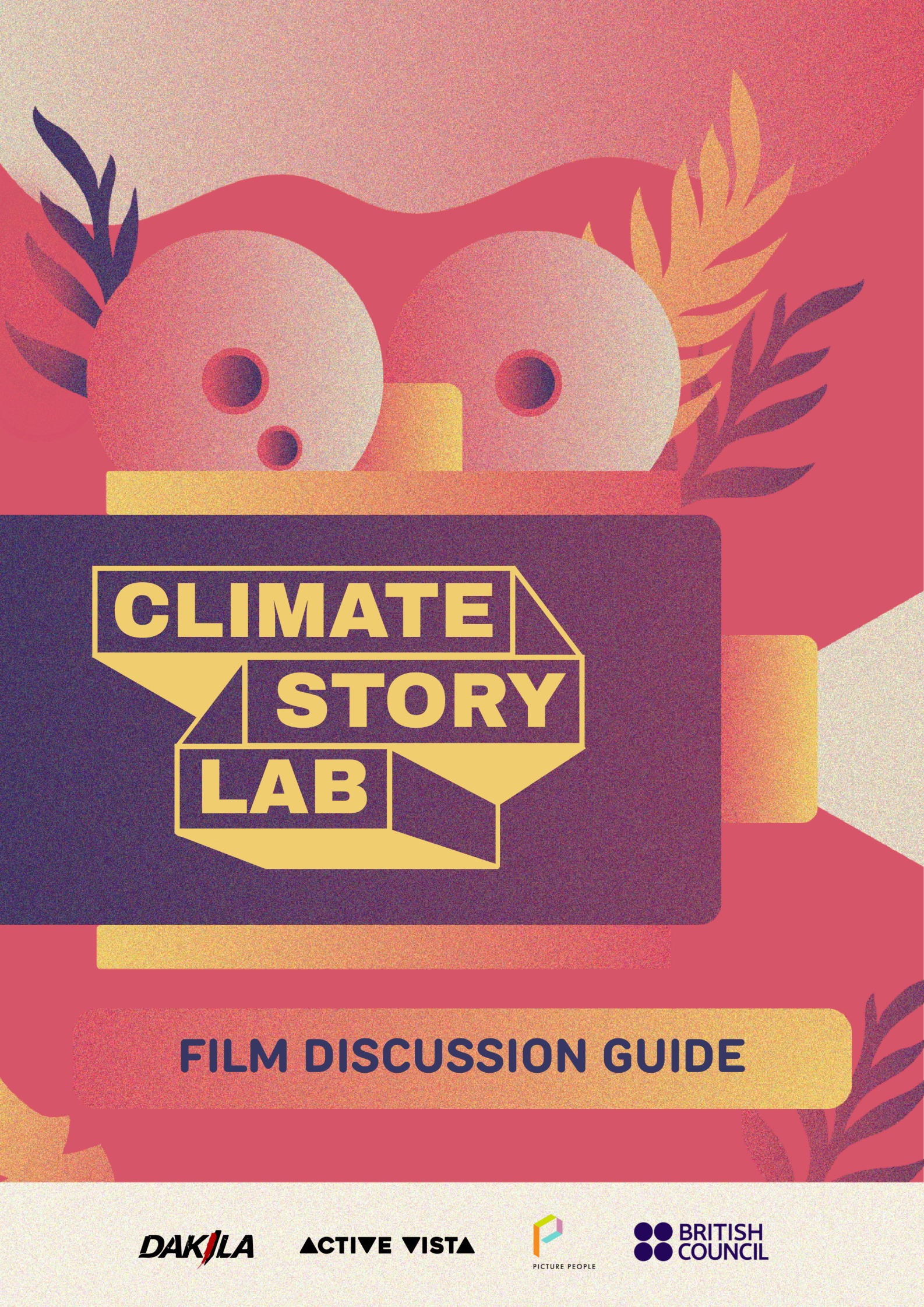




CLIMATE STORY LAB

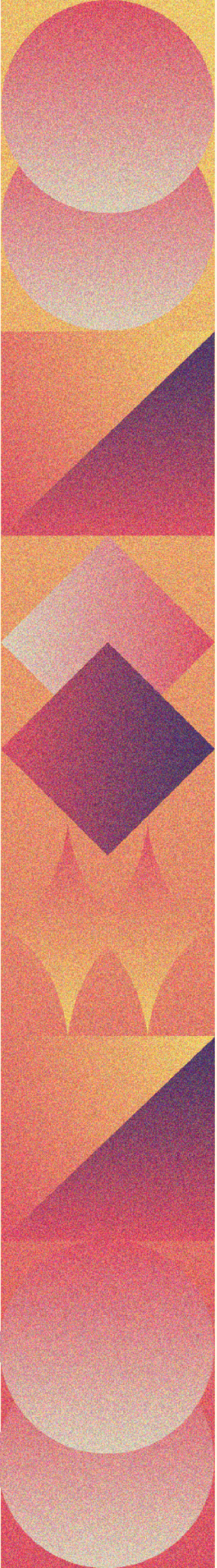
FILM DISCUSSION GUIDE

CLIMATE STORY LAB

DISCUSSION GUIDE

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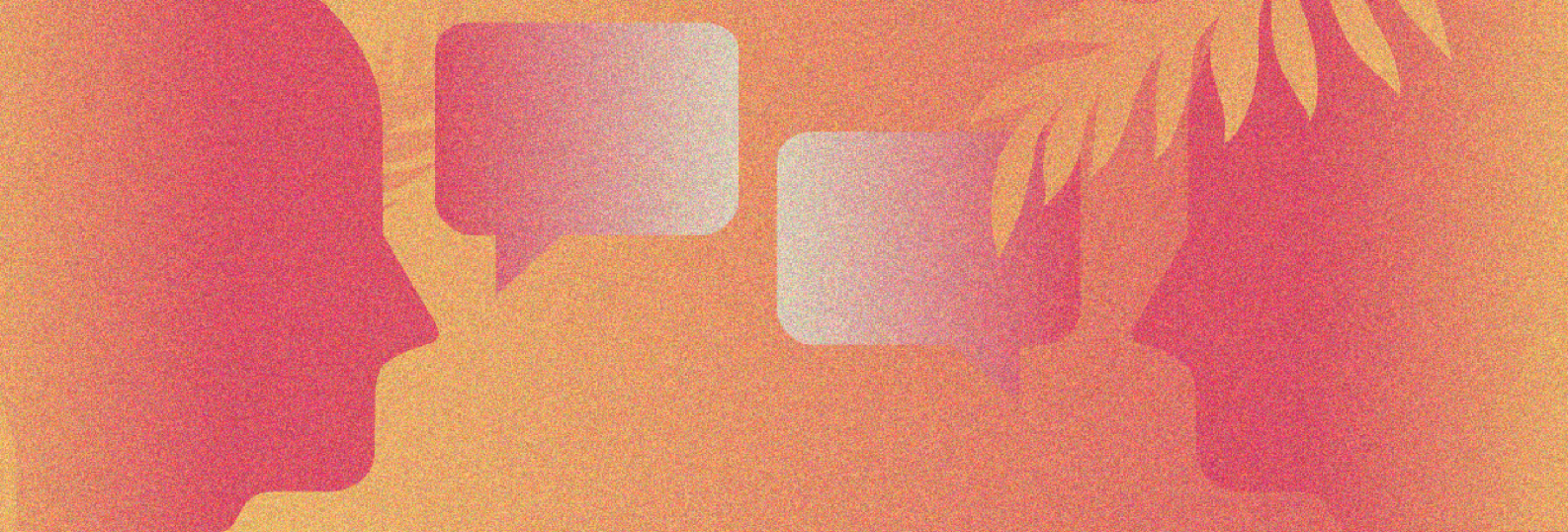
INTRODUCTION

The Climate Story Lab is a film and media production workshop that empowers creatives to produce social-impact films or videos that connect audiences globally using transformative storytelling of climate change impacts that lead the public into strategic and meaningful actions to address climate change challenges in the Philippines.

By providing hybrid training workshops and mentoring sessions by filmmakers and media professionals, issue experts, and advocates, the Climate Story Lab shall empower filmmakers with knowledge on climate change impacts as well as skills in social impact filmmaking. The lab provides a unique opportunity for the creatives and filmmakers to advocate for the rights of the affected communities to speak with knowledge on pressing climate issues based on science, and enable the affected communities to tell their stories towards inspiring local leaders and other communities to be agents of change.

The first edition of the Climate Story Lab granted a production fund to four short films providing a unique perspective of climate change impacts through the lens of communities of a developing country that will resonate with global audiences. These films are also complemented with impact campaigns in their own communities leading audiences to take action on the climate issues presented.

The following discussion guides for the films serves as a toolkit for audiences, educators, and organizations to be able to conduct their own screenings of these films and facilitating post-screening discussions toward a better understanding of Climate Change issues and our call for Climate Justice.



CREATING A SOFT SPACE FOR HARD CONVERSATIONS

Tips for Facilitating the Discussion

The topics of climate change will definitely come with many assumptions and predetermined arguments given the intersectionality of such issues. Therefore facilitating is crucial in guiding these conversations. We have to be intentional that we help put out the fire and clear the smoke, rather than adding fuel to the fire.

As facilitators of the discussion, let's ensure we empower the group as a whole. We treat the facilitator and participants as both the teacher and learner. The power in this discussion is not held over, but rather with the group. Acknowledge that alone we know little, but together we know a lot.

Basic Rules of a Facilitator

- 1** After viewing the film, whether watching it alone or with a group, take some time to reflect. Write down your own initial thoughts, feelings, and questions. Encourage all those you plan to hold the discussion with to do the same.
- 2** Open up a safe and accessible space that offers many insights, opinions, and values to a given topic. Be intentional and clear with the participants about how interactive and inclusive you'd like your discussion. Set ground rules if you'd like, and make sure to allow space for your participants to add to the rules and collectively agree on these rules.
- 3** Set the tone and expectations. List down a clear agenda of what will be discussed. If done online, determine if videos should be turned on or allowed to be kept off. Clarify if the chatbox can be utilized as an alternative channel for sharing insights. Be realistic with yourself, too, when setting the length of discussion, and breaks, and bring in a co-facilitator when you need one as additional support to help take notes or set the discussion and participants up.

- 4** Encourage personal stories and reflections. When the insights shared sound broad or abstract, ground the conversation by asking them to relate these instances to personal experiences or anecdotes. Take time to listen and show support, especially for intimate stories. Assure one another that no stories or personal information shared in the group can be shared outside without consent
- 5** Watch out for red flags. Carefully redirect individuals who monopolize the conversation, keep track of who's talking and whose voices are being heard, and work towards equalizing the space for all voices to be heard. Read the room as much as you can. If there are some disagreements or misunderstandings, check in with the group as a whole or quietly check in with the concerned individuals.
- 6** Make the connections. With so many national issues competing for our attention, our tendency is to isolate the issues as if they have nothing to do with one another. The worst-case scenario is we forget about them. As the discussion deepens, look out for recurring problems and relate them to key issues from the film and the current events in the world and your community. This is one way to help ensure the conversation stays relevant and focused.
- 7** Occasionally summarize and note key areas of agreement. If a topic seems to have maxed out all possible directions and participants have found nothing more they'd like to share, make a recap of the insights before moving on to the next questions.
- 8** Expect and respect a lack of closure. This may be the first time the audience has dug deeper into this topic. Not all questions raised may be answered right away; there might also not be enough time to address every issue raised. Be okay with allowing these unanswered questions to sit with you for a while and return to them for another discussion.
- 9** Enjoy the discussion. Imagine how many conversations like this, you will ever spark or be a part of and where else this can lead! Treat this opportunity to learn and connect with one another. We discuss, debate, laugh, grieve, and fight together.
- 10** End with a good and hopeful note. The topics we discuss might fuel anger and uncertainty in our current situation. These feelings are equally important and powerful, especially when channeled into hope and vision. Keep this in mind from Patrisse Cullors, one of the founders of Black Lives Matter:

“Provide hope and inspiration for collective action to build collective power to achieve collective transformation, rooted in grief and rage but pointed towards vision and dreams.”



ANG PROPESIYA: QUICK DISCUSSION POINTS

ISSUE CONTEXT

The Philippines is one of the countries most vulnerable to the impacts of climate change, facing increasingly intense typhoons, heatwaves, floods, and sea-level rise. These climate-related disasters have caused significant economic losses, damaged infrastructure, and disrupted livelihoods—especially in coastal and rural communities. While the government has developed policies like the National Adaptation Plan and secured international climate financing, implementation challenges remain due to limited resources and local capacity. Public concern is growing, particularly among youth, as the country experiences more frequent and extreme climate events that threaten health, food security, and long-term development.

Sources: Philippine Climate Change Commission, The Guardian, Daily Guardian PH, GMA News, Philstar, Pulse Asia Survey, Reuters

SYNOPSIS

Nonoy and Lolo Andres are standing by the seashore as they witness the arrival of some fishermen in their boat. Nonoy runs to the boat and asks the fishermen if they were able to catch any fish. One of the fishermen tells Nonoy that they did not catch anything. It seems all the fish are gone. Nonoy goes back to his grandfather and relates what the fisherman told him. Lolo Andres tells Nonoy that a foretold prophecy seems to be happening now. The prophecy is about the time when the sea will rise and be as hot as fire. The coral reefs will turn white and crumble to ashes. All the fish will be gone. Soon other animals will also vanish. And mankind will live in the darkness of black air. Nonoy asks his grandfather if there is still a way to stop the bleak prophecy. Lolo Andres tells his grandson that only time will tell. And if greed will stop living in man's heart.

DURATION: 16min 19sec



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- How does the prophecy about the dying sea reflect what is happening with climate change today?
- When Lolo Andres says the prophecy will only end if greed leaves people's hearts, what does this tell us about our role in changing the systems that cause the climate crisis?
- What similar problems do you think people in cities might face like the farmers in the story, and how does this show the effects of climate change?
- Who do the "prophet" and the "greedy one" represent? Discuss.
- Identify the elements of a short story in this film, such as the characters, plot, and setting. Explain how these elements help you understand the topic better.
- Can you share your personal experience with climate change/crisis?
 - How do you mitigate its effects?
- How can we prevent the idea of despair or "doomism" among our target audience?
- The film highlights the power of hope, in spite of the looming threat of the destruction of our planet. How can we amplify that hope with action?
- What kind of impact does the film want to achieve?
- How can we use the film to start conversations on the urgency of the climate crisis?

LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of the discussion, the audience understands that the influence and decisions of those in power greatly affects the state of our planet. But we can still shape our collective future by holding them accountable. Instead of relying on an individualistic approach to the climate crisis, we must shift toward collective action that unites communities. Even futures that seem inevitable are not beyond our influence; by organizing together, we can challenge doom-driven narratives. Collective action trumps "prophecies."

I BANNAG TA PANSI BATIL POTUN: QUICK DISCUSSION POINTS

ISSUE CONTEXT AND SYNOPSIS

The River in the Noodles follows the stories behind Cagayan's iconic noodle dish, Pancit Batil Patung, through the recollections of old head cooks. The ingredients of these delicacies have evolved, not just due to consumer preferences, but also because of environmental changes like flooding, rising temperatures, and climate-related diseases in animals and crops. The evolution of these dishes reflects the environmental degradation driven by human activity and climate change. The film urges viewers to reflect on how our food—and cultural identity—are deeply tied to the natural world we are losing.

DURATION: 32min 30sec





DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- How did the filmmakers convey the devastating effects of the climate crisis through the story of food and culture?
- In terms of storytelling, how important is it to highlight the stories of the community?
- How can we further highlight the destructive effects of the current climate crisis to our culture here in the Philippines?
- How can we mainstream the narrative that accountability, not resilience, should be the focus of climate narratives?
- What kind of impact does the film want to achieve?

LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of the discussion, the audience will see how the climate crisis devastates even our culture. They will acknowledge that communities bear the brunt of its lasting effects. Through their stories, they will understand that resilience must go hand in hand with accountability.



MANILA IS A GATE OF HELL: QUICK DISCUSSION POINTS

ISSUE CONTEXT

Climate-change-driven heatwaves are increasingly disrupting life in the Philippines: schools in Metro Manila and other regions regularly suspend in-person classes during peak heat periods, affecting over 3.6 million students. Children struggle to concentrate, suffer heat-related illnesses (dizziness, fainting), and those from low-income homes without fans, good ventilation, or reliable internet are especially disadvantaged. Pregnant women are experiencing more “pregnancy heat-risk” days—risking complications including preterm birth—much of which (over 80%) is now attributed to climate change. Women also face extra burdens: managing household health, caring for children suffering under extreme heat, and coping with higher utility costs when cooling households (fans, water) or seeking respite in cooler public places. In rural and poorer urban areas, women and children are hit hardest because homes and schools are least likely to have heat-resilient infrastructure.

Sources: Reuters, Channel News Asia, Philstar, Climate Change Commission

SYNOPSIS

On this hottest day of the year, Violet is blue. While serving patrons at a Chinese restaurant in Binondo, her nose starts to bleed, foretelling a day unlike any other. It is her son's very first birthday, a day meant for joyful celebration. Sadly, he resides miles away in a remote province. Violet's unyielding boss refuses to grant her leave. To make matters worse, an unknown caller bombards her with a series of threats. In a scorching midday hour, Violet roams around Arroceros park in Manila, the so-called “city's last lung” which provides her a breath of fresh air and quick relief from all the urban chaos and her misfortunes. But when she discovers her son's sudden sickness, Violet faces a searing dilemma, teetering on the edge of desperation.

DURATION: 14min 5sec



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- How does the unbearable heat and suffocating city life in Violet's story reflect the real effects of the climate crisis on ordinary people, especially to workers like her?
- When Violet seeks relief in Arroceros Park - the city's "last lung" - what does this moment tell us about our shared duty to protect what remains of nature?
- Can you share your personal experience with climate change/crisis?
- How do you mitigate its effects?
- In what ways does the climate crisis impact our everyday lives, particularly aspects we tend to overlook or take for granted?
- How did the Climate Crisis alter your lifestyle?
- In what ways does the current climate crisis worsen the existing crises we are already facing?
- How did the current climate crisis further aggravated the already precarious life of the women in the film? Share and discuss women's experience in the context of the climate crisis.
- What kind of impact does the film want to achieve?

LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of the discussion, the audience will be able to analyze that the experience of unbearable heat and suffocating city life reflects the real world effects of the climate crisis on ordinary people, especially with workers and women in precarious conditions. They will evaluate how moments such as her refuge in Arroceros Park highlights the need to create more green spaces and protect remaining natural ones. And lastly, examine how it reshapes our daily life while aggravating some existing social and economic inequalities.



NAGAHANAW NA MGA ANINIPOT: QUICK DISCUSSION POINTS

ISSUE CONTEXT

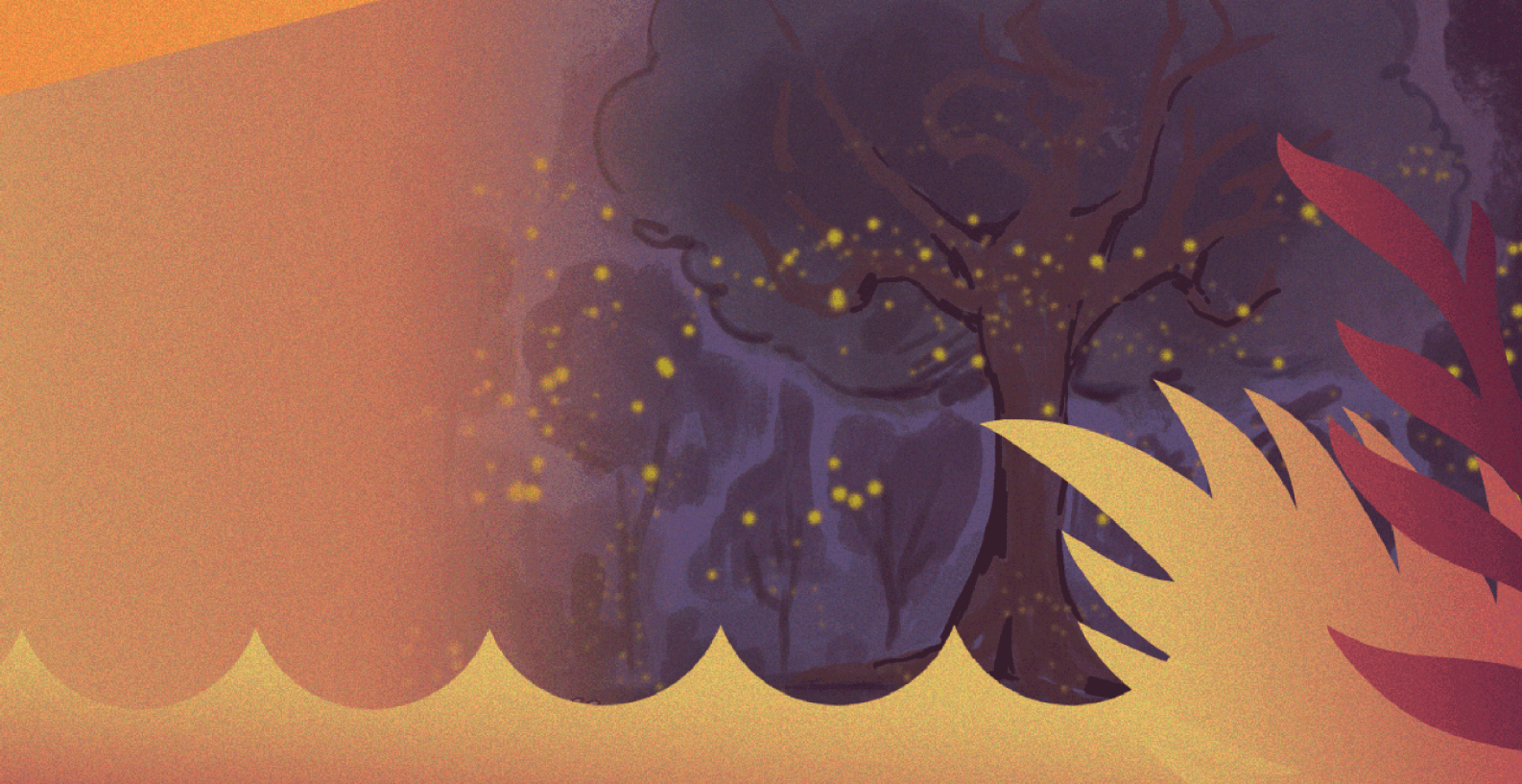
Typhoon Yolanda (international name: Haiyan) brought catastrophic devastation to the Philippines in November 2013. As of December 5, 2013, the official nationwide death toll stood at 5,719, with over 2,100 fatalities in Tacloban City. Additionally, more than 1,700 people were reported missing and over 26,000 injured. The typhoon affected around 11.26 million individuals—equivalent to 2.38 million families—across several regions. Agricultural losses were severe, with damages reaching ₱6.9 billion, impacting over 81,000 hectares of farmland, including rice fields and fisheries. Overall economic damage was estimated at ₱10.384 billion, with the agriculture sector sustaining the largest share of losses. The storm surge, wind speeds, and widespread infrastructure damage overwhelmed local communities, given that the Philippines is one of the many vulnerable countries to the destructive effects of Climate Change. This made Yolanda one of the deadliest and most destructive typhoons in Philippine history.

Sources: GMA News, Rappler, Philippine Star, SunStar

SYNOPSIS

In the quiet town of Tabango, Leyte, young Russell's world is upended when a super typhoon forces him and his grandfather, Lolo Lito, to seek shelter in an evacuation center. Clinging to a single firefly for comfort, Russell begins to sense the weight of the storm's aftermath—felt most deeply by the farmers and families around him. As he searches for light amidst loss and uncertainty, he discovers that even the smallest flicker can grow into a symbol of hope, memory, and quiet resilience.

DURATION: 7min 50sec



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- How does Russell's experience during the typhoon show how deeply the climate crisis affects vulnerable communities like farmers and children?
- The firefly becomes a symbol of hope for Russell - what does this tell us about how small acts of care and collective actions can help rebuild lives and inspire solutions after climate disasters?
- Can you share your personal experience with climate change/crisis?
- How do you mitigate its effects?
- Can you share with us what you know about the current climate crisis, its impact on vulnerable countries like the Philippines, and how the government is responding to these challenges?
- How can we mainstream the narrative that accountability, not resilience, should be the focus of climate narratives?
- In your opinion, how urgent is the issue of the climate crisis?
- How do you explain the climate crisis to a person with limited knowledge on the topic?
- What kind of impact does the film want to achieve?

LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of the discussion, the audience will be able to examine how Russell's and his community's experience during typhoons reveal the deep and unequal impacts of the climate crisis on vulnerable communities such as farmers and children. They will recognize how small acts of care and collective action can help rebuild lives after climate disasters. Participants will also reflect on their own experiences and understanding of the climate crisis, assess its urgency and impact on the Philippines, evaluate government responses, and consider how shifting the narrative from resilience to accountability can strengthen climate action.



CONCLUSION

JUSTICE AND ACCOUNTABILITY

- Despite laws protecting the environment from developmental aggression and exploitation, and international agreements to mitigate global heating and climate change, the Filipino government falls short on implementing these laws and agreements.
- This lack of implementation has driven non-government organizations and individuals to act many times endangering themselves and exposing themselves to violence and threats from corporations and paramilitary groups.
- As environment advocates and human rights defenders, our role is to:
 - call for the government to fulfill their obligation as duty-bearers to respect, protect, and fulfill human rights of environmental defenders
 - surface our desired narrative that development and progress is meaningless without equity and justice
 - continue to occupy civic spaces in calling for environmental protection and climate justice, organizing human rights advocates and mobilizing the public to defend at-risk environmental and climate defenders.



CALL TO ACTION

Find Your Collective: Build Communities of Care. Seek out and strengthen networks of like-minded individuals—orgs, study circles—where political education and mutual support go hand in hand. Join, volunteer, or collaborate with us at DAKILA and Active Vista Center, just message us on our social media pages. Follow us on Facebook @dakila.philippines and @ActiveVista.

Take Up Space: Meaningful engagement is collective power. Participate actively in forums, assemblies, and campaigns. Practice speaking out, facilitating discussions, and leading small initiatives that connect personal growth to social action.

Support Filipino Films: Stories remind us how cinema can shape public memory and political consciousness. By watching and championing these films, we ensure that powerful, relevant, and reflective stories continue to be made – for us and by us.

Reimagine the Nation: From imagination comes blueprints for real change. We can still reimagine a nation built on justice, democracy, and inclusion.