

TOO YOUNG *to* WED

Final Grant Report

Submitted to Together Women Rise

June 2024

1. *Please provide the following information:*

- a. *Organization Name:* Too Young To Wed
- b. *Project Title:* The Butterfly Project: Bringing the Bedrocks of Lasting Change to Northern Pastoralist Kenya's Most Excluded Girls
- c. *Grant Amount:* \$50,000
- d. *Contact Person:* Jessica Tirado-McKinney
- e. *Address:* 1112 Main Street, First Floor, Peekskill, NY 10566

2. *Recap briefly what outcomes the project was designed to achieve.*

The Butterfly (Sampiripiri) Project brings reproductive health education and financial literacy training through games, music, and instruction during weekly meetings, among a suite of additional resources, to girls in Samburu County, Kenya who are most vulnerable to child marriage and other harmful practices. In partnership with local families, the Butterfly Project equips girls and their households with protective social, economic, and health resources, in order to delay marriage and increase literacy.

As stated in TYTW's original proposal: The Butterfly (Sampiripiri) Project's main goal is to reduce gender disparity among historically excluded girls, beginning at age 9, who are at risk of child marriage, female genital mutilation (FGM) and other harmful practices in Samburu County, with the support of families and the greater community.

Project Outcomes:

- Education as a Preventative Measure Against Child Marriage: Highly vulnerable girls (those who have survived or are at high risk for child marriage) attend day school or early evening educational programming, serving as a protective measure against harmful practices.
- Strengthened Protective Assets for Historically Excluded Girls, in the forms of Human, Social, Economic, and Cognitive Assets (identified by Protective Asset-Building Strategy House, [Building Girls' Protective Assets: A Collection of Tools for Program Design](#)).

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- Reduced Incidences of GBV: Girls receive peer mentoring support from Population Council-trained mentors through Implementation of the Intentional Design curriculum, a safety intervention to reduce incidences of GBV and harmful practices.
- Increased Economic Assets among Beneficiaries and their Communities: strengthened numeracy education, financial literacy, and livestock provision, leading to greater economic independence.
- Sensitization and Long-Term Community Reduction of GBV: Parents and extended family members of girls in areas where harmful practices (child marriage, FGM, beading) are commonplace receive sensitization programming, helping to contribute to long-term social norm change.
- Strengthened Social Wellbeing: positive social connections, improved peer-to-peer relationships, strengthened sense of unity.
- Strengthened Individual Wellbeing in the forms of self-management tools, increased confidence, goal-setting skills.
- Transformation of Gender Norms leading to heightened societal consensus on the need to protect girls from GBV, eventually changing the marriage market.
- Lowered Risks Among Girls for Maternal Mortality and Infant Mortality (both of which are linked to child marriage).

3. *What was accomplished in connection with this project? Please address each stated objective. If any project objectives were changed, please also explain the circumstances leading to the modification of the objective(s).*

We are thrilled to report that thanks to the generous support of Together Women Rise, the Butterfly Project has had a 100% success rate in keeping the girls enrolled in the program safe from child marriage and FGM throughout the project period.

The Butterfly Project has achieved significant progress towards its stated objectives, positively impacting the lives of girls and their families in Samburu County, Kenya. Below is a detailed account of the accomplishments aligned with each objective.

We successfully exceeded our goal of having 90% of families sign family agreements, **achieving a remarkable 100% participation.** These agreements have been crucial in securing family commitment to support the girls' education and delay their marriages. In terms of accessing health resources and social support, we met our objective with 100% of enrolled girls benefiting from these essential services. This access has significantly reduced the risk of early pregnancies and associated maternal and infant mortality and morbidity. The provision of regular health check-ups, reproductive health education, and peer support groups has been instrumental in achieving this outcome.

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Regarding educational advancement, we exceeded our objective with 100% of the identified and enrolled girls improving their educational levels, especially for beneficiaries who were shepherd girls who would not have accessed education by parental initiative.

We also achieved our goal of delaying marriage for at least 75% of the girls enrolled in the program, **with 100% of the girls successfully delaying marriage as evidenced by comprehensive case management records.** Since the girls were recruited in June 2023, none of them have been married off, and we have not received any FGM reports concerning our beneficiaries. Continuous mentoring and community sensitization efforts played a critical role in this achievement.

We surpassed our objective of providing resources to increase earnings, with 100 girls, women, and families receiving support. This includes training in financial literacy, provision of livestock, and support for small business initiatives, all contributing to improved economic stability and independence. The project has increased money circulation in the community and the general household income. A total of 4 mentors and 6 casual workers are directly paid by this grant. The casual workers are parents to some of our beneficiaries. The supplies for the safe spaces are also procured locally, promoting local businesses (parents of beneficiaries) and improving household income in this community.

4. *Have the number of beneficiaries changed? To report this please refer to the original numbers in your grant proposal under Number of women and girls Directly Impacted and Indirectly Impacted.*

The project directly benefits a total of 100 girls in Namunyaak who attend safe spaces under this grant (in addition to 100 more in Namunyaak supported by the Girls Opportunity Alliance / Obama Foundation, and 200 girls participating in the Butterfly Project in Ngilai village). Additionally, the grant directly supports four mentors (out of eight engaged in the Butterfly Project in Namunyaak, in addition to those engaged in Ngilai), six casual workers in Namunyaak, and three community enumerators engaged during the survey/baseline assessment in Namunyaak. The project in Namunyaak also involves 20 active community committee members and has directly reached approximately 400 additional community members through various community events and sensitization efforts.

The combined number of total beneficiaries through this project is over 2,000 as anticipated. Funding permitting, the original proposal had estimated that in concert with additional funding support, the program could reach 950+ direct female beneficiaries

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(mentors, mentees, enumerators, mothers/sisters of mentees) in year 1 along with 2,000+ indirect.

Overall (in concert with other funders), the project supported 400 mentees, 16+ mentors, and 800+ mothers and sisters, bringing the total number of direct female project beneficiaries to an estimated 1,200+. Indirect beneficiaries are estimated at 2,000+ and include siblings of direct beneficiaries, fathers of beneficiaries, committee members, casual workers, community sensitization event attendees, and neighbors.

For the specific portions of the project funded by Together Women Rise, this generous funding has supported 100 mentees, 3 enumerators, 4 mentors, and 200+ mothers and sisters. This brings the total number of direct female beneficiaries supported by Together Women Rise to 300+. Other beneficiaries include siblings of direct beneficiaries, fathers of beneficiaries, committee members, casual workers, community sensitization event attendees, and neighbors, with indirect beneficiaries of Together Women Rise estimated to be at least 500.

5. *What challenges did you face in connection with this project? How did you address these challenges?*

The Butterfly Project encountered several significant challenges, primarily due to severe weather conditions and their resultant impacts. The most pressing issues were the recent flooding and the prolonged drought that preceded it, both of which posed substantial obstacles to our efforts in Samburu County, Kenya.

Since the onset of the March–May 2024 rainy season, Samburu County has been severely affected by heavy rainfall, which led to widespread flooding and landslides across the region. The flooding, particularly from the overflowing River Barsilinga, caused major disruptions. Many residents were stranded, and critical infrastructure, including bridges, was damaged. This hindered access to our educational programs and safe spaces for students, as travel became dangerous and at times impossible. The floods also severely impacted livestock, a crucial asset for the local economy, further exacerbating the difficulties faced by the community.

Before the floods, Samburu County was already grappling with the aftermath of the longest drought on record since 2020. The drought had left the soil damaged and intensified competition for land and water among herders, farmers, and conservancy owners, often resulting in violent conflicts. The combination of these climatic extremes has heightened food insecurity, with many families struggling to maintain their livelihoods. Incidents of increased armed banditry, including the tragic killing of a

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Samburu County Assembly member and the gang rape of an 11-year-old girl, underscored the heightened dangers and instability in the region.

The pre-existing drought had already placed 2.8 million people in drought-affected counties, including Samburu, in need of humanitarian assistance due to the loss of livelihoods, malnutrition, and health challenges such as cholera. The recent floods have exacerbated these conditions, with predictions indicating that an additional 200,000 people could become food insecure. In addition to these ongoing crises, the Kenya Meteorological Department forecasts continued rainfall, suggesting that the residents of Samburu and other impacted communities will continue to face severe challenges from cyclical climate-related disasters.

Additionally, some of the male committee members we engaged initially resisted women-led interventions. However, through ongoing engagements and dialogues, we were able to change their perceptions, fostering a newfound appreciation not only for the effectiveness of women-led initiatives but also for the potential of their daughters. Additionally, due to resource scarcity for livestock, the community is prone to conflict and banditry. Consequently, we had to temporarily pause some safe space sessions during security initiatives aimed at arresting bandits.

6. *Is your organization or project situation different than presented in the approved proposal? For example, new executive director, significant project staffing changes or NGO affiliation, loss of large funding, or other significant changes?*

Since the approval of the proposal, there have been a few changes in our staffing structure, enhancing our capacity to implement the Butterfly Project effectively. While Joycelyn Mwangi has moved on from her role at and remains serving TYTW in a voluntary advisory capacity, the following individuals comprise our talented Kenya team:

Rudolf van den Boogaard, Ph.D., Program and Operational Excellence Advisor, has extensive experience working in Turkana and Samburu Counties. In Turkana, he led efforts to create a county-wide livelihood monitoring program and an Early Warning System (EWS) to mitigate drought impacts. His Ph.D. research at the University of Sussex focused on this EWS, which was later expanded to all Northern Kenya counties under his guidance. Since 1995, Rudolf has been an international consultant specializing in livelihood programming and humanitarian relief across various African regions. Based in Maralal, Samburu, he also founded an organization that has supported around 3,000 vulnerable youths in accessing secondary education. We are currently working with the organization he founded, Samburu Child Support, as an implementing partner for local administrative and managerial purposes, helping to further build TYTW's local team capacity and offer additional mentoring for the field staff.

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Lynette Ouma, Program Manager, holds a Bachelor of Arts from Moi University and is pursuing a Master of Arts in Gender and Development Studies at the University of Nairobi. With extensive experience in advancing sexual reproductive health and rights (SRHR) services, Lynette integrates SRHR-related interventions into our project and supports the mentorship program in Samburu County.

Noreen Wahome, our Bookkeeper & Finance Manager, has over seven years of experience in audit, accounting, and grants reporting, with a background in managing international agency grants. She holds a BS in Applied Accounting from Oxford Brookes University and an Advanced Diploma in Accounting and Business.

Edna Kiilu, our Kenya Administrator, is an operations specialist with over eight years of experience in administrative roles within startups. Her skills in business operations, budget management, and process optimization enhance our organizational efficiency.

Florence Lerapayo, our Program Officer and Mentor Supervisor, is a primary school teacher with a diploma in primary education and previous experience as the Butterfly Project Mentor Supervisor. Her local insights and experience strengthen our program's effectiveness in Samburu County.

7. *What were the most important lessons learned?*

Consistently targeting cultural gatekeepers with transformative information has been shown to gradually change perceptions, albeit slowly. Supporting vulnerable girls within their households, while concurrently sensitizing the community, fosters social capital for these girls and promotes inclusivity in the advocacy for their rights. This approach is notably more effective compared to supporting the girls in isolation from their families.

Our team's experience has shown that while sensitizing community gatekeepers (cultural leaders) within their communities is resource-efficient, it sometimes results in minimal learning. However, relocating these leaders to conference facilities and conducive learning environments has proven to be more effective.

Furthermore, empowering girls to access education not only enhances their own agency but also increases the likelihood that parents will enroll shepherd boys in school, thereby promoting broader educational inclusion.

8. *What has changed within your organization as a result of this project?*

While the Butterfly Project itself did not directly bring about this change, our organization has undergone significant enhancement in its financial management capabilities. We are pleased to announce the addition of Tonia Papke as our Global Chief

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Financial Officer (CFO). Tonia is based at our headquarters in the United States and brings over 30 years of experience working with nonprofit organizations in the New York metro area.

Tonia specializes in developing internal controls, implementing accounting systems, creating financial reporting systems, and drafting investment policy statements for both domestic and international nonprofits. She holds an MBA from Columbia University Business School, an MS in Urban Planning from Columbia University Graduate School of Architecture, Urban Planning, and Historic Preservation, and a BA from Macalester College. Additionally, Tonia is a Certified Financial Planner® with expertise in investment management and long-term financial planning.

9. *Describe the unexpected events and outcomes, including unexpected benefits.*

Throughout the implementation of the Butterfly Project, we encountered several unexpected events and outcomes that significantly advanced our mission objectives.

An unexpected yet highly beneficial outcome was TYTW's pivotal role in drafting the Samburu County Children's Protection Policy. This policy development included key principles for child protection and established comprehensive referral systems, significantly enhancing the framework for safeguarding children within the county. Our involvement at this policy level has solidified TYTW's standing as a key advocate for children's rights and protection in Samburu County.

Our community engagement efforts yielded remarkable results. We convened four community engagement sessions that led to the establishment of a community project implementation committee. Through structured dialogues, especially focused on the importance of education, we saw positive shifts in attitudes and commitments. For instance, Mr. Malphet Lalparasoi, the committee chairman, pledged to enroll his children in school, demonstrating a significant change in community perspectives on education.

The celebration of the International Day of the Girl Child was another unexpected highlight, drawing over 100 participants. This event served as a powerful sensitization tool, reinforcing the community's commitment to protecting children against harmful practices like child marriage. The event's success underscored the community's growing awareness and dedication to safeguarding children's rights.

One of the most impactful outcomes was the identification of the lack of birth certificates among many children, which is a requirement for school registration. To address this, we integrated a civil registration team into the International Day of the Girl Child celebration to create awareness and pilot local registration efforts. As a result, 73 children were

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registered to receive birth certificates, removing a significant barrier to their education. This initiative not only facilitated school enrollment but also highlighted the importance of civil registration, setting a precedent for future efforts in the community.

10. *Did you change your strategy as a result of obstacles you encountered? How will you address these challenges in the future?*

The project's goals have slightly evolved, particularly in response to emerging needs within the community. Initially, our focus was on older adolescent girls; however, we have now expanded our target age group to include girls as young as 6 years old. This change was prompted by our realization that even very young girls in the community are at immediate risk of child marriage.

To address this expanded age range, we have adjusted the curriculum delivery for our safe space groups to be age-appropriate. For the younger girls, the curriculum has been simplified to ensure it is understandable and engaging for their age group, while still covering essential topics such as self-care and self-esteem.

These changes did not significantly impact our overall budget or expenses. Instead, we reallocated resources within our existing framework to accommodate the new beneficiary ages and curriculum adjustments. Since some of the youngest participating girls are 6 years of age, our team anticipates a need for refresher sessions as the girls reach the age of puberty along with more advanced and age-appropriate information on health and feminine hygiene.

By including younger girls in our programs, we aim to provide early intervention and protection, which is crucial in preventing child marriage and promoting education from an early age. This evolution in our project's goals ensures that we are more effectively safeguarding and empowering all vulnerable girls within the community.

It is important to note that this community was selected based on having some of the highest rates of child marriage and FGM in Samburu County. TYTW had previously supported a few of the girls in the village with individual leadership scholarships, but the community sensitization component has been more of an uphill journey because this community, in particular, had some of the highest rates of harmful practices. Local community members even had a hard time with women running the programs—our local female staff had to work harder than male team members to gain the respect of the male elders and prove themselves to more community members. The need for a more robust community sensitization component became apparent, on which our team has continued to invest time and resources.

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11. *Approximately how many lives have been touched, both directly and indirectly, by the project?*

At least 2,000 lives have been touched by the project overall; Together Women Rise's support has touched at least 800 lives both directly and indirectly.

12. *What are the measurements used to monitor success and how was this information measured (e.g., surveys, observation)? Be specific and include measurable results.*

To effectively monitor the success of the Butterfly Project, we implemented specific measurements and methodologies tailored to assess our impact on the community. Prior to initiating community interventions, TYTW conducted a thorough needs assessment that included interface meetings with key stakeholders such as the children's officer, assistant county commissioner, chief village administrator, and police commander. These engagements provided critical insights into the specific needs, assets, and challenges within the targeted villages, laying the groundwork for tailored intervention strategies.

A baseline survey was conducted across six villages to establish key indicators, with a particular focus on school attendance rates among school-age girls. This survey revealed significant challenges, including low attendance rates, highlighting the urgency of the Sampiripiri education initiative.

To measure success, we utilized a combination of self-reported data (survey and interview data), direct observation / case management reports, and records and reports (including attendance registers and school enrollment records). First, improvements in school attendance rates among girls were tracked using attendance records from local schools, comparing attendance before and after project implementation. Additionally, qualitative assessments were conducted to gauge community engagement and awareness. Structured dialogues and observations during community meetings and events provided insights into shifts in attitudes towards education and child protection within the community.

We are delighted to report a **100% retention rate** in the Butterfly Project for the girls participating, evidenced by session attendance records, and an overall safe space session **attendance rate of roughly 90%**. As evidenced through school records, we are thrilled to report a **100% retention rate of girls enrolled in school**. Head teachers have been pleased to report **about 95% attendance rates in classes**. From the grades shared by schools to track performance, about 85% were graded as above average in their first term exams.

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The success of our civil registration initiative was assessed based on the number of children who received birth certificates during the International Day of the Girl Child celebration. This initiative aimed to address barriers to education caused by the lack of civil registration documentation.

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- 13. If the project is ongoing, provide plans and expected results, including projected timeframe.*

For the cohort of girls who participated in the Butterfly Project this past year, TYTW plans to provide education through the shepherd school, as well as continued protective

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monitoring through case management in the succeeding years. Since some of the youngest participating girls are 6 years of age, our team anticipates a need for refresher sessions as the girls reach the age of puberty along with more advanced and age-appropriate information on health and feminine hygiene. TYTW also plans to continue its sensitization events in the community in the succeeding years as funding permits.

Funding permitting, TYTW has the potential to scale the Butterfly Project program further throughout the area of Namunyaak, and eventually open the program up in a neighboring village.

- 14. Provide a detailed list of all expenses incurred during the grant cycle which have been paid for with the Together Women Rise grant.*

The total budget portion of the Butterfly Project requested from Together Women Rise and spent of Together Women Rise's grant funds was \$50,000.

Training of mentors included facilitation allowances for trainers, meals for mentors, staff, and trainers, accommodations, venue hire, enumerator training, and transport. The total amount budgeted was \$15,800, with \$11,000 requested from Together Women Rise, and \$8,000 actually spent. For local school scholarships for girls, the requested Together Women Rise contribution was \$7,000, with \$4,700 actually spent.

Because the above two areas presented lesser costs than initially anticipated, TYTW made some minor reallocations within the program budget direct costs that became necessitated during the course of the program. To address unanticipated community resistance, we allocated more funds within the budget for community engagement, including more staff field visits and community meetings. This ensured better community trust and smoother project implementation. Additional funds were also allocated for staff time and field supervision due to the need for increased field visitations after the floods. This required more supervision and team hours, resulting in \$2,000 spent of the funds from Together Women Rise. Program management costs included fees and benefits for key personnel, including a program manager, program officers, and fringe benefits. \$11,357 of the grant funds were spent on program management.

Together Women Rise's generous grant funds supported weekly, curriculum-based safe space sessions with mentors for the girls participating. Costs included nutritious meals for girls, mentor allowances, and transport reimbursements. Out of the \$15,000 requested from Together Women Rise for this budgetary area, \$15,043 was actually spent.

We also reallocated funds to help cover communications costs due to lower-than-expected costs in other areas, spending \$2500 of the Together Women Rise

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grant funds in this area to help cover the local team's photography and storytelling work, which included travel, staff time to gather the stories as well as tone and edit the photographs, write up the narratives, upload and store the high-resolution photographs, and travel to the beneficiaries' locations. Communications costs also included printing training materials and monitoring tools, digital media management, and phone credits for mentors and staff, ensuring reliable communication.

15. Did this grant and relationship with Together Women Rise assist your organization in obtaining other funding, partnerships with other organizations, or public recognition in some capacity?

Through the grant from Together Women Rise, we were able to demonstrate our project's impact and attract further support. Specifically, the grant facilitated a partnership with the Obama Foundation's Girls Opportunity Alliance, resulting in an additional \$50,000 grant that covered half of our beneficiaries in Namunyaak. This funding has helped to bolster our efforts to empower adolescent girls through education, mentorship, and expanded opportunities, extending our reach and impact within the community.

We have also initiated partnerships with Rise Against Hunger, securing an in-kind grant of nearly 250,000 meals for 2024. These fortified meals will support the Butterfly Project, addressing food security needs and potentially enabling us to reach more vulnerable girls in Samburu County.

Additionally, our newly formed partnership with the Westgate Community Conservancy highlights our growing network of supporters. The Conservancy, focused on eco-friendly tourism and conservation efforts, has committed to providing crucial support for our shepherd school component. This collaboration enhances our program's sustainability and effectiveness in empowering local communities and promoting coexistence between humans, livestock, and wildlife.

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Beneficiary Stories

Rajipia, 10



Rajipia, 10, is the youngest of two children and lives in Namunyaak, Samburu county, with her parents who are livestock keepers. Her favorite animal is her cow named 'Mpus'.

Rajipia is a grade 3 student at Lempaute primary school. Rajipia's favorite subject is English and she likes playing football at school. She is enrolled in Naamunyak's newly-launched Butterfly Project, and enjoys attending the weekly safe spaces.

When asked about challenges girls face in Samburu, Rajipia replied that one challenge was teenage pregnancy and that girls end up having to leave school.

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Saja, 10



Saja is a ten-year-old shepherd girl from Lempaute village, Samburu County. The youngest of seven siblings, Saja lives with her mother who works as a livestock keeper. Saja is responsible for looking after the animals, as well as carrying out household duties. In her free time, she likes to sing.

Saja has been a participant in the Butterfly Project for the last month and half since safe spaces launched in Namunyaak. About the safe spaces, she says she likes her mentor, Mary, and enjoys her time there as she gets to meet her friends and learn for the future. She dreams of building a big house for her mother one day, and to own a business selling clothes and food.

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Nangasin, 11



"I would like to urge girls from other parts of the world to take care of themselves."

Eleven-year-old Nangasin is a full-time shepherd from Samburu County, Kenya, where she lives with her parents and four siblings in Namunyaak village. Nangasin spends her days helping her mother with household chores and taking care of the family's livestock.

Nangasin is enrolled in TYTW's Butterfly Project attending evening shepherd school and weekly safe spaces, where girls from pastoralist communities who are most at risk of child marriage and FGM are supported by local mentors.

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Mpopi, 10



"I was not able to go to school because of poverty - my mother and father don't have any work. I told them that I will go to Sampiripiri (Butterfly Project) safe spaces and they agreed to let me go." – Mpopi, 10 years old

Living with her parents and four siblings, Mpopi, along with her best friend Ntonila, attends one of eight weekly safe space classes organized by TYTW's Butterfly Project in Ngilai and Namunyaak, Samburu County.

She has big plans for her future: "I want to become a pilot — I will go and fly an airplane."

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Rose



"The good thing about education is that it changes the thinking of children — they won't get lost and they will know what to do with their lives. Once a child is educated, they have knowledge."

Rose, a mother of eight children, lives in Namunyaak, Samburu County, Kenya, where she is a committee member of TYTW's Butterfly Project. Two of her daughters are enrolled in TYTW's programming at a local primary school and the weekly safe spaces.