

NARRATIVE REPORT

20
25

CLIMATE STORY LABS

**PROGRAMMES PRESENTED AT
RISE AFRICA URBAN FESTIVAL 2025
DURBAN FILMMART 2025**

CAPTIVATE – AGITATE – ACTIVATE

In collaboration with Climate Story Lab Southern
Africa – East Africa – Lagos, DocSociety, Tunga
Afrika and Surge Africa

Supported by UMI and UCT Centre for Film
and Media Studies

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INTRODUCTION

Climate Story Labs Africa is a collaboration between Climate Story Lab Southern Africa, East Africa, Lagos, DocSociety, Tunga Afrika and Surge Africa. We were supported by UMI and UCT Centre for Film and Media Studies to bring a powerful climate storytelling content to two events in South Africa during 2025: the RISE Africa Urban Action Festival and the Durban Filmmart. We built our climate narrative program around the concepts:

CAPTIVATE - AGITATE - ACTIVATE

The team draws together committed voices in film impact from across the continent: Emily Wanja and Cindy Makandi from Kenya, Dr Liani Maasdorp, Miki Redelinghuys and Tarha McKenzie from South Africa and Nasreen Al-Amin from Nigeria.

Together we curated diverse sessions with a focus on supporting impactful narratives to raise awareness of the climate crisis. We outline the sessions below and share some of the key outcomes



RISE AFRICA URBAN FESTIVAL

The [Rise Africa Urban Action](#) Festival brings together participants from across the world to inspire action for sustainable cities. Climate Story Labs Africa in collaboration with the documentary team of Mother City and the South-South Network conceptualised an interactive session that brought together questions of spatial and climate justice in a program titled: Fearless Cities in the Times of Climate Crisis. The program included a film screening followed by a Q and A with housing activists and a workshop session in the Rise Africa Urban Festival.

1. FILM SCREENING: MOTHER CITY

DURATION: 120 minutes (film & discussion)

Date: Wednesday, 28 May 2025

Time: 20:15

Venue: Venue: The Labia Theatre, 68 Orange St, Gardens, Cape Town

Attendance: 64 people

Mother City charts a defiant war against government and property developers in one of the world's most unequal cities. Known as the Mother City, Cape Town lies resplendent between the iconic Table Mountain and the icy Atlantic. In 2016 when the government sold prime land, earmarked for affordable housing, to a private developer. This careless disregard of desperate housing needs of Capetonians gave birth to the social justice movement, "Reclaim the City (RTC)". Through the deeply personal story of RTC activist, Nkosikhona Swartbooi, **Mother City** follows, over 6 years, the David and Goliath battle in a city disfigured by spatial apartheid.

Watch the film trailer [here](#).

The film screening was followed by a discussion with activists featured in the film, Nkosikhona Swartbooi, Bevil Lucas, Karen Hendriks and Axolile Notywala. Audience members were invited to participate in the workshop the following day, keeping the film as a narrative framework for the discussion.



RISE AFRICA URBAN FESTIVAL

2. FEARLESS CITIES IN TIMES OF CLIMATE CRISIS

As climate emergencies intensify, rural citizens increasingly migrate to urban centers, often forced to settle in precarious housing, informal spaces, or vulnerable areas. This leads to a strain on core resources that include housing, water & sanitation, food, personal security, energy and access to health services, hindering a dignified life in the city.

Political leaders have largely failed to address these complex challenges. So what is the role of the community? How might solidarity economics, with its emphasis on cooperation, mutual aid, and collective resource management, offer alternative pathways for urban resilience? What role could social movements play in mobilising citizens to take action and ownership of these issues?

This workshop invited housing and climate activists, urban planners, architects, geographers, local government representatives, legal practitioners, filmmakers, impact strategists, and writers to explore the central question:

How Do We Create Fearless Cities in Times of Climate Crisis?

Participants were divided into working groups to unpack this question from 3 different perspectives, namely:

- Shelter, Equality & Belonging
- Life Systems & Infrastructure
- Power, Participatory Governance & the Solidarity Economy

The focus was on finding pathways to community-based economic models that can help build urban systems where resources are democratically managed and relationships of reciprocity strengthen climate resilience.



RISE AFRICA URBAN FESTIVAL

OUTCOMES & REFLECTIONS

Municipalism as a Pathway to Better Governance: Movement for Care, Accountability, and the Right to Play

“We’re living in extraordinary times that demand brave and creative solutions. If we’re able to imagine a different city, we’ll have the power to transform it.”

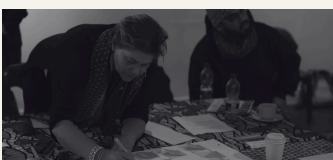
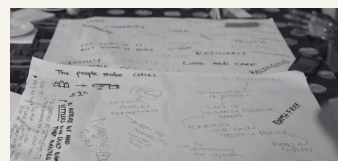
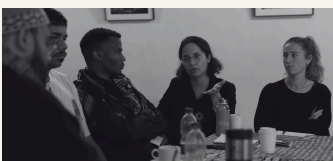
– Ada Colau, former Mayor of Barcelona

This quote from Ada Colau captures the spirit of what municipalism demands from us today: courage, imagination, and collective action. Over a decade ago, Barcelona faced deeply entrenched structural inequalities and the systematic exclusion of its citizens from decision-making.

Through the citizen municipalist platform **Barcelona En Comú** and the inaugural **Fearless Cities Summit** in 2017, Colau and her allies demonstrated that radical democracy is possible when residents, activists, community-based organisations, and progressive political parties work together to reimagine power. They showed that politics can be feminised, economies can be designed to care for people and the planet, and cities can become spaces of participation rather than exclusion.

During the session **Fearless Cities in Times of Climate Crisis**, we brought these lessons into the South African context. Our contribution centred on municipalism as a pathway to better governance.

Imagining different possibilities for our city is not a utopian exercise, it is a political necessity. By acting locally through campaigns like the *Movement for Care’s Right to Play*, we demonstrate how grassroots activism can intersect with broader struggles for climate justice, participatory democracy, and social equity. In doing so, we move closer to building cities that do not just exist for their residents, but with and by them.



RISE AFRICA URBAN FESTIVAL

The **Fearless Cities session** also provided space to explore practical solidarity actions, where municipalist ideas were tested in real struggles.

Solidarity - urban movements

Sogen Moodley shared the story of the Durban Coalition as a direct response to the catastrophic floods in Kwazulu Natal in 2022. This example of collaboration between different parts of civil society inspires hope. The question was posed: could other cities follow this model? This dialogue with the Durban Coalition continues and talks are to follow this model of engagement and action in other cities as well as paving the way for a broader coalition between urban movements.

The Fearless Cities conversation remains a critically needed platform. It could be held annually to shine a light on persistent urban inequalities while also highlighting solutions implemented in other parts of the world. It could serve as an extension of what the Durban Coalition has started, bringing together all stakeholders involved in the land and housing crisis. More broadly, the platform would allow us to hear how the government aims to address the challenges we face, explore how the private sector sees its role, understand what civil society can contribute, and discuss the role of communities in developing Fearless Cities that care for all people.

Our work, inspired by the principles of municipalist movements like Fearless Cities, illustrates how local activism can intersect with broader struggles for climate justice, environmental stewardship, and participatory democracy. By imagining different possibilities for our city, we are not only advocating for housing & environmental justice and children's rights, but also challenging systemic exclusion and inequality in the urban landscape.

Connecting food security and housing

The participation of food sovereignty activists helped to connect the struggle of housing and services to food security. These are intrinsically linked, but convening in the same discussion and linking this to municipal governance lead to specific connections between these activist groups.

Reliable access to water in the occupation

We invited **Murendeni Mafumo**, a water scientist whose work is to connect communities without access to water to clean and running water to participate in Rise Africa. Murendeni met with activists at the occupation of Ahmed Kathrada House (AKH), where the government cut the municipal water supply in 2017 (documented in Mother City). He has committed to working with AKH residents to explore ways of reconnecting water so that each household can gain access to clean, running water.

RISE AFRICA URBAN FESTIVAL

Fire readiness in the occupations

At the Cissy Gool House (CGH) occupation, we stood in solidarity with families affected by a fire tragedy that rendered many homeless after their rooms in the residence were destroyed. We used the screenings as a fund-raiser to repair the CGH roof, which was damaged in the fire. Through donations from several people, including the *Mother City Documentary Collective*, the roof has now been fixed – a powerful example of collective care in action.

Together, these reflections and actions under the **Fearless Cities in Times of Climate Crisis** session at RISE Africa highlight how municipalist politics is not abstract theory. It is about building solidarity, creating alternatives, and showing that communities, when resourced and supported, can design dignified and resilient futures.



RISE AFRICA URBAN FESTIVAL

LEAD PARTICIPANT BIOGRAPHIES



Nkosikhona Swartbooï | Human Rights Activist

Nkosikhona is a human rights activist who is passionate about collaborative, inclusive and adaptive approaches to movement building. He is an experienced socio-economic rights-based activist and a strategist. His focus is on the strategic governance of systemic change, specifically around the equal access to basic services and facilitation of the relationships between communities and the state organs responsible for the realization of these constitutional rights.



Gabriel Klaasen | Intersectional Justice Activist

Gabriel Klaasen is a youth intersectional justice activist. They serve as the elected general secretary of the Climate Justice Coalition, and the Policy and Advocacy Coordinator at Project 90 by 2030. Gabriel has experience in movement building with youth and communities across the African continent, with a focus on capacity building, advocacy, and action-orientated areas.



Sogen Moodley | Durban Coalition

Sogen Moodley is an urban planner with over 21 years' experience working in local government. He transitioned into academia publishing in the field of urban governance and planning. He is a founder member of the Durban Coalition, supporting social movements and NGOs in building more climate resilient human settlements.

Theme: Shelter & Belonging



Murendeni Mafumo | Kusini Water, Executive Director

Murendeni Mafumo is the founder and CEO of Kusini Water, a social enterprise committed to ensuring equitable access to clean drinking water and sanitation for communities in the African continent. To date, Kusini Water has given clean water to 60 communities, supplying 3 million liters of water a month. Prior to founding Kusini Water, Murendeni worked in the public sector as a water scientist, spending 10 years working for City of Cape Town and Johannesburg water. cathing indictment on the rupture of the South African dream" by The Cape Robyn.

RISE AFRICA URBAN FESTIVAL

LEAD PARTICIPANT BIOGRAPHIES

Asiphile Khanyile | UMI Waste Project Campaigner

Asiphile Khanyile works as the UMI Waste Project Campaigner for GroundWorks, a non-profit environmental justice service and developmental organization working primarily in Southern Africa in the areas of Climate & Energy Justice, Coal, Environmental Health, Global Green and Healthy Hospitals, and Waste

Nazeer Sunday | Small-scale Farmer & Philippi Horticultural Area Food and Farming Campaign Chairperson

Nazeer Sunday is an organic farmer, activist and chairman of the PHA Food & Farming Campaign. The PHA Campaign is a community-based organisation in the Philippi Horticultural Area, Cape Town that works to protect the 3000ha Philippi Horticultural Area and the Cape Flats Aquifer- the city's food and water supply. Nazeer is a regenerative farmer rooted in agroecology and food sovereignty.



Dr Suraya Scheba: Housing & safety

Dr Suraya Scheba is a lecturer and researcher in the environmental and geographical sciences department at the University of Cape Town, in South Africa. Her current research focuses on the practice of land and building occupation, in the context of a ubiquitous urban precarity that necessitates tactics of survival and refusal.

Jared Rossouw | Former Ndifuna Ukwazi Co-Director

Previously a Co-Director at Ndifuna Ukwazi, an activist organisation and law centre which was at the centre of the campaign to secure public land for affordable housing in well located areas.

Theme: Power, Participatory Governance & the Solidarity Economy?



Guilherme Montenegro | Instituto Pólis, São Paulo, Brasil

Guilherme is a communicator engaged in civil society issues related to the right to the city, climate justice, racial justice, and gender at Instituto Pólis. He has coordinated mobilization campaigns across various political participation platforms.

Axolile Notywala | Politician and City Councillor

Axolile Notywala is a South African politician and councillor in the City of Cape Town. Prior to his political career, Notywala was a community activist and organiser. He is a lifelong fellow with Atlantic Fellows for Racial Equity. He co-founded the Movement for Collective Action and Racial Equity, focusing on active citizenship amongst marginalised communities.



RISE AFRICA URBAN FESTIVAL

LEAD PARTICIPANT BIOGRAPHIES



Blessing Nyoni KaNyuswa | Glory of the last days community Organisation (GOLDCO) Community Activist

Blessing Nyoni KaNyuswa has always been passionate about community service and social justice. Blessing started her career as a community developer, helping marginalized communities in Bhambayi, Inanda, Durban. Her dedication to social justice led her to become a community activist. For over a decade, she has been at the forefront of numerous campaigns i.e. clean Bhambayi, education reform, and environmental justice.



Sydelle Willow Smith | Sunshine Cinema Co-Founder

Sydelle Willow Smith is a storyteller and impact producer. As the Co-Founder of Sunshine Cinema, she has pioneered solar-powered mobile cinema initiatives that empower youth and communities across Southern Africa through media-driven dialogue and civic engagement. An Atlantic Fellow for Racial Equity, Sydelle leads Un/Settled, a work in progress exploring settler colonial histories and racial justice in South Africa, the USA, and Australia.



Tiisetso Mashifane | Playwright and Theatre Director, Neighbourhood

Tiisetso Mashifane wa Noni is a South African playwright and theatre director with an interest in writing plays focused on social politics, history, and violence in contemporary South Africa. Her latest play, Neighbourhood has been described as “a scathing indictment on the rupture of the South African dream” by The Cape Robyn.

Buhle Boo | Head of Political Organising at Ndifuna Ukwazi

Buhle is head of political organising at Ndifuna Ukwazi. He is the former deputy chairperson of Equal Education, and is completing a BA in Education with a focus in engineering, graphics, design and isiXhosa. He is interested in building solidarity across land and housing struggles to advance urban land justice in Cape Town.



Jane Nshuti | Plant-based Food Educator & Chef

Jane Nshuti is a chef and plant-based food educator, born in Rwanda and raised across several African countries. With a deep commitment to African food traditions, she reimagines indigenous recipes to promote wellness and celebrate African heritage. As a passionate storyteller and educator, Jane connects audiences to the richness of African flavors and the cultural significance embedded in every dish.

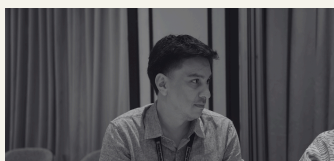
DURBAN FILMMART (DFM)

We hosted three sessions and awarded an impact award at Durban Filmmart 2025.

The sessions were:

- 1. DISTRIBUTION FOR IMPACT & INCOME**
- 2. CLIMATE CINE-BAR**
- 3. IMPACT CAFE: ONE-ON-ONES**

The award was given to the selected project during the DFM awards night and closing ceremony.



DURBAN FILMMART (DFM)

SESSION 1: DISTRIBUTION FOR IMPACT & INCOME

DURATION: 90 MINS

Date: Saturday, 19 July 2025

Time: 10:00 – 11:30

Venue: Elangeni Hotel – Suite 5

Attendance: 199 people

Filmmakers often grapple with balancing impact and income. There is a perception that one has to sacrifice income generation in order to prioritise impact objectives, but in fact the two are not mutually exclusive. In order to make a sustainable living, filmmakers need to generate an income – without a sustainable industry, no impact can be achieved. Climate Story Labs Africa launched our program at Durban FilmMart 2025 with a session that explored ways in which powerful storytelling can deliver a distribution strategy for social impact and income.

The session was structured in two parts: a fireside chat (panel discussion) and an impact ‘hackathon’.

PART 1: FIRESIDE CHAT: DISTRIBUTION FOR IMPACT AND INCOME

South African filmmaker and Climate Story Lab ZA co-director, Miki Redelinghuys hosted a discussion with impact producers and filmmakers from Africa and Latin America. Innovative case studies from the majority world were unpacked during this fast-flowing, informative discussion featuring Rodrigo Díaz Díaz from Taturana, Brazil; Pete Murimi from BBC Africa Eye, Kenya; Susan Mbogo from Docubox, Kenya; and Lucía Galarza Suárez from Mullu TV, Ecuador. The focus was on sharing strategies for doing alternative distribution and impact, while staying financially sustainable.

The venue was filled to capacity, and it was clear that the session hit a nerve with filmmakers eager to explore alternative and impactful avenues for distribution.

PART 2: IMPACT HACKATHON

The second part of this session was an interactive hackathon, where we invited the room to collaborate on the spot to design an impact strategy that considers both social change and financial viability. Plastic Atlantis by Samira Vera-Cruz from Cape Verde is a feature documentary that was selected for the DFM pitching forum. CLS worked with the director and everyone who attended the session to create a road map for impact for this project. The hackathon was led by Liani Maasdorp, Climate Story Lab ZA co-director and Cindy Makandi from Tunga Media, Kenya. Together we mapped alternative distribution platforms aimed at amplifying reach while supporting revenue generation. The audience was invited to engage actively in a hands-on strategy building on how we integrate these two elements. Post-it notes and koki’s in hands the session participants brainstormed impact ideas.

The hackathon was structured around four impact ‘pillars’, namely: audiences, distribution avenues (platforms & places), partners, and activations (activities and actions).

DURBAN FILMMART (DFM)

SESSION 2: POP UP – CLIMATE CINE-BAR

DURATION: 2 HOURS

Date: Saturday, 19th

Time: 18:00 – 20:00

Venue: SKY VENUE – MAHARANI HOTEL

Attendance: Approximately 60 people

The Climate Cine-bar is part of a series of provocations with film. Set on the 21st floor of the Maharani Hotel with sweeping views over the city and sea, the Climate Cine-bar invited guests to do what we love best: gather to watch films while enjoying refreshments.

Our guest speakers included filmmakers, activists, funders, civil society and fellow impact producers. We showcased narratives that connect with movements and inspire bold action that makes change possible. We shared stories that help us envision futures that might otherwise remain invisible.

When the right story meets the right people, magic happens. And it did!

The session was hosted by Emily Wanja from Docsociety, who set the tone with an elegant mix of playfulness and deep interrogation. Wanja invited guest speakers to discuss impact work of a selection of films that have supported climate and social justice. The audience was young, enthusiastic and engaged. A powerhouse session ensued with discussions continuing well after the moderated Q and A's closed.

With participation from

Susan Mbogo – Docubox

Cindy Makandi – Tunga Afrika

Emily Wanja – Doc Society

Dr Liani Maasdorp – UCT Centre for Film & Media Studies, Climate Story Lab ZA

Nasreen Al-Amin – Surge Africa

Miki Redelinghuys – Climate Story Lab ZA & Filmmaker

Dr Sogen Moodley – Durban Coalition

Kira Erwin – GroundWorks

Sarah Summers – STEPS

Pete Murimi – BBC Africa Eye

Lucía Galarza Suárez – Mully TV

Samira Vera-Cruz – NEWF

Films and guest speakers are outlined below:

DURBAN FILMMART (DFM)

THE FILMS AND DISCUSSION

1. THE NEW BOATS (2022) BY LANSANA MANSARAY (BARMY BOY)

The New Boats is an investigative documentary that presents an eye-opening look at the impact of international industrialized fishing in West African waters and its disastrous effect on local communities at a critical point in Sierra Leone's history.

Climate Cine-bar screened an 8 minute extract of this 49 minute documentary. Watch the film [here](#).

The New Boats is part of the STEPS Generation Africa series of films on Climate. Liani Maasdorp in conversation with Sarah Summers about the STEPS impact model and the on-going climate impact campaign with Generation Africa. Produced by STEPS, the project aims to bring together filmmakers, co-producers, film organizations, climate actors and communities across the continent to collaborate on a film collection aimed to catalyse a conversation about climate action responses in Africa.

2. MOTHER CITY, BY MIKI REDELINGHUYS & PEARLIE JOUBERT - EXTRACT - 8 MINUTES

Mother City charts a defiant war against government and property developers in one of the world's most unequal cities. Known as the Mother City, Cape Town lies resplendent between the iconic Table Mountain and the icy Atlantic. In 2016 when the government sold prime land, earmarked for affordable housing, to a private developer. This careless disregard of desperate housing needs of Capetonians gave birth to the social justice movement, "Reclaim the City (RTC)". Through the deeply personal story of RTC activist, Nkosikhona Swartbooi, Mother City follows, over 6 years, the David and Goliath battle in a city disfigured by spatial apartheid.

Climate Cine-bar screened an 8 minute extract of this 103 minute documentary. Watch the film trailer [here](#).

The discussion that followed was a conversation between *Mother City* filmmaker and impact producer, Miki Redelinghuys and civil society leaders from the Durban Coalition, Dr Sogen Moodley and Kira Erwin. The Durban Coalition led the movement to draft a People's Plan for a Right to Housing in the Time of Climate Change. This was an urgent response to the devastating floods in Kwazulu Natal in 2022, where thousands of residents are still homeless as a result of the climate disaster. The Durban Coalition screened *Mother City* as part of its first convening of all stakeholders, framing the right to housing in the context of climate change. The conversation between Miki, Sogen and Kira focussed on the interrelated struggles of social and climate justice and how film can support movement building.

DURBAN FILMMART (DFM)

THE FILMS AND DISCUSSION

3. THE BATTLE FOR LAIKIPIA, BY PETE MURIMI & DAPHNE MATZIARAKI

In Laikipia, Kenya, a battle over land and water is escalating between original pastoralist communities and large landowners. While these communities, who have practised nomadic herding for generations, fight to protect their way of life, landowners claim vast areas for conservation and ecotourism. Deep-rooted inequalities and postcolonial power structures fuel rising tensions, further exacerbated by political interests and corruption.

Climate Cine-bar screened an 8 minute extract of this 90 minute documentary. Watch the film trailer [here](#).

In conversation with Susan Mbogo from Docsociety, director Pete Murimi shared the impact strategy for The Battle for Laikipia, highlighting how the film balanced income with impact. The discussion also linked conversations about land and colonial dispossession with climate justice.

4. PRECIOUS HOME, BY SAMIRA VERA-CRUZ & CARLOS NORONHA, NEWF

Precious Home follows Precious Osariemen, a young Nigerian marine scientist as she learns to conquer her fear of water in order to scuba-dive. Like many scientists on the continent she has studied the ocean floor based only on books and videos without ever experiencing it first hand.

Duration: 9 minutes. Watch the film [here](#).

The conversation with the director and NEWF Fellow, Samira Vera-Cruz, who herself has learnt to dive and film underwater, is about access to stories of conservation and representation. There is a need to hear more stories about and by black women on the continent who are specifically under-represented when it comes to wildlife documentaries.



DURBAN FILMMART (DFM)

THE FILMS AND DISCUSSION

5. CHARIP, LIGHTNING OF THE RIVER, MULLU TV

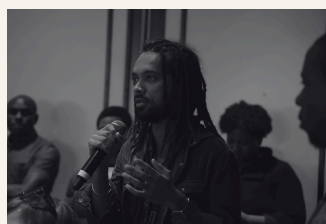
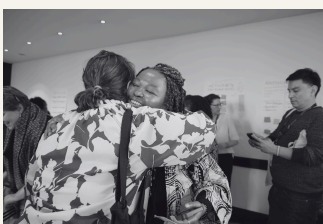
The territory of the Wampís covers an area of more than 13,000 km² in northern Peru in the Amazon. The region is a biodiversity hotspot and is home to rare species under threat by continued logging, commercial farming and other developments. This film that was made in collaboration with the Wampis, shows resistance strategies against on-going attack on indigenous land.

Guest speaker, Lucía Galarza Suárez, shared the collaborative approach to film-making and distribution by Mullu, where film training for self-documentation is part of the filming process. Emphasis is placed on representation, and how this affects impact.

Duration: 9 minutes. Film still to be released, but other Mullu Films can be viewed [here](#).

6. BURNING REBELLION – THE FILM, WELL WORN THEATRE

Climate Story Lab ZA invited the Well Worn Theatre company to participate in our first residential lab near Cape Town in 2023. The successful Climate poetic theatre performance has since been adapted to film. We concluded our evening by playing out with the hot off the edit trailer to the film. Watch it [here](#).



DURBAN FILMMART (DFM)

LEAD PARTICIPANT BIOGRAPHIES



Kira Erwin, Durban Coalition, GroundWork | South Africa

Dr Kira Erwin is a sociologist and Senior Researcher, at the Urban Futures Centre at the Durban University of Technology in Durban, South Africa. Her research and publications focus largely on race, racialisation, racism and anti-racism work within the urban context. Her projects explore how forms of belonging are shaping the social landscape of the city in housing, migration and environmental justice.



Sogen Moodley, Durban Coalition | South Africa

Dr Sogen Moodley is an urban planner with over 21 years' experience working in local government. He transitioned into academia publishing in the field of urban governance and planning. He is a founder member of the Durban Coalition, supporting social movements and NGOs in building more climate resilient human settlements.



Sarah Summers, STEPS | South Africa

Sarah is the impact producer for STEPS for the future Generation Africa Climate series.

Intention and outcomes

This session was designed to inspire creatives to produce works that respond to climate justice and better futures. It showcased creative films with potential for social impact and unpacked the magic of collaboration with movements. This was done to build stronger partnerships between climate advocacy groups, activists, filmmakers, funders and distributors.

The Climate Story Lab Africa Cine-bar opened deep conversations in a pop-up cinema setting that inspired engagement in an informal and open manner. We believe that this approach to discussion and information sharing worked very well. It created a social and narrative focussed environment in a beautiful setting that looks out over the ocean and city. In the same way cinema attracts engagement with serious issues through story, the Cine-bar connected with DFM attendees in an entertaining manner to inspire deep engagement. We also specifically invited participants from outside the film market as we seek to build connections between film and civil society. We would like to pursue more events like this one and grow the potential that germinated in the session.

DURBAN FILMMART (DFM)

SESSION 3: IMPACT CAFE: ONE-ON-ONE

DURATION : 90 MIN

Date: Monday, 21 July

Time: 12:30 - 14:00

Venue : Elangeni Hotel - Suites 1+2

Attendance: 39

The Climate Story Lab Impact One-on-One session invited filmmakers and film impact teams to participate in 15 minute round-robin consultations with leading Impact producers and facilitators. This session was open to all film projects (and not limited to climate-related content), including fiction, non-fiction, animation and VR. Projects used a jotform to reserve a slot. More than 23 projects and a total of 26 participants shared their impact ideas and questions in the Impact Café. The session was fast, fun, light and supported by coffee and snacks to create a café environment. There were 6 round tables, each representing a pillar of impact production, namely:

- 1.Goals / Impact dynamics (How change happens) & Take Action/Activities
- 2.Audiences & Location
- 3.Impact & Conventional Distribution
- 4.Partnerships & Funding
- 5.Publicity & Media Strategy

The session was hosted by Climate Story Labs Africa programme manager, Tarha McKenzie, who explained the process, introduced the session impact advisors and prompted participants to move to a new table (and topic) every 15 minutes.

Impact advisors for this session included a diverse body of impact practitioners from Africa and Latin America:

- 1.Emily Wanja - Doc Society
- 2.Miki Redelinghuys - Climate Story Lab ZA & Filmmaker
- 3.Dr Liani Maasdorp - UCT Centre for Film and Media Studies & Climate Story Lab ZA
- 4.Nasreen Al - Amin - Surge Africa
- 5.Cindy Makandi - Tunga Afrika
- 6.Marcela Lizcano - NordoSur_
- 7.Rodrigo Díaz Díaz - Taturana
- 8.Sydelle Willow Smith - Sunshine Cinema
- 9.ThiHangwi Ramutsindela - NEWF
- 10.Susan Mbogo - Docubox
- 11.Tzutsumatzin Soto - Documental Ambulante A.C.
- 12.Lucía Galarza Suárez - Mully TV

DURBAN FILMMART (DFM)

CLIMATE STORYTELLING IMPACT AWARD

Climate Story Lab offered a \$10,000 USD award for a film project pitched at the DFM FORUM that uses creative narrative to address climate issues. We sought out stories that illuminate the interconnectedness of all life and demonstrate how climate action can create a new era of abundance through inclusive, equitable, and resilient systems.

The winning project, ***Plastic Atlantis***, was chosen because it resonates on a deeply emotional level, reflecting our collective love for our communities, environments, and future generations. The award was aimed at supporting a film that is aligned with a strong impact campaign.

Samira Vera-Cuz - Director, *Plastic Atlantis* | Cape Verde

Samira Vera-Cruz is a Cape Verdean film director and producer based in Cabo Verde. Her film in development, *Plastic Atlantis* explores the parallel narratives of past and present. Ocean currents and geo-politics have brought both plastic pollution and the slave trade to the shores of Cape Verde.

The film questions the complexities of Cape Verdean and Creole identity, asking fundamental questions: Who are we? Where do we come from? Where are we headed? As they delve deeper into the archipelago's past and present, they confront a chilling possibility: Are we, as a society, becoming plastic, as our oceans fill with the very material that now threatens our existence?



KEY TAKE-AWAYS

The series of Climate Storylabs Africa DFM offerings built on the sessions we offered at DFM 2024. We noticed a marked rise in attendance and audience engagement from 2024 to 2025. We believe that the lessons we learned in 2024 allowed us to offer content that resonates with DFM attendees; and that the inputs came at a time when filmmakers from the African content are hungry to learn more about how they can tell critical climate stories within a sustainable production model that sees them taking the power in how their films are distributed and who the income goes to.

African filmmakers, and filmmakers from the Majority World more broadly, have had to pioneer innovative strategies for reaching audiences with and making an income from their films for years. The CSLA sessions created spaces where experienced filmmakers and distributors could share their strategies with emerging filmmakers, and with established filmmakers who are new to the world of impact distribution.

We made an effort to present climate storytelling as powerful, moving, entertaining and fun across all our sessions. Based on responses during and after sessions this approach appealed to attendees and inspired engagement with climate storytelling. We believe that our work is contributing positively to building a pan-African climate storytelling movement that is connected to similar movements across the Majority World.

“Scientists are not dependent on the ideas of a single man, but on the combined wisdom of thousands of men, all thinking of the same problem.”

Ernest Rutherford

We believe that Rise Africa Urban Festival and Durban Film Mart were good partners for Climate Story Lab Africa. We managed to reach diverse audiences and collaborators, growing the impact of our work, while supporting activism through creative narrative. Rise Africa was a new relationship that we hope to build on in the future. This is the 4th year that CSL maintains a presence at DFM, the leading film market on the African continent. This year we expressly included non-film participants in our program, to reach civil society and forge stronger collaborations between creative storytelling and activism. This worked very well and we hope to expand on this in the future as we grow our presence at DFM.

CLIMATE STORY LABS AFRICA

TEAM BIOGRAPHIES



Emily Wanja - Doc Society | Kenya

Emily Wanja is an award-winning impact producer driving climate justice through storytelling. As Director of African Programs at Doc Society, she leads Climate Story Labs—global ecosystem gatherings uniting stakeholders to identify transformative climate narratives. She has overseen 14+ labs across five continents, and is on UNFCCC's ECCA steering committee. She serves on advisory boards of multiple climate organizations, weaving partnerships that harness documentary storytelling for systemic change.

Cindy Makandi - Tunga Afrika
Kenya



Cindy Makandi - Tunga Afrika | Kenya

Tunga Media Afrika, a platform that brings African films into classrooms to enrich learning and drive engagement. With over a decade of experience in film distribution and impact producing, she works at the intersection of storytelling and education. Makandi champions African cinema as a catalyst for learning and social change.



Dr Liani Maasdorp - UCT Centre for Film and Media Studies, CSLZA South Africa

Dr Liani Maasdorp is a senior lecturer in the Centre for Film & Media Studies at the University of Cape Town. She convenes the MA: Documentary Arts and the Impact Facilitator online short course. She is one of the co-directors of Climate Story Lab ZA and a member of the Global Impact Producers' Alliance (GIPA).



Nasreen Al-Amin - Surge Africa and Climate Story Lab | Lagos, Nigeria

Nasreen is an environmental sustainability practitioner with years of experience in climate development, policy, and communications sectors. She works with local and international institutions to develop tailored programs and interventions that address Africa's development needs.



Miki Redelinghuys - Climate Story Labs Africa | South Africa

Miki is a documentary filmmaker who believes story has the power for positive change. She is a co-founder of Plexus Films, co-director of the Climate Story Lab SA, consults on impact campaigns and serves as mentor on the DFM Access programme.



Tarha McKenzie - Climate Story Labs Africa, Encounters South African International Documentary Festival | South Africa

Tarha McKenzie, an independent contractor in the film industry since 2011, focuses on Programme and Distribution Management. She currently manages Electric South's AR/VR labs and Climate Story Lab Southern Africa. She's also Festival Manager at Encounters and Distribution Manager for "Mother City." Her work includes strategy, innovation, and building pipelines for African content.

FULL LIST OF CLIMATE STORY LAB SESSION GUESTS



Rodrigo Díaz Díaz – Taturana | Brazil

Rodrigo Díaz Díaz is Director of Community Distribution for Taturana, Brazil. He works with community-based film distribution, impact campaigns, and training programs to foster dialogue and strengthen the impact and audiovisual field in the Global South. He shared their impact distribution model which supports fund-raising and building partnerships for impact screenings across Brazil.



Pete Murimi – BBC Africa Eye | Kenya

Peter Murimi is a multiple award-winning documentary director/producer focusing on hard-hitting social issues. Murimi has led numerous investigations for BBC Africa Eye and is the director of the award-winning documentaries, Battle for Laikipia and I am Samuel. He shared his impact and distribution strategies for these films, where the latter was banned in Kenya and the former screened to sold out houses in cinemas for more than 3 weeks.



Susan Mbogo – Docubox | Kenya

Susan is the Programs and Partnerships Director at the East African Documentary Film Fund- Docubox, which has created a significant impact in the film industry in the East African region through the support of over 150 films through grants & capacity-building initiatives. Susan's expertise extends to various facets of film production. In this session Susan shared the strategy for their series that focuses



Lucía Galarza Suárez – Mullu TV | Ecuador

Lucía Galarza Suárez is a journalist and researcher specializing in gender, environmental issues, and Indigenous rights. She co-founded Mullu TV, directing documentaries and coordinating news content. She shared the participatory approach to film-making and impact used by Mullu TV, allowing indigenous community to map the film narrative and impact strategy.



Marcela Lizcano, Nodo Sur | Colombia

Marcela Lizcano is a Colombian filmmaker and impact strategist. Founder of Viceversa Cine, she works on auteur films and co-productions. Her debut Aislados screened at 30+ festivals. She produced Suspensión (IDFA) and A Loss of Something Ever Felt (HOT DOCS). She also leads NODO SUR, an initiative focused on strengthening the social impact of films in Colombia and across Latin America.



Kira Erwin, Durban Coalition, GroundWork | South Africa

Dr Kira Erwin is a sociologist and Senior Researcher, at the Urban Futures Centre at the Durban University of Technology in Durban, South Africa. Her research and publications focus largely on race, racialisation, racism and anti-racism work within the urban context. Her projects explore how forms of belonging are shaping the social landscape of the city in housing, migration and environmental justice.

FULL LIST OF CLIMATE STORY LAB SESSION GUESTS



Sogen Moodley, Durban Coalition | South Africa

Dr Sogen Moodley is an urban planner with over 21 years' experience working in local government. He transitioned into academia publishing in the field of urban governance and planning. He is a founder member of the Durban Coalition, supporting social movements and NGOs in building more climate resilient human settlements.



Sarah Summers, STEPS | South Africa

Sarah is the impact producer for STEPS for the future Generation Africa Climate series.



Sydelle Willow Smith, Sunshine Cinema | South Africa

Sydelle Willow Smith is a filmmaker, photographer, and co-founder of Sunshine Cinema. Her work explores themes of memory, identity, and social justice. She is passionate about using storytelling and solar-powered cinema to spark dialogue and inspire community-driven change across Africa.



Thihangwi Ramutsindela, NEWF | South Africa

Thihangwi Ramutsindela is a storyteller, African wildlife film advocate, a recent UCT MA graduate, head tutor for the 2025 Film in Africa course and the Program coordinator for the UCT Impact Facilitator course. She volunteers for the Encounters South African International Documentary Festival, the founder of Nga Maanda Awe Film Festival and a story labs coordinator for NEWF.



Tzutzumatzin Soto, Documental Ambulante A.C. | Mexico

Mexican curator and activist in community-based film exhibition and access to audiovisual memory. She is part of the programming team at Ambulante, where she develops screening programs and training for grassroots exhibitors, drawing from her archival experience and focus on circulation models rooted in collective care.

DFMI EVENT GLOSSARY

THU 17 JULY

08:30 – 18:00 SAST | Arrivals, airport transfer to Blue Waters Hotel (*please check your [flight itineraries](#)*)
tbcc SAST | DIFF Opening Night (invite only)

FRI 18 JULY

07:00 – 08:00 SAST | Yoga | On the grass area directly opposite the Elangeni Hotel, in front of the beach
09:00 – 13:00 SAST | Pitch and finance Forum – Documentary | Elangeni Hotel – Suites 1+2
14:30 – 15:15 SAST | Palestine Film Institute Showcase | Elangeni Hotel – Suites 1+2
14:45 – 15:45 SAST | Collaborating with the Film Industry in Senegal | Elangeni Hotel – Suite 5
17:00 – 17:45 SAST | Talking Cents: A New Black Film Ecosystem | Elangeni Hotel – Suite 3+4
19:30 – late SAST | DFM Opening (invite only) | Nelson Mandela Cruise Terminal

SAT 19 JULY

07:00 – 08:00 SAST | Yoga | On the grass area directly opposite the Elangeni Hotel, in front of the beach
09:00 – 13:30 SAST | Pitch and Finance Forum – Fiction | Elangeni Hotel – Suites 1+2
10:00 – 11:30 SAST | CSL Distribution for Impact & Income | Elangeni Hotel – Suite 5
11:45 – 12:30 SAST | Durban Does Docs: Ethical Collaborations in Documentary Film Practice | Elangeni – Suite 3+4
14:00 – 17:30 SAST | Pitch and Finance Forum – Animation | Elangeni Hotel – Suits 1+2
14:00 – 14:30 SAST | Wanja & CSL team meeting with Kivu project team in Panini, 2nd floor, Maharani Hotel
14:30 – 15:00 SAST | Wanja & CSL team meeting with Akal project team in Panini, 2nd floor, Maharani Hotel
15:00 – 15:30 SAST | Wanja & CSL team meeting with Plastic Atlantis project team in Panini, 2nd floor, Maharani Hotel
15:30 – 16:00 SAST | Wanja meeting with The Salt of the South project team in Panini, 2nd floor, Maharani Hotel
15:45 – 16:30 SAST | Bridges not Borders | Elangeni Hotel – Suite 5
16:45 – 17:30 SAST | Bridges Take Many Hands and Bricks to Build | Elangeni Hotel – Suites 3+4
18:00 – 20:00 SAST | CSL Pop Up – Climate Cine-Bar | Elangeni Hotel – Swimming Pool Deck

SUN 20 JULY

07:00 – 08:00 SAST | Yoga | On the grass area directly opposite the Elangeni Hotel, in front of the beach
09:00 – 09:45 SAST | Exhibitors and Distributors: Global South Content | Elangeni Hotel – Suits 3+4
09:00 – 09:45 SAST | African Editor Orgs Talking Together, Towards working Together | Elangeni Hotel – Suite 1+2
09:30 – 12:30 SAST | Story Junction | Elangeni Hotel – Suite 5
10:00 – 11:30 SAST | In Conversation with Roger Ross Williams | Elangeni Hotel – Suite 3+4
10:00 – 10:30 SAST | Wanja & CSL team meeting with Children of Honey project team in Panini, 2nd floor, Maharani
11:45 – 12:30 SAST | Durban Does Docs: Impact-Driven Distr. for African Docs | Elangeni Hotel – Suits 1 + 2
12:30 – 13:30 SAST | CSL internal lunch meeting
13:30 – 14:30 SAST | Latin American Visions | Elangeni Hotel – Suites 1+2
14:45 – 15:30 SAST | Accessing the Next Narrative Africa Fund | Elangeni Hotel – Suites 3+4
14:45 – 15:30 SAST | Power of Programming: Programming for Global Connections | Elangeni Hotel – Suites 1+2
15:45 – 16:30 SAST | Durban Does Docs: Your Wellbeing as a Documentary Filmmaker | Elangeni Hotel – Suites 3+4
18:00 – 20:00 SAST | Cinema Solidarity Pop Up Outdoor Screening/s | Elangeni Hotel – Swimming Pool Deck

MON 21 JULY

07:00 – 08:00 SAST | Yoga | On the grass area directly opposite the Elangeni Hotel, in front of the beach
09:00 – 09:45 SAST | Meet the Festivals | Elangeni Hotel – Suits 1 + 2
12:30 – 14:00 SAST | Impact Cafe: One-on-One | Elangeni Hotel – Suite 1+2
tbcc SAST | DFM Awards Ceremony

TUE 22 JULY

AM – PM SAST | Departures, airport transfer from Blue Waters Hotel to King Shaka International Airport (*please check your [flight itineraries](#)*)

Details about the Durban FilmMart (DFM) full programme can be found on their website [here](#).
Details about Durban International Film Festival's (DIFF) full programme can be found on their website [here](#).

DFMI CLIMATE STORY LAB EVENTS

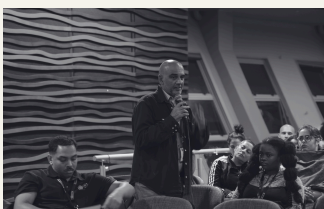
ARRIVAL DAY

TITLE: DIFF Opening Night (Invite only)

VENUE: SUNCOAST CINE CENTRE TBC

DATE: 18 JULY 2024 (THURSDAY)

TIME: 18:00 SAST



DFMI CLIMATE STORY LAB EVENTS

DAY 2: SESSION ONE

TITLE: DISTRIBUTION FOR IMPACT & INCOME

DURATION: 90 MINS

Date: Saturday, 19 July 2025

Time: 10:00 - 11:30

Venue: Elangeni Hotel - Suite 5

[Run of show here](#)

Description:

This session unlocks the intersection - where powerful storytelling delivers a distribution strategy for social impact and income. Taking the format of an interactive hackathon, we will dive into a compelling film impact case study, then collaborate on the spot, to design an impact strategy that considers both social change and financial viability. Together, we'll map alternative distribution platforms that amplify your film's reach while supporting revenue generation. Come prepared to engage actively in a hands-on strategy building on how we integrate these two elements.

With participation from

1. [Dr Liani Maasdorp](#) - UCT Centre for Film and Media Studies, CSLZA
2. [Emily Wanja](#) - Doc Society
3. [Cindy Makandi](#) - Tunga Afrika
4. [Nasreen Al-Amin](#) - Surge Africa
5. [Rodrigo Díaz Díaz](#) - Taturana
6. [Pete Murimi](#) - BBC Africa Eye
7. [Susan Mbogo](#) - Docubox
8. Samira Vera-Cuz - NEWF

Moderator:

[Miki Redelinguys](#) - Climate Story Lab ZA & Filmmaker

DFMI CLIMATE STORY LAB EVENTS

DAY 2: SESSION TWO

TITLE: POP UP – CLIMATE CINE-BAR

DURATION: 2 HOURS

Date: Saturday, 19th

Time: 18:00 – 20:00

Venue: Elangeni Hotel – SWIMMING POOL DECK

[Run of show here](#)

Description: The Climate Cine-bar is part of a series of provocations with film. We invite you to do what we love best: gather to watch short films over a drink. Hosted at DFM on the Elangeni pool rooftop, Climate Cine-bar, will bring together filmmakers, activists, funders and dreamers to discover and discuss stories that need telling. We showcase narratives that connect with movements and inspire bold action that makes change irresistible, and stories that help us envision futures that might otherwise remain invisible. When the right story meets the right people, magic happens.

With participation from

[Susan Mbogo](#) – Docubox

[Cindy Makandi](#) – Tunga Afrika

[Emily Wanja](#) – Doc Society

[Dr Liani Maasdorp](#) – UCT Centre for Film and Media Studies & Climate Story Lab ZA

[Nasreen Al-Amin](#) – Surge Africa

[Miki Redelinghuys](#) – Climate Story Lab ZA & Filmmaker

Dr Sogen Moodley – Durban Coalition

[Kira Erwin](#) – GroundWorks

[Sarah Summers](#) – STEPS

[Julian Etienne](#) – Doc Society: Climate Story Fund

[Pete Murimi](#) – BBC Africa Eye

[Lucía Galarza Suárez](#) – Mully TV

Samira Vera-Cruz – NEWF

[Thiangwi Ramutsindela](#) – NEWF

The films:

1. *The New Boats* by Lansana Mansaray (Barmmy Boy) – Extract – 8 minutes
2. *Mother City*, by Miki Redelinghuys & Pearlie Joubert – Extract – 8 minutes
3. *The Battle for Laikipia*, by Pete Murimi & Daphne Matziaraki – Extract – 8 minutes
4. *Precious Home*, by Samira Vera-Cruz & Carlos Noronha (NEWF) – 9 minutes
5. *Charip* (MULLU) – 9 minutes

DFMI CLIMATE STORYTELLING EVENTS

DAY 4: SESSION THREE

TITLE: IMPACT CAFE: ONE-ON-ONE

DURATION : 90 MIN

Date: Monday, 21 July

Time: 12:30 – 14:00

Venue : Elangeni Hotel – Suites 1+2

[Run of show here](#)

Description:

Do you want to run an impact campaign but don't know where to start, how to build partnerships, or where to seek funding? Or perhaps you're considering alternative distribution strategies for your film. The Climate Story Lab Impact One-on-One session invites filmmakers and Film impact teams to book 15 minute one-on-one consultations with leading Impact producers and facilitators. This session is open to all film projects (and not limited to climate-related content), including fiction, non-fiction, animation and VR. Projects will need to book a slot by completing [this form](#) by 15 July.

Hosted by:

1. [Emily Wanja](#) – Doc Society
2. [Miki Redelinghuys](#) – Climate Story Lab ZA & Filmmaker
3. [Dr Liani Maasdorp](#) – UCT Centre for Film and Media Studies & Climate Story Lab ZA
4. [Nasreen Al – Amin](#) – Surge Africa
5. [Cindy Makandi](#) – Tunga Afrika
6. [Marcela Lizcano](#) – NordoSur
7. [Rodrigo Díaz Díaz](#) – Taturana
8. [Sydelle Willow Smith](#) – Sunshine Cinema
9. [Thihangwi Ramutsindela](#) – NEWF
10. [Julian Etienne](#) – Doc Society: Climate Story Fund
11. [Susan Mbogo](#) – Docubox
12. [Tzutzumatzin Soto](#) – Documental Ambulante A.C.
13. [Lucía Galarza Suárez](#) – Mulu TV

Moderator:

[Tarha McKenzie](#) – CSLZA Programme Manager

DFMI CLIMATE STORYTELLING EVENTS

DAY 4: SESSION FOUR

TITLE: CLIMATE STORYTELLING - IMPACT AWARD

DURATION: TBC - AT AWARD CEREMONY

DATE: MONDAY, 21 JULY 2025

DESCRIPTION:

Climate Story Lab is offering a \$10,000 USD award for a film project pitched at the DFM FORUM that uses creative narrative to address climate issues. We're seeking stories that illuminate the interconnectedness of all life and demonstrate how climate action can create a new era of abundance through inclusive, equitable, and resilient systems. The winning narrative should resonate on a deeply emotional level, reflecting our collective love for our communities, environments, and future generations. The award is aimed at supporting a film that is aligned with a strong impact campaign.



FILMS AT DFM 2025

Mother City

Miki Redelinghuys & Pearlie Joubert | South Africa | 2024 | 103 min | English | 13 L P V

Mother City charts a defiant war against government and property developers in one of the world's most unequal cities. Known as the Mother City, Cape Town lies resplendent between the iconic Table Mountain and the icy Atlantic ocean. In 2016 government sells prime land, earmarked for affordable housing, to a private developer. This careless disregard of the desperate housing needs of Capetonians gave birth to a social justice movement, "Reclaim the City". Through the deeply personal story of activist, Nkosikhona Swartbooi, *Mother City* follows, over 6 years, the David and Goliath battle in a city still disfigured by spatial apartheid. Beautifully observed, the film is a riveting look at the politics of urbanism from a deeply human perspective. In partnership with Durban FilmMart.

Precious Home

Samira Vera-Cruz & Carlos Noronha | Cape Verde | 2024 | 9 min.

Precious Home is a poetic short documentary inspired by the courage and vision of Precious Osariemen, a young Nigerian marine scientist.

Charip, Lighting of the River

film information

Charip, Lightning of the River, tells the story of the Indigenous Wampís people's resistance to gold mining in their ancestral territory. The film was created in the context of growing pressures from the global race for critical minerals tied to the energy transition and rising market prices for gold.

The New Boats

Film information

Tombo village has relied on fishing for centuries but now their livelihood is threatened by the arrival of Asian trawlers who over-fish on their shores. Sullay, the son of a master fisherman tries to carry the family tradition and resist the pull to leave the village and look for work as fish decline. Community organizer Woodie reunites wives with their husbands who have left.

Screening Details

Saturday 19 July 18:00 Elangeni Hotel - Rooftop

RSVP not required



**CLIMATE
STORY**  **LABS**

<https://climatestorylabza.org>

