



I CAN
I WILL
I MUST
JOIN
NCC

GIRL RISING

DISCUSSION GUIDE





Transformation begins with conversation. Watching *Girl Rising* is the first step toward understanding the barriers that hold girls back; discussing the film and those barriers is the first step toward breaking them down.

Host a panel, give a speech, lead a discussion - there are any number of effective ways to engage your audience - classmates, employees, colleagues and a community - in a dynamic conversation about the critical issue of girls' education.

The Girls

It is not hyperbole to say that the economic future of the entire world will be strongly affected by the fate of girls – either positively or negatively, depending on whether, where and how many girls get access to the education, healthcare, and safety from harm they require and deserve.

The filmmakers behind Girl Rising knew they had to find a way to give a voice to the millions of girls who aren't being heard. So they went in search of the stories behind the statistics – and they were astounded by the girls they met being agents for change in every corner of the world.



Sokha

“This is not the end. It is just the beginning.”

Sokha was a Cambodian child of the dump: orphaned and forced to pick through garbage to survive. But, through a series of miracles, Sokha finds her way to school – and, like a phoenix, she has risen to become a star student on the brink of a brilliant and once unimaginable future.



Suma

“Change is like a song you can't hold back.”

Though her brothers go to school, Suma is forced into bonded labor at age 6. The Nepali girl endures years of sorrow by writing beautiful music and gets a glimpse of freedom when she learns to read. Now, she uses her education in a fight to free other girls.



Yasmin

“He was strong but I was stronger.”

A young Egyptian girl falls prey to a violent attack but, rather than become a victim, she becomes a superhero. Yasmin's is the story of the triumph of imagination over a reality too painful to bear.



Ruksana

“That’s when I learned to never give up.”

Ruksana’s family are “pavement dwellers” – living on the streets of Kolkata, India, where her father has sacrificed everything to send his daughters to school. Ruksana’s life is filled with danger but she escapes into her artwork and draws strength from her father’s resolve.



Azmera

“What if a girl’s life could be more?”

When 13-year old Azmera is told she must marry, she does something shocking and brave: she says no. Meet an Ethiopian family where a brother champions his younger sister’s cause to be educated and to be free.



Senna

“Poetry is how I turn fear into will.”

Though her brothers go to school, Suma is forced into bonded labor at age 6. The Nepali girl endures years of sorrow by writing beautiful music and gets a glimpse of freedom when she learns to read. Now, she uses her education in a fight to free other girls.



Mariama

“Now there’s nothing to stop me. Nothing in the world. Nothing in the universe.”

Mariama, a teenager from war-torn Sierra Leone, is the voice of the future. The first in her family to go to school, she has her own radio show, big dreams and boundless imagination.



Wadley

“I will come back every day until I can stay.”

Wadley is just 7 when the world comes crashing down around her. Haiti’s catastrophic earthquake destroys her home and school, but it cannot break her irrepressible spirit nor extinguish her thirst to learn, even as she’s turned away from the schoolhouse day after day.



Amina

“Look into my eyes. Do you see it now? I am change.”

Amina is constrained by Afghan society, confined by her gender and expected only to serve men. But this child bride has had enough. She is determined to reject the limitations prescribed by society and to lead others to do the same. escapes into her artwork and draws strength from her father’s resolve.

Speaker & Panel FAQs

The following are some questions that are frequently asked of Girl Rising speakers at events. If you plan to answer these questions yourself, check out our website for answers.

The Film:

- Girl Rising tells the stories of nine incredible girls. How were the girls cast?
- How did your production team decide on the countries that would be represented in the film?
- Where can I see the film again or buy a copy of Girl Rising?

The Movement:

- Since the release of the film, what has Girl Rising done to raise awareness about the issue of girls' education?
- How do I get involved as an individual? Or as an employee of my company?
- What role do corporations play in the movement for girls' education and women's empowerment?
- What is next for Girl Rising?
- Where can I find out more about the campaign?

Support for Girl Rising:

- I'd like to donate to the Girl Rising Campaign. How can I do that?
- My company has a corporate giving program. Can I register Girl Rising as a beneficiary?
- Where does the money go?
- How can I further Girl Rising's engagement with corporations around the world?

General Discussion Questions

These questions are designed to facilitate a discussion with your audience, to encourage them to speak about their experiences with Girl Rising, their knowledge about girls' education, and their personal stories.

- What was your initial reaction to the film?
- Is there a specific story that resonated with you? If so, why? How does that particular girl inspire you to achieve your own goals as a leader and citizen?
- Girl Rising isn't pure journalism – but isn't fiction, either. We attempt to use unconventional techniques to go beyond the numbers and see into the personal experience. Did you find yourself getting lost in the stories? Why or Why not? Are you able, through the storytelling, to relate to their lives in a way that lets you empathize rather than sympathize? Why or why not?
- Do you think education is a legitimate and sustainable solution to the barriers girls face in the film and around the world? Why or why not?
- Why do you think girls are undervalued in the world? How can this perception be changed?
- Do girls and women face challenges in your community? If so, how can the perception of be changed and improved?
- What role do men and boys play in the movement for girls' education and women's empowerment? What impact did Azmera's brother and Ruksana's father have on their educations? How did they defy the norms in their societies?
- In the film, many of the young girls' mothers had been oppressing their daughters. How is gender-based violence internalized within the same gender? Why do you think this happens?

The Role You Play

- Do companies have a responsibility to address the issue of unequal access to education for girls? Why or why not? What is their role?
- How do you think you - and the communities you are a part of - can play a role in improving access to opportunities for girls? How does educating girls relate to the values of your community?
- What efforts will you, as a community or company, take to combat gender-based violence, in our own communities and abroad?
- What are you doing as an individual to support a campaign or cause that improves girls' access education? What should we do if someone we know is affected by gender-based violence or discrimination? Do you know how to report gender-based violence if you know it is going on around you?
- Girl Rising often collaborates with the foremost policy organizations so that more girls around the world have an opportunity to reach their fullest potential. Do you think you or people you know would reach out to your elected officials and lobby to improve the systems that govern girls' lives?

Sharing Stories & Experiences

- One key theme throughout the film was the positive ripple effect that one girl's education can have on her family and even her entire community. What attitudes do you hope to pass down to future generations? What negative perceptions and beliefs might stop with you?
- How has your education helped you get to where you are today? How has your education empowered you in your career and in everyday life?
- Did you face any barriers to accessing education? If so, how were they similar or different to the barriers the girls faced in the film? How did you overcome these challenges? Do you see yourself in any of these girls?
- Cultural tradition, lack of economic opportunity, and gender discrimination were barriers for many girls in the film, yet they persevered in spite of these challenges. Is your community or company already working to remove these barriers for girls in the developing world? What can they do to increase these efforts?