

Application to The Media Consortium
[people. power. media]
9 November 2012

1 Tell us about your organization's mission and vision

[people. power. media] is an independent media channel focused on the perspectives of grassroots organizations and marginalized communities broadcasting on the internet and through social networking. Our mission is to empower organizations and communities by featuring their voices in short multimedia documentaries and news features to influence public policy and inform the public consciousness on immigration, housing and poverty issues.

2 Why do you want to join The Media Consortium

Our goal is to build a sustained media presence that supports efforts by organizations to build leadership and power in marginalized communities. We cannot do this alone! The network that The Media Consortium brings together is an amazing cross section of independent media from which we look forward to learning, and for which we are eager to contribute.

**3 How do you see your organization as a fit for The Media Consortium?
Would you like to be an associate or full member?**

We would love to be a full member, but at this time, as a start up that is still working to establish revenue and staffing, we are applying to be an associate member. We hope to be able to upgrade our membership over time. The recent commitment by Independent Arts & Media to be our fiscal sponsor gives us hope because we now can apply for grants and accept tax-deductible donations from individuals.

The Media Consortium's core values of "extending the influence, sustainability, impact, and diversity of independent media through our projects, collaborations, and strategic alliances" are certainly compatible with the values that guide us at [people. power. media].

We are aware of the commitments to which Media Consortium members must adhere. We agree not to discriminate in any way; we agree to promote justice through all our practices, approach, and management; we agree to remain open to points of view and experiences of a diversity of organizational structures and individual perspectives; and we thrive on collaboration and input. We are constantly learning and open to sharing our knowledge in order to strengthen the community of independent media that respects and empowers marginalized communities.

We embrace The Media Consortium's requirements that member organizations participate in projects and collaborations that help other members; to send a delegate to at least one Consortium meeting per year; to invest resources and staff time in the development of the Consortium and collaborative relationships among independent media organizations; and to have a journalism-driven mission that promotes progressive ideals.

All of these values and commitments are consistent with our vision for [people. power. media] and are important to us personally and professionally as co-founders of [people. power. media].

4 How would you describe your primary audience in terms of size, diversity/ demographics, lifestyle and geography?

We started in Toronto where Dyan Ruiz, one of our co-founders, is from and has established a presence there. We have moved our base to San Francisco where Joseph Smooke, the other co-founder is from, and we continue to have projects in both Toronto and San Francisco.

The purpose of our work is to impact public policy, so our primary audience is targeted. We prioritize issues and stories based on what community based organizations are working on. These are issues that are impacting marginalized communities, but policy makers and mainstream media are not seeing the issues from the perspectives of those most impacted. By distributing our content through community-based organizations, our audience reaches the marginalized communities they support. These communities are often racially and economically diverse.

The primary intended target audience, therefore, is the group of policy makers responsible for the issue. Another important target audience is the general public that lives in, works in, and otherwise engages with impacted communities. By watching our features, they are able to see and understand issues in a new way. By impacting the general public's perception of these issues, we hope to support long term change.

It is not our goal to "go viral". Our goal is not to have the biggest and widest circulation. Rather we are interested in reaching those responsible for making a difference in the short term and reaching enough of an affected or interested audience to make a difference for the long term.

We hope over time to have enough staff to be able to cover a regular line-up of issues related to housing, immigration and poverty in both San Francisco and Toronto simultaneously. Our long term dream is to expand our presence to other major cities in the US and Canada.

5 What is your operating budget?

We are seeking funding support from both private foundations and individuals, but we do not yet have any revenue committed. We will kick off our first individual donor campaign after Thanksgiving 2012, and we have already started applying for foundation grants. We have a first year goal of \$150,000 which would sustain our current operations, and we are hoping to grow that to \$200,000 so we can pay for office space and staff.

We are currently fiscally sponsored by the San Francisco-based non-profit, Independent Arts & Media.

6 How many staff do you have?

Currently, we are just Dyan Ruiz and Joseph Smooke, co-founders. We do everything including the whole flow of pre to post production and distribution, admin, etc.

7 What are your primary platforms?

Our primary platform is video published on the web and “broadcast” through social media, community meetings, legislative hearings, etc. Secondary to our video features are audio slideshows, Prezis, written blog posts, and podcasts (we have not published any podcasts yet, but we expect to do so at some point).

8 How do you reach your audience?

The primary distributors of our content are community based organizations and their networks in addition to our own social networking. Our content has appeared on the websites of non-profit organizations, official city services and well-respected bloggers. We have also had our content shared extensively on facebook and twitter. BlipTV is our video host, and some people have found our content through that platform.

By using Jetpack on our Wordpress site and Google Analytics, we have been able to track what keyword searches have been leading people to our site. We also know that we have had visitors from 17 countries and 83 cities around the world. Of course, most of the visitors to our site have been from Toronto and San Francisco, the communities in which we have been intending to make an impact.

Upon the request of the community organization, Tenants for Social Housing, [people. power. media] showed our documentary, “Waiting for Affordable Housing,” to the Executive Committee of Toronto’s City Council during the public hearing on that topic.

We will continue to show our pieces at legislative hearings at the request of community organizations. We also rely on community meetings, and academic presentations. We look forward to being able to distribute our content through other independent media and even mainstream media.

All of our content is available with free, open access at our website www.peoplepowermedia.net, and through our facebook page www.facebook.com/PeoplePowerMedia. We also have a LinkedIn presence and distribute our content to many different LinkedIn groups concerned with the issues we’re reporting on.

9 What infrastructure is your organization looking to build?

As a startup, we have a ton of infrastructure needs. Our primary need is to be able to hire staff who can do admin, bookkeeping, transcribing, grant writing, and database management

We currently use Excel to manage our contacts, and MailChimp for e-blasts. Through our fiscal sponsor, we have a PayPal arrangement that directs donors to the right place. But, these systems are not integrated, and as we grow, we know we’ll need to manage our

donors, contacts, communications and accounting in an integrated system. But, such systems cost money which we don't have at this time.

Colleagues have advised us to start contracting out some of our production and post-production tasks. So, we will need to identify competent contractors and establish a way of managing them and ensuring consistent quality.

We are in the process of evaluating whether to sell space to a select group of advertisers. If we decide to sell ad space, we will need someone to contact companies to negotiate their placements, and take care of the tech work to get the ads placed on our content and website.

To supplement what we expect to be inconsistent and inadequate foundation and donor funds, we have developed a whole fee-for-service component to our business. We need to develop and secure clients which means outreach and marketing materials. We also need to develop an infrastructure for meeting the needs of our clients and the deadlines of our news feature/ short doc work simultaneously.

Since many of our supporters are in Canada, we need a Canadian fiscal sponsor so we can cultivate Canadian donors—and so they can claim tax advantages. We may eventually want to be a stand-alone non profit both in the US and in Canada.

10 Does your organization have any areas of expertise that could be helpful to The Media Consortium and its members?

Our unique strengths are based on our expertise in photography and video-based storytelling and our networks to marginalized communities and policy-makers. Dyan Ruiz has a Masters in Journalism from Ryerson University in Toronto where her short documentary was recognized as the best documentary of the year. Ryerson also gave her an award for her community involvement through journalism. Her hands-on training at Canada's top-rated journalism school includes broadcast writing, on-camera presence, video editing and web-based multimedia. Dyan's writing skills and reporting instincts are built on years reporting for the Toronto-based ethnic press newspaper, *The Philippine Reporter*, and the Manila-based, *The Philippine Daily Inquirer*, the largest newspaper in the Philippines.

Joseph Smooke has documented the trials and triumphs of NGOs in the US and internationally through photographs and documentaries. Joseph was the Managing Editor, a writer and photographer for the *New Bernal Journal* a community based newspaper publishing every other month for the Bernal Heights and Excelsior neighborhoods of San Francisco. He has also shared his photography skills to youth who write for the magazine, *The kNOW*, in West Fresno, California (a project of New America Media), one of the poorest urban communities in the US. He was the Director of Housing Programs, then the Executive Director of Bernal Heights Neighborhood Center in San Francisco and also worked as a Legislative Aide to San Francisco Supervisor Eric Mar. In Toronto, Joseph worked as a freelance photographer and writer for *The Philippine Reporter*. Joseph is a professional member of the National Press Photographers Association (NPPA) and the

News Photographers Association of Canada (NPAC). His skills in videography include training by the NPPA.

Their contacts and networks in Toronto and San Francisco support Dyan and Joseph's sensitive and informed approach to their journalism about issues facing marginalized communities. Joseph is an accomplished grassroots organizer and affordable housing advocate and developer. As the Housing Director, then Executive Director of the non-profit organization Bernal Heights Neighborhood Center (BHNC), Joseph built and maintained affordable housing for residents in rapidly gentrifying neighborhoods throughout San Francisco. Joseph ensured BHNC's program participants regularly engaged with policymakers and created critical mass on land use, health, violence prevention, and immigrants' rights issues. He is adept in navigating the political landscape both from his years of advocacy and his work as a Legislative Aide for San Francisco Supervisor Eric Mar.

11 Is your senior management willing and able to contribute to Consortium discussions, meetings and projects?

Yes!

12 Who will be the primary MC contacts for your organization? If these contacts are unable to participate who will serve this role in their place?

Both co-founders, Joseph Smooke and Dyan Ruiz are available to participate on behalf of [people. power. media].