

VOICE BODY POWER

Gender-Based Violence and Spoken Word Poetry

A Manual for Youth Work Organisations
by Creativity & Change



*Nurturing
Change-Makers
Imagining a
better World*

Acknowledgements

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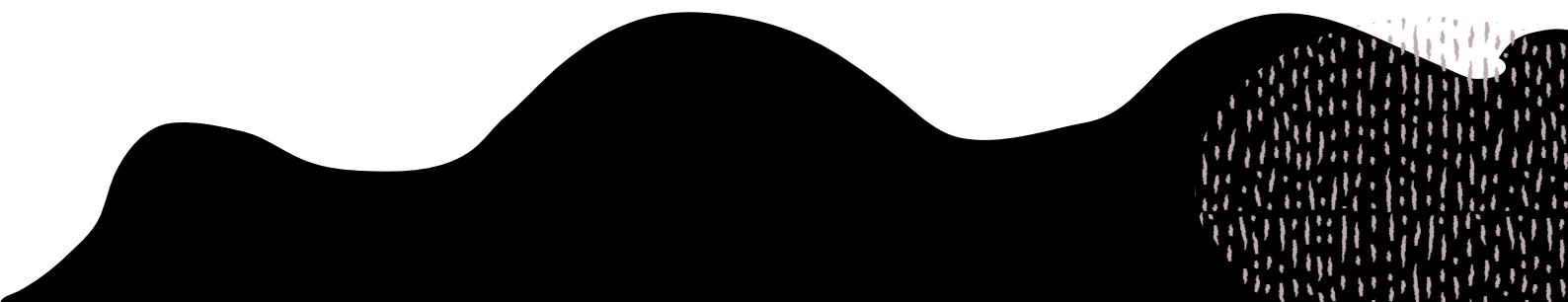
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**Poetry is not only a dream and vision; it is the skeleton
architecture of our lives. It lays the foundations for a future
of change, a bridge across our fears of what has never
been before.**

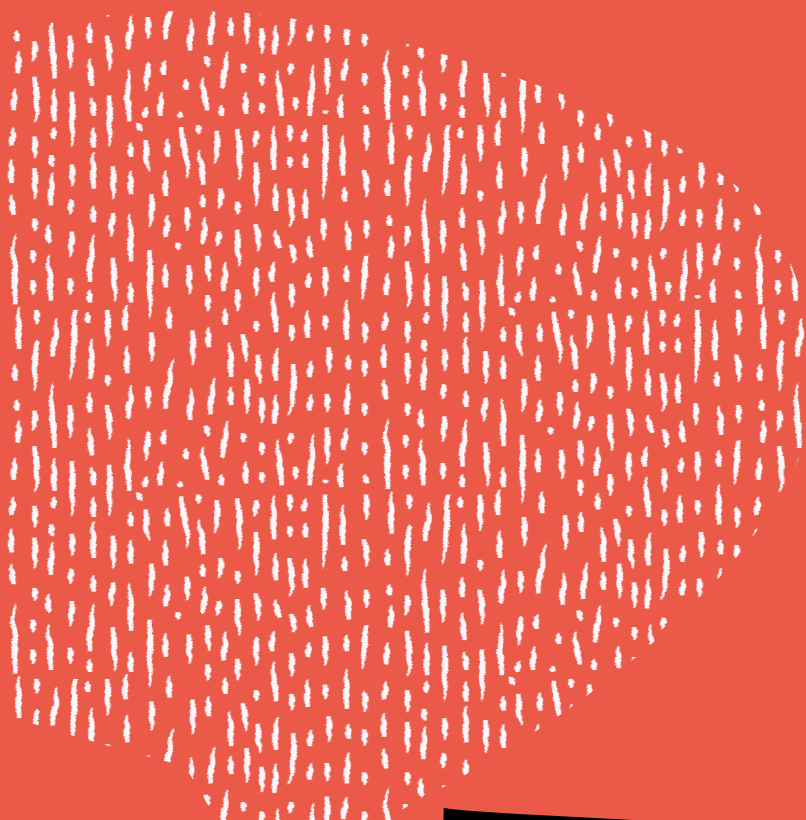
Audre Lorde

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INTRO DUCTION



Overview

In 2020, when lockdowns meant that we had to stop offering workshops in person, we decided to run online Spoken word poetry slams. The slams were meant to provide young people in Ireland with the opportunity to use their voices to speak out against injustice. When we opened our first online spoken word poetry slam, we were uncertain what to expect. We certainly hadn't imagined that young people from other countries would join us, but they did. What emerged over the following months surprised, and inspired us. Young people from all over the world signed up to our slams and raised their voices about issues from climate change, to the housing crisis, to corporate greed. One emerging theme however stood out: Gender based violence. Young people from all continents shared impassioned, insightful poems that rose like a collective call. We were struck by this emergence - this unexpected, unplanned confluence of thoughts, desires and demands about GBV. We weren't sure what to do with this, but knew these poems spoke to each other in a unique and valuable way.

We decided that if young people were raising the issue of GBV through poetry, that this might just be a language to reach other young people. So, we gathered four of the poems that had most impacted us and began speaking to the poets about a project. All of the poets were interested and excited about the idea of working together to make something that would have a wider impact. We began working on this manual to do just that.

We see GBV as a local and a global issue, while these poems highlight the global context, we recognise that in Ireland a new statutory agency will be established to oversee the State's response to domestic, sexual and gender-based violence, under plans to be brought to Cabinet and a consultation on a third national strategy on domestic, sexual and gender based violence (DSGBV) is about to begin, as this resource is under development. This is an issue that connects us all and we think that providing space to discuss and recognise the impact of GBV is a key strategy in bringing it to public attention. This resource is a tool to support space for discussion, reflection and action to tackle GBV.

How to use this manual

This manual is broken up into four sections. Each section is based around one poem about Gender based violence and includes the following:

- A. A [video](https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL2pZTKXLOsCKPXIWJ7Ujtl2jInp68yHhW) of the Spoken word poem <https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL2pZTKXLOsCKPXIWJ7Ujtl2jInp68yHhW>
- B. An interview with the poet
- C. Opening discussion ideas
- D. An activity to deepen the conversation.

Each section could take the form of a workshop with young people to be done in four consecutive weeks, or the sessions could be spread out further. It is important to establish respect and openness in the workshops before exploring these difficult and personal topics.

Spoken word poetry

Spoken word poetry is a form of poetry that has something about it that can't stay on the page, it has to come to life. It has its origins in multiple places, including the African storytellers known as "Griots", the 1970's Beatnik poets who used words to rally people around social issues, rap and hip hop. The popularity of Youth Spoken word poetry slams have demonstrated that young people are articulate, passionate, and ready to use their voices for change. Young voices like Amanda Gorman, who performed at American President Biden's inauguration, as well as Irish Spoken word poets like Femispeaks and Natalya O'Flaherty have helped to raise the profile of this impactful and dynamic performing art form.

Spoken word poetry is an effective way to engage young people in the theme of Gender based violence as it provides a creative container to explore a challenging topic. The medium of poetry allows for a new kind of conversation about GBV to take place, one that centers personal experience and critical questioning about gender and cultural expectations. As spoken word poet and teacher Sarah Kaye says "I use spoken word to help my students rediscover wonder, to fight their instincts to be cool and unfazed and, instead, actively pursue being engaged with what goes on around them, so that they can reinterpret and create something from it." Spoken word poetry creates space for a deeper level of engagement, while also providing an outlet for participants to process the emotions that emerge.

Gender based violence

The United Nations define Gender Based Violence (GBV) as "any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual, or mental harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life." The poems in this manual speak to the various forms that GBV can take. From the coercion and limiting gender expectations seen in the poem "Don't my Darling", to the violence depicted in "Breathe". These poems explore the roots of GBV, including culture-based bias against women. This bias can lead to victim blaming for GBV as in this line from "Allie and the Paper chain girls":

***When I was fifteen, a fifty-year-old man wouldn't leave me alone on the tube,
he told me I had sexy legs. I was wearing my school uniform; in case you were
wondering. I know you were wondering, already trying to come up with a reason
as to why it was my fault.***

Through the exploration of how women are perceived in society, a new dialogue about the role of women is imagined. This is portrayed in the poem “Eden’s first fruits”, where the story of the biblical Eve, who was traditionally blamed for the first sin, is now celebrated as the first fruit, the “essence of recreation”. It is this kind of questioning and re-imagining our narratives that will awaken the cultural imagination, allowing us to make conscious the unconscious bias against women. The poems in this manual challenge the attitudes and behaviors that underpin gender inequality that is the root of GBV.

Resources about Gender based violence

- * <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/violence-against-women>
- * <https://www.concern.net/news/gender-based-violence-explained>
- * <https://www.unhcr.org/en-ie/gender-based-violence.html>

Sustainable Development Goals and Gender based violence

The SDG’s are 17 goals developed by the UN to overcome global challenges, such as poverty and injustice. Goal number 5 is “Gender equality”. Gender equality intersects with many other forms of injustice, as described by UN secretary-general Ban Ki-Moon:

Violence against women continues to persist as one of the most heinous, systematic and prevalent human rights abuses in the world. It is a threat to all women, and an obstacle to all our efforts for development, peace, and gender equality in all societies.

A few of the targets to achieve gender equality include:

- * End all forms of discrimination against all women and girls everywhere.
- * Eliminate all forms of violence against all women and girls in the public and private spheres, including trafficking and sexual and other types of exploitation.
- * Eliminate all harmful practices, such as child, early and forced marriage and female genital mutilation



Gender inequality and GBV facts

From the World Health Organisation¹

Worldwide, almost one third (27%) of women aged 15-49 years who have been in a relationship report that they have been subjected to some form of physical and/or sexual violence by their intimate partner. (World Health Organisation, WHO)

Violence can negatively affect women's physical, mental, sexual, and reproductive health, and may increase the risk of acquiring HIV in some settings. (WHO)
From the United Nations Gender Equality Fact Sheet

From the United Nations Gender Equality Fact Sheet²

Globally as many as 38% of all murders of women are committed by intimate partners. (WHO)

Globally, 750 million women and girls were married before the age of 18

The rates of girls between 15-19 who are subjected to FGM (female genital mutilation) in the 30 countries where the practice is concentrated have dropped from 1 in 2 girls in 2000 to 1 in 3 girls by 2017.

In 18 countries, husbands can legally prevent their wives from working; in 39 countries, daughters and sons do not have equal inheritance rights; and 49 countries lack laws protecting women from domestic violence.

One in five women and girls have experienced physical and/or sexual violence by an intimate partner within the last 12 months. Yet, 49 countries have no laws that specifically protect women from such violence.

While women have made important inroads into political office across the world, their representation in national parliaments at 23.7 per cent is still far from parity.

In 46 countries, women now hold more than 30 per cent of seats in national parliament in at least one chamber.

Globally, women are just 13 per cent of agricultural land holders.

More than 100 countries have taken action to track budget allocations for gender equality.

In Southern Asia, a girl's risk of marrying in childhood has dropped by over 40 per cent since 2000

Resources about SDG 5: Gender equality

<https://sdgs.un.org/topics/gender-equality-and-womens-empowerment>

1 Who.int. 2022. Violence against women. [online] Available at: <<https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/violence-against-women>> [Accessed 18 February 2022].

2 United Nations Sustainable Development. 2022. United Nations: Gender equality and women's empowerment. [online] Available at: <<https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/gender-equality/>> [Accessed 18 February 2022].

Safe spaces

In Ireland, research shows that 15% of women and 6% of men have experienced severely abusive behaviour by a partner at some point in their lifetime, and 3,214 incidents of sexual offences were reported to An Garda Síochána in the year 2021. Given the high incidence of Gender based violence, it is probable that a percentage of young people in any given youth setting will have experienced this issue either directly in their home, or in their community. In addition, media portrayals of GBV are prevalent, creating an ambiance of fear. Young people will also have experienced the underlying biases, unequal treatment and negative attitudes towards women explored throughout this manual. So how do we address this prevalent issue without doing further damage to the young people we are working with?

The field of trauma informed practice offers some important guidance on how to work with people who have experienced trauma. Certain approaches might be more helpful than other approaches.

Trauma informed approaches

	Beginning the process with a group contract that addresses the content that will emerge and what can be done if people begin to find the topic overwhelming is essential. <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The contract should include what would be appropriate to discuss in the group, and what should be addressed privately.
	Informing participants about the content of the sessions beforehand and offering alternatives if they'd prefer not to participate
	Letting participants know about where they can go for help if this issue impacts them
	Monitoring the response of the group to the topic. At times, taking breaks to offer distance from the material. This could look like: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• A movement break• Inviting participants to take a moment to write or draw a picture in response to what is coming up for them• Acknowledging the difficulty of the topic and reminding participants of who they can speak with after the session• Having two facilitators is good youth work practice, and essential in this work
	Remember that it is possible to pause the topic if the group needs a break from the content. It can be returned to when the group is ready.

Support and supervision

Good youth work practice includes support and supervision where the youth worker can reflect on their experience, and what is emerging for them in the work. This is essential for the youth worker who is leading the sessions in this resource.

Where to go for help

Safe Ireland

Safe Ireland is a national body working to eradicate Domestic Violence, which includes delivering frontline refuge and support services.

Gréasán: www.safeireland.ie

Líne Chabhrach: 1800 341 900

Woman's Aid

Women's Aid is a voluntary organisation which provides support and information to women and their children who are being physically, emotionally and sexually abused in their own homes.

Gréasán: www.womensaid.ie

Líne Chabhrach: 1800 341 900

Guthán: 01 678 8858

Email: info@womensaid.ie

Men's Aid Ireland

formerly known as Amen, is the only dedicated national service supporting men and their families experiencing Domestic Violence in Ireland. Our professional and qualified support team have years of experience in supporting men and families experiencing domestic abuse.

Gréasán: www.mensaid.ie

Líne Chabhrach: 01 5543811

Guthán: 01-5543811

Support Email: hello@mensaid.ie

Email: hello@mensaid.ie

ISPCC Childline

Ireland's 24-hour active listening service for children.

The service is confidential, non-judgmental and free to contact from anywhere in Ireland.

Children and young people up to the age of 18 can contact Childline at any time, about any issue which may be on their mind.

Childline's online, phone and text services are all accessible to children and young people 24 hours a day, every day

Gréasán: www.childline.ie

Téacs: Text: 50101

Líne Chabhrach: 1800 66 66 66 (24hrs, 365 days a year)

Support Email: Online Live Chat: Childline.ie

Connect

Free telephone counselling and support service for any adult who has experienced abuse, trauma or neglect in childhood. You can talk in confidence with a trained counsellor who can listen or help with questions you have.

Gréasán: www.connectcounselling.ie

Líne Chabhrach: 1800 477 477

Guthán: 00 800 477 477 77 (UK and NI)
Email: admin@connectcounselling.ie

Dignity4Patients

A patient support and advocacy organisation. We work with people who have suffered sexual abuse or inappropriate sexual behaviour whilst a patient in a medical or therapeutic setting.

Gréasán: www.dignity4patients.org

Líne Chabhrach: 086 165 4111

Support Email: support@dignity4patients.org

The Dublin Rape Crisis Centre

A national organisation offering a wide range of services to women and men who are affected by rape, sexual assault, sexual harassment or childhood sexual abuse. The services include a national 24-hour helpline, one to one counselling, court accompaniment, outreach services, training, awareness raising and lobbying.

Gréasán: www.drcc.ie

Líne Chabhrach: (24 hrs) 1800 77 88 88

Guthán: 01 661 4911

Email: info@rcc.ie

Sexual Violence Centre Cork

Sexual Violence Centre Cork was set up on International Women's Day in 1983 and has been providing services to victims of sexual violence in Cork city and County for over 37 years. The Centre was formerly known as Cork Rape Crisis Service.

www.sexualviolence.ie

info@sexualviolence.ie

Free phone: 1800 496 496

Text: 087 1533 393

5 Camden Place, Cork City

Preparation

ACTIVITY ONE: SETTING THE SCENE

Overview: Beginning the conversation about gender inequality and gender based violence requires group safety. In this activity, the group will establish ground rules for engaging in the topic as well as introducing key terms and where to go for help.

Age: 15+

Aim: For the group to establish ground rules for engaging in the upcoming sessions and to introduce the topic.

Time: 20 mins

Step One: Laying the parameters. Explain to the group that the next 4 sessions are going to be on the subject of Gender equality, and will include looking at Gender based violence. Tell them that this group is not a therapy group, and that we won't be talking about personal experiences of gender-based violence during the sessions, but that they'd be encouraged to bring this up one to one with a staff member. Say that we will be exploring poems written about this issue by other young people, as well as being creative ourselves.

Step two: Opening the conversation - Ask the group how they would define Gender equality and Gender based violence. Reflect on what they think the relationship is between gender inequality and gender-based violence. Clarify any misconceptions with the following definitions:

Gender equality definition³:

Legal, social and cultural situation in which sex and/or gender determine different rights and dignity for women and men, which are reflected in their unequal access to or enjoyment of rights, as well as the assumption of stereotyped social and cultural roles.

Gender based violence definition⁴:

Gender-Based violence refers to harmful acts directed at an individual based on their gender. It is rooted in gender inequality, the abuse of power and harmful norms.

Step Three: Explain to the group what they can do if a concern about themselves, or someone else they know, comes up during these workshops. Hand out the list of numbers to call, as well as identifying staff who are available to talk, and when they are available to talk.

3 European Institute for Gender Equality. 2022. gender inequality. [online] Available at: <<https://eige.europa.eu/thesaurus/terms/1182>> [Accessed 4 March 2022].

4 2022. Gender-based Violence. [online] UNHCR. Available at: <<https://www.unhcr.org/en-ie/gender-based-violence.html>> [Accessed 4 March 2022].

SESSION ONE: UNPACKING GENDER ROLES



INTRODUCTION TO "EDEN'S FIRST FRUIT"

Interview with Precious

Interviewer: *Could you tell us where you're from and how you started performing Spoken word poetry?*

Precious: I'm originally from Nigeria and I moved to Ireland in 2017 and I'm in Galway right now. I'm a student and I'm also working and I love writing. I write because I'm a very deep thinker so I just kind of write out my thoughts to ease myself and just be at peace with myself. When I was doing my leaving cert I was scared about whether I was going to make my results. I felt the pressure, and the anxiety. We were reading poems in school and my favorite poet was Sylvia Plath. So I thought "Let me write something similar to my own story. Something I know, that I've seen in African culture that I don't like".

Interviewer: *What inspired you to write your poem "Eden's first fruit?"*

Precious: I wrote "Eden's first fruit" for Africa day, I wanted to present something, so I wrote this poem. This poem is all about inequality in Africa. The culture and how African culture in general is more favorable to the men than to the women. I find it awful - so that is what this poem is all about.

Interviewer: *What do you see as cultural differences between Nigeria and Ireland when it comes to gender equality?*

Precious: There's a big difference because in Nigeria. They feel when ladies get to this type of age, maybe you get to 25, your family stops treasuring you at home. You have to look for a boyfriend. You have to get married. They feel like marriage is an achievement for women, which I don't... And the culture is not right because they would say "You know you're a woman and you cannot walk at night", while men can walk at night. What's the difference? At the end of the day we're all human beings. The only difference is that some parts of our body are different. So why tell me that this is good for a man and this is not good for woman?

In Nigeria, in Africa, parents don't send their girls to secondary school. They're like, oh, this one is going to get married and she won't answer my name* at the end of the day. But the man will answer my name. My son will answer my name so they are more concerned about the son and so on, and they just push the woman to get married. So some girls get married at the age of 17... Inequality starts in the home.

And also when a woman gets raped. They don't say anything when you come out to talk. They will say "how did he rape you"? "What were you putting on when you went out"? So the men will continue to do the same thing over and over again because they know at the end of the day, the blame is going to go on the woman. I'm so happy now that women are coming out to talk about what happened. To say "he raped me." This one is coming out and this one is coming out. That's because society has given them the chance. Culture is meant to be beautiful.

POEM 1

An Excerpt from Edens First Fruit by Precious Tedeye

I am Edens first fruit.
My strength is brim-full,
I am a mother, mother of the south.
I am a coat of many colours.
My uniqueness is electrifying.
My ways are the old ways of community and
togetherness.
I have my worth and no less.
I have tasted grief and courage.
Fear and folly will not play my game,
I am the essence of re-creation.
I am love, only if you would seek my heart and
listen
to my whisper from within your heart
I am Eden's first fruit, I am not his but I AM
And will always be the heritage that never ages.

ACTIVITY TWO: THE STORIES WE TELL

Overview of activities in this section

Eden's first fruit is a poem that explores the Biblical story of Adam and Eve in the garden of Eden. While this story has influenced the Western cultural understanding of the role of women in introducing sin into the world, Precious' poem flips the story, looking at women as having strength that is "brim-ful", bringing goodness and togetherness into the world. This poem is where the journey to understanding gender inequality begins for us in this resource because it introduces important concepts including our societal construct of gender, the stories in our culture that can lead to interpretations of one gender being more valuable than another and victim blaming.

The activities in this group are designed to build onto each other, but if you don't have time, you could focus on just one activity.

Key points:

This session is about opening up a conversation. It's important to establish a sense of trust where participants can share their perspectives, while unpacking the bias in their own cultural background. It's also important to note, that while this session is critically exploring the story of Adam and Eve, that what we are critiquing is Western society's interpretation of this story, rather than the Biblical narrative itself. There are many interpretations of the story, including those that value the role Eve played in initiating a deeper spiritual journey.⁵

Aim: To reflect on gender roles in our culture using the story of Adam and Eve.

Age: 15+

Time: 30 mins

Materials needed: Link to video and projector or computer

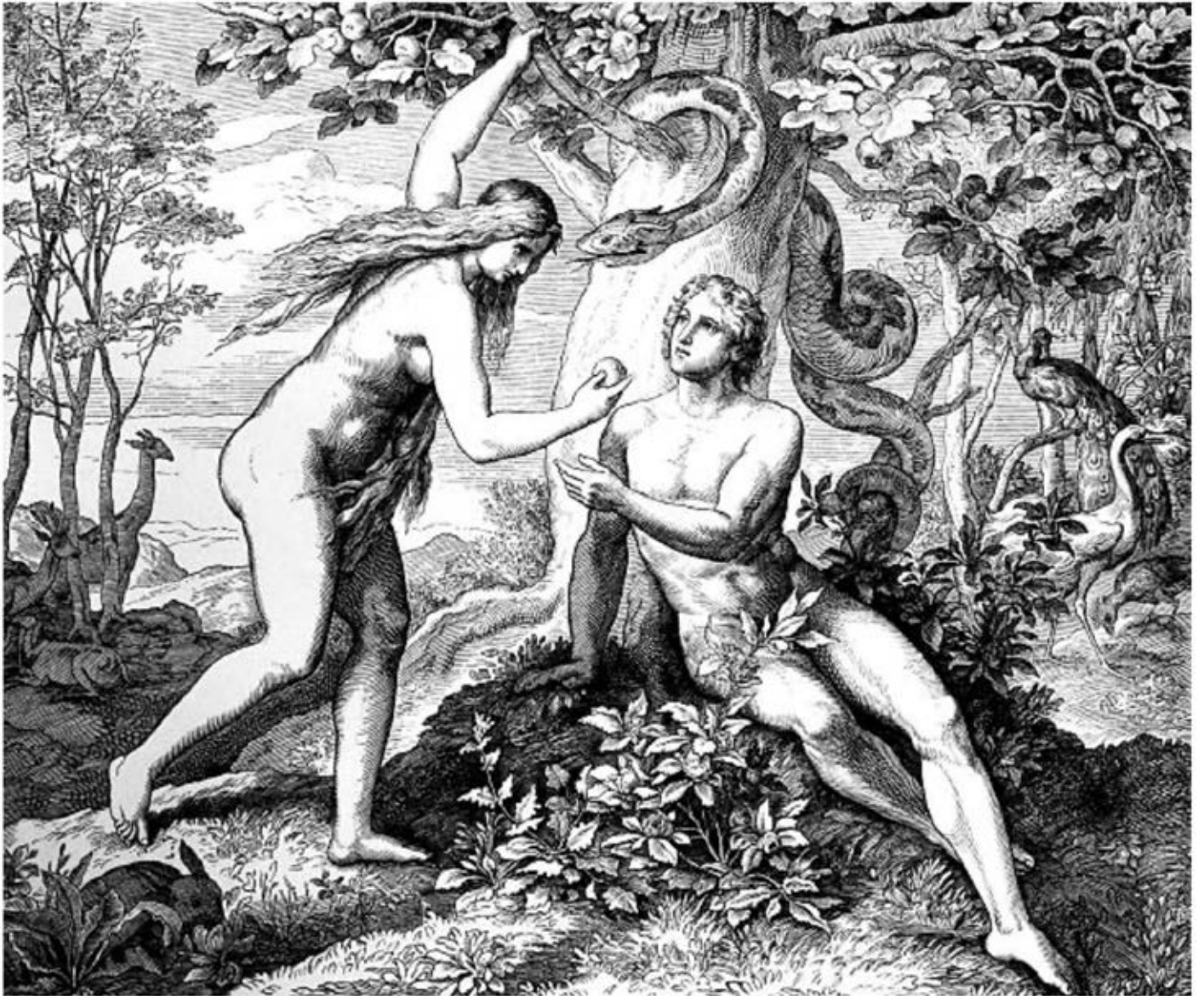
Step 1: Preparation: Show the group the image of Adam and Eve in the garden of Eden. What do they think the message of this interpretation of the story is? How have these messages influenced how society sees men and women differently? Are there other ways to interpret this story?

Step 1: Watch or read the poem "Eden's First Fruit" by Precious Tedeeye

Step 2: Discussion - What stood out to you listening to this poem?

Step 3: Further discussion: What, or who, do you think is "Eden's first fruit"? What value does the poem suggest that women have brought into the world?

⁵ Karen, Azar-Rubin. 2017. In Defense of Eve – Re-Visiting the Garden of Eden. [online] Patheos: Companions on the Journey. Available at: <<https://www.patheos.com/blogs/companionsonthejourney/2017/09/defense-eve-edden-sin/>> [Accessed 2 March 2022].



Engraving by Julius Schnorr von Carolsfeld (March 26, 1794 - May 24, 1872)

ACTIVITY THREE: ONCE UPON A TIME...

Aim: To better understand how the stories in our culture influence the ways we understand gender roles and to find new ways to tell these stories.

Age: 15+

Time: 30 mins

Step 1: List myths, legends and fairytales. How do these stories influence how we define the roles of men, women and non binary people in our culture? Some ideas to get you started:

Little red riding hood (Girls should be obedient or they will be hurt)

The Greek myth of Cassandra: (Cassandra is given the the gift of prophecy, but the curse of not being believed. Does this story convey that women won't be believed when they speak?)

Snow white and the seven dwarves, Cinderella and many others (The prince is portrayed in one-dimension only. He has no name or identity beyond his privileged position. His only role is to "rescue".)

Beauty and the Beast (The Beast imprisons a women, and yet, she still falls in love with him.)

All of the above fairytales assume heteronormative relationships

Gender is portrayed in many ways in fairy tales... boys are typically adventurous; rescuers; fighters and capable; symbolize ingenuity and perseverance. On the other hand, female characters are represented as victims; seldom triumph if not beautiful; passive; submissive and dependant to male figures.⁶

Step 2: Retell a myth or fairytale, changing the gender roles. How does this change the story?

Give the following instructions:

- a) Ask participants to think of a myth or fairytale they want to explore. Encourage participants to consider what gender roles and expectations the character experiences. How might they change these?
- b) Ask the participants to write in a stream of consciousness style in the first person. Set a timer and give them two minutes to answer each question. Encourage them not to second guess what they write and to keep their pen to the paper the whole time.
 - i) Who are you?
 - ii) What expectations do others have of you?

⁶ Gender Stereotypes in Selected Fairy Tales: Implications for Teaching Reading in the Foundation Phase in South Africa. Available from: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/321216427_Gender_Stereotypes_in_Selected_Fairy_Tales_Implications_for_Teaching_Reading_in_the_Foundation_Phase_in_South_Africa [accessed Mar 02 2022].

- iii) What do you want people to know about you?
- iv) What is your true strength?

c) Give the participants 5 minutes to look over what they wrote. This is the “raw clay”, that they will mold and shape into a poem or monologue

d) Have the participants share their poems/stories in the wider group. If the group is large, they could first share with a partner and then invite 4-5 to share in the whole group.

e) Feedback: Ask the participants to share what lines in the poem/story made them think in a new way, or that they found interesting.

SESSION TWO: VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND THE MEDIA

INTRODUCTION TO "ALLIE AND THE PAPER CHAIN GIRLS: A POEM ABOUT VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN"

Interview with Emily

Interviewer: *Could you tell us where you're from and when you started to perform Spoken word poetry?*

Emily: I'm from a suburb of London in the UK. I started writing poetry and little stories when I was about six or seven. I only actually started writing Spoken word poetry recently, because I started writing more about myself and I felt like I wanted to perform it. I didn't want to just scribble it down and then send it off and forget about it. I'm not much of a performer, but with these poems about my life, I did feel like I had to perform them

Interviewer: *What inspired you to write "Allie and the Paper Chain girls?"*

Emily: A couple things inspired me. One of the most important things is my sister Alice, or Ally. I was thinking about her throughout it and also about my own fears and worrying about her safety. Recently in London there was the Sarah Everard case that really drew people's attention. So that very much inspired me to write this poem. The reason I picked newspaper as a metaphor is because it's so disposable, like you can pick it up and then read it and then leave on a tube seat or chuck it in the bin. This Sarah Everard case was huge for a little while and then it was just kind of forgotten the next day, almost. I wrote this poem because these women are reduced to their headlines and then we just throw them away like a newspaper. But we have to keep remembering that they are people and not headlines.

Interviewer: *What would you like people to take away from your poem?*

Emily: I hope it inspires more people to do a bit of writing themselves. For me, if I'm scared about something or struggling with something in my life, I write about it. That's how I deal with my fears about my little sister and my fears about living in London and existing as a woman in that area. So, I encourage more people to try spoken word poetry as a way of dealing with those things themselves.

POEM TWO

An excerpt from *Allie and the Paper Chain Girls: A Poem About Violence Against Women* by Emily Mellows

Sometimes I dream of her face, well not her face.

 The face in the paper
 that is not her but might as well be her now.
She's always found guilty of being too flirty, too
 stupid,
she was probably walking down the wrong
 street, she should have ignored him,
 she should have said thank you.

She's print and for 50p you could take her away,
 perhaps you'll forget her on the train, or leave
 her on a bench or stuff her in a bin.
Perhaps you'll fall asleep on the printed image of
 her.

 Perhaps you'll read her story at breakfast over
 toast.

Perhaps you'll drop breadcrumbs onto the paper,
 a trail of breadcrumbs
 that will never lead her home.

ACTIVITY FOUR: WHAT'S IN YOUR PAPER?

Overview of activities in this section

The poem "Allie and the Paper chain girls explores how the media portrays women who have experienced Gender-based violence. The media often reinforces cultural biases, including blaming the victim for the crime. This section is designed to develop critical thinking skills about the ways that gender based violence is portrayed in the media.

Aim: To open up a conversation about how the media portrays women who experience GBV, using the poem as a prompt.

Age: 15+

Time: 20 mins

Step one: Watch or read the excerpt from the poem "Allie and the Paper Chain Girls"

Step two: What stood out to you listening to this poem?

Step three: Discussion:

Ask the group if they can think about a story that's been in the news about gender-based violence. What do they remember about how the victim was described? Explore the concept of victim blaming. For example, if the victim was described as being drunk, or out late at night how does this subtly blame them for what happened? How long was this story talked about?

ACTIVITY FIVE: FLIPPING THE SCRIPT

Aim: To critically think about the way GBV is portrayed in the media.

Age: 15+

Time: 30 mins

Materials: Newspaper headings (either the ones below, or new current headlines); Paper & markers, possibly laptop or computer if you'd like to make a digital headline.

Step One: Discussion - Ask the group what they think is the media's role in gender based violence.

Step Two: Show the group the newspaper headlines about gender based violence. Discuss the questions and prompts below. (Note, you could also use new, relevant newspaper headlines)

Step three: Either as a whole group, or in smaller groups, come up with an alternative headline.

Step four: Create a newspaper headline. This could be done either on paper, or use the website "Break your own news" to generate a new headline. <https://breakyourownnews.com>

Step five: For inspiration, look at the Cork Sexual violence centre's instagram campaign where they flip the advice about how to avoid sexual assault. Fixed-it Ireland also has an instagram page where anyone can submit an improved headline. See examples below.



Example of Screen from Break Your Own News website

Change the headlines

Link to article	Line to flip	Prompt/ questions	What could it be changed into?
https://www.thejournal.ie/woman-attacked-evergreen-street-cork-random-5670334-Feb2022/	"A WOMAN IS recovering after she was attacked in what gardaí believe was a random attack on a Cork city street"	Definition of the word random: . "made, done, or happening without method or conscious decision." Why do we use the word "Random"? Is it really random? What other words could be used?	
https://www.irishexaminer.com/world/arid-40728012.html	How can you avoid spiking? Advice includes a person buying their own drink and watching as it is poured, not accepting drinks from strangers and never leaving their glass unattended.	Given the advice, who is responsible for avoiding spiking? How could you flip the script to place the responsibility to avoid spiking on someone else?	
https://www.independent.ie/podcasts/the-into-daily/the-into-daily-she-was-just-out-for-a-run-how-ashling-murphys-violent-death-has-numbed-the-nation-41241782.html *this link is no longer working	"She was just out for a run"	This was a tag line that was used for the murder of Ashling Murphy. What is the meaning of this line? Does it make her less deserving of a crime because she was out for a run in the daytime? What would the headline have been if it was night and she was out at a party? Is there subtle victim blaming in this headline?	

Headlines - For the full stories, see the links above



Breaking News

Man jailed for six years after string of unprovoked attacks on strangers and friends

Mirror

Woman, 36, 'repeatedly punched' in unprovoked attack while pushing a buggy in Co...



Breaking News

Man given two years in jail for unprovoked street attack on woman

[thejournal.ie](#)

Man (25) jailed for unprovoked attack on mother of his children



Limerick Leader

Singer with strong Irish roots injured in 'unprovoked attack and ...

'Unprovoked'

The word 'unprovoked' has been used frequently in the last few weeks when describing acts of male violence.

The use of the word 'unprovoked' is unnecessary and suggests that there is such thing as 'provoked' physical or sexual violence.

Male violence is never the victims fault and it's important that the media reflect this in their language. We urge the media to stop using the phrase 'unprovoked' when describing men's violence.

#fixeditireland

FixedIt Ireland Instagram Post



sexualviolencecork

...



Liked by richardscriven and 136,241 others

sexualviolencecork How to avoid sexual assault: a quick and easy guide... more



FixedIt Ireland Instagram Post

FixedIt Ireland Instagram Post



FixedIt Ireland Instagram Post



FixedIt Ireland Instagram Post

ACTIVITY SIX: FOUND POEM

Aim: To provide the participants with an opportunity to be creative, exploring new ways to write poetry and express themselves. You could use this as an opportunity to talk about how stories are told in the news - what details are included, what are omitted?

Age: 15+

Time: 30 mins

Materials: Newspapers, markers

Step one: Hand out newspapers to the group and let them create “found poems” by using a thick black marker to cover over all the words they don’t want to include in their poem.

Step two: Participants can share their poems with each other if they wish.

Step three: Discuss the creative process - What words did they leave out? What did they include? How did leaving words out change the meaning of the poem?

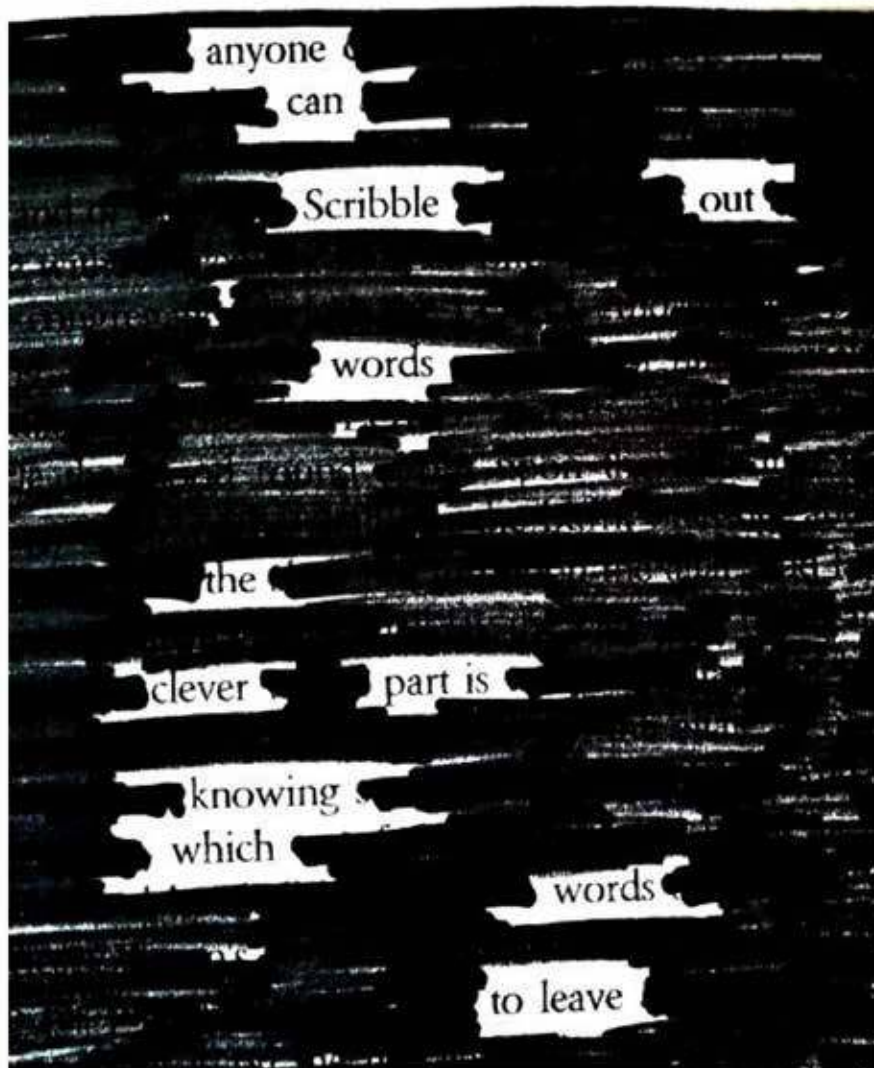


Image of scribbled out words poem.

SESSION THREE: VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN GLOBALLY

INTRODUCTION TO "DON'T MY DARLING"

Interview with Maya Amlin

Interviewer: *Maya, could you tell us where you are from and how you started performing Spoken word poetry?*

Maya: I'm from a small town in India. I've been writing poetry for a long time now, as long as I can remember, actually. One day I just realized that what I write is supposed to be heard. I also used to listen to spoken word poetry a lot, that influenced me as well.

Interviewer: *What inspired you to write your poem "Don't my darling?"*

Maya: This poem is actually inspired by a lot of things. In the poem, you see this figure of a female who's told to do things, and although she does try to get out of what is imposed on her, she's still somewhat stuck there. This dynamic is everywhere, it's not just in India. I've heard about incidents like this from people everywhere all over the world. The worst part about all of this is that we're always told these contradictory things, and what do you do? Because as a kid, you're supposed to stay away from boys, you know, don't kiss boys; don't have sex with boys; don't talk to boys. And then you're supposed to marry one one day. You're supposed to be quiet because respectable girls don't do that, but you're also supposed to speak a lot, because if you're too quiet that's wrong. So I guess the poem comes from all these contradictory messages imposed on women.

For most of the poem there is this female figure which is meant to represent all those voices who were imposing their ideas on women. The voices come in various forms: There is the immediate family, the relatives, sometimes friends, and the society in general. They're forcing these ideas on you and these things that you should do and things that you should actually not do.

Interviewer: *What do you hope the audience takes away from your poem?*

I hope people realize the impact of this sort of abuse on girls especially. Because this is something you're told since you're a little kid. Maybe not everywhere, but in many societies you are told things like girls "don't do this and don't do that". I hope people everywhere realize that this comes with a sort of an emotional abuse and it's wrong. I hope people come to realize that. I hope they start treating girls better. I hope they treat women better of course, but also little girls because they are impacted the most from all of these expectations and coersions. These girls will absorb and internalize these messages for the rest of their life. Changing the message at that young age is really important.

POEM THREE

**Don't my Darling,
by Maya Amli**

I

Don't talk about love, my darling;
good girls don't do that.
Instead, they go about their lives pretending
boys don't exist and love is a language
never to learn.

Don't say no to a marriage, my darling;
good girls don't do that,
because we gave you your life and now it is your turn
to pay us back
with a child we get to flaunt as ours.

Don't speak up, my darling;
good girls don't do that.
Instead, they spend their lives remembering
how they don't have a voice loud or a mind clear
to ever raise an opinion.

II.

Don't think you're any less, my darling;
good girls don't do that.
They learn to believe in themselves
even when they are constantly compelled
by the whole world to think they are someone else.

Overview of activities in this section

"Don't my darling" is a poem that looks at the ways family and culture coerce girls and women to adhere to gender roles. The refrain "Don't my darling" implies tenderness, while simultaneously giving a message that the girl must conform. The final stanza of the poem is the poet speaking to herself, telling herself that she can believe in herself. The activities in this section are designed to unpack the messages that males, females and non-binary people are told about their gender roles, sometimes in what seems like supportive language on the surface.

The poet of this poem is from India. In this section we are beginning to look beyond the gender roles in Western society, to the wider world. Gender inequality is the root of many other global inequalities. This will be explored through a web activity with the SDGS where participants are encouraged to explore.

ACTIVITY SEVEN: WHO IS DARLING?

Aim: To begin to explore the messages in the poem "Don't my darling" and the way language can be used to enforce gender roles.

Age: 15+

Time: 15-20 mins

Step one: Watch or read the poem "Don't my Darling" by Maya Amlin

Step two: Ask the group "What stood out to you listening to this poem?"

Step three: Why do you think the poem has the refrain "Don't my darling"? Who do you think is meant to be saying these words? Does the speaker change in the last stanza?

Step four: Explore other compliments and language used to address women and girls that seem "nice", but depending on how they are used could actually be controlling. For example, calling a woman "sweetie" be a way to try to subtly make someone feel like she has to act sweetly and not express anger. Are there similar words used for men?

ACTIVITY EIGHT: WEAVING A WEB

Aim: To connect SDG 5 “Gender equality” to the other 16 SDGs. To explore how gender equality impacts all the other SDGs.

Age: 15+

Time: 15-20 mins

Materials: SDGs cut up; Tape or string

Step one: The poet Maya Amlin is from India. Ask the group to reflect on how her experience of being a woman might be different or similar to women in Ireland.

Some facts to consider:

India is the only large country where more girls die in childhood than boys

Girls are more likely to drop out of school.

In India girls and boys experience adolescence differently. While boys tend to experience greater freedom, girls tend to face extensive limitations on their ability to move freely and to make decisions affecting their work, education, marriage and social relationships.

only a quarter of women are in the formal workplace.

Step two: Introduce the group to the SDG’s if they haven’t already heard of them.

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), also known as the Global Goals, were adopted by the United Nations in 2015 as a universal call to action to end poverty, protect the planet, and ensure that by 2030 all people enjoy peace and prosperity.

Step three: Cut out the SDGs and place in a circle. Place “Gender equality” in the middle.

Step four: Put participants in groups of 3-4 and hand out the facts below. Ask the participants to place each fact as a link between one of the SDG’s and Gender equality. The facts are taken from the “Women and sustainable development goals” report put out by UN Women.

Here is a suggestion about how the facts link to each of the SDGs.

Sustainable Development Goal	Connection to Gender Equality
SDG 1: End poverty	More than 1.3 Billion women don't have a bank account
SDG 2: End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture	Only 10% of aid for farming, forestry and fishing goes to women
SDG 3: Ensure healthy lives and well being for everyone	Women in the global south are 14 times more likely to die in childbirth than women in the global north
SDG 4: Quality Education	In poor countries, girls are less likely to be educated than boys. As an example, in Sub sahara africa, only 23% of girls go to school
SDG 6: Clean water and sanitation	When there is not easy access to clean water, it is most often women who bear the burden of walking sometimes great distances to carry it. In 25 sub-saharan countries, women spend 16 million hours per day collecting water - this is often instead of schooling or paid work.
SDG 7: Affordable and clean energy	When there is no access to clean energy, women are often the ones who have to gather firewood to burn, spending hours collecting fuel such as wood and animal dung, and then face health issues from breathing in the fumes while the fuel is burning.
SDG 8: Decent work and economic growth	50% of all working age women are in the labor force, but globally they earn 24% less than men
SDG 9: Industry, innovation and infrastructure:	Women account for only 25% of researchers in the fields of innovation, and industry
SDG 10: Reduced inequalities	Women in the Global south are 75% more likely to have jobs that do not pay well and have little security. One of these jobs is as a domestic worker, which has little legal protection and no requirement for minimum wage.
SDG 11: Sustainable cities	Women are more likely to run informal stalls in cities, but they are also more at risk of gender based violence in these public spaces
SDG 12: Responsible consumption and production	Women are less likely to own property, and therefore lose access to technology and resources they need to reduce consumption

SDG 13: Climate Action	Climate change is already affecting the most vulnerable. Women in the global south are forced to walk farther in search of water and fuel, while facing the impact of crop shortages due to drought.
SDG 14: Life below water	Women outnumber men in working in fisheries, but have lower paid jobs. They are also more vulnerable to the impact of fish shortages as their work is often seasonal.
SDG 15: Life on land	Women play a critical role globally as stewards of the land, but are under represented in decision making about land use
SDG 16: Peace justice and strong institutions	Only 9% of negotiators at peace talks are female. During times of war, women are more vulnerable to gender based violence.
SDG 17: Partnerships for the goals	Although Gender equality is central to all the SDGS, only 5% of foreign aid funds had global equality as a goal



ACHIEVE GENDER EQUALITY AND EMPOWER ALL WOMEN AND GIRLS 

GLOBALLY



1 IN 3 WOMEN HAVE EXPERIENCED SOME FORM OF PHYSICAL OR **SEXUAL VIOLENCE** IN THEIR LIFETIMES

IN INDIA

ONLY
65.46%
OF THE WOMEN ARE LITERATE, AS COMPARED TO
82.14%
OF MEN

ENROLMENT OF GIRLS IN PRIMARY EDUCATION

100%
BUT
74.6%
WOMEN ARE NOT ENROLLED IN HIGHER EDUCATION

WOMEN HOLD ONLY

11%
OF SEATS IN THE LOK SABHA BUT
46%
IN PANCHAYATI RAJ INSTITUTIONS



CHILD SEX RATIO IS

919
FOR
1,000 BOYS



48.5%
POPULATION OF WOMEN BUT ONLY
27.4%
WOMEN ARE IN WORKFORCE



ACTIVITY NINE: "REAL MEN DON'T..."

Aim: To create a group poem that explores the messages that men receive about their gender roles

Age: 15+

Time: 15-20 mins

Step one: Ask each person complete the line "Real men don't.." filling in a negative message men/boys receive, such as "Real men don't cry"

Step two: Write down each person's response as they say it

Step three: Read the poem outloud, inserting the line "Real men don't" as a refrain throughout the poem using Maya's poem as a model.

Step four: Do a second round changing the message to something positive, such as "Real men don't look away when a woman is being harassed"

ACTIVITY TEN: WHEN THE GOING GETS TOUGH...

Aim: To create individual poems that further explore the messages that men receive about their gender roles

Age: 15+

Time: 15-20 mins

Materials: Pens and paper for each participant

Step one: Tell the participants that they are going to write an equivalent poem of "Don't my darling" for boys/men. What does society repeatedly tell men about their behaviour? Tell them to use this line as a refrain through out their poem the way "Don't my darling" is used to frame Maya's poem. Like Maya's poem, they could make the final stanza about a positive message for boys and men.

Some ideas to get you started:

- a) Real men don't...
- b) When the going gets tough, the tough get going
- c) Don't be soft
- d) The only person you can count on is yourself

Step two: Give the participants 5 minutes to write.

Step three: Share the poems in partners or the wider group

SESSION

FOUR: MEN AS
ALLIES

INTRODUCTION TO "BREATHE"

Interviewer: *Where are you from?*

Timo: I am Timo GK, a multidisciplinary creative and psychologist based in Nairobi, Kenya. I am the 2021 Poetry Slam Africa Champion and use my poetry to provoke both thought and action. You can find me on 'Timo GK' across all social media and streaming platforms.

Interviewer: *How did you become interested in Spoken word poetry?*

Timo: I started writing page poetry, in high school, after reading the poem 'Atieno Yo' by author Majorie Oludhe MacGoye. I started writing and performing spoken-word poetry six years ago after watching a friend on stage.

I have always loved reading and fancied the power of words. Discovering spoken-word poetry helped unlock a superpower of being crafty, playful, educative and entertaining all at the same time. I have used this power not only to express myself but also to tell stories about human experiences.

Interviewer: *What inspired you to write this poem?*

Timo: I wrote this poem after listening to South African poet, Hlox da Rebel performance during the 21st edition of Poetry Africa. His poem 'Akimbo' was so candid about sexual violence and GBV in Africa. It inspired me to write about the same in a Kenyan context and my personal experiences. 'Breath' is an acknowledgement of the current status of women in most communities, it is an apology to all survivors of GBV and it also provides hope.

Interviewer: *Why is it important to you to share this poem with others?*

Timo: The relevance of sharing this poem with others is to provoke the thought and action of anyone who listens. It is a call out to anyone who listens or reads it to take a stand against GBV, sexual and any other form of violence.

Interviewer: *What advice do you have for others who may want to write Spoken word poetry?*

Timo: Spoken word poetry is a free-form-art, it requires one to be well-read and thoroughly research any topic you desire to write about. It also needs one to understand the language of their audience this will help you to communicate better. It also helps to know various stage antics to better your performance.

BREATHE
by Timo GK

Silence speaks a foreign language
but I can still hear the muffled screams behind her tears,
and I have seen my sisters slowly getting wiped out of
existence,

My sisters are endangered species
and I'd rather save them than rhinos,

There are too many campaigns
but not enough action.

I apologize for what my gender has done to your gender,
I hope sunshine sneaks into your darkness,

Spirit bleaks builds you up
for you are the greatest wall build with thick black skin
bones engineered to perfection.

There are tiny persons in wombs
praising your existence,

The universe is inside you
mankind is annihilated once you stop breathing
so breathe.

Overview of activities for this section

The poem "Breathe" is written by Timo Guatheria - a poet from Kenya. In the poem, he bears witness to the gender based violence he sees girls and women in his country face. The activities in this section are directed towards supporting boys and men to reflect on their role in stopping Gender based violence.

ACTIVITY ELEVEN: SEEING MY SISTERS

Aim: To open up a discussion about the role of men in overcoming gender-based violence.

Age: 15+

Time: 15-20 mins

Step one: Read the poem "Breathe" by Timo GK

Step two: Ask the participants: "What stood out to you listening to this poem?"

Step three: Follow up questions;

What has the narrator witnessed?

How did this impact him?

How do you think GBV would change if men and boys saw girls and women as equals?

ACTIVITY TWELVE: BEING AN ALLY

Aim: To create an image that reflects the group's understanding about the role of men and boys in addressing gender-based violence.

Age: 15+

Time: 30 mins

Materials: Large piece of paper, markers

Step one: Reflect with the group on what they think men's role should be in raising awareness of gender-based violence. Would does this look like? What active things can men can do to be in solidarity with women? Some examples could include not interrupting women when they are talking about their experience; Saying something if someone talks about women or girls in a derogatory manner; Avoiding walking behind a woman alone by crossing to the other side of the street

Step two: Draw the outline of a man with a speech bubbles. Draw in the values, attitudes, and actions that could help end GBV. Write what a man or boy might say in different situations ie. if a woman/girl is telling them about an experience, or if someone is speaking about women/girls in a derogatory manner. This can be done as a whole group, or in small groups.

Step three: You could take photos of the images and share on social media.

ACTIVITY THIRTEEN: "HOW TO BE AN ALLY" POEM

Aim: To explore the values, behavior and attitudes of someone who is an ally in stopping Gender based violence.

Age: 15+

Time: 30 mins

Step One: Tell the group that everyone is going to write a poem called "How to be an ally".

Step Two: Invite the participants to create a list poem, including 10 steps to be an ally. They can write it as advice to their own gender, or a different gender. Tell the participants not to overthink it. Give them 5 minutes to write, and then 2 mins to refine.

Step Three: Invite participants to share their poems with a partner. Discuss what things did they have in common, what was different?

Step Four: Bring the group back together and ask for volunteers to read their poem. Ask for comments about what were some overall similarities and differences about what it means to be an ally.

ACTIVITY FOURTEEN: I PLEDGE...

Aim: To reflect on what the group has learned through the GBV sessions together.

Age: 15+

Time: 30 mins

Step one: Ask the participants to share what it's been like for them to participate in this workshop series. Some questions could be: What did you find surprising? What was uncomfortable? What was fun? What did they learn?

Step two: Tell the participants that as we come to a close, we are going to make a pledge to help end gender based violence. Tell participants that they will each say "I pledge, followed by a change they plan to make".

Examples might include:

I pledge to use my voice to speak out against GBV

I pledge to not blame victims

I pledge to think more critically about newspaper headlines

I pledge to step in and say something if a girl or woman is being spoken about in a degrading way

I pledge to believe in myself

Step three: Each person shares their pledge. The leader could write these down and say them back at the end as a group poem. Alternatively, the pledge could be written up and displayed in the youth centre.



*Nurturing
Change-Makers
Imagining a
better World*

