

BEYOND BORDERS TEACHER GUIDE

Introduction

The mission of Listen Up! is to encourage and facilitate a youth voice in the mass media, and contribute to a culture of free speech and social responsibility. The *Beyond Borders* project highlights student-created films that grapple with complex and provocative issues. The Teacher Guide is designed to help you effectively use the *Beyond Borders* films and lesson plans in your classroom. The educational materials are designed to help students by providing activities that inspire reflection, analysis, discussion and critical thinking. The *Beyond Borders* Teacher Guide contains a project overview, film summaries, lesson plan overviews, media literacy information, background information about the topics covered in the films, templates that are featured in the lesson plans, and Internet resources.

Project Overview

As a network for young filmmakers, Listen Up! has given the "green light" to youth teams worldwide to produce short documentaries about what may be the most important questions of our time. These teenagers are courageously documenting some of most difficult aspects of their lives, examining what they most fear and how they create security in their lives, families and communities.

Along the way, they reveal more than just their stories and beliefs. They also help us find new sense of optimism and hope that the future can be different, more peaceful and secure.

Film Summaries

***Lift the Silence* Bogdana Aksyonov**

Children's Voice (Kiev, Ukraine)

On April 26th, 1986 the core reactor of the Chernobyl Nuclear Plant exploded and released thirty to forty times the radioactivity of the atomic bombs dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Many of the families living in the "Chernobyl Zone" during the explosion were moved to the district where filmmaker Bogdana Aksyonov lived. Chernobyl was never discussed. Bogdana didn't want to face what had happened and the fact that it could happen again. She became a Journalism student at Kyiv National University, and realized that keeping the silence didn't help her neighbors and put all of us in danger. Her goal is to help her fellow Ukrainians confront this tragedy and find ways to create a safer future.

***Ji-hee's Candlelight* Ji-hee Huh**

Daejeon Independent Media Center (Daejeon, South Korea) (in collaboration with the MNN Youth Channel – NYC)

Ji-Hee, a 16 year-old high school student in South Korea, let very little come between herself and her studies. But in June 2002 her world changed forever when two 13-year-old schoolgirls were run over

by a U.S. military armed vehicle. The deaths shook Ji-Hee, and like many students across the Korean Peninsula, she wanted answers to why the U.S. Military is stationed in South Korea. She also started worrying about the real possibility of war with North Korea. As Hyang-Soon's future became less certain, she began to play an active role in the anti-war movement. She uses her knowledge to help end the threat of violence, and create a secure future for people across Korea.

History Lessons Daniela Glusberg

Youth for Social Action: Evanston Township High School (Evanston, IL)

When the bell rings at 3:35pm each weekday, over 3,000 American teenagers stream out of the classrooms and into the hallways of Evanston Township High School. As this multicultural mass of mostly Latino, African-American, and White students slowly disperses, there's a group of students who choose to stay behind. Seeking refuge and community, the student-run group, "Youth for Social Action" joins together to share fears that have built up since 9/11. They discuss their worries that Bush's war on terrorism has quickly become a war on immigrants, a war on many of their families. They fear that if their families speak up, they may be deported. This is a story about a group of youth who have joined together to help each other fight for and preserve the American dream of peace, prosperity, and freedom in a time of fear.

***Diana's Story* Diana Guevara**

La Camioneta (Guatemala City, Guatemala)

In Diana Guevara's barrio in Guatemala City, it was hard not to be in a gang. The country was at war for 36 years and community structures and resources have been destroyed. Diana's film focuses on how, while a gang is supposed to protect you, it's all too easy to get hurt. She was raped by one of the members of her gang. When she told her mother about what happened, her mother just blamed her. Diana discovered and met a new group that makes her feel good about herself, the Iqui Balam Theatre Troupe. The members of the Troupe are helping her develop her talents and learn the art of acting. She often chooses the roles of girls that have been abused; it's her own way of healing and fighting back.

***Rapping at Fear* Andres Tabares**

Polimorfo (Bogota, Colombia)

Twelve year-old Andres lives in the Cazuca slum on the outskirts of Bogota, Colombia, where his family sought refuge from a brutal civil war in the countryside. Like many in Colombia who were threatened and fearful for their lives, Andres and his family escaped, seeking safe ground in Cazuca. But safety is the last comfort they found. Paramilitary, or "social cleansing" groups, police the dirt streets and paths of Cazuca, placing seeds of fear among inhabitants. These

groups inhibit youth from expressing themselves - saying what they want to say and wearing what they want to wear. Afraid of being silenced, Andres writes and performs rap music to speak out about his life, his barrio and his country.

Fires Over England Daisy Badger

Rose's Theatre (Tewkesbury, U.K.)

When the Foot and Mouth epidemic hit Britain in 2001, it seemed like nothing could stop it. The government slaughtered millions of animals and the people in Daisy Badger's school smelled the smoke from burning pyres in their classrooms. People were stuck on their farms, the countryside was closed and the tourism industry was badly hit. Scared and angry, this community was determined to find out all they could about Foot and Mouth disease. They learned precautions and produced information for markets, traveling farmers, politicians, and anyone else who would listen. They used this knowledge to produce a play for their small, rural community of Tewkesbury. The play became more than just a way to describe the thoughtlessness and greed that caused such devastation. It was an opportunity to raise voices, connect and teach the community, and try to prevent a recurrence of this terrible disease.

We Don't Want No War – Mohamed Sidibay

Iearn Sierra Leone (Freetown, Sierra Leone)

In Sierra Leone, Mohamed Sidibay was conscripted, or forced, to be a child soldier during his country's brutal, 10-year civil war. His confused mind still fills with fear for the people he cherished in life – his father, mother, brothers and sisters. Three years later and now 10 years old, Mohamed still trembles at the thought of heavy hands that lay over his shoulder; hands that killed his loved ones, hands that conscripted him. Today, he uses the power of the Internet to help design www.childsoldiers.org and let the world know about his experiences.

Sahar Before the Sun – Sahar Adish

Light House (Charlottesville, Virginia)

Sahar Adish is a senior at Charlottesville High School, applying to colleges, taking standardized tests and preparing for her future. Unlike all of her classmates in this affluent community, she grew up under the Taliban in Kabul, Afghanistan and was home schooled in secret by her mother. Through her experience, she gained a deep appreciation for education coupled with a growing fear that she will not "make it" in America. She views herself as having both a wonderful and terrifying opportunity in America to do something important and

meaningful with her life -- first and foremost for her parents and her country.

Divided City Ghayda Nawrus

Sawtona "Our Voice" (Amman, Jordan)

Sixteen-year-old Ghayda looks around the streets of Jordan and sees a divided society with two faces - modern and traditional. The differences are striking, from the way people dress and spend their leisure time, to relationships between family members and personal views of the world. Ghayda prefers non-traditional western clothing, music and culture, which is looked down upon by traditional Jordanians. She also believes strongly in her Muslim faith, choosing to pray five times a day, fasting during the holy month of Ramadan, and choosing not to have a boyfriend. Ghaya is part of a new Jordanian generation - a complex mix of old values and new ideas. Misunderstandings about her generation's beliefs and values are driving a wedge into a small but fragile society. She finds solidarity in friends who share similar dreams of a community that can balance the traditional and non-traditional, and is determined to continue working hard at school.

***Leaving Still* Katy Thompson**

Spy Hop Productions (Salt Lake City, UT)

Growing up poor in America often means growing up alone. Katy Thompson's father was rarely home and her mother struggled to support ten children on a secretary's wage. To meet the family's basic needs, her mother had to work eight-hour days and salvage food from grocery store dumpsters. As a result, Katy hardly got to spend time with her. Because this is the lifestyle she was born into, she was often afraid that her life would unfold in the same way and that she would pass this legacy on to her own children. When she started running track in her junior year of high school, it gave her confidence and power to dictate her life's direction. As she continued to move forward with hard work and dedication, she was learning to find the confidence that she will be able to provide a happier and more successful future for her family.

***I'm Not a Boy* Julie Joyce**

House of Frame Fierce (New York City, NY)

At the age of 16, Julie Joyce stopped answering to her male birth name and decided to publicly identify herself as a girl. Without support or understanding from her family, Julie turned to transgender girls on the streets of the Bronx for support. Although their support was important, she knew their lifestyle left them vulnerable to harassment,

substance abuse, and prostitution. As she searched for safe and productive ways to express her identity, Julie found a peer education job teaching other youth about transgender rights and HIV/AIDS awareness. Today, she is part of a new family of friends who support her in developing her full potential as a human being.

Lesson Plan Overviews

There are six *Beyond Borders* lesson plans, which are designed for use in high school classrooms. The lesson plans contain the following components: overviews, grade level, learning objectives, building background activities, learning activities, extension activities, and education standards.

Exploring Youth Media

In this introductory lesson, students will explore different aspects of media. They will view, analyze and compare examples of youth-created media, define media literacy, and think critically about the role of media in their lives. Youth media refers to activities that engage students in the creation of a media work that may be in the form of audio, video, digital art, or websites.

Art Changes Me & Changes the World

In this lesson students will explore the role that the arts play in expressing emotions, understanding fear, developing security, and creating change in the world. The lesson focuses on three films:

Diana's Story, *Rapping at Fear*, and *Fires Over England*. Students will conduct research, create a presentation, and use reflective journals as they investigate visual arts, film, theater and music and make connections between the issues raised in the films and their own lives.

Identity & Power: Finding Your Place in the World

In this lesson students will explore varied aspects of identity and their place in the world. They will focus on these themes while viewing two brief student-created films: *Leaving Still* and *Divided City*. Students will participate in reflective journal writing activities, explore personal traits and how others view them, create a personal identity frame, and create an advice column. The lesson activities are designed to help the students connect the issues raised in the film to their own experiences.

Taking Action to Change the World

In this lesson students will explore varied aspects of activism. They will view three films that share common themes: fear, security, and making an impact on the world. As students watch *History Lessons*, *Ji-hee's Candlelight*, and *Lift the Silence*, they will learn about how student filmmakers become empowered agents of change. Students will participate in the creation of a mock television show as they learn about environmental activism, legal activism, and human

rights activism and make connections between the issues raised in the films and their own lives.

Children: The Innocent Victims of Adults' Wars

In this lesson students will explore the impact that war has on the world's children. The lesson focuses on two films: *We Don't Want No War* and *Sahar Before the Sun*. Students will conduct research about the impact of war on children, create a presentation, and investigate ways to become involved in helping children affected by war. They will also create a "Peace of Art" to promote peace.

Talking Tolerance

In this lesson students will examine how hidden biases may influence our perceptions and actions, and will explore ways to promote tolerance. The lesson focuses on the films: *Divided City* and *I'm Not a Boy*. Students will take a hidden bias test, record thoughts and feelings in a reflective journal, perform a skit to examine what it might be like to live another person's life, and take action to promote tolerance in their school.

Background Information on Media Literacy

The following list of resources contains background information on media literacy.

- Alliance for a Media Literate America

<http://www.AMLAinfo.org/home/media-literacy>

- JustThink Foundation www.justthink.org
- Listen Up! www.listenup.org
- Center for Media Literacy <http://www.medialit.org/>
- PBS Teacher Source
http://www.pbs.org/teachersource/media_lit/media_lit.shtm

Resources on Film Topics

The topics in the *Beyond Borders* film are provocative. The Educators for Social Responsibility website at <http://www.esrnational.org/guide.htm> offers guidelines that can help foster classroom discussions on emotional subjects such as war and violence.

The section below provides further resources on the film topics.

Youth Activism

- MTV: Rock the Vote <http://www.rockthevote.com/home.php>
- Project Think Different
<http://projectthinkdifferent.org/>
- Habitat for Humanity
<http://www.networkforgood.org/offsiteframe/?siteURL=http://www.habitat.org>
- What Kids Can Do
<http://www.WhatKidsCanDo.org/Index.asp>
- Youthlink.org
www.youthlink.org

Arts

<http://www.npr.org/programs/morning/features/2002/mar/girl/>

- Artists Against the War
<http://www.aawnyc.org/>
- Voices of Youth Digital Diaries
http://www.unicef.org/people/belize_26967.html
- *A Thousand Cranes: The Hiroshima Atomic Bomb*
<http://www.childrenstheatreplays.com/atc.htm>

Child Soldiers

- <http://www.childsoldiers.org>
- **[UNICEF's Child Soldiers Site](http://www.unicef.org/protection/childsoldiers.pdf)**
<http://www.unicef.org/protection/childsoldiers.pdf>
- [BBC: Children of Conflict](#)
- [Amnesty International: Child Soldiers](#)
- [IRIN: Child Soldiers](#)

Refugees Groups

- [UNHCR: The UN Refugee Agency](#)
- [Amnesty International: Refugees have Rights](#)
- [UN: Children in Flight](#)
- [Human Rights Watch: Refugees](#)
- [UNICEF's Real Lives Afghanistan's Former Child Soldiers](#)
- [BBC: The Road to Refuge](#)

- [Refugees International](#)

Human Rights & Transgender Equality

- Connect For Kids website
<http://www.connectforkids.org/node/302>
- Youth Research: A Project of Advocates for Youth website
<http://www.youthresource.com/community/transtopia/index.htm>
- The National Center for Transgender Equality
<http://www.nctequality.org/>
- PFLAG <http://www.pflag.org/index.php?id=277>
- Human Rights Watch
<http://www.hrw.org/reports/2001/uslgbt/action.htm>

Conclusion

The best way to help your students learn from the *Beyond Borders* films is to encourage them to take what they have learned beyond the classroom. Encourage your students to become involved in their communities, explore their passions, learn about global issues and realize the power that they have to create positive change in the world.

Templates

Talking Tolerance Lesson Template Bias & Tolerance Reflective Journal

What Happened?

Use this space to describe an event or an issue.

How do I feel? What do I Think?

Use this space to describe how you feel, or what you think about the topic.

What did I learn?

Use this space to write about what you learned and/or what you can do about the situation.

Art Changes Me & Changes the World Lesson Template

THE ROLE OF THE ARTS

1. Why do you think people create art?

2. What is your most memorable arts experience in a school setting?

3. Art should be created only by people who are skilled at their craft.

Disagree

Somewhat Agree

Agree

4. I notice art in public places.

Rarely

Sometimes

Never

5. I think a part of people's taxes should fund arts programs in schools.

Disagree

Somewhat Agree

Agree

6. Describe a strong reaction, either positive or negative, that you have had in response to a painting, song, film, or sculpture.