

NORMSTORM

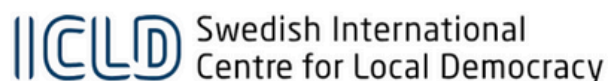
DISRUPTING NORMS, INSPIRING CHANGE

A Local Idea with Global Roots

Every community has its unspoken rules—norms that shape how we act, speak, and treat others. Some of these rules guide us. But others divide us.

Normstorm is a bold campaign that challenges those harmful norms—particularly the ones that fuel bullying, gender-based violence, inequality, and silence. Born in Sweden, and supported by the Swedish International Centre for Local Democracy (ICLD), Normstorm has grown into a global tool for youth empowerment. But it found a new home, and new purpose, right here in the Stellenbosch Municipality.

CONTRIBUTERS



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Stellenbosch Leads with Purpose

As our Mayor recently noted, “The strength of Stellenbosch lies not only in its beauty, but in the courage of its people—especially our youth.”

It was with this courage in mind that Stellenbosch Municipality initiated a groundbreaking step: adapting the Normstorm concept to the South African context. Recognizing the growing need to address issues like violence in schools, toxic masculinity, and social exclusion, Stellenbosch became the first municipality in South Africa to bring Normstorm into classrooms—sparking dialogue, creativity, and transformation.

Our leadership didn’t stop at local implementation. We approached the Western Cape Education Department (WCED) and formed an innovative, multi-stakeholder partnership to ensure Normstorm would reach learners meaningfully and responsibly.

With the support of educators, artists, and young people, Stellenbosch transformed Normstorm from a campaign into a movement—rooted in empathy, equality, and education.

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What is a Norm? Why Storm It?

A norm is an unspoken rule—like “boys don’t cry,” or “real power looks a certain way.” These rules can shape how we treat others, and how we see ourselves. But when they become harmful, it’s time to question them.

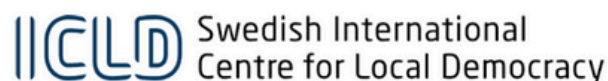
That’s the storm.

That’s Normstorm.

Through photography, visual storytelling, and personal reflection, learners were asked:

- *What are the harmful norms in your life?*
- *How do they affect you or your peers?*
- *What do you want to change?*

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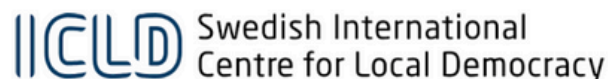
Youth Voice as the Catalyst

As the Municipal Manager reflected, “Real change comes from the ground up—from the courage of young people who are willing to speak the truth through art, through emotion, through leadership.”

This exhibition showcases the brave responses of our learners. Each photograph is more than an image—it is a declaration. A call to be seen, heard, and understood.

From calling out bullying, racism, and abuse, to lifting up themes of friendship, hope, and unity, these works demonstrate that the youth of Stellenbosch are not waiting to be empowered—they are already leading.

CONTRIBUTORS



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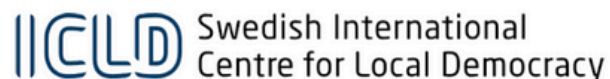
DISRUPTING NORMS, INSPIRING CHANGE

Global Exchange, Local Action

In collaboration with our long-standing partner Jönköping Municipality (Sweden), and under the guidance of ICLD, Normstorm stands as a shining example of democratic learning, local leadership, and international solidarity.

Together, we are proving that municipalities can be incubators for change—by listening to their youth, investing in education, and creating space for truth-telling and transformation.

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This Exhibition is a Beginning

This is more than an art display.

It's a community conversation.

A spark. A storm.

Let it move you. Let it challenge you. And above all, let it remind you of the words we've seen repeated across these walls, in countless creative forms:

"We are all equal. We all belong. We all matter."

As we look ahead, this exhibition marks just the first step in a broader movement. In the true spirit of collaboration, stakeholders from Stellenbosch Municipality, the WCED, Jönköping Municipality, and the ICLD have come together to co-develop an educational toolkit—a practical, values-driven resource to guide the implementation of Normstorm in classrooms and communities.

This toolkit will not only support schools across the Western Cape and Sweden, but also serve as a model for broader interprovincial and international adaptation—ensuring that the conversations sparked here continue to inspire real, lasting change.



STELLENBOSCH HIGH SCHOOL

Title: Constrained by Conformity

Learner: Jean-Mari Rautenbach

Medium: Photography

Artist Statement:

This image delves into the pressures individuals face to conform to societal standards. It portrays the lengths many people go to in altering their physical appearance, driven by the belief that they must fit a predefined mould to gain acceptance. The piece highlights the emotional and physical toll of these expectations, reflecting how deeply ingrained societal ideals can shape self-perception.

Through this work, the viewer is prompted to question the origins of these standards and to consider the value of authenticity and self-acceptance in a world often dominated by superficial judgments.



JUNEDAL HIGH SCHOOL

Title: Tape It Up for the World to See

Learner: Irene Kayeny

Medium: Photography

Artist Statement:

Fold me, shape me, point out everything that sticks out. But when the tape is torn off, the imprint remains.

Tape It Up for the World to See explores the lasting impact of hurtful words. Just as tape leaves an imprint on the surface it touches, so do mean comments leave marks on a person's heart.

This piece reflects the emotional scars that are left behind when words are used carelessly or with intent to harm, highlighting the power of language and the importance of kindness.



JUNEDAL HIGH SCHOOL

Title: Body Ideal

Learners: Alice Forsberg, Emma Ringvall, Emme Kragner, Leia Sinclair, Jessica Hormez

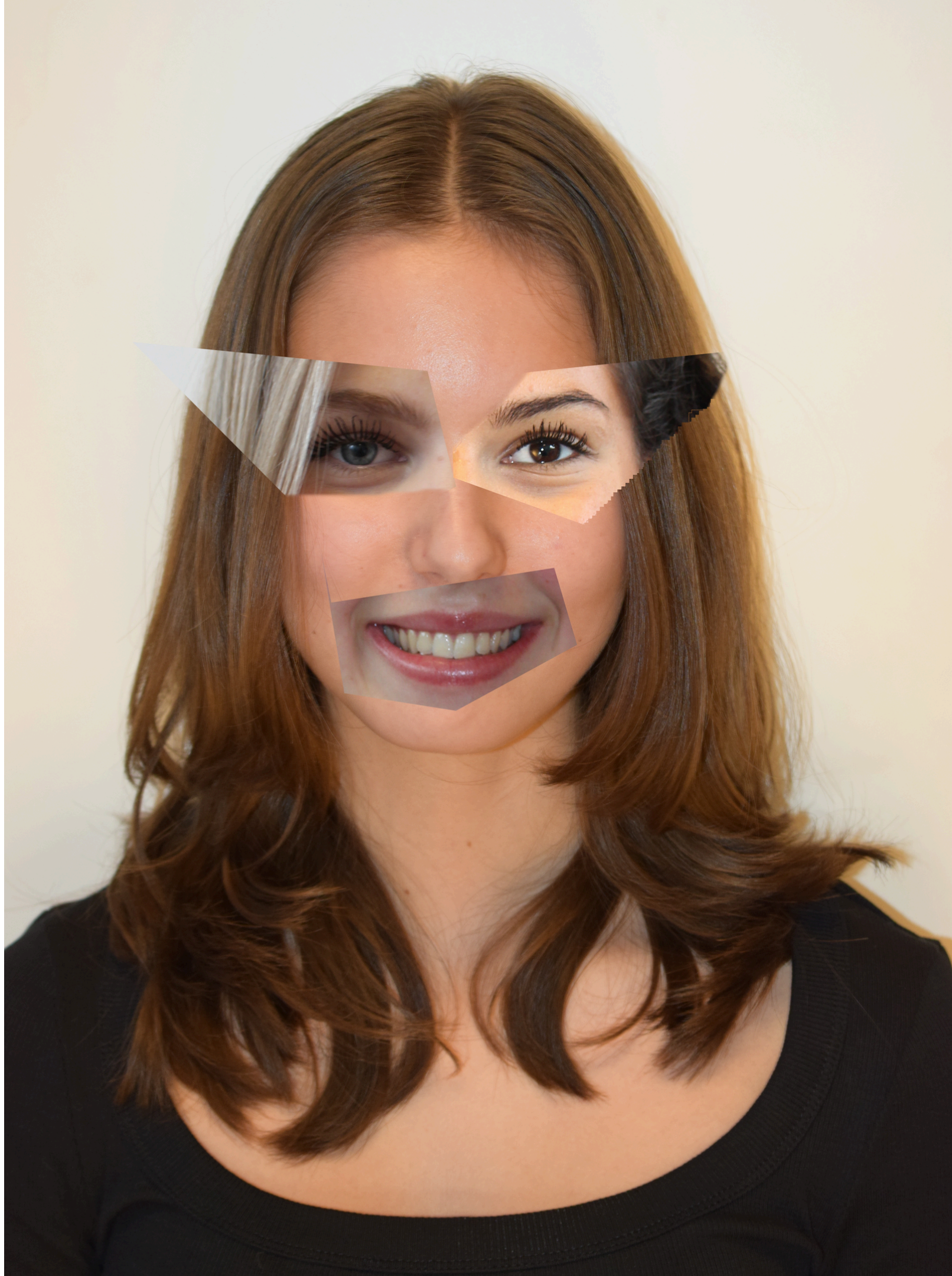
Medium: Photography

Artist Statement:

It is unreasonable that female ideals should be based on resembling a Barbie.

Body Ideal challenges the unrealistic and narrow standards of beauty imposed on women. This piece critiques the pressure to conform to manufactured ideals and highlights the damaging effects of comparison, objectification, and societal expectation.

It is a call for authenticity, self-acceptance, and a broader, more inclusive definition of beauty.



JUNEDAL HIGH SCHOOL

Title: Different but Still Equal

Learners: Elina Johansson, Anna Elvingsson, Klara Sandin, Ellen Rangstig

Medium: Photography

Artist Statement:

The faces of humans can vary greatly, but regardless of our appearance, we are equal.

Different but Still Equal is a celebration of diversity and a reminder of our shared humanity. It calls on viewers to choose love over hate, and in doing so, see the world—and each other—with greater compassion.

When we embrace difference with an open heart, everything and everyone becomes more beautiful.



FRANSCHHOEK HIGH SCHOOL

Title: Surface Value

Learner: Kiara Horne

Medium: Photography

Artist Statement:

This piece critiques society's obsession with surface value and the pressure to conform to physical ideals. The subject, weary of the expectation to "put on a face" to be deemed beautiful, challenges the notion that appearance defines worth.

Through this image, the viewer is invited to reconsider what truly matters: character, talents, and personal achievements. The work suggests that beauty is more than skin deep and calls for a shift away from superficial judgments to a deeper appreciation of individuality and substance.



FRANSCHHOEK HIGH SCHOOL

Title: I Am More Than a Body Type

Learners: Hope Davids & Semihla Mbewu

Medium: Photography

Artist Statement:

This piece explores the pressure young women face to conform to unrealistic beauty standards. One figure represents the internalized struggle—measuring herself against narrow ideals. The other rejects this norm, casting aside the measuring tape as a symbol of defiance and self-liberation.

Through this powerful contrast, the viewer is invited to reflect on how society shapes body image and self-worth. The work is a bold declaration: we are not defined by sizes or shapes, but by the strength it takes to accept ourselves as we are.



FRANSCHHOEK HIGH SCHOOL

Title: The Echo of Agency

Learner:

Medium: Photography

Artist Statement:

Despite the immense progress made in empowering girls to claim their rightful place in educational spaces, an unsettling silence lingers. This work reflects the paradox of empowerment—while girls gain agency, their voices are often marginalized, left unheard in the very places meant to nurture them. The empty hall represents both the physical and metaphorical absence of their voices, a haunting reminder of the work still needed to ensure true inclusion. This piece is a call to action, inviting reflection on the quiet spaces where voices are lost, and asking how we, as a society, can amplify the voices of those who remain unseen.



JUNEDAL HIGH SCHOOL

Title: Silenced

Learners: Seda Özcelik, Sigrid Johansson, Emma Lundqvist, Emma Josefson, Ester Lydén

Medium: Photography

Artist Statement:

In the shadow of the “experienced” voice, my own is stifled. I have so much to say, but no one is listening.

Silenced captures the quiet frustration of being unheard in a world that often values authority over authenticity. It reflects the inner struggle of those whose voices are dismissed or overlooked simply because of their age, background, or perspective.

This piece is a plea—not just to be heard, but to be understood.



FRANSCHHOEK HIGH SCHOOL

Title: LIE

Learner: Lieschen Goliath

Medium: Photography

Artist Statement:

While significant strides have been made in empowering girls within educational spaces, a lingering silence reveals a paradox—girls may have gained agency, but their voices are too often muted. This work highlights the tension between progress and persistence, symbolized by the tape across the girl's mouth and the expression of fear in her eyes.

The image speaks to the emotional and psychological weight of being unheard, even in environments meant to support and nurture. It challenges us to examine how society continues to restrict true expression, and urges us to reconsider the meaning of empowerment if voices remain silenced.



KAYAMANDI HIGH SCHOOL

Title: Challenging the Expectation of Femininity in Fashion

Learner:

Medium: Photography

Artist Statement:

This photo depicts a young woman confidently wearing clothing traditionally associated with masculinity. It boldly asks, "Who said that girls should only wear skirts and dresses?" By embracing fashion as a form of self-expression rather than a gender rule, the image challenges outdated expectations of femininity.

The photograph highlights a growing shift toward inclusivity and individuality, encouraging freedom in how we present ourselves and celebrating style beyond gendered limitations.



STELLENBOSCH HIGH SCHOOL

Title: Bring the Balance

Learner: Martelize Engelbrecht

Medium: Photography

Artist Statement:

This work questions the traditional expectation that women should bear the primary responsibility for the home and childcare. It brings attention to the imbalance that often exists in domestic spaces, where emotional and physical labor is unequally shared.

The image urges viewers to reflect on the importance of equality within the household. By promoting shared responsibility, it envisions a more balanced and respectful dynamic—one where partnership replaces assumption, and fairness shapes the foundation of family life.



STELLENBOSCH HIGH SCHOOL

Title: The Weight Beneath

Learner: Anouk Roeloeffse

Medium: Photography

Artist Statement:

This image confronts the unspoken expectations placed on boys to appear tough and in control at all times. Beneath their outward facade, many young men struggle with the overwhelming pressures of school, sports, family, and social life. The societal demand for boys to maintain composure and suppress their vulnerabilities leaves them quietly battling to cope.

In capturing this struggle, the photograph reflects the invisible emotional burdens carried by boys today, highlighting the need for more open conversations about mental health and emotional expression. It invites viewers to reconsider rigid gender expectations and to recognize the importance of providing support to young men as they navigate life's complexities.



KAYAMANDI HIGH SCHOOL

Title: Breaking Gender Barriers in Mechanics

Learner:

Medium: Photography

Artist Statement:

This image defies traditional gender norms by featuring a young girl confidently fixing a car—an activity often associated with boys and men. Her focused and skilled demeanor challenges the stereotypes surrounding gender and mechanical work.

By highlighting her capability and confidence, the photograph emphasizes the importance of empowering children to pursue their interests and talents regardless of gender. It advocates for a more inclusive understanding of skills and responsibilities, championing gender equality and the celebration of diverse abilities.

$$(4x - 7y)^4$$

$$= \sum_{r=0}^4 \binom{4}{r} (4x)^{n-r} (-7y)^r$$

$$= \binom{4}{0} (4x)^4 + \binom{4}{1} (4x)^3 (-7y)^1 + \binom{4}{2} (4x)^2 (-7y)^2 + \binom{4}{3} (4x)^1 (-7y)^3 + \binom{4}{4} (-7y)^4$$

$$= 256x^4 - 1792x^3y + 4704x^2y^2 - 5488xy^3 + 2401y^4$$

STELLENBOSCH HIGH SCHOOL

Title: $1 + 1 = ?$

Learner: Theunis du Plessis

Medium: Photography

Artist Statement:

This work challenges the stereotype that academic boys must be weak, uninterested in fitness, or disconnected from physical strength. It questions the narrow labels often placed on young men, suggesting that intellect and athleticism are not mutually exclusive.

Through this piece, the viewer is invited to rethink what it means to be “smart” or “strong.” It celebrates the freedom to embrace both body and mind—to be a boy who solves equations and lifts weights, without compromise or judgment.



WELTEVREDE SECONDARY SCHOOL

Title: If Boys Can, Girls Can Too!

Learners: Jordan Nero & Skyler Fortuin

Medium: Photography

Artist Statement:

This work challenges the outdated belief that sports are divided by gender. Through photography, it celebrates the power and presence of girls in traditionally male-dominated sports like soccer, rugby, and hockey. The message is clear: when given equal opportunity, girls can compete, lead, and thrive on the same playing field.



STELLENBOSCH HIGH SCHOOL

Title: Strength

Learner: Divan Toua

Medium: Photography

Artist Statement:

This work challenges the persistent societal norm that views women as weaker or less capable than men. It explores the inequality women face both in everyday life and in professional spaces, where their efforts are often undervalued and undercompensated. From unequal pay to the higher expectations placed on women in physical or demanding tasks, the image reflects the silent burdens many carry.

Through this piece, the viewer is invited to reflect on these normalized injustices and to recognize the resilience and strength women demonstrate daily. It calls for acknowledgment, conversation, and change in a society that too often remains silent in the face of gender inequality.



STELLENBOSCH HIGH SCHOOL

Title: Play the Ball, Not the Victim

Learner: Haydan-Reece Cornelius

Medium: Photography

Artist Statement:

This piece confronts the outdated belief that certain sports—like rugby—are only meant for boys. It sheds light on the gender stereotypes that label the game as too rough, too wild, or too dangerous for girls, reinforcing limitations that discourage many from pursuing their passions.

Through this image, the viewer is encouraged to break free from societal expectations and embrace individuality. It's a call to action: challenge the norm, choose joy over judgment, and be the girl who plays rugby—not because it's allowed, but because it's who you are.



FRANSCHHOEK HIGH SCHOOL

Title: Breaking Boundaries: A Level Playing Field

Learner: Hope Davids, Claython Malgas, Cody Roedolph, Semihla Mbewu

Medium: Photography

Artist Statement:

This artwork explores the intersection of gender and access to sports, highlighting the limitations imposed by traditional gender norms. The focal point is the longing of learners to break free from societal expectations that confine sports participation to specific sexes. Through vivid imagery, the piece challenges the viewer to question why certain sports remain gendered, emphasizing the universal desire for inclusion and equality. It captures the aspirations of youth yearning for the freedom to engage in activities that align with their passions rather than outdated conventions, making a powerful statement about the need for gender inclusivity in sports.



JAKES GERWEL TEGNIES

Title: Girls Love Rugby Too

Learner: Delano Oerson

Medium: Photography

Artist Statement:

This photograph captures a powerful moment where girls are actively playing rugby, boldly breaking gender norms. It sends a clear message: girls can play rugby just as well as boys—while still embracing their femininity.

The image challenges the idea that toughness and athleticism are only for boys, promoting gender equality in sport and encouraging everyone to pursue their passions freely and confidently.



KAYAMANDI HIGH SCHOOL

Title: Celebrating Afro Beauty

Learner:

Medium: Photography

Artist Statement:

This image challenges the societal norm that afro hair is inferior to fair or relaxed hair by proudly showcasing the natural beauty and strength of afro hair. The subject stands with confidence, wearing their afro unapologetically, illustrating that all hair types are equally stunning and worthy of appreciation.

Through this powerful depiction, the photograph promotes self-acceptance, celebrates cultural identity, and encourages a break from conventional beauty standards that often marginalize natural Black hair.



I COVER
MY HAIR
NOT MY
BRAIN

ALFRED DALIN HIGH SCHOOL

Title: My Hijab, My Choice

Learners: Asolde Arbfors, Vanessa Magnusson, Astrid Holstein, Nervin Khorze, Hala Alhafian

Medium: Photography

Artist Statement:

This work confronts the prejudice and discrimination faced by those who choose to wear the hijab. Too often, hijabis endure bullying, hateful stares, and even violence simply for expressing their faith. The image captures the emotional toll of these daily injustices—fear, isolation, and vulnerability—while also asserting strength and self-determination.

My Hijab, My Choice is both a declaration and a demand: a declaration of identity, and a demand for respect. It challenges the viewer to look beyond stereotypes and recognize the courage it takes to remain true to oneself in the face of intolerance. This piece stands in solidarity with all who choose to live their truth, unapologetically.



ALFRED DALIN HIGH SCHOOL

Title: Boundless

Learners: Nour, Dana, Eila, Kaltrina

Medium: Photography

Artist Statement:

When you see someone with curly hair, many people ask if they can feel it.

Boundless highlights the importance of respecting personal boundaries and the need to protect the privacy of others. It challenges the assumption that someone's physical appearance is an invitation for others to cross personal lines.

This piece encourages viewers to consider how simple actions can impact a person's sense of autonomy and privacy, urging respect for individual boundaries.



ALFRED DALIN HIGH SCHOOL

Title: Shame and Silence

Learners: Isabell Soro Shamon, Cecilia Efrem, Alva Clarin

Medium: Photography

Artist Statement:

5% of Sweden's population suffers from some type of diabetes, 8,000 of whom are children—and every year about 900 children are diagnosed with the disease. Despite how common diabetes is, many feel ashamed to show they have it. This shame stems from offensive words, ignorant comments, and persistent stigmatization.

From being told to cover vital medical devices so as not to make others uncomfortable, to receiving misguided advice from those with no real knowledge, people with diabetes are too often made to feel like their condition is something to hide.

Shame and Silence gives visibility to this hidden burden. It confronts the emotional and social impact of living with diabetes and demands empathy, education, and respect. It is a call to break the silence, challenge the stigma, and affirm the right to live openly and confidently with a chronic illness.



JUNEDAL HIGH SCHOOL

Title: You're Not Even Trying!

Learners: Nova Olofsson, Sofia Arvidsson, Stella Andersson

Medium: Photography

Artist Statement:

People with ADHD often hear comments like “you’re not even trying,” simply because they struggle to focus differently than others.

You're Not Even Trying! sheds light on the frustration and emotional toll of being misunderstood. It challenges the misconception that difficulty focusing equals laziness or lack of effort.

This piece advocates for empathy and awareness—reminding us that invisible challenges deserve just as much understanding as visible ones.



ALFRED DALIN HIGH SCHOOL

Title: Seeing Words in a New Way

Learners: Isak Sjöqvist Grandt, Frank Forssen, Teo Solmaz

Medium: Photography

Artist Statement:

Dyslexia is a learning disability that affects reading and writing skills. This can lead to great frustration and low self-esteem.

Seeing Words in a New Way aims to raise awareness about dyslexia and the importance of support. Without the right help, individuals with dyslexia risk falling behind and not reaching their full potential. This piece emphasizes that there is help available and that with the right tools and understanding, those with dyslexia can find their own way to succeed.



BERGRIVER SECONDARY SCHOOL

Title: Friends ...

Learners: Jeandre September & Lee-Haygin Adams

Medium: Photography

Artist Statement:

This piece captures the delicate and often misunderstood nature of friendships. The image suggests a moment of connection, where shared experiences and understanding bond individuals together. However, within this closeness lies a subtle vulnerability—a reminder that friendships, while built on trust, can be fragile.

Through this work, the viewer is prompted to reflect on the complex dynamics of friendship and the moments when the line between support and competition can blur.



BERGRIVER SECONDARY SCHOOL

Title: ...Can Become Enemies

Learners: Jeandre September & Lee-Haygin Adams

Medium: Photography

Artist Statement:

This image explores the darker side of human relationships, where friends may evolve into rivals or enemies. The shift from unity to conflict is symbolized by the stark contrast in the imagery, highlighting the emotional distance that can form.

The piece speaks to the pain and complexity of broken relationships, challenging the viewer to consider how easily trust can be fractured and how quickly familiarity can turn to resentment. It serves as a reflection on the fragility of human bonds and the impact of betrayal or miscommunication.



KAYAMANDI HIGH SCHOOL

Title: Courage Against Bullying

Learner:

Medium: Photography

Artist Statement:

This powerful image captures a small boy standing defiantly in the face of a more muscular boy who attempts to intimidate him. The smaller boy's determined expression and stance challenge the norm that bigger boys will bully others. The picture sends a strong message that it is not only acceptable but commendable to stand up for oneself against bullies

By promoting a culture of courage and self-respect, the photograph encourages viewers to resist intimidation and to assert their dignity—regardless of size or strength—while questioning power dynamics that enable bullying.



BERGRIVER SECONDARY SCHOOL

Title: No More

Learner: Samarah Sampson

Medium: Photography

Artist Statement:

This piece calls for an end to violence and abuse, urging us to speak up and take action. The image powerfully conveys the need for unity in standing against injustice. It serves as a reminder that silence only perpetuates harm, and only by coming together can we hope to create a safer, more compassionate world.

Through this work, the viewer is invited to reflect on their role in breaking the cycle of abuse—whether through speaking out, offering support, or simply standing in solidarity with those affected. It is a call to action: No more violence. No more silence.



SOMERSET HIGH SCHOOL

Title: Bullying

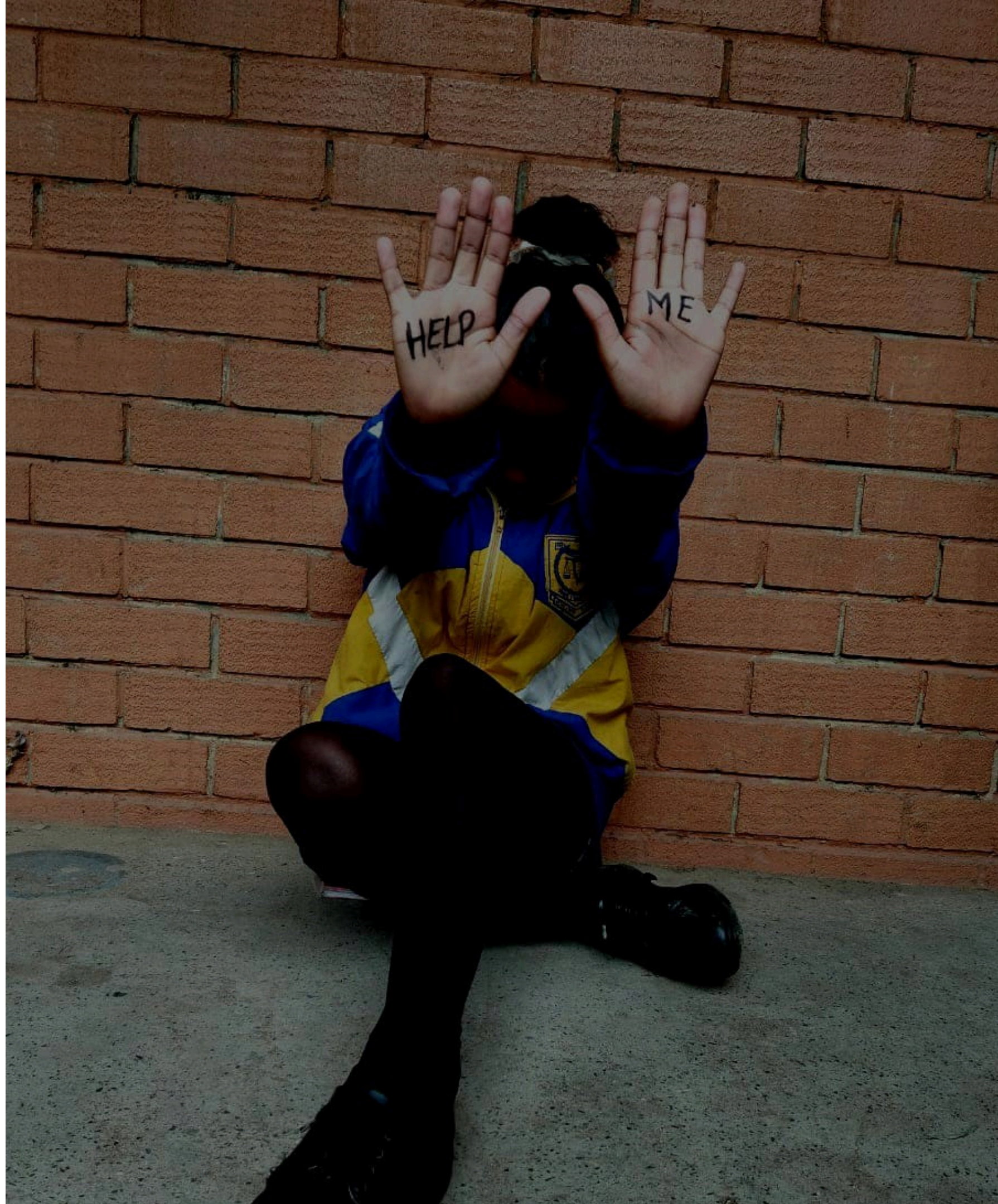
Learners: Kwakhanya Plaatjie & Tapfumaneyi Mpariwa

Medium: Photography

Artist Statement:

This piece addresses the alarming normalization of bullying in today's society. It highlights how many learners have become so accustomed to mistreatment that they struggle to recognize it as bullying. The silent damage caused by these everyday acts can lead to serious emotional distress, self-harm, and even loss of life.

Through this image, the viewer is urged to confront the often-overlooked realities of bullying and its deep psychological impact. It serves as a powerful reminder that awareness, empathy, and intervention are essential to breaking this cycle and creating safer, more supportive spaces for all.



BERGRIVIER SECONDARY SCHOOL

Title: End Human Trafficking

Learner: Renique Franse

Medium: Photography

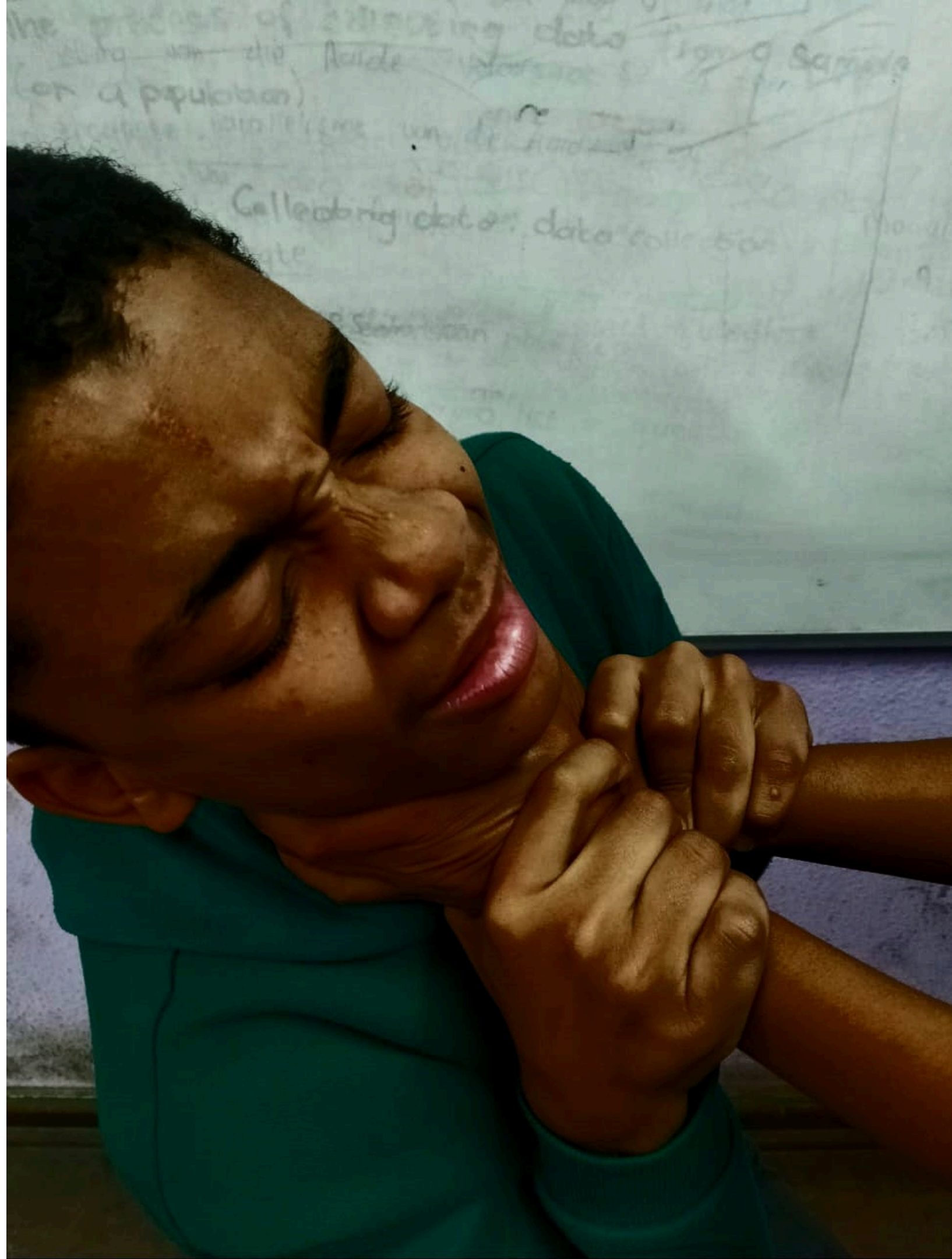
Artist Statement:

Stop human trafficking. We must remain vigilant when it comes to strangers and situations that could be dangerous.

This photograph aims to raise awareness about the importance of hand signals or subtle messages that individuals can use in moments of distress, particularly if they find themselves in a human trafficking situation. These hand signals can be a vital tool for discreetly communicating that someone is in danger, especially when speaking out loud isn't an option.

While the gesture in this image is not one specific signal, there are various hand signals that can be used to indicate distress. One example of a well-known signal involves placing the thumb of one hand in the palm of the other, then closing the fingers over the thumb, making a fist. It's essential that we all familiarize ourselves with these signals so we can recognize when someone may need help.

By educating ourselves and others, we can play a crucial role in helping to prevent human trafficking and protect vulnerable individuals.



BERGRIVIER SECONDARY SCHOOL

Title: Stop Abusing Our Children

Learner: Jordon Langeveldt

Medium: Photography

Artist Statement:

Abuse no more. Innocent children are often the victims of various forms of abuse—emotional, physical, and sexual.

Abuse leaves deep scars, causing lasting trauma and pain that affects not only the child but society as a whole.

This image serves as a powerful reminder that we must protect the most vulnerable in our communities—our children. It's time to take a stand and ensure that no child has to suffer in silence.



END
RACISM

WE
ARE
EQUAL!!

JUSTICE
FOR ALL

ASHTON SECONDARY SCHOOL

Title: Unity

Learner: Nathan Sylvester

Medium: Photography

Artist Statement:

Racism and segregation deny a fundamental truth: that all people are created equal in the image of God.

These forces divide communities, fuel injustice, and leave deep emotional scars.

This piece calls on us to reject hate, confront prejudice, and choose unity over division. True strength lies in our ability to stand together—with dignity, respect, and love for every human being.



ALFRED DALIN HIGH SCHOOL

Title: One Step Back for Two Steps Forward

Learners: Theo, Dimitris, Ebbe, Ahmad, Alexander, Ali, Cristiano, Andro, Ninos

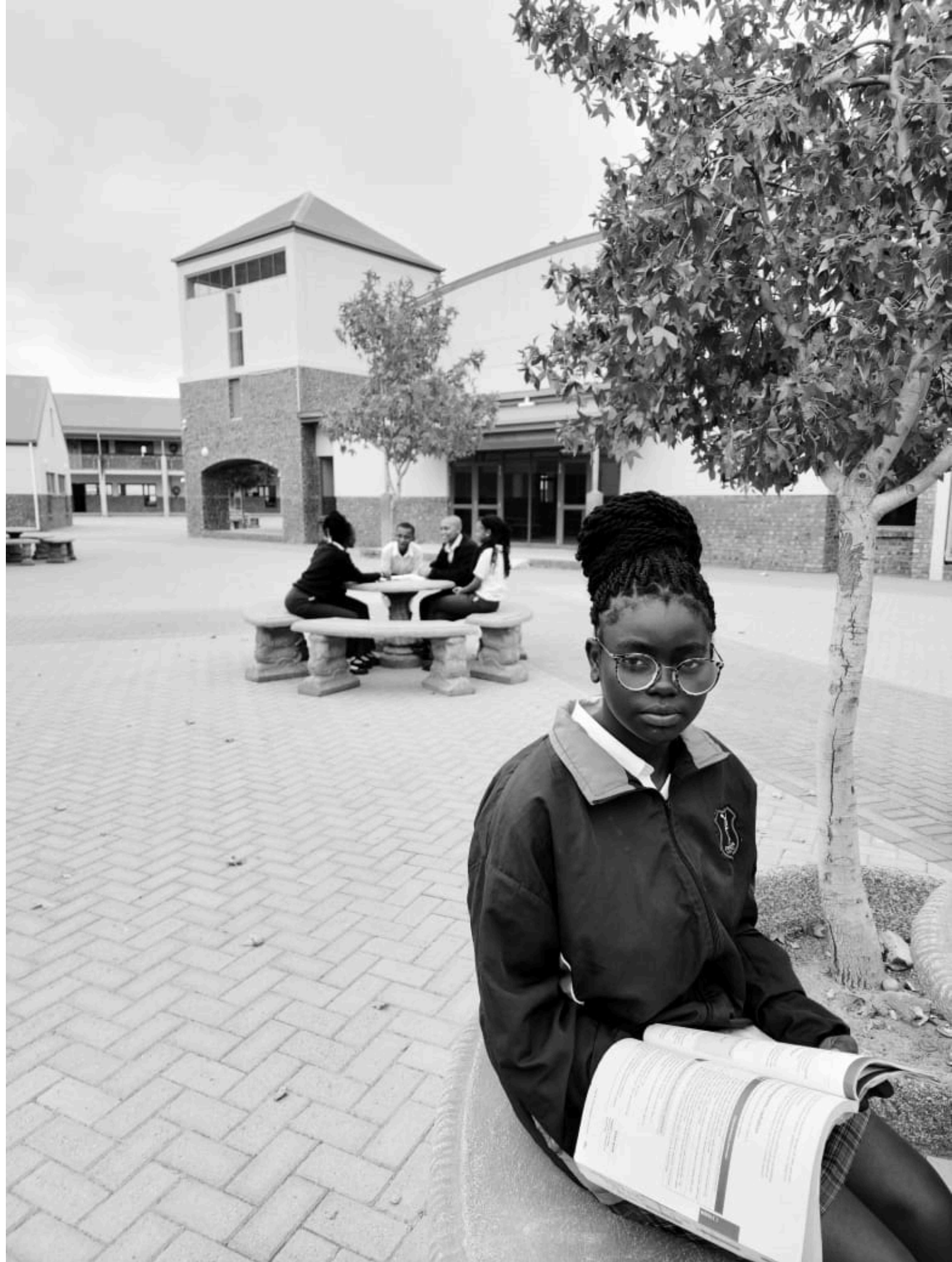
Medium: Photography

Artist Statement:

In life, we are often faced with difficult choices that shape our future. Choosing the right path—rather than the easiest—is crucial.

One Step Back for Two Steps Forward addresses the growing issue of youth involvement in gang crime, often driven by the allure of money and power. It highlights the harsh reality that once entangled, breaking free becomes incredibly difficult.

This piece urges young people to pause, reflect, and make conscious choices. Sometimes stepping back is the most courageous act—especially when it leads to a better future.



ZWELETHEMBA HIGH SCHOOL

Title: Foreign No More

Learner: Mhlali Tomose

Medium: Photography

Artist Statement:

This image explores the emotional journey of overcoming the feeling of being an outsider. It highlights the courage it takes to adapt to a new culture, find belonging, and grow in a once unfamiliar environment.

The photograph also speaks out against xenophobia—challenging the fear or rejection of foreigners—and calls for empathy, inclusion, and the celebration of cultural diversity. It reminds us that when communities embrace newcomers, everyone thrives.



SOMERSET HIGH SCHOOL

Title: Accept Us

Learners:

Medium: Photography

Artist Statement:

This piece sheds light on the diverse realities children face—from cultural backgrounds to economic challenges. Whether wearing no shoes, new shoes, or worn-out ones, these learners show incredible resilience by choosing education despite the judgment, teasing, or exclusion they may face.

The image is a plea for empathy and inclusion. It reminds us that beyond appearances and circumstances, every child shares the same hope: to belong. Accept Us challenges the viewer to look past surface differences and embrace the humanity in everyone. Acceptance, after all, is something we all deserve—and something we can all give.



ALFRED DALIN HIGH SCHOOL

Title: Go Your Own Way

Learners: Leia Bilanovic, Anonym ("Moonlight")

Medium: Photography

Artist Statement:

Go Your Own Way emphasizes the importance of embracing individuality and making choices that align with your personal path, even when they are not easily accepted by others.

This piece celebrates the courage to choose authenticity over conformity, encouraging viewers to pursue their own vision despite societal pressure.



CERES SECONDARY SCHOOL

Title: Include Everyone

Learner: Zandre Williams

Medium: Photography

Artist Statement:

This image reminds us how important it is to respect the beliefs and religions of others. It shows that true inclusion begins when we take the time to understand one another and create space for everyone—even in something as everyday as a study group.

The photo carries a clear message: diversity is a strength. By including everyone, we build a more connected, understanding, and just community.



ALFRED DALIN HIGH SCHOOL

Title: Holding Hands

Learners: Nour, Dana, Eila, Kaltrina, Willex, Sam

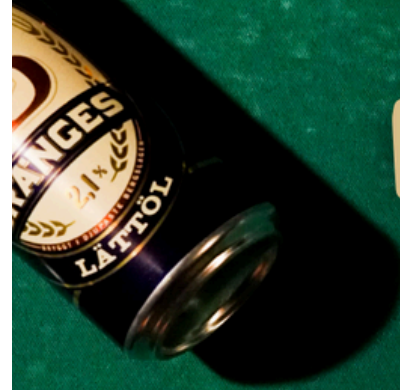
Medium: Photography

Artist Statement:

You should be able to choose who you want to hold your hand with.

Holding Hands explores the freedom of choice in relationships, challenging societal norms and expectations. It emphasizes the right of every individual to decide who they connect with, both emotionally and physically.

This piece advocates for love and connection without limitations, encouraging personal autonomy and the celebration of diverse relationships.



JUNEDAL HIGH SCHOOL

Title: Huh! Haven't You Tried It?

Learners: Adriano Karo, Olle Johansson, Erik Svensson Coelho, Doung Khanh Do, Mohamed Aden

Medium: Photography

Artist Statement:

It starts with a laugh, maybe a raised eyebrow or a comment that seems harmless. Then suddenly, you're standing there with something in your hand you never planned to try. The group watches, waiting. The room feels still.

Is it curiosity guiding you—or simply the fear of saying no?

Huh! Haven't You Tried It? explores the quiet pressure of social conformity, especially among youth. It captures the moment where personal boundaries are tested, and the internal conflict between belonging and self-trust becomes palpable.

This piece challenges viewers to reflect on the subtle ways peer pressure manifests and the strength it takes to stand by your own choices when the world is watching.



PAULUS JOUBERT SECONDARY SCHOOL

Title: Say No to Substance Abuse

Learners: Breadon Booysen & Nithaam Revelle

Medium: Photography

Artist Statement:

This photograph highlights a critical issue many learners face: peer pressure to use drugs or nicotine products. The image captures a moment of decision, encouraging students to make healthy choices and stand firm against harmful influences.

It sends a strong message—saying “no” is not weakness, but courage. The artwork promotes awareness and resilience, reminding us that our future is shaped by the choices we make today.



BERGRIVIER SECONDARY SCHOOL

Title: SAY NO TO DRUGS

Learner: Raynito Finish

Medium: Photography

Artist Statement:

Say no to drugs. Many of our family members and friends are trapped in cycles of drug and alcohol abuse. It often starts small—but the consequences can be devastating.

The message is simple but powerful: don't do it.

Make the choice to live clean, stay focused, and build a better future.

It starts with us.

Say no to drugs—for yourself, and for the people who love you.



STELLENBOSCH HIGH SCHOOL

Title: Not So Normal

Learner: Ruben Sander

Medium: Photography

Artist Statement:

This piece explores the growing normalization of excessive social media use and its quiet yet powerful impact on our lives. What once was a tool for connection has become a major distraction—pulling focus from academics, goals, and real-world experiences.

Through this image, the viewer is encouraged to reflect on how much time is given away to scrolling and screens. It calls for a reset—a chance to reclaim our attention, our purpose, and our time in a culture that too often values online presence over personal growth.



CERES SECONDARY SCHOOL

Title: Koester Mekaar

Learner: Jamie Amos

Medium: Photography

Artist Statement:

This image reminds us not to place technology and social media above the people closest to us. It shows how quickly time passes and how easily we neglect one another in the process. The photo calls on us to refocus on our relationships and to be truly present with the people we love. It carries a simple but powerful message: Cherish one another—before it's too late.



JAKES GERWEL TEGNIES

Title: Receptionist

Learner: Rozaan Oktober

Medium: Photography

Artist Statement:

In this photograph, a young boy confidently steps into a role traditionally seen as a job for girls—working as a receptionist. Using his strong communication skills, he sees himself as a valuable asset who can bridge the gap between a company and its clients to ensure excellent service.

The image challenges gendered perceptions of certain careers and inspires others to pursue their passions without limits. It reminds us that you can become whatever your heart desires, regardless of societal expectations.



KAYAMANDI HIGH SCHOOL

Title: Redefining Male Friendships

Learner:

Medium: Photography

Artist Statement:

This image challenges the traditional norm that male friendships are emotionally distant by portraying two boys sitting together during lunchtime, comfortably engaged in meaningful conversation. Their ease and connection highlight a powerful message: emotional expression and deep bonds are just as important for boys.

By showcasing this moment, the photograph encourages a shift away from rigid stereotypes surrounding masculinity and promotes healthier, more authentic relationships among young men.



ZWELETHEMBA HIGH SCHOOL

Title: Don't Let Your Race Determine Your Career Choices

Learner: Mhlali Tomose

Medium: Photography

Artist Statement:

This powerful image challenges the racial and social barriers that often shape the career paths of people of colour. It highlights how systemic inequality frequently pushes individuals toward “safe” and stable careers—choices often driven not by passion, but by economic necessity and societal expectation.

By acknowledging how race and social class intersect to influence opportunities, the photograph encourages a shift toward empowerment and self-determination. It's a call to action: pursue your passion, break free from imposed limits, and redefine success on your own terms.