



Case Study


GIVING BLACK GIRLS A VISUAL VOICE

Themes: branding, messaging, consultant management, and project management

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Overview

In November 2019 and in anticipation of the 2020 election, Girls for Gender Equity (GGE) is centering the needs of cisgender (cis) and transgender (trans) Black girls and gender nonconforming (GNC) Black youth. A National Agenda for Black Girls (NABG) is a collaborative project bringing the needs of Black girls to the national stage and amplifying the voices of Black girls in the 2020 elections by engaging organizations across the United States who are committed to the well-being of Black girls.

A National Agenda includes six national policy priorities that were informed by the experiences and self-identified needs of Black girls across the United States. Black girls are centered in this agenda, because we understand that when we center the most marginalized among us, it benefits those around us.

The campaign needed to speak to a variety of audiences: the young people on its Steering Committee, young people who may be interested in following the campaign, mission-aligned organizations that may support and amplify the work, policymakers, funders, and the presidential hopefuls themselves. It was critical that the branding of this campaign substantively reflect and communicate not only the project's mission, but the young people who power it.



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Challenges

The A National Agenda for Black Girls (NABG) project is GGE's first national initiative, and it was designed to communicate a variety of lived experiences of Black youth. The Youth Steering Committee, which consists of 15 young people from six partner organizations across the country, are the heart of the campaign. As the digital communications lead, I was responsible for building a brand and platform for the project that represented them. I identified two key challenges:

1. We needed to create a branding package and digital assets that inspire and motivate audiences to action, while also communicating how serious the stakes are for Black girls in the USA right now.
2. It was imperative to center Black youth across the girlhood spectrum and portray them with the full extent of their humanity. NABG countered harmful narratives around Black girls based in adultification bias, hyper sexualization, and a general devaluing of their humanity.
3. It was necessary to elevate the Girls for Gender Equity brand through this work. We needed to continue to build our share of voice and brand recognition.



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Solutions

I decided the initiative required its own branding (colors, fonts, logo, etc.), a microsite, email templates, and a package of shareable social templates to be used by us and any partners who were amplifying the work. Deciphering what that branding needed to look like would require input from young people and long-standing GGE staff.

Girls for Gender Equity has worked with young people for nearly two decades. In my time at the organization, I have led feedback surveys to collect data on how young people and GGE staff think about, understand, and experience GGE's brand. This was primarily done as data collection for a larger organizational rebrand, but was also very informative for the NABG branding process. Based on the feedback received, I determined that the initiative needed to feel like a GGE project and communicate GGE's values, but to have its own visual identity. Young people and staff were eager for a new, livelier color palette and more dynamic branding.

After meeting with a couple of design and communications firms, I offered a contract to Tara Dowdell Group, a Black woman-founded and led consulting firm, to translate our vision into a reality.



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Solutions: Branding

Working with the team at Tara Dowdell Group, we landed on key language we wanted to build the branding around:

- Dynamic
- Diverse
- Inspiring
- Inclusive
- Informed
- Holistic
- Youthful
- Empowered
- Accessible

Ultimately we developed a color palette, logo, and series of images that uplifted and honored Black girlhood.

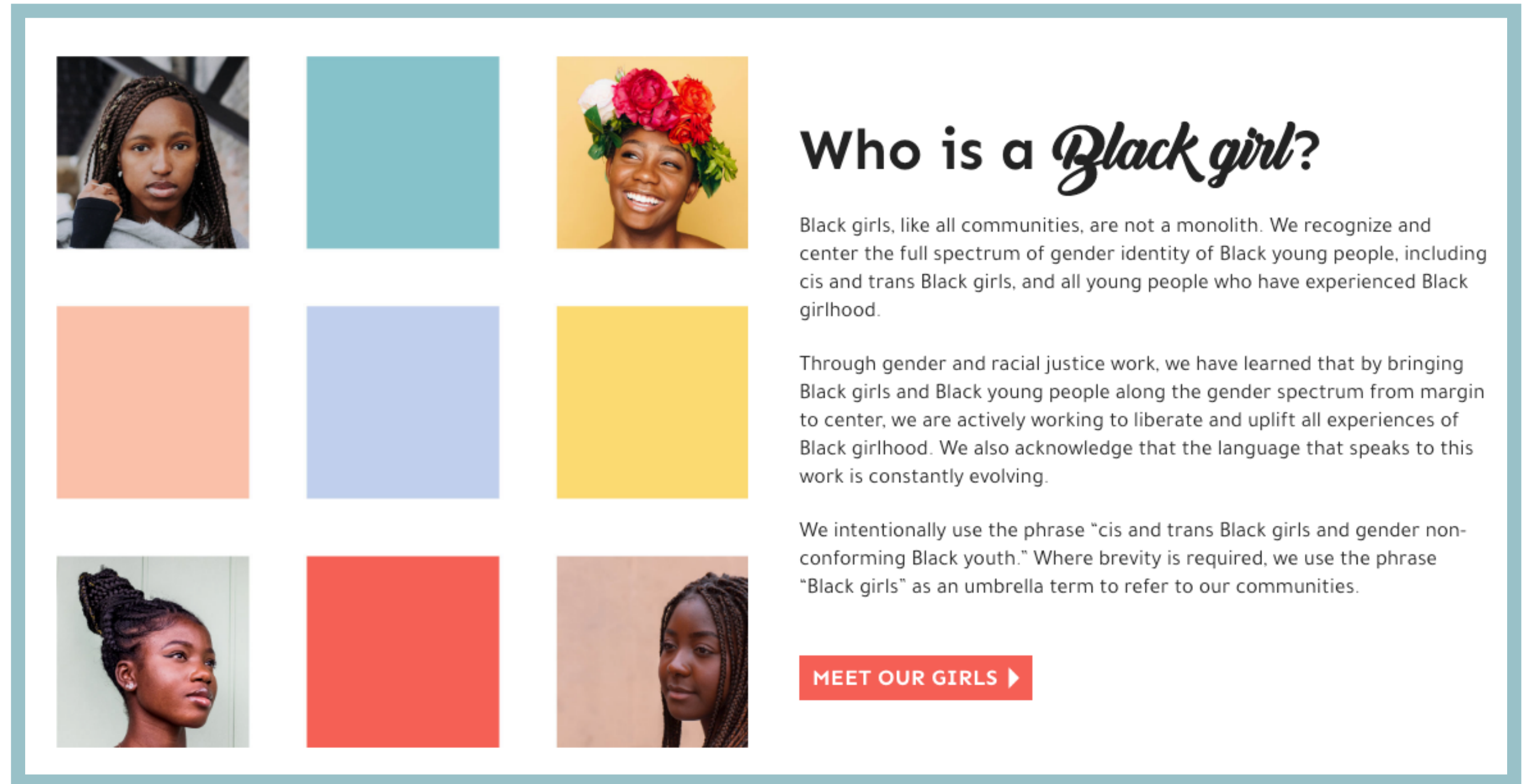


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Solutions: Website

Visit BlackGirls2020.com to explore more of the NABG microsite.



The screenshot displays a website layout with a grid of six portraits of Black girls, each accompanied by a solid color swatch. The portraits are arranged in two rows of three. The top row features a girl with braids, a teal swatch, and a girl with a floral headpiece. The middle row consists of three solid color swatches: peach, light blue, and yellow. The bottom row shows a girl with braids, a red swatch, and another girl with braids. To the right of the grid is a text section titled "Who is a Black girl?" in a mix of bold sans-serif and script fonts. Below the title are three paragraphs of text. At the bottom right of the text section is a red button with the text "MEET OUR GIRLS" and a right-pointing arrow.

Who is a *Black girl*?

Black girls, like all communities, are not a monolith. We recognize and center the full spectrum of gender identity of Black young people, including cis and trans Black girls, and all young people who have experienced Black girlhood.

Through gender and racial justice work, we have learned that by bringing Black girls and Black young people along the gender spectrum from margin to center, we are actively working to liberate and uplift all experiences of Black girlhood. We also acknowledge that the language that speaks to this work is constantly evolving.

We intentionally use the phrase "cis and trans Black girls and gender non-conforming Black youth." Where brevity is required, we use the phrase "Black girls" as an umbrella term to refer to our communities.

[MEET OUR GIRLS ▶](#)

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**Solutions:
Website**



A National Agenda for Black Girls is a reminder that in both the public and private sector, Black girls deserve the support that they systemically do not receive.

In 2016, 94% of Black women turned out and voted. According to a poll taken by MSNBC and Essence, 95% of Black women plan to vote in the 2020 elections. It is clear and evident that Black women are active participants in our nation's democracy and have had a tremendous hand in creating political change in America.

However, while Black women show up and vote, the unique issues that impact them are rarely ever on the policy agenda. Black women deserve to vote in their own interest and to have support and resources to create a future where we are investing in their well being and humanity. We are fighting for Black girls because they become Black women, and Black women vote. We're here to say Black girls need support, Black girls need to be nurtured, they need protection, and most importantly, they need to be on the 2020 policy agenda!

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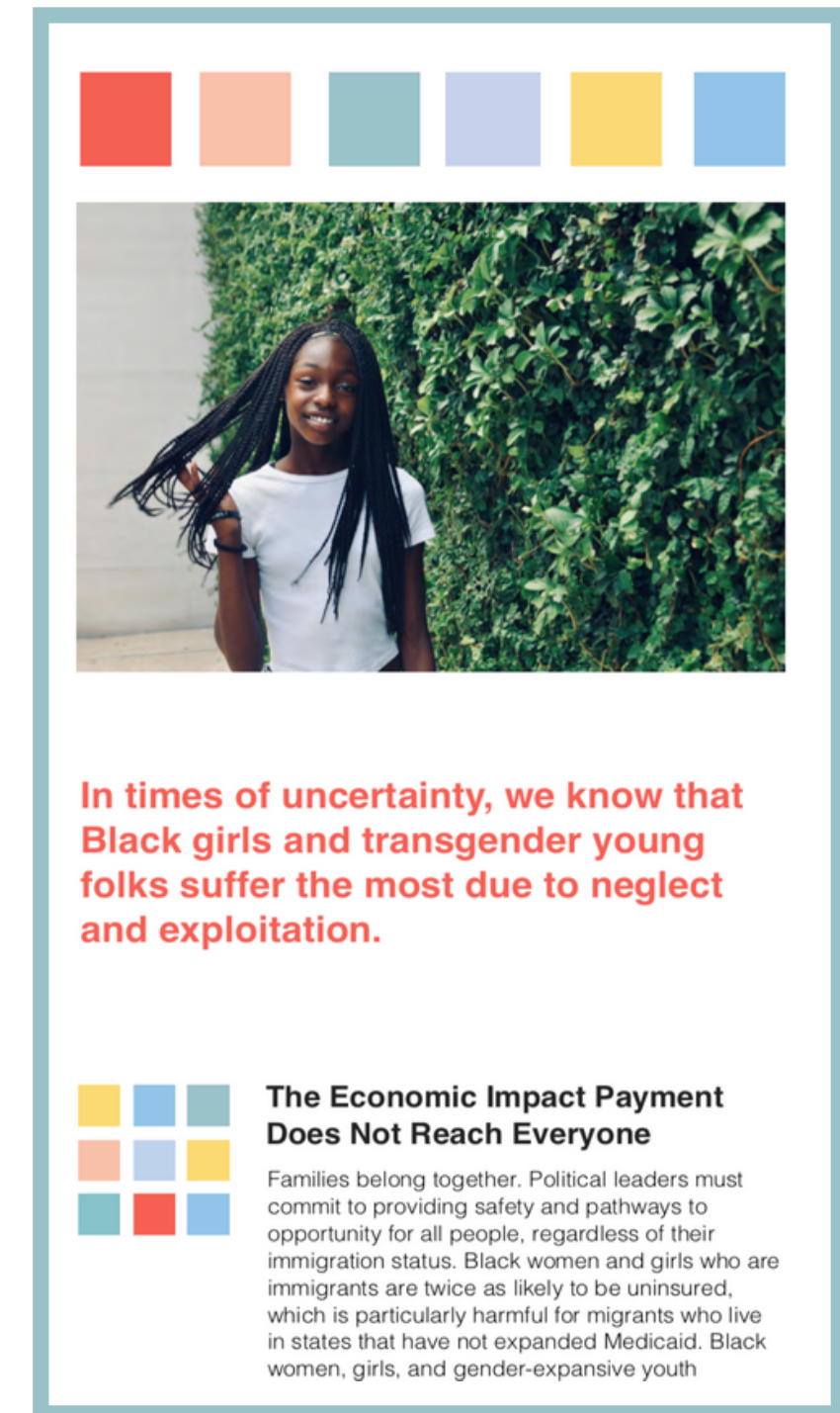
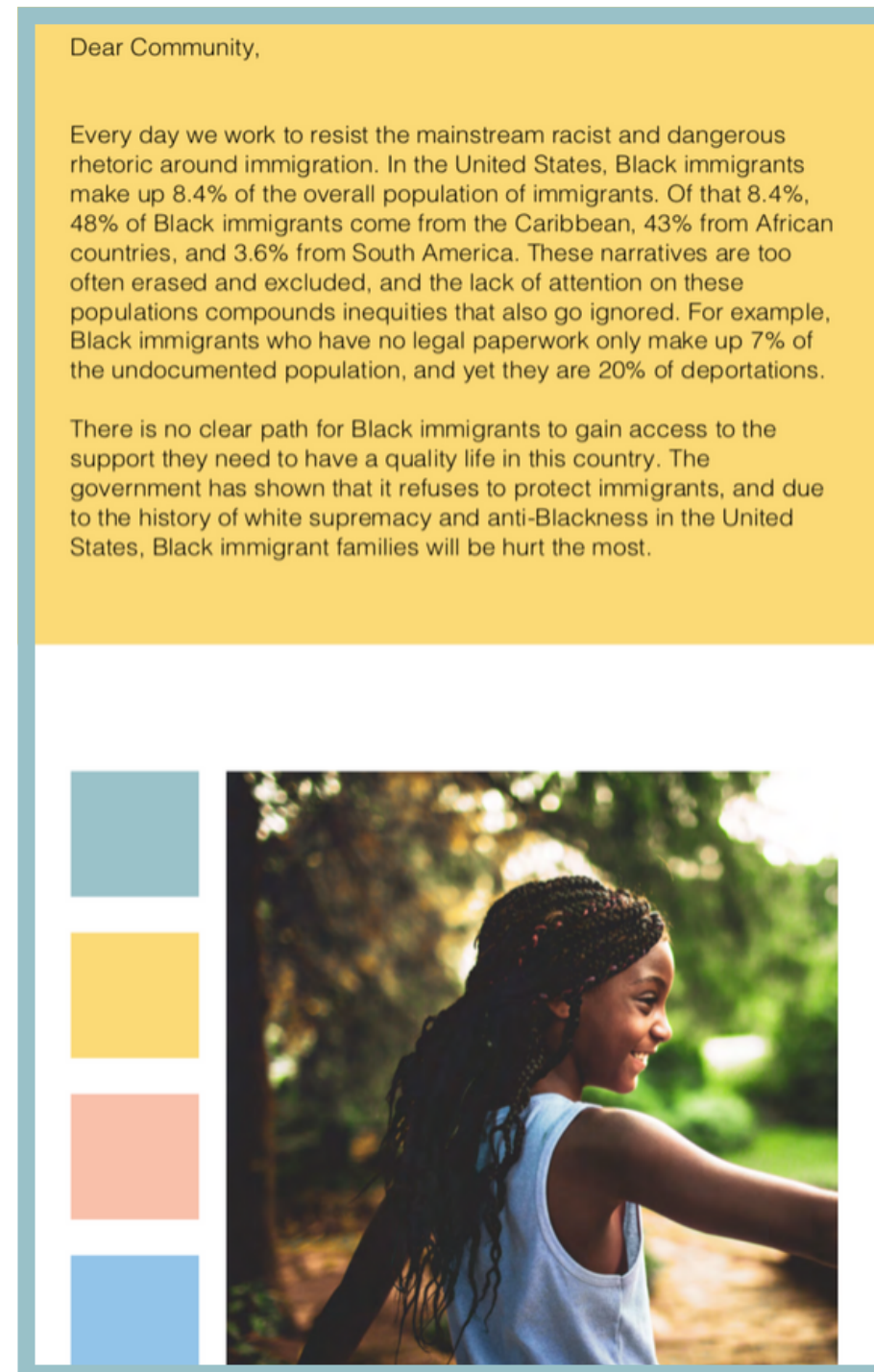
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Solutions: Newsletter Template

The visual themes continue in our external communications through email and social media (featured on the next slide).

We chose to create a color palette that was bright and varied to not only pull audiences in, but to also allow some levity to discussions around heavy topics such as Black maternal mortality rates, education justice, access to democracy, and more.



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Solutions: Social Media



Terriana K.

she/her/hers
Age 19

A NATIONAL AGENDA FOR
Black Girls
AN INITIATIVE OF GIRLS FOR GENDER EQUITY

“Black Girls deserve to live in a world that values them. Black girls created the Black Girls Bill of Rights to outline their inalienable rights and privileges that have been historically overlooked.”

#blackgirls2020

PROTECT
Black Girls

Through gender and racial justice work, we have learned that by bringing Black girls and Black young people along the gender spectrum from margin to center, **we are actively working to liberate and uplift all experiences of Black girlhood and femmehood.**

#blackgirls2020



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Solutions: Meeting the National Moment

As we moved through the COVID-19 pandemic and Black Lives Matter protests, the necessity for this work became more clear than ever. Black cisgender and transgender women and girls are regularly force-fed images and narratives that devalue their lives and humanity. The murders of Tony McDade, Breonna Taylor, Dominique Fells, Riah Minton, Brayla Stone, and so many others due to police brutality, misogynoir, and transphobia all underscore these narratives.

To counteract this harmful influx, the A National Agenda for Black Girls website and accompanying assets intentionally feature diverse images of Black girls smiling and laughing, as well as being vibrant, beautiful, strong, safe, and alive. They are free to be fully themselves. A National Agenda for Black Girls not only dares to imagine, but dares to pursue and fight for an America where that is a reality.

Additionally, by centering Black girlhood, youth, and youth leadership in the initiative and its branding, and through thoughtful and intentional language, we challenge the savior narrative that tells us that Black girls don't know what's best and need rescuing. Black girls are the experts of their lived experiences, meaning they are also the experts on strategizing ways to solve for the issues they face. However, they are not in the positions of power to actualize these solutions, and that is the critical juncture where we must look to our policymakers and national leadership.

Ultimately, the four-month engagement with Tara Dowdell Group resulted in a branding package that we, and our Youth Steering Committee members, feel is the website our girls deserve.






Thank You!

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