

Trio of Sisters Work With Youth in Alaska and Africa

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Brianna Gibbs/KMXT

A local non-profit scored big this week when it picked up \$119,595 in a grant from the United States Institute of Peace. Marie Acemah is the executive director and cofounder of Media Action .

-- (Media Action 1 : 33 "Media Action is a non-profit that works to help young people depict their cultures on film, both in Alaska and in East Africa. So we applied for this U.S. Institute for Peace grant and we are just utterly delighted to win it in order to do a film festival in northern Uganda, films that are made by young people from the region that have been directly influenced by the conflict that has been in the region for decades .")

Acemah (ah-chay-mah) and her two sisters founded Media Action two years ago, but Acemah said the group is now run by a board of directors. The group has an impressive resume of films on topics ranging from interior Alaskan villages, street boys living in Tanzania and a history of Kodiak's Filipino community. They are also wrapping up filming for a documentary about Pebble Mine.

Acemah said the grant money will go toward the group's upcoming project in Uganda.

-- (Media Action 2 : 35 "So they'll be two trips to Uganda, and the first trip will be a planning trip because we have several local partners working on this project with us, although we are the actual grant recipient. And then there will be a three month implementation trip that will likely be sort of early summer. And during those three months we will be doing three film workshops with youth who are in post conflict situations and they'll each make a film, each participant, on a peaceful solution that they identify. And then there will be a film festival, a regional film festival in the West Nile area of Uganda.")

Despite the trip being almost a year away, Acemah said the organization will be very busy in the months to come.

-- (Media Action 3 : 44 "We're right now in the process of planning some fundraisers and some sort of community engagement activities because while we got a substantial grant, it does not cover the budget for the project. So we're really, really looking for fundraising opportunities, so anyone who's interested in either contributing financially or helping in another capacity is more than welcome to contact me.")

In addition to fundraising events, Acemah said she encourages community members to look for upcoming film screenings of Media Action's latest work.

