

Animation bootcamp to create wealth opportunities for young Africans

Of the 45 African animators from five countries - Kenya, Tanzania, Zimbabwe, South Africa and Egypt - that participated in Ada Animation's Bootcamp South African animator, Kearabetswe Moumakwe, won Ada Animation Bootcamper of the Year Award at their recent awards ceremony, hosted in conjunction with the Kenya Film Commission.



Some of the Ada Animation bootcamp participants and staff with founder of Ada Labs, John Kamara (back, 2nd left)

The four month programme, that commenced in September at the Adanian Lab Campus, saw 33 of the original 45 students completed the course and submitted the 30 sec public service announcement group project. Of the 33, there were 11 South African students.

The Boot Camp cohorts were trained by key industry players in animation from around the world, including: Dean Lyon (US), who has worked on films such as Lord of The Rings and Armageddon, and founder of Splinter Studios, Kevin Sharpley (US), founder of Kijik Media Studios, Brad Beckham (US), Irmak Atabek (Turkey), Dennis Mbuthia (Kenya), David Wyre (Kenya), Eric Musyoka (Kenya) and Jon Turner Founder of Kilogramme Studio.

Creating employment

As of 2020, the global animation market was valued at \$290bn, but Africa contributes only 0.75% of this figure.

Animation is an easy to acquire skill when well trained and job opportunities created for the creatives to continue harnessing and earning from their skills.

Yet animation training and mentorship is non-existent in Kenya and in most places in Africa . South Africa being the only hotspot that offers such training but at a high fee.

With a growing cohort of trainee animators from across Africa, and a team of six internationally acclaimed animators, Ada Animation's Bootcamp Training is a first for Kenya and one of the only capacity building animation programmes on the continent.

A Kenyan-based studio with a growing African footprint, Ada Animation was founded on the desire to tell African stories and the completion of the recent programme has proven how possible this dream is.

Ada Animation currently have three studios in Kenya, UK and South Africa. They are the first studio to offer affordable short animation courses in Kenya, and one of the few in Africa.

"Our aim is to build a thriving animation industry in Africa that will create employment for the youth and catalyse wealth creation opportunities.

Developing top-tier animators

"Our strategy plan being to develop top-tier animators in Kenya and across Africa by providing ambitious animators with the necessary skills, tools, mentorship and platforms to create and share African stories with Africa and the world.

"We were so motivated by the response to the programme, not just from Kenya but other countries as well," says Joy Mwangi, CEO of Ada Animation.

"Since inception, we have successfully managed to run two animation bootcamps for the participating trainees, who have all shown such tremendous growth in skill and market placement," adds Mwangi.

"The animation bootcamp sets us off on our mission to groom and grow animators through mentorship and in turn, build a dynamic animation industry for the African youth," says Mwangi.

Foundation for growth

Thanks to Ada Animation's invitation Animation SA was able to share the opportunity to their dynamic growing ecosystem of animators.

"Animation SA is honoured to have been part of the Ada Animation initiative," says Isabelle Rorke, deputy chair of Animation SA.

"We believe that initiatives such as these are laying the foundations for the growth and improvement of the African animation industry. It has also been a great bridge to linking the only South African animation industry organisation with such an impressive studio in Kenya.

"We look forward to joining forces in the future and exploring more ways in which we can create social impact.

The success of the first two bootcamps is driving Ada Animation's next steps towards launching Africa's first Animation Talent Resource portal, where the credible trainees will get market exposure to open jobs both locally and internationally and consistently be exposed to different revenue streams.

Also in the pipeline is the first ever video on demand platform that seeks to highlight, market, and bring traction to animation

content originating from Africa.

Ada Animation's animators have also been busy in the studio – and are proud to be premiering their first episode of the kids TV series – Ethan Man, as well as continuing work on the movie trailer for The Last Laiboni (scheduled for release mid-February 2022).

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