

*Here are some case studies that should be helpful in illustrating the types of stories the SI DocFest is looking for. As you read through them, you might find yourself relating to these hypothetical situations and/or they may even spark additional ideas for your film.*

1. You are a high school student and you volunteer every Thanksgiving or Christmas season at your local food bank. You know there is a poverty issue in your community, but you want to find out more about how homeless people manage their lives on a daily basis. Your curiosity leads you to research statistics on homelessness in your community and you also look up the food bank in your city's newspaper archives to learn about its background. You find out that the founder of the food bank actually went to your high school and decide to interview him to learn more about his organization. Through the course of talking to different teachers who knew him when he was your age, you choose to pursue your learning further and go to the food bank itself to interview current employees, customers and volunteers on the issue of poverty and how the food bank tries to curb the issue.

Now that you have all these different elements, you begin to storyboard a documentary profiling your food bank in the context of homelessness as a social issue in your community. Once you have a basic structure for your film, you stop by the food bank after school to film their daily activities. When Thanksgiving rolls around, you film volunteers sorting through and handing out food to people in need. After completing your research, conducting your interviews and collecting all your footage, you begin editing to produce an 8-15 minute documentary film to submit to the SI DocFest. In parallel, you decide to share the film with your high school's community involvement organizations so that they can show it to students to spread awareness and also motivate more community involvement at your school.

2. At your high school's annual career day, you hear the story of a woman who founded an organization that teaches English as a second language (ESL) classes to immigrant women in your community. After briefly chatting with the woman, you become interested in finding out more about the organization's origins so you visit their website. On the site, you read about the hundreds of women this organization has aided in securing jobs in your community. You email the founder and ask for an interview, in which you learn that many students from your school volunteer at her organization. You arrange to come to one of the ESL classes to film and interview some of the women who attend. Even though you know a little bit of Spanish from your classes, you invite your best friend who's fluent to translate for you. In addition, you get insight from fellow students who tell you they love volunteering there. After meeting some of the women in these ESL classes and hearing about their struggles and perseverance, you think the story of this organization would make a great documentary.

You do more research on the organization's background and begin editing your interviews together to form a piece that combines the founder's story with that of the

organization and the role it plays in your community. Along the way, your Spanish-speaking friend helps you out with all the translations for subtitles. After completing your film, you submit it to the SI DocFest and the organization asks for permission to put your film on their website to illustrate the work they do.

3. For the last few years, you've been following the hot debate over global warming through newspaper articles, the evening news and classes at your school. You are told by your peers and teachers to watch the Al Gore documentary, "An Inconvenient Truth." After watching it, you feel inspired to join the ecological awareness club at your school in order to educate yourself more about environmental issues, and what you can do to help in your community. As a service project for your club, your moderator takes you to volunteer at a non-profit organization that focuses on promoting ecologically-friendly solutions to global warming. You begin to form friendships with the employees and visit more often to learn more about the establishment. You truly believe in the goals and objectives of this organization, so you decide to find a way to promote its mission. You see an ad about the SI DocFest in your local newspaper, and conclude that this is a perfect channel for spreading awareness about global warming through profiling the environmental organization.

You begin by interviewing the employees that you have formed relationships with about their opinions when it comes to global ecological challenges, and what their organization is doing to help dilute these issues. You also film and interview volunteers about why they have decided to dedicate their time, and why they think their organization is a beneficial asset to their community. In conjunction, you do more individual research about the origin and causes of global warming, and gather basic statistics about what the future will be like if this issue is not dealt with appropriately. Now that you have all of these components organized, you begin to produce your 8-15 minute documentary, and eventually submit it to the SI DocFest. Later, your club moderator asks to show your movie to the whole school on Earth Day.

4. During your monthly student council meeting, you hear about an opportunity to attend an annual youth conference sponsored by your city council. This year, the youth officers are giving a presentation on the genocide in Sudan in order to spread awareness to the local youth. You find out that one of your friends is actually president of the youth commission and will be the one presenting the topic. You ask her some questions about the genocide, and she tells you shocking and moving stories about the displaced refugees in Darfur. In parallel, you hear about a documentary contest in your video productions class (the SI DocFest) and conclude that your friend would be a perfect person to profile for a film. First, you ask your school's permission to borrow a camera for the use of the documentary, and then you interview your friend about how she got involved with the youth commission, and what she thinks the local youth can do to make a difference in terms of the genocide in Sudan. Later in the week, you go to the actual conference and film your

friend's presentation, as well as the keynote speaker: a refugee from Sudan who chronicles his experiences and his escape from the region.

Once you have key interviews and footage of the actual conference, you gather research and statistics about the genocide. You glean information about the cause and the current effect that it's having on men, women, and children living in Darfur. You then ask your school's permission to use the editing program in the school labs, and eventually compile all of your footage to produce an 8-15 minute documentary film. In addition to submitting the film to the SI DocFest, you present it at your next student council meeting as a great example of youth action in your community.

5. Since you were a child, you've heard your grandfather's war stories from World War II. Today, as a high school student, you learn that your grandfather helped organize a veterans fund in your community that has aided injured and disabled soldiers for the last 10 years. The veteran's fund holds annual fundraisers to spread awareness and raise money, so you decide to attend to learn more about the cause. At the event, you hear very moving stories from injured or disabled veterans and decide to interview your grandfather to find out more about how the organization started and what it does today, in detail. Your grandfather shows you old photographs from his days in the war and also from the first event that he organized. Feeling inspired by your grandfather's courage and initiative, you ask him to put you in contact with some of the people you first heard speak at the event so that you can interview them.

After several interviews, you feel confident enough to start piecing together a story for your documentary that explains your grandfather's organization and highlights its significance in your community today. You are sure to incorporate your grandfather's archival photographs in the film along with many of the stories you heard from the veterans. After completing your film, you submit it to the SI DocFest and your grandfather asks you to screen it at the veterans fund's next event.