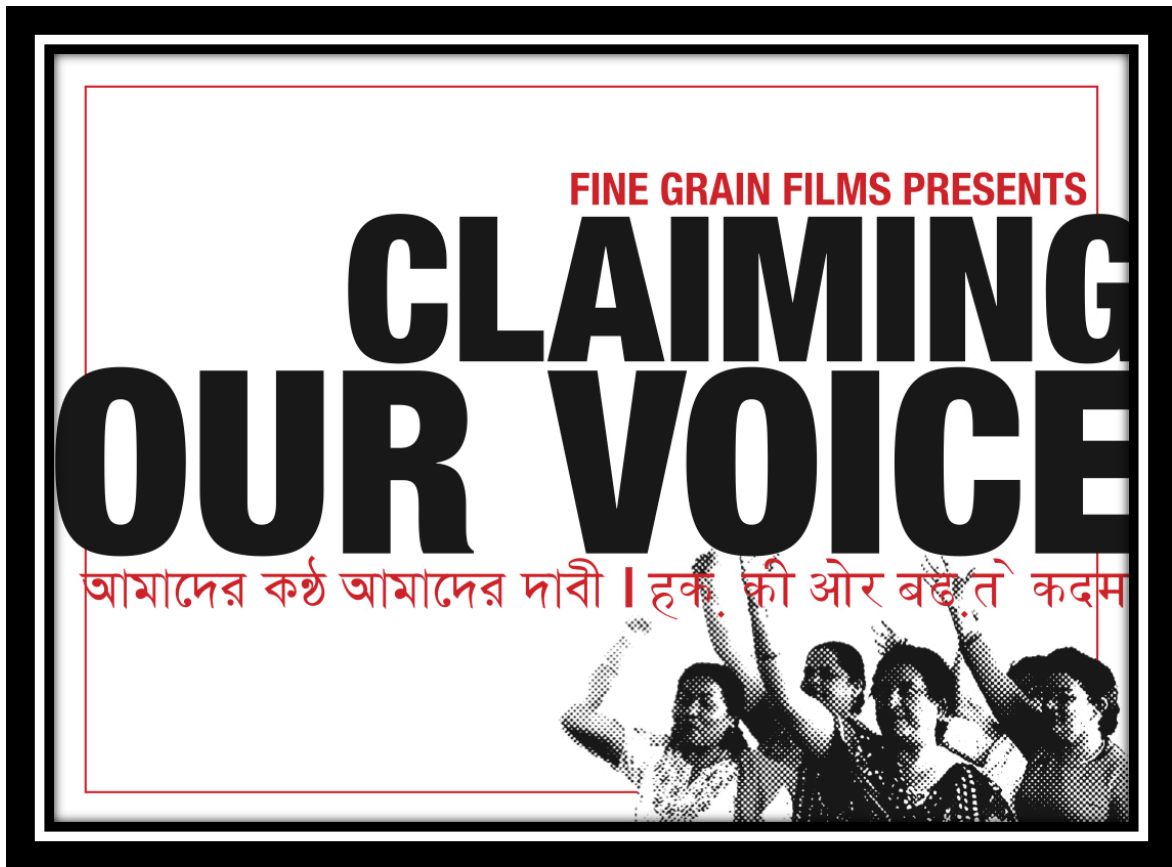


Screening Guide & Companion Curriculum for the Film “Claiming Our Voice”

This resource packet includes the curriculum for a community or school film screening and a 4-lesson unit for high school level students on understanding the power of narrative and voice for immigrant domestic workers.



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Table of Contents

Introduction.....	3
Two-Hour Film Screening Workshop.....	6
Companion Curriculum Overview.....	8
Lesson 1.....	9
Lesson 2.....	12
Lesson 3.....	14
Lesson 4.....	16
Appendices <i>(Appendices start on page 18)</i>	
Fact Sheet on Domestic Work (2 pages)	18-19
Materials for Gallery Walk (1 page)	20
Excerpt from Amy Poehler (1 page)	21
Additional Resources (1 page)	22

Introduction

This curriculum uses the short film, [Claiming Our Voice](#), to build upon the concept of storytelling for social change, drawing on the experiences of domestic workers as the guiding framework to do so. This film was created to document a participatory theater piece to recognize, validate and share the narratives of domestic workers – a community primarily comprised of immigrant women. The film focuses specifically on a theater piece developed by members of Andolan: Organizing South Asian Workers (hereafter, “Andolan”), a non-profit organization started in 1998 by a domestic worker, Nahar Alam, to support fellow South Asian domestic workers in New York City. Though *Claiming Our Voice* addresses the viewpoints of members of a very specific community, this curriculum contextualizes the film within a larger issue of silencing and the privileging of certain narratives over others.

The topic of domestic work is one rife with potential to explore power dynamics related to gender, race, immigration status, and the value of different forms of work. *Claiming Our Voice* depicts members of Andolan preparing over the course of six months for a public theater performance as part of The Culture Project Women’s Stage Festival. Narrative vignettes of specific members of the organization speak to their struggles and their motivations to engage in social action. Estimates place the number of domestic workers in the U.S. at over 1.8 million, but their work has long been ignored by the law with regards to labor protections. Additionally, work taking place in the home tends to be largely feminized and therefore, unfortunately, rendered invisible by society at large (Kim, 2012).¹ The majority of domestic workers are women (95 percent), with a large proportion of them immigrants (46 percent) and women of color (54 percent) (NDWA, 2012).²

This curriculum allows for the examination of multiple perspectives and highlights the experiences of the marginalized. Understanding the way that narratives and histories are conveyed creates an environment where one may look critically at the current status quo of power and begin to question it. By using interactive methods, this curriculum encourages collaborative dialogue and thinking among participants, with the facilitator playing an active role in problem-posing, indicative of education through critical inquiry (Freire, 1970).³

¹ Kim, E.T. (2012, December 7) Home is where the union is. *The American Prospect*. Retrieved from <http://prospect.org/article/home-where-union>.

² NDWA. (2012). *Home Economics: The Invisible and Unregulated World of Domestic Work*. New York: National Domestic Workers Alliance.

³ Freire, P. (1970). *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, trans. Myra Bergman Ramos. New York: Continuum.