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## EIGHT AFRICAN FILM PROJECTS TO RECEIVE \$115,000 CAD INVESTMENT FROM HOT DOCS-BLUE ICE DOCS FUND

- OUTSTANDING DOCUMENTARY PROJECTS FROM EGYPT, SUDAN, BURKINA FASO, SOUTH AFRICA, NIGERIA, ALGERIA, AND SENEGAL WILL RECEIVE DEVELOPMENT GRANTS TO SUPPORT ALL LEVELS OF PRODUCTION

**Toronto, ON** – Hot Docs Canadian International Documentary Festival and Blue Ice Docs are pleased to announce the eight African film projects selected to receive \$115,000 in development and production grants. The **Hot Docs-Blue Ice Docs Fund**, now in its twelfth year, seeks to enable more African documentary filmmakers to tell their stories and contribute to the next generation of African documentary talent. Chosen from 87 applications from 22 countries, four of the selected projects will receive development grants, one will be provided with production grants, and three will get post-production grants.

“We are proud to support eight female filmmakers for this round of funding and celebrate their talent, passion and craft of storytelling,” shared **Heidi Tao Yang**, Hot Docs’ Director of Funds & Labs. “These courageous filmmakers confront the ghosts of the past, reveal the dark side of reality, and lead us into the light with their confident vision.”

"Over the past 12 years, the Hot Docs-Blue Ice Docs Fund has played an essential role as a launching pad for important African doc projects," said **Neil Tabatznik**, Hot Docs-Blue Ice Docs co-founder. "We are honoured to continue investing in this fruitful partnership and thank Hot Docs for their expertise and deep care in selecting these fresh, innovative, and uniquely African projects."

In addition to the funding of eight projects from seven countries, six of the grant recipients have been invited to participate in a year-long mentorship program, which grants direct access to industry mentors, provides networking opportunities, and 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 27 countries, with \$1,433,000 granted to date.

Eligible projects were considered by the Hot Docs-Blue Ice Docs Fund Committee, which included Shameela Seedat (Undercurrent Film & Television), Mayye Zayed (independent filmmaker), Hot Docs Industry (Julian Carrington, Distribution Manager & Funds Programmer; and Yiqian Zhang, Manager of Funds and Labs).

Applications for the next round of disbursements will start on October 4, 2023. For further information on the application process, eligibility requirements and deadlines, visit [www.hotdocs.ca/industry/film-funds/hot-docs-blue-ice-docs-fund](http://www.hotdocs.ca/industry/film-funds/hot-docs-blue-ice-docs-fund).

## Development Grants:

### **A BUTTERFLY HUG**

Director: Sally Abobasha  
Producers: Talal Afifi, Sally Abobasha  
Production Company: Sudan Film Factory  
Countries: Egypt, Sudan

Two confused teen friends attempt to find their own personality by making short films on social media, while living with a fatal genetic skin disorder and facing social stigma.

### **BORN A GIRL**

Director: Kady Traoré  
Producer: Jean-Marc Dindané  
Production Company: Athéna Films  
Country: Burkina Faso

Kady, who was circumcised 3 days after her birth, decides 21 years later, against her family's wishes, to seek a surgical repair of the after-effects left by genital mutilation. She recounts her struggle, which is also that of her sisters, the women of her village, and several regions of Burkina Faso and Africa, where this practice has left its mark.

### **MY DREAM TO FLY**

Director: Asmaa Gamal  
Producer: Asmaa Gamal  
Production Company: Rec & Roll  
Country: Egypt

Chasing his dream as a stuntman, Osama moves through his inner conflict to achieve his late brother's dream and ascends the ladder of fame from poor slums towards the outside world.

### **WILDFIRE**

Director: Zahra Moloo  
Producers: Neil Brandt, Sergio Kirby  
Production Companies: Storyscope, Loaded Pictures  
Countries: South Africa, Canada

In *Wildfire*, two activists in central Africa fight to prevent their land from being turned into national parks. Their story reveals the conflicting interests of conservation organizations, indigenous people and multinational corporations.

Production Grant:

**PLAGUED**

Director: Nicole Schafer  
Producers: Nicole Schafer, Teboho Pietersen  
Production Company: Thinking Strings Media  
Country: South Africa

Inside a public hospital in South Africa, young doctors and their patients find themselves 'plagued' by a multitude of colliding health and social 'epidemics' in the aftermath of the global Covid-19 pandemic.

Post-Production Grants:

**PÜLÖ**

Directors: Christina Ifubaraboye  
Producers: Christina Ifubaraboye, Elisa Mereghetti (Co-Producer)  
Production Companies: IMBUU, ETHNOS (Co-production company)  
Countries: Nigeria, Italy

Pülö means blood and oil in Okrika, a Delta community in Southern Nigeria. Oil is the blood of Kirike that keeps the people going. Blood is the stream of life. What happens when this stream is poisoned? The film tells the story of an environmental tragedy on Okrika Island, due to crude oil pollution and wastewater from Oil Refineries.

**YOU DON'T DIE TWO TIMES**

Director: Ager Oueslati  
Producers: Raouf Oueslati, Ager Oueslati  
Production Company: Taswir Edition Production  
Country: Algeria

Gift left Nigeria in 2017. One night she tells Blossom, her son, what led her on this perilous odyssey. Drawn into her life's journey, she finally realizes the impact of her memories on her day-to-day. But will she overcome them?

**ZION MUSIC**

Director: Rama Thiaw  
Producers: Yanis Gaye, Rama Thiaw  
Production Company: BOUL FALLE IMAGES  
Country: Senegal

*Zion Music* is a musical, political, and spiritual odyssey in the heart of the African continent. It goes back to the 1970s and travels through the political history of Africa through musicians, songs, and hidden meanings in the songs.

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[Hot Docs \(www.hotdocs.ca\)](http://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 will present its 30th annual edition from April 27 to May 7, 2023, in cinemas across Toronto, with a selection of films available online to audiences throughout Canada. Hot Docs will also mount a dynamic series of knowledge sessions, networking opportunities and market programs for documentary practitioners and industry delegates, including the renowned Hot Docs Forum, Hot Docs Deal Maker and The Doc Shop. In celebration of its 30th anniversary and a dedication to excellence in non-fiction storytelling, Hot Docs will present the Podcast Festival Showcase, featuring a slate of today's hottest podcasts live on stage; along with a dynamic line-up of industry panels and master classes featuring podcast game-changers. Year-round, Hot Docs supports the Canadian and international industry with professional development programs and a multi-million-dollar film fund portfolio, and fosters education through documentaries with its popular free program Docs For Schools. Hot Docs owns and programs the Hot Docs Ted Rogers Cinema, a century-old landmark located in Toronto's Annex neighbourhood and the world's first and largest documentary cinema, and operates Hot Docs at Home streaming platform.

Starting Tuesday, March 28, Festival ticket package holders, including Doc Soup subscribers, can redeem their ticket packages, and Hot Docs Members can purchase single tickets. Starting Tuesday, April 4, single tickets will be available to the public. Tickets and ticket packages can be purchased and/or redeemed online at [www.hotdocs.ca](http://www.hotdocs.ca) or in person at Hot Docs Ted Rogers Cinema Box Office, located at 506 Bloor Street West (hours vary daily in accordance with screenings). Single tickets are \$19 to regular Festival screenings and \$22 to Special Presentations screenings (\$17-19 members). Special events vary in price. A Festival 12-Pack is \$199 and a Festival 20-Pack is \$279. Hot Docs offers free tickets for all screenings before 5:00 p.m. to those 60+ and students with valid photo I.D., available online the day of the screening, subject to availability. Free screenings for students courtesy of CBC and CBC Gem.

Hot Docs is proud to include Scotia Wealth Management as its Presenting Platinum Partner; Rogers Group of Funds as its Founding Partner; CBC as its Signature Partner; Netflix as its Presenting Partner; and Telefilm Canada, the City of Toronto and the Government of Ontario as its Major Supporters.

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