GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

PBS.ORG/INDEPENDENTLENS/HALF-THE-SKY
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Community Cinema is a rare public forum: a space for people to gather who are connected by a love of stories, and a belief in their power to change the world. This discussion guide is designed as a tool to facilitate dialogue, and deepen understanding of the complex issues in *Half the Sky: Turning Oppression into Opportunity for Women Worldwide*. It is also an invitation to not only sit back and enjoy the show—but to step up and take action.

This guide is not meant to be a comprehensive primer on a given topic. Rather, it provides important context, and raises thought provoking questions to encourage viewers to think more deeply. We provide suggestions for areas to explore in panel discussions, in the classroom, in communities, and online. We also provide valuable resources, and connections to organizations on the ground that are fighting to make a difference.

For information about the program, visit [www.communitycinema.org](http://www.communitycinema.org)

**NOTE TO READERS:**
This discussion guide gives an overview of the entire two-hour *Half the Sky: Turning Oppression into Opportunity for Women Worldwide* film, and then provides specific background information and resources for the country segment that deals with Gender-based Violence in Sierra Leone.
We wanted to create a unique experience that goes beyond “issue” filmmaking to simply tell incredible stories.

From the Filmmaker
Maro Chermayeff

Working in documentary film has always been an adventure, a pleasure, and a roller coaster ride—but rarely does a project come along that changes one’s entire worldview.

Making Half the Sky: Turning Oppression into Opportunity for Women Worldwide has truly been a life-changing endeavor and an honor. The concept for the transmedia project was originally brought to me by my fellow executive producers: Jamie Gordon and Mikaela Beardsley. Mikaela had recently produced the film Reporter about the intrepid New York Times columnist Nicholas Kristof. She was very excited when, in conversations in the field, he talked about his upcoming book to be co-written with his wife Sheryl WuDunn addressing the struggles and triumphs of women and girls in the developing world that they had personally encountered over years of reporting.

That book turned out to be the groundbreaking work, also titled Half the Sky: Turning Oppression into Opportunity for Women Worldwide, which became an international bestseller. The game-changing element of the book is the focus on personal stories that allow readers to deeply connect with individual, true stories of women and girls facing horrendous difficulty and inequity. It tackles head on issues such as maternal mortality, sex trafficking, gender-based violence, and forced prostitution—and illustrates the hope offered by the life-changing opportunities of education and financial empowerment. The storytelling nature of the subject-driven narrative leant itself beautifully to documentary film.

As a New Yorker, I knew of Nick’s work as a journalist for The New York Times, and of the highly regarded Pulitzer Prize-winning articles that Nick and Sheryl had written together during their tumultuous years as reporters based in China, but I had never met either of them. Nick and Sheryl believe in the power of social media and the potential of this subject matter to reach new and diverse audiences through multi-platform content. This is where the larger concept of the transmedia project inspired by their book came from.

Now, the project is launching on multiple platforms, with a four-hour television series for PBS and international distribution through Fremantle Media; a one hour film for Community Cinema; free curricula developed for Community Classroom, over 20 short films and educational modules made in partnership with some of the project’s more than 54 NGO partners worldwide; mobile games for India and Africa (executive produced with Games for Change with the support of USAID); a social-action Facebook game; and two websites—one housed on PBS.org and another advocacy-based site at halfttheskymovement.org.
As a filmmaker, the centerpiece of the project for me was the documentary series. Filmed in ten countries, the series is inspired by Nick and Sheryl’s work—but also goes beyond the page to film new and immediate stories that lend themselves to the drama that television demands. Our approach was to orchestrate 2-week trips to six different countries, following Nick as he reported on an agent of change working to better her own life or the lives of women in her community. Joining Nick on each leg of the journey was a different actress who had experience advocating for social issues, but who was not an expert in the specific issue we were following in that location. Rather, she was there to act as the eyes and ears of the audience, allowing an intimate and honest way into some of these tough and demanding stories. We had the good fortune to be joined by Eva Mendes in Sierra Leone, Meg Ryan in Cambodia, Gabrielle Union in Vietnam, Diane Lane in Somaliland, America Ferrera in India, and Olivia Wilde in Kenya.

The experience of the shooting was some of the most difficult I have ever experienced in over twenty years of producing and directing large and complicated series. Having directed a ten-hour series aboard the USS Nimitz on a six-month deployment to Iraq (PBS, Carrier), run away with a traveling circus (PBS, Circus), and made a film about toxic waste being dumped on a Native American community (HBO, Mann v. Ford), I was prepared for and yet still stunned by the conditions in which most people in the world live. I was especially affected by the experiences of women living under these conditions. From rough terrain to blistering poverty, the situations were incredibly challenging and the issues were often heartbreaking. For example, children being raped as early as two and three years old in post-conflict Sierra Leone or the staggering reality of trafficking and sexual slavery of young girls in Cambodia. But the women we worked with were some of the most amazing, courageous, and admirable women I have ever known. The tears often flowed.

Two of the more emotional experiences occurred while trying to help the fourteen-year-old Fulamatu seek justice against the uncle who raped her and two of her friends, only to watch the case crumble, and during the harrowing brothel raid in Cambodia with the fiery Somaly Mam that freed several under-age girls being held in slave-like conditions where they were forced to work as prostitutes with 10-30 clients per day.

Working with Nick and Sheryl was an invaluable and amazing opportunity as a director. I was so impressed by Nick in the field as he tenaciously sought out the story and by Sheryl's incredible ability to see the big picture and address the large global issues. I knew I wanted to honor their work. We all felt from the start that it should be an epic production, visually stunning and visceral, showing the amazing places we visited and people we met in all their beauty. We wanted the reality of their world to be accessible and yet, at times, shocking—an edge-of-your-seat adventure with global significance. We wanted to tell true stories, yet also deepen people’s experience and understanding of the issues women and girls face in the developing world. We also believed, and Nick and Sheryl were deeply committed to showing, that the stories could and should be uplifting and empowering. Even in the darkest of circumstances, we found the most startling humanity and confirmation of the human spirit’s resilience. People who engage with all of our content—on the multiple platforms available—will be angry, motivated, inspired, and most important, feel connected to the subjects and themes. We wanted to create a unique experience that goes beyond “issue” filmmaking to simply tell incredible stories about the capacity of human beings to persevere against all odds and the restorative power of opportunity in parts of the world that are not “over-there,” but a small leap from our own backyard.
The Film

In 2009, Pulitzer Prize winning-journalists Nicholas Kristof and Sheryl WuDunn published a ground-breaking book about the oppression of women and girls worldwide. That book was *Half the Sky: Turning Oppression into Opportunity for Women Worldwide*—an instant bestseller that immediately catalyzed an already burgeoning movement to eradicate gender inequality.

The landmark PBS documentary series *Half the Sky: Turning Oppression into Opportunity for Women Worldwide* aims to amplify the central message of the book—that women are not the problem, but the solution—and to bolster the broad and growing movement for change. Using the story of the book and its impact as a launchpad, the documentary zeroes in on the lives of girls in some of the countries around the world where gender inequality is at its most extreme and explores the very real ways in which their oppression can be turned to opportunity.

Featuring six celebrated American actresses and the commentary of the world’s leading advocates for gender equality, the film is a passionate call to arms—urging us not only to bear witness to the plight of the world’s women, but also to help to decisively transform their oppression into opportunity.

Episode One

*Gender-Based Violence*
Sierra Leone | Eva Mendes

*Sex Trafficking*
Cambodia | Meg Ryan

*Education*
Vietnam | Gabrielle Union

Episode Two

*Maternal Mortality*
Somaliland | Diane Lane

*Intergenerational Prostitution*
India | America Ferrera

*Economic Empowerment*
Kenya | Olivia Wilde


*Half the Sky: Turning Oppression into Opportunity for Women Worldwide* is a production of Show of Force and Fugitive Films in association with Independent Television Service (ITVS). *Independent Lens* is jointly curated by ITVS and PBS and is funded by CPB with additional funding provided by PBS and the National Endowment for the Arts.

*Half the Sky: Turning Oppression into Opportunity for Women Worldwide* is inspired by Nick Kristof and Sheryl WuDunn’s book of the same name.
Episode One

In Episode One we follow Nicholas Kristof and three American actresses to developing countries where gender discrimination is at its most extreme. We explore the shocking extent of gender-based violence in Sierra Leone with Eva Mendes, the global crisis of sex trafficking as experienced by women and girls in Cambodia with Meg Ryan, and the need for and power of educating girls in Vietnam with Gabrielle Union, where she visits an innovative education program that is transforming, not only the lives of the country’s poorest and most vulnerable girls, but also the futures of their families and their communities. Featuring commentary from Sheryl WuDunn and interviews with some of the world’s leading advocates for gender equality—including Hillary Clinton, Michelle Bachelet, and Gloria Steinem—*Half the Sky: Turning Oppression to Opportunity for Women Worldwide* offers a nuanced and moving account of this century’s most pressing problems, and an uplifting, actionable blueprint for change.

**Gender-Based Violence**

Our first stop is Sierra Leone, a country recovering from years of colonial oppression and a terrible civil war and which is still suffering from rampant gender-based violence. Guided by Amie Kandeh, the passionate and dedicated coordinator of the International Rescue Committee’s Women’s Protection and Empowerment Program in Sierra Leone, Kristof and actress Eva Mendes come face-to-face with the enormous challenges women and girls face in a country where rape is practically the norm—challenges embodied by Fula, a buoyant 14-year-old who hopes one day to become a bank manager. When we meet Fula, she was raped repeatedly by a local church pastor—a family friend who is close enough to be officially considered her uncle. She had risked the shame of telling her parents and the ridicule of her community to break her silence and press charges against the perpetrator. The outcome is a sobering object lesson in the insidious effects of gender-based violence, and the urgent need to end impunity for the violators.

**Sex Trafficking**

As interviews with WuDunn and some of the world’s leading advocates for gender equality explain, in many parts of the world cultural attitudes and traditions are used to justify the low status of girls, rendering them vulnerable to all manner of exploitation and abuse. This is nowhere more evident than in Cambodia, where the pernicious global problem of sex trafficking is perhaps at its worst. Actress Meg Ryan joins Kristof in Phnom Penh as he catches up with Somaly Mam, one of the women profiled in the book *Half the Sky: Turning Oppression into Opportunity for Women Worldwide*—a woman who was herself a child sex slave and who now has dedicated her life to rescuing and rehabilitating others. As Mam’s story merges and mingles with those of the girls in her charge, the horrors of sex trafficking are writ large—so too is the awesome resilience of the human spirit and the vast, untapped potential that resides in each and every one of Mam’s girls.

**Education**

That potential, WuDunn and our luminary advocates tell us, is the key to bettering our world: tap into those girls and they will change the future. The clarity of that equation, the elegant cause-and-effect of it, animates Episode One’s final sequence, in Vietnam, where former Microsoft executive John Wood’s organization Room to Read is transforming the lives of the country’s poorest and most vulnerable girls. Hosted by Bich Vu Thi, program officer of Room to Read’s Girl’s Education program, Kristof and actress Gabrielle Union get to know a few of the program’s stars and encounter firsthand the incredible obstacles which stand between these girls and their bright futures. Still, these girls are almost miraculously undaunted—and fiercely determined to change both their circumstances and those of their families. The ripple effect of their education even now is making itself felt—and there is no doubt that with a little bit of help, a little encouragement and support, these girls and the tens of millions of others like them in the developing world will be a powerful army for change.

Combining vivid, visceral on-the-ground stories with the commentary of a vast and impressive roster of experts, advocates, and agents of change, Episode One takes us deep into the lives of girls in the developing world and makes us witness to their seemingly impossible struggles—at once challenging and inspiring us to be a part of the vital, urgent project to empower them once and for all.
Episode Two

Episode Two continues our journey to the hot spots of gender oppression around the world and highlights the courageous work of some of the extraordinary women and men who are taking a stand in the face of incredible odds. This episode focuses our attention on the role of women in their families and their communities—examining the fundamental obstacles that hinder their potential, and charting the ripple effect that results when that potential is harnessed.

Veteran journalist and Half the Sky: Turning Oppression into Opportunity for Women Worldwide co-author Nicholas Kristof is once again accompanied by a three celebrated American actresses who offer fresh and personal perspective on the issues in each country. Kristof travels to Somaliland with Diana Lane to examine maternal mortality and female genital mutilation, to India with America Ferrera to explore intergenerational prostitution, and with Olivia Wilde to Kenya, where the transformative power of economic empowerment is changing women’s lives and is laying the groundwork for the next generation.

In the process, the film considers the central role of women in the health and stability of their families and communities and establishes their critical role in the global efforts to eradicate poverty and achieve peace. Featuring on-camera commentary from Sheryl WuDunn and some of the world’s most respected and outspoken advocates for gender equality—including Melanne Verveer, Zainab Salbi, and Desmond Tutu—Episode Two underscores the fundamental obstacles to women’s progress and prosperity and celebrates women’s boundless capacity to better our world.

Maternal Mortality

The episode begins in Somaliland—an unrecognized country, populated mainly by nomads, where the average woman today has a 1-in-12 chance of dying in childbirth. Joined by actress Diane Lane, Kristof reconnects with Edna Adan, founder of the Edna Adan Maternity Hospital in Hargeisa. A spry 70-something woman often and rightly described as a “force of nature,” Adan is almost single-handedly revolutionizing the experience of childbirth in her country—providing medical care to women who would otherwise have none, training midwives, and fighting tirelessly against female genital mutilation—a traditional practice still common in much of Africa (and elsewhere), which severely compromises a woman’s ability to deliver a child. In Somaliland, the challenges women face in the developing world are starkly apparent: Poverty and tradition conspire to undermine a woman’s health, directly threatening her life, and having a lasting impact on her children’s survival and ability to thrive.

Intergenerational Prostitution

As WuDunn and our cast of gender equality advocates argues, tradition is, in many ways, the greater evil. In too many places in the world, tradition still is used to marginalize women, to keep them down and in their place. This vicious cycle repeats itself generation after generation, damaging and ending lives and undermining the ability of thousands of women improve their quality of life and live their full potential. The key—as Kristof and actress America Ferrera discover in India—is intervention by someone from the inside: someone like Urmia Basu. A social worker and an educated, middle-class Bengali, Basu has dedicated her life to stopping the cycle of intergenerational prostitution in India, where 90 percent of girls born to sex workers follow in their mothers’ footsteps. What she is up against is neatly illustrated by one of the young girls in her care, Monisha, who is on the brink of being wrenched out of school and likely sold to a brothel by her own family—a family that belongs to a sub-caste of sex workers. What keeps Basu going is girls like Sushmita—and more to the point, women like Sushmita’s mother, Shoma, who has lived the utter brutality and desolation of prostitution every day of her life and desperately wants a different fate for her daughter. Shoma’s hope for her child is the seed of real and lasting change.

Economic Empowerment

When women have equal control over their finances and the financial decision-making on the personal, community, and national levels, everyone benefits. WuDunn and the many contributors who lent their voices and considerable expertise to Half the Sky: Turning Oppression into Opportunity for Women Worldwide all stress that putting money in the hands of a poor woman changes everything. During their visit to Kenya, Kristof and Olivia Wilde witness the impact of the economic empowerment of women first-hand. In this episode’s final segment, they explore the impact and challenges of microfinance and the ways is transforming the lives of women and those around them. We begin with Jane Ngoiri, a former sex worker-turned-dressmaker who is now able to send her four children to school, where they are each at the top of their class, and end with Rebecca Lolosoli, a Samburu woman who built a safe haven for women on the slender thread of a jewelry-making business. Kristof and Wilde see for themselves the dramatic and tangible transformation that can be set in motion by a woman with a little money of her own and a system of support to help her make the best use of her financial and personal resources. Replicate the experiment several million times, and the world will be an entirely different place.

The episode—and the film—ends with an urgent call to action, an invitation to the viewer to take up the central moral challenge of our time, and to join a movement that will tap the immense potential of women to create a more peaceful and more prosperous world for us all.
Background Information
Sierra Leone: Civil War and a Legacy of Violence against Women and Girls

Sierra Leone’s brutal civil war stretched from 1991 to 2002, cost tens of thousands of lives, and destroyed much of the country’s economy and social infrastructure. The war itself was driven by a complex web of forces, including the legacy of centuries of exploitation by colonial forces, rivalries between ethnic groups, and cross-border regional conflicts and alliances with countries who had political, military, and economic interests in Sierra Leone, especially in regards to its diamonds.

Sierra Leone emerged from this war in 2002 with the help of a large United Nations (UN) peacekeeping mission. More than seventeen thousand foreign troops disarmed tens of thousands of rebels and militia fighters, but several years later, the country still faces the challenge of reconstruction. Rape, abduction, and sexual slavery are part of the brutal legacy of the civil war, which left over half the country’s population displaced and destitute.

The Sierra Leone Civil War was known internationally for its horrific atrocities, but until recently, little attention was devoted to abuses directed specifically against women. During the conflict, violence against women was routinely used as a tool of war and women and girls were sexually and physically abused in extraordinarily brutal ways, including rape, torture, amputation, forced pregnancy, trafficking, mutilation, and slavery. Although the war has long since ended, the mistreatment of women continues. As Nicholas Kristof explains in *Half the Sky: Turning Oppression into Opportunity for Women Worldwide*, “When you have a civil conflict, the norms about sexual violence change, and it becomes OK to rape. Then when the war ends it’s no longer acceptable to shoot people, but somehow it’s still acceptable to rape.”

Sierra Leone’s Rainbo

Over a decade since conflict ended, many fear that rape is more of a problem in post-conflict Sierra Leone than it was during the war.

In an effort to serve the thousands of survivors of sexual and physical violence, Amie Kandeh, women’s protection and empowerment coordinator for the IRC in Sierra Leone, helped found and continues to manage three Rainbo Centers, facilities that provide medical care, counseling, legal aid, and educational support for survivors of sexual violence. These are among the first sexual-assault referral centers in West Africa, and in their first eight years, they served over nine thousand survivor – 80 percent of whom were children, some as young as 2 months old.

Amie Kandeh has emerged as one of the leading voices on women’s issues in Sierra Leone, and as a local and a survivor of domestic violence, she brings to her work an intimate understanding of the cultural context of violence and the physical and psychological impact it has on the almost 80 percent of Sierra Leonean women who experience it. Beyond her work with the IRC, Amie has also drafted the section of Sierra Leone’s national reproductive health policy devoted to violence against women, and has authored a manual on how to recognize sexual abuse in schools. She has organized legal workshops on women’s and children’s rights, and has helped gain passage of the Gender Acts, three 2007 national laws that radically improved the rights of women in Sierra Leone.

“When you have a civil conflict, the norms about sexual violence change, and it becomes OK to rape. Then when the war ends it’s no longer acceptable to shoot people, but somehow it’s still acceptable to rape.”

– Nicholas Kristof, *Half the Sky: Turning Oppression into Opportunity for Women Worldwide*

**Individuals Featured in Gender-Based Violence in Sierra Leone**

**Nicholas Kristof**
Journalist; Co-Author of *Half the Sky: Turning Oppression into Opportunity for Women Worldwide*

**Sheryl WuDunn**
Journalist; Co-Author of *Half the Sky: Turning Oppression into Opportunity for Women Worldwide*

**Amie Kandeh**
Founder of the International Rescue Committee’s (IRC’s) Rainbo Centers; Women’s protection and empowerment coordinator for the IRC in Sierra Leone

**Eva Mendes**
Actress

**Abu Bakark**
Kanu Line Manager for the Family Support Unit in Calaba Town, Sierra Leone

**Fulamatu Tarawaille**
Rainbo Center client; Rape survivor
Truth and Reconciliation: Breaking the Silence

Following the end of the civil war, a Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) was established in Sierra Leone to create an impartial record of the abuses that occurred during the conflict. Early in their efforts, however, commission investigators found that gathering information, especially about sexual violence, was not easy. In Sierra Leone, as in many other countries, women and girls confront social taboos against speaking publicly about rape and other sexual violence. They are stigmatized in their own communities when they admit they have been sexually abused. To help break through such barriers, the UN Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM, now part of UN Women) intervened with advice, training, and other support for TRC staff and especially for the women themselves.

Based on their findings, the commission urged reforms in Sierra Leone’s legal, judicial, and police systems to make it easier for women to report cases of sexual and domestic violence and recommended the abolition of the customary practice that obliged the victim of rape to marry the rapist. It also called for the repeal of all statutory and customary laws that discriminate against women, including in marriage, inheritance, divorce, and property ownership.

Violence against Women and Girls

Gender-based violence is a global crisis that cuts across race, class, country, and culture, touching the lives of women and girls in every community. According to the UN, approximately one out of every three women worldwide has been beaten, coerced into sex, or otherwise abused in her lifetime.

Fast Facts

- One in five women will be a victim of rape or attempted rape in her lifetime.
- Women are more likely to be beaten, raped, or killed by a current or former partner than by any other person, with most studies estimating that 20 to 50 percent of women experience partner violence at some point in their lives.
- In the United States, a woman is abused, usually by her husband or partner, every 15 seconds and is raped every 90 seconds.
- In 2005, 1,181 U.S. women were murdered by an intimate partner—that’s an average of three women every day.
- One hundred and two countries have no specific legal provisions against domestic violence, and in at least fifty-three countries, marital rape is not a prosecutable offence.
- Rape has long been used as a weapon of war, and violence against women during or after armed conflicts has been reported in every war zone. Between two hundred and fifty thousand and five hundred thousand women were raped during the 1994 genocide in Rwanda and between twenty thousand and fifty thousand women were raped during the conflict in Bosnia in the early 1990s.
- Between five hundred thousand and 2 million people—the majority of them women and children—are trafficked annually into situations including prostitution, forced labor, slavery, or servitude. Only 93 countries have some legislative provision prohibiting trafficking in human beings.
- The UN estimates that approximately five thousand women are murdered each year as a result of honor killings, but many women’s groups in the Middle East and Southwest Asia suspect the number is at least four times higher.
- In many communities around the world, girls are still seen as less valuable than boys. As a result, an estimated 60 million girls are “missing” from various populations due to the selective abortion of female fetuses and the mistreatment and neglect of female children.
The Roots of Violence

Gender-based violence is not the result of random, individual acts. It is deeply rooted in the unequal power relations between men and women as well as in cultural and social norms that encourage discrimination against women and the violation of their human rights.

The Price of Violence

The cost of violence against women and girls is extremely high and is a significant obstacle to reducing poverty, achieving gender equality, and improving living standards and economic opportunities for women, their families, and their communities. It is also a major public health concern due to the short- and long-term damage to a woman’s reproductive and physical health, her emotional well-being, and her increased risk factors for diseases such as HIV/AIDS.

In addition to the pain and suffering of the individual women and their families, the social and economic costs are staggering. Treatment and support programs needed for abused women and children, legal and judicial services employed to bring perpetrators to justice, and lost employment and productivity resulting from physical and emotional injury put a significant economic strain on under-resourced communities and society as a whole. The cost of intimate partner violence in the United States alone is approximately $5.9 billion per year: $4.1 billion for direct medical and health care services and $1.8 billion for losses in productivity.

Barriers to Change: A Culture of Silence and Impunity

Although it is widespread, violence against women and girls goes widely unreported due to factors such as fear of retribution, lack of economic resources, concern for children, inadequate social services, and ineffective legal systems. In addition, few countries provide appropriate training for the police, judicial, and medical staff who are the first responders for women and girls during and after violent events. As a result, victims of violence are left vulnerable to further abuse from the systems and institutions that are meant to protect them, and the perpetrators are often left unpunished.
What is Needed?

Violence against women and girls is a worldwide crisis, but there is a global movement to challenge the attitudes and institutions that make this abusive behavior possible. Research from the UN, the World Health Organization (WHO), and Amnesty International concludes that the most effective strategy for addressing gender-based violence is through coordinated efforts by international and local institutions to raise public awareness, increase political will, and provide resources for preventing and responding to all forms of violence against women and girls. Strategies include:

• Make the prevention of violence against women and girls a political priority on the international, national, and local levels.

• Pass legislation that specifically addresses gender-based violence, and establish a system of oversight to make sure the laws are enforced.

• Provide ongoing training to police, judicial staff, and medical staff, who are the primary sources of protection and support for women and girls in crisis.

• Establish effective outreach and education programs that target both women and men from early childhood.

• Support programs that make primary, secondary, and university education accessible to all girls and empower women to become financially independent.

• Ensure the participation of women in all areas of society and support the appointment of women to leadership positions at the local, national, and international levels.

“I’d like to put him in jail and throw the key into the ocean.”

– Fulamatu Tarawaille, Rape survivor, Rainbo Center, Sierra Leone
Defining Violence against Women and Girls

The Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women, adopted by the UN General Assembly in 1993, defines violence against women as “any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual, or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or private life.” This includes but is not limited to:

- Physical abuse. Hitting, slapping, shoving, grabbing, pinching, biting, hair pulling, etc. are types of physical abuse. This type of abuse also includes denying medical care or forcing alcohol and/or drug use on the victim.
- Sexual abuse and rape. These involve coercing or attempting to coerce any sexual contact or behavior without consent. Sexual abuse includes attacks on sexual parts of the body, marital rape, forcing sex after physical violence has occurred, or treating another person in a sexually demeaning manner.
- Domestic violence. This is a pattern of abusive behavior in any relationship that is used by one partner to gain or maintain power and control over another intimate partner. This can be physical, sexual, emotional, economic, or psychological actions or threats. It also includes any behaviors that intimidate, manipulate, humiliate, isolate, frighten, terrorize, coerce, threaten, blame, hurt, injure, or wound someone.
- Emotional and psychological abuse. Undermining an individual’s sense of self-worth and/or self-esteem is abusive. This may include, but is not limited to, constant criticism, name-calling, damaging a woman’s relationship with her children, causing fear by intimidation, and threatening physical harm.
- Sexual harassment and intimidation. These involve unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature.
- Human trafficking. This involves using force, coercion, abduction, fraud, deception, power, and threats of harm in order to take unlawful ownership of an individual and exploit them. Exploitation often involves forced prostitution, forced labor, and indentured servitude.
- Honor killing. This is an act of vengeance, usually murder, committed against a female family member who is believed to have brought dishonor to the family. A woman can be targeted for a variety of reasons, including refusing to enter into an arranged marriage, being the victim of a sexual assault, seeking a divorce (even from an abusive husband), or allegedly committing adultery.
- Female genital mutilation/cutting. Female genital mutilation (FGM), also known as female genital cutting (FGC) includes procedures that intentionally alter or cause injury to the female genital organs for nonmedical reasons. It is mostly carried out on young girls between infancy and age 15 and is motivated by a mix of cultural, religious, and social factors within families and communities.

Sources:
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» www.now.org/issues/violence/stats.html
» www.womenshealth.gov/violence-against-women
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» www.unwomen.org
» www.saynotoviolence.org
Thinking More Deeply

1. What insights did *Gender-Based Violence in Sierra Leone* give you about violence against women and girls around the world? What information surprised you the most?

2. Why is gender-based violence an important issue to tackle? What are some of the ripple effects of violence against women on their families, communities, and societies?

3. Michelle Bachelet, executive director of UN Women, says in the film, “You see violence against women in rich places, highly educated families, in very low-income families in all regions of the world.” Before seeing this film, did you think of violence against women and girls as a worldwide crisis? In what ways, if any, is gender-based violence an issue in your community?

4. How is violence against women and girls connected to the cycle of poverty? What role, if any, could access to education and economic empowerment play in combating gender-based violence?

5. In the film, Amie Kandeh says, “When you look at the root cause of violence against women, it is about power and control.” What does this statement mean to you? Do you agree with Kandeh? If gender-based violence is a global crisis, affecting diverse communities and women from all walks of life, what factors are driving men’s need to control women?

6. How significant is it to the success of Kandeh’s work that she is from Sierra Leone? Do you think it is possible for individuals from wealthy countries or international organizations to be effective in the developing world or communities other than their own? What are the benefits and challenges?

7. Kandeh says that “the IRC has responded to about ten thousand sexual assault survivors” since the program began in Sierra Leone and “there’s not even 1 percent of those cases that have been convicted.” What are some of the barriers that get in the way of bringing perpetrators to justice? What are some of the consequences for survivors who come forward to seek prosecution? How do these challenges compare with survivors’ experiences in your community? Can you identify any parallels?

8. Hillary Clinton draws a parallel between the attitudes toward and treatment of women around the world today and the experience of African American slaves during the height of the slave trade, explaining that both communities were not seen as “fully human”—they were both “some other kind of being.” Do you think this is an apt parallel to draw? Why or why not?

9. Nicholas Kristof actively participates in Fulamatu’s story, even helping the authorities track down the accused child rapist. He considers the journalistic ethics of his involvement and concludes that he is comfortable with his decision. What do you think about his decision? Is there a distance that journalists should maintain in order to remain objective? Is it more ethical to simply observe and report or to actively participate?

10. Kristof says, “It is really hard to find legal remedies to rape when you have cultural attitudes like this where rape is unfortunate but forgivable, but being raped is just an unpardonable sin.” What do you think is needed to reduce and eventually eradicate gender-based violence? What responsibility do governments and international bodies like the UN and the International Criminal Court? What role can you play?
Suggestions for Action

Together with other audience members, brainstorm actions that you might take as an individual and that people might do as a group. Here are some ideas to get you started:

1. **Join the global movement to educate women and girls and improve the quality of education for all children.** Visit the *Half the Sky: Turning Oppression into Opportunity for Women Worldwide* movement website to learn more about the issue and find out how to host a screening with your friends, family, community, or organization and facilitate a discussion of the film and the best-selling book that inspired it. [www.halftheskymovement.org](http://www.halftheskymovement.org)

2. **Mobilize your community and become part of the “Say NO—UNiTE to End Violence against Women” campaign.** This campaign was launched in 2009 by UN Women to engage people from all walks of life online and on the ground to end gender-based violence in all its forms. The “Say NO—UNiTE” tool kit has a range of resources, tips, multimedia tools, and step-by-step guides for creating your own campaign, organizing community events, and starting local clubs to galvanize support.
   
   Say NO—UNiTE to End Violence against Women: [www.saynotoviolence.org](http://www.saynotoviolence.org)
   
   Say NO—UNiTE Organizer’s Tool Kit: [saynotoviolence.org/about-say-no/organizers-toolkit](http://saynotoviolence.org/about-say-no/organizers-toolkit)

3. **Take action to empower survivors of violence in Sierra Leone and help to provide support and services to girls and women around the world who need them most.** The International Rescue Committee’s Rainbo Centers in Sierra Leone have provided medical care, counseling, legal aid, and educational support for over nine thousand survivors of sexual violence. Visit the IRC’s website to find out more about their lifesaving work in Sierra Leone and in more than 40 other countries around the world: [www.rescue.org](http://www.rescue.org).

4. **Find out more about how ending gender-based violence can help end poverty.** In September 2000, the United Nations signed the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) with the aim of halving the number of people living in poverty, reducing child mortality, fighting disease, and improving social and economic conditions in the world’s poorest countries by 2015. Learn more about the Millennium Campaign’s focus on women and find out how you can help:
   
   
   
   The “Get Involved” section of the UN MDGs website: [www.un.org/millenniumgoals/getinvolved.shtml](http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/getinvolved.shtml)
   
   The “Millennium Development Goals” section of the UN Women website: [www.unifem.org/gender_issues/millennium_development_goals](http://www.unifem.org/gender_issues/millennium_development_goals)
   
   MDG Monitor: [www.mdgmonitor.org](http://www.mdgmonitor.org)

5. **Take back the night!** The Take Back The Night Foundation (TBTN) serves to create safe communities and bring an end to sexual assault, domestic violence, dating violence, sexual abuse, and all other forms of sexual violence. TBTN empowers survivors in the healing process and inspires responsibility in all. Visit the website to find out how to plan a “Shine Your Light Walk” to demonstrate your community’s commitment to ending sexual violence and take a stand in solidarity with survivors: [www.takebackthenight.org](http://www.takebackthenight.org).
Resources

www.halftheskymovement.org—This is the official website for the *Half The Sky: Turning Oppression Into Opportunity For Women Worldwide* movement, as well as for the book and film of the same name.

www.rescue.org—The International Rescue Committee (IRC) responds to the world’s worst humanitarian crises and helps people to survive and rebuild their lives.

www.careinternational.org—CARE International is an organization that is fighting poverty and injustice in more than 70 countries around the world and helping 65 million people each year find routes out of poverty.

endviolence.un.org—UNiTE to End Violence against Women was launched in 2009 by UN Women to engage people from all walks of life to end gender-based violence in all its forms.

www.gems-girls.org—Girls Educational and Mentoring Services (GEMS) is the only organization in New York State specifically designed to serve girls and young women who have experienced commercial sexual exploitation and domestic trafficking and their work has put them on the forefront of the national movement to end the sexual slavery of women.

www.futureswithoutviolence.org—Futures without Violence works to prevent and end violence against women and children around the world.

www.rainn.org—The Rape, Abuse, and Incest National Network (RAINN) is the nation’s largest anti-sexual violence organization and created and operates the National Sexual Assault Hotline: 1-800-656-HOPE. The online version of the hotline can be found at apps.rainn.org/ohl-bridge.

www.vetoviolence.org/stryve—Striving to Reduce Youth Violence Everywhere (STRYVE) is a national initiative, led by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), which takes a public health approach to preventing youth violence before it starts.

www.nnedv.org—The National Network to End Domestic Violence (NNEDV), a social change organization, is dedicated to creating a social, political, and economic environment in which violence against women no longer exists.

www.now.org—The National Organization for Women (NOW) is the largest organization of feminist activists in the United States and works to bring about equality for all women.

www.amnesty.org—Amnesty International is a worldwide movement of people who campaign for internationally recognized human rights for all.

www.msf.org—Médecins Sans Frontières, also known as Doctors Without Borders, is an international, independent, medical humanitarian organization that delivers emergency aid to people affected by armed conflict, epidemics, health care exclusion, and natural or man-made disasters.

www.savethechildren.org—Save the Children is an organization that works to save and improve children’s lives in more than 50 countries worldwide.

www.unfpa.org—The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) is an international development agency that promotes the right of every woman, man, and child to enjoy a life of health and equal opportunity.

www.worldvision.org—Recognizing women and girls as critical partners in development, the Christian humanitarian organization World Vision works to equip, protect, and advocate for women in nearly one hundred countries.

A Message from New Video

New Video, a Cinedigm company, is a leading entertainment distributor and the largest aggregator of independent digital content worldwide. New Video’s Docurama Films is proud to offer *Half the Sky: Turning Oppression into Opportunity for Women Worldwide* as part of its roster of acclaimed, award-winning documentaries. Here are ways in which grassroots organizers and home video consumers might utilize the DVD to spread the message of the film and benefit their organizations:

- **Affiliate Program:** New Video offers a free Affiliate Program that allows organizations or individuals to earn a 10 percent referral fee off every DVD purchased through a unique tracking link on their websites, social media properties, and signatures. ([www.newvideo.com/about/affiliates](http://www.newvideo.com/about/affiliates)) New Video is very hands-on with enrollees, helping them reach their highest potential within the program: calling out the “donation” from the program, messaging that purchasing directly supports the independent film community, etc.

- **Wholesale Orders:** Bulk orders start at just ten units (nonreturnable), with discounts increasing at tiered intervals. Great for fundraising incentives, membership premiums, etc.

- **DVD Giveaways:** New Video can offer a small quantity of DVDs for giveaways in exchange for promotion on social media and web properties

- **Member Discounts:** New Video can create unique discount codes for organizations to offer its members a discounted rate on the DVD

- **Social Media Engagement:** New Video can post or retweet organizations that are spreading the word about a release or engaging in a giveaway or screening event

- Please contact Vanessa at vvarous@newvideo.com if you are interested in the above options.
Thanks to those who reviewed this guide:

**Maro Chermayeff**
Director, *Half the Sky: Turning Oppression into Opportunity for Women Worldwide*

**Rachel Koteen**
Co-Producer, *Show of Force*

**ITVS**
Independent Television Service (ITVS) funds, presents, and promotes award-winning independently produced documentaries and dramas on public television and cable, innovative new media projects on the Web, and the Emmy® Award-winning series *Independent Lens* on PBS. ITVS receives core funding from the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, a private corporation funded by the American people. Women and Girls Lead is a strategic public media initiative to support and sustain a growing international movement to empower women and girls, their communities, and future generations. To learn more, visit [itvs.org/women-and-girls-lead](http://itvs.org/women-and-girls-lead)

**SHOW OF FORCE**
Dedicated to creating feature documentaries and television series events of the highest caliber, Show of Force is known for dynamic, character-driven storytelling that consistently engages, entertains, and inspires. Show of Force is a media production company represented by CAA (Creative Artists Agency), with 20 years of combined experience and excellence between partners Maro Chermayeff and Jeff Dupre. They have produced over 20 hours of television and media content per year with a staff of excellent young producers and are the recipients of numerous awards and accolades for their work on both U.S. and international media broadcasts. Show of Force is the production company overseeing the multiple platforms of the *Half the Sky: Turning Oppression into Opportunity for Women Worldwide* movement. To learn more, visit [showofforce.com](http://showofforce.com)