

The Single Story

Our lives are constructed by multiple stories, but sometimes we can't, or aren't, allowed to tell them all. Sometimes we have the power to lock up the stories that we don't want to remember, or simply can't remember. Sometimes we hold on to the stories that help us continue going with our days, or sometimes we tell the stories that people like to hear from us. After a while of telling the same story, that single story is the one that defines who we are, mostly by the criteria of others.

The Nigerian writer Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, in one of her TED Talks *The Danger of the Single Story*, says that "single stories create stereotypes and the problem with stereotypes is not that they are untruth, but they are incomplete. They make one story become the only story." With this in perspective, it is fair to say that the Single Story is a tool of power, which has been largely introduced into the consciousness and behavior of many capitalist societies that have intentionally, and unintentionally, reproduced systemic forms of oppression. By "intentionally" I refer to governments and their racist and bias policies, and educational systems that continue silencing the voices of those who have been discriminated against and misrepresented as part of a "common" history. By unintentionally I refer to every single act that is subjected to our biases, privilege, and lack of social awareness.

At Hilltop, we are learning about ourselves in the context of our biases, our privileges, our cultural, ethnic, social, intellectual differences, and how to own them as part of our identities. This is a necessary exercise that we, as a community of educators, need to embody in order to cleanse from those racist codes that inhabit our daily behaviors. Sometimes it feels like going uphill in one hundred degree weather, but this is part of the work that needs to be done so we can better understand, support, and partner with our student and family communities.

I have so many stories that I would love to tell you all about myself, and I am sure that you do too. I believe that the construction of a compassionate community starts with the reflection of ourselves, and recognizing that who "I am" as an individual is in constant connection and relation with the others.

I would like to invite you to explore the concept of a Single Story, and how these generalizations harm different individuals and societies, perpetuating all forms of discrimination, but also how can we start listening to those other stories. You can watch Chimamanda's story [here](#).

-Marco Yunga Tacuri