

Indie Lens Pop-Up: Strengthening Stations, Strengthening Communities

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Executive summary

Indie Lens Pop-Up is a powerful program that provides a low-risk, high-reward framework for stations to experiment with community engagement, gain experience and buy in for this work, and can be adapted to meet unique station goals and needs. As stations' community engagement initiatives mature and become more robustly staffed and integrated, Indie Lens Pop-Up (ILPOP) continues to be a core engagement program, but stations can experiment creatively with formats and partnerships for the event series.

Conducted from May through September 2017, a case study of three stations, Georgia Public Broadcasting, Kansas City PBS (KCPT), and Basin PBS, finds that through ILPOP, community organizations and individuals come to see stations as a resource and partner. ILPOP provides stations with a season-long slate of *Independent Lens* (IL) films as well as the resources stations need to craft events that resonate with local communities, and community organizations and individuals recognize and appreciate the powerful IL content and the locally resonant ILPOP event programming.

Furthermore, ILPOP can serve as a proof of concept for stations, making it easier to get broad buy-in for increased community engagement. Because the ILPOP program is flexible, stations can use it to meet their unique strategic goals and priorities.

This evaluation finds that ILPOP is most successful when one person or team "owns" the ILPOP initiative so that there is a consistent person to interface with community partners. And, when the person responsible for organizing the ILPOP events has an editorial background, stations can generate editorial content (not only promotional material) through ILPOP, providing an additional benefit to stations.

Finally, ILPOP results in increased brand recognition for *Independent Lens*. The program connects the dots for station staff, community partners, and audience members alike that IL content is high quality documentary film that is available on local PBS stations. And, at a moment in time in which the United States is experiencing increased political polarization and radical extremism on both sides of the spectrum, ILPOP events introduce relevant, often challenging topics to audiences and provide a format for a structured, community conversation. The findings in this report, which focuses on three case studies, are further

strengthened by end-of-season partner survey results that also demonstrate the significant impact that ILPOP has on partner organizations.

I. Introduction

A. Indie Lens Pop-Up

1. Program

Indie Lens Pop-Up (ILPOP) is a program of *Independent Lens* (IL) that seeks to empower local stakeholders to use films to convene community members and catalyze conversations, while also building local stakeholders' capacity to strengthen and expand their community networks, facilitate dialogue, and inform strategies to solve problems. To produce ILPOP events, ITVS provides local partners with *Independent Lens* films, resources and materials, and individualized support from an ILPOP team member. Local producing partners - sometimes stations, sometimes community based organizations - lead ILPOP in their communities. Their efforts collectively support public broadcasting's mission to help inform civil discourse essential to American society.

ITVS staff work directly with partners to build capacity through engagement coaching, event planning guidance and materials, and at times mini-grants or stipends to support community ILPOP events. In exchange, ILPOP community partners commit to organizing community ILPOP events for four to six films each program season. These events always include the screening of an IL film (selected by ITVS with input from a program advisory group) and an engagement activity that the event organizers design that will speak most to their local community. Events often include panel discussions and audience Q&A sessions. Some partners have designed innovative ILPOP events that have featured improv comedy, intergenerational conversations, and more.

2. Goals

ILPOP is designed to build stations' and community partners' capacity to do community engagement, especially through the use of film. Increased community engagement builds trust-based relationships among stations, partners, and community members, thereby strengthening community networks. In the case of station partners, participating in ILPOP solidifies its position as a community convener.

Regarding *Independent Lens* specifically, ILPOP aims to increase the value stations and community partners place in documentary film and IL content, resulting in stations and local partners integrating IL content into ongoing and future engagement efforts.

ILPOP also has intended effects on community members who attend the events. Community members will have deepened relationships with their local station (or community partner), and they may sign up to participate in future events and/or donate to their local PBS station. The program also aims to increase community members' appreciation for documentary film, as well as IL brand recognition. ITVS hypothesizes that community members who attend ILPOP events will talk about the film with friends, family, and peers, learn about the issues presented in the films, and potentially engage in their communities and civic life differently as a result of their experience.

Over the course of the ILPOP program, ITVS has asked station and community partners to complete pre- and post-season surveys and post-event summary forms. Station and community partners have also been asked to administer audience surveys. Additionally, ITVS has conducted evaluations of specific screening campaigns, such as ILPOP's *The Black Panthers: Vanguard of a Revolution* program.

In end-of-season surveys, stations and community partners consistently report high degrees of satisfaction with the ILPOP program (96%), meeting their unique community engagement goals (88%), and appreciation for the support that ITVS provides through the program. Post-screening reports indicate that stations are experimenting with event formats and a wide variety of community partners.

In audience surveys, an average of seventy-six percent of audience members report that they have learned about new issues and topics, and eighty percent say that they intend to talk to friends and family about the films. Nearly half (48%) say they would like to take action and more than half (56%) say that they are likely to tune in to broadcast. Half of audience members (average) say that they are "very likely" to donate to their local PBS station and/or become members.

B. Research: Case studies

The data gathered by ITVS over the course of ILPOP provide ample evidence that it is a high-impact program. Stations and community partners are invested in the program, they are building community partnerships and networks through the program, and they have increased capacity to do innovative community engagement. Audiences are learning about new topics and connecting with their local PBS stations in new and deeper ways.

This research project digs deeper into the success of the ILPOP program by using comparative case study methodology, including network analysis, to understand why and how station partners craft successful ILPOP programs in their communities. It also includes stations' community partners in the analysis in order to trace how ILPOP influences community networks and a station's perceived relevance in its community.

Research included review of ITVS data,¹ conversations with ITVS staff, and semi-structured open-ended interviews with ITVS partner station staff and other community partners (see Appendix A for complete list of interviews).

¹ Pre- and post-season station and community partner surveys, post-event summaries, post-screening audience surveys.

II. Georgia Public Broadcasting: A new ILPOP market with a new emphasis on community engagement

Georgia Public Broadcasting and Indie Lens Pop-Up

Georgia Public Broadcasting (GPB) is a statewide dual licensee in Georgia with nine public broadcast stations. GPB is headquartered in Atlanta, a city of nearly half a million (447,841, 2013). GPB partnered on Indie Lens Pop-Up (ILPOP) from 2005-2009, during which time ITVS had consultants on-the-ground producing events in partnership with the station. GPB did not produce ILPOP events from 2010 through 2014, and rejoined the program in 2015. It is completing its second season in 2017. To date, GPB has held ILPOP events only in the metro Atlanta area.

In 2014, GPB created a department of external affairs and hired Bert Huffman as Vice President of External Affairs and Chief Development Officer. Huffman says that while GPB had a long history of community engagement, it had focused on bringing GPB members and donors into events at the station. As Huffman and his new team began to craft a forward-looking engagement strategy, they made it a priority to reach new and diverse communities in the Atlanta metro area. "We wanted to be intentional about community engagement. In the past GPB did a great job of engaging communities, but we [now] think it's about giving people opportunity to be involved in conversations and allowing them to see people who look like them in conversations and on screen," he says.

Huffman and Rebecca Hogue, Direct Marketing Manager at GPB, say that the Indie Lens Pop-Up program was especially convenient for GPB because it was an innovative way to get out in the community, and it came as "engagement-in-a-box." Because in 2015 there was no one GPB staff person dedicated to this new type of community engagement work, it was easy for staff to take the ILPOP program with a set schedule, discussion prompts, and other supporting material and pull together a program. Of the first season GPB participated in ILPOP, Hogue says, "We took advantage of the one-on-one coach. We partnered with ChrisKids and had some phone calls with ITVS to brainstorm around different groups to reach out to to boost attendance and to brainstorm how to put together a panel. We definitely took advantage of the questions for panelists [provided by ITVS]."

In 2016, Huffman hired Emmalee Hackshaw as Director of Community Engagement, and Hackshaw became responsible for producing GPB's second season of ILPOP. Hackshaw says that she greatly appreciates the resources ITVS makes available for producing the ILPOP events. Hackshaw participates in ITVS's webinars and shares the discussion guides with panel moderators. GPB has also accessed ILPOP station mini-grants to produce events. She says, "It's nice because ILPOP films happen as a whole season, so it gives me a good base for the calendar and I can schedule around that so we have consistent programming [throughout the year]."

GPB staff emphasize that they intend to continue to participate in the ILPOP program, as well as do innovative community engagement to bring new and diverse groups of the Atlanta metro area into GPB's orbit. Huffman explains:

"I believe it's public media's responsibility to hold up a mirror to the community and to be a part of the community. We are in a unique position because we have an external affairs department to handle everything outside of the organization together in one unit. We can be intentional about marketing from a fundraising and community engagement standpoint. And, if Marketing and fundraising are our two pillars, community engagement undergirds both."

GPB has made a commitment to community engagement, and ILPOP has provided a ready-made program to catalyze this important work.

ILPOP event production

For the first two seasons of ILPOP, GPB partnered with Chris180 (formerly ChrisKids) for most events. Chris180 is a mental health organization that "saves, serves, and protects children, young adults, and families who have experienced trauma to help them change the direction of their lives" (chris180.org). Chris180 provides counseling, safe housing, community support, and training in the Atlanta metro area.

According to Anne Wilson, Director of Marketing and Communication at Chris180, the second season of ILPOP has been a particularly fruitful series of events due to the relevance of the *Independent Lens* films' topics to Chris180's work. Wilson says:

"This year's actually been really interesting, these films have been especially beneficial for Chris180. We wanted to put together panels with panelists on these topics that

include trauma so we could inform the community about how to deal with these issues and how to inform the community. I think 'trauma informed' is a new topic people are starting to hear more about and we've been able to raise the awareness of that topic through the film series."

When planning the ILPOP events, Hackshaw and Wilson have a conversation about what each organization hopes to get out of the event and who they think could represent the local community issues that are relevant to the topics presented in the film. For the films they partner on, they work closely on event logistics. They both send invitations to their email distribution lists. In addition, Wilson says that for many of the films she reached out to Chris180's board of directors and advisory council to both invite them to the events and to think strategically with her about who else they might want in the room.

Hackshaw also asks panelists to reach out to their own networks with invitations to the ILPOP events. For example, two panelists for the *National Bird* ILPOP event were from Emory University and work with veterans on a daily basis, and Hackshaw asked them to invite their colleagues and the organizations with which they have connections.

GPB does not have a permanent location for ILPOP events. For the second season, three screenings took place at the Plaza Theater in downtown Atlanta and two were at GPB. Going forward, Huffman says that it is a priority to look for new and interesting places throughout the Atlanta metro area to hold ILPOP (and other community engagement) events. He says that prior to planning events, he and Hackshaw meet to discuss the films and topics represented and "where these things coalesce with where GPB needs to be." Huffman says, "If we've spent a lot of time up north, maybe we need to be downtown. We look for location based on that." He also says that they have an "unspoken commitment" to avoid traditional film screenings venues and to "go into places we think are cool." He posits that "by going into spaces that are open and welcoming and feel like a safe space you're opening the door to all those people trusting GPB in a new way."

Connecting national issues to local communities and resources

The GBP team works to directly connect the issues and topics presented by the IL films in the ILPOP series to local communities and issues in Atlanta. Hackshaw sees in-person events as presenting a unique opportunity for local communities. She says:

“ILPOP is a way to not only share the content but then have a meaningful and a localized connection to it. Not only is the audience able to see the film, but they also are able to have a reaction as a group and learn about resources in their community for dealing with the problem.”

In order to connect broad issues to local communities and context, Hogue says it's important that Hackshaw has experience working in the local nonprofit sector. Hogue explains:

“Emmalee will watch the content so she knows what it is and/or read about it. She'll think about what's relevant about it to Georgia, what are local resources available around that subject. She's worked in the nonprofit sector in Atlanta for awhile so she knows the landscape so she'll know who we should connect with. For example, there's a great local improv company we partnered with for Meet the Patels. We didn't want to do an academic panel, so went to Dad's Garage, which has a huge following and [Emmalee] wanted to get in on that, so she reached out to them and they together cooked up the idea that they'd do some sketch improv after the screening for audiences.”

Beginning next season, GPB and Chris180 will refine their strategy. Instead, of partnering for the entire ILPOP season, they will maintain a relationship and partner to produce events in which the film topics are directly relevant to Chris180's work: youth, trauma, and supporting families. Both Wilson and Hackshaw emphasize that the relationship between the organizations is strong and that they anticipate many opportunities to work together in the future - both through ILPOP and other community engagement activities.

Building and strengthening networks

Through the ILPOP events, GPB has built relationships with new community groups, as well as strengthened pre-existing ties. While GPB has partnered with Chris180 to host the ILPOP events, the station has included many other community organizations and groups in post-screening panel discussions and activities. According to Hackshaw, “The nature of these partnerships has varied, including panel representatives and actual event planning/logistics.” In the 2016-2017 season, GPB collaborated with approximately 15 community partners.

Hackshaw says that organizations and groups she invites to participate always say “yes.” Huffman elaborates on this willingness of community groups to participate in GPB community engagement events in saying:

“Public Media is the perfect place to be the center point for community engagement. Sure, we want you to watch and listen, but at the end of the day we’re about making the community a better place and providing the opportunity for people to see this stuff and get information out. Other organizations want to work with us to get the word out [about their own work], so it’s easy to coalesce around community engagement.”

Wilson affirms this when she says, “For Chris180, putting our name with GPB felt like it was a good partnership and GPB has a strong reputation, so we felt this was a strong collaboration.”

Attendees of ILPOP events recognize the power of GPB as a community convener, too. After one ILPOP event, an audience member who works for Bank of America approached GPB and asked them to co-host a screening for a film the bank is producing about opioid abuse. Huffman says the woman recognized that “GPB is the best kind of partner for this type of community engagement.”

At another ILPOP event (*Bad Kids* screening), a Georgia state representative was in attendance. The panel discussion included a Chris180 staff therapist, and Wilson says that after the screening, the representative approached Chris180’s CEO to discuss possible solutions to the challenges raised during the panel. In addition to reaching power holders and influential community members through GPB’s convening power, Wilson says that after reviewing Eventbrite RSVP’s, she knows that the ILPOP events help her organization reach new community members with information.

Building an audience

GPB uses its ILPOP programming as a way to strengthen connections with current station members, as well as a way to reach new communities to build relationships with community members. Huffman says that ILPOP is significant because it is an opportunity to demonstrate to diverse community members the types of content that air on GPB - “that the station isn’t only *Masterpiece Theater* and *Downton Abbey*.”

GPB asks ILPOP attendees to sign up through Eventbrite so the station has a record of individuals who have participated. In surveys, they ask “where did you hear about this event,” in order to get a sense for where the audience is coming from. Once an individual has attended one ILPOP event, they are automatically added to the email invite distribution list for subsequent community events, based on geography. Hackshaw says, “I also send an email the day after the event to say ‘thank you for coming,’ ‘don’t forget to tune in to watch the film on broadcast,’ and ‘tell your friends!’” She sends a different email to people who had RSVP’ed ‘yes’ but did not come to the event saying ‘sorry we didn’t see you at the event, but you can still see the film on air.’ Huffman says that this strategy has reduced attrition for the ILPOP events.

Hackshaw echoed Huffman’s point that this way of engaging with audiences is different than how GPB used to think about engagement. Hackshaw says that screenings or other live events used to be thought of as strictly marketing and a way to promote the station and/or things that would be on air. “Now, [community engagement] is less about driving people on air and more about the conversation the screening engenders. It’s more of a centered and emotional discussion that helps people understand that they have a connection to this topic, and thus a connection to GPB,” explains Huffman. He says, “It’s time to put our attention toward the people who could benefit from having access to public media and see their lives reflected on screen and to know there are filmmakers and institutions that care about their lives. Time and again we hear ‘thank you so much’ for helping to elevate the lives of people like us.”

Creating content

GPB has not created much editorial content through or around the ILPOP program. Hackshaw says that occasionally she will reach out to the “On Second Thought” daily radio talk show produced in the Atlanta GPB office for recommendations for panelists and that the show may include panelists as guests to provide a through line from editorial content to community engagement.

Huffman recounts a recent community engagement effort through which his team is partnering with a group of local artists and, together with the creative services team, they’re creating content for on-air interstitials. He says that he would like his team to do more of this type of content creation “to reflect the Atlanta community and the Georgia community at large, and the inspiration for this comes from Independent Lens and ILPOP.”

Building brand recognition for Independent Lens and appreciation for documentary film

Rebecca Hogue says that prior to ILPOP, she wasn't familiar with *Independent Lens*, but that through the program, "I put two-and-two together and realized what it was. It's been great to have a better understanding about what IL is and I think ILPOP is doing that for a lot of other people. Our [station] members and community people who come see it love the IL docs."

Huffman indicates that Nielsen ratings are not the only measure of success for GPB, nor are they the only criterion in the programming process. Huffman says:

"Just because a Nielsen household doesn't watch something doesn't mean there isn't value in that. And as Public Media, we have the luxury to say that. We are now in a much more proactive phase of GPB's programming for high quality types of content. What I love about working with ILPOP is that we get that content that's not necessarily that safe mainstream approach of Brit-coms and Masterpiece Theater."

III. Kansas City PBS: An ILPOP veteran that has built a proven track record in community engagement through the program

Kansas City PBS and Indie Lens Pop-Up

Kansas City PBS (KCPT) is a dual licensee serving Kansas City, Missouri, a city with a population of nearly half a million (467, 007, 2013). KCPT first participated in ILPOP (then named Community Cinema) in 2011. Prior to 2011, the University of Missouri Kansas City (UMKC) was the local ITVS partner for Community Cinema. Community Cinema was originally run by Caitlyn Horsmon, Associate Professor Communication at UMKC, who knew CC's Midwest coordinator, Naomi Walker. UMKC partnered with a local independent movie theater for the screenings. When Lindsey Foat of KCPT approached the Community Cinema team, they put her in touch with UMKC. Since 2011, KCPT and UMKC have been collaborating on ILPOP events, with KCPT taking on the role of primary organizer and lead organization for the ILPOP team at ITVS.

Lindsey Foat, a trained journalist, started at KCPT as Promotions and Outreach Coordinator. There are different memories as to how Lindsey and KCPT initially became interested in ILPOP and connected with Horsmon, but regardless of the exact circumstances, Foat had some previous experience organizing film screenings and she loves documentary film, so for her it was an obvious opportunity. Angee Simmons, Vice President, TV Production & Creative Services, recalls, "We originally jumped into the [CC] program because we were looking for a way to get into more community engagement."

Of the early days of the CC program, Foat says: "Between Caitlyn's experience, the theater already there, and Naomi and the discussion guides and resources that [ITVS] was providing, it was a crash course in how to use doc film for community engagement and impact."

Over time, KCPT has concretized the schedule for ILPOP screenings: they happen the second Saturday of each month throughout the season. According to Foat, "the dates are set in stone." Almost all screenings are now held at the Kansas City Public Library. Foat says that the set date and location removes some of the logistical pressures and allows her and Horsmon to focus on the agenda.

In May of 2015, Foat was promoted to Community Engagement Producer, a position KCPT created for her based in large part on the station's experience participating in the ILPOP program. She continues to lead the ILPOP initiative, in addition to KCPT's other innovative community engagement. Foat says, "While KCPT screens anything from *American Experience* to *Mercy Street* or POV films, we're constantly going back to the things we've learned through CC/ILPOP and following that same basic model: we have a film with a topic or issues, how do we best connect it with people doing work in the community, and how can we connect it to people on a local level."

Foat says that, while she has been participating in the ILPOP program for nearly seven years now, she still takes advantage of the resources provided by ITVS. She said that, schedule allowing, she participates in webinars and the brainstorming phone calls with other stations. Foat says, "Even though we've been a part of [ILPOP] for a number of years, part of what I love is the sharing that happens among stations. You don't always get to get on the phone with your counterparts at other stations to hear what they're thinking about or to commiserate."

Simmons asserts that CC/ILPOP were important experiences that contributed to KCPT deciding to invest more in community engagement beyond membership marketing. She says:

"ILPOP triggered the notion that [community engagement] is important. The station has put more focus on engagement in the past few years than ever before, and if had not dipped its toe [into ILPOP] it may have missed out in recognizing that opportunity. But now it's just what we do: the second Saturday of the month, 10 months a year."

ILPOP event production

For almost all ILPOP events, KCPT partners with UMKC to develop the program's agenda and the Kansas City Public Library provides a theater for the event at no cost. Together, Foat and Horsmon consider the ILPOP slate for the season and identify potential community partners to participate as panelists. Most ILPOP events begin with the screening and are followed by a panel discussion or talk. Foat says that most films lend themselves well to this format, "but as we go on we're trying to get creative with the activities and communities we connect with and to think more outside the box."

KCPT promotes the ILPOP events on air, through their member guide, and to an email list for individuals who have previously attended screenings. They also do some targeted marketing to affinity lists based on the film topics. Foat says that they lean heavily on the community partners participating in the events to promote them within their own membership and/or networks. She says that when she approaches community partners she clearly asks first, that they participate in the post-screening activity and second, help “get butts in seats and promote the event.” She wants partners to feel co-ownership for the event.

Connect national issues with local communities and resources

Foat says that a primary goal of the ILPOP program is to connect the topics in the film to local communities. She hopes that event partners and community members who attend the ILPOP events alike “walk away feeling like the station is invested in the community and is working to connect national programs with local folks, and that there are amazing and impactful docs on air that can help them tell their story.”

Foat admits that finding the local Kansas City connection for each ILPOP film is not easy. She provides one example:

“It forces us as a station to stretch and figure out what's the local connection with this [topic]. For example, with the doc ‘In Football We Trust’ about Polynesian and Pacific Island high school football players in Utah, I initially didn't know what to do with it. So I started researching and thinking about who would talk and thinking about what's the connection. I found that - and it was a surprise to me - there's a fairly significant Polynesian and Pacific Island community in a suburb of Kansas City that's really active in football. For the screening we brought in the coach and some players to talk about it. There was a whole segment of the community we didn't know about, a really ‘wow’ moment about a connection we never would have ever made otherwise. And a way to give the high school kids a way to be part of the conversation, saying they'd never seen their family or their culture on the screen like that. And in a mostly white station we take that for granted, and it's good to be reminded how powerful it is to see your own experience reflected in media. It challenges us to make new connections and find parts of the community they might not have known were there.”

Building and strengthening networks

KCPT is a hub of the Kansas City community, and ILPOP provides a regularly occurring, structured way to invite community groups and individuals to join in community conversations. As time goes on, Foat says that it's a delicate balance to invite returning community partners to participate in events and to reach out to new organizations to bring them into the fold.

Foat says that she follows up with partner organizations and individuals after events to thank them and encourage them to reach out to her and/or KCPT for partnership opportunities in the future. She also shared information with community partners she thinks they'd be interested in as it comes up. "My hope is that after being a part of the [ILPOP] film screening, community partners walk away with a new understanding and realization that they have a partner in KCPT," says Foat. In the six seasons prior to 2016/2017, KCPT had partnered with 78 community organizations for ILPOP screenings. During the 2016/2017 season, KCPT estimates they will partner with approximately 20 community partners.

And, while for many of these community groups, the partnerships might begin with ILPOP, Simmons says, "they don't end there, and that's the part that's really powerful." She says that these same community groups form a network and they can be brought back in for future community engagement efforts and reporting.

In some cases, participating community groups are already working together. In other cases, the groups are working on related topics but might not know of each other, and in these instances, the event provides a way to get to know one another and start to build a relationship. Foat says, "for pretty much every event I'm making introductions among community groups. They always exchange contact information, but it's hard to know if they actually collaborate afterward."

And ILPOP provides an opportunity to bring in a great diversity of community members and groups - more so than is possible in traditional reporting. Foat explains:

"One of the great things about ILPOP is that it is something that almost any size organization can be a part of, it could be a single person who has started a group on Facebook and is trying to do something and [ILPOP] is a way to bring them into the post-film discussions and activities and get them a platform. These are things that we might not typically think of as 'newsworthy,' or if it were a huge event these individuals wouldn't be on the stage. This is part of the beauty of the community engagement of

[ILPOP]: we can bring in individuals as partners, or someone who's representing the local chapter of a huge organization. And all of those people can make meaningful contributions for how we connect the doc to our community."

Building audience

As mentioned in the previous section, Foat expects community partners to invite their own members and networks to ILPOP events. KCPT considers these events an opportunity to make connections with members of the broader Kansas City community who may not have pre-existing relationships with KCPT. Foat says that she collects email contact information from participants in order to invite people to additional in-person events and screenings and begin to build relationships with those who might not already be in the KCPT network.

Foat also says that KCPT uses the ILPOP promotional language (provided by ITVS), screen images, and other collateral to promote broadcast tune-in for the ILPOP films. She says, "Building our broadcast [audience] and understanding that KCPT/PBS stations are a source for this [documentary film] content is a major goal."

Creating content

While KCPT does not necessarily use ILPOP events as a mechanism to drive broadcast audience growth, they do see these events as an opportunity to create content and reflect diverse Kansas City communities to their core audiences, both broadcast and digital. ILPOP then is a way to build relationships with new parts of the Kansas City community and bring awareness about issues and resources available for these community members, while simultaneously building greater awareness about the diversity of the community and the challenges and opportunities they're facing among KCPT's core audience.

When KCPT first began participating in the ILPOP program, there was not an immediate recognition that it was an opportunity for editorial content creation. However, an institutional structure that promotes cross-team collaboration combined with Foat's training as a journalist and motivation to create content have proven to be an effective strategy for content creation.

KCPT has a weekly editorial meeting that brings together people from the newsroom, producers from the weekly public affairs shows, radio producers, marketing and promotions

people, and community engagement (Foat). During this meeting, each person runs through what they'll be airing or producing that week. Simmons elaborates:

"This meeting is where they present every project, whether it's an event or a doc film or the weekly shows lineup of guests. Everything gets thrown out and they look at what are the opportunities to extend any of the pieces. Sometimes that means they're going to do a story on infrastructure and Lindsey [Foat] says she could pull together a panel of people, or Lindsey says 'I've got an ILPOP about 'Farmer Veteran' and they know there are local stories they could tell about it.' In some cases if Lindsey doesn't have people for the panel she can ask reporters for suggestions. We try to extend the reach on any program, show, or event and we try to get everyone to always be thinking about how to get people to care about the story and how to engage the community."

Foat often creates content directly from the events. For example, for the 2016-2017 ILPOP season, Foat says: "With *National Bird* and with *The Bad Kids* we actually filmed the post-film Q&A and I did a post-event recap that included some footage. I always think about the content as part of the process but it comes second [to the ILPOP event planning]." (See examples of KCPT's editorial content created from Indie Lens Pop-Up [here](#) and [here](#).) Simmons also highlighted that while Foat was trained as a journalist, her experience was mostly in print/text reporting and some audio production. Through ILPOP, Foat took the initiative to learn to operate a camera and will often record the panels, talks, and/or Q&A sessions herself.

Occasionally, others at KCPT create content associated with ILPOP events. Of the *T-Rex* ILPOP event Foat says:

"This film not only led to a collaboration with parts of KC's long established boxing community, but it also led to an internal partnership. Because of the local connection we made to the film, KCPT's digital magazine Flatlandkc.org did a profile of Missy Fitzwater. In the past I've been the one to produce related content, but the timeliness of this film and interesting subject led to an internal collaboration."

Flatland writer, Jonathan Bender, got the idea for the Fitzwater profile after hearing Foat talk about the upcoming ILPOP event in a weekly editorial meeting. Bender had previously worked for the local alt-weekly, and he thought the profile would be a good fit for their audience and

potentially introduce them to KCPT. *Flatland's* [profile](#) of Fitzwater also ran in the local alt weekly.

Over time, Foat says that her deep community engagement has proven to be a reporting resource for KCPT. "I've been able to make the case that being out in the community makes me a better reporter because I know the community better."

Building brand recognition for *Independent Lens* and appreciation for documentary film

KCPT airs *Independent Lens* content at its national feed. Foat says that within the station there is an appreciation for doc film and "the potential it has to draw in new audiences, and hopefully younger and more diverse audiences." And, while KCPT has a deep appreciation for doc film, Simmons says that "[ILPOP] definitely has raised awareness about independent film in KCPT. I feel like it has brought a recognition that independent filmmaking is an area where we have excelled for decades and haven't claimed as well as we could as a system."

Simmons also asserts that the appreciation for doc film at KCPT comes in part from the station leadership. She explains:

"KCPT's CEO really believes in looking outside the window and in [content] not just being created internally. We also really strive to find local independent filmmakers in KC to see what they're doing and how KCPT can support them. We've worked with four or five filmmakers, not in funding [them], but in helping them promote their film or giving them editorial notes or suggestions. It's good for us to highlight what's happening locally in KC, as well as what's happening nationally."

IV. Basin PBS

Basin PBS and Indie Lens Pop-Up

Basin PBS is located in Midland, Texas and serves the greater Midland and Odessa communities. Basin PBS is a small station with a full-time staff of eight. It does not currently have a studio, but it is renovating a historic building in Midland, which will have a studio where it will be able to create and edit content that will open in 2018. Basin serves a large geographic area, with some viewers located as far as four hours from Midland. This poses unique challenges and opportunities for Basin, especially when contrasted with the higher geographic density of GPB and KCPT's audiences.

Basin PBS has been an Indie Lens Pop-Up partner for four years. The program is organized by Alyson Trevino, who works with Basin on contract to do community engagement work. Trevino was interested in ILPOP, and when Carla Holeva joined Basin PBS as General Manager she embraced the program. For Holeva, ILPOP was an obvious opportunity for Basin to connect more deeply with community members and increase its presence in the region, even with the station's limited resources and human-power.

Holeva emphasizes that Basin PBS is working hard to connect with community members throughout the vast region that the station serves, and while the station has thus far hosted all ILPOP events in Midland or Odessa, it plans to hold ILPOP events in communities located farther from these cities in the future.

ILPOP event production

Alyson Trevino is responsible for organizing Basin PBS's ILPOP events. She says that, during the first season, she organized the screenings independently. However, since then she says, "I've gotten smarter. I realized I needed help. Last season we partnered with maybe ten community groups for the program." When planning an event, she considers community groups that have an interest in the film's topic and invites them to partner. Basin has regularly partnered with local public libraries, colleges, and universities to host the events, and included an array of local organizations as panelists for post-screening discussions.

For event production, Trevino uses the discussion guides and coaching provided by ITVS.

"Most of the time I'm ok, but as we've gotten further into seasons I tend to want to enhance

things, and the coaching is helpful for that. It's great to have someone to bounce things off of and brainstorm with when I'm in a vacuum here."

Connect national issues with local communities and resources

All staff members from Basin PBS who participated in this evaluation emphasized the importance of ILPOP for introducing relevant, current events and topics into a largely conservative community and providing a space for learning and conversation. Trevino says, "There are films like *Real Boy* where people either think it doesn't happen or they don't want to talk about it, and ILPOP creates a nice, safe, welcoming environment, even for those who think they're going to oppose it. Instead, they come in and hear the story told the way it should be and they can have their eyes opened."

Basin PBS staff's sense that ILPOP films generate valuable community conversations that don't otherwise happen in the region was echoed by Krista Lynam Vanderberg, a partner from the Ector County Library in Odessa. She says, "This area is fairly conservative, and having movies like *Real Boy* mean we might reach new demographic groups. [Community members] Might have a sense of relief and a shared sense of identity that the library is available for these kinds of things whether you're progressive or conservative. Especially for the youth, and we have more young adults [at ILPOP events] than we do at other teen events."

Building and strengthening networks

Basin PBS has built strong partnerships with the Ector County Public Library and the Midland and Odessa newspapers, the Midland Reporter Telegraph and the Odessa American. The library is a regular partner for ILPOP events, opening their auditorium space for screenings. The Odessa American and Midland Reporter Telegraph advertise ILPOP events, helping to get the word out and encourage community members to attend.

Basin PBS has also used screenings as opportunities to invite community organizations to participate in panels. Trevino says that these events are as much about introducing community organizations to Basin as it is getting their expertise. Shotts also says that a main challenge for Basin PBS has been to increase recognition for the station and let people know that they not only have a PBS station, but that it's local.

And, the station's experience with ILPOP has led them to host more film screenings as a way to reach community members that might not already know about Basin PBS. For example, Trevino says that "this past year we did two or three other film screenings, one of which was a Latino Public Broadcasting film about Willy Velasquez. We partnered with the library in Odessa, a relationship we had thanks to ILPOP. And in Midland, the Midland Hispanic Cultural Center helped us promote it. We had food trucks and we invited people to come in and get food. Now the food trucks have become big partners, and they help promote [screenings] when they're going to be there."

Building audience

Basin PBS has two significant challenges in building relationships with audience members: first, the station reaches a large geographic area; and second, the station is small and has limited capacity for content production and/or events. Prior to ILPOP, Trevino says, "Basin was sort of invisible, people didn't know we were here. They knew they had a PBS station but they didn't know it was local. [ILPOP] has really helped us to be a part of the community. It's putting us out there so we can be a part of other things that we hadn't been before." General manager Holeva agrees that ILPOP and other community engagement efforts create opportunities for community members to get to know Basin PBS and realize that it is a local station that serves local people. Shotts says the station gathers contact information from ILPOP attendees and adds them to the station newsletter listserv.

Creating content

To date, Basin PBS has not created content for broadcast or their website related to ILPOP events. All staff expressed interest in doing so, and they are hopeful that when the new studio opens there will be more opportunity for content creation. However, given their small size, it will be a challenge. Staff suggest that ITVS provide a customized spot for each ILPOP film that have a closing blank space in which the station could insert the details about their event.

Building brand recognition for *Independent Lens* and appreciation for documentary film

For Basin PBS, ILPOP has strengthened station staff's connection with PBS and appreciation for documentary film as both content and a convening tool. As mentioned above, Basin staff express their appreciation for *Independent Lens* films to tell important stories about current

events and issues in a way that resonates with individuals, including those with divergent political perspectives.

And ILPOP provides a template for producing events - so much so that Trevino says it is now a "well oiled machine." She says that this appreciation for the content and the ease of producing events created a pathway for her to get "deeper into the PBS culture," and that she started paying more attention to emails and other communication from PBS about screening and community engagement opportunities in which Basin could be involved. Basin now produces community film screenings throughout the year.

V. Two stations, two ILPOP events

This section illustrates how stations can use ILPOP events to meet their unique goals and priorities by comparing and contrasting how Georgia Public Broadcasting and Kansas City PBS planned and executed Indie Lens Pop-Up events for *National Bird* and *Meet the Patels* during the 2016-2017 ILPOP season. It also explores the impact from these events that are observable in the short term. Notably, in both cases, the stations solidified their own role as a community convener and strengthener of community networks.

National Bird

National Bird, directed by Sonia Kennebeck, “follows the dramatic journey of three whistleblowers determined to break the silence around one of the most controversial issues of our time: the secret U.S. drone war, which has been waged globally for more than a decade. The film, executive produced by Errol Morris and Wim Wenders, gives rare insight into the program through the eyes of veterans and survivors, to explore the complexities of drone warfare from a human perspective” (itvs.org).

GPB

GPB invited two clinicians who focus on trauma psychotherapy from the Emory University psychiatry program’s veterans health care program to participate in the ILPOP *National Bird* event. Prior to the event, Emmalee Hackshaw, Director of Community Engagement at GPB, organized a phone call with the panel participants in order to set expectations and share a discussion guide (provided by ITVS). In an interview with the two clinicians, they emphasized that they viewed the ILPOP event as an opportunity to educate a new audience about the trauma veterans face every day, and that met this goal through the event.

Approximately 45 people attended GPB’s *National Bird* ILPOP event. After the event, 81% of audience members said they had increased awareness about the issues in the film as a result of this event.² The audience for this event was mostly white (69%), older (88% over the age of 50), and 69% said they are current members of their PBS station. Nearly two-thirds (63%) said they were likely or very likely to donate to their local PBS station. An impressive 81% said they were both likely or very likely to recommend *Independent Lens* to their friends, family, and/or

² The audience survey was administered after the screening and had a 36% response rate.

network after the ILPOP event and likely or very likely to attend future ILPOP events, and 75% said they'd like to receive emails about upcoming *Independent Lens* films.

KCPT

KCPT is part of the Corporation for Public Broadcasting's Veterans Coming Home initiative, and both through that initiative and independently has been reporting on veterans issues in the Kansas City area and nationally for years. Thus, KCPT has deep connections with the local veterans community and the community groups and organizations that serve them. And ILPOP has been a key program in developing a relationship with the veterans community.

In particular, KCPT had previously done some joint community engagement work with the Moral Injury Association of America, a group founded by Cindy McDermott, a Kansas City retiree who is a veteran herself. The Moral Injury Association of America works to socialize the idea - both within the veterans community and with the broader public - that veterans suffer from moral injury (meaning they've done something or haven't been able to do something that goes against their moral values and, because of that, it brings great grief and shame, which can lead to a variety of challenges, including suicide). The Moral Injury Association of America also has a writing group for veterans, using writing as a strategy for working through moral injury.

Of the partnership with KCPT, McDermott says:

"Last year and this year with Lindsey [Foat] it blossomed into a wonderful partnership where we're working together to help vets with different areas of healing, and trying to help KCPT with other programs they're trying to do to help vets. For example, for the Ken Burns Vietnam Vet thing we did a read in of 'The Things They Carried' and we're using those readings combined with the library and KCPT to get people involved as much as possible. We're trying to get the word out through our groups about the things KCPT is sponsoring."

Foat invited McDermott to participate in the *National Bird* ILPOP event, as well as Alex Burdge from Veterans for Peace, and Alicia Dressman from Amnesty International. *National Bird* director Sonia Kennebeck also joined the panel. After the film screened and before the panel discussion, veterans who are part of the Moral Injury Association of America's writing group read a sampling of their writings (approximately ten minutes). Foat says:

“National Bird was a really valuable film for KCPT's engagement around veterans. This screening allowed us to work with both new and existing partners. And, we were lucky enough to have director Sonia Kennebeck join us for the screening, which I think increased awareness about KCPT and Independent Lens being an important source for independent documentary and journalism.”

Through this event, the participating panelists made valuable connections. According to McDermott, *National Bird* speaks directly to moral injury, “although it does not refer to it explicitly.” She was able to engage directly with Kennebeck about moral injury. She later introduced Kennebeck to Dr. Rita Brock, a leading researcher on moral injury. McDermott also exchanged information with Burdge from Veterans for Peace and anticipates that they will find ways to collaborate in the future. McDermott says:

“It's interesting how these little seeds are planted all throughout the community and how working together as a group we're able to make these intense connections that will benefit vets not just in the KC community but maybe throughout the entire US. I just have to say that KCPT has been a phenomenal resource for us and certainly a strong supporter.”

The audience was approximately 80 individuals, and the film had an immediate effect on them. The post-event report indicated that this audience skewed older and more male than other KCPT ILPOP events, “likely due to the fact that we heavily promoted the screening to our veteran organization partners that are mostly made up of Vietnam era veterans.” In the post-event survey, 68% of respondents were over the age of 50 and 82% were white.³ After the ILPOP event, 82% of respondents said they planned to talk to their friends and/or family about the film. Nearly three-quarters (73%) said they'd recommend *Independent Lens* content to their friends, family, and/or network and 82% of respondents said they'd like to attend future ILPOP events.

Meet the Patels

Meet the Patels, written and directed by siblings Geeta and Ravi Patel, “is a real-life romantic comedy about Ravi Patel, an Indian American actor/comedian who enters into a love triangle between the woman of his dreams — and his parents. Filmed by Ravi's sister, Geeta, in what started as a family vacation video, this warmly humorous film filled with unique animation and

³ The audience survey was administered after the screening and had a 55% response rate.

a soulful soundtrack reveals how, for a Patel, love is truly a family affair” (itvs.org). This film stands out among ILPOP films for its lighthearted, comedic tone. The ITVS team that works on ILPOP suggested that stations think creatively about these screenings, and created an engagement strategies guide with model activities such as comedy or improv shows and hosted a webinar to share event planning ideas and new approaches to consider.

GPB

For *Meet the Patels*, the GPB team wanted to do something different, recognizing an opportunity in the light-hearted comedy that focuses on challenges of multicultural young people in modern-day America. Emmalee Hackshaw says the GPB External Affairs team wanted to reach a younger audience to show that PBS content can be fun and hip. As they brainstormed about how to make the event unique, Hackshaw suggested they partner with Dad’s Garage, a downtown Atlanta improv comedy club.

Dad’s Garage is active in the Atlanta community and, in addition to improv comedy shows, does trainings with organizations throughout the region. Dad’s Garage and GPB had been exploring ways to collaborate, especially on radio initiatives, and Hackshaw saw the ILPOP *Meet the Patels* event as an opportunity to partner. Hackshaw contracted with Dad’s Garage’s improv group to do sketches following the screening.

The GPB team hoped that Dad’s Garage would bring a younger, more diverse audience to the ILPOP event, while Kevin Gillese, a staff person and ensemble cast member of Dad’s Garage, says that it saw partnering with GPB for the screening as a way to get a new audience in the door, one that might not be familiar with improv. Thus, the partnership was seen as mutually beneficial.

Hackshaw says that the approximately 80-person audience for this event was “quite diverse.” GPB promoted the event through targeted emails and social media channels. Dad’s Garage also promoted the event on social media. Hackshaw also says that there were people who had never attended a GPB event before who had learned about the event through an Eventbrite search. “They all said that they enjoyed the show and would be attending other screenings in the future,” says Hackshaw.

According to Gillesse, the audience for *Meet The Patels* and the improv show was “strictly a GPB audience.” His assessment is, “the majority of the people in the room weren't familiar with Dad’s Garage, and by the end of the show, we had garnered some good will and [the audience] had been won over.” Post-event surveys were not conducted at this ILPOP event.

Since the ILPOP event, GPB and Dad’s Garage have had multiple conversations about ideas for continued partnership. For example, GPB had a tent and a game station at Dad’s Garage recent annual fundraiser. In the words of Hackshaw:

“It is definitely a mutually beneficial relationship, and ILPOP was the first official thing we’d done together. Now the relationship has solidified.”

KCPT

Similar to GPB, KCPT wanted to do something different and unique for the *Meet the Patels* ILPOP event, and the station, too, thought a local comedy club would be a natural fit as a partner. While the Kansas City Improv Company says that it doesn’t typically do partnerships for events, KCPT has been a sponsor to the local KC Improv Festival, and so when Foat approached the organization, it decided to partner for the event.

The screening was held at the KC Improv Company’s Kick Comedy Club Theater. Ashley Osborn, Artistic Director at KC Improv Company, says that “we wanted to incorporate improv in some way in the event, so we talked with Lindsey [Foat] about how to integrate improv in the activities to lead a discussion about the film.” Osborn said the improv company had a few plans so they would be prepared for a large crowd or a small crowd, a talkative crowd or a shy crowd. In the end, she says that the improv “turned into more of an entertainment experience for the audience.” According to the KCPT post-event report:

“Instead of having a discussion after the film, five members of their company did a basic introduction of how improv works and then did several skits. All of the skits were themed around love and relationships, including one called Swipe Right where a player would create a character for a potential date and then if swipe right was called would have to act out a first date with another player.”

Similar to Dad’s Garage in Atlanta, the KC Improv Company saw this partnership as a way to bring in new people to experience improv and hopefully get them as new fans and audience members. KC Improv Company also invited its own audience, but according to Osborn, “The

afternoon time of the event was a little hard for our audience, which tends to be more of a night crew.” In the post-event report, Foat indicated that the screening had a more diverse crowd than typical ILPOP events, both in terms of racial and ethnic diversity and generational diversity.

Thirty-one people attended the event, and Foat’s hunch that it was a more diverse audience than many KCPT ILPOP events is confirmed by the post-event audience surveys.⁴ Fifty-two percent of the audience was under age 50, and the audience was 70% white (compared with more than 80% at other ILPOP events). Nearly two-thirds (65%) of respondents said they had increased awareness around issues in the film as a result of the event, and a massive 83% of respondents said they would speak to their friends and/or family about the event. Perhaps most impressive is that 94% of respondents said they’d recommend *Independent Lens* content to their friends, family, and/or network, and 70% said they’d like to receive the *Independent Lens* newsletter. Ninety-one percent of respondents said they’d like to attend future ILPOP events. And, while only 22% said they were currently members of their local PBS station (a lower percentage than most KCPT ILPOP events), 57% said they’d be likely to donate to their local PBS station.

⁴ The audience survey was administered after the screening and had a 74% response rate.

VI. ILPOP: Tough topics, generative conversations

Unlike GPB and KCPT, Basin PBS serves a largely rural community in the conservative state of Texas. Basin's ILPOP event for *Real Boy* provides a clear example of how *Independent Lens's* deeply reported, documentary films can provide an opportunity for rural community members to learn more about current issues facing people around the US with which they might not have firsthand knowledge or experience. Alyson Trevino, Creative Director at Basin PBS says, "thanks to the amazing and diverse films provided to us through ILPOP and the tone that we're able to set for these events, people in our communities feel safe and welcome to speak their minds and be a part of the conversation."

Real Boy ILPOP

Trevino, who is tasked with managing the ILPOP series, says that *Real Boy* was both the most challenging and most rewarding film for her station during the 2016-2017 ILPOP season. Being in a conservative area, she guessed that there would be, at best, a lack of interest, and at worst, resistance, to the film. In her words, "With *Real Boy*, Basin PBS hoped to engage and create awareness of those who are transgender in general, as well as raise awareness about the growing number [of trans youth] in our communities. We also hoped to continue to build new, and nurture growing, partnerships within our communities. We hoped to reach a new audience as well as encourage viewership of the film on-air."

In order to achieve these goals, Basin partnered with the Ector County Library to host the ILPOP event. Trevino reached out to Mareena Benevides, counselor and owner of On the Couch Counseling, to help put together a panel that would include local resources. Benevides is a counselor to local trans youth and has a personal connection to the issue through her son, who is trans. On the Couch Counseling has space at the Universitarian Universalist church in Midland, TX, an organization that had partnered with Basin on an earlier ILPOP event, and Benevides suggested inviting Reverend Emily Wright-Magoon to moderate the panel.

The panel included Benevides, Felix Vasquez, a trans youth who also gave a musical performance after the film before the start of the panel, Mireya Guerrero, Felix's mom, Matthias Dearstyne, Gio Pham, and Kerry Manzo, a doctoral candidate in comparative literature who is an expert on representation of LGBTQ lives in fiction and nonfiction literature.

While Trevino, Benevides, and Krista Lynam Vanderburg of the Ector County Library worked hard to create an event space and panel that would be feel welcoming to all community members, they also guessed that some would not feel comfortable coming to the event, especially trans individuals who might benefit from the local resources the event was highlighting. Trevino decided to livestream the event on Facebook so these people could potentially watch the panel discussion, as well as other Basin PBS audience members who would not actively choose to attend an ILPOP event, but whom might benefit from participating in the conversation.

While Trevino had expected the event to be the most challenging of the season, she says that she was pleasantly surprised that it turned out to be “one of the easiest.” She says that she found “great support and assistance” from local partners - especially Benevides, and that the turnout for the event was one of the largest they had all season (approximately 40 attendees). Vanderburg, of the library, echoes this point when she says, “Having movies like *Real Boy* means [the library] can reach new demographic groups. We saw more young adults there than we do at our other teen events.”

***Real Boy*, real impact**

While there are not audience surveys from Basin PBS’s *Real Boy* ILPOP event, anecdotal evidence suggests that the powerful event had an effect on audience members and created meaningful relationships among community members and organizations. Trevino says that, while Basin had partnered with the Unitarian Universalist church before, this event deepened and solidified that relationship. She also says that neither she nor the station had relationships with the LGBTQ communities in the area, and this event provided an opportunity for the station to position itself as an ally and partner. And, while many of the activists and support organizations already knew each other, community partners say that the opportunity to invite other friends and family to a film screening allowed them to grow their networks.

Basin’s use of Facebook Live also ensured that the community discussion was available to other community members, and the livestreamed video has been viewed nearly 400 times, extending the reach of the conversation to an even larger audience. Trevino says, “There are a lot [of people] here who live in a bubble and have no idea or don’t want to know that [gender transitioning] is even a thing, let alone here, so it was important to make sure we had a meaningful conversation that could be shared via Facebook Live to those who perhaps didn’t

want to be there.” And the panel and conversation was, according to station staff and partners, nothing short of amazing. “The film and the panel discussion went further than I could have ever imagined in opening minds and hearts,” asserts Trevino.

VI. Findings and recommendations

For the 2016-17 season, twenty-one stations participated in Indie Lens Pop-Up, as the lead partner producing community screenings for *Independent Lens* films across the United States. There are an additional 26 community organizations that collaborated directly with their local station, and 17 community organizations that host screenings largely independent of their local station. An additional five stations hosted one or two Indie Lens Pop-Up screenings in their community as a “one-off” partner. Georgia Public Broadcasting and Kansas City PBS serve as instructive cases of stations that have used Indie Lens Pop-Up as a key program in building robust community engagement initiatives. Using these cases to better understand the value of ILPOP to stations, we find that ILPOP provides “engagement-in-a-box” - a pre-selection of a diverse array of films, mini grants made available to stations, access to ITVS staff, a network among stations and community partners facilitated by ITVS, and the event specific resources (e.g., discussion guides) - that allows a station with limited resources to delve into community engagement. As community engagement initiatives mature, becoming more robustly staffed and integrated into stations, ILPOP maintains its position as a core engagement program, in part because stations can experiment creatively with partnerships and formats for the events.

1. Through ILPOP, stations come to be seen as a community resource and partner by community organizations and individuals.

ILPOP provides stations a season-long slate of *Independent Lens* films that tackle complicated issues and represent diverse communities. ILPOP also provides the resources stations need to craft events that resonate with local communities. As evidenced through the cases of GPB, KCPT, and Basin PBS, community organizations and individuals recognize and appreciate the powerful IL content and the locally resonant ILPOP event programming. As the conveners of these events, stations solidify their role as a community resource and partner. Furthermore, nearly ninety percent of ILPOP partners (89%) agree that ILPOP has contributed to new and/or strengthened partnerships with other community organizations and eighty-seven percent say that ILPOP has led community organizations and individuals to see their station as a resource or partner.

2. ILPOP provides stations with a low-cost, low-risk community engagement program that can serve as a proof of concept, making it easier to get broad station buy-in for increased community engagement.

In providing stations with event stipends, conversation guides, webinars, and other resources, ITVS makes it easy for stations to participate in the ILPOP program, even without a dedicated staff person or community engagement specialist. The overwhelmingly positive response of audiences and community organizations to the ILPOP events encourages stations to further invest in both the ILPOP program and in other forms of innovative community engagement. Especially for stations with a desire to do community engagement but have limited resources (both financial and human), ILPOP makes it possible.

3. Stations can use ILPOP to meet their unique strategic goals and priorities.

Whether a station is working to build a robust in-person community engagement program, reporting based in and on community engagement, or drive audience tune-in, ILPOP can be adapted to meet these goals and priorities. In addition to the case studies, in end-of-season surveys eighty-eight percent of partners agree that they've used and adapted ILPOP to meet unique strategic goals and priorities.

4. Stations can generate editorial content (not only promotional material) through the program, especially when the station's structure promotes interdepartmental collaboration and program staff have editorial experience.

As illustrated through the case of KCPT, when the station's organizational structure promotes cross-departmental communication to tie together diverse editorial content, ILPOP events can be closely integrated with other station content. Additionally, having a trained journalist involved in the ILPOP event allows for the creation of editorial content through the Q&As, panel conversations, and interviews with participants.

5. One person or team should own the ILPOP initiative.

While the ILPOP program can be implemented ad hoc, it is helpful for a station to have an individual who manages the program in order to serve as a consistent community partner. In all cases considered here - KCPT, GPB, and Basin PBS - community partners emphasized the value of the connections they had made with Lindsey Foat, Emmalee Hackshaw, and Alyson Trevino, respectively. These program managers (and their station colleagues) also say that

their consistent leadership means they know which community partners they should go back to for which events and how to make connections and introductions among partners.

6. ILPOP supports increased brand recognition for *Independent Lens*.

ILPOP connects the dots that IL content is high quality documentary film available on local PBS stations for station staff, community partners, and audience members alike. Community partners in particular said that they have an increased appreciation for *Independent Lens* and increased motivation to use film in their work. Audience members want increased information about IL, indicate they will watch IL on air, and say they'll talk to their friends and family about IL. In end-of-season surveys, eighty-three percent of partners agreed that ILPOP has increased recognition of *Independent Lens* among community partners and audiences.

7. ILPOP creates spaces for generative community conversations about relevant, and often challenging, topics.

At a moment in time in which the United States is experiencing increased political polarization and radical extremism on all sides of the spectrum, ILPOP events introduce relevant, often challenging topics to audiences and provide a format for a structured, community conversation. *Independent Lens* films weave together powerful narratives and facts, increasing audiences' awareness and understanding about issues and creating opportunities for deep learning and empathy building.

Appendix A

Interviews

Organization	Individual	Title
GPB	Bert Huffman	VP of External Affairs
GPB	Rebecca Hogue	Direct Marketing Manager
GPB	Emmalee Hackshaw	Director of Community Engagement
Chris180	Anne Wilson	Director of Marketing and Communication
Dad's Garage	Kevin Gillese	Staff
Trauma and Anxiety Recovery Program, Emory University	Liza Zwiebach	Assistant Professor
KCPT	Lindsey Foat	Community Engagement Producer
KCPT	Angee Simmons	VP TV Production & Creative Services
KCPT	Jonathan Bender	Reporter, <i>Flatland</i>
Kansas City Public Library	Courtney Lewis	Staff
University of Missouri Kansas City	Caitlyn Horsmon	Assistant Professor
Moral Injury Association of America	Cindy McDermott	Co-Founder
Grandparents Against Gun Violence	Judy Sherry	Founder
Kansas City Improv Company	Ashley Osborn	Artistic Director
Basin PBS	Alyson Trevino	Creative Director
Basin PBS	Carla Holeva	General Manager
Basin PBS	Jazmin Shotts	Membership Coordinator
Ector County Library	Krista Lynam Vanderburg	