



Kamloops, BC – A City in Crisis

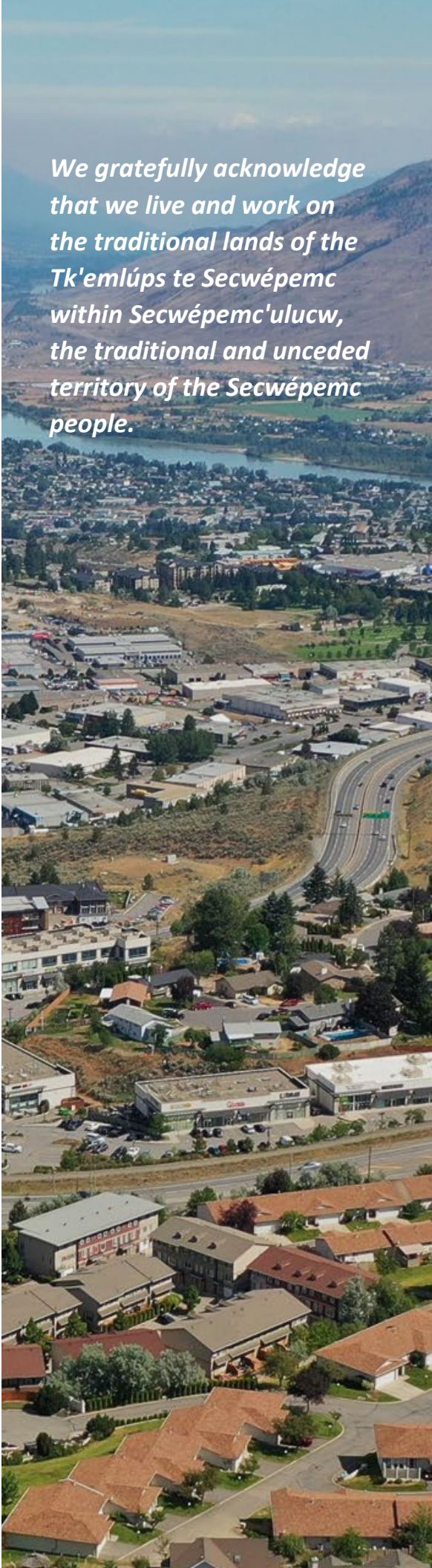
Logline:

A docu-series that chronicles the impacts and seeks to find a way forward from the opioid crisis and its related fallout on a community with 100,000 residents. Kamloops, BC is a city at the complex crossroad between a safe, enjoyable place to live and a growing population of marginalized people who are on the edge of despair. Compassion fatigue has led to polarized opinions with very few feeling that their concerns are being addressed. Can everyone's voice be heard? Can they work together in *Finding A Way Forward* through mentorship and documentary storytelling?

Synopsis:

As the Covid pandemic and wildfires have raged throughout the Province of British Columbia the crises surrounding overdoses, mental health, homelessness, and substance use disorder in BC have also continued to grow at an alarming rate. No longer are there people who can say they are unaffected by the escalating impacts of these difficult and dangerous situations.

In the heart of BC's Interior Region one community has reached its boiling point. Pandemic guidelines meant to protect the population have also isolated, polarized and broadened the divide between the residents of Kamloops.



We gratefully acknowledge that we live and work on the traditional lands of the Tk'emlúps te Secwépemc within Secwépemc'ulucw, the traditional and unceded territory of the Secwépemc people.

Overdose deaths are at an all-time high and are not just confined to the disadvantaged – pillars of the community and professionals have also fallen prey. Kamloops was stunned with the passing of Christopher Séguin, VP of Advancement at Thompson Rivers University, resulting from an overdose in 2017. However, the frequency of these tragic circumstances is on the rise.

According to the BC Coroners Service (Illicit Drug Toxicity Deaths in B.C, 2021) since the beginning of 2020, BC has recorded 2,938 overdose deaths (so far). In comparison, the BC Centre for Disease Control reports 1,951 deaths resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic.

When looking at the Interior Health (IH) Region of BC the numbers reflect the same cause for concern with deaths due to overdose equaling 479 compared to 245 deaths due to COVID-19 (almost double since the beginning of 2020). Kamloops is amongst the cities within BC that experience the highest fatalities due to overdose. It is also important to note that these numbers do not include overdose fatalities resulting from prescribed medications.

Despite significant increases in subsidized housing within the last five years for vulnerable & marginalized populations, an all-time high of homelessness is also adding to the pressure this community is experiencing. “The City of Kamloops' 2021 Point-in-Time Count conducted in April 2021, identified 222 individuals experiencing homelessness in the city. The current shelter capacity in Kamloops is 130 beds, leaving more than 90 individuals with no access to shelter on any given night.” These numbers have increased since 2018 when the Point-in-Time Count recorded 201 individuals. People of Indigenous identity were overrepresented among those experiencing homelessness at that time with 53.5% of those who provided information reporting an Indigenous identity.



With this increase in homelessness, whether by coincidence or direct correlation, increases of threats to personal safety, vandalism, and other crimes related to drug use are also on the rise.

In an article written by Kamloops This Week in June 2021, Supt. Syd Lecky is reported as saying, “he believes calls for service and incidents of property crime will increase again next year due to changes that have impacted the effectiveness of policing... He added that social media has increased awareness of property-crime issues... He said factors beyond police control, including charge approval standards in the courts, policy decisions and case law, have impacted policing, noting officers are as frustrated as residents... Lecky said police may arrest somebody up to four times and, if someone is convicted, sentencing other than incarceration is encouraged. Collectively, he said, the changes are impacting police effectiveness. ‘This is why I do believe we’re going to see trends for property crime continue to increase, is we don’t have the ability to hold them accountable like we had before,’ Lecky said, adding he sees the trend increasing until policy changes are enacted.”

Statistics Canada for 2019 (most recent available statistics) recorded that while Kamloops was safer than 19% of the cities in Canada, year over year crime in Kamloops had increased by 26%. At that time Kamloops crime rates were 100% higher than the national average and violent crimes in Kamloops were 50% higher than the national average. The 2019 statistics showed a 1 in 11 chance of becoming a victim of crime for living in this community.

Businesses and livelihoods are being threatened. Families are feeling unsafe. Neighbourhood appearances and property values are at risk. The deep sense of community is fracturing. Healthcare and social service organizations are struggling with staff burn-out and policing resources are stretching to the breaking-point with officers also feeling like they are being criminalized themselves.

Traditional media continues to fan the flames for sensational news stories while social media groups once known for rational discourse to discuss these challenges are becoming labelled as hate groups.

Far too many feel their concerns are not being addressed. Dehumanization and misinformation continue to spread through this community faster than the wildfires that have been surrounding it.

These problems stemming from opioids, healthcare, housing, and mental health are very real, but so too are the problems stemming from personal emotions, especially fear, and a break down in healthy communication and understanding.

One question that begs to be asked - How can seemingly opposing groups of people, forming around polarizing issues, be brought together to understand each other, and be made to feel that their voices are being heard? Better yet, how can they be brought together to collaboratively work in *Finding A Way Forward?*

“If there was a quick fix, we would have fixed it, but this is a problem that is deep-rooted in poverty, lack of housing, lack of employment, chronic mental illness, drug addiction and eventually crime... I would really ask our public to be patient with us and also to be compassionate.”

Mayor Ken Christian, in a statement to CFJC-TV July 2021

Mastermind Studios in association with AIMCanada Mentorship Society seeks to facilitate the development and production of a reliable, unbiased, and comprehensive docu-series by giving voice to individuals who have been impacted within the community as well as those who have been working on the front lines to manage these crises.

We believe that the depth and breadth of information written within government and agency reports has been far too vast for people to absorb and fully comprehend. Many of these resources have also lacked the stories surrounding lived experience and the human element that can help with understanding.

Through careful listening, mentorship, documenting and attentive storytelling we will eliminate misinformation, make sense of the information available and help this community find a way forward together as a documented blueprint that other communities may follow and build upon.

Exploring and delivering this project could face difficulty if perceived to be representing any one group more than another. As such, we believe it should not be a direct product of a municipal department, political office, business group, healthcare provider nor social service agency. Any of these being perceived as having a controlling interest would only serve to alienate groups who already feel isolated and unheard.

The experiences and perspectives within the docu-series will engage the audience through character constructs such as: The Struggling Business Owner; The Grieving Parent; The Hand-Cuffed Officer; The Almost Homeless Person; The Street-Wise Hustler; The Threatened Homeowner; The Fatigued Social Worker; The Truth & Reconciliation Seeker; The Medical Expert; The Academic Scholar; The Public Servant; The Frightened Family; The Unaddicted Out-of-Worker; The Compassionate White-Knighter; etc

Can Kamloops shine as an example of how to work towards a better outcome during these crises?

A Community In Crisis





Questions We Will Explore Include:

1. What is the Opioid crisis? What is the size and scope? Why has it happened? What has been done so far to address it? What is being done right now? What still needs to be done?
2. What are the lived-experiences and truths versus myths about substance use disorders and is there any evidence that there are solutions for effectively treating and managing the disease?
3. What are the experiences and concerns around public safety and what can be done to address them?
4. What are the experiences and concerns for the business community and the local economy? What needs to be done to mitigate negative impacts?
5. What are the challenges faced by marginalized populations and what have been the contributing factors? What has been done and what is being done to address these problems?
6. What role has traditional and social media played? What information can be trusted? What should residents be mindful of?
7. What are the priorities, roles, responsibilities, historical efforts, and future plans of the municipal government to address the concerns of all residents?
8. What are the experiences, facts and outcomes of law enforcement, the judicial system, corrections, and restorative justice? What are the barriers to improving outcomes and how can they be eliminated?
9. What do subject matter experts and academic scholars have to say about the causes and solutions to this growing crisis?
10. Is there a framework for collaboration, consultation, transparency, and oversight that could be adopted for better outcomes?

Approach & Funding

1st Phase

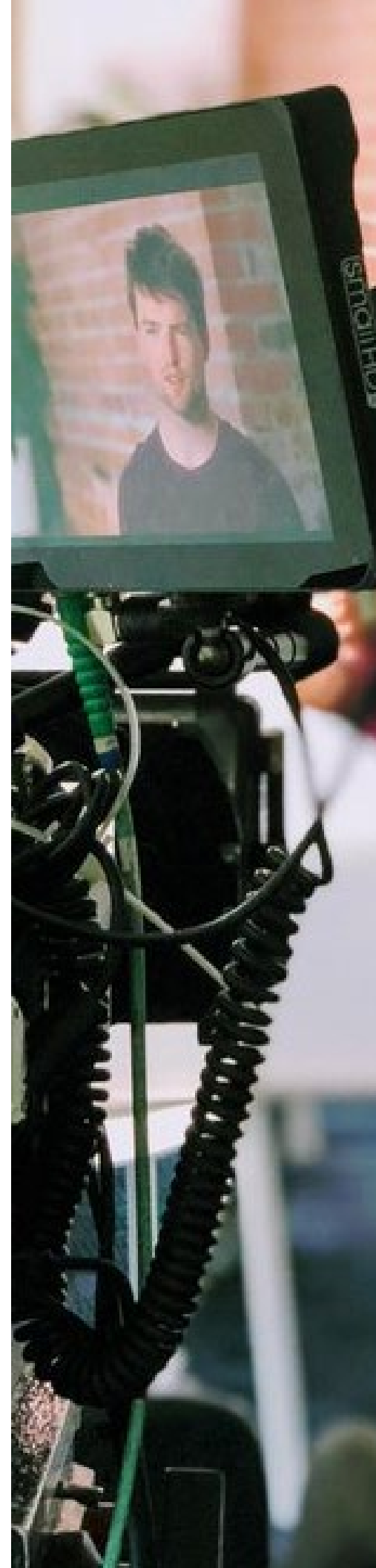
Project status: In Development

Development: *Finding A Way Forward* is currently within the development stage and seeking funding for this first phase including:

1. Further market research.
2. Community consultation and the development of an unbiased screening and selection process to ensure that participants represent a diverse and comprehensive cross-section of the entire community and its experiences surrounding the opioid crisis.
3. Writing a complete documentary series treatment plan with detailed production budget for production greenlight funding and a complete distribution and dissemination plan. This plan will inform and guide the production forward in the creation and distribution of the docu-series and serve as the basis for financing and acquiring the greenlight to move forward with the second phase leading into pre-production, production, post-production, and distribution.
4. Production of a dynamic and engaging 5-minute sizzle reel that adequately reveals how this docu-series will look and what it has to say about: the world in which we live; emotions the film will bring forth in viewers; understanding of the scope of conflicts; and, the personal or human essence of the stories within.

Development Stage Funding: Financial contributions from those within the community will create a more engaged participation in the process and a greater commitment to positive outcomes. However, these financial contributions will not be permitted to bias story development or process for the production.

Mastermind Studios is currently developing a secure website at www.findingawayforward.com which will be administered by AIMCanada Mentorship Society. Here community members and organizations will be able to engage directly





with the production through offering their input for the project and making secure financial contributions. Within the docu-series all participants and financial contributors will be recognized. Although any amount will be accepted with gratitude towards the costs of development and production, we will be recognizing contributors at different contribution level amounts including: Corporate at various amounts; Memorial/Testimonial; Local Agencies; National Agencies; Government funding at local, provincial or federal levels; Media; Impact Donors; Foundations; Individual Donors; and, Champions.

2nd Phase

Pre-production: Off-camera interviews will be conducted over telephone and email with transcriptions for researching and identifying lived-experiences, impacts, understanding and pathways to improved outcomes

Selection of on-camera interview participants will be made and interview preparations including discussion outline/questions will be written; location & set planning will be completed; further planning for illustrative footage (broll) requirements will be done and anonymity for participants will be facilitated where necessary. Any set construction that may be required will be done at this stage. Film permits will be acquired where needed along with the completion of final location scouting, releases and location agreements.

Production: Capturing all the elements that will be used in the final docu-series including Interview filming, archiving, transcribing, and organizing of information, topics and story arcs for editorial consideration.

Several useful, yet uncommon, camera techniques will be used in the filming of this documentary series. The primary focus will be to help the audience engage and connect with the individuals and their stories on a more personal and engaged level while allowing the interview subject to feel as comfortable and safe as possible.

Occasionally there may be interview subjects who have legitimate fears for their own personal safety should their identity be revealed. When this occurs efforts will be made to hide or disguise their identities while maintaining the authenticity of their story.

This production will utilize an Interrotron. This is a variation of the teleprompter used for interview subjects. Rather than seeing text over the camera's lens, the on-camera interviewee sees the face of the person asking the question. The subject of the interview and the questioner can have a one-on-one personal conversation without eye contact wandering around the room. Although the name Interrotron may sound intimidating the actual impact on the interview subject is quite the opposite.

Loss of eye contact has always been a major problem for documentary filmmakers. Non-professional interview subjects are often uncomfortable in front of the camera. They tend to look off camera at every opportunity. Their eyes wander. At the end of an answer to a question from the director, their eyes often dart off camera leaving the editor without even a few frames with which to cut.



Image: Use of an Interrotron in an interview

With the Interrotron, the subject looks into the face of the questioner rather than a cold camera lens. The questioner looks into his or her device and sees the face of the on-camera subject. Each person can observe the expressions and body language of the other while the interview is going on. Most importantly, direct eye contact with the person being interviewed is maintained on camera and the audience will perceive that the interview subject is speaking directly to them.



Wherever possible multiple camera angles will also be used for much more engaging and enjoyable viewer experience than relying on a single camera, shooting statically from one angle. Additional camera angles allow the editor to cut from a wide shot to a close up, which not only helps stop a scene from dragging on, but also adds depth to each story.

While a director producing a drama or a fictional show can reshoot a scene again and again until everything is perfect, shooting events in real-time with real subjects lacking acting experience doesn't allow flexibility to go back and recapture what might be missed from a single camera angle. By shooting with multiple cameras we ensure one camera can pick up what another misses.

Having more than one angle gives editors more options in terms of crafting a story. It allows them to cut together a scene cohesively and creatively and gives them the flexibility to create the story that results in the best value for viewers.

Who Are We & Why Should We Be Making This Docu-Series?

Mastermind Studios is a production company and film studio in Kamloops specializing in documentary style productions. The company has focused since 2010 on subject matter that impacts residents in the Thompson-Nicola region of BC; particularly topics surrounding community, healthcare, and marginalized populations (including elders, hospice patients, indigenous persons, those who identify as LGBTQ2S+, the homeless and children and youth in need of advocacy).





Peter Cameron-Inglis, Executive Producer, Director and CEO of Mastermind Studios, has been an advocate and active community supporter in Kamloops for more than 25 years. For just as long he has served and supported many not-for-profit Board of Directors and business associations including the Kamloops Chamber of Commerce, the Kamloops Venture Advisors, the Royal Inland Hospital Foundation and ASK Wellness Society. Peter is no stranger to the impacts of the opioid pandemic. For more than half of his life he has waged his own personal battle with Crohn's Disease. Peter has undergone many resection and ostomy surgeries while struggling with the addictive nature of opioids for pain and pain management.

AIMCanada Mentorship Society began as a nonprofit in 2012 to increase awareness and build a culture of career mentorship for university students and graduates in Canada. The organization has 'aimed' for community building and diversification of regional economies through local employment of university and trades graduates. Through its programs and services graduates have gained valuable experience, knowledge and mentorship through AIMCanada Mentorship Society's community business and not-for-profit agency partners and volunteers. Now, in partnership with Mastermind Studios, AIMCanada will be offering its mentorship and organizational role to the entire community of Kamloops as we work on Finding A Way Forward to address the opioid crisis in our community.

Dawn Koch, the founder of AIMCanada Mentorship Society, has been a Career Counsellor for over 30 years. Dawn has spent much of her consulting life working with individuals facing career change and career crisis situations including job termination, burn-out, and medical or mental health adversity. Her desire in founding AIMCanada Mentorship Society is to share the benefits of Mentorship in building community and regional economies.

Dawn has been a Medical Technologist, Instructor and the Regional Laboratory Coordinator at Royal Inland Hospital until 1986 when she started her consulting practice and began serving for over a decade as an elected School Trustee and member of the Board of Directors for TNC United Way.





Finding A Way Forward is a production partnership between
Mastermind Studios & AIMCanada Mentorship Society

(with valued partnerships also being sought from the City of Kamloops
and front line service agencies throughout our region).



We are currently approaching community stakeholders and experts in their respective fields to assemble our advisory and mentorship supports for this project.

Further proposal development and applications for funding will follow as we move into development and production phases of this ambitious project.

To find out how you can support this project, or discover ways in which you may be able to be involved, or for more information please contact:

Dawn Koch
(250) 319-6218

Dkoch@aimfoundationofcanada.ca

Or

Peter Cameron-Inglis
(250) 574-6902

peter@mastermindstudios.ca