

# Film to School (FtS) Programs: Active Engagement for Filmmakers in Education

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Paper Presented in the Panel:  
*Films and International Relations:*  
*How cinema can motivate students to study and learn IRs*

54<sup>th</sup> Annual International Studies Association Convention  
San Francisco, April 3-6, 2013

## Abstract

Although teachers have been using film in the classroom for decades, there is a growing trend for filmmakers to create supportive materials and programs for educators to integrate their films into school programming. Student populations can be extremely valuable assets to the educational and engagement goals of issue-based and documentary films. Likewise, students and teachers both receive significant benefits from incorporating film into the educational environment, making schools an excellent venue for film outreach. This new breed of Film to School (FtS) programs utilize a variety of strategies – including film availability, curriculum, professional development, school screenings, action campaigns, and coordinated events – to both enhance the school environment and spread the messages conveyed within such films. This paper will discuss past research on the benefits of using film in schools, introduce FtS strategies in theory and practice, and present outcome results from *Invisible Children*, one of the analyzed films. Results suggest great promise for FtS programs as a way to enhance student learning and subsequent engagement in civic behavior.

## Introduction

The role of film has great potential within the school environment. From the perspective of the school, films allow targeting of important social issues, supported by facts and examples, to make the passive audience into active social members of society and collaborate to make a difference. Films can educate audiences of humanitarian issues worldwide, and with that awareness can become a greater desire to become active. When film campaigns target schools, they can educate students and help to connect them with what they learned in a highly personal way. Rather than reading about events in books and newspapers, films can give students a fresh perspective of the world and enable them to connect their classroom knowledge with real-world application.

From the perspective of activist filmmakers, integrating with schools is a great way to gain viewership and also enhance the educational and activist goals of their films. Since today's children will be tomorrow's decision makers, informing them about the problems they stand to inherit and potential solutions appears to be logical. In addition, there is sufficient infrastructure to institute such programs since the schools are already in place and millions of students go to them every day. Documentary films present a great opportunity to bring real-world issues into the classroom.

As such, it has become increasingly common for documentary filmmakers to create supportive materials and programs for educators to integrate their films into school programming. While teachers have been using films in class for a long time, they may no longer need to seek out, purchase, and develop curriculum around issue-based films. Over the past decade, filmmakers have taken a more active role in promoting their film into schools. These films utilize a broad array of strategies to educate, empower, and engage students, including film availability, curriculum, professional development, school screenings, action campaigns, and coordinated events, increasing the ability for teachers to easily and successfully integrate film both in and out of the classroom.

The goal of this paper is to introduce and discuss the various strategies being utilized by Film to School (FtS) programs and present outcome data from one such film, *Invisible Children*. After reviewing past literature on the benefits of using film in schools, this paper will present descriptions and examples of six identified FtS strategies from a comparative case study of eight documentary films and present student outcome data from one of the films, *Invisible Children*. Results are discussed on the potential of film to supplement, stimulate, and manifest school education.

## Films as Teaching Tools

Literature on using film as a teaching tool dates back several decades. Thomas Edison was quoted as saying, "I believe that the motion picture is destined to revolutionize our educational system and that in a few years it will supplant largely, if not entirely, the use of books." (Marcus & Stoddard, 2007, p. 317). Though this is not yet the case, the discussion of film in education has a rich history. Numerous articles have been published describing the successful use of film to teach a wide variety of subjects, including French (Bloom, 1995), science (Dubeck, 1990), and political science (Funderburk, 1978; Kranzdorf, 1980; O'Meara, 1976; Sanchez, 1976). Surveys indicate that K-12 teachers use film widely and across subjects and that their experiences doing so are largely positive (Hobbs, 1999; Marcus & Stoddard, 2007).

In addition to presenting examples of successful teaching with film, research has also analyzed the effects of such practices. Films are a key form of entertainment education (Slater, 2002), an educational paradigm that links learning and enjoyment by leveraging entertainment media for educational purposes. A review of this literature identified the following benefits.

### Engagement

Ritterfeld et al. (2004) describes the three requirements for entertainment education to be successful. First, it must provide a compelling narrative in order to *entertain*. Second, it must *educate* by providing accurate information, elaborating on key concepts, and defining problems as well as the means to solve them. Finally, it must incorporate the *entertainment experience* with educational goals by triggering intrinsic motivation for continued learning and engagement in the material presented.

Narrative is a vital element in learning across the lifespan. Learning, in fact, can even be viewed as the process of assimilating new stories into one's understanding of the world (Schank & Berman, 2003). While most effective teaching aims to tell stories, film is an especially useful medium for telling stories. Film allows for transportation (the feeling of being swept into the narrative), which reduces psychological distance between students and complex or far-away issues (Green & Brock, 2003; Trope & Liberman, 2010). Films have the ability to not only provide the viewer with information, but to also engage the viewer emotionally, connecting and making relevant the material being presented. Entertainment leverages emotion to open the door to cognition, thus increasing the likelihood and extent to which students process information. Students are less resistant to ideas transmitted through entertainment, as the educational material is being transmitted implicitly (Ritterfeld et al., 2004). Learning takes place as a side effect from absorption in the narrative.

### Relevance

Films are able to add relevance to instruction by providing links between general course content and specific issues and stories taking place in the world. Student learning can be linked to societal issues, which is a vital goal of curriculum, as "curriculum is an integration of the needs of society, the discipline, and the learner" (Tyler, 1949). Much emphasis has been placed on American students' test scores in math and science, which are dropping relative to our neighbors around the globe (Phillips, 2007), but such "scientific literacy" includes not only gaining

knowledge on basic concepts, but also learning how to integrate them into civic decision-making. Such an emphasis ensures that students are able to make the leaps necessary in the future to integrate concepts in theory and in practice, as public understanding of the substance and process of current issues is vital to successful policy (Miller, 1983). “They (films) serve as a bridge between the world of lectures, research, and textbooks, and the world that really matters” (Demerath, 1981, p. 71).

### **Efficiency**

Using film is an efficient way for educators to address very specific topics that may not be within their area of expertise. A teacher can maintain expertise in the general course content and “borrow” expertise from films regarding specific issues. It is often difficult for the educational system as it is currently set up to fully meet these needs. Course textbooks, by their very nature, are unable to keep up with the pace of current events and do not target issues at the local level or link them to the lives of students (Oravetz, 2005). Clearly, there is a place for films to come into the classroom and as a supplement to instructor and textbook expertise. Such use keeps preparation within reasonable limits and can also be seen as a less expensive substitute for field trips that enable students to “see” another place without having to travel from the school setting.

### **Credibility**

Films are able to enhance the credibility of teaching material in two ways. First, the medium itself lends credibility to the material presented, as students ascribe a sense of authority to content that has been formally produced and released as a film (Hannon & Marullo, 1988). Films also serve to bring voices into the school of highly respected and credible authorities. Documentary films often feature leading experts on issues to make connections between the story being presented and the larger issue at hand. The combination of leading experts with narrative elements is vital for effective documentary story-telling.

### **Empowerment**

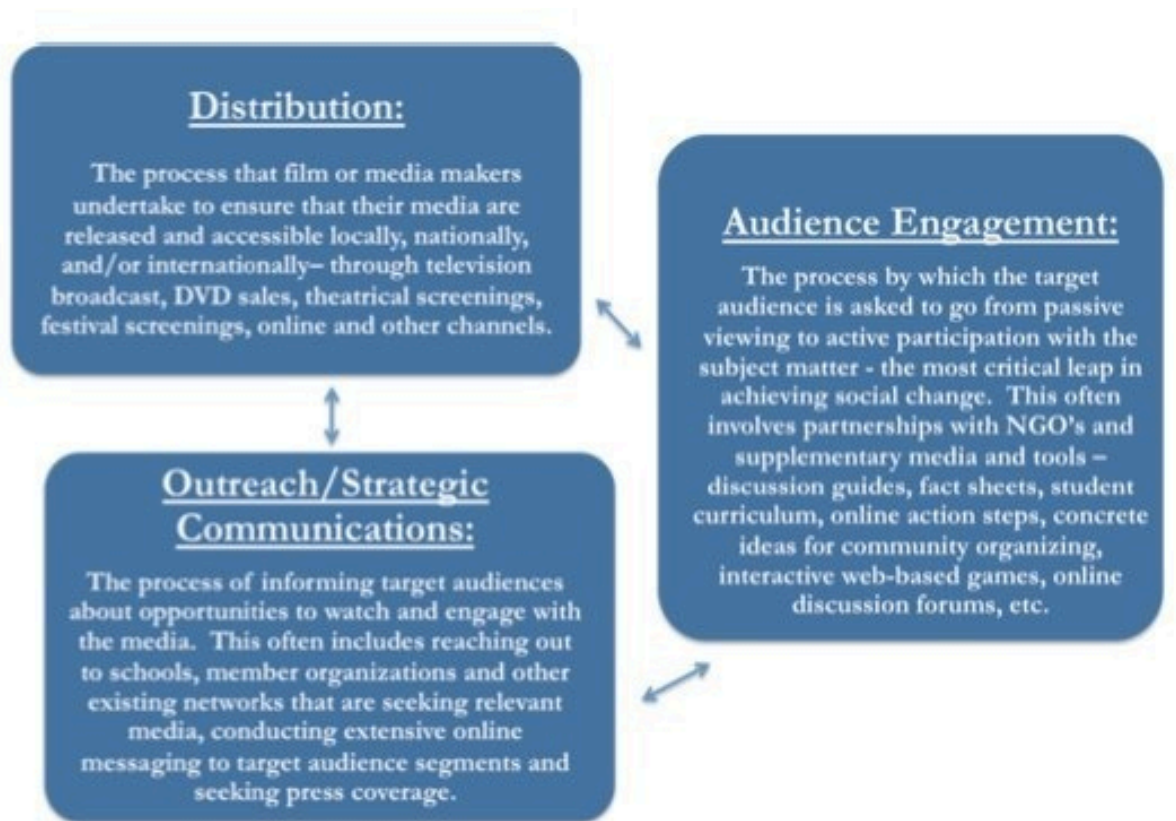
Film can bring a big impact in creating social awareness and engagement about not only problems, but also potential solutions. Film can put a human face and experience behind the statistic, which is very useful for creating the empathy needed for action and mobilization. Film has the potential to close gaps between issues that are seemingly too far to deal with, and can create a sense of immediacy about the issue. The power of film comes from “its use of audiovisuals, its capability to contextualize human rights problems, and its creation of human connection via direct testimony” (Miller, 2008, p. 830).

In addition to increased engagement during class, enjoyment increases the likelihood that students will share information with others, thus reinforcing newly acquired knowledge. Continued discussion serves to enhance learning outcomes, as “the process of change is facilitated when people share stories about how they respond to commonly experienced problems” (Papa et al., 2000, p. 23).

## Schools as Training Grounds

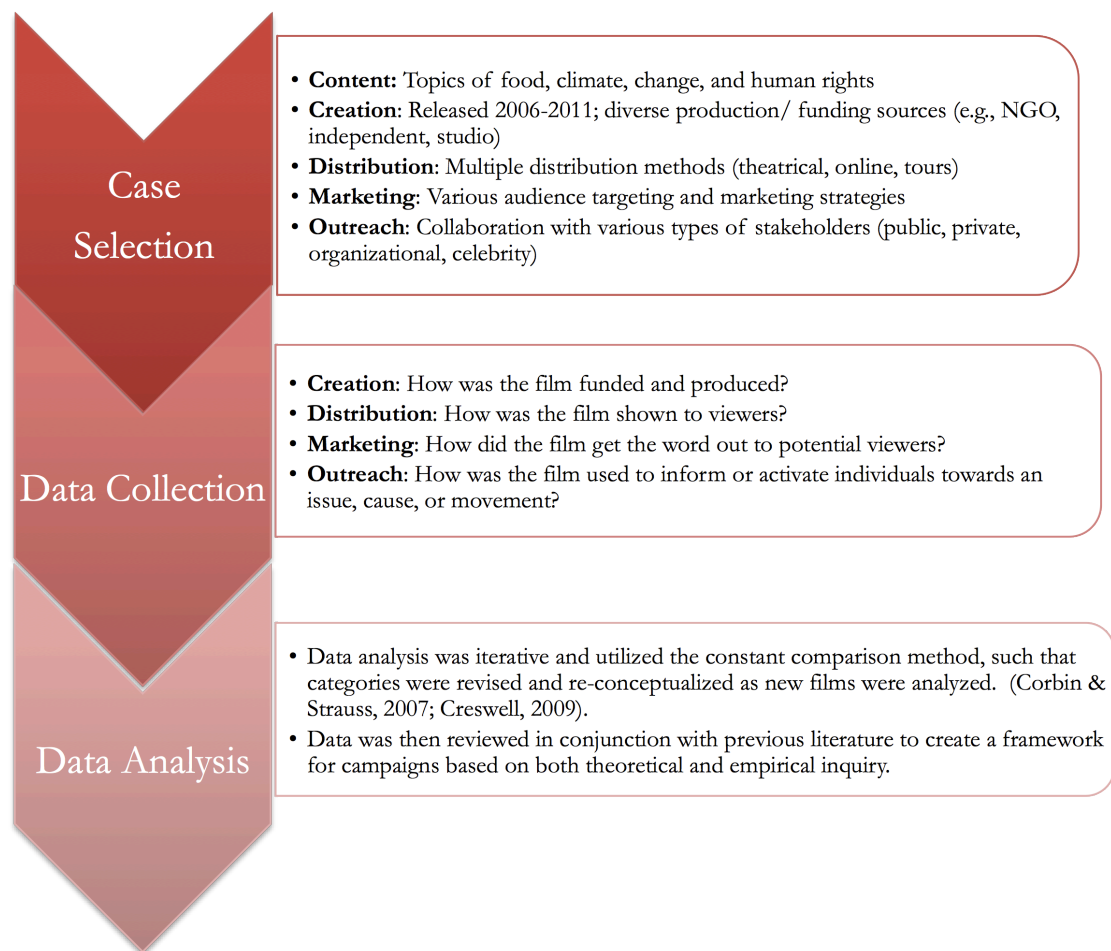
Integrating films in schools not only serve the needs of the schools themselves, but are increasingly being seen as a way for filmmakers to spread the information, messages, and social goals of their films. The recent upsurge in popularity of documentary media, combined with technological advances of internet and computers have spawned a new era in issue-based filmmaking, opening up a whole new set of opportunities for film to serve as a tool for education and engagement both within and beyond the school environment.

It is becoming increasingly common for films targeting a specific issue or cause to incorporate additional information, outreach and activities with distribution and promotion of their films. Verellen (2010) defines the three key activities of issue-based films as distribution (how the film is made available for viewing), outreach/strategic communications (tactics to get people to see the film), and audience engagement (turning emotional response to action). (see Figure). Working with schools enables filmmakers to accomplish all three - schools provide a venue for distribution, a mechanism for informing target audiences (both the students themselves as well as the communities in which they are situated), and a way to engage audiences to take action. By taking their films 'to the streets' (e.g. educational institutions, environmental organizations, local government meetings, bars, churches, etc.) films' potential for influencing policy and individuals is greatly increased (Whiteman, 2004).



## Film to School (FtS) Strategies

In order to better understand the various ways that film campaigns are targeting schools, we analyzed eight documentary film campaigns to determine the nature of their school-based programming. Data were collected as part of a larger research project on film campaigns, which aim to analyze these films and their production, distribution, marketing, outreach, and impacts. The study utilizes a multiple-case holistic case study design (Yin, 2003); methodology for case selection as well as data collection and analysis are presented below. The films included in this analysis are *An Inconvenient Truth*, *Flow*, *Food Inc.*, *Home*, *No Impact Man*, *Invisible Children*, *Pray the Devil Back to Hell*, and *The Story of Stuff*. The data presented in this paper will be limited to school outreach but a brief description of each film is included in Appendix A for reference.



Analysis of this data revealed six primary Film to School (FtS) strategies: film availability, curriculum, professional development, school screenings, action campaigns, and coordinated events. A description of each strategy follows.

### **Film Availability**

The first strategy is simply making the film available free to educators. Although it sounds fairly straightforward, there are several ways in which films can accomplish this task. Some issue-based films are distributed online and free of charge to anybody who wishes to watch them. This is the strategy employed by Home, Invisible Children, Pray the Devil Back to Hell, and Story of Stuff. Story of Stuff releases all of their films with a Creative Commons license, which means that people can distribute them as long as they do not change them or receive revenue from them (Creative Commons, 2013). Pray the Devil Back to Hell is available on the PBS website, which was negotiated during the television rights. And Invisible Children have released the original film as well as several subsequent films, including the famous Kony 2012 on multiple platforms, including YouTube, Vimeo, as well as their own website. Home took this same strategy, imbedding the film on YouTube, Vimeo, and their website immediately upon release.

If the film is not being distributed freely to the public, filmmakers can also work to make copies available to educators. Paramount Pictures and Participant Media made 500 copies of An Inconvenient Truth available to college campuses through an initiative called Truth on Campus and they also offered 50,000 free copies of the film to the National Science Teacher's Association (NSTA) to be distributed to teachers across the country, but, the NSTA denied the offer. Food Inc provided a free DVD of the film to 2,000 teachers (sponsored by Film Education - a charity supported by the UK Film Industry that supports the use of film in curriculum).; they said that the film "can be used in range of subjects including Geography, Science, Citizenship, Critical Thinking and General Studies". Flow also provided copies of the film free of charge to select educators.

Finally, for longer films, filmmakers can create educator's cuts of their films, which is an additional strategy in which filmmakers edit special version of their films that are made to fit into a class of 50 minutes to enable easier showing in classes. Flow created such an educational DVD and Home created two short videos which are shot in a similar fashion as the main film and supplement the film with extra information on Forests and Desertification, respectively.

### **Curriculum**

As suggested in previous literature, the addition of curriculum is a key strategy for connecting films to content and broader ideas and issues. Many film campaigns are taking this message to heart and creating supplementary materials for educators to use with their films.

Film-based curriculum can range from simple discussion guides to comprehensive standards-based lesson plans. Film-based curricula among the sampled films vary from elementary through college audiences, integrating with a diverse array of subjects. Food Inc., for example, partnered with Center for Ecoliteracy to develop a standards-based curriculum for suggested use with courses in economics, environmental science, English, geography, science, social studies, and vocational agriculture.

An Inconvenient Truth designed classroom curriculum for middle school, high school, and college-level science and civic engagement classes. The curriculum is available for free on the film's website and was officially adopted into the national UK education system in 2006. Likewise, Food Inc. offered free school screenings to the schools that incorporated the issues introduced in the film into their curriculum and offered a discussion guide that provides questions to spark thoughtful discussion about the issues in the film, which is directed to audiences high school age and older.

Home compiled a teaching pack, which includes basic information about the film, photos of the world and information of the films location, information about the music used in the film, and lessons about the topics that were presented in the film. They say that, using their materials, it is possible for children 9 years old and over to tackle a citizen debate or study geographical, historical, philosophical, scientific, literary or musical matters in groups.

Story of Stuff worked with Facing the Future, whose mission is to create tools for educators that give students the tools to build global awareness and engage in solutions for global environmental crises, to create a two-week curriculum, targeted at the high school level, which includes ten, fully planned lessons that meet national science and social studies standards. The project also included multiple study and action guides for faith based communities in collaboration with GreenFaith, such as their faith-based program for Christian and Jewish teens.

### **Professional Development**

Extending curriculum, filmmakers can engage in professional development for educators to help support them in using the film to support educational goals. This is a less common, but potentially beneficial strategy. Following are three examples.

An Inconvenient Truth created opened its "Train the Trainers" program, in which they train volunteers to give the PowerPoint presentation that influenced the whole film. Following the release of An Inconvenient Truth, Al Gore founded The Climate Project and launched a program called Train the Trainers to teach educators and activists to give a version of his famous PowerPoint presentation in their communities. The group has trained over 3,500 presenters since it began (Payne). These trained presenters are now a part of The Climate Reality Project and travel around the world with their message.

Flow launched Project Flow, in which they offered professional learning workshops to teachers across Canada. They also held an educational panel at the San Francisco Film Festival, in which they answered questions from participants interested to know more about the film and cause.

Finally, Invisible Children has two programs for educators. First, they have sponsored a teacher exchange between Uganda and the US for several years. And they plan to offer their first multi-day teacher training in August 2013 at the Fourth Estate (there will also be training programs for high school and college-aged youth, respectively).



### **School Screenings**

Screenings may seem similar to the film availability, in that they involve viewings of a film within a school setting, but they differ in that school screenings refer to viewings that are organized with or by the filmmakers and potentially involve a visit from somebody affiliated with the film or associated campaign. Nearly all of the films sampled have organized some school and/or community screenings as part of their campaign. By far, the most extensive of these is Invisible Children, who has held bi-annual “tours” every year since 2006. During these tours, which are a core component of their model, teams of four “roadies” travel for 2-3 months in designated regions hosting community screenings. Each tour corresponds with a specific film and a fundraising campaign (Fall) or event (Spring) to engage viewers. Tours average 1500 screenings each, with about half of them to schools (ranging from middle school to universities) and half to community groups.

No other films have quite as extensive of a screening program as Invisible Children, but several others have engaged in school screenings as a form of outreach. Pray the Devil Back to Hell worked with outreach organization Film Sprout to create a Global Peace Tour, which started on March 2009, peaked during the United Nations’ International Day of Peace on September 21st and ended on October 31st, 2009. The tour was a large-scale screening initiative with 411 screenings in 235 American cities as well as 31 countries. In addition to many school screenings (mostly university-level), the film screened in venues ranging from the United Nations and United State embassies to academic conferences, libraries, cruise ships, and yoga studios.

### **Action Campaigns**

Many films extend their message into social action campaigns, which can target and/or accommodate schools. Companies such as Participant Media (An Inconvenient Truth, Food Inc.) create “specific social action campaigns for each film and documentary designed to give a voice to issues that resonate in the films”. While film social action campaigns are broadly inclusive of both technologies such as podcasts, social media and network applications as well as traditional movement strategies such as rallies, protests, and congressional lobbying efforts, the focus of this section is on school-focused organizing and action.

Several films have created school and/or youth-focused initiatives to coincide with their broader action agenda. An Inconvenient Truth, for example, launched an initiative called “Inconvenient Youth” to encourage youth to make a change to improve the climate crisis. Story of Stuff created the “Green Schools Initiative” with a partner organization to improve the environmental health and ecological sustainability of schools. And No Impact Man launched a program called the No Impact Experiment, which includes is a guide for individuals and groups to minimize their own impact and also influence those around them by taking part in a “carbon cleanse ... to see what a difference no-impact living can have on your quality of life”.

Invisible Children seems to have the widest reach in terms of school-based action campaigns. They encourage its supporter to engage in various calls to action. In every biannual campaign (coordinated with a screening tour, above), With the Schools for Schools campaign, for example, the organization paired U.S. and Ugandan schools to raise money to rebuild the war-affected institutions; from this funding, they were able to rebuild 11 schools in Acholi-land. They also have active clubs at high schools and colleges across the U.S. and world.

### **Coordinated Events**

Finally, some films have engaged in coordinating screenings or events, connecting people across the country and/or world to view the film or engage in action at the same time. No Impact Man, for example, organized a national No Impact Week, in which 30 University campuses viewed the film and then engaged in an associated No Impact Project for a week. An Inconvenient Truth coordinated nationwide viewing parties across the United States on December 16, 2006 in an effort to spread awareness and put pressure on Congress to take action against global warming. And Home launched worldwide with such a global screening day, on International Earth Day 2009. Many countries showed the film on national broadcast television, but some communities still chose to participate via screenings at schools and other locations.

Once again, Invisible Children seems to have the most extensive programming in terms of coordinated events. Since its inception, the organization has hosted over a dozen national and/or global events, including two lobby days in Washington DC with several thousand youth supporters in attendance and a four-day leadership Summit called The Fourth Estate, the second of which will be held in Los Angeles in August 2013. Through these events, Invisible Children has been able to “mobilize large number of supporters in virtual and assemble large number of supporters in physical space” (Pepper, 2009).

## **Analysis of Impacts – Invisible Children**

As discussed above, Invisible Children (IC) serves as an innovative example of a mature and comprehensive Film to School program. It is also a good example of film within the area of international relations, as it is based on a specific international humanitarian issue and also integrates concepts of getting involved and standing up for the rights of others, extending the potential scope and reach of its message beyond the LRA to general issues of human rights and civic engagement. It is for these reasons that IC was selected for subsequent analysis focusing on its impacts on youth viewers. Analysis is presented from two surveys of middle and high school students exposed to IC Film to School programs.

### **School Screening Survey**

The first survey was conducted to assess the general impacts of attending a school screening. IC reached out to the approximately 750 schools that participated in the Fall 2011 Tour asking whether they were willing to distribute a survey to all student participants in order to help IC evaluate their programs. 167 schools responded, of which 22 were randomly selected; 16 schools ended up returning 4,367 completed student surveys.

Although randomly selected, the 16 schools were sufficiently diverse in a number of ways. They were geographically spread out across the United States and Canada (the region in which the tour took place). They included both public and private schools, middle and high schools, and both schools with a history of Invisible Children screenings and those for which this was their first tour. Additional information about the sample can be seen in Table 1.

*Table 1. Characteristics of surveyed schools (K = 16)*

Variable	Number of Schools	
Geographic Location	Northeast US	1
	Midwest US	2
	South US	5
	West US	7
	Canada	1
School Type	Private School	5
	Public School	11
School Grades	Middle school	4
	High school	9
	Mixed (7-12)	3
Tour History	First Invisible Children Screening	8
	Past Experience with Invisible Children	8

About one month after the screenings, students who attended were given a 50-item scantron survey. Questions measured students pre-screening exposure to IC, subsequent involvement with IC programming, and self-reported outcomes of participation. They were also asked five demographic questions; results are shown in Table 2.

*Table 2. Demographic Characteristics of the Sample (n = 4,367)*

Variable	Survey Sample	
Gender	Female	51%
	Male	49%
Grade	Middle school (5 <sup>th</sup> -8 <sup>th</sup> )	30%
	9 <sup>th</sup>	18%
	10 <sup>th</sup>	20%
	11 <sup>th</sup>	16%
	12 <sup>th</sup>	16%
Race/Ethnicity	White/Caucasian	55%
	Spanish/Hispanic/Latino	21%
	Black/African American	8%
	Asian/Pacific Islander	8%
	Multiple race/Other	8%
Political Affiliation	Very conservative	9%
	Somewhat conservative	15%
	Moderate	61%
	Somewhat liberal	11%
	Very liberal	4%
Socio-economic Status	Lower income	6%
	Lower-middle income	14%
	Middle income	44%
	Upper-middle income	28%
	Upper income	8%

When asked whether they enjoyed the IC film and presentation, 91% and 93% responded yes, respectively. Students were also asked if they had engaged in a series of subsequent behaviors related to IC. Nearly all students (91%) had participated in at least one IC behavior after the screening, with over half participating in two or more. The most frequent behaviors reported were speaking with others who attended the screening, followed by speaking with others who had not attended the screening and followed by discussing the LRA and/or IC in class. The least frequently reported behaviors were joining or starting an IC organization; only 12% reported engaging in this behavior. However, it is important to note that this still resulted in 524 of the 4,367 students who viewed the screening getting involved in the organization and this is only among 16 of the approximately 750 school screenings hosted in Fall 2011. A list of all ten included behaviors, with means and standard deviations for responses, is provided in Table 3.

*Table 3. Means and Standard Deviations for subsequent engagement (N = 4,367)*

	Mean	SD
Spoken about IC with someone who also attended the screening	.78	.41
Spoken about IC with someone who did not attend the screening	.65	.48
Discussed the LRA and/or IC in a class	.63	.48
Visited IC on the internet (e.g. website, blog, Facebook, twitter)	.35	.48
Made a donation (e.g., funds, books) to IC	.27	.45
Joined an IC online community (Facebook, website, twitter)	.21	.40
Purchased any films, apparel or accessories from IC	.19	.39
Fundraised for IC	.15	.36
Subscribed to any IC news feeds online	.13	.34
Joined and/or started an IC club/organization	.12	.33

Finally, the survey also asked students to self-report, on a scale of 1 (not at all) to 4 (a great deal) how much they felt their participation with IC had impacted them on a series of variables which included academic motivation, knowledge about Africa, appreciation for their lives, and three civic variables: attention, interest, and efficacy. A list of these variables as well as means, standard deviations, and alphas for scaled variables are presented in Table 4. Overall, students reported that their engagement with IC lead to positive outcomes, including an increased appreciation for their own lives, knowledge about central Africa, and motivation to do well in school. Results for civic outcomes were also positive, with the highest scores among the three reported for civic efficacy.

*Table 4. Means, Standard Deviations, and Alphas for Outcomes (N = 4,367)*

	Mean	SD	$\alpha$
<u>Life Appreciation</u>	3.40	0.96	<sup>b</sup>
Appreciation for your own life			
<u>Knowledge about central Africa</u>	3.10	0.96	<sup>b</sup>
Understanding of the situation in central Africa			
<u>Academic Motivation</u>	3.01	1.12	<sup>a</sup>
Motivation to do well in school			
<u>Civic Efficacy</u>	2.71	0.90	.85
Your ability to make meaningful contributions to the world.			
Your ability to interact with others in ways that are meaningful and effective.			
Your ability to apply your knowledge and skills to solve “real-life” problems.			
<u>Civic Interest</u>	2.54	0.91	.83
Your level of interest in volunteering in your local community			
Your level of interest in international volunteering			
Your desire to help in promoting social justice in society.			
<u>Civic Attention</u>	2.28	0.81	.82
How much you pay attention to national, state, and/or local politics			
How much you pay attention to world affairs Help others			
How often you talk about politics, government or current events with others			

<sup>a</sup> Single-item variable

Finally, participants were grouped based on factor analysis of the participation behaviors in four groups: those who engaged in no subsequent behaviors (9%), in only “talking with others” behaviors (36%), in talking and/or web-based communication behaviors (13%), and finally those who actively engaged with IC via donating, fundraising, making a purchase, or getting involved in an IC club.

*Table 5. ANOVA Results of Participation Groups on Self-Reported Outcomes*

	Group 1 (None) 9%	Group 2 (Talk) 36%	Group 3 (Web) 13%	Group 4 (Active) 42%	ANOVA (F)
Academic Motivation	2.42	2.97	3.16	3.12	46.61***
Africa Knowledge	2.35	3.07	3.26	3.24	104.43***
Life Appreciation	2.76	3.45	3.53	3.46	66.82***
Civic Attention	1.84	2.21	2.48	2.37	61.60***
Civic Interest	1.88	2.37	2.77	2.74	142.57***
Civic Efficacy	2.07	2.61	2.88	2.87	106.24***

### General Outcomes Survey

A second, longer survey was administered online to a smaller sample of students, recruited via email as well as from the IC website. After removing non-students and incomplete responses, this survey had 1758 responses. Data analyzed in this paper are a subset of the complete survey and focus on responses to the following four open-ended questions:

1. Have your academic or career goals changed as a result of your involvement with IC?
2. Have you developed and/or improved your leadership skills as a result of your involvement with IC?
3. Have your personal values or priorities changed as a result of your involvement with IC?
4. In your own words, how has IC impacted your life?

A coding sheet was developed to document and analyze responses. An initial set of codes were developed through open coding, and then grouped into second order categories through axial coding. Finally, the following three themes were constructed from analysis: knowledge/awareness, values/perspective, and civic engagement.

### Knowledge/awareness

Students report that their exposure to IC opened their minds to events and issues worldwide: *"Before I saw a screening of any of the movies, I had no idea about the issues going on in the rest of the world. But seeing my first IC showing of the movie Sunday sparked an interest in me for global issues that has been growing ever since."* Many stated they were largely unaware of global issues before their screening. *"I had never heard about the war in Uganda, or the Acholi people, before I saw the rough cut film. Now I live in Northern Uganda and work with people affected by the war."* They are influenced from the knowledge gained from IC and yearn to change goals to better their understandings of global issues, ultimately to help change these issues. *"Invisible Children has informed me about the LRA and the destruction it has caused but it has not only informed me, it has inspired me to be a part of putting an end to it. Invisible Children has inspired me to believe that young people can make a difference."* Finally, students report this knowledge is something that they cannot unlearn and that will last with them for a long time. *"I can't not be a part of something larger than myself."*

### Values/perspective

Related to knowledge and awareness, students came to realize that there are much larger issues than what they see around them. *"I can no longer sit in America and only be concerned with my own well-being. I now feel as though I must do all that I can to fight for those who do not have the means to fight for themselves."* Involvement has inspired students in positive ways. Many have become socially conscious, responding to wanting to be involved with IC and react to global problems in some way. *"Invisible Children opened my eyes to the injustice in the world and the fact that we as individuals can work together to make real, tangible changes in the lives of those who are less fortunate. Invisible Children has shown me how to be grateful for the lucky life I lead. I have learned the true meaning of 'Where you live shouldn't determine whether you live,' and I have let this aphorism dictate my actions and how I lead my life."* They report both an appreciation for their own lives and a renewed vigor for addressing injustice. *"It made me more grateful for the security, comfort, and happiness I have in my life, but also inspires me to do something on behalf of those who do not so fortunate to be born into my situation"*

The impact IC has left on students appears to be life changing, empowering, and influential/inspirational. Students have realized a purpose to fulfill because of the involvement with IC, or from the introduction of IC. Many students want to incorporate global awareness into their futures. *“Invisible Children has made the greatest impact in my teenage years. It changed the way I saw the world and empowered me. Since my involvement in high school, I changed my minor to non-profit management, and I shifted my interest in politics from purely domestic to international relations.”*

Being involved with an organization that allows these students to help no matter how little or how large of a contribution, students are inspired to give more and more for those less fortunate. IC has given the opportunities to these students to show their activism, to be involved in global politics, to actively participate in a cause. *“Invisible Children has given me something to fight for, something to be excited about, and something I can help with and SEE the difference it's making. From the first day I saw the screening, to my first call to the state capitol, to my first Invisible Children even in the city, to my first screening I hosted, to the first time I saw one of my close friends experience Invisible Children for their first time, to telling EVERYONE about when Obama signed the bill, to now seeing that being played out. It has shown me that my actions really DO matter. My involvement around the world has grown, my involvement at home has grown, my passion for serving has grown. All because of Invisible Children.”*

Students take what they encounter with IC and place it in perspective. Students want to be more selfless as they witness/encounter what other people are going through vs. what the average American student goes through. Many feel that taking their lifestyle for granted needs to lessen after realizing what people of less fortune live like. *“Knowing that people go through what they go through around the world makes my problems seem I less significant. It made me a more selfless person being involved with Invisible Children.”* This leads to both a significant appreciation for one's own life and an intense desire to give back. *“I look at what I have and realize that it is more than I need and more than some people will have their entire lives. I have no excuse for not helping in some way.”*

## Civic engagement

Students report a calling to get more involved in civic causes and social justice. Responses mention getting more involved in school, volunteering, activism, and changing career goals. Many have realized they want to be global citizens, not just a citizen of their country.

*“I don't want to pursue success, fame, or money anymore; I just want to work to make other people's lives better, whether they are next door to me or across an ocean!”*

*“something changed in my so that my goals in life all became centered around fighting for social justice and fighting for human rights. My priorities remain the same and strong to this day.”*

*“Dedicating my life to seeking social justice for those who cannot seek it themselves in an effective way; realizing that humanity is at its best and truly comes alive when we are living to benefit the lives of one another.”*

To demonstrate their compassion, many students report involvement within clubs or created a club at their school/institution:

*"I want to be more involved with Invisible Children and expand the program in my school."*

*"I have served on our executive board for our college club for two years, and I have developed a broad set of unique leadership skills as a result of my work with Invisible Children."*

They also report increased interest and participation in lobbying behavior:

*"I went to Lobby Days in Washington D.C. and I learned so much from that experience. I feel confident in dealing with politicians now and getting my point across in government. I feel like I have a voice in this country now."*

*"Prior to my involvement with Invisible Children I would have been perfectly content to live out my life in suburban America while having little impact on my community and my world. Now, having been involved with Invisible Children, and because of a number of other similar experiences I have had, I realize that I have a responsibility to the people around me and around the world. I have a responsibility to do all that I can to make life better for those less fortunate than myself."*

## **Career Choice**

Finally, many students report changing or focusing their career choices to those that incorporated issues of social justice and/or international relations. These goals range from missionary work, teaching, to creating a way to help and serve those less fortunate in other areas of the world:

*"Before IC I didn't know what I wanted to do with my life. But now, I want to major in Sociology, so I can better understand the people in this world, and be able to help out in any way I can."*

*"Invisible Children gave me a need to serve people in need abroad. I am going to spend time in Africa helping where I can and learning about the people I come in contact with."*

*"Involvement with Invisible Children has encouraged me to use my dream of a career as a photojournalist to strive and use talents to benefit and help other around the world documenting real life situations such as the war in central Africa to raise global awareness."*

Many had set college majors and career paths, after involvement with IC, these majors and/or careers have changed to reflect a position that involves global/international studies. With their career changes, there are goals these students want to achieve such as traveling to and servicing countries less fortunate, specifically those within Africa. Some believe coming from a privileged lifestyle [i.e. living in North America] gives them the responsibility to change or try to make a difference in global security/issues, thus wanting to change these issues.

*"Invisible Children happened in my life when I started understanding what social justice and movements were and how I could be a part of them. Since then my priorities are now tilted in the social justice direction."*

*"My involvement with Invisible Children prompted me to major in International Studies with hopes of someday working at a similar non-profit, or of someday spending my life abroad participating in humanitarian work"*



## Conclusion

In conclusion, Film to School (FtS) programs offer great promise for increased integration of International Relations and other issue-based concepts to be integrated into school settings, meeting the needs of both educators and filmmakers. Additional research is needed into the experiences of teachers using such programs as well as into the long-term impacts of these programs on students, on schools, and on film campaigns and social movements. This preliminary introduction suggests that this has been a neglected area in the study of both film-based activism as well as entertainment education and that much further investigation is needed. This paper is a necessary first step toward that goal.

**Acknowledgements:** The author would like to thank Richard Matthew for constant guidance, feedback and support throughout the research process; Kehau Ahu, Brandon Duong, Natalya Olbes, and Mariam Isygan for their invaluable contributions to the research; and Talitha Baker and their staff at Invisible Children for assistance with designing instruments and collecting data.

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## Appendix A. Brief Descriptions of Included Films

*An Inconvenient Truth*, directed by David Guggenheim and produced by Participant Media, follows former Vice President Al Gore's seminars about global warming. The film depicts the destructive progression of global warming, while touching upon the myths and misconceptions that are connected with it. Shot in less than six months, *An Inconvenient Truth* became one of the highest grossing documentaries of all time and earned both the Oscar for Best Documentary as well as helping to secure a Nobel Peace Prize for Al Gore as well as the International Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) whose work is featured in the film.

*FLOW: For Love of Water*, directed by Irena Salina and produced by Oscilloscope, brings to light the growing issue of the privatization of the ever dwindling fresh water supply. In addition to describing the problem, the film also introduces solutions and the people and institutions that are working on those solutions. The film's collaboration with organizations also helped create the movie. Some of the organizations who helped in creating the film are, the Vermont Natural Resources Council, the UN, Water Geeks, Take Back the Tap, and the Food and Water Watch.

*Food Inc.*, directed by Robert Kenner and produced by Participant Media and River Road Entertainment, explores the American food industry and provides commentary on the actions of the government regulatory agencies USDA and FDA. The film accuses them of putting profits before people, focusing on the health of the consumer, the livelihood of the farmer and the safety of the workers. The film also touches on illnesses caused by new strains of bacteria in food, and obesity as a product of their actions. The film was shown in several film festivals and released on DVD in 2009 and subsequently released in theaters and shown on PBS on Earth Day 2010.

*Home*, directed by Yann Arthus-Bertrand and produced by PPR (a French multinational holding company that includes Gucci Group and Puma, among others), tells the story of our planet's history, beauty, and diversity as well as the current actions that are threatening the ecosystem using only aerial views shots of different places on Earth and voiceover narration (in English by Glenn Close and translated to 40 languages). The film was released simultaneously on Earth Day 2009 in over 131 countries via theaters, online, and television. After its initial release, the film has remained available free in its entirety on the film's website.

*Invisible Children*, independently directed and produced by the filmmakers, tells the story of human rights violations committed by the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) in central Africa involving the kidnapping of village children. After self-distributing the film among family and friends, the filmmakers founded a non-profit organization to extend the mission of the film and create subsequent media. Since its first streaming in 2004, the first *Invisible Children* film, called the *Rough Cut*, has been viewed over 200,000 times and the 2012 release of *Kony 2012* received over 100 million views in a week, setting the record for the most viral piece of media in human history.

*No Impact Man*, directed by Laura Gabbert and Justin Schein and produced by Eden Wurmfeld and Laura Gabbert, follows author Colin Beavan and his wife on a year-long No Impact Project with the goal to make as little environmental impact as possible for an entire year. After screening on landmark theaters the film was released on DVD. *NIM* has also been shown on schools worldwide.

*Pray the Devil Back to Hell*, directed by Gini Reticker and produced Abigail Disney, tells the story of Liberian women who allied to end their country's second civil war between various warlords and the corrupt Charles Taylor regime. After its initial release in film festivals, the filmmakers partnered with PBS to create a four-part *Women, War, and Peace* television series. The film sparked the creation of the non-profit organization, Peace is Loud and collaborated with many other organizations, such as, Mothers in Charge, Liberian Education Trust, Women for Women International, Equality Now, the White House Project, and Women's Funding Network.

*Story of Stuff*, directed by Annie Leonard and Michael O'Heaney and produced by Free Range Studios with funding support from the San Francisco Tides Center, is a 20-minute straight-to-internet video that follows "stuff" (i.e. consumer goods) from its creation, through its sale and use, and eventually to its disposal. The film is presented in the animated whiteboard-like manner narrated by Leonard. The movie led to the development of an NGO, the Story of Stuff project, which has since created seven more films (and counting) shot in the same manner as well as a supplementary book. With an original goal of 50,000 views, the original *Story of Stuff* film has been seen by over 15 million people and counting.