DOCACCESS PLAYLISTS FOR CHANGE

MAPPING AN ISSUE AREA

Slide 1:

Welcome to the DocAccess playlists for change – this is our Mapping your Issue Area learning module.

Slide 2:

In this video we discuss:

- The benefits of mapping the issue area you are hosting a documentary screening or event around
- We will run through some useful tools which will help clarify the area you are aiming to address and the key stakeholders in this space
- As well as how you can use this information to inform your partnerships, outreach and create influential screenings, events and campaigns

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There are many different ways to influence and create change with your screening or event. The more your actions target gaps and needs, the more valuable they will be.

Having a clear understanding of the issue area will greatly assist the impact you achieve with your screening.

The more you drill down into the gaps and needs in your issue areas, as well as the key stakeholders operating in this space, the more likely you are to design an effective call to action and create positive social change.

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We cover four accessible and useful tools that will support you to better understand the issue area you are addressing with your screening or event, as well as your key stakeholder groups.

The two issue mapping tools we recommend include an activity called 'Cutting the Issue', and developing a 'Problem and Solutions Tree'.

The two stakeholder mapping tools we recommend include creating a 'Power Map' or identifying your 'Spectrum of Allies'.

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We recommend using the 'Cutting your Issue' tool to

- Understand the issue landscape the documentary you have chosen to screen is in
- Refine the issue / gap / need you hope to address through screening the film
- Focus and prioritise pathways for action and change

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Step One: identify the issue focused on by the documentary you have selected to screen

Step Two: write down all the factors that are contributing to or causing this issue

Step Three: what part of this issue do you want to target and change through your documentary screening?

Step Four: what can you can ask your audiences to do to help?

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Here is an example for the documentary film "Blue".

The overall issue area being addressed is the environment. Of course the environment is a broad-ranging area, so the next step is to break this issue area down into smaller topics.

For Blue these topics would be climate change, pollution, the declining health of marine environments, loss of biodiversity and deforestation.

The next step is to consider the key factors that contribute to these issue areas.

For Blue, the key factors include pollution, overfishing, the destruction of habitat and ocean changes.

From here, it is important to go one step further to break these factors down even more. And once you have identified the contributing factors (as shown here on the screen), you must identify which of those you want to address through your screening or event and your audience call to action.

For example, the Blue team focused on the role of plastics, unsustainable fishing for our food, as well as the excessive development and pollution leading to the destruction of habitats by calling on audiences to:

- Quit plastics
- Eat sustainable seafood
- Advocate for improved protection and conservation initiatives
- Take responsibility for reducing pollution and plastics for example through the 'Take 3 for the Sea' initiative.

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Developing a problem and solutions tree follows a similar but slightly different process.

Where possible, this tool is best used in collaboration with others as a part of a workshop. A tree is used as a symbolic structure for your conversation.

Firstly, you focus on developing a 'problem tree' which is a basic approach to identifying causes and effects in the key area you are working in.

The Trunk represents your core problem. Here you identify the main problem you are aiming to address.

The roots represent the immediate causes of the problem, while the deeper roots represent the underlying causes for those immediate causes.

To identify the root causes, ask - why does this problem exist? Then ask 'why?' again. Write down and group as many ideas as you and your team have and keep asking 'why' until you have come to the end of that train of thought.

Turning to the branches, you now need to identify the range of effects of the core problem. What does this problem mean?

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Let's look at a concrete example for the same film, “Blue”.

Here the main problem being addressed is the declining health of marine environments. So why is this happening?

One reason is the level of pollution. But why do we have so much pollution? Excess plastics, regular oil spills, etc.

Overfishing. Why? Our population is eating unsustainably, industrial fishing leads to by-catch, etc.

Destruction of habitat. Why? Ocean temperatures are rising and there is too much development occurring, etc.

And ocean changes. Why? Global warming and lack of coral reef protections, etc.

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Now that you have developed your problem tree, it is time to create a solutions tree!

This is easier than it sounds!

Simply re-write your negative causes statements as positive ones.

Then identify which you will actively address through the activities in your project, and which are out of your scope.

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So how does this look for “Blue”?

Our core problem becomes our main target solution - improving the health of marine environments.

Our key causes become our goals - reducing pollution and overfishing, protecting habitats and reducing ocean changes.

And the underlying causes become the areas that we hope to influence through our audience actions.

In this example, the Blue team chose to focus on reducing plastics use, eating sustainable seafood, and improving the protection of marine parks and coral reefs.

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This activity provides you with a clear understanding of the types of actions that will be most effective in addressing a problem and it's causes.

It ensures that what you plan as a part of your change initiative is addressing a genuine need.

Therefore making your contribution valuable.

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Now we will move onto the Power Map and Spectrum of Allies tools.

You can use these tools to:

- Understand the allies and opponents in your issue area
- Consider these stakeholders in relation to their level of power and influence, and degree of support or opposition
- Identify the key players who would be useful partners for your screening or project

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A power map involves identifying key stakeholders and players in your issue area of interest along two dimensions - how powerful or influential they are, and how strongly they support or oppose your objectives.

Once you have run through this process for a range of individuals, influences, organisations, corporations, media and government officials you will have an insightful visual representation.

It will show you the key stakeholders who you should aim to partner and work with as your strongest and most influential supporters, those to be mindful of in terms of your strongest opponents, and those closely aligned but largely powerless groups who you might aim to uplift and empower to support their influence.

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The spectrum of allies is an activity that will help you consider your target audiences by mapping the range of social groups and stakeholders according to your most active allies through to your most active opponents.

This activity will support your goals by identifying how you can aim to attract key allies to engage with your screening, event or campaign, and to clarify who you are hoping to influence and who you probably can't.

As you can see, in this tool your spectrum of allies includes:

- Active allies, who are those in agreement with you and your position who are already engaging in action
- Passive allies, or those who agree with you but aren't engaged in any form of action (yet)
- Neutrals, who are the people who aren't at all engaged or informed
- Passive opposition, or those who disagree with you but aren't actively fighting against you; and
- Active opposition, or those who both disagree with you and are actively fighting against you.

Once you have placed your key stakeholders, organisations, sub-groups and others along this spectrum you should gain clarity on who you want to engage through your screening, event or campaign.

It is much more realistic and effective to aim to engage and shift the individuals sitting closer on the spectrum to you than to try to convert your strongest opponents.

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In summary, identifying the key stakeholders operating in your issue area is a critical step in thinking through how to have influence and make a difference.

These tools can highlight or unearth some unlikely allies that you wouldn't necessarily think of.

These activities can inform your target audiences, potential partnerships and the outreach worth undertaking for your screening or event.