

**HP and Girl Rising Celebrate International Day of the Girl with 12 Stories of Empowerment from Around the Globe**  
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*Announces results of Creative Challenge that highlight inspiring stories of overcoming discrimination and poverty, and fighting for access to education and free speech*

**News Highlights**

- *HP/Girl Rising Creative Challenge launched in March to honor story-driven works from individuals making their communities more gender-equitable.*
- *Entrants included over 880 stories from 110 countries.*
- *Among the honorees: Safe Kicks Initiative - Adolescent Girls Against Sexual Violence (Nigeria), Fear is a Liar (Uganda & Democratic Republic of Congo), and Free Women Writers (Afghanistan).*

NEW YORK, Oct. 11, 2018 (GLOBE NEWSWIRE) -- Today, in honor of International Day of the Girl, HP (NYSE: HPQ) and Girl Rising, a nonprofit dedicated to eradicating poverty by providing education to girls, are celebrating 12 stories of female empowerment gathered from around the globe as part of the first ever Girl Rising Creative Challenge. Introduced on International Women's Day [in March](#), the challenge was a call-to-action to highlight storytelling that has the power to change the world. More than 880 stories were submitted from people in 110 countries who entered essays, videos, art and more about how they, or people in their communities, are working to make the world a better place for girls.

"HP and Girl Rising both believe in the power of stories to change mindsets and spark meaningful action," said Christina Lowery, CEO, Girl Rising. "During this Challenge, it has been incredibly inspiring to learn how all kinds of people - girls, boys, mothers, fathers, and teachers - are working every day to change the lives of girls and bring about a more gender-equitable world. It is my sincere hope that sharing their stories will inspire others to find ways they can make a difference in their own communities."

Entries covered issues impacting girls and women globally, including access to education in conflict settings, combating gender-based violence, empowering girls through sports, and sexual and reproductive health.

The volume of story entries was culled to 40 finalists, of which an esteemed panel of judges chose the 12 winners. Among the judges: David Oyelowo, actor; Landry Bender, actor; Isha Sesay, journalist and activist; Sejal Kumar, YouTube influencer; Kat Gordon, founder, The 3% Conference; Shelley Zalis, CEO, The Female Quotient; Andrew Robertson, president & CEO, BBDO; and Madonna Badger, co-founder & chief creative officer, Badger & Winters.

"Gender-based discrimination keeps millions of girls and women from reaching their full potential. Today we honor these stories by spotlighting and sharing them," said Karen Kahn, Chief Communications Officer, HP. "We were humbled by the volume and breadth of responses and are truly inspired by the entrants from across the globe who are using the power of storytelling to help change their world."

The winners of the HP/Girl Rising Creative Challenge are:

- **Accelerated Secondary Education for Women from Africa Educational Trust (ASEW in South Sudan):** Due to conflict, poverty and early pregnancy, many women in South Sudan, are unable to attend secondary school. The lack of education leaves them deeply vulnerable. ASEW, a project implemented by Africa Educational Trust in Yambio Town, South Sudan, is an accelerated secondary education program centered around flexible learning times and an active learning methodology with on-site child care. This unique approach to educating those in low- resource, high-conflict areas, resulted in a pilot where ASEW students achieved the highest grades in the state and the 9th highest grades nationally.
- **Brown Girls DO Ballet®, (USA):** What began as a personal photography project to highlight girls of Hispanic, African, Asian, East Indian and Native American ancestry in ballet programs, has now transformed into an artistic movement celebrating the beauty and power of diversity. By redefining a classically Euro-centric art form, generations of diverse ballerinas, alongside their audiences, are now

inspired and empowered.

- **Decisions – Cecelia Choices from Zenafri Limited (Nigeria):** This multi-platform, interactive mobile game is targeted at young African women and aims to educate and empower them as they navigate the challenges of poverty, reduced access to education, sexual violence and teen pregnancy. The game series uses storytelling and interactive decision making to guide young women through the process. The combination of entertainment and education is a creative and compelling approach to empowering young women.
- **Fear is a Liar from Remnant International (Uganda & Democratic Republic of the Congo):** The lives of Congolese women in Uganda is often challenging. Many have been ripped from their homes by soldier husbands and brought to a new country where they are often ostracized and abandoned. Without a home, papers or a job, they are forced to sell their body. Remnant International created a program in 2010 that provides alternate sources of income through sewing and screen-printing trades. In addition, they provide vocational training, as well as tend to the spiritual, physical and emotional needs of the Congolese women through mentorships, financial training and health seminars. Their film, Fear is a Liar, is one of the many ways they inspire, empower and educate these women to strive for more.
- **Field of Dreams from Building Tomorrow (Uganda):** In an effort to build greater self-esteem and confidence in the young girls of Uganda, two Building Tomorrow Fellows created the first of its kind: A football program for girls. Most of the girls, previously expected to rush home after their school day to clean and do domestic chores, can now learn teamwork, conflict resolution and communication skills outside of the classroom.
- **Free Women Writers (Afghanistan):** The UN estimates that 90% of Afghan women are victims of violence. The Free Women Writers collective, comprised of Afghan writers and activists, is working to reverse this horrible statistic. Through published books, as well as an on-line platform to share poetry, narrative, journal entries, reports and articles, the group uses storytelling to educate, advocate and ultimately, change lives.
- **Girls Voices Initiative from Lucy Sananai (Kenya):** The Girls Voices Initiative trains young girls to speak up and advocate for their rights against Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) and child marriage. Lucy Sananai is one of their candidates and shines a light on how her training and newfound voice has been used to educate other girls in Kajiado about their rights, the effects of FGM, as well as how to rise-up to eradicate it in Kenya.
- **My Life of Advocating for the Girl Child from Fatima Gebi (Nigeria):** Fatima is a 17-year-old, self-described African girl-child advocate, stereotype breaker and student. To everyone else, she is an extraordinary wonder working tirelessly as a passionate activist. She leads multiple organizations and provides numerous seminars and talks to enlighten girls and parents about the importance of education. Additionally, she advocates on behalf of a group of abducted African girls to bring them home safely.
- **Safe Kicks Initiative - Adolescent Girls Against Sexual Violence from Girl Pride Circle (Nigeria):** In Nigeria, one out of four girls fall victim to sexual violence. The Safe Kicks Initiative is an after-school program that equips adolescent girls with self-defense skills, alongside sexual violence education. To date, 270 adolescent girls have been trained. The same girls drafted an unprecedented community action plan for the prevention of sexual violence, which was adopted by the local government and implemented by Girl Pride Circle – a registered NGO in Nigeria advocating for girls' rights and empowering them to transform their communities.
- **Swapn Pahte – I have a dream from Bright Future (India):** Pooja is a young girl from a tribal village in Dalonda, Bhiwandi-Thane. To improve her family's financial condition, she found a job with an NGO called Bright Future. This organization helps youth build their employable skills and transform their passions into employment. Pooja took this knowledge and brought it back to her village to spark a revolution. She now provides life, education and employment guidance to youth in her village.
- **They Say from All Girls Code (Lebanon):** They Say is an inspiring film created by the All Girls Code initiative which introduces young girls to tech and STEM fields. The film inspires young girls to challenge cultural stereotypes and reach beyond the roles they've been limited to.
- **Turning Periods into Pathways from Days for Girls (Nepal):** In Nepal, Chhaupadi is a long-held tradition in which girls banished from their homes while they menstruate, often relegated to isolated sheds or makeshift structures. Not only does the ritual keep girls out of school, which is the single most empowering factor in improving their lives, but they are subject to sub-human conditions. This program, implemented by Days for Girls.org, is working to end the tradition through education and DfG kits. The work empowers girls to defend their right to an education and drive change in their communities.

Beyond sharing the winners' stories across their storytelling channels, HP and Girl Rising will provide the winners with microgrants and HP technology and services to continue and expand their important work to inspire change and reinvention.

Specifics about the Creative Challenge winning entries can be found at <https://girlrising.org/challenge/>. For a summary of the winning entries, visit [here](#).

## RELATED LINKS

- Read more about the story behind HP and Girl Rising's work to empower girls on the [HP Garage](#)
- Read how [HP](#), the Clooney Foundation for Justice (CFJ), UNICEF and Google.org are partnering to eradicate poverty by providing education to girls here
- About HP Sustainable Impact: [www.hp.com/sustainableimpact](http://www.hp.com/sustainableimpact)

## About Girl Rising

Girl Rising is a non-profit organization working to change the way the world values and invests in girls. GR uses the power of media and partnerships to inspire girls to create a different future for themselves and to engage those around girls – parents, brothers, teachers, and community leaders – to do their part in breaking down the barriers holding girls back.

## About HP

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