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## **MACARTHUR GRANT TO WORKING FILMS STRENGTHENS AND PROMOTES INNOVATION & IMPACT OF SOCIAL JUSTICE MEDIA**

WILMINGTON, NC. January 5, 2011 – On the tenth anniversary of their startup, the non-profit media firm Working Films announced a new grant from the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation to support strategic collaborations between non-profit/non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and story-driven documentary films. This one-year grant of \$300,000 will enable Working Films to research, design and facilitate a week-long residency for documentary film and media makers, built around one urgent theme. Following the residency, Working Films will launch a high profile collaborative campaign between the filmmakers and NGOs dedicated to the thematic issue at hand.

The goal is to turn “competition” for space in the media landscape into unprecedented collaboration; leveraging multiple opportunities for audiences of social issue films to contribute to civic engagement and propel progressive public policy forward. Working Films, co-founded by veteran curator and media educator Robert West and Peabody Award-winning filmmaker and educator Judith Helfand, is a national organization supporting community-based change through the strategic use of non-fiction film and related media-making.

### **About the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation**

The MacArthur Foundation supports creative people and effective institutions committed to building a more just, verdant, and peaceful world. In addition to selecting the MacArthur Fellows, the Foundation works to defend human rights, advance global conservation and security, make cities better places, and understand how technology is affecting children and society.



MacArthur is one of the nation's largest independent foundations. Through the support it provides, the Foundation fosters the development of knowledge, nurtures individual creativity, strengthens institutions, helps improve public policy, and provides information to the public, primarily through support for public interest media. More information is available at [www.macfound.org](http://www.macfound.org).

### **About Working Films**

Founded in 2000, Working Films has co-developed and managed community engagement campaigns for high-profile award-winning PBS, HBO and NBC documentaries: *Two Towns of Jasper*, *Blue Vinyl*, *Trembling before G-d*, *Thirst*, *Girl Trouble*, *Everything's Cool*, *Ghosts of Abu Graib*, *Including Samuel*, *Speaking in Tongues*, *Dirty Business* and others.

Working Films offers filmmakers strategic planning for alternative distribution, website and social media development, and complete campaign management. With a diverse and committed staff and board, Working Films is supported by foundation grants, earned-income and individual donations. Their two offices, in Wilmington, NC and London UK, have allowed them to expand the long-term effectiveness of their efforts.

National and international press coverage of Working Films' campaigns has included the *Village Voice*, *LA Weekly*, *International Documentary*, *The Nation*, *The Independent Film and Video Monthly*, *In These Times*, *The Progressive*, *The Huffington Post*, *London Guardian* and others. The Sundance Film Festival, the Sheffield Film Festival, the Center for Social Media, the New York University Center for Religion and Media, the National Alliance for Media and Culture, the American Academy of Religion, the Film Arts Foundation, the National Center for Media Engagement, MASS MoCA, ESo-DOC and the Full Frame Film Festival have highlighted their work and successful engagement campaigns.

Project narratives, consultation information, and national press about Working Films' efforts are available at [www.workingfilms.org](http://www.workingfilms.org). Inquiries are welcome.