



CASE STUDIES

The Act of Killing

Director and Co-Producer: Joshua Oppenheimer

Producer: Sygne Byrge Sørensen

Website: <http://theactofkilling.com>

Funding

Key Funder: Anonymous

The filmmakers write:

“We could not have done this without our outreach funder. We do not have money for this kind of outreach, and we would never be able to raise that kind of money out of a film budget. But please note that our main outreach funder does not want to be publicly acknowledged for their support because they are worried about problems this could cause for their staff and other activities in Indonesia.”

BRITDOC Impact Report

Read more about the film’s outreach campaign in the [full BRITDOC case study](#), which observes:

“In a country where killers are celebrated as heroes, the filmmakers challenge unrepentant death squad leader Anwar Congo and his friends to dramatise their role in the Indonesian genocide. But their idea of being in a movie is not to provide testimony for a documentary: they want to be stars in their favourite film genres — gangster, western, musical. They write the scripts. They play themselves. And they play their victims. The hallucinatory result is a cinematic fever dream, an unsettling journey deep into the imaginations of mass murderers and the shockingly banal regime of corruption and impunity they inhabit.

The Act of Killing is a rare example of a film that both works to expose a political injustice and has also been lauded for its cinematic inventiveness. This critical acclaim has given the 1965 Indonesian genocide a new audience both inside and outside the country. The goals are ambitious and the team are clear that the film itself can only hope to contribute to larger conversations that might make an apology, or truth and reconciliation commission possible. However it is already — in a few short months — changing Indonesians’ understanding of their recent history.

Campaign Update

Since release, the film made over \$480,000 domestically at box office, and over £120,000 in the UK, and continues to roll out in 23 territories including Israel, Australia, New Zealand and Japan.

After Tiller

Synopsis

Since the assassination of Dr. George Tiller in Kansas in May 2009, there are only four American doctors who openly provide third-trimester abortions. *After Tiller* paints a complex, compassionate portrait of these physicians, who have become the new number-one targets of the anti-abortion movement, yet continue to risk their lives every day to do work that many believe is murder, but which they believe is profoundly important for their patients' lives. The film weaves together in-depth interviews with the doctors with intimate vérité scenes from their lives and inside their clinics, where they counsel and care for their anxious, vulnerable patients at an important crossroads in their lives. By sharing the moving stories of several of these patients, *After Tiller* illuminates the experiences of women who seek late abortions.

The film's campaign has shifted coverage of third-trimester abortion from abstract debate to a concrete focus on the rationale of doctors and patients. More medical students are engaging their universities in discussions about abortion care training, and the clinics featured in the film and their allies have received letters of support. The film was used to rally volunteers to fight an Albuquerque ballot measure, which would have severely decreased access to third-trimester abortions if it passed.

Production Team

- *Directors/Producers:* Lana Wilson, Martha Shane
- *Executive Producers:* Regina Kulik Scully, Diane Max
- *Impact producers and researchers:* Film Presence; Film Sprout; University of California, San Francisco

Funders

Additional funders:

Artemis Media Ventures, Belle Max Productions, Chicken & Egg Pictures' Mother Wit Human Rights Fund, Educational Foundation of America, International Documentary Association's Pare Lorentz Fund, Lebowitz Family Foundation, New York State Council on the Arts, Nirvana Manana Institute, Puffin Foundation, Sarah Jacobson Film Grant, Sundance Institute's Documentary Film Program, Valdimir and Araxia Buckhantz Foundation, Oma Fund of the Ms. Foundation, Bertha BRITDOC Foundation, plus several private donors.

Key funder: The Fledgling Fund

The filmmakers write:

“We checked in regularly with Emily Verellen at the Fledgling Fund, who helped us to make decisions about how to spend our funds in a way that would have the greatest possible impact. Because we were working with a distributor, Oscilloscope Laboratories, Emily also helped us determine how best to handle that collaboration, and how to make sure that our outreach and audience engagement campaign was in alignment with Oscilloscope's theatrical release strategy.

Overall, the Fledgling Fund was a crucial source of support and guidance throughout the release process.”

Budget

- *Production*: \$436,862
- *Outreach and Distribution*: \$85,000

Campaign

Goals:

With *After Tiller*, the production team aims to:

- Spark a national conversation about late abortion in a way that brings more light, rather than more heat, to the issue.
- Educate Americans, particularly in states where legislation banning abortions after twenty weeks has passed or has been introduced, about the reasons why women seek this procedure.
- Change public perception of third-trimester abortion providers by building a movement dedicated to supporting their right to work with a special focus on maintaining their safety.
- Encourage dialogue about this complicated issue among audience members with varying political and personal beliefs

Target location:

U.S.—although the film is gaining traction in locations where abortion is controversial, such as Ireland and Mexico

Target groups:

The production team designed the outreach campaign to focus on medical students, pro-choice individuals who do not support late abortion rights, people in states where 20-week bans have passed or are in danger of passing, and Americans under 30 (the demographic in which support for abortion rights is dropping the fastest.)

Partners:

Outreach partners include NARAL, local chapters of Planned Parenthood, Medical Students for Choice (MS4C), Nursing Students for Choice, numerous state-based abortion access funds and networks, Law Students for Reproductive Justice, Backline, Exhale, Physicians for Reproductive Choice, local chapters of the National Organization for Women, and many more.

How the Campaign Works

The filmmakers hope that viewers absorb several key pieces of information: the motivations of the doctors who provide late abortions; the reasons why women seek late abortions; the lack of access to abortion, particularly later abortions, throughout this country, and the problem of violence against abortion providers, clinic workers, and clinics

Pivot points:

The filmmakers note that effective steps they took to move the campaign forward included:

- hiring Film Presence to formulate strategy for engaging relevant groups, offering discounts and special screenings;
- partnering with key groups to use screenings as fundraisers;
- partnering with MS4C chapters nationwide to organize groups of medical students to attend theatrical screenings in their cities and at med schools, and place film in university libraries;
- involving the doctors in media and outreach efforts and screenings.

Research methods:

- Researchers from Advancing New Standards in Reproductive Health (ANSIRH), part of the Bixy Center for Global Reproductive Health at the University of California at San Francisco, are currently conducting two separate analyses of the film. The first analyzes the media surrounding the film's release, discovering that the nuanced way in which the film is discussed, as well as the focus on doctors and patients rather than the abstract philosophical discussions, differs significantly from the media that previously surrounded this issue. The second is an in-depth qualitative analysis of film viewers' responses to the film, and its impact on their thoughts and feelings around third-trimester abortion.

Next steps:

The *After Tiller* campaign is midstream: the production team has released both the educational and commercial DVD, and the film will be broadcast on the PBS series POV this fall.

Impact

Change in Awareness

The filmmakers estimate that thousands of people now have an increased awareness of this issue.

Distribution:

- *Premiere:* Sundance Film Festival, January 2013
- The film opened in 45 US cities, 7 UK cities, and 2 Canadian cities.

Awards:

- Grand Jury Prize for Best Documentary at the Sarasota Film Festival
- The Kathleen Bryant Edwards Award for Human Rights at the Full Frame Film Festival

Targeted outreach:

Researchers from University of California, San Francisco recruited 50 audience members from 7 screening locations and interviewed them 5-20 weeks after the screening to assess whether and

how viewing changed their thoughts and feelings about third-trimester abortion and third-trimester abortion providers. Preliminary analyses suggest that the film did encourage viewers to think more deeply and empathetically about third-trimester abortion, and to feel more strongly about legal protections for those procedures.

Screening attendees:

Filmmakers don't have exact numbers, but place screening numbers in the thousands, and predict at least the tens of thousands as the screenings continue.

Digital/Mobile Outreach

- *Social media platforms:*
 - Facebook—2,570 likes as of early May
 - Twitter—1,396 followers as of early May
 - *Online distribution platforms:* iTunes, cable VOD

Notable online responses:

The production team reports an outpouring of support and admiration for the four doctors who are featured in the film, increased sharing of facts relating to late abortion (including that these abortions comprise less than 1% of all abortions, and that only four doctors in America openly perform them), and increased online conversation regarding the growing number of states with 20-week abortion bans, and encouraging people who support such bans to see *After Tiller*. A Kickstarter campaign for the film launched the production in 2009, and the filmmakers have kept in touch with Kickstarter supporters ever since.

Key Press Mentions:

The New York Times, *The Nation*, MSNBC and others

Change in Behavior

Asks:

- For all screenings, the production team has asked people to go home and discuss the film and/or the issue with five people who are close to them, who might have similar or different views
- For screenings in places where 20-week abortion bans had been proposed or passed, filmmakers asked people to contact their legislatures and share their feelings about the bans.
- Audience members are also encouraged to request a screening on the film's website.
- Medical students are provided with an addendum to the educational guide, which encouraged them to ask their school to include abortion care training in the curriculum.

Responses:

The filmmakers say that audience members are seeking information about how to become clinic escorts, and expressing increased support from the general public for the work that the doctors are doing, as evidenced by phone calls and letters received at all of the clinics featured. They

report anecdotally: “numerous individuals—both pro-choice and anti-choice—come up to us after screenings, thanking us for making the film, and telling us that this issue is so much more complicated than they ever imagined,” with “even anti-choice people saying that now, with their new understanding from the film, they can understand why a woman would seek a late abortion in certain situations. So, there seems to be a significant increase in empathy and support for abortion rights as a result of the film, even among those who consider themselves opposed to abortion.” The production team also cites an increase in medical students seeking to engage their universities in discussion about abortion care training.

Political impact

Asks:

For the most part, the film was created to increase awareness, not to have a specific political impact. However:

- The film was screened on Capitol Hill for congressional staffers, with the goal of ultimately affecting votes related to abortion rights
- During the film’s theatrical release in San Francisco, filmmakers used screenings to engage audience members in a conversation about the proposed 20-week abortion ban in Albuquerque, which would have prevented two of the film’s doctors from working, and severely decreased access to late abortion in this country.

Responses:

Ultimately, those conversations and “ask” for help in opposing the ban led to over ten thousand dollars being raised to support the Respect ABQ Women campaign, which fought the ban, and led to an influx of volunteers from San Francisco into Albuquerque during the crucial final weeks of the campaign. The ballot measure was defeated.

Corporate impact

The filmmakers do not have corporate targets, as this is not relevant to their topic.

Building Capacity

After Tiller has become a resource for partner organizations to rally support, raise funds, and encourage more nuanced dialogue about a hot-button issue:

- Ilyse Hogue, the president of NARAL, said: “NARAL Pro-Choice America has shown this film to thousands of our member activists all over the country, from South Dakota to New Hampshire, to spark conversations about the critical importance of protecting reproductive freedom and access to abortion services.”
- Through fundraising screenings, tens of thousands of dollars were raised for the Trust Women Foundation and other abortion rights groups to support abortion access and to support the defeat of the ballot initiative in Albuquerque.

American Promise

Synopsis

In 1999, filmmakers Joe Brewster and Michèle Stephenson turned cameras on two families – including their own – as they enrolled their sons at a prestigious prep school in hopes that it would set their son on a path to success. Thirteen years later, the result is a feature-length documentary, *American Promise*, which provides a rare look into the lives of two middle class black families as they wrestle with the same questions all parents face as they navigate the ups and downs of race, class, parenthood and education.

Through a strategy targeting educators, parents and students, the film’s campaign has raised awareness of issues surrounding black male achievement. The film has been widely screened in schools, conferences and communities, covered multiple times by national outlets, and spurred the creation of 46 “Promise Clubs” run by parents. The film has been screened on Capitol Hill and at the UN, and the White House Initiative on Educational Excellence for African Americans supported the campaign’s Black Male Achievement Week.

Production Team

- *Producers, Co-Directors*: Joe Brewster and Michèle Stephenson
- *Executive Producers*: POV | AMERICAN DOCUMENTARY, Dan Cogan, Simon Kilmurry, Cynthia Lopez
- *Impact producers and researchers*: Active Voice, A Fourth Act, Khaleaph Luis (freelancer), Logan Projects, Picture Motion, POV, ro*co films, Six Foot Chipmunk

Funders

Independent Television Service (ITVS), Jerome Foundation, Kellogg Foundation, MacArthur Foundation, National Black Programming Consortium, New York State Council on the Arts, Open Society Foundations, POV, San Francisco Film Society, Sundance Documentary Fund, The Fledgling Fund, Tribeca Gucci Documentary Fund, plus individual donors via Kickstarter.

Key funder: The Ford Foundation

The filmmakers write:

“Early on in our strategy phase (mid 2011), the Ford Foundation was gracious enough to agree to hold quarterly check-ins at its offices with our main funders; Open Society Foundations Campaign for Black Male Achievement (CBMA) and the Fledgling Fund.

In addition to those check-in meetings, the Ford Foundation, CBMA and the Fledgling Fund supported two brain trusts, two film launch meetings in D.C. and NYC, and two focus group sessions (with parents and youth) with our various partners. We found all of these events to be crucial to the roll out, strategy development, and execution phases of our campaign. The brain trusts established important buy-in from our national partners, who later worked closely with us on the development of our various outreach tools and community screenings. The trusts were also instrumental in providing very important feedback on our messaging, especially our final brain trust in 2012, which was held at the POV offices with experts and practitioners in the field.

The organizations and individuals present provided key feedback on which messaging would most resonate with our partners and key stakeholders.

As a result of that brain trust we were able to re-orient some of our messaging that directly led to much deeper trust and buy-in with our partners. The regular check ins also provided valuable information on other funders working in the field and potentially interested in our work. This information helped solidify our funding with the Kellogg Foundation. In addition to potential funding sources, the regular check ins we requested provided valuable feedback on the usefulness of our tools – for example we got important feedback from the Fledgling Fund regarding frameworks and templates for our mobile app aimed at behavior change. The Fledgling Fund recommended we look at the health and fitness apps for potential applicability to our app. This information gave us an important behavior change framework to rely on as we developed the Promise Tracker.

The film launch meetings supported by OSF’s Campaign for Black Male Achievement and held 60 days prior to our theatrical release were instrumental in confirming “adopt-a-screenings” with our partners. These meetings ensured that we obtained commitments from key partners to attend our theatrical screenings and organize post-screening panels involving their leadership and grassroots communities. This proved to be a huge success for our theatrical roll out in our key cities. The meetings also showed us where our geographical weaknesses were in terms of depth of our reach and where we should spend more time establishing stronger grassroots relationships.”

Budget

- *Production: \$1.5 million*
- *Outreach and Distribution: \$1.3 million*

Campaign

Goals:

The primary campaign goal for *American Promise* is to make a significant impact on the closing of the black male achievement gap in education. The filmmakers recognize that this will require a generation (or two) of activism to obtain, and have laid out a careful phased approach for playing a catalytic role in the larger Black male achievement movement. Their strategy involves:

- Building partnerships with key national stakeholder groups already doing work on the ground,
- Using these relationships to promote a national awareness about the key issues issues facing African-American boys and their families in the educational arena,
- Continuing to engage the partners to collaborate in the creation and use of tools that can help shift behaviors

The team is committed to pursuing an evidence-based approach to outreach that will:

- Foster deeper cultural sensitivity among educators by incorporating campaign tools into training;
- Inform parents of African-American boys about how they can be more effective advocates for their children, deepen learning at home, take small steps to create large behavior changes, and conquer “stereotype threat”;
- Elevate the importance of engaging African- American males in the process of their own achievement;
- Support the empowerment of young African-American men by providing opportunities for dialogue, creative expression, and mentorship, and
- Increase the awareness of the movement’s positive impact to the larger society.

Target location: The film’s team targeted key US cities determined in part by the resources of partner groups, including New York, Washington D.C. and suburban VA and MD, Triangle region, NC, Jackson, MS, San Francisco, Chicago, Philadelphia, Boston, and Baltimore.

Target groups: An initial campaign focus was teachers and parents of children between birth and grade sixth—the team has widened parameters in some cases based on the needs and resources of their partners. The filmmakers and their partners believe that real solutions to the achievement gap require the active involvement of three key stakeholder groups: parents/caregivers, educators and students. The filmmakers write that *American Promise* “interweaves perspectives from members of each of these groups throughout the film’s narrative, allowing the target audience to recognize elements of their own lives represented on screen.”

Partners: Key strategic partners in this ongoing campaign include United Way/NFL, Mocha Moms, National Urban League, College Board, A Better Chance, Teach for America, COSBOC, Great Schools, Concerned Black Men, 100 Black Men of America, BBBS of America, African American Leadership Forum, Friends School Network, America’s Promise Alliance, The Black Man Can, Teaching Tolerance, Facing History and Ourselves, National Parent Teacher Association, Jack and Jill of America, Policy Link/ Promise Neighborhoods ,White House Initiative on Educational Excellence for African Americans -Young Men’s Initiative, Mentoring, USA and American Graduate. Many other partners are involved on a more limited or regional basis to plan events, workshops and local leaders in communities.

How the Campaign Works

During the first two years, the team developed relationships with more than 50 national organizations that were working on the key issues the film highlighted. Over the subsequent two years the number of active grassroots and foundation participants has grown to more than 250 organizations including think tanks, teacher groups, municipal groups, and parent organizations dedicated to promoting awareness and sparking change.

Extensive research was conducted both during the process of making the film, and provided the basis for producing campaign assets, including focus group research with educators, parents and caregivers, and students, and consultation of related academic research on Black male achievement. The early networking opportunity the campaign obtained through *The Good Pitch New York City* (2011), proved to be an important catalyst for outreach, triggering deeper relationships with new and current partners and more support from funders.

The filmmakers note: “the work associated with developing our partnerships is a crowning achievement yet it alone does not effectuate the change we desire.” As a result, between 2011 and 2014 and in partnership with stakeholders who met at four regional summits, they developed seven tools designed to help families, educators, and young people to discuss ways to better serve Black boys, and take actions that ensure that all young people are equipped with the same opportunities to succeed.

This toolkit includes a professional development guide for educators (developed by the Southern Poverty Law Center’s Teaching Tolerance project), a youth workshop, a parent support guide, a companion book, *Promises Kept* published by Random House, and a mobile application for parents. Currently, the filmmakers are in phase three of their campaign and have completed, tested and released each of the tools, except for the mobile application, which is currently in beta testing phase.

Pivot points:

The filmmakers note that effective steps they took to move the campaign forward included:

- Deciding to self-distribute theatrically, which “allowed for synergy between our outreach and distribution goals”— allowing them to meet with various stakeholders to obtain buy-in for the theatrical release;
- Partnering with ro*co films to release the educational DVD, “and expand their story to schools across the country”;
- Leaving the film festival circuit after winning a round of awards to focus on reaching the target audience through community screenings, conference screenings and panels and educational screenings;
- Launching the *Promises Kept* book, which accelerated the momentum of the campaign and allowed partners to offer a tool to channel conversations after the screenings into concrete tangible actions individuals could take, using the book as a guide.

Research methods:

- The team conducted two brain trust meetings, led by Active Voice, to help gather data around the field of Black Male Achievement.
- They have developed post-screening surveys to measure impact, as well as surveys to measure the long-term effect and impact of the campaign over the coming 6 to 12 months.
- The film’s web site is designed to include integrated polling questions on various web pages that allow the team to capture user attitudes and knowledge about the issues raised in the film and web site content.
- Currently they are working with the interactive storyteller, Andrew Devigal, and Oregon State University to use mobile phones to assess audience goers’ emotional responses and produce real-time digital data visualization of those responses. This mobile tool, HARVIS, is being piloted with American Promise and was recently presented at the Tribeca Interactive Summit.

Next steps:

The team is currently refining mobile/digital outreach tools and related research. This September 2nd, 2014, the film will be released digitally via Cinedigm. An agreement is currently in place with Netflix

Foreign Territories, and the film will be available digitally in select foreign territories, including France, the UK and certain territories in Latin America starting June 2014. An *Advancing the Promise Tour* is also being planned for the Fall, which includes multiple day workshops and conversations in over 13 cities across the country.

Impact

Change in Awareness

Distribution:

- Premiere: Sundance Film Festival World Premiere on January 21st, 2013
- Estimated viewing numbers for the POV airing include 1,523,000 cumulative audience, with a rating in NY that was double the usual for that time slot. Via the PBS video player as of 3/6/14, there have been 57,133 full film plays.
- The film has been released theatrically across 40 cities, with over 600 theatrical screenings to date.
- An educational DVD package was released in November—as of March, 250 had been sold.

Awards:

- 2013 Sundance Film Festival — Special Jury Prize for Excellence in Filmmaking
- 2013 Full Frame Film Festival — Grand Jury Prize Winner
- New York Film Festival — Official 2013 Main Slate Selection

Targeted outreach:

The filmmakers write: “We thought carefully about what types of awareness shifts would be needed to narrow the black male achievement gap in education. Ultimately, we recognized that a personal connection and elevated sense of awareness of the conditions would have to occur within each individual in order to compel them to act, and transform attitudes.” Goals for each group include:

- Young people: to support a deeper understanding of implicit bias/unconscious racism and stereotype threat, and provide them with the tools to better recognize these factors in their daily life.
- Parents and caregivers: to help them recognize that their experiences are not happening in isolation, and that there are resources and strategies available to better support the socio-emotional health and academic success of their sons.
- Educators: More than 80% of educators in the country are white middle class females. The filmmakers aimed “to connect teachers to important tools that could make them more aware of the unique social and emotional needs of black boys.”

Screening attendees:

The film has received over 1200 screening requests, been screened at more than 20 national conferences on education and race relations. More than 600 university/school screenings have been booked and the POV community screenings program has confirmed greater than 298 free community screenings since February 2014. Estimated attendance:

- Strategic Influencer: many

- 298 Community Screenings POV: 14,900
- 150 Rada Film Group screenings: 15,000
- 20 Educational Conferences: 5,000
- 450 Educational Screenings: 112,500

Responses:

The filmmakers write that the *American Promise* campaign has “sparked a multitude of micro-conversations in communities across the United States that go well beyond our campaign, linking parents, caregivers, committed educators, and concerned advocates with the power of these deeply personal issues...for many audience members, the film is a transformative witnessing tool, revealing an experience that many people experience intimately and in the privacy of their home life.” Audience polls reveal that about 87% agreed that they learned something new from the film screening, while about 64% agreed that the film deepened their understanding of the issues presented.

Digital/Mobile Outreach

- *Primary site:* americanpromise.org —61,930 unique visitors since January 2013
- *Social media platforms:*
 - Facebook—10,649 likes as of May 29, 2014
 - Twitter—7,998 followers as of May 6, 2014
 - Online distribution platforms: YouTube, Vimeo, PBS Player, POV web site

Notable online responses:

An *Atlantic* article featuring the film and an interview with the filmmakers, generated 18,000 Facebook posts as well as a critical examination of the issues boys and girls of color face in preparatory schools. The team created the #BMAWeek (Black Male Achievement Week) to rally support for PBS premiere. Supported by over 80 offline events, the #BMAWEEK Twitter chat had over 619 organizations and individuals in participation. On the day after the PBS broadcast, POV organized an Ovee chat. The chat broke all prior POV OVEE participation records.

Key Press Mentions:

TV—CBS, MSNBC, NBC (Carson Daly Show), CNN (Anderson Cooper- 360), PBS, BBC, over 40 local station vignettes, five separate NPR broadcasts (*The Story*, *Market Place* with Kai Risdal, *Tell Me More* with Michel Martin, Leonard Lopate and *All Things Considered*), the BBC. Print: *The Atlantic*, *The New York Times*, multiple articles in *Essence*, *Jet Magazine*, *Ebony* and *O Magazine*.

Change in Behavior

The filmmakers note: “Both our website and mobile applications have been designed to work in conjunction to inform and ultimately change behavior using concepts developed by the Stanford Captology Laboratory and the “tiny steps” behavioral modification work of Professor B.J. Fogg.” The team is midway through an ambitious data gathering effort, designed to assess both medium- and long-term behavior changes by target audiences. Anecdotally, they report that “parent stakeholder groups in New York City and Corvallis Oregon, through the creation of Promise Clubs, are implementing changes in their direct interactions with their child’s schools and teachers — from increasing the number of direct interactions with teachers and discussing their child’s experience in the classroom, to parents working with school administrators to create inclusion, equity and diversity groups within their schools where none existed prior to the screening of *American Promise*.”

Asks:

- The filmmakers write: “Anticipating an emotionally charged and highly motivated audience, we designed readymade tools for our target stakeholders.” Today, most viewers leave a screening with a clear action/ask that is supported by extensive research in behavior change.
- Through highly engaged dialogue before, during, and after screenings, they “have been able to mobilize parents educators and advocates by building a sense of connectivity and timeliness. This film has helped empower parents to collect, train, and work together for universal changes that establish an environment where their children can be successful and healthy.”
- Adopt-A-Screening efforts allowed audience members and partner organizations to become involved with distribution.
- The team partnered with Tugg, a web-platform that allows individuals and organizations to bring the film to their local theaters.
- They also held a crowd-sourced funding campaign through Kickstarter to secure funds for post-production.

Responses:

Since the campaign’s launch, 46 Promise Clubs (self-run advocacy groups for parents and caregivers) have been created. After a screening organized by United Way, parents in chapters across the country have rented out theaters in their community to host additional screenings. The filmmakers report: “We also frequently see a rise in additional screening requests after every community screening, which increases the opportunity to build awareness and find new advocates.”

Political impact

Asks:

- The team has engaged with a number of policymakers and think tanks to raise awareness of issues related to Black male achievement, including Policy Link, the California State Legislature, the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, the New York City Young Men’s Initiative and the White House Initiative on African American Excellence.
- The film was screened on Capitol Hill, sponsored by Representative Fudge, Ohio (11th District, D).
- The film screened at the 25th United Nations Human Rights Council Convening in Geneva in March 2014.

Responses:

The White House Initiative on Educational Excellence for African Americans supported Black Male Achievement Week. Several statewide boards of education, school systems and educators have committed to using the team’s Professional Development Modules for educators, and in North Carolina, the State Department of Public Instruction has committed to scheduling 100 screenings of the film over the next year.

Corporate Impact

Asks:

The filmmakers report: “We wanted our screenings to encourage employees at various corporations to analyze the role that implicit bias plays in their organization.”

Responses:

The conversations have been “very fruitful.” The team has screened and conducted panel discussions/talks at Goldman Sachs, PriceWaterhouseCooper, BNP Paribas, Google, and Deutsche Bank.

Building Capacity

American Promise has become a resource for partner organizations to rally and educate constituents, hold conversations, and raise the profile of the issues they champion:

- Nationwide Black Male Achievement Week Campaign, or #BMAWeek was so successful that several partner organizations have committed to making it a recurring annual event each February.
- Last summer, the team coordinated a series of screening with Teach For America (TFA), including a youth-facilitated workshop. From there, local TFA chapters adopted screenings in New York, Atlanta, and Chicago. TFA provided promotional support, and hosted a #DreamRiseDo Twitter chat with the filmmakers and a Google Hangout with singer John Legend. TFA has also committed to integrating their professional development guide into their summer teacher summit sessions.
- The partnership between American Promise and United Way began by engaging students during the summer to address the summer learning gap through the use of the American Promise Summer Learning Discussion Guide, developed with the help of the Campaign for Grade Level Reading and the National Summer Learning Association. The team facilitated 7 strategic screenings in low-income areas and coordinated a live Google Hangout online with United Way, the NFL, and the American Promise filmmakers. As United Way Program Manager Kate Bauer has stated, “The opportunity for conversation provided by community viewings of “American Promise” has been a unique doorway to open, honest dialogue with varied stakeholders throughout our area.”

A Place at the Table

Synopsis

50 million people in the U.S.—one in four children—don’t know where their next meal is coming from, despite our having the means to provide nutritious, affordable food for all Americans. Directors Kristi Jacobson and Lori Silverbush examine this issue through the lens of three people who are struggling with food insecurity: Barbie, a single Philadelphia mother who grew up in poverty and is trying to provide a better life for her two kids; Rosie, a Colorado fifth-grader who often has to depend on friends and neighbors to feed her and has trouble concentrating in school; and Tremonica, a Mississippi second-grader whose asthma and health issues are exacerbated by the largely empty calories her hardworking mother can afford. Ultimately, *A Place at the Table* shows us how hunger poses serious economic, social and cultural implications for our nation, and that it could be solved once and for all, if the American public decides—as they have in the past—that making healthy food available and affordable is in the best interest of us all.

The film’s campaign has raised awareness of U.S. hunger issues, and was influential in the passage of a West Virginia bill to offer free breakfast and lunch to every elementary school student—the first state to pass such a bill. A screening was also held at the Capitol, and members of Congress held screenings in their own districts. The film has been widely covered in national and local media, and the team has raised funds for a 5-year follow-up campaign.

Production Team

- *Directors:* Kristi Jacobson and Lori Silverbush
- *Producers:* Kristi Jacobson, Lori Silverbush, Julie Goldman and Ryan Harrington.
- *Executive Producers:* Tom Colicchio; Participant Media’s Jeff Skoll and Diane Weyermann; and Christina Weiss Lurie and Jeffrey Lurie.
- *Impact producers and researchers:* Active Voice, Share Our Strength, Take Part

Funders

The production team for *A Place at the Table* reports that while the majority of their funding came from Participant Media, they received production funding support from Bread for the World/Terrence Meehan, Chicken and Egg, individual donations and outreach support from Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, Ford Foundation, Marcus Foundation, Markle, Tisch Illumination Fund, Rosenthal Family, and Fledgling Fund.

They did not name a key funding partner, instead writing “the filmmakers worked very closely with each of their funders, which enabled them to create a multi-layered social action campaign for 2 years (2013-2014). The most significant outcome from their efforts is the development of a separate 5-year, multi-million dollar social action campaign that will immediately follow the expiration of the current social campaign (in December 2014) for which they initially received foundation support.”

Budget

- *Production:* Not public

- *Outreach and Distribution:* Not public

Campaign

Goals:

The production team aims to:

- Increase awareness: Push the issue of American hunger to the foreground of the national conversation.
- Change the conversation at both a federal and local level to build public will for legislative solutions to address hunger, in contrast to a reliance solely on charitable efforts to combat the problem.

Target location:

The film's campaign targeted U.S. viewers, with a specific focus on raising awareness of the relationship between hunger and obesity in regions most affected by those issues.

Target groups:

Local leaders (within select communities) in the anti-hunger and anti-obesity fields.

Partners:

The production team worked with more than 100 national and local partners, including nonprofits and faith-based groups.

How the Campaign Works

The social action campaign team reports: “we worked with our partner organizations to reach communities across the country that were especially impacted by hunger. Through national and local organizations as well as faith-based groups, we implemented a grassroots campaign to ensure that audiences could not only see the film in their communities, but foster dialogue through panel discussions. Through these screenings we were able to build a wider community of support, educate those who were less aware, and engage with audiences to encourage them to join the movement.”

Pivot points:

The team noted that effective steps they took to move the campaign forward included:

- Engaging a third party educational distributor (RoCo Educational) and community distributors (Tugg & Active Voice) for their distribution strategy, which allowed the team to reach multiple audiences in communities across the country to build and energize the movement.
- Leveraging the traditional theatrical release (which resulted in widespread mainstream media coverage) by following up the surge in press coverage with meetings with key leaders on Capitol Hill and in various states.
- Specifically targeting low-income communities that would not necessarily have access to the film by applying for a health related grant with the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, which allowed them to hold free, moderated screenings that were facilitated by the Active Voice engagement campaign.

- Conducting research and evaluation related to the screenings through pre and post-screening surveys.

Research methods:

- The team reports: “We did not conduct entry/exit surveys at the screenings — however, an online pre-event survey was sent out broadly to communities where screenings were held two weeks before the screenings, and an online post-event survey was sent out roughly two weeks after the screening events. Respondents included both individuals who planned to attend/attended the events and those who were not planning to attend/did not attend the events for the purpose of collecting data from a control group of individuals for comparative analysis. Key Findings:
 - 85% of individuals who attended the Take Your Place (TYP) Community Screenings said that the film changed their views (to varying degrees).
 - Participation in the Community Screenings had a statistically significant effect on the understanding of the relationship between hunger and obesity (pre- to post-event shifts among attendees were compared with those pre- to post-event shifts among those who did not attend the events).
 - The team offered several quotes from the special screenings that depict a shift in views from the audience, such as “It gave me a sense of urgency and commitment that I hadn’t fully manifested in the past.”

Next steps:

The film birthed a multi-million dollar 5-year social action campaign developed by the filmmakers, which will directly follow the expiration of the social action that was financed for 2 years with foundation support.

Impact

Change in Awareness

The team sought a change in awareness regarding 1) views on hunger in America, 2) individuals understanding of the relationship between hunger and obesity, and 3) the attitudes towards federal government support in addressing hunger, obesity and food insecurity.

Distribution:

- *Premiere:* Sundance Film Festival 2012
- National Theatrical Release began March 1, 2013 for 77 weeks—distributed by Magnolia Pictures in 35 cities across the US. Domestic Total Gross: \$231,378

Awards:

- Pare Lorentz Award from the International Documentary Association

Targeted outreach:

- The production team worked with partners to screen the film in low-income communities, where hunger issues are most acute.
- An educational companion guide and companion book provide teachers and activists with additional resources for hosting screenings and discussions.

Screening attendees:

- Community and influencer screenings were held at 25 sites. Out of the 25, 15 sites did audience surveys and attendance was estimated to be around 1,690.
- Attendance at educational screenings is not tracked, as they are self-hosted, however there have been over 200 educational screenings.

Digital/Mobile Outreach

- *Primary site:* TakePart.com/table—visitors: 646,230
- In addition to an online campaign via Participant Media’s Take Part activism hub, the film led to the development of a separate campaign: the “SNAP Alumni” project. The SNAP Alumni project featured online profiles of notable and everyday extraordinary individuals who overcame the hardship of hunger with an aim to: 1) De-stigmatize food stamps, 2) Eliminate the shame felt by 50million Americans, and 3) Shatter misconceptions about people who receive SNAP.
- *Social media platforms:*
 - Facebook—53,837 likes as of early May
 - Twitter—6,878 followers as of early May
 - *Online distribution platforms:* Amazon, iTunes, Netflix

Notable online responses:

Working with high-profile influencers to spread the word has been a central tenet of this campaign. The team provided a sampling of Twitter responses from celebrities, including:

- “50 million Americans live on the brink of hunger. Go see @tomcolicchio’s eye opening film @PlaceAtTheTable in theaters today.#takeyourplace” – Jon Bon Jovi, Twitter
- “Bravo @tomcolicchio on A Place at the Table doc. Child hunger next dr neighbor to obesity. If compassion doesn’t move us the numbers should” – Rachael Ray, Twitter
- “P!nk, @Billboard’s Woman of the Year, talks hunger in America and A Place at the Table! <http://bit.ly/1lzp6k6> pic.twitter.com/6wGavOV4CJ” – A Place at the Table, Twitter

Key Press Mentions:

- The film has been widely covered by national current events programs, including *The Daily Show*, *PBS*, and *Bill Moyers*, among others.
- MSNBC’s Melissa Harris Perry hosted the Take Your Place (TYP) event in New Orleans and facilitated a panel discussion that included the head of NOLA’s health department Karen DeSalvo among others.

- Brownsville TYP got a feature in the *Brownsville Herald* and a spot on Action 4 News. Fresno Bee had a feature on TYP and several local TV spots about TYP events in partnership with Fresno Grizzlies.

Change in Behavior

Asks:

- A primary goal in the community screenings was to generate a dialogue between members of the anti-hunger and anti-obesity movements — groups which were not particularly connected prior to the screenings.

Responses:

- Researchers reported: Individuals who attended the Community Screenings were significantly more likely than those who did not attend to engage in dialogue and participation around food insecurity, hunger and obesity in the weeks following the community screening event.
- The team also noted a change in life circumstances for one of the documentary subjects: Barbie Izquierdo received a full scholarship and grant to continue her activism.

Political impact

Asks:

- The film was designed to encourage legislative action related to hunger

Responses:

The team reported: “The support from political leaders and the development of campaigns as a result of the film was unprecedented. For example, the film played a role in the passage of West Virginia’s ‘Feed to Achieve’ Act: West Virginia Senate Majority Leader John Unger sponsored the Feed to Achieve act on March 27, 2013, weeks after screening *A Place at the Table*. Unger said the film ‘directly influenced’ his support of and commitment to the Feed to Achieve bill.” Feed to Achieve was passed by a nearly unanimous Legislature and signed into law by Gov. Earl Ray Tomblin on May 9, 2013, making West Virginia the first state in the country to offer free school breakfast and lunch to every elementary school student. The bill is a public/private partnership, where a combination of additional federal funding and private donations and grants pay for the expanded nutrition program.”

The campaign also inspired other local policy initiatives: activists in Brownsville used their event to support a local living wage campaign, and in Baltimore, connected their TYP event to paid sick leave and minimum wage campaigns. Stephen Baldrige kicked off the Okmulgee Oklahoma event with a Mayoral proclamation Take Your Place Community Action Campaign Day; the Mayor of Bakersfield, CA, did a Hunger Action Month mayoral proclamation to kick off the screening event. Harrison, AR, mayor, Jeff Crockett, attended and spoke at an obesity conference as part of the TYP activities (*A Place at the Table* was screened at the event) ; Congressman McGovern attended and spoke at the Holyoke, MA event; Congressman Donald M. Payne Jr. attended an event hosted by the YMCA of Newark and spoke up during the discussion; Senator Sara Howard attended the TYP event in Omaha, NE in support of efforts to support low income families with better benefits; Omaha followed up their event with info on a new “cliff effect” bill being proposed in the state.

Corporate Impact

This film campaign did not target corporate actors.

Building Capacity

A Place at the Table became a resource for anti-hunger related organizations to raise awareness and rally constituents:

- An online national action center was launched to support the film's social action campaign. The national action center highlighted the work of over 100 organizations, which submitted actions that individuals seeking to be more engaged locally could take. Through the 100 organizations, over 300 actions are available in geographically dispersed areas.
- In addition, the film catalyzed the formation of local organizations:
 - Hawaii Hunger Project launched in Oahu
 - Bay Area Food Bank in Alabama launched a backpack program at the elementary school in Evergreen Alabama

Blackfish

Synopsis

Blackfish tells the story of Tilikum, a performing killer whale that killed several people while in captivity. Along the way, director-producer Gabriela Cowperthwaite compiles shocking footage and emotional interviews to explore the creature's extraordinary nature, the species' cruel treatment in captivity, the lives and losses of the trainers and the pressures brought to bear by the multi-billion dollar sea-park industry. This emotionally wrenching, tautly structured story challenges us to consider our relationship to nature and reveals how little we humans have learned from these highly intelligent and enormously sentient fellow mammals.

The film has generated significant coverage about issues related to keeping killer whales in captivity, and opened this debate up beyond the spheres of animal activism and academia. The film has moved elementary school students to protest field trips to Seaworld, rock bands to cancel their Seaworld performances, and state legislators to propose bills banning the use of whales in theme parks. Seaworld attendance is down 13 percent in the first three months of 2014.

Production Team

- *Director:* Gabriela Cowperthwaite
- *Producer:* Manny Oteyza
- *Executive Producers:* Judy Bart, Erica Kahn

Funders

The *Blackfish* team notes that their production was funded by an investor — Our Turn Productions Executive Producers Judy Bart and Erica Kahn — with outreach costs picked up by distributors.

Budget

Not public

Campaign

Goals:

- Bring awareness of killer whales in captivity to a wide audience beyond academia and animal activist groups.
- Create conversation around animals in captivity and entertainment.
- Improve living conditions for killer whales in aquatic entertainment park.

Target location:

Producer Manny Oteyza writes: “We did not aim for any particular region, country and the idea of reaching the world was not even in our mind. We just wanted to people to see our little movie—it didn’t matter where.”

How the Campaign Works

The production team's primary focus was on distribution. Producer Manny Oteyza writes: "Our bar was set pretty low. I think being a documentary filmmaker, you're excited by the prospect that people might see your film on purpose — actually go to a theater, pay and see it. As a documentary filmmaker you come from humble pie so you don't imagine that all that many people will lay their eyes on your film and you don't imagine necessarily going to change things, but that's the whole point of why you do what you do."

After premiering at Sundance we were able to get theatrical distribution by Magnolia Pictures where we reached over 100 theaters around the US and Canada achieving over 2 million in US Box office alone. CNN Films owed TV Cable rights were during our premiere week of 19 airings we had over 21 million viewers. Our dream was to have both a theatrical and TV broadcast and we achieved both and the audience viewership was beyond our expectations and continues to still grow."

Pivot points:

The filmmakers note that targeted campaigns directed at the whale and animal rights communities helped to move the campaign forward, but that they did not partner directly with activist groups.

Research methods:

- The team did not do any sort of polling but various media outlets had done their own polls to ask if Blackfish has done anything to change viewers' attitudes about Seaworld. **One story** noted that Seaworld was accused of "stuffing ballots" for a CNN poll, based on votes coming from a Seaworld protocol address.
- A **Google Trend analysis** of the term "Blackfish" shows a strong spike in interest starting in mid-2013.
- **An analysis of CNN Films strategy** around the airing of Blackfish shows a strong spike in Tweets about the film.
- **IndieWire** also **reported on the success** of CNN's Twitter strategy, and visualized the network of those tweeting about the film.

Next steps:

The team is still considering next steps.

Impact

Change in Awareness

Oreyza writes: "The subject of killer whales was a topic for only those involved in cetacean studies and animal activists groups. Our film, based on the numbers, reached the regular public and the controversial topic of animals in captivity and animals used in entertainment, especially Killer Whales, became an everyday topic discussed in newspapers, TV news, magazine articles all over the world." Recently, *Scholastic Magazine* had an issue that focused on the topic of whales in captivity, reaching millions of elementary students.

Distribution:

- The film premiered at the Sundance Film Festival, January 2013

- The film has had over 24 million viewers in the USA on CNN as of February 2014.
- Via the UK’s BBC, 1 million viewers have seen the film. Additional viewing numbers from across Europe are still pending.
- At domestic box office, the film made \$2,073,582.
- The film has been made available for download on iTunes and streaming via Netflix.

Awards:

Academy Awards 2014 Short List for Best Documentary Feature, BAFTA (British Academy Awards) — Nominated for Best Feature Documentary, Sundance Film Festival— Nominated Feature Documentary In-Competition, Green Film Festival Seoul — Winner Audience Award, Sheffield Doc/Fest — Nominated for Special Jury Award.

Targeted outreach:

The team did not provide information on targeted screenings, which were managed by partner organizations as noted above.

Digital/Mobile Outreach

- *Primary site:* <http://blackfishmovie.com>—126,000 unique visitors
- *Social media platforms:*
 - Facebook— 359,904 likes as of early May
 - Twitter— 37,900 followers as of early May
 - *Online distribution platforms:* iTunes, Netflix

Notable online responses:

- Oteyza writes: “We had great supporters in the whale and animal rights community that helped spread the word about the film. Social media played a major part in letting people know about Blackfish via Facebook and Twitter.
- Over 100 celebrities have posted about the film on Twitter, including Russell Brand, Miley Cyrus, and Rosie O’Donnell.
- The Ex-Seaworld trainers in the film and other whale organizations saw their websites receive major increases in traffic.
- A New York state petition supporting the “Blackfish” Bill to ban Orca captivity attracted over 1 million signatures

Key Press Mentions:

USA Today, LA Times, CBS, other widespread coverage.

Change in Behavior

Asks:

- Screening attendees who asked what they could do to help were advised to abstain from purchasing Seaworld tickets.

Responses:

Response has been significant. Audience attendance is down 13 percent in the first three months of 2014 at Seaworld. Rock bands that were planning to perform at Seaworld's "Bands Brew & BBQ" event canceled their performances, including Heart and Willie Nelson. Elementary students protested to their principals that they no longer wanted school field trips to Seaworld San Diego.

Political impact

For the most part, the film was created to increase awareness, not to have a specific political impact. However, Assemblyman Richard Bloom, D-Santa Monica, proposed legislation banning the use of orcas for performance purposes at California aquatic theme parks as a result of *Blackfish*, and New York Senator Greg Ball proposed a bill to prohibit "the possession and harboring of killer whales in aquariums and sea parks." While the Sacramento bill was tabled for a revised proposal next year, in New York the bill has just recently passed the state's Standing Committee on Environmental Conservation.

Bloom said there was no justification for the continued captive display of orcas for entertainment purposes. "These beautiful creatures are much too large and far too intelligent to be confined in small, concrete tanks for their entire lives," Bloom said. "It is time to end the practice of keeping orcas captive for human amusement.... in captivity, they have shorter lifespans, show increased health problems, live in swimming pool sized habitat that are approximately one ten-thousandth the required size and demonstrate aggressive behavior towards one another and towards humans that has never been documented in the wild,"

Corporate Impact

Asks:

- The filmmakers suggested Seaworld could stop whale breeding, or construct Seapens for the whales they currently own.

Responses:

- Seaworld has responded to the film with a vigorous negative PR campaign including Twitter and newspaper ads. The production team has responded with their own evidence to refute Seaworld's critique.
- Since the release of the film, as noted above, park attendance has dropped significantly at Seaworld locations.
- Blackstone, a major stockholder in Seaworld Parks, recently sold 15 million of their shares

Building Capacity

While the team has not directly engaged partner organizations, *Blackfish* has served as a resource for animal rights groups to rally supporters against whale captivity.

Bully

Director: Lee Hirsch

Producer: Cynthia Lowen

Website: http://www.thebullyproject.com/about_film

Funding

Funders: BeCause Foundation, Einhorn Family Charitable Trust, Fledgling Fund, the National Center for Learning Disabilities, NoVo Foundation, Sundance, The Vered Foundation

Key Funder: The Einhorn Family Charitable Trust (EFCT)

The filmmakers write:

“EFCT quickly became one of the key strategic partners and funders for The Bully Project (TBP). And in particular, the Executive Director, Jennifer Hoos Rothberg, became an invaluable “brain trust” for Lee and the entire TBP team. EFCT contributed to the 3 rounds of funding of TBP, including both the production of the film as well as outreach of our 10 Million Kids campaign both theatrically and for the Educator’s Kit. In addition, EFCT facilitated relationships that prospered between TBP and DonorsChoose.org, Not in Our Schools, and Harvard Graduate School of Education.

DonorsChoose.org developed an online application process for school nationwide to see Bully in a theater. They helped organize transportation and anti-bullying training for the educators as well. In total they coordinated screenings for over 700 schools representing over 250,000 students. 1 Million Kids became the largest collection of field trips within a single program. As a trusted resource for teachers, DonorsChoose.org was the perfect partner to facilitate our initiative.

Not In Our School has inspired students of all ages to develop and share innovative ways to resist bullying and promote an atmosphere of acceptance and inclusion. With the introduction from EFCT, we included their videos and materials in the Educator’s DVD and Toolkit and one of our key volunteers Susan Guess has become a board member of the organization.

EFCT also introduced us to the Harvard Graduate School of Education has developed our ‘Roadmap to Building a Caring and Respectful School’ which is an integral part of the Educator’s Kit and is the first introduction of Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) concepts for most of the people purchasing our kits.”

Read more about the film’s outreach campaign in [the full BRITDOC case study](#), which observes:

Over 13 million American kids are bullied each year, making it the most common form of violence experienced by young people. *Bully* brings human scale to this startling statistic, offering an intimate, unflinching look at how bullying has touched five kids and their families. The film documents the responses of teachers and administrators to aggressive behaviours that defy “kids will be kids” cliché, and captures a growing movement among parents and youths to change how bullying is handled in schools, in communities and in society as a whole.

The Bully Project (TBP) was formed to implement the campaign around the film *Bully*. The director Lee Hirsch, who had himself experienced bullying as a child, personally drove the campaign, becoming the face and spokesperson, and appearing at community screenings and extensively on national news.

There is no doubt that the film leveraged its impressive media presence to plant the issue of bullying firmly into the national consciousness, with coverage from all major media brands. Extensive and robust collaborations with a raft of corporations and nonprofits has been a hallmark of the campaign; an exemplar of successful partnership in action. This has been complemented by outstanding educational resources and the genesis of a genuinely self-sustaining grassroots movement.

Campaign Update

Since the BRITDOC awards, the filmmakers have developed a second edition of their Educator’s DVD and Toolkit, which began shipping in early May 2014. The first edition sold 7,500 copies, reaching over 2 million children and educators. The Bully Project has partnered with a number of organizations in order to spread awareness for their cause. Girl Scouts of America, The AD Council, and other organizations have created campaigns and programs of awareness and prevention in partnership with the Bully Project. Upworthy and Peace First each engaged the film’s target audience with creative campaigns that encouraged people to share their first-hand experiences with bullying through online media.

Facing History and Ourselves, (FHO) one of the team’s earliest partners and largest in-kind donors, developed a screening guide and online workshop that was made available at no cost to all participating educators, complemented by face-to-face training for teachers. The team asked every school participating in the 1 Million Kids campaign to pledge to use the FHO materials. *Bully* content on Facinghistory.org has reached nearly 450,000 unique page views—and according to a survey, 98 percent of teachers would recommend the workshop and 88 percent “agree” or “strongly agree” that the film and training helped to create a safe environment in their classroom. FHO also hosted *Bully* screenings and anti-bullying summits in several cities, with an estimated 25,000 and 800 administrators, teachers and parents participating.

The Bully Project has localized teams in 40 states which have made great strides to improve bullying laws in their communities. In Tennessee they’ve worked with State Representative Mark White on potential bullying law changes, and in Iowa they’ve participated in a major local youth leadership conference. They continue to hold screenings and engage with local legislators and school administrators.

Gasland & Gasland II

Synopsis

Gasland: The largest domestic natural gas drilling boom in history has swept across the United States. The Halliburton-developed drilling technology of “fracking” or hydraulic fracturing has unlocked a “Saudi Arabia of natural gas” just beneath us. But is fracking safe? When filmmaker Josh Fox is asked to lease his land for drilling, he embarks on a cross-country odyssey uncovering a trail of secrets, lies and contamination. A recently drilled nearby Pennsylvania town reports that residents are able to light their drinking water on fire. This is just one of the many absurd and astonishing revelations of a new country called *Gasland*.

Gasland Part II is the provocative follow-up to the filmmaker’s Academy Award nominated documentary feature *Gasland*. Fox’s newest effort — with his trademark dark humor — shows how the stakes have been raised in one of the most controversial environmental issues facing our nation today. *Gasland Part II* pierces prevailing myths by arguing how and why fracked wells inevitably leak over time, contaminating water and air, hurting families, and endangering earth’s climate with the powerful greenhouse gas, methane.

The 2010 documentary *Gasland* and 2013 follow-up *Gasland II* have significantly raised the profile of issues surrounding fracking across the globe, inspired the creation of hundreds of local anti-fracking groups, rallied celebrity activists, and played a key role in region, state, and country-based moratoria on oil drilling. The films have influenced the writing of the national FRAC Act. Eight members of Congress and many environmental groups have joined a campaign to force the EPA to reopen marquee cases demonstrating that fracking has contaminated groundwater. The production team is in the midst of launching another grassroots tour, “Solutions Grassroots,” designed to encourage adoption of renewable energy solutions by individuals, communities, and commercial settings, and to support related legislation.

Production Team

Gasland

- *Director*: Josh Fox
- *Director & Producer*: Molly Gandour
- *Producer*: Trish Adlesic
- *Screenings and Outreach Coordinator*: David Braun

Gasland, Part II

- *Director & Producer*: Josh Fox
- *Producers*: Trish Adlesic, Deborah Wallace
- *Gasland Grassroots Coordinator*: Lee Ziesche

Funders

Funders:

- *Gasland*: Private donors through International WOW Company and fundraising parties, Cinereach Sundance Doc program grant, Park Foundation, 11th Hour Fund and Fledgling Fund.
- *Gasland Part II*: HBO, Park Foundation, Wallace Global Fund, Lucy Rockefeller Waletsky, and Bertha Foundation.

Key Funder: The Park Foundation

The filmmakers write:

“Both the Park Foundation and Fledgling Fund were really instrumental in creating the campaign structure at the beginning but then we worked with our grassroots partners in the field to create a dynamic outreach campaign that could address hot political situations. But the Park Foundation has been so incredibly instrumental for us—they have kept with us and seen the value in continuing the campaign over 3 long years. These campaigns are often multi-year undertakings. Park Foundation understands that. At each stage they found ways not only to support us with grants but also with important contacts and other resources. They have been such a leader in this field.”

Budget

Not public

Campaign

Goals:

- To change the conversation on fracking in the mainstream media and international dialogue.
- To grow the anti-fracking movement.
- To raise awareness of the fact that there is no safe fracking, and the only measure that will protect communities is to ban it.
- To raise awareness of the deceptive PR tactics of the oil and gas industry and their corrupting influence on democracy

Target location:

Global but grassroots tour “included many rural areas whose movie theaters would have never played *Gasland* or *Gasland Part II* otherwise,” notes Fox. New York has been a particular target, due to the threat that fracking would contaminate New York City’s water supply.

Target groups:

The initial engagement campaign was targeted towards people who lived above shale plays and were targeted for fracking. For *Gasland Part II*, grassroots outreach was focused on the network of hundreds of mom and pop anti-fracking groups that the first film helped to catalyze — for example, New Yorkers Against Fracking alone is a coalition of over 200 groups against fracking — as well as “big green” environmental groups like Sierra Club, Food & Water Watch and NRDC, and good governance groups like Common Cause.

Partners: Through the team’s tour and screenings programs they have partnered with hundred of organizations—many of which were founded after seeing the *Gasland* Grassroots Tour and went on to host their own house parties and community screenings.

How the Campaign Works

The grassroots screenings were high-profile events that served as organizing tools for activists who were struggling to gain attention and spread information on fracking. Fox writes “I believe because we showed up and personally toured to these areas, the audience size at each screening was much larger and folks became much more engaged.” These screenings were paired with broadcast for maximum reach. Face-to-face and broadcast distribution strategies were amplified with savvy online outreach.

Pivot points

The filmmakers note that effective steps they took to move the campaign forward included:

- Releasing key clips like the iconic scene of tap water on fire, which allowed the team to garner attention before *Gasland* was even completed. Those clips went viral and have been featured extensively in the media to this day.
- Focusing on informing the audience on ten key points that prove the only reasonable and safe decision is to ban fracking: 1) Water contamination, 2) Water pollution, 3) Health effects, 4) Waste disposal and land scarring, 5) Fracking the climate, 6) Fracking our communities, 7) Fracking the government, 8) Fracking our workforce, 9) Fracking the civic dialogue and media, 10) Fracking the future.
- Post-screening conversations, which allowed them to fine tune the film to “make sure the that then dense amount of scientific fact we were trying to share were readily understandable,” the team writes. “Now the fracking movement is one of the most educated movements of all time. They understand complex processes like well casing failures and know the percentage of leaking methane.”
- Showing segments of *Gasland* were to every community board in New York City—engaging this population helped gain significant media attention and broaden the dialogue on an international level.
- Pairing broadcasts on HBO with their tour and screening schedule to reach the widest possible audience.
- During the grassroots Tour of *Gasland Part II*, taking an audience photo every night and tweeting it out with a message to President Barack Obama and the governor of the state they were in.
- Pursuing extensive outreach with celebrities, including Robert Redford, Mark Ruffalo, Scarlett Johansen, Alec Baldwin, Debra Winger, Yoko Ono, Pete Seeger, Arlo Guthrie, Natalie Merchant and others.

Research methods:

- Fox writes “We’ve made a huge impact on the international dialogue. In 2012 the word ‘fracking’ was Googled more than climate change. Data shows that the release of *Gasland* and my many media appearances was one of the causes in rise of awareness.” According to Google’s analytics, searches for *Gasland* tend to precede rising search activity for ‘fracking’. For example, the first Bulgarian-language subtitles appeared in mid-2011 on video-sharing websites, prefacing the emergence of widespread anti-fracking protests.
- Negative posts accounted for only one fifth of the 74,000 posts in June and July many of which originated from the oil and gas industry or their spokespeople and supporters. According to an

analysis done by Fenton PR firm 190,687,177 people saw positive messages about *Gasland Part II*.

Next steps:

This campaign continues on many fronts, with the ultimate goal of a national ban on fracking. The *Gasland* production team is in the midst of launching “Solutions Grassroots,” a national tour featuring film, music and performance as a motivator to adopt renewable energy solutions for individuals, communities, and commercial settings, and to support related legislation. The team is organizing a set of pilot locations, with a goal of deploying the model throughout the US. Each tour stop is designed to spur the formation of neighborhood volunteer teams led by a trained field organizer who will help them set goals to move towards 100% renewable energy. In conjunction, the team is building relationships with renewable energy providers, building a “new grassroots distribution circuit” that marries cultural, grassroots and business partners.

Impact

Change in Awareness

Before *Gasland* was released the oil and gas industry dominated the conversation, according to Fox, touting hydraulic fracturing as a safe process that would help secure America’s energy independence. He writes: “we were able to combat the false information being perpetuated by the industry and change the international dialogue about fracking by broadcasting the films on television and doing hundreds of media appearances. ...Almost single-handedly, *Gasland* made unconventional gas production internationally controversial. The film’s climactic scenes of rural homeowners using matches to set tap water alight have been replicated repeatedly, in multiple languages, in both mainstream and social media.”

A [white paper](#) from the oil and gas industry revealed that *Gasland* raised awareness of what fracking is and its dangerous consequences all over the world, noting “The anti-fracking movement did not start with *Gasland*, but would not have gone global without it.” Many of the scientists featured in the films have received increased media attention for their work including Stanford scientist Mark Jacobson, whose plan for 100% renewable energy was featured in *Gasland Part II*, was recently on *The Late Show with David Letterman*.

Polls on fracking indicate that there is not only a rise in awareness on what the process of hydraulic fracturing is, but public opinion is turning against it. Currently two-thirds of Pennsylvanians support a moratorium on fracking.

Distribution:

- *Premieres:*
 - *Gasland* premiered at Sundance 2010.
 - *Gasland II* premiered at the Tribeca Film Festival 2013.
- Both *Gasland* films were among the highest rated in HBO’s documentary series. The team approximates that the film reached worldwide HBO audiences of 50 million across 30 countries.
- iTunes reports 10,999 downloads of *Gasland*

Awards:

- *Gasland*: Sundance Film Festival, Special Jury Prize Big Sky Film Fest, Artistic Vision Award Yale Environmental Film Festival, Grand Jury Prize Thin Line Film Festival, Audience Award

Sarasota International Film Festival, Special Jury Prize Traverse City Film Festival, Best Environmental Documentary Nominated for Best Documentary Oscar Won Emmy for Best Documentary Directing Nominated for 3 additional Emmy Awards including Best Doc, Writer and Camera Nominated for Best Documentary Screenplay Writer's Guild of America Won Planet Defender Award (Josh Fox) from Rock the Earth Won Environmental Media Award for Best Documentary Won John Lennon/Yoko Ono Peace Prize 2010 (Josh Fox) Won Best Graphic Design Cinema Eye Awards Nominated for IDA Pare Lorentz Award

- *Gasland Part II*: Tribeca Film Festival Waimea Ocean Film Festival Wild & Scenic Film Festival, Best in Festival Cinema Verde Environmental Film Festival Won Environmental Media Award for Best Documentary Won Cinema Eye Hell Yeah Prize

Targeted outreach:

The film's extensive grassroots outreach campaign included the director personally touring to over 300 cities and towns, and developing a robust house party and community screenings program.

Another important aspect of the production team's media strategy was to create a dialogue with the climate change movement and other groups fighting extreme energy extractions like mountaintop removal and tar sands." To this end, Fox traveled with 350's Do the Math Tour, created a video for tar sands action, was arrested as part of a Keystone XL protest in front of the White House and participated in a march on Blair Mountain in protest of mountaintop removal.

Screening attendees:

- An estimated 200,000 people attend screenings of the original *Gasland* on their Grassroots Tour.
- Another estimated 22,000 people attended screenings of *Gasland Part II* on their Grassroots Tour.
- In addition, an estimated 32,000 people have attended house party and community screenings of *Gasland Part II*. Through their community screenings program, organizations have hosted hundreds of community screenings and house parties.

Digital/Mobile Outreach

- *Primary site*: www.gaslandthemovie.com—Unique visitors: 1,296,500
- *Social media platforms*:
 - Facebook—109,113 likes as of early May
 - Twitter—23,000 followers as of early May
 - *Online distribution platforms*: Netflix, iTunes, Amazon, YouTube, Vimeo

Notable online responses:

The films' social media sites serve as hubs for the anti-fracking movement. Fox writes: "We get daily emails from top anti-fracking organizations asking us to share their content through our Facebook page and Twitter account. Dozens of people from around the world post updates on our Facebook page." Further, he reports: "The release of *Gasland Part II* drove a massive conversation across social media, blogs, and web forums."

Robust online responses to the films both reflect and drive continued interest in the topic from activists, politicians and the press. For example, one tweet about Exxon Mobil CEO Rex Tillerson suing to keep

fracking infrastructure out of his neighborhood was retweeted 696 times. Fox writes: “While we weren’t the first to report on this story we helped garner significant media attention. I went on *[All In With] Chris Hayes* to talk about it two times in a row.” There are dozens of unofficial mash-ups, shorter versions, and translations of *Gasland* on YouTube. A few examples are *Gasland* with Romanian subtitles, in Spanish, and in French. The team also runs a blog called the “Not From *Gasland* Journal” where they share stories from activists around the world.

Key Press Mentions: The film has been widely covered in TV segments and in print around the world.

Change in Behavior

Asks:

- The film’s primary ask is that fracking be banned. Calls for tighter regulation have revolved around *Gasland*’s major concern of disclosing fracturing chemicals, as well as managing surface wastewater and reducing greenhouse gas emissions.
- *Gasland* screenings have become one of the strongest organizing tools anti-fracking groups have to educate and galvanize people in their areas. They offer a shared point of reference for anti-fracking groups worldwide, serving as a ready introduction to the issues and perspectives of the anti-fracking movement.
- Since fracking is so widespread, the specific goals around each screening have varied based on the needs of the communities they were in.

Responses:

In addition to many one-off screenings, by reaching out to their audience and working with groups like Food & Water Watch and MoveOn, the team has coordinated 620 *Gasland Part II* house parties and over 200 community screenings with over 100 more people signed up to host house parties on Earth Day. Many of the larger environmental groups changed their position on fracking and came out against it after *Gasland* premiered. Fox writes: “The films have also had a large influence on the number of scientists researching this topic. Physicians, Scientists & Engineers for Healthy Energy have compiled over 150 peer-reviewed papers about the impacts of shale gas development.”

Political impact

Asks:

- *Gasland* was distributed to every New York State Senator and Assemblyperson and the Governor’s office.
- The film has been screened multiple screenings at EPA (both federal and regional offices), and these special screenings have led to regional EPA offices using *Gasland* as a training video.
- The film was screened at the Department of Justice for the entire environmental enforcement division.
- *Gasland Part II* is designed to turn up the pressure on regulators, highlighting three marquee cases where the EPA ignored scientific evidence that showed fracking contaminated groundwater, and caved to political pressure and dropped the cases.

Responses:

In the U.S., the influence of the films has led to the writing of the FRAC Act, introduced by Congressman Maurice Hinchey, who said, “*Gasland* is a very important film about the risks posed by hydraulic fracturing — a method of drilling for natural gas that currently lacks proper oversight... We cannot allow drilling to move forward without rules in place to protect drinking water and our overall environment.” This act aims to repeal the exemption for hydraulic fracturing in the Safe Drinking Water Act.

Partners have been able to use the media buzz generated by the release of the films and increase in awareness about fracking to help them get 200,004 thousand public comments on the NY SGEIS, 750,000 signatures on a petition to ban fracking on public lands, and 250,000 signatures on a petition to reopen investigations into fracking water contamination that were dropped by the EPA. Fox and his team have supported local moratoria on drilling in New York, New Mexico, Pittsburgh, Colorado and elsewhere. Eight members of Congress and many environmental groups including Food & Water Watch, We Are Power Shift, and Earthworks have now taken up the campaign, recently submitting a letter to EPA head, Gina McCarthy to reopen the cases highlighted in the second film. The Obama Administration also has vowed to curb methane leaking.

Internationally, Fox and his team have been actively involved in local campaigns in France, Bulgaria, Quebec, and elsewhere. South African anti-fracking groups screened *Gasland* in Cape Town shortly after the first exploration applications for the Karoo basin were submitted. In southern France, anti-fracking collectives simultaneously launched with a screening of *Gasland*, which was released in French cinemas two months before a national moratorium was adopted in mid-2011.

Corporate Impact

Asks:

Fox writes: “We were aiming for the oil and gas industry to recognize the inherent dangers of their drilling practices and put citizen welfare over corporate profits. So far their reaction has been complete denial.”

Responses:

- While the industry has yet to respond positively, “many other business to realized the dire need to get off of fossil fuels. Over 1,000 New York business have come together to form Businesses Against Fracking New York.”
- Brooklyn Brewery launched a “Don’t Frack my Beer” campaign.

Building Capacity

The film has served as a rallying point for both national environmental organizations and the creation of local groups. The Sierra Club alone organized 200 house parties and 40 screenings in hard-hit communities. The filmmaker reports: “Through our touring we were able to provide connective tissue to anti-fracking groups across the world and galvanize a massive basis of people against fracking.”

Many new organizations were formed after people saw the film or to handle the increased number of people now active on the issue—to name just a few: Artists Against Fracking, Berks Gas Truth, New Yorkers Against Fracking, American’s Against Fracking, Californians Against Fracking, Frack Action, Stop Gaz de Schiste and Britain and Ireland Frack Free.

Give Up Tomorrow

Director: Michael Collins

Producer: Marty Syjuco

Website: <http://www.pacodocu.com/>

Funding

Funders: The Fledgling Fund, Independent Television Services (ITVS), Sundance Institute, Gucci Tribeca Documentary Fund, Bertha Britdoc Connect Fund, Center for Asian American Media, New York State on the Arts, Jerome Foundation, POV's Diverse Voices Project

Key Funder: The Fledgling Fund

The production team writes:

“We worked in close partnership with The Fledgling Fund, who supported our outreach and audience campaign on three occasions. The FREE PACO NOW campaign would not have been possible without The Fledgling Fund. Without their generous support and commitment, we would not have been able to achieve what we did. It was a formidable partnership, filled with brainstorming sessions where great ideas were born. There were also regular workshops and mentorship, which as emerging filmmakers we really appreciated and enjoyed. They were such a valuable supporter of our project and it was really wonderful to work with them. We were able to build our website properly, especially the video section, which was a complex page and required major web development and programming.”

BRITDOC Impact Report

Read more about the film's outreach campaign in the [full BRITDOC case study](#), which observes:

“A tropical storm beats down on an island in the Philippines, two sisters leave work and never make it home... Paco Larrañaga, a 19 year old student, is sentenced to death for their rape and murder despite overwhelming evidence of his innocence. Seven years in the making, the film reflects schisms of race, class and political power at the core of the Philippines' tumultuous democracy that clashing families, institutions, and individuals face over Paco's freedom.

The filmmakers have very effectively created a political campaign across borders, channelling public feeling generated by the film towards concrete political goals. Already the campaign has done much to improve Paco's quality of life and they have managed this through their own personal energy in partnership with other NGOs, on modest resources.

A long term legacy of the campaign in the form of the Innocence Project Philippines Network will address the systemic roots of injustice in that country for years to come.”

Campaign Update

In order to spread the film's message in Southeast Asia, the filmmakers helped to launch the first ever Innocence Project Philippines Network, which holds benefit screenings for awareness, as well as sending law students to interview Philippine prison inmates to find cases fit for exoneration.

The film has been very well-received by the broader Asian anti-death penalty movement. It was the sole selection for the Asian Film Festival Against the Death Penalty, an event involving an alliance of Asian NGOs including Amnesty International Hong Kong, Amnesty International Thailand, TAEDP (Taiwan Alliance to End the Death Penalty), and the Civil Rights Committee of the Kuala Lumpur and Selangor

Chinese Assembly Hall in Malaysia, which are all members of the Anti-Death Penalty Asia Network (ADPAN).

In Bangkok, Thailand and Galway, Ireland, event screenings of the film were held by Amnesty International as part of the October 10th World Day Against the Death Penalty 2013. These screenings received a significant amount of response and media coverage, particularly in Thailand where the press coverage and anti-death penalty campaign reached millions on television. Campus and cinema screenings have begun in Hong Kong, in partnership with Amnesty International, and in Mainland China, in partnership with CNEX (“China Next”), a Beijing-based NGO. Give Up Tomorrow was also selected as the Opening Night Film at the Many Faces of the Death Penalty Film Festival in Taipei, organized by the Taiwan Alliance to End the Death Penalty.

The Interrupters

Director: Steve James

Producers: Steve James, Alex Kotlowitz, Zak Piper

Website: <http://interrupters.kartemquin.com/>

Funding

Production Funders: Independent Television Service (ITVS), WGBH/Frontline, MacArthur Foundation, BBC, Sundance Documentary Fund, CBC News, Dreihaus Foundation, SVT, NRK, DR TV

Outreach Funders: ITVS, Tribeca New Media Fund, Bertha BRITDOC Connect Fund, The Fledgling Fund, Robert R. McCormick Foundation, Polk Bros. Foundation, Chicago Community Trust

Key Funder: ITVS

The production team writes:

“We regularly worked with Cathy Fischer at ITVS on our Project 360 proposal, with ITVS providing large amounts of feedback and guidance on shaping our interactive website www.interruptviolence.com. Once funded we had weekly phone calls to discuss the website and outreach strategy. This greatly helped shape the website into a much stronger design and to connect us to a larger audience.”

BRITDOC Impact Report

Read more about the film’s outreach campaign in the [full BRITDOC case study](#), which observes:

“*The Interrupters* tells the moving and surprising stories of three Violence Interrupters who try to protect their Chicago communities from the violence they once employed. Shot over the course of a year, the film captures a period in Chicago when it became a national symbol for the violence in US cities. The film’s main subjects, “The Interrupters”, work for an innovative organization, CeaseFire; they have credibility on the streets because of their own personal histories and intervene in conflicts before they erupt into violence.

This campaign has worked with an impressive range of partners to bring meaningful and considered conversation to the roots of urban violence and offer some possible solutions. Working with organisations with few resources about a subject often misunderstood by the ‘mainstream,’ this has been a true grassroots effort which has grown impressively through the efforts of the outreach team.

Campaign Update

The team’s latest production is an [interactive website](#), *Interrupt Violence*, with feedback and guidance from ITVS, to share stories and start outreach discussions in the Chicago community.

The Invisible War

Director: Kirby Dick

Producer: Amy Ziering

Website: <http://invisiblewarmovie.com>

Funding

Funders: The Fledgling Fund, Women’s Donors Network, Sundance, BRITDOC, Regina Kulik Scully, Abigail Disney, Sarah Johnson Redlich, Joel and Susan Hyatt, Jim and Susan Swartz, Elizabeth Lykins, Louise Davis, Barbara Dobkin

Key Funders

The filmmakers cite their funders as an essential source of support for outreach leading up to Sundance. They also provided critical funding which underwrote Hill screenings, extensive non-theatrical outreach, digital support, and the film’s Oscar campaign.

BRITDOC Impact Report

Read more about the film’s outreach campaign in the [full BRITDOC case study](#), which observes:

“*The Invisible War* is a groundbreaking investigative documentary about one of America’s most shameful and best kept secrets: the epidemic of rape within the U.S. military. The film paints a startling picture of the extent of the problem — 1 in 4 women will be sexually assaulted during military service. Focusing on the powerfully emotional stories of rape victims, the film is a moving indictment of the systemic cover-up of military sex crimes, chronicling the women’s struggles to rebuild their lives and fight for justice.

The major impact of this campaign can be seen in the top level of political buy-in on the issue as well as the way that the military has begun to address Military Sexual Assault head-on in a public sphere as well as behind the scenes.

The campaign team has ensured that the issue of Military Sexual Assault has remained constantly in the public eye, coordinating a sustained grassroots campaign around strategic tentpoles such as the Academy Awards, and generating sustained press coverage. High level military and crossparty political support has signalled a shift in public discourse, acknowledging the gravity of the issue and pledging to “end the scourge.” There has been a raft of unprecedented legislation which has tackled MSA from multiple angles, a signal that the campaign has managed to create a change in culture within that most conservative of institutions, the US military. This will need further sustained advocacy over a considerable period of time, a commitment the campaign has already made.”

Campaign Update

Since this case study was written, a total of 5 Senate hearings on the issue of sexual assault in the military have been held, and 35 legislative reforms have been passed. These include measures to bar criminal felons with assault histories from enlisting, a whistleblower protection act, and more. Secretary of Defense Panetta publicly credited the film for influencing his decision to revise military policy on sexual assault within two days of seeing *The Invisible War*.

The issue has also gained traction in popular entertainment. Executive Producers and writers on shows such as *House of Cards*, *Law and Order: SVU*, *Scandal*, and others have publicly credited the film with bringing the issue of military rape to their attention, which has subsequently been included in these shows’ storylines.

Finally, to connect directly with to victims of abuse, the filmmakers organized a recovery program, funded by Regina Scully, the funder and CEO of the Artemis Rising Foundation and an executive producer of the film. The two-week retreat, offered for free to a group of survivors, including those featured in *Invisible War*, provides non-pharmaceutically-based treatments to alleviate the PTSD symptoms that abuse victims suffer.

Additional Research

The Invisible War also caught the attention of researchers examining high-impact media projects for the California Endowment’s [Communications Strategies That Fast Track Policy Change](#) initiative. This project seeks to identify and share examples that “use media and communications grantmaking to create a more receptive environment for dialogue about potential solutions, build public will and generate political will for policy change.”

The Fast Track case study of the *Invisible War* notes that the film “resonates for all grantmakers who seek to give a disenfranchised population a voice and raise awareness of a complex social issue among federal policy makers and the public.” [Click here to read the full case study.](#)