

OVERALL QUESTIONS:

1. Which story or issue resonated most deeply with you? Why?
2. Sheryl WuDunn notes that there are 60 million women and girls “missing” because they have been literally “discriminated to death.” What will it take to change this? What institutions other than the government should be tackling these problems?

SEX TRAFFICKING:

3. One of the primary reasons that sex trafficking and sexual slavery continue to flourish is that there are too few penalties for traffickers, brothel owners, and the patrons and sex tourists that keep this economy running.
 - a. What are some of the consequences for survivors who come forward to seek prosecution? How do these challenges compare with the barriers faced by women who seek justice for other forms of gender-based violence? What are some of the strategies mentioned in the film that are crucial for ending this practice?
4. Nicholas Kristof says that one of the “global paradoxes is that countries with the most conservative sexual mores tend to have the most prostitution.” Why do you think that is? What value do women have in these societies? What examples from the book illustrate this?
5. Pg 26 The authors discuss the evolution of their thoughts regarding how best to deal with forced prostitution and child prostitution.....legalize and regulate vs. prohibition. Before reading this book, what were your thoughts on preventing/reducing prostitution in the U.S. and abroad? What are your thoughts now? Do you agree or disagree with the “big stick approach”?
6. Pg. 35 “Rescuing girls from brothels is the easy part, however. The challenge is keeping them from returning.”
 - a. After reading Half the Sky up to this point and then reading this statement, what thoughts come to mind? What feelings? What kind of threats would have to be made for you to stay enslaved, to not run away? What makes some of these women stay in the prostitution industry? In your opinion, do any women enter prostitution willingly? If so, why?
7. Pg. 53 “There will be less trafficking and less rape if more women stop turning the other cheek and begin slapping back.” How do you feel about the responsibility being placed on women? Who are the stakeholders in abolishing trafficking? Are those who do nothing guilty of the same offense as the traffickers?

8. Pg. 57 How/why could the closure of an entire red light district in Hyderabad be counted as a failure?
 - a. Referring to book: prostitutes were not rehabilitated, shunned by society, driven to suicide, etc.

EDUCATION

9. Do wealthy countries have a responsibility to help poor countries improve access to and quality of education for girls? Why or why not? What more could or should the United States do? What do you think is the best way for you and the members of your community to help?
10. Why is the empowerment of women and girls an effective way to address global poverty?
11. Pg. 17 What do you take away from the experience of the Overlake School in Redmond, Washington?
12. "Rescuing girls from brothels is important, Krishner believes, but the best way to save them is to prevent them from being trafficked in the first place---which means keeping them in school."

Do you agree that education is the best way to prevent trafficking? Do believe girls in the United States should be educated about the risks of sexual trafficking?

13. Pg. 18 Do you think that the money spent by Overland students to travel to Cambodia would be better spent building another school instead? Is that cynical or practical? What would the Overland community say? What would the parents in Cambodia say?

EMPOWERMENT

14. Why is it important to educate men about the benefits of women's economic empowerment?
15. How does earning and "handling" money change a woman's social status?
16. Pg. xx What are the reasons development experts now say that girls and women are the key to solving societal problems? Do you agree/disagree?
17. Pg. xxi "Empowering girls, some in the military argued, would disempower terrorists." Are you surprised by this statement coming from military analysts? What are your thoughts?

18. Pg. 47 “Education and empowerment training can show girls that femininity does not entail docility, and can nurture assertiveness so that girls and women stand up for themselves.” As Westerners, we have been encouraged in recent years to not judge other cultures by our own standards. Is nurturing assertiveness in the women and girls of developing countries offering Western solutions/values? Is assertiveness in women and girls a universal value or culturally relative?
19. Pg. 49 The reign of terror in Kasturba Nagar by Akku Yadav is almost unbearable to read. It is hard to imagine this type of abuse of an entire community in our day and time. Discuss the solution that the women came up with to handle the matter. What factors do you consider when deciding if their actions were right or wrong?

MATERNAL HEALTH

20. What information about maternal mortality resonated most with you during your reading? What was most surprising?
21. What are the additional implications of maternal mortality and women’s health? How does women’s health affect men? How is maternal health connected to the cycle of poverty?

OUR ROLE

22. What more could the United States do to improve maternal health? What impact, if any, do the high maternal mortality rates in the poorest countries have on the social and economic health of our country? Is global maternal mortality a national security issue for the United States? Why or why not?
23. Do wealthy countries have a responsibility to help poor countries improve their maternal health care? Why or why not? Do you think individuals from wealthy countries or international organizations can be effective in the developing world? What are the benefits and challenges? What role do you think you can play?
24. A Saudi female doctor states, “We don’t want anyone fighting for us – and we certainly don’t want anyone feeling sorry for us.” Pg. 154 What do you take away from this?
25. “The best role for Americans who want to help Muslim women isn’t holding the microphone at the front of the rally but writing checks and carrying the bags in the back.” Pg. 163 What are your thoughts? Is this something that you are willing

to do?

26. What prevents U.S. non-profits, government entities, and denominations from supporting existing indigenous organizations rather than creating their own programs and organizations? Do you agree that more progress could have been made in Afghanistan if Americans had invested in Sakena's organization?
27. Discuss the cost-effective ways to increase school attendance which include deworming the students, assistance with managing menstruation, iodizing salt, and bribery. Pgs. 171 – 173.
28. Pg. 224: One of the most successful efforts to end cutting, Tostan tries to always remain positive, preparing people to make their own decisions through discussion of human rights and health issues. In doing so, Tostan has been widely criticized for not taking a stronger stand against cutting. What are your thoughts about this approach?

FORCED/INTERGENERATIONAL PROSTITUTION

29. Urmi Basu describes the cycle of intergenerational prostitution: "Women who are in prostitution have very little ability to make their daughters aspire to do something different. It's not that trans-generational prostitution happens because they want to make it happen. It's because they have no option, they have no escape." Do you agree with this statement? Why or why not? What are some of the barriers that girls can face when they try to break out of this cycle?
30. There is an international debate raging around the subject of prostitution and whether women will be better protected if it is legalized. What do you think? What impact do you think legalizing prostitution would have on the global sex trafficking crisis?

GENDER BASED VIOLENCE & WOMEN'S ROLES

31. Pg. xvi "The best estimate is that a little Indian girl dies from discrimination every four minutes." Why do you think the mothers participate in this kind of gender- based cruelty?
32. Pg. xxii "Honor killings, sexual slavery, and genital cutting may seem to Western readers to be tragic but inevitable in a world far, far away." Does this statement resonate with you?
33. Discuss the fact that women play an active role in the brutalization of other women and girls. What makes women physically abuse other women, drown their infant daughters, assist in raping women in times of war, and insist upon the cutting of their own daughters? How much is due to culture and how much is

due to religious beliefs?

34. Two of the heroes in this chapter (4) are Zoya and Mukhtar. Their lives seem to reflect the many complexities of inter-cultural change. What were your thoughts when you read that Zoya approves of wife beating when the wife deserves it? Were you surprised to learn of Mukhtar's becoming a second wife only after the first wife expressed approval? Pg 79. How are the two situations similar? How are they different?
35. "Publicity about Pakistan's harassment of Mukhtar was embarrassing to the Bush administration..." pg. 73 Are you surprised by the connection between the abuse of one woman in a Pakistani village and the president of the United States? What did it take to make that connection?
36. "Because men now typically control the purse strings, it appears that the poorest families in the world typically spend approximately ten times as much (20 percent of their income on average) on a combination of alcohol, prostitutes, candy, sugary drinks, and lavish feasts as they do on educating their children." Pg. 192
37. The gender differences surrounding the utilization of resources appear to be quite significant. Can it really be as simple as reallocating funds to women? What cultural factors allow these men to spend income on, what we consider to be, frivolous, and immoral purchases? How do religious beliefs possibly support this lifestyle?

ABORTION

"With the best of intentions, pro-life conservatives have taken some positions in reproductive health that actually hurt those whom they are trying to help---and that result in more abortions." Pg. 134 After reading this chapter, would you agree that some pro-life positions have actually led to more abortions rather than less?

OTHER

"Implicit in what we're saying about China is something that sounds shocking to many Americans: Sweatshops have given women a boost." Pg. 210

This statement is shocking. Discuss why the authors confidently make this statement. Can the same be said about children in sweatshops? What is the definition of a sweatshop?