

**Power**  
What Lies Beneath



# power

*/ˈpaʊə/*

noun

1 the ability or capacity to do something or act in a particular way

2 the capacity or ability to direct or influence the behaviour of others or the course of events

3 physical strength and force exerted by something or someone

4 energy that is produced by mechanical, electrical, or other means and used to operate a device

verb

1 [with object] supply (a device) with mechanical or electrical energy

2 [no object, with adverbial of direction] move or travel with great speed or force.

— *Oxford Dictionary of English*

# What Lies Beneath

a CRIN magazine

**What Lies Beneath** is a conversation on big issues that lie in the shadows and keep us from evolving as a species. Through questions, artwork and our vision for the future, the magazine encourages people to think critically and self reflect to be able to start changing things for the better.

**CRIN** is a creative think tank that produces new and dynamic perspectives on human rights issues, with a focus on under-18s. We challenge the status quo because the norms that dictate children and young people's place in society need radical change. We believe everyone can help to set right the world's power imbalance if we collectively harness our courage, insight and compassion to break it.



#2 2019

**Kings and queens may cling to power, and the jester's got his call. But, as you may discover, the common one outranks them all.**

THIS RIDDLE may describe the hierarchy within a pack of cards, placing the ace as the most powerful, but it can also apply to how power exists in human societies. Each country may have a head of State in one capacity or another, but do they actually wield ultimate power or is it an illusion? Can one single person really command above millions of others? Or is the power actually among the millions themselves, yet they're unaware of it or too afraid to exercise it? Admittedly, it's not so black and white, as power comes in many shapes and forms.

There's the obvious power that exists in physical strength, large size, machinery and weapons. This is the type of power that can be used over others, to subjugate them and to command their obedience. It's the type that, if absolute, it will corrupt absolutely. Then there's the invisible power of beliefs, principles, norms or prejudices, which shape how we act or refrain from acting. Emotions, too, take a hold of our behaviour. Anger, hatred, love and fear above all make us do things that we rarely like to admit. And then there's the power of the

imagination, something so boundless and personal that no one can touch it. It exists within all of us and can be exercised at any moment and in any setting. And doing it best are children, whose youth, creativity, curiosity and dreams witness the world, with all of its virtues and horrors, from scratch, and with confusion about why things are the way they are.

But children are younger and smaller, they have no vote or income, they're told what to do and made to mimic the rituals of their elders; surely they have no power. Wrong. They possess a power that's lost among the majority of us; that being young means they're less bound by a status quo that isn't theirs. In practice, this means that old power, the self-serving kind that's hoarded by a few and defined by winners and losers, will naturally expire and make way for a new power which demands not respect or subservience, but rebellion, equality, justice and all those other naughty words.

The CRIN team

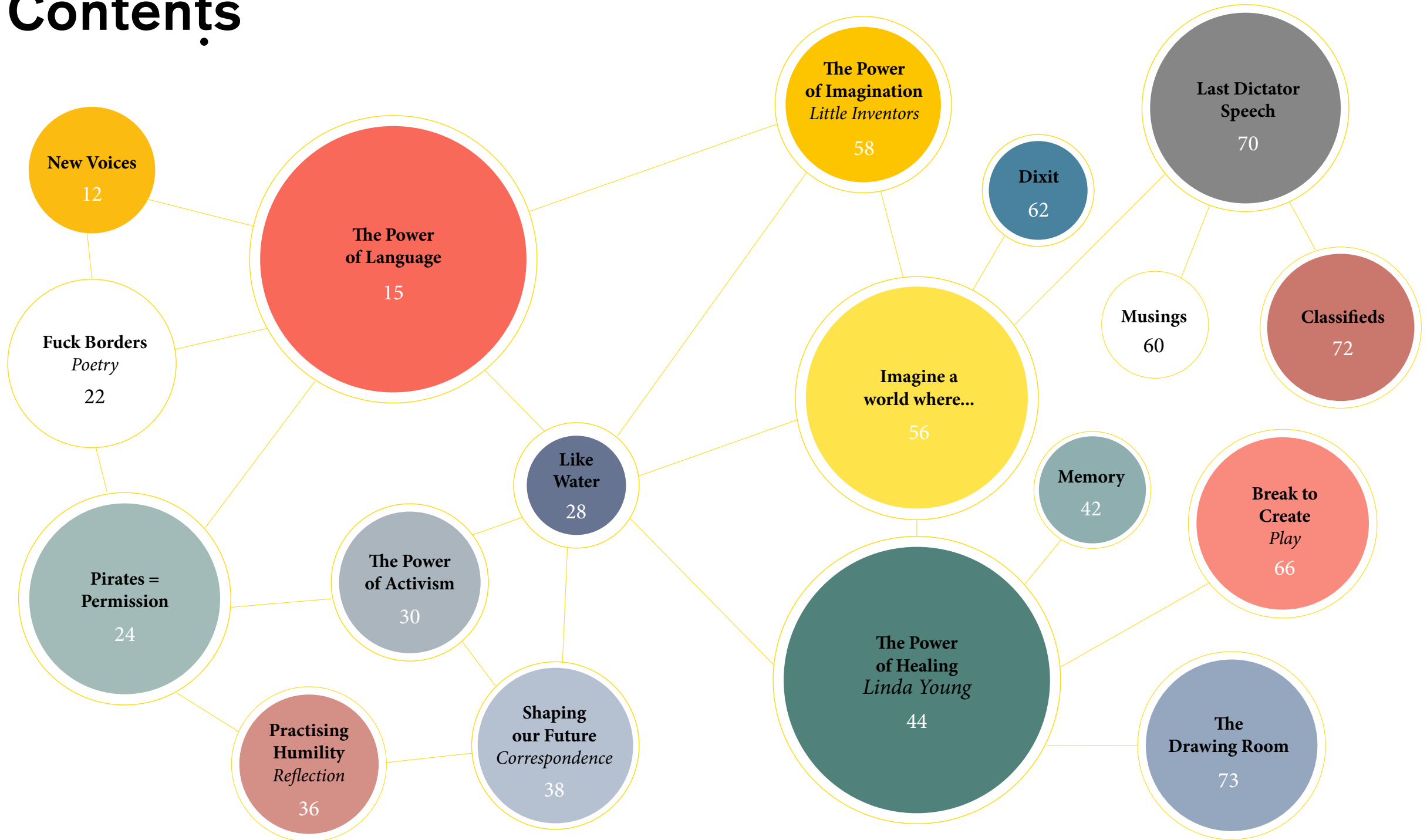
*“We have it in our  
power to begin the  
world over again.”*

—Audre Lorde





# Contents



**“Power means to have control of something or someone. It makes you strong and sometimes feared.”**

*Ignas, 10*

**“What I don’t like is the abuse of those who have power but don’t deserve it and the injustice that can result from its distribuion.”**

*Morgane, 16*

**“Power means either to rule over the world or a group or people or have special powers such as the power to freeze.”**

*Amelie, 10*

**Power is the ability to make a change.** *Faith, 12*

**Power inspires all the mistrust it deserves but also the openness it requires.**

*Cyril, 14*

# New Voices

Thank you to colleagues and partners in Brazil, France, Spain, Mexico, the UK, the US and Zimbabwe for collecting these quotes from under-18s.

***“Power means being able to do something, like walking or talking. With power I feel free to do things.”***

—Isabela, 9

***“Power is powerful, like a dinosaur! With power he gets angry.”***

—Bernardo, 3

***“Power means having control of something, like... a country, for example. With power, people do bad things, but I like it when people who have power do good things with the power they have.”***

—Eduardo, 10

***“Power to me is when someone is facing something, they make decisions and choices. But having power doesn’t always mean having privilege. For example, having power in your hands and not knowing how to use it, that’s bad.”***

—Milena, 17

***“Power is something you can do and that nobody can prevent you from doing.”***

—Margot, 9

***“Power makes me think about having the strength to defeat your enemies. Power makes you strong. This is very important.”***

—Leonardo, 7

***“I would like to have the power of being listened to. And I guess, kind of, respected and valued because I’m the youngest [in my family] and I would like to be a more impactful individual. I want to have more of an impact.”***

—Taniya, 17

***“To me, power is when we can do things we always wanted to do, like shooting rays. I am a superhero when I have this power; I think I can do anything with my power. I don’t like it if I hit someone. Then, I say, ‘Wow, I don’t like this power because I don’t know how to keep it.’”***

—Clara, 5

***“Power to me is doing everything I can and want to do, independent of what others think, they can be good or bad things, as long as I have control.”***

—Ligia, 14

***“Power has two meanings: it can be for superheroes, as well as power for congressmen. Power makes you stronger.”***

—Victor, 13

***“Power makes me think of when someone has authority over another person that doesn’t have power, and they can use that power to ‘control’ or even command something.”***

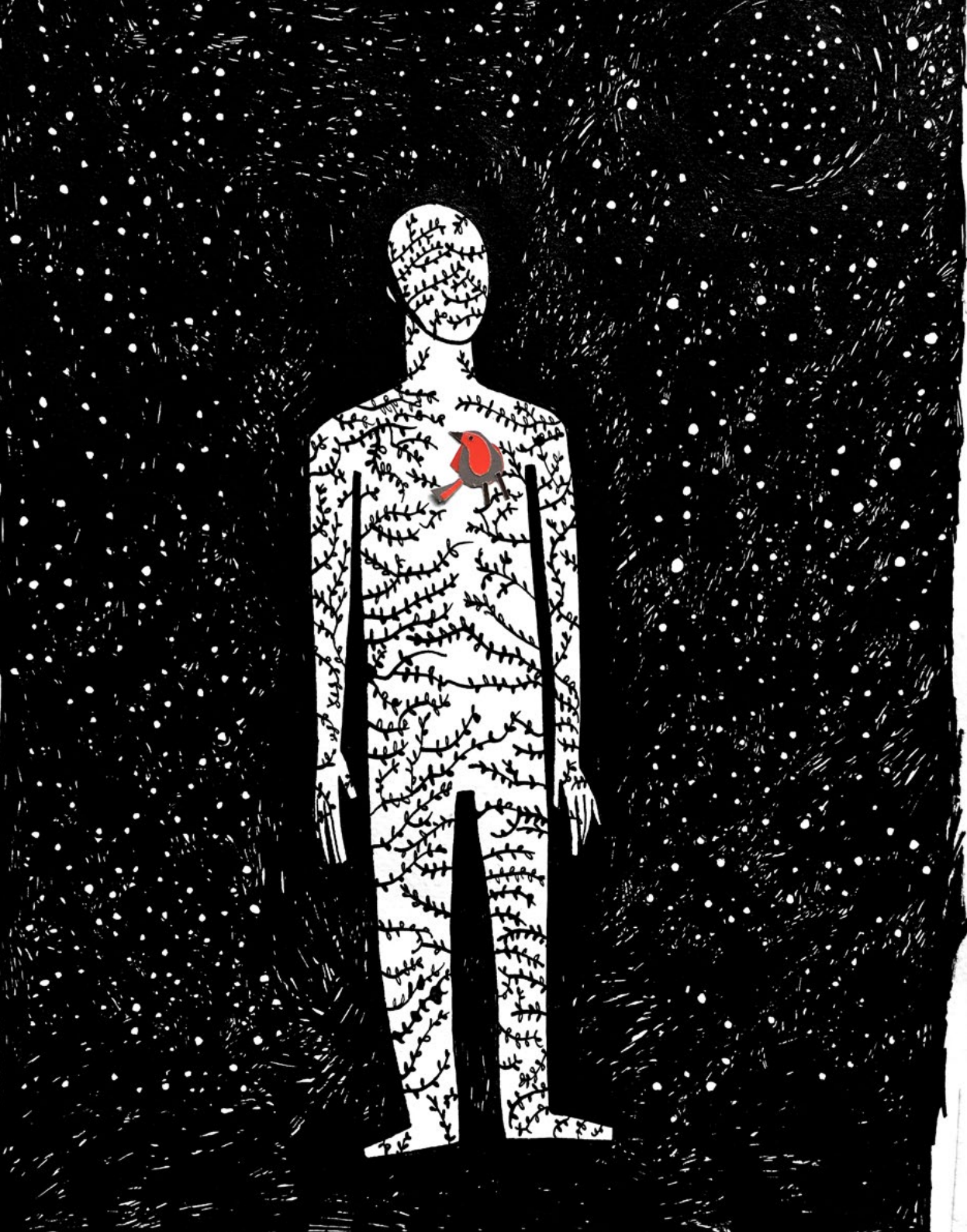
—Felipe, 17

***“Power is having something you love. My dog, to me, is power because he is very cute and furry. He is my power.”***

—Helena, 7

***“Power is the strength to help others gain their rights.”***

—Ruvarashe, 13



# The Power of Language

Language isn't just about words, even if dictionaries state otherwise. Most of us communicate through words, yes, be they written, spoken or signed, but most communication comprises facial expressions, physical cues and 'speaking' with our eyes, aka body language. Irrespective of its form, however, language serves the social practice of understanding one another, which, as a species, is important to us, but it's not the only reason why we do it. Essentially, language is used to communicate ideas, and because of this, it harbours a power we're rarely conscious of.

Let's take an obvious example: dictatorships. Power-hungry tyrants and their cronies use language - from words in televised speeches to images in propaganda - to spread an idea to garner uncritical support and gain adoration and fear from the masses. Meanwhile dissenters use language - from words in speeches at secret gatherings to images in anti-government posters and pamphlets - to destabilise that power by encouraging criticism and inspiring rebellion.

This ability to convey an idea and instil it in an audience's mind shows the power that language can have as a means of communication. A given idea can then either spread or die, change opinions or reinforce them, keep people in their place or rouse them, or it can evolve into more ideas each with their own or it can stagnate and paralyse thought. But at its core, the power of language is something bigger. While it may appear simplistic to say that if we can use language to convey an idea, we can do the same with a counter idea, it's precisely here where its true, elemental power lies, as no single idea, however dominant it may be, exists without opposition, criticism or questioning, and this is always done through language, whether it's voiced, drawn, gesticulated or otherwise communicated. In other words, language has the power to subvert power, both its own creations.

## Random reflections on the power of language

### Democracy

No single person or institution can monopolise language, however 'powerful' they may be, as language is, by its nature, democratic.



Simply having a command of a language - written, spoken, signed, drawn etc - means that we can use it however we like and to communicate whatever we want.

### **Humility**

On resisting tyranny, one author advises: "Avoid pronouncing the phrases everyone else does. Think up your own way of speaking". This relates not only to chanting the same words (and ideas) as others do or expect from us, but also resisting a narrowing of our vocabulary and thoughts. The world is full of information from myriad sources, and this diversity calls for us to be humble and recognise that there's so much more we don't know, and to allow ourselves to challenge our own thinking and be open to being proven wrong.

### **Challenge**

'No' is a powerful word because it stops people and their assumptions and expectations in their tracks. A firm 'no' from an adult to a child can prompt obedience, but this effect is as much about the meaning of the word as it is about solidifying one's authority in a power dynamic that places the older and bigger person in charge and the younger and smaller one in compliance. But 'no'

works both ways, and while such an exclamation can be obeyed, it can also be challenged, as 'no, you can't' leads to 'no, I can'.

### **Fear**

Institutions and individuals use language both to build their power and to maintain it. In human trafficking, victims are often groomed not through physical submission, but through language that disempowers, dehumanises, degrades, isolates and shames them into compliance. Meanwhile in the case of politics we have demagogic rhetoric, whereby the objective of a simple sentence (and the idea it carries) is nothing more than to convince voters by stirring their fears and desires.

### **Protest**

That actions speak louder than words is difficult to refute. When Rosa Parks refused to stand up, that action spoke to many people without a single word. After the Tank Man stood in front of a convoy in Tiananmen Square, it eventually became one of the most iconic symbols of protest. And such actions are sometimes captured on camera, reminding us, too, that 'a picture is worth a thousand words'.

### **Dominance**

Asserting power and dominance requires obedience from others, but obedience isn't just achieved through coercive means such as force and violence; the mere threat of these is enough to induce it, and this is done indirectly through language. When something is 'banned' and 'will not be tolerated' is sometimes enough. A clenched fist or a stern look can also suffice. Language, however we express it, can be loaded with assumptions of power and authority which, whether real or perceived, makes us react and act a certain way.

### **Identity**

Commanding a language and being understood forges a powerful feeling of belonging - to a family, a community, a culture or a country. This is especially true when discussing national identity, but not all citizens can talk of having a national language. Outside of Europe, for instance, Dutch, English, French, Portuguese and Spanish are inescapably the languages of the colonisers, as language is never ahistorical or apolitical, especially when you know one stripped you of your own.

### **Assumptions**

When we communicate through words, it's the result of using grammar and vocabulary to translate our thoughts and feelings, but words also affect the way we think. The media, for instance, uses particular words, images or other techniques to affect the way audiences perceive something. Calling young people 'snowflakes' or refugees 'marauding migrants' can sway public opinion on these groups, as labels are always charged with assumptions and expectations.

### **Compliance**

The language of telling a child to sit like a girl or that they're such a brave little boy doesn't stop at the last word; it continues in the actions that follow. Legs together, feeling of shame for crying... these are the unspoken expressions of compliance, when we do as we're told and grow into a broad brushstroke of an idea that we had no say in designing.

### **Stereotype**

Labels and stereotypes mislead us into thinking something or someone is only a particular way. Such assumptions abound especially for groups who've historically been downtrodden:

women, children, people of colour, immigrants, religious groups, sexual minorities, and so on. For girls and women, labels can range from 'Angry Black Woman' and 'Dutiful Wife' to 'Feminist Killjoy' and 'Pretty Princess'. And when we replicate these labels uncritically, we feed the stereotype.

### Diversity

Generic terms are convenient terms, but they limit our perception of things. 'Man' or 'mankind', for instance, are supposed to be all-encompassing, but they're far from inclusive of the diversity of humanity. Similarly, 'child' is taken to include girls, boys, infants, adolescents, teenagers, and youth, yet rarely is intended to mean all of them at the same time.

### Freedom

All the words we're not supposed to say, let alone come to know them. Some words are 'dirty' and can get us into trouble, but not in the way we're probably thinking. Depending on the country, talk of freedoms and rights gets people in detention and forced labour camps or shot and buried, because such words need to be silenced, it's believed, because they are a risk to

the status quo. But it's not because the words in and of themselves are dangerous; it's the ideas they carry.

# BUT...

Language on its own has little purpose if no one is paying attention to what we express. We may hear, see, feel or otherwise perceive someone communicating with us, but it's not the same as taking in the content, understanding the meaning and acting on it. Part of the issue is that 'listening' is a disappearing art, as nowadays we place too much emphasis on 'talking' ourselves, and some groups, such as under-18s, are more prone to this treatment than others. Needless to say that the 'future leaders of tomorrow' are apparently not worth hearing out until the future arrives. And when we speak for them, whether it's well-intentioned or self-righteous, it doesn't necessarily make their message louder; it merely reinforces our role as self-appointed mouthpieces.



*“We live in  
capitalism. Its  
power seems  
inescapable. So  
did the divine  
right of kings. Any  
human power  
can be resisted*

*and changed by  
human beings.  
Resistance and  
change often begin  
in art, and very  
often in our art,  
the art of words.”*

— Ursula Le Guin

# Fuck borders, or things I wish I'd said to immigration before they deported me

By Basma Osman

I'm not shaking because I'm scared.  
I have crawled up mountains on these bumping hands and knees  
So that the tremors of the earth have become my own  
And these lips of mine that quiver so  
They have been burned too many times by impatient desire  
It is not out of fear that my eyes dart to and fro  
    Evading your stare  
    Settling nowhere  
They are thrilled by the chase  
Dance with them and see  
I am powered by these tiny movements, kinetic, potential  
So go ahead and black me out  
I glow in the dark.

I'm not shaking because I'm sick.  
I have been bleeding this week, though nobody sees  
There is a deep tectonic burning beneath these dragging feet and unsteady hands  
The earth's core and the moon's pull draw these tremors from me  
Making mountains and new beginnings  
I keep it a secret but I know that you know.

I'm not shaking because I'm guilty.  
Yes I grind my teeth sometimes  
They are uneven, sucked and kissed by a mothertongue muted  
She clicks and clacks in protest at my every word  
Maybe this is why I sound off-key and wobbly  
Speaking in a second language  
(But I don't have a first)  
Maybe I am guilty



But if this is guilt it is not for you, not for you  
I gift this guilt each summer to my aunties  
If this is innocence it is not mine, but theirs (ours?)  
It is the belly-gushing love that itches the throat  
    Profound nodding  
    Uncertain embraces  
    Laughter  
    Silence  
    Sweat  
    And tea on the Nile seven sugars sweet –  
    Ease

These fingers are buzzing on grandmother's biscuits and pre-diabetes  
And if you can't hear the music in these vibrations then maybe we are a different species  
But I'm no wolf.

I'm not shaking because I'm weak.  
There is a kind of tension in my feet from tiptoeing the lines that you draw, and redraw  
But watch me tap tap dance on the point where our circles touch  
My legs are thick and graceful  
They jiggle but never slip  
Know that everytime I bend, twist, split myself for you  
My back gets stronger  
I can carry myself and others on it  
My arms, too  
They have been busy cooking  
    Those burnt black bits  
    At the bottom of the melting pot  
    They are the tastiest  
    If cancerous  
But scraping, scraping is hard and I am getting tired  
So I shake  
In power, in life, in love, and in growth I shake  
That's everything.



# Pirates = permission

by Alex Barker, Right Hand Pirate to Sam Conniff Allende, author of *Be More Pirate: Or How To Take On The World And Win*



If there's one phrase we've heard in response to *Be More Pirate*, it's that it gives people permission. Permission to speak up, to tell the truth or to do something they were previously afraid of doing.

It provides a language and an opportunity to reclaim the power they didn't even know was absent.

It's common, particularly in the public and voluntary sectors, to talk about power sharing as part of a 'strategy' to improve XYZ. The risk here is that we assume everyone understands what constitutes power, and where it lies.

There's often a narrow focus on sharing traditional power: wealth, status, or authority, while ignoring

subtle, or more informal means of wielding power. You can give someone a more senior role with more money and more influence, but if they're still afraid to give themselves permission to change what really matters, then you have only shared responsibility, not power.

So, if what we're seeking is impact, we have to look at power more broadly. Power is our ability to get things done. It's not fixed. It's not solely internal or external either. It can be everywhere or nowhere. So you must first find it.

Start by asking yourself this: when did you first feel your power to make a dent in the world?





By answering this question you recall what triggered a feeling of strength as a child. Was it about standing up to a particular person? Protecting someone else? Winning a battle with a teacher? Rescuing your pet?

By understanding where and when your own power first made itself known, you have a better chance at connecting to your natural strengths.

Now think to the present day:

- Write down five people you'd trust with your life
- Name a space or place that you go to frequently, out of choice
- Write down the last thing that caused you to shout in defiance

The first group are the people who have your back - power can come from a sense of security.

The space you go to, is a place that uplifts you. Power exists in the physical environment, so pay attention to the places you work, live and play.

The thing you shouted about is something you care about -power comes from certainty-knowing what you believe in and knowing what hurts.

This all might sound trivial in the face of bigger systemic struggles, but if you don't know where power exists at the micro level, you cannot seize it, use it or share it with others.

As there is an increasing need for social movements in the face of the climate crisis and the breakdown of traditional political leadership, the ability to build strong connections, momentum and meaning among strangers is a force to be reckoned with.

This is what pirates did. Their policies of equal say and equal pay would not have worked had each individual not also given themselves permission to call themselves pirate and take part in the rebellion. Their real power came not from treasure stolen or battles won, but from the new names they granted themselves, the skull and crossbones symbol that defined a new space. From the code that gave them something to believe in and shout about, and the crew who were bound by it to have each other's back.

**Pirates = permission = power.**

# Like Water

*Nothing is weaker than water,  
But when it attacks something hard  
Or resistant, then nothing withstands it,  
And nothing will alter its way.*

— Lao Tzu

An action or event can cause ripples in a society which, in turn, expand further, reaching more and more people. But while ripples eventually fade, what's left is like a body of water nudging the banks and filtering through the depths to new soils.

The power of water also lies in its formlessness, with martial artist Bruce Lee telling us we should “Be water, my friend”; moving, expanding, adapting; never assuming a single mould, but many - whichever ones a given circumstance calls for.

In the following you'll find examples of ideas which, after their first ripples, stirred more and more people to the point of sparking an entire movement. These are the stories of the things that grew out of the ideas and actions of individuals.

**#FridaysForFuture:** The FridaysForFuture global youth movement began after a 15-year-old in Sweden sat in front of the parliament every school day for three weeks to protest against the lack of action on the climate crisis. As her story spread, more students organised protests outside of their own parliaments and local councils all over the world, to the extent that now every month hundreds of thousands skip class in an unprecedented act of civil disobedience. As of November 2019, there are a registered 2129 strikes in every continent, with national campaigns forming in Iraq, the Philippines, Turkey, Pakistan, India, Brazil, Uganda and more.



**Idle No More:** What began as a thread of emails in Canada in 2012 between four women to brainstorm actions against a law that would remove legal protections from the land reserved for Indigenous people in Saskatchewan province, has now become a “peaceful revolution to honour indigenous sovereignty and to protect the land and water”. Called Idle No More “as a reminder to get off the couch and start working,” the movement spilled into the United States and even as far as Ukraine and New Zealand. Its impetus is empowering Indigenous communities to stand up for their rights, cultures and sovereignty, actions they say are rooted in a centuries-old resistance by Indigenous nations.

**Umbrella Movement:** Students in Hong Kong's 2014 pro-democracy protests used umbrellas to shield themselves from pepper spray used by police to disperse crowds, which had gathered in sit-ins as part of a non-violent civil disobedience campaign. The protests signalled a new wave of civil rights protection, which galvanised an entire generation whose activism continues five years on. Hong Kong's 2019 protests are rooted in the spirit of the Umbrella Movement and have adopted the mantra “Be water”. Practicing varied forms of civil disobedience, protesters urge one another to be “Strong like ice. Flow like water. Gather like dew. Disperse like fog.”





# The Power of Activism

*“They will tell you the rules are that those we see in the news and the parliaments and boardrooms hold all the power and you must be nice to them and perhaps they will give you crumbs, or the time of day, or just a door slammed in your face. They will tell you that things can only change in tiny increments by predictable means. They’re wrong. Sometimes you don’t have to ask for permission or for anything because you hold the power and you yourselves decide which way the door swings. Nothing is possible without action; almost anything is when we rise up together, as you are doing today.”*

—Rebecca Solnit, to climate strikers

People under the age of 18 are largely seen as not having any power, let alone being mature enough to use it. “We are, after all, just children,” said Greta Thunberg, ironically alluding to this common preconception. But if 2019 has shown us anything, it’s that under-18s - just like anyone else who’s passionate about something, regardless of their age - can go against what’s expected of them, and not do as they’re told.

Refusing to go to school, brushing off orders to stay quiet and to stop wasting time, and telling world leaders that it’s them who’ve behaved childishly - these are some of the ways that under-18s have misbehaved this past year, shunning the type of sofa activism

that most of us are comfortable doing. And for what? To save the planet? What a naive, exaggerated and far-fetched idea, many still say. But there’s a simple lesson to be learnt: if adults have shown us the power of humans to cause extinction, then under-18s have shown us the power of humans to try to prevent it. In the words of 13-year-old Autumn Peltier, a First Nations clean water activist, “Now is the time to warrior up and empower each other to take a stand for our planet.”

In the following, we chatted with two youth climate warriors to understand how they’re activism is challenging the power structures that allowed this mess to happen in the first place.



## **Jeronimo Zarco, 15,** **Fridays for Future and Extinction** **Rebellion Youth**

### **How did you get involved in climate activism?**

My climate-related activist days began with both Fridays For Future (FFF) Mexico and FFF Mexico City in March 2019 along the first global climate strike (which I helped organise in Mexico). I became a coordinator of the movement and the International/National Speaker for the Mexican movement. I also organised the May 24th march. For personal reasons, I moved to New York City where I met with Greta Thunberg and participated in the September 20th strike. I received the UN Environment's Champions of the Earth Award on behalf of Greta and the FFF movement alongside other environmental activists from all around the world. Later in the year, I joined Extinction Rebellion Youth USA and Extinction Rebellion Youth NYC. I am now organising alongside FFF NYC the December 6th strike.

### **How do you feel about criticism of what you're doing?**

I believe that there are two types of criticism: non-valid and constructive criticism. Non-valid criticism of the climate movement(s) is usually a defence mechanism of "boomers" (or in general older people) who want to keep this suicidal economic and political system, or it's climate crisis deniers that are simply ignorant people. However, constructive criticism is a whole different thing. Constructive criticism allows us to grow and actually make our movement(s) stronger and more accessible. It allows us to be better. Ultimately, I believe that criticism is good because it makes our fight noticeable and a conversational and debatable topic in everyday lives.

### **What are the values underpinning the movement?**

The movement started when the youth around the world realised that the climate crisis had to be the major focus on the political and economical landscape to protect and ensure a livable and sustainable future for the young and upcoming generations. Our movement is based on the

values to protect life and to hear and act around the science. We demand governments to declare a state of Climate Emergency (and act on it) and to hold polluters accountable. Acting now is the only way may save humanity. [But] the actions taken by big enterprises and/or governments so far are not even close to what is needed.

### **How do you stay safe?**

We keep us safe! My activist friends protect me and I protect my activist friends. It's a beautiful alliance based on friendship and love.

### **Have you seen any direct results yet, even small actions that worked? (perhaps also add examples of things that didn't work? on the premise that we can learn from the good and bad.)**

Yes. In the lower scale, individual actions work such as boycotting fast fashion or going vegan. However, on a big scale, these actions have an extremely small impact on reducing climate change. The world needs big actions. Some countries have already declared a Climate Emergency such as the UK, Canada, Portugal, Spain among others. Recently, the Mexican Senate has exhorted the presidency to declare it. Unfortunately, many of these "Climate Emergency Declarations" are just that: declarations. The declaration should not be just a saying but also actions must happen after it. Besides this, some other actions work such as mass tree plantation and banning single use plastics.

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## **Oscar Glancy, 16,** **Extinction Rebellion (XR) Youth**

### **What does power mean to you?**

Power means strength: the power of you, yourself as a person; the power of people and the environment around you. Power to me also means community. 'People-power' is a term used a lot by social action groups and movements like XR, and past XR actions like the April Rebellion in

London really made the power of people who come together as a resilient community extremely clear.

### What does power make you think of?

Power makes me think of change. Of current movements like XR and past social action movements like the Civil Rights movement. These groups have been on the frontline of bringing about people-led change to create a fairer and healthier society, and it was only possible when thousands or millions of people banded together under a name and took to the streets to demand action.

### How does power make you feel?

Power makes me feel empowered. The empowerment and adrenaline-rush that I have felt through taking part in XR actions and also the youth climate strikes is amazing and you really can't describe it - the feeling of doing something (often) illegal yet so righteous and critically important, surrounded by hundreds or thousands of people from all walks of life yet with the same mindset of urgent climate action. You really can't put it into words the emotions that this creates in you as it's such a mixture

of positive and negative, of hope and fear, but it really is something incredible to be a part of.

### What don't you like about power?

How easily it can be controlled and manipulated. From when the Holocaust was 'legal' and hiding Jews was criminalised by Hitler, to when slavery was legal in America and freeing them was often illegal. These huge injustices through time by an imbalance of power have been responsible for a huge amount of human suffering. It is this same imbalance of power that I am now fighting against by being part of XR - fighting against a toxic system that prioritises the business interests and profits of multi-billion pound corporations, rather than the lives and futures of children who will come to inherit the world. Governments and corporations now have so much power that it is extremely hard to bring about change, even more so with the vast transformative changes that we need to see in our society to avoid a climate breakdown. This misplacement of power is what I am fighting to change.



# PRACTISING Humility

*Aided and abetted by Nick Martlew, author of 'Creative Coalitions', a handbook for people seeking to work with others to change the world.*

You discover an injustice. You think something should be done about it. You want to do something about it. You're a teenager or an adult, a diplomat or an NGO or someone or something else. You ask: **what can I do?**

## Approach 1: Me

**NGO:** We can fix it! We'll do this, this and that...

**Diplomat:** Thank you for raising this important issue. I'll mention it to my country's Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

**Adult:** I'm busy working for a living. There's nothing I'd be able to change anyway. But I'll make a donation.

**Teenager:** I think it's wrong, but how can I challenge it? I'm just a student. I can't even vote. I don't even get enough pocket money to make a donation.

## Approach 2: You

**NGO:** Another organisation can address it. We don't have the time or resources. Plus, it's too controversial and isn't part of our strategy.

**Diplomat:** Maybe I don't need to raise it, as Sweden or Uruguay will probably address it anyway.

**Adult:** There'll always be someone else who takes on the issue, and kudos to them.

**Teenager:** I have exams coming up, so I can't. Plus, again, what can I do as a student.

## Approach 3: Everyone

**NGO:** Let's do a joint letter. We should denounce the problem and ask a high-level United Nations figure to express concern too.

**Diplomat:** I could talk with several countries' delegates to see if we all agree and could support the same statement.

**Adult:** I have friends, family, neighbours and work colleagues with whom I can discuss it and see if we can all do something together. If that fails, I'll join a protest.

**Teenager:** I'll talk about it with my friends, and they can talk about it with their friends. Who knows, with all the world's youth-led protests going on, maybe we could spark one too.

## Approach 4: The reality

**NGO:** Who are we kidding - we can't fix this issue alone. But we also shouldn't wait for another organisation to act; we should start doing something now. A joint letter is OK, but it should lead to something bigger, like a collective.

**Diplomat:** Sweden and Uruguay are two countries among 191 others - let's get more ambitious. However, I don't want to risk straining diplomatic ties with some countries because of this issue, as we're working on an economic deal. Plus, the USA might threaten us or write a mean tweet.

**Adult:** Doing something on my own doesn't mean doing it alone. There'll be others on their own too. We just need to learn about one another and potentially join our efforts.

**Teenager:** While I am a student, and even though I can't vote, I have a voice, free will and more energy, optimism and drive than most adults. If a protest is what I can do, then I'm going to protest hard!

Or, maybe there's another way. An approach that's not about you, them or us, but about the change that needs to happen. An approach that doesn't start with 'what can I do?' or 'what you should do', but with 'what needs to be done?', and brings all actors - whether a teenager or an NGO - together to draw on their respective strengths and experiences and their social and professional circles.

It's a liberating question. Freed from any preconceptions, you can think creatively, politically and collaboratively. You can connect with others to find the best answer to 'what needs to be done', identify who's best placed to do it, and only then - only then - can you see: what's my role in making this vision of change a reality.

And who knows, maybe that does mean a joint NGO letter or a protest.



# Shaping our Future

*My name is James Douglas, I'm 16 and from Northern Ireland. I have albinism and the group I am linked with is Angel Eyes NI which helps young people and families affected by visual impairments. They have a Facebook page and a website ([www.angeleyesni.org](http://www.angeleyesni.org)).*

*In my home city I'm also involved with several youth democracy groups which I mention in my speech which can be found on the Instagram page @youth19derrystrabane*

On 9 October 2012, a young girl, Malala Yousafzai, was shot in the head on her way home from school as she campaigned for her right to an education. She was 17 at the time and has been a leading education activist since. She is a perfect demonstration of the power of children to change the world around them- but her story is also a warning of the dangers activists can face.

Children cannot stand as activists alone. From my experience in local democracy groups, it seems to me that there are three main ways child activists need help.

The first of these is that young people need a platform from which to speak, for example a youth council, parliament or forum. The power of children is their passion about the issues affecting them, but a platform should do more than just allow young people to be heard. It should allow young people to actually be listened to by those in power and have our thoughts actually influence decisions.

I would say the key to this happening is through cooperation. For decades people have tried setting up a youth council in my city of Derry/Londonderry with no success. However, recently a council has been

successfully set up and will survive and have a meaningful impact because it links charities with schools, councils and other organisations. A platform, to make real change must be cross-organisational.

Secondly, disabled young activists also need support. As someone with a visual impairment there is nothing more down-heartening than going to a local democracy event which speaks about how important inclusion is when you're not able to see the materials provided due to small print. We have seen the power of disabled activists through Greta Thunberg who has overcome many challenges, including her autism, and has become perhaps the leading climate activist in the world. Inclusion and accessibility should be at the forefront of child activism.

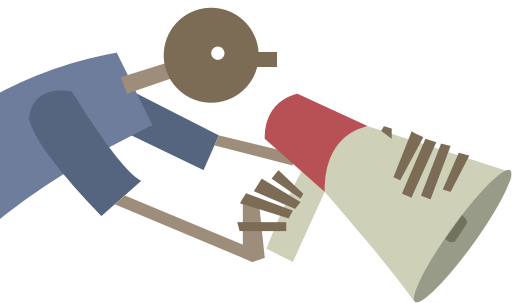
And finally, perhaps the greatest way for children to change their future is through participation in politics. Yet in many countries the voting age is 18 so children cannot have a say on matters affecting them - and they've noticed. In a survey of 700 people conducted by a youth group I am involved with, the voting age being too high was selected by children as one of the top 20 issues they faced. And if there were not so many more immediate problems, I'm

sure even more young people would have prioritised the subject. This is a controversial topic, but most young people I have spoken to believe they should have the vote at 16 or earlier. In my country, at 16 you can smoke, get married or start a family, and at 17 learn to drive. These are huge responsibilities where potentially fatal mistakes can be made, yet at these ages young people are not deemed responsible to vote.

If young people were given political classes at school or elsewhere, in an unbiased setting, and allowed to vote at a younger age, we would have a generation of passionate young people armed with the information they needed to vote, and we might see the power of children in politics and shaping their own future. The power of children is that they know their rights and lives better than anyone else, and yet they cannot have their opinions listened to.

When it comes to keeping child activists safe, I would briefly like to comment on the importance of social media. The power of children like Greta Thunberg is to be able to spread their activism across the world with a click of a button. However, this opens up many dangers, and I'm not sure all adults appreciate the significance of





his. Greta Thunberg has been mocked and attacked by many journalists and celebrities, and faced 100s of messages of hate mail on sites like Instagram, and we need to keep child activists as safe as possible from this danger moving onward.

But what can adults learn from young people? In answer to this I would briefly like to talk about my home of Northern Ireland. For around 30 years we went through a troubled period of violence between extremists from the two main communities there, and although there are still many tensions, young people have become leaders in breaking down boundaries. In the aforementioned youth survey, issues like flags, policing and parades - which were once major flash points between certain older members of the communities - came

last in importance in a question about reconciliation. All of the top results as voted by children were along the theme of cross-community cooperation.

This shows how most young people have left behind anger of the past in favour of peace and inclusion (with unfortunately a few exceptions), to the extent that I am even able to go to school in an area I would never have dared to enter 20 years ago.

The power of children in Northern Ireland has been to accept those from all religions and backgrounds, and leave conflicts and hatred in the past when many members of other generations were unwilling to. The power of children is to move on and look to the future instead of history.

Malala Yousafazi, who I mentioned at the beginning of my talk, went on to become world famous as she campaigns for her right to an education, and, as I'm sure you all know, became the youngest person to win a Nobel Peace Prize. From Malala risking her life for her right to an education to Greta Thunberg denying herself the right to education in protest of climate change, we have seen the incredible power of children to change the world around them. And there is much, much more to come.

*“The rules are the rules of the obvious, the easy assumptions that we know who holds power, we know how change happens, we know what is possible. But the real lesson of history is that change often comes in unpredictable ways, power can suddenly be in the hands of those who appear out of what seems to the rest of us like nowhere.”*

— Rebecca Solnit

# Memory

Throughout the world, identity-based violence continues to serve as a political tool for perpetrator regimes, who marginalise and brutalise victim groups to stoke fear and secure power.

Time and again, however, people emerge to respond to the politics of destruction with a politics of hope; using their voices, bodies, and creativity to counter the divisiveness of genocidal regimes, often turning to the arts as a key tool in their struggle for social transformation.

For the first time, the work of six such artists was brought together at the Atrocity Prevention Pavilion at the Venice Biennale, organised by the Auschwitz Institute for Peace and Reconciliation. CRIN was honoured to be invited to participate in the Pavilion.

There we met and heard the story of Linda Young, a survivor of Canada's residential school system for First Nations children, who uses her art to break the cycle of intergenerational trauma.

## A brief timeline of cultural assimilation and reparations: CANADA

1493 Pope Alexander VI called on Christian explorers to claim ownership over those living in non-Christian lands. Armed with the Doctrine of Discovery, what followed was the mass assimilation of indigenous peoples around the world. The Vatican has thus far not revoked the Doctrine.

1763

A Royal Proclamation from King George III of Britain declares any claims to land from indigenous communities and any treaty negotiation will be handled by the Crown. This is despite the fact that Indigenous peoples have been present in what is now Canada sometime between 12,000 and 23,000 years prior.

1867

1867

Canada is founded and the British North America Act gives the new federal government responsibility for Indigenous peoples and their lands.

1871  
1921

The 11 Numbered Treaties are signed by the Canadian government and Indigenous groups. These treaties give the Crown land for industrial development, in exchange for various promises – many of which are contested to this day.

1876

The Indian Act is passed. In essence, it controls every aspect of their life, from their rights to practice their culture and traditions, to imposing governance structures and extinguishing any remaining self-government for Indigenous groups. The Act also introduced residential schools.

1883  
1996

Though residential schools had opened earlier, it was in 1883 that Prime Minister Macdonald authorised the creation of these state-sponsored religious schools aimed at assimilating Indigenous children into Euro-Canadian culture. These schools caused great harm to more than 150,000 indigenous children by isolating them from their culture and inflicting physical and sexual abuse.

1950s  
1980s

Thousands of Indigenous children are taken from their homes and placed in foster homes and subsequently adopted out to white families in Canada and the US. Known as the 'Sixties Scoop', children lost their names, families, language and cultural connection.

2008

Prime Minister Harper formerly apologises to former students of residential schools and offers compensation. Students who attended schools in areas left out of the offer of compensation contest the exclusion and go on to pursue a class-action lawsuit.

2010

Canada endorses the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, after having initially voted against its adoption in 2007 - one of only four States to do so (the others were the US, Australia and New Zealand).

2015

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada concludes that the residential school system amounted to "nothing short of cultural genocide".

2017

The federal government announced a payout of C\$800m to around 20,000 victims of the Sixties Scoop. Some survivors challenged it, saying the compensation was not enough for the damage done, but a federal judge later approved the scheme.

2019

The National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls reports that Canada's "laws and institutions perpetuate violations of fundamental rights, amounting to a genocide..." and that the violence suffered is "a national tragedy of epic proportion." Ending this required "dismantling the structures of colonialism within Canadian society" and reinstating the rights and power of Indigenous women and girls.

# The Power of Healing



Veronica Yates,  
Director of CRIN, in  
conversation with  
**Linda Young**,  
artist and Traditional  
Knowledge Keeper for  
the Saskatchewan Public  
School Division in  
Canada.

When we first met you told us about how you want to break intergenerational trauma and that this was one of your messages in your piece. Can you tell me a bit more about that?

The work that I started doing as an art student was always related to the Land, to residential schools, and to being an Indigenous woman. And Land or Earth, not land ownership, but Land as a place of grounding, a place where you go home in spirit and emotions and heart, and physically, that was important to me.

There was a term that used to identify my work which is a 'reparative act' and I liked that because the Indian Act was what destroyed us. The Indian Act put us in residential schools, it took away our languages, our culture, all of that, and so I really like the term reparative act because what I do in the process is I repair an incident that happened in history.

Upon doing that I am also healing the generations that had this trauma. It's

not necessarily about me, it's always about the people, the children, grandchildren, you know, so my work is primarily focused on repairing incidences to create a healing in the present.

**What is the story about the piece in Venice?**

I was involved in a hearing called the Alternative Dispute Resolution Process. The Hearings are very traumatic for Survivors because you're sharing your lived trauma in an environment that feels very much like a courtroom, even though the Hearings were in settings such as a house, an office, or hotel board room.

What they do is they research you, your medical history, the school that you attended, and you get these binders of information about you. Part of my involvement in preparing for that was to gather information. A lot of residential school survivors were labelled as having post-traumatic stress disorder and so I had to find all that information, all the places I had gone to to seek help for healing. So that's part of the process; 'what have you

*Years ago when I heard what happened to you my heart broke for you and your mom and your brother and sisters. I went to ceremony to pray and give our grief over to the Water, mother Earth and Grandfathers to heal. After that ceremony I was asked to help with doctoring (a healing ceremony) but couldn't because my own energy was taken out by my own emotions and seemed to have no control in terms of stopping it. I was told to place my hands in a pail of freezing cold water. After a few minutes I withdrew my hands and noticed my emotions were stopped and also noticed my fingertips were numb, as if there was a thin layer of wax on them.*

*That same year I made an art piece about my Residential School story so I could place my written story in a safe place and in a respectful manner. I used this method of cauterising, closing off the wound with wax. The art piece is akin to a baby hammock, wewipison, and it is being shown in Venice, Italy, along with other artists whose work talk about their own experiences of genocide and atrocities done to people.*

*My intention is to reclaim our child-raising teachings related to the "wewipison" that was taken from us and giving it back to all the generations who suffered from this deep seated trauma that has lasted seven generations. I dedicated this piece to you, to family members we have lost and to the aunties and kohkom for showing us to be resilient under all conditions, and to seek strength from our ancestors.*

*You are a beautiful human being and I have so much love and respect for who you are. You have taught me so much and I thank you for that. Art helps us heal. Kinanaskomitin.*

Letter from Linda to her nephew, whose sister was one of the estimated 4,000 Indigenous women and girls missing or murdered in Canada

Note: in respect of family members, names have been removed

done to help yourself' in a sense. And that took about a year.

The thing about these Hearings is you get re-traumatised over and over again. When I received my binder on the history of the Residential School I attended, a very high percentage, maybe 60% or more of that information was in French and I don't speak French, I don't read French. So if you want to find yourself in the history it's very difficult.

I had my hearing in 2006. We started with a pipe ceremony that my daughter and granddaughter attended, as well, as my husband and my therapist. After we had the pipe ceremony my daughter left and just the adjudicator, the lawyer for Canada and my husband and my therapist and I were left for the duration of the Hearing. It's important for people to know that as Survivors we want to protect our children as much as possible from the trauma that we went through. So the Hearing itself lasted for 12 hours, mainly because I had written an 83 page story about my experience and I wanted to read it.

When you're going through this process - and every survivor goes through this - you're always wondering if what you're sharing is the truth. When you grow up in an institution that operates under three things: care, custody and control, you become a person who has difficulty in having faith in yourself and your truth. It takes a lot of courage

to go through with the process and you have to be willing to go through it, you have to have the belief that your story is going to make a difference.

And so that's where the story of the piece started. After it was all over I had these pages of material and I didn't know what to do with them so I just left them alone. Later, I was asked to be part of an exhibition called Politics of Mother, I decided to maybe do something with that story.

**I heard testimonies from people who said that telling their story could itself be traumatising, but it could also be healing. How did you find your path through this process?**

When I do create something it's always for a purpose and so making a baby swing/wêwêpison using my residential school story was a way for me to respond to my relationship with my mother, great grandmothers and my daughters and the 'raising of children bundles' that we carry. We were taken out of the safety of the wêwêpison where we learned about who we were through our language. Each tie is a small bundle that wraps painful memories in love, prayer and song, in the same way a mother, grandmother, auntie and sister would have sung a lullaby to the baby in the swing.

So prior to June 2012, my son was involved with collecting artefacts from residential schools across the coun-

try for a project called The Witness Blanket. He said: "Mom, you have to contribute," and I didn't want to. It's not that I'm shy, I'm just careful and I didn't want to put myself out there in a public space. But he kept encouraging me and I really felt at that point that maybe I needed to have the same courage as he did and go with it. That's how it ended up in the collection at the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation (NCTR). All items contributed to the bentwood box are now held at the NCTR.

*"It takes a lot of courage to go through with the process and you have to be willing to go through it, you have to have the belief that your story is going to make a difference"*

**What power do you think most needs to be broken?**

I don't really want to answer that question. The reason is because power in my language means something different. From the English language, I would probably

say the power that needs to be broken is the belief that we are what the residential schools taught us about us, all of the stereotypes about Indigenous people. When you grow up in an institution, which I did, and you believe that you don't have capacity, that's a power that has a hold over you and needs to be broken.

In my language, if we talk about power it is often talked about as in physical strength. We don't have a word for power, but we have a word for courage. We say the act of having courage. If you have that, that's an inner power within yourself that allows you to reclaim what it is that has been taken from you in terms of ceremony, language, kinship system and land.

**Talking about land, Indigenous people have always been at the forefront of defending the natural world. You also mention the importance of land in your own artwork. Is this the case for many other Indigenous artists?**

Every artist that I am aware of is addressing issues of

*"And that's one thing that I think if the world understood, which is that you don't take from the earth, from people, unless you give something before you take it"*

language, addressing issues of land and their personal stories or their personal troubles. I think most Indigenous artists share their stories in their art, centred on causes that are meaningful for them.

As artists, we look at things holistically, we have a tendency to address all of those things. I think that we can have one story but we tell lots of stories, or one piece has lots of stories within that one piece.

**I read somewhere that we should learn about how to live with nature from Indigenous people, that this may be the only way that we can tackle problems as big as the climate crisis.**

One of the things that I value as an indigenous person, as a Plains Cree woman, is the



practice of protocol. When we work with the English language and our First Nation language or our original language, sometimes it's hard to bring the truth together so that everybody can understand. In the Cree language, that idea of protocol is *nacinewin*.

Nacinewin is when you seek something, whether it's knowledge from an Elder, Knowledge Keeper or a ceremonial person, you offer tobacco as a way of acknowledging your request for information. That's following or practicing Indigenous (in my case Cree) protocol.

And that's one thing that I think if the world understood, which is that you don't take from the earth, from people, unless you give something before you take it, and you give thanks for that information, for that land, for that medicine, for those trees, for all of the things that we take. If we practised that I believe we would not be in the situation we are in right now.

Somebody said 'it's not the earth that is suffering; it's us'. We need the birds, the wind, the insects, everything else on this land, on this earth is before us. We need all of that to survive. But we don't understand that as human beings. And that's part of indigenous knowledge.

People always say scientists discovered this or know this to be true... we've known this for centuries, we've known this is true and we are all keepers in indigenous teachings: some people are responsible for the air, the fire, the water and the land. That's how we see ourselves, [as] keepers of the land, and the land is being destroyed and that means we're not doing our job. If you're the keeper of air and there's pollution, you're not doing your job.

I think the important thing is to realise in this discussion that we are holistic people and so every time we do something as indigenous people, we are considering everything, everything around us, and I think we should do the same throughout the world.

**More people are aware of the ills of the world but might not know how to contribute in a meaningful way. Do you have any suggestions or ideas on what people could do in relation to Indigenous communities?**

Research. Read. Look. I think the important thing for anyone is to go to the Indigenous people, read their material, read through their eyes, through



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*What I would say is to stay away from wanting to be a saviour to the people. As indigenous people, we believe in 'giving away', which means you give something and you never follow where it goes, how it's being used"*

that lens, because if you look through your own lens it's always harder to really understand what is happening, or how you can respond.

For me, if somebody needs food, I give them food, you know, I just respond immediately, that's how I was raised. Have courage to do it.

What I would say is to stay away from wanting to be a saviour to the people. As indigenous people, we believe in 'giving away', which means you give something and you never follow where it goes, how it's being used, and you give it with love, whether it's energy, whether it's money, whether it's clothes, food, whatever it is you are giving away has to come

from a place of love and that to me is how you help.

**What is your favourite quote on power?**

It was when Murray Sinclair who was a commissioner on the Truth and Reconciliation Commission said: "the Survivors in this room, the most important gesture of reconciliation that





they will ever see in their lives, is for you to tell them that you love them.” That to me is power. It’s giving back, giving love to the survivors, and to anybody.

[Another one is] what my mom said to me. I contributed a piece to The Witness Blanket and it was a piece that I created on the spiritual genocide of Indigenous people in the Americas, which was one of the first installation pieces that I made as an art student. I followed protocol, and called my mom. I said: “I need your help because I want to make sure that I’m doing this right,” because in our belief system we never do anything without considering how it’s going to impact the past: our ancestors; the present: our family now; and our future: our grandchildren for the next seven generations.

She sent me a letter and she said memorise the strength of t̄ap̄ok̄eyimoh (have belief/faith in yourself), s̄ohki-t̄eh̄eh̄ (be strong, have no fear), ekwa mina (and) n̄akatohk̄eh̄ (be respectful). To have belief, to be strong, to have no fear and to be respectful to self and others are important words about power.

### **If you were an animal, what would you be?**

We don’t do that actually, but we have spirit names. The names are given in a place of ceremony and

so in order for me to have a name I would go to ceremony and bring my protocol, my tobacco and my gifts to the Elder.

If you asked children you’d get wonderful answers. My granddaughter, was four years old and she was asked what she wanted to be when she grows up, and she said ‘I want to be a dragon.’

### **Who is or who are the activists you most admire?**

My favourite activists are actually my grandchildren, my children, my nephews, my nieces, my mom, the Indigenous students and teachers and Survivors. The reason why they are my favourite activists is because they are living the trauma every single day and continue to be strong, to be who they are.

They are activists because they raise their children to try and help break the cycle, that to me is the daily act of healing and working towards feeling grounded on all levels of your being. That to me is activism, it’s a daily effort.

### **What superpower would you like to have?**

I can’t answer something like that. It’s very hard for me. Again, when

“*In my language, if we talk about power it is often talked about as in physical strength. We don't have a word for power, but we have a word for courage. We say the act of having courage. If you have that, that's an inner power within yourself that allows you to reclaim what it is that has been taken from you in terms of ceremony, language, kinship system and land.*”

you’re in residential school, you’re not a child anymore, you don’t grow up being a child, you don’t have a family, you just don’t have that childhood, you become like this robot, you become a product of an institution. So that’s difficult for me to answer.

But I have a grandson who is 6, (I have 13 grandchildren), he loves Mega Man. So he considers himself to have all these powers when he comes to visit, so that’s how I learn about superpowers, through my children and grandchildren who have wonderful imaginations.

## *Intergenerational trauma*

If trauma is not healed, we may unknowingly pass it on to others through our behaviour. Our children may experience difficulties with attachment, disconnection from their extended families and culture and high levels of stress from family and community members who are dealing with the impacts of trauma. This can create developmental issues for children, who are particularly susceptible to distress at a young age. This creates a cycle of trauma, where the impact is passed from one generation to the next.

In a study by the University of Zurich, researchers discovered not only can extreme and traumatic events change a person, but they can also impact their children, a generation or two later, through RNA strands.

Generational trauma patterns can be depicted as a heavy chain of links, dragged (unconsciously) from one family line down to the next. And one of the greatest benefits that can be achieved by doing the inner work needed to recognise and heal is – you release your children from lugging these links into the future, thereby liberating them from the generational chain.

*Source: Science Daily.*



# Linda's Drawing Room

## Literature

- *The Knowledge Seeker: Embracing Indigenous spirituality*, Blair A. Stonechild
- *Nationhood Interrupted: Revitalizing n hiyaw Legal Systems*, Sylvia McAdam (Saysewahum)
- Honouring the truth, reconciling for the future. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada
- *The survivors speak*. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada
- *What we have learned*. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada
- *Calls to action*, The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada
- *Keetsahnak: Our missing and murdered Indigenous sisters*, Kim Anderson et al.

## Film

- *In My Blood It Runs* (2019), Maya Newell
- *nîpawistamâsowin: We Will Stand Up* (2019), Tasha Hubbard
- *Finding Dawn* (2006), Christine Welsh
- *Mohawk Girls* (2005), Tracey Deer
- *Two Worlds Colliding* (2004), Tasha Hubbard
- *Richard Cardinal: Cry from a Diary of a Métis Child* (1986), Alanis Obomsawin

Join us online for more resources and conversations from Linda's Drawing Room and beyond: [medium.com/and-beyond](https://medium.com/and-beyond)

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*To love. To be loved. To never forget your own insignificance. To never get used to the unspeakable violence and the vulgar disparity of life around you. To seek joy in the saddest places. To pursue beauty to its lair. To never simplify what is complicated or complicate what is simple. To respect strength, never power. Above all, to watch. To try and understand. To never look away. And never, never to forget.*

— Arundhati Roy



# Imagine a world where...

## oil could de-fossilise

Creatures that had been dead for hundreds of millions of years would suddenly come alive again. Tiny plants and animals that floated in the ocean, more multitudinous than anyone could comprehend, which over time had died, sank to the ocean bed, were buried, crushed, melted, compressed and simplified as the aeons passed.

Right now they are the drivers of civilisation. They have the power to power humanity, and we have the power to exploit that. Their bodies form substances so revered that we're willing to suck the planet dry than leave them to slumber in the deep. They power almost everything, are sprayed on fields, they polish our shoes and are wrapped around our foods, electronics and vehicles. Their collected remains are dragged to the surface, mixed, stretched and reshaped again to suit every one of our needs.

But imagine if they exploded back into life in an instant. A pair of spindly antennae peeking out from an ocean oil spill. Other miniscule eyes and claws would soon escape the darkness to find a world that was warmer, but quite like the one they had left.

Tankers that had contained thick, flammable liquids and volatile gases would suddenly begin to slosh and churn with millions upon millions of miniature sea creatures. Colourful algae and energetic plankton would erupt from pumps and launch out of engines everywhere. Plastics would wriggle back into life, roads would squirm and die, cars would sputter and stop in the road as they collapsed inside and out.

And what if other fuels changed back too? Coal power plants would suddenly be filled with ancient trees with their mighty branches breaking through the pulverising mills. Governments chasing dwindling reserves of natural gas would find only swathes of primeval ferns, mosses and fungi.

In this unexpected burst of life many would not make it back to their habitat, confined as they would be to pipes, whirring motors and metal tanks. But the effect on people would be the same in most places. So much of what we rely on these days would change completely.

The people who once pushed fossil fuels, and the people who made use of their exploits, would lose everything. We'd recall in horror how we all created a world where we foolishly relied on a few resources and fell for the allure of convenience and greed. Our actions had no consequence, we thought. We didn't think. We were seduced by a charming few who held all the power, influence and money. It had been a pyramid scheme, we'd realise. "Do as we say," they told us, "and we'll give you energy forever".

But one lie is enough to question all truths.

In a world where fossil fuels returned to life overnight we'd be the shit hitting the fan. What would we burn for energy now? How would we carry our shopping home? What would we paint our homes with or play ball games with? How would we mend the potholes in our roads? Would the creatures someday turn back into oil for us to use up again? Would we look elsewhere to power our activities or would we seek to change how we are as a species?



# The Power of Imagination



Anything that's new always starts life the same way, as a spark in our mind. We ask ourselves: **what if?** It's our imagination in action, it takes us forward, feeds our creativity and gives us immense creative power. Coming up with ideas is what we humans do, as sure as we breathe.



We all have the power to imagine a better world

The power to imagine the future that we want to live in

And the power to imagine without any limits!

At Little Inventors we believe children have the best imaginations, unrestricted by too much life getting in the way. We ask children to draw inventions and the most ingenious ideas are brought to life by Magnificent Makers. They show how precious a truly free imagination can be, something worth nurturing and celebrating.



Now it's your turn to think like a child and have a go at inventing!

It could be silly, serious, helpful or funny, something for someone you know, something small or something huge, it's up to you and your very own imagination.

**My invention!**

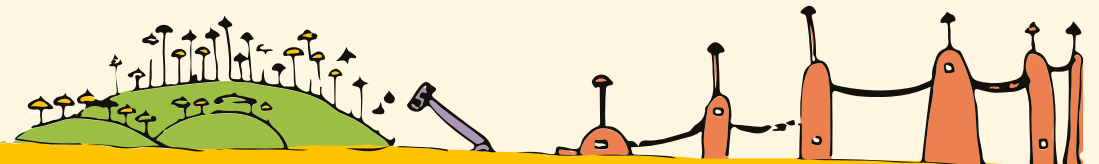
Take a picture and share it with us on [littleinventors.org](http://littleinventors.org) to get feedback and see the amazing ideas from children from all over the world.

Name: ..... Age: ..... Email Address: .....

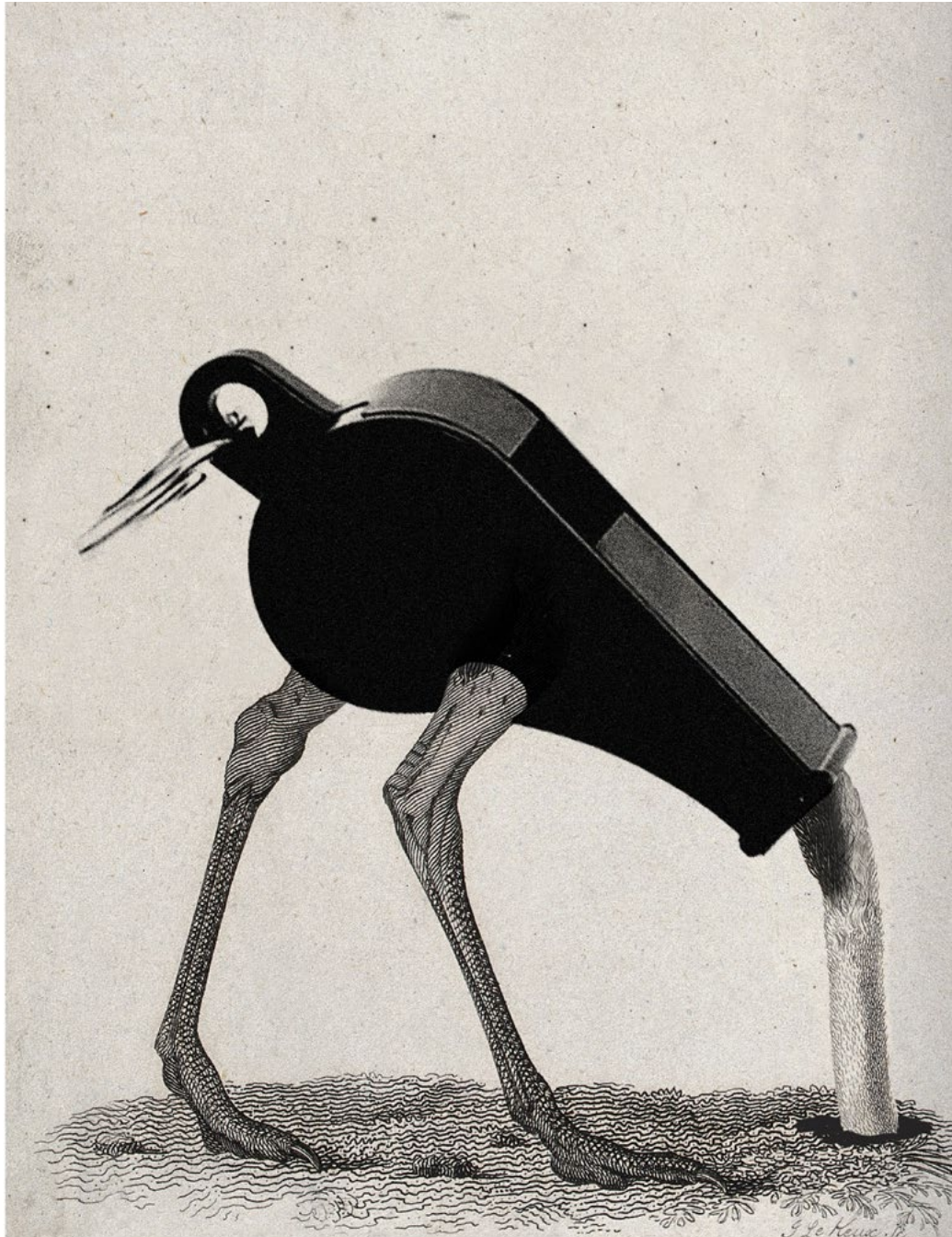
My invention is called: .....

Explain your invention: .....

.....  
.....







*whistleblower autoctonos novosque*

# Musings

Most of us go about our days blissfully unaware of our privileges. We're busy enjoying them, so perhaps it's no surprise. But little do we know that we all have some, sometimes at the expense of other people. The first step to challenging inequality is to acknowledge our own privileges and reflect on how we can utilise them for the greater good. Here is some food for thought which we reflected on ourselves.

*What privileges do you have?\**

- a. I'm white.
- b. I'm heterosexual.
- c. I'm male.
- d. That's enough!

*What social inequalities do you benefit from?*

- a. I've never been racially profiled.
- b. My children don't tell me what to do.
- c. My salary is higher than my female peers'.
- d. I'm an expat, not an immigrant.

*You announce you're going to save the world. You...*

- a. Create a new hashtag.
- b. Give up and go back to the day job.
- c. Donate to a big charity.
- d. Get some friends together.

*Which of the following is the least disadvantaged group?*

- a. Women.
- b. Black women.
- c. Black, disabled women.
- d. Black, disabled, immigrant women.

*What is the most powerful language?*

- a. English.
- b. My mother tongue.
- c. A computer programming language.
- d. Body language.

*When you do something 'charitable', what response would you like?*

- a. Vocal confirmation of having done good.
- b. An award recognising my actions.
- c. The happy tears of a small child.
- d. No response required or expected.

*What kind of feminist are you?*

- a. Equal pay for equal work.
- b. No group should hold power over another.
- c. Women have the right to veto any war.
- d. I don't preach feminism; I practise it.

*What does staying quiet or inactive in the face of injustice represent?*

- a. Uncertainty about what can be done.
- b. Fear of provoking an adverse reaction.
- c. Trust that someone else will help.
- d. What injustice?

\* If you have more than two, you're morally obliged to acknowledge your unearned luck in life and utilise it to end the oppression of disadvantaged groups.

*"[If] we think of anger as compost, we think of it as energy that can be recycled in the direction of our good. It is an empowering force. If we don't think about it that way, it becomes a debilitating and destructive force"*  
— bell hooks

*"Power doesn't commit suicide."*  
— Noam Chomsky

*"Position in the power hierarchy determines the degree of responsibility and guilt, but it gives no one unlimited responsibility and guilt, nor does it completely absolve anyone."*  
— Vaclav Havel

*"You can cut all the flowers, but you can't stop the spring."*  
— Pablo Neruda

*"There is no job that is too small. There is no person who is too small."*  
— Indira Gandhi

*"Courage inspires communities: the courage of an example — for courage is as contagious as fear."*  
— Susan Sontag

*"It seems reasonable to believe — and I do believe — that the more clearly we can focus our attention on the wonders and realities of the universe about us the less taste we shall have for the destruction of our race. Wonder and humility are wholesome emotions, and they do not exist side by side with a lust for destruction."*  
— Rachel Carson

*"Laughter isn't just medicine; it's power. If I can laugh at the monster from my nightmares, if I can laugh at the most powerful predator in the entertainment world maybe my pain doesn't control me as much as I thought it did."*  
— Kelly Bachman

*"Power is not a means; it is an end. One does not establish a dictatorship in order to safeguard a revolution; one makes the revolution in order to establish the dictatorship. The object of persecution is persecution. The object of torture is torture. The object of power is power."*  
— George Orwell

*"The exercise of imagination is dangerous to those who profit from the way things are because it has the power to show that the way things are is not permanent, not universal, not necessary. [...] We will not know our own injustice if we cannot imagine justice. We will not be free if we do not imagine freedom. We cannot demand that anyone try to attain justice and freedom who has not had a chance to imagine them as attainable."*  
— Ursula Le Guin

*"Our anger controlled can be transmuted into a power which can move the world."*  
— Mahatma Gandhi

*"Who speaks is not who writes, and who writes is not who is."*  
— Roland Barthes

*"We have to be more reflective about what power is, what it is for, and how it is measured."*  
— Mary Beard

*"He who has great power should use it lightly."*  
— Seneca the Younger

*"Show a people as one thing, as only one thing and that is what they become. ... It is impossible to talk about the single story without talking about power."*  
— Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie

*"Do not obey in advance. Most of the power of authoritarianism is freely given. In times like these, individuals think ahead about what a more repressive government will want, and then offer themselves without being asked. A citizen who adapts in this way is teaching power what it can do."*  
— Timothy Snyder

*"Power is not brute force and money; power is in your spirit. Power is in your soul. It is what your ancestors, your old people gave you. Power is in the earth; it is in your relationship to the earth."*  
— Winona LaDuke

*"In our every deliberation, we must consider the impact of our decisions on the next seven generations."*  
— The Great Law of Peace, The Constitution of the Iroquois Nations



*“There is no hope for the world unless power can be tamed, and brought into the service, not of this or that group of fanatical tyrants, but of the whole human race... for science has made it inevitable that all must live or all must die.”*

— Bertrand Russell

*“Part of the danger of imagining change as a process forced by violence and brute power is that it overlooks the great power of nonviolent uprisings and those other moments when individuals become a civil society on its feet.”*

— Rebecca Solnit

*“I ask no favour for my sex. All I ask of our brethren is that they take their feet off our necks.”*

— Sarah Moore Grimké

*“We must change almost everything in our current societies. The bigger your carbon footprint - the bigger your moral duty. The bigger your platform - the bigger your responsibility.”*

— Greta Thunberg

*“Let us use whatever power and influence we have, working with whatever resources are already available, mobilizing the people who are with us to work for what they care about.”*

— Margaret Wheatley

*“Creativity is the power to reject the past, to change the status quo, and to seek new potential.”*

— Ai Wei Wei

*“There is something vulgar about public dissemination of opinions on matters about which one does not have extensive first-hand knowledge. If I speak of what I do not know, or know hastily, this is mere opinion-mongering.”*

— Susan Sontag

*“It’s clear that equality doesn’t quite cut it. Asking for a sliver of disproportionate power is too polite a request. I don’t want to be included. Instead, I want to question who created the standard in the first place.”*

— Reni Eddo-Lodge

*“Our deepest fear is not that we are inadequate. Our deepest fear is that we are powerful beyond measure. It is our light, not our darkness, that most frightens us.”*

— Nelson Mandela

*“The world is a dangerous place to live, not because of the people who are evil, but because of the people who don’t do anything about it.”*

— Albert Einstein

*“Others felt cornered and felt uncomfortable about the limitations of power, which is the essence of human rights: the limitation of power.”*

— Thomas Hammarberg

*“Colorful demonstrations and weekend marches are vital but alone are not powerful enough to stop wars. Wars will be stopped only when soldiers refuse to fight, when workers refuse to load weapons onto ships and aircraft, when people boycott the economic outposts of Empire that are strung across the globe.”*

— Arundhati Roy

*“Power tends to corrupt, and absolute power corrupts absolutely. Great men are almost always bad men, even when they exercise influence and not authority; still more when you superadd the tendency of corruption by authority.”*

— Lord Acton

*“It is a great wisdom to accept reality as it is, even if it contradicts the stories most people believe.”*

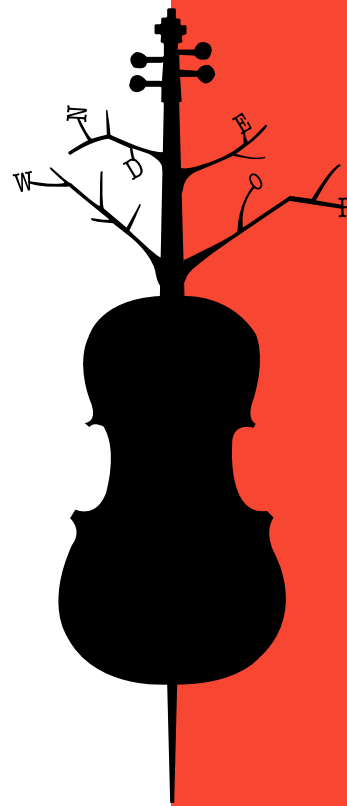
— Yuval Noah Harari

# breaktcreate9

A glimpse of [breaktcreate.org](http://breaktcreate.org)

Like any group in society, under-18s are branded with labels, preconceptions and generalisations which determine how others view and treat them. Such ideas - which materialise from assumptions, attitudes, behaviours, norms, traditions, prejudices and even wilful ignorance - have a strong hold on all societies, and our individual thinking is not immune to their powers.

Whether consciously or not, we're conditioned by what we see practised around us. On the other hand, we may be doing it to ourselves. In some cases, our ego might get in the way of admitting we might be wrong about a long-held view. Or maybe, at the root of it all, we're just afraid of losing power.



The result? That societies continue unable - or unwilling - to fully recognise children and young people as having their own independent human rights. But this thinking is keeping progress at bay, and in today's ever-changing world, there's no place or justification for it.

This was the premise that led to [breaktcreate.org](http://breaktcreate.org), an interactive project which shows that we all have the imagination, talents and critical thinking to challenge what we think we know and be activists in our own way. Breaktcreate was produced as part of ARTIVISM, the first-ever human rights pavilion at the Venice Biennale, and the project invites visitors to commit time - 60 seconds, 60 minutes or 60 days - to either breaking, playing with or building something.

As a preview, the project explains that the first step to breaking the spell which prejudices and assumptions have over our thinking is to acknowledge them and recognise them for what they are. Along these lines, we invite you to identify some about under-18s below. Simply match the corresponding words. After that, it's up to you.

ADULT

CORPORAL

YOUNG

CHILDREN'S

GENDERED

FINANCIAL

INTERNET

VOTING

CHILD

BEHAVIOUR

DONATIONS

RESTRICTIONS

OFFENDERS

TERRORISTS

BELIEFS

PUNISHMENT

THINKING

RIGHTS

ISN'T

PROTECT

AREN'T

REQUIRE

KNOWS

SAVE

IS

ARE

REQUIRE

DEPRAVED

MATURITY

BEST

LIVES

CHILDREN

IMPRISONMENT

TAUGHT

HARMLESS

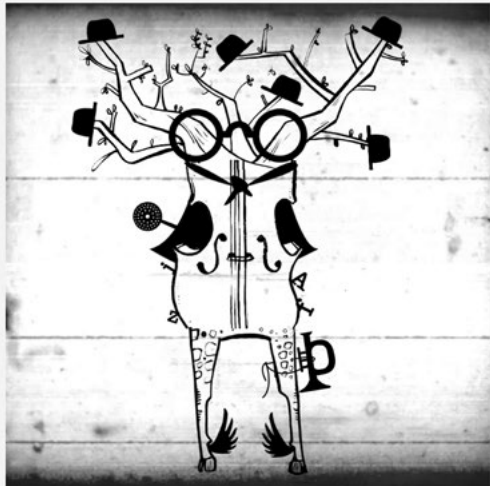
INCULCATED

## WHEN PROBLEMS PROVE TOO LARGE, WE MIGHT CALL ON POWERS GREATER THAN US TO FIX THEM.

We're not referring to divine entities, though; superheroes fit the bill just fine. But the superheroes we have in mind are those closer to home. We believe that everyone can be a superhero in their own way, with powers that come from our everyday lives, actions and ideas.

In another exercise of breaktcreate, we asked visitors to design their own superhero, choose their powers and write their story. Drawing from a selection of objects, like a typewriter, torch, trumpet or megaphone, visitors should think about what they can achieve - in other words, what makes them super?

For more, visit [breaktcreate.org](http://breaktcreate.org)



### Name

The Tall Seasoner

### Superpowers

Observes world injustices from a great height, shedding colourful leaves, musical notes and words of wisdom to inspire justice and equality in those below.

### Protects

All freedoms and equality.

### Fights Against

Waves of ill-thoughts, violence and prejudice from spreading across societies.

### Secret Accident or Trauma

Almost lost all its leaves from shock and depression after years of watching the news.



### Name

SHA-WING

(FKA The Winged Seatiger Crusader)

### Superpowers

Picking off evil-doers from the face of the planet, as it cruises through the oceans, treetops and cityscapes at sonic speed.

### Protects

The good in humanity.

### Fights Against

The bad in humanity.

### Secret Accident or Trauma

The merciless killing of a seahorse, rare bird and tiger, which prompted Mother Nature to morph their bodies and abilities into one.



### Name

The Owling Wisdom Blaster

### Superpowers

Knocks sense into people through atomic sound waves dispersed in all directions within 270 degrees.

### Protects

Knowledge, scientific facts, awareness.

### Fights Against

Ignorance, false allegations, fake news.

### Secret Accident or Trauma

Desperately searching for his family and friends in his disappearing habitat gave him a stiff neck.



# Last Dictator Speech

Charles Chaplin

I'm sorry, but I don't want to be an emperor.  
That's not my business.  
I don't want to rule or conquer anyone.  
I should like to help everyone if possible.  
Jew - Gentile - Black Man, White.  
We all want to help one another, human beings are like that.  
We want to live by each other's happiness.  
Not by each other's misery.  
We don't want to hate and despise one another.  
And this world has room for everyone, and the good Earth is rich can provide for everyone.  
The way of life can be free and beautiful, but we have lost the way.  
Greed has poisoned men's souls, has barricaded the world with hate, has goose-stepped us into misery and bloodshed.  
We have developed speed, but we have shut ourselves in.  
Machinery that gives us abundance has left us in want.  
Our knowledge has made us cynical.  
Our cleverness, hard and unkind.  
We think too much, and feel too little.  
More than machinery, we need humanity.  
More than cleverness, we need kindness and gentleness.  
Without these qualities life will be violent, and all will be lost.  
The aeroplane and the radio have brought us closer together.  
The very nature of these inventions cries out for the goodness in men - cries out for universal brotherhood - for the unity of us all.  
Even now my voice is reaching millions throughout the world - millions of despairing men, women, and little children - victims of a system that makes men torture and imprison innocent people.  
To those who can hear me, I say - do not despair.  
The misery that is now upon us is but the passing of greed - the bitterness of men who fear the way of human progress.  
The hate of men will pass, and dictators die, and the power they took from the people will return to the people.  
And so long as men die, liberty will never perish. ...  
Soldiers!  
don't give yourselves to brutes - men who despise you - enslave you

who regiment your lives - tell you what to do - what to think and what to feel!  
Who drill you - diet you - treat you like cattle, use you as cannon fodder.  
Don't give yourselves to these unnatural men - machine men with machine minds and machine hearts!  
You are not machines!  
You are not cattle!  
You are men!  
You have the love of humanity in your hearts!  
You don't hate!  
Only the unloved hate - the unloved and the unnatural!  
Soldiers!  
Don't fight for slavery!  
Fight for liberty!  
In the 17th Chapter of St Luke it is written: "the Kingdom of God is within man" - not one man nor a group of men, but in all men!  
In you!  
You, the people have the power - the power to create machines.  
The power to create happiness!  
You, the people, have the power to make this life free and beautiful, to make this life a wonderful adventure.  
Then - in the name of democracy - let us use that power - let us all unite.  
Let us fight for a new world - a decent world that will give men a chance to work - that will give youth a future and old age a security.

By the promise of these things, brutes have risen to power.  
But they lie!  
They do not fulfil that promise.  
They never will!  
Dictators free themselves but they enslave the people!  
Now let us fight to fulfil that promise!  
Let us fight to free the world - to do away with national barriers - to do away with greed, with hate and intolerance.  
Let us fight for a world of reason, a world where science and progress will lead to all men's happiness.  
Soldiers!  
in the name of democracy,  
let us all unite



## ADVERTISEMENTS

**A TV megastar is offering one lucky charity the opportunity to harness the prodigious power of his celebrity for one high-profile campaign.**

### About the celebrity

This actor's resume spans 12 years of prime-time daytime TV soap operas. His face has graced the covers of over six TV guides and he has featured on countless celebrity quiz shows. But the years of lavish living, strict fitness regimes and yearly makeovers have taken their toll on his conscience and he now wishes to use his fame for good.

### Potentially worthy causes

- Poverty and hunger (Africa, other countries will be considered)- Peace (but in a relatively safe country)
- Peace (but in a relatively safe country)
- Orphans (they must look sad initially)

### Requirements

- Must be high profile campaign;
- Guarantee of speaking opportunities at the UN;
- Guarantee of photo opportunity with the UN Secretary-General;
- Campaign ads to include the words Save, Free and Robin Hood;
- Any vehicle transportation to be accompanied by a police escort;
- Personal stylist to accompany the actor on campaign trips abroad;
- If visiting rural areas, maximum 15-minute meet-and-greet with poor communities;

### How to apply

Write a catchy description of your campaign and details of the all-expenses-paid trips on which you will send our megastar to help raise awareness. Organisations working outside of the Global South need not apply. Email: [save\\_us@colonymedia.com](mailto:save_us@colonymedia.com)

## PERSONAL ADS

**WANTED:** A time-traveller from the past to remind contemporary governments adamant on comparing the size of their arsenal that wars are not fun. Must own history textbooks. Must possess the benefit of hindsight. [repeatedmistakes@blastfromthepast.com](mailto:repeatedmistakes@blastfromthepast.com)

Disillusioned individual seeks experienced dream catcher to restore faith in humanity. Must be an insensitive listener and a hard talker. Own fishing net preferred.

Amazons seek willing candidates for gender warfare target practice. Must be white, male and scared of losing privilege...and balls.

To the inventor of patriarchy: thanks a bunch.

**DONATE** your ideas to short-sightedness! We're a recycling firm specialising in the reapplication of great ideas for sectors wailing in stagnancy. Creative thinking preferred. Best practice will be binned.

### MISCELLANEOUS:

Lawsuit-stricken religious institution selling prime real estate in three capital cities and a selection of precious items from its art trove. Quick sale needed. Secrecy appreciated.

White privilege holders requested to share their unearned luck in life by noticing other people. Ability not to dominate conversations about racial and economic discrimination appreciated. Lesson 1: reverse discrimination is not a thing.

Pharmaceutical company seeks cure for greed. We have produced a string of groundbreaking treatments and vaccines in the past decade, but we can't stop applying outrageous markups to even the simplest syringe. Email us your free home remedies via [freebies@freepharma.com](mailto:freebies@freepharma.com)

Media baron seeks fiction writers to replace journalists to help reinvent news empire as a fiction factory.

To produce this edition of the magazine, we read, listened to, discovered, and were inspired by the following materials.



## What We're Reading

*Women and Power*, Mary Beard

*Optimism over Despair*,  
Noam Chomsky

*Power Systems*, Noam Chomsky

*Be More Pirate*, Sam Conniff Allende

*Why I'm no longer talking to white people about race*, Reni Eddo-Lodge

*Winners Take All*,  
Anand Giridharadas

*The Power of the Powerless*,  
Vaclav Havel

*All About Love*, bell hooks

*The Wave in the Mind*,  
Ursula Le Guin

*Bruce Lee: Artist of Life*,  
Bruce Lee

*The Creative Coalitions Handbook*,  
Nick Martlew

*Power Corrupts*, New Philosopher  
*Expands Our Scope of the Possible*,  
*BrainPickings*, Maria Popova

*Ursula K. Le Guin on Power*,  
*Oppression, Freedom, and*  
*How Imaginative Storytelling*,  
*BrainPickings*, Maria Popova

*On Tyranny, twenty lessons from the twentieth century*, Timothy Snyder

*Wanderlust, A History of Walking*, Rebecca Solnit

*At the Same Time, Essays and Speeches*, Susan Sontag

*No one is too small to make a difference*, Greta Thunberg

*#newpower*, Henry Timms and Jeremy Heimans

*The Body Keeps the Score; Mind, brain, and Body in the Transformation of Trauma*, Bessel Van der Kolk

*Who do we choose to be*, Margaret Wheatley



## What We're Listening To

The About Race podcast, Reni Eddo-Lodge

'Songhoy Blues', (song) Bamako

'Exactly Like You' (song), Dizzy Gillespie & Stan Getz

'Behaviour change', The Drawdown Agenda podcast

'Finding your power', The Guilty Feminist podcast, Episode 119



'Change and Assumptions', The Guilty Feminist podcast, Episode 128

'Letter to the 1%', (song) Lowkey

'Soundtrack to the struggle 2', (album) Lowkey

'Prophecy' (album), Nitin Sawhney

'Fight the Power', (song) Public Enemy

'Utopia and Reality', Polarised podcast, Royal Society of the Arts



## What We're Watching

Demain / Tomorrow (2015)

Joshua Wong: Teenager vs. Superpower (2017)

'The Danger of a Single Story', Chimamanda Adichie, TED Talk

'How childhood trauma affects health across a lifetime', Nadine Burke Harris, TEDMED

'Wounds that won't heal', The ACE

Adverse Childhood Experiences Study, 'When time doesn't heal all wounds', Dr. Robert K. Ross, TEDx Talks



## Where We Get Inspiration From

The Correspondent

<https://thecorrespondent.com/>

New Philosopher

<https://www.newphilosopher.com/>

The MobilisationLab

<https://mobilisationlab.org/>

The Tactical Technology Collective

<https://tacticaltech.org>

FridaysForFuture

<https://www.fridaysforfuture.org/>

Idle No More

<http://www.idlenomore.ca/>

The Drawdown Agenda

<http://www.thedrawdownagenda.com/>

OpenGlobalRights, 'Positive Narratives',

<https://www.openglobalrights.org/positive-narratives/>



## Activism Around the World

'My generation is confident and unafraid to speak out', Positive News

'Why adults no longer have the right to object to their children taking radical action', The Conversation

'The '3.5% rule': How a small minority can change the world', BBC

'Dear Life — A Letter', Julia Steinberger

'The Courage of Saying No: Children, Rebellion and Greta Thunberg', Pressenza

'Politics is failing, but human networks could show us how to fix it', The Correspondent

'Fight the system: Lebanese at protests teach children things can change', Middle East Eye

'The old made our climate mess. And the young will get us out of it', The Guardian







# power

/'paʊə/

noun

1 using one's physical strength, authority, wealth or weaponry to dominate others

- a delusion of authority or superiority

2 an often untapped ability or capacity every person possesses

- the essence allowing a person or group to act against an injustice or drive change
- free will

3 physical strength, force or energy exerted by superheroes

4 vigour and inspiration produced (by a person or group) that galvanises others

verb

1 [with object] boost (an idea or movement) with inspiration, support, drive or momentum

— *CRIN Dictionary of Interpretations*

# The CRIN Code

## I - We have a mission

Rights, not charity  
Children's rights, human rights  
Justice, not compromise  
Accountability, not apology  
Diversity, not homogeny  
We are Earth's custodians, not its owners

## II - We have an attitude

Principles, not pragmatism  
Critical thinking, not compliance  
Feminism, not patriarchy  
If you can't imagine it, you can't achieve it  
Promote children's rights, not ourselves  
Invest in failure, not quick wins

## III - We have a means

Advocate in language, not words  
Don't grow; network  
Stronger together, not apart  
Be open, not proprietary  
Think ethically, be ethical  
Safeguarding children, not the organisation

Read the full version at: [crin.org/the-crin-code](http://crin.org/the-crin-code)

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- Oscar Glancy, *Extinction Rebellion Youth*
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- James Douglas, *Youth Activist*
- Linda Young, *Artist and Traditional Knowledge Keeper*
- The Little Inventors

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