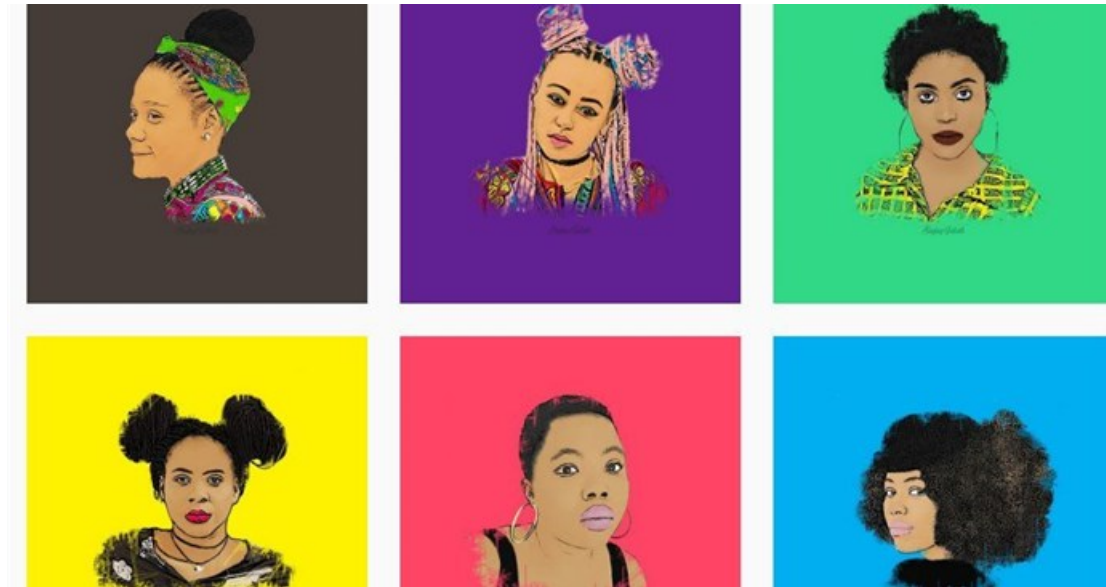


# Staying true to Africa's creative voice in the digital era

By [Georginah Machiridza](#)

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It's crucial that the content, art and creative output of Africa's content creators remain authentically African, even while we embrace the opportunities of the digital era.



Source: © Slaying Goliath [slayinggoliath](#) There are many creators telling African stories for African such as South African illustrator and artist, Slaying Goliath

We're all aware of how rapidly the media landscape is changing. Audiences have been migrating to digital and online channels for more than a decade, and even established media such as broadcast, film, and radio are using hybrid platforms that reach audiences across multiple channels.

A modern media company would likely use a combination of broadcast media, social media, written content, video clips, as well as animation and physical activations to share content and market their brand.

## Digital skills

This constantly evolving media terrain requires a diverse range of skills.

While storytelling lies at the heart of most media messaging, specific technical knowledge is required to translate compelling stories for every channel.

Writing, cinematography, video editing, TV, radio and online presenting, animation, coding and content management are just some of the specialised skills of the modern media landscape – many of which are evolving in real-time as their respective media fields develop.

Africa is at the coalface of these developments. New media provides enormous opportunities to reach more of our people, with more compelling content, and to do it more efficiently and cost-effectively.

## **African authenticity**

The challenge, though, is that we must continue to tell African stories, even while many technology innovations and Big Tech companies originate outside Africa.

Digital media evolution comes with a very real threat of cultural imperialism.

The solution to avoiding this Western cultural hegemony is twofold.

Firstly, we must empower African content creators with the skills to tell African stories.

Secondly, we must create viable, profitable markets for African content, and grow demand for that content.

Fortunately, Africa has long been a hub of creativity and innovation. We have “found our voice” in the digital economy, and there are many creators telling African stories for African, as well as global audiences.

These include Kenyan comedienne, Elsa Majimbo, Ghanaian internet personality, Wode Maya, Ghanaian visual artist, Prince Gyasi, Kenyan journalist, Brian Otieno, South African illustrator and artist, Slaying Goliath, SA comic Donovan Goliath and others.

These innovators are “Expressing Africa” through compelling content using digital and social-media platforms.

African media platforms such as DSTv and Showmax are also enabling this trend, creating platforms across the continent tailor-made to showcase African stories for audiences hungry for stories about themselves and their culture.

In 2018, M-Net and MultiChoice spent R2,5bn developing local movies and series and bringing them to screens across Africa.

By investing in original productions of authentic stories and talent across the continent, M-Net is helping to launch acting, writing and filmmaking careers, both locally and internationally.

## **Hyperlocal platforms**

In Ethiopia, MultiChoice channel Abol TV provides premium 100% Ethiopian general entertainment 24 hours a day.

In Uganda, Pearl Magic provides a similar offering, telling stories by Ugandans for Ugandans.

In Nigeria, Africa Magic provides channels in Igbo, Yoruba and Hausa.

Customised hyperlocal MultiChoice offerings are also available in Ghana, Angola, Mozambique and Kenya and 3rd party channel launching in Zimbabwe recently.

The group reaches a total of 50 African countries.

The Showmax streaming service has also emerged as a powerful platform for African content, through its movie and series

offerings.

Its Colours Of Africa series of homegrown African short films by MultiChoice Talent Factory (MTF) students celebrates African culture and the effects of modernisation on some cultural practices.

## Skills pipeline

All of these emerging platforms – whether broadcast, streaming or digital – have created enormous opportunities for African media workers and content creators.

Creating the skills that enable young creatives to grasp these opportunities is the other way Africa will find its voice in the digital era.

Helping to provide this, by building a pipeline of skilled African content professionals is the MultiChoice Talent Factory (MTF).

MTF plays a critical role in building and strengthening the TV & film industry across Africa, and was born out of a need to solve for representation, local content, and higher production quality and value.

MTF is a shared-value platform and strives to be Africa's leading training ground for content creators, by providing an enhanced training programme through partnering with local and global experts.

The initiative takes a multi-tiered approach, incorporating the MTF Portal, the MTF Academies and MTF Industry Masterclasses.



### First MultiChoice Talent Factory Scriptwriting Incubator class graduates

19 Apr 2022



Every year, the MTF academies select 74 talented African individuals to participate in a 12-month academic and practical immersion programme including both theory and hands-on experience in cinematography, editing, audio production and storytelling to name a few.

The year-long, fully sponsored programme is offered through regional MTF academies in Kenya, Nigeria, Zambia and South Africa, in partnership with local tertiary education institutions. Students and interns learn filmmaking by making films – developing their film and TV production skills alongside industry greats.

In addition, MTF Masterclasses give working film and television professionals and those who aspire to be content creators exclusive access to practical, industry expert-led skills workshops, where they interact and learn from the best in Africa and the world. The online portal has more than 40,000 registered users who have access to a growing library of masterclass content.

The MTF Masterclasses, the Academies and the MTF Portal (a profiling and networking platform) – support MultiChoice's commitment to enhancing accessibility, opportunity, and quality in local productions.

These initiatives are all part of Africa's cultural and technological resurgence, creating opportunities and building capacity, allowing Africa's creative output to stand proud on the world stage.

## ABOUT GEORGINAH MACHIRIDZA

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