

IMPACT IS A DESTINATION.  
DISTRIBUTION IS THE MAP.

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Impact  
Distribution  
Lab



# From Story to Impact: Turning Films into Tools for Social Change

SPEAKER

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# The power of stories



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# The power of stories

“ Stories have power. The way in which an individual, a group, a community, or a territory tells their story, or the way in which their story is told, has an effect on their ability to inhabit their life. That is to say, ‘Stories create the worlds we inhabit’. ”

— Andre Ortega, Narrative Practices Collective / Mexico

**Stories have the power to generate empathy and connection, allowing people to feel and understand other people's realities, which is crucial for mobilizing support and action.**



LA VITA È BELLA (1997), DIRECTED BY ROBERTO BENIGNI, PRODUCED BY MELAMPO CINEMATOGRAFICA / MIRAMAX FILMS.



**Stories can influence how people see the world, altering their attitude and behaviors towards specific causes.**

**Stories can be a meeting point that brings together individuals with similar values and goals, strengthening cohesion and collective action.**



# Stories build narratives



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Narratives are cultural constructs that shape how people understand and experience beliefs, values, and attitudes within a society.

# Hegemonic narratives are those that “dominate”

In ancient Greek, the “hegemon” was the commander of the army



Reflect and perpetuate the dominant ideas, values and norms in a society.



Promoted by groups with political, economic, social, cultural or religious power in our societies.

# Counter-hegemonic or counter-narrative narratives

- They challenge and question dominant narratives.
- Created from a place of diversity, dignity and hope.  
Often told by historically silenced individuals,  
communities or territories.
- Have disruptive, healing, and transformative potential.



Films are embedded in these narratives and can inspire new, alternative narratives of the world we want to inhabit.

- ① Impact begins with awareness — but it doesn't end there.
- ② A good campaign moves audiences from emotion to engagement, from watching to participating.
- ③ Sometimes, the most powerful actions are simple: a conversation, a collective screening, a partnership, a petition.

**What matters is that the audience feels they have a role.**

# Media library of Latin American film and social impact

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The Mediateca is a unique virtual platform featuring 23 Latin American case studies on film distribution with a focus on social impact — inspiring and exploring experiences that use cinema as a tool for social transformation.

[www.mediatecacinemaimpacto.com](http://www.mediatecacinemaimpacto.com)

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# Create a campaign strategy

## First steps

# Topic or problem of my project

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A well-defined problem is the compass of every impact campaign. Summarize yours in one clear sentence.

## ASK YOURSELF

**What is your film really about?**

“On loneliness in old age,”  
“On the fight for water in an Indigenous territory.”

## AVOID ABSTRACT IDEAS

### Don't say:

“It's about life,”  
“the system,”  
or “society.”

### ✓ Say:

“It's about young people who migrate because there are no opportunities in their town.”

# First steps towards the impact strategy

VISION  
OF IMPACT



AUDIENCE



GOALS



IMPACT ACTION



# First steps towards the impact strategy

VISION  
OF IMPACT



AUDIENCE



GOALS



IMPACT ACTION



# We start from the Why: The Impact Vision

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Before writing goals, visualize the change you want to see.

## GUIDE QUESTION



What transformation or vision do you want to promote in the world through this film?

## DEFINE YOUR IMPACT VISION



An inspiring horizon that guides (e.g. “A society where indigenous women are recognized as legitimate political leaders”)

# First steps towards the impact strategy

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# Audience

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It's important not to think of the audience as a passive and weak entity, but rather as an active, creative, and critical audience — people who can respond to our calls to action and be fundamental allies in our impactful activities.

# Audience

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People are rational and emotional, we have beliefs and values that move us, we have previous experiences and we are immersed in narratives of the world we inhabit.

As an audience we need to know ↙

**What is our role  
in the transformations  
proposed to us?**

# Audience's relationship with the topic

## Ask yourself



Is my audience directly affected by the problem, or are they contributing to it?



How do they currently deal with this issue?



Are their current solutions enough?

# First steps towards the impact strategy

VISION  
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AUDIENCE



GOALS



IMPACT ACTION



# Impact goals

What makes a good impact goal?

A strong impact goal is



Concrete



Measurable (even if qualitatively)



Achievable within the scope of your campaign



Specific about who you want to mobilize  
and what you want to achieve

# Impact goals

Think about the kind of change you want to create – in attitudes, behaviors, or structures.

Identify if your goal is to



Shift perceptions or social narratives



Spark new conversations



Encourage collective action



Influence public or institutional policies

Align your goal with the most relevant type of change, based on your audience and context.

# Key agents allies



What are the strategic priorities of these allies?



How can you join or support the campaign?

# Impact strategy

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When we clearly define our topic, objectives, and audience, every message and action gain purpose — turning our campaign into a powerful bridge that truly connects with the people it's meant to reach.

MESSAGES

GOALS

KEY AGENTS

IMPACT  
DYNAMICS

IMPACT  
ACTIONS

AUDIENCE

COMPLETE THIS SENTENCE ↙

“I want to work with [who], to achieve [what], and activate [which audience].”

I want to work with educators to promote climate awareness and activate students as local changemakers.

I want to work with journalists to achieve visibility for gender equality and activate new public conversations.

# Collaboration, purpose, and connection

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Because when we know who we work with,  
what we want to achieve, and who we want  
to activate — our stories stop being isolated  
pieces of art and become part of something  
larger: a movement for change.

# Define your vision

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As team responsible for a film that seeks to create an impact, we always have a vision that considers two elements:

## ARTISIC VISION



The intrinsic vision of the film and what it's going to be like.

## IMPACT VISION



The extrinsic vision of what the movie is going to be made.



# Audiences



**For whom do I do what I do?**

Resignifying the concept of audience.

## CHANGE MENTALITIES ↙

- Awareness and understanding to generate a change in public attitudes.
- What attitudes or beliefs do you want to generate or change?

## STRENGTHEN COMMUNITIES ↙

- Community Organization: Provide the thematic focus and activities that will bring people together.
- What communities could you serve or support?

## CHANGE BEHAVIORS ↙

- Mobilize people to act differently.
- What specific action could you promote?

## CHANGE STRUCTURES ↙

- Vertical change: directly influencing laws and policies to change the context.
- What laws or policies permeate the problem you are trying to change?

CHANGED INDIVIDUALS		
Awareness. knowledge	Attitude. belief	Behaviors
DIRECT IMPACTS		

Will engagement with your media build awareness? Expand knowledge?  
Shift attitudes? Motivate behaviors?

CHANGED GROUPS, INSTITUTIONS AND SYSTEM		CHANGED CONDITION
Social norms  Shared standarts  Awareness. knowledge  Process innovation	Policies  Public discourse  Movements  Resourse allocation	Social or physical conditions (e.g., poverty, health, conservation)
CUMULATIVE IMPACTS		

Will the individuals you engage drive collective, longer-term changes in the world?