



# Sprouting Our Collective Wisdom

TOWARDS A POLITICS OF PRACTICE FOR  
ACTIVIST-LED ACCOMPANIMENT: LESSONS  
FROM THE GLOBAL RESILIENCE FUND



# Executive Summary

*Our Collective Wisdom  
are the seeds of life.*

*Seeds of revolution.*

*Seeds of liberation.*

*We carry them within  
our body, spirit,  
heart, and mind.*

*Passed down through  
the generations.*

*With powerfully infused  
diversifications.*

*Ready to sprout.  
Root. And rise.*



We have chosen the title ‘Spouting Our Collective Wisdom’ as an ode to the collective knowledge and learning that has emerged from different corners of the world during the pandemic. We draw inspiration from the natural world, the cycles of growth, of co-dependence, metamorphosis, and the connectivity across ecosystems in nature around us. Through our relationships across our work in the Global Resilience Fund (GRF), with activists and funders, we have created an environment for ongoing learning, unlearning, reflection and for sprouting new ideas and experimenting with care, love and friendship as our guide.

This report gives an overview of the Global Resilience Fund’s activist-led accompaniment with early reflections and observations. Our intention is to inspire others to center the vision and leadership of girls and young activists in providing accompaniment, and for others to learn from our experience.

The GRF was launched at a critical moment in history and is resourcing some of the most important frontline strategies to respond to the needs of communities during the COVID-19 pandemic. With

a deep understanding that organizations and collectives often need more than money, GRF is committed to offering holistic and responsive young activist-led accompaniment to nourish and build people’s individual and collective resilience.

Accompaniment is a process of walking side by side towards feminist liberation and social justice, with a grantee **partner’s needs, realities, and expertise front and center.**

A feminist approach to accompaniment is based on the understanding of our expansive interconnection and role in supporting each other. From the beginning, we knew that a grantee partner’s needs, realities, and expertise must be at the core. So, instead of basing our offerings on what we believed they need, or on ideas of how they could be better grantees in relationship to us, we asked grantee partners what they need to be even more resilient as individuals, collectives, and organizations. Thus, the **activist-led accompaniment** sprouted, **deeply rooted in feminist and activist principles of collaboration, self determination, non-hierarchical and relational learning.**

We developed our accompaniment offering in collaboration with the panelists of the Fund, who are also young feminist activists from all over the world with diverse experiences and are themselves involved in a multitude of movements. Our intention from the beginning has been to take time to **co-design and co-create strategy and programming** alongside both activist panelists and funder partners of the GRF. Guided by the expertise, understanding and connection to movements of the panelists, this has meant going **beyond participatory grantmaking**, to participatory and co-design processes in all areas of the Fund.

We brought together **needs with existing resources** in our community, and what came out of this were diverse experiences of accompaniment, for example, regional webinars on resource mobilization, digital security and storytelling workshops, and community coaching circles. We've learned and adapted with each of these experiences, because **activist-led accompaniment also means that learning happens multi-directionally**, and all parties involved should have the opportunity and space for learning and growth, including facilitators and space holders.

More than content delivery, we wanted to create community learning spaces that cultivate friendships, encourage listening to each other, and invite intentional sharing as this can be extremely healing and supportive, and **it creates a sense of togetherness that for many was not accessible before**. This was especially important given the moment we were in with the pandemic, where people who already experienced isolation, were even more isolated.



What follows are our reflections and learnings (and some tools!) in relation to these offerings:

- **Community Circles**
- **Thematic Learning Spaces on Storytelling**
- **Spaces of Collective Care in Times of Crisis**
- **Cultivating Critical Connections and Consciousness**





# Acknowledgements

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## Special thanks to:

Our deepest gratitude to all of the funders, activist panelists that made the Global Resilience Fund possible, and to all of the girls, young women, gender non binary and trans youth that are organizing to create better communities for us all. We have, and continue to learn from your brilliant strategies every day, and we are sincerely grateful for all you do, and the way you do it.



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#1

# Background to the Global Resilience Fund: The who and why of activist-led accompaniment during crisis



For millennia, girls and young people have played a critical role in struggles for freedom and liberation. From Africa's anti-colonial movements to the Arab spring to climate justice organizing and everything in between – their resistance has always sparked and sustained transformational change. And yet, too often girls and young activists are separated from resources and shut out from decision-making spaces, their power deliberately obscured and hidden from view.





**Although they do a little with a lot,**

**they deserve to be resourced now.**

Purposeful is a feminist hub for girls activism, rooted in Africa and working all around the world. We work so that girls and their allies have access to the resources, networks and platforms they need to power their activism and remake the world. Centering the political power of girls and young feminists across the world, we enter all of our work through a power-building lens – redistributing power assets, building collective power, organising power holders and transforming power structures. We dream of a world in which girls’ activism and organizing is resourced in healthy and sustainable ways that genuinely work for girls at the unique intersections of age, gender and other identities. We reframe grantmaking practices so that girls can define and determine resource distribution in the service of their own visions, goals and dreams of freedom.

As the realities of COVID-19 began to unfold in early 2020, it quickly became clear that girls and young women, trans and non binary people – already battling the compounding effects of patriarchy, white supremacy and imperialist extraction – would be the very worst affected. Like any other crisis, COVID-19 continues to expose and exacerbate the existing systemic oppressions and violence

that position girls and non-binary young people as particularly vulnerable, especially those who face multiple forms of oppression. At the same time, girls and young activists continue to show up with the bravery, resilience and organizing power they bring to all of their activism. Girls, non-binary young people, and young feminists are organizing against the backdrop of violence and repression, yet they bring creativity, joy, love, and liberatory tactics to all that they do. Despite the odds, they are creating long-term strategies for change, whilst meeting the immediate needs of their communities in and beyond the pandemic.

It is in that context that the Global Resilience Fund (GRF) was launched in May of 2020. Housed and facilitated by Purposeful, and stewarded in partnership with Women Win, the GRF was launched by a cross-section of 25 funders as a pop-up crisis response fund, to directly resource girls and young feminist’s brave and transformative strategies. Rooted in principles of trust, solidarity

and reciprocity, and grounded in an ecosystem approach to funding, GRF moves resources at speed and scale through models of shared power. Because young activists show up across movements, sectors and regions, the Fund has created an opportunity for a diverse range of donors to come together and collaborate in new and transformative ways, leading to unprecedented possibilities.

Given gaps in the ecosystem, and a continued urgent call from funding partners to step in at critical moments through the last year, Purposeful and many of the partners have expanded the role of the Global Resilience Fund to resource girl and young feminist led organizations in other crises. GRF is an emergent fund that works with other funders and activists across the ecosystem to move resources to girls and young feminists during times of crisis. We continue to build and learn with funders and activists about what it takes to fund girls and young feminists in crisis.



# A Snapshot of GRF's 2020-2022 Grantmaking

## 2021

## 2020

Between May and December 2020, the fund supported 234 grassroots groups from 91 countries for their COVID response and organizing efforts. Every supported organization and collective is led by girls, young women, trans or non-binary people under 30 years of age. Of these groups, 25% are led by young people under 19 years of age, and the vast majority of the groups are unregistered.

The funded groups are incredibly diverse, including organizations and collectives led by girls and young people with disabilities, from Indigenous communities, climate activists, LGBTQI youth, and other groups most often excluded from funding opportunities.

In 2021, GRF did a round of grantmaking focused on supporting the resilience and collective care strategies of organizations in the existing cohort of grantee partners, including:

**Collective Care & Healing Grants:** Supporting groups to exchange, share and access practices of care, wellbeing and resilience.

**Community Building & Collaboration Grants:** Supporting groups to connect thematically and regionally, to promote cross-regional knowledge, experience, and practice sharing and exchanging strategies for surviving and thriving during the pandemic.

In 2021, the GRF also moved resources to those who were experiencing the COVID crisis within the context of other crises - to Afghanistan in partnership with [MADRE](#), to Myanmar in partnership with Tharthi Myay Foundation, and directly to groups in Lebanon, Haiti, and the Occupied Territories of Palestine.

## 2022

In 2022, the fund has focused on supporting young feminist activists in emerging and intersecting crises. Called to action by activists who were funded in earlier rounds and GRF panelists from the region, the GRF has focused its energies to resource and respond to young feminists in and fleeing from Ukraine. To date our support there has been focused on emergency funding and in bringing funders and activists together for critical dialogue.

In 2022, we are working with girls, young feminists and funding partners to design the future of the GRF.





## But Why Accompaniment in Crisis Contexts?

*The importance of accompaniment at this moment during the pandemic*

The Global Resilience Fund was launched at a critical moment in history and is resourcing some of the most important frontline strategies to respond to the needs of communities. People who already face discrimination are being pushed even further to the margins;

**those working on the frontlines are experiencing increased burnout and a deepened emotional and psychological toll; and many are facing increased risk of exposure to COVID-19.**

All of this work is happening with little financial resources and often in the context of political backlash and violence. Outside of their COVID-response work, girls and young people are often responsible for increased household and economic duties to sustain their families.

**With a deep understanding that organizations and collectives often need more than money, GRF is committed to offering holistic and responsive young activist-led accompaniment to nourish and build people's individual and collective resilience.** As with any accompaniment or offering, the people most impacted by injustice and who are leading response efforts are best positioned to define their needs. Therefore, from the beginning, GRF's offerings have been grounded in the needs and hopes of young people working on the frontlines. Young activist panelists from the GRF led the process of designing and delivering the accompaniment, based on input and guidance from grantee partners.



# What Do We Mean When We Say Activist-led Accompaniment?

**Activist-led accompaniment means that we are deeply rooted in feminist and activist principles of collaboration, self determination, non hierarchical and relational learning.**

It is based on the belief that knowledge should be shared openly, critically and in the spirit of cooperation rather than competition. Our differences are engines of knowledge building and sharing, and the various types of experiences we have complement each other and bring valuable perspectives. Nobody is superior, nobody is inferior, we don't perpetuate a hierarchical model of learning between teacher and student, rather one that focuses on sharing knowledge from personal practice, discovering together with curiosity, and

learning from each other's experiences as sources of infinite wisdom. We are many, and we are very diverse – however, many of the struggles we face have very similar roots. This is why creating learning spaces that cultivate friendships, encourage listening to each other, and invite intentional sharing can be extremely powerful, especially with this international perspective.

In this context we use the term accompaniment quite literally – accompanying girls and young feminists to

meet their needs as defined by them. It means non-financial resources that are provided in addition and outside of monetary grants. We chose to develop our accompaniment offering in collaboration with GRF's global panelists because activists will always be better able to understand and meaningfully support other activists and they have sat at the heart of the fund since the beginning. All 34 advisors of the GRF are directly connected in a multitude of ways to the activist world: some work at the grassroots, some work internationally or in foundations, some support the movement as facilitators, trainers, researchers and much more. They were invited to support the Fund due to their commitment to advancing social justice across the globe, and for their connection and involvement in local, national and international movements. We recognized that activist-led funding does not only include assessing and prioritizing funding, but can also expand to develop a holistic support framework which includes accompaniment.

Because the activist-led accompaniment model allows learning to happen multi-directionally, and we are mutually interested in the quality of learning, we are able to adapt, learn as we go, and continuously improve our offering.



**ASIA AND THE PACIFIC**



**Betty Barkha**



**Saranzaya Gereltod**



**Subina Pariyar**



**Gopika Bashi**



**Maselina Luta**



**Sharanya Sekaram**

**Meet the Global Resilience Fund Activist Panelists**

**EUROPE & CENTRAL ASIA**



**Marija Jakovljević**



**Anna Szczegielniak**



**Dani Prisacariu**



**Zhanna Zharmatova**

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**Anisie Byukusenge**



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**Essi Geraldo**



**Joy Munthali**



**Mercy Otekra**



**Zoneziwoh Mbongulo-Wondieh**



# THE AMERICAN CONTINENT AND THE CARIBBEAN



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Jandi Craig



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Ariane Corniani



Hawatu Davowah



Numa Dávila Arriaza



Juliana Roman Lozano



Abril Violeta



# THE MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA



Amani Aruri



Tara Ashour



Fatima Aitouknik



Emna Mizouni



Emilia Massou





“

Accompaniment can very easily turn into an unpleasant experience for everyone involved, if it's driven too heavily by the demands for "capacity building" a funder has. In situations like those, it becomes something a grantee partner is forced to participate in to receive funds, rather than something a partner is excited to do because they actually feel like they'd benefit from it. Because GRF accompaniment spaces have been established to be a space of trust and collective imagining and doing, I think that makes accompaniment something that is more equally enjoyed by all involved. A part of navigating the power dynamics was ensuring that I didn't approach a space assuming I was the [only] voice in the room with an authoritative voice. My approach to the spaces has always been one where I see my role as requiring me to both share the information and experiences that I have, and to intentionally create space for girl and youth feminists to exercise their agency - both through listening to their requests regarding what they need, as well as the experience and knowledge they had to share with others.



— Gabrielle Bailey,  
GRF Activist Panelist



”



**Towards a Politics of Practice: Diving deep in an activist-led accompaniment model**

**#2**





Through this process of shared strategy creation, an accompaniment model emerged grounded in the needs as identified by groups and advisors:

To design non-financial support for groups and organizations we considered: the **needs of grantee partners** and the **resources and expertise available in the Fund and between activist advisors**. After drawing a main frame of what is available and possible, we created a form/survey for grantees to express their interests and needs when it comes to their learning and growth. Noting the diversity across the community we were mindful to make the form accessible for those with limited internet access and also for girls and young people with disabilities. This quite practically meant downloadable word documents, translation where possible and short and accessible language. We received answers from more than 25% of the total grantees, from all regions funded by GRF.

*1. The GRF has held three groups of community circles in the following countries: Group 1: from Malawi, Ghana, Nigeria, Zimbabwe, Cameroon, Group 2: from Nepal, Bangladesh, Indonesia, Somalia, Palestine and Group 3: from Colombia, Nicaragua, Honduras, Perú.*

## Supporting deepened connections, cultivating community and increased confidence

- ▶ **Community circles:** drawing on coaching methodologies, three small groups of activists came together for eight sessions over an 8- or 16-week period to collectively support each other to work through key issues.<sup>1</sup>

## Supporting opportunities to strengthen their collectives and access more resources for their work and exchanging skills and experiences:

- ▶ **Webinar / training workshops / virtual learning / teach-ins:** using inclusive and accessible formats, activist panelists led a variety of topics offered based on expressed needs.



## Supporting resilience, collective care and wellbeing:

- **Collective care festival:** Held in Latin America, the festival offered a series of virtual and in person spaces with young feminist collectives working on physical, emotional, and spiritual wellbeing.
- **End of year celebration:** A moment for our community to gather and enjoy each other's company while participating in facilitated movement and ritual activities, and listening to young feminist musicians. Check out our wonderful artists, healers, and facilitators [here](#).
- **Collective care conversation:** Curated with the purpose of finding shared language and understanding of what self and collective care means for us as young feminists.
- **Collective care open space:** An activist-led event to explore collective care themes relevant to those who attended, both activists and funders.

## Cultivating critical connection and consciousness:

- **Connecting groups thematically and regionally** in different ways, where possible supporting them with funding for collaborative work.
- **Supporting panelists to host spaces** between groups to enable sharing of knowledge and strategies for surviving and thriving during the pandemic.
- **Community spaces for activists with disabilities**, which will expand in 2022.

It is important to acknowledge that realities change, and so a frequent needs assessment is useful, using whatever methodologies suit the moment. This can go further than asking groups what they need, to include exposure to new ideas, methods and information in order to move beyond individual experiences and knowledge and tap into the collective 'hive' mind. By supporting girls and young activists to lead accompaniment, we can be nimble and evolve accompaniment to meet and even exceed their needs.



# Practising Activist-led Accompaniment: Diving deep into four core offerings

In this next section, we dive deep into how the model sprouted and was nurtured. Click to view each section!



**Community  
Circles**

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**Thematic  
Learnings Spaces**

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**Spaces of  
Collective Care  
in Times of Crisis**

*Pg. 40*

**Cultivating Critical  
Connections and  
Consciousness**

*Pg. 47*



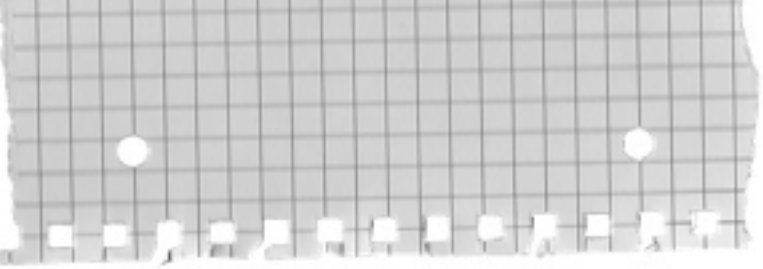
Spotlight on the

# Community Circles

We define community circles as a small group of people that meet regularly to support each other to achieve the changes they want to see personally, as a collective, organizationally, or on a societal level. It is a community of practice with a clear focus, facilitated by somebody who not only supports each person to go deeper on the issue they bring forth, but also to gain skills for coaching others.







## 2 The Model

**Community circles** were born out of the desire to support people in their leadership journeys towards feminist social justice. GRF's grantee partners are extremely diverse, not only geographically, but also in regards to the communities they serve and the type of activism they do. We wanted a model that is feminist, or that can easily be adapted to feminist values, so we decided to base our offering on a coaching methodology, adapting and tailoring this to meet the needs of girls and young feminist groups.<sup>2</sup>

*2. We built our model combining various approaches to group work, and drew from the knowledge of [International Coaching Federation coaching circles](#), [Presencing Institute/ Theory U's case clinic](#), Art of Hosting's model of community of practice, and [Erik Kim's goals oriented group coaching](#).*

## Goals of the Community Circles



- **Support those who attend**  
to intentionally work on their capacity to transform their group or organization, and develop systems that work for them;
- **Develop a sustainable support network**  
with other feminist groups and organizations from other countries;
- **Transfer coaching conversations skills**  
to all involved for future use, in particular how people show up as leaders and contributors in their groups and movements.



# b

## How It Happens In Reality



Amidst tough sociopolitical circumstances, and the pandemic, it's been a safe space and a true show of feminist solidarity

— Participant, GRF Community Circles



Community circles focus on building long term relationships and creating a safer space for sharing and supporting each other. Their frame helps develop a shared space, and offers predictability and familiarity of the process. The content however, should be flexible and led by the group, and each person could bring in any topic that was relevant to them.

A community circle group is composed of approximately six young feminists from different countries and 2-3 co-facilitators that meet twice a month, or weekly, for approximately 90 minutes, for a total of eight meetings. A small group can be more intimate and supportive, as people get to know each other, their struggles and joys and develop solidarity.

The first session is dedicated to getting to know each other, beginning to build a safer space together, and making sure everybody has the same understanding of the goals and process.

The next six sessions focus on building capacity in the group primarily by using coaching methodologies. This means that each of the six people in the group take turns being coached by the facilitators on an issue they have chosen, and receive further questions, support, input or anything else they need from the rest of the group.

The last session is dedicated to integration of all that the group learned together by sharing space with each other, evaluating the process, and discussing the future.

Click to find tools and templates. Feel free to use it, adapt it, and tell us how it went!



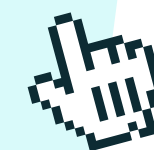
1 A detailed session flow design template



2 Guidance & principles for facilitators



3 An example of a session using the GROW coaching model







## What We Are Learning About Young Activist Realities Through the Community Circles

The common issues and challenges brought in by circle participants give us insight into the challenges faced by the broader girl and young activist community. While each individual's circumstances are unique, there were commonalities from across girl and young activist leaders:

- Lack of community support due to sexist beliefs
- Struggles with finding sustainable funding sources for activities
- Challenges related to running an organization and widening activities
- A need for more community development and leadership building
- Dealing with ageism and not being taken seriously
- Dealing with difficult emotions coming out of working with girls with very difficult life circumstances
- Working with a team without the same vision as you, and who needed to be pushed
- How to better manage self-imposed pressure and taking time to relax





## Reflections from Co-facilitating the Community Circles



— Subina Pariyar,  
GRF Activist Panelist



All of our participants run small grassroots collectives in different parts of the world and face multifaceted challenges in their work. It is challenging to understand the local contexts, access to resources, and peculiar challenges of participants from a completely different region. But, the community circles created a platform for us to develop this understanding. One of our participants runs a feminist youth initiative inside a Palestinian refugee camp for refugee youth and children amid acute resource limitations. During her sharing, many of us realized that her initiative had little to no

space for partnership and collaboration with their government. This sharing made us all more sensitive about the participant's unique position regarding access to funds and support. It also offered us a completely different perspective to look into their work and their initiative.

With such new knowledge about every participant, we could appreciate their work better and comprehend their challenges. This was one of the most significant factors nurturing solidarity amid the community circles. Likewise, we registered that the overall limitations of resources the participant from Palestine faced was similar to the participant from Nepal. These interactions highlighted how alike our struggles and aspirations were despite differences in geographical location and socio-cultural contexts. **As a result, the participant from Nepal proposed to help the participant from Palestine apply for a grant for their initiative.**

Additionally, we attempted to find solutions to our problems together. When one of our participants



from Somalia navigated through different approaches to get their community to support gender equality, other participants shared strategies their initiatives used, and closely followed the discussion so as to adopt useful strategies in their work too. The participants demonstrated solidarity, openness to collaborate, and care towards each other in a mere eight sessions, all done virtually. **This showed how holding such spaces fosters collective care, solidarity, and collaboration across regions eventually, bringing our isolated movements together to give it better momentum.**

While I had the enriching experience of learning together, I also got space to re-evaluate and strengthen my core values as a development practitioner. Co-hosting community circles was extremely rewarding but also tremendously challenging. We, the eight members of the circles, did not share a common language that we all were proficient in. Hence, we had to bring in translators for the sessions. We found one of the translators speaking on behalf of a participant and was not telling us what the participant shared during a

session. Similarly, one participant in the circles had a verbal disability, so we needed them to share their challenges and answers in writing to the group. Moreover, the participants had a wide range of experience as development practitioners – some had recently begun their activism and initiative, whereas some had been in the field for many years. On top of all that, we faced some interruptions due to network issues. The result of persistence, despite these challenges, to hold the space was rewarding. The Community Circles envisioned a safe space for participants where they can share their challenges and receive support from the community members to guide them to the solution. And, we were able to offer our participants and ourselves this space. I acknowledge there is plenty of room for us to do better. Nevertheless, this was a great start.

In a nutshell, co-hosting the Community Circles was a gratifying experience full of learning. Hopefully, in the upcoming days, the circles will grow bigger and better, to better accommodate the needs of diverse participants and continue offering a safe space to co-learn, collaborate, and indulge in collective care.





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## Practice Based Learnings from the Community Circles

**Participant learnings** have been central to this process. One person is coached every meeting, but all participants take important learnings from that experience, as it helps them reflect on their own experiences.

**Creating space for solidarity** was one of our main goals. For most of the participants, the fact that other people go through the same issues in distant countries and different cultural contexts is one of the biggest learnings, as it makes them feel less alone and gives them hope of being able to do things differently. Taking time to go through each issue one at a time helps the process and gives people space and time to reflect and understand each other's struggles.

“

During the community circles, activists were able to share feelings and situations that they could not share within their collectives. The circles were a safe space for them to feel listened to and listen to others, without providing advice but new perspectives. The activists expressed how this process helped them to get inspired by others' stories and to feel that they are not alone. Despite being in different contexts, they experienced similar situations and obstacles.

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— Gloria Rosales Peña,  
GRF Activist Panelist / Women Win

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This was an eye opener that some challenges I face are not just happening in my country but in other countries. I have learnt to take each day as it comes and not to overload myself with work and emotions. Honestly to take and apply in my work I am taking the power of positivity no matter the challenges I come across because its a young feminist movement i should just be focused and not lose hope but continue to empower other young voiceless women.

— Participant, GRF Community Circles

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**Using coaching as an approach** is still a learning curve. We used this approach because it has roots in autonomy and agency building, to empower youth to take the decisions that best suit their situation and to avoid working based on assumptions. Facilitating coaching conversations is profoundly enriching. At the same time, coaching is not for everyone, and not everybody benefits from this approach. Different needs require different approaches. So, take what works, and leave the rest. Some people will need to approach their issue by hearing what others did in similar situations, and reorient themselves using that information. Others are not ready yet to explore solutions, and just need space to express what they are experiencing and what they feel. Some need to feel understood, others learn and grow by listening to others. There is so much diversity, and the structures we create need to be adaptable to reality and individuals' needs.

## Which is Better, Asking Questions or Giving Advice?

We fully believe that each person is capable of finding their own solutions, and we, as support people, can be there to show them nuances, perspectives that they maybe did not think about yet. When a person shares a challenge, there is an important difference between telling them “You should do a and b”, and asking them “What did you try until now? What other options do you see?” or even opening the floor to the group so they can share what options they choose in a similar situation, and in the end, ask the person “Which of these options seems to be the most appropriate for you right now? What are some first steps you can take in that direction?”. Saying this, advice is not all bad, especially when the person asks for it. However, the question remains: **how can you encourage agency, informed consent and empowerment?**



**Relationship building** is central to the success of this coaching methodology and is often the catalyst for change: relationships between facilitators, the facilitator and the person being coached, between facilitators and the group, and between participants. We dedicated one meeting in the beginning to get to know each other, and one in the end to learn about the overall experience that each of us had. We also tried to maintain these relationships in between sessions on email and Whatsapp; however, this is a point that we would like to improve in the future, as it was also signaled by participants. Asynchronous community building needs to be designed with more intention and consistency so that it supports the process even better.

**Monthly practice calls** were essential for building better relationships between facilitators and continuously improving the quality of the circles. All panelists that were interested in taking part in the development and implementation of the circles attended monthly meetings where we took turns in using the methodology, coaching each other, being coached, offering feedback and having many discussions to bring clarity to the process. This provided an opportunity for facilitators to have the full experience and learn from and with each other as we navigate the circles first hand.



**On a professional level: I got insight on several introduced methodologies for working with the community to support each other to make sense of what is happening to us, to reflect on our needs and priorities and to collectively “troubleshoot” and figure out how to deal with current challenges. On the GRF community level: I got familiar with other panelists’ lives and challenges which definitely contributed to bonding, better understanding each other and developing friendships. On a personal level: learnt another way how to get a broader perspective on my challenges and I learnt how to reflect (without overthinking! :D) and deal with them.**



**— Marija Jakovljević,**

**GRF Activist Panelist, co-designer and co-facilitator of the Europe RM workshop**



**Having the opportunity to learn about the coaching circles methodology and to facilitate the community circles has helped me to be more curious and listen more, which is reflected not only in the accompaniment we gave the grantees but also in my current job and the partnership I hold.**



**— Gloria Rosales Peña,**

**GRF Activist Panelist / Women Win**





Spotlight on

# Thematic Learning Spaces

Coming together in online workshops, skill sharing and webinars were a core part of the accompaniment offered to groups in 2021. Topics were selected by the groups themselves, and all design and delivery of these webinars and spaces were hosted by GRF activist panelists. The design was deeply responsive to groups' needs, participatory in nature, starting from the strengths and interests of young activists themselves (both the facilitators and the participants) and aiming to co-create brave spaces of connection. Online spaces do not replace in person learning and exchange environments, however, given the reality of the pandemic these online spaces continue to be crucial for connection and growth. To date we have offered workshops on: storytelling, resource mobilization and digital security.







## Storytelling Workshops

Girls and young feminists have powerful stories to tell. Together their stories represent a possibility to visiblize, reshape and offer new narratives about their experiences. Storytelling workshops bring together activists to hone their storytelling skills and to be together in community with each other to witness and understand their realities. The act of telling their stories is in itself important. It creates a powerful space and process, as so often young people feel they are not listened to, taken seriously or given the space and time to share their experiences. These workshops, centered in creative approaches, open up space for healing, transformation and for activists to be heard.

Two virtual storytelling workshops were held over a six month period, one in Spanish and one in English with French interpretation. The participatory methodology centered on learning the essential elements of storytelling and its practice. Amongst the themes we approached were the elements and structure of storytelling and the various formats and tools we can use. The workshop had two parts, which made it possible for participants to spend time with the information gathered and also have the chance to practice.

We started the workshop by getting to know each other and the stories that we want to explore together. We then deconstructed what a story is, and explored the four elements of storytelling:

**Message:** A message is the meaning of the narrative – the central point or big picture concept that the audience should walk away with.

**Environment:** The environment is the context of the story. This can be a place, a region, a territory, a time, a season of the year, etc. This provides the material context that allows us to understand the conditions in that space and time.

**Characters:** The characters are the subjects of the action. They can be human or non-human, like animals, plants, forces of nature or supernatural beings. They conduct the narrative by taking action.

**Conflict:** Situations can be considered conflicts, but in a narrative, conflicts are not necessarily bad or problematic. Conflicts can be a custom or a culture, a political decision, a material need, a challenge faced by the characters, a dream, a plan for the future, a collective struggle, etc.



We then navigated through some very practical tools that can be used to tell a story, such as: how do we conduct an interview, make a video or a podcast, use photographs to tell stories, and finally visuals edited in Canva. We then concluded our first session by bringing in our experiences with storytelling, and sharing with each other ways in which we have done this so far.

In the second session we started by talking about creating stories: What are some ways we can weave our stories together? What are some free, accessible platforms and tools that we could use? We talked about storyboards, scripts and using social media for stories. To anchor our stories in our realities, and practice some of the tools we have been learning about, for the second session happening one week after, participants were asked to think about the question: “**what does self and collective care mean for me?**”, and bring with them any photos, objects, etc. that connect them to this theme. We used all this as material for conversation and practice then divided into two groups and put together a story based on the knowledge in each group. We created a podcast script and recording, a story board, and

talked about collective care by exploring the stories we wanted to put into the world.

We created a podcast script and recording, a story board, and talked about collective care by exploring the stories we wanted to put into the world.

[Click to listen to a storytelling workshop](#)



Roshni Youth Group



**At the end of the workshop, most people left feeling inspired by each other's stories, with a greater understanding of the power of storytelling, and with practical tools to approach stories with no cost and minimal equipment.**

We explored some of the important questions that can support us in developing a story:

?

**What is the purpose of telling this story?**

?

**What effects do we want to provoke?**

?

**In what context and time?**

?

**Where do we imagine sharing your story? (platforms, spaces, etc)**





## Reflections from the Storytelling Workshops



— Ariane Corniani  
Co-lead designer and  
facilitator of workshops,  
GRF Activist Panelist

“

Like birds, “women are so intelligent, but they try to keep us caged.”

recalls Lucelia Cruz, from the Asociación Movimiento de Jóvenes de Ometepe (Nicaragua), one of the webinar participants.

”



By telling their stories, activists have the opportunity to express how they feel, make visible the realities of people involved in their group or community, and convey their legacy.

And that didn't start on the webinar. The groups have been telling stories for a long time! Through photos and videos on their social networks, with the artistic manifestations they produce, in collective diaries, fanzines, blogs, radio programs, drawings, and by revisiting their individual and collective memories in meetings as well.

The activists come together to exchange experiences, knowledge, and feelings. Although virtually, the meetings are open spaces for them to listen and be listened to, breaking the imposed silence.

Memory then emerges as the tool for weaving bonds among activists. In this collective loom, they remember how they felt before and how they

are feeling now, connecting with their ancestry, strengthening their identity, and supporting themselves in grief for their companions who are no longer with them.

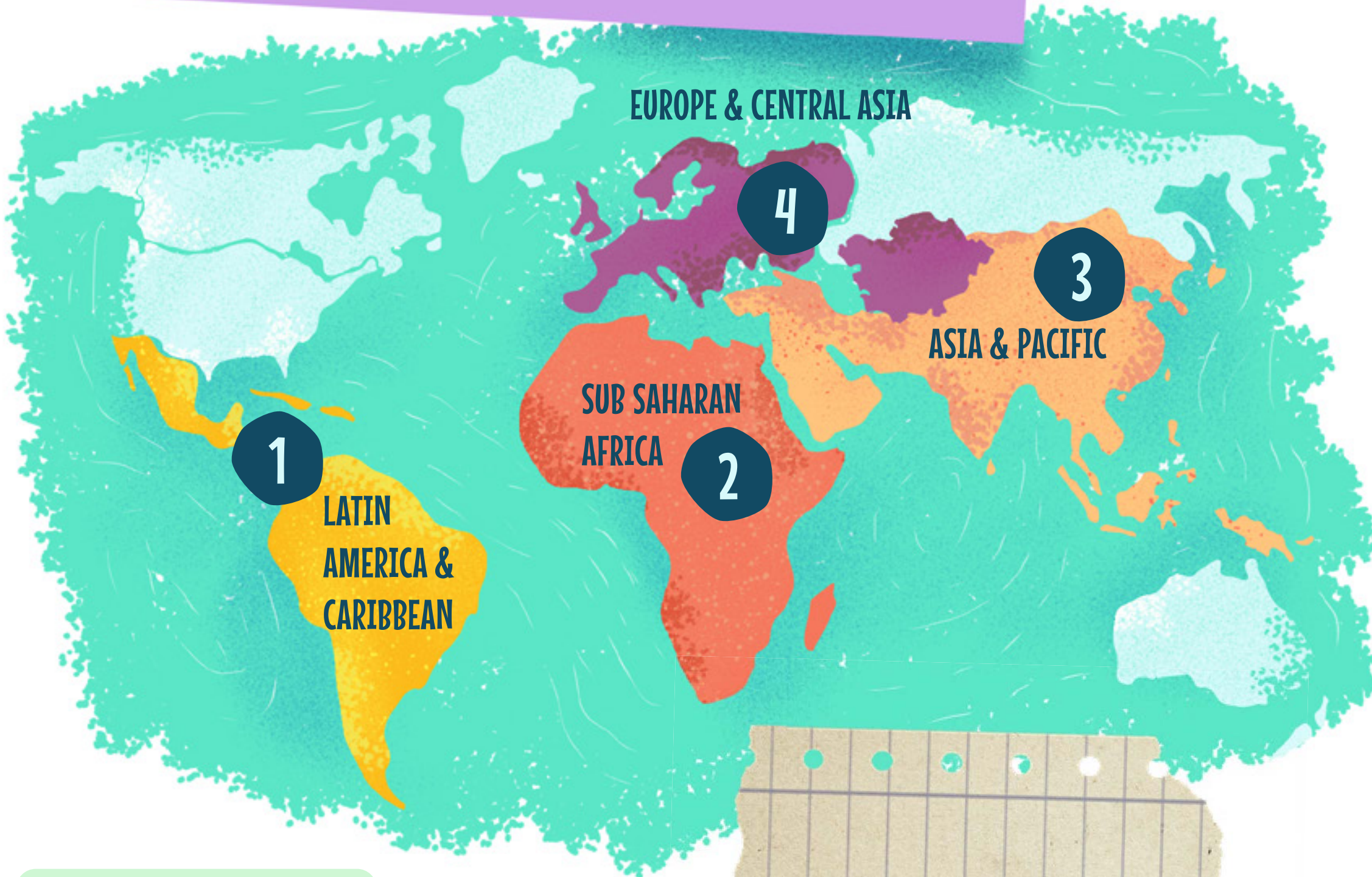
Latin American and Caribbean feminists tell stories of collective power and resilience. They tell stories about people with disabilities, sexual and gender dissidents, afro and indigenous identities, victims of femicide and trans femicide, ancestral knowledge, and their potencies.

Full attention is the first resource the young feminists need to tell their stories. When an audience is truly willing to see, hear, feel and learn from them. However, activists in the region face enormous challenges regarding access to communication technologies such as computers, smartphones, and internet access.

Particularly in the context of the pandemic, in which most interactions took place in the digital environment, the lack of these resources implies the isolation of group members and, consequently, their ability to weave their memories collectively.



# Resource Mobilization Workshops



Girls and young feminists continue to face challenges in accessing flexible, long term resources for their work. During May-October 2021 we held four regional resource mobilization (RM) workshops: Latin America and the Caribbean; Sub Saharan Africa; Asia and Pacific; and Europe and Central Asia. These workshops were designed to explore and reflect unique challenges for girls and young feminists in those specific regions, and were led and designed by activists from those regions. Due to the regional approach, the workshops had a certain level of depth and meaning that was locally contextual and relevant.

In February 2022, we hosted a global workshop series that brought together activists from each region in key global conversations on resource mobilization. It was a great opportunity for young feminists from all over the world to come together and learn from each other's experiences, as well as get a chance to explore topics such as: mapping funding and opportunities, establishing and maintaining connections with donors, proposal writing, and building safety nets for their organisations.



## Resource Mobilization is an Exercise in Trust & Moving Boundaries



— Marija Jakovljević,  
GRF Activist Panelist,  
co-designer and co-facilitator  
of the Europe RM workshop

COVID crises severely affected activists around the globe. For a pop-up fund with a time-bounded mandate, accompaniment work on resource mobilization is a particularly demanding task. In a global system built on competition and scarcity mentality, it is challenging to change the game towards non-extractive collaboration and abundance. Claiming resources and not falling into the trap of competing with others is a mastery that requires time to perfect. We aimed to co-create a space where young feminists can reflect and further develop mechanisms for their resilience. Strengthening their internal organization, looking for ways to better support each other and their communities, growing their roots even deeper and wider, and building safety nets are some of the desired outcomes of our resource mobilization accompaniment work (RMAW).

The tissue that connects all those diverse dots of interest is networking. In crisis times, when demands multiply but concrete support is scarce, collectives can feel isolated. The underlying assumption was that having a curated space for getting to know

each others' resource mobilization (RM) struggles and collectively examining ways to overcome them could ignite the collaborative spirit and amplify individual efforts. When people are being left behind, alienated and exploited in so many ways, rebuilding trust in each other is *conditio sine qua non*. Opportunities like this enable people to (re)connect, share their experiences and collectively seek solutions. Hence our accompaniment work on resource mobilization also paved the way for the next grant round that centered on collaboration and collective care for previously resourced groups.

RMAW started from the awareness that people are at different points on their resource mobilization journey. We created a poll to map the needs and shareable experiences for peer learning. The multiplicity of needs, challenges and aspirations guided our endeavor to co-design a modular learning space that can be further customized to each regional context. We are also learning along the way: test, take out what's not helpful and figure out ways to create a functional, meaningful, joyful and collectively owned learning process.





## Exploratory Learning Encompassed 9 Angles

- Values and ethics of fundraising and resource management
- Defining resources and understanding resources in our collectives and surroundings
- Assessing our capacities for resource mobilization and management and steps to move forward
- Mapping funding opportunities and channels / access to financial and non-financial resources
- Moving beyond competing: collaborations/ consortia/alliance building for advocacy and resource mobilization
- Community engagement for resource mobilization and sharing

- Management of resource mobilization process (roles, skills, procedures, workload, collective care)
- Navigating through financial crises
- Building safety nets (e.g., solidarity fund for members and allies in crisis/need).

Regionally held webinars showed once again how far young feminists manage to go with highly limited resources at their disposal. Groups' achievements (reach and impact) are significant, and we want to hold space to acknowledge them and celebrate them. While their often unacknowledged skills and perseverance should be praised, we should not romanticize this state of opportunity scarcity. We also aim to address the constraining environment (systemic and structural problem) and change it for the better.

RM is a loaded topic, closely related to pervading burnout, so we put effort into approaching it in a responsible but joyful manner. It was encouraging

to receive feedback that people felt *energized & inspired* after the webinar. Setting a positive tone and mutually sparking hope was a good start!

To be responsible supporters, we observe, listen, reflect and learn from and with groups. It's not enough for donors to claim they want to support power-sharing and shifting. It needs to be demonstrated. If there is no leading by example, people will stick to predominant patterns of communicating needs and ideas. Changing the way RM is being approached takes time and persistence.

Most importantly, RMAW is an exercise in trust-building. While RMAW is still evolving, we confirmed that centering relations is a critical piece of work. Focusing on the importance of meaningful and nurturing ties within and outside collectives for the RM was welcomed by participants and pointed as a rare but much-needed approach.

Besides people's gratitude for holding the space for honest and critical conversations on RM, we noted the needs requiring more time to reflect,



strategize and practice. Context-wise, young feminists experience difficulties in RM, particularly if government restrictions are imposed on foreign funds. The situation is even more challenging for informal groups. They are the most agile parts of the movements with great potential and need better quality funding: timely, accessible, and flexible.

On the organizational level, great interest exists in further strengthening self-assessment capacities, followed by an orientation to improving managing and communicating skills. These are not mere technocratic requirements, rather the exploration of values and goals operationalization, so the young feminist collectives stay vital. Common aspiration is “mobilizing long term resources” and stepping out of the circle of constant fighting to preserve rare autonomous safe spaces and dedicated people to be able to serve the community and fight for a just society. “How to maintain members’ solidarity inside and outside the organization “appeared as an inseparable question from RM.

Young feminists understand that the financial health of the collective has to do both with growing technical skillset and holding political ground. Participants in our webinar were also interested in developing a resource mobilization strategy for securing financial health, demystifying grantmaking, writing proposals, tailoring adequate grant management systems, raising funds from the community and online fundraising, and overcoming obstacles of the financial crisis. Due to value-rooted work, young feminists are on a constant search for adequate support. It can mean “identifying good funders for us who can fund us yet not force anything on our agenda” or exploring opportunities for partnership with business sectors.

The good news is that within a pool of supported groups exists a range of expertise activists are willing to share with their peers. That might be internal organization and employing people’s talents, developing projects, managing resources effectively, mobilizing the community, establishing partnerships, nurturing relations, using social networks, setting accountability mechanisms, implementing feminist

MEL, creating safety nets. Even with the awareness that the copy/paste approach is not possible, learning from each others’ experiences is valuable for further strengthening young feminist collectives.

In the era of “practical solutions “(i.e., more action, less theory), we’ve tried to balance the content by pointing to the theoretical pieces and critical reflections of other feminist collectives. We know that things don’t start with us. We want to acknowledge the hard work and contribution of the other feminists and build on it with intersectional lenses.

**As the issues young feminists are dealing with are interconnected, funders of different profiles need to continue developing their interest in supporting this work. There are great expectations to see further development of better quality funding: flexible, long-term, core support.**



## Key Insights and Lessons Learned

### Online communication and tools do not contribute by default to greater accessibility, usefulness or improved practices.

They can be an additional burden if other people's circumstances are not taken into account. Online spaces and tools need to be accessible and easy to use. Based on users' experience, they should evolve. Hence our RM gatherings start from groups' needs and build on their inputs.

### Paradoxically, people feel isolated within an environment that is based on connectivity.

Communication channels also contribute to the fragmentation of ecosystems. By design, it creates bubbles. That's why we insist on an intersectional approach with various formats and sources to expand the horizon of activists' pursuit for proper resources.

### Young feminists share the struggles of other progressive movements facing a lack of funding opportunities to meet their needs and provide certain stability.

Inviting young feminists to learning, decision-making and co-creating spaces is beneficial to all involved parties. Networking and collaboration strengthen RM.

### Young women, girls and youth-led collectives value responsible donors.

This means these collectives will filter which resources they would accept and under which conditions, even in a crisis. Autonomy of their functioning is a highly ranked criterion, as pointed to by participants.



# Digital Security Workshops

“ Please continue this session with more information and what are the latest precautions that we should take against hackers, etc.  
— Workshop participant ”

“ The information was invaluable and an eye opener for me, and others. Organize more of the same. Otherwise thank you so much for keeping us informed  
— Workshop participant ”

Digital security continues to be a critical issue for girls, young women, and non binary activists. In the current context of the pandemic, feminist activists are increasingly organizing in online spaces and moving across a wide range of platforms. While some are familiar with online spaces, many are newer to the environment. In some contexts groups are joining from rural contexts and are using shared data, or unprotected wifi connection to access spaces of connection or convergence. Across the groups GRF funds, it is clear that digital security and protection continues to be a key issue of interest and concern. Online surveillance and interception of data of activists, as well as online violence and bullying is pervasive in all corners of the world. Strengthening the resilience of movements requires feminists to place digital security firmly at the center of our engagement with the internet.



# Reflections from the Digital Security Workshop



— Evdokia Romanova  
Lead designer and facilitator  
of the workshop / GRF  
Activist Panelist

The workshop was designed to cover basic levels of digital and personal security knowledge and was oriented towards feminist activists coming from diverse communities and working at a grassroots level in small-scale initiatives or collectives. Taking into account the complexity of the topic, a significant amount of theoretical knowledge was presented, covering:

- General understandings of digital security;
- Security of phone and computer use;
- Safe messenger platforms;
- Establishing security and safety in your collective or initiative;
- Understanding the responsibility that comes with ensuring safer online spaces for our collectives.

During this workshop, we highlighted the importance of understanding potential threats on the personal and digital levels associated with working in the local communities the participants were coming

from. To promote participation and knowledge sharing, participants had the opportunity to share their knowledge and personal experiences in small groups. To maximize accessibility and inclusion we conducted the workshop in two time slots to accommodate different time zones and offered the workshop with English, Spanish, Arabic and sign language interpretation.

## General observations:

Digital security is highly relevant and most of the communities where GRF grantee partners are from do not have access to information about the topic. Therefore there was significant interest from the community, with 43 participants across both workshops. Activists were engaged and brought questions to the webinar on the basic topics that concern digital security, such as (e.g. “Is it safe to use Whatsapp? Where do I find funding to support digital security in my collective?”). The majority of workshop participants indicated they have a very basic level of knowledge when it comes to digital security and stressed the relevance of understanding the topic in their communities.



## Key Takeaways and Lessons

This topic brings in many nuanced conversations and practical implications, and this is why there is a need to allocate more time for this exploration or conduct a series of workshops on the topic that can allow ample space for learning.

Learning happens in a multi-directional way, which is why expertise is much needed, as well as more space and time for peer learning and sharing of experiences and best practices.

A learning process like this can become more holistic if we identify digital security as a part of advocacy priorities for donors and funders on the global level, and invite in the voices of our communities to contribute to the wider social change we seek to create when it comes to digital rights, access and online safety.

Existing expertise in the community can be valued and brought in by offering space for sharing, asking questions, exploring answers, and collectively problem solving some of the common issues we face when it comes to digital security.



Regional workshops on the topic with regional representatives who are familiar with the context and potential challenges might bring more nuanced ideas to the global conversation and support folks to better contextualize digital safety, as well as focus on finding concrete solutions to issues specific to their realities.



## Participant Feedback

Participants highlighted the positive learning processes acquired during the workshops, as well as the importance of the topic and the need to continue discussions. The quote below brings this to life:

“ Please continue this session with more information and what are the latest precautions that we should take against hackers, etc. ”

Several participants have mentioned transferring the knowledge to their collective and starting a separate approach when it comes to digital security:

“ I am going to continue teaching my fellow girls how to protect their phones, laptops, social media accounts. ”

In addition, some participants highlighted their interest in participating in such workshops at the global level and learning from the global community:

“ I saw activists from all around the world during the workshop and it felt connecting and reassuring ”

Several suggestions for the workshops were made, such as a different structure/tool organization and a longer time allocated for holding the workshop. The importance of resources support after the workshop was also noted:

“ We suggest you to use a black board and explain the topic more deeper and take more time to answer the question from the participants , in the meantime plan the next session for one day or half day workshop to discuss the methods in depth ”





Spotlight on

# Spaces of Collective Care

## in Times of Crisis

Crises are not new. The ones that we continue to experience are a product of the systemic injustices of the world – the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic being no different. As a result, we continue to experience painful trauma that is created by these crises which can drown us in hopelessness, chaos, and make us feel alone; make us think that we cannot imagine or dream about the future. And, though it is difficult to carry forth, we know that we are the seeds that sprout the revolution. One where we resist by connecting with the wisdom of our ancestors, communities, and territories. One that is rooted in our collective care and power by reminding ourselves to breathe, pause, learn, reflect, and reclaim our divine joy.





Poem by Andrea, a Costa Rican activist, artist and poet, at the closing event of the festival.

## Cuidarnos, Sostenernos: Latin American & Caribbean Collective Care Festival



— Laura Vergara  
and Perla Vázquez —



“porque no para la violencia en esas casas cárceles de 4×4 para las mujeres violentadas, porque afuera había respiro, por lo menos 4 minutos para respirar y yo suertuda, bendecida, privilegiada, soltera, sin hijos, tengo 4 minutos para pensar si estaré haciendo lo suficiente, si seré virtualmente capaz y podré sembrar y leer y hacer ejercicio y comer bien y fortalecer mi sistema inmunológico... ¿Y si solo tengo palabras? ¿Y si solo tengo palabras? Y si no alcanzan las camas de cuidados intensivos para mí y por qué estoy pensando en eso, si eso no me va a pasar a mí, eso no me va a pasar a mí... Porque ya me han pasado cosas que no pensé que me iban a pasar a mí.

(Pausa. Respire profundamente)”

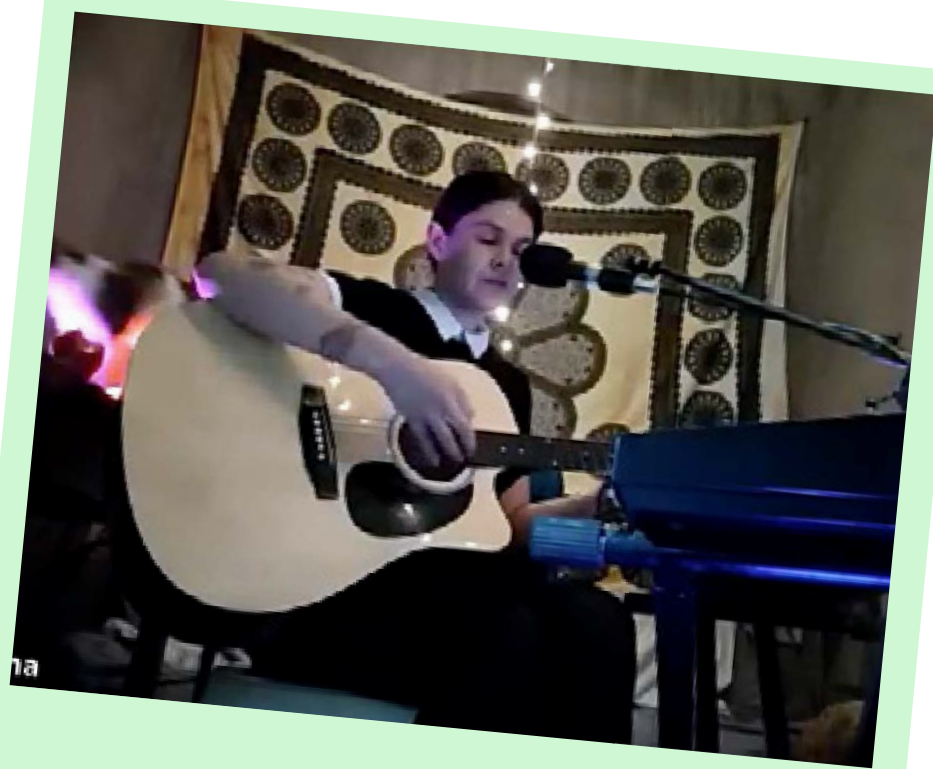
— Extraído de *Diario de una pandemia: Día 100*  
Por [Andrea Gómez Jiménez](#)

“...why doesn't the violence stop in those 4×4 prison cells where women are harmed, why is there air outside, at least 4 minutes where I can breathe by myself, And I: lucky, blessed, privileged, single, without children, have 4 minutes to wonder if I am doing enough, if I will be capable with the virtuality, able to sow and read and exercise and eat well and strengthen my immune system... What if I only have words? What if I only have words? What if there are not enough intensive care beds for me and why am I thinking about that, if that's not going to happen to me, that's not going to happen to me... Because things have already happened to me that I didn't think would ever happen to me.

(Pause. Take a deep breath)”

— Excerpt from *Diary from a pandemic: Day 100*  
By [Andrea Gómez Jiménez](#)





Committed to a revolution that seeks our sustained healing, solidarity, and liberation while honoring our territory and wisdom, we, a group of Feminist Latin American and Caribbean Activists, co-organized and curated in 2021 the Festival Cuidarnos, Sostenernos (Caring, Sustaining Festival) that brought together over one hundred feminist girls and young activists every Friday and Saturday from October 15th-30th.

The festival was rooted in collective care and inspired by the beauty and richness of the individual and collective human experience, which we identified in the following components<sup>3</sup>:

**Symbolic: individual and collective rituals, practices, and approaches**

**Rational: decision-making and its implementation**

**Physical: body and its senses**

**Spiritual: individual and collective spirit and its relationship with our surroundings**

**Emotional: expressions and experiences that emerge from thoughts and feelings**

These components guided the agenda curation by helping us understand why, how, and when they showed-up across sessions– bringing deeper intentionality, diversity, and care. We believe that how we curate and hold spaces matter, this includes what parts of ourselves we are not only inviting but allowing to be truly present.

*3. The components are meant to be living, flexible, and evolving to ensure that they are relevant to the context of each community and their approaches.*







For the three-week period of the festival, we co-curated and held 32 activist-led community spaces that included a variety of offerings such as: concerts, poetry free-style cafes, ancestral healing workshops, dance classes, and a dedicated space for and by the healing of Indigenous communities. These powerful spaces connected young feminists across the Latin American and Caribbean territory to share wisdom and solidarity, build relationships, and care for each other.

As an Indigenous youth activist shared: “Estos espacios donde nos articulamos, desde todos nuestras periferias nos ayuda a construir, llorar y cantar juntas” (“These spaces where we articulate, from all our peripheries help us build, cry and sing together”).

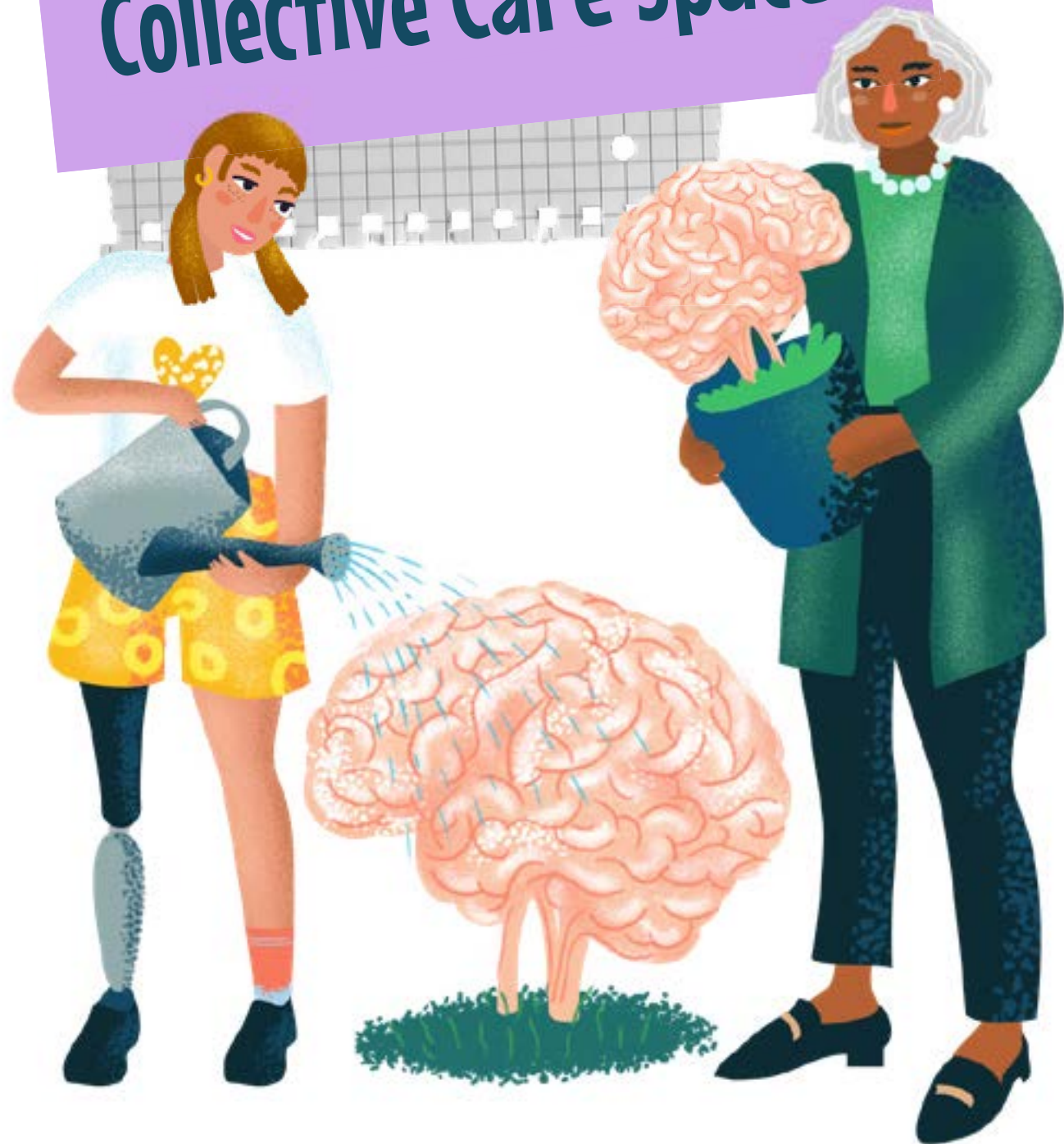
The sessions were led in Spanish and Portuguese, and included, if requested, sign language and English interpreters. To honor the wisdom of each co-organizer, all of the activists that led a session received an honorarium. We also provided tech stipends, funding for internet access, to ensure participants could join the healing community spaces.

Girl and young feminist activists have been organizing and holding healing and collective care spaces in creative, organic, and brave ways. When any community space for young feminists and their communities/partners is organized, it must have their leadership – not their mere participation.





# Activist and Funder Collective Care Spaces



Community is resistance and transformation. Community is all we have. We prioritize collective care spaces that bring our community together, including activists, funders, and partners, as we understand that caring for ourselves and each other is the core of all social change. These spaces support our healing, learning, spark ideas, and build our collective power.

Throughout the last year, we ideated on organizing a large community collective care space. But adjusted as we realized, after discussing with people from the community, that we needed to take a step back because: the timing and pace were not supportive of people involved, and people still needed to find shared language about this topic before going into detail. This is a key lesson from this process: as we ideate and dream spaces for and of collective care, they must be conducive to our care in every component (including planning and implementation).

Grounded in our commitment to create spaces for and of collective care and the needs of the community, we decided to host two spaces to allow for more time to grow and for the concepts to take a better shape for us all. We started by organizing a simpler event, the Collective Care Conversation, with the sole purpose of young activists having the space to define what collective care is. We learned that sometimes simple is better. If we get too tied to an idea or of a way of doing things, we can alienate ourselves and our communities. Respecting the pace of our community nourishes us all. After this initial, grounding conversation, we were able to host the Collective Care Open space two months later, that brought funders and activists together to discuss core ideas related to collective care.

**Because we moved at a pace that met the needs of activists, we were able to create a space that was supportive to those who attended.**



# Space 1: Collective Care Conversation



## Let's define together: what is self & collective care for you? How do you understand each?

right to make mistakes and opportunity to learn from them	opening space for those with less power and not abusing power and privileges	acting as door opener for others and connecting people	being self-critical about our practices and looking to improve them
labor rights and decent working environment	attention to wellbeing of communities and our natural environment	non-market oriented forms of care	inviting others into spaces of opportunity
accessibility for everybody	showing solidarity with others, building safety nets	unlearning harmful behaviors and practices	holding space for people to be themselves

Click here to view the full mural



After our 2021 grantmaking round on collective care and collaboration, it was clear we needed to create a space for conversation with each other on the topic of collective care. This topic is so complex, and it has so many different implications, interpretations, and practical aspects. In dialogue with our community, we learned it was important to first find shared language and vocabulary to define what we mean by self and collective care, and why is that important in our activism. Together, activists and funders, explored how this looks in their realities, and what are the challenges they face in implementing care. For this conversation, we focused on the question: What is most important for you and your communities when it comes to collective care? Activists and funders came together in conversation and practice of collective care, to reflect, brainstorm and share from their experiences of bringing care to the center of our activism. We also took advantage of this moment to provide some theoretical framework, and to acknowledge that there is not only one perspective but many, not only one way of doing collective care but a multitude of ways.



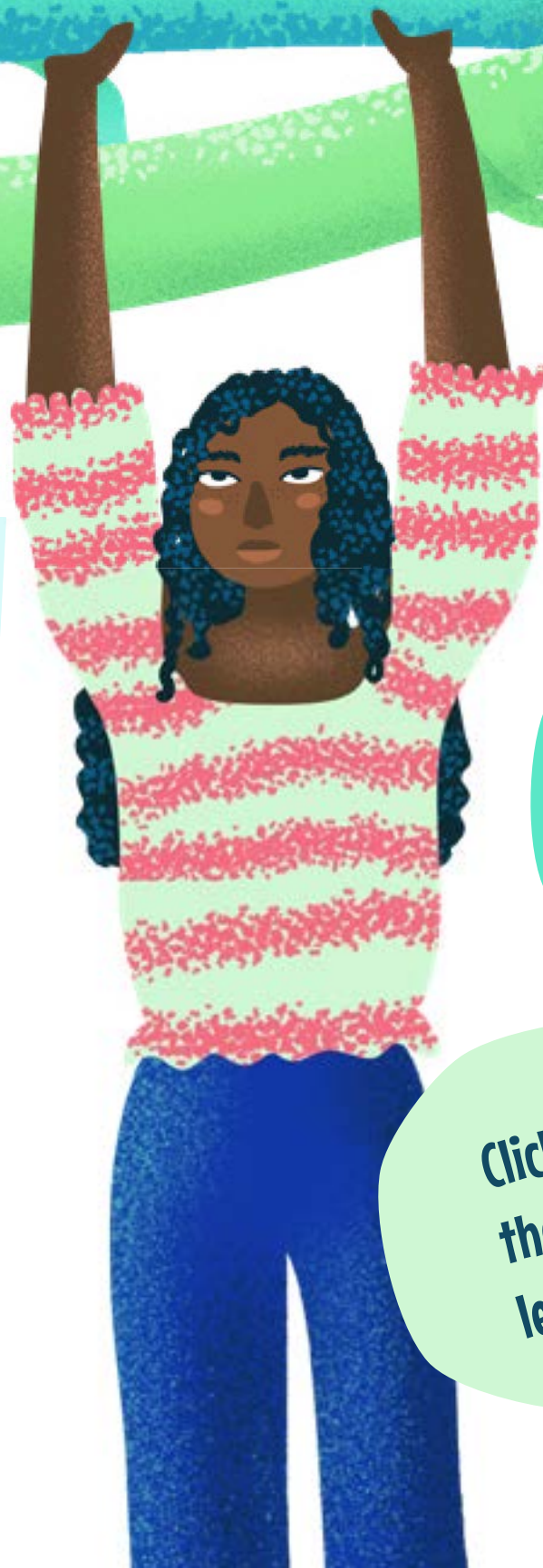
## Space 2: Collective Care Open Space

An illustration of two hands, one from a person with a blue and white striped sleeve and one from a person with a brown sleeve, holding a glowing red heart. The heart is surrounded by a soft, green, ethereal glow.


After we had shared definitions and theoretical frameworks for collective care we were better positioned to host a more complex community space focused on collective care. Open Space is a participant-led methodology, in which organizers don't come with a fixed agenda but rather open it up for participants to decide what the most important topics are that need to be discussed. We had 12 conversations to expand ourselves and our understanding of collective care on: what is collective care; how to establish collective care practices in our organizations; collective healing for leaders and activists; pleasure activism; feminist anger; as well as practices for soothing our bodies and souls like dance; meditation; yoga; tarot; astrology; and sound baths.

“  
*Some time ago I was looking for a horizon and going aimlessly, without understanding what I do, but today was like a hug from the heart and [I] received the answer*  
”

— Participant,  
Collective Care Open Space

An illustration of a Black woman with long, dark, curly hair, wearing a red and white striped sweater and blue pants. She has her arms raised, holding onto a thick, green, vine-like structure that arches across the top of the page. The background is white with soft, green, ethereal glows.

Click to know more about collective care offerings



Click here to visit the website and learn more





Spotlight on

Cultivating Critical

Connections and

Consciousness





# Disability Justice Dialogues

Since the launch of the GRF and amid the urgency of the pandemic in 2020, we have firmly believed that without disability justice, there is no justice – much less pandemic relief or any real and sustainable recovery. Thus, from the beginning, we have held an explicit intersectional lens that centers the leadership of disability rights activists to reimagine and co-create all aspects of the resourcing process. This ensures we reach the powerful, creative, and resilient efforts that are often excluded from funding opportunities. As our partners at the Disability Rights Fund shared, it is incredibly important to truly commit to disability justice by ensuring we are resourcing the vision of the community as only 2% of all global human rights funding is directed to persons with disabilities.<sup>4</sup>

Disability justice is an ongoing learning and evolving effort that requires bold and community rooted

conversations and collaborations. To this end, we organized in December 2021 and January 2022, in partnership with Disability Rights Activists, our first disability justice dialogues. This brought together 16 disability rights activists representing 12 groups working on disability rights efforts from across the world. Our goal was to provide a meaningful space of solidarity and care that deepened trust, collective power, and knowledge and resource sharing. In an ableist society, individuals and communities with disabilities are stigmatized, discriminated against, excluded, and isolated.

**Thus, being, belonging, connecting, and building with community is a radical and powerful act of resistance and transformation.**

4. <https://www.hrfn.org/community-voices/reversing-the-trend-the-time-is-now-to-fund-disability-rights/>



# Meaningful Community Gatherings:

Throughout the planning and envisioning of the disability justice dialogues, we wanted to ensure it was a participatory, non-extractive space, filled with care and truly meaningful for the community. This led us to reflect on the following questions: What do we mean by meaningful participation and engagement? Who and what is missing in the current spaces that we have participated in the past? And, how have we felt and wished that had been different?

These reflections led us to reaffirm our belief in the importance of holding a space that moved from meeting the minimum “accommodations” to purposefully engaging with the community, especially as co-creators and experts. When we think about how we gather and hold community spaces, it’s important to transcend from thinking solely around inclusion to moving to practices of belonging.

## Our Belonging Practices

We developed these practices of belonging while reflecting on and organizing the dialogues. It was a collective effort of love and commitment for a present and future that we deserve: one where we all belong.

- **Access is identified as a right rather than a need**
- **Individual and collective care are prioritized**
- **All intersecting identities are celebrated, respected, and welcomed**
- **There is mutual accountability and transparency**
- **Lived experiences and wisdom are prioritized and honored with just remuneration**
- **We let go of perfectionism and one size fits all approaches**
- **Flexibility is the norm**
- **We continuously learn and adapt**
- **There is diversity in communication and participation**



An illustration of two people climbing a giant beanstalk in a stormy night sky. One person is standing on a large green ring of the beanstalk, while the other is climbing a ladder attached to it. The background is dark blue with rain falling and a lightning bolt striking a tree. The scene is set against a backdrop of stylized, glowing green and blue clouds.

# Emergent Learnings: offering to others committed to more and better work with young feminists

#3

*This section aims to draw together our learnings and reflections on offering activist-led accompaniment so far. These are our emergent practices, thoughts, and suggestions for both funders and organizations doing or thinking about starting accompaniment work. We welcome thought partnership with other funders, activists and accompanying collectives, as we too are in a continuous and evolving process of learning and unlearning.*



## Co-create community learning spaces as a form of accompaniment

From early on in the Global Resilience Fund design process, we decided to challenge more traditional reporting and extractive practices that do not add value to the community. In our case this meant actively experimenting and moving away from reporting to co-create community spaces for shared and collective learning. During the learning calls, activists had the opportunity to share the work they are doing to respond to the pandemic, their ideas and strategies, and also challenges they were facing. Through these calls we learned more about their strengths and the challenges they faced in their work, providing another layer of understanding for what kind of non-financial accompaniment the fund could provide.

- **Challenge extractive practices that do not add value to the community** by moving away from reporting processes to support and/or co-create community spaces for open learning. This is an important and much needed step for funders to take to not only reduce unnecessary work for groups, but also build trust.
- **Cultivate spaces for activists to come together, network, and share experiences** and strategies for their work. This can be for people in similar contexts, across diverse contexts to connect people with similar lived experiences or broader spaces of connection and community.
- **Create opportunities for funders and activists to learn from each other** and build community together to promote shared understanding and accountability and ultimately improve the quality of financial and non-financial resources moving to girl and young feminist led groups.

## Work to decolonize and shift power in your approach by ensuring accompaniment is led by or at least informed by activists themselves

- **Design with and be accountable** to girls and young feminists in your approach to accompaniment work.
- **Co-design with girls and young feminists** to ensure support is responsive to all organizational shapes and sizes.
- **Be aware of power imbalances**, possible impacts attached to any funding modality.
- **Embrace the potential messiness** and work through it with humility and care.



## Be open, flexible and curious to find the best solutions for inclusion and accessibility and to ensure meaningful participation. Some ways we promote accessibility and inclusion:

- **Inquire about people's access needs when they sign up** and work to meet these needs well in advance. Check to make sure needs are met during the session and when relevant make other participants aware of accessibility needs.
- **Allocate resources toward inclusion and accessibility** and to help minimize barriers to participating locally. For example:
  - Co-create learning opportunities in local/regional languages.
  - Provide materials in advance (presentations, handouts, links to collaborative spaces, etc.) for screenreader users.
  - Provide personal assistance when the event is in-person and hold the gathering in accessible spaces.

- **Offer mobile data support** to ensure young people from all socio-economic backgrounds have internet access.
- **Ensure language interpretation** (including sign language) is available for those who need it and prepare well. Form good contacts with local translators, ensure they are well vetted and reliable, and sign confidentiality agreements where possible. Things are often last minute and sometimes translation or interpretation is mixed in quality, or interpreters may not be values-aligned or may translate inaccurately. Make sure people understand how to use technological tools to support their learning and adjust if those tools are not meeting the needs of people participating in the space.

- **Adapt the program and methodology** in collaboration with participants to ensure people with disabilities can participate and the timing does not conflict with commitments or cultural events. Create breaks and spaces that are mindful and caring of our bodies and mind.
- **Be open to keep learning and unlearning**, reflecting on what could have gone better and planning as much as you can for future moments. Recognize that inclusion requires a lot of ongoing learning and it does not equate to accessibility.



## Ground your approach in the current context of the pandemic or other intersecting crisis

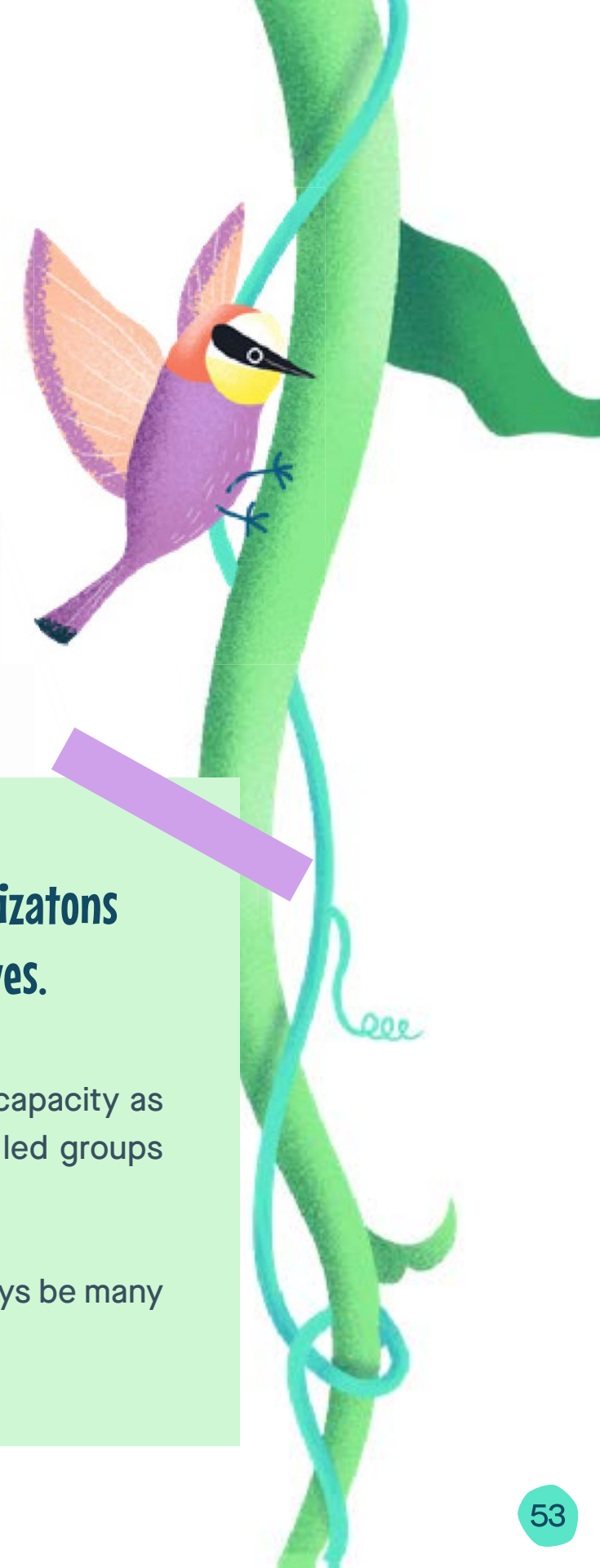
- Recognize the realities everyone continues to experience in the current state of the pandemic. Clearly state your awareness of the context – that we are not in ‘business as usual’. Take the time to be as informed as possible in the shifting contexts of the groups you fund.
- Work to actively center care in your approach.
- Be flexible and open to plans changing - all the time. Create an environment where adaptiveness and change is the norm, removing the stigma of people needing to cancel and take the time they need.

## Ensure offerings are locally grounded and contextualized

- Work with trainers, coaches, and activists from the region you are offering accompaniment.
- Offer spaces in people’s mother tongue where possible.

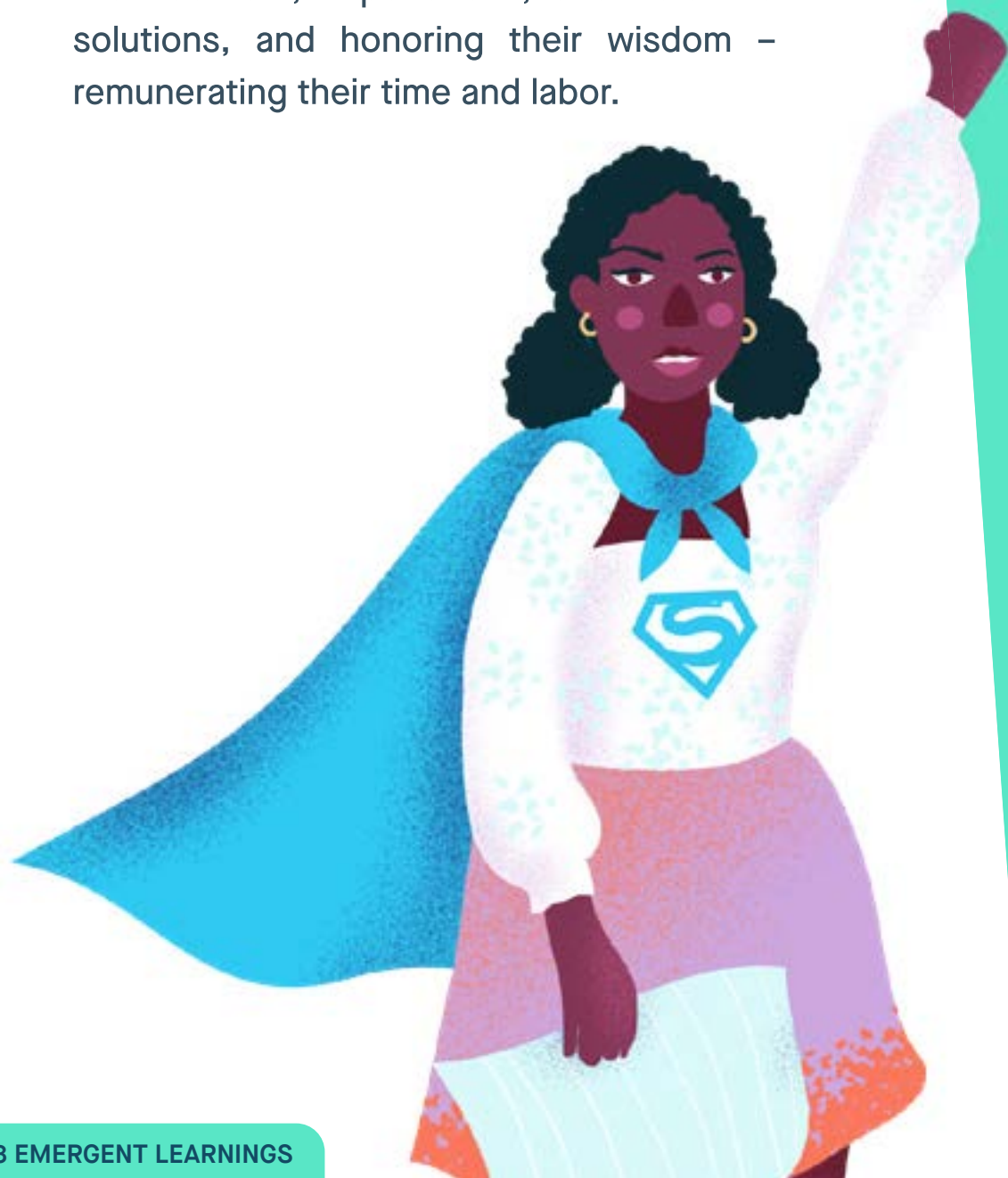
## Commit to building your own capacity as funders / organizations working with girl and young feminist groups and collectives.

- Invest in training and resources for the team to build their own capacity as funders to better work with and support girl and young feminist led groups and collectives.
- Be guided by humility and curiosity, understanding there will always be many things you do not know.





And transversing all these reflections is the importance of supporting the vision and dreams of girls and young feminists – their mere participation is not enough. This means, actively co-creating and supporting their leadership as they are the experts of their context, experiences, and hold the solutions, and honoring their wisdom – remunerating their time and labor.



“

As young feminists, we are already facing multiple forms of oppression, ineffective capacity building, and accompaniment models from donors only exacerbate the struggles that we go through. An ideal accompaniment model should be one that is demand-driven and co-created by the groups and the funders. Donors have to build their capacity by listening to what young feminists need to thrive in their work and trusting them to know their needs best. Then collectively come up with an accompaniment model that offers opportunities for networking, growth, and learning for young feminists. A model that makes young feminists feel supported and in solidarity with each other. Global Resilience Fund offers this model by connecting their grantee partners thematically and regionally and offering them community spaces where young feminists share, learn, and exchange strategies on how to navigate the Covid-19 pandemic and other day-to-day struggles that they meet. This has made me feel like I have friends to lean on and I have a community of young feminists to look up to when challenges arise.



— Joy Hayley Munthali,  
GRF Activist Panelist, Green Girls Platform

”



# Contending with Power in Accompaniment Processes: Some first thoughts

No matter how much we design our accompaniment model in a non-hierarchical, participatory way, we must constantly examine our practice because power dynamics are always present in grantee-funder relationships. The results of years of conditioning and power imbalances in grantee-funder relationships are present in the way we all show up, and we recognize that declaring an intent of breaking the current system is not enough.

**We need to unlearn and relearn ways in which we relate to each other, and this takes time, intentionality, and radical transparency and honesty.**

*Below we outline emerging lessons around power, how it shows up and how we are navigating it.*



**Be realistic and honest about power dynamics between funders and grantee partners:** Even if you are explicit about accompaniment being fully optional for groups, grantee partners are likely to feel obligated to accept opportunities because of the power dynamics that exist, and especially if it is a renewal moment, or the status of future funding is unclear. Talk openly with your partners: assure people they do not need to attend events, nor are they connected in any way to current or future funding, and that they are simply opportunities they can benefit from, if needed.



**Timing is important:** If you are a funder and request groups to complete surveys, or ask them for information or to attend spaces you are curating, be mindful of the power dynamics and what this means for their ability to say no. Be aware of when renewals are being processed and ensure you are not making requests of groups at key moments.



**Work to reduce some of these power differentials through cultivating trust, co-design, transparency and consistent communication:** Where possible design with and compensate partners, explore opportunities for groups to offer up their skills, experiences and contributions. Given activists' realities, it is critical not to overburden them and let groups determine if and how they would like to lead or participate.



**Be very clear about the intentions of the space you are creating:** Share intentions, expectations, and what you are hoping will result from the space or request. Also let people know what you believe is the benefit of their participation and what they will not gain from it to manage expectations. Transparency can go a long way in building trust.

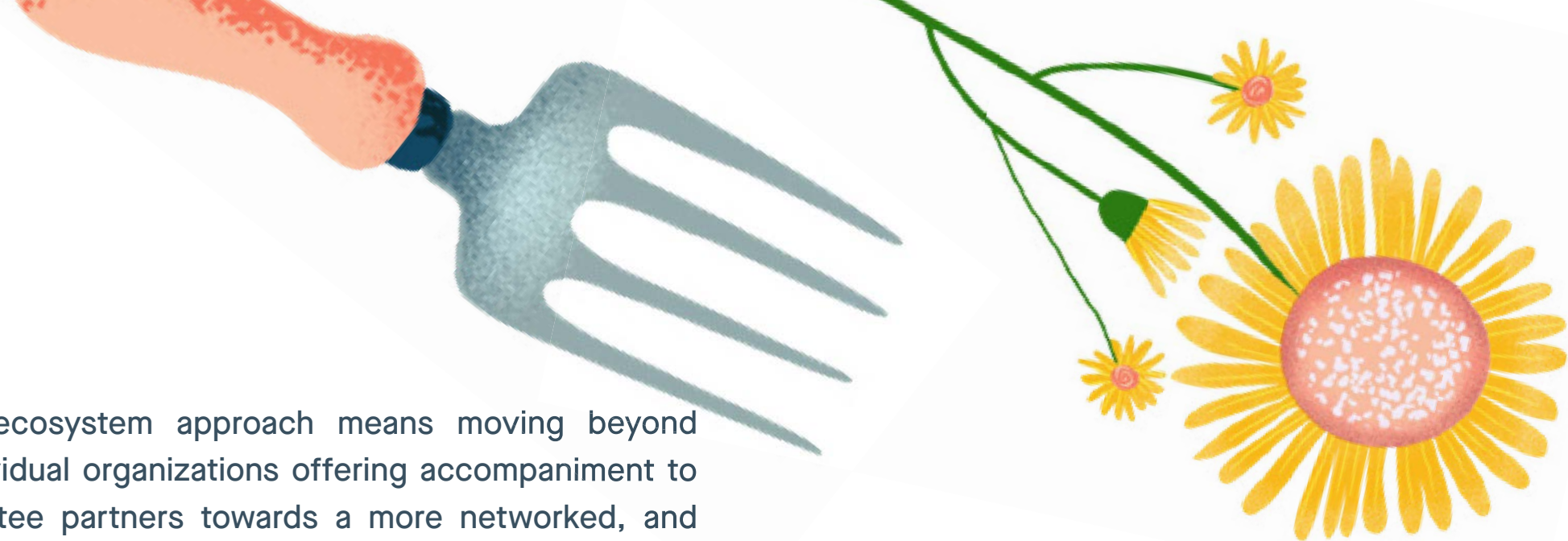


**Towards an Ecosystem  
Approach to Accompaniment:  
An offering to feminist funders**

**#4**





An illustration featuring a silver fork with an orange handle on the left, and a green stem with several yellow daisy-like flowers on the right. The flowers have bright yellow petals and pinkish-red centers. The background is white with a subtle floral pattern.

An ecosystem approach means moving beyond individual organizations offering accompaniment to grantee partners towards a more networked, and interconnected approach that intentionally builds on the strengths of different funders. Over time this could move towards a field level model that is centered on how funders can work collectively and with activists to offer accompaniment to a broader set of girl and young feminist led groups and organizations. The intention behind this approach is to avoid over-burdening groups and organizations with multiple and duplicative offerings, to ensure groups across the ecosystem have access to diverse and dynamic opportunities and can maintain autonomy to drive the direction of accompaniment. We do not have all the answers, but rather a deep desire for girl and young feminist-led groups and intergenerational movements to thrive and to improve the quality and relevance of support (both financial and non-financial) they receive from funders and partners.

Many funders that are supporting girl and young activist-led or centered groups are offering, or intend to offer accompaniment to grantee partners. While intentions are to support girl and young activist-led organizations, if careful attention to coordination is not considered it could result in a burden of multiple, similar offerings, by different funders and a waste of resources and reinforcing existing power dynamics. Some funders resource girl and young feminist groups with financial resources but do not have the capacity to offer accompaniment. This results in some groups receiving a lot of non-financial support and others receiving none.

With this in mind, we are interested in exploring how feminist funders can coordinate and collectivize accompaniment in ways that will nurture and



grow the ecosystem of girl and young feminist led work. This would require feminist principles of partnership, accountable collaboration, responsible and transparent use of power and a spirit of genuinely wanting to support, and not overburden, girl and young feminist led groups and feminist funders. We aim to better interweave our existing work, and find ways to be in deeper collaboration to sustain our work and avoid burnout, as many women's funds and feminist funders are also facing overwork and stretched capacity. Our intention is to model and manifest our values and politics in the way we support more collective, horizontal and transformative relationships to emerge.



Below we outline a set of guiding questions to support funders and activists across the ecosystem in imagining what a collective approach that supports a healthy, thriving ecosystem could be.

? How can we coordinate better as funders to provide more holistic support to groups? Are there ways we can combine offerings or pool resources?

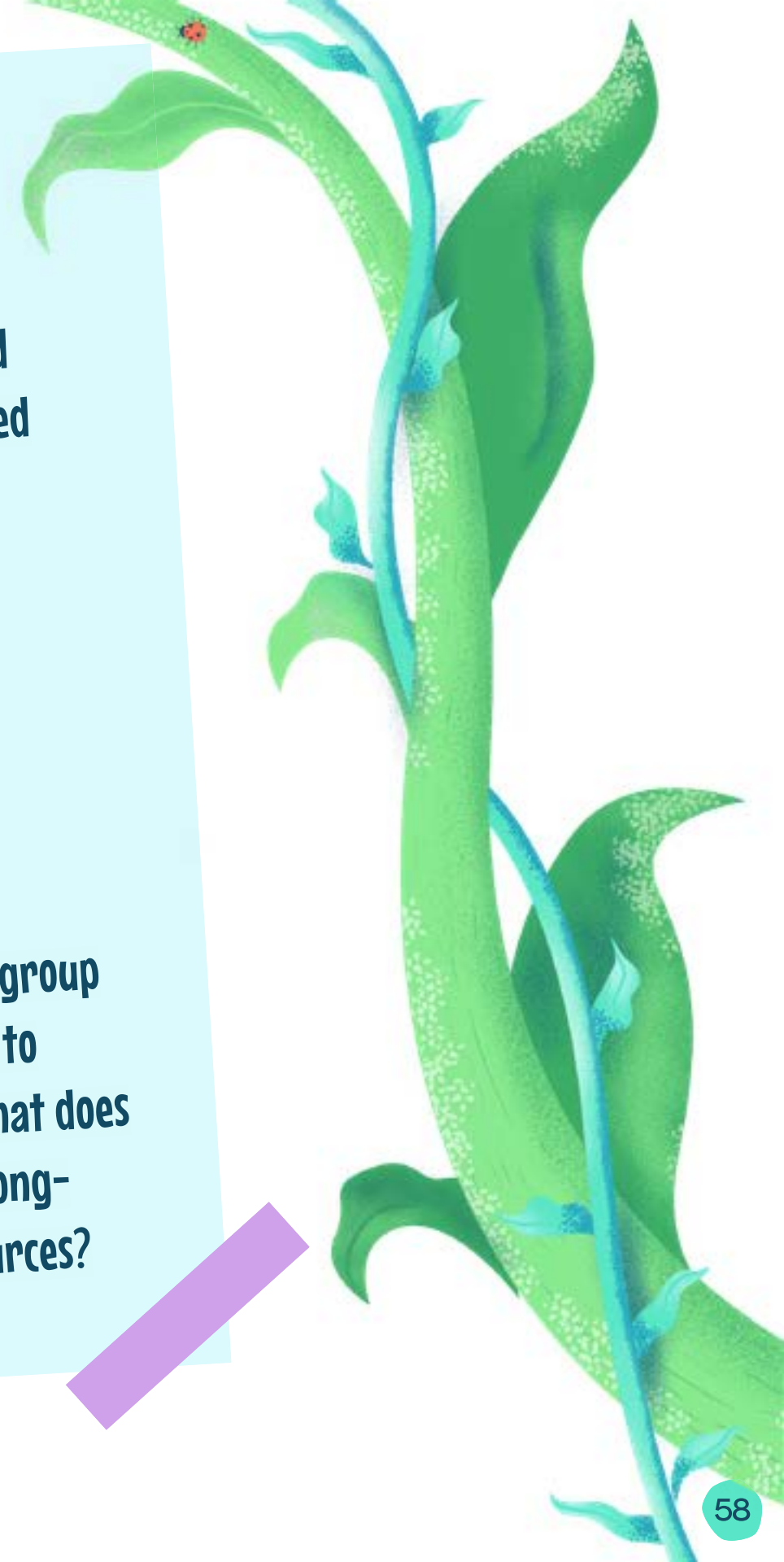
? How can we reduce burden on groups and organizations by collaborating – offering more spaciousness to grantee partners?

? What tools and information already exist in the funding ecosystem? How can we collectively access these and reduce duplication of efforts?

? What spaces and offerings are useful and generative for girl and young feminist led groups, and centered on their needs?

? Are we well placed as funders to offer this accompaniment, and are our current approaches effective? How can we learn with each other?

? When we stop funding a group, or the group transitions, how can we support them to access new resources and support? What does that accompaniment look like with a long-term view and beyond financial resources?





# From Seeds to Seedlings: Is an ecosystem approach to accompaniment possible? What might it look like in practice?



This is an invitation for the feminist funding ecosystem to be in dialogue about accompaniment – what we are offering to girl and young feminist led groups; how we might share resources; and how we might deepen our collaboration to be in better solidarity through financial and non-financial resources to girl and young feminist led groups. Below we share some emerging ideas for collaboration across the ecosystem as a starting place for exploration.

## **Sharing key resources, tools and learning materials:**

Instead of funders continuing to reinvent the wheel with accompaniment offerings, funders and others in the ecosystem that provide accompaniment, could co-create a shared library of resources. For example, in sharing this document our hope is others will be able to use approaches designed by young feminists for their accompaniment.

*What would it look like if we had a library of resources designed by girls and young feminists in multiple languages, available across regions?*

## **Co-design resources, tools and learning materials:**

If materials do not yet exist, organizations across the ecosystem could partner to develop materials and/or resource girls and young feminists to develop resources.

*What would it look like for girls and young feminists to identify gaps that exist? What if they were resourced to design materials to fill this gap and further the field?*

## **Offer collective accompaniment offerings:**

Funders could collaborate to provide girl and young feminist-led groups accompaniment offerings collectively. For example, this could mean opening up accompaniment offerings to each other's grantee partners or collaborating to co-design accompaniment offerings for the field, rather than a set of grantee partners.

*What would it look like for funders to coordinate their efforts to provide girls and young feminists activist led accompaniment?*

## **Pool funds or resources to support accompaniment for girl and young feminist-led groups:**

Funders could also work towards a pooled set of funds that support activist-led accompaniment. This would require significant coordination, relationship building, and collective design, but could result in a powerful offering for girls and young activists.



## An Example of Collaborative Ecosystem Accompaniment

The New York City Capacity Building Funders' Collaborative consists of social justice foundations that collectively pool resources to build the capacity of grassroots community organizations. The Collaborative began to take shape over a decade ago, when several foundations, partnered to provide technical assistance trainings. They began to reach out to other peer funders with the goal of creating a more lasting partnership structure that could support and provide capacity-building to more organizations across a wide range of topics on an ongoing basis. Today, the Collaborative includes 12 foundations, which each contribute financial resources and staff time. The current structure involves shared leadership among the staff of the participating foundations.



— Gloria Rosales Peña,  
GRF Activist Panelist / Women Win

I love the idea of an ecosystem approach to accompaniment and I think it is possible, particularly organizations are willing to coordinate, collaborate and acknowledge their own pace and unique value. In that way, we recognize the interconnectedness and complementarity of our work. Last year I supported very specific accompaniment initiatives led by the Global Resilience Fund, and I could feel how my small contribution had an impact on how we were supporting the grantees and their leaders, in a way that made sense to them but also to Women Win and myself with my limited time and resources. The coordination between GRF and Women Win was open, flexible and adaptable which created a fertile ground for intentional engagement that did not feel forced nor burdensome and felt very fruitful.



# An Ecosystem Approach: Principles and practices to support interconnectedness



## 1. Support accompaniment that is seeded and toiled by girls and young feminists

People who live with injustice are best positioned to address injustice. They know their needs and have the best vision for their lives and how to realize this vision. Supporting activist-led accompaniment means prioritizing the expertise of girls and young feminists themselves, compensating them for their time and centering them as content creators, trainers, and leaders in designing and delivering accompaniment. The center of gravity of such an approach is activists themselves, recognizing their skills, experience and contributions to building their capacity and that of their own communities and groups they work closely with. It seeks to generate concrete and relevant spaces of connection and learning that are relevant to and guided by activists themselves, working with them rather than for them.

This does not mean one group of young feminists has to hold all of the knowledge. It might mean scanning the field to find the right person with the expertise or knowledge young feminists are looking to build. What is critical here, is the needs of girls and young feminists are centered and we prioritize and resource the expertise of girls and young feminists themselves in offering accompaniment. This should be foregrounded and built into the design of any accompaniment ecosystem models.



## 2. Create strong roots by grounding in girls' and young feminists' evolving needs and priorities

A feminist accompaniment model should reflect what girl and young feminist organizations are requesting in support. Given the dynamic work of girls and young feminists, and the world we are living in, accompaniment should also be responsive to shifting realities. This should be done in relationship with girls and young feminists, co-designing and reimagining what this ecosystem should look like. This report reflects our experience with what girls and young feminist-led groups needed during the pandemic, and reflects many of the ongoing needs of these groups. A collective approach to accompaniment should remain nimble, allowing to meet the evolving needs of girls and young feminists. Building in leadership of girls and young feminists and systems of accountability is key to the success of any accompaniment model.

## 3. Nourish the ecosystem through abundance and donor coordination

An ecosystem approach to accompaniment should be embedded in a well resourced field where girl and young feminist-led organizations have the financial and non-financial resources they need. Bringing an ecosystem lens to accompaniment keeps the center on girls and young feminists, but moves the responsibility of resourcing and coordinating efforts to funders.

## 4. Fertilizing growth through trust based relationships, collective vision and shared intentions

An ecosystem approach to accompaniment must be rooted in trust, solidarity and reciprocity, and grounded in an ecosystem approach to funding. It must be foregrounded in feminist and activist principles of collaboration, self determination, non-hierarchical and relational learning. It must begin with open and transparent dialogues between funders and activists on definitions and

understanding of accompaniment, and the politics we bring to approaches. For example, where do we align on a spectrum of supporting partners to meet the needs of their funders vs radically reimagining approaches towards the relationships we want to see? What is our collective – funder and activist together –vision for accompaniment? It also requires funders to be transparent with each other and their grantee partners about their intentions in offering accompaniment and their desired outcomes of the offering.

Getting to a place of shared intention and vision requires deep relationship building, trust, and a collective desire to better support girl and young feminist led groups. It will be critical for funders to practice humility, listen deeply and be open to adaptation or irrelevance. The GRF is committed to continued experimentation, collective learning and reflection to best support the deepened autonomy and relationships between young feminist led collectives and organizations. With this comes an intention to resource and work in partnership to document the collective knowledge and wisdom that comes from and belongs to young feminists themselves.



# Practical Tools + Templates for Community Circles

## Annex



## What are the community Circles

1

Community circles were born out of the desire to support people in their leadership journeys towards feminist social justice. We define community circles as a small group of people that meet regularly to support each other to achieve the changes they want to see personally, as a collective, organizationally, or on a societal level. It is a community of practice with a clear focus, facilitated by somebody who not only supports each person to go deeper on the issue they bring forth, but also to gain skills for coaching others.

### Goals of the Community Circles:

- **Support those who attend**  
to intentionally work on their capacity to transform their group or organization, and develop systems that work for them;
- **Develop a sustainable support network**  
with other feminist groups and organizations from other countries;
- **Transfer coaching conversations skills**  
to all involved for future use, in particular how people show up as leaders and contributors in their groups and movements.



## 2

# Principles for Facilitators

### Listen with attention:

Listen with curiosity in order to really hear and understand what the person is saying. Don't start thinking already how to reply or solve their issues as the other person is talking. Real listening in itself can be a supportive way of being held while we try to find new perspectives.

### Speak with intention:

Think prior to the meeting what is relevant to be shared and what do people need to know in order to support you to achieve your goal and also allow yourself to be in the moment with what arises in you as you share.

### Each person decides how they need to be supported:

Generally, questions are more useful than advice as they are more sustainable. If each person learns to find their own answer they feel more empowered and motivated.

### Ask speaker-centered instead of listener-centered questions:

Your questions show your focus – focusing on the person that shared something is a sign they have your total attention, and we are all going in the direction of their goal rather than focusing on our own learning instead.

### Building a safe container:

It is important that each group that decides to work together for the long term builds a safe container for each other with any agreements that are important to them, that they commit to respect while they are in this relationship.





## Guidance for Facilitators

Participants bring any challenge or situation that is current, concrete, important, can be presented easily, where they play the role of a key player, and could make a big difference for them and their environment to move forwards.

The type of support offered comes from multiple places. On one side, the facilitator, who supports the person in their journey of clarifying, better understanding, and finding new perspectives and solutions to their issue. On the other side, the group and the collective knowledge in the space. As people voice their challenges and situations, the rest of the group listens with attention, mind and open hearts, without trying to find solutions, rather seeing how their story impacts them, what it opens up in them, etc. From that place, participants are invited to share their thoughts from their experiences but not to give advice. Each meeting the group decides who will be the next person being coached. That person will have two weeks to think and check in with one of the co-facilitators about the issue they want to bring forward.

## Adaptations

The first two groups were facilitated using the initial model, and the third was slightly modified in terms of how we approached the issues raised, the group composition, language, and duration.

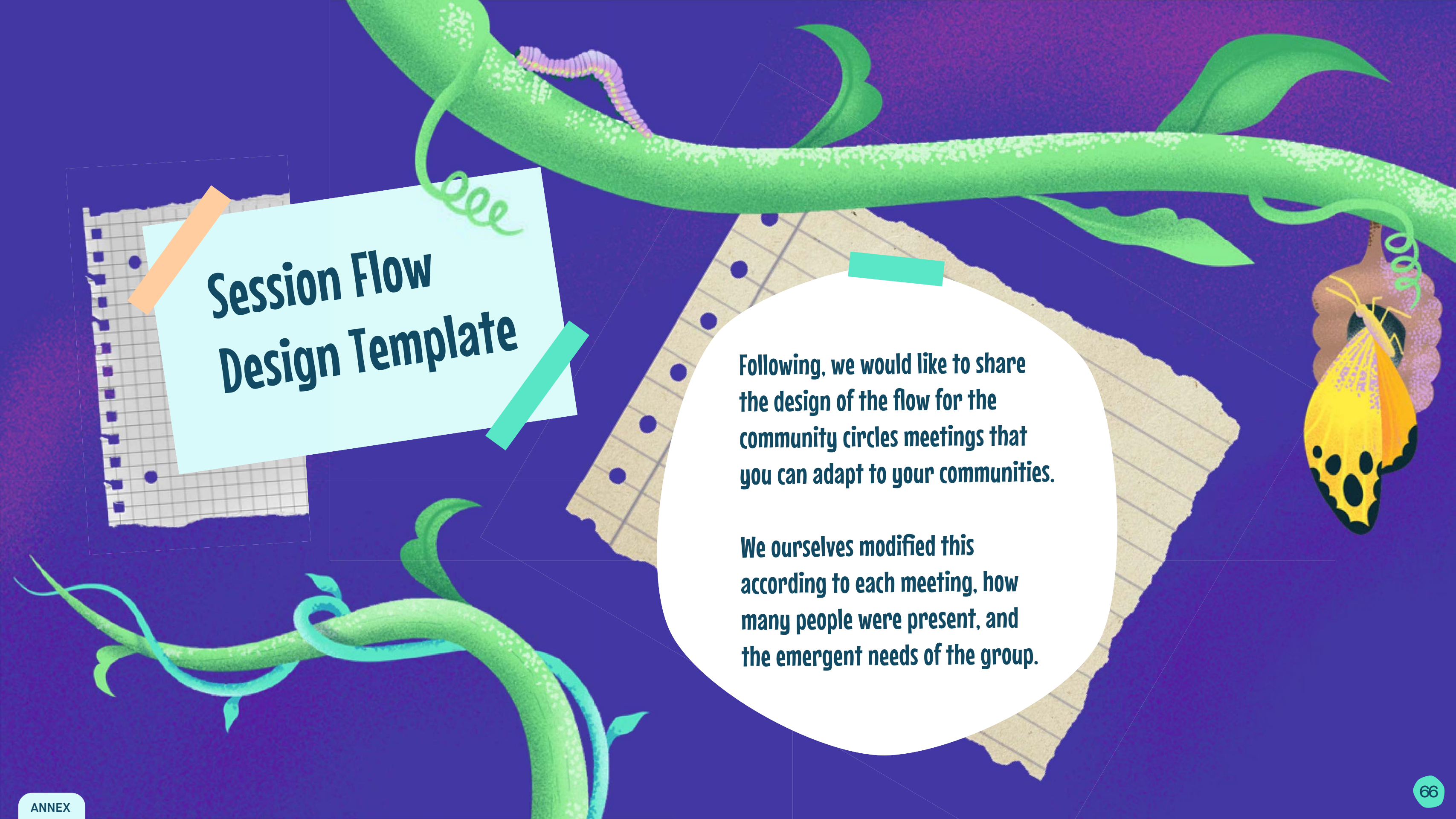
We decided to:

- Explore if working with a bigger group was possible, inviting more than 10 people into the circle;
- Offer the community circles in Spanish rather than English with interpretation;
- Ask people in advance about what they hope to explore in the circles, and create a flexible structure of coaching conversation themes to better support people to connect with the theme before the call;
- Propose weekly meetings rather than bi-monthly, so we can keep the momentum going and form the group.

From these adaptations we learned that it is better to keep the circles theme-free, with less pre-established structure, and just work with what is most relevant in the day/week for the person. Having these meetings in people's native languages was a plus, and allowed for better connection and expression of their feelings. Having the meetings weekly rather than bi-monthly also proved to support group cohesion and continuity.







## Session Flow Design Template

Following, we would like to share the design of the flow for the community circles meetings that you can adapt to your communities.

We ourselves modified this according to each meeting, how many people were present, and the emergent needs of the group.



# a First Meeting

## WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION TO THE CIRCLES

Facilitator briefly welcomes everyone and frames the day: what will happen in today's session, by when we hope to finish, etc

F. invites all to take a moment to center and arrive at the meeting: take three deep breaths together, a quick body scan, or any other method that can help bring the body in the room, and make the transition from work/study/activism to the community circles.

## GETTING TO KNOW EACH OTHER AND BUILD TRUST

### CHECK IN

In order to get to know who is in the room, let's make a round of introductions. We have prepared a prompt for you to share, and we put it in the chat. So we invite you to share:

- *Name: how would you like us to call you during these meetings?*
- *Pronouns: what gender pronouns should we use when talking about you? he, she, they? (ask if all are familiar with pronouns and offer to explain them a bit if not)*
- *Where are you based?*
- *What group/organization are you active in?*
- *An opening question: what do you like to spend your time doing? Hobbies?*

We will each have about 3 minutes to share. Most of us don't have English as a primary language, so please speak slowly and feel free to ask questions in the chat if something is not clear. In the end you can pass the mic to another person so they continue. Finish by thanking everyone for sharing.

### BREAKOUT ROOMS

#### Instructions

We are going to get to know each other a bit better and hopefully build strong foundations for this group. Please share as much or as little as you wish, and get to know the other persons through their answers.

We are going to work in smaller groups of 3 people. We will have a few questions for you to explore. After we share the first 2 questions with you, you will be sent into a breakout room, and have 9 minutes to share your answers in pairs, which means each person has a maximum of 3 minutes.. Please be mindful of time, we will remind you to change after 3 min. At the end you will receive a notification from Zoom that the room will close soon.



## BREAKOUT ROOMS

### First round

What are some of the challenges you personally face in your work? (you as an individual, or things related to the dynamics of your group that affect you – not general societal issues.)

What made you join the community circles? What should happen so that in the end you say \*it was worth it!\*

### Second round

What would make you feel that this group is supportive for you? What are your expectations from the circles? Be as concrete as you can.

What are some needs you have from the group, from facilitators, that we should take into account?

Each facilitator goes in one breakout room to facilitate the smaller groups + takes notes in the same document (main ideas, relevant for the group). When we come back to the main room we do a very short summary of all that has been discussed.

## DISCUSS THE FORMAT OF THE MEETINGS AND HOW IT WILL HAPPEN

We will meet twice a month, every other week, for 4 months, on Zoom, for approximately 90 minutes.

- **First session** will be dedicated to getting to know each other, building our safer space together, and making sure we are all on the same page with how things will happen.
- **Next 6 sessions** will be focused on building capacity in the group by using coaching methodology. This means that the 6 persons will take turns in being coached by the facilitators on an issue they choose, and receive input from the rest of the group.
- **Last session** will be dedicated to integration of all that we learned together, and to discussing the future!

So starting next week, we will work on concrete challenges and situations that you decide to bring forward.

What issues to bring? Any challenge or situation that is current, concrete, important, you are a key player, can be presented easily, and it could make a big difference for you and your environment to move forward. Each meeting we decide who will be the next person being coached. That person will have 2 weeks to think and check in with one of the co-facilitators about the issue they want to bring forward.

Ask people to put on paper one challenge/issue you would like to bring forth

**DECISION:** Who would like to start next week?  
Any questions?



## COLLABORATIVE GROUP AGREEMENT CREATION

Starting from the conversations you had previously I would like us to build a collaborative group agreement that will support us in creating a safer space for us all. What are the principles that should guide us?

Individual thinking and taking notes: What would support you to be able to participate fully, share, learn, and enjoy this process? Principles for the group?

Some of the things that we would like to propose, for example, are: confidentiality, listening with curiosity and attention, not trying to fix the other persons, sharing from our hearts.

What would be some things that you suggest?

After each write, we read them out loud and invite people to share their thoughts, see if they have anything else to add. This is not a fixed document, we can come back to it, modify, add, etc. Finish by asking people their consent that we will all respect this agreement through the meetings.

## NEXT STEPS

- set up dates to block in the calendar?
- wire group, whatsapp, email?
- Buddy system: announce they will be randomly paired and we invite them to meet with the other person before the next session with the purpose of getting to know each other better.

## CHECK OUT

Thank everybody for being here  
1 word evaluation (if there is time verbally, if not in the chat)



# b Second to Seventh Meeting (Coaching Sessions)

## WELCOME

Welcome everybody + centering together, becoming present: either a quick body scan or a few breaths together.

As a transition: remind everybody about the group agreements and focus on advising them to speak with intention, listen with attention to understand and not to fix somebody or come with their own ideas right away.

## CHECK IN

[2 min per person- ask them to time themselves] short check in as a group: how are you feeling today? What impacted you OR stayed with you the most from our last meeting?

## COACHING

**1. Focus on one person: their issue + what are they hoping to get from today** - what is the goal, just share, get clarity, find solutions, etc.

Invite folks from the group to sit with what is and if there is any reflection they have they can share towards the end: not advice! but maybe what resonated in them, what did it make them feel, open up, etc

**2. Two people appreciate the person sharing** "What I appreciated about you, your story.. / what touched me / what really surprised me from your sharing is..."

All sharings are about the person being coached, not about the person giving appreciation - it's their moment to sit back and hear how they impacted others, what they brought in other's lives by being vulnerable and sharing etc.

++ one of the facilitators can also appreciate them and move to the last part

**3. Closing:** let's all take a deep breath in, and a long breath out and share one word: how are you feeling/ what do you take from today/ what was most valuable for you today?

If it fits the topic/theme/sharings we can have a "homework"- something to think, write, discuss until next time.

## CLOSURE

### Decisions:

Buddy system - what would you like to happen next (individual and group)? How could the two of you support and keep each other accountable in the next few months so that change continues?

Volunteer for next time - who wants to be coached?

Confirm date for next meeting



# C Last Meeting (Closure)

## WELCOME

Facilitator briefly **welcomes everyone & frames the day**: what will happen in today's session, by when we hope to finish, etc

We will first check in, then discuss a bit about the learnings we got from the circles and the friendships we cultivated, then go and evaluate them and see what other future possibilities of supporting each other we would like to cultivate together.

F. Invites all to take a moment to center and arrive at the meeting: take 3 deep breaths together

## CHECK IN

**Round: How has your mind, body, soul been in the last few weeks? Any updates you would like to share?**

## LEARNING

5' Remind people why we decided to do the circles and what our intention was for them.

15' Invite people to journal/think and then add the answers in a Mural (?)

**Please reflect on your LEARNING:**

a. What was the issue/challenge that you brought into the community circles?

b. How has being in feminist friendship and support with people in this group supported me?

c. What did I learn by sharing and listening to others?

d. What am I taking with me in my work as an activist from this circle? Either ideas from the issue you brought into the conversation, or from listening to others.

## EVALUATION

Divide the group into 2 breakout groups, one facilitator in each group, to have a more intimate conversation for evaluation:

Please **EVALUATE** your experience:

a. What worked well and should be repeated if we were to do the circles again?

b. What did we miss that we should include next time?

## HOW DO WE CONTINUE FROM NOW ON?

What are some non-financial needs that you and your group have that you would need support with?

Learning needs (workshops, training, etc)

Further mentoring/coaching

Conversations to have with each other and other groups

## CHECK OUT

Gratitude + wishes for the future

One thing you are grateful for from the group + one thing that you wish to everybody here.



# Using GROW Model from Coaching in Practice

## Reality and Motivation

The way we chose to tackle each subject raised by participants followed the GROW coaching model. For an explanation of this model and an example of how it was applied in one of the first coaching conversations, please see the case study below.

### Clarity and Goal Setting

At this stage we want to make sure that we support the person getting clear on what it is they wish to achieve by the end of this conversation. Sometimes, what we want to discuss about initially changes, or has deeper roots in an even more important subject for the person. This is why, at this point we invite the person to share, ask clarifying questions, summarize and mirror them so that they can gain clarity on what they want. It is also important to define a realistic goal that can be tackled in 40-50 min. At this stage

one of the most important questions is to ask the person why this issue is important to them? In this way, they can go deeper and connect with their why.

**Example:** *We started our conversation by asking the participant what they would like us to focus on for these 40 minutes. They said they would like us to talk about the challenges they are currently facing with regards to finding sustainable funding. In this first step we really tried to see why this is important for them, and got to learn a bit more about the work they do, and how the fact that they don't have sustainable funding impacts them. We then asked what sustainable funding meant to them, and they said: stable income/ revenue source, uninterrupted programs, fair compensation and benefits for all workers, a physical space to work and organize, admin, renewal, and M&E costs. We then went on to explore how much money is it that we are talking about when we say all these, and got to a sum of US\$20,000 per year. It is very useful for people's clarity and process to name what they actually mean when they say a certain thing, so that it becomes more palpable.*

At this stage we really want to know where they are right now in relation to their goal. According to the topic this can be a discussion about numbers and facts, or about feelings and habits they have, to name a few. This can look like asking them where they are right now on a scale from 1 to 10, where 1 is "I'm very far away from doing/having/being this" and 10 is "I am 100% on this"; and explore why they are there and not lower or higher. We can also explore what some of the blocks are and some of the existing support and resources. After focusing on what is, we can focus on what if this was real? What if it doesn't become real? Support them to think how their life would look, feel, and be like in both cases.

**Example:** *If sustainable funding is the goal, we want to explore how the funding is now, and what is the starting point. We continued our conversation by seeing what funding they have at the moment and what is the gap between what they have and what they need. We then continued to talk about what are some of the ways in which they have explored fundraising until now, and they shared about grant*



writing and a crowdfunding campaign. During the conversation, it is important to also give space for naming feelings and emotions that appear. In this case, when asked how they feel looking at what they need and where they are, the participant said they felt anxious. We can welcome these feelings as information, and inquire into them together with the person. Then support them to allow themselves to get out of the present situation for a moment and go into the future and its possibilities.

## Options

At this stage we get as practical as possible and start designing. How will you know when you got there? What are some ways you could approach this issue? What practices will shape you into this new way of being/doing? What do you need to let go of? We can also support people to develop lateral thinking and dreaming by asking things that might sound impossible. What would you do with unlimited resources? What would you do in the best case scenario? What if you had all the support you needed? What would your 80-year self advise

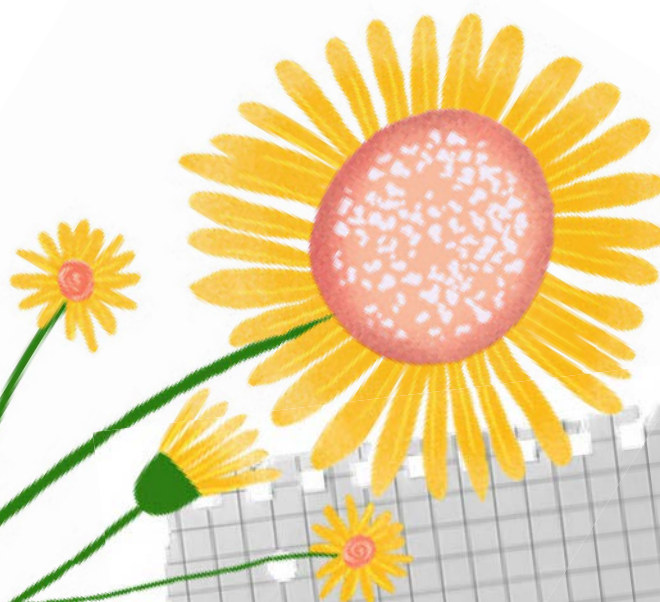
you to do? The idea is to support people in seeing a path from where they are to where they want to get. Having concrete actions gives people stepping stones into their journey.

**Example:** For this stage we decided to open the discussion to the rest of the group, to give some different perspectives on the issue. People shared from their experience what were some things they tried already. We then went on to ask the person which of these ideas interests them the most and feels like a suitable solution for them. They chose four of them: reaching out to college ambassadors, developing a membership, local government funds, and Patreon.

## Future

at the last stage we bring everything together and reassess the commitment to the plan, and most importantly, discuss what would be some concrete things they could already start doing this day/week/month. What would be some first steps? You can go as much in detail as needed. You can check in with the person and see how much accountability they would need to keep on track, and if there are people around who could support them in this.

**Example:** Asked what could be some first three steps they could do, the participant mentioned following up with one of the Round Tables they attended; reaching out to student committees abroad; looking at Patreon and figuring out how they can incorporate it; and keep on writing grant applications. Going back to the issue of anxiety and feeling overwhelmed, we also discussed what approach would be useful in order to address these feelings, and they said they would like to try and focus on one thing every week.







**Purposeful**