Human Rights Film Network

ONE WORLD

MOVIESTHATMATTER

FiSahara
INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL
المهرجان العالمي للسينما بالصحراء الغربية

Setting Up a Human Rights Film Festival, vol. 2

An inspiring guide for film festival organisers from all over the world

Setting Up a Human Rights Film Festival, vol. 2

Human Rights Film Network

An inspiring guide for film festival organisers from all over the world

Setting Up a Human Rights Film Festival, vol. 2

An inspiring guide for film festival organisers from all over the world

Edited by Hana Kulhánková (One World),
Matthea de Jong (Movies that Matter),
María Carrión (FiSahara),
Ryan Bowles Eagle (California State University)

Design by Linda Živnůstková
Cover photo by Alberto Almayer, FiSahara International Film Festival
Published by People in Need
Prague 2015
© Human Rights Film Network 2015

Contents

We Are Making a Change, Don't Forget: Introduction 5
Human Rights Film Festivals: Different Approaches to Change the World 17
Knowing Yourself and Your Audience: Programming a Human Rights Film Festival 27
Film Festivals with Guts: Security and Censorship 47
Now What Do You Think? Film Festivals as a Platform for Discussion 59
Who Is Organising It? Importance of Production and Team Members 71
The Nuts and Bolts: Technical Production.....85
How to Successfully Promote Your Festival.....97
Adding Water to the Soup Pot: Finding Resources for Your Festival.....115
Did We Do It Right? Evaluating a Human Rights Film Festival.....131

Case Studies

Karama Human Rights Film Festival in Jordan: "Dignity, where to?" 147
Dare to Document: Advocating Human Rights Through Films in Malaysia.....155
Sowing the Seeds for a Human Rights Film Festival in Burma.....169
Ciné Droit Libre: A Festival of Mobile Cinema Screenings in Burkina Faso.....177
FiSahara: A Film Festival in Exile 183
Docudays UA: a Festival in the Heart of a Citizen's Revolution 195
Human Rights Film Festival in Guatemala Ushers In Criticism And Dialogue 203
Opening Eyes in Sierra Leone: The Opin Yu Yi Human Rights Film Festival 211
The Next Wave: Building a Legacy Through Education 221

Appendix

Festival Members of Human Rights Film Network 237
Want to Become a Member of Human Rights Film Network? 241

We Are Making a Change, Don't Forget: Introduction

Written by Karol Piekarczyk, former WATCH DOCS International Human Rights in Film Festival organiser; former programme and festival coordinator at Document Human Rights Film Festival

I was fifteen years old when my father took me to see my first ever human rights film in cinema. It was December and the film was *The Mothers of Plaza de Mayo.* I remember the experience vividly despite being unable to recall any aesthetic merits of the documentary. I can't picture specific takes, the pace of the montage, nor what style it was shot in, or much of the plot for that matter. Funnily enough, some of those features are the ones that best imprint themselves on my memory nowadays. Back then though, for a teenage boy, it was much more about the emotional side of things and, in that respect, the screening left a lasting impression on me. Although I could not fully empathise with the Argentine mothers who wept for justice, I could understand the unique bond between a parent and their child. Most importantly, something so basic and unquestionable to me, especially as I was growing up, was being brutally taken away from them by what was a clear violation of fundamental human rights. The festival which showcased the documentary was WATCH DOCS, and a few years later I found myself within its ranks, helping to bring important films to audiences in Poland.

When I was asked to write an introduction for this handbook I felt honoured, yet at the same time petrified at the prospect of doing so. I asked myself, how will I be able to fit in all the vital points about why we should be setting up human rights film festivals? How can I pass this on to readers around the world? Can I convince them of the powerful social impact that these films can have? The panic passed, however, as soon as I started to read the chapters that constitute this handbook—a collection made up of carefully selected practical advice on one hand, and a wide range of case studies from a variety of festivals on the other. My colleagues have been very thorough and at the same time comprehensible in their writings. I am confident that if you are seeking answers on how to organise a human rights film festival, regardless of whether you are located in a metropolitan or rural setting, in spite of what budget you have or what local obstacles you may face, you are very likely to find those answers here. Before I give you a short summary of what each chapter is about and what is unique about this version of the handbook, I would like to share with you my thoughts on

how, by setting up a human rights film festival, we can facilitate social change.

Human Rights Film Festivals

Since 1985, when the Vermont International Film Festival was launched as a part of the anti-nuclear movement, over fifty human rights film festivals have sprung up all around the world. Every year this number grows with the new millennium bringing a rapid rise of festivals. Human rights films and strands of human rights programming have also found their way into mainstream festivals, documentary festivals, or topic-specific festivals, such as indigenous, LGBT, women's, disability and health, or migration related festivals. Many festivals are associated with or have been formed by human rights organisations: Movies that Matter is a successor to the Amnesty International Film Festival, One World is attached to People in Need, the Refugee Film Festival was established through UNHCR Representation in Japan and the Human Rights Watch Film Festival was created over two decades ago by Human Rights Watch in New York City.

Frequently, the educational purpose of human rights film festivals is to bring the very concept of human rights to people and help them understand its meaning. The definition of *human rights* that I find most apt and straightforward is that they are "universal moral rights, of a fundamental nature, held by individuals in their relations with the state".[1] Human rights are a collection of legal rights, from a national level to an international one (such as *The Universal Declaration of Human Rights*). They are always viewed through the prism of a relationship between one individual citizen and the country that should guarantee his or her rights. On the other hand the practice of human rights is reflected in the actions of various entities. We can make a distinction between two kinds of actors that function on the global human rights scene. The first are those that operate within the legal frameworks of nation-states, whether it is within a country or in an international milieu. This would range from bodies created through national constitutions (such as parliaments) or through worldwide treaties (such as the UN). The second kind comes from the citizens instead of the authorities. It ranges from activities of specific non-governmental organisations, to human rights lawyers, to activists, to human rights film festivals, to diverse networks, to various social movements. We can perceive these actors, collectively, as a human rights movement.

In my experience with audiences in Poland, I could see them often associate human rights with something distant, something they would observe on the screen in far away lands but that would not necessarily relate to them. This made it important for us to make our audience see the concept in a different light by showing them that it applies to all citizens, regardless of where they are come from. Naturally, the intensity of the struggles against human rights violations differs greatly from one region to another. This is why the shape, the aims and objectives of your festival highly depend on your environment.

Members of Human Rights Film Network meet every year at IDFA in Amsterdam. Photo: Archive of Movies that Matter.

Some festivals were created with the purpose of advocating and human rights campaigning by positioning themselves alongside international legal bodies, as with Movies that Matter in The Hague, FIFDH in Geneva, or One World's edition in Brussels. A festival such as FiSahara works in a displaced community of refugee camps; it not only aims at bringing the concept of human rights to the audience but also becomes a part of an effort towards social justice and international recognition. Meanwhile, the Bujumbura Film Festival (Burundi) and the Rwanda Film Festival, known as Hillywood, focus on using film as a means to heal communities traumatised by armed conflict and genocide. Many festival organisers highly value working with youth and frequently set up school programmes: this might mean preparing toolkits for teachers, or helping students run film clubs. A number of festivals have launched a travelling section in order to reach more remote places in their countries or regions. All of these activities lead to an increased audience reach, often targeting a variety of people who might not otherwise have a chance to see a human rights film.[2]

With the idea of a human rights movement spreading from the local to the worldwide in the era of globalisation, a number of human rights film festivals decided to join their efforts in reinforcing a global civil society. The Human Rights Film Network, founded in 2004, brings together nearly forty interconnected festivals from a wide range of countries and regions. When the Network was established, we never dreamed that it would grow to be so vast. From South Korea, through Burkina Faso, through Ukraine, to Bolivia. From Buenos Aires, through New York, through Vilnius, to Kuala Lumpur. We share our experiences, we exchange ideas on how to educate and campaign and we cooperate with each other. In 2009 the Human Rights Film Network published a handbook that was aimed at film festival organisers-to-be. It contained our knowledge and experience in a form that was boiled down to empirical advice and know-how on how to set up and run a human rights film festival.

The question that many of us may ask ourselves is whether human rights films can transform our society in a positive way. Throughout the years of working with festivals, I have found that we tend to take this question in stride, downplaying the role played by human rights films and festivals. Whether this comes from a hesitation to speak too fondly of the work that is being done, whether we fear that by putting forward a claim about our role the spotlight of expectations will then be shed upon us, or whether some of us are actually sceptical, the fact remains that the activities of festivals around the world can, and will continue to, make a change. Without any modesty, we should praise human rights films and festivals that do so.

The Impact

Ever since *Workers Leaving the Lumière Factory in Lyon*, which is said to be the first movie ever made, film has been preoccupied with and focused on that which is social. From early on after the Second World

War, the impact of films dealing with human rights has been clearly visible. In Cannes, German diplomats ran around doing all they could to prevent the screening of *Night and Fog*; in Venice, similar efforts were engaged by representatives from China trying to cancel Antonioni's documentary *Chung Kuo*. These examples carry on throughout history all the way to the present. Authorities sometimes feel threatened by filmmakers and by festivals—from Jafar Panahi to the Side by Side festival in Russia—and the Human Rights Film Network responds by showing support to many repressed artists and organisers who are a part of our global civil society. If government officials are scared of films that we screen then, clearly, they acknowledge the social impact that they can have. As I'm writing this, our friend from the Freedom Film Festival in Malaysia is being persecuted over the screening of the documentary *No Fire Zone: The Killing Fields of Sri Lanka*.

Nowadays such reactions not only come from wary ambassadors but are also expressed by multinational companies, as in the recent example of the film *Big Boys Gone Bananas*. The documentary describes how the filmmaker Fredrik Gertten was being sued by the Dole Company for making his previous film *Bananas*. Dole not only filed a lawsuit against the filmmaker, which they subsequently lost, but also threatened to take legal action against the Los Angeles Film Festival if they were to screen the film. Some films are so scrupulous in their investigations and willingness to uncover hidden aspects of social reality that they have proven to be more effective than the justice systems. The most famous of these films is *The Thin Blue Line* by Errol Morris, which led to a release of a wrongly convicted prisoner. Similar results have been seen after screenings of *El Rati Horror Show* (shown by our friends at Festival Internacional de Cine de Derechos Humanos in Buenos Aires) whose main character was also unjustly imprisoned, and yet, thanks to the film, finally discharged.

Recently, the documentary *The Act of Killing* gathered a great deal of momentum and, putting aside the success it achieved internationally, it is helping in an unprecedented way to catalyse social transformation in Indonesia. The National Human Rights Commission of Indonesia gave a statement saying that "if we are to transform Indonesia into the democracy it claims to be, citizens must recognise the terror and repression on which our contemporary history has been built. No film, or any other work of art for that matter, has done this more effectively than *The Act of Killing*".[3] The documentary is now available online for all Indonesian citizens to watch free of charge.

More and more often, films, by bringing attention to particular social issues, become connected with wider campaigning for the improvement of the situation that they depict. It can be linked with setting up an NGO, by raising funds or pressuring the authorities. This can be especially powerful when the film uncovers stories that are lesser known to the general public. The human rights film festival is invaluable in these

processes, often becoming the middleperson as well as a platform for such activism.

The Education

The greatest power of human rights films undoubtedly lies in education, consciousness raising and attitude shaping. This strength can be transmitted directly through human rights film festivals. Paradoxically though, it is a power that is often hardest to measure. Film as a medium can reverberate amongst audience members on a personal level; unfortunately changing individual perceptions of the world, inspiring people or inducing empathy cannot be simply quantified and turned into numbers and graphs. I've spent a vast amount of time talking to film directors and festival organisers about how human rights films can influence their viewers.

When I spoke to Hanna Polak (co-director of the film *Children of Leningradsky*)[4] about the notion of how powerful human rights films and festivals can be, she recalled a time when she was at a screening of her film in Mexico. After the screening, a woman walked up to her and said: "Thank you so much for this film. From now on I promise myself to be a better mother". This story embodies how films can, similarly to human rights themselves, be both universal and immensely poignant. A film made by Polish documentarians, filmed around a train station in Russia, made an everlasting impression on a mother in Mexico. Just because a film has been made on the other side of the globe doesn't mean that it will not have as much relevance to our own audience as it would to people living many miles away. It's important to keep that in mind whilst programming your event. If you come from a country where there is scarce respect for human rights or where censorship applies, there may be no films directly addressing the pressing human rights problems in your region. From my experience, the universal nature of human rights films is a powerful tool against such obstacles—so long as it is accompanied by a meaningful introduction, commentary, a Q&A session or a debate.

To try and at least grasp how audiences might feel about human rights films, I have conducted research during the WATCH DOCS festival in Warsaw. Here are some of the findings gathered through questionnaires, which were filled out by 100 participants:

Audience Research

- 92% of people believe that human rights films can, in some way, change our world
- 74% of audience members felt that these films affect their own worldview
- 64% of people said that their knowledge on topics portrayed in the films has changed or has been enhanced
- 40% of respondents came to the festival for the first time, whereas 60% were returning

These responses demonstrate a substantial belief in the power of films held by people who come to our

festivals; this is something we should hold most dear whilst organising our events. Some might be tempted to assume that at a human rights film festival in Warsaw, the audience is already acutely aware of the issues they will encounter; however, as the results of the research show, over half of the audience said that some of the opinions or knowledge they had prior to entering the cinema had changed after the film. Moreover, a number of new people come to these events, which not only is reflected in the statistics, but also in the fact that festivals are increasingly trying to reach a variety of audiences, by holding travelling editions, by screenings in schools or local communities, among other activities. Human rights film festival audiences are not homogeneous. At your festival, you might be screening films for people far less familiar with human rights films or the concept of human rights itself. Conducting a questionnaire is something I would highly recommend. You'll find out more about your audience, and will gain valuable feedback from the people who should be at the heart of your activities.

I believe that, ultimately, evocative human rights films can engage with their audience in a way that no other form of art can. The documentary *Jai Bhim Comrade*, directed by Anand Patwardhan, follows the struggle of the untouchable Dalit caste in India. It begins after the poet-activist Vilas Ghogre committed suicide (in the light of the police shooting ten unarmed Dalit in 1997). When I spoke about the documentary with Anand Patwardhan at a screening in London, he passionately described showing it back in India: "We had screenings of the film in the community, for the working class people, for Dalits. We had white sheets on which we projected in the open air, with people squatting on the floor, many people even stood for three hours. They sang, they clapped, and they interacted with it". A very powerful bond can be forged between human rights films and their audiences, one that can be experienced on a collective and on a personal level, one that sometimes imposes change and one that is often too difficult to describe unless you are sitting amongst the participants.

The Handbook

At the end of the foreword to the first edition of the handbook we have written that any feedback we would get could hopefully contribute to an updated version. And here we are, five years later, with a second edition that, more than anything, was born from the events that have taken place in the meantime. The boom in human rights film festivals is not slowing down. Since the first publication, the Network has been contacted on numerous occasions by people from around the world, eager to create their own festivals. New members have joined the Network from countries such as Jordan and Papua New Guinea. We have partnered with new human rights film festivals springing up in a multitude of places such as AfricanBamba in Senegal, Human Screen in Tunisia, the first travelling festival in Burma, or FiSahara in the Sahrawi refugee camps. Many more have sought advice on how to start and how to keep going.

Q&As with festival guests are an integral part of One World Film Festival in Prague. Photo by Lukáš Bíba.

Frequently, organisers who have contacted us come from countries where there may be little regard for freedom of speech, from developing regions or from post-conflict zones.

We came to understand that we took many things for granted. Organising a festival in a relatively wealthy democratic country is one story. If we ever considered setting up and running a film festival to be tough, the stories of how our friends who are trying to stand up and create a festival against all odds were a wake-up call for all of us. Many of the human rights violations which we observed on the screen suddenly became pressing matters for us, not only as citizens of a global civil society, but as colleagues of fellow festival organisers who face discriminatory authorities, who struggle to finance their event and who are often the only alternative source of information in their region. Although we try to give ongoing assistance, we realised that it was high time for a second edition of the handbook to address the needs of people under these circumstances: a manual carefully crafted with an understanding of diverse geographical, political, social and cultural issues that could address questions unique to developing, transitional or post-conflict countries.

The handbook is divided into two parts. The first part offers practical guidelines that are, nonetheless, interlaced with revealing examples from a selection of international festivals. The latter part is a collection of fascinating case studies, selected to include narratives that readers from developing and transitional countries might find particularly helpful.

A Summary of What Awaits You in this Handbook

Firstly, we look at the *typology of human rights film festivals*. This chapter entwines the description of varied types of festivals with specific accounts, from around the world, of how they can instigate social change. This may help you conceptualise where you want to start with your festival as well as inspire a choice of a most effective structure. Next, you'll verge into the vital notion of *programming a human rights film festival*. Here it will become clear that programming is about much more than just films. Enriched with examples from festivals in Uganda, Malaysia, the Western Sahara and India, the chapter on programming lays a foundation for building a successful event. The chapter on *security and censorship* represents the core reason for this handbook; we found that these issues are persistent for many of you. Hence, in this chapter you'll encounter not only cases from human rights film festivals facing oppression, but most importantly, advice on how to safely plan your activities. The chapter on *debates and Q&As* underscores the notion that the power of human rights films can be enhanced through an insightful discussion. From this section, you can learn not only how to augment the social impact of your programme by incorporating debates and meetings, but you'll also be able to consider the practicalities of holding accompanying events. The

next chapter of the handbook relates to the *production and team* of a human rights film festival. Whatever your finances and your resources might be you should ensure that you have a strong team in place and, what follows, that you can collectively oversee and deliver an exceptional festival. The chapter on *technical production* is of twofold importance, primarily, because the technical side of preparing a festival is one that should never be underestimated and requires great attention to detail. Secondly, with the medium technologically evolving so rapidly, there may be choices that you can make to improve the quality of the screenings or to save money, both of which are not necessarily mutually exclusive. *How to successfully promote your festival* is an imperative question to ask when launching a human rights film festival. From thinking visually about the promotion of your event and broadening your media contacts to planning and executing a PR campaign, this section is filled with ideas and suggestions that could help attract attention and audiences to your new festival. The chapter on *raising funds to support a human rights film festival* takes into account different circumstances in which you might find yourself; offering financial alternatives such as in-kind donations, partnerships and many more. The aim is to propose a creative way of fundraising, and as it accurately says to showcase the possibilities of "doing a lot with very little". *Evaluating a human rights film festival* is a phase, again never to be underestimated, that is significant for the future of your festival. This chapter gives you examples of evaluation that can best suit your needs and help you make potential adjustments.

The subsequent part of the handbook is filled with compelling case studies. We hope that in conjunction with the practical advice offered in the first section, they will help you formulate the groundwork for setting up a noteworthy human rights film festival, one that is capable of galvanising social transformation. Here you'll be able to read the story of how the *Karama Human Rights Film Festival in Jordan* is fighting to dismantle the preconceptions of human rights being a term connected only to Western culture. Then you'll be taken to Malaysia, where with the motto of "Dare to Document" the *Freedom Film Fest* became an igniting force inspiring native productions of socially engaged films—something that had been ever so rare in their country. You will visit Burma, where the *Human Rights Human Dignity International Film Festival* grew from a small seed planted in the organisers' hearts, to an event that often treads a thin line of law but that, nevertheless, continues screening inspiring films. In Burkina Faso you might find a city crier standing on the main square announcing that the *Ciné Droit Libre* mobile cinema has arrived in town, providing people with means enabling them to become advocates for their own rights. This journey will take you to the land of infinite sands, where in the middle of the Sahara desert thousands of refugees have made their home. Their resourcefulness helped build a society in which the *FiSahara International Film Festival* not only works to empower, but also to bring the long forgotten conflict to international attention. The next stop will be Ukraine, where through creating a network of

Screening at Seoul Human Rights Film Festival in South Korea. Photo: Archive of Movies that Matter.

NGOs the *Docudays UA International Human Rights Documentary Film Festival* reaches various regions of their country; despite the notorious efforts aimed against them, such as police raids or bomb threats, the festival strives to build a strong civil society in their motherland. There will also be a chance to travel to Guatemala where the *International Film Festival Memoria Verdad Justitia* is courageously facilitating a social conversation in a nation that is trying to raise itself from the ashes of killings, disappearances and torture. Then you will arrive in Sierra Leone, where the steadily growing *Opin Yu Yi Human Rights Film Festival* not only has to prevail over the brutal legacy of the country's past, but also, most importantly, tries to help the citizens look forward to a socially just future. At the end, different festivals share their experience in *educational activities* for children and youth. All of these case studies are extremely captivating and

were selected to illustrate the power of human rights film festivals: to overcome, to educate and to ignite a spark of change.

Thank you and good luck!

We would like to thank all those who contributed to the creation of this handbook: by coordinating the process, by writing, by editing, by providing consultations and by designing the book. Most importantly, we would like to dedicate this handbook to all the future festival organisers who might find its contents helpful.

Please take our recommendations and conclusions with a grain of salt. We have never been in your shoes. We don't know what social, economic or political climate you are operating in, nor what donor options are available to you. We have never been able to test the advice that we are offering under the same conditions you face. Above all, this handbook shows our readiness to aid setting up festivals around the world—ones that can enhance local civil societies as well as strengthening the global one. Thus, if anything here requires more detail, or if there is any way in which we can help make your event happen, please contact us and we will do our best to give you a hand.

Filmography:

Bananas (dir. Fredrik Gertten, 2009).
Big Boys Gone Bananas (dir. Fredrik Gertten, 2011).
Children of Leningradsky (dir. Andrzej Celiński and Hanna Polak, 2005).
Chung Kuo (dir. Michelangelo Antonioni, 1972).
El Rati Horror Show (dir. Enrique Pineyro and Pablo Tesoriere, 2010).
Jai Bhim Comrade (dir. Anand Patwardhan, 2011).
Night and Fog (dir. Alain Resnais, 1955).
No Fire Zone: The Killing Fields of Sri Lanka (dir. Callum Mcrae, 2013).
The Act of Killing (dir. Joshua Oppenheimer, 2012).
The Mothers of Plaza de Mayo (dir. Susana Blaustein Munoz and Lourdes Portillo, 1985).
The Thin Blue Line (dir. Errol Morris, 1988).
Workers Leaving the Lumiere Factory in Lyon (dir. Louis Lumiere, 1895).

---

[1] Wiktor Osiatynski (1998) *Introduction to Human Rights*, Helsinki Foundation Publications

[2] You'll find more about the types of film festivals, later in this handbook, in the chapter on the *typology of human rights film festivals* as well as through a number of *case studies*.

[3] Joshua Oppenheimer (2014) *The National Human Rights Commission of Indonesia*. (*http://goo.gl/VWd5gw)*

[4] *Children of Leningradsky* was a film which itself made a great impact. After winning several international prizes and being nominated for an Academy Award, through its disturbing images, it was able to reach millions of people and pressurise legal changes in Russia.

Human Rights Film Festivals: Different Approaches to Change the World

Written by Daan Bronkhorst (Amnesty International, The Netherlands) & Matthea de Jong (Movies that Matter, The Netherlands)

"You can ask whatever you want"

On the outskirts of Ouagadougou in Burkina Faso, the film festival Ciné Droit Libre had set up a huge screen for an audience of hundreds, maybe more than a thousand people. Directly in front of the screen were little children playing around. We sat on plastic chairs. Around the chairs was a human hedge of boys and girls on scooters. The full moon gave the spot a magical glow. On the screen, first there were music videos with popular West African musicians and clips of stand-up comedians commenting on freedom of speech to attract an audience. Then there was a feature-length documentary dealing with land issues in Burkina Faso. While the end credits were running, festival director Abdoulaye Diallo shouted out: "This is Ciné Droit Libre, you can ask whatever you want!".[1] Many participated in a fierce discussion.

"It is all about the popularisation of human rights", said Diallo later on, "that is the main target".[2] In his view, Ciné Droit Libre is only successful when it helps people realise that they have rights, human rights, and that they can claim these rights. At the Movies that Matter Festival in The Netherlands, where we work, one hardly feels the urge to make people aware of their own rights; it's more about the rights of *others*—those oppressed and marginalised by repressive regimes—and about being critical and knowledgeable about complex issues.

We have witnessed a rapid worldwide increase of film festivals that focus on human rights. In 2004, 17 film festivals founded the Human Rights Film Network. In 2014, the network comprises 39 member festivals. And many more countries, not yet represented in the network, have film festivals with a focus on human rights. These festivals screen films that portray the many facets of human dignity, including the suffering from violations of freedom of expression and personal integrity, the damages of armed conflict, the pain of deprivation and social injustice.

The festivals basically share the same goal: promotion of the observance of human rights through cinema. But to achieve more precise objectives, the ways these festivals position themselves, the criteria for film selection and the manner in which the films are

presented vary considerably. This chapter presents a structure that allows an assessment of goals, methods and results.

Moral Imagination

Cinema is pre-eminently the medium that has the ability to expand the moral imagination, the ability to imagine ourselves in the situation of others, despite the fact that the other is often far away. The process of being morally imaginative includes disengaging from and becoming aware of one's own situation, envisioning moral conflicts and dilemmas, and the ability to imagine new possibilities.[3]

However, we are not sure how images influence our ethical responses and moral behaviour, and what would be the most appropriate communication and response related to a film. One and the same film can appeal to different audiences, reach different layers of understanding, and evoke different kinds of experiences. For some, it is just a pleasant way of spending a night out. For others, it is an eye-opening film that will alter professional and political decisions. Some will be numbed, or bored and walk away, others will be inspired to do something. Some close their eyes when the images are too shocking, while others feel the need to be shocked so as to understand what it is all about. A film may have the effect of reinforcing the perceived "gap" between the self and the other, or it may create a sense of understanding and contact.

In its most general sense, what organisers of human rights film festivals have in mind is a process of raising awareness. But what does this imply? One way to approach this is to distinguish between "types" of conscience, or mental states. After having viewed the same film, one person's mental change may be quite different from another person's. Or one person can experience various mental effects.

We sketch five steps of the moral imagination that the spectator can experience after watching a film at a human rights film festival:

- "I'm touched". The film moved me, changed my mood, made an impression. I can't say whether that will have a more lasting effect on my perception, attitude or actions.
- "I know more now". I have learned things that I did not know before. I have become more aware of the depth, the character of an issue. This will have an effect on my perception, possibly more.
- "I am more critical now". I not only have learned new things, I also am more able now to analyse. I can see that things are more complex (or more simple). I may feel that the filmmaker has made good choices (or that it was mainly an attempt to manipulate me).
- "I feel concerned (responsible, guilty) now". I have become aware that issues in the film concern me. The distant suffering is something that people like me should do something about. It makes me think about my position in society, about my capabilities.

Human Rights Human Dignity IFF in Burma also focuses on young audiences. Photo courtesy of HRHDIFF.

- "I feel called to action". I am clearly aware that I should do something about the issues that concerned me in the film. I may change my professional choices, or initiate action, or donate money, or join an organisation.

Human Rights "Schools"

All festivals aim towards raising awareness, and many even aim at social change. But how do the festival organisers see the position of their festival? How can the festivals increase their impact? How can festivals optimise their role as powerful actors in a civil society? A phenomenological[4] analysis of human rights film festivals should include scrutiny of the activism generated by groups with social change goals. For that purpose we adapt the model of the four human rights "schools" as developed by Marie-Benedicte Dembour.[5]

The four human rights schools as proposed by Dembour are:

- The *natural or principled school* embraces the most common and well-known definition of human rights: rights one possesses simply by being human. The universality of human rights is derived from their natural character. This school has traditionally represented the heart of orthodox human rights defence.

- The *deliberative school* conceives of human rights as political values that liberal societies choose to adopt. Human rights come into existence through societal agreement, and they are elaborated through negotiations. The idea of this school is that one would like to see human rights become universal, but recognises this will require time. Human rights defenders offer their wisdom and expertise to improve the status of human rights.

- The *protest school* considers human rights as a platform from which to articulate entitlements demanded by or on behalf of the poor, the underprivileged, and the oppressed. Human rights are claims and aspirations. They oblige us to stand up for the humiliated and those in the margins. International treaties and rules can help, but should not get in the way. Human rights defenders are activists, fighting injustice as injustice and not because a treaty says so.

- The *discourse school* is characterised by its lack of reverence towards human rights. Human rights exist only because people talk about them. Discourse school adherents are convinced neither that human rights are given nor that they constitute the right answer to the ills of the world. Human rights defenders operate from the premise that the language of human rights, in their various interpretations, has become a powerful tool for expressing social and political claims.

Film festivals are virtually always a mixture of these different "schools". In response to a questionnaire

we developed in preparation for this chapter, Maria Carrión from FiSahara explains that we aim to combine two strategies. On the one hand, the "principled" approach helps to raise awareness among a wider international audience, and the other, the "protest" approach is a tool for the Sahrawi people to express their cultural identity and use film as a tool for cultural survival and social change.[6]

Uli Stelzner from the festival in Guatemala adds that "in the mixture of the different 'types' lies the key of the success of our festival".[7]

With this in mind, let's have a closer look at the festivals.

Principled Type

The principled type of festival starts from the inherent dignity of the human being and emphasises a universal humaneness that should appeal to the widest possible audience. In June 2013, for the very first time, the Human Rights Human Dignity International Film Festival was staged in Yangon, Burma. Afterwards, the festival toured through the country with the award-winning films, reaching large crowds and full houses. The organisers distributed a leaflet with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights to all those in the audience. In Ukraine, a special program of "Docudays UA" consists of film screenings and discussions in prisons and jails with the objective "to teach people about the concept of human rights, including respect to the rights of prisoners".[8] That some festivals feel it is their duty to make people aware of their own rights can often be derived from the very name of the festival: Manya Human Rights International Film Festival in Uganda (*manya* means "get to know"), Derecho a Ver (the right to see) in Colombia, and Opin Yu Yi (open your eyes) in Sierra Leone including special sessions called Sabi Yu Rights (know your rights).

Deliberative Type

The *deliberative* type is a festival most of all serving as a forum for debate and catering to more specialised or more directly human rights-involved audiences. The deliberative type aims to convince the target audience to adopt human rights as political values because human rights are the best possible legal and political standards that can rule a society. Festival du Film et Forum International sur les Droits de l'Homme (FFIDH) in Geneva usually coincides with the UN Human Rights Council's main session. The film selection is adjusted when expedient to the themes that will be discussed during the council. *No Fire Zone* is an example of a film that was screened during the Council. This documentary about the armed conflict in Sri Lanka meticulously shows the war crimes and crimes against humanity committed by the government over the course of 2009. The filmmakers started a campaign targeting the UN and the governments of the Commonwealth. After huge international pressure on the Sri Lankan authorities requesting an independent investigation, in November 2013 that government announced a survey to determine the number of people killed during the

Live video-conference with Edward Snowden at FIFDH in Geneva and high-profile guests. Photo by Miguel Bueno.

country's 26 years of civil war. In this manner, festival organisers can foster a debate on topics that they would like to see high on the political agenda.

Protest Type

The *protest* type festival is strongly oriented towards social and political life, often springing from a movement that opposes the powers that be, and sees human rights as an instrument for overall change. An example is Cine Amazónico, a travelling film festival in Ecuador focusing on the rights of the inhabitants of the Amazon region. The festival screens films that would otherwise remain unseen, films that stir a debate and sometimes can even lead to non-violent protests. The government recently forced the organisation's office to shut down, accusing the NGO of interfering in political events, and "affecting the public peace".[9]

Many festivals have to operate with great caution to ensure the safety of their teams and visitors. Festival dates are chosen carefully not to coincide with elections, for instance. Also self-censorship is a recurring issue. Topics that are considered too sensitive are sometimes avoided in order to keep other important topics on the agenda and build support.

Invitation-only screenings can be a way to get around censorship boards. For the Indonesian distribution of *The Act of Killing*, the filmmakers did not choose to present the film in regular Indonesian cinemas, as the censorship board would most probably prohibit the screenings. Instead, they provided DVD copies of the film to NGOs so as to enable them to organise invitation-only screenings. The documentary has since been screened several thousand times, along with millions of downloads. The filmmakers made the film available for free inside Indonesia, which is another way around the censors.

Discourse-Steered Type

The *discourse-steered* festival has a largely post-modern position: if offers films and debate in great variety and pretends to be no more than a venue where people come to agree or disagree on human rights issues and what they are related to. Discourse-steered type festivals preferentially screen films that raise questions and stir discussion. Isabelle Gattiker, general director of the FIFDH in Geneva, explains: "We organise high-level debates after the main screenings with international speakers giving different views on the subject. We highly encourage contradictory discussions".[10]

One World similarly sees itself mainly as a discourse-steered festival, as it serves as a debate platform for the often highly educated audience, but also has the ultimate goal to inform, encourage and motivate people to change "even small and everyday things around them".[11]

Kumjana Novakova from Pravo Ljudski in Bosnia Herzegovina adds:

"Most important is an open dialogue, not criticism towards a certain group or towards the government.

Especially in our country where the past is not so easy. We need to provide safe places for discussion. We simply pose questions, not only to other people but also to ourselves".[12]

Festivals are usually open to everyone, allowing human rights issues to be discussed outside the government buildings, universities, or NGO offices. Our colleague from the Karama Human Rights Film Festival in Jordan explains:

"There is currently a debate here as to how democratic the country truly is, and whether it could be more democratic. That debate is primarily taking place amongst academics. A film festival is accessible to everyone, which benefits the discussion".[13]

Conclusion: Choices and Impact

All four types of festivals as outlined above are valuable and important, each with their specific strengths in engaging the audience's fascination and mobilisation. The principled type will often offer films that deal with local issues and opt for open-air screenings at popular places.

Deliberative screenings for a specific target audience pick venues that work best for each group. To redress injustice, protest-type festivals may be geared to using their festival as a platform for action, facilitating workshops on film making or non-violent activism, distributing petitions, or providing suggestions on how to further promote the observance of human rights. Discourse-steered events will be most effective when opposite views and observations can be tabled.

A festival that limits its concept of human rights to one "school" can easily become a one-sided event. Pressing the message in mass screenings, as in many festivals of the principles type, will not create the intimate setting that allows for free exchange of knowledge and ideas. Film screenings solely for the sake of social and political change can turn a festival into propaganda.

Deliberative-type screenings may hinder the popularity of the event for the general audience. Discourse-steered kind of screenings can become non-committal or too intellectual. Different approaches towards human rights can perfectly exist next to each other within the same festival. Indeed, festivals optimise their impact by shifting between different strategies for different objectives.

Most importantly, human rights film festivals reinforce the moral imagination and so help us to connect with other people and reflect on our own position and behaviour. Sometimes this is accomplished by a festival that positions itself as a cultural event; at other times it may best be presented in an educational or political setting. In the words of Sridhar Rangayan from Flashpoint, India: "We feel it is crucial to make the festival not highly academic and didactic, but to combine

Creative street art workshops about human rights at Derecho a Ver in Colombia. Photo: Archive of Movies that Matter.

elements of advocacy and entertainment with a judicious mix of documentaries and narrative films".[14]

We thank all members of the Human Rights Film Network for inspiration and feedback. We also thank the filmmakers and festival organisers that contributed to this chapter.

Filmography

No Fire Zone: The Killing Fields of Sri Lanka (dir. Callum Mcrae, 2013).
The Act of Killing (dir. Joshua Oppenheimer, 2012).

---

1 Abdoulaye Diallo (Coordinator Ciné Droit Libre), festival screening (Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso, July 2012).

2 Abdoullaye Diallo, 2012.

3 Mark Johnson, *Moral Imagination* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1993): xi–xii.

4 We use *phenomenological* in the sense that we analyse these festivals not for internal consistency or deontological position, but in terms of how they have become a phenomenon in the present-day worlds of film and human rights. "Phenomenological" as used by Maurice Merleau-Ponty in his *Phenomenology of Perception* (1945) implies that we perceive intersubjectively and intentionally. It's not the logic or reality of a phenomenon, but our perception of it, that we analyse.

5 Marie Benedicte Dembour, "What Are Human Rights? Four Schools of Thought", *Human Rights Quarterly* 32 (2010): 1-20.

6 María Carríon (Executive director FiSahara) in response to a questionnaire we developed in preparation for this article and that was distributed amongst members of the Human Rights Film Network.

7 Uli Stelzner (Director of Muestra de Cine Internacional Memoria Verdad Justicia) in response to the questionnaire.

8 Gennady Kofman (Director of DocuDays UA), report about the DocuDays UA Travelling Film Festival (Ukraine, 2013).

9 As of June 18, 2014, retrieved at the website of Global Voices Online, http://goo.gl/2E61HQ.

10 Isabelle Gattiker (General Director of the FIFDH) in response to the questionnaire.

11 Zuzana Raušová (Programmer One World International Human Rights Documentary Film Festival) in response to the questionnaire.

12 Kumjana Novakova (Creative director Pravo Ljudski), presentation at the Mobile Cinema Workshop organised by Movies that Matter (Amsterdam, November 2013).

13 Interview with Ayman Bardawil (Programmer Karama Human Rights Film Festival) by Mira Zeehandelaar (in Dutch) (Amsterdam: *Wordt Vervolgd*, April 2011).

14 Sridhar Rangayan (Director Flashpoint Human Rights Film Festival) in response to the questionnaire.

Knowing Yourself and Your Audience: Programming a Human Rights Film Festival

Written by Kateřina Bartošová, Hana Kulhánková, Zuzana Raušová, with feedback given by Kenneth Barongo, María Carríon, Matthea de Jong, Anna Har, Sridhar Rangayan, Uli Stelzner

Before programming a film festival, you need to know your main objective. The festival's actual programme is a reflection of what you want to achieve with your event.

Very often the goal of human rights film festivals is to contribute to public debate on human rights and to encourage people to support them. Still, finding answers to some specific questions might help you more clearly identify your aim.

Such questions include: Do you want to target specific problems and reveal issues related to your setting? Do you want to inform audiences about current affairs around the world in order to engage them in what is happening in far away places? Or do you want to attract people to the documentary film genre?

Other important questions need to be raised as well, such as what are the central topics that you want to address with your festival, *whom do your chosen topics address*? Do they involve fragile or minority groups such as women, LGBT, migrants, displaced populations, or war survivors, who are often affected by serious human rights violations? Do they impact poor, less educated people from your community who never go to the movies? Does your festival address middle class, university educated people and/or local politicians? Are you reaching out to a specific group that can be referred to as a *new audience*?

Many times, the human rights film festival audience is a mix of various segments. You may have academics, activists, students and people who have been victims of human rights violations, all coming together for your event. The festival's programming should take this into consideration and appeal to the interest of a larger audience.

Programming for your festival should be purposeful, not random. It is important to nail down topics and themes before you begin looking for films. The *topics you want to highlight and communicate are actually what makes a human rights festival*, not the films themselves. The film is a piece of art that reveals its meaning in the context into which it is placed.

Basic Topics

The reasons for launching a human rights film festival vary depending on the country or region and political or social situation. These reasons can range from a *lack of alternative information* available from outside the country through official media to *a need to reveal hidden problems* in society, such as past traumas, or inequality of rights. Here are some examples of the reasons behind several different human rights film festivals:

Manya Human Rights International Film Festival (Uganda): "The festival is aimed at bringing to life human rights abuses through storytelling using film, social media and art that confronts each human being to understand and demand fairness for all people as well share a platform for social dialogue. Based on our poor reading culture, film is such a powerful tool that can reach masses easily. Therefore, the aim is to use film language to raise awareness about human rights by bringing both local and international films about human rights issues to disadvantaged and disenfranchised communities in Uganda".

Memoria Verdad Justicia (Guatemala): "Guatemala is a post-war country. 250,000 people died during the civil war. 45,000 people are still missing. Guatemalan genocide is called the Latin American Holocaust. Decades of repression, silence and fear marked the society and destroyed social and human relationships. After the peace treaty of 1996, few things changed. Actually, impunity, daily violence and human rights violations are the legacy of this long period. People could never express their opinions, and the press was silenced, censored or exiled. There were few art movements, and independent cinema didn't exist. It was from the beginning of the 1990s that a few filmmakers started again, in small circles, but with no support and still with fear. Continuous efforts allowed them to produce and screen documentaries about history and social injustice. We realised that the people were *hungry* to see themselves reflected in moving images and historical films about history. It was not until 2010 when the documentary *La Isla* (IDFA 2009) opened a massive space for these kind of films, and provided a reason for starting the human rights and documentary film festival Muestra de Cine Internacional Memoria Verdad Justicia. The festival's objectives are to encourage society to see different films, create consciousness and foster a critical view on reality—to help audiences learn more about human rights and civic and democratic participation, learn from history, and allow them to express themselves. We also want the young people to get interested in making films themselves".

FLASHPOINT Human Rights Film Festival (India): "Flashpoint intends to be a catalyst for social change by igniting thoughts and views around critical human rights issues. Through film screenings, panel discussions and filmmaker interactions, the festival spotlights global human rights concerns and holds a candle to similar issues existing within our own societies.

Director of Manya HRIFF in Uganda (in black suit) with local filmmakers. Photo by Kiiza Brian.

It attempts to create better understanding and enable an environment for greater social equity. It urges its audience to act as "flash pointers" to spread awareness and create social change in their own small ways".

FiSahara (Western Sahara): "FiSahara was created to address the need of Sahrawi people to access entertainment and culture, become familiar with film as a human rights educational/outreach tool, tell their own stories through film and raise international awareness about their invisible conflict. FiSahara has become a key instrument for Sahrawi and Moroccan filmmakers to gain mutual understanding and dialogue on peace".

You will be probably also look for films that meet the above mentioned goals in some way.

Issues that may be sensitive or controversial issues in many communities include:

- Women's and children's rights
- Minority and marginalised populations' rights (for example disabled, homeless, street children, albino populations, LGBT, interracial couples, Roma people, Afro Latin populations, migrants, and religious minorities)
- Economic and political transparency
- Use of natural resources
- Coming to terms with the past: truth, accountability, reconciliation and transitional justice
- Civil society and freedom of speech

When thinking about basic human rights issues, *The Universal Declaration of Human Rights* is a starting point. For example, Prague-based International Human Rights Festival One World's programming is associated with this traditional understanding of human rights that addresses the right to physical and mental integrity, political rights and civil rights, social, economic and cultural rights.

The role of One World is to bring these difficult issues to the broad public, even broadening the definition of human rights by finding unexpected connections and using creative approaches to documentary filmmaking.

Categories

Once you identify your main topics/areas of focus, you can either connect them with *single films* or *create whole categories*; putting more films under one programming category enables you to examine issues from more angles. The categories can be fixed or changed every year, but it might be best to repeat some of them for at least two consecutive editions so the audience can become familiar with them. It is also good to play with the names of the categories and not be too literal. Some examples of past programming categories include:

Tolerance/Intolerance (One World): Thematic films on racism, nationalism and radicalism, drawing attention to the rising force of the neo-Nazi movement in

Europe, racist violence, and the role of the media in spreading populism and the mechanisms used to increase the movement's membership base.

Matter of Act (Movies That Matter): Portraits of human rights defenders throughout the world, showing their fight against injustice and oppression. Multiple topics were displayed in films that showed what dangers these activists have to face in order to do their work.

Youth Empowerment and Tribute to Nelson Mandela's Legacy (FiSahara): Many of the screenings and roundtables focused either specifically or generally on the intersection of these themes. Youth roundtables focused on Mandela's contribution to youth; a roundtable with former South African political prisoners also included a former Sahrawi prisoner of conscience and centred on parallels between both struggles.

Festival Memoria Verdad Justicia (Guatemala): The program has been a special selection for the actual historical process of Guatemala. We have had several sections and an annual focus with films on a special topic that is relevant for the country like Transitional Justice, Land and Natural Resources, Crisis and Migration, Woman and Memory. Permanent sections include: "Memory, truth, justice" that screens traditional human rights films; "World Panorama", that offers successful and innovative documentaries; and "Cine 15+", made up of special and non-public screenings for students and their teachers. One of the most important sections of the festival is "Visual Memory Guatemala", during which we offer (and subtitle if necessary) foreign productions on Guatemala that have never been seen with in the country.

Flashpoint HRFF (India): Programming centres around a different theme on each day of the festival. For example, the 3rd edition of Flashpoint offered three different thematic concepts on the three days of the festival: "Political, Social & Personal Boundaries", "Sexuality & Gender", and "Community Action".

The general mantra for programming can be summarised in three words: *Educate, Engage, and Entertain.*

Prepare a programme that brings new information to your audience (educate), without being boring and moralising (entertain), while at the same time motivating and inspiring them (engage).

If your festival is comprised only of non-confrontational, glossy films, it will be boring and less thought provoking than a varied selection that surprises and disturbs the audience with unexpected types of films.

Here are some examples of potentially unexpected films:

Emergency Shelter: Documentary consisting of a shocking interview with a crippled Chinese lawyer who was made homeless by authorities for defending the rule of law in her country. Due to the low

production quality, the film was too difficult for the audience to follow.

The Greatest Silence: Rape in the Congo: Heart-wrenching testimonies of perpetrators and victims of brutal sexual assaults bringing to light a "hidden weapon" of the Congolese war. Despite the harshness of the film, the audience was able to identify with the victims and learn about how perpetrators can be brought to justice.

Scarlet Road: A Sex Worker´s Journey: An intimate and taboo-breaking story of an Australian sex worker who provides sexual services to people with physical disabilities. For many people in the audience it was the first time when they started thinking about the fact that people with disabilities can have a fulfilling sexual life.

My Makzhen and Me: A film by a young Moroccan about the pro-democracy February 20th Movement in Morocco. This film was screened at FiSahara 2013. The audience of Sahrawis had rarely seen films made by Moroccans and it was revealing for them to not only see the level of repression faced by Moroccans from their own government, but also to meet the filmmaker, who shocked many when he openly supported Sahrawis' right to self-determination. This was an example of how film can act as an instrument for mutual understanding and peace-building.

Thembi: Despite her unlimited energy and exceptional courage, this gentle and incisive documentary shows that Thembi is all too human. Her desire to live, love and leave behind a legacy didn't make her any less susceptible to insecurity, social pressure, exhaustion and the whims of being a celebrity.

In addition to these highly relevant and important films, it is worth trying to identify an *audience hit* to help to attract attention to the festival and subsequently draw their interest to other films that you might consider more compelling.

What Does a Hit Look Like?

A hit is usually a film with an intriguing topic and a strong, easily understood story that attracts a wide audience; in other words, it must be an example of good filmmaking. Typically the film has a charismatic protagonist and a cool title. One example is *Autumn Gold*; Czech audiences fell in love with the film's characters—senior athletes in their 80s and 90s who, despite their age, maintain a happy spirit and admirable levels of fitness. However, it is important to remember that what constitutes an audience hit is not always predictable. Your audience may love a totally different film than the one you had anticipated. You can help "create" a hit by inviting a special guest to the film and giving it special attention in the festival's publicity.

Locally-made films can be enormous hits, especially if the audience identifies with protagonists and story. For instance, FiSahara's biggest hit, screened in 2013, was *Divided Homeland*, the first feature film

ever to be entirely produced by Sahrawis. This film was made by students at FiSahara's film school.

In Guatemala, *Pussy Riots: A Punk Prayer*, and *The Lord of the Flies* were hits with the students. The festival's organisers also believe they motivated student protests by screening *The Penguin Revolution* and *The Chilean Spring* about the Chilean student movement.

Local Films

We recommend you look for local productions to program–these films are easier to understand and your audience is more likely to identify with the issues they address. New audiences who are not used to watching films on the big screen tend to love films made in their own communities, particularly if the filmmaker uses a narrative to which they can relate.

There are two ways to deal with local films if any emerge in your country. You can either include them in the thematic categories according to their topic, or you can stress the fact that they were made nationally or locally and include them in a separate category. It is good to have suitable name for this category (for example "Czech films, Czech perspectives", so it is easy to understand that this category contains local films).

Local films are usually easier to acquire and are an effective way of building good relations with your filmmaking community. Local filmmakers tend to appreciate invitations to festivals, which provide them with an opportunity to be inspired by foreign artists' films and to network with other local filmmakers and human rights activists. Consequently, local films in the programme provide international guests an insight into local issues.

Freedom Film Festival in Malaysia makes great use of the potential of local production. By having filmmakers among their organisers, they also have access to Malaysian films. Festival director Anna Har explains, "Our aim is to encourage social filmmaking and human rights in our country. Most of the time content takes precedent over artistic quality of the film when selecting, as we know local films will be interesting enough to generate discussion amongst our audience based on the content. This is also caused by our local situation, where alternative information is hard to come by. We would also pair a local film with an international film of a similar topic to give viewers a wider perspective of the issue".

FiSahara screens Sahrawi-made films (mostly shorts, as Sahrawis are just starting out with filmmaking) that deal with a plethora of issues affecting the community such as health problems, chronic unemployment, long-term separation from family members, and the disappeared and mutilated from war.

Manya HRIFF has integrated local films into its previous editions by combining them with international

Outdoor screening at Street Cinema Festival (Festival Cine en la Calle, Bethania) in Guatemala. Photo: Archive of Movies that Matter.

ones. In 2012, a local experimental film *My Opinion* about views from the general public regarding homosexuality in Uganda sparked a heated argument, which led to further discussion about the issue.

While in Guatemala most films screened at the festival are produced outside the country, the opening film is always a Guatemalan one.

The programming at Flashpoint brings in both well-known and lesser known Indian films on human rights issues, and also uses a mix of documentary and fictional films in order to create an engaging and diverse bouquet that appeals to a broader audience segment. Local films provide the audience with an opportunity to interact with the actors, filmmakers, and technicians who may be well-known/a star and able to draw in a bigger audience as well as media attention

If your community is still not making many films, you can search for films made in the region (including neighbouring countries) that address similar issues and employ similar language. If film interest builds in your community, but there are still no local people making films, think about incorporating simple filmmaking workshops into the festival. Some festivals such as Ciné Institute in Haiti, FiSahara in the Sahrawi refugee camps, and Film Aid International in the Dadaab refugee camp (Kenya) have done this successfully and have gone on to open local film schools. The impact of these film festivals has been tremendous, empowering communities to tell their own stories through film. Many funders will support festivals that offer audio-visual training and generate long-term impact in their communities.

FiSahara's flagship workshop teaches Sahrawi video activists and filmmakers from the refugee camps and the occupied Western Sahara how to film, narrate, edit and share human rights-themed films. They also offer a children's filmmaking workshop, a youth-oriented videogame production workshop and a gender-specific workshop that teaches women to use cell phones to make short films that address issues in their community.

Manya Human Rights International Film Festival conducts children's film workshops that provide an opportunity for children between the ages of eight and nineteen-years-old to learn the basics of telling stories using film. They are also planning a pilot women's training activity for selected female participants between the ages of nineteen and thirty-two to learn how to tell stories in order to change the mindset of boys and men in reducing gender-based violence.

Programming Challenges and Considerations

There are several major decisions you need to make regarding your programming as well as several circumstances that need to be taken into consideration.

- Reaching your target group (addressing local issues, showing parallels, making sure the films can be understood by new audiences)
- Programming documentary versus fiction films
- Prioritizing formal/stylistic quality versus the importance of the story
- Addressing sensitive issues, taboos, and risk analysis

Reaching Your Target Group

To achieve appropriate sensitivity, it is essential to know the local reality for your festival very well; be aware of the level of your audience's education and understand the formal as well as unwritten laws, customs and traditions. This will better enable you to anticipate an audience's reaction and possible consequences of screening a particular film.

Using Fiction Films

Using fiction films is a good way of starting off a festival in a country or community where people are not used to watching documentaries, in particular due to the low quality of TV production, lack of film culture or access to audio-visuals. At FiSahara, the new festival audience is more engaged by fiction than by documentary because film has never been a part of Sahrawi storytelling culture, which is predominantly oral (poetry, song, etc.).

At Manya HRIFF, documentary films in regards to the new audiences are more associated with TV productions whereas fiction films especially blockbusters from Hollywood (USA) and Nollywood (Nigeria) are very popular. Normally in our programming we get questions like, "Is that a movie?" referring to a documentary film.

Formal Quality Versus Importance of the Story

In the case of documentaries, it is especially important to include well-made films with strong narratives in order to convince your local audience that they are fun to watch, often suspenseful and that they have great stories similar to fiction films. In the beginning editions of a festival, it is vital to fight the misconception (if it is present locally) that documentary is a boring genre that should only be watched on TV. In terms of local documentaries, it pays to be lenient and favour the strength of the topic and the authenticity of the film over filmmaking brilliance or formal quality.

Sensitive Issues

It is up to each festival to estimate the risks and either decide whether or not to screen a film that addresses taboo issues, or to instead build support for the festival by selecting films about less sensitive issues. If you decide to select a film on a sensitive topic, conduct a risk analysis and create a plan to mitigate or deal with potential risks.

Side by Side, an international LGBT festival in Russia, openly opposes the homophobic campaigns from

Autumn Gold was a hit at One World FF in Prague. Jiri Soukup (protagonist) and Jan Tenhaven (director) at the opening ceremony. Photo by Josef Rabara.

local authorities both through their programming and by taking active part in protests. However, they often have to face bomb threats and always need to be prepared to move their screenings in order to ensure the security of the audience.

At Flashpoint in India, there was a special concern about screening a film on Kashmir, a region that is divided politically and along the lines of religion. The film *Inshallah* depicted how the government branded innocent people as militants.

Generally it is best to keep in mind that it is not just a single film that you are introducing to the audience but an entire topic or issue. Although you are not responsible for the film's content, be prepared to face and deal with any questions, disputes, or negative reactions after the screening from the audience or in the media. Be able to defend your decision to show the film publicly. You can also organise small screenings to deal with sensitive issues, engaging local community leaders to select the best target audience as well as ensure that the screening is followed up with a discussion that enables the audience to debate the issue in a secure and safe setting, helped by expert facilitators.

Taboos and Parallels

This is a question of even greater responsibility in post-conflict, non-democratic, transitional countries whose audience will be highly sensitive to issues that remind them of their own suffering and difficulties. The programmer should select films that will help the viewer to better deal with his or her trauma, rather than deepen it.

Often this can be achieved by selecting a film where the local audience is able to find parallels with their own experience. It is advisable to include films in your program that deal with the same problematic (ethnic conflicts, war traumas, dissident activities, etc.), but that take place in other geographical or cultural contexts. These films can then be used as a basis for discussion on local issues. It is also a very effective way to show how people deal with similar problems in different parts of the world. Films that depict high levels of suffering can deepen traumas, so be sure that the films also have an empowering effect, such as showing how a community successfully struggles against poverty or oppression. You can also pair a local film with an international film addressing a similar topic in order to offer viewers a wider perspective on the issue.

Here are some examples of taboo issues in different geographical, cultural and religious contexts. Note that these examples are not exhaustive, as taboos cut across national, cultural and religious boundaries:

- LGBT issues in Africa, Asia, Latin America, Middle East, and parts of Europe
- Critique of governments under dictatorships; testimonies on governmental and non-state actors' violence against populations in conflict and post-conflict countries
- Women's emancipation or reproductive and sexual rights in conservative countries in Africa, Latin America, Asia, and the Middle East
- Female Genital Mutilation practices
- Openly apartheid practices in America, Asia, Europe, Middle East countries

Programming in Practice

The following are some sources and methods programmers can use to acquire films:

- Visits to festivals or consultations with existing festivals
- Websites of similar film events (human rights festivals, film clubs)
- Websites of film distributors, sales agents, production companies and TV stations
- Websites of national film centres, film institutes, NGOs, community and social justice movements, including foundations supporting human rights filmmaking and other institutions dealing with films or human rights (e.g. OSI)
- Various online databases, such as Documentary Educational Resources
- Film schools and universities
- Collaboration with another human rights film festival and asking for their help with print sources or introductions

One of the most efficient ways to find good films is to personally visit other festivals. Use their video libraries, set up meetings with distributors and make use of other networking events. However, this is an expensive option. It is easier and less costly to look for films using online resources such as online databases, festival catalogues or filmmakers' and distributors' web pages. You can also approach more experienced festivals over email for good tips on where to start.

The Human Rights Film Network (*http://www.humanrightsfilmnetwork.org/*) is a very good resource for recommendations. Each region has emblematic human rights film festivals that can help you find the most appropriate films and guests for your event. Also, you can cooperate with other festivals that screen films subtitled in languages that you need, e.g. the festival in Guatemala cooperates with festivals in Mexico because they have many films with Spanish subtitles.

Most films have screening rights (and fees) attached to them (see below) but an increasing number of filmmakers who want their work to be seen by as many as possible are also releasing their work under licenses that allow non-profit screenings to be free (such as Creative Commons, *http://vimeo.com/creativecommons*). While these films may not be blockbusters, there are interesting works worth looking into, especially if you do not have many resources when just starting out.

Key Actors

Filmmaker: A creative person who shot the film; he or she intends his/her film to be screened as much as possible, and usually wishes to visit the festival as a reward for providing the film; it is generally easy to negotiate with him/her but in many cases he/she doesn't own the rights to the film.

Producer: an executive person (or a company representative) who invested money into the film's development; he/she often deals with film rights, copies of the film, publicity, and other practical tasks. The producer's intention is to show the film at festivals but also to earn the invested money back.

Distributor/Sales Agent: Business person/an agent who buys rights to many films and represents and distributes them through various means; the purpose for distributors is profit so he/she tries to sell the screening rights to as many festivals, TV stations, and institutions as possible.

Film Institutes and Schools: They represent the films produced in their country/school; they can either stand for a producer or a distributor; generally it is easier to negotiate with them as their aim is to promote the filmmaking.

Filmmakers, producers, distributors, and film institutions are accustomed to receiving film inquiries so don't be afraid to contact them. Send a brief but clear invitation email asking them to provide a DVD screener or online link for previewing.

Here is an example of an invitation email:

Dear XY,

We are pleased to invite you to submit your film " … " to be considered for screening at the 1st Human Rights Film Festival held in Prague, Czech Republic from 10-15 September, 2014.

The festival features engaged documentary filmmaking while at the same time demonstrating high artistic qualities. It consists of thematic categories and educational screenings at schools and other events.

More information, including detailed submission guidelines, can be found at: www.hrff.cz.

All entries should include a DVD screener (preview copy of the film) and an application you will find online / attached. This can also be emailed to us at submission [at] hrff.cz

Please send your entries to:

Human Rights Film Festival
Street No.
110 00 Prague 1
Czech Republic

Online viewing of films is also possible.

Deadline for submission is 20 July 2014.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact us at program@hrff.cz.

Thank for your kind attention to this letter.

With best wishes,

YX

Selection Process

Your efforts to collect all the relevant films for your festival topics will likely result in having far more DVDs

and online links then your actual programme can accommodate. It is important to preview films as soon as you receive them. At least two other people in the team should also preview the films. You should hold regular meetings to discuss and evaluate the films you have each seen (every week or two weeks). If your festival is in a local community that has been affected by human rights issues, include community leaders in your screening sessions so that they can help you flag any potential problems or make recommendations regarding a particularly potent film.

While watching the film submissions, take notes as they will be helpful in evaluating discussions. You can classify the film and sometimes assign it a preliminary category within a programme. The discussion will help you to strengthen your opinions and defend your reasons why a specific film should be included or not.

Pre-selection Process

If you are already dealing with hundreds of films in pre-selection, it is good to set up a system of evaluation at the very beginning.

- Pre-selection committee
- Evaluation system. You can grade the film on a scale, such as 1= best, 5= poor. You should also evaluate the content of the film and filmmaking/ technical quality and write a short description of your impression of the film and whether you should recommend the film or not. Add a section about whether the film is appropriate for your target audience by checking with your list of programming "rules" (re: dealing with cultural, religious and other sensitivities).
- Expert review
- Pilot screening

It's helpful to set up a pre-selection committee comprised of several people who have been involved in the festival organisation for some time, have the necessary background, and above all understand what you are trying to achieve with the festival. If this is your first festival, this type of person may be particularly useful to you. Other festivals may be able to suggest possible screeners if you cannot find enough, but always look for people sensitive to your political/cultural context. The pre-selectors can be voluntary or paid positions, depending on your budget. All pre-selectors must deliver a written evaluation of the film to be passed on to the programmer(s). The pre-selectors need to have a unified evaluation system, such as giving the films grades within a certain scale. Both form and content should be the subject of evaluation.

In some cases, you might need to seek out greater expertise on an unfamiliar film topic. For these purposes, it is convenient to set up a *reference group of experts* who will provide feedback. For example, these experts can be journalists, NGO representatives, social justice activists or academics. This also will help you establish a network of contacts that will be helpful later when searching for debater leaders/

Sahrawis take part in filmmaking workshops during FiSahara. Photo by María Carrión.

participants. Also, if you intend the film to be screened to a specific type of audience, such as students, it is useful to organise a *pilot screening* to sample audiences from your community to confirm you have made the right film choice.

Once you make your final decisions in the pre-selection phase you can start to contact the makers/distributors of the selected films. Send an email announcing your decision, *an email of confirmation* to include the specific film in your programme and kindly ask for permission as well as request the various materials needed for the screening.

This must take place at least two months before the festival as the whole process of getting permission and requested materials such as dialogue list, stills and the screening copy, can take a significant amount of time.

Here is an example of a confirmation letter:

Dear XY,

We are pleased to inform you that your film ……. was selected for screening at the 1st edition of Human Rights Film Festival. It will take place in Prague, Czech Republic from 10 to 15 September, 2014. Please let us know as soon as possible if you agree with your film being presented at One World.

If you are willing to let us screen your film, please provide us with the necessary materials (dialogue lists, stills) and information (contacts and credits) as soon as possible–no later than 20 July, 2014.

Thank you for your cooperation and we hope to hear from you soon.

Best regards,

YX

Screening Rights and Fees

For the past few decades, films have been treated as a regular "business product" on the market. Clearing screening rights with filmmakers, distributors or producers often resembles trade negotiating. Generally you must *be prepared to pay to screen films*. It is both fair and logical.

However, there are exceptions and mutually beneficial ways to avoid paying large screening fees that would decimate your budget:

The person who handles the film rights decides to give it to you free. This is usually filmmakers who appreciate the opportunity for their film to be screened at a festival and/or value the human rights focus of your event. You should briefly introduce your event–especially if it is new – and include important details, such as the purpose and audience of your festival and your supporters and partners.

You get the screening rights in exchange for inviting a film guest to the festival. Many producers and filmmakers are open to giving the film if you offer to cover two nights of accommodation and travel expenses for the director or other crew member. It is often better to pay for the guest rather than a fee, depending on the travel costs. The audience also always appreciates the chance to participate in Q&A sessions with filmmakers.

Bargain! Films are often treated as a commodity; it is not inappropriate to try to lower the amount of money asked for its screening. Distributors and sales agents are used to these strategies so don't be embarrassed, especially if you are a small start-up festival in a poor community. There are limits to bargaining; try to find a sum that more or less satisfies both sides. Some films have reduced prices for NGO screenings.

Your reputation is at stake when it comes to negotiating screening rights. Be polite, respectful and keep your word if comes to an agreement (e.g. regarding the number of screenings). *Only good relations with the filmmaking community and the industry will allow you to enter the world of respected festivals and secure entries for your next editions.*

Screening Schedule

Suitable placement of your festival is something that can highly influence the course of the whole event. In order to get high attendance you need to think of these factors:

- Other competing events taking place at the same time
- Season of the year
- Days and times of the screening
- Holidays, dates of festivities

The organiser must be able to estimate the best days of the week and times of the screenings in relation to audience habits and spare time, but also with regards to security issues. People will not come to your screenings if they are not able to get home safely.

Another important factor is gender sensitivity in programming. In many communities, women not only work but have to take care of their families and have set schedules. In some conservative cultures, women are not able to stay out late at night. Make sure you pick a time that suits women and speak with community leaders to find out how you can adapt your programme to meet women's needs. In certain places, getting the word out to women guarantees an audience, as they can act as transmitters and organisers in their communities.

When programming films it is important to leave sufficient time after the screening for Q&A sessions. An *opening film* should be picked carefully to attract enough attention. It can be a film addressing issues that are particularly relevant to the local community.

Many festivals have *at least three consecutive days* of screenings.

Opening ceremony at Karama HRFF. Festival director Sawsan Darwaza introduces main topics of the festival. Photo: Archive of Karama HRIFF.

Main Tips:

Be an Activist: You don't need to be an expert or academic to programme a human rights film festival but rather an activist who is determined to influence things around him or her.

Identity: Answer basic questions about who you are as a festival: what is the background of your region and what is the mission of your festival? Adjust the programme and its structure to your festival's identity and location. Know who your audience is. Starting simple pays off.

Genres: Decide if you want to mix documentaries with fiction films to ease the launch for inexperienced viewers; including shorts and animations is a good choice for the beginning of a festival (and can be useful for particular groups like children and students).

Main Theme: Pre-select a main topic for your festival that you want to promote. Start with key issues relevant to your setting and search for suitable films that align with those topics.

Sources: Identify good sources for films or approach friendly festivals that can provide film tips and offer introductions.

Selection: Set up a selection team, including pre-selectors or experts; hold regular meetings and discuss the films; save everyone's remarks so that you can always refer to them later.

Controversy: Identify potentially sensitive issues in your films to estimate audiences' reactions and be ready to defend your decision to screen a specific film.

Fees: Either allocate enough money for the fees or be ready to negotiate, but always be fair.

Schedule: Schedule screenings according to the habits of your target audience, giving main films and audience hits "prime-time" slots in your main venues; carefully program local films; put shorts in blocks and always schedule enough time for Q&As.

Filmography

La Isla: Archivos de una Tragedia (Island: Archive of a Tragedy, dir. Uli Stelzner, 2009).
Emergency Shelter (dir. He Yang, 2010).
The Greatest Silence: Rape in the Congo (dir. Lisa F. Jackson, 2007).
Scarlet Road–A Sex Worker´s Journey (dir. Catherine Scott, 2011).
My Makzhen and Me (dir. Nadir Bouhmouch, 2012).
Thembi (dir. Jo Menel, 2010).
Divided Homeland
Pussy Riots: A Punk Prayer (dir. Mike Lerner, Maxim Pozdorovkin, 2013).
The Lord of the Flies (dir. Harry Hook, 1990).
The Penguin Revolution
The Chilean Spring
My Opinion
Inshallah (dir. Ashvin Kumar, 2012).

Film Festivals with Guts: Security and Censorship

Written by Matthea de Jong, with feedback given by Joke Baert, Kenneth Barongo, María Carríon, Gwain Colbert Fulai, Eric van de Giessen, Manny de Guerre, Mon Mon Myat, Rachel Sine, Gideon Vink

Introduction

In many places, film festivals are facing forms of censorship. A festival may face obstruction and opposition as a result of restrictive laws and regulations that limit event organisation and the screening of certain (types of) films. For a number of festivals, opposition from national or local authorities is a major problem. Constraints may also be rooted in cultural or religious reasons; some topics are simply taboo and therefore cannot be mentioned or discussed openly in society. Screening films about sensitive topics can thus lead to resistance from the audience or opposition groups. This resistance can even take violent forms, as we have seen in various cases. Some festivals need to operate with great caution to ensure the safety of their teams and visitors.

Side by Side is the LGBT festival located in St. Petersburg, Russia. Despite an increasingly repressive climate for LGBT rights, the festival continues to be organised by a courageous team. In 2013, the festival faced five (false) bomb threats and hostilities from right-wing extremist groups. During the festival some venues withdrew their support and many foreign guests had concerns about participating, one even pulling out only a couple of weeks prior to the festival start. By the end of the festival, one of the organisers said: "We're just a festival, but there's the sense we're running a military operation".[1]

In 2013, the Ecuadorian government dissolved the organisation Fundación Pachamama. Fundación Pachamama organises Ciné Amazónico, a travelling film festival that draws attention to the rights of people in the Amazon. According to the authorities, Pachamama would interfere with political affairs and disturb the peace. One of the organisers commented: "We are peaceful, we defend human rights and we have never promoted or supported violence".[2] Despite this opposition, they continue preparations for the next festival.

There are many more examples that show the courage and perseverance of festival organisers who keep the discussion about human rights and freedom of expression going by screening human rights films. This chapter is derived from their experiences.

Government Censorship

In most countries, organising a cultural event does not in itself pose major problems. Problems may start when the content of these cultural events is considered sensitive, critical or potentially inflammatory. In many countries, films that will be distributed, broadcasted or screened must be presented to a "Film Censorship Board" for licensing. The board views and evaluates the content of these films. Productions with content that is considered to be possibly "harmful for the population" can be censored or even banned. Usually, "sensitive" topics include political, racial, sexual or religious issues. Authorities enforce these laws when films are screened to an audience in a public space.

In Belarus, the organiser of a film festival with short films on human rights related themes commented that a censorship board can create a lot of work for the festival team. For their last festival, the organisers had to translate all films for the censorship board. Long discussions followed. Many venues cancelled their cooperation due to pressure from the KGB and local government. That was mostly due to the bureaucracy of the censorship board and the need for different kinds of permission. Some of the films were prohibited from being shown in the cinema, while others were censored as category 21+. Nevertheless, the festival showed most of them in underground or independent venues. They were also able to organise many free and open discussions, but they also note, "We didn't shout about what we think on the streets. We didn't disclose censorship issues widely in independent media, we just did not stop trying to find a space for dialogue with everyone. We didn't radicalize relations with officials, and as a result we were able to have success, even in our work with the government".

In 2013, the Freedom Film Fest in Malaysia was under pressure. One of the organisers, Lena Hendry, was charged for violating the Film Censorship Act of 2002. She was one of the organisers of the screening of *No Fire Zone: The Killing Fields of Sri Lanka* from director Callum Macrae in July 2013. This documentary is an investigative documentary about the final weeks of the Sri Lankan Civil War in 2009 and shows war crimes and crimes against humanity committed by the Sri Lankan army against the Tamil population. Even though the screening was not accessible to the general public, Lena Hendry and a colleague of hers were arrested during the screening. It is the first time that a person was charged for exhibiting a human rights film in Malaysia. The outcome of the case is still pending.

Bir Duino, the human rights film festival in Kyrgyzstan has faced many difficulties and opposition in the past years. In 2010, the festival was prohibited by security services to screen the documentary *The 10 Conditions of Love* which tells the story of the well-known Uyghur activist Rabiya Kadeer. On the same day the film was supposed to be screened at the Historical

Audience at Bir Duino Kyrgyzstan Human Rights Film Festival. Photo: Archive of Movies that Matter.

Museum in Bishkek, State Security Service officials from the Department of Terrorism and Extremism requested the director of the museum not to screen the film due to its potential to incite inter-ethnic conflict.[3]

Two years later, in 2012, state officials and religious groups opposed the screening of *I Am Gay and Muslim*, claiming the film was a threat to the religious identity of Muslim people living in Kyrgyzstan. Only a few hours before the screening was scheduled, the Bishkek Court ruled that the film was banned. Subsequently, festival director Tolekan Ismailova was targeted with a defamation campaign in the media. She was also charged for extremist acts and intent to incite public riots, meaning that she could face imprisonment if the festival continued to screen the film publicly. The organisers of the festival (at that time known as Human Rights Centre "Citizens Against Corruption") and film theatre received threats.[4] As a result of this, the film screening did not take place.

Pressure can also be instigated by business interests. In 2011, filmmakers and cultural organisers in Peru protested the Peruvian government's censorship of films documenting mining conflicts. Six documentaries were removed from a film event. The award-winning documentary *The Devil Operation* by Stephanie Boyd about the protests of the farmers against an American mining corporation was removed from a series of regional films on TV Peru for (unproven) technical difficulties. The concerned filmmakers and cultural organisers criticised representatives of mining and oil companies for using their power and influence to impede the circulation of these films.

Security Analysis

When you suspect that your activities might have security risks, it is important to make a proper security or risk analysis outlining the potential risks before, during and after the festival. Possible risks that human rights film festivals have identified over the last years are: opposition from certain groups in society; disruption by authorities; or subtle censorship measures that are difficult to trace.

Film screenings can be disrupted by opposing (often conservative) groups. Such groups may communicate information or disinformation about the festival, which may also reach the media, portraying the festival in a negative way. If this happens, you can use media attention to share your story and present the real objectives of your festival.

Be aware that opposing groups can also threaten the team and visitors or protest outside the venue. In some instances, you will need to take into account the risk of groups even attacking the venue. In your security analysis, you need to consider the risks for your organising team, but also for your (international) guests and visitors.

The risks can also concern digital risks, like email threats, or websites or Facebook accounts that are

hacked. If you suspect you face digital threats, please check the Digital First Aid Kit by Hivos at *https://digitaldefenders.org/digitalfirstaid/* or Security in a Box by the Tactical Technology Collective and Front Line Defenders at *https://securityinabox.org/*.

On a few occasions, events have been disrupted by authorities or the police force. In 2011, the first edition of the Yaoundé International Human Rights Film Festival was suspended by the Cameroonian authorities. The opening ceremony was cancelled only thirty minutes before its start in the presence of its audience, guests and journalists.[5]

Sometimes, censorship measurements are more subtle. Screenings are sabotaged by sudden power cuts or other technical problems that prevent the continuation of the programme.

The 2010 Side by Side Film Festival held in Kemerovo in Siberia came up against such opposition. After all original venues had to pull out after threats from the authorities, an alternative cinema hall was located in a large local shopping complex. Once news got out concerning the new location, the authorities threatened to cut the power supply to the entire the shopping complex.[6]

Some festivals take place in locations that are insecure due to crime, political instability or conflict. While the festival and its activities might not be specifically targeted, it is also important to make a security analysis in order to come up with a security plan for the team, public and guests.

In all instances, it is worthwhile to get advice from local partners, lawyers or journalists who might be able to help you to assess the security situation. The security analysis and the plan can be combined into a crisis plan or table that can guide your team both to prevent and deal with potential security crises.

This handbook does not offer a blueprint for carrying out a risk analysis. However, some suggestions include:

- Organise a brainstorming session with your organisational team, experienced people or other like-minded people mentioned above.
- Note all undesirable things that could potentially happen.
- Categorise risks based on the likeliness (frequent, likely, occasional, seldom, unlikely) and the effects (catastrophic, critical, marginal, negligible) of those occurrences if they were to take place. Like that, you can filter out all risks that are likely to occur and have a serious effect on the festival or its visitors, which may help in deciding on which risks to focus upon primarily in your mitigation plan.

Crisis Planning and Mitigating Risks

After a thorough security analysis, the next step is to come up with a security plan to mitigate risks.

Measures vary widely; sometimes hiring security personnel or informing the local police will suffice, while in other cases it is wise to formulate a detailed plan in case of crisis.

Side by Side has an extensive crisis planning strategy. They work with alternative back up venues in case local authorities or nationalist groups stop festival proceedings. They hire security services, inform local partners of any potential threats and problems and use online screenings in case visitors consider their own physical attendance too risky.

Some initiatives actively seek support from foreign embassies or other international organisations to provide them with a certain level of protection. In Colombia, Fundepaz always informs public officials responsible for the protection of human rights, such as the regional ombudsman office or the regional Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, about their activities. For Active Vista in the Philippines, the threat of rebel groups and military groups is the biggest risk. The festival tries to connect as much as possible with local organisations to mitigate risks.

Naturally, it is important to choose festival dates carefully, in order not to coincide with events like elections or otherwise politically tense times. According to the organisers of the Bamenda Human Rights Film Festival in the north western part of Cameroon, the political situation was an important reason why the festival in Yaoundé was suspended. It coincided with moves by government and resistance by opposition parties to change the constitution. The festival in Yaoundé was seen as an opposition move to instigate violence. Therefore, Bamenda Human Rights Film Festival now takes place in July, when the Parliament has its recess.[7]

For festivals taking place in insecure settings, it is wise to come up with a security protocol and share it with team members, partners and others involved in planning. This plan should also include guidelines for the public and guests from outside the community. Guests must be aware of the situation and be advised on how to avoid putting themselves at risk unnecessarily. (For instance, in insecure neighbourhoods or locations you might advise guests to avoid walking alone at night or engaging with strangers.)

It could be helpful to develop a diagram, indicating the risks, prevention or mitigation measures, responsible team members, relevant institutions and contact details of potential partners or experts to ask for assistance.

Such a diagram does not need to be very detailed and sophisticated, but can actually be quite simple. This will help the entire team get a clear overview of security risks and responsibilities. Consider in advance under what conditions you will decide to change, or even cancel, (parts of) your event, and discuss this with your team beforehand. In the heat of the moment, you may be taking unnecessary and irresponsible risks.

Risks may also involve health-related problems, if your festival takes place in a location that has issues with water, sanitation and/or infectious diseases. In that case your plan also has to include advising guests on vaccines and preventative health measures. For instance, the international film festival FiSahara, which takes place in the Sahrawi refugee camps in the desert, sends guests and the international public a detailed health and security form, and its team includes a group of volunteer doctors. Other potentially relevant risks are related to fire safety and crowd management. For screenings in cinemas or other indoor locations, there is often no easy exit. It is advisable to consult experts, or at least organisations or individuals with experience in these matters.

Self-censorship

Self-censorship is also a relevant issue to discuss here. Topics that are considered too sensitive are sometimes avoided in order to keep other important topics on the agenda and build support.

For the first edition of Karama Human Rights Film Festival in Jordan in 2008, the organisers adopted a form of self-censorship: "It was our first edition, so we had to be very careful about which films we presented to the authorities. I think we were still very daring, but we didn't want to be too provocative in order not to have a good initiative be nipped in the bud. So we have chosen films that we thought were acceptable to the authorities. Not that I'm not happy with these films, on the contrary. They are controversial and treat human rights issues in Jordan seriously. Next year we will be even bolder. But taboo topics are religion, homosexuality and the king. These are the no-go subjects".[8]

The question whether a film can be screened is not always easy to answer though; it often depends on the assessment of the organisers. Recently, Ciné Droit Libre in Burkina Faso presented a film about LGBT rights in Africa. One of the organisers commented: "These films remain controversial here in Ouagadougou. A snappy and sharp-toned discussion followed after the screening during which the festival was accused of screening 'immoral films'. Next to films dealing with politics, this is one of the most contentious issues in Burkina Faso, but we keep trying. However, we will not screen these films outside the capital, during our travelling festival, because it could be a reason for the local authorities to prohibit the screenings".

Another example of self-censorship is the difficult choice made by the Human Rights Human Dignity International Film Festival in Burma during its second edition in 2014. The festival cancelled the screening of a documentary dealing with anti-Muslim violence after social media users criticised the film for being too sympathetic to the plight of Burma's Muslims. The festival received requests from authorities and cinema owners to withdraw the film. The film, *The Open Sky*, follows a woman who visits her Muslim aunt whose house gets burned down during the

Promotion poster of Memoria Verdad Justicia Festival in Guatemala. Photo: Archive of Memoria Verdad Justicia.

outburst of anti-Muslim violence in March 2013. Min Htin Ko Ko Gyi, the festival director, said that the festival decided to cancel the film's screening because it appeared to have inflamed lingering Buddhist-Muslim tensions in Rangoon. "We are not holding the film festival to create conflict. We can't let any conflict come in the way, so we removed the film from our list. I feel really sorry about the decision to remove the film. It hurts the feelings [of the filmmakers] and also the dignity of the film festival. But there is a possibility that [the film] can bring conflict and now the country is in a very sensitive state", [9] he said. The organisers also feared for the security of the characters in the film.

Only a few months later, the festival organisers managed to successfully screen the film in the capital city. Afterwards, Buddhist and Islamic religious leaders took part in a panel discussion about the film, hate speech and possible solutions to prevent potential ethno-religious riots. The three filmmakers got the chance to speak to the media. The film was also screened at one of the universities for 800 students.[10]

Self-censorship can be a way to prevent extreme tensions and mitigate risks. In relation to that, it can sometimes be more effective to screen a film about a sensitive topic if the film is situated in a totally different context and country. The touchy issue can still be presented, or even discussed, without pointing too sharply to the imperfections in one's own country. This can prevent the highly emotional or even aggressive responses that would otherwise disrupt the debate completely.

Self-censorship can also come into play when festival programmers fear that certain scenes, language or issues can alienate the audience due to cultural sensitivities. A great film might fall off the schedule due to a single scene or word. FiSahara is continuously evaluating what is appropriate to show a mixed audience. While Sahrawis are more accepting of some scenes in the privacy of their own homes, in a public setting these same scenes would be considered inappropriate. The line is sometimes so fine that programmers must prescreen to many different Sahrawis to get a consensus.

Invitation-only & Online Distribution

Invitation-only screenings can be a way to get around censorship boards. For the distribution of *The Act of Killing* in Indonesia, the filmmakers chose not to present the film in regular Indonesian cinemas, as the censorship board would most probably have prohibited the screenings, and in that case, it would be punishable to own a copy of the film. Instead, they provided DVD copies of the film to a wide network of NGOs, enabling them to organise invitation-only screenings. The documentary has since been screened thousands of times.

Before DVD copies were widely distributed, several screenings were organised for journalists only. This led to ample media coverage in both the Indonesian and the international press. In the beginning, almost all the screenings were invitation-only. But over time, more and more public screenings began to take place. The

film received a lot of national and international media attention. The filmmakers stated: “It seems that people have more courage to screen the film openly for the public. So far, there were only two public screenings that were cancelled because of the government’s pressure and there was only one public screening facing opposition from a nationalist group”.[11]

The filmmakers also made the film available for free in Indonesia – another way around the censors. It now has been downloaded millions of times. The film has also been seen hundreds of thousands of times on YouTube, where the filmmakers have made the film available without English subtitles.

Also Callum Macrae, the filmmaker of the controversial film *No Fire Zone* on the bloody final days of Sri Lanka’s civil war made the film available for free online in India, Malaysia, Nepal and Sri Lanka following a ban on its public screenings in these countries.[12]

Publicity Strategy

Festivals can also adapt their publicity strategy to mitigate risks. Some film festivals avoid using the term *human rights*. The festival in Ethiopia avoids the term primarily due to the resistance it would otherwise arouse from authorities. The director of FreeZone in Belgrade does not use the term in order to avoid scaring potential visitors and sponsors away. According to him, human rights have taken on a negative connotation since the Balkan conflicts in the 1990s.

The wide variety of creative and strong festival names from all over the world clearly show that a festival does not need to include the words *human rights* in its name to express its dedication to human rights and social justice. Watch Docs, Truth Cinema, Movies that Matter, Active Vista and Freedom Film Fest are just a few examples of festival names expressing the dedication of their programmes. In communicating about the festival or the films, you can choose to use certain words to prevent opposition; you can convey a similar message with a different discourse.

A few festivals, like the Tripoli Human Rights Film Festival in Libya, deliberately choose not to invite foreign guests because they cannot guarantee their security or do not want to attract unwanted attention. Other festivals, like Side By Side, choose to invite a renowned international guest, in the hope that the attention will improve safety. In their case, film director Gus van Sant was invited.

When Manya Human Rights International Film Festival in Uganda bravely decided that they wanted to screen *Call Me Kuchu* about LGBT rights in Uganda on their festival in 2013, they took up a very challenging task.

The documentary portrays David Kato, one of the first declared homosexuals in Uganda, a country in which homosexuality is a criminal offence. The film follows the courageous and determined activist Kato in his last year before he was killed.

The film festival took place from 10–14 December 2013. One week later, on the 20 of December, the Parliament of Uganda passed the Anti-Homosexuality Act. This new law broadens the criminalisation of homosexual relations in Uganda, as a result of which a Ugandan same-sex couple faces life imprisonment. It is widely believed that the new law is not only the result of, but has also exacerbated, homophobia in Uganda. This law caused widespread concern by international governments and organisations. This was the context in which the festival director decided that the film should be screened in the capital city, Kampala. But how? The publicity strategy proved vital in this regard.

First, permission from the filmmakers was needed. However, the filmmakers were reluctant to give approval, out of fear for the security of the people from the LGBT community portrayed in the film. After four days of extensive contact with the Ugandan LGBT community, the filmmakers approved. The next question was where to screen the film. The organisers decided that one of the festival spaces in particular would be the best spot. This space is a small and popular arts event space with a capacity of about forty people. The organisers knew that this place would not attract as much attention as the main festival venue. The festival's strategy about this film was to keep a low-profile campaign. This would then mitigate the risk that the screening, or even the entire festival, would be closed down by the state officials. This was also the main reason why the screening took place on the second last day of the festival at 9 pm. Still, formal permission from the Media Council was needed. Somehow, there were no restrictions to hinder the screening of this film because the state agency was not equipped enough to follow up such an activity.

Finally, the organisers managed to include the film in the festival programme. To prevent any problems, it was essential that the film description in the publicity material did not contain provocative information. For example, the description did not refer to the "anti-homosexuality bill", but instead used the word "bill".

On the day of the screening, when everybody got inside, the doors closed for security reasons. The organisers were nervous as they realised they were risking the festival's future, but also wanted to give a floor to these sensitive issues for discussion. Why would the Ugandan people not have the chance to watch this film that caused huge debates and awards at film festivals all around the world? Fortunately, everything went smoothly.

Main Tips

- Be informed about the laws regarding film screenings in your country.
- Make a proper security analysis with input from your local partners, lawyers and journalists.
- Develop a security plan to mitigate risks.
- Be careful in the composition of your film programme. Consider what effect films about sensitive topics can have.

Filmography

The 10 Conditions of Love (dir. Jeff Daniels, 2009).
The Act of Killing (dir. Joshua Oppenheimer, 2012).
Call Me Kuchu (dir. Malika Zouhali-Worrall and Katherine Fairfax Wright, 2012).
The Devil Operation (dir. Stephanie Boyd, 2010).
I Am Gay and Muslim (dir. Chris Belloni, 2012).
No Fire Zone: The Killing Fields of Sri Lanka (dir. Callum Mcrae, 2013).
The Open Sky (dir. Kyal Yie Lin Six, Lynnsatt Nwe and Phyo Zayar Kyaw, 2013).

---

[1] Victoria Lomasko (2013) "Homosexuals and Homophobes: Victoria Lomasko on the Side by Side LGBT Film Festival", *The Russian Reader*. (*http://goo.gl/DF3Y0r*)

[2] Mercedes Alvaro (2013) "Ecuador Shuts Down Environmental NGO", *Wall Street Journal*. (*http://goo.gl/Wn0eCc*)

[3] (2012) "Violation of freedom of expression by the interim government must stop", *FIDH*. (*http://goo.gl/f65xGl*)

[4] "Kyrgyzstan: Defamation campaign and threats against human rights defender Ms Tolekan Ismailova", *Frontline Defenders*. (*http://goo.gl/G3izKP*)

[5] (2011) "The first edition of the Yaoundé International Human Rights Film Festival suspended by the Cameroonian authorities", *Festivals Internationaux du Film des Droits de l'Homme*. (*http://goo.gl/kAJTE4*)

[6] Manny de Guerre, director of Side by Side, Russia, in response to the first draft of this article on 28 July 2014.

[7] Gwain Colbert (Director of A Common Future), application for the Bamenda Human Rights and Arts Festival (Cameroon, 2012).

[8] Interview with Ayman Bardawil (Programmer Karama Human Rights Film Festival) by Mira Zeehandelaar (in Dutch) (Amsterdam: Wordt Vervolgd, April 2011).

[9] San Yamin Aung (June 18, 2014), "Festival Cancels Film on Anti-Muslim Violence After Social Media Criticism", *The Irrawaddy*. (*http://goo.gl/k1kAj0*)

[10] Press release 13 August 2014 by Human Dignity Film Institute.

[11] Personal email contact between author and producer of *The Act of Killing*, July 2014.

[12] News article (February 22, 2014) 'No Fire Zone' documentary to air online for free in Malaysia, India", *The Malay Mail Online*. (*http://goo.gl/eAayB6*)

Now What Do You Think? Film Festivals as a Platform for Discussion

Written by Matthea de Jong, with contributions by María Carríon, Eric van de Giessen, Hana Kulhánková

The moderator of the Freedom Film Festival in Malaysia says: "Feel free to share your thoughts and questions during the Q&A after the screening. The whole point for this festival is to provide a platform for free discussion. You may agree, disagree or, have your own thoughts about it, but this is what the festival from its start is all about".[1]

Statements like this can be heard at many human rights film festivals across the world. Most Human Rights Film Festivals actually use film screenings as a basis for public discussions.

Film festivals serve as a platform for dialogue for experts, artists, policy makers, journalists, civil society organisations and the audience. Human rights films and debates are unique opportunities to enjoy freedom of expression. Especially in contexts where individuals and civil societies struggle, they can play a crucial role in providing a rare opportunity for people to express their feelings about the issues presented and ask questions. Missing facts and updates about the screened events, can be shared with the audience.

Films have the capacity to reach out to communities that do not have access to written information on human rights or that have not been able to broach difficult issues. Video and film are being effectively used across the world by human rights advocates in remote locations, from war torn villages in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and Rwanda, to communities in Chiapas or Burma, enabling community discussions that otherwise might not take place. Grassroots organisations in the DRC have used video to open up discussions on the effects of rape as a tactic of war, enabling affected women to stop hiding their identities, seek justice and demand respect and compassion from their families and communities. Others have used film-sparked discussions to change discriminatory practices against women in the name of cultural traditions, to convince armed groups to release child soldiers, or to aid in the collective healing process after war and genocide.

The organiser of the AfricanBamba Human Rights Festival in Thiaroye, Senegal, puts it like this: "The festival is one of the few opportunities for us to communicate to those who govern us, to our people and to the world what are our dreams, our worries; how we would see a socially just and peaceful world. In Thiaroye, the festival

is viewed and lived by the people as a new way for the community to engage, be recognised, and express themselves on urgent social issues".[2]

For the organisers of Ciné Droit Libre in Burkina Faso it is important that the screenings and discussions raise questions: "Lasting and durable development is only possible if citizens are well-informed and ask legitimate questions about their rights and their duties, demanding accountability of the authorities".[3]

Clearly, debates are very important at human rights film festivals. So are Q&A sessions, during which the audience can pose their questions to an expert or filmmaker. But how can a successful debate programme or Q&A session be organised?

Objectives

When you finalise your film selection you can set the themes for the debates and Q&A's. Which themes deserve more attention? Some films deal with underexposed issues, while others raise questions and dilemmas. It is always useful to find links to current affairs and issues in your country or region.

Discussions may serve to:

- Inform and deepen the knowledge of the audience. Guest speakers can provide more information on the subject matter.
- Raise awareness and discussion. Guest speakers can provide new insights and perspectives.
- Express ideas. Some films arouse emotions that people would like to share after the screening.
- Motivate. Films may encourage or inspire the public to take action, to change their behavior, sign a petition, vote, etc.

The format of the event and the choice of speakers (presenters or performers) can be adjusted to fit your objective. It can take the form of a debate, lecture, an interview, a master class, a quiz, or any other (self-invented) format that might fit. In some cases, cultural performances such as dance, theatre, music, spoken word performances or poetry readings can work as a way for the audience to reflect on the films' subject matter.

A good discussion programme starts by knowing your audience and adapting to the local context. Who is the film screening targeting? Do you expect mostly women to attend the screening? Or do you aim for university students? Do you organise an outdoor screening for primarily local fishermen? Is your setting a postwar environment and do you expect war victims to attend your event? Adapt the form and content of the discussion for different audiences to be effective. Invite guest speakers and moderators that connect with your audience.

Festival de Cine en la Calle in Guatemala notes this difference between rural and urban settings: "In rural areas, it is easier to propose meetings for discussion

Q&A after the screening of Warisan at Freedom Film Fest in Malaysia. Photo: Archive of Freedom Film Fest.

because people are used to critically participate in the public life of the community. In contrast, in urban neighbourhoods, family, group and ethnic fragmentation negatively influence the consideration of public space as something collective and, therefore, the critical and effective participation of people in public activities".[4]

In general, most film festivals are keen to avoid approaches that are too didactic and avoid superficiality. Human rights are multidisciplinary, comprised of legal, social, philosophical, political, economic, religious and cultural aspects. The director of the Nuremberg International Human Rights Film Festival Andrea Kuhn explains: "We consider ourselves a film festival that engages audiences in a critical debate about films, media and human rights. We feel that part of any human rights activity should be a conception of an audience as critical individuals that should be respected to make their own informed decisions. We want them to question their perception of the world and we hope that they think the films we present are good films that take them seriously and are not just feeding them with a message, but allow them to think for themselves".[5]

Taboo Issues

Special care is required when dealing with sensitive or controversial issues that touch upon deeply held views and embedded attitudes. Make sure you talk to your community about how to address taboo issues in front of the public in order to encourage a safe, open, and respectful dialogue.

In 2012, the organisers of CinéDoc, the documentary festival in Tbilisi in Georgia, organised a mobile cinema project in the isolated border regions of the Southern Caucasus. The aim was to create more mutual understanding and cross-border dialogue between the people living on different sides of the borders in a region torn by conflict and war. To do so, the organisers consciously avoided screening films dealing with war, conflict or internally displaced persons. Instead, to garner trust and mutual understanding, they selected films dealing with everyday life. Organiser Artchil Khetagouri explains that "screening a film from the neighbouring country is already provocative enough. Because of the public pressure and fear of authorities it was sometimes extremely challenging to discuss certain topics. To initiate dialogue and peaceful debates it was vital to be neutral, and not get involved in political discussions".[6]

For some audiences who are themselves affected by serious human rights issues, debates around a film can have an empowering effect by showing how other communities deal with a similar situation, and can help contextualise their own reality. Don't worry about not being able to always answer all the questions and resolve complex issues presented in the films. Simply opening a debate on sensitive or unspoken topics can have a powerful effect on people's minds and help them to cope with their own traumas, especially

when dealing with issues like genocide, political repression, LGBT rights or domestic violence.

Smaller, intimate spaces where people feel more at ease are often more suitable for discussing sensitive issues. In these types of more intimate debates, it often helps to have the audience and guests sit in a circle, encouraging closeness and open dialogue.

You can find more about covering sensitive issues in the chapter: Film Festivals with Guts: Security and Censorship.

Format

Welcome: We recommend opening screenings with a word from the moderator, a staff member or a volunteer. They can welcome the audience to the festival, provide basic information about the film (the title, director) and announce if there will be a debate, Q&A session or other event with guest speakers after the screening. This will allow audience members to prepare their questions during the screening and ensure that they do not leave immediately after the film ends.

Introduction: When the film deals with a sensitive or difficult issue you can prepare your audience by providing some context in advance that will increase their understanding of the film. You can also provide a handout with more background information on the film's subject matter. One of your guest speakers may want to say a few words before the screening as well. Inform your audience and guest speakers beforehand if the discussion is being recorded on video or streamed live. For some speakers or audience members it may be uncomfortable or even risky to be seen or express their opinions on camera.

Questions & Answers: A Q&A session provides a platform for the audience to ask questions and share opinions with guest speakers. A moderator guides the session. The duration of the Q&A can be anywhere between 10 and 45 minutes.

Panel Debate: If you want to address topics that you consider more compelling and important to discuss in more detail you can organise a panel debate with several guests. Each can share a different perspective, opinion or experience with the audience.

Panel debates usually need more time than a Q&A's (for instance, 45 minutes to an hour) and a skilled moderator. You could plan the debate with a brief script that lays out the format and the different questions to be addressed. As a way to structure the discussion, you can also work with different challenging statements for the panelists and the audience to respond to.

At the FIFDH in Geneva the panel discussions start with a discussion between the panelists; they introduce themselves and exchange ideas with the moderator for approximately 20 to 30 minutes. Then the panel opens up the discussion to questions from the audience. This is a way to make sure that the debate

is not immediately taken over by people representing particular ideologies, special groups, etc., and to ensure there is a real discussion.

Master Class: You can ask a filmmaker or other interesting guest speaker, such as a human rights activist, to give a master class. A master class is a learning session or discussion offered by an expert on a particular topic or discipline, in this case related to films and the issues they address. This format gives the opportunity to learn more about the work of the filmmaker or activist. Provide enough time for questions from the audience.

Talk Show: Some festivals organise daily talk shows with short discussions, interviews and possibly other elements like music, poetry, or stand-up comedy. The talk shows can centre on a specific theme or discuss the festival highlights.

Speakers

Inspiring speakers are essential for successful Q&As and panel discussions, although some festivals organise discussions in which primarily the audience participates and reflects on the film with their thoughts and questions.

The right choice of speakers always intersects with knowing who your audience is. If they are students or people with little experience with human rights films it is crucial that the speaker can effectively address and connect with this type of group. If NGO representatives or politicians are in your audience be sure to have professional speakers with a greater expertise who are able to address complex questions. If victims of human rights violations might be among the audience members, be sure that the experts you invite are aware of this and capable of being especially sensitive and resourceful on the topic and know how to address this audience.

New audiences in remote areas may prefer someone from the community as a guest instead of someone from afar speaking in a different language. In the case of screenings and debates dealing with deeply-held opinions or traditions—some possibly discriminatory—local guests are especially important in order to diffuse arguments that "outsiders" are imposing their values on the community.

Filmmakers, experts and activists can be invited as guests. You can also think of NGO representatives, community leaders, politicians, journalists, and university representatives, who should be able to give context to the issue under discussion. Festivals regularly invite policy makers and influential figures to attend, serving as a powerful tool for influencing policy and facilitating networking, as well as acting as a catalyst for public debate.

People are usually more interested in personalised stories and practical examples than promotional talks from an organisation or political party.

If possible, bring in a local resource person who knows more about the on-the-ground realities of the topic and who can connect it up with real-life local issues. It helps to take a look at videos of other debates they have participated in to assess whether they are inspiring speakers.

Festival de Cine en La Calle (Street Cinema Festival) in Guatemala City organises outdoor screenings in urban and rural areas. The organisers underscore the importance of the local artists' participation. It is important to mention local artists' strong commitment to the project since the first edition; over the years, a great number of filmmakers have recognised the importance of bringing cinema to the people, and in particular the role that the Street Cinema festival is playing in bringing people closer to independent cinema. During the latest edition, directors were present even in the most remote villages of the Ixil area".[7]

If your festival has sufficient funding you can invite international guests—either filmmakers or film protagonists. Both are very attractive to the audience. Filmmakers can provide interesting details about how the film was made and about their personal relationship to the theme.

Seeing a film's protagonist is an especially profound experience for the audience. If you are not able to bring an international guest from the film you can also find someone with a similar life story locally. Usually his or her direct testimony is stronger than the analysis of an expert. Both combined (protagonist/expert) can also result in a more in-depth discussion, with one providing a first-hand account and the other offering a larger context.

If resources are limited you can also opt for a Skype call with the filmmaker. In 2009, the Movies that Matter Festival in The Netherlands screened *In Prison My Whole Life* about (at that time) death row inmate Mumia Abu Jamal. His lawyer was present and arranged a telephone call with Abu Jamal from prison. In this way, the audience was able to remotely ask questions to the imprisoned writer and activist.

When you invite your guests share your ideas on the specific content of the debate or Q&A, its format and, if applicable, the other guest speakers. If they are unable to participate you may ask them for suggestions in order to use their network to find alternative guests. If possible, it is also advisable to provide the guest speakers with an online link or DVD copy of the film in advance so that they can better prepare for the discussion. Make sure you know what language(s) they speak ahead of time in order to organise translations if needed. You can ask your guests to spread the word about your event, for instance through social media or via the communications channels of the organisation they represent.

Be prepared for a last-minute guest cancellation. If possible, identify alternative guests and a moderator just in case, and be prepared with a Plan B.

Guests and audience during Q&As at Derecho a Ver in Colombia. Photo: Archive of Movies that Matter.

Moderators

The role of the moderator is to encourage audience members to ask questions, help them digest the film and direct the debate by keeping time -- allowing as much participation as possible while also navigating sensitive or tense debates. Depending on the format or complexity of the issue the moderator does not necessarily need to be an expert on the topic or a professional moderator. It is more important that he or she knows how to encourage and maintain a dialogue. The moderator's charisma plays a big role but be aware that one with a particularly strong personality may dominate the discussion, relegating invited guests to a secondary position. You can help your moderator with talking points so she or he can more easily address substantive human rights issues during the discussion.

Some festivals have had good experiences with using professional TV and radio journalists. They are well trained for moderation and at the same time help to promote the festival's activities in the local media.

The best way to prepare the moderator for the discussion is to make sure he or she sees the film in advance, understands the issues raised and how they may relate to local reality, knows the guests' background and has at least two starting questions prepared as ice-breakers in case no one in the audience wants to ask the first question (people are sometimes too shy to ask or need a bit of time to formulate their questions).

The ideal moderator knows the local protocol formulas, respects cultural diversity and local traditions, does not feel a need to dominate the debate, is able to leave the floor to the audience and always acts respectfully. At the same time, he or she is able to intervene gracefully but firmly in case of offensive remarks from the audience. If there is a clash of opinions it is important that the moderator remains neutral, eases the situation and lets people express a wide range of opinions.

At One World Prague the moderator meets the speaker(s) at least 15 minutes before the screening to introduce him or herself and consult with the speaker about the prepared questions, the structure of the debate, how to introduce the guest, etc. The moderator should conclude the discussion by thanking guests and audience members for their contributions.

Examples

In 2011 a mobile cinema project in Peru screened films about the Peruvian mining industry, *The Devil Operation* and *Tambogrande, Mangos, Murder Mining*. The organiser reported: "Despite the different geographic and cultural contexts, the audiences all reacted emotionally to the films, perhaps because they touch upon issues affecting all Peruvians, and stories that are usually suppressed or ignored by the mainstream media. During screenings and discussion periods we saw faces stained with tears, heard shouts of anger, calls for justice and even plans for action.

In areas directly affected by mining activity, audience members called for the formation of 'video defenders.' In urban areas, like Chiclayo and Lima, audience members involved in advocacy campaigns to support Peru's mining communities called on the public to sign petitions and get involved. Several communications students in Chiclayo said they would travel to the countryside to document struggles of farming and indigenous communities as part of their studies".[8]

In 2014, the Freedom Film Festival in Malaysia organised a forum called "South East Asian Video Activism". Two short films were screened and different guests were invited. A Burmese filmmaker spoke about how he addressed the topic of freedom of expression in the current political situation of Burma. A Chinese guest showed how Chinese artists use the camera to record officials, sometimes as a response to the surveillance to which they are subjected. A program manager from WITNESS pointed out how video activists can deal with security issues. An intense discussion evolved about the responsibility of filmmakers towards their protagonists and how to prepare them for the effects that participating in a film project might have on their lives.

To adapt your debates to the local context, it is advisable to invite local experts. In 2013, Film Aid organised a film festival in the Kenyan refugee camps Kakuma and Dadaab. The public discussions after the film screenings were about the rights of refugees and the portrayal of refugees in the media. Another expert panel discussed how the Kenyan media has tried to deal with issues around tribalism and xenophobia, and the role of art in addressing social issues. The panels were comprised of a mix of experts from the camp (filmmakers, social activists) and experts from international organisations (UNHCR, Amnesty International).

In Cameroon, during the Bamenda Human Rights Film and Arts Festival 2013, various panel discussions were held on topics related to violence against women, human trafficking, discrimination of girls and domestic violence—topics that were featured in many of the festival films. According to the organisers, there is not only a culture of shame on these topics, but also a huge knowledge gap. Most youth and women in the Bamenda municipality are ignorant of the law; they do not know that any laws exist to punish human rights abuses. In addition, many people are hesitant about whether a police officer or judge would imprison another man for raping a woman. Local experts were asked to comment on the films and on these matters in panel discussions, which developed into consultative, almost therapeutic sessions. For example, in one of the debates a woman in her late 30s confessed to have hidden the fact that her seven year-old daughter was raped. She said she did not want any member of the public to know for fear that her child would be stigmatised by friends and classmates. One of the panellists, the executive director of the Bamenda-based Centre for Human Rights and Peace Advocacy, remarked that women should not

protect someone who has raped their children. The same woman then revealed that she was afraid that her husband would push both of them out of the family home. Understandably, many of the festival debates were very passionate and emotional; some members of the audience requested immediate action on some of the issues raised. At the end of the discussions, several people specifically confirmed their engagement to take action, on a (local) political level.

Practicalities

It is advisable to have one person within your team who coordinates the Q&A's and debates and is in touch with the guests, moderators and translators.

When scheduling the festival programme, don't forget to factor in time-slots for debates (as well as the time needed for translation of a debate, if required). If the allotted time for a debate is not sufficient you can invite the audience to continue in a space close to the screening hall, such as a classroom, lobby or café.

Debate participants should be comfortable. Make sure that your moderators and guests are sitting on comfortable chairs or standing in an adequate spot in front of the audience, and provide them with drinks (if the event is long make sure they are able to sit down). Treat them as you do other festival guests; give them a programme brochure so that they can get a sense of the entire event and attend other sessions if they wish.

Technical problems can easily ruin a debate so check all your technical needs ahead of time and again on the day of the event. Check if there are enough microphones, if necessary, and whether they are working. Are there enough seats? Is the lighting right? Will additional microphones be needed for the audience?

Some guests or professional moderators may request a fee for taking part in the discussion. If you are not able to pay a fee, a token gift basket with books or DVDs may serve as appreciation for the time and effort put in by the moderator or guest(s).

Wider Outreach

Discussions and Q&As often work as a litmus test because you can see how the audience responds to the film and its message. As organiser it is good to attend as many discussions as possible to get a sense of people's reactions. This will help you design your next program.

Don't forget to take photographs of the event that can be shared on your website and social media networks. It may also be a good idea to have one of your team members note down some salient points that came up during the discussion or Q&A. This can be shared as part of the report for your funders and partners, as well as on your website and social media networks. There is a wide audience beyond those who can physically attend the festival, and they are also interested in your festival and its topics and

films. For example, in Papua New Guinea debates have been recorded by national radio and broadcasted live across the country. The partnership with the national and local media has had a positive impact in bringing human rights education and debate to remote areas of the country, as radio is the major source of information for the majority of the population in Papua New Guinea.

Main tips

- Invest in a good moderation/facilitation.
- Make sure the guest speakers and the moderator connect with your audience.
- Adapt your debates to the local context and be ready to avert/diffuse tensions.
- Inform your audience ahead of the debate and be ready with ice-breaker questions.
- Address technical needs such as microphones and translations.
- Prepare content ahead with guests and moderator.
- Always have a Plan B in case of last-minute guest cancellations.

Filmography

The Devil Operation (dir. Stephanie Boyd, 2010).
In Prison My Whole Life (dir. Marc Evans, 2007).
Tambogrande, Mangos, Murder Mining (dir. Ernesto Cabellos, 2007).

---

[1] Jerald Joseph (board member of Pusat KOMAS, organiser of Freedom Film Festival in Malaysia), September 2014, Petaling Jaya, Malaysia.

[2] Abdoulaye Gaye (Director AfricanBamba Human Rights Film Festival), festival plan for the AfricanBamba Human Rights Film Festival, Senegal, 2014.

[3] Abdoulaye Diallo (Director Ciné Droit Libre), festival plan for Ciné Droit Libre, Burkina Faso, 2014.

[4] Simone Dalmasso (member Colectivo Cine en la Calle), report for Cine en la Calle, Guatemala 2013.

[5] Andrea Kuhn (Director Nuremberg International Human Rights Film Festival) in response to a questionnaire that was distributed to members of the Human Rights Film Network.

[6] Artchil Khetagouri (Director CinéDoc), presentation at the Mobile Cinema Workshop organised by Movies that Matter, November 2013, Amsterdam, The Netherlands.

[7] Simone Dalmasso (member Colectivo Cine en la Calle), report for Cine en la Calle, Guatemala 2013.

[8] Stephanie Boyd (Asociación Quisca and director *The Devil's Operation*), report for Media that Matters Film Series, Peru, 2011.

Who Is Organising It? Importance of Production and Team Members

Written by Andrea Kuhn, with feedback given by Matthea de Jong, Lena Hendry and Abdoulaye Gaye

How many people does it take to organise a festival, and what do those people do? This chapter will look at the most important jobs at a festival, as well as discuss how to structure and organise everyone as a team.

Production Department

First, we will look at an easily underestimated aspect of festival organisation: production. Of course, there is a job connected to this area: the production manager. Make sure to assign this task early on so that you will have someone to look specifically at all aspects of production. Your festival will be a much bigger success if you do; having a production manager can prevent many slightly embarrassing moments that can easily arise if there is no one to keep an eye on the larger whole of the festival because they are each paying attention to the details of their particular job.

And that's exactly what the production department is for. Production gives a "face" to your festival by integrating all the work that everyone is doing in the background into a smoothly running whole for the public to see. Production creates the look of your event and makes sure that everything is where it should be, when it should be there. It is the link between your festival and its audience. Production is like design—ideally it combines form and function.

Some of its tasks intersect with other departments, such as the technical coordinator or the PR and graphic design people. Production will scout and decorate venues (be it a regular cinema, a football pitch or a courtyard); it will put on shows, ceremonies and special events, organise awards and possibly also organise ticketing. You might not need or want all these different kinds of events at your festival, but even if you organise "only" screenings, you still might want to create an inviting and nice atmosphere; you can do this even in improvised venues by dressing them up a little. You might consider having chairs and a table for a discussion after the film, keeping a bottle of water on hand for your guests, or thanking them with some flowers, etc. That's what production is for.

The more events you organise, the more difficult it can be to stay on top of things. Often it is the little

things that are forgotten. It is therefore vital for this part of your festival team to plan and get organised early on. So let's get more specific.

Planning

Before you start with the actual hands-on work, you need to plan thoroughly what you will need in terms of manpower, materials, and money (or, in most cases, how much money you can spend and what you will realistically be able to get with it). Do this planning well in advance, as it is probably the most important stage of festival preparations.

Permissions

Permissions are an important part of the planning process and usually need to be taken care of well in advance of everything else. You might need a permission to set up your festival as a whole (from a censorship board, ministry of culture, local authorities, etc.). Talk very early on with the people in charge to find out what they need for permissions—or, if you decide that such an official cooperation is impossible, how you can work around that obstacle.

Often you need permissions for quite mundane tasks like hanging a banner in a public place. Again, try to obtain these permissions well in advance and figure out if there are additional costs involved. For some venues, you might need special permissions as well. For example, if you build extra stands at improvised venues, you might have to observe building regulations. Since permissions can be an essential part of finding suitable venues and advertising your festival, they are typically handled by the production department.

Venue(s)

When deciding which venues to use, production will look at the places in question in terms of capacity (for instance, an opening ceremony might require a bigger place than a regular screening), convenience and attractiveness. Production will discuss these elements in close coordination with the technical coordinator *(see chapter "The Nuts and Bolts: Technical Production")*, and will also plan events at specific venues according to their technical possibilities. For a travelling film festival with constantly changing screening venues, this is quite a task that requires a lot of planning ahead and visits to specific venues. For a bigger and more static festival, this might require finding a number of venues for different uses. If you want to go all out, here are some things to keep in mind when planning for specific venues and events:

Screening Venues

How many people do you expect to show up at your screenings? Based on that, make sure you have venues big enough to get people in, but don't overplay your hand. There's nothing more embarrassing than having a big venue and a very small crowd. Be realistic for the first edition of your festival; you can always expand the following year.

Volunteers are an important part of the festival team at Nuremberg Human Rights Film Festival in Germany. Photo: Archive of Nuremberg HRFF.

Choose a venue that is already a popular place, easily accessible (by public transportation), and accessible to your target groups. For open-air screenings, choose a popular, central place.

Venues should be chosen in order to provide audiences easy access (in the evening, by foot or public transport), also considering the economic resources available to people trying to reaching the festival. If, for example, the festival is easily reachable by foot and close to home, it will be easier for low income families to get to a screening, even at night. If the festival is far away, your audiences would need to take public transport, which is an additional cost. If your program is at night, it may not facilitate participation, especially from youth, the elderly, and women—unless the festival provides bus passes and escorts for security in the evening to get back home. You might need to consider other security issues as well when picking your venue. Please consult the *"Film Festivals with Guts: Security and Censorship"* chapter for more information on this.

Can you get all the electricity you need at the venue you choose, or fit in a suitable generator? Extra electricity/power supply may need to be purchased to supplement the existing supply. It is very important when choosing a venue for the festival that electricians fully check the electrical system of the venue to verify it is secure. If the venue of choice already has some or most of the technical equipment you'll need, all the better.

Identify areas that you can use for promoting your festival inside and outside the venue. If you are screening in a building or an enclosed space, let people on the outside know what's happening inside, and show them what event they are attending once they are inside. This becomes particularly important if your venue is part of a larger structure like a university or a multiplex cinema. Help people find their way by guiding them with signs that are easily detectable and that share the logo/artwork of the festival. Orientation is very important especially for international guests who might not speak the local language and cannot easily ask their way around.

Special Venues for Shows, Ceremonies and Special Events

Find the most suitable venue in terms of seating capacity and existing technical equipment; for special events, the requirements might be very different from a general screening. If you want to include a reception before or after an event, consider whether you have a suitable space at or nearby the venue, or if you will have to transform the space itself. And if so, how much time do you need for that, and what will you do with your guests in the meantime? Perhaps a little drink will help them pass the time while a sufficient number of volunteers stack chairs and help the band set the stage for a short concert, etc. If you need to transport your guests from one place to the next, make sure you've organised a shuttle service or private cars.

Festival Centre

The festival centre is usually the place where your guests can meet and where they can get all the information they need, from their accreditation to tickets. It might be where guests come together after the last screening of the day or where they choose to hang out during the day because they know they can always meet someone there. If you want to have a festival centre for your festival, location is very important. The festival centre should be easy to reach for everyone and clearly identifiable. Don't forget to state opening hours in promotional materials.

If possible, the festival centre should be in a location that offers free Wi-Fi and has all the technical equipment your team will need to run a festival office—computers, internet, printer, xerox machine—or that your guests might need to use. The festival centre might provide separate spaces for your guest services and your press office. If so, make sure these areas are easy to find. Decorations in the festival centre should make your guests feel that they really are at the heart of the festival. This can include festival poster and banners, but also posters and promotional material of the films that you screen.

Decorations

Think about dressing up your festival to give people a sense that they are attending a special event and to create a consistent look for your event. Decide on a festival logo which might include specific fonts and colors; use these as a guideline for all other aspects of production. To decorate your festival you can use everything at hand, from flowers to plastic banners to roll-ups to handmade decorations. There is no best way to do it, just keep in mind that all elements share a general design, colors, etc.

To save on your budget, you should look for elements that are easy to assemble/disassemble, easy to transport und reusable at different locations or for the next festival edition. Banners, for example, are both great for PR and provide helpful orientation for your guests. If some materials will be used outdoors, prepare them according to weather conditions. Banners, for example, must survive gusts of wind, rain, sun or snow depending on where you're located; be sure they come with loops or eyelets for fastening them to structures. Find a good printer well ahead of time and make sure that everything is ready at least two weeks before the festival.

Ticketing

Even if you are offering admission to your screenings for free, it can still be helpful to use tickets. Tickets can help you control the number of guests in relation to available seats, and it can help you to keep track of audience numbers. If you decide to use tickets, the production department should find the best place to hand them out. For instance, if people have to pay for tickets, selling them at the entrance can cause a

bottleneck. Selling tickets takes some time and requires enough space for the rest of the crowd to wait for their turn. In this case, it can be useful to have a separate place for your box office and entrance control at the door.

If you use tickets to control your audience numbers, you will need to think of a system for people with special passes such as festival guests or team members. How and where do these guests get their tickets? At special events in particular, you should keep some extra tickets handy for last-minute VIP reservations.

Awards

If your festival wants to give out awards, it is important to weigh the benefit of a nice design against the price you can afford for a statuette or certificate. Check for local talent to design your award; filmmakers will remember the awards that look specific to a place and event and not like catalogue pieces. Clearly define how many awards you want to present, and determine whether a cash price is attached. If so, do you want to represent the cash prize at your festival and if so, how can that be done (e.g. a super-sized cheque)?

Event Planning

To organise a special event, you should set up a system for inviting those guests who are not filmmakers. Collect and check addresses of important people (VIPs) in your area regularly in order to always be up-to-date. Send out the invitations in time and ask for RSVPs. Make a list of RSVPs to help you make plans.

Write a detailed, minute-by-minute schedule of special events you're planning and hand it out to all the technical staff and the others involved in the event. Don't forget: you're putting on a show! Always test-run any ceremony or complicated special event. That is the only way to find out if everybody knows what to do and if the technical aspects are actually working.

Ask Yourself:

- *Who will give a speech and when?* Don't forget to give everyone instructions on time limits or your event might go on long after everyone in the audience has fallen asleep. Make sure everyone knows when they're meant to speak.
- *What kind of media do you need (PowerPoint slides, film clips, etc.)?* What equipment do you need to use them (consult with the tech department)?
- *Who will moderate?* Choose wisely—a famous host will give you extra publicity, but ask yourself whether they are the right person to moderate an event on sensitive issues like human rights?
- *Do you need translations for international guests?* Don't let your guests sit through a two-hour ceremony without understanding a word! How will you organise the translation? For a small number of guests, a whispered translation might work. For more guests you will need translation equipment and to organise a pick-up point and system.

- *Should there be flowers for special guests, the moderator, etc.?* If so, where will you place them during the ceremony, and how will they get into the hands of the person for whom they're intended? If the flowers are not already on stage, have someone nearby who will hand them to the moderator.
- *What should you do with awards?* Again, where will you place them during the ceremony and how will they get into the hands of the person for whom they're intended? If they're not already on stage, have someone close by who will hand them to the moderator.
- *How, where, and when should pictures be taken by the press and/or your own photographer?* It's usually a good idea to plan specific photo opportunities—such as a group photo of all award winners—immediately after the ceremony and/or a short moment after each award, when the award winner and the jury representative both face the camera. Make sure to have good photos of the important people at your event (politicians, funders, sponsors, award winners, etc.); these photos will be very helpful, both in your press work but also when you want to get those same VIPs on board for the next festival edition.
- *What should you do with funders, cooperation partners and sponsors?* These people and organisations have helped you to put on the festival. Respect that, and give them an opportunity to showcase their contribution. This can be in the simple form of projecting their logos on a screen at some point during the ceremony and having the moderator mention them. The most important contributors can be offered the chance to make a short speech—just remember to give them a time limit!

Whom do you want to address?

In general, you should be aware that you have at least three target audiences for everything you do in production.

- Donors/politicians/press
- General audiences
- International guests/filmmakers

Make sure you determine who needs what, and prioritise those demands.

Donors, politicians and members of the press might expect to be treated as VIPs and might define the success of your event by a certain amount of glamour, grandiosity, etc. After the opening ceremony (if you have one), they usually don't show up again until after the award ceremony (if you have one). For this reason, those kinds of events should look a bit bigger than regular screenings.

While glamour might also be a concern for general audiences, they are primarily expecting good content, discussions, and organisation, etc.

Filmmakers and international guests are normally most interested in the cultural specifics of your area,

Volunteers at the ticket counter at Freedom Film Fest in Malaysia. Photo: Archive of Freedom Film Fest.

and are less interested in streamlined production value and glamour. Still, do not underestimate how much filmmakers value quality screenings of their own films.

A filmmaker spends a lot of time and money in making their film the best it can be, and while they usually understand technical limitations due to rugged screening conditions, etc., they need to know that you are doing the best you can in terms of screening quality. In the same regard, if you put on debates about their films, make sure you have knowledgeable people to moderate them.

Team

The success of your festival depends very much on the team that organises it. For starting festivals, it is usually good to have a core team of two to three people. With a small team like that, expect to be multi-tasking!

Team Positions

Even if you have no money for staff and everyone is a volunteer, it is important to both identify specific areas of work for each person and to distribute responsibilities for particular tasks. Depending on the size of your festival and staff, you might need some people to fill several positions. Here's a short overview of positions that could be vital to the success of your festival and which you should determine well in advance. More often than not, one person fills several of these positions:

- *director(s)*
  This person is usually the "face" and the spokesperson of the festival with tasks such as overall fundraising, representing the festival at other events and teambuilding.
- *programmer(s)*
  This is the person or the people who watch all the films in order to select the festival program.
- *program coordinator*
  Once you have decided on the program, you will need someone to get in touch with all the rights owners of the films, and have them send the screening masters to your festival in time. Quite often, screening masters arrive just in time from another film festival; in that case, the program coordinator has to arrange shipping with the other festival. The program coordinator is also responsible for sending the screeners back right after the festival. Again, this often has to be coordinated with another festival, not the rights owner. A program coordinator requires excellent organisational skills, good English skills to be able to communicate with contacts worldwide and knowledge of the most suitable courier companies in your country.
- *technical coordinator and team*
  They make sure that everything runs smoothly on the technical side.
- *production department*
  This was explained in the first part of this chapter. The position requires creativity, organisational skills and good team spirit, as they will have to work with different departments of the festival.

- *guest coordinator*
  The guest coordinator is the link between your festival and all invited guests, especially international guests. Great organisational and communication skills are required as well as good command of English both in writing and in conversation. This is the person who arranges everything for the guests including accommodation and transport (plane, train or otherwise and transport from/to airport, etc.). To make sure you can always reach your guests if necessary, ask them for their mobile phone numbers in advance and give them yours.

Guest visas are very important to arrange before the festival:

- Organise this in advance! Visas can take forever. It often takes quite some time for your guest to get an appointment at your country's embassy and then the visa process itself can also take a long time. Generally, the visa applicant has to apply for and pick up their visa in person.
- Guests coming from certain conflict regions may face additional complications such as the arbitrary closing of borders and/or airports, or unsurpassable roadblocks. Keep that in mind when timing their trips and always have a plan B in place in case they cannot make it.
- Keep in mind that a guest might have to travel to another country to get the visa if your country doesn't have an embassy or consulate in your guest's home country. Make sure they understand that element.
- Research your country's visa requirements well in advance and pass the information on to your guests.
- If your country's visa can be purchased at the point of entry into the country, everything will be a lot easier, but you should prepare your guests for the process. For instance, they will need to bring or exchange a certain amount of money to obtain the visa, and perhaps passport-size photographs.
- Keep your guests on their toes about this! They usually underestimate the time it takes to get a visa and because of this you can end up without the guest.

Write a welcoming letter/e-mail to your invited guests at least one week before they are due to arrive to give them important information such as:

- The details of their travel arrangements (flight numbers, hotel name and address, pick-up details at airport)
- Important mobile numbers (e.g. guest services, director)
- Their personal schedule (including screenings, Q&As, debates, press interviews)

Prepare a guest map for each individual guest and give it to them upon their arrival. This can include:

- Guest activities (if you have any planned)
- The welcoming letter (see above)
- City map
- Festival schedule and catalogue

- Vouchers (if available)
- Pen (if available)
- Useful information about your city/country (how to obtain internet access, emergency phone numbers, good restaurants, specific customs, etc.)
- Information on which films will be available in English (subtitled or English language)
- Their accreditation/name badge

Accreditations/name badges are usually also handled by guest services. If you want a printed photo on accreditations, ask your guests for them beforehand so you'll have enough time to prepare them. You'll need lanyards or some other device to attach the accreditations. It is useful to print important phone numbers on the back or include a second card with the numbers so that everyone always carries them around. Don't forget that your team will also need an accreditation.

- *press/communications manager*
  Find someone who has good media contacts and also knows how the system works. Great communications skills are paramount for this position. Your press manager has to "sell" the festival and they need to know who needs what materials and when.
- *location manager*
  Always have a staff member at each screening! You need someone in charge; this person has to make sure that everything is running smoothly and has to intervene when something goes wrong. Good communication skills and strong nerves are definitively assets. Usually this person will make sure that the screening starts on time, and that the projectionist, guests and moderators are on time to their specific venue. The location manager will also make sure that chairs are put in front of the screen for a Q&A, that microphones are ready, water is served, etc. They are the micro-managers of each venue.
- *translators*
  Translators are specialists. If you decide to have an international festival, you can't manage without them. Catalogue texts will have to be translated and Q&As might also have to be translated into English (for the guests) or—if you're a travelling festival—to and from the local language to the festival language.
- *moderators*
  You have to find a good balance between someone who is confident speaking in front of a crowd, interviewing people and handling controversial discussion versus someone who is also knowledgeable in both filmic questions and the subject matter at hand. Be aware that some media professionals, while able to handle interviewing and speaking in front of a large audience, might lack the sensitivity required in human rights contexts.
- *volunteers*
  Volunteers can take over all positions that require fewer specialised skills and less knowledge of the festival. They usually work only during the festival or start shortly before the festival begins. Choose them wisely: they might be the heart of the festival, and a happy crowd of volunteers can be vital for a

good festival atmosphere. Your core team will be on board for a quite a while, will deeply identify with your event and know all about it; others, such as your volunteers, will join you for a shorter period of time and have less knowledge about your program, structure, and the rest of the team. Treat them accordingly and create a structure that brings them up to speed on the things they need to know. Hold orientation meetings with volunteers before the festival so that you can explain the philosophy of your festival, the key tasks that await them, and introduce them to the key players of the festival. A little introductory sheet with the names of the most important people and their function with photographs will help them to identify the person they are looking for from the core team.

Be realistic about what to expect from your volunteers. In societies without a pronounced culture of volunteering and internships, or where people struggle to make financial ends meet, it might be difficult to even find volunteers, let alone reliable ones. Be sure to clearly communicate the benefits of volunteering (e.g. developing organisational and team skills, contact with interesting international guests, and a chance to see loads of films). Be clear about volunteers' responsibilities and their role vis-à-vis the core team. Perhaps you can arrange with local universities, high schools, etc. for students who volunteer at your festival to receive extra credit. People might not have time to volunteer extensively, so try and split up jobs into smaller assignments or organise shifts according to regular business hours or school curricula so that people can join you for a shift after work or school.

Criteria for Jobs

If you're looking for staff, expertise is of course a wonderful thing, but in a low budget film festival other qualities might be almost as important. Everybody needs to be reliable, even if they're not getting paid. Team players are always an asset; creative or technical geniuses are great, but if they cannot work under pressure or around people, it can complicate things a lot. Identify jobs by their relationship to the public: a behind the scenes job might put more emphasis on organisational skills, whereas a position that requires direct interaction with your guests and audience will require stronger communication skills.

Team Structure and Coordination

Assign clear responsibilities to your staff. If someone cannot carry out a task for which they are responsible, they should hand the job over to someone else who will be able to take care of it. Your team structure doesn't have to be hierarchical, but someone needs to be able to get things done when necessary.

Most festivals start each festival day with a staff meeting. This is when you go over the events of the day (or even better, the following day to give you time to make adjustments if necessary) to see if you still need to organise anything and if everything has been taken care

of. This includes the technical details of the screenings (including Q&As if you have any), guest services (who will arrive/depart that day, who needs transportation, who has an interview where and when, etc.) and other organisational matters.

Create a good atmosphere for everyone! Each team member, including volunteers, should feel that they're part of something special, not just cheap labour. They should proudly represent the festival and take it on as their very own. This will help them feel responsible for the success of the festival and ensure friendly and helpful interaction with your audience and guests.

Share Information!

Establish clear communication structures. You have to create a structure that can be used to pass information on to each other. The more informed everyone on the team is, the less errors will be made and the better prepared you will be to react if something does go wrong (and something always does!).

While no single person can know everything, everyone should know who will have what information, and how they can be contacted if necessary (via a list of phone numbers, names, etc.)

Hopefully your festival will run for more than one edition, but even then your team—especially the volunteers—will inevitably change. To ensure consistency, create checklists that summarise the most important and regular tasks for each position that can be used by next year's team/volunteers. They can be adapted and changed based on experience to improve them over time.

Stress

Working for a low-budget film festival demands a lot from everyone involved. Things will get hectic and things will go wrong both before and during the festival, so you should be prepared to deal with high stress levels. Don't take your stress out on volunteers or on other people further "down the food chain" from you. To help keep your team motivated, it's important not to take people for granted; make everyone feel important and part of the festival. Their additional motivation will help reduce errors and create an atmosphere where everyone can deal with problems more easily. Sometimes something extra like a shared dinner for everyone right before the festival can work wonders at bringing everyone closer and motivating everyone that extra bit.

Never forget to thank your team—they deserve it!

Working meetings of a festival team are essential for smooth preparations. Photo: Archive of Karama HRFF.

The Nuts and Bolts: Technical Production

Written by Tomas Johanovský, with feedback given by María Carrión, Sabrina Innocenti Mohamed Ben Halim, Sabrina Mahtani, Gideon Vink

In recent years technical production has changed significantly. Classical screening formats such as 35 mm prints, beta tapes and others have almost disappeared and been replaced by digital formats. Technology changes rapidly, so it is very important for festivals to keep up with new trends. It is possible for your festival to greatly reduce costs and improve quality with the use of new technologies. Still, you should set clear goals and not underestimate technical production, a key component of your festival's success.

A film festival is usually more than just film screenings. You may also be planning galas (opening and closing), special screenings, roundtables and debates, workshops, events for the media, concerts and a host of other activities. Many of these elements have a technical component to them that requires planning, equipment and a technical team in order to carry them out.

For example, Festival del Cinema dei Diritti Umani di Napoli has one central goal: to use locations generally forgotten by the city such as suburbs, artistic places, public spaces, ancient theatres or cinemas that have been closed. The festival is focused on the right of citizens to experience those places. In November 2011, it screened at the Important Church of San Domenico Maggiore in Naples and had to carry all the necessary technical equipment into the church.

Technical production can be especially challenging for start-up festivals, particularly if they are located in communities with few financial resources and/or little infrastructure. If you are planning a new festival, its technical aspects will help you define a format that is manageable for you.

For example, does your community have movie theaters, and will you have access to them? What are the best alternative venues? Do you have reliable sources of energy? What about Internet access? What does putting on a concert entail? A gala? A roundtable?

Purchasing or renting all necessary equipment may be impossible for start-up festivals, particularly those with very few resources. If this is the case for you, try to get donations or loaned equipment. Perhaps some members of your technical team already have computers, or a projector, that they can lend you. Try approaching potential donors such as film and communication schools for in-kind donations or loans of equipment.

For instance, Ciné Droit Libre didn't have any equipment at all when they started the festival, so instead of buying or renting very costly equipment they looked for venues that were already equipped to screen films and tried to partner with those venues. They started the festival in the French Cultural Centre of Ouagadougou, mainly because the centre has a decent film theatre and an experienced projectionist. Over the years, they gained experience and got more equipped so that two years later they were able to do open-air, mobile screenings.

Setting Up Technical Production

- Define in advance all technical production responsibilities. These include obtaining the film in the right format (conversion, digitalization and shipping), setting up film screenings (screening equipment, projectionists), subtitling or interpretation (translations, language versions) and sound (microphones, sound settings).
- Be realistic about your resources and technical possibilities when planning your festival and don't aim too high on the first try.
- Find the right person/team for these responsibilities; they require good knowledge of the medium and it is advisable to select someone who is aware of new trends and can adapt to them.
- Test and check everything well in advance. You will have time for trial and error in the office, but not in front of 500 spectators. Define a timeline that will allow you to correct errors.

Computers and Software

Nowadays, computers and software are the most important equipment for a capable technical production department. You don't have to spend millions in order to get quality equipment. Thanks to technological advances, a PC capable of editing HD video will definitely cost less than 1.000 dollars. Prioritise processor speed (Intel i5 or i7) over storage capacity (portable drives are cheap) and forget about lightweight and long battery life in a laptop (you will be working on AC chargers in your office most of the time) unless your energy sources are unreliable. USB 3 and at least 8 GB RAM is a must; on the other hand, a graphics card is not that important.

For basic tasks, it is a good idea to try and use some freeware programs, such as the following:

Media player: *VLC Media Player* (*http://www.videolan.org/vlc/index.html*)

Editing Subtitles: *Subtitle Edit* (*http://www.nikse.dk/subtitleedit/*) and *KMPlayer 3.9.0.126*, which allows you to have three subtitle lists at the same time (up to two srt. files) and allows you to add error-free Arabic subtitles (*http://kmplayer.en.softonic.com/*)

DVD creation: *Freemake Video Converter* (*http://www.freemake.com/free_video_converter/*)

Format conversion: *Handbrake* (*http://handbrake.fr/*)

Setting up equipment for open space screening at Kawempe grounds in Uganda. Photo: Archive of Manya HRIFF.

For those who work on a Mac there are some good video converting tools available such as *Toast Titanium* (paid) and *MPEG Streamclip* (downloadable for free on *http://www.squared5.com/*)

Most of these programs have well-written manuals available online and perform their functions well. Always make sure that you are using the newest release of the software with all the updates. Updated versions often bring significant new functionalities and stability enhancements. There are professional and costly editing suites (Adobe Premiere Pro, Final Cut, etc.) but you may not need them. If you do not know how to accomplish a specific task, try googling it first. Many video forums and tutorial pages can offer you invaluable help. Wikipedia is another important resource if you want to get into technical details.

Venues and Their Equipment

Find out the technical specifications of the equipment where the festival screenings will be held. Test the equipment beforehand. If you notice that the image is blurred, the subtitles are illegible or the picture is too small or otherwise distorted, adjust the settings first. It this does not help, try to get another projector or call an experienced projectionist.

You do not need a perfect silver screen for a good projection. A plain white wall, a well-stretched white bedsheet on a wall or even the side of a large truck may suffice. Pay attention to sound as well; stereo sound will be adequate for most screenings but you need to make sure that the films will be audible even if the venue is full of people.

For example, Festival del Cinema dei Diritti Umani di Napoli works in suburbs of the city, where there are not good technical tools in many schools, so they very often need to use white walls. They also screen films in places other than cinemas (open spaces, artistic spaces, exhibition spaces, etc.) so it is very important to pay attention to the sound. Many spaces are good for screening a film, but a quality projection is still necessary to reach your audience.

In Sierra Leone, materials for screen construction are limited, so they have always worked with local carpenters to construct a screen and then used white flex banner (the material they use to print on large banners) for the screen. In a case such as this, carpenters might disassemble the screen after each event or you have to find a suitable place to store the screen. Opin Yu Yi's outdoor screenings in public fields attract huge audiences—sometimes over 2.000 people—and so they have learned that they need to have a large, almost multiplex-sized screen so that everyone can see the image.

Pay careful attention that the mobile (foldable) screen is big enough for the audience to be able to see and follow the films. Ciné Droit Libre screens in huge open air spaces and had to adapt screen sizes (and height) to the ever growing public. In the first years, they used a 2x3 meter foldable screen but very soon they were

DVD

Advantages

- Cheap, easy to use
- Every film is available on a DVD (unless it is a new release)
- Can be played on a PC
- Low shipping costs
- Possibility to make several backup copies (for example, for the viewing committee, or several copies for each screening venue)

Disadvantages

- Lower image quality: a DVD comes in SD or standard definition, no HD (high definition) possible
- Many filmmakers don't like screening on DVD
- Can be affected by adverse climate conditions (heat, sand, dirt etc)
- Can get damaged by transport easily so you need to request more than one copy
- For recent releases, many distributors are reluctant to loan them because of fear of piracy

Blu-ray

Advantages

- Not so expensive, easy to use
- Better image quality (HD)
- Can be played on some PCs

Disadvantages

- Can get damaged by transport easily so you need more than one copy
- Can be affected by adverse climate conditions (heat, sand, dirt etc.)
- For recent releases, many distributors are reluctant to loan them because of fear of piracy
- Not many films are available on Blu-ray

Video file

Advantages

- Flexible format with many possibilities
- Can be sent for free over Internet
- Can be easily copied, transferred, duplicated
- Can have very high image quality

Disadvantages

- Requires advanced knowledge; codecs and formats can be complicated
- Needs to be tested before screening
- Image quality may not be ideal

obliged to look for a bigger screen (3x4 meter); nowadays, they use a screen size of 4x6 meters.

It is important to have a decent video projector with a high luminosity (ideally 5000 lumens or better). Video projectors are getting cheaper and cheaper and you can buy one for less than $500 but many projectors are not suited for screenings for larger audiences .

Video projectors are extremely fragile and the lamps sometimes overheat. Older lamps also produce less bright and crisp images. Do a check of all video projection equipement before the festival and have the lamp replaced regularly if you can.

Some festivals are held in remote locations without basic infrastructure: screening in improvised movie theaters under the sky, in a community centre or school, or in a tent. In this case you will probably need to bring in your screening and sound equipment and, if there is no electricity, will need to secure a source of energy, such as a powerful generator. It is important to check your energy source and have a backup plan in case it fails. If ground conditions are tough, make sure the equipment is protected from the elements (sand, rain, heat, etc.). If you hold daytime screenings make sure that you can make the room sufficiently dark.

Recently these types of festivals, especially if they are mobile, are also obtaining inflatable screens for outdoor screenings; these screens work very well and are easily transported. They are expensive and some of them require special projectors, so many mobile festivals that use them obtain them thanks to in-kind donations.

It is important to have a proper storage and inventory system for all of your equipment such as clearly marked plastic boxes so that when packing up screenings at the end of an evening, equipment can be accounted for and does not get misplaced.

Masters for Screenings

Before you start requesting the masters for screenings you should have a clear idea of what kind of formats you can work with and what formats your equipment will allow you to screen from. We recommend using one of these formats depending on your technical knowledge and available equipment. They all have low shipping costs, do not require expensive equipment (they can be played on laptops/PCs) and are fairly common among filmmakers.

If you start a new low-budget festival, begin with DVDs. If you want to improve quality, go for the Blu-ray. If you understand video codecs and formats and want to lower shipping costs, you can also use video files. Video files are distributed on hard drives (or USB sticks) or over the Internet and can be compressed to reasonable sizes (ranging from 2 to 10 GB) without perceptible quality loss.

Most new films are made in high definition (HD). If you want to use HD materials, make sure your projector

and computer support them. Common media formats (containers) include .mp4, .mov, .avi and mpeg2. Image quality of the format depends on the codec used, resolution and video bitrate. Nowadays the best quality/file size ratio can be obtained using H.264 codec. This codec is available for free in various conversion programs (including *Handbrake*, mentioned above).

Resolution of the video should be full HD (1920x1080 pixels) for most films, though HD (1280x720 pixels) is also acceptable. Try to avoid screening only DVD quality (720x576 pixels) if possible. Video bitrate suitable for screening on large cinema screens starts at 5.000 kbps; reasonable boundaries for the video bitrate stop at 20.000 kbps. More bitrate means more image quality but also higher demands for computers and video players used. Common media players can play nearly all available formats without any problem and include all the codecs in the installation file (*VLC Media Player*). If your Internet connection is good, you can save money with online transfer of the screening data (through FTP, *Dropbox*, *WeTransfer*, etc.)

All these formats may present a problem if you are screening a recent film with a commercial release, especially if the DVD version is not yet available for sale. Distributors are fearful of piracy and thus very reluctant to send DVD, Blu-ray or video files—even in the case of human rights-related films. Make sure you build trust when dealing with the distributors. You should avoid screening films with watermarks or other visible logos if possible. If you have rights to screen the film you should get a copy without a watermark from the distribution company. You will have to do a lot of cajoling to get them to send the films and then you should keep your word and not allow copies to be made and distributed. (Sometimes filmmakers prefer to come with the only copy of their film on a DVD or Blu-ray and go back home with their copy to avoid such problems with the distributors)

There are other professional formats available: 35 mm prints, HDCAM tapes and DCP masters. These formats require expensive equipment to be played and highly complicate other tasks such as subtitling. You generally should be able to convince filmmakers to send you a Blu-ray or a video file instead if quality is a concern.

Language Versions

When you are requesting screening formats don't forget to specify what language versions you need. English subtitles are usually offered but you can also ask for French, Spanish, Arabic, German, etc. versions. If you are 100% sure your audience understands the language of the subtitles already included, you can save yourself a lot of work and money on translation and subtitling.

However, you may encounter a film you want to screen that has not been subtitled to your language. If you want to translate the film to your language you need to request the *dialogue list* (the transcript of

Outdoor screenings require lots of technical equipment. Photo: Archive of Opin Yu Yi.

everything what is said in the film) and/or the *subtitle list* (list of the subtitles, different language versions can be available) with *time codes* if possible. The person working on the subtitles needs to be reasonably experienced, as they will need to work with the film's time codes in order to adapt new subtitles to the film's dialogues if you plan on screening additional subtitles on the main projection screen. Often the film will be in several languages and subtitle lists will not include all dialogues. If the film has hearing-impaired subtitles, this list will be the most complete. Time codes must include hour/minute/second/frame in the specified format. The most common and widely used subtitle format is .srt. Another option is to set up small additional screen, laptop and projector for subtitles only and use the freely available program *Clickshow* (*http://clickshow.xf.cz/*). With Clickshow, you do not need to work with time codes, but you do need a person to manually advance the subtitles during the screening.

Subtitling can be costly and time-consuming. We recommend that you evaluate your audience's capacity to read a film's subtitles, especially if it is a "new audience" not used to watching films in other languages, in order to determine whether they are ready for this type of screening. To reduce costs, try to cooperate with other film festivals who use the same subtitling language when you screen the same films.

Ciné Droit Libre often works in rural areas with illiterate audiences. From their experience, they have found that subtitled films can be difficult to screen. Even those who are able to read the subtitles have difficulties following the films because they are not used to them. They sometimes make a dubbed version of a film with French voices, but this is very costly and has to be done in a professional sound recording studio. They often aren't able to screen some of the best films from the festival simply because there is no French version available. However, when screened for a seated audience in a more "intellectual" environment, some subtitled films can be used without problems.

Different Approaches to Subtitles

When subtitling the films, you can either use double or triple subtitles (when your audience needs more than one language) or use only new subtitles, hiding the original subtitles. Subtitling takes time; expect the translation and subtitling of a film to take approximately two to six weeks. Another possibility is using simultaneous translation. It requires at least a microphone for the interpreter, though much better quality can be achieved with an interpreting booth and receivers with headphones for the whole audience. Manya Human Rights Film Festival in Uganda organises grassroots screenings in video halls, which are small venues. These screenings are live-translated by a VJ into the local language in order to better include the semiliterate and illiterate members of the audience. At Ciné Droit Libre, a presenter will often explain the film and its content in the local language

before the screening begins. After the screening, the debate is often held in multiple languages (French and local languages) and many people ask questions to better understand the film they saw.

Simultaneous translation requires only a few days of preparation, but the equipment can be expensive. The last possibility is dubbing, which is generally too expensive for smaller festivals and takes approximately four weeks.

Check, Check, Check

Check all the films before the screening. Find volunteers or ask people in the team to watch the entire film carefully and instruct them on how to identify problems (missing subtitles, damaged picture, lack of synchronization between image and sound, a different format from what you requested, etc.). Conduct the technical check well in advance so you still have time to ask for a new master copy if necessary. This technical check is very time consuming, but believe us, it is worth it. If you use additional subtitles, check them as well. It is also a good idea to check the screening equipment in all the screening venues with your actual films. If your screening includes more than one film without a break, it is always better to copy the films to a hard drive, in order to avoid awkward DVD-changing moments. Hard drives are also less likely to be damaged than DVDs. Modern software players (VLC, KM player, etc.) have an option to play DVD files from the hard drive and also allow you to use playlists for seamless playback. If for some reason you have to screen from a DVD/Blu-ray directly, at least cover the projector or use the Blank function on the projector remote control during the disc swap.

Film Checklist

- *Film arrives* – check the whole film (if possible directly on your screening equipment)
- *Subtitles are made* – check spelling mistakes, synchronization with the film.
- *2 weeks before the festival* – check the film with subtitles in the screening venue, also check audio levels.

Have a Back-up Plan

Try to have as much done as you can before the festival starts. Your plan should include not only the ideal conditions, but also back-up plans for many scenarios—such as the sudden break-down of a projector, a defective film copy, a film that does not start, faulty sound or a power outage. Put simply, be pessimistic: try to predict what could go wrong and be prepared to react. It is essential to have additional copies of the films in one place. If you use video files, have a back-up portable disk with all the films for each of your technical staff to carry around with them all of the time. Be ready to produce a back-up DVD in case there is a problem with another film format. At FiSahara they recommend having three copies of each film:

one on a DVD or Blu-Ray and the other two in two different hard drives.

At Opin Yu Yi in Sierra Leone their back up system involves making two digital copies and a back-up DVD. They give a programme run-through with timing to projectionists so that they know what to screen and when, and during film change-overs they make sure that a volunteer or the Producer is on hand; this way, in case any issues or problems arise the projectionist does not have to deal with them alone. They also try to get as much back-up equipment as possible (for example, a projector and a generator) and ensure there is more than enough petrol to last the generator for the entire evening.

If you are working in a remote location and have a small team, have a back-up plan for your technical team as well, in case a member becomes sick or is suddenly unavailable. At FiSahara they make sure that more than one person knows how to work the projector, the sound equipment and the computer. Have each team member note down their main tasks and checklist and share them with the whole team.

Inform and explain to your audience when something is going wrong; nothing is more awkward than a long silence when the film does not play like it should. The presenter for the evening can explain what is happening and make the wait more bearable. If the audience understands the problem, they will be more willing to wait a little while to have it solved.

During the Festival

- Check the screening schedule, appropriate screening formats, settings and language versions daily. Your technical team should share a daily checklist that includes this information. Post the list in all festival locations.
- For some festivals, it works to have a daily morning meeting with the technical and production team to go over the day's activities in order to address any last-minute changes and identify and correct problems. One person from programming should also attend.
- For some festivals, especially those in remote locations, it helps to have the team connected via walkie-talkie in addition to mobile phones.
- Projectionists often have a good gauge of audiences. If you need to evaluate audience participation, interest, or capacity to follow films/subtitles, ask the projectionists to note down their observations during film screenings.
- Make sure you have enough spare cables, adaptors, projectors and other equipment in case anything needs to be replaced. This is especially important in remote locations where purchasing them is not an option.
- Check the logistics every day; some masters might come in the last minute from another festival to you, or some films may be screening in more than one venue at the same time. Prepare a logistics plan for distribution of the screening masters and always keep it updated during the festival.

- Special care should be given to special events such as opening and screening ceremonies, gala premieres, concerts and other occasions. Make sure your sound personnel does the appropriate sound checks for these events. Also, check with the performers (singers, bands, etc.) who perform during opening/closing galas regarding what equipment they might need, especially if they use instruments (i.e. microphones) and have a sound check early on before the performance to check for any issues.
- Make sure that you have enough microphones (and well-charged batteries) for your speakers and guests. Be sure that you are aware what languages the guests speak and that you are prepared for the simultaneous or consecutive translation/interpretation needed.

After the Festival

- Return all rented/borrowed equipment.
- If you have any footage from the festival, edit it and make it public. Send it to those who contributed.
- Keep a festival archive (DVDs, dialogue lists, photo stills from films, etc.).
- Make sure you thank all those who loaned equipment, sent films and otherwise helped to improve the technical quality of your festival.
- Evaluate what went wrong and why and how you can improve it next time. Note down what worked as well. It helps to have an evaluation meeting quite soon after the festival so that team members' memories can still be fresh (for more on this see the chapter on evaluation).

Main Tips:

- *Think first:* Define what needs to done and how; conduct your research.
- *Test equipment:* Prepare and test computers and software you will use; experiment.
- *Venues:* Check all the screening venues and their equipment, and improve them if you can.
- *Masters:* Decide which master(s) you want to use and make sure you get them in advance.
- *Subtitles:* Choose language versions and a subtitling method, and test it beforehand.
- *Control:* Check all the films and subtitles; fix any problems.
- *Be flexible:* Be ready to improvise, come up with solutions and use alternatives.

How to Successfully Promote Your Festival

Written by Bohdana Rambousková, with feedback given by Anna Har, Sabrina Mahtani, Ella McNeill, Kumjana Novakova and Celia Turley

You have spent a long time carefully selecting films and building up a catchy programme, inviting interesting guests and coming up with attractive accompanying events for your festival. However your country and your media are not yet familiar with the festival; in fact, they do not even know that it exists. In order to make the festival successful, you need to let people know about your event and make them want to become part of it.

Even though your team has worked hard to put together a rich programme, you can lose potential audience members if you try to introduce the festival to the public in all its complexity. You will be much more successful in addressing your audience if you pick a few fundamental aspects that represent the festival. Focus your communication strategy on those few flagship issues. Then, try your best to link each issue with a film and an invited guest (such as a film's director or protagonist). For a newly launched event, only simple, straightforward communication can create public understanding quickly.

This rule especially applies when it comes to the media, who will only publish or broadcast news about your festival if they can easily understand what the event is about and are able to get directly to the point. Prepare a clear set of information to present to the media:

- An exact title of the festival
- Dates and locations
- The aim of the festival (or an aim of the current edition)
- Content (theme, programme categories, accompanying events, guests)
- Who stands behind the festival (organisers, sponsors and partners)

Challenges in Promoting Human Rights Issues:

- When the majority of people hear the term "human rights", they immediately imagine suffering and violence. *It is important to always stay positive.* Avoid criticism and complaints about injustice by replacing them with a proactive and hopeful approach that focuses on efforts to make change.
- Human rights issues are usually difficult and complex. Present them through *stories of human lives. Avoid empty or tired symbols, and instead* look for new angles. As a creative organisation , *be creative!*
- Persuade the public and media that human rights issues are important, engaging, interesting, and relevant to their own lives. *Show people how civil activism can bring a change to their lives*, what has

been achieved through activism in other countries and draw parallels with problems in your country.

Reminders for New Festivals:

- The media will not go looking for your festival. You must contact them and show them that you have something to offer. *Use your personal contacts*. Call any journalists you personally know or invite them for coffee to talk about the festival. They will much more likely listen to you than someone who has never heard your name before.
- Prove to the media that you are a professional organisation by providing them with *well-prepared materials* (information, photos, quotes, commentary or video material). Well designed, slick marketing material will help ensure they take you seriously. If you can't afford designers, put out a call for volunteer designers who might want to build their portfolio.
- *Getting visibility is easier through media partners*. Cooperation between a festival and a media outlet (i.e. a newspaper, a website, a radio, a TV outlet) is beneficial for both parties and ensures more widespread media coverage. However in order to get a media partner for your festival you must present them an attractive offer: interesting content (such film premieres or guests who are available for interviews), free tickets to screenings for both management and employees of the media partner, cinema audiences that correspond with the partner's target audience and branding, as well as promotional opportunities within the festival (such as logo placement and social media cross promotion).
- A media partner will pledge to publish information about the event in pre-determined formats (e.g. a full page article two weeks prior the event, an interview with the festival director the day prior to the event, a film review each day of the festival, etc.). In return, you will pledge to promote the media partner during the festival (e.g. offering full catalogue page for the promotion of media partners, printing their logo on all printed festival materials, showing their promotional spot before each screening, giving out free copies of their newspaper to your audience, etc.).
- *Treat journalists as VIPs.* Send them a personal invitation to the festival's opening, send them the full program when you launch, book their seats in the first row, etc. They will appreciate this effort on their behalf.
- Use social media. Create a festival Facebook page, Twitter account, Instagram, and YouTube or Vimeo channel. Publish small pieces of information about how preparation for the festival is going, introduce members of your team and share funny stories from behind the scenes. Upload film trailers on your Vimeo or YouTube channel, as well as your festival promotional video, and promote each screening. If you manage *to build a strong following on Facebook or Twitter*, it is likely that journalists will notice and will even start to use that online community as a source of information.

Taking photos of festival audience at Opin Yu Yi Human Rights Film Festival, Sierra Leone. Photo: Archive of Movies that Matter.

So-called *ambassadors* can help a newly-launched festival by promoting it in their social groups (at universities, high schools, NGOs, political or cultural environment). Look for *influential personalities* from different social backgrounds, introduce them your festival and ask them to spread the news in their own circles. Remember that a personal recommendation can be much more valuable than any official content published in the media.

Once you establish yourself, you might look for more professional help with public relations. For example, after three editions, Human Rights Arts & Film Festival in Australia paid for services from a PR agency who had experience working in film; they found this additional help with PR made a significant difference in the amount of press they received as well as their audience numbers.

The Importance of a Communication Strategy

A communication strategy is a fundamental document that lays the foundations for all of your communication activities. Do not panic about this document though; you don't need to spend time drafting dozens of pages. In fact, your communication strategy can be just a single page. Basically, it should be a plan stating how much money and time you have and how you will spend it. You might think that because your festival is small, you can keep your plan in your head, but this isn't the case. No matter the size of your festival, it is very useful to sort out your thoughts and get them down on paper. This will give you a much clearer vision of what your resources are and what goals are feasible.

Drafting a communication strategy means that you identify the best methods of communication for each of your target groups. You must decide what you will communicate to them as well as how, where and when that communication will take place. First, *identify your target audience(s)*. Determine which social groups the festival wants to reach, and based on that, you will be able to determine the most fitting messages as well as the best ways to deliver them to each target group. Most likely, you will have more than one target group. You need to tailor your communication not only to your desired audience but also to journalists, partners and sponsors, politicians, etc. *Each of these target groups will have their own characteristics and needs.* As a human rights festival, your core audience is going to be people involved in human rights, social justice, NGOs and other similar sectors. Focusing on this audience is a great place to start as they are already converted to the cause.

The second aspect you need to take into consideration is the amount of *financial funds available*. Of course it would be wonderful to have a massive TV campaign, but most likely you lack the funds to make this happen. In many countries, it is also impossible to cooperate with mainstream media. Instead, consider low-budget solutions that can be effective; often they are much more creative and fun.

For example, The Human Rights Arts & Film Festival in Australia asks volunteers or media companies to create a festival trailer for free. Once the program launches, the trailer is posted to social media with instructions to "share" it via Facebook pages and Twitter to gain momentum. All staff, volunteers and partners also share the same link on their social media accounts.

Another idea is setting up a volunteer "information booth" in a visible location that is close to where the festival is being held. In the days leading up to the festival, people can come and grab a flyer and talk to volunteers about when the festival begins as well as what it is all about, what films they should see, etc.

Your festival's *communication strategy can include* posters, social media, radio, press releases, press conferences, advertisements, newsletters, interviews, etc. Know that you do not need to do it all. In fact, for a new festival, a solid base can be created by focusing initial efforts on a few local media outlets that are likely to reach your target audience, deciding how many press releases to publish, and planning a press conference. Once your communication strategy is drafted, do not forget to write all items into a calendar so that no deadline is missed.

Campaign

A campaign should be a vital part of your communication strategy. Your festival needs a clear visual identity that the potential audience will easily comprehend and that will distinguish the festival from other events. Surely you will need a poster, e-promotional materials, maybe a video. More precisely, we speak about a *key visual* that will be later used in various formats (posters, videos, invitation cards, tickets, T-shirts, Facebook cover photo etc.).

How to Develop a Key Visual?

Your festival needs a clear visual identity that the potential audience will easily comprehend and that will distinguish the festival from other events. You will need to develop a *key visual* that can later be used in various formats including posters, videos, invitation cards, tickets, T-shirts, your Facebook cover photo, etc.

There are different approaches to creating a key visual that connects with your festival programme:

- The programming can team pick a theme for the festival and build the programme around it. Go for a theme linked to current affairs in your country that occupy people's minds. After selecting fitting films, you will be better able to create a key visual reflecting the same theme. Try to communicate the specificity of the festival edition and its theme visually.
- However, in some festivals, the team organises its work differently. The programming team often selects films they like from those that were submitted to the festival. It can be a challenge to present

such a diverse selection of films to the audience in a unified way. Try to look for what the films have in common and group them under a single narrative. Perhaps you notice that your programme is primarily comprised of films about various non-democratic regimes or films about strong women or films about problems rooted in a lack of education. Then try to translate that theme to your key visual.

- If you are unable to find one human rights issue or theme that unifies the film programme, you can also select a key visual that communicates a creative insight into human rights. You can look for a concept that is visually captivating, is unique and that attracts people to your program. You may want to use the key visual to try and overcome stereotypes of what a human rights film festival would be and surprise audiences into engaging with a program that is inspiring and high-quality (characteristics that are often not immediately associated with a HR film festival). This way, you will be seen as a *creative* organisation rather than a human rights organisation. This strategy may not work for everyone, of course.

Ultimately, developing a key visual means selecting a distinctive image that provides insight into the festival's values and that can help you connect with your audience on an emotional level. An engaging visual will enable you to get the attention of your target group and to create a relationship with them. If they like your poster they will be willing not only to come to the screenings but also to buy stickers, T-shirts and other merchandise, which will be a welcome addition to your budget and will also help to further publicize the festival. When creating a visual, be sure to also think about its various uses; for instance, be prepared with both portrait and landscape layouts as needed for posters, leaflets, programme brochure, Facebook cover photo, etc.

Campaign Distribution

Now that you have your key visual and communication strategy ready, you can better decide what kind of promotional materials to produce and where to place them in order to get them to the right people.

Here are the most common examples of promotional materials:

Posters: Display them at places your potential audience regularly visits—at a university, cultural venues, around the cinema where the festival will take place, as well as popular spots in the city including cafés and shops.

For example, leading up to the Opin Yu Yi festival the team does a mass-postering for the event across the city of Freetown. Large banners are also placed at key transportation locations, such as the Cotton Tree roundabout in the city centre.

Flyers: Give them away in the streets, at cafés, on the university campus, at local churches/mosques, etc.

Radio Spot: Produce a radio spot advertising the festival. Many people who do not buy newspapers will listen to the radio because it is free. In some places, such as Sierra Leone, radio is still the most popular information and entertainment channel. Because of this, Open Yu Yi invests many of its resources in advertising across a range of popular radio stations, allowing them to reach different geographical areas and types of audiences.

Video Spot: This must be in line with your key visual. It can be screened in the cinema to open every festival screening, as well as shown on outdoor screens, shared on Facebook and YouTube, etc.

Stickers: Their production is cheap and people tend to love them. Given them away and put them around town. The reason for this is obvious: if they see your visual often, the public will think that the festival is an important event that they should not miss.

T-shirts: Ask your designers to support you by creating a T-shirt design. Give shirts away to volunteers and festival guests if you can afford it, or sell the T-shirts during the festival for an affordable price. This will not only help you raise you some money, but also the festival will be visible on people's chests for the entire year.

Festival Programs: These can be distributed more widely by paying for their distribution, but you can also save money by asking volunteers to distribute them in their neighborhoods.

Signage: This is very helpful for increasing visibility. You can ask for a partnership with an advertising company, or inquire about free space near your venues. It is very effective to produce a cheap sign or banner to go outside the cinema during the festival.

Media Plan

A media plan is a list of media you want to use to spread your message. It includes not only newspapers or radio but also any other channels through which the festival will be promoted—everything from posters on the playground wall to billboards to social networks to a car driving around the town with a megaphone. The contents of the media plan very much depend on the budget you have available. It should include:

- Spaces for advertising
- Media partners
- Journalists open to cooperating with you

As a new festival, you should aim to have coverage in print media, radio and on the Internet.

There is one more very important communication channel called "*word-of-mouth*"; this refers to the free advertising that comes from people talking to their friends, family, and colleagues about your festival. If you can build excitement about your festival enough so that people will spread the word for you, it will be a huge asset to your promotion. This is simply because

A programme book can be an important part of promotion. Photo: Archive of Freedom Film Fest.

a personal recommendation is always much more persuasive than a corporate-sponsored message. To build word-of-mouth, try to create buzz about your festival in social media, identify and reach out to potential ambassadors as mentioned above, and try to provoke debate. Getting people talking about your festival is the best—and most affordable—form of advertising.

- Opin Yu Yi festival in Sierra Leone creates word-of-mouth advertising by delivering direct invitations to festival events when visiting local schools, colleagues in civil society, and community. This strategy has proved to be a reliable way to grow audiences.
- The team of *Mumbai Women's International Film Festival* in India was desperate due to not having gotten enough publicity. A few days prior the festival, the organisers went to a place where local rickshaw drivers gather and gave them a presentation about the festival. The rickshaw drivers were so inspired by the festival's story that during the following days they told every passenger about the upcoming event. This PR machine reached many people and created a real buzz.

There are other strategies you might consider to create word-of-mouth. You could hold a free "private" screening of one of your best films the week before the festival for industry people (human rights organisations, film students or other film professionals). Ask attendees to spread the word and hand out promotional posters or leaflets. Do ticket giveaways for your audience so they can bring a friend and then tell their friends. Send direct email invitations to key people in the human rights and film industries so they spread the word. Make an effort to promote certain films that might already have a buzz about them (for instance, an Oscar-nominee, or a film by local filmmakers) or publicize a significant international guest. If there is an opening night function or party that the public can attend, be sure to promote it.

Word-of-mouth can also work well on social media; make sure your content is engaging, tag the films and individuals that might be interested in attending, and share information from the program's directors or filmmakers to increase interest. Ask audiences to use a social media hashtag when tweeting or sharing their experiences online, run a competition on Instagram, Facebook or Twitter by asking a question to increase engagement. Online media is a salvation for any festival with tight budget. It is an especially great means of communication if you are targeting a young audience. The costs can be near to nothing and Internet users will help you to spread your messages.

Online Promotion

Facebook: Launch your festival's Facebook profile and you can update people on your programme, guests, behind-the-scenes developments, etc. for free (or for a low price when using advertising tools). Create a Facebook event for the festival's opening

and/or closing ceremony and invite as many Facebook friends as possible. Choose other social networks that are the most popular in your country (e.g. Twitter, Instagram, Google+ and Flickr). Set your profile name to match the title of your festival and use your key visual for the cover photo (that will make it easier for Internet users to find your profile).

Festival Website: Having a website is a must. Keep it easy and user-friendly. Provide basic information about your festival, the full programme and schedule, information about every film you will screen (including trailers, if possible), a map of festival venues, a photo gallery, etc. One nice feature to have is a "My Programme" application that allows users to register and build their own schedule with the screenings they most want to attend.

Other Websites: Ask allied organisations to promote your event via their websites, whether by posting an article, placing a free web banner, or exchanging links. This will help boost your visibility.

Newsletters and Emails: You may find this kind of communication old-fashioned in a time when we rely so much on social media, but it still delivers great results. Emails and newsletters are free, and they only require your time and energy to prepare them. The most demanding step is building a good database of contacts. Start with your friends and ask them to forward your messages on to their own contacts. Grow your contacts by placing a newsletter registration button on your website's homepage, and collecting email addresses in-person during the festival. HRAFF uses MailChimp for their e-newsletter. Though it comes at a cost, it is user-friendly as well as easy to manipulate and design so that your newsletter looks slick and professional.

Securing Media Partners

Media partnership is a pre-arranged cooperation with media. Identify a media outlet with the same or similar target audience as your festival and address the editor-in-chief with a request for media partnership. Start the negotiations at least two months prior the festival.

What you can ask from the media partner:

- Space in the media for articles
- An appointed journalist who will cover your festival
- Advertising space (print advertisements, video/audio spots)
- Promotion through their online channels (social media, YouTube etc.)

What you can offer to a media partner:

- Promotion addressed to your audience (logos, promotional spots before your screenings, participation at your press conference, invitations for opening/closing ceremony and other events, free tickets, distribution of free copies of a printed media texts, etc.).

Outdoor promotion is visible and can be very effective. Photo: Archive of Ciné Droit Libre.

- Building up the media outlet's image as being a humanitarian organisation
- Exclusive information from your festival as well as exclusive interviews with guests
- Promotion through festival channels such as social media, and the festival's website.

As a new festival, be careful about offering your media partners too much as you don't want to disappoint them. Still, even from the beginning you do have attractive benefits to offer and by obtaining some space in the media in exchange for placement of a logo/spot you can secure at least basic media coverage for the festival.

Providing Service to Journalists

Media service is different from media partnership; it includes cooperation with media that is not arranged in advance and is not guaranteed. You offer information/topics to journalists and they themselves decide whether they are interested in covering those topics or not. This is tiring work and does not always come with results. Don't give up, but instead try to offer the best pieces of information to your journalists. Reading an article that was not negotiated through media partnership but was published because the media outlet decided independently to do so is one of the greatest moments for a PR manager!

Do not address all journalists in a mass email or bulk mailing. For each journalist, carefully select the piece of information that you think he or she might be most likely interested in. This means that you will recommend different films or topics to a journalist from a women's magazine than to a political commentator. In order to make these informed recommendations, you will need to have seen all the films from the festival's programme in advance.

The situation with the media is different in each country. As a human rights film festival you may face limitations on freedom of the press or taboos rooted in your society. Be observant of the position of the media and journalists in your country and adjust your ambitions and expectations accordingly.

For instance, in Sierra Leone, journalists receive low wages. Because of this, many try to supplement their wages through a "commission-based model of journalism", or in other words a pay-to-print approach. They expect organisations to pay journalists for writing a story about their events. Opin Yu Yi festival is not willing to succumb to this practice and therefore is not able to obtain satisfactory press coverage. The festival team focuses on using social media instead, and has had great results.

What You Can Offer to the Media:

Apart from dates, places and the theme of the festival, this information can also interest the press:

- Portraits of festival guests or jury members

- Statistics (number of films, guests, and attendance of screenings)
- Awarded films, viewers' favorite films
- Appearances of popular personalities (politicians, actors, etc.) at the event

Films: For each journalist you contact, select two films they might be interested in. Offer to let them watch the films prior to the festival so that they have enough time to write and publish a review.

Interviews with festival guests: Offer to put journalists in contact with filmmakers and protagonists of the featured films; even if they do not come to the festival personally, it is still possible to interview them by email, Skype etc. You can also offer to put them in touch with national human rights activists and experts on the topics featured in festival films.

Photos and trailers: Have high resolution photos prepared for each featured film. Ideally, place them on your website so that journalists can download them easily and place them along their articles. The same applies for film trailers.

Managing Your Media Contacts

A reliable database of media contacts is an essential tool for each PR manager. Read newspapers and magazines, watch TV and listen to the radio throughout the year; if you like an article or reporting style, write down the name of the author and try to find his or her contact details. This can be time consuming but helps to build up your database several months before the festival. There will be no time to do this later. The database you compile should contain the name, email address and mobile phone number of each media contact as well as a note about their position, their topical focus, and any notes on specific articles they end up publishing about the festival. Having detailed information about each journalist allows you to provide a personal approach and to offer them carefully-selected content.

Once the festival is over, don't forget about your contacts for next twelve months. Be sure to keep in touch with them throughout the year in order to maintain good relationship. It is a good idea to send them a wrap-up email or report talking about the successes and achievements of the festival's first edition.

Press Releases

A well-written press release is your key entry point to the media. It must contain relevant information right at the beginning (following the journalistic rules of who, what, when, where, why and how). *Include at least one quote* in the press release, ideally from the festival director. Journalists like quotes because they can reuse them in articles and reports. Be sure to provide contact details for the festival's PR manager or other person who can be contacted for further information. Attach also some high-resolution photos, preferably via Internet links where the images can be downloaded directly.

Do not overwhelm journalists with too much text; a single page of information is more than enough.

When sending a press release, prepare a cover letter that you can be copied and pasted into the body of the email. You can also copy the text of the press release for the convenience of those who read their emails on mobile phones. Always also attach the press release as Word document as well so that journalists can easily download the text and edit it. Remember that a press release should be newsworthy. If you do not have anything interesting to say, do not send out a press release. A worthless press release will make your media contacts angry and they will not pay attention to your future emails.

Suggested press release schedule:

- Two months prior the festival: General information about the festival (the news that a new festival is emerging, as well as its title, type, date and place, aim, organisers, venues, ticket costs, etc.).
- Two weeks prior the festival: An introduction to the festival programme (film categories, most attractive films, festival guests etc.).
- The final day of the festival: An announcement of award-winning films, attendance records, as well as guests feedback.

Of course, it is possible to send out more press releases if anything especially noteworthy occurs, especially during the festival itself. The most important rule is to only *send a press release when you have something new and interesting to say.*

Preparation of a press release will take time. Each sentence must be carefully placed and edited. Once the text is ready, ask someone to proofread it in order to avoid mistakes. Ideally, you should have a draft of each press release three days before you plan to send it out.

Press Conference

It is a good idea to hold a press conference before your event. Some festivals hold a press conference one or two days before their opening; others organise it one or weeks beforehand. Make sure to check beforehand that there is nothing else happening for journalists on the same day that could conflict with their attending your press conference. The exact time to hold a press conference varies regionally; if you are not sure, check with other festivals or NGOs for input. In Central Europe, for example, the best time to hold a press conference is usually between 9 am and 11 am. It is said that Mondays and Fridays are not good days for press conferences because they are too close to the weekend.

You will also need to book a location for your press conference. Do this six weeks to four months in advance; not wait until the last minute. In the case of festivals, the easiest option for a press conference location is one of your festival venues. If that is not possible for some reason, arrange a place that journalists are familiar with going. Send out invitations to

Press conference at FIFDH in Geneva with a famous former football player Eric Cantona who directed a documentary film about immigration and football. Photo by Miguel Bueno.

your press conference four or five days before it takes place. You can try to coordinate this with your local news agency, which should send out a list of upcoming events to journalists on a regular basis. The invitation should be short, and contain all important details—the location, time, topic, who will be speaking, etc.). Be sure to include all of your contact details. A day before the press conference you can remind journalists individually by reaching out through email or with a phone call. Explain why it would be interesting for them to come, but never be pushy. Always check that all the technology at the venue is working before the press conference begins.

Press Conference Checklist:

- Create an attendance sheet where each participant will fill in their name, media outlet, phone number and email address.
- Make several copies of the latest press release
- Create name tags for speakers.
- A CD with PR material or film stills (if you manage to prepare it).
- Prepare a DVD with film trailers and the festival video if you have time.
- Festival catalogues or other materials about your organisation.
- Bring festival passes (if you want to distribute them to journalists).
- Create a 10-15 minute trailer for the best movies from the festival programme. This should be screened before the press conference begins.
- Arrange for a moderator to introduce the individual speakers. Be concise and keep it short, allowing for approximately 30 minutes for the entire presentation, followed by a 15-minute Q&A session. When you speak about the festival programme, keep in mind that not many people in the room have ever heard of these films. Mention the films that received prestigious awards or that have an unusually compelling topic.
- At the end of the press conference, thank everyone for coming, and use the spare moments afterward to speak to journalists directly in order to establish a personal contact.
- Offer catering, such as snacks, fruit, coffee, and tea. It's OK to keep it simple.

In 2015, HRAFF in Australia decided to hold a "program launch" event as an alternative to a press conference; this involved inviting the festival's key stakeholders for a drink and a walk-through of the program. The media was welcome, but the event was more for the festival's partners and supporters. The festival finds that the local media prefers to be sent the films and press releases via email as they as so busy, and so they use an "online launch" that doesn't require as many resources.

Once the Festival Is Over

Communication work does not end with the last day of the festival. Do not rest before wrapping up all feedback and lessons learned. Otherwise, you may

Outdoor promotion in front of the festival venue. Photo: Archive of Movies that Matter.

not ever get back to it later on and will lose valuable data. Send out the final press release with a list of award-winning films, attendance numbers, or any other achievement you can be proud of. Finalize your contact database, noting any information that might be useful to you next year.

Prepare a media monitoring report with all press clippings covering the festival; you will use it when addressing sponsors next year, together with the festival final report. Write a personal message thanking all your media partners and journalists who diligently cooperated with you. Once all this is done, you can then enjoy your success and rest.

Main Hints:

Keep it simple: don't try to communicate everything about the festival in your promotion. Single out a core message that can be expressed in a simple and easy-to-remember tag line.

Build a clear image: your festival should have a consistent identity that makes it easy for the general public and the media to identify it and understand the values behind it. A festival logo and a poster for every annual event is a must.

Look for stories: human rights is a complex topic. Deliver your objectives and messages through interesting and comprehensible stories.

Observe media: read newspapers and magazines, listen to radio stations, and watch TV. Write down the names of journalists whose writings and attitudes you appreciate.

Plan ahead: plan your activities in advance. Write them down in order to make them orderly and feasible.

Think outside of the box: don't fall into despair due to a lack of money for a communication campaign. Many great PR ideas are cheap and simple. Listen to your target audience's needs.

Find ambassadors: within your target audience, search for ambassadors who will promote the festival in their communities. Try to find a public person who can grant you their support in order to lend credibility to your event.

Think positive: believe in what you are doing. Enthusiasm and drive are contagious; pass it on to folks in the media and your audience.

Adding Water to the Soup Pot: Finding Resources for Your Festival

Written by Matthea de Jong and María Carrión

There is no universal way to fundraise for a human rights film festival. A great deal depends on the concrete circumstances in each country, the nature of the festival and the characteristics, experience and capacity of the organisation in charge of planning the event. Being a successful fundraiser is knowing how to search for in-kind donations, develop a diverse financial portfolio and be creative with budgets and resources. In essence, many human rights festivals, especially those in the developing world, are excellent at doing a lot with very little.

Organising a festival in a relatively wealthy democratic country is one story: chances are you will have access to various domestic and international foundations and endowments, as well as public funds from national and regional governments. You will probably not face ethical or political issues in accepting public funding, nor be harassed by authorities or criticised by local media for taking funding from foreign donors.

It is a very different story if you are in a country with a non-democratic, corrupt or otherwise problematic government from which you cannot take any funding without seriously compromising your mission and message.

Festivals taking place in middle and low-income countries and in those seriously hit by financial crises face the challenge of having little access to national and local government grants. These festivals strive to find financing elsewhere and stretch small budgets to the fullest.

Here we want to share some of our experiences and go over some basic fundraising rules. Some of our approaches may not be applicable, but hopefully some of them will spark ideas that you can modify and apply. We have provided a short explanation about the different kinds of sources. You will also find an example of a budget and how these costs will most likely change over time. We end this chapter with a summary of our main tips.

Basic Fundraising Rules

Develop your strategy and write your project plan.
If your festival is just starting out we recommend you conduct research on existing human rights film festi-

vals and contact some for advice and feedback on the kind of festival that you envision. Many of these festivals are familiar with other starting festivals. You can also contact the Human Rights Film Network (HRFN) for advice. The HRFN is not just a cultural organisation; it is a global community for festivals to get feedback and advice, network, partner and defend the filmmaking community from human rights violations. (See *www.humanrightsfilmnetwork.org*).

There are also numerous documents online that offer tips on how to set up and finance film festivals. While each festival has different needs, you are sure to find information that can be useful to your own event.

You will need to define your goals and project set-up and make an estimation of the costs. Develop a project plan with clearly formulated and well-structured ideas, including a timetable.

In general, a project plan includes at least: general and specific objectives; information about your targeted groups; political and social context; expected outcome and evaluation plans; programme description; production/logistical plan; publicity plan; budget (including costs and benefits); financing plan; material and personnel needs (staff/volunteers); and outlook for the future (3-5 years).

Try to be as concrete as possible. If known, include which (kinds of) films you aim to select and why, how many screenings you will organise, what type of guests you will invite, as well as additional events such as roundtables, concerts, exhibits, trainings,

Spend time drawing up a clear, realistic and detailed budget. Estimate your costs carefully and explain how you came up with the numbers so donors and sponsors know exactly what they are subsidising. Also specify your benefits, your other sources of income and the status (confirmed or pending). Try to include an amount in your budget for unexpected costs. Please note that the total expected costs should be the same amount as the total expected benefits.

You can find an example of an application form that is used by Movies that Matter Support Programme through this link: *http://goo.gl/qOa6dK*
You can find an example of a budget here: *http://goo.gl/yAUuaD*

Find suitable financial sources
The sources to finance your festival can be categorised as follows:

- Foreign funds and donors (governments, foundations, international agencies, etc.)
- Domestic funds and donors (non-governmental)
- Public sector (local or national government)
- Corporate sponsors and in-kind
- Individual donations, benefit events and crowdfunding
- Box office, advertising, merchandising and other sources

Good festival posters are always enjoyed by young festival visitors. Photo: Archive of Karama HRFF.

You will find a short explanation per category below.

Diversify your sources

A human rights film festival's funding portfolio usually changes considerably over the years, in large part because donors tend to leave projects after a few years, seeking new ones to fund. Thus, a good diversification of sources is important to secure the continuity of your project. Even if you achieve an initial level of success with a donor, do not rely exclusively on the longevity of that relationship, but instead start to work on identifying additional funders. A good mix between local and international funding is ideal whenever possible. Many funders like to support projects that have diverse portfolios, so this may have a positive influence in their assessment of your proposal.

For many festivals in the developing world, support from foreign funds and donors is the most important source of income for the first years. Start with small funds and use your track record (evaluation of results and impact) to convince donors to invest larger sums. After a couple of years, local support from domestic funds and donors, including local and national governments and foundations, tends to increase.

However, the economic crisis has severely affected many governments' cultural budgets, reducing this kind of support notably. Individual donations and box office revenues (if applicable) may become part of a festival's income too. For festivals in Europe and the US it is often the other way around: domestic funds precede foreign funding.

Below you will find a table of the funding portfolio of twenty randomly selected human rights film festivals from all over the world categorised by the number of years that the festival exists.

A film festival in a developing country is often more likely to succeed in funding its first edition(s) by applying for resources from international funds already

	<5yrs	<10yrs	>10yrs
Box office, advertising and other sources	0%	3%	4%
Foreign funds and donors	88%	76%	25%
Domestic funds and donors	4%	2%	35%
Public sector (national / local government)	6%	15%	21%
Corporate sponsors and in-kind	1%	3%	11%
Individual donations	1%	1%	6%

operating in that country, as well as some foreign embassies. These entities will be particularly interested in knowing what impact the event may have on targeted audiences, especially if it coincides with their strategic goals in that country. Partnering with local NGOs working on the issues your festival addresses not only can improve the event and its impact; it can also help obtain funding from international entities whose work also focuses on these issues.

For a festival in a more prosperous country, aim for domestic funds and funding from the public sector, as these will most probably become the core of your funding portfolio over time.

Funding Sources

Whether you are searching for grants, donations or in-kind contributions, the key to successful festival fundraising is to identify the right funders and supporters for your project. All aspects of your festival—from programming and activities, to target audiences, to social and political context, to specific issues addressed by the festival—will guide you in this process. The first step is to know your strengths, limitations and characteristics well enough so that you can target entities and people that best suit your project and organisation.

Human rights film festivals can be seen as cultural events, but also as social or educational projects. Some funders are more inclined towards projects that focus on gender; others emphasise democracy-building or the environment; yet others prefer supporting projects that work on peace-building or include a training component. Some funders specifically exclude supporting advocacy work, which can be a tricky concept to define.

The nature of your organisation, including its legal status and the country where you are based, is also an important factor when identifying funds and donors. Some donors only support projects organised by non-profits; others donate to organisations that have a track record of some years. Some donor organisations have priority regions and countries and exclude others. Many individual donors (including in-kind) prefer to donate tax-free, so if your organisation does not offer that status you may need a fiscal sponsor—an organisation that can accept tax-free donations on your behalf and then charges you a percentage. This is especially true if you are seeking funding and other resources in the United States.

For some festivals that have multiple activities it sometimes helps to package programming so that each donor or supporter can choose which aspect they would prefer to support. For instance, gender-specific screenings and activities, a youth filmmaking workshop or an event around truth and reconciliation can be budgeted and packaged separately and presented to donors interested in supporting that specific activity.

As you search for the most adequate funders it is helpful to look at their past grantees because their

grant description and guidelines may not describe fully the range of projects they cover.

Foreign funds and donors

Foreign funding comes in different shapes and sizes. Some grant programmes that may fund human rights film festivals focus on building awareness on human rights, strengthening civil society, fostering dialogue, peace and/or reconciliation and promoting active citizenship. Depending on your festival's focus and target groups, you can look for programmes that promote gender equality, support ethnic, racial and other groups facing discrimination, and/or protect the environment. If your festival also aims to provide media or film training, look for programmes and organisations that support these activities. Browsing the sponsor pages of similar film festival catalogues and websites will offer some inspiration.

Some well-known funders are Bertha Foundation, BRITDOC, Open Society Institute, National Endowment for Democracy, Ford Foundation, EU delegation programmes, Arab Fund for Arts and Culture, European Commission programmes and UN agencies. Movies that Matter's Support Programme offers small grants for starting film festivals.

Depending on the region where you are located, there are also regional cultural funds available from international foundations, UN and European agencies and programmes, etc., that specify groups of countries covered.

Embassies

Some embassies and foreign cultural institutes can help you cover screening fees and translation costs for films, as well as the travel and accommodation of guests from their countries, or promotion. Some even offer screening venues, such as their cultural institutes. The British, French, German, Canadian, Danish, Dutch, Norwegian, Swedish, Czech and sometimes US embassies have shown their support in the past. Some even have specific programs and grants intended to support civil society development. Make sure that these agreements come with no political strings attached that may compromise your festival's freedom of expression.

Embassies can also support you in other ways if you are working in an environment that is not fully free and democratic. For instance, an embassy's participation could provide you with a certain level of protection. If films from their countries are screened, embassies have an excuse to become involved without being accused by unfriendly local authorities of meddling in internal domestic affairs or violating the country's sovereignty. Ambassadors might show up at the screening of a film from his/her country or might even host a small reception afterwards. It may help to photograph these diplomats at the event with the guests they helped to bring and then share these images publicly.

Non-governmental organisations

Some (international) NGOs operating in your country might have funds that could help you if you offer films,

debates and public awareness activities about topics they deal with. They may also offer in-kind support, such as providing venues, good debate subjects or needed services for your event. Partnering with NGOs may also help you attract funding from other sources.

Domestic funds and donors

Domestic funds are often distributed through the various levels of state government, through the individual ministries' granting programs or through publicly funded agencies, regional governments and/or municipal governments. Domestic funds can also come from private foundations (like Ford Foundation or Soros Foundation) or lottery revenues.

Public sector (national and local government)

Depending on the political situation in your region, you can check whether your government offers public funds for your project. Most democratically elected national governments and city councils (in countries with resources) have developed specific funding mechanisms that provide support to cultural events and civic initiatives. Ministries of Culture may support a film festival, but so might a Health Ministry if there is emphasis on health issues, the Ministry of Education if trainings are involved or if you plan to work with schools, the Environmental Ministry if you are dealing with the environment, etc. If your festival has a gender component look for funding from governmental entities that focus on women's rights; likewise, if the rights of specific groups (Indigenous, Afro-descendant, Roma) are involved, contact agencies and ministries working with these communities. Regional and local governments may also fund cultural activities, particularly if they have a positive impact on local populations or lend a positive (international) image to their region or city. You can try to convince local governments that the festival brings visitors and media attention to the town.

Universities, film schools, film institutes

You may be able to get sponsorship, support or in-kind donations from some universities, film schools and film institutes interested in your festival's focus. This is especially the case if your festival offers film workshops.

Corporate sponsors and in-kind support

Getting corporate sponsors on board, particularly large ones, is not usually an easy task. Human rights are hard to sell to big companies. Many do not like to deal with or be associated with issues that are political, critical or controversial. High audience numbers and substantial media and marketing visibility are vital in order to attract sponsors. The exception are those companies or businesses who are sensitised to socially responsible practices and may be interested in supporting this type of event. Smaller local businesses may also be more amenable since they do not have to answer to boards or shareholders.

Commercial sponsors' support can be very valuable, as their funding is not usually earmarked for a specific objective or part of the project. In exchange for their support, corporate sponsors expect you to deliver on

Award Ceremony of Movies that Matter Festival 2013, with award winners, protagonists, festival director and a City Council Member from the municipality of The Hague. Photo: Archive of Movies that Matter.

agreed-upon levels of marketing and media visibility—not just to sell their brand or product, but also to improve their image.

For many film festivals, in-kind support from corporate sponsors and local businesses is much easier to obtain. It may be more feasible for smaller businesses to contribute with a free or discounted good or service (free lunches for the team, transportation, lodging, discounted printing services, etc.), rather than by providing monetary grants. These contributions may also include the use of venues, technical equipment, production of T-shirts, etc. In exchange, these supporters will probably want their logo on your website and catalogue, as well as other types of visibility.

You should pick your sponsors with care and make sure you research their practices and record, both at home and internationally. They should have a good reputation in terms of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), which spans the range from fair labour practices to respect for the environment. There are organisations that monitor the CSR of larger corporations, so for information on them you can search their websites.

Stay away from corporate sponsors that have the reputation of being human rights violators—accepting support from them will damage your festival's credibility. Some corporate human rights violators have established foundations, often with misleading names, that help them "cleanse" their image by giving a lot of money to social projects. Beware of taking funds that only help to launder a violator's image.

Individual donations and crowdfunding

Financial support from individuals is becoming an increasingly important source of income for the film festival circuit. More and more festivals work with a circle of "friends"—individuals who donate annually a small (or large) amount to the festival. For example, both the Cine Institute in Haiti and Film Aid International in Kenya have managed to secure these private donors in wealthier countries.

Offer these friends something exclusive such as a special preview screening; invite them to an opening or closing event or a meet-and-greet with one of the filmmakers to keep them engaged with your festival. You can also organise a benefit party with their support. You should acknowledge their support on your website unless they wish to remain anonymous.

Crowdfunding has proved to be a very useful tool for the production of films. It is usually employed by a new project or product that would probably not be realised without the support of these funders. A start-up festival with a unique focus may be able to move the public to contribute but keep in mind that it will depend on your circle of contacts and your ability to inspire them, that it is not a stable form of funding, that the costs of the rewards and the percentage given to the platform can add up, and that it generates a lot of work for your team. Crowdfunding

has not generally been applicable to recurrent film festivals.

Box office sales, advertising, benefit events and other sources

This is usually a very small part of your income, if any. Still, it is important to make an effort to generate your own sources of income.

Some festivals choose to sell tickets; some don't simply because their target group would not be able to afford them.

One World in Czech Republic shares the revenues of the box office with cinemas instead of paying for rental space.

Another way to generate income is to sell advertising space in your publicity materials such as the catalogue. You can also offer this space for those who offer in-kind support. For instance, restaurants who cater to the festival, a company that loans screening equipment, a cinema or other entity that lends their space for free, etc.

Merchandising may also be a source of revenue: the sale of festival T-shirts, catalogues, bags or other items to your audience. You can sell these at the festival but also through your website.

Benefit concerts and other events require effort but can also generate funds and give media visibility to your festival. For instance, FiSahara has been able to generate some funding with an annual benefit concert.

The Funding Process

Getting acquainted and applying for a grant

After you have found suitable funding or sponsor options, make sure to double-check their guidelines, criteria and regulations. What exactly does this organisation subsidise? Is it applicable to your project? You should also review their regulations carefully—especially when it comes to deadlines and timeline conditions. This last point is very important, as many funders establish a starting and ending point for the funding and so your project must take place within those dates. Most funders have a limited number of granting rounds per year. Check if these coincide with your own planning and the execution of your project.

Some funders specifically earmark their funds for screenings, roundtables, special guests, workshops, promotion or other activities. Many do not support operating year-round costs (office rental and expenses, personnel, etc.). Diversification also allows you to cover different needs.

Sometimes it is worthwhile sending potential funders a short introductory email, or else calling or visiting them in person if they are within your reach. This is especially useful if you have questions or doubts about your application. You could also consider in-

Selling festival T-shirts could contribute to festival resources. Photo: Archive of Freedom Film Fest.

viting them to the opening of your festival and offer them free passes to screenings. If a potential or actual sponsor comes to your festival make sure you help them plan their visit and organise their schedule.

Some funders accept applications by invitation only. If you are interested in a funder of this type because you believe that they would like your project, look at their funding portfolio to see if you recognise grantee projects or organisations that you already know and who know you and/or your work. Ask them to introduce you.

Writing the application is a crucial step that can be long and arduous, especially with complex grants like those offered by the EU. Present your project plan according to the language and framework of each donor's guidelines and mandate. This does not mean that you have to compromise on content, but that you should not neglect the specific selection criteria and regulations involved in each fundraising procedure.

Some funds work with standard entry forms; if so, use them. Use the required currency (dollar, dinar, euro, peso, etc.). Be consistent and stick to the allotted maximum and minimum number of words.

Finally, your sponsors will want to see results after your project has ended. Therefore, make sure you formulate clear, measurable indicators and an evaluation methodology that will make it possible to identify concrete results later on.

Developing a relationship

Once your project has been selected for a grant, invest in a relationship with your donors. Share your successes but also your failures. Be transparent. The credibility of your organisation is vital for their continued support. Always inform them when your project suffers changes or when your budget differs from the initial plan. Some donors can be very helpful and offer advice, feedback and sometimes networking possibilities. Often these funders have gathered a lot of experience and knowledge.

What do you offer your donors? Include their logo on your publicity material, including website and catalogue. Invite them to your festival (and be sure to let them know if you cannot afford to cover their travel and hotel expenses). If appropriate or required, invite them to give a talk or participate in a panel discussion. This will both enhance their visibility and make them truly part of the festival experience. If they do not come, send them the catalogue and some festival merchandising along with the final report. Stay in touch; if you publish a periodic newsletter make sure to send it to them.

Last but not least, remain independent. It is always good to search for shared goals, but the festival organiser has the final say in the set-up of the event and the content of the programme.

Evaluate and report

It's the end of the project. Check if there are specif-

ic requirements for your evaluation report and how much time you have for handing it in to your sponsor. In general, the report presents an account of all of your project activities, as well as the results achieved as compared to those stated in the original application. Write down what went well, but also be honest about what went wrong; for instance if you did not achieve all your stated goals. Make sure you are brief, specific and precise.

A good evaluation report includes: a description of the event and original objectives; the exact outcomes (for example, the number of visitors, participation in specific events, amount of media attention); lessons learned; and follow-up plans. If your event is for "new audiences" you should evaluate very specifically the full experience of the audience.

Whenever possible, have your team note down numbers of attendees, conduct questionnaires of a select number of participants (targeted audiences, guests and other participants) and use a mix of quantitative and qualitative indicators (How many people came? Did they stay for the full screening and debate afterwards? Did they enjoy the screening? Were they able to read the subtitles? Did they participate or seem engaged in the debate? What did they take from the event?).

Usually, the financial report should deal with the entire project, not just the part of the expenses covered with the grant.

It is also important to include photos, videos or newspaper articles on the event. Your communication team is the key to assembling a full final report that includes visuals, media coverage, quotes from participants, etc. Many festivals publish their reports on their websites like the Manya Human Rights Film Festival in Uganda or the One World Festival in the Czech Republic. For more information you can read our Evaluation chapter.

Guidelines for the Final Report for Grantees of the Movies that Matter Support Programme

In the final report, the applicant presents as brief and detailed as possible an account of the activities undertaken and the results achieved. All this with reference to the enclosed project plan. The report contains the following:

- *A short content-based report about the project, including:*
  - *Overview film programme, including gender of filmmakers*
  - *Number and kind of public debates initiated as a result of film screenings and related activities*
  - *Number of visitors of the event*
  - *Background and the estimated gender balance of the visitors*
  - *Reactions of visitors about the festival*
  - *Attention and reactions of the media (both qualitative and quantitative). Please send us the publications if available.*
  - *Effects of the event (also which you did not expect beforehand)*

  - *What went very well? What went moderately? What went wrong?*
  - *Lesson learned from the event*
  - *Plans for a follow-up for the event*
- *Final financial report of the entire project*
- *Published material, photos and films of the event*
- *Your advice. If you could give one piece of advice to someone who wants to organise a similar event, what would it be? (Movies that Matter is collecting suggestions with the aim of publishing them online, to assist future festival organisers.)*
- *Feedback on the collaboration with Movies that Matter, and suggestions to improve our work.*

How will your budget change over time?

With each additional year of the festival, there will be constant pressure on certain budget items that you will most likely have to spend more money on:

- Staff (in order to keep good people you will have to pay them)
- Screening rights
- International guests
- Technical quality of screenings and sound

Main Tips

- Connect with other human rights film festivals
- Look for the best donors according to your profile
- Diversify your sources
- Invest in donor relationships
- Be creative with your budget; look for in-kind donations
- Stay independent
- Be transparent
- If possible, invest in local support

Example of a Budget

This example budget is used by Movies that Matter's International Programme. It is very simple and easy to adapt to each festival's needs. Please note, that not all budget items might be applicable to your festival. A festival will usually have an internal budget, which tends to be extremely detail-oriented and includes annotations intended for the team, and a budget for partners and donors detailing spending by category. Budgets are usually presented twice: the first time during the application process, and the second time accompanying the Final Report and the Financial Report.

BUDGET (COSTS IN €)					
	budget item	amount	costs per amount	costs	total costs
Programme					
	Screening fees & transport films			0	
	Translation & subtitling films			0	
	Debates, Q&A's, discussions			0	
	Travel and stay festival guests			0	
	Special events (opening, exhibition, concert, etc.)			0	
	Total programme				0
Production					
	Rent for venues			0	
	Technical equipment			0	
	Catering			0	
	Total production				0
PR/ Communication					
	Posters			0	
	Festival programme, catalogue			0	
	Website			0	
	Advertisement (radio, TV, print media)			0	
	Total PR/ Communication				0
Staff					
	Staff			0	
	Total staff				0
Administrative costs					
	Office rent			0	
	Communication			0	
	Total administrative costs				0
	TOTAL COSTS *[should be the same amount as total benefits]*				**0**

BENEFITS IN €				
		status	benefits	total benefits
Grants & Sponsors				
	[name grant/ sponsor]	[confirmed, pending]	0	
	[name grant/ sponsor]	[confirmed, pending]	0	
	Total grants & sponsors			0
Additional income				
	Crowdfunding & private donations		0	
	Merchandising		0	
	Other income		0	
	Ticket sales		0	
	Total aditional income			0
	TOTAL BENEFITS *[should be the same amount as total costs]*			**0**

Live Radio at Movies that Matter Festival 2015. Good cooperation with media can bring new audiences and save festival resources. Photo: Archive of Movies that Matter.

Did We Do It Right? Evaluating a Human Rights Film Festival

Written by María Carrión and Yunuen Montero

Planning an evaluation may not be initially on our radar screen as we set up a human rights film festival, and yet this may be one of our most important actions. An evaluation helps festivals become more effective, avoid making important (often recurrent) mistakes and be accountable to donors, partners and stakeholders. Once the screen goes dark, our next job is to ask ourselves: did we achieve what we set out to do?

An important part of the evaluation can be used to write the festival's final report for donors and partners. In addition, the evaluation will also include many details that need not be in the report but that will help the team improve all aspects of festival planning, execution and post-production. For human rights film festivals this exercise is useful to improve "know how", social impact and outcomes.

A festival's objectives should be in line with identified needs of the local community. These needs should guide a festival's programming, production, accompanying events and the evaluation process, helping us measure its impact.

But how do you go about measuring impact? A film festival that seeks social transformation as one of its objectives may be more difficult to evaluate because there are so many intangibles related to the achievement of these goals, and because these changes do not usually come quickly. That is why it is important to establish some sort of "baseline", a point of departure from which to compare subsequent festivals. In other words, the findings from your first festival evaluation can be used as a benchmark or measuring stick for future evaluations, helping you to gauge the changes produced by each subsequent event. Young festivals may not be able to evaluate their longer-term impact initially, but they can establish clear objectives and actions to attain them and evaluate them from day 1.

There are easily measurable outcomes (for instance audience numbers or participation), but the more desirable long-term outcomes (such as awareness building, the empowerment of a community or the sensitisation of decision makers) are harder to measure and usually require a few years to take hold.

Evaluation is ideally built into festival planning from the start, and it should involve all team members and all activities. All stakeholders (not just the team)

should be included in the evaluation process: partners/funders, audiences, guests, filmmakers, members of the community, human rights organisations, media, etc. Questionnaires or short interviews with participants (audience members, partners, etc.) are effective tools that can help festivals understand the impact they are having. Asking team members to write notes about each day's activities will also help evaluate at the end. If you hold daily coordination meetings, make sure that someone takes detailed notes. These meetings offer a chance to evaluate in real time, identify problems and errors, and correct them.

If the festival is held within a population suffering from human rights violations that the festival is addressing, it may be useful for people to hold town hall-style meetings (informal, participatory community or village discussions) after the event to discuss the event and how it impacted the community.

There are two general types of evaluation

Internal
Conducted by festival team members using a basic "Evaluation Toolkit". You can find some example models in several languages at *http://goo.gl/WJLY1A*. An internal evaluation is less complex. If your organisation does not have experience with this it would be advisable to ask someone with some experience to guide you through the first one.

External
Conducted by external evaluators using methodology and ethical principles, it is very useful for first evaluations, impact evaluations and for projects requiring more serious intervention.

Internal Evaluation

In an internal evaluation process the team shares and builds on collective experiences with the aim of improving each edition of the festival. This is the ideal type of evaluation for the average human rights film festival.

The team must first identify the key goals and objectives (expectations) for the festival and its activities. Then it asks itself several key questions about the festival and about each of the activities. What was the initial objective? Was it met? What worked and why? What did not work and why? What lessons can we draw from our experience and how can we improve for the next time?

SWOT Analysis

Many projects like One World conduct a SWOT analysis with core team members. It is a useful tool that identifies:

- Strengths (internal factors)
- Weaknesses (internal factors)
- Opportunities (external factors)
- Threats (external factors)

For example, at One World FF they usually do SWOT analysis 1-2 months after the festival, once they collect and analyse feedback from the audience (who fill in online questionnaires), guests, volunteers and festival partners. They usually gather the core festival team (10–15 people) from all festival sections (programming, production, PR, outreach, financial, etc.) and together identify what worked well (strengths), what went wrong (weaknesses), what could be done in the future (opportunities) and what things endanger the festival (threats). They are very open during discussions and try not to take criticism personally. The analysis is always written down, including main conclusions, and it is the basis for the planning of next festival edition.

After Action Review (AAR)

Many human rights/development/humanitarian aid organisations that work in the field use a method called After Action Review (AAR), a team discussion held shortly after the action has ended and when memories are still very fresh. This approach can also work well for a human rights film festival. Ideally, it should be done within one or two weeks of the festival.

Because AARs are held shortly after an event is held, the team will probably still lack a lot of information about the exact outcome(s). For instance, media coverage may be ongoing and not yet fully compiled; questionnaires may not have been processed and computed, and analysis on audience numbers or participation may still be incomplete. Of course, the more information the team can bring to the table, the better the AAR will be, but the real value of AARs is that they help record the event almost in real time.

Participants can vary depending on the size of your team: if it is very large, you might want to include one or two representatives from each section (production, guests, programming, debates, etc.) in order to facilitate the process, whereas if the team is not too large, everyone can participate. FiSahara's AARs usually involve about 15–20 people.

AARs are dynamic group discussions, and are best held with the aid of an external person who facilitates dialogue and writes the key information on a flipchart. AAR sessions posit basic questions to help orient and focus discussion.

It is important to stress that this exercise should be constructive: rather than identifying who is to blame for an error, the error itself should be identified so it can be avoided in the future.

FiSahara's 2014 edition benefitted from key recommendations from its two previous AARs. These included significant improvements in its human rights film workshop; better on-the-ground coordination with local actors prior to the festival; improved scheduling for all activities; a better balance between human rights and entertainment

programming; the prioritisation of some key partnerships; significant reduction in health risks for visitors; and improved coordination of all aspects of the trip to the camps.

AAR in Practice

AAR is a simple but powerful tool that helps improve the organisational learning that teams require. AAR helps to assess our performance and identify and learn from successes and failures. Furthermore, sharing the results of AAR can help future teams learn about your successful strategies and avoid the obstacles that you have worked to overcome.

AAR is a tool that permits us:

- An open and honest professional discussion
- Participation by everyone on the team
- A focus on results of an event or project
- Identification of ways to sustain what was done well
- Development of recommendations on ways to overcome obstacles

AAR is centered on four questions:

- What was expected to happen during our film festival?
- What actually occurred?
- What went well and why?
- What can be improved and how?

Each part of the team replies to all questions and shares results with other areas. In order to distill important information and be more efficient, ask team members to reflect on their experience and note down their key points (and answers to the four questions) before the AAR takes place. Try to focus on the larger picture and leave small details out of the discussion to avoid a drawn out discussion. Some people like to write basic ideas down and distribute them among their colleagues during the meeting.

How to Use AAR:

- Hold the AAR immediately or as soon as possible, while team members are still fresh from their experience.
- Create the right climate. Make sure that the atmosphere is relaxed: some organisations order pizza or other food, take short coffee breaks to ease tension or make plans to go out as a group afterwards. There should be a consensus among participants that the sole purpose of an AAR is collective learning. AARs use a similar strategy to brainstorming sessions: participants leave seniority and rank at the door, participate in an open discussion free of judgment, and are committed to learning from each other. These sessions are not meant to evaluate individual performance.
- Choose a facilitator. This person is there to guide the discussion, facilitate learning and write down key points to be recorded. Depending on the nature of the festival, the facilitator will break the event down into its separate activities, each with its own objective and plan of action to be evaluated in turn. The AAR begins with the first activity, repeating all four basic questions for each one.

Evaluation group at FiSahara, Dakhla refugee camp. Photo: Archive of FiSahara.

- Ask “What was expected to happen?” The group talks about the activity’s initial objective(s) and plan of action. For instance, for a human rights film screening and debate, discuss what your objectives and expectations were, and your proposed plan to carry them out.
- Ask “What actually occurred?” Participants discuss the event as it happened, looking both at positives and negatives. Here the team must objectively review the event as it took place.
- Compare initial objectives and action plan with what took place. This is where valuable lessons are drawn. On the one hand the team identifies what was successful and why. On the other, it also looks at what went wrong and why. It is important not to just ask yourselves whether the objective was achieved but also, whenever necessary, to review whether the objective was realistic in the first place, and whether it needs to be modified.

For instance, perhaps the theme of a film was very relevant to the audience, but the movie itself did not connect with viewers. Why? Did it use appropriate cinematographic language for your target audience? Were they sufficiently prepared to process the information? Is the audience ready for this type of film?

Once these comparisons (between expected and actual results) have been discussed, the team can modify its action plans (even possibly some of its objectives) to strengthen successes and correct mistakes for the future.

Record and share the key points. Taking notes and reporting on the AAR to the entire team helps document successes and failures, facilitates the sharing of knowledge, encourages group learning and enables the organisation as a whole to build on lessons learned.

Resources and Time

AARs can be used in two ways.

- Formal AARs are ideally conducted with a facilitator.
- Spontaneous or informal AARs can be led by a member of the project team.

The time required to conduct an AAR varies and often depends on the time your team can allot. AARs usually take between half a day and a complete day, especially for festivals with multiple activities.

What Do Donors Expect from Us?

Accountability and transparency are key parts of evaluations. Donors often have their own evaluation requests. Some of their questions will ask for quantitative data such as global audience participation, gender breakdown (both of audience and guest participants), number of events held, etc. Be ready to document this data for your evaluation; before the festival you should identify members of your team who can record this information. Donors may ask you for audience/guest reaction, media coverage and impact on the community (intended and unintended).

Some Examples of Indicators

- Number of attendees (global, broken down by activity)
- Number of participants (guest filmmakers, speakers, etc.) and their diversity (gender, culture, ethnicity, occupation, focus, etc.)
- Acceptance and support on the part of like-minded organisations (human rights defenders, etc.) toward the festival
- Implication/ownership of local community towards festival (volunteers, citizen participation, local institutional support, local businesses, etc.)
- Acceptance towards programming (audience reaction, audience participation in debates, poll answers, etc.)
- Audience gender balance
- Audience diversity
- Media coverage
- Impact on decision-makers, if targeted
- Impact on human rights community
- Cost of festival (economic, material, human) vis-à-vis results
- Collateral benefits (for example, local initiatives arising from participation in the festival)

We must also be watchful to indentify both the positive and negative unintended/unplanned consequences of our festivals. This includes environmental, social and economic impact. For instance, does the festival spark new initiatives in the community? Does it bring additional income to local families/businesses? Does it generate trash, and how is that trash disposed of? Does it lead to the production of new film projects? Does it put participants or community members in danger? Does it generate a backlash from conservatives or other groups?

Evaluating unplanned impact is particularly important when festivals are held in communities new to these types of events. FiSahara, held in the Sahrawi refugee camps, has an enormous effect on Dakhla, the most remote of the camps. For one week, this refugee camp is transformed from a sleepy community deep in the Sahara Desert to an international event, hosting hundreds of visitors from many countries. How do these hundreds of people impact life in the camp? Are they respectful of local customs? Do they go home and work on the Sahrawi cause? Do they stay in touch with their families? Start a project? Vendors, artisans and other family businesses descend on festival grounds and dozens of pop-up restaurants emerge. What does that mean for these families' economies? Are resources well distributed? How does Dakhla recover from those days?

A defining characteristic of evaluations is that the results are used to make decisions, improve activities, achieve outcomes or results and draw on lessons learned. These findings always help us to improve our project.

External Evaluation

An external evaluation is needed if a festival needs a more radical change; for instance, if its impact is very

unclear, if it is not sustainable, if its objectives are not being sufficiently met or if its goals or organisation need radical change and the team's internal evaluation cannot identify a course of action. External evaluations can be expensive, but their advantage is that evaluators are more objective than team members and employ effective (and more complex) methodologies that identify key problems and recommendations.

In 2012 and after eight editions, FiSahara needed to evaluate organisational structure, programming and impact and rebuild its funding sources. While its main funder, the Spanish government, had discontinued support due to the global financial crisis, FiSahara also needed to ascertain how to best meet its objectives, which include empowering Sahrawi people through film and raising international awareness on the Western Sahara, a forgotten conflict.

The Dimes Foundation, which already works in the Sahrawi refugee camps, offered economic support if the festival agreed to an external evaluation. The evaluation of FiSahara's 2012 edition clearly stated that the project's overall impact on was positive but it identified some problems in organisational structure, team coordination and film programming, as well as an urgent need to internationalise its activities, partnerships and financing.

As a result, FiSahara made important changes that have helped the festival significantly improve its impact, outreach and sustainability. These include re-structuring its core team; internationalising its outreach and partnerships; strengthening its human rights-related activities through films, guests and partnerships with key organisations (Movies that Matter, HRFN, WITNESS and many others); programming more films in Arabic; including a strong gender component through partnerships with local women's groups and women-centered screenings and events; searching for international funders and, most importantly, evaluating impact on a constant basis.

External evaluation parameters and objectives

The main purpose of an external evaluation is to assess the festival's relevance, its impact and sustainability. It proposes a series of recommendations on model, performance, management and progress in defining and proposing alternatives.

The principles that guide the evaluations must be:

- Objectivity
- Independence of the evaluation team
- Participation of affected people in the whole process
- Transparency and focus
- Understandability
- Completeness and clarity of reports
- Justice and protecting the interests of participants
- Usefulness

Summary

Evaluation Criteria: Relevance, Effectiveness, Efficiency, Impact and Sustainability

Relevance: the extent to which our festival is tailored to the priorities and policies of the people, institutions, the general public and donors. In assessing the relevance, consider the following questions:

- To what extent the objectives are valid?
- Are the activities and results of the festival in line with the objective general and the achievement of its objectives?
- Are the activities and results consistent with the expected impact and effects?

For example, FiSahara had to deal with these very tough questions in its 2012 external evaluation. The evaluators agreed that the festival's main objectives—entertaining and forming Sahrawis through film and raising international awareness on the Western Sahara—were extremely relevant, but found that after nine editions these objectives were only partially being met, diminishing the festival's relevance.

For instance, even though the festival had become the single most important cultural event in the camps, many Sahrawis in the audience thought that films were mostly selected for international visitors. Many did not attend screenings because they did not understand or connect with films, which were selected according to criteria (such as whether a movie had won awards and would be accompanied at the festival by a filmmaker or star to give it more visibility) that were sometimes not in line with needs and tastes of main beneficiaries. Most films were not in Arabic or Hassanya, the local Arabic dialect, making it difficult for the audience to understand and connect with them. Many in attendance were there to enjoy the social event, not the films. Additionally, women were not largely present in many screenings either because of schedule conflicts or because some films were not considered appropriate for mixed audiences.

In addition, the evaluation detected the need to expand festival objectives to include a wider-reaching objective of empowering the Sahrawi people through film by creating a human rights section (films and roundtables), offering human rights video and film trainings to Sahrawis from the camps and the occupied territory and forging partnerships with other human rights film festivals. By doing so, the festival has become more relevant to Sahrawis in the camps, but also to Sahrawis living under occupation in the Western Sahara, who suffer from daily human rights abuses.

Effectiveness: The extent to which our festival reaches its objectives. In assessing the effectiveness, it is useful to consider the following questions, which are the basis of evaluating:

- To what extent were the objectives achieved or are likely to be achieved?
- What were the major factors influencing the achievement or non-achievement of objectives?

In 2012, external evaluators found that while FiSahara was partially meeting its main objectives—providing

Festival meeting at FiSahara, Dakhla refugee camp. Photo: Archive of FiSahara.

entertainment and training to Sahrawis through film and raising international awareness about the Western Sahara—it could reach them more fully by programming to fit local tastes and conducting international outreach.

Factors that now help achieve these objectives include working in partnership with local organisations in all aspects of programming and FiSahara's ongoing human rights work in conjunction with key international partners.

Efficiency: This means measuring results—qualitatively and quantitatively—in relation to the resources (economic, material, human) invested. Efficiency is an economic term meaning that the least costly resources are employed to achieve the desired results. This generally requires comparing alternative approaches to achieving the same outputs in order to see whether the most efficient process has been adopted. In assessing the effectiveness of our project, it is useful to consider the following questions:

- Is the festival managed in the most efficient way compared to alternatives?
- Were each of the activities cost-efficient?
- Were the objectives achieved in the time allotted?

For example, the production of FiSahara takes up a large amount of hard-to-obtain financial resources, as well as a vast quantity of material and human resources. In the context of a refugee camp lacking basic services and with pressing needs of all kinds, FiSahara has an extra duty to operate in the most efficient way possible. In order to evaluate its efficiency FiSahara looks at:

- The results obtained for each activity versus the resources devoted to the activity. What was obtained from a workshop and was it worth the money invested in bringing in facilitators and workshop materials? Do all screenings have sufficient attendance, considering how much time and resources are devoted to obtaining and subtitling (if necessary) the films?
- Whether each activity employs the most cost-effective option. For instance, was it worthwhile inviting a guest whose flight costs 2—3 times more than another guest's? If so, what were the results of this added expense and were they worth it?
- Whether each activity is effective in the time and place dedicated to it. For instance, in 2013 FiSahara conducted its first human rights film workshop in Dakhla during the festival, which lasted 4 days. While the workshop was extremely relevant to beneficiaries, we concluded that time was too short for the amount of resources used and that the workshop needed more materials and infrastructure (it lacked sufficient cameras and computers, electricity was intermittent and Internet access was non-existent). In 2014, the workshop was lengthened to 3 weeks, was mostly held at the film school and there were more cameras and computers; as a result, the participants learned substantially more. Costs for the workshop were similar both years, but the 2014 results were far superior.

Impact: These are the positive and negative changes produced by the festival, directly or indirectly, intentionally or not. This looks at the resulting effects, incidence and activity indicators in local social, economic, environmental and other spheres. The analysis should differentiate between intended and unintended results and must also include the positive and negative impact of external factors.

For example, does the festival lead to heightened consciousness on human rights? (intended, positive). Has it generated local income? (unintended, positive). Do the activities lead to repression or prohibitions against participants? (unintended, negative).

In assessing the impact, it is useful to consider the following questions:

- What has happened as a result of the festival?
- What is the real difference that the project brings to beneficiaries?
- How many people have been affected by the activities of the festival?

As this chapter has explained, impact can be measured quantitatively (number of attendees, screenings, gender/age breakdowns, etc.), but it is the qualitative aspect of impact that can be most interesting for a human rights festival: whether minds are changed or key tools and knowledge transferred. Each festival will adopt different methods to measure this impact, depending on its objectives, types of audiences (and availability of the audiences to respond to questions), etc. Some qualitative results (change in attitude, increased awareness, the adoption of effective organising tools) usually take years to materialise.

For FiSahara, both types of impact are difficult to measure. Methods used include head counts (some very informal), observations by team members (in screenings, roundtables and workshops), questionnaires and interviews with participants (audience, guests, workshop facilitators and beneficiaries, merchants, local families, etc.), interviews with local organisations (to determine impact in the camp), output (for example videos produced during workshops) and evaluation meetings with counterpart and key organisations.

Local audience questionnaires are simple and conducted during the festival. After obtaining basic data on the interviewees, questions center on their festival experience: how many years they have attended, which activities they have attended, which they prefer, what types of films they have seen, which they like best, which they would like to see, whether they believe that FiSahara is important to their community, etc.

In a refugee camp of 15,000 residents with open spaces, people constantly coming and going and multiple activities (most of them outdoors), coming up with realistic numbers can be particularly challenging. Numbers for workshop participants and indoor

Working meetings at FIFDH in Geneva. Photo by Miguel Bueno.

screenings are easiest, but for outdoor activities, some widely dispersed, they are next to impossible. In 2014 the governor of the Dakhla refugee camp decided to conduct a comprehensive consultation with residents, to be followed by town meetings with FiSahara team members. This process aims to identify both positive and negative and intended and unintended impact.

Sustainability: This deals with measuring the benefits of the festival and the likelihood that they will continue after donor funding has been withdrawn. The festival also must be environmentally and financially sustainable.

In assessing sustainability, it is useful to consider the following questions:

- To what extent will the film festival's income continue after current donor funding has ceased? (Here also we look at activities to bring new donors and sources of income before present donors leave the project).
- What were the major factors influencing the achievement or non-achievement of sustainability for the festival?

Human rights film festivals will always need outside donors. But as we see in the fundraising chapter of this handbook, practically none are permanent. Thus, evaluating the sustainability of a festival includes looking at whether the festival organisers are resourceful and strategic not just in procuring financing for the present, but also in guaranteeing it for the future.

Evaluating sustainability includes taking a hard look at festival budgets—income versus costs—and figuring out whether our expenditure plans (and thus our programme) are realistic for the present and the future. It is easier to start small and grow slowly but with firm footing, as the festival picks up support, than to start big because of a windfall from a major funder and then have to massively scale back once that funder disappears. This has happened to many events, including FiSahara, which abruptly lost all its Spanish government grant funding in 2012 due to Spain's drastic reduction in international aid at the height of the global financial crisis. As it rebuilds its finances and evaluates costs and sustainability, FiSahara has also scaled back on high-cost items, like funding trips for dozens of attending film stars, focusing on a few priority people. Now, many of these stars pay their own way, or do not come.

Theory of Change

Theory of Change is a tool that helps plan, strategise and evaluate projects. It is used by numerous organisations that focus on producing social change in sectors such as education, human rights, international development and sustainability, and it could also prove useful for human rights film festivals.

Some organisations working with film are using Theory of Change to improve impact. One example is the Impact Field Guide Toolkit for filmmakers and film projects currently being developed by Britdoc, the Bertha Foundation, the Ford Foundation and Sundance, with the

aid of the New Citizenship Project, a group of creative strategists. Drawing on Theory of Change, and using case studies of films that have been especially effective at generating impact, this guide helps filmmakers and film teams define their vision, plan their strategy and deliver an effective campaign for their film projects. The toolkit can be found at *http://impactguide.org/*

The methodology offered by Theory of Change helps plan project evaluations by providing the building blocks necessary for project to achieve its long-term goal or goals. It then guides projects in identifying what to evaluate and when. Theory of Change provides a clear roadmap for strategic planning, decision-making and evaluation.

When employing Theory of Change organisations go through six steps:

- Identifying long-term goals (defining desired outcome(s) and pre-conditions to achieve the outcome(s))
- Backwards mapping and connecting outcomes (mapping the process that will lead to desired change)
- Completing the outcomes framework (identifying the necessary pre-conditions for the project to work)
- Identifying assumptions (these assumptions, if correct, make the outcome achievable)
- Developing indicators (identifying how to measure the implementation and effectiveness of the project)
- Identifying interventions (defining the actions that will bring about the desired change)

For more on Theory of Change and how it works: *http://www.theoryofchange.org/*

Sharing our Findings

The most important aspect of the evaluation process is to share the results and act on recommendations. The findings and recommendations should be shared with the festival team, partners and stakeholders in a Final Report (for a Final Report example from One World, visit: *http://goo.gl/8c1CkO*).

You can also find a Final Report guide in our fundraising chapter of this manual. But Final Reports are not enough. Findings should also be discussed in a participatory team workshop. Whether you can convene the team depends on members' availability during the off-season. If meeting physically is impossible, you can use knowledge-sharing tools such as Google docs, a group portal like Zoho Wiki, videoconference sessions or a closed Facebook group. At FiSahara, the team convenes after the Final Report and before the next festival planning to discuss lessons learned and design a plan of action. Feedback in this process is necessary to have a complete overview of the entire evaluation process and implement lessons learned.

The first evaluation establishes clear baselines that can be used to compare subsequent festivals. After a few editions, measuring significant (longer term) impact becomes more feasible.

Main Tips

- Decide which kind of evaluation your festival needs: internal or external.
- Start planning the evaluation from the early stages by identifying what you will evaluate, the methods you will use and who in the team is responsible for what.
- Include all team members and stakeholders in the evaluation process and make sure they understand the purpose and steps to follow.
- Define methods for obtaining information about all events and from all stakeholders (questionnaires, interviews, head counts, etc.).
- Conduct a baseline evaluation that will serve as comparison for future ones.
- Make sure you are clear about key goals and objectives of your festival and the methods to achieve them so you can compare your expectations with the actual results.
- Record events as they happen.
- Follow the key evaluation principles.
- In the evaluation process include intended and unintended impact as well as positive and negative.
- Do a SWOT analysis with your team to identify strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats.
- Conduct an After Action Review (AAR) meeting with the team as soon as the festival is over. If possible, include an outside person to facilitate an open discussion, free of hierarchies and judgment, and to record results.
- Use your evaluation process as a collective learning tool to identify what works and what needs to be changed.
- Write a Final Report for all partners and funders that includes main findings and recommendations from the evaluation.
- Share the Final Report and evaluation findings with all stakeholders and with your team.
- Conduct a follow-up meeting with your team once the report is written to prepare an action plan for the next event.

Karama Human Rights Film Festival in Jordan: "Dignity, where to?"

Written by Sawsan Darwaza, festival director and Ehab Al Khatib, festival artistic director

The Idea

The idea for *Karama* (Dignity) Human Rights Film Festival (henceforth KHRFF) came about in June 2009. While many regional and international human rights organisations have created and enhanced the discourse on human rights in the region, no significant public platform existed in Jordan or the neighbouring Arab countries for the discussion of such issues. As most traditional human rights organisations focus their work on monitoring and reporting human rights violations, conducting field or academic research, leading advocacy campaigns mostly at the level of policy and/or providing capacity building for activists and practitioners, the larger general public continues to be excluded from being informed of or engaged in such discourse.

Considering these reasons, the initiation of Karama came to address the lack of an independent Human Rights platform that is able to bring complicated notions of human rights issues closer to the public—in addition to other stakeholders in the Arab region and beyond—mainly through films as well as other interrelated activities such as music events, exhibitions, panels and workshops. The platform created an opportunity for the wider public to get involved with human rights issues by attending, seeing and even participating in the events mentioned above. By using Karama's network and working together with stakeholders such as local NGOs and CSOs, the possibilities grew to truly contribute to the knowledge and awareness of the public and their perceptions on Human Rights. Karama promotes essential human rights causes, such as dignity and freedom with tools such as issue-oriented film screenings, press releases, discussions, themed workshops and events.

While KHRFF highlights various themes each year, its primary focus is on human rights issues in relation to the concept of human beings' dignity and with a social, political and economic justice lens. The first edition's theme was the "Contemplation of Human Rights", addressing questions such as, "How do we gain awareness of our dignity?" and "How do we demand our dignity as a daily human right?". The next year the theme was "Change. Change for the better and change for all". Other themes have included "Know…Think…Act" and "General Human Rights".

This past year's KHRFF theme was "War and Displacement", and focused on the ongoing crises in the region and the state of refugees.

The Beginning

The first edition of Karama was a call for action towards real dignity and real justice. It was held from the 5th to the 10th of December 2010—a year before the Arab Spring that spread across many countries in the region. Now, Karama is always held at the same dates, every year. The idea for Karama was conceived by three rights and social justice activists, who each had filmmaking experience as directors and producers. The launch of a human rights festival in Jordan was most welcomed in the beginning, and was considered to be a very important step toward changes at both social and political levels.

The choice to name the festival *Karama* seems to have been contagious, as many revolutions to follow in the region were named "Revolutions for Dignity", which helped increase the festival's impact for its second edition, as it intersected directly with public demands.

Was it Easy or Difficult?

It was easy to launch a human rights festival due to many reasons, including the partnership with the Royal Cultural Centre, which is run by the Ministry of Culture. This partnership provided a very good umbrella for Karama as a debut festival in its first editions, and helped in with security for screenings and festival activities so that audiences and guests would not be endangered. This step helped to avoid many confrontations, and would be easily applicable for other human rights festivals unless the event is designed to work against the system that rules the country in which the festival is held.

In the beginning, we worked vigilantly to ensure the festival would be welcomed and accepted by the society and the system. The festival's confrontations were done gradually through film, and we chose not to directly confront the social and religious practices that would contradict human rights and values (for example, we do not select films with extreme sexual references or clear images of nudity). In the beginning, we were also careful to only indirectly confront the system that rules the country.

To that end, we selected international films whose topics intersected with local and regional issues, such as political detainees and prisoners, freedom of expression, women's rights and other universal themes; by screening these films and with the discussions that followed, corresponding Arab issues were able to be questioned and put under a microscope by the audience, activists and policy makers. Examples of this were the film *Peace vs. Justice* that deals with the perception of justice and the miscommunication between cultures, and *Camp 14: Total Control Zone* which discusses the rights of political prisoners.

From the first year, Karama Human Rights Film Festival in Jordan attracted large number of audiences. Photo: Archive of Karama HRFF.

What Are The Obstacles?

Karama's target audience is made up of thinkers and workers within the field of human rights, as well as regular guests of the festival who have an interest in human rights. These include human rights activists from Jordan and the Arab world, journalists, filmmakers, concerned officials, as well as researchers and the wider interested public in Jordan and the region. This region is a turbulent one, and its realities are always changing; because of this, expanding a base of spectators is more difficult than it would be in less volatile situations.

Some of the obstacles are financial; available funds often focus on direct humanitarian rescue projects but consider festivals and cultural events to be luxurious, even when they are directly related to human rights issues. Available funds are also scarce, and may not cover the expansion of the festival into other local or regional areas. Based on our previous experience, human rights film festivals are hard to define for donors, in particular because our festival is not purely entertainment but also not only a human rights activity. Still, as the festival expands its activities, the audience's expectations become bigger, as we have found from reports of festival activities as well as surveys we have received from venue supervisors.

Another obstacle arose in 2013 because the region has been through critical periods, and affected negatively by global decisions and some fake attempts to install democracies in its countries. Thus, Arab people widely perceive the term *Human Rights* to be imposed by the West and consider it to be a tool that helps the West achieve its political, social and cultural agendas. Therefore, many people in the Arab region have lost their trust in human rights and human rights defenders and promoters, as they do not see direct results and fruits of these projects that promote human rights in the world and in the region. To change these beliefs, Karama organises a range of activities where different topics can be discussed in a variety of ways; there are some opportunities for the audience to directly participate, and some where they are invited to receive new perspectives to stimulate their critical thinking. Though the discussed themes are complex, Karama seeks to address them in ways that everyone can understand. This means that certain jargons or difficult language is avoided and that general overviews and available, trustworthy statistics are used to introduce the themes.

The Impact

From our observation, KHRFF has made an impact on many levels and aspects. We have been approached by local and regional NGOs who would like to join the platform of Karama in outreach to its network and local communities. Karama is now known in Jordan and the region for its capacity to influence:

Individuals:
Karama influenced local filmmakers who began integrating human rights issues and violations' concerns in their films. Also, members of Karama HRFF team who began as semi-volunteers started to engage themselves either by working in HR fields, by studying HR academics, or by becoming fully engaged in Karama activities and projects though they come from different disciplines.

The Local Community:
In order to meet spectators' expectations and to deal with the lack of local Human Rights films, Karama Atelier was created by Karama and Ma3mal 612 Think Factory. Karama Atelier works to address the lack of Human Rights films—films that touch on human rights issues through evident and direct legal and social messages—in the Arab region in general and in Jordan in particular. In the atelier, activists concerned with human rights, justice issues and the art of film can join to co-produce films with Ma3mal 612's team of workers and thinkers. To date, Karama Atelier has produced three documentaries and two short animated films: *Ta'a Marboutah*, *Gaza … Black & White*, *A Part of Her*, *Growing,* and *Surprise.*

Civil society organisations such as The Seven Villages Association, film clubs including Karak Film Club, schools and universities, as well as youth organisations such as We Love Ajloun have begun requesting to hold additional screenings based on Karama's program. Policy makers including the Ministry of Culture and the Royal Cultural Centre have been persistent in continuing a partnership with Karama, and are well aware of the project's capacity as a tool for change. They have become more tolerant of our content and freedom of expression when it comes to many human rights issues, even if these issues are local. They also do not mind if the festival uses their logos. They offer funding as well as venues and space for activities. These partnerships help to get the public more involved in the process of promoting human rights and expanding our base to reach the most remote areas in Jordan.

The Region:
Affiliates and other organisations have also suggested setting up programs and activities with Karama. For example, ARDD Legal Aid proposed workshops to be held within Karama for both the Karama audience and their audience of Syrian, Iraqi and Sudanese refugees. Cinema Human Rights and Advocacy participated in the 2013 edition by giving a lecture/mini-panel. Local radio stations—for example Amman Net, one of Karama media partners—saw the need for radio shows that tackle human rights and now there are three human rights shows being broadcasted. The French Institute designated a category for human rights in their Franco Arab Film Festival entitled *"Window on Karama"*. The Royal Film Commission began holding weekly documentary screenings. In addition, other affiliates have approached Karama for film contributions including the Shoman Foundation, King Hussein Foundation, as

Karama Human Rights Film Festival in Jordan also uses its festival venue for exhibitions. Photo: Archive of Karama HRFF.

well as other film festivals such as UN Women Festival in Jordan, Kelibia Film Festival in Tunisia and the Middle East Alternative Sound & Arts Festival (MEASAF) in Greece.

Karama established the *Arab Human Rights Film Network* in 2011 within a strategy to promote human rights through films in the Arab region. The Network aims at establishing a number of festivals and spaces for screening human rights films in the region, in collaboration with a number of organisations and individuals who intersect with Karama's vision and goals, such as Karama in Palestine / January 2014 , Karama in Gaza / May 2015 and Karama in Mauritania / March 2015. We initiated this "Informal" network inspired by the international Human Rights Film Network (HRFN), to enlarge our base of spectators and our network, and to have a festival with a local and a regional exposure. The Network will be formally effective by December 2015.

Karama also now contributes several "Karama Packages"—sets of themed films—to many other festivals that are not specifically human rights-focused festivals, such as the Franco Arab Film Festival, and the Dubai Film Festival; these packages help promote human rights in other artistic and cultural platforms and festivals.

Dealing with Censorship

Following the Arab Spring, editions of Karama faced greater censorship. In order to screen many important films that might be banned by the censorship department in our country, we partnered up with other bodies who could qualify under a non-governmental umbrella, and thus would not be subject to the same censorship laws as bodies within the country. For its 4th edition, Karama partnered up with the French institute, which provided a free venue for its screenings. This partnership has been very valuable and does not mean that the festival was required to include French films. While a partner will sometimes ask for the festival to make compromises in its programming, Karama does its best to maintain creative control of the films it screens.

The festival has to take into consideration the conflicts and controversy that exist among the spectators within the community. To cope with this, the festival practices self-censorship in a way that helps avoid conflicts and security problems. This fact does not necessarily mean to avoid screening any controversial films; indeed, the festival screens at least one shocking film, but doing so means that we must secure the screening venue, carefully present the film, and organise a secured debate.

In previous editions of Karama, some of the debates caused controversial discussions between audiences, especially for films about social, political, and religious taboos. Therefore, it is important for us to take certain precautions when screening these films and during the debates following the films. For example, we invite moderators who are experienced and who

have the know-how to lead these kinds of conversations. These moderators are elected by Karama seniors according to their experience and relevance.

Karama festival and screenings have taught us to diversify our subject matter to cater for an array of audience members with different affiliations and sensitivities. We have always kept our mission sheltered from propaganda or dogmatic discourse. Karama has kept the human being as the region's central hero and his/her basic rights as the festival's focal point.

Filmography

Peace vs. Justice (dir. Klaartje Quirijns, 2011).
Camp 14: Total Control Zone (dir. Marc Wiese, 2012).
Ta'a Marboutah (dir. Ehab Al Khatib, Karama Atelier, 2013).
Gaza … Black & White (dir. Arab and Tarzan, Karama Atelier, 2013).
A Part of Her (dir. Sawsan Darwaza, Karama Atelier, 2014).
Growing (dir. Tariq Rimawi, 2013).
Surprise (dir. Tariq Rimawi, 2015).

Dare to Document: Advocating Human Rights Through Films in Malaysia

Written by Anna Har, festival director

The FreedomFilmFest (FFF) is an annual human rights film festival that began in 2003 as a creative tool to increase awareness of human rights in Malaysia and the South East Asia region. The festival is organised by Pusat KOMAS (Community Communication Centre), an NGO based in Malaysia. KOMAS utilizes and promotes popular communication and participatory methodology in working for change. The organisation has been conducting community video and facilitation-skills training sessions for communities all over South East Asia since the early 1990s.

Responding to the Malaysian situation, KOMAS's other core programmes are in Non-Discrimination, Citizenship and Voter education. KOMAS was part of the organising committee of BERSIH 3.0 (Coalition for Free and Fair Elections) that organised the biggest rally on the streets of Kuala Lumpur in 2012, and also initiated PEMANTAU, a citizen election observers project for the 2012 elections. KOMAS has been a long time partner of and continues to support the Indigenous grassroots movement in Peninsular Malaysia. The NGO is an active member of COMANGO (Coalition of NGOs in Malaysia) that prepares the Universal Periodic Report on the state of human rights in Malaysia to the United Nations.

Background

During the 1980s and 90s, citizens in Malaysia were generally quite fearful of openly criticising the government. The same political party had ruled the country since its independence in 1957, and dissent and opposition parties had been effectively controlled with the help of laws that were used primarily to curb the media, opposition politicians, trade unionists, activists, academics and other alternative and progressive voices. Such laws included: the Internal Security Act (ISA) that allows for detention without trial for an unlimited period of time; the Official Secrets Act (OSA) that allows for government contracts and documents to be classified as official secrets and for anyone who exposes them to face severe punishment; and the Printing Presses and Publication Act (PPPA) that requires all press institutions and printers to reapply for their licenses yearly. The opposition had been successfully suppressed using legal methods such as the laws mentioned along with "extra legal" means such as divide-and-rule tactics where citizens are effectively divided and separated according to ethnic origins and languages.

It was against this political and social backdrop that the FFF was first conceived as a creative way to disseminate alternative information and points of views that are seldom represented in mainstream media.

Branding and Positioning the Festival

In Malaysia, the government and mainstream media branded NGOs or human rights activists as being anti-government or opposition supporters, though what we have always been is pro-justice and human rights. That stereotypical image made it easier for the government and the media to discredit our rights-based campaigns and public education to the masses. Because of this, when choosing a title for the festival, we strategically chose a name that would appeal to the masses and especially youth while still retaining a powerful message for human rights. In the end, we decided on FreedomFilmFest. Since *human rights* carried a negative or anti-government connotation, we did not outwardly brand it as a "human rights festival". Nevertheless, we did maintain that our festival showcased films that celebrate or embody the principles contained in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR).

We chose orange as our trademark FFF color and all designs and publicity materials would be consistently in orange. We also decided to have a theme to embody the spirit of our festival. We chose "Dare To Document" as our theme specifically to encourage Malaysians to be courageous despite the restrictions they face, and to document and put into film the social realities of ordinary people in the country. We also wanted to make the festival a platform for other NGOs and socially concerned groups in Malaysia to participate and share information.

We would invite them to be the resource people for films that were related to their issues and also offer them exhibition and booth space where they could reach out to the general public. In short, the festival became a civil society event that other NGOs and communities can tap into as well. We also tried to engage with the other arts-based groups such as dance, performance and visual artists, and invited them to contribute to our festival.

Venue

Because our event is still regarded as "sensitive" and might perhaps put venue managers in an "unpopular" situation with the government, one of the main challenges was securing a suitable public venue that would be willing to host the festival. Most large halls with screening facilities belong to local authorities, private corporations or are housed within academic institutions. All three of these are connected to the government either directly or indirectly and would not want to risk jeopardizing their business licenses for the festival.

In our first year, we cooperated with a film club that regularly holds screenings at a college auditorium.

A festive atmosphere at a venue, filled with stalls run by the festival's partner organizations. Photo: Archive of Freedom Film Fest.

However, the college informed the club that they would not allow us back again. Apparently, our exhibition panels contained "sensitive" topics such as calling for the repeal of particular oppressive laws as well as an anti-dam campaign. We also learned that holding the festival on college grounds does not necessary guarantee that students will come for the screening. In our experience, students have a general disinterest in documentaries unless they happen to be made by a popular filmmaker or the students have been forced by their lecturers to attend the screening as part of their coursework.

We then tried a commercial performance arts theatre space but the cost of renting the space was much higher than the previous location. In addition, it closed down soon after the festival for unrelated reasons. Generally, there were very few venues that had the full package of what we needed: a strategic location, reasonable rental costs, access to public transport, a size and environment that are conducive to discussion and supportive venue managers that are willing to take the risk of hosting our event. Finally, in our fourth or fifth year, we found an alternative arts space that suited our festival; it was in a pre-war building that was well known among the youth. Still, in two or three years, as our audiences got bigger, the fragile building structure could no longer hold our maximum capacity. Every year we continue to face the issue of where we can hold the festival that will suit all our requirements and needs. For now, the best option has been to hold it in a private arts and theatre space with professional audiovisual equipment and adequate seating—a space with which the public is familiar, that has accessible transport and parking facilities, and that is not too high-end or commercial.

Censorship

In Malaysia, there is a censorship law (Act 620, Film Censorship Act 2002) that requires all films to be sent in for censorship before they can be screened in public. The law states all films are subjected to this law. If found guilty of violating the law, a person can be slapped with a fine and jail term.

Section 6 (1) (a)(b) says that No person shall— have in his possession or in his custody or under his control; or circulate, exhibit, distribute, display, manufacture, produce, sell or hire, any film or film-publicity material which has not been approved by the Board.

Under part (2)(a)(b), the act states that any person who contravenes subsection (1) commits an offence and shall be liable on conviction— in respect of any film, to a fine of not less than five thousand ringgit and not more than thirty thousand ringgit or to imprisonment for a term not exceeding three years or to both; or in respect of any film-publicity material, to a fine of not less than one thousand ringgit and not more than ten thousand ringgit.

Lena Hendry, a KOMAS staff member, is now being charged under this act for screening *No Fire Zone:*

The Killing Fields of Sri Lanka, a documentary made by Nobel peace prize nominee, journalist and filmmaker, Callum Macrae.

Macrae was in Malaysia to lobby the Malaysian members of Parliament to pressure Sri Lanka to begin investigating alleged war crimes that happened in Sri Lanka during the civil war, and had approached KOMAS to assist in arranging a screening and meeting with the members of Parliament in Malaysia. Both the screening and meeting took place without any problems. However, on the same night, KOMAS also helped Macrae to screen the same film to invited guests in a private venue in Kuala Lumpur. This screening was disrupted by officers from the Home Ministry insisting that we stop the screening, citing that the film had not been approved by the censorship board and therefore could not be screened in public. We managed to continue the screening that night, but later three members of KOMAS were arrested; only Lena Hendry was charged.

Before the screening, the embassy of Sri Lanka had tried to persuade the venue owners to cancel the screening. They sent an official letter to the venue organisers stating that the screening was organised by "a group of sympathisers of the LTTE terrorist organisation", that the film was "based on lies and distorted facts of the events during the fight against LTTE terrorists in Sri Lanka" and that "screening such a documentary would affect the harmony and peaceful co-existence of different sections of the people in Sri Lanka and also in Malaysia in the long run". Based on this experience, it seems that the screening of any films that may be critical of other governments/ countries who are on friendly terms with Malaysia are also forbidden. This is a grave violation of the people's right to information and expression enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and also in the Malaysian constituition.

Before that incident, we had several run-ins with the authorities. They issued warning letters to us, informing us that our films had not been sent for censorship and thus could not be screened in public. We requested an official meeting with the censorship board to discuss the matter and explained to them that our events are small, private screenings for human rights education and should be exempted from the censorship process. The censorship board assured us that they would not censor content unnecessarily and requested that we send in our films in the future.

Despite this assurance, KOMAS has not complied with the request for several reasons: first, the independence of the censorship board is questionable as it is directly under the control of the Ministry of Home Affairs and the Prime Minster's Office. Second, the guidelines for censorship are not restricted to rating the films based on sexual or violent content, but also include many other aspects such as whether the film might jeopardise friendly relations with other countries, or whether its content is in conflict with national policies or interest.

In addition to being reviewed by the board of censors, films must be further scanned for content that may jeopardise security, and also ethnic and religious sensitivities, and ultimately approved by the police as well as religious authorities. In the past, this Act has been used arbitrarily to ban films that have content that is deemed sensitive to the country such as *The Last Communist* by Amir Muhammad, a film about the older generation of communists from Malaysia who are now living in exile in Thailand.

KOMAS believes that this Act is against the freedom of expression and information and thus has taken a stand from the beginning that we will not submit any of our films through this censorship process. Unfortunately, this has also meant that we are unable to screen in any public cinema in the country, due to a regulation restricting cinema owners from screening any film without a censorship license even if the cinema hall has been booked for a private screening. Still, this is a decision we feel we had to make since the films we screen about Malaysia almost always contain perspectives that are very critical of the government and its institutions or policies, and thus would be banned even if we, in good faith, sent them in for the censorship process.

Censorship remains the biggest threat to our festival because authorities can claim that our screenings are illegal because the films we screen do not have a censorship certificate. Rather than approaching us directly to stop a film screening, the authorities would be more likely to approach the venue operators or owners to threaten them that their business is at risk if they allow us to continue with the "illegal" screening. Some public and private academic institutions have also forbidden our film screenings for similar reasons. Once when we had a screening in a hotel in a small town, the police tried to stop the screening by announcing that there was a bomb threat. This scared off the hotel customers and in the end the owner told us that he could not allow us to screen in the hotel as it was jeopardising his business and customers. For a recently planned screening at a restaurant, the venue owner was visited three times by officers from the Home Ministry in the week leading the event. They told her that her business license might be pulled back and she might be arrested if she allowed the screening to take place in her venue. Even after the screening was cancelled, on the day of the scheduled screening, many officers were stationed outside the restaurant which scared off many potential customers.

It is important that we establish good partnerships with local hosts and screening venues that support our cause and are strong enough to withstand threats by the authorities. Whenever possible, we choose to go forward with an event despite the threats, and most of the time the authorities do not try to stop the screenings even though they are present to observe and make a report on what happened. Perhaps closing down a small event like ours would be counter-productive for the authorities, bringing more attention to the event rather than doing the opposite. Or perhaps they make the call that our event is not really a threat or impacting their

support base, and thus not crucial enough for them to take action. However, it has been proven that the authorities will not hesitate to act if they feel that the event will seriously threaten or harm their power base. Those times when the authorities did try to stop a screening were when the film featured content that seriously implicated political leaders or the ruling party, or contained content that was especially controversial.

Most of the time, if we can identify the officers who are present at a screening, we will tell them to register just like other guests; sometimes we even acknowledge their presence in the crowd and invite them to participate in the discussion and offer their point of view. Our stance is that we have nothing to hide and that what we are doing is opening up a space for the public to learn about human rights issues and encouraging discussion and discourse on these issues, which in the long term contributes to the process of nation-building. For screenings of films on "sensitive" topics, we always invite resource people who can speak about the issue with authority; thus, we welcome the government or religious authorities to come and participate in the Q&A session after the screening. So far though, they have chosen not to be present or engage with us.

Producing Malaysian Films with Critical Content

Up until the early 2000s, there were very few independent filmmakers in Malaysia who made documentaries that explored contemporary social and political issues within Malaysia. This is partly due to the fact that there was no space or platform to screen films with such content as a result of our highly controlled mass media. Also, Malaysians generally consider films to be entertainment as opposed to a source of alternative information. Non-fiction forms including documentaries are not very popular, with the exception of nature documentaries such as National Geographic or Discovery Channel. KOMAS had also been involved in community video production for a long time and wanted to seize the momentum created by the accessibility of cheap video cameras in the 1990s in order to encourage people to be active users of the video/film medium as a tool to document and to express their opinions—not to merely be consumers or create entertainment. Thus, one of the main objectives of the festival is to encourage social filmmaking and to provide a platform and create an audience for such films.

In the festival's first two years, we began by calling for completed entries like other film festivals. But soon, we realised that there were not enough good documentaries (if any) being made every year in Malaysia, let alone quality documentaries with human rights content. Those films that we did receive were mostly student films or TV magazine programmes. So, in the third year, we created a proposal competition whereby Malaysian can send in their proposal for a social film and are eligible to win a grant of RM6,000 (less than USD2,000) to produce their film. This way, we can encourage more people to make social films

A film festival can be a family event.
Photo: Archive of Freedom Film Fest.

(since their film would be funded from the grant if they win), and at the same time KOMAS could "select/curate" the themes of the films that would be produced from the grants. Interestingly, most of the proposals submitted came from first-time filmmakers and activists and not professionals. This is perhaps because the grant is too small to finance a professional production, and also perhaps due to lack of interest from more commercial filmmakers.

Recognising that the winners of the grant may not have the technical competency to make a film, KOMAS provides production guidance and infuses a human rights perspective into the films. The type and amount of support varies from filmmaker to filmmaker, but it usually entails a few pre-production meetings whereby the budget, schedule, script, production team and preparations for the shoot are discussed and finalised; after footage has been shot, meetings are held to identify any technical issues that may have occurred; later on, some guidance is provided on editing the film and feedback is given on the work-in-progress and end product. With this support, the film's production quality and content is to a certain extent ensured, although the filmmaker's skill and commitment to the production ultimately determines how the film will turn out.

This approach of offering support has been quite effective in the sense that every year we can guarantee that we have produced three films about important issues in Malaysia; the films are then used to generate discussion and bring attention to these issues via the FFF platform, allowing us to reach out to a wider audience all over the country. Audiences can usually relate with the issues presented in the locally made films and are happy to be able to watch something that represents their experiences and opinions. Some audience members who are not familiar with or aware of certain issues are shocked and touched by the stories shared by their fellow Malaysians. The filmmaker, as well as the protagonist and a resource person are usually present for post-screening discussions so the audience can ask questions about certain things presented in the film. This is also an opportunity to show support and solidarity to some of the protagonists in the films who are victims of human rights abuses. Of course there are many people in the audience who are worried about sharing their opinions aloud and would refrain from speaking or asking questions, but the facilitator can always throw out some general questions that represented some of the issues and thoughts that might be on the audience's mind, or invite certain representatives to speak from the floor.

Every year, the proposal competition is based on a certain theme, depending on what is currently relevant in the country. Past themes have included: Freedom of Information; the Untold Stories of Merdeka (the country's independence); Dare to Document; Real Change?; and Democracy and Freedom.

The three Malaysian films produced yearly from the grants make an impact because they are about

issues that Malaysians would not see on TV or covered in the mainstream; they also receive quite a lot of attention. In fact, the Malaysian films are the highlight of the festival. Once we put the films online, they are shared by many. Our films can go from 60,000 hits in the first week of release to 150,000 hits over a longer period of time. The films have been used as resource materials in classes by lecturers and students and have been screened by activists to their own communities.

Apart from organising screenings in the cities, we also bring selected films to rural and more interior communities, where there is less access to alternative information. We translate and subtitle appropriate films that will resonate with these communities. So far, we have found that stories of struggles from similar communities can have an empowering impact on the communities watching; they can gain strength or be challenged to think about what else they can do to within their own reality. For example, one Malaysian film, *Hak Dinafikan* (*Rights Denied*), was made by two Indigenous filmmakers, Shafie Dris and Abri Chupil about a controversial proposed act that would provide individual land ownership to indigenous families. The film was disseminated to indigenous villages nationwide and used as a crucial tool to bring awareness to and gain support for their campaign to convince indigenous communities to reject the proposed act.

As a result of our annual proposal and grant competition, we now have a sizeable collection of social films about Malaysia made from the perspective of ordinary people; this collection is used widely as a resource in universities, and in particular by lecturers on Malaysian studies. We have also received invitations to screen the films from Malaysian communities abroad such as in the UK, US and Australia.

Dissemination of Films and Impact

As our FFF films will never reach the TV stations or cinemas, it was important that we develop an alternative method of distribution. This is done by making DVD compilations and selling them at our screenings. We also upload the films online at *http://freedomfilmfest.komas.org/?page_id=878* and organise online discussions with the filmmakers. Apart from that, with the help of interested groups and individuals, screenings are organised in different cities in the country and also in smaller more remote communities, schools and universities.

To maximise the discussion after each screening, we make sure that there is a facilitator present either from KOMAS or our local partner. Whenever possible we try to arrange for the filmmaker or a resource person to be present. More recently, we have used online technology such as Skype to communicate with filmmakers who cannot be present or are in a faraway country. From our experience, how far or fast a film spreads, and its impact is also dependent on the filmmaker. Our past filmmakers/grant recipients who were activists tend to be more diligent in using their

Award ceremony with festival winners and festival organisers. Photo: Archive of Freedom Film Fest.

films compared to non-activists. One of our most successful films was made by indigenous filmmakers; the film, *Hak Dinafikan* (*Rights Denied*) was mass duplicated and shared with indigenous communities throughout the country to campaign against a proposed law that was seen as disadvantageous to the indigenous community.

Another film that was really popular was *Sepuluh Tahun Sebelum Merdeka* (*10 Years Before Independence*), a film about the history of the Left's role in the independence of Malaya. The information provided in this film was something that we do not find in our official history books. It was well received, especially among students, partly because the filmmaker was a talented graphic designer and crafted his film to reach out to young people. He was also a passionate researcher of alternative history and frequently gave talks and presentations on this topic. He even created a blog about his films and research.

FFF films are also popular because they are made in the local language of the people: Bahasa Malaysia. In Malaysia, documentary films are usually consumed by the elite class who are English-speaking; those films are mostly foreign documentaries. But FFF documentaries fill in the need for critical documentaries about local issues done by locals in a local language. We also selectively subtitle foreign films that we screen at the festival into Bahasa Malaysia. If it's just for screening in the cities, usually Bahasa subtitles are not necessary, but if the films will also travel to smaller towns and into different communities, we would usually subtitle them.

The FFF film with the highest online hits thus far was *M-C-M: Utopia Milik Siapa? (M-C-M': and they call us dreamers...), a film* about the issue of affordable housing for the current generation in their twenties living in Malaysia. It focused on an issue that is not discussed critically in the mainstream media, and was stylized in a way that was attractive enough to catch the attention of young people today. It made a big impact on them—enough to share it with others.

Engaging with Local/State Authorities

As previously discussed, it is very difficult (almost impossible) for human rights NGOs to engage with the current government to lobby for change; there is no multiple or even two party system; there is hardly any public debate or discussion, and politicians do not take a stand across party lines. If you are not pro-government, then you are effectively the enemy, and no engagement with you is needed. Today this attitude is prevalent among most government officials and politicians, in part due to our history of being ruled by one party for more than fifty years.

Nevertheless, Malaysia went through a political reformation in 2008 whereby a new coalition party managed to win enough seats to form the government in several states, although they failed to form the federal government. Since then, the festival has actively

been trying to engage with representatives from these states and successfully got two state governments to co-organise the FFF's state level screenings. This has been possible because FFF already had a reputation for screening human rights films and for carrying films with alternative information, and the two new state governments already knew about our festival and films and were frequent attendees or supporters. Their involvement in programming the festival is minimal with them lending some financial support and being there to officiate the opening or closing ceremonies. Although they do not offer much financial support or resources, the cooperation with the state governments has helped the festival be officially recognised and increased its credibility.

More recently, we have approached local representatives within these states and have organised community video workshops and community level screenings in their areas. The community video workshop focused on how to make stories of concern to the local communities and areas that they represent. We will then organise community screenings in all the local areas that participated in the workshop.

The state tourism board also supports us by sponsoring the costs to bring regional filmmakers and guests to our festival. Still, most powers are under the control of federal government and ministries and it is difficult to have any engagement with them in order to affect change or lobby particular issues. We have also tried to cooperate with the city council but because our screenings are illegal in the eyes of the law, partnerships with established and major institutions are almost impossible. This kind of outreach, lobbying with the government and creating new partnerships is usually conducted by the board of directors of KOMAS or the festival director. It must be said that this kind of work takes a lot of effort and time and continuous communication with the various authorities in order to engage with them and gain their confidence.

Human Rights/NGO Branding

FFF is organised by an NGO with an agenda to spread human rights; this has pros and cons, especially in a country where the government and activists have always been on opposite sides. As a comparison, a festival that is more arts-focused rather than principle-based might be more attractive to ordinary folks not looking for an event that is overtly political in nature. There is also the danger of preaching to the converted; although they are an important part of our audience, we try to ensure that we also reach out to new audiences every year. We do this by choosing yearly festival themes that we feel may be interesting to the general public at large, by having different NGOs and groups co-host particular screening sessions on particular themes with us, by showcasing a variety of themes and films to cater to different interests, as well as including some award-winning popular international films in our lineup. We also try to reach out to new audiences by

holding screenings in new and different venues apart from our regular ones.

We face other challenges as a human rights festival. The type of FFF films that have been produced thus far have been very overtly critical of the government, which in turn makes it difficult to penetrate and approach schools in any official capacity. This also makes it difficult to get local sponsorship. This presents a challenge because it is increasingly difficult to obtain foreign funding for the festival, which makes sustainability almost impossible unless we decide to charge a fee for tickets. At the same time, because the FFF is meant to be a tool to spread awareness of human rights, we want to make the festival accessible to everyone. In addition, our NGO staff are not professional festival workers and thus they may have other responsibilities within the organisation; most of the time, they are stretched in many directions at once.

For the future, we are looking at ways to establish spinoffs of the festival that are more geared towards capacity-building for filmmakers, audiences and the industry as a whole. Hopefully we will be able to position these activities as being mainstream enough to obtain local support and funding.

Filmography

No Fire Zone: The Killing Fields of Sri Lanka (dir. Callum Mcrae, 2013).
Lelaki Komunis Terakhir (The Last Communist, dir. Amir Muhammad, 2006).
Hak Dinafikan (Rights Denied, dir. Shafie Dris&Abri Yok Chupil, 2010).
Sepuluh Tahun Sebelum Merdeka (10 Years Before Independence, dir. Fahmi Reza, 2007).
M-C-M´: Utopia Milik Siapa? (M-C-M´: and they call us dreamers..., dir. Boon Kia Meng, 2012).

Sowing the Seeds for a Human Rights Film Festival in Burma

Written by Mon Mon Myat, festival co-organiser

Three years ago, if we had tried to organise a human rights film festival in Burma—a country where military dictatorship had taken root for a half a century—it simply would not have been possible. The possibility did not arise magically. Rather, it was formed step-by-step, and grew through the inspiration, passion and efforts of its founding partners.

I can remember well the day that a certain foreigner—he seemed like a giant—first came to my apartment. It was 2012, and had been two years since the alleged end of military rule; at the time, roughly 2,000 political prisoners remained. I was helping my partner with a local film festival entitled, "The Art of Freedom", though *freedom* was still considered a sensitive word in Burma. Since 2010, Burma had become a popular case study among the international community as an example of a peaceful transition process from military rule to quasi-civilian rule. However opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi warned the world to keep a "conscious optimism" about the so-called-reform process of the former military regime.

When we met this giant white man, we did not know that he was Igor Blazevic, the founder of One World Human Rights Film Festival in Prague. A close friend had emailed me and introduced Igor as a foreigner who was interested in helping out with The Art of Freedom Festival. Though he offered his help, we were not very warm with him at first; we had never heard of One World, and were concerned that the influence of a foreigner could cause a problem for our own festival. The film festival we were planning was very political and was meant to put a spotlight on the remaining political prisoners in the country. Most films submitted to the festival were very political and anti-government; none of the films were submitted to the film scrutiny board for screening, which meant that the festival was completely unauthorized.

Because the film festival itself was already very risky and operating within a sensitive political situation, we were especially wary of involving a foreigner in our activities, knowing his presence might increase the dangers we faced. For instance, the government might accuse the festival of being a foreign-funded event and use that as justification for banning the festival. Unfortunately we could not accept Igor's offer of help. His proposal having been rejected, he left our apartment, perhaps a bit confused by our response. Still, he did not give up hope. When we came to Lifescapes

Southeast Asian Film Festival in Chiang Mai, Thailand, he reached out again. This time, Igor invited my partner, Min Htin Ko Ko Gyi, to One World Human Rights Film Festival in Prague, Czech Republic. Indeed the trip to One World was very inspiring for Min Htin, and he returned home with a dream to organise a human rights film festival in Burma.

Igor had sowed a seed in Min Htin's heart, but the seed didn't remain there—it grew up and spread out to others. When Min Htin first told me of his dream to start a human rights film festival, I wasn't aware that it would be such a big undertaking. Having already helped him with The Art of Freedom festival, I didn't think it would be that difficult. Day by day, though, I came to realise that there is a great deal involved in such a complex process.

Seeking Out Funding

When we began to pursue Min Htin's dream of a human rights film festival, we had no resources secured. We approached potential donors and explained our idea to organise a human rights film festival in Burma. The first donors who supported our human rights film festival project were two organisations, Internews and Norwegian Burma Committee (NBC). Internews provided a shared office space for one year and NBC provided a small grant for the project. We also approached the Western Embassies in Yangon and sent out proposals to different donors including the EU, Goethe Institute, Movies That Matter (MtM) and International Documentary Film Festival Amsterdam (IDFA).

With Igor's help, in November 2012, we were also able to arrange an event to introduce human rights films to the local media and potential donor organisations. Soon after that event, the British Council in Yangon offered to sponsor our human rights film festival. Later, we also received funding from the British Embassy to support a travelling film festival and additional support from Norwegian People's Aid (NPA) and Open Society Foundation (OSF) for a documentary film library and seminars.

With the help of all those initiatives, Human Dignity Media Organisation (HDMO) was born in early 2013 with the aim to organise Human Rights Human Dignity International Film Festival (HRHDIFF) in Burma. We announced our open call for film submissions in January 2013. The HRHDIFF is dedicated to human rights defender Aung San Suu Kyi, who introduced human rights to Burma. The festival's awards ceremony is held every year on her birthday, June 19th.

Organising the First Edition of HRHDIFF

The main challenge for us was running the festival with a low budget for the first year. Fortunately, we were able to find local sponsors with small theaters—Junction Square and Nay Pyi Daw Cinema in downtown Yangon. The owners of both cinemas provided screening venues for free for the first edition

Members of the festival audience loving human rights symbols and the festival logo. Photo courtesy of HRHDIFF.

of our festival. Igor Blazevic was now our international consultant, and with his help we were able to get access to One World's films and filmmaker contacts, as well as input from Watch Docs International Human Rights Film Festival (Poland), Freedom Film Festival (Malaysia), Steps International and Amnesty International.

Based on Igor's suggestion, we decided to invite three international jurors to help establish our festival as an international event and also to strengthen our network with well-known international film festivals. We invited Ally Derks from IDFA, Don Edkins from Steps International, Canadian filmmaker and producer Peter Wintonick, as well as Igor himself, and they comprised our first international jury for HRHDIFF. Together with one local jury member, they selected the winner of the Aung San Suu Kyi Award for best documentary.

For the first edition of the festival we screened approximately 26 international, feature length documentary films and short documentary films. For the first edition of the HRHDIFF, we divided the submitted films into competition categories including main competition (for international and national documentary films), best short film and best animation categories for local films and non-competitive categories. It was important for us to divide up the international and national films because local filmmakers are working under such difficult conditions that the production value can be quite different. Other international films were shown in our non-competitive Panorama section. A handful of short documentary films were also selected for our Docs for Kids section, for which we invited children from the schools to the film festival. All films in the international section were translated and subtitled into Burmese language.

We also had a national program section in which we screened about 28 films, documentaries, shorts and animations. Films in our national program were also included in the competition. Three members of our national jury selected the best three local films in three separate categories—best documentary, best short, and best animation. The award for best film was named the "Min Ko Naing Award", in tribute to a poet and legendary student leader who has spent more than seventeen years in jail for his leadership of the 88 Student movement. Another award title carries the date March 13, which is when the democracy uprising started in Burma in 1988. Two additional awards—one honoring Vaclav Havel, the late president of Czech republic and strong supporter of Aung San Suu Kyi, and another named after the Norwegian Burma Committee (NBC)—were included in the first edition of HRHDIFF.

Ultimately, the Human Rights Human Dignity International Film Festival was successfully organised in Yangon in 2013. Our audience numbers reached approximately 6,000, and we were able to screen 26 international films and 28 national films that focused on human rights. The festival drew significant

media coverage from international and local media in its first edition.

Mobilizing Human Rights Film Festivals and Pushing Boundaries

Our festival began its tour of the country in August 2013. We felt it was important to hold our human rights film festival in different parts of the country in order to create a public space for audiences to be exposed to an overview of human rights films and reflect on the films' connection to their daily life. Within eight months, the travelling element of the film festival had visited thirteen locations, including the country's capital of Nay Pyi Taw as well as ethnic states including Kachin, Kayah, Karen, Chin, Mon and Shan State. We were able to reach about 13,000 people by the end of that tour.

Providing a platform for discussions about human rights in public is at the heart of our festival. For instance, the award-winning documentary *Survival in Prison* is one film that sparked lively debate among audience members. The film itself is a testimony of human rights violations endured by political prisoners, and it gave the audience a platform to discuss human rights abuses that had been perpetrated by the former military government. San Zaw Htwe, the main subject of the documentary, spent twelve years in prison told the audience that his story is personal, and insisted that he did not speak for the many other political prisoners who suffered more than him or died in custody. After the screening of the film, an elderly lady in Hpa-an, the capital of Kayin state, burst into tears, admitting that she never grasped how political prisoners had suffered until watching the documentary. She wiped away tears as she told San Zaw Htwe, "I could imagine how painful it would have been for your parents while you were in prison. I would have felt the same if you were my son". This prisoner's plight resonated with audience members of all ages, including a number of university students who said they were overwhelmed with the respect they felt for San Zaw Htwe and the courage he displayed during his time in captivity.

During the tour of the travelling film festival, San Zaw Htwe said was struck by the fact that audiences seem more interested in venting their anger about rights abuses than in developing a better understanding of what exactly their human rights are. At many of the festival's stops, audience members have approached filmmakers to ask them to document human rights abuses affecting their local area such as land grabbing, mining projects, hydro power projects and deep sea port projects.

People were interested in the festival because the term *human rights film* was itself very new to them, and they were curious to know what kind of films would be shown at our the festival. Local audiences came from all walks of life and sectors of society, from MPs to trishaw drivers. Anyone could freely join the public space created in the cinema venue by asking

questions, sharing their own experiences related to the films, and expressing their opinion.

Only a few cities in Burma outside of Yangon have cinemas. If there was no cinema in the city where we took the travelling festival, we were required to ask permission from the local authorities to screen in another suitable venue. That permission needs to be secured at least two weeks before the festival. Making these arrangements is time-consuming, but it also is illegal to publicize a film festival without official permission. We decided to take the risk and not obtain permission for any venue except Loikaw in Kayah State. Technically, running the festival without permission is breaking a law as it is considered organising public assembly without permission. So far, we have not faced any legal action for our activities during the first edition of the HRHD Travelling Film Festival, but we are well aware that human rights issues are still especially sensitive when it comes to local authorities.

Producing Human Rights Films

In the first edition of HRHDIFF, we found that the quality of human rights documentary films submitted to national competition was not yet up to the production value of international films. In addition, because Burma was under military rule for so long, people were still lacking in knowledge about human rights. To fulfill the need for human rights documentary films in our country, we organised a human rights documentary filmmaking workshop for twelve young participants together with two international trainers, using funding provided by Burma OTI/USAID. We advertised an open call for applications for the workshop. We ultimately selected twelve participants using three main criteria: a quota of 35 percent women, 50 percent minority ethnic participation, and the engagement of youth. We invited two international filmmakers whom we had met during the first edition of HRHDIFF and International Documentary Film Festival Amsterdam (IDFA) to be our trainers. After a six-month long filmmaking workshop, our twelve participants produced five human rights documentary films related to constitutional amendments, freedom of assembly, freedom of religion, child rights, and the rights of people with disabilities—all of which reflect human rights issues and the political situation faced in Burma. Those five student films were then submitted to the second edition of HRHDIFF in June 2014.

The Second Edition of HRHDIFF

Because of how successful the first edition of our festival had been in 2013, other embassies including the US, France, Canada, Czech Republic and Sweden were willing to support the second edition of HRHDIFF. Our primary partners the previous year, such as British Council, Norwegian People's Aid (NPA), International Documentary Film Festival Amsterdam (IDFA) and One World Human Rights Film Festival (Prague), continued supporting the HRHDIFF in its second year.

We awarded three Aung San Suu Kyi awards for best national, regional and international documentary films, the Min Ko Naing Award for the best short film and the March13 Award for best animated film.

In addition to the award named for Vaclav Havel, late president of the Czech republic, we established two new awards: one named for Hantharwady U Win Tin, late Burmese human rights defender and journalist, and another for Peter Wintonick, late well-known Canadian documentary filmmaker who was an international jury member of HRHDIFF 2013. Peter Wintonick had introduced Burmese filmmakers to the word "Docu-mocracy"; the award in his honor was given to the winning student-film from the human rights documentary film production workshop.

A total of 9,200 people attended the second edition of the festival, a number that included 500 children and roughly 150 people with disabilities. We screened thirty-one national films, twenty-six international films, and nine films from the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). In order to establish Human Rights Human Dignity International Film Festival as an ASEAN event in the future, we will continue to include an ASEAN films category in upcoming HRHDIFF editions. The festival took place over four days, with screenings held in two cinemas; entrance to screenings was free, opening up the festival to people from all walks of life. The festival again drew significant media coverage from both international and local media. We invited 300 domestic accredited guests (government officials, diplomats, representatives from NGOs, film professionals, press, etc.) and twenty-three international guests (jury members as well as some international filmmakers, including those from the ASEAN region).

The seed that Igor Blazevic carried from One World in Prague has now grown up in another land. What this shows is that the plant of Human Rights is universal and can be sowed wherever there is inspiration, passion and the effort to make things happen.

Filmography

Survival in Prison (dir. Yee Nan Theik, 2013).

Award ceremony of Human Rights Human Dignity FF 2014. Photo courtesy of HRHDIFF.

Ciné Droit Libre: A Festival of Mobile Cinema Screenings in Burkina Faso

Written by Abdoulaye Diallo, festival co-ordinator

Mobile Cinema Screenings Are the Way to Go

Ciné Droit Libre is the first film festival committed to the cause of human rights and freedom of expression in French-speaking Africa. It offers a space for open debate on issues of major interest, such as good governance, socioeconomic development, justice, corruption, socio-political crises, etc. First held in 2005 in Burkina Faso, and with its credo "one film, one theme, one debate", the festival soon became a key player in the area of human rights.

Over the years, the need to involve the population of the inland areas of Burkina Faso has been increasingly felt. In fact, ignorance is rife among the inhabitants of the inland cities. The number of people that have access to socially engaged films is limited, while the lack of a space for expressing opposing points of view has a negative impact on their level of awareness when it comes to human rights issues.

In 2007, Association Semfilms, the organisation behind Ciné Droit Libre, organised the mobile cinema programme for the first time. Mobile cinema screenings very rapidly became a success in Burkina Faso and, what's more, they permitted their organisers to learn about and assess the fundamental rights violations in the rural and remote areas of the West African country.

The mobile cinema programme (referred to in French as *decentralisation*) opens up the debate about all sorts of abuses, the lack of awareness of fundamental rights, the constant fear of speaking out, and serves as an effective remedy for the people. Its aim is to reduce human rights violations by increasing civic education for, and raising public awareness among, both the people and the authorities. The idea is to put the people—and thus human rights—at the centre of concerns. The programme takes into account all of the aspects that contribute to this change in behaviour so that the citizens themselves become the primary advocates of their own rights.

The Organisation of the Mobile Cinema Programme

Each year, in between October and December, the mobile cinema screenings take place in public spaces

in seven Burkina Fasoan cities. Most screenings are open-air screenings. From one year to the next, the cities change, with the exception of Bobo-Dioulasso in the west and Ouahigouya in the north of the country, two cities where Ciné Droit Libre has established film societies. In its initial stages, the organisation of the festival is composed of a small coordination team responsible for the creation of the programme as well as the selection of the cities where the films are to be screened. Once the festival has started, this team is reinforced by other people who have their own specific tasks. Generally, the cities are chosen by taking into account, among others, the following criteria:

- The topicality of the themes and the extent to which they relate to the problems of the respective city
- The theme and the language of the films
- The availability of invited guests who are informed in advance in order to have constructive debates
- The interest shown by civil society partners active in the area of human rights

The equipment used consists of a sound system, a video projector, a generator and a small light unit. We just acquired an open-air cinema. For transport we rent 4x4 vehicles.

Mobilisation Strategy

The mobilisation strategy is based on the public space and its unrestrained access, on the quality of the invited guests (engaged artists that enjoy popularity and well known human rights activists) and on the films whose themes are of interest to the people. The strategy is implemented making use of a communication plan that consists of:

- A radio commercial in French and local languages
- Posters, programme booklets and flyers
- Grass-roots communication throughout the entire city orchestrated by a “town crier” on market days and on the actual day of the festival (special emphasis goes out to this form of communication)

In addition, in the cities where Ciné Droit Libre film societies have been established, the mobile cinema programme is organised in the form of mini festivals that take longer (two to three days) and have more films on offer. At this moment, Ouahigouya and Bobo-Dioulasso are the two cities that are livened up by the monthly activities of these very film societies. Moreover, partnerships with the Olvida Library in Ouahigouya and the French Institute in Bobo-Dioulasso allow Ciné Droit Libre to organise the screenings through adequate frameworks and to benefit from the communication activities of these two institutions free of charge.

Another effective mobilisation strategy upon which Ciné Droit Libre relies upon is the combination of artistic activities and the cinema screenings and debates (film concerts) and above all, performances by committed artists who prove to be very popular, such as Sams’k Le Jah, Smockey, Sana Bob and

Outdoor screenings attract large audience numbers. Photo: Archive of Ciné Droit Libre.

others. Since its inception, Semfilms has supported engaged artists that have been censored by the authorities through the making of video clips or by offering them a stage (during festivals) and a space (web tv: *www.droitlibre.tv*) for the promotion and distribution of their works.

The film concerts benefit from innovative concepts such as a concert by the Grandes Gueules ("the Loudmouths") stand-up comedy and the onstage providing of information about human rights. The presence of artists that are renowned among youth, significantly contributes to attracting large crowds.

Since 2013, Ciné Droit Libre has extended its successful concept of the "Festival Village" in Bobo-Dioulasso and Ouahigouya with outdoor screenings in popular neighborhoods. In addition to the screenings, people can have a drink, eat kebabs, watch concerts or stand-up comedy, and participate in discussions. The cinema screenings and debates, along with the concerts, act as a springboard for other forms of communication for the protection of human rights, such as the collection of signatures for petitions, etc. Each night, between 2,000 and 7,000 people attend the activities at the Festival Village.

Obviously, with such big crowds these discussions are different from the discussions we organise indoors. Yet, we manage to organise good discussions with interesting resource people as our guests. Usually, there are also plenty of questions from the audience.

Difficulties Experienced and Lessons Learned

One of the recurrent difficulties of the mobile cinema programme is getting permission to occupy the urban spaces for the film screenings and debates. In some cases, the authorities called the engagement of the festival into question and were reluctant to authorise the occupation of these public spaces. This has lead to tough negotiations time and again. To counteract this situation, Semfilms has teamed up with a dozen civil society organisations, like human rights organisations, youth movements, and trade unions, and relies on their efforts and synergy.

These strategic partners of the festival take on the responsibility of requesting authorisation to occupy the public spaces. In return, Semfilms helps out these organisations by making awareness-raising films available to them and by offering them free training courses during the festival on the use of videos and the internet in relation to the promotion of human rights.

Conclusion

Over the last seven years, the extension of the Ciné Droit Libre festival has proved that the mobile cinema programme remains one of the rare opportunities for an open debate in the provinces. It gives a voice to the people of the inlands of Burkina Faso, who, little by little, have overcome their fear and denounced all violations of their fundamental rights. Every year the

festival is taken to seven different cities to screen the best films of the festival. The most popular films are films that focus on land issues, political films on corruption and mismanagement, or movies that portray heroes like former president Thomas Sankara, assassinated journalist Norbert Zongo, former Prime Minister Lumumba of the Rupublic of Congo, or former South African President Nelson Mandela.

Putting into practice the mobile cinema screenings has allowed Ciné Droit Libre to establish close contact with the isolated inland population. Year after year, the festival has shown its relevance and value to the citizens of Burkina Faso—in particular in the remote areas of the country—and that's why its organisers attach particular importance to it.

A 2013 survey on the impact of the Ciné Droit Libre festival, carried out in the capital Ouagadougou and several other cities where cinema screenings have taken place, reveals that:

- In three years time, the festival has reached out to more than 275,000 people.
- Around 64% of the respondents consider that the festival has instilled in them respect for the values of human rights and freedom of expression.
- Around 41% of the respondents think that the festival has advocated for consolidating the democracy in Burkina Faso.
- Around 35% of the respondents believe that the festival has contributed to good governance.

Performances by engaged artists in Burkina Faso. Photo: Archive of Ciné Droit Libre.

FiSahara: A Film Festival in Exile

Written by María Carrión, festival executive director

Who We Are

In Arabic, *FiSahara* means "in the Sahara". Our film festival takes place in the heart of this immense desert, in a region known as the Desert of Deserts or the *Hammada* (Devil's Garden), where temperatures in the summer can soar to over fifty degrees Celsius. This forgotten corner of the world in Southwestern Algeria is the temporary home of about 150 thousand refugee women, men and children from the Western Sahara who fled their homeland in 1975, when Spain, the former colonial power, was withdrawing, and Morocco and Mauritania invaded it. Sahrawis have lived here for four decades in almost total isolation, the victims of an internationally invisible crisis.

Created in 2003 by both Sahrawis in the camps and Spanish civil society, FiSahara (Western Sahara International Film Festival) is an annual human rights film and cultural festival that seeks to entertain and empower the Sahrawi people through film, as well as to raise international awareness about the Western Sahara's ignored conflict. As Sahrawis discovered film, they have embraced this new art as a tool for self-expression, cultural resistance and human rights activism, giving birth to Sahrawi cinematography.

FiSahara's programming combines film screenings with roundtables, workshops, concerts, a traditional Sahrawi cultural fair, children's entertainment, camel races and, for international visitors, a chance to live with Sahrawi families and visit camp institutions. The winning film at FiSahara is awarded a camel.

FiSahara brings the Sahrawi population together with filmmakers, artists, human rights defenders, journalists and many others from around the world, including, most recently, filmmakers and activists from Morocco who have come in support of the Sahrawi people. Visitors develop strong bonds with their new friends and families, and these experiences often lead to many different forms of collaboration, including the production of films about the Western Sahara.

Spanish actor Javier Bardem visited FiSahara in 2008 and subsequently produced *Sons of the Clouds*, a documentary on the Western Sahara that screened at the United Nations and the US Congress and that is used as an awareness-raising tool by the Robert F. Kennedy Center for Justice and Human Rights. Others have initiated health, educational and cultural projects in the camps after their visit. While the festival's origins and most of the team are in the refugee camps and in Spain, FiSahara is now an international project that attracts filmmakers and visitors from many different

countries, reaching out in particular to the Middle East/North Africa (MENA) region and the rest of Africa.

An important part of FiSahara's programming is based on the premise that access to leisure, culture and entertainment are basic human rights. For Sahrawis entering their fifth decade of exile, and who face all sorts of scarcities on a daily basis, the festival offers a week of respite from the hardship of everyday life.

In particular, FiSahara focuses on offering entertainment for children and youth. Women, who shoulder family responsibilities and have leadership roles in the community, are also at the center of programming and scheduling. The festival acts as a two-way window through which Sahrawis view and interact with the outside world, and the outside world can learn about Sahrawi reality. It has become the most important annual event in the camps, a date that Sahrawi families look forward to year-round.

In 2011, FiSahara opened the Abidin Kaid Saleh Audiovisual School, a year-round film school in the camps that offers a two-year curriculum and is training the first generation of Sahrawi filmmakers. Screenings of student films at FiSahara have a particularly empowering effect on the Sahrawi audience, portraying an array of stories and characters unique to blossoming Sahrawi cinematography.

In 2013, FiSahara introduced a human rights film section offering a range of human rights-centered films portraying struggles, stories and characters that Sahrawis can identify with and learn from. The films are accompanied by roundtables with filmmakers and/or protagonists. These screenings and debates, along with FiSahara's human rights video workshops for activists from the occupied territory and from the camps, help bring the Western Sahara's human rights crisis into sharper focus and provide Sahrawis with tools to document, contextualize and share their own reality with the international community.

The Western Sahara's Invisible Crisis

FiSahara's work is both guided and conditioned by the larger context in which it operates: the forty year-old political conflict and humanitarian crisis in the Western Sahara. A land rich in natural resources including phosphates and plentiful fishing, the Western Sahara lies south of Morocco, north of Mauritania and west of Algeria. Its long coastline stretches along the Atlantic Ocean.

Often referred to as Africa's last colony, the Western Sahara was under Spanish colonial rule until 1975/6, when Madrid withdrew from the territory and allowed Morocco and Mauritania to invade, with the support of the United States and France. Thousands of Sahrawis fled the brutal military invasion and the repression that followed and took to the desert, leaving family members and homes behind. Morocco bombed the fleeing Sahrawis with napalm and white phosphorous using French-built warplanes.

Concert in the dunes.
Photo by Carlos Cazurro.

Sahrawis who fled settled deep in the Sahara Desert of Southwestern Algeria, in an area ceded to them by the Algerian government. While the women built and ran the refugee camps, the men went to war. Mauritania withdrew in 1979. The war ended in 1991 with a UN-brokered cease-fire accord and a promise of a referendum on self-determination for Sahrawis. To this day, the people of the Western Sahara continue to wait for the referendum, which Morocco refuses to allow.

The Sahrawi refugee camps are located near the town of Tindouf, Algeria, and living conditions are harsh: extreme temperatures, arid terrain and lack of basic infrastructure and services such as clean drinking water and sanitation. The population, of which almost half are children, has few employment opportunities and depends on international humanitarian aid for survival. Most refugees have never seen their homeland.

The camps are administered by the Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic (SADR), the Sahrawi government-in-exile created in 1976; its Ministry of Culture is FiSahara's on-the-ground implementing partner. Despite the conditions and severe shortage of resources, Sahrawis have created an organised society in exile complete with Prime Minister, Ministries, Governorships and local administrations, emphasising education and literacy for the population. Women experience a larger degree of empowerment than in many neighbouring societies, in part due to their sixteen years of running the camps single-handedly.

One half of Sahrawis still live in the occupied Western Sahara, where they suffer from severe repression and where all Sahrawi human rights organisations are banned. In 2010, tens of thousands of Sahrawis set up a protest camp called Gdeim Izik outside the occupied city of Laayoune to protest the occupation, an action pre-dating the revolutions in the rest of the region. It was violently dismantled by the Moroccan police. The United Nations has a peacekeeping force in the territory and the camps known as MINURSO whose mandate does not include human rights monitoring—a key demand of Sahrawis and of international human rights organisations, and one of the main reasons why FiSahara is training human rights activists from the territory in video advocacy. The UN Security Council convenes each year to renew MINURSO's mandate, a time when Sahrawis usually take to the streets to demand the adoption of human rights monitoring.

Practically every Sahrawi family suffers from separation, with members on both sides of the Morocco-built wall dividing the occupied territory from an area controlled by the Polisario Front. It is the second longest separation wall in the world, a heavily guarded berm sewn with millions of landmines. Sahrawis call it "the wall of shame" and Fisahara often ends its activities with a short visit to this wall.

Spanish NGOs and associations that work on projects in the camps are constantly reminding the Spanish government of its obligations towards the Sahrawis, whom it abandoned. FiSahara was born

out of this network of solidarity organisations and operates under CEAS-Sáhara, a coordinating platform of associations in Spain.

Our Origins

FiSahara was founded in 2003 by Sahrawis, along with Spanish solidarity activists and filmmakers from Spain who visited the camps. The aim was to bring entertainment to the Sahrawi people and to raise international awareness on the Western Sahara. FiSahara has since expanded its objectives to include a much wider aim of empowering Sahrawis through film. But the festival's ultimate goal is to disappear once the conflict has been resolved and Sahrawis can return to their homeland—and, hopefully, to reappear in the Western Sahara.

Sahrawis wanted a festival that would attract well-known filmmakers and movie stars as well as journalists whose visits could help to put their neglected crisis on the map. These visits would also connect the Sahrawi people to the outside world and introduce film as a new tool to communicate and to preserve their identity and culture. Sahrawi culture is primarily based on the oral arts such as poetry, music and storytelling, and in the festival's early days, film was practically unknown.

Logistics seemed daunting: the camps lacked basic infrastructure and festival planners had scarce financial means. However, Sahrawis are some of the most resourceful people in the world. Dozens of Sahrawi electricians, engineers, artists and local leaders in the camps prepared the event on the ground. In Spain, people volunteered to travel to the festival as projectionists, sound technicians, producers and workshop facilitators, many loaning their own equipment. A long list of filmmakers, actors and actresses and other artists also signed up to go, and distributors loaned films for free.

The first edition, held in November of 2003, is remembered by all who experienced it as nothing short of a miracle—a truly magical event that at times came close to disaster. A chartered plane from Madrid landed in Tindouf and unloaded the team as well as hundreds of filmmakers, journalists and other festival attendees, 35mm reels and projectors, sound and other technical equipment. They were met by Sahrawis on Jeeps and old donated city buses and driven to Smara, one of the largest of the camps. There, local planners had erected a giant movie screen on the side of a truck, conditioned small adobe buildings and pitched desert tents for festival activities. Families opened their Haimas and welcomed perfect strangers into their homes.

Logistically, the festival constantly seemed on the verge of collapse. Electrical blackouts darkened screens and silenced microphones. Equipment overheated or broke down. There were no cell phones or walkie-talkies for team members to communicate, leading to mad races under the scorching sun. Most

of the Spanish team became ill; at one point all the projectionists were out sick on the same day. At an evening screening, a scene involving a bed offended a local filmgoer, who blocked the projector with his hand. Chaos ensued.

Still, it worked. When FiSahara's outdoor Desert Screen first lit up, the vast majority of the audience sitting under the stars had never seen a movie before. Before them appeared *Winged Migration*, a spectacular French documentary that lifted the audience to the heights of migrating birds flying over oceans, forests and deserts. That first edition also included Charlie Chaplin shorts, Michel Ocelot's animated film *Kirikou et la Sorciere*, films on the Western Sahara and a roster of Spanish and Latin American films. The crowning event was a concert at sundown, nestled in the sand dunes. Press coverage was extensive, particularly in Spain.

FiSahara also held roundtables with visiting filmmakers and Sahrawi artists, as well as filmmaking workshops and concerts. The overall response in the camps was overwhelming, and the festival has grown with each passing year, obtaining grants from the Spanish international aid agency and Ministry of Culture.

Since its first edition, Fisahara offered film workshops dealing with all aspects of film creation. Films made at the workshops screened on the last night of the festival. Offered by renowned filmmakers of every specialty, the workshop sessions were packed with young Sahrawis, many of them women, who wanted to tell their own stories. These young people began to request year-round training. With a Spanish government grant and private donations, FiSahara built a film school in the Bojador camp. Created in 2011, the Abidin Kaid Saleh Audiovisual School graduated its first group of students in the summer of 2013. Each year FiSahara screens a selection of student films, which are also distributed to other film festivals.

For the first few years, FiSahara was an itinerant film festival, popping up in a different camp each year, until in 2007 it arrived in Dakhla, the most remote camp. Separated by about 200 kilometres of desert from the other camps, Dakhla had the least infrastructure and the most pressing needs. Its population had fled the furthest from Moroccan warplanes because they were most heavily bombed; they settled in this area because nomads identified it as an oasis with underground water. Although logistics for FiSahara were by far the most challenging here—a long ride through the desert, lack of basic electricity and poor communications—in 2007 FiSahara sprang up from Dakhla's sandy ground like a mirage. FiSahara brought Dakhla's population out of its extreme isolation, and after that the team decided to stay put. FiSahara is now held in Dakhla each year.

Growing Pains

Film programming for FiSahara has been and remains a challenge, and because of this the festival

has experienced growing pains. While Spanish programmers were both filmmakers and cinephiles, in the early years they were experimenting with their audience. Few, if any, Sahrawis knew enough about film to participate in this critical selection process. In addition, in order to reach a key objective of attracting media attention to the festival—and thus the Sahrawi cause—both Sahrawi and Spanish team members prioritised films that had won awards and were able to bring its film stars.

While Sahrawi audiences enjoyed most of the movies, some of the earlier films were not suitable for new audiences who were unaccustomed to watching foreign films that portrayed vastly different realities in another language. The festival made an effort to subtitle in Arabic, but most people in the audience could not simultaneously watch movies and read. Some scenes depicting partial nudity or lovemaking were inappropriate for large, multi-generational, mixed audiences, and made viewers uncomfortable. FiSahara tried to remedy this by screening films containing these scenes in an indoor club and restricting audiences (young men were particularly enthusiastic to watch them), but this choice led to the almost complete exclusion of women from this audience, as well as criticism from more conservative members of the community.

With each passing year, FiSahara has adapted its film programming to local tastes and customs, prioritising Arabic-language films that speak most clearly to Sahrawi people. Films depicting nudity and erotic scenes, even if only briefly, are no longer screened, and the indoor club is now used for thematic screenings with targeted audiences, often accompanied by debates. Sahrawis are now active in the selection process and Sahrawi-themed films are a clear favourite.

FiSahara Today

The festival and its film school base their activities on the needs identified by Sahrawi actors in the field, including the Ministry of Culture of the SADR, collectives run by women, youth and war victims, as well as local leaders.

Access to Entertainment, Culture and Leisure

Screenings and activities at FiSahara include:

- Family films (animation, comedy, adventure, action—features and shorts) on FiSahara's large outdoor Desert Screen
- Sahrawi-themed films, some made by Sahrawis (mostly but not exclusively by film school students) and others made by international filmmakers and collectives
- LeFrig cultural fair, parade, thematic Haimas (traditional desert tents) and camel races showcasing traditional Sahrawi culture and customs with hundreds of participants and that give the festival a rich cultural identity

Clown performance.
Photo by Mikel Oibar.

- Clown and circus shows by our partner Pallasos en Rebeldía, an international circus group based in Galicia working in communities affected by conflict, poverty and exclusion
- Filmmaking workshops where schoolchildren participate in the making of a short film that is screened the following year at FiSahara
- Videogame workshop in which Zaytoungang, a group of Palestinian artists from Yarmouk (Syria), create an interactive videogame on displacement. Sahrawi kids and youth participate in the creation of Sahrawi characters and stories based on their own lives.
- Concerts featuring Sahrawi and international groups
- Football matches pitting locals against visitors
- Opening and closing ceremonies: these festive events include dance, music and presentation of workshop certificates and film awards. The makers of the winning film receive a camel, and trophies are made by a women's ceramics cooperative.

Empowerment, Human Rights and Self-expression Through Filmmaking

- The main festival theme guides some of the film programming and discussions. In 2013, it was "Revolutions and Human Rights in the MENA Region"; in 2014, it was a tribute to Nelson Mandela; in 2015, it is Universal Justice.
- Human rights film screenings are carefully chosen films that connect Sahrawis with similar human rights struggles and that have the potential to empower viewers. Particular care is taken not to select films that portray excessive human suffering, which may add to the suffering of the Sahrawis. The films must also appeal to international audiences. Films that have worked in the past include *5 Broken Cameras*, *The Lemon Tree*, *Dirty Wars*, *The Source*, *When I Saw You*, *Invictus* and *The Square*.
- Women's films: these are thematic screenings on gender-related issues for mixed audiences, with an emphasis on women's participation.
- Human rights roundtables are organised around a screening or a theme addressed in the films or at the festival. These roundtables bring Sahrawi filmmakers, human rights activists and many others together with international filmmakers and/or protagonists of the screenings. Recently, Moroccan filmmakers and journalists have participated in the festival, sharing films and strategies with Sahrawi counterparts.
- A human rights video advocacy workshop is offered by video activists and filmmakers. These sessions, which use the WITNESS methodology, centre on how to film, edit, narrate, archive and share human rights videos so that Sahrawis can improve the quality and impact of their human rights filmmaking. The goal is also to connect Sahrawi video activists from the occupied Western Sahara with international and regional video/human rights networks. In particular, organisations such as the RFK Center for Justice and Human Rights have specifically mentioned these trainings as a priority to help

improve their advocacy work on the Western Sahara. FiSahara brings about a dozen activists from the occupied Western Sahara to participate in this workshop. The images filmed by this collective provide the only footage available to the outside world depicting what is happening in the territory, including the torture, ill treatment and arbitrary imprisonment of Sahrawis by Moroccan security forces.

- Filmmaking classes are offered on topics including film narrative, directing non-professional actors and production of short films using a "guerrilla" style technique that teaches each person all aspects of the filmmaking process. FiSahara also offers women's film workshops that focus on gender-specific content and use.
- Abidin Kaid Saleh Film school offers a two-year curriculum for a maximum of twenty students and is branching out into film production. The best students earn scholarships to study in international film schools such as San Antonio de los Baños (Cuba).

Raising International Awareness

FiSahara is raising international awareness of the festival and the Sahrawi people through:

- Invitation of filmmakers, actors/actresses, human rights activists, journalists and cultural artists and human rights organisations to the festival
- Outreach to the above collectives to obtain their collaboration and support in press and media events and in the creation of communication materials (videos, brochures, interviews, etc.)
- Media and communication outreach through website and social media, press conferences and events, FiSahara videos (trailers, making of, public service announcements, etc.)
- Organised visits for media, guests and international visitors to camp institutions including hospital, schools, community orchards, film school
- Outreach to/partnership with film festivals, media collectives (particularly human rights-based) and foundations working on human rights, and integration into international and regional groups and institutions that use film as a means for social change

Capacity Building

One of Fisahara's most important goals is for the international team to transfer festival production, programming and directorship to Sahrawis in the camps. From the very first day, Sahrawis have been at the core of the team, with the Minister of Culture, Khadija Hamdi (and her predecessor, also a woman), at the centre. During the festival, the Spain team trains projectionists, sound technicians, producers, etc. There are skills that still need to be transferred so that Sahrawis can also conduct key activities like fundraising, international outreach, film curating and programming.

Our Challenges

Many of FiSahara's early challenges remain today, mostly due to the precariousness of conditions on

Desert Filmmakers workshop.
Photo by Carlos Cazurro.

the ground. The festival relies on generators that often break down; the team is seeking renewable energies such as solar panels. Transportation is scarce and often complicates mobility within Dakhla. Cell phone communications and Internet access are shaky. The festival is also impacted by weather conditions such as high winds, extreme cold and heat, as well as rain; in 2014 a sirocco downed all festival Haimas. Risk mitigation, including health and security for hundreds of visitors, remains an important part of festival planning and execution due to the complex situation in the region.

Due to its small budget, FiSahara also continues to rely too heavily on volunteers and donated equipment, which sometimes limits the quality and effectiveness of its work.

Evaluating Our Impact

In 2013 and as a result of an external evaluation, FiSahara began to implement a series of changes to internationalise its efforts, improve its impact and become financially sustainable.

Based on the recommendations, FiSahara's team has identified priority needs and objectives, and its programming is tailored to meet them.

The impact of an event like FiSahara is extremely complex to measure, and our team is still working on improving our methods. In the evaluation chapter of this manual we have noted down some of the tools that are most useful to identify intended and unintended impact, both positive and negative.

Filmography:

Sounds of the Clouds (dir. Alvaro Longoria, 2012).
Winged Migration (dir. Jacques Perrin, Jacques Cluzaud and Michel Debats, 2001).
Kirikou and the Sorceress (dir. Michel Ocelot, 1998).
5 Broken Cameras (dir. Emad Burnat and Guy Davidi, 2013).
The Lemon Tree (dir. Eran Riklis, 2008).
Dirty Wars (dir. Richard Rowley, 2013).
The Source (dir. Radu Mihaileanu, 2011).
When I Saw You (dir. AnneMarie Jacir, 2014).
Invictus (dir. Clint Eastwood, 2009).
The Square (dir. Jehane Noujaim, 2014).

For more on the Western Sahara conflict see:

Profile:
http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-14115273
Background:
http://goo.gl/CkKOMn
Timeline:
(*http://films.culturesofresistance.org/ws-timeline*

Human Rights reports:

http://goo.gl/DohZdr
http://goo.gl/Nu22zK

Docudays UA: a Festival in the Heart of a Citizen's Revolution

Written by Dar'ya Averchenko, festival PR director, Gennady Kofman, festival program director, Svitlana Smal, chairman of the Organizing Committee

Docudays UA was held for the very first time in Ukraine in 2003, organised by the Centre for Modern Information Techniques and Visual Arts. The festival is held annually in Kyiv in the last week of March. The main purposes of the festival are to improve the quality of Ukrainian documentary films, to promote an open dialogue on moral problems in our society, as well as human rights and human dignity and to create the foundation for a democratic future of the country. It aims to inspire the citizens of Ukraine to become active, competent and responsible actors for human rights protection and the prevention of authoritarianism and dictatorship.

In addition, the organisers aim to unite dozens of human rights organisations with the festival's activities. This collaboration promotes the development and strengthening of a network of human rights defenders, able to counteract the powers that infringe on rights and freedom.

The festival presents both Ukrainian documentary films and a selection of the best docs from the international human rights film festivals. Every year, Docudays UA organises a filmmaking workshop, a film retrospective and many special events, such as conferences, roundtables, thematic sections, master classes by leading experts in documentary filmmaking and human rights, discussions, seminars, workshops and photo exhibitions. Entrance to all film screenings is free of charge.

Travelling Festival

Once the festival activities conclude in Kyiv, Docudays UA traditionally continues around Ukraine. The films travel to 236 cities and towns of Ukraine and attract over 130,000 visitors. The screenings and debates are not only held in cinemas and cultural centres, but also in cafes, schools, universities, libraries and military units. Local partners choose the films from the festival selection themselves. This way, film selection is tailored for local audiences.

Travelling Docudays UA also includes a special programme in Penitentiary Institutions. We screen festival films and conduct discussions on human rights with human rights activists in fifty-one juvenile detention centers and twelve prisons throughout the country. We also organise screenings in schools for future employees of the penitentiary system.

The educational programme to promote human rights for youth, students, school children and teachers was introduced in 2013. Our experience has shown that the average Ukrainian high school student does not get enough information on how to engage in civic activities, nor on how to defend their own rights, the rights of fellow citizens, and of their community. Subjects at school such as "law" do not provide any practical skills or examples of how rights can be exercised by school children.

Therefore, as part of the Travelling Film Festival, we organised a pilot project called "Documentary Films in Schools: Lessons of Legal Awareness and Civic Engagement". Through the programme we offered 130 lessons in 64 educational institutions. In total, 4,500 students took part in the project.

To better equip our regional partners to organise film screenings and discussion programmes, in September 2013, prior to the start of the Travelling Festival, we organised a three-day seminar on how to organise the film screenings.

The seminar included workshops about different aspects of organising the Traveling Film Festival such as film selection, the organisation of discussions at the screenings, promotion of the screenings through the Internet, etc. One session focused on the organisation of documentary film screenings at schools and another looked at how to organise a Docudays UA festival for penitentiary institutions.

Political Challenges in 2013: EuroMaidan and the Travelling Docudays UA

Organising the 2013 travelling festival proved to be a challenge. In November 2013, public protests demanding closer European integration began in Kiev's Independence Square (also called the Maidan Nezalezhnosti). This was the start of Euromaidan, a wave of demonstrations and public protests leading up to the 2014 Ukrainian revolution.

Authorities in many regions tried to disrupt the festival screenings. They mostly did so by putting pressure on venue owners, sometimes by cutting the electricity at festival locations; in one city, Ivano-Frankivsk, there was even a false bomb threat.

The screenings in Ivano-Frankivsk were planned for the 12th of November at the KinoBum cinema. The local organisers were activists from a regional NGO known as "Moloda Prosvita". They planned to screen *Children Behind Bars* and *Enough! To Freedom…*

The first film, *Children Behind Bars*, depicts the current problems of the criminal justice system for juveniles in Ukraine by telling the true stories of children in conflict with the law. *Enough! To Freedom…* describes the events on the 19th of December, 2010, when so-called presidential elections took place in Belarus, leading to protests that ended with the massacre of peaceful protesters.

A festival team full of brave and committed people. Photo by: Sergiy Khandusenko.

Two hours prior to the screening, the owners of Kino-Bum cinema reported an electricity shutdown on their premises. When organisers arrived, they encountered a closed door with a note saying that there were ongoing repairs. The owners did not respond to phone calls from the organisers, journalists and visitors. It was the third time that one of the events of Docudays UA Travelling Film Festival in Ivano-Frankivsk was disrupted.

The next day, another cinema called Lumiere was to screen a compilation of short documentary films called *Almanac Open Access*. The films dealt with access to information and corruption in Ukraine. One film, *Mezhyhirya*, was about the Ukrainian President's controversial residence at Mezhyhirya.

However, none of the screenings took place. When confronted about the reasons for the cancellation, cinema employees helplessly said that they had never heard of such an event.

The local organisers decided to move the film screenings to another venue called Prosvita and invited the audience there. But after the first part of the screening, the police stormed into the room and announced that there was a bomb threat in the premises of Prosvita; everyone was asked to leave the room. Residents of Ivano-Frankivsk stood in front of the building with cries of "Shame!"

The police promised to check the room and allow people back into the theatre to continue with the screening. However, after waiting for about an hour, the activists decided to screen the movie in the middle of the street. It was projected onto the wall of a school next to Prosvita, which allowed the police to become de facto spectators.

Earlier, in several other cities around Ukraine, this same strategy of a false bomb threat was used to force the cancellation of the screening of the film *Mezhyhirrya*.

In the Crimea, officials from the Ministry of Culture demanded that the festival provide all the films ahead of time, evidently with censorship in mind. After watching the films, they "advised" regional partners not to screen the film *Almanac Open Access* and two other films. However, despite threatening phone calls from unidentified people who promised to disrupt the screenings and beat the organisers, one of the festival partners screened the banned films in their office.

In the Rivne region, the travelling festival coincided with protest events all over Ukraine, including Rivne. Therefore, school representatives did not want to show the festival films.

In Kharkiv, the Security Service of Ukraine paid close attention to institutions where festival events were to be held. Their interpretation of the concept of *human rights* as an expression of opposition resulted in permanent conflict between the festival organisers and government officials. Despite the fact that the original

plan was to organise the screenings in cooperation with the local officials, all screenings were cancelled.

However, all the local officials that opposed our screenings could not avoid the fact that the festival received support by the State Film Agency of Ukraine, which sent *two* letters of support to the regional administrations and cultural managements.

Despite the tremendous difficulties and obstacles it faced this year, the travelling festival offered 1,240 screenings and 824 discussions, and it reached 134,000 visitors. It also held thirteen roundtables and seven theatre performances on human rights, as well as conferences, street performances and many photo exhibitions. In partnership with the Association of Ukrainian Monitors on Human Rights Law Enforcement, we held three workshops called "You and the Police: What to Do to Avoid Becoming a Victim of Police Arbitrariness".

Docudays UA 2014: a Festival in the Heart of a Citizen's Revolution

We prepared for Docudays UA 2014 under exceptionally difficult conditions. The festival took place from the 20th to the 26th of March, 2014. The EuroMaidan protests reached their peak in mid-February. On the 21st of February, after heavy clashes between protesters and the police, President Yanukovych fled the country. The next day, the parliament impeached Yanukovych and replaced the government with a pro-European one.

Our festival office was just a couple of steps from the Maidan Square, where the citizens' protests took place. It became a shelter, a warming place, a night's lodging for journalists and documentarians from various countries who had come to us because they wanted to sort out what was happening in Ukraine. Their heroic efforts contributed to a more balanced media coverage on the Maidan worldwide.

Due to the political circumstances we decided that the main theme for our festival should be: "There is a Choice!"

Our festival is apolitical; it is about human rights and about the fact that each of us has a choice: to accept a dictatorial regime or to fight for the victory of democracy. In our communication we added, "Today the future of Ukraine depends on everybody's choice. Therefore Docudays UA is with the EuroMaidan".

Members of our team did many things to support EuroMaidan. They organised documentary screenings on the Maidan stage in Kyiv and other cities: they handed out tea on the square, provided first aid, patrolled the streets with a politically active group of drivers—the so-called Automaidan—and they shot the most striking footage on camera.

We ourselves became familiar with the batons of the riot police, tear gas, and rubber bullet wounds. Luckily, we endured, but we won't forget those who were less lucky.

Every day, during the most dramatic last months before the festival started in March 2013, we doubted whether it was possible to hold our festival at a time when, we thought, our audience needed a hot broth, medicines and tires more than documentaries. It was not an easy choice to undertake one of the biggest movie events of the year in a very short period of time and under extremely difficult conditions, and implementing that choice was even harder.

Today, with great pleasure, we realise that we succeeded one hundred percent. Our festival venues, from the Hall of the House of Cinema, to the Cinema Panorama and the Kyiv Cinema were overcrowded with a grateful audience.

For this festival we cancelled the opening film and screened a compilation of the best shots showing the Ukrainian protest. Episodes of upcoming films about EuroMaidan formed a kaleidoscope of the revolution. The opening film was a chronicle of the Ukrainian protest called *Euromaidan. The Rough Cut: Three Months of the Revolution*. It showed demonstrators with pots on their heads, wearing body armour. It showed the joy of victory and the mourning of our lost ones. It showed the revolution as an explosion of awakened dignity, as the euphoria of freedom, and as a painful awareness on the birth of Ukraine's modern history.

During the festival we held many discussions and presented master classes by leading directors from different countries. And despite doubts, misinformation and even fear, sixty-three foreign guests flew to Kyiv: directors, producers, experts, advocates and others.

The festival held a campaign to protect Ukrainian human rights activists and journalists who were victims of illegal actions by police, prosecutors and courts. This was organised by the Legal Aid Foundation and the Ukrainian Helsinki Group for Human Rights. A panel discussion took place within the campaign's framework called: "Advocates of the Maidan: What the Mass Media Didn't Write". Speakers included lawyers who provide legal aid, people who became victims during the protests and representatives of human rights NGOs.

During the festival week Docudays UA was visited by thirty-eight thousand visitors. With few exceptions, the festival audience halls were at or over capacity.

The active participation of the audience and guests of Docudays UA in discussions, film debates, educational events and human rights actions signalled that the festival reached its goal—to become a platform for dialogue for Ukrainian citizens who care about human rights, democratic values and, above all, the future of their country.

The team is confident the festival has helped thousands of Ukrainian citizens to make a better-informed choice in favour of democratic values and active citizenship.

Natalia Ligacheva, chief editor of the online publication *Telekritika*, stated:

I believe that the festival provides an opportunity to present Ukrainian citizens not only the world's best documentaries, but also to invite them to become more active citizens willing to defend their rights. For me personally, this festival is important not only because it gives the opportunity to see quality films, but also because it really allows you to see how citizens in many countries actively and proactively, with enthusiasm, and—most importantly—successfully, defend their rights. And I think that the most important thing is the fact that the festival is challenging Ukrainian citizens to build on their self-confidence. We can do a lot without any help from officials or the aid of powerful authorities, but only with a great hope for ourselves.[1]

In the aftermath of the EuroMaidan protests, Russia annexed the Crimean Peninsula in March 2014, the start of the *Crimean crisis*.

Filmography

Almanac Open Access (dir. Volodymyr Tykhy, Dmytro Konovalov, Serhiy Andrushko, Zhanna Dovhych, Dmytro Tiazhlov, 2013).
Children Behind Bars (dir. Olena Lypejkyna, 2013).
Enough! To Freedom... (dir. Andrei Kutsila, Viachaslau Rakitski, 2012).
Euromaidan. The Rough Cut: Three Months of the Revolution (dir. Volodymyr Tykhyi, Andriy Lytvynenko, Kateryna Gornostai, Roman Bondarchuk, Yulia Gontaruk, Andrey Kiselyov, Roman Liubyi, Oleksandr Techynskyi, Oleksiy Solodunov, Dmitry Stoykov, 2014).
Mezhyhirrya (dir. Volodymyr Tykhyi, 2013).
Ukraine (this is one of the short films from Almanac Open Access).

[1] *http://goo.gl/Jx5fMj*

Docudays UA has very creative visual style. Photo: Archive of Docudays UA.

Human Rights Film Festival in Guatemala Ushers In Criticism And Dialogue

Written by Uli Stelzner, filmmaker and festival co-ordinator

The Initial Spark

In April 2010 *El Periodico*, one of the best-selling newspapers in Guatemala, surprised its readers with a photograph on its front page showing a film poster among portraits of more than 45,000 missing persons. The text on the front page read: "Bomb threat in the National Theatre did not prevent screening of film *La Isla: Archivos de una Tragedia* (*Island: Archive of a Tragedy*) on the means of repression by the National Police during armed conflict".

What happened? The film *La Isla* brought to an end the *1st international film festival Memory Truth Justice*, a festival that served a "rich local dish" of films from Argentina, Chile, Mexico and Rwanda, that dealt with the search for memory, truth and justice in post-conflict societies. *La Isla* addresses the duration and consequences of state repression from the 1960s through images completely unknown in Guatemala.

Despite the threat of a bomb, a power cut, diplomatic boycotts and the silence of the local press, over three days 6,000 people attended the festival so that they could watch records of their recent history on the big screen. The positive reaction of the civilian population was so great that it gave the organisers the idea to relaunch the festival as an entirely independent festival of films on human rights: La Muestra, the International Film Festival of Memory, Truth, and Justice.

Five Years of Memory, Truth and Justice on Screens Throughout the Country

La Muestra has taken place five times. The statistics connected with it are revealing and confirm the need for Guatemalan society to break through the silence and isolation of recent decades via film, which today is clearly the most relevant medium for explaining history. With just 105 films screened over five years, La Muestra attracted 45,000 viewers, thirty foreign guests and a hundred domestic guests, who discussed the content of the films shown.

La Muestra, characterised by a small number of films but high quality and rich filmic content and dialogue has become one of the most important public spaces for discussion in the region.

The path leading to this, however, has been long and complicated. In both war and post-war eras, Guatemalan filmmakers and the press have been concerned with murder, exile and censorship. In 1996 a peace treaty was signed, but it remained difficult to express an opinion and channels for producing and distributing films did not yet exist. A small number of enthusiastic filmmakers from Guatemala and abroad slowly began to produce films, which reflected the memory, history, raw reality and breaches of human rights. Threats and attacks still didn't cease. Soon however, in the towns and the interior, a space began to open up for a growing number of projections of mobile cinematography.

Today, La Muestra is probably one of the most innovative festivals, despite the difficulty and risk of doing this kind of work in a country that remains characterized by lenience towards criminals, violence, racism, threats, intolerance and economic disparities.

Every year the La Muestra program has a different thematic focus ("Justice in a Time of Transition", "The Country and Natural Resources", "Crisis and Migration", "Women and Memory", "Courage"). A permanent section is the "World Panorama", which covers films marked by their cinematic skills and innovative visual language. Every year, the festival sees a growth in the number and importance of the morning section "Films 15+", which is intended exclusively for high school students and their teachers. The heart of La Muestra is the section "Memory Truth Justice", which screens classic films on human rights and memory. The most powerful section is perhaps "The Visual Memory of Guatemala". The festival screens unknown films about Guatemala—internationally produced films shot over various periods, which have never been shown in Guatemala. La Muestra looks for these films in archives all over the world and provides subtitles for them if it has the necessary funds. So far, we have succeeded in acquiring the rights to ten films and their national distribution in DVD format. These films restore and reclaim forgotten episodes of the past for the people of today, allowing festival participants to learn about the images and sounds that connect them to the past.

Profile

The Program is Critical

La Muestra is not a competition and films cannot be sent to it for selection. We do not have the capacity to accept and view hundreds of films; instead, La Muestra seeks out and selects our own films, drawing on other festivals, distributors, and information we gather ourselves. The festival is concentrated on the historical process relevant to our country, which is why its films do not have to be contemporary. In this way, we also save on funds, as films more than three, five or six years old are not as expensive to screen, and we don't have to compete with the larger festivals. We try to present all current independent documentary productions, and work by filmmakers who have their own vision. Films in the international

One of the festival slogans, "An obstacle is an inspiration," was popular among the audience. Photo by Cecilia Cobar Falla.

section come from all over the world and we choose themes with which our audience can identify. Our understanding of human rights is relatively broad. We don't just show films that reveal breaches in human rights but also films that open a space for new life positions that break through ideological norms and traditions, and that motivate and send signals of hope and positive belief, sometimes through music, sometimes through humour.

Attracting the Public with Debates and Guests

We believe that the presentation of a film should not just function for viewers to watch it. At the festival, different people meet in the hall with a variety of ideas, dreams, opinions and experiences; everyone has a reason to be in that place at that moment. This provides a unique opportunity to express your opinion, to look at one another face to face, to open up and express yourself, to get to know one another, and to find agreement or difference in your opinions. In post-war countries dominated by silence, censorship and self-censorship, where fear rules and social bonds are torn, the possibility to discuss and speak is of the utmost importance as it allows—at least for the moment—for the silence and intellectual repression (imposed by television, stolen advertising, reclusive use of the internet, the monopolistic private press, etc.) to be broken. That is why La Muestra encourages discussion about most of our films.

Those who join the discussions come from different areas of society (academics, politicians, journalists, activists, protagonists etc.) and they analyse, comment and explain the films based on how they perceive them. After the initial five to ten minute introduction by each participant, the debate is opened to the public by a presenter.

Depending on the funds at our disposal, each year we can invite five to eight directors from abroad. Before we invite them, we "vet" them. We scan information and study conversations that make it possible for us to determine whether the person is engaged with the issues, is democratic and willing to share their views with the public.

La Muestra is not a festival with red carpet and prizes but it can offer guests a full screening hall and an interested public. We want our foreign guests to be motivated by not being alone in the discussions but by being accompanied by one to two domestic participants who will try to outline and explain the film from a local perspective. We want our guests to cooperate with the organising team and public. In exchange we will offer them, via our network of friends, meetings and visits to interesting places and organisations. Until now we have had the good fortune that our guests have unquestionably enriched our festival and the public.

Team and Organisation

It is not easy to put together an organising team. However, it is a vital issue. The organisation of a festival

A full cinema is what a festival organiser wants to see. Photo by Cecilia Cobar Falla.

that brings about so much work, stress, difficulties and uncertainties requires mutual confidence, tolerance and respect among team members. A collective, democratic structure of the team is ideal. La Muestra's organising team changes every year. Due to this fluctuation, there are more and less experienced persons among us. There are no formal ways of integrating a new member; instead they have to fit in and be able to perform their duties. We are all "workers". Among us there are cultural advisors, photographers, designers, social workers, journalists and people from the artistic world. None of us is a human rights activist, but we are all parties to the process, and we are all engaged volunteers. One disadvantage is that our team is short of any representatives from the film industry. That, however, is the reality of our location: there is only one film school in Guatemala, and it focuses on fiction films, not documentaries. There are simply not enough filmmakers. This means that we have less experience in making a coherent selection of films for the festival; the selection process requires willingness to get involved, and to learn on our own. Due to the lack of funds, La Muestra is not active during the year: once the festival is over, La Muestra's team is dissolved, so that we can survive.

Most of our members are young people whose life plans change quite often. Others have jobs that do not allow them to dedicate their energy to other projects. From the beginning, management unit has been in the hands of the German filmmaker Uli Stelzner who spends more time in Latin America than in Germany. This has its advantages and disadvantages. Since formally La Muestra is an international festival, we are able to enjoy certain political protection in a country with unstable development, violence, almost absolute impunity and an alarming political polarisation. The filmmaker is familiar with other festivals, has contacts and general know-how for acquisition of films. Moreover, he is capable of handling a credible and to a certain extent "neutral" discourse in public; a certain level of neutrality comes in handy in this country. The disadvantage is obvious: many–sometimes too many–things depend on this one person. However, we feel it would be very difficult to find another enthusiast who would resume this adventure with us every year.

Our pre-production phase (formulation of the project, selection of films and communication with the distributors, search for funds, etc.) lasts for about four months and is administered by one person. The production phase also lasts for four months; at the heart of the team are four to five people, and this number gradually increases as the start of the festival approaches. The post-production phase (reports, accounting, etc.) is one month and is dealt with by one person.

The funds for the festival come from foundations and NGOs. The state does not really support our event, and the private sector in Guatemala is one of the most reactionary on the continent and does not support "subversive" activities. The first four editions of La

The poster for the film La Isla: Archivos de una Tragedia was an inspiration for a human rights film festival in Guatemala. Photo: Archive of Memoria Verdad Justicia.

Muestra were free. In 2014, we asked for donations for the first time. We announced this decision publicly and supported it with the necessary argumentation. We started to search for sponsorship from bars and restaurants.

Difficult Political Context

The very existence of the festival has been put in danger from the very beginning. The attacks against us were not always open, but still obvious. At the start, there was a bomb threat as well as a power failure in the biggest cinema in the country. During the third edition, the lights went off across the whole quarter in which the cinema was located. In 2014, three new films about Guatemala were withdrawn from the program because their protagonists (young people from the suburbs, human rights activists) feared repression. As if this was not enough, the Guatemalan film *La Propuesta Impuesta* (Imposed Proposal), about student protests in 2012, was subject to a strong political pressure from the ministers of education, interior and foreign affairs. The TV station that covered the film was also intimidated; the live interview with the festival director was stopped. This is a regrettable, pitiful and disturbing development: the political situation in our country is full of uncertainty, fear and insecurity, all of which are amplified by the government policy that censors critical opinions. This tendency has had sweeping consequences and transmits a fatal signal: *do not make documentaries; do not be critical; you had better be silent!* Despite this message, La Muestra has always found the way to overcome obstacles. A screening was replaced by a forum titled, "Film Besieged by Impunity–Censorship and Self-censorship in Guatemala", and had the participation of 250 people. Any intimidation thus becomes subject to public debate.

The Festival that Dignifies Us in the Eyes of the World

Nowadays, La Muestra enjoys such recognition of the Guatemalan public that we may consider ourselves a part of the national imagery of contemporary history and culture. We search for new ideas, enforce freedom of thought and teach audiences to appreciate new horizons through films. Film images mediate tragedies from all over the world for us, yet they also provoke an irresistible desire for life. After the film is over, we can go home and share with our neighbours the certainty that pain does not outbalance the positive aspects of human existence. This is emphasised by the motto of the 2011 edition of La Muestra "El Cine de la verdad nos impulsa a librarnos del olvido y nos prepara para hacer la Memoria de la Alegría", which translates as: "a truthful film makes us liberate ourselves from the oblivion and helps us to create joyful memories".

Filmography

La Isla: Archivos de una Tragedia (Island: Archive of a Tragedy, dir. Uli Stelzner, 2009).
La Propuesta Impuesta (dir. Archivo Documental, 2012).

Opening Eyes in Sierra Leone: The Opin Yu Yi Human Rights Film Festival

Written by Celia Turley, festival producer and programmer and Sabrina Mahtani, festival co-founder

How We Started

Opin Yu Yi was started by Sierra Leonean filmmaker, Idriss Kpange and human rights lawyer, Sabrina Mahtani. We were in Burkina Faso at the FESPACO film festival and were impressed at how a country with many challenges had successfully put on one of the greatest film festivals in Africa. We also felt that Sierra Leone, emerging from a decade long war, similarly deserved such a film festival where people could be exposed to stories and thoughts from all over the world.

We feel that visual storytelling has the power to inform, inspire and stimulate debate, encouraging people to open their eyes to local and global human rights concerns. Film is a particularly powerful tool in a country such as Sierra Leone with low literacy rates. We also wanted to create a film festival to support the emerging film industry.

After FESPACO, we came back to Sierra Leone, wrote proposals and budgets and tried to pitch our idea to as many people as possible. We had meetings with various local and international NGOs and Embassies. We depended a great deal on voluntary contributions to make our dream a reality. We finally secured around $3000 and with that shoestring budget planned our festival in 3 weeks! It was exhausting, with many sleepless nights. However, the first festival was a great success, with over 2500 attending and much positive feedback. We are now planning our 4th edition and each year the festival has grown; we have developed our team and partnerships, are constantly learning, making mistakes, and improving.

Our Festival

The first ever human rights film festival in Sierra Leone took place in February 2012, around 20 February to mark World Social Justice Day.

We held 5 screenings including:

- Youth day screening
- Screening at Globe Cinema, the only working cinema in Freetown
- Screening with Journalists for Human Rights targeting media professionals

- First ever screening at Kroo Bay, one of the largest slums in Freetown

Successes of the 1st edition:

- Around 2, 500 attendees
- Showed a variety of international and Sierra Leonean films focusing on a wide range of human rights issues, such as women's rights and environmental issues
- 98% of people who filled out feedback forms stated they would come again
- Received partnership or support from the British Council, British High Commission and Christian Aid, Sierra Leone Film Foundation
- Launched a human rights film competition, with prizes for Sierra Leonean Film Makers
- Invited to attend a workshop for global human rights film festivals at the Cine Droit Libre Film Festival in Burkina Faso
- Longstanding established film festivals, such as One World, Ciné Droit Libre and FIFDH Geneva, have provided us with technical support and advice[1]

The 2nd edition was held in Freetown in March 2013. We were able to:

- Expand the festival to nine screenings and travel from the East to the West of Freetown. This enabled us to conduct the first ever human rights film screening in the East End, one of the poorest areas outside of the capital.
- Increase our audience to around 4500 attendees
- Include a screening for students at Fourah Bay College (University of Sierra Leone) and a further outdoor community screening in Lumley
- Include "Sabi Yu Rights" / "Know Your rights" sessions at University of Sierra Leone and with panelists from various civil society organisations
- Hold three special panels
- Showcase special musical performances at the Opening and Closing ceremony with social justice musicians, such as Sorie Kondi (a blind folk musician) and the Walpolians (a disabled musical group)
- Screen shortlisted films submitted as part of the human rights film competition and award prizes to Sierra Leone filmmakers

The 3rd edition built upon the 2nd edition by:

- Increasing our audience to over 4,800 attendees
- Showcasing thirty films and seven panel discussions on topics such as "LGBTI Rights" and "The Role of African Filmmakers in Social Change"
- Creating a central festival in social change, human rights film competition and award prizes to Sierra Leone filmmaker sreening in the East End, one of the poorest areas
- Launching the Sierra Leone Women in Film (SWIF) network to support underrepresented women in the film industry, so we decided to create a network to support training, mentorship, networking and to provide a greater platform for women in the film industry. The SWIF network is very much in its infancy but we hope that it will continue to grow and we

Celia Turley, producer & programmer, is interviewed by an Opin Yu Yi volunteer Mary Alpha. Photo: Archive of Opin Yu Yi.

would like to see it include specific trainings and exchanges from women filmmakers across the world.

Programming: What Films to Screen

Opin Yu Yi programs with a particularly open interpretation of human rights cinema. Our festival selection includes long form documentary, fictional features, animated shorts, reflective observational portraits, punchy campaign films and calls to action. We try to select films that defy the expectation that human rights film can be only dreary and depressing, whilst also seeking to avoid the white-washing that can be inherent in the pressure to deliver a programme of only "feel-good, positive stories". Sierra Leone is a dynamic and ever-developing country defined by more than its tragic past. We want to promote the diverse stories told by and about the country, not simply those that focus on the horrors experienced during conflict or the immediate aftermath. Of course, many of the human rights violations that play out in Sierra Leone today are part of the legacy of war—from high levels of sexual violence to youth disaffection and corruption. Though this will never be our exclusive focus, these inevitably are addressed at some point within the annual festival programme.

Of key importance to the Opin Yu Yi programming team is that we strike the balance between finding films that speak to local audiences whilst also challenging storytelling expectations and what cinema should look like. The range of movies that normally make it to Sierra Leonean audiences is limited. The few existing cinemas in Sierra Leone rarely show films, having been primarily co-opted these days for the mass broadcast of European and English premiere league football. The same is true for the informal video halls that have proliferated across the country. Pirate DVD sellers roam the streets of Freetown and other urban areas but distribution is patchy and titles stick to the most profitable fare—Nollywood melodrama, American action flicks and Sierra Leonean productions from local stars comedian Sara D Great or the multi-talented director/producer/actor Jimmy B. Slow broadband speeds make streaming a broader range of cinema via the internet a challenge. Most of the films available within Sierra Leone therefore stick to conventional narrative formats and this shapes the expectations of many Sierra Leonean audiences. In response to this context, the Opin Yu Yi programming team is determined to also introduce films that are more ambitious in form and content to Sierra Leone. This is a process of trial and error. Not every event can be a crowd-pleaser, but we've had some great successes with films such as Kenyan feature, *Nairobi Half Life* or the provocative documentary, *Call Me Kuchu*. In the case of *Nairobi Half Life*, Sierra Leonean audiences enjoyed the fast-paced and amusing narrative. *Call Me Kuchu* was a successful screening in a different way. It was not uncomplicated entertainment; much of the content was challenging to local Sierra Leonean audiences. The powerful twist in the film really showed the dangerous repercussions of state-sponsored prejudice and the

moving testimonies of the gay and lesbian characters struck a chord. Many people approached the Opin Yu Yi organisers afterwards to say that the film had made them think a lot and question many of their judgments about LGBT people. By showing a variety of types of film, we are contributing to growing cine-literacy and appreciation of the diverse forms of cinema encapsulated within a modern film culture in Sierra Leone.

A key goal of Opin Yu Yi is to support the development of Sierra Leone's fledgling film industry. As such, a main programming consideration for us is to prioritise films which are made by Sierra Leonean filmmakers. We also host a human rights film competition in which we welcome open submissions from filmmakers across the country to submit music videos, short fictional films and documentaries that address human rights issues. At the beginning of every screening event, a selection from the Human Rights Competition films is shown. This ensures all audiences will have a chance to access Sierra Leonean social justice storytelling from established or emerging filmmakers.

The Opin Yu Yi programming team also aims to prioritise films by other African filmmakers. Images of Africa have long been dominated by the outsider's eye and the history of these visual depictions is an unpleasant one. Racist stereotypes, tropes of savagery and otherness have dominated, giving clear indication of the prejudices of those that have made them, and allowing for very little "truth" to be gleaned about the myriad lives and experiences of people in Africa. The circulation of such imagery has contributed to the ideological justification behind all manner of contentious interventions in the continent, from the "civilising mission" of early missionaries to contemporary neo-liberal development agendas. Therefore, for Opin Yu Yi, is making a space for a cinema in which Sierra Leonean and other African filmmakers are free to represent themselves, determine their own agendas and work to construct an ideological space in which diverse ideas are explored and realities are documented. Showing examples of excellent films by African filmmakers may also act as inspiration and influence to local filmmakers still developing their creative practice. This year, we showed *The President*, by Cameroonian filmmaker, Jean Pierre Bekolo. It reflects on the themes of corruption and poverty and was in fact banned in Cameroon for its subversive questioning of President Paul Biya's thirty-two year rule. Such an inspiring piece of work prompted one of the most interesting panel discussions at Opin Yu Yi 2014, in which local filmmakers discussed the role that African filmmakers have to play in challenging power.

Another principle that drives the programming of Opin Yu Yi is the aim to prioritise those films which speak to the most pressing human rights concerns in the country, or reflect on pertinent social justice issues happening at a global scale. We believe that films are catalysts for conversations and we program with an eye to finding films with powerful contextual relevance, films that can prompt discussion on essential

The logo for Opin Yu Yi is visible on posters and festival T-shirts. Photo: Archive of Opin Yu Yi.

social concerns. An example of this is our screening of the West African premiere of Jessica Vale's film, *Small Small Thing*, about young Liberian girl Oliviah Zinnah and the medical complications which follow her brutal rape at the age of seven. Like its neighbouring country, Sierra Leone is gravely affected by sexual violence towards children. In post-conflict Sierra Leone, more than seventy percent of the sexual violence cases seen by the International Rescue Committee were girls under eighteen, according to a 2013 report by Save The Children.[2] As such, showing such a film and raising discussion on the violence it depicts is a necessary starting point for local reflection on these issues. The film was screened in the impoverished East End of the city where gender-based violence is particularly prominent, and followed by a Q&A session from leading activists on these issues, including panelists from the Family Support Unit, LAWYERS (the female lawyers association) and Ministry of Gender and Social Welfare. Through such events we hope to engender a culture of collective responsibility where these topics are constructively addressed in a public forum.

Long term, we aim to build a wider viewing panel whose opinions will contribute to our final programme, including other local Sierra Leonean film professionals, activists and human rights lawyers. This will help to ensure that our programme speaks to a number of different agendas and we can benefit from the knowledge and expertise, ensuring our festival stays current and relevant.

Promotion

Opin Yu Yi engages with a range of different promotional platforms in order to try and reach as many people as possible. Radio is still the most popular channel for information and entertainment for Sierra Leoneans and so much of our resources are used in advertisement placement on a range of popular radio stations that speak to different geographical areas and types of audiences. Television advertisements and trailers screened on "Sign Africa", large audio-visual screens across the city, also help to raise the profile of the event. As the film industry grows in Sierra Leone, the walls of the city are increasingly pasted with movie posters and Opin Yu Yi joins the display in lead up to the event with mass poster-ing for the event across the city. Large banners are also placed at key transportation locations across the city, such as the Cotton Tree roundabout in the centre of town. Word of mouth promotion is also highly successful in Sierra Leone and by visiting local schools, colleagues in civil society, community groups and other locations, direct invitations to events are a surprisingly reliable way to grow audiences.

Our current promotional model requires that we spend a considerable amount of our resources on advertisement. In other contexts this would also be combined with having a well thought out press strategy. However, in Sierra Leone the low wages of journalists mean that many try to supplement their wages through a "commission-based model of journalism",

a pay-to-print approach, in which there is an expectation that organisations should pay journalists to write any story. Beyond this challenge, cultural and arts journalism takes up little space on most media outlets. Our organisation's unwillingness to engage with these practices means that there is a barrier to our achieving much press coverage.

Despite this, in 2014 for the first time, Opin Yu Yi experimented with a programme launch, releasing significantly more information about the films due to screen three weeks before the event through a small press conference, where select journalists were invited to hear about the festival, review the programme and ask any questions. We also published the programme in select newspapers and online.

Journalists had little response, however, our online launch was much more successful. Facebook was used as a key site in which each screening event was promoted with some success. It is with pleasure then, that in receiving feedback from audience members about why they decided to come to Opin Yu Yi 2014, 15.8% of the audience stated not a general love of film, but an actual direct interest in a specific element of the programme, a desire to see a particular film or see content which addressed a topic of interest.

Travelling Film Festival

In November 2013, we decided to take the festival to the provinces where 80% of the population live and where there is minimal access to film or human rights information. It was challenging to organise as our team is based in the capital, several hours away. We did a number of "scoping" trips and formed partnerships with civil society groups who assisted us. These included human rights organisations, such as the Sierra Leone Human Rights Commission and Timap for Justice, as well as youth organisations and associations of filmmakers.

We did the first travelling festival on a shoe-string budget. Outreach was central and the team spent a few days before the festival outreaching to schools and doing live radio programmes. Screenings in communities can be easier in terms of getting people to come, as communities are small, which makes it easier to spread information by word of month or community radio.

All the screenings were outdoors and we used community fields that were both less expensive and also could hold many people. There were a number of technical challenges as we had to build the screen for each event, hire equipment up country and have good generators. We even had a freak rainstorm at our first screening! People still came, but we learned from that experience that we need to prepare for all eventualities.

For future travelling festivals we hope to obtain a mobile cinema van and spend a longer time before the festival doing outreach and building partnerships.

Children play in Lumley Grassfield as the festival team sets up a screen for the evening. Photo: Archive of Opin Yu Yi.

Key Lessons

- *Planning is essential*. This is especially the case as the festival grows. At least 6 months of planning in advance of the festival is critical.
- *Outreach is vital*. People need to know about the festival, understand what it is about and want to come.
- *Funding is difficult* Partnerships with a range of stakeholders (media, multimedia, graphics, etc.) are useful to try and get free or discounted services. In the beginning, it is possible to do a lot with voluntary support but as the festival grows it is important to be able to secure sufficient funding for outreach and to pay the team well in order to professionalise the festival.
- *Admin is important*. it is necessary to have good accounting practices, a list of contacts and suppliers, a good evaluation system, etc.
- *Teambuilding is essential*. As the festival grows, it is hard to do on a voluntary basis and a few part time staff are essential. Supporting and building your team are just as important as putting on a great festival.
- *Build partnerships*. Building partnerships with civil society, media, filmmakers, donors, etc. is central to making your festival successful and relevant.
- *Anticipate Complications.* You always need to think about what can go wrong and have a back up plan, for example a back-up generator or people to help trouble shoot.
- *Solicit Feedback*. Continually involve your partners and team in evaluating and thinking about the festival so you can learn and improve.

Filmography

Nairobi Half Life (dir. David ‚Tosh' Gitonga, 2012).
Call Me Kuchu (dir. Malika Zouhali-Worrall and Katherine Fairfax Wright, 2012).
The President (dir. Jean Pierre Bekolo, 2013).
Small Small Thing (dir. Jessica Vale, 2012).

The Next Wave: Building a Legacy Through Education

Written by Ella McNeill, Sein Lyan Tun, Sabrina Innocenti, Uli Stelzner, Margreet Cornelius, Humberto Mancilla, Lorena Taverna

"The workshop succeeded in the difficult task of engaging students in the concepts being addressed; it didn't pander to them by simply gratifying them on a dramatic or emotional level. It did so by actively provoking them to reflect upon and reconsider our definitions of asylum seekers as well as common myths and facts surrounding them—as such, it positioned them to consider not only the plight of refugees but their own civilian roles as perceivers of refugees". — Teacher at Melbourne Girls Grammar, Australia

Introduction

We all believe in the power of film to create change. Films are a wonderful way to highlight the value of difference and diversity and connect individuals—especially young people—to an understanding of social justice issues.

Human Rights Film Network has an incredible selection of human rights materials at their fingertips. Through well planned and executed education programs, there is a great opportunity to utilize the power of human rights films to connect with the youth of today, who are also our leaders of tomorrow.

Education through film evokes empathy in a way that a lecture or lesson cannot. Films promote social inclusion and inspire an appreciation for difference and diversity; they elicit compassion and empathy. They empower students to celebrate human rights and teach young people the importance of incorporating these principles into their everyday lives. Human rights education programs can help create a more accepting and compassionate environment within the classroom and beyond, which, in turn, can help foster a stronger and more cohesive human rights culture in the wider community.

These education programs can also present new sources of revenue and new audiences. They can provide more opportunities for successful grants, sponsorship and donations as well as providing a way for a film festival to reach disadvantaged people that may not otherwise be able to attend the festival. If measured properly, the impact of these education programs also helps to demonstrate the importance of Human Rights Film Network.

Below is a brief outline of various education programs run by Human Rights Film Network members, they are very diverse and inspirational.

Case study 1 – Melbourne, Australia

Human Rights Arts & Film Festival (HRAFF)

Australia's Human Rights Arts & Film Festival has been running an education program since 2010. We call it the Schools and Community Program, or SAC, and it involves HRAFF bringing issue-based, social justice films beyond the festival audience and into local communities and schools in urban, regional and rural areas. It is an ongoing, year-round outreach screening program that increases the reach and impact of social justice films and generates income for the festival.

SAC is targeted to students from years 5 to 12. We tailor each program to the specific needs or interests of the teacher to make sure that the lesson and film are relevant to what is being studied and the school curriculum. The program can be used to address issues that are being experienced within the school, such as bullying or racism.

These films are often (but not always) presented together with a lesson, workshop and/or discussion exploring the themes raised by the film in a creative, interactive and engaging way. This is so students can consider the film in relation to their own lives and the lives of other Australians.

In return for a fee, we provide copies of the films to screen from, negotiate with the filmmakers to provide appropriate licensing and permissions to screen, and facilitate lesson plans where available, classification exemption for the screening, synopses and marketing material and a HRAFF representative to introduce or deliver the program. The school provides the venue, the screening equipment, a representative to play the film, and organises promotion and communication about the event to the students.

By going into schools, we find this program is both unique within the education system and also widely accessible. What has worked well for us is aligning film screenings with existing school programs and areas of curriculum focus throughout the year. It's also useful to align with human rights events that occur throughout the year such as Anti-Poverty Week, International Youth Day, Peace Day, International Day of Disabled Persons, Human Rights Day and others.

As part of the year-round education program, we also present events for young people during the festival, a festival program stream called CineSeeds. This is presented in the cinema with introductory speakers, raffle prizes and take-home goodie bags and is a great way to provide an entertaining and engaging human rights event for young people at the festival.

The success and impact of our education activities are measured by photographic documentation, testimonials, market research and collection of statistical

Human Rights for Kids screenings are popular in Burma. Photo courtesy of HRHDIFF.

information. Measuring the program is very important for its continued growth and improvement and also for gaining financial and in-kind support.

We see the education program as a way to create the most impact year-round on important human rights issues. This program ensures the biggest audience for powerful films and provides an ongoing revenue stream for the organisation. Over the next three years, HRAFF hopes to transition the program to become a social enterprise that specialises in the grassroots distribution of social justice films.

Case study 2 – Burma

Human Rights Human Dignity Film Festival

The Human Rights Human Dignity Film Festival (HRHDIFF) is the first-ever International Film Festival in Burma and the biggest human rights film festival in Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). It is organised by the Human Dignity Film Institute. HRHDIFF runs an education program called the Human Rights for Kids outreach program. This is integral to the organisation as we believe that young people are the future leaders of our country and need to understand and advocate for human rights.

During the festival, kids are introduced to human rights issues by exploring the Declaration of Human Rights. Article 30 is distributed to the kids prior to the screening and they are encouraged to read and analyse it. We also hold workshops on motivation and inspiring confidence in children, as well as programs on both health and art. All programs include extensive Q&A time on issues to do with young people and education and audience members are encouraged to speak their mind and read out loud with prizes and gifts distributed for participation. Access to these sessions is improved by the fact that they are free for all, and we provide transportation and snacks on the day.

We garner interest and improve attendance at these workshops by visiting government schools, orphanages and other recreational centres to introduce the festival as well as the workshops we have available, and to extend an invitation to screenings. In 2014, we held screenings and workshops in more than 70 schools from different divisions of Burma.

By engaging with the Human Rights for Kids outreach program, kids are motivated, introduced to new ideas and leave with a better understanding about what rights they have as children. We would like to improve the program by finding more documentaries and short films for kids. This will help us increase young people's understanding and ideas about human rights and ensure they know their rights, responsibilities and duties.

Case study 3 – Naples, Italy

Festival del Cinema Dei Diritti Umani di Napoli

The Festival Del Cinema Dei Diritti Umani di Napoli

(Naples HRFF) has a dedicated Schools Group that has organised educational activities since 2010. In 2014, Naples HRFF, the first "Schools Edition", targeted at the education environment (including students, teachers, administrators, families and institutions). It aimed to inspire students' creativity and encourage them to produce audiovisual works with colleagues from different countries, always with emphasis on the right to education and on the role of public schools.

The role of the Schools Group is to educate young people about the basic concepts and the defence of human rights while also promoting integration between European and Mediterranean culture. The objective is to use human rights and documentary film as a strategic, informative and educational tool. The program aims to introduce young people to active citizenship to prevent youth problems, develop civic awareness, promote participation and education in areas of social interest—specifically the knowledge and defence of human rights, encourage communication between human rights organisations and activists with local, national and international schools and develop awareness and European citizenship education toward social euro Mediterranean cohesion.

The School group invites scholars from all school levels to attend screenings and presentations. Teachers and students are involved during the planning to share goals and strategies. The School Group presents and screens, in the presence of authors, experts and witnesses, selected short films and documentaries from the archive of Naples HRFF, on specific topics. Students are invited to discuss the content in the screening and produce a poster. The School Group also promotes the Festival Competition for Schools, called "The School for Europe, Rights and Cinema" which encourages the creativity of young people and increases their confidence with techniques for audiovisual production. It also delivers training courses and opportunities to produce short videos focusing on social issues.

Some of our past educational activities and events have included an audiovisual competition that aimed to build and promote the knowledge of hidden aspects of the city of Naples as seen through the eyes of students. This focused on life in the metropolis and neighbourhoods, intercultural situations, discomfort and integration solutions. The festival also held an travelling forum on human rights dedicated to schools during the weekend of the festival. This involved debates on issues of the Universal Declaration of Rights, video screenings and student discussions. The School Group also provides many cross cultural exchange programs where film content is shared between cities and countries such as France and Argentina.

The first School Edition 2014 was attended by over 30 schools in the city and province of Naples and was aimed at students, teachers, administrators, institutions and families. Organised by the School Group,

the School Edition promoted a competition for audiovisual works and film criticism called "The School for Europe, Rights and Cinema", which consisted of three sections: critique, video and photography. Students from all schools levels were the main protagonists in the first edition.

The key words for the event were "Dispersions, Distances, Differences, Inequalities, Diversity and Women" to emphasise the attention that human rights cinema pays to problematic situations. International guests from Europe and South America attended the event to emphasise the interest of human rights cinema for our city.

Overall, the School Edition 2014 was a successful trial of the use of film for the communication of social issues among young people. It also established the competition's first Young Jury, involving scholars from Suger of St Denis (France) and Naples and other cultural institutes.

Case study 4 – Guatemala City, Guatemala

Muestra de Cine Internacional Memoria Verdad Justicia

Since 2012, the festival has offered an education section called "Cine 15+". We invite students between the ages of 15 and 18 from public and private schools, as well as their teachers, to watch independent films (mostly documentaries, with some exceptions). Students discuss the films together with panellists who are either representatives or protagonists of the films or people who are close to the topic of the film. These screenings are exclusively for the students, and are not open for other audiences. We also provide access to this program for students with disabilities.

The majority of young people do not have access to human rights films or independent films dealing with social issues. Commercial theatres and private TV stations do not program those films and thus they are new to young people. It is especially important to keep in mind that the country lived through a nearly 40 year-old internal conflict under military dictatorships, silence and censorship, specifically in the arts.

Our objective is to screen films that allow the students to see and discuss fundamental human topics that help them to know about their own history, citizenship, democracy, youth rights, environment and more. Bringing together both public and private schools provides a unique experience for many of the kids, as this wouldn't happen outside the program. We have had great experiences with films like *Presumed Guilty, Azul Intangible*, *Discovering Dominga*.

The results have been amazingly positive. Film is generally not used in our schools and there is no youth film festival, so our festival is a unique opportunity for young people to speak out on what they think and feel about their society and problems. The teachers appreciate the screenings because they have the

opportunity to exchange opinions and see how alive and free the youngsters can be outside of the authoritative boundaries of the school system. Teachers who have lived through the violent past of the country have a unique chance to transfer their experiences to the students—a conversation that is motivated by a good local film.

Public schools depend on the very conservative ministry of education, which tries to control students and prevent "subversive" activities. Therefore many school directors are afraid to attend the program and we have to make strong efforts to convince them to come to the screenings. This year, the education minister forbade schools from attending a specific film in our section. On the other hand, the private schools fear coming into contact with "proletarian youth" from public schools as they fear they will be a "bad influence" on the upper class kids. This means that we must lobby to convince them otherwise. It is incredibly important that the guarantors see the positive aspects and impact on the pupils and that we can tell them about the impactful results.

Other challenges we face for the program include losing a staff member responsible for the youth section and being unable to replace her. We also had some violent attacks on our youth audience in front of the theatre and need police protection for the screenings. The entire festival faces uncertainty due to censorship and financial problems so it is a challenging time for us. Ideally the youth program would remain and we would involve more and more schools. We would also like to evolve to include a youth specific film jury.

Case study 5 – The Hague, The Netherlands

Movies that Matter

Movies that Matter (MtM) runs two educational programs: a festival program offering educational screenings in Amsterdam and The Hague for primary, secondary and higher education during the Movies that Matter Festival as well as a year-round program that focuses on teachers at secondary schools. MtM offers a film library (350 films including documentary and fiction and both shorts and feature length) where teachers can borrow movies free of charge.[1] MtM suggests movies that suit the curriculum of subjects including Geography, History, Economy, Social Sciences, Citizenship and more.

In 2014 we reached more than 7,000 students with our festival program. The festival program for primary education consists of two options: one documentary and one fiction film, while the festival program for secondary education consists of four options: two documentaries and two fictional films. Each film is accompanied by a Q&A or debate in Dutch. We plan the talks at various moments such as in between a film, before a screening and sometimes after a screening. We also create a real festival atmosphere around the screenings: funny sidekicks, crazy decorations and famous Dutch people (young soap actors, young news reporters, etc.).

During festival screenings, students in Guatemala have a rare chance to speak about their society. Photo by Cecilia Cobar Falla.

For both the primary and secondary programs, Movies that Matter collaborates with other film festivals[2] for teacher guides and films. We also collaborate with other human rights organisations[3] who prepare the students on human rights and debating in order to hold a well-prepared debate. Movies that Matter also joined the MovieZone jury program of the EYE film institute. Five youngsters (ages 15-18) screened fifteen films during a weekend at the Movies that Matter Festival.

The festival program for higher education works in close cooperation with The Hague University of Applied Sciences. We focus on three goals:

1. Participation of the students outside their curriculum: students are invited to take place in a student jury. This jury is invited to select three movies out of the Movies that Matter Festival for the Students' Choice award. These movies are screened free of charge for students only at the festival.
2. Participation of the teachers (MtM films fit within the existing curriculum): Every year teachers of The Hague University of Applied Sciences are informed of screenings and their relevance to the subjects they teach.
3. Participation of lecturers from The Hague University in Q&A's, lectures, etc.

In addition to this, The Hague University of Applied Sciences sponsors the Movies that Matter Festival with an Award (The Students' Choice Award) and with publicity. We also offer students a program of master classes by filmmakers, professors of law, and photographers. Each master class is connected to a film screening before or afterwards.

Year round, Movies that Matter delivers an education program that reaches around 100,000 students. More than 100 films are available for use and are accompanied by a teacher's guide. The teacher's guides are written by volunteer teachers and students under the direction of Movies that Matter. These guides are then directly downloadable from the Movies that Matter website. Movies that Matter also offers digital lesson plans with film fragments or shorts where teachers can follow the results of their students. Movies that Matter also gives out DVDs and workshops to teachers to stimulate the use of visual aids during lessons.

This is a successful program that has seen the following results:

Teachers believe in the power of films: Movies that Matter notices how more and more teachers use human right films to replace the book lesson on a certain subject. For example the subject "Production Chains" is compulsory within the Geography curriculum. After workshops at a geography meeting (attended by 850 teachers), teachers were convinced that screening a movie about the production of clothes (*China Blue*) or phones (*Blood in the Mobile*) was a better starting point to involve students in the subject of "Production

Chains". For Movies that Matter it was a chance to highlight the human rights aspects of the subject of production chains.

Students are more involved with the subjects: Movies that Matter conducted research with The Erasmus Centre for Strategic Philanthropy (ECSP). It involved a large scale research project to examine the impact of human rights films in the classroom. The target group consisted of 500 secondary school students (age 12-15), level vmbo (lowest level secondary school in the Netherlands).

Impact was defined by seven components: Tolerance, Empathy, Trust, Altruism, Happiness, Patience, Risk. The research specifically tested behaviour and attitude of the students (for example altruism was tested by giving them €5,00 and giving them the option to keep it, share it with other students or to give it away to a good cause).

The conclusion of the research was positive. Students who saw a human rights film (*China Blue* or *Africa United)* became (at least for a short term) more tolerant, showed more empathy and became more altruistic.

They also developed a small boost of happiness. Their trust in humanity also increased with *Africa United* and decreased after viewing *China Blue*. Female students were more influenced by the movies than male students.

For the future, we have a few plans for improvement. We hope to create more impact by creating more dynamic and interactive programs around festival screenings, modernising the lesson plans by digital lessons for digital school boards and e-learning/flipping the classroom and creating a greater outreach through stronger lobbying for more visualisation in schools and human rights education in the Dutch school curriculum.

Case study 6 – Sucre, Bolivia

Festival Internacional de Cine de Los Derechos Humanos

The Human Rights and Nature Film School (Escuela de la Naturaleza) was born from the film workshops offered at FESTIMO, the International Human Rights Film Festival "The Seventh Eye is Yours" (El séptimo ojo es tuyo) in Sucre, Bolivia.

These workshops had two distinct but converging sections. One part was dedicated to the study of fundamental human rights including children's rights, the defence of indigenous peoples, women's rights, justice and equality, and used a Visual Anthropology framework. The second part worked on theoretical focus and practice in research, scriptwriting, directing, photography, sound, edition and production.

The workshops lasted six weeks and were held annually with the support of the Ibermedia program and Amnesty International (Netherlands), who

CineSeeds for kids session at Human Rights Arts & Film Festival in Melbourne. Photo by Caitlin Mazzallo.

provided travel and accommodation grants for students from several countries. The groups made short films about the administration of justice, the right to work and plurinational identity. Instructors Rob Brouwer and Humberto Ríos were responsible for these workshops. In 2014 members of the film festival's jury also participated in the trainings, holding several lectures. Former students continue to produce films and to organise festivals in several Latin American cities, from Mexico to Argentina.

The Bolivian Ministry of Education has signed an agreement with PUKAÑAWI ("Red Eye" in Quechua), a cultural association specialising in the management of cultural projects and in strengthening education on human rights through film. This agreement created the School of Nature and gave it a unique identity as a centre that provides holistic education to students on human rights and the rights of the Mother Earth (Pachamama).

Students certified at the school in 2014 produced twelve films, including *Warmipura* (*Between Women*), *Purispa, Purispa* (*Walking, Walking*), *Within the Tree* and *Rubbish, the Elephant in the Room*. They are being compiled in order to be distributed to film festivals.

The School of Nature is a member of the Federation of Audiovisual Schools of Latin America (FEISAL), is entering an agreement with the International Film and Television School in San Antonio de los Baños (EICTV, Cuba) and has participated in the Atitlan Declaration (Guatemala) declaring film to be a human right. The School of Nature is also part of the Human Rights Cineteca (Film Archive) in Bolivia and the Human Rights Film Network.

Case study 7 – Buenos Aires, Argentina

Festival Internacional de Cine de Derechos Humanos

There are two training programs that involve film and human rights run by the HRFF of Buenos Aires: a 'Schools Section" of the International Human Rights Film Festival of Buenos Aires and "Education in Human Rights through Film", a permanent learning program that takes place during the year.

The "Schools Section" of the International Human Rights Film Festival of Buenos Aires has been running for five years. Human rights audiovisual projects are created through workshops in schools and social organisations connected to the festival. Our school section creates a screening platform for the most outstanding films created through these workshops.

"Education in Human Rights through Film" is a continuous education program; it is a theoretical and practical workshop in audiovisual production developed throughout the school year.

The program explores issues related to memory, gender, xenophobia, trafficking, work and other topics of

interest to young people. The workshop results in an audiovisual product that presents the participants' concerns and worries about human rights.

The program achieves many things. It creates a permanent archive of audiovisual materials on human rights produced by children and young Argentines, it encourages the ongoing reflection on issues of human rights in younger sectors of society, and it creates platforms for the sharing of audiovisual material made by children and young people, which is especially important as it is material that receives little or no discussion outside of the internal circuits of schools or social organisations.

We also face challenges for the programs. Both programs require acquisition and updating of technical equipment for film projection and permanent audiovisual production, which requires a consistent budget for management and maintenance.

We must also maintain a constant and fluid relationship with each of the schools and social organisations linked to the programs. It is an expensive and delicate task that requires intensive institutional coordination.

We will continue to develop and expand these programs as we believe human rights remain a large and important field of education for youth. Film and audiovisual production are some of the best tools available to be used and assimilated by young audiences.

Examples of Human Rights Films Used in the Education Programs:

Zarafa (dir. Rémi Bezançon, Jean-Christophe Lie, 2011).
A village elder tells a group of eager children the story of Maki—a ten-year-old Sudanese boy–and his escape from slave traders that takes him from Africa to Paris.

Mia and the Migoo (dir. Jacques-Rémy Girerd, 2008).
A young girl's search for her father in a tropical paradise, threatened by the construction of a gigantic hotel resort.

Songlines to Happiness (dir. Danny Teece-Johnson, 2012).
Teenage brothers Ritchie and Dillon Goymala deal with trauma and suffering by creating music that celebrates their unique Songline to Happiness.

China Blue (dir. Micha X. Peled, 2005).
A highlight on sweatshop conditions in China and the growing importance of China as an exporting country on a global scale.

Die Welle (dir. Dennis Gansel, 2008).
High school teacher Rainer Wenger is forced to teach a class on autocracy, despite being an anarchist and so, decides to start an experiment to demonstrate how easily the masses can be manipulated.

Africa United (dir. Debs Gardner-Paterson, 2010).
A comedy-drama-adventure film that revolves around a group of children who travel 3000 miles across Africa to get to the South African World Cup.

Freedom Writers (dir. Richard LaGravenese, 2007).
Newport Beach-born Erin Gruwell is shocked at the immeasurable difference that her compassion has on the lives of a class full of "at-risk" teens that she is assigned to when she starts work as a teacher in Long Beach.

That's Why I Work, 14 Years Later (dir. Maarten Schmidt, Thomas Doebele, 2013).
Fourteen years after the documentary *That's Why I'm Working*, filmmakers Maarten Schmidt and Thomas Doebele go back to the children featured in the first edition to see how they are dealing with problems such as arranged marriage and hard labour in the textile industry.

The Club of Ugly Kids (dir. Jonathan Elbers, 2011).
Dealing with issues of discrimination and racism, this film is about the fight against a totalitarian President who is planning to kill all of the ugly children.

The T-Shirt (dir. Hossein Martin Fazeli, 2006).
On a trip back to Slovakia, American traveller Mark befriends a shop assistant whose friendship is cut short when he reveals a T-shirt that offends Mark's beliefs, exposing ignorance, intolerance and the power of words.

Framing the Other (dir. Willem Timmers, Ilja Kok, 2011).
This film demonstrates the destructive impact that tourism has in traditional communities by showcasing the women of the Mursi tribe in Ethiopia whose cultural traditions have been embellished over time to cater to the interests of the Western tourist groups who come through to photograph them every year.

Blood in the Mobile (dir. Frank Poulsen, 2010).
This film makes a compelling showcase on the connection between our mobile phones and the conflict in Congo, deemed by human rights organisations as the bloodiest conflict since WWII.

My Neighbourhood (dir. Julia Bacha, Rebekah Wingert-Jabi, 2012).
A coming-of-age story about Palestinian teenager Mohammad al-Kurd, produced to strengthen the idea that the city of Jerusalem is a shared city that seeks to set a tone of cooperation and mutual respect between Israelis and Palestinians.

Arigato (dir. Anielle Webster, 2012).
During a beach trip with her granddaughter Toet, Grandma bumps into a Japanese family and her memories of the former wartime occupiers of Dutch Indonesia, are stirred.

No et Moi (dir. Zabou Breitman, 2010).
Thirteen-year-old Lou Bertignac is a gifted but lonely child—two years ahead in school without any

friends—who sets upon a school project that has her befriend a homeless girl nicknamed No.

The Wooden Camera (dir. Ntshavheni Wa Luruli, 2004).
This film follows the story of two fourteen-year-old brothers Madiba and Sipho who are affected in drastically different ways after finding a dead body with gun and a video camera.

Discovering Dominga (dir. Patricia Flynn, 2003).
Denese Becker is a twenty-nine-year-old housewife living in Iowa, America who decides to return to the Guatemalan village where she was born. An adoptee, Denese begins a journey that takes the viewer through a political awakening on the terrors of genocide and displacement.

A Giraffe sous la pluie (dir. Pascale Hecquet, 2008).
This film follows the story of a brave giraffe who finally decides to protest the fact that all of the village's water goes to fill up Mr. Lion's swimming pool.

Presumed Guilty (dir. Roberto Hernández, Geoffrey Smith, 2008).
In the same vein as *The Thin Blue Line* (1988), this documentary is the attempt by two young Mexican attorneys to exonerate Antonio Zúñiga – wrongly convicted by the Mexican judicial system on charges of murder based almost solely on the testimony of one man.

Azul Intangible (dir. Eréndira Valle, 2013).
A road movie over and about the ocean, this film portrays the diversity of Mexico's northwestern seas, the Gulf of California and the Pacific.

---

[1] We are not the right holders of these movies. In the Netherlands you can screen movies, read books, etc. within the school program without paying the right holders.

[2] IFFR, Rotterdam; IDFA, Amsterdam; Mooov, Belgium; Cinekid, Amsterdam

[3] Humanity House, Red Cross, The Hague; Amnesty International, Amsterdam

Students can learn how to make films during workshops for schools in Buenos Aires. Photo: Archive of IHRFF of Buenos Aires.

Festival Members of Human Rights Film Network

Algeria, Tindouf refugee camps:
FiSahara, International Film Festival
www.festivalsahara.org

Argentina, Buenos Aires:
Festival Internacional de Cine
de Derechos Humanos
www.imd.org.ar

Australia, travelling:
Human Rights Arts and Film Festival
www.hraff.org.au

Austria, Vienna:
This human world
www.thishumanworld.com

Belgium, Brussels:
Festival des Libertés
www.festivaldeslibertes.be

Bolivia, Sucre:
Festival de Cine y Video de los Derechos
Humanos „El Séptimo Ojo es Tuyo“
www.festivalcinebolivia.org

Bosnia and Herzegovina, Sarajevo:
Pravo Ljudski, *www.pravoljudski.org*

Burkina Faso, Ouagadougou:
Festival Ciné Droit Libre, *www.cinedroitlibre.bf*

Czech Republic, Prague:
One World
www.oneworld.cz

Ethiopia, Addis Ababa:
Addis International FF
www.addisfilmfestival.org

France, Paris:
Festival du Film des Droits de l‘Homme
www.alliance-cine.org

Germany, Nuremberg:
Nuremberg International Human Rights FF
www.filmfestival-der-menschenrechte.de

Guatemala, Guatemala City:
Muestra de Cine Internacional Memoria Verdad Justicia
www.iskacine.com

Hungary, Budapest:
Verzio Documentary FF
www.verzio.org

India, Mumbai:
Flashpoint Human Rights Film Festival
flashpointfilmfestival.blogspot.in

Italy, Bologna:
Human Rights Nights
www.humanrightsnights.org

Italy, Naples:
Cinema e Diritti
www.cinemaediritti.org

Japan, Tokyo:
Refugee Film Festival
www.refugeefilm.org

Jordan, Amman:
Karama Human Rights Film Festival
www.karamafestival.org

Lithuania, Vilnius:
Ad Hoc: Inconvenient Films
www.inconvenientfilms.lt

Malaysia, Kuala Lumpur:
Komas Freedom Film Fest
freedomfilmfest.komas.org

Myanmar/Burma, Yangon:
Human Rights Human Dignity International Film Festival
www.hrhdiff.org

The Netherlands, The Hague:
Movies that Matter Festival
www.moviesthatmatter.nl

Norway, Oslo:
Human Rights, Human Wrongs
www.humanfilm.no

Papua New Guinea, Port Moresby:
Papua New Guinea Human Rights FF
www.hrff.org.pg

Poland, Warsaw:
Watch Docs Human Rights in Film IFF
www.watchdocs.pl

Scotland, Glasgow:
Document – International Human Rights Documentary FF
www.documentfilmfestival.org

Senegal, Dakar:
AfricanBamba
africanbamba.webs.com

Serbia, Belgrade:
Free Zone, Belgrade Human Rights FF
www.freezonebelgrade.org

Sierra Leone, Freetown:
Opin Yu Yi
http://opinyuyi.org

South Africa, Johannesburg:
Tri Continental FF
www.tcff.org.za

South Korea, Seoul:
Seoul Human Rights FF
www.hrffseoul.org/en

Spain, San Sebastian:
Festival de Cine y Derechos Humanos
www.cineyderechoshumanos.com

Switzerland, Geneva:
Festival International du Film et Forum
sur les Droits Humains, *www.fifdh.org*

Uganda, Kampala:
Manya Human Rights International
Film Festival
www.manya.org.ug

Ukraine, Kiev:
Docudays UA International Human Rights
Documentary Film Festival
www.docudays.org.ua

Uruguay, Montevideo:
Tenemos que Ver
www.tenemosquever.org.uy

USA, Burlington:
Vermont International FF
www.vtiff.org

More information at *www.humanrightsfilmnetwork.org*.

Human
Rights
Film
Network

Human Rights Film Network´s working group planning activities during San Sebastian European Capital of Culture 2016. Photo by Iñigo Royo.

Want to Become a Member of Human Rights Film Network?

The Human Rights Film Network (HRFN) is an informal network of independent human rights film festivals around the world. The network was established in Prague in April 2004 by a group of 17 festivals. Now HRFN has 38 active members. Through the network, festivals cooperate in the representation of human rights in films. They exchange ideas on how to promote human rights films through festivals, broadcasting educational programmes and discussions.

They share experiences about the organisation of screenings and debates. They encourage the establishment of new film festivals on a sound and independent basis. As such the HRFN works to foster an international environment conducive to the screening and promotion of human rights films worldwide.

Joining the Network

Membership to the network is open to any human rights film festival organisation that subscribes to the principles and practices as recognized by the network and described in its charter. Its programme should be clearly focused on human rights. To join the network the festival must at least have had two editions.

Five Reasons to Join the HRFN:

- to strengthen the presence on the (human rights) film festival world map
- to exchange ideas, experiences and methods
- to benefit from the network's promotional tools and communication material
- to participate in joint efforts to improve human rights films exposure worldwide
- to stimulate the human rights film climate and support its filmmakers

New festivals can be accepted based on recommendation by - and approval of – current members. The annual meeting of the network takes place during the IDFA in Amsterdam. Approval will be granted on the basis of various aspects, including the regularity of events, professionalism and festival track record.

Annual Membership Fee

Festivals currently pay a EUR 200 membership fee. Festivals from developing countries are eligible for a discount (EUR 100).

Please visit *www.humanrightsfilmnetwork.org*