

FACILITATOR'S GUIDE:

Bay Window “Raising a Ruckus: New Activism and the Response to Globalization”

INTRODUCTION

In November 1999, Seattle hosted a meeting of the World Trade Organization (WTO), the only global organization dealing with the rules of trade between nations. The city also, unexpectedly, hosted thousands of protesters with such diverse interests as prison reform, labor rights, and environmental protection. The success of those demonstrations has resulted in a lasting legacy, with Seattle serving as a touchstone for a new generation of activists who are committed to building a coalition linking local and global interests. By introducing us to some of the groups and individuals involved in Seattle, as well as subsequent demonstrations in Prague, Philadelphia, and Los Angeles, “**Raising a Ruckus**” examines the challenges inherent in democratic social protest. The film’s insights on creating a coalition across lines of race, class, and age, as well as differing agendas and disagreements about tactics, can provide a valuable tool for you to facilitate dialogue about;

- How dissent is expressed, and
- The potential of individuals and diverse groups to build alliances towards common goals.

THE ISSUES

“I’m for globalization, communication, solidarity. But corporate globalization is not only not inevitable; in fact, it is inevitable that we get rid of it...”

- Han Shan, Ruckus Society

The unifying issue for protesters featured in the film is “globalization”, which refers to the expansion of free-market capitalism across national, ethnic, and political boundaries, giving increasing power to transnational corporations.

How does globalization effect affect you? Can you identify concrete examples of the effects of globalization in your community? Is globalization inevitable?

The protests featured in “Raising a Ruckus” focus on three organizations:

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank – The World Bank and the IMF are the largest lending institutions in the world. In exchange for providing loans to needy countries, these agencies require the recipient governments to implement economic policies designed to promote privatization and corporate growth.

The World Trade Organization (WTO) - Founded in 1995 to enforce the internationally recognized General Agreement on Tariffs & Trade (GATT), the WTO has the power to impose economic sanctions on countries that, in its view, have violated the agreement.

What is it about the *structures* of these agencies that the protesters find problematic? What is it about the *policies* of these agencies that the protesters find problematic? Given that protestors represent a wide variety of organizations and issues, what connects the groups that fight against corporate globalization?

TACTICS: THE CHALLENGES OF MAKING YOUR VOICE HEARD IN A DEMOCRACY

“One thing protests can do is to make you take into account these concerns. If you don’t take into account these concerns, we’re going to disrupt your peace.”

- Professor Clayborne Carson, Stanford University

“Creative confrontation” and “non-violent direct action” are ultimately about getting people to pay attention and giving voice to perspectives that have been missing from the public eye. As you look at the choices people make in the film, consider:

In the film, who did you find the most convincing or inspiring and why?

Based on what you saw in the film, how does using violence, or non-violent tactics, influence public opinion? Media coverage?

Can you think of other protests or acts of civil disobedience throughout this country’s history that were successful? What were the keys to their success? How much does the race, class, gender, or age of protesters influence public opinion?

How might you act on issues you find important?

What are alternative ways to bring about change in policies or institutions?

ASSESSING THE RISKS / BUILDING ALLIANCES

“Using your pain and your fire and translating it into work for the people, for the masses, is a really healing thing...” - Malachi Larrabee-Garcia

Can all U.S. citizens engage in protest equally? What might keep some segments of the population from demonstrating or from otherwise, ‘raising a ruckus’? How do stakes change if you are:

A person of color? White? A member of a minority group? Not fluent in English? Young? A parent?
Your family’s sole support? On probation?
Poor? Rich? Working for an hourly wage? Retired?
Physically disabled or in need of physical assistance? Terminally ill?
A leader? A celebrity? A woman? A man?
Add your own categories:

How might these differences create an obstacle to cooperation? How might working with people who don’t share your risk factors be beneficial? How can people who don’t share your situation act as your ally?

Is diversity a strength, or does it dilute the key message(s)?

How can issue-specific groups work together to identify common goals?

RESOURCES

www.kqed.org/baywindow – The **KQED Bay Window** web site for “**Raising a Ruckus**” offers ways to get involved in your community, contact information for the organizations featured in the film, as well as personal stories from local youth organizers. You can also download **KQED Education Network’s** curriculum for middle and high school classroom use.

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