

As documentary filmmakers, our mission is to amplify the voices of those whose stories need to be told. We are passionate about social and environmental causes, and *Toxification* is a story that deserves attention. It is a phenomenally powerful film, told without narration but through the mouths of the farmers themselves.

I had heard about the growing number of farmer suicides and felt that as a Punjabi filmmaker, it was my duty to bring the story to light. So when Leva Kwestany, a friend and accomplished filmmaker, suggested we collaborate on a film in India, I jumped at the chance. Before we arrived in India our understanding of the issue was based mainly on the research that Guru Nanak Dev University, Punjab Agricultural University and Punjabi University Patiala had published; 6926 suicides in a decade, almost two per day. This number haunted us day and night.

We flew out to India to make a ten-minute short film, and unknowingly returned with a feature film in our hands. From pre-production, to our time in India filming, to the years spent editing, animating and subtitling, we worked in a voluntary capacity. Our film tells a story not yet told; we believe it is important and needs to be seen and heard.

After interviewing Amarjit Singh, a farmer who struggles with addiction having lost his son to cancer, he thanked us for listening; he had never been asked to tell his story. In interviewing him, we showed him that his story is important and that we care about the future of Punjab. It is now vital that we share this film with as many people as possible, not only for Amarjit Singh but for the thousands of farmers in his situation.

For the mother terrified of debt collectors and still mourning her husband; for the children living in homes that could collapse at any second; for the resilient Punjabi spirit that never gives up.

