

Hello, My name is Jo Gowers and I'm the Women's Officer for the National Union of Students- Union of Students in Ireland- NUS-USI.

Firstly I'd like to thank those at Reclaim the Agenda who asked me to speak here today, it is such a huge honour for me. It means so much because International Women's Day 2015 was my first ever rally and first event I attended after my election to this post.

I was overwhelmed by the atmosphere at the rally, an atmosphere of celebration, of pride and of sisterhood. It was beyond inspiring to be surrounded by incredible Women activists, many of those here now, who are all trying to make a difference. Together we have made a difference. Together we will continue to fight for Women to have better, safer and more equal lives. International Women's Day is the perfect opportunity to reflect on how far those before us have come, and how far we still have to go.

And Sisters, Brothers and Allies, we still have far to go.

The theme of events for International Women's Day this year is Women Reclaim the 1916 Agenda. I believe this is to honour those who came before us those in the Uprising, in the First World War, in the Labour Movement, in our fight for Suffrage and in our fight to be treated equally.

As a student and Woman of Colour, I see daily how our contributions as women, especially women with multiple identities are edited out of history and education. I see that our contributions, our involvement and our very real impact is overwritten. I see history as we are told is far too male, far too white, far too straight and far too privileged. I say not anymore.

I say it is not enough that we are only being taught what white men have written, what white men have done and what white men have said.

I say it's not good enough that our stories have not been told- stories of oppression, stories of sacrifice and stories of sisterhood.

I say, no I demand for our education and our lives be liberated.

A liberated education goes beyond our academic sources and course content. It means an environment where sexual harassment is not seen as normal, acceptable and part of college or university experience.

One where sexism, homophobia, racism, ableism and other forms of oppression aren't justified as banter.

As activists in the Women's movement we need to continue working to support Women students, in creating a future of equality.

And as Women activists in the Student Movement, we will continue to support the Women's movement. We will march to reclaim the night, we will fight with our vote to see more women's voices heard and we will trust women to make decisions about their own bodies.

I am incredibly proud to be here today representing students, I have worked with some of the most outstanding feminist activists this year, both within the Student movement and the Women's movement. Each day I have been inspired by the work, dedication and support activists have shown by fighting for real change and to make a real difference.

So please take today, International Women's day to recognise those amazing Women in your lives and thank them by helping us create a better and more equal future and fight the oppression we face daily.

In that vein I'd like to quickly pay tribute to the most incredible woman I know- my mother. I can quite literally say I wouldn't be here without her and I'd like to thank her for being the woman she is, and helping me become the woman I am today. Thank you, and have an amazing international Women's day.