

Each chapter of Girls Learn is paired with a partner class in a poor country where girls traditionally do not get much education: Afghanistan, Colombia, Costa Rica, El Salvador, India, Kenya, Pakistan, Uganda, Vietnam. The American girls raise money to help their partners and upgrade the foreign schools. Jordana, for instance, helped improve the office of Mukhtar Mai, the anti-rape campaigner in rural Pakistan. When Mukhtar Mai e-mails us to inform us of the latest threats against her, she does it with a computer and Internet hookup that Girls Learn paid for.

Girls Learn partners are chosen mostly by the connections cultivated by Jordana, her mother, and a professional staff of two in an office in Manhattan. Each chapter is supposed to raise at least \$500 a year, and the kids have raised a cumulative total of about \$50,000, which goes exclusively to partner classrooms abroad. Supporting grown-ups separately raise more than \$100,000 annually to cover administrative expenses. That means that Girls Learn isn't the most efficient charity around to support girls' education abroad, since far more money goes to administrative costs in Manhattan than to keep Pakistani girls in school. Still, the purpose of Girls Learn isn't just to support girls' education abroad but also to create exchanges and build the basis for a movement at home. As an educational venture for the American girls, it's a bargain. American high school students who might otherwise be obsessed with designer bags are sending their spending money abroad so that girls in India can have notebooks.

"Talk about getting girls involved in the process," said Cassidy DuRant-Green, a staff member of Girls Learn. "What better way to start than in middle school? We're building leaders, women we could be working for in twenty years." So while the ostensible aim is to empower girls in countries like Pakistan, some of the major beneficiaries are the American girls. You see that in Jordana, and the passion she has found in her cause. In her speech in the Bronx, Jordana exuded maturity and empathy as she exhorted the students to support the Girls Learn chapter, noting that girls the same age as those in the audience are being trafficked or killed for "honor," and she ended with a ringing crescendo: "Girls' rights are human rights!"

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

What You Can Do

You must be the change you wish to see in the world.

— MAHATMA GANDHI

Americans knew for decades about the unfairness of segregation. But racial discrimination seemed a complex problem deeply rooted in the South's history and culture, and most good-hearted people didn't see what they could do about such injustices. Then along came Rosa Parks and Martin Luther King Jr. and the Freedom Riders, along with eye-opening books like John Howard Griffin's *Black Like Me*. Suddenly the injustices were impossible to look away from, at the same time that economic change was also undermining Jim Crow. One result was a broad civil rights movement that built coalitions, spotlighted the suffering, and tore away the blinders that allowed good people to acquiesce in racism.

Likewise, skies were hazy, rivers oily, and animals endangered for much of the twentieth century, but environmental destruction unfolded without much comment or opposition. It seemed the sad but inevitable price of progress. And then Rachel Carson published *Silent Spring* in 1962, and the environmental movement was born.

In the same way, the challenge today is to prod the world to face up to women locked in brothels and teenage girls with fistulas curled up on the floor of isolated huts. We hope to see a broad movement emerge to battle gender inequality around the world and to push for education and opportunities for girls around the world. The American civil rights movement is one model, and so is the environmental movement, but both of those were different because they involved domestic challenges close to home. And we're wary of taking the American women's movement as a model, because if the international effort is dubbed a

"women's issue," then it will already have failed. The unfortunate reality is that women's issues are marginalized, and in any case sex trafficking and mass rape should no more be seen as women's issues than slavery was a black issue or the Holocaust was a Jewish issue. These are all humanitarian concerns, transcending any one race, gender, or creed.

The ideal model for a new movement is one we evoked earlier: the British drive to end the slave trade at the end of the eighteenth and beginning of the nineteenth centuries. That is a singular, shining example of a people who accepted a substantial, sustained sacrifice of blood and treasure to improve the lives of fellow human beings living far away. Winston Churchill suggested that the British people's "finest hour" was their resistance to the Nazis in the 1940s, but at least as noble an hour was the moral quickening in Britain that led to the abolition of slavery.

For most of history, slavery had been accepted as sad but inevitable. The Athenians were brilliant philosophers and abounded in empathy that made them wonderful writers and philosophers, yet they did not even debate their reliance on slavery. Jesus did not address slavery at all in the Gospels; Saint Paul and Aristotle accepted it; and Jewish and Islamic theologians believed in mercy toward slaves but did not question slavery itself. In the 1700s, a few Quakers vigorously denounced slavery, but they were dismissed as crackpots and had no influence. In the early 1780s, slavery was an unquestioned part of the global landscape—and then, astonishingly, within a decade, slavery was at the top of the British national agenda. The tide turned, and Britain banned the slave trade in 1807 and in 1833 became one of the first nations to emancipate its own slaves.

For more than half a century, the British public bore tremendous costs for their moral leadership. On the eve of the British abolition of slave-trading, British ships carried 52 percent of the slaves transported across the Atlantic, and British colonies produced 55 percent of the world's sugar. Without new slaves, the British colonies in the New World were devastated, and Britain's great enemy, France, benefited enormously. So did the United States. Sugar production in the British West Indies fell 25 percent in the first thirty-five years after Britain's abolition of the slave trade, while production in competing slave economies rose by 210 percent.

The British navy led the way in trying to suppress the slave trade, both in the Atlantic and within Africa itself. This led to the loss of some

five thousand British lives, plus higher taxes for the British people. And such unilateral action was costly diplomatically, enraging other countries and putting Britain in open conflict with rival military powers. The British antislavery efforts led to a brief war with Brazil in 1850 and to war scares with the United States in 1841 and with Spain in 1853, as well as to sustained tense relations with France. Yet Britain did not flinch. Its example ultimately prompted France to abolish slavery in 1848, inspired the American abolitionists and the Emancipation Proclamation, and pushed Cuba to enforce a ban on slave imports in 1867, in effect ending the transatlantic slave trade.

Two scholars, Chaim Kaufmann and Robert Pape, calculate that for sixty years Britain sacrificed an annual average of 1.8 percentage points of its GNP because of its moral commitment to ending slavery. That is an astonishing total, cumulatively amounting to more than an entire year's GNP for Great Britain (for the United States today, it would be the equivalent of sacrificing more than \$14 trillion), a significant and sustained sacrifice in the British standard of living. It was a heroic example of a nation placing its values above its interests.

Credit for the abolitionist movement usually goes to William Wilberforce, and indeed he was one of the foremost leaders of the movement and the one who turned the tide. But Wilberforce joined after abolitionism was well under way, and the public wasn't stirred solely by Wilberforce's eloquence. A central part of the campaign—and one worth learning from today—was a meticulous effort to explain to the English exactly what conditions were like on slave ships and plantations.

Slavery did not exist in Britain itself, only in British territories abroad, so for the average English family slavery was out of sight. As with sex trafficking in India today, it was easy to cluck about the brutality of it all and then move on. The abolitionist who overcame that challenge was Thomas Clarkson, who had first become interested in the issue as a student at Cambridge when he wrote about slaves for a Latin contest. His research so horrified him that he became an ardent abolitionist for life. Clarkson became the driving force behind the Society for Effecting the Abolition of the Slave Trade. "If anyone was the founder of the modern human-rights movement," *The Economist* has observed, "it was Clarkson."

After leaving university, Clarkson undertook enormous risks to move clandestinely through ports in Liverpool and Bristol where slav-

ing ships docked, to talk to seamen and to gather evidence about the trade. Clarkson acquired manacles, branding irons, thumbscrews, leg shackles, and gruesome implements that were used to force a slave's jaws open. He found a former captain of slave ships who came forward and described their holds. And Clarkson obtained a diagram of a Liverpool slave ship, the *Brookes*, and made posters showing how it was loaded with 482 slaves. That image became the icon of the abolitionist movement, and it underscored an important point: Clarkson and the abolitionists were scrupulous about not exaggerating. The *Brookes*, in fact, had carried up to 600 slaves on some journeys, but Clarkson thought it best to use the most carefully documented and conservative figures to guarantee credibility.

Apologists for slavery at the time often described benevolent farming operations in the West Indies, indulgently caring for slaves' every need, but Clarkson's evidence proved that conditions were often revolting. The slavers were furious and paid a group of sailors to assassinate Clarkson; they nearly beat him to death.

Clarkson and Wilberforce seemed to be fighting a hopeless campaign: Britain had a huge economic stake in the continuation of the slave trade, and the suffering was endured by distant peoples whom many Britons considered inferior savages. Yet when British public opinion confronted what it meant to pack human beings into the hold of a ship—the stink, the disease, the corpses, those bloody manacles—citizens recoiled and turned against slavery. It's a useful lesson that what ultimately mattered wasn't just the abolitionists' passion and moral conviction but also the meticulously amassed evidence of barbarity.

Likewise, success came not only from making politicians see the "truth" but also from putting relentless domestic political pressure on them. Clarkson traveled thirty-five thousand miles on horseback, and a former slave, Olaudah Equiano, lectured all over Britain on a five-year book tour. In 1792, 300,000 people boycotted sugar from the West Indies—the greatest consumer boycott in history until that point. That year, more people signed a petition against slavery than were eligible to vote in British elections. And in Parliament, Wilberforce bargained furiously to build a voting bloc to overcome the shipping and slavery lobby. Then, as now, government leaders found ethical arguments most persuasive when they were backed by the raw insistence of voters.

In the 1790s, it was common to dismiss the abolitionists as idealistic

moralizers who didn't appreciate economics or understand geopolitical complexities such as the threat from France. In the same way, these days, the "serious issues" are typically assumed to be terrorism or the economy. But the moral issue of the subjugation of women isn't frivolous today any more than slavery was in the 1790s. Decades from now, people will look back and wonder how societies could have acquiesced in a sex slave trade in the twenty-first century that, as we've seen, is bigger than the transatlantic slave trade was in the nineteenth. They will be perplexed that we shrugged as a lack of investment in maternal health caused half a million women to perish in childbirth each year.

Leadership must come from the developing world itself, and that is beginning to happen. In India, Africa, and the Middle East, men and women alike are pushing for greater equality. These people need our support. In the 1960s, blacks like Dr. King led the civil rights movement, but they received crucial backing from Freedom Riders and other white supporters. Today, the international movement for women needs "freedom riders" as well—writing letters, sending money, or volunteering their time.

Moreover, emancipation of women offers another dimension in which to tackle geopolitical challenges such as terrorism. In the aftermath of 9/11, the United States tried to address terrorism concerns in Pakistan by transferring \$10 billion in helicopters, guns, and military and economic support; in that same period, the United States became steadily more unpopular in Pakistan, the Musharraf government less stable and extremists more popular. Imagine if we had used the money instead to promote education and microfinance in rural Pakistan, through Pakistani organizations. The result would likely have been greater popularity for the United States and greater involvement of women in society. And, as we've argued, when women gain a voice in society, there's evidence of less violence. Swanee Hunt, a former U.S. ambassador to Austria now at Harvard, recalled the reaction of a Pentagon official in 2003 in the aftermath of the "shock and awe" invasion of Iraq: "When I urged him to broaden his search for the future leaders of Iraq, which had yielded hundreds of men and only seven women, he responded, 'Ambassador Hunt, we'll address women's issues after we get the place secure.' I wondered what 'women's issues' he meant. I was talking about security."

Think about the major issues confronting us in this century. These include war, insecurity, and terrorism; population pressures, environ-

mental strains, and climate change; poverty and income gaps. For all these diverse problems, empowering women is part of the answer. Most obviously, educating girls and bringing them into the formal economy will yield economic dividends and help address global poverty. Environmental pressures arise almost inevitably from surging population growth, and the best way to reduce fertility in a society is to educate girls and give them job opportunities. Likewise, we've argued that one way to soothe some conflict-ridden societies is to bring women and girls into schools, the workplace, government, and business, partly to boost the economy and partly to ease the testosterone-laden values of these countries. We would never argue that the empowerment of women is a silver bullet, but it is an approach that offers a range of rewards that go far beyond simple justice.

Consider Bangladesh for a moment. It is poor, often politically dysfunctional, with tremendous uncertainties ahead of it. Yet it is also incomparably more stable than Pakistan, of which it was a part until 1971 (Bangladesh was called East Pakistan until then). After the country split, Bangladesh was initially presumed to be hopeless, and Henry Kissinger famously dubbed it a "basket case." It suffered from the same political violence and poor leadership as Pakistan, and yet today its future looks more assured. There are many reasons for the different outcomes, including the cancer of violence that spread from Afghanistan to Pakistan and the Bengali intellectual tradition that has moderated extremism in Bangladesh. Yet surely one reason Bangladesh is more stable today is that it invested enormously in women and girls, so that a girl in Bangladesh is far more likely to go to school than a Pakistani girl, and afterward far more likely to hold a job. The upshot is that Bangladesh today has a significant civil society and a huge garment industry full of women workers who power a dynamic export sector.

Nearly everyone who works in poor countries recognizes that women are the third world's greatest underutilized resource. "The first thing we learned is that men are often untrainable," said Bunker Roy, who runs Barefoot College, an India-based aid organization that operates in Asia, Africa, and Latin America. "So now we work only with women. We pick a woman from Afghanistan, from Mauritania, from Bolivia, from Timbuktu, and in six months we train her to be a barefoot engineer" working on water supplies or other issues.

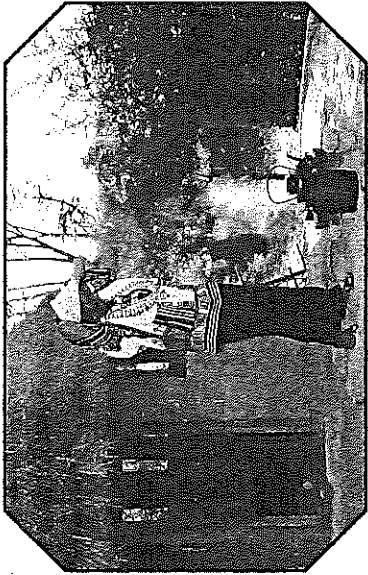
Almost invariably around the globe, countries and companies that

have deployed women according to their talents have prospered. "Encouraging more women into the labor force has been the single biggest driver of Euro-zone's labor market success, much more so than 'conventional' labor market reforms," Goldman Sachs wrote in a research report in 2007. Likewise, public companies that have more women executives consistently perform better than those with fewer women. One study of America's Fortune 500 companies found that the one quarter with the most female executives had a return on equity 35 percent higher than the quarter with the fewest female executives. On the Japanese stock exchange, the companies with the highest proportion of female employees performed nearly 50 percent better than those with the lowest. In each case, the most likely reason isn't that female executives are geniuses. Rather, it is that companies that are innovative enough to promote women are also ahead of the curve in reacting to business opportunities. That is the essence of a sustainable economic model. Moving women into more productive roles helps curb population growth and nurtures a sustainable society.

Consider the costs of allowing half a country's human resources to go untapped. Women and girls cloistered in huts, uneducated, unemployed, and unable to contribute significantly to the world represent a vast seam of human gold that is never mined. The consequence of failing to educate girls is a capacity gap not only in billions of dollars of GNP but also in billions of IQ points.

Psychologists have long noted that intelligence as measured by IQ tests has risen sharply over the years, a phenomenon known as the Flynn Effect, after a New Zealand intelligence researcher named James Flynn. The average American IQ, for example, rose by eighteen points from 1947 to 2002. Over thirty years, the IQ of Dutch conscripts rose twenty-one points and those of Spanish schoolchildren by ten points. One scholar estimated that if American children of 1932 had taken an IQ test in 1997, then half of them would have been classified as at least borderline mentally retarded.

The cause of the Flynn Effect isn't fully understood, but it affects primarily those with lower scores, who may not have received adequate nutrition, education, or stimulation. Iodine deficiency is a factor in some countries. As people become better nourished and better educated, they perform better on intelligence tests. Thus it's no surprise that a particularly large Flynn Effect has been detected in developing



countries such as Brazil and Kenya. The IQ of rural Kenyan children rose eleven points in just fourteen years, a pace greater than any Flynn Effect reported in the West.

Girls in poor countries are particularly undernourished, physically and intellectually. If we educate and feed those girls and give them employment opportunities, then the world as a whole will gain a new infusion of human intelligence—and poor countries will garner citizens and leaders who are better equipped to address those countries' challenges. The strongest argument we can make to leaders of poor countries is not a moral one but a pragmatic one: If they wish to enliven their economies, they had better not leave those seams of human gold buried and unexploited.

One of the groups that has increasingly focused on women for these pragmatic reasons is Heifer International, an aid organization based in Arkansas that gives cows, goats, chickens, or other animals to farmers in poor countries. Its head is Jo Luck, a former state cabinet official in Arkansas under then-governor Bill Clinton. On assuming the presidency of Heifer in 1992, Jo traveled to Africa, where one day she found herself sitting on the ground with a group of young women in a Zimbabwe village. One of them was Tererai Trent.

Tererai is a long-faced woman with high cheekbones and a medium brown complexion; she has a high forehead and tight cornrows. Like many women around the world, she doesn't know when she was born and has no documentation of her birth. She thinks it may have been

1965, but it's possible that it was a couple of years later. As a child, Tererai didn't get much formal education, partly because she was a girl and was expected to do household chores. She herded cattle and looked after her younger siblings. Her father would say: *Let's send our sons to school, because they will be the breadwinners.* "My father and every other man realized that they did not have social security and hence they invested in male children," Tererai says. Tererai's brother, Tinashé, was forced to go to school, where he was an indifferent student. Tererai pleaded to be allowed to attend, but wasn't permitted to do so. Tinashé brought his books home each afternoon, and Tererai pored over them and taught herself to read and write. Soon she was doing her brother's homework every evening.

The teacher grew puzzled, since Tinashé was a poor student in class but always handed in perfect homework. Finally, the teacher noticed that the handwriting was different for homework and for class assignments, and whipped Tinashé until he confessed the truth. Then the teacher went to the children's father, told him that Tererai was a prodigy, and begged for her to be allowed to attend school. After much argument, the father allowed Tererai to attend school for a couple of terms, but then he married her off at about age eleven.

Tererai's husband barred her from attending school, resented her literacy, and beat her whenever she tried to practice by reading a scrap of old newspaper. Indeed, he beat her for plenty more as well. She hated her marriage but had no way out. "If you're a woman and you are not educated, what else?" she asks.

Yet when Jo Luck came and talked to Tererai and the other young women, Jo kept insisting that things did not have to be this way. She kept saying that they could achieve their goals, repeatedly using the word "achievable." The women caught the repetition and asked the interpreter to explain in detail what "achievable" meant. That gave Jo a chance to push forward. "What are your hopes?" she asked the women, through the interpreter. Tererai and the others were puzzled by the question, because they didn't really have any hopes. Frankly, they were suspicious of this white woman who couldn't speak their language, who kept making bewildering inquiries. But Jo pushed them to think about their dreams, and, reluctantly, they began to think about what they wanted. Tererai timidly voiced her hope of getting an education. Jo pounced and told her that she could do it, that she should write down

her goals and methodically pursue them. At first, this didn't make any sense to Tererai, for she was a married woman in her mid-twenties.

There are many metaphors for the role of foreign assistance. We like to think of aid as a kind of lubricant, a few drops of oil in the crankcase of the developing world, so that gears move freely again on their own. That is what Heifer International's help amounted to in this village: Tererai started gliding along freely on her own. After Jo Luck and her entourage disappeared, Tererai began to study frantically, while raising her five children. She went away to her mother's village to escape her husband's beatings. Painstakingly, with the help of friends, she wrote down her goals on a piece of paper: "One day I will go to the United States of America," she began, for goal one. She added that she would earn a college degree, a master's degree, and a PhD—all exquisitely absurd dreams for a married cattleherder in Zimbabwe who had less than one year's formal education. But Tererai took the piece of paper and folded it inside three layers of plastic to protect it, then placed it in an old can. She buried the can under a rock where she herded cattle.

Then Tererai took correspondence classes and began saving money. Her self-confidence grew as she did brilliantly in her studies, and she became a community organizer for Heifer. She stunned everyone with superb schoolwork, and the Heifer aid workers encouraged her to think that she could study in America. One day, in 1998, she received notice that she had been admitted to Oklahoma State University.

Some of the neighbors thought that a woman in her thirties should focus on educating her children, not herself. "I can't talk about my children's education when I'm not educated myself," Tererai responded. "If I educate myself, then I can educate my children." So she climbed into an airplane and flew to America, bringing all five children with her.

At Oklahoma State, Tererai took as many credits as she possibly could and worked nights to make money. It was exhausting, and she didn't have enough food or money or heat. At times she thought about quitting. But a local church and other groups helped her, and she struggled on to earn her degree. Then she returned to her village, dug up the tin can under the rock, and took out the paper on which she had scribbled her goals. She put check marks beside the goals she had fulfilled, and buried the tin can again.

Heifer International offered Tererai a job, and she began work in Arkansas—while simultaneously earning a master's degree part-time.

When she earned her MA, Tererai again returned to her village. After embracing her family members and relatives, she dug up her tin can and checked off her most recently achieved goal. Then she began her PhD at Western Michigan University, writing her dissertation on AIDS programs among the poor in Africa—and planning to focus her career on improving health for the world's poorest people. She will become a productive economic asset for Africa, all because of a little push and helping hand from Heifer International and a few others. In December 2009, she received her doctorate—and a onetime cattle-herder became Dr. Tererai Trent.

There is a broad scholarly literature about social movements, and experts have noted that one of the most striking changes in recent years has been a surge in female leadership. The civil rights and anti-Vietnam War movements may have been the last such major efforts in the United States that were overwhelmingly male in their top ranks. Since then, women have led such diverse efforts as Mothers Against Drunk Driving and the pro- and anti-feminist movements. While women still lag in political, corporate, and government positions, they dominate the civil sector in much of the world. In the United States, women now lead Harvard, Princeton, and MIT, as well as the Ford Foundation and the Rockefeller Foundation. The groups in the National Council of Women's Organizations represent 10 million women. The same pattern is evident abroad. In South Korea, women hold 14 percent of the seats in the National Assembly but lead 80 percent of the country's NGOs. In Kyrgyzstan, women don't hold a single seat in parliament but run 90 percent of the NGOs.

In the nineteenth century, wealthy American women disdained the women's suffrage movement, instead contributing generously to men's colleges and schools, and to churches and charities. Often, rich women were strikingly generous to institutions that openly discriminated against women. The women's suffrage movement was thus forced to raise money mostly from sympathetic men. Likewise, in recent decades, wealthy American women haven't been particularly generous toward international women's causes, but there are signs that that may be beginning to change. American women are now playing an increasingly important role in the philanthropic world, and "women's funds" that support women and girls are booming. There are now more than ninety in the United States alone.

So the time is ripe for a new emancipation movement to empower women and girls around the world. Politicians should take heed: In the United States, a 2006 poll found that 60 percent of respondents said that "improving the treatment of women in other countries" was "very important" for American foreign policy (another 30 percent said it was "somewhat important"). The movement should adhere to these principles:

- Strive to build broad coalitions across liberal and conservative lines. This makes practical results far easier to achieve.
- Resist the temptation to oversell. The humanitarian community has undermined its credibility with its exaggerated predictions (journalists joke that aid groups have predicted ten of the last three famines). Research about women tends to come from people who care passionately about justice and gender, and who have convictions before they begin their studies. So be cautious about the findings. There's nothing to be gained by exaggeration.
- Helping women doesn't mean ignoring men. For example, it's crucial to fund the development of vaginal microbicides, creams that women could apply to protect themselves from HIV without their partners knowing. But it may help women just as much if boys and men are circumcised, for that slows the spread of AIDS and reduces the chance that men will infect their partners.
- American feminism must become less parochial, so that it is every bit as concerned with sex slavery in Asia as with Title IX sports programs in Illinois. It is already making good progress in this respect. Likewise, Americans of faith should try as hard to save the lives of African women as the lives of unborn fetuses. In short, all of us need to become more cosmopolitan and aware of global repression based on gender.

If there were a fifth principle, it would be: Don't pay too much attention to the first four. Any movement needs to be flexible; it should be relentlessly empirical and open to different strategies in different places. For example, we've repeatedly described educating girls as the single best way to lower fertility, improve children's health, and create a more just and dynamic society. But as we were writing this book, two new studies pointed to another approach to revolutionize fertility and gender in the villages: television.

One study, by an Italian development economist, Eliana La Ferrara, examined the impact of a television network, Rede Globo, as it expanded in Brazil. Globo is known for its soap operas, which have huge and passionate followings and whose main characters are women with few children. It turns out that when the Globo network reached a new area in Brazil, in the following years there were fewer births there—particularly among women of lower socioeconomic status and women already well along in their reproductive years. That suggested that they had decided to stop having children, emulating the soap opera characters they admired.

A second study focused on television's impact on rural India. Two scholars, Robert Jensen of Brown University and Emily Oster of the University of Chicago, found that after cable television arrived in a village, women gained more autonomy—such as the ability to leave the house without permission and the right to participate in household decisions. There was a drop in the number of births, and women were less likely to say they preferred a son over a daughter. Wife-beating became less acceptable, and families were more likely to send daughters to school.

These changes occurred because TV brought new ideas into isolated villages that tended to be very conservative and traditional. Before TV arrived, 62 percent of women in the villages surveyed thought it was acceptable for husbands to beat wives, and 55 percent of women wanted their next child to be a son (most of the rest did not want a daughter; they just didn't care). And fully two thirds of the women said they needed their husband's permission to visit friends.

Then, with television, new ideas infiltrated the villages. Most of the popular cable television programs in India are soap operas set among middle-class families in the cities, where women hold jobs and come and go freely. Rural viewers came to recognize that the "modern" way is for women to be treated as human beings. The effect was huge: "introducing cable television is equivalent to roughly five years of female education," the professors report. This doesn't mean that we should drop programs to send girls to school and instead settle for introducing cable television to villages full of wife beaters, for these findings are tentative and need to be replicated elsewhere. But as we have argued, a movement for women must be creative and willing to learn and incorporate new approaches and technologies.

The movement's agenda should be broad and enveloping, while

focusing on four appalling realities of daily life: maternal mortality, human trafficking, sexual violence, and the routine daily discrimination that causes girls to die at far higher rates than boys. The tools to address these challenges include girls' education, family planning, micro-finance, and "empowerment" in every sense. One useful measure to help foster these is CEDAW, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination. It was adopted by the UN General Assembly in 1979, and so far 185 countries have become a party to it; the United States continues to refuse to ratify it, because of Republicans' concerns that CEDAW could nibble away at American sovereignty by surrendering authority to an international convention. Those concerns are absurd. In addition, the UN should have a prominent agency to support gender equality (there is one in theory, UNIFEM, but it is minuscule). The United States should have a separate cabinet department that oversees all foreign aid and development issues, as Britain does, and this department should emphasize the role of women.

Yet ultimately, as we've shown, what will change the patterns of life in an African village is less likely to be CEDAW or a new American cabinet position, and more likely a new school or health center in that village. It's fine to hold UN conferences on education, but sometimes it does more good to allocate the money to projects on the ground. We would like to see a grassroots campaign bringing together feminist organizations and evangelical churches and everyone in between, calling on the president and Congress to pass three specific initiatives. Ideally these would be coordinated with similar efforts from Europe, Japan, and other donor countries, but if necessary they could start as American projects.

The first would be a \$10 billion effort over five years to educate girls around the world and reduce the gender gap in education. This initiative would focus on Africa but would also support—and prod—Asian countries such as Afghanistan and Pakistan to do better. The aim would be not just to fund new schools, with DONATED BY THE AMERICAN PEOPLE written on the sides, but to experiment with finding the most cost-effective ways to support education. In some countries that may be providing school uniforms to girls from poor families, or deworming communities, or providing scholarships to the best-performing girls, or helping girls manage menstruation, or supporting school lunches, or extending Mexico's Oportunidades program to Africa. These ap-

proaches should be rigorously tried on a randomized basis, and assessed by outside evaluators, so that we can determine which are most cost-effective.

The second initiative would be for the United States to sponsor a global drive to iodize salt in poor countries, to prevent tens of millions of children from losing approximately ten I.Q. points each as a result of iodine deficiency while their brains are still being formed in the uterus. As we discussed in the chapter on girls' education, female fetuses are particularly prone to impaired brain development when the mother's body lacks enough iodine, and so girls would be the major beneficiaries. Canada already sponsors the Micronutrient Initiative, which supports iodization of salt, but there is far more work to be done—and it is appalling that so many girls will suffer irreversible brain damage when by one estimate a mere \$19 million would pay for salt iodization in the countries that still desperately need it. This iodization campaign would thus cost very little, and it would underscore that for all the criticisms of foreign aid, there are still some methods that are cheap, simple, and highly cost-effective. Iodizing salt may not be glamorous, but it gets more bang for the buck than almost any form of foreign aid.

The third initiative would be a twelve-year, \$1.6 billion project to eradicate obstetric fistula, while laying the groundwork for a major international assault on maternal mortality. Dr. L. Lewis Wall, the president and managing director of the Worldwide Fistula Fund, has drafted with Michael Horowitz, a conservative agitator on humanitarian issues, a detailed proposal for a campaign to end fistulas. The plan includes the construction of forty fistula centers around Africa, as well as a new institute to coordinate the campaign. This is one of the few areas in reproductive health that unites Democrats and Republicans, and it would cast a spotlight on the need for better maternal care generally. The campaign would showcase the opportunity to help some of the world's most forlorn young women, deepen obstetric skills in Africa, and generate the energy to take subsequent steps to tackle maternal mortality.

These three steps—campaigns to fund girls' education, to iodize salt to prevent mental retardation, and to eradicate fistula—would not solve the problems of the world's women. But action on these three measures would raise the underlying issues higher on the international affairs agenda, and would illustrate solutions to the problems. Once

people see that there *are* solutions, they will be more willing to help in myriad other ways.

This movement has to address problems in rich countries as well as poor ones. It is a disgrace that fourteen-year-old girls are openly sold by pimps in almost every major city in America, and that police work often consists of arresting the girls rather than the pimps. If a fifty-year-old man has consensual sex with a fourteen-year-old girl, then he's likely to be arrested for statutory rape and she'll get counseling. But if a pimp bullies and beats the same girl into having sex with customers for his profit, then the john gets off with a fine and she is arrested. Sometimes even an arrest would be a relief.

In Atlanta, a fourteen-year-old girl named Jasmine Caldwell was one of thirteen girls being controlled by a pimp who beat them and took every cent they earned. Then, Jasmine told us, a chance for escape arose—an undercover cop picked her up. The policeman could have taken her to a shelter and helped prosecute the pimp. That didn't happen. "He showed me his handcuffs and threatened to send me to jail," Jasmine said. "I was so scared. I was crying. He said he would let me go if I had sex with him. So I did. And then he turned me back out on the street, and my pimp beat me because I hadn't been paid."

If we are to address injustices abroad, we also have to attempt to address them at home, and the abuse of girls like Jasmine must be high on the agenda. More broadly, the challenge is to change attitudes. As Stephanie Davis, who has tackled trafficking in Atlanta from a perch in the mayor's office, put it: "The problem isn't the girls in the streets; it's the men in the pews."

So don't feel as if the only valuable tasks lie half a world away—there are great programs closer to home that also need help. Some work with victims of domestic violence, others help single moms with parenting skills, and others, like GEMS in New York City, work with girls escaping from prostitution and address problems similar to those we have described in the brothels of Cambodia or India.

Whether the project is in Cambodia or New York City, the most effective supporters will donate not only their money but also their time, by volunteering on the front lines. If you care about poverty you must understand it, not just oppose it. And understanding poverty comes from spending time observing it directly.

In talking about sex trafficking, we mentioned Urmi Basu, who runs

the New Light shelter for trafficked women in Kolkata. Over the years we've steered several Americans to volunteer at New Light, teaching English to the children of prostitutes, and they find it pretty overwhelming at first. One of those we introduced to Urmi was Sydnee Woods, an assistant city attorney in Minneapolis who wasn't finding everything she wanted in life from her job. She asked her boss for a ninety-day unpaid leave to go to India to work at New Light, and he flatly said no. So Sydnee quit, sold her home, and moved to Kolkata. She found it a very rough adjustment, as she put it in an e-mail to us:

It took me about 6 months to actually admit to myself that I hate India (well, Kolkata, at least). Truly I absolutely loved New Light—the children, the mothers, the staff, the other volunteers, Urmi. But I hated everything else about being in Kolkata. I found it extremely difficult being a single, black American woman there. I was constantly met with suspicion—not so much due to my color, but because I was not married and was often by myself (in restaurants, at the mall, etc.). The staring was emotionally exhausting and I don't think I ever truly got used to it.

Chastened that our advice had produced such a painful experience, we asked Sydnee if that meant that she regretted having gone. Would she recommend such an immersion to others? Moments later a very different e-mail arrived:

I am so glad I went! I am considering going back to New Light next year. I fell in love with all of the children, but two of them, siblings Joya and Raoul (they are 4 and 6, I think), truly touched my heart and I am totally committed to making sure they get an education and get out of Kalighat [the red-light district]. I know that I did some good there, which is satisfying. The experience (good and bad) changed me forever. I have become incredibly laid back and able to deal with setbacks and hardships much more easily. I had never traveled out of the country (other than touristy trips to Bermuda, Mexico and the Bahamas) and now I can't imagine not traveling abroad as often as possible. I made lifelong friends in India. It's difficult to put into words—but I am a different, better person. I would definitely recommend it—especially to other single, black women. It was difficult—but nec-

essary. India changes you—it makes you confront things about yourself that you may have chosen not to confront. As far as I'm concerned that can only be good. It was good for me.

Indeed, while the main motivation for joining this global movement is to help others, the result is often to help oneself. As Sir John Templeton said, "Self-improvement comes mainly from trying to help others." Social psychologists have learned a great deal about happiness in recent years, and one of the surprises is that the things we believe will make us happy won't. People who win the lottery, for example, enjoy an initial spike of happiness but then adjust and a year later are not significantly happier than those who haven't won. Our happiness levels seem to be mostly innate, and not markedly affected by what happens to us, good or bad. People in end-stage dialysis, for example, turn out to be no different in their moods through the day than a comparison group of healthy people. And while those who suffer a crippling disability are initially deeply unhappy, they adjust quickly. One study found that just a month after becoming paraplegics, accident victims were in fairly good moods a majority of the time. Other research found that within two years of suffering a moderate disability, life satisfaction fully recovers to the predisability level. So Jonathan Haidt, a psychologist at the University of Virginia who has studied happiness, advises that if you are hit by a truck and end up a paraplegic, or if you win the lottery, remember that a year from now, it won't make much difference to your happiness level.

Yet Professor Haidt and others advise that there are a few factors that *can* affect our happiness levels in a sustained way. One is "a connection to something larger"—a greater cause or a humanitarian purpose. Traditionally, this was what brought people to churches or other religious institutions, but any movement or humanitarian initiative can provide a sense of purpose that boosts one's happiness quotient. We are neurologically constructed so that we gain huge personal dividends from altruism.

Thus we hope you will join this growing crowd and back it in whatever way you can—volunteering at Mukhtar Mai's school in Pakistan, writing letters as part of Equality Now campaigns, or sponsoring Tostan to educate a village about genital cutting. Browse the aid groups in the appendix of this book, or go to www.charitynavigator.org. Then find a group or two that you want to commit to. Philanthropists and donors

traditionally haven't been sufficiently interested in women's rights abroad, giving money instead to higher-brow causes such as the ballet or art museums. There could be a powerful international women's rights movement if only philanthropists would donate as much to real women as to paintings and sculptures of women.

We don't presume to say that all of your giving should be targeted to the needs of women, any more than all of ours is. But we hope that some of your giving will go to these causes, and that you will give your time as well as your dollars. A portion of the income from this book will go to some of these organizations.

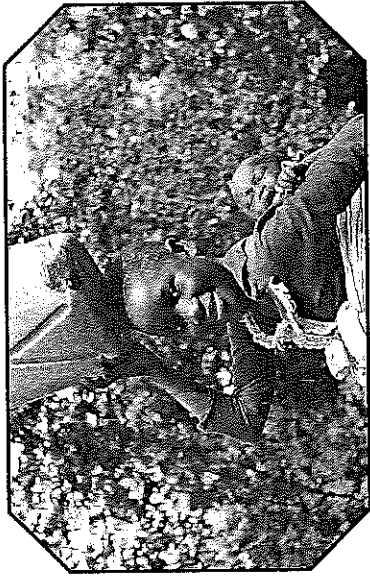
If you're a student, find out whether your school or college has classes or study abroad programs that address these issues. Consider volunteering for a summer internship at one of the organizations we've talked about. Or take a "gap year" before or after university for travel or an internship. If you're a parent, take your kids not just to London but also to India or Africa—or to the other side of the tracks in your own hometown. At a town meeting, ask a candidate about maternal health. Write a letter to the editor of your local paper calling for a big push for girls' education.

The tide of history is turning women from beasts of burden and sexual playthings into full-fledged human beings. The economic advantages of empowering women are so vast as to persuade nations to move in that direction. Before long, we will consider sex slavery, honor killings, and acid attacks as unfathomable, as foot-binding. The question is how long that transformation will take and how many girls will be kidnapped into brothels before it is complete—and whether each of us will be part of that historical movement, or a bystander.

Four Steps You Can Take in the Next Ten Minutes

The first step is the hardest, so here are several things you can do right now:

1. Go to www.globalgiving.org or www.kiva.org and open an account. Both sites are people-to-people (P2P), meaning that they link you directly to a person in need overseas, and this makes them an excellent way to dip your toe in. Global Giving lets you choose a grassroots project to which to give money in education, health, disaster relief, or more than a dozen other areas around the developing world. Kiva lets you do the same for microlending to entrepreneurs. Browse the sites to get a sense of the needs and donate or lend money to those that appeal to you, perhaps as a gift to a family member or a friend. Or try a third site, www.givology.com, started by students at the University of Pennsylvania to help children in developing countries pay for primary school. The site initially focused on China but has since expanded to India and Africa. On Global Giving, for example, we have supported a program to keep runaway girls in Mumbai from entering prostitution, while on Kiva we lent money to a woman making furniture in Paraguay.
2. Sponsor a girl or a woman through Plan International, Women for Women International, World Vision, or American Jewish World Service. We ourselves are sponsors through Plan, and we exchange letters and have visited our children in the Philippines, Sudan, and Dominican Republic. Sponsorship is also a way to teach your children that not all kids have iPods.
3. Sign up for e-mail updates on www.womensenews.org and a similar service, www.worldpulse.com. Both distribute information about abuses of women and sometimes advise on actions that readers can take.
4. Join the CARE Action Network at www.can.care.org. This will assist you in speaking out, educating policy makers, and underscoring that the public wants action against poverty and injustice. This kind of citizen advocacy is essential to create change. As we've said, this movement won't be led by the president or by members of



Congress, any more than their historical counterparts led the civil rights or abolitionist movements—but if leaders smell votes, they will follow. The government will act where our national interests are at stake; however, history has repeatedly shown that where our values are at stake, leadership must come from ordinary citizens like you.

These four steps are simply a way to break the ice. Afterward, browse the organizations listed in the appendix, find one that seems particularly meaningful—and dive in. Join forces with some friends or form a giving club to multiply the impact. And don't worry that your efforts won't solve the global problems of oppression, for they will make a difference in real people's lives.

We'll leave you with a story that is a fine reminder of the impact we can have. The children of the Niantic Community Church, in Niantic, Connecticut, bought six goats through Heifer International, as a gift for Africa. The goats are listed in the Heifer International catalog at \$120 each.

One of those goats went to the Biira family in Uganda, near the Congo border. The goat was named Luck and lived up to its name: it promptly produced twins. The Biira children drank the milk for a nutritional boost, and the parents sold some of the milk to raise a bit of extra income. They had not been able to afford to send their daughter Beatrice to school, keeping her home instead to do chores. But

Beatrice Biira in her village at age nine, just as a donation of a goat enabled her to begin school. (Courtesy of Heifer International!)



with the extra income from the milk, the parents decided to send the girl to the village school.

Beatrice was nine years old, while all the other first graders were just six. But she worked diligently and rocketed to the top of the class. She won a scholarship to Uganda's best girls' school. Finally, she became the first student from her village to go abroad to study—and in 2008 she graduated from Connecticut College. "I am one of the luckiest girls in the world," Beatrice declared at her graduation party, and she added to us: "It's all because of a goat!" Now Beatrice is earning a graduate degree and working on a United Nations project for the millennium goals—but there are so many other girls who are left behind, for want of a goat. So let's get on with it, give them a hand, and speed up the day when women around the world truly hold up half the sky.

APPENDIX

ORGANIZATIONS SUPPORTING WOMEN

Here are some of the groups that specialize in supporting women in developing countries. In addition, there are many outstanding aid groups, such as International Rescue Committee, UNICEF, Save the Children, and Mercy Corps, that are not listed below because women and girls are not their only focus. This list is not a rating, screening, or exhaustive list; it is a quirky compendium of groups both small and large that we've seen in action. Consider it a starting point for further research. Two useful Web sites to consult for more information about aid groups are www.charitynavigator.org and www.givewell.net.

Afghan Institute of Learning, www.creatinghope.org, operates schools and other programs for women and girls in Afghanistan and in the border areas of Pakistan.

American Assistance for Cambodia, www.cambodiaschools.com, has fought trafficking and now has a program to subsidize poor girls so that they remain in school.

Americans for UNFPA, www.americansforunfpa.org, supports the work of the UN Population Fund. It is similar to 34 Million Friends of UNFPA, www.34millionfriends.org.

Apne Aap, www.apneap.org, battles sex slavery in India, including in remote areas in Bihar that get little attention. Apne Aap welcomes American volunteers.

Ashoka, www.ashoka.org, is an organization that identifies and invests in social entrepreneurs around the world, many of them women.

Averting Maternal Death and Disability, www.amddprogram.org, is a leading organization focused on maternal health.

BRAC, www.brac.net, is a terrific Bangladesh-based aid group that is now expanding in Africa and Asia. It has an office in New York City and accepts interns.

Campaign for Female Education (CAMFED), www.camfed.org, supports schooling for girls in Africa.

CARE, www.care.org, increasingly has focused on women and girls.

Center for Development and Population Activities (CEDPA), www.cedpa.org, works on issues related to women and development.