



WOMEN IN AFRICA  
EMPOWERING ENTREPRENEURS, CONNECTING GLOBALLY.

# POSITIVELY, MEN

ENGAGED FOR POSITIVE  
MASCULINITIES  
AND GENDER EQUALITY



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## DISCLAIMER

This booklet gathers a selection of the testimonials that UNESCO received in the framework of its 'Positively men' campaign that was launched in 2021 under the patronage of the Permanent Delegations of Iceland and Oman, Co-Chairs of the UNESCO Group of Friends for Gender Equality. Such testimonials come from people from all parts of the globe who are engaged and practicing different forms of positive masculinity.

The ideas and opinions expressed in this publication are those of the interviewees and do not necessarily reflect the views of UNESCO or Women In Africa.



## SHORT SUMMARY

UNESCO is committed to making a positive and lasting contribution to women's empowerment and gender equality around the world. At UNESCO, we believe that no society can thrive when girls remain out of school, that no country can take up technological challenges if the scientific fields exclude women, that no community can grow healthy and cohesive until all forms of gender-based violence are eradicated.

This is why gender equality is a global priority of UNESCO. Overcoming these challenges requires the full engagement of men and women. Unfortunately, evidence suggests that many men still feel unconcerned by efforts in favor of gender equality.

UNESCO has been promoting positive men's roles and positions for more than two decades. In 1997, UNESCO organized an Expert Group Meeting on Male Roles and Masculinities in the Perspective of a Culture of Peace. More recently, UNESCO launched a series of consultations and global initiatives to engage with men and boys for gender equality.

Women In Africa (WIA) is the foremost international platform dedicated to the economic development and support of African women entrepreneurs. WIA believes that African women, as agents of action, change and impact on the economies, are the future of the continent.

Women In Africa is committed to the fight for gender equality to build a more egalitarian world between women and men.

Through the program WIA AMOYA, each year WIA selects and awards the African Man of the Year for his outstanding commitment to promoting and encouraging women in the socio-economic landscapes of the continent. Also, men champion women through Women In Africa mentoring programs designed for African women entrepreneurs.

UNESCO and Women In Africa have decided to join forces through the campaign "Positively, Men: engaged for positive masculinities and gender equality" with the objective to promote attitudes that could be easily replicated at local level. These attitudes are aimed at :

- 1 **Preventing male violence and aggression such as bullying in schools, and gangs, verbal or physical violence against women and gender-based violence in general;**
- 2 **Supporting women's rights and empowerment such as girls' right to education, artistic freedom of women, increasing women's autonomy and leadership;**
- 3 **Supporting care and affection such as active fatherhood engagement, providing care to children or the elderly, expressing positive emotions, encouraging peers to ask for help when they need it;**
- 4 **Engaging with the community, especially men, to promote and live the values of respect for diversity and gender equality, rejecting gender stereotypes and speaking out in case of gender-based discrimination.**

We believe that gender equality should be everybody's business. By giving a voice to positive examples of men's engagement, we want to encourage more men to question their own behaviours and bias, and to take action for the promotion of gender equality and women's empowerment for the benefit of all.



## FOREWORD



**Jamila Seftaoui**

Director for Gender Equality at UNESCO



**Hafsat Abiola**

President of Women In Africa

Women and girls do not exist in a vacuum. They are part of families, communities, and countries. Change comes slowly and unevenly; but it is no longer to foresee a time when men and women will stand together as equals in a world that is inclusive. Such a time may be two hundred plus years from now, according to forecasts by the World Economic Forum.

Or it could be sooner; that is if men, like the ones we feature in this publication, decide to take action to bring about a gender equal world.

We are witnessing a global demand to tackle gender inequalities more effectively and more holistically, and to address the root causes of violence, discrimination, and gender stereotypes.

According to an IPSOS study conducted across 27 countries, 65% of respondents believe that gender equality will not be achieved unless men contribute to and foster women's rights and empowerment (Ipsos 2019).

**If we get rid of harmful stereotypes and norms, we could reduce sexual violence by at least 69% and eliminate at least 41% of traffic accidents, 40% of bullying and violence, 39% of suicides, and 4% of depressive symptoms among men, every year (Promundo).**

This is why UNESCO's Division for Gender Equality and Women In Africa have decided to join forces around

a new initiative to propose transformative narratives that can inspire and mobilise men worldwide to take action in favour of Gender Equality: "Positively, Men".

The men who we highlight here are actively opening the way to the call of the time. They have turned their backs on a past defined by the many ways society dominated women. And in the long honoured tradition of the griots in many of Africa's cultures, we seek to share their stories with you.

Be they photographers, designers, entrepreneurs, students, or activists, these men seem very different one from another, but they are all united by a commitment to building safer and more equal communities for all.

We also feature some stories from women, because there can be no deconstruction of toxic forms of masculinities without them. We hope you will be as inspired by them as we are.

If you are a proponent of what's to come, and even if you aren't, this collection of reflections of men supporting women is for you. Either to encourage you on your journey or to nudge you to begin.

A new world is not only possible, it is on her way, Arundhati Roy once said. One day, we will be living in that world where women and men are valued equally. And more, we would know that we called that world into being.





## NAIRA DAVLASHYAN

JOURNALIST

FRANCE

“WHEN WE TALK ABOUT  
GENDER EQUALITY,  
WE THINK ABOUT WOMEN.  
WE WANT TO CHANGE  
OUR PERSPECTIVE AND  
SEE HOW MEN CAN ALSO  
BE CONTRIBUTING  
TOWARDS EQUALITY.”

**Naira Davlashyan is a journalist at Euronews. Together with colleagues, Naira created a podcast entitled “Cry Like A Boy”.**

By focusing on men challenging gender stereotypes and their roles as allies, Naira and her team share positive messages to women and men. “With our podcast, we want to focus on healthy masculinity, so we don’t stigmatize men, guiding them to healthy behaviours.”

Through on-the-ground reports made by local journalists and in-studio discussions with experts, Naira and her colleagues share encouraging stories and testimonials of men, living in five selected African countries, willing to inspire a global audience.

The sharing of unique stories has made the Cry Like A Boy podcast achieve an audience of over 200 000 people around the world and has been recognised as the Best Digital Audio Project at the Europe Digital Media Awards 2021.

Thanks to this successful way to promote gender equality and positive masculinities, Naira and her team are ready to innovate and pursue other dynamic approaches to exploring positive masculinities.

**Nearly 60% of people believe that  
it is rare to see men speaking out  
against gender discriminations.**

(Source: Promundo 2019)



## MOHAMED EL SERY

**WOMEN IN BUSINESS MENTOR**  
EGYPT

“I AM COMPLETELY IN FAVOUR OF MEN WHO REALLY SUPPORT WOMEN, THEIR DAUGHTERS, MOTHERS OR FEMALE CO-WORKERS BECAUSE THIS IS ACTUALLY WHERE THE MEN SHOULD BE.”

**Mohamed El Sery advocates for women's and girls' economic empowerment and independence.**

Mohamed is the founder and head of Mentors', a business community which gives opportunities to all, men and women, willing to create, develop and grow their own businesses.

Conscious of the specific issues faced by women and girls, he has committed to offer equal career opportunities for women and girls, in order to ensure their economic independence and support successful and inspiring women for the next generations of

**Only 8% of the Fortune 500**

**CEOs are women.**

(Source: Fortune 500)



women.

***“It's essential to focus on digital transformation to support women, their business and their life.”***

The COVID-19 pandemic has reinforced Mohamed's commitment, noticing how crucial the role of women is. In addition to management competences, he provides digital skills to women and girls and endeavours to close the gender digital gap as the world gets increasingly connected.

A healthy and equal environment, whether physical or virtual, is a necessity for thriving societies. Mohamed encourages men to support women and girls, as he is convinced that this is a greater value than just one's successful career.



## ZICHUAN GAN

MASCULINITY & INCLUSION STUDENT WRITER  
CANADA

"I DEDICATE MY RESEARCH  
TO GENDER STUDIES  
BECAUSE I WANT  
TO HELP PEOPLE OVERCOME  
GENDER-BASED DISCRIMINATION."

**Zichuan Gan is a young advocate for inclusion and gender equality.** Having lived in China, France and Canada, he has had the chance to discover different approaches to gender issues around the world.

Zichuan Gan decided to combine his interest for gender issues with his passion for books by studying comparative literature and gender studies.

**More than 30% of the world's  
students have been  
victims of bullying.**

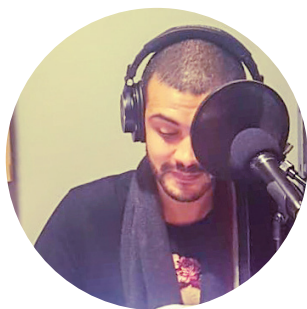
(Source: UNESCO)

Through his academic research and articles, Zichuan uses the art of literature to highlight the tragic consequences of toxic masculinity and lack of diversity in different societies.

This desire to foster inclusion and gender equality through literature can be explained by his personal story, as he knew that gender-based discrimination existed very early on, even in elementary school, but there was no support and nobody to discuss with in a comprehensive manner.

Taking refuge in books, he succeeded to cope with bullying and discrimination. To share the benefits of reading and to foster discussions on diversity, Zichuan Gan regularly participates in workshops at his university in Montreal, where students are invited to share their thoughts.

By fostering these discussions, Zichuan encourages men and young boys to deconstruct toxic masculinities and to advocate for inclusion, which are necessary steps to counter larger societal problems, such as gender-based violence, sexual assault and gun violence.



## SOUFIANE HENNANI

RESEARCHER IN MEDICAL BIOLOGY & GENDER DIVERSITY ACTIVIST  
MOROCCO

“FOR ME, IT IS IMPORTANT TO SENSITIZE YOUTH BECAUSE I KNOW HOW YOUNG PEOPLE, ESPECIALLY YOUNG MEN, TALK ABOUT WOMEN AND HOW THEY EXPRESS THEIR EMOTIONS. IF A MAN IS AN ALLY OF WOMEN TODAY, IT IS STILL DIFFICULT TO TALK ABOUT IT.”

**From Morocco, Soufiane Hennani acts for gender equality by promoting positive masculinity. He is a young doctoral researcher in medical biology, activist, and founder of a youth community.**

Soufiane adds to his list of skills the role of creator of the Machi Rojola podcast. Through this podcast, he spreads ideas about positive masculinities and deconstructs toxic forms of masculinity in his society.

Feminism, religion, gender stereotypes, men's health are some of the topics, among many, that Soufiane decided to discuss with experts.

For him, the entire society has to feel concerned about this podcast, Soufiane wishes for young men and women to listen to it, believing that they are the important source of change for the next generation: “I am sure that future generations won't accept to find themselves in a society where dominant masculinity harms women.”



As a researcher in science, specifically biology, Soufiane faces up to criticism and lack of understanding of his interest in gender and masculinities.

By imagining the society as a body composed of muscles and organs, Soufiane proposes several diagnoses to heal his community from several forms of illness, including toxic masculinities and gender inequalities.

**According to an international**

**survey coordinated in 2016,**

**around 61,6% of men in Morocco**

**agreed that to be a man**

**you need to be tough.**

(Source: IMAGES/UNWOMEN)



## JOSHUA MARTINEZ

UNIVERSITY ACTIVIST  
MEXICO

“WE MAKE THE MISTAKE OF  
THINKING THAT PATRIARCHY ONLY  
BENEFITS US, WITHOUT NOTICING  
HOW IT CONSTRAINS US.  
VIOLENCE AFFECTS OUR PERSONAL  
RELATIONSHIPS, OUR HEALTH,  
AND LIFE PERSPECTIVES.  
IT PREVENTS US FROM  
BECOMING FULFILLED  
CITIZENS, FRIENDS AND  
FAMILY MEMBERS.”

**Joshua Martinez works at the Faculty of Engineering at UNAM, in Mexico, a place that he describes as predominantly masculine, where for a long time he exercised a complicit masculinity that allowed him to succeed professionally.**

As he became involved in feminist movements within the faculty, he started to realize that there was something wrong and oppressive in the way men socialize and limit opportunities for others.

Through the angle of feminism, violence around him became visible and recognizable. He decided to volunteer to create a safer space for everyone, to get trained and promote projects that would allow the faculty to be on the path to achieving equality.

He started to participate in the Commission for Gender Equality of the Faculty of Engineering of UNAM and to carry out workshops with men to make them aware of their own gender bias.

Joshua meets many men who do not acknowledge gender inequalities, who refuse to address violence and who attack or ridicule the efforts of other men to overcome gender stereotypes. He also sees men who claim to advocate for gender equality, but who actually do not translate their statements in concrete transformative actions.

Yet, when Joshua questions these men about the changes that they want to see in their community for future generations to live freely and safely, most of them end up realizing that changing the structural gender norms is necessary, and that their conscious engagement is needed to stop harming women and different gender groups and ensure a better future for all.

**Across 27 countries, two thirds of  
men and women believe that gender  
equality won't be achieved  
unless men take action to  
support women's rights.**

(Source: Ipsos 2019)





## ALLAN NUME

**DISABILITY INCLUSION ACTIVIST AND CO-CREATOR OF A SEXUAL  
AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH CENTRE FOR DISABLED GIRLS AND WOMEN  
UGANDA**

“WE NEED AN ORGANIZATION  
WHICH PUTS MEN WHO  
CHAMPION WOMEN’S RIGHTS  
ON THE FRONT LINE OF  
GENDER EQUALITY TOGETHER  
WITH WOMEN.”

**Allan Nume Ogwang is an activist engaged for disabled girls’ and women’s rights. Living with a disability, Allan knows exactly how it feels to be left out. Growing up, he suffered from discrimination and abuse in his community, at schools and in his own household.**

Allan faced discrimination and exclusion in his community because of his disabilities, and during this difficult time, he said: “Women were the only ones beside me, to support me, they were compassionate and encouraging.”

**Women with disabilities are**

**2x more likely to experience violence**

**from family members and**

**partners in comparison to**

**women without disabilities.**

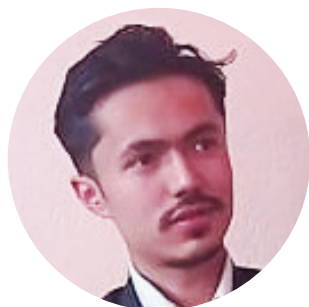


He then decided to devote his time to support women and girls with disabilities/impairments, by promoting disability inclusion and gender equality as crucial values.

As the founder of the NGO Gulu Women With Disabilities Union (GUWODU) and as an active Disability Inclusion Facilitator with Light for the World Uganda, he works to promote disability inclusion and protect girls and women with disabilities from all forms of discrimination and violence.

His strong commitment fueled him to create the first Accessible Reproductive Health Care Clinic for Disabled Girls and Women in Uganda.

Willing to scale up his work, Allan is calling for more action from men, funding organisations and the international community, including local governments to contribute to eradicating gender-disability-based inequalities. Everyone should be included as part of the community and everyone should contribute towards equality.



## BIKASH POKHAREL

YOUTH ENTREPRENEUR & RESEARCHER

NEPAL

“OPPORTUNITIES HAVE TO BE EQUALLY GIVEN TO WOMEN AND MEN. THE PROVISION OF DIGITAL SKILLS AND TRAINING IS KEY IN ALIGNING WITH GENDER EQUALITY ESPECIALLY IN NEPAL AND OTHER DEVELOPING COUNTRIES.”

**After witnessing the devastation caused by the 2015 earthquake in Nepal, Bikash decided to be a game changer. Rebuilding from this catastrophe was difficult for most communities and the impact was felt mostly by the youth, women and girls.**

In a bid to build back better, he raised funds to rebuild a local public school, which was severely destroyed. From then on, Bikash started using his tech background to inspire the youth in his region about positivity, inclusivity and gender equality.



In local communities, he empowers youth through tech-related lessons and this extends to confidence building sessions, presentation skills, coaching, mentoring and tutoring women and girls.

In 2018, he founded OnlineKaam, a digital employment marketplace based in Nepal that focuses on connecting youth, people living with disabilities, women and professionals with suitable employment opportunities.

Bikash believes that women's empowerment is a must for society and that digital skills allow women and girls to access many opportunities for employment, self-development, leadership, innovation and societal progress.

**Multi-country estimates show**

**that girls with disabilities are more**

**likely to be out of school than**

**both boys with disabilities**

**and girls without disabilities.**

(Source: UNGEI 2021)



## LUCIANO RAMOS

**BLACK PATERNITY ADVOCATE AND WRITER**

BRAZIL

"I WAS RAISED IN A FAMILY WITHOUT A PATERNAL PRESENCE. I GREW UP UNDERSTANDING THAT THE NORMALIZATION OF PATERNAL ABSENCE IS ALSO BASED ON MACHISMO. MEN NEED TO UNDERSTAND THAT THE CARE AND PROTECTION OF CHILDREN ALSO DEPEND ON THEM."

**Luciano Ramos is a Brazilian advocate for gender equality and positive masculinities, more precisely to promote engaged paternity among black men.**

He started his involvement by being a counsellor for children's and teenagers' rights. Luciano has found his passion for human rights within the family sphere. Each phase in the life of a child is important and needs to be carefully supported by the parents.



He decided to strengthen his commitment by working on education, gender, sexuality, masculinities and fatherhood.

He interacts with men to encourage them to express their emotions, to discuss their role as fathers and to remind them of the consequences of toxic masculinity, not just on men but also on women and children.

He recently published a book for children entitled *Quinzinho*, which tells the story of a son and his loving father depicting alternative fatherhood and positive masculinity.



## JAVIER ROYO

**GENDER AND SOCIAL ILLUSTRATOR-GRAPHIC DESIGNER & COMIC BOOK AUTHOR**  
SPAIN

“THE GREAT REVOLUTION  
OF THE 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY IS  
GENDER EQUALITY,  
AND IT CAN ONLY  
BE ACHIEVED BY  
REMOVING ALL THOSE  
MASKS THAT MASCULINITY  
HAS BEEN IMPOSING ON US.”

**Javier Royo is a well-known gender and social illustrator, graphic designer and writer from Spain.**

Noticing the power of graphic art and cartoons, he uses his art as a tool to denounce inequalities and to criticize the news with more than a touch of humour.

His designs and illustrations are distributed around Europe, North and South America and Asia. He shares his artistic abilities with several publishing houses and national newspapers.

Javier extends his work with personal and professional projects which are now concrete actions towards positive masculinities and gender equality.

To overcome gender barriers, he writes comic books directly related to machismo and gender stereotypes. He combines humour and art, his signature, to make people laugh, but, at the same time, to make them realize that gender inequalities cannot be ignored.



**A majority of media content portrays**

**women in stereotypical roles.**

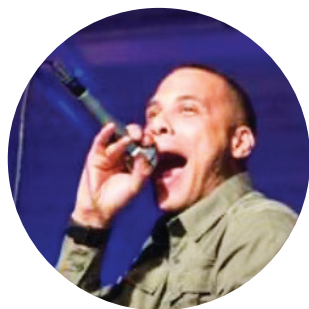
**Only 4% of all newspapers,**

**radio and TV reports worldwide**

**challenge gender stereotypes.**

(Source: International Media Support 2020)





## LUCAS SALMON

POSITIVE-LANGUAGE MUSIC COACH & RECORD/STUDIO FOUNDER  
NORWAY

“I HAVE WORKED WITH MUSIC,  
HIP HOP AND RAP, WHICH  
TEND TO HAVE DEROGATORY  
LANGUAGE WHEN IT COMES  
TO WOMEN, SO I WORK  
WITH MEN AND BOYS TO  
MAKE MUSIC A TOOL FOR  
ENGAGEMENT AND EQUALITY”



**Being raised by his mother and grandmother, he witnessed how challenging it was for his mother to be the backbone and driving force of the family.** This challenged him to question himself and encourage men to become positive examples of masculinity.

Of Caribbean and British descent, Lucas Salmon is a blogger, writer, public speaker and founder of Respect Incorporated Creative Order (RICO) – a music and art project where he integrates music with positive language to unite people. The inspiration for this project is his late brother Rico, who was accidentally killed in a shootout showdown in London in 2011. Lucas also works in a language school for displaced people coming to Norway from other countries.

By incorporating positive masculinity into these two platforms – music and language – he brings people together for social change.

Lucas conducts activities that require young people to transform their personal stories and life experiences into song, without derogatory language. He also worked with young women who have always wanted to do rap music but had neither the platform nor the self-confidence while entering a male-dominated industry: “I saw the need to create girls’ groups, where we would talk about different issues that they face, family, society and how the music industry deals with women rappers”.

Overall, his work contributes to a hip-hop culture without hate speech and one that empowers women and young people.

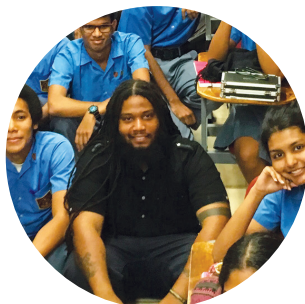
**Studies show that, on average,**

**women artists earn 25% less**

**than their male counterparts.**

(Source: The Conversation 2020 - Australia)





## AMÍLCAR SANATAN

WRITER AND ACTIVIST FOR PEACE AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC TRANSFORMATION  
TRINIDAD & TOBAGO

“IN MY CULTURE,  
WE HAVE TWO  
DESIGNATIONS FOR  
THE STAGES OF MANHOOD,  
SMALL MAN AND BIG BOY.  
NEITHER OF THESE  
CONSTRUCTS OF  
MANHOOD MAKE  
BOYS AND MEN  
MORE FREE”

**“A ‘small man’ refers to a boy who perpetually tries to live up to the ideals of an adult and a ‘big boy’ is a reference to an adult with social and economic power over others.”**

Amílcar Sanatan is researcher, activist and writer. He has long worked in environments where violence and power over others defined the standards of masculinity. He addresses issues of structural gender norms and cultural standards of masculinity, specifically gun and gang violence.

Environments where young men’s masculinity was rooted in dominance, which included the possession of guns, deeply worried Amílcar, especially when his peers were both perpetrators and victims of violence. This propelled him to engage young men for social change.



To him, gun violence is an expression of a toxic form of masculinity and promoting gender equality is imperative to address this issue.

As an writer, Amílcar has reached out to young men through literature festivals, poetry, student research opportunities and youth conferences. Through TEDx Port of Spain, he enlightened a wider audience about the social ills resulting from toxic forms of masculinity.

**Men make up more than 80%**

**of both perpetrators and**

**victims of gun violence.**

(Source : The Washington Post, 2019)



## RICHARD SIAW

YOUTH EMPOWERMENT ADVOCATE & HUMAN RIGHTS ACTIVIST  
GHANA

“GROWING UP, I NEVER FELT LIKE THE AVERAGE MAN. I DIDN'T LIKE SPORTS, I WASN'T STRONG. THERE WAS SOMETHING DEEP WITHIN ME THAT JUST WANTED TO BE ME WITHOUT HAVING TO FIT AN EXPECTATION OF WHAT A MAN SHOULD BE LIKE.”

**Richard Siaw never understood the constant pressure to be stronger and more able than a woman in most aspects of societal life. As a young man who just wanted to be Richard and not be seen just as a “man,” this pressure made him uncomfortable.**

When he realized that he was living in a toxic environment, he decided to be a voice to inspire positive masculinity and speak up against gender-based violence. As a result, Richard became the founder of VOIICE Community (Voice of Inspiring Inclusive Change Equitably) in Ghana.

VOIICE encourages young people to own their voices against different issues, such as violence, discrimination, stereotypes, sexual abuse or elderly abuse on witchcraft accusations. Richard empowers them to challenge certain perspectives towards positive masculinity.



He hosts panel discussions, youth shows, video commentaries, debates and various activities aimed at highlighting the experiences and providing safe spaces to victims of violence and injustice. This includes male survivors of rape, elderly women accused of witchcraft and victims of toxic forms of masculinity. He also engages youth through a podcast, a writing column and media outlets where he advocates for social change.

Richard believes that when men speak up against injustices, perpetrators will lose their status in society, thus remain in the minority and hopefully desire to embrace this change.

**COVID-19 pandemic is likely  
to cause a one-third reduction  
in progress towards ending  
gender-based violence by 2030.**

(Source: UNFPA).



## NAILA TARIQ

CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGIST AND COUNSELLOR  
KENYA

"I HAVE SEEN NUMEROUS  
CASES WHERE WOMEN  
ARE OFTEN THE ONES  
SEEKING HELP AFTER  
HAVING EXPERIENCED  
SOME SORT OF  
EMOTIONAL OR PHYSICAL  
ABUSE FROM THEIR MALE PARTNER."

**Growing up, Naila Tariq was raised to consider education and emotional expression as basic human rights. As a psychologist and counsellor, she noticed that men often struggle to express their emotions due to social pressure.**

Her work centers on men's emotions and toxic masculinity. She notes the importance of healthy forms of expression in men because the lack thereof is the root of many societal problems such as gender-based violence and the abuse of women.

As a champion for gender equality, she assists men to address their emotions, mental health issues and toxic masculinity.

Naila believes that society should encourage mindfulness, emotion regulation techniques and healthy expressions of people's needs.

Through peer and tele-counselling, health psychology and cognitive behavioural therapy, she hopes that men will strive for better mental health and gender equality.

**Globally, an estimated 243 million  
women and girls aged 15 to 49  
have been subjected to sexual and/or  
physical violence by an intimate  
partner in 2019.**

(Source: UN Women)



## MICHAEL TUBES

**MUSIC AND DOCUMENTARY PHOTOGRAPHER**

UNITED KINGDOM OF GREAT BRITAIN AND NORTHERN IRELAND

“IMAGE IS SO POWERFUL THAT IT CAN CHANGE OUR PERCEPTION. I FELT THAT IT IS HIGH TIME THAT, AS A DOCUMENTARY PHOTOGRAPHER, I SHOWCASE EXACTLY WHAT THESE WOMEN ARE MADE OF, TO SHOW THEIR TALENT AND HARD WORK AND TO CHANGE PEOPLE’S PERCEPTION.”



**As a music and documentary photographer, Michael Tubes witnessed injustices against women in music. Seeing that women worked twice as hard to get half the success of their counterparts, Michael was motivated to take action.**



As the founder of Sounds of Africa, he recently conducted a “Women in African Music” exhibition, which showcased the experiences of women artists in the African music industry.

In his fight for gender equality, Michael’s photography captures performances as well as “behind the scenes”, highlighting some of the issues that women face in art spaces.

Through his work with top women artists such as Yemi Alade, Tiwa Savage and Angélique Kidjo, Michael hopes to continue using visual representation to advance gender equality and to engage more men in advocating for equality in all spaces.





## REN CHUNG YU

**WOMEN'S RIGHTS ACTIVIST**  
MALAYSIA

"IT DIDN'T OCCUR TO ME AS STRANGE OR UNUSUAL TO JOIN A WOMEN'S RIGHTS NGO. BUT AT THE TIME, I WAS THE ONLY MAN IN THE ORGANIZATION."

**Ren Chung Yu is the Advocacy Director and Deputy Executive Director of the NGO Women's Aid Organisation. For almost ten years, Ren Chung has coordinated actions and campaigns promoting gender equality and women's rights.**

With colleagues and other stakeholders, he has worked on efforts leading to the setting up of the Malaysian National Committee on Domestic Violence, the creation of domestic violence guidelines for government agencies, publication of research on gender-based discrimination and violence and other efforts.

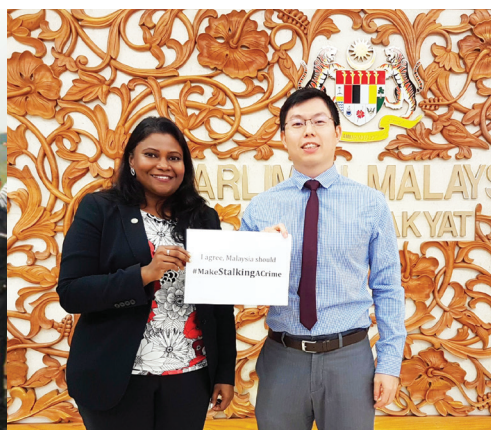
Learning from role models and women in his life, Ren Chung decided to work in human rights and women's empowerment. He continues to advocate for gender equality, including for laws to prohibit discrimination at work, and for stalking to be criminalized.

He is also advocating for the establishment of paternity leave schemes for all working fathers, believing in paternity leave as a way to enable men to contribute more equally at home: "We need laws and policies to enable men to be able to take on more responsibilities at home. Measures like paternity leave, and flexible work arrangement for both parents are necessary."

**In 2020, women represent**

**only 28.3% in management.**

(Source: ILO)





## CONCLUSIONS

From music to comics, fatherhood to men's mental health, digital skills to entrepreneurship and science education, this campaign shows that gender inequalities can be tackled through numerous and diverse actions, also by men.

These unique testimonials from men and women across the globe tell stories of innovative and impactful actions to inspire communities to act against gendered discriminatory or violent behaviours and stereotypes.

Whilst we have depicted only a few of the many inspiring stories, this campaign is just the beginning of our institutional commitment to address gender equality from a masculinity perspective.

This is part of the bigger "Positively, Men" initiative, where we will feature more transformative examples in diverse formats.

The objective is to inform, create interest and give ideas to men amongst general public on how to address gender stereotypes held by men, and engage in behavioural change, starting from one's own action in everyday life setting.

We also intend to produce learning materials to support policy makers promote inclusive masculinities across different sectors, and leverage positive masculinities for the achievement of gender equality and women's empowerment worldwide.



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**For more information :**

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To learn more about UNESCO's actions on gender equality, please go to:

**[www.unesco.org/genderequality](http://www.unesco.org/genderequality)**

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