Wongel Zelalem said the classes were very helpful adding, “I was given a strategic manager who was dedicated to helping me and giving me solutions to my problems. That was something that I didn't know I needed in my life”.

South African creator Thato Rampedi says “YouTube Black has taught me a whole lot of things about how to be a really good creator”.



MARKETING

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The growth of these creator channels has been tangible on the continent. YouTube data as of December 2022 shows that in South Africa, the number of YouTube channels making 100k or more in revenue (ZAR) has increased by over 30 percent year on year. In Nigeria, the percentage of YouTube channels making 100k or more in revenue (NGN) increased by over 15 percent, year on year; while in Kenya, the number of YouTube channels making 100k or more in revenue (KES) has increased by over 25 percent.

In addition, in Nigeria, over 45 channels have more than one million subscribers, an increase of more than 50 percent, year on year. In South Africa, 25 channels reached the one million subscriber mark, an increase of over 30 percent, year on year, while in Kenya, over 14 channels have more than 1 million subscribers, an increase of more than 110 percent.

Beyond the Black Voices Fund, YouTube is committed to continuing to prioritise and centre Black creators, artists and content through programs, initiatives and improvements to the platform.

“We’re committed to ensuring that Black creators from Africa and around the world find a home on YouTube and we are investing in strategic partnerships with culturally relevant organisations to ensure that we are able to reach and help even more creators and artists,” Okosi says.

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