



## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 2012, Independent Television Service (ITVS) launched the Women and Girls Lead Global (WGLG) project, working in eight countries in the global South: Bangladesh, Colombia, El Salvador, Jordan, Kenya, Malawi, and Peru. ITVS set out to test the idea that high-quality, emotionally compelling international documentary films focused on development issues and solutions could be used in diverse country contexts to help inspire and model women’s empowerment and gender equality. At the heart of the project’s theory of change is the idea that international documentaries about women and girls acting as agents of change can help spark “breakthrough conversations” on challenging, culturally sensitive topics and pave the way for community-driven solutions to gender inequities.

The project selected 37 international documentaries to be included in four seasons of its “Women of the World” (WOTW) series. In three countries – El Salvador, Colombia, and Malawi – the project used a lighter-touch approach, focusing on national television broadcasts of the films in order to raise general public awareness of the issues conveyed by the films. In five “social change countries” – Bangladesh, India, Jordan, Kenya, and Peru – the project launched intensive community engagement campaigns, partnering with local nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) already working on related issues. The campaigns and their partners in these five countries developed distinct objectives and strategies tailored to address the specific country context, but all five came to embrace a common facilitated screening approach called the **three-film model** (see box).

### The Three-Film Model

#### Basic Framework:

Train NGO staff and other community members to facilitate a series of three film screenings and discussions designed to enable discussion of sensitive gender issues; encourage changes in knowledge, self-efficacy, attitudes, and behaviors; support audience-generated group actions to improve the community; and help audiences reflect on their experience taking new actions.

#### Theory:

Films provide a way for audiences to talk about issues they are typically unable to discuss, creating a starting point for making changes in their own thinking and behavior and developing their own solutions to challenges faced by women and girls in their community.

The five campaigns incorporated other engagement activities as well, including:

- ▶ Partnering with broadcasters to air the documentary films on television;
- ▶ Cultivating and engaging a social media following;
- ▶ Organizing broader community mobilization events; and
- ▶ Collaborating with local filmmakers and other partners to create short films, radio series, and other media pieces designed to promote positive examples of social change in a local context.

The project was supported by USAID, the Ford Foundation, and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, with implementing assistance from CARE-USA. ITVS contracted the Aspen Planning and Evaluation Program (APEP) at the Aspen Institute to serve as its evaluation partner throughout the five-year project. The evaluation used a multi-method approach, including traditional baseline/endline surveys, focus groups, and interviews with screening participants; interactive voice response (IVR) surveys of participants and other community members; surveys of local partner organizations; and a screening event reporting tool completed by facilitators in the five social change countries. This report summarizes findings on the project’s reach and impact over five years, particularly in the five social change countries, and draws broader lessons about the utility of WGLG’s film-based model for fostering social change.

## SUMMARY OF FINDINGS FROM THE FIVE SOCIAL CHANGE COUNTRIES

### India: The Hero Project

**Attitudes toward masculinity and gender roles.** Hero Academy participants' beliefs about masculinity and gender roles showed strong positive changes, including large increases (20-39 percentage points) in the percentage disagreeing with harmful stereotypes about what it means to "be a man" and traditional beliefs about the roles that men and women should play. There were smaller changes (6-13 percentage points) in their tolerance of four forms of harassment of women and girls, and in the percentage expressing a strong sense of self-efficacy to intervene when witnessing three of these forms of harassment.

#### **Empathy and behavior toward women and girls.**

Hero Academy participants demonstrated greater understanding of and respect for women's and girls' perspectives, and willingness to go beyond gendered roles by doing household chores and allowing female relatives greater freedom. In addition, their intention to intervene when witnessing four forms of harassment increased by 8-25 percentage points. However, they showed some reluctance to fully relinquish a man's "right" to control or use force against female relatives and to ignore their perspectives when making decisions that affect them.

**Community impacts.** Preliminary evidence suggests that some of the Hero Academy participants' community initiatives began having tangible impacts on girls' education and safety – e.g., reenrollment of girls in school and reduced harassment – but underscored that additional time and sustained efforts are needed to produce lasting change in the community.

**Comparing interventions.** The findings suggest that the three-film model yielded many of the same positive impacts as the nine-session Hero Academy, though with lesser effects on self-efficacy and certain beliefs about masculinity and gender roles. We observed little evidence that the standalone unfacilitated screenings produced changes in attitudes, with only a modest change in one indicator: awareness of the greater challenges girls face compared to boys. This offers preliminary evidence that a multi-session facilitated model is a more effective approach.

### Bangladesh: Best School for Girls (BS4G)

**Impacts on the student council.** Members of the student council, which the campaign helped establish in each partner school, registered strong gains (29-45 percentage points) across several measures of leadership skills and self-

#### Goal in India: Reduce gender-based violence (GBV)

**Theory of change:** Encourage actions to reduce GBV and inequality by changing perspectives on traditional norms of masculinity and gender roles, particularly among young men.

#### **Activities:**

- Nine-session Hero Academy with young men.
- Three-film model and standalone (single) facilitated and unfacilitated screenings with groups of young men and mixed-gender groups.
- TV broadcast partnership to air 17 WOTW films.

#### **Reach:**

- Nearly 7,600 screening participants, including 476 Hero Academy graduates.
- Estimated 115,000 viewers per broadcast.

#### Goal in Bangladesh: Reduce girls' school drop-out and child marriage

**Theory of change:** Empower student councils to take actions that make schools more girl-friendly and help reduce child marriage.

#### **Activities:**

- Three-film model with student council.
- Standalone facilitated screenings with students, parents, and teachers.
- Annual competition among schools for Best School for Girls awards.

#### **Reach:**

25,000 facilitated screening participants per school year, with over 280 partner schools by project-end.

efficacy to achieve their goals and improve their school, and became more likely to take actions to prevent girls' drop-out and child marriage. Girls on the student council also reported significant increases in the extent to which they felt they had a voice regarding decisions about their education, marriage, and career. Compared to student council members, who participated in the three-film model, lesser direct effects were observed from the standalone screenings organized for parents and the general student population.

**School-wide improvements.** The findings suggest that student council initiatives, supported by teachers' and school administrators' efforts, improved girls' safety and security in partner schools. For example, the percentage of schools with a sexual violence prevention committee and a complaint box through which students could raise concerns significantly increased. And compared to girls in control schools, girls in partner schools reported a significantly greater increase in safety, with the percentage of girls reporting they felt "very safe" en route to school and on school grounds rising by 15 and 25 percentage points, respectively. In addition, the evidence suggests that, by empowering student councils and reinforcing schools' efforts to provide a "girl-friendly" environment, the campaign contributed to statistically significant reductions in rates of girls' school drop-out (from 4.7% to 1.3%) and child marriage (from 4.2% to 0.9%) in partner schools.

## Jordan: I Have a Story

**Awareness of GBV and discrimination.** The evidence suggests the campaign had a positive impact on awareness of gender discrimination, GBV, and the laws that protect and support women and girls (17-27 percentage points), and prompted hundreds of participants to take actions to address discrimination experienced by family members, friends, or others in the community – including nearly 900 women who spoke up about discrimination in their family, and 1,463 participants who offered advice to someone struggling with discrimination or GBV.

The campaign's success in raising awareness through collaborations with local content producers varied. Kharabeesh elicited over 8,800 URL clicks (75% of all URL clicks during the project period) and nearly 800 comments and replies for the animated shorts, while Lina Abu Rezeq's promotion of the online talk show yielded weaker engagement.

**Addressing domestic violence.** The findings suggest that the facilitated screenings contributed to women's increased willingness to talk to others about GBV, with a 17 percentage-point increase observed during the first three-film cycle, and an additional boost of the same magnitude observed during the second cycle. Women in focus groups confirmed the value of the facilitated discussions as a safe space for sharing experiences regarding personal and sensitive topics. But the data also suggested that perceptions of domestic violence as a private matter and concerns that outside help would be ineffective continued to constrain some women's willingness to seek (and to endorse) help in cases of domestic violence.

### Goal in Jordan: Reduce gender-based violence (GBV)

**Theory of change:** Break down barriers to preventing GBV by reducing tolerance for GBV as normative and addressing gaps in awareness regarding GBV and gender inequality.

**Strategy:**

- Three-film model using intimate home-based screenings for women and community center screenings for youth.
- Local content production and online distribution (animated shorts with Kharabeesh, talk show with entertainer Lina Abu Rezeq).
- TV broadcast partnership to air 37 WOTW films.

**Reach:**

- Nearly 7,000 facilitated screening participants, including 179 who attended a second cycle of the three-film model.
- Estimated 65,850 viewers per TV broadcast.
- Approximately 25,000 YouTube views per animated short; 1,350 views per talk show episode.
- 9,000 Facebook fans; 2,700 Twitter followers.

## Kenya: Women in the Red

**Support for women leaders.** The findings indicate the campaign helped strengthen support for women leaders – with increases of 16-30 percentage points in participants’ awareness of concrete steps they could take to support aspiring women leaders, and over 350 participants reporting that they campaigned for a woman candidate during the period before the 2017 elections. Men and girls, though not women, became much more likely to reject a negative gender stereotype of leadership.

Qualitative data recorded by facilitators offer diverse examples of how participants took action to increase women’s leadership, from canvassing for female political candidates to advocating for women’s inclusion in leadership positions in government and community groups. *Ms. Politician* played a key role in the campaign’s ability to promote positive examples of female leaders, serving as a strong driver of the campaign’s coverage in major media outlets and audience engagement on social media.

**Building the pipeline for female leadership.** There was evidence of moderate increases (13-17 percentage points) in the percentage of women and girls who attended a community meeting or shared concerns with school administrators. And during the last year and a half of the project, more than 100 women and girls reported that they had vied for leadership positions since beginning the three-film model. Women (but not girls) also showed improvement in their understanding of the basic premise of the Kenya constitution’s 2/3 Gender Rule to improve gender balance in government; aspirants showed more modest effects on political knowledge.

## Peru: Ahora Es Cuando

**Parent-child communication about SRH.** The evaluation findings indicate that the three-film model, along with the SRH capacity-building sessions, helped strengthen parent-child communication about sexuality, pregnancy prevention, and related issues. Among both students and their parents, there was a consistent pattern of improvement across multiple measures of perceived communication challenges

### Goal in Kenya:

#### Increase female political participation and leadership

**Theory of change:** Increase women’s leadership by encouraging female civic and political participation and strengthening public support for women leaders.

#### Activities:

- Three-film model with women, girls, men, and political aspirants.
- Local content production and distribution (e.g., 10-episode series, *Ms. Politician*) online and via broadcasts.
- Media and social media outreach.
- TV broadcast partnership to air 35 WOTW films.

#### Reach:

- 9,500 facilitated screening participants.
- Estimated 3,790 TV viewers, 1,400 YouTube views, 2,550 Facebook viewers for *Ms. Politician*.
- 21,000 Facebook fans.
- Nearly 80,000 viewers per TV broadcast.

### Goal in Peru:

#### Reduce girls’ school drop-out and teen pregnancy

**Theory of change:** Reduce school drop-out due to teen pregnancy by improving knowledge of and communication about sexual and reproductive health (SRH), and increasing capacity to advocate on teen pregnancy prevention.

#### Activities:

- Three-film model with students and parents, followed by SRH capacity-building sessions.
- Local content production and distribution (e.g., short film, 17-episode radio program).
- Social media targeting youth.
- TV broadcast partnership to air 35 WOTW films.

#### Reach:

- 2,342 facilitated screening participants per school year.
- A total of 1,477 participants in SRH sessions.
- Estimated 350,000 viewers per TV broadcast.
- Estimated 1,500-2,800 listeners per radio episode.
- 21,000 Facebook fans (80% ages 13-24).

(10-40 percentage points), as well as increases in self-reported engagement in parent-child conversations about SRH-related topics (ranging from 7 to 59 percentage points depending on the topic).

**Knowledge of sexual and reproductive health (SRH).** The findings suggest that the campaign’s strategy of using the three-film model as a way to prepare and recruit parents and students for the SRH capacity-building sessions paid off. Data from the capacity-building sessions suggest they successfully boosted knowledge levels, including strong gains (20 percentage points or more) across nine knowledge measures regarding pregnancy prevention and STD transmission. The campaign also successfully engaged its target youth audience through entertaining social media content designed to raise awareness of SRH topics.

**Impacts on local capacity.** Though the evaluation gathered limited data speaking to outcomes among teachers and youth leaders, there was anecdotal evidence of how the campaign strengthened the ability of teachers and youth leaders to serve as influencers and change agents, both within their own families and as professionals working in the community. The campaign has also generated substantial NGO and government interest in continuing or adapting the film-based methodology, including plans for the Regional Office of the Ministry of Education to implement a Tutoría toolkit based on the WGLG methodology in the 33 schools throughout the Puno region in 2018.

## PROJECT-WIDE FINDINGS: EVIDENCE OF CAMPAIGN REACH AND IMPACT

### ► Reaching Audiences through Screenings and Broadcasts

The broadcasts of the 37 WOTW films reached audiences ranging from an estimated 65,000 per broadcast in Jordan to an estimated 350,000 per broadcast in Peru. By comparison, the community-based facilitated screenings in India, Jordan, Kenya, and Peru annually reached an average of 1,500 to 2,300 individuals per country. But the facilitated screening model has the potential for scalability. In Bangladesh, the campaign was able to reach over 280 schools and an estimated 25,000 individuals per year by combining NGO partners’ manpower to conduct facilitated screenings with an annual awards incentive system. And the Peru campaign’s film-based curriculum, which enabled teachers to incorporate the three-film model into secondary schools’ Tutoría sessions, formed the basis for a Tutoría toolkit that the Regional Office for the Ministry of Education plans to implement throughout the Puno region. These examples illustrate the value of institutional partnerships in scaling the facilitated screening model.

### ► Influencing Knowledge, Self-Efficacy, and Attitudes

The evaluation findings indicate that the project contributed to positive changes in indicators of knowledge and awareness, self-efficacy, and attitudes – key outcomes the campaigns expected to drive target behavior changes. For example, there was evidence of strong gains in learning outcomes, including Peruvian students’ and parents’ SRH knowledge; Kenyan men’s and women’s understanding of the basic premise of the 2/3 Gender Rule; and Jordanian participants’ understanding of GBV and the laws that protect women and girls from violence. We observed considerable growth in Bangladeshi students’ self-efficacy to improve their school and have a voice in life decisions, and in Peruvian students’ and parents’ self-efficacy to talk to one another about taboo SRH issues. And male graduates of the Hero Academy in India became significantly more likely to reject multiple traditional stereotypes about masculinity and gender roles.

The evaluation findings also underscore the challenges of encouraging participants to fully overcome – or reject – long-standing norms. Evidence in India and Jordan indicates more modest impacts on participants’ self-efficacy to intervene in cases of GBV. Further, we observed some resistance among participants to

changing traditional beliefs about men’s role in deciding what is in the best interests of female relatives (in India) and the idea that domestic violence is a private issue not to be discussed outside the family (in Jordan).

### ► Encouraging Individual-Level Behavior Change

The evaluation findings indicate that the project contributed to an array of behavior changes across the five social change countries, illustrating the versatility of the WGLG model for encouraging different kinds of behavior change in diverse country contexts. A key mechanism underlying success in bringing about behavior change was the use of “calls to action” – facilitators encouraged participants to take specific actions that built on the above-mentioned changes in knowledge, attitudes, and self-efficacy.

However, the evaluation findings also confirmed how long-standing norms can constrain behavior change. We observed this in particular in India and Jordan, where there appeared to be limits on the project’s ability to influence certain behaviors informed by traditional norms about men’s control over and use of force against women. An additional cautionary note: we have limited data on the durability of the observed behavior changes, though the IVR surveys with female relatives in India offered some confirmation that the effects on the Hero Academy participants’ behavior toward them (even if modest in many cases) continued to endure one to two months after the program’s conclusion.

### ► Fueling Community-Level Changes

The findings provide some evidence of larger-scale changes – such as the significant reductions in rates of girls’ school drop-out and child marriage in partner schools in Bangladesh – while underscoring that time, persistent efforts, and support from government and civil society organizations are needed to sustain broader change processes. Changing participants’ attitudes and behaviors regarding traditional gender norms is an important step in challenging the status quo, but achieving broader normative shifts requires other community members to endorse and enact those same attitude and behavior changes. For example, in Bangladesh the wide disparity between the national child marriage rate (52%) and the child marriage rate in partner schools even at the beginning of the project (<5%) underscores that this practice is much more prevalent among girls who are not in secondary school. In addition, structural factors such as poverty and lax law enforcement slow participants’ efforts to seed positive changes in their communities. The findings point to the importance of longer-term institutional support for maintaining community-level processes of change.

### ► Strengthening Local Capacity to Use Documentary Films

An intended byproduct of the WGLG framework was capacity building among local NGO partners. The survey of partner organizations confirmed that, from their perspective, WGLG improved their capacity to use film, facilitate discussions, and advocate effectively. The evaluation findings also suggest that the WGLG model – or adaptations of it – will continue to be used in the campaign countries, helping to sustain its influence beyond the project period. Partners were nearly unanimous in indicating they were very likely to use films again in the future, and government partners (particularly in Peru) began using the WGLG methodology in their own programming.

## LESSONS LEARNED: ASPECTS OF THE MODEL THAT FACILITATED POSITIVE CHANGE



**The Utility of Films for Engaging Audiences.** The evaluation data suggest that one of the strengths of film is its ability to capture participants’ attention and interest. Participants’ reactions to the films, corroborated by partners’ observations, indicate that the films were entertaining, informative, and

useful for getting audiences to engage with the content. To help maximize the films' potential for engaging audiences, it is important to ensure that technical criteria are met (e.g., the participants can adequately see and hear the films) and to select films whose storylines participants can follow and relate to with relative ease.

- ✓ **The Inspirational Value of Depicting Real Stories.** The evidence suggests that audiences were inspired by the documentaries' depiction of real people overcoming obstacles and creating positive change. Participants remarked on the films' impact on their determination, sense of agency, and perception of what is possible.
- ✓ **The Importance of Facilitation.** The evaluation findings indicate the important role of facilitation in fostering positive changes in communities. Consistent with ITVS's theory of change, the data confirmed that the films gave audiences something to respond to, providing an entry point for discussing sensitive or challenging issues. The facilitated discussions also offered a valued opportunity for participants to share their views and experiences. The evaluation findings on the limited impact of *unfacilitated* screenings in India provide further (albeit preliminary) evidence of the importance of facilitation for achieving the observed changes in attitudes, knowledge, self-efficacy, and behavior.
- ✓ **The Value of Serial Engagement.** The evaluation findings suggest that facilitated screenings are most effective when organized into a *serial* model. Standalone events (i.e., where audience only attend a single screening) did not provide sufficient time to discuss the films, explore potential actions and challenges, and report back on progress – and did not appear to influence participants as much as the sequentially structured set of screenings that comprised the three-film model.
- ✓ **Ensuring the Quality of Facilitated Screenings.** Practical lessons regarding the ingredients for effective screenings include: provide careful, consistent, and ongoing training, support, and discussion guides for facilitators; limit the size of facilitated screenings to ensure productive discussions; and employ call-to-action cards that facilitators can use to encourage participants to take positive actions.
- ✓ **The Power of Local Stories:** Local media content – which each of the country campaigns developed and incorporated in various ways – strengthened the project's ability to reach, engage, and impact audiences. Locally produced content helped audiences “see themselves” in the films, and was viewed as uniquely helpful among partners in multiple countries. It also generated interest among other organizations that wanted to use the content (in Peru) and among news media (in Kenya).

The WGLG project proposed a model that can be used to empower and mobilize community members to identify and enact changes that improve the lives of women and girls. The evidence gathered in this evaluation provides support for the project's theory that international documentary films, supplemented by locally produced content, can form the basis for fostering these kinds of changes in contexts as varied as Bangladesh, India, Jordan, Kenya, and Peru. The extent to which changes endure or even advance depends on individual initiative (i.e., participants continuing to serve as advocates and change agents in their communities) and institutions like government agencies and NGOs, which can both reinforce changes through prolonged engagement and spread change through replication in other communities. We hope the lessons learned through the WGLG project – and through this evaluation – will help inform and strengthen future efforts to realize positive social change in the world.