



Review of the Month

Lend with Care



Jeanine is 33 years old and lives with her husband and two children in the Burera District of Rwanda. Both children are at school where their father teaches. Jeanine herself works as a farmer, growing seasonal crops, including potatoes.

Jeanine has been on the family farmland for over 7 years now. She is enormously busy on her farm and often needs additional help from up to 10 labourers during the growing season to help her in land preparation, seeding and harvesting.

Currently, she grows potatoes on a full hectare of land and wishes to expand her land for growing potatoes up to two hectares. To achieve her vision, Jeanine has requested a loan which she will use in part to purchase an additional plot of land and roughly a third will be used to purchase high quality potato seeds, vitamins, composts and fertilizers. Jeanine also thinks that she'll need to set aside funds to pay about 6 additional temporary labourers to assist with the growth.

Jeanine currently has 7 tons of potatoes in stock ready to be sold, and she is confident that she will be able to repay the loan fully without difficulty over the 18 month loan period.

World Youth Skills Day 15th July

In 2014, the UN General Assembly declared 15 July as World Youth Skills Day, to celebrate the strategic importance of equipping young people with skills for employment, decent work and entrepreneurship. Since then, World Youth Skills Day events have provided a unique opportunity for dialogue between young people, technical and vocational education and training (TVET) institutions, firms, employers' and workers' organizations, policy makers and development partners. Participants have highlighted the ever-increasing significance of skills as the world is embarking on a transition to a sustainable model of development.

World Youth Skills Day 2021 will again take place in a challenging context due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

- UNESCO estimates that schools were either fully or partially closed for more than 30 weeks between March 2020 and May 2021 in half the countries of the world. In late June, 19 countries still had full school closures, affecting

nearly 157 million learners and 768 million more were affected by partial school closures.

- Respondents to a survey of TVET institutions jointly collected by UNESCO, the International Labour Organization (ILO) and the World Bank reported that distance training had become the most common way of imparting skills, with considerable difficulties regarding, among others, curricula adaptation, trainee and trainer preparedness, connectivity, or assessment and certification processes.
- ILO estimates show that globally, youth employment fell 8.7% in 2020, compared with 3.7% for adults, with the most pronounced fall seen in middle-income countries. The consequences of this disruption to the early labour market experiences of youth could last years.

World Youth Skills Day 2021 will pay tribute to the resilience and creativity of youth through the crisis. Participants will take stock of how TVET systems have adapted to the pandemic and recession, think of how those systems can participate in the recovery, and imagine priorities they should adopt for the post-COVID-19-world.

Influential Women: Olympe de Gouges



My 'inspiring woman' was an outspoken advocate of women's rights, and is claimed by some to be the founder of modern feminism. She famously said: "Woman has the right to mount the scaffold; she must equally have the right to mount the podium and speak." Her words were prophetic – she was to experience both.

Her name is Olympe de Gouges. Born in southern France in 1748, at age 15 she was forced into a marriage with a man thirty years older than herself. Her husband died one year later and Olympe never remarried. Moving to Paris, she ignored social conventions and spent the rest of her life denouncing injustice and advocating for women's rights.

She was a prolific writer and the author of over 70 political pamphlets, two novels, and 40 plays. Her early plays explored the powerlessness of women, faced with men's rapacious sexual desires. But Olympe championed the rights of all human beings, including the plight of the underprivileged, and wrote two plays exposing the appalling abuse of black slaves. She described how they were sold like cattle at a market and wrote that 'it is only colour' that differentiates Africans from Europeans, and that colour is simply 'the beauty of nature'. At that time France's economy

depended on its Caribbean plantations worked by slaves, and Olympe became the target of death threats and narrowly escaped incarceration in the Bastille.

Frequently, she was dismissed and ridiculed simply because she was a woman. "To write a good play, one needs a beard," wrote one reviewer. Her greatest renown derives from her pamphlet: 'Declaration des Droits de la Femme et de la Citoyenne' (1791), written in response to Thomas Paine's *The Rights of Man* (1789), which had overlooked women. She proposed that "Woman is born free and lives equal to man in her rights".

She highlighted the vicious contradiction which denied education to females but refused them full citizenship due to their lack of understanding. She advocated for extending full civil and political rights to women, and called on them to band together to demand equality. Describing marriage as the 'tomb of trust and love' and 'perpetual tyranny', she advocated for marriage to be a civil contract drawn up between equals with divorce possible for both parties, for women to have equal parental and inheritance rights, and for children born out of wedlock to be treated as legitimate children in terms of inheritance rights. Among other things she sought the right for women to name the fathers of their children. This may reflect the rumour that Olympe was herself the illegitimate daughter of the Marquis de Pompidon.

I salute Olympe for being a woman of enormous courage

and conviction. She was an ardent republican and supporter of the French Revolution, but sided with the moderate Girondists, and opposed the death penalty for humanitarian reasons. When it was proposed that the King should be guillotined, she wrote in favour of clemency. Her fate was sealed when she had the audacity to accuse Robespierre of tyranny.

November 4th, 1793:

"Yesterday, at seven o'clock in the evening, a most extraordinary person called Olympe de Gouges who held the imposing title of woman of letters, was taken to the scaffold, while all of Paris, while admiring her beauty, knew that she didn't even know her alphabet. She approached the scaffold with a calm and serene expression on her face, and forced the guillotine's furies, which had driven her to this place of torture, to admit that such courage and beauty had never been seen before...

After her death, one commentator wrote: "Remember the shameless Olympe de Gouges who abandoned the cares of her household to involve herself in the affairs of the republic, and whose head fell under the avenging blade of the laws." Another reported that 'the law has punished this conspirator for having forgotten the virtues that belong to her sex.'"

Joy Stephens

Women inspiring action, transforming lives

Black Joy

In this series of articles, I have written about my year of learning, all thanks to the racial equality allies group that I belong to. I've mentioned:

- my inherent bias towards people of the same heritage as myself,
- my daily practice of 'spending time' with people of different heritages,
- new definitions of racism and the concepts of micro aggression and micro intervention,
- what to do if I am called out for problematic words or behaviour, and
- how we all gain from the trickle-down financial benefit of slavery.

This time I would like to outline the new (to me) concept of Black Joy. A short podcast on the topic is available at:

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/ideas/videos/what-is-black-joy-and-why-do-we-need-it-in-our-liv/p07fwxvm>

My understanding is that Black Joy is a celebration of the fullness of what blackness is; the artistry, the innovation, the achievements of black and brown people who have authentic, free and unencumbered agency. Black Joy serves as a counterpoint to Black Trauma which is very often what we are shown by our cultural gatekeepers, the broadcasts on famine and war, the news on knife crime, the use of phrases like 'black on black crime'. (I don't think we ever hear the phrase 'white on white crime'). It is more than enjoying the athleticism of basketball players. It is more than delighting in reggae and soul music, for we have accepted black genius in these fields. It is more than this. It is expanding our understanding of the presence of

black protagonists in every field from ornithology to farming, from swimming to stand-up comedy, in art, in poetry and science fiction.

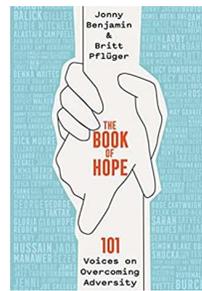
Everyone will have their own favourite examples of Black Joy. Mine include these two:

1. The fabulous Kanneh-Mason family, classical musicians all. Watch at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rFdYtd13PjE>
2. And the wicked humour of Gina Yashere at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kDX1YTL-ByU>

Enjoy!

Tessa Woodward

Book of the Month



From the best advice you'll ever get to the joy of crisps, the 101 brilliant contributors to *The Book of Hope* will help

you to find hope whenever you need it most. Award-winning mental health campaigner Jonny Benjamin, MBE, and co-editor Britt Pflüger bring together people from all walks of life – actors, musicians, athletes, psychologists and activists – to share what gives them hope.

These 101 key voices in the field of mental health share not only their experiences with anxiety, psychosis, panic attacks and more, but also what helps them when they are feeling low. This joyful collection is a supportive hand to anyone looking to find light on a dark day and shows that, no matter what you may be going through, you are not alone.

Jonny Benjamin is known for his book and documentary film, *The Stranger on the Bridge*, which

fought to end stigma around talking about mental health, suicidal thoughts and schizoaffective disorder. When his campaign to find the man who prevented him from taking his own life went viral, Jonny was one of a wave of new figures lifting the lid on mental health struggles. In this book, he brings together a range of voices to speak to the spectrum of our experiences of mental health and the power of speaking up and seeking help.

Women and Alcohol

"Drinking and drinking problems have increased in every generation of women born after World War II" (Dr Katherine Keyes). Women in their early 20s are most at risk but they are not the ones overdoing it. Affluent, fit adults over the age of 50 may be particularly prone to heavy drinking – and it's often habit (wine o'clock) rather than addiction that is to blame.

Today drinking is not only accepted, it's expected. Maybe that's because it has become a badge of female empowerment.

Marketing has played a role with many beverage companies hoping to cash in on the new wealth in the female market. Then there's the stress factor, with women under considerable pressure at home as well as in the workplace.

Drinking heavily affects your health and increases the risk of serious disease. Over the last 10 years women drinking to excess has increased 18.9%, compared with 7.3% in men.

Advice is that if you choose to drink, don't do so for your health but rather with your health in mind. One drink a day is an ideal average, but you can have a second or third on occasion, as long as you scale back the rest of the week.

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