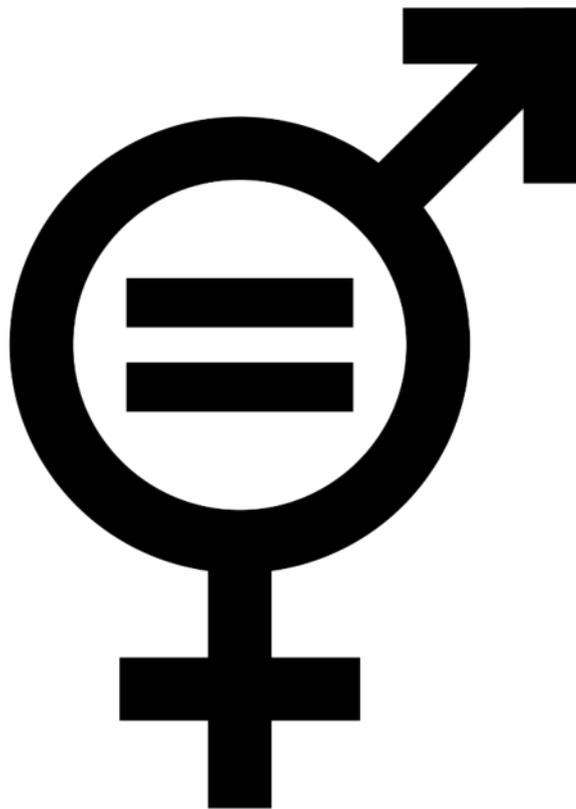


# GENDER EQUALITY



Clara Sánchez Miranda

Let me tell you some stories of **a world full of fear and vulnerability**. A world in which people die and suffer. It is not far away and it is not made up. Maybe you have not noticed yet. But it is my world, our world.

I wake up. I cannot hear my own voice although I feel my vocal chords aching. I am trying to speak up, but nobody will look.

I dress up fast, but then I must slow down. I must be careful, to choose carefully. Is this skirt too short? I am not shaved. Now it is too long, what would they say? I pretend not to care. I look at myself in the mirror, I make up my face. Mum says it is too much, their looks feel like it is not enough. My brother wears the same as yesterday.

On my way to school some old men whistle. They comment on my too short skirt. I regret the too much make up. I walk faster, I am scared. **Was this my fault?**

**[A woman is raped every eight hours in Spain]**

At school, I spend the hours wondering... **am I too tall or too short, too blonde or too dark-haired, too thin or too fat?**

I cannot remember how many women inventors, scientists, poets, philosophers, painters or architects I have studied at school. Could you help me? **I remember all the men.**

Someone has texted me. He noticed my skirt. He says I look pretty. Was it worthy? I guess. He says he is jealous about my best friend. He says I am too pretty and he wants me only for himself. He checks up on me all day. Nobody liked me so much before this way. It feels great.

He says my friend has a crush on me and asks me not to talk to him again. Doesn't he trust me? He says I am too special and he wants me only for himself. He won't change his mind and holds me tight, too tight. **I am scared, but nobody liked me before this way.**

**[Only in Spain 885 women have been murdered by their partners or ex-partners in the last 15 years.]**

***"I do not wish them [women] to have power over men; but over themselves." (Mary Wollstonecraft).***

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Now let me introduce you to Waris. Born in Somalia into a nomadic family, she was educated by an intuitive mother but submissive mother, and an authoritarian father. She does not know exactly her own age. Is it 32? What she cannot forget, is that around five, she was mutilated. She was no taller than a goat and her mother held her while an old woman sectioned her clitoris and

the inside of her vagina. Then she sewed the wound. "Only a tiny opening the size of a matchstick was left to urinate and menstruate", tells Waris.

"In the midst of my pain I saw my mother's, I felt the beat of her heart" writes the somalian model. "She did not agree but I had to give in, so that I could get married and be accepted. That is when I said to myself: 'I am not going to suffer what she is suffering, I will not live this life of impotence or force my daughters to do what I do not want for them" she affirms when evoking that atrocity. It was the beginning of a rebellion that pushed her at age 13 to escape from her hut and her familiar world to get rid of a marriage arranged by her father with an older man. "It was an inner voice that made me make the decision to flee," she says. The same conviction that prompted her, already in Mogadishu, to ask her uncles to help her travel to London to work as a maid. Four years later, a photographer discovered her luminous face.

***"Gender is between your ears, not between your legs" (Chaz Bono)***

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***"Equality is the soul of liberty; there is, in fact, no liberty without it" (Frances Wright).***

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Although gender equality is a constitutional principle which stipulates that men and women are equal under the law, discriminatory legislation against woman still abound worldwide. The truth is that gender equality is still a battle to fight.

There is no social progress without equality and the economic growth cannot be boosted without valuing the woman for what she is. According to a OECD study, the GDP of the North Africa and East countries could grow in 575.000 million dollars with real gender equality.

**Women represent half of the worldwide population. But most of them are invisible.**

Femicide is the most exaggerated expression of the scale of violence against women.

But here are some other facts:

Being born as a woman in some countries is considered as a disgrace, like having a congenital defect. Son preference is practiced most widely in Southeast Asian countries, Middle Eastern and North African countries and in some sub-Saharan African countries. There is also some evidence of abnormal sex ratios in mortality figures in some Latin American countries. In these countries, there is a tendency to abort girls and even to female infanticide performed in very different and terrifying ways.

Women continue to be denied their rights in many parts of the world, particularly in Islamic countries where **they frequently are treated as property rather than as humans**. Rights that men have possessed for ages: the right to education, health, work, political participation and above all, the right to be safe.

Nowadays, **more than three million of girls undergo female genital mutilation every year**.

In India, a woman is traditionally considered to be complete when she marries- preferably to someone chosen by her parents. Being single, divorced or a widow carries a very harsh social stigma. The average age at marriage for girls ranges between 11 and 14 years old, making it very difficult to complete education. As an Indian proverb says “investing in a girl is like watering in a neighbor’s garden”.

And there is no need to travel far away to look for injustice: worldwide, women’s salary is a 24% lower than men’s. **Women are still the poorest population in the world**. Although they perform nearly two-thirds of the work hours, they receive only 10% of the world’s incomes and the 1% of the properties.

In developed countries, the percentage of women executive and leadership jobs is still very low. Moreover, many programs ask women to adopt more masculine styles in order to succeed, instead of looking for diversity.

Yes, we may have made some progress in the developed countries: the right to vote, to get a divorce, to abortion, to access education... but these changes have been relatively recent and there is still a certain space between what is written and reality. Even if the countries where rights are recognized, implementation is limited and sometimes doesn’t exist.

Therefore, gender equality is still an unresolved issue that need to be tackled through politics, culture and education.

***“The test for whether or not you can hold a job should not be the arrangement of your chromosomes” (Bella Abzug)***

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## **NEWS FROM NEWSPAPERS:**

### **Media presents women as “sex objects” and abuses this stereotype.**

Women that work in TV are required to “be pretty” as well as being professional in their work, while these physical qualities are not required in men. We can clearly consider this a discrimination act.

### **80% of women who have been abused are isolated from their own environment**

Red Cross is warning the population about these high and worrying figures.

### **Police is investigating a man who burned his wife alive in Antioquia**

The victim, a 31-year-old woman who worked as a dental surgeon, was admitted in the intensive care unit in San Vicente de Paúl Hospital.

### **Man who burned his partner alive could be released**

This man sprayed her with ethyl alcohol and then set her alight in his own apartment located in the centre of the capital.

### **Eliana is the eighth foreigners who has been killed by her partner in Spain**

She reported him to the police for maltreatment and he murdered her. Eliana’s family is now fighting to get the custody of their two children.

So far this year, 24 women have been killed in Spain by their partners; eight of them were born abroad.

### **Six female workers were fired from the petrol station where they were working as they refused to wear a skirt.**

These workers, who refused to use the uniform prescribed, have been suffering harassment from their boss who threatened them to not renovate their contracts if they did not wear the skirt.

### **Grethcen Carlson, a journalist from FOX News, has reported his manager for sexual abuse**

The former TV presenter made a claim last Wednesday against the president of the television network, Roger Ailies, stating that he fired her last month after she refused to accept the sexual insinuation he was making towards her...he said to her “I think you and I should have had sex a long time ago”

### **Economic gap between women and men will take still 71 years to disappear**

According to a report written by the OIT, Spanish women get paid 17% less than men and female workers with children receive a salary 5% lower than those who do not have children. Even though, the gap is getting smaller, we will need to wait until the end of the century to see a society where men and women get paid the same amount of money.

### **Every year, 3 million women and female children are victims of female circumcision**

Even though, this practice is illegal in 59 countries, more than 200 million girls have suffered this mutilation. Talking about this practice is still considered as a taboo before the girls reached the age of 15.

“Do not shout, otherwise your family will be ashamed of you and 20 years later we will still remind you that you were not brave enough”

### **Why women do not have an important role in Media?**

Out of 6 names that appear on the media, 5 of them belong to male workers. According to North American researchers who have analysed thousands of headings with big data techniques, there is a huge informative gap between women and men. This gap is more evident when we talk about politicians, spokespersons and managers

### **In Spain, just 13 per cent of women have a “high Rank” position**

31 per cent of the companies do not have any women with a senior position working for their companies, this percentage raises when we talk about companies inside the Continuous Market

### **Pregnant woman faces death after choosing who she wanted to marry**

A pregnant woman has been sentenced to 100 lashings for getting married with the man she had chosen. Her family was the one sentencing her. This reveals how fragile the situation of the women in Pakistan is and the crimes that can take place to protect the honour of the family

### **Sudan woman faces death after converting to Christianity**

Meriam Yehya Ibrahim, a woman who was eight months pregnant, has been arrested with her one-year-old child.

She has also been sentenced to 100 lashings before being executed.

**Young female was stoned to death in Afghanistan after having being accused of adultery**

It seems that Rokshana`s family arranged a marriage with a man older than her against her will. Rokshana had a relationship with a 23-year-old man. He was sentenced to 100 lashings while she was sentenced to death.

**A six-year-old girl was forced to marry a 55 year-old in exchange of a sheep**

A 55-year-old man has been arrested in Afghanistan after getting married with a 6-year-old girl. The girl was forced by his dad, who also has been arrested. Dad wanted to exchange his daughter for a sheep, rice, sugar, tea and cooking oil.

***“The most important factor in determining whether you Will succeed isn’t your gender-it’s you “ (Angela Braly).***