

VOICES OF TRANSITION

Tips for a fertile screening of the film Voices of Transition

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Important preparation

BEFORE THE SCREENING...

- Try to get as many initiatives, groups and organisations on board as possible.
- The success of the Transition movement is partly thanks to its openness and inclusivity. By the same token, events which are organised and hosted by several different groups often prove to be the most effective.
- Discuss possible approaches to presenting the film. Who will say what (and when)?

AFTER THE SCREENING...

- Please let us know how many people attended your event. If in doubt, ask the person/venue which hosted the screening (e.g. the cinema).
- Feedback: how did it go? How did people react to the film?
- If, you (the organiser) are also responsible for the screening itself, please return the Blu-Ray, DCP or DVD to us as soon as you can.

Promotional materials: flyers, posters, etc.

- Our page for material downloads is <http://voicesoftransition.org/press/downloads>
- You can print off as many copies of the digital poster file as you want (for that purpose we've created the customizable "window poster" which offers an empty bar) and amend this with the details of your event. Good places to hang these include local shops, libraries and community noticeboards.
- You'll as well find a digital press kit to download and to share with local journalists that you might know.

Suggested event structure

- A) INTRODUCTION (8 MIN)
- B) "SPEED MEET": AUDIENCE MEMBERS GET TO KNOW THEIR NEIGHBOURS (3 MIN)
- C) AND... ACTION! (65 MIN)
- D) "SPEED DISCUSSION": AUDIENCE MEMBERS SHARE THEIR FIRST REACTIONS (4 MIN)
- E) OPEN DISCUSSION (30 MIN)
- F) SHORT PRESENTATIONS OF LOCAL PROJECTS/ (8 MIN)
- G) FOUNDING OF A NEW TRANSITION INITIATIVE? (20 MIN)

(Please note: we've found that it's usually better for the host/organiser to introduce themselves *after* the event [i.e. the film screening and discussion]. That way, you don't interrupt the discussion and, when the event comes to an end, you're fresh in everyone's mind as the person to contact should they wish to get involved with your project.)

A) Introduction (8 min)

Thank the organisers and everyone who helped with the screening. Don't forget to also thank the audience for attending and for their interest in the topic.

Provide a **short summary** of the film's content:

The film portrays important **drivers of the agricultural transition**: people and groups who are working to overcome the current, highly insecure global food situation. It's a film about agriculture (and not primarily about Transition Towns).

"Part one": The industrialisation of agriculture has generated numerous problems. We'll find the solutions to these problems not only in rural areas, but also **in our cities**. French agro-ecologists are leading the way in research into complex agricultural systems such as **agro-forestry**. In the first part of the film, we meet them and hear about their experiences, theories and hopes.

"Part two": The second part of the film explores the **Transition movement**, which has its roots in England. Transition sees agriculture as a central pillar of our culture and society. "Urban gardening" projects, such as community gardens, are often the first visible manifestations of emerging Transition initiatives.

"Part three": Cuba is the first country in the world to experiment on a large scale with what could be termed a **"post-industrial, post-fossil fuel"** agricultural model. Indeed, when the Soviet Union collapsed at the beginning of the 1990s, it had little choice.

The making of *Voices of Transition*: The film is the result of several years' unpaid work, undertaken alongside university studies as a self-financed, totally independent project. The film is now complete, but many of the costs incurred during its production are still outstanding. The filmmaker is grateful for support of any kind! (Please make this point again – in greater detail – after the film!)

B) "SPEED MEET" (3 min)

Audience members introduce themselves to those sitting next to them. Suggestion for the introduction of this exercise: "We won't succeed in making the transition to a sustainable society if we work as individuals. We have to move together. That's why Transition places emphasis on making contacts and building networks, and we want to start right here. We'll now have a 3-minute break. Please use the time to introduce yourself to a fellow audience member – someone you don't yet know – and tell them why you came to the event tonight."

C) And... ACTION! Screen the film (65 min)

(including credits)

D) "SPEED FEEDBACK" (3 min)

Ask audience members to turn to the person beside them and share their reaction to the film. Here's a suggested introduction to this exercise: "Before we throw the floor open to discussion, let's spend three minutes sharing our reactions to the film: what was new to you, what did you find interesting, what sticks in your mind?"

After three minutes, ask the audience to throw comments into the room. The goal is to share the positive energy generated by the film – and, in doing so, to let it snowball!

e) Open discussion (30 min)

Prior to beginning the discussion, please mention the Milpafilms mailing list and explain to the audience that donations are welcome!

Frequently-asked questions and suggested answers:

- 1) *Why are there no projects from [my country/my area] in the film? There's a lot going on here, too!*
Voices of Transition was produced in France, and there are a lot of reasons for the decision to choose the specific projects in Cuba, France and England. Trying to pack examples from more than three countries into the film would only have led to an information overload, and that would have been counterproductive.
However: it's certainly true that there's a huge amount going on here, too!
(If you like, mention the www.transitionnetwork.org website or other relevant local examples).
- 2) *How do we set up our own initiative?*
Prior to establishing an initiative, it can be helpful to get in touch with other, existing, Transition Initiatives, or with groups such as ATTAC (an organisation working to improve producer-consumer links, create energy cooperatives, develop local currencies, etc.).
(Feel free to add country or region-specific examples of other, relevant organisations).
When you know what you want, the most important question is: "Where can I find other people who want the same thing?"

Useful links:

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www.transitionnetwork.org (central portal for information on Transition and the global database of existing Transition initiatives)

<http://transitionculture.org/> (Transition founder Rob Hopkin's blog)

3) *How was the film made?*

An early interest in permaculture, along with an alarming book about soil erosion (by soil scientist Claude Bourguignon) sparked Nils Aguilar's idea of making a documentary. The intention was to make a film which contrasted with the numerous critical and negative documentaries already in existence. Instead, it would focus on positive solutions and, in doing so, motivate people to act. Nils planned the film and raised the funds to make it whilst studying for his Sociology degree. The task was made even more energy-intensive and time-consuming by the fact that he is an entirely self-taught filmmaker.

(Here's a brief timeline: 2006: initial idea of making a film; 2007: research and planning; 2008: initial funding and scouting; 2009: shooting begins; 2010-2013: postproduction, promotion and distribution)

4) *This is all very well, but Transition Towns can only ever hope to play an anecdotal role. If you consider the context – for example, the overwhelming power of multinationals – they're totally insignificant.*

Transformation takes time! Evolution can't be forced: it's a gradual process. Our task is to organise the transition to a post-fossil fuel society. The starting point has to be our own doorstep: integrating new, sustainable practices into our everyday lives and, importantly, taking the time to celebrate the first steps, however small they may seem. If we don't do this, the risk of failure is much higher. The broader transition must be also underpinned by the transition in thinking. *Voices of Transition* can be a useful tool here.

Small is beautiful: what we're doing is tilling the soil and preparing the ground. When the multiple environmental and economic crises escalate, the "anecdotal" seeds we're sowing now will sprout. For historical precedents, see, for example, the role of local currencies in the context of the Argentinian economic crisis in 2001. Another useful description comes from Rob Hopkins, who talks about building alternative systems onto which we can then "step" when the existing systems collapse.

Think globally, act locally: promoting "small" and "decentralised" systems needn't mean ignoring our global political responsibilities or rejecting all top-down relationships. Cooperation with engaged politicians is something to strive for – but only on the condition that Transition initiatives retain their freedom and don't find themselves in the pocket of parties or institutions!

Strength comes from diversity: if you get to know your neighbours (see, for example, "Transition Streets"), and share your problems, hopes, fears and plans, you quickly discover that you're not alone. Once you realise that, the courage and energy to act are generated automatically.

5) *I don't think we can stop the catastrophes happening. I'm scared about what the future will bring.*

In the case of a comment like this – which risks denting everyone's enthusiasm – it's important to recognise and accept the person's fear. One response would be to say to the audience: "If you're frightened about the future, raise your hand". Then raise your own hand (and hope that lots of other people do the same!). Point out that it's perfectly rational to be afraid of climate change and that it's understandable that feeling helpless means that people avoid confronting

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the threat. But if we rise above this fear, we can use our collective strength to catalyse change. And the best way to do that is as part of a community – such as a Transition initiative.

F) Short intro of local projects / initiatives (8 min)

If there are any local organisations, projects or initiatives already operating in your area, give them a chance to tell people about the great work they're already doing. If you can, it's probably a good idea to invite them well ahead of time so that they can prepare themselves a bit. Ask them to keep it brief but to share their passion openly.

G) Start a new (Transition) initiative right there in the cinema? (20 min)

Before the event, think about ways to help people who are interested in setting up an initiative (such as a Transition Town) to network with each other.

Tip 1: Use a playful method to enable those who are interested to find out where the other people live (they might discover that they're already neighbours). Ask the audience to arrange themselves in the room according to the points of the compass – North, South, East and West. This is a good way for people to get to know each other and learn how to spontaneously organise themselves.

Tip 2: Another good method is a trip to the pub! As the host of the event, invite anyone who is interested in establishing an initiative (or getting involved with an existing one) to head to a local pub after the event. As a smaller group, you can then discuss the next steps.

Important questions:

- Whose email address will be used to organise the first meeting/as a point of contact for interested people?
- Do you want to go ahead and register your group at <http://www.transitionnetwork.org/initiatives/map> or would you rather wait until the group has become better-established before registering? Both options are totally legitimate!
- Do you want to produce a flyer to distribute at the screening itself?
- What are potential dates for the first get-together?

AND LAST BUT NOT LEAST: BEST OF LUCK AND HAVE A LOT OF FUN!