

# The gambia and the movie industry

[Business](#), [Industries](#)



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The Globalizing of Films and Introduction of Film Industries into Developing Countries Movies, films, cinema, the big picture; all of these are terms used to describe an industry that has captured the minds and imagination of billions of people throughout the world. And what an evolution process this industry has gone through. Video recording has been around since the late 1800's, and back then the videos seemed more like Claymation technique than anything else. The videos were grainy, stopped a lot, and had no sound. Of course through time improvements have been made. As the 20th century moved forward, so did the movie industry.

Videos became clearer and longer, and so people decided to shoot movies and charge people money to see said films. The early ones of course had no sound and had to use cue cards, but as time progressed so did technology. In just a few short years not only was sound added to the films, but also color, and even 3d technology. So what comes next for this billion-dollar industry? The industry is now taking its business throughout the world; to countries that one would not expect the movie industry to set up camp due to the increase in technology and decrease of technological costs.

The movie industry is also becoming less localized, in that the movies that are being produced in any of these countries are not simply made for the <https://assignbuster.com/the-gambia-and-the-movie-industry/>

local audience, but rather are made for a global audience. Of course, almost everyone in the world knows about Hollywood, and Bollywood is bigger than Hollywood in terms of movies produced, though may not be as well known in the world. Nollywood is a well-established movie-producing powerhouse. In the past, when Hollywood was the main movie-producing powerhouse, Nigeria was probably one of the least places experts in the industry thought would take begin producing movies.

Now, Nollywood is a main staple in movie productions each year. It appears as though these “woods” are beginning to pop up all over the world. Countries, regions, cities, are all beginning to see the benefit to having their own movie producing location. What is causing this trend of areas wanting to set up their own movie producing locations? The main aspect that is leading the way for this increase of “woods” throughout the world is the fact that movies are now being made in a less localized fashion. There are not nearly as many movies produced that are made specifically for a certain region.

A movie producer is no longer going to fund a movie that will only do well in the country that it is made in. No, producers want to make the most money on the films, and that means relating the films to a global audience. Nigeria can be looked at as an example. Nigeria has a decent sized population, but how many people of that population would be willing to pay money to see a film. Not many, there are many other problems that need to be fixed before going to see a movie. So why produce movies in Nigeria for a population that would not sustain the industry? It is because the production costs have gone down so drastically.

It no longer takes \$50 million to make a movie. Nollywood thrives on its many producers providing small capital to many different movie projects (Haynes). The old movies that were created in, for lack of a better word, developing countries have always been inferior to those created by the US, England, and France. The technicality, special effects, costumes, and so on were never able to compete with the powerhouse countries (Callimanopulos). Now, however, with the lower cost of these techniques, these less fortunate countries are able to use the same technique, or at least those of equal quality.

Sure, these countries may not be able to use the newest of filming technology (such as 3d or Imax), however these improvements give these countries a greater edge in the market. In fact, the average cost of a Bollywood film is \$1.3 million, whereas the average cost of a Hollywood film is \$13.6 million (Factoids). No longer are countries following Hollywood's style of producing blockbuster after blockbuster. Nigerian producers realized that by dividing capital amongst many different projects, the income from each project may not be as great, however the total revenue from the combined projects is plenty to sustain Nollywood.

That is why Nollywood has become the third largest movie producing area in the world. The same case can be made for Bollywood. India was an emerging market where movie producers took an opportunity to produce many movies at a cheaper cost, and the effect was the same. This style of movie producing is what is allowing these developing countries to, basically, take over the market. A few decades ago the US was producing 5% of the movies

in the world, however these US movies occupied 50% of the screen time in the world (Callimanopulos).

While these numbers have not changed drastically, they are still beginning to take a new form. The world is producing more movies in general, and the US movies are occupying slightly less screen time than before. This decrease, however, is the forefront to what is expected to be a greater change as time progresses on. In fact, what is happening is that the major studios are begin to see how successful these “guerilla” movie making tactics is, that they are beginning to want to get into the market as well. For example, Warner Brothers is now financing French films and Fox is financing Latin American films (Toward).

This just adds to why the movie industry is globalizing so quickly, and why it is beginning to reach these developing countries. As these big companies continually invest more money into these less than fortunate countries, then the movie makers will be able to use the newest equipment to make technical better films, ensuring their spot in the global film industry. These movie producers, directors, and writers are now realizing that even with this increase of lower budget films being produced, they need to make sure that the movies produced are made for a global audience, rather than simply a local audience.

France is actually experiencing the negative side of low budget film production. The number of French films produced is well over 200 a year now, however with so many of these low budget films being produced, the audience is beginning to see fewer films because of the repetitive nature of the films (Hayes). What French filmmakers failed to do was to look ahead at <https://assignbuster.com/the-gambia-and-the-movie-industry/>

the big picture. Instead of writing scripts and backing films that the French society will only understand, they should have been producing films that a global audience can enjoy. By continuing to produce movies that can only be relevant in France, the audience gets bored.

If these movies were more globally friendly, then there is less of a chance of the audience getting “bored” with the same predictable movies. It is this thought of less localized more globalized filmmaking that has opened the door to new areas of film. For example, 20 years ago China and Korea films were unheard of. The movies that they made there were made specifically for those countries. Now, it is very common to see Chinese or Korean films in theaters around the world (Toward). The movie industries within these countries realized that simply producing movies for their citizen’s alone is not enough.

In order to stay relevant they would need to begin to produce movies that the global audience can enjoy. Specifically, South Korea has taken this attitude and run with it. A decade ago, South Korea was hardly in the movie scene. The current system of localizing the films was flawed. Instead, the film industry began producing movies with less nationalism so as to appeal to the global audience. As a result, the country produced *The Host*, the most successful movie in South Korean history, beating out worldwide famous movies like *Titanic* (Lee).

The reason this movie did so well is that it did not focus on issues simply related to South Korea. It was a contemporary look at a monster attacking a city. Before this movie was produced, most South Korean films depicted the lifestyle of problems facing South Korean citizens. By taking on a movie that

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appeals to the global audience, they were able to reach a larger number of people, resulting in a much more successful film. This concept of producing fewer localized movies is allowing these smaller film industries to compete with the likes of Hollywood and Bollywood.

If these smaller nations were to simply produce films that appealed to their own country, there would not be enough demand to sustain it. There are a lot of people in the world, and by reaching out and connecting with that audience, the smaller film industry nations are able to thrive as efficiently as the leading film industries. The Globalizing of Films and Introduction of Film Industries into Developing Countries and the Affect on the Business Environment This shift in the production of films affects the business industry in many ways. Being such a large industry, a multibillion-dollar industry. This industry is also very versatile.

It does not take a lot to have the industry fall apart one year and bounce back with record numbers the following year. Since the movie industry is so big an impacts so many people, this versatility can drastically affect the business that is done in the entire country. This may not be true in the United States since there is so much other business that gets done in the country, however just think about the impact it could have on a small country. If the country loses small country without a high GDP loses another couple billion dollars form a poor movie year, then that country will suffer directly from that poor year.

The opposite is also true. If that same country has a magnificent year in terms of movie productions and sales, then the entire country's GDP and way of life will improve directly due to the movie industry. Since the movie

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industry is so vast and covers so many different areas of the business sector, including marketing, management, and finances, a country's entire economic well-being could depend directly on the success of that movie industry, which relies on the experiences of the marketers to sell those films. Most people would consider actors, directors, and producers to be the most important part of filmmaking.

Of course, these aspects are very important, but it is hard to admit that those aspects are the most important part. Just thinking about it for a second. If a movie were to have the best director of all time, director the best actor of all time, acting the best scrip of all time, it would seem like it would be the formula for an extremely successful film. The problem is, if no one knows about the film how is anyone going to be able to see it. If there are no ads, promotions, or tours, how is the movie going to make a profit.

The muscle behind the movie could be the actors and directors, however the brains behind the revenue and eventually profits are the marketers. This becomes especially important when thinking about the shift of localized films to globalized films. It is one thing to be able to market a movie properly to one country, but it is entirely different to market the same movie in 5 different regions across the globe. The first place to look is towards Bollywood, the largest film industry in the world, located in India. The films produced in India are unique to their own country.

These movies tend to be, a lot of the time, musicals, which can be difficult to introduce into new territories. Recently, however the Bollywood film industry has looked toward producing more global friendly film. Just look at the success of Slumdog Millionaire. This movie stars unknown actors from <https://assignbuster.com/the-gambia-and-the-movie-industry/>



Bollywood, and went on to be a huge global success, even going as far as winning at the Oscars. Similarly, one year later Bollywood released a period-epic movie entitled Jodhaa-Akbarr, which was the most successful Bollywood film at the time, being released in 26 other countries.

The following year, My Name Is Khan was released in 70 countries, taking over as the most successful release from Bollywood in terms of release countries and revenue (Mahmood). This clearly shows that Bollywood is following the trend of trying to release more globally friendly films, but the important part that always gets overlooked is that marketing of these globally friendly films. It is put best when it was said, “ In Bollywood today, if the box-office is King, then marketing is the Queen” (Bollywood). This seems to put Bollywood in the best perspective.

Of course, box-office and revenue are the ultimate goal of any movie being released in Bollywood, which is why box-office can still be considered king. On the other side, these movies could never reach those revenue streams without marketing. The two go hand-in-hand. With countries such as India trying to release produce globally friendly movies, marketing becomes even more important. This can include creating a trailer that will attract the attention of the most consumer, to actually doing the market research to find out which country’s would be the best to release the film in and which countries the film would not fare well in.

This is connecting the film to the audiences that are most likely to create a large return on profits (Arons). The cost to market a movie properly has gone up. The audiences are expecting to see more trailers, more appearances, more billboards, more everything, and as inflation and prices begin to go up,  
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it is easy to see how expensive it can become to promote a movie (Bollywood). This again details the importance of picking the right countries to release the movie/market in. If a marketer fails to pick the right country, it can be a large expense on the film company.

It is the marketers job to put in the time and money to promote the movie in the best way possible on the smallest budget possible. These movie companies in areas like India do not have the amount of spending that US film companies have, which is why it is so important to count every penny. In addition, Bollywood continues to find new markets in which to export. In fact, in the past 4 years there has been a 60% growth in overseas sales (Lorenzen). As these sales continue to rise, there will be more need for marketers.

The importance of all of this is that as more countries, like India with its Bollywood, begin to improve their movie industries, they are going to need marketers. As the movies that these movie industries produce, such as in South Korea and Taiwan, begin to look towards the global market with their movie productions, their marketing tactics need to improve. Since most countries with a film industry are making globally friendly films, the need for marketers, accountants, and the likes will increase. A company will need a lot more employees to promote a movie abroad as compared to promoting one in a single country.

The need of so many new employees to keep up with the demand of overseas promotion can vastly help the economies of any country, especially those that are less fortunate than our own, which is where many of these new film industries are popping up. A little over a decade ago, Nigeria was a

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crime-ridden country that where people were afraid to leave their homes. This was before the time of Nollywood (Obhafuso). This, obviously, would lead to a problem with the economy. If people were afraid to leave their homes, how would people spend money? How does an economy survive without money being spent?

The short answer is that it cannot. To make matters worse, the reason people were turning to crime was because there was no work to make money at. It was a vicious cycle that seemed to have no end. Nollywood became Nigeria's answer to these problems. If the country could get people jobs, and give them a decent wage, then that would (at least in theory), reduce the number of people who would have to turn to crime to support themselves and their family. Did the theory work well in the business world as well as it was suppose to? In short, yes.

To put it into scope, Nollywood is considered the second largest employer of labor. Each film that is made employs, on average, 130 people (Obhafuso). So how many movies are made each year? Well, each week, there are 30 new movies that hit the market. That is 4, 500 movies each year (About Nollywood). This is a drastic change from the late 80's to early 90's. Back then it was extremely dangerous to walk around and even harder to find work. Now, with the growth of Nollywood, not only are the streets safer, but the way of life of the citizens is improving because of the money that is generated from the movie industry.

These employees of these 4, 500 films are going home with a minimum of 5-10, 000 naira per film, but can make up to 20-25, 000 naira. That is equal to about 128 US dollars (About Nollywood). It may not sound like a lot, but that

kind of money really can change the lives of a family, economically and socially. By raising a kid on a fair day's wage, that same child will see that it is possible to make a living without the crime that seems to plague the country at the moment. It is a turning point for the country.

Nollywood injects the country with \$250 million dollars a year (About Nollywood). In a country that was not well off to begin with, that is a huge difference. This one industry has single handedly changed the economic downfall of a country. There are of course still problems, still crime, still unemployment and poverty in the country, but there always will be. This film industry can be an example of a tool that can be utilized by a country to fight poverty and crime, and vastly improve the economy and standard of living throughout the country.

The Globalizing of Films and Introduction of Film Industries into Developing Countries and the Affect on the Business Environment, Case Study: The Gambia Now the question turns to where to next open a movie industry. Africa seems to be the newest location where these new film industries (like Nollywood and Bollywood) are being created. A movie industry is exactly what many of these African countries need. There is not a lot of stability in these countries, both politically and, more importantly, economically. As shown earlier, a film industry can pump a large amount of money into an economy as well as employ many citizens with jobs and a steady income. One country in Africa that seems to be looking at these statistics is The Gambia. Gambia is located on the western shore in Northern Africa. In Gambia, about 60% of the population falls below the overall poverty line. This can be due to the fact that the unemployment rate in the country is

over 40% (The Gambia: An Assessment). With such a high unemployment rate, it is difficult to maintain an economy. The introduction of a national film industry in Gambia would allow for the economic growth that the country seems to be in need of.

If a country wishes to be economically successful, it is important to be a part of the global economy. A country does not need to be a part of the global economy to sustain itself, but of course life can be made easier for the citizens of global economy countries. It appears that Gambia, and its 1.8 million citizens, are struggling with their economy (History). If 60% of those 1.8 million people are out of work, then there is clearly a need for the creation of new jobs. As stated earlier in the paper, many countries have had similar problems with their economies, and needed to change something.

These countries saw the film industry as an opportunity to help its citizens. The film industry can be made extremely global if done correctly, which would allow for greater demand for films and create more jobs. Gambia is following suit by attempting to also start its own economy. There was once a short lived film industry in Gambia, but was shut down by the government in 1994. Since then the government has had major control of media outlets such as radio and television (History). Over the years the country has been slowly switching to give the people more power and control over their lives.

It is this slow shift in power that is allowing Gambia and its citizens to have another go at creating a film industry. The government is also beginning to understand the need for change in such an impoverished country. Since the citizens are now able to vote for their leaders, it is now of more importance of these leaders to keep the citizens happy. If the country is not making any

money for its citizens, then these leaders will not be re-elected. This is extremely important because the creation of such a big industry in a country of poor economic standard would require support from the government (Kasumaye). In order to get movie producing off the ground, there needs to be investments. How can people invest if no one has enough money? That is where the government needs to step in and begin to financially back this industry. As the movies begin to take off and sell and make profit, then the industry will be able to sustain itself. Until then the government needs to understand the effects such an industry can have on Gambia. It seems strange to think that the government should back an industry such as filmmaking. Would it not be better to back things such as farming? Farming is important, but farming will not bring the country into the global economy.

The film industry in Gambia has a large impact on the citizens of the country. It creates commerce throughout the entire country and teaches the individuals in the country new skills (The Gambia and its). Any kind of film costs a lot of money. In fact, simply look at The Hobbit. The new movie was filmed in New Zealand, and contributed more than 2.4 billion dollars to the New Zealand economy (Child). That movie is an exception, since they are such large production units, however it just goes to show that one movie really can make a difference in the economy.

The film companies need to feed their workers, hire clean up crews, etc. , and if Gambia creates a major film industry with many movie companies, then the economy will reap the benefits as much as the CEO's. Going hand in hand with an increase in commerce is that fact that a new industry will create many new jobs for the citizens. In fact, it is estimated that a film

industry created in The Gambia would employ, at a bare minimum, 5, 000 Gambian youths (Janko). This does not include the actors, directors, or any of the business aspects (such as marketers, accountants, financiers, etc. . This is simply extra people needed on set to help with set up, tear down, dining, and every other aspects involved with filmmaking. As the industry begins to take off, so will the amount of jobs available. The more movies that are made, the more jobs will have to be filled. These 5, 000 jobs can increase to 20, 000 if the film industry grows. Nearly 20, 000 new jobs can be a huge benefit to an economy that is suffering from high unemployment. Clearly as more people get jobs and begin to receive a steady income, the more money families will be able to spend on the market. The ore money that is spent on the market, the faster the economy will turn around. The faster the economy turns around, even more jobs will be created to keep up with the improvements. In fact, a well organized film industry could not only help the standard of living in Gambia, but also the surrounding areas as well (Sankanu). As the industry grows, it is very possible for citizens of surrounding countries to migrate over to Gambia in order to be apart of the industry. This influx of new people also means that these same people will be spending their money in the Gambian economy.

Also, as the Gambian film industry creates more and more globally friendly movies (if they continue to follow the current trend in movie making), then the surrounding countries could be big importers of these films. Countries closer to Gambia may find Gambian films more appealing than, say, a Hollywood blockbuster. These imported movies can clearly help both video stores and movie theaters in these bordering countries to survive. As stated

earlier, marketing is one of the most important factors in the film production process. The consumers need to know about the movie in order to see it.

That being said, a Gambian film industry would open the door for all sorts of marketing professionals, both local and global marketers. It would seem pretty obvious that the locals of the country would work on the local promotion of the film. It would not be too far fetched to think that a movie company would want to hire a professional marketer from an already well-established company overseas. It can be a safe assumption that these kind of professionals will most likely have more experience with this global marketing than a native individual from Gambia. Normally, marketing a film globally would be extremely difficult.

However, due to the established tourism industry and breathtaking scenery, Gambian movies may be easier to promote to the world than, say, a movie from Chad (Kasumaye). If the world has a basic understanding of The Gambia, then people will be much more open to watching a film from Gambia. This makes the jobs of whatever marketing professional get the job that much easier. The Gambia is currently struggling to improve its economy and standard of living. The unemployment is too high and their economy is not sufficient enough to give its citizens a proper standard of living. Nigeria was in a very similar situation, and by adding a film industry, hundreds of millions of dollars was expelled into the economy, creating jobs, and improving the standard of living. The Gambia has a similar opportunity, in that there are plenty of actors, directors, and writers that want to create films, there just does not seem to be enough capital to truly get the industry off the ground. The government needs to realize this opportunity, and fund



(at least for the beginning) the creation of this industry so as to create a greater flow of cash and employment throughout the country.

This will create a large number of new opportunities for marketers to jump into the new industry to become a part of the growing phenomenon. A Gambian film industry can not only help the economy and business thrive in the country, but can also create new business opportunities on a global scale as well. Bibliography " About Nollywood. " This Is Nollywood. N. p. , 2006. Web. 08 Nov. 2012. . Arons, Marc. " Five Key Drivers of Global Marketing. " Forbes. Forbes Magazine, 17 Mar. 2010. Web. 07 Nov. 2012. . " Bollywood Goes over the Top with Marketing Bollywood, Updated Feb 25, 2012 at 03:10pm IST. " Http://ibnlive. in. com/. CNN, 25 Feb. 2012. Web. 06 Nov. 2012. . Callimanopulos, Dominique. " Film and the Third World. " Cultural Survival. N. p. , 11 Feb. 2010. Web. 31 Oct. 2012. .

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