

**Prof 'Funmi Olonisakin**

## **Interview**

**What does a world where girls don't have to worry about their general security look like to you?**

In that kind of world, there are real extra ordinary possibilities because it is a world where the society is pulling together to address common security and common development challenges. Where we are not just getting a fragment of the efforts of that society. This present world which girls are short changed in so many ways because they have to worry about security concerns. They make different choices in terms of the development, there is a limit to the kinds of participation they can have, either in particular spaces, particular professions because they have to have security considerations. This is in terms of personal security and the security challenges that are created by structural violence where the average girl is not seen as an equal citizen or even if is seen by law as an equal citizen, is not treated as an equal citizen. It will be a world in which the society is doing that much better than now, because right now only a limited aspect of our efforts is taken into consideration. The security establishments and institutions will also look different, because in that world the security institutions are authentically leveraging the efforts of male and female sides of society. That will be a brand new world.

**What do you think we need to do for girls today to change the women they will be tomorrow?**

What we need to do today, even in our generations today, we need to work with those girls to make different choices notwithstanding inequalities in society today, to make different choices about profession, how they participate, we should help them (girls) expand their thinking in ways that they consciously and we consciously are supporting them to overcome gender stereotypes. They will invariably be present in every realm of society, they will not just be present in places where there are constructed gender roles, they will be doing different things, and they will not naturally expect that their role in society is to be lower than the males, that there are particular roles not for them. They will be present in so many spaces, e.g. defense spaces. Spaces that today have been constructed for male and that actually will mean that we will expect in future different constituency of women.

**One thing you think every adolescent girl should know**

Thinking back to some of the things I thought as an adolescent, there are two things I think:

- 1) That the generation before them, adults don't have all the answers which means they can think creatively about how to make the world a better place. Come up with the solutions rather than see themselves as sharp opposites to present.
- 2) About the new possibilities that they can create by being different and thinking outside the box. Not sure exactly what that translates into, but the idea that adults don't have answers to every other problems and that they themselves can contribute should provide

solutions rather than see the next generation as the one that doesn't get them or doesn't disturb them

**One thing you think every adolescent girl should have access to**

Being able to have access to information, different kinds of information, that would help them to govern their personal spaces including their bodies and also information that helps them understand how their environment is governed even as young as they are. Can place them in such good places, In good stead and help prepare them for the life that is ahead. Having access to that information has technology dimensions, it has dimensions of adults also creating spaces in which adolescents need to be part of situations when they make decisions that affect the futures of these people.

Sometimes there is curtailment from a whole range of things. Curtailed by laws, religion, parental methods of interaction...etc..

***Do you think adolescents curtail these for themselves?***

At that age, they might still be open to accommodate different ways of being. Any curtailment that happens is because of environments and spaces they have been introduced to. It's a moment and its apart of life where u can still mould them into becoming...a set values and norms and whatever occupies the space and mind of environment they grow up is what has the most impact then.