

Made in L.A. Event Planning Toolkit

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About the Film, the Filmmakers and Active Voice

Made in L.A. follows the remarkable story of three Latina immigrants working in a garment factory as they embark on a three-year odyssey to win basic labor protections from a trendy clothing retailer. In an intimate vérité style, this documentary reveals the impact of the struggle on each woman's life as they are gradually transformed by the experience. Compelling, humorous, deeply human, *Made in LA* is a story about immigration, the power of unity and the courage it takes to find your voice. *Made in L.A.* airs nationwide on Tuesday September 4th on the PBS documentary series, P.O.V., as a Labor Day special. The film and related activities are funded by P.O.V., the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, the Independent Television Service and Latino Public Broadcasting. For more information about the film, please visit www.madeinla.com.

Made in L.A. was produced and directed by Almudena Carracedo and Robert Bahar. Carracedo is an award-winning documentary filmmaker who has directed two short films and a short documentary. She is a recent fellow of the NALIP's Latino Producers Academy. Bahar is the co-founder and coordinator of doculink.org, a grassroots networking organization for documentary filmmakers. He also produced and directed the award-winning documentary *Laid to Waste*.

Active Voice (AV) is a team of strategic communication specialists who put powerful media to work for personal and institutional change in communities, workplaces and campuses across America. Through our practical guides, hands-on workshops, stimulating events and key partnerships nationwide, Active Voice moves people from thought to action on a range of issues (including criminal justice, sustainability and more). For more information about AV, please visit www.activevoice.net.

Getting Started With Your *Made in L.A.* Event

Consider your organization's goals and needs – and use the film to support them in a practical way. Before any film screening, you should consider the following:

1) IDENTIFY OBJECTIVES

Identifying your objectives will lay the foundation for your event planning. Think about what you'd like to get out of the event, how it can benefit your organization, and what is realistic. Here are a few suggested objectives (these are not mutually exclusive!):

- **Raise awareness** about the issues faced by low wage workers, the impact of immigration and globalization on labor and consumerism, and the benefits of labor organizing.
- **Heighten visibility** and spotlight the importance of your work by connecting it with the issues raised in the film.
- **Build bridges** between immigrant workers and community members.
- **Educate** immigrants and low-wage workers about their rights, and present them with opportunities that are available in your community.
- **Establish coalitions** with other organizations and inspire the development of new programs that address the needs of low wage workers, the importance of conscious consumerism, and the need for fairer labor practices.
- **Engage general audiences** around how to be more conscious consumers.
- **Prompt local decision-makers** and business leaders to consider how addressing the needs of immigrant and low-wage workers benefits the community.

2) TARGET AUDIENCE

Once you determine your objectives, consider your target audience. Do you hope to cast a wide net and reach the community-at-large? Or do you want to narrow the focus to reach out to a specific sector or group? (e.g., low-wage workers, labor and immigrant-serving organizations, corporate reformists, unions, community organizers, activists, decision makers, foundations, etc.)?

3) FRAMING EVENT TO MEET OBJECTIVES

Will you choose to focus on one particular issue, or a range of issues? You may simply choose to do a screening with brief comments before and after, but *it is best that you engage the audience in a way that enhances your work directly*. Here are some suggestions:

- **Community screening:** A screening/panel discussion designed to attract a range of community members – from interested individuals to community leaders – in a broader conversation about the ideas raised in the documentary (e.g., the implications of globalization and corporate institutions on low wage workers and their rights, how immigration is impacting or impacted by a globalized economy, the effect of labor organizing to raise workers' standard of living and rights, how cultural communities can work together to raise awareness of low wage-workers circumstances and to improve conditions, etc.)

- Cross-sector policy review: An event designed to engage specific sectors, such as policy analysts, local government officials and community leaders in a thoughtful solutions-based conversation. The dialogue would be carefully framed, focusing on ways to better meet the needs of low-wage workers. To keep the conversation focused, this type of event is better as a small, invitational screening.
- Town hall meeting: A screening and forum for members of the community to learn more about the intersection of labor and immigrants' rights in a local context, with an opportunity to voice related ideas, questions or concerns. The panel can include a low-wage worker involved in improving workers rights, a representative from a corporation practicing fair labor laws, an elected or government official focused on immigration reform, labor and immigration experts, a professor or other academic studying the relevant issues and an experienced facilitator. Reserve as much time as possible for dialogue with the audience. **Note**: An event like this should be held in a neutral space so that all community members feel comfortable expressing their opinions.

4) EVENT ENHANCEMENTS

- Keynote Speaker: Invite a local leader or scholar to speak about some of the themes the film raises, such as the global economy, consumerism, immigration, and labor rights. Try to screen the film for her/him in advance!
- Action Steps: Offer motivated audience members suggested ways they can help address labor issues (e.g., volunteer at a local organization, become a more conscious consumer, get involved in a letter writing campaign to legislators to initiate labor law shifts, create a low wage worker committee to discuss issues facing workers regardless of industry, etc.).
- Experienced Moderator: This is especially useful if you'll have a smaller group that wants to really tackle some of the tougher issues.
- Reception: Plan a special meet-and-greet with refreshments to allow opportunities for networking either before or after the screening. Depending on your budget and capacity, this could be open to the public or invite-only.
- Exhibit hall: Provide opportunities for co-sponsors to display information about their organizations and relevant programs/services they provide.
- Performances: Invite a local choir, playhouse or dance troupe to perform a piece dedicated to labor or the immigrant experience.

Getting the Word Out

There are several ways to get the word out about your event, from sending emails to your listserv, identifying “allied” organizations to broaden your reach, and pursuing coverage by local media.

Electronic/Viral Outreach

Active Voice will provide you with text and images so you can create an email announcement to spread the word about your event. We recommend you send out these emails twice: two weeks before, and then a reminder several days before your event. If applicable, Active Voice will also send out this email to our personal contacts in your area.

Co-Sponsoring Organizations

Active Voice strongly encourages including other organizations in your event plans, as it helps you broaden your reach and establish new, potentially long-term coalitions. Allied organizations can get involved in a range of ways depending on their capacity. This can include getting the word out about the film through listservs or websites, contributing time or resources to the screening event, and/or participating in a post-screening panel discussion.

There are many groups that would make good co-sponsors, including labor and immigrant rights organizations, low-wage worker coalitions, labor rights advocates, universities, organizations devoted to human rights issues and media/film centers.

The key in approaching co-sponsors is to help them understand how your event fits into their priorities as an organization, and how they will ultimately benefit from being associated with your plans.

Working with Local Media

If you or one of your co-sponsoring organizations has a communications department that can take the reigns on contacting press, get them involved right away. But we understand that many community partners are small organizations that are limited in this capacity, so we’ve put together some basic tips that can be useful to those who are new to working with local media. Beforehand, we recommend you do a little background reading to get acquainted with the basic steps and terms.

For a “beginners” overview read:

<http://www.causecommunications.com/diy/getnewscoverage.html>

For a full tutorial on news releases from the SPIN Project check out:

<http://spinproject.org/article.php?id=115>

Before you make complicated plans about how to promote your event, spend extra time thinking about who is most likely to understand and appreciate your event, and what your target audience listens to, reads and logs on to. By targeting your core audience, you might decide that it makes more sense to focus on, say, an alternative weekly paper that already covers innovative community initiatives vs. the headline-driven daily paper that tends to focus on crime and celebrity.

Below are some basic tips for your media outreach:

- Use the press release provided by Active Voice as a guide to create your own. Interesting details to include would be information on local wages and efforts to improve workers' rights, a summary description of each of the important issues impacting local workers, statistics on immigrant workers in your community, and a complete list of the co-sponsoring organizations. Make sure to make a special mention if your event will feature the filmmakers (ask Active Voice about their availability).
- Ten days before the event, issue the release to a wide range of mainstream and ethnic media. Make sure to send it to reporters covering labor and immigration issues and the arts/entertainment and metro sections.
- Try to get calendar listings in your city's weekly publication(s) and on the web.
- Make calls to local television and radio programs, including local news, public affairs programs, talk radio and pop radio. Let them know about your event, and be prepared to give them contact and title information of local expert or advocate that can be available for interviews. Who to contact:
 - Local TV news: assignment editors
 - Public affairs programs: producers
 - Talk radio: producers or hosts
- A couple of days prior to your event contact the people to whom you sent press materials and encourage them to attend the event. Pitch the value of this unique screening and the importance of educating people about the experiences of low-wage workers and immigrants in the community and the need for broader labor protections.

Tips for Post-Screening Discussion

Complex films like *Made in L.A.* can raise a range of emotions, questions and/or concerns from the audience, and we recommend you address this with a post-screening discussion. Below are some tips and ideas for framing the discussion, keeping the conversation moving and focusing the audience on important topics. Check out the *Made in L.A.* facilitator's guide for additional suggestions.

Panelists

Your post-screening discussion will vary depending on your event objectives, but it's always a good idea to have a range of perspectives represented on the panel.

- Your co-sponsors are great resources for identifying potential panelists for the discussion. Also, they'll have more incentive to promote the event if they're being represented on the panel.
- For a cross-sector discussion, you might include a low-wage worker, a labor and immigrants' rights advocate, a corporate representative, a policy expert, and an organizer with experience working on issues impacting low-wage immigrant workers. If you're planning a town hall-style event, it's good to include an experienced facilitator as well.
- If possible, ask panelists to screen the film before the event so they can prepare.
- Give your panelists an idea of who will be in the audience, so they can tailor the discussion to the audience's needs. For example, if you anticipate a general audience, ask panelists to tone down any sector-specific jargon.
- Have a translator present if you'll have audience members with limited English proficiency.

Meeting Your Objectives with the Discussion

The way the discussion is framed can be helpful in meeting your objectives.

- If you're hoping to build coalitions or enhance existing programs, the discussion should be action-oriented. Focus on what needs to be done, how to facilitate action, and how various community sectors can contribute.
- If you'd like to raise visibility, showcase your organization's work and make sure it's made clear why your work is important to the community. You'll also want to get key people in the audience, including press, potential funders and other influential decision makers.
- If your main objective is public education, set aside at least half an hour for Q&A with the audience and have fact sheets handy.
- Offer your audience members ways to get involved, whether it's as simple as visiting your website to find out about upcoming events, or something more specific like volunteering at a local workers' center.

Controlling the Discussion

- You might want to select an experienced moderator to keep the discussion moving and field questions from the audience.
- If you have more than one person lined up to speak it is up to you to decide whether each speaker should give a brief reaction to the film in context to their work or if you want to go straight into a moderated discussion. This is largely based on the time limitations you have, but if you have more than 30 minutes available it's a good idea to allow some time for each speaker to introduce

- themselves – who they are and how their work is relevant to the issues raised in the film.
- As the panelists speak, encourage them to choose specific scenes from the film and link them to their comments.
 - Be prepared for potential criticism.
 - Although it is a very small possibility, you must be ready in case the film or speakers come under scrutiny. For example, there may be a lack of sympathy for immigrants that don't speak English or resistance to efforts to improve labor rights through union activity. A neutral moderator can help make sure that the conversation remains productive and many perspectives are heard.

Guide any comments or concerns to a positive end that applauds the benefits of sharing information in an open forum. Encourage critical audience members to think about how the film might be a helpful way to address the tensions that they are feeling.

For a discussion guide and additional ideas for your event, please visit the POV website at www.pbs.org/pov/madeinla.

Planning Checklist

Once you have defined your target audience, objectives, and framing, begin planning the event.

Preliminary planning – at least 6 weeks prior

- Book the venue and date for your screening.
- Recruit local organizational partners to broaden your reach, and help identify roles for each one – such as publicity, panelist coordination, reception planning, etc.
- Determine speakers, panelists, and moderator (if applicable).

Logistical planning – 3-4 weeks prior

- Create a flyer to publicize your screening (image and text provided by AV).
- Contact press. Check out the “Getting the Word Out” section of this toolkit for more information.
- Confirm the appropriate format for your screening (DVD, Beta-SP, etc.).
- Secure food for reception (if applicable).
- Draft agenda and vet with partners.

Logistical planning – 2 weeks prior

- Create an email blast to publicize your event electronically (image and text provided by Active Voice). We suggest sending one announcement 2 weeks prior and another several days prior.
- Contact community calendars about your event.

Media outreach – 10 days prior

- Send out press releases to media outlets.
- Make calls to local television and radio programs.

Final planning – several days prior

- Important:** test screen your format version of the film in advance of the event to make sure there aren't any glitches.
- Send second round of email blasts.
- Follow up with press who expressed an interest in covering the story.
- Finalize agenda.
- Make copies of handouts, including literature from your organization, fact sheets, etc.

At the event itself

- As people arrive, ask them to sign up to receive updates from your organization.
- Have a timekeeper so that panelists/speakers remain within their assigned speaking time.
- If applicable, announce the broadcast and encourage participants to spread the word.
- If possible, announce a call to action or have materials available for attendees to follow up.
- Let audience members know that they can learn more about the film at www.madeinla.com or <http://www.pbs.org/pov/madeinla>.

Additional Resources

- The *Made in L.A.* discussion guide (available at <http://www.pbs.org/pov/madeinla>) offers discussion questions, facts, statistics and other resources to enhance a post-screening discussion.
- The International Labour Organization is the only 'tripartite' United Nations agency bringing together representatives of governments, employers and workers in jointly shape policy and programs. URL: www.ilo.org. The ILO hosts **NATLEX** offering a database of national labor and related human rights legislation.
- The National Labor Relations Board is an independent federal agency created by Congress in 1935 to administer the National Labor Relations Act. NLRB offers resources, statistics and information on labor issues, organizing and efforts to reduce work interruptions caused by conflict between private sector workers and employers. Read more at www.nlr.gov.
- The National Immigration Law Center (NILC) is dedicated to protecting and promoting the rights of low-income immigrants and their family members. NILC is a nationally respected expert organization on immigration, public benefits and employment laws affecting immigrants and refugees. NILC is involved in policy analysis and advocacy, impact litigation, building coalitions and training. Learn more at www.nilc.org.