



Who we are

Uniting NC is part of a national grassroots collaborative that works to build understanding and respect for immigrants and the cultural changes they bring to our state. We believe that, when people of different races, cultures and backgrounds get to know one another, they realize that we are all people who want the same things: safety, happiness and opportunity. Only after we understand our common humanity can we work together to build stronger, safer, more productive communities.

How we work

Uniting NC pursues its mission by hosting events that bring people of all backgrounds together for meals, films and conversation. We produce public service announcements, billboards and videos that reveal the humanity of immigrants. And we are building a state-wide corps of volunteers working to make their communities more welcoming. We do not engage in policy advocacy or political debates, as these topics can be divisive and do not inspire the kinds of positive, person-to-person interactions we seek to foster.

How to make your community more welcoming

1. Host an event

We need you to take the idea of welcoming and run with it in your community. Think of the clubs, associations or religious institutions you belong to. Think about your friends and neighbors. How can you help break down barriers and misconceptions between groups of different backgrounds? Here are a few of the types of events we can help you put on:

- **The Immigration Board Game:** Bring a small group of people together to play this game that demonstrates the complexities and pitfalls of the U.S. immigration system, and explains why so many immigrants cannot get legal status.
- **Film Screening:** Host a screening of one of many films that explores the lives of immigrants. This can be in your living room, or in a large public venue.
- **Community Dialogue:** A facilitated discussion about cultural change and immigration, which encourages people to speak from personal experience.
- **Speaker:** If you have a willing audience, we can help you find a great speaker who will tell their immigration story.
- **Community event:** Help put together a potluck, service project or social event that brings together immigrants and non-immigrants.

2. Facilitate an event

Maybe you aren't quite ready to host your own event. You can still help us. We get lots of groups throughout the year who ask us to help them put on events. They often want people to give a brief presentation about Uniting NC or facilitate a discussion about immigration. Now that you're trained, we would like to call on you occasionally to help us handle an event. This will allow our small organization to commit to more events each year.

3. Raise money for a billboard

We have a couple images for use on billboards and are developing more. All of them focus on humanizing immigrants. If you want to see a positive message about immigrants in your community, then work with us to figure out the price of a billboard and then help us raise the money to make it happen.

4. Offer your skills to Uniting NC

As an organization with only one part-time staff member, we need help in all kinds of areas. If you have expertise in any of the following areas, please consider volunteering a couple hours a month to help us with:

- **Writing:** We would love to build a team who we can call on to write blog posts, letters to the editor and op-eds.
- **Internet and social media:** We are always looking to build our online presence through our website, Facebook and other online tools.
- **Graphic design:** We often need people to help us design fliers, promotional materials and billboards. We would love to have a group of people to share the work.
- **Advertising:** We need help figuring out how to get our PSAs, billboards and videos out into the world on a limited budget.
- **Fundraising:** If you know how to fundraise, we would love to have your help. You can raise money for something specific, like a Uniting NC billboard in your community, or just help us raise money to continue our work in general.

FILMS FOR DIALOGUE

Short (1 hour or less)

Detained: The New Bedford Immigration Raid (half hour)

On March 6, 2007, US Immigration officials raided a New Bedford, MA factory that makes vests and backpacks for US soldiers. Many of the 361 undocumented immigrants who were detained in the raid were women with small children.

A news report about the raid: <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2007/03/17/AR2007031701113.html>

Cartas del Otro Lado (three 20-minute shorts)

"Letters from the Other Side" captures the circumstances, doubts, struggles and hardships that Mexican families must endure when their husbands, sons, and male relatives migrate to the United States in search of work. Told from the perspective of several women, the daily effects of migration to the North and post-NAFTA trade policies between the US and Mexico on families left behind in Mexico are central to this documentary. It highlights the inhumanity and danger that the journey to the US poses for both the individuals who endure it and the families that are left behind.

Echando Raices / Taking Root (Three 20-minute segments)

In the three 20-minute segments of *Echando Raices*, immigrants from diverse countries tell their stories of the struggle to seek new futures in the United States. The film focuses on immigrants and the communities in which they live in California, Texas, and Iowa. Stories and reflections from immigrants and refugees are woven together with scenes of community life. Also included are perspectives from scholars, union and community activists, local officials, displaced workers, and more. The film features a vibrant soundtrack.

Welcome to Shelbyville (1 hour)

This documentary produced in collaboration with Welcoming America tells the story of how the movement that Uniting NC is a part of began in Tennessee. It will be available for use at events after May 24, 2011.

People in the small town of Shelbyville become concerned when a large group of Muslim Somali refugees moves in to work in the local chicken plant. Rumors start to spread that they are dirty or plotting terrorist attacks, and many of the allegations are published in the local paper. A diverse group of residents comes together to challenge the stereotypes. They hold meetings and community events that allow the Somalis to meet other residents and answer their questions.

The film is about Shelbyville, Tennessee, but it tackles an issue that has affected towns across the South. Shelbyville is the model for the kind of work that Uniting NC wants to do, and for the way that all of us in North Carolina can get involved.

The Guestworker (1 hour)

The Guestworker tells the story of Don Candelario Gonzalez Moreno, a 66-year old Mexican farmer who has been coming to the U.S. since the 1960s as a farm laborer. He is some twenty to forty years older than all the thousands of Mexican men who work in today's United States' H2A Guest Worker program started in 1986. Yet he is asked back, year after year,

because of his commitment to hard work, his “good attitude,” and his long-term service to Wester Farms in North Carolina. With revealing insight, filmmakers Cynthia Hill and Charles Thompson embark on an intimate exploration of Cande during one particularly grueling season while delving into this little-known guest worker program now already twenty years in existence.

The Guestworker comes at a time in American history where immigration policies are as relevant a discussion as they’ve ever been. As the U.S. engages in deliberations of who will do our farm work and how they will be employed, phrases such as “illegal aliens,” “closing the gate,” and “guest worker” have become essential to our national lexicon. *The Guestworker* offers some humanity to a debate that could otherwise be callous and bureaucratic.

Brother Towns / Pueblos Hermanos (1 hour)

Brother Towns is a story of two towns linked by immigration, family, and work: Jacaltenango, a highland Maya town in Guatemala; and Jupiter, a coastal resort town where many Jacaltecos have settled in Florida. Brother Towns chronicles a story of how and why people migrate across borders, how people make and remake their communities when they travel thousands of miles from home, and how people maintain families despite their travel.

Because we are all immigrants, this is a universal human story, and a quintessential American one. All of us understand family. Brother Towns is also a story of local and international controversy. News of undocumented immigrants is familiar in nearly every community across the U.S., and citizens must choose how they respond to this issue. Our story includes voices of those opposed to undocumented immigrants as well as advocates helping migrants who seek work and hope, whether documented or not.

Long (1.5 to 2 hours)

The Visitor (1 hour, 45 minutes)

A story about an American professor from Connecticut, whose life is changed and enriched by a chance encounter with an illegal immigrant couple. The man is a Syrian musician and the woman is a jewelry designer from Senegal. The Syrian man is eventually detained and deported, despite the professor’s attempts to block his removal. A revealing tale about the way immigrants, legal and illegal, have become woven into the fabric of the United States.

GUIDE FOR DIALOGUE FACILITATORS

1. **Explain process** to participants.

This is a dialogue method taught to us by the Public Conversations Project, which works around the world to facilitate dialogue on prickly topics. It's a very structured approach, where a facilitator offers a question, allows a short time for reflection and then gives each person a set amount time to answer. We ask that no one interrupt, ask questions or respond. We go through two rounds of this process, before the facilitator opens up the discussion for questions and responses.

2. **Make agreements** with participants.

- a. We will speak for ourselves, rather than trying to represent a group.
- b. We will speak from personal experience.
- c. We will avoid criticizing others.
- d. We will share airtime and not interrupt others.
- e. We will "pass" or "pass for now" if we are not willing or ready to respond to a question.
- f. We will keep what we hear in this room confidential.

3. **Introductions:** Your name and why you came here tonight, or other intro question of your choice.

Ask people to keep it to two sentences, max.

4. **Split into groups** of 3-5 people, each with a facilitator.

5. **Round one** (2 minutes per person):

- Facilitator briefly explains the process, that there will be a question, a short pause for reflection, and then each person will have two minutes to answer.
- Pose the question: **Talk about a time when you felt out of place or different.** (Or other question that includes everyone and is broad enough that answers do not have to relate to immigration.) *Specify that their answer does not have to relate to immigration, race or culture. It could be about going to the beach and not knowing how to swim, for example. Anything.*
- Allow 30 seconds or so for quiet reflection.
- Call on the first person. Warn them at 30 seconds remaining. Gently cut them off at 2 minutes.
- Repeat with each participant.
- Remember that people can pass.

6. **Round two** (1 minute per person):

- Pose the question: **What did you learn from the situation? If you could go back, would you have changed your response?**
- Repeat same process as in Round One.

7. **Facilitator opens up the discussion**, so participants can respond to each other and ask questions.

Appendix C-1: What We Mean by “Dialogue”

What dialogue is

The dialogues that PCP designs and facilitates are conversations in which the participants’ primary goal is to pursue mutual understanding rather than agreement or immediate solutions. As participants pursue this goal, they sometimes decide to pursue other goals. For example, dialogue groups sometimes decide to become better informed together or to build consensus about ways that they can act on shared values.

What dialogue is not

Dialogue is distinct from debate; in fact, participants in dialogue often explicitly agree to set aside persuasion and debate so that they can focus on mutual understanding. Dialogue is also different from mediation, conflict resolution, and problem solving although it may serve as a prelude to or aspect of such processes.

What participants do

- They listen and are listened to with care.
- They speak and are spoken to in a respectful manner.
- They share airtime so that all speakers can be heard.
- They learn about the perspectives of others.
- They reflect on their own views.

What participants gain

- Mutual understanding, which may stimulate new ideas for learning and action
- Communication skills that can be used in other difficult conversations

What it takes

Dialogue is present any time people genuinely seek mutual understanding, setting aside for that time the urge to persuade or the pressure to decide. It can occur spontaneously, among friends, in classrooms, in organizations, or even among strangers. When people are experiencing polarized conflict, however, we have found that it is helpful if they

- have clarity and consensus about the purposes of the conversation.
- make communication agreements that will help them to achieve their purposes.
- have a facilitator whose sole responsibility is to help the participants honor their agreements and reach their shared purposes.

Appendix C-2: Distinguishing Debate from Dialogue*

Debate	Dialogue
Premeeting communication between sponsors and participants is minimal and largely irrelevant to what follows.	Premeeting contacts and preparation of participants are essential elements of the full process.
Participants tend to be leaders known for propounding a carefully crafted position. The personas displayed in the debate are usually already familiar to the public. The behavior of the participants tends to conform to stereotypes.	Those chosen to participate are not necessarily outspoken leaders. Whoever they are, they speak as individuals whose own unique experiences differ in some respect from others on their side. Their behavior is likely to vary in some degree and along some dimensions from stereotypic images others may hold of them.
The atmosphere is threatening; attacks and interruptions are expected by participants and are usually permitted by moderators.	The atmosphere is one of safety; facilitators propose, get agreement on, and enforce clear ground rules to enhance safety and promote respectful exchange.
Participants speak as representatives of groups.	Participants speak as individuals, from their own unique experience.
Participants speak to their own constituents and, perhaps, to the undecided middle.	Participants speak to each other.
Differences within sides are denied or minimized.	Differences among participants on the same side are revealed as individual and personal foundations of beliefs and values are explored.
Participants express unswerving commitment to a point of view, approach, or idea.	Participants express uncertainties as well as deeply held beliefs.
Participants listen in order to refute the other side's data and to expose faulty logic in their arguments. Questions are asked from a position of certainty. These questions are often rhetorical challenges or disguised statements.	Participants listen to understand and gain insight into the beliefs and concerns of the others. Questions are asked from a position of curiosity.

Statements are predictable and offer little new information.	New information surfaces.
Success requires simple impassioned statements.	Success requires exploration of the complexities of the issue being discussed.
Debates operate within the constraints of the dominant public discourse. The discourse defines the problem and the options for resolution. It assumes that fundamental needs and values are already clearly understood.	Participants are encouraged to question the dominant public discourse, that is, to express fundamental needs that may or may not be reflected in the discourse and to explore various options for problem definition and resolution. Participants may discover inadequacies in the usual language and concepts used in the public debate.

* This table contrasts debate as commonly seen on television with the kind of dialogue we aim to promote in dialogue sessions conducted by the Public Conversations Project.

Appendix C-8: A Sample Set of Proposed Agreements*

1. ***We will speak for ourselves.***We won't try to represent a whole group, and we will not ask others to represent, defend, or explain an entire group.
2. ***We will avoid making grand pronouncements***and, instead, connect what we know and believe to our experiences, influences in our lives, particular sources of information, etc.
3. ***We will refrain from characterizing the v+iews of others in a critical spirit,***keeping in mind that we're here to understand each other, not to persuade each other.
4. ***We will listen with resilience,***"hanging in" when we hear something that is hard to hear.
5. ***We will share airtime and refrain from interrupting others.***
6. ***We will "pass" or "pass for now"***if we are not ready or willing to respond to a question—no explanation required.
7. ***If asked to keep something confidential, we will honor the request.***In conversations outside of the group we won't attribute particular statements to particular individuals by name or identifying information without permission.
8. ***We'll avoid making negative attributions***about the beliefs, values, and motives of other participants, e.g., "You only say that because...". When tempted to do so, we'll consider the possibility of testing the assumption we're making by asking a question, e.g., "Why is that important to you?"
9. ***We'll use email only for scheduling,***not for substantive discussion.

*See also second page of Appendix C-7