HBO ORIGINAL

SIMPLE AS WATER

بسيط كالماء

ACADEMY AWARD® SHORTLIST
EMMY FOR OUTSTANDING DIRECTION NOMINEE
PEABODY AWARDS NOMINEE
PGA AWARDS NOMINEE

The New York Times Critics' Pick

IMPACT CAMPAIGN



We are thrilled to share with you a **strategy to expand the audience and impact of *Simple as Water***. The film has been embraced for **its artistry, its humanity and its insight** into the multi-layered ways war and displacement impact families. It has already **sparked dialogue, donations, volunteerism, and lasting connections**.

"THE WORDS WE HAVE FOR THE HORROR OF FLEEING HOME IN THE FACE OF VIOLENCE AND WAR ARE INSUFFICIENT: REFUGEE, MIGRANT, ASYLUM SEEKER. THE VAST EXPERIENCE OF A MILLION IMPOSSIBLE DECISIONS ARE FOLDED INTO CLINICAL TERMINOLOGY THAT DESCRIBE THE PROCESS, BUT FAIL TO CAPTURE THE HUMANITY OF THOSE LIVING THROUGH IT. —ENTER *SIMPLE AS WATER*."

- VANITY FAIR





Our strategy is informed by and created **in partnership with leading refugee and immigrant rights organizations**. At a moment of tremendous need and opportunity, it puts *Simple as Water* to work to promote a culture of welcome in the U.S.

We have spent the last several months engaged with refugee and human rights advocates, educators, public officials, and art venue programmers articulating and executing a **pilot screening series**, to determine if *Simple as Water* can:

- Bring together diverse groups in a cinematic experience
- Be a tool for refugee organizations to promote their missions
- Raise funds for earthquake relief and refugee support

We are delighted to say that it can, and it will!

With your support, we will leverage the success of our proof of concept to **organize 50 flagship screenings, and create a suite of materials for turn-key screenings** our target audiences hold on their own.

We focus our work in the U.S. in this first phase of the project, knowing that the need and opportunity exist globally. We hope to expand in later phases of the project, applying lessons learned to our work around the world.

"I'VE SEEN *SIMPLE AS WATER* WORK ITS MAGIC ON AUDIENCES. FROM THE EMOTIONAL VISCERAL RESPONSES IT INVOKES TO INQUIRIES ABOUT WAYS TO SUPPORT REFUGEES. ALL A TESTAMENT TO ITS POWER AND ABILITY TO MOVE COMMUNITIES TO TAKE ACTION."

– LINA SERGIE ATTAR, KARAM FOUNDATION

"I WAS PROFOUNDLY MOVED BY THE STORIES. I ONLY WISH EVERYONE WOULD WATCH THIS FILM BECAUSE I KNOW IT WOULD CHANGE HEARTS AND MINDS. THROUGH THE STRUGGLES OF THESE LIVES WE SEE THE STRUGGLES OF ALL GENERATIONS OF PEOPLE RISKING ALL TO SEEK BETTER LIVES."

– S. MASHBURN, AUDIENCE MEMBER, DALLAS

"*SIMPLE AS WATER* DID IN ONE NIGHT WHAT I HAVEN'T BEEN ABLE TO DO FOR WEEKS–CONVINCE FRIENDS OF MINE THAT THEY SHOULD BECOME PRIVATE SPONSORS FOR A REFUGEE FAMILY."

– NELE FELDMANN, COMMUNITY SPONSORSHIP HUB

NEED & OPPORTUNITY

For refugee advocates and activists, the **need for resources and tools to address this crisis has never been greater**. Last year, for the first time, the world surpassed the milestone of 100 million people forcibly displaced. This staggering number was calculated before multiple natural disasters forced migration once again. The devastating earthquakes in Turkey and Syria—that the WHO has called the largest natural disaster in a century—have hit close to home. Thankfully the families in the film and our crew are safe, but all know people affected. Organizations we work closely with are on the frontlines of the massive recovery effort.

This moment of enormous need is also one that offers a powerful opportunity to respond. Public outpouring for Afghan and Ukrainian refugees has helped usher in inspiring innovation in U.S. refugee resettlement. A new State Department initiative, Welcome Corps, invites private citizens to directly sponsor refugees. Americans overwhelmingly support its creation. Refugee resettlement has historically been a strong bi-partisan issue and one where action at a local level attracts people of many backgrounds. Additionally, cities and counties nationwide are increasingly taking a multi-stakeholder approach to transform their communities into more welcoming places where refugees and immigrants can thrive.



Simple as Water affects audiences intensely, at a deeply personal level. That **profound human connection makes the film uniquely suited to activate a sense of common purpose and serve as a convening force for civic and community engagement**. The universal themes of family, love, and the unyielding determination to seek a better life for the next generation, help diverse audiences to connect. At the same time, the nuance and rigor of its storytelling speaks to those with deep connection to the issues raised. The critical and award recognition for *Simple as Water*'s artistry has helped us identify robust interest from prestigious cinema venues and institutes to host special screenings. These invitations to be part of an institute's official programming put the film, its themes, and our community partners on a prominent stage.



GOALS

After years of pandemic-induced isolation, we've found audiences eager to re-enter theaters for meaningful experiences like sharing *Simple as Water*. The response to the film has been profound. Through research conversations, and lessons learned from our pilot program, we have developed the following goals:

ENERGIZE audiences to see a role for themselves in helping refugees thrive

SPARK new community connections and partnerships

MOBILIZE private sponsorship

SPOTLIGHT the work that cities and towns are doing to create welcoming infrastructure

MOTIVATE lawyers to provide pro bono services to refugees and law students to pursue careers that include pro bono services

RAISE AWARENESS among high school and university students of the refugee crisis and in so doing, put their creativity and compassion to work for their refugee peers around the world

RAISE FUNDS for earthquake relief and specific welcoming culture initiatives

FLAGSHIP SCREENINGS

Based on the success of our pilot program, we have developed a strategy to **organize 50 flagship screenings** in strategic locations across the country in 2023 – 2024.

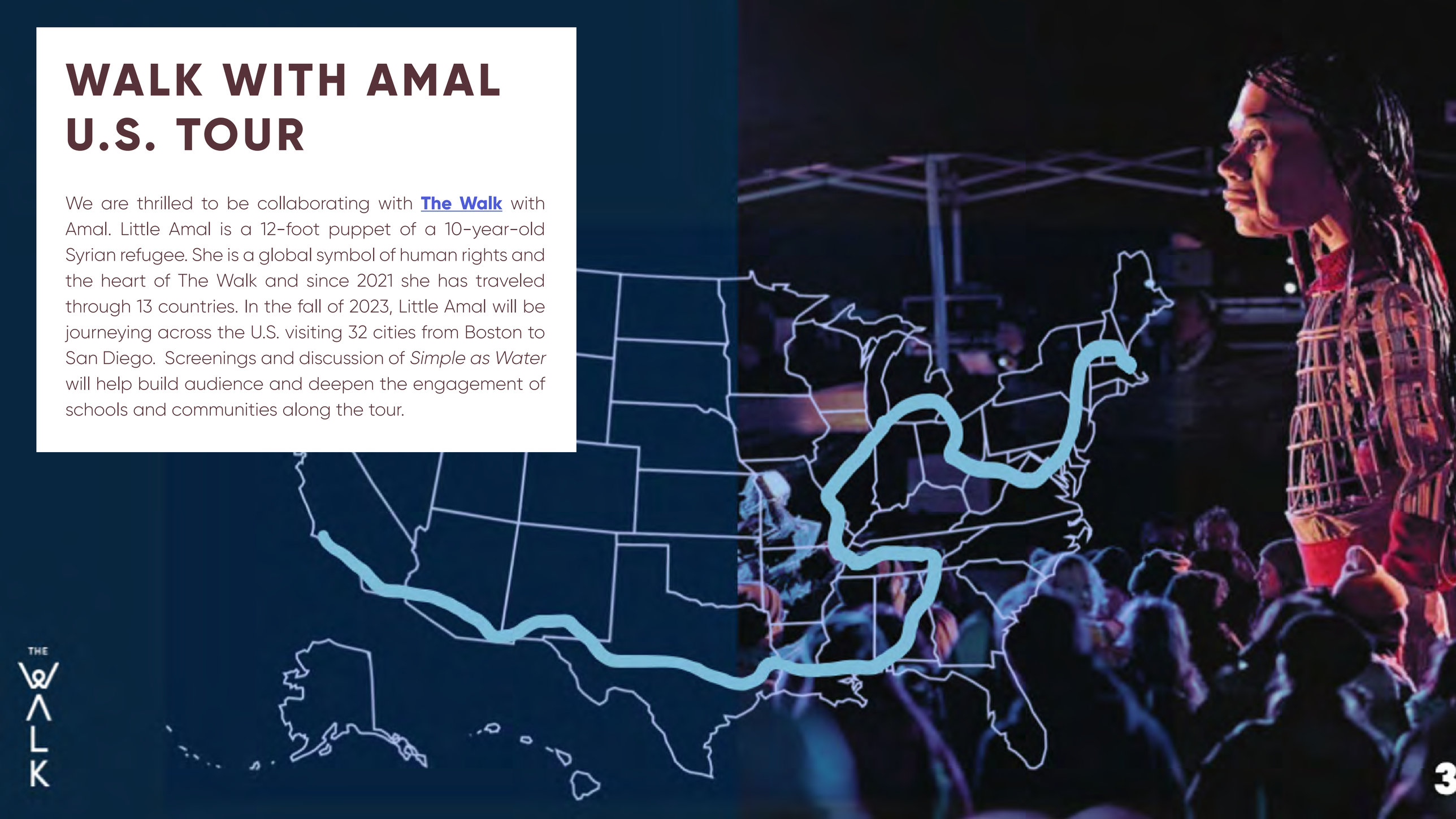
We define our flagship screenings as those in-person screenings the *Simple as Water* team organizes in collaboration with arts organization, national and local advocacy partners, and universities. These screenings provide advocates a prestigious stage from which to speak about their work and invite community involvement. They attract press and influencer attention and connect diverse audiences around a common purpose.

We are articulating the schedule and locations in concert with our community partners and already have numerous invites and key partnership networks to build on.



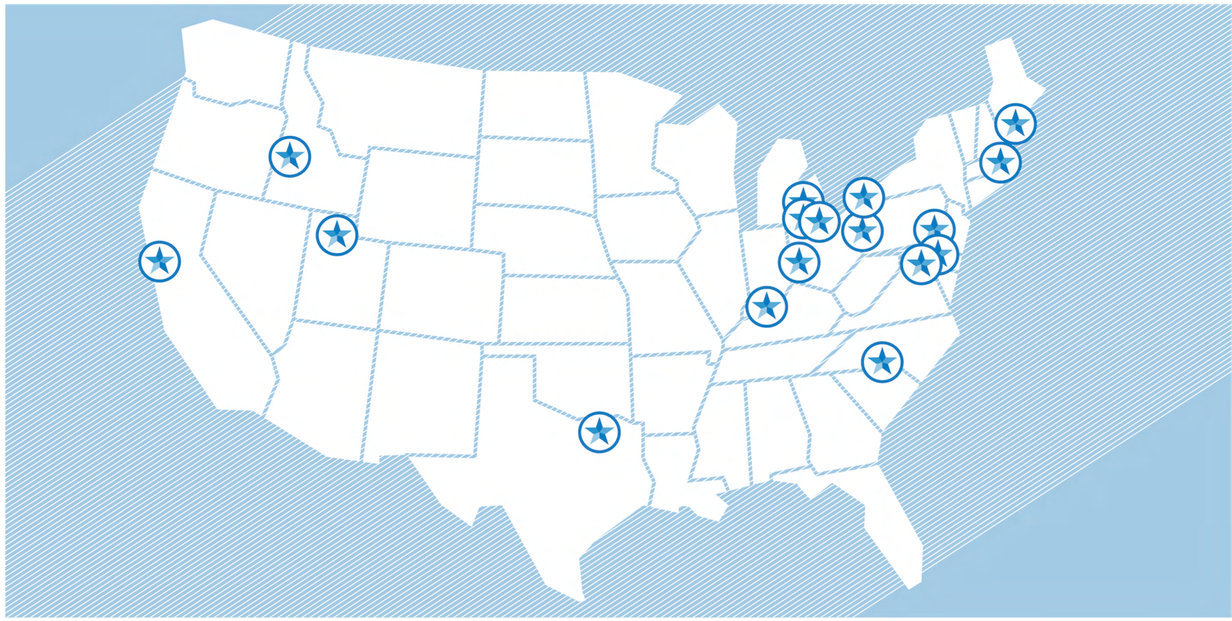
WALK WITH AMAL U.S. TOUR

We are thrilled to be collaborating with **The Walk** with Amal. Little Amal is a 12-foot puppet of a 10-year-old Syrian refugee. She is a global symbol of human rights and the heart of The Walk and since 2021 she has traveled through 13 countries. In the fall of 2023, Little Amal will be journeying across the U.S. visiting 32 cities from Boston to San Diego. Screenings and discussion of *Simple as Water* will help build audience and deepen the engagement of schools and communities along the tour.



WELCOMING AMERICA: CERTIFIED WELCOMING CITIES

There are 18 cities in Welcoming America's **Certified Welcoming** network. These local government cities and counties have set themselves apart with a focus on creating communities where immigrants and refugees can thrive and contribute. By creating multi-sector policies and programs that work to include and welcome immigrants in all areas of civic, social, and economic life. The networks share best practices and lead by example. We collaborated with the City of Dallas, the first in Texas to be designated Welcoming, on a sold-out screening that attracted a vibrantly diverse audience, media coverage for Dallas' leadership on inclusion, as well as initiating and deepening relationships among cultural and advocacy groups.



CITY OF BALTIMORE, MD
CITY OF BOISE, ID
CITY OF CHARLOTTE, NC
CITY OF DALLAS, TX
CITY OF DAYTON, OH
CITY OF DETROIT, MI
CITY OF ERIE, PA
CITY OF LANCASTER, PA
LOUISVILLE METRO GOVERNMENT, KY
LUCAS COUNTY, OH
MONTGOMERY COUNTY, MD
CITY OF NASHUA, NH
CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, PA
CITY OF PITTSBURGH, PA
CITY OF PORTLAND, ME
SALT LAKE COUNTY, UT
CITY OF SAN JOSE, CA
CITY OF TOLEDO, OH

TURN-KEY SCREENINGS

Our outreach and flagship screenings raise the visibility of the film and inspire audiences to host their own screenings. We have had intense interest from a wide range of education, law and refugee support networks to utilize the film. We will create materials that enable them to host meaningful screenings and offer a tiered strategy for support if and when it is needed.

These supports include:

- Screening Toolkit
- Discussion and Facilitation Guides
- Easy digital access to the film through SWANK (Warner/HBO's streaming platform partner)
- Requests for virtual conversation with the film team, film subjects, advisors
- Pre-recorded Q&As for target audiences
- Mini-grants to organizations who seek support for the screenings
- Customizable graphic and print material



KEY AUDIENCES

Simple as Water attracts and **resonates powerfully with general audiences**. It is able to create a sense of shared human experience and common purpose among a beautifully diverse range of people. Along with **refugee and human rights advocates, faith-based, business sector, art and philanthropic networks** are energized to work with the film.



HIGH SCHOOLS

Simple as Water has proven a strong draw for high school educators and students. The film's focus on the experience of children, on the urgency of accessing education and particularly our U.S. storyline with Abed Sabha, while he was a high school freshman and newcomer in Pennsylvania have proven resonant. We are developing a special suite of materials for high school and middle school students and educators to deepen their experience with the film and enable them to easily access it.

Many of our film venue partners have high school programs and when they have offered Simple as Water to educators, the demand has been extraordinary — prompting them to schedule unprecedented multiple screenings and waiting lists. We will continue to schedule high school screenings in each of our in-person flagship screening locations. A key outreach focus for the Amal Tour is students and we will be part of that engagement through leading education networks.

UNIVERSITIES

At the university level, we have found that many educators do not yet know about *Simple as Water*, but when engaged, a broad cross-section of schools and departments and student associations are eager to collaborate with each other to host screenings. We are also excited about a series of campus screenings across the country in partnership with Welcome Corps and others who are mobilizing campus sponsorship of refugees. The film is easily accessible to campuses through Swank, and we will promote this offering to universities throughout the country supplemented with our discussion guides.

LEGAL COMMUNITY

Lawyers, law firms, and law schools with a focus on human rights have been particularly excited about the film and its potential to grow and inform pro bono and advocacy networks. Steve Schulman, Omar's asylum lawyer in our U.S. story, is a leading voice among the pro bono law community and a partner at Akin Gump. He is deeply engaged with the film and is engaging the legal community along with groups such as IRAP, Human Rights First, American Immigration Council, and Association of Pro Bono Counsel.

MILESTONES

WE HAVE IDENTIFIED A NUMBER OF MOMENTS OF SIGNIFICANCE FOR OUR TARGET AUDIENCES THAT ARE OPPORTUNITIES FOR BOTH FLAGSHIP AND TURN-KEY SCREENINGS.

WORLD REFUGEE DAY 2023

On June 20th, organizations around the country will celebrate World Refugee Day. Organizations will screen the film for their employees, partners, and other stakeholders as a way to strengthen their communities. Several UNHCR country locations will also host screenings.

WELCOMING WEEK: SEPTEMBER 2023

During Welcoming Week, organizations, communities, towns, cities and universities will host events to celebrate places of belonging. Welcoming Week is coordinated by Welcoming America, which sends a toolkit of recommended resources for all participating Welcoming Week institutions. This year, WA has invited *Simple as Water* to be part of its toolkit. The toolkit will include access to the film and a discussion guide. Local officials from within Welcoming America's network, including Rocío Villalobos from the City of Austin and Christina da Silva from the City of Dallas have expressed interest in hosting in-person screenings during Welcome Week.



INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION WEEK: NOVEMBER 2023

International Education Week is an opportunity to celebrate the benefits of international education and exchange worldwide. This joint initiative of U.S. Department of Education and the U.S. State Department promotes programs that prepare Americans for a global environment and to attract future leaders from abroad to study in the United States.

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY 2024

On March 8, organizations around the world will tell stories about women and our goal is to ensure that the stories of women refugees are included in this global celebration of women. *Simple as Water* has strong female protagonists and our partners have already told us that this would be a great opportunity to showcase this story as a symbol of the experiences of women refugees.

BUDGET SUMMARY

We have witnessed the profound ways that *Simple as Water* moves people and the power it has to motivate action. We're at a critical juncture in this country, at a time when **it feels possible to create a culture of welcome at all levels of society**. We are confident that with your support and the vibrant partnerships we have developed, the film can be an effective spark for the sort of moral urgency and creativity it takes to create a culture where immigrants and refugees thrive.

WE ARE WORKING TO RAISE $350,000 FOR THIS STRATEGY IN 2023 – 2024. FOR EACH OF THE COMPONENTS OF THE STRATEGY, THE FUNDS WILL BE USED IN THE FOLLOWING WAYS:

50 ORGANIZED SCREENINGS

- Travel - Film Subjects and team members
- Honorariums – Film Subjects
- DCP prints
- Graphics and Print materials
- Discretionary Mini-Grants ($500) for community partners to spend on reception, publicity, speaker fee, etc.

TURN-KEY SCREENINGS

- Digital Screening Toolkit
- Discussion Guides
- Website
- Lesson Plans
- Educational Streaming fees
- Reflection Essay Honorariums
- Video supplements with film subjects and community partners

PRINCIPE PRODUCTIONS

Principe Productions, inc. is a non-profit film production company specializing in artfully crafted documentary films. Our films enjoy critical praise, award recognition, wide international release and are complemented by bold social action campaigns.

We bring the same intensity and creativity to distribution and engagement, as we bring to our filmmaking. We have a proven track record of effecting change: raising over 3 million dollars for charitable causes; attracting new influencers to issues; generating extensive nuanced media coverage, mobilizing thousands of volunteers and informing public policy.

Principe.org

As we bring *Simple as Water* out more deeply into the world, the film team will continue to be intimately involved in strategy, audience-building and traveling with the film.

We have been joined by talented impact and distribution specialists and are grateful for deep collaboration with advisors and community partner teams particularly: Karam Foundation, Re-imagining Immigration, Welcoming America, and the Welcome Corps consortium.



MEGAN MYLAN
DIRECTOR/EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Megan creates observational documentary films including Simple as Water, Lost Boys of Sudan and Smile Pinki. She has been recognized with an Academy Award®, an Independent Spirit Award, Peabody, PGA and Emmy nominations and a Guggenheim Fellowship. Megan served for several years onthe Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences' Executive Committee for Documentary spearheading her branch's international expansion. Before beginning in documentary, Megan worked with Ashoka, an international development non-profit, in the U.S. and Brazil.



ROBIN HESSMAN
PRODUCER

Robin is a documentary filmmaker and creative producer. She produced and directed the Peabody-award winning documentary, My Perestroika, which premiered at the Sundance Film Festival and is a New York Times Critics' Pick. Robin is Vice-President and a founding board member of the Karen Schmeer Film Editing Fellowship and a member of the Council on Foreign Relations. She is a member of the Documentary Producers Alliance and of the Documentary Branch of AMPAS.



HAZEM OBID
PRODUCER

Hazem is a photographer and media producer. Raised in Masyaf, Syria, Hazem currently lives in Frankfurt Germany working in Europe and Africa. He graduated from the University of Damascus in Media Studies. He left Syria in 2014. In Germany, Hazem completed a Master's degree in International Media and Cultural Work from the Darmstadt University of Applied Sciences.



SAMIA KHAN-BAMBRAH
IMPACT PRODUCER

Samia is an award-winning filmmaker and impact producer. As an impact producer, Samia has worked with filmmakers and brands to develop impact strategies and campaigns to engage deeply with their audiences. She brings a decade of experience working in social justice movements around the world and in the United States to this work. Samia began her filmmaking career at the Emmy-award-winning studio, MediaStorm, where she also served as the Independent Film Project's Expert in Residence.



LIZ OGILVIE
EVENTS PRODUCER

Liz brings decades of relationships and experience in independent film marketing, audience-building and strategic partnerships. Liz has worked with TCM's FilmStruck, Fandor, Cinedigm, Prime Video, HBO, and Sundance Channel managing marketing and strategic partnerships initiatives for long and short-form content. She is now focused on growing community relationships, engagement and crafting audience-driven social impact campaigns for documentary and scripted films across all release windows. She resides in Los Angeles.



ABDULRAHMAN "ABED" SABHA
FILM SUBJECT

Abed was born in Albab, Aleppo, Syria. At the age of 10, he came to the U.S. for medical treatment. Abed is currently a student at Houston Community College in Kinesiology and plans to pursue a career in physical therapy. He works part time with FOODA as a caterer.



OMAR SABHA
FILM SUBJECT

Omar was born in Albab, Aleppo, Syria. He studied telecommunications engineering at the University of Aleppo. Omar is currently a QA Engineer II at Comcast. As a refugee, Omar struggled to find a job in the software industry. Things changed when someone took a chance on him. To pay it forward, Omar founded ZenithQA to train refugees in the latest QA technology giving them real-world experience and helping to connect them with employers. Omar lives in Houston and is married with two little girls.

HBO DOCUMENTARY FILMS, A PRINCIPE PRODUCTIONS FILM
ASSOCIATION IN WITH INMAAT PRODUCTIONS
AND JUSTFILMS/FORD FOUNDATION
PRESENT SIMPLE AS WATER
FEATURING YASMIN AL KADAD,
SAMRA ABO GHANOOJ, OMAR SABHA, DIAA AL BAHRY
AND SAFWAN AL KADAD
PRODUCED BY ROBIN HESSMAN, MEGAN MYLAN
CO-PRODUCERS HAZEM OBID, ALAA HASSAN, YARA HASSAN
CO-EXECTUVIE PRODUCERS G. BARRIE LANDRY, SUSAN BAY NIMOY
CINEMATOGRAPHY BY LARS SKREE, RAFIA SALAMEH, MICHAEL CHIN
EDITED BY PURCELL CARSON, MEGAN MYLAN
MUSIC COMPOSED BY HANAN TOWNSHEND
DIRECTED BY MEGAN MYLAN

SIMPLEASWATER.ORG