



Created in 2022, Stories x Women supports access to international opportunities for authentic stories told by women¹ creatives from emerging national film and audio-visual animation markets in Africa, Asia, and Latin America.

Stories x Women is a program run by WIA in partnership with FIAPF, The Walt Disney Company, and UNESCO.

2025 APPLICATION GUIDELINES

Background:

You are invited to apply for the Stories x Women program. The aim of the program is to increase the diversity of voices in animation content globally.

WIA and FIAPF have partnered to develop the unique program Stories x Women (further described and referred to as the “program” below) that aims to identify authentic animation stories told by women creators coming from emerging national film and audio-visual animation markets in Africa, Asia, and Latin America. The objective is to offer these creators additional access to international opportunities at the 2025 edition of the Annecy International Animation Film Festival.

Stories x Women will take the opportunity of the Annecy International Animation Film Festival, the world’s largest animation festival, to create momentum and move the industry one step closer to a world where all people share equally in the creation of and production of animation content and have access to the resources and connections to make that happen.

Applications for this opportunity close on February 7, 2025 (11:59 P.M. Central Europe Winter Time / GMT+1)

About Stories x Women

Stories x Women is a springboard program to propel women creators, in particular producers, screenwriters, and directors, coming from a selection of markets in Africa, Asia, and Latin America.

Stories x Women will select up to five (5) delegations composed of creators who are citizens of eligible countries/markets and have pitch-ready projects that are either an animated feature film or series.

¹ All women (cis and trans) and nonbinary people are encouraged to apply.

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Applications will be assessed by a selection committee of international industry stakeholders.

Program Offerings

The selected candidates will be invited to attend the upcoming Annecy International Animation Film Festival and Market, which will be held in Annecy, France, from June 8th to 15th, 2025, to pitch their project and attract financing.

The on-site programming will run from June 8th through 14th, 2025, and includes participating in the WIA World Summit on June 9th, 2025. Throughout the week, the selected candidates will have access to the robust network that Annecy offers and will be able to connect with a wide range of decision-makers.

To prepare for this unique opportunity, the selected candidates will be required to attend a series of virtual mentorship sessions prior to the festival with internationally acclaimed experts. The sessions will help candidates strengthen their pitching skills and will help build relations with key stakeholders. Sessions will take place virtually between March and June 2025.

Who can apply?

- The call is open to up to two team members, which must include at least one woman or nonbinary person who is designated as the "Lead Project Holder".
- The Lead Project Holder must be the director and/or the screenwriter and/or the producer of the project and, if applying as a team of two (2), must be able to demonstrate a shared history of co-writing and co-directing the project.
- The Lead Project Holder must be a citizen of one of the eligible countries/markets listed under the Eligible Countries/Markets below.
- Project holder(s) must have a ready-to-pitch project, whether for an animated feature, for an animated documentary film, or for an animated series project. A ready-to-pitch project is defined as a project in advanced development – i.e. with significant creative material already in place – or at pre-production stage.

Note: If a production company is already involved in the project, the application form must be completed by the production company.

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- Project holder(s) must have reached majority of age in their respective country/market of citizenship and must have reached the age of 18 years.
- Project holder(s) must possess sufficient English skills² to fully enjoy the benefits of the program, including its mentorship session and opportunities of pitches and networking in Annecy.
- Project holder(s) must be able to attend the Annecy International Animation Film Festival and Market from June 9th to 15th, 2025 and must commit to attending all virtual mentorship sessions before Annecy.
- Stories x Women strongly encourages applications from communities that have been historically less visible. In particular, we encourage applications from Indigenous people, disabled people, and those who identify as LGB+.
- This Program, its applicants, and all selected to participate are subject to all applicable laws, rules, and regulations in the applicable commensurate jurisdictions.

How to apply?

Applications shall be submitted by February 7th, 2025 (11:59 PM CEST).

Applications can be submitted at www.womeninanimation.org/stories-x-women.

Mandatory elements to provide (in English):

- The completed application form
- A max. 5-page project mini bible (including synopsis, presentation of the characters, etc.) for either an animated feature film or an animated series
- A one-page (max) letter of intent describing why the project matters for its creators and how participation in the program can benefit them. If a team of two is applying, the letter must also outline how the Lead Project Holder has significantly contributed to the artistic vision of the project.
- A detailed, press-ready bio for each Project Holder
- A copy of valid ID as proof of citizenship for each Project Holder (see FAQ – Who Can Submit)

² The organizers understand that the English linguistic requirement may limit the access to the program for some interested applicants. We hope to expand the linguistic scope of the program in future years.

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- List of workshops and events in which the project has circulated already (or may circulate by June 8th, 2025)
- List of grants which the project has received (if applicable)

Optional element to provide:

- List of previous works by the director and/or the screenwriter (including non-animation content)
- A short presentation of the production company (where applicable)

Please note that:

- Incomplete applications will not be considered
- No changes can be made between the submission of your project and the end of the selection procession
- The selection process may include an interview

Press Release and marketing material to be provided at the application stage (These materials will only be used by the program if the project is selected.)

- A set of 3 to 5 examples of visual material from the project(s)
- A high-resolution headshot of each Project Holder
- A text in English presenting the project (150 words max)
- A short logline for the project
- One high-resolution image from the project
- A rough estimate of the budget
- A rough estimate of running time for a feature or number of episodes and length for a series
- LinkedIn and any other social media profiles to share during marketing



IMPORTANT INFORMATION

By applying, you declare and guarantee that you are the holder of all relevant rights in and to the materials presented necessary for this application, or have been authorized to use them in this context. Stories x Women and its organizers cannot be responsible in any way for any claims, conflicts, or lawsuits in connection with your application to the program.

By applying, whether your project is selected or not, you undertake to keep the selection confidential until the official announcement of the selected projects by the program.

By applying, if your project is selected, you undertake to ensure that the Project Holder(s), as registered in the application form, will attend the Annecy International Animation Film Festival and will participate in all the virtual mentoring and networking sessions organized by Stories x Women prior to and during the Annecy International Animation Film Festival, as well as the WIA World Summit. Participation also includes taking all the necessary logistical and administrative steps in due time (e.g. obtaining a visa, etc.).

By applying, if your project is selected, should local authorities impose exceptional measures such as a quarantine to curb the COVID-19 pandemic in the lead-up to the Annecy International Animation Film Festival, you undertake to accept to travel at the revised date mentioned by the organizers to proceed with the quarantine ahead of the program in Annecy.

By applying, if your project is selected, you undertake to conform with all applicable laws and regulations, including those dealing with COVID-related measures, in the countries/markets of origin and destination, stop-over territory/ies, and in France. Stories x Women and its organizers cannot be responsible in any way for any claims, conflicts or lawsuits in connection with non-compliance by the Project Holder(s) with local laws.

By applying, if your project is selected, you accept that the program and its organizers reserve the right to cancel the selection of a project if conditions do not allow the Lead Project Holder to attend WIA World Summit and Annecy International Animation Film Festival, including if local authorities do not release a visa to the Lead Project Holder.

By applying, if your project is selected, you undertake to mention "*Selected by Stories x Women, a program developed by WIA and FIAPF*" on all your promotional and

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publicity materials as soon as the official announcement of the selection is made. The same mention must be included in the credits once the film or series is completed.

In the case that an emergency prevents one or both project holders from attending the WIA World Summit / Annecy International Animation Film Festival, you must inform the Coordinator of Stories x Women as soon as possible. The program reserves the right to adjust or cancel the initiative described above, in particular, if health and/or geopolitical conditions prevent the execution of the program.

Should this happen, decisions and measures taken by Stories x Women will be announced as soon as possible.

Benefits of Stories x Women

- Virtual mentorship sessions led by internationally acclaimed experts
- Networking and pitching opportunities in Annecy, including attendance at the WIA World Summit
- Connection with key players from the animation industry (including but not limited to producers, distributors including broadcasting and streaming services, festival program leaders, etc).
- Invitation to the Annecy International Animation Film Festival (expenses covered include economy-class flight ticket, seven-night accommodation, MIFA accreditation, per diem). Visa fee, if applicable, will be covered.

What is not covered: Project Holder(s) of selected projects will be asked to contract themselves for adequate insurance covering all relevant risks when traveling, including (but not limited to) disease, injury, death, etc.

Selection criteria

The Selection Committee Members, made up of international industry experts, will review eligible candidates and will pay particular attention to the following aspects of the application:

- Artistic: originality and quality of the project
- Production: potential added value for the project to participate in the program in terms of access to international networks

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Please note that the composition of the Selection Committee will not be publicly released, and the motives of decisions by the Selection Committee will not be communicated to the candidates.

Considering the remaining uncertainty related to the COVID-19 pandemic and/or visa-related challenges, the Selection Committee may pick up to six (6) substitute projects in addition to up to six (6) selected projects in the event selected Project Holders cannot attend the Festival.

Timeline

- The link to the application will be available on December 17, 2024.
- Applications are welcome until **February 7, 2025 (11:59 PM CEST)**.
- The applicants will be informed about their selection status no later than March 1 2025.
- Virtual mentorship sessions for the selected projects and preparation for the festival begins in March (dates to be announced).
- Participation in the Annecy International Animation Film Festival starting June 8th, 2025 until June 14th, 2025.

FAQ

Which projects are eligible for participation in the program?

Projects shall be animation series or full-length animated features or documentaries.

Who can apply?

Projects must be submitted by up to two-person teams made up of at least one woman or non-binary person in the position of the director and/or the screenwriter and/or the producer of the project. The person of the underrepresented gender will be considered as the Lead Project Holder. If both team members are persons of underrepresented gender (woman or nonbinary), the applicants must choose one person to be the Lead Project Holder. If applying as a team of two (2), the Leader Project Holder must be able to demonstrate a shared history of co-writing and co-directing the project.



The Lead Project Holder must be a citizen of one of the eligible countries/markets in Africa, Asia, Latin America (see the full list of eligible countries/markets below). The applicants will have to provide evidence of citizenship at the application stage. The applicant may reside in another country/market.

Does a project presented by a production company established outside the eligible countries/markets qualify?

Yes, as long as the Lead Project Holder is a citizen of one of the eligible countries/markets as listed below.

Can a project be submitted by a director and/or a screenwriter?

Yes, in specific cases to be assessed by the Selection Committee. Please note that if a production company is already involved in the project, the application form must be completed by the production company.

Is minimum financing already in place required?

No minimum financing in place is required.

Can I submit more than one project?

Each Lead Project Holder can submit up to two (2) projects. Please complete a separate application form for each project.

Is my student/school project eligible?

Yes, under certain conditions. Your project must be developed by a production company that has records and meets the criteria listed above.

Which stage of production is eligible?

Projects in advanced development (i.e. with significant creative material already in place) or at the pre-production stage are eligible.

If selected, can a different team from the Project Holder(s) registered in the application form participate in the mentorship session and/or the Annecy International Animation Film Festival?

No, the team submitting the project must be the one participating in all the activities

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organized by the program.

However, considering the remaining uncertainty around the COVID-19 pandemic:

- The teammate who is not the Lead Project Holder may be substituted for another key creative contributor.
- If the Lead Project Holder is unable to attend the Annecy Film Festival for health reasons, she may be substituted by another leading creator who is a person of an underrepresented gender actively involved in the project.

If my project is not selected, what will happen with the material I submitted?

Should your project not be selected, the organizers will ensure that all files and elements submitted by you, including those containing copyright content, whether of a material or immaterial nature, will be deleted within three months after the last day of the program (September 17th, 2025). The application form itself, as well as PR materials (as defined above), will be kept on file by the program. By submitting your application, you consent to the above-mentioned procedures by the program.

Is my project eligible if it has already been presented at other events?

Yes, your project can have participated in other events. You must mention them in your application form.

Can I submit my first project, whether as a producer, director or screenwriter?

Yes, you can submit your first project.

What is the deadline to submit?

Deadline to apply is February 7, 2025 (11:59 PM CEST)

How do I apply?

The application can be found on the [WIA website](#).

What are the materials to provide with the completed application form?

- A max. 5-page project mini bible (including synopsis, presentation of the characters, etc.) for either an animated feature film or an animated series
- A note of intent describing why the project matters for its creators and how participation in the program can benefit them. If a team of two is applying, the

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letter must also outline how the Lead Project Holder has significantly contributed to the artistic vision of the project. - one page max

- A detailed bio for each Project Holder
- A copy of valid ID as proof of citizenship for each Project Holder
- List of workshops and events in which the project has circulated already (or may circulate by June 9th, 2025)
- List of grants which the project has received (if applicable)

Optional elements to provide:

- A short presentation of the production company (if applicable).

Press Release material to be provided at the application stage *(These materials will only be used by the program if the project is selected.)*

- A set of 3 to 5 examples of visual material from the project(s)
- A high-quality photo of each Project Holder
- A text in English presenting the project (150 words max)

Please note that all the materials must be in English.

What costs are covered by the program if my project is selected?

If your project is selected, the following costs will be covered by the program:

- Economy-class round-trip flight ticket from/to your home city to Annecy (France)
- (Up to) seven-night accommodation in Annecy, France
- Daily per diem for (up to) seven-day stay in Annecy, France
- Visa regular fee (if applicable). The visa application must be made in due time. The program will not cover the extra cost in case of a late visa application.

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Full list of eligible countries/markets per region

Africa:

Algeria	Libya
Angola	Madagascar
Benin	Malawi
Botswana	Mali
Burkina Faso	Mauritania
Burundi	Mauritius
Cameroon	Morocco
Cape Verde	Mozambique
Central African Republic	Namibia
Chad	Niger
Comoros	Nigeria
Democratic Republic of Congo	Republic of the Congo
Djibouti	Rwanda
Egypt	Sao Tome and Principe
Equatorial Guinea	Senegal
Eritrea	Seychelles
Eswatini (formerly named Swaziland)	Sierra Leone
Ethiopia	Somalia
Gabon	South Africa
Gambia	South Sudan
Ghana	Sudan
Guinea	Tanzania
Guinea-Bissau	Togo
Ivory Coast	Tunisia
Kenya	Uganda
Lesotho	Zambia
Liberia	Zimbabwe

Asia-Pacific:

Afghanistan	Brunei
Armenia	Cambodia
Azerbaijan	China
Bahrain	Egypt
Bangladesh	Federated States of Micronesia
Bhutan	Fiji

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India
Indonesia
Iran
Iraq
Japan
Jordan
Kazakhstan
Kiribati
Korea
Kuwait
Kyrgyzstan
Lao People's Democratic Republic
Lebanon
Malaysia
Maldives
Marshall Islands
Mongolia
Myanmar
Nauru
Nepal
Niue
Oman

Pakistan
Palau
Papua New Guinea
Philippines
Qatar
Samoa
Saudi Arabia
Singapore
Solomon Islands
Sri Lanka
Syrian Arab Republic
Tajikistan
Thailand
Timor-Leste
Tonga
Turkey
Turkmenistan
Tuvalu
United Arab Emirates
Uzbekistan
Vanuatu
Vietnam
Yemen

Latin America (LATAM):

Argentina
Belize
Bolivia
Brazil
Chile
Colombia
Costa Rica
Cuba
Dominican Republic
Ecuador
El Salvador
Guatemala
Guyana

Haiti
Honduras
Jamaica
Mexico
Nicaragua
Panama
Paraguay
Peru
Suriname
Trinidad and Tobago
Uruguay
Venezuela

Please contact us at wia@wearewia.org for further assistance.

