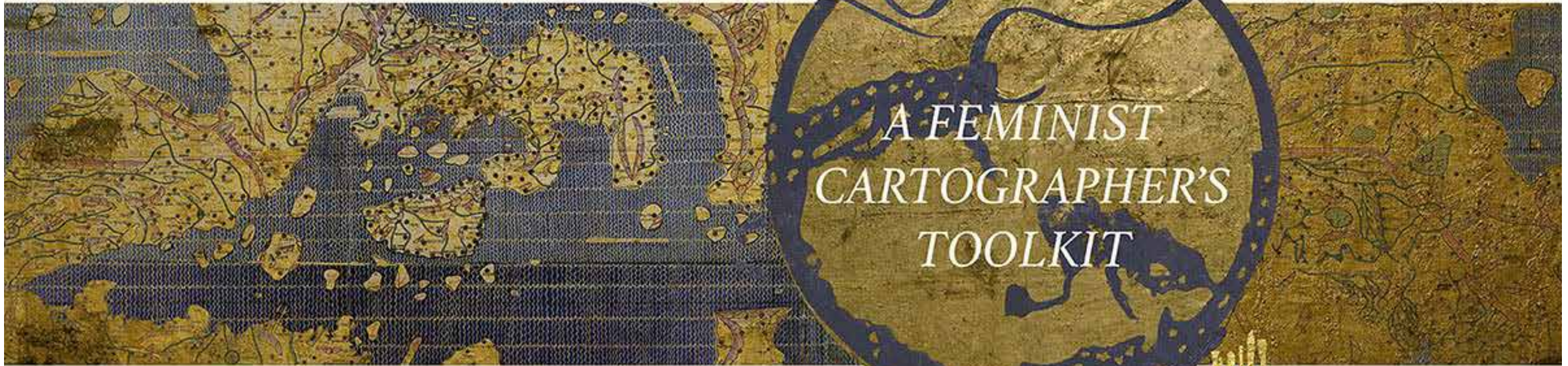


# Fearless Futures

A FEMINIST  
CARTOGRAPHER'S  
TOOLKIT

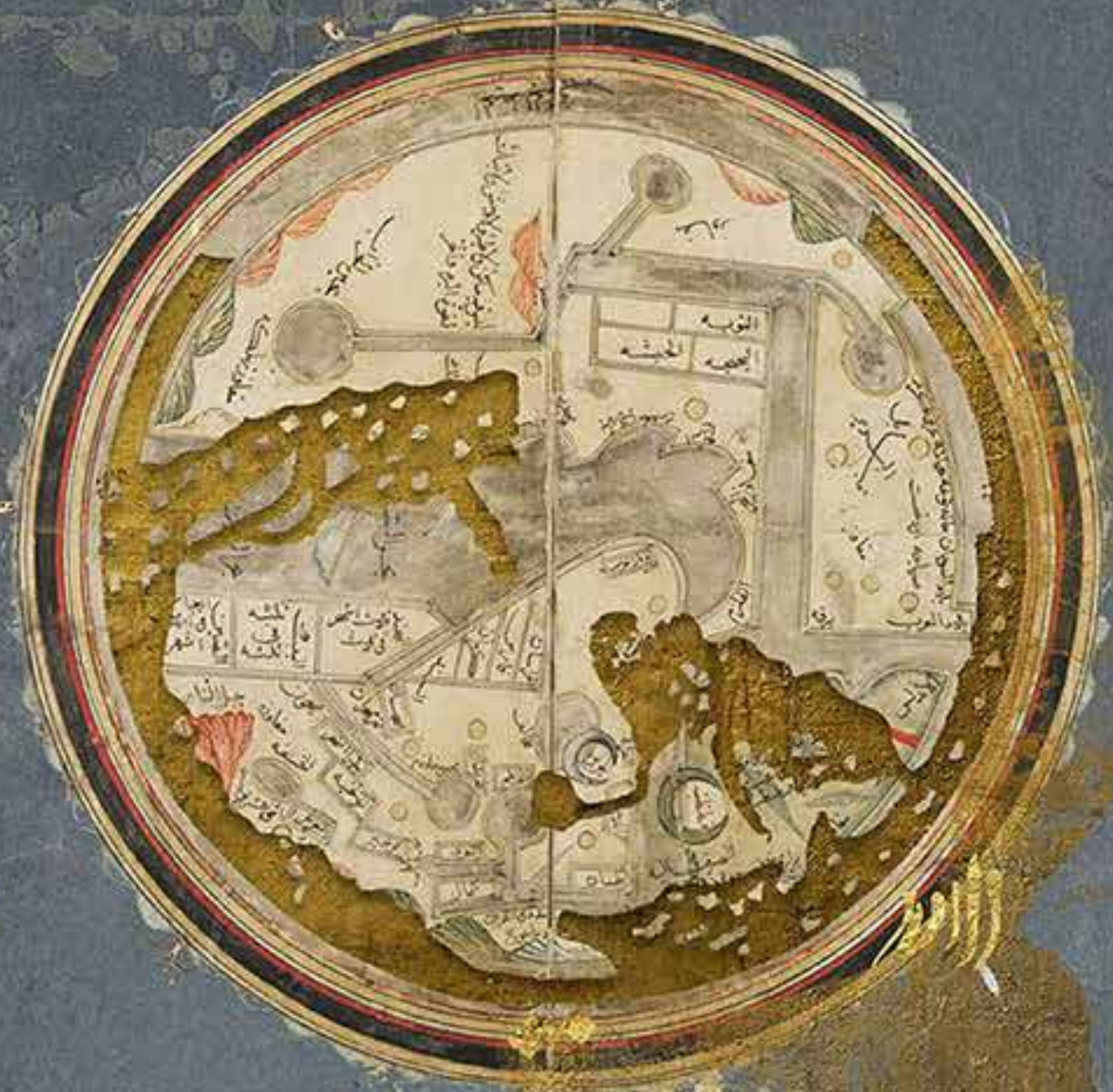
*you know my world was never flat*





*Searle's  
Sutures*

part 1  
*ATLAS*







What is the NAME you were given?  
 What is the PLACE you chose?  
 Mapwork

WRITE IT IN YOUR MOTHER TONGUE

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE

Foreword

My mother was a mapmaker before she became the artist she is today. As a cartographer, with a love (and training) for making Islamic miniatures and botanicals, she used to recreate old maps with a single-hair brush and a diamond cutter's eyeglass in the smallest room of our house, which was barely big enough to fit her drafting table. This was the only room lit in dark hours, and so became home to moths flickering above her, watching her paint.

Sometimes at midnight, I would stumble out of bed with heavy eyelashes and see her perched at her table as she summoned rivers and mountains with her fingers: stepping out of one dream and into another, I was in love.

Here was a woman who could make a world.

Toward the end of her relationship with my father, I remember the night that he tore one of her maps in anger. Continents lay scattered on the floor. We tried to piece it back together, but in turn, the eventual severing of their marriage taught us that beauty could be reclaimed in broken places. I eventually used fragments of those torn maps in my art.

Maps, though often seen as objects of wonder and adventure, have a good deal of healing to do. Some have used them to carve imagined borders, (re)form nations, and navigate territories that were not theirs. Finger flick ahead a few centuries: a map guides me to my next meeting, informs me I'm late, and warns me against traffic. I trust it. When I ask the same map to show me the route from Delhi to Lahore it says: "No Way Found." Our maps continue to be torn.

Colonial navigators used the idea of 'terra nullius' or 'empty lands' to justify the invasion of territories that were by no means empty. Far from uninhabited, these lands were home to Indigenous nations, their honeyed deities and spirits, ancestors and kin, and their plant and animal relations. Even within feminist spaces our maps are used to document gender-based violence, visualizing and embedding statistics that depict our lack of safety.

But other mapmaking traditions exist too: Songlines, or 'dreaming tracks,' are central to the belief systems of Indigenous Australian nations. These songs, which trace ancestral paths across the land and sky, mark the routes followed by Creator-Beings during the Dreamtime. Songlines are recorded in traditional songs, stories, dances, and paintings of Indigenous communities. Indigenous people who have inherited these oral maps from their ancestors navigate their lands by repeating the songs, which describe the location of particular significant landmarks and sacred sites. By singing their songs in sequence, Indigenous people are able to navigate vast distances.

*"& what is a country but the drawing of a line! i draw thick black lines around my eyes & they are a country! & thick red lines around my lips & they are a country! & the knife that chops the onions draws a smooth line through my finger! & that is a country & the tightening denim presses a soft purple line into my belly! & when i smile like my mother a line flashes between my two front teeth! & for every country that i lose i make another & i make another" -Safia Elhillo, self-portrait as map*



Drawing from this tradition, which traces stories into our geographies, uses poetry as a form of navigation, and invokes a collective dreaming/memory- intimately connecting people to their landscapes as the carriers of those stories - in our Atlas we started to **sing**.

Here is a process of using maps primarily as tools for activists to recognize these lands as full of dreams and collective imaginings, spaces for common ground and creation.

To enable the process of imagining new geographies, Fearless Collective and AWID designed a workshop methodology called 'Fearless Futures,' which premiered at the 13th AWID International Forum in September 2016. This workshop process (the focus of this toolkit) was accompanied by a 64 x 13 foot map of our imagined space for visioning fantastical feminist futures.

This map is woven with symbols representing the systems, structures, and social constructions we navigate everyday. As these can be quite complex themes to work with, we designed the symbols in ways that could be indicative of safe spaces in order to inspire participants to believe in the possibility of alternatives.

This Atlas, and the methodology it contains, is a work of co-creation: a collective weaving by creators from across the world- a collaboration between Fearless Collective and the Association for Women's Rights in Development (AWID). We thank AWID for helping us to make this Atlas a reality. We would like to thank Amina, Aimee, Angelika, Nida, Cassie, Pearl, Madhu, Josephine, Svabhu, Ruby, and Chloe for making this toolkit and the development of Fearless Futures possible.

Stiko Shiv Suleman  
founder, Fearless Collective



# How to use this

WITH YOUR HANDS

this toolkit is made in two parts



## Atlas

THIS ATLAS IS MADE FOR  
COLLECTIVE IMAGINATION  
INSPIRATION REALIZATION  
RELIEF



## Book of DIRECTIONS

THE BOOK OF DIRECTIONS IS  
'NAVIGATION' GUIDANCE  
FINDING YOUR WAY (to me)

INDIVIDUALLY



use this as a journal for dreaming yourself into existence

COLLECTIVELY



imagine together the space you would like to inhabit

100% HANDMADE AND OPENSOURCE AND UNLIKE ANYTHING YOU HAVE SEEN BEFORE.  
print me/share me/distribute me and let people know where to find me. (I am all yours)

((Print this BIG. A3 works just fine))

此 份 圖 集 是 由 人 們 共 同 創 作 的 一 份 圖 集 其 中 包 含 了 許 多 有 關 女 性 權 益 的 圖 案 和 圖 標 這 些 圖 案 和 圖 標 是 由 許 多 女 性 共 同 創 作 的 其 中 包 含 了 許 多 有 關 女 性 權 益 的 圖 案 和 圖 標 這 些 圖 案 和 圖 標 是 由 許 多 女 性 共 同 創 作 的

"my mother was my first country // the first place I ever lived  
-land" -nayyirah waheed.





HELLO there Atlasworker

before you were

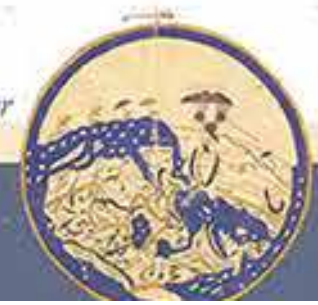
ARTIST / ACTIVIST / FEMINIST  
SOCIALIST / REVOLUTIONARY / HE / SHE  
THEY / QUEER / BI / POLYAMOROUS /  
HETEROSEXUAL / AGNOSTIC / ATHEIST / BELIEVING /  
FIREFIGHTER / ACTIVATOR / ORGANIZER

FILL FILL FILL  
YOU WERE ONCE A CHILD.

LET THIS BE OUR COMMON GROUND

*if you have picked up this atlas, we know the child lives in you still. Activists are dreamers- fighting for a world that doesn't yet exist.*

*i made a map of water*



*"later that night / i held an atlas in my lap / ran my fingers across the whole world / and whispered / where does it hurt? it answered / everywhere / everywhere / everywhere." - Warsan Shire*



Much of our ideas of this world, the systems that run it and the attitudes that shape it, are based on our fears: the fear of not having enough, of not being loved, of rejection, of invisibility, of abandonment, of perceived weakness, of being taken for granted, of being lost.

Unfortunately, fear often (in)forms the foundations upon which even the most well-intentioned initiatives and movements are carried out. When we stand in protest, we know what we do not want: slogans often reflect nostalgic variations of our struggles and we formulate demands that react to the failures of our systems. Within our own spaces, movements, and communities, we often spend all of our time firefighting for the issues we believe in and forget to water our own roots. In doing so, we leave little space for imagining a world beyond our present realities.

**Fear, in its essence, is a total and utter misuse of the imagination.**

# Fear is a total misuse of the imagination



IN ITS  
essence:

As we grow older, we are taught to play out every detail of an event, conditioned to expect the worst. We bind our wrists with strings of "what ifs." It is as if one who had the capacity for both dreams and nightmares as a child, now focuses solely on conjuring monsters under their beds as an adult. As children, we invoked creative spirits to guide us into visions of becoming astronauts who explore the moon or geologists who study the motions of tectonic plates.

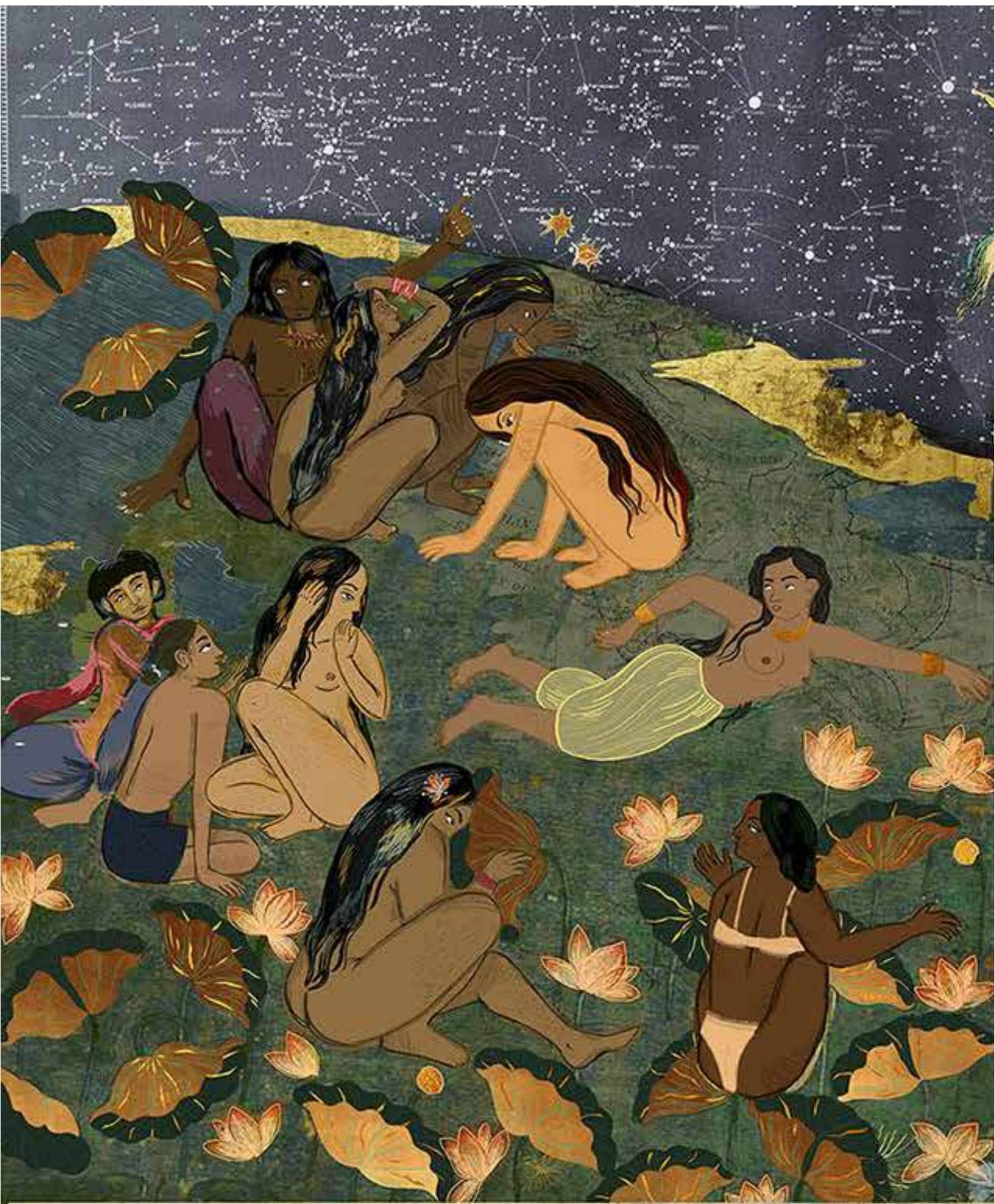
We used our imaginations to enter empathetic conversations with birds and beasts, color in the mysteries of the universe, and create safe spaces where kin could hide during imaginary storms (and drink a cup of tea). The imagination has always been an outlet for play and wonder, as well as a way for us to tap into the same creative forces that cause bees to pollinate and telescopes to find distant galaxies. The imagination is intention for creation, fuel for innovation, and playmate of mystery.

And there's more magic: as children we seldom imagine alone. Somehow, children involved in imagining together can see this new universe, enter into it, and build a home, together.

In putting together this toolkit, we started to think about collective acts of imagination: love is an act of imagination between individuals who form commitments to each other. Countries are collectively imagined and reinforced with national songs, flags, and symbols. People press foreheads to the ground and circle around mountains in prayer. Laws are written like spells. Collective imagination crystallizes into belief systems, which then form institutions. However, in recent history, women's voices are rarely woven into the creation of the systems that influence the world. Now is the time to reclaim these spaces and processes of collective imagination.

*"How to travel? Follow the star along... While we were growing up, we only lay on our backs and talk about stars // The stars and the Milky way have been moving all around . If you lay on your back in the middle of the night you can see the stars all blinking. They are all talking"- Bill Yudumduma Harney*





Does it surprise us then that patriarchy has appropriated something as powerful as the creative force? Women have long been the subjects of fantasy with abundant tales of mermaids, mothers, and nymphs, but are too seldom acknowledged and respected as its co-creators.

Let us close our eyes for a moment and remember the moment of pure imagining it took, for example, for women in a rural village in India to stand hand in hand and risk their bodies in protest, circling a tree. Activism is a form of dreaming; we are on the frontlines fighting for a world that does not exist yet.

Our first step in reclaiming fantasy and the creative spirit as feminists is to **suspend our disbeliefs.**

Suspending our disbeliefs involves willingly putting aside our critical faculties and believe the unbelievable. For example, when we imagine as children, there is a moment when one crosses the threshold of 'reality' and enters into worlds where anything is possible. When you were young, you may have looked into the sky and asked a friend nearby, "do you see that castle?" to which they may have responded with a resounding heartfelt "yes!" In this moment, a new space is entered. A new world begins. Reality is transcended and our disbelief is suspended.

In our feminist movements, suspending our disbeliefs allows us to say: *I will not always have to fight for my rights; people who do not share my beliefs are not my adversaries/enemies; the color of my skin will not always color my experiences of the world; my struggle will not leave me bitter and resentful; my unpaid labour will not remain unaccounted for.*

*"I am the Queen, the gatherer-up of treasures, most thoughtful, first of those who merit worship.... Through me alone all eat the food that feeds them, – each man who sees, breathes, hears the word outspoken. They know it not, yet I reside in the essence of the Universe. Hear, one and all, the truth as I declare it. - Devi Suktam*



# Suspension of Disbelief

*Fear came to eat my children.*

*Fear poisoned my rivers, drowned my islands, sank its teeth into my mountains, uprooted me by my silt. Fear stained me by my color. Fear whispered to me: you cannot leave. Fear tied borders around my legs. Fear huffed and puffed and blew my house down. Fear built a fortress in my chest. Fear starved my poems. Ate my tongue. Fear told me my sex was weaker. Fear kissed me in places I did not want.*

*One night, Fear came to eat my children. But worst of all, fear started to make me forget anything but itself. Fear stopped me from seeing anyone else. I belonged to it. I craved it. I wanted it. I held it in my arms. I depended on fear.*

*I knew I had to leave.*

When I was a child, one day, my friend and I looked up at the sky and I turned to her and said: "Do you see that boat in the sky?"

Instead of replying, "What boat? That's a cloud," she said, "Let's use it to get away."

This moment is called Suspension of Disbelief. This moment, when one crosses the threshold of reality and enters into a world where anything is possible, where the otherwise unbelievable is accepted as real. We invite you to enter this world of possibility through this exercise.





# MAKING SPACE FOR FORGIVENESS

Why is it so hard, yet important, for us to suspend our disbeliefs?

My love, you know our worlds are hurting.

I started writing the word 'forgiveness' to you (in the language of my colonizer).

I stop.

I grasp at my second language (supposed 'mother' tongue). I write شش خوب / माफी and hear it on the tongue of a family patriarch.

How do I even begin to forgive if my language is broken?

There came a time when we needed to articulate the world's flaws so we could break long silenced oppressions. Yet, as we focus on the forces that oppress us, there is a danger of romanticising the past, appropriating pain, or becoming overwhelmed by the struggle. Here is our request: this book is an exchange of lived experiences. Your story, and mine. When we forgive our stories we allow them to slowly dissolve into what is and what could be rather than what was. Forgiveness is a way of making space in our fractured Atlas; it is an allowance of change, a reclamation of beauty, and an expression of absolute power.

Everytime I forgive, I create space for possibilities. This is magic.

When we forgive our collective histories, we allow ourselves to create our futures.

an you show we where if Hurts?







*WHEREAS when offered an apology I watch each movement the shoulders/ high or folding, tilt of the head both eyes down or straight through/ me, I listen for cracks in knuckles or in the word choice, what is it/ that I want? To feel and mind you I feel from the senses... Where in the body do I begin." -Layli Long Soldier*





*Pleasure*



*Body*



*Economy*



*Labour*



*Spirituality*



*Knowledge*



*Power*



*Security*



*Home*



*Resources*



*Art*



*Justice*

let me show you the lay of the land



# I miss the village I never HAD

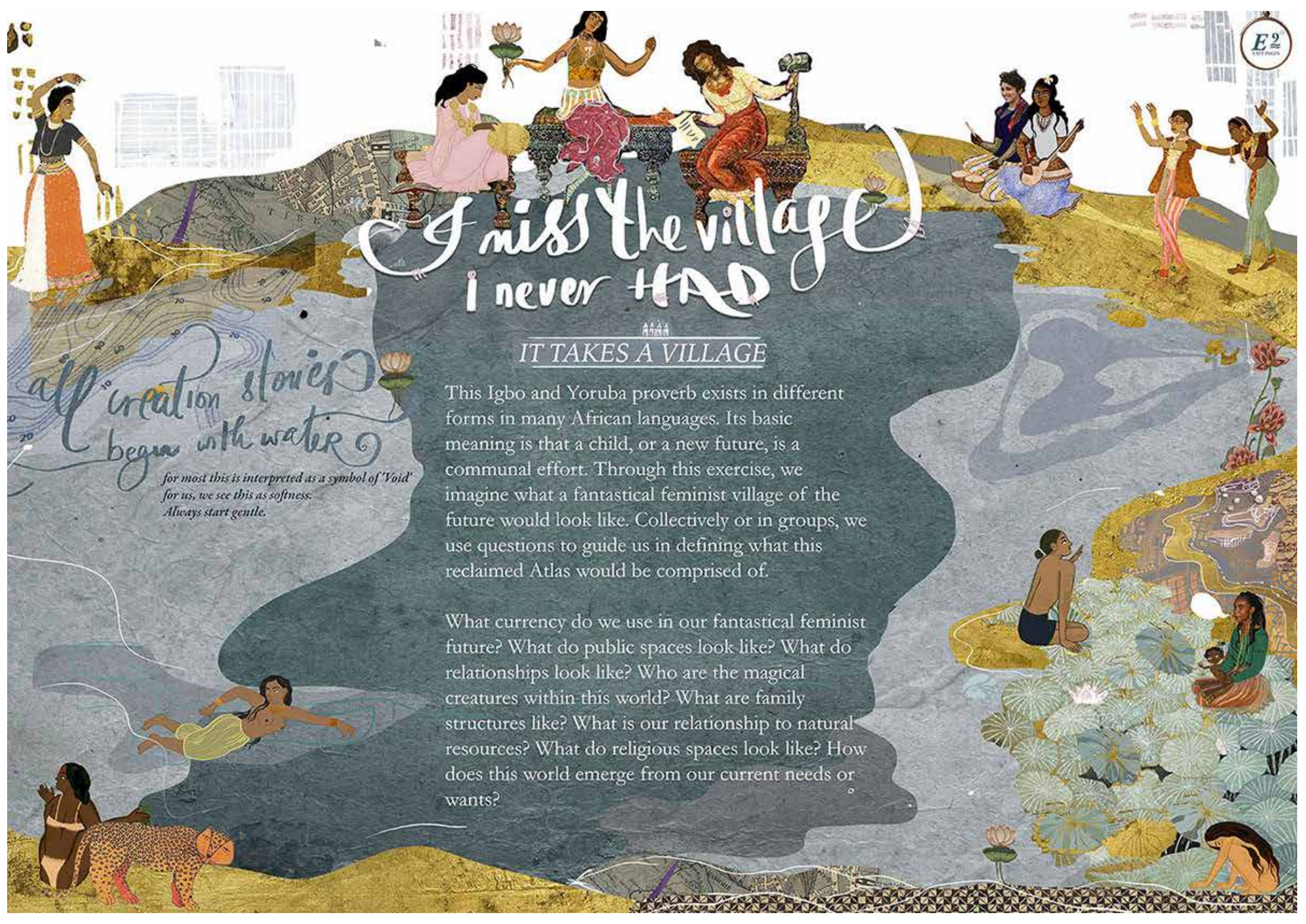
## IT TAKES A VILLAGE

This Igbo and Yoruba proverb exists in different forms in many African languages. Its basic meaning is that a child, or a new future, is a communal effort. Through this exercise, we imagine what a fantastical feminist village of the future would look like. Collectively or in groups, we use questions to guide us in defining what this reclaimed Atlas would be comprised of.

What currency do we use in our fantastical feminist future? What do public spaces look like? What do relationships look like? Who are the magical creatures within this world? What are family structures like? What is our relationship to natural resources? What do religious spaces look like? How does this world emerge from our current needs or wants?

all creation stories began with water

*for most this is interpreted as a symbol of 'Void' for us, we see this as softness. Always start gentle.*







# feather's magic Rule of THREE



In Hindu mythology it is said that for anything to be true, it needs to ring true three times



first, in all your atoms  
(personally true)



then, to all the people around you  
(socially true)

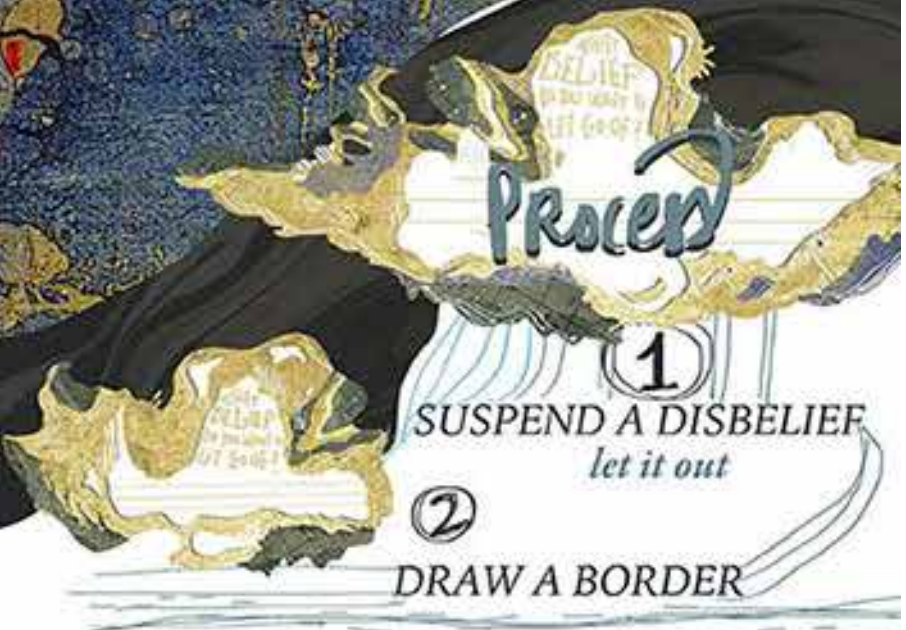


and finally, true to every star in every galaxy  
(Universally true)

## IT TAKES A VILLAGE

In our dreaming atlas, we take you on this journey through the personal, social, and universal by posing three questions in each of our villages. By asking these questions we want you to articulate Emotional, Social, and Systemic alternatives to current systems. We do this in affirmative ways. For example, while security systems today are built on the fear of keeping things out, we ask "what makes you feel safe?" to help you articulate ideas of safety and create systems based on that. We need to know what we love, as much as what we hate.

In the following pages you will find writing, quotes, and questions sorted into four themes or "villages." Each village has multiple elements represented through symbols on a map. Spend time in each space, wander and write. These questions can be answered individually or collectively.



3. MAKE SPACE FOR DREAMING  
write as much as you need,  
and if you need more space- reclaim it.

4. ARTICULATE  
try not to get stuck in the issue or  
in thinking that your idea is too  
extravagant. Your imagination still  
exists- let it find it's voice.

5. FANTASIZE  
dreaming and resistance can go hand  
in hand. Allow yourself to fantasize.



Answer all three questions in order



IT TAKES A VILLAGE  
to love

*It Takes a Village to Love, we loudly proclaim, as we immerse ourselves in jewel toned favelas (home), our anatomical hearts (body), and lush gardens of bliss (pleasure). We ask: How do we connect with ourselves, our communities, and our bodies?*





"... I was asked: what is one thing that I thought as a child? What was one thing that I thought was simple? I thought that it was very simple, the world was a beautiful place, the world is a beautiful place, and that, you know, if something went wrong, I could stand up, I could just raise my voice and everything would be ok again..."

In our village we wanted to go back to this child. The child who was curious, but not nasty. The child who questioned, but was not judgmental... this child who smiled just because the sky was blue, who opened his or her arms and embraced the world. We at the village decided to suspend all judgements, the attitudes that we have that prevent some others, the Others, to join us, because [they are] bodies that don't fit into our realities. There will be no us, there will be no them, there will be no Othering. What we mean by this is that we don't want our movements to be separate. We don't want us to be mainstream and them to be marginalized; we wanted to be one, synchronized and intersecting and moving ahead together....

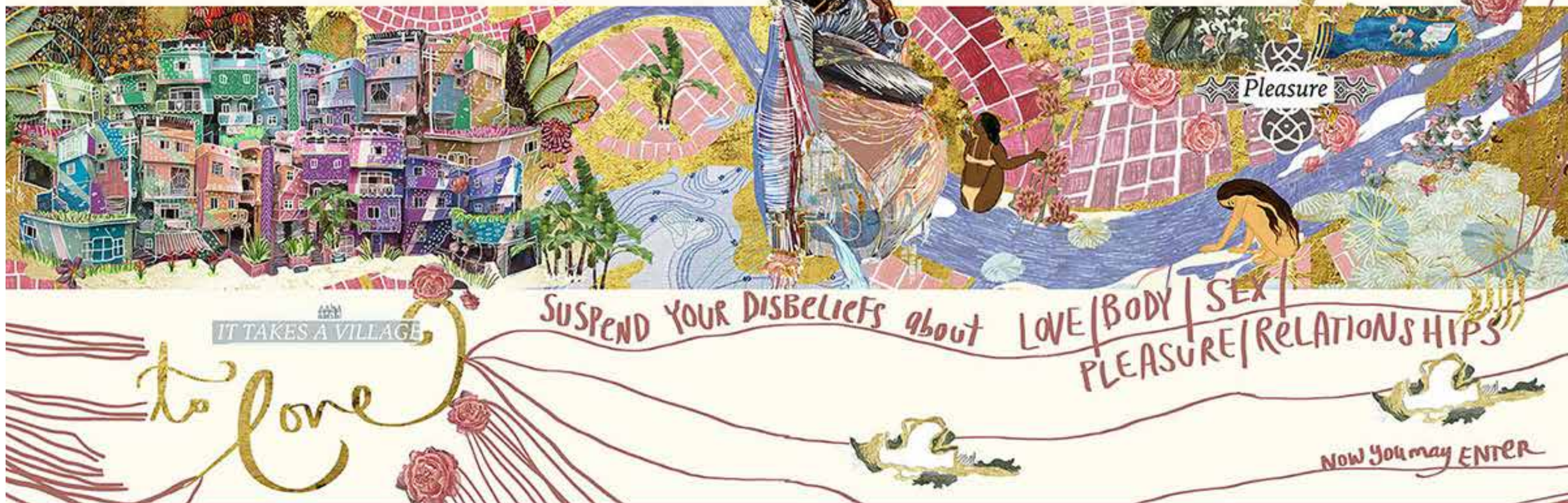
We have complete and informed consent in our village- no one can force us to do anything. There's no judgment or shame on us deciding on when and where we want to have sex... But there is also no judgement if we refuse the normative ways of sex... We want to shed some lenses that we carry, we want to shed the lens of asexuality that we fit on many bodies-

we fit on people with disabilities, we fit on trans women, we fit on the elderly because we decide that sex is for some and not for the others; that sexuality means something for us and nothing for them...

...And to end with, our houses... they have revolving doors (figuratively because revolving doors are not really wheelchair accessible), so we have revolving doors as a vision, which means that we don't have locks, we don't have stoppage, we share our space with everyone, we bring people into our homes.

What does this mean? That we don't only politically portray that we're doing the right thing and we're mingling with everyone and we're intersecting, but we really from our hearts bring everyone together right into our personal space, into our lives, and into our activism."

-Spoken by Nidhi Goyal, 2016 AWID Forum



on the lids of my eyes on the nape/ of my neck across the top of my/ shoulder down the/ side of my/ arm... over the/ knuckle of each finger... in/ the centre of my palm on the tender/ inside of my forearm in/ the crease/ of my underarm... between my breasts... on the/ inside of my thighs on the lips of the/ flower where you will find me/ trembling -Cheryl Savageau, Where I Want Them



# Body

*In our village, how do we connect with our bodies?*

*How do bodies shape our access, opportunities, protections etc?*

*How are bodies perceived, represented and valued?*





# Treasure

*Describe a pleasurable moment in our village?*

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*In our village, what turns you on?*

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*How do we talk about, value, and represent sex?*

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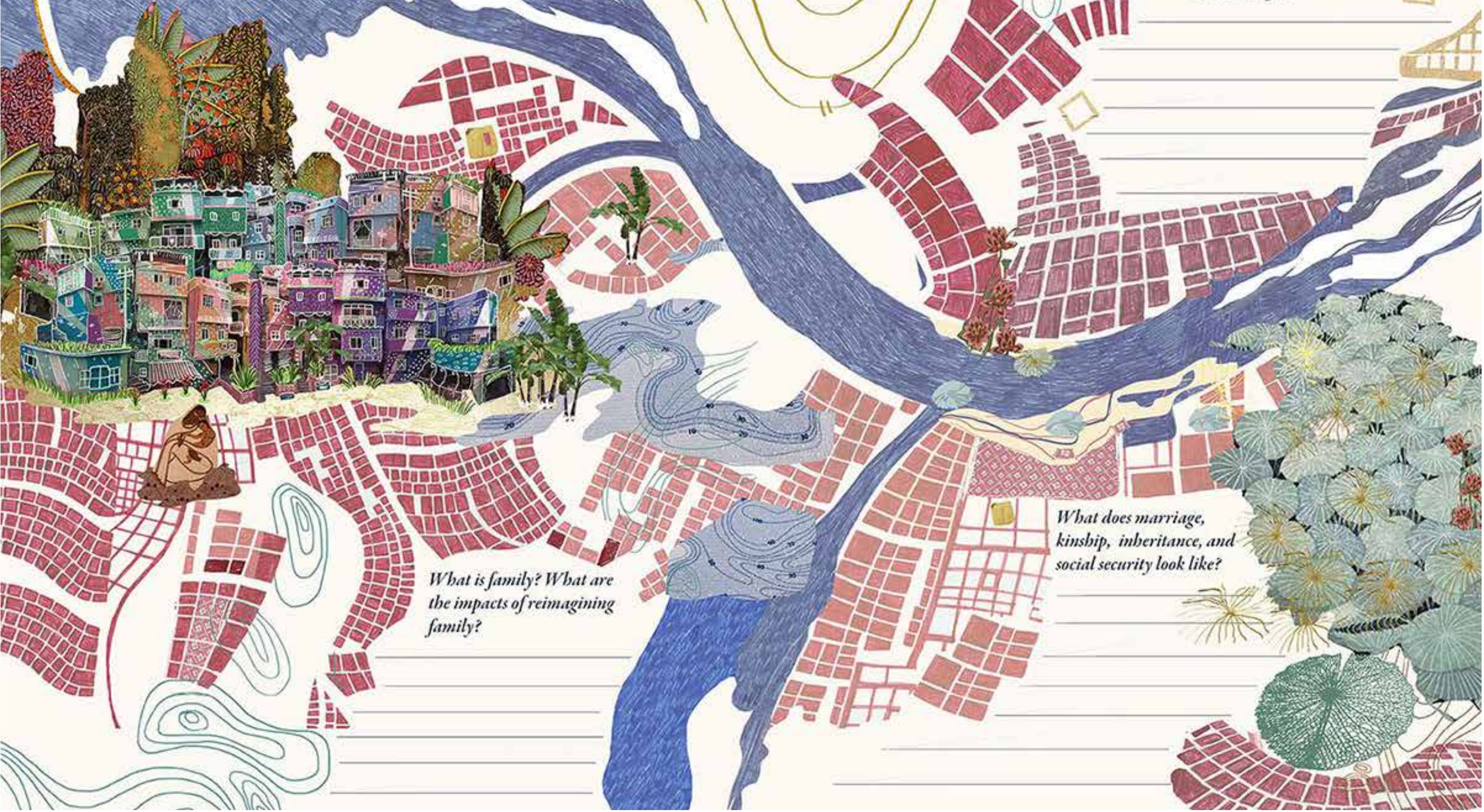
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# home



*In our village how do we relate to each other? How do we build relationships? How do we end relationships?*

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*What is family? What are the impacts of reimagining family?*

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*What does marriage, kinship, inheritance, and social security look like?*

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# MAKING SPACE



*In our village, how do we connect with our bodies?*

*How are bodies perceived, represented and valued?*

*How do bodies shape our access, opportunities, protections etc?*

*In our village how do we relate to each other? How do we build relationships? How do we end relationships?*

*What is family? What are the impacts of reimagining family?*

*What does marriage, kinship, inheritance, and social security look like?*

*In our village, what turns you on?*

*Describe a pleasurable moment in our village?*

*How do we talk about, value, and represent sex?*



IT TAKES A VILLAGE

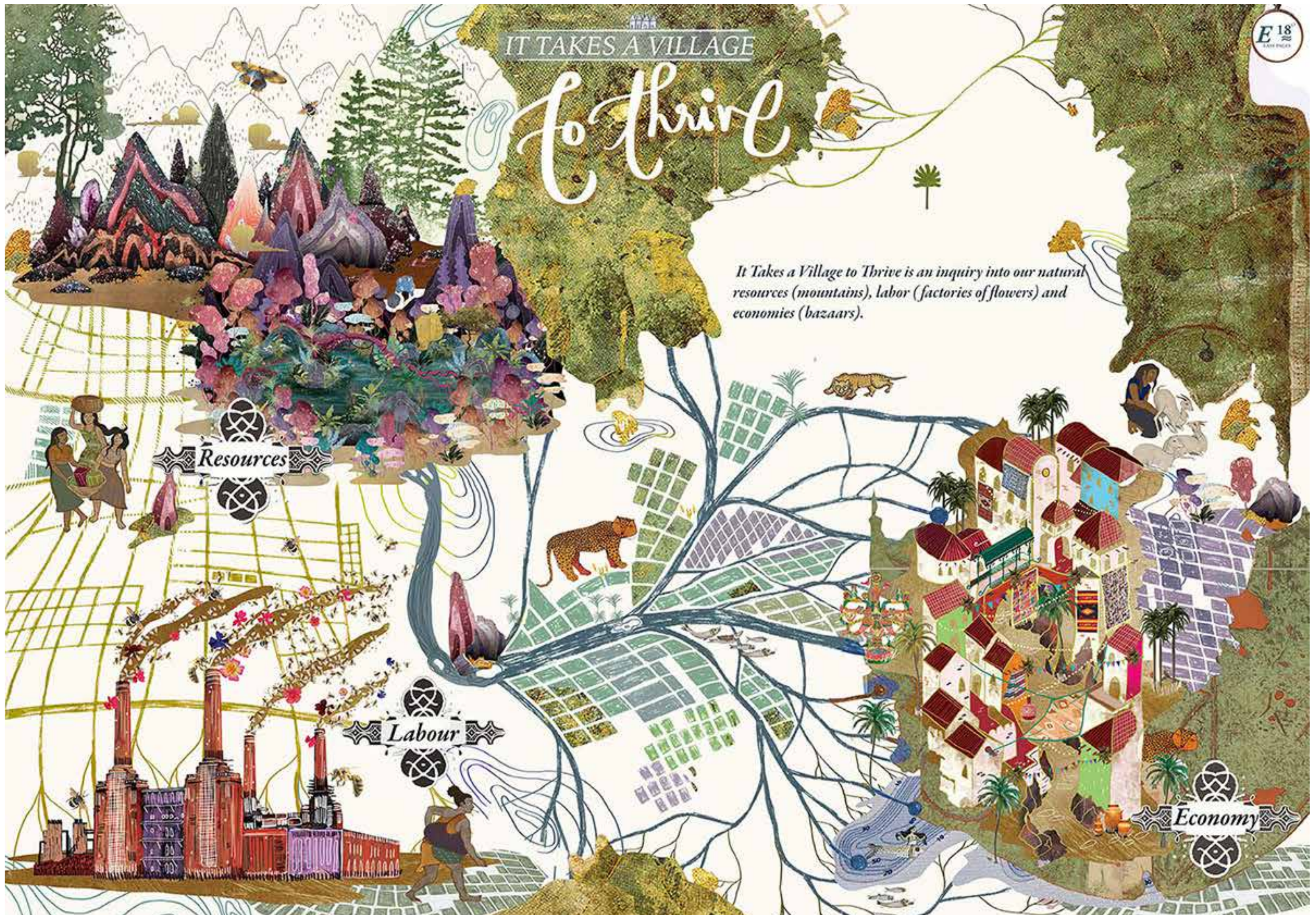
# To Thrive

*It Takes a Village to Thrive is an inquiry into our natural resources (mountains), labor (factories of flowers) and economies (bazaars).*

Resources

Labour

Economy







“They arrived in the village at night. It was dark. It was so deep in the night that it was almost morning. And they saw, just outside, some jars of water, beautifully painted, fresh water. And they saw some warm food, smelling so good on some beautiful plates. And they saw some clean sheets. And they look at each other- should we touch? And the night owl came by and say:

“If you are thirsty, drink some. If you are hungry, eat some. If you are tired, take a rest. You know, water is a gift from our mother, the Earth. It is only ours to share. In this village we only share water, we don't sell it. Imagine: not selling water? Hahahaha.”

“Wow. I think we've arrived. How do you work in this village? What people do with their time?”

“You can work, if you want. You can grow food, you can make food, not only for yourself, but you could leave some for the wanderers, for the young people who come back late at night. You can sit it outside. You can make and grow food to keep for the next seven generations coming. You set aside their plate, their side too. Haha. You can work: you can make crafts, you can make beautiful things that people can use. You can work: you can make

songs, you can lay down and watch the stars- yes that's work too heh! There are some of us in this village that sit and watch the river and watch the ocean, some of us watch the stars so we can sit down and mark down every move they make, so that we can collect knowledge, so that people will know, in the generations coming when the droughts will come, when the floods will come, and where to set the village and where to unset it.”

“Yes, what is your currency in this village? How does it work?”

“Hahaha! Can you laugh? Yes. Hahaha. In this village we trade laughter, we like smiles, we make people smile, hahahaha- can you laugh for me?”

“Will you laugh with me? hahahaha”

“Ooo, I think we've arrived in the village of feminist future because there will be no future if it's not feminist!”

-Spoken by Coumba Touré at the 2016 AWID Forum



IT TAKES A VILLAGE

To Thrive

SUSPEND YOUR DISBELIEFS about NATURAL RESOURCES / CAREWORK / FOOD

NOW YOU MAY ENTER

“Sunlight made visible the whole length of a sky, movement of leaf, flower, all six colours on tree, blush and creeper: all this is the day's worship.” -Akkamahadevi



# Natural Resources

*In our village, what is considered precious and why?*

## Resources

*How do we give and what do we take?  
How are natural resources used and distributed?*

*What defines our relationship to earth -  
extraction, feeding, respect,  
interdependence?*



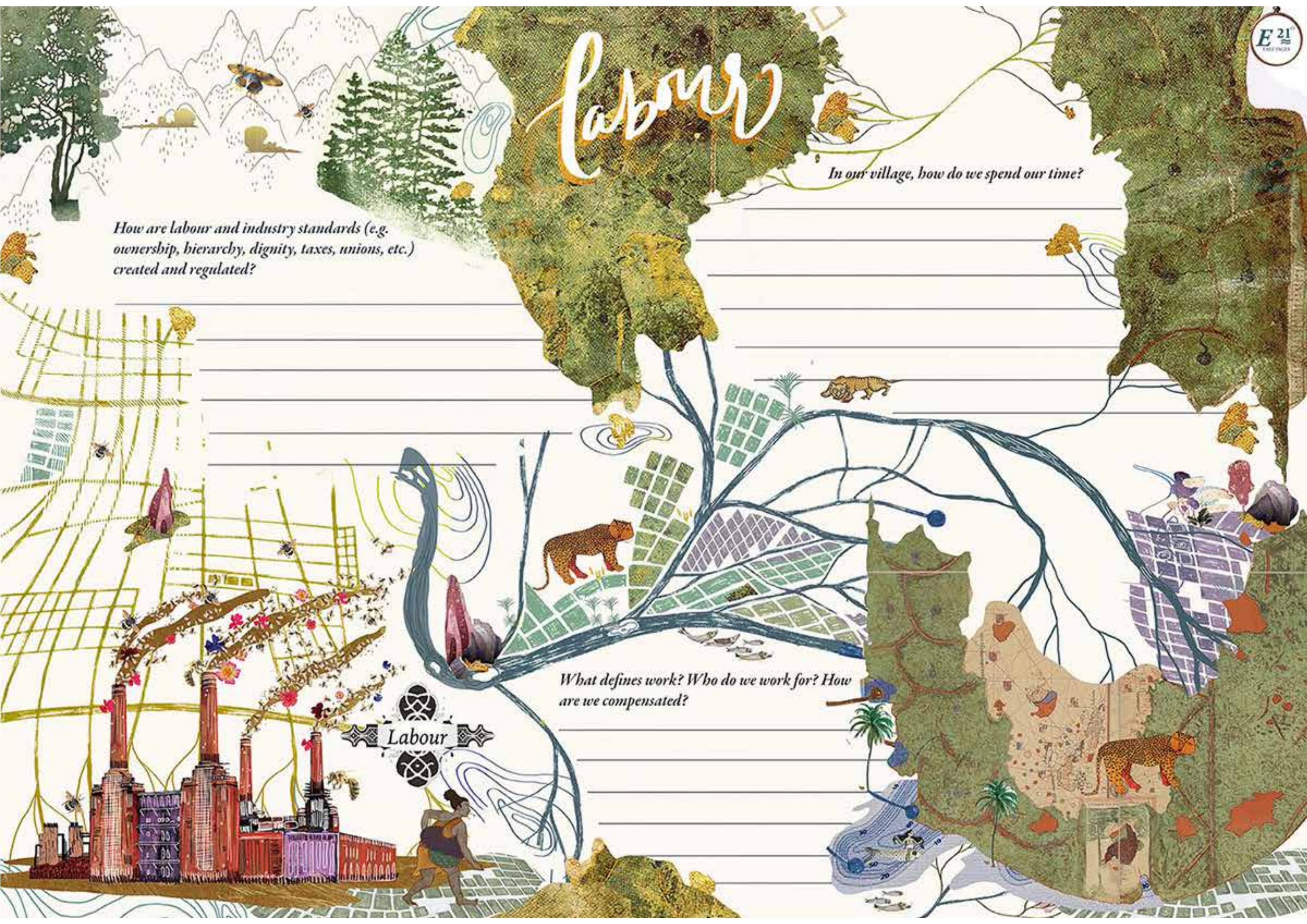


# labour

*In our village, how do we spend our time?*

*How are labour and industry standards (e.g. ownership, hierarchy, dignity, taxes, unions, etc.) created and regulated?*

*What defines work? Who do we work for? How are we compensated?*





# Economy

*In our village, how is value defined?*

*How do we regulate our local economy to share and sustain resources, support people, and live within our means?*

*What does our currency look like?*







# MAKING SPACE




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*How are labour and industry standards (e.g. ownership, hierarchy, dignity, taxes, unions, etc.) created and regulated?*

*What defines work? Who do we work for? How are we compensated?*

*In our village, how do we spend our time?*

*How do we give and what do we take? How are natural resources used and distributed?*

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*What defines our relationship to earth- extraction, feeding, respect, interdependence?*

*In our village, how is value defined?*

*What does our currency look like?*

*How do we regulate our local economy to share and sustain resources, support people, and live within our means?*





Power

Justice

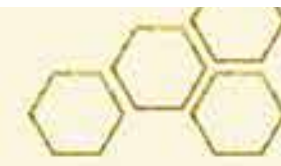
Security

*In It Takes a Village to Govern, we use the imagery of moon cycles (power), scales and courtrooms (justice), and navy arches conspicuously missing walls (security). We ask: Who will have the power to make decisions? Who makes the rules that govern our society?*

IT TAKES A VILLAGE

To govern





“My dream is not a dream, I hope it’s a reality: that we can have a very realistic, but revolutionary vision of the future. There’s always this: in national liberation struggles, especially in socialist struggles, in different contexts, always, we have heard stories from women who have shared their stories, that we will postpone women’s liberation till later. Class or race, everything will come later, once we liberate the general thing whatever we are fighting for, a nation or whatever, and then we will have women’s reforms. But that never works- you always have to have an intersectional approach from the beginning so that’s why it’s important to implement our utopias in the here and now....

Women have been leading communities for thousands of years. We are the creators of life- that’s why our slogan is ‘jin, jivan, azadiye,’ women, life, freedom. And if we cannot defend and create life nobody can. Men will never give us anything and in that sense whatever we do, our educational work, our work in the grassroots communities, they always must come from within. So my vision of the future is that we never postpone the future: the future is what we create now, the seeds that we plant today.”

-Told by Dilar Dirik, 2016 AWID Forum



IT TAKES A VILLAGE

to govern

SUSPEND YOUR DISBELIEFS about POWER/GOVERNANCE  
POLITICAL STRUCTURES / JUSTICE

NOW YOU MAY ENTER

“To become a maker is to make the world for others, not only the material world but the world of ideas that rules over the material world, the dreams we dream and inhabit together... For it is those dreams and ideas that will determine what shape the material world will take, how it will smell, who it will serve.” -Rebecca Solnit, *The Faraway Nearby*



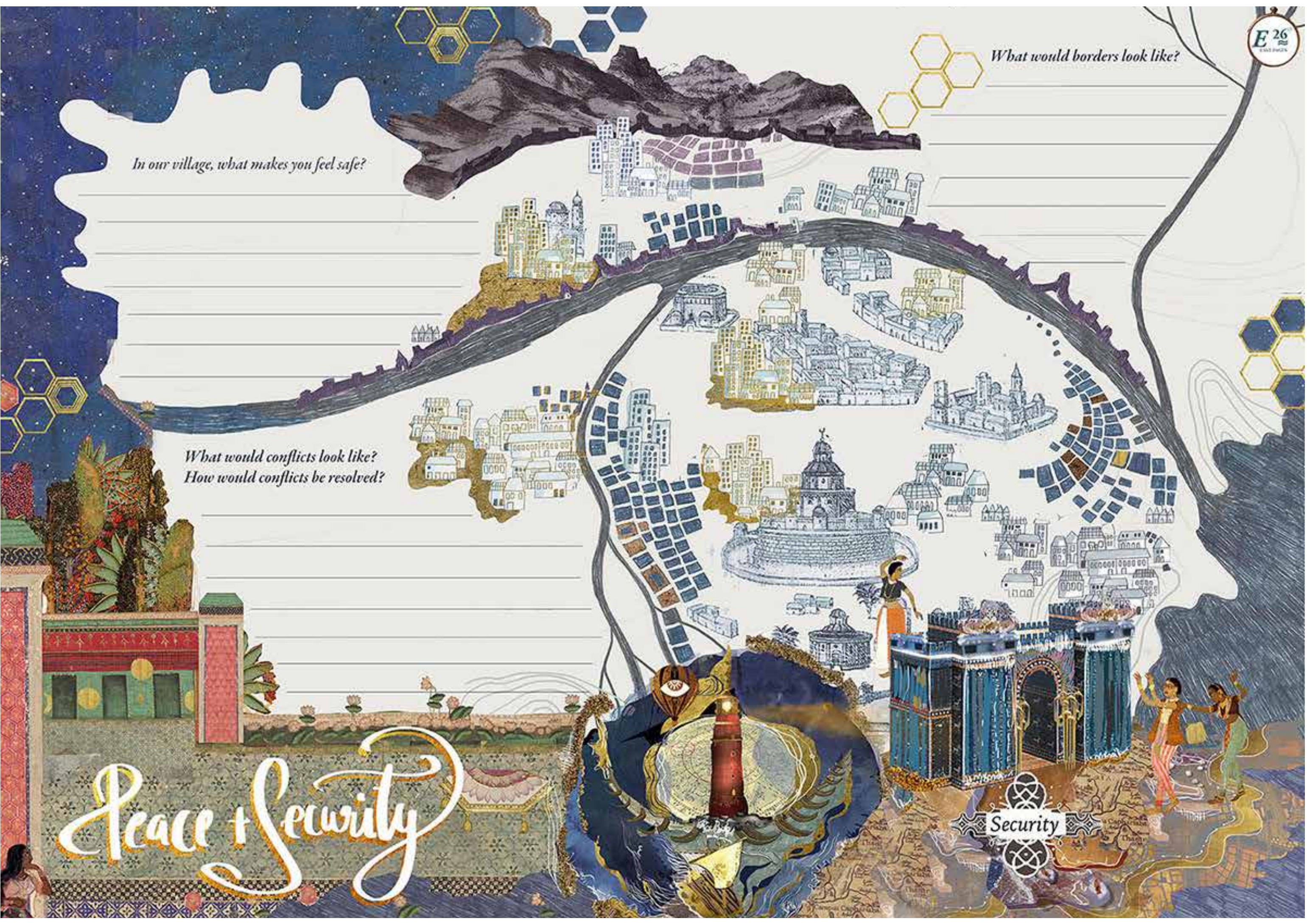
What would borders look like?

In our village, what makes you feel safe?

What would conflicts look like?  
How would conflicts be resolved?

Peace + Security

Security





*In our village, what do we need to ensure a just society?*

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*How will laws be determined?  
Would we reward and punish?*

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*What are ideal accountability and justice systems for all of us?*

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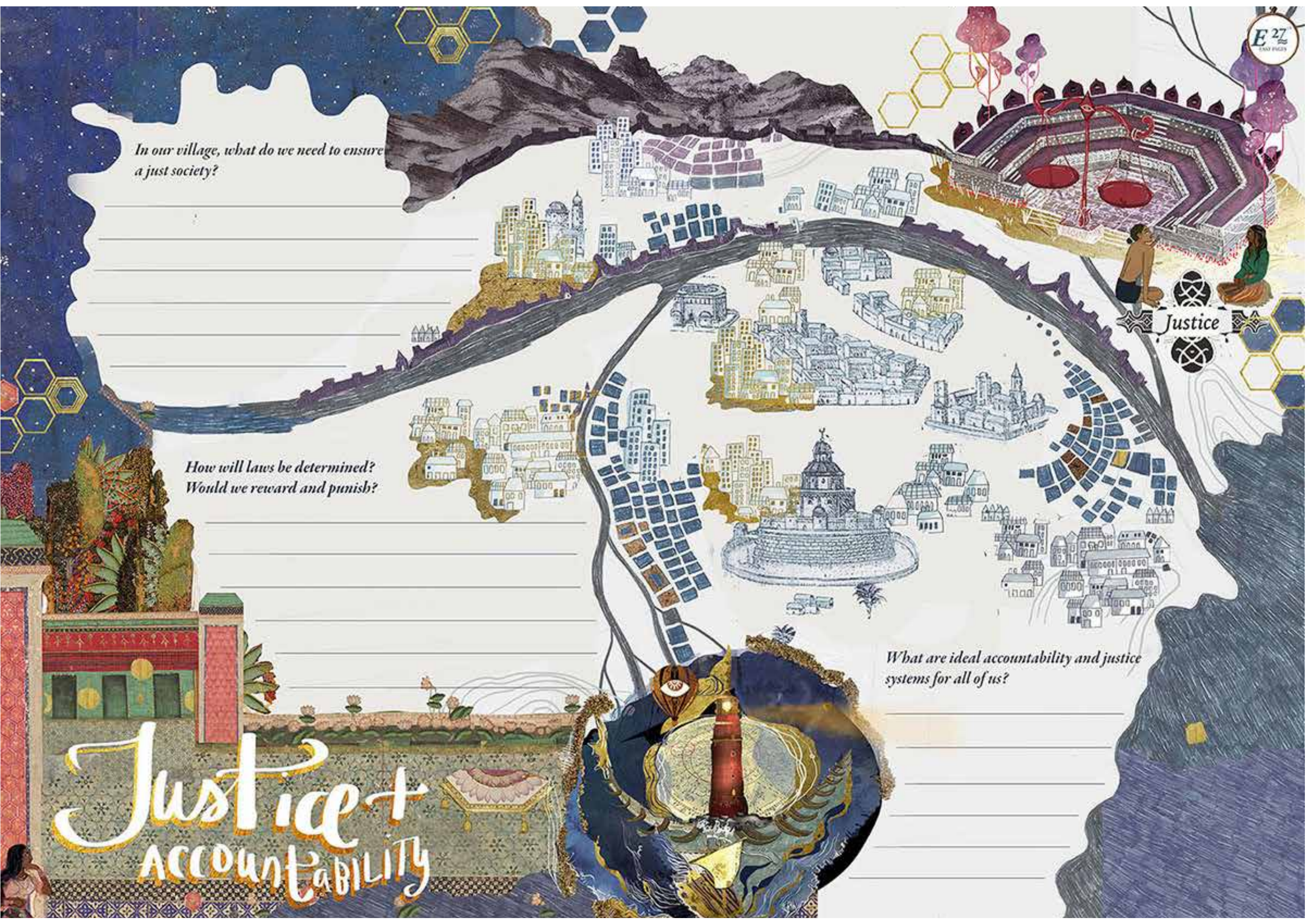
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# Justice + Accountability





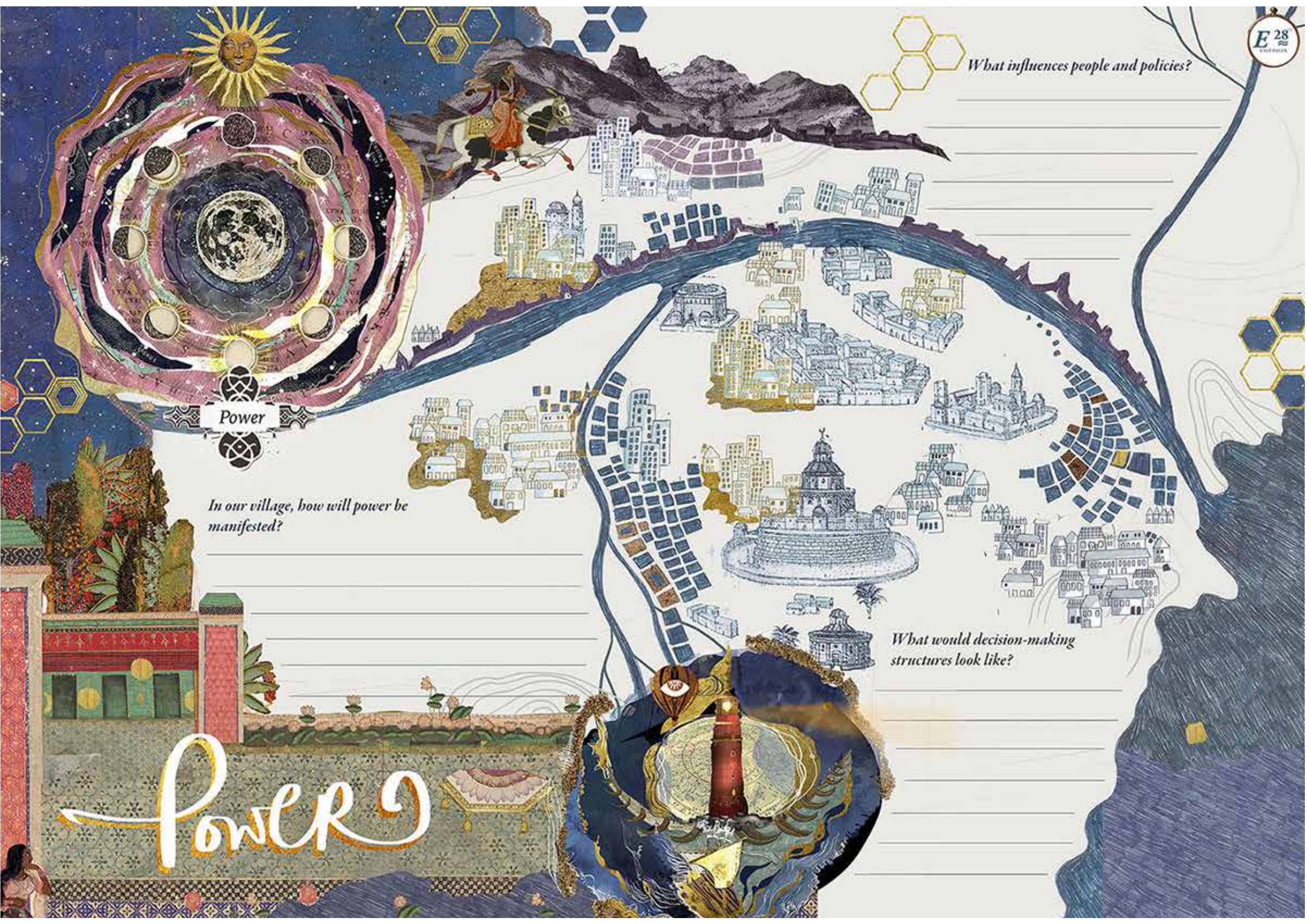
What influences people and policies?

Power

In our village, how will power be manifested?

What would decision-making structures look like?

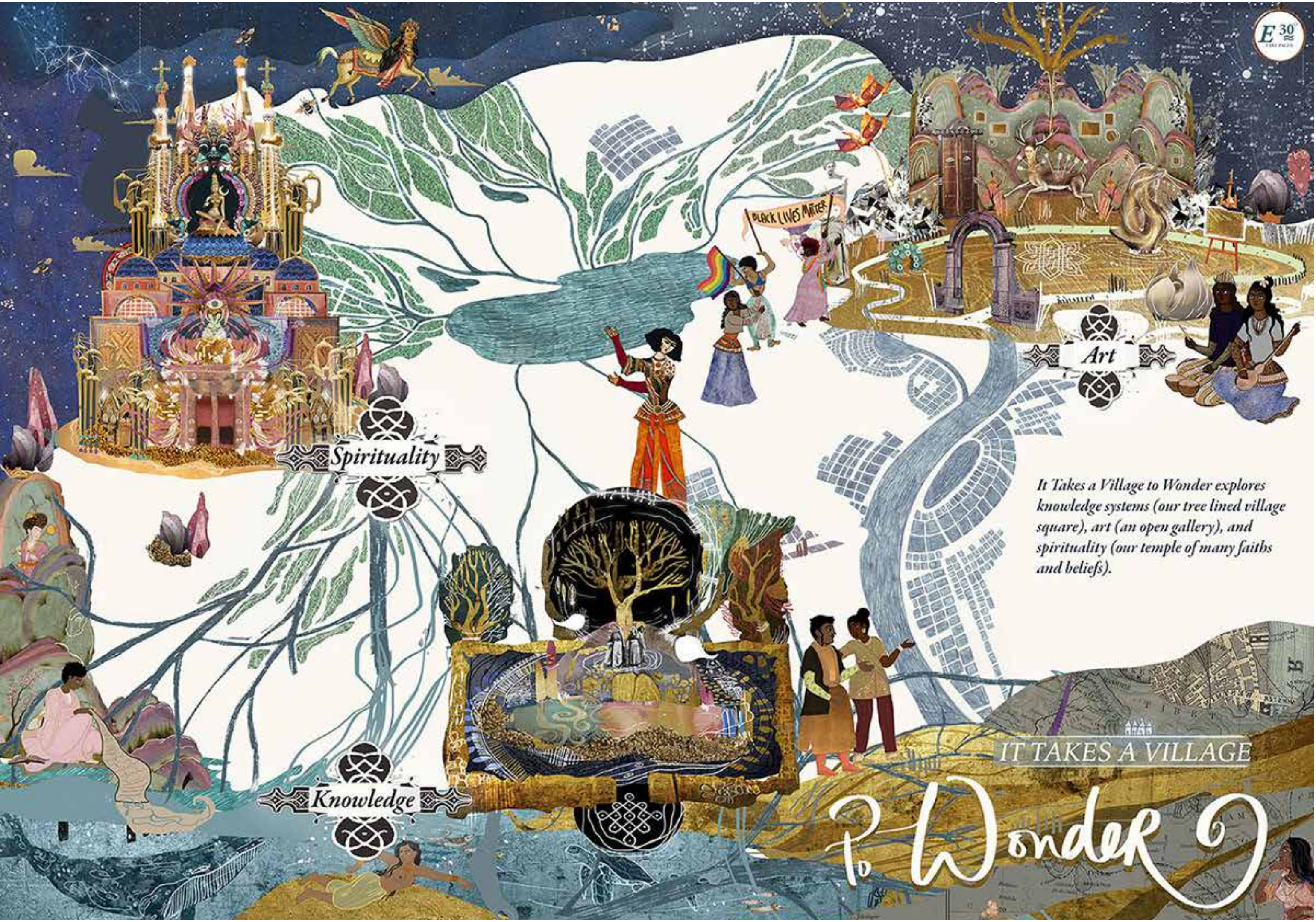
Power











Spirituality

Art

Knowledge

*It Takes a Village to Wonder explores knowledge systems (our tree lined village square), art (an open gallery), and spirituality (our temple of many faiths and beliefs).*

IT TAKES A VILLAGE

P. Wonder



"This is a story about the present, told as the past, from the gaze of the future. Imagine you have in your hands, a knot. And the knot carries one story about a person named Zitone, who's trying to understand her world and who wants to change it into something that is a little less ugly, a little less distorted, a little less painful. Zitone believes she lives in an incredible age- an age where it has never been more possible to tear down the calcified and heaving structures of power that monopolize what is knowledge and what is truth.... what she holds is not just a piece of technology, inert and humming with innocent objectivity: it's an idea of how to reimagine the world...

Now put that knot on your lap because you have a third knot. And in this new knot there is another story. And in this story, Zitone is not alone. She is sitting in the room with the beautiful chaos of bodies, desires, and histories. They may not be many in numbers, but they are weaving a revolution....

Now, take a moment. In your other hand, there is another knot. And in this knot is another story. In this story, Zitone has fear in her stomach- the fear of knowledge that is detached from the human because it is transmitted through a cold interface... Where the warm hands of people whose lands are robbed to satiate the hunger for newer, faster, and sleeker equipment are unfelt. Where more and more toll gates are constructed for poor people to simply have access to a narrow slice of this expensive space and the mutating evolution of capitalism to create new monopolies sold as 'free services,' shared economies, and doing no harm obscures the act and cost of our surrender...

You now have three knots in your hands. And each knot is a story paused in time. They exist simultaneously and are all true, and now they are unraveling as threads of reality, at this very moment. We are at the precipice and we must look at the present from the future as something we will participate in weaving. We are in the same world as Zitone. So take hold. Take hold of the hope, the fear, and the revolution, and really consider what is it that we will be weaving together."

-Spoken by Jac Sm Kee at the 2016 AWID Forum



IT TAKES A VILLAGE

SUSPEND YOUR DISBELIEFS about RELIGION/HOW WE SHARE KNOWLEDGE OUR CULTURES AND ARTS

To Wonder

NOW YOU MAY ENTER

"In my soul, there is a temple, a shrine, a mosque, a church, where I kneel. Prayer should bring us to an altar where no walls exist. Is there not a region of love where the sovereignty is illumined nothing where ecstasy gets poured into itself and becomes lost." -Rabia, In My Soul





*What infrastructures help to create and disseminate information?*

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*In our village, how is culture formed?*

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*What are our libraries?*

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Knowledge

Knowledge +  
INFORMATION





*In our village, what is beauty? What is ugliness?*

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*How do we access beauty? Who has access to beauty? Where does it live?*

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*You are an artist. What do you make?*

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# Arts + Beauty





Spirituality

*In our village, what does faith look like?*

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*What does religion look like without patriarchy?*

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*What is a sacred space? Describe.*

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Religion  
+ Spirituality





# MAKING SPACE



*What is a sacred space? Describe.*

*In our village, what does faith look like?*

*What does religion look like without patriarchy?*

*In our village, what is beauty? What is ugliness?*

*How do we access beauty? Who has access to beauty?  
Where does it live?*

*You are an artist. What do you make?*

*What infrastructures help to create and disseminate  
information?*

*In our village, how is culture formed?*

*What are our libraries?*



# Asking for Directions

They say men never ask for directions.

I am making my way down a highway. I take a left turn. Stop. Roll down my window and ask- for directions. A transgender woman selling roses at the red light tells me I'm on the right path.

My life is suddenly taking a very different direction. Stop. I pick up the phone, call my mother and ask- for directions. She tells me I need to slow down.



Gender aside, for some of us being lost and asking for directions can be a very difficult undertaking. We're taught that in order to find our path we need to do so alone- move out of our parents house, hide our weaknesses and wounds, and refrain from seeking help. Yet, as we move into our collective feminist futures, it is imperative for us to remember: we are not alone- we are surrounded by loved ones, families and communities, inherited or created, networks of support, and each other. As we make our ways across our feminist maps what directions do you need to receive from others around you about navigating community, building movements, and for yourself?

*"We live in a moment of uncertainty and change – of vast open questions at the heart of our life together. Rilke spoke of "living the questions." What questions would you like to pose, hold, and live with others in the period ahead?"*



# Asking for Directions

Your Question Here



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"Stories go in circles. They don't go in straight lines. It helps if you listen in circles because there are stories inside and between stories, and finding your way through them is as easy and as hard as finding your way home. Part of finding is getting lost, and when you are lost you start to open up and listen." -Terry Tafoya, Finding Harmony





# You are Here (with me)

W 38  
WESTERN

The Tamil word 'vali' has several different meanings depending on the context in which it is used. Vali means 'pain.' Vali can also mean 'path.' By using our imaginations to travel through the process of suspending our disbelief and into our feminist villages of the future, asking for directions along the way, we have charted a path to move through our pain into what lies beyond. My love, you know our worlds are hurting. But now, we have begun the process of charting our roadmaps towards building the futures free from oppression that we want to inhabit.

You might wonder, how can this be when we haven't even moved from the space in which we started our journey? When we start to move along the path that is our pain, we begin an inward journey that takes us through our own emotional landscapes- valleys of sorrow, mountains of fear, ravines of longing, islands of love, sunrises filled with hope, sunsets that hold the promise of mindful repose- until we finally cross a threshold, and we find ourselves in a different place. (We've all felt it at least once in our lives, that brief moment of clarity, of insight, that comes after a crisis or a good cry, that calm feeling after the storm that feels like a soft place to rest a while before we pick up and carry on. We could call it catharsis. Or our own personal vali.)

We've moved through this journey together, now you are in a different place: you are here, with us. Take a moment to look around. What does Here look like? Has the quality of light by which you examine your surroundings changed? What does it smell like? Is the scent of the air ever so slightly different from when you entered this space? What colours does *Here* hold now? What possibilities? What fears have you overcome? What questions have you raised? What acts of collective self-revelation have brought us Here, together? And how can we hold onto these things as we move forward?

"Got a map where I've marked where I think we can go from here" - Monica Dogra



Fearless  
Future

part 2

A BOOK OF  
DIRECTIONS











*A BOOK OF DIRECTIONS*  
ATLAS COORDINATES → CENTRE PAGES 1-5

**Here is what we need to do before we embark on this journey:**

*Locate yourself*

The first step in using our maps as tools of navigation for orienteering our ways through our social landscapes is to orient ourselves within both our existing realities and the ones we hope to create. To locate ourselves is a conscious act of self-reflection that asks not only “where am I?” but also “where do I stand within the multiple landscapes that compose the bigger picture?” and “where do I stand in relation to my fellow navigators?”

In our current intersectional realities self-location of this kind is of utmost importance to avoid, consciously or unconsciously, reinforcing particular biases and oppressions while we struggle to overcome others. What are the challenges you face? What are the privileges you hold? Do those privileges come at the expense of others? To what communities do you belong? With whom do you identify? What is your personal history? Where does it hurt? Where have you found space for healing?

We entre Fearless Futures lugging our baggage of the past and the present on our shoulders and in our arms. The lived experiences of years wear on our hips and on the soles of our feet. Make space for this luggage. It weighs, but it can also ground. Start here.

*Check the weather*

After four years of working through processes of participative and collective imagination we have understood that these processes are as much about working on ourselves as they are about working with communities and the world at large. Our journeys towards changing the world in which we live have always involved acts of inner exploration, self-revelation, and transformation. Specifically at Fearless, we engage with emotional resonance- how an idea or an image makes you feel- and we strive to imbibe our work with a similar emotional quality.

We are impatient with the language of ‘sympathy,’ the saviour complexes that often arise when we work with ‘community’ (which communities do we belong to?), and the dismissal of non-measurable knowledge as inaccurate. No matter what your issue or context, we all share emotional experiences, fear being one example.

Understanding the power of emotion is foundational to both a feminist politics and this process. As co-creators of this world, let the universality of emotion be our common ground.





*A BOOK OF DIRECTIONS*  
ATLAS COORDINATES → CENTRE PAGES



Gather the crew

Identify co-creators, adventurers, visionaries, navigators, revolutionaries and the likes. Bring them aboard and make sure we understand each other's needs and visions for this space.

Are we building space for coworkers to talk freely about organizational goals? Are we using this process as an opportunity to bring activists from various backgrounds together? Is this an opportunity to better understand what our community is dreaming and thinking about?

By identifying who will come along we are identifying a critical component of our journey: the people who will build a world together.



Make space - lay the map

The spaces we build matter. Think of the space where we gather to build Fearless Futures as our stage. Ideally, we should select a space that can be wandered through, uninterrupted. We will also want a space with clear walls or floor or tables or platforms to lay our thoughts, clouds, maps, questions, and villages on. Alternatively, the space can also have trees to hang clouds, grass to lay maps on, nooks and hammocks to move into imagination, questions, and reflections. See what comfortably works for everyone, but do check the weather too.

We encourage decorating the space to make it warm and inviting. We can frequently be found draping surface with scarves and loose fabric, lighting candles, and hanging fairy lights.

Making space is both an external and internal processes. If possible, we encourage prepping your participants in advance on the conceptual framework of Fearless Futures. Feel free to introduce key elements about imagination and visioning before the workshop begins. You can select quotes and excerpts from the references and writings in this workbook or choose your own.



# A BOOK OF DIRECTIONS

ATLAS COORDINATES → CENTRE PAGES 1-5

Check  
essentials

*Here is a list of essential tools to take with you:*

**An Atlas each-** Ideally everyone will have a copy of the Atlas. However, if that is not possible, go through the list of 'Navigation Tools' found on page \_\_\_\_ and give everyone a set of navigation tools: clouds, questions, villages, etc.

**Things to write with-** paper, markers, pens, pencils, erasers, voice recorders, paints, pins, colourful ribbons. You will need some tape and scissors to make and break these supplies and improvise.

**Fertile Imagination-** We recognize that making space for imagination and dreaming can feel like a luxury, yet we maintain that allowing ourselves and our communities to dream of the future, however seemingly impossible those dreams may be, is critical to building the world we are all working so hard to create.

**Flowers-** We like to leave long and temporary traces as we wander through imaginary spaces. We, at Fearless Collective, are known to leave a trail of petals where we go. Make gentle traces so others may find their way as you find yours. And make sure to take some water.

Make sure  
everyone is  
aboard

It is very important that the space we choose feels as accessible as possible for all participants. Be sure to consider ramp and wheelchair access along with lighting, visibility, and transportation. If our space is relatively public, will all our crew members feel comfortable publicly participating in this process?

Be sure to provide the support needed for everyone to participate in the workshop. This may include providing translators, keeping records, using multi-tactile materials that can be felt rather than seen, and changing language/wording of activities as appropriate.





# A BOOK OF DIRECTIONS

ATLAS COORDINATES → CENTRE PAGES ≈ ≈

## THE JOURNEY

Every journey is made possible through the arrangement of many parts. To help us navigate our Fearless Futures journey we have created a chart of the symbols and terms used in this Book of Directions.

*Atlas Coordinates*- page numbers to corresponding activities and worksheets in the Atlas



*Navigation Tools*- worksheets, exercises, and readings that support each step in our journey



*Terrain*- a brief description of what to expect, steps to take, and how to use the navigation tools



*Wisdom of Wanderers*- Some of us have gone through this journey before. Here we are offered some guidance and examples to follow or improvise from

*Journey*  
*Atlas Coordinates*  
*Navigation Tools*

*SUSPENSION OF  
DISBELIEF*

*NORTH PAGES ≈ ≈*

*Printed Clouds*

*IT TAKES A  
VILLAGE*

*EAST PAGES ≈ ≈*

*Villages and Questions*

*ASKING FOR  
DIRECTIONS*

*SOUTH PAGES ≈ ≈*

*Question sheets*

*YOU ARE HERE  
(WITH ME)*

*WEST PAGE ≈ ≈*

*Stories and Sharing*



# SUSPENSION OF DISBELIEF

ATLAS COORDINATES → NORTH PAGES 6-8

## Tool



Find, follow, and fill the clouds in the Atlas. Every person aboard will need at least one cloud.

Suspension of disbelief is a childhood rite of passage. It involves moving beyond the known to a world of possibility. The central question we typically ask our co-creators here is “What is a belief (or fear) you want to let go?”

## Terrain



Suspension of disbelief is a childhood rite of passage. It involves moving beyond the known to a world of possibility. The central question we typically ask our co-creators here is “what is a belief (or fear) you want to let go?”

Encourage the crew to think about their individual experiences in organizing or community work. Do they hold beliefs that prevent them from being their most brilliant selves? Are there conceptions about their work they could do without?

We must all let them go. Write these conceptions, beliefs, doubts that don't serve us, that create fear and insecurity inside us, on the paper clouds and then suspend them- hang them on the peripheries of your space, acknowledged but not involved.

## WISDOM OF WANDERERS



There is the potential for suspension of disbelief to bring up unacknowledged biases around privilege, access, race, and identity. As co-creators, it is our job to tune into the energy of our crew. Pay close attention to both the beliefs that have been suspended as well as how everyone is responding to these responses.

If there needs to be space to discuss how people are feeling about the suspended (dis)beliefs make that space! Be prepared to guide conversations on how people are feeling about the responses to the prompt, including anything that made people uncomfortable.

Past responses during this exercise have ranged from the personal “I want to let go of the belief that I am not women enough for this work,” to the systemic “I am letting go of the belief that our gender dictates our salaries, access to positions of leadership, and public spaces.”



IT TAKES A VILLAGE  
ATLAS COORDINATES → EAST PAGES 2-35

Tool



Find the four villages we are going to create and recreate together.

- It Takes a Village to Love (bodies, pleasure, and relationships)
- It Takes a Village to Wonder (spirituality, knowledge, and art & culture)
- It Takes a Village to Govern (peace & security, justice, and power)
- It Takes a Village to Thrive (natural resources, labour & carework, and economies)

There is a set of 9 questions for each of the villages in the Atlas. The questions included are designed to help us envision the larger intersectional feminist movements we are working towards. However, we can adapt, edit, or remove questions to make this more relevant to our work and context.

Terrain



We will map four villages of our future together. We will work on one village at a time. Each village has three areas to work through. Let everyone choose which group to join depending on the area they want to work with. For example, the first village is of Love and the areas of work within the village include bodies, pleasure, and relationships. Each of these areas are represented through a symbol in the Atlas. There are questions for each one of these three areas. Those of us who want to work on 'bodies' sit around the symbol representing it (the heart), take the questions and imagine a feminist future through those questions.

Our imaginations for our villages and areas can take shape as manifestos, statements, declarations, poems, and ideas. We can write/draw our imaginations out onto the pieces of paper provided in the Atlas or we can use extra paper and material too. Embed, weave, staple these pieces around the symbol on your map.

After we complete one village we can reconvene as a larger group to highlight exciting ideas as well as contradictions, spectrums of responses, etc. And then continue on to imagine the next village.



IT TAKES A VILLAGE  
ATLAS COORDINATES → EAST PAGES 2-35

WISDOM OF WANDERERS



Remind the crew that in our village anything is possible. What are our wildest visions of the structures, communities, and interactions we want to build with our movements? Here is the place to share them.

Specificity in responses is helpful! Encourage our co-creators to be as detailed as possible in their imaginations.

Keep looking forward: don't just tell us what we would not have- tell us what we would build or create instead. For example, it's not just that exploitation of resources would be banned, but instead that for every tree we cut down we would grow three instead.

Let the crew join the villages/spaces/thematic areas that resonate most with them.

If we are stuck on where to start, start with where we are. In the past, specifically when working on questions of governance, we've found it helpful to ask our crew to start by spending some time brainstorming what exists today and their experiences navigating it. Once we've identified the gaps, and grounded our opinion in the personal, how do we move forward and beyond our current systems to create something new and beautiful? Some possible questions to prompt reflection:

- How does this system function in our current context?
- What are your experiences with this system? What problems/current gaps exist within the larger thematic space under discussion, e.g. governance, environment, love, sexuality, etc. Encourage participants to explore personal interactions, stories, and experiences within their theme.
- In the feminist future, how should this system function or what values should it advance?









## YOU ARE HERE (WITH US)

ATLAS COORDINATES → WEST PAGE 38

As we come to the end of Fearless Futures it's time for us to tie the pieces together. For many of us this is the start of a larger conversation about our futures- a launchpad for the hard, sometimes gritty work that must happen to turn dreams into realities. That's why we believe documenting the beginning of this larger journey is essential. Whether it's through photographs of participants brainstorming, recording the wisdom, dreams, or explorations of participants through voice recording or video recording the session, find a way for participants to reflect on where they began and how they are ending this process.

For example, when we ran Fearless Futures at AWID in 2016 we brought in co-creators, leaders in feminist spaces, to moderate conversations in their area of expertise or focus villages. These leaders drew the conversations from each of their selected villages into their talks at the Third Plenary session, which followed the workshop. To watch these videos and draw inspiration from the worlds they imagined, follow the links below:

### *It Takes a Village to Love:*

Nidhi Goyal - [https://www.youtube.com/edit?o=U&video\\_id=O-QbmzF9ZE4](https://www.youtube.com/edit?o=U&video_id=O-QbmzF9ZE4)

### *It Takes a Village to Govern:*

Dilar Dirik - [https://www.youtube.com/edit?o=U&video\\_id=kEou4LiERDU](https://www.youtube.com/edit?o=U&video_id=kEou4LiERDU)

### *It Takes a Village to Thrive:*

Coumba Touré - [https://www.youtube.com/edit?o=U&video\\_id=Bywori6t0i8](https://www.youtube.com/edit?o=U&video_id=Bywori6t0i8)

Lolita Chavez - [https://www.youtube.com/edit?o=U&video\\_id=8OBs2QklJ7s](https://www.youtube.com/edit?o=U&video_id=8OBs2QklJ7s)

### *It Takes a Village to Wonder:*

Jac sm Kee - <https://youtu.be/wY4MVGJZeng>

Finally, we would love to hear from you! Fearless Futures is ever evolving and can only continue to grow and become more wise through your input. To share your stories in this process please reach us at [lovemore@fearlesscollective.org](mailto:lovemore@fearlesscollective.org) or <http://awid.org/contact-us> or tag us at [#fearlessfutures](https://twitter.com/fearlessfutures) [#feministfutures](https://twitter.com/feministfutures)



# Gratitude

shukran  
it took a  
village

## FEARLESS FUTURES

A Feminist Cartographer's Toolkit is a collaboration between the Association for Women's Rights in Development (AWID) and Fearless Collective

The development of Fearless Futures would not be possible without the support, trust, and gifts of a number of people and organizations. They are our villages and we are so grateful for their work



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We'd like to especially give thanks to the amazing women at FRIDA | The Young Feminist Fund, especially Ruby, Deepa, and Devi for their endless support and belief in our work. We'd like to thank Chloe for being our number one lover and advocate. Aruna Chandrasekhar, Avijit Michael for advice. Nilofer Suleman for mapmaking tools. Finally, thank you to our plenary speakers for spending so much of your AWID conference dreaming and co-creating villages with us, Nidhi Goyal, Coumba Toure, Jac SM Kee, Dilar Dirik, Lolita Chavez, Madeleine Rees, and Claudia Corredor. This toolkit would look very different without each of you.

Madhuvanti Maddur  
Video Puzzlemaker

Amina Doherty

Making space for Culture



Shilo Shiv Suleman

Creative Spirit and Artist



Aimee Santos-Lyons

Navigating new waters



Nida Mushtaq

Compass and Navigation



Angelika Arutyunova

all things grounding



Cassie Denbow

Timekeeper / Notemaker



FRIDA

Moral Loving Support



Josephine Simone

Wise Woman / Weaver



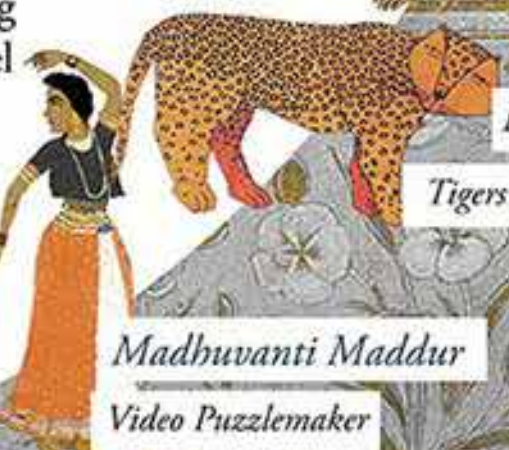
Fabrice Bourgelle

our loving male gaze



Pearl D'Souza

Tigers and Lays of the Land



Svabhu Kohli

Beauty Builder







# glossary

**Affirmation:** In the Fearless process, affirmations refer to the positive, empathetic statements used as alternatives to-fear based ones. For example “ I wear my body without shame” is a statement rooted in the affirmative.

**Collective Imagining** is the process of imagining a new world as a community. This term can also refer to childhood imagination, specifically the exchange between children engaged in a process of play: building grand castles out of cardboard boxes or elaborate storylines of feasts out of a pile of twigs and mud.

**Facilitator:** for the purpose of the Feminist Cartographer’s toolkit, a facilitator is anyone leading another through the Feminist Futures workshop process. However, we believe it is critical that a Facilitator is also a participant in the workshop. That facilitators position themselves as learners and adventurers, building the sturdy yet quiet structure for every participant to feel safe, invited, and welcome. For more on our philosophy of facilitation please go to page xx in the Facilitation notes.

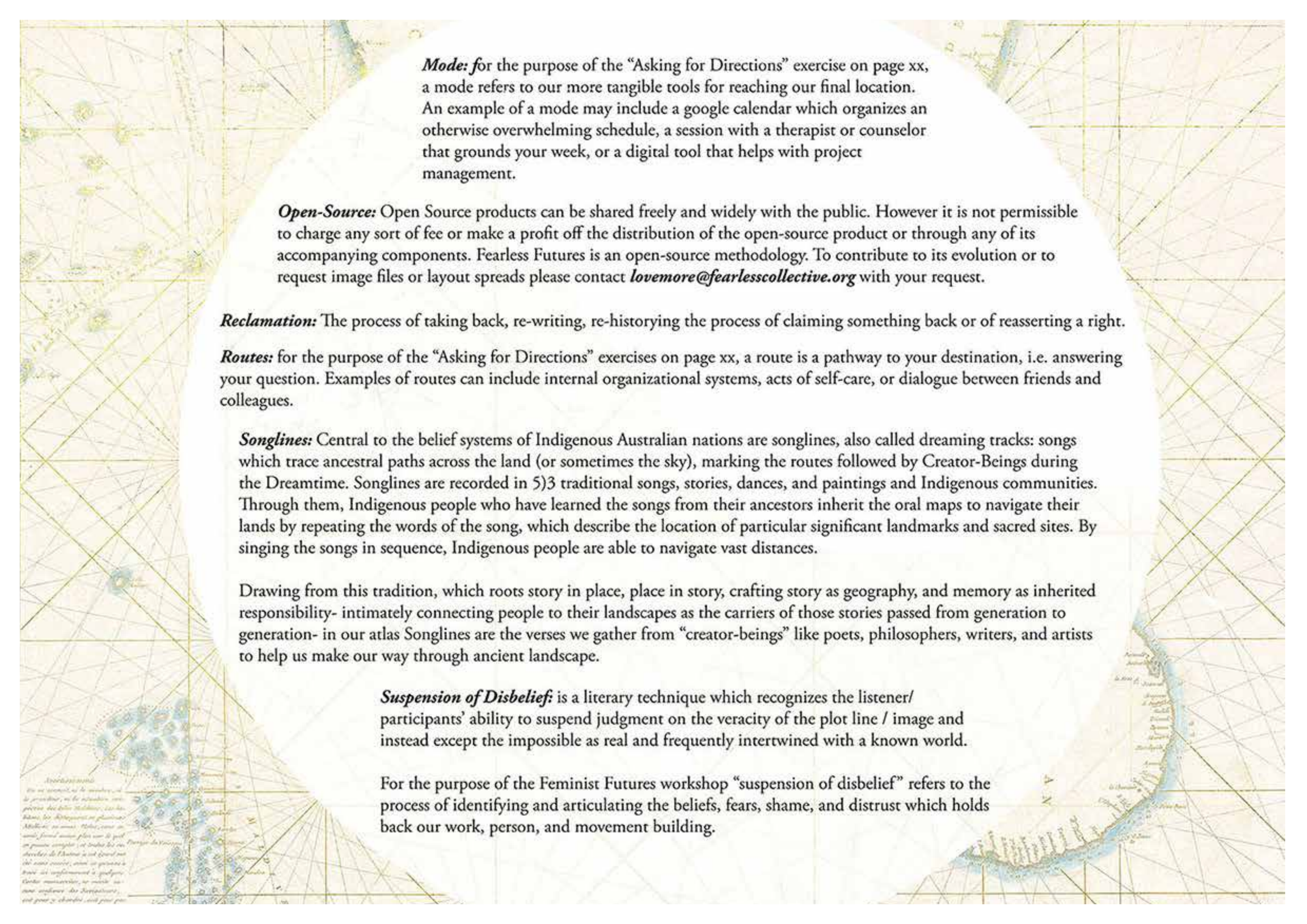
**Feminist Cartography:** the act of drawing maps with an eye on what must be reclaimed and what is unwritten; an act of reclamation that focuses on re-defining borders, boundaries, and the modern conception of nation-states. Feminist cartography is forward looking. It focuses on futures and potentials, grounding our maps in our collective histories and individual stories.

In the academic space, Feminist cartography typically focuses on the evolution of technology, specifically Geographic Information System (GIS), and its intersection with geography and cartography. Feminist geographers hold that “...a map is really only one person’s view of reality... whoever makes the map holds power over what the world can and can’t look like”.

**Heroine’s Journey:** The Heroine’s Journey was developed as a response by Maureen Murdock to Joseph Campbell’s ‘ A Hero’s Journey’ in the early 1980’s. Murdock felt that Campbell’s journey failed to address the unique psycho-spiritual experience of women. The Heroine’s journey explores the internalization of patriarchy and focuses on the exploration of self, power, and healing. A cyclical process, Murdock asserts that at the end of the journey our Heroine has healed her past wounds and found a way to integrate the masculine and feminine as one.

For the purpose of this Atlas, the Heroine’s Journey is used as an analogy for the ‘Asking Directions’ exercise found on page xx.





**Mode:** for the purpose of the “Asking for Directions” exercise on page xx, a mode refers to our more tangible tools for reaching our final location. An example of a mode may include a google calendar which organizes an otherwise overwhelming schedule, a session with a therapist or counselor that grounds your week, or a digital tool that helps with project management.

**Open-Source:** Open Source products can be shared freely and widely with the public. However it is not permissible to charge any sort of fee or make a profit off the distribution of the open-source product or through any of its accompanying components. Fearless Futures is an open-source methodology. To contribute to its evolution or to request image files or layout spreads please contact [lovemore@fearlesscollective.org](mailto:lovemore@fearlesscollective.org) with your request.

**Reclamation:** The process of taking back, re-writing, re-historing the process of claiming something back or of reasserting a right.

**Routes:** for the purpose of the “Asking for Directions” exercises on page xx, a route is a pathway to your destination, i.e. answering your question. Examples of routes can include internal organizational systems, acts of self-care, or dialogue between friends and colleagues.

**Songlines:** Central to the belief systems of Indigenous Australian nations are songlines, also called dreaming tracks: songs which trace ancestral paths across the land (or sometimes the sky), marking the routes followed by Creator-Beings during the Dreamtime. Songlines are recorded in 5)3 traditional songs, stories, dances, and paintings and Indigenous communities. Through them, Indigenous people who have learned the songs from their ancestors inherit the oral maps to navigate their lands by repeating the words of the song, which describe the location of particular significant landmarks and sacred sites. By singing the songs in sequence, Indigenous people are able to navigate vast distances.

Drawing from this tradition, which roots story in place, place in story, crafting story as geography, and memory as inherited responsibility- intimately connecting people to their landscapes as the carriers of those stories passed from generation to generation- in our atlas Songlines are the verses we gather from “creator-beings” like poets, philosophers, writers, and artists to help us make our way through ancient landscape.

**Suspension of Disbelief:** is a literary technique which recognizes the listener/ participants’ ability to suspend judgment on the veracity of the plot line / image and instead except the impossible as real and frequently intertwined with a known world.

For the purpose of the Feminist Futures workshop “suspension of disbelief” refers to the process of identifying and articulating the beliefs, fears, shame, and distrust which holds back our work, person, and movement building.



# Resources + References

*we offer you our libraries*

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# Fearless Futures

*you know my world was never flat.*

*you know my world was never flat*

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