



BRAZIL
DISCUSSION GUIDE

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INTRODUCTION TO THE *FUNDAMENTAL* SERIES

Feminist movements have the power to disrupt the status quo and radically alter the course of history for women and girls—and ALL historically marginalized people and communities globally. **But what does it really look like to be a feminist leader today?**

Fundamental: Gender Justice. No Exceptions. is a series of docu-shorts following activists and community organizers from five different countries who are working on the frontlines of the global fight for gender justice. Each episode runs approximately 15 minutes and features remarkable grassroots leaders working on issues as varied as ending child, early, and forced marriage in Pakistan and pursuing LGBTQ+ liberation in Georgia.

The series is a joint production from Academy Award-winning director Sharmeen Obaid-Chinoy and the non-profit [Global Fund for Women](#). At a time of unprecedented political uprisings around the globe, from Haiti to Chile to Iraq to Sudan to Lebanon and beyond, *Fundamental* introduces global audiences to grassroots movements and community leaders who are standing up for our fundamental human rights and working to hold governments accountable for healthier and more just societies for all.

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ABOUT GLOBAL FUND FOR WOMEN

Global Fund for Women envisions a world in which movements for gender justice have transformed power and privilege for a few into equity and equality for all. As a feminist fund, we offer flexible support to a diverse group of partners—more than 5,000 groups across 175 countries so far—to create meaningful change that will last beyond our lifetimes. To learn more about our work, visit www.globalfundforwomen.org or follow us on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), or [Instagram](#).

DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT SHARMEEN OBAID-CHINYOY, DIRECTOR

Fundamental takes us into the lives of gender justice activists around the world who are working to create change at the grassroots level. The activists you will meet in the series are on the frontlines of human rights issues, risking everything, yet they are rarely made visible. So often the movements they lead are not widely visible either—and yet they are so critical to protecting human rights. For this reason, they know they have to do this work, for their communities and their countries. They are the only ones who will do it.

Our films provide a better understanding of their struggles and show us an intimate portrait of what it means to be a frontline advocate in today's volatile world. We see that social change is not always linear, that there are violent threats and bitter disappointments. For every one step forward there are three steps back. But we also see that they aren't doing this work alone. Within movements there is great community, and there is solidarity in knowing there are others alongside you—your neighbors in your city as well as those across the globe—who are also fighting for justice.

From Brazil and the United States to Kenya, Pakistan, and Georgia, these inspiring activists refuse to accept the status quo, agitating and organizing to create safe spaces and a safer world for other women. It is my hope that the series will inspire viewers to learn more about these issues, and join the fight for gender justice alongside these incredible activists.



HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

Thank you for sharing the *Fundamental* series with your community! We hope the films and this guide will provide an opportunity for conversation, education, and action.

HOSTING AN IMPACTFUL SCREENING

- **Preview the film yourself** so that you can speak to the content well before your screening begins.
- **Ensure you test the equipment** you are using prior to the screening. Be sure to check for sound quality.
- **Prior to beginning the screening**, consider offering content warnings or trigger warnings (such as descriptions of abuse or assault) based on your audience and context.
- **Provide time for reflection and discussion** following the screening and ensure that you direct audience members to resources that can help them to continue to process and learn after the screening ends.
- **Remember that as a facilitator**, your role is to guide the discussion and set expectations that allow for diverse voices to be heard.
- **You are not expected to be an expert** in the issues presented, so you might want to involve a subject matter expert from your local community in your screening. We also encourage you to read and reference this full guide.
- Visit www.fundamental-film.com for more resources that may be useful in your post-screening conversations, including learning about other groups globally working on the issues, infographics, and articles that can inform and guide your conversations.





SYNOPSIS

Can women’s movements in Brazil fight against nationalism, racism, and patriarchy to save women’s lives?

Brazilian law permits abortion only in cases of rape, incest, when pregnancy endangers a woman’s life, or in the case of anencephaly (a rare fetal abnormality).¹ Sexual and reproductive health and rights are severely limited, and there are deep racial prejudices against Black Brazilians. Civil society is also under threat, and activists in Brazil remain on high alert after the murder of prominent Black Brazilian activist Marielle Franco in March 2018.

In *Fundamental Episode 2, “Defenders of Justice,”* we meet Lucia Xavier, who is part of a movement of powerful women activists who are reframing reproductive rights as an issue of women’s rights and racial justice, as she and others work to address security threats against activists fighting for reproductive rights. We also meet Daniele Duarte, an Afro-Brazilian lesbian activist who participates in protests and marches against the rise of the extremist president Jair Bolsonaro. Lucia, Daniele, and others are part of a vibrant and intersectional feminist movement in Brazil, mobilizing what some are calling a “Feminist Spring” as the Supreme Court considers decriminalizing abortion.

¹ Malta, M et al. Abortion in Brazil: The case for women’s rights, lives, and choices. November 2019, The Lancet. [https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lanpub/article/PIIS2468-2667\(19\)30204-X/fulltext](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lanpub/article/PIIS2468-2667(19)30204-X/fulltext)

THE STAKES

Around the world, anti-gender ideologies are on the rise. Anti-gender movements are religious extremist and populist forces that target gender equality; advocate for the exclusion of LGBTQI+ people; and push extreme restrictions on sexual and reproductive health and rights. These movements often use human rights language, including arguments for religious freedom, individual choice, or morality, while actually working to limit who gets to exercise those rights.

In Brazil, anti-gender ideologues, emboldened by the election of President Jair Bolsonaro, fight to restrict access to abortion, limit rights to LGBTQI+ people, and support systems that are racist against Afro-Brazilians and hostile to civil society actors. Against this backdrop, local activists in Brazil like Daniele and Lucia are driven by their mission to combat discrimination and violence towards Black and LGBTQI+ people in Brazil, and to end the severe restrictions on sexual and reproductive rights.

In Brazil, abortion is highly restrictive. According to the 1940 Brazilian Penal Code, abortion is only legal in the case of rape or a danger to the woman's life. However, pregnant people find ways to terminate their pregnancies regardless of the law, with many forced to resort to unsafe methods. According to Brazil's National Abortion Survey, one in five women under the age of 40 in urban areas have had at least one abortion. Women can be punished by up to three years in prison for choosing to have an abortion under circumstances other than those dictated by the Brazilian Penal Code. Much like all over the world, these restrictions disproportionately impact poor women, Black women, and those most marginalized.

AFRO-BRAZILIAN WOMEN'S ACTIVISM

Afro-Brazilian people make up more than 50% of Brazil's population.² Black and Indigenous Brazilians face disproportionately higher rates of violence and discrimination, and experience a vast wealth gap.

Civil society is also under threat: in 2018, Black Brazilian activist and Rio councilwoman Marielle Franco was assassinated. Marielle was considered an advocate for the thousands of Brazilians who live in favelas—makeshift settlements that have experienced historical governmental neglect. She was a strong human rights defender, regularly calling out police violence and state hypocrisy, a lesbian, and avid defender of LGBTQI+ rights. Following the death of Marielle Franco, activists in Brazil remain on high alert.

Black women's leadership in social justice organizing, both at the neighborhood and national level in Brazil, is an integral part of social change. As scholar Keisha-Khan Perry has said, Black women activists mobilize their views on self and identity in order to fight



² Phillips, T. Brazil census shows African-Brazilians in the majority for the first time. November 2011. The Guardian. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2011/nov/17/brazil-census-african-brazilians-majority>

for a range of issues, from race and gender identity to poverty and urban policy reform.³ In order to understand the particularities of Black Brazilian women's activism, we must first understand their experiences. Additionally, learning about the racial context and history of Brazil enables us to understand contemporary social movements as just one part of a longer, multi-dimensional struggle for justice.

QUESTIONS

- 01.** Think back to the film. Can you pick up on any examples of how the activists' identities inform their politics and why?
- 02.** What does the film teach us about the intersection of class, gender, and race?
- 03.** Why is it important to visually represent Black Brazilian women in social movements?
- 04.** Can you describe circumstances in your country that are a result of systemic racism?

FEMINIST RESPONSES TO PATRIARCHY AND THE RADICAL RIGHT

In October 2018, Jair Bolsonaro was elected president of Brazil. A former army captain and right-wing nationalist, Bolsonaro gained support by espousing deeply conservative and extremist views. For feminist activists in Brazil, Bolsonaro's popularity is troubling because it represents the proliferation of racist, homophobic, and extremist ideas. But they aren't letting that stop them from speaking out.

QUESTIONS

- 01.** Can you think of examples of anti-gender movements in other countries? What rights are they trying to restrict?
- 02.** Can you think of other places in the world where activists in general and women in particular are organizing and protesting in opposition to new authoritarian leaders?
- 03.** Have you seen examples of women pursuing roles in politics (locally or nationally)? What factors and perceptions stand in the way of women running for office?



³ Y Perry, Keisha-Khan. Geographies of Power: Black women mobilizing intersectionality in Brazil. November 2016. Meridians: feminism, race, transnationalism. <http://unequalcities.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/17/2019/01/Perry-Keisha-Khan-Meridian-Article.pdf>

MOVEMENT BUILDING ACTIVITY

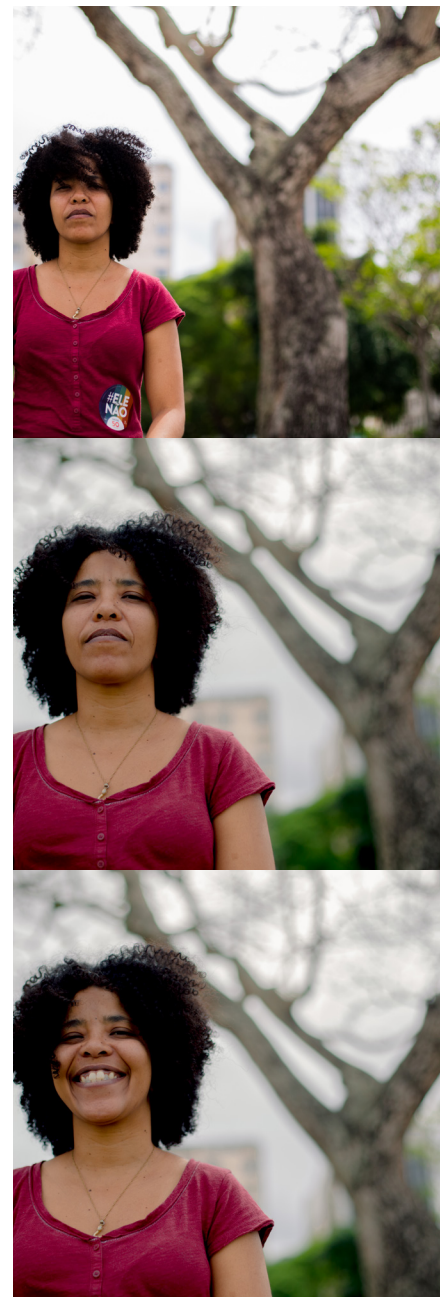
There are many different ways to organize for social change. [Social movements](#) are one of the most effective ways to create long-term, meaningful change. In effective social movements, activists take time to strategize and think about what actions might be best for a given moment or goal. Additionally, no one is doing this work alone. Organizers and groups are always connected to other people. This is the power of movements.

In the film we see women organizing in protest and leaders from feminist groups across Brazil meeting to discuss strategy and challenges. As a group, share some ideas about other ways that activists can organize for change. Make a list and then discuss what methods might be effective in different situations.

IN ORDER TO BUILD MOVEMENTS, ACTIVISTS MUST FIRST COLLECTIVELY THINK ABOUT A RANGE OF QUESTIONS. FOR EXAMPLE:

- 01. What are our goals?**
- 02. What resources do we have?**
- 03. How will we ensure that our movement is intersectional and inclusive?**

See if you can add to the list by thinking about what other questions activists may consider. What questions would you ask of the movement? For example, who can you partner with? Who are other organizations in the space and what are their goals?



TAKE ACTION

Thank you for watching the episode and hosting a conversation. If you are interested in supporting rights for women and girls around the world, this next section offers tips and tools for getting involved.

- ➔ **Join Global for Women:** Global Fund for Women works to strengthen gender justice movements to shift power, privilege, and perception and create meaningful change that will last beyond our lifetimes. We envision a world where movements for gender justice have transformed power and privilege for a few into equity and equality for all.

Join us to learn more about our work! You'll receive updates and action opportunities related to the issues in *Fundamental*, as well as other ways to support movements for gender justice around the world.

www.globalfundforwomen.org/join-us/

- ➔ **Make a donation:** Your support will allow Global Fund for Women to fund groups in *Fundamental* and other organizations that are fighting to protect and advance the rights of women, girls, trans, and gender non-conforming people around the globe. [Make a donation.](#)

- ➔ **Follow us on Social:** Follow the *Fundamental* film series on social media and help spread the word about the films and the issues they address.

www.fundamental-film.com



[@FundamentalFilmSeries](#)



[@FundamentalFilmSeries](#)



[@Fundamental_Doc](#)



www.youtube.com/GlobalFundForWomen



PAIRING MULTIPLE EPISODES

Interested in viewing more than one episode?
Here are some suggestions on how to pair them:



RIGHTS NOT ROSES

Ending child, early, and forced marriage in Pakistan

INCLUDES:

- GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE
- GIRLS' RIGHTS

GIRLS AT THE HEART OF IT

Comprehensive sex education and girl's leadership in Kenya

INCLUDES:

- REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS
- GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE
- GIRLS' RIGHTS

DEFENDERS OF JUSTICE

The battle for women's rights in Brazil

INCLUDES:

- RACE
- REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS
- INTERSECTIONALITY
- LGBTQ+ RIGHTS
- MOVEMENT BUILDING

LIVING OUT LOUD

LBTQI movement building and resistance in Georgia

INCLUDES:

- LGBTQ+ RIGHTS
- GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE
- MOVEMENT BUILDING

RISING POWER

Building an intersectional justice movement in the United States

INCLUDES:

- RACE
- INTERSECTIONALITY
- LGBTQ+ RIGHTS
- MOVEMENT BUILDING