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Global Social Change Film Festival & Institute
www.socialchangeilmfestival.org
Ubud, Bali April 13 – 17
The ARMA Resort

Supporting filmmakers to be effective social activists and social activists to be engaging storytellers

In the Media

Ode

Deploying the power of film for social change

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http://www.odemagazine.com/exchange/24689/deploying_the_power_of_film_for_social_change

If you're seeking an alternative to the glitzy, glamorous, and purely entertainment-based film festivals that dominate most headlines, take a trip to the art-loving island of Bali. This year Bali's Ubud will host the Global Social Change Film Festival and Institute (GSCFFI), a long, but appropriate title for a festival that unites social activists and filmmakers in an environment built around intercultural understandings and the promotion of social change. For Cynthia Phillips, the festival's founder and overarching visionary, the event is about providing a platform for important ideas that have a social impact. "We're a very different type of festival," says Phillips, "we want to empower activists as well as filmmakers to make what they envision happening with their film and impact a reality."

Originally trained as an agricultural economist, Phillips discovered powerful storytelling can be while working on developmental projects in Africa. "I realized that the power of story is as powerful or more powerful than a good plan, to be able to motivate and inspire people with story makes a huge difference." In the final stages of her doctorate work,

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Phillips filmed a documentary about fighting hunger and poverty in Africa, connecting storytelling and social activism.

GSCFFI is a place where filmmakers and activists can engage in a dialogue about pressing social issues while sharing valuable experience. It's a win-win situation: filmmakers learn how to be more effective social activists while social activists acquire the skills to become better storytellers. Some festivals provide audiences with a visual onslaught of 150 films, but the GSCFFI screens only eight films over a four-day period, highlighting the importance of providing networking time and a place for extended dialogue around the work.

With 2011 marking the 100-year anniversary of International Women's Day, it's fitting that this year's festival theme is "Women and Film." Phillips strives to empower women to become the filmmakers they want to be; inspiring women to take on roles that are traditionally male dominated, such as directing and producing, is part of the festival's aim. Nia Dinata, an award-winning Indonesian filmmaker and activist, will be one of this year's honorees and institute instructors. Dinata, who produces her films under the constraints of strict government censorship, walks the fine-line of creating films that both challenge and respect the powers that be. "We honor her because she's an inspiration and mentor to so many people," says Phillips.

Every aspect of the festival is geared towards making a difference; by combining art and activism, filmmakers spread awareness and help illuminate important issues. When asked about the future of the GSCFFI, Phillips is both inspired and optimistic. Despite tough economic conditions, Phillips is determined to spread the festival's influence and leave behind an infrastructure and community in places like Bali so that activists can arrange festivals on their own, even after the annual event is over. "We like to call ourselves a global festival with local presence," says Phillips.

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Global Girl Media Releases Citizen Journalist Sizzle Reel at LA Center Studios

Examiner.com March 16th, 2011 By [Liz Kelly](#), Digital Entertainment Examiner

<http://www.examiner.com/digital-entertainment-in-national/global-girl-media-releases-citizen-journalist-sizzle-reel-at-la-center-studios>

To empower teenage girls to become citizen journalists using new media and the web, Global Girl Media released their [new sizzle reel](#) at LA Centers Studios last night at a special Global Social Change Film Festival Event. This exciting project provides training for young women in low income and inner city neighbors. Their citizen journalists covered the World Cup, and will be reporting at the [Global Social Change Film Festival](#) April 13-17, 2011, in Bali.

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Amie Williams, Executive Director and Co-Founder of [Global Girl Media](#), shared with the filmmakers and fans, “We are bringing together teenage girls to share the power of their stories.” Global Girl Media has trained 30 young women, produced 45 videos, and written 70 blogs. Amie Williams added, “We go where the cameras and microphones are not always pointed.” To increase learning and confidence, Global Girl Media pairs up girls from different cities. For the World Cup, they paired teens from Soweto, South Africa with girls from East Los Angeles.

In this inspirational sizzle reel, you’ll see many teenage citizen journalists stating, “My voice is important...because like women before me, I can make change happen.” From the smiles on their faces, you can read their excitement and pride. You’ll also see a teenage girls speaking with Dr Jill Biden (VP Joe Biden’s wife), Danny Glover and Robert Redford, founder of the Sundance Institute (we love him!) Robert Redford shares, “Now is the time. I think a woman's point of view is very important.”

Global Girl Media had two citizen journalists from East Los Angeles reporting at the Sundance Film Festival 2011. One of the themes for Sundance this year was celebrating women in film, and I was honored to cover the [Miss Representation Panel](#), which included Geena Davis, Gloria Steinem and Jennifer Siebel Newsom, Director/Producer of this documentary that highlights the need to change the way the media portrays women.

During the Global Social Change Film Festival Event last night, we also had a moment of silence for our friends in Japan and Haiti. We are all watching citizen journalism in Japan as they post reports on Facebook and Twitter, and are grateful for the brave reporters sending us images of this tragedy.

Moving forward, Global Girl Media will cover the Global Change Film Festival 2012 in New Orleans. The organization is working on training programs for teenage women in the Middle East, and will be in Lebanon and Kurdistan, connecting them with women in Atlanta and Detroit. New York and Washington D.C. will also be launched in the next two years. If you want to get involved in this exciting empowerment program, please contact Global Girl Media. We need more teenage reporters giving us an insider’s view saying, “This is our world, and my voice.”

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<http://sunriseroadmedia.com>



Agriculture and Cinema?

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Open Spaces January 2, 2011 By [Patricia Zimmermann](#), professor of cinema, photography and media arts at Ithaca College and codirector of the [Finger Lakes Environmental Film Festival](#)

http://www.ithaca.edu/fleff/blogs/open_spaces/global_social_change_film_festival_bali_indonesi/

What do agricultural economics and cinema have in common?

Stumped?

Two words.

Cynthia Phillips.

And five more... the [Global Social Change Film Festival](#) (GSCFF) slated to unspool in Ubud, Bali, Indonesia April 13-17, 2011.

For Cynthia Phillips, the founding director of this new festival, the challenges of food security, world hunger, poverty, and sustainable futures lead directly and logically to film and media for social change.

A New Film Festival in Indonesia

The Global Social Change Film Festival and Institute focuses not on film markets, deals, auteurs, landing big movie stars, discoveries of the next breakthrough genius, or launching the next new wave.

“We’re about creating spaces for dialogue around these films,” explains Phillips. “We want to connect filmmakers and activists for community building.”

To this end, the festival plans to convene filmmakers, activists, and audiences for meaningful discussion in Bali, an island renowned for its embrace of the arts, slower pace, and open culture. With only 8 feature films screened in open air venues over 4 days, the festival is making a strong statement that extended dialogue matters.

Phillips hopes that filmmakers will explore how to build audiences beyond festivals by linking with activist groups. And she hopes that activists will learn more about the possibilities of a range of media.

In an international media landscape crammed with film festivals in nearly every city on almost every theme imaginable, the GSCFF possesses an impressive clarity of vision by answering real needs. According to Phillips, the festival focuses on “addressing the needs of filmmakers to become more effective at outreach, and addressing how activists can become better storytellers.”

It’s a large mandate—but scalable. For Phillips, one word keeps everything in focus: outreach.

From Economics to Outreach

Phillips sports an unusual background for a film festival director.

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After getting her PhD in agricultural economics from Michigan State University, she pulled together a team to record a convening by the USAID on hunger and poverty in Africa. That led to a stint in Singapore working in international marketing for American Express. And, now, she's a high profile, high energy strategic planning consultant for a range of high end clients like [One Degree Media](#), 2020 Fund, and others via her [C. A. Phillips Company](#).

Along the way, she did some programming for the Sedona International Film Festival in Arizona around sustainability issues and locally sourced food.

That experience ignited her interest in solving a key unresolved problem lurking underneath the utopian, user-generated, all-tools-are-accessible-everyone-can-do everything, Web 2.0 media ecosystem: how do we build audiences for beautiful, well-produced social change films?

Staying on Point

The Global Social Change Film Festival seems to be unpacking that gnarly audience and outreach question in innovative ways. It's honoring the nongovernmental social media group [Engage Media](#) in Jakarta, Indonesia with a special innovator award. It's giving a special activist award to the Women and Children Crisis Center of Tonga. And it is honoring Indonesian filmmaker and social activist [Nia Dinata](#).

During the day, the Institute part of the festival will offer a range of pointed workshops on pressing, unresolved, but necessary topics like Commercially Viable Social Change Filmmaking and Distribution, Hybrid Models of Distribution, and Film, Audience Building and Social Action and Environmental Film.

Challenges and Dialogues

However, challenges lurk despite this clarity of vision, marketing savvy, and ability to pull in partners like the Global Fund for Women, Global Girl Media, and First People's Worldwide. All films need to pass through the government review board for approval, a time consuming process but one that GSCFF respects as part of the media regulatory environment in Indonesia. It's also hard to pull together resources in a tough economy for a first-time film festival.

Drilling down into details like how to get different activists from around the Southeast Asian region to Ubud for workshops, the endlessly optimistic and undaunted Phillips observes "People are always asking me why start a film festival festival in this tough economy?"

Her answer is simple: "I tell them we need to create a space for dialogue about social change media and activism and outreach."