

SPOTTED FROG PRODUCTIONS  
PRESENTS

# THE PEACE AGENCY



WHEN THE **WAR** ENDS

**A WOMAN'S** FIGHT BEGINS

SPOTTED FROG PRODUCTIONS PRESENTS A DOCUMENTARY FILM BY SUE USEEM

USA/INDONESIA, 85 MIN, AUGUST 2013 ETA

# THE PEACE AGENCY

a documentary film by Sue Useem

(USA, 85 MIN, AUGUST 2013 ETA)

[www.spottedfrogproductions.com](http://www.spottedfrogproductions.com)

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**AN INTIMATE JOURNEY**



**OF AN UNLIKELY HEROINE**



**DETERMINED FOR PEACE**

# THE PEACE AGENCY



Lian Gogali, an unlikely disabled heroine, fights to unite marginalized Muslim and Christian women from her conflict-ridden region of Poso, Indonesia in order to transform them from victims into survivors and agents of peace. Her radical idea is to educate them. But her success seems improbable as the odds stack against her. Then fate takes a turn.

and determined individual can make a difference in the lives of many.

Though the country remains a dangerous place for those who challenge the status quo and the country's dominant forces, courageous individuals continue to step and change. Lian Gogali is one of them.

The Peace Agency is an emotionally powerful and thought-provoking film, depicting the difficulties women face – and the triumphs they can achieve – in Indonesia. It captures the blunt realities of living on the margins of a country still struggling to embrace the concept of women's rights. It documents how the vision and dreams of one courageous



## POSO

Since 1998, Poso has been the center of religious conflict between Christians and Muslims. **Over 80,000 people** have been forced to flee their homes, while thousands of people have been killed in sporadic bouts of violence.



**This film** moves the issue of women’s rights and grassroots peace movements in the developing world from an abstract concept into a comprehensive and moving account through the eyes of one courageous, inspiring, and appealing woman on crutches with a young daughter by her side. Viewers find that though Lian struggles in a context unique to Poso, her personal and political challenges are ones that women, and people everywhere, can identify with. It offers insight into the process of creating communal harmony in an area of deep divisions, and it alerts audiences to the challenges that women face worldwide in establishing gender equity. It seeks to provide viewers with the tools to reduce religious conflict and build human rights in their own communities through education, empowerment, and community organizing. It is a story intended to foster more peaceful and just societies through a graphic account of one individual who has struggled successfully against a host of barriers.

**A UNIQUE STORY: A journey towards peace and empowerment**

Lian’s school is open to Muslim and Christian survivors, refugees, and ex-combatants of the conflict. It is the only institution in Poso where women can gather together in a secure environment to learn from a well-developed curriculum how to strengthen women’s rights and heal the region’s religious divisions.



THEPEACEAGENCY

## STORY SYNOPSIS

### A struggle so personal

The story begins with Lian Gogali telling the story of her journey home from college when her father, a Protestant Minister, dies suddenly. When she comes home to Poso in 1999, Lian is shocked to see the destruction from the conflict. The audience learns from graphic archival footage that religious tensions between Muslims and Christians, exacerbated by extremists on both sides, had turned very deadly.

Interspersed through the film is Lian's backstory, showing her wrenching experiences during the Poso conflict that spurred her to attempt to create her own grassroots, interfaith, women centered school and movement, as well as

her own fight for acceptance from her impoverished, ethnic minority village that had ostracized her for becoming a single mother.

**"I am just a single mother. I can't walk, but I have a dream..."**

From the very beginning, Lian's personal problems threaten to derail her far-reaching efforts and dreams. While attempting to establish the school, raise her daughter in a region that looks askance at single mothers, she is run over by a car and has to fight to keep her leg. Her attempts to get it fixed by a local healer end in disaster and for three years she

is severely disabled and unable to walk. Still focused on creating an interfaith women's movement and school, she neglects her health and contracts Tuberculosis.

Despite her trying personal circumstances, Lian remains steadfastly and cheerfully committed to ending the conflict and fostering women's rights, and she obtains a grant to partially finance the opening of "The Women's School" for those ends. Numbers of poor women are ready to cautiously step forward, and Lian suddenly finds herself in charge of more than a hundred Christian and Muslim students ready to transform themselves and their communities.

Lian's successful launch of the school, however, is overshadowed by still more setbacks. At the very moment that her dream is finally getting traction, she is forced to leave Poso to undergo multiple painful new rounds of surgery for a bone transplant. Lian entrusts the school's destiny and her daughter to staff and friends.

Five months later, Lian returns home with an almost-healed leg to find that The Women's School has already become a powerful force in Poso's interfaith peace movement. Yet even as the school is becoming an important pillar of the community, Lian's aspirations face still more threats. The school's accountant informs her that he has "accidentally" mis-spent most of the funds that had been set

aside to cover the school's operating expenses for the next two years while she was away. To keep the school running, Lian goes into debt and searches desperately for new sources of funding.

At the same time, an infection in Lian's leg becomes life threatening. Facing enormous pressure to both fund the school and save her leg, Lian also steadfastly tries to remain the good mother to her 4-year-old daughter. But her child complains that she cannot understand why Lian spends so much time working, and why Lian is absent from Poso altogether so often. Adding to this disheartening moment, all of Lian's applications for continued funding of the school are rejected, and she learns that she must undergo surgery yet again – now without the funds to pay for it since all her personal resources have been invested in the school.

A month later Lian is startled to learn that she is one of six finalists for the Coexist Prize, a cash award of \$100,000 to honor, in the words of the London-based Coexist Foundation, "an unsung heroine who has made an exceptional contribution to building bridges between people of different faiths."

Lian leaves her village and daughter yet again to join the five other finalists in New York City for the award's announcement and cere-

mony, knowing that if she returns home empty handed, she will probably have to shut down the school and her dreams will be ruined. Before the ceremony she is in tears. To her utter surprise and delight, she is awarded the prize. Her effort's recognition brings an enormous outpouring of interest and support from organizations around the world – and helps reinvigorate her determination to build the school and the movement.

### **“Women and children are our most untapped resource in interfaith healing and peace-building”**

Lian returns to Poso a heroine, and with the new-found stature and outside support, she is able not only to move The Women's School onto firm financial footing but also to more than double its village locations and the number of students. Her dream of creating an interfaith peace movement is finally coming true, and the school's first wave of graduates are now seen teaching the next generation of students. And with a fully-healed leg, Lian is now walking her daughter to school every morning.





THE PEACE AGENCY



## DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT--SUE USEEM

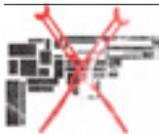
When I came to Lian's house in Poso in 2010 to pay a visit after finishing my first documentary about the Poso conflict, I had no plans on making a new documentary there. Since I had seen her last, she had become a single mother and was trying to recover from her accident, all while fighting Tuberculosis. When she told me she was holding classes for women on her front porch I considered the idea of making a short documentary about it in order to help her promote the idea. I had no idea what journey both of us were about to embark on. The result is The Peace Agency.

For the last three years I have been traveling to Poso back and forth to capture what she worked so hard for, which gave me intimate access to her life and story. Her personality really captured me, and during the filming of the school I came to realize that she herself was the main story here. So many times I was frightened she would die from her injuries and illnesses. When she was able to get the life and leg saving surgeries that she needed, I naively thought things were going to go great from there on out. As she struggled with her health, I watched as they ran out of money and she went into deep personal debt to fund the school. I attempted to balance my role as a filmmaker but increasingly as a concerned friend. It looked as though many times this documentary was going to have a sad ending. When we got notice that she would be flying to New York with the chance of winning the Coexist Prize, I knew the redeeming moment for both of us had come. I could never have imagined how well it all would turn out.

I am so grateful for Lian giving me the access to her life and story and for all of the people of Poso who have been so kind and welcoming to me over the years.

# THE PEACE AGENCY

## MAIN CHARACTER



### **LIAN GOGALI**

**A sweet, donut-loving, petite little lady with big dreams is the star of The Peace Agency.**

Lian was born into a small ethnic minority village in rural Poso, the daughter of a Protestant Minister. From a young age she asked her father to take her to find books. When she asked to go to school and he refused because she was a girl, she fasted until he approved. She left to study Theology on the main Indonesian island of Java. When her father died of illness in 1999, she came home for his funeral and found Poso in ruins from the conflict. Moved by stories from both Christian and Muslim family members, Lian got funding from her university to live in Internally Displaced Camps with women and children. She ended up writing a book about her research there.

During her experience researching in the Internally Displaced Camps she was taken one night by local jihadists to their headquarters. They were suspicious she was a spy for Christians. But the night turned into an unforgettable one as she had a six hour dialogue with the Muslim militants about the real nature of the Poso conflict, which they agreed was a fight over natural resources. Religion



was being abused to divide people and incite violence. This was Poso's first inter-faith meeting, and would set Lian on a new course of life.

During the next few years, Lian lived and worked in Poso's refugee camps. She came to the conclusion that the conflict that rocked Poso was not about religion: it was a fight over land and political power. After this realization, Lian began working with refugee women and children. She believed they were the key to restoring community ties, and she founded The Women's School to bring peace and equality to all of the people of Poso.

Beyond the struggle of founding and running a grassroots campaign, Lian has gone through harrowing personal struggles. In 2008 she became a single mother. Her family and the community ostracized her for her decision. She also received death threats for keeping her daughter Sophia. A year later, Lian was struck by a car. For three years she had endured multiple operations to save her leg and foot. Lian has walked from village to village on homemade crutches—while exposed bones stuck out of her calf. Eventually, she contracted tuberculosis. Still undaunted by all of these obstacles, Lian left her well-paying job to start her own grassroots movement.

At the start of the film, we join Lian running her school for peace and gender equality on her porch and struggling with her leg injury. The viewer will watch how her school is finally bringing all of the women of Poso together to spread the message of peace and equality. By the end, her movement will have spread to hundreds of villages, thousands of women, and beyond.



SUPPORTING CHARACTERS

**SOPHIA “OPI” GOGALI**

Lian’s three-year-old daughter is the documentary’s show stealer. Sophia is a silly, friendly child who is unusually gifted for her age. She patiently accompanies Lian wherever she goes to work in villages or giving talks, and often livens up the environment with her antics.



**IBU RAMLA**

Ramia is a budding agent of peace in her village of Malei, who lost many of her Muslim family members in the height of the conflict in Poso. A dedicated student of The Women’s School, Ramia ignites discussions with her Muslim and Christian classmates ranging from inter-religious tolerance, gender rights and fighting against rape from the military and police. Her toughness and resilience in the face of hatred and ignorance will leave the audience inspired and moved.



**IBU LINA**

Lina is from the indigenous Protestant Pamona culture of Poso. Although she only has a junior high school education, Lina jumped on the opportunity to join The Women’s School and became a close ally of Lian. She quickly emerged as a leader in bringing women of different faiths and backgrounds together to tackle Poso’s most pressing needs, and when she graduated from her first year, she went on to become a facilitator for the next generation of students.



**PIAN**

Pian is the loyal partner in crime with Lian in the creation of the Women’s School in Poso. During the conflict, Pian witnessed a huge amount of corruption in the aid industry coming to Poso and their subsequent failures. At heart he is an activist for better government, and he sees that a democracy can’t possibly function well without increased participation by female citizens. Knowing he could not depend on the government or other NGOs to empower women, he partnered with Lian to create a new alternative for marginalized women in Poso.



**USTADZ IBRAHIM**

Another one of Lian’s main supporters, Ustadz Ibrahim runs an Islamic school in Poso City. During the conflict he was part of an Islamic militia that took Lian one night while she was doing research in an Internally Displaced Camp. He was desperately looking for a Christian that they could have an interfaith dialogue with in hopes of ending the conflict. They have been good friends ever since and he continues to work in bridging differences between Muslims and Christians.



## STAFFING AND ADMINISTRATION

### SUE USEEM | PROJECT MANAGER | DIRECTOR | PRODUCER



Sue Useem is the writer, director, editor, and producer of the award-winning feature-length film *Which Way to the War?* She was also a producer and broadcaster at the Voice of America (VOA) in Washington, D.C. for five years.

*Which Way to the War?* tells the story of Poso, Sulawesi, a community rocked by religious conflict and terrorist attacks. It shows all sides of this bloody, harrowing conflict, and the community's subsequent steps toward reconciliation. At the film's premiere in Los Angeles at the Action on Film Festival, Sue Useem received the award of "Best Female Filmmaker." The documentary continued in the film festival circuit for fifteen months, receiving a number of additional awards and drawing widespread attention. *Which Way to the War?* has been purchased by organizations and universities worldwide. Information about the film can be found at [www.whichwaytothewar.com](http://www.whichwaytothewar.com).

### SOMA HELMI | EDITOR

Born in Bali, Soma Helmi grew up somewhere between Indonesia, Australia, and the US. In 2009, Soma decided to pursue film making after many years as an Art Director in web, advertising and photography. Her debut short film – *The Angel & Rajapala* – won the short film competition at BALINALE International Film Festival in 2009. Her work has now been screened at film festivals around the world including Sundance Film Festival, Anchorage Film Festival, WOW Film Festival, Sydney, and Short & Sweet Film Festival in the UK.



### MICHAEL LAWRENCE | CINEMATOGRAPHER

Michael is a director, cinematographer, and photographer based in Brooklyn. His work has been featured in *Creative Review*, *1.4*, *VICE Noisey*, *Pitchfork*, *FADER*, *i-D Magazine*, and *The Reel*. Clients include *Travelocity*, *Ford Models*, *New Era*, *Kitsuné*, and *Cantora Records*. He is also a visiting instructor at the Miami Ad School.



### YOANES LITHA | CAMERAMAN | FIXER

Yoanes is a key trusted ally in Poso and a brave journalist. Originally from Central Sulawesi, Yoanes moved to Poso to cover the conflict and aftermath for many national stations and is a stringer for Voice of America (VOA). He is always on the ground to cover every class and event of The Women's School and is an avid supporter of peace building in Poso. It would be impossible to secure locations to film without his assistance.



## STAFFING AND ADMINISTRATION

### MEGAN MCKEARNEY | PRINT GRAPHICS

Megan McKearney is an experienced photographer and graphics designer from Oakland, California. She served as Director of Photography and Print Graphics Manager on *Which Way to the War?*



### ASHLEY GRIMES | DESIGNER

Ashley Grimes works in international development with degrees in transnational security and strategic communication. Ashley assisted in the design of materials for The Peace Agency.



### EMILY USEEM | GRANT WRITER

Emily Useem is a writer/editor from Washington, DC. She began working for Spotted Frog Productions in 2010, when she moved overseas to Bali, Indonesia with Director/Producer Sue Useem. Emily has many roles at Spotted Frog Productions, but she primarily writes and edits grants, newsletters, and other documents. The Peace Agency is Emily's first film.



### RAHMAT HERUTOMO | TRANSLATOR

Rahmad Herutomo (Heru) is a social development practitioner with over 15 years of experience in development context in Indonesia, ranging from poverty to environmental issues. With years of experience in policy research, communication and advocacy related activities, Heru also has an exposure in media environment when he involved as columnist with *GlobeAsia Magazine*, in charge of *Eye on the Economy*, a column highlighting recent economic and social development issues in Indonesia.



## INTERNS

Spotted Frog Productions is partnering with Reef Artisan Collaboration Initiative (RACI) to create an internship program. Based in Washington, D.C., RACI is a nonprofit organization in the U.S. and a Registered NGO in Indonesia. RACI will recruit Americans and Indonesians for 60-day internship with the film production staff in fundraising, marketing, and curriculum development. The curriculum development intern will create lesson plans to accompany the film for foundations, teachers, and students to apply the lessons of the film to their own situation and concerns.

## BUDGET

The budget for The Peace Agency is a well thought out and carefully crafted financial plan from pre-production all the way to marketing. Audience outreach will be a separate budget later created when the film is nearing completion.

The budget for the documentary is able to be kept at a small amount due to the relatively low cost of living for Indonesia as well as the low cost of labor. Indonesia is full of many talented artists, filmmakers, animators, and film editors that can work on less and produce more than many other countries can.

Spotted Frog Productions believes in supporting local media production whenever possible to help improve skills and increase job opportunity. When no appropriate Indonesian talent can be found, the film will rely on outsiders to complete the task. The budget is based primarily on the Indonesian Rupiah (IDR) which currently sits at Rp. 9,500 to 1 US Dollar.

Foreign transaction fees have been avoided by opening up an international account of Citibank.

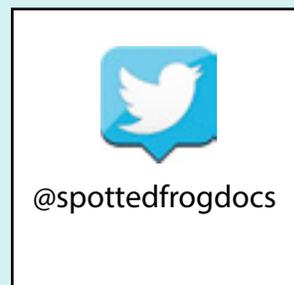
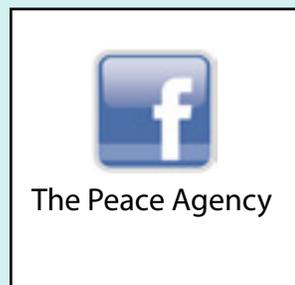
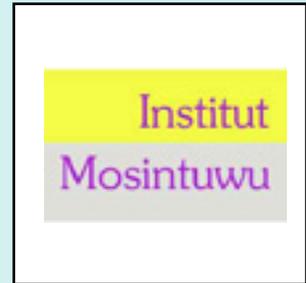
<b>ABOVE THE LINE (ATL)</b>	<b>BUDGET</b>
Pre-Production and Development	395
Producing Staff	42,000
Rights, Music and Talent	11,000
<b>TOTAL ABOVE THE LINE</b>	<b>53,396</b>

<b>BELOW THE LINE (BTL)</b>	<b>BUDGET</b>
Crew and Personnel	7,600
Production Expenses	14,704
Travel and Related Expenses	4,465
Post-production	10,350
Insurance	10,500
Office and Promotion	20,558
<b>TOTAL BELOW THE LINE</b>	<b>68,177</b>

<b>SUBTOTAL (ATL+BTL)</b>	<b>121,572</b>
CONTINGENCY	12,157
FISCAL SPONSOR SUBTOTAL	6,686
<b>TOTAL BUDGET</b>	<b>140,416</b>

# THE PEACE AGENCY

## RESOURCES



# AUDIENCE ENGAGEMENT

We have a three-tiered plan for audience engagement for this documentary to have the highest amount of impact possible. We seek to inspire core audiences on an emotional level to take action to build peace and justice or use this film as a tool to continue in their own projects. around the world.

The three targets are:



## INDONESIAN PUBLIC

To bring the concept of the Women's School, mobile library, and sustainable building to other areas of Indonesia in order to strengthen their democracy, increase women's political and economic participation, and promote sustainable development.



## WOMEN'S GROUPS

To engage women's groups in the US and around the world to screen the film and build it in to their existing campaigns. The film will be utilized by multi-national NGOs and policy makers to hold panel discussions, refocus their donation efforts to grassroots women's leadership groups worldwide, and distribute to local partners both the full length version and 25 minute version discussing the pedagogy of the school and movement. For grassroots organizations abroad, discussions will be held in the local context and the viewers can identify potential female leaders and apply the curriculum of the school in their own area.



## INTERFAITH GROUPS

To enable interfaith groups and religious groups globally to use this film to bring people together for community targeted action. Interfaith and faith based groups can utilize both the full length version and a shorter 20 minute version highlighting Muslim-Christian dialogue between the female conflict survivors.

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## PICTURES



## PICTURES



## PICTURES



## PICTURES



## PICTURES



# INTERACTIVE ELEMENTS

**The Peace Agency** is about the journey of Lian Gogali and her struggles to fulfill her dreams of making peace. For those who are interested in the character development of some of the students of The Women's School and the course work they follow will be provided with three to five minute segments highlighting each of the schools' eight curricula. These will be available as extras on the DVD, on the website, available for download to view on mobile phones and other online platforms such as YouTube and Vimeo. All available versions will be translated into a number of languages.

On the film's website, the students of The Women's School will share how they worked for peace during the conflict and how they are continuing to make change in their community.

There will also be a page on **The Peace Agency's** website where people can write in and share their dreams for themselves and their communities as well as what actions that have taken to:

- **make peace in their community or family;**
- **overcome physical disabilities;**
- **overcome religious hatred and stereotyping;**
- **and/or raised their child in a single-parent household.**



## ABOUT OUR FISCAL SPONSOR

THEPEACEAGENCY



**The Peace Agency** is fiscally sponsored by Docs in Progress®, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization dedicated to empowering independent documentary filmmakers and educating the public about documentary as an art form.

**You can make a tax-deductible donation through them to help complete this film.**

### TO DONATE

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THANK YOU



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