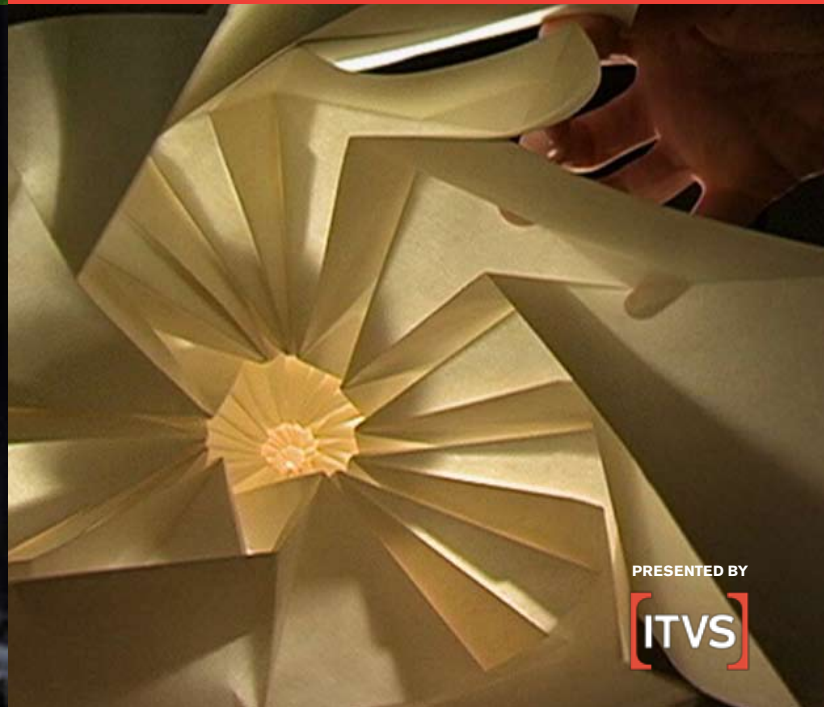


**[C] COMMUNITY
CINEMA**

PROGRAM TOOL KIT



PRESENTED BY

[ITVS]

COMMUNITY CINEMA is a monthly screening series showcasing the Emmy Award-winning PBS series *Independent Lens*. Presented in partnership with local, regional and national partner organizations and local public television stations, COMMUNITY CINEMA aims to build connections among diverse communities, public television stations and leading organizations working on a range of important social issues.

COMMUNITY CINEMA features free public screenings of films scheduled for upcoming broadcast on *Independent Lens*. Screenings are followed by a panel discussion or other presentation featuring local experts or key organizations working on issues covered in the film. Through these events, COMMUNITY CINEMA provides cutting-edge film content, information and resources on a range of issues and opportunities to get involved.

COMMUNITY CINEMA is an excellent opportunity for community organizations to broaden their constituencies by hosting regular events featuring award-winning independent films. Organizing panel discussions and/or inviting community leaders to speak at screening events facilitates networking and provides real benefits to local communities. Additionally, engaging communities around important social issues positions local partner organizations as important conveners at the center of today's debates.

COMMUNITY CINEMA screens in premier venues that are accessible to diverse communities such as art house cinemas, well-established community centers, museums, and public libraries. Screenings take place about 30 days prior to the scheduled broadcast of each film and are "hosted" by at least one partner organization who takes primary responsibility for producing the event—securing the venue, promoting the event to the public and organizing a post-screening panel and/or discussion.

ITVS provides local partners with all of the resources necessary to help build a successful event. Materials are provided free of charge and include:

- High-quality DVD of the film for screening
- DVD copies of the film for sharing with and recruiting local speakers and/or partners
- Full-color postcards to promote screening events (local partners can add local screening event information to back of card)

- Customizable flyer templates in Microsoft Word
- Discussion guide and facilitator guide for each film
- Event listings on the *Independent Lens* Web site
- Connection to local public television stations for partnership opportunities



These 11 steps will guide you through the before, during and after of your event. Be sure to check out the useful checklists on page eight. Contact ITVS at outreach@itvs.org for advice or questions.

1. WATCH THE FILM

- Become an expert on the film. Watch it twice if you have to!
- Take notes on the important issues presented in the film. Are there hotpoints or controversial topics?
- Think about possible partnerships with local organizations or speakers that work on these issues
- Think about who your audience is. Is the film appropriate for all ages?
- Think about the desired outcomes for the event. What steps will you take to achieve them?

2. FIND A VENUE

Location, location, location! The venue is as important as your promotional efforts in either bringing people in or keeping them away. Public libraries, museums, large community centers and other community-oriented spaces are generally good choices. University campuses, private clubs or other exclusive venues may sound appealing, but some people can find them intimidating or off-putting, so choose carefully. Your local public television station will likely be able to suggest local venues that would be appropriate for your COMMUNITY CINEMA Event.

Evaluate potential venues on their ability to provide the following:

ACCESSIBILITY

- Near public transit
- Easy parking
- Safe neighborhood
- Wheelchair accessible

WELCOMING ATMOSPHERE

- Clean theatre
- Comfortable seats
- Clean restrooms
- Space for panel discussion
- Diverse and inclusive reputation

PROMOTIONAL SUPPORT

- Newsletter/calendar
- Web site
- Email/mailling lists
- Space to leave postcards/flyers

TECHNICAL SUPPORT

- Video projector on-site
- Ability to playback DVDs
- Microphone(s) and speakers
- AV technician on-site

3. FIND EVENT PARTNERS

Among the key objectives of COMMUNITY CINEMA is to develop lasting partnerships with a broad array of local, regional and national organizations.

- Recruit participation from organizations with diverse missions: issue-based or advocacy organizations, direct service organizations, community organizations, governmental organizations and/or faith-based organizations.
- Be careful about opposites: although it is tempting to bring two adversaries to the table to debate in public, these can often be difficult situations to manage.
- COMMUNITY CINEMA events cannot be used as fundraisers (all events must be free and open to the public). However, your local public television station should be encouraged to leave membership information for your audience to pick up.

4. PARTNER WITH LOCAL PUBLIC TELEVISION STATIONS

Local public television stations should be acknowledged as “co-presenting” partners for COMMUNITY CINEMA, although the actual level of participation will vary from market to market, and from month to month.

Explore the contacts your local public television station partner may have. They have been in the community for a long time and will likely have worked with many local organizations.

5. FORM YOUR POST-SCREENING PANEL

Invite your event partners to suggest speakers who will lead a panel discussion and audience Q&A session (if appropriate). Collect a bio and some background information to confirm that this speaker will fit with the screening event you are creating. It is also wise to recruit a moderator that can manage the panel discussion and field questions from the audience.

It is vital that every speaker (including potential speakers) be provided with a copy of the discussion guide produced by *Independent Lens*. Direct your speakers to the COMMUNITY CINEMA Web site to download the guide in PDF format at www.pbs.org/independentlens/getinvolved.

6. CONFIRM

Confirm your screening date(s), speakers and partner organizations! Give them a call or send them an email confirming their participation and next steps. If possible, organize a meeting or conference call to introduce everyone and define goals, roles and responsibilities.

7. IMPORTANT GUIDELINES

ITVS is a federally funded public media organization. *We do not take positions on social issues.* However, we certainly can and will partner with organizations who do. This can create some obvious tension and a few operational dilemmas with respect to what can and cannot happen at an event. We want to assure that the views and positions of our partners are not ascribed to ITVS. Here are a few guidelines to consider:

PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS

- *May* explain their views and positions at COMMUNITY CINEMA events.
- *Should* distribute educational materials and information that details their views.
- *May* inform audiences how to get involved after the event.
- *Cannot* solicit direct action at COMMUNITY CINEMA events (this might include petitions, signing appeal postcards, letters or other obvious forms of political action).
- *Cannot* solicit donations at COMMUNITY CINEMA events, but *may* distribute membership or contribution information for people to review later.

COMMUNITY CINEMA EVENTS

- *Must* be free and open to the public.
- *Must not* be used as fundraisers.

Event organizers should make clear that ITVS does not take positions on social issues, that the positions of partner organizations are their own, and that we work with a broad array of organizations representing diverse perspectives.



8. INVITE! PROMOTE! CREATE BUZZ!

You cannot invite too many people, and you cannot do too much publicity and promotion. That event planning disaster they tell you about where way too many people show up and there aren't enough seats: pray for that!

Also keep in mind that promotion in and of itself helps us all meet some of our goals. If 100 people come to your COMMUNITY CINEMA event, but 10,000 are aware of it due to your clever promotional strategy, your partners, local stations and *Independent Lens* will all benefit.

PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS CAN PROMOTE THE EVENT THROUGH

- Mailing lists
- Newsletters
- Email lists
- Web site features
- Blogs
- Other Related Events
- Social Networking Sites

MEDIA CONTACTS TO CONSIDER APPROACHING TO PROMOTE YOUR EVENT

- Daily newspaper
- College/university papers
- Local PBS station
- Niche papers/ethnic press
- Local radio PSAs
- Weekly alternative paper
- Blogs
- Social Networking Sites

OUTREACH STRATEGIES

- Speak at other events
- Hand out postcards
- Post flyers
- Contact educators at local schools and universities.

Your public television station partners are a great promotional resource. They often have mailing lists, newsletters and e-blasts which can include your event details.

9. THE BEST PART: THE DAY OF YOUR EVENT!

BEFORE THE GUESTS ARRIVE

Every venue will be different, but remember that we have to provide a place for our partners' materials to be displayed, and we also need to display ITVS and local station materials. With that, we suggest securing TWO tables for literature: one for ITVS and the local station, and one for partners' materials (this will also

help us to make distinctions between partners who may have sharp and controversial positions and the public media organizations who do not).

ON YOUR LITERATURE TABLE:

- Clipboard with sign-in sheets
- Flyers or postcards for upcoming Community Cinema events
- *Independent Lens* Season Calendars
- Promotional postcards for the film
- Mounted *Independent Lens* posters on display easels

You should also have at least three clipboards with sign-in sheets (one for each table, one to keep with you and pass around to collect email addresses and mailing addresses to receive our newsletter and updates about future screenings). Ask folks to sign-in! To expedite the process, consider leaving a bowl at the table where guests can leave their business cards. (Please be aware that ITVS does not sell or give away our mailing lists).

SCREENING AND DISCUSSION SET-UP

- The set-up for the panel discussion will vary, but in general, a table for panelists to sit at is preferable.
- If there is a podium, affix the *Independent Lens* poster or Community Cinema banner to the front of it.
- If there is a PA system, be sure to check the microphones before the event.
- Be sure and do a general *tech check of all video and audio*, and run a small segment from each DVD to make sure there's no trouble once the lights go down.
- Have everything in place *before* your guests begin to arrive. Ask your featured guests (station reps, partner reps, other speakers) to arrive at least 15 minutes before the scheduled start time and review the event *run-of-show* with them.

Always bring a back-up copy of the film.

10 IT'S SHOWTIME!

Once your guests have arrived, the event should begin on time.

Every COMMUNITY CINEMA event should begin with an introduction from the front of the room. Introductions and welcome should be given by you or a station representative.

It is always best to write out your remarks and introductions. Remember to keep it concise. Contact outreach@itvs.org for sample scripts.

YOUR INTRODUCTION

Make sure to:

- Thank everyone for coming
- Formally acknowledge and thank partners
- Thank the venue
- Thank other sponsors or supporters
- Thank the station and mention the upcoming *Independent Lens* broadcast
- Encourage audience members to contribute to talkback on pbs.org/independentlens

Introductions should also call attention to the literature tables and ask people to sign-in with at least their email addresses for information about future screenings. Finally, introductions should always make clear that there will be a discussion or other presentation after the film and invite people to stay.

LIGHTS, CAMERA, ACTION! ROLL THE FILM!

DURING THE CREDITS

After the film, *while the credits are still rolling*, assemble your speakers and get them in place. When the lights come up the moderator should provide a segue to the discussion. For example:

"Wow! What a wonderful film, and now to help us explore these issues a little further, please let me introduce our speaker/panel."

- Remember, some will be inclined to leave after the film. **THAT's OK...**let them go, and don't stop talking. If the action (from film into discussion) is continuous and fluid, more people will stay.

- Make sure there is time for Q&A. Audience participation is an important component to COMMUNITY CINEMA.
- Monitor the discussion, and don't let it go all night!
- After the discussion, make sure the moderator thanks everyone for coming, reminds everyone about the literature tables, the broadcast date, the resources on the *Independent Lens* Web site and announces the next COMMUNITY CINEMA event!



11. THAT'S A WRAP!

After a COMMUNITY CINEMA event, there are a few quick things to do before calling it a wrap:

FOLLOW-UP WITH ALL PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS AND SPEAKERS

1. Call or send an email to thank them for their contributions to a successful event.
2. Send them the Partner Feedback Form [optional], reminding them that it will take less than 5 minutes and will help us better serve organizations like theirs in the future.
3. Provide partner organizations with copies of the sign-in sheets.

FOLLOW-UP WITH YOUR LOCAL PUBLIC TELEVISION STATION

1. Call or send an email to thank them for their contributions to a successful event.
2. Provide copies of the sign-in sheets.

REPORT BACK TO ITVS

1. Complete the online report for COMMUNITY CINEMA **within 48 hours** after your screening.
2. Turn-in all Partner Evaluation Forms [optional]

MEASURES FOR SUCCESS

PARTNER ORGANIZATION PARTICIPATION & SATISFACTION

- How many organizations participated in the event?
- Was their participation meaningful or superficial?
- Did they feel that the investment of time and resources in this project was a valuable one?
- Would they participate in a future Community Cinema Event? • Do they plan to use the film and/or discussion materials in their own work, perhaps at a future event?

AUDIENCE ATTENDANCE AND REACTION

- Did the audience stay for the post-screening discussion? • Did the audience respond to the film? • Did the audience engage in the discussion?
- Did they take information from the partner organizations? • Were you able to collect contact information for newsletter sign-ups? • Did audience members inquire about participating in future events or about getting more involved?

PUBLICITY AND MEDIA COVERAGE

- Was the event listed in newspaper and Web site event calendar listings and partner organization Web sites and/or newsletters? • Was there any news coverage of the event (radio, print, Web, TV)? • Were e-mail blasts sent out from the public television station and partner organizations?

Answering this series of questions can easily help to determine if the event was a success by some basic measures. But the key is to consider these questions **BEFORE** the event, and in so doing, ensure that some basic steps are taken that can help deliver happy partners, full houses and some local buzz about COMMUNITY CINEMA.



PARTNER CHECKLIST

- ☐ Partner organizations have received an e-mail outlining the terms of their participation
- ☐ Partner organizations' logo, one paragraph description, and URL have been given to ITVS for Web site placement
- ☐ You have confirmed partner organizations' representative(s) for the screening, and have contacted that person (get their cell phone number!)
- ☐ You have previewed the materials the partner organizations want to display/distribute
- ☐ Partner organizations have listed the event on their website and/or in their newsletter
- ☐ Partner organizations have sent an e-mail blast about the event to their list
- ☐ Partner organizations have been informed of other event partners/participants
- ☐ Partner organizations have completed Partner Feedback Form and submitted to ITVS
- ☐ Partner organizations have received copies of all sign-in sheets upon completion of event

PUBLICITY CHECK LIST

- ☐ Calendar listings filed before deadline (for closest publication BEFORE the event) in weekly papers, daily papers, college/ethnic/or niche press, and with radio stations
- ☐ Media advisory distributed to your local media list and follow-up calls made to reporters
- ☐ Any available direct mail lists have been sent postcards and/or flyers
- ☐ Flyers have been duplicated and distributed widely
- ☐ Event announcements posted to community bulletin boards, college campuses, and other regular posting locations
- ☐ Local station has promoted the event on its Website, in its newsletter and to its members as agreed upon

DAY OF THE EVENT CHECKLIST

- ☐ The venue has provided all necessary items (PA system w/ microphones, tables, chairs, easels, video, etc.).
- ☐ *Independent Lens* signage is in place before the event
- ☐ Literature tables are set up (one for ITVS and local station, and one for partner organizations)
- ☐ Sign-in sheets are in clipboards and placed on tables (and one is in your hand).
- ☐ Audio and video systems are checked before the event, screening copies are checked for playback on equipment
- ☐ The projectionist has the film to screen!
- ☐ Partner representatives have arrived and have set up their materials
- ☐ Introductory remarks are ready, and event host is prepared
- ☐ Panel moderator is chosen prepared
- ☐ Thank everyone for coming and "say goodnight Gracie!"

ABOUT ITVS



ITVS funds and presents award-winning documentaries and dramas on public television, innovative new media projects on the Web and the Emmy Award-winning weekly series *Independent Lens* on Tuesday nights at 10 PM on PBS. ITVS is a miracle of public policy created by media activists, citizens and politicians seeking to foster plurality and diversity in public television. ITVS was established by a historic mandate of Congress to champion independently produced programs that take creative risks, spark public dialogue and serve underserved audiences. Since its inception in 1991, ITVS programs have revitalized the relationship between the public and public television, bringing TV audiences face-to-face with the lives and concerns of their fellow Americans. More information about ITVS can be obtained by visiting itvs.org. ITVS is funded by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, a private corporation funded by the American People. For more information visit www.itvs.org.



ABOUT CPB



The Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB) is a private, nonprofit corporation created by Congress in 1967. The mission of CPB is to facilitate the development of, and ensure universal access to, non-commercial high-quality programming and telecommunications services. It does this in conjunction with non-commercial educational telecommunications licensees across America.

The fundamental purpose of public telecommunications is to provide programs and services, which inform, enlighten and enrich the public. While these programs and services are provided to enhance the knowledge, and citizenship, and inspire the imagination of all Americans, the Corporation has particular responsibility to encourage the development of programming that involves creative risks and that addresses the needs of unserved and underserved audiences, particularly children and minorities. More information about CPB is available at www.cpb.org.

ABOUT PBS



PBS is a media enterprise that serves 355 public noncommercial television stations and reaches nearly 73 million people each week through on-air and online content. Bringing diverse viewpoints to television and the Internet, PBS provides high-quality documentary and dramatic entertainment, and consistently dominates the most prestigious award competitions. PBS is a leading provider of digital learning content for pre-K-12 educators and offers a broad array of other educational services. PBS' premier kids' TV programming and Web site, PBS KIDS Online, www.pbskids.org, continue to be parents' and teachers' most trusted learning environments for children. More information about PBS is available at www.pbs.org, one of the leading dot-org Web sites on the Internet.

Questions? Contact ITVS COMMUNITY at outreach@itvs.org.