HOW TO RUN A HUMAN RIGHTS WATCH FILM FESTIVAL AT YOUR UNIVERSITY

THE CLUB:

- Find out how to set up an **officially recognized club** on campus. This will give you access to funding and other resources that will help the screenings.

- To register the club you will probably need a **mission statement** and a budget proposal.

- You will probably need a faculty member to act as ‘**advisor**’. Try to get two or three interested professors involved, as this will increase your exposure.

- Hold regular **meetings**, write agendas and take minutes.

- Decide how you want to **structure** your club, for example, president, vice president, subcommittees, each with a president. Examples from USC’s HRWU chapter: President, Vice President, Financial Chair, Public Relations Chair.

THE FILMS:

- **Andrea Holley** is the HRW Traveling Film Festival Manager and she can help with getting you the films and giving you information about speakers. Her e-mail address is holleya@hrw.org

- On the HRW Film Festival website (http://www.hrw.org/iff/), you can find out what films we have to offer.

- To show films not included in the Film Festival, you need to get **approval** from Andrea Holley and you need to contact the distributor or director directly to get permission to screen it.

- It is important to make sure that you have **permission** from the filmmaker to show the film at the time you want to show it. For example, at USC we wanted to show ‘Promises’, a film about Israeli and Palestinian children, but we were unable to as it was being re-opened in theaters around LA that month.

- Find out what **issues** students are interested in or get a list of **courses** from the political science or international relations department to see if you can link any of the films to the courses. This will make it easier to persuade professors to make attending the film a requirement in their classes.

- Link films to **other student groups** such as the Black Student Assembly or Feminist Majority. For example, at USC, the GLBTA (Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgender Association) co-sponsored the film, ‘Scout’s Honor’ with USC’s
HRWU, a film about discrimination against gays in the Boy Scouts. The GLBTA helped to publicize and fund the screening. If your school has a film/cinema/television department, you will probably find a lot of interest in a film festival there and you could consider enlisting their help with publicity as well as the logistical elements of the screening.

- Most films/documentaries have their own website where you can find out more about the film, get images, and contact the director/film-maker.

THE SPEAKERS:

- If you invite the director of one of the films, you will most likely have to pay their travel expenses as well as an honorarium which can range from $200-$500. Don’t forget to take into account where the director resides as this could substantially increase your costs.
- Can you arrange other speaking events for your speaker? At local high schools, for example, particularly if it is a youth issue.
- Can the film be tied to current events such as the Middle East situation? Can the film be tied to recent HRW reports? This will help you to select materials and give you ideas for speakers. For example, at USC a film about Palestinian and Israeli youths was followed by a panel discussion on the current conflict. And, also at USC, a film about Bosnia was followed by a talk given by Terree Bowers, a California Committee member who worked for the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia, on Milosevic’s trial at the Hague.

THE PUBLICITY:

- Press images, and in some cases flyers where you can type in your own screening information, are available on the HRW Film Festival website: http://www.hrw.org/iff/
- You can also make your own flyers. Be sure to include the following information: name of film, time of screening, location, directions/map (if necessary), parking instructions, admission fee, guest speaker (if any), your contact information (for questions), and which student groups/professors are co-sponsoring (including HRWU).
- Get the screening into the university newspaper. Include screening information and a film synopsis/review, and highlight the guest speaker (if any).
- Make class announcements (with professor’s consent).
- Set up a table on campus as often as possible to distribute flyers and other screening information. This may also be a good way to recruit new members.
- Try to get announcements on university listserves that you think would have a special interest in the film. For example, if the film deals with gay issues, have the GBLTA send out an announcement.
- Contact outside organizations that may be interested in attending, such as local women’s groups if the film deals with women’s rights.
- Spread the word to your friends and family. Give them flyers to post in their workplaces or at their schools.
- Public Service Announcements (PSAs) on local public radio stations.
THE SCREENING:

- Consider the venue in terms of how many people you are expecting. A packed small auditorium is better than a half-empty, enormous auditorium. With good publicity, you can probably hope for a 10% turn-out. At USC, hundreds of people were made aware of the screenings and turn-out ranged from 50-70 people.
- Make sure you are familiar with all equipment and that you have the film in the appropriate format: VHS/Beta/DVD (check with Andrea Holley about the availability of films in various formats). In some cases, you may need to rent the equipment from the university for a fee.
- Consider time of day and time of year of the screening. Students tend to be the most active in February and March.
- At the beginning of the screening briefly introduce Human Rights Watch, indicate the availability of materials and sign-up sheets, and announce any upcoming screenings.
- If you are planning to screen a series of films, be sure to space the screenings out. Perhaps screen one film every two weeks. USC screened three films in three weeks and found that attendance was not as good for the second film.

THE MATERIALS:

- Have a sign-up sheet available for people interested in receiving more information about HRW (include name, address (optional), e-mail address). They can be added to the relevant listserves. On sign-up sheets, ask how the attendee found out about the screening.
- Include flyers for upcoming HRWU screenings.
- Provide bio of guest speaker if you have one.
- General HRW information/stickers etc. (these can be picked up or mailed from our office). Also check with office for up-to-date HRW materials on the issues that the film covers.
- Possible advocacy on the issue that the film deals with. Coordinate with the HRW office on this. Examples might be petitions, information on call-in days, upcoming HRW events, etc.

THE FOLLOW-UP:

- Get feedback from as many people as possible. Perhaps you could create a standard evaluation form. Encourage faculty, HRW staff, and audience members to complete the evaluation forms.
- Keep a record of how many people came, and if possible, ask people how they heard about the screening. This will give you an indication as to which methods of publicity are more effective than others.