

Creative Producer Indaba provides filmmakers with future facing skills

The fifth edition of Creative Producer Indaba, the audiovisual producers' professional development programme, brought together 15 filmmakers, who have a focus on African film and television content.



The Creative Producer Indaba brought together 15 filmmakers. Top left to right: Aswathi Naduthodi (India), David Franciscus (South Africa), Imran Djonne (Senegal), Ique Langa (Mozambique), Lova Nantenaina (La Réunion/Madagascar). Middle left to right: Linda Qibaa (Morocco/France), Mahelet Gezachew (Ethiopia/USA), Mo Harawe (Austria/Somalia), Shveta Naidoo (South Africa), Soko Negash (Canada), Stefan Eichenberger (Switzerland).

Bottom left to right: Talita Arruda (Brazil), Warre Otshepe Merafhe (Botswana), Xolani Nhlapho (South Africa), Yasmin Hassan Mohamed (Kenya/Somalia) (Image supplied)

Created and designed by Cape Town-based media house, Realness Institute, in partnership with EAVE, the Indian Ocean International Film Festival (FIFOI) and Maison du Cinéma et des Jeux Vidéo, with the financial support of Region Réunion, the programme strengthens the entrepreneurial and leadership skills of a new cohort of media leaders and builders.

The programme is also supported by the Brazilian Foundation Projeto Paradiso, Canada Media Fund, Telefilm Canada, the Swiss Foundation for professional training in cinema and audiovisual media (FOCAL), the Austrian Film Institute, the French National Centre of Cinema (CNC), and Institut français Creation Afric.

It kicked off with an online Opening Assembly (12 November) with guest speaker Ivana Kirkbride, media and tech executive and current NorthStar Media Group co-founder, who led a discussion on "Leadership".

Participants

The cohort includes:

- African/Indian Ocean producers with a project: Ique Langa (Mozambique), Lova Nantenaina (Réunion/Madagascar), Wame Merafhe (Botswana), Yasmin Hassan Mohamed (Kenya/Somalia) and Shveta Naidoo (South Africa)

- African/Indian Ocean producers interested in professional development: Xolani Nhlapho and David Franciscus (South Africa), Mahelet Gezachew (Ethiopia/USA), Iman Djionne (Senegal), Linda Qibaa (Morocco/France).
- International producers collaborating with African/Indian Ocean Producers: Mo Harawe (Austria/Somalia), Stefan Eichenberger (Switzerland), Soko Negash (Canada), Aswathi Naduthodi (India), and Talita Arruda (Brazil).

Online sessions

The current online sessions for the programme include:

- A story masterclass with story expert Tracey-Lee Rainers, award-winning entrepreneur and international story practitioner with Story Oasis (Johannesburg).
- An International sales masterclass with Julien Razafindranaly, film sales executive and head of sales Films Boutique.
- Alicia Petrusa, media and entertainment senior relationship manager at Royal Bank of Canada to discuss corporate strategy, cash flow, and private equity financing.

In-person workshop

This introductory session is followed by an in-person workshop in February next year in Johannesburg, where participants will have sessions on financing, PR and marketing, and project development.

The cohort will then move to Saint-Paul, Réunion, during the International Indian Ocean Film Festival (FIFC) in April 2026 where the workshops will focus on legal, organisational development, network management and leadership.

The programme blends seminars, workshops, and mentorship to support creative projects within a business framework.

Participants gain practical insights across project planning, financing, legal, marketing, advocacy, organisational growth, and leadership.

Future-facing skills

Mehret Mandefro, interim managing director of Realness Institute and Creative Producer Indaba group leader, comments, "Global media systems are going through an unprecedented set of disruptions and in year five of Creative Producer Indaba, we are focused on equipping producers with future-facing skills that can help them weather the storm and come out stronger."

Diana Elbaum, award-winning producer and Creative Producer Indaba group leader, says, "CPI celebrates producers as bold leaders, changemakers, and vital forces in the vibrant African and Indian Ocean creative landscape."

"By connecting producers, talents, and ideas, CPI provides the tools and experience to amplify extraordinary voices whose narratives are reshaping global majority storytelling."

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