

climate

A PROGRAM OF EXPOSURE LABS

WINTER 2020/2021

CONTRIBUTORS

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about the contributors



SAM ADLER

Samantha is focused on formulating social impact strategies through the power of film as Exposure Labs' Campaign Manager. As a passionate storyteller, she's interested in the intersection of climate change and human rights. Most recently, she's worked for Yale's Program for Climate Change Communication promoting research around a multifaceted approach to climate change social research. She has also worked as a journalist for Alliance Earth, writing and reporting on environmental issues, including an assignment in Botswana's Kalahari Desert. Prior, Samantha acted as the Global Communications Manager at Girl Rising. Projects included constructing a communications strategy with the White House in relation to the First Lady's Let Girls Learn initiative. Samantha holds a BA in Journalism and Cinema Studies from New York University and is based in San Diego with her many plants and fluffy cat.

LINDSAY CROWDER

Lindsay is the Field & Advocacy Director at Exposure Labs, overseeing the development of our climate work. From running national campaign offices for a handful of progressive organizations to developing dozens of digital campaigns for a variety of clients, Lindsay centers her work in building community & transformational change. Most recently, she worked as National Organizing Director for the Peoples Climate Movement, building program work that demands bold climate action centered in racial and economic justice through mass mobilization, coalition building and movement alignment. She is based in Brooklyn, New York, soon to be Detroit, Michigan.



MONA YEH

Mona has a passion for the intersection of stories and social justice. She was recently lead producer of a broadcast radio series on public transit commuting as part of the Localore: Finding America initiative, where she received an award for disability reporting, and is also a co-founder of an oral history collective focused on collecting and telling stories of social movement activists. Before joining Exposure Labs, she was the Communications Director of the Funder's Collaborative on Youth Organizing, a national funding intermediary. Mona holds a bachelor's in radio/television/film from Northwestern University and is based in LA, where she is a professional hobby dabbler and karaoke enthusiast.





introduction



We believe that the transformational power of storytelling is one of the greatest tools that we can use to accelerate climate action at scale.

Since 2012, Exposure Labs has been using our films *Chasing Ice* and *Chasing Coral* as tools to advance the climate movement – from [challenging prominent climate skeptics](#) to [advancing clean energy legislation](#). In addition to our original productions, we recently launched [Film in the Field](#), connecting film and storytelling beyond our own to the grassroots efforts of organizers around the country, and efforts to support the impact work of global storytellers through initiatives like [Climate Story Lab](#).

We believe that the transformational power of storytelling is one of the greatest tools that we can use to accelerate climate action at scale. Stories shape culture, and reshaping the cultural awareness around climate change is how we, at Exposure Labs, can help to make climate action a priority.

We recognize that there is no single story that will resonate with all audiences. We need a diversity of climate stories that can engage communities who may not see themselves as part of the current movement, and then connect these communities to trusted organizations and leaders who can guide them towards long lasting action. The most effective climate stories will evoke a broader range of emotions beyond hope and fear, and will be centered in climate justice, less extractive and include a range of storytellers, trusted messengers, subject matters, and mediums to reach over political and cultural divides.

Our past campaigns and movement efforts have put us in a unique position to build bridges -- from this vantage point, we have witnessed a surprising gap between the world of climate advocacy and that of climate storytelling. Our climate programming seeks to unite the power of these two worlds with other stakeholders to engage new audiences, expand the broader climate storytelling ecosystem, challenge power, and ensure that both organizers and storytellers have the resources, access, and capacity to do the work.

looking back

PAST WORK + IMPACT

In order to move our work forward effectively, it's important to have a shared understanding of what we've done and where we've been. Our case studies help to tell that story and showcase the impact we've made with our climate work to date.



CASE STUDY

Climate Story Lab

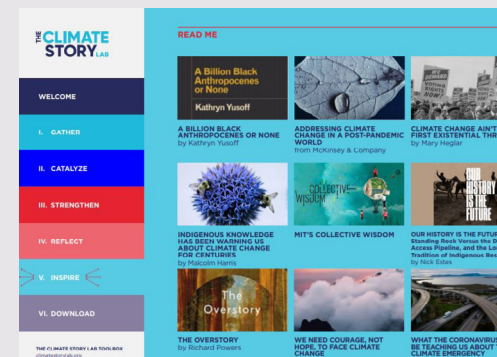


CLIMATE STORY LAB UK 2020

The [report from Climate Story Lab UK](#), which took place in March 2020 just ahead of the Covid-19 lockdown, summarizes key insights and take-aways from our latest three day meeting and aims to inspire media makers, climate activists and their allies around the globe to support story-based climate action.

DIGITAL TOOLBOX

The Climate Story Lab [Digital Toolbox](#) is an aid for cultural organizers who want to host their own gatherings - whether in person or virtual, it can be iterated and adapted to suit the context and community. We will keep updating the toolbox with perspectives from around the world and always welcome suggestions.



THE CLIMATE
STORY LAB

CLIMATE STORY LAB US-NY 2019

The five-day convening focused on 12 projects but also explored broader questions about this particular moment in the climate crisis in the U.S. To get a flavor of the lab have a [look at this short film](#). While [this report goes further](#), summarizing key insights and take-aways from the Lab and aims to resource media makers, climate activists, amplifiers, and allies with tools, inspiration, and lessons to support story-based climate action in your own corner of the planet.

CASE STUDY

Film in the Field

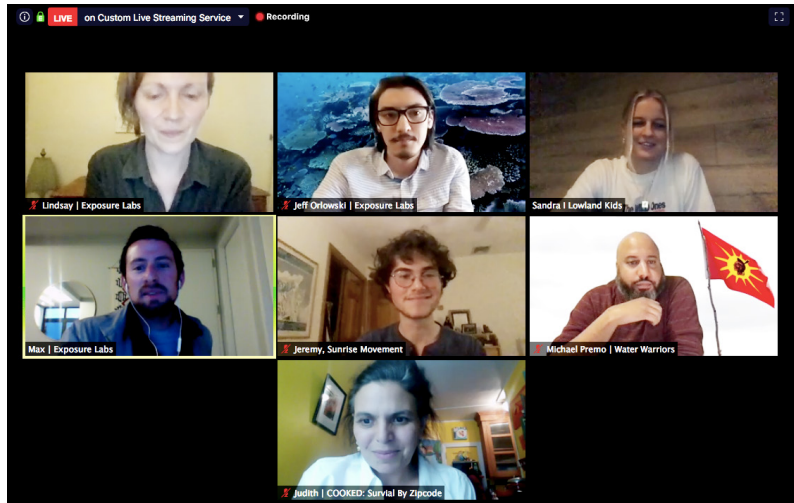
EARTH DAY 2020

Using film to drive climate action in a time of social distancing

HOW WE DID IT

During this time of social distancing, many groups were forced to cancel their in-person Earth Day gatherings to curb the spread of COVID-19. In response to the moment, we created a library of films and tools to support groups in moving their Earth Day mobilizations online and individuals in celebrating without physical convenings. To complement watch parties, we hosted a Q&A conversation to connect film teams and organizing insights for driving climate action.

FILM IN THE field



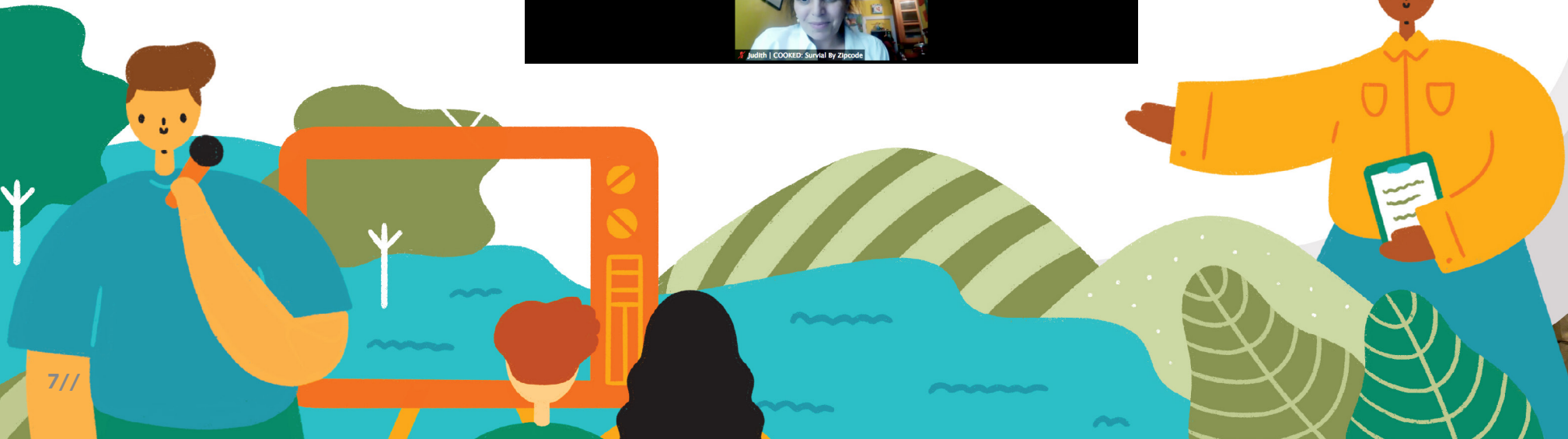
SOUTH CAROLINA

Energy Freedom Act passes following statewide film tour

HOW WE DID IT

Alongside CVSC (Conservation Voters of South Carolina), we created the Dear South Carolina Tour, using film to advance solar legislation. The statewide tour featured a mix of titles to reach audiences that legislators don't typically hear from on clean energy -- such as The Burden to engage armed forces and Beasts of the Southern Wild for reaching communities of color. Guests shared messages directed at their legislator calling for a transition to clean energy. The visible groundswell of support from 30+ screenings in 12 counties drew 8 Republican legislators to our events and was a critical factor in securing unanimous passage of the Energy Freedom Act in May 2019.

 [Watch our case study here](#)





GEORGIA

After-work screenings drive millennials to the polls on climate issues

HOW WE DID IT

Using the voter file we identified that there are 15+ million registered voters who care deeply about the environment, but regularly do not vote. To activate this group in Atlanta, we launched the [Big Screen Bloc Party](#), using film to grow the environmental voter bloc ahead of the midterms. The series featured unexpected film selections to educate Atlantans about environmental issues at stake in local elections. Bloc parties contributed to the highest early voter turnout in a midterm election and [doubled](#) young voter turnout since 2014.



OHIO

Congressman Tiberi responds to call, joining Climate Solutions Caucus

HOW WE DID IT

In the Spring of 2014 we launched the [Chasing Ice Ohio Tour](#) in an attempt to use the film to shift the political conversation around climate change. As a society, for us to address climate change properly, we need our leaders in Washington to stop debating about whether or not it is actually happening and start taking action. So we decided to take Chasing Ice to one Congressional district, where Congressman Pat Tiberi (OH-12) had denied climate change. Congressman Tiberi responded to the call, changing his stance on climate change and even joined the Climate Solutions Caucus.



laying a foundation

From Spring through Fall of 2020, the Exposure Labs team underwent an internal process to develop a set of foundational statements and documents to support the long-term impact of our work. We began at the organizational level and then further focused the thinking to guide our climate work. Below is an introduction to that process.

EXPOSURE LABS

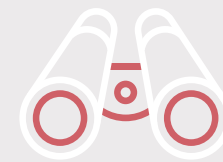
Mission, Vision, Values



Mission

We use stories to change the world.

We believe that stories are the most powerful catalyst to build empathy, shape culture, foster equity, and shift systems. We share stories and craft campaigns to address big societal challenges.



Vision

We envision a world that is fair, just, and equitable for all people and the planet.

A world that is sustainable and regenerative, where people recognize that science and truth can prevent unnecessary pain and suffering, where we recognize the complexities, nuances, and differences that unify us, and where we work together to build a better future for all.





Values

Equity & Sustainability

We believe a sustainable world must be fair and just for all people and the planet and the path forward requires an intersectional approach to overcome systemic and institutional injustices.

Creativity & Innovation

We embrace big ideas and creative thinking in all of our work, looking for new and innovative ways to share and connect with our audiences and communities. We are adaptable, flexible, and maintain a growth mindset.

Love & Inclusion

We build bridges and focus on what unites us over what divides us. We recognize that just like in nature, diversity brings strength and resilience, and we seek an inclusive future where all stakeholders are involved in the decisions that affect them. We know that we can go further together when diverse voices, perspectives, and experiences are at the table.

Truth & Complexity

We don't shy away from hard questions, and we maintain the open-mindedness to challenge our own beliefs. We seek out perspectives that differ from our own, approach the world with curiosity, and take the time to embrace the nuance in ideas.

Integrity

We do what we believe is the right thing, even when it's not the easy thing, putting time, thought, and care into our decisions, actions, and partnerships.

Optimism

We believe that a better world is possible and we recognize we must contribute and do our part in order to realize that change.

EXPOSURE LABS

Climate Program Theory of Change, Points of Unity, and Group Agreements

Theory of Change

We believe that the transformational power of storytelling is one of the greatest tools that we can use to accelerate climate action at scale. Our work serves as a pathway for climate storytellers, organizers, and the broader storytelling ecosystem; moving away from centering ourselves, to disrupting unjust power structures, and ensuring that both organizers and storytellers have the resources, access, and capacity to do the work.

We build bridges, foster collaboration, and seek to be a trusted hub and thought partner for climate storytellers and organizers, recognizing our privilege and power, bringing innovation and opportunity to the overall ecosystem, and ensuring that we are contributing to an equitable, intersectional, and multidisciplinary approach to addressing the climate crisis through the power of storytelling.

Points of Unity

Points of Unity are our shared values, beliefs, methods, and means. They guide our climate work, reflect who we are and what we believe in, and inform our decision making. Our process was inspired by the great work of our friends at AORTA.

We ground our work and ourselves by listening.

We are committed to intentional relationship building, both new and long-term, to nurture a network of individuals, organizations, storytellers, and other stakeholders co-collaborating in building an ecosystem of solutions to the climate crisis. We appreciate that this involves constant work at the individual, organizational, and structural level.



We follow the **Jemez Principles of Democratic Organizing** in all that we do.

We encourage our team, our partners, and all relationships to show up with their whole selves.

We nurture intergenerational practices, we value intimacy, depth, and trust, and we believe care for self, others, and community is crucial to a more sustainable world.

We stand in alliance with struggles that uphold collective liberation and cooperation and recognize that those struggles can be intersectional. We believe that individuals, organizations, and ecosystems can be transformed.

We assume our own power and privilege and maintain our humility.

We believe in the importance of leadership and prioritize the development of leaders among youth, communities most impacted by the climate crisis, and intentionally targeted communities in all levels of our work.

We spend our time building bridges rather than closing doors.

We value resource sharing and are committed to contributing to a fair and just ecosystem by directly linking resources and capacity building with the communities that need them most.

We move at the speed of trust and honor that there is always enough time for the right work.



Group Agreements

Group Agreements are intended to clarify our role in community spaces and meetings and allow room for holistic participation. Depending on the group, meeting, and overall purpose, these agreements can be built on and adapted for meaningful use.

Make space, take space // Be mindful of how you use your time, your power, and privilege.

Be brave // Lean into tensions that can lead to growth, learning, and clarity.

Approach questions and thinking with curiosity and disrupt harm without apology.

Throw glitter, not shade // Share your truth using “yes/and” & “I” and treat others with care.

Focus on the behavior, not the person // Aim for accountability.

Be present // Your attention is a gift, what you pay attention to grows.

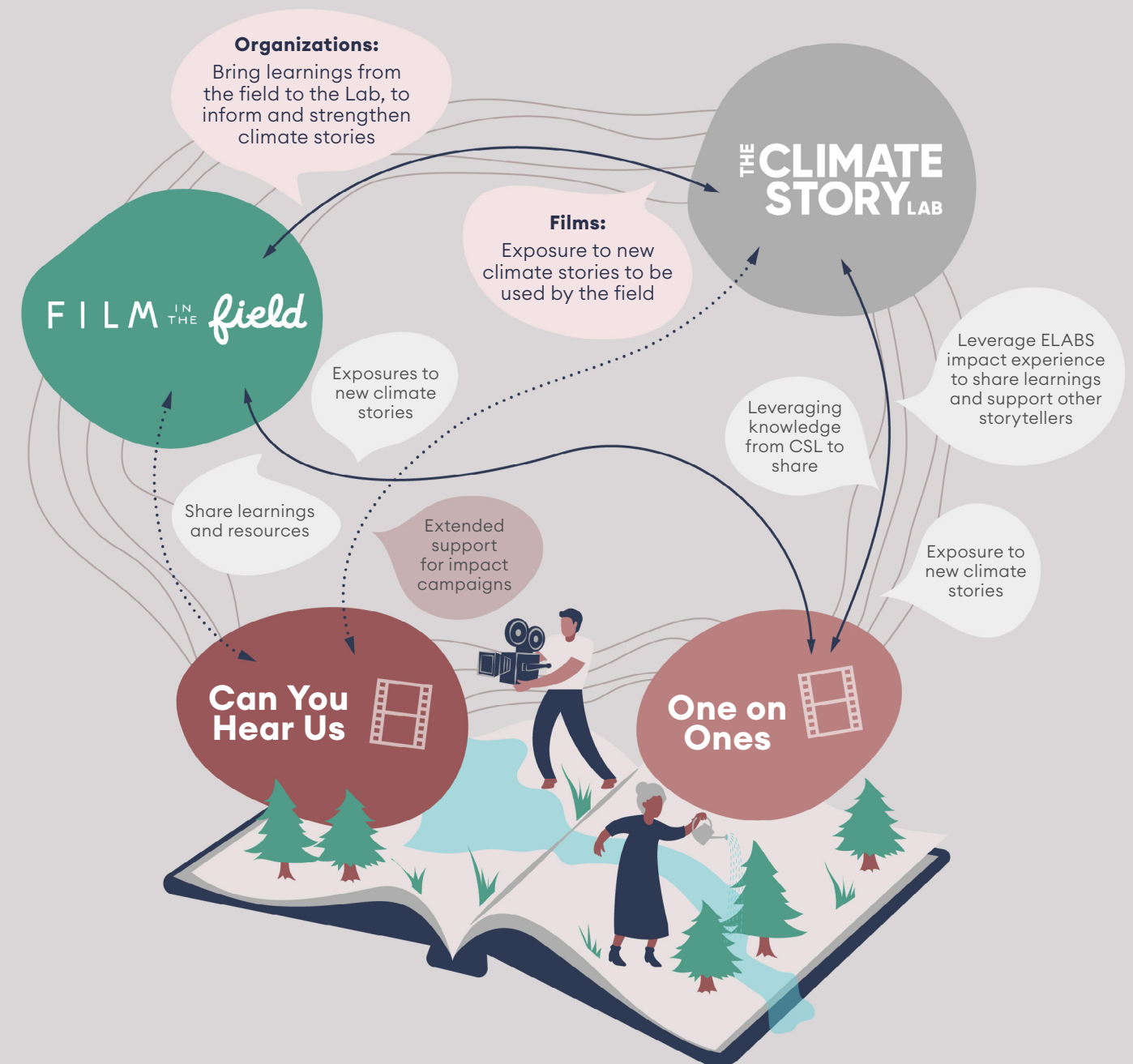
looking ahead

As we consolidate our climate programming under one cohesive vision and theory of change, our work will continue to grow and evolve to best serve the movement. Here is a snapshot into our current and growing offerings:



STORYTELLER PATHWAY

Exposure Labs has a unique role, with the ability to collaborate with climate storytellers, organizers, and other stakeholders along both the film production and impact journey. Our team is developing a framework to illustrate clear pathways for climate storytellers, organizers and the broader ecosystem to engage with our work across all of our existing climate programs.



a. CLIMATE STORY LAB

Climate Story Lab is a series of interventions designed by Exposure Labs and Doc Society with a laser focus determination to accelerate effective climate communication at the regional level. The first two iterations were held in New York in 2019 and London in 2020. Hoping to learn from past successes and failures in climate narratives, the Labs showcased selections of new storytelling projects that aimed to reach and engage diverse audiences.

This model is a deliberately highly interdisciplinary and adaptable approach, combining a carefully curated range of people interested in the same challenge - how to communicate the climate crisis more effectively and move communities to action. The model seeks to deliberately examine stories and unpack who is telling the story, how are we telling it, who is funding it, and how does the story get shared. The first two iterations of the lab have convened climate storytellers working across all creative mediums (including fiction / non-fiction / podcasts / poetry / plays) in conversation with climate scientists, advocacy organizations, social scientists, political strategists, faith leaders, cultural curators, journalists, grassroots and youth campaigners.



We need a biodiversity of stories and storytellers as diverse as the ecosystems we seek to save.

– Michael Premo, Storyline Media

Informed by the latest insights on public attitudes, this intersectional group discusses how best to inspire citizens and mobilize communities in the target region. Theory is put into practice as storyteller teams and climate organizing groups are each given the opportunity to strategize their work with the room – challenging their own creative ideas as well as developing more robust campaigns for both sides. The immediate goal is that all participants are strengthened, a number of the creative projects are dramatically accelerated, and new creative and strategic collaborations are manifested.

As part of an ongoing intention to make the Climate Story Lab model accessible and adaptable to different contexts, the Climate Story Lab Toolbox was created, which includes a library of videos from experts, discussion prompts and resources to help guide gatherings. The Toolbox will grow over the next year.

To build on our existing relationships and commitment to building capacity for climate storytelling in the South, we are planning a Climate Story Lab US-South tentatively scheduled for April, 2021. We have secured partnerships with regional stakeholders New Orleans Film Society and the Southeast Climate and Energy Network (SCEN).

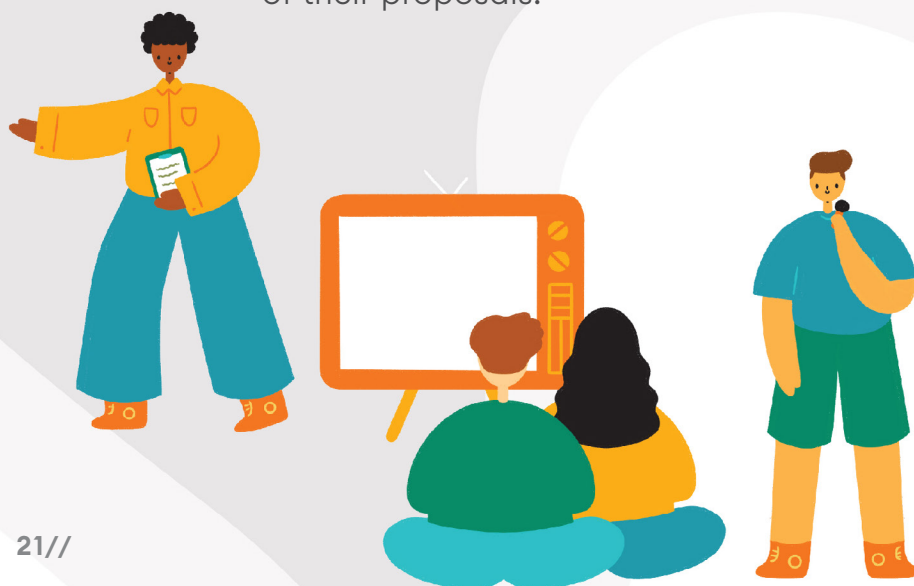


b. FILM IN THE FIELD

In 2019, we launched [Film in the Field](#), our new program that goes beyond our own productions to connect film and storytelling to the grassroots efforts of organizers around the country.

We believe that the power of storytelling is an underutilized tool to address the climate crisis -- touching audiences where logic cannot, sparking new perspectives, transforming hearts and inspiring action. By leveraging an expanded community of climate storytellers, combined with the knowledge and experience of climate organizations, Film in the Field can help build political will at the speed and scale we need to preserve our world for future generations.

In September 2020, we partnered with the Southeast Climate & Energy Network to support the use of climate storytelling to mobilize new audiences, drive climate action and create lasting change. Through a Request for Proposal process, this partnership aims to use film screenings (drawn from Exposure Labs [Film in the Field Library](#) of films and resources) and innovative organizing models to reach new audiences, building an engagement journey that will guide these audiences towards specific actions that advance respective goals. Impact will be measured through metrics designed around the following models or established by organizations, based on the goals of their proposals:



CULTURE-SHIFTER

Increasing Public Awareness

- Build relationships with new audiences and communities that are not already part of the conversation.
- Energize your base with issue education, training, and kick-off campaigns for canvassing events or other key moments in your organizing.
- Partner with cultural institutions and leverage an unexpected base to your organizing goals.

PRESSURE-BUILDER

Increasing Public Engagement

- Drive legislator accountability by inviting them to your event or including them in your call to action.
- Challenge prominent skeptics by leveraging audience reactions with a public call to action.

MOVEMENT-BUILDER

Fostering collaboration

- Ignite deep thinking with key stakeholders by creating an intentional space for planning and visioning.
- Build the movement and nurture allyship by bringing different groups and their bases together in solidarity.

This project kicks off our long-term commitment and effort to use climate storytelling to grow the climate movement and to create additive models for both storytellers and organizers to do the work.



Film in the Field has given our members the opportunity to explore firsthand the connection between storytelling and impact.

– Sara Ochoa, SCEN

c. CAN YOU HEAR US?



Youth-led movements have been growing across the globe, expanding to a range of issues from climate change to gun violence to racial inequality. Their voices are loud and clear. They are now looking to the rest of the world to listen, and more importantly, act.

Building on this momentum, the “[Can You Hear Us?](#)” campaign’s vision is to accelerate local climate action by uplifting the momentum and voices of youth climate activists around the world through the power of film.

The campaign will initially be based around the release of *I Am Greta*, a feature-length documentary providing an intimate look at Greta Thunberg’s journey to becoming a globally recognized activist. B-Reel Films, the Swedish production company behind the film, have been by her side from the start, including sailing with her across the Atlantic in time for the UN Climate Week in September 2019. *I Am Greta* will premiere in the U.S. on Hulu on November 13, 2020. We’ve partnered with [YEA! Impact](#) to lead the campaign forward.

We acknowledge that the global media has dedicated a significant amount of coverage to Greta, often forgoing spotlighting the work of those who have been elevating the need for climate justice for generations. Inspired by Greta’s leadership to pass the mic to fellow activists, we hope to leverage this film’s ability to reach those beyond the environmental choir and connect those audiences to the work of youth activists across the globe.

d. 1-ON-1S

In the spirit of collaboration, community, and mutual learning, the Exposure Labs team reserves time each week for conversations with filmmakers and impact producers on feedback, potential collaborations, connections and questions on specific areas of our expertise. [1-on-1s](#) are available to anyone currently working in the film and/or impact space. 1-on-1s were designed with the following values in mind:

Service-oriented

Exposure Labs is in a position where we can leverage our experience and expertise in service of the broader community without expecting anything in return.

Inclusive

We want to democratize access to industry professionals and expertise by eliminating a gatekeeper. Anyone can sign up for 1-on-1s and speak to someone on our team based on their interests and needs, rather than an internally set criteria.

Optional

We recognize this still takes capacity. ELABS team members can opt into the program and choose how much time they make available for 1-on-1s.



If our generation wants to win a government that cares about COVID-19 and climate change, we need stories. The work of climate storytellers is to anchor this massive crisis in real life.

– Jeremy Ornstein,
Storytelling Strategist,
Sunrise Movement

e.

MOVEMENT BUILDING

In honor of our values and our ongoing commitment to ensure that we are contributing to an equitable, intersectional, and multidisciplinary approach to addressing the climate crisis, our team has invested time and resources into movement building opportunities to grow the work & inform our role across the field. Over the course of 2020, we participated in the following movement moments.



The Sundance Film Festival, Sundance Institute*

Media Impact Funders Sundance Gathering, Media Impact Funders*

The New Climate Narratives, Hip Hop Caucus

Environmental Film Festival, DC Environmental Film Festival

Digital Impact Screenings Resource Guide, Together Films

Transitioning to Social Distance Organizing, Social Movement Technologies*

Break/Out: A Roundtable on COVID-19 and the Narrative Moment, ReFrame

MobLabs Community Call, Mobilisation Labs*

CAL Research & Experimentation 8, Climate Advocacy Lab*

Arm in Arm National Kick-Off Call, Arm in Arm + USCAN

Culture: The Engine to Protect Democracy, Culture Surge

How We Won 100%, Climate Advocacy Lab and Climate and Energy Funders Group

Community Deep Dive, Hearken

PIVOT! Creating Successful Online Conferences, BCDC Ideas

SCEN Virtual Convening, the Southeast Climate & Energy Network

DOC NYC PRO Immersive: Social Impact When the World is Inside, DOC NYC*

Lessons for Rebellion, People's Forum

Communicating in these times: Clean Energy, COVID, Racial Justice, 100% Network

Unbreathable: The Fight for Healthy Air Premiere and Live Discussion, American University School of Communication

Surveillance Pandemic - A Conversation with Naomi Klein and Edward Snowden, Mijente

Civic Science: Lessons from Research & Implications for MIF's Learning Agenda, Media Impact Funders

Our Village, Ford Foundation*

Beyond Resilience: The Black Gaze, Firelight Media

WOW Global Festival, Women of the World Festival*

CAL Equity & Justice Peer Learning Circle, Climate Advocacy Lab*

New Climate Narratives: In a World of Racial Injustice and a Global Pandemic, Producers Guild of America

Un(Documenting): Storytelling Through the Undocumented Lens, Firelight Media

Hopes and Fears in a Covid World, Other & Belonging Institute + More in Common

Uniontown Screening with Rep. Brawley, Conservation Voters of South Carolina

Black, Indigenous, People of Color Surviving Predominantly White Institutions, artEquity

SCEN Environmental Justice & FRESH Energy Working Groups, the Southeast Climate & Energy Network*

The Storytellers' Guide to Changing Our World, Culture Surge

Allied Media Conference, Allied Media Project

Beyond Resilience: After the Call Out: Towards Equity, Equality, and Racial Justice, Firelight Media

Netroots Nation, Netroots

Blackstar Film Festival, Blackstar

Introducing the THRIVE Agenda, People's Action

Good Pitch Local Philadelphia, Good Pitch Local + Doc Society

Crafting Powerful Climate Narratives, Climate Advocacy Lab*

Story Leads to Action, Working Films and The School of Good Citizenship

Getting Real, International Documentary Association

Climate Story Lab Berlin, Human Rights Film Festival Berlin

This Film Kills Fascism, Peace is Loud and The Future of Film is Female

Planet Prescription Film Premier and Clean Air Conversation, Mothers and Others for Clean Air

From Wildfire Crisis to Community Resiliency: Charting a Just Transition, PowerShift Network

Good Pitch Texas, Good Pitch Local + Doc Society*

New Orleans Film Festival, New Orleans Film Society

Meeting the Moment: Building a More Resilient Nation, Progressive Caucus Action Fund

From the Ground Up: Global Gathering for Climate Justice, COP 26 Coalition

Culture Surge Network Celebration, Harness

SCEN Virtual Convening, the Southeast Climate & Energy Network*

IFP Distribution Lab, Independent Filmmakers Project*

* indicates events where we presented, [full list here](#).

acknowledgements

We would like to acknowledge and thank our Exposure Labs team, our leadership circle, and the generous support of our sponsors.



PERSPECTIVE
FUND



Exposure Labs is the impact and production company behind *Chasing Ice*, *Chasing Coral*, and *The Social Dilemma*. We use stories to change the world.

We believe that stories are the most powerful catalyst to build empathy, shape culture, foster social justice, and shift systems. From inception to impact, we develop stories to address big societal challenges, and to help move us towards lasting collective solutions.

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