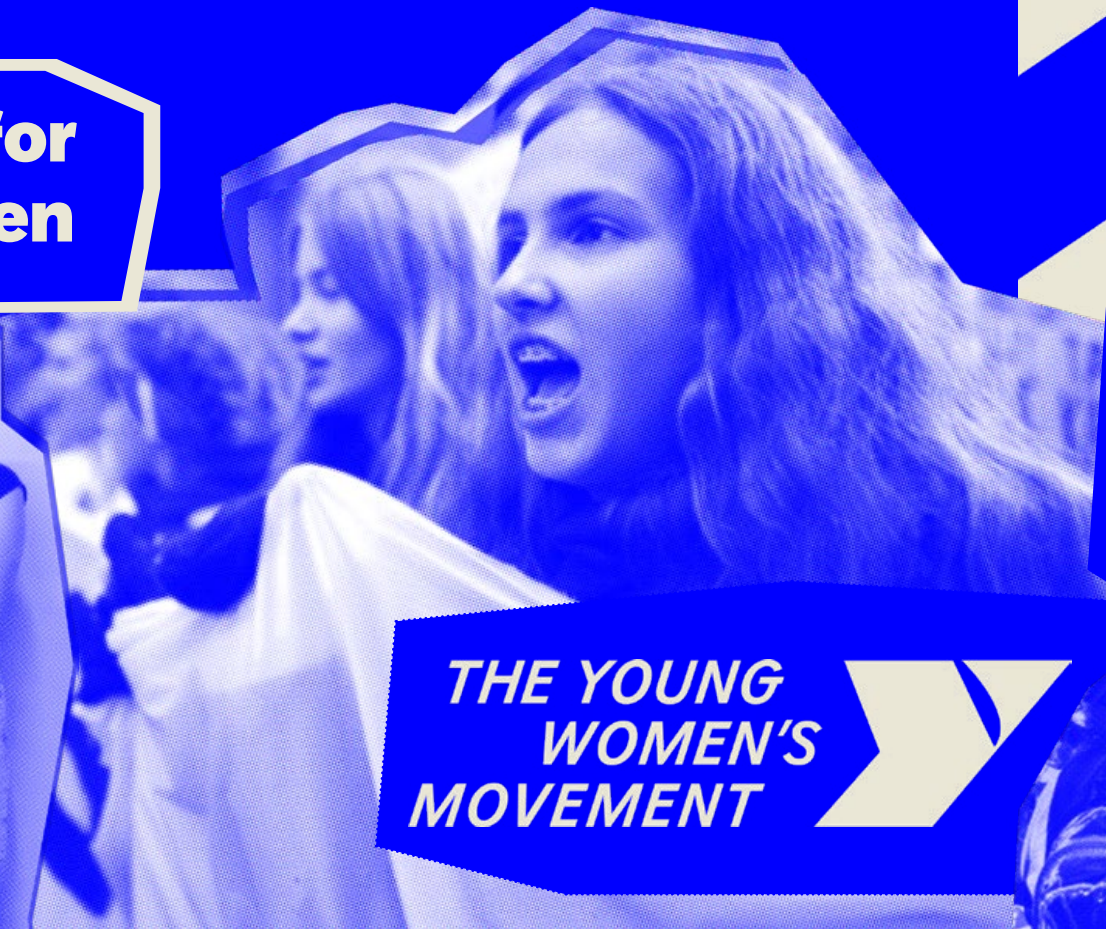


# The Young Women's Guide to Changemaking

A resource for young women



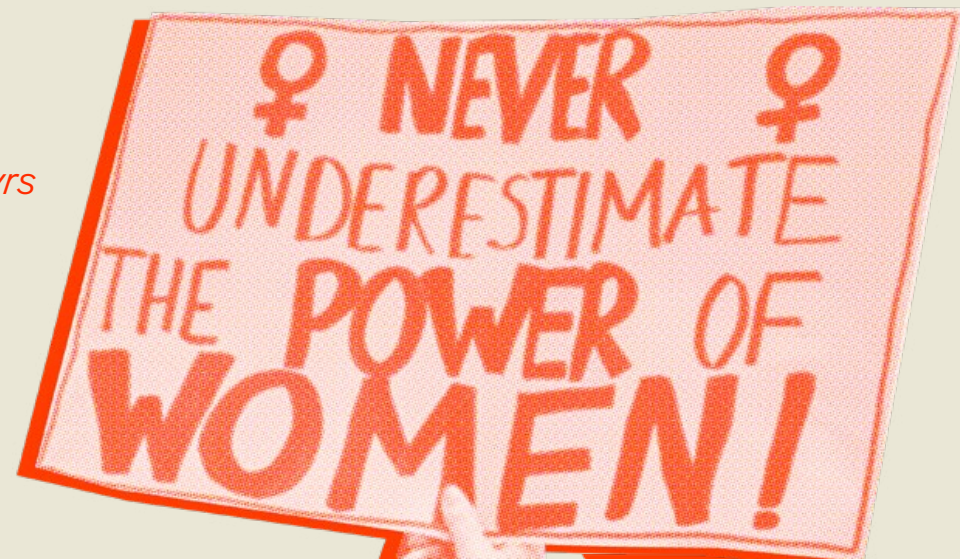
THE YOUNG  
WOMEN'S  
MOVEMENT





Written by: Success Agbontaen,  
Violet Beattie, Poppy Duncan,  
Catriona Hay, Matylda Kaluzinska,  
Evie Lawless, Abigayle McKinlay,  
Daniela Onyewuenyi

*Young Women Changemakers programme members, aged 14-18yrs*



# Foreword



*Photo credit Ellie Morag*

Young women are at the heart of everything we do at The Young Women's Movement. Our work is informed, shaped and led by and for young women who want meaningful change in their lives and across society. Together with the participants of Young Women Changemakers, we are proud to launch the Young Women's Guide to Changemaking resource.

The Young Women Changemakers group worked collaboratively to explore their rights through a feminist lens and identify the knowledge, tools and resources needed for them to create the changes that they need to ensure their rights are being upheld. Using feminist, participatory and youth work principles the group not only produced this resource but a workshop for other young women 15-18yrs which provides the tools and information they need to campaign for their rights on issues that are impacting them.

Our vision is a Scotland where young women are meaningfully heard, valued and supported. By putting young women's experiences and perspectives at the forefront, this resource will equip young women across Scotland with the tools and information needed to support them to become changemakers and create brave conversations resulting in much needed change.

We would like to thank the Young Women Changemakers group for all of their hard work and our funders National Lottery Awards For All for their support in bringing this resource to life.

*Emma Hill – Interim CEO, The Young Women's Movement*

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The aim of this resource is to support young women in understanding both their rights and what activism encompasses, to enable them to make changes in their own lives. It is written by young women for young women who are passionate about making change in their own lives and their communities; designed to enable other young women to become changemakers.

This resource will support and encourage young women to advocate for themselves and others; to challenge systemic inequality and create opportunities for young women to have their voices heard and valued in decision making processes; to create long lasting change supporting young women and girls to thrive and to build strong feminist relationships in their community.



“Each time a woman stands up for herself, without knowing it possibly, without claiming it, she stands up for all women.” Maya Angelou





# Activism

## Definition of activism

'Activism is the process of campaigning in public or working for an organisation in order to bring about political or social change.'

*Source: Collins English Dictionary*

## Forms of activism

**boycotts**

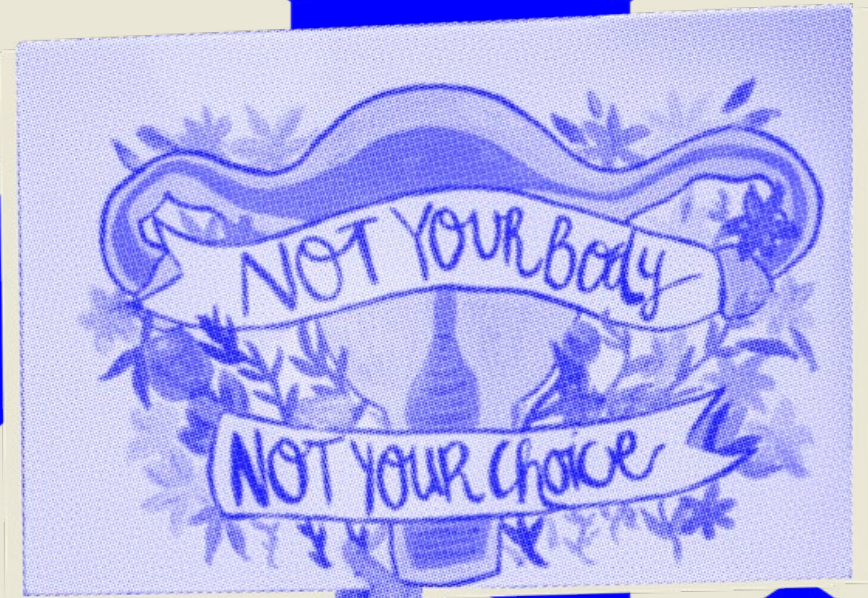
**strikes**

**community organising**

**marches**

**letter-writing campaigns**

**rallies**



## Why do we need activism?

Activism **contributes to making the world a safer place** for everyone. It brings attention to issues that are affecting people and groups in society.

Activism **challenges the status quo** and pushes for better human rights, policies, laws, and social justice.

Activism **creates community** and brings people together, which is vital to supporting and **connecting people** facing oppression.

Activism is **fundamental to bringing about systemic change** in society. Systemic change refers to the full overhaul of a system to create a lasting difference. It is a process that addresses the root causes of problems, rather than just their symptoms.

Engaging in activism provides an outlet for people, regardless of background or experience, to **stand up** for the issues they care about and bring about change.



"You can join in and put yourself out there and go for it for issues that matter to you – you don't have to just sit back and let everyone else do it".

**"Something so small can grow and impact a big number of people".**

"Activism doesn't have to be a big rally or march but can be little things you do and activism comes in many different forms e.g. talking to your friends, and it can make a difference".

*Quotes from Young Women Changemakers co-design group*





## Useful short video clips:

- **Be inspired** by 20 young activists to join the fight  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N6k6X0tyYF4>
- **See** young climate activists march in Glasgow  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Vt8xePV\\_kDg](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Vt8xePV_kDg)
- **Learn** how to be a responsible activist  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kUvOLhDQ83c>
- **Watch** young people defend their human rights  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cY-aalML6ok>

## How can we protect our rights?

- Protest and campaign
- Be informed
- Vote
- Participate in research and movements
- Write to representatives
- Take advantage of groups putting young people at the forefront of politics



"Change is already taking place in small ways, in how people treat each other. The more people become aware of the opportunities they have to change the world, even in small ways, the bigger it ends up being for everyone." Anuscheh Amir-Khalili



# Feminism, rights and activism

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## Women's right are Human rights

UN Universal Decleration of Human Rights  
<https://youtu.be/UD2LOQ0awCo>

## Learn about the global history of women's rights in 3 minutes

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m\\_UjYOfmkn8](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m_UjYOfmkn8)

## Women's rights

In the first few weeks of the Young Women Changemakers programme we looked at rights that are important to us as young women in Scotland:

- Reproductive rights
- Rights to education
- Maternity Leave
- Recreation & Sport
- Access to healthcare
- Right to vote

We were most passionate about young women in sport and reproductive rights as we could relate to our own lives and experiences. Think about what rights you are passionate about and if there are any changes that you would like to see!

## Children's rights

If you are under 18 you will have rights as a child and be protected under the UNCRC (United Nations Convention on the Rights of a Child):

### UNCRC

<https://www.cypcs.org.uk/rights/uncrc/>

In Scotland we now have a United Nations (UN) Charter incorporated into a Law to protect the rights of all children under the age of 18 living in Scotland:

### UNCRC Act

<https://www.nextchapterscotland.org.uk/topic/uncrc-act>

### UNCRC Scotland Bill evidence

<https://youtu.be/pCNXchTI8uM>

## Prompts that can help you create lasting change

### ➤ What do I care about?

Examples: environmental issues and human rights.

### ➤ What would I like to change?

Think: perceptions, actions, and legislation.

### ➤ Are there others who care about the same thing that I do? How do I connect with them?

Consider: charities, organisations, online forums, and your support network. We used group activities to reflect on feminism and women's rights, such as making a collage. You can use different tools, videos, and information to better understand your cause as a collective group.

### ➤ What is my end goal?

Examples: awareness raising or changing policy.

### ➤ What do I have to do to achieve my goal?

Consider: making a petition, creating a poster, or writing to MSPS.

### ➤ What knowledge and resources will I need to achieve my goal?

Think: current legislation, materials, and finances.





## People to help you create change

The Young Women's Movement can help you make change for young women and girls in Scotland.

MSPs. Find your MSP here:  
<https://www.parliament.scot/msps>

Writing to your MSP and encouraging others to do so will help get your cause in the public sphere.

### **Charities:**

Charities with specific interests for change. For example, if you would like to create change for LGBT young people, **LGBT Youth Scotland** <https://lgbtyouth.org.uk/> would be a useful contact. (See page 15 for further examples)

Charities with a focus on supporting changemakers.

➤ Organisations such as the #iWill Movement will support you on your journey to create change – big or small. (See page 16 for further examples)

➤ Mentors (teachers/ role models). Think: who has done this before?

➤ Who encompasses your support network? Who are your biggest cheerleaders?



"Speak the truth, even if your voice shakes." Daphne Caruana Galizia





# How to create social change



## **Advocate**

➤ Advocacy is all about having your voice heard and using it to create change.

➤ To advocate effectively, you need to figure out what needs to change and how to make it happen.

➤ Additionally, it is important to make people aware of the problem so that they can help us with the solution.

➤ Find out who has the power to make change and how to convince them to do so.

## **Create social change**

➤ Collaborate with others.

➤ Be a role model for ethical practice.

➤ Network with others and share your story.

➤ Advocate and participate in activism.

➤ Join creative arts and culture initiatives.

## **Run a campaign**

➤ Decide your goals.

➤ Craft your campaign story.

➤ Choose your actions.

➤ Evaluate, adapt, and stay positive.





## **Examples of campaigns:**

As a group, we looked at various campaigns which aimed to create change. Below are the ones most important to us, chosen due to our passionate views regarding gendered sports inequalities and women's rights in general. Here are some of the campaigns we loved:

### **Bold Girls Ken - Consent campaign tackling sex abuse launches in schools**

- [See their TikTok video](#)
- [See their full length video](#)

Information presented in different formats: tiktok video, flier, and poster.

- Campaign got noticed and shared on the national news.
- Shortlisted for the Sheila McKechnie Foundation Award in the Young Campaigner category.

## **Gender inequality in sport**

### **This Girl Can**

- The This Girl Can Campaign found that 2.4 million fewer women enjoyed sport and activity than men.
- Research shows that 40% of girls drop out of playing sports when they get to high school.
- 1/3 girls don't feel confident to play sport at secondary school.



## What might stop young women from participating in sports and P.E.?

- Lack of funding for free community sports groups
- Body image
- Inadequate changing facilities
- Puberty and body changes
- Homophobia and transphobia
- Unsuitable period products

## 'White shorts' campaign

We feel passionate about sport and understand how important it is to feel confident playing any sport whilst having your period. The threat and embarrassment of leaking can put girls off playing sport when wearing white shorts.

As young women that engage in sport a lot, we want to highlight what small changes have been done to make women feel more confident playing sport when on their period and how taking white shorts out of sporting uniforms for people with periods is a small but positive change for women. Change might take a while so it's good enough to do small things that will still make a difference.

Bodyform and This Girl Can are partnering on a new campaign to empower women and girls to stay active and confident while on their periods.

## Bodyform and This Girl Can partner on periods in sport campaign

The 'stigma' stopping girls in sport – and what can be done to break it:

<https://www.manchestereveningnews.co.uk/news/greater-manchester-news/stigma-stopping-girls-sport-what-26627806>

Example of two women's football teams that have swapped from white to coloured shorts:

[Manchester City Women: WSL club stop wearing white shorts because of period concerns - BBC Sport](#)

[Periods in sport: Why female teams in Ireland are moving away from white shorts - BBC Sport](#)



## Understanding Women's Everyday Safety concerns



### See What She Sees: A Bold Campaign for Change

- Simple, clear targets, and an explanation of what the campaign is about.
- Aesthetically pleasing and draws the reader in.
- Research conducted and presented in an effective manner.

## Creating change using Tik Tok

Tik Tok is a fun, current way of creating change. Use your creativity, humour, and knowledge to make the changes you want to see. Like these young women...

- Jessica supporting LGBT rights.
- Nina advocating for those with disabilities.
- Lucey who raises awareness for the blind.

## Actions for change summary

**Identify** - purpose, passion, goals, timeline.

**Research** - how to achieve goals, policies.

**Connect** - people with similar visions, people who help make changes

**Communicate** - plan, goals etc.

**Adapt** - there's always going to be resistance and challenges.

# Did you know?



➤ It was reported by The Young Women's Movement that **1 in 2 young women** do not trust politicians to represent them and advocate for their human rights.

➤ Additionally, **58% of young women** feel they have no say in decisions about how Scotland is run.

➤ As of 1st June 2025, research collected by the UN found that there are **27 countries where 31 women serve as Heads of State and/or Government.**

With how things are currently going, gender equality in the highest positions of power will not be reached for another 130 years.

➤ **Women Deliver** asserts that women's participation in politics helps advance gender equality; it affects both the range of policy issues that are considered and the types of solutions that are proposed. Research indicates that whether a legislator is male or female has a distinct impact on their policy priorities.





*Photo credit Ellie Morag*

"I've been involved in campaigning and activism for as long as I can remember. I've campaigned on lots of different issues including human rights, women's rights, and sports equality. Activism to me is about taking a stand on issues important to you and making your voice heard."

*Elena Soper – The Young Women's Movement' Partnership & Events Lead*

# Young people creating change



- ▶ We hold fresh, current thoughts and ideas for progress.
- ▶ We have the capacity to transform these ideas into tangible social change.
- ▶ **Hear** from Hannah Testa about Youth Activism.



### **Emma González**

On 14 February 2018, 17 students and staff lost their lives at the Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School shooting in Parkland, Florida. After surviving the event, Emma González and a number of her fellow students organised the March for Our Lives protest that took place in Washington, with over 880 sister events throughout the US and elsewhere. At the march, one of the largest protests in American history, González read the names of her fellow students who had lost their lives.



### **Malala Yousafzai**

"I tell my story not because it is unique, but because it is the story of many girls." At just 15-years-old, Malala Yousafzai was shot in the head on a school bus by the Taliban in Pakistan for daring to speak out against a ban on education for girls. It is a story that is known across the world. Malala survived and has gone on to become a role model for women globally. She has devoted her life to being a voice in the fight to ensure all girls receive 12 years of free, safe, quality education.



### **Greta Thunberg**

Swedish teenage climate activist Greta Thunberg started a school strike for the climate outside the Swedish Parliament. Since then, Greta has become a global phenomenon and has helped spread the movement, dubbed Fridays for Future, around the world. "Hope is taking action. And hope always comes from the people."







### **Amika George**

After Amika George read an article about British women missing school due to stigma around menstruation, or because they were unable to afford sanitary products, the then 17-year-old started #FreePeriods, a campaign to end period poverty in the UK. What began as a petition soon became an online movement and in March 2019 the government pledged to provide free menstrual products to all secondary schools and colleges across the country, to help less well-off students.



### **Bana Alabed**

At just seven-years-old, Bana Alabed became well known for documenting her experience of the siege of Aleppo in Syria through Twitter. With the help of her mother, Bana told of the suffering for people inside and outside of Syria and gave a face to the everyday reality of life in Aleppo. Her Twitter account urged leaders to do more for the millions of children stuck in the middle of conflict.





# Inspiring young women

These are just some of the 270 young people who have been celebrated on The Young Women's Movement's 30 Under 30 list who inspired this Young Women's Guide to Changemaking.





### **Daniela Onyewuenyi**

Age: 18

Location: Paisley

Pronouns: she/her

From a person that struggled to feel part of a completely new community that Scotland was to her, to being immersed in her newfound home through volunteering, at only 18 years old, Daniela has achieved an incredible amount in uplifting the voices of young people across Renfrewshire and, more widely, Scotland through her previous role as Vice Chair of Renfrewshire Youth Voice, and now as a Member of Scottish Youth Parliament. As a Member

of Scottish Youth Parliament (MSYP), Daniela is the former Convener of the Health, Wellbeing and Sport Committee.

Daniela is an integral part of our Young Women's Changemakers programme and has helped create this very resource and associated workshop.



### **Safiyah Pearson**

Age: 13

Location: Musselburgh

Pronouns: she/her

Safiyah has been volunteering with Together (Scottish Alliance for Children's Rights) since the age of 10. She has shown

a passion for human rights, inclusion of LGBTQIA+ people, Young Carers issues and climate change. Safiyah has become one of Together's first ever Rights Detectives, contributing to the development of a new Human Rights Bill for Scotland. Through this, Safiyah personally carried out investigations with over 100 children in East Lothian to find out about their experiences of their human rights.

Safiyah is continuing as a Rights Detective to help to develop a new human rights project investigating how babies, early years children and their grown-ups can raise worries about their human rights. This will influence work in Scotland as well as informing new guidance on access to justice at a UN-level.







### **Emma Porter**

Age: 20

Location: Glasgow

Pronouns: she/her

Grown and raised in Springburn, North Glasgow, Emma has always had a passion for her local area. She started volunteering in Springburn at the age of 12. In 2017 she raised the funding for and built an outdoor classroom in Springburn Park, the idea behind which was to ensure that local young people could have access to nature and outdoor learning as well as a place to sit in their local park. From this Emma got involved in Springburn Community Council and

became vice chair of Spirit of Springburn SCIO, a community development charity which was set up in 2020.



### **Jasmine Angove**

Age: 30

Location: Glasgow

Pronouns: she/her

Jasmine is the founder, president and coach of Gender Goals Football Club, Scotland's first football club for and run by trans and non-binary members, which has 40 members. The club was awarded 1st place in the Football v Homophobia Scotland awards, and Jasmine won 3rd place in the Football v Homophobia Women's award.

Through her work, Gender Goals provides a safe space for trans+ individuals to access a sport that has often and continues to exclude them. This radical challenge to the football status quo allows trans+ members to play, exercise and find community.





### **Shafa Ali Waqas**

Age: 17

Location: Cumbernauld

Pronouns: she/her

Shafa is a youth advocate and campaigner, interested in policy reform and representation for underrepresented communities. As a Trustee of the Scottish Youth Parliament (SYP), Shafa has been at the forefront of pressing issues, including gender-based violence and disability rights.

Recently, she addressed the Scottish Government's Executive Team, calling for a more intersectional approach to

the Equally Safe Strategy, urging for the inclusion of women of colour and women with disabilities. At the SYP79 Sitting in Orkney, Shafa introduced a successful Motion to ensure public buildings claiming accessibility provide accurate, publicly accessible information, gaining overwhelming support with a 96% vote. Beyond her work with SYP, Shafa is a member of UNICEF UK's Youth Advisory Board, where she influences UNICEF's efforts on children's rights.

**Be inspired by some of Scotland's most inspiring young women, girls and non-binary people on our 30 Under 30 list:**

<https://youngwomenscot.org/30Under30/profiles>

“There is a global epidemic of violence against women — both within conflict zones and within societies at peace — and it is still treated as a lesser crime and lower priority. We need policies for long-term security that are designed by women, focused on women, executed by women — not at the expense of men, or instead of men, but alongside and with men.”

Angelina Jolie



# **Further reading and resources**





### **The Young Women's Movement**

The Young Women's Movement is Scotland's national organisation for young women and girls' leadership and rights. We are local in action and national in impact.



### **#iwill movement**

Supports young people between the ages of 10 – 25 make a difference in society through youth social action.



### **Elect her**

Supports women start and throughout their political career.

## **Finding information about your rights**



### **Scottish Human Rights Commission**

The Commission has a general duty to promote awareness, understanding and respect for all human rights – economic, social, cultural, civil and political – to everyone, everywhere in Scotland, and to encourage best practice in relation to human rights.



### **UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)**

An important, legally binding agreement signed by 196 countries (as of 12 July 2022) which outlines the fundamental rights of every child, regardless of their race, religion or abilities.

## **With specific rights-based issues**



### **LGBT Youth Scotland**

Scotland's national charity for LGBTQ+ young people, aged 13-25. We support young people in all aspects of their lives through the provision of amazing youth work, and we support them to use their voice to create change in equality and human rights.



### **British Red Cross**

Our humanitarian movement helps people most in need in the UK and 190 countries around the world. Including: mobility support, cost of living support, refugee services, and emergencies in the UK international services.



### **Glasgow Disability Alliance**

Glasgow Disability Alliance (GDA) is a thriving disabled people led organisation with 5500 members across Greater Glasgow – and counting! We are the biggest groundswell of disabled people in Scotland and a leading example of a grassroots community of identity.



### **Glasgow Women's Aid**

Glasgow Women's Aid support Women, Children, and Young People experiencing domestic abuse.



### **Coalition for Racial Equality and Rights**

CRER's work tackles structural racism in Scotland using evidence based and rights based approaches. We undertake research, policy development, lobbying, campaigning, network building and more across all areas where racial injustices persist.

...find other organisations and groups who are aligned with your visions and desires for the world. There's support out there, usually just a Google search away. Remember, we can create more impactful change when we connect and help each other!



## **Extra reading on feminism, icons, and social change**

### ***A Different Kind of Power***

*by Jacinda Ardern*

From the former prime minister of New Zealand comes a deeply personal memoir chronicling her extraordinary rise and offering inspiration to a new generation of leaders.

### ***Women don't owe you pretty***

*by Florence Given*

Women Don't Owe You Pretty is the ultimate book for anyone who wants to challenge the out-dated narratives supplied to us by the patriarchy.

### ***Girls Resist!: A Guide to Activism, Leadership, and Starting A Revolution***

*by Kaelyn Rich*

Because I Was a Girl is an inspiring collection of true stories by women and girls about the obstacles, challenges, and opportunities they've faced...because of their gender.

### ***Because I Was a Girl: True Stories for Girls of All Ages***

*by Melissa de la Cruz*

A smart, contemporary, stylish and practical handbook for aspiring teen girl activists who are mad as hell about the way the world is going and aren't gonna take it anymore.

### ***Modern Herstory: Stories of Women and Nonbinary People Rewriting History***

*by Blair Imani*

An inspiring and radical celebration of 70 women, girls, and gender nonbinary folks

who have changed--and are still changing--the world, from the Civil Rights Movement and Stonewall riots through today.

### ***Invisible Women: Exposing Data Bias in a World Designed for Men***

*by Caroline Criado Perez*

From government policy and medical research, to technology, workplaces, and the media. Caroline Criado Perez brings together for the first time an impressive range of case studies, stories and new research from across the world that illustrate the hidden ways in which women are forgotten, and the profound impact this has on us all.



This guide was created by members of the Young Women Changemakers programme. Over the course of ten months, they worked together to explore their rights and identify the knowledge, tools and resources needed to support and inspire other young people to make the changes they want to see in their own lives and communities.

### **Matylda Kaluzinska**

Being part of this programme has shown me how powerful it is when young women come together with a shared goal. We brought our experiences, ideas, and passions into one space to create a resource that we hope will educate, inspire, and empower others. We believe anyone can be a changemaker - and this is just the starting point.

### **Daniela Onyewuienyi**

Working with like minded people during this project reinforced our point that many young women want to do things within our local communities but do not have enough guidance. I hope our work can be the stepping stone for success for young girls now and generations to come!

### **Evie Lawless**

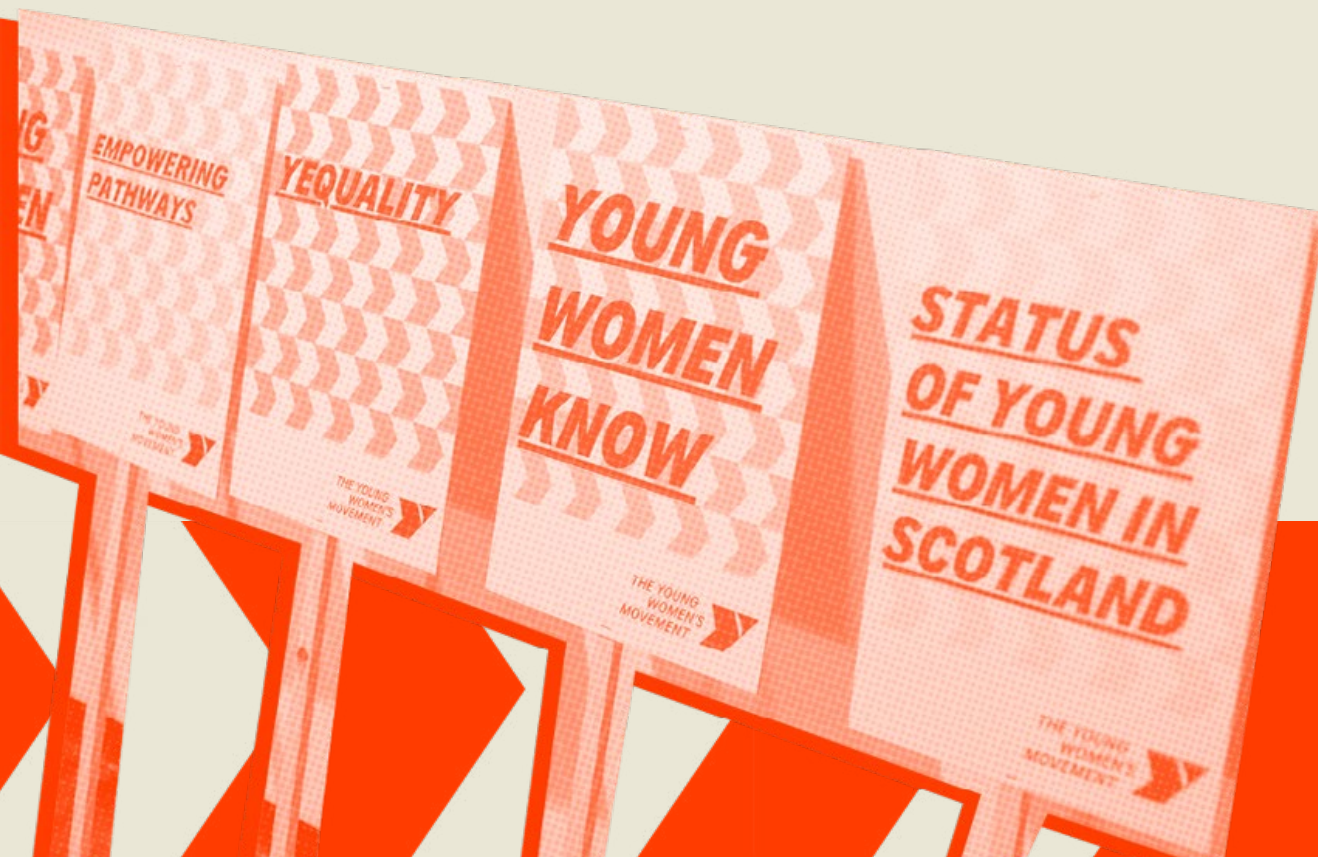
This project has been a great experience where I have learned so much about activism and campaigning.

### **Violet Beattie**

This project has been so much fun and i am so grateful to have been able to co- design this project and i hope that our work will inspire positive change and educate others on topics that need to be discussed!

### **Success Agbontaen**

I never really knew where I belonged in society or what I could do to really make a change or bring light to a subject, for fear of being a loudmouth, speaking out on injustice, but then I realised there is no reason for me to keep quiet if there are people like me that are facing unjust treatment.







## Acknowledgements and thanks

The Young Women's Movement would like to thank the following people and funders for their support and contribution in the creation of this resource:

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### **Young Women Changemakers co-design group:**

Success Agbontaen  
Violet Beattie  
Poppy Duncan  
Catriona Hay  
Matylda Kaluzinska  
Evie Lawless  
Abigayle McKinlay  
Daniela Onyewuenyi

**Graphic Design:** Zoe Paterson



*THE YOUNG  
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[youngwomenscot.org](http://youngwomenscot.org)

