



## DISCOVERING OPEN DOORS WITH **SOPHIE BOURDON**

*Sophie Bourdon is the head of Open Doors at the Locarno Festival. She shares some valuable information about the sensational "Open Doors Program" that opens a window of opportunity for many new talents.*

### **What is the "Open Doors" initiative?**

Together with our partner, the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) of the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs (FDFA), the Open Doors section of Locarno Festival intends to spotlight filmmaking talents from the focused region (8 South Asian countries till the end of 2018), towards the audience as well as towards international film professionals; and to better connect the filmmakers with international film professionals, to possibly increase working collaborations on future films. In order to achieve this objective, Open Doors has been developing different activities; The Hub and the Lab for professionals, and the Open Doors Screenings for the public, as a window onto the cinematography of the focused region.

### **What are the activities/programs within this initiative?**

These consist of two complementary dimensions: a professional training activity (the Lab) designed for proactive producers in the yearly-focused countries to increase their entrepreneurial skills and knowledge of the international market-

place, and a business platform (the Hub) to introduce new feature-length film projects from any of the 8 South Asian countries to the international decision makers. In Open Doors, the activities are:

#### **Open Doors Lab (2-8 August)**

The purpose of the Lab is to introduce professionals from the respective regions and work internationally. Our goal is to give tools to the participants to better sense how approach the international market. The program is a 5-day journey combining individual consultancies, group tutorials and talks on several subjects relating to storytelling, international film financing and distribution, festival and marketing strategies within and across (South) Asia and Europe. We hope to bring the emerging producers creative and business inspiration to strengthen the independent film industry in their own countries while reinforcing their visibility and commercial prospects abroad.

#### **Open Doors Hub (2-8 August)**

This is a co-production platform, for both fictions and documentaries, where teams composed of directors and producers can present and discuss their project during 1-to-1 meetings with film professionals and potential partners. These film projects are more advanced in terms of writing and are selected mostly on their potential in the international market. The 5-day coproduction platform also includes

individual consultancies to best approach the international decision makers as well as some talks in common with the Lab participants on specific subjects such as international financing and distribution.

#### **Open Doors Screenings (2-12 August, targeting the Festival audience)**

The Open Doors Screenings presents to the Locarno audience a selection of about 20 shorts and feature films that are particularly representative of the world of contemporary cinema in the focused countries. The programming for the Open Doors Screenings includes both established directors with international reputations but also showcases young emerging voices.

#### **Could you tell us about how the selections are made?**

For the above-mentioned activities, the selection is following first of all the artistic quality of the projects/films, which reflects the editorial line of the Festival. We also look for stories that can interest the international public. Although we are selective, the spirit of 'Open Doors' is to give the opportunity to the maximum of filmmakers and producers from the region over the 3-year period and possibly open up new horizons to them.

#### **Could you give us some insight regarding the Open Doors participation?**

As the whole program has been designed as a natural journey, a professional can

start by participating in the Lab and Screenings. They can benefit from an inspiring week to keep on working at future projects and then even be selected a year later with the same project. At the coproduction platform of the Hub, the filmmakers can then get an international feedback on their story and find potential partners to co-finance the film or/and distribute it. Rubaiyat Hossain had done so with her "Made In Bangladesh".

#### **Speaking of Bangladesh, could you tell us about Bangladesh's eligibility in Open Doors?**

This year Bangladesh is eligible for the Open Doors Hub, but next year it will be a part again of all 3 activities: Hub, Lab and Screenings. We hope that by raising enough the attention on them to attract on a long-lasting fan-base in Locarno and beyond, South Asians and Bangladeshis can be more present on the international scene. The Locarno public is by tradition very curious towards different storytelling. Similarly, the professionals gathering at the Festival can see the potential of stories coming with different perspectives. We are building up on this curiosity and preparing the ground, giving a first push to let then the local filmmakers do the work, developing the first connections made in Locarno.

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The interview was taken by Showbiz Desk