Philanthropy Seminars

"Featuring Award Winning Women"

Seminar Transcript

11 December 2014
Sabancı Center, Hacı Ömer Auditorium
Istanbul

Speakers:
Sheryl WuDunn, Pulitzer Prize-winning Journalist, Half the Sky Movement Initiator
Sharmeen Obaid Chinoy, Academy Award Winning Documentary Filmmaker

Singer:
Sertab Erener, Performance with the Song “Kız Leyla”

Moderator:
Özlem Dalga, Bloomberg HT Economy Director
Sertab Erener’s Performance:

Lyrics of “Kız Leyla”:
Some were by their husband, some their uncle.
Right by their beloved ones they were.
As they ripped them from their warm homes.
To throw them in riverbeds by midnight.
Neither the killers knew, nor the killed. It was man's law.
Stand up and breed yourself, you have the power.
You are a woman, you are my daughter, you are my mother.
So much milk you had.
Will you let grudge breastfeed the world?
Come on Leyla, get up.
Get up quickly, collect the shards.
Leyla, lie in ambush, now.
Let them not shoot girls anymore.
Some dripped off a knife at a junction.
Some during a friendly conversation.
As life was taken away by a man's hand.
Its last breath spat in our face.
Neither the killers knew, nor the killed. It was man's law.
Stand up and breed yourself, you have the power.
You are a woman, you are my daughter, you are my mother.
So much milk you had.
Will you let grudge breastfeed the world?
Come on Leyla, get up.
Get up quickly, collect the shards.
Leyla, lie in ambush, now.
Let them not shoot girls anymore.
GÜLER SABANCI:
We want to send endless thanks to Sertab Erener. She made us all get on our feet, but it is worth for Leyla. Yes. Recently, one morning my dear friend Sezen Aksu called me. She only said, “Listen.” She said listen. She read a poem. She read the lyrics of the song you listened today. She made me cry. And then she said, “Sertab and I would like to give this to Sabancı Foundation. You may do whatever you wish with it.” We would like to send endless thanks. Music, art. Yes. Now Ünzile has a sister, hasn’t she?

SERTAB ERENER:
Hopefully, if this song creates an impact and if this evokes something, something good, if it creates awareness by going through people’s hearts, I will be very happy. So is Sezen. I mean, we have written this song together. And the fact that this is a song we produced together has a significant value for me.

ÖZLEM DALGA:
We would like to thank Sertab Erener very much.

Distinguished guests, welcome. Welcome to the eighth Sabancı Foundation seminar that has become a tradition. Moments, really filled with emotion. It is very emotional to start the day with music but it is great to start with a wonderful song. Did your hair stand on end? Mine did. I would like to have a big hand once more. Yes, we would be just fine if this room does not explode with energy today. Because our seminar is about “Featuring Award Winning Women” today. Our hashtag is #başroldekadınlar. We would like to get your comments and questions within the next two hours. I will be reminding you. #başroldekadınlar. Please be interactive. Do not hide your precious comments and questions. Now, it is not that we do not come here if we do not win awards but today we have very distinguished award winning women here. One of them is Academy Award winning director Sharmeen Obaid Chinoy is here. The other is Pulitzer winning writer Sheryl WuDunn. Both of them are really are both widely known for what they have achieved and they also lead people for action with what they have done.

Now, I would like to invite once again another wonderful woman, Sabancı Foundation Chairman of the Board of Trustees Dear Güler Sabancı to stage.

OPENING SPEECH by GÜLER SABANCI:

Yes. Good morning. Welcome. Welcome.

Our distinguished speakers Sheryl WuDunn and Sharmeen Obaid Chinoy and our dear students are here with us today.

Dear members of the press are here with us. Doyens of foundations are here with us.

Yes. I would like to say welcome to all of you. This year, year of 2014 is the 40th year of Sabancı Foundation. And therefore, during our seminars, which we are conducting the eighth one today, we usually tried to share best examples of philanthropy, social change, social development.

Today, as I mentioned a little while ago, we started with a present that was also a surprise for us, too. We started with wonderful song of Sezen Aksu and Sertab Erener who are very
generous and very giving.

Hey Leyla. I assume we will be singing this song repeatedly. As you know, December 10 is World Human Rights Day. Therefore, for eight years we usually try to conduct our seminars during this week. Because we say that human rights topic is an absolute must in civil society projects. The topic of our seminar today is violence against women.

In fact, violence is the violation of the most basic human right. And we see that this violation of the most basic human right affects girls and women at most. And therefore, the topic of our seminar today is this. We want to share good and right examples, examples which give hope in the world with you. And while you are leaving the seminar, we want you to be able to say, I can do this, I can lay a claim to this issue, I will do my best, I will also be a part of the solution. Everyone may attract attention to societal problems within their possibilities. Everyone can transform this sphere of influence to a better one.

Today, our distinguished artists and directors perform many projects in order to attract attention to women’s issues. We hope that they continue doing this fearlessly. The example we have witnessed a little while ago is one of them.

And therefore we said that this is not new. Leyla has become a sister to Ünzile. Ünzile was a song written by many years ago by Sezên Aksu about a girl who has become a mother at age twelve. Yes. The guests of our seminar this year are very special women who bravely give voice to people that are struggling for women, just like them.

Our two guests that tells the stories of women that are exposed to violence and how they get rid of this violence. Pulitzer award winning, first Asian-American reporter Sheryl WuDunn. And other guest is the director of documentaries about human rights and women’s issues, Sharmeen Obaid Chinoy.

Sharmeen is the first person to bring Academy Award to her country, Pakistan with her documentary film “Saving Face” where she tells the stories of women exposed to acid violence and how they hang on to life. This is the reason we titled our seminar as “Featuring Award Winning Women.”

As you can understand women are already featuring but these women are also award winning women. And therefore, we will be paying close attention to them and I am sure that they will share examples that will give all of us hope. However, we all know that we will encounter a dark picture. However, we are trying to transform this pessimism to hope.

We have to be determined. We should not lose heart. Doubtlessly, telling stories is a very powerful tool. Stories give us the opportunity to touch people we have never seen, we have never met. We, as Sabancı Foundation, as you know, are trying to highlight people who are working for utility of society. Share their stories with videos, films, on internet and social media. I am following these stories very carefully. Every time I watch one of them, in spite of the difficult conditions, I witness that it is possible to create change and that ordinary people can make a difference and my sprits rise.

Distinguished guests, we have some serious problems that should be solved about women in our country. 2014 Global Gender Gap Report of World Economic Forum, about women and men equality topic, Turkey comes at 125th place within 142 countries. 2014 Gender-related Development Index report of United Nations Development Program, Turkey comes at 118th place within 148 countries.

Yes, I know, there are many projects, studies. We all are showing effort. And some people who are working on these topics do not like to repeat these rankings. However, I think the opposite. We have to repeat these rankings so that we can remind each other continuously
that there are many works to be done, that we have to work more. We need every contribution and every work. Therefore, every kind of study acceptable and we are grateful for them. As long as we have these projects of non-governmental organizations, projects of other organizations, I say we need these all, all of them may make at least a good deal of difference. Therefore while thanking everyone working on the subject, we have to fearlessly continue working together.

Women’s issue is a multidimensional subject. In recent days, in order to determine the precautions to be taken for preventing the violence against women, it is stated in the Official Gazette that Parliamentary Investigation Committee will be formed.

We are grateful for this decision. And we wish that this decision will be put into practice with determination. Here, in this room we have representatives of many non-governmental organizations. We all have to look after this decision. We all have to make an effort to put this decision, this investigation to practice.

Distinguished guests, as we expect women to be brave about using their rights, we also expect men to walk side by side with women concerning their struggle for their rights.

The speakers that we will be listening here today are people who achieved to raise worldwide awareness by handling the women’s issue with tools such as documentaries, books, games and music. I wish for our artists, directors and writers to continue giving more support to create sensitivity and awareness about women’s issues. Members of the press, we have many friends of the media here. We have been traveling together about the women’s issues for years.

I am grateful to all of them. However we will continue to write and we need these issues to take more place in media. I mean we should not get tired of repeating more, we should not get bored, we should not lose heart. Only this way, we can raise more awareness. Only this way we can ensure change.

In the foundation we see, we experience the women, girls, young and disabled people all across Turkey that we touch. And as I see these, my faith grows stronger that today once more, with your participation Sabancı Foundation took more courage that we can achieve successful projects.

In a little while, we will be seeing the successful examples, we will be listening to world examples of these projects and we should be leaving this room with more courage.

Once again I would like to thank you on behalf of Leylas, for participating, for setting your hearts on these issues.

ÖZLEM DALGA:
We would like to thank Dear Sabancı for this opening speech. The aim here is really to be a part of a solution. We hope that we can excite you enough to make you want to be a part of the solution too.

We have two very significant speakers. I would like to inform you a little bit about our first speaker.

Sharmeen Obaid Chinoy. She is winner of Academy and Emmy awards. She did not only become a part of the solution, she also won the first Academy Award of her country. And also, she and these awards she has won resulted in passing a law, a harsher law against violence against women in her country. What she has done? In year 2012 she made a film named “Saving Face.” This film brought the Academy Award to her. And in fact she is
telling stories about the acid violence that women in Pakistan are exposed to. In 2010 she has also won an Emmy award in Pakistan. She has won this award with her documentary named “Children of Taliban.” She is a one with many awards. She tells the problems of women, especially in Pakistan. She becomes a part of the solution, wins awards and also set people in motion. She even changes laws.

Now I would like to invite Sharmeen Obaid Chinoy to tell us her story. Sharmeen, the stage is yours.

**SHARMEEN OBAID CHINOY:**

Good morning. I was born and raised in Karachi, Pakistan and when I was very young, I would find myself getting angry with a lot of the issues that I saw in my country. I was fourteen years old and my parents thought that they should encourage me to channel that anger in a better way. So my mother decided that I should start writing for newspapers. You know, she was afraid that this angry young woman, something might become of her. We should just channel her energy to a something positive.

When I was seventeen years old, I wrote an investigative journalist piece, which was about young men who had Access to guns and ammunition and who would kidnap other young men. Sort of big bullies, they would shave their heads, they would throw them, kidnap them for a few hours.

And I remember that writing that piece and it was published on the morning of Eid and my father who was a fairly traditional man, was going to say his prayers and he came rushing back and said to me; “You can’t go out today.” And I wondered what had happened. The young men that I have written about had spray painted my name through my neighborhood, through many neighborhoods to shame my family and me. And I was convinced that my father would stop me shaking the status quo. He would want me to stop writing. But he got a number of our family members together, got paint and begun white washing the walls. He said something to me that has always stayed with me. “If you speak the truth, I will stand with you and so will the World.” And I think that’s an important, important message for young women to have.

Especially to a woman growing up in a conservative country like Pakistan. So right from the age of seventeen, I was shaking the status quo. Trying for people to have difficult conversations, the kind of conversations people don’t want to have. I found myself in college in United States. And in 2001 I thought that I should start writing for newspapers in America. And then 9/11 happened. I wanted to start doing something visual.

I had studied economics and political science. And I wanted to start making films. And wanted to make films about the issues that people didn’t want to talk about. About marginalized communities, about refugees and women and minorities. But I had a degree in economics and political science. How do you do that? So I wrote up a proposal to about eighty organizations in United States and around the World and I got many, many rejections. Then, New York Times came back and hired me. I started making my films through them.

Through the years I have worked and highlight issues that people are hesitant to talk about. In 2008 I traveled Iraq, Jordan and Syria, worked with Iraqi refugees. And it was at that point when I realized that it’s not enough to make films about these people. But one must try and make their lives better in some way. Because when we make films about them, people generally ask; “What is going to happen to me? What am I going to get by being in your film?” And three of the people that we profiled in that film were able to get asylum in Canada and in the United Kingdom. So, just by highlighting the issue, we were able to help some of
the refugees that we featured. But it wasn’t until I made “Saving Face” A clip I’m going to show you just now, so that you have an idea what the film is about.

**Film 1**

**Zakia:** I found a lawyer. She is especially passionate about women’s cases. And she is fighting my case for free. I don’t know how I would’ve fought this without her.

**Zakia:** Hello Madam.

**Sarkar Abbas-Advocate High Court:** Hello Zakia? How are you? Please sit. Tomorrow your court hearing begins. He’s denied all allegations and says he’s innocent. “I did not throw any acid on her…”

**Zakia:** If not him then who throw the acid?

**Sarkar Abbas-Advocate High Court:** Well, in order to shatter the defense, we need to prove that our witnesses are credible. I am also going to mention some verse from the Quran on disfigurement in the court during our hearing. But it depends on the court. I can’t say before then what the verdict will be.

**Sarkar Abbas-Advocate High Court:** Zakia is a very brave women. Most women in our society do not come to courts for justice. Our present laws are too lenient and most culprits are acquitted. It would be great if we could set a precedent with Zakia’s case.

**End of the Film**

**SHARMEEN OBAID CHINOY:**

“Saving Face” was about the story of two women in Pakistan who had had acid thrown on their faces. And the story highlighted what women were capable of doing if the women had courage to. So Zakia decided to fight and sent her husband to jail who is now serving a life sentence. And Ruhksana, the other woman in the film who had had acid thrown on her face, unfortunately didn’t have the courage fight. And she had another child with her husband who continues to torment her. So, “Saving Face” was about choices. It was about showing how women can help women. In the film particularly, we had this very strong lawyer who decided to take it upon herself to fight this case.

When “Saving Face” came out, I changed the trajectory of kind the films I make. I no longer wanted to make films that highlighted issues. I wanted to talk about the people who are fighting on the front lines, which were risking their lives every day to make sure that those issues were addressed in some way.

I think in the 24 hours news cycle that we have, we often get burdened by how many we all see every single day. And it’s important to talk about the people who are on the front lines, who are able to change things for other people. I am going to show you a clip of a woman who risked her life to make Pakistan polio-free. Some of you may know that Pakistan is struggling with polio. Naseem Akhtar’s story and what she does is very inspirational.
Film 2

Naseem Akhtar: “Knock on the door.” On 18th December the first attack on our polio workers took place. Two of my workers were martyred. A fear set inside. We go and save so many children from disability and this is the reward we get? Our worker who Works for Rs 250 a day was killed. “Are there small kids here?” Now security accompanies us. The alleys are so narrow, that if we go in, there is only one way out. So my eyes are always searching to see if there is something suspicious, a motorcycle or a person. “Are there policemen in the front?” I have received threats quite openly. A man once came to me and said, “What will so much security achieve? We can do suicide attacks.” When I go out in the field I am ready to die. I am not the only one, there are a lot of brave people in my field. There are such beautiful children from Waziristan, Afghanistan and Swat. Children with colored eyes. Seeing them, we forgot our fears. We believe we are saving these children from permanent disability and if we have to give up our life to do that, so be it.

End of the Film

SHARMEEEN OBAID CHINOY:
Unfortunately Naseem Akhtar was killed three months ago in a domestic violence episode. Her husband could not deal with the liberated mind she had. But what Naseem thought us was that it doesn’t matter whether you are educated, whether you are wealthy. It matters whether you have a vision. For 250 Rubies a day, which is equivalent to about three or four dollars, she was risking her life, because she had a vision. And she once told me, “I have a choice. I can stay home because my children are vaccinated. Or I can go out and vaccinate other people’s children. So that my conscience is clear.” And it’s people like Naseem who are on the gracious level, who are on the front lines. Those are ones who are creating change. Those are the ones that need our attention and the light that shed on them. Pakistan is an incredible country because it produces people like myself and people like Naseem and yet it produces women like Zakia as well who are victims. I often say that I come from a very schizophrenic country. I am sure that there are many here who can relate to that.
And I will say this that there are women across the country who are empowered and who are doing incredible things. And as a film maker whose had her voice amplified, I want to amplify that their voices. The two women that you are going to see now on screen are actually my personal favorites.

Film 3

Women Police Officer: It was approximately 1: 30 am. We had to raid an area in Abbottabad, in fact we had to raid with different police station. It was I, Inspector Shehzadi and another lady. We sat in the police van and left. The house that we had to raid had terrorists in it. There was a girl whom they had captured.

Our senior officer told a police officer that he should climb a Wall and opened the door from within so that the terrorists remain uninformed.

When the senior officer called him, he lost his nerve; Courage deserted him when he thought about climbing the Wall and opening the door for the terrorists could easily kill him. My height is small and I couldn’t climb up the Wall, yet after witnessing my spirit, my senior
officer told me to climb up on his shoulder and jump inside the house. Believe me when I tell you, I climbed up on his shoulder, slowly jumped inside the house. When I jumped inside, I could hear some movement within, so I opened the lock with full strength, the police rushed in, the girl also survived and the terrorists were caught.

End of the Film

SHARMEEN OBAID CHINOY:
Two very brave police officers that work in tribal areas of Pakistan. They were in extremely difficult circumstances. They come from very low-income backgrounds. And they’re fighting terrorists every single day. Their stories are inspirational because they will inspire others to carry on in their footsteps. One of the things that I find in our societies unfortunately is that we don’t have mentors. And it’s important to have mentors on all levels, not only just mentors who are, you know, liberated, educated and have had a World class education. But also those mentors that come from the grass roots level. What I find so inspirational about these two women is that they have left their families and they have made police life their calling and their life.

In a country like Pakistan, to have somebody that shatter and break stereotypes at that level is incredible. Last year while doing this Show, it’s a twelve-part Show that I was doing in Pakistan, looking at issues that confront our country, child sexual abuse, domestic violence, what happens to not only men and women but issues of water and land. I traveled right across the country and I met people like this. And then I came across this incredible community. Men and women who have tackled a very important issue in Pakistan; domestic violence. Uneducated men and women who have made their village a model village for all of us to model after. A clip from them.

Film 4
I used to think that women have no rights. Her worth was equivalent to a sandal.

Shahista Bukhari is a worker at Women’s Rights Association and this organization has been successful in making Pippalwala Village a violence-free village.

Shahista Bukhari /Women’s Rights Association: We’ve been working in this community for almost 5 years. We started empowering women. We started a Social Entrepreneurship program with them so they could be economically empowered, and made some women community leaders alongside so that they could work for the betterment of women. See this sign here? It says, “Violence-free household.” This has been up to shut the mouths of all those abuse women.

There’s been a lot of progress. Women have the same rights as men. No one hit us anymore. Nothing bad happens anymore. Every wife and every daughter here is happy. The new generation is very different.

End of the Film
SHARMEEN OBAID CHINOY:
You know, what’s incredible about this village that it shows that change can happen in every community. But you need visionaries to walk with that community; you need people to invest time in that community and you need people to you need someone to be the leader, someone to have a vision like Shahira.

One of my personal heroes is a young woman called Humaira Bachal. She had her hand; her mother had her hand broken by her father only because she dared to send Humaira to school. From a very young age Humaira struggled to get an education. She had a vision. Because she struggled to get an education, she didn’t want anyone else struggle like her community. So she took three rooms, even when she was in school and she set up a school for 1200 children that run in four shifts. When she was in grade eight, she was teaching grade one, grade two, and grade three. She made all the educated girls and boys in her community volunteer their time.

In dimly lit rooms, where water leaked when it rains, where they had no resources Humaira had a vision. When I found Humaira three years ago, I started profiling her. Her vision was to convert the three-room school into a modern school, to a school that everybody could be proud of. We made a short video and see who we sent it to.

Film 5
(The Sound of Change Live, Presented by Chime for Change)
London, June 2013

Madonna: What happens when we educate girls? We empower them. Humaira Bachal, she’s 25 years old. She started teaching when she was 15 in a three-room, make-shift school. She now teaches over 1200 students, in the same rooms. Let’s help Humaira build a bigger school in Pakistan.

Humaira: I fought to go to school and I am standing before you as proof of how education can transform a life. I felt like the dream that I had been seeing for 12 years came true in one day. When I came back to where it all started, I remembered all those times when people conspired against me. They tried to banish me from the neighborhood.

Pakistani Man: It’s not a part of our culture. We have never sent our girls to school. It’s a question of honor. When our girls leave their homes, men stare at them. This is why we don’t send our girls to school. Once a girl is married, her only duty is to help her in-laws. So where is the benefit of going to school?

Humaira: The taunts and threats that I had been facing for 12 years seemed to vanish in that very moment. Now they have all been silenced. Now we will just work. Just work. Everything will happen according to our plans.

Contributions around the World began pouring in to help Humaira Bachal build her school

End of the Film
SHARMEEN OBAID CHINOY:
Humaira was able to build a three room school into a World class education institute. After we sent the film to Madonna, Madonna invited Humaira on the stage at Buckingham Stadium in London. And hundreds and thousands of people from around the World sent in their contributions. Humaira had a dream. And through film we were able to realize that dream. Everyone always ask me why did you move back to Pakistan? I tell them that people like myself need to go back and invest in our country. It is very important. Because if we don’t then who will? And one day I want to be able to stand in front of my daughter who will be born in a few short weeks. And I want to look at her and say what my father said to me. “If you speak the truth, I will stand with you and so will the World.” Thank you.

ÖZLEM DALGA:
Thank you Sharmeen. Now it is Sheryl WuDunn’s turn to speak.
She is the first Asian-American reporter, who wins Pulitzer award. She is working in many fields varying from banking, journalism, and as a writer. At the moment she is a banker, she owns her own company.
She also racks her brain over financing entrepreneurs, especially women. We will be asking about that during our conversation. In fact, she has written a book named “Half the Sky” in 2011. I read that book and I advise you to read it too. But she has another book she has written recently, “A Path Appears.” She says that this one is her favorite. She loves this book because this book offers solutions. There are many problems but how do we solve these and transform them to a more positive way, how do we show the solution, how do we become an example for the solution. The target here is this. Therefore, you have to read this book, too. In 2011, she has been chosen among 150 women, she has been chosen one of the most effective 150 women in the world. By the way, Sharmeen is amongst the first 100. Let me remind that, too. And these books she has written, we have watched the films. The books that Sheryl has written set people in motion about activism. And this becomes a worldwide movement. She will be telling these to us but first of all, how did she set these people in motion, how this has become a worldwide movement?

SHERYL WUDUNN:
I mean, wow, four powerful women. It’s a hard act to follow. A singer, a CEO, a filmmaker, a TV anchor. Oh my God. I’m shaking in my shoes. I am delighted to be here. This is my first time to be in Istanbul and I have to say that when I first came the guide in the car was explaining to me “Oh, this is the land of former Constantinople.” And I said, “What does that mean?” He said, “Yeah, it was the city of Constantine.” And I asked him “What does Istanbul mean?” And there was a great deal of silence. I know it’s a naive question but can you tell me what Istanbul means? Well, I find that out I’m sure later. But as I was talking to the guide about coming to the wonderful Sabancı Foundation, I heard a lot of talk between the driver and the guide. And in Turkish which I don’t speak of course. And then the driver explained to me. Well, the driver said that, I had to mention to you, that everyone loves Sabancı. So, you guys have a lot of followers here in this city. So, I’m very grateful to be here. I also am grateful to be here with the Sabancı Foundation here because, I think that the goals, the mission of helping women, of helping the underprivileged, the youth and also the disabled fits very well with some of the recent works that I’ve done with “A Path Appears.” Transforming lives, creating opportunity.
It is extremely important that we continue to cultivate and to support individuals; people who are inside organizations who are actually trying about to bring a social change. Who are trying to address a lot of the social ills in society which we have many. And a lot of them go unnoticed. Whether it’s women, the plague of many women in marginalized areas of the country or whether it’s the disabled who often can be forgotten in the public mind.

So, I really respect that and I think it fits very well. And sometimes Non-Profit organizations can be the vehicle that they can do a lot of good. Sometimes it is for profit organizations that might be delivering a critical service that is not available for the underprivileged. Sometimes it’s organizations that simply creates jobs. And we underestimate how important the jobs are for many people. So, I really do respect a lot of that work. Thank you very much.

Only introduction of Sheryl WuDunn’s speech is scripted due to her request.

ÖZLEM DALGA:
Yes. We invite Sheryl to the chairs. By the way, I want to call Sharmeen, too. Sharmeen please join us. We will be having a moderated session during this part of our seminar. Now, if you excuse me I will turn to English.

So ladies how did you like the song? Let’s begin our chat.

SHERYL WUDUNN:
She was amazing. Absolutely amazing. It was extremely I mean I’m even embarrassed to speak next to her because she was wonderful.

SHARMEEN OBAID CHINOY:
I think it was a great start to the morning because it’s a rallying cry. You know it’s a cry for people to come together, to do something. And you know, this group of people sitting here are so empowered, they really have the power to affect change in this region. So it’s important to bring this message to them.

ÖZLEM DALGA:
Well, your speech, you showed how you used Madonna your campaign.

SHARMEEN OBAID CHINOY:
Who doesn’t like Madonna support your campaign?

ÖZLEM DALGA:
That was really powerful. So tell us a bit how can we, you know, like the Turkish popstars, like Sertab you know, we are so grateful for her and Sezen Aksu. They are very socially aware of course but how can they help make a change in Turkey?
SHARMEEN OBAID CHINOY:
You know, I’ve always felt that people who are icons in society. They have a special privilege. You know, with great power as Spiderman says, comes great responsibility. And they have this responsibility to people. So if each one of them takes on a cause that they are passionate about. And then rallies around that course, it’s so important. I was recently a part of Chime for Change initiative by Gucci who empower women around the World.
And I’ve seen a phenomenal success that celebrities like Beyonce, Madonna and Salma Hayek who are all part of the project have had. You know, they have all chosen one area that they are attracted to, domestic violence or education or healthcare of justice. They have raised funds for it, they have used their fan base, they have done free events and they have found people who they want to connect with. You know, one of the greatest things is, it’s not that we, there are already people who are doing fantastic work. They just need a boost. They just need a leg-up. These celebrities, you know, all of these people can help them do that.

ÖZLEM DALGA:
And celebrities do give a boost, that’s a living example. Thank you Sertab for your support.

SHERYL WUDUNN:
In our documentary that appeared about “Half a Sky”, the one for “A Path Appears” appears, actually go air on January. In both cases we’ve used celebrities to actually shine a spotlight. Because I think that that’s what they can do. They may not be on the ground, trying to bring about the change but what they can do is shine a spotlight on these issues. Because they can use their celebrity to draw people’s attention in. And it’s very important to create awareness.
I mean people would say, “Why should we just create awareness?” It’s because they are not really doing anything. It’s true that there have been some celebrities who are trying to jump on the bandwagon but maybe a little bit fake. And so I think that you have to look at the authenticity of that particular celebrity but I think that by shining a spotlight on some of these issues, it really does help raise the awareness and the consciousness of ordinary people.
That’s important because if it causes not marketed if people don’t know that there is a particular issue they can’t help. They can’t even donate, they can’t even a Word about the issue. We do need to raise awareness and I think that people underestimate the role that the media can play. And also the role that celebrities play in trying to bring a cause to light. And marketing is very important.
I think among a lot of non-profits at least in the western World, they think that the marketing is bad. Evil, it’s something that for-profits do. But I think we need to change our thinking because I think marketing, marketing for social causes is even more important than marketing soda pop, right?

ÖZLEM DALGA:
You did that with your book. And you did that with your films. But let’s start how you created “Half the Sky” movement? How did you get all these people to act? How did you convince them?
SHERYL WUDUNN:
Well, it kind of took a life of its own. We could only use tools that we thought would be really important. So what we realize is that, first of all, books you know, are not people’s best hobbies. How many people read books?
So we knew that we had to reach people through things like a film, that was helpful but then also we did basically use social media and we created a Facebook game. We thought that games reach even more millions of people so there is a Facebook game. It’s obviously a different medium, it has to be a little bit more simplified. But it does expose people to the issues if you follow certain characters. You know, you can see what happens when a family gets a new goal and how that changes their lives. Or when a girl gets some education, how that changes her life? So I think the idea is basically to give people certain tools to learn about a particular subject in whatever context they are most comfortable learning in.

ÖZLEM DALGA:
What was the tipping point? I mean was it the Facebook game? What was the most effective?

SHERYL WUDUNN:
I think it started with the book. I think it started with the book because that was sort of the intellectual foundation. And then the others followed and each one I think created more awareness.

ÖZLEM DALGA:
What do you say Sharmeen? How do you think is the easiest way to get people to act on the issue?

SHARMEEN OBAID CHINOY:
I think that you have to make people be in the shoes of those people that you are showing. When people think that those issues happen in that part of the World, to those people, from those socio-economic backgrounds, then they already put a Wall between themselves and those people.

We have to grab people and make them think, “This could happen to me. It is lack of the draw that I’m born in a country or in an environment which supports me, I could have just easily been born in an area where I didn’t have the resources.”

You know, I think that if you shake people into thinking this could have happened to me or to my children or this could happen anytime, I think that’s when you really grab people. You know, we are also, we live in this “globalized” World but we are all in some way alienated by so many issues. Because we’ve trained ourselves to think; “Oh, that doesn’t happen to us. That happens somewhere else.”

Actually if you wait long enough, that might actually happen to where you are. So for me, it’s important to use film as a tool to make people understand that; “Hey! This is not them. This could be any one of us.”
SHERYL WUDUNN:
I agree totally with Sharmeen. I think that story telling is extremely important certainly in film. But also in books and literature. I think it’s very important to bring stories to people so they can actually put themselves in the World of those individuals who are facing a lot of challenges. But it isn’t easy. But I also think it is important to give the tools to people to figure out what they can do to act.

ÖZLEM DALGA:
What can be the tools? That’s another question.

SHERYL WUDUNN:
Exactly. So for instance we have in the back of both the books “Half the Sky” and “A Path Appears” a list of organizations that they might go on to the website and look up to learn about or donate to or volunteer to. I think you have to give them, for instance, six steps in six minutes which we do because you just want to make it as easy as possible. Just as a starting point. Half the battle is just starting. Once you start then you might be able to move to the next step, to the next step.
And if you do it with a lot of friends, you have a group of, like a book club that you get together and you can turn it into a giving club. Or you can choose a topic that you all want to learn more about and then discuss. And then choose an organization that you want to work with or you choose a topic that you might want to work in together. It’s a lot more fun. I think that we can learn a lot from the way religious organizations organize activities.

ÖZLEM DALGA:
Well, calling for action I want to call for action here. I think that if we Tweet for once, maybe some people will hear our voice. Because of that; # başroldekadınlar. Please don’t spare your comments and questions from us, I just wanted to remind. I was just calling our audience to action. Our hashtag is #başroldekadınlar. So maybe on social media we can create an impact. Maybe we can draw some attention to the women’s issues here in Turkey. But both of you as we’ve seen from your speeches, you’ve given us examples, examples of how you called for action, how you initiated people to take an action. I want to go back a bit.
How did you start at first? I mean you told us that you are an economy major, you are a political science major. And normally what happens to an econ and pol-sci major you go work in a bank or you know continue with your career. How did you decide to work on this women’s issue?

SHARMEE N OBAID CHINOY:
You know I interviewed with Goldman Sacks and I got a job. Because as a good South-Asian girl who studied economics, I needed to make good amounts of Money. And I thought to myself the day I give the interview and the guy asked me “Why do you want to this job?” I was thinking to myself, “Why do I want to do this job? I don’t want to do this job.”
You know, that’s something that I never be happy with. My career was going to be film. I just... I woke up one morning, I had never seen a documentary film in my life. I was twenty one. In those days I mean I was, it was 1999-2000. In those days I was studying. We weren’t
on social media. There was none of that. You know, that kind of stuff. I watched a film on Discovery Channel. “Oh! This is interesting. I write. I think I could do film.” And, “You know, why I don’t just come up with a proposal?” So I came back to Pakistan. The first thing I saw, it was in October 2001, first thing I saw was the hundreds young Afghan children were on the streets of Pakistan. Because the war has started in Afghanistan and all of these children came to Pakistan. Parents for safety have sent them to Pakistan.

And I said, “You know, everyone is talking about the war in Afghanistan and nobody is talking about the children who are growing up without parents, who are refugees.” So I wrote up this proposal. And I researched online, on Google, how to make a documentary film?

And then I wrote it all up, I just then sent it out. You know, to all of these organizations. And I got many many rejections. I remember crying about them and I remember. One day I said, “Who cares if no one is going to fund me? I’ll do it.” That was, it was just a week after that New York Times answered my call and said that they would fund me.

So the important lesson I learned was “Never take no for an answer.” And if you are turned down, then it means that you have not knocked enough doors. You are able to kick open a door. It is in your faith to do that, in your ability to. So I kicked open the door and here I am.

ÖZLEM DALGA:

So you can make a difference, I mean your story tells us that. Your story as well. What’s your story? I mean you started out as a banker. Your husband is a journalist. How did you get involved with this women’s issue?

SHERYL WUDUNN:

Well you know I don’t think that it’s a women’s issue.

I think that if we call it a women’s issue, we are certainly stuck.

I think we have to think about it as social issue that both men and women have to bring about a change. Because I think if it’s just a women’s issue it will remain a women’s issue. I mean everybody has to bring about a change. I think that what helped in my case is that I came from a background in journalism and also from business which sort of give me the solution focus.

And we looked at the facts and we did analysis and assessment. A balance assessment because that’s what we were trained to do. So we didn’t come at this, “This is our point of view and we are going to fit the arguments to this point of view.” We said, “Here are the facts. We’re going to do an analysis and be balanced, get both sides, all sides.” And then arrive at a conclusion. I think that balance is what people really responded to. Because they didn’t feel that they were being preached to. “Oh my gosh.” First of all the facts are horrible enough that I think they spoke for themselves.

ÖZLEM DALGA:

Well, in the audience we have a few men. Because without men it is impossible to address the issue and to get the numbers in a better way. But what’s interesting with your story is that you started a movement. You know, you told me, us that you used different ways like social media. And how did you use TV, film, social media and the mobile apps, gaming components to promote this global equality and support for women’s issues.
SHERYL WUDUNN:
Right, well, I think really, we look at it as being as being platform agnostic and just, here is the content. Though the content can be rolled into many different platforms, whether it’s television, whether its books, games or mobile games. We have some mobile games in India. We’ll have educational videos as well, curriculum guides. I mean it just spins out into whatever platform people need to read it in or absorb it in. So I think that’s how you reach more people. Each person, because we are saying that ordinary people can actually play a role and make a difference. People take it upon themselves in their own way and act on it with their own skillset and take it into, you know, take it on a path that they could push it along given their skillset and their interest and their passions.

ÖZLEM DALGA:
Which medium was most effective? For instance Facebook and social medium is very popular here in Turkey. Tell us a bit about the game, the Facebook game you created.

SHERYL WUDUNN:
Oh, it’s definitely a good medium. But I think you also have to support it with other things. I don’t think that social media itself is the end game. I mean, it’s a tool. And it is a tool that only go so far because it’s a limited amount. Obviously you can’t put an entire film on just a small, you know, YouTube. I mean too much people won’t watch for such a long time, you want to use different snippets. So I do think that when you all go in together, it really does have a critical mass. It’s hard to do something just for once. So, for instance, the Cony video which I do not know what is big here. I mean that went viral for a while but they didn’t have this support system to capture a lot of that activity and that excitement. And it just won’t and now it is gone. So I think you need to have an infrastructure behind it also different platforms that many people can engage on different levels.

ÖZLEM DALGA:
You use all the power, platforms you can you are saying. Ok. Sharmeen, you give voice to women that are silent. How does that make you feel, how did you convince those women to speak about their experiences?

SHARMEEN OBAID CHINOY:
I spent quiet a lot of time in the communities that I make films in, you know. Some of these women tell me their deepest darkest secrets. Things that their own family members do not know about them. So I have to build trust with them, have to spend a lot of time and find common ground.

You know, you only tell people your secrets or you only let people into their lives, strangers into your life if you trust them. And building trust is very important, and finding common ground. I want them to think that I am in some way just like them. Because really I am just
like them. We all are just like them. It is just that we’ve had opportunities and they haven’t. That is the only difference between people who are empowered and people who are not. It is the level of opportunities that we’ve had and they haven’t had.

ÖZLEM DALGA:
How did you convince them to trust you? I mean, how did you convince them to speak up in your documentaries?

SHARMEEN OBAID CHINOY:
You know, one of the things that I found works very well is a conversation about children. You know women, just always want to and help. If you can talk about how, you know you bring up your children. So if I am working with somebody, a woman who has a child, I always bring my child, my daughter, my four and a half year old daughter. I always start talking about her.

You know, you have to bring yourself down to that level where they, they find something common with you. And then you talk about the issue. First you have to become friends with that person. You know, you have to find a way in. And I found that it always worked, finding something whether it was talking about you know issues that, you know talking about difficult in-laws, who does not have difficult in-laws? Or talking about, those are really, those are issues that bind women across language, culture, religion.

Children, in-laws, it is simple. You know, I always look for issues that bind us. And and frankly, very honestly, the tipping point in the films comes after I spent a lot of time with them. You know, in Saving Face, I spent a lot of time with Rukhsana and the other woman who you don’t see, who you haven’t seen today. She is the one who is living with her husband, and has had another child. And you know, I was working with her and working with her, and then she went, she left the shelter where I was filming and she went back to her husband. And she got pregnant with him. And she was feeling really unwell and she wouldn’t tell me why she feeling so unwell. And I said, “What, what is it?” And she said, “I think I am pregnant.”

And she hadn’t even told her husband then, that she thought she was pregnant. And so there is a scene in the film where she goes to the doctor and the doctor does an ultrasound and realizes she is eight weeks pregnant. You know, for her to have told me over her own parents, or her you know meant that, we had spent enough time for her to get trust. And I think that, that that is something that is always worked with me.

ÖZLEM DALGA:
Well, aren’t they concerned that their families will be mad at them if they find out that they took part in your films?

SHARMEEN OBAID CHINOY:
So, yes. In a lot of the films that I have done, many of the women and the men who have been featured have risked their lives to, to tell their story. But they know, and they are fully aware about the risks and off the risks. Because, you know there is something in them that wants to tell their story.
You know, I think everyone loves the camera. I mean, whether you admit it privately or publicly, everyone loves to be on television. But some people, for some people to be on television means that they carry a lot of high risk. With Rukhsana, in this, in Saving Face, when the film came out, her husband thought this was a way for him to earn money. So then the film won an Academy award. So then he started thinking a million dollars for sure. And he started sending, lawsuits, saying that we owed him money.

Even though they had signed all the legal documents saying that, you know. So he was just a headache. And but what we managed to do through the film is we managed to raise money to get Rukhsana her own house. And so, you know, when you appear in one of the films I mean, I just, I don’t just make films. I make a film and I carry that film with me and I speak about the people and I take it to countries and people learn about those people.

And the human spirit across the World is so incredible that almost always the women or the men that I featured in my film are helped in some way or the other. And their life does change. I never make a promise to them, I never tell them anything. It is just that I have seen that when you do bring up issues, when you do take them out, and when you do talk about them people will help. And it doesn’t matter if they can, you know, if they are from a different part of the World or they don’t share anything in common. The spirit of generosity is still alive in the human race.

SHERYL WUDUNN:

Now I, I definitely agree with that, but I have seen failures too. So, for instance when we were filming “Half the Sky” we actually did try to get one of the people who was in the book on film. It was Pakistan, and there were lengthy discussions, you know, couple of the producers went out and spent a month there trying to work with them.

And in the end because, there was no money. People do expect to get paid to be on the television. They think they were going to be paid to be in the documentary. And since we couldn’t pay, they wouldn’t do it. And also, the cause was the situation where a woman was, obviously she had been in a brothel, she was, at the time, been raped many times. For her it was shameful and so she wants to get money and then it, there was nothing for her so she decided not to.

And in another situation, not that it was a failed attempt but, we caught on camera a police raid of a situation where a young have been raped. And they tried to catch the perpetrator and then put him in jail. And that actually failed so what happened was, the guy was arrested and then he was released by the police. And then we were stuck in a situation, “oh my goodness, what is this mean? Is he now going to go after her again?” But in the end, he didn’t. She, you know, you know, wasn’t in any that much worse a situation or that much better a situation. We were always mindful of the impact that it would have on who are in a film or in a story.

SHARMEEN OBAID CHINOY:

It’s just, the important thing is, do you want to tell your story and if telling your story is going to make sure that someone else learns from it and someone else benefits from it. I mean that is my message when I tell people: you are not telling the story as much for yourself as you are telling it for all of those people who cannot tell that story.
ÖZLEM DALGA:
I think the ultimate example is, your hero, the one you shared in your speech. You said, she passed away a couple months ago.

SHARMEEN OBAID CHINOY:
Yes, she was shot by her husband four times. Four times. That is the ultimate example. He left behind three children: two sons and a daughter. An eight year old, a fourteen year old and a sixteen year old. And we have just set up an education fund for all three of them. We have used a film to set up an education fund and now all three of them have money to go up to college.

ÖZLEM DALGA:
Okay. Wow. Great stories so let’s open it up for questions.

ECE AYAZ:
Ece Ayaz, coming from Koç University. I would like to ask Ms. Sharmeen a question. What happened to the husband of that lady, the lady that was murdered? Because she mentioned how she was killed, what was happened but I am very curious about what happened to her husband. Is he punished in some way? Is he in jail? Thank you.

SHARMEEN OBAID CHINOY:
The husband has been arrested and is in jail right now.

ÖZLEM DALGA:
Is he sentenced to death or?

SHARMEEN OBAID CHINOY:
No, his case is going on right now. And we are hoping that he does get a sentence. Unfortunately in Pakistan, there is a parallel law: the law of a blood money. And we are, you know, if he is able to pay blood money, then he may get released. But the children, because they have become orphans. Because the mother have died and the father is gone to jail. So they have become orphans overnight that their children are getting pressured to forgive the father. And so the case is going on right now. So at least he has been arrested and put in jail.

ÖZLEM DALGA:
Well, in Pakistan a law was passed that made life more difficult for those, for the perpetrators. I mean, is this after your movie? Your movie, do you think, had a role in this?

SHARMEEN OBAID CHINOY:
We had a, once with acid violence particularly, when I was making “Saving Face” the parliament enacted a law. That made acid violence punishable by life imprisonment and ten
thousand dollars in addition. So there are number of cases that are now, everyone that is being processed through, for acid violence particularly, is getting severe penalties. But what really happened after “Saving Face” was that the reason where acid violence happens a lot, the provincial local government made it an anti-terrorism crime. Which meant that instead of going to court for years, they set up these speeding courts and justice could be dispensed. Because ninety percent of the time the woman does not pursue a case is because she is trying not to go to court. Because, you know, it is a problem to have to go to court every week and face your perpetrator. So they made this a crime. And speedy courts so now it’s really working.

SONDAN DURUKANOĞLU FEYİZ:
Hi. I’m Sondan Durukanoğlu Feyiz. Vice president of Sabanci University. I think the issues are there clear, crystal clear. To me the problem is to find those who can make the transformation so that we have a balanced World and to help those people. What do you think about this? Here the problem is really clear. All issues you talk is a real problem. And there are people who can make this transformation but they don’t have the need, the help they need.

SHERYL WUDUNN:
You know definitely the issue is that in the long term there are things that you can do but the government’s play a role. For instance, education. I think that not the only thing is almost the necessary foundation without the education, you really can’t build a society that moral, socially just and equality. So you need that as a minimum. You also need a situation where the society accepts women into productive roles into their society. In other words, they are allowed to have jobs, they are allowed to have work that let them climb the corporate ladder. Because a society has to absorb those principles. Those are the long term effects. In the short term there are a lot of issues depending on the particular location.
If you are in a conflict zone then you need to strengthen security issues and you need short term military toolbox. You need something that really establishes the secure zone so that you can be able to build schools. You know you need quick fixes, maybe there are organizations that can come in and give small grants to particular areas. You know, you need organizations that can come in and distribute food if there is food insecurity. So there are a lot of short term tools but over the long run, the one that is much more sustainable is pervasive education, mandatory education and then jobs.

ÖZLEM DALGA:
Sharmeen, do you want to add anything?

SHARMEEEN OBAID CHINOY:
I will just say that I think that we as a society that somebody else will come in and help. What are we doing to help? What are the steps that we are taking? Even if it’s a small step that we are taking in society, at first we’ve got to help ourselves. And we’ve got to look to the outside World to help us. And I think that in the countries where you find that there is high level of philanthropy, where you find that there are bridges made. And you find that there are people who are helping others people, you find that the voices of the kind of people that you are
talking about are amplified and they are able to help. So you know if there are foundations as Sabancı Foundation in this country helping their own. That’s the first step where some of these issues are getting solved.

**SHERYL WUDUNN:**
We actually examined a lot of neuroscience, the science in the biology behind giving. Very interesting. We had our brain scanned. And they actually do an experiment where they scan your brain while you are actually giving and when you are getting. And they found that of course when you get it stimulates a certain part of the brain, it gets stimulated when you, it’s your pleasure center. It's when you eat ice cream...

**ÖZLEM DALGA:**
So it’s like Tweeting.

**SHERYL WUDUNN:**
Or when you, you know, engage in flirting. It’s the pleasure center of the brain. But when you give, that also turns out, stimulates the pleasure center of the brain. And in half of research subjects, they have discovered that those people tend to feel as much pleasure or more when they give than when they get. There is scientific research to prove that giving is a very pleasurable sensation and it actually makes you happy. There is a whole literature behind this.

**BUĞRAHAN NAMDA:**
My name is Buğrahan ... I’m a student in Sabancı University. First I would like to thank our speakers for coming here and also the people who are here today who have time for human rights, empowering women and empower our civilization of humanity.

I would like to ask Ms. Chinoy a question. Ms. Chinoy, two of my roommates are Pakistani. I have a lot of Pakistani friends at school. Firstly I was discussing about this event and when they heard your name, they were very happy to hear your name.

They were very happy that you come here. When I asked them about your movies did they watch your movies, they said that they didn’t have a chance to. I would like to ask after your awards and after your achievements what has changed in Pakistan. You mentioned there was a governmental support. However, was it in a big extend and do you think there are a lot of NGO developments? Or there were people following your way, making new movies, making new Works for non-governmental charity or that kind of development? Thank you.

**SHARMEEN OBAID CHINOY:**
One of the things that filmmakers get asked a lot is when we do stuff is; “So what happened?” And I always say that film makers are not magicians. Neither are they government officials. They are people who highlight issues. And hopefully, if they are successful they force people to confront those issues. And have difficult conversations about those issues.

So when I put a film out in Pakistan and when I raise an issue when I talked about acid violence in Pakistan. Before the film came out somebody had acid thrown on their faces 50%
of the time it would not get reported. And if it ever did get reported it would be in the inside pages of a newspaper. Maybe two or three lines. “Saving Face” comes out, wins an Academy award, when you have acid thrown on your face you get on the front page news. The police look at it, the judiciary looks at it, and everyone looks at it.

What did I do as a film maker? I didn’t change a law, I didn’t enact changes on the grounds level. What I did was talk about an issue and highlight an issue and that made people sit up and say “Why is this happening in my society and I don’t want it to happen”.

Was that for me the barometer of success? That is, for me, how I value success. When I started talking about some of the issues that, you know, I was talking in the TV show that I have been doing in Pakistan. Nobody wanted to talk about child’s sexual issues, nobody wanted to talk about incest.

Incest? That doesn’t happen in Pakistan, people used to say. That’s shocking because physiologists think over fifty percent of the children are sexually abused at some point or the other in Pakistan. Nobody wants to talk about those issues. Especially incest, where a family member or someone close to you has done that.

You know, there are so many people in Pakistan who absolutely hate me. They think that I should not be talking about the issues that I talk about. They think that I highlight issues that, that give Pakistan a bad name. And you know what I say to them? I say to them: If you hide your problems under a carpet they are not going to go away.

Be man enough to look at yourself in the mirror, confront those issues and say: why are those issues happening? And talk about those issues. Because if we, as a society, don’t confront our own issues, if we don’t talk about them, we will never be able to find solutions. So, you know when I know that I have been successful? It is when I have a hundred people on Twitter saying I am wrong. Or that I should be banned. Then I know that I’ve been successful. Because I’ve been able to rile those hundred people, I’ve been able to awaken something inside of them that they don’t like. If you don’t like something you are going to speak out against it. And in the films that I have made people have not liked what they have seen about themselves in it. And that is why, that is what I have been able to do. I start those conversations that no one wants to start.

ÖZLEM DALGA:
And what was your biggest challenge? You make it sound so easy.

SHARMEEEN OBAID CHINOY:
Firstly you really have to have a very thick skin, ok? Thick thick thick skin. And you have to have vision, and you just have to put your head down and know that this is an issue that you need to get out there. This is an issue that people need to talk about.

You know, I keep my head down, I have a very thick skin and I just work. I am a workaholic. I work a lot. And I work. And I think that, you know, when the film comes out people are like “Ohh, how did that happen?” I am like, it is like having a child. You spent like nine, ten, eleven months, like in the process of, of putting something together. And then the film comes out and you put it into the World, like you put out a child, you hope the World will embrace it. And will understand it and that is what I feel like as a film maker. That is what I like to do.
SHERYL WUDUNN:
But I also think it is important to understand is that, this is all an ecosystem that we are talking about. It is not just one of Sharmeen’s films, or a book here or a Facebook game there. You know we are an ecosystem and actually if we all work together and build on momentum that is created by one or the other piece. Then, you know, we really can. That is why we need a movement.

Because everybody has their own skillset, their own background, their own niche that will listen to it that they can push forward on. And if so we all kind of, you know, join this great movement, we actually can bring about change.

ÖZLEM DALGA:
The challenge is to convince all those people to act and what are the challenges you confronted in achieving people to act, I mean, to this movement?

SHERYL WUDUNN:
It starts by giving people little acts that they can do. You know, change in the World just sounds so overwhelming. It is like “Oh my Gosh! How come I play a role in this giant change that needs to take place in the World?” So break it down. And we, no one may solve the global problem of clubfoot. But you can change the life and transform the life of one, Rashida for instance, in Niger who has clubfoot. And if she can get an operation that she could never afford, two hundred dollars’ worth. If she can get that operation you can transform her life. You haven’t solved the global problem of clubfoot, you haven’t solved the national problem in Niger of clubfoot. But you have changed her life and I think, understand that you can make a difference in part of that problem. It is extremely important for ordinary people to feel. So you have to start with small acts and bite size things that they can digest and then they will get hooked.

ZERRİN KOYUNSAĞAN:
Yes, we have featuring award-winning women. Women are featuring but what should we do in order to involve men? What are the advices of our speakers?

SHERYL WUDUNN:
Actually, as I have said before, first of all I wrote my book with my husband so is that acceptable? So you are successful in this, tell us how do we get them involved? I really do think that, that’s why I don’t call it a woman’s issue because then it will just be delegated to women having to solve it. But I think, we have to think of it as a social problem, a global problem that everybody has to play a role in.

Frankly there are a lot of women who are the evil perpetrators of a lot of the pain and injury to women. Women hurting other women too. They are absorbing social morals, social attitudes. So I think that we have to say this is something for ordinary people to play a role in, for men and boys and women and girls.

That is the way, I think, we have to bring men along. And so for instance in education, well it is important for boys growing up to see girls in the same school. Answering the math questions just as well as they are, if not better. One of the, there is a, wonderful woman, Mali
Melching, who lives in Senegal. She started this non-profit, where she works with a local non-profits to. Create educational programs around anti-FGM, you know, female cutting.

And she says she has to start really early. Because she has to teach the boys not just, this is not just a tale of the girls. To teach the boys, it is ok growing up, to recognize that women can become smart human beings. And also, it is ok to marry a girl who isn’t cut. But she has to start really early because by the time they are in, in teenagers it is too late. They have already been, their mind has been formulated in a certain way.

ÖZLEM DALGA:
So you are highlighting mixed-sex education I believe.

SHERYL WUDUNN:
Well, I mean, in that particular instance, I mean there are, you know, I don’t, I am not saying blatantly that it is bad or good but in that particular situation.

ATA KÖSEOĞLU:
Ata Köseoğlu, Sabancı Holding. First of all, thank you very much for these, very powerful stories and they have been very moving. What are your views on Islam? Being interpreted and most of the time used as an excuse behind the abuse of women. It is not a coincidence that most of the stories that you have brought us here are happening in Islamic societies. So I would like to get your thoughts on the relationship between the use of Islam in the name of Allah sometimes. Or most of the times an abuse behind women.

SHARMEEN OBAID CHINOY:
You know, I will start off by saying that I come from a country which is not an Arab language speaking country. We speak Urdu and the Quran is written in Arabic, a language we don’t understand or speak. So it can be interpreted by anyone anyway and especially in mosques and in the conservative sectors. That they are interpreted in the manner that they want to interpret it and then they impose that interpretation on people. People are unable to challenge that interpretation because they don’t understand what is in the Quran. I mean if you don’t understand the language of the Quran and you, and and most. And the most times in the areas where this happens, you can barely read or write. So what the cleric tells you that is what you that is what you believe to be the truth because. How can somebody who is supposed to be a bastion of a community lie to you? And so, most often I find, actually the root of all evils are the people who run mosques in some of the areas. Where, where this happens, you know.

I mean I am not, I cannot speak for Turkey but I can speak for Pakistan and I’ll say that is a big problem in Pakistan. And people look to the clerics in the mosques as the people on Friday prayers, to get sermons. And almost always, if you have actually picked up the Quran, and read it and then heard the sermon. You would think that they are talking about two different religions. You know, and who benefits the most when you hold a woman back?

You know, in Islam, when you give a woman the right the divorce, you give the woman the right to inheritance. You give the woman the right to inheritance; you give the woman so many rights. Who benefits the most when those rights are taken away? It is that, it’s those people in those communities. And the most interesting thing that I have found is that in
poorer communities people have a lot of frustrations. And the first kind of, what we call “the Wall of Frustration”, the easiest one, to push through is a woman. You know, it is your wife, it is your sister, it is the one who is around you. You might not be able to take your frustrations out on the neighbor or the man down the Street or on your boss. But you can always take your frustration out on a woman. She is always there. And she is not capable of fighting back in many circumstances.

So, I find, one of the things that I have done very early in my life was read the Quran in English, read the Quran in Urdu. So now when a cleric, you know, and often times I find myself confronting clerics. He says something to me, I can answer back. Actually I have no idea what you are talking about because you need to go back and read the book.

Because you are the one who needs the education, I have already read the book and I know what my rights are. But I am able to say that because I read the book, but so many other women don’t. You know, and they are unable to. And that is why it is so important. To have the Quran translated, and not just translated but, but people need to read those translations. Out to all those people who are unable to read and write themselves. One of the biggest problems I found when I was traveling across Pakistan was that. Women thought “well, I don’t have that right”. You know, this happens to me because he has the right. And I am like no, he does not have the right! You only think that because you don’t know otherwise. But actually he doesn’t have the right to do any of those. So it is empowering people to understand a language that they don’t understand and understand text that they don’t understand.

ÖZLEM DALGA:
Well, in Turkey we have the same problem. The Quran is in Arabic and we speak Turkish so have the language barrier as well. Would you like to elaborate more on the issue?

SHERYL WUDUNN:
No, I mean I, the only thing that I would say is that in “Half a Sky” we write about a wonderful woman who started to string of schools in Afganistan, called Afganistan Institute of Learning. It is girls schools and she basically shows, teaches each of those, each of the girls and pulls out the clauses from the Quran, that show them their rights so that when anyone says “you don’t have the right to do this”. Well, they pull out the clause and they say: “well, here it says” and you know, phrase x, y, z, that we have this right. She has armed them with ways to actually speak back.

ÖZLEM DALGA:
Well, in your speech you said that the problem of our century is gender and poverty. Do you think it still is? I mean, is it still underserved?

SHERYL WUDUNN:
The moral challenge of our time, yes. Well, number of sixty million missing females from the population because they’ve been basically, you know, killed before their time. That is a pretty strong statement that really, show that there is an inequality that is not just a matter of jobs or education, it is inequality of life really.
AHMET MÜMTAZ TAYLAN:
I would like to welcome you all once more. My name is Ahmet Mümtaz Taylan. In short, let’s say that I am working in entertainment industry. Now, we are being very enlightened about this awareness issue, thank you but on the other hand instead of men, we should turn back to women’s issues again. What should we do to make women play a greater role in politics? The ladies on the front row, I think that the ladies sitting on the first were in politics, we would progress much faster. Because, the wheels of the state is being turned mostly by men. We are experiencing this problem a lot. What are they talking about this participation in politics topic? Thank you.

SHARMEEN OBAID CHINOY:
In Pakistan thirty percent of the parliament is women.

ÖZLEM DALGA:
Wow. That’s a number to applaud for.

SHARMEEN OBAID CHINOY:
It’s a law. It’s mandated in the law.

ÖZLEM DALGA:
So quotas help.

SHARMEEN OBAID CHINOY:
So thirty percent of the parliament has to be women, whether you like it or not. But I will say this that even then, the committees that are formed to pass legislation is extremely hard. Because, of course not all the committees are made up just of women. You know there are men that are part of the committees. In the last parliament, two years ago, five landmark bills were past. Because the women had a quorum less and they lobbied very hard to find the men that sympathize with them. Then use the men to work with them. Five laws were passed. The domestic violence, acid violence, child marriage, work equality and pay equality. The problem is not just putting women in the parliament but implementation of the law. You can have laws, but if no one is going to follow those laws, what’s the good of having those laws? So it’s great, you need to have women in decision making corridors to be able to enact those laws. But then those laws have to be enforced.

ÖZLEM DALGA:
How is it in the U.S.?
SHERYL WUDUNN:
I’m kind of embarrassed because the U.S., you know has a worse record, as you know probably. Basically one quarter of the senate, less than twenty five percent of the senate is women. Even smaller, maybe like eighteen, nineteen percent of the house is women. And that’s a real big problem. When you look at corporate boards it’s a tiny percentage. Maybe fifteen, sixteen seventeen percent are women on boards. It is a real issue. So the question people talk about is “Do quotas work?” I actually do think that quotas can work.

There is some argument for quotas in India. First mandated that village chief’s one third had to be women. They had a chance to do randomized control experiment. They discovered that the first time a woman became a village chief, there was a hyper criticism of her. “Oh my gosh, she has no experience. Oh, she is not educated. What does she know?” And there is hyper criticism. And they evaluated that the women village chiefs and the male village chiefs, there wasn’t basically that much difference. In outcomes, in how effective they were.

But the second time around the women became village chief was like, “Oh well, she is just another village chief.” The novelty was off, of it being a woman. So that could argue that to get over that initial hurdle rate, perhaps quotas would really work. The U.S., I don’t think that could work in the U.S. because it would take forever to actually pass a law that would allow those.

But one of the problems in the U.S. is that women in addition to their being sort of a social resistance there is also a resistance by women themselves stepping up to the plate. You know it does mean sacrifice of the family, the scrutiny that you know one gets, as a candidate in the U.S. now is just unbelievable. So, a lot of women, they want to focus on their families, they don’t want to put up, you know, expose themselves. So this is an issue because we have to figure out how to do child care a lot better, we have to figure out how to change the basic practical aspects of, you know, family life. So that women can spend more time on their careers and it’s okay. But we are not there yet clearly.

ÖZLEM DALGA:
There is room for women in every country but how did they pass the law in Pakistan? I mean the quota law.

SHARMEEN OBAID CHINOY:
It was passed by a dictator. The best way to pass laws in Pakistan. We had a general, Pervez Musharraf. And he passed the law. And to be honest General Pervez Musharraf wasn’t much of a dictator.

He passed some benevolent laws for women in the country. And this was one of those laws. He mandated the thirty percent of parliament had to be women. It’s really, really helped women a lot in the country on all levels of society because it’s okay for you to run for elections and it’s okay for you to sit in parliament.

You know, however empowered we are, even those of us who are very empowered, we struggle every day to find that balance as Sheryl said in family life. There are still very, very empowered women who carry a heavy guilt with them of the sacrifices that they make. Today, to be here, I miss my daughter’s first recital in school. You know, should I have come, should I not have come, that guilt in the morning, not that guilty in the morning.
However liberated you are women inherently carry some guilt with them. We all do. When you are running for Office, when you at that public level there is even more kind of sacrifices one has to make.

The higher you achieve, the more you go forward if you don’t have a partner who works with you. If you don’t have a society, family that helps you, guilt just multiplies. And for some women it’s too much and they fall in the way side and they give it up. For other women they find strength in some ways and they continue. But you know, women on all levels of society, everywhere in the World, have very similar issues.

ÖZLEM DALGA:
So it helped to get the family involved and especially the husbands involved. I would like to congratulate you on the issue because you wrote the book with your husband.

SHERYL WUDUNN:
It was nice because then I only had to write half a book.

ÖZLEM DALGA:
You know how to get him involved. So, you are also a businesswomen working in New York. Let’s talk a bit about gender inequality in the job environment. I mean The U.S. is the ultimate example, a good example. We are a worse example. So how is it in the U.S.?

SHERYL WUDUNN:
Good example but it isn’t quite there either. So when I recently, I was at Goldman Sachs. There were twenty five percent women in the department that I had.

And it was actually a place that had more women than other departments. In journalism where I spent a lot of my career, at the New York Times for instance, there are basically fifty-fifty percent women and men as reporters. But at the senior level, management, there is much fewer women until Jill Abramson became the executive editor. And there are some more women but it’s a really hard life style. Getting back to life style change. Think about news you have realize and I was an editor, it’s really challenging is that people right their news articles during the day, nine to five and then the editors have to edit them starting at five just when most people are going home to cook dinner or have dinner with their families.

The editors have to stay there to catch the news, edit it until going bed at night. So it’s just the life style is very hard for women so a lot of them just make sacrifices. And so you have to make that choice but I’d say that in the business World as I mentioned corporate boards, you know, very small percentage are women. It is very difficult. There is still a resistance.

Well the other area is entrepreneurs. So you know, there are a lot of male entrepreneurs. We talk about Facebook, Mark Zuckerberg. Of course Sheryl Sandberg wonderful there. But there are very few women entrepreneurs, women who start ventures. Now, why is that?

Part of it is that, it’s hard for women to raise funds. So venture capitalists, most of them are men and they tend to fund, mostly men. So it is hard for them to fund women. And they have done studies to show what percentage of women who pitch to get the funds versus percentage of men who get the funds. You know, when men are the venture capitals. Of course the women get fewer funds. So it’s a really tricky, kind of the chicken egg right now. If one can
support women

ÖZLEM DALGA:
Is there a percentage that men pitch more than women do?

SHERYL WUDUNN:
There is a many more men, male entrepreneurs who are pitching there are fewer female entrepreneurs. There are nights where only men pitching, no women. There is very fewer in far between.

ÖZLEM DALGA:
So there is a lot of work to do. Would you like to elaborate a bit more on the issue?

SHARMEEN OBAID CHINOY:
No. I just want to thank you very much. You have been an incredible audience. And I have enjoyed my time in Istanbul. Shopped a lot. I hope to come back at some point so thank you so much.

SHERYL WUDUNN:
Thank you.