

# OUR STORIES



Fred Roberts Photography Workshop students pose with Fred Roberts, The Honourable Elizabeth Dowdeswell, Lieutenant Governor of Ontario, and Henry Kim, Director and CEO of the Aga Khan Museum, at the LG's Office Our Sustainable Future exhibition.

AKDN / Aly Manji

## Giving youth a voice through photography

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Since 2016, the [Aga Khan Museum](#) has been proud to partner with [Fredric Roberts Photography Workshops](#) to showcase the incredible talent of local students. In just two and a half days, high schoolers learn computer and camera skills that will last a lifetime. But it is about more than building knowledge.

“Photography is a tool for self-expression, and

the stories are very powerful.” says Roberts.

It is this focus on storytelling that makes the workshop so unique. Students come from different backgrounds and communities to share images that catch their eye. Then, because Roberts runs these workshops all around the world, they can connect with other young photographers in a private Facebook group. “Instead of teaching and disappearing, there is a continued education element to the workshops,” Roberts explains. “We leave behind equipment for the students to keep using, and our faculty stays engaged with the images posted on the Facebook group.”

Each time the workshop returns to the Aga Khan Museum, former students share their expertise with the newcomers to the group. This invaluable teaching experience helps to build responsibility, patience and compassion. “It is amazing to see someone with no experience in photography become a teaching assistant in such a short time,” says Roberts. The future leaders in our community start with the simple click of a camera.

To find out more about the programme’s impact, we spoke to four student photographers from the most recent workshop.

### **Zenia Rangwala, 15, from India**



#### *Tell us about your photograph*

My photograph is of people from different races and cultures that are playing a game together. I wanted to express multiculturalism and show that Canada is a diverse nation. I wanted to express that people can come together and work as a team to solve problems. It is an important message for me because I immigrated to Canada about seven years ago and knowing

that Canada accepts people of different colours and religions made me feel a sense of belonging in this country.

#### *Did this workshop change your view of the world?*

Yes, it did! The workshop made me want to capture all the beautiful things in my city, as well as the problems going on. This course has made me a better person. By taking photos of my city and community, it made me become more aware of the problems and challenges that are happening and I started to see my city differently. I also started to acknowledge and appreciate the good things. Photography has helped me to tell my story – it enabled me to educate individuals through the power of images.

### **Saleh Khudayar, 17, from Afghanistan**

#### *Tell us about your photograph*

I took this photo on a trip to the Thorncliffe Neighbourhood Office – there were women from different countries making beautiful art and clothing. It was a familiar scene for me because I have seen people do this type of work in Pakistan. It was like a glimpse of home.



*Did this workshop change your view of the world?*

It was interesting that all the students would be sent to the same spot for picture-taking, but then, at the end of the day, all the photos were so different. We all had different perspectives. It was cool to see everyone's photos and talk about them.

*How did this workshop impact your life?*

The first time I went, my parents told me to join. I was not that interested in photography, but now I really like it. I am going back and doing another workshop in the fall, it will be my third. Last time, I was selected to be a captain for the new groups because I had experience. It felt really good to share my skills and teach others. I have met a lot of cool people and made great friends.

**Aria Noori, 17, from Pakistan**



*Tell us about your photograph*

I did not always know what I wanted to take a picture of, so I would get my camera and start biking around. There was no set destination or objective. When I saw something that caught my eye, I would pull out my camera and take photos with different techniques. My assignment was to look for the theme of "sustainable goals". I wanted to express gratitude for Canada because we

are so lucky to have basic needs fulfilled – not everyone in the world has that. I hope that looking at my photograph makes people remember those who do not have much, then think of how you can help them through everyday actions.

*What did you learn in this workshop?*

I learned that photography is a way to make time stop. The camera is a way to capture memories. You can always go back to a picture and recall the feeling you had when you took it. You know how sometimes you remember past events from a specific smell? That is exactly what photos do – it is like a scent to the eyes.

*Did this workshop change your view of the world?*

After taking this workshop, I gained a different perspective – a photographer's perspective. Something so little and meaningless could be so powerful and lively in a picture. You have to be the director of the picture and make sure it is perceived the way you want it to be. I learned that a picture can have a lot of power in someone's mind. Everyone might see it differently but at the end of the day, it makes people think.

## Madalina Raduta, 18, from Romania



### *Tell us about your photograph*

My photograph was related to the topic of healthy lives and well-being for all ages. In this photo, the young children are warming up, alongside the residents of a retirement home, in preparation for their dance lesson. Together they are able to enjoy themselves, and live their lives to their best potential, combining a happy and healthy environment. In this photo, I specifically wanted to capture

how one can have fun and enjoy themselves at any age – kindergarten children, as well as residents of a retirement home.

### *Did this workshop change your view of the world?*

Ever since I was small, I loved the arts, especially painting and drawing. I enjoyed being able to see how my stories were slowly appearing on the paper with each brush stroke I made. Through the Frederic Roberts Photography Workshop, I learned how to not only express myself and my story, but also the lives and stories of others around me. I learned how to truly take a photo, and not just point-and-shoot. This course helped me use my creativity for empowerment, and enlighten others about what I learned by passing along my skills.

*To learn more and watch a short video about other AKDN collaborations with the Fredric Roberts Photography Workshops, click [here](#).*