

Balkan Young Talents Concludes First Session at 17th Beldocs IDFF

The inaugural session of the Balkan Young Talents initiative has successfully concluded at the 17th edition of the Beldocs International Documentary Film Festival (Beldocs IDFF). This innovative program, a joint effort between Beldocs IDFF and Al Jazeera Balkans Documentary Film Festival (AJB DOC), aims to support and nurture emerging documentary filmmakers from the Western Balkans.

The talented participants of this first session included Abdulah Hodzic (21, Bosnia and Herzegovina), Afrodita Ramos (26, North Macedonia), Alen Umer (29, North Macedonia), Diona Kusari (26, Kosovo*), Ivana Marinkovic (24, Serbia), Mateja Raickovic (25, Montenegro), Mirko Savkovic (31, Croatia), and Vukasin Cvetkovic (22, Serbia).

Balkan Young Talents provides a unique opportunity for young filmmakers to attend two intensive three-day workshops. The first workshop was held during the Beldocs Industry Days in Belgrade, Serbia, with a second workshop scheduled for Sarajevo during the Al Jazeera Documentary Industry Days at AJB DOC.

The program's three-day session in Belgrade was designed to foster creativity, facilitate the exchange of knowledge, and encourage networking among participants. Through a combination of lectures, panels, and one-on-one mentoring, the young filmmakers were equipped with both theoretical and practical techniques necessary to create a 10-minute documentary.

Throughout the summer, participants will work on their short documentary films under the guidance of experienced mentors. The best 3-5 projects will be presented to an international panel of documentary film professionals during the AJB DOC festival in September.

This initiative is supported by the Central European Initiative and Creative Europe Media, underscoring our commitment to fostering the growth of cultural industries in the Western Balkans. Beldocs is dedicated to supporting emerging documentary filmmakers by providing educational and networking opportunities that enhance their skills and offer valuable insights.

Our goal is to create a collaborative environment where participants can develop compelling documentary ideas, benefit from mentorship, and connect with industry professionals. This initiative not only aims to nurture young talent but also to contribute to the cultural landscape of the Western Balkans by empowering new voices and facilitating the sharing of unique stories and cultural narratives.

The next phase of the program includes an online mentoring session in June and July 2024, followed by the second on-site module in Sarajevo in September 2024, coinciding with the AJB DOC film festival. This allows participants to further hone their production skills and gain exposure to a broader industry audience.

*All references to Kosovo, whether the territory, institutions or population, in this text shall be understood in full compliance with United Nations Security Council Resolution 1244 and without prejudice to the status of Kosovo.

