

# **Investigation of Workplace Concerns at Women Deliver**

October 16, 2020

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In July of 2020, Women Deliver’s Board of Directors retained Cader Adams LLP to conduct an independent investigation into employee allegations of racial discrimination, harassment, and bias and to report on workplace culture and trust in the organization. The following sets forth our investigative process, findings, and recommendations.

## **I. Background**

Women Deliver is an international non-profit organization and “a leading global advocate that champions gender equality and the health and rights of girls and women”.<sup>1</sup> It is headquartered in New York City with an affiliate office in Ottawa, Canada. Women Deliver’s staff are predominantly American.

Founded in 2007 by global women’s health and rights advocate Jill Sheffield, Women Deliver began as a global conference dedicated to issues of maternal and reproductive health, and shortly thereafter was established as an independent nongovernmental organization. In 2010, Women Deliver began its Young Leaders Program, which provides training, mentorship, and networking opportunities for young advocates from around the world. To date, the Young Leaders Program has worked with over 1,000 participants. There are also programs for Policy and Advocacy, Humanitarian Advocates, the Women Deliver Conference, Research, and the campaign Deliver for Good.

In 2014, Women Deliver hired Katja Iversen as CEO. Prior to joining Women Deliver, Ms. Iversen was the Chief of Strategic Communication and Public Advocacy with UNICEF, and before that she worked on advocacy and communication for the United Nations Population Fund. When Jill Sheffield retired in 2016, Ms. Iversen took over as President, while also retaining her role as CEO. Under Ms. Iversen’s leadership and as a result of collective commitment, dedication, and effort, Women Deliver experienced rapid, exponential growth, adding ambitious new programs and doubling the size of the Young Leaders Program. During this time, the organization expanded from eight employees to a high of approximately 70 employees in the lead up to its 2019 conference. It currently has 54 employees, almost seven times the number it had in 2014.

As a result of this rapid growth, in the early Fall of 2019, Women Deliver identified a need to increase its Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (“DEI”) throughout the organization and develop a more robust people management infrastructure. In December of 2019, the organization retained ReadySet, a DEI consulting firm, to assess Women Deliver’s policies and culture. ReadySet undertook a deep review, including conducting organization-wide meetings and focus groups and reviewing Women Deliver’s practices and policies to develop Women Deliver’s next five-year strategy. That strategy was also supported by the findings of SRI Executive (“SRI”), a global strategy consulting practice specializing in international development, which conducted a detailed evaluation based on ReadySet’s findings. Women Deliver also retained QED Consulting (“QED”) to evaluate a draft of the organization’s five-year strategic plan in terms of intersectionality, anti-colonialism and decolonization, and anti-racism. We reviewed ReadySet’s, QED’s, and SRI’s reports during the course of our investigation. We note below the many steps including those

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<sup>1</sup> <https://womendeliver.org>, last accessed October 9, 2020.

recommended by ReadySet that Women Deliver had already begun to implement before our investigation.

## II. Allegations

While Women Deliver was working with ReadySet to strengthen its DEI and develop more robust policies and procedures to support employees, the movement toward racial justice gained momentum following the police killings of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, and other African Americans. In response, on June 4, 2020, Women Deliver published a statement entitled “Women Deliver Stands in Solidarity with the Movement for Racial Justice,” saying, “we challenge ourselves and others to listen, learn, and act — to take the question Women Deliver often asks our partners — ‘how will you use your power?’ — and apply it to this moment. Today, we pledge to put our power and resources towards ending racial injustice.”<sup>2</sup> In the statement, Women Deliver committed to:

- set clear Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion benchmarks for hiring processes;
- examine its retention rates for people of color and minority groups;
- continue to hire more people of color and strengthen the diversity of recruitment pipelines; and
- ensure an intersectional lens, along with a DEI strategy, is included in its five-year strategic plan.

In response, four former employees posted on Twitter about their experiences with racial injustice at Women Deliver and in the global nonprofit sector more generally. They stated that they experienced or witnessed bias against some employees who identify as Black and people of color. Rather than paraphrase these statements, we have included them in full in the appendix to this report.<sup>3</sup>

On June 15, 2020, 118 members of the Young Leaders Program submitted a letter to Women Deliver expressing solidarity with those who spoke out on Twitter and calling for Women Deliver to commission an independent investigation and take measures to address issues of racial bias and inequality within the organization.<sup>4</sup>

These issues are not unique to Women Deliver. Organizations in every sector are being called upon to examine their workplace cultures. We are aware of formal investigations underway in at least two other global women’s health organizations. As is true in many organizations, witnesses here raised concerns about the culture and management of Women Deliver as a whole: the investigation did not find that any one person is the cause of these challenges.

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<sup>2</sup> <https://womendeliver.org/2020/women-deliver-stands-in-solidarity-with-the-movement-for-racial-justice/>, last accessed October 9, 2020.

<sup>3</sup> For the full Tweets, see Appendix 1, pages 1a-13a.

<sup>4</sup> For the full letter, see Appendix 2, pages 14a-19a.

### **III. Women Deliver’s response to the allegations**

On June 16, 2020, President and CEO Katja Iversen issued a public statement in response to the allegations, apologizing for the pain and trauma employees experienced and committing to deepening Women Deliver’s efforts to ground the organization in intersectionality, anti-colonialism, decolonization, and anti-racism.<sup>5</sup> The Board of Directors issued a companion statement expressing concern over the allegations, announcing that it would commission an independent investigation and that Katja Iversen had volunteered to take a leave of absence. The Board appointed Kathleen Sherwin, the organization’s COO, as the interim CEO and retained Cader Adams LLP to conduct the investigation.<sup>6</sup>

Through its earlier work with ReadySet before the investigation began, and during the course of our investigation, Women Deliver has undergone a major transformation, which is still ongoing. Many changes have taken place as of October 1, 2020 and we note that more changes will likely have occurred in the time between the writing of this report and its public release. Women Deliver has been reporting on these changes through the “Women Deliver’s Transformation: Our Work to Become an Anti-Racist Organization” section of its website.<sup>7</sup> This page details the organization’s efforts to “become an anti-racist organization, grounded in intersectional principles, and foster a culture of respect and inclusion for all.” Measures taken thus far include:

- creating six staff task forces and working groups to engage with 140+ recommendations gathered from staff, DEI consultants, and Young Leaders;
- continuing to work with DEI experts ReadySet including implementing all-staff trainings on topics such as Ally Skills Training, Feedback Training for People Managers, and Communication Practices for People Managers;
- developing an updated Compensation Philosophy along with FAQs for staff and managers related to salary bands and conducting trainings with all staff on these practices;
- adding salary ranges to all job postings;
- holding three town hall-style meetings with Women Deliver Young Leaders and Alumni to answer questions and start a dialogue;
- holding twice weekly virtual open office hours with the interim CEO to have a forum for staff to ask questions, provide feedback, or offer suggestions;
- increasing internal communications and transparency by providing regular updates via Slack and email — including sharing meeting agendas, meeting notes, and action items, pulse surveys, and staff polls;

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<sup>5</sup> For the full letter, see Appendix 3, pages 20a-21a.

<sup>6</sup> For the full letter, see Appendix 4, pages 22a-23a. For the Terms of Reference for the Investigation, see Appendix 5, pages 24a-26a.

<sup>7</sup> Available at <https://womendeliver.org/commitment-to-anti-racism/> (last accessed Oct. 10, 2020).

- providing optional discussion spaces for continued sharing and with emphasis on Black colleagues and colleagues of color, with support from ReadySet and experienced facilitators;
- expanding its mental health offerings to include additional mental health days and service offerings from Headspace;
- expanding its work with Paradox of Leadership, experts in leadership development and coaching, to include all-staff trainings in July, August, and September 2020 on Navigating Change, Self-Care, Energy Management, and Motivation & Stress Management;
- expanding leadership team meetings during this transition period to include representatives from junior and mid-level staff, across all departments/programs and meeting twice per week in this format;
- developing Women Deliver’s next five-year strategy — deepening its examination of intersectionality, with support from SRI Executive and QED Consulting, which have provided feedback specifically around how the strategy explores anti-racism and principles of intersectionality;
- achieving clarity around definitions of anti-racism and exploring decolonizing, with a similar approach to recent work on principles of intersectionality; and
- continuing to be transparent in communications with its partners, funders, and community on this transformation, including one-on-one calls, town halls, and via the website, social media, and the Women Deliver newsletter.

#### IV. The investigation process

Our mandate was to investigate “the specific allegations made regarding discrimination, harassment, and bias, and what they reveal about current workplace culture and levels of trust in the organization.”<sup>8</sup>

At the outset of the investigation, we met with the employees of Women Deliver and introduced the investigation. The Board of Directors invited all employees to contact us directly in order to participate. We also specifically invited some current and former employees to participate. In addition, we were contacted by a former and a current consultant and a current board member, who asked to be interviewed. **In sum, twenty-eight people agreed to speak with us, consisting of 19 of the 54 then-current employees, six former employees, one then-current consultant, one former consultant, and one member of the board.** We interviewed everyone who volunteered to speak with us. Interviews lasted one to two hours. At the request of the Board, we also conducted focus groups with current and former participants in the Young Leaders Program who contributed perspectives on the programs and practices.

In addition to the interviews, we reviewed online statements from current and former employees; Women Deliver’s personnel policies; ReadySet’s, QED’s, and SRI’s reports on their

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<sup>8</sup> See Terms of Reference at Appendix 5, pages 24a-26a.

findings regarding workplace policies and culture, and on Women Deliver's five-year strategic plan; and documents pertaining to Women Deliver's transformation plan.

Prior to the publication of this report, we presented our findings orally to the Board of Directors.

## **V. Findings**

Our findings fall into four main themes:

1. Like many workplaces, Women Deliver is facing the legacy of a society that has traditionally excluded Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC) and other diverse workers from positions of power. And, like many workplaces, Women Deliver has a generation gap between its leadership and much of its workforce. This has led to a disconnect in expectations and workstyle.
2. Because Women Deliver experienced such rapid growth, its policies and practices around promotions, performance management, and management generally have lagged behind growth in workforce. This has created a perception of unfairness among employees.
3. The dedication and drive that produced this growth has at times also created a demanding, high-pressure environment that would benefit from some formal mechanisms to protect work-life balance and reduce pressure while preserving the organization's remarkable productivity.
4. The actions taken by Women Deliver to date in combination with the existing strengths of the organization will allow Women Deliver to readily meet the challenges identified in our report.

We elaborate on each of these findings below:

### Finding Number One

Some employees expressed that they felt they were expected to be deferential, congenial, subordinate, and not outspokenly critical. This can make the workplace less welcoming for anyone whose identity and experience differs from these norms. Interviewees earlier in their careers noted that a less hierarchical approach in the workplace would allow all voices to be heard and help the organization to thrive. And some employees who identify as BIPOC reported being treated negatively because of their communication style or appearance.<sup>9</sup>

Several interviewees stated that more junior employees were expected to accept directives from leaders and management without questioning them or asserting their own points of view. Some also hypothesized that this expectation of agreeableness and congeniality particularly penalizes Black women and women of color, who are perceived as being more outspoken and

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<sup>9</sup> See the Tweets reproduced at Appendix 1, pages 1a-13a for examples.

direct. Some employees who identify as BIPOC spoke of feeling pressure to “code switch”—i.e., to speak and interact differently when at work than they would in other social contexts—and said that the performance was draining.

In addition, some interviewees noted that certain leaders and managers engaged in behaviors such as belittling or criticizing employees in public settings and regularly making demands on employees’ time outside of working hours (i.e., regularly sending text messages and making phone calls to employees late at night and on weekends).

Further, some employees expressed frustration that in the past, performance evaluations were based on qualities such as “positivity”. To them, this rewarded polite, congenial, and subordinate behavior and penalized employees who tended to be more direct, asked whether there is a better way to do things, or voiced constructive criticism.

Interviewees agreed with Women Deliver’s goal to hire more diverse employees and increase the presence of LGBTQ+ issues on the external agenda. While Women Deliver’s outside affairs are beyond the scope of this investigation, we note that employees and Young Leaders with whom we met also support the goal of centering the voices of women of the Global South in the organization’s work with local partners, relations with donors, and in the conference.

#### Finding Number Two

A major theme from our interviews was that a lack of robust human resources policies led to *ad hoc* decision-making, which in turn resulted in a perceived lack of consistency and fairness in how employees are treated, as well as a lack of transparency. Some employees perceived inconsistencies arising from these policy deficits as reflecting bias against them. We understand the organization is creating greater formalization of decision criteria for hiring, promotions, compensation, benefits, and communications/social media policy. We note that Women Deliver was already working on these gaps in policy and practices prior to our investigation.

#### Finding Number Three

Some interviewees strongly advocated for greater employee participation in decision making, and greater managerial autonomy over projects. Some managers reported feeling excluded from decisions and micromanaged. They also reported a lack of clear direction, delegation, and allocation of responsibility. Several employees reported that, because senior leaders were juggling many initiatives during this period of growth, after projects were well underway or nearly complete, sometimes leaders would suddenly intervene to make changes to the direction or scope of the project. This created last-minute time pressure, frustration, confusion, and duplicative work. Several interviewees felt this could be averted by making division of responsibility more clear, giving managers authority to control their own work streams, and including staff in discussions of the scope and direction of their projects. Some employees who identify as BIPOC stated that they were micromanaged and denied the autonomy to develop their own ideas and vision. They perceived leaders’ lack of trust as being related to their race or ethnicity.

## Finding Number Four

Current and past employees whom we interviewed also spoke about the strengths they see in the organization. Interviewees reported that they were proud that the Women Deliver conference brings together expertise from different sectors and from all over the world. Interviewees agreed that this event is crucial for the advancement of this sector. They also expressed deep appreciation for the work of the Young Leaders Program and its profound impacts. They noted that Women Deliver's powerful communication strategy, including its use of social media, has played a major and positive role in bringing issues of gender equality and the health and rights of girls and women to the fore.

Many interviewees also expressed that they were encouraged by Women Deliver's response to criticism and its willingness to examine its practices and make changes.

## **VI. Recommendations**

The issues at the heart of this investigation are not unique to Women Deliver. During recent months, a number of international non-governmental organizations have faced similar allegations of engaging in institutional racism and discrimination and reinforcing colonialism.<sup>10</sup> The entire sector is reckoning with issues around race, gender, and colonialism. All are examining their practices with the goal of charting a new path forward.

Where Women Deliver *is* unique is that it had identified challenges and areas for growth months before these complaints arose and before our investigation began, and it has been working steadily to implement changes throughout. As a result, many of our recommendations are already underway.<sup>11</sup> The following recommendations describe the values that we hope the organization will embrace, and set forward some strategies for accomplishing these goals.

- 1. The organization's leaders, structures, and policies should be centered around the values of belonging, inclusion, and procedural justice.**<sup>12</sup> Procedural justice involves ensuring that all stakeholders have a voice and opportunity to participate in decision-making. Key

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<sup>10</sup> See Lori Adelman, I've Seen First-Hand the Toxic Racism in International Women's Rights Groups, *The Guardian* (Aug. 17, 2020), <https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2020/aug/17/ive-seen-first-hand-the-toxic-racism-in-international-womens-rights-groups>; Médecins Sans Frontières is 'Institutionally Racist,' Say 1,000 Insiders, *The Guardian* (July 10, 2020), <https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2020/jul/10/medecins-sans-frontieres-institutionally-racist-medical-charity-colonialism-white-supremacy-msf>; Amy MacKinnon, The International Aid Sector Faces a Reckoning, *Foreign Policy* (July 10, 2020), <https://foreignpolicy.com/2020/07/10/international-aid-sector-faces-reckoning-doctors-without-borders-letter-msf-racism-colonialism/>.

<sup>11</sup> For a list of steps taken as of September 18, 2020, see Appendix 6, pages 27a-32a.

<sup>12</sup> Research shows that employees are happier and more committed to their work if they experience workplace belonging and inclusion. See, e.g., Wendell David Cockshaw and Ian Shochet, "The Link Between Belongingness and Depressive Symptoms: An Exploration in the Workplace Interpersonal Context," *Australian Psychologist* 45, no. 4 (Dec. 2010): 283–289. Employees of an organization are likelier to trust and respect the organization and its authorities if they are treated with procedural justice. See generally Alan Lind & Tom Tyler, "The Psychology of Procedural Justice" (1988); Tom Tyler, "Why People Cooperate" (2011).



elements are fairness and neutrality, treating people with respect and dignity, and demonstrating trustworthiness through transparency and accountability.<sup>13</sup> Women Deliver should continue to increase the participation of employees, solicit their views more effectively, and create safe spaces for employees to voice fears and concerns.

2. **The Board should strive to diversify leadership.** This includes actively seeking out BIPOC and LGBTQ+ representation at all levels of the organization.
3. In order to achieve these goals, **we recommend that the Board of Directors establish a subcommittee** that is charged with internal affairs and organizational culture to implement these recommendations. This subcommittee can communicate directly and routinely with representatives of leadership, management and staff, human resources, as well as the in-house DEI specialist recommended below.
4. **We recommend building out a larger, more professional human resources department.** Expanding the human resources department will help the organization with developing and executing procedures, policies, and practices related to the topics discussed above, and making sure everyone in the organization fully understands these procedures and policies. To ensure consistency and oversight, the director might report directly to the Board's subcommittee on internal affairs and organizational culture which in turn can help facilitate this new function. Women Deliver grew exponentially between 2014 and 2020, from about seven employees to over fifty. This rapid growth was not accompanied by the human resources infrastructure that is required to support such a large staff, to implement official, consistent, and transparent policies, and to systematize processes and practices.
5. **We recommend hiring an experienced in-house DEI expert, and empowering them to participate in strategic planning and management throughout the organization.** The in-house DEI expert might report directly to the Board's subcommittee on internal affairs and organizational culture. This person would lead efforts on recruiting and hiring diverse candidates, hold office hours, conduct listening sessions and employee surveys to monitor climate and experiences with inclusion and belonging, and continually work on addressing any concerns about DEI. The DEI lead would also be in charge of organizing ongoing training, counseling, and coaching on DEI-related matters for the entire organization. Topics might include history of different forms of racism and colonialism, hostile work environment and harassment (including microaggressions), subconscious bias, and other aspects of diversity, such as gender identity, sexual orientation, and disability. The person who fills the DEI role should have a proven track record of success in leading DEI initiatives. They should also be empowered to participate fully in planning and management decisions.
6. **We recommend implementing training, counseling, and coaching for management on an ongoing basis.** All managers should receive management training and coaching. We note there is a significant generational gap between leadership and more junior employees. Some members of different generations have different workplace expectations and communication styles, which can contribute to miscommunication and misunderstanding.

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<sup>13</sup> *Id.*

Management training could assist with intergenerational communication and understanding.

7. **We recommend taking additional measures to manage workload and protect work-life balance.** It is evident from our interviews that employees felt overworked and as though they were frequently under unnecessarily tight deadlines, which required working well beyond ordinary business hours. Some employees reported that they regularly experienced pressure to attend events or answer calls in evenings and on weekends. For employee wellbeing and morale, it is important to implement systems that will keep workloads manageable. It is also important to communicate that employees are not expected to be on call or to attend events outside of work hours, except for special occasions planned in advance (i.e., work trips or conferences), and to adopt practices that make this realistic. Additional steps to support work-life balance might include allowing more flexibility in work schedules and allowing more flexibility for working remotely.<sup>14</sup>

We recognize that some of the changes are already underway. We nonetheless include them here to emphasize their importance, to encourage Women Deliver to continue to pursue them, and to offer a complete picture.

## **VI. Conclusion**

We commend and thank the current and former employees and Young Leaders who raised these issues and who gave their time and energy to speak with us. And we commend and thank Women Deliver management and Board of Directors for listening intently to their concerns and pledging to transform the organization.

Women Deliver has been through rapid, exponential growth during the past six years as a result of the launch of several ambitious new programs and significant expansion of the Young Leaders Program. In these circumstances, growing pains are to be expected. At the same time, global and national events have brought into sharp focus the need for systemic change regarding gender and racial justice. The crossroads where Women Deliver finds itself presents an opportunity to create lasting positive change.

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<sup>14</sup> We understand that all employees are currently working remotely due to COVID-19. The organization might maintain some of this flexibility in ordinary circumstances where remote work is no longer required by COVID-19.

## **REPORT APPENDIX**

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**16 October 2020**

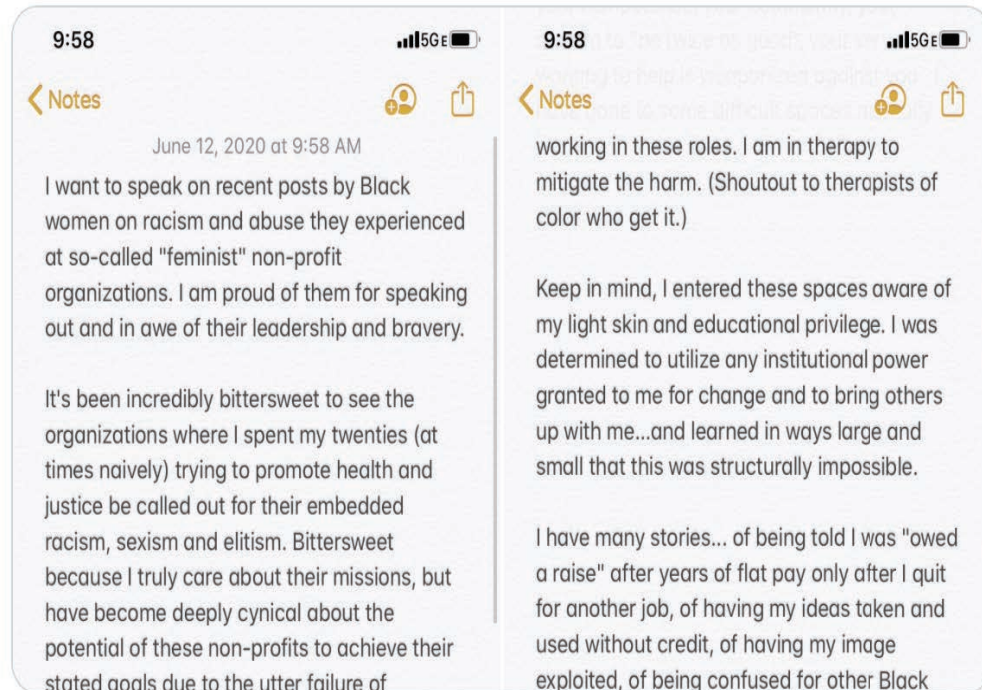
## **Appendix 1**

### **Screenshots of original Twitter complaints**

↻ Brittany Retweeted

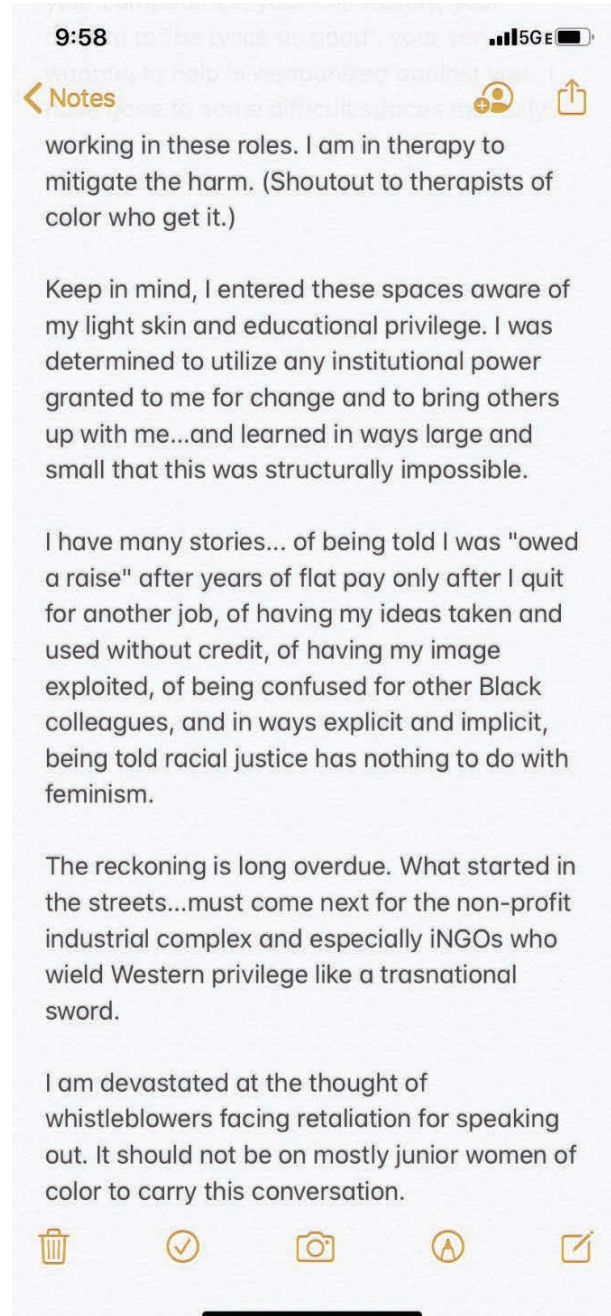
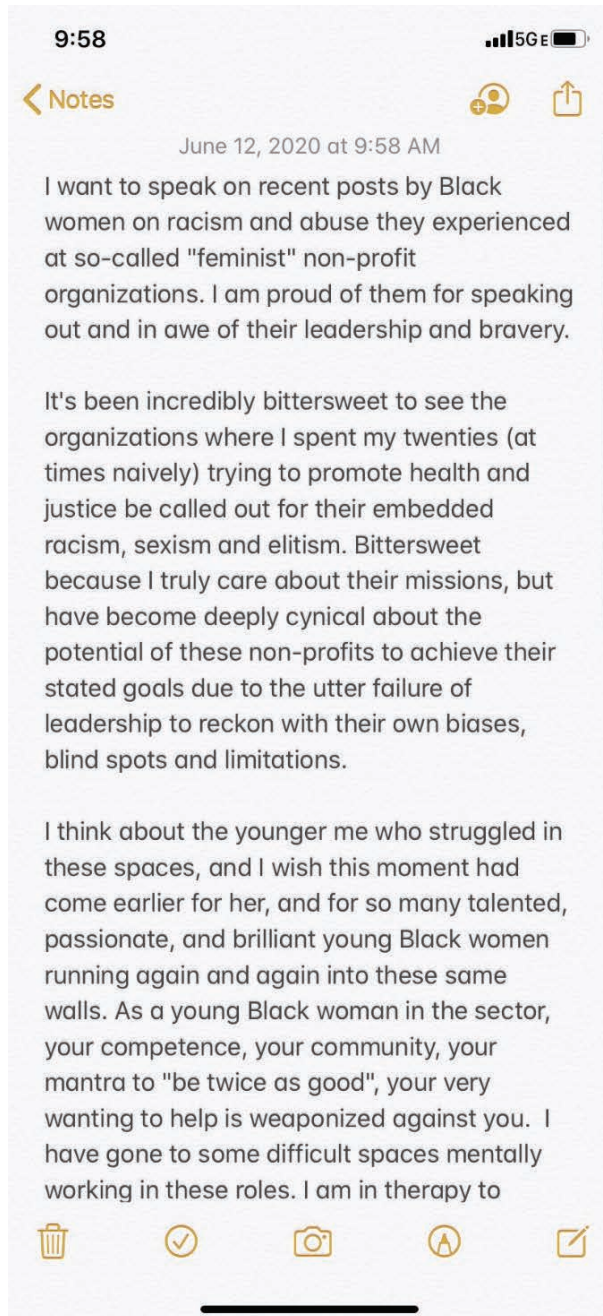


**Lori Adelman**  
@Ladelman



6:59 AM · Jun 12, 2020 · Twitter for iPhone

**70** Retweets   **15** Quote Tweets   **255** Likes







**Lauren Rankin** ✓  
@laurenarankin

Replying to @laurenarankin

I'll be explicit: this was at @WomenDeliver. That place was toxic for so many of us, but it was first and foremost racist. While I was there, @BritanyTatum was the only black woman on staff, and her skills were used to advance the org while she remained the lowest paid staffer.

10:01 AM · Jun 11, 2020 · Twitter Web App

42 Retweets 8 Quote Tweets 116 Likes



**Lauren Rankin** ✓ @laurenarankin · Jun 11

I worked with Brittany. I watched her experience microaggressions (HR once grilled her about whether her braids were her "real hair" 😞) and structural barriers to promotion and progress. She was the only black woman on staff and she was the most junior. That wasn't an accident.



**Brittany** @BritanyTatum · Jun 11

White women have always been some of the worst perpetrators of racist behavior in my personal and professional life.

[teenvogue.com/story/women-wh...](https://teenvogue.com/story/women-wh...)

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**Lauren Rankin** ✓ @laurenarankin · Jun 11

At a staff meeting, a colleague noted how white our staff was, highly problematic, especially for a global women's rights org. We demanded racial diversity in hiring. HR's response? "Well, we have certain educational requirements." AS IF BLACK WOMEN DON'T HAVE MASTERS DEGREES.

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**Lauren Rankin**  @laurenarankin · Jun 11

Replying to @laurenarankin

I experienced so much toxic psychological abuse at @WomenDeliver that scarred me. But watching how @BritanyTatum was tokenized and grateful for that while leadership used her skills and work but refused to financially reward her was the most jarring. It was deeply racist.

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**Lauren Rankin**  @laurenarankin · Jun 11

I haven't publicly shared my criticism of @WomenDeliver for many reasons, but a big one is how "professionalism" is a way to excuse toxicity and abuse. It seemed unprofessional to criticize the org and its CEO for the abusive treatment. But that's privilege and that's not enough.

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**Lauren Rankin**  @laurenarankin · Jun 11

I have a platform and a ton of privilege, and with it comes a responsibility. I tried to fight for @BritanyTatum in small ways that I could while I was there. But remaining publicly silent allows this org and its CEO to continue to present themselves as feminist. And neither are.

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**Lauren Rankin**  @laurenarankin · Jun 11

Since sharing this, I've received DMs and private messages that back up what I saw. One even claimed that @WomenDeliver's CEO said that intersectionality was a "barrier" to achieving gender equality goals. That's only true if your "goals" only pertain to cis, white women.

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**Lauren Rankin**  @laurenarankin · Jun 11

So much of @WomenDeliver's "gender equality" schtick is about wooing white corporate power structures and inserting white women into them on the backs of black women and women in the global south. It's about positioning white women as powerful; not changing who has the power.

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**Lauren Rankin**  @laurenarankin · Jun 11

There are wonderful, intersectional feminists who work at @WomenDeliver and have in the past. The problem is leadership—it's predicated on appealing to a white patriarchal power structure. The org isn't interested in change but in promoting cis white women's access to power.

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**Lauren Rankin**  @laurenarankin · Jun 11

If you're a current staffer at Women Deliver (or any other INGO or women's rights non-profit) and want to share toxic, racist, or abusive things you've witnessed or experienced, my DMs are open. You can remain anonymous.

1 42 107



↻ Brittany Retweeted



**Lauren Rankin** ✓ @laurenarankin · Jun 15

"I am a black womxn and Women Deliver made me an advocate and then took it away."

This is a powerful and heartbreaking read. A @WomenDeliver Young Leader wrote about the revelations of the toxic, racist environment maintained by its CEO:



Why I'm no Longer an Advocate

I am a black womxn and Women Deliver made me an advocate.

🔗 [medium.com](https://medium.com)

💬 1

↻ 39

❤️ 65





**Brittany**  
@BritanyTatum



I have shared these thoughts with my colleagues who left Women Deliver but never shared them publicly because I was afraid of the consequences.

I put literal sweat and tears into that organization for almost 3 years and got nothing in return. Fuck your white savior complex.

11:58 AM · Jun 11, 2020 · Twitter Web App

60 Retweets 22 Quote Tweets 283 Likes



**Brittany**  
@BritanyTatum



Replying to @BritanyTatum

I was verbally abused by the CEO, I had the head of HR ask me if my hair was "my real hair", I was the lowest-paid staff full-time staff member for nearly two years, I watched time and time again QUALIFIED Black candidates to be denied jobs.

I'm not being quiet anymore.

12:35 PM · Jun 11, 2020 · Twitter Web App

31 Retweets 5 Quote Tweets 137 Likes



**Brittany**  
@BritanyTatum



To all of you that had to endure the same treatment that I did at that organization, I see you, I hear you, and my DMs are open if you want to rage.

To the Black folks still there I see you too, and you can rage in my DMs too.

5:31 PM · Jun 11, 2020 · Twitter Web App

6 Retweets 43 Likes



**Brittany** @BritanyTatum · Jun 11

Replying to @BritanyTatum

I was told my job was meaningless by the CEO.

I was tokenized and I was reminded of it constantly. But I was supposed to feel like I was lucky to be there because I was young.



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**Brittany** @BritanyTatum · Jun 11

One more thing, digital Blackface is real and Women Deliver is a huge perpetrator of it and they need to stop.



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**Brittany** @BritanyTatum · Jun 16

"What is clear is that we as an organization and as individuals have work to do."

@WomenDeliver wasn't ignorant of the work that needed to be done, they just thought they could get away with not doing it.



Statement on How Women Deliver Will Reform – ...  
I want to start by recognizing the conversations started by former employees about working at ...  
[womendeliver.org](https://www.womendeliver.org)



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**Brittany** @BritanyTatum · Jun 13

When I was at Women Deliver my go to place to cry was the stairwell — I spent way too much time alone in that stairwell.

I wish we weren't all connected by this collective trauma.



**Chelsea** @chelsea\_wd · Jun 13

Wow.

There is an closed area by the freight elevator where Black & other poc Women Deliver staff would gather to cry & vent.

The fact that this is a shared experience is just ... sad.  
[twitter.com/kaykaylita/sta...](https://twitter.com/kaykaylita/status/1234567890)



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**Brittany**  
@BritanyTatum



My experiences at this organization still weigh so heavily on me to this day.

I was put into meetings for optics, I was sent to a The Women's March Conference after our only other Black staff member wasn't able to go (she was a Director I was an Associate).



**Lauren Rankin**  @laurenarankin · Jun 11

I'll be explicit: this was at @WomenDeliver. That place was toxic for so many of us, but it was first and foremost racist. While I was there, @BritanyTatum was the only black woman on staff, and her skills were used to advance the org while she remained the lowest paid staffer.

[Show this thread](#)

10:09 AM · Jun 11, 2020 · Twitter Web App

**16** Retweets   **4** Quote Tweets   **54** Likes

Brittany Retweeted



**Chelsea**  
@chelsea\_wd

I'll start by saying this: I am so traumatized by my experience at Women Deliver that I literally have their handles and name muted on Twitter so I don't get triggered.

I almost missed the thread exposing them — shouts to [@reprojobs](#) for RTing Brittany and getting me on her page

2:49 PM · Jun 11, 2020 · Twitter for iPhone

84 Retweets 18 Quote Tweets 295 Likes



**Chelsea** @chelsea\_wd · Jun 11

Replying to [@chelsea\\_wd](#)

My time at Women Deliver was plagued by straight up racist, white faux feminism & toxic clickish behavior — from the top down. And most former & current employees completely agree.

I have stories for days, but I'll share a few specific ones that often play back in my head:

7

37

126



**Chelsea** @chelsea\_wd · Jun 11

White feminist spaces have a tendency to value 'niceness' over everything (to the detriment of employees and the work). One of the 'nicest' (& longest serving) white women is guilty of worst microaggressions. I have been a victim of her gaslighting & white tears on many occasions

1

45

167



**Chelsea** @chelsea\_wd · Jun 11

once on a work trip abroad, she straight told me that she didn't believe in western privilege. Later in the convo she asked if I had thought about my future & going to grad school. Yall, me and her have masters degrees from the SAME INSTITUTION. She should know this, she hired me

1

16

108



**Chelsea** @chelsea\_wd · Jun 11

Later in my time at WD, we would hire an 'inclusion' lead — a cis white woman who would go on to serve as my new manager. I often tried expressing my concerns to her, especially about the aforementioned 'nice white woman' & her harm to not just me but to the youth in our program

1

12

88







**Chelsea** @chelsea\_wd · Jun 11

Once in the process of censoring the art of a Black trans youth activist, she misgendered her in the staff group chat. When I brought this to the 'inclusion' lead (by email & in person twice) I was completely ignored and no action was taken.



1



13



78



**Chelsea** @chelsea\_wd · Jun 11

When I finally put in my notice, my 'inclusion lead' manager was on maternity leave. While she didn't have time to reach out & say goodbye/wish me well, she DID have time to secretly secure my replacement & greenlight the promotion of another white woman with HALF of my resume



1



12



98



**Chelsea** @chelsea\_wd · Jun 11

— a double promotion that directly went against company policy btw AND that had previously been denied to a former assistant of color in that exact same position.

But you know, policies can be bent & rules can always be broken for other nice white women. 🙄



3



14



122



**Chelsea** @chelsea\_wd · Jun 11

To be clear, the person they promoted is lovely & I consider her a friend. But secretly promoting & breaking the rules for her (and no one else) is a classic example of white women solidarity.



1



15



112





**Chelsea** @chelsea\_wd · Jun 11



In the end, my love for the work will always outweigh my desire to 'be nice' or 'professional' or whatever coded bs white feminist orgs make us believe we need to be in order to be successful.



1



22



129



**Chelsea** @chelsea\_wd · Jun 11



Whoops — one thing I forgot to say:  
after I tried expressing my concerns re the misgendering incident of a black trans youth & was ignored, that same 'inclusion' lead went on to nominate the 'nice white woman' for an institutional impact award. She won.



7



13



77



**Chelsea** @chelsea\_wd · Jun 12



Super thankful for all of the support ❤️ I want to add one important thing:

I fully recognize my privilege as a US-based light skin Black women in global dev. My experiences, though bad, do not even come close to those of Black women outside of the US, especially African women



8



14



125





**Chelsea**  
@chelsea\_wd



Wow.

There is an closed area by the freight elevator where Black & other poc Women Deliver staff would gather to cry & vent.

The fact that this is a shared experience is just ... sad.



**Kayla** @kaykaylita · Jun 13

I honestly don't have the language to describe how harmful @dosomething was during my time there. My friend and former colleague shared this story and remembering it this morning instantly made me cry. This is a FRACTION of what it was like in that office. #NotMyCrisisTextLine

***experienced.***

***SIT WITH THAT  
VISUAL.***

***Picture a group of incredible,  
brilliant, black and brown folks  
huddled in a cleaning closet,***

10:40 AM · Jun 13, 2020 · Twitter for iPhone

**4** Retweets **2** Quote Tweets **9** Likes



## **Appendix 2**

**Letter from 118 Young Leaders dated June 15, 2020**

## **Women Deliver Young Leaders Call for Accountability & Urgent Redressal of Systemic Racism at Women Deliver**

15 June 2020

We, the undersigned Women Deliver Young Leaders, take seriously and are deeply concerned by the testimonies of former Women Deliver employees revealing experiences of racism, discrimination, unfair treatment, microaggressions, unequal pay, and several other issues linked to racial injustice and inequality inflicted by the CEO and management level personnel at Women Deliver. We recognize and applaud the bravery of those who have spoken out, noting well the risks at hand. We stand with all of them.

In response to the growing Black Lives Matter movement, reignited by the murder of George Floyd, Ahmaud Arbery, and Breonna Taylor by the Police in the United States of America, Women Deliver released a solidarity statement dated 4 June 2020,<sup>1</sup> iterating that the organisation *"stands with our U.S.-based staff, global partners, and protesters in sharing the anger and pain of the Black community"*. The statement further recognized that *"the international development and non-profit sectors have their own history of racialized power dynamics that need to be dismantled"*, and that Women Deliver's *"work must acknowledge and break down the systems of white supremacy and privilege at the core of reproductive, economic, and racial inequality and injustice"*.

With such statements issued by Women Deliver, it is disheartening to see former employees of the organization share stories that reveal experiences linked to the very events that prompted the organization's solidarity statement. As affiliates and Young Leaders of Women Deliver, which is defined as a global feminist organisation, we are concerned that these testimonies reveal practices within the organisation that go against the ethos and values of our collective and principles of feminism and feminist organising.

From the testimonies, some of these experiences have led to the concerned persons' decisions to leave the organization, despite a commitment to the work for gender equality and the health and rights of women and girls around the world. This is a grave indictment on a global feminist organisation which believes that *"every person has the right to health, bodily autonomy, and freedom from violence regardless of race, age, gender, sexuality, religion, immigration status, or ability"*.

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<sup>1</sup> Women Deliver, "Women Deliver Stands in Solidarity with the Movement for Racial Justice" (June, 2020); <https://womendeliver.org/2020/women-deliver-stands-in-solidarity-with-the-movement-for-racial-justice/>

As Women Deliver Young Leaders fighting for social justice everyday, and often experiencing such injustices ourselves (racial among others), we stand in solidarity with and applaud the bravery of every individual who has made the decision to speak up about their experiences, and those who have been tokenized and/or subjected to microaggressions, discrimination, racism, transphobia, and white supremacist behaviour. We recognise that there may still be Black people, People of Colour, trans and gender non-conforming people, and other minority groups dealing with similar experiences within the organization.

We hereby collectively condemn this transgression, and will refuse to be associated with any future benefit derived from a platform that is revealed to be built on white supremacy, corporate power and racial oppression. We also condemn all the existing power dynamics that have fostered a toxic environment for employees, partners, affiliates (including Young Leaders themselves) and valued mentors who assist us with our grassroots-level organizing as Young Leaders.

Therefore, we demand full accountability from the Women Deliver Board, Management and Staff. In pursuit of this, we call for the following actions to be undertaken by the organization with immediate effect:

1. An immediate interim suspension of the accused person(s) and initiation of a thorough independent third-party investigation of the allegations made, including engagements with former employees with their due consent, with the report of this investigation available publicly;
2. A robust and truthful response to address ALL the specific allegations made with clear remedial actions; and immediate dismissal of those found guilty of the allegations made by the former Women Deliver employees;
3. A clear plan to address oppressive, unjust, and racist practices within the organisation along with diversity employment percentage released, including data on promotions and retention of Black employees and employees of colour;
4. An review of the Human Resources and Diversity, Equity and Inclusion strategies followed by Women Deliver, with revisions made public;
5. A review of the Women Deliver leadership structures (including the Board), complaint mechanisms, and staff welfare policies and services;
6. An inclusive approach to the development of Women Deliver's next 5-year strategic plan;
7. A public apology by Women Deliver following the conclusion of the investigation and initiation of the above advised recourse actions;

We hope that our concerns will be fully addressed and encourage Women Deliver to further engage with Young Leaders and the general public in their response to this situation, and ensure that we can continue to work towards our collective objectives, in line with the principles of equality, equity, justice, inclusion and non-discrimination.

**On behalf of:**

1. Jama Jack, The Gambia, 2018
2. Larissa Kennedy, UK, 2020
3. Larz Gerrand, Australia, 2016
4. Catherine Nyambura, Kenya, 2016
5. Francoise Moudouthe, Cameroon/France, 2010
6. Kateryna Korniienko, Ukraine, 2020
7. Linda Barry, The Netherlands, 2020
8. William Otuck, Tanzania, 2016
9. Hamza Meghari, Palestine, 2016
10. Deneka Thomas, Trinidad & Tobago, 2018
11. Wiem Askri (weema), Tunisia, 2018
12. Oluwaseun Ayodeji Osowobi, Nigeria, 2018
13. Olivia Wainwright, The UK, 2020
14. Fila Magnus, Malaysia, 2016
15. Chenai Muchena, Zimbabwe, 2018
16. Ana Aguilera, Mexico, 2016
17. Aramide Odutayo, Canada, 2018
18. Nnamdi Esem, Nigeria, 2016
19. Mina Tolu, Malta, 2018
20. Zanele Mabaso, South Africa, 2018
21. Adeveline Suija, Indonesia, 2016
22. Alan Jarandilla Nuñez, Bolivia, 2016
23. Brian Omala, Kenya, 2018
24. Nana Abuelsoud, Egypt, 2016
25. Oketch Nick, Kenya, 2016
26. Kinga Wisniewska, Poland, 2016
27. Aarushi Mehta, India, 2018
28. Kizanne James, Trinidad & Tobago, 2016
29. Son Le, Vietnam, 2018
30. Tanisha Chadha, India, 2016
31. Ankit Gupta, India, 2016
32. Helena Branco, Brazil, 2020
33. Nomtika Mjwana, South Africa, 2018
34. Anna Szczegielniak, Poland, 2016

35. Chiamaka Uzomba, Nigeria, 2016
36. Marinella Matejcic, Croatia, 2016
37. Ivonne Arica, Peru, 2018
38. Kobe Smith, Guyana, 2018
39. Dennis Anthony Glasgow, Guyana, 2018
40. Richard M Dzikunu, Ghana, 2016
41. Marisol Ruiz, Mexico, 2016
42. Jennan Paige Andrew, Trinidad & Tobago, 2018
43. Umba Zalira, Malawi, 2016
44. Angela Delgado, Costa Rica 2016
45. Latoya Charles, St. Lucia, 2018
46. Sanne Thijssen, The Netherlands, 2018
47. Beverly Moise, Nicaragua, 2018
48. Cecil Ato Kwamena Dadzie, 2018
49. Tasneem Kakal, India, 2018
50. Génesis Luigi, Venezuela, 2016
51. Luciana Amarilla, Paraguay, 2016
52. Alex Aguirre, Nicaragua, 2018
53. John Kwasi Amuzu, 2018
54. Harpreet Dhillon, Australia, 2020
55. Aatika Patel, Fiji 2018
56. Sumaira Waseem, Pakistan, 2018
57. Ali Rizvi, Pakistan, 2018
58. Lucía Berro Pizzarossa, Uruguay, 2016
59. Patricee Douglas, Guyana, 2016
60. Ibrahim Hassanin, Egypt, 2018
61. Olaoluwa Abagun, Nigeria, 2016
62. Swarnima Bhattacharya, India, 2018
63. Adebisi Adenipekun, Nigeria, 2016
64. Amit Timilsina, Nepal 2018
65. Sruthi Chandrasekaran, India, 2016
66. Archlove Takunda Tanyanyiwa, Zimbabwe, 2018
67. Krishna Sharma, Nepal, 2018
68. Nateica Garraway, Guyana, 2020.
69. Alice Zhang, Australia, 2018
70. Adja M SEMBENE, Sénégal, 2018
71. Melissa Fairey, Canada, 2016
72. Faqueeda Watson, Guyana, 2018
73. Zanda Desir, St. Lucia, 2018
74. Trang Le, Vietnam, 2016
75. Marinela Gremi, Albania, 2018
76. Zar Ti Nwe Nu Aung, Myanmar, 2018
77. Mahmoud Salah Abdelaal, Egypt, 2018

78. Bhongolwethu Sonti, South Africa, 2018
79. Charity Giyava, Zimbabwe, 2018
80. Amos Katsekor, Ghana, 2018
81. Amina Melissa Lakrib, Algeria, 2020
82. Mashiyat Rahman, Bangladesh, 2018
83. Hai Ha Vu Thi, Viet Nam/Germany, 2020
84. Zanie Ferreira, South Africa, 2018
85. Ikram Laimeche, Algeria, 2018
86. Danica Shahana Magtubo, Philippines, 2016
87. Jude Thaddues Njikem, Cameroon, 2016
88. Nebila Abdulmelik, 2012
89. Mulesa Lumina, Zambia, 2018
90. Thao Nguyen, Vietnam, 2018
91. Anna-Kaye Rowe, Jamaica, 2010
92. Victor Hugo Castellanos Lemus, México, 2018
93. Pushpa Joshi, Nepal, 2020
94. Shreejana Bajracharya, Nepal, 2013
95. Suprina Bajracharya, Nepal, 2020
96. Or Ram, Israel, 2018
97. Shreejana Bajracharya, Nepal, 2013
98. Alisa Draskovic, Australia, 2016
99. Sara Scott, Guyana, 2020
100. Ornella Ohoukoh, Togo, 2018
101. Navnita Jadhav, India, 2018
102. Pooja Kapahi, India, 2018
103. HayMann Zaw, Myanmar, 2016
104. Laveza Khan, Canada, 2018
105. Enow Awah Georges, Cameroon, 2018
106. Smarak Samarjeet, India, 2013
107. Poorvi Mehrotra, India, 2018
108. Anthony Lopez, Philippines, 2016
109. Priyesh Sharad, India, 2018
110. Namra Nasyr, Pakistan, 2018
111. Paulema Gweama, Liberia, 2018
112. Gonzalo Castro, Panamá, 2018
113. Joshua Dilawar, Pakistan, 2018
114. Lara Santos, Brazil, 2018
115. Offor Hope Jeremiah, Nigeria, 2018
116. Immaculee Katounke, Togo, 2018
117. Serkan Kasapoğlu, Turkey, 2018
118. Marriane Enow, Cameroon, 2018

### **Appendix 3**

**Letter of apology from Katja Iversen dated June 16, 2020**

# Statement from Katja Iversen

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 [womendeliver.org/press/statement-from-katja-iversen/](https://womendeliver.org/press/statement-from-katja-iversen/)

Recently, former Women Deliver employees have come forward on social media to say they experienced a toxic work environment and Black former employees explicitly described how they felt tokenized, abused, and discriminated against during their time at Women Deliver. And in my discussions with staff, it's clear that the problems still run deep.

I was and am shaken, heartbroken, and tremendously angry with myself. I am in charge of this organization, and I apologize and take full responsibility for these experiences and for my role in it. We have not lived up to our own values, and I am deeply sorry for the pain and the trauma experienced by current and former employees. I am grateful to our former staff for their bravery in coming forward, as well as our current staff and Young Leaders who've stood in solidarity.

Women Deliver's Board of Directors is actively engaged in the process of appointing a third party to independently investigate, a move that I support and feel is essential for accountability. I will cooperate fully with that process, and I have offered the board to take a leave of absence until the conclusion of the investigation, an offer they have accepted.

Women Deliver has been working hard and smart to change the world for – and with – girls and women, pushing for gender equality and sexual and reproductive health and rights for all, no matter their gender, geography, race, age, ability, who they love, or their socio-economic circumstances. Together with partners across the globe the great staff have achieved amazing results over the years. But it is not enough, and it is not acceptable if we pushed for equality globally while a system of inequality festered internally. That is why Women Deliver will be working relentlessly to make overdue changes, including structural, interpersonal, and programmatic shifts, and why I personally will be listening more, learning more, and being more self-reflective and question my default reactions; to examine how and where my privilege and unconscious biases are at play.

This is a watershed moment, where the whole world is reckoning with the systems of white supremacy that have led to systemic racism. I hope that collectively we can learn from this long overdue awakening and see real change, including putting more power in the hands of grassroots women's organizations, young advocates, and girls and women across the globe.

I am deeply sorry for the pain I have caused, and hope that the results of the investigation will help better the organization. I look forward to a stronger Women Deliver, and gender equality movement, that I know will come from this work.

-Katja Iversen



## **Appendix 4**

**Statement from the Women Deliver Board of Directors dated June  
16, 2020**

**available at <https://womendeliver.org/press/statement-from-board/>**

# Statement from the Women Deliver Board of Directors

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 [womendeliver.org/press/statement-from-board/](https://womendeliver.org/press/statement-from-board/)

To the Women Deliver Former and Current Staff

To the Women Deliver Young Leaders

To the Women Deliver Partners and Funders

The Women Deliver Board of Directors is aware of and deeply concerned about the substance of the testimonies shared by former and current employees of the organization. We are also aware of the concerns and demands that have been voiced by a number of Women Deliver Young Leaders.

The Board takes this situation very seriously. It condemns all forms of racism and discrimination.

As the governance body of Women Deliver, fully understanding our roles and responsibilities, the Board will commission an independent investigation that is thorough and transparent to address the range of issues which have been raised. The Chief Executive has offered, and we have accepted, to take a leave of absence from her position while the investigation is being done and until the Board has considered its outcomes. The COO has been appointed as interim CEO.

The outcomes of the independent review will inform the decisions of the Board moving forward. The outcome will be made public in accordance with the principles of transparency, accountability, and fairness to which we adhere.

We reiterate our commitment to the staff, the Young Leaders, and the broader network of Women Deliver, and our support for the organization to fulfil its mandate in inclusive, respectful, and transformative ways.

On behalf of the Board of Directors,  
Kristin Hetle (Chair

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## **Appendix 5**

### **Terms of reference for the Cader Adams LLP independent internal investigation**

## **Terms of Reference for Independent Investigation of Workplace Concerns at Women Deliver**

The Women Deliver Board of Directors is aware of and deeply concerned about the experiences shared by former and current employees of the organization. We are also aware of the concerns and demands that have been voiced by a number of Women Deliver Young Leaders.

The Board takes this situation very seriously. It condemns all forms of racial injustice and discrimination.

As the governance body of Women Deliver, fully understanding our role and responsibilities, the Board of Directors of Women Deliver has therefore commissioned an independent investigation into the range of issues and the specific allegations regarding leadership and management practices that have been raised.

Through the investigation, it is the aim of the Board of Directors to contribute to ensuring that Women Deliver is a workplace in which all staff feel equitably included, heard, respected and able to contribute to their fullest extent, and with which Women Deliver Young Leaders and partners can feel rightfully proud to be associated.

The scope of the investigation will focus on the specific allegations and what they reveal about current workplace culture and levels of trust in the organization. It will provide recommendations aimed at ensuring workplace culture and practices are consistent with Women Deliver's values and purpose.

The investigation will be fully independent. All members of the investigation team will be experts in their fields, and external to the organization. A sub-committee of the Board will provide a link to the full Board of Directors.

The investigation will be conducted by Cader Adams LLP, a law firm with expertise and experience in conducting similar investigations for non-profit organizations. The final report will express the independent opinion and conclusions of Cader Adams LLP, based on the firm's findings during the course of its investigation of Women Deliver's culture and practices.

The investigation team will ensure that people communicating their experiences or views will be listened to attentively, respectfully and with compassion.

The role of the Board sub-committee is:

- To receive periodic reports on progress.
- To ensure that any logistical issues can be speedily resolved.

- To be advised by the investigation team of issues that may require an immediate response in order to ensure the investigation is conducted most effectively and expeditiously.
- To assist the investigation team in understanding the history and purpose of the organization, including by sharing a recently completed report on Women Deliver's Diversity, Equity and Inclusion.
- To share the outcomes of the investigation with the full Board of Directors and with Women Deliver Staff and Management.

The outcomes of the independent investigation will inform the decisions of the Board moving forward. These decisions will be made public in accordance with the principles of transparency, accountability, and fairness to which the Board adheres.

June 30, 2020.

## **Appendix 6**

**Women Deliver's website page regarding the transformation (last updated on September 18, 2020), available at <https://womendeliver.org/commitment-to-anti-racism/>**

# Our Work to Become an Anti-Racist Organization – Women Deliver

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 [womendeliver.org/commitment-to-anti-racism/](https://womendeliver.org/commitment-to-anti-racism/)

## Women Deliver's Transformation: Our Work to Become an Anti-Racist Organization

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For more than a decade, Women Deliver has championed gender equality, anchored in advocacy for sexual and reproductive health and rights. But we have fallen short by working towards more equality while also contributing to inequality and systemic racism, which cannot be tolerated. To fully deliver on our mission of health and rights for all girls and all women, we must and will reexamine our past and reimagine our future.

Women Deliver will become an anti-racist organization, grounded in intersectional principles, and foster a culture of respect and inclusion for all.

We are grateful to current and former employees, Young Leaders, partners, and fellow advocates and activists who have offered testimonies, made recommendations, asked questions, and challenged us to reexamine our values, actions, and privilege. We are listening, we are acknowledging, we are learning, and we are taking action.

---

### OUR PROCESS FOR CHANGE:

#### **1. Women Deliver will examine, acknowledge, and address past wrongs**

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First and foremost, we **acknowledge and validate the testimonies of pain expressed by former and current staff**. The third-party investigation into Women Deliver will examine the range of issues that have been raised, past and present, and the Board will take appropriate action based on the investigation's findings and recommendations and make the outcome of the investigation public. Additionally, Women Deliver will continue to acknowledge that we have failed to uphold our own values which has led to a deficit of trust among partners and staff. We will work to rebuild that trust internally and externally.

#### **2. Women Deliver will reform internal structures, policies, and culture**

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Recognizing that change must start with ourselves, we will examine and reform our own structures and policies to **create a more equitable and inclusive organization with increased diversity at all levels**. And knowing that policies on paper won't add up to change without a supportive, enabling environment, we will take steps to build back trust, inclusion, and equity within our culture so that these changes are ingrained in our organization's ethos. We will have thoughtful, clear, and fair policies paired with a culture that enables us to live our values.

### **3. Women Deliver will transform our advocacy, practices, and programs**

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- Equally as important as changing internally, we must also transform our work to challenge white supremacy, colonialism, and racism through our programs and practices. **Intersectionality must be the cornerstone of our strategy and our programming**. We must design and implement that strategy and programming in partnership with the people most impacted by the work.

### **4. Women Deliver will embrace accountability, learning, and sharing**

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- We will **embrace continuous learning, encourage feedback from staff, partners, and others**, be transparent in our transformation, and share learnings to encourage others to transform. We will lead by example and approach this work with humility. There is no final destination in the work to become anti-racist and intersectional — it is a continuous process and will require continuous work.

### **5. Women Deliver will change how we partner to drive inclusive, sustainable change within ourselves, our sector, and the world**

---

To do this work, we also need to **reconsider our partnership approach: how leadership partners with staff, how we partner with external organizations, and how we partner with the people who will be most impacted by our advocacy to create a more gender-equal world**. Changes to our partnership approach start by being consultative in how we transform and continue as a core organizational principle to create a better Women Deliver, a stronger movement for gender equality, and more sustainable change.

**ACTIONS TO DATE:**



- On Tuesday, 16 June, our Board of Directors announced it would appoint a **third party to independently investigate** the range of issues that have been raised, past and present, and they will take appropriate action based on the findings of that investigation, which is expected to conclude by late summer/early fall.
- Katja Iversen, Women Deliver's CEO, issued a statement of apology and has taken a leave of absence until the conclusion of the investigation process.
- The Board appointed Kathleen Sherwin, COO, as **Interim CEO** to help guide the organization through the coming period.
- We have begun to review and act upon the **review of over 140+ recommendations provided** by our staff, Young Leaders, and intersectionality and DEI experts — which we refer to as "Our Transformation Roadmap".
- To ensure our own transformation is developed for lasting change, leadership has involved all staff in the process — which has included the **creation of task forces and working groups** to engage in the 140+ recommendations including:
  - DEI Task Force
  - Intersectionality Task Force
  - Fundraising Task Force
  - Strategy Implementation Working Group
  - Communications Working Group
  - Partner Engagement Working Group
- Women Deliver has been continuing to work with ReadySet, experts in DEI, which began in January 2020 — and has extended and expanded ReadySet's work with us to include **all-staff trainings** on topics such as Ally Skills Training, Feedback Training for People Managers, and Communication Practices for People Managers.
- We have developed an **updated Compensation Philosophy** along with FAQs for staff and managers related to salary bands and conducted trainings with all staff on these practices in late August. Additionally, Women Deliver added salary ranges to all job postings on our Careers Page starting in September.
- We have held three (to date) town hall-style **meetings with Women Deliver Young Leaders and Alumni** to answer questions and start a dialogue in June and August 2020.
- We have held twice a week **virtual open office hours** with the interim CEO to have an open forum for staff to ask questions, provide feedback, or offer suggestions.
- We have **increased internal communications and transparency** by providing regular updates via Slack and email — including sharing meeting agendas, meeting notes, and action items, pulse surveys, and staff polls.
- We have provided **optional discussion spaces** for continued sharing and with emphasis on our own Black colleagues and colleagues of color, with support from ReadySet and experienced facilitators.
- We have expanded our **mental health offerings** to include additional mental health days and service offerings from Headspace.

- We have been continuing to work with Paradox of Leadership, experts in **leadership development and coaching**, since 2018 — and have extended their work with us to include all-staff trainings in July, August, and September 2020 on Navigating Change, Self-Care, Energy Management, and Motivation & Stress Management.
- We have expanded our Coordination Team (our leadership team) meetings during this transition period, starting in July 2020 — to include **representatives from junior and mid-level staff**, across all departments/programs and are meeting twice per week in this format through the end of September 2020 when we will re-assess format and structure.
- We have continued developing our next five-year strategy — deepening our **examination of intersectionality**, with support from SRI Strategy and QED Consulting, who have provided feedback specifically around how the strategy explores anti-racism and principles of intersectionality.
- We are achieving clarity around our **definitions on anti-racism** and exploring decolonizing, with a similar approach to our recent work on principles of intersectionality.
- We have continued to be **transparent in our communication** with our partners, funders, and community on our transformation, including one-on-one calls, town halls, and via our website, social media, and Women Deliver newsletter.

#### ACTIONS TO COME:

- Developing **metrics** for our public commitments and our Transformation Roadmap.
- Defining metrics for diversity in **hiring and retention** including Black people, people of color, and underrepresented groups moving forward. Determining how to best collect, report, and publish this data going forward. In examining our current systems, we are unable to appropriately develop a baseline for past years.
- **Continuing to hire** more Black people, people of color, and underrepresented groups and **strengthen the diversity of our recruitment pipelines**, including for our open leadership positions.
- Launching **Employee Resource Groups** (ERGs), including budgetary support.
- Refreshing our **Personnel Policy Handbook** — and prioritizing a policy refresh by early September 2020 for paid parental leave and bereavement leave policies, as well as documenting a transparent internal hiring/promotion process and feedback/grievance process.
- Revising our **Media and Digital Engagement Policy**, so that staff has clear and transparent guidelines to help support their own advocacy.
- Launching a series of **Young Leader Program Transformation engagement** opportunities for August, September, and October 2020 — including dialogues, surveys, and co-designed activities with Young Leaders, with support from BIPOC facilitators in partnership with Kore Global, leading experts in gender equality and social inclusion research, strategy, design, and evaluation.

Good advocates identify problems, highlight solutions, push for commitments, and hold people accountable to their promises. That's what we've strived to do for 10 years around the world, and what we must — and will — do to transform ourselves.

**LAST UPDATED: 18 September 2020**

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See previous updates [here](#) and [here](#).