

Dreaming and Worldbuilding Facilitators' Journal



OUR
COLLECTIVE
PRACTICE

Building narrative, knowledge, and collective power with and for girls.



Acknowledgements

Contributors:

Jimena Alejandra Aon, Asha Athman, Juliana Román Lozano, Kruthika N.S., Priyanka Samy, and Augustina Vasile.

Introduction and collective reflection questions:

Majandra Rodríguez Acha, Jody Myrum, and Laura Vergara.

Illustrations:

Ayleen Mayte Diaz Rivera

Design:

Alike Creative

With deep gratitude to all of the girls and young feminists who participated in the Dreaming and Worldbuilding Game sessions across Argentina, India, Jordan, Kenya, Romania, Tanzania, the United States, and multi-regional sessions, and to the feminist facilitators and allies who accompanied these spaces of collaborative, intergenerational creation, and learning.

With gratitude to Kruthika NS, the 2024-2025 Artist in Residence for Our Collective Practice, who developed the Dreaming and Worldbuilding Game through a process of co-creation with girls and young feminists, drawing on the framework of the More&More card deck developed by Marina Zurkow and Sarah Rothberg.

August 2026



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Introduction

Girls' and Young Feminists' Dreaming and Worldbuilding

To dream is to expand what is possible. Worldbuilding brings it to life. Imagination and dreaming allow us to break out of the limitations of the world as it is today - to create worlds outside and beyond systemic violence, injustice, environmental crisis, oppression and the concentration of power and resources in the hands of a few. It is an act of refusing to normalise dystopia; of building more just and life-affirming futures.

For much of history and today, the world has tried to shrink girls' dreams. It pushes girls to dream smaller, and too often, not to dream at all. Yet, despite great odds, girls and young feminists across the globe are resisting, visioning justice, and daring to imagine and co-create worlds where everyone can thrive and belong. **They are dreaming with extraordinary power.** In the process, they are teaching us that dreaming is not simply a hope for a better future, but a demand for the very right to shape the world itself.

The dreams of girls and young feminists are visionary and tangible, shaping new realities for themselves, for their communities, and for us all. Dreaming becomes a strategy of resistance, a source of hope, and a practice of transformation. **It is a necessary part of building new realities - here, now, and for our collective futures.**

"What we dream together, we can also build together." – Jimena Alejandra Aon, Facilitator in Argentina

The Dreaming and Worldbuilding Facilitators' Journal

The Dreaming and Worldbuilding Game is a portal into these worlds of expanded possibility. Inspired and seeded by and with girls and young feminists, the game invites us to collectively dream, reimagine, and challenge systems that attempt to strip us of our power to envision and create new worlds.

This **Dreaming and Worldbuilding Facilitators' Journal** is a compilation that brings together short articles featuring the voices, insights, and reflections from the Dreaming and Worldbuilding Game facilitators – young feminists and allies who have accompanied girls and young feminists in spaces of imagination, resistance, and collective creation across Argentina, India, Jordan, Kenya, Romania, Tanzania, the United States, and multi-regional sessions.

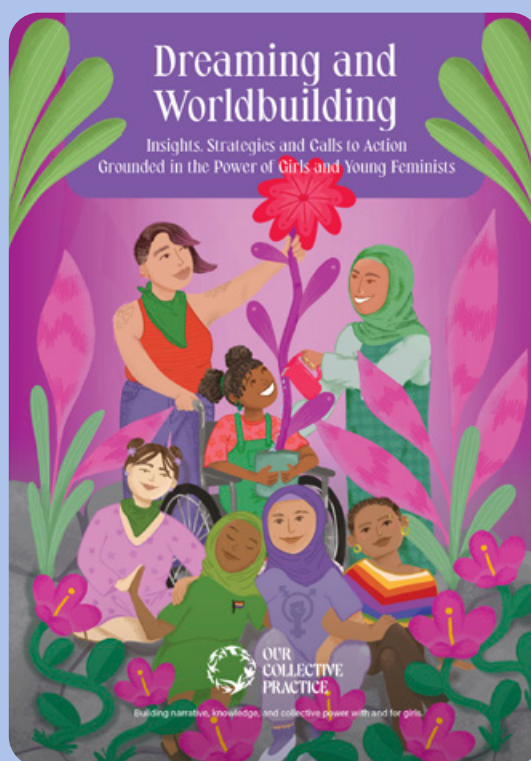
Through each article in this journal, the facilitators share learnings from the practice of holding and guiding the game, revealing what emerges when girls' and young feminists' dreams are given space to materialise collectively. They recount how **accompanying girls and young feminists in dreaming and worldbuilding disrupts their own assumptions, loosens adult-centred hierarchies, and revives their capacity to imagine collectively.**

The contributions gathered here offer analysis, provocations, and invitations for anyone committed to building life-affirming futures with and for girls and young feminists. This journal concludes with questions for collective and individual reflection and space for you, the reader, to note down your thoughts and/or those of your group regarding dreaming, worldbuilding, and the experience of playing the Dreaming and Worldbuilding Game.

"These girls taught me that dreaming is not "just storytelling," it is strategy. It is survival. It is system change seeded in spirit. As a Dalit feminist, I know how systems conspire to steal our dreams. But I also know that dreams, once articulated into visions, can become movements and drive systems to change. The girls I walked alongside in this process are already leading us there, we just need to listen." – Priyanka Samy, Facilitator in India



If you are interested in learning more about the power of Dreaming and Worldbuilding to expand what is possible and build new worlds, we invite you to review the report ***Dreaming and Worldbuilding: Insights, Strategies and Calls to Action Grounded in the Dreams and Power of Girls and Young Feminists***, as well as the accompanying calls to action for funders to support girls' and young feminists' visionary work to transform systems and shape life-affirming realities for themselves, their communities, and all of us.



Dreams of Equity, Justice, and Care

Holding with Radical Imagination in Our Movement Work

By Asha Athman, Facilitator in Jordan

As a dreaming and world-building session facilitator with [Our Collective Practice](#) and [Takatoat Feminist Collective](#) in Jordan, I entered each session with anticipation and curiosity. From the outset, as I prepared to host these sessions, I was challenged by the question of how to open up space in a way that would allow young women to engage with dreaming and world-building meaningfully. The core of this challenge lay in creating a foundation that enabled participants to imagine and play together, while also honoring the context, energy, and lived experiences each person brought into the room.

In my past experience documenting activities centered on feminist imagination in other learning spaces, I have witnessed how difficult the act of imagining can be. It is not easy for any of us. Imagination, I've come to understand, is like a muscle that requires consistent exercise and care to be strengthened. We are often weighted with living through and addressing struggles of our present circumstances—as individuals, friends, communities, and movements—and this affects what space we can give to radical imagination, dreaming, and play.

With these reflections in mind, I decided to open each session I facilitated with a group conversation around the following questions/sentiments: What does it mean to imagine as feminists? What does it look like to envision a different world? And what tools—creative, spiritual, or communal—do we have to help us imagine as freely and authentically as possible?

As the young women I was joined by began engaging with the dreaming and world-building game, the room filled with the sound of conversation, laughter, and the movement of hands shaping clay, sketching ideas, and writing. As I moved through the space, observing their process, I was struck by the depth and richness of the participants' discussions. The dialogue was debate filled, involved, and layered with care and consideration. These young women were not only imagining fantastical, different worlds, but also grappling with the complexities of what each world might require based on its unique features and what obstacles and opportunities lie therein. They developed their ideas in a thoughtful way, weaving together playfulness, creativity, and deep contemplation. They joked and laughed, but also questioned, challenged, and debated foundational systems—from education to governance to health care. Their visions were informed by personal desires and broader collective needs. They explored limitations, imagined solutions, and asked what a feminist approach to building new worlds could really look like. These were not abstract dreams; they were rooted in lived experience, their aspirations and desires, and in hope for more just and caring communities and worlds.

Photo of a girl creating and playing in Irbid on July 16, 2024, courtesy of Takatoat Feminist Collective.



A photo (left) of the cover of Voices from a Feminist Future booklet in Arabic by Takatoat Feminist Collective and a photo (right) taken during a session in Irbid, Jordan on July 16, 2024, courtesy of Takatoat Feminist Collective.



As someone witnessing this space, I was moved and inspired by the imaginative power of these groups of young women. The energy they brought into the room—one of curiosity, play, care, and critical thinking—reflected the importance of creating intentional spaces for feminist imagination. I left each session with the affirmation that dreaming in community is an act of resistance, care, and love. One of the participants (A. K.), who joined us for one in Amman, echoed this sentiment in one of her reflections on how learning in community is experienced in the world built with her peers:

“Education in our world is continuous ... schools are not like how we traditionally know them today ... there are natural spaces around our school buildings ... students of different generations convene in learning circles and are educated by one another and education is not bound by a certain age or life period ... most importantly, education and learning is driven and informed by the principle of love.”

We closed our dreaming and world-building sessions together, meditating on the experience and sentiment: What does dreaming in community mean to us? Facilitating in this space also helped us learn how play is powerful, and the joy and intimacy that came with playing the dreaming and world-building game in the groups was a testament to this. In the closing reflection circles, many participants shared that they felt a lot closer to their game partners after going through this experience together, and they were happy to learn about interests that they mutually share. The artistic expression element of the game was particularly beautiful to me and brought the imaginaries thought through by the groups in their sessions to life. The practice of molding parts of their imagined worlds was evidently joyful for the groups.

As a collective, we have worked to integrate feminist imagination into our community learning approaches and curricula because of the relevance and importance of this feminist practice to our work. Exercising this imagination in community learning spaces appears in different ways and leverages writing, acting, and art to give material and expressive power to our visions. We produced the booklet [Voices from a Feminist Future](#) as an exercise in practicing feminist imagination, and as a facilitator in the dreaming and world-building sessions, I shared this resource with the groups.

Holding space for radical imagination is a feminist practice that must be both prioritised and invested in by our movements, our allies, and the funders who support this work. Within the feminist movement ecosystem, we advocate for resources to be responsive and shaped by the evolving needs and aspirations of girls and women. To do this in a truly transformative way, we must also value and support the conditions that allow feminist imagination, creativity, and play to thrive. Listening to and documenting the diverse feminist imaginaries of girls and women can also play a role in informing what movement support priorities look like from allied funders. This requires that a wide array of movement actors and funders make efforts to bring women and girls’ imaginaries to the fore and intentionally center these visions and align with them. When this diverse feminist imagination is nurtured and supported, it strengthens our resolve and the belief in our struggle towards more just communities and worlds and makes our movements alive, visionary, and effectual. Intentional investment in slow work, dreaming, cultural, social, and creative practices strengthens our movements in the long term. It is necessary and so worth it!



Dreaming as Resistance

When Dalit Girls Reimagine the World

Priyanka Samy, Facilitator in India

What does it mean to ask a Dalit girl to dream?

To invite her to imagine joy, power, and possibility in a world that has consistently denied her even safety? To encourage her to draw a future when her present is still shaped by violence, exclusion, and silence?

When I walked into the dreaming workshop, I was not afraid of the girls' capacity to dream, as I have seen their brilliance blaze through impossible odds. What unsettled me was the weight of the invitation. In a society that has punished Dalit girls for simply existing, was it fair to ask them to imagine a world where they could fly?

And yet, they did. Fiercely. Tenderly. Politically.

In the beginning, the silences were heavy. I asked the girls, "What does your dream world look like?" They paused, not because they had nothing to say, but because no one had ever asked them this before. Dreaming is a privilege often denied to girls who are taught that survival is enough. For Dalit girls, raised within the tight grip of caste, patriarchy, and intergenerational poverty, imagining a world that honours their dignity is radical.

But they took the invitation seriously. And slowly, beautifully, the space began to swell with colours, stories, and visions.

Navanitha imagined a village where trans girls and women are safe, respected, and whole. Her world was not utopic because it had no conflict; it was utopic because it had care, inclusion, and the safety to be oneself. Agalya spoke of a magical artifact that could harness the world's happiness and sorrow without harm. She imagined a pen, simple and unassuming, that could only write the truth, but when held with kindness. With it, she said, stories of pain would be told with dignity, and stories of joy would be shared without pride. In that moment, Agalya demonstrated that even young girls carry the weight of ethics: they want to change the world gently, justly, and with care.



What happens when girls dream?

They build what the world refuses them. Their visions challenge dominant ways of knowing and being, pushing back against epistemic erasure. In naming what care looks like, what power could mean, and who gets to lead, they are producing feminist knowledge rooted in lived experience, defiance, and collective imagination.

I watched Mercy draw herself as a president, governing with fairness. Sumithra imagined herself as an elder, offering intergenerational wisdom to a community held together by trees. What was fascinating to me is how they did not mimic the oppressive leadership they have seen, but rather they reimagined leadership rooted in justice, joy, and care. These were not childish fantasies. These were sharp political visions.

And perhaps the most striking thing, something that humbled me deeply, was the joy that filled their worlds. Vidya, who imagined herself as a clown, chose to spread laughter as her act of resistance. In a world that wants Dalit girls to be quiet, small, and invisible, choosing joy is a revolutionary act. Yameema's world of magical butterflies was light and radiant and that lightness itself was political. I often forget how heavy we adults can become in our resistance. These girls reminded me that laughter can be a strategy, and dreaming is a method of surviving and reshaping.

It was in this context that I was reminded of a powerful quote by Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, the visionary Dalit leader and architect of the Indian Constitution: [*"Cultivation of mind should be the ultimate aim of human existence."*](#)

To cultivate the mind is to liberate the imagination and for Dalit girls, whose lives are hemmed in by oppression; cultivating the imagination is a form of refusal. In dreaming, they step beyond the limits that caste society has drawn around them. It is an act of defiance, a declaration that they will not stay confined to the place society has assigned them.

This is what dreaming does. It chips away at the internalized beliefs of “I am not meant to lead” or “I am not meant to thrive.” Dreaming interrupts generational scripts of marginalization. And as adults, especially those of us from the Dalit community, it shifts us too. It shook me. It demanded that I make more space, soften my control, and surrender to the brilliance of their visions.

What did I learn about their world-building?

Their sense of care is expansive. Kavya spoke of animals and humans sharing power. Her dream carried a lesson for all of us about coexistence and ecological balance. In a world that extracts, they imagine relationships. Where we see collapse, they imagine regeneration. The girls hold so much wisdom.

It also made me ask difficult questions about the spaces I hold and the funding ecosystems we navigate. If dreaming is political, creative, and feminist, then why do so few donors prioritise it? Why do metrics and logframes still dominate, when what we need are spaces for reflection and radical reimagining? These girls taught me that dreaming is not “just storytelling,” it is strategy. It is survival. It is system change seeded in spirit.

If donors truly believed in shifting power, they would fund dreaming as rigorously as they fund outputs. They would trust girl-and youth-led organisations not because they tick a box, but because they are seeding transformative futures. These dreams are blueprints for justice.

One girl said to me, “If I can imagine this world, maybe I can start building it.” That sentence stayed with me. I believe the role of facilitators, activists, and feminist practitioners is not just to bring resources or develop frameworks, but to remind girls that their imaginations are legitimate sites of resistance.

In this space, world-building means asking: What if joy was not an afterthought? What if care was the organising principle? What if power was shared, not hoarded or gatekept?

And so I left that space full, broken open, but full.

As a Dalit feminist, I know how systems conspire to steal our dreams. But I also know that dreams, once articulated into visions, can become movements and drive systems to change. The girls I walked alongside in this process are already leading us there, we just need to listen.



A photo of the girls and dreaming and world-building facilitator Priyanka Samy on June 30, 2024, courtesy of Women's Voice.



Longing, Appetite, Pining, Craving, Francy, Thirsting, Need, Itch, and Yearning to Dream

Poftă¹ de Visare

Augustina Vasile, Facilitator in Romania

Longing...

One of the participants entered the room well before the others. Her eyes widened as she saw the small trolley bag full of colourful materials and trinkets prepared for the session, but quickly reverted to her regular attitude: "What can I help you with?"

She's one of the youth I've worked with before, so she was expecting this session to be another career orientation activity: discussing real-life situations, working on a CV, and preparing for the inevitable future.

She asked a couple of questions, curious about what we are going to do with all the things I had packed: "What's the LED light projector for?"; "Why did I bring picnic blankets?"; "What are all the essential oils for?" I let her in on some of the things I had prepared and told her I'll keep some surprises just so she can enjoy the activity. And then I asked her to pick a scent that she feels is the most appropriate for the occasion, so we can put it in the diffuser to provide the olfactory background of the dreaming session.

She chose the grapefruit scent because she believed it to be "the one that most will enjoy." As one of the youth who's been the longest in the program, she is used to thinking about the others, as well as helping out during the scheduled activities, taking responsibility, and setting an example for her mates. When you come from a challenging environment and grow up in residential care, reality checks are the norm and thinking as a grown-up as soon as possible is one of the main goals.

But *longing* for contexts where you can freely follow your imagination is an omnipresent feeling, even if it might not be a conscious one.

Appetite...

In the months preparing for the girls' dreaming and world-building session, my most prevalent feeling was excitement. I constantly find myself wanting the space to facilitate without a very strict objective. Wanting contexts where the main resort is curiosity and the space is open to build on the participants' wishes, inner worlds, and hidden truths (even from themselves).

Most projects want measurable results and quantifiable impact. While I understand and support this approach (because it is a necessity), I also often find that—both for me as a facilitator and for the people I work with—open contexts bring a different dimension to self development. One where more doors open, possibility and choice (re)emerges, and motivation (re)ignites.

So in the face of such a tangible opportunity *my appetite was whetted* and it only grew when the girls welcomed me with hugs and enthusiastic exclamations upon my arrival for the session. My heart started pounding and I got all giggly when they entered the room, face lighting up at the sight of the dancing lights on the ceiling, at the smell of grapefruit and the encouragement to sit on the floor. And I was delighted to see them gravitate towards the centre of the room and get seated in a circle around the creative materials prepared for our session. There was no need for me to prompt them to get to know each other and talk. They were already doing it.

1. In Romanian the word "poftă" can be translated as any of the words in the English title.



Photo of the participants in a girls' dreaming and world-building session in Bucharest on August 26, 2024, courtesy of Augustina Vasile.

Pining...

There is a saying in Romanian: “nu mai visa cai verzi pe pereți.” It roughly translates to “stop dreaming of green horses on walls” and it is the equivalent of “stop chasing pavements” or “quit living in a dream world.” This implies that dreaming is a fruitless activity and that those who do dream are naive and there are better alternatives in doing something more productive.

In my work as a trainer, I can see a tendency towards requesting sessions that serve a practical purpose. There is demand for presentation skills, sales, pitching, time management, personal branding, etc. Most of these are self-development opportunities with the purpose of bettering ourselves and an end goal of being more productive. In adult trainings, it is the case in 90 percent of iterations but it happens in youth trainings as well. We definitely need these skills. But if this is the only option that is incentivised (financially and otherwise), then we find ourselves in a world where:

- facilitators, trainers, coaches, and guides are indirectly forced to prioritise this type of work in order to also make a living;
- beneficiaries are in need of more but have limited resources (time, money, energy, etc.) and they need to invest in the directions that are encouraged.

The result is a mix of feelings I see quite often at the end of my interactions with various groups: the satisfaction of discovering new things and seeing parts of yourself grow (both through your efforts and by being reflected in others) combined with the sense that something is still missing. In the long term, this

repeated sensation adds up and leaves people *pining for something more*, for true freedom to enrich all parts of themselves, for the liberty to dream and imagine.

As a facilitator working predominantly with creatives and artists at the start of their professional paths (regardless of their age), I see AND feel the need for more contexts where we encourage dreaming and make space for all the imaginations of the green horse people.

Craving...

Creativity, imagination, and dreaming are all muscles that need exercising. Without contexts where our imagination can roam free of “there is no time for this nonsense”; free of “you shouldn’t”; free of “you need to stop wasting time and be more productive”; free of “you need to stop dreaming and start living in the real world,” we start withering. Our motivation fades, our engines start breaking down, and—regardless of how much we love what we are doing—we begin questioning whether we are in the right place or not. I see it happening to accomplished corporate professionals, passionate activists, and prolific artists alike.

What we all have in common is the *craving for a fuel* that can put us back in motion and keep us moving forward. I believe that dreaming can be that kind of fuel. And I found the girls' dreaming and world-building methodology to be a context that can reconnect both the facilitator and the participants to the power of dreaming and stimulate the springing of this invaluable resource.

Fancy...

I can see so many applications of this methodology. There's an adaptability coordinate to it that makes it valuable for groups that have very different needs and come from varied contexts. Its capacity to mirror the inner worlds of participants as well as sublimate what is quintessential, its power to bring forth elements that are buried deep under our various masks and its potential to bring our values and ideals in the spotlight make it a multi-tool that can keep on giving.

For the group I worked with, it was marvelous to see clearly both their needs, what they're missing, as well as what they dream of bringing into the worlds that they are beginning to shape. Prevalently, the roles that they actively chose in their imagined worlds were those of healer, child, and parent. By taking on those roles, it was easy for a **child** to identify that her "favourite thing is to play without worries, stress, hardship, or lying." And for a **healer** to state that she wants to "help all living beings, both physically and psychologically." This way they get the opportunity to connect to their inner child, to imagine an alternative childhood, to share how they believe a parent should be, and to muse about their present and future roles in the real worlds they are building.

I think this method has something for every fancy; it can:

- be a therapeutic tool,
- spur creativity,
- help with identifying a professional path (by realising what role one gravitates to),
- serve as a relaxation tool (one of the girls in the session was so at ease she fell asleep and literally dreamt of the dragons and animals her group mates were describing).

And if this is possible, what else is?

Thirsting...

At least one more thing: in the spaces where youth dream, it rubs off on the adults too.

A very surprising, touching, and impressive thing was that the adults present in the session dove deep in the exercise themselves. The adults present were women, mothers, (that is what they are called in the organisation) who are social workers or designated caretakers of the girls participating in the event. They asked for permission to be in the space in the beginning of the session because they felt they could learn from the things that the girls were sharing and felt could be useful in their future interactions with the girls. They believed that in this way they could offer them better support in the future. They ended up doing the activities themselves: they went through the visualization, chose rules for their worlds, and imagined possible worlds themselves.

It was touching for me as a facilitator and for them as well because they shared the new things they discovered about themselves and what they want from their lives. At the end of the session, they came to me and thanked me for the opportunity and asked if they could have a session solely for them, where they could be guided to have even more insights.

This shows me *the thirst for this type of context* and that these women are probably not the only adults who feel this way.

This is a photo of a session in Bucharest on August 26, 2024, courtesy of Augustina Vasile.



Need...

We need to be able to imagine because, as one of the girls put it: "Something that is different in the imagined world compared to the real world is the fact that in our imagined world there is no stress. What's different is the lack of worries."

"In the imagined world there is more equality and less preconceptions."

From the perspective of one of the girls who chose the **artist** role: "We can make our dreams come true faster and more freely" in the worlds we imagine. And as seen through the eyes of the **athlete**: "In the real world, people with disabilities or disadvantaged people are not given the chance to do sports. And in this imaginary world of mine, I am offering this opportunity to anyone."

Imagining is the first step because it refuels our engines. And then it's inevitable when we start placing bricks at the foundations of the worlds we want to build.

Itch...

Because once we imagine something, there's a good chance we realise it makes sense. And once it makes sense, it starts nudging us. And soon we're already one step inside the room of "this is what else is possible." And we find ourselves in need of *scratching our various itches* more frequently: the creative one, the social justice one, the giving back to the community one, or the spiritual one.

And if you are like one of the **pirates** in my session and what "stays with you is the quiet that appeared in the imagined world," then you will itch to bring the quiet to the real world you are building too.

And if you are like another one of the participants and "something that stayed with you is the fact that each story, each thing that was imagined is linked to reality" and you feel like "whenever we write and draw something from our imagination, we immediately make a connection to reality" then you will probably also understand that "although it is an imaginary story, it is something that comes from within."

And if there's one thing I—as a facilitator, community builder, social entrepreneur, and woman—DREAM of seeing happen more often is funding going towards holding spaces where girls, women, and their supporters can come together and IMAGINE FREELY, GET EXCITED about what they imagined, and then GET THE SUPPORT THEY NEED to realise they can definitely bring things from the worlds they imagined to the worlds they inhabit.

Yearning...

And maybe then there would be less yearning for things we imagine and more building them in our day-to-day worlds.

Who are you yearning like?

The **healer** who "would take the quiet and the feeling of getting along from the imagined world. Because I have a feeling that in our (real) world, people don't communicate so much, people don't get along as much. In my imagined world, things are different and I wish that the real world is a bit more like that. And I believe it will be, but now is not quite the right moment"?

Another **healer** who "would take the lack of negativity present in the imagined world" with them?

The **athlete** whose "hope for the world from this role is to be able to offer people with disabilities or other difficulties the chance to practise sports"?

Another athlete who "would take the lack of judgement because in the real world there is too much bullying"?

The **person with memory loss** who "with the risk of forgetting everything, would make memories with the people she holds dear"?

The **artist** who "would allow fans to come on stage and sing with her"?

The **pirate** who would take the belief "that the world can be conquered by pirates because in the real world there are no pirates." And the belief that "the real world could be conquered by people other than those who are very important and who have a lot of power"?

The **child** who "would like to take with her from the imagined world her inner child"?

The **animal** who "would like to take back the clean air and freedom"?





Weaving Dreams, Sowing Worlds

Jimena Alejandra Aon, Facilitator in Argentina

My name is Jimena, I am 45 years old and for 25 years I have chosen to be a popular educator, a grassroots and feminist activist with my body, my words and my heart.

I am part of La Nuestra Fútbol Feminista, a beautiful organisation that, for the last 18 years, has been working in Villa 31, Buenos Aires, promoting the right to play, to choose the sport we want and to freely occupy public space. We work to guarantee a safe space for girls and young women, free from violence and discrimination, with open access and grounded in a pedagogy of popular, feminist and community education. Our approach integrates football with workshops, and carries out a systematisation and production of pedagogical materials and awareness-raising actions on the rights of women and LGBTIQ+ people, comprehensive sexual education, mental health and tools to prevent and eradicate gender-based violence.

In La Nuestra, among other tasks that fill me with meaning, I coordinate the coaching staff of the organisation's youngest girls' categories. When we accepted the proposal for the workshop, we decided to facilitate it for the older girls in the younger age group, who are between 8 and 11 years old. We then formed a group of 6 players aged 11. They have been kicking around with La Nuestra for almost half of their lives, and we, as adults and trusted figures, have built a solid, loving and tender bond with them and their families.

As soon as I received the proposal for this project, fears appeared. All of them were born of uncertainty, of the vertigo that comes with the new. Today, looking back, almost a year after that first meeting, I understand that this trembling was born of my adult-centrism, which, although I might think I have deconstructed it, still percolates into certain practices. As a popular

educator, I always ask myself: what tools do I have to hold space for the unexpected? What happens when *the emergent*² - that which springs from the collective experience - overflows the initial planning? The methodology proposed by *Girls Dreaming and Worldbuilding* came to dismantle my structures. It was so different from everything I knew that I realized those fears weren't about the workshop itself, but about my own insecurities. And in that bewilderment I discovered, at 45, the revolutionary and profoundly vital act of dreaming again.

When we suggested the experience to the families and the players, they responded with a rush of joy. The willingness was immediate, as if they were already waiting for this opportunity without knowing it. The families embraced us with their trust, and, with that loving gesture, fears began to dissipate. The players, for their part, were restless, not out of nerves, but with that sparkling excitement of someone who is about to receive a surprise.

For the girls, dreaming of a feminist world was as natural as running after a ball. They imagined a universe where everything revolves around a football pitch, where health is cultivated with plants and shared knowledge, where no one puts gender on clothes or the desire to dress, where money or its absence does not determine who can and who cannot. A world where playing is a right and is full of safe spaces where no one judges us.

They dreamed with their eyes wide open, their souls tousled and their boots full of hope. And we learned, by accompanying them, that the most important game is to imagine other possible worlds. Because in each round, in each drawing, in each word spoken without fear, a certainty is ignited: what we dream together, we can also build together.

2. In popular education, 'the emergent' does not simply refer to 'unforeseen issues', but is understood as what emerges from the group, from practice, from the territory and from collective interaction, often as an expression of needs, knowledge, tensions or desires that were not foreseen in the initial design, but which are fundamental to the educational process.

Paulo Freire, for example, when talking about dialogue and problematization, points out that education must be open to what emerges from the concrete reality of the subjects. That is, the emerging content is legitimate, political and transformative.

"I want to live in a world where no one gets sick, and if it happens, I want everyone — absolutely everyone — to heal with plants." — Dana

"I'd like to be able to dress however I want. I don't like that there are different clothes for men and women. I want to be able to be what I want to be." — Naye

"My mom is always worried about money. I wish that in our world, that wouldn't be something to worry about anymore." — Ari

I firmly believe in the disruptive act of dreaming of a feminist world. These fellow young activists are, today, the present, and above all, the political future of our territories. Territories where inequalities and injustices abound, and where, if we delve deeper, we also find the seeds of change and collective resistance. In every community meal centre, in every school, in every playing field, in every small organisation, silent but powerful feminist revolutions are brewing. And I'm not talking about the feminism we read about in books, but about community feminism, the feminism of the *Villa*, forged in the streets and nurtured in the heart of our communities. We need to generate this type of experience in all our territories, so that the fire of collective imagination continues to ignite other struggles.

It is also key to strengthen and expand this network that feeds us back, that supports us and challenges us to grow constantly. A network that not only unites us in action, but also invites us to question, to rethink

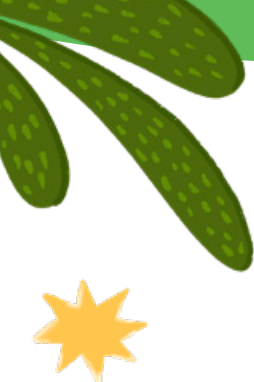
what we understand by justice, by community and by feminism. A network that teaches us to walk together, to share knowledge, doubts and dreams, because, as educators and activists, we know that our struggle is enriched with every encounter and every exchange. But even more so, it challenges us as dreamers, reminding us that it is the strength of our collective visions that can transform reality and open paths towards more just worlds.

Dreaming is not escaping reality — it's daring to transform it. And in that loving and subversive gesture, the girls teach us every day that the future is not something to wait for: it is built collectively, with righteous defiance, with organization, and with joy.

Because what we dream together is not some distant utopia — it is a political strategy to contest the present and to kindle livable territories, shaped by desire, equity, and tenderness.

A photo of the girls and dreaming and world-building facilitators Jimena Alejandra Aon and Juliana Roman Lozano, courtesy of La Nuestra Fútbol Feminista.





The creative and political power of dreaming

(Re)imagining the world through the eyes of girls

Juliana Román Lozano, Facilitator in Argentina

Since time immemorial, dreaming has been a profoundly revolutionary act.

For the Muisca, an indigenous people native to what is now central Colombia, dreams were more than just nocturnal images. They were portals to a deeper understanding of life, a way to connect with the spiritual, with ancestors, and with the forces that govern nature. In their worldview, dreaming not only facilitated a dialogue with the past and present, but also allowed them to imagine and establish connections with other possible orders.

This intrinsic power of dreaming as a creative, spiritual, and political tool lives on in many indigenous peoples and dwells within the vital impulse to transform reality through the collective imagination.

To dream today is precisely to enable the unimaginable, challenging the logic of control and domination characteristic of the colonial, modern, and capitalist world.

In this sense, the act of dreaming is not neutral: it is deeply political. Dreaming allows us to inhabit narratives where hierarchies, inequalities and oppressive logics are confronted and overturned. It is a space where instrumental reasoning yields to radical imagination; where the impossible becomes viable and where historically silenced voices—such as those of women, young women and girls—have the opportunity to seize and (re)imagine a new order.

What would the world be like if it were shaped by girls' dreams?

Asking ourselves this question implies an act of radical resistance against adult-centred thinking, the patriarchal system, and the structures that seek to stifle the transformative potential of girls and young women. For them, dreaming is not a mere form of escapism, but a profound process of questioning and (re)imagining. In their dreams, they do not draw fantasy castles, but build tangible and collective alternatives for a more just future. They dream of accessible playgrounds where everyone can play and feel safe; of communities where coexistence is based on equity; of safe streets to walk on; and of clear forests and rivers where the defence of life is placed at the centre. They dream of systems where collective well-being outweighs individualistic competition.

The Girls Dreaming and Worldbuilding Initiative by **Our Collective Practice** stems from this premise. It brought together girls from different parts of the world to share their dreams and explore ways to start building them now. The groups of girls, scattered across different parts of the world, were accompanied by adult facilitators whose mission was to support the process, document it, and (un)learn.

This collective act, seemingly simple, is in fact deeply political and subversive. In a world that places girls at the bottom of the power hierarchy, enabling spaces where they can dream freely means directly challenging the systems of oppression that seek to undermine them; it means foregrounding the tools, mind maps, and relational maps their imaginations provide us with and using them as roadmaps for a feminist future.



The role of facilitators: between fears and learning

As adult facilitators involved in this process, accompanying the girls' dreams also meant facing our own fears, prejudices and internalised power structures. At times, we wondered whether the girls would understand the exercise, whether they would find it too complex or whether they would be able to connect with this seemingly abstract task. However, it was precisely their innate ability to imagine so freely that taught us to (un)learn.

The girls not only dreamed for themselves, but for their communities. This collective approach confronted us with our own limitations as adults. During the sessions the facilitators, mothers and community leaders allowed themselves, for the first time in years, to dream again. It became an act of personal and intergenerational rediscovery. The interaction between different generations dissolved traditional hierarchies and allowed for the construction of communities based on mutual support and shared imagination. Recognising and honouring the knowledge woven collectively across generations revealed both the immense need for, and the importance of validating and treasuring 'what we know' at every stage of our lives.

The worlds girls create: tangible solutions from the imagination

What emerges from girls' dreams are not abstract ideas or unattainable utopias. Their visions are deeply rooted in their everyday realities and connected to pressing issues such as safety, equality and non-discrimination. In their dreams, we find concrete solutions that challenge existing structures: communities where animals and humans coexist in harmony, safe and accessible public spaces, and support networks that prioritise justice and collective well-being.

One phrase that illustrated this process was: *'Girls do not dream of castles, they dream of playing fields where everyone can play and be safe.'* This outlook is powerful because it reminds us that girls are agents of their own reality. They are by no means disconnected from reality, but rather are advancing in multiple ways to transform it. Their imagination allows them to articulate viable alternatives that stem from their contexts and immediate needs, but from a deeply collective consciousness.

Methodological transformations: feminist activism through dreams

The impact of adopting a standpoint rooted in what makes dreaming possible was not limited to girls. The organisational methodologies of one of the participant organisations were also radically transformed. Traditionally, the activism and participatory methodologies of various feminist organisations, including La Nuestra, had focused on identifying problems and proposing practical solutions, usually based on technical diagnoses and structured analyses. While this approach is valuable, it can also generate a sense of exhaustion and limitation by focusing solely on the challenges, hostility and restrictions of the present.

However, the act of dreaming unlocked new perspectives and strategies by offering a space for collective imagination. By rooting the process in dreaming, participants were allowed to adopt a more proactive and enthusiastic attitude, leaving behind the weight of the problem to focus on the possibilities for change. This renewed methodology not only provided emotional relief to the organisational process, but also introduced a creative and hopeful energy that revitalised commitment and participation.

When you invite people to dream, you articulate an ideal destination: a clear and shared vision of what you want to achieve. This not only fosters an emotional connection to the purpose of activism but also provides concrete direction to guide actions. With an imagined horizon in mind, it becomes easier to think step by step about what needs to be done, what strategies are necessary, and how resources should be organised to move towards that goal.

For example, in one of the workshops, adult facilitators were invited to envision their ideal version of 'feminist football'. This exercise, in addition to revealing common goals regarding accessibility, inclusion and equity, also encouraged the collective development of concrete plans to achieve them: from organising inclusive local leagues to rethinking the rules for using public spaces to ensure everyone's participation.



Furthermore, dreaming allowed us to overcome approaches that often get stuck in analysing shortcomings or conflicts. Instead of focusing solely on what is missing or what is not working, participants began to imagine what could be, and this allowed us to create a narrative of abundance and possibility. This deeply transformative narrative served as a driving force for the design of practical strategies, showing that dreaming is not a practice isolated from reality, but a tool deeply connected to political action and social change.

Ultimately, dreaming collectively not only transformed organisational methodologies – it transformed the people and movements that practised them. By enabling a space where creativity, enthusiasm, and hope guided strategic planning, more inclusive, sustainable, and visionary methodologies were generated. This strengthened both the organisations and the communities seeking transformation. Dreaming, in this context, reveals itself as both a political and practical act, capable of triggering profound changes in both structures and people.

The political act of dreaming: an intergenerational feminist legacy

The act of dreaming, as experienced by the girls in these sessions, is deeply radical because it constitutes a political tool that challenges established power structures. By dreaming, girls not only imagine a better world, but also chart precise paths toward justice, equity and solidarity. This exercise is not a passive act; it is an active form of resistance and transformation rooted in a feminist legacy that has proven effective in creating meaningful social change.

To invest in girls and their dreams means to bet on a future where their voices and experiences are at the centre of solutions. Girls have the political capacity to lead their own organisations and movements: it is their creativity and collective strength that enrich traditional forms of social organisation. Their way of working, based on values of horizontality, mutual care and resilience, is valuable and necessary to face the complex challenges of our societies.

For these methodologies to thrive, it is essential that funders recognise that girls are not passive recipients of aid. On the contrary, girls are agents of change with a right to autonomy. Supporting them involves more than providing financial resources: it is necessary to create safe, creative and sustainable spaces where they can experiment, imagine and build without the limitations imposed by adult-centred thinking and traditional hierarchies. These spaces strengthen their leadership and enable them to develop innovative strategies that transform their communities from the ground up.

We call on funders to view financing girls not as an expense, but as a strategic and ethical investment. By recognising and supporting their organisational capacity, we contribute to the creation of more diverse, inclusive and representative movements. Their autonomy, backed by sustainable and respectful funding, ensures that girls can take the helm of their own processes and successfully lead the changes the world needs.

Ultimately, investing in girls is an act of social justice – a bold vision for a future in which narratives of scarcity are replaced by stories of abundance, solidarity and transformation.

Conclusion: dreaming as resistance and transformation

Dreaming is an act of resistance and transformation. Through these dream sessions, the feminist girls imagined possible worlds and, at the same time, inspired adults and organisations to rethink their own methodologies and approaches. Dreaming is not a luxury, it is a political and collective necessity that allows us to build a more just, inclusive and caring future. The girls teach us that the future is built and made possible through shared imagination. Dreaming is a practice of resistance, an affirmation of life and a radical act of building a future where we can all exist with dignity, freedom and hope.

Dreaming as a feminist strategy

Girls and young women imagine, organise and transform

Juliana Román Lozano, Facilitator in Argentina

Dreaming is an ancient, spiritual and political practice. In many indigenous cultures, such as that of the Muiscas, dreams are conceived as portals for dialogue with the past, the present and what does not yet exist. Dreams have been maps for organising community life, for honouring ancestors, for projecting possible worlds.

Today, in a world marked by adult-centred thinking, patriarchy, racism and capitalism, dreaming remains a form of radical resistance. Especially when those who dream are feminist girls and young women. Because dreaming, in their bodies, is not an indulgence: it is an act of disobedience, a political statement; it is a way of forging the future from the margins.

This is the aim of the *Girls Dreaming and Worldbuilding* project, promoted by Our Collective Practice, which brought together girls and young women from different parts of the world to share their dreams and build, from now on, the worlds they imagine.

Girls and young women don't dream of castles: they dream of safe playing fields

Contrary to the narrative that paints girls and young women as naive dreamers, what emerged were visions deeply grounded in their realities. Girls do not dream of unattainable castles-- they dream of safe sports fields where everyone can play, of neighbourhoods free from fear, of community networks that protect life -- with animals at the heart of it.

Their dreams were collective, situated, full of proposals: a well-lit park where they can play safely, a school without violence, a home to share with their friends, a forest free of pollution, and open conversations with animals to understand how to build places that care for and protect them. Each of these dreams is, at the same time, **a diagnosis of the present, a proposal for change, and a strategy for action.**

For them, dreaming was not an act of evasion. It was a way of reshaping the present through radical imagination. In their words, their drawings and their bodies, they wove a feminist archive of possible futures.

Dreaming across generations: what girls teach us

The girls and young women were not alone. This happened at the heart of La Nuestra Fútbol Feminista, a community organisation with more than 17 years of history in Villa 31 (Buenos Aires, Argentina). Here, the right to play is upheld every day as a feminist banner. We accompanied them as adult facilitators: activists, educators, former players. But far from leading the process, many of us found ourselves (re)learning. Questions arose: would the girls understand the instructions? Would it be too abstract to invite them to dream? However, it was they—the girls and young women of La Nuestra—who taught us that **dreaming is a living knowledge: disobedient, generous and deeply courageous.**

Something was shaken on that shared path: many of us—trained in urgency, in constant support, in the logic of resistance—**allowed ourselves to dream again.** It was a small, intimate gesture, but a deeply political one. And in that gesture, the hierarchies molded by adult-centrism loosened, fears dissolved, and new spaces of closeness, complicity, and mutual care opened up. **Dreaming together**, in that grassroots feminist context, proved to be a transformative practice; not only because of what it projects into the future, but because it reminded us that to imagine is to heal, to rebuild and to honour our desires. By dreaming together we start to live in the world we envision — starting now.

The most powerful thing about this process was that the dreams did not linger on the air; they became starting points for organising action. With a shared horizon, it was easier to think: what do we need to get there? Who takes on which tasks? How do we do it together?

This approach also transformed the methodologies of our organisation and other groups with whom we shared it. Letting go of our old habit of starting with diagnoses, we now set to work from desire. And that shift **unlocked new energies, strategies and alliances**. Because when desire is collective, commitment is too. We invited people to imagine a 'feminist football' and concrete proposals emerged: inclusive leagues, rules to guarantee participation, reconfiguration of public spaces. Thus, dreaming moves beyond fantasy to become a tool for strategic planning rooted in a shared desire.

Dreaming from a place of abundance, not scarcity

One of the biggest revelations was shifting from a scarcity-based approach to one based on abundance. Instead of listing what was missing, the girls and young women imagined what could be. And that change in narrative is key: to stop surviving the present and start inhabiting the future, starting now.

Dreaming then becomes a political practice that subverts the logic of 'it can't be done.' It is a way of inhabiting the future without waiting for permission. It is also a radical critique of cynicism, institutional cruelty, and the way in which—even in progressive spaces—adult-centered, hierarchical, or aid-paternalistic logics are often reproduced.

Girls as political subjects, not beneficiaries

This process makes one thing very clear: **girls and young women are not 'the future'; they are the active present of our struggles**. They are organising, thinking, creating, leading. Not from hierarchical structures, but from horizontalism, care, collective joy and political imagination. They are producing deeply transformative, situated and community-based knowledge, methodologies and strategies.

Therefore, **supporting their processes is not a symbolic gesture, it is a political and strategic decision**. It involves **financing without controlling, listening without correcting, accompanying without imposing**. It involves recognising them for what they are: **leaders capable of transforming their territories from their own organisational logic, with proposals rooted in everyday life and with the capacity to have a long-term impact**.

In contexts marked by the rise of hate speech and policies, setbacks in rights, and the defunding of life itself, choosing to invest in girls and young women takes on renewed significance. It becomes a concrete way of defending democracy, territories, and hope. It means holding together the social fabric from which collective, affective, and deeply political proposals still emerge.

Ensuring the growth, replication, and sustainability of girls' initiatives **requires the provision of secure, lasting, and accessible spaces and resources for their exploration, creation and leadership**. This is not optional. **It is urgent; it is necessary; it is transformative**.

Funding girls is not an expense. **It is an ethical, political, and structural investment in the present and in the world we still have the power to build**.

To keep the world from dying, we dream

In times when the future appears foreclosed by fear, violence, and urgency—times when patriarchal and fascist regimes charge with hatred toward bodies, queer identities, territories, and joy—**girls remind us that to dream is not naive, but insurgent**.

Imagining other ways of living, playing, caring and organising is the first step towards making them a reality. **Dreaming is political. In other words: we want something different, and we want it together**. Dreaming is a feminist act because it dismantles hierarchies, recovers tenderness as a tool and places desire as the engine of change. Dreaming is radical because it transforms those who dare to do so and those who walk alongside that courage.

The girls who dreamed during this process did not merely imagine new worlds — **they began to build them**. They revealed to us that, perhaps, in these other perspectives — grounded in love, wisdom, tenderness, and a profound commitment to centering life — **lies the bold yet gentle spark we need to keep the world from dying**.

Our role isn't to teach, direct, or correct them. **Our task is to step aside, listen earnestly, and offer support — with resources, respect, and real commitment — to the processes that are already sparking the future**.

Because dreaming isn't evading. **Dreaming is the most serious and most loving way we have to persist in fostering life, even in the midst of collapse**.

Birthing the Dreaming & Worldbuilding Game

(and the Unintended Consequence of Embracing Imperfection)

Kruthika N.S. [Game Co-creator and Artist in Residence](#)

Chapter I: Games, Jetpacks, and Menstrual Blood Volcanoes

"We're never going to have a perfect world because perfect worlds can't exist," Professor Marina Zurkow says. We write it down - actually process what's being said - and then turn to each other, puzzled. It's early 2024, in a class titled *"Investing in Futures"* at NYU's Brooklyn campus. Wait. Isn't this a class I signed up for to help us actually reimagine a better world? What's the point if we start with the premise that it's not even going to be perfect? I thought this class was going to give me that answer. Should I drop out? Should I sign up for that other storytelling class instead? I'm not sure what's going on in the heads of everyone around me, but before I feed it further, my stream of consciousness is broken by Marina, who says:

"Let's play a game."

Over the course of that semester, in groups of three or four, we create magical worlds we absolutely love using the [MORE&MORE Framework](#), a game structure created by Marina and Sarah Rothberg. We even create worlds we're not really fond of at first but grow to like. Worlds that can't really exist any time in any future we know of, and worlds that we think couldn't possibly exist but that are closer than we could have ever imagined. I think my favourite - one I still think about to this very day - was a world rich in iron where we pray to the gods of iron. Obviously, we then become obsessed with the idea of iron-rich matter, including blood, and we go on to create ways to celebrate and treasure menstrual blood, flying in our jetpacks to pour it into volcanoes. Indeed, this was such an evocative world we were building in our dreaming sessions that it went on for weeks. The only prompts that Marina's game had given us was that jetpacks were a means of transportation in a world rich in iron. Our menstrual blood ritual to the volcano was conceived through our collective dreaming.

Worldbuilding session facilitated at the *Building New Worlds* exhibit, at GG & POP, New York, as part of my artistic thesis project on girls' dreams (2025).



It was quite some time until we finally grasped the depth of our dreaming. It wasn't that we were ever actually going to live in a world where we pooled our menstrual blood into a volcano as a regenerative ritual, but that we desired a world where menstrual blood was not seen as taboo, where regeneration was celebrated, and even human fluid was seen as something worth valuing. The game was never really about building actual worlds but finding the meaning of what we desire in our present, and that in imagining a new world, we might put voice to some of those desires.

I became fascinated by the premise of rebuilding our real world from scratch. *"What would the world look like if it was built on girls' dreams instead of the dreams of old privileged men?"* This exploration very soon became the anchor for my [thesis question and art installation](#).

And so, to the present. Call it serendipity, call it magic, call it a dream, but I find the folks at Our Collective Practice fascinated by the very same.

And out of sheer instinct, I say, *"Let's play a game."*

Chapter II: Dreams of Feminist Worldbuilding

In the summer of 2024, I find myself reworking the cards, rewording the prompts of Marina's game, and rewriting the meditative guide. I try to reimagine the game, not to fit a classroom, nor a corporate setting or tech founder's office, but a play session with young girls. The folks at Our Collective Practice are elated, and I'm ecstatic that I get to collaborate on this exploration with an organisation with the same vision. At some juncture, I realise that I need the original game designer's perspective to see if I'm on the right track - somebody who has experience guiding the creation of new worlds, a creative backbone. I write to Marina, *"Would you be open to doing a private tutorial with me next semester - perhaps we could call it Feminist Worldbuilding?"* She readily accepts.

I create various versions of the meditative guide that Marina had presented to us in class. This is very similar to any guided meditation you might have listened to at some point, where you close your eyes and play an audio recording or have a yoga teacher guide you through imagining a ball of light moving through your body. But instead of a ball of light, it takes you through certain prompts that the player has already picked - prompts which nudge you to imagine a

world completely divorced from your current reality. I echo Marina's prompt through this meditative guide - a simple question laden with power: *"If this is true, what else could be true?"* The rest of the guidance I completely adapt, prime for a 10-year-old girl to follow. In one version, I add a line where the player imagines themselves walking or swimming or gliding through their world until they come across a group of girls. I nudge them to have a conversation with the girls to see what emerges.

"Love this!", exclaims Marina in our second or third Feminist Worldbuilding tutorial session. *"Just try not to nudge them towards a positive conversation all of the time."*

I feel torn. Marina, in her own prompts, constantly asks players to imagine a world that they want to live in, yet she tends to veer towards embracing imperfections. It's not until I begin to facilitate these sessions for myself that I begin to understand why.

Chapter III: Realities of Feminist Worldbuilding

Over the course of that summer, I find myself facilitating sessions with the team at Our Collective Practice, working with the version of the game I came up with in the Feminist Worldbuilding class.

Alongside me are regional facilitators from their team who are an absolute delight to collaborate with. They create warm, lovely worlds filled with sunshine, endless libraries, community gardens and kitchens, and food for everyone. Each of them takes the game to their own hometowns, where they have already identified a group of girls they want to play it with.

And then came their feedback.

"This is the first time that we've ever asked them to dream!"

"Oh, they enjoyed it so much!"

"The girls felt really, really horrible when one of the prompts said that there would be no schools in their world."



"The girls didn't really appreciate the fact that the world would be ruled by robots."

"The girls don't really understand this world."

I attempt to make a strong case for the prompts ranging from; *"Oh, just because I say that there are no schools in that world, it doesn't mean that there can't be any education. Education can look different in that world. Don't you think there is some merit to guiding them in that way?"* to *"Why can't they just imagine nice robots?!"* (Something even I feel incapable of most of the time!).

After much discussion with the team at Our Collective Practice, we decide to remove some of the prompts to make it safer and more meaningful for the girls and meet them right where they are. I still have a strong inclination to let the girls sit in their imperfections, but I can't really vocalise why.

It isn't until the spring of 2025 that I finally find the words.

Chapter IV: Visas, Wars, and Rebel Farmers

In our tiny, shared apartment in Brooklyn, my flat mate Caroline is rearranging some of her mycelium sculptures that she had made during an Asian American Arts Alliance programme. *"You should apply this year"*, she says. My initial reaction is a casual nod, never believing that something like this game would ever exist in the same world as mycelium sculptures. But with her nudge, I apply anyway, and end up receiving the [What Can We Do? Artist Grant](#) to take this game to children who are part of the New York Public Library's teen programme. The irony is not lost on me that this is my first conscious reckoning of how my thesis research about *"how we are often limited by the worlds that we build for ourselves in our own heads"* clearly also applies to me.

Fast forward a few weeks, and I find myself in front of the New York Public Library in Chinatown, Manhattan. I arrange a large circle of chairs with the coordinator and add a few mats on the floor in the centre of the space for those who may prefer. In this moment, I am acutely aware that the only experience I have of facilitating this game is with my friends, with the folks at Our Collective Practice, and over Zoom with their regional facilitators. The players trickle in, mostly in groups of three or four, chatting away about some recent anime they've watched or how the latest test went in school. I begin.



Worldbuilding session facilitated at the New York Public Library, Chinatown New York, as part of the 'What Can We Do?' Grant by the Asian American Arts Alliance (2025)

These kids create fantastic worlds. It comes almost as second nature to them, most of them having played Dungeons and Dragons religiously. They are excited by the worlds they build, but unlike the groups I've met before, who treat the world-building exercise as something with a beginning, middle, and end, with the creation of the world forming the end of course, they instead expand the task.

"Can I get a visa into your world?," a kid from one group asks the other. "No. Our leader Felipe (a fictional farmer-rebel-leader they've just created) won't allow it."

I foolishly decide to interject: "Do you think visas even exist in a world like this?" The first group treats this as an invitation.

"Yeah, we don't care about Felipe. We're going to declare war against your world."

"You can't do that. We don't want war."

"What are you going to do to stop us? Our world is filled with highly trained spies." A prompt of their own making, that they've decided to build on, takes centre stage.

I find myself a bit confused but also curious about what's going to unfold. In all the worlds I've built or facilitated before, there had been this unsaid acceptance that these worlds would be inherently peaceful, with no talk of war, no talk of spies, no need for rebels. The kids here seem to have made no such promises.

Before I can interject once more, the coordinator at the library beats me to it. She apologetically smiles at me and asks the kids to wrap up, as we are almost at the end of the two-hour mark. She mouths several apologies to me, and I mouth an equal number of don't worrys. We try to conclude the session by making hasty remarks about how war is bad and how we shouldn't really encourage it, but it leaves me with the overwhelming feeling that we have somehow failed these kids. We haven't really given them the scaffolding to sit with a world that has real problems and no built-in solutions. And perhaps more importantly, we haven't let them sit with the possibility of divisive opinions within two conflicting worlds.

What's most alarming to me is that the two adults in the room decided to pacify the situation as though we were trying to protect the children from these imaginary wars, while the children seemed to be at ease with conflict.

Something about that session has stayed with me ever since.

Chapter V: Dreamscapes in Fabric

After my stint with the Asian American Arts Alliance, I am catapulted straight back into my residency with Our Collective Practice. The regional facilitators have come back with new findings from the new worlds built by the group of girls they each worked with. Each region has had several groups with several different prompts. "Clearly, these worlds must be so different," I think as I dig in and make notes. In a way, I'm right, but I'm also exhilaratingly wrong. Despite having severely different material conditions in each of their imagined worlds, the girls somehow provide us a foundational set of values that echo and resonate with each other's worlds. It is almost as though these worlds have been in constant conversation with each other, and these conversations are now slowly emerging as I jot these worlds down, side by side.

"There is only one way we can present this to an audience," I tell the team at Our Collective Practice. "We need to stay true to how these words have been imagined by these girls, but at the same time, we have to create a cohesive thread that weaves through them."

I know it will be incredibly foolish of me to veer any further from the gorgeous images these girls have already concocted in my mind, and I make a conscious effort to stay as true to their vision as I can. At the same time, I decide that some level of fiction on my part is needed to make all these distinct pieces of the puzzle come together in a way that forms one possible reality.

Words don't come close to what these girls have achieved, so I leave you with three films from [India](#), [Jordan](#), and [Romania](#). I've created these in a humble attempt to bridge their imaginations with a tangible reality borne out of fabric. I've specifically used discarded material to create collage-esque videos of these moving breathing worlds that in a way say, *"We exist. It might take us a while to get here, and it might take you a while to piece us together, but we certainly exist."*



Stills from one of the dreamscape films.



Chapter VI: Peace, Perfection, and Ripped Wallpaper

It's the summer of 2026. I'm in Naarm (Melbourne) for Women Deliver, facilitating the Dreaming & Worldbuilding Game for participants from across the globe, primarily from feminist advocacy and human rights backgrounds. I haven't facilitated a single session since the Rebel-Farmer-War-Zone incident.

We play the game, and I invite each group to share. *"We live in a world where all of us are mermaids. We sing sweet songs to each other. We eat out of oyster shells. We all share our food. There is no violence. We are in complete harmony and at peace at all times,"* shares one group.

I ask the group to read their prompts, and the one they build on is where they all live underwater.

"That's interesting, but do you think that there could be a problem that might arise in this world? Do you think it's always going to be peaceful?" I ask.

It's been a long day. Everyone in the groups has been running from one session to another in the middle of a very overwhelming conference, and I don't blame them for saying, *"No. We don't have any problems here. We just choose to live in peace."*

Something about this takes me back to that room in the New York Public Library. *"If people can just choose to live in peace, why wouldn't we be doing it right now in the real world? Don't you think that you could run out of oysters maybe one day? How do you think you would navigate that? And isn't peace something that is just determined by somebody who wants to keep the status quo?"*

Honestly, I have no answer for this myself. It's a short session, and we have four more groups that need to share. I'm not sure if the group ever got back and put their heads together about what could be a problem in their world or how conflict would be resolved.

Worldbuilding session facilitated at Women Deliver, Melbourne (2026)



I'm not sure if the context of the conference allowed them to even think about it anymore. But if there's one thing I take away, it is that in every game I've played or facilitated with adult players, there's a tendency to create a world that is so alike in our material conditions, yet so distinct from our values. As adults, we often fail to imagine a world that could be difficult yet exciting to live in. Children treat this process so differently. They create messy, wild worlds. They create worlds where animals can talk, and they create worlds where farmers have back stories which don't allow them to practise certain religions. They have fish that wage wars, and they have flowers that can't be traded. And yet, at the same time, they manage to find ways to resolve these conflicts. Significantly, children manage to bring out the difficult conversations in their game play. They manage to create avenues for negotiation, even if it means, as adults, we have to bear witness to uncomfortable conversations

As a facilitator and a maker of games, I take away one main lesson from Marina's game and the version we created based on it - that our dreams, in order to create a tangible effect, need to be able to sit in unprocessed, strange, wild, uncomfortable muck. We need to create worlds that might seem pleasant but also be able to rip off their shiny wallpaper to reveal their imperfections. We need to be able to sit with uncomfortable prompts and still create something worth fighting for.

After all, the world we have been handed isn't perfect, and we choose to live in it anyway, despite all its structural and systemic challenges. If we continue to hold our imagination to a level of perfection that we have been trained to think about, it will only reveal to us that these ideas of perfection stem from the same systemic structures of capitalism and patriarchy that demand uniformity, predictability, and rigidity - the very ideas that our lives, our collectives, our conversations, and our desires seek to resist. So why should our dreams be any different?

Worldbuilding session facilitated at the *Building New Worlds* exhibit, at GG & POP, New York, as part of my artistic thesis project on girls' dreams (2025).



Questions for Collective Reflection and Sharing

Have you played the Dreaming and Worldbuilding Game? Have you facilitated sessions of the game, or spaces of dreaming, imagination and worldbuilding with girls and young feminists?

We invite you to explore the possibilities of nurturing creativity, imagination, and dreaming through playing it, and to use this space to write down your reflections about your experience with facilitating spaces of collective imagination and co-creation with girls and young feminists.

These questions are intended to support collective reflection as well as the sharing of your experiences with imagination and dreaming with others. We invite you to respond to them in free-flowing form, writing down the first things that come to mind when you read the questions.

What worlds have you dreamt? What worlds have the girls and young feminists imagined and co-created? What do these worlds look like, sound like, smell like, feel like?

What was surprising or most striking about the experience of facilitating the game with girls and young feminists? What has this experience revealed to you?

What is easy about sharing (y)our experiences with imagination and dreaming with others?*

**What is hard about sharing (y)our experiences with imagination and dreaming with people?
What are the words and feelings that are hard to express?***

**What can you share here regarding your experiences with imagination and dreaming?
[List as many things as you can]***

What are ways in which you can nurture the possibilities of collective imagination, dreaming, and worldbuilding in your life and communities?

What do you think would be possible if the world supported the dreams of girls and young feminists?

* These reflection prompts are adapted from The Audre Lorde Questionnaire to Oneself, offered here in gratitude for the enduring gifts of her work. We hope these adapted questions invite the same courageous practice of individual and collective listening and learning, speaking truth, and imagining new and expansive possibilities. In carrying these questions into new conversations with girls and young feminists, we honour Lorde's legacy - one rooted in the curiosity, imagination, and fearless inquiry she cultivated from girlhood.

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.



Lined writing area for notes.



OUR
COLLECTIVE
PRACTICE

