



THIS IS NOLLYWOOD (54' & 70')
GENRE: DOCUMENTARY / CULTURE / ARTS

This Is Nollywood tells the story of the Nigerian film industry—a revolution enabling Africans with few resources to tell African stories to African audiences. Despite all odds, Nigerian directors produce between 500 and 1,000 movies a year. The disks sell wildly all over the continent—Nollywood actors have become stars from Ghana to Zambia.

We experience the world of Nollywood through acclaimed director Bond Emeruwa's quest to make a feature-length action film in just nine days. Armed only with a digital camera, two lights, and about \$20,000, Bond faces challenges unimaginable in Hollywood and Bollywood. Electricity goes out. Street thugs demand extortion money. The lead actor doesn't show. But, as Bond says, "In Nollywood we don't count the walls. We learn how to climb them."

In Nigeria's teeming capital of Lagos, we attend an audition where hundreds of hopeful actors vie for their chance in the limelight. We meet some of the industry's founding fathers who tell us of their responsibility to educate their massive audiences: many of the films deal with AIDS, corruption, women's rights, and other topics of concern to ordinary Africans. The impetus behind Nollywood is not purely commercial; the traditional role of storytelling is still alive and well — just different.

Nollywood, Nigeria's booming film industry, is the world's third largest producer of feature films. Unlike Hollywood and Bollywood, however, Nollywood movies are made on shoe-string budgets of time and money. An average production takes just 10 days and costs approximately \$15,000.

Yet in just 13 years, Nollywood has grown from nothing into a \$250 million dollar-a-year industry that employs thousands of people. The Nollywood phenomenon was made possible by two main ingredients: Nigerian entrepreneurship and digital technology.

Currently, some 300 producers churn out movies at an astonishing rate—somewhere between 500 and 1,000 a year. Nigerian directors adopt new technologies as soon as they become affordable. Bulky videotape cameras gave way to their digital descendents, which are now being replaced by HD cameras. Editing, music, and other post-production work is done with common computer-based systems. The films go straight to DVD and VCD disks.

Thirty new titles are delivered to Nigerian shops and market stalls every week, where an average film sells 50,000 copies. A hit may sell several hundred thousand. Disks sell for two dollars each, making them affordable for most Nigerians and providing astounding returns for the producers.

Yet Nollywood producers are undeterred. They know they have struck a lucrative and long-neglected market - movies that offer audiences characters they can identify with in stories that relate to their everyday lives. Western action-adventures and Bollywood musicals provide little that is relevant to life in African slums and remote villages.

"Look out, Hollywood," one exuberant Nigerian producer exclaims. "Here we come!"

