GCED ONLINE CAMPUS

SHE RISES

GCED ONLINE CAMPUS MAGAZINE



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THE UNSAID STORIES











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Mehak Shazhad

Editor's Note



Maria Jane Tienoviani Simanjuntak

This issue celebrates the strength, resilience, and brilliance of women everywhere. From inspiring personal stories to practical insights on career, wellness, and self-expression, our pages are crafted to empower you. May each article spark courage, confidence, and joy as you embrace your journey.



Break the Silence

Catherine Nampijja - Uganda



Eliminating does not start with grand gestures on a global stage, it starts in our homes, work places, social circles and our communities.The most powerful tool is our influence within our own cultures. My responsibility is to educate myself, to understand that my voice can elevate theirs, not to replace them. It is to use my position, however small, to create space and opportunities, advocating women's voices in rooms where they are absent. Women are built with great power, the power of choice. The moment you decide to walk away from rooms of discrimination and speak your truth, you reclaim your voice and remind the world that silence is no longer an option.

Educating ourselves as women is not enough. We must raise awareness beyond gender, men need to be educated too. Addressing only one side is merely half the journey. My role also involves creating safe spaces for women who face discrimination, spaces where we can openly discuss urgent issues as such. To take advantage of resources in powerful positions to help eliminate discrimination against women. We must challenge the systems that allow discrimination to persist. We must call on those in power to listen, to act, and to change. Because when one woman is empowered, a spark of courage spreads. And that spark can become a wave.



From the cradle to the grave suffering of discrimination

Samira Yarzadeh - Afghanistan

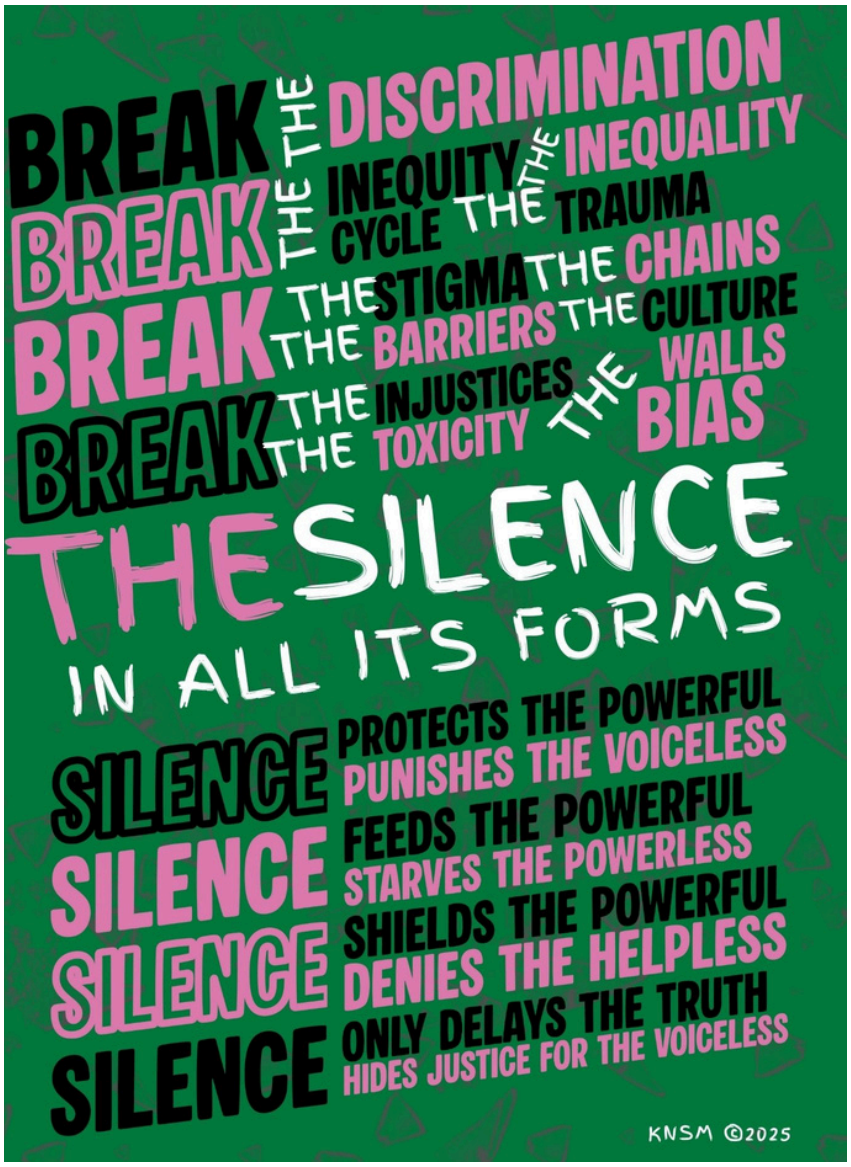


In my country, when a baby is born, at first all the family members come together to choose a name for him or her. If the baby is a boy, he has a clear identity and is considered an honor to the family.

But if the baby is a girl, her story is different. While she is in her father's house, she is identified and defined through a man, her father or her brother, as "daughter of" or "sister of" a man, until she gets married. She hopes that by getting married she will finally receive her own clear identity, but this hope is never fulfilled. Instead, she becomes "the wife of a man." Even on the wedding card, her own name is never written; it is introduced with her father's or brother's name, or only her last name.

When she gives birth to a child, she is no longer recognized as herself, but as "the mother of" someone. This continues until the end of her life. When a woman dies, her death certificate often records her as "the mother of" or "the wife of" a man.

This is the reality of the identity of a girl or woman in my country. Calm and simple on the surface, but unjust at its core, from beginning to end. A human life, an essential part of society, is subjected to injustice, and this cycle repeats itself with the birth of every girl. This is the truth: my identity, the identity of my sister, and the identity of my mother have been trampled upon. And still, this pattern continues again and again with the birth of each girl, while few realize how deeply it wounds a girl's soul.



Break the Silence In All Its Forms

This poster was created for the GCED class "Your Role in Eliminating Discrimination Against Women" and inspired by the book "Know My Name" by Chanel Miller, a survivor of sexual assault. Both the experience of my peers in class and Chanel's bravery reminded me how speaking up can be deeply empowering.

The phrase BREAK THE SILENCE is divided into three parts. At the top, I named what things must be broken such as discrimination, inequality, and harmful cultural norms. At the center, I highlighted "Break the silence in all its forms". At the bottom, I showed how silence weighs heavily on the powerless yet protects the powerful. The phrase "BREAK THE SILENCE" can also be read both horizontally and vertically, urging action from every angle. The background of shattered, hazy glass symbolizes fragility yet resilience of women. I chose bold fonts mixed with handwritten emphasize strengths and urgency, while the color green, pink, and white reflect Indonesia's struggles of loss, resistance, and solidarity in recent weeks. Designed in Canva, this poster is a call to keep breaking silence and persistently raising voices in any ways we can.



By: Khoirun Nisa' Sri Mumpuni - Indonesia

POWER TO CHANGE

Christiana Akpan Ukem- Nigeria





I came from a family and a society where women are encouraged to pursue education and skill development. Yet, I remember my father telling me stories of the time when women were denied such opportunities, confined mostly to the home and the kitchen. Although things have improved today in Nigeria, traces of that mindset of limitation still remain. Many women continue to struggle with self-belief, limiting themselves to how men see them, rather than fully embracing their God-given potentials. Some women see themselves as incapacitated and mainly sexual objects.

I believe the real change begins when we fully recognize our potential and purpose. This is not about competing with men for equality but about women refusing to limit themselves to attracting male attention. Too often, young women waste opportunities by waiting for a man to marry or care for them instead of focusing on their growth. When women rely only on men, they risk being seen as liabilities or, worse, as mere sexual objects by some men. But I believe we have far more to offer. If we truly harness our talents, pursue education, and contribute to society with the same determination that men show, we can lessen discrimination and create a healthier balance in our homes and communities.

I am not against men providing for the family-that role is important. But women must also realize that they have equal potential. With an open mindset, women can rise above limitations, unlock their gifts, and truly change society for the better.



Eliminating Discrimination



Alukudo Emmily, Uganda

Discrimination against women is one of the deepest wounds in our society an injustice that has robbed generations of dignity,
opportunity, and equality. It is found in schools where girls are discouraged from pursuing certain subjects, in workplaces where women are underpaid for equal work, in communities where harmful cultural practices are normalized, and even in homes where voices of women are silenced. Eliminating this form of discrimination is not just the responsibility of governments, laws, or institutions and our responsibility.

My role begins with awareness. I must first recognize the subtle and overt ways in which discrimination thrives around me. It could be in jokes that demean women, in traditions that restrict their freedom, or in biased decisions that limit their growth. Speaking up against these injustices, however small they may seem, is the first step I can take. Silence allows discrimination to continue; my voice can challenge it.

I have a duty to educate and empower.

Knowledge is a powerful tool in breaking the chains of inequality.By mentoring girls, supporting women-led initiatives, and advocating for equal opportunities in education and work, I can help build a society where every woman has the chance to thrive. Empowerment also means standing with women who face violence, offering them support and referring them to services where they can find safety and healing.

Leading by example. Respect begins at a personal level. In my family, workplace, and community, I must practice equality sharing responsibilities fairly, respecting women's decisions, and acknowledging their strengths. Children and young people learn from what they see. By modeling fairness and respect, I can inspire the next generation to uphold equality as a core value.

Finally, I can join my voice with others in advocacy. Campaigning for stronger policies that protect women, supporting organizations that fight gender-based violence, and engaging in dialogues that promote inclusiveness are ways of creating lasting change. One person may not dismantle discrimination alone, but when we come together, change becomes unstoppable.

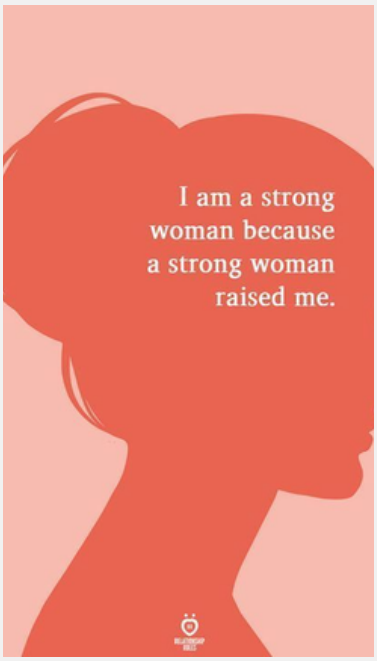




THE *DANCE*

by Michelle Tenkorang - Ghana

Be Involved,
Join The Parade,
Say the uncomfortable thing,
Challenge the Norm,
Just so the next flower would never have
to fight for a place,
Be loud about it.
Dance in the fire,
Dance with the wind,
With anklets celebrating the earth.
Take space,
And know that you too are human Teach them to understand us
Teach them to see us
Teach them what pain had been inflicted So they know, our celebration is not loud enough
Let them see we have what it takes
Dance in the fire
Dance in the water
With your anklets celebrating the earth
your veil in the wind.
Dwell in what was not ours.
Dance in the Hums of our mothers.
Whatever you do be apart Whoever you are be apart
Be apart of The Dance.



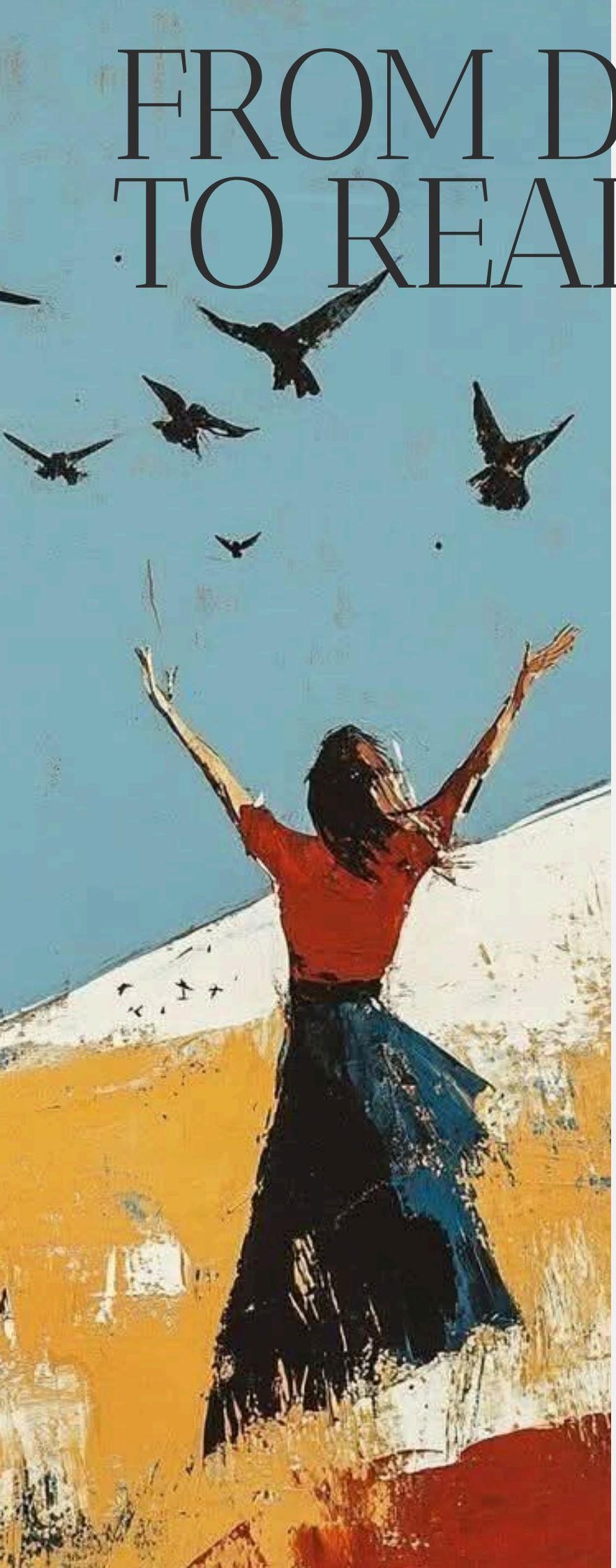


THE POWERFUL YOU

by Mehak Shahzad- Pakistan

You've got the light within you
To illuminate the darkness amidst
Thereupon, break the nascent mold
You've got the strength of sword
Ineptness won't come to you
And fortitude will never let you bend
You've got to cut the dead end
So, sharpen up the edges
Illusive is the art of benevolence
You've got to cross the bridges
Hovering over in the blues
Since, fancy is the idea of fraternizing
You've got to have late learning
Or fade away the light within you

FROM DREAM TO REALITY



BY DR.ARZOO- AFGHANISTAN

In a world still burdened by structural inequality and gender-based discrimination, the dream of empathy, justice, and the end to violence and discrimination against women is no longer a personal wish, it is a shared outcry echoing from the hearts of millions of women around the globe. These are women who face injustice every day, who often find themselves fighting simply because they are women.
These women are the unsung heroes.
One fights for her right to education.
Another battles to enter the workforce.
Many struggle simply to be heard, seen, and valued.
But a world free of discrimination is not an impossible dream.
It is a reality waiting to be built,
The path is difficult, but not unreachable.
What once was a dream is now a decision.And what today is a decision will become tomorrow's reality.
Be brave,Belive in yourself we can do it.

IRON PETALS

BY: ENGR. SADIA IFTIKHAR- PAKISTAN

She rises where the shadows fall
Having determine heart, she conquers all
Through storms she walks, through fire she went A strength invicta, yet it revealed
Beauty shines beyond her face
It's living in kindness, softness & grace
A gentle hand, an aurora smile
That softens the hearts of granite, and heals the soul
Her Eternal spark, and endless radiance stays Unyielding through the hardest days
She builds, she mends, she dares, she dreams Her will is stronger than it seems
She is dawn, the earth, the sky
The endurance that will not die
Both fierce and tender, bold, yet true
The world is beautiful because of you .



Rising Beyond Barriers

WRITTEN BY EDESS MANEMBA
MALAWI

The world grows dark where bias stays
And silence hides the brighter ways
Yet hope still speaks, both strong and true
To build a fairer world anew
No girl should live with fear or shame
Or carry blame she did not name
No woman's dream should be denied
By heavy rules or ancient pride
Equality must guide our stand
In every home, in every land
It is not kindness, gift, or plea
But part of shared humanity
Discrimination fades away
When courage leads us day by day
When rights are lived, not words alone
And fairness shapes what all are shown
Let voices rise, let barriers fall
For justice must be won for all
A brighter world for all to see
Where every soul walks equally





FARIDA ZAINI-AFGHANISTAN



This artwork reflects the pain of young girls who are trapped behind the barriers of discrimination. Her eyes show hope for freedom, education, and equality. My role is to raise my voice through art and inspire others to eliminate discrimination against women.





DIGNITY FOR WOMEN

FARKHUNDA WAHEDY-AFGHANISTAN

My friend once told me that justice is a community habit, not a distant dream. I therefore start by looking into the mirror and asking myself: What can I do today to make women stand on an equal ground? I listen first. Listening is louder than shouting. I listen to the stories of women I know, and to voices that I otherwise might not hear—neighbors, co-workers, friends online. In listening, I learn about the kinds of discrimination that still lurk in plain sight: biased jokes, unequal pay rumors, or the endless task of proving oneself. Second, I speak up. When I hear a put-down or a stereotype, I say something gentle and firm. I don't need to win every argument; I need to break the momentum of bias. A simple, "That's not fair," can change a moment and invite a more promising question: "How can we make this right?"

Third, I provide opportunities. I mentor, suggest training, or nominate an individual for a job they deserve. I publicly acknowledge successes and give credit where credit is due. I champion policies that protect women from harassment, offer parental leave, and equal pay for equal work. Fourth, I learn and unlearn. I question assumptions, read books by diverse authors, and interrogate my own practices—who I listen to, whose thinking I amplify, and which voices get muted. Lastly, I organize. Change does not occur in isolation. I join groups, invite others to join in, and keep the work in public sight so that friends and strangers alike feel invited to contribute to the effort. When each one of us takes small, steady steps, discrimination against women loses ground, and dignity becomes a habit that we all practice.





MY BODY MY RIGHT

MY BODY MY RIGHT

FATIMA NAZARI-AFGHANISTAN

If you give your body but not your heart, it's a ruin,
Like drinking soda mixed in a cup of wine.
If you give your heart but not your body, still it's ruin,
This time it's neither wine nor soda, but a mirage.
Here, they say nothing to you of love or loyalty,
For the people's concern in this city is the veil.
If you give your body but not your heart, it makes no difference,
They'll read a verse, and your sin becomes a virtue.
They bought your body and cut your shroud,
Bound your mouth with a verse and some coins.
Neither spirit is at work nor love bears fruit,
Only male lust is a friend to your body
Whoever sells a woman for money,
It's just that his soul is tormented in the depths of hell.
Everywhere else in the world, a woman's rank is high,
But in my country, a woman is treated as a corpse.

MY BODY MY RIGHT

This poem reflects the situation of Afghan girls and women who have been denied basic human rights like education and freedom for years. It was recited by Mozhgan Azimi, a refugeegirl inGermany, and went viral online with billions of views. The song named Aye, People expressed sadness after hearing it. The root of these problems is politics, yet many skilled politicians worldwide remain silent—why?



Towards Equality



Discrimination against women is not just a women's issue; it is a human problem. When women have seemed to lose opportunities, entire communities missed out on their innovations, talents, ideas, and contributions. Equality begins with respect; valuing women's voices, choices, protecting their rights and creating spaces where they can freely and completely participate.

Each of us has a role to play; By challenging stereotypes, questioning unfair practices, and supporting one another, we take small but powerful steps toward change. Real progress happens when dignity and opportunity are treated as basic rights, not special privileges.

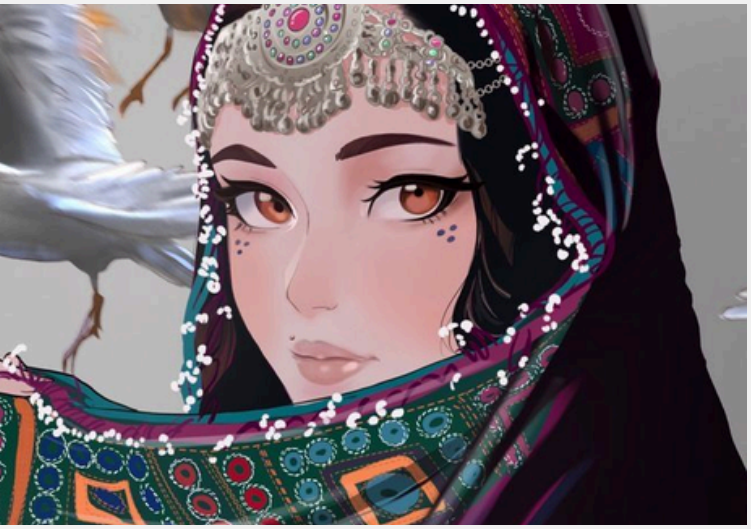
A world without discrimination is a world where every woman can dream without limits and live without fear. Equality is not a gift to women; it is something we must all uphold together for the future we dream of.

By: Fayeza Askary- Afghanistan



Afghan Girls

BY: FATEMEH NAZARI-AFGHANISTAN





This poem reflects the situation of Afghan girls and women who have been denied basichumanrights like education and freedom for years. It was recited by Mozhgan Azimi, a refugeegirl inGermany, and went viral online with billions of views. The song named Aye, People expressedsadness after hearing it. The root of these problems is politics, yet many skilled politiciansworldwide remain silent—why?

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Like drinking soda mixed in a cup of wine.
If you give your heart but not your body, still it's ruin,
This time it's neither wine nor soda, but a mirage.
Here, they say nothing to you of love or loyalty,
For the people's concern in this city is the veil.
If you give your body but not your heart, it makes no difference,
They'll read a verse, and your sin becomes a virtue.
They bought your body and cut your shroud,
Bound your mouth with a verse and some coins.
Neither spirit is at work nor love bears fruit,
Only male lust is a friend to your body
Whoever sells a woman for money,
It's just that his soul is tormented in the depths of hell.
Everywhere else in the world, a woman's rank is high,
But in my country, a woman is treated as a corpse.



The Daughter Who Stood Alone: Breaking Silence for Bataknese Women

By: Maria Jane Tienoviani Simanjuntak - Indonesia

The hall was filled with the voices of elders chanting lineage, names passed down through generations. But when they reached her family, a heavy silence fell. She sat there, spine straight, heart pounding, as all eyes darted past her—because she was the only child, a daughter, with no brother to carry the clan name.



In that silence, she felt centuries of tradition pressing against her chest, as if her very existence was a flaw, a dead end in her own bloodline.

This is the invisible wound borne by many Bataknese women without male siblings. No matter how accomplished, resilient, or devoted they may be, they are often treated as shadows in their own heritage.

At weddings and funerals, in rituals and clan discussions, they are reminded—sometimes with words, more often with silence—that they are not the "real" successors. Their worth is measured not by their spirit, but by the absence of a man to stand beside them.

But is lineage only a name, a word tied to gender? Or is it the courage of women who endure, who protect their families, and who carry the very essence of Batak resilience?
To deny them this place is to fracture the culture itself.

A true legacy is not confined to sons. It is etched in the strength of every child—daughter or son—who dares to honor the past while reshaping the future. The silence that once erased Bataknese women must now give way to their voices. The chains of discrimination must be shattered.

BATAKNESE WOMEN–BROTHERLESS OR NOT–ARE NOT THE "END."
THEY ARE NOT THE END OF A BLOODLINE.
THEY ARE ITS BEATING HEART.

Indriaswari W
Indonesia



Eliminating Discrimination against Women as a Public Health Professional

Indriaswari W - Indonesia



Ensuring equitable access to healthcare by advocating to remove barriers for women.

Integrating gender analysis into program design.

Creating safe and supportive environments by encouraging workplaces and health facilities to adopt policies that protect women from discrimination and harassment.

The Heartfelt Words of Thousands of Girls

What does an Afghan girl ask
from an unequal world?
She asks for freedom
to live as a human being,
with all her rights intact.
A life of dignity,
of respect, of peace.
She longs for her voice to be heard,
her worth to be honored.
Her greatest dream
to learn, to grow,
to build a future bright with purpose.
Perhaps to run her own business,
or work with pride in her craft.
But she is tired
tired of waiting on others to survive,
in a world that turns its face away.
Day by day,
restrictions tighten
around girls and women,
breath-stealing,
soul-breaking.
She cannot raise her voice in this prison
for a voice here
can be silenced with violence.
For months, for years,
she has thought only of survival.
What can she do
for her own life,
her own well-being?
She is told to accept
the brutal rules,
to bend, to adapt.
Yet within her burns
a small, stubborn light
HOPE,
blended with willpower.
She must begin.
She must act.
To heal, to recover,
to carve a new path.
She holds the power
to believe, to create, to rise.
She is the heroine of her own story
stronger than men,
carrying burdens,
and still
walking ahead.



Tahereh Shams
Afghanistan

Speech on Gender Equality & Women Empowerment

By Chongwony Jerusha Salama

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I stand before you today not just as an individual, but as a representative of millions of women and girls whose voices deserve to be heard, respected, and uplifted. Discrimination against women is not simply a women's issue—it is a human issue, a justice issue, and a development issue. When women are held back, entire communities are held back.

My role in eliminating discrimination begins with awareness and action. I choose to challenge the stereotypes that confine women to the margins of leadership and decision-making. I choose to use my voice to amplify the concerns of women who are silenced. And I choose to mentor young girls, so they may grow up believing not only that they belong at the table—but that they can lead it.

Professionally, I carry the responsibility of advocating for policies that promote equality, fairness, and dignity. Whether in governance, diplomacy, or community engagement, I commit myself to ensuring that no woman is left behind because of her gender. In every negotiation, every program, and every partnership, I bring with me the conviction that women's participation is not optional—it is essential.

But beyond policies and platforms, eliminating discrimination begins in our daily lives. It is in how we treat one another, in how we challenge harmful traditions, and in how we create safe spaces for women to dream, to learn, and to lead.

I believe that the true measure of progress is not in how many barriers we break for ourselves, but in how many doors we open for others. My role, therefore, is not only to walk through those doors but to hold them wide open for the women and girls who come after me.

Together, if we stand firm in our commitment to equality, we will create a society where every woman is free—not just to exist, but to thrive.
Thank you.

Promoting Equality • Inspiring Change • Empowering Women

Kenya

My Role in Eliminating Discrimination Against Women

I grew up in a family and a city where women were more likely to be “caged.” People believed that men were the true foundation of a family. My grandparents had five daughters and one son, yet only the son was given the opportunity to pursue a college education. In my family, and even among my teachers, it was always assumed that my male cousin was smarter, better, and naturally stronger in subjects like math and science.

Because of this, I felt I had to work harder—not just to prove myself, but to show that girls are powerful too. I knew I needed to step out into a bigger world. That determination led me to receive a quality education in London, and now I live in New York.

Through my journey, I’ve come to believe that as long as you hold on to your faith in yourself, the whole world will rise up to support you.



Jinglu Zhang_China

"A Voice That Stands"

A woman's voice is not a whisper,
it is a call the world must hear.
Her rights are roots that grow much deeper,
strong with courage, free from fear.
Equality is not a favor,
it's the justice we all share.
To silence bias, we must labor,
speak with truth, and act with care.
No walls of judgment, no exclusion,
no shadow cast on what she can be.
End the cycle of illusion-
her future is in dignity.
Together build, with understanding,
a world where fairness lights the way.
Each hand in hand, all rights expanding,
for women's freedom, here to stay.

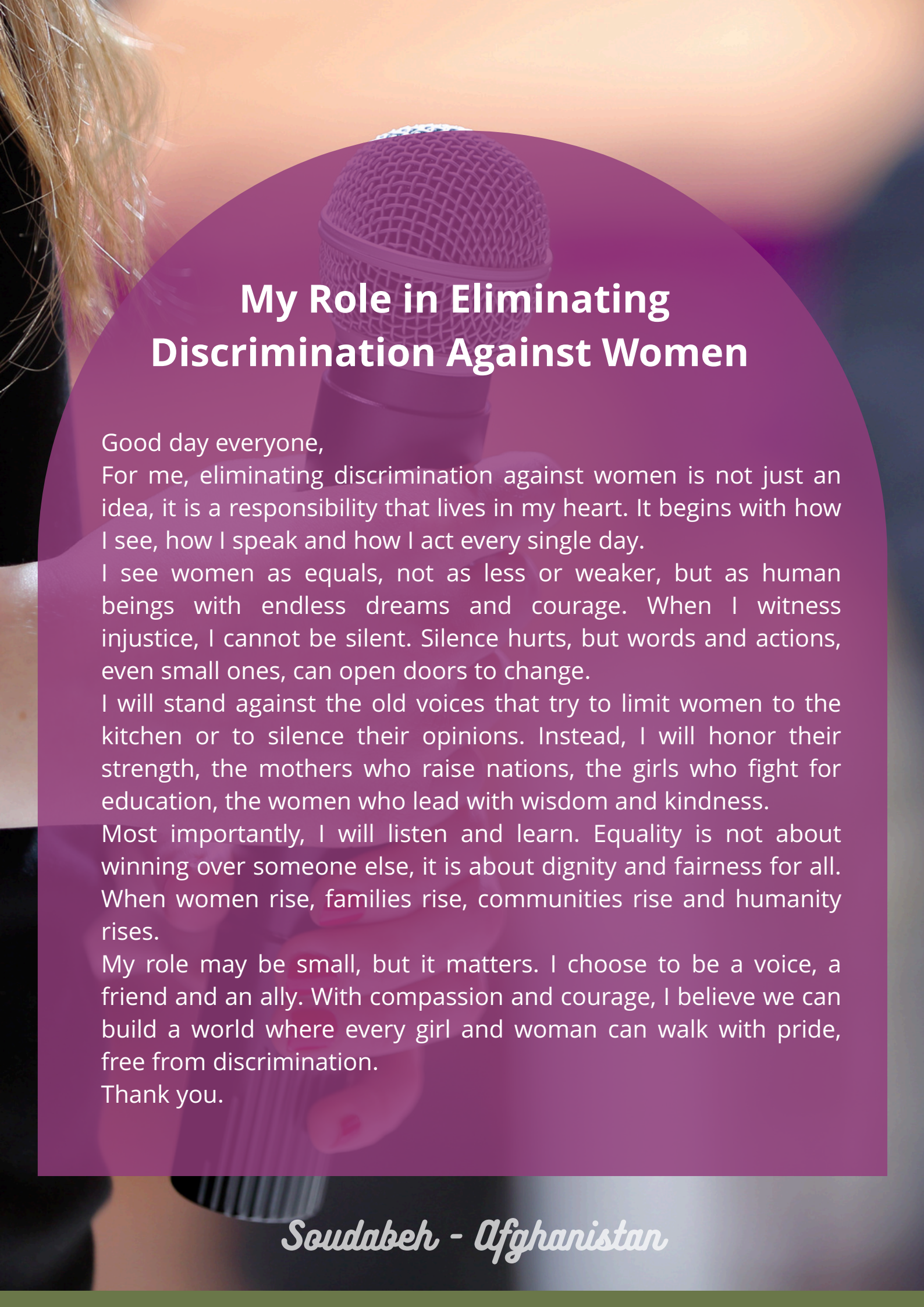
Joanna - Poland

Saadiya

(based on true story)

In the oppressive air of the burn unit, amidst the scent of charred flesh, I first encountered Saadiya. Her gaze, though bright brown, was hollow, a silent testament to her anguish. She was a poignant silhouette against the sterile white, a child herself, yet bearing one within. Her hospitalization was due to the most profound despair: self-immolation. Moved by her profound solitude—she had no companion—I gently inquired about her story. It was then the dam broke. Through shuddering tears, the fifteen-year-old confessed she had been torn from her life and forced into a marriage with a man named Mujib. Her new world was one of unrelenting violence. Upon discovering her pregnancy, she believed the most merciful act was to extinguish both their lives, sparing her innocent child a fate mirroring her own. Her painful confession was severed by the abrupt entrance of her husband—a tall, bearded man with a harsh demeanor. Saadiya's face, a moment before raw with emotion, shut down into a mask of pure terror. The news of her imminent discharge back into his care sealed her despair; I saw the light in her eyes vanish completely. I felt a crushing helplessness, a familiar shadow in our profession here. As I helped prepare her for departure, my warnings to her husband about stress and the baby's well-being felt futile, mere whispers against a storm of injustice. That night, sleep eluded me. Her face, those clouded eyes that had once held a silent scream, haunted me. I returned the next morning, not as a savior with solutions, but as a witness. I vowed that her story would not be buried within a file. Saadiya is not an isolated tragedy but a stark embodiment of a collective wound—a reminder of the countless silenced women whose suffering demands our unwavering compassion and a relentless cry for change.

Masomah Jalili - Afghanistan



My Role in Eliminating Discrimination Against Women

Good day everyone,

For me, eliminating discrimination against women is not just an idea, it is a responsibility that lives in my heart. It begins with how I see, how I speak and how I act every single day.

I see women as equals, not as less or weaker, but as human beings with endless dreams and courage. When I witness injustice, I cannot be silent. Silence hurts, but words and actions, even small ones, can open doors to change.

I will stand against the old voices that try to limit women to the kitchen or to silence their opinions. Instead, I will honor their strength, the mothers who raise nations, the girls who fight for education, the women who lead with wisdom and kindness.

Most importantly, I will listen and learn. Equality is not about winning over someone else, it is about dignity and fairness for all. When women rise, families rise, communities rise and humanity rises.

My role may be small, but it matters. I choose to be a voice, a friend and an ally. With compassion and courage, I believe we can build a world where every girl and woman can walk with pride, free from discrimination.

Thank you.

Soudabeh - Afghanistan

My Role in Eliminating Discrimination Against Women

Discrimination against women is a violation of human rights and a major barrier to the development of any society. I believe that each of us carries a responsibility to stand against it. As awomanandajournalist, my role becomes even more important. I have always felt a deep responsibility to stand against discrimination. For me, journalism is not only a profession but also a way to fight for justice and equality. Through my work, I strive to give voice to women whose stories are often silenced. Throughout my journey, I have consistently advocated for creating opportunities for girls and womentoaccess education. I believe that education is the most powerful tool to break cycles of inequality. I have reported on the challenges Afghan women face, raised awareness about harmful practices, and highlighted their strength and resilience. Even after being forced into exile, I continue my mission. I now write articles and reports for international news agencies and Afghan media in exile, ensuring that the voices of Afghan womenare heard globally. Media has the power to shape public opinion, and I see it as my duty to use this platform to promote equality and respect for women. Sharing their stories with world is both a responsibility and a form of resistance. Myrole is to inform, keep telling these stories, to keep speaking the truth, and to keep fighting for the rights of women. Therefore, I hope to contribute to eliminating discrimination and building a society where women and men enjoy equal dignity and freedom. By Sadaf Yarmal, Afghanistan



My Role, Our Change

Nelofar Mohammadi - Afghanistan

Growing up as an Afghan woman, I have seen how discrimination affects not only individual lives but also the future of our society. Many girls are told that their voices do not matter, or that education is not meant for them. These ideas limit women, but they also hold back entire communities from reaching their true potential.

For me, eliminating discrimination starts with education. Every time a woman studies, she is breaking a barrier that says she cannot. Education gives women the tools to stand up for themselves and to contribute to change. By continuing my own studies, I am taking part in that fight, even in a small way.

Another role I see for myself is sharing stories. When I speak or write about my experiences, I remind people that Afghan women are more than what the world often imagines.

We are strong, ambitious, and capable of leading. Telling these stories helps shift how people think, both inside and outside Afghanistan.

Lastly, I believe in standing beside other women. Supporting one another, encouraging each other, and refusing to stay silent—this is how discrimination loses its power.

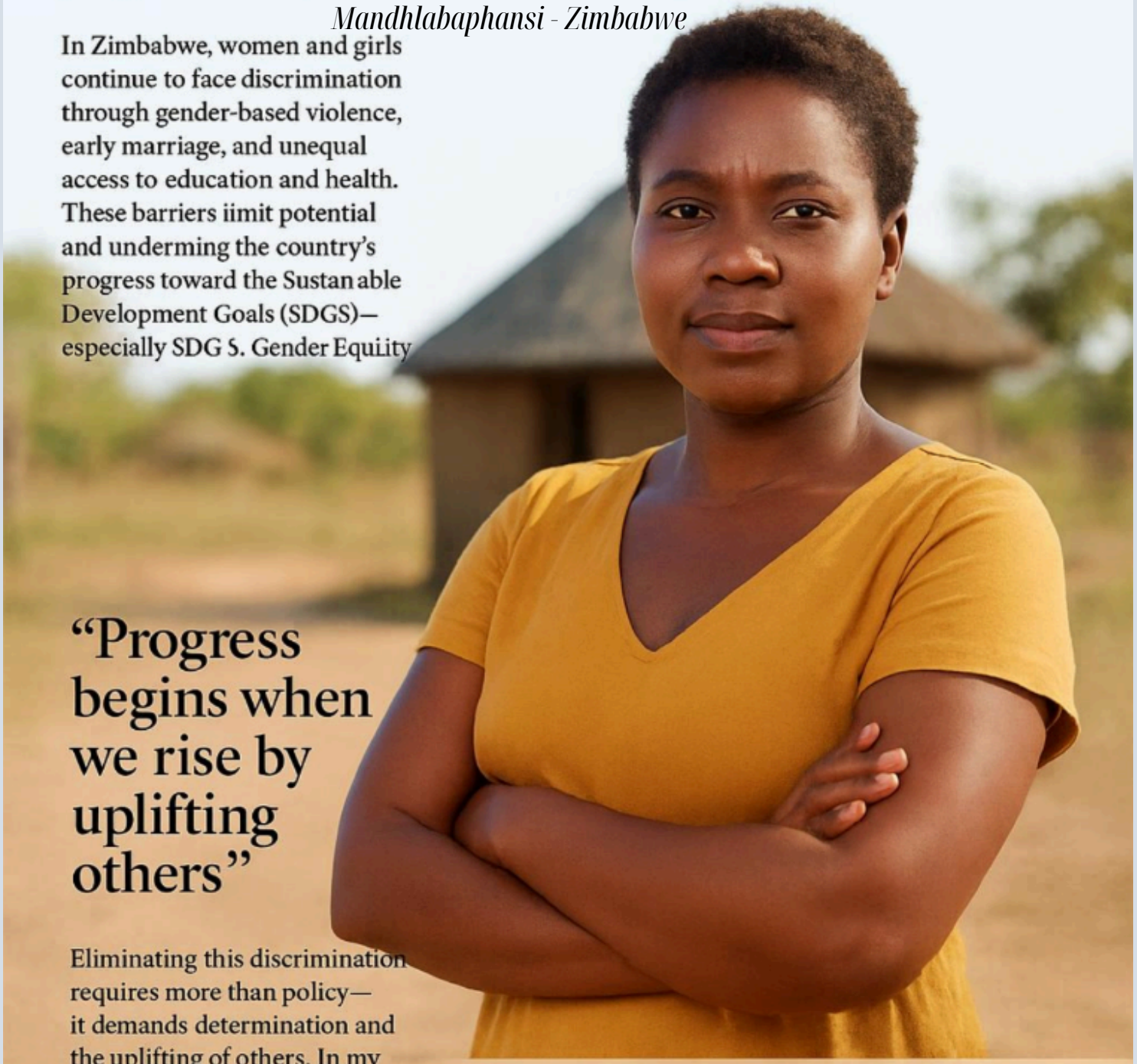
My dream is that one day, Afghan girls will not have to fight for their right to learn or to lead. Until then, my role is to keep going, keep learning, and keep speaking.



BREAKING BARRIERS

DETERMINED TO END DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN IN ZIMBABWE

Mandhlabaphansi - Zimbabwe



In Zimbabwe, women and girls continue to face discrimination through gender-based violence, early marriage, and unequal access to education and health. These barriers iimit potential and underming the country's progress toward the Sustan able Development Goals (SDGS)— especially SDG 5. Gender Equiity

"Progress begins when we rise by uplifting others"

Eliminating this discrimination requires more than policy— it demands determination and the uplifting of others. In my work, I have witnessed how one empowered woman can inspire a chain of change.

In one tural district. I supported community dialogues that challenged harmful practices and encouraged parents to keep their daughters

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The fight against disctrimination ıo (es) ears t requires persistence, cultural shifts and a collective willingness to rise by



Malika Haidari
Afghanistan

A FUTURE INSPIRED BY LADYLAND

Imagine waking under the bright light of the moon, stars sparkling, and you step outside with a friend, without worrying whether it is the appropriate time for a girl to go out, whether your outfit is proper, or if you're sufficiently covered. You stroll through streets filled with flowers, the air alive with freedom and you do not see a single man. Everyone around you is a woman, laughing freely. "Sultana is mannish," they tease, calling she is shy like a man.

This is Sultana's Dream, the story of Ladyland written by Rokeya Begum. Ladyland is a society shaped by women, where knowledge is power. Women run every aspect of life. Their religion is based on Love and Truth, and they used Science to make life easier. Men, on the other hand, are kept indoors, taking care of children, cooking, and worrying only about households — roles often assigned to women in many societies. While reading this story, I felt captivated and empowered, imagining myself living in such a world. But when the dream ended, and Rokeya woke up, I felt broken and discouraged — reminded of how cruelly women are treated in reality.

I wish the dream of Ladyland, that perfect imaginary world come true, but with a slight change: a world where men and women work side by side, sharing responsibilities equally, without humiliation or injustice. May the whisper of the wind through women's hair no longer be our concern, but rather how we can progress toward a brighter, equal future.

NOT JUST A WOMAN

“She must have slept her way to the top.”
No.
I climbed with bruised hands,
burned midnight candles, with eye bags
that tell the stories of success.

“She was asking for it.”
As if anyone asks to be violated.
The blame is not mine,
it belongs to the predator that saw a prey.

“You’re too ambitious for a woman.”
If ambition were fire,
then let me burn.
I am not “just a woman.”

I am the reflection of all who came before me,
the pillar of those yet to come,
and the fire that will not be put out.



Tovia Muo - Nigeria





"From Firehiwot to Freedom: Empowering Women Every Day." My inspiration and mission to eliminate discrimination against women

Living her lessons



I grew up as the second child in a family of four, raised by my mother, Firehiwot her name means Meaningful Life in Amharic. She was a housewife who carried everything for us, yet she always told us to dream big. Even though her own opportunities were limited, she gave us courage and hope. Since her passing, I feel her words guide me every day. I studied in a women's school, where I could clearly see the impact of discrimination. How girls doubted themselves, how society tried to shape our futures for us. That experience pushed me to speak up. I became a voice for women and children in my community, refusing to let silence protect inequality.

In my daily life, I try to live what my mother taught me: to share responsibilities, to respect women's voices, and to encourage every girl to believe she can be more. But my dream goes further. One day, I hope to open an NGO in my mother's name Firehiwot so her legacy of "Meaningful life" and empowerment can continue to touch others. Eliminating discrimination is not just about laws or policies. It is about love, respect, and courage in action. My role is to honor my mother's sacrifice by building a future where women's choices are respected and their dreams are limitless.

by Rediat Gashaw

Ethiopia

PRETTY GIRL - MAGGIE LINDEMANN



I can swear, I can joke
I say what's on my mind
If I drink, if I smoke
I keep up with the guys
And you see me holding up my middle finger to the world
Fuck your ribbons and your pearls
'Cause I'm not just a pretty girl
I'm more than just a picture
I'm a daughter and a sister
Sometimes it's hard for me to show
That I'm more than just a rumour
Or a song on your computer
There's more to me than people know
Some days I'm broke, some days I'm rich
Some days I'm nice; some days I can be a bitch
Some days I'm strong, some days I quit
I don't let it show but I've been through some shit
I can swear, I can joke
I say what's on my mind



If I drink, if I smoke
I keep up with the guys
And you see me holding up my middle finger to the world
Fuck your ribbons and your pearls
'Cause I'm not just a pretty girl
I'm more than just a number
I'm a hater, I'm a lover
Sometimes it's hard for me to show
That I'm more than just a title
Or a comment going viral
There's more to me than people know
Some days I'm broke, some days I'm rich
Some days I'm nice, some days I can be a bitch
Some days I'm strong, some days I quit
I don't let it show but I've been through some shit
I can swear, I can joke
I say what's on my mind
If I drink, if I smoke
I keep up with the guys
And you see me holding up my middle finger to the world
Fuck your ribbons and your pearls
'Cause I'm not just a pretty girl
I'm not just a pretty girl, yeah
I'm not just a pretty girl
No, I'm not just a pretty girl

Veronica - Argentina



MY ROLE IN ELIMINATING DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN

Hamida Yaqoobi - Afghanistan

Growing up in Afghanistan, I dreamed of becoming a civil engineer—a field that sparked my curiosity. But from the beginning, I faced doubt. Many believed engineering was only for men, and girls didn't have the strength or intelligence for it. This was discrimination, trying to limit me simply because I was a girl.

I refused to accept those limits. I studied civil engineering, earned my degree, and worked proudly in my field—proving that women not only belong in engineering, but can succeed.

Discrimination against women has always existed in Afghanistan. But when the Taliban returned in August 2021, it became worse. Girls were banned from schools and universities. Women lost the right to speak freely, to travel without a male guardian, and even to enjoy simple things like going on a picnic. Their goal was to keep women silent and invisible.

Even in this time of fear, I didn't give up. I joined online courses, studied English, and prepared for a future Master's degree. I encouraged my sisters and other girls to stay strong and keep learning—no matter how hard the path.

My role in eliminating discrimination is to resist limits, speak up, and lead by example. I believe every girl has the right to dream, to learn, and to build her future. When one woman rises, she lifts others with her.

Filipino Women: Power and Inspiration of the New Generation

By: M. Ochinang

Sa bawat pahina ng kasaysayan ng Pilipinas, makikita natin ang bakas ng kababaihan—matapang, matalino, at may pusong handang magsakripisyo para sa bayan at sa pamilya. Ngunit higit pa sa kanilang mga nakamit, nararapat din nating gisingin ang damdaming matagal nang natutulog sa bawat babae: ang pagkilala na sila ay may kapangyarihan, may tinig, at may puwang na pamunuan ang pagbabago.

Sa panahon ngayon, hindi na sapat ang manatiling nasa gilid ng lipunan. Ang kababaihang Pilipina ay dapat makita ang kanilang sarili bilang ilaw na gumagabay at apoy na nagbibigay-init sa bagong henerasyon. Hindi na panahon para ang babae ay ituring lamang bilang tagasunod o tahimik na saksi sa takbo ng buhay; panahon na para sila ang maging taga-ukit ng kinabukasan.

Balikan natin ang ating mga bayani: si Gabriela Silang, na walang takot na humawak ng espada laban sa mananakop, at si Melchora Aquino, na sa kanyang edad ay nagbigay ng kanlungan at lakas sa mga Katipunero. Ang kanilang kwento ay patunay na ang babae ay hindi mahina, hindi pabigat, kundi sandigan at inspirasyon. At sa kasalukuyan, makikita rin natin ang mga babaeng lider, guro, manunulat, manggagamot, at atleta na patuloy na nagpapatunay na ang babae ay may kakayahan sa bawat larangan.



Ngunit sa kabila ng lahat ng ito, marami pa ring kababaihan ang nakakulong sa maling paniniwala—na sila'y limitado, na sila'y dapat tumahimik, na ang kanilang halaga ay nakatali lamang sa apat na sulok ng tahanan. Ito ang panahong dapat nating iwaksi ang ganoong pananaw. Ang babae ay hindi lamang ina ng tahanan, kundi arkitekto ng lipunan, tagapagtaguyod ng hustisya, at tagapagdala ng bagong pag-asa.

Huwag din nating maliitin ang kapangyarihan ng wika. Sa paggamit ng gender-fair language, binubura natin ang diskriminasyon at nililinaw na ang babae ay hindi pangalawa, kundi kapantay sa lahat ng aspeto ng buhay. Ang simpleng pagkilala sa babae sa tamang paraan ay isang hakbang tungo sa mas makatarungan at makataong lipunan.

Kaya sa bawat estudyanteng babae, sa bawat gurong babae, sa bawat inang nagtitiis, at sa bawat batang babaeng nangangarap—ito ang paalala: ang iyong tinig ay mahalaga, ang iyong lakas ay kinakailangan, at ang iyong pangarap ay may saysay. Huwag hayaang manahimik ang iyong damdamin, huwag hayaang ikulong ka ng lipunan sa takot o pangamba.

Ang bagong henerasyon ay nangangailangan ng mga babaeng matapang na mangarap at manguna. Sa iyong talino, lakas, at malasakit, maaari mong baguhin ang kinabukasan. Ikaw, babae, ay hindi lamang inspirasyon—ikaw ang mismong lakas at pag-asa ng kinabukasan.

Ngayon ang panahon para bumangon, magsalita, at magtagumpay.

SPEECH

YUSRAH SHITTU - NIGERIA





Good day everyone,

Eliminating discrimination against women begins with me. Every word I speak, every action I take, and every choice I make can either continue the problem or help solve it. I choose to be part of the solution.
My role is to respect women and girls equally, not as less or weaker, but as human beings with dreams, talents, and rights. I will speak up when I see unfair treatment, and I will not remain silent in the face of injustice.

I will challenge harmful stereotypes that say women belong only in the kitchen or that their voices are not important. Instead, I will celebrate their contributions in science, leadership, arts, business, and every part of society.

Most importantly, I will educate myself and others that equality is not about competition it is about fairness. When women rise, families rise, communities rise, and nations rise.

Each of us has a role to play. Mine is to be an advocate, an ally, and a friend who believes in equal opportunities for all. Together, with courage and kindness, we can build a world where discrimination against women has no place.

Thank you.

SPEECH

OGUOBA MARGARET-NIGERIA



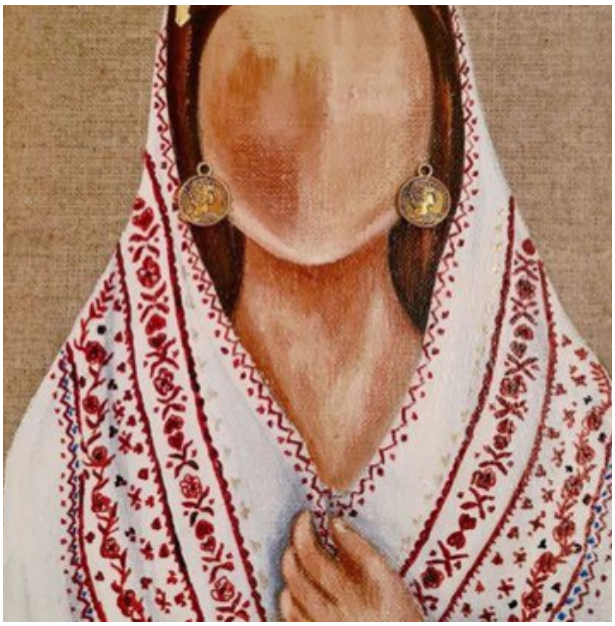


Speech: My Role in Eliminating Discrimination Against Women

Discrimination against women is like a wall that blocks progress. To bring it down, I must first examine my own actions. Do I treat women as equals? Do I challenge unfair traditions? My role begins with honesty. Secondly, I must educate. Ignorance feeds discrimination, but knowledge opens minds. By teaching young boys and girls that leadership, intelligence, and dignity belong to everyone, I help rewrite the narrative of equality. Thirdly, I must advocate. Whether in conversations, policies, or community spaces, I will stand for women's rights. Silence makes me a bystander; action makes me a changemaker. Finally, my role is to inspire. When I lead with fairness and respect, others will see that equality is not just an idea—it is a way of living. Eliminating discrimination is not one person's task. It is a collective duty. But if I play my role faithfully, and you play yours, we will build a society where every woman is free to dream, achieve, and shine.

SPEECH

Maliha Zaini_Afghanistan





Speech: My Role in Eliminating Discrimination Against Women

Discrimination against women remains one of the greatest barriers to equality and peace in our societies. I believe that every individual has a responsibility to stand against this injustice, and my role begins with my daily actions.

First, I try to promote respect and fairness in my family and community. By treating women with dignity, listening to their voices, and valuing their contributions, I show that equality is not only a principle but also a practice.

Second, I believe in the power of education. I support the right of every girl to go to school and to continue higher education.

Education gives women the tools to defend their rights, to become leaders, and to break the cycle of inequality.

Third, I use my voice to raise awareness. Whether it is through social media, discussions with friends, or participation in community programs, I speak against harmful traditions and stereotypes that limit women's opportunities.

Finally, I recognize that true change requires men and women working together. My role is not only to support women but also to challenge other men to respect women as equal partners in
society.

By taking these steps, I believe I can contribute to a future where women and men live with equal dignity, opportunity, and respect.

The Paradox of Being a Woman

This world is a paradox for women; always in a dilemma, forever confused about which way to go. Either path is narrow enough to make you fall, if you put a step out.

We are the suffering mute.
The unknown rescuer.
The free healer.
The unpaid care worker.
The warrior who always loses.
They say: "Adam was the creation, Eve was made from Adam."
Made from men, for men.
Respected only as a man's mother, sister, wife, or daughter.
But not respected as an individual.
Can't I be honored for what I am?
Equality? They make me do two full-time jobs, pay me for one, and still treat me as a sub to a man?
Freedom? They use me to gain more money, pay me an insignificant amount, and blame me for misleading the society?
Religion? They confine me to four walls, demand I serve men and his children, worship God, and then boom "I will be in heaven?"
Media? They broadcast my sorrow and struggles, for what? To make movies or captivating newspaper headlines "Feminism and Tragedy?"
They name me everything but myself.
But one day I will make them listen to my anthem that says:
I am mine. Always.

Yasmeen Hotak

Afghanistan




“THERE IS NO FORCE MORE POWERFUL THAN A WOMAN DETERMINED TO RISE.”
GCED
ONLINE CAMPUS