

# WE HAVE A DREAM

ABOUT COURAGE, COMPASSION & HUMAN RIGHTS



EDUCATIONAL MATERIAL WHICH IS PART OF  
THE BOOK AND EXHIBITION WE HAVE A DREAM

AN INITIATIVE BY  
ALBERT WIKING & OSCAR EDLUND

REALISED WITH THE SUPPORT OF  
THE CRAFOORD FOUNDATION

HOW MUCH PUNISHMENT are you willing to take to stand up for your own rights, and those of others? Some people are prepared to risk their lives for their rights and their dreams. We Have a Dream is not about saints or superheroes; it's not about infallible individuals. The only difference between these people and the rest of us is that they left their comfort zones and went out and acted for change.

More than 100 activists, Nobel Peace Prize winners, artists, writers, and politicians have chosen to participate in We Have a Dream to help inspire others to realise their own dreams and visions. Here, many spokespeople for the younger generation – from the low-key mentors Ida Engblom and Abbas Ahmadi to the outspokenly brave activists Malala Yousafzai and Pussy Riot – rub shoulders with those more worldly-wise and experienced, including Nelson Mandela, Patti Smith, Ai Weiwei, Richard Branson, Annie Lennox, and the Dalai lama.

To inspire thoughts and discussion, we have compiled lists of questions related to the topics touched upon in We Have A Dream: courage, commitment, and human rights.

As this project has progressed, we've come across new questions at every turn, especially during our meetings with the participants. In the following pages, we address twelve different subjects. The questions here are designed to provoke reflection on the reader's own role in the big picture, to help bring about the realization that everybody's actions make a difference.

There are no right or wrong answers here. Consider your own opinions, find out the facts, and discuss these questions with your family, friends, or colleagues. If you're a teacher, you can give your students assignments based on the questions. The material here can be used for anything from a group discussion of an hour or two to more ambitious projects.

You, the person holding this material, have a greater capacity to bring about change than you might think. It doesn't have to be some great big thing. You don't need to change the world. Nobody can do everything, but together, we can do a lot.

Change starts with a dream!

Albert Wiking & Oscar Edlund

## Contents

<i>Equality</i>	4	<i>Corruption</i>	10
<i>Transparency &amp; freedom of speech</i>	5	<i>Racism &amp; discrimination</i>	11
<i>Courage &amp; compassion</i>	6	<i>Violence</i>	12
<i>Childrens rights</i>	7	<i>LBTQI-rights</i>	13
<i>Religion</i>	8	<i>Enviroment</i>	14
<i>Power &amp; Leadership</i>	9	<i>Economy</i>	15

In this educational material we have choose to include the following out of the 114 participants in the We Have a Dream exhibition and book project.

<i>Zineb el Razhoui</i>	20	<i>Nadezhda Tolokonnikova</i>	72
<i>Richard Branson</i>	22	<i>Phymean Noun</i>	76
<i>Zara Larsson</i>	26	<i>Fatima Naza</i>	80
<i>Dalai lama</i>	30	<i>Jason Diakité</i>	84
<i>Maryam al-Khawaja</i>	32	<i>Nadia Murad</i>	86
<i>Gunhild Stordalen</i>	34	<i>Paul Rusesabagina</i>	88
<i>Kimmie Weeks</i>	38	<i>Huang Ming</i>	92
<i>Samuel Opio</i>	42	<i>Muhammad Yunus</i>	94
<i>Roberto Saviano</i>	44	<i>Vigdis Finnbogadottir</i>	96
<i>Phumzile Mlambo-Ngucka</i>	48	<i>Amos Oz</i>	98
<i>Anders Sunna</i>	50	<i>Gloria Ray Karlmark</i>	100
<i>Ida Engblom</i>	54	<i>Maja Lundqvist</i>	102
<i>Malala Yousafzai</i>	56	<i>Shorna Shahida Akter</i>	104
<i>Abbas Ahmadi</i>	60	<i>Tutu Alicante</i>	106
<i>Ruby Rose</i>	64	<i>Urmila Chaudhary</i>	108
<i>Daniel Domscheit-Berg</i>	68		

## EQUALITY

4 |

1. How would you define equality? Do you think equality is important? Give some reasons for your answers.
2. What is the gender distribution like in your environment; in your home, in your school, in your workplace, and in your government? Is there anything you think ought to be changed? What, and how? What could you do to contribute?
3. The UN's Human Rights regulations include a special convention and resolution specifically intended to guarantee the rights of women. Why do you think these are necessary, and why isn't there a corresponding guarantee of men's rights?
4. Are there any circumstances where women and men should not be treated equally, where they should not have the same rights or opportunities to hold power? Give some reasons for your answers.
5. In several countries around the world, girls' access to education is not prioritised. In some countries, girls and women are punished if they don't dress a certain way, or if they socialise with men they aren't married to. In other countries, girls and women are shamed and punished for being sexually assaulted. In war, rape is commonly used as a weapon against women. Why do you think this is, and what do you think needs to be done in order for the rights of girls and women to be acknowledged and respected all over the world?
6. Who are your role models in the historical and present struggles for gender equality? What do they mean to you?
7. Which countries are usually ranked the highest and the lowest when comparing gender equality in the various countries of the world? Consider the differences between these countries, and find out the historical reasons why each country turned out the way it did. What do you think needs to be done to improve equality in the lowest-ranked countries?
8. Zara Larsson (p. 26, and phumzile mllambo ngucka (p. 48) are two people who are involved in the gender equality issue. Find out more about one of them, and consider what the consequences would be if all the women and girls of the world had greater control over their lives. What could you do to promote equality in your area and become a role model for others in terms of equality?



ZARA LARSSON



PHUMZILE  
MLAMBO-NGCUKA

## TRANSPARENCY & FREEDOM OF SPEECH

| 5

1. Consider the transparency of states and people's freedom of speech. Who do you think stands to lose or gain in a society where people are able to express themselves freely, and where the work and decision-making of the government occurs transparently and openly?
2. Which international conventions guarantee the right to freedom of speech, and the right to information and transparency in governance? Why do you think some countries do not respect these rights to the same extent as others? For example, compare Sweden, Eritrea, the USA, Russia, and India.
3. In several countries around the world, journalists who further the causes of freedom of the press and freedom of speech by reporting on maladministration and injustices are imprisoned, tortured, and killed. Why do you think journalists have become living targets, and how do you think this could be prevented and counteracted?
4. Governments and their agencies have secrets, just like people do. What do you think they want to protect, and which kinds of information do you think we actually ought to keep secret from citizens and the rest of the world?
5. What is a whistle-blower? Could you give an example of some facts that have come to light after a whistle-blower defied the code of secrecy and disclosed them?
6. Do you think there should be limits to what people are allowed to print in newspapers, say on television and on the radio, or post on social media? If so, what should they be, and why?
7. Can freedom of speech be abused, or do you think people should be free to say, express, or joke about whatever they like? Give some reasons for your answers.
8. Daniel Domscheit-Berg (p. 68) and Zineb El Rhazoui (p. 20) are two people who are all involved in the issues of transparency, freedom of speech, and the working conditions of journalists. In which ways? Find out more about one of them, and consider what you think needs to be done to make important information easier and safer to spread and access.



DANIEL  
DOMSCHEIT-BERG



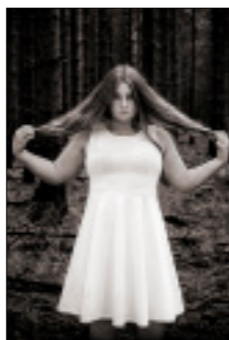
ZINEB EL RHAZOU

## COURAGE & COMPASSION

1. As a human being, you have a number of rights, but does being human also entail any duties? If so, which ones, and why?
2. How would you define courage? Do you consider yourself courageous? What makes some people brave enough to stand up for their own or others' principles and rights, even when this involves taking a personal risk?
3. What is moral courage, and have you ever experienced it?
4. How do you think you ought to act as a fellow human being if somebody in your vicinity was being subjected to violence, abuse, racism, or discrimination? How would you have liked others to act if you were the victim?
5. Do you think that it ought to be a legal requirement to intervene when somebody is subjected to a crime or abuse? Give some reasons for your answer.
6. Is there anything you would be prepared to risk your freedom for?
7. Do you have any role models when it comes to having the courage to stand up for important principles? It could be somebody you know, or somebody anywhere in the world.
8. Paul Rusesabagina (p. 94), Ida Engblom (p. 54), Maja Lundquist (p. 102), Abbas Ahmadi (p. 60) and Urmila Chaudhary (p. 108) are five people who have displayed courage and compassion. In what ways? Find out more about one of them, and consider what might have made them go their own way, and given them the courage to stand up for themselves or for others?



PAUL RUSESABAGINA



IDA ENGBLOM

## CHILDREN'S RIGHTS

1. What's your definition of a child? How is the term defined in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child?
2. Which rights do you think are important for children? Why do children have special rights? Why isn't it enough to give children the same rights as adults?
3. Read the Convention on the Rights of the Child, and consider its fundamental principles. For example, read article 2 about the right to non-discrimination, article 3 about the principle of the best interests of the child, article 6 about the right to life, survival, and healthy development, and article 12 about the right to participation. Who do you think is responsible for upholding these rights? Do you share in this responsibility at all?
4. How do you think the protection a child enjoys under the principles of the Convention on the Rights of the Child is impacted by where on Earth it is born? For example, consider children's access to healthcare, clean water and sanitation, and education, their protection from violence, abuse, and being coerced to take part in armed conflicts, and their say in decisions concerning their bodies, their lives, and who they will marry.
5. Can you think of any principles that are especially relevant to children living in your country? Are there any rights that are particularly important for girls or boys? Which ones, and why?
6. Which countries are the best and the worst for children to live in? What do you think the reasons are for these great differences between different countries?
7. The majority of the nations of the world have signed and agreed to be bound by the Convention on the Rights of the Child, but far from all of them have managed to establish and implement its regulations. What could explain the differences between the ways in which the convention has been implemented in countries like Sweden, the USA, Pakistan, and Liberia?
8. Kimmie Weeks (p. 38), Malala Yousafzai (p. 56), and Shorna Shahida Akter (p. 104) are three people who are involved in the issue of children's rights. Find out more about one of them, and consider what you could do to make your area, country, or the world a safer and more secure place for children. For example, how would you react if you knew that a child in your vicinity was in trouble, being abused, being bullied, or about to be married against their will? How do you think we ought to act as fellow human beings, and how would you have wanted people to act if that endangered child was you?



KIMMIE WEEKS



MALALA YOUSAFZAI

## RELIGION

8 |

1. What is religion really, and why does it exist? What does religion mean to you?
2. What do you think a world without religion would be like? Consider what the impact on your country's power structure, laws, history, norms, traditions, and culture would have been if religion didn't exist.
3. Which international conventions guarantee the right to freedom of thought, freedom of conscience, and freedom of religion?
4. To what degree do you think religious values should be allowed to influence the legislation of a country? Could religion somehow come into conflict with human freedom and human rights? Give some reasons for your answer.
5. Can religion be abused in any way? If so, why, and to what end?
6. Do you think people ought to be free to make fun of religion? Why do you think it is that this can be such a sensitive issue?
7. List some countries where religion is especially influential; for instance, countries where religious authorities have official influence over legislation, or some other more informal kind of influence. List some countries that are secularized, i.e., where religion is treated as a private matter that doesn't impact political life. Compare these countries, and find out what the historical reasons are for the ways each country turned out.
8. Amos Oz (p. 98) and Nadia Murad (p. 86) are two people who are involved in issues related to religion. In what ways? Find out more about one of them.



AMOS OZ



NADIA MURAD

## POWER & LEADERSHIP

| 9

1. Consider the meaning of the concept of power. Who has it, who lacks it, and who do you think ought to have it?
2. What do you have power over? What don't you have power over? Why is this?
3. How is power distributed in your country, and in the rest of the world? Why is power distributed the way it is? How do you think power could be more equally and fairly distributed on a global scale? How can you influence the existing power structures and distribution of power in your own country?
4. Why do you think the leaders and powerful people in the world fail to ensure that every country fully complies with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, that people's basic needs are met, and that we will reach the global environmental goals?
5. How well do you think the UN is doing its job as a world organisation? What do you think the UN's strengths and weaknesses are? How would you characterise the balance of power between different UN member states? What degree of authority do you think the world organisation ought to have?
6. How can you influence things and make the world a better place?
7. Consider the kind of world you'd like to live in, and the kind of leader you'd like to see more of. What do you think would be required to make your dream world a reality? How could you contribute?
8. Richard Branson (p. 22) and Vigdis Finnbogadóttir (p. 96) are two people who are involved in issues related to leadership. In what ways? Find out more about one of them, and consider what characterises the leaders who rule the world today. How and why do you think those particular people become leaders? What attributes do you think a good leader needs to have? Are you a good leader? Could you become one?



RICHARD BRANSON



VIGDIS FINNBOGADOTTIR

## CORRUPTION

10 |

1. What is corruption, and how do you draw the line between corrupt and ethical behaviour?
2. Have you ever experienced corruption? Would you be prepared to pay a bribe to achieve something?
3. Why does corruption happen, and which of the problems it causes do you find the most serious?
4. What international conventions are in place to counteract corruption in different countries?
5. Compare the most and least corrupt countries in the world, and consider the reasons why these countries function as they do. What makes some countries more corrupt than others, and what do you think the best way is to prevent and stop corruption?
6. Do you think your country should trade with or give aid to corrupt regimes? Give some reasons for your answer.
7. Do you have any role models in the struggle against corruption?
8. Tutu Alicante (p. 106) and Roberto Saviano (p. 44) are two people who are all involved in the struggle against corruption. In what ways? Find out more about one of them, and think about what you could do to prevent corruption.



TUTU ALICANTE



ROBERTO SAVIANO

## RACISM & DISCRIMINATION

1. What is racism? How does racial discrimination express itself in society, in school or in the workplace, in the arts, in politics and the legal system, or in the media and online?
2. What do you think are the main causes of racism, xenophobia, and prejudice? How long do you think racism has existed, and why do you think it still exists today?
3. What national regulations and international treaties are in place to protect people from being discriminated against or denied their rights because of their skin tone, ethnic background, religion or creed, disability, age, sexual orientation, gender, or trans-gender identity and expression?
4. Are you prejudiced against anybody? If you are, consider why. Do you think anybody is prejudiced against you? If you do, consider why.
5. Have you ever been subjected to racism, discrimination, or prejudice? If you have, how did you, the people around you, and society in general respond to this? Why do you think this person or these persons acted abusively to you, and what do you think it will take for them to not repeat this behaviour in the future?
6. How do you react if you see or hear somebody express themselves or behave in a racist, prejudiced, or discriminatory way towards some person or group? What responsibility do you have to take a stand against this kind of behaviour? How would you have liked others to act if you were the victim?
7. Is there a minority group or an indigenous population in your country? Find out more about them, how they are treated, and how their rights are being respected. Do special efforts need to be made to secure their needs and rights? If so, which ones, and who is responsible for making these efforts?
8. Jason Diakit  (p.84), Fatima Naza (p.80), Gloria Ray Karlmark (p. 100) and Anders Sunna (p 50) are four people who are involved in the struggle against racism and discrimination. In what ways? Find out more about one of them, and consider how we might best prevent and combat racism and discrimination at the local and the global levels. What can you do to inspire others to strive for a society free from racism and discrimination?



JASON DIAKIT 



FATIMA NAZA

## VIOLENCE

12 |

1. What do you think about violence and non-violence as means of political struggle? Give reasons for your answers, and give some examples of cases where each method has been used.
2. Are there any situations where you think that violence or armed resistance could be justified?
3. Who is allowed to exercise force according to the law? In which situations? Who do you think ought to be allowed to exercise force? In which situations?
4. What do you think causes violence, and societies fraught with violence?
5. Find some examples of situations where armed resistance and non-violent resistance have been successful. Which do you think are the most effective methods in the short term and in the long term?
6. Can conflicts be resolved, or peace made, through the use of weapons and violence? Give some reasons for your answer.
7. On several occasions, the UN has sent peacekeeping forces to war zones. How well has the world organisation managed to achieve its goal of preventing violence? Can you give one example of a success and one of a failure?
8. Maryam al-Khawaja (p. 32) and the Dalai lama (p. 30) are two people who are involved in issues related to violence and non-violence in politics. In what ways? Find out more about one of them.



MARYAM AL-KHAWAJA

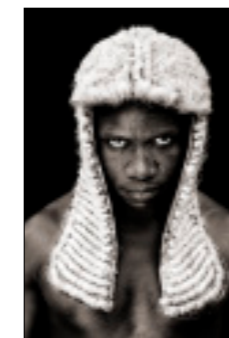


DALAI LAMA

## LGBTI RIGHTS

| 13

1. How would you define love? Can love ever be controversial?
2. What difference does your gender make, and what difference does the gender of the person you fall in love with make?
3. Which international conventions expressly guarantee the equal worth of all human beings, regardless of their sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression?
4. In several countries around the world, same-sex couples don't have the right to get married. In certain countries, same-sex relationships are illegal, and in other countries homosexuality is punishable by death. Who do you think should get to decide who you are allowed to love, be in a relationship with, or marry? Is there some regard in which you think same-sex relationships shouldn't be considered equal to others? If so, why?
5. Who determines which gender you belong to or identify with? Do you think that you're entitled to have opinions about other people's sexuality and identity?
6. How would you respond if somebody close to you, such as a parent, sibling, child, or friend, were to come out as an LGBTI person? What response would you have hoped for if it was you who was coming out?
7. Compare the rights of LGBTI people in a few different countries, such as Sweden, India, Australia, and Uganda. Why do you think public perception and the laws are so different in these countries?
8. Samuel Opio (p. 42) och Ruby Rose (p. 64) are two people who are involved in the struggle for LGBTI rights. In what ways? Find out more about one of them, and consider what you as a fellow human being can do to help make sure other LGBTI people don't suffer the same adversity and oppression.



SAMUEL OPIO



RUBY ROSE

## ENVIRONMENT

14 |

1. Scientists all over the world often describe climate change as one of the major challenges of our time. Despite this, politicians and rulers rarely prioritise environmental issues in their political agendas, and the countries of the world often struggle to agree on common environmental goals and laws. Why do you think this is?
2. What do you think are the greatest causes of environmental damage and climate change? How have you noticed them?
3. Which environmental issues do you consider the most serious, and what do you think it will take for us to address them successfully?
4. Who do you think suffers the most, and is the most affected by, climate change? Why, and in what ways?
5. We will have to work for sustainable development and reach our environmental goals if we are to achieve poverty reduction, food safety, clean water, sustainable use of natural resources and ecosystems, human safety, equality, health, and economic growth. In your opinion, who is responsible for the achievement of the environmental goals, at the local and global levels?
6. At least eight of the UN's 17 global goals from 2015 involve the environment. Read them again, and consider how you contribute to making the planet cleaner and greener. What are you, the people around you, and your country doing to bring about sustainable development? How could you influence others to adopt a more sustainable way of life?
7. Consider how much you have travelled, what you have bought, what you have eaten, and what you have thrown in the rubbish bin this last week. What impact do you think your behaviour might have had on the environment? Can you think of any ways in which you could make your everyday lifestyle more environmentally sustainable?
8. Huang Ming (p. 92) and Gunhild Stordalen (p. 34) are two people who are involved in the struggle for the environment. In what ways? Find out more about one of them.



HUANG MING



GUNHILD STORDALEN

## ECONOMICS

| 15

1. What is poverty? How would you define it, and how is it measured?
2. What do you think are the main reasons why poverty is so widespread in the world? Compare the poorest and richest countries in the world, and consider their differences in terms of history, geography, politics, technology, climate, and education.
3. What do the IMF, the World Bank, and the EU do to aid poor countries and address global economic inequality?
4. What benefits and drawbacks can you see in the giving of aid to developing countries? What do you think would be the best way to give and use aid, and how could your ideas be put into practice?
5. In what way do you think the field of economics plays a significant role in the struggle for human rights?
6. What do you think needs to be done to reduce poverty in the world? What responsibility do you think the countries, organisations, companies, and people of the world have to reduce poverty? How could you contribute?
7. One of the 17 global goals for sustainable development set by the UN in 2015 is to ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns. Consider what this might mean, and how you think these goals ought to be achieved in rich and poor countries.
8. Muhammad Yunus (p. 94) and Phymean Noun (p. 76) are two people who are involved in the issue of the role of economics in the struggle for human rights. In what ways? Find out more about one of them.



MUHAMMAD YUNUS



PHYMEAN NOUN





*My inspiration are men and women who have emerged throughout the globe, and who have chosen the world as the theatre of their operations and who fight socio-economic conditions which do not help towards the advancement of humanity wherever that occurs. Men and women who fight the suppression of the human voice, who fight disease, illiteracy, ignorance, poverty and hunger. Some are known, others are not. Those are the people who have inspired me.*

NELSON MANDELA

Jag tillbringade en sommar med att läsa om mod och tog reda på allt jag kunde om modiga människor som betraktas som hjältar, förebilder eller idoler. Sådana som vågat gå en egen väg, utföra modiga handlingar eller varit starka ledare. Det som förenade dessa mer eller mindre kända personer var framför allt att de hade en klar bild av vad som är rätt och fel, ett slags inre moralisk kompass. Dessutom vägledades de av en vision eller dröm om framtiden. Att vara modig, framkom det tydligt, kommer inte från frånvaron av rädsla utan från att övervinna den utifrån en övertygelse.

Jag glömmer aldrig mötet med den unga begåvade flickan – bäst i klassen, berättade pappan – som hållits fången och våldtagits av rebeller i ett krigsdrabbat land. Nu hade ljuset i hennes ögon slocknat. Hon hängde med huvudet och det var först när vi sa att det som hänt inte var hennes fel utan förövarnas, som hon tittade på oss. Ett stråk av vrede, en beslutssamhet och viljan att leva skulle hjälpa henne att gå vidare och våga drömma om ett liv i värdighet. I min roll som FN-representant fick jag förtroendet att bära hennes erfarenhet och röst med mig till FN:s säkerhetsråd.

Vi lever i en svår tid. Men det är vi, världens folk, som har ansvaret. Inget förutbestämt öde, ingen okänd kraft bestämmer över oss. Vi vet tillräckligt för att handla mot varandra och mot världen på ett besinningsfullt sätt och det gör vi bäst genom att hålla drömmen om en fredlig och rättvis värld levande, och genom att arbeta modigt och hårt för att förverkliga den!

Beväpnade endast med en vanlig hotmailadress och en enkel kamera, utan någon organisation i ryggen, har Albert Wiking och Oscar Edlund samlat röster från hela världen. Röster som berättar om engagemang mot orättvisor och att det faktiskt är möjligt att göra skillnad. För mig är det viktigt att medverka i We Have A Dream. Det här initiativet visar att det som enskilda människor gör faktiskt spelar stor roll.

Sveriges utrikesminister Margot Wallström

Vi föds i olika länder, med olika förutsättningar. Människor tvingas fly från krig, svält och torka. Länder stänger sina gränser och presidenter bygger murar. Somliga lever ett liv i överflöd, andra lever nära naturen under knappa förhållanden. Vissa riskerar livet för att få gå i skolan, andra tar rätten till utbildning för given.

We Have A Dream handlar om människor som inte låtit sig besegras och som har visat att ingenting är omöjligt. Här står okända ungdomar sida vid sida med Nobelpristagare, aktivister och entreprenörer.

Malala Yousafzai sköts i huvudet för att hon kämpade för flickors rätt till utbildning i Pakistan. För Ida Engblom i Sverige blev skolgången en mardröm fylld av mobbning och rädsla. Malala fick Nobels fredspris för sin kamp. Ida brinner för att hjälpa både de som mobbas och de som mobbar. Ida och Malala har båda en dröm och är beredda att stå upp för sin övertygelse.

We Have A Dream är ingen berättelse om helgon eller superhjältar, här är ingen ofelbar. Det enda som skiljer människorna i den här boken från vem som helst är att de en gång lämnat sin trygghetszon, gått mot strömmen, trotsat sina rädsor och bestämt sig för att skapa förändring. Deras berättelser är gripande och tänkvärda och deras röster representerar en jordnära bild av livets mörka och ljusa sidor.

I projektet har vi mött eldsjälar från hela världen, unga och gamla, rika och fattiga, och deras röster är alla lika mycket värda.

Vår vision är att inspirera och omsätta vilja, hopp och drömmar till handling. Det som började som en dröm har tagit oss från vår hemstad Lund i södra Sverige ända till FN-skrapans trettiotonde våning i New York. Ett oändligt tack till alla ni som medverkat i We Have A Dream och gett oss förtroendet att förvalta era röster, idéer och drömmar. Det är ni som gjort denna bok och utställning möjlig. Boken är tillägnad alla som vågar omvandla sina drömmar till handling.

Initiativtagarna Albert Wiking & Oscar Edlund

# ZINEB EL RHAZOUÏ

JOURNALIST

*'I refuse to let terrorists dictate the terms of my life.'*

It was nearly noon, and the Wednesday meeting was already in progress when two men dressed in black barged into the magazine's offices. 'Where is Charb? Where is Charb?' they shouted, and raised their weapons. The next moment, they spotted the publishing director Stéphane Charbonnier, and shot him in the head. Then, they turned their assault rifles on the rest of *Charlie Hebdo's* editorial staff. While they killed the journalists, they shouted their names, one at a time: Georges Wolinski, Bernard Verlhac, Jean Cabut, Bernard Maris, Elsa Cayat, Philippe Honoré... There is another name the killers would have liked to shout that day: Zineb El Rhazoui. The satirical magazine's Moroccan columnist was in Casablanca on that particular Wednesday. 'I'll be in next week,' she wrote in an email to Stéphane Charbonnier, moments before the editorial meeting. It was 7 January 2015. Ten minutes later, when brothers Chérif and Saïd Kouachi left the magazine's headquarters on Rue Nicolas-Appert in Paris, they had murdered 12 people, and injured another 11.

The day after the attack, I received a message in Classical Arabic: 'You survived and escaped while your brothers in atheism were killed, because you were on holiday in Morocco. But if our lions can't catch you, we have other lions who will be keeping their eyes on you. And we swear to you that those eyes will stay open until we have separated your head from your body.' The message was from IS.

There would be more, similar messages over the next few days. A hashtag translated as 'Find Zineb El Rhazoui and kill her' was shared 7,500 times on Twitter in a week. Since then, I live under police protection.

I grew up in an ordinary middle-class family in Casablanca, with a Moroccan father and a French mother. Once I entered my teens, it dawned on me that I didn't share the same rights as men. That's how I discovered feminism, and secularism, because I became more and more convinced that human laws are superior to divine laws.

It was journalism that made me politically aware. I founded a movement with my friend Betty in 2009. We called it Maly, which means 'What's wrong with me?' in Moroccan Arabic. Maly was an alternative movement for the freedom and liberties of the individual. Our first protest was a public picnic, which we organised during Ramadan.

In September of 2009, the religious authorities in Morocco issued a fatwa against me. During the next two years, I was arrested by the police three times. I was never taken to trial, and I never went to prison, but I was subjected to lengthy interrogations. I felt constantly harassed, and in the end, I stopped going out at night.

When the Arab Spring reached Morocco in 2011, I was a founding member of the February 20th movement. We got thousands of people in more than 60 cities to demonstrate every week, but the regime hit back hard. In the end, I realised that my options for the future were to either go to prison or to leave the country. I was in Paris, and the Arab Spring was still going on, when a journalist from *Charlie Hebdo* asked to interview me about the situation in Morocco.

After several hours of talking, he told me that I had to meet the rest of the editorial staff. I had lunch with the publishing director Charb, who asked me if I'd like to start writing for *Charlie Hebdo*. I was out of work, and the magazine was poor, but one of the illustrators offered to take a salary cut so that they could afford to hire me. I refuse to let terrorists dictate the terms of my life. The crime they committed was horrible, but it was also an indication that *Charlie Hebdo* had stood up for something very important: the right to freedom of speech.

Zineb El Rhazoui, Morocco/France, born in 1982. Journalist, activist, and columnist for the French satirical magazine *Charlie Hebdo* since 2011. Was out of the country during the terrorist attack on the magazine's offices on 7 January 2015. Has worked to promote freedom of speech since the attacks. Is the object of constant death threats.



# RICHARD BRANSON

ENTREPRENEUR

*'Look, if you go to live in Libya your life will be spared, your people will be spared, and your country will be spared.'*

'Now you'll have to give Ricky a whacking,' said Mrs. Branson to her husband, who brought the boy into his study and shut the door. Barrister Branson smiled soothingly at his son. 'Now, make sure to cry convincingly,' he said, and slapped his palms together loudly. Perhaps this was when Richard Branson first learned about human rights. Another time, his mother said 'Get out of the car Ricky. You'll have to find your own way for the last few miles.' He was four years old, and maybe that was the moment, as he was walking alone through the moors and fields of Surrey, when future entrepreneur and billionaire Richard Branson learned that you can fix anything. Almost anything.

Everybody wanted to get rid of Saddam Hussein, but not everybody thought that it was a good idea to invade Iraq, kill hundreds of thousands of people, and completely mess up the Middle East to achieve that goal. So I tried to think of how we could get Saddam Hussein to step down. Maybe we could offer him exile in Libya. I spoke to the king of Jordan about it, and he agreed to try to persuade Saddam to accept the idea.

Then, I asked Kofi Annan and Nelson Mandela if they would go to Baghdad to meet with Saddam Hussein, and basically tell him: 'Look, if you go to live in Libya your life will be spared, your people will be spared, and your country will be spared. If you don't, America is likely to invade, you and your family are likely to be killed, and your country will be ruined.' Nelson Mandela and Kofi Annan agreed to go to Baghdad, and Saddam Hussein told the king of Jordan that he was prepared to meet with them.

On 20 March 2003, the preparations were all done, and the plane was ready to take off. But that same morning, the USA began bombing Baghdad, and the meeting never took place. That got me thinking: if a dictator like Saddam Hussein had been prepared to speak to two old statesmen who enjoyed such high moral authority, then maybe we should form a group of esteemed elder politicians, who could always be on standby, ready to visit troubled regions and mediate conflicts. Nelson Mandela agreed to found such a group, and The Elders was born.

By now, The Elders have mediated in many conflicts, and done some wonderful work. This is clearly a group that the world needs, and I think it will still be around in a couple of hundreds of years' time. So if you ask me what I am the proudest of, that would be it. If we achieve something that outlives us, we can be proud.

I think that we can't rely on the government and the social sector to sort out all of the problems of the world. We need every single business, small or large, to manage that. We need the entrepreneurs' skills for creating the jobs that a stable society needs. Little businesses can take on little problems, and bigger businesses can take on bigger problems. I'm convinced that most of the problems in the world can be solved this way. Whether we're talking about environmental problems, social problems, or conflicts, we need to get more entrepreneurs and business people on board.

Sir Richard Branson, England, born in 1950. Entrepreneur. Founder and owner of Virgin Group, which includes more than 400 businesses. Supporter of projects that promote human rights. Initiated The Elders, a group of elderly statesmen whose mission is to address international challenges related to poverty, AIDS, and global warming.





I'M DYSLECTIC, AND I WAS PRETTY HOPELESS IN SCHOOL. People's expectations of me were pretty low. I was good at sports, but then one day I damaged my knee, and there wasn't much hope for me in that respect either. So when I told my parents that I wanted to leave school at 15, they didn't put up much of a fight. They realised that anything would be better for me than staying at school. This was during the Vietnam War, a war which I had already realised was deeply unjust. I spent three of my teenage years marching on the streets to protest the war, and I started a magazine to campaign against the USA's war, against the Biafra war, and for students' rights generally. I've been a businessman ever since.

I learned the art of delegation early on, to compensate for my dyslexia. It's actually a very good strategy. I also think that dyslectic people learn early on to exceed in things that they are good at, and leave the rest to other people. And that's what I did. Most people know what dyslexia is today, but when I was a child, many simply thought that I was stupid. My drive since then has always been to prove the naysayers in my life wrong, whether it's a matter of running an airline, creating a business for commercial space travel, or something else. When somebody tells me that something can't be done, I immediately feel the urge to show them that it can. It's not so much about revenge, I wouldn't use that word. It's about proving to myself what I am capable of, and testing my limits.

# ZARA LARSSON

ARTIST

*'I live in a country that's supposed to be equal and open,  
but there is a very sick and prevalent sexism.'*

Hatred ran high on the Internet when Zara Larsson criticised the gender distribution among the performers at the Bråvalla pop festival, but Sweden's ministers of culture and home affairs supported her statement. Twenty thousand people came to hear Zara Larsson sing at the Malmö festival in 2015. One of them threw tomatoes at her. At first it didn't seem so bad, and she was even able to joke about it while she was still onstage. Her fear came later, when she realised that if one of the people who hated her could attack her, the others could as well. Some of them have threatened to do much worse things to her: beat her, rape her, and even kill her. They make sure that she can't open her computer without facing a hatred that seems almost unlimited in scope. Many took huge offence at a leaflet that the Young Left of Sweden handed out at a music festival a few years ago, which Zara Larsson shared and commented on. In *Eight Ways not to Rape Somebody*, advice was offered to mirror the precautions that girls are always urged to make, and the way that responsibility is often shifted to them. 'Don't walk home alone. Don't drink too much alcohol, and only drink if you have a sober friend with you. Avoid environments where you risk raping somebody, like the festival's stage area, toilets, camp site, and food services. If you notice that not raping people is difficult for you, you should get help.' Somebody who speaks this way about men doesn't deserve to live, according to the logic of a group of outraged Internet users whose real names remain secret.

**J**ust writing 'you bitch' – it doesn't serve any purpose. Why would you say that to somebody you want to debate with? Most of the people who write that stuff are macho guys who feel all upset that I think that men in general are trash.

I don't mind men on a personal level, but I feel that men are just trash when they're in groups. They're annoying, and rude, and I don't like it. A lot of guys were enraged when they saw the tips for not raping people. They insisted on telling me that 'I'm most certainly no rapist! Don't tell me men are trash, you feminist cunt! I'll kill you!' It doesn't make any sense. They're just proving my point.

I hate the macho culture that makes men act a certain way, and I hate the patriarchy for teaching men that they're some kind of superbeings, and that women deserve to suffer. Men have all the power, because patriarchy favours men, and I hate men who exploit this fact. I hate it when men throw sexist comments around in groups. The fact that men have been given this powerful role, which dictates how they should behave – act tough and never cry – is a norm that is just as bad for men, but is very harmful to women.

I've always had a powerful personality. From the very beginning, I was regarded as a bit of a troublemaker, because I don't settle for a simple no, and I don't accept it when people say 'that's just how it is'. I never have. I want to know why, and my parents have always encouraged me to find out. Not to be rude or anything, but to speak up, stand up for myself, and state my mind.

When I became a public person, and was given a lot of space in the media, it only became even more obvious that people wanted to tell me to sit down and be quiet. Girls aren't supposed to take up that much space. This made it very clear to me that, actually, I am entitled to do that.

Zara Larsson, Sweden, born in 1997. Artist. Became famous at the age of 10, when she won TV4's *Talang* (the Swedish version of *Got Talent*) in 2008. Has won attention for her feminist views. At the age of 17, she became the youngest guest host ever of the popular *Sommar* programme on the Swedish radio channel P1. Has won the Rockbjörnen award Female Performer of the Year three years in a row.





MY PROBLEMS WITH BEING THREATENED WITH VIOLENCE AND RAPE ARE MINOR, too, in comparison to the situations many other women have to endure. I live in a country that's supposed to be equal and open, but there is a very sick and prevalent sexism that I never noticed before I was 15. That's when I realised I was a feminist.

Women have always been threatened, but the thing about our generation is that anybody can write anything to anybody from behind a protected user name or a private profile. Many of the people who write the most terrible comments are anonymous. It's crazy that somebody gets to just invade a person's space and be rude like that.

I read every comment on my blog, Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter. I have more than a million followers on Instagram, and on some days it's very hard to deal with all the negative comments, but the moment I can tell that somebody just wants to stir up trouble I ignore them immediately. I don't need to have that kind of energy around. I spend a lot of time on the Internet, and I don't want to be reading those comments all the time, so I get rid of them right away.

Some days I just want to erase all of my accounts, and never make music again. After that event in Malmö, when somebody threw tomatoes at me, I had a lot of anxiety, and I didn't know if I'd ever dare go back onstage. Is there somebody else in the audience, some really sick person, who's planning something worse? It scares me. Somebody could actually do something to me.

I love making music. The best thing about music is that you can use it to express yourself any way you like. My music is very apolitical. It's about love, and love has no gender.

# DALAI LAMA

HIS HOLINESS THE 14TH DALAI LAMA

*‘Love, compassion, and tolerance are essentials, not luxuries.’*

On 9 March 1959, two Chinese military officers arrived at the Potala Palace in Lhasa. They gave a message to the commander of the Tibetan guard: his employer was to report to Colonel Fu in the military headquarters the next morning – alone. The Dalai Lama, head of state and spiritual leader of six million Tibetans, avoided this trap. Word spread. The next morning, there were tens of thousands of people standing outside the palace. ‘Tibet for the Tibetans!’ they shouted. This was a powerful popular uprising. But 50,000 Chinese soldiers were marching on Lhasa, and in the face of an impending bloodbath, the Dalai Lama saw what he had to do. Late that evening, he left his palace disguised as a soldier, and headed for the Indian border. Since then, the 14th incarnation of the bodhisattva Avalokiteshvara has been leading the struggle for a free Tibet from his headquarters in Dharamsala. He soon realised that the world cares more for nuggets of Buddhist wisdom than for the Tibetan people’s rights, but he learned how to use the former to draw attention to the latter. Today, it’s not just his 12 million followers who hope that the Dalai Lama is right when he tweets that ‘The gun may seem more decisive in the short term, but in the long term the power of truth is stronger.’

**I**t doesn’t matter if people call me a living Buddha, or a god king, or a devil, or a counter-revolutionary. The truth is that I’m just a human being, a simple Buddhist monk. There’s no difference between us.

In my experience, we can make ourselves happier by focusing more on our inner lives. You can achieve many things by living in a materially developed society, but if you also pay more attention to the world inside you, your life will be far richer, and far more complete. Mental training can make us more peaceful as human beings. It gives us better opportunities to establish the peaceful relationships and human communities that are the necessary foundations of global peace. Inner strength allows us to face problems in our families, in our communities, and in the global arena in a much more constructive way.

Non-violence is not to be confused with passivity. We need to solve our problems through dialogue, in the spirit of reconciliation. This is the true meaning of non-violence, and the source of all peace in the world. In the case of Tibet, whether we want to or not, we have to live side by side with our Chinese brothers and sisters. The Tibetans have had relations with China for almost two millennia. Sometimes they have been fruitful, sometimes they haven’t. Right now we are going through a difficult period, but nevertheless, we must go on living as neighbours. In order to live peacefully, harmoniously, and amicably in the future, it’s extremely important that we avoid the use of violence in our struggle for freedom. That’s my core belief.

Another thing is that support from the Chinese public is a necessity if we’re to find a solution to the problems between China and Tibet. Support for, and solidarity with, the Tibetan cause is growing among the Chinese people. This is most encouraging, but if we resort to violence, and spill the blood of the Chinese, we will lose the support even of those Chinese who acknowledge intellectually that the Tibetan cause is just, and that the Tibetan people have suffered unduly. Therefore, we must continue to rely on peaceful means in our continuing struggle. Love, compassion, and tolerance are essentials, not luxuries.

The Dalai Lama (Tenzin Gyatso), Tibet, born in 1935. The 14th Dalai Lama, the spiritual and worldly leader of Tibet. Was declared head of state in 1950. Has led the Tibetan government in exile in India since 1959. Has received countless awards, notably the Nobel Peace Prize in 1989. Retired from political leadership in 2011.







# MARYAM AL-KHAWAJA

HUMAN RIGHTS ACTIVIST

| 33

*'If words were swords, I would be very dangerous.'*

The Saudi forces that helped the king of Bahrain subdue his people arrived across the bridge from the mainland. Abdulhadi al-Khawaja was arrested, tortured, and sentenced to life in prison. Today, his daughter lives in exile, and leads the Bahrain Center for Human Rights, which her father founded to inform the world about the injustices in his country. Bahrain is in 163rd place out of the 180 nations ranked in the Press Freedom Index. Dissidents are imprisoned every day. The king of this little island kingdom considers Maryam al-Khawaja a terrorist.

**T**hey shot him in the hip, and then in the chest. He fell down in the street. No ambulance was allowed through, so he simply lay there and bled out. He was 22 years old, and he was my friend. I was with him just a few minutes earlier. Later on, when I saw his body in the morgue, I felt anger towards the people who did this, and over the fact that the dead become anonymous numbers so quickly. We speak of 10, 100, or maybe 1,000 killed, but each one of them is an individual human being.

This was in February of 2011, during what was so inaccurately named the 'Arab Spring'. My father, my uncle, my sister, and two of my brothers-in-law were sent to prison. Do I worry about them? Of course. Do I worry about myself? Not at all. Of course I sometimes ask myself if it's worth it, but what's the alternative? Letting the government get away with terrorising people?

If words were swords, I would be very dangerous. Unfortunately, they aren't. The world has a very romanticised notion of peaceful protest. I mean, you don't learn about Malcolm X in school growing up, you learn about Martin Luther King. You don't learn about people who fought, you learn about people like Gandhi. And yet, when people use peaceful methods to start a revolution, the world turns its back on them.

What makes me really angry is when people and governments say that they support human rights and democracy, but then completely ignore transgressions against these ideals in certain countries for political or economic reasons. I thought there were at least one or two systems in place to protect people who fight for human rights, no matter where they are. But it really all comes down to which passport you have. If you're a Bahraini, it doesn't matter if you're involved in human rights issues. Politics, oil, and petrol trump all those things.

My father is the strongest person I've known. He taught us children that nobody is entitled to violate our rights, and that they are worth fighting for. I only ever saw him cry once. We were stopped at a red light in Bahrain when an elderly man stepped out of his car, and approached us. He insisted on shaking my father's hand, and thanking him for everything he's done for the people.

The rulers of Bahrain are afraid of me, because I'm one of the people who make sure that the world won't forget this country after all, and that their transgressions won't go unnoticed. The absence of a reaction from the international community can sometimes make me pessimistic, but my hope returns when I see that the people of Bahrain are still fighting. They fight every day, even though nobody is on their side, and even though the price they pay is so high.

Maryam al-Khawaja, Bahrain, born in 1987. Human rights activist. Leader of the Bahrain Center for Human Rights, which was founded by her father Abdulhadi al-Khawaja in 2002. The object of constant online harassment and death threats from Bahraini loyalists. Currently living in exile. Has received the Stieg Larsson Prize, as well as other awards.

# GUNHILD STORDALEN

DOCTOR, PHILANTHROPIST & ENVIRONMENTAL ACTIVIST

*‘Studies have shown that people in Norway are more afraid of immigration than of climate change.’*

Dittu Bai in Madhya Pradesh has come into some spending money. Until a few years ago, she only made 1,000 rupees a month, which is equivalent to about \$15. She earned even less when Ranikhet disease, the feared viral infection which is also referred to as Newcastle disease, afflicted and killed all of the family’s chickens. After that, Dittu Bai took a course in chicken vaccination, which was paid for by the UN agency FAO. She’d always dreamed of being a veterinarian, and now she not only gets to inoculate plenty of birds, she’s also doubled her income. Now, her family is no longer at the mercy of local loan sharks when the children need books for school. They have food on their table, and thanks to the vaccine, almost all of the chickens in the village of Sad survive. Gunhild Stordalen grew up in a village as well, on a small farm with chickens and other animals. She also dreamed of being a veterinarian, but ended up becoming a doctor instead. She’s also come into some spending money. Gunhild Stordalen is married to billionaire Petter Stordalen, who shares her vision of creating a better future than the one currently projected. We can produce enough food for everybody in 2050, as long as we realise that some of us will have to change our diets, and that others will need help to increase their food production. That’s the reasoning behind the Stordalen Foundation and the EAT Forum – a series of global summits on how we can secure our food supply in harmony with the environment. Gunhild Stordalen continues her work, even as she struggles with a fatal disease.

Perhaps this is the greatest challenge humanity faces: how can we sustainably feed nine billion people by the middle of the century? We have to produce more food, in a more sustainable way, while also making people’s diets healthier.

We have to define the concepts of health and sustainability, and determine how to attain our climate goals while also preventing the obesity epidemic and making sure that the small-scale farmers of the world will be able to keep their businesses going. Yes, these are big issues, but if you really delve into them, you’ll soon realise that they’re all connected, and that solving them would constitute a win-win outcome. We can fix this.

Studies have shown that people in Norway are more afraid of immigration than of climate change. They aren’t grasping the severity of the situation, and the challenges we’re facing: global warming poses one of the greatest threats to our own survival, and to the survival of many other species.

I grew up in the countryside. My family weren’t farmers – my dad was an engineer and my mum was a doctor – but we had a small farm with lots of animals: rabbits, chickens, horses, and dogs. The animals were my best friends. Once, when I was six or seven years old, we went fishing. I saw lots of fish floating around, belly-up. My mother and father explained to me that the fish had died from lack of oxygen in the water, and then they proceeded to explain the causal relationship between pollution and damage to the environment. I had nightmares that the world was going to ruin, but then I decided to become an activist.

Sometimes, I managed to get other children involved in the things that interested me. I even got them to join a demonstration in the village where we lived. I can’t remember what we were demonstrating against, but I managed to convince them that we could make a difference.

Gunhild Stordalen, Norway, born in 1979. Doctor, philanthropist, and environmental activist. Founded the Stordalen Foundation with her husband, to support research in the fields of environmental studies, health, and sustainable growth. In 2014 she created the EAT Forum, a global meeting place focused on issues related to food, health, and the environment.



MUCH LATER, WHEN PETTER AND I BECAME A COUPLE, people would ask me how I could be an environmental activist when we lived in such a big house, with so many cars, and my husband even owned a private jet! It was a difficult time. Our cars all run on biofuel or electricity. Maybe the plane could run on biofuel too, one day. After all, sustainable development is all about improving technology and coming up with new solutions. I invite lots of smart people with different ideas for solutions to the EAT Forum. They might just be separate, isolated pieces, but together we can finish the whole puzzle.

I thought I had 50 years to improve the world, but one day I found out I might just have a year or two left. I was diagnosed with an autoimmune disease that hardly anybody has heard of, and that will shorten my life significantly. I took it as a challenge to find out how much I could achieve in two years, because I really think you can achieve quite a lot in that time.

Now, I'm still fighting this illness, and I've recently finished a risky treatment that was absolutely horrendous. It's a hard struggle, but once you get through it, and come out on the other side, you have to get your bearings very quickly. You've changed, and you've been through a lot.

I feel a need to invest all of my time, all of my energy, and all of my knowledge into trying to contribute. I'm not able to do anything that nobody else can do, but I do have the opportunity to do something. My illness was a catalyst that helped me determine what I really want to do, and what I'm presently doing: trying to suggest an outline for a solution.

My own life is very small and insignificant in the light of the big issues. I can't permit myself to shut down because of some disease that nobody's heard of. That's why it's important for me to fight for what I believe in, instead of just giving up.



# KIMMIE WEEKS

HUMAN RIGHTS ACTIVIST

*'It was the first time I saw a human being get killed.  
And the first time I saw a child soldier. The kid was my age,  
and he was holding a gun.'*

If you want to turn a human being into a soldier for life, you should begin before the age of eight, before the child has developed any other morals. When the urge to kill is programmed into the underdeveloped brain of a child, it can stay there for life. That's why child soldiers make perfect sense from the point of view of a warlord. Kimmie Weeks was nine years old when he first saw a child kill, and 14 when he decided to dedicate his life to rescuing children from having to be soldiers. Today, he is one of the most hard-working proponents of children's rights in the world. The president of Liberia awarded him the nation's most distinguished order. An earlier president tried to have him killed. Everything began one day when the civil war was raging across Liberia, and the rebel soldiers were storming Kimmie Weeks' residential neighbourhood outside Monrovia.

**I**t was the first time I saw a human being get killed. And the first time I saw a child soldier. The kid was my age, and he was holding a gun. I was shocked, because it was a real gun, and I saw him commanding adults and telling them to move back. My mother and I had to leave our home. We took nothing out of our home, just the clothes we were wearing. We walked for a whole day, until we reached a university campus that had become a refugee camp. We were 16 families living in a classroom built for 30 students. Everybody slept on the floor, crammed together, side by side. This was our new home.

The water in the camp was contaminated, because the bodies of those killed in the battles were still lying around everywhere, but that was the only source of water we had. Almost everybody got sick. I got malaria and cholera. In the end, I was so sick I couldn't move, all I did was lie still on the floor, and my mother held my hand. 'Is Kimmie OK?' the others asked, but she wouldn't let them touch me. In the end, somebody came and took my pulse, and said I was dead. My mother was in a fit of despair, and they had to restrain her while they wrapped me in the blanket I was lying on and carried me out.

There were so many dying in the camp, the bodies were piled up in heaps. They threw me onto one of the heaps. When they let my mother go, she ran out and started looking for me, running from pile to pile, digging through dead bodies until she found me. I don't remember this of course, but what I do remember is my body being shaken violently. I looked up, and I saw my mother. There were tears on her face. I'd never seen her cry before, so I knew that something was terribly wrong. This happened during our first month in the refugee camp. We stayed there for six months.

The wars came and went. One day, when there seemed to be a lull in the fighting, my mother told me we were going home. Many houses in our neighbourhood had been destroyed. There were dead bodies all around. This was when I performed my first humanitarian act. I told my friends, 'let's clean the community'. So we did. Our parents thanked us, and we thought about whether there was something else we could do. We'd heard that the UN had come to Liberia to help with food, but nobody was coming to our area. So 10 or 15 of us kids went to the UN office, and told them where we lived. We had to nag them and queue up for a week before they brought any food.

Kimmie Weeks, Liberia, born in 1981. Human rights activist. Has dedicated his life to the rehabilitation of child soldiers, and the prevention of their use. Founder of the Children's Disarmament Campaign in 1996, and Youth Action International in 2005. Recipient of countless awards, including the Martin Luther King Peace Medal.



THE WAR INTENSIFIED AGAIN. It was as though we had a civil war every two years, and more peaceful times in-between. Each time, more children were bearing arms. The rebels captured them, and turned them into soldiers. I was 14 when I read the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. That was the first time I realised that children have rights. The rights to live and be healthy – and not to be used as soldiers. The last part changed everything for me. Of course, I'd always felt that seeing a child using a weapon was shocking, but I'd never thought of it as something particularly wrong, it was just part of the war. But seeing the convention and seeing that it is intended to protect children, that was when I decided to speak up for the children.

If we couldn't end the entire war, maybe we could at least get the rebel groups to let the children lay down their arms. We started the Children's Disarmament Campaign in 1996. That was when I really became an activist. We formed a delegation of children, and we actually left the areas that were controlled by UN peacekeepers to try to meet with rebel leaders. This was the first time that children were engaged in these kinds of things in Liberia. Each time we met a rebel leader, we convinced him to sign our petition. We knew, however, that nothing would happen just from having them sign a paper, so we got them all to record voice messages saying something like: 'I am Charles Taylor, all children under 18 fighting for me should lay down their guns and/or turn them over to the peacekeepers.'

When we spoke to children who were soldiers, some of them thought the campaign was great, but many of them told us the strangest things. It was almost as though they didn't want any help. Being soldiers was all they knew, and some of them said they'd never had so much fun before in their lives.

The year after our campaign, a peace treaty was signed, and Charles Taylor became president of Liberia. It didn't take long before I found out that he was running a training camp for child soldiers, which he intended to deploy in battle in Sierra Leone. These weren't rebels, this was the legitimate government of Liberia turning children into soldiers. I met with the president and told him I was going to speak up about this. Taylor was furious; 'If you do that, you will disappear. Your family will disappear,' he threatened me. But I did it anyway, and then I had to run. I was 17 then.

That was many years ago, and many things have changed. I am only in touch with one of my friends from the refugee camp – Isaac. We live together now. All of our other friends from the camp are dead. The children died easier. I'll never forget the family who were in the room with me and my mother; they had six children, and after six months in the camp, they had lost all of them.

During the civil war, there were 15,000 child soldiers in Liberia. The great challenge in my life is turning them into functioning people again. It's very easy to put a gun in the hands of a child, but taking that gun away fully is much more difficult. It's not just the presence of the gun that makes somebody a soldier, it's the whole mentality of warfare. The big part of our programme is what happens after. We need to rehabilitate the child soldiers, and get their communities to welcome them back.



# SAMUEL OPIO

LGBT ACTIVIST

*'That was when I realised that the government was my enemy.  
I was the most outspoken gay activist in Uganda.'*

'Do you know that homosexuals eat each other's poo poo?' asks pastor Martin Ssempe in Kampala. When the Baptist congregation looks doubtful, he displays a drawing of the act on the screen of a laptop computer. Almost nine million people have seen Ssempe's speech since the clip was posted on YouTube in May of 2010. Many were quick to follow the pastor's call to eradicate homosexuality in Uganda. Two of them went to the home of Samuel Opio, the activist who founded Queer Youth Uganda.

I'd been to a UN conference in Geneva, to speak about Uganda's drafted laws against homosexuality. When I got back to Kampala, and entered my flat, there were two people there. One of them had a gun, and they began to hit me immediately. I screamed for help, but nobody came. The blood spilled into my eyes. Before leaving, they said: 'We're going to kill you.'

They returned two days later. Then, I was saved when other people showed up, but a week later, they came back again. I fled. The police said they couldn't do anything. When I tried to leave Uganda, I was stopped at the airport. That was when I realised that the government was my enemy. I was the most outspoken gay activist in Uganda. When the parliament passed the law that set higher penalties, and made it a crime to fail to report homosexuals, it became impossible for my organisation to exist. The pastor had bribed one of our members into talking, and the church told the police where we were. Since then, I've had to keep moving from place to place.

It all began with that pastor who declared war on the homosexuals of Uganda. Certainly, homosexual practices had already been illegal for a long time, but most Ugandans didn't know people like me existed. Not until Martin Ssempe began his hate campaign, and claimed that Queer Youth Uganda was going to make all children gay, and said the best thing would be to kill us all. Many of my friends fled, but some stayed to fight. We are Ugandan, after all. We have to fight for acceptance. Nobody else will do it for us. If I leave my country now, then what have I been fighting for all these years? What message would I be sending to all the people who think of me as a role model?

I think I have always been my own role model. I grew up in a small village where we didn't have access to newspapers, or any other information about what was going on. I always believed in myself, and when I discovered that I was more attracted to boys than to girls, that was simply that. My father died when I was very young, and that was probably a good thing, because otherwise something bad could have happened. When I came out to her, much later, my mother didn't even know what homosexuality was. Once she understood what I was saying, she told me she wanted nothing to do with me. When my brother, who is a lawyer and a judge, realised that I wasn't going to change my mind, he cut me off, and refused to give me any more financial help. He went to Cambridge to study, and he had been exposed to homosexuality, so I thought he would accept me. But it was the opposite.

I live in Kampala, but I move often. My face is known, and I sometimes get thrown off the bus by people who don't want to ride the same bus as a homosexual. They've tried to harm me several times. I've learned that it's time to move on when people in the neighbourhood start pointing fingers at me.

I will continue to fight for a just legislation. When a society's laws tolerate something, the people will eventually come round to accepting it. We're here, and everybody needs to realise that.

Samuel Opio, Uganda, born in 1981. LGBT activist in Uganda, where homosexuality is a crime. Chairman of the Queer Youth Uganda organisation, which opposes all discrimination against LGBT individuals, and is the object of constant death threats.



# ROBERTO SAVIANO

JOURNALIST & WRITER

*‘Businessmen with guns have their own rules, instead of the laws of society. Once you’ve understood the difference between a rule and a law, you’ve understood the Mafia.’*

‘Don Peppino?’ asked the men who had entered the sacristy. ‘That’s me’, replied the priest. Five shots echoed among the arches. Two bullets hit his face, and the others penetrated his skull, his throat, and one of his hands. That’s how the priest in Casal di Principe died, moments before service on 19 March 1994. He had challenged the Camorra by refusing to give the mob bosses the Church’s blessing, encouraging his parishioners to report crime to the police, and organising protest marches against the clans and their business practices. Nine years later, mob boss Nunzio De Falco was convicted of conspiring to commit the murder. Journalist Roberto Saviano was in the courtroom, and he almost laughed out loud, because the boss of the Camorra was being defended by a lawyer who also happened to be the president of the Chamber of Deputies’ Justice Commission. Saviano relates this moment in his bestseller *Gomorra*. Since its publication, he’s lived in hiding with police protection, under constant threat of sharing Don Peppino’s fate.

I’m often afraid, but not of dying. I’m not afraid of dying because my own death has been described to me so many times that it doesn’t feel distant anymore. Fear is a natural thing. Fear is what proves that you’re alive; fear is the defence of life. Cowardice is something else. A coward chooses the worst way of defending his life; both for himself and for his own dignity. Gambling with your life is not always heroic, and not always the bravest option. Courage means always choosing what you think is right.

When I was young, I dreamed of a life of adventure. Travelling the world, and visiting the front lines of different wars. I dreamed that my words would have the power to change things, to change the world. When I was writing my first few articles about the Mafia and the Camorra, I could already tell that even the shortest of stories, in the smallest of newspapers, had an effect. Some people were frightened, others were curious, but the words were like an explosive charge.

Unfortunately, my life these days doesn’t involve much adventure. Instead of a life filled with passion and risk-taking, I’m forced to live in silence. Mine is an armoured existence; a life I am escorted through; an everyday experience where the briefest of walks requires at least five days of advance planning; and a life rife with slanderous rumours. No, it wasn’t worth it. Do you know when I thought it was worth it? That was before, when I took it upon myself to further the cause of freedom and fight the Mafia. If somebody had asked me then what I was willing to sacrifice, my response would have been: my life! But when you do sacrifice your life, you realise that it wasn’t worth it. In the end, altruism is quite a disgusting thing. It doesn’t exist.

Italy is a mean country, where the majority of people are extremists, people who can be bought for 50 euros. That’s exactly why studying the Mafia is such a privilege: it helps you see that the problem isn’t just its 20,000 or so members. Mafia culture exists everywhere. More than anything, the Mafia is a business organisation. It’s capitalism without rule of law. Businessmen with guns. It’s not a bunch of criminals making money, that would just be gangsters. Businessmen with guns follow their own rules, rather than the laws of society. Once you’ve understood the difference between a rule and a law, you’ve understood the Mafia.

Roberto Saviano, Italy, born in 1979. Journalist and writer. Published his book *Gomorra* in 2006 about the Mafia in Naples, which has been translated into more than 40 languages. Has been the target of death threats ever since. Wrote the book *ZeroZeroZero* about the global cocaine market in 2013. Recipient of the PEN Pinter Prize and the Olof Palme Prize in 2011, as well as other awards.



ALL OF THE FINANCIAL PROVISIONS WE HAVE IN CIVIL SOCIETY, like wages, health insurance, and pensions, exist in the Mafia too. As a member of the Mafia, if you go to prison, for instance, there are rules which dictate how much money you will be given, depending on how long you're going to stay inside. It's impossible to single anybody out as solely responsible for things turning out this way. Old ideologies, an inability to carry out reform, good old Italian stinginess – it's far from easy to figure out where the responsibility lies. It's like Benito Mussolini said in his last interview: 'I did not create fascism; I drew it from the Italians' unconscious minds.'

Italy is a country that's supposed to present a beautiful view for tourists; famous artists, the leaning tower of Pisa, the canals of Venice, gorgeous churches. But if you stay for too long, it drags you down like quicksand. And just like quicksand, the more you struggle to get up, the worse things will get. I've already lived abroad for some time, and I think that my friends who remain in Italy will never truly be happy there. The ones who have families and mortgages might have to simply accept this, but if you only have yourself to think of, you really ought to just leave if you ask me. Get out of there!

And still, I hope that this will all end one day, and that the people who read my writings will somehow be a part of that change, by studying and then gradually demolishing the loathsome mechanisms that are victimising all of Europe. There is next to no awareness of these mechanisms. The Camorra in and around Naples is the largest criminal organisation in Europe, five times larger than the Sicilian Mafia, and it operates throughout the continent. But hardly anybody has heard of it.







# PHUMZILE MLAMBO-NGCUKA

POLITICIAN & EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF UN WOMEN

| 49

*‘Men’s violence against women is a sickness in society.’*

Before she died, Anene Booysen told the doctors that her ex-boyfriend was one of the five men who had raped her in the vacant lot in Bredasdorp. The doctors could see for themselves what else had been done to her. The girl’s arms and legs were broken, her genitals were torn to bits, her belly was sliced open, and she had been disembowelled; the perpetrators had used Anene’s own hands to do the latter. Her boyfriend was sentenced to life in prison, but according to the officers investigating the crime, the other perpetrators were figments of the 17-year-old victim’s imagination. ‘Anene Booysen is our society,’ one commenter would write afterwards, alluding to the fact that every third woman over the age of 18 in South Africa has been raped, and every fourth man has committed rape. This is the country where Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka grew up, and where she has been a member of government, and a vice president. In 2013, she became the leader of the UN entity for gender equality: UN Women.

Violence against women has to stop, period. And yet, it continues. Men’s violence against women is a sickness in society, and a sign that something else is very sick. It continues simply because there are no consequences for the perpetrators. It’s that way in many countries: the guilty parties get away with it. The governments need to get the police to do their jobs. Men have to realise that violating women will have consequences.

In the end, it’s a problem of leadership. The political leaders of the world aren’t committed enough to the eradication of gender inequality. Discrimination of women is the most common form of human rights violation – as well as the most tolerated, and most rarely punished.

You can change attitudes and prejudice among the people, but we need our leaders to take a clear and unequivocal stand. The main goal for UN Women at the moment isn’t to produce new conventions and agreements, it’s simply to get the leaders of the world to realise the UN conventions that they’ve already signed, and act on the laws that are already in place.

South Africa has one of the most equal constitutions in the world, and one of the most equal parliaments, but the justice system and the social norms are simply relics from another age. I grew up during apartheid, when the whole system was based on discrimination. To me, fighting these injustices was a given. I really wanted to be a teacher, like my dad. If I had been born in Norway, where so many problems have already been solved, I would have spent my energy on school and left politics to other people, but in the face of South Africa’s racial politics, I didn’t have that option.

My mother was one of the first Catholic nurses to defy the Vatican and begin working on family planning efforts. She prescribed preventatives. The pill defined an era, because it changed the rules of life for all of the women of the world. It allowed us the right to decide over our own bodies, and the opportunity to educate ourselves and shape our own lives, instead of being reduced to being childbearers, and being trapped in a system where all the power lies with the men, and where violence against women is an everyday exercise of this power.

My own strength stems from having been raised with the ambition of doing something for other people. One of the many things I learned from Nelson Mandela is that there are three things that are truly important for a leader: humility, humility, humility! Don’t take yourself too seriously, and never forget the people who voted for you.

Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, South Africa, born in 1955. Teacher and politician. Executive Director of UN Women since 2013. Founder of the Umlambo Foundation, which works to promote education, women’s rights, and equality. Played an active role in the struggle against apartheid. South African Minister of Minerals and Energy from 1999 to 2005, and Deputy President of South Africa from 2005 to 2008.

# ANDERS KOMPASS

FORMER FIELD OPERATIONS DIRECTOR FOR THE HCHR

*'The UN is obsessed with plugging leaks and keeping uncomfortable truths under wraps.'*

The boys were homeless; their villages had been burned to the ground. They were terrified and starving. The militia men had stabbed their parents to death, and they hadn't had anything to eat during the trek. Now, their escape from the civil war had taken them to the UN camp at the airport in Bangui. The UN Security Council had given the task of protecting these children to a unit of French soldiers. 'Can I have some food?' the eight-year-old asked one of the UN soldiers. 'If you suck me off first,' the soldier responded. The report on the abuses committed by UN soldiers in the Central African Republic was seven pages long. Anders Kompass, who was the field operations director at the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (HCHR) at the time, was reading it in his office in Geneva. It made him feel sick. He'd spent his whole adult life working to protect these basic rights – as an aid worker, diplomat, negotiator, and observer. After 17 years of working for the UN, Anders Kompass knew all too well how the leaders of the organisation hushed up uncomfortable truths. When the report reached his desk, he realised that the same thing would happen to this story if he agreed to play by the rules. After a sleepless night, he decided what had to be done, and handed the report over to a French diplomat. A few days later, the French ambassador called him up to thank him. Eleven soldiers had been recalled, and a criminal investigation was underway. The abuses of the children ceased, and the guilty parties would be punished. Six months later, Anders Kompass was informed that his boss, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, wanted him to resign. Kompass had broken the rules of the global organisation by disclosing internal paperwork. The fact that the abuses had been prevented was irrelevant; the breach of UN protocol was regarded as more serious. Neither one of them was prepared to back down. On 17 April 2015, they sat down across from one another in one of the meeting rooms at the UN headquarters.

The High Commissioner for Human Rights assumed office in September. We'd met a few times before, and had gotten along fine. Now, he was reserved, almost hostile, and he told me that he had initiated an enquiry because I hadn't resigned when he asked me to. While the enquiry was ongoing, I wouldn't be allowed into the office. I had to sign a paper stating that I was on administrative leave.

Some people might call me a whistle-blower, but I was really just doing my job. It's not as though I contacted the media, or tried to turn the affair into some big spectacle. I simply told the French that they had a big problem, and that they needed to make it clear that this behaviour was unacceptable; some kind of legal action had to be taken in France. These were soldiers who were fighting for the UN, tasked by the international community with protecting people from danger but who had decided to exploit their absolute vulnerability instead.

Just as I'd hoped, they were able to identify and protect the children in the camp outside Bangui, as well as identify the guilty soldiers. However, as it turned out, the High Commissioner wasn't too concerned with these children's safety. He didn't ask me how they had fared, not once. Instead, he insisted that I was in the wrong, and forced me out of my workplace. Nobody was told why, so naturally, many of my co-workers wondered what transgression I was guilty of.

Anders Kompass, Sweden, born in 1955. UN official and field operations director for the HCHR. Was suspended from his duties at the UN after filing a report concerning sexual offences committed by UN peacekeeper troops in the Central African Republic. An internal investigation would later determine that the UN was in the wrong, and his suspension was annulled.



ONE OF OUR IN-HOUSE LEGAL EXPERTS helped me lodge an appeal. The day we finished it, 29 April, *The Guardian* ran an article on the story: 'UN aid worker suspended for leaking report on child abuse by French troops.' This was how I discovered that many people within the UN were upset, and had been waiting for this information to be made public. A few days later, a tribunal ruled that my suspension was unlawful, and the media took such an interest that the Secretary-General had no choice but to appoint an independent committee to investigate how the UN had handled the abuses. In December, the UN's 'gross institutional failure' in responding to these abuses was criticised, and I was fully exonerated.

It was as though somebody had opened a dam, and people suddenly dared to discuss this. Each week, new reports would come in, mostly of abuse of underage women, but also of UN soldiers who weren't taking responsibility for children they'd fathered.

None of my superiors have reached out to offer me any kind of support or apology, and they never will. On the contrary, the High Commissioner made it very clear that he still didn't trust me. Because of this, I decided to leave my job.

The UN is obsessed with plugging leaks and keeping uncomfortable truths under wraps. This has been going on for nine years, under Ban Ki-moon. He's chosen to surround himself with people whose main job is to keep any kind of bad news away. When it comes to my own case, my field colleagues told me that what could have turned out to be a good thing for the UN had become another stain on the organisation's reputation instead. There are wonderful people working for the UN in the field, who sacrifice their spare time and family time to support this global organisation. The problem lies with the leadership.

I was six years old the first time I saw my mother cry. She was sitting in the kitchen, and what I saw terrified me. 'A man who worked for peace has died', she told me. The man she was talking about was the UN head Dag Hammarskjöld, and this is my first memory of anything related to the world outside of a very safe and small region of Sweden called Småland, where I grew up. Hammarskjöld had surprised everybody when he was Secretary-General, by courageously taking a clear stand for the developing African countries that had been subjugated by colonial powers. Since his death in 1961, the superpowers in the Security Council haven't wanted the UN to have another strong leader like that.

When you work in the field of human rights, you get to witness the worst examples of how human beings treat each other, and your job is to do something about them. You also have to have the courage to speak the truth to those responsible, and stand up for ordinary people. I think the thing I'm proudest of and happiest about, regarding my work, is the fact that I've done that.



# IDA ENGBLOM

MEMBER OF PLAN INTERNATIONAL YOUTH COUNCIL

*'Almost every bully is a bully because there's something missing from their life, because of some insecurity they struggle with.'*

Each weekday morning, a million children prepare for another day in the primary schools of Sweden. About 65,000 of them do this with a deep sense of discomfort, because of the tormentors who await them in the schoolyard. As the concept of bullying is not easy to pin down, this estimation of the number of bullying victims in Swedish schools is quite imprecise. But bullying is not showing any signs of declining. According to the statistical average, there is one bullied pupil in each primary school class. Swedish informational materials for school employees on bullying state that the most constructive reaction is to speak out about the problem early on, to talk directly to the perpetrators, and to bring the problems to light. In the end, Ida Engblom learned to do just that. But she isn't a school staff member; she was just seven years old, in first grade, when her own hell began.

The breaks were tough. I'd run off into the woods, and hide among the blueberry bushes. After the breaks, I simply stood up and went back inside. I didn't want to make a big deal out of it, so I kept a straight face and kept going, and determined not to let it affect my school work. I pretended everything was fine, and focused on my assignments, but it was slowly eating away at me on a psychological level.

I was sad, angry, and frustrated. Some things did make me stronger, like when I realised that I'm simply me, and they can say anything they want. If they don't like me, they don't like me. Slowly, gradually, I built myself up during all that time I spent in the blueberry bushes, and that's how I got to where I am today.

When I started third grade, a teacher finally paid attention to me. 'How do you really feel?' she asked me. Then, I was finally able to tell somebody. It was a long process, but after this conversation with my teacher, I felt like nobody could stop me. I was going to make other people feel better.

My wish is for nobody to have to go through what I went through. When I approach lonely kids during break times, they often tell me they're waiting for somebody, but I usually stay and talk to them until the break ends, because nobody else ever shows up.

I think there are reasons why people get bullied, but I think those reasons have to do with the people who do the bullying, not with the ones who get bullied. Almost every bully is a bully because there's something missing from their life, because of some insecurity they struggle with.

Sometimes I've asked the kids who used to bully me why they said the things they said. This has often surprised them at first, but once they've realised that I was asking sincerely, they've let their guards down and begun to talk to me. It often turned out that they were troubled and insecure in themselves, and that they didn't have anybody to help them. They tormented others to elevate their own status, and keep their weaknesses hidden.

Thanks to my experiences, I have an easier time noticing when something is wrong. I don't hesitate to get involved, because I know how awful it is to be in that situation, and how difficult things can get if you don't talk about them. I want to give the victims a smile and a greeting, and let them know that I'm there if they want to tell me about it. I'm not involved in any organised anti-bullying programme, there's no organisation backing me. It's just me, my smile, and my past experiences. We all have to learn to see, be present in the moment, and ask that essential question: how do you really feel?

Ida Engblom, Sweden, born in 2001. Is attending the last year of elementary school at Mörmoskolan in Karlstad. Was bullied in school for a number of years. Is a member of the school's student council, and is deeply involved in anti-bullying issues. Was elected a member of the Swedish Plan International Youth Council in 2015.



# MALALA YOUSAFZAI

WOMEN'S RIGHTS & EDUCATION ACTIVIST

*'I've always said that guns can only kill terrorists, they can't kill the ideology of terrorism. The ideology of terrorism can only be fought through education.'*

She doesn't remember the young man who stopped them to ask if this was the bus from Khushal school. She also doesn't remember the man who jumped onto the back of the vehicle, or his question: 'Who is Malala?' She didn't hear the blast of his weapon, and she didn't feel the bullet enter her head just next to her left eye. The last thing she remembers is taking an exam on the history of Pakistan. Everything that happened after that is gone. Malala Yousafzai, a 14-year-old schoolgirl who had promised herself, long ago, not to avenge any wrongs done to her, had now become such a danger to the Taliban of the Swat Valley that she must die. She had defied their edict that girls mustn't go to school, and had refused to obey the Islamist terrorists' demand that women keep silent. Malala was nine years old when she began blogging about the horrors of everyday life in Mingora, and she was 13 when she was awarded Pakistan's first Youth Peace Prize. One year later, on 9 October 2012, they shot her. When she survived the attack, the greatly disappointed Taliban leader Maulana Fazlullah said 'Let this be a lesson'. And of course she did learn a lesson – to continue fighting for her dreams. 'One child, one teacher, one pen, one book can change the world,' the world's youngest Nobel Peace Prize laureate insists.

When I was born, all the men in my family told my mother: 'Don't worry, you'll have a son next time. Let's pray for a son.' I was the second daughter of my family, and some people were worried that my mother would only have daughters. The belief in many parts of Pakistan, like in many other places, is that a daughter is a burden to her family, because she can't support them. It's the men's duty to support their families financially.

The year I turned 12, 2009, was the worst of my life so far. The Taliban banned us girls from going to school, so my friends and I couldn't go. We also had to leave our homes. We were displaced for three months, with nowhere to go. I had no hope that we would ever return to the Swat Valley, but in the end, the Taliban were defeated by the Pakistan Army, and we could all go home again.

But girls in Pakistan also face other issues besides not being allowed to go to school. Child labour and child marriages are just as serious problems. I began to write a blog about girls' rights, which ended up playing an enormous role in my life. My friends and I returned to school, but secretly, dressed in our home clothes, so nobody would notice us. We didn't want to miss a single day of school; education was so dear and important to us.

During the sacrificial feast of Eid al-Adha, Muslims sacrifice animals to commemorate Abraham, who feared God so much that he was prepared to sacrifice his own son. According to the rules of Islam, you can only sacrifice animals with four legs, like cows, buffalo, camels, and goats. Now, the Taliban declared that they would be sacrificing animals with two legs as well. They were talking about people, of course – anybody who would speak out.

After the attack on me, I went through a hard time. While I was recovering, I realised that I had been targeted because I was speaking up, and I realised the power of standing up for Human Rights. I'd already been through that terrible fear, and I wasn't afraid of their guns anymore, but they were afraid of my voice. I also realised how many people supported me – what did I have to be afraid of? In this, my second life, I felt that I had faced death, and that a new life was beginning. I want to spend this life fighting for the cause of education.

Malala Yousafzai, Pakistan, born in 1997. Women's rights and education activist whose struggle for girls' right to an education made her the target of a 2012 assassination attempt by Taliban loyalists. Lives and studies in Great Britain. Has received innumerable awards, including the Nobel Peace Prize (2014), the International Children's Peace Prize (2013), and the Sakharov Prize for Freedom of Thought (2013).





IF I HAD STAYED IN PAKISTAN AND NOT GONE TO SCHOOL, I would probably have been forced into marriage at a very early age, like many of my friends. They had children while they were still children themselves. One of my friends left school in fifth grade. She called me when she was 14, and told me she was married, and had a son. I was shocked. Her life had changed in seconds. She'd had dreams for her life; she'd wanted to become a doctor. These dreams were gone the moment she became somebody's wife, and a mother, at an age when she should still have been in school.

I am a woman, and I want to use the influence I've gained to work to empower women. There's no difference between men and women; we're equal, and our rights cannot be different. I find it horrible that these ideas are so common, that women aren't treated the same way as men. Equality is important for all of society, not just for women. There's a lot of work to be done, and if women participate the countries will be a lot better off. Society will be better.

When it comes to fighting terrorism, I've always said that guns can only kill terrorists, they can't kill the ideology of terrorism. The ideology of terrorism can only be fought through education. We need to remember why these people pick up their weapons: they've been influenced by extreme religious teachings, and they've grown up in a system which doesn't allow them to question anything. Quality education is a matter of learning to question things. Rather than firing bullets, we should solve the problem from that point of view. We need to create an educational system where all children are valued equally, where they are taught to ask the most important questions, where nobody is discriminated against for their skin tone, gender, or religion, and where everybody has a voice in society. Without a voice, it's easy to resort to guns. We need to solve these issues at their roots. Warfare alone can never defeat terrorism.

When I was living in the Swat Valley, and girls were banned from school, I was so worried about the decisions that the politicians were making that I just felt 'why shouldn't I become the Prime Minister of Pakistan?' Benazir Bhutto inspires me as a symbol of female leadership. You can always discuss her policies, but the fact that she managed to become Prime Minister of Pakistan twice is something that everybody should accept and respect.

That was my dream back then: to become Prime Minister. Today, I'm not quite sure what I want to do with my life. I don't have a clear idea of a profession at the moment, but I will always work with my campaign for school for everyone. I haven't been back to Pakistan for almost four years, but I want to return to my country. There are risks everywhere, of course, but that's where I started, and that's where I want to continue.

# ABBAS AHMADI

INTEGRATION MENTOR

*‘When you’re living in hiding, underground, with no rights, you can’t go to school or the health clinic, and you can’t even spend time with your friends openly.’*

The fact that they go missing poses a serious administrative challenge; how are you supposed to turn people who are missing away, or even process their asylum application? In a well-organised bureaucracy, people shouldn’t be able to stay hidden for years on end. Where are they? Abbas Ahmadi spent 18 months in Malmö in a state of non-existence, with nothing to rely on but the compassion of others and his own determination. That would end up taking him a long way. When Abbas Ahmadi was finally able to come out of hiding, he made sure to do exactly that, and organised a protest march through Sweden.

**W**e walked all the way from Malmö to Stockholm. We walked through big cities, and through small villages where the people had maybe never met any refugees before. We wanted to meet people and tell them about ourselves, why we’d left our home countries, and what we wish for and dream of. We called it Asylstafetten (The Asylum Relay). Along the way, we managed to network in various communities, and the members of this network are helping others today. This happened in 2013, the year I submitted my third asylum application, and the first time I’d been allowed to tell my story to somebody at the Swedish Migration Agency.

I was born in Afghanistan, and I belong to a people known as the Hazaras. We look Asian, and when I was a child, I was often called a Chinese Afghan. The Hazaras are Shia Muslims, and have suffered repeated persecution and massacres. I was two years old the first time we moved, to Iran. The second time we ran, I was 10, and the third time, I was 16. That time, I made it to Europe. I crossed the ocean, from Turkey to Greece, in a small rubber dinghy.

I spent five months on the island of Patras. It felt like there was a war going on; there were soldiers and police everywhere. I didn’t want to get sent back to Turkey, so I tried to sneak onto one of the trucks and get out of there. The soldiers discovered me, and kicked and beat me with their truncheons. One of them spat in my face and called me a terrorist. I tried to explain that the terrorists he was talking about were the very people I was running from, but that only made the soldier beat me more so I would stop talking.

I managed to escape in the end. There were five of us, in a box no larger than a metre and a half, under a truck. The journey from Greece to Italy took 36 hours. We had some biscuits, some water, and some bottles to pee in. It was dark, I was scared, and I had a hard time breathing. I also had to keep quiet, and struggle to stay conscious. Sometimes, I felt a panic come over me, but after having spent all those months on that Greek island, I was desperate to move on.

I wanted to get to Sweden. There, everybody would be helpful, and I’d be given an education, and get to become anything I wanted. I was sure of it. The Migration Agency turned me down. According to the Dublin Regulation, I wasn’t supposed to seek asylum in Sweden, but after I’d packed my belongings a second time, I decided not to go back to the Netherlands. A person in Malmö housed me, and I was connected to Asylgruppen (The Asylum Group), which helps asylum seekers and undocumented migrants. When you’re living in hiding, underground, with no rights, you can’t go to school or the health clinic, and you can’t even spend time with your friends openly. You start imagining that everybody you meet is from the police, and that they’re all looking at you and trying to catch you out.

Abbas Ahmadi, born in 1994, Afghanistan. Has lived as a refugee almost his entire life, and spent 18 months as an undocumented migrant in Sweden. Founded Asylstafetten (The Asylum Relay), and was one of the initiators of Ensamkommandes förbund (The Union of the Unaccompanied). Today, he has a Swedish residence permit, and has worked as an integration mentor in Lomma municipality since 2015.





YOU COULD BE ASKED FOR YOUR ID AT ANY MOMENT. While I was in hiding, there was a project called REVA, in which the correctional system, the police, and the Migration Agency worked together to locate undocumented people. I received texts every day about how I shouldn't go to this or that place, because there were police there checking people's IDs.

I've always been interested in languages. Wherever I've gone, I've tried to learn the language. I learned Swedish on my own. After two months, I was able to correct my interpreter. I don't want to have to rely on an interpreter, I want to manage by myself. I've done that since I was seven, and I've done OK so far.

I didn't want to sit around at home. I wanted to get out of the house, and I was put in touch with the organisation Individuell Människohjälp (IM, Swedish Development Partner), where I began my volunteer work. I also began playing drums with a band. Asylgruppen had some connections with schools, and through them, I finally got to go to school. Of course, I didn't receive any grades, and I couldn't tell my classmates that I was undocumented, but it gave me back some hope. After spending 18 months in hiding, I applied for asylum again, and we started Asylstafetten. The next year, after I'd received my permanent residence permit, we went to the Almedalen Week, to show the politicians there that we're actual people with rights.

I want the same rights that you have, and I want to join in and build this country with you. It feels so good to be in Sweden, and in Malmö, and to feel that I can grow as a person and make use of the things I've learned along the way. I'm used to running and being discriminated against, and I've been abused and beaten all my life. The decisions that politicians make each day show that they simply don't care about people. People leave their homes, their childhoods, their friends: everything. I want to help them, and it strengthens me to see that they understand what I'm saying, and that they can do something to improve their situation.

Today, I have an education, and a job helping unaccompanied refugee children. I've done well, but I often think back on the years I lost. I lost my dreams when I came here. Since then, I've found new dreams. I have a force within me, which is always pushing me to grow as a person and reach my goals.

One day, I'm going to open an orphanage in Afghanistan. I was a street child myself, and a child labourer, so I know what they're going through, and how they suffer from war, poverty, and persecution. My biggest dream is to be able to help them.



# RUBY ROSE

MODEL, DJ, ACTRESS & TELEVISION HOST

*'I didn't feel right in the body I was born with. I was attracted to girls. When I was 12, I decided to come out as gay.'*

You have to realise that you're just part of a greater circumstance. Just before prisoner Stella Carlin is to be released on parole, the hacks raid her cell, and take her to the secure unit. Somebody has tipped them off about contraband in her cell. Stella understands who put the things there: it's payback from her cellmate, for an earlier betrayal. This is ironic, because Ruby Rose, who plays Stella on *Orange Is the New Black*, definitely doesn't believe in revenge. Once a victim of bullying, Ruby Rose became a DJ, television star, and actress. Her success helped her forgive her childhood tormentors, but the memories of how she was terrorised also motivate her to support kids who are having similar experiences growing up.

I didn't feel right in the body I was born with. I was attracted to girls. When I was 12, I decided to come out as gay. I figured I didn't have much to lose, seeing as I didn't have any friends anyway. Or so I thought. Every day, the other girls would follow me home after school. They would shout at me, and beat me up. Some of them had knives, and threatened to slit my throat. I tried to take different shortcuts home, but they would always find me. That's how it continued, until I was 17.

I think I had a lot of strength as a child. Today, there are so many little things that can upset me, but when I was very young I was like a little soldier. Back then, there was nothing that could put me down for very long. Sure, I felt like I'd hit rock bottom at times, and that nobody had my back. But then, I would just look up at the sky, or think of my dog, or an imaginary friend, and I would find strength in that. For many years, my imagination kept me going. Besides, I actually thought that everybody else had it more or less as bad as I did. I didn't get angry until many years later.

I was a good boxer, and I could easily have beaten up any one of my tormentors, but I'm glad that I never did. I didn't want their blood on my hands. It sounds crazy, but even then I had a dream that I would one day be able to help other people who were in the same situation I was in. Maybe I could be a child psychologist, or write a book. To do those things, though, I needed to finish school first. I did do that, but I didn't get the marks I needed for university. So I chose another path: getting famous enough for people to start listening to me.

You can't get revenge by fighting back, or hurting others and making them pay. That's not how life works. You have to work on your own self-esteem and your own happiness, and you have to realise that you're just part of a greater circumstance. I believe in using the delete button, and in blocking anybody who expresses ill will towards you. That's the best advice I can give to people who are harassed online.

When I was a kid, there were no social media. I was safe as soon as I was inside the house, but it's different for bullied kids today. Their abusers can reach all the way into their bedrooms through Facebook, Twitter, or Instagram. But we have those buttons to stop them. Block and delete. Block them in every way you can, and save your strength and energy so you can use it to be the person you want to be.

Ruby Rose, Australia, born in 1986. Model, DJ, actress, and television host. Rose to fame as a presenter on MTV Australia. Is an ambassador for the Headspace organisation, which supports bullied and troubled youths. Is gender fluid, and deeply involved in issues concerning gender and sexuality.





AND ONCE YOU GET THERE, once you get to a place where you are the person you want to be, life takes on new meaning. It's like when you kiss someone and you're like 'Oh shit, this feels different'. You start to see people and things differently. You notice the birds singing and the sun shines brighter. The bad stuff slips away and the good air fills your lungs. You're just daydreaming before that, but when you feel yourself coming into your own, you truly start living. It's beautiful. And it keeps getting better. This is my wish: for everyone to find their true selves. Of course, you'll still have those moments where you think the bouncer is going to tap you on the shoulder, and tell you the party's over and you don't belong. But those irrational fears slip away, because the foundation underneath you is stronger. It's very spiritual. And someday down the road, you'll sit there in your place of peace, thinking you can't believe that you almost threw it all away. Please don't throw it away. Find a way through to yourself. It's unbelievably worth it. I promise.

# DANIEL DOMSCHEIT-BERG

TECHNOLOGY ACTIVIST & FOUNDER OF OPENLEAKS

*‘Openness is an opportunity for humanity, not a threat.’*

It was four o’clock in the afternoon when they finally helped the last of the elderly patients out of bed. Some of the patients didn’t get to shower at all between January and April. Nurse’s assistant Brigitte Heinisch raised the alarm about the situation in the municipal retirement home in Berlin. She was fired. There’s no protection for whistle-blowers in Germany, there isn’t even a word for them. Daniel Domscheit-Berg dreams of creating online platforms where anybody can safely expose wrongs in society. He once helped Julian Assange construct one. It was called WikiLeaks, and it changed the world.

I was 29 years old, I lived in Wiesbaden, and I worked as a web designer. The work was OK, but I longed to do something that really mattered. In September 2007, *The Guardian* published sensational information about corruption in Kenya. They had received the information from a website called WikiLeaks, which was designed to provide a means for people to reveal wrongs without having their own identities revealed. I sent a chat to WikiLeaks: ‘Do you need help?’ And Julian Assange needed help.

Somebody said that WikiLeaks published more scoops in a couple of years than the *Washington Post* and *The New York Times* combined. This might be true, and it’s a beautiful thought. But it’s about the effect the stories have, not how many of them you publish. There’s no point in making thousands of documents public if nobody has the energy to read them all. We started WikiLeaks up before we were prepared for the success we ended up having. When the website became world famous, and we were drowning in documents, we simply didn’t have the organisation in place to take care of it all. We would have needed hundreds of employees to process all of the documents. The core of WikiLeaks was a group of just four people.

The lesson learned from WikiLeaks is that somebody has to have the necessary structure for receiving and passing on the relevant information. Today, I try to help different organisations do just that. I create platforms where anybody can expose anything they like, without running the risk of having their own identities revealed. We need more openness and transparency in the world, and this is completely obvious when you look at the problems we’re facing today. Only transparency can allow us to identify and solve our real problems. Openness is an opportunity for humanity, not a threat.

To me, transparency means that you can see through something. That’s the basic meaning of the word. Transparency is key for people to understand the situation they’re in, and the system they live in.

When I grew up, I felt a growing frustration over the fact that I was unable to make meaningful decisions, because I lacked the necessary information. Let’s take a contemporary example: how are we supposed to have a well-reasoned position on the euro crisis when none of us completely understand how the euro really works? How are we supposed to know which politician to back on that issue? What drove me then, and what still drives me now, is a desire to create the transparency we need to understand society better, and to shed light on the areas of the world that have been covered up.

Daniel Domscheit-Berg, Germany, born in 1978. Technology activist. Spokesperson for the whistle-blower organisation WikiLeaks in Germany from 2007 to 2010. Founded the online platform OpenLeaks in 2011. Published the book *Inside WikiLeaks: My time with Julian Assange at the World’s Most Dangerous Website* in 2011.



TODAY, WE HAVE THE TECHNOLOGICAL CAPACITY to do things that were completely impossible in the past, but we need to use it for something important. Way back, some 3,000 years ago, people decided that history is so important that they needed to write it down. It would be very ironic if our contemporary history was lost – not because we are unable to describe it, but because we're so self-centred that we only use the technology for narcissistic purposes, such as documenting details of our own lives, rather than for the important stuff.

I have fairly simple dreams: for humanity to make something important out of all of the opportunities available to us; for exposing the terrible working conditions in shoe factories in Southeast Asia to convince people to buy different shoes; and for us to stay curious even though we're no longer children.



# NADEZHDA TOLOKONNIKOVA

ACTIVIST & MEMBER OF PUSSY RIOT

*'My dream is a Russia where everybody can speak their mind freely, and where nobody gets beaten or imprisoned for their thoughts or opinions.'*

They stood in front of the altar, and sang something nobody had ever heard in the Cathedral of Christ the Saviour, or in any other Russian church: 'Patriarch Gundyayev believes in Putin, Bitch, better believe in God instead!' In the next line, they pray to the Virgin Mary to save them from the president of the Russian Republic. For this, the three women from the punk band Pussy Riot were sentenced to two years in prison in 2012. In court, Nadezhda Tolokonnikova insisted that their action hadn't targeted Christians, only the patriarch who had encouraged his followers to vote for Putin, a Russian dictator who hates feminists.

We arrived at the church with what we knew, and what we had recourse to: our own musical performance. The idea was to use our performance to voice our concerns over the fact that the bishop of the Cathedral of Christ the Saviour, who is also the patriarch of the Russian Orthodox Church, supports a politician who is forcefully suppressing our beloved civil society. I want to emphasise that we never said anything in the church that could be perceived as insulting to the Church, or to Christians, or to God. Everything we said, and the entire performance, was intended to express our strong disapproval of a specific political event: the patriarch's support for the authoritarian anti-feminist Vladimir Vladimirovich Putin.

My friends at school told me: 'You'll soon get tired of being a feminist, because you'll love men when you grow up.' I tried to explain to them that feminism isn't about hating men; it's about equality. But they didn't understand. Now I'm 24, and I haven't changed my mind.

Feminism is an essential part of my life. This is especially true since I became a mother, because everybody kept telling me what to do, like sitting at home with my child all the time, because it's very important for mothers to do that in Russia. But I don't want to do that. I believe in equality between the genders, in all things.

Have I ever been discriminated against? Of course! That's why I founded Pussy Riot. Before then, I was part of an artist's collective in Moscow, both as an active member and as an activist. But whenever we were interviewed by journalists, they only directed their questions to the men in the group. They automatically treated the men like leaders. This freaked me out, and that's why I decided to start an all-female band.

I don't regret our action in the Cathedral of Christ the Saviour, not even after the time I spent in prison. You only have one life, and you can't look into the future. Maybe that's actually a good thing sometimes. I think if we had known what was going to happen we would only have been scared, and I don't like being scared. In prison, political activists from the Soviet era became my role models, because they served 10- or 20-year sentences, in prisons much worse than the ones we have in Russia today. I read their memoirs, and their strength made me feel that my two years in prison weren't so bad in comparison.

Nadezhda Tolokonnikova, Russia, born in 1989. Feminist, activist, and concept artist. Member of the punk group Pussy Riot. Was sentenced to two years in prison for a protest against Vladimir Putin in the Cathedral of Christ the Saviour in Moscow, 2012. Has received the LennonOno Grant for Peace in 2012 and the Hannah Arendt Prize in 2014, as well as other awards.





I DON'T FEEL ANY RAGE OVER THE FACT THAT I WAS IN PRISON. I hold no grudge. There is no personal anger. But there's political anger. Our imprisonment has served as a clear and obvious sign that the whole country is being robbed of freedom. And this threat of annihilating the freeing, emancipatory forces in Russia – that's what causes me to be enraged. Seeing the large in the small, the trend in the sign, the common in the individual. Second-Wave Feminists have claimed that the personal is political. That's how it is. The Pussy Riot case has shown how the individual troubles of three people facing charges of hooliganism can give life to a political movement. A single case of repression and persecution against those who had the courage to speak in an authoritarian country has shaken the world: activists, punks, pop stars, and government members; comedians and ecologists; feminists and masculinists; Islamic theologians and Christians; they're all praying for Pussy Riot.

Sure, I've been threatened since I was released, but I've decided not to be afraid. Otherwise, I'd have to have guards with me, and I wouldn't be able to go out, or ride the Metro. I like my city, and I like the people in it, and I definitely don't want to have two scary goons following me everywhere. I just try to trust in fate, and believe in my own good fortune.

My dream is a Russia where everybody can speak their mind freely, and where nobody gets beaten or imprisoned for their thoughts or opinions. The political situation has to change. Putin has been in charge for a long time, and he knows he's a very powerful person, but all dictators tend to lose touch with reality. I believe in Russian history and culture. If Russian artists could enjoy the same working conditions that existed in the beginning of the 20th century once more, we could achieve a lot. I want to see a Russia where artists and activists can live and flourish.

# PHYMEAN NOUN

HUMAN RIGHTS ACTIVIST

*‘The first school we founded was located right next to the dump. Each day, I would go out to convince the parents to let their children attend the school. Soon, the school had six hundred enrolled students.’*

‘You have to go to school. Education is the key to a better life’, Phymean Noun’s dying mother told her. Before we routinely file these words under ‘obvious facts of life’, we need to consider the fact that every one of their relatives had been murdered for being a teacher, doctor, lawyer, or police officer. Her mother, who had studied in France, only survived the genocide because she had acted the fool so convincingly that the Khmer soldier spared her, believing the person he had come across was a simple farmer’s daughter. Only those who possess the powers of knowledge and words are able to fight the ideology of repression effectively. The revolutionary Pol Pot was certainly aware of this fact, because his Khmer Rouge forces systematically murdered anybody who had an education during their time in power, which lasted for almost four years. In total, two million people fell victim to the genocide that was carried out between 1975 and 1979. Phymean Noun was nine years old when this hell ended, and for the first time, she was able to hold a book in her hands without putting herself in danger. As the new Cambodia built up an educational system, she made her way through it. When the UN founded UNTAC in 1992, to restructure Cambodian civil society, Noun got a job there. Now, she had a comfortable life in Phnom Penh, with a monthly salary, a bank account, a home, and a car. One day in March of 2002, when she bought a barbecued chicken and sat down by the Mekong River to have lunch, everything changed.

When I had finished eating the chicken, I threw away the bones and leftovers in a rubbish bin. The kids must have been hiding and waiting somewhere, because now they came running. They grabbed the chicken bones and began fighting over them. It was horrible to see how hungry they were. I called out to them, and asked them where they lived. They told me they didn’t live anywhere in particular: in the streets, at the rubbish dump. They spent all day hunting for things to eat, things that other people had discarded. I asked them what I could do to help them. They told me that apart from somewhere to call home, their biggest dream was to go to school.

A few days later, I drove out to the largest rubbish dump in Phnom Penh to take a look. It was as big as a mountain. There were people living among all the rubbish. Children were crawling around in the muck, looking for something to sell or eat. I spoke to their parents, who told me they couldn’t get work, and didn’t have any money for their kids. When I returned to the office, my colleagues asked me where I had been, because my clothes smelled so awful.

I returned to the people at the dump several times, and eventually, I made my decision: I was going to found a school there. I had to move quickly, because each day that went by was a day lost. I took my money out of my bank account and got to work. I quit my job with the UN and founded an organisation called People Improvement Organization.

The first school we founded was located right next to the dump. Each day, I would go out to convince the parents to let their children attend the school. Soon, the school had 600 enrolled students.

Phymean Noun, Cambodia, born in 1971. Human rights activist. In 2002, she founded the People Improvement Organization (PIO), which supports the education of poor children in Cambodia. PIO has built schools and orphanages in the slums of Phnom Penh. Was awarded the World’s Children’s Prize in 2015.



WE RECEIVED SOME ATTENTION. International organisations began to give us their support. In 2008, the CNN TV network gave me their Hero Award, and with that money, we were able to build a house where our students can spend the night. Today, we run three schools in the slums of Phnom Penh, with a total of 1,340 enrolled students.

My mother is my hero. She taught me that anything is possible. I know she would be proud of me – and I'm proud of who I am.





# FATIMA NAZA

WOMEN'S RIGHTS ACTIVIST

*'Don't let anybody else decide who you're going to marry.'*

'My parents don't want me to go to school anymore,' seven-year-old Merima said after the lesson had ended. 'They say I'm getting married.' If her teacher had read the country's constitution, she could have pointed out that its 75th article guarantees all children the right to education, and states that elementary education is compulsory. The teacher could also have informed Merima about article 18 of the constitution, which guarantees the equality of men and women in the country, and thus their right to decide for themselves when to get married, and to whom. The teacher did none of these things. She simply said: 'OK, Merima, that's your people's way. You're not very good at schoolwork anyway. It's probably better for your family if they can put you to some other use.' And so, Merima was allowed to leave school without any adults intervening, which is the fate shared by most Roma girls in Montenegro. 'It's hard to think of anybody who is lower than this group on the social ladder; they are doubly discriminated against,' Fatima Naza usually points out when she tells Merima's story. When the EU investigated how the Roma are faring compared to the poorest non-Roma in Europe, the results were clear, in all countries: we're all privileged compared to the Roma. At the age of 17, Fatima Naza became the first activist to take up the cause of Roma women in Montenegro. The telephone hotline she set up for her desperate Roma sisters would eventually grow into the Center for Roma Initiatives (CRI). She receives awards and distinctions abroad, but remains a controversial figure at home.

I'm still not married. My mother is funny, because she really believes that getting married would solve all of my problems. Sure, I want to have children, but I won't ever get married, and I've told her that. Nobody in my family wants to talk to me. They say there's something wrong with me.

My mother was 14 when she married my father. It was an arranged marriage, of course. He was 22, and she'd never seen him before the wedding. Then, she gave birth to two sons and five daughters. She always told us: 'Don't let anybody else decide who you're going to marry.' This attitude, and the fact that they were so insistent that their children get an education, made my parents rather unusual members of the Roma community. They've always both worked, they could afford to build a house, and they're still working today. That's why it's so strange that my mother still believes that marriage and bearing children are the most important things in a woman's life.

The Roma are a marginalised group in Montenegro, and women are at the bottom of that group. They don't have the right to decide anything about their own lives. A Roma woman can't even decide what to wear, or where to go, much less who to marry, or how many children to have. Everything is decided by her husband, or by a council of male elders from the community. Men's control over female sexuality is a decisive factor in this society. A family can sell one of their daughters into marriage, and make between 4,000 and 15,000 euros, but the whole deal hinges on the girl being a virgin. Naturally, this means that parents want to sell their daughters as soon as possible, because if she's not a virgin anymore, they won't get any money, and they'll have to marry her off to some older man.

Fatima Naza, Montenegro. Women's rights activist. Became the country's first Roma activist for women's rights at the age of 17. Fights for freedom and justice, both in the family domain and in society at large. Co-founder of the Center for Roma Initiatives (CRI). CRI was awarded the Anna Lindh Prize in 2012, for their work for Roma women in Montenegro.





GIRLS THAT DON'T GET TO GO TO SCHOOL never get the chance to learn about their own rights, and if you don't know your rights, you can't do anything about your situation. My four sisters and I were allowed to go to school, and none of us have been married according to Roma tradition. My dream is to live freely and not feel ashamed of anything – whether it be the fact that I am Roma or the fact that I'm a woman.

There is only one woman working for the government in Montenegro. I tried to find a job, but I could never find one, because I'm a Roma woman. That makes me very angry. Sometimes, I try to convince myself that things will change. But it's going to take time. I have two brothers who can't find a job in Montenegro, just because they are Roma. One of my nieces says she wants to be a doctor. When my brother heard that, he said: 'You want to be a doctor? Who do you think would go to you for help?' Thinking about this can make me so angry. Roma are always discriminated against when they visit doctors or healthcare institutions, but this is also because they don't have the right paperwork. This is a big problem in Montenegro, because not all Roma children are registered at birth. They don't have any identification, so they can't get any health insurance. This problem isn't just a matter of discrimination, it's bigger than that.

Our organisation fights for the rights of Roma women, and we have a problem with the Roma leadership in Montenegro. Many of these men refuse to work or speak with us. They want to hold onto their power, and maintain the Roma traditions and patriarchy, and they're afraid that our work for equality could threaten that. I'm just a woman like other women. I never say that I am Roma or from Montenegro. I'm just a woman!

# JASON DIAKITÉ

ARTIST

*‘Toppling the whole mountain would be great, but there’s nothing wrong with getting some smaller rocks out of the way either.’*

“It’s because your mother spilled coffee on you when you were a baby”, the childcare worker tells the little boy who has asked why his skin isn’t the same colour as that of the other children in Lund. Jason suspects that what she’s telling him isn’t the truth. This suspicion has been confirmed by the time he’s nine years old and enduring daily jibes because of the way he looks. It takes Jason Diakit  a few years to turn his shame into pride, and several more to focus his anger in a rap song: “Sweden is mine too, why wouldn’t it be?”, he raps to the people who refuse to get it. When he walks into a shop, and they stare at him because of the colour of his skin, what is it they don’t understand? What are they afraid of? Timbuktu is in Mali. Perhaps that’s where Jason’s great-great-grandfather’s wife lived before she was captured, enslaved, and shipped off to the United States. Either way, the name of the city made a good rapper name. When hip hop artist Timbuktu was receiving an award for his human rights work in the Swedish House of Parliament, he said: “You don’t have to be tolerant of me, I’m not demanding to be tolerated.” Tolerance is what the status quo extends to people who are different, to those who are less esteemed according to the norms of society. “However, I do demand, with all the force I possess, that I be judged for my actions, and for my personality.”

When I’m in New York, I can get the feeling that the colour of people’s skin doesn’t make much of a difference. Or in Havana, where they’ve been used to all kinds of skin tones since way back. My parents are from the US. You could say I’m both white and black, half each. When I travel through West Africa, people think of me as white, but I think that has more to do with the culture I represent. To them, I’m a representative of Western European culture, which is a white culture. So it’s not as though they receive me like some lost son returning home...

I’ve always been questioned in Sweden. Throughout my life, I’ve been told that I’m not Swedish enough, or that I don’t look Swedish. It’s been a source of motivation for me, because it’s made me want to make sure that my own children, and any children who will live in Sweden in the future, won’t get this distorted image of what being Swedish means, and of who’s entitled to call themselves Swedish. The fact that I’m here, standing up for who I am, helps change the image of Sweden in people’s minds. Or, at least, that’s what I choose to believe.

I was born in Lund, and I grew up there. When I was about nine or ten years old, I was bullied in school because of the colour of my skin, and there was a time in middle school when all I wanted was to fit in and be like my white class mates. But once I got to upper secondary school, I began to appreciate my skin tone, because it set me apart from most others. I’ve chosen to regard it as an advantage, and I’m glad to be who I am.

I’ve somehow found my true identity in my music. If my mind is preoccupied with romantic worries, or concerns over where society is headed, I write about those things. That’s the true beauty of artistic expression: I get to decide what to write about.

I’m optimistic about the future, because even if things look pretty grim right now, there are so many loving people out there working to make it all turn out better than we fear.

When I was 25, I wanted to change the world, and I guess I still do. But I’ve realised that this change happens in the here and now, wherever I’m at in the moment. Of course, toppling the whole mountain would be great, but there’s nothing wrong with getting some smaller rocks out of the way either.

Jason ‘Timbuktu’ Diakit , Sweden, born in 1975. Musician and radio host. Writes and performs hip hop and reggae music. Achieved mainstream success in 2003 with his album *The Botten Is N dd*. Involved in anti-racism efforts. Goodwill ambassador for UNA Sweden, and member of the board of Teskedsorden (The Order of the Teaspoon).





# NADIA MURAD

HUMAN RIGHTS ACTIVIST

| 87

*'We begged them to kill us instead, but the rapes just continued.'*

When the phone rang, and somebody warned them about what was happening, it was too late: the terrorists had already marched into the Yazidi village of Kocho. They quickly captured all the men they could find, about 400 of them. 'Convert to Islam, or we'll kill you,' they said. Soon after this, the men of the village were dead, and before long Nadia Murad would come to wish that she had shared the fate of her six brothers. The Yazidi live in the border regions between Syria, Iraq, and Turkey. The word itself is Old Iranian, and means 'the worshippers of God'. Sunni Muslim extremists insist that the Yazidi must be wiped out, and to this end the terrorist army which calls itself the Islamic State follows the conventional genocidal practice: killing the men immediately, and the women slowly through prolonged, systematic rape. On 3 August 2014, yet another Yazidi village in northern Iraq was emptied. The IS warriors took the women from Kocho to the city of Mosul, and the captivity they endured there made them envy the dead. Despite the pain, Nadia Murad is determined to tell the world about her three months in hell. Most of her sisters in suffering are still being held captive, and this makes her own freedom too precious to waste. 'We want a Peace Prize that can awaken the world to the fight against sexual violence as a weapon of war,' said Audun Lysbakken, a member of the Norwegian parliament, when she nominated Nadia Murad for the Nobel Peace Prize of 2016.

**I** ended up in the clutches of an IS warrior named Salman. When he had finished raping me, he made me mop the floor. I was his slave. He beat me. Then, he put me in a room with guards, who raped me until I passed out.

The worst part was that they could show up at any time. They could come to rape me at any moment. There were no ordinary days in this captivity. The IS warriors presented us to other soldiers as gifts, sold us as sex slaves, and beat and humiliated us. We begged them to kill us instead, but the rapes just continued.

They said that anybody who tried to escape would be punished, but I did anyway. The first time, I tried to crawl out through the kitchen window of the house where I was being held captive. They discovered me, and four soldiers came to rape me as punishment. They kept going from early morning until the morning of the next day.

My feeling of hopelessness was absolute, I was so powerless. It wasn't just because of what was happening to me, it was also because of what had happened to my people, my family, and thousands of women like myself. My mother was always my role model. Since my father died early, she had to look after her big family all on her own. She gave us so much love, and she was very respected in the village. The IS soldiers killed her.

Eventually, I managed to escape. The man who had bought me went out to go shopping, and I ran into the street and started pounding on all the doors. A family let me in. Thanks to them, and the fake identification papers they gave me, I managed to get away.

Every time I speak of this, it re-opens the wounds in my soul, but the pain compels me to tell the story. These abuses will continue as long as the extremists remain. It's the Muslim community that has to stop them, their extremism can only be defeated through ideology. Military means alone won't be enough. I've been told that the IS warriors have seen me in the media, and that they've said that they're going to come and kill me, but I'm not afraid. I've already experienced something worse than being killed.

Nadia Murad Basee Taha, Iraq, born in 1993. A Yazidi activist, who fights for the rights of the Yazidi. Her mother and her six brothers were killed by the Islamic State. She was captured, and raped daily, but managed to escape after three months. She has been nominated for the 2016 Nobel Peace Prize, and has received the Sakharov Prize for Freedom of Thought (2016).

# PAUL RUSESABAGINA

HUMAN RIGHTS ACTIVIST

*'If you show genocide as it really is, nobody will be able to watch the whole film.'*

John Hanning Speke was thought to be an unusually ethical explorer. He probably had no idea how many innocent people would be killed because of the lines he sat down to write one summer's day in 1863, after his return from Africa. The Englishman was beginning his work on a 'theory of conquest of inferior by superior races'. In the kingdom of Rwanda, which had not been previously explored, he met people who looked so handsome to him that he was convinced they must be related to the Europeans. According to Speke, these people, who called themselves the Tutsi, were made to rule the Hutu, or 'ordinary Negroes' of Rwanda. Speke's home-grown theory soon became an accepted truth, and would be implemented by German and Belgian colonial overlords for a century. This was how the hatred between the ethnic groups in Rwanda came about. It was the one thing that made the ruthless but organised killing, which was initiated on 6 April 1994, and would come to cause 800,000 deaths in just 100 days, a possibility. The genocide in Rwanda was carried out in plain view of UN troops who had been ordered not to intervene. It is thought that 70 per cent of the country's Tutsi population were slain. Some of them, one source gives the number 1,268, took refuge in the Milles Collines luxury hotel in Kigali, where Paul Rusesabagina held down the fort – and became the most famous hotel manager in the world.

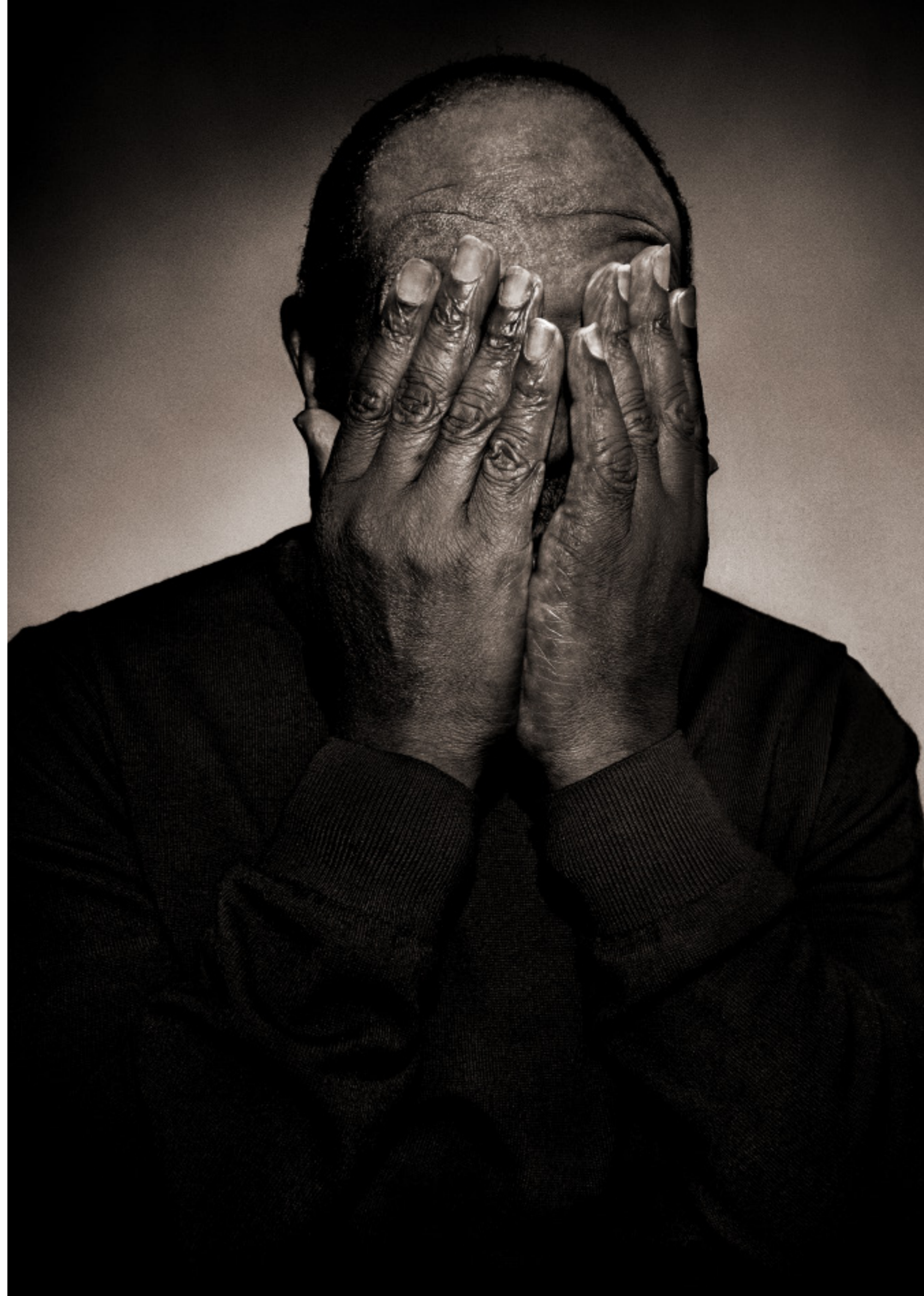
**W**e'd been locked up in the hotel for almost a month when we were told that some of us could be evacuated and taken to safety. My family and myself were included at the top of the list of names. When the people in the hotel saw the list, they came to me and told me: 'We saw your name on the list. If you're going to leave your hotel, let us know first, so we can go to the roof and jump off of it.' I looked at them, and I could tell that they meant it. They'd rather die of their own volition than end up in the hands of the butchers, because we knew that the killers tortured their victims until they begged to be allowed to die. 'If you leave the hotel, we'll kill ourselves', these people repeated, and looked right at me.

It was 2 May 1994. The evacuation was planned for the next day. My daughters were 16 and 12, and my son was 14. The whole family would be given refuge in Belgium. We stayed up all night, and I contemplated the most difficult decision of my life. By the time morning came, I had decided to remain in the hotel. I said goodbye to my wife and my children – and, of course, I had no idea if I would ever see them again.

The killing continued for another two months. The fact that I was able to protect my hotel and the people in it from the soldiers may have been due to the fact that I am a good negotiator, which was in turn the result of my having learned to see things from two sides early on in life. My father was Hutu, and my mother was Tutsi. I grew up in a mixed family, and I became a mixed person. It was impossible for me to hate or fear either group, and this set me apart from my friends in school. Hutu and Tutsi children disliked each other, because they'd been told so many terrible stories at home.

After the end of Belgian colonial rule in 1959, there was a revolution in Rwanda. Tens of thousands of Tutsi were killed, and hundreds of thousands were forced to flee. At the time, I was only five years old, and I didn't really understand what was going on. I learned about the hatred and the discrimination several years later.

Paul Rusesabagina, Rwanda, born in 1954. Former hotel manager. Saved the lives of 1,268 Tutsi and Hutu refugees during the Rwandan genocide of 1994, by offering them sanctuary at the hotel he managed in Kigali. These events were the basis of the film *Hotel Rwanda*, which was released in 2004. Founder of the Hotel Rwanda Rusesabagina Foundation.





I WAS ON MY WAY TO SCHOOL with my friend Gerald, when a group of Hutu boys stopped us. They told Gerald he couldn't go to school anymore. He and I were both from mixed families, but Gerald's father was Tutsi, and it's the father that counts. I was allowed to continue going to school, but Gerald was kicked out.

On 7 April 1994, my son went out to visit a friend. When he arrived at their house, he found the whole family murdered. My son's friend was lying there, literally butchered, along with his mother, six sisters, and two of his neighbours. When my son came running home, he couldn't say a word, he just ran right to his room and stayed there for four days without speaking to anyone.

We lived at the hotel at the time, which is the location where the feature film *Hotel Rwanda* takes place. When I saw it, it struck me how little blood and death there is in the film compared to what really happened. It only makes sense if you want the audience to take in a message; you can't show them more than they can handle seeing. You want them to sit through the whole thing, and if you show genocide as it really is, nobody will be able to watch the whole film.

I saw with my own eyes how people were being stabbed to death, while UN soldiers stood by, passively watching. They didn't intervene, because they had orders not to. Neither the UN Secretary-General nor anybody else wanted to accept that what was happening was genocide. So no, I don't feel that the UN is doing what an organisation of its kind ought to be doing.

The UN is controlled by the superpowers, and can never make a decision that goes against their wishes. The United Nations is supposed to represent the interests of 190 nations. Occasionally, they do arrive at a resolution which has a truly powerful message, but by the time the superpowers have approved it, it's been so diluted that it's completely toothless. On 8 November 1994, when the UN determined that what had happened in Rwanda was a case of genocide, four months had passed since the French troops had stopped the killings. The UN isn't doing its job.

For a long time, I subscribed to the 'eye for an eye' school of justice, but now I know that the best and only solution is forgiveness. People rarely act for truly evil reasons; they tend to just go with the flow. The majority isn't always right, but it is always the majority, and human nature prefers to follow it – out of fear, because raising your voice can get you killed.

My ambition for the Hotel Rwanda Foundation is for the Hutu and the Tutsi to be able to sit down at the same table to speak to each other one day. I dream of reconciliation.

# HUANG MING

SOLAR ENERGY ENTREPRENEUR

*'If we continue like this, she'll never see a blue sky,  
breathe fresh air, or swim in a clean lake.'*

In seven years, the Chinese economy multiplied threefold. The energy required for this came from coal-powered plants. Half of the coal that is burned in the world is burned in China, and inhaling the particles that the chimneys spew out is harmful to your health. The WHO has stated that a human being can tolerate no more than 25 micrograms per cubic metre. The air in Beijing had 993 micrograms per cubic metre the last time the smog struck. Each year, the smog kills 2,000 people in the Chinese capital. Similar pollution rates are regularly reported from other major cities in the country, when the air isn't breathable, and you can't see further than 30 feet in front of you. This is the context within which Huang Ming's dream that every Chinese child should live under a blue sky is properly understood. This dream guided him on his path to becoming one of the world's most prominent producers of solar energy. Outside the city of Dezhou, he's constructed his utopia; a Solar Valley where all of the housing, offices, factories, schools, universities, sports centres, and arenas run on solar power. Each day, 4,000 people come to see it – and be inspired, or so Ming hopes.

I grew up near a big lake. The scenery was beautiful, the water was clear and clean, the landscape was green, and the sky was blue. After we got married, my wife and I went to another city for our honeymoon, and I was shocked at what I saw there. The lake water there was black and stinky, and the river was polluted. I never quite recovered from that experience. When our daughter was born, one year later, and I held this lovely little person in my arms, I thought to myself that if we continue like this, she'll never see a blue sky, breathe fresh air, or swim in a clean lake.

In 1978, one of my university professors said that we would have used up all of our natural resources within the next 50 years. She warned us, and told us to conserve these resources, but I never thought that it had anything to do with me until my daughter was born. I was going to be over 70 years old when things got really bad anyway. Now, I realised that this would become our daughter's reality. So I decided to do something.

I was fortunate enough to find a book about solar power, written by an American professor. It became my introduction to the technology used to turn sunlight into electricity and heat. I decided to switch careers. However, I still had to support my family, so between 1987 and 1995, I worked at the Petroleum Institute in Dezhou in the daytime, and researched solar energy in the evenings and at night. After this, I was ready to start my own business: Himin Solar.

The company was intended to help me realise my dream of ensuring that everybody could experience blue skies. I have built and sold millions of square metres of solar panels, made a lot of money, and won fame worldwide. I've used the money to build even more solar panels, and now we're building whole towns that run on solar power. We want more people to use solar panels to heat their water, power their televisions, and heat their homes.

We have a team designing solar hats, solar bags, solar toys, and solar water-purifying systems. I feel very proud of what we've accomplished, but solar power still only represents 1 per cent of China's energy supply. We're still living with this awful smog, with all of the pollution, and climate change.

My dream is still a long way off, but I hope that everybody will realise that there is another option besides coal-powered plants; an energy source that will allow us to see the blue sky above.

Huang Ming, China, born in 1958. Engineer, politician, and solar energy entrepreneur. Created the Solar Valley in Dezhou, China, which become the model for international environmental efforts. In his political work, he's played an important role in the development of renewable energy in China. Received the Right Livelihood Award in 2011.



# MUHAMMAD YUNUS

ECONOMIST & NOBEL PEACE PRIZE LAUREATE

*'Poverty isn't created by the poor. Poverty is the result of the inherent flaws of the system we've created.'*

The woman who made furniture in Jobra, Bangladesh, was paying extortionate interest on her loan, and had to sell her stools to the loan shark for very little money. Muhammad Yunus, who was a professor of economics at the Chittagong University, asked her how much she owed. She told him it was five *taka*, which is less than 10 US cents. He soon found 42 other debt slaves in the village, whose combined debt amounted to 856 *taka*. Yunus paid their debts off for them, and then he came up with the idea of starting a bank for people who don't have any assets. According to Muhammad Yunus, poverty isn't something the poor have brought upon themselves, it's the result of a systemic failure of capitalism.

**C**redit means trust. No banks wanted to open their doors to the poor when I first introduced the idea of small loans that would help people establish their own ventures. You need a dollar to make a dollar, after all. You can't create anything from just a pair of empty hands. I wanted to lend the poor that first dollar, to give them the opportunity to make more money, and find a way out of poverty.

We called it the 'village bank', or Grameen Bank in Bengali. This was back in 1976. Today, we have eight million borrowers in Bangladesh; 97 per cent of them are women, and 98 per cent of them manage their payments perfectly – even though they wouldn't be considered credit-worthy by a conventional bank. Our bank is based on trust. The money we lend has been deposited by the borrowers, so we don't need any lawyers. Grameen is probably the only lawyer-free bank in the world.

Poverty isn't created by the poor. Poverty is the result of the inherent flaws of the system we've created. Almost two thirds of the global population would stand no chance in an ordinary bank. Grameen Bank showed that you can lend money to the poor, and do so profitably. As I see it, being profitable means helping people get out of their poverty. I dream of a world where poverty only exists in museums, in exhibits where they show you how people used to live in the past.

When I started out in microcredits, I visited a lot of poor families in their homes. Then, I found out that the children couldn't see after the sun had set. This confused me, and I wondered what this peculiar disease could be. Some doctors I asked told me that it's called night blindness. It causes you to lose your night vision, and can eventually make you completely blind. It's caused by vitamin A deficiency, and the cure is vitamins, whether they come from pills or from an increased amount of vegetables in the diet. Pills didn't feel like a dependable option, but growing vegetables seemed like something doable. So, we started a business that sold seed bags for a penny each, and it was a big success. The people loved their home-grown vegetables. Eventually, we became the largest seed supplier in Bangladesh, and night blindness became a thing of the past.

This is what they call social entrepreneurship. The greatest weakness of capitalism is that it presupposes that everybody has selfish motives for the things they do. But we're actually prepared to help others without profiting from it. It's out of this insight that social business is born.

Muhammad Yunus, Bangladesh, born in 1940. Economist, banker, and social entrepreneur. Founded the Grameen Bank in 1976, and invented the concept of microcredits in order to give poor people small loans that would help them start businesses and make a living. Was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 2006, and the Presidential Medal of Freedom in 2009.





# VIGDÍS FINNBOGADÓTTIR

PRESIDENT OF ICELAND 1980-1996

*'Society can't function without the efforts of women.'*

On 24 October 1975, Vigdís Finnbogadóttir, the artistic director of the City Theatre of Reykjavik, refused to go to work. She was in very good company. More than 90 per cent of the women of Iceland had decided to refuse to work, cook, and look after their children that day. Almost 10 months of the UN's International Women's Year had passed, but nothing seemed to have changed. Women were still expected to take care of households and children, and in the workplace they had to settle for being paid 36 per cent less than the men, even though they worked every bit as hard. The women's general strike in Iceland only lasted one day. For the fast food vendors of the nation, this day had significant short-term implications, as the family men of Iceland had bought all of the hot dogs and other kinds of ready meals by early afternoon. In the nation as a whole, the effects were long-lasting, because the women on strike held a meeting in Reykjavik at which they decided that the next president of Iceland would have to be a woman. Their eyes turned to the theatre's director, and she accepted their challenge and ran for office. That's how, five years later, Vigdís Finnbogadóttir ended up becoming the first democratically elected female president ever.

**W**e've worked hard to give women a natural role in professional life, whether it be in a bank or in a factory, because professional life won't function without women. We proved that when all the women of Iceland went on strike, and banks, shops, and factories all had to close. Society can't function without the efforts of women, just as it can't function without men's efforts. Writing, poetry, and stories about the strike have made all of society aware of the fact that things will break down without women's contributions. It's interesting that men and women alike have given excuses for why society isn't equal, but I take consolation in the fact that I, and many others with me, know what's really going on.

When I was elected, a female president was a very unconventional idea, and I soon learned that as a woman, you have to stand up for yourself, or people will walk all over you. It was difficult at times, but those times only made me more determined to carry on the struggle – not just for myself, but for all women, especially the younger generations. I wanted women to enjoy the same rights and opportunities as men, and I think of my term as president as a natural extension of the women's movement.

The new women's movement is based on massive societal change, and these changes were what made it possible for me to be elected president. I thought of myself as an entrepreneur who served the people. I wanted to represent the radical changes that were needed. Looking back on when I ran for election, it truly was a struggle. At first, the result was a disappointment to me, but eventually I came to realise that it was an amazing result for a woman at the time. To this day, I'm incredibly proud of my compatriots for supporting me and voting for me. I'm proud that they were the first nation in the world to elect a female president. As my friend in the Norwegian parliament once put it, we can only achieve equality if both men and women vote for it; it's a matter of cooperation. The issue of women's social standing doesn't just affect women. Now, the university of Iceland is organised in such a way that everybody can raise questions about equality, and work to promote it. It's all about both men and women achieving a good quality of life, and both genders being acknowledged in society.

Vigdís Finnbogadóttir, Iceland, born in 1930. Politician. President of Iceland from 1980 to 1996. The first female president in Europe, and the first democratically elected female head of state in the world. Has been a UNESCO Goodwill Ambassador since 1998. Among other awards, she received The International Leadership Living Legacy Award in 1990.



# AMOS OZ

AUTHOR, PEACE ACTIVIST & PROFESSOR OF LITERATURE

*‘Compromise is never a popular solution, in private life or in international conflicts, but it is the answer.’*

‘Yids, go back to Palestine!’ the graffiti on the walls used to say when Yehuda Klausner was growing up in Europe in the 1920s. When he returned there, 50 years later, it said: ‘Yids, get out of Palestine!’ Klausner’s son Amos used to shout ‘British, go home!’ when he threw stones at the British soldiers in Jerusalem in the 1940s. Now, 70 years later, he says: ‘Make peace, not love!’ Amos Oz, Israel’s most famous author, knows the mind of a fanatic, because he used to be one himself. But he also knows the cure for fanaticism.

A fanatic is a walking exclamation mark. He has very simple answers to all of the complex issues of our times – often simple enough to be expressed in a single sentence! And very often, his answers are full of hatred towards people who are different. Fanaticism is older than Islam, Christianity, and Judaism; it’s older than any state, regime, or political system; and it’s older than any ideology or faith. Unfortunately, it’s a constant presence in human nature; an evil gene, if you will.

I’ve never seen a fanatic with a sense of humour, and I’ve never seen somebody who had a sense of humour become a fanatic. If I could parcel humour in little capsules, and get people to swallow these humour capsules, to immunise them against fanaticism, I would be given the Nobel Prize in Medicine. Maybe the Peace Prize as well.

I was born in Jerusalem. There are plenty of fanatics there. I was one of them as a child. It made me so terribly angry when the British soldiers called my father a ‘bloody Jew’. At the age of four, I learned what the German Nazis had done to our relatives in Europe. I think I’ve been politically aware since that day, but I soon realised that fanaticism and hatred are the worst enemies of the human race.

When I coined the phrase ‘Make peace, not love’, of course I didn’t intend it as an attack on the concept of love. I was criticising the slogan of the peace movement from the 1960s: ‘make love, not war’. Peace is the opposite of war, not love. Love is very, very rare. The people I know tend to be capable of loving between five and 15 people, or something like that. Love is intimate and private.

I believe in peace. If you ask me if I think there will ever be peace between the Israelis and the Palestinians, my answer is yes. In the Middle East, the word ever could mean anything from six months to 30 years, but of course the conflict will be resolved. I can even answer the question of how it will be resolved. Most of the people, both the Israelis and the Palestinians, already know the answer; even the ones who don’t like the answer know it. The answer is compromise. Compromise is never a popular solution, in private life or in international conflicts, but it is the answer.

The land we call Israel, which the Palestinians call Palestine, is smaller than Denmark. It’s a very small house. The Palestinians aren’t going to leave the house, because they have nowhere else to go. The Israeli Jews aren’t going to leave it, because they have nowhere else to go either. So, we have to divide this house into a two-family unit. I don’t think Israelis and Palestinians will love one another any time soon, but we can learn to live together in peace, in a house divided into two apartments. There is no other solution; no other answer.

Amos Oz, Israel, born in 1939. Author, peace activist, and Professor of Literature. Fought in the Six-Day War of 1967 and the Yom Kippur War of 1973. Today, he’s a peace activist, and an outspoken proponent of a two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Among other awards, he’s received the Goethe Prize in 2005, and the Franz Kafka Prize in 2013.





# GLORIA RAY KARLMARK

| 101

CHEMIST & MATHEMATICIAN

*'When a white girl walked up to enter, the soldiers moved aside and let her in, but when I tried to follow her, they got back in my way.'*

Gloria Ray was happy to finally be going to school. It was just a shame that it took 11,500 soldiers to make sure she would get there. The people outside the Central High School actually looked quite nice in their light summer dresses and suits. But they were shouting: 'No niggers in our school! Go home you black bastards!' It was 24 September 1957. For three years, the authorities in Arkansas had tried to delay the implementation of the US Supreme Court's decision that school segregation was unconstitutional, and that black children had the right to attend white schools. Gloria Ray chose to go to Central High School in Little Rock, which had a reputation for being the best school in the state. When she and her eight friends arrived for the first day of the autumn term, there was a crowd there, chanting: 'Here come the niggers! Get them! Lynch them!' The governor had called in the National Guard to stop these black children. He claimed that it was for their own safety, to avoid bloodshed. The whole world followed the drama that unfolded in Little Rock. When the white people had been rioting for three weeks, these nine black children were finally going to have their first day of school. The day before, President Dwight Eisenhower had assumed command of the Arkansas National Guard, and given the soldiers the opposite order: now, they were tasked with protecting the children on their way to school. Just to make sure, the president also sent paratroopers to Little Rock. Some of them escorted the children into the school building. 'The niggers are in the school!' the crowd outside shouted. The children were beaten and harassed, even though they each had a soldier as their personal bodyguard during their lessons and break times. The Little Rock Nine endured.

**M**y childhood ended when I was 14 years old. After the events at the Central High School, we stopped being kids and became the principle. We had put this on our own plates, and it was up to us to get it done, and make a contribution to the nation.

I was really looking forward to going to this school, and when I went there to register in August, there was no trouble at all, nobody tried to stop me. On the first day of the term, we were stopped by armed soldiers. There are pictures of me from that day, and I can see in my eyes that I couldn't understand what was happening. When a white girl walked up to enter, the soldiers moved aside and let her in, but when I tried to follow her, they got back in my way.

Back then, in the United States, we were called Negroes, and it was very clear what Negroes were allowed to do, and not allowed to do; which benches we could sit on, or which water fountains we could drink from. It was just like traffic rules, except these rules served no purpose. It's not like we were really any different from the others. I felt that it was my obligation to resist this ignorance – to stand up for everybody's equal rights, and to get through each day at Central High School.

It was hard on the nine of us, and on our parents. My mother lost her job because of all this, as did most of the parents who had jobs to lose in the first place. But we had the backing of the constitution, the Supreme Court and the president of the United States, so we felt that we had to go through with this and get the education we were entitled to.

I've told my story many times. But when I look around, and see the problems in the USA, and in the world, I think to myself: what have we really learned?

Gloria Ray Karlmark, USA, born in 1942. Chemist and mathematician. One of the Little Rock Nine, who challenged the racist school system in the USA in the 1950s, and contributed to its reform. The members of the Little Rock Nine were awarded the Congressional Gold Medal by President Bill Clinton in 1999.

# MAJA LUNDQVIST

MEMBER OF PLAN INTERNATIONAL YOUTH COUNCIL

*‘The part I remember the most is how the children’s eyes sparkled with excitement and happiness over receiving just a single present.’*

The boy was standing alone in the bustling Santander railway station with a sign around his neck. ‘This is José. I am his father. When Santander falls, I will be shot. Whoever finds my son, please take care of him for me.’ It was a summer’s day in 1937. The Falange forces were winning the Spanish Civil War. British journalist John Langdon-Davies caught sight of six-year-old José in the panicking crowd, read the note, and decided to grant the wish of the boy’s father. This was the beginning of what has since grown into Plan International, an organisation that helps endangered children. Its philosophy is based on establishing personal relationships between givers and receivers. Today, the organisation works in 70 countries. One of Plan’s Swedish activists is Maja Lundqvist from Torsby. The girl was sitting alone at a table in the noisy dining room of the Stjerneskolan school. She was from Afghanistan, and she hadn’t been in Torsby very long. Maja Lundqvist picked up her lunch tray, and went over to sit with her...

She didn’t know much Swedish, but I sat there and smiled at her, and asked her how she was feeling, and which class she was in. It made her very happy. Many assume that the newly arrived refugees don’t understand anything, and that talking to them would simply make them uncomfortable. But the truth is, as long as you speak clearly, it works out just fine. Often, all you need to do is smile or say hello. How are they going to learn Swedish if nobody speaks to them?

Of course, we got some funny looks that time in the lunch room, but it’s all pretty simple to me: if somebody’s alone, I sit down next to them. Whether they’re Swedish or not makes no difference. A lot of refugees come to Torsby. I talk to them, and they tell me their stories, and it all only strengthens my interest in and knowledge of these issues. I co-founded an integration group, and I’m a member of the Torsby municipality youth council. Our job is to voice the perspectives of the local youth on different issues.

My mother is the legal guardian of two children who don’t know much Swedish. They’ve crossed the oceans in a rubber dinghy, and told us about it. I get a bit teary when I hear all these stories from people who have made it here, and it makes me feel grateful that my parents are alive, and that I was born in Sweden.

Last Christmas, I took part in a project where we collected presents. We managed to raise about 200 presents. My mother and I dressed up as Santa, and handed the presents out at the asylum accommodation. The part I remember the most is how the children’s eyes sparkled with excitement and happiness over receiving just a single present.

I’m a member of the Plan Youth Council. We provide a youth perspective on the issues Plan works on, like children’s rights.

Working for Plan has taught me a lot. I’ve always wanted to know what the world is like, and I want to be able to make a difference. I think a lot of people back in Torsby might imagine that I think I’m better than them because I work for Plan. I often stand up and speak my mind, and I know that people could give me a lot of grief for being involved with this stuff. I can be pretty strong, but deep down, I’m not so self-assured when it comes to these things. Like the time I sat down next to that girl in the lunch room. Of course I’m a little frightened of what might happen, but I do it anyway.

Maja Lundqvist, Sweden, born in 1999. Is enrolled at the social sciences programme at secondary school, and does volunteer work on youth issues for the Torsby municipality. She’s a member of an integration group which, among other things, works to bring joy to people at refugee centres in Värmland. Was elected a member of the Swedish Plan International Youth Council in 2015.



# SHORNA SHAHIDA AKTER

HUMAN RIGHTS ACTIVIST

*‘Some parents just don’t want to listen, and feel that they have no choice but to marry their little girls off, because they don’t have any money.’*

‘If you keep insisting, I’ll go to the police,’ the girl said in the end, and glared at her father. He gave her an angry look back. Why did he, of all the fathers in Gazipur, have such a troublesome daughter? She was serious, and eventually he gave in. He wouldn’t force Shorna, who was only 14 years old, to get married. Not yet anyway. This was the start of Shorna Shahida Akter’s wedding-busting activities. What did she mean by saying she’d go to the police? Well, the law in Bangladesh dictates that no girl is to be married before the age of 18. And yet, child marriages are the norm. Two out of three underage girls are forced into marriage, three out of 10 of them before their 15th birthday. The younger the bride is, the smaller the expected dowry is. It also means one less mouth to feed, one less teenager to pay for. Every time Shorna Shahida Akter visits a family that’s trying to force their daughter to get married, she tells them: ‘Children mustn’t be forced to marry, they have a right to go to school.’ Sometimes, she manages to convince the parents to change their minds.

The reason why little girls are forced into marriage is usually poverty. When the families can’t afford to support their children, they marry them off instead. Since married girls aren’t allowed to go to school, they don’t get an education. I’ve managed to prevent several child marriages, but I often fail. Some parents just don’t want to listen, and feel that they have no choice but to marry their little girls off, because they don’t have any money.

The older the bride is, the larger the dowry that the parents have to pay to the bridegroom’s family. This is why girls from poor families are married off, taken out of school, and robbed of their lives. They’re in real physical danger as well, because a pregnancy is much riskier for a child than it is for an adult.

Education and knowledge are probably the best cures for child marriage. When I was 14, and my parents decided that I was to be married, I was already a member of a child organisation that had ties to Plan Bangladesh. I knew about children’s rights, and I told my family no. I insisted that it’s wrong to marry a child. I wanted to study. We fought for many days, until they finally gave in. Two years later, they tried to force me again. They didn’t cancel the wedding until I’d threatened to go to the police and the government.

Today, I’m a student at the university in Gazipur, but I also work as a tutor in the mornings and evenings, to make money for my family, and serve as chairman for an organisation that works to prevent child marriages. Whenever we find out that a girl from one of the villages nearby is being threatened with marriage, we make a house visit to the family. We also sometimes contact their schools, or speak to their teachers, the local authorities, and the police.

I’ve become quite famous for this now. My own family has come round too, and they think that what I’m doing is right. My dad told me that he’s proud of me, and that he realises now that he was wrong to try to force me to get married. He’s understood that it’s important to get an education – even for girls.

Shorna Shahida Akter, Bangladesh, born in 1994. Human rights activist. At the age of 12, she got involved in the Plan Bangladesh organisation, which works to promote children’s rights. Is active in Plan International, and leads the Union Shishu Forum, which works for the abolishment of child marriages.



# TUTU ALICANTE

LAWYER & CORRUPTION FIGHTER

*‘Corruption is ever-present in every nook and cranny of public life.’*

If income was evenly distributed, the population in this country would be richer than the Japanese or the French, but most have no more than a dollar to live on each day. In Equatorial Guinea, the president and his friends take care of the oil money. There are few heads of state who have as much private capital as Teodoro Obiang Nguema Mbasogo. There are few states as corrupt as this beautiful country on the west coast of Africa. From his exile on the other side of the Atlantic Ocean, lawyer Tutu Alicante struggles to get the world to react, but his native country is small, and there is too much money to be made there for people who are prepared to turn a blind eye.

That’s how things work in a country which doesn’t pay its police force a reasonable salary, and where the problem of corruption is ever-present in every nook and cranny of public life. You could hit another car, and the accident could be your fault, but if you have more money than the other driver, he will be found to be at fault. You need a driver’s licence, so you go to the police station. But if you don’t have enough money to bribe them, you’ll never get your licence. You’ve landed at the capital, Malabo, and you’re supposed to get a connecting flight to Bata, but the plane takes off without you, because somebody wealthier than you bought your seat. You could be so sick that you’re dying, but if you can’t afford to pay the nurse, you still won’t get the medication you need.

My sister Chicitina died in a hospital. She was 19 years old, and pregnant. She suddenly became unwell. Our father drove her to the hospital, but there were no doctors there, and no electricity, so she bled to death on a bed in the hall. Equatorial Guinea has enough money to pay for the best healthcare in the world, but the money disappears into the president’s overseas accounts, and into the coffers of the oil companies.

How can it be that the whole world knows about the dictatorship in Zimbabwe, but hardly anybody has heard of what’s going on in Equatorial Guinea? Well, Zimbabwe has no resources for the wealthy part of the world to exploit. The money in Equatorial Guinea comes from oil. Who’s producing the oil? The United States. President Obama called President Obiang a good friend. If the USA wasn’t getting that oil, the world would have known much more about what was going on there.

The oil companies provide the opportunities for corruption and oppression in Equatorial Guinea. The oil money allows the president to buy off politicians, journalists, and other governments. Teodoro Obiang Nguema Mbasogo bought the votes which made him chairman of the African Union in 2011.

My organisation, EG Justice, is handling a number of legal cases in various parts of the world, both against the regime’s human rights violations, and the president’s embezzlement of the nation’s money. If I was to return home at this point, I would certainly be arrested, tortured, and probably killed.

One good thing is that I have an American passport. If they just tortured me and threw me in prison, the American ambassador might be able to get me out.

Tutu Alicante, Equatorial Guinea, born in 1973. Lawyer and corruption fighter. Founded EG Justice in 2008, and has led the organisation since the beginning. Tries legal cases and works for human rights, transparency, and civil participation in the establishment of a fairer system in Equatorial Guinea.



# URMILA CHAUDHARY

HUMAN RIGHTS ACTIVIST

*'Going to school was my biggest dream.'*

Urmila Chaudhary was five years old when a man in a smart suit and sunglasses came to the village to give her parents an offer they couldn't refuse. Her father was in debt. The stranger, a lawyer from Kathmandu, offered him 4,000 rupees for his youngest daughter. That's how Urmila became a slave. It would be 12 years before she was released from the home of this stranger's family. For a long time, the Tharu people were the only ones who were able to live in the marshy, yet fertile, western provinces of Nepal. In the 1950s, DDT was used to exterminate the malaria mosquitoes, and the land of the Tharu was made available for exploitation. Strangers began to demand rent from the peasants, who ended up in debt. This was how the Kamlari system came to be, in which little Tharu girls were sold into servitude. When Urmila Chaudhary saw her parents the next time, she had turned 17, and started to go to school. Then, she decided to work to liberate her sisters in slavery, who number in the thousands. In the spring of 2013, a 12-year-old girl named Srijana, who worked for one of the most distinguished families in Kathmandu, died. People said it was suicide. Srijana had been allowed to go to school, but she'd done so poorly there that her despair drove her to douse herself in petrol and set herself alight. However, her teacher claimed that Srijana was one of the brightest students in the class, even though she came to school covered in bruises and cuts every day. Urmila Chaudhary demanded that the death be investigated. She gathered other ex-Kamlari girls, and demonstrated in Kathmandu. They were beaten by the police, and when they protested again, they were arrested. In the end, they managed to draw enough attention to the issue to force the Nepalese authorities to promise they would investigate Srijana's death. On 27 June 2013, the practice of Kamlari was banned.

I did everything in the household: cooking, cleaning, washing, fetching water, and minding the children, who were only a little younger than I was. Every day, I would walk them to school, and remain outside the classroom when they went inside.

Going to school was my biggest dream. I also wanted to read books, wear a school uniform, and come home with good marks, just like the children in the family did. When they sat down to do their homework, I had to bring them food, because I was their slave. I slept on the floor in a cupboard behind the kitchen.

They had a dog that they fed corn flakes. They never gave me anything nice like that. All I got to eat was leftovers that had gone bad. If I tried to steal any other food, or do anything else they felt I shouldn't, they would scald me with hot water. I never made eye contact with my owners during the 12 years that I spent in their home.

When I was finally freed, on 1 January 2007, it was like a miracle. An organisation called the Nepal Youth Foundation campaigned to free the Kamlari girls, and suddenly, I was free to go.

I was 17 years old when I started school. Now, I've made my way to the 12th grade. I'm also the district chairman of an organisation that helps freed slaves, the Freed Kamlari Development Forum, and an ambassador for a project called Because I am a Girl. We do a lot of work to ban child marriage in Tharu, and to help mediate deals between debt slaves and their creditors.

My biggest dream of all is to become a lawyer. There's so much that needs to be done.

Urmila Chaudhary, Nepal, born in 1991. Human rights activist. Was sold into slavery at the age of six under the system of Kamlari. Has fought to have the system abolished ever since she was freed 11 years later. In 2007 she was elected the first leader of the Common Forum for Kamlari Freedom.



The We Have a Dream exhibition will be shown at the following places:

Fotografiska, Stockholm: 9 December 2016 – 19 February 2017

Lunds Konsthall, Lund: 18 March – 7 May 2017

Västerbottens Museum, Umeå: 22 May – 1 October 2017

Jönköpings Läns Museum, Jönköping: 14 October 2017 – 14 January 2018

Värmlands Läns Museum, Karlstad: 2 February – 29 April 2018

Göteborgs Stadsmuseum, Göteborg: 12 May – 14 October 2018

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