

Adriana Alonso Blanco (1º Bachillerato)

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As a girl

Girl's day 2020

When you search on the internet the reason why we celebrate the Girl's Day, the answer you're bound to get is the following one:

“We celebrate girl's day to acknowledge girls' rights and the exceptional problems that they face around the world”.

Reading this may leave you impressed or even confused, because, which problems do we face exactly?

I, as a girl, have had the chance to grow up in an open-minded environment, full of opportunities where nobody has ever questioned me for being a girl. Everyone would expect that since I am a 21st-century girl. However, all that glitters is not gold.

Studies carried out in 2012 revealed that every seven seconds a girl younger than 15 is bound to get married somewhere in the world. Nowadays, more than 700 million women around the world have gotten married before they reached 18.

Regarding slavery, in 2016 it was sobering to know that three-quarters of the enslaved people were girls. Further research has proved that when household resources are limited, social norms in many places dictate that boys should be given priority, leaving girls with few education opportunities.

I, as a girl, but mainly as a human and as part of our society, think that we can't keep on ignoring all these facts,

I, as a girl, can't ignore the fact that 31 million women of my age aren't allowed to go to school in the world. Why are we supposed to believe that we are less valid? Why does society keep underestimating us? And, why don't believe ourselves capable of succeeding in a scientific career?

In Spain, the proportion of women in the research staff (in full-time equivalent) has not improved in 10 years, remaining at 39%. According to the data provided by the Ministry, in the research career, there is still little female representation in the highest-ranking category.

The problem lies in our childhoods. Only 7% of Spanish girls see themselves as scientists in the future.

We must change it together. The low visibility of female scientists in our society, as well as the existence of stereotypes, provoke little interest in science from girls and young women. And we are probably losing a lot of talent along the way.

So I, as a child, am going to ask for a favour: if your daughter ever looks you in the eye and tells you that her greatest desire is to make history, in whatever field, do not snatch that dream from her; do not throw cold water on the girls.