



WOMEN
DISCUSSION GUIDE



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 LGBTQI+ 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.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

- Introduction to the *Fundamental Series* 01
- About Global Fund for Women 02
- Director’s Statement 02
- How to Use this Guide 03
- Hosting an Impactful Screening 03
- Synopsis 04
- The Stakes 05
- Discussion & Activities 06
- Take Action 07
- Pairing Multiple Episodes 08

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

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 Kenya, anti-rights movements are blocking access to comprehensive sexuality education (CSE) for girls and young people—a critical barrier to girls and young women realizing their full potential. In this episode, we meet Purity Kagwiria, Executive Director of Akili Dada, an organization that provides education and leadership training to high school- and college-aged girls and young women. We also meet Mary Adhiambo, a young leader and sexual assault survivor in her early twenties who is taking her new organizing skills to the streets, and Mary Anyango, a high school student who is sharing what she’s learned about sexuality and leadership in her own community.

THE STAKES

Across Kenya, young people and especially teenage girls are denied CSE and access to sexual and reproductive health and rights. According to a 2017 United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) report, more than 390,000 10- to 19-year-olds became pregnant in Kenya between July 2016 and June 2017.¹

Patriarchy and religious and social conservatism are exacerbating the issue: teenage pregnancy is high, along with maternal mortality rates and rates of unsafe abortion. Pregnancy—often a result of a lack of comprehensive sexuality education—is one of the main reasons that girls drop out of school. For girls in Kenya, misinformation on sexuality and gender is coming from many different places: religious leaders, individuals with deep cultural and traditional beliefs, media and news sources, social media, or teachers without the skills or training to develop CSE.²

But teenage girls and young women in Kenya are change-makers and leaders. Many of them are advocating for comprehensive sexuality education, educating their peers on their bodies and rights, and working for laws and policies that advance sexual and reproductive health and rights, including access to safe abortion.

COMPREHENSIVE SEXUALITY EDUCATION AROUND THE WORLD

Comprehensive sexuality education (CSE) is about more than just reproductive health, pregnancy, and sex. A truly comprehensive sexuality education program includes positive, scientific, and nonjudgmental information about so much more, including gender roles and power relations, bodily autonomy, consent, and gender identity (among other important topics). CSE is an incredibly effective tool to empower girls. A 2019 United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) report outlines why comprehensive sexuality education is crucial: it leads to improved health; contributes to gender equality; enables young women to understand basic facts about their bodies; encourages young people to think about families and social relationships, and recognize inappropriate behavior; and helps prepare women for healthy, consensual, and pleasurable relationships.³

However, CSE is rare, and even basic information about sexual health can be lacking in many places. For example, 48% of girls in the Islamic Republic of Iran believe menstruation is a disease. Likewise, 51% of girls in Afghanistan and 82% in Malawi are unaware of menstruation before they first experienced it.⁴ In the United States, CSE programming varies widely across the country. Currently, just 29 states in



1 Otewa, Faith. Teen Pregnancy in Kenya. October 2018. Duke Center for Global Reproductive Health. <http://dukecenterforglobalreproductivehealth.org/2018/10/25/teen-pregnancy-in-kenya/>

2 Sidze, Estelle et al. From Paper to Practice: Sexuality Education Policies and Their Implementation in Kenya. April 2017. Guttmacher Institute. <https://www.guttmacher.org/report/sexuality-education-kenya-and> <https://www.guttmacher.org/fact-sheet/sexuality-education-kenya>

3 UNESCO. Facing the Facts: The case for comprehensive sexuality education. June 2019. <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000368231>

4 See footnote 3.

the U.S. and the District of Columbia mandate sexuality education, and 39 states mandate HIV education. Although almost every state has some guidance on how and when sexuality education should be taught, decisions are often left up to individual school districts.⁵ We encourage you to search for your country or state's policies on comprehensive sexuality education.

QUESTIONS

- 01.** The subjects of the film recall women from their lives that inspired them and helped them find their voice. Who is someone in your life that has played that role?
- 02.** What does the film teach us about the power of shame and its repercussions? How are myths about sex, gender, and identity spread in the media?
- 03.** Do you recall receiving sexuality education? What was it like? What was your experience?
- 04.** What are misconceptions you've heard about women's bodies?
- 05.** Where do you feel like you learned most about your body and sexuality? From your parents? Peers? Reading about it?
- 06.** Despite laws in place in support of comprehensive sexuality education, it is not always provided. Why might schools and educators choose not to include it in curricula? Why might parents choose not to talk about it at home?
- 07.** How can we all encourage our friends, families, and community members to feel safe and supported to ask questions and be honest with regards to questions about sex, sexuality, and our bodies?



⁵ Guttmacher Institute. State Laws and Policies: Sex and HIV Education. February 2020.
<https://www.guttmacher.org/state-policy/explore/sex-and-hiv-education>

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