

## Celebrate Africa's voices at Africa Podfest

The 2021 #AfricaPodcastDay by Africa Podfest aims to celebrate and appreciate the talent within the continent's podcasting industry. Directed by Josephine Karianjahi and Melissa Mbugua, Africa Podfest was created as a space for the region's podcasting pioneers to gather, share knowledge and connect with African and international partners.



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From listeners, to podcasters and the greater audio community, #AfricaPodcastDay was started in recognition of the growth of podcasting on the continent, which is historically a strong audio continent, with radio being the most widely-consumed media.

#AfricaPodcastDay will be held on Friday, 12 February 2021. The day's proceedings will commence with community events at 6am WAT/ 7am CAT/ 8am EAT. This will be followed by the official opening of Africa Podfest which will commemorate the day through a four-hour virtual gathering which starts at 10am WAT/ 11 am CAT/ 12pm EAT. This year's festival theme is aptly titled, We are proud to be here!

"Our theme, We are proud to be here!, is a celebration of the strong start that podcasting has had across Africa. From hard hitting investigative journalism, to Afro-realism, comedy, horror, self-improvement and more," said Festival Co-Director, Josephine Karianjahi. "African podcasters are telling the world they are exactly who they sound like - rich storytellers, constantly improving their craft and exploring diverse themes, styles and techniques of podcasting."

## **Amplifying the African voice**

Josephine also highlights the importance of creating a specific podcast festival for Africans. “Africans have not had independent spaces to amplify their voices for a very long time. A podcast festival for us by us acknowledges this reality, and allows us to celebrate ourselves, challenge our technical skills and connect with one another in a truly African way.”

The Podfest’s half-day virtual celebration aims to spark connections and acknowledge people’s contributions to both the continental and international podcasting arena.

Furthermore, the festival wants to continue to plant the idea of striving to be fresh in a cluttered media industry, simplifying the educational aspects of podcasting and map out the ecosystem and opportunities within the African podcasting landscape.

Africa Podfest has partnered with a few organisations to make the festival come to life such as Baraza Media Lab, SemaBOX, Hindenburg Systems and in\_Motion Digital Grant (British Council & Prince Claus Fund).

Maurice Otieno, executive director at Baraza Media Lab, expresses his excitement about the partnership with the festival. “Baraza Media Lab is really excited to be part of the Africa Podfest partners, this event is completely aligned with the core of our existence which is to support and highlight good storytelling work out there. We believe podcasting is an emerging medium that is used to bring out some nuanced public interest issues that mainstream media does not have the capacity to highlight,” Maurice said.

## **The power of audio**

Fellow festival partner and CEO of Hindenburg Systems, Chris Mottes, adds how the power of audio shaped his world as a young African. “Growing up with a transistor radio under my pillow in eSwatini and Azania in the 70’s and 80’s, I have always known the incredible power of audio to share emotions, dreams, facts and facilitate revolutions. Many broadcast mediums have insurmountable barriers of entry for everyday people. But radio and especially podcasting make it incredibly easy to share stories and gather communities without access to facilities controlled by states and entrenched elites. Together with Africa Podfest we are so happy to celebrate, support and increase access to the mic for people all over Africa, no matter where they come from,” Chris said.

Attendees can expect sessions that will include roundtable discussions, presentations and workshops. There will also be expo booths and networking opportunities. A variety of hosts from various countries around the world will be featured to share their insights and knowledge together with speakers who are pushing boundaries on the airwaves.

Co-director of Africa Podfest, Melissa Mbugua explains that the festival is ultimately a springboard to the continuous development of the African podcasting environment. “This is the first gathering bringing Africans in podcasting together from across the continent and around the world. Here, these pioneers will forge new connections with the best in the game globally and level up their understanding of opportunities in African podcasting,” Melissa said.

#AfricaPodcastDay is observed every year on 12 February, which falls on the day before World Radio Day.

Tickets are free and can be booked directly on <https://hopin.com/events/africa-podfest>. Visit [www.africapodcastfestival.com](http://www.africapodcastfestival.com) for the festival programme.

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