



MADE IN L.A.

Immigration and Immigrant Rights Conversation Guide

Made in L.A. is a story about immigration, the power of unity and the courage it takes to find your voice. *Made in L.A.* follows the remarkable story of three Latina immigrants working in L.A. sweatshops and their struggle for self-empowerment as they embark on a three-year odyssey to win basic labor protections from a clothing retailer.

Starting the Conversation

Immigration and immigration reform are key issues of our time. In recent years there has been a wide-ranging conversation about how recent and undocumented immigrants in the United States should be treated, and how the immigration system should be reformed.

This brief guide is intended to spark conversation, build awareness and motivate viewers of *Made in L.A.* to learn more and possibly get involved. We hope that participants using this guide try to understand one another and expand their thinking by sharing viewpoints and listening actively. Controversial topics often make for excellent discussions. But by their nature, those same topics can also give rise to deep emotions and strongly held beliefs. We hope the questions below help guide you through an engaging and enlightening conversation.

To find out more about *Made in L.A.* and how to get involved, to view the *Made in L.A. Event Planning Toolkit* or to explore conversation guides on other issues in the film, please visit www.MadeInLA.com.

General Questions

Do the stories of Maria, Lupe and Maura resonate with you? Do you know people with similar stories? How does hearing other people's immigration stories impact the way you see the issues of immigration and immigration reform? If you're not an immigrant yourself, how does it change the way you look at immigrants working in your own community? If you are an immigrant, how does it change the way you view yourself in the community?

In the film, Maria says, "I thought it would be different here ... to study, to have a career ... to be happy. I was full of dreams." How do you think Maria's dreams and hopes are different from or similar to those of immigrants from generations past? What reasons did the women in the film give for coming to the United States?

We see Lupe at the Lower East Side Tenement Museum and at Ellis Island (the port of entry to the United States for millions of immigrants at the turn of the century) recognizing links to turn-of-the-century Jewish women garment workers, and we also hear Joann Lo from the worker's center talking about her parents as immigrants. What similarities do you see between the way immigrants have been historically treated in the U.S. and the way they are treated today?

Made in L.A. highlights historical patterns where some immigrants in the United States end up in low-wage, often exploitative jobs. Why do you think these patterns still exist? How does lack of documentation make immigrant workers vulnerable to exploitation?

How did Maria, Lupe and Maura overcome their fears and concerns? What were the sources of their strength?

What insights or inspiration did you gain from this film? What did you learn about the film's subjects and/or about yourself?

Immigration Policy

What barriers kept Maura from seeing her kids for 18 years? What policy changes could have prevented this from happening? If it were up to you to make the decision, would you allow her to bring her children to the United States to live with her? Why or why not?

Recently, Immigration and Customs Enforcement has raided factories where undocumented workers are employed. These workers are often detained and deported, in some cases after living in the US and paying taxes for decades. How do you feel about this? Did *Made in L.A.* change your perspective on this type of treatment? Why or why not?

What changes do you hope will be made in the years to come regarding US immigration policy? How might the lives of the women in *Made in L.A.* have been different if these changes were already in place at the time of their campaign? What does comprehensive immigration reform mean to you?

President Obama supports a system that "allows undocumented immigrants who are in good standing to pay a fine, learn English, and go to the back of the line for the opportunity to become citizens" (WhiteHouse.gov). What do you think of this policy? If you were President Obama what would be your top concern regarding immigration reform?

If it were up to you to make the decision, would you grant the undocumented workers that you meet in the film legal residence status and the opportunity to become U.S. citizens? Why or why not?

Immigration's Impact: Connections Between Immigration and Other Issues in Made In L.A.

Why did Maura, Maria or Lupe feel they have to leave their countries? Why do they choose to come to the U.S.? More generally, what forces cause migration?

In *Made in L.A.* we see Maura migrate to the U.S. so she can make enough money to provide for her parents and three children in El Salvador. Why is this burden placed on Maura as a woman? Does her burden differ with the burdens placed on immigrant men?

Historically, work in the U.S. garment industry has been performed by poor, unskilled, mostly female immigrants. Why do you think sweatshops have been part of our economic system for so long?

What could be done to prevent employers from exploiting undocumented workers? Besides the workers themselves, who would benefit from protecting the rights of these workers? What might happen to the wages of other workers if undocumented immigrants were granted legal status?

Ultimately, the garments that Lupe, Maria or Maura produce end up in retail stores. What is the role of consumers in the situations that you see in *Made in L.A.*? What are our responsibilities as consumers?

Taking Action

What are some issues in your community relating to immigration or immigrants' rights that you feel need community support? How would you go about nurturing support for these issues? What kind of support can you provide to immigrants in your community?

Did the film inspire you to take action in your life? What steps can you take today to start to build positive change around the issue of immigration?

Is there current legislation in your city, county, state or in Congress you can support to help create fair immigration reform?

Does the organization hosting this event have suggestions about how you can get involved in the issue of immigration reform?

If you want to express your views or influence the process, you may want to write or call your congressperson or other elected officials to let them know how you feel about humane immigration reform. Contact information is available at www.usa.gov/Contact/Elected.shtml.

[We encourage each screening host or coalition to determine the right "Action Ask" for their event, if any. Note that many organizations offer specific template e-mails or suggested talking points for contacting your elected officials around immigration reform. For samples, we suggest that you explore the organizations listed on our "Learn More" page]



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