



Citizen Jane: transformative citizenship in a globalized world

Jane Sloane

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"Jane, if you really want to make a difference in the world, you ought to focus on conflict resolution and citizen-led change." This was the advice that Nelson Mandela gave the author when she spent a day with him in 2000. Mandela's words became a dramatic turning point in her life as she embraced his advice and embarked on a journey to who she is now, a global advocate for women's and girls' human rights. The book starts with a broad sweep of the author's childhood and teenage years and pivotal influences during that time. It quickly moves through the territory of her university study, early career and scholarship positions, as well as travel experiences and people that had a defining impact on her future direction and focus. This includes her time as founding CEO of the Social Entrepreneurs Network in Australia, with World Vision, AusAID, Marie Stopes International and as Executive Director of the International Women's Development Agency. Time working in the Pacific, most especially Papua New Guinea and Fiji, heightens the author's awareness of the depth of violence and injustice women and girls experience, as well as their courage, determination and resilience in working to realize their full human rights. Throughout the book, Ms. Sloane captures the rise of a global citizenship movement. She writes about the people involved, the breakthrough ideas and the activists holding ground that have contributed to this momentum for social change. There are many stories of women's human rights defenders and other individuals and organizations that have maintained the momentum for social change -- and the kinds of programs and successes that have been possible as a result. Ms. Sloane also explores what hasn't worked in terms of women's rights movement building and activism to claim and sustain their human rights. There is a parallel spirit journey throughout this book that includes fragments of diary entries, poems and conversations that give the reader a sense of Ms. Sloane's personal growth and awareness. The second half of the book focuses on the author's relocation to the United States, firstly to work for Women's World Banking in New York as Vice President of Development, and later to assume the role of Vice President of Programs with the Global Fund for Women. She arrives in New York just as the Occupy Movement is gaining ground and she documents the heady idealism of the movement at that time as well as the increasing challenges to the movement in sustaining its impact without a defined plan. The book is a touchstone for those wanting to know how to be involved in similar human rights and movement building work. What is compelling is the author's daring and effective balance between a poetic sensibility and a problem solving approach. This ability allows Ms Sloane to view issues in a broader context and she offers and documents solutions to problems that seem intractable. While the central focus of the book is about women's human rights, it's also about the wisdom of children, our dream lives and our playfulness; it's about clay making and music-making, poetry, dance and the natural world. The shape-shifting, pattern making nature of this book gives cause for optimism and hope. Its embrace of creativity, courage, community and connectivity is a potent combination. At its heart, the book is a conversation about humanity and the way we choose to live - the way that we play and dream and hope as much as what we do to work toward a just, kind and equitable world.

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