



KICKSTART



IMPACT KICKSTART

For a documentary film to make a difference, a solid strategy for audience engagement and strong partnerships are key.

Filmmakers often lack time to do this work themselves or the expertise and the funds to pay for it. Emerging filmmakers, creators of color, and underrepresented artists can face the biggest hurdles, despite the potential of their projects. Working Films' response to this challenge is Impact Kickstart, a program offering in-kind partnership and strategy development to underrepresented documentary directors with feature films in progress that hold great promise to catalyze action to address critical issues of our time.

Impact Kickstart program has helped underrepresented filmmakers create strategic goals for impact and specific plans to engage future partners, funders, and audiences in meaningful ways. Impact Kickstart was created to fill a gap in support for the impact campaigns of underrepresented filmmakers, including directors who identify as Black, Indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC); undocumented; disabled; LGBTQ+; nonbinary; trans; and female directors with a majority female and/or underrepresented film team

For nearly two decades, Working Films has planned and led strategy summits to inform the plans for impact campaigns and solidify partner commitments. Our team works in collaboration with filmmakers to outline priorities including: vision, outcomes, potential partners, priority audiences, strategic screening locations, and opportunities for meaningful action. From there, we work with filmmakers to create an invite list of aligned organizations, build out an agenda, and coordinate the logistics of the strategy summit. Both the film team and attendees will walk away from the summit with a clear sense of each other's goals, current and future opportunities to leverage the film, and commitments to move the impact campaign forward in priority locations and in front of key audiences.

PREVIOUS IMPACT KICKSTART FILMS:

2021

BRING HER HOME

by Leya Hale (Director/Producer) and Sergio Mata'u Rapu (Producer/Editor)

FIRE THROUGH DRY GRASS

by Andres "Jay" Molina (Co-Director), Alexis Neophytides (Co-Director/Producer), Jennilie Brewster (Producer), Peter Yearwood (Associate Impact Producer), and Vincent Pierce (Impact Strategist/Musician)

2020

DUTY FREE

by Sian-Pierre Regis (Director) and Meredith Chin (Producer)

LITTLE SALLIE WALKER

by Marta Effinger-Crichlow (Director/ Producer), Michael Dinwiddie (Producer), Princess A. Hairston (Editor/Producer)

UNAPOLOGETIC

by Ashley O'Shay (Director/Producer) and Morgan Elise Johnson (Producer)

THE WALLS OF JERICHO: INSIDE THE FIGHT FOR A POOR PEOPLE'S CAMPAIGN

by Dara Kell (Director)

2019

EATING UP EASTER

by Sergio Mata'u Rapu (Director/Producer) and Elena Rapu (Producer)

GOING TO MARS: THE NIKKI GIOVANNI PROJECT

by Michèle Stephenson (Director/Producer) and Joe Brewster (Director/Producer)

THE FIRST RAINBOW COALITION

by Ray Santisteban (Director/Producer)

WARRIOR WOMEN

by Christina King (Director/Producer), Elizabeth Castle (Director/Producer), and Anna Marie Pitman (Producer)

2018

ALWAYS IN SEASON

by Jacqueline Olive (Director/Producer) and Jessica Devaney (Producer)

CRIP CAMP

by Nicole Newnham (Director/Producer), Jim LeBrecht (Director/Producer), and Sara Bolder (Producer)

DECADE OF FIRE

by Vivian Vázquez (Director/Producer), Gretchen Hildebran (Director/Producer), Julia Steele Allen (Producer/Impact Producer), and Neyda Martinez (Producer)

NAILED IT

by Adele Pham (Director/Producer) and Kelvin Saint Pham (Producer)

2022 IMPACT KICKSTART FILMS

STORMING CAESARS PALACE

by Hazel Gurland-Pooler
(Director/Producer) and Nazenet
Habtezghi (Producer)

When Ruby Duncan faces harassment by a fraud-obsessed welfare department, she ignites “Mother Power” mobilizing a welfare rights group to fight for justice, dignity, democratic participation, and an adequate income. With low-income

mothers across the country, and two radicalized professors George Wiley and Frances Fox Piven, they form the National Welfare Rights Organization (NWRO). When thousands of Las Vegas families are slashed from the welfare rolls, Ruby calls the NWRO and launches “Operation Nevada.” They lead an army—including Ralph Abernathy and Jane Fonda—down the Strip into Caesars Palace, shutting it down. From protesters to lobbyists to founders of an anti-poverty community center, Ruby proves her mantra, “we can do it and do it better.”



UNTITLED UNDERGROUND RAILROAD RIDE

by Fiz Olajide (Director/Producer), Faith E. Briggs (Impact Producer/Associate Producer), Jon Lynn (Editor/Co-Producer), Nerenda Eid (Executive Producer)

On the heels of 2020’s global protests for social justice and the run-up to the US presidential elections, five Black and Latinx cyclists led by NYC-based messenger, John “Bobby” Shackelford attempt to traverse a route inspired by the Underground Railroad which led many

enslaved Black people to freedom in the 1800s. Riding alongside the magnetic Bobby – Richard Carson, a camera-shy cyclocross racer from Indianapolis; Rashad Mahoney, a soft-spoken bike mechanic in Baltimore who loves the outdoors; Eduardo Garabito, a gregarious Latinx custom bike builder at a NYC shop and Alex Olbrich, a spirited DC bike salesman of Ghanaian-German heritage. They seek agency to combat the lack of representation in the ultra white world of cycling and to inspire BIPOC kids with their representation of Black manhood. Over the course of 17 days, as each man attempts this ambitious athletic feat, the challenges of the road transform them in this thought-provoking and complex tale of freedom and identity.



IMPACT KICKSTART HIGHLIGHTS

ALWAYS IN SEASON

by Jacqueline Olive (Director/Producer) and Jessica Devaney (Producer)

As the trauma of more than a century of lynching African Americans bleeds into the present, *Always in Season* follows relatives of the perpetrators and victims seeking justice and reconciliation in the midst of racial profiling, police shootings, and heated national debate about the value of black lives.

On September 11, 2018, Working Films hosted the Always in Season National Strategy Summit at the Woodruff Arts Center in Atlanta, Georgia. The meeting brought together racial justice leaders to discuss their priorities and outline opportunities for using the documentary to spark public dialogue and action for racial justice and an end to racist violence across the United States. Molly Murphy and Hannah Hearn of Working Films co-facilitated the meeting.

Summit attendees discussed the opportunities and challenges of positioning *Always in Season* in the current racial justice landscape. Participants identified the need to find and focus on the right places and the right audiences with whom to hold conversations about truth and reconciliation. They prioritized cities where racist violence has taken place and where there is opportunity for remembrance and transformative justice. Key audiences identified include those who work on the issue already, progressive individuals who could be motivated to act after watching, faith communities, historical societies, HBCUs, and people convened across different generations. Attendees closed out the meeting with commitments to host screenings, to gain buy in from the rest of their organization and networks, to support communication efforts, and to assist with the creation of a discussion guide.

Find out more about the film and how to watch it [here](#).



"Our Always in Season National Impact Summit that Working Films organized and hosted last year in Atlanta made the deep-dive into goal-setting and engagement strategies with national and regional organizations possible, and it was the fruitful convening that I had been imagining for years."

- Jacqueline Olive, Director/Producer

BRING HER HOME

by Leya Hale (Director/Producer) and Sergio Mata'u Rapu (Producer/Editor)

Native women make up less than one percent of the U.S. population yet face murder rates that are more than ten times the national average. *Bring Her Home* follows three indigenous women – an artist, an activist, and a politician – as they fight to vindicate and honor their missing and murdered relatives who have fallen victims to a growing epidemic across Indian country. Despite the lasting effects from colonization, each woman must search for healing while navigating racist systems that brought about this very crisis.

As the 2022 Impact Kickstart recipient, we hosted a Strategy summit for *Bring Her Home* which convened leaders focused on combating the epidemic of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, to strategize how the film can reach its greatest impact. Leya Hale, Director/Producer of *Bring Her Home*, recounted their experience: "I've always heard about impact producing, but I never fully understood what it was. It wasn't until I went through Working Film's Impact Kickstart program where I finally understood the value and process of creating a thoughtful plan to maximize the impact of our film...Working Films Impact Kickstart program truly showed us what to do with our film once it was completed."

The *Bring Her Home* team was able to allocate the Impact Kickstart funds (\$30,000) towards hiring a Native American publicist who will help support the film's broadcast premier to ensure that they reach Indigenous communities and supporting the hard costs associated with community screenings.



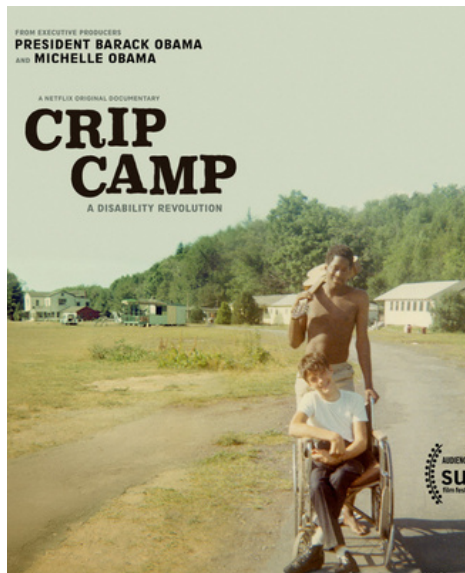
CRIP CAMP

by Nicole Newnham (Director/Producer), Jim LeBrecht (Director/Producer), and Sara Bolder (Producer)

Down the road from Woodstock, in the early 1970s, a parallel revolution blossomed in a ramshackle summer camp for disabled teenagers. *Crip Camp* explores the awakenings that would happen there, transforming lives and shaping the disability rights movement, and America, forever. Told from the point of view of former camper Jim LeBrecht, and steeped in the humor and music of the era, the film traces the journeys of campers up to the present day, in this untold story of a powerful journey towards inclusion.

Crip Camp was an inaugural Impact Kickstart awardee in 2018. Working Films consulted the film team at various points during production, advising initial fundraising and impact campaign strategy.

Working Films later worked with the filmmakers and the firm Uncommon to plan a 2019 strategy summit for the film's impact campaign that included a case study of Working Films' methodology and past campaigns to seed ideas to support the movement for disability rights and justice. The meeting brought together leaders and advocates working in disability justice to discuss the issue landscape, opportunities and challenges, priority screening locations and audiences, important actions, and engagement materials that could accompany the film's release. The film was picked up by Higher Ground Productions and released on Netflix on March 25, 2020. You can watch it [here](#) now.



DECADE OF FIRE

by Vivian Vázquez (Director/Producer), Gretchen Hildebran (Director/Producer), Julia Steele Allen (Producer/Impact Producer), and Neyda Martinez (Producer)

As cities today struggle with gentrification and social inequity, *Decade of Fire* offers an intimate historic portrait of the burning of the Bronx in the 1970s, transcending era and geography. Set against irrefutably insurmountable odds, and told from the perspectives of the people who survived it, the film's heroes demonstrate the lengths to which everyday people will go to save their communities; in this case – defending and rebuilding their neighborhoods with their bare hands.

For *Decade of Fire*, we provided consultation that solidified and expanded partnerships. We connected their team to community leaders in Puerto Rico with whom they presented a successful solar powered film tour across the island in early 2020. We created a promotional deck, conducted funder research, and helped them to write an effective Letter of Inquiry for seeking funding. During our collaboration they secured funding from the Ford Foundation for the impact campaign. We also connected the film team to Adele Pham (Director of *Nailed It*), whom they hired to produce a short designed to advance housing justice, entitled "Defending Your Block: How to Stay, Fight and Build." *Decade of Fire* Impact Producer Julia Steele Allen noted that the Working Films weekly check-ins were vital to the success of their impact campaign.



(Photos by Ramón Andino Rodríguez for Cine Solar Rodante and the film *Decade of Fire*.)

"This weekly accountability structure - where I could bounce ideas off of you, ask questions, share worries and check my progress - was invaluable as a first-time impact producer (and filmmaker!) working largely independently on this aspect of our film project."

- Julia Steele Allen, Impact Producer

DUTY FREE

by Sian-Pierre Regis (Director) and Meredith Chin (Producer)

After a 75 year-old immigrant mother gets fired from her job as a hotel housekeeper, her son takes her on a bucket-list adventure to reclaim her life. As she struggles to find work, he documents a journey that uncovers the betrayals plaguing her past and the economic insecurity shaping not only her future, but that of an entire generation.

For the *Duty Free* strategy summit, Working Films brought together leaders working to address ageism, economic insecurity and intergenerational care, that included AARP, Caring Across, Generations, LeadingAge, CIRKEL and other national organizations. The strategy summit was an opportunity to shape and inform the impact campaign, create long-term partnerships and strategize opportunities for the film to spark intergenerational dialogue and catalyze action that allows older adults to reclaim their life – and that of an entire generation. The *Duty Free* team has carried the momentum from the strategy summit along with support through the Impact Kickstart grant to bring on a full-time Impact Producer to implement their impact campaign ahead of the film's theatrical premier that took place on Mother's Day, a World Health Organization screening, and a screening + talkback at the Leading Age Conference.



"Making an impact can be a tall order. But WF showed us our film's superpowers and helped us strategize how to make strides toward progress."

- Sian-Pierre Regis, Director/Producer

EATING UP EASTER

by Sergio Mata'u Rapu (Director/Producer) and Elena Rapu (Producer)

The iconic statues and sensationalized “mysteries” of Easter Island (Rapa Nui) have drawn the interest of the world for centuries, attracting curious visitors to its shores. Today, this tiny, barren island is experiencing an economic boon as tourism skyrockets. Yet the indigenous culture and the island’s fragile environment are suffering. *Eating Up Easter*, directed by native Rapanui filmmaker Sergio Mata'u Rapu, explores the dilemma his people are facing. Crafted as a story passed down to his newborn son, Sergio intertwines the authentic history of the island with the stories of four islanders. In their own voices, these Rapanui reveal the reality of modern life and the actions they are taking to preserve their culture and environment amidst rapid development.

For *Eating Up Easter*, Working Films hosted a virtual National Strategy Summit. The meeting brought together leaders working in environmental health and sustainability, eco-tourism, cultural preservation, and media impact to discuss their priorities and outline opportunities for using the documentary to spark public dialogue and advance action toward reducing waste, being a conscientious traveler, and ensuring that the culture and monuments of indigenous communities survive and thrive. Anna Lee, Hannah Hearn, and Stephanie Avery of Working Films co-facilitated the meeting.

Based on the conversations that took place at the summit, Working Films proposed four strategic avenues for the engagement campaign:

- 1) Tours to locations with similarities to Rapa Nui (With Hawaii as first stop)
- 2) Screenings for industry leaders and employees working in tourism, sustainability, and diversity
- 3) Leveraging existing distribution opportunities and maximizing action opportunities for wider audiences
- 4) Creating unique screening opportunities in other educational and community settings

Read the full summit report [here](#), and find more details about these four strategies in the section “Positioning Eating Up Easter.”



FIRE THROUGH DRY GRASS

by Andres “Jay” Molina (Co-Director), Alexis Neophytides (Co-Director/Producer), Jennilie Brewster (Producer), Peter Yearwood (Associate Impact Producer), and Vincent Pierce (Impact Strategist/Musician)

Fire Through Dry Grass uncovers in real time, and with singular access, the devastation nursing home residents experienced during the coronavirus pandemic. Co-Director Andres “Jay” Molina is one of the Reality Poets, Black and Brown disabled artists who live in an NYC nursing facility. Prior to Covid, they traveled throughout the city sharing their art and wisdom. Using GoPros clamped to their wheelchairs, the Poets document the harrowing year on “lock down.” Nurses beg for PPE, sick patients are moved into crowded rooms with the healthy, while refrigerated-trailer morgues hum outside the windows and city officials lie to hide their deadly decisions. *Fire* proceeds from the Poets’ world to unmask the many issues and inequities that historically impact those most vulnerable, and shows the power of community and creativity. The Poets’ rhymes flow throughout the film, revealing their inner lives and describing life in the city-run institution, now as dangerous as the streets they once ran.

The *Fire Through Dry Grass* strategy summit brought together the film team with individuals and organizations whose work focuses on supporting those living in nursing homes and amplifying disability justice, with organizations such as DREDF, Undocumented Filmmakers Collective, Essential Caregivers Coalition, and World Institute on Disability Justice helping ground the discussion in the adage, “nothing about us without us.”



“It was amazing to see people attending the summit respond in such a positive and war way. They were engaged in the films like it was theirs, and it was a reminder of how much the film actually impacts people.” - Jay Molina, Co-Director

GOING TO MARS: THE NIKKI GIOVANNI PROJECT

by Michèle Stephenson (Director/Producer) and Joe Brewster (Director/Producer)

Going to Mars is a feature length documentary film in-progress in which Nikki Giovanni, one of America's greatest living poets, orators and social commentators, will compel audiences to laugh and cry using her poetry and biting social commentary. As a social commentator Nikki Giovanni stands toe-to-toe with the best. She has the satirical wit of Will Rogers and the comedic timing of David Letterman. She has influenced both her contemporaries, from Muhammad Ali to Maya Angelou, as well as today's hip-hop artists such as Kanye West. She in turn demands, using a contrarian point of view, that we question our assumptions about race, gender, equity and privilege and challenges us to hope and dream for a better tomorrow.

To help envision and strategize the impact campaign for *Going to Mars*, Working Films partnered with Beautiful Ventures to host a national strategy summit on December 6, 2019 at Busboys and Poets in Washington D.C. The meeting brought together racial and social justice leaders, artists, and creators to discuss their priorities and outline opportunities for using the film to spark intergenerational dialogue and catalyze action at the intersection of creative arts and social justice. Melinda Weekes Laidlow of Beautiful Ventures and Gerry Leonard of Working Films facilitated the meeting.

Summit attendees laid out the current landscape of their work and that of larger movements they are part of. Given the wide span of issues the film *Going to Mars* illuminates, attendees identified the need to find and focus on the right partners and audiences with whom to hold conversations around racial healing through art and creativity, across generations. They helped map the geographic locations and reach of each participant, both for the film's long term impact campaign and to prioritize new partnerships with film festivals, literary fairs, and cultural events, where attendees are based or have affiliates who can participate in programming. Attendees closed out the meeting with commitments to stay connected with each other, to host screenings, to share information with their networks, to support communication efforts, and to explore collaborative fundraising efforts.

Find out more about the film and watch the trailer [here](#).

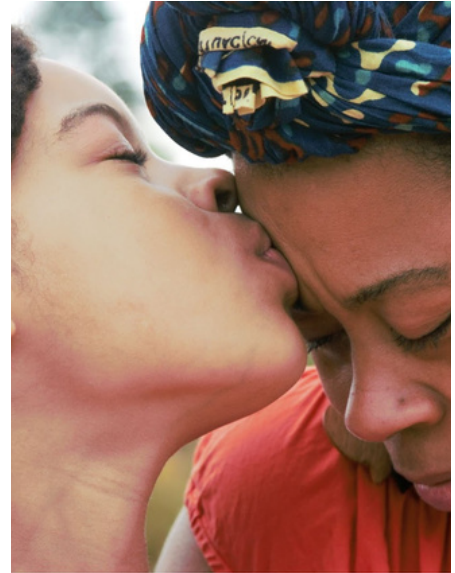


LITTLE SALLIE WALKER

by Marta Effinger-Crichlow (Director/ Producer), Michael Dinwiddie (Producer), Princess A. Hairston (Editor/Producer)

Play is a lifeline for black girls across the generations. *Little Sallie Walker* tells the story of Patricia, Billie Jean, Raisha, Kristi and a collection of resilient black women and girls, who understand that coming of age in America has involved creating worlds-of-make-believe through different types of play. Patty cake, dress up, double dutch, doll-making, jacks, and hide-and-seek have offered sanctuary from discrimination, violence, and poverty. From New York, Alabama, California, and Washington State, they share and demonstrate how play lets them take their place in the center of their universe. While it exposes the beauty of black girl culture, play also fuels painful recollections of their struggles within their communities and in the larger society. In this impassioned and lyrical story, black women and girls attempt to find and affirm their whole selves as they navigate America.

The *Little Sallie Walker* Strategy Summit brought together a wondrous group of social justice leaders, artists and creators to discuss their priorities and outline opportunities for utilizing the documentary film as a resource to reclaim power and create healing justice for Black women and girls. The *Little Sallie Walker* Play Date Experience© serves as the film's main resource for its impact and engagement campaign. It invites intergenerational communities to attend film screenings that are coupled with storytelling, games and play activities.



"The Working Films Impact Kickstart has given me the opportunity to share my full authentic self in a film community. The IK certainly provides filmmakers with the tools to strengthen our projects' impact campaign strategies and goals. I'm certain I've come away with so much more than access. There is something quite thrilling about Working Films, who at their beautiful core, are also committed to truth-telling and spirit-building, within and beyond the medium of film."

- Marta Effinger-Crichlow, Director/Producer

NAILED IT

by Adele Pham (Director/Producer) and Kelvin Saint Pham (Producer)

Nailed It chronicles the genesis and 40 year legacy of the Vietnamese nail salon and its influence on an \$8 billion-dollar American industry. For mixed-race Vietnamese filmmaker Adele Pham, it's personal as she confronts her conflicts with the culture and discovers a place within a trade seen by everyone but known to few.

Working Films created a national impact strategy with *Nailed It* director, Adele Pham, and supported pilot efforts to lay the groundwork for future funding. We initiated the film's social media presence before its premiere at CAAM Fest, developed promotional collateral, conducted academic outreach to position the film for pick up by an educational distributor, and advised the design of a National Salon Tour to engage Vietnamese salon workers, clients, public health advocates in efforts for healthier and more just salons, while celebrating the cultural and economic contributions of Vietnamese entrepreneurs and workers.

We organized a *Nailed It* film screening and pop-up salon that was featured at the New Orleans Film Festival on October 22, 2018. The event was hosted by Working Films with *Nailed It's* Adele Pham and Kelvin Saint Pham, M.A.D. Nails, and the New Orleans Film Festival. Event sponsors included Sunshine Nail Supply, Native Polish, and Karma Organic Spa.

Over 60 festival attendees were able to stop by the nail salon table and get their nails done by one of the four professional nail technicians using all natural, toxin-free products. Conversations flowed about the film and the history of Vietnamese nail salons. Excitement and passion grew around the issue of healthy, just nail salons, and guests were able to take info/action handouts with them when they left.



"There was a palpable warmth and energy throughout the day."

- Sapana Sakya, Center for Asian American Media

THE FIRST RAINBOW COALITION

by Ray Santisteban (Director/Producer)

In 1969, the Chicago Black Panther Party began to form alliances across lines of race and ethnicity with other community-based movements in the city, including the Latino group the Young Lords Organization and the southern whites of the Young Patriots organization. Banding together in one of the most segregated cities in postwar America to collectively confront issues such as police brutality and substandard housing, they called themselves the Rainbow Coalition. By 1973, the coalition had collapsed under the weight of relentless harassment by local and federal law enforcement. Although short-lived, it had an outsized impact: breaking down barriers between communities, it created a permanent shift in Chicago politics and an organizing model for future activists and politicians across the nation. *The First Rainbow Coalition* tells the movement's little-known story through rare archival footage and interviews with former coalition members.

On October 3, 2019, Working Films, in partnership with the MacArthur Foundation, hosted *The First Rainbow Coalition* National Strategy Summit. The meeting brought together racial and social justice leaders to discuss their priorities and outline opportunities for using the documentary to spark public dialogue and catalyze action to advance racial justice and multiracial coalition building in the United States. Anna Lee and Gerry Leonard of Working Films co-facilitated the meeting. The strategy summit helped shape the film's impact strategy and secured key partnerships leading up to its broadcast premier on PBS on January 27, 2020. SpiritHouse, one of the summit attendees, hosted an online watch party of the film followed by a Twitter/Facebook discussion on February 20, with over 100 groups and chapters taking part. The full summit report that includes next steps and focus areas can be found [here](#).



"Impact Kickstart really helped shape a clear vision for my impact campaign. The strategy summit that Working Films planned and hosted crystalized my film's potential partners, created an overall program strategy, and set realistic goals for how my film could impact a variety of communities. The Working Films team brings a wealth of hands-on experience and creates a partnership with filmmakers that taps into your film's inherent strengths, creating an impact plan that is both informed by the communities you hope to reach and one that is best positioned to reach the key audiences you hope to engage."

- Ray Santisteban, Director/Producer

The Walls of Jericho: Inside the Fight for a Poor People's Campaign

by Dara Kell (Director)

The Walls of Jericho: Inside the Fight for a Poor People's Campaign is a forthcoming feature-length documentary film by Dara Kell that examines the crisis of poverty through the perspective of the leaders and voices of a new social movement, the Poor People's Campaign. In the wealthiest society in human history, nearly half of the U.S. population lives in poverty or is struggling to make ends meet and cannot afford a \$400 emergency. This is an intimate account of a "season of resistance," told through the eyes of extraordinary leaders: mothers, veterans, preachers, and students who are the voices and founding members of this new "fusion" movement. The film bears witness to the profound process by which those without power decide not to accept their powerlessness. Instead, they claim - through protest, dance, song, and poems, through testimony and tears - their birthright: to live decent lives in the United States of America.

The strategy summit took place in October 2020 that included Black Alliance for Just Immigration (BAJI), Georgia STAND-UP, Malcolm X Grassroots Movement and other national organizations to help shape and inform the impact campaign for the film. After the summit, the film team has continued to cultivate partnerships with the organizations to map out issues and call-to-actions that outline the overall framework of the Poor People's Campaign. The Impact Kickstart grant will support in creating a screening guide and educational curriculum that will accompany the film.



Unapologetic

by Ashley O'Shay (Director/Producer) and Morgan Elise Johnson (Producer)

During the height of the Movement for Black Lives in Chicago, *Unapologetic* captures a community of millennial organizers confronting an administration complicit in state violence against its Black residents. Janaé and Bella, two Black queer women organizers, provide an intimate peek into the personal and political battles that transformed Chicago, from the police murder of Rekia Boyd to the election of Mayor Lori Lightfoot.

The *Unapologetic* film team after completing their strategy summit, which brought together leaders from around the country focused on Black liberation and abolition, has focused their impact campaign on reaching new audiences and partners. Partnerships include: A Long Walk Home Inc, Affinity Community Services, Black Lives Matter - Chicago, Black Youth Project 100, Color of Change, #LetUsBreathe Collective, Nap Ministry, Teens Take Charge and other national groups working on issues the film amplifies. The Impact Kickstart grant supported with the creation of their impact discussion guide paired alongside the film as well as bringing on an Impact Coordinator to help implement outdoor screening events, partner screenings and impact work alongside their theatrical run.



WARRIOR WOMEN

by Christina King (Director/Producer), Elizabeth Castle (Director/Producer), and Anna Marie Pitman (Producer)

In the 1970s, with the swagger of unapologetic Indianness, organizers of the American Indian Movement (AIM) fought for Native liberation and survival as a community of extended families. *Warrior Women* is the story of Madonna Thunder Hawk, one such AIM leader who shaped a kindred group of activists' children – including her daughter Marcy – into the “We Will Remember” Survival School as a Native alternative to government-run education. Together, Madonna and Marcy fought for Native rights in an environment that made them more comrades than mother-daughter. Today, with Marcy now a mother herself, both are still at the forefront of Native issues, fighting against the environmental devastation of the Dakota Access Pipeline and for Indigenous cultural values.

Through Impact Kickstart, Working Films advised the structure and roll out of the encompassing Warrior Women Project (WWP), which builds on the impact of the feature film and lifts up the leadership and solutions of Native women through community-informed research, archiving, media production, and impact programming. We have advised upcoming WWP programming and supported fundraising and partnership development by making connections and developing written and visual materials.



"As a first time filmmaker coming from a community organizing and academic space, it was difficult to figure out who I could ask about what. There is a lot of pressure in the filmmaking community to always appear like you have all the answers when of course you don't. There is also a tradition of moving on to your next project while barely finishing the first though more and more folks are turning to filmmaking as a direct pathway for social change. I had the great privilege of receiving multiple fellowships as part of my filmmaking experience, but they were very time limited. They don't provide the ongoing mentorship and support that a major project like mine needed and that came from my Impact Kickstart with Working Films. This is truly different from many of the existing fellowship opportunities. First of the all, the staff are truly hard workers with top notch skills. The weekly check-ins have been absolutely critical. I can't say that enough - there is no other experience that provides an ongoing relationship of mentorship and partnership that truly grows a film like mine which was made for the purposes of the extensive impact campaign built around it. I would trade grant money in a heartbeat for extended in-kind support from Working Films. It is a much deeper investment in time and yields so much more in results. It has been my single most valuable experience in the ten year process of making this film and has helped me create an ongoing, change-making, sustainable project and shown me a path for making more media of this nature."

- Elizabeth Castle, Director



IN CLOSING

Now in its sixth year, Impact Kickstart has helped underrepresented filmmakers create strategic goals for impact and specific plans to engage future partners, funders, and audiences in meaningful ways. Impact Kickstart was created to fill a gap in support for the impact campaigns of underrepresented filmmakers.

Beginning in 2020, we were able to begin providing pass through funding to the selected filmmakers. Impact Kickstart recipients use these grants toward the implementation of each film's impact campaign.

Impact Kickstart has received rave reviews from the participating filmmakers about the efficacious ways in which Working Films has served and supported their projects. We continue to look for ways to improve the program and the services we provide filmmakers. This year we revamped our decision-making panel process to better reflect those the program is designed to serve. We will continue to evaluate and innovate the program's structure and offer out insights and lessons learned with the documentary and impact field.

THANK YOU

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