

Everything is possible ... Tout est possible...



There's an exciting buzz going on in the world regarding women and girls. In a recent report

[Because I am a Girl](#), *The State of the World's Girls 2009: Adding it All Up*, U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton states, "Of particular concern to me is the plight of women and girls, who comprise the majority of the world's unhealthy, unschooled, unfed and unpaid. If half of the world's population remains vulnerable to economic, political, legal and social marginalization, our hope of advancing democracy and prosperity will remain in serious jeopardy." Secretary Clinton continues to use her powerful voice to draw attention to global women's issues and violence against women in a recent [New York Times](#) interview.

In their new book, [Half the Sky](#): Turning Oppression Into Opportunity for Women Worldwide, Nicholas D. Kristof and Sheryl WuDunn write: "There's a growing recognition among everyone from the World Bank to the U.S. military's Joint Chiefs of Staff to aid organizations like CARE that focusing on women and girls is the most effective way to fight global poverty and extremism. That's why foreign aid is increasingly directed to women. The world is awakening to a powerful truth: Women and girls aren't the problem; they're the solution."

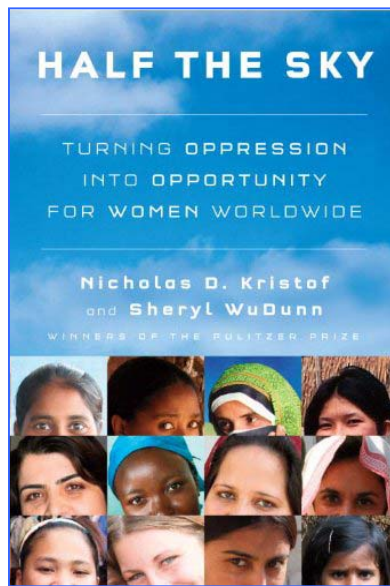


Photo by Drafftfeb Ulka, Mumbai, India

The [Stop Rape Now](#) brochure describes a new, cross-United Nations (UN) initiative: the UN Action Against Sexual Violence in Conflict, committed to preventing all forms of gender-based violence including sexual violence, in areas of conflict and to support survivors.



A Global Campaign Raising Awareness of Violence Against Women

October 2009



Last year we met a remarkable young woman, Kira Mountjoy-

Pepka, director of [Pack Parachute](#) (PP) a new non-profit that is the only charity that offers direct financial support to former members of the military with [Military Sexual Trauma](#) (MST) who live in Washington State. PP acts as a gateway organization to other existing programs in the community and has a long term goal to put together a transitional home for people with MST because so many have experienced/are experiencing homelessness, and there are so few resources for homeless female vets. Kira is an honorably discharged member of the military who **resigned in protest** from the United States Air Force Academy for what she and other advocates allege is the military's defacto policy of persecuting individuals who report sexual assault.

Kira says about her own experience with MST: "The military hurt me, and it hurt me pretty badly, and while I've gone through a lot of recovery, right now I don't have that instant bond with other former members of the military. But I'm getting there, and that is someplace I want other vets with MST to get to as well. One thing I articulated at the WA Women's Veterans Conference was, 'The military may not have wanted me, but the veteran community does.' And that made me feel pretty good."

Canada-Speak My Name charm honoring Zofia Strojnik, age 54. Murdered by her husband in October 2006.



"We are here today to announce the launch of Girl Child Network Worldwide. It will be the centre of excellence and a hub of girls' activism as well as a centre of empowerment where the whole world will come and take best practices."



These are the words 11-year-old Annie Chatizemba used to open the official launch of [Girl Child Network Worldwide](#) (GCNW) on 4 September 2009, Essex County Hotel, United Kingdom. For girls in the UK, it was the first time they had ever stood in front of hundreds of adults, both male and female, to denounce widespread abuse of girls all over the world. Many girls had heard about the suffering of other girls, especially in Africa, but they had never thought that one day they would be leaders of girl's empowerment like Annie. GCNW's empowerment model has reached 300,000 girls in Zimbabwe and continues to expand.



Betty Makoni founded the Girl Child Network in Zimbabwe in 1998. She and 10 high school girls established a girls club in a local high school to combat the kind of terrible sexual abuse that Betty herself had undergone and that many girls were enduring from teachers, relatives, and even,

officials. They marched across the country; they organized campaigns to teach girls their rights; they built empowerment villages to enable abused girls to heal and support each other.

60,000 girls are members of GCN Zimbabwe and thousands have been transformed from victims into survivors and leaders. There are over 700 girls clubs with 80% of the members living in remote areas of the country. Despite overwhelming obstacles, including threats, detention and smear campaigns, Betty Makoni and the group continue to champion the rights of the girl child today in Zimbabwe.



Excerpted from:
[Iran: A female revolution. A monumental challenge to Islam](#), by Azar Majedi

"The Women's Liberation Movement (WLM) is the most important player in the fight against the Islamic Republic. WLM is the antithesis of the Islamic regime. The Islamic regime promotes a misogynist ideology. Subordination and enslavement of women is its credo, the Islamic veil is its flag and ...[read more here](#)."



Photo by Sergio Pessalano, Courtesy: Tahirih Center

The [Tahirih Justice Center](#) (TJC) advocates for women and girls fleeing violence—providing immediate protection through cutting-edge legal remedies, and actively improving public policies for long-term systemic and permanent change. TJC is the agent of change for a community of supporters worldwide with the shared vision that one day, women and girls will no longer live in fear of violence.

TJC was founded in response to a groundbreaking 1996 case (*Matter of Kasinga*) that set precedent, establishing gender-based persecution as grounds for asylum in the United States. Following her involvement as a student attorney in the case, Layli Miller-Muro went on to co-author a book with Ms. Kassindja, a 17-year-old girl who fled Togo in fear of a forced polygamous marriage and female genital mutilation. Few organizations offered legal assistance to women seeking asylum or refugee status and she used 100% of the book's proceeds to establish the TJC in 1997.

[ENVISION this: NYC a Rape-Free City](#)

The [New York City Alliance Against Sexual Assault](#)

is building its vision of a city free from sexual violence. In conjunction with community stakeholders they conducted action-research on sexual violence prevention in three communities. In each community a coalition comprised of local service providers, rape crisis advocates, community members and activists, is using the data to develop effective solutions for preventing sexual violence in their community.



"Spirits" by Maria Sanchez