DOCACCESS PLAYLISTS FOR CHANGE

COMMUNITY & AUDIENCE BUILDING

Slide 1:

Welcome to the DocAccess playlists for change – this is the Community and Audience Building Module.

Now that you have decided to host a screening event, finding your audience and building a community around the reasons for the event will help you reach your goals.

Slide 2:

In this video we will cover:

- Why hosting a film screening is a great way to reach your goals and the benefits of screening a film.
- How to find your audience and the different types of people you might want to reach with your event.
- How you can connect with your audience and how to conduct outreach
- Which types of materials and communication tools you could use
- And lastly, how you can maintain long-term engagement from the community in your goals

Slide 3:

By hosting a documentary screening, you can reach new audiences and create space for conversation, learning, and action. This is a vital part of how a documentary film can be used to create real change.

Prior to and during your screening event you can raise awareness and engage new audiences in your cause.

In turn, this will allow you to build an engaged community that will help drive the change you want to see!

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A film screening can do all these things and more!

- Engage new audiences from your community in the issues outlined by the film
- Connect people and build communities
- Encourage discussions around the film and how it might relate to your local community
- Educate and raise awareness: documentaries can move people to change their minds or develop a deeper understanding of social issues
- Screenings are also great way to create or drive action by audience members – such as motivating individual action, signing a petition and even encouraging the support of fundraising efforts

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It's essential to do your research on the people and organisations in your community that are interested in the social issues addressed by the documentary.

You could speak to local groups, community members, councillors, and politicians to discuss and find out which issues matter most in your community.

Finding the right audiences and engaging them in the issues will help you achieve a successful event and grow your community long-term.

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When you are creating your invite list - it is best to start with a list of the key people you need to invite to the event.

- Who are the key invitees who must attend to watch the film and participate?

If you are having a discussion or speaker – its important you identify whom your audience should hear from or, you may simply wish for someone to introduce the film.

- Who would be the right panellists or a keynote speaker?

Partners can help promote your event and reach new audiences.Think about potential organisations or community groups that you could collaborate with to ensure you garner enough support for your screening to be a success.

You can also use partnerships to support local organisations or campaigns.

- Who are the right partners or organisations to support?

Starting with a list of key guests will help you understand the size of your event, what type of venue is needed and importantly - whom to connect with first to discuss the idea of the event to generate interest and gain support.

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Remember - some people will be for and against the issues raised or the subject of a documentary.

Finding allies will help you build a network of people who are engaged in the issues and can provide advice or expertise. They may also attend your event, speak, or partner with you to help you spread the word and reach your goals.

You may also want to invite people with alternative views to watch the documentary so that they can listen and learn – after all, documentaries are powerful tools to change hearts and minds.

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When thinking about the broader audience you'd like to promote your event to - why not brainstorm various audience categories? This will help you think through the key groups you'd like to inform about your screening and how you can reach them - this is called outreach!

Your audience categories could include:

- Not for Profits / Non-government organisations
- Local Businesses / Organisations
- Community members
- Local Interest Groups
- Schools, Primary / Tertiary / Uni level students
- Media, Radio, social media
- First Nations community leaders and members
- Schools - Primary, Secondary, Tertiary
- Employees / volunteers

The amount of outreach you do to new and broader audiences will depend on the goals of your screening and logistical factors such as the capacity of your venue, your event budget, and the time you have to organise the event.

For example - you may be organising a large public screening and your goal might be selling tickets to fundraise for your not-for-profit organisation. Therefore, you may want to engage your community members as well as local interest groups, organisations and media.

Developing an outreach list will allow you to raise awareness of your event with different groups and find a venue to suit your needs.

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It may sound boring - but a database is you main organisation and tracking tool!

A database will help you track contact details and conversations you have had, manage invites and RSVPs - it can also help build a community that you can send invitations and updates to.

A basic database could include details such as:

- Name
- Email
- Phone
- Address / postcode
- Organisation / Role

- Organisation Type: Corporate, Government, Educational or Public
- Key mission - how do they align with your event?
- Comms Channels: social media, website, events, news, etc.
- RSVP status
- Evaluation - have they completed a screening survey?
- Last contact - allowing you to keep track of when you last emailed them and any important notes about your conversation

Slide 10:

Once you have created your guest list, outreach list and created a database - it's time to go out and connect with people.

When writing outreach communications or speaking with people about your event, first think about:

- Why would someone want to support this screening?
- How will they connect with the story, and how can you work together to achieve social impact?
- What materials do you have to share with them? for example you may share a trailer, an image from the film and the film's website

You can then craft a personalised message or tailored invitation that is relevant to them that highlights the event, your goals and its impact.

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Whilst developing your outreach communications you need to think - what are all the possible ways you'll be able to reach and engage your community?

Will you first contact them via email, phone, social media or in-person at events?

You also need to find the best person to contact within organisations or community groups during your research and if you can't get in touch with them, ask for help with an introduction.

This will allow you to meet them face-to-face, start deeper conversations and send them a tailored invitation or materials before the event.

By letting people know you're looking for people to attend, speak, and spread the word – you are also building an audience and a community of support.

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Promotional materials or "assets" are a great way to share and spread the news about your event. Assets include:

- Social media posts, photos or trailers
- Flyers, posters, postcards, etc.
- Email or printed invitations, etc.
- Press releases

This will ensure they are able to share your event with their communities easily, whilst staying aligned with your messaging and driving people to register for the screening event.

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Now that you have an audience for your event (and maybe more people on your mailing list or on your social media channels) you can begin to develop your relationship with them and ask them to engage further.

To do this at your event, you need to think about:

- How long will you spend talking to your audiences on the night?
- Will you meet and greet, register them and have a social element?
- How will you capture their contact details through your registration process, through ticketing or on the night?
- How will you engage with them in conversation - will you have a panel discussion, round table meeting?
- Will you have more information on the night and materials for them to take away?

After the film's screening - having a slide on the screen which features information on how people can participate further is a good reminder for audience members at the end of an event.

Slide 14:

To build an engaged community after the event:

Follow up with your audience after the screening to say thank you and share an update, photos, a video, or even a quote or story from the event.

Ask them to join your social media channels or newsletter and regularly update these with interesting content so they stay engaged.

You may wish to evaluate your event and send them a survey to ask for feedback and then share the results with them.

Continue to remind your new community how they can participate and take action!

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For long-term community building, think about:

- How will you keep them engaged long-term?
- Make sure you respond to emails, comments and feedback
- Are you planning more events or activities they can come to?
- Will you update them on the outcomes or results?
- How will you send them regular news and updates?

Slide 16:

In summary, you must build a community around your screening to help drive the change you want to see. To do this:

- You need to find your audiences

- Do your research - knowing your issues, your allies and opponents is critical
- Decide who needs to attend your event, speak at your event and who might partner with you and/or spread the word
- Create a database/contacts list - this is the main tool you will use to track your outreach and keep it updated!
- Decide how you are going to reach different types of audiences and how you will communicate with them
- Create materials that can be shared to spread the word and build your community
- Keep your new community engaged