

# WAKING DREAM

Young. Undocumented. Future Unknown.

DIALOGUE GUIDE



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media

# Waking Dream Screening & Dialogue Guide



ROSSY AT THE  
U.S./MEXICAN BORDER

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# WAKING DREAM



*Waking Dream* weaves together the stories of six undocumented young adults as they sit in limbo between deportation and a path to citizenship, and fight for legal status in the United States. The shared backdrop of their stories is DACA, the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals, signed as an Executive Order by President Barack Obama in 2012. DACA gave nearly 800,000 undocumented young people, who had been in the U.S. since they were small children, a chance to work legally, go to college, start businesses, and pursue the “American Dream.” When the program was rescinded by the Trump administration in 2017, DACA recipients suddenly were faced with the reality of losing their jobs, legal status, and being at risk of deportation from the United States - the place that each regarded as their home.

## About the Series

The six episodes, each 8-10 minutes in length, are part of *Indie Lens Storycast*, a new YouTube channel that aims to spark community conversation focusing on the most vital issues in our communities. With the ease of access and short-form format, *Waking Dream* can be screened and discussed with multiple audiences and serve as a tool and catalyst to spark conversations on immigration issues touching all parts of our communities.

Watch the complete series at <http://bit.ly/wdreamplay>



WAKING DREAM DIRECTOR, THEO RIGBY

## Letter from Director, Theo Rigby

*Waking Dream* is about hope. A future not yet realized. The tenacity of youth, stifled due to politics and sheer happenstance. These young people are all brilliant in their own way, are all fighters, literally in some cases, and embody everything that we as 'Americans' hold dear. However, they are cast in a shadow of limbo and uncertainty.

I try to create work that provides different entry points into the intricacies of undocumented life in the U.S. I very intentionally wanted *Waking Dream* to push against the 'Dreamer' tropes we often see in the divided media landscape. We see multitudes of 'Good Dreamer' stories of superstars who graduate first in their class, situated one click away from 'Bad Dreamer' stories of alleged criminals with DACA permits. Where are all of the stories in between? Why do we feel the need to represent such polar opposites of the spectrum of life? *Waking Dream* consists of a diverse cast in terms of where people live, countries of origin, cultures, and political views. The series imparts the idea that there isn't a monolithic 'Dreamer', the undocumented

community is diverse in myriad ways, and that being undocumented is just one part these young people's identities, and lives.

As a filmmaker, I try to peel back the layers of life in a way that doesn't reveal some sort of objective 'truth,' but creates an opening for us to more clearly see the realities of what we often pass by unaware, ignore, or haven't had the privilege of yet seeing. With this clarity and a deeper understanding of the world as we see it, my hope is that audiences can not only learn something new, but also take one step closer to our realizing our own truths.

There are few times in my practice where I feel 'in my power,' that is, in the place where I unequivocally know I should be. Spending time with the young people featured in *Waking Dream*, sharing space, sharing tears, and having the privilege to tell their stories, put me in that unique place. For this, I am eternally grateful.



STEVE LI, WAKING DREAM PARTICIPANT

## Letter from Steve Li

Thank you for watching *Waking Dream*. My story and the stories of the people you see in the film are not uncommon. We are only a few of the 11 million undocumented that continue to live as second-class citizens and live in fear of being separated from our families.

I hope that after watching this film, you have a better understanding of the real-life impact that unjust immigration policies have on our country. When we are apolitical and apathetic to the events that are happening around us, we become complacent to injustice. Our fight for immigration reform is interconnected with the fight of Black Lives Matter, women's rights, LGBTQ, Islamophobia, and gun control. Find an issue that you are passionate about and a community that supports and empowers you to **use** your voice. You have more power to affect change than you realize. I believe that together we will prevail and eradicate injustice.

## Using this Guide: Why Dialogue?

“Dialogue is a shared inquiry, a way of thinking and reflecting together. It is not something you do to another person. It is something you do *with* people. Indeed, a large part of learning this has to do with learning to shift your attitudes about relationships with others, so that we gradually give up the effort to make them understand us, and come to a greater understanding of ourselves and each other.”<sup>1</sup>

~ William Isaac,  
*The Art of Thinking Together*

*Waking Dream* offers a unique opportunity to listen and learn from the lived experiences of undocumented immigrants in America today. Amidst the political rhetoric dividing so many communities, the six episodes challenge the paradigm that groups together immigrants as a community to fear rather than as unique individuals living the best lives that they can under precarious circumstances. We meet Dilan, Rossy, John and James, Marisol, and Steve and learn about their family separation, their struggles in school and maintaining steady employment as young adults. We also see that Dilan and Rossy are our teachers and Marisol is a mother and works with our children, that Steve is a promising student and activist, and John and James are our soldiers. Recognizing their contributions as fellow community members and not as “other” opens up the space to engage on what it means to be an American from a place of empathy, deep compassion, and common humanity.

This is where the process of engaging in respectful dialogue alongside the stories in *Waking Dream* can be transformative by:

- Shifting the dominant narrative and conversation about immigration away from xenophobia and fear towards more positive and complex framing of immigration issues;
- Increasing empathy and compassion regarding current immigration issues through listening to and learning from the stories of individuals;
- Creating a replicable model for informed, deliberate and compassionate dialogue to take place in communities across the country;
- Deepening understanding of the history of immigration policy in the United States as an entry point for a more informed and accurate understanding.

<sup>1</sup> This definition of dialogue comes from *Dialogue and the Art of Thinking Together*.  
<https://www2.clarku.edu/difficultdialogues/learn/index.cfm>

## Tips for Facilitating Dialogue

Engaging in dialogue around contentious issues like immigration requires practice and patience. Dialogue doesn't just happen naturally. It must be learned and practiced. In particular preparing the space, preparing yourself, and preparing to group to respectfully exchange viewpoints and actively listen can be a challenge for even the most skilled facilitator and participant.

### PREPARE THE SPACE

*Before the event begins.* Set up your physical space for participants to clearly see and hear the film. If necessary, after watching *Waking Dream*, rearrange the space for participants to be able to see and hear one another. A "U" shape or circle are usually conducive formats for setup.

*Set the tone.* Prior to starting a general discussion, a question and answer session with a panel, or a more interactive engagement event, set the tone of respect by discussing the intent of civic dialogue emphasizing a few of the following best practices.

This may include respectful listening, a clarification of terminology, equity of voice, and sharing the space without interruptions so all can voice their perspective. Remind participants to speak in the first person ("I think...") rather than generalizing for others ("Everyone knows that" or "Your community...")

Remind groups that for some members, there are legal ramifications of openly discussing unauthorized status for some members of the group. Be respectful of an individual's privacy and their willingness, or reluctance, to disclose personal information.

Be explicit from the very beginning that this dialogue space is a safe space. This may include an agreement of confidentiality as well as being open and coming to an agreement about how to disagree respectfully.

Keep in mind that individuals may not want to share their own story out of fear of reprisal, so avoid asking questions such as "Where are you from?" or "Why are you in America?"

*Note:* A section entitled "Guidelines for Dialogue" is included at the end of this resource. Sharing it with your audience or having it on hand as a reference can be very helpful.



JOHN AND JAMES, *WAKING DREAM* PARTICIPANTS



DILAN PEDRAZA, WAKING DREAM PARTICIPANT

## PREPARE YOURSELF

*Reflect upon how immigration touches your own life.* View all six episodes before facilitating your event. Take time to reflect on your connections and think through strategies to deal with your emotions to avoid being caught off guard as you facilitate. Know your own triggers and take some time before your event to think about your own feelings and values. What came up for you in the film? Were you shocked? Angered? Scared? Any of these feelings can be expected with such a powerful story. At the same time, we need to be steady and focused when we have these conversations.

*Be knowledgeable.* You don't need to be an expert on the history of immigration or current policies in place to be an effective and supportive facilitator. Reading through this guide and familiarizing yourself with the issues it raises will help you support individual reflection, small group discussion or cross-community dialogue. It can also be very helpful to invite local stakeholders from the community, scholars, and leaders in the non-profit sector working on immigration policy, or supporting direct services within the immigrant community, to be present. Each will bring their own expertise and experiences and further enrich your conversation.

*Be clear about your role.* Facilitating dialogue is a unique role. Staying neutral and helping move along the discussion without imposing your views is your priority. It is pivotal to remember that the stories shared in Waking Dream are emblematic of thousands of other stories. This by no means is to minimize the six stories filmed. On the contrary, it is a reminder that participants may have a story to tell as well. Your role as a facilitator is to ensure that all voices are heard.

*Know who might be present.* It is not always possible to know exactly who or how many will attend a screening, but if you know what kinds of groups are present in your community, you may be able to predict who might be represented. Factors like geography, age, race, religion and socioeconomic class, can all have an impact on comfort levels, speaking styles and prior knowledge and play out differently in every group.

*Words Matter.* In discussions on immigration, race, racism, and sexism strong emotions and ideas may surface. The words you choose to describe racial, ethnic, religious, sexual and gender identities, immigration status, and citizenship, and other sensitive topics addressed in this film, matter a great deal. Understanding your audience and how groups in your area self-identify will help guide your choice of language as a facilitator. Be both transparent and explicit about why language is important and has power.

## PREPARE THE GROUP

*Gather resources:* It is also important to come prepared with several resources you would like to use as reference points during these dialogue opportunities. In this resource, see sections entitled: "Background on Immigration," "The Immigration Experience by the Numbers," and "Knowing Immigration Legislation and Laws: Context Matters."

*Encourage active listening.* Ask the group to think of the event as being about listening, as well as discussing. Participants can be encouraged to listen for things that challenge as well as reinforce their own ideas. Ask people to practice formal "active listening," where participants listen without interrupting the speaker, then re-phrase to see if they have heard correctly. If necessary, talk about the difference between dialogue and debate in order to prevent one or more people from dominating the conversation. In a debate, participants try to convince others that they are right. In a dialogue, participants work towards understanding each other through sharing viewpoints and listening to one another actively.

*Remind participants that everyone sees through the lens of their own experience.* Our lived experience influences how we interpret what we see and how we understand the world around us. Being mindful of our own biases and relationship to the issue of immigration is an important awareness to bring to the table.

*Take care of yourself and group members.* Discussing the immigrant experience intersects with other challenging issues such as racism, sexism, homophobia or other ideologies that marginalize individuals and groups. These issues may open deep wounds for participants, so it is always helpful to support and take care of each other during these conversations. If the intensity level rises, pause to let everyone take a deep breath. Also, think carefully about what you ask people to share publicly in order to avoid the risk of revealing information that might place them in legal or physical danger.



ROSSY, WAKING DREAM PARTICIPANT, AT THE U.S./ MEXICAN BORDER FENCE



# Pre-Work: Background on Immigration

This section includes accessible background information for facilitators to use either with audiences or as material to prepare for facilitating community screening events.

## DACA and DREAMers

### WHAT IS DACA?

In 2012, President Barack Obama's administration created Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals, or DACA, a program to protect eligible immigrant youth (often referred to as Dreamers) who came to the United States when they were children. **DACA gives young undocumented immigrants: 1) protection from deportation, and 2) a work permit. An individual's DACA permit expires every two years and must be renewed.**

**DACA recipients pay federal and state income taxes and can have a valid driver's license, enroll in college, and be legally employed.**

### WHO IS ELIGIBLE TO APPLY FOR DACA?

The undocumented student program at the University of California, Berkeley has compiled this list to explain DACA eligibility:

- You were under 31 years old as of June 15, 2012;
- You first came to the U.S. before your 16th birthday;
- You have lived continuously in the U.S. from June 15, 2007 until the present;
- You were physically present in the U.S. on June 15, 2012 and at the time you apply;
- You came to the U.S. without documents before June 15, 2012, or your lawful status expired as of June 15, 2012;
- You are currently studying, or you graduated from high school or earned a certificate of completion of high school or GED, or have been honorably discharged from the Coast Guard or military (technical and trade school completion also qualifies); and
- You have NOT been convicted of a felony, certain significant misdemeanors (including a single DUI), or three or more misdemeanors of any kind. Consult with an attorney about ANY contact you have had with law enforcement or immigration authorities.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> <https://undocu.berkeley.edu/legal-support-overview/what-is-daca/>

<sup>3</sup> [https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/DACA\\_singer\\_svajlenka\\_FINAL.pdf](https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/DACA_singer_svajlenka_FINAL.pdf)

### WHAT IS THE DREAM ACT?

The DREAM Act was a bill originally introduced in 2001 and stands for the **D**evelopment, **R**elief, and **E**ducation for **A**lien **M**inors Act. If approved, the bill would have granted legal status to certain undocumented immigrants who were brought to the United States as children and went to school here. Introduced and voted on several times in Congress since 2001, the DREAM Act has never passed.

### WHO ARE DREAMERS?

The term "DREAMer" has been used to describe young undocumented immigrants who were brought to the United States as children, who have lived and gone to school here, and who in many cases identify as American. Mexico is by far the country of origin for the greatest number of DREAMers, but others from Asia, Southeast Asia, South and Central America are DREAMers.

Today, many DREAMers have applied to and are now protected under DACA. And while the term DREAMer originally took its name from the DREAM Act, it has now become a title and a term adopted by undocumented youth as they organize and advocate for their dreams to stay in the United States.

#### Stats on DREAMers as a point of reference:

According to federal government data obtained by The Brookings Institution, DACA applicants were born in 192 countries, and there are 25 countries with at least 1,000 applicants who together accounted for over 96 percent of all applicants. In total, 74.9 percent of applicants were born in Mexico, followed by El Salvador (4.0 percent), Honduras (2.7 percent), Guatemala (2.5 percent), South Korea (1.5 percent), Peru (1.4 percent), Brazil (1.2 percent), Colombia (1.1 percent), Ecuador (1.0) and Philippines (0.7).<sup>3</sup>

## The Immigrant Experience by the Numbers

In discussions on the immigration experience and immigration policy, statistics are often used to support a specific claim. Having a selection of accurate numbers from numerous reputable research-based institutions as an important point of reference can be helpful if questions arise or misconceptions surface where a percentage or number can inform and move the conversation forward.

The numbers compiled are from Pew Research Center unless cited otherwise.<sup>4</sup>

Lawful immigrants accounted for about three-quarters of the foreign-born population in the United States.<sup>5</sup>

One in every seven people living in the U.S. was born in another country and was not a U.S. citizen at birth.

More than 5.9 million citizen children, U.S. born and naturalized, live with at least one family member who is unauthorized.<sup>6</sup>

Immigrants comprise about 14 percent of the total U.S. population - **43 million** out of 323 million people, according to U.S. Census Bureau data.

The nation's 33.8 million lawful immigrants are naturalized citizens, permanent residents (that is, immigrants with green cards) and immigrants who have temporary visas for work, school or other reasons.

A quarter of the immigrants living in the U.S., approximately 11 million, are unauthorized either because they arrived illegally, or their temporary status has expired.

More than half of undocumented individuals have lived in the U.S. for more than a decade, and nearly one-third are the parents of U.S. - born children.

25.7 percent of DACA recipients have a child who is a U.S. citizen.<sup>7</sup>

Mexico has the largest population of immigrants living in the U.S.

34% of immigrants living in the U.S. live in the Western part of the country. California, Texas and New York are the states with the greatest immigrant populations.

Immigrants make up 17% of U.S. workers, though they only represent 13.5% of the total population.

Immigrants to the U.S. are more likely than U.S.-born residents to be married, and those from South and East Asia, Europe, Canada, the Middle East and sub-Saharan Africa are more likely to have a bachelor's or advanced degree.

Roughly half of immigrants ages 5 and older are proficient in English.

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<sup>4</sup> These statistics are excerpted from the U.S. Customs and Border Protection, <https://www.cbp.gov/newsroom/stats/sw-border-migration>, Pew Research Center mini-course on immigration <http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2018/10/16/want-to-understand-u-s-immigration-weve-got-an-email-course-for-you/>, Pew Research Center, Hispanic Trends, <http://www.pewhispanic.org/2018/09/14/facts-on-u-s-immigrants/>, The Migration Policy Institute, <https://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/frequently-requested-statistics-immigrants-and-immigration-united-states>

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2017/08/03/5-key-facts-about-u-s-lawful-immigrants/>

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/immigration/reports/2017/03/16/428335/keeping-families-together/>

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.thedailybeast.com/200k-kids-could-lose-their-parents-if-dreamers-are-deported>

## Knowing Immigration Legislation & Laws: Context Matters

Immigration policy can offer a revealing window into the political and social climate of an era. Since the passage of the first immigration policy in America, the Naturalization Act of 1790, questions of who belongs and who does not, have been an enduring part of American identity, and a potent instrument to push public policy. Over generations and across many immigrant communities, policies of exclusion based on race and nationality have endured.

The [Pew Research Center, Hispanic Trends](#) has a full chronology of legislation that pertains to immigration quotas and restrictions.<sup>8</sup> As a facilitator:

- Familiarize yourself with the chronology listed on the Pew Research Center site.
- Select several historical references you would like to point out in order to educate audiences and enrich the community conversation.
- If helpful, have on hand a select chronology of Select Immigration Legislation and Law Chronology in the "Lessons for *Waking Dream*" found [here](#).



JOHN AND JAMES, *WAKING DREAM* PARTICIPANTS, AWAITING U.S. ARMY DEPLOYMENT ORDERS

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<sup>8</sup> [http://www.pewhispanic.org/2015/09/28/modern-immigration-wave-brings-59-million-to-u-s-driving-1population-growth-and-change-through-2065/ph\\_2015-09-28\\_immigration-through-2065-a2-02/](http://www.pewhispanic.org/2015/09/28/modern-immigration-wave-brings-59-million-to-u-s-driving-1population-growth-and-change-through-2065/ph_2015-09-28_immigration-through-2065-a2-02/)

# Empowering Audiences to Engage in Dialogue

The suggestions in this section are opportunities to creatively engage in dialogue with a community audience. Each can be adapted to suit the needs and size of your group while offering multiple entry points to juxtapose the issue of immigration and policy reform with the dignity, humanity, and the fundamental human rights of every individual.

## Idea One: Who is an American?

Who is an American is an enduring question that has faced generations of individuals -- most of whom arrived in the United States as immigrants. The motto of the United States, *E pluribus unum* - "From many, one"- suggests a collective set of unified and shared values and ideals. Of course, depending upon who you are, this set of shared ideals is checkered with exclusionary and discriminatory laws and policies based on racial, ethnic, or religious affiliations.

While each of the six storytellers - Dilan, Rossy, John and James, Marisol and Steve - share the experience of arriving in the U.S. as children, their realities of living undocumented are particular to aspects of their identity including gender, nationality, and geography. It is through their insights that the stories cut beyond politics, revealing the reality and courage of undocumented people working tenaciously to achieve a brighter future for themselves, their families, their communities, and the United States.

**"[Dialogue is] a conversation with a center, not sides... a way of taking the energy of our differences and channeling it toward something that has never been created before. [Dialogue] lifts us out of polarization and into a greater common sense and is thereby a means for accessing the intelligence and coordinated power of groups."<sup>9</sup>**

### SUGGESTED STEPS:

Ask participants to reflect and discuss these questions to begin a conversation:

- *How do you define yourself as an American?*
- *How did you come to understand notions of who is an American?*

Acknowledge that this can be a complex and emotional prompt that opens a host of important conversations. But for the purposes of this exercise, remind your group that for now, this opening reflection is intended as a point to connect to the stories told in *Waking Dream*. Depending upon the size of your group, you may want individuals to share in pairs or small groups before opening up the discussion for a larger conversation.

Transition from the opening conversation to having viewers read over quotes excerpted from Episode One and Episode Two of *Waking Dream*. (Note: The quotes are formatted as an Appendix at the end of this guide)

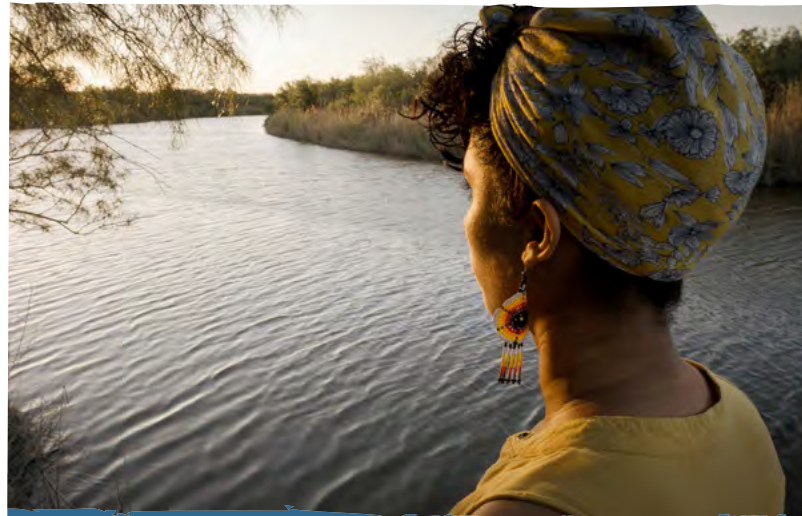
Have participants choose one quote that either affirms or challenges their idea of what it means to be an American and discuss their choices. If facilitating a small group gathering, consider posting each quote separately on large easel paper and ask individuals to stand next to the quote that reflects something about their American identity.

<sup>9</sup> <https://www2.clarku.edu/difficultdialogues/pdfs/DD-keynote.pdf>

## Idea Two: Yes ... And ...

When it comes to public policy and legislation regarding immigration and DACA recipients, there are many perspectives and complex opinions. The “Yes ... And” exercise offers an opportunity for individuals to explore how two opposing views can be presented and how to engage in respectful dialogue amidst this tension. As a facilitator you may want to adapt these talking points to introduce this engagement strategy:

- Often, when arguments are perceived as having two clear and distinct sides, the complexity of an issue gets lost. For example, it may be possible to find statistics or points of view that prove aspects of both sides to be “right,” and then it is challenging to continue a constructive conversation.
- To challenge the notion of “sides” we are going to engage in an approach to dialogue known as “Yes, and...” This invites participants to discover where they agree and where they disagree in order to guide them deeper into dialogue. For example, if a person is wary of immigration because of doubts about loyalty to America, a “Yes, and...” response may be: “Yes, loyalty is important to me too. And, how we define loyalty can be quite different. What does ‘loyalty’ mean to you? How do you know when a person is being loyal? How might that be demonstrated or measured?”
- On the other side, a “Yes, and...” response to a person concerned about racism in immigration policy could be: “Yes, we want to exclude racism in our policy. And, given limited resources in our country to accept everyone who wants to enter our borders, what criteria can we reasonably use to limit immigration?”



ROSSY LOOKS ACROSS THE RIO GRANDE

### SUGGESTED STEPS:

1. Organize groups in pairs or groups of four.
2. Assign Viewpoint One to one person or pair and Viewpoint Two to the other person or pair.
3. Have each person or pair explain their assigned viewpoint to the other viewpoint and vice versa. Set an agreed upon amount of time for this discussion (e.g. 5 min)

Once each pair or group has had the opportunity to engage in “Yes ...and”, debrief using these prompts:

- Are there other viewpoints missing from this pairing?
- If you were to personally align with one of the perspectives, which one would you choose? Why?
- What was most challenging about taking on a viewpoint that was contrary to your own values and beliefs?
- If time permits, come up with another set of Viewpoints to engage around and try the exercise one more time.

### Sample Viewpoint:

Viewpoint One: “The problem is that undocumented immigrants defy laws, the government is losing control of borders, and immigrants are disloyal to America.”

Viewpoint Two: “The problem is that immigration issues are decided through the lens of racism, rather than human rights, refugee protection, and the positive value of a diverse society.”

## Idea Three: What Story is Being Told?

In *Waking Dream*, we listen to six stories from the undocumented immigrant community that suggest a more complex portrait than the media often reports. Too often we hear stories in the media celebrating the ‘superstar’ immigrant or stories that play into stereotypes of undocumented immigrants as drug runners or alleged criminals. What is often overlooked are the thousands of stories that fall in between these extremes, ones that normalize and humanize the immigrant experience and not relegate it to a historical epoch or as something outside our everyday lives.

Developing a critical lens when reading and listening to any immigrant story is at the heart of this engagement strategy. Spending time unpacking the language in community can be an important educational and organizing strategy in order to refute and flip the script on the racial stereotypes that all too often impede the success of immigrants today.



MARISOL, WAKING DREAM PARTICIPANT

### SUGGESTED STEPS:

Here are several online collections of stories from the undocumented community. Choose several stories from this collection to share with your group.

[American Dreamers](#): Stories of DACA recipients collected by *The New York Times*.

[“We Are Americans, Revisited. The Dreamers, Five Years Later.”](#) *Time magazine*.

[Stories in Defense of Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals](#), National Immigration Law Center.

[“DACA, A Student’s Story: They Are the Types of Immigrants You Want in Your Country,”](#) NPR, September 18, 2017.

Alternatively, you may want to organize a panel of speakers from local or national immigrant rights organization to share their stories. Here are several national organizations to contact and explore if there are local affiliates in your community.

[American Civil Liberties Union](#)

[International Rescue Committee](#)

[Immigrant Legal Resource Center](#)

[National Immigration Law Center](#)

## Idea Four: The Power of One Story - Steve Li and the Intersectionality of Immigration:<sup>10</sup>

Intersectionality is a term that may be familiar to some audiences, but is often misunderstood. Originally coined by Dr. Kimberlé Crenshaw as a way to examine the multiple oppressions affecting black women in America, today the term is used to describe “the overlapping systems of oppression and discrimination that women and other marginalized communities face ... based not just on gender but on ethnicity, sexuality, economic background and other axes.”<sup>11</sup>

Steve Li, who we meet in *Waking Dream*, knows there is power in telling his story as it touches upon multiple points of intersectionality. He hopes his experience can motivate others to advocate on behalf of immigration reform and bring greater attention to the complexities of immigration.



STEVE LI, *WAKING DREAM* PARTICIPANT

### DIALOGUE OPPORTUNITY

After sharing the context of intersectionality, read a selection of reflections from Steve Li and consider using these dialogue prompts to begin a deeper conversation on the intersectionality of immigration. (These quotes are formatted as an Appendix at the end of this guide)

- In general, how do you understand the intersection between immigration, racism, sexism, LGBTQ+ rights and religious freedom?
- Return to the section of this guide titled, “The Immigration Experience by the Numbers.” Discuss where you think the intersectionality of immigration shaped U.S. immigration since 1790.
- What is particular to Steve’s immigration story? What is shared amongst the five other stories?

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<sup>10</sup> “Steve Li’s parents, Chinese nationals, left the People’s Republic of China for Peru in the 1980s to escape the Chinese government’s “one-child” policy. Steve, who was born in Peru, was brought to the United States at the age of 11. Upon entering the U.S., Li’s family was issued tourist visas, which lapsed at the end of 2002. A request for asylum was denied by a judge in 2004. Throughout that time, Li attended middle school and graduated from high school in San Francisco, reportedly unaware of his family’s status. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) officers took the family into custody on Sept. 15 and informed Li of his final deportation order to Peru, issued when he was 15, to his astonishment.” <http://thepioneeronline.com/1922/opinions/steve-li%E2%80%99s-case-highlights-greater-problems-within-immigration-reform/>

<sup>11</sup> Definition of intersectionality is adapted from: [https://www.huffingtonpost.com.au/entry/kimberle-crenshaw-intersectional-feminism\\_us\\_598de38de4b090964296a34d](https://www.huffingtonpost.com.au/entry/kimberle-crenshaw-intersectional-feminism_us_598de38de4b090964296a34d)

## Idea 5: Supporting Families

"The day I left them to pursue a life in the States, that's the feeling I am feeling right now. Being separated, but with the thought of a good future then it goes away little by little. In every struggle and sacrifice, there is some comfort."

~ James' Father, *Waking Dream*

In *Waking Dream*, we hear the stories of six courageous young adults working to advocate for their future and the future of other immigrant communities. We meet Marisol who is a parent herself. We learn that Steve, John and James were unaware of their undocumented status as teens and only discovered this when confronted either by applying to the military or when being detained. At the same time, we also meet several parents and hear about their struggles and sacrifices as immigrant parents to bring their children to the United States for educational and economic opportunities.

DACA creates a particularly vulnerable position for families - hundreds of thousands of people who immigrated as children now have DACA protection while their parents remain unauthorized and millions more children live in mixed-status families, or families where at least one parent is unauthorized.<sup>12</sup>

"University of Southern California's Center for the Study of Immigrant Integration", or CSII, and the Center for American Progress shows:

Nationwide, about 16.7 million people in the country have at least one unauthorized family member living with them in the same household.

More than 8 million U.S. citizens, of which 1.2 million are naturalized citizens, have at least one unauthorized family member living with them.

More than 5.9 million citizen children, U.S. born and naturalized, live with at least one family member who is unauthorized.

California, Texas, and Nevada have the highest percentage of U.S.-born population with at least one unauthorized family member living with them.

States with smaller immigrant populations, such as Nebraska, Arkansas, and Kansas also have high percentages of naturalized citizens who have unauthorized family members living in the same household."<sup>13</sup>

In 2016 The American Psychological Association published a study examining the "spillover effect" of having parents with undocumented status. The report stated, "U.S. immigration policies and enforcement practices today directly and indirectly affect children, families and communities by forcing individuals into new unions, dividing couples, separating parents and children across borders for indefinite time periods, leaving family members in highly vulnerable positions, and complicating individual family relationships when different members hold various legal statuses in the same family titled."<sup>14</sup>

At the same time a Washington Post poll found that a majority of Americans (over 80%) support "a program that allows undocumented immigrants to stay in the United States if they arrived as a child, completed high school or military service and have not been convicted of a serious crime."<sup>15</sup> Yet the parents of these children do not receive the same level of public support or opportunity for a path towards citizenship. This tenuous and vulnerable position puts them at risk for deportation and further exacerbates their trauma and fear of family separation.

<sup>12</sup> <https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/immigration/reports/2017/03/16/428335/keeping-families-together/>

<sup>13</sup> <https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/immigration/reports/2017/03/16/428335/keeping-families-together/>

<sup>14</sup> "The effects of parental undocumented status on families and children."  
<https://www.apa.org/pi/families/resources/newsletter/2016/11/undocumented-status.aspx>

<sup>15</sup> <http://www.pollingreport.com/immigration.htm>



## DIALOGUE OPPORTUNITY

### Discuss:

- What are your initial responses to the challenges posed by the reality of living in a mixed-status family?
- How can we, as a nation, address the challenge of mixed-status families with fairness and compassion?

John's parents, like many others, came to the United States for a better life for their children. He shares, "If we wouldn't have come in the U.S., we would've most likely died from poverty in the Philippines. My mom always told us be grateful for America, to be grateful for this country."

- If you had the opportunity to speak with John's parents, or any of the parents of the storytellers in *Waking Dream*, about their choice to immigrate to the United States for a better life for their children, what would you say?
- How can we, as a country, move from a position of blame and shame for immigrating, to one of understanding and compassion? What is the balance?

Share Dilan's, Rossy's, and John's reflections about growing up undocumented and discuss their reactions using these prompts:

- How do their experiences complicate your notions of what it means to live in a mixed-status family?
- What stands out to you about what they remember and want to share on film?
- How does a parent's immigration status affect their child's experience?
- What support systems can be in place in school, faith communities, health care centers, government agencies and other sites that are likely places for these issues to be at the forefront?

"There we were standing there in the Rio Grande. I knew that my mom was confronting all her fears. She did not know how to swim, but she was determined to give us a better future. The river and the wall, became a symbol of my identity."<sup>16</sup>



-Rossy, Episode One, *Waking Dream*

"I was about 10 years old, my dad went back to Mexico, my grandma, she was on her deathbed. As he tried to make his way back, I believe he was caught and then deported. As a kid, honestly, I didn't really understand it. I was pretty sure he was going to come back. Definitely, my dad's absence, we were destined to live in poverty essentially.



-Dilan, Episode Two, *Waking Dream*

"I asked my mom for our documents, and that's where she gave me that look. When moms give you a look, you'll just know something bad was going to happen. Then she said, 'Well, we're technically not supposed to be here.' When I found out that I was undocumented, for two weeks, I was speechless. I don't even know if I can go to college. I don't even know if I can go to work. I was very grateful when DACA came out."



-John, Episode One, *Waking Dream*

<sup>16</sup> Excerpted from transcript, Episode One, *Waking Dream*

## Guidelines for Dialogue<sup>17</sup>

1. *We will speak for ourselves.* We won't try to represent a whole group, and we won't ask others to represent, defend, or explain an entire group.
2. *We will avoid making grand pronouncements.* Instead, we'll connect what we know and believe to our experiences, influences in our lives, and particular sources of information.
3. *We will refrain from characterizing the views of others in a critical spirit,* keeping in mind that we're here to understand one another, not to persuade one another.
4. *We will listen with resilience,* "hanging in" when we hear something that is hard to hear.
5. *We will not stay confused.* We'll ask for clarification when we need it.
6. *We will not raise our hands.* We'll take turns speaking, which means we'll always listen to what others are saying.
7. *We will share airtime and refrain from interrupting others.*
8. *We will "pass" or "pass for now"* if we're not ready or willing to respond to a question—no explanation required.
9. *We will discuss ideas,* rather than one another's opinions.
10. *We will talk with one another,* not just to the leader.
11. *If asked to keep something confidential, we will honor the request.* In conversations outside the group, we won't attribute particular statements to particular individuals by name or by identifying information without permission.
12. *We are each responsible for the success of the dialogue,* even if we don't know it.
13. *We will avoid making negative assumptions about the beliefs, values, and motives of other participants,* such as, "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, such as "Why is that important to you?"
14. *We will refrain from side conversations.*
15. *We will listen first to understand* rather than thinking of what we want to say and waiting for a pause to get into the conversation.

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<sup>17</sup> [http://www.ascd.org/publications/educational-leadership/apr15/vol72/num07/The-Art-of-Dialogue.aspx#el201504\\_guidelines](http://www.ascd.org/publications/educational-leadership/apr15/vol72/num07/The-Art-of-Dialogue.aspx#el201504_guidelines)

## Resources

### Asian Law Caucus

<https://www.advancingjustice-alc.org/programs/asian-students-promoting-immigrant-rights-through-education/>

### Immigration Law by State

<https://www.immigrationlawhelp.org/>

### Immigrants Rising

<https://immigrantsrising.org/>

### “10 Ways to Support Undocumented Students”

<https://immigrantsrising.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/Educator-Top-10-Ways-to-Support-Undocumented-Students.pdf>

### U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services

“Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals: Response to January 2018 Preliminary Injunction.”

\*\*Read entire document especially the USCIS 2018 DACA Preliminary Injunction FAQs.

<https://www.uscis.gov/humanitarian/deferred-action-childhood-arrivals-response-january-2018-preliminary-injunction>



JOHN AND JAMES

"I came to the United States when I was two months old. I haven't been to Mexico since. I feel as American as anyone else."



-Dilan, *Waking Dream*

"[W]e were standing there in the Rio Grande. I knew that my mom was confronting all her fears. [She didn't] know how to swim, but she was determined to give us a better future. The river and the wall became a symbol of my identity."



-Rossy, *Waking Dream*

"...I didn't feel like I was an immigrant. I felt like I was the same. If we hadn't come to the US, we would've most likely died from poverty in the Philippines. My mom always told us to be grateful for America, to be grateful for this country. Started making me, like, 'Oh, I want to be a Marine, I want to fight what's bad in the world.'"



-John, *Waking Dream*

"This is a way for us to give back. To protect that people that I grew up with, the people that welcomed us. I'm here willing to lay down my life for the people of the United States."



-James, *Waking Dream*

"I was seven years old and we walked across the desert... I think I was the only one in my class that wasn't documented. I did graduate top of my class. All of my friends were all getting ready to go to college, but I was probably going to end up working in the greenhouse or in the fields with my mom and my siblings. That was going to be my life, and I knew that... I probably would not have two kids if I was not in a situation where I could give them something better. I got a really good job in the elementary school here. If I can keep DACA, I can keep going with my life. School, owning our first home, maybe getting a bigger car. I grew up here, like this is my country. This is the only place I know as home."



-Marisol, *Waking Dream*

"Having been born in Peru and being of Chinese descent, I'm definitely not your average Joe... When Immigration came, I was just getting ready to go to school, I heard a loud knock. When my mom opened the door, all of a sudden, ICE agents started rushing in. They immediately handcuffed me and threw inside the van. I think the hardest thing was seeing my mom being criminalized and being handcuffed for coming to this country and giving us a better opportunity."



-Steve Li, *Waking Dream*

## Quotes for Steve Li and Discussion on Intersectionality

“Knowing and learning my own history and learning the struggles other immigrants have faced in the U.S. throughout history, and learning about their contributions - the ongoing push-pull of history - was so important.”<sup>18</sup>

“I am not just fighting for immigration reform. I am fighting to abolish racism and sexism which are so tied to other struggles. Immigration is not a one-way street. We are not fighting just to protect immigrants but to deconstruct racism and sexism, and protect LGBTQ and religious freedoms.”<sup>19</sup>

“I was lucky to be in San Francisco, but the sad thing is it happened in San Francisco. I was at City College, my second year, fall quarter when I was detained. My professor found out what happened and rallied the community together with press conferences, rallies at City Hall, lobbying of senators. To see this all occur - this was justice. The Board of Supervisors, Chinese Community Center, Asian Law Caucus were all activated. The tipping point was Senator [Dianne] Feinstein and a private bill that was passed on my behalf.”<sup>20</sup>

“Even if I have documents, it doesn’t mean those experiences that my family went through disappear.”<sup>21</sup>

“Deportation is impacting individual community members and the community as a whole. My dad owned a grocery store in the neighborhood. The community relied on this store to receive their fresh produce. I work at a health start-up. There are immigrants in every part of society that are contributing to this country.”<sup>22</sup>



<sup>18</sup> From a personal interview with Steve Li, October 26, 2018.

<sup>19</sup> From a personal interview with Steve Li, October 26, 2018.

<sup>20</sup> From a personal interview with Steve Li, October 26, 2018.

<sup>21</sup> <http://kwonglede.com/2012/steve-li-stuck-in-immigration-limbo/>

<sup>22</sup> From a personal interview with Steve Li, October 26, 2018.