

## **Finding Africa's next generation of filmmakers: Netflix & UNESCO launch groundbreaking competition in Sub-Saharan Africa**

Entries for the 'African Folktales, Reimagined' Competition open until 14<sup>th</sup> November  
Six winners will create short films that will premiere on Netflix in 190 countries

Paris, 14 October – Netflix and UNESCO have partnered to launch an innovative short film competition on 'African Folktales, Reimagined' across **Sub-Saharan Africa**. Winners of the competition will be trained and mentored by industry professionals and provided with a US\$75,000 production budget to create short films that will premiere on Netflix in 2022 as an "Anthology of African folktales".

One key aim of this competition is to discover new voices and to give emerging filmmakers in Sub-Saharan Africa visibility on a global scale. We want to find the bravest, wittiest, and most surprising retellings of some of Africa's most-loved folktales and share them with entertainment fans around the world in over 190 countries.

"It is important that the film sector acts to ensure the voices of Africa are heard, by supporting the emergence of diverse cultural expressions, putting forth new ideas and emotions, and creating opportunities for creators to contribute to global dialogue for peace, culture and development." - **Audrey Azoulay, UNESCO Director-General**

The competition, which will be administered by **Dalberg**, will open on **14 October 2021 until 14 November 2021**. Each of the 6 winners will receive a production grant of US\$75,000 (through a local production company) to develop, shoot and post-produce their films under the guidance of Netflix and industry mentors to ensure everyone involved in the production is fairly compensated. In addition, each of the 6 winners will also receive \$25,000.

"Growing up, entertainment was how I connected with people. I fell in love with the stories and characters I saw on screen and experienced how storytelling has the power to inspire, which is why I'm excited about this partnership with UNESCO and the opportunities ahead. Together we will promote local cultures and support the creative industries in telling stories that cross borders, reflect universal truths, and ultimately, bring us together." – **Ted Sarandos, Co-CEO and Chief Content Officer, Netflix**.

UNESCO and Netflix both strongly believe in the importance of promoting diverse local stories, and bringing them to the world. They recognize that many emerging filmmakers struggle with finding the right resources and visibility to enable them to fully unleash their talents and develop their creative careers. This competition aims to address these issues and enable African storytellers to take a first step towards showcasing their content to a global audience.

"This competition puts a global spotlight on the emerging, homegrown talents of Africa while honouring the storytelling tradition of the continent. By infusing new energy into folktales, these young filmmakers enable stories to transcend time, space and culture - from their communities,

through a digital platform, into the hearts of audiences around the world." - **Ernesto Ottone R., UNESCO Assistant Director-General for Culture**

This partnership will also help create sustainable employment and encourage economic growth and it will therefore contribute to the achievement of the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda, a series of targets established by the United Nations which aims to end global poverty in all its forms by the end of this decade. This film competition will also help reduce inequalities by facilitating access to global markets and by guaranteeing dignified working conditions. All of these are key goals within the 2030 Agenda.

“Africa has a rich storytelling heritage and a wealth of folktales that have been passed down for generations. When you marry these very local stories with Africa’s emerging talent, there is no limit to fresh new stories to connect people with African cultures and bring the world that much closer to each other” - **Ben Amadasun, Netflix Director of Content in Africa.**

The competition is open to emerging filmmakers across Sub-Saharan Africa on the theme of “**African Folktales, Reimagined.**” Folktales have always been an important way of passing on culture, heritage, and values to future generations, while constantly inviting people to reimagine their relevance to our contemporary societies. This theme is inspired by African Union 2063 Agenda’s Aspiration 5, which celebrates African cultural identity, common heritage, values, and ethics. This competition aims to harness this important tradition with a modern outlook while leveraging new mediums of distributing artistic and creative content, like Netflix.

For the first round, applicants will be required to submit a synopsis of their concept (no more than 500 words) as well as links to a recent CV and a portfolio/evidence of any past audiovisual work they have produced. Applications can be submitted via [www.netflix-growcreative.com/unesco](http://www.netflix-growcreative.com/unesco) from October 14th at 16:00 CET and will close on November 14th, 2021 at 13:59 PM CET.

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For more information about the application process, please visit [www.netflix-growcreative.com/unesco](http://www.netflix-growcreative.com/unesco)

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**Editors’ Notes:**

**About The Application process:**

- **How to apply:**

Candidates will need to submit a synopsis of their concept (no more than 500 words) in a Creative Statement as well as a link to a recent CV and a portfolio of any past audiovisual work they have produced on [netflix-growcreative.com/unesco](http://netflix-growcreative.com/unesco)

- **Applications open**

Applications can be made via [www.netflix-growcreative.com/unesco](http://www.netflix-growcreative.com/unesco) from October 14th. They will close on November 14th, 2021 at 11:59 PM (CET).

- **Eligibility Criteria:**

- The competition is open to individuals seeking to venture into feature film development and production. Applicants must have a minimum of 2 years and a maximum of 5 years of demonstrable professional experience in the audio-visual industry. Applicants must have **developed and produced 1 to 2 theatrical feature films, television fiction, documentaries, or 2-3 short films and/or commercials.**
- Candidates must be a citizen of a Sub-Saharan African country and currently residing in [Sub-Saharan Africa](#) to apply. Applicants must be 18-35 years old at the time of submission.

- **Shortlisted finalists:**

We'll announce our top 20 finalists in January who will then be invited to a "*How to Pitch to Netflix*" workshop.

These workshops will give candidates the chance to prepare, polish, and present their film concepts with the help of industry experts. The Netflix and UNESCO judging committee will then mentor six winners to develop a 12 to 20-minute short film.

- **TIMELINE:**

- October 2021 - Application portal opens on October 14th
- November 2021 - Applications close on November 14th
- January 2022 - Announcement of Top 20 finalists
- January 2022 - Workshop on "How to Pitch to Netflix" for shortlisted candidates
- February 2022 - Shortlisted candidates invited to pitch final entries to mentors
- February 2022 - Final selection via a Netflix and UNESCO joint judging panel
- February 2022 - Announcement of 6 winners
- Spring/Summer 2022 - Development, production & post-production of films
- September/October 2022 - Launch of 6 films on Netflix service

### **FAQs:**

- ***Why has Netflix decided to Partner with UNESCO, and why the focus on folklore?***

*Both Netflix and UNESCO strongly believe in the importance of promoting diverse local stories and bringing them to the world. We also recognise that many emerging filmmakers struggle with finding the right resources and visibility to enable them to fully unleash their talents and develop their creative careers. This competition is a step towards reducing this gap and enabling these storytellers to showcase their content to a global audience.*

- ***What does the theme "African Folktales" mean?***

*An African folktale is a timeless story circulated orally among African people and handed down from one generation to the next. Folktales have always been an important way of passing on culture and heritage to future generations. This competition aims to harness this important tradition while leveraging new mediums of distributing content, such as Netflix.*

- ***Are you looking for filmmakers from specific countries?***

The competition is open to emerging filmmakers from the Sub-Saharan Africa region. We would like this group of talents to be truly inclusive, no matter what your language, race/ethnicity, gender, or sexual orientation.

- **Is this contest open to filmmakers outside of the SSA?**

The filmmakers will need to be based in any of the countries in the Sub-Saharan Africa region. Proposals can be submitted in English, French, or Portuguese.

- **What kind of ideas (or people) are you looking for?**

This is an open call for emerging filmmakers from across Sub-Saharan Africa, many of whom are located in parts of the continent that are often overlooked. We value the wide diversity of African cultures and want to promote them globally. We encourage any emerging filmmaker from Sub-Saharan Africa with a story to tell to go for it! So if the brief (“African Folktales, Reimagined”) strikes a chord with you, get involved.

- **What level of experience are you looking for?**

This competition aims at unearthing new talent so we hope to be surprised by talent we haven’t heard of yet. For the purposes of this competition, the ‘emerging filmmakers’ we’re looking for will need to have a minimum of 2 years of demonstrable professional experience in the audio-visual industry and have developed and produced 1 to 2 theatrical feature films, television fiction, documentaries, and/or 2-3 short films.

- **How long should my submitted documents be?**

You have a maximum of 500 words to tell us the synopsis of your short film idea in your Creative Statement. Your short video should be no longer than 2 minutes and within it you should articulate your vision, including any ideas about artistic treatment. You can include your past audiovisual work in your proposal and relevant experience in your CV.

- **Who will select proposals?**

Led by Netflix, selection will be done by an evaluation committee composed of industry experts from across Sub-Saharan Africa, overseen by the designated local agency, Dalberg.

- **Can my film concept be a documentary or be other forms such as animation?**

No, the film concept cannot be a documentary nor an animation form.

- **My film concept has already been produced or distributed. Am I still eligible to apply for the emerging filmmakers’ competition in Sub-Saharan Africa?**

Films that have been produced, financed, distributed, or initiated by a major film studio or television network are **ineligible** for competition. Films that have been shown on network or cable television or distributed to theaters are also **ineligible** for competition.

- **Which languages can I use for my concept video?**

Your video can be submitted in English, French, and Portuguese as well as the following African languages: Igbo, Swahili, Wolof, Yoruba, Zulu, Hausa.

- **Can I submit more than 1 idea?**

No. Only one application will be accepted per person. Submit your best idea!

- **Will I win anything?**

Six winners will have their short films (12-20 minutes long) launched on the Netflix service in 2022, as an “Anthology of African Folktales, Reimagined.” Each of the 6 winners will receive a production grant of US\$75,000 (through a local

production company) to develop, shoot and post-produce their films which will be administered by a nominated local production agency. In addition, each of the 6 winners will receive \$25,000.

- **How will winners be selected?**

Submissions will be reviewed by a designated local agency according to criteria established by Netflix and UNESCO. Selection will be done by an evaluation committee comprised of industry experts from across Sub-Saharan Africa. Shortlisted finalists will be invited to pitch their concept to Netflix and UNESCO, who will then mentor six winners to develop their short films.

- **Will I receive a budget to produce my film?**

Each of the 6 winners will receive a production grant of US\$75,000 to develop, shoot, and post-produce their films which will be administered by a nominated local production agency. Within each film's budget, teams must ensure that filmmakers and everyone involved in the production is fairly paid.

- **Will the final film be launched on Netflix?**

Yes — the films will launch on Netflix in 2022 as part of an anthology series.

- **What happens to my submitted idea if it doesn't get selected?**

If your submission is not successful and Netflix decides not to commission or explore your submission further with you, it will be deleted by the administering agency Dalberg after the successful entrants have been chosen.

If you would rather not receive future communications from UNESCO, let us know by clicking [here](#).  
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