

CSI rarely delivers, right? These Isibaya and Isithembiso SAFTA nominees would argue otherwise

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Corporate social investment programmes are often treated with a healthy dose of cynicism. It's the kind of thing that looks good in a company's annual report, but how often do these schemes deliver real-world benefits? The recent announcement of the SAFTA nominations shows in the entertainment industry at least, corporate social investment does indeed have a role to play.



Mbalizethu Zulu



Charleen Ntsane

Mbali Zulu and Charleen Ntsane are both writers on popular TV shows, and both were members of teams nominated for South African Film and Television Awards (SAFTA). They've also got another thing in common - both are graduates of a corporate-sponsored development programme. Mbali's and Charleen's stories are interesting case studies into how corporate social investment (CSI) can genuinely help individuals and at the same time pay dividends to the companies that sponsor them.

Pictures of Mbali and Charleen, and for Isibaya and Isithembiso are available [here](#).

Charleen Ntsane has been a core member of the youth telenovela [Isithembiso](#) writing team since the show began in 2017. Prior to her storyliner and scriptwriting position at the film and television production company Bomb Shelter, Charleen took part in MultiChoice's *M-Net Magic in Motion Academy*.

The Academy, which has been running since 2015, gives participants experience in key areas of TV and film creation including commissioning, scriptwriting, concept creation, producing, directing, cinematography, sound, art direction,

editing, post-production and broadcasting.

Talking about what the Academy did for her, Charleen said:

“The Magic in Motion Academy seeks out people who’ve studied in the TV and film field but haven’t yet got a full time job in the industry. They gave me exactly what I needed - actual solid working experience - to bridge the gap between studying and employment. I’m over the moon that just a year afterwards I’m part of a team nominated for a SAFTA for best achievement in scriptwriting.”

Mbali Zulu has a similar story. After leaving the Academy, she also went to work for Bomb Shelter as a storyliner and scriptwriter, in this case for [Isibaya](#).

“In my first year writing on Isibaya, I was nominated for a SAFTA. It was a surreal and unexpected experience. But it let me know that I was on the right track in my career. To get this second nomination for my contributions in the writing room - I feel so grateful. So so so grateful. So many creatives are struggling to get into the industry. If it were not for the Magic In Motion Academy, I know for certain that I wouldn't be where I am today.”

After leaving the Academy, Mbali has worked on eight films, two of which are currently in post-production. She was also part of a team which successfully pitched for a 13-part series that’s due to air soon on Mzansi Magic.

Speaking about why they decided to start the *Magic in Motion Academy*, MultiChoice CEO for General Entertainment Yolisa Phahle said:

“The best possible world for CSI is where doing something good for society intersects with helping your own industry - and by supporting promising TV and film students in the transition to meaningful employment we’re doing both. Africa has incredible TV and film talent and I’m a firm believer that there’s world-wide demand for well-told African stories. There’s no question that I get a kick from seeing our graduates up for awards, but I’m probably even more excited that the pool of skilled professionals producing original African content is even larger than before thanks to the Academy.”

To date, more than 1200 episodes of Isibaya and more than 400 episodes of Isithembiso have been filmed. They are available to stream on www.showmax.com.

The SAFTA awards ceremony takes place on 2 March. MultiChoice was the most-nominated company with its productions receiving more than 150 nominations. For more information on the Magic in Motion Academy, visit <https://mnetcorporate.dstv.com>.

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