

# EXEMPLAR OF EFFECTIVE PRACTICE

## Our Lady and St Patrick's College, Knock

(School Ref: 442-0259)

### Female Voices – an innovative approach to addressing sexism and misogyny in society through education

An exemplar of effective practice by the students of Our Lady and St Patrick's College, Knock

#### Context

The Female Voices Project began in September 2023, when a group of 19 students from Years 9 to 14 at Our Lady and St Patrick's College, Knock formed a project team to design and deliver an ambitious project. The aim of the project was to give rise to the female voice within the curriculum and to develop resources to facilitate conversations in schools around sexism and misogyny.



**“Misogyny has always been a problem in secondary education. In junior years, the problem blossoms if it goes unchallenged.”**  
(Maria Mullan – Year 14 student)

#### Baseline position

**“The need is obvious. We have a problem in society with sexism and misogyny, which we can either serve to perpetuate or challenge. An overarching aim of the Northern Ireland Curriculum is to encourage active citizenship. This project is an attempt to allow students to express their citizenship in a creative and powerful way.”**  
(John McCloskey – facilitating teacher & head of R.E.)





“Female voice means that we, as young women, have a voice and are heard. It is so important to use our voices as we strive for change in society. The more we raise each other up and empower other women, the more we can make our mark and replace the misogyny in education and society with equality.”  
(Emilie-Louise Braniff – Year 11)

### Action to effect improvement

“Students had to submit a written application to be part of the Female Voice Project Team and the standard of their applications was exceptional, producing a project team of 19 students who are passionate about the subject and committed to the project. In our first session, students brought with them an item that was an important part of their story. After hearing them speak about their experiences with such clarity, I knew that this project was in good hands.”  
(Lesley Emerson – Queen’s University Belfast)



**"Female voice is a journey of visibility,  
education and empowerment."  
(Rena O'Hagan – Year 13 student)**



## A brief timeline

November 2023 – March 2024  
The Project Team interviewed many of the amazing women who feature in the resource. (Pictured: Jacinta Hamley)

June 2024  
The Female Voices resource is launched at Parliament Buildings, Stormont, hosted by Kate Nicholl MLA.



October 2023  
The Project Team are selected and begin by setting their vision for the project.

March 2024  
The Project Team at their 'Away Day' hosted by Queen's University Belfast.

September 2024  
Female Voices is presented by the Project Team at WomenEd NI's Annual Unconference.

## A video log of the Project Team's journey, created by student Jashvita Katta



## Outcomes

The final resource, which you can download below, is split into three strands, designed for each year of Key Stage 3.

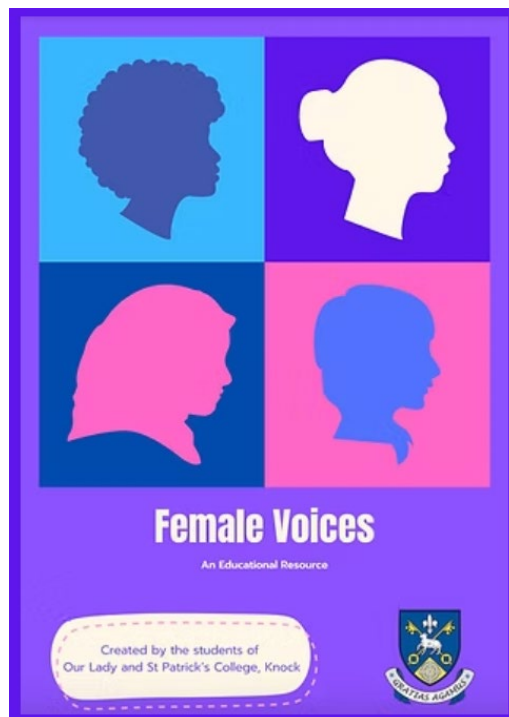
Year 8 – Women in the Curriculum – Profiles of 15 inspirational women to inspire conversation and further research about the contribution of women to each subject area.

Year 9 – Sexism in Society – Three lesson plans and accompanying resources designed for Learning for Life and Work, Pastoral Care or PDMU? programmes.

Year 10 – Becoming Anti-Misogynist – A workshop aimed at providing tools to challenge misogyny in schools and wider society.

## The final resource

You can view or download the Female Voices Resource here\*:



\*ETI does not endorse resources.



## Testimonials and impact

"It is inspiring to see such empowered young women make such a strong and strategic case for change. I think your Female Voices project is an excellent example of how we can make things better for all young people."

**Nicola Byrne, Assistant Chief Inspector, ETI**

"This resource is amazing and deserves to be seen by all."

**Jane McCarthy, Strategic Communications and Engagement Lead, Ending Violence Against Women and Girls Directorate**

"What an honour to be present at the launch of Female Voices, and to hear first-hand about a teaching resource to address misogyny and designed by young women from Our Lady and St Patrick's College, Knock."

**Mary Lowery, Acting Assistant Director, Education Authority**

"What an inspirational group of young women from Our Lady and St Patrick's College, Knock launching a resource aimed at combatting misogyny and patriarchy."

**Chris Quinn, Northern Ireland Children's Commissioner**

"Female Voices has been an empowering project. It has taught me the value of making space for every voice. I am so proud to have been a part of this resource."

**Lois Mackey, Year 12 student**



"This project gives voice to amazing women. It will revolutionise how women are seen in the curriculum. We will be visible."

**Jena McKeown, Year 12 student**