



# A Silent Transformation

## *A Screening Guide*

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### **Intro**

*A Silent Transformation* is an impact film.

It is meant to engage the viewers with new ideas and move them to action. The most effective venue for this is a community screening.

When set up by a community member or a local organization, a film event can bring together a lay audience with activists, organizers and professionals and foster important social links for collective action.

*A Silent Transformation* is also meant to appeal to a younger demographic. So families and young people are encouraged to attend. The more entertaining a screening event the more successful it will be in engaging the viewers.

This guide is meant to provide event organizers with the basic information needed to set up a screening.

## Setting up a Screening

If you are not familiar with community organizing, setting up a film screening may seem a daunting challenge. But in fact, it's just like organizing a big party! First, start talking to your friends and neighbors - you need to promote the event among you and yours. Create a social media page and ask people to share it. Won't hurt to leave a few flyers at your community center or a local social spot as well.

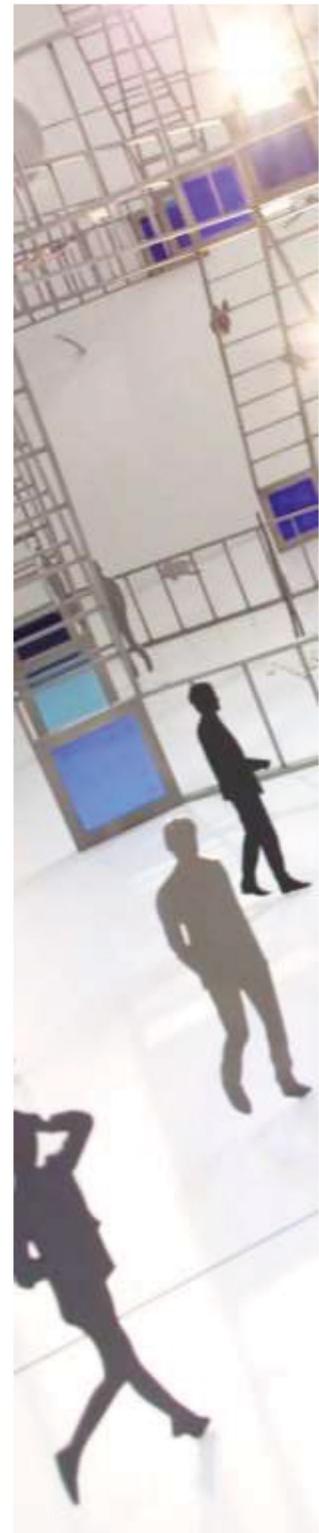
Setting up a space for the screening may require reaching out to local organizations that share your values and may be interested in the film. A local co-operative, a library, a school... - all are great ideas! Some may even have necessary equipment, like a projector hooked up to a laptop. If not, find a teksavvy movie buff friend of yours.

You may have expenses associated with this operation. Get a local or regional organization to sponsor the event. A credit union, a co-op association, a local business, non-profit - who ever can kick a coin to this worthwhile undertaking.

Next, invite some folks to speak. The makers of the film are *obviously* your first choice! Otherwise a co-op developer, or a community organizer, or a researcher, or a political representative, or a faith leader, or a writer, or a union leader, or a housewife, or a stay-at-home dad - who ever can speak about the issues and get the audience engaged.

And you're pretty much set! You just have to decide which version of *A Silent Transformation* to show. Depending on your particular screening needs you may choose the full feature or a shortened educational version of the film. The two versions include the same on-the-ground community stories and provide the same discussion of the co-operative enterprise model. However, the feature goes into extra detail about the contemporary social and economic context in which co-operation takes place, and provides a longer discussion of the transformative values and practices that would animate a more co-operative society.

Although we encourage the showing of the full feature, the shortened version is perfect for a classroom setting or for a presentation focusing on local co-operative development.



## **Abstract**

*A Silent Transformation* is a film about the *transformative* power of the co-operative model.

The co-operative movement was built by people who took on the responsibility for their collective wellbeing in the face of government neglect, economic exclusion and cultural discrimination. As the modern economy increasingly denies vast sectors of the population basic amenities for decent life, this co-operative spirit is as critical as ever. However, over the years the co-op sector has become insular and poorly understood.

*A Silent Transformation* sets out to explore the innovative self-help efforts of diverse communities across the Province of Ontario, which by addressing their needs collectively are helping to regain the radical vision of co-operation. In these communities are the seeds of economic democracy, global solidarity, and a new popular movement to *transform* society!

Will it grow and flourish?



## **Featured Topics**

*A Silent Transformation* discusses a variety of topics concerning contemporary conditions of co-operation as well as types of values, relations and institutions that are necessary to transform the current system:

- Local development in the post-industrial era
- Democratization of finance and capacity building in communities
- Co-operative business conversion
- The history of co-operation and universal health care in Canada
- Stagflation of the 1970's and the chaos of the 2000's – impetus for transformation
- Neo-liberalism, precariousness and the ecological crisis
- Rising inequality and socio-epidemiological effects
- Free Trade vs. Fair Trade
- Export-led agriculture, food insecurity and rural development in Ontario
- Urban farming and the multi-stakeholder model
- Land trusts and the fight against gentrification
- Housing, co-ops and the state
- The effects of market competition on co-operation
- Co-op democracy in the face of growth
- Early childhood education and neo-classical economics
- Why co-operation “has to be part of a bigger project”



## ***Discussion Sheet***

An impact film *has* to be followed up by a lively audience discussion. Below are some questions that could spark the conversation. Co-op practitioners and organizers in the audience are encouraged to share their knowledge and experience.

- What do you think motivates individuals? Is it money? Creativity? Hard times? Or something else completely?
- How can persons maintain their individual identities in the face of powerful forces in society such as governments and corporations whose aims are to make them conform?
- Discuss some possible obstacles that complicate cooperation (i.e: lack of trust or resources, insufficient organization).
- What does community mean to you? And what can be done to promote the ideals of communal life?
- Identify some common needs in your neighborhood and compare individual vs. collective solutions. The issues could be as diverse as lack of affordable daycare or rising utility prices. How can these issues be addressed?
- How would the economy change if more businesses were owned and managed by members of the communities in which they operated? Would it be more environmentally sustainable or socially inclusive? Is this realistic and what kind of obstacles do you see on the way towards such an economy?
- Identify a potential co-operative solution in your community. What are some first steps that could be taken towards setting up a co-op? Encourage the audience to take an inventory of resources, skills and organizations in their community that can help start a co-operative.
- Do you know businesses in your community whose owners may be looking to retire? Is there an opportunity to help them and their employees to convert to a co-op? Discuss what first steps may be taken.
- What is the role of unions in modern society? Are they relevant, and are they connected to the wider community? Should unions promote the co-operative model?
- Many issues around co-operation, labor relations, and community benefits are political. Whether it is a processing plant closing in a rural community, or rent prices skyrocketing in a city neighborhood, or a public school classroom size being increased, a lot can be accomplished by direct action. Encourage the audience to share their experiences and thoughts on organizing and political action. What role can co-operatives play?



## ***Production Bio***

***A Silent Transformation*** is

A ***Powerline Films*** Production

In Collaboration with ***Tonic Productions***

In Association with the ***Atkinson Foundation***

***Co-operative Development Foundation of Canada***  
and ***Co-operatives and Mutuals Canada***

*A Silent Transformation* was created by **Simon Brothers, Luke Mistruzzi, Anton Smolski and Mark Preston**, operating as a worker collective based on initiative-driven participation, consensus-based decision making and an ethos of “from each according to his ability, to each according to his need”.

In its egalitarian approach, AST had no use for traditional hierarchies and determinate roles common to film production: the responsibilities were shared; directing and editing of the film was done collectively.

*A Silent Transformation* is an autonomous and independent project made possible by the support of a community of stakeholders that includes private individuals, co-operative businesses, co-op associations, private foundations and academic research networks. The project set out to re-create through the production process the types of co-operative relationships that the film has attempted to capture on screen.

The primary task of *A Silent Transformation* is to explore the co-operative enterprise model and its transformative potential. But the film’s deeper significance is in its attempt to sketch out, through process and narrative, the contours of a possible transition away from Capitalism to a system of economic democracy.



## Featured Organizations

[London Skateboard Co-operative](#)  
[Native Inter-Tribal Housing Co-operative](#)  
[The Root Cellar / On The Move Organics](#)  
[Planet Bean Worker Co-operative](#)  
[Li Maya Coffee Farmers' Union](#)  
[Café Femenino Co-operative](#)  
[Meridian Credit Union](#)  
[Aron Theater Co-operative Inc.](#)  
[Dufferin Grove Housing Co-operative](#)  
[Parkdale Neighbourhood Land Trust](#)  
[Family Pastimes Cooperative Games](#)  
[Gay Lea Foods Co-operative Ltd.](#)  
[West End Food Co-op](#)

## Reach Out (Canadian)

[Atkinson Foundation](#)  
[Co-operatives and Mutuals Canada](#)  
[Co-operative Development Foundation of Canada](#)  
[The Ontario Co-operative Association](#)  
[Canadian Worker Co-op Federation](#)  
[Co-operative Housing Federation of Canada](#)  
[Health Care Co-operatives Federation of Canada](#)  
[Canadian Association for Studies in Co-operation](#)  
[Social Enterprise Council of Canada](#)  
[The Council of Canadians](#)  
[The Leap Manifesto](#)  
[Beautiful Solutions](#)  
**(American)**  
[Democracy at Work](#)  
[The Workers Lab](#)  
[The Next System Project](#)  
[The Pluralist Commonwealth](#)  
[Community Wealth](#)  
[The Democracy Collaborative](#)





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