



PODER: BACKGROUND INFORMATION, TALKING POINTS AND DISCUSSION QUESTIONS FOR SCREENINGS

Thank you for hosting a PODER screening! To help you make the most of your event, we recommend reading this information before planning your screening, and then adapting it for your specific event.

It's helpful to provide your guests or participants some information about PODER before the screening so they can understand the importance of the film. Below you'll find some general information about PODER, Let Girls Lead (LGL), and some girl-related statistics for you to share in your welcome and introduction.

INFORMATION ABOUT PODER

PODER is a 16-minute creative documentary that tells a powerful story of girl-led change in Guatemala. In the rural Western Highlands of Guatemala, fewer than 10% of girls finish primary school, and over half have their first baby before age 20. The movie highlights how Elba Velazquez and Emelin Cabrera, two indigenous Mayan girls ages 13 and 16 decided the time had come to make a change for girls. With the help of their friends and a dedicated adult ally, Juany Garcia (a 2009 Let Girls Lead participant), they overcame tremendous obstacles to transform their own lives, families, and communities. These amazing girls were able to convince the mayor of their town to increase funding and access to education and health services for girls. The film starts out in the future, showing Emelin and Elba as adults, winning the "Let Girls Lead Award." Emelin's first-person narrative transitions to tell the compelling present-day story of how the girls were able to advocate with the mayor to provide funding for girl-friendly programs in their community.

PRODUCTION INFORMATION

The film was shot over three days in July 2013 in the girls' hometown of Concepcion, Chiquirichapa, located in the highlands of Guatemala. All filming and production was completed by LGL staff with the Emmy-winning director Lisa Russell. Let Girls Lead's goal in creating PODER was to tell the inspiring story of how these girls in Guatemala raised their own voices to create change. To reflect this girl-centered approach in the film, LGL invited the same group of girls who had advocated with the mayor to star in the film. The girls took part in the production of the film from start to finish: they starred and acted as themselves in the film, they helped with technical tasks such as camera and sound, and they watched the daily playbacks to help select the best shots of the day. The film premiered in Guatemala in March 2014 to an audience of over 100 people, including all of the girls who participated in the advocacy project and the film itself. Photos of the premiere can be seen [here](#). The film's US premiere took place at the UN Commission on the Status of Women in New York.

ABOUT LET GIRLS LEAD

Let Girls Lead is building a global movement of Champions who empower girls to attend school, stay healthy, escape poverty, and overcome violence. Let Girls Lead invests in girls and their

allies to lead social change through advocacy, education, storytelling, economic empowerment, and strategic partnerships. Since 2009, Let Girls Lead's proven model has contributed to improved health, education, livelihoods, and rights for more than 3 million girls through the passage of national laws, implementation of programs, and distribution of funds to ensure access to quality healthcare, education, and economic opportunity. Let Girls Lead's sister initiative, Champions for Change, leverages this proven model to save the lives of women, newborns, and children by empowering leaders and organizations to advocate for reproductive, maternal, newborn, and child health in Nigeria. Champions for Change and Let Girls Lead are headquartered in Oakland, CA, at the Public Health Institute, a leader in global health and development for over 30 years.

WHY INVEST IN GIRLS?

- There are 600 million girls living in low-income countries. Many of them don't get to attend school or see a doctor when they need one, and suffer from violence and discrimination.
- Research shows that girls who attend 7 years of school will marry 4 years later and have 2 fewer children.
- Girls and women reinvest 90% of their income back into their families and communities, compared to the 30% to 40% that men reinvest.
- Evidence is clear – supporting girls' education and leadership is the best strategy to reduce global poverty. As educated girls become women, they can improve their communities and have children who are healthy and educated.
- BUT support for girls is very limited. Out of every dollar in international funding, only 2 cents goes to programs focused on girls.

****SOURCES:** World Bank, Nike Foundation, UNICEF, World Health Organization.

RECENT PRESS COVERAGE ON PODER

- Gates Foundation Impatient Optimists Blog – [The World's Greatest Return on Investment](#)
- Christian Science Monitor – [Making a Difference: Denise Dunning Unlocks Girl Power Through Let Girls Lead](#)
- Huffington Post – [PODER: A Story of Girls Overcoming](#)
- Revue Magazine, Guatemala - [Lights, Camera, Advocacy](#)
- Gates Foundation Impatient Optimists - [On Film: Two Girls Launch Change In Guatemala](#)

SAMPLE QUESTIONS FOR POST-SCREENING DISCUSSION

Below are some sample discussion questions that you can adapt based on your audience and use to guide the discussion with your guests.

- How did the film make you feel? What was it that moved or affected you? Was there anything in the story that reminded you of your own experiences?
- What did you learn from watching the film? (About Elba and Emelin, about issues facing girls, or even about yourself)
- What are three issues facing girls in Guatemala that were mentioned in the film? Why do you think these issues impact girls more than they do boys or adults?

- Do girls in your community face similar challenges? Is it considered acceptable for girls to lead change where you live? Why or why not? What has been done in your community to change the reality facing girls? How can we improve our work to make change for girls?
- How does the advocacy shown in the film relate to your own work?
- What can you do as an individual, and what can we do together, to improve the lives of girls around the world?

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

- When did Elba and Emelin's advocacy campaign begin?
 - **Answer:** 2011
- How long did it take in real life for the girls to learn leadership and advocacy skills and then convince their mayor to support their proposal?
 - **Answer:** The entire process took about one year.
- How old were Elba and Emelin when they became community leaders advocating for girls?
 - **Answer:** 16 and 13, respectively
- So, Elba and Emelin are a doctor and a lawyer now?
 - **Answer:** No, they are still girls attending school. But someday they will be! 😊
The animated part in the film takes place in the future at an imagined Let Girls Lead awards ceremony, and reflects the real-life career goals of both girls.

HOW CAN GUESTS SUPPORT LET GIRLS LEAD

Every dollar raised for Let Girls Lead supports girls' leadership, advocacy, and empowerment programs around the world.

\$25 provides a year of leadership training for a girl in Honduras.

\$50 helps girls in Liberia learn public speaking and social media skills.

\$100 supports the important work of girl advocates in Guatemala.

\$500 provides a girl leader in Malawi with equipment and training to create her own video.

If you would like to make a donation in honor or memory of someone special, or to set up recurring monthly donations, please send an email to lgomezbarris@riseuptogether.org. Thank you.

To donate online, go to www.riseuptogether.org and click on the "Donate" button. Checks should be made out to Public Health Institute/Rise Up