

For Immediate Release: Wednesday, May 21, 2025

EIGHT DOC PROJECTS FROM AFRICA SELECTED AS RECIPIENTS OF \$120,000 CAD INVESTMENT FROM HOT DOCS-BLUE ICE DOCS FUND

Toronto, ON – Hot Docs and Blue Ice Docs are thrilled to unveil the recipients of \$120,000 CAD in development and production grants, supporting eight powerful African documentary projects. The **Hot Docs-Blue Ice Docs Fund**, celebrating its fourteenth year, continues to empower more African documentary filmmakers to tell their stories and contribute to the next generation of African documentary talent. Chosen from 127 applications from 30 countries, four of the selected projects will receive development grants, three will be provided with production grants, and one will receive a post-production grant. These projects represent a diverse array of voices and stories from the African continent, each poised to leave an indelible mark in the world of non-fiction filmmaking.

“The Hot Docs-Blue Ice Docs Fund has built an impactful legacy through its support of the documentary filmmaking community in Africa,” shared **Elizabeth Radshaw**, Hot Docs’ Director of Industry Programs. “We are so honoured to recognize this incredible group of storytellers through the Hot Docs-Blue Ice Docs Fund and are grateful to nurture these projects as they strive to share important stories from across the continent.”

The Fund provides development grants of up to \$10,000 and production grants of up to \$40,000 to four to ten projects annually. Each year, up to five funded projects are invited to participate in a year-long mentorship program, which includes private filmmaker labs at Hot Docs and the Durban FilmMart/Durban International Film Festival or other festivals and markets in Africa.

Since its establishment in 2011, the Hot Docs-Blue Ice Docs Fund has supported 100+ unique projects from 30 countries, with \$1,554,000 CAD granted to date.

“This year’s Hot Docs-Blue Ice Docs Fund recipients represent a notable variety of projects that reach across the documentary genre to share stories of great significance and impact from nine African countries,” added **Neil Tabatznik**, Hot Docs-Blue Ice Docs Fund co-founder. “I am delighted to be able to play a part in their success through the dissemination of these funds, and I congratulate them all on their tremendous efforts to bring their works into the world.”

Eligible projects were considered by the Hot Docs-Blue Ice Docs Fund Committee, which included Fibby Kioria (Mucii Pictures and East African Screen Collective), Hot Docs Industry (Elizabeth Radshaw, Industry Programs Director, and María José Arauz, Industry Programs Manager), Renny Matsiko (Documentary Africa) and Sam Soko (filmmaker and Hot Docs-Blue Ice Docs Fund alumnus).

Applications for the next round of disbursements will start on October 1, 2025. For further information on the application process, eligibility requirements and deadlines, visit www.hotdocs.ca/industry/film-funds/hot-docs-blue-ice-docs-fund.

The recipients of the Hot Docs-Blue Ice Docs Fund grants are:

Development Grants:

CHILDREN OF HONEY (OLANAKWE SA BA'ALAKO)

Directors: Jigar Ganatra, Emanuel Musa Marco

Production Companies: JG Creative Ltd, Storyboard Studios

Country: Tanzania, Scotland

Three young friends from the last generation of Hadza hunter-gatherers co-create a landmark vérité film. Can their community protect 50,000 years of Traditional Ecological Knowledge in rapidly changing times? "We are Hadza. We want the world to know who we are."

THE ISLANDER (L'ILE DES INVISIBLES)

Director: Amédée Pacôme Nkoulou

Producer: Amédée Pacôme Nkoulou

Production Companies: Pas Comme les Autres Films, Girelle Production

Country: Gabon

Gabon, 2023. As presidential elections loom, unemployed Bravo, 25, survives on his canoe by transporting islanders to the heart of the capital, Libreville, while nurturing many ambitions. On August 30, 2023, the military seizes power, opening a new, tumultuous political chapter with an uncertain outcome. Forgotten by the authorities and development programs, Bravo and the island's inhabitants hope to finally see their lives change.

PURE MADNESS

Director: Inès Arsi

Producer: Sarra Ben Hassen

Production Company: Instinct Bleu

Country: Tunisia

Shaped by her own mental health journey, a filmmaker uncovers her great-uncle's 1970s disappearance in France. Found years later in a psychiatric hospital, his story reveals hidden family wounds, the cost of migration, and intergenerational psychological trauma.

VUKA

Director: Matthew Robinson
Producers: Matthew Robinson, Rehad Desai
Production Company: Trevendy Films
Country: South Africa

Amidst the challenges of township life on the outskirts of Cape Town, an inspirational choir conductor uses the language of music to guide young singers through their daily struggles. Together, they push themselves to the limit as they compete for national honours.

Production Grants:

BORN A GIRL

Director: Kady Traore
Producer: Ousmane Samassekou
Production Company: Athena Films Productions
Country: Burkina Faso

At 7 days old, I was a victim of female genital mutilation (FGM). At 21, I had partial reconstructive surgery against the will of my parents. I now wish for full medical restoration of my clitoris. In this film I travel back to my hometown seeking my family's consent as I travel towards physical and emotional healing.

DON'T LET THE SUN GO UP ON ME

Director: Asmae El Moudir
Producer: Asmae El Moudir
Production Company: Insightfilms
Country: Morocco

Don't let the sun go up on me is the story of a group of young dreamers, the children of the moon, who fight to escape the sun. No matter the cost, the sun's rays must never touch their skin, for it could mean their end.

DRY SKY

Director: Ibrahim Omer
Producers: Aya Tallah Yusuf, Ibrahim Omer
Production Company: Shoghl Cairo Pictures
Countries: Egypt, Sudan

On his way back to his hometown, Ibrahim endeavors to build what he has dreamt of all his life; however, he faces a fate intertwined with the memories of the past in the village. Alongside his friend and their donkey, he strives relentlessly to break free from this constraint.

Post-Production Grant:

WE, PEOPLE OF THE ISLANDS

Directors: Elson Santos, Lara de Sousa

Producers: Elson Santos, Lara de Sousa, Pedro Borges

Production Companies: Soul Comunicação

Countries: Cape Verde

Through a forgotten photo of a group of clandestine guerrillas in the jungles of Cuba, Elson, a young Cape Verdean filmmaker, goes in search of the silenced heroes of this daring and little-known military operation whose main objective was to fulfill Amílcar Cabral's dream to free the country from the grip of colonialism.

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Hot Docs (www.hotdocs.ca), North America's largest documentary festival, conference and market, is a not-for-profit organization dedicated to advancing and celebrating the art of documentary and to creating production opportunities for documentary filmmakers. Hot Docs presented its 32nd annual edition from April 24 to May 4, 2025, in cinemas across Toronto. Since its inception in 1993, Hot Docs has supported the Canadian and international industry with professional development programs and a multi-million-dollar production fund portfolio, including the Hot Docs Ted Rogers Fund, CrossCurrents Doc Funds, Hot Docs-Slaight Family Fund, Hot Docs-Blue Ice Docs Fund and Hot Docs Partners, and valuable professional development programs, including Doc Ignite and Hot Docs Incubator.

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