

U.S.A.  
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 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](http://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](http://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

In an increasingly polarized and racially segregated United States, we see the impact of white supremacy and patriarchy through the eyes of Black and Southeast Asian activists living in Madison, Wisconsin. Against a backdrop of anti-Blackness, violence against women, and increasing social and political polarization, we meet M Adams and Kabzuag Vaj, community organizers and co-directors of Freedom, Inc.

What began as a sexual assault support group has grown into a community organization at the forefront of battles over education reform, police brutality, land access and ownership, women's safety and security, and mental health. In this *Fundamental episode, "Rising Power,"* Kabzuag says "Freedom, Inc. exists because there were no organizations serving women like me." With Freedom, Inc. Kabzuag and M have cultivated a movement that invites women of color—in particular, Black, Hmong, and Khmer women, girls, queer, and trans people—to tie their own rights to one another. Freedom, Inc. works to equip the communities they serve with the tools and resources they need to uproot our broken system and ultimately build a roadmap toward shared liberation.

## THE STAKES

Two-thirds of Americans say it has become more common for people to express racist views since Donald Trump became president in November 2016. Most Americans say it's now more common for people to express racist or racially insensitive views; more than four-in-ten say it's more acceptable.<sup>1</sup>

Additionally, 2019 also saw the most deaths of transgender or gender non-conforming people in the U.S. due to fatal violence, the majority of whom were Black transgender women.<sup>2</sup>

In this *Fundamental* episode, we learn about grassroots movements led by women and gender non-conforming people of color who confront oppression and patriarchy in the U.S. It highlights the ways people from different backgrounds experience discrimination and focuses our attention on the importance of not placing issues in silos, but instead recognizing how systems of oppression intersect and overlap.

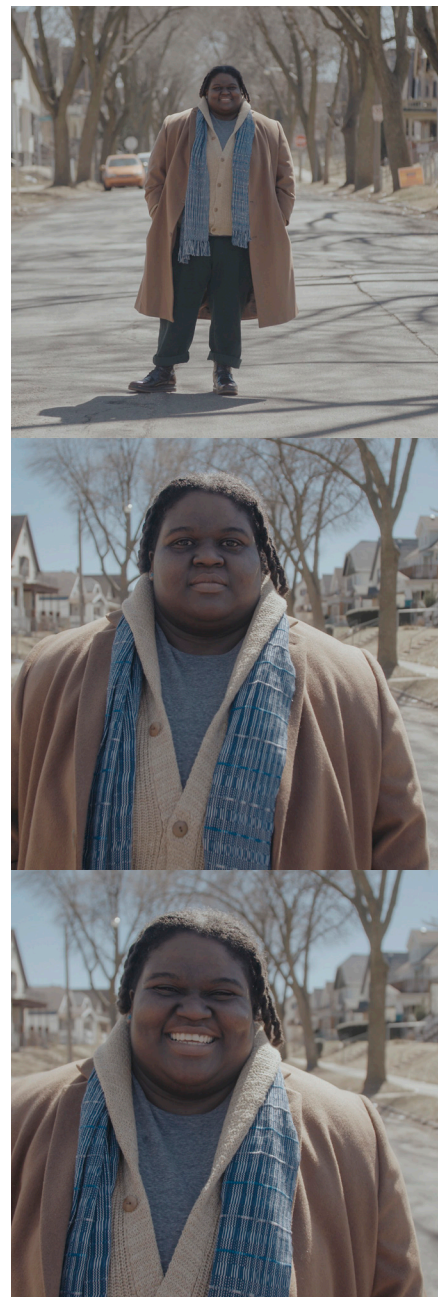
Movements addressing one form of oppression must take others into account. For example, efforts to fight racism must include addressing homophobia, classism, and anti-Semitism, and work to eliminate gender disparities must acknowledge how women of color experience inequality and prejudice differently from white women.

**INTERSECTIONALITY:**  
The interconnected nature of social categorizations such as race, class, and gender, regarded as creating overlapping and interdependent systems of discrimination or disadvantage. The term "intersectionality" was coined by Kimberlé Crenshaw, a civil rights activist and legal scholar.

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 01.** What are your initial reactions to the film? How did it make you feel?
- 02.** Which of the subjects did you connect with? Why?
- 03.** In describing herself, M says she identifies as Black and gender non-conforming. What are some of the ways you identify?

Questions continue on next page



<sup>1</sup> Horowitz, Juliana et al. Race in America 2019. April 2019. Pew Research Center. <https://www.pewsocialtrends.org/2019/04/09/race-in-america-2019/>

<sup>2</sup> Human Rights Campaign. Violence Against the Transgender Community in 2019. Accessed February 2020. <https://www.hrc.org/resources/violence-against-the-transgender-community-in-2019>

- 04.** Freedom, Inc. is “people-based and not issue based.” What does this mean to you? Can you think of any other organizations that are people-based and not issue based? How does this concept of being people-based relate to intersectionality?
- 05.** It is overwhelming to think about tackling major systemic issues like racism and criminal justice reform. But organizing to build a community garden was such a powerful example for Freedom, Inc. What are examples of small wins that help chip away at larger issues?

#### ACTIVITY: HOW ISSUES INTERSECT

This episode of *Fundamental: Gender Justice. No Exceptions.* highlights how social justice issues intersect. This activity is meant to examine how issues are connected and the systems in place that further enable these injustices to exist.

- 01.** Return to the answers from the question above about ways you identify: parent, gender non-conforming, etc. How many items did you list? What are the social justice issues that affect each one? Are there similarities?
- 02.** In thinking of definitions of racism and anti-Semitism, what are common elements? How are they used to keep some people in power and dominant positions?
- 03.** How are gender discrimination and ableism connected? What are the common characteristics that describe them?
- 04.** What enables racism and gender discrimination to continue? For example, education, fear, individualism. What else?
- 05.** Consider a world where all genders have equal rights and protections. What are characteristics of this world that don't exist today? How would other social issues be affected?





## 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/](http://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](http://www.fundamental-film.com)



[@FundamentalFilmSeries](#)



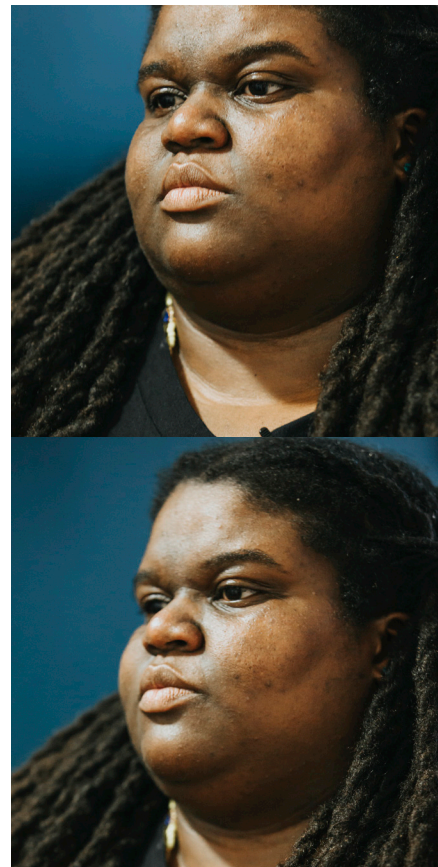
[@FundamentalFilmSeries](#)



[@Fundamental\\_Doc](#)



[www.youtube.com/GlobalFundForWomen](http://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