

Organising a Film Screening

Synopsis

Developing a better understanding of Bethlehem as a real and vibrant city of significant historic importance globally is a key objective of ours, and you can play a great part in helping us build a bridge between Bethlehem and the outside world.

Our critically acclaimed documentary film 'Open Bethlehem' is a poignant insight into the plight of modern day Bethlehem, which has helped many people better understand the current situation there and its wider context.

Film screenings are a valuable tool for raising community awareness about plight of Bethlehem and Palestine. Our aim is to screen the Film as widely as we can, in as many cities and communities across the globe as possible.

Film screenings are especially effective if participants are given the opportunity to discuss the film after the showing. These types of events are a great opportunity to increase community knowledge and advocacy and to raise funds.

Project Outline

Planning & Preparation

Format

Choose type of screening, which might be a smaller screening in a local community centre or a large gathering such as at an arts festival, conference or a local independent film theatre. Decide whether you want a speaker at the event for a hosted Q&A after the film is screened.

Venue

Locate a venue: homes, churches, grange halls, colleges, universities, libraries, organizations or even local theatres. Make sure that someone visits the venue with sufficient advance time that you can re- solve any issues that arise.

Booking

Book a screening with us, once you have determined the format of the event contact us to make arrangements for a cinema quality DVD and a speaker (if required) to be available, as appropriate.

Sponsorship

Identify possible co-sponsors, such as local groups and appropriate departments at local colleges. Look for groups that have an audience, projector and/or venue.

Engagement

Contact local organizations to see whether they would like to be involved.

Helpers

Find some helpers and delegate the remaining tasks as appropriate, endeavouring to match helpers to activities that they enjoy. Possibilities include local neighbourhood group and online local community sites such as craigslist.org and indymedia.org.

Donations

Develop a donation/door policy such as “Suggested donation: £5 to £15, nobody turned away for lack of funds. Donations after any expenses from the screening will be made to Open Bethlehem”.

Materials

Edit and print hand-outs about the film, as well as a sign-up sheet. Templates can be downloaded from our website, see the Resources section below.

Promotion

Promote the screening with an e-mail and a printed flyer. Invite friends, neighbours, co-workers, acquaintances from organizations and thought leaders in your community.

Screening

Set Up

Arrive at least 45 minutes before the event to setup chairs, TV/projector, refreshments and the information table. When someone is available to staff the information table, put out any leaflets, the donations' box, and the sign-up list.

We recommend having a person actively collecting donations or entrance fees in a designated container at a table where people enter the venue.

Welcome

Welcome the audience. Before starting the film:

- Thank people for coming
- Tell them the schedule for the evening (e.g., watch the film, then Q&A for 30 minutes)
- Pass around the sign-up list (preferably on a clipboard with a string attached)
- Remind them to turn off cell phones
- Tell them where the fire exits and rest rooms are

Q&A / Discussion

Have a Q&A or general discussion after the screening.

If you are having a Q&A:

- Make the necessary arrangements for the speakers to sit in front of the audience
- Introduce the Q&A
- Introduce the speaker/s
- Moderate the discussion

If you are not having a presenter or question and answer session after the film, consider inviting people to discuss the film in small groups.

Consider whether it would be useful to have a short break between the screening and the Q&A/discussion.

Close & Thank You

Close the event and call to action. After the discussion or Q&A:

- Thank everyone for coming
- Summarise how they can get involved, organising their own screenings, writing to representative, etc.
- Point them at our website www.OpenBethlehem.org for more information
- Ask everyone to sign up to our mailing list, either in person or online
- Ask everyone to donate, either in person or online
- Thank everyone for coming

Clean Up

Close the venue. Once the audience have left:

- Collect any materials
- Reset the layout / tidy chair / clean as appropriate
- Lock the venue

Post Screening

Follow-Up

Follow up with attendees and supporters. E-mail people who supported the event and those that signed up on the list, thanking them for coming to the screening and indicate what local groups are doing and how to get involved.

Returns & Forward

Returns. Return/forward the following

- Film
- Donations
- Mailing List additions

Roles

If your community does not already have an organization involved in our work, you can form an ad hoc committee:

Project Coordinator(s)

Convene and facilitate the project; ensure that all necessary tasks are being done

(Co)-Sponsor(s)

Provide financial or in-kind support; may also provide name-recognition to help attract attendees or a ready audience and/or access to a venue and video projector.

Publicity

Develop and distribute promotional materials; get event(s) listed in local newspapers; makes posters, places advertisement, and contacts the participant list.

Event Staff

People at the event who promote your group and answer question/start discussions around the issues of the film. Depending on the location of your event, you may need a chair/host/MC, greeters, ticket sellers, ushers, cleaners, and other support people.

General Guidelines

Screening the film can be as simple as a hosting a community film night, or as big as organizing an advertised run at a local film theatre. Whatever the size, a screening is a valuable opportunity to expose people to the issues and get them advocacy on behalf of Bethlehem. These tips apply to screenings of any size:

Audience

Setting up the film the best way: Who do you want to attend the film? Who else would be interested in it? It takes a lot more than an email or a newspaper listing to get people to see a film they've never heard of before. For a small screening, announce your screening through flyers at local stores, through the neighbourhood newsletter, and through local organizations. If you're holding a public screening, purchase advertising in local media outlets, ask your local newspaper to run a review, and get co-sponsors on board to promote the screening to their constituencies.

Co-Sponsors

Find co-sponsors to share the load. Ask them whether they could help promote, setup, provide a venue and audio-video equipment and participate during the screening and the clean-up.

Advertising

Advertise the screening a lot, and well in advance. You really cannot over-promote a local film screening. Remind people about the screening via social media, advertising, flyers and mailing list announcements for weeks ahead of the event. If you're screening the film at a film theatre, you may need to act months in advance to get listed on a published schedule.

You can also post announcements on online sites such as meetup.com, craigslist.org, tribe.net and indymedia.org.

Impact

Hosting

Using the screening to its full advantage. Before and after the screening you can promote awareness about the challenges Bethlehem faces, collect contact information and donations, and even host a discussion about the issues communicated by the film. The more structured your event will be, the more important it is to have an engaging chair/host/MC so attendees know what's going on and want to stick around.

Discussion

Creating an opportunity for discussion. After the film, ask people to talk about their reactions to the film.

Venue

Smaller Venues

For a smaller screening, you should be able to find a serviceable venue for cheap or even for free: Schools, libraries, community centres, community organizations, places of worship, and even some restaurants, bars and cafes may have large meeting spaces available to the public.

Be sure to visit the venue in person and determine logistical details like accessibility, availability of screen and chairs, permission to sell tickets and merchandise, and even the location of electrical outlets before deciding.

Larger Venues

Local independent theatres are often interested in screening issue-oriented films if they think there's an audience for them. Plus, simply holding your screening at a film theatre automatically gives your event some legitimacy and publicity. With a larger venue you will have to deal with higher venue costs, higher advertising costs, possible permission issues, so plan ahead and start contacting theatres as early as possible. You may also need to have a registered co-sponsor for insurance purposes.

Tickets/Donations

Many community film screenings suggest a donation at the door but do not turn people away for lack of funds; this will depend on the needs of your budget.

Time Frame & Effort

2 weeks to 6 months elapsed time; 2 weeks for a community screening, 2 – 6 months for a screening at a public venue. 6 to 20 hours of work.

Tools & Materials

DVD or VHS player and projector, copy of film, Internet, clipboard, pen, donation container and change.

Charges & Fees

Film Charges

As a not for profit organisation, film screenings are an important source of funding for OPEN BETHLEHEM and we normally seek to make a charge related to use of the film.

Charges vary according to a number of factors, including the nature of the hosting organisation. In general, we seek:

- **Screening Fees** – A fixed screening fee; and,
- **Box Office Takings** (commercial organisations) – A percentage of Box Office takings.

These charges go towards covering our cost and the ongoing running of the organisation.

Speaker

We also generally charge for any speaking engagements as follows:

- **Speaking Fees** – A fee for each occasion that the Film Maker (or any OB Speaker) is invited to speak, in most circumstances;
- **Expenses** – All reasonable expenses related to any speaking events, such as travel, accommodation and subsistence, etc., in all circumstances.

These charges go to the speaker to ensure that they are not out of pocket for any expenses incurred and in part recognition of their time spent in participating in the screening.

Donations

We also ask organisers to collect donations at all screenings. These funds go to supporting our on-going work, including new projects.

Resources

For further information and resources please visit our website, www.OpenBethlehem.org, which includes:

- Screening resources
 - Templates
 - Leaflets
- Information about
 - Bethlehem City
 - The Wall
 - Visiting Bethlehem
 - Supporting our work

Open Bethlehem

About Us

OPEN BETHLEHEM is a non for profit organisation whose mission to advocate and proactively promote support for a free and flourishing Bethlehem city within a vibrant and sovereign Palestine, through the use of digital multimedia strategies alongside targeted audience outreach programmes.

Contact Us

To arrange a screening or make a general enquiry related to screenings please contact Emma Clark at Screenings@Openbethlehem.org.