

# RESET Symposium

Urban Land Institute  
WLI

2021.05.19



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Presented by: the  
Women in Leadership  
Initiative - Urban Land  
Institute

“RESET is not about  
going back to normal.  
It’s about building  
a better normal for  
everyone.”

A multisector deep  
dive to co-create  
solutions for building  
back better.

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# Letter from the Reporter

Dear Reader,

My name is Samantha Arpas, and I was chosen as a WLI scholarship student to write the Reset Symposium report. I'll inform you about some significant aspects of my life to help you comprehend my perception of the Reset Symposium. I am a recent graduate of the University of Toronto's John H. Daniels Faculty of Architecture, Landscape, and Design. In the Autumn, I will continue my education at Ryerson University, where I will pursue a Master of Applied Science in Environmental Applied Science and Management.

I've had a strong desire to work in the land development industry since I was a child, and not only in architecture, but also in planning, policy, and sustainability. My undergraduate studies took me to various cities in Europe, where I was able to observe equitable infrastructure in connection to land development and compare it to the systems in place here in Canada. These experiences attracted me to the Reset Symposium because I feel that we as a country are in desperate need of a reset in how we handle the land development sector.

As I write this letter, the news reports that 751 unmarked graves have been discovered at a former residential school in Saskatchewan. If the pandemic's disruption wasn't enough to convince you of the need for a reset in our country, let this heartbreaking news change your perspective. There is no normal to return to after this pandemic since that normal was inadequate. Allow this report to reflect that one of the most successful ways to contribute meaningful change post- pandemic is to consult with individuals who have been silenced for years. Allow us to hear from them about their future concerns and what land means to them.

If now is not the time for change, then, when? And if not us, the purveyors of land development and all that is associated with it, then, who?

Will you accept the reset?

Sincerely,

Samantha Arpas

P.S. The Reset Symposium took place on May 19, 2021, but for the purpose of this report, the writing is in present tense.

# What is Reset?

Perhaps one of the largest impacts that the COVID-19 pandemic has had on us is the way that we work. This modern health pandemic has caused a large portion of the workforce to work from home. There are many challenges associated with working from home - childcare, space, social isolation. However, there are also many benefits. No commute, money saved, better work-life balance, time savings, lower carbon emissions. The conversation around working from home, however, runs deeper than we think. It is worth looking at the history of work and reconsidering and rebooting the construct post-pandemic in order to improve the quality of life for all.

The Reset Symposium explores the set up of our lifestyles and workplaces to examine how they have historically been designed by men for men, since they were the primary out-of-home workforce and decision makers at that time. As a result of the disruption COVID-19 has presented, there is an opportunity to spark a dynamic and collaborative discussion and movement to build cities for all regardless of gender, race, class or ability. The Reset is not a one and done solution, rather, there are two components to experience before we can reach the reset phase, they are realization and reckoning.

The Reset Symposium is a deep dive conversation engaging diverse and multidisciplinary perspectives including • planners • designers • developers • builders • investors • feminists • economists • urbanists • organizers • citizens • marginalized people. Sharing our dreams, concerns and insights can enhance all the efforts we are making to realize a better world.

We would like to acknowledge the generous support of the Hines Foundation. The Reset Symposium would not be possible without the Hines Innovation Grant.

I have never believed in status quo. I believe we can always improve- either by rethinking existing ways of doing things or by thinking outside the box. This is innovation- it is a state of mind.

- Gerald Hines

# Meet the Organizers



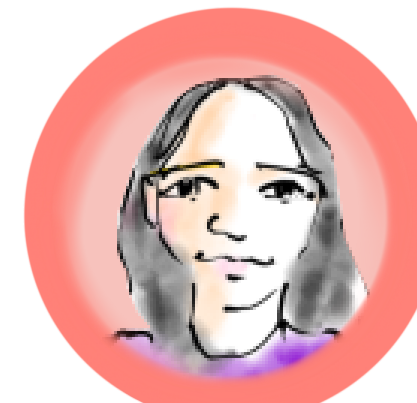
**Gail Borthwick**  
MGAC



**Andrea Katz**  
IBI Group



**Gabriella Sicheri**  
CreateTO



**Manisha Thacker**  
ACMA



**Lisa Chandler**  
Oxford Properties Group



**Veronica Maggisano**  
Oxford Properties Group



**Saira Muzaffar**  
BTY Group



**Kim Beckman**  
Davies Howe LLP



# The Rules of Reset

The reset symposium guidelines were a tremendous success in terms of facilitating vulnerable and challenging discussions. By adhering to these principles, individuals who want to express their dissatisfaction with the status quo are empowered to do so in a safe space. As a response, reset pushes beyond circular dialogues and brings to light the concerns of all, particularly those who are silenced by our existing societal structure.

## CONFIDENTIALITY

No screenshots, no screen recording, take the wisdom not the names (unless you ask for consent).

## RESPECT

For everyone and yourself – all our stories and different paths that have led to us showing up here.

## ALL ISSUES ARE CONNECTED

Reset is a multi-issue community exploring insights, understandings and solutions together.

## SOLIDARITY & PARTNERSHIP

Together we know a lot, and together we can do a lot for everyone.

## LEARNING IN DISCOMFORT

Lean into/ stretch into discomfort to learn together.

## DO NO HARM

Make Reset a community built on safe space and trust.

## DO OUR BEST

We will make mistakes learning and unlearning but we always want to do our best.

## FOCUS

Show up for the conversation fully. Limit distractions (for yourself and other participants) if possible. Mute your mic until you need to talk. Raise your hand so we don't interrupt each other.

## TAKE SPACE, MAKE SPACE

For yourself and each other, for those of us who think out loud and those who think quietly.

## USE THE CHAT BOX TO SHARE THOUGHTS

A virtual event brings challenges in having enough time for everyone to speak but we also have the opportunity to use our chat box in the Zoom App to participate.

# Symposium Agenda





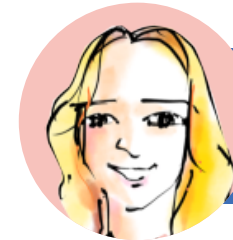
# The Co-Conspirator

## The Role of the Co-Conspirators

All of the Co-Conspirators were chosen given their track record of innovative and pioneering work in their fields. Originally, we hoped that the role of the Co-Conspirator would be to provide inspiring contributions to panel discussions, but we then thought that Co-Conspirators could play a different role as keynote listeners.

We believe that it is very motivating when someone you admire listens to you. Therefore, the role of the Co-Conspirator for the purpose of the reset symposium is to honor and validate the contribution of all the participants. The role is to listen and help to steer and elevate the conversation amongst the participants.

# RESET Co-Conspirators



**Cherise Burda**  
Executive Director, City Building,  
Ryerson University

*“My hope is that we build cities for people, not cars, or investors. We get the city that we plan for and we get the city that we approve.”*



**Sheila Block**  
Senior Economist, Canadian  
Centre for Policy Alternatives

*“We need to rebalance the economy. We need to move more of our economic activity into the public sector and shift out of the private sector.”*



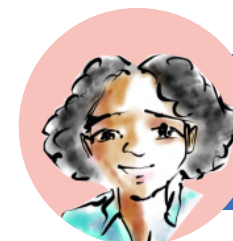
**Luke Anderson**  
Co-founder and Executive Director,  
StopGap

*“I am a true believer that we as humans do not recognize everyone in our communities and I believe that is problematic. It is holding us as individuals back and communities back from reaching our collective full potential.”*



**Camille Mitchell**  
Architect, Gensler

*“Where I see hope and optimism is at the willingness of groups, individuals, and organizations to ask more challenging questions and not accept the status-quo.”*



**Aliyah Fraser**  
Owner/Operator, Lucky Bug Farm

*“It shouldn’t be a privilege to be able to do something that fills you with joy everyday. This should be something that we are striving towards, for us and for our kids.”*

# RESET Co-Conspirators



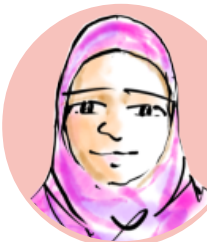
**Ryan Gorrie**  
Senior Architect, Brook McIlroy

*“We need to shift our focus back outside to build a relationship with nature and culture that enriches our lives so that we are not always tethered to a screen and feel the need to document our lives.”*



**Bianca Wylie**  
Co-Founder, Digital Public & Tech Reset Canada

*“I’m struggling with our failed state and how we are complicit in failed public institutions. We have the democratic machinery that is sitting there, that we could be using to take better care of each other and we are not.”*



**Sabina Ali**  
Executive Director, Thorncliffe Park Women’s Committee

*“I would like to see the world be more peaceful with all of the technological advancements, but I still feel that we have to connect with nature.”*



**Jenny McMinn**  
Managing Director, Urban Equation

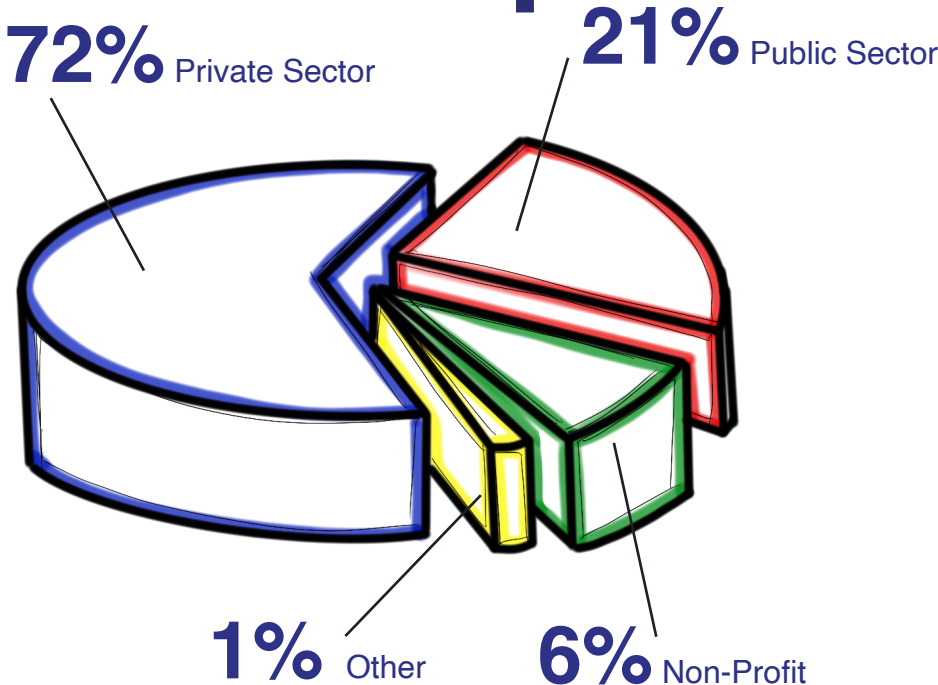
*“There is an urgent need to change how we build, and there is an urgent need to revisit our lifestyle choices to come into right relation with the resources we have and start operating, consuming, and thriving in a way that respects the boundaries of our planet.”*



**Deborah Leslie**  
Professor of Geography, University of Toronto

*“The pandemic has seperated us, but has also made us realize the value of being together.”*

# The Participants



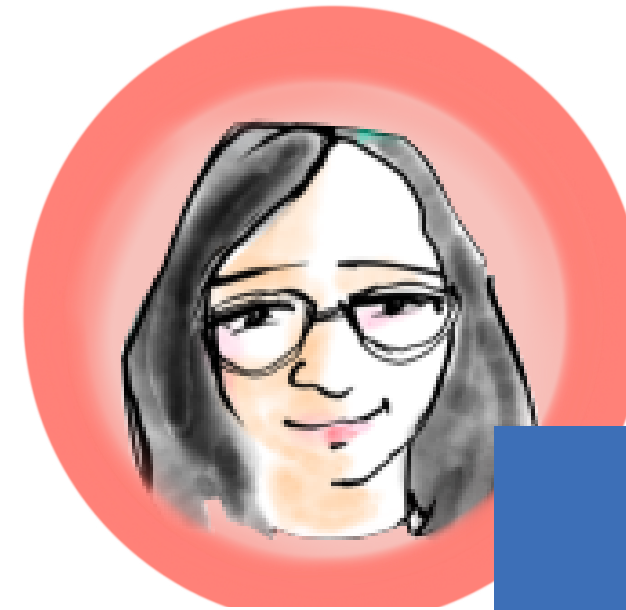
## Represented Companies & Organizations

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bousefields Inc</li> <li>• SKYGRiD Construction</li> <li>• IBI Group</li> <li>• MHBC</li> <li>• Cavalieri &amp; Associates</li> <li>• Municipality of Clarington</li> <li>• McCarthy Tetrault LLP</li> <li>• Davies Howe LLP</li> <li>• Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing</li> <li>• Carpenters' District of Ontario</li> <li>• Mattamy Homes</li> <li>• Paula Bowley Architects Inc</li> <li>• Ryerson University</li> <li>• A Different Booklist Cultural Centre</li> <li>• Crosslinx Transit Solutions</li> <li>• Moriyama &amp; Teshima</li> <li>• Broccolini Construction</li> <li>• Region of Peel</li> <li>• Fotenn Planning + Design</li> <li>• Regional Municipality of York</li> <li>• Entuitive</li> <li>• Town of Halton Hills</li> <li>• BEL+RIT Urbanism</li> <li>• Metrolinx</li> <li>• Larendale Group</li> <li>• Gensler</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• First Gulf Corporation</li> <li>• kg&amp;a</li> <li>• Carpe Diem Dispute Resolutions Services</li> <li>• Land Art Design Landscape Architects Inc.</li> <li>• Aoyuan Management Services Limited</li> <li>• City of Markham</li> <li>• Consulate General of Sweden</li> <li>• ULI Nashville</li> <li>• Canadian Urban Transit Association</li> <li>• Yvette Jancso Architects</li> <li>• Canadain Institute of Planners</li> <li>• Wordsearch Place</li> <li>• Dillon Consulting Limited</li> <li>• Bell Canada</li> <li>• Metropolitan Design Ltd.</li> <li>• Live Work Learn Play</li> <li>• Ontario Power Generation</li> <li>• Tate Economic Research</li> <li>• Shared Path Consultation Initiative</li> <li>• Enwave Energy Corporation</li> <li>• Canadian Turner Construction Company</li> <li>• Wyse Meter Solutions</li> <li>• University of Toronto</li> <li>• PGL Environmental Consultants</li> <li>• Northcrest Developments</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Oxford Properties Group</li> <li>• Northcrest Developments</li> <li>• Urban Strategies Inc</li> <li>• CivicAction + CivicAction Leadership Foundation</li> <li>• DIRT Environmental Solutions</li> <li>• City of Mississauga, Planning and Building Development</li> <li>• C.F Crozier &amp; Associates Inc.</li> <li>• MGAC</li> <li>• SPACE Coalition</li> <li>• City of Toronto</li> <li>• Cadillac Fairview Corp. Ltd</li> <li>• Chelsea Commons</li> <li>• Hazelview</li> <li>• City of Vaughan</li> <li>• Carp</li> <li>• BTY Group</li> <li>• Sakto Corporation</li> <li>• TechGirls Canada</li> <li>• Queens University</li> <li>• Forrec Ltd.</li> <li>• McCarthy Tetrault LLP</li> <li>• Create TO</li> <li>• PwC Canada</li> <li>• City of Brampton Planning, Building, and Economic Development</li> </ul> |
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# Meet The Speakers

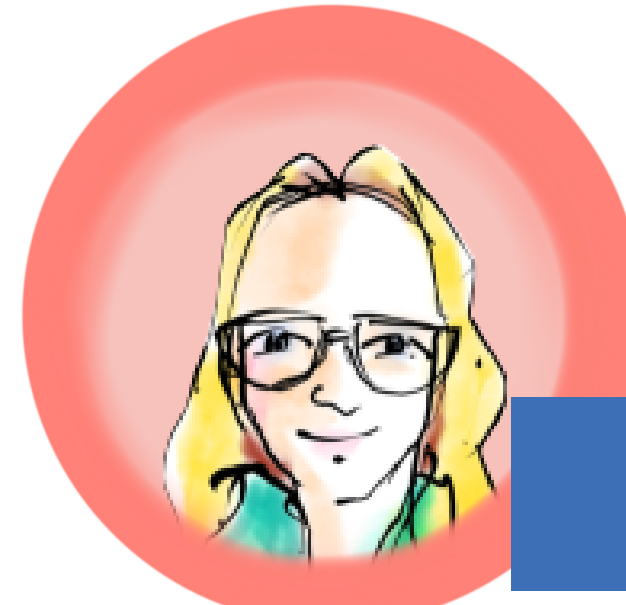
## The Fireside Chat

Leslie Woo, the moderator, is joined by two land development industry experts to explore the parallels and contrasts between New Zealand and Sweden. The discussion is centered on unpublicized land development and social concerns in both countries that are perceived as progressive from an outsider's perspective. Furthermore, the discussion focuses on how the pandemic is acting as a catalyst for reform in both countries.



### MODERATOR

Leslie Woo  
CEO, CivicAction



### PANELIST

Greer O'Donnell  
Urban Strategist

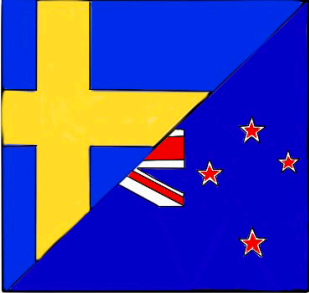


### PANELIST

Miriam Nordfors  
Stockholm City Planning

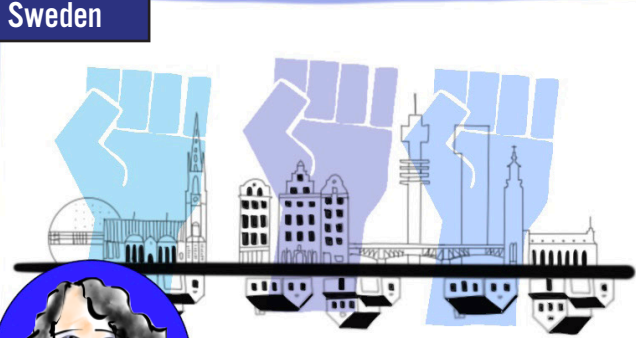


How are your countries building back better?



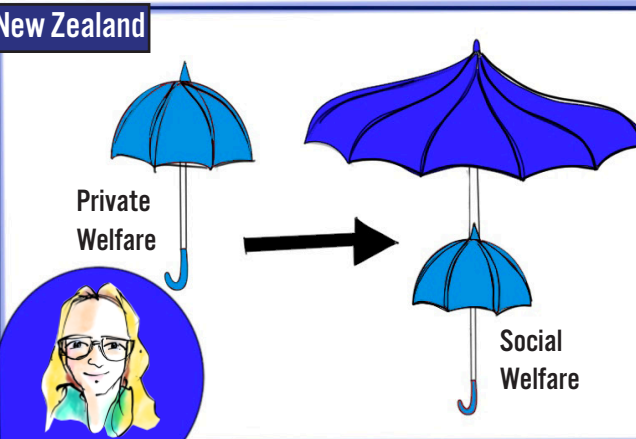
What pushed your country to reset?

Sweden




Removing the divide between things such as the division of city women vs suburb women

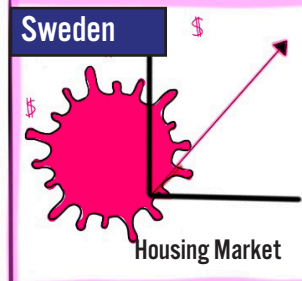
New Zealand



New Infrastructure Investment



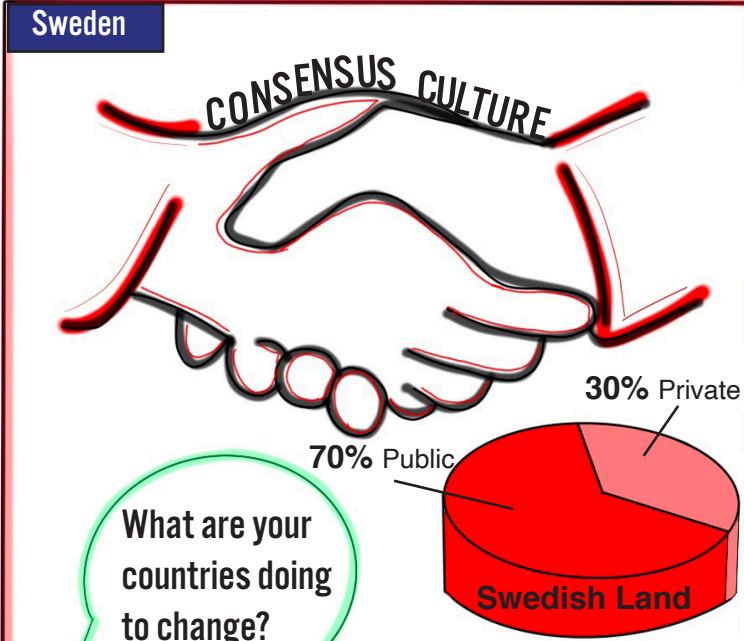
Sweden



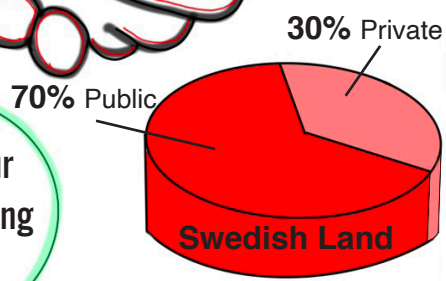
Housing Market

What role has the pandemic played in land development?


Sweden



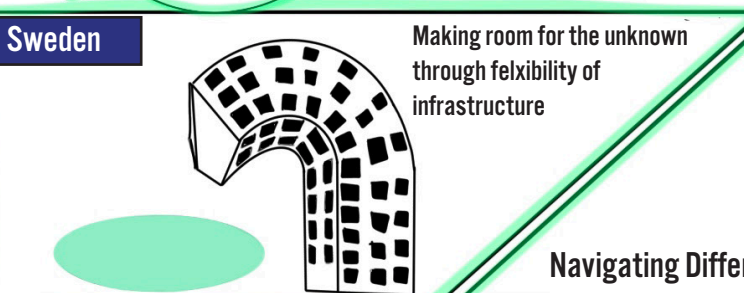
What are your countries doing to change?



New Zealand

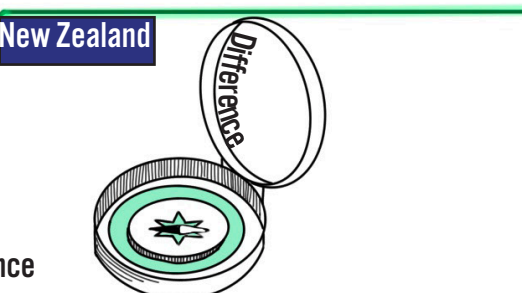


Sweden



Making room for the unknown through flexibility of infrastructure

New Zealand



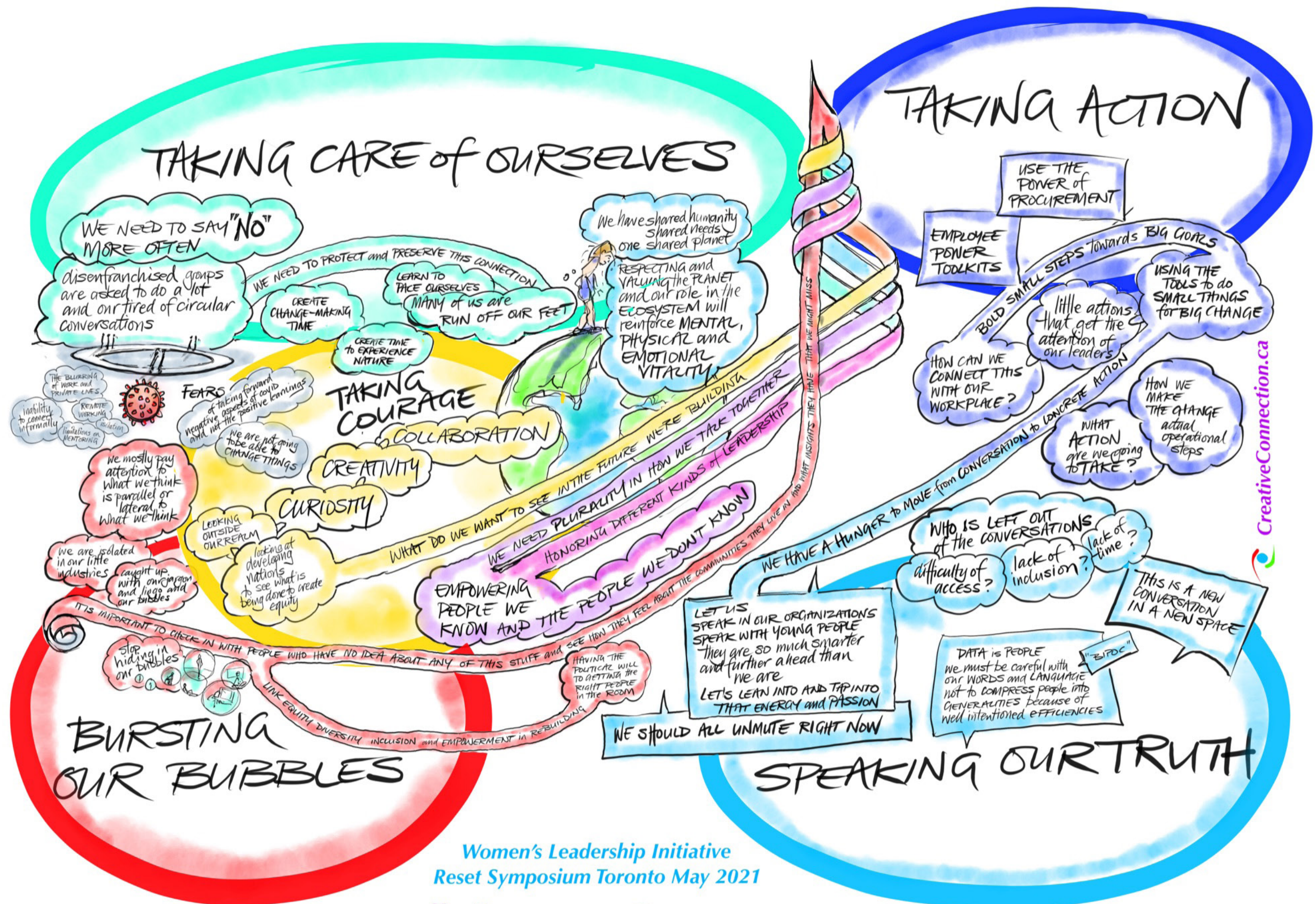
Navigating Difference

# The Breakout Rooms

Presented by: The Co-Conspirators & Participants of the Symposium

Attendees of the reset symposium are divided into random breakout rooms and are led into talks by each room's assigned Co-Conspirator and WLI committee member. Participants discuss their worries and insights, while adhering to the symposium guidelines, concerning what didn't work in our lives prior to the pandemic, the obstacles and benefits of the pandemic, and what they would like to see become a reality as we rebuild better post-pandemic. The words and visuals that follow are synthesized summaries of themes that developed during these challenging dialogues in the breakout rooms.

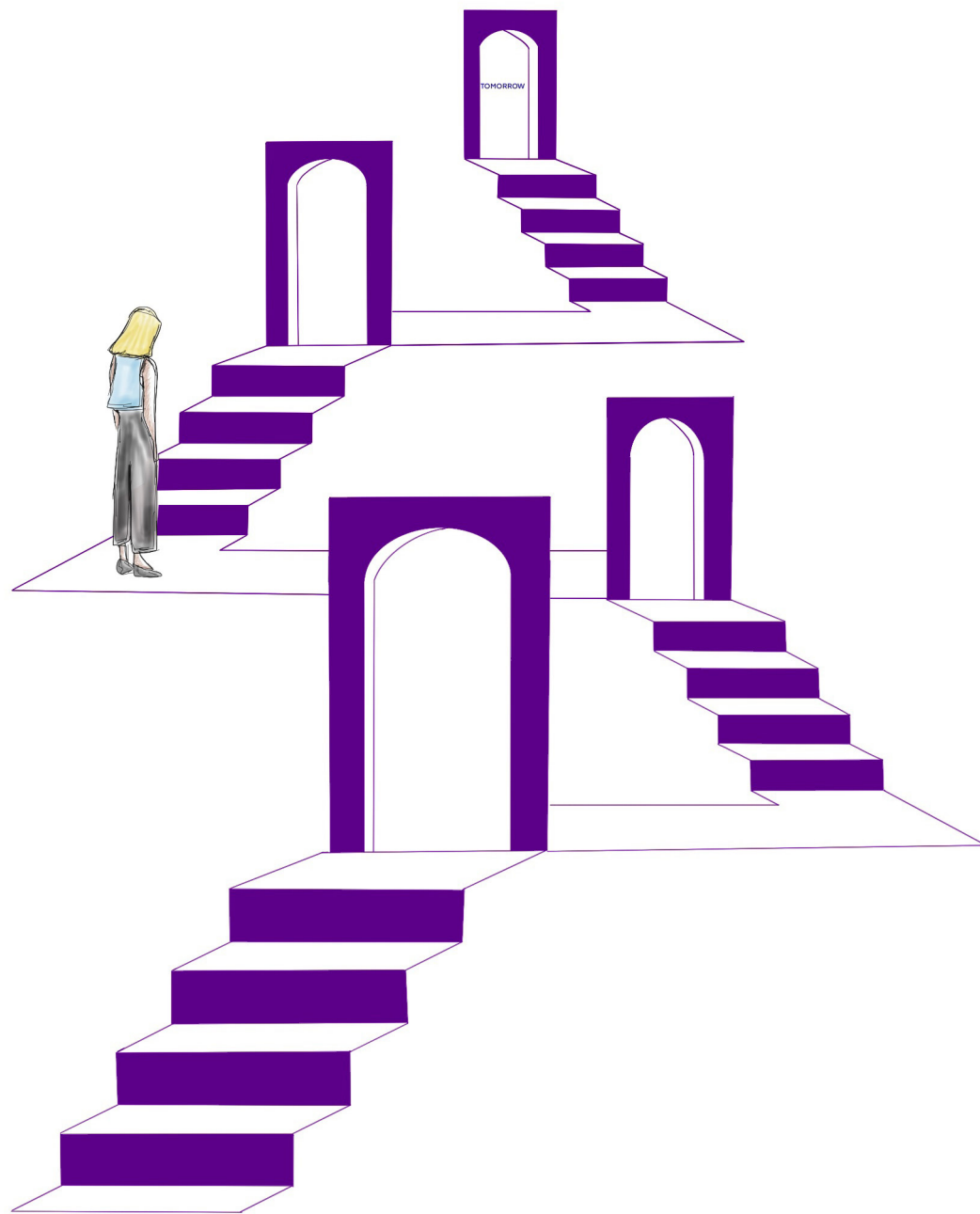






# Delays & Denials

Today's delays are NOT tomorrow's denials!



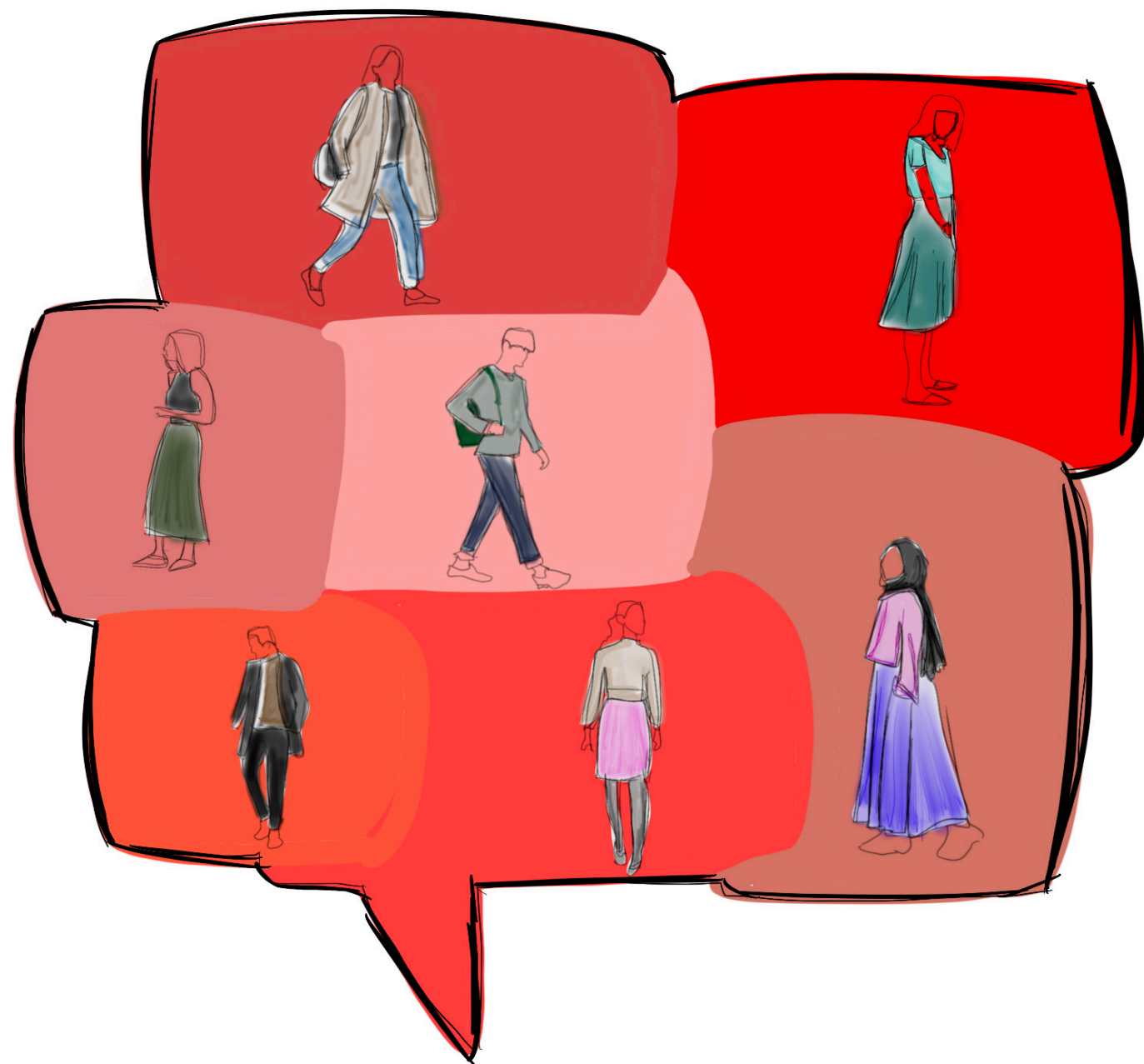
People have had a chance to step back and evaluate the lives that we have developed for ourselves in a moment of severe necessity and survival in the era of a pandemic. A revelation has emerged that challenges the perception that the majority of society's focus is on what will set us back, rather than on how to go forward constructively. We can utilize reflection as a not-so-secret technique to get things done. To adequately reflect, one must take a breather and consider the implications as well as the opportunities of prospective delays, because delays can act as a catalyst for change, as we see in our current pandemic circumstance. There is no normal to return to; instead, we must create a new normal by reflecting on ourselves and our actions.

# Taking Action



There is no denying that the government, the commercial sector, and the general public are divided. Everyone has their vision of what change should look like, but how can GOOD change be realized? Reform in our current political framework that favours the private sector over individuals and the public sector is required. The private sector, in particular, is not as susceptible to change as the public sector. The realization is that the government is a collective, that the government is US. The government's purpose is to serve its citizens, therefore policies must reflect those demands while also respecting intersectionality and diversity; only then will we be able to move forward. To build a movement and make change, we must first advance beyond our discussions and take meaningful action. To accomplish this, a push must be made through a succession of little actions that draw the attention of those in positions of power, and we will gradually march toward change.





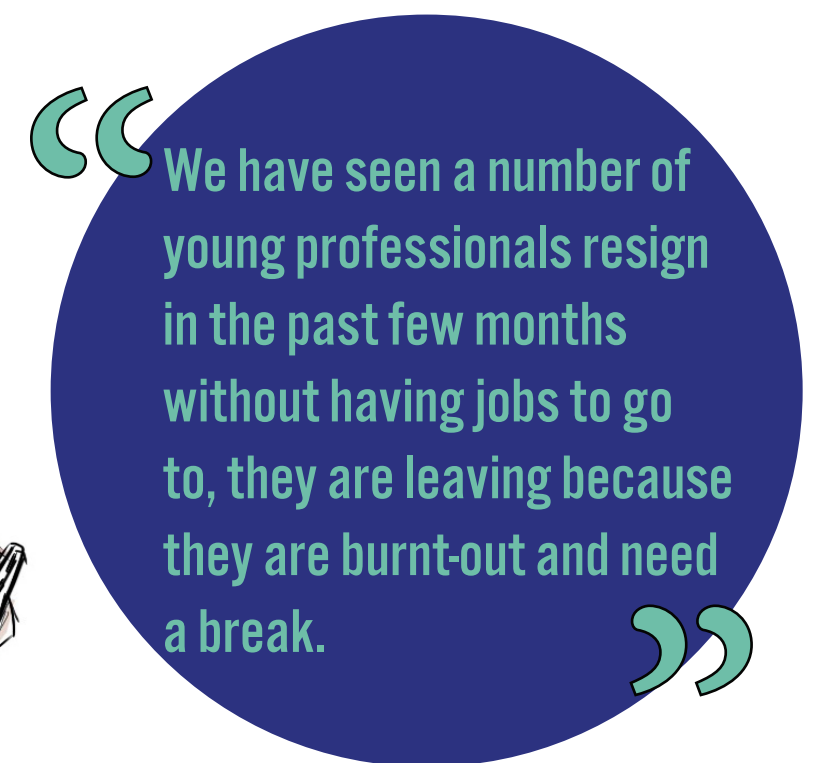
# Bursting Our Bubbles

Part of resetting means that we need to realize that we can no longer progress within our professional bubbles, that it is an interdisciplinary collective action that will make change. For a long time, we have operated in a way where we only pay attention to what we believe is parallel and even lateral to what we think. This belief is just a byproduct of the human condition as a result of the societal structures in which we live. This leads to isolation in our professions; we only stick to what we know, and now it is time to go out and encounter discomfort. Staying in our bubbles simply slows us down and does not build a framework for genuine change. We see this all the time, for example, with transit organizations that do things the old way, with little consideration for modern technologies. Instead, we should be intersectional, not only across industries but also across the public, private, and community-based sectors. We are boundless and should not be limited to certain roles; instead, we should be motivated to be many things and, most importantly, we should be inspired by others.

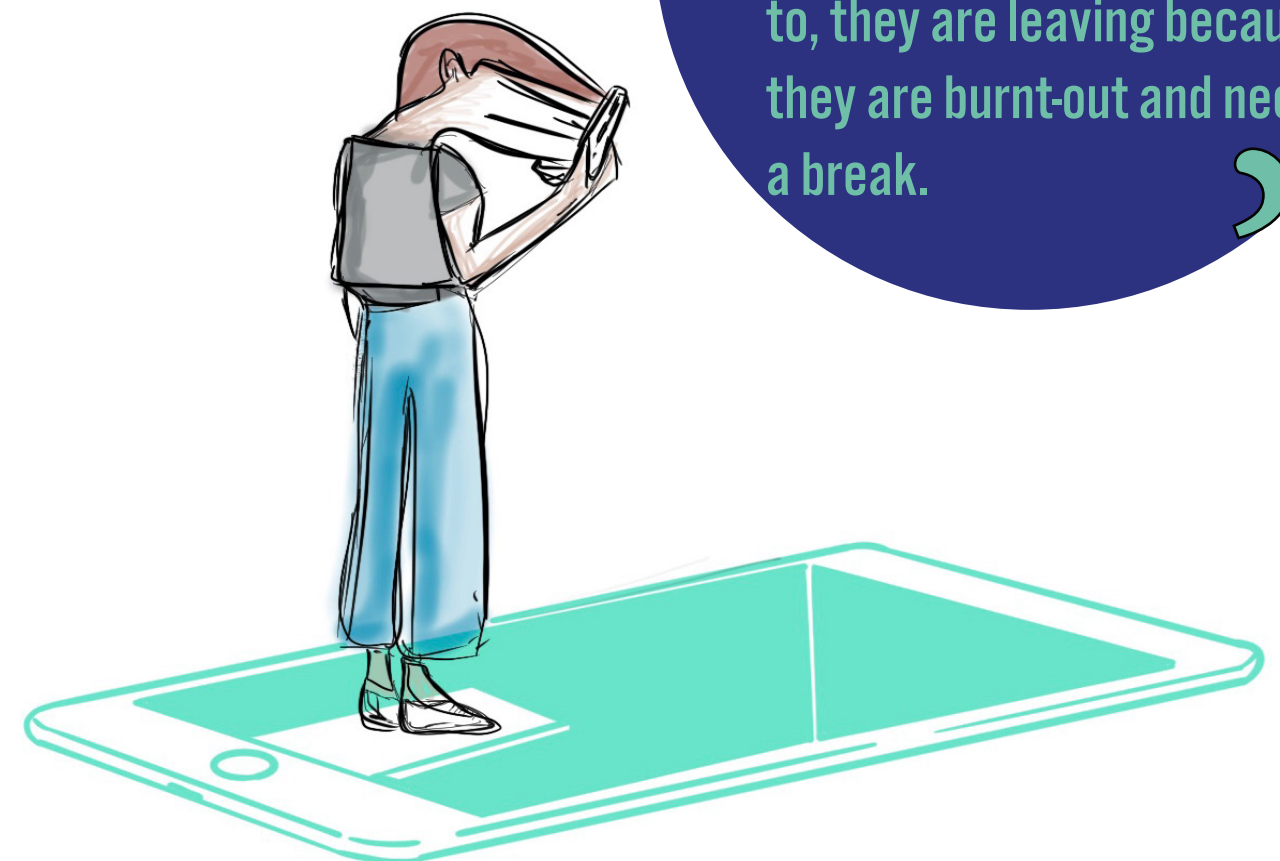
# Taking Care of Ourselves

## Home is where the work is!

Since the beginning of the Pandemic the work from home frontier has caused major interruptions in work life balance. There is no doubt that in the pandemic, expectations are higher and deadlines are more numerous. More work has been assigned as there is more 'down time' and less things to do because of lockdown closure, but when did we lose integrity for our personal lives as professionals? As the lines blur between work and life, the perception has changed from working 5 days a week to 6 or 7 days a week. The inconsistent pace of the pandemic and its uncertainty have placed professionals in a position where they no longer know how to pace themselves. In the pandemic, the world didn't slow down, it seems to have sped up. The age of technology plays a big role in this as work can be done anytime and anywhere. From this pandemic we have realized that this can no longer be the normal, it is rather a call to adjust the boundaries of the work life balance even from before the pandemic to prioritize personal life and physical and mental health.



“We have seen a number of young professionals resign in the past few months without having jobs to go to, they are leaving because they are burnt-out and need a break.”





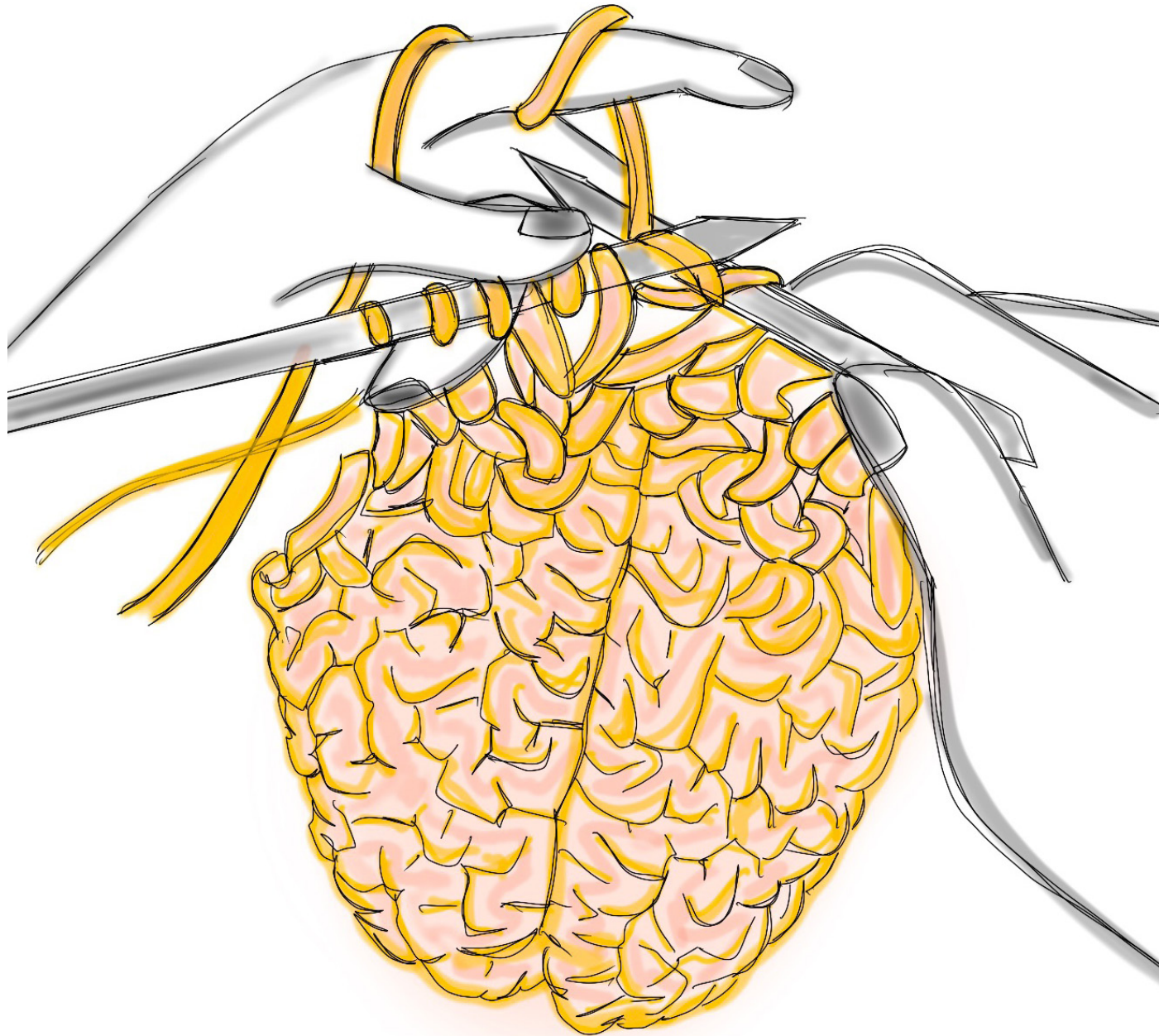


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Women's Leadership Initiative  
Reset Symposium Toronto May 2021

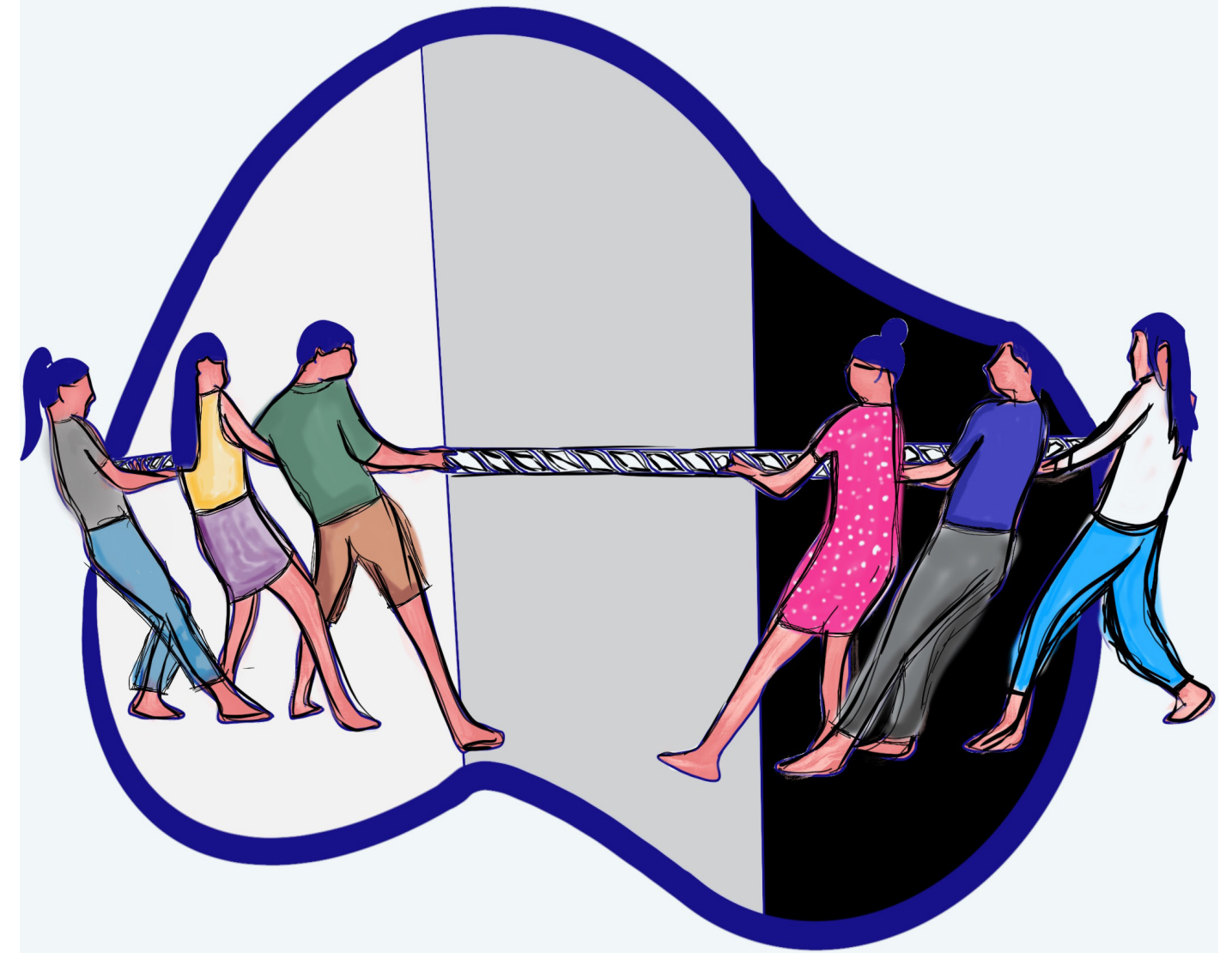
# Discovering the Meaning





# Learning & Un-Learning

We are continuously learning in an era of continual change. We do not work within the parameters of our schooling; if we did, none of us would be employable. We are humans, and we are designed to adapt to changing circumstances, and the only way to do so is to actively learn while concurrently unlearning. There is no one-size-fits-all answer to the reset. The reset, instead, is a network of complicated problems with corresponding dialogues. Things from the past stay in the past for a reason, and it is because they are so disconnected from our contemporary realities. So something that you may have become accustomed to in the past probably will not cut it in today's society which calls for unlearning and progressively learning through this process. This is what reset is all about. Our previous way of life was problematic; there was no sense of idealism in the way we lived. Our previous normal silenced the voices of marginalized people. Our previous normal damaged the environment. Our previous normal allowed for the wealthy to make important decisions. There was so much wrong with the way we lived that we didn't even recognize it; it took the pandemic to make us understand that we can't live the way we used to. This is a time for change, and unlearning will pave the way for educated change to occur for everyone, not just the privileged. This is a different kind of change, one that affects us all.



# Disregard of the In-Between

Over the years, society has conditioned itself to only have two options- right or wrong, black or white. We have lost our rationale towards making decisions and hosting opinions by the culture of disregarding the grey space and not giving it any value, when in reality the grey space has some of the greatest potential for change.



# Accountability

We lost our accountability somewhere along the way, and as a result, we have lost all sense of our responsibilities as stewards of our common humanity and shared earth. The truth is that we are all complicit. We may point fingers all we want, but it won't get us anywhere; instead, it will cause delays and even hold us back. We can argue that no change will occur until the government addresses us, but we are the government, the authority, each and every one of us, and no matter what we do or say, we will remain complicit and accountable until we recognize otherwise. Individuals initiate meaningful impact by taking small actions that add up to generate change. This shift is about monitoring and following up with others around us; it's all part of the collaborative process. We must recognize that we, as people, are genuinely accountable for both our actions and for change, and it is only when we do so that we will be able to make meaningful progress in the reset.



# Taking Courage & Speaking Our Truths

There are no limits in the society we live in, even with the limitations of the digital realm regulating our physical interactions. As a result, we must seek beyond our immediate surroundings, yet doing so requires courage. Curiosity, creativity, and collaboration are three components of developing courage. In retrospect, this symposium encourages all three components of courage; we are essentially forming a coalition/group of allies to navigate these uncomfortable dialogues in a way that will counteract emotions of anger and isolation, paving the path for a true reset. Part of implementing changes is having the courage to tell our truths since people in positions of power do not always want to hear them. That is why, as a group, we must build a case for change by looking outside the boundaries of our city and country and instead take inspiration from equity initiatives in other nations. RESET's safe environment allows us to delve deeper into equity and investigate who is left out of dialogues and why... Is it difficult to access. Is there a lack of inclusion? Or is it due to insufficient time? To be able to address these gaps and encourage access to knowledge to generate change in equity, we should consult young people. Young people have bright minds with the capability to be bold and tell their truths because as much as this is for our future, it is even more so for their future.







## The Pandemic as an Opportunity

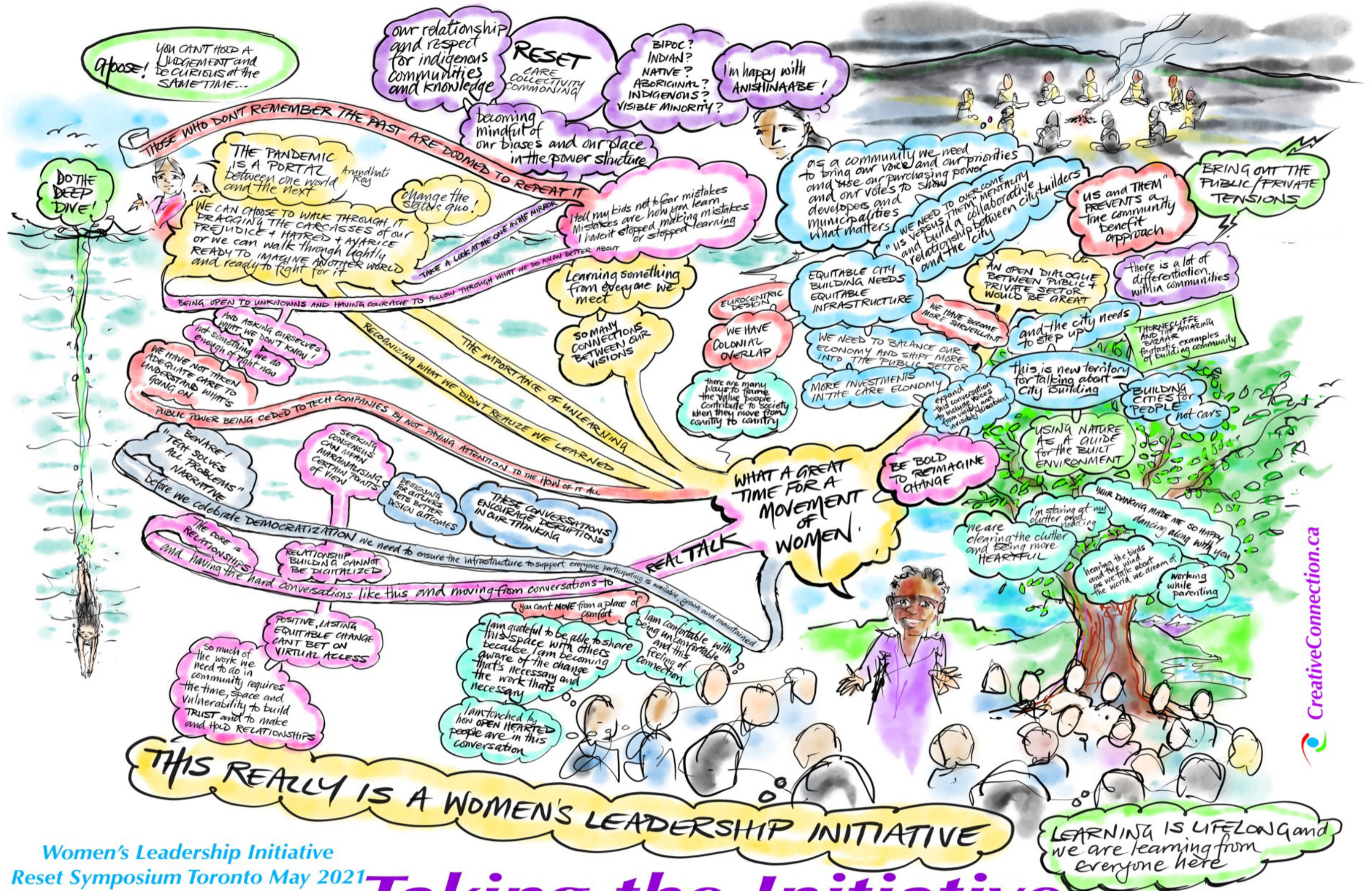
As difficult as the pandemic has been, its interruption has allowed us to think and understand that there is no normal to return to since our 'normal' is no longer sufficient. It's not good enough for people, and it's surely not good enough for the environment. There is only a new reality to adapt to. The opportunity to reset does not come along very often, and we must take full advantage of it. The pandemic presents us with that chance. The pandemic is a disruption and out of disruption arises opportunity. It takes energy, innovative thinking, and unlearning, all of which are required for change. Already, we have witnessed tremendous improvement in the ways we communicate with one another. We no longer need to travel 12-hour trips to attend meetings since we have learned that technology exists for nearly everything. Now, more than ever, we have the chance to interact with individuals all over the world and cooperate in ways we never imagined possible. This increased collaborative spirit has opened the path for Change, which would not have occurred had it not been for the pandemic's disruption.

# The Meaning of Land



When did we lose sight of the value of nature? Historically, land ownership was communal; however, this has been deliberately destroyed, and the entitlement to green space has been almost completely eliminated. Because society has failed as earth's stewards, we must now sit in the discomfort of what we are doing that is not good for the world or our species. This necessitates a transformation in what we have long supported in real estate and development, where the only true concern is profit. We need to adapt to develop innovative alliances with people and nature, we need new leaders in new positions, we need to value spirituality and environmental stewardship. Remembering Indigenous peoples and their connection the earth is critical for this change. To Indigenous people, land productivity means something entirely different, and we should turn to them for direction because they have been anticipating how to do this sharing. Instead of having infrastructure guide green space, we should have green space guide infrastructure, especially because green infrastructure may establish new links to nature for individuals who do not have private green areas such as backyards. The pandemic has highlighted the value of green space as a place of optimism, collectivism, human connection, and mental wellness. Everyone should have the right to green space because it is the key to a promising future.







# How Do We Move Forward?

The Reset Symposium has evolved into the Reset Lab, a platform for co-creation that incorporates a repository of live data that we analyze to provide feedback and make interventions in the community. The Reset Lab's role in knowledge sharing will bring together research and multidisciplinary aspects. The Reset Lab's findings will be socialized into the community, with a focus on doing things differently. The Lab will assist us in measuring the 'needle moving' by concentrating on the inequalities and divides that exist in our everyday lives that prevent us as a community from achieving tangible change.

We would like to thank the following for making this event happen:

ULI Staff, the Hines Foundation, the WLI Committee, the Reset Committee, the Co-Conspirators, and, the Participants

## Will YOU Accept The Reset?

