AT&T PROUDLY SUPPORTS
TRIBECA YOUTH SCREENING SERIES®

THE HARVEST / LA COSECHA
A FILM BY
U. ROBERTO ROMANO

EDUCATOR GUIDE
Whether you’re an educator, administrator, parent, student, or just someone who wants to learn more about media literacy, you can use this guide as a way to discuss the themes in the film. Lessons are aligned with time-coded video modules, and ‘Resources for Students and Teachers’ offers further reading, further watching, and a list of local and national arts organizations. Above all, we understand that educators are multifaceted artists in their own right, so we encourage you to utilize your own artistic experiences to spark dialogue.

A PDF of this and other creative, incisive Tribeca Film Institute® Educator Guides can be found at TRIBECAFILMINSTITUTE.ORG

ABOUT THE FILM
Every year, more than 400,000 American children are torn away from their friends, schools and homes to pick the food we all eat. The Harvest/La Cosecha profiles the torrid journey of Zulema, Perla, and Victor from the scorching heat of Texas’ onion fields to the winter snows of the Michigan apple orchards, and back South to the humidity of Florida’s tomato fields, to follow the harvest. We learn how these three young people labor as migrant farm workers, sacrificing their own childhoods to help their families survive.

ABOUT THE FILMMAKER
U. ROBERTO ROMANO - DIRECTOR, PRODUCER, DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY
U. Roberto Romano was an award winning filmmaker, photographer, and human rights educator. He worked on human rights projects with organizations such as GoodWeave, Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, The International Labor Organization, Stop the Traffik, The Hunger Project, and The Council on Foreign Relations, among others. His film credits include: Dark Side of Chocolate about slavery in the West Africa cocoa trade; Stolen Childhoods about child labor.

ALBIE HECHT & SUSAN MACLAURY - EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS
The Academy Award-winning husband and wife team are the co-founders and driving force behind the non-profit production company, Shine Global; and Emmy winners for its first film, War/Dance. Albie is the former president of entertainment for Nickelodeon and Spike TV. He is currently president of Worldwide Biggies, a transmedia company he founded. Susan is the Executive Director of Shine Global. She is dually degreed in social work and health education and also teaches at Kean University. In 2013, Shine Global’s latest film Inocente was honored with an Academy Award for Best Documentary Short.

ABOUT THE CURRICULUM WRITER
Sarah Dahnke is a multimedia artist and arts educator. She has worked as a teaching artist in public schools throughout New York and Chicago; writing original curriculum that weaves arts into social studies within the classroom. She is the former artist residency manager at chaNorth, where she managed a partnership with McEnroe Organic Farm that brought artists to the farm to work, harvest and connect to the land. Sarah has a master’s degree from the NYU/Tisch Interactive Telecommunications Program and is a student at Just Food’s Farm School NYC.
FILM IN CONTEXT

La Losoña / The Harvest tells the stories of Luena, Hiera and Victor, only three of the estimated 400,000 American child migrant farm workers who are torn away from their friends, schools and homes to pick the food we all eat. The conditions they live in are extremely difficult. They earn no overtime and no sick days and often do not even receive a minimum wage. From the age of 12 or younger, their family’s necessity forces them to work in all weather extremes. They are exposed to hazardous pesticides in what is the most dangerous occupation for minors in the United States of America.

This is legal in America because the Fair Labor Standards Act, enacted in 1938, is a federal statute that introduced better labor conditions like the maximum 44-hour, seven-day work week, established a national minimum wage, guaranteed “time-and-a-half” for overtime in certain jobs, and prohibited most employment of minors in “oppressive child labor”. However, this act excluded agriculture and thus left thousands of children unprotected.

VIDEO MODULES

DISCUSSION PROMPTS

CYCLE OF POVERTY

Many migrant workers began picking crops immediately after immigrating to the United States. The work doesn’t require an education, special skills or the ability to speak English, nor does it guarantee a minimum wage. As soon as they are able, children start working in the fields; disrupting their education and making them likely to not finish school.

According to the film, migrant children drop out of school at four times the national rate. After dropping out, these children often go back to picking crops, as it is the only work they are familiar with. Soon they have families of their own and continue the same cycle. Migrant workers earn an average of only $17,500 per year; many migrant workers can’t even afford to visit a grocery store and buy the crops they pick.

INJURY AND HEALTH

The Environmental Protection Agency pesticide regulations are set for a 154-pound male; this causes over 300,000 migrant workers to suffer from pesticide poisoning each year because they do not adhere to this description. Long-term exposure to pesticides in adults is associated with chronic health problems such as cancer, neurological problems, and reproductive problems. Repetitive manual labor is also a cause of injury, and older workers suffer from physical ailments while feeling as though they have to keep working to support their families. Non-labor-related health problems often go untreated or are prolonged because workers can’t miss a day of work and wages. The additional expense of medical care is often also a deterrent from seeking help. Migrant workers are not provided with health insurance, and 64% do not buy healthcare because it is too expensive.

LACK OF STABILITY

Almost 40% of farm workers must migrate to follow where there is work. Their children suffer the instability of a nomadic lifestyle, potentially working in multiple states in a given season, and attending multiple schools, each with a different curriculum and standards. Stability is even harder to find when the average farm worker family of four makes less than $17,500 a year. Farm workers can be paid hourly, daily, by the piece or receive a salary, but they are always legally exempt from receiving overtime, and often from receiving even minimum wage.

DISCUSSION PROMPTS CONT.

CHILD LABOR

Many times, migrant workers cannot afford childcare. Children end up working alongside their parents in the fields as early as seven years old. Getting used to working at such a young age also affects the education these children receive. On average, children in agriculture work 30 hours a week, and often end up migrating from May-November, making it extremely difficult to succeed in school. Migrant children end up dropping out of school at four times the national rate.

Working in agriculture also affects their physical growth. With their bodies not being fully formed, children are most susceptible to repetitive motion injuries. Farm workers labor in extreme temperatures and die from heat exposure at a rate twenty times that of other US workers and children are significantly more susceptible to heat stress than adults. Heat illness can lead to temporary illness, brain damage, and death.

KEY WORDS

Farmworker – An individual who works in the agriculture industry. Depending on the location and type of farm, the work may be seasonal or permanent.

Migrant Worker – An individual who relies on temporary or seasonal agricultural work to make a living, usually following the harvest from state to state.

Pesticides – A chemical substance used for deterring or destroying insects, weeds, or any type of animal that feeds on crops. Some of the controversies related to pesticides include their potential for impacting human and environmental health.

Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) – Established in 1938, it introduced a maximum 44-hour seven-day workweek, established a national minimum wage, guaranteed “time-and-a-half” for overtime in certain jobs, and prohibited most employment of minors in “oppressive child labor”.

Farmer: Traditionally, farmers are individuals engaged in agriculture, often involving raising animals and crops. Farmers may own the land they work on, or work on someone else’s land. In advanced economies, a farmer is usually a farm owner, while employees of the farm are known as farm workers, or farmhands.

Living wage: The minimum income necessary for a worker to meet basic needs and maintain a safe standard of living. These needs include adequate housing or shelter, proper nutrition, and the ability to sustain monthly expenditures like clothing, transportation, etc.

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Migrant workers are one of the most vital and invisible workforces in the United States. There is a high probability that the fruit and vegetables you eat were picked by a migrant worker. In 1938, the United States enacted the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA), ensuring most workers have better labor conditions like the maximum 44-hour, seven-day work week, established a national minimum wage, guaranteed “time and a half” for overtime in certain jobs, and prohibited most employment of minors in “oppressive child labor.” However, migrant workers are not guaranteed a minimum wage and often live in extreme poverty.

**PART A:**

Using the Internet, divide into groups or work as a class to learn about the FLSA. Write down answers to the following questions:

• Why are migrant workers not included in this act?
• Who benefits from paying migrant workers so little? Who does not benefit?
• What are some alternatives to using migrant workers to pick crops?
• How can children be protected from being forced to work in these conditions?

**Discuss:**

The Harvest/La Cosecha profiles three young migrant workers and their families. Why are migrant workers necessary? Why can’t their work be replaced by machinery, like corn we see harvested in King Corn? Why aren’t crops picked by farmers?

**Opinion:** Based on your research, how can the current legislation be more equitable?

**PART B:**

Draw a chart on a white board or chart paper with two columns: fair and unfair. Fill in each side of the chart with student opinions about what is fair and what is unfair about the current law.
POST-SCREENING ACTIVITY 1
I WANT TO FINISH SCHOOL AND BECOME A LAWYER

**Time:** 45 minutes

**Materials:** Paper, writing utensils, Video Modules: “Discrimination” (00:19:21 – 00:19:57); “Life will change” (01:09:50 – 01:10:40); “Dreams” (01:06:11 – 01:07:08)

In the film, we learn about the difficulties migrant children must overcome if they want to finish school. They migrate often, chasing crops and work around the country, which makes it difficult to have a consistent education. We learn that Perla was held back a grade, and Zulema worries she won’t finish high school. Yet all of the children profiled have dreams to get an education and leave the world of migrant agricultural work.

**PART A**
Write down your biggest academic challenge. Now write a three-step plan to overcome that challenge. What resources might you need to be successful?

**PART B**
In groups, determine the factors that prevent migrant workers from finishing school; then design an organized step-by-step plan that addresses these challenges and provides a road to success. How could someone who was migrating for the majority of the year still be able to get an education and graduate high school? What resources and support might they need?

Each group will present their plans to the class.

POST-SCREENING ACTIVITY 2
WHO AM I?

**Time:** 1 hour

**Tools:** Paper, writing utensils, Video Modules: Zulema (00:08:32 – 00:10:45); “Victor” (00:12:06 – 00:13:10); “Perla” (00:23:02 – 00:23:35)

**PART A**
Watch the video modules of each of the 3 main characters: Zulema, Victor and Perla. After each module, students should write down a sentence that describes the main character’s personality. Discuss students’ responses. What did the characters say in their introductions that revealed their characters?

**PART B:**
Imagine you are Zulema, Victor or Perla. Your assignment is to write a paragraph soliloquy from the point of view of one of these three characters. What unspoken thoughts and feelings do you have? What do you wish you could say to your family? What do you wish for your future? What is your greatest challenge? Are you content with your current situation?

Students will read their soliloquies aloud to the class upon completion.

**Taking it further:**
Students can create simple animations to accompany the soliloquies, using any of the following programs: Aniboom (www.aniboom.com), Go Animate (www.goanimate.com), or iStopmotion (itunes.apple.com). Encourage students to also consider doing voice recordings of the soliloquies and pair them with the animations to create multimedia storytelling experiences.
More than 400,000 children work in American fields to harvest the food we all eat.

The average farmworker family makes less than $17,500 a year, well below the poverty level for a family of four.

Increasing the incomes of migrant farmworkers by 40% would add just $15 to what the average US household spends every year on fruits and vegetables, according to a researcher at University of California Davis.

Almost 40% of farm workers migrate and their children suffer the instability of a nomadic lifestyle, potentially working in multiple states in a given season and attending multiple schools each with a different curriculum.

Families often cannot afford childcare and so have no choice but to bring their children out into the fields. As a result, children who work as farm laborers do not have access to proper education and are at risk of exploitation.

On average, children in agriculture work 30 hours a week, often migrating from May – November, making it exceedingly difficult to succeed in school.
ABOUT TRIBECA YOUTH SCREENING SERIES®

Tribeca Youth Screening Series® is a media literacy program begun in 2006 by the Tribeca Film Institute®. The academic year is divided into two series, screened from September through June in partnership with national and neighborhood partners. These screenings are augmented by in-class sessions led by a Tribeca Teaching Artist, who works with a film-specific curriculum written and edited by a team formed through Tribeca Film Institute®. Schools are selected based on relationship, location, and need; in 2012 we will be working in eight schools in New York and New Jersey. Connect and download free curricula at TRIBECAFILMINSTITUTE.ORG

Additional program support provided by:

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