

26th June 2013

How to Get Involved in Ending Gendercide:

An Interview with Evan Davis

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In November, I had the opportunity to meet Evan Davis, director of “It’s a Girl,” a documentary about the global atrocity of female genocide. We had both attended the same conference and began talking during the ‘meet and greet’ time.

Evan was humble and modest, but it did not take long for me to realize that this man had a significant story to tell. His passion to restore gender equity to a world with an estimated 200 million missing women was both empowering and heartbreaking. My time with Evan spurred me on to research this humanitarian crisis called gendercide, and to write an article about it.

The response that the article received was incredible. Many of you shared the article on social media and Twitter, and some even contacted me to ask what you could do to get involved in ending gendercide. Due to this amazing response, I decided to interview Evan Davis about “It’s a Girl” and to ask him how we can all get involved in ending one of the greatest humanitarian crises of our time.

How did you first become aware of the atrocity of gendercide?

We set out in 2008 to produce a documentary exploring the cultural mindsets that underlie social injustice and human rights violations. We traveled to nine countries capturing various human rights stories. One of the stories we wanted to tell was that of son preference and sex selection so we went to India to capture this story. We had researched the issue and knew sex ratios were skewed and understood many of the underlying forces like dowry, but what we found was a game-changer.

Standing at the edge of a field in Southern India, looking at a row of graves, listening to a mother describe how she personally strangled eight of her own newborn daughters in her quest for a son, then learning that as many as 200 million women are missing in the world today as a result of similar practices– and no one seemed to be talking about this! We quickly realized that this was one of the greatest human rights issues of our time, and certainly the

26th June 2013

greatest form of violence against women in the world today– and the story was largely untold. It was then that our team determined to dedicate the film to exposing gendercide in India and China.

Why is this an important issue?

Millions of women in the world today are subjugated, devalued, abused and often killed, simply because they were born female. The world community should care about this issue for no other reason than we are human, and being human means we acknowledge others' right to live free of violence and neglect. More women have been killed, simply because they are girls, than all of the deaths from World War I, World War II and all of the major battles of the 20th century combined. More girls have been eliminated by gendercide in the past decade than people were killed in all of the other major genocidal events of the 20th century combined.

Besides being a human rights violation on a scale rarely seen in history, there are many economic and demographic concerns that stem from the gender imbalance present in India and China today. There are currently 37 million more men than women in China with over one million more boys born each year than girls. India has a similar imbalance. The result is a major increase in sex trafficking, prostitution and child bride kidnapping, among many other concerns.

Why do you think gendercide isn't being addressed by governing bodies?

This is a complex question with some dynamics unique to India and others to China. Both nations have an underlying son preference culture driven by centuries old traditions that say boys are more valuable than girls. In both cases, girls become a part of their husband's family when married and are not able to carry on the family name or inherit wealth, so are seen as a drain on families and their resources.

In China, the government is complicit in the problem because of the One Child Policy, which limits families to one child, or in some cases, two children if their first is a girl. If families are only allowed one child, it is essential to have a boy or parents are left without an heir or a son to care for them when they are old.

In India, the government has passed laws prohibiting sex selective testing and female feticide, as well as dowry, but these laws are not enforced, so the practice of eliminating

26th June 2013

unwanted girls continues. The cultural views about the value and roles of women are so deeply engrained, and corruption is so prevalent, that the government is unable and unwilling to demand justice and equality for girls in India.

As for the absence of response from other world leaders and world bodies like the UN, I'm at a loss. China and India are both significant trade and economic partners to influential nations and I'm sure much of the inaction stems from the desire to avoid disruption to the world economy. It is an unfortunate reality that most of the human rights violations of the world today are either driven by financial profit or ignored for the sake of financial security.

What do you think it will take for the international community to truly invest in ending the atrocity of gendercide?

As I've looked at a number of examples of major human rights violations of the past, like the Trans-Atlantic slave trade; or Apartheid in South Africa; or genocides, like the Jewish Holocaust, I have noticed some similarities:

The victims were reduced to non-citizen, almost sub-human status by the oppressing class.

Surrounding nations and members of the world community turned a blind eye and avoided getting involved for far too long before intervening.

Ending these atrocities required significant intervention by the world community, including sanctions, boycotts, and sometimes war. Without intervention from those who were willing to fight for justice, millions more would have died or have been exploited.

Our film is about educating and mobilizing a movement to end gendercide, whatever it takes. We as members of the world community can learn from the past about what it takes to restore justice on a mass scale like this.

How can others get involved in the fight to end gendercide?

There are a number of activists and organizations working to end gendercide who could use support and help spreading the word. You can learn more on our website at www.itsagirlmovie.com/action

You can also find on the website if there is a screening of It's a Girl coming to your community and see the film, or bring the film to your community if there are no screenings

26th June 2013

scheduled.

Together, we can restore dignity and value to the girls of India and China.

Evan Davis is the director of “It’s a Girl” documentary. To watch the trailer, sign the ‘End Gendercide Manifesto’, and learn more about this film and how you can get involved, visit his website at <http://www.itsagirlmovie.com/>.

[youtube <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ISme5-9orR0?rel=0>]

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