Western Nepal

A six-year old girl rides on her brother’s shoulders as they cross a shallow river, their figures silhouetted against the wide expanse of glistening water. To the casual observer, this is a touching and beautiful scene.

For Urmila Chaudhary, this was her first day of slavery.
Introduction

There are moments when the human race spreads its improbable wings and actually soars. This is one of those moments.

The Daughter’s Voice presents the interlocking stories of five young women from the Terai region of Western Nepal, where poverty and severe oppression have forced generations of girls into indentured servitude. Many of these girls were sold for less than 60 dollars a year and some were taken from their families as young as five years old.

Now freed, after toiling for years as indentured servants, our film’s main characters have become leaders in a movement to abolish this embedded practice of slavery, known as Kamlari. The girls tell the astonishing tale of how almost 13,000 girls have been rescued over the past 14 years.

Transformed into powerful activists, the freed slave girls have created their own NGO, The Freed Kamlari Development Forum (FKDF). With over 1,700 members, the FKDF is helping the girls build new lives through education, vocational training, micro financing, and peer counseling. Their continued activism, often at great personal risk, has essentially abolished the Kamlari practice – and changed the way a nation views, and values, its women and girls.

Why tell this story?

With the world’s attention now focused on gender equality as key to healthy societies, and the shocking number of women still enslaved worldwide, The Daughter’s Voice will be the centerpiece for a global outreach campaign that will raise awareness, showcase a successful model, and stimulate funding for organizations working to end child slavery in countries around the world.
The Daughter’s Voice is a cinematic wide-screen documentary. It captures the timeless beauty of Western Nepal and examines the history and intimate details of Tharu life (the tribal roots of our characters). In stark contrast, the visual palette includes the chaos of cities like Kathmandu, news coverage of demonstrations, violent police actions, historical stills, and archival film footage. The result is a comprehensive look at the awakening of a nation in its final stages of abolishing an embedded system of child slavery forever.

The film centers on the interlocking stories of five young women from the Terai region of Western Nepal, where poverty and severe oppression have forced generations of girls into indentured servitude. Told by the freed slave girls themselves, the story reveals how these brave young women won their freedom, and how they’re building new lives in a society that has oppressed women for centuries. Our young Nepali cast provides a much-needed mirror for oppressed girls everywhere: five beautiful, self-possessed role models who are coming back from the brink of despair and declaring their humanity.

Now free after years in captivity, the film’s main characters have become leaders in a movement to abolish the practice of Kamlari. They tell the astonishing tale of how almost 13,000 girls have been rescued over the past 14 years, spurred by the efforts of retired California attorney Olga Murray and The Nepal Youth Foundation (NYF), the small, Nepali-run NGO she founded.
Our principal cast includes Manjita, the charismatic founding President of the FKDF and Urmila, who was by her side early in the movement and became president herself in 2012. Now in their early 20s, both of these young women have grown in confidence and determination, not only leaders of the FKDF, but as role models, policy makers, and public speakers.

We’ll also meet Dil Kumari, who started her own design center with a small loan from one of the FKDF co-operatives, and has trained over 100 girls in the art of dressmaking. We’ll meet Sujata, who along with Urmila, was beaten unconscious by the police in a demonstration in which the girls demanded a proper investigation into the suspected murders of two Kamliari sisters.
And we will meet Asmita, who after 6 years as a house slave, completed vocational training, and is now teaching scores of former Kamlari how to farm and grow off-season vegetables. Asmita is supporting her entire family and sending her sisters to school with her flourishing nursery and vegetable business.

Like millions of victims of child slavery, the Kamlari girls survived years of brutal treatment without hope, schooling, or love. Fragile though their newfound freedom is, they are prevailing – through education, peer counseling, and micro-enterprise – setting an example for how child slavery can be abolished and how freed slaves can build productive lives.

Their accomplishments and their struggle, offers hope and inspiration to millions of women and girls around the world.

“The pain of being a Kamlari has become the weapon for my movement.”

Urmila Chaudhary
Robin Mortarotti and Roy Cox have been making award-winning films together for over 30 years. It made them the perfect team to produce *Olga’s Promise*, a fundraising film for the Nepal Youth Foundation. The experience of producing that film, has given them a unique opportunity to make *The Daughter’s Voice*. The trust they’ve earned with the freed Kamlari, coupled with the close partnerships they’ve established with The Nepal Youth Foundation and impact, a Nepali production company, guarantees them privileged and exclusive access to the heart of this amazing story.

**ROY COX**  
**Producer/Co-Director**

Roy has run his own company for 34 years and produces documentaries and promotional films for television, the Internet, and corporate events.

Credits include: *Mythos*, a series documenting Joseph Campbell’s final lecture tour – hosted by Susan Sarandon, *Imagine*, a series examining technology’s impact in the classroom, *Olga’s Promise*, an identity film for the Nepal Youth Foundation, and three programs for APS; *Once Upon a Time on the Farm* and *When Life Was Young* featuring the work of photojournalist Joe Munroe, and *Let the Mountains Talk* – a conversation with Sierra Club legend, David Brower.
ROBIN MORTAROTTI
Producer/ Director of Photography

Robin Mortarotti is an award-winning filmmaker with over thirty-five years experience as producer and director of photography on feature, documentary, commercial, and promotional films.

Robin has produced numerous international shoots and has earned a C.I.N.E. Golden Eagle, a local daytime Emmy, and many other awards. *A Death in the Family* won Columbia/duPont and Sigma Delta Chi awards for its examination of the effects of television on society and aired as a segment of “Bill Moyers Journal” on PBS. *Enrique’s Story*, produced for the California State Library Literacy Services and narrated by James Earl Jones, was nominated for an Academy Award.

LOUISE VANCE
Writer/Co-Director

A Peabody and duPont Award-winning producer/director/writer, Louise’s career spans thirty years of television, independent film and video production. Specializing in content-rich, real-world stories, her achievements include seven national TV documentaries and five films serving women and girls.

At CNN Louise produced talk shows and specials. At TBS, she directed and wrote *Iran: Behind the Veil* and helmed the Portrait of America series. For PBS, she produced *Livelyhood, Not in Our Town II*, and *Speaking Freely: An Evening with Remarkable Women*. Her 2010 doc, *Seneca Falls*, aired on 165 PBS stations nationally and is still finding audiences through educational outreach.
The resiliency of the human spirit, and the will to prosper, is a very powerful combination.

In February 2014, we returned to Nepal to scout locations and get a first hand look at the recent key activities of the FKDF. We began casting the five young women who will become our featured stories – asking a select group to write letters about their lives. In April 2014, we hired imPACT, a Nepali video production company, to follow a delegation of FKDF leaders to Kathmandu where they met with government ministers and presented their demands for increased funding to support their primary education.

We are currently working with Didi Bethurum the former marketing director for Girl Rising, to develop our outreach and engagement campaigns. Over the next six months, we will finalize our shooting script, lock in our cast, and begin pre-production for our return to Nepal in 2015. Concurrent to production, we will be launching our outreach and engagement campaigns, to further support fundraising efforts and generate awareness for the film. These efforts will include pursuing additional foundation grants, corporate sponsorships, hosting fundraising events, and launching the outreach, engagement and social media campaigns.

Post Production will begin in summer 2015, and will be ongoing for approximately 6 to 8 months. We anticipate at least one return trip to Nepal with a small crew for additional photography in the winter of 2015. Our goal to begin preview screenings and festival showings of The Daughter’s Voice is early, to mid – 2016. Our core team is deeply committed and engaged in a coordinated effort to launch this production on the timetable outlined.
Partners

The Nepal Youth Foundation (NYF) Founded by Olga Murray in 1990, NYF provides Nepal’s most impoverished children with vital healthcare and education. In 2000 NYF launched the incredibly successful Indentured Daughter’s Program to free the Kamliari. Olga has been profiled on CNN, TIME Magazine and “The Oprah Winfrey Show.”

The Freed Kamliari Development Forum (FKDF) is a Nepalese nonprofit organization of former Kamliari girls founded in 2010 and headquartered in Nepalgunj. They now have five chapters and almost 1,400 members working on projects that include: rescues, peer counseling, business cooperatives, and advocacy for women’s and children’s rights.

The Filmmakers Collaborative (FCSF) is an award winning non-profit organization that produces films & campaigns that engage audiences in matters of cultural, social, and environmental significance. FCSF programs have been broadcast on PBS, Channel 4 (UK), ABC/Disney, ZDF, Australian Broadcasting, Canadian Broadcasting, and in schools. FCSF is a 5013c organization and will manage production funds for The Daughter’s Voice.

We are actively seeking additional partners for our outreach and engagement campaigns, and are in contact with several organizations with shared objectives, notably: the campaign director for Girl Rising, Free the Slaves and Make a Stand. We have also begun working with the Girl Scouts, and will approach the United Nations, the Clinton Global Initiative, The Malala Fund, the Global Fund for Women, and a host of others as we move forward.
Donations

Please send checks to:
The Filmmaker’s Collaborative SF, Inc.
145 Ninth Street #101
San Francisco, CA 94103

You can also make contributions online at www.filmmakerscollaborative.org. Click the donate link on the home page located in the top menu bar. Then click the justgive.org logo that appears.

Enter the amount of your donation and the title, The Daughter’s Voice. For more information please contact the filmmakers, rc@roycoxproductions.com or robinmortarotti@gmail.com

Thank you.
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For campaign updates and a “behind the scenes” look at our production process, please visit: http://www.thedaughtersvoice.com