

# WOMEN MAKE FILM

Online Filmmaking Training Program



**HANDBOOK**

EDITED BY

**ELBARLAMENT**

AUTHOR AND DESIGN

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This handbook is the outcome of WOMEN MAKE FILM workshops In Iraq 2020, which was organized by elbarlament with the support of The Federal Foreign Office.

First edition, Berlin 2021

Elbarlament

Book cover: Salma El Tarzi

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## **Acknowledgements/Special thanks:**

We would like to thank the German Federal Foreign Office for funding the project “Women Make Film” and for their support in the publication of this handbook.

Elbarlament would also like to thank Salma El Tarzi, the main trainer for leading the “Women Make Film” training program and sharing her knowledge and experience in the form of this handbook. We also extend our warm thanks to all the guest speakers of the program: Bahar Ali, Suzan Aref, Dr. Alia Arasoughly, Azza Shalaby, Nadine Salib, Sara Ishaq, Mona Assaad, Nancy Abdelfattah, Sarah Kaddouri and Julie Biro.

Furthermore, elbarlament would like to thank the participants for their commitment, their thirst for knowledge and their constructive contributions which have led the project, hence this handbook to succeed: Fatima Abbas, Kawthar Jbara, Dahlia Qutaiba, Hajir Azhar, Kajeen Yaseen Waisy, Mariam Al Zeady, Noor Ali, Rania Albayati, Safa Muhammed, Seivan M.Salim, Shahad Al Taay, Teba Adel, Tuqa Al-Din Gaffer, Yousr Mokdad, Zahra Saed Alkindy, Zozan Saeed.

Finally, elbarlament thanks the team of “Women Make Film”: Kenza Rady, Hatice Özyurt and Michel Khouri for making this project happen.

Dr. Birgit Laubach  
Founder and co-director of elbarlament

## **Preface**

Since October 2019, Iraqi women and girls have been at the forefront of anti-government demonstrations calling, among other things, for gender equality. Despite their courageous efforts which continue to this day, many Iraqi women face an acute threat of domestic violence and gender-specific discrimination. The hardship and difficulties women face have been further exacerbated by the current pandemic and its impact in terms of economic recession, deteriorating health services and a further reduction in women's public visibility. That is precisely why realizing the project "Women Make Film" in a year marking the 20th anniversary of the United Nations Security Council resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security is a symbol of courage proving that women are agents of change in Iraq. The project bears testimony to the fact that Iraqi women increasingly play an active role in seeking to shape their future – and are there to stay.

Women's empowerment remains a central pillar of Germany's Transformation Partnership, recently relaunched as the Ta'ziz Partnership for Democracy, "ta'ziz" meaning strengthening or consolidating in Arabic. The Partnership is part of the Federal Foreign Office's overall crisis prevention approach and also falls under the remit of its cultural relations and education policy strategy. This concept's overall objective is to bolster democracy by supporting projects focusing on sectors which are crucial for consolidating the still fragile transformation. By reinforcing civil society participation and networking through the creation of discursive spaces, the democratic consolidation process within societies is being enhanced.

16 Iraqi women from across the country with different religious, ethnic and professional backgrounds and thus keen to overcome the existing sectarian divide have had the chance to express themselves through the means of art and to acquire the skill of film-making. The latter not only represents an important tool with which to tell one's story and record incidents on the ground complementing fast-paced news, but it is also an instrument for raising the voices of the marginalized and the unheard thus fostering compassion, understanding and empathy across internal divisions and international borders. Through this project, women have been elevated to draw attention to personal issues from a female perspective. They are reasserting their presence in arts and culture by questioning prevailing narratives and traditional stereotypes on their role in society. As audiences can now experience the daily lives of women through the female lens, the film-makers empower society to adopt a new approach in building an Iraqi state equipped to meet challenges of today and tomorrow. It should be highlighted that these films have been produced in spite of unprecedented challenges due to lockdowns, a volatile security situation and the shift into the virtual, instead of in-person, workshops.

My special gratitude and appreciation go to elbarlament, which has successfully and with great sensitivity managed this challenging situation and has once again used its in-depth expertise in designing and implementing projects geared at women's empowerment and participation to contribute to the promotion of democratic processes and challenging societal prejudices.

**Irmgard Maria Fellner**

Director for Cultural Relations Policy and Deputy Head of the Directorate-General for Culture and Communication at the Federal Foreign Office of Germany.

“Women Make Film”  
*Handbook for Online Filmmaking Training Program*

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## INTRODUCTION

In March 2020, as most of the world was clearly heading into a complete lockdown after COVID-19 was declared a global pandemic, I was approached by elbarlament to submit a proposal for a five-phase filmmaking workshop for women in Iraq. This seemed absurd at first, given that the whole world seemed to be heading toward the great unknown and life as we knew was probably going to cease to exist. The situation did not seem promising and a project like this seemed doomed to fail before it had even begun. Not only was it logistically near impossible, but we were also all trying to navigate through the debilitating anxiety and fear for our and our loved ones' lives. And that's when it hit me: What if this workshop could be a kind of "salvation"? What if it was a chance for collective survival? What if it was an opportunity to learn how to adapt? To make knowledge accessible? And if life as we knew it would never be back, what if this was a chance to make it better? I imagine many of the readers are rolling their eyes now. After all, it's just a filmmaking workshop, right? But I was not alone in this train of thought. Many people, including Arundhati Roy, were speaking of the hidden opportunities we should seize to make a better world. Some even went as far as predicting the fall of capitalism.

There was also a great opportunity to explore and experiment. This was a moment in the history of humanity where a lot of what we knew had become obsolete. And although this comes with definite challenges, it also provides a lot of freedom to break old rules, or at least question and reinvent them. The cherry on top was the support of an organization ready to take a leap of faith. And so, we embarked on this adventure, learning as we went along, without any references. Training an entire film curriculum to beginners online under lockdown was unprecedented. Learning filmmaking, unlike other forms of individual artistic practices, is a complex process that relies heavily on practical implementation in the physical sense, as well as teamwork and collaboration—both elements absent in remote teaching circumstances under lockdown and social distancing regulations. We had to invent a system that somehow compensates for this absence.

What you will read in the following pages is the methodology we have developed over seven months of trial-and-error, constant troubleshooting and experimentation. While I believe we have achieved a solid system, the key element for the success of this program is flexibility. I hereby invite you to follow the essence of the guidelines in this manual, while leaving room for improvisation.

## WHAT DOES THIS WORKSHOP OFFER?

In the world we live in today, there is an abundance of workshops and seminars organized by institutions focusing on gender and women's issues, and which aim to introduce filmmaking as a tool of expression and empowerment for women. However, this approach often views filmmaking—and the arts in general—as mere tools to be instrumentalized for the production of advocacy videos in awareness campaigns, which gets in the way of any real growth and sustainability beyond the duration of the workshops themselves. What we are left with are videos that are artistically weak, direct and lacking in depth, which have no actual impact save for a few conferences showcasing the organization's projects.

The *Self-Determined: Women Make Film* program adopts a different philosophy, where the opportunity to practice filmmaking (as well as other art forms) is in and of itself viewed as a right everyone should be able to enjoy unconditionally, without being silenced or weighed down by stereotypical expectations based on gender, race, religion, or any aspect of their identity, and where a feminist approach to filmmaking is not only possible but also necessary, irrespective of the topic addressed in the film. Participants have the opportunity to explore and reflect on how to create a feminist filmic practice that is sensitive to privileges, power dynamics and gaze, both during the production process and on screen.

While the general aim of the project is “to make the voices of women visible and audible by making their artistic potential accessible to a broad public,” what this workshop aims to achieve, in practical terms, is to introduce film as a medium from a comprehensive perspective, one that combines practical training with theoretical learning. Another objective of this workshop is to help participants achieve sustainability. How do we provide them with the necessary tools to continue making films independently after the workshop and not be forced to give up due to a lack of resources? In order to achieve this, we need to take an inventive and revolutionary approach to filmmaking, one that explores low-cost, alternative and accessible solutions with an open mind. Participants can learn how to make their films using everyday life items and open-source technology that doesn't require sophisticated and expensive equipment. If they can make their films with nothing, they will excel when they have access to resources. The opposite, however, is never

true. In light of this, participants were not distributed into separate departments; they were trained as independent filmmakers who can perform basic filmmaking skills and switch roles if necessary. This means that participants need to also learn how to work collectively as opposed to the classical hierarchical (and patriarchal) role distribution in the film industry. This horizontal approach is not only efficient for the development of a low-budget independent and sustainable film practice, but also allows participants to get acquainted with all fields of filmmaking and decide if they would like to seek further specialized training in any given department.

## WHAT IS FILMMAKING?

Filmmaking is the process of making a film. It is every single step, item and element involved. Teaching filmmaking requires a different approach to teaching specialized courses in directing, scriptwriting, editing or cinematography, etc. Teaching filmmaking is more abstract and less tangible than can be done using PowerPoint presentations, instruction documents and step-by-step tutorials. Teaching filmmaking is accompanying students through the process of “making” all the elements—the physical and the abstract, the theoretical and the practical—work together, a process that cannot be taught, but rather one that is discovered. The trainer’s job is to guide their students through their exploration journey and provide them with the tools to “unlearn” everything they think they know and make their own discoveries. The most important thing in a filmmaking workshop is the “making”—students do not “learn” and then “make,” they “learn” *while* they “make.”

## ONLINE TEACHING: CHALLENGES AND REMEDIES

### *Challenges*

One of the main challenges you will probably face is how to create an interactive atmosphere on an online communication platform with 16–20 participants. The video conference mode creates a transmitter/receiver dynamic that is very hard to break, especially with poor internet quality often forcing people to turn off their cameras. Most of the time, a trainer will find herself speaking for extended durations to 20 tiny black squares on a computer screen. While this can be tolerable when teaching topics that are more theoretical or scientific, it becomes a real challenge when the topic is artistic expression, let alone an art form that depends wholly on collectivity. Another challenge is how to compensate for the lack of practical training—imagine trying to teach someone oil painting without them having access to paint, brushes or canvases, for instance. These challenges, among others, can quickly lead to the failure of the whole program if participants begin feeling frustrated or gradually lose interest, giving up one after the other.

Some of difficulties the trainer is likely to face at the beginning are:

1. Participants are too shy to speak because the transmitter/receiver dynamic puts the speaker under a spotlight, making them feel exposed and vulnerable.
2. It is difficult for the trainer to know participants and their characters well enough to cater to their individual anxieties and needs in order to help them engage.
3. It is almost impossible for participants to interact and bond with each other.
4. Limited session times, moderation procedures and lack of physical/visual proximity mean that there is little chance of spontaneity and flow.
5. Participants may have difficulty grasping the logic behind a lot of the basics they are being taught because they don't get to physically test them, or soon forget or confuse lessons with one another.

## *Remedies*

I don't think there is one easy fix for this; solutions and remedies will vary from case to case. There are, however, a number of things that were proven useful:

### 1. Your disposition:

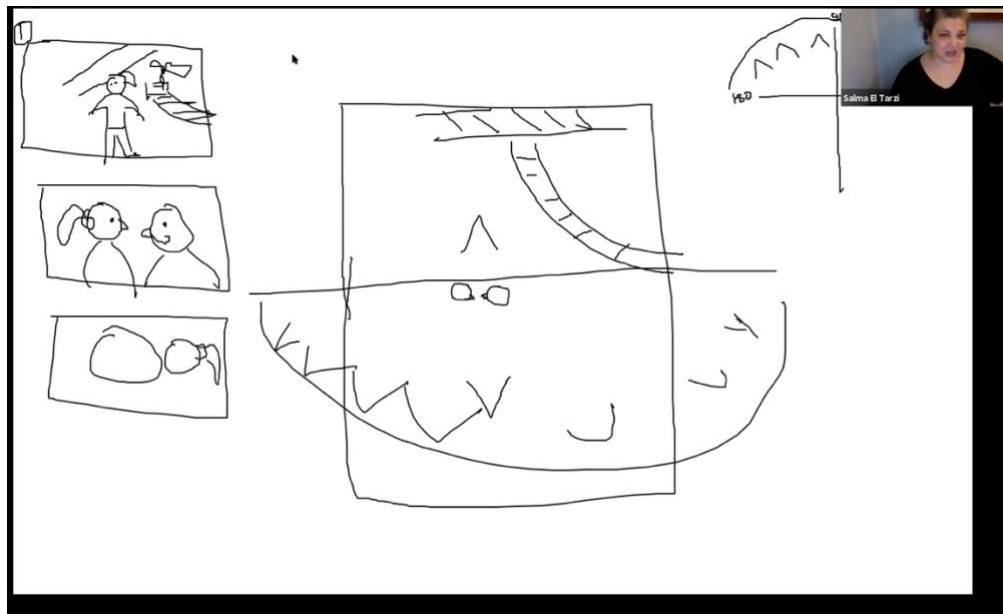
As a trainer, you'll need to wear several hats and switch between characters. Sometimes, you'll be the entertainer—or even the clown—while at other times, you'll be the therapist or the producer. You'll have to be very attentive and sensitive to participants' individual needs and weaknesses, all while treating them like equals. Pay attention to race, class, religion, background, gender, sexuality, social status—anything that can have an effect on power dynamics and privileges, and consequently, on the amount of space each participant feels entitled to occupy. But, most importantly, be genuine. Be yourself while having empathy toward them. Another important

### 2. Know your participants:

Be part of the selection process from day one. Read every single application. Make shortlists. Have individual meetings with applicants. Filling out applications can sometimes be very intimidating and people tend to give a very dry and formal description of themselves, stating what they think we want to know. In your individual interviews, try to learn beyond what they've written. Talk to them about everything and ask them to send you samples of their work—it doesn't have to be a film or a video; it can be a photograph, a drawing, a poem, a story or a song. If they don't have works of their own, ask them to send you a sample of something that inspires them: a favorite book, a favorite film, a favorite song, etc. Have them explain why they like it. Share a bit about yourself as well. This not only helps you as a trainer understand your participants, but you also become the only familiar face each participant sees during the first few sessions and this creates an automatic bond. You make them feel safe.

### 3. Use the tools:

Whether you're using Zoom or any other application, most video conference platforms offer a variety of useful tools. Besides the hand-raising and polling tools, I used the white board a lot. You can use it for brainstorming with participants about their projects, or explaining different frame sizes, the 180-degree rule, angles, blocking, storyboarding, etc. Whether they "guide" you to draw the next thing, or they respond to your questions regarding what you're drawing, the whiteboard is a really good tool to get participants to engage and interact. It also gives the class momentum by creating this real-time effect, as opposed to just sharing a screen of something previously prepared.



*In this screenshot we were breaking down the shots of a film scene we have just watched to understand the 180 degrees rule.*

#### 4. Create a familiar setting:

From the very beginning of the program, we realized the need to create a friendlier and less formal atmosphere in which participants can express themselves freely and spontaneously without the pressure of performativity. This led to the idea of creating a Facebook group as an additional shared space for interaction. The group turned out to be a huge success. Participants felt that they were in their element. They began posting ideas and questions, sharing films they like for discussion, joking and commenting on each other's posts, just like they would normally do on social networks. Their characters were finally coming out and they were bonding with each other.



However, this group was not just for social interaction; it was a teaching tool through which I could communicate ideas and principles, assign tasks, reply to questions and use as a platform to post extra material that I couldn't share during sessions due to time constraints.



The Facebook group was also a good option for participants who often have unstable internet connections and were finding it difficult to interact on Zoom because their connection only allowed them to watch silently with cameras turned off and microphones muted. The fact that Facebook automatically converts and compresses videos made it a convenient platform for uploading video assignments as well, in a way where we could all comment on posts and give feedback.

## WOMEN MAKE FILM

**Yusr Mokdad** Founding members · 9 August · 🌐

مرحباً صبايا ..  
بهالفترة جانت عندي طاقة عجيبه وسويت هذا المقطع كتمرين على فلم قصير وحبيت اشاركه معكم  
رايكم مهم

Hi girls  
in these last days i had strange power in photography so i practiced  
by making a short film , and i would like to share it with you  
tell me what you think ?



13 17 comments Seen by 24

Love Comment

**Kajeen Waisy**  
I love it!! Well done and thank you for sharing!! 🙌  
Care · Reply · 20 w 2

**Yusr Mokdad** Author  
**Kajeen Waisy** I'm happy for that thank you !! ❤️❤️  
Like · Reply · 20 w 1

**Salma El Tarzi**  
انا مبسوطة بيكي بشكل! ❤️❤️❤️  
Like · Reply · 20 w 1

**Yusr Mokdad** Author

Like · Reply · 20 w

**Salma El Tarzi**  
**Yusr Mokdad** طيب ايه رايك تطور التدريب؟ مستعدة ادبكي واجب صغتن خالص؟  
Like · Reply · 20 w · Edited 1

View 8 more replies

**Teba Alkafagy**  
كلش عاشت ايدج 🙌🙌🙌  
Like · Reply · 20 w 1

**Yusr Mokdad** replied · 1 reply

**Hajir Azhar**  
فووووة تجنن بالله 🙌🙌🙌  
Like · Reply · 20 w 1

**Yusr Mokdad** replied · 1 reply

This whole process reflected very positively on the level of active participation, engagement and interaction during the training sessions. It also means, however, that the trainer needs to be available/responsive outside the hours of training sessions—not just to respond, but also to conduct some “secret curation” to keep the group going and functioning as a training tool. I highly recommend that the trainer assigns a couple of hours a day to respond and interact with participants on Facebook to avoid burnout.

#### 5. Make it fun:

Games not only help break the ice and soften the rigidity of online training, but are also an excellent teaching tool. Games can vary wildly in type, complexity and purpose, from quizzes to puzzles to role play—we even had a tarot reading. I will explain each game I invented in more detail later, but the bottom line is: always be ready to play.

#### 6. Make it exciting:

Let’s be realistic. No matter how charismatic and charming you are as a trainer, and no matter how dedicated and passionate the participants are, if you are teaching an 8–9 month program, it can eventually get a bit monotonous and you are likely to have participants turn off their cameras even when they have good internet connections so they can chat with their friends on WhatsApp or even take a nap; it’s only human, really. This is why guest speakers play a very important role in keeping things alive. This, of course, will depend on your network, but elbarlament can also help with some of the names with whom we have already established good connections and have expressed their willingness to help. Whether they are giving a masterclass or an artist talk, it is important to try and get speakers who are inspiring to the participants or who they can relate to. It is very empowering for the participants when the guest speaker is a woman filmmaker who is accomplished in her field and who can also deliver and share knowledge. On the day we invited Nancy Abdel Fattah, the only female cinematographer in Egypt, and the most famous, for example, participants were so excited that they talked about it for days beforehand and afterward. On the day of the session, they all had their cameras turned on and were looking their best and glued to their screens. But as important

as it is to invite impressive and famous guest speakers, it is also important to invite speakers who participants can identify with and relate to. One of the most successful sessions was when we invited Dr. Alia Arasoughly from [Shashat](#), who shared projects by young Palestinian women making their first films. Given that Palestine, like Iraq, has been devastated for years by occupation and war, participants could draw parallels and relate to the Palestinian filmmakers. Another successful session was one in which we invited Karoline Kamel, who is in the process of making her [first film](#), and her producer Mai Saad. When Caroline and Mai were sharing their experience, it was easy for participants to imagine themselves in their place—this was a success story that was attainable and did not seem as intimidating or as far-fetched as when the speaker is an established or prominent filmmaker.

## GENERAL OUTLINE

*Self-Determined: Women Make Film* is a five-phase training program over the period of 8–9 months by the end of which participants are to produce four short graduation films. The first four phases are all held online, while the fifth phase is a combination of online sessions and work on the ground. Every phase consists of approximately 8–10 online sessions held twice a week. Every session is between 2–3 hours in duration. Each phase is followed by 3–4 weeks breaks, with assignments and follow-up with a trainer. The final phase is dedicated to the pre-production, shooting and post-production of projects over the duration of 5–6 weeks. This phase is run remotely by the main trainer in coordination with a local producer with participants on the ground.

<b>PHASE 1</b> 4 weeks	<b>BREAK</b> 3 weeks	<b>PHASE 2</b> 4 weeks		<b>BREAK</b> 4 weeks
<b>PHASE 3</b> 4 weeks	<b>BREAK</b> 3 weeks	<b>PHASE 4</b> 5 weeks	<b>BREAK</b> 2 weeks	<b>PHASE 5</b> 5-6 weeks

## **Sessions**

1. Regular training sessions with main trainer
2. Seminars and masterclasses with guest speakers
3. Artist talks with guest filmmakers
4. Project development sessions with main trainer

## **Topics**

During the course of the program, participants will learn a combination of basic theoretical knowledge and practical skills. The aim is to not only teach them how to make films, but also how to watch films and develop critical thinking skills. Accordingly, the totality of these sessions should cover the following technical topics:

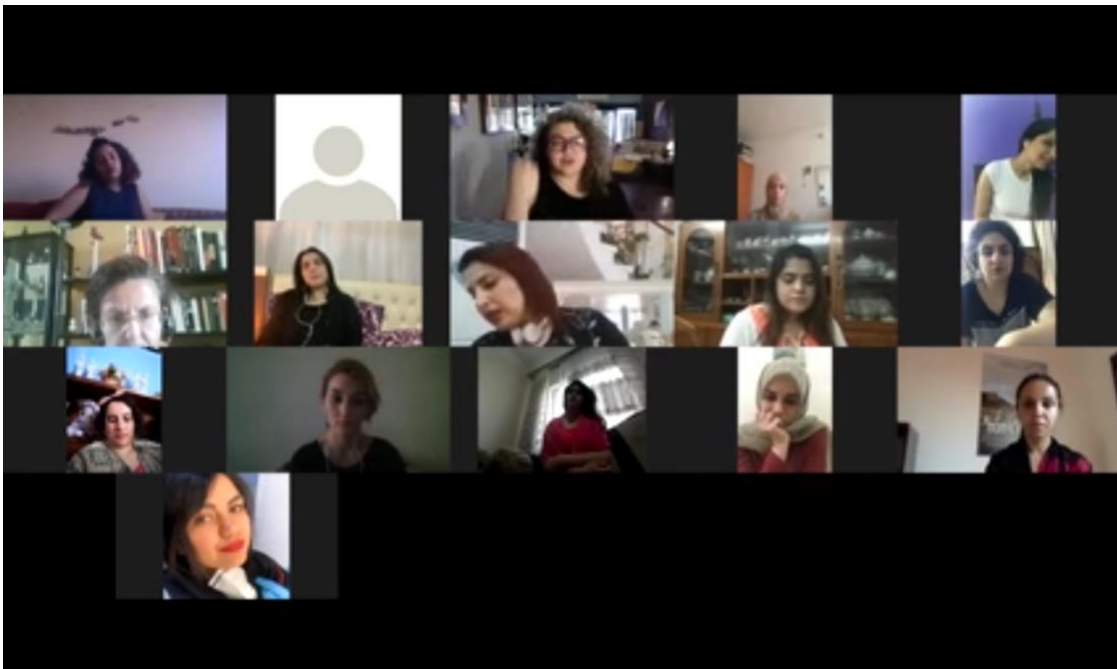
1. Basics of scriptwriting
2. Basics of film directing
3. Basics of editing
4. Basics of cinematography
5. Basics of sound
6. Basics of production
7. Copyrights and usage of archival material

The following theoretical topics are also covered, among others:

1. Basic gender training
2. Basics of film analysis
3. The male gaze
4. Politics of representation, agency and power dynamics
5. Feminist ethics in filmmaking

## Participants

When we first started, elbarlament had the ambition of continuing the workshop with 20 participants. This meant we had to start with 25 participants in order to hopefully finish with 20 after the expected number of drop-outs. This number is very high for any program, let alone one that is held online over the period of nine months. Due to the difficulties caused by the global pandemic, we lost and replaced several participants during the course of the workshop. We ended up with 16 who were fully dedicated, which I believe is a more reasonable number. From this experience, it is highly recommended to start with 20 participants with the aim of ending up with 16. In all cases, it is advisable to make sure the number of participants is divisible by four (the number of final projects). Even if participants do not necessarily get distributed evenly, this also makes it easier to assign group tasks. I also believe that 3–4 participants per project is a good number. Therefore, I would recommend that the number of participants be no less than 12 and no more than 20.



*One of the rare occurrences when the internet was strong enough for almost everyone to turn on their cameras. At this point, poor image quality was the least of our problems. 😊*

## PHASE BY PHASE PROGRAM STRUCTURE

As mentioned before, *Self-Determined: Women Make Film* is a five-phase workshop training program held over a period of 8–9 months by the end of which participants are to produce four short graduation films. In the following pages, I will share with you an overview of the program we executed, followed by an in-depth breakdown of every phase/workshop.

### Workshop 1

Duration: 4 weeks

Number of sessions: 8

Frequency: 2 sessions per week

#### Topics and activities:

1. General introductions and planning
2. Basic gender training and introduction to feminisms
3. What are women's films? Politics of representation, power dynamics and agency
4. The male gaze: Stereotypes and objectification of women in film
5. How to tell a story with images
6. Introduction to basic editing
7. Short films: Different genres and styles
8. Where do ideas come from? What do we want to make films about?

### Break 1

Duration: 3 weeks

Assignment: Each participant presents an idea for a short film

## **Workshop 2**

Duration: 4 weeks

Number of sessions: 11

Frequency per week: 2–3 sessions

### Topics and activities:

1. Recap and organization
2. Cinematic treatment: Case studies and samples
3. Basics of scriptwriting
4. Female representation in art history
5. Artist talks with filmmakers
6. Discussing participants' ideas
7. Collective voting on shortlist and final selection of the four ideas to be executed
8. Participants' distribution into four work groups

## **Break 2**

Duration: 4 weeks

Assignment: Each group presents logline, synopsis and treatment of the project they are working on

### **Workshop 3**

Duration: 4 weeks

Number of sessions: 20

Frequency per week:

- 1 collective session (2–3 hours)
- 1 individual session with each of the four work groups (1 hour–1 hour and 30 minutes)

#### Topics and activities:

1. Recap and organization
2. Script formatting and different styles
3. Script development of each of the four projects
4. Masterclass in copyrights and use of archival material
5. Masterclass in film directing + follow up

### **Break 3**

Duration: 3 weeks

Assignment: Each group to deliver final script of their project

## **Workshop 4**

Duration: 5 weeks

Number of sessions: 29

Frequency per week:

- 1 collective session (2–3 hours)
- 1 individual session with each of the four work groups (1 hour–1 hour and 30 minutes)
- 1 individual progress report session with each of the four work groups (30 minutes)

### Topics and activities:

1. Recap and organization
2. Basics of production management
3. Basics of cinematography
4. Scene blocking
5. Basics of sound
6. Introduction to project coordinator + follow up of pre-production
7. Introduction to local producer + follow up of pre-production
8. Delivery of final storyboards of the four projects
9. Delivery of production breakdowns of the four projects.
10. Casting and location scouting

## **Break 4**

Duration: 2 weeks

Assignment: This break is dedicated to pre-production with weekly progress report sessions and daily communication with the main trainer, producer, project coordinator and team representatives.

## **Workshop 5**

Duration: 5 weeks

Number of sessions: 8 sessions + shooting and editing days

Frequency per week:

- 1 individual session with each of the four work groups (2–3 hours)
- 1 individual progress report session with each of the four work groups (30 minutes)
- 2 days shooting for each project
- 5 days post-production for each project

### Topics and activities:

1. On-location role distribution
2. Equipment tutorials and training
3. Shooting schedules and scene blocking
4. Shooting four projects
5. Edit and post-production of four projects
6. Remote troubleshooting during shooting days
7. Production follow up with local producer
8. Delivery of four projects

## WORKSHOP 1

<p>Duration: 4 weeks Number of sessions: 8 Frequency: 2 sessions per week</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. General introductions and planning</li><li>2. Basic gender training and introduction to feminisms</li><li>3. What are “women’s films”? Politics of representation, power dynamics and agency</li><li>4. The male gaze: Stereotypes and objectification of women in film</li><li>5. How to tell a story with images</li><li>6. Introduction to basic editing</li><li>7. Short films: Different genres and styles</li><li>8. Where do ideas come from? What do we want to make films about?</li></ol>
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## SESSIONS

1. Opening session and introduction
2. Training session on gender
3. Planning session + presentation and discussion: What are “women’s films”? Politics of representation, power dynamics and agency
4. Seminar on Resolution UNSCR 1325
5. Seminar on the normalization of sexual violence in mainstream cinema and stereotypical representation of women in film
6. Session on basics of film editing + step-by-step tutorial of open-source editing software
7. Short films: Different genres and styles
8. Brainstorming session: Where do ideas come from? What do we want to make films about?

### **Session 1: Opening session and introduction**

This session is dedicated to the opening ceremony of the program, which includes an opening speech by the director of elbarlament, introduction to the activities and goals of the organization, introduction to team members and main trainer, etc. To alleviate any sense of intimidation participants might feel, I did the following:

- a. For my introduction in the PowerPoint presentation, I chose a playful picture of myself. I wanted to send the message that I was approachable and wasn't taking myself too seriously.



- b. I took over moderation from the moment I was introduced by the project manager, even before participants introduced themselves. I started using a simple game in which each participant introduces themselves and randomly chooses the next participant to speak. As simple as it is, it helped to ease the atmosphere and even produced a few giggles.

## **Session 2: Gender training**

This session is prerequisite to the program and consists of a seminar delivered by a guest speaker specialized in gender training. There are a number of brilliant names from different backgrounds who can give this training. elbarlament has a list of contacts that can be very useful. The main trainer has very little or no contribution to this session. However, I recommend that she discusses and plans ahead with the gender trainer to be able to follow up and build on what participants will learn from this seminar.

## **Session 3: Planning + presentation and discussion: What are “women’s films”? Politics of representation, power dynamics and agency**

The first part of this session was dedicated to the detailed introduction of the workshop. For the first 30 minutes, I discussed with participants my methodology and plan for the upcoming sessions. We also discussed logistics and convenient timings, especially given that most participants had day jobs and it was also the month of Ramadan.

The second part of the session is what would be considered the actual beginning of the workshop. Building on the previous session, this one is dedicated to questioning the meaning of “women’s films.” I start the conversation by asking participants to tell me what they understand when they hear the term “women’s films.” If they are hesitant at first, I help them with the following questions:

- Are they films directed by women?
- Are they films with a woman as a main character?
- Are they films that talk about certain topics related to women?
- Can they be made by men?

Once the conversation takes place and different opinions are being formed, I complicate the questions:

- Are women’s films and feminist films the same thing?
- Are all women’s films feminist?
- Are all films made by women feminist films?
- Do feminist films only talk about certain topics related to women?

Through these questions, I build the argument that not all women's films are feminist and that a film can be feminist even if it doesn't talk about typical "women's issues." I share some examples of women's films that reproduce female objectifying stereotypes or patriarchal values.

Examples:

- a. [\*Estakoz\*](#) by Inas El Deghedy is an interpretation of Shakespeare's *The Taming of the Shrew*, an already problematic premise, made worse by emphasis on sexual objectification in the film.
- b. [\*El Maslaha\*](#) by Sandra Nashaat celebrates nationalist macho fetishism by drawing a hypermasculine portrait of the main character who is a police officer.

We then proceed to discuss what feminism and intersectionality mean in this context, and how this reflects on politics of representation of class, race, gender, etc.

Example:

- a. [\*Capernaum\*](#) by Nadine Lababki as an example of problematic representation of class, manifested in patronizing judgementality and poverty fetishism a.k.a "poverty porn."

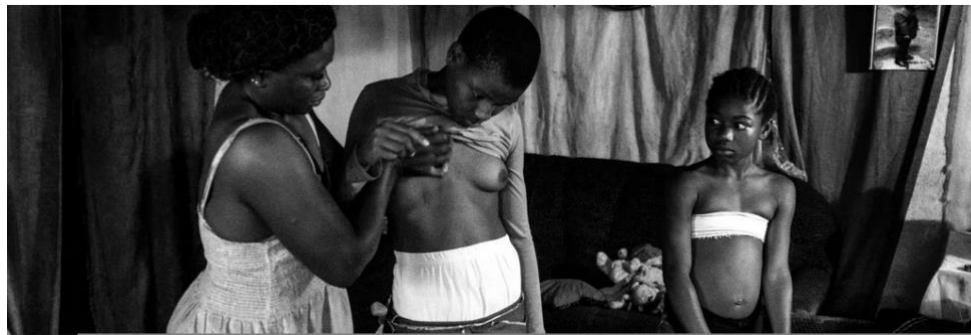
From here, we move to the topic of power dynamics, agency and ethical obligations of a filmmaker as core feminist values. Some of the questions raised are:

1. What is consent?
2. What is agency?
3. What is objectification?
4. What are power dynamics?

We focus on human rights films, or films with a cause, and discuss how to avoid unknowingly reproducing the same violence we are trying to fight.

Examples:

- a. [The CNN video capture](#) of an FGM operation in Egypt in 1994. I use it to raise questions about agency of the subject—a minor that is the victim of FGM, in this case—and the reproduction of the violence she had to endure twice, once at the hands of her father and butcher doctor and a second time when being filmed without her able to give consent, making her humiliation and torture public.
- b. The award-winning photography project [Banned Beauty](#) by Egyptian photographer Heba Khamis. I use this example to problematize the objectification of minors who are victims of chest ironing and the double violence they have to suffer: once by being forced to go through the horrific procedure and again by being photographed without being capable of giving real consent.



- c. [Letters from A Child Bride](#) by Studio Kawakeb as a positive example of interpretation of real testimony in a way that is sensitive and aware of the politics of representation and narratives.



- d. BBC Arabic program [El-Ar Online](#) . I use this example to problematize the customary sensationalist representation of sexual violence in media and film, starting from the name of the program—el-‘ar, meaning “shame”—to the title of the episode—“I Killed My Rapist When He Lusted After My Sister”—a name fit for tabloids. I also problematize the episode’s narrative and the victimized tone it chose for the narration of the real victim’s testimony, and the choice to use and visuals that tell the story through the eyes of the rapist.



*“He raped me with his finger”*



*“After two weeks... he filmed me naked”*

#### **Session 4: Seminar on Resolution UNSCR 1325**

2020 marked the 20th anniversary since the adoption of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on women and peace and security, and Iraq was the first country in the region to adopt a National Action Plan to implement UNSCR 1325. The seminar was given by Suzan Aref, the Coordinator of Iraq Cross Sector Task (CSTF) on UNSCR 1325. She introduced the participants to the resolution, the efforts done by the Iraqi civil society to implement it and the challenges that still face the social, political, economic and cultural participation of women in Iraq.

#### **Session 5: Seminar on the normalization of sexual violence in mainstream cinema and stereotypical representation of women in films**

For this seminar, I made a presentation of my [study](#) published on independent outlet Mada Masr, as well as the [video](#) produced for the platform Jeem, on the representation of desire in mainstream Egyptian cinema, specifically in the post-Cinema Nazifa (Clean Cinema) era. I discuss how the gender bias and objectification of women in film contributes to the normalization of sexual violence and rape culture. I used the examples of my study to showcase my arguments, but there are also numerous resources and material that trainers could use if they choose not to use this specific study to discuss the objectification of women and their stereotypical representations in cinema.



## **Session 6: Introduction to basic editing**

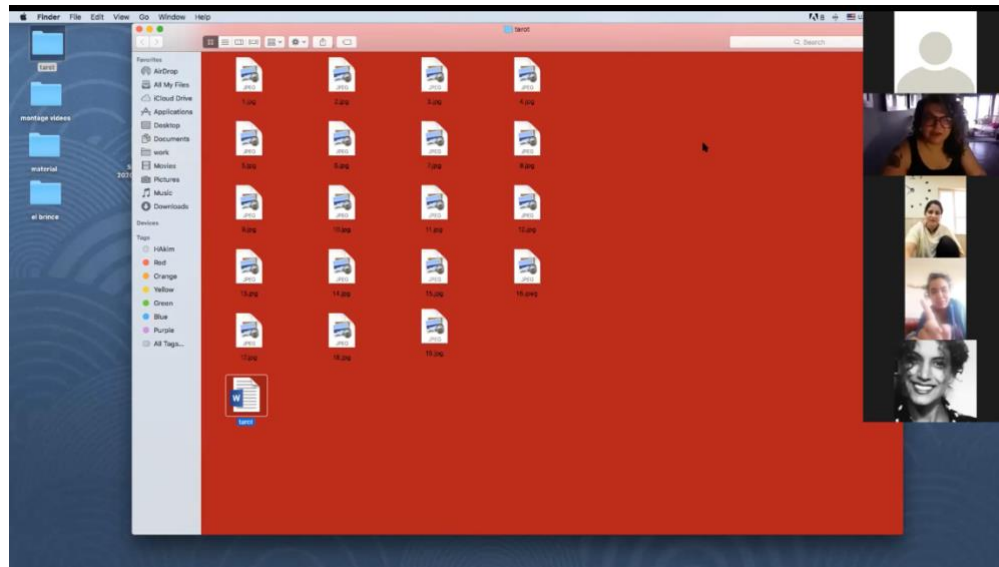
The reason I wanted to introduce editing as early on as possible in the program is that it was the only practical exercise that all participants could do during lockdown and see the immediate results of; I needed them to “make” something and learn through the process of doing so. The other reason was that I wanted to familiarize filmmaking and clear up the intimidating mystery around it. Filmmaking is telling stories with visuals and sounds, while editing is the process of combining these elements—a process that any social media user who owns a smartphone and posts stories does on a daily basis without realizing. When someone adds a song, audio, text, effect, or any other element to their video, this is editing. When someone chooses a series of photos to be posted consecutively in a certain order in their stories, this is also editing. So why not use something they are very familiar with to explain more complex concepts and theories that they can practically test and experiment with?

I divided the session into three parts:

### **Part 1 (30–45 minutes): The tarot game**

Inspired by the amazing [Dark Matter Cinema](#) project by Silvia Maglioni and Graeme Thomson, who created a tarot set from cinematographic images, I decided to create a simplified version and use the format of a three-card tarot reading to introduce the participants to the concept of telling/reading a story through images. The main concept of a tarot reading is finding an answer to the player’s question through three cards that they draw: one represents the present moment/situation, one represents an action that needs to be taken, and the last one represents the future. What I did was select 15 screenshots from famous films, created an improvised tarot deck with them and displayed them through screen-sharing as obscured thumbnails in a folder, giving each image file a number from 1 to 15.

## WOMEN MAKE FILM

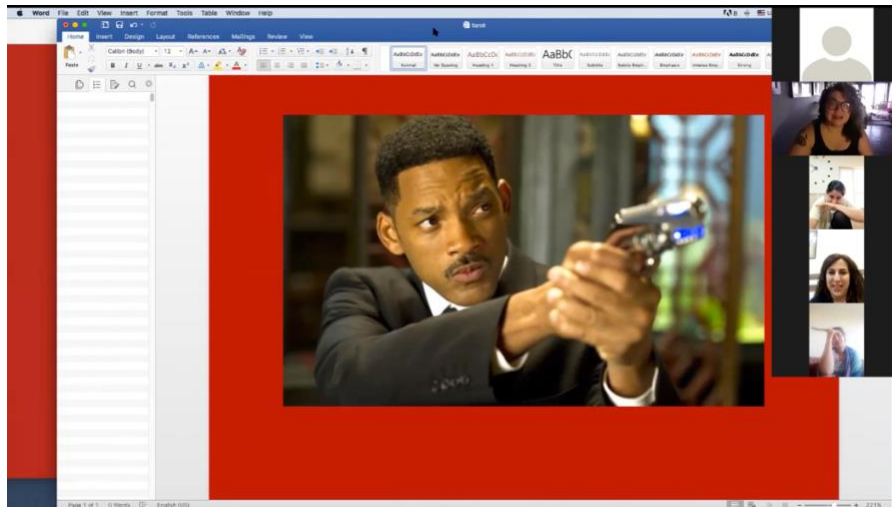


*Improvised Tarot deck*

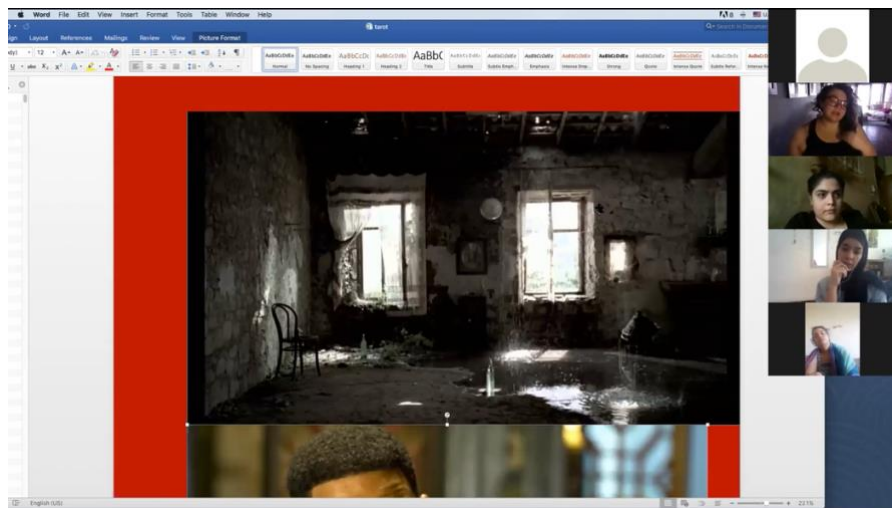
After I explained the rules of the game and shared the deck with the participants, I asked them to come up with a question, preferably one about something that they share in common. Given that we were in a filmmaking workshop during a global pandemic, the questions were along the lines of: Are we going to make it through? Are we going to survive? How do we succeed? etc. We then combined these into one question: How do we make it through?

Once we had our question, I asked a participant to pick the first card, which represents the present moment. When she did, I turned the card over for everyone to see and we spent some time discussing the image, analyzing all the elements, characters, objects, light, composition, colors, costumes, etc. and trying to draw a meaning related to the question and what the card represents—the present moment. We repeated the process with the two other cards and then I laid them next to each other in order and we started trying to create an answer/narrative based on what we had come up with from each individual image/card.

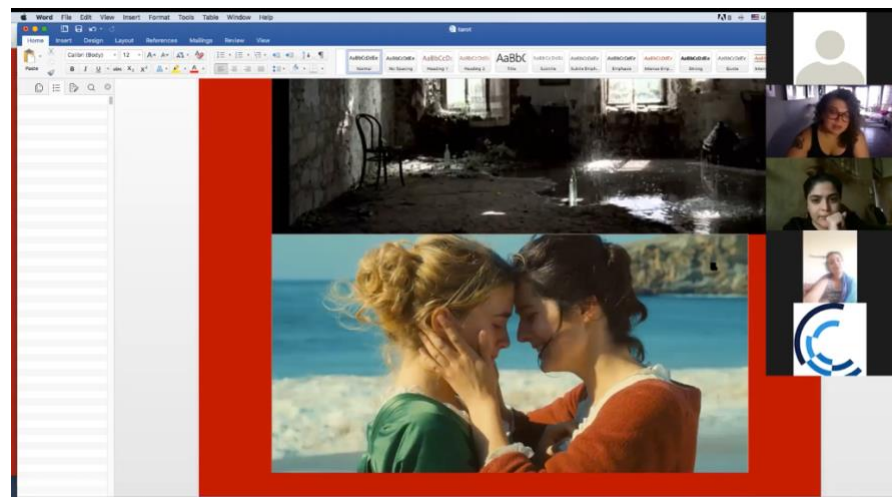
## WOMEN MAKE FILM



*Card 1: Present moment*



*Card 2: The action that needs to be taken*



*Card 3: the future*

### Part 2 (45 minutes): Theoretical introduction to editing and montage

Once we finished the tarot reading, I explained to the participants that what we had just done was montage and I shared with them Eisenstein's definition of montage. I then proceeded to explain the concept of editing and montage, as well as the different types of transitions, etc.



There is a lot of wonderful material available online for this purpose. I'm sharing with you what I used, but I'm sure you'll find plenty of other sources as well.

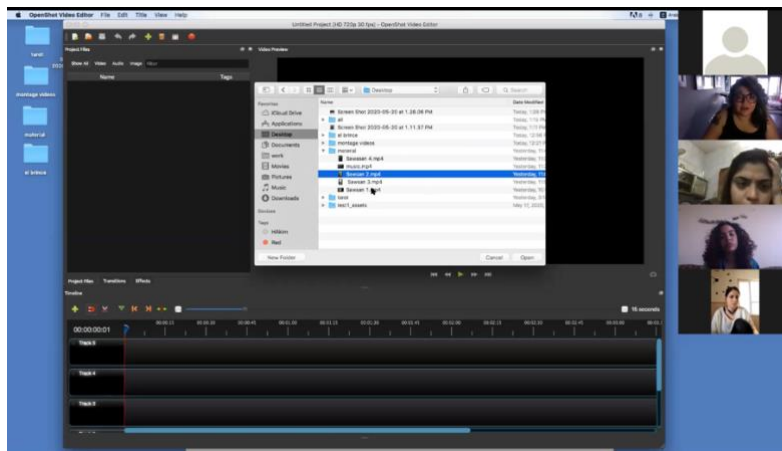


\*Click on the images for links

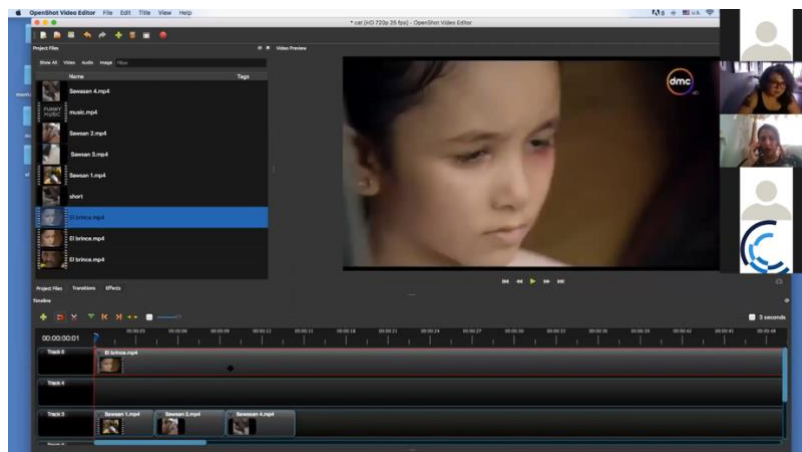
## Part 3 (1 hour): Editing tutorial

This part is dedicated to the step-by-step live editing tutorial. I chose to train participants on [OpenShot](#) editing software. I chose this program because it is free, open-source and doesn't require advanced computing power, thus making it accessible to all participants.

For the tutorial, I shared my screen on Zoom and made two edits in front of them, explaining every step as I went along.

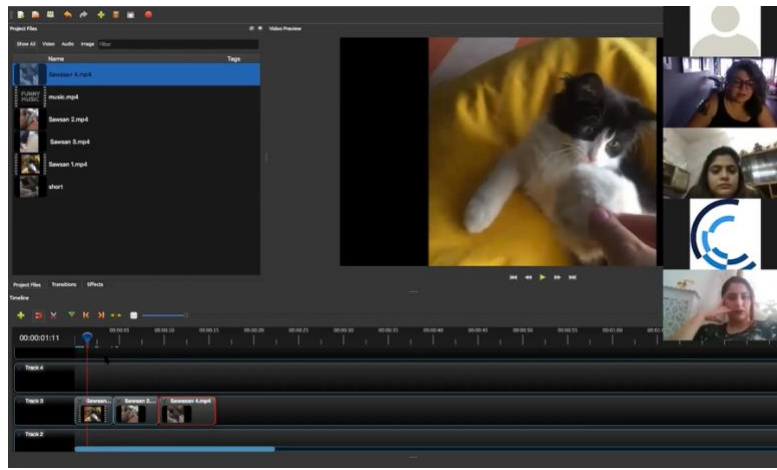


The first edit was a shot-by-shot breakdown of a short scene from a TV series, before reassembling the shots in a different order to give a different meaning.



*In This scene from Egyptian TV series El-Brince, I re-edited this sequence to make the driver seem to rescue a little girl standing alone in the middle of the street instead of abandoning her like in the original edit.*

The second edit was a montage of several clips I shot of my cat on my phone adding a music track.



At the end of the session, I gave them two assignments, each to be submitted in two weeks:

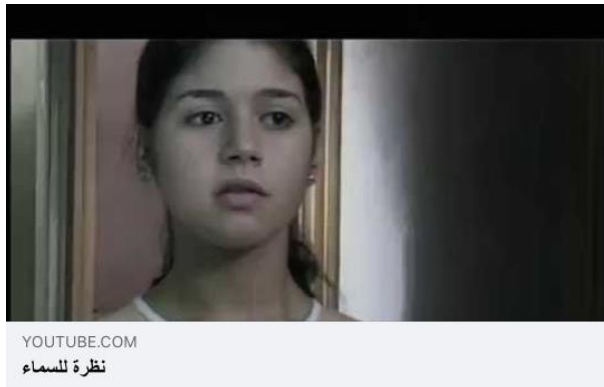
- a. Make a one-minute video diary about a day in their life during lockdown.
- b. Download a scene from any film or TV series and re-edit it in a different order and see how the meaning changes.

Some of the participants were already familiar with other programs like Premiere, and the majority used phone-based editing applications. Since my main target was for them to practice editing and make videos, rather than learn to use a specific software, I gave them the freedom to use whatever software they wanted to for their practical assignments as long as they got it done.

## **Session 7: Short Films: Different Approaches to Women's Films**

During this discursive session, we collectively watched a number of short films of different styles and genres, following each screening with an open discussion. As we were getting closer to the end of the workshop, I wanted participants to think about and implement everything they'd learned while watching and analyzing these films. I also wanted them to see different examples of short films that might inspire them in the process of finding ideas for their own films for the next phases.

Here, I'll share the films I chose to show them; however, it's up to every trainer to choose films as they see fit. During my selection process, I was making sure to choose a selection that shows variety as well as touches on the topics we'd discussed previously during the workshop. I also made sure that the films were made by women.



\*Click on the images for links

**Session 7: Brainstorming session: Where do ideas come from? What do we want to make films about?**

This is the last session of this workshop and is dedicated to preparing participants for the assignment they will carry out during the break. I start by explaining to them the entire process of selection, which is as follows:

1. Every participant will submit an idea for a short film by the end of the break period.
2. I will sort the 20 ideas and give each file a number. I will then share them with all participants anonymously. Participants will not know which idea belongs to whom, and are not to reveal which idea is theirs.
3. Every participant is to vote for nine ideas, including their own.
4. I will sort the votes and share the results with the nine ideas that were shortlisted.
5. We will read and discuss the ideas together before taking a second poll to select seven ideas out of the nine that were shortlisted.
6. A different participant will volunteer to defend one of the seven selected ideas, trying to convince the other participants to choose it. The only rule here is that participants cannot choose their own idea to defend.
7. After all participants have listened to the arguments of the seven volunteers, we make a final poll to select the four ideas that are going to be executed during the program.
8. Once the four ideas are selected, participants are distributed to four working groups. Each group will be working on one of the ideas. The original owner gets priority in choosing the group working on their idea, but they are not allowed to reveal themselves as the owners of an idea. From this point, it is made clear that it is no longer their idea, but the whole group's, as they will develop it collectively.
9. The identity of the owner of the idea remains anonymous until the groups are formed and they start working together. They then decide internally if and when the original owner's identity is to be revealed.

After I explain the process and get everyone on the same page, I begin a brainstorming session in which I ask participants to think of topics they would like to make films about. They will probably need some encouragement and guidance

at first to get the conversation flowing, so it is useful to provide some examples—however, you should make sure they are different to things they might be interested in. (The goal here is to give them examples, not give them ideas.) The purpose of this session is just to get their imagination going and to ease them into the brainstorming process. The ideas shared in this session are just examples; they can stick to them or drop them altogether and present completely different ones for their assignment.

I start asking questions about the idea to try and open up possibilities. I also try to summarize the main idea or theme in one line. Sometimes, I group several ideas under the same “main idea” or theme. At this point, I’m being careful not to use technical terms like “logline,” “synopsis,” “treatment,” etc. These are things they’re still going to learn in the second workshop. Instead, I use words like “idea” and “topic.” I just want them to think and express themselves freely and organically at first.

Make sure to use the white board on Zoom or share your screen with a Word document to write down all the ideas they share in front of them. You can share this document with them after the end of the session to help them with their assignment.

## **BREAK 1 ASSIGNMENT**

*(Break duration: 3 weeks)*

Every participant is to present a topic for a short film. The film can be of any genre: fiction, documentary, essay, etc. and does not necessarily have to address themes that are considered “women’s issues.” Participants should have the freedom to choose without pressure of expectations. I also ask them to prepare research, with supporting documents, to better explain their idea and get other participants to vote for it. They can add articles, photographs, Wikipedia links, videos, etc. In their presentation, they should answer the following questions:

1. What is the very short summary of your idea/topic?
2. Tell us about it in more detail
3. Why is this topic important for you?
4. How does this topic relate to the other participants/Why should other participants vote for this idea?

The final deadline is by the end of the three-week break, but participants should submit their drafts one week earlier to get the trainer’s feedback, make adjustments accordingly and send back the final version before the deadline is due.

During the break, the trainer is available for questions and to provide feedback, as well as follow up on the progress of the assignment and basically ensure that participants deliver their work on time. Communication will take place via the Facebook group for general announcements, but there will also be emails, private chats and sometimes video calls with participants to help them out when needed.

## WORKSHOP 2

<p>Duration: 4 weeks Number of sessions: 11 Frequency per week: 2–3 sessions</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Recap and organization</li><li>2. Cinematic treatment: Case studies and samples</li><li>3. Basics of scriptwriting</li><li>4. Female representation in art history</li><li>5. Artist talks with filmmakers</li><li>6. Discussing the ideas presented by the participants</li><li>7. Collective voting shortlist and final selection of the four ideas to be executed</li><li>8. Participants distribution into four work groups</li></ol>
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## SESSIONS

1. Opening session/recap + short films: Genres and styles
2. Masterclass on cinematic treatment with Alia Arasoughly from Shashat
3. Interactive session: How to develop an idea?
4. Masterclass on scriptwriting with Azza Shalaby
5. Artist talk with Nadine Salib
6. Follow-up on basics of scriptwriting masterclass
7. Selection process I + screening & discussion about representation of women in the arts
8. Selection process II (Double session)
9. Artist talk with Sara Ishaq
10. Final selection process + team distribution

## **Session 1: Opening session/recap + short films: Genres and styles**

Following greetings and small talk, which took a few minutes at the beginning, the session was divided as follows:

### **Part 1 (30 minutes): Introduction**

This part was dedicated to getting participants acquainted with the planning of this workshop and the tasks ahead of us, as well as reminding those who hadn't submitted their break assignment to do so we could start the selection process. I explain to them once again the steps of the selection process.

### **Part 2 (1 hour 30 minutes): Short film screening and discussion**

As we were getting closer to selecting the four projects to be developed, and as the participants were submitting the topics and ideas that they wanted to make films about, I wanted to introduce them to several possibilities and directions they could choose for their films. While some of them had submitted ideas for narrative films in the form of fictional short stories, others were more interested in submitting topics they would want to discuss in their films. At this point, these topics could be developed into any genre or form: short fiction films, documentaries, film essays, diaries, or even animation. This was also a good time to watch short films from different genres and styles and discuss their approaches and aesthetics together.

While curating this film screening, I was careful to select short films that were made by beginners in workshops similar to ours. I wanted the participants to watch something relatable, something that they could actually see themselves doing. So I picked films that aren't perfect, are a bit rough around the edges, diamonds in the making—just like themselves. And since we had watched several short fiction films in the previous workshop, the focus was more on short documentaries this time.

## WOMEN MAKE FILM

Here are the short films that were used as examples, but as previously mentioned, trainers are free to choose their own material.



YOUTUBE.COM

Short Documentary - Under the / تسجيلي قصير - تحت الحديد  
Iron



YOUTUBE.COM

Short Documentary - Our Weapon / سلاحنا - تسجيلي قصير  
شاهد واسمع / برنامج يقدم للمنتقح افلام ومعلومات عن فنون الفوتوغرافيا والجرافيتي في فقر...



YOUTUBE.COM

Documentary Film - Crack / شق - تسجيلي قصير  
شاشة جديدة / برنامج للسينما والفيديو على شاشة an ...ogram dedicated to Cinema



YOUTUBE.COM

The Darabokka - Movie / الدريكة  
شاشة جديدة / برنامج للسينما والفيديو على شاشة an ...ogram dedicated to Cinema



Stay away from me is it not enough

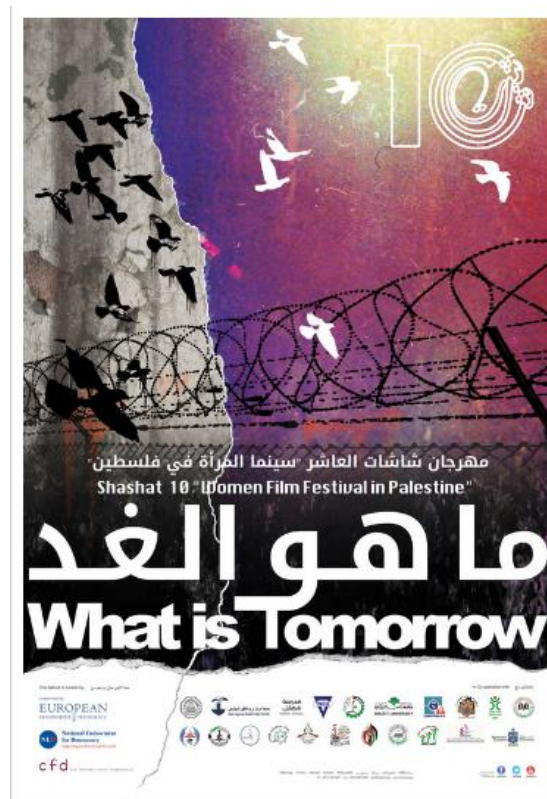
YOUTUBE.COM

بحار قديم

\*Click on the images for links

## **Session 2: Masterclass on cinematic treatment with Dr. Alia Arasoughly from Shashat**

[Shashat](#) is an independent non-profit women's cinema NGO in Palestine, whose focus is on women's cinema and the social and cultural implications of women's representations. Shashat, which means "screens" in Arabic, was founded in 2005 in order to provide sustainability and continuity to these objectives. One of their four programs is the Young Palestinian Women Filmmakers Incubator Program, a training program that takes place over several phases which shares a very similar approach and goals with ours.



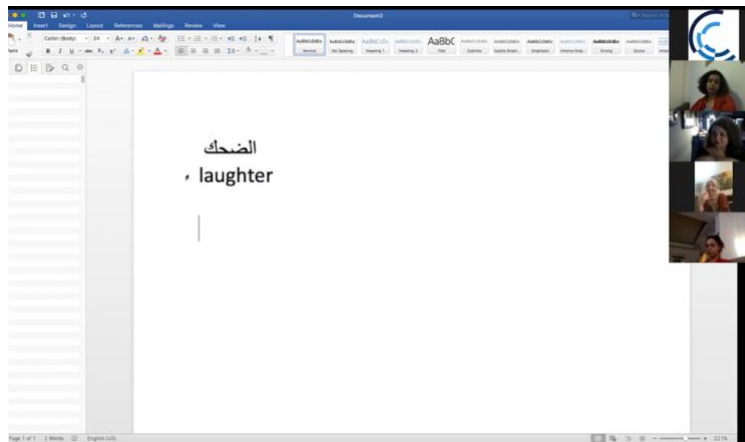
During the session, Dr. Arasoughly showed four short films made by women filmmakers in the program and explained the development process that these projects had gone through to see the light, from concept to execution. She also shared some of the challenges and obstacles emerging women filmmakers typically face and the solutions they have come up with at Shashat to help overcome these.

*\*By this time, all participants had submitted their assignments.*

### **Session 3: Interactive session: How to develop an idea?**

In this session, we try to demystify the concept of “development.” Up until this moment, when participants think of ideas, they either think of a “story” or “topic” but have no perception of where these ideas can go from that point or how to take them further. In this session, they are guided through a brainstorming session to help them understand the logic of the process.

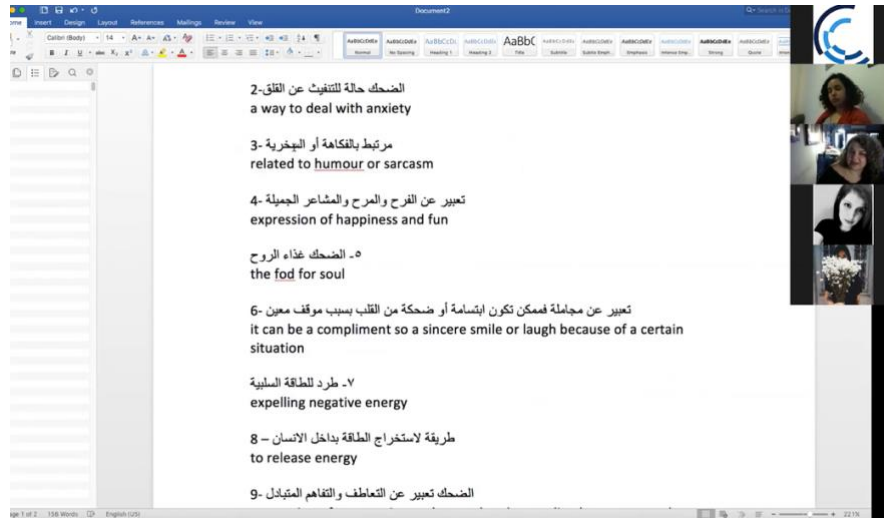
The first thing to do is to choose an abstract theme. Let’s imagine we are applying for a grant that will fund films that revolve around a certain theme. How do we come up and develop an idea from this theme? After I explained to the participants what a theme is, I told them that the theme for our development exercise is “laughter.” I then wrote the word “laughter” in the middle of the blank screen and asked participants how we should proceed from here.



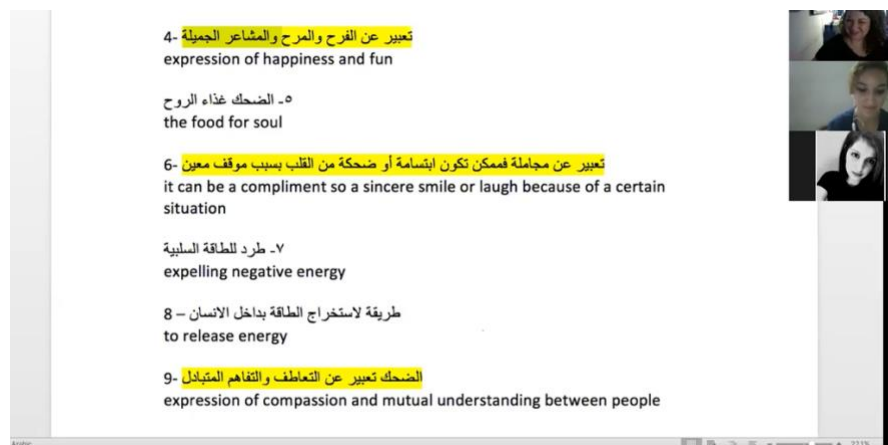
To a large extent, development depends on asking the right questions. Therefore, a good way to break the deadly silence that follows my question and ease the rising panic on participants’ faces—the ones who still have their cameras on, that is—is to ask them, “What is the first question we should ask?”

Participants start making suggestions: What are the situations that make people laugh?, How does laughter affect us?, etc.

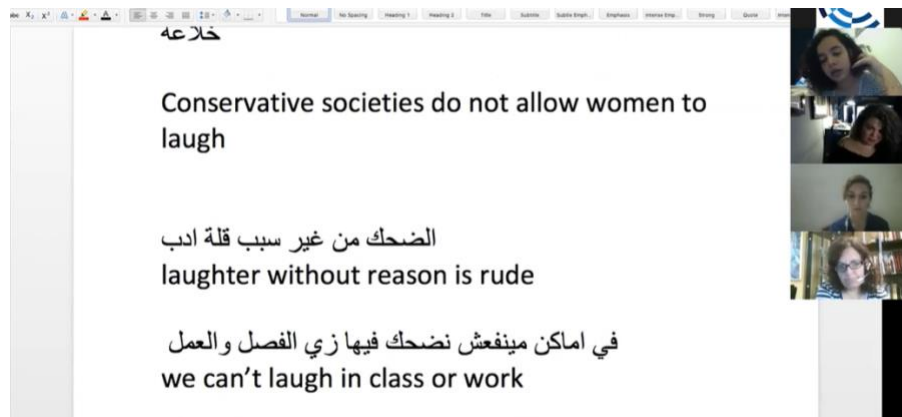
I insist that there is a question that precedes all these questions: “What is the first question? What if I say, let’s make a film about the Bagalagadodo—what will be the first question everyone will ask me?” One participant answers: “What is a ‘Bagalagadodo’?” and they soon realize that the first question in our brainstorming should be: “What is laughter?” And so, the ball starts rolling and, with the trainer’s moderation, one question leads to another.



When we have compiled enough information and reflections about the topic, I take the brainstorming to the next level. What do we find in common between all the ideas we have compiled? And can we come up with a conclusion? In this example, we found that the word “expression” was repeated several times.



We concluded that “laughter is a means of expression and communication,” which gave me the chance to complicate the question further and ask whether laughter was a personal/private or public concern. This led the conversation toward political satire, society, authority, women and feminism. Suddenly laughter gained new meanings: rebellion, resistance, liberation and challenging authority.



خلاعة

Conservative societies do not allow women to laugh

الضحك من غير سبب قلة ادب  
laughter without reason is rude

في اماكن مینفعش نضحك فيها زي الفصل والعمل  
we can't laugh in class or work

The final step is to ask participants to suggest different angles and approaches for if we were to make a film about laughter. The session should end with a list of possible ideas for films about laughter.



تسجيلي documentary

هل الضحك مسألة نسوية؟  
is laughter a feminist question  
ممکن ندور على بنت ضحكت في مكان عام وكان رد فعل المحيط سلبي  
we can search for a girl who laughed in public and the reaction was bad

نسال سيدات عن مواقف متعلقة بالضحك  
asking women about situations re laughter

روائي fiction

ديستوبيا عالم بدون ضحك  
dystopian world without laughter

قصة فنانة ستاند اب كوميدي  
story of female stand up comedian

#### **Session 4: Masterclass on scriptwriting with Azza Shalaby**

This session is dedicated to introducing participants to the basics of scriptwriting. In her masterclass, Egyptian scriptwriter Azza Shalaby chose to use the American film [\*Chocolat\*](#) to demonstrate the elements of classical dramatic structure. Participants were requested to watch the film prior to the session.



During the session, participants were introduced to the following topics:

- Feature films vs. short films
- Documentary films vs. fiction films
- Logline
- Treatment
- Story
- The elements of character (physical appearance, social aspect and psychological aspect)
- Character development
- Types of conflict
- Classical three-act dramatic structure

*\*By this time, I had anonymized all submitted ideas and shared them with participants so they could read through them for the selection process.*

### **Session 5: Artist talk with filmmaker Nadine Salib**

As the previous two sessions were intense and full of information, we needed a buffer to let the participants catch their breath. An artist talk was also a good opportunity for the participants to process everything they had learned, while still engaging in a conversation about cinema. Nadine Salib shared with us the link to her feature documentary [\*Um Ghayeb: Mother of the Unborn\*](#) a few days before the session for participants to watch and prepare their questions. During the talk, Nadine talked about the process of making the film from a professional yet also very personal and honest perspective and the participants had endless questions to ask.

### **Session 6: Follow-up on the basics of scriptwriting masterclass**

In this session, we build up on the results of the brainstorming we'd done in Session 3 in light of what they've learned in the basics of scriptwriting masterclass.

Having learned about loglines, synopses, treatments, characters and events, we develop together short film ideas revolving around laughter. There are two objectives for this session:

- a. Learning to build an idea with story elements in mind
- b. Learning how to express this idea in writing

The outcome of this exercise is to collectively write synopses for the film ideas we come up with during the brainstorming session.

The trainer will probably have to deal with the frustration of participants, who will feel duped at this point, because if they had learned these things before they were asked to submit ideas, they would have done much better jobs. I suggest that the trainer acknowledges their frustration before they express it and explain how crucial this sequence is to the learning process and for them to understand the importance of the things they have learned—their frustration being the proof! 😊

Here are samples of the ideas participants came up with and developed during the session:

1. *A girl achieves great results in high school, allowing her to enroll in one of the top universities in the country. However, she isn't interested in doing this and has to fight to achieve her dream of participating in a stand-up comedy reality TV competition instead, against her parents' wishes.*
2. *A poor girl gets a well-paying job that requires her to always be cheerful and smile at customers. However, she is incapable of smiling and laughing at customer's terrible jokes just to please her boss, who constantly shames her for being depressing and lacking a sense of humor. To everyone's surprise, we discover she is a very funny stand-up comedian who is highly successful in an underground club.*
3. *Since childhood, a young woman likes to wear clown clothes and do clown performances with her two younger brothers. When the war erupts, her two little brothers die in one of the raids. After their death, everyone tries to convince her to stop clowning out of respect for the sad circumstances. However, she challenges people and goes out in public wearing her clown clothes, mourning her brothers by giving the funniest performance she ever has.*
4. *A crowd at a talent show is enjoying a stand-up comedy number very much. At the end of the performance, the stand-up comedian reveals that she is actually a woman and not a man as the crowd had thought. She explains that she carried out this trick in order to document how the crowd would react—and how they'd receive the same provocative jokes—if the teller was a woman, in order to expose the bigotry of society.*

*\*At the end of the session, I share the link for the poll with participants so that they can each vote for nine ideas.*

## **Session 7: Selection process I + screening and discussion about representation of women in the arts**

This session is divided into two parts with two different activities:

### **Part 1 (30–45 minutes): Selection process I**

The first part of this session is dedicated to revealing the results of the poll and explaining the next steps to participants. I share the poll statistics and calculate percentages with them to figure out which ideas made it to the nine that were selected. I'm keen on conducting all steps with or in front of participants; it's very important that the process is democratic and that they feel ownership over and agency within it. The aim is to build a spirit of self-organized collectivity. It is not a competition. There are no winners or losers. There is no personal glory. Ideas-owners and voters are anonymous and should remain as such. It's a collaboration.

Once we have our nine selections, we carry out another quick poll and ask each participant to vote for seven ideas out of the nine. I explain the following steps of the process: In the next sessions, we will read the seven ideas together and discuss them. Then, seven participants will volunteer to each defend one of the seven ideas (provided they are not the original owner of that particular idea). After everyone has listened to their defense, they will vote for the final four ideas that are going to be executed.

### **Part 2 (1 hour 30 minutes): Screening + discussion**

In the second part of this session, we discuss the representation of women in the history of Western arts. We focus on Western arts because cinema itself is a Western invention/art, as well as a very recent one. The classical aesthetics of cinema—the ones we are taught in film schools all over the world—are highly influenced by the heritage of aesthetics in other arts in the West, like painting.

For this purpose, we screened the second episode of John Berger's [\*Ways of Seeing\*](#), which discusses "the female nude," followed by a discussion during which excerpts from Laura Mulvey's essay "[Visual Pleasure in Narrative Cinema](#)" were shared.

### **Session 8: Selection process II (Double session)**

In this session, we read together the seven shortlisted ideas and have an in-depth conversation about each of them. At the end of the session, seven participants volunteer to each defend one of the seven ideas, as long as they are not original owners of the idea they defend.

The duration of this session is longer than usual to provide enough time to discuss all the ideas. It is recommended to distribute the time as follows:

- 15–20 minutes per idea (x7)
- 10–15-minute break after every two ideas (x3)
- 15 minutes for volunteer selection

The selection of volunteers is done through the chat box in the Zoom application, and is done on a first-come first-served basis—the first participant who states that they want to defend a certain idea is selected to do so.

### **Session 9: Artist talk with Sara Ishaq, Yemeni filmmaker and director of Comra Yemeni Film School**

In this session, Yemeni filmmaker Sarah Ishaq shares her experience in making her feature documentary [The Mulberry House](#), and introduces the participants to the Comra Yemeni Film School project. The students were provided with a link to watch the film a few days before the session. During the discussion, we focused on the personal aspect and challenges of making self-referential films.

The reason behind the timing of the session because is to allow participants to catch their breath and take some distance from the seven shortlisted ideas, in order to be able to reflect on them before the final selection session.

### **Session 10: Final selection process + team distribution**

This is the final session of this workshop, in which the four ideas are selected, working groups are divided and each group is assigned tasks to be executed during the break period.

We start the session by giving each of the seven volunteers 10 minutes to defend the idea they've chosen. When they're done, I share a poll with all participants to vote for the four ideas out of the seven.

Once we have our four film ideas that participants will execute during the following phases of the program, we start dividing the teams. This is a very sensitive task, and needs to be handled with a lot of transparency and tact. It is agreed upon from the start that the secret owner of each idea has their place secured on the team that will execute it. The other participants chose the teams based on which idea of the four they would like to work on. However, there are other things to bear in mind. I share with participants all the things we need to consider while forming the teams and trust their instincts and team spirit. These things are not obligatory, but they can really make logistics easier to manage.

1. Location: If participants come from different cities, it would be more convenient to form teams within same or nearby cities when possible.
2. Language: If there are participants who do not speak the dominant language of the country, it would be more convenient if they are in the same group. (For example, in this program, we had three Kurdish women, one of whom did not speak Arabic. They chose to be on the same team with two Iraqi women. They all compromised and decided to communicate in English, which they could all speak.)
3. Number of participants: Numbers per team should be more or less balanced for the work to get done; we can't have two members on one team and seven members on another.

## **BREAK 2 ASSIGNMENT**

*(Break duration: 4 weeks)*

The duration of this break is four weeks, during which each of the four work groups are going to work collectively to develop the film idea they have chosen. Participants of each group should self-organize to meet online (or in person, if they live in the same city and mobility isn't restricted by lockdown) and brainstorm together.

It is recommended that the trainer makes it known that they are available in case help is needed, but leaves it up to participants to decide how many times they want to meet and how they run the process and distribute the tasks.

By the end of this break, every group should have developed the rough outlines of their story and delivered a logline, synopsis and treatment for their film.

It is highly recommended that the trainer holds two mandatory progress follow-up sessions with every group, one on the third week and the other on the fourth. The duration of the session is between one hour to one hour and 30 minutes.

## WORKSHOP 3

<p>Duration: 4 weeks Number of sessions: 20 Frequency per week:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 1 collective session (2–3 hours)</li><li>• 1 individual session with each of the four work groups (1 hour–1 hour and 30 minutes)</li></ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Recap and organization</li><li>2. Script formatting and different styles</li><li>3. Script development of each of the four projects</li><li>4. Masterclass on copyrights and use of archival material</li><li>5. Masterclass in film directing + follow up</li></ol>
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### SESSIONS

#### a. Collective sessions:

- i. Opening session: Script formatting and different styles
- ii. Masterclass on copyrights and use of archival material with Mona Assaad
- iii. Masterclass in film directing with Nadine Salib
- iv. Follow-up session on film directing

#### b. Individual group sessions:

- i. Project development session x four groups x four weeks = 16 sessions

## COLLECTIVE SESSIONS

### **Session 1: Opening session/script formatting and different style**

This opening session is dedicated to introducing participants to script formats and the different components of a scene.

#### Part 1 (30 minutes): Introduction

Here, basic information about script formatting and the components of a scene is introduced:

- Definition of a scene (time/location)
- Components of a scene (day/night—interior/exterior—location—transition)
- Writing style and nature of information (present tense—descriptive, etc.)
- Different script formats

I will share here examples and exercises I used during the session, but again, every trainer should feel free to use whatever material they see fit for the task.

#### Part 2 (15–20 minutes): Old format vs. new format *(Or what we call in Egypt: French format vs. American format)*

I shared with participants samples of scripts of commercial films they'd be familiar with written in different formats. The same samples were also used for the following exercise. I chose to acquaint the participants with the old format despite it being almost obsolete because it reflects the concept of audio-visual very well in the way that the page is divided into two vertical columns, as opposed to the new format. (To my surprise, some of the groups chose the old format when they wrote their scripts).

For the old format (French) I used the script for [Dam el-Ghazal](#), written by Wahid Hamed. For the new format (American), I used the script of [45 Yom](#), written by Mohamed Hefzy.

### Old format (French)

مشهد ١٢	داخل الشقة	ليل / خارجي
أمانة إيه اللي أنا خنتها يا رجل يا أهمل.. أنا لغت وصية أبوها.. أبوها وهو بيמות قال لي سنز البنت يا عيده..	عده	-الرجلان في مواجهة كلامية شديدة ولكنها في حالة تشبه صراع الديوك المائدة متصل بينهما وفاطمة زوجة عده تقف عاجزة عن فعل شيء.. عده وهو يشوح بيده..
تقوم تجوزها لحشاش..	جابر	-الكاميرا على الصورة للأصدقاء القدامى
أنا جوزتها لغتاش..	عده	
وحشاش..	جابر	
ما كل الناس حشاشين.. هات لي حد في الحنة مش حشاش..	عده	
عشان تعرف انك غبي ومخل تخون.. انت لغت وصية المرحوم غلطي.. سيد الدهشوري وهو بيמות قال لي صون البنت يا جابر..	جابر	
قال صولها.. وقال أسترها ما تفرقش حاجة	عده	-هو يجلس بينما يظل جابر واقفا
لا.. تفرق كثير يا أبو مخ تخون..	جابر	-هو يجلس أمامه وفي هذه
تلوقت هتعمل إيه عشان تخلص البنت من النصيبة اللي هي فيها.. عارف ان حمايتها طرتها يا عيده..		-حالة من الهم تسيطر على عده والزوجة وأيضا جابر..
قطع		
28		

Dam El Ghazal by Wahid Hamed

### New Format (American)

مشهد ٣٨	حوش المدرسة	نهار/خارجي
أحمد يسير بجوار طفل في نفس عمره في حوش المدرسة. الحوش مزدحم بعشرات الأطفال. معظمهم يلعبون كرة القدم و بعضهم يجلس حول أركان الحوش المختلفة.		
أحمد مالك يا بني مكش كدة ليه ؟		
وليد ماليش...		
الطفلان يتجهان إلى دكة خشبية بالحدى أركان الحوش و يجلسان عليها.		
وليد		
لقت مامتك بتديك مصروف قد إيه ؟		
أحمد بتديني جنبه كل يوم.. بتسأل ليه ؟		
وليد و لا حاجة.. بأسأل عادى.		
أحمد مامتك ما بتديكش مصروف ؟		
وليد		
لا بتديني... بس لما بابا الله يرحمه كان عايش كان بيديني أكثر.		
تأني الكرة تجاه وليد و أحمد و تتوقف عند قدمي وليد.		
طفل بمدرسة أحمد هات الكورة !		
وليد ينظر إلى الطفل الآخر لعدة ثوان ثم ينحني ليمسك بالكرة.		
طفل بمدرسة أحمد ( بصوت مرتفع )		

45 Yom by Mohamed Hefzy

### Part 3 (30–45 minutes): Compare shot scene with written scene

In this exercise, we read together the introductory sequence or the first scene of the film in the script. We then watch the scene/sequence that was shot in the actual film. This exercise helps participants understand how words translate to images and sounds. It also gives them the opportunity to notice the differences between the written script and the shot scene, opening a discussion about the director's flexibility and creative license. I repeat the exercise with different scenes from both films.

Part 4 (45 minutes): Watch the scene and write it

In this exercise, we reverse the process. I screen a random scene from the film and ask participants to watch attentively. We then proceed to write the scene together, going back to the video when necessary. The final step is to compare the scene we wrote to the scene written in the actual script. The exercise is repeated with several scenes from both films.

**Session 2: Masterclass on copyrights and use of archival material with Mona Assad**

During the first part of this masterclass, Mona Assad, director of *Into Studio Masr*, introduced the participants to different types of archival material as well as different usages. She also discussed some of the ethics of using archive footage and problematized unethical uses of archive footage. She used examples from several films:

- a. [Fair Game](#) by Doug Liman, which is based on Valerie Plame and Joseph C. Wilson's memoirs, as an example of the use of archival footage in a biographical film.
- b. [El-Bab El-Maftouh](#) by Henri Barakat, as an example of the use of archival footage to depict events that are too expensive to re-enact—in this case, the Cairo Fire of 1952, or the World War II in Youssef Chahine's [Iskendereya Leh?](#)
- c. [Abnaa wa Qatala](#) by Atef el-Tayeb, looking at the use of Gamal Abdel Nasser's speech to add a touch of realism to the film.

During the second part of the masterclass, Mona Assaad discussed copyright laws and rules, restrictions and possible solutions. She used examples from her own experience while making her documentary [Into Studio Masr](#), which the participants had watched prior to the session.

At the end of the session, participants were given the small assignment of making a one-minute video each using any type of archival material on the topic of their choice. The deadline was two weeks and they were to upload it on the Facebook group as usual.

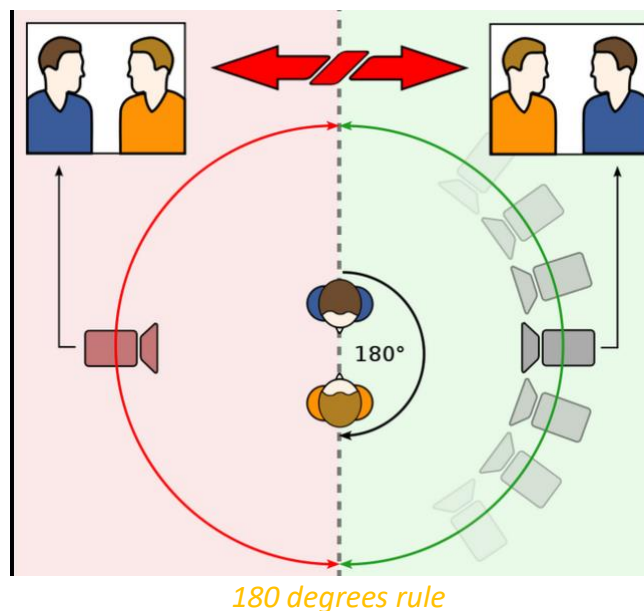
### Session 3: Masterclass on film directing with Nadine Salib

Using the BAFTA-nominated short film [Two & Two](#) by Babak Anvari, Nadine Salib explains the basics of film directing to the participants.



By watching the film together and analyzing it shot by shot, Salib introduces the following:

- |                    |   |
|--------------------|---|
| 1- Shot Sizes.     | 5- Jump cut                             |
| 2- Angles          | 6- The <a href="#">180 degrees rule</a> |
| 3- Camera movement | 7- Mise en scene/blocking               |
| 4- Continuity      |   |

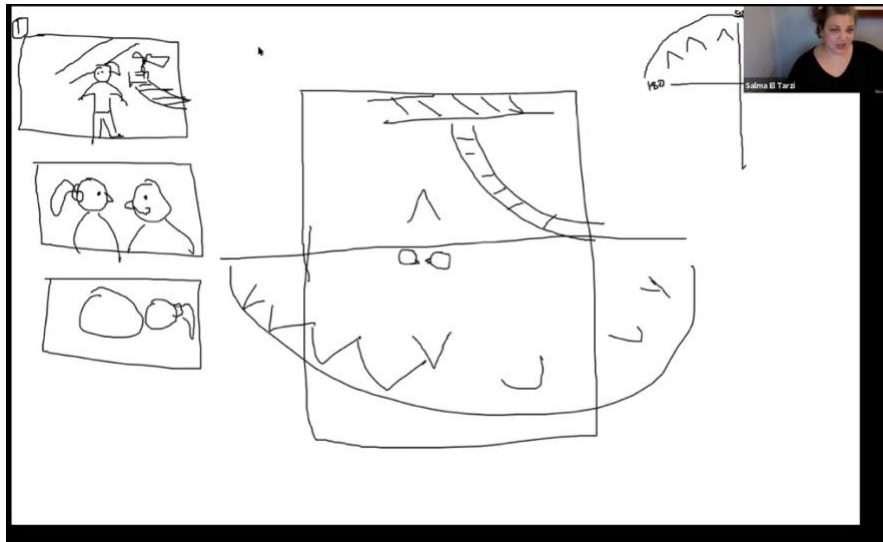


### Session 4: Follow-up session on film directing

During this session, we do a follow up on the masterclass on film directing. In my opinion, this is one of the most challenging topics to teach online in the whole program, especially when it comes to the 180-degree rule, eyelines and directions. The absence of direct practical implementation quickly makes the participants overwhelmed with the amount of information they have to take in. To remedy this, I reversed the process: instead of making a decoupage or drawing a storyboard then shooting it and editing it, we deconstructed an actual scene onto a storyboard together and examined how laws of directions, eyelines, jump cuts, continuity and the 180-degree rule work.

For this, I used dialogue film scenes shot in the classical style (exit frame from left/enter from right, over-the-shoulder shots and reverse angles, etc.) After screening the scene, I use the whiteboard and ask the participants to guide me to do the following:

- a. Imagine the floor plan of the set
- b. Locate the actors and the camera angle in every shot on the floor plan
- c. Draw the storyboard frame of every shot and write down its description (size, angle, movement, action)



The scenes I chose for these exercises were:

1. The scene where Dorothy loses her son in the airport and Jerry helps her find him from [Jerry Maguire](#), directed by Cameron Crowe.



2. The art gallery scene from [Play It Sam](#), written by and starring Woody Allen and directed by Herbert Ross.



## INDIVIDUAL GROUPS SESSIONS

Every week, I meet with each of the four groups for a project development session, the duration of which ranges from one hour to one hour and a half. I chose to have all of the sessions consecutively on the same day every week, with a one-hour break between groups. I chose to hold the four sessions on the same day for two reasons: on the one hand, it gives me more freedom during the week to prepare and do other things since I only teach for two days and, on the other hand, all the group progress at the same pace. However, I imagine other trainers might choose to divide the sessions over two days or more.

During these sessions, I follow up on the development of projects with each group. I listen to their updates and brainstorm with them, discuss the concerns they raise and help them resolve the differences in points of view. In parallel to these sessions, the groups meet and work on their projects every week. I leave it up to the participants to organize the frequency of their work sessions within their respective groups, as long as they make weekly progress and they have something new to show me in our individual groups sessions. During these four weeks, the four groups work on turning their treatments into screenplays.

During the third week, we invited a fellow filmmaker to attend the weekly meetings and discuss the projects with the participants and give feedback. It was a very good opportunity for them to listen to different feedback and to learn how to pitch their projects and talk about them to complete strangers. One week earlier, the guest filmmaker was sent the files of the four films which included loglines, synopses and treatments to study them, and during the sessions the participants presented their projects to her, listening to her questions and comments.

By the end of the workshop, every group should have finished a first draft of their script.

### **BREAK 3 ASSIGNMENT**

*(Break duration: 3 weeks)*

The duration of this break is three weeks, during which each of the four work groups are going to work collectively to finalize their screenplays as well as start brainstorming about actors and locations.

By the end of this break, every group should have the final draft of the script and some ideas about cast and location.

It is highly recommended that the trainer holds two mandatory progress follow-up sessions with every group: a very short one on the second week (30 minutes–45 minutes), and a longer one on the third and last week of the break (1 hour–1 hr 30 minutes).

During this break, the trainer and organization find a local producer in the participants' country and introduce them to the program and the four projects. By this time, there is a treatment and a first draft for each film, which is enough information for the producer for a start.

The trainer also assigns an assistant/projects manager who will help follow up the progress of the pre-production process and coordinate between the trainer, local producer and participants in the upcoming two phases.

## WORKSHOP 4

<p>Duration: 5 weeks  Number of sessions: 45  Frequency per week:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1 collective session (2–3 hours)</li> <li>• 1 individual session with each work group (1 hour–1 hour and 30 minutes)</li> <li>• 1 individual progress report session with each work group (30 minutes)</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1- Basics of production management</li> <li>2- Basics of cinematography</li> <li>3- Scene blocking</li> <li>4- Basics of sound</li> <li>5- Introduction to project coordinator + follow up of pre-production</li> <li>6- Introduction to local producer + follow up of pre-production</li> <li>7- Delivery of final storyboards of the four projects</li> <li>8- Delivery of production breakdowns of the four projects.</li> <li>9- Casting and location scouting</li> <li>10-</li> </ol>
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### SESSIONS

#### a. Collective sessions:

- i. Storyboard/Scene blocking/Breakdowns/Order of shooting
- ii. Basics of production
- iii. Masterclass on cinematography with Nancy Abdel Fattah
- iv. Masterclass on sound with Sarah Kaddouri
- v. What to do on location

#### b. Individual groups sessions:

- i. Project development with main trainer sessions x 4 groups x 5 weeks= 20
- ii. Progress report with project coordinator sessions x4 groups x 5 weeks= 20

## COLLECTIVE SESSIONS

### Session 1: Storyboard/Scene blocking/Breakdowns/Order of shooting

With the four scripts in hand, the participants are ready to start cutting their scenes and moving to pre-production. This session prepares them to perform these tasks. The session is divided into three parts, but first, I share with them a sample of three consecutive scenes that we will be using for our exercises during the session.

*Scene 1                                      Backyard                                      Day/Ext.*

*Aly, a small boy, is playing with his bike*

*Cut*

*Scene 2                                      Kitchen                                      Day/Int.*

*Mother walks from stove to the window, leans out and calls the boy*

*Mother:  
Aly!*

*Cut*

*Scene 3                                      Backyard                                      Day/Ext.*

*Aly stops playing and looks up at the window from where his mother is calling him.*

*Mother:  
Aly! Come eat!*

*Aly:  
Yes mom*

*Aly leaves bike and runs towards the house*

*Cut*

### Part 1 (45 minutes): Breakdowns

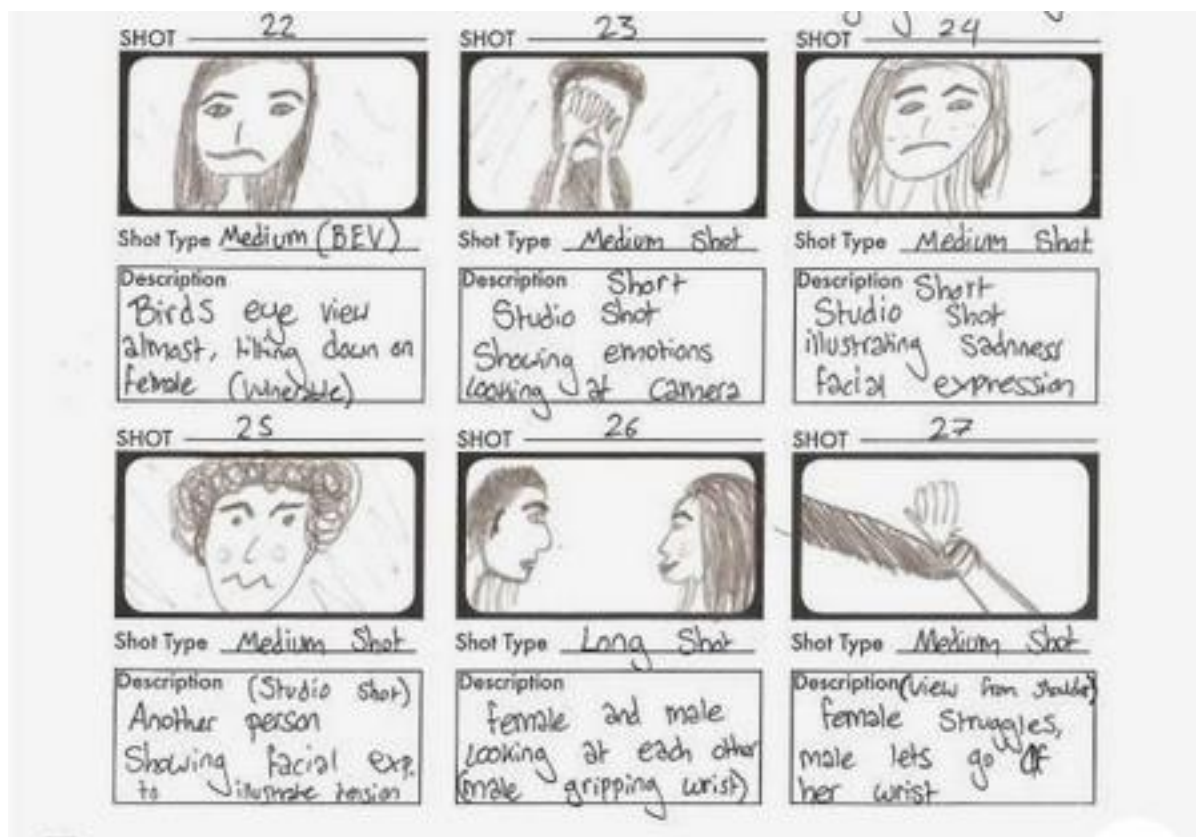
In this part, I explain the purpose of breakdowns and demonstrate how to make a general breakdown. We make the table from scratch together and I try to have them guide me as much as possible while I am labeling the tabs.

#	Scene	Day/Night	Int./Ext.	location	Characters	Wardrobe	Props	Notes







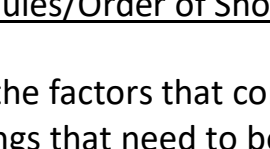
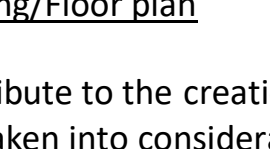
We then proceed to make a breakdown of the three scenes shared earlier, by filling in the table together and explaining every item, e.g. wardrobe continuity for Mother in Scenes 2 and 3, which needs to be mentioned in case the two locations are shot on different days. etc.

### Part 2 (45 minutes): Storyboard

For this part, participants are shown samples of storyboards, discussing what goes in them and what pieces of information they convey.



I then share a storyboard template and we proceed to cut the three scenes and make a storyboard with descriptions. For this process, we used the Whiteboard to draw the shots then took screenshots and inserted them into the template, which is not the most practical solution—there are many softwares that allow you to draw directly into the template—but this is what was available at the time.

Title: _____		Storyboard Sheet # _____	
Shot # _____ Description/Dialogue: _____ _____	Shot # _____ Description/Dialogue: _____ _____	Shot # _____ Description/Dialogue: _____ _____	Shot # _____ Description/Dialogue: _____ _____
			
Shot # _____ Description/Dialogue: _____ _____	Shot # _____ Description/Dialogue: _____ _____	Shot # _____ Description/Dialogue: _____ _____	Shot # _____ Description/Dialogue: _____ _____
			

### Part 3 (1 hour): Schedules/Order of Shooting/Floor plan

In this part, I explain the factors that contribute to the creation of a shooting schedule, and the things that need to be taken into consideration. Our three scenes are used as an example, shuffling and reshuffling the schedule and comparing between shooting in chronological order vs. a more time-efficient order. I also explain the possibility of “cheating” by shooting the kitchen scene in a completely different location if the right kitchen overlooking the right backyard is not available, and how this affects the schedule.

The final thing we address in this session is the order of shots and the grouping of angles on a floor plan of the set.

Once again, using the whiteboard, we imagine a floor plan of the backyard and the kitchen and place the shots from the storyboard we had drawn earlier, then make a shooting list.

\*At the very beginning of this session, I introduce the project coordinator briefly, until the proper introduction takes place in the individual meetings. The project coordinator attends this session without interacting much to be able to get a sense of the general atmosphere and the participants' characters.

## **Session 2: Basics of production management**

The main focus of this session is to introduce the basics of production. However, before we get into specifics, I felt the need to give a more comprehensive idea about the logic of film production from script to screen. If the trainer does not have a background in production or feels that production is not something they can teach then it is better to invite a guest speaker for this session.

This session was divided into two parts with a short break in between and 10–15 minutes at the end for participants' questions.

### **Part 1 (45 minutes): "The dinner reception"**

This is a role-playing game that uses a dinner reception as an analogy for a film. This game is inspired by something my [mentor](#) used to repeat 25 years ago, and made a lot of sense to me as a student. He used to say that a good filmmaker is a good cook, because the process of filmmaking is very similar to the process of cooking. It all starts with an idea: Let's throw a dinner reception!

You will need recipes, and that's your script. You will then make a list of all the ingredients, and you have your breakdowns. You make sure you have all the appliances and cooking utensils needed for the dishes, just like filmmakers check for equipment. You calculate how much everything will cost and that's budgeting. You go to buy the ingredients and that's pre-production. You do the cooking and that's the actual shooting. Finally, you put the dishes together and garnish the plates for the presentation, which is basically post-production.

In my version, however, I don't point out these similarities from the beginning. Using the white board, we play a role-playing game in which I tell the participants that we have to host a dinner reception and ask what we need. As they start playing, I write down everything they say: We need recipes, we need to buy the groceries, a kitchen, an apron, we need to hire a cook, etc. At certain points, I

complicate it a little bit and ask what happens if we're in a warehouse with no kitchen? Or what if we're in a country house with no electricity? We then discuss the logistics and plan for our imaginary reception accordingly.

Only when I am satisfied that they have covered all possibilities and needs and have become aware of the process, do I explain to them what we've just done and its significance and how it relates to film production.

### Part 2 (1 hour and 30 minutes): Budgeting

For this part, I share with participants an old budget from a past project. You can use whatever budget you have available, be it for a film, a commercial, TV series, etc. as long as you know it well enough. I brief them about the project this budget was made for, and I go through the budget with the participants, explaining every item and why every decision was made. We also discuss alternative production solutions, thinking about how to make cuts to the budget if necessary, etc.

### **Session 3: Masterclass on cinematography with Nancy Abdel Fattah**

In this masterclass, Nancy Abdel Fattah shared with participants basic tips about cinematography and lighting. During the session, she covered the following topics:

- Light direction and angle
- Light temperature
- Filters and diffusers
- Composition
- Depth
- Camera work and movement
- Shadows
- Shooting outdoors vs. shooting indoors
- Using available light

During the process, she shared samples from her work, explaining how and why she chose to execute them the way she did. She also shared useful hacks for low-budget films, giving the participants an idea of how to get creative with lighting without fancy gear, like using house lamps and natural sources of light. Some of the other things she suggested they use included white papers, foam boards, aluminum foil, mirrors for reflectors, parchment paper, Calque, Chinese lanterns for diffusers, colored shawls as filters, black paper and blankets for blackouts, etc.

The four scripts participants were going to use were shared earlier with her, so she was familiar with what each project might need. I encouraged participants to ask her specific questions about their projects and share any concerns they have; e.g., in one of the films, there was a moment in which the electricity cuts and the character lights a candle or a small gas lamp. In another project, half of the film took place inside a taxi and the participants were worried about how they would handle the shooting and the lighting inside of a moving car. Her input regarding these concerns was very useful and inspiring.

#### **Session 4: Masterclass on sound with Sarah Kaddouri**

In this session, Sarah Kaddouri introduced the participants to the basics of sound, explaining every step of the process, from recording to mixing, and touching upon sound design and music as well. She also shared some of the most common mistakes in sound recording on location and how to avoid them, as well as some of the challenges she has faced in her work and how to remedy them.

Having read the four scripts and knowing the sound equipment that participants were going to use, she was able to give specific tips and advice to optimize the sound recording of each film.

#### **Session 5: What to do on location**

This session is not only the last collective session in this workshop, but in the whole program. It is thus the last session participants have before they get into full pre-production mode and proceed to shoot their projects. In my opinion, this session is one of the most challenging in the whole program: How do you prepare participants to shoot their films in two weeks, when they have never set a foot on a shooting location, never met each other, never had any practical training and will see equipment for the first time only a day or or two before the shooting date? The answer to this consists of two parts:

##### **1. The choice of equipment**

Given the circumstances, we decided that the participants should shoot their films on mobile phones instead of regular cameras. This decision was made because participants would have no chance of receiving proper training on professional or semi-professional gear due to the pandemic limitations that had forced us to do this program online in the first place. It didn't make sense to confuse the participants with DSLRs or other semi-professional cameras that they wouldn't be able to use properly and benefit from.

The alternative was to choose a mobile phone with a good camera and have them make their films with something they can use so that they can focus more on the filmmaking and less on technical issues. We settled on the Huawei P40 Pro with a Leica lens, 4K and full HD resolutions but mainly for the Cinema Pro options feature. The list of equipment for all four projects consisted of:

- 1 Huawei P40 Pro
- 1 [H4N Zoom recorder](#)
- 2 [Lavalier microphones](#)
- 1 tripod
- 1 clapperboard

## 2. [Tutorials and instructions](#)

During the session, Participants were shown tutorials on how to use the equipment mentioned above. We also went through the details of how to operate on a film set, how to call the shots and how to distribute the tasks among themselves.

### *i. Equipment tutorials:*

Regarding the Zoom recorder and Lavalier microphones, we watched several videos online and went through every step together, making sure they fully understood it. There are many useful tutorials on [No Film School](#) website.

Regarding the mobile phones, I used the screen recorder feature to make them a tutorial explaining the main features and uses of the Cinema Pro option in the camera. This was also a good opportunity to explain, with direct examples, what white balance is, different types of focus, ISO, etc. For this tutorial, I explained every step, from the moment they select the camera application to choosing the right frame size and frame rate, to the different functions and when to use them.

Regarding the clapperboard, I explained how sync works and the importance of using a clapperboard when recording audio separately from video. I also explained the importance of having a shooting report that notes every single take that has been shot, and shared with them a table to use in the report:

Date:							
#	Scene	Shot	Day/Nigh/ext./Int	location	Description	Take	Notes

*ii. On-set instructions:*

During this part, I explained to the participants that during the actual shot they will need to distribute the tasks among themselves—someone will have to do camera work, another person will be in charge of sound, a third person needs to take care of the clapperboard and shooting report, while someone needs to call the shots. As I've mentioned before, it is important for this workshop that all participants learn how to do different things so that they can rotate tasks if need be. However, for this session, I just wanted to give them an idea of how things work before getting into task distribution in the individual work group meetings.

To make sure they understood the workflow and the order of calls, we played a little role-playing game, where I assigned roles to the participants as follows: First assistant director, soundwoman, camerawoman and clapperboard. I then asked them to try calling the shots as follows:

1<sup>st</sup> AD: Standby... Roll sound!

Soundwoman: Sound rolling.

1<sup>st</sup> AD: Roll camera!

Camerawoman: Camera rolling.

1<sup>st</sup> AD: Claque!

Clapperboard: Scene [X], shot [X], take [X].

1<sup>st</sup> AD: Action!

We repeated the exercise several times. Each time, participants changed the rules and tried different positions to ensure they all understand the order of calls regardless of what role they will actually play during the actual shooting of their films.

## INDIVIDUAL GROUP SESSIONS

### 1. Project development with main trainer:

During these sessions, which the duration and pace of were established after the previous workshop, we continue working with each group on developing their project. In this phase, participants are working on the storyboards. By the end of this workshop, each group should have their final storyboard.

During this phase, they are also working on the pre-production of their films, including choosing costumes, locations, finding actors, etc. We try to make them as self-sufficient as possible, meaning that we encourage them to search for locations and actors that they can find among their friends and families, without depending on production companies. It is one of the objectives of this program to teach the participants to make films with whatever is available and not be stopped for lack of resources.

The project coordinator attends these sessions so that she can follow the progress of each project and help the participants sort out the logistics in her sessions.

### 2. Progress report with project coordinator:

The project coordinator guides each group through the pre-production process, from making breakdowns to dividing tasks and executing them. She is also the link between the participants and the production manager assigned by the local producer.

The project coordinator asks every group to choose one of the participants as a communication officer, who will follow up the progress of the tasks assigned to each participant and reports to the project coordinator in their weekly meeting. The meeting is followed by an email to the group, sharing with them the meeting minutes and new tasks.

By the third week, the project coordinator arranges meetings between the production manager and the communication officer of each group.

The project coordinator regularly updates the main trainer with the progress of the groups.

*\*\*From the beginning of the workshop, the main trainer is in communication with the local producer and the organization to work on the logistics of the four productions, including schedules, meals, transportation, travel and accommodation if necessary, etc. As mentioned above, each film is assigned two shooting days and five days for editing and sound. Having said this, the gap between the shooting days and the post-production days depends on the schedules, how many editors are available, and whether the participants and the material need to travel from One city to another.*

## **BREAK 4 ASSIGNMENT**

*(Break duration: 2 weeks)*

This break is only a break in the sense that there are no regular sessions. During these two weeks, participants, production team, trainers and the organization are all working the pre-production for the four films. Communication between departments takes place on a daily basis, with frequency depending on the updates.

By the end of this period, the following items should be locked (at least for the first project scheduled for shooting)

1. Shooting dates for the four projects
2. Editing and delivery dates for the four projects
3. Locations
4. Actors
5. Props
6. Travel and accommodation (if needed)
7. Budgets
8. Transportation
9. Rehearsals

The focus and priority go to the first project, since the other projects have more time for preparation, depending on their position in the schedule.

## WORKSHOP 5

<p>Duration: 5–6 weeks</p> <p>Number of sessions: 8 sessions + shooting and editing days</p> <p>Frequency per week:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1 individual session with each work group</li> <li>• 1 individual progress report session with each work group</li> <li>• 2 days shooting for each project</li> <li>• 5 days post-production for each project</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Equipment training</li> <li>2. Shooting of four projects</li> <li>3. Online troubleshooting</li> <li>4. Edit and sound of four projects</li> <li>5. Delivery of four projects</li> </ol>
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## SESSIONS

### Session with main trainer:

This is one long session with each group right the day before their first shooting day. During this session, the trainer goes over all the shooting details and makes sure participants are prepared for the next day. This includes the following:

- Assignment of roles during shoot
- Recap on how to call the shot
- Complete storyboard
- Floor plan for every location/scene + grouping angles
- Shooting schedule (order of scenes/shots based on light/location/angles)
- General reminders and tips

Session with project coordinator:

This is one session with each group a few days before their shoot. During this session, the project coordinator makes sure that the participants have taken care of and secured the following:

- Costumes
- Props
- Lighting and shooting accessories
- Extras and secondary actors

*\*\*Trainer and project coordinator are available during this period to respond to participants outside of official session times.*

## SHOOTING

It is not possible to put in place one plan here that will work for all projects, since there might be many variables based on the location, nature of the film, whether participants are travelling, etc. However, there are certain things that will apply to all projects, reflected here in the following schedule for each group:

Day 1: Trying out equipment and location visit

Day 2: Rehearsal with actors and equipment (preferably on location) + final session with main trainer

Day 3: Shoot

Day 4: Shoot

### *Day 1: Trying out equipment and location visit*

This is possibly the first time all team members physically meet, especially if some of them are from other cities and couldn't join for the collective preparations. This is also the first time they get to try out the equipment they will be using during the shoot.

The main trainer must make herself available for troubleshooting over video calls throughout the duration of the rehearsal. It is also advisable to ask participants for updates if they fall suddenly and (suspiciously) silent. They can use a separate phone to make a video call or to take videos of what they are doing and send it to the trainer via WhatsApp or any other application.

It is better that they do the training on-location. However, if this is not possible due to the nature or availability of the location on that day (for example, a busy street, or a set that will cost an extra rental day if they use it for rehearsals), it is important that they at least visit the location together and take photos from the angles they will shoot from. This is also a good opportunity to make sure their floor plans are accurate and that the angles they have chosen in their storyboard make sense.

*Day 2: Rehearsal with actors and equipment + final session with main trainer*

Here, participants do general rehearsals with actors, while still trying out equipment. If there is a possibility to set up these rehearsals on location, it would be much more beneficial. The participants also make sure they have all their props, accessories, and costumes ready. Later that day, the participants of this group have their final session with the main trainer.

*Day 3 + 4: Shooting*

During the two days of shooting, the trainer and the project coordinator make themselves available and on standby for troubleshooting from the beginning until the end of the shooting day. The participants might need the trainer's help in technical issues, but also to resolve possible conflicts between participants and find solutions for unexpected problems that might arise on location and require a quick change of plans.

Depending on the case, the trainer can either directly get involved or delegate the project coordinator to take care of the situation.

The main trainer is also in direct contact with the production manager on the ground, and asks for regular updates regarding workflow and performance. The production manager, being physically present, will have a more accurate assessment of the participants' performances, strengths and weaknesses, and can give the main trainer insight on when she needs to step in to direct participants.

## EDITING

The editing process in an online setting is the most challenging part of this program, and far from ideal or remotely comfortable, especially in countries with no fast nor stable internet. And yet, we still managed to finish four beautiful films despite all of these difficulties. I don't believe there is a one-size-fits-all recipe that can apply here. The main trainer will have to follow their instincts and make decisions based on the circumstances at hand. I will share what worked for us in the workshop in Iraq.

Ideally, to edit the four films and meet deadlines comfortably, you need two editors. While the editing process and follow-up by the trainer will happen online, and while the participants might not be from the same city and will not be physically attending the editing, it is still preferable to hire the two editors locally because they need to receive the raw footage uncompressed and in full quality, which is almost impossible to transfer via internet with slow and unstable connections.

In the case of the workshop in Iraq, one participant was already a video editor, with good knowledge of the Premiere software, but she needed a lot of guidance on how to edit a film. This meant that, as a trainer, I needed to do much more work during the edit, but it also meant that she experienced some intensive training and hopefully came out of this experience with a lot of knowledge on film editing. It was definitely worth it.

Another participant only had basic knowledge of Premiere but really wanted to edit the film she had shot with her group. This meant even more work for me as a trainer, because I had to follow every step of the process, but was still very much worth it.

I understand that trainers are not always going to make this choice, nor will circumstances always allow it. I also assert that hiring two professional editors is much more convenient, practical and less demanding. However, in my case, I saw dedication and passion, and a learning opportunity that I couldn't deny these participants. Having said that, if the trainer chooses to use professional editors, it is very important that they understand that this is a learning program, and that

making these films is part of the learning process. This means that they have to have the patience and tolerance to hold space and allow the participants to express themselves and learn without being silenced or dismissed.

### *Workflow*

Day 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Editor receives shot material and audio files on hard disk along with shooting report</li> <li>• Editor puts the shots in order on the timeline based on the shooting report</li> <li>• Once editor finishes, she shares her timeline with the participants over Zoom to confirm that she has used the correct takes and put them in the correct order</li> </ul>
Day 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Editor syncs the audio files with the shots on the timeline and cleans up the clips (removes the call for shots, cuts, etc.)</li> <li>• Editor shares the timeline with the participants and trainer, who gives comments and instructions after a collective discussion with participants</li> </ul>
Day 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Editor implements trainer's comments</li> <li>• Editor shares timeline with trainer and they work together on the fine tweaking of the edit</li> <li>• Participants make sure to deliver any missing files for the audio mix (voice over, music, effects, etc.)</li> </ul>
Day 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Editor shares timeline with trainer and participants for final viewing and approval</li> <li>• Editor places sound effects, music, etc. with the participants under trainer's guidance</li> </ul>
Day 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Editor finishes sound mix, color correction and credits under trainer's guidance</li> <li>• Film is exported</li> </ul>

WOMEN MAKE FILM

**GOOD LUCK**