

# School Guide: **WALK ON MY OWN**



## **ABOUT THIS GUIDE**

This BYkids School Guide is designed to enable teachers to use *Walk On My Own* to expand students' experience of the film from passive watching to active, deeply personalized learning.

Included are three sample Pathways, each driven by an essential question to challenge students. Use the Pathway questions to start discussions in small groups or with the whole class. We've also added Discussion Starters and Suggested Projects, and we encourage you and your students to follow your own pathways and create your own projects.

BYkids wants our films to be part of cross-cultural, project-based, collaborative learning that links cultures and countries in shared humanity as the students develop the competencies they need to become global citizens while mastering necessary college and career readiness skills. Most of all, we want students to value their own stories as they learn from the stories of other people from around the world. We encourage you to share the creativity and knowledge that flourish in your classroom as you and your students expand on these BYkids suggestions and create your own learning units.

We'd love you to share your discoveries and ideas with us at [BYkids.org](https://www.bykids.org)!

**BYkids**  
THEIR WORLD THEIR FILMS

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## **ABOUT THE FILM**

*Walk on My Own* was filmed, directed and narrated by 13-year-old **Ndèye Fatou Fall**, who lives in the village of Keur Simbara in Senegal.

She tells the story of how her village chose to abandon long-held cultural practices of childhood marriage and female genital cutting (removal of external genitalia) after participating in an educational program run by Tostan, a human rights organization. The traditions had been accepted unquestioningly and practiced for more than 900 years, but a change came when her village openly discussed these taboo topics. The people of Keur Simbara, with their imam, decided that there was no religious basis for the practices, and chose to end them.

Ndèye Fatou was born after these practices ended in her village. Unlike the generation just before hers, she has the freedom to make her own choices and to finish her education. Ndèye Fatou's hope for her film is that it will help others around the world to examine the choices they make that limit, even harm, girls and women.

Child marriage still occurs worldwide, and on all continents. In the United States, for example, there are some state laws and some legal exceptions that mean children 15 or younger can be married. In the past 20 years, more than 200,000 minors were married in the United States, and in some states boys as young as 14 and girls as young as 12 can be married.

Female genital cutting (FGC) is the ritual cutting or removal of the external female genitalia. The practice is still mostly found in Africa, Asia and the Middle East. In 2016, UNICEF estimated that 200-million women had experienced FGC. In some societies, this is a strong custom so women go along with it. FGC is illegal in the United States, and now in Senegal.

*Walk on My Own* shows how deeply entrenched customs can change, but it takes courage to challenge cultural norms. Now, girls in Ndèye Fatou's village don't endure FGC. They can continue their education, choose whom and when they marry, and pursue a career. Groups such as Tostan and others work to make human rights changes, but it is the people, especially the girls and women, who make lasting change.

## **ABOUT NDÈYE FATOU'S MENTOR**

**Elizabeth Hummer** is committed to empowering children everywhere to tell their stories. She wants them to feel heard, seen and celebrated. She has worked for Sesame Workshop, Nickelodeon, PBS (Cyberchase, In the Mix), and MTV, giving kids cameras to help them tell their stories. Her work has earned two Emmy Awards for stories co-created with young people and nine additional Emmy nominations for children's media and fashion.

*“Young people are in a rapidly evolving state of making sense of their worlds and their place within it. By helping youth to tell their stories authentically, BYkids assists them to become more grounded in their personal truth and confident about their place in the world – locally and globally. I am proud to shepherd the individual wisdom of young people on behalf of BYkids. Nothing is more effective in bringing peace to the world than this exchange of self-knowledge.”*

**Elizabeth Hummer**

## **ABOUT BYkids**

**BYkids** mentors teens to tell their stories through film and share the realities of global inequality and injustice on the world stage. Kids learn citizenry through empathy, using film as a starting point for cross-cultural conversations. **BYkids** films are viewed and discussed by 248 million teens, educators and their families, creating understanding through storytelling. Join us at [BYkids.org](http://BYkids.org).

# THE GUIDE

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## PATHWAY 1

### HOW CAN YOU HELP MAKE CHANGE WITHOUT FEELING RESENTMENT FOR THOSE YOU SEE AS WRONG, OR EVEN HURTING OTHERS?

Ndèye Fatou was born after her village, and later the country of Senegal, decided to abandon FGC and forced child marriage. The decision by Ndèye Fatou's village came about because of education and open discussion, without shame, scorn, or blame of past traditions that were harmful physically and emotionally to girls and women. Open discussion of taboo topics, with all views treated with respect and dignity, led Ndèye Fatou's village to respect and take pride in all who helped to make these changes.

#### From the Film

*"Spreading the word is more effective than just having a law against it. You can tell people that it is illegal, but they will do what they want when you are gone."*

~ Ramata Sow

#### Discussion Starters

- Education is an important theme in the film, but education and traditional beliefs seemed at odds. When everyone in Ndèye Fatou's village thought that FGC was a duty from the Koran, they supported the practice. But when the Imam learned that FGC and forced child marriage were not in the Koran, he had the courage to change his views, as did others. What can you learn from the film about taking on social change when traditions and religion are interpreted by some as the need to do harm to others?
- Social change is hard and can take time. What examples of social change have happened or are needed in your community? What are some accepted 'norms' that you think should be changed? How could you start the change? Are there ways besides (or in addition to) passing a law to make change?
- Ndèye Fatou and others in the film kept respect for and joy in their religion and their strong sense of family and community, even as they saw that social change was needed. How would you approach social change? What did you learn from the way that the people of Keur Simbara reached social change?

#### Suggested Projects

- Create a skit, song, or other type of presentation to identify and educate others about an issue that you see needing change. Be sure to explain why the change will be positive for the community as well as for individuals. You may want to make your presentation poignant, realistic, sad or funny. Perform or share it with the class.
- With your group or class, make a chart or other representation of the similarities and differences between Senegal's social change and a social issue that has changed OR needs to change in your school or community, in your group's view. Research religions, customs, traditions, and attitudes towards women or other groups. Next, propose your own solutions for creating social change

- What can you do about issues of misogyny or disrespect of girls and women in your school? Are there girls who feel they don't fit the female stereotype at your school? Does there have to be only one or two types of females? Create a "Respect for All" campaign at your school. Develop posters that express all the ways people show respect, and that are good for your school. You may use cartoons, humor, songs, drawings, a twitter or Instagram campaign – any expression – to educate others about how to show respect.

## THE GUIDE (continued)

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### PATHWAY 2

#### HOW DOES SOCIAL CHANGE FOR ONE GROUP (GIRLS) RESULT IN IMPROVEMENTS FOR THE ENTIRE COMMUNITY?

The women in the village have benefitted from being able to choose whom and when they marry. They may also choose to stay in school longer, and to develop greater self-confidence. Their joy of learning and of continuing their education comes through as a great benefit and happiness. They also bring back knowledge and actions to the community, resulting in improvements such as electricity and light for the village, with light as a great metaphor.

#### From the Film

*"It is...never too late to learn"*

~ Ndèye Fatou

#### Discussion Starters

- One woman's education and interest in lighting brought electricity to the community. What else might result?
- What role do the children play in helping to keep electricity in the community? Are there added roles children could play in your community?
- What do you and your friends do to contribute to your community? What else could you do to make your contributions even bigger and better?

#### Suggested Projects

- Research the statistics of electrical connectivity, internet connectivity, or another issue that limits a community around the world or across your country or city. Create a map, chart or infographic to highlight the differences and similarities. Next, research how many people are affected in each area or country. Analyze how the reasons or causes are the same and different. Present your infographic to the class.
- With a small group or your class, create an essay or video to share and, if you want, to send to elected officials to explain your views and also raise questions about an issue that needs changing. Your group should first identify the questions and issues that you want to address, then research and take notes about them. Your essay or video must reflect the views of the entire group so you will have to negotiate and compromise to reach agreement on the final version. Share with the class and with elected officials. Monitor their responses to you, and share those responses with your class and school.
- With your class or small group, create a skit, artistic work, music, rap, or art exhibition to show how helping girls and women be equal helps everyone. To start, you may want to decide on a more specific theme for the exhibit, or you may want to have each group or artist select their theme. Encourage personal themes as well as historical themes and themes learned from Walk on My Own. Each member of the class can contribute, and you can organize a performance event or night at your school. If possible, share your works with the community by showing the film and inviting the audience to visit your classroom to experience your works, as well.

## THE GUIDE (continued)

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### PATHWAY 3

#### HOW DO YOU MOVE BEYOND YOUR OWN SCHOOL OR COMMUNITY TO MAKE SOCIAL CHANGES THAT YOU SEE AS NEEDED?

Ndèye Fatou's life is full of friendship, support and love. She is grateful to benefit from the social changes that others fought for. But that doesn't seem like enough – many in the film want to extend social changes to others who do not have them.

#### From the Film

*"I want to do... work that is good."*

~ Ndèye Fatou

#### Discussion Starters

- Ndèye Konaté, one of Ndèye Fatou's aunts, decided to wait to marry until she finishes her education. She is 23, an age at which, in earlier times, a girl could have already been married for a decade. She wants a partner who will support her in what she wants to do and who will be her equal. How might an educated woman and her equal partner help others make social change?
- One way that Tostan helps to spread the word is for each person to have a buddy from the community to explore social needs and make their decisions about how to change things themselves. How could have a change buddy help? What are the different ways that social change can be made?
- Once social change is made in one school, town or country, how can it impact others to change? Does everyone have to make the same social changes? How can you have open, respectful discussions about why a social change is needed?

#### Suggested Projects

- Make a "WHY CHANGE?" bulletin board or wall in your classroom. Put words, pictures, and images of anything that you and your class think might motivate or persuade others to change a social value that disrespects one group of people. Be sure to take photos of your wall to save, post, and add to your school's yearbook. What can you learn from the actions and ideas that motivate others?
- Take your "WHY CHANGE?" (above) to a schoolwide, community, national or international level – create a presentation to show what motivates people to change for the better. Ask others to contribute their motivations. Share these with others. (Note: you may need to edit out sarcastic, biased, racist, or extremely negative motivations submitted by people who are not sharing the spirit of your WHY CHANGE, and whose submissions might harm others.)

- Research some areas of discrimination-related social customs or attitudes in the US or another culture. Make a presentation of biased laws, customs, and attitudes. Research the statistics on improvements and harmful outcomes from one or more of them. Does one change or improvement mean a problem is solved? Use the statistics you surface to argue for continuing change, or to argue against it if you find instances where social changes actually were harmful. Explain your views to the class.
- Identify some areas where you think adding education and women's equality could be helpful to an economy. For example, in the film you saw women carrying buckets of water, and washing in basins of water. What other improvements and businesses might improve Ndèye Fatou's life? Your life? Make a plan that includes the education needed for each.

## **COLLEGE & CAREER READINESS ANCHOR STANDARDS**

Dear Educator,

You and your students, in defining the creative and collaborative details of each Pathway and Project, will implement many different standards not limited to any one content area but focused on critical and rigorous, evidence-based thinking. Following are provided some College & Career Readiness Anchor Standards, Common Core ELA and Math standards, and Next Gen Science Standards, but you and your students will go beyond those limited standards. We hope you will share your experiences and ideas at [BYkids.org](http://BYkids.org).

### **PATHWAY 1**

#### **CCSS ELA College & Career Readiness Anchor Standards**

- CCRA.R.2 Determine central ideas or themes and analyze their development.
- CCRA.R.3 Analyze how and why individuals, events, or ideas develop and interact.
- CCRA.R.6 Assess how point of view or purpose shapes content and style.
- CCRA.R.7 Integrate and evaluate content in diverse media and formats.
- CCRA.R.8 Delineate and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a work, including the validity of the reasoning as well as the relevance and sufficiency of the evidence.
- CCRA.W.1 Write arguments to support claims using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.
- CCRA.W.2 Write informative/explanatory text to examine and convey complex ideas.
- CCRA.W.3 Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events.
- CCRA.W.4 Produce clear and coherent writing appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.
- CCRA.W.6 Use technology to produce and publish writing and to interact and collaborate with others.
- CCRA.W.7 Conduct research based on focused questions, demonstrating understanding of the subject.
- CCRA.W.8 Gather relevant information from multiple print and digital sources, assess and credibility and accuracy of each, and integrate the information while avoiding plagiarism.
- CCRA.SL.1 Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others' ideas and expressing your own clearly and persuasively.
- CCRA.SL.2 Integrate and evaluate information in diverse media and formats, including visually, quantitatively, and orally.
- CCRA.SL.3 Evaluate a speaker's point of view, reasoning, and use of evidence and rhetoric.
- CCRA.SL.4 Present information, findings, and supporting evidence so that listeners can follow the line of reasoning and the organization, development, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.
- CCRA.SL.5 Make strategic use of digital media and visual displays of data to express information and enhance understanding of presentations.

CCRA.SL.6 Adapt speech to a variety of contexts and communicative tasks.

**CCSS Standards of Mathematical Practice**

MP3 Construct viable arguments and critique the reasoning of others.

**NEXT GEN SCIENCE STANDARDS, SCIENTIFIC and ENGINEERING PRACTICES**

SEP 1 Ask questions and define problems

SEP 7 Engage in argument from evidence.

SEP 8 Obtain, evaluate, and communicate information.

**PATHWAY 2**

**CCSS ELA College & Career Readiness Anchor Standards**

CCRA.R.2 Determine central ideas or themes and analyze their development.

CCRA.R.3 Analyze how and why individuals, events, or ideas develop and interact.

CCRA.R.6 Assess how point of view or purpose shapes content and style.

CCRA.R.7 Integrate and evaluate content in diverse media and formats.

CCRA.R.8 Delineate and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a work, including the validity of the reasoning as well as the relevance and sufficiency of the evidence.

CCRA.W.1 Write arguments to support claims using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.

CCRA.W. 3 Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events.

CCRA.W.4 Produce clear and coherent writing appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

CCRA.W.6 Use technology to produce and publish writing and to interact and collaborate with others.

CCRA.SL.1 Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others' ideas and expressing your own clearly and persuasively.

CCRA.SL.2 Integrate and evaluate information in diverse media and formats, including visually, quantitatively, and orally.

CCRA.SL.3 Evaluate a speaker's point of view, reasoning, and use of evidence and rhetoric.

CCRA.SL.4 Present information, findings, and supporting evidence so that listeners can follow the line of reasoning and the organization, development, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

CCRA.SL.5 Make strategic use of digital media and visual displays of data to express information and enhance understanding of presentations.

CCRA.SL.6 Adapt speech to a variety of contexts and communicative tasks.

**CCSS Standards of Mathematical Practice**

MP2 Reason abstractly and quantitatively.

MP3 Construct viable arguments and critique the reasoning of others.

MP8 Look for and express regularity in repeated reasoning.

### **NEXT GEN SCIENCE STANDARDS, SCIENTIFIC and ENGINEERING PRACTICES**

SEP 1 Ask questions for science and define problems for engineering

SEP 2 Develop and use models

SEP 4 Analyze and interpret data

SEP 5 Use mathematics and computational thinking

SEP 6 Construct explanations for science and design solutions for engineering

SEP 7 Engage in argument from evidence.

SEP 8 Obtain, evaluate, and communicate information.

### **PATHWAY 3**

#### **CCSS ELA College & Career Readiness Anchor Standards**

CCRA.R.2 Determine central ideas or themes and analyze their development.

CCRA.R.3 Analyze how and why individuals, events, or ideas develop and interact.

CCRA.R.7 Integrate and evaluate content in diverse media and formats.

CCRA.R.8 Delineate and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a work, including the validity of the reasoning as well as the relevance and sufficiency of the evidence.

CCRA.W.1 Write arguments to support claims using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.

CCRA.W.2 Write informative/explanatory text to examine and convey complex ideas.

CCRA.W.4 Produce clear and coherent writing appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

CCRA.W.6 Use technology to produce and publish writing and to interact and collaborate with others.

CCRA.W.7 Conduct research based on focused questions, demonstrating understanding of the subject.

CCRA.W.9 Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

CCRA.W.10 Write routinely for a range of tasks, purposes, and audiences.

CCRA.SL.1 Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others' ideas and expressing your own clearly and persuasively.

CCRA.SL.2 Integrate and evaluate information in diverse media and formats, including visually, quantitatively, and orally.

CCRA.SL.4 Present information, findings, and supporting evidence so that listeners can follow the line of reasoning and the organization, development, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

CCRA.SL.5 Make strategic use of digital media and visual displays of data to express information and enhance understanding of presentations.

CCRA.SL.6 Adapt speech to a variety of contexts and communicative tasks.

**CCSS Standards of Mathematical Practice**

MP1 Make sense of problems and persevere in solving them.

MP2 Reason abstractly and quantitatively.

MP3 Construct viable arguments and critique the reasoning of others.

MP4 Model with mathematics.

MP5 Use appropriate tools strategically.

MP6 Attend to precision.

MP7 Look for and make use of structure.

MP8 Look for and express regularity in repeated reasoning.

**NEXT GEN SCIENCE STANDARDS, SCIENTIFIC and ENGINEERING PRACTICES**

SEP 1 Ask questions and define problems

SEP 2 Develop and use models

SEP 4 Analyze and interpret data.

SEP 5 Use mathematics and computational thinking.

SEP 6 Construct explanations for science and design solutions for engineering

SEP 7 Engage in argument from evidence.

SEP 8 Obtain, evaluate, and communicate information.