



Morénike Giwa Onaiwu

Advocate, Public Speaker, Writer, Educator, Mom



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Proposal: *The Morenike Monologues*

Through my nonprofit organization Advocacy Without Borders, which is [one of the areas of my work](#) with the community, I aspire to [develop a series of books whose primary purpose will be to raise funds for humanitarian endeavors](#).

I have several ideas and would welcome collaborators and/or sponsorship to one day bring these projects to life. This proposal for the monograph that you are currently reviewing, *The Morenike Monologues*, is one of these ideas. In addition, I have plans for six additional books (edited collections/anthologies as well as monographs), two or more detailed guidebooks, a preceptorship, and a few multimedia projects.

It is my desire to offer some of these materials as fully open source resources that will be available free of charge to the public. Other resources will have a nominal cost associated with them in order to obtain some revenue, but all of these will still be firmly non-profit and mission driven. For each, at minimum I will pledge 50% or more of proceeds, royalties, and/or earnings associated with them to be utilized to fund direct support for programs and services that benefit marginalized groups, including youth, single parents, racial and gender minorities, and people with various disabilities, including autism and HIV.

This proposal contains a biographical statement and headshot as well as some contextual information as well as a summary of *The Morenike Monologues*. I can easily provide supplemental documents, including a detailed outline, notes, and a list of projected tasks, timelines, and potential costs for the project, upon request.

I welcome your feedback and/or questions, and will be happy to provide clarification as needed. Please note that your support will be 100% tax deductible as our nonprofit organization Advocacy Without Borders is a 501c3 charitable organization. We are happy to accept checks, cash, electronic payments, and other forms of payment. Funds can also be donated online directly via <http://PayPal.me/AdvocacySansBorders>

Thank you! MGO



Speaker Bio/Qualifications (can be shortened/lengthened/otherwise modified as needed)

Morénike Giwa Onaiwu, PhD(c), MA, (she/they) is a non-binary Autistic woman of color, educator, public speaker, parent of Autistic children, and advocate. She is involved in various social justice activism endeavors and a contributing author/editor of several publications, abstracts, and books on concepts such as intersectionality, disability, advocacy, and inclusion.

Morénike has spoken at the White House, the United Nations, the AIDS Clinical Trials Group Network plenary, and several national conferences. Her board membership includes Autistic Self-Advocacy Network, Autism in Adulthood Journal, Ethical Autism Research Expert Group, the National Disability Parenting Research Center and other entities. She has written for or been featured in Salon, HuffPo, Spectrum, NPR, NY Times, POZ, Today Show, Conde Nast, etc.

Morénike is a full-time college faculty member, a current Rice University Scholar in the School of Humanities and Co-Chair of the Women's HIV Research Collaborative. She is also co-editor of the first anthology of Autistic people of color, *All the Weight of Our Dreams: On Living Racialized Autism* and *Sincerely, Your Autistic Child: What Every Person on the Autism Spectrum Wishes Their Parents Knew About Growing Up, Acceptance, and Identity*.

Headshot



*The Morenike Monologues:
Cherished Lessons of Resilience, Global Black Womanhood, & Survival*

The idea behind this (monograph) book is to depict, describe, and celebrate Black women, but using a twist so that it captures not just Black American women, but Black women from all over the world, as I have found individuals named “Morenike” in six different continents. Few, if any, of us knew of one another prior to my conceptualization of this project. Surprisingly, however, I have found that there are a number of similarities between us.

So who exactly *are* all these Morenikes anyway? Well, in a sense, we’re “every woman.” Several are advocates, like me; many of us have endured abuse and trauma and are still (figuratively) standing/surviving. A number of us are currently or have formerly been involved in some form of social justice or service. Some of us are in STEM fields; some are fashionistas, artists, musicians, athletes, models. Others work in research, healthcare, law, business, finance, policy. Several are multilingual and/or bicultural. Some are in recovery.

We are young and older; we are monoracial and multiracial; we are parents and childfree. And coincidentally (or not?), we all share a name that, in the Yoruba language that is spoken, along with English and several other dialects, in southwestern Nigeria and the surrounding region, means, “Cherished One” - a powerful name even if we have not all necessarily lived lives where we have felt cherished or even wanted by anyone.

Collectively, our stories are more than just the stories of individuals who happen to have the same name; they are much more than that. They are global stories that deserve to be told. They are Black women and femmes’ stories. They are the stories of mothers, daughters, sisters, wives, leaders, overcomers. They are Nigeria’s stories and the UK’s stories and Canada’s stories and the stories of the Americas, Europe, Africa, the Pacific.

On the following page there are a few paragraphs containing some draft wording that provides background information. It describes the incident that served as the accidental catalyst for this project. This wording is unedited and was written on a whim/spontaneously; please focus more on its intended meaning than the actual structure and delivery of the content.

Please enjoy this “sneak peek.” I hope that you will find it enjoyable. Thank you for your interest and your much-needed support of our efforts to simultaneously raise funds to provide direct support to the community while also amplifying the voices of various Black women with this groundbreaking monograph, *The Morenike Monologues*.



The Morenike Monologues

I was in my 20's the first time I met another person who bore my name.

Growing up, unlike my classmates, who often had to be differentiated as "Courtney A." and "Courtney C."; "Mike" and "Little Mike"; "Skinny Juan" and "Hazel-eyed Juan," in my world there was only one Morénike - me.

In that world, I learned at a young age, probably by early elementary school, that by voluntarily stating my name aloud, I could often circumvent what was likely to be yet another futile attempt to pronounce it. Young me also discovered that I could typically predict the exact instance that a new teacher, health care provider, or other adult who wasn't acquainted with me stumbled across the spelling of my name (the sudden appearance of a furrowed brow coupled with extended silence was usually a dead giveaway).

Thus, though I was aware that there *had* to be at least a few people in existence who shared my name (not counting my actual namesake, a relative I'd never met who died when I was toddler), actually meeting another Morenike in person for the first time was an unexpected treat. Even though this person was publicly known by a derivative of the name, (Nike), it was still gratifying to know that we shared a name.

For me, that one instance would have been enough; I could have survived off of the residual joy for the rest of my life of knowing that I was not the "only" Morenike for thousands of miles. But a few years later, something extraordinary happened. A friend, who was attending an international HIV conference across the world, reached out to me with some exciting and very unexpected news:

"There's another Morenike here!" she shared enthusiastically, sounding short of breath as if she had rushed to the phone to place this call to me. "I just met her! And she's so much like you!"

I was intrigued. Who was this other Morenike? And what a coincidence that she was also involved in HIV advocacy! Curious, I decided to try to look her up...and in doing so, I stumbled across a myriad of Morenikes. Although similar searches in previous years had come up short, on this day the internet gods smiled in my direction. There were Morenikes everywhere...in many countries and in nearly every continent. Page after page after page.

I spent hours reviewing articles, social media pages, networking profiles, and more...capturing what seemed to be a never-ending sea of Morenikes and their stories. I searched and read; made notes; bookmarked sites; took screenshots; searched and read some more - astonished by the fact that from what I was reading, these strangers and I, though so, so different from one another, seemingly had so much in common with one another...more than just our shared name.

At this moment, I knew that these stories needed to be told to the world, and that I, the Morenike who once felt so alone, would be the one to tell it.

