

# WOMEN AND ACTIVE RESISTANCE AGE 14+



Every day women and girl's human rights are being ignored or violated, and face many forms of discrimination. This session explores the people and groups, both in the past and today, who have fought back and created change through their campaigning. Whether meeting politicians or starting a petition, students will gain an understanding of a range of campaign tactics before planning a campaign of their own focused on furthering gender equality.

This is part of our Women's Rights and Gender Equality resource materials.

## Aims

- To explore how people have championed women's rights
- To discuss current issues affecting girls and women and the continued need to mobilise for gender equality
- To understand what a campaign is and the methods used to raise awareness of an issue
- To create a campaign around an issue that needs change

## You will need

**Handouts:** Universal Declaration of Human Rights – Summary  
What is a human rights defender?  
Human rights defenders case studies sheets  
What, why, who, how? sheet  
Ideas for campaigning sheet  
Weighing it up grid

## INTRODUCTION 10 minutes

### A timeline of key dates for women

Ask the class to guess when these historic milestones were reached and create a timeline.

Women in Saudi Arabia are granted the right to drive (2017)  
 Abortion is decriminalised in Northern Ireland (2019)  
 Women in the UK can vote if over 30 and they or their husbands owned property (1918)  
 Women in the UK can become a lawyer or accountant (1919)  
 Women get the vote in Switzerland (1971)  
 Divorce is allowed in Japan (1990)  
 All women in the UK can open a bank account in their own name (1975)  
 Women become 'persons in their own right' in Canada (1929)  
 The Equal Pay Act is passed in the UK (1970)  
 Women can buy their own drink in a pub without possibly being refused (1982)

How does this make them feel? Do they think this is fair? How or why have these things changed?

### Watch the UN Women clip *The History of Women's Rights (3:27)*

Ask them to write down three pieces of information from the clip. What surprises them? How would their life be different if they could not enjoy these hard-won rights?

Emphasise that things can change by the actions of other people. From worldwide suffrage campaigns to the rise of #MeToo and digital activism, there has been progress for gender equality, but there is still work to do.

Read out the UN Women quote from the clip and discuss its meaning:

***'A single woman's voice is now louder than ever.'***

## TASK 1 20 minutes

### What is a human rights defender?

Ask students if they have heard of human rights defenders – people who protect and promote human rights, including women's rights. Do they know any?

Hand out the *What is a human rights defender?* sheet or direct them to [amnesty.org.uk/human-rights-defenders-what-are-hrds](https://www.amnesty.org.uk/human-rights-defenders-what-are-hrds)

Explain human rights defenders are the people who make change happen. Allow students time to read and talk through what sticks out the most to them.

Display a few human rights defenders on the board or ask students to research and create mini profiles of early women's rights campaigners. For example:

Emmeline Pankhurst  
 Princess Sophia Duleep Singh  
 Rosa May Billinghurst  
 Elizabeth Fry  
 Olive Morris  
 Sewing machinists at Ford Motor Company  
 Jayaben Desai  
 Christine Goodwin

**Teacher note:** This list spotlights women in the UK but further information on global women's rights activists can be found at [amnesty.org/en/what-we-do/discrimination/womens-rights](https://www.amnesty.org/en/what-we-do/discrimination/womens-rights)

Focus on how these activists campaigned for change (a strike, a protest, key speeches, gathering support from MPs, creating leaflets, a petition) and how effective this was.

**Prompt questions**

How did they make change and what methods did they use? How has it impacted on women today? Can you think of any other ways you would have used to help their cause?

**TASK 2 A full lesson if necessary  
Exploring campaigning**

Explain that they are now going to look at how human rights defenders campaign today. Divide the class into groups, and hand out case study sheets.

The case studies are:

Saket Mani – gender equality and youth empowerment

Hazel Mead – period poverty

Zhanar Sekerbayeva – LGBTIQ rights

Fahma Mohamed – Anti-FGM

Janna Jihad – Palestinian children’s rights

Tarana Burke – #MeToo movement

Samantha Renke – disability rights

Memory Banda – against child marriage

Introduce the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (UDHR) handout and explain it exists to protect the human rights of everyone, including children.

Ask students to identify which human rights are being compromised or denied in the case study they have been assigned.

Ask pairs to discuss the action they are taking to overcome this. How successful have their campaign methods been? What are the next steps needed to continue change?

Bring the class back together to share their discussions.

**TASK 3 45 minutes  
Be an activist in your community**

Have the case studies they’ve just looked at inspired them? Women and girl’s rights are still being violated every day. Does that make them want to do something about it?

Ask them to think about their own contexts – what one change would they make in their school or wider community linked to furthering women’s rights? If needed, get them to look at their copy of the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* and mind map all the issues they care about that hold girls and women back.

If preferred, the class can focus on one issue together. What do they want to achieve, for example ending misogyny in schools, walking home safely at night/ending street harassment, calling out discrimination and online trolling?

How will they start a conversation about this issue and get people listening?

Hand out the *What, why, who, how?* sheet to help them plan how to raise awareness about their issue, and *Ideas for campaigning*, to get them to think about who has the power to help make it happen. The *Weighing it up grid* will also help them plan the effectiveness of each action.

Ask them to:

- Come up with three ways to campaign to make change – one needs to include a way to engage/persuade other students or people in the community that this is something they should support.

**Optional:** Create a two-minute elevator pitch to convince someone to become an ally and take action on your case. Address: What is the problem they want solving? What are the key details and how do you propose to solve it? What action can that person can take?

Keep in mind the change they'd like to see, the human rights and people they are defending, and who to ask for help.

### **FINALLY... 10 minutes**

- Discuss how campaign methods have changed over time. Rank three actions you believe are most effective at catalysing change now.
- Come up with three ways people can be a good ally to girls and women.
- Use your new campaign skills to take action on one of Amnesty's campaigns where people are at risk. See [amnesty.org.uk/urgent-actions](https://www.amnesty.org.uk/urgent-actions)
- Or write and/or draw messages of solidarity with the case study you were assigned.

### **EXTENSION**

Research activists and local campaigns in your area...who and what are they? What are the methods they are using? Highlight the importance of local activism and what that can lead to.

## UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS summary

- 1** We are born free and equal, and should treat others in the same way.
- 2** We have all these rights in the Declaration, no matter who we are, where we're from or what we believe in.
- 3** We have the right to life, and to be free and feel safe.
- 4** Nobody has any right to make us a slave. We cannot make anyone else our slave.
- 5** Nobody has any right to hurt, torture or humiliate us.
- 6** Everyone has the right to be protected by the law.
- 7** The law is the same for everyone. It must treat us all fairly.
- 8** We can all ask for the law to help us when we are not treated fairly.
- 9** Nobody has the right to put us in prison, or to send us away from our country, without good reasons.
- 10** If we are accused of breaking the law, we have the right to a fair and public trial.
- 11** Nobody should be blamed for doing something until it has been proved that they did it.
- 12** Nobody has the right to enter our home, open our letters or bother us or our families without a good reason.
- 13** We all have the right to go where we want to in our own country and to travel abroad as we wish.
- 14** If someone hurts us, we have the right to go to another country and ask for protection.
- 15** We all have the right to belong to a country.
- 16** When we are legally old enough, we have the right to marry and have a family.
- 17** Everyone has the right to own things or share them.
- 18** We all have the right to our own thoughts and to believe in any religion.
- 19** We can all think what we like, say what we think and share ideas and information with other people.
- 20** We all have the right to meet our friends and work together in peace to defend our rights. It is wrong to force someone to belong to a group.
- 21** We all have the right to take part in the government of our country. Every grown up should be allowed to vote to choose their own leaders.
- 22** The place where we live should help us to develop and to make the most of all the advantages (culture, work, social welfare) on offer. Music, art, craft and sport are for everyone to enjoy.
- 23** Every grown up has the right to a job, to a fair wage and to join a trade union.
- 24** We all have the right to rest and free time.
- 25** We all have the right to a decent living standard, including enough food, clothing, housing and medical help if we are ill. Mothers and children and people who are old, out of work or disabled have the right to be cared for.
- 26** We all have the right to education.
- 27** We have the right to share in our community's arts and sciences, and any good they do.
- 28** There must be peace and order to protect these rights and freedoms, and we can enjoy them in our country and all over the world.
- 29** We have a duty to other people, and we should protect their rights and freedoms.
- 30** Nobody can take away these rights and freedoms from us.

This version of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights has been simplified by Amnesty International UK and is especially useful for younger people.

Download a full version at [amnesty.org.uk/universal](https://www.amnesty.org.uk/universal)

## WHAT IS A HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDER?

Human rights defenders (HRDs) are some of the bravest people in the world.

They work to stop human rights abuses and to ensure that everyone has access to their universal rights.

HRDs come from all walks of life. Their important work might be fulfilled by their job – including teachers, journalists, community workers, lawyers and activists working for human rights change. They may also defend human rights in a voluntary capacity, which is separate to their job or studies.

There is no one ‘type’ of HRD. What they all have in common is that they do their utmost to make sure that human rights are upheld – to make this world a better place for us all.

### What do they do?

Human rights defenders work in many different ways to protect and promote human rights. They operate at community, national or even international level.

A defender might:

- Document abuses by collecting evidence of human rights violations
- Raise awareness of abuses through public campaigns in the media, online and in their community
- Report violations to international bodies like the United Nations
- Put pressure on perpetrators of abuses to change their behaviour
- Lobby people in positions of influence and power to make change, for example, governments, corporations, and other non-state actors
- Pursue legal avenues for justice through casework, advice and legal representation
- Offer practical support to people who have survived human rights abuses, for example, offering shelter or legal advice
- Educate people about their rights, teach them how to defend them and empower them to challenge those who deny them

These are only a few ways in which someone can fulfil their role as a human rights defender.

## **WHAT, WHY, WHO, HOW**

**WHAT** is your issue? What is wrong and what needs to change?  
What human rights are involved? Are any rights being denied?

**WHY** is this issue occurring?

**WHO** can help sort out this issue?

**HOW** could you persuade them or work with them to bring about change? How can you convey your message? What action could you take? List three ideas.

## IDEAS FOR CAMPAIGNING

These are some people who can have power at local, national and global levels. Can any of them help you sort out your chosen issue?

Members of the community (school/local/national)

Teachers, senior teachers, governors

School groups and council

Friends and family

Local community groups

Local council

The government (depending on where you live) and other political parties

NGOs and charities

The media

### How could you persuade them or work with them to bring about change?

Choose one or more of the actions below or think of your own.

#### Raise awareness: change attitudes and behaviour

- Write an article for a local magazine or newspaper
- Ask adults to help you set up a blog or start up a discussion on an existing website or on social media
- Spread the word through Instagram – and see if people are supportive
- Hold an online workshop or public speech
- Create posters or leaflets with a campaign slogan
- Write a presentation for a younger year group
- Share information on your issue in other interesting ways (drama, song, photo, video, leaflets, QR codes)
- Take part in or organise a peaceful protest in your community (this can be an online protest)
- Do a survey to gain an insight into how people in your community feel about the issue, and what they would do to solve it
- Write to people being denied rights to show solidarity

#### Lobby and persuade: change policies

- Start an online petition or online campaign to show support for your aims
- Collect evidence (eg research, interviews, videos) and present your findings to people who are responsible for this issue
- Write a letter to the people who are responsible for this issue, persuading them to help you
- Look up your local MP and send a letter about your issue
- Organise an online vigil and ask a local councillor or another person in authority to take part

#### Work with others: support charities and NGOs (non-government organisations)

- Raise some money for a charity or NGO to help their work addressing your issue
- Research and join an existing campaign
- Invite a speaker from a charity or NGO to do a talk. This could be an Amnesty speaker
- Contact a charity or NGO to find out what action it recommends



# WEIGHING IT UP GRID

		How easy is it to achieve this action? Consider the time, resources and opportunities you have		
		Difficult	Average	Easy
WOMEN'S RIGHTS AND GENDER EQUALITY	Big impact			
	Average impact			
	Little impact			
		How much impact will this action have?	Consider the message you want to get across.	Who will see it? Who can join in? Who will it help?

## HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS CASE STUDIES

### INDIA Saket Mani Gender equality activist



#### In his own words

'It is up to you what you want to do once you take the pledge for HeForShe.'

Many men, including Saket Mani, have spoken up for women's rights and gender equality in India.

In 2015, Saket supported the United Nations Women's HeForShe movement, which encourages men and boys to participate in the fight for gender equality. He helped to organise Wheels for Change, the first bicycle rally in Pune. Over 700 cyclists took part, and he mobilised 121,000 people to sign up and pledge for HeForShe.

Saket believes that for society to move forward in India, there must be a balance of genders. When explaining why he organised a HeForShe bicycle rally he says: 'You are not stuck in traffic. You are traffic. Speak up. Cycle on. Support gender equality'.

He is also a great believer in youth engagement and their role to change lives. He has led advocacy workshops about changing perspectives of gender and youth empowerment, and how to move away from traditional gender norms. 'We did the first advocacy workshop on HeForShe in a rural area highlighting the power of volunteerism through creative online/offline methods as well as building a network of youth advocates.'

He has continued to raise awareness of the power of different campaign methods such as cycling, walks, musical performances, advocacy and capacity-building workshops, and the notion of a male standing as an equal alongside a female instead of acting as a protector for her.

- Watch the clip [heforshe.org/en/heforshe-equality-stories](https://heforshe.org/en/heforshe-equality-stories)  
Scroll down to the India story

## HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS CASE STUDIES

### UK Hazel Mead Fighting period poverty



© Private

#### In her own words

'I love the work I get to be involved in – it is often to do with smashing taboos and ending period poverty.'

Illustrator Hazel Mead is a campaigner against period poverty. She uses illustrations to start conversations about and normalise periods, and has worked with organic period product company Freda on their 'Period Manifesto' campaign.

For some girls menstruating means being hidden away in cattle sheds or banned from their houses; others struggle to afford tampons and pads and are forced to make do with rags, toilet paper or socks. Some women have even been arrested or interrogated for their peaceful activities to change the stigma.

Hazel says: 'The UK is more progressive than many other countries but growing up I always felt shame about my period. I think this is because periods weren't talked about at school and, when they were, they were referred to with a plethora of euphemisms – "that time of the month" was mine.

'Near the start of my career, I created satirical pieces about the tampon tax after attending the #FreePeriods protest in December 2017, which was a campaign to end girls missing school because they couldn't afford period products.

'I have volunteered my drawing skills to Bloody Good Period frequently, as their work to ensure asylum seekers and people experiencing homelessness have access to period products is something I completely believe in.

'I was also a part of Freda's campaign to get hotels, schools, airlines and offices to provide free period products. I am also talking about my period more. I no longer use euphemisms, and call pads and tampons "period products" rather than "sanitary products", which implies that periods are unclean.

'In 2019, the UK government announced it would provide free period products in secondary schools and colleges in England from the next school year. This wasn't my doing, but I have been part of this movement behind all the campaigning for change.

There is still so much to be done to break menstrual taboos and injustices, but little by little as we keep making noise, we're seeing change.'

- Explore Hazel's art at [www.hazelmead.com](http://www.hazelmead.com)

## HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS CASE STUDIES

### KAZAKHSTAN Zhanar Sekerbayeva Women's and LGBTQ+ rights activist



© Amnesty International

#### In her own words

'It's solidarity that's helped us come this far and fights can only be won when we work together.'

Zhanar Sekerbayeva is an LGBTQ+ activist and co-founder of Feminita, an initiative promoting feminism and protecting lesbian, bisexual and queer women's rights in Kazakhstan.

She was originally inspired to act when she saw an elderly woman outside a bank protesting about the devaluation of the Tenge, the Kazakh currency, and the negative affect that could have on pensions. She rallied support behind the protest which was broken up by the police.

Later, Zhanar joined a women's rights group FemPoint to take part in a photo shoot tackling the taboos around menstruation in her country, and she was arrested and found guilty of minor hooliganism.

As a lesbian, she knew she wanted to represent LBQ women so she and her friend Gulzada Serzhan set up Feminita. It works to protect the rights of women from the most oppressed groups in Kazakhstan. 'In our society, LBQ women are shy and stigmatised. It's important we address their needs through education and shared experiences,' she has said.

This is no easy task. The organisation has repeatedly tried to register as a legal entity in the country since December 2017 – but had its applications rejected several times. She has been subjected to harassment and abuse while trying to organise meetings to discuss LGBTQ+ rights and human rights.

But it doesn't stop Zhanar being vocal and active. She says: 'When I see people facing injustice, I have to act.'

## HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS CASE STUDIES

### UK Fahma Mohamed Anti-FGM campaigner



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#### In her own words

'We need to acknowledge the importance of eradicating FGM and protect the rights of girls all over the world.'

Fahma Mohamed is a leading Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) activist in the UK.

She began campaigning after attending an after-school session about FGM: the ritual cutting or removal of some or all of the external female genitalia for no medical reasons still prevalent in the UK and around the world.

At 14, Fahma started volunteering for Integrate Bristol, which was co-founded by her teacher at the time. Integrate Bristol is a youth-led charity fighting to end FGM, inequality and gender-based violence, as well as empowering young people to take an active role in transforming the society they live in. She became one of three young trustees of the charity at 16.

At first, her and three friends started writing poetry challenging the taboo of FGM. When more people joined them, they made films and music to raise awareness, including a drama doc for radio *Why?* and *Silent Scream*, which went global (you can watch it on YouTube). They also wrote and performed the critically acclaimed play *My Normal Life*, that placed FGM firmly within the context of violence against women and girls.

In 2014, she helped launch a petition calling on the government to remind all schools of their duty to safeguard girls from the harmful practice, and that every girl be protected from it. It received more than 250,000 signatures and the support of the then UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon and Malala Yousafzai.

Fahma was invited to meet with the then UK Education Secretary, MP Michael Gove. This culminated in compulsory training for public sector workers to help teachers, doctors and social workers identify and assist girls at risk.

She received many awards for her work, all while still at school, and has, at times, overcome fierce backlash.

- Watch Fahma Mohamed talk about her campaigning and the music video *Use Your Head* (20 minutes, music video starts at 18 mins) by Integrate Bristol by 5x15 Stories <https://vimeo.com/142999039>

## HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS CASE STUDIES

### PALESTINE Janna Jihad Teenage journalist for children's rights



© Tanya Habjouqa/NOOR

#### In her own words

'I was raised not to be silent on the violation of any of my rights. We want our childhood.'

Janna Jihad is a 16-year-old Palestinian journalist exposing discrimination and violence in the Israeli-occupied West Bank.

She longs for the freedom to live like an ordinary teenager and practise her rights that belong to her as a child, but her life in her village Nabi Saleh under systematic discrimination is far from normal. Palestinian children and their communities are denied their rights on a daily basis.

When she was seven, the Israel military killed her uncle. This began Janna's journey of documenting the Israeli army's treatment of Palestinians. She used her mother's phone to record and expose the racist brutality her community experiences at the hands of Israeli forces. She started posting her videos on Facebook to show the world – and they raised awareness about what was happening.

This treatment includes night raids, demolishing homes and schools, and crushing communities who stand up for their rights. Palestinian children are particularly affected. Many have been killed and injured, and arrested, by Israeli forces. The children struggle to access their rights to education and freedom of movement. 'Any Palestinian over 12 can get arrested and even that military illegal law is broken,' Janna says.

Janna is now one of the world's youngest press card-carrying journalists. She continues to film human rights violations by the Israeli military, and has been interviewed and been on speaking tours. She has also campaigned for child prisoners.

She says: 'As Palestinian children we face so many things. We want to practise all our rights that are given to us as children, without seeing our parents injured or treated as second class citizens because of our identity. Now I just hold my phone, and start live reporting.'

She faces regular harassment and even death threats for speaking up for human rights but she won't give up. 'I want to know what freedom feels in my homeland, what justice and peace and equality means. To gain liberation, we need people to resist in any form, and to fight against oppression everywhere.'

- If you have time, watch *In Conversation with Janna Jihad* from Amnesty International (53 minutes, YouTube)

## HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS CASE STUDIES

### USA Tarana Burke Founder of the #Me Too movement



© Brittany "B.Monét" Fennell,  
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#### In her own words

'If you're ready to change the world, if you're ready to join this movement, if you are ready to do the work that is necessary to end sexual violence, I can only leave you with these words: Me too.'

Before the Me Too movement went viral in October 2017, activist Tarana Burke had been using the phrase for over a decade in her work to help survivors, especially Black girls and women, heal, and to end sexual violence and abuse.

Tarana became an activist at the age of 14 when she joined a youth development organisation called 21st Century, aiming to help those marginalised people whose voices are hardly ever heard. She became involved in campaigns focusing on social issues such as racial discrimination and housing inequality.

As a survivor of sexual violence herself, she realised that too many girls were suffering and surviving abuse without what they needed to start a healing process. She herself went to the local rape crisis centre and was turned away: 'I had no outlet and no resources.'

Her work to fill this gap grew from there, focusing on increasing access to resources, counselling, safe spaces and support through community organising, workshops, lobbying and, later, social media.

Thanks to her own experience and her work with other survivors, Tarana knows it is important to realise you are not alone, and that's where the phrase Me Too was born.

Fast forward to 2017 and actor Alyssa Milano urged survivors of sexual assault to use the words 'Me Too' on Twitter... In 24 hours, the hashtag was used 12 million times, with women sharing their experiences and sparking a global movement. Suddenly Tarana and her life's work and purpose was being talked about. She realised this was an opportunity she couldn't miss, and change can come through creating more awareness.

Tarana continues to call for a greater focus on the victims rather than the aggressors, including helping them not to blame themselves for sexual violence committed against them and lead fuller lives, and to educate people more about sexual violence.

- For more information: <https://metoomvmt.org/get-to-know-us/tarana-burke-founder/>

## HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS CASE STUDIES

### UK Samantha Renke Disability rights campaigner



© Nils Jorgensen  
/ Alamy Stock Photo

#### In her own words

'If you talk about diversity, you can't leave out disability.'

Samantha Renke is a disability rights activist, and inclusion and equality consultant. You might also recognise her as an actress and presenter.

She was born with the rare genetic condition Osteogenesis Imperfecta type 3 or more commonly known as Brittle Bone condition, and is a full-time wheelchair user.

She went to mainstream school, and after university and teacher training, became a language teacher. She also became a trustee for the Brittle Bone Society, and knew she had the strength and ability to help others in a similar situation as herself.

When Samantha became an Ambassador for ADD International, who campaign for equality and disability inclusion, she said: 'As a former teacher, I knew the importance of sharing information, the more we share the more we grow, develop and become stronger. I never knew anyone "like me" growing up which made my younger years sometimes very lonely and challenging. If only I had someone with my disability guiding me and at times simply assuring me that you will get through this or you can do it. So as I grew I knew what I had to do.'

She is an activist for the acting world – 14.6 million people living in the UK identify as having a disability/additional needs yet they are only represented by 3 per cent on our TV screens and in magazines. She encourages people to join this profession, and for the industry to be more inclusive.

She also speaks out about disability rights and has written numerous newspaper and magazine articles on what it is like to be disabled in a disabling world, including exposing bullying, discrimination, and the financial and social costs of being disabled.

- For more information: <https://samantharenkeofficial.com/>



## HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS CASE STUDIES

### MALAWI Memory Banda Girls' rights activist



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#### In her own words

'It was a hard thing to change but a good thing to try.'

Memory Banda is a Malawian girls' rights activist who led a national grassroots campaign to ban child marriage in Malawi.

Her younger sister was sent to a traditional 'initiation camp' at the age of 11 so that she could learn about culture, motherhood and how to sexually please a man. She got pregnant at the camp and was forced to marry the man who impregnated her.

Memory refused to go to the camp – instead, she spoke up against the oppressive and dangerous child marriage practice in her country. She said: 'I said no because I knew where I wanted to go in life. When I compared the two stories between me and my sister, I said, Why can't I change something that has happened for a long time in our community? That was when I called other girls...'

At the time, Malawi had one of the world's highest rates of child marriage, with half its girls married before the age of 18 and teen pregnancies contributing to 20-30 per cent of maternal deaths in the country. The practice of child marriage robs girls of decision-making power on their lives and bodies, it forces them to miss out on education, and they are more vulnerable to violence, discrimination and abuse.

Memory joined local organisations Girls Empowerment Network (which she helped create) and Let Girls Lead and began talking to other girls about their experiences.

She asked her community's leader to issue a bylaw stating that no girl should be forced to marry before turning 18 from the previous 15. It was the first bylaw in the country that protected girls in their community and the initiation camp was banned.

She also pushed on to the national level to fight for girls in other communities, creating a campaign called I Will Marry When I Want. In February 2015, in a landmark decision, the country adopted a new amendment that raised the legal marriage age from 15 to 18 for both girls and boys.

She continued work to ensure that the law is enforced, girls are able to finish school, live safe from violence, and know their rights so they too can drive change. Internationally she has delivered speeches on the issue to raise awareness.

- Watch Memory Banda's TED talk: *A warrior's cry against child marriage* (12:29 mins)