



Poetry, Portraits, and Perspectives: Voices from the Global South.



I KNOW THEM, YOU KNOW THEM.

I know them, you know them.
I know them, you know them
I see them, you see them every day,
across our homes, in the streets, on our phones
bending their backs, breaking barriers to build
a future where no one is left behind

we see the future they are building, how they are
watering the garden, turning dust into soil, brick by brick,
dream by dream, building the future we all long for

a future where peace, justice, and equality are not
just ideals, but everyday realities
a future where no girl has to fight to read, to speak, to exist freely
a future where safety is not a privilege

today, that dream still remains out of reach
but still, they rise, they fight,
they build from nothing, because waiting is never an option

let me tell you the stories of my sisters, of heroes,

the story of Pashtana and Heela, two fierce feminists
from Afghanistan whose love for education,
justice, and equality birthed hope for many girls in their motherland

Ronelle from Barbados, Elizabeth from Nigeria who are
telling girls they can be whatever they want to be,
refusing to let society clip their wings

Kuda from Zimbabwe, who waves the flag of pride for girls with disabilities
Niyati from India, who is ending gender stereotypes in classrooms
Richa from India who is weaving wellbeings in classrooms for children
Luisa from Brazil who is breaking barriers so technology can serve communities

Farida from Kenya who is bending her back so education is truly a right
Joy from Nigeria who is shining her light for girls to tread
Karen from China who is building a pathway for our planet to breathe
Sofia from Argentina, turning her grandmother's unfinished dream
into a movement for education and equality

I know them, not tens, nor hundreds, but
thousands of young leaders building castles out of stones,
weaving justice into the fabric of the society



but I tell you, dreams need more than words;
they need more than a pat in the back, it needs
more than accolades, awards or a social media post

it is past time, enough of the tokenism, enough of the breadcrumbs
it is past time to put your money where your mouth is
fund us!

the best time was yesterday, the next best is now

a just world is impossible without those
who dare to dream it into existence
a safe, peaceful and prosperous world is impossible
if young feminists are left fighting alone

this is a poem of reminder that young people
doing the work are not just quotas, or data, or stories
you share across high level meetings and pages of reports
we are individuals, organizations, collectives, coalitions, movements
who need the support to do more

feminists are doing the work; breaking their backs beyond wonders
carrying the weights of the world in their hearts
standing tall in rooms that dare to erase their voices
shouting at the top of their voices in their tiny corners
pushing power to commit to progress
feminists are doing the work
even when the world is burning under their feet

a kudos to my sisters, mothers, friends, feminists
from the four corners of the earth
whose back aches, whose necks hurt from
carrying the world in their tiny bodies and large hearts

it is time to put your money where your mouth is
to put money into the ones that do the work
it is past time to shift the change for the future,
for me, for you and the ones coming after us
fund us,

fund feminists, fund the future.
#FundFeminists4theFuture



by Karimot Olábí sí Odébò dé