

CDI

CREW
DEVELOPMENT
INSTITUTE

CDI FOR AFRICA

2026 *Brochure*

www.CDI-GLOBAL.org

A MESSAGE

from the

Co-FOUNDER

I'm excited to share the vision behind the Crew Development Institute. As someone who has spent over 15 years working in concert touring, television, and film production across the United States, I've witnessed firsthand the power of well-trained crews to transform a good show into an unforgettable experience.

Africa's live entertainment industry is experiencing unprecedented growth. The talent is there. The demand is there. What's missing is the professional infrastructure and trained workforce to match the ambition of this moment.

CDI exists to bridge this gap. We're not just training technicians, we're building the foundation for world-class productions across the diaspora.

Our approach combines hands-on learning, real-world production experience, and direct pathways into live event work.

Our mission is simple: liberate local crews through knowledge, elevate productions through expertise, and create sustainable careers in live entertainment across Africa.

To our future partners, I say: join us in building something transformative. Together, we can ensure that Africa's stages shine as brightly as its incredible talent deserves.

Let's build shows that move the world.

Erica D. Hayes

Co-Founder & Executive Director
Crew Development Initiative

Welcome Note

Welcome to the Crew Development Institute. This program represents a pivotal moment for Africa's live entertainment industry, a chance to build the professional workforce that will power world-class productions across the continent.

For too long, the growth of Africa's entertainment sector has been constrained by a shortage of trained technical professionals. International tours often bring their own crews or skip the continent altogether, limiting opportunities for local talent. Local productions struggle with inconsistent quality due to training gaps.

CDI changes this equation. Our program is rigorous and practical, giving participants firsthand experience of what's required to execute professional productions. We're building an army of competent, safety conscious, and innovative technicians who can meet international standards while understanding local contexts.

As you engage with this initiative whether as a partner, sponsor, or future crew member, please keep an open mind. Be ready to learn. Be ready to build something unprecedented.

The future of African live entertainment starts with the crews we train today.

Congratulations on being part of this journey!



ABOUT CDI

The Crew Development Institute (CDI), in partnership with Illumin8 Academy, is a workforce enablement program focused on strengthening live events infrastructure across Africa, beginning in Ghana and expanding throughout West Africa and additional regions.

CDI is not a traditional school. CDI is workforce infrastructure.

Our model delivers free, high-volume stagehand training combined with specialized technical tracks across all core production departments. By liberating crews with knowledge, safety awareness, and real show experience, CDI builds a dependable labor pool that promoters, festivals, and vendors can trust.

With partnerships spanning California Baptist University, University of Ghana, and University of Nigeria, we're developing a global program with an African focus. Our curriculum emphasizes hands-on learning, real-world application, and professional mentorship from industry veterans.

The goal: Build local capacity so African production crews own and operate world-class events.

CDI

BUILDING CREWS WHO BUILD SHOWS

The Opportunity

THE CHALLENGE

Africa's live entertainment industry is growing rapidly, but lacks the professional equipment and trained technicians needed to produce world-class shows.

THE GAP

Essential infrastructure like professional audio consoles, professional lighting, and reliable Wi-Fi systems are either unavailable or prohibitively expensive to import.

\$5B+

AFRICAN MUSIC INDUSTRY BY 2026

13%

ANNUAL GROWTH RATE

NOW

TIME TO BUILD INFRASTRUCTURE

Our Solution: CDI

Building Crews Who Build Shows | Diaspora-driven expertise developing local talent to global standards.



Learning Arm

School programs and hands-on training for local technicians in lighting, audio, and production management.

University partnerships with California Baptist University, University of Ghana, and University of Nigeria.



Technical Advisory

On-site and virtual production management, implementing training to create world-class shows.

Industry professionals mentoring and supporting local crews on real productions.



Production Arm

Direct production support during the transition period, phasing out as local teams become self-sufficient.

Goal: Build capacity so locals own and operate their own world-class events.

Training Model Overview

TIER 1 STAGEHAND FUNDAMENTALS	2-Day Free Program 100 Trainees Per Quarter Load-in/load-out procedures, stage etiquette, power fundamentals, cable handling, safety awareness, and department workflow orientation.
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TIER 2 SPECIALIZED TECHNICAL TRACKS	3-Day Intensives 15-30 Participants Per Track Audio, Lighting, Video, and Rigging tracks. Rigging instruction focuses on operational readiness and safety awareness.
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100+
Stagehands Per Quarter

60-120
Specialists Per Quarter

2 Weeks
Quarterly Deployment

6
Senior Trainers

THE CDI FOR AFRICA PROGRAMME

FOCUS AREAS

4 FOCUS AREAS

NUMBER OF MODULES

6+ MODULES

NUMBER OF TRACKS

4 TRACKS

TOTAL CONTACT HOURS

100+ HOURS

Deployment Structure

CDI operates on a 2-week quarterly deployment model:

Days 1-2

Stagehand Fundamentals

Days 3-5

Audio Track

Days 6-8

Lighting Track

Days 9-11

Video Track

Days 12-14

Rigging Track + Partner Meetings

Key Milestone: March 2026

Program launches March 2026 | Equipment container ships June 2026
First local-led events: Q4 2026

2
WEEKS

Our Team

50+ years combined experience in concert touring, television, film, and live event production

Erica D. Hayes

LIGHTING DESIGNER | EDUCATOR

15+ years across concert touring, television, and film. Designed for Fantasia, Sombr, The Isley Brothers, Anita Baker, and Ledisi.

IATSE 728 & ICLS member. Credits include HBO's Westworld, Nickelodeon, ABC, and House Party.

Professor, California Baptist University

Keith Bernard

LIGHTING DESIGNER | VISUAL DIRECTOR

Experience spanning film, television, high-profile national events, and concert touring for top-tier artists across hip-hop, R&B, and soul.

Production lead on nationally recognized events. Career began in music videos and independent film.

Specializes in visually driven lighting

Blake Brady

PRODUCER | OPERATIONS LEADER

10+ years specializing in technical direction, stage management, and live event production for large-scale events and touring.

Hands-on expertise in LED wall systems, camera operations, and lighting. Known for decisive problem-solving.

Focus: Building sustainable systems

The Equipment Package

A complete shipping container of professional-grade production equipment

Lighting Package

- Profile Moving Lights: 20-100 units
- LED Fresnels: 50-100 units
- Command Wings / OnPC: 5-10 units
- Vectorworks Licenses: 5-10 seats

Infrastructure

- EcoFlow Generators: 100-200 units
- StarLinkWiFi Access Points: TBD
- Stage Boxes: TBD

Audio Package

Package in development with audio engineering specialists.

Focus on stage boxes and essential front-of-house equipment.

POTENTIAL VENDOR PARTNERS

Elation, GLP, MA Lighting, Vectorworks

The Timeline

JAN - FEB 2026

Finalize equipment list, Secure vendor partnerships, Establish 501(c)(3)

MAR 2026

CDI Program Launch - Training programs begin

MAR - MAY 2026

Equipment procurement, Container preparation

JUN 2026

Container ships from Baltimore (~3 weeks transit)

JUL - SEP 2026

Container arrival, First production support

OCT - DEC 2026

Local teams lead shows, Evaluate & expand

Partnership Value

Dependable Trained
Labor Pool

Reduced Touring
Labor Costs

Improved Safety
Culture

Faster Load-Ins

Increased
Deployment
Confidence

WHAT PARTNERS RECEIVE

- Access to professional equipment
- Trained local workforce
- Technical advisory support
- Connection to US industry network
- University partnership opportunities

OUR SHARED GOAL

Build local capacity so local production crews own and operate world-class productions.

This initiative is not revenue-driven. The return is risk reduction, operational efficiency, and market enablement.

WHY AFRICA

1

Cultural Powerhouse

Africa is rapidly becoming the creative capital of the world, attracting global artists, brands, and unprecedented investment in entertainment.

2

Explosive Growth Market

The continent's live entertainment sector is experiencing 13%+ annual growth, with major festivals, international tours, and broadcast productions expanding each year.

3

Diaspora Connection

Annual influx of diaspora tourism, creates massive production demand and visibility for infrastructure investment.

4

Scalable Model

Starting in Ghana as proof of concept, CDI will expand to Nigeria, Kenya, South Africa, and other emerging entertainment markets across the continent.

\$5B+

African music industry projected by
2026

13%

annual growth

The Ask

What we need to launch CDI in Ghana

1. LOCAL PARTNERSHIP

A Ghanaian production company or event organizer to co-sign this initiative, provide local expertise, and navigate customs/logistics.

2. EQUIPMENT STORAGE

Secure warehouse space in Accra to house the equipment container.

3. TRAINING VENUE

A space to host training sessions, workshops, and classes for local technicians.

4. GOVERNMENT ENDORSEMENT

Letter of support from the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Creative Arts.

5. EVENT COMMITMENTS

2-3 confirmed events in Q4 2026 where trained crews can apply their skills.

6. TRAINING CANDIDATES

10-20 motivated local technicians committed to the training program.

ESTIMATED EQUIPMENT VALUE

\$150K - \$300K



CREW DEVELOPMENT INSTITUTE

Building Crews Who Build Shows

Contact: Erica D. Hayes

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LET'S BUILD THIS TOGETHER

March 2026

Program Launch

June 2026

Container Ships

Q4 2026

First Local-Led Events

2026+

Sustainable Operations