

## Part A - General Information

### Charity Name

Lifting Limits

### Charity Type/Structure

Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO)

### Charity Registration Number

1187603

### Project Name (if same as Charity Name, please leave this blank)

Lifting Limits

### Lead Contact

Caren Gestetner

### Email

[careen@liftinglimits.org.uk](mailto:careen@liftinglimits.org.uk)

### Phone

07771 904 138

### Website

<http://www.liftinglimits.org.uk>

### Social media handles (Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, Instagram etc):

<https://twitter.com/LiftingLimitsUK>

<https://www.facebook.com/Lifting-Limits-463486700776546/>

## Part B - Project Proposal

### Project Mission: A snapshot of the project's intention (50 words max)

Lifting Limits' mission is to challenge gender stereotyping in and through education. A root cause of gender inequality, stereotypes limit children's choices, aspirations and outcomes. At scale, our programme will drive social change: intervening early to transform practice, develop critical thinking and impact outcomes across large numbers of primary schools.

### Situation (250 words)

Gender stereotypes surround children in every aspect of their lives, creating and entrenching inequalities. The clothes they are dressed in, the toys they are given to play with, the language we use to speak to them, books, TV, films and games, all bombard children with messages about appropriate roles for girls and boys, men and women. Gendered messages feed children's understanding of the world and set expectations for their place in it.

It matters because:

Stereotyping limits children in school: it limits girls' participation in certain science subjects (girls take 23% of Physics and 12% of Computing A-levels); boys' literacy achievement; and what children want to be 'when they grow up'. It affects behaviour: girls learn to please, boys to 'play rough', and sexual harassment and violence abound – 37% of girls at mixed secondary schools experience sexual harassment at school and even at primary school level 17% of teachers have witnessed sexual harassment in school.

Beyond school, stereotyping affects workplace and health outcomes: a 14% gender pay gap for full time workers and only 12 women CEOs in the FTSE 350. Only 11% of nurses are male and under 10% of engineering professionals are women. Men account for 75% of suicides and 1 in 4 women (in the UK) suffers domestic violence, which has escalated during the Covid crisis. The pandemic has thrown gendered inequalities into sharp relief, with women bearing the brunt of increased domestic work, home-schooling and childcare, whilst under-represented in decision making roles and over-represented in high-risk caring roles.

Gender stereotyping feeds unequal outcomes which are bad for individuals – boys/men and girls/women – and for society.

For references visit <https://www.liftinglimits.org.uk/why-it-matters/>.

### Complication (250 words)

Gender stereotyping does not stay outside the school gates. Far from being challenged, stereotypes are often “unthinkingly exacerbated” in schools, for example: in the curriculum (where (white) men dominate); in books (where male characters dominate adventurous roles and have 50% more speaking parts); in language (‘man up’ and ‘boys will be boys’) and in unconscious bias in staff (asking boys to move chairs and girls to tidy up). “She’s so organised, she could make someone a great PA one day” (teacher, London primary school parents’ evening 2018).

A wide range of authoritative evidence points to the need for a ‘whole school approach’ challenging gender cultures, starting at primary school. Early intervention is key – gender norms become fixed between the ages of 8-10, so primary schools have a critical role to play.

Although this need has been long identified there has been little done to address it systematically at a grassroots level. This complex, emotive, highly current issue has so far been left up to individual teachers to tackle, with little expert guidance available.

The time is now: schools see the need to address stereotyping and there is growing enthusiasm in the sector for a systematic approach. That is why we created an evidence based whole school approach, with a comprehensive package of training and resources, to support schools, staff, pupils and parents to challenge gender stereotyping and head off its limiting effects on children. Our work tackles inequality at the grassroots.

For evidence sources visit <https://www.liftinglimits.org.uk/evidence-and-sources/>.

### Solution (250 words)

Our whole school programme provides schools with highly practical support in recognising and addressing gender stereotyping in the school environment and empowering their pupils to think critically about and challenge stereotyping wherever they encounter it. We offer a gender audit, from book corners to classroom and playground language, from policies to who is taught on the curriculum. We provide training to give school staff the awareness and knowledge they need. We provide comprehensive practical teaching tools interweaving gender equality objectives with National Curriculum objectives: 80+ lesson plans covering 12 subject areas, assemblies, discussion cards, a Role Models poster series, book lists, language guide and more. We offer workshops and resources for families.

It works! Throughout the school year 2018-19 we ran a pilot, testing our approach in 5 Camden primary schools. Reaching 270 educators and 1,900 pupils, independent evaluation of the pilot demonstrated significant impact for staff, pupils and the whole school environment – impact report at [www.liftinglimits.org.uk/pilot-evaluation](http://www.liftinglimits.org.uk/pilot-evaluation).

Driving social change is our purpose. While we continue to enrol new schools to our programme, we are focused on developing a version of our programme that can be rolled out to large numbers of schools at the same time: accessing schools via the ‘middle tier’ of local authorities and multi-academy trusts and developing their internal capacity to deliver our initial core staff training themselves. We aim to have a model ready to ‘soft test’ with 2 large school networks, delivering centralised training in autumn 2021 and starting in schools in January 2022.

## Part C - Wider Support

### How would the Stephen Lloyd Award network of partners' support be beneficial to your project? (250 words max)

Securing the funding to develop our project is a crucial step in progressing our work. We are fortunate in having brilliant Trustees and advisers and access to experts in the education world who we can call upon.

However, we do not underestimate the complexity of the task ahead and would particularly value strategic business and communications advice from the Awards community as we develop our scalable model, especially in the following areas:

Business/Financial:

Helping us cost and adapt our model so that it meets the needs of schools and their budgets whilst generating income  
Helping us develop a viable business model for wider roll-out that reflects our mission

Challenging us to be entrepreneurial, to be flexible and ahead of the curve, while remaining true to our mission and charitable purposes

Helping us identify what we don't yet know – and need to

Marketing/Communications/Policy:

Finessing our 'storytelling' to capture the interest of multi-academy trusts, local authorities and other middle tier organisations

Advice on how we make inroads with policy makers to influence policy

Beyond the project, given the wealth of expertise in the Awards community, we would also value broader organisational support in the following areas:

Having recently obtained charitable status, testing our processes to ensure outstanding governance and strategically expanding our board to fill identified skills gaps

Mentoring to support our leadership in growing the organisation

Fundraising advice, helping us devise a multi-channel fundraising campaign and plan for long term financial viability.

#### **Part D - Financial Justification**

**In general terms, please explain how the funding would be used to carry out your project. (50 words max)**

The funding would give us capacity and time to develop the project by funding a Head of Education (0.4 FTE). This will not only bring valuable expertise to project development but also free up our Chief Executive's capacity to focus on scaling.

#### **Part E - Supporting Information**

**Governing Documents: Where relevant, please upload any recent charity accounts and governing documents as attachments.**

- [Company-Accounts-2018-19-Lifting-Limits.docx](#)

**Team: We would like to learn a little more about the individual or team invested into the project. What are your individual credentials? Is there a story behind how you or your team all came together to support the project? (75 words max)**

A shared passion for gender equality brought the founders together. Caren Gestetner was a lawyer before taking an MSc in Gender, Policy and Inequalities at LSE, focussing on the impact of stereotyping in education - inspired in part by her own children's primary school experiences. Rachel Hermer's professional background was in policy at the BBC and she has been an active school governor for over 8 years, including as Chair of Governors.

#### **YouTube Video**

N/A

**Supporting statements: We also encourage you to make contact with any awards supporters listed here via the link above, whom you already have a relationship with and ask them for supporting statements. Please don't contact supporters unless you know them and they would be in a position to support your application.**

- [SLA-supporting-statement-for-Lifting-Limits-1965.docx](#)

**Additional References: You are welcome to provide a list of up to 5 links with relevant supporting material as further reference.**

<https://www.theguardian.com/education/2019/nov/12/clean-five-schools-of-sexism-teachers-pupils-gender-equality>  
<https://www.liftinglimits.org.uk/pilot-evaluation/>

(Professor Gina Rippon, Professor Emeritus of Cognitive Neuroimaging, Aston University)

<http://camdennewjournal.com/article/schools-audit-on-gender-stereotyping?sp=1&sq=gender%2520audit>