

World Cup of public TV comes to SA

From 4 to 10 May 2008, the Sandton Convention Centre is set to be transformed into a broadcasting global village when more than 1500 professionals and practitioners from over the world will flock to Johannesburg to take part in Input (International Public Television) 2008, the world's biggest annual international screening conference.

 [Bylssa Sikiti da Silva](#) 24 Apr 2008

“The rules of broadcasting are set to be challenged and redefined at Input, the weeklong annual showcase of screenings of the most thought-provoking, innovative and controversial programming in the world,” Input 2008 national coordinator Sylvia Vollenhoven said.

‘Back to the Beginning’

Input 2008's theme is ‘Back to the Beginning’, a clear reference to the place where humankind originated and where the conference returns. So the organisers wanted to make it a truly memorable African event by inviting a huge number of African storytellers and practitioners.

It is in this spirit that close to 300 African emerging documentary filmmakers will attend a two-day workshop in Johannesburg on 3 - 4 May 2008, where they will acquire or develop skills in international production of documentaries, storytelling and pitching the ideas globally.

African directors and producers of film documentaries may also attend the workshop - a lead-up to the main conference - if they feel that their participation might help their careers or horizons in one way or another.

“In an age when technology is so advanced, we need to take time to revisit storytelling in Africa, which is the home of oral storytelling tradition,” Vollenhoven said.

Lack of support

However, despite the abundance of African stories and talent, many experts say that telling those stories in a healthy and professional manner has proven to be a mammoth task for many African film and TV practitioners due to lack of freedom of expression, credible training institutions, financial resources, infrastructures, government and communities' support and rampant corruption.

This sorry state of affairs leaves many African storytellers with no choice but to go abroad, mostly to the developed world, in search of better working conditions and human rights-friendly environment, where they believe that their potential would be fulfilled and fully appreciated.

Many observers are hoping that challenges such as these and many other problems facing the African screening industry will be debated at Input 2008.

Input is the only global event devoted to the cause of public service broadcasting, and the sponsors for the 2008 edition include the SABC, City of Johannesburg, National Film and Video Foundation (NFVF), Goethe Institute/Johannesburg, Thomson Foundation, among others.

Mini-Inputs

Several mini-Inputs were held in the past year in Mozambique, Zanzibar, Uganda, Ghana, Namibia, Kenya, Togo and Rwanda, as a curtain-raiser for Input 2008, the organisers said.

“Africa's response has been encouraging as we have received many emails saying how inspirational people found the mini-Inputs,” Vollenhoven said.

“All over Africa there are people who want to network and Input is a great networking environment because everyone is relaxed, as it is neither a market nor a festival.”

Vollenhoven also said that five African films (from Congo, Ghana, Mauritania, Cameroon and Senegal), and five from South Africa have been selected, out of hundreds of entries from around the world, to be part of the conference programme.

Producer's Hour

Level Two of the Sandton Convention Centre will be metamorphosed into an entire Input Village, where three screening rooms will be set up to run simultaneously from 9am to 6pm every day, coupled with a Producer's Hour every lunchtime and evening between 6pm and 7pm, and a Boulevard Café referencing storytelling icons.

The Producer's Hour is a platform whereby delegates will have the opportunity to meet a producer once his or her programme has been screened and discussed.

- Register and submit project ideas: organisers are urging people to register for Input 2008 and submit their project ideas for the workshop. The best ideas will then be chosen for development at the Thomson Foundation's three-month documentary summer course to be held in Cardiff, Wales (UK), from June to August this year.

The deadline for participants wishing to submit a project is Friday 25 April 2008. For more information and complete programme on the conference, visit, www.input2008.org.za. To apply directly, kindly contact Maganthrie Pillay by emailing her at, .

You can also call +27-11-482 8511/18 to speak to Karima Effendi, the responsible for media, marketing and publications for Input 2008, or email her at karima.effendi@gmail.com.

ABOUT ISSA SIKITI DA SILVA

Issa Sikiti da Silva is a winner of the 2010 SADC Media Awards (print category). He freelances for various media outlets, local and foreign, and has travelled extensively across Africa. His work has been published both in French and English. He used to contribute to [Bizcommunity.com](http://bizcommunity.com) as a senior news writer.
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