

Dutch psychology graduate creates gender neutral pack of cards to target 'subtle inequality'



A Dutch woman has created a gender neutral pack of cards which removes the need for Kings, Queens and Jacks. Indy Mellink was inspired to create the new form of deck after questioning why a king should be worth more than a queen.

The 23-year-old forensic psychology graduate was encouraged by her father to turn the traditional pack of cards on its head. "If we have this hierarchy that the king is worth more than the queen then this subtle inequality influences people in their daily life because it's just another way of saying 'hey, you're less important,'" she said in an interview. "Even subtle inequalities like this do play a big role."

To create the gender neutral deck, Mellink replaced the images of a king, queen and jack with with gold, silver and bronze cards.

The genderless playing cards feature gold silver and bronze images.



The first 50 decks of GSB (Gold, Silver, Bronze) cards were quickly snapped up by her friends and family and Mellink then began selling them online.

Within a few months, she had sent out around 1,500 packs, including to Belgium, Germany, France and the US. Game shops have also shown interest, she said.

Mellink has been testing the cards out on players, who said they had never been conscious of sexual inequality in decks before. Switching would take some getting used to.

"It is good that we reflect on gender neutrality," said Berit van Dobbenburgh, head of the Dutch Bridge Association, while playing with the new cards. It would be complicated to make a formal switch because that would require updating the rules, she said. "I wonder if it's worth it. But gender neutrality, I am all for it! It's great that someone of this age has noticed this. It's the new generation."

Playing cards as we know them arrived in Europe in the Middle Ages having been adapted from a creation by the Mamluks - an empire which spanned the Middle East at the time.