

EMPOWERED FILMMAKER MASTERCLASS 2022

ALBERTA & BRITISH COLUMBIA



BACKGROUND

Thanks to Telus STORYHIVE, in its inaugural year 2017, The Empowered Filmmaker Masterclass was able to bring together 25 aspiring indigenous filmmakers (ages 15-50+) and give them the technical skills needed to produce turnkey productions. The first iteration of the program took place on August 8-12, 2017 in Vernon, B.C. with participation from the Secwepemc and Okanagan First Nations. Participants worked in 5-person production teams to produce their own short films that were showcased during our own film festival held on the final day of the program. Each student received an official certification of completion and a select few an academy style film award recognizing their exceptional dedication and talent. Altogether, the experience was beyond powerful.

Together we had created something beautiful, and far more significant than the technical training we originally sought to provide. Our program in itself became a place of community building, healing and camaraderie amongst the participants and between the participating nations. In some cases, during the process of creating their own films, something rather special happened; we observed an invisible line being drawn between participant's recent personal difficulties, and the positive futures they wished to live being able to engage the world through film. Knowing how to produce films and share distribute them globally, defies the feelings of isolation that often plague rural communities. The craft of filmmaking can bring a powerful sense of purpose, knowing that we can spread our stories throughout the world and enable positive change, especially in a culture where oral tradition is the basis for spreading knowledge and recording history.

Since our first program, we've learned a lot. Better course materials and more time to plan, meant our second iteration of the program had a dedicated community liaison within respective band councils who was responsible for recruitment and also helping us utilize local indigenous suppliers and catering. We



rolled out three programs in 2018, the first in the Smithers area with participation of the Gitanyow, Lake Babine and surrounding nations. Our next program took place in the Kamloops area with participation of the Secwepemc, Okanagan and Lower Nicola Indian Band (LNIB). Our final program of 2018 took place in Vernon, where we combined indigenous and non-indigenous participants working together in production teams. All our programs ran at full capacity and were even more effective than the original.

In 2019, we ran four indigenous focused programs in Nanaimo, Cranbrook, Prince George and Vernon, training more than 100 participants with no prior knowledge of filmmaking, producing 22 films. The 2020/2021 was held online with 25 participants with 15 films produced due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

For 2022, we are plan to expand our program beyond the boundaries running two programs in British Columbia and two programs in Alberta.

British Columbia: Nanaimo (Snuneymuxw) & Cranbrook (Aq'am)

Alberta: Grande Prairie (Treaty 8 at GPRC) & Lethbridge (Kainaiwa, Piikani, Siksika)

Many of the productions created within the program are beautifully assembled short films aimed to raise awareness about social issues, conservation initiatives and even cultural restoration. For many outside of indigenous communities, filmmaking is a luxury, where people are in search of inspiring stories to tell - in the Empowered Filmmaker Masterclass, filmmaking is seen as an essential tool to do meaningful work, with participants having no shortage of stories that need to be told. All of the films were shot with the provided 4K-gimbal cameras and edited with Adobe Premiere on Macbook Pro laptops. All our films were screened during our film festival where students received official 'Empowered Filmmaker Masterclass' certificates and film awards just as in our original program. The most promising students were gifted 4K cameras on behalf of VoVo Productions.



In cooperation with Telus Optik and Community Showcase television, we can now offer distribution of selected participant films as well as access to numerous filmmaking grants through the STORYHIVE platform. The Empowered Filmmaker is not just another media training program - we are here to create an army of filmmakers and providing the ongoing support they need to be discovered and thrive independently. We are looking forward to doing the same in your community in the summer of 2022.

The ultimate outcome of the program is to have each of the groups within the program form a filmmaking groups within their respective communities. The relationship will no doubt be ongoing after the course and we will continue to provide ongoing mentorship. We wish to catalyze aspiring filmmaker to take the necessary steps to begin their journeys as filmmakers by removing barriers to entry, building confidence and providing the technical training that will form the foundation for lifelong development in the field. We are here to provide technical knowledge, not direct the messaging. We wish to simply enable participants to be able to tell their own stories and share them with the world.



Hands-on training with state-of-the-art 4K 3-axis camera gimbals



Some of our participant film awards



EMPOWERED FILMMAKER MASTERCLASS 2017
25 PARTICIPANTS: 5 FILMS PRODUCED

EMPOWERED FILMMAKER MASTERCLASS 2018
75 PARTICIPANTS: 15 FILMS PRODUCED

EMPOWERED FILMMAKER MASTERCLASS 2019
100 PARTICIPANTS: 22 FILMS PRODUCED

EMPOWERED FILMMAKER ONLINE 2020-2021
25 PARTICIPANTS: 15 FILMS PRODUCED

PARTICIPANT PRODUCTIONS:

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC3HALDkdH14fe2thXYerwiw/videos>





The Empowered Filmmakers Masterclass Workshop with Farhan Umedaly was absolutely necessary and valuable not only to me as an Indigenous woman and mother, to all those that attended but even more importantly to our peoples collectively. I say this because being able to use film as a vehicle of education and awareness for social change, to the general public and to communities around the world,

is essential because of the new technological world we live in. It enables those of us who live in smaller communities that are facing huge struggles and are in need of support to have a voice in the global community. It gives the viewers a direct view into the important issues and stories we are wanting to share and most importantly the stories are told by us; therefore, authentic and filled with raw real emotions. It is also accessible to almost anyone through the web, so although one may not be able to physically hear the story face to face with the storyteller(s), they can view it on screen. Farhan taught our class many skills including how to shoot great angles, how to use movement and framing to bring about emotion wanted in viewers, how to connect viewers with characters in the film, how to use the OSMO Gimbal cameras, and how to navigate through Adobe Premiere to edit our footage to final production. I would recommend anyone interested in filmmaking and/or interested in inspiring viewers to connect with social change efforts.

Using film to inspire people and draw attention to social justice issues is the new way to help change the world. Farhan is a great teacher, he is very approachable, helpful and inspiring because he absolutely loves the work he does and wants to share this passion with everyone in his classroom.

Michelle Jones

Secwepemc & Syilx Nation





The sordid legacy of colonization, the atrocities of residential schools and the systematic, deliberate attempt to delete indigenous culture, history and storytelling still rest on Canada's shoulders. The scars of this are multigenerational and more present than ever outside of our major population centers, we all know the signs. The tide is changing however, with indigenous youth rising up, now more than ever to learn and restore their ancient ways. Storytelling rather than written documentation has largely been how history and culture was recorded and passed down since time immemorial within indigenous culture. Filmmaking is the ultimate storytelling tool that can harness the age of social media to create positive waves of change throughout society and tell the stories that need to be told. This is an opportunity often ill afforded to indigenous youth and adults alike. That is exactly why I've created an intensive masterclass filmmaking curriculum that will take place over 5 days - the course is designed to take an individual with no prior experience and give them hands on technical training from storyboarding/script writing to on location filming, audio production and delivery of a final complete production. The purpose of this course is to create self-sufficient, self-driven filmmakers that can go on to achieve great things.

Farhan Umedaly, Lead Instructor

Empowered Filmmaker Masterclass

THE COURSE

DAY 1

Orientation, program overview in the classroom and then diving into filmmaking 101. Types of productions, filmmaking style, structure of a production, production stages and elements, assembly and delivery. We will conclude by watching a grassroots indigenous documentary and diagnose what went into producing it. We will watch two productions we produced, 'A Last Stand for Lelu' and 'The Sun on Top of the House', both award-winning films that are centred around indigenous communities and discuss how the productions were put together.

DAY 2

How to storyboard and plan your production. Here we will break into 5 groups of roughly 5 individuals based on age category and work to develop our own script/storyboards, shot lists and production plans. Each group will present their production plans before the class in adjourned for the day. We will then discuss each production as a collective - including who our target audience is, how we will distribute our film and how we would go about producing the films from a technical perspective.

DAY 3

We will distribute 5 DJI OSMO+ 4K cameras with integrated 3-axis gimbals. Each group will then have hands-on training on how to operate these cameras in the field. We will discuss camera settings, preparing media, principles of aperture, exposure ISO settings, camera movements and cinematic filming techniques. We will then move to the outdoors to bring our script/storyboards to life in our own productions. At the end of the day we will then review the collected footage together and share our thoughts.

DAY 4

Assembling and editing our footage. We will utilize Adobe Premiere CC as the main editing suite on the provided high-performance Macbook Pro laptops.

We will cover subjects such as: importing footage into the timeline, editing, colour grading, transitions and exporting the final assembly. We will also discuss topics such as the legalities of using stock music vs. self-made scores and available online resources. Participants will also continue to film and edit their productions for display on the final day of the program.

DAY 5

We will continue editing our productions through to final delivery for a film screening and awards ceremony at the conclusion of the course. Selected films will be distributed through Telus Optik and Community Showcase Television. We will also discuss the business aspect of filmmaking, needed equipment and everything one would need to get started as a professional. We will also discuss funding for films as well as how to utilize online video platforms for distribution and how to reach vast audiences to make sure our productions are seen and our messages heard. Students will be encouraged to register an account on STORYHIVE so that they can apply for grants and funding opportunities; we will continue to mentor our participants through this process. This year the STORYHIVE Indigenous Edition awarded \$500,000.00 in filmmaking grants which were made available to our participants.



I found the challenge of establishing a small working group to go through the whole learning program of filmmaking so simulating. Our group went from idea concept, storyboarding, shooting, editing and post production, daunting for a newbie. However, our diverse group experienced the thrill of completing our short film.

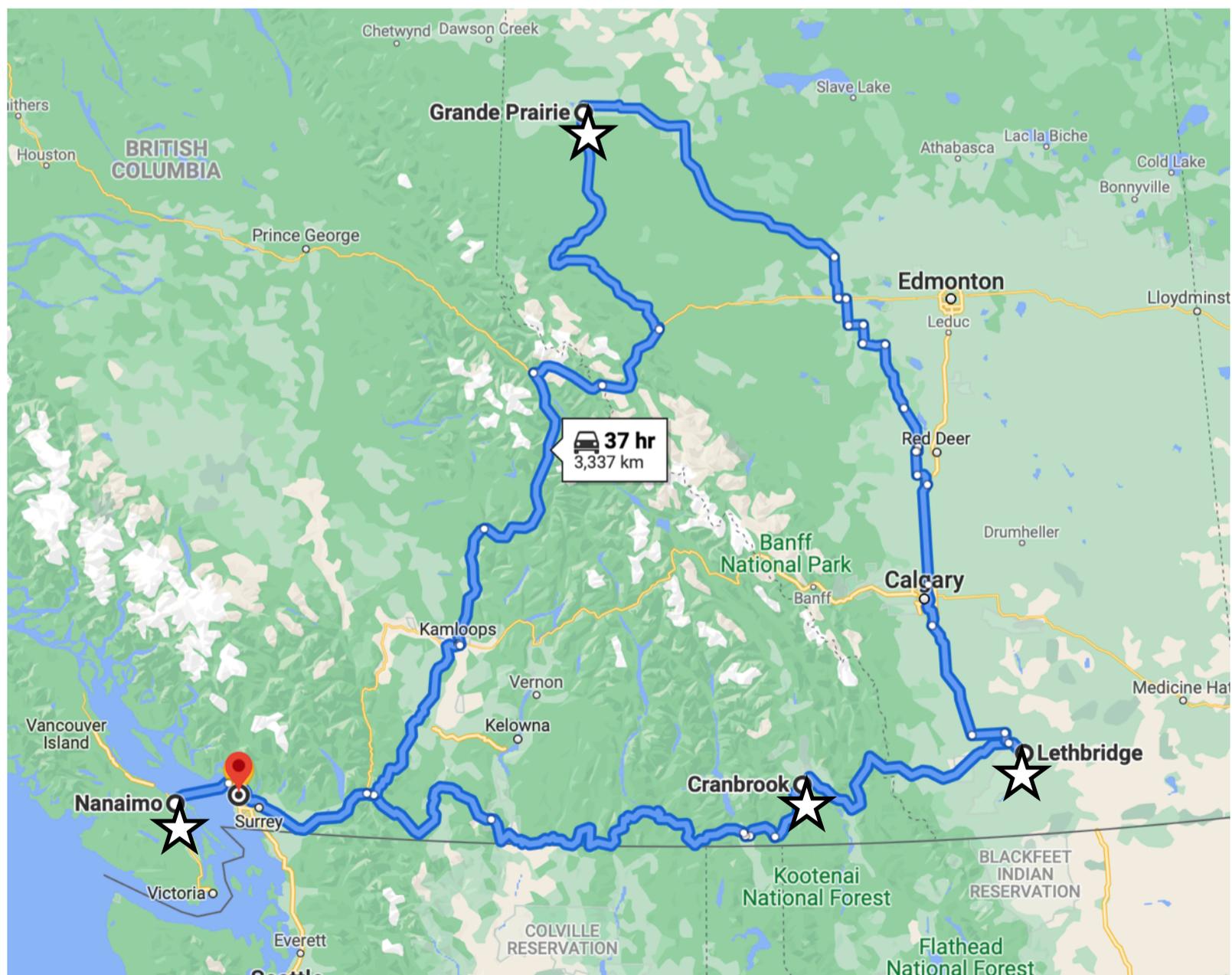
Janice Antoine

Lower Nicola Indian Band



THE PLAN

Each program will have an official community liaison within the respective indigenous communities/band councils to ensure that the program is successful. Their support will ensure the highest level of visibility within the communities and also ensure that the program engages the appropriate participants through a formal recruitment/application process. A dedicated liaison also ensures that we support local suppliers and have the best possible facilities for the program. In British Columbia, we have already run highly successful programs in both Nanaimo (Snuneymuxw) & Cranbrook (Aq'am) with community contacts, venues, and past participants willing to lend support, I am confident these programs will build upon their first iterations. This momentum will allow us to turn our attention to our expansion into Alberta, working with the indigenous friendship centres in both Lethbridge and Grande Prairie to source the appropriate venues, community liaisons, and successfully advertise our programs. Each program will have a capacity of 25 participants, with the aim to produce a minimum of 5 films per program along with supplementary content to meet the CRTC requirements as required for our program funding. This will be content produced by our participants.



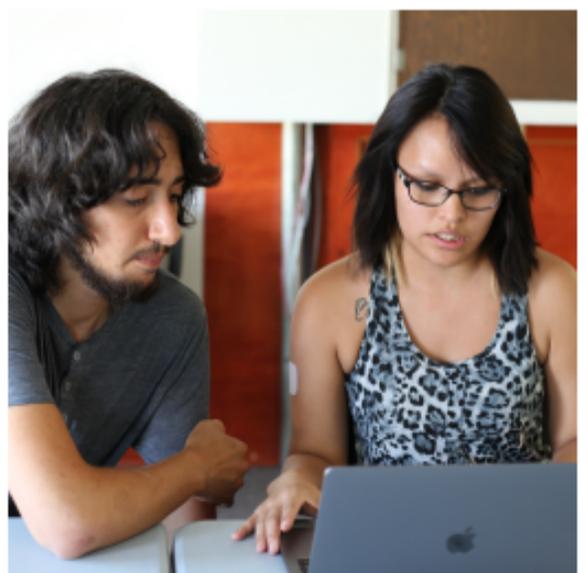
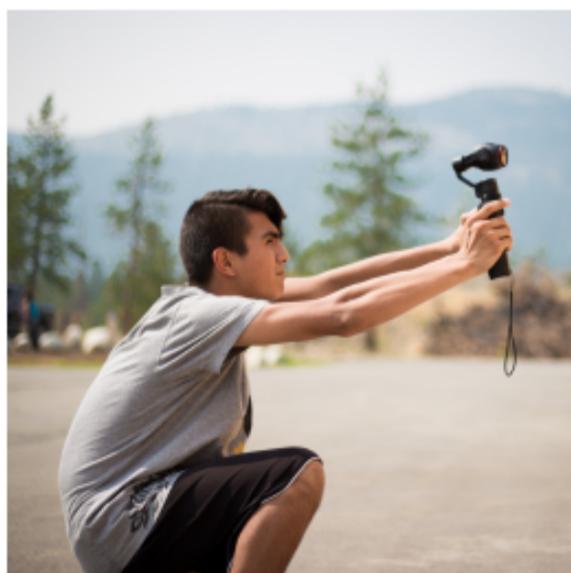
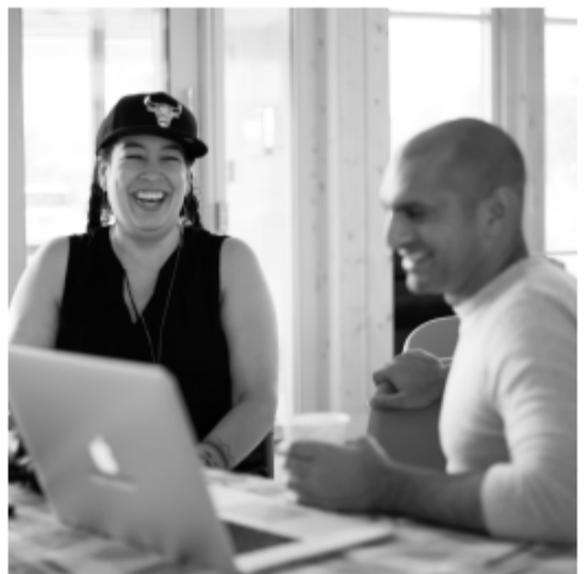
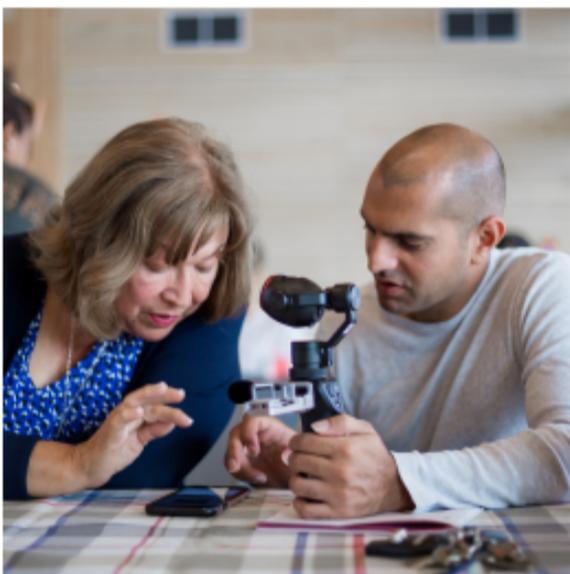
CONTENT

COMMUNITY	SHORT FILM CONTENT MINIMUMS (MINUTES)	SUPPLEMENTARY CONTENT (MINUTES)	TOTAL
NANAIMO	30	145	175
CRANBROOK	30	145	175
LETHBRIDGE	30	145	175
GRANDE PRAIRIE	30	145	175

We will be able to produce an estimated 5 , 6 minute short films in each community, totalling 30 minutes. Supplementary content will come in the form of a video diary, blog produced by each participant as they move through the program. In addition to this our team will capture highlights of the program for inclusion a STORYHIVE, Empowered Filmmaker documentary in the future. In summary, BC content will total 350 minutes, and Alberta content will total 350 minutes with a total of 700 minutes of content in total. These materials will be packaged and delivered using the same protocols as needed to streamline the processing time for STORYHIVE.



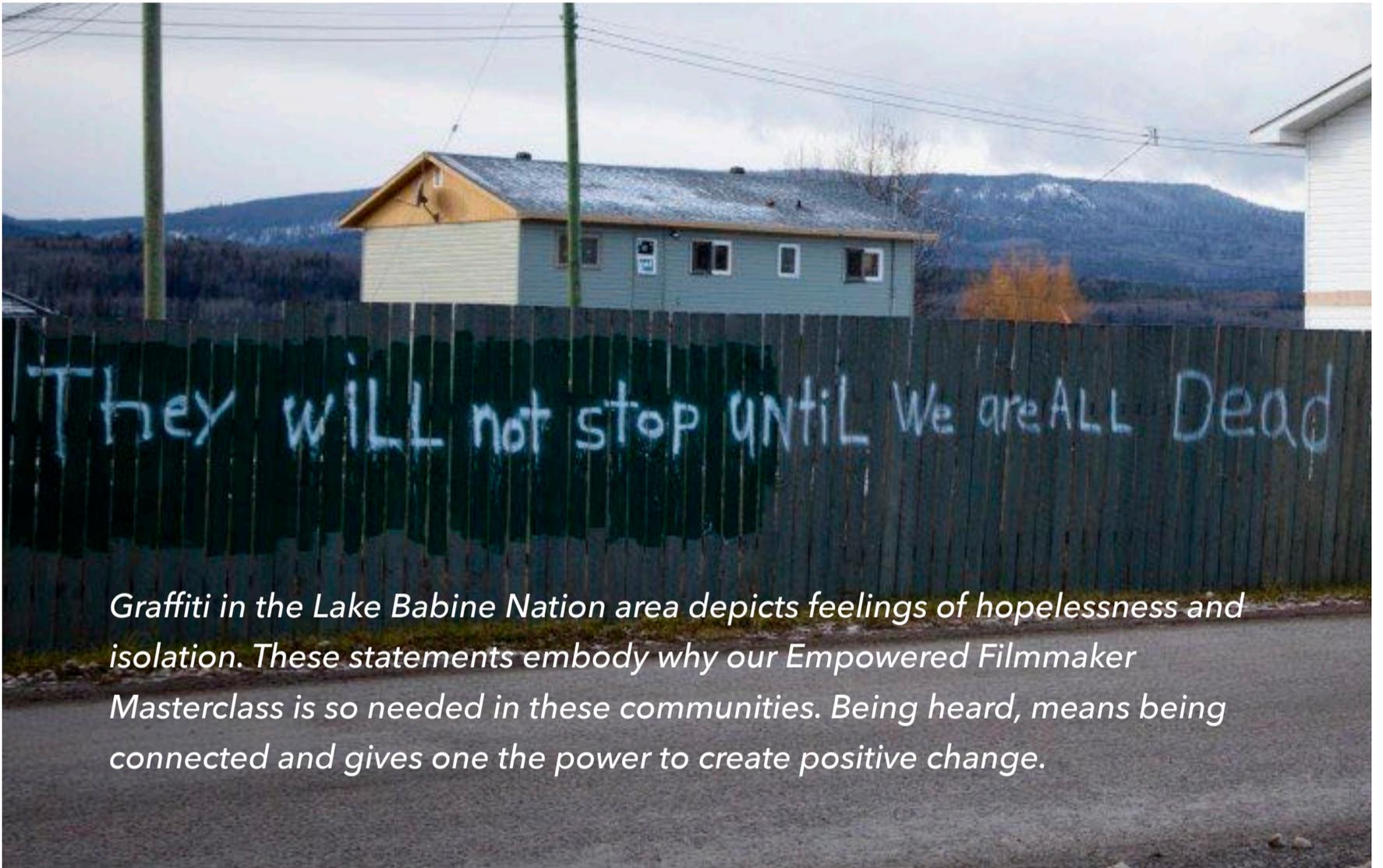
The term **empowerment** refers to measures designed to increase the degree of autonomy and self-determination in people and in communities in order to enable them to represent their interests in a responsible and self-determined way, acting on their own authority.





"We need to create a visual platform to assist youth to be more informed about choosing to live healthy, drug-free lives... We need to strengthen the youth with the power to achieve their own social awareness".

Trent Moreas,
Skidegate Band Council



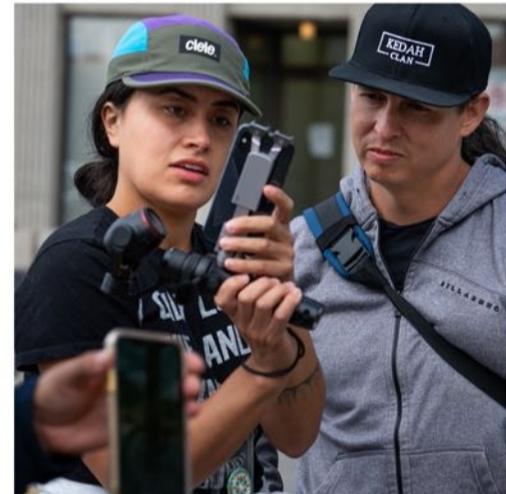
Graffiti in the Lake Babine Nation area depicts feelings of hopelessness and isolation. These statements embody why our Empowered Filmmaker Masterclass is so needed in these communities. Being heard, means being connected and gives one the power to create positive change.

"Farhan still continues to mentor me, help me become a better filmmaker, and be my number one filmmaking resource. I couldn't be happier to endorse his program. I hope other aspiring filmmakers can learn from him as much as I did".



Zehra Ozgun Gunduz
Emerging Documentary Filmmaker (2021 Program)

Many of our students are now working professionals serving their communities with their new filmmaking skills.



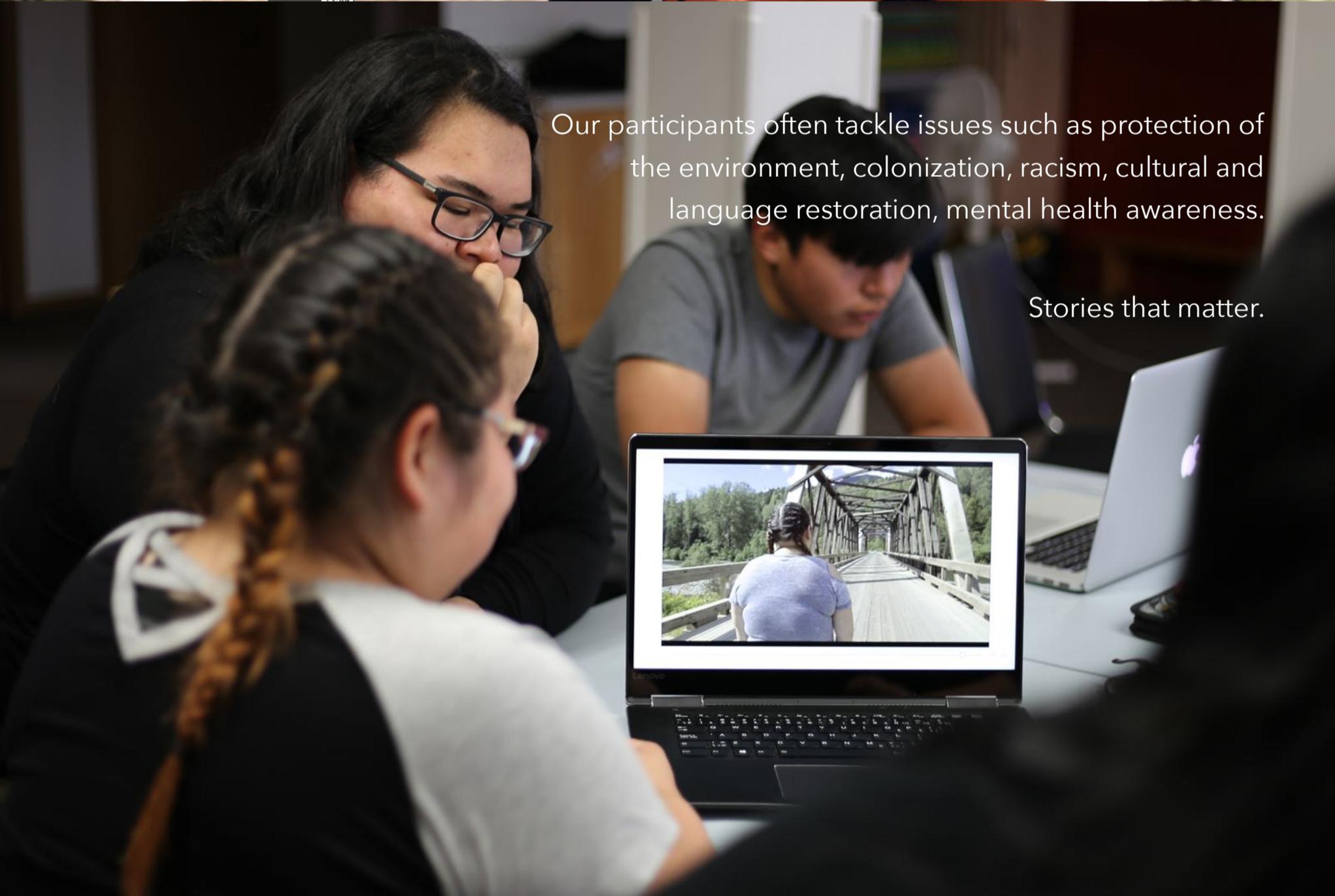
We have a huge responsibility to preserve and engage in our culture to be passed to future generations, and by documenting our traditions we are taking a huge step towards just that. I give my full support for this project and I am eager in hopes that it can be brought to our little community and grow exponentially.

*Haaw'a/Thank you,
SGaana Gaahlandaay
Alix Goetzinger*



Our participants often tackle issues such as protection of the environment, colonization, racism, cultural and language restoration, mental health awareness.

Stories that matter.



Through our program we honour participants who lift up others and are dedicated to positive change. We also honour the creative geniuses who often work quietly in the background but are instrumental in creating beautiful, creative films.



TEAM

Farhan Umedaly - Lead Instructor



Farhan Umedaly is an award-winning filmmaker best known for his films about social causes.

Farhan has a background in neurobiology and has worked as a consultant for renewable energy developments before establishing VoVo Productions in 2009. The original focus of the company was to produce videos that enable clean-tech and renewable energy companies to realize their business objectives. Since then, VoVo Productions has diversified, having produced more than 200 promotional videos and commercials for leading companies and non-profits such as the David Suzuki Foundation to help create positive change. Farhan works alongside groups such as ISSofBC, Vancouver Foundation, and Access to Media and Education Society to provide mentorship in filmmaking to marginalized communities such as Syrian refugees and indigenous communities. He is best known for his indigenous focused documentaries - 'A Last Stand for Lelu', and more recently 'The Sun on Top of the House'. He recently was a Producer, Assistant Director and Director of Photography for the acclaimed Hollywood feature 'Best F(r)iends' which was recently purchased by Lionsgate Films. He is also a Producer of 'Brave Blue World' on Netflix starring Matt Damon and others.

The son of refugees to Canada from Uganda, Farhan is committed to building alliances with indigenous communities through providing professional training and mentorship in filmmaking - an area of great opportunity as well as a powerful tool to give voices to those who have important stories to tell.

James Morgan - Northern B.C. Liaison, Mentor



James Morgan is a member of the Gitanyow Lax'Yip Guardians was a participant in the 2018 Empowered Filmmaker Masterclass program in Northern B.C. He is a dedicated to empowering indigenous communities through education and reconnecting with their traditional territories and culture. James is also a key figure helping to build the National Indigenous Guardians Network.

Christine Smith-Martin - Senior Advisor



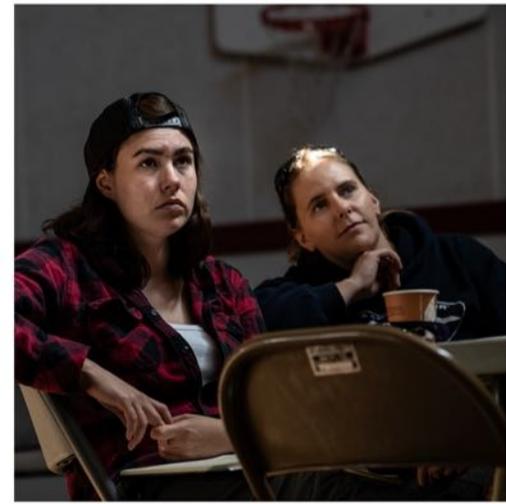
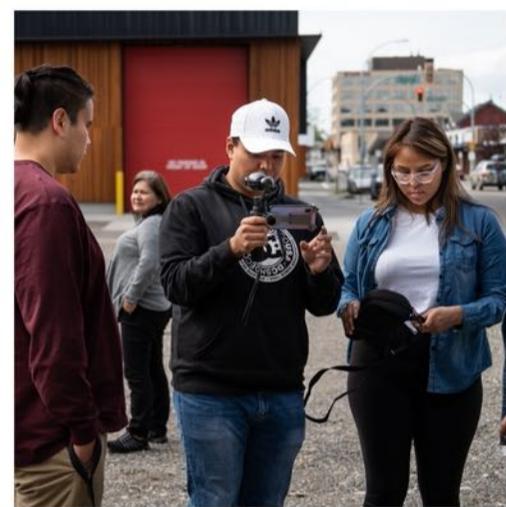
Christine Smith-Martin grew up in the north coast communities of Lax Kw'alaams and Prince Rupert. Her Nations include Haida, Tsimshian and Nisga'a. Her great-grandfather was William Beynon (Sim'oojit Gwisk'aayn) Her grandparents were William (Sonny) Beynon and Dora (Adams) Green, Ganada Wilp Luuxhoon.

Christine spent 19 years as the Executive Director of the Vancouver Aboriginal Transformative Justice Services Society. In this capacity, she sat on various Boards and Committees including the Aboriginal Community Career Employment Services Society, Metro Vancouver Aboriginal Executive Council (which she co-founded), Knowledgeable Aboriginal Youth Association among others.

In addition to the Board and Committees, Christine spent most of her professional career negotiating with both Provincial and Federal Governments, The City of Vancouver and Provincial Indigenous political organizations.



Every single participant that completes the Empowered Filmmaker Masterclass will be able to produce their own productions from beginning to end.



MORE INFORMATION:

www.empoweredfilmmaker.com





CONTACT INFORMATION

Farhan Umedaly
farhan@vovoproductions.com
604.562.2119

Participant contact: empoweredfilmmaker@gmail.com
Find us on Facebook @empoweredfilmmaker

Within the Traditional Territory of the Coast Salish Peoples



V o V o P r o d u c t i o n s