



## Documentaries screened at the **LUSEM film club** (Lund University, Sweden), 2014-2015

The films are listed in order, in which they were screened at the film club. The usual format was screening of a documentary followed by a 30-60-minute discussion, depending on the film's length.

The film club started from screening **“Why poverty?” series (2012)** (<http://www.whypoverty.net>) – 8 hour-long documentaries (films 1-8 in this list below are all part of the series), which cover issues such as inequality, corporate tax avoidance, modern forms of colonialism, education, philanthropy and others. All of them are available online on the series' website. A great resource for exploring documentaries is [www.filmsforaction.org](http://www.filmsforaction.org).

### 1. **“Stealing Africa”**

Rüschlikon is a village in Switzerland with a very low tax rate and very wealthy residents, but it receives more tax revenue than it can use. This is largely thanks to one resident, in the world, but 60 per cent of the population live on less than \$1 a day and 80 per cent are unemployed. Based on original research into public documents, the film describes the tax system employed by multinational companies in Africa.

### 2. **“Park Avenue”**

740 Park Ave, New York City is home to some of the wealthiest Americans. Across the Harlem River, ten minutes to the north, is the other Park Avenue in South Bronx, where more than half the population need food stamps and children are twenty times more likely to be killed. In the last thirty years, inequality has rocketed in the US. While the richest lobby Capitol Hill for friendly legislation, the poorest are left asking what happened to the American Dream?

### 3. **“Solar mamas”**

Rafea is the second wife of a Bedouin husband. She is selected to attend the Barefoot College in India that takes uneducated women from poor communities and trains them to become solar engineers. The college's 6-month programme brings together women from all over the world. The film follows Rafea as she finds that qualifying at the college is the first of many challenges.

### 4. **“Give us the money”**

Bosse Lindquist's film looks at how celebrities have become political activists and advocates for the world's poor. The director follows the efforts made by the campaigns Through interviews with these two celebrities, African experts, politicians and development workers, the film poses questions about the positive and negative effects of these initiatives in eradicating poverty and promoting democratic leadership in Africa

### 5. **“Education, education”**

In ancient times in China, education was the only way out of poverty; in recent times it has been the best way. China's economic boom and talk of the merits of hard work have created an expectation that to study is to escape poverty. These days however, China's higher education system only leads to jobs for a few, educating a new generation to unemployment and despair.

## **6. "Welcome to the world"**

Every year, 130 million babies are born and not one of them decides where they will be born or how they will live. In Cambodia, you're likely to be born to a family living on less than \$1 per day. In Sierra Leone, chances of surviving the first year are half those of the global average. In the USA, Starr's new baby could soon be one of the 1.6 million homeless children now living in the streets. Brian Hill takes a worldwide trip to meet the newest generation.

## **7. "Land rush"**

The population of Mali comprises 75 per cent farmers, but rich, land-hungry nations like China and Saudi Arabia are leasing Mali's land in order to turn large areas into agribusiness farms. Many Malian peasants do not welcome these efforts, seeing them as yet another manifestation of imperialism. As Mali experiences a military coup, the developers are scared off – but can Mali's farmers combat food shortages and escape poverty on their own terms?

## **8. "Poor us: An Animated history of poverty"**

Beginning in the Neolithic Age, this film by Ben Lewis takes us through the changing world of poverty. You go to sleep, you dream, you become poor through the ages. As an impoverished avatar you float across centuries and continents smelling, looking at and listening to poverty. This trip, combined with interviews with experts, makes this film an excellent source of information about the history of poverty and a way to understand the present.

## **9. "A burning question: Propaganda and the denial of climate change" (2012)** (available on youtube)

Climate change has been hailed as "the biggest challenge to mankind in human history and has also been called "the biggest swindle". Today many people are confused as to what climate change is and what consequences lie ahead for Ireland in the near and distant future. In this documentary Duncan Stewart takes us on a journey exploring the gap between public perceptions of climate change, what the scientists are trying to tell us and what role the media are playing.

## **10. "Enough is enough" (2014)** (available on youtube)

"Enough is enough" lays out a visionary but realistic alternative to the perpetual pursuit of economic growth-an economy where the goal is enough, not more. Based on the best-selling book by Rob Dietz and Dan O'Neill, the film explores specific strategies to fix the financial system, reduce inequality, create jobs, and more.

## **11. "Don't panic – The truth about population" (2013)** (available on youtube)



Using state-of-the-art 3D graphics and the timing of a stand-up comedian, world-famous statistician Professor Hans Rosling presents a spectacular portrait of our rapidly changing world. With seven billion people already on our planet, we often look to the future with dread, but Rosling's message is surprisingly upbeat. Almost unnoticed, we have actually begun to conquer the problems of rapid population growth and extreme poverty.

Across the world, even in countries like Bangladesh, families of just two children are now the norm - meaning that within a few generations, the population explosion will be over. A smaller proportion of people now live in extreme poverty than ever before in human history and the United Nations has set a target of eradicating it altogether within a few decades. In this as-live studio event, Rosling presents a statistical tour-de-force, including his 'ignorance survey', which demonstrates how British university graduates would be outperformed by chimpanzees in a test of knowledge about developing countries.

## 12. "The century of the self" (2002) (available on vimeo)

"The century of the self" tells the untold and sometimes controversial story of the growth of the mass-consumer society. How was the all-consuming self created, by whom, and in whose interests? The film consists of 4 hour-long episodes.

### Episode 1. **Happiness machines**

"Happiness machines" documents the story of the relationship between Sigmund Freud and his American nephew, Edward Bernays who invented Public Relations in the 1920s, being the first person to take Freud's ideas to manipulate the masses.

### Episode 2. **The engineering of consent**

This episode explores how those in power in post-war America used Freud's ideas about the unconscious mind to try and control the masses.

### Episode 3. **There is a policeman inside all our heads: He must be destroyed**

In the 1960s, a radical group of psychotherapists challenged the influence of Freudian ideas, which lead to the creation of a new political movement that sought to create new people, free of the psychological conformity that had been implanted in people's minds by business and politics.

### Episode 4. **Eight people sipping wine in Kettering**

This episode explains how politicians turned to the same techniques used by business in order to read and manipulate people's inner desires. Both New Labour with Tony Blair and the Democrats led by Bill Clinton feature in the film.

## 13. "The corporation" (2003) (available on youtube)

The corporation is today's dominant institution, creating great wealth but also great harm. This 26 award-winning documentary examines the nature, evolution, impacts and future of the modern business corporation and the increasing role it plays in society and our everyday lives.

## 14. "The Yes Men fix the world" (2009) (available on youtube)

“The Yes Men fix the world” is a screwball true story about two gonzo political activists who, posing as top executives of giant corporations, lie their way into big business conferences and pull off the world's most outrageous pranks.

This peer-to-peer special edition features never before seen footage of the Yes Men imitating the U.S. Chamber of Commerce and has been released under a free-to-share license.

**15. “Banking nature” (2015)** (can be rented from vimeo)

This significant documentary explains the spectacular financialisation of environmental conservation. Putting a price on nature seems like a simple idea: If nature had a dollar value, wouldn't corporations and governments be less likely to destroy it? Would putting a price on it overturn what economist Pavan Sukhdev calls “the economic invisibility of nature”? Reality, of course, turns out to be more complex. And there are wider issues at stake. What guarantees do we have that our natural inheritance will be protected? And should our ecological heritage be for sale?

Banking Nature investigates the commercialization of the natural world. Is it the best way to protect nature or will “nature credits” and the financial markets that deal in them lead to the extinction of species as big business buys up vast swathes of land?

**16. “Just do it: A tale of modern-day outlaws” (2012)** (available on youtube)

For one eventful year, filmmaker Emily James gains unprecedented access to document the work of a group of environmental activists engaged in nonviolent direct-action campaigns across England. Embedded in the activists' clandestine activities, she captures the triumph, setbacks, secret planning sessions, and feverish passion of a group of remarkable characters. They blockade factories, attack coal power stations, and glue themselves to the trading floors of international banks – despite the very real threat of arrest.

*Just Do It* gives us a thrilling inside look at the kinds of direct-action campaigns that are now sweeping the globe in local Occupy movements, showing us how everyday people can use the tools of civil disobedience to make meaningful change.