

solidariTEa

Rethinking feminist leadership



INTRODUCTION

Do you ever have those dreams that are so realistic they take a while to process after you wake up? Yeah? I had one of those dreams last night.



I was a future me, and let me tell you, future me was a *boss*. As were many others, like me, different than me, I supported them all. How we got here and our fitness for power were left unquestioned.

As I walked home from work I looked at the world. I passed a school where kids had enjoyed their CSE, picked up by their dads I heard two siblings argue like he said she said they said ze said. There was no dis in ability and I saw people with impairments access positions of power. I passed the parliament that was proud and it reflected me. I saw my body being beautiful not just because I felt it but because everybody was. There was no norm, so I fit in. In the same way that my clothes, which were nothing more than clothes, fit like comfort.

The sun had set yet the world looked enlightened; her streets were mine. I took a deep breath and inhaled the fresh fossil free air that smelt like justice.

BUZZ!!! My alarm goes off aggressively and I am hit with the disappointment that “it was just a dream”.



YOU, feminist activists all over the world, are already wide awake. You know that in spite of well meant words of ‘how far we’ve come’ there is still lots to be done. You have faced injustices and are fighting against them. Over the past year especially, young feminists have carried the burden of gender inequality; and in the midst of this pandemic it is you and your leadership who have made a difference.

It is tiring, frustrating at times, but more than that: *incredibly valuable*.



Transform Education is a coalition that brings together young feminist activists to support and amplify the work they do to transform education for gender equality. Our first zine, **SolidariTEa**, is a gift of hope to thank you for your work. This first volume reimagines feminist leadership. Feminist escapism into a gender equal world. Together with creatives from over the globe we have imagined what things look like without gender-based violence, without barriers for girls to access quality & safe schooling, without a gender digital divide.



Join us into this world filled with girls’ potential. One where feminist leadership is engrained within education, where all students have quality comprehensive sexuality education, where they are taught about climate justice. A world where girls are encouraged and enabled to thrive in all fields.

Join us into the future world of our dreams, your dreams, that is becoming more and more of a reality because of the work that you do.





WE ARE PODEROSAS,
WE ARE POWERFUL,
UNIQUE, INNOVATIVE.
WE HAVE BEEN
UNDERESTIMATED
THROUGHOUT HISTORY,
BUT IT IS TIME TO CREATE
OUR OWN STORIES.
IT IS OUR TIME TO WRITE
TALES ABOUT HOPE,
COMMUNITY GROWTH,
AND THINKING OUT
OF THE BOX.
WE ARE PODEROSAS,
WE ARE CREATIVE,
RESILIENT, EMPATHETIC.
WE HAVE BEEN
QUESTIONED
ABOUT OUR KNOWLEDGE,
BUT IT IS TIME TO
LEAD AND PIONEER.
IT IS OUR TIME TO
COME TOGETHER,
AND BE TRUE TO
OURSELVES.
WE ARE PODEROSAS,
WE ARE WHATEVER
WE DECIDE TO BE.

- ALEJANDRA RAMOS GÓMEZ



Leadership

• noun [lead-er-ship \ 'lɛ-dər-,shɪp \]¹

- 1: The office or position of a leader
- 2: Capacity to lead
- 3: The act or an instance of leading

We can all agree that we lack womxn, nonbinary and agender people in leadership positions. Most presidents and prime-ministers, politicians, CEOs and other executives are still men, whose policies are likely to be shaped by masculine biases and character traits. Given the dominance of male leadership, it may be hard for womxn and girls to find role models, to imagine alternative leadership styles and rethink what leadership actually is supposed to be. Let's think of what feminist leadership would look like!

“Good leadership” is associated with masculine traits like competitiveness, decisiveness, toughness and absence of emotions². Womxn and gender non-confirming individuals are often met with a double edged sword in institutions which still value such characteristics. When adopting similar traits, they tend to be “punished” for not being or looking like what is expected from someone in their position. They are called a bitch, seen as less competent and rated unsympathetic. When exhibiting characteristics associated with femininity, such as compassion, cautiousness, affection, empathy and ability to compromise, they are punished for not acting like the gender role associated with the position.³

But simply installing womxn leaders is not enough to achieve feminist leadership. Gender norms are deeply rooted in institutions. Crisis management is an example of a field which structurally favors “masculine” over “feminine” leadership. Crisis management has traditionally called for masculine values, such as rationality, pragmatism, cost-driven concerns and hierarchy. This has in turn down-played feminine values, such as helpfulness, empathy and involvement

with social issues. Interestingly, the Covid-19 pandemic has initiated a rethink of crisis management. In dealing with the pandemic, the traditional approach has fallen short and many have called for a more feminine ethics-of-care approach.⁴

Studies repeatedly find that gender inclusivity in leadership enhances performance in business, politics and other organizations.⁵ Also, companies with womxn executives tend to make more profit.⁶ Some explain womxn leaders’ high performance by pointing out that, because of the many barriers and biases womxn face, only the most competent womxn make it to a leadership position.

But feminist leadership is not just about womxn holding traditional leadership positions, like CEO, prime-minister, editor-in-chief or member of parliament. When we want to radically rethink leadership to be feminist we need to go beyond that. Feminist leadership is inclusive and anti-racist. It holds principles like accountability, transparency and vulnerability, which makes it easier to admit mistakes. Feminist leaders (who not need to be womxn!) create space for others to flourish.

Feminist leadership is about recognizing the many leaders who guide, grow, activate, educate and nurture their communities and families - as happens every day all around us. By crediting their work as leadership, the important roles they fulfill in our lives will finally be recognized as such. Apart from that, attributing greater value to everyday, community-based and grassroots forms of leadership hopefully encourages more people to take up the important work of looking after their next of kin.

1 Leadership. (n.d.) In Merriam-Webster. Retrieved February 27, 2021, from <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/leadership>

2 Schneider, M. C., & Bos, A. L. (2014). Measuring stereotypes of female politicians. *Political psychology*, 35(2), 245-266.

3 Dolan, K. A. (2014). “Gender Stereotypes, Candidate Evaluations, and Voting for Women Candidates: What Really Matters?” *Political Research Quarterly* 67 (1), 96–107.

4 Branicki, L. J. (2020). COVID-19, ethics of care and feminist crisis management. *Gender, Work & Organization*, 27(5), 872-883.

5 Grossblatt, L. (2016, September 5). 5 reasons why having women in leadership benefits your entire company. The Broadlist. Retrieved February 27, 2021, from <https://medium.com/@theBroadlist/5-reasons-why-having-women-in-leadership-benefits-your-entire-company-labor-day-2016-a3c46162a7af>

6 Women in leadership. (n.d.) Women Deliver. Retrieved February 27, 2021, from <http://womensdeliver.org/womenleadership/>

Hyder, S. (2019, May 2). The Hidden Advantage of Women in Leadership: How Closing the Gender Gap can Increase GDP. Inc. Retrieved February 27, 2021, from <https://www.inc.com/shama-hyder/the-hidden-advantage-of-women-in-leadership.html>



WE CAN STEM

The only time we look up to the sky
Is to count its night light
Knowing we are women
We become astronauts
Lead a team
To space in a rocket
Rocking our career roles
No clinging onto gender roles
Where we are advised to the stems of
plants and their roots
To know the succulent parts for food

No! When we talk about STEM
Science Technology Engineering and
Mathematics

We mean more girls in STEM

Education and a safe space for the girl
child
Let this be our stem
Upon which we grow into a girly wonder.

JOY



Art by Diana

Letters from 2090

By Mayeso



Dear Nani,

It is strange to write a letter knowing it will make it back to me from an unrecognisable past.

I am writing from the edge of the new century, you would've turned 100 next year. You made me promise to write and tell you if your efforts were worth it, and today, with the new time laws, I finally can.

So much has changed and you taught me better, but Agogo, it's hard to think the world you grew up in was so different to the one you helped forge. I will keep you company over the next few years with stories that may light up what is, from what you told me, one of the darkest parts of your life. I was named after you, you know? Mom said Sunganani means to keep each other, and you were proof that names can be prophecies of who will bear them.

On my first day of school, you found it funny that I still needed a stool to reach the bathroom sink, I found it strange that the teachers were more excited to meet you than me. I was a little put out, but you brushed it all off. You always put people before applause. They gave us a tour of the school, they showed us the red room. Big girls go there when visited by the moon, you said.

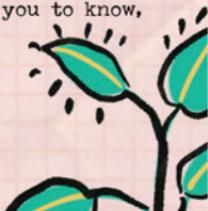
Looking back, I found the menstrual metaphors corny. I didn't know any different though. That there was a time when our menses were not okay to talk about. That it had to be normalised as if it was anything but normal. I can't imagine having an accident and being embarrassed. Not being able to tell the teacher or go to a red room with access to everything I need. That is ridiculous! Like coffee without milk!

Mom explained it though. That before your big campaign things were very hush hush. People didn't talk about it. Schools didn't have red rooms with pads and tampons. Mom said we had to pay a lot of money to get sanitary products because they were luxury goods. I had to check the archives before I believed her. Imagine! Luxury? Because involuntary bleeding each month is such a luxury.

It's strange to think if it wasn't for your campaign, we would still have to. I thought you'd want to know that your leadership helped people stop being so stupid about something so normal. They say we can't write too long because the heavier letters are less likely to make the trip. But I wanted you to know, that I'm happy you're my grandmother.

I hope this warms your heart. I'll write again soon.
I promised after all.

All my heart, 
The other Nani.
August 2090



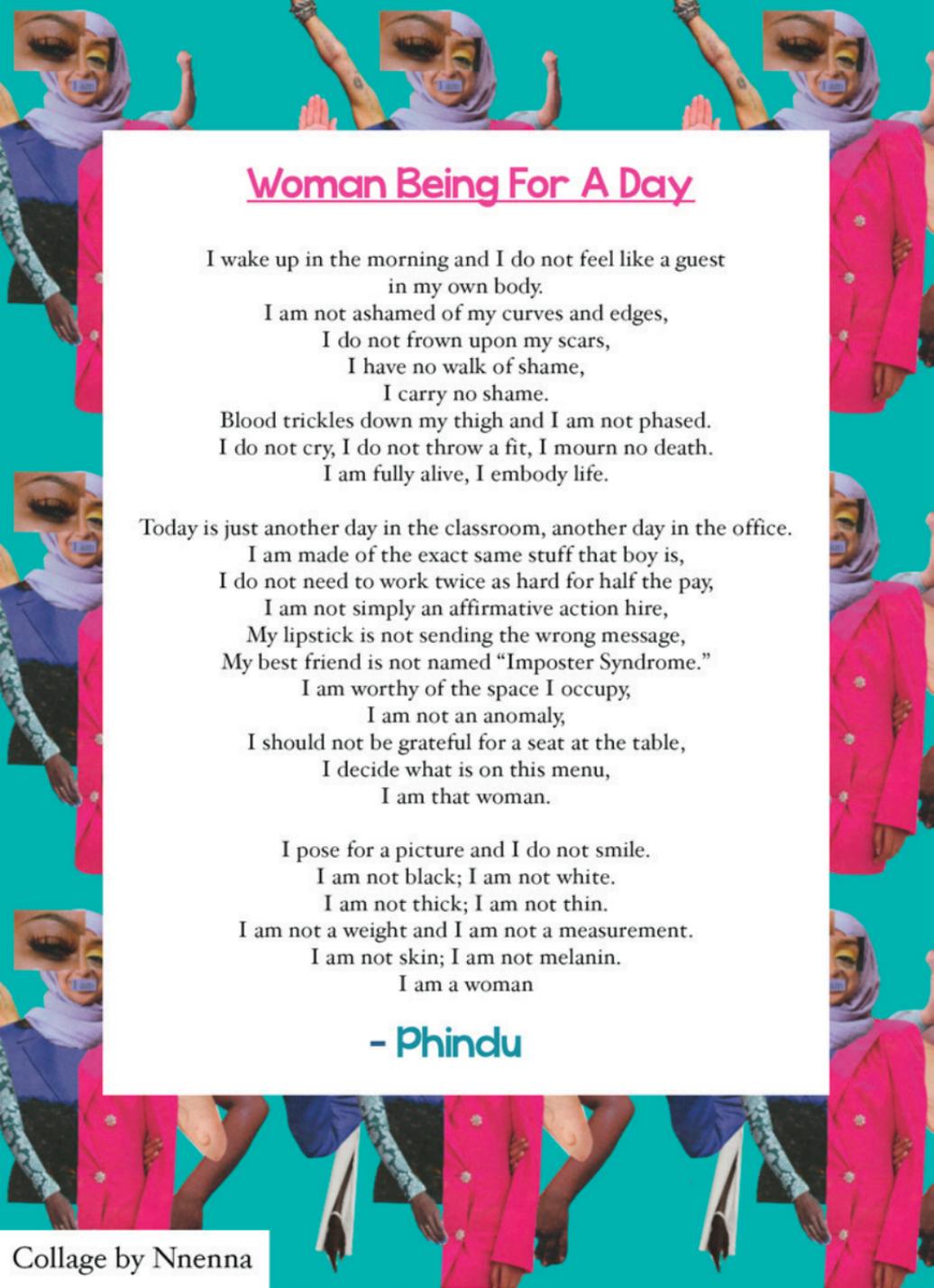


The first time I got my periods, I thought something dangerous happened to me. I ignored it, used to wet my panties with red. It happened again, the second time after a month. I told my mother about it and she smiled. I felt strange. She said that I'm a grown up lady, confining me with the values that I never knew existed.

In rural Nepal, women have to face Chhaupadi: a form of menstrual taboo which prohibits Hindu women and girls from participating in normal family activities while menstruating, as they are considered "impure". Every year we hear news such as, in January 2019, Amba Bohora, a 35-year-old Nepali mother and her sons, aged 9 and 12, died of smoke inhalation while living in their menstrual hut. In early February 2019, 21-year old Parwati Bogati died from suffocation and smoke inhalation after lighting a fire to stay warm.

But in my feminist future, this does not happen.

Photographs & caption by Jyoti



Woman Being For A Day

I wake up in the morning and I do not feel like a guest
in my own body.

I am not ashamed of my curves and edges,
I do not frown upon my scars,
I have no walk of shame,
I carry no shame.

Blood trickles down my thigh and I am not phased.
I do not cry, I do not throw a fit, I mourn no death.
I am fully alive, I embody life.

Today is just another day in the classroom, another day in the office.

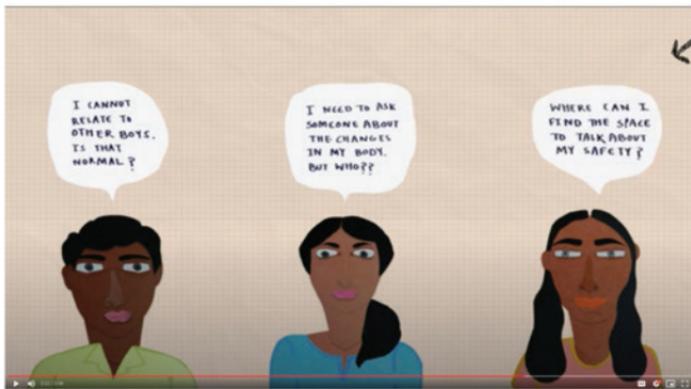
I am made of the exact same stuff that boy is,
I do not need to work twice as hard for half the pay,
I am not simply an affirmative action hire,
My lipstick is not sending the wrong message,
My best friend is not named "Imposter Syndrome."

I am worthy of the space I occupy,
I am not an anomaly,
I should not be grateful for a seat at the table,
I decide what is on this menu,
I am that woman.

I pose for a picture and I do not smile.

I am not black; I am not white.
I am not thick; I am not thin.
I am not a weight and I am not a measurement.
I am not skin; I am not melanin.
I am a woman

- Phindu



Young people are key players in creating a gender-equal world. With the right tools - like comprehensive sexuality education (CSE) - they can create meaningful and sustainable change in their contexts. When implemented at a young age, CSE can act as a preliminary introduction to the concepts of change, puberty, adolescence, bodies, sex, sexuality, gender, emotions, violence, and diversity. In addition, CSE equips young people with accurate and rights-affirming information about themselves, empowers them to make responsible choices in their lives, and enables them to have healthy and positive perceptions of themselves.

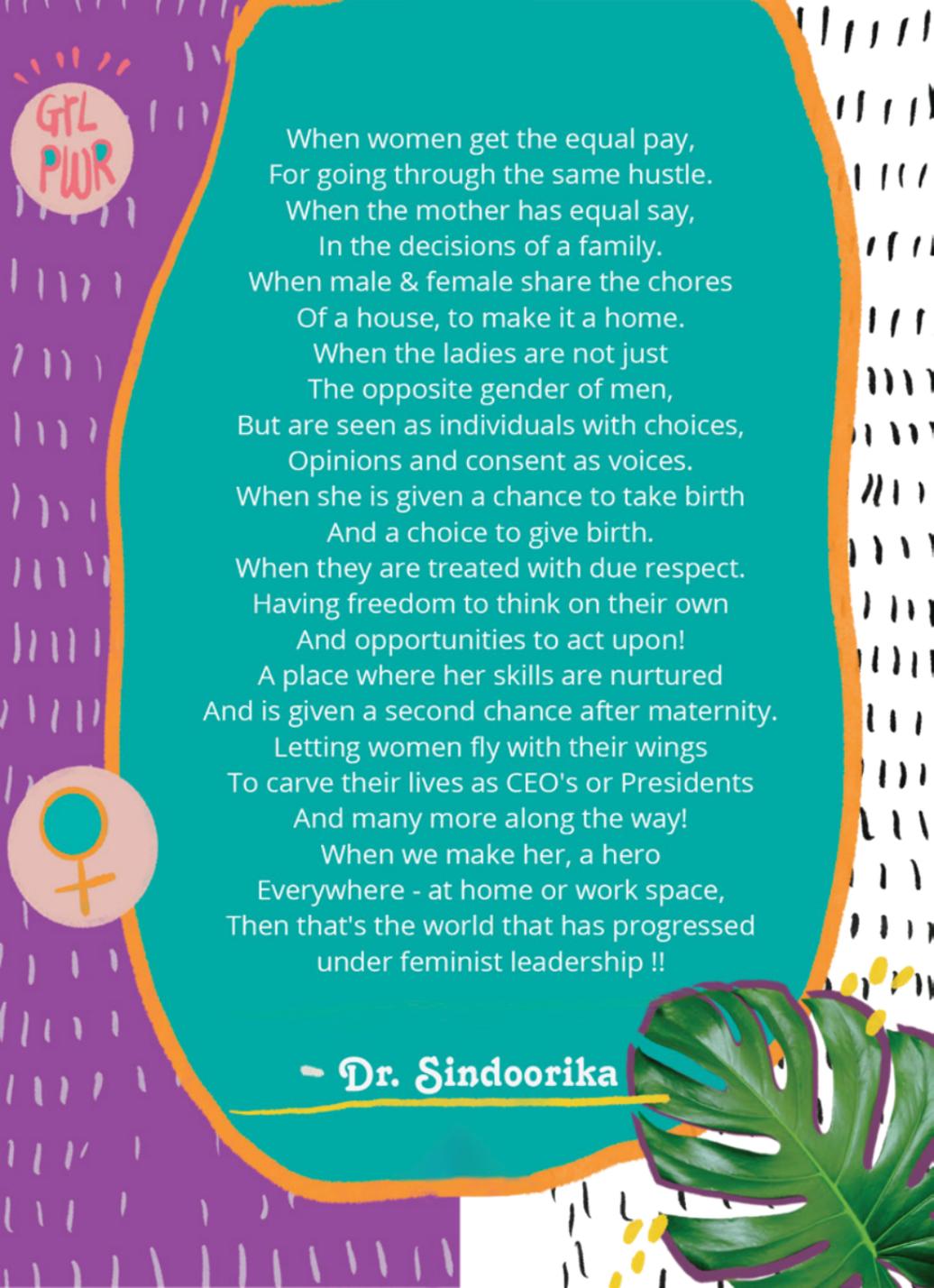
Video by Annette Jacob, The YP FOUNDATION

NOT ALONE BUT TOGETHER

FEMINISM=EQUALITY



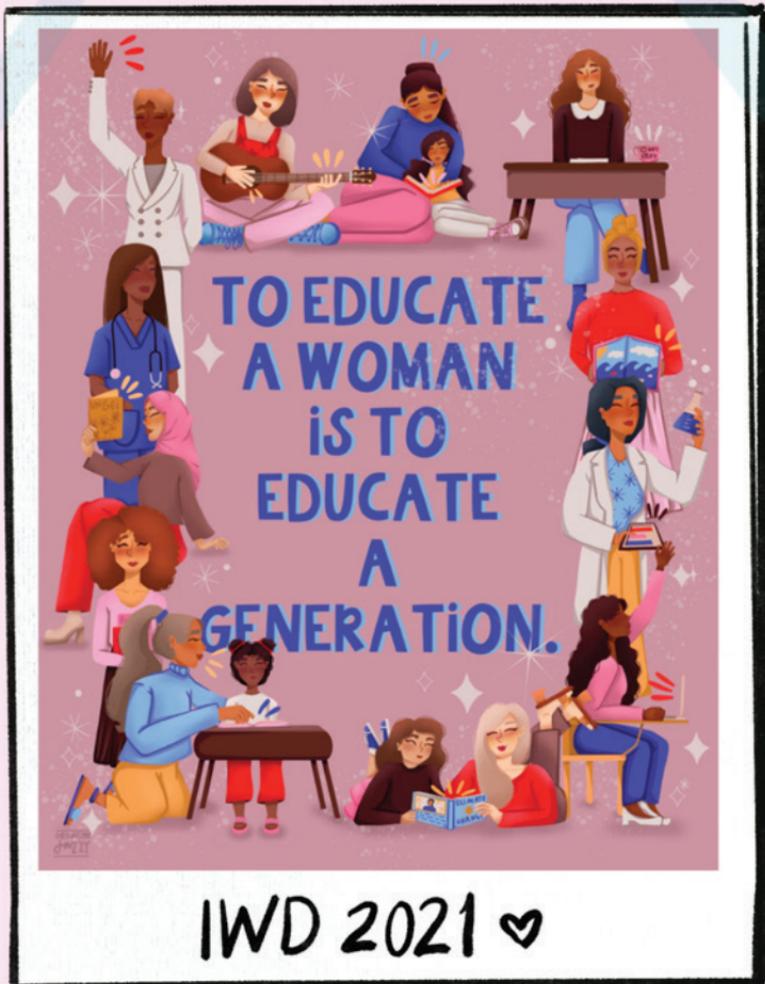
Artwork by Ece



GFL
PWR

When women get the equal pay,
For going through the same hustle.
When the mother has equal say,
In the decisions of a family.
When male & female share the chores
Of a house, to make it a home.
When the ladies are not just
The opposite gender of men,
But are seen as individuals with choices,
Opinions and consent as voices.
When she is given a chance to take birth
And a choice to give birth.
When they are treated with due respect.
Having freedom to think on their own
And opportunities to act upon!
A place where her skills are nurtured
And is given a second chance after maternity.
Letting women fly with their wings
To carve their lives as CEO's or Presidents
And many more along the way!
When we make her, a hero
Everywhere - at home or work space,
Then that's the world that has progressed
under feminist leadership !!

- Dr. Sindoorika



IWD 2021 ♡

Women make up more than half of the world's population. And yet, according to the UN, girls make up two-thirds of the world's illiterate youth and are more likely to drop out of school by the age of 13. For far too long, being born a woman remains the primary cause of discrimination and a lack of education. And this justification is often the strongest force behind persistent gender gaps and unbroken glass ceilings that dampen what a woman can achieve—and therefore, what the world can achieve. But, with access to quality education, women and girls can break this vicious cycle and reshape a more equitable future for all. They can have the autonomy to make informed decisions, improve the lives of their communities, and create better opportunities for the next generation. Because to educate a woman is to educate a generation.

LETTERS FROM THE FUTURE BY WHISPER TO HUMANITY FOUNDATION, NIGERIA

Dear Maryjacob,

It must have been a world of terror and trauma for you and your kind. I'm writing with so much love and excitement after reading from the history museums, about the word feminism and the efforts you all put for the world we have today.

I am writing to you from Nwiboko community, in Ohaukwu Local Government of Ebonyi State. Seated by the window of my school's e-library and watching the beautiful blue sky.

I'm in school today because home is boring, it's fun knowing you can learn from anywhere you are. I don't have to come to school to learn as digital learning is free and easily accessible. I heard my community didn't even have a building for schools in your time, it must have been a horror.

Chiemene my elder sister, just invented a wind energy wheelchair. She's so excited about it, we all are. All anyone needs is wind energy stored at all times to move with the wheelchair, and she dedicates it to her best friend, who hasn't been able to walk since her accident 5 years ago. Grandma says if it was in your generation, Chiemene would probably be married as a 4th wife to a chief. It is scary imagining it.

My last school excursion was to Maiduguri, the state museum has edifices and images of the numerous school girls abducted due to insecurity and insurgency. I met Azizat, she is a student of Chibok Secondary School and served as our museum guide. She said a lot to us about Chibok Girls. I bet it put the nation in a state of mourning and emergency, which must have been too much for children going to school.

I'm sincerely wondering if trees grew faster in your time. It's been 4 months since we had our climate protection tree planting for the year. I marked the one I planted personally, looking at it through this window and I doubt if it has added an extra inch. The flowers grow faster, I love the cute ones from my window at home and the strange ones in front of my class, they make me smile.

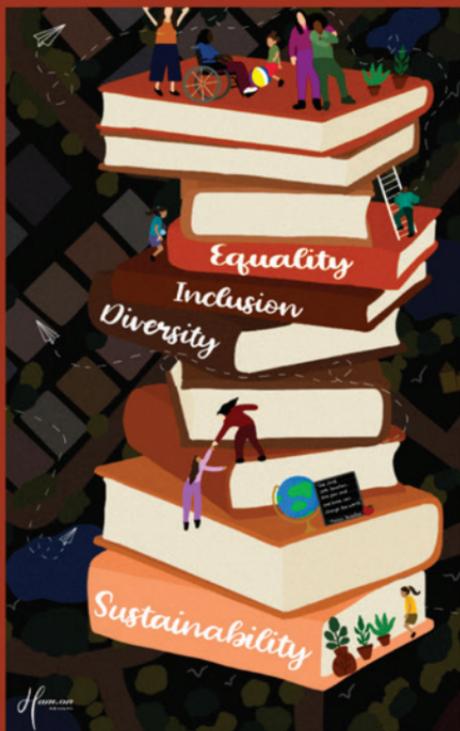
My school is running another Weekend Waste Management event with Ishieke Primary School. I'm excited to pick reusables with my friends. My mathematics teacher, Ms. Chidiadi has insisted we join the Fermentation Team for the weekend, but our minds are set on recycling.

Ms. Chidiadi is my mentor and luckily my counsellor as designated by the school authority. She's so intelligent, friendly and firm. She lives with her beautiful wife and their cute little son, who wouldn't stop throwing tantrums to get a new toy. I am joining them for their family vacation in the ancient city of Ibadan, hoping to find more exciting stories.

I sincerely wish I could hear more of how it was for your time and how these beautiful lives we live evolved. It is indeed normal to have all we have, but knowing it hasn't always been here makes me grateful.

Lots of Love,
Nwaezebuona





Artwork by Helen

CHANGE
IS
HERE



What's his name?

We use him, standing for Her.
he is universal.
Man! s(he) is not.

All human beings are assumed to be 'male' unless
prove otherwise. False.
What is the Truth? *Truths.

Yet not one human is seen,
nor is hir alternative accepted.
Encased in brackets, (s)he takes up
too much space.
Does hen?

Are all words derivative of their 'masculine' origin?
We will make words from scratch, scrap.

A change of letter —is what some womyn like,
but grammar rules determine the way of life,
And spell checks always catch the 'crime'.

Zie who settles for blurring the 'binary',
to articulate their identity is forced to choose,
a symbol that divides the one
for two.

He/ She is inadequate for the words that follow,
And a full stop at the end of this sentence seems
hollow.

Prose is convenient for the codification of gender?
Never mind, I have decided to speak like a poem
everyday.

Some switch the (s)he with he,
no guesses who got there first.
But in a new world,
hu no longer plays the words,
for one side or another.
Equality is a breather.

I take this room is gender-neutral.
So, repeat after me.
What a beautiful baby.
What's his name?

-Bidisha

SATIRe

atTIRe



NOW THAT EVERYONE IS EDUCATED EQUALLY, I NO LONGER FEEL THE NEED TO OVER-EXPLAIN SIMPLE CONCEPTS TO WOMEN AT DINNER PARTIES.



Artworks by Sam



A FEMINIST PLAYLIST FOR YOU

TUNES FOR A GENDER EQUAL FUTURE

Side A

1. Let Her Know - Afrie ♥TE FAVOURITE♥
2. Fight for the Rights - Kelly Fraser
3. Hold on - Yola, The Highwomen
4. You Don't Own Me - Lesley Gore
5. Underdog - Alicia Keys
6. Sorry - Beyonce
7. Confidence - RAYE, Maleek Berry, Nana Rogues
8. Arnaq - Elisapie
9. Fighter - Christina Aguilera
10. She Works Hard For The Money - Donna Summer

Side B

1. Girl on Fire - Alicia Keys
2. I'm Coming Out - Diana Ross
3. Girls Just Wanna Have Fun - Cyndi Lauper
4. Sisters Are Doin' It for Themselves - Eurythmics, Annie Lennox, Dave
5. Soy Yo - Bomba Estereo
6. Straight Outta Vagina - Pussy Riot, Desi Mo, Leikeli47
7. A Ningun Hombre - Rosalia
8. Hard Out Here - Lilu Allen
9. Rich, White, Straight Men - Kesha
10. Self Made - Maxim Adams, Cici, Dwade



CONTRIBUTORS CABINET



Top Row (left to right)

Sidisha, is an artist, writer and visual communicator from India. She is a storyteller who specialises in designing meaningful narratives across mediums.

Sam is an artist and performer from Cheshire. He currently lives and works in London, and is a founding member of the arts-conglomerate 'Stolen Table Collective'.

Alejandra is a Mexican poet, writer and bilingual educator. She is the founder of We are Poderosas, bilingual empowerment and spoken word initiative for girls

Diana is an Illustrator, Writer and Dentist based in Honduras. She is passionate about sciences and uses her art to demand inclusion of gender, health and climate action.

Ece Rana is an artist based in Turkey and loves to try out new things.

Dr. Sindoorika is poet based in India. She aims to create an inclusive and sensible society.

Shinduz is a Malawian feminist who is passionate about using poetry to advocate for social justice.

Mweso is a Malawian writer based in Lilongwe. She hopes to share the same wonder and awe she felt listening to and watching different stories unfold.

Bottom Row (left to right)

Jaemino is a California-based artist. She uses her art to stand up and speak about social injustices, focusing on gender, class and race.

Jay is a girl child activist, spoken word poet and creative writer. She believes that empowered girls can empower girls.

Afrife is an AFRIMA nominated Ugandan Afro-Fusion musician that lives to tell the truth of the African girl. She is currently the ambassador for the AU/ CIEFFA campaign to incorporate STEM in girls' education.

Jyoti is an artist based in Kathmandu, Nepal. Through her photography she aims to challenge the invisible norm-belief-systems which are deeply rooted in patriarchy.

Helen is an illustrator from Los Angeles. Through her work she aims to motivate the younger generation to understand the significance of education.

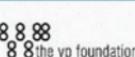
Whisper to Humanity is a youth-led feminist organisation based in Nigeria. They promote feminist leadership and activism through education and training. They motivate youth to be true forces of change.



This is gendered is the first feminist encyclopedia. Its founders, Alina and Tess, believe everything is gendered and prove this in A-Z order.



The YP Foundation (TYPF) is a youth-run and youth-led organization that enables young people to create programmes, and influence policies in the areas of gender, sexuality, education and health.



SolidariTEa by Transform Education



SolidariTEa is a zine by **Transform Education (TE)**, a collective of young feminists and feminist networks around the world, set up to support and amplify the work they do.

TE members focus on challenging gender norms in education, Comprehensive Sexuality Education, SRHR & menstrual hygiene education, Girls' education in emergencies, school-related gender-based violence, feminist leadership in education, STEM gap and gender/ digital divide, and education for gender equality and climate justice.

SolidariTEa covers these themes through art, poetry, stories and music. Arising from the youth-led space that is TE, it is created by and for young feminist activists, and distributed in communities actively working in gender equality and education.

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MEET THE TEAM



DESIGNER & CURATOR

Ipsita is a feminist illustrator currently based in New Delhi. An advocate of gender studies and intersectional feminism, through her work she aims to explore the subjects sexuality, politics and power. Her art captures the multifarious human emotions and sentiments. Most of her work centers on realist portraits and colorful illustrations. As a self-taught artist works in various mediums and is well versed with fine art techniques as well as digital.

 @ipsitadivedi
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EDITOR & WRITER

Nnenna is based between Amsterdam and London, where she does a master's in Human Rights. She is passionate about the philosophy and politics behind educational equality and the social impact of conflict; in particular with regards to gender and education. Outside academia, she explores different ways through which information around social issues can be made accessible. She believes art and feminist principles are key to make the distribution of such knowledge inclusive.

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