



GIRL RISING

TEACHER'S GUIDE

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INTRODUCTION: WHAT IS GIRL RISING?

**Girl Rising is a film.
Girl Rising is a movement.
Girl Rising is the future.**

Educating girls can break cycles of poverty in just one generation.

That's the fact that inspired us to make this film. That's the message we want to spread through the stories we tell. And that's the change we hope to effect with a grassroots movement that promotes that message. We believe that students, coming of age in an increasingly interdependent world, will be at the vanguard.

Around the world, millions of girls face barriers to education that boys do not. Removing barriers, such as early and forced marriage, gender-based violence and discrimination, domestic slavery and sex trafficking means not only a better life for girls, but a safer, healthier, and more prosperous world for all.

THE FILM

Girl Rising journeys around the globe to witness the strength of the human spirit and the power of education to change the world. Viewers get to know nine unforgettable girls living in the developing world: ordinary girls who confront tremendous challenges and overcome nearly impossible odds to achieve their dreams. Prize-winning authors put the girls' remarkable stories into words, and renowned actors give them voice.

THE MOVEMENT

Girl Rising is a global campaign for girls' education. We believe that storytelling can drive change, and we know that the passion and energy of young people can be a mighty force. Students, who truly understand the power of social media and how to use it, are an integral part of a worldwide campaign, joining teachers, parents, business leaders, celebrities and global influencers: girls, boys, women, and men – all raising awareness in their own communities and working to build a future where every girl can get a good education and reach her full potential.

THE STATISTICS
BEHIND THE STORIES

The data is clear.

This is what happens when girls are not valued:*

- 496 million girls over age 15 cannot read or write.¹
- 65 million school-age girls are not in school.²
- 32 million fewer girls than boys are in primary school worldwide.³

But this is what happens when girls are treated equally and educated:

- It is far more likely that they will marry later, have fewer children,⁴ and avoid contracting HIV/AIDS.⁵
- They are less likely to be victims of domestic violence⁶ and more likely to be aware of their rights.
- They will earn more money. An extra year of primary school boosts girls' eventual wages by 10 to 20%. An extra year of secondary school: 15 to 25%.⁷

Best of all, an educated mother is more likely to educate both sons and daughters equally,⁸ passing prosperity and opportunity to the next generation. In other words, investing in girls creates a ripple effect that can transform families, communities and entire countries.

These statistics were a story that needed to be told. We set out to find the girls who could help us tell it, and we were astounded by the girls we met. Their fortitude became the Girl Rising motto: **One Girl with Courage is a Revolution.**

**Some of these statistics have changed slightly since the film was produced.*

HOW TO USE THIS TEACHER'S GUIDE

This guide is designed to help educators working with students at the upper elementary, middle, high school and college levels foster meaningful discussion about the status of girls' education in the world today, why it matters, and how it can lead to a safer and more prosperous planet. And it offers students guidance as to what they, as global citizens, can do to make a difference in their own communities and in the wider world.

The nine stories in Girl Rising together create a single narrative, but they each also work as stand-alone "chapters." You can screen the entire film or just a chapter or two. Below, you will find pre- and post-screening discussion points for the whole film as well as for each chapter. Following the chapter guides are issue guides. These can be used as supplementary resources, or as a way to structure your class discussion around one or more of the barriers to education – early marriage or gender violence, for example – that cut across more than one of the film's chapters.

At the end of this guide you will find an array of resources to help enrich lesson plans and provide greater context for the Girl Rising film and campaign and girls' education in general. They include background information about each country in the film and a list of additional videos included on the DVD. You will also find a link to the free Pearson Foundation-designed – and standards-aligned – Girl Rising curriculum, which complements this Teacher's Guide and includes project lessons that can be used with any of the film chapters.

PLEASE NOTE:

We consider the chapters with Yasmin's, Azmera's, Amina's and Senna's stories to include content that is too mature for elementary school students. The chapters we feel are most suitable for that age group are Wadley's and Ruksana's stories. The Issue Guide also contains sensitive material. Middle school teachers, please use your discretion. Additionally, the Girl Rising video trailer contains some images of Malala Yousafzai after she was shot that might be upsetting to some students. Again, teachers please use discretion.

DISCUSSION GUIDES

READY TO WATCH?

- 01 Full film
- 02 Chapters
- 03 Issues

05

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READY TO WATCH GIRL RISING?

Select the type of screening that works best for your class – the full film, or just a chapter or two. Then choose from among the resources on the following pages: pre- and post-screening questions, a guide to the barriers girls face, country information, supplementary videos and more.

Any or all of the following very short videos (found on your DVD) can help introduce the film and the issue to your students.

- **Message From The Director**
- **Girl Rising Trailer**
- **Connect The Dots**

Or you might want to kick off your class with one of these lighter, but inspiring, videos (also on your DVD):

- **Walking To School**
- **Let's Dance**

01 FULL FILM

We have included a range of questions, some more suitable for younger students, some for older. Teachers, please choose the questions that you think will best stimulate a dynamic discussion with your students.

BEFORE YOU WATCH

07

AFTER YOU WATCH

08

FULL FILM
BEFORE YOU WATCH...

- Think about your own life, where and how you live. Now imagine how a girl – or a boy – growing up in India or Cambodia, for example, might live and how it might be similar or different.
- Think about your school. What do you think a school might be like in Nepal or Peru?
- Sixty-five million girls around the world who should be in school are not. What do you think are some of the reasons?
- Why do you think more girls than boys are not in school?
- Has it ever occurred to you that you wouldn't or couldn't go to school? How do you think your life would be different?
- Have you heard of Malala Yousafzai? (If you watch the Girl Rising trailer, you will see Malala in it.) The Pakistani girl was shot in the head by the Taliban because she advocated for girls' education. What would you do if you were told you couldn't go to school because you are a girl? For boys: what would you do if your sister or friend couldn't go to school?
- Malala continues to speak out for equality in education. Why do you think she continues to risk her life so that she and others can go to school? How important is it to stand up for something you believe in? Have you ever had to do so? **[Malala's speech to the UN Youth Assembly]**.
- Do you see any limitations on who or what you can become? What are they? Are the limitations different for boys and girls?
- Societies are hierarchical. What role does gender play in where you end up on the spectrum?
- What is the gender hierarchy in your own culture? How do the roles of men and women (or girls and boys) differ?
- Why do you think it's important to be a global citizen?⁹

FULL FILM

...AND AFTER

- Which story resonated most deeply with you? Why?
- These girls' lives seem pretty different than yours, but in what ways are the girls like you?
- Now that you know about these issues, what would you like your friends or family to know?
- Parents living in poverty sometimes have to decide which, if any, of their children they can send to school. How would you decide?
- How does your educational experience compare to that of the girls in the film? Do girls and boys in your community have equal opportunities to be educated?
- How might education change the future for these girls and for their families?
- The barriers to girls' education are formidable. What do you think we can do to help?
- Which, if any, of the adverse conditions faced by the girls in the film are faced by girls in your country?
- Did you feel sorry for the girls? Why? Do you think they felt sorry for themselves? Why or why not?
- Has anything you learned in the film changed the way you think about your own community? Your country? How?
- Think about the obstacles in your life. What will you do to overcome them?
- Watch Azure Antoinette perform the piece she created for Girl Rising. The girls in the film re-ignited in her a belief she could change the world. How did the girls affect you? **[\[See Superhero here\]](#)**
- How is girls' education a social, moral, political, religious or cultural issue?

FULL FILM

...AND AFTER

- It's been said that educating girls is not only the right thing to do, it's the smart thing to do. How would you show those in power that it is in their best interest to educate girls?
- Are you surprised that these issues – child marriage, forced labor, gender violence, educational inequity – exist in the world today? Do you think they exist in your own country?
- What happens when a particular group is denied access to education? Why would those in power seek to control who gets a good education and who doesn't?
- How would the world look different if girls had equal access to education everywhere? How would that affect you?
- If this is a global issue, what is the global responsibility?
- How does cultural relativism apply to these stories?
- Explore the relationship between poverty, fertility and education.
- Do you think your experience of the world is influenced by gender stereotypes? How? Why?
- Political scientist and sociologist Alan Wolfe observed, “of all the ways that one group has systematically mistreated another, none is more deeply rooted than the way men have subordinated women. All other discriminations pale by contrast.” Do you agree with Wolfe? Why or why not?

02 CHAPTERS

Use these chapter guides alone or in combination with the full film discussion points. Again, we have provided questions for before and after your screening. At the front of each chapter guide you will find a list of complementary materials.

SOKHA	11	RUKSANA	21
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SOKHA | CAMBODIA

Written by: Loung Ung
Narrated by: Alicia Keys

Video On DVD
SOKHA BACKSTAGE

Country Guide
CAMBODIA

Issue Guide
POVERTY

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

Sokha was a child of the dump, orphaned and forced to pick through garbage to survive. But with luck and a lot of determination, Sokha found 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.

BEFORE YOU WATCH...

- What do you know about Cambodia? Can you locate it on a map? Do you know what language(s) Cambodians speak? What do you know about their culture?
- When you daydream... what do you daydream about?
- Have you ever been to a garbage dump? What do you think it looks like? Smells like?
- What do you think it would be like to be at work every day instead of in class?

SOKHA | CAMBODIA

AND AFTER...

- As she worked picking through garbage each day, Sokha dreamed of school; what would you have been dreaming of?
- Hundreds of children scavenge at Cambodian city dumps, as Sokha did. What do you think a day in the dump would be like, picking through trash to survive?
- For most of us, the garbage dump looks like a nightmare, yet in the midst of it we see children laughing. Does it surprise you that they might be happy?
- As Sokha sees it, getting a good education is not the end of her story, but it is the beginning. What do you think she means?
- Sokha is now earning top grades at a prestigious high school and is using her education to tutor younger girls who have struggled just like she has. How will you give back to those around you?
- Poverty, years of conflict, migration and the rising rate of HIV/AIDS are the main reasons why 570,000 Cambodian children no longer live with their families. If their families can't look after them, who is responsible for their well-being?
- What would you like to say to Sokha, or ask her? What have you learned from her?

WADLEY | HAITI

Written by: Edwidge Danticat

Narrated by: Cate Blanchett

Video On DVD

MEET THE WRITER
WADLEY DRESSES UP
WADLEY DANCING ON SET

Country Guide

HAITI

Issue Guides

NATURAL DISASTERS & DISPLACED PERSONS
POVERTY

“Even if you send me away, I will come back every day until I can stay.”

Wadley is just seven years old 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.

BEFORE YOU WATCH...

- What do you know about Haiti? Can you locate it on a map? Do you know what language(s) Haitians speak? What do you know about their culture?
- What do you know about earthquakes? Have you ever been in one? If not, can you imagine what it would be like during it? After?
- Have you ever had to leave your home? How did that feel?
- Does being in school matter to you? How much? What would you do if someone said you couldn't go?
- Do you think families should have to pay for their children's schooling? Why? Why not?

WADLEY | HAITI

AND AFTER...

- Imagine you're Wadley. How would you have felt if told you couldn't join your classmates in school? What would you have done if your teacher told you to leave because your parents couldn't pay?
- Now imagine you're Wadley's mother and had to tell your daughter she couldn't go to school. What do you think she was thinking and feeling?
- What about the teacher? Do you think she cared about her students, or just the school fees?
- Wadley says she will come back every day until she can stay. Where do you think that determination and bravery comes from?
- Is there something in your life that matters as much to you as school does to Wadley? What is it and what would you do to hold on to it?
- Edwidge Danticat, the writer of the Haiti chapter, says that there is a spark in Wadley that neither the earthquake nor living in a tent camp had destroyed. Why do you think Wadley's spirit survived intact, or maybe strengthened? How do you think you would have fared?
- Danticat calls Wadley "the future of Haiti." What do you think she means by that?
- Haiti is the poorest country in the western hemisphere. How could educational equity change that? Is it possible for a poor country to educate all its children?
- What would you like to say to Wadley, or ask her? What have you learned from her?

SUMA | NEPAL

Written by: Manjushree Thapa
Narrated by: Kerry Washington

Video On DVD

MEET THE WRITER
SUMA JOURNEYS TO NY
SUMA'S FIRST INTERVIEW
STORIES OF BONDED LABOR

Country Guide
NEPAL

Issue Guides
HUMAN TRAFFICKING & FORCED LABOR
POVERTY

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

Though her brothers go to school, Suma is forced into bonded labor at age six. The Nepali girl endures years of sorrow by writing beautiful music and gets a glimpse of freedom when she learns to read. Liberated at age 12, today Suma uses her education in the fight to free other girls from similar lives of servitude.

BEFORE YOU WATCH...

- What do you know about Nepal? Can you locate it on a map? Do you know what language(s) people speak in Nepal? What do you know about their culture?
- What is bonded labor? What is slavery? What is the difference?
- What was your life like when you were six or seven years old? Your home, your family? What kind of chores did your parents ask you to do?
- Have you ever lived away from your family – can you imagine living apart from them when you were six? Is there any reason you can think of that they might send you away?

SUMA | NEPAL

AND AFTER...

- Suma wrote songs to endure. How would you have gotten through it?
- Why was the opportunity to learn to read and write so important to Suma?
- Why do you think Suma's parents sent her away? Do you think they had another choice? What would you have done if you were her parents?
- In her song, Suma writes, "Thoughtless were my mother and father. They gave birth to a girl." Why do you think she feels it was "thoughtless"?
- One of Suma's masters calls Suma "unlucky girl." What do you think luck has to do with her circumstances?
- For boys: can you imagine your sister being sent away to work while you went to school? Do you think you would have or could have stood up to your parents in support of your sister? What about if you were sent away?
- What does Suma mean by "change is like a song you can't hold back"?
- Now that Suma is free, how is she using her experiences to help others?
- Is there a difference between bonded labor and slavery? Suma decides there's not. Do you agree?
- Manjushree Thapa, the writer of Suma's story says, "when girls and women change – that changes everything." How? And what does that mean for boys and men?
- Although illegal, the tradition of kamlari has stubbornly persisted. Why?
- One girl told Girl Rising, "My parents only educated their sons. But I changed this. I said, treat me the way you would treat your sons. And, gradually, my mother and father have started to change." How can you effect change?
- What would you like to say to Suma, or ask her? What have you learned from her?

YASMIN | EGYPT

Written by: Mona Eltahawy
Narrated by: Chlöe Grace Moretz

Video On DVD
MEET THE WRITER

Country Guide
EGYPT

Issue Guides
EARLY & FORCED MARRIAGE
GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE
POVERTY

NOTE TO TEACHERS: We believe that Yasmin's story includes content that is too mature for elementary school students. Middle school teachers, please use your discretion.

“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.

BEFORE YOU WATCH...

- What do you know about Egypt? Can you locate it on a map? Do you know what language(s) Egyptians speak? What do you know about their culture?
- What do you think it would be like to be 12 or 13 and not be able to read or write? Make a list of things you wouldn't be able to do. Go through your day and think about everything you do on an average day that requires reading or writing.
- Have you ever felt physically vulnerable or threatened because of your age, your size or your gender?
- Have you ever felt powerless? How did you respond?

YASMIN | EGYPT

AND AFTER...

- Yasmin calls herself a superhero. What is the one word that you would use to describe her?
- What would you have done in Yasmin's place? Her mother's?
- Why do you think Yasmin describes herself as "stronger" than her attacker? Stronger in what sense?
- Do you think Yasmin really believed she was a superhero? Do you think she is one? In what way?
- Did you think Yasmin's attacker was going to be punished? Why or why not?
- What did it mean when Officer Mansoor said to Yasmin "you're just a street kid"? Why was that significant? And how did his relationship to Yasmin change as the story moved on?
- Who do you think felt more helpless – Yasmin or her mother? Why?
- Why would Yasmin's mother choose to marry her off at 13?
- The film-makers used a pseudonym for Yasmin and an actress to play her part. Why was that necessary? Discuss this story in the context of the current situation in Egypt, including stories of rampant sexual assault during the demonstrations in Tahrir Square.
- What would you like to say to Yasmin, or ask her? What have you learned from her?

AZMERA | ETHIOPIA

Written by: Maaza Mengiste
Narrated by: Meryl Streep

Video On DVD
MEET THE WRITER
AZMERA INTRODUCES HERSELF

Country Guide
ETHIOPIA

Issue Guides
EARLY & FORCED MARRIAGE
POVERTY

NOTE TO TEACHERS: We believe that Azmera's story includes content that is too mature for elementary school students. Middle school teachers, please use your discretion.

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

When 13-year old Azmera is told she must marry, she does something shocking: she says no. Meet an Ethiopian family where a brother is his sister’s champion, insisting on her right to be educated and be free.

BEFORE YOU WATCH...

- What do you know about Ethiopia? Can you locate it on a map? Do you know what language(s) Ethiopians speak? What do you know about their culture?
- How old were your parents when they were married, and when you were born? Look at the classmate sitting next to you – does he/she look ready to be a parent?
- What is a good age to get married? Why?
- Who is going to choose your husband or wife? Why?
- Describe what your life is like on a given day – when you wake up, get ready for school, eat breakfast. How do you get to school? What do you do after school? Now, imagine your life if you were married and had children. Describe what you think a day in that life looks like.

AZMERA | ETHIOPIA

AND AFTER...

- What would you have done if, like Azmera, you were 13 and your mother arranged for you to be married?
- Azmera dreams of a life that is “more.” What is “more” to Azmera?
- Maaza Mengiste, the writer of Azmera’s story, says when Azmera was offered to the stranger “it wasn’t because [her mother and grandmother] didn’t love her; it was because they loved her.” How does that make sense to you?
- Were you surprised by the stand taken by Meselu to support his sister? Why do you think he did it? Would you have done the same?
- The story speaks about limits. What are some of the limits in your life?
- Why are so many girls in Ethiopia married so young?
- Is early marriage always wrong?
- Maaza Mengiste says, “when a young girl gets married, her education stops ... it more than likely ends the education of any future girls that she will have.” Why? How do you break the cycle in a culture where generations have married early? And why should you?
- Azmera’s brother is the hero in this story. What do you think it will take to convince more men to stand up for their sisters, wives and mothers?
- How would you bring more men into the conversation about early marriage?
- What would you like to say to Azmera, or ask her? What have you learned from her?

RUKSANA | INDIA

Written by: Sooni Taraporevala

Narrated by: Priyanka Chopra

Video On DVD

MEET THE WRITER

RUKSANA DRAWS HER DREAM HOUSE

RUKSANA SINGS HER FAVORITE SONG

Country Guide

INDIA

Issue Guides

GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

POVERTY

“How can so much beauty and so much meanness be together in the same world?”

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

BEFORE YOU WATCH...

- What do you know about India? Can you locate it on a map? Do you know what language(s) Indians speak? What do you know about their culture?
- What does it mean to be homeless?
- What do you think when you see someone who lives on the street? Do you ever see families or children?
- Have you ever been in trouble in school? What did your parents say/do?
- When you want to “escape,” where does your imagination take you?

AND AFTER...

- Why do you think Ruksana seems so happy and spirited at the same time as her life seems so difficult?
- What did you think Ruksana's father was going to do when he found out she'd gotten in trouble for drawing in her school notebook? Were you surprised? How would you have handled the situation if Ruksana was your daughter?
- Ruksana and her family are "pavement dwellers." Would you consider them homeless? Do you think they consider themselves homeless? Why or why not?
- What would your life be like if you lived in their home? What would you do when you got home from school? How would you bathe? How would you do your homework? What happens when it gets dark?
- Ruksana wonders how beauty and ugliness can exist side-by-side in her world. What does she mean? Do you see any examples of that in your own life?
- How do you explain the contrast between Ruksana's life and the one she paints?
- Sooni Taraporevala, who wrote Ruksana's story, says that with education "you're not vulnerable anymore to circumstances... you have some defenses." What does she mean by that?
- There is a scene in Ruksana's story where she is confronted by some menacing young men. How is physical vulnerability defined by gender and class?
- There has been a lot of media attention recently on sexual violence in India. Protests led to new laws and a promise to enforce them. But what can be done to change the underlying reasons for what seems like an acceptance of sexual violence?
- What would you like to say to Ruksana, or ask her? What have you learned from her?

SENNA | PERU

Written by: Marie Arana
Narrated by: Salma Hayek

Video On DVD

MEET THE WRITER
SENNA PERFORMS “MASSES”
SENNA PRACTICES HER LINES

Country Guide

PERU

Issue Guides

HUMAN TRAFFICKING & FORCED LABOR
POVERTY

Additional Resource

SENNA'S POETRY

“Poetry is how I turn fear into will.”

Senna’s family struggles to survive in a bleak Peruvian mining town. Her father has dreams for her and so insists she go to school. There she discovers the transformative power of poetry. Her passion and talent seem to ensure she’ll have a better future – and be the success her father dreamed she’d be.

BEFORE YOU WATCH...

- What do you know about Peru? Can you locate it on a map? Do you know what language(s) Peruvians speak? What do you know about their culture?
- Do you like poetry? Why? What does poetry do for you? How does it make you feel?
- What in your life are you really passionate about? How does it nourish you?
- What kind of responsibilities do you take on for your family? How does your family depend on you?
- What kind of dreams do your parents have for you?

NOTE TO TEACHERS: We believe that Senna’s story includes content that is too mature for elementary school students. Middle school teachers, please use your discretion.

SENNA | PERU

AND AFTER...

- In the film Senna says “a warrior’s name was my father’s first gift to me.” What did she mean? Why did her father name her after a warrior princess? What did it signify about his hopes for her?
- Do you have a job before or after school? Why or why not? What do you think it would be like to work as Senna did, cleaning the public toilets?
- Did you notice the heavy sweaters and coats that the children wore in Senna’s school? Were there other things that are different about Senna’s school than your own?
- How does Senna use poetry to bring beauty to her world? What role does art play in life and survival?
- “I know now that the fortune [my father] sought so haplessly was always buried in me. It was just a matter of finding it.” What do you think Senna meant by that – what is the buried treasure she refers to?
- What do you imagine Senna’s life would be like if, like so many others in her community, she hadn’t learned to read – if her father hadn’t encouraged her to go to school?
- What would you like to say to Senna, or ask her? What have you learned from her?

MARIAMA | SIERRA LEONE

Written by: Aminatta Forna
Narrated by: Selena Gomez

Video On DVD
MAKING THE CHAPTER
MARIAMA'S RADIO SHOW

Country Guide
SIERRA LEONE

“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.

BEFORE YOU WATCH...

- What do you know about Sierra Leone? Can you locate it on a map? Do you know what language(s) people there speak? What do you know about their culture?
- You have probably traveled outside your city. Have you ever left your state? Your country? Your continent? If there were anyplace in the universe you could go, where would it be? Why?
- Do you think there is such a thing as a “typical” family? What do you think it looks like?
- Do you have a curfew, or rules about what you wear, where you can go, when and with whom? What kind of arguments do you have with your parents about them?

MARIAMA | SIERRA LEONE

AND AFTER...

- Mariama calls her family “a perfect family” – do you think they are? Does a perfect family exist? What makes it perfect?
- Mariama has big dreams. What are your big dreams?
- Mariama says nothing in the universe can stop her. Why do you think she believes that? Do you believe that? Is there anything in the universe that can stop you? What?
- When Mariama comes across a problem, she finds a solution. When you come across a problem, what do you do?
- Mariama is the first in her family to be educated. She’s been told that older generations fear that educated children will no longer respect their uneducated parents. How would you handle that situation as a child? As a parent?
- Radio is the communications technology most accessible to the people of Sierra Leone. How do you think it helps build communities? Does the technology in your life work in a similar way, or the opposite?
- What would you do if you had a radio show/podcast/blog? How might you use the power of mass communication to effect change?
- Mariama’s generation is the first to come of age after a 10-year civil war. What are the challenges, responsibilities and opportunities that face the young people of Sierra Leone?
- What would you like to say to Mariama, or ask her? What have you learned from her?

AMINA | AFGHANISTAN

Written by: Zarghuna Kargar
Narrated by: Anne Hathaway

Video On DVD
MAKING THE CHAPTER

Country Guide
AFGHANISTAN

Issue Guides
GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE
EARLY & FORCED MARRIAGE
POVERTY

Additional Resources
AFGHAN WOMEN'S WRITING PROJECT
SHABANA BASIJ-RASIKH AT TEDxWOMEN

Note to teachers: We believe that Amina's story includes content that is too mature for elementary school students. Middle school teachers, please use your discretion.

**“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.

BEFORE YOU WATCH...

- What do you know about Afghanistan? Can you locate it on a map? Do you know what language(s) people there speak? What do you know about their culture?
- What are your favorite childhood memories? What does being a child mean to you? What responsibilities should children be expected to have?
- How old were your parents when they were married? When you were born? Does the classmate sitting next to you look ready to be a parent?
- What is a good age to get married? Why?
- Who is going to choose your husband or wife? Why?
- Describe your life on a given day – when you wake up, get ready for school, eat breakfast. How do you get to school? What do you do after school? Now imagine if you were married and had children. Describe a day in that life.
- During the six years the Taliban was in power, girls' education was banned entirely. Today, only 6% of Afghan girls go to high school and only 12% of Afghan women are literate. What would your world be like if the girls and women you know could not read or write?

AMINA | AFGHANISTAN

AND AFTER...

- Amina says that no one bothered to record the day of her birth. Why not?
- Amina's life was markedly without a childhood. Can you imagine yourself, your sister or your mother being forced to grow up like that?
- What do you think it would be like to grow up with a mother who wanted only sons? What do you think it would be like to be born unwanted?
- Amina says that she was privileged because she was able to go to school for a short time. What did her education provide for her?
- Child marriage accounts for 43% of marriages in Afghanistan. Should parents have the right to force their daughters to wed? Or sell them into marriage?
- Do you think Amina's parents had a choice? Did Amina? What if you were her brother? Would you have stood up for her?
- Amina's story is heartbreaking, but she perseveres. Describe a situation when you refused to give up.
- Should treatment of girls in Afghanistan be attributed to culture or religion?
- Amina possesses a remarkable inner strength – to rise up at the risk of retribution. Would you have that courage? What would you have done?
- Amina says that any of the men in her life could kill her for speaking out. Boys, can you imagine being in a position where you could justifiably kill your sister, daughter, or wife simply because she demanded more out of life? Girls, can you imagine that your father or brother might kill you for wanting more?
- “Look into my eyes... I am change.” What do you think “change” looks like?
- What would you say to Amina, or ask her? What have you learned from her?

03 ISSUES

An educated girl can empower herself, lift her family from poverty and help her community prosper. But girls often face barriers to their education. Teachers can structure lessons around one or more of the issues below. Each section includes an issue overview, plus relevant film chapters and additional resources.

GENDER BASED VIOLENCE	30
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GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

Relevant Chapters
YASMIN | EGYPT
AMINA | AFGHANISTAN
RUKSANA | INDIA

Violence is defined as the physical force exerted for the purpose of violating, damaging, or abusing; abusive or unjust exercise of power. Sexual violence is defined as any sexual act that is perpetrated against someone's will.

Every year an estimated 150 million girls are victims of sexual violence. 50% of all sexual assaults are perpetrated on girls under the age of 15.¹⁰

Women and girls too frequently live in a world where violence and abuse is routine.

Girls and women fall prey to domestic violence, sexual assault and abuse, sexual exploitation, trafficking, incest, harmful practices such as female genital mutilation/cutting, as well as so-called honor killings, femicide and murder by intimate partners.

In many countries, like Haiti, reliable statistics are elusive. Of the fraction of rapes and other abuses that are reported, many go unprosecuted.

In Sierra Leone, nearly 90% of females aged 15-49 are estimated to have undergone female genital mutilation/cutting (FGM).¹¹

One woman in three experiences physical and/or sexual violence in her lifetime.¹²

The rate of domestic violence against women is highest in Africa, the Middle East and southeast Asia, where 37% of women have experienced physical or sexual violence inflicted by a partner at some point in their lifetimes. Globally, as many as 38% of murders of women are committed by intimate partners.¹³

In India, the setting aflame of a bride whose dowry is considered insufficient by her new in-laws is distressingly common. In 2012, there were 8,233 “dowry deaths,” almost one every hour.¹⁴

More than 600 million women live in countries where domestic violence is not considered a crime.

In Afghanistan, women can be prosecuted for “moral crimes” including adultery and running away from home. Victims of rape and forced prostitution can be doubly victimized with jail time for the crime of “zina,” or sex outside of marriage.¹⁵

RELEVANT FILM CHAPTERS

Yasmin's Story | Egypt

When 12-year old Yasmin is violently and sexually assaulted, her inner superhero takes charge. Her mother knows the reality and fears that the consequences are not just physical and emotional trauma, but that her daughter has been “ruined.”

Early marriage is still considered a desirable option for some Egyptian girls, especially those in rural areas and of lower socioeconomic status. Sixteen percent of adolescent Egyptian girls are engaged to be married, and many may be abused by their husbands.¹⁶

Roughly 30% of married women in Egypt report experiencing violence at the hands of their husbands,¹⁷ but it is generally assumed that the figure is higher and that most sexual assaults are not reported to the authorities because many women are too fearful or ashamed to seek help.

Amina's Story | Afghanistan

Amina is determined to change a world where girls and women are subject to violence with impunity. She believes that the men in her family – father, brother, husband – could harm or kill her with very little risk of punishment.

In Afghanistan, official statistics are not available and most incidents are assumed to go unreported to police. A 2008 survey recorded an overwhelming majority of women (87.2%) experienced at least one form of physical, sexual or psychological violence or forced marriage, and most (62.0%) experienced multiple forms of violence. The Elimination of Violence Against Women law, passed by presidential decree in 2009, criminalized child marriage, forced marriage, the selling and buying of women, baad (giving away a woman or girl to settle a dispute), forced self-immolation and 17 other acts of violence against women.¹⁸ But the EAW law, never well-enforced, is under threat. Some conservative members of Parliament are fighting it on the grounds the law is “un-Islamic,” and EAW has been the target of public protests, including a rally at Kabul University where hundreds of students denounced it as a “Western” import.¹⁹

It is estimated that more than 2,000 Afghan women and girls attempt suicide each year by setting themselves on fire, with experts citing early and forced marriages and domestic violence as the primary impetus.²⁰

GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

Ruksana's Story | India

Ruksana and her family are “pavement dwellers.” Although Ruksana colors a fanciful world where all is beautiful and safe, life on the streets of Kolkata can be especially precarious for girls – dangerous enough that Ruksana and her sisters are sent by their parents to a shelter at night so they’ll be safe from assault.

Women in India face violence and discrimination from before the day they are born. The 2011 Indian census found there are 914 girls for every 1,000 boys among children six or younger. A 2011 study in *The Lancet* attributes the gender gap to the four to 12 million selective abortions of girls that have occurred in India over the past three decades.²¹

Historically, sexually violent crimes in India were not reported because of the social stigma attached to rape and molestation, but reporting has increased in recent years. According to the Indian National Crimes Records Bureau, there were 244,270 crimes against women reported to the police in 2012, a dramatic increase from previous years. Only 26.4% of cases resulted in a conviction.²²

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:

[World Health Organization, *Violence Against Women Fact Sheet*](http://www.who.int)
www.who.int

[UNICEF Report, *Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting*](http://www.unicef.org)
www.unicef.org

[UN Women, *Annual Report 2012-2013*](http://www.unwomen.org)
www.unwomen.org

EARLY & FORCED MARRIAGE

Relevant Chapters:

AMINA | AFGHANISTAN

AZMERA | ETHIOPIA

YASMIN | EGYPT

***Child marriage** is defined as a formal marriage or informal union before age 18. **Forced marriage** is defined as a union made without the full and free consent of one or both parties, as a result of physical or psychological pressure or abuse.*

14 million girls under 18 are married every year.

38,000 girls are married every day.

13 girls were married while you read this paragraph.²³

Despite the fact that many nations have laws setting 18 as the legal age for marriage, this centuries-old tradition stubbornly persists. Early marriage is often meant to protect girls, providing a financial stability that many families don't have and can't offer their daughters. But when girls marry young, the cycles of poverty and ignorance continue.

Girls who marry young are more likely to become young mothers. In the developing world, 7.3 million girls under 18 give birth every year, and two million of them are under age 14.²⁴ Motherhood in childhood is a global problem – and the maternal mortality rate is staggering.

Childbirth is the number one cause of death for young women age 15 to 19 in the developing world.²⁵

Once a girl is wed, her education almost always comes to an end. Her value is now in her service to her husband, to the home and in bearing children. Girls with no education are three times more likely than those with a secondary or higher education to marry or enter into union before age 18.²⁶

But when girls go to school for at least eight years they are less likely to be married as children and they stay healthier, have fewer and healthier children, and earn more income for their families.²⁷

EARLY & FORCED MARRIAGE

RELEVANT FILM CHAPTERS

Azmera's Story | Ethiopia

With her brother's support, 13-year old Azmera refuses an arranged marriage, insisting on her right to education and freedom. Together, they challenge their society's traditions by standing up for what they believe, and for Azmera's future.

Early marriage was outlawed in Ethiopia in 2005 and the legal age for marriage is now 18. But the tradition persists, especially in rural villages and remote areas where some parents consent to a daughter's marriage when she is as young as age 10. Almost half of girls in Ethiopia are married by age 18, but in the Amhara region, for example, 74% are married by age 18 and half of all girls married before their 15th birthday.²⁸

In Ethiopia, 80% of married girls have received no education and only 3% of married girls aged 15-19 are in school.²⁹

Yasmin's Story | Egypt

Yasmin sees herself as a superhero, but her mother knows just how human – and vulnerable – her daughter really is. After Yasmin is assaulted, her mother fears her daughter's future has been compromised.

In the Arab region, one in seven girls is married before her 18th birthday.³⁰ Egypt – the most populous Arab country – is home to the largest number of child brides in that region. In 2012, 16% of girls under 18 were married.³¹ Nearly a quarter of child brides in Egypt are married to men a decade or more older.³²

A successful campaign in 2008 changed the legal age of marriage in Egypt to 18, but recently the Egyptian Parliament submitted new proposals to reduce the legal age for girls to marry to 14.

EARLY & FORCED MARRIAGE

Amina's Story | Afghanistan

Amina is sold into marriage for \$5,000. In a single transaction her life is forever transformed. But this child bride refuses to remain quiet. She is a voice for change, leading others to rise with her against a culture of repression.

Afghanistan's legal age for marriage is 16 – or 15 with parental consent – well below the internationally recommended standard of 18. Thirty-nine percent of girls are married before they turn 18. In a survey conducted by Global Rights, girls who had married young were more likely to experience violence than older brides, and girls in forced marriage reported nearly twice as much physical and sexual violence as those who were not forced into marriage. The Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission reports that between 60-80% of all marriages in Afghanistan are forced.³³

Early marriage too often leads to early childbirth. Girls, whose pelvises are not yet fully developed, face risks of serious complications in childbirth, like fistula, a hole in the birth canal caused by prolonged labor. The damage can be lasting and lead to social ostracism and loss of income or financial support. Thirty-two percent of all deaths of girls aged 15-19 in Afghanistan are pregnancy related.³⁴

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:

Melka's Story

Human Rights Watch Report, *Afghanistan: Ending Child Marriage and Domestic Violence*

<http://www.hrw.org>

United Nations Population Fund Report, *Marrying Too Young*

<http://www.unfpa.org>

NATURAL DISASTERS & DISPLACED PERSONS

Relevant Chapter:
WADLEY | HAITI

A natural disaster is defined as a sudden, catastrophic event that is caused by the forces of nature and that affects many people.

A displaced person is defined someone who is forced to leave his or her home or country because of war, persecution, or natural disaster; a refugee.

Between 2008-2012, an estimated 143.9 million people in 125 countries were newly displaced by rapid-onset disasters.³⁵

Natural disasters come in many forms such as flooding, earthquakes, volcanoes, hurricanes and tornadoes. Countries are susceptible to different natural disasters depending on their location and geography. Often the event itself is over quickly, but the destruction left behind is enormous and the recovery process can take years.

Poor communities are the most vulnerable to the effects of natural disasters. Shelter is often fragile, economies are tenuous, and there are few resources available to rebuild when homes and businesses are destroyed. The impact of a natural disaster on an already struggling system is devastating; an extremely difficult situation becomes that much worse.

Girls, usually the most vulnerable among the vulnerable, often suffer disproportionately in the aftermath of a natural disaster, forced to make sacrifices and take on greater responsibility. When food is scarce, women and girls are often the first to forfeit their meals so that the men, boys and youngest children can eat.³⁶

Girls are more likely than boys to be pulled out of school following a natural disaster... and less likely to return.

Refugee camps are often scary places for girls: there is little to no security and usually no electricity to light the way at night, making a girl an easier target for assault, even when she simply wants to use the bathroom after dark.³⁷

HUMAN TRAFFICKING & FORCED LABOR

RELEVANT FILM CHAPTER

Suma's Story | Nepal

When Suma's parents can't afford to care for her, she is bonded to a master: her childhood exchanged for room, board and one set of clothing a year. Away from her family and forced into servitude, Suma finds salvation in learning to read and write.

The Asia-Pacific region, which includes Nepal, accounts for the largest number of forced laborers in the world – 11.7 million (56% of the global total), followed by Africa at 3.7 million and Latin America with 1.8 million.⁴⁶ In some cases, it is culturally acceptable for a child's parents to give or sell him or her into bonded servitude, as it has been in Suma's region of Nepal with the practice of Kamlari.

Although the practice of Kamlari has been illegal since 2000, the government only recently officially announced its abolition. So far, it has proven impossible to eradicate. Extreme poverty sometimes drives parents to sell their children (more often their daughters) for a small stipend, or sometimes bond them, as Suma's parents did, solely in return for room and board. Kamlaris are rarely allowed to go to school and often grow up illiterate.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:

[Manjushree Thapa, "Extraordinary Girls: The Former Kamlari of Nepal"](#)
www.roomtoread.org

[United States Department of Labor, *What are Child Labor and Forced Labor?*](#)
www.dol.gov

[Apne App Women Worldwide](#)
www.apneaap.org

HUMAN TRAFFICKING & FORCED LABOR

Relevant Chapter:
SUMA | NEPAL

Human trafficking is defined as the recruitment, transport, transfer, harboring or receipt of a person by such means as threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, or fraud or deception for the purpose of exploitation.

Almost 21 million people are trapped in jobs into which they were coerced or deceived and which they cannot leave. 59% are women and 17% more are girls.⁴⁰

It happens in nearly every country in the world. A child in Ethiopia is snatched on her way to school. A young woman from Indonesia is recruited by a phony employment agency and taken to Hong Kong. A family from India is deceived into bonded labor. A mother from Moldova is abducted to Kosovo. Some are lured by the promise of high-paying jobs, others by a fresh start in a another country. They are told they will be waitresses or perhaps house-cleaners. Instead they are forced into prostitution, pornography, modern day slavery. They are easy targets, and they are tricked.

Sometimes it's not trickery or abduction, it's just survival, a way for the extremely poor to secure food and shelter for themselves or their children.

In Peru, human trafficking thrives, often in the gold mining regions. Victims work in illegal mines or are forced into prostitution in mining center brothels.⁴¹

And in Cambodia, thousands of girls – sometimes as young as age 10 – are reportedly trafficked each year, forced to work as sex slaves, domestic servants or beggars.

Worldwide, almost 27% of all trafficking victims are children. And of every three child trafficking victims, two are girls.⁴²

Of the 600,000 to 800,000 people trafficked across international borders each year, more than 70% are female and half are children.⁴³ Fifty-eight percent of victims – male and female – are trafficked for sexual exploitation.⁴⁴

Globally, trafficked forced laborers produce an estimated \$32 billion in profits each year.⁴⁵

This may seem surprising, but in many parts of the world women tracking women and girls is the norm. In 30% of the countries which provided information on the gender of traffickers, women make up the largest proportion.

HUMAN TRAFFICKING & FORCED LABOR

RELEVANT FILM CHAPTER

Suma's Story | Nepal

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www.roomtoread.org

[United States Department of Labor, *What are Child Labor and Forced Labor?*](#)
www.dol.gov

POVERTY

Relevant Chapter:
ALL GIRL RISING CHAPTERS

***Poverty** is defined as lacking a usual or socially acceptable amount of money or material possessions. Absolute poverty or destitution refers to the deprivation of basic human needs, which commonly include food, water, sanitation, clothing, shelter, healthcare and education. As of 2008, the international extreme poverty line has been set by the World Bank at US\$1.25 a day.*

1.4 billion people around the world live on \$1.25 a day. The great majority of them are women.⁴⁷

More than 30% of children in developing countries – about 600 million – live on less than US\$1 a day. They often lack food, shelter, healthcare and the basic necessities for survival. More than 500 million children – one in three – have no access at all to sanitation facilities. And some 400 million children – one in five – have no access to safe water. Unsafe water and sanitation cause about 4,000 child deaths per day.⁴⁸

Every 3.6 seconds someone dies of starvation. Usually it is a child under the age of 5.⁴⁹

In some societies women and girls – and the sick and the disabled – eat whatever food remains after the males in the family have finished. This “food discrimination” results in chronic under-nutrition and ill-health.

In the developing world, girls are twice as likely to die from malnutrition as boys.⁵⁰

Living in poverty is the underlying reason many girls are not in school, or can’t stay in school. It exacerbates risk factors for girls and magnifies their vulnerability. For example, a long walk to school means a girl faces the risk of assault or abduction each day – and schools in poor, rural communities are often far from home. Poor countries have compromised education systems with fewer schools and inadequate resources. Poor families within those societies struggle to pay school fees, and to buy uniforms, books and supplies, even exams. When poor parents must choose which children to educate, it is usually their sons.

As a result of these factors and more, fewer than half of the girls in the developing world will ever reach secondary school.

POVERTY

RELEVANT FILM CHAPTERS

All of the girls of Girl Rising have been profoundly affected by poverty. Suma's family could not afford to keep and care for her at home, so she was forced into bonded servitude and exploited by her masters. Like many orphans, Sokha was left to fend for herself, spending her days sifting through garbage in search of something to sell. Ruksana, Wadley and Senna live in squalor, in makeshift homes built from scrap materials. Azmera inhabits one of the world's poorest countries as does Mariama, and she, Yasmin and Amina live in societies where child marriages are a cultural norm and can sometimes be seen as a response to poverty, even as they perpetuate it.

We know, and research proves it, that one of the best ways to end cycles of poverty is to value, empower and educate girls. In the girls of Girl Rising we see what the future can be if they, and the millions of girls like them, are given the opportunity to design their own lives, reach their true potential, and contribute to the betterment of their families, communities, countries and the world.

"I believe in a world of justice and human rights for all. A world where girls can grow up free of fear of abuse. A world where women are treated with the respect and dignity that is their right. A world where poverty is not acceptable. My dear young friends, you can make this your world." – **Secretary General Ban Ki-moon, speaking to international students at Model UN.**

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:

[The Chicago Council on Global Affairs Report, Girls Grow: A Vital Force In Rural Economies](http://www.thechicagocouncil.org)

<http://www.thechicagocouncil.org>

[The United Nations, The Millennium Development Goals Report 2013](http://www.un.org)

<http://www.un.org>

CALL TO ACTION

SHARE HER STORY
INVEST IN HER
STAND WITH HER

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Share her story. Invest in her. Stand with her.

These are our rallying cries. Share her story to spread awareness about the importance of educating girls. Invest in her by raising funds and volunteering to support organizations that empower girls. Stand with her to inspire global leaders to act on behalf of girls.

JOIN THE MOVEMENT

A message from Girl Rising Executive Director Holly Gordon:

“Girl Rising has unleashed spectacular energy and support for girls around the world and you can be part of this growing movement. To the educators – you’ve already signed on simply by bringing Girl Rising to your students. And to the students – the ways you might contribute are limited only by your imaginations. At Girl Rising we believe that transforming the future starts with small acts today. So take a look at what some of your fellow champions have done, get inspired and get going. Change is possible – and it can be so much fun!”

- **Portraits:** Jenni, a high school student from Colorado, painted girls from the film for her senior project. One portrait already sold for \$1,000 – which Jenni donated to the Girl Rising Fund.
- **A flash dance mob:** Alana, a St. John’s University student, organized her friends to surprise, entertain and raise awareness about girls’ education.
- **Animated videos:** Josh, a 13-year old from Sydney, got creative. His videos have been seen on YouTube thousands of times.
- **A rush hour concert:** A group of 4th and 5th graders formed a sextet and performed at a San Francisco train station.

Now, what can YOU do?



SHARE HER STORY

Watching Girl Rising and participating in the discussion is a good first step. Other things you might suggest your students can do:

- Learn more about the girls, the artists, the authors, the issues and the film. Visit the [Girl Rising website](#).
- Screen the film for others. Anyone, anywhere can do it. See how [here](#). And check out the Girl Rising [screening kit](#).
- “Girl Rising Voices” (on the DVD) shows quotes from girls around the world expressing their dreams. Make your own “quote slide shows” or choose a girl and write about how and why her quote resonates.
- Write to local newspapers or radio and TV stations to publicize any action you take on behalf of girls, including Girl Rising screenings.
- Create! Poems, art and songs can unite and inspire others to think about and act on behalf of girls.
- Share *your* story: make videos of how you have “risen” to conquer obstacles, or videos of how others are confronting their own obstacles.
- Start a school club or lecture series. Invite guests from girls’ or women’s groups or Skype with a representative from one of our NGO partners.
- Express your enthusiasm. Follow Girl Rising on Facebook [10x10-Girl Rising] and @GirlRising on Twitter and tweet, like and post away.
- Celebrate International Women’s Day on March 8th and International Day of the Girl on October 11th. Plan a screening or event in your own community.



INVEST IN HER

Girl Rising partners with non-profit organizations that have proven records of providing life-changing services to girls every day. Organizations like these are perpetually in need of volunteers and, especially, funds. One option is to raise money for the [Girl Rising Fund](#), a 501(c)(3) fund which distributes donations among our NGO partners, all of which operate girls' education initiatives that provide resources like scholarships, health care services and critical life skills training.

[Click here](#) to see how our partners use the funds they receive.

Some ideas for how students can support girls' education:

- Hold a bake sale, a yard sale, a 5k race, a silent auction, a basketball game, a car wash, dance-a-thon – use your imagination!
- Organize a poetry slam, talent show, or art competition based on the theme of girls' education, and sell tickets. Then post the poetry, performance or art online to help spread the message.
- Volunteer with a local, national or global charitable organization of your choice that supports empowering girls.
- [Shop the Girl Rising store!](#) (a portion of proceeds goes to the Girl Rising Fund)



STAND WITH HER

- **Join the Girl Rising movement** to help motivate global leaders to take action. Girl Rising works to identify how policy-shapers can support and protect girls. We'll keep you informed about legislation you can support, actions you can take in your own neighborhood and other ways you can stand with girls everywhere.
- **Support The Girl Declaration**, a call-to-action by Nike's The Girl Effect to put girls at the heart of the post-2015 development agenda.
- **Advocate for Change**. Join our partner Girl Up/ United Nations Foundation and petition your members of Congress to co-sponsor The Girls Count Act of 2014.



COUNTRY GUIDES

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SIERRA LEONE	72

To find statistics and information for the U.S., Canada and hundreds of other countries visit www.cia.gov.



AFGHANISTAN

Capital City: Kabul (pop. 3.6 million)

Population of Afghanistan: 31.1 million

Percentage of population living in urban areas: 23%

Government: Islamic republic

Mobile/Cellular Telephones: 17.5 million

Natural Resources: Natural gas, petroleum, coal, copper, chromite, talc, barytes, sulfur, lead, zinc, iron ore, salt, precious and semiprecious stones

**All statistical information in this section from the CIA World Factbook:
<https://www.cia.gov/>*

ETHNIC GROUP DISTRIBUTION

Pashtun	42%
Tajik	27%
Hazara	9%
Uzbek	9%
Aimak	4%
Turkmen	3%
Baloch	2%
Other	4%

RELIGIOUS GROUP DISTRIBUTION

Sunni Muslim	80%
Shia Muslim	19%
Other	1%

LANGUAGES

Afghan Persian or Dari (official)	50%
Pashto (official)	35%
Turkic languages (primarily Uzbek & Turkmen)	11%
30 minor languages	4%

LITERACY

Females	12.6%
Males	43.1%

LIFE EXPECTANCY AT BIRTH

50 years

ECONOMY

Gross Domestic Product	US\$19.85 billion
GDP per capita	US\$1,100
Population living on less than \$1.25 per day	36%
Unemployment Rate	35%

Imports US\$6.39 billion in machinery and other capital goods, food, textiles, and petroleum products.

Exports US\$376 million in opium, fruits and nuts, handwoven carpets, wool, cotton, hides and pelts, and precious and semiprecious gems.

AFGHANISTAN is a landlocked country located in Southern Asia and bordered by Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, China, Pakistan, and Iran. It is a very dry landscape, consisting mainly of rugged mountains, barren plateaus, and wind-swept deserts. Its most prominent feature is the Hindu Kush, a towering mountain range stretching from central Afghanistan to northern Pakistan.

HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL BACKGROUND

Afghanistan is an ancient civilization and yet one of the world's least developed countries. Nestled in the heart of Asia, Afghanistan connects the West to the East, acting as the gateway to India and an important trade stop on the Silk Road. Animositities among Afghanistan's more than 20 major ethnic groups, each with its own language and customs, led to the epidemic of civil wars that have plagued Afghanistan from antiquity. Foreign intervention has marked Afghan history as well, with both Russia and Britain fighting to gain control over this strategic location. During the last several decades of war, the infrastructure of Afghanistan has suffered serious damage. Due to continual conflict, more than 425,000 Afghans remain internally displaced, with 2.7 million residing outside of their country as refugees.⁵¹

After a 10-year war with Russia ended in the mid-1990s, the Taliban, an extremist Islamic group, seized power in Afghanistan and imposed extreme interpretations of sharia (Islamic Law) under which Shiites and non-Muslims were persecuted as heretics, women were banned from working outside the home, girls were banned from school, and movies, TV programs, photographs, and paintings were prohibited. The Taliban harbored (and was financed by) Osama bin Laden and his Al Qaeda organization, which was responsible for the terrorist attacks against the U.S. on September 11, 2001. Following the attacks, the destruction of the Taliban and Al Qaeda became the main goal of the U.S.-led anti-terrorist coalition and the U.S. launched a military campaign in Afghanistan, which eventually led to a shift in political power from the oppressive Taliban regime. Hamid Karzai won the country's first presidential election in 2004 and was re-elected in 2009, but political instability is still the norm and the Taliban has experienced a resurgence. Afghanistan is the world's leading producer of opium, a key source of revenue for the Taliban and other anti-government groups; poppy cultivation in Afghanistan increased 57% from 2011 to 2012.⁵²

AFGHANISTAN

CHALLENGES FOR GIRLS

Since the overthrow of Taliban rule in 2001, there have been major improvements in the rights of women and girls in Afghanistan, but the country is still one of the most challenging places in the world to be born a girl. Early and forced marriage, domestic violence, the health risks of early pregnancy and childbirth: a girl's life in Afghanistan is too often one of servitude, marked by powerlessness and fear. Girls have been attacked, poisoned, maimed with acid and killed simply for attempting to go to school.

In 2009, the Law on the Elimination of Violence Against Women (EVAW) banned and set new penalties for underage and forced marriage, domestic violence, rape, forced prostitution, and other abuses against women, but enforcement has been weak and the law is under threat. Human Rights Watch estimates at least 600 women and girls are imprisoned for “moral crimes” such as flight from marriage, domestic violence, or sex outside of marriage even when it's rape or forced prostitution.

EDUCATION IN AFGHANISTAN

About one in five Afghans is a school-aged child. That's one of the highest proportions in the world. At present, only 32% of boys and 13% of girls complete primary school, but Afghanistan is in the midst of massive change. After years of exclusion, girls are permitted to go to school again, and today make up roughly 36% of students in the country.⁵³ There are currently more girls enrolled in school than at any time in Afghanistan's history. Although the numbers are encouraging, school conditions are often poor and nearly half a million girls who are enrolled in school do not regularly attend. Serious barriers to education remain, including the high cost of schooling, limited resources (including supplies, books, desks and school buildings themselves), and the lack of trained female teachers. After the age of 13, female students must be taught by women, but just 30% of teachers are female and the vast majority work in and around urban areas, with more than one third based in the capital, Kabul. In contrast, in Khost province on the border with Pakistan, just 3% of teachers are female. In neighboring Paktika, this drops to 1%.⁵⁴ An additional challenge is the persistent conflict within the country. The gains made by women and girls in the last decade hang in the balance amidst unrelenting struggles for control.



CAMBODIA

Capital City: Phnom Penh (pop. 1.5 million)

Population of Cambodia: 15.2 million

Percentage of population living in urban areas: 20%

Government: Constitutional monarchy

Mobile/Cellular Telephones: 13.7 million

Natural Resources: Oil and gas, timber, gemstones, iron ore, manganese, phosphates, hydro-power potential

*All statistical information in this section from the CIA World Factbook:
<https://www.cia.gov/>

ETHNIC GROUP DISTRIBUTION

Khmer	95%
Vietnamese	5%
Chinese	1%

RELIGIOUS GROUP DISTRIBUTION

Buddhist	96.4%
Muslim	2.1%

LANGUAGES

Khmer (official)	95%
Other languages:	
French	
English	
Vietnamese	

LITERACY

Females	70.9%
Males	85.1%

LIFE EXPECTANCY AT BIRTH

63 years

ECONOMY

Gross Domestic Product	US\$14.3 billion
GDP per capita	US\$2,400
Population living on less than \$1.25 per day	20%
Unemployment Rate	0%**

*** although there is practically no unemployment, most Cambodians – 80% – work in the informal sector, where wages are unregulated and very low.*

Imports US\$8.84 billion in petroleum products, cigarettes, gold, construction material, machinery, motor vehicles, and pharmaceutical products.

Exports US\$6.15 billion in clothing, timber, rubber, rice, fish, tobacco, and footwear.

CAMBODIA, a Southeast Asian kingdom, borders the Gulf of Thailand and shares the Indochinese peninsula with Vietnam and Laos. Cambodia's tropical climate is characterized by high temperatures and humidity year round, with marked wet and dry seasons of equal length. Monsoon season runs from May to November. The country consists mostly of flatlands and rolling hills, with high mountains rising along its northern border with Thailand. The Mekong River flows through the country from the north, southward into Vietnam.

HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL BACKGROUND

Cambodia has a rich and vibrant history. The land now known as Cambodia was built on a number of smaller, fractured kingdoms that gradually merged to become the greatest empire in Southeast Asia, the Khmer Empire, which ruled between the ninth and 15th centuries. It was during this long period that most of the country's magnificent temples were built, including Angkor Wat, which is still considered an architectural marvel. In 1863, Cambodia became a protectorate of France, thus beginning a 90-year period of colonial rule. Cambodia won independence in 1953 and reinstated its monarchy under the rule of King Sihanouk.

The communist Khmer Rouge seized power in 1975 after a vicious five-year civil war in which the United States, allied with the Cambodian government, actively participated with financial support and a sustained bombing campaign. During the regime's brutal four-year command, an estimated two million Cambodians died from torture, disease or starvation. The Khmer Rouge sought to eradicate traces of Western cultural influence and intellectualism, and therefore targeted educated middle and upper class Cambodians. As most of the urban population was exiled to the countryside, Cambodia's economy suffered significantly. Vietnam invaded Cambodia in December of 1978, and the regime was stripped of power soon thereafter. A UN-brokered deal in 1991 created a democratic government, but recovery from genocide is gradual, and the devastation of a skilled workforce and an institutional contempt for education have left an enduring and unhappy legacy.

Over the past two decades, Cambodia's economy has ranked among the fastest growing economies, unmatched by any other post-conflict country. However, many challenges remain. One-fifth of Cambodians still live below the poverty line (\$1.25 per day) and roughly 50% of the population live on less than \$2 a day.⁵⁵

CAMBODIA

CHALLENGES FOR GIRLS

Gender-based violence is rampant throughout Cambodia. Poverty and a cultural acceptance of violence against women contribute to the thousands of girls said to be trafficked within Cambodia each year. Girls as young as age 10 are forced to work as sex slaves, domestic servants, or beggars. Cambodia has been labeled by various international organizations as a key transit and destination point in the global commercial sex trade.

Domestic violence is widely tolerated by both men and women, especially by husbands against wives: 46% of Cambodian women believe that wife-beating is justified under certain circumstances. And, perhaps due to social custom, limited education or lack of awareness of legal rights, more than 25% of women who have been subjected to sexual or physical domestic violence do not think they have been abused.⁵⁶

EDUCATION IN CAMBODIA

Today, while 80% of Cambodian children attend primary school, just 32% continue on to secondary school. Only 2% of villages have a secondary school, and just one in four secondary school students are girls.⁵⁷ Among the reasons for that gender discrepancy are that families consider a boy's education to be more economically rewarding, a belief that over-educating a girl might be a handicap to marriage prospects, and fear that a girl might be abducted or harmed while commuting to school. Nationally half of all Cambodian girls work – typically in the family field or in the home – instead of going to school.⁵⁸



EGYPT
26.0000° N, 30.0000° E

SAUDI
ARABIA

SUDAN

EGYPT

Capital City: Cairo (pop. 10.9 million)

Population of Egypt: 85.3 million

Percentage of population living in urban areas: 43.4%

Government: Republic

Mobile/Cellular Telephones: 83.4 million

Natural Resources: Petroleum, natural gas, iron ore, phosphates, manganese, limestone, gypsum, talc, asbestos, lead, rare earth elements, zinc

**All statistical information in this section from the CIA World Factbook:
<https://www.cia.gov/>*

RELIGIOUS GROUP DISTRIBUTION

Muslim, primarily Sunni	90%
Christian	10%

LANGUAGES

Arabic (official)

LITERACY

Females	63.5%
Males	80.3%

LIFE EXPECTANCY AT BIRTH

73 years

ECONOMY

Gross Domestic Product	US\$255 billion
GDP per capita	US\$6,700
Population living on less than \$1.25 per day	20%
Unemployment Rate	3.5%

Imports US\$58.76 billion in machinery and equipment, foodstuffs, chemicals, wood products, and fuels.

Exports US\$28.37 billion in crude oil and petroleum products, cotton, textiles, metal products, chemicals, and processed foods.

EGYPT is located in North Africa and bordered by Israel, Libya, and Sudan, as well as by both the Mediterranean Sea and Red Sea. Egypt is primarily desert, with only 3.5% of its land cultivated and permanently settled. The famous Nile River prevents the land from becoming a complete desert and helps support 99% of the population.

HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL BACKGROUND

Egypt was the birthplace of one of the world's first societies, about 5,000 years ago. The waters of the Nile River (the longest river in the world) were a wellspring for drinking water, irrigation and civilization itself. The fertile soil of the Nile River valley allowed for farming and the development of permanent settlements which grew into the culture that created hieroglyphics, built the Pyramids and remained the preeminent civilization in the Mediterranean world for nearly 30 centuries.

Alexander the Great conquered Egypt in 332 B.C., beginning a dynasty that ruled for 300 years. Since then, Egypt was occupied by every major empire from the Ancient Greeks to modern Great Britain. In 1953, Egypt declared independence from colonial power and established a republic. Egypt's third president, Anwar al-Sadat, made history by signing the Egyptian-Israeli Peace Treaty (also known as the Camp David Peace Treaty). After Sadat's assassination in 1981, Hosni Mubarak took the office, where he remained for nearly 30 years.

January 2011 brought dramatic change, as the "Arab Spring" spread to Egypt. Inspired by the popular uprising in neighboring Tunisia, Egyptians fed up with Mubarak's oppressive rule, as well as with high unemployment and high prices, launched massive pro-democracy protests in Cairo's Tahrir Square, calling for Mubarak's resignation. He did resign, but Egypt's turmoil was far from over. The Muslim Brotherhood's Mohamed Morsi became Egypt's first Islamist president, but after one tumultuous year Morsi himself was deposed by the military in a popularly supported coup, leaving Egypt in the state of political instability and uncertainty that continues today.

EGYPT

CHALLENGES FOR GIRLS

Egypt has been considered relatively progressive in its region with regard to women, but Egyptian society remains deeply entrenched in customs of patriarchy, including genital mutilation and early marriage. More than 90% of girls in Egypt are still subjected to female genital mutilation, though this rate has been declining.⁶³ Sixteen percent of Egypt's adolescent girls are married and young brides are much more likely to experience abuse at the hands of their husbands than those who marry later.⁶⁴

EDUCATION IN EGYPT

Egypt has the most robust education system in the region, with 95.4% of school-aged children enrolled in primary school. Ninety-six percent of boys are enrolled in primary school, with girls lagging only slightly at 94.7%, although rural Upper Egypt shows a greater gender gap, with up to 11% fewer girls in school. And nearly three million children between the ages of six and 18 have never enrolled in or have dropped out of school.⁶⁵ Most of these are poor children in remote rural communities who often must work to help support their families.

The problems facing the Egyptian education system are less about parity and more about quality. In a 2013 report, Egypt was ranked last out of 148 countries surveyed for the quality of primary education. Cited as key issues were poorly trained teachers, classroom overcrowding and lack of school materials.⁶⁶



Capital City: Addis Ababa (pop. 2.9 million)

Population of Ethiopia: 93.9 million

Percentage of population living in urban areas: 17%
(Increasing by approx. 4% each year)

Government: Constitutional monarchy/multi party democracy

Mobile/Cellular Telephones: 829,000

Natural Resources: Small reserves of gold, platinum, copper, potash, natural gas, hydro-power

*All statistical information in this section from the CIA World Factbook:
<https://www.cia.gov/>

ETHNIC GROUP DISTRIBUTION

Oromo	34.5%
Amhara	26.9%
Somali	6.2%
Tigraway	6.1%
Sidama	4%

RELIGIOUS GROUP DISTRIBUTION

Orthodox Christian	43.5%
Muslim	33.9%
Protestant	18.6%

LANGUAGES

Oromigna	33.8%
Amharic (official)	29.3%
Somaligna	6.2%
Tigrigna	5.9%

(90+ dialects represented in Ethiopia)

LITERACY

Females	35.1%
Males	50.3%

LIFE EXPECTANCY AT BIRTH

60 years

ECONOMY

Gross Domestic Product	US\$41.89 billion
GDP per capita	US\$1,400
Population living on less than \$1.25 per day	29.2%
Unemployment Rate	N/A

Imports US\$10.6 billion in food and live animals, petroleum and petroleum products, chemicals, machinery, motor vehicles, cereals, and textiles.

Exports US\$3.16 billion in coffee, khat, gold, leather products, live animals, and oilseeds.

ETHIOPIA is a landlocked country bordered by Eritrea, Sudan, South Sudan, Kenya, and Somalia. Ethiopia is almost twice the size of the state of Texas in the United States. The country consists mostly of rugged mountains and high plateaus. Ethiopia is also home to the Great Rift Valley and the Danakil Depression, 100 meters (328 feet) below sea level.

HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL BACKGROUND

Often called the “Cradle of Humanity” for the renowned paleontological discoveries in its sands (the most famous being the early hominid “Lucy” in 1974), Ethiopia is Africa’s oldest independent country and remains a tightly woven tapestry of diverse people, traditions and beliefs.

The Old Testament of the Bible tells of the Queen of Sheba (Sheba is considered to be modern day Ethiopia and Yemen) visiting King Solomon in Jerusalem. Ethiopian lore holds that she bore his son, Menelik, who founded the Ethiopian Solomonic Dynasty that continued for nearly 3,000 years and that Menelik brought the Ark of the Covenant (the chest containing the tablets of the Ten Commandments) with him to Ethiopia, where it remains hidden today.⁶⁷

Haile Selassie, called “The Lion of Judah,” became Emperor in 1930 and oversaw the creation of the country’s first Constitution in 1931. Italian forces under Benito Mussolini invaded Ethiopia in 1936, sending Selassie into exile in the United Kingdom, from whence he returned in 1941 to drive out the Italian occupiers with the help of U.K. forces. Selassie was ousted from office in 1974 in a coup by a military group called the Dergue, which declared Ethiopia a Marxist state. Colonel Mengistu Hailu Mariam came to power in 1977 and launched a violent counter-insurgency campaign known as the Red Terror, estimated to have killed tens of thousands of Ethiopians. Since Mengistu’s ouster in 1991, the country has been governed by the Ethiopian People’s Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF), which has moved to establish a democratic political system and a free-market economy.⁶⁸

A predominantly agrarian society with 80% of the population working in subsistence farming, Ethiopia’s landscape and climate leaves it susceptible to severe drought and desertification, thus the country relies heavily on international food aid.⁶⁹ The country was devastated by a series of famines beginning in the late 1970s during which an estimated one million Ethiopians perished. Ethiopia remains one of the poorest countries in the world, with the majority of its population living on less than \$2 per day. More than 50% of Ethiopian children ages 5-14 are working.⁷⁰

ETHIOPIA

CHALLENGES FOR GIRLS

According to the Ethiopian government, girls and women are entitled to all civil liberties, including legal rights, voting rights, and equal protection under the law. However, these laws are loosely enforced, and in many areas of Ethiopia – particularly rural regions where deeply rooted traditions dictate social norms – girls are not given rights or recognition equal to boys. They are typically viewed as valuable only for marriage, childbearing, and household labor.

Although early marriage was outlawed in Ethiopia in 2005 (the legal age for marriage is now 18), the centuries-old tradition endures in remote areas, where some parents consent to a daughter's marriage as early as age 10. Generally, girls living in rural villages marry earlier than girls in urban areas. Forty-nine percent of girls in all of Ethiopia are married by age 18, but in the Amhara region, for example, 74% are married by age 18 and half of all girls are married before their 15th birthday.⁷¹ Early childbearing is the leading cause of death for girls 15-19 in Ethiopia.⁷²

Ethiopian girls grow up in a world where 81% of women believe a husband is justified in beating his wife for reasons like neglecting the children, going out without telling him or burning the food.⁷³

EDUCATION IN ETHIOPIA

Ethiopia has one of the lowest primary school enrollment rates and one of the highest illiteracy rates in the world.⁷⁴ Child marriage, poverty and gender discrimination account for poor school attendance among girls, who are also more likely than boys to have to leave school to work.

Distance to school is one of the most common reasons for non-attendance.⁷⁵ Parents in Ethiopia worry that the long walk from rural homes to school is too dangerous and, rather than risk molestation or abduction, many girls are kept home where they do domestic chores or care for siblings.

Uneducated girls are more likely to be married younger, and married girls are rarely allowed to continue their education. In Ethiopia, 72% of girls with no education have been married, compared to 22% of girls with nine or more years of education.⁷⁶



HAITI

Capital City: Port-Au-Prince (2.1 million)

Population of Haiti: 9.9 million

Percentage of population living in urban areas: 52%

Government: Republic

Mobile/Cellular Telephones: 4.2 million

Natural Resources: Bauxite, copper, calcium carbonate, gold, marble, hydro-power

**All statistical information in this section from the CIA World Factbook:
<https://www.cia.gov/>*

ETHNIC GROUP DISTRIBUTION

Black	95%
White and bi-racial	5%

RELIGIOUS GROUP DISTRIBUTION

Roman Catholic	80%
Baptist	10%
Pentecostal	4%

LANGUAGES

French
Creole

LITERACY

Females	51.2%
Males	54.8%

LIFE EXPECTANCY AT BIRTH

63 years

ECONOMY

Gross Domestic Product	US\$7.895 billion
GDP per capita	US\$1,300
Population living on less than \$1.25 per day	80%
Unemployment Rate	40.6%

Imports US\$2.64 billion in food, manufactured goods, machinery and transportation equipment, fuels, and raw materials.

Exports US\$785 million in apparel, manufactured goods, oil, cocoa, mangoes, and coffee.

HAITI, a small country located in the Caribbean Sea, shares the island of Hispaniola with the Dominican Republic. Haiti has a tropical climate and a rough mountainous terrain. Located in the middle of the hurricane belt, Haiti is subject to extreme storms and earthquakes as well as periodic droughts and floods, the effects of which are exacerbated by severe deforestation: only about 2% of the country's once lush forest remains.

HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL BACKGROUND

Haiti has been consumed by political unrest for most of its history. Shortly after Christopher Columbus landed on the Caribbean island in the 1400s, Spanish settlers nearly wiped out the native Taíno (Arawak) tribe. At the beginning of the 17th century, the western half of Hispaniola was seized and colonized by the French who quickly began to import slaves from western Africa. At the end of the 18th century, inspired by the French and American revolutions, more than half a million slaves led by François Toussaint L'Ouverture revolted and took control of the island. In 1804, Haiti became the first black republic, but political instability continued.

In 1844, the Spanish-speaking east seceded, later becoming the Dominican Republic. The United States invaded in 1915, occupying Haiti until 1934. Repeated coups, trouble and turbulence followed. François “Papa Doc” Duvalier, supported by his menacing private army, the TonTon Macoutes, turned his presidency into a dictatorship then passed power to his son Jean-Claude – known as “Baby Doc” – who was later forced into exile. Democracy struggled to gain a toehold. Jean-Bertrand Aristide, a Roman Catholic priest, was elected to great fanfare and hope in 1991, but his presidency was aborted when yet another bloody coup ushered in a brutal military regime. Ultimately, under threat of U.S. invasion, Aristide returned in 1994. But unrest continued and the office of the presidency changed hands six times in the next 19 years. Haiti has been governed since 2011 by President Michel Martelly, one of the country's most famous musicians, known as “Sweet Micky.”

Haiti is the least developed country in the western hemisphere and one of the poorest in the world. The lack of an educated workforce, exposure to frequent natural disasters, and continued political unrest have left Haiti in an economically vulnerable state. Eighty percent of the Haitian population lives below the poverty line, and less than 40% of Haiti's children have regular access to basic health care. One child in four is malnourished and less than one-third of Haitian children have been immunized. More than 200,000 Haitian children have at least one parent infected with HIV or AIDS. Haiti has the highest rate of infant and child mortality in the Western Hemisphere.

In January 2010, a powerful earthquake ravaged the country's infrastructure and population, killing more than 230,000 people and displacing an estimated two million. Four years later, Haitians are still digging out and grappling with housing, sanitation and health issues like hepatitis A and E, typhoid fever and diarrheal diseases. An estimated 380,000 children were living in orphanages and group homes before the earthquake, and this number is believed to have doubled post-quake.

HAITI

CHALLENGES FOR GIRLS

Girls and women in Haiti face serious risks of gender-based violence and human trafficking. It is difficult to find statistics for rape cases in Haiti, not only because so few rapes are reported, but because those that are reported often go unprosecuted due to disorganization within the police and judicial system. It wasn't until 2005 that rape was legally considered a crime in Haiti. Since the earthquake, the UN has estimated that 50% of women living in the shantytowns and refugee camps in Haiti have been sexually assaulted.⁷⁷

EDUCATION IN HAITI

In less than a minute, the 2010 earthquake damaged or destroyed nearly 4,000 schools and killed hundreds of teachers. Today, many children are still out of school, but the problems of education in Haiti existed long before the earthquake hit. The country has no government-funded public education system. Instead, students rely on a network of private schools, which are too expensive for many children to attend. The cost is not the only concern – there are simply not enough schools in the country to support Haiti's youth (50% of the population is under 18). Only about half of Haitian children will have a chance to attend primary school; only one-fifth go to secondary school.⁷⁸



INDIA

Capital City: New Delhi (pop. 21.7 million)

Population of India: 1.2 billion

Percentage of population living in urban areas: 30%

Government: Federal republic

Mobile/Cellular Telephones: 893.9 million

Natural Resources: Coal (fourth largest reserves in the world), iron ore, manganese, mica, bauxite, rare earth elements, titanium ore, chromite, natural gas, diamonds, petroleum, limestone, arable land.

*All statistical information in this section from the CIA World Factbook:
<https://www.cia.gov/>

ETHNIC GROUP DISTRIBUTION

Indo-Aryan	72%
Dravidian	25%
Mongoloid and other	3%

RELIGIOUS GROUP DISTRIBUTION

Hindu	80.5%
Muslim	13.4%
Christian	2.3%

LANGUAGES

Hindi (official)	41%
Bengali	8.1%
Telugu	7.2%
Marathi	7%
Tamil	5.9%
Urdu	5%

(English is the subsidiary official language, used for national, political, and business communications)

LITERACY

Females	47.8%
Males	73.4%

LIFE EXPECTANCY AT BIRTH

67 years

ECONOMY

Gross Domestic Product	US\$1.9 trillion
GDP per capita	US\$3,900
Population living on less than \$1.25 per day	29.8%
Unemployment Rate	8.5%

Imports US\$500.3 billion in crude oil, precious stones, machinery, fertilizer, iron and steel, and chemicals.

Exports US\$309.1 billion in petroleum products, precious stones, machinery, iron and steel, chemicals, vehicles and apparel.

INDIA covers about 3.3 million square kilometers (1,274,137 square miles), approximately one-third of the area of the United States. India is bordered by the Arabian Sea and Pakistan to the west; by China, Nepal, and Bhutan to north; and by Myanmar, Bangladesh, and the Bay of Bengal to the east. The country encompasses portions of the Himalayas, desert in the west, and lush rain forests and tropical lowlands. Despite its size, India is also one of the planet's more densely populated countries, with a total population that is second only to China's.

HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL BACKGROUND

India, home to more than one billion people, has a rich and ancient history. The Maurya Empire of the 4th and 3rd centuries B.C. united much of South Asia. The Golden Age of the Gupta dynasty (4th to 6th centuries A.D.) saw a flowering of Indian science, art and culture. In the 10th and 11th centuries, Turks and Afghans invaded India and established the Delhi Sultanate. In the 16th century, the Emperor Babur established the Mughal Dynasty which ruled India for more than three centuries.

By the 19th century, Great Britain was the dominant political power on the subcontinent. Nonviolent resistance to British rule, led by Mohandas Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru, eventually brought about independence in 1947 and the subcontinent was divided along sectarian lines into Pakistan and India. Since 1947, India and Pakistan have fought three wars, two over the disputed territory of Kashmir.

With many languages, cultures and religions, India is highly diverse. This is reflected in its federal political system, whereby power is shared between the central government and 28 states. Indians continue to be influenced by the ancient Hindu caste system, which assigns each person a place in the social hierarchy. Discrimination on the basis of caste is now illegal, but caste and regional tensions still haunt Indian politics. In 1984, Prime Minister Indira Gandhi (daughter of Nehru, India's first Prime Minister) was gunned down by her Sikh bodyguards after ordering troops to flush out Sikh militants from the Golden Temple. She was succeeded by her son, Rajiv; in 1991 he, too, was assassinated.

India has one of the fastest growing economies in the world. The large, skilled workforce makes India a popular choice for international companies seeking to outsource work. The agriculture, textile, tourism and technology industries play major roles in contributing to India's GDP, but as India's economy surges, so does its population. For all the money those sectors bring in, India has one of the world's lowest per-capita incomes.

INDIA

CHALLENGES FOR GIRLS

The UN recently declared India the most dangerous place to be born a girl. Violence takes many forms – infanticide, domestic violence, rape, honor killing, human trafficking and sexual slavery. Domestic violence is common: 67% of Indian women married as girls report abuse by their husbands. In 2012, India's National Crime Records Bureau reported 8,233 dowry deaths (the setting aflame of a Hindu woman whose husband's family considers her dowry inadequate). That's 22 per day.

Millions of Indian girls work out of necessity. UNICEF estimates 28 million Indian children aged five to 14 work. The majority of these children work on family land or for other farmers, but many are forced to become beggars, factory workers or prostitutes. Girls are frequently found in textile mills, dyeing plants and garment factories or making beedis, hand-rolled cigarettes. The groundbreaking Right to Free and Compulsory Education Act may change that. Passed in 2009, it states that all children between the ages of six and 14 have the right to a free quality education, and employers risk fines and jail time for employing underage workers.

EDUCATION IN INDIA

An estimated eight million school-age children – mostly girls – are not in school. Many families don't see the need to educate girls, whose main roles will be housekeeping and child rearing, and keep daughters home to take on domestic responsibilities at an early age.

There are too few teachers in India (especially women) and approximately 17% of villages don't have primary schools. Schools in many rural areas have little access to clean water or sanitation, placing burdens on girls entering puberty and causing them to be more frequently absent or to drop out of school altogether.

At the same time, higher education in India has experienced enormous growth since Indian independence in 1947. Then, there were 20 universities and 500 colleges; in 2010, there were 493 universities and 31,324 colleges. Women's enrollment in higher education has grown tremendously, from less than 10% of enrolled students in 1947 to 41.6% in 2010.



NEPAL

26.5333° N, 86.7333° E

NEPAL

Capital City: Kathmandu (pop. 990,000)

Population of Nepal: 30.4 million

Percentage of population living in urban areas: 19%

Government: Republic with a Prime Minister and a President

Mobile/Cellular Telephones: 13.3 million

Natural Resources: Quartz, water, timber, hydro-power, scenic beauty, small deposits of lignite, copper, cobalt, iron ore

**All statistical information in this section from the CIA World Factbook:
<https://www.cia.gov/>*

ETHNIC GROUP DISTRIBUTION

Chhettri	15.5%
Brhaman-Hill	12.5%
Magar	7.0%
Tharu	6.6%
Other	32.7%

(100+ ethnic groups are represented in Nepal)

RELIGIOUS GROUP DISTRIBUTION

Hindu	80.6%
Buddhist	10.7%
Muslim	4.2%

LANGUAGES

Nepali (official)	47.8%
Maithali	12.1%
Bhojpuri	7.4%
Other	10.0%
Unspecified	2.5%

(92+ languages have been reported in Nepal)

LITERACY

Females	48.3%
Males	73.0%

LIFE EXPECTANCY AT BIRTH

67 years

ECONOMY

Gross Domestic Product	US \$19.4 billion
GDP per capita	US \$1,300
Population living on less than \$1.25 per day	25.2%
Unemployment Rate	46%

Imports \$6.1 billion in petroleum products, machinery and equipment, gold, electrical goods, and medicine.

Nepal exports \$1 billion in clothing, legume crops, carpets, textiles, juice, pashmina, and jute goods.

NEPAL is a landlocked country situated between India and China. Northern Nepal, bordering Tibet, is comprised primarily of the Himalayas, the highest mountain range in the world, and has cool summers and severe winters. Southern Nepal, on the Indian border, is primarily a region of flat, fertile river plains with milder winters and subtropical summers.

HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL BACKGROUND

Nepal was once a region of small independent kingdoms. Today the country, while unified, comprises over 100 ethnic groups and castes speaking over 92 languages. Amidst the country's natural beauty exists a harsh economic reality: roughly a quarter of the population subsists on less than \$1 a day. Despite almost five decades of foreign aid, Nepal continues to be one of the poorest countries in the world. In addition to being prone to earthquakes, Nepal is one of the most vulnerable countries in South Asia to climate change, with a highly variable climate, fragile ecosystems, and devastating floods and landslides, especially during the monsoon season.

In recent years, Nepal has gone through dramatic political changes. Unified by King Prithvi Narayan Shah in the mid-18th century, Nepal was a hereditary prime ministership until 1951, when a cabinet system of government was instituted. In 1990, a multi-party democracy was established within the constitutional monarchy. Six years later, an insurgency led by Maoist extremists started a 10-year civil war which dissolved the democracy. In 2006, pro-democracy demonstrations led to negotiations between the Maoists and the government, and a nationwide election was held in 2008. Nepal declared itself a federal democratic republic, abolished the monarchy (thus ending the last Hindu kingdom), and elected its first president. However, instability continues to this day as conflicts between the Maoists and the Nepali government persist.

NEPAL

CHALLENGES FOR GIRLS

Some families in parts of Nepal feel forced by extreme poverty to sell their daughters into a form of domestic slavery called Kamlari. Parents typically receive a small payment, but sometimes only room, board and clothing for their daughter. Kamlari often means the end of a girl's education and the beginning of a harsh life of abuse and mistreatment. Bonded labor in Nepal is a result of destitution and indebtedness, usually of a landless family who must pay back a landowner for the right to live on and work his farm.

In rural western Nepal, many girls and women are sent to live in sheds called “goths,” or in stables or caves while menstruating. This forced isolation, called chaupadi, is an ingrained cultural and Hindu religious tradition that holds that a menstruating woman is impure and must be kept apart until she is clean once again. Girls and women face risk of illness, injury or death from exposure, snakebites, rape, animal attack and fire. In 2005, the Supreme Court of Nepal declared chaupadi illegal, but the practice is accepted as the way of life and continues regardless.⁵⁹

Arguably the greatest danger that girls in Nepal face is trafficking. The border between Nepal and India is porous and includes a long stretch where travelers don't need a passport. Although reliable data on the scope of the issue is difficult to gather, UNICEF reports that as many as 7,000 women and girls are trafficked out of Nepal to India every year, and around 200,000 are now working in Indian brothels.⁶⁰

EDUCATION IN NEPAL

Primary education is free – when you can get to it. Many areas of the country don't have a single school. Where schools do exist, classrooms are overcrowded and under-resourced, lacking necessities such as furniture, books, and teaching materials. Nepalese girls have even less access to education than boys, and only 38% attend secondary school.⁶¹ Because of the work demands at home, children who are in school are often temporarily pulled out – as many as 75% at one time or another, girls more often than boys. The lack of sanitary facilities presents another barrier to education for girls, causing many to drop out in adolescence. Only 36% of public schools in Nepal have a separate toilet for girls, a particular challenge for girls in puberty.⁶² The resulting illiteracy rate underscores these conditions: 52% of women are illiterate, as compared to 27% for men.

PACIFIC
OCEAN

PERU
8.2333° S, 76.0167° W

BRAZIL

PERU

Capital City: Lima (pop. 8.8 million)

Population of Peru: 29.8 million

Percentage of population living in urban areas: 77%

Government: Constitutional republic

Mobile/Cellular Telephones: 32.5 million

Natural Resources: Copper, silver, gold, petroleum, timber, fish, iron ore, coal, phosphate, potash, hydro-power, and natural gas

**All statistical information in this section from the CIA World Factbook:
<https://www.cia.gov/>*

ETHNIC GROUP DISTRIBUTION

Amerindian	45%
Mestizo	37%
White	15%

RELIGIOUS GROUP DISTRIBUTION

Roman Catholic	81.3%
Evangelical	12.5%

LANGUAGES

Spanish (official)	84.1%
Quechua (official)	13.0%
Aymara	1.7%

LITERACY

Females	89.4%
Males	96.4%

LIFE EXPECTANCY AT BIRTH

73 years

ECONOMY

Gross Domestic Product	US\$200.3 billion
GDP per capita	US\$10,900
Population living on less than \$1.25 per day	31.3%
Unemployment Rate	6.8%

Imports US\$41.1 billion in petroleum and petroleum products, chemicals, plastics, machinery, vehicles, telephones and telecommunication equipment, iron and steel, wheat, corn, soybean products, paper, cotton, and vaccines and medicines.

Exports US\$47.4 billion in copper, gold, lead, zinc, tin, ore, molybdenum, silver, crude petroleum and petroleum products, natural gas, coffee, asparagus, fruit, apparel, textiles, fishmeal, fish, chemicals, fabricated metal products and machinery, and alloys.

PERU is bordered by the Pacific Ocean, Ecuador, Colombia, Brazil, Bolivia, and Chile. The Andes Mountains run along the eastern portion of the country. These differences in terrain, from the ocean to the mountains, create a variety of climates, ranging from tropical areas along the coast to the frigid mountains of the Andes.

HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL BACKGROUND

Inhabited since about 8,000 B.C., Peru was home to many pre-Colombian cultures, most notably the Inca Empire. The Incas, sometimes referred to as “peoples of the sun,” were a theocratic society, worshiping their emperor as a god. The empire stretched from modern day Colombia down to Chile, and stockpiled massive amounts of gold and silver. The Incas were conquered by Spanish conquistadors in 1533, and Peru remained under Spanish rule until rebelling in 1821. Since independence, the nation has alternated between civilian rule and bouts of military dictatorship, the most recent of which lasted from 1968 until 1980. The election of president Alberto Fujimori in 1990 began an economic turnaround for Peru, and a time of increased stability. However, Fujimori’s dictatorial style alienated supporters and he was ousted from the presidency in 2000 after being accused in a corruption scandal. Fujimori’s daughter, Keiko, came very close to winning the presidency in 2011, but lost in a runoff.

Peru’s economy is a reflection of its varied geography. The coastal waters provide excellent fishing, while the Andes Mountains and coastal lands hold a wide range of mineral resources. Peru is the leading producer of silver and the fifth largest producer of gold in the world. Although the country has abundant natural resources, most people working in mining and fishing toil under harsh conditions and do not share in the wealth those industries create. The mining industry, especially, is not just economically bipolar: it’s deadly. The risks – of accident, injury, exposure to toxic chemicals and more – pervade the thin atmosphere.

The poverty rate in Peru has gone down by 23% since 2002, but it is still an impoverished nation, especially in the rural indigenous communities. Seventy-eight percent of all indigenous children live in poverty, compared to 40% of those whose mother tongue is Spanish.⁷⁹

PERU

CHALLENGES FOR GIRLS

Attitudes towards women and girls are shaped by a pervasive culture of “machismo.” This traditional belief in the superiority of men over women contributes to the continued oppression of Peruvian women. Forty-nine percent of women in Lima and 61% in Cusco report physical violence by a partner at some time in their lives. About one in every five women in both cities reports being sexually abused as a child.⁸⁰ Insensitivity on the part of law enforcement toward female victims contributes to a societal attitude of permissiveness toward abuse. There are laws against rape, but enforcement is lacking and experts believe rape and domestic abuse cases often go unreported due to a fear of retribution, including further violence and stigma.⁸¹

EDUCATION IN PERU

Peru has free and compulsory education and posts impressive figures, with 94% of both girls and boys enrolled in primary school and 77% of both girls and boys in secondary school. But vast discrepancies exist in achievement between indigenous communities and the majority of Spanish-speaking students. Indigenous peoples in Peru generally reside in rural areas, where poverty and harsh conditions make access to quality education problematic and where schools have fewer resources, less access to basic services, and teachers who have less training.



SIERRA LEONE

Capital City: Freetown (pop. 1.5 million)
Population of Sierra Leone: 5.6 million
Percentage of population living in urban areas: 38%
Government: Constitutional democracy
Mobile/Cellular Telephones: 2.1 million
Natural Resources: Diamonds, titanium ore, bauxite, iron ore, gold, chromite

**All statistical information in this section from the CIA World Factbook:
<https://www.cia.gov/>*

ETHNIC GROUP DISTRIBUTION

Temne	35%
Mende	31%
Limba	8%
Kono	5%
Krio	2%

RELIGIOUS GROUP DISTRIBUTION

Muslim	60%
Indigenous beliefs	30%
Christians	0%

LANGUAGES

English (official)
Mende
Temne
Krio

LITERACY

Females	24.4%
Males	46.9%

LIFE EXPECTANCY AT BIRTH

57 years

ECONOMY

Gross Domestic Product	US\$3.8 billion
GDP per capita	US\$1,400
Population living on less than \$1.25 per day	70.4%
Unemployment Rate	N/A

Imports US\$1.67 billion in foodstuffs, machinery and equipment, fuels and lubricants, and chemicals.

Exports US\$1.17 billion in diamonds, rutile, cocoa, coffee, and fish.

SIERRA LEONE is a small country in Africa, resting on the continent's western "bulge" and bordered by the Atlantic Ocean, Guinea, and Liberia. The country has a tropical climate with hot, humid summers and a long rainy season. The coastal belt is primarily mangrove swamp, while the country's easternmost regions are highlands with mountains and plateaus.

HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL BACKGROUND

Sierra Leone was so named ("lion mountains") by Portuguese explorers in the 1400s. The arrival of Europeans marked the start of Sierra Leone's long and dark history in the slave trade. Bunce Island Slave Castle, 20 miles upriver from present-day Freetown, was the processing center and departure point for tens of thousands of slaves shipped to South Carolina, Georgia, Florida and other places in the Americas during the mid- and late 1700s until it was shuttered in 1807.

Freetown, Sierra Leone's present day capital, was founded in 1787 as a settlement for freed slaves from the United States and the United Kingdom and became one of Britain's first colonies in West Africa. Thousands of liberated slaves flocked to this new coastal colony, bringing their traditions with them. After several unsuccessful revolts against British rule, Sierra Leone was finally granted independence from colonial power in 1961.

Bloody conflict and internal strife have marred Sierra Leone's more recent history. Civil war erupted in 1991 when the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) launched an offensive against President Joseph Saidu Momoh. A bloody decade-long civil war followed, bringing with it the total destruction of the country's infrastructure and the displacement of millions of its citizens (about a third of the population). It was a particularly gruesome war, as the RUF waged a campaign of atrocity, hacking off hands or feet of their victims and raping women and girls. Legions of children were abducted and forced to become soldiers. The war was financed in part by so-called "blood diamonds," smuggled out of Sierra Leone to Liberian president Charles Taylor, who in turn provided the rebels with arms. Taylor was convicted of crimes against humanity in 2012 and is serving a 50-year sentence.

Sierra Leone's future hinges on its ability to successfully navigate the post-war landscape: to rebuild an economy (around its mineral-rich land) in a country that has severe income inequality and an imploded education system. In August 2013, the country issued its first ever "Status of the Youth Report." Noting that 60% of youth are unemployed, the report argues for a dramatic effort to improve conditions and create opportunities for young people, including education, healthcare and job skills training.⁸²

SIERRA LEONE

CHALLENGES FOR GIRLS

Though Sierra Leone is in a period of reconstruction both economically and socially, traditional gender roles are resistant to change. Nearly 90% of females aged 15-49 are estimated to have undergone female genital mutilation/cutting.⁸³ While there is an active campaign against these practices, there are still no laws in Sierra Leone prohibiting FGM. About two-thirds of girls are reported to have experienced at least one or more forms of sexual violence and about 18% have experienced rape.⁸⁴ Although the rate of early marriage has significantly declined, girls continue to be married off as children: 48% of girls marry before age 18, and 10% marry before age 15. The practice of polygamy is widespread, with many men marrying multiple women.⁸⁵

EDUCATION IN SIERRA LEONE

Education was one of the primary casualties of war. Schools were destroyed by the thousands and children were victimized in terrible ways: orphaned, abused, left homeless, forced to become soldiers, and made to serve soldiers. After the war ended in 2001, more than 60% of children were still out of school. But as other sectors of Sierra Leone's society have improved, so has the country's education system, with a recent surge in student enrollment. As of 2011, enrollment at the primary school level had reached 77% for both boys and girls.⁸⁶ Severe teacher shortages, classroom overcrowding, poor classroom conditions and lack of learning materials still pose major challenges to quality education.

VIDEO ASSETS

*A list of the supplementary video included on your DVD,
and the running times.*

INTRODUCTION

Girl Rising Trailer 2:32
Walking to School 1:12
Let's Dance 1:33
Director's Welcome 1:43

WHY GIRLS' EDUCATION?

Connect the Dots 1:28
Making the Case for Girls' Education 7:06
Girl Rising Voices 3:41

SOKHA | CAMBODIA

Sokha Backstage 1:44

WADLEY | HAITI

Meet the Writer 2:31
Wadley Dresses Up 1:31
Wadley Dancing on Set 0:47

SUMA | NEPAL

Meet the Writer 2:54
Suma Journeys to New York 2:21
Suma's First Interview 2:08
Stories of Bonded Labor 3:05

YASMIN | EGYPT

Meet the Writer 2:42

AZMERA | ETHIOPIA

Meet the Writer 3:11
Azmera Introduces Herself 1:00

RUKSANA | INDIA

Meet the Writer 2:41
Ruksana Draws Her Dream House 1:10
Ruksana Sings Her Favorite Song 1:20

SENNA | PERU

Meet the Writer 3:13
Senna Performs "Masses" 1:24
Senna Practices Her Lines 1:10

MARIAMA | SIERRA LEONE

Meet the Writer 2:26
Making the Chapter 7:58
Mariama's Radio Show 1:29

AMINA | AFGHANISTAN

Meet the Writer 2:36

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

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GIRL RISING CURRICULUM

The Pearson Foundation has developed a free project-based, common core-aligned curriculum. It is based around Suma's and Senna's stories and will soon include all the chapters.

The project lesson plans can be used with any of the chapters of Girl Rising and are suitable for social studies, political science, math, language arts and economics classes. Students learn to think critically about the problems and potential of educating girls, as well as their own roles as global citizens. They can, for example:

- Create their own theoretical NGO that supports girls' education, and design its marketing brochure
- Write poetry, or songs or create visual art to illustrate the barriers girls face
- Apply for a hypothetical UN Grant on behalf of girls' education

The curriculum is designed for upper elementary through high school students, but the lessons can easily be adapted for college students.

INSPIRATION

- [The Girl Rising YouTube channel](#). Explore!
- [Why Girls Education](#) 10 Facts about Girls' Education
- [Girl Rising FAQs](#)
- [Malala Yousafzai's speech at the UN](#)
- [The story of Dr. Tererai Trent](#). She grew up in Zimbabwe, poor and with little schooling, married at 11, a mother of three by 18, abused by her husband – but she, somehow, never lost sight of her dream. Today she is a PHD and a fierce promoter of education for all.
- [Shabana Basij-Rasikh at TEDxWomen](#). Shabana is a global ambassador for Girl Rising and, at only 24, the founder of a unique boarding school for girls in Afghanistan.
- [Azure Antoinette performs Superhero](#), a powerful performance piece about how the girls of Girl Rising reignited her childhood belief that she could change the world.
- [Afghan Women's Writing Project: Education](#) - stories as told by Afghan women. You might want to browse the rest of the site, including the teenage writers workshop.
- [Senna's Poetry](#)

REPORTS

- [The Chicago Council on Global Affairs Report, *Girls Grow: A Vital Force In Rural Economies*](http://www.thechicagocouncil.org)
- [Human Rights Watch Report, *Afghanistan: Ending Child Marriage and Domestic Violence*](http://www.hrw.org)
- [Human Rights Watch Report, *Nobody Remembers Us*](http://www.hrw.org)
- [Plan International Because I am a Girl, *The State of the World's Girls - In Double Jeopardy: Adolescent Girls and Disaster*](http://becauseiamagirl.ca)
- [UNICEF Report, *Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting*](http://www.unicef.org)
- [The United Nations, *The Millennium Development Goals Report 2013*](http://www.un.org)
- [The United Nations Population Fund Report, *Marrying Too Young*](http://www.unfpa.org)
- [United States Department of Labor, *What are Child Labor and Forced Labor?*](http://www.dol.gov)
- [UN Women, *Annual Report 2012-2013*](http://www.unwomen.org)
- [World Health Organization, *Violence Against Women Fact Sheet*](http://www.who.int)

BOOKS OF INTEREST

For Upper Elementary and Lower Middle School Students (grades 3-6)

- *Close Encounters of a Third-World Kind*, by Jennifer J. Stewart. 12-year-old Annie moves to Nepal and befriends a girl with five sisters who is unable to attend school.
- *Serafina's Promise*, by Ann E. Burg. A novel in verse about a Haitian girl who dreams of going to school and becoming a doctor.
- *No Ordinary Day*, by Deborah Ellis. Valli learns that she has leprosy. She must face her fears and come to terms with an uncertain life on the streets of Kolkata.

For Middle School Students (grades 6-9)

- *Wanting Mor*, by Rukhsana Khan. Based on a true story about a young girl living in post-Taliban Afghanistan.
- *Kids of Kabul*, by Deborah Ellis. What is life like for Afghanistan's children since the fall of the Taliban? Deborah Ellis went to Kabul to find out. All royalties from book sales go to Women for Women in Afghanistan.
- *The Breadwinner Trilogy*, by Deborah Ellis. *The Breadwinner*, *Parvana's Journey*, and *Mud City*, follow Parvana, a girl who is forced to transform herself into a boy become her family's breadwinner in war-torn Afghanistan.
- *My Name is Parvana*, by Deborah Ellis. The sequel to the *Breadwinner Trilogy*. Parvana is now 15 and her mother has opened a school for girls - but disaster befalls the school and puts Parvana's life in jeopardy.
- *Monsoon Summer*, by Mitali Perkins. When Jazz Gardner reluctantly travels to India with her parents she finds a new appreciation for the choices she always took for granted.
- *Climbing the Stairs*, by Padma Venkatraman. Vidya dreams of going to college — unheard of for traditional, upper-caste women like those in her conservative family.

BOOKS OF INTEREST

For High School readers (grades 9-12) and college students:

- *Chanda's Secrets*, by Allan Stratton. 16-year-old Chanda is forced to confront African stigmas and taboos about HIV/AIDS in order to care for her suffering family.
- *The Servant*, by Fatima Sharafidinne. Against the backdrop of civil war, Faten must leave her happy village to work as a maid for a wealthy family in Beirut.
- *Cry of the Giraffe*, by Judie Oron. Fleeing violence and religious persecution in Ethiopia, Wuditu and her family secretly escape their village.
- *The Dressmaker of Khair Khana*, by Gayle Tzemach Lemmon. Former ABC journalist Lemmon tells the true story of Kamila Sidiqi and other women of Afghanistan in the wake of the Taliban's rise to power.
- *I am Malala: The Girl Who Stood Up for Education and Was Shot by the Taliban*, by Malala Yousafzai.
- *Sold*, by Patricia McCormick. A girl from Nepal is sold into sexual slavery in India.
- *Half the Sky*, Nicholas Kristoff and Sheryl WuDunn's book about how women are key to economic progress.
- *Creating Room to Read*, by John Wood, founder of Girl Rising NGO partner, Room to Read, the story of one man's mission to put books within every child's reach.

From the Girl Rising authors:

- *Bolivar*, *Lima Nights*, and *American Chica*, by Marie Arana
- *Claire of the Sea Light*, *Breath*, *Eyes Memory* and *Krik? Krack!*, by Edwidge Danticat
- *The Hired Man*, *The Memory of Love* and *The Devil that Danced on the Water*, by Aminatta Forna
- *Dear Zari*, by Zarghuna Kargar
- *Beneath the Lion's Gaze*, by Maaza Mengiste
- *Season of Flight*, *The Lives We Have Lost* and *Tilled Earth*, by Manjushree Thapa
- *First they Killed My Father*, *Lucky Child* and *Lulu in the Sky*, by Loung Ung

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