## **STORYTELLING CASE STUDIES:** IMMIGRATION **UNITED STATES**



## **ABOUT THIS RESOURCE**





This resource offers examples of video storytelling tactics that have been used to protect and uplift immigrants in the United States. The videos featured here were chosen because they are responsibly made, community-centered, and effective.

The intention of this resource is to inspire and inform people seeking to integrate video into advocacy campaigns that honor the rights and dignity of migrants. Stronger storytelling can make for more impactful campaigns that brings us ever closer to community visions of safety, liberation, and freedom!

WITNESS created this resource by researching different videos that were made in 2016-2020 by and for immigrants in the U.S. We had the opportunity to interview some of the campaign creators. This allowed for more depth of information on some videos than others. Quotes from these conversations are woven throughout the resource. The video panels also feature icons that detail key elements of the videos. A breakdown on what those icons mean is available on the next slide.

Importantly, most of these videos were made as part of broader campaigns with additional legal or advocacy strategies.

Whatever your advocacy goal is, storytelling can probably help you get there. Use this resource to nurture your own advocacy strategies and to learn more about the people, challenges, and possibilities illustrated by these stories.



**United We Dream** #HomeisHere Series





The video series were initially part of a storytelling amicus brief submitted by **United We Dream** in the fall of 2019 for the DACA case being heard at the Supreme Court. The videos were also made public for UWD's #HomelsHere campaign.

#### Video objective:

- 1) Demonstrate the importance of DACA and showcase the broad impact a negative decision from the Supreme Court would have on hundreds of thousands of people
- 2) Elevate the stories of those who are DACA recipients and showcase importance of these people to their communities and "bring these stories to life"
- 3) Mobilize people (Supreme Court justices, U.S. citizens) to protect undocumented immigrants (specifically DACA recipients) as part of the #HomeIsHere campaign

Audience: 1) Supreme Court justices/clerks 2) Potential coalition partners, people able to provide support to the actions defending DACA (joining rallies, sending supplies, donating, sharing on social media) 3) Recipients of DACA

**Message**: DACA supports people like Maricruz who make essential contributions to communities in the US. Undocumented immigrants have a right to call the U.S. home and have a right to equality and the opportunity that entails.

#### Impact:

- UWD received major media coverage as an immigrant-led org being on the "cutting edge of the way folks are heard in court"
- #HomelsHere rally received organizing support from thousands of people, including the presidential campaign for Bernie Sanders
- #HomeisHere continues to be a hashtag and talking point used by immigration advocacy organizations and activists
- Courts sided with immigrant youth and ordered the federal administration to reinstate the program to its original form
- One video by UWD on Twitter had 250K views, 2.8K retweets. 7.4K likes
- Overarching UWD <u>impact</u>: mobilized nearly 20K people in US to take action, informed 34K people about DACA and local events, helped over 3.7K people apply for/renew DACA (part of #HomeIsHere campaign involved getting funding for people's renewal applications)

#### Make The Road #HomeisHere March for DACA and TPS Series





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This video spotlit a 18-day, 230-mile march from NYC to Washington DC to demand the courts rule on the right side of history. In 2019 **Make the Road** communication team released a new video every day with a new story and documented the journey.

#### **Objective:**

1) Showcase the who (individuals + networks), how, and why of this #HomeIsHere campaign 2) Push to create and defend pathways to citizenship in the U.S. 3) Inspire people who are currently participating/will be motivated to participate

*"It was important for all of us to share the story in the way we had never seen: a way that was about embracing being unodocumented, showing effects of DACA, showing diversity of immigrant communities, and showing the complexity of immigration system." - MTR* 

Audience: 1) People who can support the march and ongoing efforts of the campaign 2) Supreme Court + policymakers 3) DACA recipients

"We wanted people in Washington to talk about DACA at a human level without thinking about Trump and the administration."- MTR

"DACA recipients that don't have any protection that could be living in so many different places could be online and see a badass group of people that were rain or shine risking their lives walking through counties that had 287g. The campaign encouraged media and news outlets to talk about DACA leading up to the Supreme Court hearing the oral arguments." - MTR

**Message**: 1) "Immigrants are part of the framework of this country" 2) Victory is possible in the important fight for #Citizenship4All. This fight is made up of people from the community and allies who are taking action to protect migrants' rights.

"We wanted to give people hope, show we were fighting something we believed in, and show that we were determined to win."--- MTR

#### Impact or Reach:

"The videos and march created a larger sense of community and also was strategic in elevating the issue in a beautiful way. Support flooded in on social media and people would send us supplies that we asked for. The digital campaign elevated those asks." - MTR Rally at the Supreme Court on facebook - attended by several thousands of people (video here)

- Day of the hearings/rally coincided with a nationwide walkout of high school and college students of varying immigration status
- Livestream videos of <u>walkouts</u> hosted on UWD site has 192K views
- 3.5K Facebook video views

ACLU & Brooklyn Defender Services We Have Rights Series







This video was created by **Brooklyn Defenders Services** and **ACLU** as part of 2019-2020 campaign to prepare for encounters with ICE and safely defend our rights. Animated videos were available in <u>multiple languages</u> (English, Spanish, Haitian Creole, Mandarin, Arabic, Urdu, and Russian). Distribution strategy was strong: targeting influencers, working within WhatsApp groups and local reporters, screening in spaces like waiting rooms and bus stops.

Video objective: Empower communities threatened by ICE agents by equipping them with critical information on what to do during and after ICE agents come to their homes.

**Audience:** People that are vulnerable to abuse, harassment, detention, and deportation from ICE agents. The campaign's distribution strategy included targeting communities in the U.S. with high density of immigrant communities and increasing ICE raids.

**Message:** Everyone has rights. ICE may use force, lie, or manipulate you. There are steps you can take to prepare and protect yourself others if ICE comes to your door.

- The videos have been viewed over 10 million times online and even more offline. They're being used in Know Your Rights training sessions for activists and immigrant communities and embedded in a new app created by United We Dream (Notifica). The videos are also used in in ESL curricula at the New York Public Library, and are being shown in waiting rooms, consulates, classrooms, and even police departments. Those views are from people who depend on this information to defend themselves and their families against injustice
- High profile media coverage (including Time Magazine and Huffingtonpost)
- Nominee for Webby Awards
- Related guides and tips shared on social media, amplified by partners and celebrities; for example, related Know Your Rights material in English and Spanish were shared 18K times on Twitter

**RAICES** MPP Explained Educational Video





It was far from a perfect system and it's hard to win asylum.

#### **DOWNLOAD VIDEO HERE**

In 2020, **RAICES** made a series of videos with different approaches that all supported the broader goal of ending the dangerous and inhumane Migrant Protection Protocols (MPP). This video serves as an overarching explainer of MPP.

Video objective: 1) Educate people on what Migrant Protection Protocols is, why it is a problem, and how it can be stopped 2) Generate a critical conversation about MPP 3) Encourage people to sign RAICES' <u>petition</u> to support asylum seekers

Audience: The target audience was "middle ground audience who may be peripherally paying attention"-- i.e. people that are supportive of immigrants rights who may not understand the current immigration policy or are misled.

"We realized there were people who were very involved in immigrant rights who did not know what MPP was and because of the name thought it was fine. So it worked well for our own audience as well as people we were trying to bring into the conversation." - RAICES

**Message:** The Trump administration's Migrant Protection Protocols are cruel and unjust, intentionally leaving tens of thousands of people seeking asylum in dangerous refugee camps in Mexico without support, explanation, a viable chance at entry, or supplies essential for dignified survival. You can sign the petition or call your representative in Congress to end this policy.

#### Impact or Reach:

- FB: 4.4K views, 101 likes, 8 comments, 105 shares
- A couple thousand people signed the petition to StopMPP
- Unable to track how many people called Congress without having implemented a specific technology
- Screened at a Doctors Without Borders panel on MPP and healthcare needs
- Pushed video on social media to influencers like Alyssa Moreno
  - Having famous people talking about immigration policy and engaging others was considered a success by the team
- Advocates pushed the Biden administration to prioritize Stopping MPP and he did so within the first few days of taking office in 2020.

"We are focusing more on the conversations they are generating the people that are offering support. For example, some of the videos specifically one about papers for Border Patrol being in English and needing translators and a lot of people contacted us saying they could translate."

**RAICES** Stop Migrant Protection Protocol Series

It's not easy. And I don't know why they sent us here.



"Stop Migrant Protection Protocol" was a major 2020 campaign led by **RAICES** that included several video components. One set of videos each features someone's story who is caught up in the devastating policy. Together, these videos tell a larger story about the impacts of MPP. Note: another video in the set is a good example of how you can film in a way that conceals the identity of the person you are interviewing. Other stories in campaign were a sick 7 year old and a pregnant woman.

Video objective: 1) Humanize the people impacted by MPP 2) Get people informed and outraged about the cruelties that occur under the Migrant Protection Protocol in order to encourage them to join the campaign to end this policy

Audience: U.S. citizens who will pressure their representatives of Congress to defund/end MPP.

Message: Help RAICES end the Migrant Protection Protocol because it is a cruel and unjust immigration policy.

#### Impact or Reach:

- #StopMPP campaign linked with a petition for Congress to defund MPP & for AMLO to end the MPP agreement-- a couple thousand people signed
- Alongside local actions like a <u>talk + solidarity walk</u> in Texas (<u>livestream</u>, 500 views)
- Proposing alternative executive and legislative actions as part of the grassroots effort Migrant Justice Platform
- Video FB had over 3.3K views + had participants viewing and sharing via Watch Party
- Conversation generated on social media, especially Twitter, with expressions of empathy, support for open borders reinforcers of the responsibility of the U.S. government to take action (note: here was also pushback to this with some users spreading xenophobia, transphobia, and other forms of hate)
- Stopping new enrollments of MPP was achieved within a couple weeks of a new president taking office

It's not easy. And I don't know why they sent us here.

**RAICES** State Department Holiday Travel Advisory Parody



DOWNLOAD VIDEO HERE



If you are a citizen of the United States, do not travel to the Mexican state of Tamaulipas. **RAICES'** satirical take on the U.S. government's framing of Migrant Protection Protocol (MPP) subverts the "official" narrative and lays bare the cruelty of what the federal administration deems to be safe enough for asylum seekers. Satire and humor can be impactful and controversial when addressing serious issues. If used carefully and strategically, then these tactics can disrupt the status quo and undermine oppressors. These tactics are best used in the hands of those who belong to impacted communities.

Video objective: Inform and provoke people in the U.S. to be angry at their administration's dangerous policy of MPP.

Audience: People that are supportive of immigrants rights who may not understand the current immigration policy of MPP.

**Message:** The MPP policy is unfair, hypocritical, and inhumane, forcing people to live in Mexico in places that the State Department warns US citizens not to travel to because of the risks there. The State Department does not value or protect migrant lives.

#### Impact or Reach:

- FB: 5.3K views, 43 comments, 171 likes, 58 shares; Youtube: 287
  - Was the most watched video in the series
- Conversations in the comments were mostly either criticism of the use of satire + the "posing" as a State Department
  message or confusion over whether the video was real; speaks to how controversial and complicated this approach is and
  underscores the usefulness of RAICES having many other videos and resources on MPP to fortify their position
- Advocates pushed the Biden administration to prioritize Stopping MPP and he did so within the first few days of taking office in 2021

## If you are a citizen of the United States, do not travel to the Mexican state of Tamaulipas.

NowThis/Voto Latino Stop Texas SB4 PSA

That's why communities across Texas have mobilized, organized,

MISSING

STOP THE RAIDS! AVE YOU

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NOW

THIS

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MISSING

DOWNLOAD VIDEO HERE

**NowThis** often creates pieces that share breaking news in a digestible format that is social media-friendly. This piece was done in partnership with **Voto Latino**, a grassroots political organization that empowers Latinx voters. One of their primary tools organizing tools is digital campaigns. Voto Latino had the information, connections, and resources to lead campaigns against SB4, a law in Texas that mandated local law enforcement to collaborate with ICE. ACLU Texas has more information on how this affects your rights as an immigrant (available <u>here</u>).

Video objective: Educate people about the problematic SB4 law in Texas in order to build momentum of the opposition to it

Audience: 1) Allied and impacted communities in Texas who may be able to mobilize against SB4 2) Texans who may not know what SB4 is or that <u>the fight against it</u> is ongoing 3) Activists against the country facing similar legislation

**Message:** SB4 is anti-Texan, anti-American, and unpatriotic and we have to keep fighting it because it makes Texas more dangerous for people who look like immigrants to be profiled, harassed, abused by police, or deported.

- FB: 851 likes, 197 comments, 579 shares, 56K views
- The law faced several legal challenges but court ultimately ruled it constitutional
  - Different provisions of the bill were <u>halted</u> so that local official will not face penalties for declining to assist federal government and are able to speak out against laws like SB4

Immigrant Defense Project/Black Alliance for Just Immigration #KnowYourRights Series





#### **DOWNLOAD VIDEO HERE**

In 2017 **Immigrant Defense Project** (IDP) and **Black Alliance for Just Immigration** (BAJI) collaborated on a series of videos produced by Newsweek to help immigrants and allies defend against ICE raids and community arrests. This was a part of a broader organizing campaign that included a toolkit with different types of materials (guides, posters, tip sheets, graphics, webinars, social media posts) to better equip immigrant communities with the knowledge they need to better defend themselves from ICE. Topics include: figuring out if you are at risk of being targeted for an ICE arrest, where ICE is arresting people and while might trigger an ICE arrest, how ICE tries to destabilize people to coerce entry homes, your rights if ICE approaches you at home, on the street, or in a courthouse, and how to prepare documents, finances, and childcare in case of an ICE raid.

Video objective: Provide practical information to those at risk of deportation on what their rights are and how to defend them, as part of ongoing work to end the vilification of immigrants and combat the destruction of lives.

Audience: 1) People at risk of deportation in the United States 2) Allies and advocacy organizations able to share information with immigrants communities

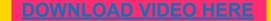
Message: You have rights in any encounter with ICE. Learn more at immigrantdefense.org

- FB: 27 likes, 44 shares, 1.7K views; Twitter: 884 views, 22 likes, 32 RTs
- Shared with news hooks later on Twitter
- Produced by <u>Newsweek</u>, videos all available as a collection on <u>Newsweek's site</u>
  - 1.5K views intro video, 4.1K ICE Comes to Your Home, 2.6K Preparing if at Risk of Deportation, 28.5K ICE Approaches You on the Street
- Involved enhanced collaboration between Immigrant Defense Project, Center for Constitutional Rights (#stopICEcold Toolkit), and organizers from Arab American Association of New York, Just Leadership USA, Black Alliance for Just Immigration, and Make The Road New York
- Used in Know Your Rights trainings for immigrants and shared in education spaces for organizers

**Define American** #UndocuJoy Campaign



# SOMETHING out of NOTHING



**Define American** led a #UndocuJoy campaign to combat mainstream media's victimizing representation of undocumented communities. This campaign aimed to show a wide spectrum of undocumented people's authentic joy and give the community a place to find and share hope.

**Video objective:** 1) Affirm the value and beauty of undocumented people and encourage them to share their joy and find hope in each other 2) Expand, complicate, and reclaim the narrative about what it means to be an undocumented person in the US

Audience: Undocumented community members

**Message:** Undocumented people are resilient and capable of creating joy even as they face an exploitative and exclusionary system

- <u>Recruited</u> undocumented stories of resilience and joy for submission to "flood social media with positive images to combat victimizing portrayals of mainstream media"
- Included as part of Working Film's curation project "Stories Beyond Borders"-- multiple screenings held throughout the US
- Video is used by universities as a wellness <u>resource</u> for DACA students (another example <u>here</u>) and included as an educational mental health resource in the database of videos available through <u>Arts with Impact</u>
- Several undocumented activists and artists used the term #UndocuJoy to launch projects and panels themed around this concept, reshaping the narrative of undocumentation
- Shared in Define American Film Festival in Chicago with sold out screenings aimed at journalists and activists
- Streamed in galleries, universities, and community event spaces largely on the West coast but appeared throughout U.S.
- Campaign highlighted by Latino news/culture platforms and Huffington Post
- The video itself and submissions were part of a <u>"healing call"</u> among partnered organizations that gained national traction
- 77K views on Twitter, 29K on Youtube

#### Movimiento Cosecha #MigrantBoycott Campaign







Days after Trump was elected in 2016, **Movimiento Cosecha** released this video to begin organizing immigrants and allies to boycott as a part of taking collective action against the anti-immigrant administration. The plan was set for the following May 1, International Workers Day/May Day. This date is significant because it honors the ongoing struggle of workers and connects global movements to history and to each other in demonstrations of solidarity. This date is opportune for calling for increased protections, respect, and dignity for workers-- many of whom are migrants.

Video objective: 1) Encourage immigrants to boycott 2) Get people to sign the pledge

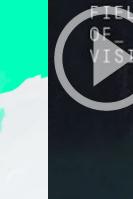
Audience: Immigrants working in the United States who can boycott

**Message:** "Without hands there is no work." Immigrants are a vital part of our economy and society. A boycott would be a powerful way to organize for greater protections.

- FB: 14K views, 199 shares, 163 likes; <u>Youtube</u>: 300 views
- <u>Pledge</u> for #MigrantBoycott with aim for 100,000 signatures (data on # collected not available)
- Thousands of immigrant workers, students, and families went on strike for Day Without Immigrants on May 1
  - Cosecha planned strikes/marches, student walkouts, and escalated in 40+ cities and rural communities
  - National coverage of grassroots May Day Marches: <u>NBC</u> Latino, <u>NYT, USA Today</u>, <u>Color Lines</u> → increased attention nationwide
  - Some communities struggled with communication/organization around what to do as a resistor

**Field Of Vision** Best of Luck With the Wall Documentary







The

Intercept\_



This 2016 short film from Josh Begley stitches together hundreds of thousands of satellite images of the U.S. mexico border. This data-driven art served as an advocacy piece in being put in conversation with the Trump administration's priority to build a wall to keep people from crossing into the United States.

**Video objective:** Use satellite imagery to inform people about the physical reality of the US-Mexico southern border, enabling reflection around 1) experiences of border crossings and 2) the absurd proposals and political rhetoric attached to this border

Audience: People in the US who are disconnected from the reality of the border, artists, academics

**Message:** The notion of building a wall is a futile attempt to control immigration (rhetoric to inflame nationalist sentiments versus strategic policy)

#### Impact or Reach:

where where the marker

- Youtube views: 542K; <u>Vimeo</u> views: 1.5 million. Popular in spaces with academics/artists/architects.
- Covered by <u>The New Yorker</u>, <u>NY Times</u>, <u>The Intercept (director authored article)</u>, <u>art and architecture publications</u> and academic activism <u>blogs</u>
- Also had installation/gallery versions-- shown at MOMA, migration film screening at MOCP, Art Tech gallery

**#WeCount** United We Dream Campaign



### Si, si nos hemos contado



In preparation for the 2020 Census, **United We Dream** began a #WeCount campaign that focused both on empowering immigrant communities to fill out the census and on combating the Trump administration's attempt to include a citizenship question on the census. This question would deter people from filling out the census due to fear of detention and deportation, thereby erasing them and leaving their communities less federally resourced. UWD used humor and the culturally significant media format of telenovela in a parody to connect with their target audience. Other videos, panels, digital assets, pledges, and organizing strategies were used to further the message of the campaign.

Video objective: Get more immigrant community members to fill out the survey for the census

Audience: Spanish-speaking immigrants living in the US who are eligible to fill out the census

Message: Complete the census! Visit contamos2020.com for information and support from UWD.

#### Impact or Reach:

- -19K views on Facebook
- A citizenship question ultimately was not included in the 2020 Census

- Delays in Census data being collected and released due to COVID and political turmoil-- to be determined how many people will fill out it that represent the immigrant population

## Si, si nos hemos contado



ACLU ICE Raids South L.A. Car Shop Campaign + legal case support

> ICE knew nothing about the workers, except the color of their skin.



2017-0

Video alone cannot secure justice. Rather, video is one tool that advocates, lawyers and communities can utilize to better fight for immigrant rights. In 2017, Juan's family, advocates at National Day Laborers Organizing Network, community, and **ACLU** team all worked together to bring him home by using press, applying community pressure, and a strong/creative legal argument. In addition to helping to fundraise to pay Juan's bond and connecting him with legal resources, advocates at NDLON also trained his family members to be able to speak publicly and to the press about Juan's arrest in an effort to shed light on what happened as well as the systemic injustice.

Video objective: Free Juan Hernandez from detention via a combined legal strategy and advocacy strategy centering around the unconstitutionality of ICE's raid tactics

Audience: 1) Judges presiding over the Hernandez case 2) Activists working for immigrants' rights + local community members 3) Immigrants/lawyers/allies who are fighting the threats posed by ICE

Message: It was unconstitutional for ICE to raid the car shop and arrest Juan without a warrant.

#### Impact or Reach:

- Juan was released from detention and received funds from the community to support his family

- The story became a case study (<u>here</u> and <u>here</u>) for other lawyers and activists to know how to leverage video to fight detentions and deportations (also available in WITNESS' <u>Video as Evidence: U.S. Immigration guide</u> for lawyers + community members)

- Viewers saw an example of the kinds of abuse that ICE often inflicts in their operations (racial profiling, breaking mandates, unlawful arrests, manipulation/ruse)

- YT Views: 110K views. Video went viral online. See more from ACLU.

- Story covered by local news outlets: CBS, ABC, LA Times, My News LA

**Notes/Considerations:** Learnings include: (1) Get surveillance footage before it is deleted (within 24 hours - 1 week of incident) (2) Keep records of chain of custody of a video (3) only edit or rename copies of the video. Do not alter the original (4) Metadata can be helpful in a legal case but also comes with security concerns (5) Be strategic with sharing and work with attorneys or advocacy groups (6) Submit multiple copies of a video in a legal proceeding (7) Use advocacy strategies in parallel with a legal case

workers

**RAICES** Black Immigrants in the U.S. Campaign





DOWNLOAD VIDEO HERE

In the summer of 2020, **RAICES** worked with Joyce Louis-Jean to bring to life the data that RAICES had collected from their legal defense work. This unseen data and anecdotal evidence illuminated the anti-Blackness rampant in the immigration system. The video is a meaningful = way of communicating a complicated and heavy issue to audiences. The distribution strategy included first rolling out the video exclusively to Joyce's audiences, working with Black immigrant rights groups to produce a Facebook Live during the launch week on the topic, and creating a landing page with complementary resources.

Video objective: 1) Get more support for the calls to abolish ICE and defund the police 2) Increase donations to RAICES to finance their efforts to protect Black immigrants 3) Share data about racial inequities in the immigration system 4) Serve as an entry point into discussions about anti-Blackness in the immigration system

**Audience: 1)** People likely to support campaigns to #AbolishICE and #DefundThePolice **2)** People that will be motivated to continue educating themselves on the issue and mobilizing with others to create systemic change **3)** People able to donate to RAICES

**Message:** The harms of the US immigration system are amplified for Black immigrants. Racism is a core component of the detention, deportation, and abuse of Black immigrants and asylum-seekers. The immigration system cannot be reformed because of these foundational systemic abuses.

- FB: 21.3K views, Youtube: 4.2K views
- Organically shared by Movement For Black Lives (online and at their 2020 convention), UndocuBlack, and other organizations during times of heightened deportations of Black immigrants- received hundreds of thousands of views this way
- Allow for more people to have a deeper understanding of the systemic issues facing #BlackImmigrants and the intersections between #BlackLivesMatter movement and the fight to #AbolishICE
- Made dynamic data about Black racial justice disparities in immigration available to to hundreds of thousands of people
- Sparked conversations online about the topic; release was happening shortly after the killing of George Floyd and elevated the conversation of anti-Blackness in the immigration system to a national level
- Nominated for a Shorty Award and was a finalist in the Social Activism category
- More media have begun covering this issue to some extent -- Teen Vogue used and cited their data for an article on the topic
- Viewers shared heartfelt comments and that they were deeply moved and informed by the video