



One film's journey to activate audiences and make a difference

LOWDOWN TRACKS

IMPACT REPORT

May 2015 to March 2017

THE DOCUMENTARY



Written and directed by Emmy award-winning filmmaker Shelley Saywell of **Bishari Films**, *Lowdown Tracks* celebrates the music and stories of those living on the margins of Canadian society and experiencing some level of homelessness.

Lowdown Tracks was created in collaboration with Juno award-winning activist Lorraine Segato and features a soundtrack of music never heard or recorded before, from people who should be listened to. In *Lowdown Tracks*, Segato begins recording their stories and songs along abandoned tracks, beneath bridges, inside shelters, rooming houses, rooftops and alleyways.



As our homeless crisis grows,

life on the margins threatens more and more people. The causes, from abuse to mental health to simple bad luck, are all touched on in the film. At its heart, *Lowdown Tracks* is about bringing into focus the heartache and the beautiful potential we should see when we walk by someone on the street. In the end, it is a celebration of the power of music and survival.

TOP CANADIAN FILM AUDIENCE CHOICE AWARD AT HOT DOCS 2015

“ ”

Positively brilliant group profile

JAMES BAWDEN, TV CRITIC

“ ”

*Inspiring ode to the power of music.
Heartbreaking... the talent is wondrous.*

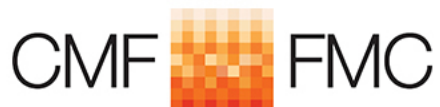
NNNN NOW Magazine

“ ”

3/4 stars

THE GLOBE AND MAIL

PRODUCTION PARTNERS



IMPACT GOALS

- 1 Raise awareness and understanding about the issue of homelessness in Canada
- 2 Change perceptions and attitudes towards people experiencing homelessness
- 3 Inspire action; get audiences involved in solving homelessness in their community
- 4 Support the talented street musicians in the documentary and empower other artists with lived experience of homelessness



Poverty Myth Busters for Waterloo Region

IMPACT TACTICS

STRONG PARTNERSHIPS

Shortly after Hot Docs 2015, the CEO and President of the **Canadian Alliance To End Homelessness** (CAEH) watched *Lowdown Tracks* and agreed to sign on as our National Impact Partner. CAEH agreed to promote the film as a useful community engagement tool throughout their national network of organizations, and we agreed to offer exposure for their 20,000 Homes Campaign at festival screenings, through social media, and on our website

“ ”

Lowdown Tracks is so important because it injects hope, purpose and creates a sense of urgency to the work we're doing and rallies people to take action. And action is the name of the game. The 20,000 Homes campaign is a catalyst for action. Lowdown Tracks is the spark

TIM RICHTER (PRESIDENT & CEO) CAEH & 20,000 HOMES CAMPAIGN

BRUCE BATHGATE

WENDELL CORMIER

THE SCREENING MOBILIZED ENOUGH SUPPORT TO OFFER THE MUSICIANS IN THE FILM

PERMANENT HOUSING

The partnership kicked-off with a special screening at the National Conference on Ending Homelessness in Montreal attended by close to 1,000 policy makers, funders, researchers, advocates, community leaders and frontline workers. This partnership allowed us to leverage financial support for the work ahead from **Catherine Donnelley Foundation, The Slight Family Foundation and Place2Give**

IMPACT TACTICS

SPECIAL COMMUNITY SCREENINGS

We set a goal to inspire and support at least 50 subsidized screenings of *Lowdown Tracks* in partnership with community groups working on solutions to end homelessness locally.

OUR GOAL WAS MET.

Large screenings were held at provincial housing conferences and municipal offices; and, smaller screenings were held in shelters, community centers, libraries and churches.

Several events were orchestrated around National Housing Day on November 22. Audiences were further engaged at events via panel discussions and performances from local street musicians and artists with lived experience of homelessness. Some screenings were used as a venue to make important policy announcements about solving homelessness.



TIM RICHTER
CEO, CAEH

JOHN TORY
Mayor of Toronto



A Toronto screening with an audience of 500+ was attended by Mayor John Tory. The event was used as a public opportunity for the city to sign a letter of commitment to work towards targets set out by the Toronto Alliance to End Homelessness.

IMPACT TACTICS

FESTIVAL SCREENINGS & FILM OUTREACH PARTNERS

CALGARY MENTAL FILM FEST
ANTIGONISH FILM FESTIVAL
GRAND RIVER FILM FESTIVAL
BELLEVILLE DOC FEST
JUST FILM FEST
REFRAME FESTIVAL
EDMONTON INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL
YUKON FILM SOCIETY
ATIN BC ARTS & MUSIC FESTIVAL
CANADIAN MUSIC WEEK FILM FESTIVAL

We shared our impact goals with festival organizers across Canada who had selected *Lowdown Tracks*. Together, we invited local organizations working in housing to be Screening Partners and to offer expertise at audience Q&A's.

In a similar vein, we partnered with Cinema Politica and Docs for Schools screening initiatives to ensure *Lowdown Tracks* could reach high school and university students.

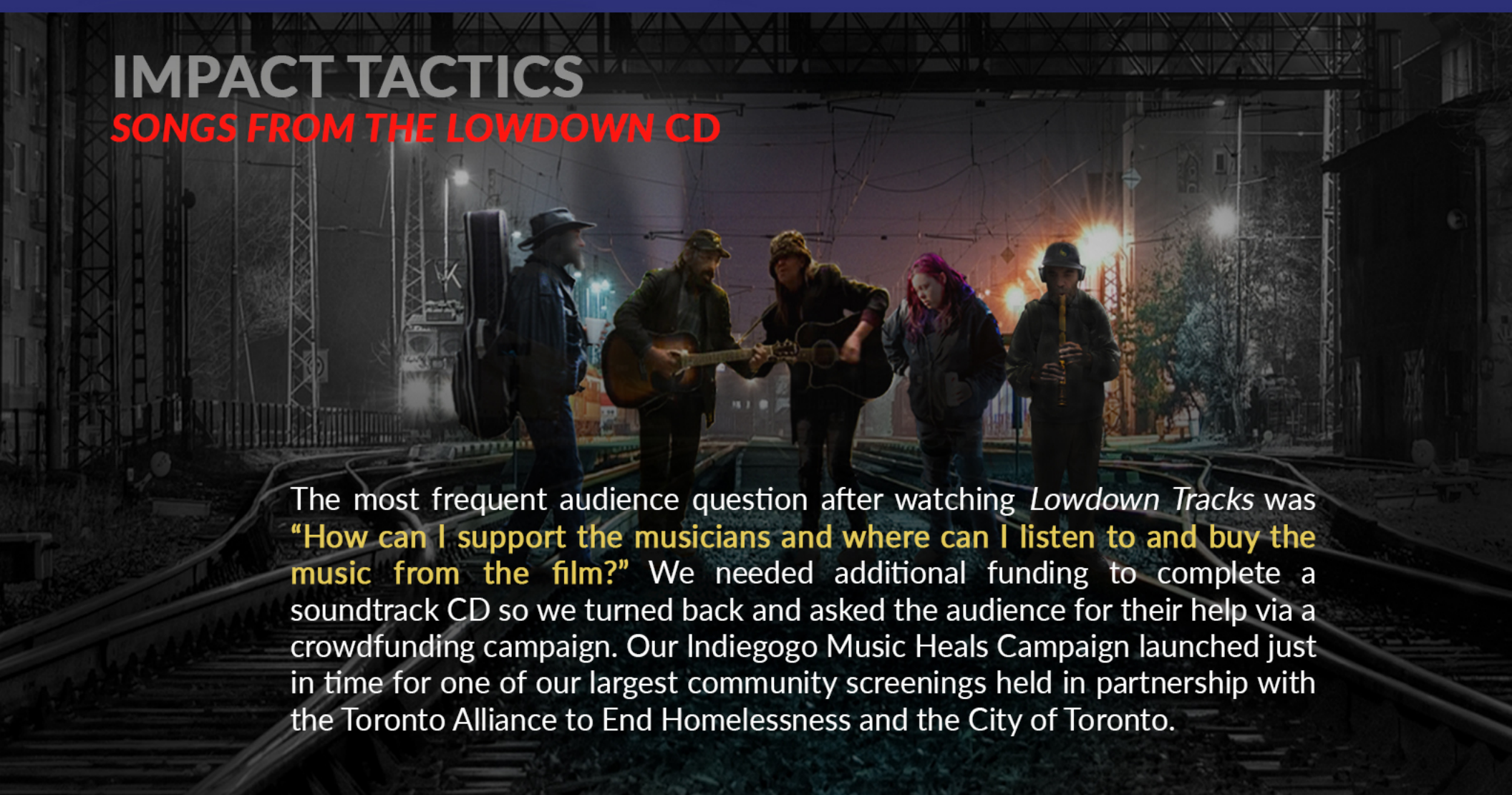


CINEMA POLITICA
SCREENING TRUTH TO POWER


DOCS FOR SCHOOLS
hotdocs
OUTSPOKEN.OUTSTANDING.

IMPACT TACTICS

SONGS FROM THE LOWDOWN CD



The most frequent audience question after watching *Lowdown Tracks* was “How can I support the musicians and where can I listen to and buy the music from the film?” We needed additional funding to complete a soundtrack CD so we turned back and asked the audience for their help via a crowdfunding campaign. Our Indiegogo Music Heals Campaign launched just in time for one of our largest community screenings held in partnership with the Toronto Alliance to End Homelessness and the City of Toronto.



We managed to raise the required \$10,000 to complete the album which was released just in time for National Housing Day 2016. *Songs From the Lowdown* attracted additional press for the musicians and the film impact tour. The CD was/is being sold online and on the streets. All proceeds from sales go directly to the musicians in the film.

IMPACT TACTICS

AUDIENCE CALLS TO ACTION

Audiences at every screening were encouraged to do three simple things:

- 1 Write their MP about the 20,000 Homes goals
- 2 Purchase the *Songs From the Lowdown* CD
- 3 Fill Out The Audience Impact Survey



IMPACT TACTICS

SOCIAL MEDIA AND COMMUNICATIONS

Lowdown Tracks had its own impact website and e-newsletter and will continue to be active on Twitter and Facebook in order to stay in touch with a concerned and growing audience. Our focus for communications beyond direct information was primarily on hopeful and positive news and stories concerning people experiencing homelessness and solutions to the crisis.



www.lowdowntracks4impact.com

CONTACT & FOLLOW US

LOWDOWNTRACKS@GMAIL.COM

SUBSCRIBE TO OUR NEWSLETTER

[TWITTER](#)

[FACEBOOK](#)

[ITUNES](#)

[YOUTUBE](#)

SUCCESSES AND OUTCOMES

OVERVIEW OF OUR NUMBERS

75

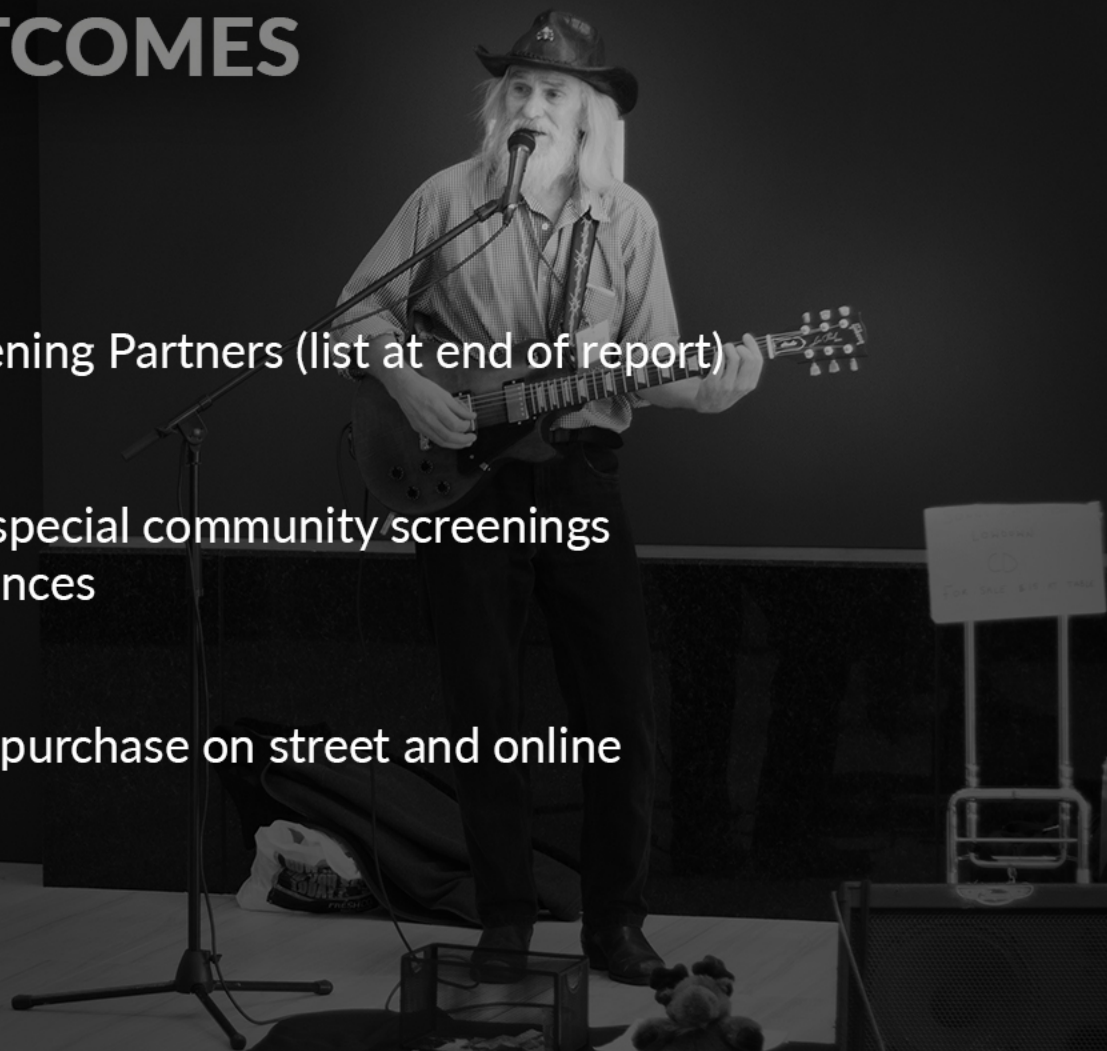
Community Screening Partners (list at end of report)

3500

people attended special community screenings across eight provinces

2000

CDs available for purchase on street and online



Lowdown Tracks musician Katt Budd performs at Grand River Film Festival opening night.

Grand River **FILM 10** FESTIVAL

SUCCESSES AND OUTCOMES

AUDIENCE IMPACT SURVEY RESULTS

54% of audiences surveyed watched *Lowdown Tracks* at a community event, the remaining 46% watched on TV or at home. 16% of our audience members had lived experience of homelessness

94%

said their awareness and understanding of homelessness was deepened by watching *Lowdown Tracks*.

Over half of these respondents said their awareness and understanding was deepened **a lot**.

“ ”

There are challenges with existing homelessness supports in Canada. This is a significant issue that needs ongoing attention.

SUCCESSSES AND OUTCOMES

AUDIENCE IMPACT SURVEY RESULTS

When asked about their most significant learning, people said:

“ ”

I need to open my eyes much wider, and my heart, when I encounter homeless people, and to honour the music makers living on the streets.

“ ”

These are real people with feelings, hopes and aspirations. They love life as much as I do.

“ ”

There is an overwhelming need for alternative housing.

“ ”

Secure housing is such a basic human need.

SUCCESSSES AND OUTCOMES

AUDIENCE IMPACT SURVEY RESULTS

When asked about their most significant learning, people said:

“ ”

*Don't take anything for granted.
Homelessness can happen to anyone.*

“ ”

*Homelessness can persist for so long? I
always thought of it as a temporary thing.*

“ ”

Homeless people need great care.

“ ”

*Every human being has potential, no
matter race or gender, all levels of
government need to make changes,
create more housing with supports.*

SUCCESSSES AND OUTCOMES

AUDIENCE IMPACT SURVEY RESULTS

When asked about their most significant learning, people said:

“ ”

We are all the same, want love and need to be loved.

“ ”

The catch-22 that exists for some of the homeless - they do not qualify for aid because of the money they may get from busking or disability, but they don't make enough to afford rent.

“ ”

All people have something to offer and need meaningful engagement in our society to thrive.

SUCCESSSES AND OUTCOMES

AUDIENCE IMPACT SURVEY RESULTS

When asked about their most significant learning, people said:



“ ”

That we all need to learn not to judge people so readily.

“ ”

Childhood abuse and trauma is pervasive and a common theme among people struggling and living on the streets.

“ ”

People who are homeless are resilient and strong.

SUCCESSSES AND OUTCOMES

AUDIENCE IMPACT SURVEY RESULTS

65%

of audience members said that watching *Lowdown Tracks* inspired them to take a specific action to support homeless individuals and help solve homelessness in Canada.

I purchased the *Songs From The Lowdown* CD to support the musicians in the film

I wrote to my MP about prioritizing homelessness in our National Housing Strategy

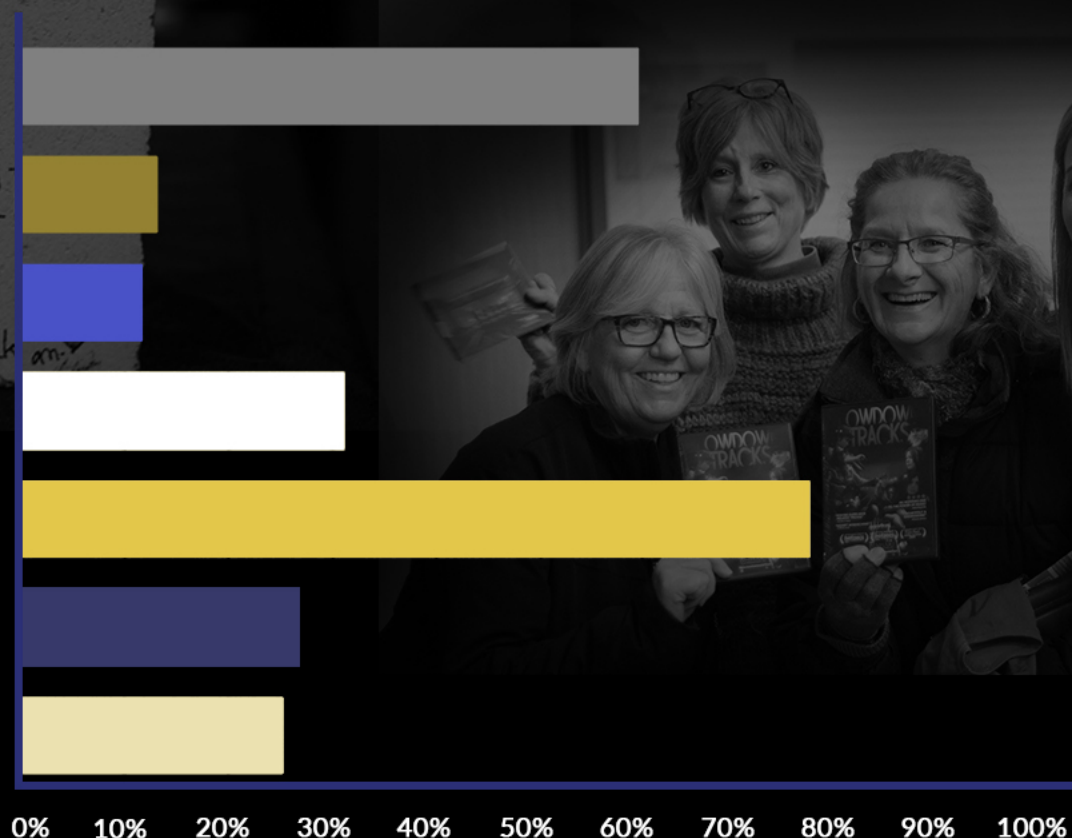
I signed up to volunteer for an organization working in the area of housing and homelessness

I made a financial/in-kind donation to an organization working in the area of housing and homelessness

I recommended the film to a friend or colleague

I learned more about how to get involved with this issue either now or in the future

Other



SUCCESSSES AND OUTCOMES

AUDIENCE IMPACT SURRVEY RESULTS

91%

of audience members with lived experience of homelessness said *Lowdown Tracks* had a positive effect on them

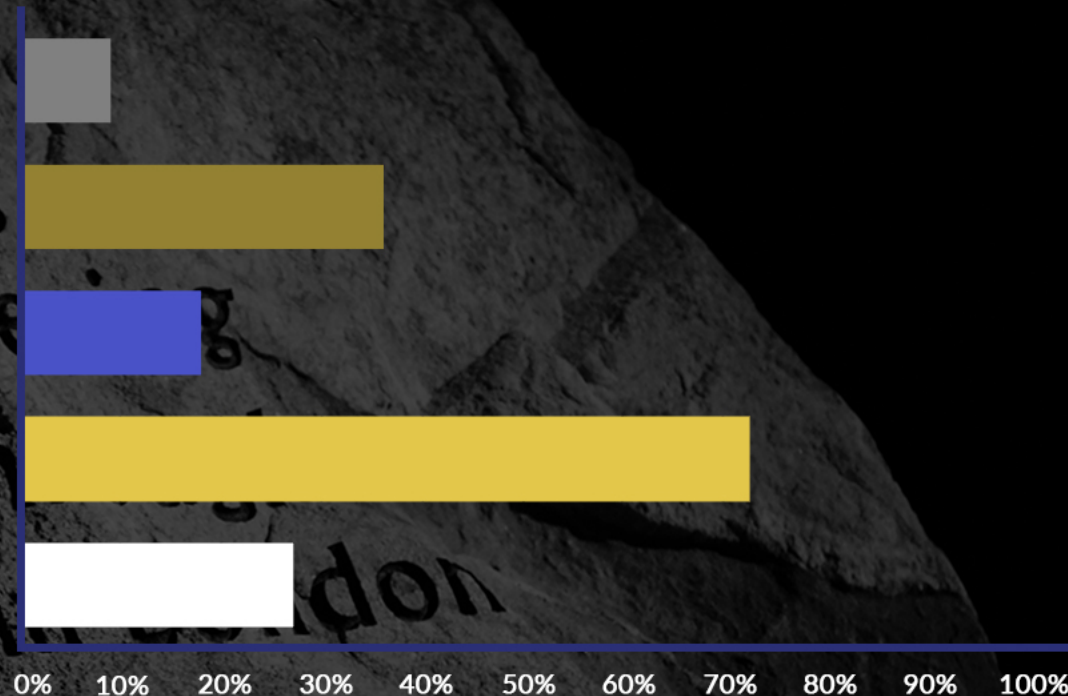
a negative effect,
l...

a positive effect,
it...

a positive effect,
it made...

a positive effect,
it gave...

a positive effect,
it inspired...



72%

indicated it gave them hope

18%

indicated it made them feel less alone

37%

indicated that it validated their experience, they felt their story was being told

27%

said that *Lowdown Tracks* inspired them to think about pursuing their own artistic hobbies and/or passions and interests

PHOTO BY ERIC WEISSMAN

SUCCESSSES AND OUTCOMES

AUDIENCE IMPACT SURVEY RESULTS

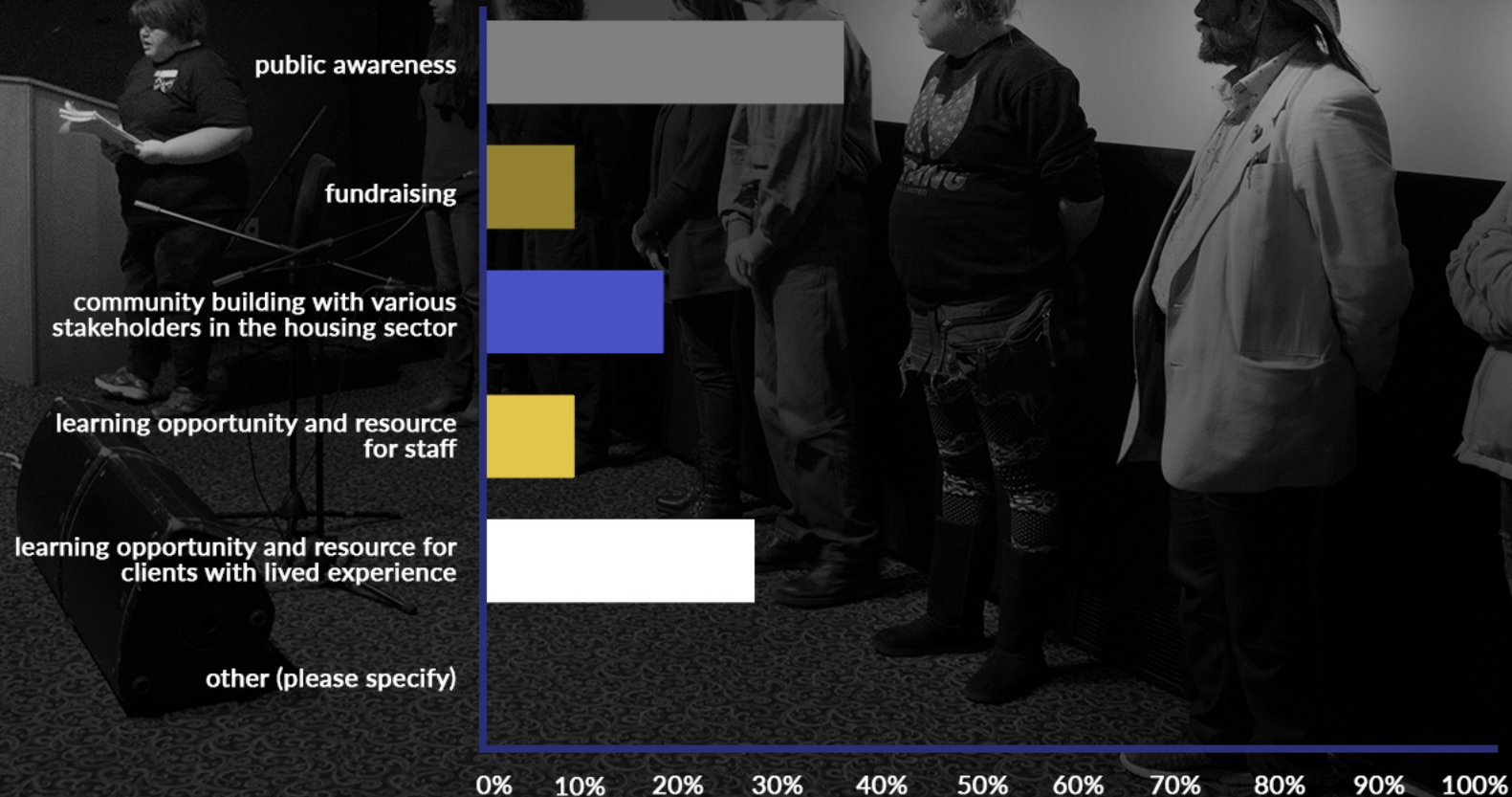
75%

of host groups effectively met their objectives (on average)

63%

of host groups said the screening built their organizational capacity

Primary Host Objectives



SUCCESSES AND OUTCOMES

SCREENING HOST SURVEY RESULTS

“ ”

It began so many conversations on housing stability...it also sparked interest in supporting local artists

- SCREENING HOST

“ ”

Many staff commented afterwards that it helped to raise their awareness and they feel better equipped to serve clients and will be more empathetic.

- SCREENING HOST

“ ”

Taking on an event like this was a big challenge for our organization. Planning and carrying out the event was very positive skill building and confidence building event for the members.

- SCREENING HOST

LOCAL ARTIST
(Waterloo Screening)

“ ”

Having the opportunity to have cast from the film attend further humanizes this reality - moving it from an "issue" to being about real people.

- SCREENING HOST

LORRAINE SEGATO
(YWCA Toronto)

SUCCESSES AND OUTCOMES

SCREENING HOST SURVEY RESULTS

90%

of our screening hosts will use their copy of *Lowdown Tracks* again to host another community event, as training for staff, and/or as a resource for clients with lived experience.

99%

of our screening hosts agree that “*Documentary film can affect social change.*” 55% agree strongly.

100%

will use documentary film again in their work.

“ ”

Lowdown Tracks helps build the awareness and the will to move the needle on the homelessness crisis in Canada.

FAIRTH McFARLAND

Community Action Group on Homelessness (Fredericton)

SUCCESSSES AND OUTCOMES

A WORD FROM THOSE CLOSEST TO THE PROJECT

“ ”

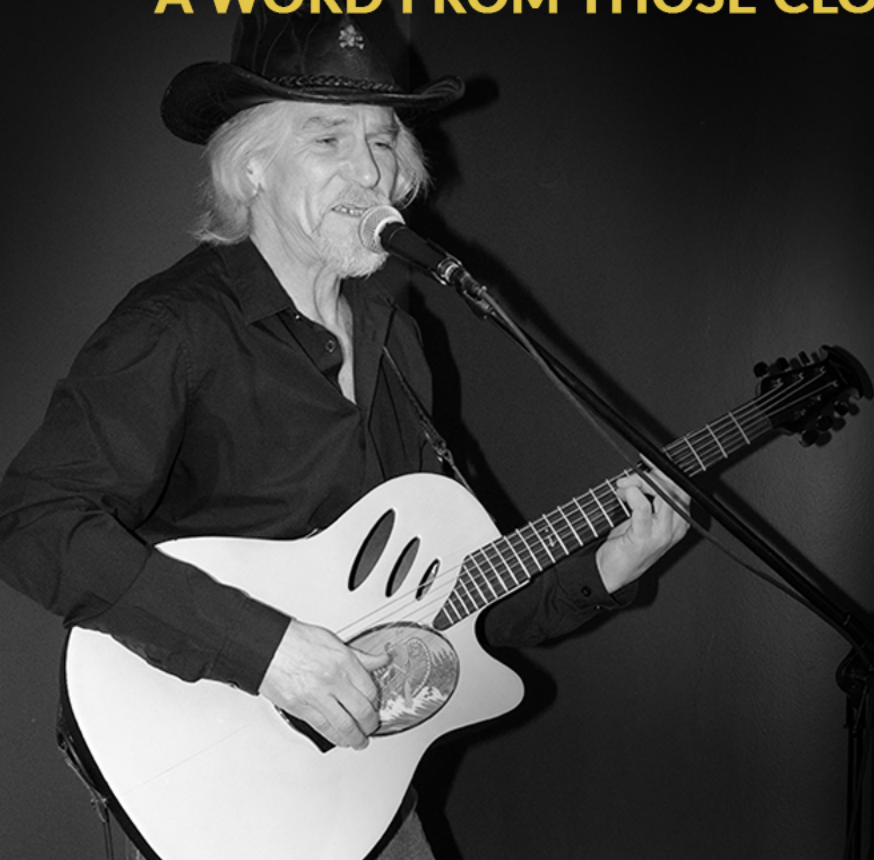
The idea of an Impact Campaign was new to me. I didn't understand how it could really help the film expand its audience, or keep going. But Jackie Garrow and Ring Five Impact Docs totally changed that. Now I'm an ardent believer in her vision for finding the untapped potential of every film. The partnership with the Canadian Alliance To End Homelessness formed the heart of the perfect impact campaign. Groups across the country affiliated with the cause and used our film for community events, screenings, and discussions on how to end homelessness. The film became the **tool for change** we wanted it to be...

...The musicians in the film benefitted directly in a way we could have only dreamed of. In the most direct example of this, **three of them received supported-housing**. It was amazing to be a part of that transformative action. Then, a crowd funding campaign **raised funds to produce a CD** of music from the film - the proceeds of which have gone directly to the musicians. All that would have been more than enough reason to participate in an Impact Campaign, but as filmmakers we also benefited by the additional revenue for screenings and sales of DVDS that would never have happened otherwise.

SHELLEY SAYWELL, DIRECTOR
LOWDOWN TRACKS

SUCCESSSES AND OUTCOMES

A WORD FROM THOSE CLOSEST TO THE PROJECT



“ ”

I met many fine people on the screening tour who truly care about the many hurting victims of homelessness. From these events I know the pain from the streets will be felt in all who listen. It feels good to know audience members will look at people on the streets with less contempt and realize it wasn't in their plans to live this way.

WENDELL CORMIER, MUSICIAN
LOWDOWN TRACKS and SONGS FROM THE LOWDOWN

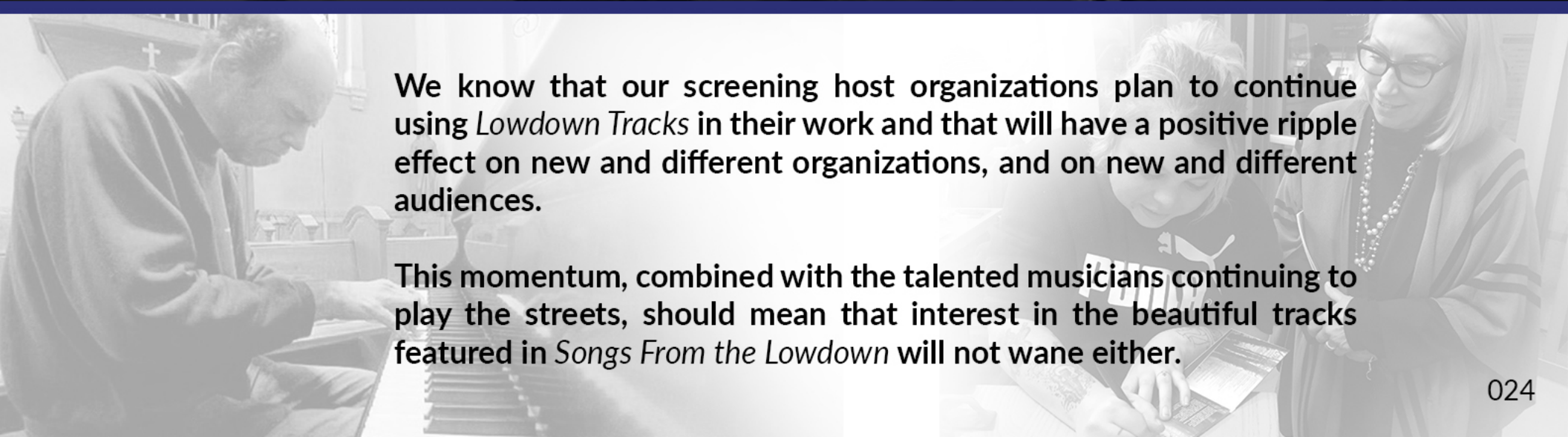


CONCLUSION



Our evaluation demonstrates that our impact goals were achieved. **By breathing community life** into *Lowdown Tracks* using the tactics described above, we were able to raise awareness and understanding about the issue of homelessness in Canada; change perceptions and attitudes towards people experiencing homelessness; inspire action and get audiences involved in solving homelessness in their community.

And finally, we found a small way to support the talented street musicians in the documentary through the *Songs From The Lowdown* CD project.




We know that our screening host organizations plan to continue using *Lowdown Tracks* in their work and that will have a positive ripple effect on new and different organizations, and on new and different audiences.

This momentum, combined with the talented musicians continuing to play the streets, should mean that interest in the beautiful tracks featured in *Songs From the Lowdown* will not wane either.

CONCLUSION

THANKS TO OUR COMMUNITY SCREENING PARTNERS

A woman with long brown hair, wearing a dark top and a light-colored vest, is playing an acoustic guitar on a stage. She is looking down at the guitar. A microphone on a stand is positioned in front of her. The background is dark, and the foreground shows the backs of several rows of chairs, suggesting an audience is seated in front of the stage.

Adsum Shelter for Women and Children
Affordable Housing Committee, Fredericton
Beach United Church, Toronto
British Columbia Non Profit Housing Association
Calgary Homeless Foundation
Cambridge Shelter, Cambridge ON
Canadian Mental Health Association, Peel Dufferin
Canadian Mental Health Association, Peterborough ON
Carnegie Community Center, Vancouver
Central and North Vancouver Island United Way
Chatham-Kent Health and Family Services,
Housing Services Division Choices Youth Shelter, Orangeville ON
City of Grand Prairie Homeless Initiatives
City of Hamilton, Homelessness Policy and Programs
City of Kawartha Lakes & County of Haliburton
City of Lethbridge, Community and Social Development Group
City of Lethbridge, Community and Social Development Group
City of Red Deer Homeless and Housing Department
City of Toronto, Shelter, Housing and Support
City of Yellowknife Community Advisory Board on Homelessness
Community Action Group on Homelessness, Fredericton
Community Advisory Board, Homelessness Partnering Strategy, Dufferin County ON
Community Living Dufferin
Cota Mental Health Services, Toronto

CONCLUSION

THANKS TO OUR COMMUNITY SCREENING PARTNERS

A man wearing a cowboy hat and a dark shirt is speaking at a podium. He is holding a microphone and looking towards the audience. To his right, another man in a suit is standing and looking at him. In the background, there are other people and a large screen displaying a video. The setting appears to be a community screening event.

End Homelessness Winnipeg
Eva's Initiatives, Toronto
Fred Victor Housing, Toronto
Guelph & Wellington Task Force for Poverty Elimination
Habitat Services, Toronto
Halton Region, Housing Initiatives
Heatherton Group Home, Antigonish NS
Homelessness and Housing Umbrella Group, Waterloo & Cambridge
Homes First, Toronto
Homeward Trust, Edmonton
Housing Administration & Development, Windsor, ON
Housing and Children's Services, Windsor, ON
Housing and Social Services, City of Kingston
Housing Central, BC's Affordable Housing Conference,
Human Development Council, St. John's NB
Knights of Columbus, Antigonish NS
Lakehead Poverty Reduction Strategy and Housing and Homelessness Coalition Advisory
Lanark County, Housing Initiatives
MacDonald Youth Services, Winnipeg
Madison Community Services, Toronto
Manitoba Family Services, Housing Supports and Service Integration
Medicine Hat Community Housing Society
Mooredale House
Nanaimo Social Planning and the Nanaimo Homelessness Committee
Nanaimo Youth Services Association

CONCLUSION

THANKS TO OUR COMMUNITY SCREENING PARTNERS

One Roof Youth Services, Cambridge ON
Ontario Coalition Against Poverty
Orangeville Food Bank
Ottawa Alliance to End Homelessness
Poverty Reduction Fund, Trillium Foundation
Region of Waterloo Community and Housing Services
Renfrew Housing Corporation
Rosedale United Church, Toronto
Salt Spring Community Services
Salvation Army, Gateway, Toronto
Sidedoor Ministries, Yellowknife NWT
Simcoe County Alliance to End Homelessness, ON
SKETCH, Toronto
St. Michael's Hospital, Centre for Urban Health Solutions, Toronto
Sunshine Coast Homeless Advisory
The Wrench, Ottawa's Street Paper
Toronto Alliance to End Homelessness
United Way of Peel Region, ON
United Way, Kamloops BC
United Way, Penticton BC
University of Toronto, Center for Community Partnerships
Uquutaq Shelter, Nunavut
Ve'ahavata
YWCA Regina YWCA, Toronto

CONCLUSION

SPECIAL THANKS & IMPACT TEAM

NATIONAL IMPACT PARTNER



SPECIAL THANKS

Steve Barden, Bruce Bathgate, Mary Anne Bedard, Katt Budd, Mitchell Cohen, Woody Cormier, Chris Dempster, Mary Anne Epp, Courtnay Evans, Linda Fong, Jan Madlener, Scott Mills, Deborah Parks, Ted Parks, Tim Richter, Gena Rotstein, Shelley Saywell, Lorraine Segato, and Jean Stevenson.

IMPACT TEAM

JACKIE GARROW, Impact Campaign Director
JENNIFER KIDSON, Impact Campaign Communications & Coordination

CONCLUSION

THANKS TO OUR FUNDING PARTNERS

The *Lowdown Tracks* impact initiative and this report was made possible thanks to the support of our funding partners:



The
Slaight
Family
Foundation

MITCHELL COHEN

