

FEARLESS

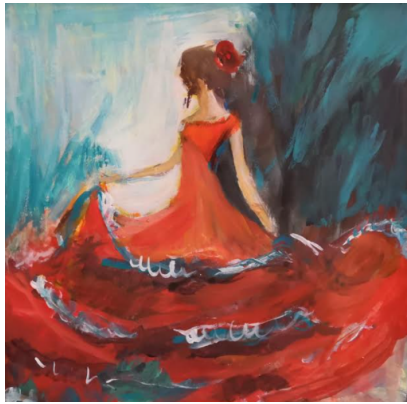
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LONDON

It was an average Tuesday lunchtime when HBS Erudite sat down and decided that we hated Barbie.

Even the idea of a *perfect woman* in a patriarchal society was positively repelling. Blonde hair, blue eyes and pink heels was not our thing. Truth be told, we were meant to be discussing design ideas for our VEX robot, but we had a loftier goal in mind than listening to our teacher. We considered the early versions of the Barbie doll which were made to inspire girls to create their very own future in a male-dominated world. However, in recent



generations, the alarming gender disparity between men and women has become painstakingly clear, especially in science and technology related fields. According to UNESCO, *only 35%* of STEM students in higher education globally are



women. We aim to work towards a future where women are unafraid to choose STEM careers, where they are valued and seen as the shaft collars and gears of the fields, rather than a hindrance. We believe that having a more diverse workforce will result in a society that is truly Girl Powered.

On that rainy lunchtime, we quickly dismissed Barbie as a paragon of female empowerment, and we started to look for other role models. One of the forgotten women of STEM caught our eye. A woman whose brilliant mind was blatantly ignored by the men in power. A woman who pioneered the technology of “frequency hopping” that would later become the basis of today’s Wifi and Bluetooth systems. Hedy Lamarr.

ANY GIRL CAN **BE GLAMOROUS**

ALL YOU HAVE TO DO IS **STAND STILL AND LOOK STUPID**

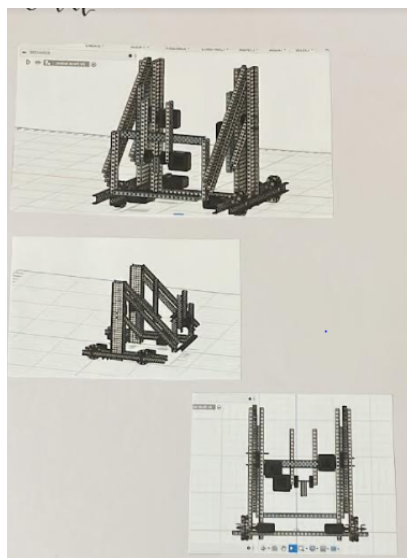
– **HEDY LAMARR**

Born and raised in Vienna, Lamarr’s beauty took the spotlight in her early life and she was restricted to a Hollywood career, before giving in to her desire for innovation. She invented “frequency hopping”, a technology that could have provided a significant advantage to the United States military in the war - but the Navy shelved her idea and told her to sell war bonds instead. Lamarr’s story resonated with the team of 10173P.

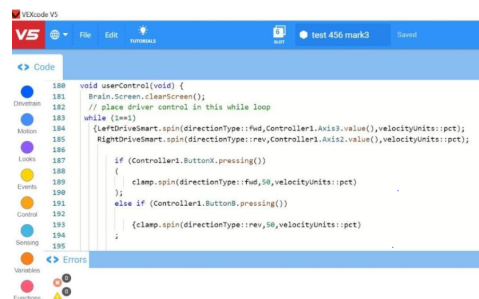


It was intriguing and relevant to today. The majority of women in STEM are often underestimated and shunted to the side. Hedy Lamarr herself was notably recognised for her work as a conventional actress, but dismissed when she entered the world of STEM. As an all girl’s robotics team, Lamarr inspires us to not let ourselves be taken for granted, like she once was in her lifetime.

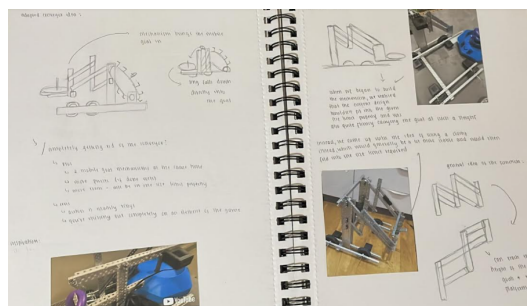
To a large extent, our ideals and role models of feminism reflects the surroundings that we have become used to. Attending an all girl's grammar school permanently etches feminism into your heart. One of the things that is truly special about Henrietta Barnett School for Girls is the diversity of the students within it. The school is composed of girls from a plethora of ethnicities, races and sexualities, which is why we value inclusivity so highly in all aspects of school life, especially in Robotics. Regardless of backgrounds, seeing your peers qualifying for Nationals and going to Worlds is inspiring and that kind of excitement is contagious.



HBS Erudite channels this excitement into our own work. As a team we make sure that everyone is recognised and actively takes part in all areas of creating a VEX robot. We regularly stray from the path and make too many mistakes to count. We are stubborn and unafraid. A good combination, right? Nonetheless, we have finally found what works for us. Every odd week, a member of the team gets to take the robot home, allowing them free licence to make any improvements that come to mind and record them in our notebook. All of our members have versions of the code to access, and this means that they can play around with the robot and develop basic driving skills. All of our CAD files are on a shared Fusion360 account, and are easily available. We keep in touch and have



regular meetings so that everyone is kept in loop and when it comes to deciding tactics, our whole group contributes to the discussion. This means that we have multiple minds working on solving a problem concerning the robot, and it gets resolved quicker. We feel that this approach benefits us as it teaches us the power of resilience and creativity. Now, everyone in our group can do just about every role and knows the robot inside out. Giving everyone a chance to solve problems independently allows us to merge our diversities and perspectives together and produce something unique and original. It allows us to solve problems more efficiently as people can think in different directions and come up with more solutions. Our team name Erudite is in reference to how sharing our wealth of knowledge has brought us closer together as a team. Even close enough to have deep discussions about the relevance of Barbie :)



GIVE A GIRL THE RIGHT SHOES AND SHE CAN CONQUER THE WORLD. - MARILYN MONROE

And so, we come back to that average Tuesday lunchtime that we mentioned earlier. The trademark British clouds hung over the sky. The rain drizzled down and patterned on the windows as 5 girls who came together from different corners of the world headed off to their next lessons, minds made up. We were going to change the definition of girl power.

Growing up, the majority of books that we had read were always highlighting the male protagonist coming to save the damsel in distress, or the helpless princess who can only be awakened by true love's kiss. A girl useless without her male counterpart.

These conceptions are outdated and present women as suppressed and constantly in need of male validation, when really, women are so much more than that. We can fend for ourselves just as men can and we can work in the same fields that men can. Yet, women get seen as feeble and incapable, even in the eyes of the younger generations. Being a part of an all female team and competing against other teams filled with boys gives us a sense of determination to persevere and prove those stereotypes wrong. Our "girl power" is the driving force for our determination, making us a stronger team day by day. And we are eagerly looking forward to showing everyone just how much they underestimated us.

