



Budgeting for Cultural Protocols

The ISO is working to ensure that the funding for implementing the Pathways & Protocols is made available for filmmakers. Indigenous filmmakers and producers from recent productions have provided lessons learned about how to incorporate protocols into their budgeting processes.

Planning

Plan your budget in a way that reflects community needs and appropriate conduct within the community. Producers stressed the need to recognize, plan and budget for the fact that productions in Indigenous communities will take more time than the (already very tight) timeframe for shooting in studio, and will likely include budgeting for community events, community liaison(s) and other aspects of community engagement such as organizing screenings in communities. Also, budget for more time when working with Indigenous content (i.e., stories, situations), as it takes more time to work through issues that involve potential harm or trauma, it will take time to identify proper permissions, and may require budgeting for cultural supports and cultural training on set or throughout production. Larger scale productions that included training initiatives started planning and preparing up to three months in advance.



Cultural Awareness of Producers

The structure of our days and the bottom-line approach to filming is a very conventional, colonial, method that works for people who are not doing personal or cultural work. Any production working in partnership with Indigenous persons or creating Indigenous stories has to include in schedule and budget time in the schedule. For example, when an AD is setting up a day and one liner on how the day is going to go, how the shoot is going to go, etc. must take into consideration the need to prepare Indigenous cast and crew. Why do we need 3 hours to shoot that scene? Prior to a funeral scene, I need at least an hour to talk to everyone and do harm reduction with elders and support workers. If someone does breakdown, it must be dealt with in a culturally

appropriate way so as to not further traumatize people. A culturally aware AD team will help you understand how to schedule the day so that it is culturally safe. Jennifer Podemski

Producers creating budgets and schedules require the cultural awareness, or a cultural resource, to ensure they understand the process and time required to work through difficult scenes or to

appropriately involve the community. When working in community, Indigenous producers are looking to identify ANY line items within budgets that could be spent within the community.

Budgeting with Community

*“On **L’Inhumain**, it was important to ensure the line producer understood that anything that can be spent in the community, you are going to spend in the community. Budget wise, about 20-25% of our overall budget went to companies and individuals on/from Kitigan-Zibi.”*

*“The reality is that when you film in a community, people will show up and come to set to watch filming or to be part of the experience – this is part of the community dynamic. **Rustic Oracle** catering jumped by 40% because we needed extra food to feed visitors on set. We need to set aside the funds for community to be on set as observers and remember that the film and its crew are visitors and guests.”*

Jason Brenan, Producer, Rustic Oracle

How much money are we bringing to community? What percentage of the budget can go to community? How are we impacting and effecting the daily life of community?

For larger scale productions, this may include something as simple as garbage; what is the impact of garbage on a community? Many First Nations have to pay municipalities for garbage removal – will you compensate the community, or will you have the garbage taken away?

As we know, offering food on visits to the community is important so be sure to include a robust food budget. It is extremely valuable to hire local community members to make food and to feed the community. Acknowledge the opportunity to bring people together and use these opportunities for the community to get to know the team and what the film hopes to accomplish; or to seek permissions from community members to make the film.

Indigenous filmmakers want to hire as many Indigenous crew and cast as possible; are striving to ensure as many community hires as possible; are building local mentorship and training opportunities into every department (when possible, at union rates). This is considered an appropriate way to reciprocate the benefit of doing a production within the community, and to recognize the value of what the community is bringing to the production.

Filming in Remote Communities

Business decisions such as “where are we going to shoot” are not always going to end up being what is most cost effective. Indigenous directors often want to go back to the land and shoot on their territories or the land associated with the story. This may implicate tax credits when working out of province, and often creates logistical pressures, which really puts Indigenous productions at a disadvantage, but none-the-less is a value-based decision that could heavily impact the budget.

You cannot have a story without a relationship. Visits to communities included time for ceremonial practices, including witnessing youth receiving spiritual names, sweat lodge ceremonies, preparing medicines, pipe ceremonies, sharing prayer and songs, and having feasts; and the expenses associated with some of these ceremonies, such as tobacco and honoraria. They include time to dine with host families and time to go out on the land, share stories, and talk about the land. Filming in communities also requires paying cultural advisors and hiring local people, including as Production Assistants (\$150-\$200/day for 2-4 days, sometimes more (e.g., \$1,500) for community-based organization leading up to production) and photographers.

Obviously, filming in remote communities is expensive due to the high cost of travel, and often includes a number of community related expenses. As does going out on the land, which involves operating vehicles, including providing appropriate compensation for using community members' boats, equipment and vehicles. Going out on the land and getting to know the actual realities of the territory may lead to changes in film schedules may also impact on the budget. There is also the need to make offerings while on the land, acknowledging host communities by gift giving (e.g., cedar and jars of sockeye salmon from the West Coast, rattles), and the purchase and preparation of food for community members.

Kevin Settee, Lake Winnipeg project

If filming in an Indigenous community, visiting the community and location scouting right at the beginning of the planning process. This allows for seeking appropriate permissions, getting a clearer sense of the capacity of the community to support or be engaged in the production, and allows you to anticipate any impacts to the community the production may have.



For example, filmmaker Nyla Innuksuk found that to film in Pangurtung, a remote community of 1,500 on Baffin Island, her production would need to develop a plan for converting the school classrooms into bedrooms during the summer when classes were not in sessions, as the community could not provide accommodation for the production. Since the community receives its normal food shipment on an annual basis, she recognized that the production could significantly affect food prices and availability for the community; therefore, the production would need to bring their own food, coordinate with the local store, and work with local hunters and fishers to supplement food supply.

#6 Protocols in Accounting

“Understanding the “giving culture” of a particular nation and ensuring that the appropriate “gifts” are given to the appropriate people – tobacco, feasts, providing for gas - is another demonstration of respect.” There is a consensus that Cultural gifts (tobacco), cash honorariums, other forms of payment (gas, meals, gift cards to grocery store) should not be the “exception to the rule”, wherein producers are constantly forced to find “work arounds” to reimburse these costs. These costs should be reflected in budgets.

Most elders who are brought on as cultural keepers or translators do not have agents or unions. Many also do not work with computers or software so they are unlikely to send in paper invoices in the way most film accounting departments want it. This has led to them not being paid on time, or overlooked, which becomes a huge problem in relationship building. It also reinforces a historical distrust of "big companies" and anyone outside of their community. So, make your departments aware, have someone to help them work through the paper, and prepare invoices for them in advance. It's about people and respect first before numbers. This will emphasize that their contribution is unique and highly skilled, and they are the professionals we are leaning on to make sure our stories are absolute.

Marie Clements, Director & Producer Red Snow

Other accounting protocols include:

- a) Having a point person/“handler” for the elder(s) cultural keeper(s) and translator(s).
- b) Having a point person (who is not the director) who can liaison between with translators in pre-production/production and into postproduction (eg. sub-titles). Often there are last minute translation changes which the script supervisor has no idea that took place.
- c) Many community members who might be brought into a production also may not be able to cash their cheques. Find a way to work within the film accounting system to help them if this arises.