



Alternativa Film Labs launches a new educational cycle in CentralAsia and announces an open call for the Development Lab

One of the primary initiatives of Alternativa Film Project is **Alternativa Film Labs**, offering free educational programs for filmmakers at different stages of their journey, who explore social issues in their countries, and who seek to develop their homeland's film industry and give a voice to their local communities. In 2024, Alternativa Film Labs will once again be held in Central Asia, comprising three film laboratories: the Teen Lab (to be held in the summer in Tashkent), the Impact Lab (to be held in the autumn in Bishkek), and the Development Lab. The open call for the Development Lab starts on **March 1st** and extends until April 28th.

The Development Lab is tailored for filmmakers from Central Asian countries who want to enhance their screenwriting and producing skills and establish new professional connections. The goal of the lab is to develop a film project for its further presentation to potential partners and international film institutions, as well as clients and producers in the region. The lab tutors are cinema professionals, ranging from directors of international festivals to successful producers, along with international experts such as Miriam Sassine (Lebanon), a producer at About Productions, director, and mentor at the Doha Film Institute.

The Development Lab includes educational programs in two directions: **the producers section** and **the screenwriting section**. The producers section is dedicated to developing the project from concept to the full package of documents for seeking international and regional financing. The screenwriting section focuses on the comprehensive development of a full-length feature film script from the initial stage to the final text. The sections will operate simultaneously through three modules, with the first module scheduled in June in Bukhara (Uzbekistan), followed by the online module in August and the final module in October in Almaty (Kazakhstan).

The Development Lab is open to emerging filmmakers from Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, and Turkmenistan with full-length feature film projects in the early stages of development. Additionally, in each section spots are reserved for participants who do not yet have a film project, including creators from the fields of literature, journalism, playwriting, or vlogging who want to try their hand in the film industry. Such participants will collaborate on their colleagues' projects. A total of no more than 20 people (no more than 10 in each section) can participate in the lab. The program covers travel expenses and accommodation. Detailed eligibility criteria and projects' requirements are available on Alternativa Film Project website alternativa.film.

The results of the Development Lab open call will be announced on **May 16th**.

Anna Gudkova, Director of Alternativa Film Labs, states, “Long-term training programs are the cornerstone of our educational initiatives. The Development Lab serves several goals at once. Not only do we provide talented filmmakers from Central Asia with the opportunity to refine and elevate their scriptwriting and producing skills, but we also foster a professional environment. Here, the authors will be able to find financial partners among the participating producers, while the participating producers can closely examine the projects being developed in the lab. An extremely important element of the program will be the projects pitching, where we plan to invite experts from the global film industry to attend presentations either in person or online. Thus, we would like to help unite participants from different countries of the region into a strong community and prepare promising films of the new wave of Central Asian cinema for production.”

Alternativa Film Project is an international non-profit project launched by the global technology company inDrive in 2023 in Central Asia. The project is designed to support and promote filmmakers and discover new voices from developing film industries. Its mission is to spotlight talents whose work expands global perspectives and fosters positive change.

Alternativa Film Labs are free educational programs, providing training both in filmmaking and social initiatives to assist cinematographers in strengthening their projects, expanding their audience, and sharing important stories that have not yet been presented on screens due to a lack of skills or resources. In 2023, the Alternativa Film Labs team delivered the Impact Lab in Almaty, online Pitching Training for producers and directors from Central Asia, and a filmmaking workshop for teenagers in Bishkek. Among the program's instructors and tutors were Margje de Koning, the art director of the international film festival Movies that Matter, dedicated to films on human rights and social issues; Danielle Turkov, founder of Think-Film Impact Production; Wim Vanacker, a member of the selection committee for the Cannes Film Festival's short film competition, and an expert in pitching. The winners of Alternativa Film Labs 2023 went to represent and develop their projects at the European Film Market in Berlin: Daniel Berger participated in the Fiction Toolbox Programme, Banu Ramazanova participated in the Doc Toolbox Programme, Diana Zhilkenova and Elar Nemat received accreditation to the European Film Market, and Assel Aushakimova, the winner of the Alternativa Impact Lab, took second place at the Talent Project Market pitching at the Berlinale.

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