

Shapeshifting Documentaries

A conversation and workshop on tools, strategies, and new directions for filmmakers.

Featuring Helen De Michiel, jesika maria ross, and Elizabeth Miller.

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00:00:22 **Helen De Michiel:** I wanna thank you, David, and the Berkeley Film Foundation for bringing us all together, doing this really interesting workshop on what we call open space documentary. So I have three questions for you, and you can just raise your hand. Who here has faced challenges planning engagement activities around your documentary project? We all have. Yay! Who wants to exchange and have a deeper connection with others who have an interest in the subject that you're looking at or pursuing in your documentary? Yay [laughs]! And who here is interested in exploring new pathways to deal with co-creation, collaboration with subjects, or people formerly known as subjects? Great, okay, you're in the right place. [jesika maria ross: Yeah [laughs].] I wanted to say that we're gonna do a little interaction, we're gonna model the kind of behaviors that we'd kind of like to do together today, and I wanted to say that we're gonna show some media, we're gonna, I'm gonna show you some slides of the big concepts that we're going to be triangulating as we talk about, a little bit about our own projects, and then bring Liz Miller in to talk about the Shoreline. We have a handout that you're welcome to sort of figure out how it relates to what you do, and I also know that there are several people in here also who've done these kind of projects in the past, who are also gonna have a lot of comments, like Andrea Turrici here has done a lot of community engagement with her documentary work and brought people together around particular subjects. And so now, I think that we hopefully will have you guys add your expertise to the conversation as well. So we're gonna start right now with, let's see, an interactive little segment. So, jesika, would you like to tell us about what we're gonna do right now?

00:02:39 **jesika maria ross:** Sure. So what I'd like you to do, what we'd like]stands up, knocks papers to floor], there we go, what we'd like you to do – always good to start with humor – what we'd like you to do is find someone close to you, get into groups of two, and just take maybe five minutes, so couple minutes each, and talk together about what motivated you to come to this session today, and what are you hoping to walk away with. So just get into pairs, one of two, find somebody next to you, behind you, start talking, take five minutes and we'll call you back.

00:03:18 **jmr:** [rings bowl bell] All right. Let's bring you all back. That looked really lovely from here We wanna know, do a quick popcorn out [snaps fingers] of some of the ideas that you heard or said, because it gives us a jumping off point to key out fdeas to what your interests are and what it is you wanna walk away with. And we'll be doing more interactive activities later, so you can also be helping each other meet your goals. So let's start with what motivated you to come, in a sentence. Can I hear a couple of ideas? Yes

00:04:00 **Woman:** This is my first documentary on [background noise] [inaudible] in Oakland, and it'll be looking at how to [inaudible] strategy around that as well as learning [inaudible] interactive documentary [inaudible].

00:04:14 **jmr:** All right. Could you all hear that? All right. So we're gonna have to use our outdoor voices, and we'll squinch it down to a sentence. So, no, that's good, we all do this. So it was engagement activities related to a production around lead poisoning in Oakland. Yeah. Other? I'm gonna do this. Yes. What motivated you to come?

00:04:36 **Man:** I'm also using a toolkit to mobilize students around basic income (?) and the documentaries I'm gonna produce.

00:04:45 **jmr:** Great. Toolkit. All right. Other motivations? Yes.

00:04:50 **Woman:** Yeah, I'm [inaudible] learning to do engagement [inaudible] consuming all your time and energy.

00:04:58 **jmr:** [laughs] Sister, I'm with you on that path. Yeah, okay. Learning how to do engagement without it taking all of your time and energy. And I saw another. Yes.

00:05:06 **Woman:** I'm here because I worked on a project that looks at people who don't wanna be on camera because they're undocumented or immigrants into this country, so looking for ways to talk about their stories and how to hear their undocumented stories when they don't wanna be on camera.

00:05:23 **jmr:** Great. How about what you're hoping to walk away with, in a nutshell? If you had to distill it down into a couple of words, what are you hoping to walk away with from this time together? [Man: New ideas.] New ideas. What else. [Woman: [inaudible]] Tools. [Man: Strategies.] Strategies. Tools, strategies, and ideas.

Okay. [Woman: [inaudible]] Models. Okay. [[inaudible voice]] Oh [laughs]. We knew.... Yes, yes, and yes. [Man: Motivation.] Motivation. Okay. Tools, models, strategies, motivation, and funding. [[inaudible voice]] Oh. Any more? Few more minutes? I think we're good. I think that gives me enough to riff off. How about you? Yeah? Yeah, thank you so much. [DB: I'll hold onto this in case and run around, which is what I do.] [laughs] Great. Okay.

00:06:27 HDM: Okay. To get us started the, models, ideas, and questions, my co-writer and I of Open Space Documentary, who is Patricia Zimmerman, came up with a variety of different conceptual scaffolds to bring together all of these kind of interests and projects that are going on in what people call the multimedia sphere, or where documentary has now become digital, and how do we use platforms and so forth. And so what we really tried to do right now, and I'll go through a series of slides, is give you some ideas that are the kind of meta to get into what we're gonna talk about in terms of actual projects. So what we came up with is that there is a sense that we're moving from vertical hierarchies into circular exchanges, and what that means is from the maker, the subject, and the audience up at the top, we're moving into becoming conveners, conveners and designers with story participants, with communities, and that is a kind of circular relationship of exchange that goes back and forth somewhat on a horizontal plane, rather than we're the experts, we're making the stories that we're then gonna put out to audiences. And what happens then is this model, there's a kind of collaborative, circular way of moving around and changing what could be your strategy and your purpose.

00:08:14 HDM: So that then brings us to designing encounters, and this is one of the areas that we're most excited about because context really is key, and this idea of not thinking about necessarily a final product, but thinking of continual inquiry and generating throughout your project new possibilities and the possibility of new forms, aesthetically, creatively, and working again with multiple kinds of environments and people. And engagement activities, then, can be tailored in this way for specific places and specific situations that you find your project going into. So it's not just one size fits all in terms of designing an encounter, but having multiple ways of being sensitive to the different contexts that you find your project involved in. So this means that you could come up participatory strategies that will arc across all phases of your documentary project of creation, from developing the idea to working with communities and then finally, if it's appropriate for your project, is coming up with a kind of action plan, if that's what you're moving towards.

00:09:39 HDM: Another one of our scaffolds sort of markers is inviting

conversations, and what this means is creating a space from the very beginning of your project for what we like to call transformative dialogue, and that is part of the process, not so much that you're just talking with subjects about how can I interview them and how can they fit into my story, but really how do we design spaces, how do we listen within those spaces, and how can the very act of conversation itself throughout the process be transformative. And Jesika knows a lot about that, and so do I, the mere fact of bringing people together where the media fragment or the media piece or artifact becomes part of a larger equation in a social practice. Also, we think about how can conversation and dialogue influence the form and the function and the project development in terms of your visual style, which means that as an artist, or a group of artists or a collaborator, you really have a place and a container in which to inject really creative, interesting new forms into this wide world of platform creativity, right, with media being everywhere.

00:11:16 HDM: The next one we would say is small places and storytelling mosaics. This is where we complicate the narrative. I don't know if you guys have found out, but if you're making a long form film -- and we're not saying don't make long form films -- we're saying that there's different modalities that you can stretch these forms out and maybe figure out different ways to do your project. So when you complicate a narrative, you find out often that there are many more stories than we can fit into our three-act structure, right. There are many, many more stories. So what we talk about a lot is a move away from big problems, big arguments, big movies, sweeping global ideas and narratives that force everything into characterizations of individuals who have to sort of represent these large pictures and arguments, into small places as aesthetic and political strategy. It means then that when you focus on a small place, or you think in terms of mosaics, that you can uncover historical and politically [inaudible] complexities. You can really dig deeper, and you may find lots of different approaches to these complexities that is very different than the model of a narrative feature documentary. And what happens then is that you can burrow into a community, and you can also be very intersectional in the sense that you're moving across disciplines when you're working this way, and you're working with multiple people who work across disciplines. We will definitely be seeing that when we look at the Shoreline.

00:13:16 HDM: And then after that, one of the key points, of course, of the Open Space Documentary scaffold is creating community, where people meet technologies meet places. In other words, at the base level, it's not letting technology rule how you make something. It really is where you and a place and your collaborators move beyond transactional relationships, meaning just simply you have to hire someone to do

this and you have groups of people who are working together on a film, but you move beyond it in a way that you think could sort of supersede transactional relationships, and that way change really can happen. Again, media, in this case all the saturation in media that we have, at that point becomes, again, only one element in a larger social frame, and for us, that's very, very powerful because in production and distribution, we ask how can our various collaborators and partners co-create with us, not meaning that they all get to be necessarily part of every phase of the process, but they are considered, along with us, horizontally as part of a co-creation model. And I think it's even more radical at this point, and it's really where we in the book trace a linear relationship historically with many different kinds of participatory models of the past in the twentieth century, is how have filmmakers in cooperatives, in collaboratives really tried to share authority across multiple zones. And that is very difficult, very challenging, but very important. And finally, now that we're in the moment of the digital pivot, how do these tools really help us create tools for real life encounters for real people, and not necessarily only online.

00:15:42 HDM: It is what we like to call, and we've taken this from design thinking, is it's an iterative process, and that's what makes this kind of nonfiction work, and it's not that we're working towards that final product that is going to simply be seen at a film festival, and if not, then we're failures, but that it's an iterative process where we bring together ideas, questions, solutions, and actions across, again, the arc of production and into a kind of distribution circularity and engagement practice, really, across platforms and lots of recombinations where you're using tactics and tools, continuously changing, growing, expanding, and possibly even stopping, right, when the time comes.

00:16:45 HDM: So I think one of the most interesting and, again, another really radical idea of this is the idea of not that we're making a film about subjects, but we're trying to create a three-dimensional commons for a community, and the media artifacts become part of that larger process. Right? And so as you can tell, I've used a lot of mosaic here in all of the visuals. I haven't had people shaking hands and taking notes and so forth. I took these mosaics because for us, I think the metaphor really is the idea of the mosaic, and how various fragments come together to make one image, but yet they're still singular and there's lots and lots of gaps in between, and that's where the creativity, the interest, the form and the function can change, manipulate, and iterate. So, let's see, what do we have next?

00:18:05 HDM: After that slide, I was gonna say that I have two minutes left. From three different long-term projects that I made that have used these kinds of practices

and my own experiences, and so it's not really just theoretical. But the first one was Lunch Love Community, which you can still see in a new form of a Website online because in 2009, we started it as a watch and share project of seven short videos, all different lengths, all different styles, meant to bring out into the world both on the Internet and in real life to talk about different ways that Berkeley served as a model for changing the way children ate in schools. Now, you gotta remember way back in 2010, it was the Paleolithic era. At the time, putting videos online and sharing them and putting them on blogs and sending them out to people, it was magic, right? It was magic [laughs]. It was so wonderful to do this. So Lunch Love Community lived online for four years, traveling around globally, and at the same time, we did a series of – and this is all online and you can see it – we designed what we called media socials. And we took the media social, which were all these different configurations of the short films, to different communities around the country. Right, jesika? You remember [jmr: Yeah.] when we did in Davis. We would bring together local experts, and we would facilitate conversations with the experts and the audience, and the films would be interspersed within the event, so what people walked away with was whatever that community felt like they needed to walk away with. So that project form followed a particular function at the time. Now it's gone, it's off the Internet, it's not circulating for free anymore, and it turned into a DVD and live streaming through an educational film distributor, so it's now living in the educational space, so it's offline, which is something we really wanted to do. So that was that.

00:20:46 **HDM:** Now, out of the partnerships and relationships that I built with all the people in Berkeley who are interested in food justice, I then, at the end of the Measure D campaign, which many of you probably remember, where Berkeley was the first town in the country to put forward a soda tax, we made a short film called Berkeley Versus Big Soda, which is thirteen minutes long and it came out of those relationships, but before putting all the footage together and editing it into a story, I held participatory meetings with stakeholders in Berkeley about what the story really was. What was the story here? And what I found out was not what I had thought from the beginning. It totally transformed what that short film became, based on, at that point, with that particular project, what I was hearing from my participants, and that was really interesting. So going into the editing room, I was able to make a film that now is being used for free, online, circulating, and also with political groups around the country, that actually focuses on how young people in Berkeley really, really spearheaded that campaign, which I hadn't known before.

00:22:18 **HDM:** Which brings me finally to the last one that you'll be seeing. It's a work in progress, and this is just the work in progress title, and it again flowed out of

that process, and it's called Knocking on Doors, and it's about young community organizers, again working on a political campaign, and this time it's also gonna be a soda campaign in the city of Stockton, California. Now, all along so far in the production of this particular project, I've been holding again participatory meetings with stakeholders in both Stockton and the group of young people who are doing democracy there, and what's coming up is very, very interesting, and so what we're gonna do in the three months leading up to the November election is take all the assets, meaning all the raw footage, look at it, that is available right now, and turn that into ten-to fifteen-second political memes that we're gonna put out through social media, just like the right wing does, and talk about organizing is just the beginning. That is the tag line for this particular flow, which is all gonna happen before the final film is done, but using the assets that are already there and still have to be edited and created into what will, I hope, be a feature film. But we're getting it out, and we're using it to mobilize people around the idea of voting, and organizing is only the beginning, and getting people involved. So what will happen with that I'm not sure, and that's another part of the scaffold. You're not always sure exactly what's gonna happen. So let me just show you quickly that two-minute clip so you exactly know that those films exist, and then we'll move on. So I think we're ready for the video.

00:24:31 **Man in film clip voiceover:** I think that's how a lot of ideas work. People work out all the bugs, finally make it happen, and then [on screen] defeat the naysayers, and then it spreads. **Women VO:** You know, it's not brain surgery at the end of the day. It really is kids and food. So [on screen], you know, there's a lot of people who can learn and work through it, and that's why we're putting the tools out there [VO], so that the great nutrition services directors that are out there who wanna make the change have the tools to help them do it. **Woman VO:** I just wanted to call and [on screen] confirm that you know where your polling place is. **Man VO:** We did not stop phoning until eight o'clock that night. **Man VO:** During the campaign, [on screen] I had the feeling that we were gonna win [laughs]. **Man in classroom:** This disease is affecting all of our families. [VO] And it's happening here in Stockton. How do we deal with that? **Woman at house door:** So my first question for you is do you or any kids or grandkids drink any like Snapple, Arizona? **Man with questionnaire:** Soda, Gatorade? **Man answering:** Soda, Gatorade. **Woman with questionnaire:** And any diabetes in the family? **Woman VO:** I think that it's really important for young people to see other young people out there making a change. Just because I haven't had to deal with a lot of issues in my life [on screen] doesn't mean that I shouldn't stand up and fight for what I believe is right. **Man VO:** If you're trying to achieve power, [on screen] and you're trying to develop leadership, [VO] organizing is kind of the key. **Woman at podium:** I've lived in Stockton my entire life, and as I learned more about this issue, I realized

how big of a problem this really is.

00:26:50 **HDM:** That's it. [applause] You know, what's really interesting, too, about seeing those three little clips, and I hope that we talk about this a lot, jesika, coming up, is the idea of change, change in terms of how digital is changing us, change in how documentary relates to people, change in your own form and practice, and change socially. So now, I would like to ask you to pull up Hidden Hunger. [jmr: Okay.] And if you wanna give us a little background on this as well while you go along. [jmr: Sure.] And one thing, you know, jesika is really so great at doing is bringing people together for what we are calling transformative dialogue, and this project, Hidden Hunger, was really one of the hallmarks of doing this, right? [jmr: Mm-hmm.] [inaudible question] [jmr: I love questions.]

00:28:01 **Woman in audience:** Sorry to interrupt. I just wanted to know when you were doing those meetings with the communities before or after you were filming, were you filming them, or was it just an in person, informal kind of thing?

00:28:12 **HDM:** You mean the media socials with Lunch Love Community?

00:28:16 **Woman in audience:** No, I mean the other projects you were saying, like the soda project you were doing.

00:28:21 **HDM:** Yeah, in this one? Yeah, I did not film the soda projects ones, but I did film these. And whether they're gonna end up anywhere in the film, we'll see. But, yeah, I do have them on film.

00:28:39 **jmr:** Yeah, and I would just also encourage folks to note down any questions about either the concepts or any of the things we talk about, 'cause what we're really hoping is to field those questions. We know that you all are doing this work or going toward doing this work, so it helps us kind of get in touch with what is, will be useful to you. So where were you? You were asking about...?

00:29:03 **HDM:** How you designed the encounters, we're gonna talk about the Hidden Hunger project.

00:29:10 **jmr:** Okay. So, you know, my style and my methodology is very similar, so I'm gonna think about, given the things that you all wanna walk away with, hitting on some other points. The background for this project, Hidden Hunger, I am rooted in the documentary unit in a public radio station, so I'm actually doing multiplatform

projects where we create work that goes on air in the form of a hour-long radio documentary, but we also have interactives Websites with data visualizations and community-voiced platforms like the one I'm gonna show you, and then on the ground events. And, um, when you all asked about like models, one of the things that I've done is that I've created a model where we spend a year, which for documentary filmmakers is like a sneeze, but for a newsroom is glacial, so we have this year-long process where I actually weave together community engagement from the get-go through kind of the end and what I call the handoff, 'cause it is very iterative. And I can talk more about that if you're interested in the model. And one of the things that I do to design encounters is that I would say, those of you who are asking about strategies, my broad approach is to try and create spaces and processes where people feel a sense of care, and that opens up into a sense of trust, and hopefully a feeling of belonging. I feel like if people have an idea that they're being cared for, and that there's trust in the room, there can be some connections and emotional and intellectual border crossings.

00:30:59 **jmr:** So those of you that asked about strategies, there's three that I use: one that I think of in my mind as radical hospitality, so trying to find ways and tactics so people feel very welcomed to a space, that they feel that they are seen and witnessed, and that the story sharing experiences are structured, so that there's an opportunity for people to actually do deep listening as opposed to what you call transactional, like, okay, I hear you, I'm gonna respond, but actually just be able to hear a story and sit with it. So that's a strategy and some tactics and tools. Another is I really attend to beauty, and what I mean by that is I pick spaces that I feel are uplifting and beautiful, so there's lots of light, there's space, I can put artwork up, I can have flowers, I can decorate it, so I'm attending to beauty because I feel like there's a way in which that opens up the imagination. So that –

00:32:04 **HDM:** Yeah, that's a really interesting point, because that was something that we share, which is the idea of participation as a sensual experience that can also include the idea of sharing food [jmr: Yep.], right? [jmr: I always have food.] And people tend to really open up and tell their own stories when they're in this kind of convivial, non-sort of interactive transactional space.

00:32:39 **jmr:** Right. So, you know, hospitality, beauty, and the other strategy I use is intentional curation. So for me, getting to the idea that you were kind of launching on around change. You know, for a lot of reasons I think we live very siloed lives, and so we don't always have the opportunity to literally cross paths with people who are pretty different from us. At this point we need to kind of create those spaces, and so I throughout my projects are really looking at ways of bringing people with different life

experiences and perspectives into the room. In terms of tactically, that could be in the form of convenings that I hold to bring diverse stakeholders together to name and frame not just the issues but the solutions that inform our reporting, and I do that before we even choose the characters or storytellers or frame the issue, so that we're in a collaborative process in figuring out what is the issues, and how do we wanna talk about it, and what are the possible barriers and solutions.

00:33:40 **HDM:** And I'm sure you've been surprised.

00:33:42 **jmr:** I have always been surprised. Another is in the form of advisory groups -- I'm sure a lot of you do that -- but by really working with an advisory group to figure out what are the different perspectives on this issue and how to get them in the room, which they usually don't wanna be in the same room, but through a hospitable, beautiful, convivial process, they become collaborators, even across the fault lines. And then I do these on the ground events, and I can show an example of that. This is an example actually at the back end. This project is called Hidden Hunger, so we were looking at the food insecurity in Sacramento County. I'm based at Capital Public Radio, which is in Sacramento; we serve the Central Valley and Sierra Nevada. Sacramento's where most of the food [laughs] in the state comes from, if not the nation, and about a quarter of the population is food insecure, including eighty-eight thousand kids, so there's something absolutely wrong. So at the back end of the project, I worked with the coalition partners and we did this kind of series of participatory dialogue events. Let me get to this one and blow it up for you. So this is to visualize what I was just talking about. So we're in a lovely old ballroom, we've got about a hundred and fifty people, art on the walls, light streaming in, someone is meeting and welcome you individually as you walk in, there's curated seating at all the tables so there's a policy maker, a business leader, a social service provider, some one or two people who are food insecure at each table along with the general public. We had partners as table hosts who were guiding the conversation, introducing people to each other. You'll see there's food and flowers. And I had speakers.... I had a series of clips I played, I had speakers respond to those clips and then people would talk together at their tables about what they heard. [film speakers....] I used an adaptive world café format, which is another tool I can tell you more about, so people switched tables, they got to meet new people, hear different perspectives. If you look at who's in the room, it wouldn't be what's considered a typical public radio audience, so that people had a chance meet new folks and share ideas.

00:37:35 **HDM:** And this happened before the media documentary?

00:37:42 **jmr:** No. This happened actually after. The actual whole Website, this Website was all fifty stories of people from food banks across Sacramento. This was made before, so I can tell you about that. I just wanna point to that at the end of those conversations, there were info zones that were staffed by our community coalition partners so that people had a pathway to a next step, and they could go talk to different partners, you know, urban ag, school gardens, food policy, food service, and get more involved. And I wanted to play that, because this was not what I would call a high production documentary, but getting to the idea of tools and funding [laughs], having this to show other partners about the kind of work that I'm doing, and how it would serve them, and also talk to funding partners, that has been a way that in subsequent projects, I've been able to build more relationships and new funding streams.

00:38:54 **HDM:** Right. And what's really interesting is this is not really sort of how, but why, in many ways. Why? What is your kind of objective in the work that you're doing? So in many ways, what's really interesting, jesika, I think, is we're trying to rethink the idea of documentary, and it's not simply like multimedia journalism, right. Don't you find that it's much different, philosophically and in terms of the values that you bring to the process and how you do it, is potentially really transformative.

00:39:36 **jmr:** Yeah, I think it's not so much a difference of values between, say, mine and what I'm doing and other documentary media makers. I think it's certain skill sets and areas I wanna focus. I think a lot of makers have these really strong muscles in actually translating an idea to the screen, but what they want, and what I want, is that that media actually be part of creating individual or community transformation. And I think that's a different set of skills, and I think that getting to some strategies, the person who said how do you have engagement not like suck all you resources, I think it's really important to partner up. Instead of having myself say, I wanna make the most beautiful visuals in the world, I partner with somebody who can do that and then I bring the engagement in, and I think that is a coproduction. I think there is a team. The other piece I wanted to mention that you asked about, or that I wanna kind of build a bridge to, is something that I feel is different that's part of my model that might be useful, is that I actually start with community media production to inform the documentary production and the collaborations.

00:40:56 **HDM:** Can you talk about what that means?

00:40:57 **jmr:** Yeah. So, for example, for this project Hidden Hunger, we knew we were gonna spend a year, we knew we were gonna make this radio documentary that goes across the country, but before we did that, I organized these convenings using the

strategies I mentioned, I brought together lots of different folks, and not only did we name and frame issues and solutions but I had the chance to say, what are the myths and stereotypes, where does media get it wrong, what do you need, and what came back like across the board is, we need to bust the stereotype of who is hungry, and we need to bring people from the front lines into that conversation. So I created a mobile story booth – like don't think story court here. It was not an Airstream; it was like a popup tent with like two chairs, so you can all do this – and I worked with my community partners, shared authority. They decided which sites, they worked me with on criteria of the kind of stories that they wanted out, they recruited these storytellers, and then they worked with me on the design of – I am not a Web builder and I built this, so I promise you, if I can do it, you can do it. So what we did is I built this out in a way that was gonna meet their needs, which were to get their people represented, to be able to use this very easy-to-use piece in all the ways that they needed to organize and mobilize, becoming part of the commons, as you said, and then the reporters -- there's fifty of these stories -- not only did the reporters attend the convenings that led to this, they listened to all of these stories so that they could decide what are the stories that weren't being told already in the public media – yep, circular – and what stories they might wanna tell. So this happened at the front end before we even got into our documentary, so that might connect a few dots.

00:43:02 **Woman:** Could I ask a question? Sorry to interrupt. When you were coming up with this overall design, did you have a funding partner that said, I want you to have this iterative process, I'd like you to shape the product as you go, how did that mechanism work, because you did have a really involved process that took time over this year. Can you explain that?

00:43:28 **jmr:** Yeah.

00:43:30 **HDM:** This is within an institutional context, too, right, not as an independent filmmaker.

00:43:33 **jmr:** Right. Right, right, right. So there was no outside organization driving this. This was an innovation that public radio wanted to try. This was a big experiment, and so in terms of the iteration, I said, well, they were like, okay, let's go out and find our stories. I said, no, no, no, no, wait, wait, wait, wait, wait! So I did the convenings, which led to this mobile story booth. The convening was the beginning of the summer. We did the story booth the end of summer; then we picked our reporters and got them into the field into the fall, and we broadcast in December, and I had a live broadcast party that brought together station leadership, reporters, the people in the

documentary, which was very scary for reporters to be in the same room when it went live, and funders. In fact, I think I have a picture. Yeah, I'm a big fan of live broadcasts with all the people in the room; it's very powerful. And when we debriefed about how powerful it was, that's actually what led to people wanting to do wider conversations, which gave me the idea for those conversations that I showed you, and because I had partners on board, and because it came out of a process that I had a lot of people who had bought in, I actually was able to make one ask of one foundation to get the money to do those conversations, and one other piece that the organizations wanted and I was able to fold into the funding, which is to create discussion guides and downloadable materials that use all of those short stories in community health worker training for fourteen counties throughout California, and of course anybody else who wants to use it. So in a nutshell, it was an iterative process, at each stage it was in collaboration with what's needed, and because I kept having more and more people who were supporting it, I was able – and documentation and media and metrics; you can see how many people are using the site – we got funding.

00:45:45 **HDM:** And it's really done in a very intentional way, all of these, and in a way, you wanna ask yourself as a filmmaker, do I enjoy doing this? [jmr: Yeah.] Do I wanna do this, do I enjoy working in this kind of improvisational practice in many ways, where you don't really know always what's gonna happen. And you cannot control it, but it's exciting in a way. It's sort of like Andrea does this town hall meets theater. You don't always really know, but it can be very, very interesting, and then it changes your practice as you go forward, and you don't feel so totally constrained to drive towards a Sundance product that either it's gonna succeed massively or fail. But there's many, many other ways of doing this.

00:46:40 **jmr:** Yeah. And again, kind of to key off of what you all were talking about in your pair and shares, I think that there a lot of models and strategies and tools. I think the challenge is to figure out if you're in a place to learn those and experiment with them and enact them, or if you wanna partner up with a community engagement specialist who really does have that skill set or desire. [HDM: Yeah.] 'Cause I don't think you always need to have the same skill set and desire. It's oftentimes better to hva a cross-disciplinary team and embrace the idea of reciprocity in time. You really wanna figure out what is it that you want and need, and the questions you need to ask to find out what your partners want and need, and to have the time and some space, which is hard, 'cause that requires resources, to figure things out and not feel like you have to rush to the finish line.

00:47:45 **HDM:** Right, and that kinda comes up in the 10 Cs that we put in the

handout, which are always a series of questions that we ask ourselves going through this entire process. Well, it looks like it's time [jmr: To bring on Liz? Let's hope it works. You guys ready to go to Canada?] Well, no, I think she's in Miami. [jmr: Oh, that's right. Sorry.] Liz Miller has – you and I should sit together. [jmr: Okay.] Let's start by showing the one minute and thirty second trailer, and all of this entire project is available to watch at your own time at theshoreline.org. And I think that's also on our handout.

00:48:34 **jmr:** And as Helen's queuing this up, I did think I saw a few hands go up, and I just wanna let you know that we have a whole chunk of time that we're [HDM: Giant chunk of time.] going to be taking questions, so please note them on your handout or hold onto them, 'cause we would really like to get to them. [The Shore Line trailer plays.] Beautiful, huh? All right, let's Skype Liz in. [HDM: Let's Skype.]

00:51:03 **HDM:** Liz, hello! [jmr: Hi, Liz, can you hear us?] [Elizabeth Miller: Yes, I can.] Hello. And you have an audience here behind us, and so we just showed The Shore Line trailer, which is a project that Liz and her team just completed, and how many years was it in the making, and can you just tell us a little bit about sort of the impetus behind it and where it's been maybe a little, and where it's going?

00:51:37 **Elizabeth Miller:** Okay. Well, first of all, thank you for including me in this, and I wish I was there with you in person. I wish I had heard everything that had come before this. [inaudible] miss out on that. But anyway, Shore Line was about three and a half years in the making, and it is of course still in progress. I like to think that real work begins now, once the project is done. But the idea was to think of the coast as both [inaudible] and also a subject in the context of climate change, and I think this where the conversation [inaudible] an interactive [inaudible]. You think to yourself, the best way to tell this story is this form, so really letting the theme dictate [inaudible]. And what I mean by that is I was talking to lot of climate change experts who were really talking about our need to grow our muscles and abilities for collaboration, and especially [inaudible] distances across [inaudible], and so huge [inaudible] in making this project was to explore how documentary can be the fabric to bring people together and to use [inaudible] which you so beautifully [inaudible] in kind of new and open architectures. So the project involved forty-three people from around the world, so we had [inaudible] unique [inaudible]. We involved [inaudible] and students and researchers around the world, and then the rest of the Website, which [inaudible] experience through the trailer, is dynamic maps, visualizations that bring in data sets from biologists who were part of the project, and also really, I think, terrific educational resources that were designed in collaboration with nonprofits. And so there was a lot of

collaboration in making the project, but also in delivering it to who we thought of as our target audience, which is classrooms, and so in order [inaudible...] in thinking how they might use this in the classroom [inaudible] which are embedded into the project. So I would say kind of the thumbnail of how to describe the project is it's like video storybook. Each video is an embedded page, and you can go to that place and go through one of these study guides, but you can also explore [inaudible], like thinking of what stories maps tell, can we think of visualization as a form of documentary [inaudible], [inaudible] kind of becoming part of our repertoire as documentary makers, so we're just trying to [inaudible] these new technologies, but still stay true to the concept of story. I know we'll get into this, we have a short period, but I know [inaudible] thinking about challenges, and I think one of the obvious challenges is how to keep a story line when it's really about space, and you're sort of thinking about [inaudible] story, does that become fragmented [inaudible]. And I think those are some of [inaudible] clear challenge [inaudible]. Does the user end up feeling like they've experienced something coherent, and how do we as makers kind of help do that both aesthetically [inaudible], so I think that was a really big challenge. Well, there's forty-three [inaudible], they're like two [inaudible] minutes each, and there was a [inaudible] when I shared it – [screen freezes]

00:55:57 **HMD:** Oh, frozen.

00:56:01 **EM:** -- look, [inaudible] these are not [inaudible], and I was like [inaudible, laughs].

00:56:09 **HDM:** Hey, Liz? Go ahead.

00:56:13 **jmr:** You froze at this teaser moment, when you were about ready to say, one of the big, and you had all of us go [gasps]. [HMD: 'cept you froze.] Can you back up?

00:56:24 **HDM:** When you back up, can you also speak maybe closer to your mic? [EM: Yes.] Because we're getting.... [inaudible audience feedback]

00:56:41 **jmr:** [laughs] Liz, one of the makers pointed out in the audience that we have The Shore Line project up, so you have that kind of soft ebbing of the water in the background, so it's giving you a little texture that maybe might not be so needed sonically [laughs].

00:56:59 **HDM:** Can you hear us?

00:57:01 **EM:** I don't hear the sound of the waves, but I hear you fine.

00:57:03 **HDM:** Oh, you're better now, right? [jmr: I think we're good.] Okay. So the big challenge...?

00:57:09 **EM:** Well, I was saying, I don't know if you heard the big challenge about fragmented stories. [HDM: Yeah.] And then the other thing is it's really the user on the Internet, because really where this documentary lives is on the Internet, and the Internet's an attention deficit disorder environment, and so people are really fast [inaudible], and so at a certain point, I had all forty-three short cuts, and I asked a colleague of mine who I really respect and who makes her own documentaries, Katerina [inaudible], look at the [inaudible] documentaries, and she said, oh, I think they're a really good choice for a film, but they're not gonna work on the Internet. And I was like, what are you talking about [laughs]. And she said, you know, for the Internet, you have to start in the middle of the story, like no [inaudible], there's no graceful sort of tempo that you set up. People are impatient. So, you know, just all of these ways that I along the way had to figure, I guess they call the rhetoric of the Internet, which is so different [inaudible] storytelling, where you [inaudible] user in or you use all these other techniques engaging user, I had to throw out the window and start over. So I can pause for a moment if you have other questions, or I can tell you more about the challenges [laughs].

00:58:47 **HDM:** The rhetoric of the Internet. Something we did not talk about before, and the idea of coherency. So, for example, with Lunch Love Community, at the beginning, the idea of the mosaic and the short and the long and the medium and trying sort of different poetic devices in various forms was very liberating in many ways, but eight to ten years into broadband now, we're saturated with zillions of fragments of media constantly, so the return to the feature documentary is something that people have longed for, almost like the novel. The novel is not dead. The feature documentary is not dead, either. However, this idea of utilizing platforms to come up with a kind of coherency within fragmentation seems to be really an issue as these experiments continue on. And something that I think for me happened with The Shore Line is the way that you were able to design the Internet space as a storybook. [EM: Huh.] But you also, it's a very interesting space, too, because it looks really different if you watch it or approach it on your phone, right, or your iPad, as opposed to your desktop.

01:00:14 **EM:** Mm-hmm. You know, and I don't know why this just occurred to me as we were talking, but I'm guessing that maybe some people in the audience are

wondering, well, will I make a linear film and an interactive. I think, like I know along the way, I was, at least in Canada right now, the money that's going into interactives are to accompany a linear documentary. [jmr: Interesting.] And so it's almost like this mandate that you have to do both, and I just wanted to say that I didn't do both. Like I always felt like this was just a collection of shorts; it was not coherent. I mean, there was a moment where I kind of asked myself, but it's almost like you start down a path and you're in this path, and it's not about following one person or creating this coherent storyline. It was really about activating a network, and kind of putting all these pieces in dialogue with each other in all these different ways. And I know one of the things that Jesika is really expert at is using like these short media bits to activate physical encounters, which I think is probably what you were just talking about, or I know we've talked about [jmr: Yeah.] in the past, and so really trying to think about this is the new form, how do we become really literate in how to use it well, and I think it's not thinking that you have to do both, and it's not thinking that it's one or the other, but it's really letting whatever project you're working on kind of dictate that form. And I'm [inaudible] on another project, which is also an interactive, but it's an interactive video art project, but we also in this case do have a linear form of it as well. And so I'm thinking to myself, it is really different when you kind of, as a director, have a linear idea of what you want someone to see first, versus really kind of creating a structure where you're saying really any way to navigate is okay.

01:02:23 **EM:** That said, there is, of course, curation. Like in a storybook, there's a first page of each chapter, and so for [inaudible], while we say it's an open platform, I think we're still [inaudible], we're still foregrounding, we're still trying to figure out how attention moves. Like in a grocery store, you know, I remember like fifteen years when I read that article about where things are located right by the checkout, so you buy things [laughs], or what's in the [inaudible] of the store, so if you set [inaudible] architecture of a documentary, you are still thinking precisely about how people move through space, what's the in door, what's the out door, what's the reward, what's the mood. So all of those things, I think, almost like a play or a supermarket or whatever metaphor, I think are kind of important elements. The other thing I wanted to say is, for those people in the audience who are thinking about doing this for the first time, I was so anxious about, really as a documentary filmmaker, kind of turning it over to a [inaudible] developers, that felt just a little bit out of my own realm of comfort or control, and so one of the things, and I come from an interactive arts background, so I'm familiar with interactivity. It still felt like I was nervous, and one of the things I did is I had a pilot site up two and a half years – Helen, you experienced the site – and developed [inaudible]. It cost me a thousand dollars just to design and develop this site, and it really helped me kind of keep all the bits and fragments together in

variation, and without paying anybody a lot of money, to be able to kind of play with it publicly. So [inaudible] it was a public space, and it got me into a habit of thinking about it like a database, like a series of chapters. So I thought that was a really helpful way that I worked towards the interactive, because the interactive [inaudible] have quite a high price tag. At least, that's the impression that I had. That was sort of the most daunting part of it for me, so using [inaudible] Website was really helpful to me to [inaudible] because paying the high dollars, while I was figuring out how to [inaudible] fragments speak to each other.

01:05:09 HDM: Yeah. So in other words, also you used a form of design thinking to kind of iterate through this pilot really a less expensive Website, and one thing also I want you to know is that they traveled to nine countries, how many countries?

01:05:29 EM: Well, most of it was not even traveling. It was engaging people who lived in these different countries, but, yeah, it's nine different countries around the world. We really tried to say to ourselves, this isn't a single story, and so there's a way that – and this is not the public who wants to hear this, but we all know the climate stories kind of get collapsed into polar bears or something far away, and so really trying to do, you know, what your book beautifully talks about is local stories, you know, how do we create super-heightened local stories and place them together, which for me as an educator is kind of the magic, 'cause then I have these nineteen and twenty year olds sitting there being like, oh, I get it, okay, okay, you know, because it's not just one iconic glacier or polar bear or [inaudible].

01:06:24 HDM: And the wonderful thing about these stories is that they are about people who are making changes around their coastal areas. So when they are making these stories, locally or with the team now to come, then being on that pilot site, a lot of the people and the youth who were involved could communicate with one another globally, is that correct, and internationally, and use those stories both hyper-locally as well as transform and change through the sharing of the various stories. Is that a good way to put it?

01:07:03 EM: Yeah. I mean, one of my favorite moments was I took a few of my students to this pretty remote island in the Archipelago of Panama. It's three hundred and sixty islands, it's an indigenous community, and we did a training for the youth so that we could try to tell the stories together. And so to get kind of on the same page, we showed a couple of portraits of other youth activists we were filming in other places, and I remember Katia, who was the young woman sort of in charge of the youth group, she looked at Sefali, a young woman in India, and she was like, now I get how you see

me. You see me like you see her. And so it was this like really beautiful and kind of touching moment of using these little pieces to kind of [inaudible], shine a light on these micro stories of change. These are super short micro stories, even across [inaudible], like [inaudible] connective tissue of helping them see. And, I mean, I'm sure every person in the audience has had that moment, but I think because we were iterating, as you so nicely said, [inaudible] and having these little pieces that were [inaudible] snowball, we got to see even in process how it was impacting these other people [inaudible].

01:08:34 **HDM:** During actual making [EM: Yeah.], so actual making along the way changes to form as you're moving along, which is exactly sort of what we had been talking about before. You know, I wanna bring up an interesting thing about this circularity, and it's not really about The Shore Line, but it's about a documentary series called Wild Wild Country that's on Netflix right now. Well, I don't know if any of you have been following how the Internet has been talking back to the filmmakers about that story, and it's just very interesting in terms of circularity, because the filmmakers produced a very myopic vision of what this particular story was, and people who are both children and lower level in the Bhagwan place, or cult, I guess you would call it, have been writing on Twitter, writing stories on Medium, and also I've read other stories from an Indian perspective about these religious gurus who come to the West, and how it really isn't what it appears to be in Western literature. And it brought up to me sort of the idea of what the one girl in Panama sees how it happens, they communicate across cultures to understand in a completely different way, which is creating a kind of comment that could not be squished necessarily into one documentary project, would you say, unless it was just a series of segments.

01:10:25 **EM:** The documentary becomes less about sort of the final project than this, as you, I think, already said, this [inaudible] process. And, I mean, it's not to give up the final project. You know, one thing I also really wanted to say is, so just to think carefully about like what I could do on my own with the [inaudible] site versus what developers could bring to the project that I couldn't do on my own, I think that's a really important thing for people to think about, what do you want from the developers. Like in the first conversation I had, the group that helps make this project is called Helios Design Lab, and first they were like, okay, you just want a container for your project. And I was like, no [laughs]. I have a container, I have a [inaudible] site, that's a container. Like I want us to figure out new forms [inaudible], so I had chosen them because they had done all these projects with maps, and they really [inaudible] maps, and I really wanted to think about, you know, for the last fourteen years we've been looking at Google maps and thinking about like what are the stories that mapping can

tell, and [inaudible] figure out together how could we use data, how could we use maps, how could we get beyond just a container and into how information can be storied. I'm super unsatisfied, and I'm super unsatisfied with the story-ing that's happening around data. I think that people make a lot of assumptions, like what data does and what it doesn't do, and I think we need to be data literate but we also [inaudible] storytellers in another way, and I don't think that we absolutely succeeded in this but I was game for the ride of trying to collaborate with biologists who had interesting data sets and to figure out like how does that become part of the story.

01:12:31 HDM: Well, that leads us to a very interesting point now in our presentation [laughs], which is turning it over to our audience to wrestle with some of these questions. So let's get our last slides up because we're movin' on to another interactive session with everyone's questions, and we're gonna leave you kind of hovering here, okay, while we also put up our next slide. [jmr: I feel like I wanna play some of that waiting music.] Yeah. Okay. So this is back to you guys, and we're gonna wrap it up with more questions and – wait. Oh, I see. What ideas could you blend into a project [DB: Don't leave, guys. So much more fun.] – yeah, we still have Liz on the line here, and what ideas could you blend into a project that you're thinking about doing, or you're in the middle of doing, and anything else that you would like to talk about, comment on, bring up, or ask questions about. And The Shore Line really is something to spend some time with now. It's an amazing site. [music from computer] Yeah, did we lose her? [jmr: Yeah, we lost her, but that's all right. It's coming back. She's back.] Okay. So those were our two questions. Yeah, so what we're gonna do is... [jmr: Do you wanna do just Q & A, or do you wanna have them talk?] What do you think? [jmr: I think we can go directly to Q & A.] Okay, let's go directly to Q & A.

01:14:08 DB: Okay, where would you like to go? You tell me where to direct and I'll take the mic to where.... [jmr: You know, we can't see very well, so I think I would just go to different parts of the room.] Okay, looks like you have a question. Talk into the mic.

01:14:23 Woman: Hi. My name is [inaudible]. I'm working on a personal film about what it means to be Iranian American, like listening to opposing countries. I'm also the cofounder, and it's a personal film, and I'm also the cofounder of Represent Media, which is about bringing the stories of underrepresented communities told by underrepresented filmmakers from the same communities. And we recently had a event called Tales from the Middle East, where we brought filmmakers, it was my film, it was a personal film from a filmmaker from Israel, and then there was a filmmaker from Turkey, and so we had it at [inaudible] Synagogue and also at Islamic Cultural

Center, and it was very similar, that we had actually people sitting and talking around tables after the films. And what I personally have, my film is going to be released like the end of this year, hopefully, but the problem I have been facing with writing outreach and community engagement for the grants that I'm applying for is, what I heard here, actually, which is very great, is about to have people like sitting with a story, like necessarily, especially when it's a personal story, they may not have like, oh, there is this like education, they're gonna give you education about this and that, but just having like people sitting with a story and thinking about it in itself, about like a perspective that they have never heard or never seen, it has like huge impact, and it's something that I have seen over and over just showing like at this even or at other events we have had with these films. So my question is like the challenge of a filmmaker is when we are trying to write this community and engagement grant, they always ask for like some specific impact that you wanna have on the audience, and how do we like really write it or explain it, that it's not necessarily one thing. It could be just like much larger than that.

01:16:54 **HDM:** Well, you bring up the big problem. Liz, are you able to hear this? [EM: Yes.] Because in many ways, you dealt with this in Mapping Memories, which is another project of hers you can find the leftovers online, and jesika, you don't always have, I mean, to be an impact specialist in an institution, you face the same issues, and all of us do as well. I have my own ideas about how, but I would also always say to you, why, you know, what is your objective at the very, very end of your project, and you write that as passionately and critically as you can without wondering what they think. Because I have a feeling, and I've done this for a long time, that we have to tell them what to think. We have to educate them, right, Andrea? [jmr: Them being?] The funders. They are not our overlords in telling us what an impact really is, although many of them, like Fledgling Fund, are becoming more sort of refined in their thinking about what impact really means. And it could even mean over generations, and with culture, and not just sort of immediate political change.

01:18:18 **jmr:** So one thing I would offer, since people asked about tools, if you haven't looked at something called Impact Tracker, you can go ahead and Google that. It's an open source format created by the Center for Investigative Reporting here in Berkeley/Emeryville, and I bring that up because one of the things that I think you'll find is that there are levels of impact and – oh, I pushed the space bar, so you have to call her back – so Impact Tracker, what it allows you to is not only does it allow you to set up your project and track impact from the get-go, 'cause we all have like probably e-mail folders from somebody who wrote you and said –

01:19:08 **Man:** [inaudible] – track impact, what kind of impact are you talking about tracking?

01:19:11 **jmr:** Right. So one of the reasons I'm recommending it is that the woman, Lindsay Green Barber, who created it came up with three levels. They're kind of conceptual sounding: mezo, macro, and micro, and when you hit the drop-down, there's like a list of what those look like, and that's why I wanted to put it out there as a tool, 'cause that way you can see like here are some things that could be considered impact that you might not be thinking about. Lotta times we're thinking about policy change, or like some huge transformation, when in fact there's lots of little other impacts that we can track and report back. So that's just a tool that I would put out there for you to look at.

01:19:54 **HDM:** Even telling the story of the event, the narrative.

01:19:59 **DB:** [inaudible], do you have a question?

01:20:02 **Woman:** I guess this is a question for Liz, but for any of you in terms of working. Like I have a project that I'm developing that's specifically probably for like a middle school/high school audience when you're looking at the educational setting. Like for The Shore Line project, were you looking at a specific age group or a specific grade, or how did you decide kinda how to target your content, and also, are you developing an app, or is it just on the Web?

01:20:35 **EM:** That's such a good question, and everybody kept asking me that along the way, and I kept saying, but I wanna put all of those teachers in conversation, like middle school teachers with high school teachers with university professors, so I created a teacher advisory committee with teachers at different levels, so that they could be telling me, oh, absolutely no way, that's not gonna work, and then we created a study guide that said, like we have one study guide that's for elementary schoolchildren, another study, so we figured out the stories that had youth protagonists were really good for younger kids. But it was a lot of trial and error, and the question about the app is such a good question, because we've been in almost fifty schools since I've finished this project, and there are so many issues about accessibility, like I was like, yeah, I'm gonna create like this free open resource, but, you know, schools are really battling with technological challenges, and I've been in schools where there's a firewall and you can't even get to the Website. So I think an app is possibly a really important consideration. We've also tried to take the project back to Panama and very remote areas and really test out like what works in these places. So I would say, really figure out your, like if

you only have five schools, five class [inaudible], what would they be and why, but for me, it was really important to feel like the project actually works for teachers at different levels. And so, for example, I [inaudible] from a high school and now I have this relationship with twenty teachers across the street, only because of this process, because I [inaudible] and figure out like how are middle school and [inaudible] teachers dealing with [inaudible], so everybody was like, no, no, you have to figure out, is it middle school, high school [laughs], and I was like, no, I don't [laughs]. So I think, which you may, you may figure out like yours is gonna go to high schools, and for me it was also selfish, because I knew I could do a lot of beta testing at the university level, so I wasn't willing to give it up just because that's where I spend every day, all day. That had to be a part of it.

01:23:12 **Woman:** Hi, I'm Andrea. [takes mic] Thank you, and I think this is a great event. Thanks so much. [applause] Yes. My question is kind of something that we're all thinking about here in the audience, which is I wanted to know if you could both talk a little bit more about perhaps your funding strategies throughout the process of developing your projects, and also if you've had any suggestions in terms of, I know, jesika, you work with an institution, Helen, you've been more independent, innovative strategies like some of the Kickstarter things or others, and also, third part, is have you had dialogues with the funders and your community, and what was that like.

01:24:25 **HDM:** Why don't you start with what you think about it?

01:24:29 **Andrea:** Me? [HDM: Yeah.] Well, that's, I have a whole story, but I don't want....

01:24:34 **HDM:** No, no, no, I mean in terms of funding for this kind of work.

01:24:38 **Andrea:** Oh, it's very challenging, and it takes a long time, and I think that everybody knows that. And then I think the biggest piece that I would tell everybody is you're not alone, and you shouldn't work alone, because it really is, in this model, a collective artistic and social and political endeavor, unless you're with an institution, which helps, NPR, CBC, et cetera, so....

01:25:17 **jmr:** I'll give it a go. Thanks for your question, and I'm glad to finally meet you [laughs]. I would say that in terms of the first question around funding strategies, one of the things that I find successful is when the proposal or the ask comes out of a community-based process, or comes in with community partners. I don't find a lot of funders fund media, or fund documentary. There's a bazillion funders who fund

community development, community health, community well-being, and that's what a lot of our documentaries at root are about, and so – or touch on, I would say. And so one strategy that I've used that kind of nests really well into the open space documentary ideas and concepts is that, as I have an idea, or my institution has an idea of what we're going to be focusing on, like we're just wrapping up one on race and place and place and privilege and the housing affordability crisis, we came into doing that work, again, by doing one on ones with community leaders and stakeholders who are already working on those issues, that already have connections to their funders, that already have some reputation, bringing them together into a cohort. I'm always amazed at how, and it makes sense when I think about it, how many organizers and nonprofit organizations really love and benefit from being brought together, and they don't have time. But if you bring them together, and you feed them, and you ask them, how can we work together, what are your big issues, how would a media project serve you, you know, all the kinds of questions you probably ask, then you build this collaboration and they also know when's the next grant [laughs], how can we go in for this. So that's one strategy that I've had that's successful.

01:27:35 **jmr:** Another is that there is a lot more openness to interdisciplinary collaboration, and so in the arts field, there's funding for this. It's called socially engaged art or social practice. One main funder you may be aware of is Blade of Grass. So you could look at those outside traditional documentary, that, Blade of Grass is one, and I was thinking of another one in the community development field, but that's another idea, which is to look at a sister discipline, and those are two I've used.

01:28:17 **HDM:** Well, it's like you and I talked about also, for example. Working in the Valley, in Stockton, there isn't a lot of really great media that has been made outside of the public television and public radio, so I was able to get meetings and funding actually from the California Endowment, and maybe the Sierra Health Fund. And one of them said to me, "Well, is this film gonna be done by the election in 2018?" and I said, "No," [laughs] and maybe 2020. But then he said, "Well, what could you do by the election?" So I put on my thinking cap and my creative practice cap and said, well, what could we do, and that's where I had the idea of coming up with using some of the documentary moments as these little social media memes into the future, and doing a little kind of experimental project to see if that really worked, because we don't necessarily know. I am pretty sure that will get funded. And that will pay for its production. You know, another kind of [inaudible] splitting the difference around different places and not just always thinking uncreatively.

01:29:39 **jmr:** I remembered the other two, so I wanna give 'em to you. Localore is

a funding stream through the Association of Independents in Radio. Unfortunately they just ended one like two days ago, but they're very much looking at this kind of work and there will be more. [Man: How do you spell that?] L-o-c-a-l-o-r-e, Localore, and it's the Association of Independents in Radio. And even though it says radio, it's all multimedia, multiplatform, but they're a very sharp organization going in this direction. And the other strategy I've used is I've partnered a lot with universities. I find a lot of publicly engaged scholars who also have connections to funding streams. [HDM: As well as museums.]

01:30:30 **EM:** This is not gonna work for everybody, of course, but I would also plug any collaborations with universities, especially in trying on new tools. Like if there's a new media department, oftentimes there's a professor who's willing to, if you have really good content, is willing to work on coding. I just spent the last four months here at U Miami, and, I mean, it's not everybody who wants to do that, but actually, I think that twenty to twenty-three year olds who are at the forefront of some of this new technology can be really fabulous collaborators, if they have a ringleader like a teacher who also cares about the issue.

01:31:18 **jmr:** Another question. [HDM: Yes.]

01:31:21 **Woman:** So when you're building these narratives where people are actually telling their own stories, what kind of structure can you give them so that they know what to present?

01:31:34 **jmr:** So I use a couple of different tools, but the one I showed you, the Hidden Hunger story booth, we were working with people who generally had a stigma and a shame about being hungry, and so one of the things that I did is I made these cards, and they were color coded, so there was like a green, a blue, a yellow, a red, and I had two questions that got to the same idea, and I would hand them the card, and I had them in two languages – I could have 'em in more languages – and I asked them to look through and pick the questions they'd like to respond to and put them in the order that they'd like to respond to them. I just asked that they start with the green card, 'cause the green card said I'm, or My Name Is. And then what they actually did was they self-interviewed, and what that did was it gave them a chance to, of course by picking the questions, they picked the narrative they wanted to tell, but also in self-interviewing, for audio it's golden, because they would pause, reflect, they would speak, and then usually it was only about ten minutes of audio that I would have to distill down to ninety seconds.

01:32:57 **Woman:** That's really smart. Could I ask a follow-up question of Liz? [jmr: Yeah. Can you hear, Liz? If you ask, I'll respond.] She mentioned that she worked a VR component for Shore Line. [jmr: You mentioned you're working on a VR component for Shore Line, and also crowdsourcing media.] It's difficult, because VR production tools are more limited than you can shoot them traditionally on your iPhone, so how is she doing that? [jmr: Can you talk, Liz, about how you are doing this VR media project, and how it relates to crowdsourcing or not?]

01:33:39 **EM:** Yeah. So the project is like the sequel to The Shore Line and it's called Swampscapes, so it's like what people don't think about near a coast, but I think that as you are so rightly saying, both the production and the exhibition of VR is really still in formation and really kind of solo, except for in some of these cave-like situations where you have a dome theater. But what we did is, every site that we went to, we had a photographer, a videographer, what we call flatty, a flatty videographer, just regular TV video, and then the 3D, so it was kinda weird and exhausting, but for each story segment, we were trying three modes at the same time. So does that make sense? [HDM: Yeah.]. So it's not crowd sourcing. I'm sorry if I confused you with the word crowdsourcing, but it's for sure multiplatform. So what we wanna think about is like what is VR doing versus, how are we telling stories, we have the same interview and we have three totally different stories, the one that's in VR, the one that's regular video or a flatty, and the still photographs, so we were really trying to think about how does this work, how are we telling stories in these different spaces.

01:35:19 **HDM:** I'm dizzy from listening. Should we take a few more questions or comments?

01:35:34 **Man:** This is just a follow-up to what Liz was saying about using a WordPress site. I wonder if she could say more. For those of us who are still in do it yourself mode and are not gonna talk to a coder or developer and spend the money on that, can she say more about the plug-ins she used, 'cause WordPress is all about the plug-ins. I know there's one called Ultimate that's a community management tool, and maybe she has some experience with those kinds of tools.

01:36:02 **EM:** So I just took a \$250 course in WordPress and worked with one of my graduate students, and so I can't even remember the template that we used, but it taught me really about just how I could be multiple tack-y, so I'd kind of like to talk to you offline for a little more detail, but it was super easy for me to basically DIY it, as you're suggesting, and I really recommend it, like I really think there's so much you can do in terms of creating these platforms so that when you do get to the coder, you'll

really know what that coder can do that you cannot do on your own. So rather than get [inaudible], it's just like take a class in WordPress, it's a fabulous language to know. I can't think of another system that I've liked as much as WordPress, because the multiple ways that you can tag things, which permits you to sort quickly and [inaudible] quickly and [inaudible].

01:37:15 **HDM:** Great, thanks. Should we take one more?

01:37:22 **jmr:** Lemme do this, 'cause there's a couple more questions I know we're not gonna get to, but I would like to just do a quick 'nother, we ditched an interaction things earlier, I'd like to do one thing before we move to close, and we'll stay later to answer any other questions that we didn't get to. I would love you just to turn to a different person than you spoke to at the beginning, and just take three minutes and just share with each other what's one thing that you heard today that you're excited to try out. Okay?

01:37:55 **HDM:** And then we'll come together again next year [laughter], and we're gonna talk about what you did.

01:38:00 **jmr:** Yeah. But just get with somebody next to you, and just take two minutes, and what's one idea that you heard.

01:38:10 **jmr:** All right. So to wrap us up, I would love to hear some of this one idea, because, again, just popcorn it out, one idea that you heard in our time together that you're excited to test out.

01:38:38 **Woman:** [inaudible] stakeholders together to find out about what they need and how they would like to collaborate, and the idea that they actually wanna get together but they need help organizing it, and being fed, and the radical hospitality.

01:38:48 **jmr:** Awesome. Another. Yeah.

01:38:57 **Woman:** We all like the idea of the self-interviewing using the cards.

01:39:00 **jmr:** Oh, awesome! Great. She said we all like the idea of self-interviewing. So if I could just ask everybody in the room to hold up on your conversations so that we can give the speakers the attention. Yes. So everyone likes the self-interviewing. Great. Any other ideas?

01:39:25 **Man:** That you don't need to spend a lot of money or resources to start, but you can start small and then iterate and find what's working and what's not working.

01:39:34 **jmr:** Yeah. Hallelujah to that.

01:39:37 **HDM:** And not being frightened to do so.

01:39:40 **Woman:** I like the tool the impact factor. That was great.

01:39:43 **jmr:** Great. Any final one idea? Liz's storybook? I think we're gonna get into question, though, right? Yeah, so we're gonna meet right when we wrap up. Any final things that you're taking away, one idea that's exciting to you that you heard today?

01:40:18 **Woman:** The location-based demonstration of the media, and then how that can be customized for a particular location.

01:40:27 **jmr:** Great. Thank you. Wanna wrap it? Wanna wrap up?

01:40:34 **HDM:** Yeah. I'm trying to think. Well, we gave you a handout that maybe you now can connect the dots with the handout, and one side of the page is a kind of manifesto for participatory media, and how it connects to movements from the twentieth century and questions to ask while you're doing it, and the other is these ten words that start with C which really trigger your own creation of a toolkit, what to ask and how to do. We're not so much about how to so much as why and go for it, in whatever, if you see on the manifesto there, by whatever means possible. So I wanna thank everyone for coming, I wanna thank you, Liz [applause] [EM: Thanks, guys.], for being online here, and we can continue the conversation a few more minutes, if you'd like, here by the Skype.

01:41:34 **jmr:** Thank you.

01:41:35 **HDM:** Thank you again for coming.

[end of recording at 01:41:54]