

# SMASHING commercial SEXISM

## CHALLENGING COMMERCIAL SEXISM WITH YEAR 6 STUDENTS IN A LEGO WORKSHOP

In 2014 Newid-Ffem ran two workshops with over 40 Year 6 primary school children at a local children's conference on gender well-being and healthy relationships. In the morning we did a **presentation** on all the different issues we thought were important in our lives.

### OUR LEGO WORKSHOP

We began the 45 minute session by asking the Year 6s to write on a sticky note what their favourite toy to play with was when they were growing up. We then compared the girls' and boys' comments and asked if boys could like 'my little pony' or girls could like 'power-rangers'. This got us all talking about how many toys are marketed differently for girls and boys (e.g. colour, separate toy aisles, advertisements etc.)

We shared the fact that pink used to be the popular colour for boys and only became associated with girls and femininity in the 1950s! We then talked a bit about the gendered history of lego and how it is now marketed differently to girls (see the 'Lego Friends' brand). "Lego means *play well*," we said, "but how can we play well when Lego reinforces gender stereotypes?"



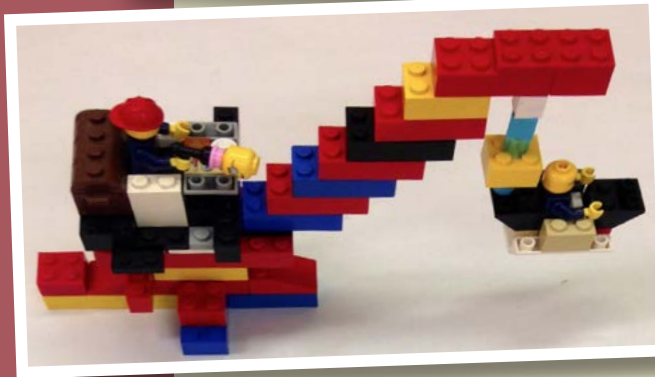
**GENDER  
EQUALITY  
MATTERS!**



We are a group of Year 11 students who started a feminist lunch time group, Newid-Ffem.

We meet once a week at lunchtime to rant about all things gender justice related.

Our goal is to raise awareness about gender inequalities and what we can do about them.



### WHY LEGO?

"We don't think it's fair that LEGO reinforces gender stereotypes by marketing their products differently for girls and boys. So we thought we'd have some fun asking students to create machines built out of lego that could break up gender stereotypes and combat sexism."

# DIY

## COMMERCIAL SEXISM CRUSHING MACHINES!

### What you'll need:

- Lots of Lego (blocks and figures)
- Sticky notes
- Coloured felt tips

1

Using the sticky notes, write down a gender stereotype used by the commercial world to sell products.



Smasher-Crasher

2

Make a machine or create a scenario that combats corporate or commercial sexism using the lego blocks and characters.

3

Name your machine or scene. Draw around your construction if you want to.

Work in groups or on your own.

**ENJOY & DESTROY!**

Before you begin adapting this activity for the children and young people in your setting, read the section on **Safety and Support**.



The Sexist  
Comment Cleaner



Plank of Doom

"The lego workshop made me think that no matter what gender you are you can like whatever you want"

"It was amazing to see how something serious, like sexism, could be explored in a fun way"

"I was surprised at how open the Year 6s were to talk about gender"

"I really enjoyed seeing how they were thinking about gender stereotypes for the first time"

"Using lego to talk about gender stereotypes made it a lot more fun"

"I loved the way students would bring their own experiences to the task"

"I felt that children enjoyed the activity because they weren't being lectured at"



Seven year old girl confronts Lego for building gender stereotypes

The gendered marketing of 'Lego Friends'

Lego gets political

How toy ads reinforce gender stereotypes

Gender stereotypes stop you doing stuff

Boys things and girls things?

Lesson plans for teachers

What do sexist comments have to do with domestic abuse? Watch this Australian TV advert to find out more