



~~before the killing begins~~

The Politics of Mass Violence

The Stanley Foundation • 209 Iowa Avenue • Muscatine, IA 52761 • 563-264-1500 • 563-264-0864 FAX

EVENT PLANNER'S GUIDE

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About the Now Showing Event-in-a-Box Toolkit

The phrase *never again* has been used for decades as a symbol of international resolve to never allow an abomination like the Holocaust to happen again. All nations seem to recognize an obligation to stop future genocides and mass atrocities, even if it means violating the near-sacred sovereignty of another country. That resolve has been tested many times, and too often it has failed.

Since the Holocaust we have seen mass killings take place the world over. In some cases, the slow, deliberate killing of innocent people may have only captured the news media's attention on occasion, leaving us with the impression that mass killings only happen in the context of war. What might have seemed like isolated incidents are symbolic of a larger epidemic.

Mass violence is a political tool used by those with power for their own strategic objectives. It is not an unpreventable and unmanageable explosion of existing tensions. Ethnic and other social divisions can be manipulated by the powerful, but genocide and mass atrocities don't occur spontaneously. And that means they can be prevented.

Now Showing *Before the Killing Begins: The Politics of Mass Violence* considers how early preventive strategies by governments and the international community should build much-needed capacities within countries, and make it harder for leaders to resort to violence. It aims to encourage discussion of how future efforts might better protect populations under threat, giving new meaning to *never again*.

What's Included

For your event, the Stanley Foundation provides you with following items in your Now Showing toolkit:

- Now Showing *Before the Killing Begins: The Politics of Mass Violence* DVD.
- Color posters to promote your event.
- Samples of a cosponsor invitation, an event announcement, and a press release that you can customize for use for your event.
- A Moderator's Guide for leading discussion (even if you are not planning to moderate as the event planner, we suggest you review the Moderator's Guide too).
- Additional resource materials for the event planner and moderator.
- A Discussion Guide for those attending the event.
- An Event Sign-In Sheet and Event Participant Survey (to be filled out and returned to the Stanley Foundation).
- An Event Planner Survey (to be filled out and returned to the Stanley Foundation).
- Please note that all of the materials included in this toolkit are also available online at www.stanleyfoundation.org/btkb-online-toolkit.cfm.

Getting Started

A typical event would include:

- Viewing the Now Showing *Before the Killing Begins: The Politics of Mass Violence* video provided by the Stanley Foundation.
- Questions and dialogue among those in attendance, led by a volunteer moderator using the provided Moderator's Guide and Discussion Guide.

You may also want to include a speaker or moderated panel of local experts discussing the prevention of mass atrocity and genocide.

The toolkit is designed so that groups can watch the DVD and still have time for a group discussion at one event. The *Before the Killing Begins: The Politics of Mass Violence* DVD is approximately 30 minutes long. We recommend that you allow for at least 30 minutes of dialogue after watching the video. Therefore, you should plan for your event to be at least one hour long.

Please note that the Stanley Foundation highly discourages organizers of events featuring these materials from charging people a fee for participation, particularly as we provide our Now Showing toolkits at no charge.

Event Planning Checklist

This checklist is meant to be an optional guide to aid in planning your group event. Please feel free to add or delete items from the list as needed.

Pre-Event Planning

Event Details

You will want to decide on the basics of your event first.

- ☐ Choose a date and time for your event.
- ☐ Determine your location and reserve it.
- ☐ Reserve any needed audio/video equipment including a TV and DVD player and all necessary cables. Reserve microphones and/or LCD projector if the discussion group will be large.
- ☐ Determine who the moderator will be and share the Moderator's Guide and Discussion Guide with them.

Publicity/Community Outreach

In order to have a good group discussion, you'll want a good turnout for your event. Therefore, it will be worth your time to do some promotion of the event through publicity and outreach.

- ☐ Hang the enclosed event posters in highly visible locations. Consider libraries, coffee shops, supermarkets, university/college campuses, and other areas with high traffic.
Don't forget to add your event information at the bottom!
- ☐ Post your event on relevant community, media, and campus calendars.
- ☐ Develop and send a press release. See the Media Guide section on page 8.
- ☐ Ask cosponsors and other organizations to publicize the event. Consider civic organizations, campus organizations if you are in a university community, church groups, book clubs, and youth organizations, even if they aren't cosponsors.
- ☐ Send a letter/e-mail to relevant groups and cosponsors with event information. The Stanley Foundation provides a Sample Letter/E-mail Announcing Event (on page 10, on the Digital Resources CD in the toolkit, and in our online toolkit at www.stanleyfoundation.org/btkb-online-toolkit.cfm) that you can customize to inform people of your event. Or you can simply use your customized press release to share event information with other groups and cosponsors.
- ☐ Don't forget to mention your cosponsors in all publicity materials.

Cosponsorship

We encourage you to collaborate with other organizations in your community in holding your event. Collaborating organizations can help to promote the event, increase the audience size, and bring diversity of thought to your discussion. Groups you might consider include: civic organizations, campus organizations if you are in a university community, church groups, book clubs, and youth organizations. Once you have discussed cosponsorship with a group, be sure to discuss what each of your responsibilities will be in making the event happen.

- ☐ Create a list of possible cosponsors.
- ☐ Contact potential cosponsors about their interest. The Sample Letter/E-mail to Potential Cosponsors (on page 9 of this packet, on the Digital Resources CD in the toolkit, and in our online toolkit at www.stanleyfoundation.org/btkb-online-toolkit.cfm) can be customized to invite other groups to cosponsor your event.
- ☐ Divide/determine respective responsibilities with cosponsors.

Day of Event

We suggest that you take the following materials with you on the day of your event. Please adapt this list as needed.

- ☐ *Before the Killing Begins: The Politics of Mass Violence* DVD
- ☐ Discussion Guides. ***Please note that extra copies of the Discussion Guide are provided in your toolkit and should be passed out to those in attendance.*** If additional copies of the Discussion Guide are needed, they can be printed from the electronic version on the Digital Resources CD or from the PDF in our online toolkit at www.stanleyfoundation.org/btkb-online-toolkit.cfm.
- ☐ Moderator's Guide
- ☐ Event Sign-In Sheet. You can find the Event Sign-In Sheet on the Digital Resources CD and as a PDF at www.stanleyfoundation.org/btkb-online-toolkit.cfm.
- ☐ Event Participant Surveys. ***Please note that one copy of the Event Participant Survey is provided in your toolkit.*** Please make additional copies by photocopying the provided copy, printing from the electronic version on the Digital Resources CD, or from the PDF at www.stanleyfoundation.org/btkb-online-toolkit.cfm.
- ☐ Other materials from the Stanley Foundation provided in toolkit. ***Please note that additional materials are available upon request.*** Please contact us at 563-264-1500 or info@stanleyfoundation.org to request additional materials for your group.

After the Event

Please do the following which will help us provide Now Showing toolkits in the future to groups like yours:

- ☐ Complete and return the Event Planner Survey, Event Sign-In Sheets, and the Event Participant Surveys to the Stanley Foundation.
 - Online at www.stanleyfoundation.org/btkb-online-toolkit.cfm
 - By mail: 209 Iowa Avenue, Muscatine, Iowa, 52761

Please note that if you return all three of the items above by mail within 30 days of your event, we will give you a complimentary \$5 Starbucks Card. If you return all three online within 30 days of your event, we will give you a complimentary \$10 Starbucks Card!

- ☐ Share this toolkit with another group you think would be interested.

Event Planning Timeline

4 weeks prior to the event	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Set event date and time; reserve a location to hold the event. ○ Recruit cosponsors to help with event planning and promotion. ○ Delegate planning responsibilities to cosponsors as appropriate.
2-3 weeks prior to the event	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Put up event posters and send event information to interested groups and cosponsors. ○ Post your event on community, campus, and media calendars. ○ Visit the event location to assess the best seating arrangement. ○ Send a press release to local media (TV, radio, and newspaper). ○ Request additional materials from the Stanley Foundation, if desired.
1 week prior to the event	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Confirm reservation for event location and audio/visual equipment. ○ Send reminders about the event to interested groups and cosponsors. ○ Invite the media, such as the local newspaper, television station, and public radio affiliate.
Day of event	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Set up venue: check to make sure audio/visual equipment and DVD are working, make sure room is easy to find (put up signs if needed), arrange seating. ○ Set up table with informational materials from your organization and the Stanley Foundation (if you requested materials from us in advance). ○ Pass around a sign-up sheet during the event. ○ Don't forget to have people complete their Event Participant Survey. ○ Please let event participants know that the use of the DVD was made possible through support from the Stanley Foundation and direct them to www.stanleyfoundation.org for more information.
After the event	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Complete and submit the Event Planner Survey included in the toolkit along with the Event Sign-In Sheets and Event Participant Surveys to the Stanley Foundation online at www.stanleyfoundation.org/btkb-online-toolkit.cfm. ○ Or mail the Event Planner Survey, Event Sign-In Sheets, and Event Participant Surveys to The Stanley Foundation, 209 Iowa Avenue, Muscatine, IA, 52761. <p><i>Please note that if you return all three of the items above by mail within 30 days of your event, we will give you a complimentary \$5 Starbucks Card. If you return all three online within 30 days of your event, we will give you a complimentary \$10 Starbucks Card!</i></p>

Media Guide

There are two reasons to inform the news media of your event. The first is to publicize the event and invite participants through the media, and the second is to draw media to the event with the hope that stories will be written about the issues discussed at the event. Any media attention for your event will help to build your audience as well as recognition for your group or organization.

Since you are in the best position to assess your local media, please take some time to learn the following:

- **News Market.** How does the local community get their news? Consider where you hear about events. Do you hear about events on the local TV stations, on the radio, in the newspaper, or somewhere else?
- **Content Analysis.** What stories generally make the local paper? Are they national or international stories with a local angle? Or are they mainly human interest stories? Recognizing the angle that has appeal in your particular community may provide you with the hook that helps you pitch your event to the media in a way that will ensure better coverage.
- **Press Release.** Often local news media will not have a large staff, so you can take that into account as you prepare materials for them. Your press release should be prepared carefully since it may be printed verbatim. It should provide information about who, what, where, when, and why with quotes and background information. Most important, your press release should provide contact information.

There are many ways to send your press release—in the mail, by fax, or by e-mail. Depending on your local media, you should send it by any or all of these methods. It's important to do a follow-up phone call to your press release. It is recommended that you send the press release approximately two weeks before your event and then again at least two days before your event.

A Sample Press Release is provided (on page 11, on the Digital Resources CD in the toolkit, and in our online toolkit at www.stanleyfoundation.org/btkb-online-toolkit.cfm) so that you can customize it for your event.

To help with media coverage of the event itself, sending photos, audio, and other materials might also be welcome since the media may not have staff to cover the event.

Sample Letter/E-Mail to Potential Cosponsors

Please adapt the text below to fit the needs of your event and organization. Items in **BOLD CAPS** should be replaced with relevant text.

Dear **NAME**:

I am a **TITLE** with **ORGANIZATION**. [INSERT SHORT DESCRIPTION OF **ORGANIZATION**.]

Currently, **ORGANIZATION** is planning an event *Before the Killing Begins: The Politics of Mass Violence* to examine US and international efforts in response to the threat of mass violence. The event will include a video presentation on the topic along with a dialogue among those in attendance led by **NAME, TITLE**.

By organizing this event, **ORGANIZATION** hopes to open a discussion of how future efforts might better protect populations under threat of mass violence. The discussion considers how early preventive strategies by governments and the international community should build much-needed capacities within countries, and make it harder for leaders to resort to violence.

At the moment, we are still in the planning stages of the event and are looking for interested cosponsors. Given your organization's potential interest in this type of event, we would like to invite you to cosponsor this event with us.

Thank you for your consideration. We look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

NAME
TITLE
ORGANIZATION

Sample Letter/E-Mail Announcing Event

Please adapt the text below to fit the needs of your event and organization. Items in **BOLD CAPS** should be replaced with relevant text.

Dear **NAME**:

ORGANIZATION(S) is holding an event *Before the Killing Begins: The Politics of Mass Violence* to examine national and international efforts in response to the threat of mass violence. The event will include a video presentation on the topic along with a dialogue among those in attendance led by **NAME, TITLE**.

Please join us on **DATE** at **TIME** at **LOCATION**. By holding this event, we hope to encourage discussion of how future efforts might better protect populations under threat of mass violence. The discussion considers how early preventive strategies by governments and the international community should build much-needed capacities within countries, and make it harder for leaders to resort to violence.

For more information, please contact **NAME** at **PHONE/E-MAIL/WEB SITE**.

Sincerely,

NAME
TITLE
ORGANIZATION

Sample Press Release

Please adapt the text below to fit the needs of your event and organization. Items in **BOLD CAPS** should be replaced with relevant text.

DATE

For Immediate Release

Contact: **NAME, TITLE, ORGANIZATION, PHONE, E-MAIL**

ORGANIZATION Holds Event on Threat of Mass Violence, National and International Response

CITY, STATE— The phrase *never again* has been used for decades as a symbol of international resolve to never allow an abomination like the Holocaust to happen again. All nations seem to recognize an obligation to stop future genocides and mass atrocities, even if it means violating the near-sacred sovereignty of another country. That resolve has been tested many times, and too often it has failed.

Since the Holocaust we have seen mass killings take place all over the world. In some cases, the slow, deliberate killing of innocent people may have only captured the news media's attention on occasion, leaving us with the impression that mass killings only happen in context of war. What might have seemed like isolated incidents are symbolic of a larger epidemic.

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ORGANIZATION(S) will hold the event *Before the Killing Begins: The Politics of Mass Violence* to examine national and international efforts in response to the threat of mass violence. The event will include a video presentation on the topic along with a dialogue among those in attendance led by **NAME, TITLE**.

The event will be held at **LOCATION OF EVENT** on **DATE AND TIME OF EVENT**.

For more information, please contact **CONTACT NAME** at **PHONE NUMBER** or **E-MAIL ADDRESS**.