

SMALL STEPS TOWARD BIG CHANGE
DE PETITS PAS POUR DE GRANDS CHANGEMENTS



GRASSROOTS IN DRY LANDS

SEMEURS D'ESPOIR EN TERRES ARIDES

A FILM BY / UN FILM DE HELENE KLODAWSKY

PRODUCED BY INFORMATION FILMS
IN CO-PRODUCTION WITH THE NATIONAL FILM BOARD OF CANADA
PRODUIT PAR INFORMATION FILMS
EN COPRODUCTION AVEC L'OFFICE NATIONAL DU FILM DU CANADA





Photos: Alex Margineanu / John Lucas

THE FILM

Set in Palestine, Israel and Jordan, *Grassroots in Dry Lands* reveals a unique human-rights-based approach to democratic change taking root in neighbourhoods across the region. This intimate documentary, filmed in radiant warm light in homes, streets and community centres, takes us into the world of social workers who struggle to apply university-taught ideals to realities on the ground. They are building hope through their commitment to social change and their belief that all peoples of the region deserve the same rights.

In observational style, but with in-depth access, the film shows these skilled civil society activists at work, helping people through crises, accompanying them to official meetings, encouraging them to claim their rights, to speak out against violence and to challenge legal, political and religious forces.

Seasoned filmmaker Helene Kladawsky spent five years gaining the trust of her characters and brings her knowledge of the region to bear on the complex issues at hand. She delivers an original, unprecedented perspective on the Middle East. Rather than focus on top-down peace initiatives, the film shows how seeds planted by passionate activists and their armies of community organizers, psychologists, lawyers and volunteers are taking root and producing hope for lasting change.

ABOUT THE FILMMAKER

Helene Kladawsky is a veteran independent filmmaker and a passionate artist. Her poignant films reveal a commitment to both social and political struggles, as well as to her chosen art form. Since her first, award-winning short, *Painted Landscapes of the Times* (1986), Helene has directed many independent documentaries exploring subjects as diverse as shopping malls and political murder. Screened and televised around the world, her films have received numerous honours and been extensively reviewed. In 1987, Helene made her groundbreaking film, *Shoot and Cry*, about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. With *Grassroots in Dry Lands*, she returns to the Middle East to deliver an unprecedented perspective on the region.



Photo: John Lucas

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CINEMATOGRAPHER ALEX MARGINEANU
EDITOR HANNELE HALM MUSIC BY OLIVIER ALARY
SOUND DESIGN BENOÎT DAME, CATHERINE VAN DER DONCKT
PRODUCERS NATHALIE BARTON, KAT BAULU, RAVIDA DIN
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