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INNOVATIVE GRANTS AWARDED AT MESA COMMUNITY COLLEGE ZAMBIAN FILM PROJECT TO BENEFIT FROM GRANT

Mesa Community College, Arizona, USA—A pivotal moment in African film history is being made possible by the recognition and contribution of an American community college. Arizona's Mesa Community College (MCC) has committed over \$35,000 in funds and film production equipment for an Innovative Project Grant submitted by MCC Media Arts Faculty, Cynthia Greening and Jeanette Roe. The grant was written to support a native son of Zambia. Jabbes Mvula is a digital filmmaking student at Mesa Community College. Mvula is returning to the capital city of Lusaka in July of 2006 to direct the first full-length dramatic narrative feature film in his country. The film, *BAD TIMING*, was adapted from the stage play by renowned Zambian playwright Samuel Kasankha. A contemporary Zambian tale of foibles, forgiveness and redemption, *BAD TIMING*, is expected to be distributed internationally upon completion.

Cynthia Greening, Program Director of the Media Arts program at MCC, is the executive producer of the feature film and a Zambian documentary as well. Greening, Roe and the MCC student filmmakers will complete a documentary film – *VOICE OF AN AFRICAN NATION* – that captures this historical event. The documentary will cover the making of the first Zambian feature; it will explore the educational and creative journey of Jabbes Mvula from Zambian National Broadcast to Arizona; it will reveal the cultural exchange that occurs as the MCC students and faculty engage with Zambian filmmakers; and it will explain the efforts of Greening and Roe to provide digital filmmaking instruction and training to Zambian producers, directors, teachers and other interested parties. The professors will spend an additional week in Zambia following the film production to teach filmmaking to others in the hopes of stimulating the creation of additional Zambian films. The film and educational projects promise to be exciting and beneficial in a numbers of ways for the Zambian citizens.

The Community College has granted the Media Arts faculty the privilege of using the high-definition cameras, lens packages, production lighting kits, audio production equipment and state-of-the-art editing equipment for the production of Mvula's film and Greening's documentary. The access to the equipment, expertise and production personnel ensure a successful production process in Zambia. Also greatly aiding the production of these films is the fact that logistics and lodging support are being provided by the Zambian government, by arts patron Dr. Edgar Ng'oma, by the Zambian National Arts Council and the Zambian National Broadcast Corporation.

By making these TWO compelling and exciting high-definition films, Mvula and Greening intend to accomplish several goals. They hope to bring the stories and the voice of a previously unrepresented African nation to the global cinema. They are committed that their efforts support the expansion of film industry in Zambia. Through the films, they intend to reveal the beauty of Zambian regions for potential tourists, visitors and investors. With such a varied landscape and rich culture to offer international and native filmmakers, this joint venture promises growth and expansion for all parties involved.

Further, the Sundance Film Festival programmers have added both the Zambian documentary and feature film to their tracking sheets for the 2007 Festival. The nation of Zimbabwe has invited them to submit an official form for screening at the 2006 international film festival. Several U.S. production companies and providers have been contacted and they offer support for this momentous event. Interest is high in the United States. It is incredibly exciting that the decision of Mesa Community College to award the Innovative Grant to the Zambian film projects is generating significant national and international support.

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