

WHY WOMEN?

FILMS ON
GIRLS' AND WOMEN'S
RIGHTS, HEALTH
AND WELLBEING

by *the why*

INTRODUCTION

WHY WOMEN?

– a media initiative shedding light on the challenges faced by girls and women worldwide

The Why Foundation has initiated the media initiative; WHY WOMEN? The project aims to raise awareness about the challenges faced by women and girls globally. WHY WOMEN? consists of 10 short films, 2 documentary films, a reportage and various outreach activities, including educational material.

WHY WOMEN? will be launched in May 2016, when Copenhagen hosts Women Deliver - the world's largest conference on girls' and women's conditions worldwide. The Why Foundation wants to make use of the momentum created by Women Deliver and initiate a public debate about the challenges of gender equality.

Prominent women are involved in WHY WOMEN?; Academy Award-winning British actress Dame Helen Mirren is the voice of the 10 short films. The Danish singer Oh Land (Nanna Øland Fabricius) has contributed with the soundtrack to the films' intros and outros. Also involved are H.R.H. Crown Princess Mary of Denmark, award-winning journalist Puk Damsgård and former Prime Minister of Denmark Helle Thorning-Schmidt, each featuring in the different documentaries.

The Why Foundation will collaborate with numerous cultural, public and non-profit institutions, to host a series of events and film screenings where women's and girls' rights will be put on the agenda. Screenings will take place at The Women's Museum in Aarhus, The National Gallery in Copenhagen, The Royal Library, Kunsthall Charlottenborg, ARoS - Aarhus Art Museum. The short films will be distributed as educational material to public

schools in Copenhagen, screened at 50 libraries across Denmark, screened at the Women Deliver conference and further shared with the international partners of the conference, including the UN, uploaded on websites and social media.

The objective of WHY WOMEN? is to inspire interest, raise awareness and create debate about girls' and women's rights globally.

WHY WOMEN? is supported by:



10 SHORT FILMS ON GIRLS' AND WOMEN'S RIGHTS, HEALTH AND WELLBEING



10 SHORT FILMS

Narrated by Helen Mirren and directed by talents from different corners of the world

Academy Award-winning actress Dame Helen Mirren is the voice of 10 short films creating a focus on different aspects of girls' and women's rights, opportunities, challenges and wellbeing in a structurally unequal world. The themes of the films cover a vast range of topics including health, family life, education, political participation and economic equality. The viewer is invited to a poetic session of enlightenment and reflection, reminding us of the great responsibility we share in freeing the world from gender-based oppression.

The scripts spoken by Helen Mirren are written by author Trine Beckett and the young feminist activist Emma Holten, while the visuals have been gathered from various directors from all over the world through an innovative talent competition on crowd-sourcing platforms. The contestants had to create visuals complementing the audio with Helen Mirren – that served as the frame of the competition.

10 winners were selected based on the creative merits; clear, powerful storytelling, unique expression and a high level of creativity. Winners were selected from Armenia, US, Italy, The Philippines, Ukraine and Denmark.

“There are still so many obstacles for girls and women. We must never forget to fight this battle. I am proud to take part in 10 short films directed by talents from different corners of the world - shedding light on the challenges faced by women and girls globally”

Helen Mirren, Academy Award-winning actress

“These are wonderful films. I love the idea of ultra-thesp Helen Mirren telling me what women's lives should be. And hats off to anyone who figured out the innovative strategy of asking people round the world to make these short films. Only in Denmark...”

Nick Fraser, Commissioning Editor Storyville, BBC



Directors — Talents from all over the world
Producer — Mette Bjerregaard / The Why Foundation

Short Film Theme / Title / Director / Country

1. Maternal and Newborn Health / What Ami Didn't Know / Antonio Nardella / IT
2. Family Planning / Every Year, Every Hour, Every Minute / Robin Glass / US
3. Sexual Rights / Striving for Utopias / Kasper Møller Jensen & Joachim Berg Nielsen / DK
4. Health Services / Facts of Life / Hapetnak Sarkisyan / ARM
5. Early, Forced Marriage / One Bride, Seven Cows or a Box of Heroin / Contrabas Video / UKR
6. Sanitation / Benefits of a Toilet / Simon Nørredam / DK
7. Education / One Extra Year / Gary George Clotario / PH
8. Economic Empowerment / What If... / Caroline Sascha Cogez / DK
9. Political Participation / Playing the Game / Clara Kokseby & Julie Hindkjær / DK
10. Women and Climate Change / It Started With a Duck / Sara Koppel / DK



Oh Land has contributed with the soundtrack to the films' intros and outros.

"In our world today there is still major injustice and women around the world are suppressed intellectually, politically and culturally. Equality isn't too much to ask. I wish that young women around the world will realize that they have endless power and that they deserve endless opportunity. No one should ever tell them otherwise"

Oh Land, Danish Artist

THE SECRET SLAVES OF THE MIDDLE EAST



An investigative story revealing the unbearable truth of migrant domestic workers trapped and tormented in the Middle East

Danish Middle East-correspondent Puk Damsgård, ventures into a world few in the west dare to imagine.

Maids in the Middle East live their lives locked up in private homes. Behind closed doors, they work under circumstances resembling slavery. The women have left their families in Asia and Africa dreaming of better lives for themselves and their loved ones. Instead they often become captives in Arab homes, working virtually up to 18 hours per day and experiencing violence, sexual abuse and in some cases torture.

For a year Puk Damsgaard follows the life of a Filipino maid named Mary Joy Dao-Ay. She left her 3 children in the Philippines, planning to pay for their education by earning a higher salary in Lebanon. Instead she was forced to flee for her own safety, stuck in Lebanon seeking refuge at a shelter. The secret slaves of the Middle East is the story of Mary Joys' desperate struggle for justice, in a country with no labour laws protecting foreign domestic workers, and where the special Arab Kefala-system renders it impossible for an unskilled worker to leave the country or change their employer. It is the story of how poverty leads unprivileged women from developing countries to be deceived and trafficked into slavery.

These domestic workers come from some of the world's poorest countries such as Nepal, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Pakistan and Ethiopia, from families that rely heavily on remittances from their work abroad. Upon arrival they are stripped off their passports, and are in the custody of their employer.



Directors — Søren Klovborg & Puk Damsgård
Production Company — DR Production
Running time — 44 min

STATE OF THE WOMEN



State of The Women is a portrait of inspiring women who have devoted their lives to improve the conditions of girls and women worldwide

Every single day 39.000 girls under the age of 18 are sold of to marriage.
Every single day at least two women are acid-attacked in India.
On the African continent more than three million girls are circumcised every year, and circumcision is frequently practiced with either a razor blade, scissors, broken glass or lids from cans.

The statistics are frightening, yet things are moving in the right direction due to the efforts of many strong advocates around the globe. State of the Women follows inspiring women during one day of their lives, providing the audience with a unique insight to their everyday lives - battles costing blood, sweat and tears.

In the film you will meet the young Afghan rapper Sonita, the Chinese feminist activist Li Ting Ting, CEO of Save the Children; Helle Thorning-Schmidt, among other inspiring and strong women.



Director — Louise Unmack Kjeldsen
Producer — Mette Heide / Plus Pictures
Running time — 45 min

CROWN PRINCESS MARY'S MISSION



Crown Princess Mary of Denmark has become a strong advocate for gender equality and women's rights globally. As protector for the UNFPA (United Nations Population Fund), she works tirelessly among powerful heads of state as well as on the ground in some of the world's poorest areas

In this program we venture with HRH Crown Princess Mary in the field, when she visits the poverty-stricken west-african nation of Burkina Faso, where she is joining the efforts of local women to gain the right to self-determination over their own bodies. We also revisit HRH's visit to Senegal last year, where she was involved in the campaign against Female genital mutilation – a painful practice causing harm to millions of women in Africa and some parts of Asia. She reveals the details of her work in the struggle for women's rights and for empowering disenfranchised women across the globe.



Directed by Lene Johansen & Helle Slejborg
Production company — DR production
Running time — 28 1/2 min

The Why Foundation

The Why Foundation initiates, produces and distributes public media initiative to a wide global audience to ensure that all people have free access to independent and fact-based information.

Through partnerships The WHY ensures that important human rights stories are seen by a broad audience. We know from experience that good stories are universal and impact the way we see the world. Through storytelling we are able to reach people from all walks of life and increase their awareness and understanding of the world we live in.

Our special projects focus on increasing public support and awareness about a specific human rights issue. Our first two projects were WHY DEMOCRACY? (2007) and WHY POVERTY? (2012). Each project consisted of a series of films made by voices from both the Global North and South. The projects reached respectively 250 million and 500 million people, through collaboration with 30 and 69 partners. The projects also achieved critical success. WHY DEMOCRACY? film 'Taxi to the Dark Side' won an Academy Award in 2008 and WHY POVERTY? won a Peabody "for providing parallax insights into poverty as it is manifested throughout the world."

WHY SLAVERY? will be launched in 2018 and raises awareness about modern day slavery. The Why Foundation will use independent voices to tell stories about slavery. The films will be distributed globally through partners and seen by 750 million people.

ABOUT

**BROADCASTERS,
SUPPORTERS
AND PARTNERS
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