

GIRL RISING

DISCUSSION GUIDE





Watching *Girl Rising* is a powerful way to start understanding the barriers that hold girls back, but discussing the film and those barriers is the first step toward breaking them down.

WHY ARE DISCUSSIONS CRITICAL?

Discussions are a powerful catalyst for action. A story that is heard, felt, shared, challenged and discussed can be an incredibly powerful tool for change. The stories of nine girls told in the Girl Rising film have the potential to not only incite emotion but also action, if followed by thoughtful reflection and conversation.

This guide is designed to help you foster meaningful discussion with your audience about girls' education and empowerment in the world today, why it matters, and how we all have a role to play in helping girls rise.

HOW-TO GUIDE

Know your audience! This is key. Every audience comes with a different set of experiences, interests, knowledge and perspectives, all of which should shape your post-screening conversation.

The sections below are designed to help you facilitate a conversation with your target audience that draws on their experience with the Girl Rising film, their knowledge and perceptions about girls' education, and their personal stories.

To get things started, we'll offer you broad themes to consider when structuring your conversation, guiding questions to ignite and sustain the conversation, and a list of resources that will be useful during the planning phase. Be sure to also check out our **Fact Sheet** for more background and statistics around the barriers that girls face in India!

Our goal is that everyone leaves with a better understanding of what they can do to make a difference in their own organisations, communities and in the wider world.

TIPS FOR SUCCESS:

- **Consider the broad themes you want to address.** We've shared some thought-starters below!
- **Think about asking questions not just after, but also before the screening.** We've seen that seeding questions beforehand helps people process the film, even as they are watching!
- **Make sure to connect themes to action.** Provide action pathways after the discussion for people who want to do something more.
- **Ask questions that your audience feels invested in answering.** Whenever you can, relate questions to something your audience may understand in another area of importance in their lives.
- **Encourage interaction among your audience.** Interaction makes the session begin to feel like a discussion rather than a Q+A session with you as the leader.
- **Make sure the rubber hits the road.** Whatever it is you're discussing, try to end with some application questions such as, "How can you change your perspective from today regarding that issue?"

*Feel free to use the information and questions in all sections below interchangeably. This is just a guide! Reach out to us at indiascreenings@girlrising.com, if, you have additional questions about facilitating a discussion with your audience.



GUIDING QUESTIONS BY AUDIENCE

These questions can be integrated into a discussion to reinforce the concepts and issue at hand:

- What are the ways in which each gender contributes to families and society?
- What are the benefits in sending our girls to school?
- What kind of support can a family provide for a girl so that she can go to school?
- What are the obstacles keeping the girls in the film away from school? What are the major challenges or barriers faced by girls in your community in getting to school?
- How will educating girls have a positive impact on household income?



QUESTIONS AIMED AT GAUGING THE AUDIENCE

These questions have subjective answers and are most important in forming subsequent lines of questioning. This is where the facilitator can effectively use the tips, dos and don'ts (given in the previous section) – along with his/her judgment – to lead the discussion in a manner that helps realise the aims and objectives of the programme. For instance:

- What did you learn from the film about girls' education?
- What in the film demonstrated to you how education can empower girls?
- Did you see anything familiar in the film that is close to your life as well?
- What did you learn that you could apply in your own family or community?
- What do girls in your community have in common with the young girls featured in the film?
- What is one lesson you learned from the film that you would like to share with your family and friends?
- Was there any particular character in the film that you found inspiring? What is it that you liked the best about them?
- What is that one incident in the film that challenged the ideas you had prior to seeing the film?
- If you could spend a day with one character in the film, who would you want to spend it with and what would you want to talk about with the character?

For each of the Special Editions, **Hausla (Determination)** and **Umeed ka Sahara (Family Support)**, the questions can be further refined to apply to the specific stories (or chapters) and specific themes. This will help the facilitator lead a particularly relevant discussion, with greater impact. It will help the audience explore and better understand the nuances of each theme, making it more likely that they will open up and share opinions and stories. Here are examples of questions for each theme.

HAUSLA (DETERMINATION)

- Which character was your favourite and why?
- Why do you feel it was important to share these stories?
- How would you define determination?
- Is it necessary to have determination? How does it help?
- How did the stories reflect this attribute?
- How did having this attribute help the characters?
- Why did Wadley's teacher allow her to stay?
- Do you know of anyone who has this attribute? How has it helped them?
- What is empowerment? How does it help?
- Can art play a role in empowerment?
- In her story Senna says "poetry is how I turn ugliness into art" - Is that possible? How did poetry help Senna?
- How is Amina rejecting society's limitations? Is she influencing change in others? How?
- Have you ever felt empowered? What helped you achieve that feeling? Do you want to feel it again?



UMEED KA SAHARA (FAMILY SUPPORT)

- Which character was your favourite and why?
- Why do you feel it was important for the film's director to share these stories?
- How do you feel when someone encourages you?
- Have you ever believed and supported another person so they might fulfil their dream? How did it feel?
- How can we help others to reach their goals? How can we influence and support others?
- How did Ruksana's father encourage her to do better in school?
- How did Ruksana's parents help and encourage each other?
- In her story, Suma says she has "important work to do". What did she mean? How is she now impacting the lives of others?
- What difference did Azmera's brother make in her life and her future?
- If you felt that someone was being treated unfairly, what steps would you take?

Participants can play an important role in spreading the word about the power of girls' education and fuelling the movement to support it. Here, the facilitator can use Focused Group Discussions (FGD) as an opportunity to inspire participants so they might become advocates for girls' education in their own families and communities. For example:

- Ask each participant to complete this sentence: "I will share what I learned today with ..."
(Name of the person/s)
- During the FGDs, create a list of barriers to girl child education and encourage the participants to share this list with relevant stakeholders
- Identify girls within the community who need support and, through the Girl Rising stories, inspire the participants to take action to provide that needed support or encouragement.
- Identify a role model within the community who can inspire and motivate the participants.

To create meaningful impact, it is important that the discussion leaves the target audience with concrete and practical suggestions, which they can use, to effect changes in their own lives, as well as in the community. Here are some key messages to help the facilitator achieve these:

FOR ADOLESCENT BOYS AND YOUTH

- **Challenge** and question gender stereotypes and roles.
- **Respect** women and girls as equal members of society.
- **Oppose** child marriage within the family and community.
- **Mind your language** and be sensitive to women and girls.
- **Offer your support** in making school and neighbourhood safe for girls.

FOR ADOLESCENT GIRLS

- **Respect** yourself and stand up for rights.
- **Don't tolerate** any kind of violence or harassment at home, at schools/ educational institutions or in any public places.
- **Speak up** against such violence or harassment and report to parents/ elders/principals.
- **Complete** your education and don't drop out of school.
- **Don't marry** before you turn 18.
- **Challenge** and question gender stereotypes and roles.
- **Encourage** your friends to follow your lead.
- **Support your friends** in achieving their goals.
- **Dream big.**

FOR PARENTS

- **Celebrate** the birth of girl child in the family and community.
- **Take pride** in daughters and oppose the mentality of 'Bojh' and 'Paraya Dhan'.
- **Encourage** daughters to NOT tolerate any kind of violence or harassment at home, at schools/educational institutes, and in public places. Encourage them to speak up against violence and harassment and report any incidences to parents/elders/principals.
- **Educate** your daughter so that she becomes a capable individual, and an educated mother. She will be healthier, and eventually her children will be healthier too.
- **Empower** your daughter to go out, pursue higher education, work, become financially independent, and access public spaces freely.
- **Dream as Big for your daughters as you do for your sons.**



FOR TEACHERS AND SCHOOL AUTHORITIES

- **Secure admission and retention** of girl child in schools.
- **Encourage** girls to participate in academic, sports and co-curricular activities.
- **Have a regular dialogue** with parents on the importance of education.
- **Inspire** children to identify their female role models from within their community, and encourage them to talk about them.
- **Integrate** gender-based themes in the school assembly and co-curricular activities to boost gender sensitisation and equality.
- **Do not tolerate** any violence or harassment against girls.

FOR OPINION-LEADERS AND LOCAL LEADERS

- **Make Positive Reinforcements of Daughters** as providers of old age security. It needs to be highlighted that daughters also take care of their parents in their old age, as much as sons do and sometimes even more.
- **Promote Simple Weddings** within the community to unburden parents from dowry and ostentatious marriage ceremonies.
- **Promote Equal Property Rights** for daughters as it is for sons, vigorously in the community.
- **Prevent Early/Child Marriage** in order to highlight the importance of allowing girls to complete their school education and preferably opt for higher education/career/skill building/vocational education etc.
- **Do not tolerate** any violence or harassment and strive to make neighbourhood safe and violence-free for women and girls.

