

Land of Opportunity

Happening to a city near you

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Land of Opportunity is an interactive, multi-layered exploration of post-crisis community (re)building in America.



THE CONCEPT

Rooted in post-Katrina New Orleans, Land of Opportunity is an ongoing exploration of the often contentious process of community redevelopment in the face of crisis/disaster. Through perspectives that travel across media, including a film and new [experimental interactive web platform](#), the project explores the fundamental question: What kinds of communities do we want to (re)build in the 21st century? From New Orleans to New York, from Katrina to Sandy, we, along with partners in sister cities, create and curate multifaceted stories highlighting a diversity of voices and approaches designed to foster engagement and inspire action around the core issues happening to cities and towns near us all.



THE HISTORY

Land of Opportunity began with a mission: to document a wide spectrum of stories about post-Katrina New Orleans that reflected the larger issues and tensions shaping urban America today. It was our goal early on to disseminate these stories in multiple ways to a diverse audience. Over seven years, we collected hundreds of hours of footage and amassed an unprecedented archive of film shot in and around New Orleans. We produced a feature film, which was broadcast by Arte France in Europe and released in 2011. The film received support from several organizations including Ford Foundation, Rockefeller Foundation and Chicken and Egg Pictures. In tandem with the film, we produced several [online videos](#) to support campaigns by partners in a growing, cross-sector movement for equitable redevelopment in crisis-hit communities across the United States. As new technology became available, we began building our experimental interactive platform, which combines New Orleans-based footage with multimedia content created and curated by partners in sister cities and communities. The platform is being built with generous support from the Ford Foundation and received technical support from the Mozilla Foundation.

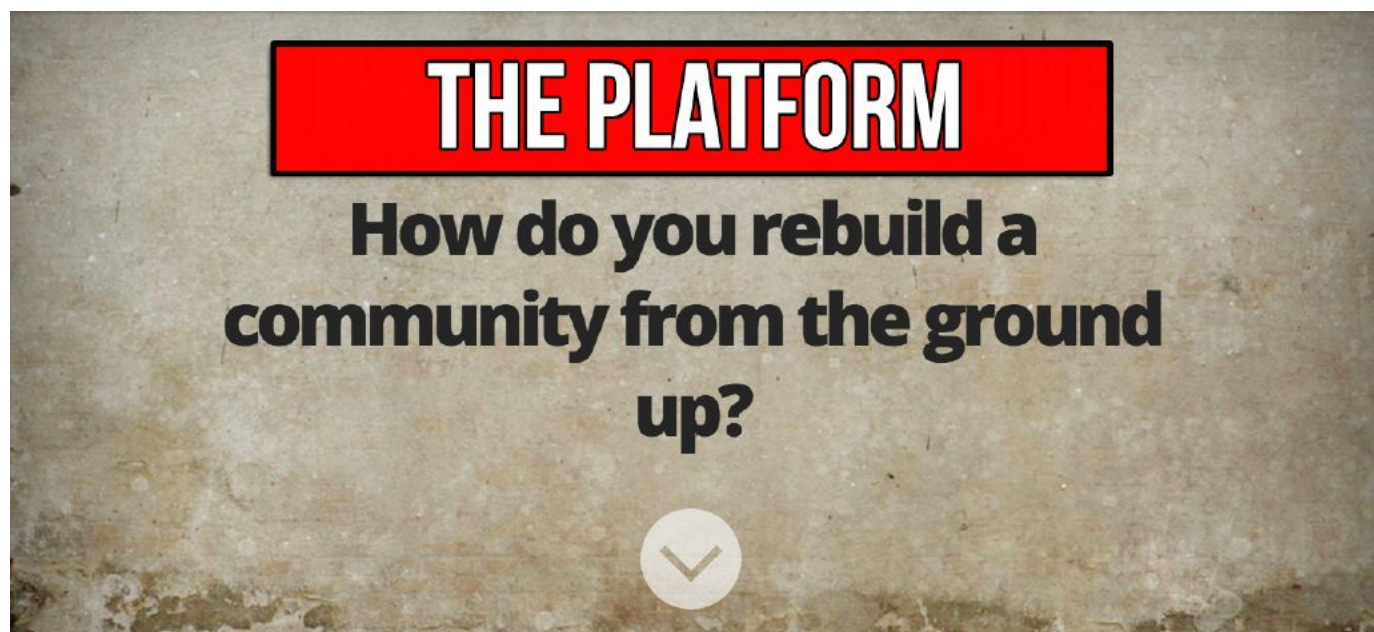


THE FILM

The feature film *Land of Opportunity* captures the contentious reconstruction of post-Katrina New Orleans through the eyes of those on the frontlines. An acclaimed verité-style documentary, the film (97 mins.) interweaves the stories of a diverse group of people over several years as they struggle to rebuild their lives in post-Katrina New Orleans.

Renowned filmmaker Spike Lee said of the film, "*Land of Opportunity* is an important part of the New Orleans story. It gets down and dirty with the people on the ground. Five years in the making, this film gives voice to everyday people working hard to rebuild their city and their lives."

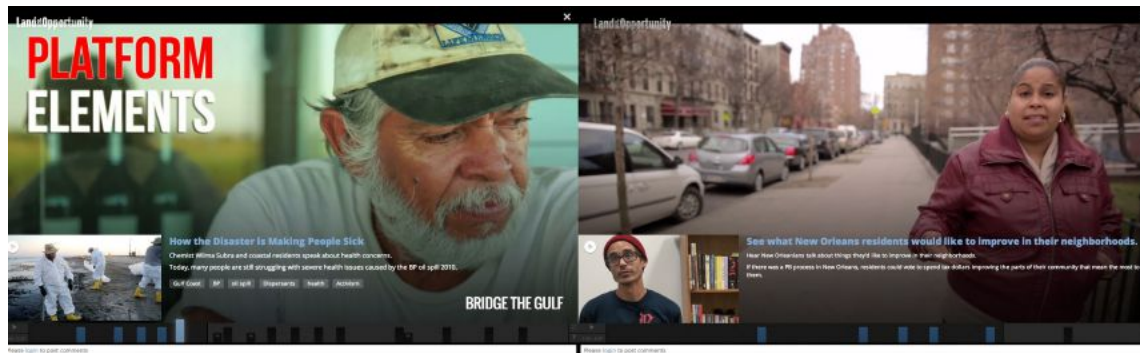
Executive produced by Chicken and Egg Pictures, the film was featured in IFP's Independent Film Week in 2007 and 2009, where it was nominated for multiple awards sponsored by the [Fledgling Fund](#). In August 2010, Arte broadcast the European version of the feature film in France and Germany. *Land of Opportunity* made its premiere at the It's All True/É Tudo Verdade International Documentary Film Festival in Rio de Janeiro in the spring of 2011. It has since screened at several international film festivals, and won Best International Documentary at the Reel World Film Festival in Toronto. The film is being distributed to educators and community groups through [New Day Films](#).



THE PLATFORM

The [LandofOpportunity interactive web platform](#) merges compelling multimedia storytelling with curated data, research, and calls to action in one experimental collaborative space. Currently in Beta, the innovative site features an interactive video player and upcoming timeline that allow users to explore and compare layered narratives about the people and processes that are shaping our increasingly vulnerable landscapes. Partners can create and curate their own multi-layer stories and strategically deploy them to increase engagement and effect change locally and nationally. Groups and individuals can collaborate with partners working in different communities, thus creating a foundation for communication and knowledge-sharing across places, issues, and sectors.

Note: This platform is an ongoing work-in-progress at the cutting-edge of current technology. It currently works best on **laptops or tablets** with the **latest version of popular browsers** (Safari, Firefox, Chrome, and Internet Explorer 9 and above), and with a high speed internet connection. Moving forward, we hope to get the resources to make this experience more accessible as the technology evolves. If you encounter bugs or glitches, we appreciate your patience and feedback.



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Moving the conversation about disaster recovery and community redevelopment beyond the constraints of any one time, place, and context, the platform challenges users to consider the significance of the stories and themes to their own lives and communities.

InterACTIVE.

Increasing engagement and action around just (re)building and urban equity by merging compelling storytelling with data, research, analysis, and calls to action in one narrative space.

Collaborative Storytelling.

Fostering cross-sector collaboration between educators, mediamakers, advocates and others working toward (re)building more just, inclusive and democratic cities and communities.

Many Voices. Multiple Communities. One Platform.

Creating, curating, and juxtaposing narratives highlighting diverse perspectives from several cities and rural areas.

Provocative.

Exploring the relationship between contrasting realities and perspectives: Devastation/Rebuilding, Displacement/Home, Exclusion/Engagement, Community/Commodity.

Open Source.

Not only is our platform's underlying technology open source, but we're working with the Center for Social Media at American University to document and share lessons learned to contribute to best practices in the burgeoning field of transmedia storytelling.

Experimental and Beta.

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Making recent history relevant.

Leveraging stories and lessons from an unprecedented time in our recent history to redefine and reframe the way we look at contemporary issues of post-crisis recovery and urban equity.



CROSS-SECTOR COLLABORATION

Through the Land of Opportunity project, we're building a national network of educators, advocates and mediamakers, all working on post-crisis, urban equity, and community redevelopment issues from a variety of perspectives and approaches. So far we have forged strategic partnerships in New Orleans, New York, Chicago and Detroit. In conjunction with these partners, we are creating layered multimedia narratives about a diversity of timely issues, topics and thought-provoking themes, including: Devastation/Rebuilding, Displacement/Home, Exclusion/Engagement and Community/Commodity.



PARTNERS

Current partners and content contributors for the interactive platform include:

- National Housing Institute/Shelterforce (NY, NJ)
- University of New Orleans-Department of Urban Planning and Studies
- SandyStoryline and Housing is a Human Right (New York)
- Bridge the Gulf (Gulf Coast)
- New Orleans Coalition for Open Governance (NOCOG)
- Kelly Anderson and Alison Dean (New York, filmmakers, *My Brooklyn*)
- Meerkat Media Collective (*New York*)
- Nathan Fitch (New York, filmmaker, *The Darker Side of Dreamland*)
- Ronit Bezalel (Chicago filmmaker, *70 Acres in Chicago*)
- Leah Mahan (Bay Area/Boston, filmmaker, *Come Hell or High Water*)
- Mark Lipman (Bay Area/Boston, filmmaker, *Gaining Ground*)
- Oren Goldenberg, (Detroit, filmmaker, *Brewster Douglass, You're My Brother*)
- Brent Joseph (New Orleans, filmmaker, *Holdout*)
- William Sabourin (New Orleans, filmmaker)
- Ed Goetz (scholar/author, *New Deal Ruins*)
- Janet Smith (scholar/ author, Nathalie P. Voorhess Center, University of Illinois-Chicago)
- Katy Reckdahl (journalist, New Orleans)
- Tulane University, Newcomb College Institute
- Center for Social Media and Impact (American University)

THE TEAM



Luisa Dantas
Director/Producer/Editor

Award-winning filmmaker Luisa Dantas has worked on a wide array of documentary and narrative projects in the U.S. and Brazil. In addition to producing, directing and editing Land of Opportunity, Luisa also co-produced the acclaimed documentary, Wal-Mart: The High Cost of Low Price, and directed and produced the web-series Voices From the Gulf for ColorofChange.



Laine Kaplan-Levenson
Digital Producer

Laine Kaplan-Levenson is a multi-media producer living in New Orleans. Laine works as a radio producer and works for the local NPR member station WWNO, and runs a live storytelling event called Bring Your Own.



Micheal Boedigheimer
Digital Content Producer/Editor

Micheal Boedigheimer is a director and cinematographer. His award-winning short film Impasse has screened at festivals around the world. He has worked as a camera operator on various reality shows for A&E, Bravo, tru TV and the web-series Voices From the Gulf for Color of Change.



Jon Vidar
Digital Strategist

Jon is the founder and digital strategist behind all of the projects that come out of Uncharted Digital. Jon has extensive background in the nonprofit sector. His projects have received top recognitions from SXSW Interactive, the Webby Awards, the Gracies, Adobe and the Knight Foundation among many others

OUR FUNDERS

The Platform:

- Ford Foundation, Metropolitan Opportunity Unit
- blackpublicmedia.org
- Chicken and Egg Pictures

The Film:

- Arte France
- Rockefeller Foundation
- Greater New Orleans Foundation
- New Orleans Jazz and Heritage Foundation
- Tulane/Newcomb College Institute

Additional Supporters:

- Mozilla Foundation
- Bay Area Video Coalition (BAVC)
- Internet Archive

LOGOS

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