



ORGANISING IN THE TIME OF A PANDEMIC

*THE SOCIAL JUSTICE
EDITION*



CHAPTER 1 *THE INVITATION*

IT IS 2020...

The Covid-19 Pandemic disrupts life as we have come to know it. It has dramatic effects on all aspects of socio-political and economic systems. Unemployment, poverty, precarious work, excessive rates of violence against women and children, widespread disease burden and malnutrition, inadequate health systems and miserly social safety nets further tests and erodes the resilience of those with the fewest reserves.



The Heinrich Böll Stiftung - Cape Town is an institution that has been actively promoting the consolidation of democracy and human rights, advancing gender equality, and taking action to prevent the destruction of the environment in Southern Africa. For many organisations and individuals the Foundation has become a reliable funding partner, a space for constructive dialogue, a powerful international network, and a provider of analyses of contemporary political events in the region.

*Join us in our journey
to document and reflect with band of social
justices advocates as they organise for
social and environmental justice in these
unprecedented times.*



ISHTAR

*These stories
traverse the
past, present
and future,
where our
protagonists share
their reflections,
their trials, their
tribulations and their
advice for future
journeyers on the path
of social justice.*



ELLA

THIS IS THEIR TESTIMONY, AS CAPTURED IN FEBRUARY 2021

OUR BAND OF SOCIAL JUSTICE ADVOCATES

Revolutionary
patience



DALE MCKINLEY

International Labour Research
& Information Group (ILRIG)

Listening &
absorbing



SHERELEE ODAYAR

South Durban Community
Environmental Alliance (SDCEA)

Communicating
with animals



GAVIN SILBER

Bertha Foundation

Spooning



LEANNE BRADY

Cape Town Together (CTT)

Positivity



HUGO KNOPPERT

Zimbabwe Europe Network

Trust
building



XENA SCULLARD

Queer Feminist Film Festival (QFFF)

Making jokes
about serious
things



NKOSIKHONA SWARTBOOI

Social Justice Coalition (SJC)

Collaborating
in teams



VICTOR MDLULI

People Against Suffering, Oppression
and Poverty (PASSOP)

Listening



WILLSON TARUSARIRA

People Against Suffering, Oppression
and Poverty (PASSOP)

Critical
thinking



CHRIS ROUTLEDGE

Mining Affected Communities
United in Action

Asking random
questions



BRIGIT MAY LOOTS

Sister Namibia

Make people
laugh



REINE BAIMEY

WoMIN

Talking someone
into having a
good time



PALENI AMULUNGU

Aids and Rights Alliance for
Southern Africa (ARASA)

ANTHEA TADARERA

Aids and Rights Alliance for
Southern Africa (ARASA)

Not taking
things too
seriously



ELSBETH ENGELBRECHT

Triangle Project

Working across
difference



SHIRLEY WALTERS

Newlands Community Action Network (CAN)

Serving others,
especially
women



CARMEN LOUW

Women on Farms

CHAPTER 2 THE WORLD. A LOT IS HAPPENING.

BUSHFIRES RAGE
ACROSS AUSTRALIA

HARVEY WEINSTEIN
IS FOUND GUILTY
OF RAPE

Prince Harry & Meghan Markle
Renounce Their
Royalty

Us Drone Hits
Baghdad International
Airport



George Floyd
KILLED BY POLICE

Brexit -
Britain formally
withdraws from
the EU

KANYE WEST
RUNS FOR PRESIDENT

OIL PRICES
hit record lows

WHO DECLARES THE
CORONAVIRUS A PANDEMIC



RECORD GROWTH
IN GLOBAL RENEWABLE ENERGY

Locust swarms
in East Africa



OVER 2 MILLION DEATHS
WORLDWIDE FROM
CORONAVIRUS

Global solidarity for the
Black Lives Matter
Movement

PARASITE WINS
OSCAR FOR BEST FILM



KENYANS CELEBRATE
0 RHINO KILLINGS
IN 2020



1st Human
Spaceflight
By SpaceX



2020
Summer Olympics
Postponed

EBOLA
OUTBREAK
IN THE CONGO

COSTA RICA BECOMES
FIRST CENTRAL AMERICAN NATION TO
LEGALISE SAME-SEX MARRIAGE

Communal
Riots In
Delhi

THE WORLD OF AFRICAN CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANISATIONS

The Africa Civil Society Organisations **Covid-19 Survey** points to the challenges organisers are facing:

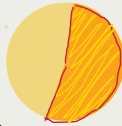
98%

reported that **COVID-19** impacted and **disrupted their operations** in one or more ways



55.69%

have already experienced a **loss of funding**, while **66.46%** expect to lose funding in the next 3 to 6 months



77.97%

of respondents indicated that **COVID-19** would have a **devastating impact** on the sustainability of many CSOs



68.08%

believed that **COVID-19** would result in greater public appreciation for the work of CSOs, while **71.58%** stated that **governments failed** to recognise and utilise local CSOs' skills, experience and networks in response to **COVID-19**



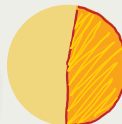
84.48%

confirmed that they were **not prepared to cope** with the disruption caused by the pandemic



49.87%

have introduced measures to reduce costs because of the **loss of funding**, or the **uncertainty about future funding**



69.34%

had to **reduce or cancel their operations**, while **54.94%** expect this to continue over the next 3 to 6 months



84.77%

introduced new program activities in response to **COVID-19**, with **71.94%** self-funding these activities



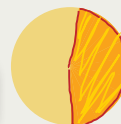
73.97%

indicated that **COVID-19** resulted in restricted movement of staff, while **79.35%** experienced reduced face-to-face community interactions



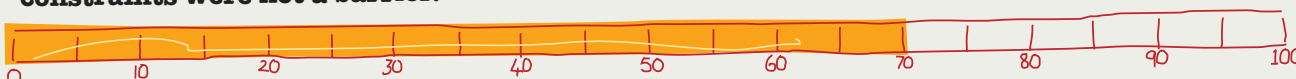
45.06%

believed that **CSOs would emerge stronger** and more agile after the pandemic



77.22%



indicated that local CSOs were playing a critical role in national responses to **COVID-19**. **85.47%** stated that they could have done more if capacity or funding constraints were not a barrier.



A total of **1015 CSOs** from **44 African countries** participated between **28 April & 15 May 2020**¹


THE WORLD OF OUR SOCIAL JUSTICE ADVOCATES

THEIR **BEST** THINGS ABOUT 2020

- Destabilisation of the usual way we do social justice work
- New approaches to activism
- Experimenting with inclusive processes and ways of collaborating
- Hours of conferences reduced to **clear and concise online sessions**
- Deliberate crossing of islands of wealth & poverty
- Collaborating with partners internationally in the digital space
- Nurturing teamwork with more time to **focus on strengthening internal processes**
- Time to reflect & prioritise about what is really important
- Flexibility of funders in the use of budgets to respond to COVID-19 challenges
- Decolonisation of funding
- Surfacing of critical questions of how we build local economies for social justice work
- Staying at home 
- Shared vulnerability
- Workload sharing & **better communication** inside organisations 
- Finding a language & a practice to **challenge the limitations of solidarity**



THEIR **MOST SURPRISING** THINGS ABOUT 2020


- Finding myself organising in a middle-class suburb
- Building trust & democratic relationships **without ever meeting in person**
- Working collectively with partners to **navigate unknown territory**
- Levels of **incapacity** of the state 
- Depth of poverty & **gender-based violence**
- **Activist burn-out**: we actually don't know how to do "self and collective care"
- **Individual adaptation**: we managed to adjust ourselves to the "new normal"
- **Strength & resilience** of activists
- **Radical generosity**
- **Strengthening of relationship ties** despite the social distance imposed by the crisis
- **Speed** with which people became immune to authoritarian practices
- Technology is a "**frenemy**"
- **Crisis after crisis**: the hits kept coming with extended lockdown and global spreads of different strains affecting organising & personal lives
- Toilet paper hoarding




THE WORLD OF OUR SOCIAL JUSTICE ADVOCATES




THEIR MOST FRUSTRATING THINGS ABOUT 2020

- Zoom meetings 
- Attitude of governments to provide no support to vulnerable communities
- Price of hand sanitiser
- Additional financing that came with tax benefits for multinationals
- Consolidation of elite power
- Media's phrasing of paternalistic practices as "family meetings"
- Masks all the time
- Continually having to learn new communication & technology skills
- Home schooling

- Bad connectivity, especially in low Wi-Fi areas
- Small cracks of possibility of doing things differently but then returning to rigid bureaucracy
- Industries getting away with only doing online participation
- Lack of vision of donors to adapt to new realities
- Lack of imagination
- Loss of momentum
- Not being able to protest or organise physical events 
- Not traveling for a whole year
- Mainstreaming of alternative facts & conspiracy theories


THE SADDEST THINGS ABOUT 2020

- Isolation 
- No more hugs
- Deep and stark inequalities that are getting worse
- Hoarding of money by elite social justice networks and organisations
- 2/3 women lost their jobs in the 1st three months of South Africa's lock down
- Greed and narcissism
- Gender-based violence

- Loss of dear friends, family, colleagues & community members
- Uncertainty and fear
- Postponement of graduations
- Securitisation of pandemic
- Loss of jobs & businesses
- Strengthening of autocratic practices by the state
- Governments misused the pandemic to target activists

• Psychological impact working from home especially for women with children

THE SEXIEST THINGS ABOUT 2020

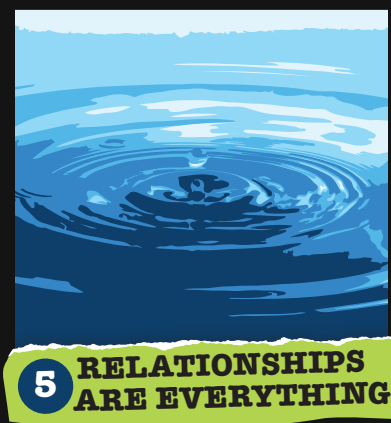
- Solidarity
- Seeing feminists showing up for each other
- Having coffee & lunch in bed 
- Being in harmony with body and mind
- Meetings while in bed

- Finding ways to exercise, to be intellectually stimulated and have fun
- Not being able to shop and not having to worry about what I look like
- Not understanding what 'sexy' means??
- Nap times with partner(s)
- Being able to stay in pajamas all day



CHAPTER 3 THE 2020 HUSTLE

LESSONS FROM THE PANDEMIC



1

SMALL IS GOOD

CAPE TOWN TOGETHER

As Cape Town Together (CTT) we began with approximately a dozen activists, public health researchers, community organisers, teachers and artists. We were a group of ordinary people looking to leverage resources in our immediate communities to reduce the spread and impact of the COVID-19 virus.

In a few weeks, the CTT Facebook Group morphed into a rapidly growing group of volunteers who were forming or joining Community Action Networks (CANs) in their neighborhoods and developing strategies for how best to support their neighbours. There were about 170 neighbourhood-based groups organising locally for whatever priorities were relevant for them. We had a range of ways of sharing ideas across the city using WhatsApp groups, Facebook and setting up cross-network co-learning sessions.

There was a lot of incredible organising across race and class lines, as well as social and spatial divides, in ways that we wouldn't have imagined in somewhere as f*cked-up as Cape Town. We were breaking from old organising traditions of the Left, which are often experienced as hierarchical and toxic. The structure of the CAN networks enabled a completely different form of organising. It was intentionally very un-hierarchical, and it brought a lot of people into conversation with each other in a way that doesn't usually happen with more traditionally, siloed approaches. This loose but interconnected network unleashed incredible creativity. We explored new possibilities and planted seeds for a different type of organising. The words we used were "radical generosity".

There were about 15 000 people involved in this city-wide response, which made space for ordinary people to get involved, many of whom would already be organising in their communities. So in some ways CTT shone a light on parts of the city that often get forgotten. It shifted which stories get told. It also connected people who wouldn't necessarily know one another. It was a story of ordinary people doing fairly ordinary things in quite extraordinary ways. Older people remarked about how it felt a lot like the anti-apartheid struggle, this street-by-street level organising, the feeling of solidarity. Many women led these spaces reflecting that it felt like a place where they could organise through generosity, reciprocity and kindness, without the toxic masculinity of other organising spaces.

NEWLANDS COMMUNITY ACTION NETWORK

I've always resisted working in my own backyard but during lockdown I found myself locked into a middle-class, mainly white suburb. Through CTT we tried to build relationships across these islands of incredible wealth and poverty by building partnerships between different CANs. The people in the Newlands CAN built relationships with the people in the Philippi CAN. In a way we were replicating old apartheid divisions with mainly black on one side and white on the other, working class and poor on one side, middle class on the other. But we were trying to work in a way to build social solidarity NOT charity. We knew what we could do well in a wealthy suburb and that was to raise money. In a couple of months we raised ¾ of a million rand and we worked with Philippi CAN distribute the money and resources. It was extremely complicated to find a way to do it that wasn't about donor/recipient relationships. What gave us a lot of relief was that we worked through Common Change (NPO), a platform that allowed us to set up a jointly-owned bank account with representatives from both Newlands and Philippi. It was a democratic forum where people from Newlands didn't make all the decisions. We would collectively receive proposals on how resources would be spent. This meant that we could be accountable to people who had given the money, as well as those receiving the benefits of that money. There were real efforts to work with a direct democratic approach against all odds.

"SMALL IS GOOD" means what we practice at the small scale sets the patterns for the whole system ². It reminds us that relatively small interactions build into complex patterns and systems of change and have the potential for large transformation.

PROVOCATION

- Is your organisation a living realisation of your collective values and beliefs?
- What are you embodying in your daily life? In your work?

2

INTENTIONAL ADAPTATION

In 2019 ILRIG started something completely new by working with creative art ensembles and artists to produce plays about working class folk and ordinary people in community halls around Johannesburg.



And then COVID hit and we couldn't do that anymore!

So we had to start thinking...



People couldn't come to a physical venue so we would take the plays into their homes through the radio!



We turned those plays into 2 radio plays:

1 Plague in the time of King Kapital and Queen Corona: about the lives and experiences of a regular working-class family. It deals with the Covid-19 pandemic and its ramifications for each family member, their community as well as broader South Africa society.

2 No money for jam: about COVID-19 post-lockdown and consequences regarding job security, wage levels and gender-based violence, all symptoms of a general socio-economic crisis exacerbated by the pandemic.

They played on over 45 different community radio stations with a listenership of about half a million people!

Social justice organisers began adjusting and responding to COVID-19 by recognising the needs of their communities and responding with different funding approaches, service provision strategies, and ideas that worked to keep their social purpose present.

PASSOP, Women on Farms, MACUA, Zimbabwe European Network

Because of the COVID-19 restrictions we were not able to meet with the people we serve, whether migrants and refugees or women on farms or mine workers. Our communities were really suffering. Members could not get the adequate support for basic necessities like food, water, shelter and access to healthcare. With everything moving to online they also struggled with access to technology and lack of data. We had to figure out how to shift resources in response to the needs of our communities and the environment, regardless of our organisational mandate.

Examples:

- We provided food parcels, something we've never done, to make sure that our communities got what they needed the most
- We reached out for support from donors whose funding we don't usually qualify for
- We worked with organisations that don't necessarily have the same purpose, but who were also working with communities left out of government support (e.g., the LGBTI community)
- We activated members in their communities when we couldn't be present
- We created feminine dignity packs that included essential items that women don't buy when they are cash strapped
- We shared stories on WhatsApp to raise money
- We organised online using landlines and provided data to meet regularly. You would expect a rural/urban divide in terms of connectivity, but with a lot of planning and care you can overcome those challenges.
- We brought together people virtually who would not usually be in a room together. It also meant that we had more access to global spaces, movements and people than before.

ADAPTATION

"a change in a plant or animal that makes it better able to live in a particular place or situation; the process of changing to fit some purpose or situation"

Intentional adaptation is how we live and grow and stay purposeful in the face of constant change. It determines both the quality of our lives, and the impact that we can have when we move into action together.³

PROVOCATION

- How do you as an organisation respond to changes? Do you address it directly, avoid it, get defensive etc.?
- How do you do work to ensure that you keep your purpose present during changes?

3

SOCIAL INNOVATION

As a feminist magazine at Sister Namibia,

we have been talking for a long time about the relevance of a print magazine. But we were scared to move into the digital space, even though strategically this is where we knew we needed to go. Originally, Sister Namibia was a printed magazine that went out into villages and communities to people who usually didn't have access to these kinds of stories. But that was 30 years ago. The publication was originally for the youth, but it had become a medium that wasn't working. 2020 forced us to do what our gut had told us to do for many years. We found ourselves at the right place at the right time with the #ShutItAllDownMovement in Namibia. By going online we were suddenly able to capture this community of youngsters, with the most voice and power we have seen in ages, in their fight to stand up and say something and do something. The whole movement was an opportunity for online advocacy.



BUT WE HAD QUESTIONS ABOUT THE DIGITAL DIVIDE

- ☐ Is it ok if we concentrate on this community?
- ☐ Is it the right community?
- ☐ Is it the right work for us to be focused on?
- ☐ Who is being left behind?
- ☐ Does it matter?

The digital divide is a constant question. But there are dynamic connections between urban and rural, and we need to embrace them and question our own assumptions about what the divide looks like.

SOCIAL INNOVATION

*"a complex process of introducing new products, processes or programs that profoundly change the basic routines, resource and authority flows, or beliefs of the social system in which the innovation occurs"*⁴

The clearer we are as organisations about where we are going, the more we can relax into collaborative innovation around how to get there. Developing our capacity for innovation can mean assessing our default patterns and whether those patterns create space for innovation, possibility, and continuing to move towards our vision.⁵

PROVOCATION

What are some important patterns and behaviours (roles, routines, rules, or beliefs) that structure your organisation?

- Roles and routines - who does what and how?
- Decision-making power - who decides what?
- Connections - who connects to who?
- Resources - who gets what?

4

SHARE THE POWER

As the AIDS and Rights Alliance for Southern Africa (ARASA)

we are a regional partnership of civil society organisations working in 18 countries in Southern and East Africa. We coordinate partnership building and capacity strengthening for our members. Not being able to meet in-person meant we had to move all our activities into the digital space. But doing this meant we needed content. We had to bring in new creative skill sets like consultants, designers, videographers and we had to rely heavily on our partners to help us create content.

We launched a campaign last year, “Every Body Counts” and we were really grateful that our partners engaged with us and put their time and effort to be a part of the campaign. In order to support their active participation, we shifted our funds to subgrant to them so that they could have the resources to create content and print materials for the campaign. Importantly, this also meant that we shifted responsibilities, leadership and power from us as the sole organisers to sharing with our partner organisations.



SHARE THE POWER

We work well when we have people to whom we are accountable and with whom we can be in interdependent relationship.⁶ This means being conscious of who has power: who does what in our systems and how, who makes the decisions, whose voices are heard (and whose aren't). Once we are more conscious of these patterns, we are able to disrupt them. Sharing power in conscious ways make us more resilient as people and as organisations and as systems.

PROVOCATION

- How does your current organisational patterns reflect (or challenge) broader social patterns?
- Looking at your organisational patterns and behaviours, who are these patterns really creating value for?

5

RELATIONSHIPS ARE EVERYTHING



At SDCEA we have been working with fisherfolk for the past 20 years. Black fisherfolk in Kwa-Zulu Natal (KZN) have always been marginalised by the policies regulating fishing and their livelihoods. Under Level 5 lockdown we experienced just how deeply this exclusion impacted the fishers because they were defined as ‘recreational’ fishers and not small scale, subsistence fishers. As a result they weren’t allowed to fish, which meant they couldn’t work and provide for their families.

In December 2020 we, and the KZN Subsistence Fisherfolk Forum, launched our report “Cast Out: The Systematic Exclusion of the KwaZulu-Natal Subsistence Fishers from the Fishing Rights Regime in South Africa”. As a collective, we worked to make sure that the voices of the fisherfolk most affected by the national lockdown were visible in the media and policy spaces. We had never seen this much government engagement with the experiences of fisherfolk. There was hope.

RELATIONSHIPS ARE EVERYTHING

The depth of relationship between the individuals in a system determines the strength of the system. And in ever-changing conditions, relationships and deep connections make all the difference. Most importantly, it is about the quality of connection between the nodes in the patterns rather than the quantity of connections.

PROVOCATION

- How are you experiencing working with each other right now? What do you most appreciate? What do you find challenging?
- How are you nurturing and/or cultivating relationships?

6

RESILIENCE



WoMIN

During 2020 we were conscious about how we can support our own people, especially women, who were doing this work and were affected more starkly by the pandemic. Work-From-Home (WFH) is becoming the new normal and we want to make sure that it is sustainable and just within our organisations.

Examples:

We developed a guide written by members of the organisation about how to work from home.

We closed the office early to give women more time to manage their multiple commitments.

RESILIENCE

Inner resilience sees activists focusing on wellbeing and care within their organisations and for each other, as opposed to focusing all energy and attention externally. It is a reminder that what we pay attention to grows.

“What kind of impact might we have if we took the inner lives of our organisations more seriously as leverage points for social change?” ⁷

PROVOCATION

- What does your organisation practice? (include all the things you practice in your collective work e.g. conflict avoidance, glorifying burnout, over scheduling, mission drift, check-ins, retreats, active listening, community accountability, etc.)
- What do you need to practice?



7

REFLEXIVITY

ILRIG

In our organisations we are so caught up in activities of everyday work that we don't often stop to do the deep thinking and deep research of our big ideas. The pandemic forced us to go back to that. This time has been very helpful internally, allowing us to produce things that will have a greater impact as opposed to ticking boxes of activities and events. Through reflexivity we took time to see the bigger systems we are a part of.

#WeSeeYou

The lockdown provided us with a moment, globally, to pause, which was a blessing. A pause that really allowed people to engage more from a different perspective. It has made us more resilient as organisations shifting us towards a more holistic view of our work, but also making us more intentional about identifying possible systemic shifts.

REFLEXIVITY

/ri.fleks'iv.ə.ti/ noun

1. "a transformative process of confrontation with biased aspects of the self too deeply rooted in and by historical circumstance and experience to be obvious"⁸
2. "to become [a] more conscious and effective participant in [your] institutional world"⁹
3. "a collaborative capability for reorientation and redirection helping to build up new social structures"¹⁰
4. "relates to understandings of the complex relationships between individuals and social systems at micro, meso and macro levels"¹¹

PROVOCATION

- How often do you pause to reflect as a team or as an organisation? If not, where could you begin?
- How can you regularly surface and draw upon your inner personal experiences during the normal course of work to shape and guide the organisation?

**When we gain
the capacity to
reflect together,**

we begin to attune with each other, and our collective work is strengthened. Reflexivity requires us to ask: What can we learn (from every situation, every personal interaction, every collective meeting, every project)? In every situation there are lessons that lead to organisational and systemic transformation.¹²

**8**

BUILD THE WORLD WE WANT

Cape Town Together

With CTT we were trying to radically shift the relationship between the broader public and health department. In the very early days of the pandemic, a bunch of us got together to think through what different models of organising would work to have a rapid community-led response to COVID that would also seek to build (where possible and where of value) relationships between different government actors. CANs demonstrated much more radical forms of organising and public participation than people would have imagined previously. In the first few months we had opportunities to get activists on community radio stations 10 times a week. We also managed to shift a lot of COVID-policy responses, for example by highlighting access to water and other socio-economic issues. It was exciting having loads of people talking about re-imagining the role of public service. If public servants were like CAN organisers imagine what a better city we would live in - imagine what sorts of struggles would be on the agenda? It feels like a new way of organising and engaging and starts to demonstrate what building a political alternative could look like.

BUILD THE WORLD WE WANT

"I believe that we are in an imagination battle, and almost everything about how we orient toward our bodies is shaped by fearful imaginations. Imaginations that fear Blackness, brownness, fatness, queerness, disability, difference. Our radical imagination is a tool for decolonisation, for reclaiming our right to shape our lived reality."¹³

PROVOCATION

- Does your organisation have a vision for the world you are working for? What does it look like, feel like, taste like, smell like? Can you describe in detail how people are living?

**9**

CREATE MORE POSSIBILITIES

#WeSeeYou Collective

"We are an art collective of queer black & coloured activists from the working & middle class occupying a mansion in Camps Bay. We are in solidarity with all occupations around the country, while centering the lives & wellbeing of queer people and women."

Our entire action as an activist land occupation protest was organised during the hard national lock down. We occupied a mansion in the affluent seaside neighbourhood of Camps Bay in Cape Town. We collaborated with lawyers, civil society leaders, activists and grassroots movements to figure out how we could pull it off.

What made it such an amazing space was that we were able to infiltrate public narrative and public imagination around what it means to reclaim people's power. We shifted the target of the issue, because when people talk about housing issues they immediately go to the government, but high-net worth individuals are also to blame.

What does it mean to begin to challenge high net worth individuals that never get touched? We made people think about what land expropriation outside of the state might look like.

CREATE MORE POSSIBILITIES

Creating more possibilities is fundamental for change—this is where we shape tomorrow towards abundance. This means exploring unusual partnerships, drawing on unexpected strategies, asking different questions and refreshing our lens'.

PROVOCATION

- Who is the centre of your story of change? Who is missing? What other possibilities are there?



THE PANDEMIC SURVIVAL KIT



PRINCIPLES OF SURVIVAL

Inclusivity

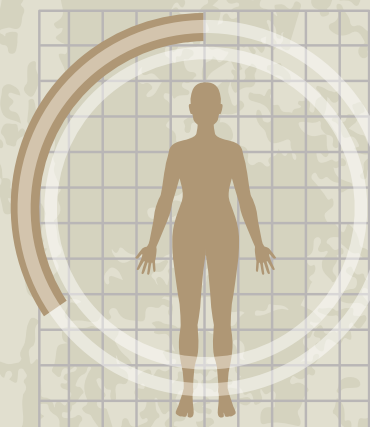
Equity

Collaboration

Collective Impact

Feminist

Collaborative



A Peoples Led Army that is resourced and truly representative including civil society, community leaders, youth, marginalised communities

Oxygen tanks	Gas masks	Full body suits	Rent free workspaces & land
Free & safe data for communication	Connectivity hardware (smart enough phones); use of radio	Safe spaces for organising, to debate & argue things out (with nuance and multiple perspectives) but also space to socialise & have fun	
Healing resources for the front line & human rights defenders	Independent unrestricted grant making mechanisms	Food sovereignty owned & cultivated by the people; Gorilla Gardens	
Basic Income Grant	Effective & accessible free public transport	Stronger international connections	
Solidarity from high net worth individuals & the private sector	Storytelling to counter the info-demic	Healthcare & vaccines for all	

2020 - THE SOUNDTRACK

1. **Donny Hathaway** - Tryin' times
2. **Miley Cyrus** - The climb
3. **Bee Gees** - Stayin' alive
4. **Duke Ellington** - New World A-Comin
5. **Original** - COVID-19 19 knows no nationality
6. **R.E.M.** - World Leader Pretend
7. **Jamiroquai** - Virtual Insanity
8. **Stevie Wonder** - Love's in need of love today
9. **Queen** - I want to break free
10. **Gloria Gaynor** - I will survive
11. **Original** - Corona/Sanitiser/Curfew
12. **Tracy Chapman** - Talkin bout a revolution
13. **Lady Gaga** - Stupid love
14. **Simon & Garfunkel** - The Sound of Silence
15. **Miley Cyrus** - Wrecking Ball
16. **Chantay Savage** - I will survive
17. **Master KG featuring Nomcebo** - Jerusalema
18. **Original** - Stop, restart, GO!



CHAPTER 4

UNDERSTANDING THE PANDEMIC AS A PORTAL

"Historically, pandemics have forced humans to break with the past and imagine their world anew. This one is no different. It is a portal, a gateway between one world and the next. We can choose to walk through it, dragging the carcasses of our prejudice and hatred, our avarice, our data banks and dead ideas, our dead rivers and smoky skies behind us. Or we can walk through lightly, with little luggage, ready to imagine another world. And ready to fight for it."

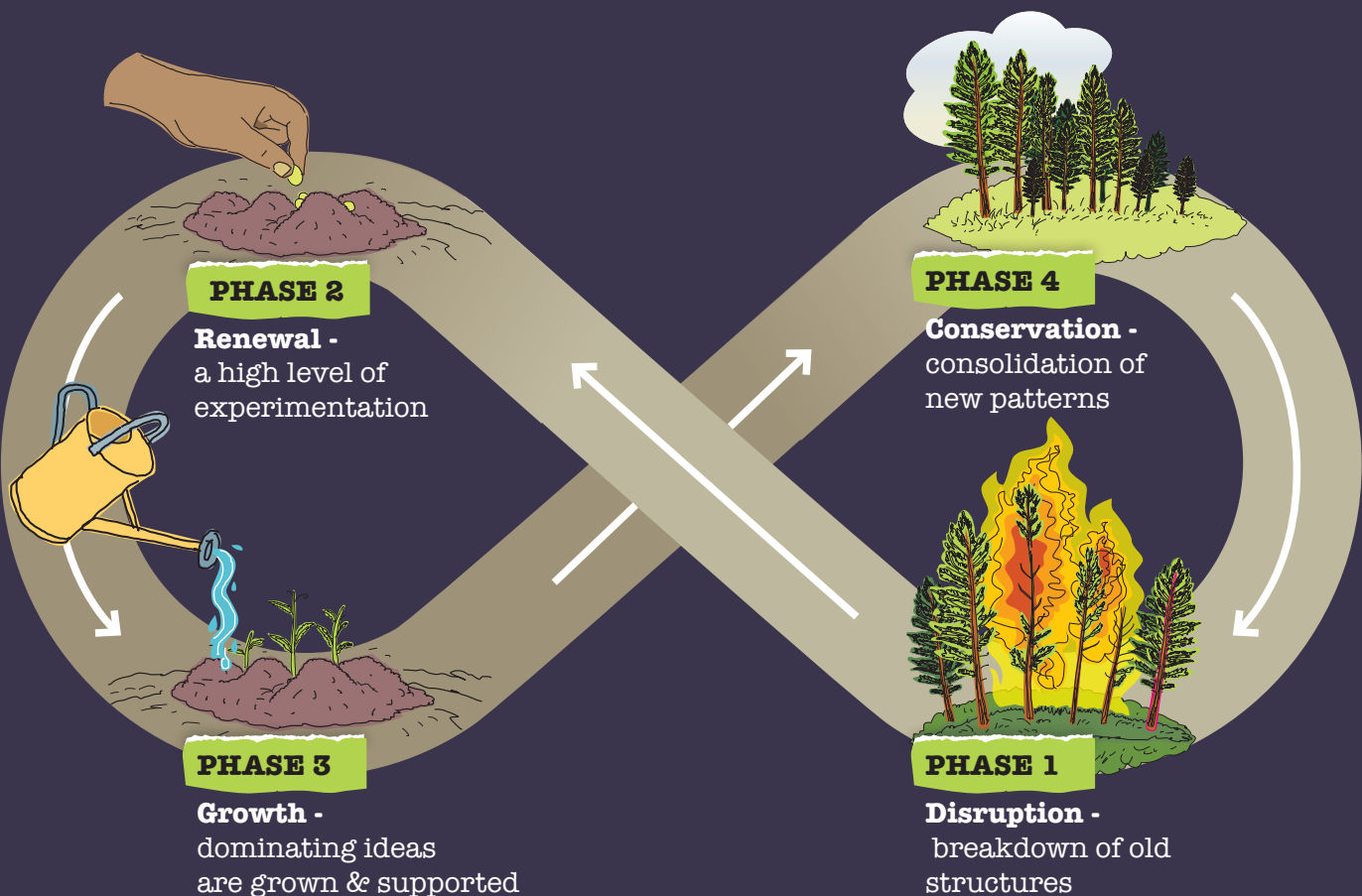
Arundhati Roy, from *The Pandemic is a Portal* ¹⁴



THE ADAPTIVE CYCLE

The Adaptive Cycle offers us a useful model to understand natural patterns of change within our different ecosystems. The evolution of any system is not static or linear but rather moves through 4 phases: disruption; renewal; growth and conservation.

Below we apply the Adaptive Cycle as a way to understand and contextualise the complex, changing social justice ecosystem using the COVID-19 pandemic as the example of a 'disruption'.



PHASE 1 DISRUPTION:

CREATIVE DESTRUCTION OR BREAKDOWN OF OLD STRUCTURES

For this case, we use the advent of covid-19 as a metaphorical creative destruction or burning of our social justice landscape.



As the pandemic hit, our social justice advocates described the existing social justice ecosystem as:

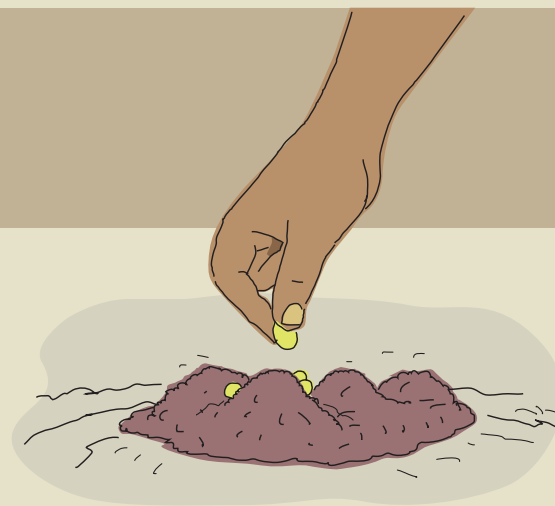
- being rigid and non-adaptive • going from crisis to crisis • suffering from a lack of perspective
- perpetuating the same inequalities and injustices in the world in our own organising
- lonely and disconnected • burnt out and uninspired

There was a feeling of deep dissatisfaction with the status quo and a recognition that things are not as they should be.

PHASE 2 RENEWAL:

A HIGH LEVEL OF EXPERIMENTATION

As the pandemic unfolded, national lockdowns and the dramatic disruption of 'normal life' severely increased inequality and limited the ability to provide basic services to marginalised communities. Social justice organisations and collectives began to re-organise and sow new ideas, experimenting with a myriad of different ways of being and doing. In the Renewal phase, social justice advocates experimented with these hustles:



- 1 Small is good
- 2 Intentional adaptation
- 3 Social Innovation
- 4 Share the power
- 5 Relationships are everything
- 6 Resilience
- 7 Reflexivity
- 8 Building the world we want
- 9 Creating more possibilities

PHASE 3 GROWTH:

DOMINATING IDEAS ARE GROWN AND SUPPORTED

As the world reconfigures to a 'new normal', in the Growth phase social justice organisers must ask themselves, what *ideas* do we want to *tend for the future*?

During the previous Renewal phase, there were a variety of new ideas seeded in response to the pandemic disruption, many of which can and should be nurtured and propelled into the future. The Growth phase invites social justice organisers to critically reflect and assess which ideas should be grown and supported.

Our social justice advocates highlighted some critical reflections that will shape what we choose to take into the future:





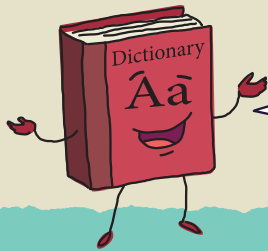
SOCIAL SOLIDARITY

The growth of solidarity within and between various communities was evident over the last year. However, we need to be critical of what kind of solidarity we grow; to nurture social solidarity not charity. "The kind of disruption the pandemic caused to our way of life is not new. We have seen disruption before, for example during the 2008 economic crisis. These disruptions repeat themselves throughout history. We are in a pandemic now, but poor people have always lived in, through, and with conditions of pandemic i.e. locked down, high levels of hunger and food insecurity, joblessness, lack of income etc. These conversations of change and systems transformation can become cynical and repetitive if we don't recognise that these conditions have always been here. What if all we are doing is containment? While we phrase a lot of the work we've done as solidarity, much of it was actually charity: a containment of poverty. Are we trying to force some sort of social cohesion when in actual fact we are sitting on (and are still sitting on) a revolution?"



WOMEN AT THE CENTRE

What was clear in the response to the pandemic, was that women were at the centre of community organising, support and service provision. However, simultaneously women were also the most affected by the impact of COVID-19. In the first 3 months of lockdown 2/3 of women lost their jobs. In addition, 70% of women are responsible for childcare. The reliance on women's unpaid labour has always been there but the experience of this across class is very different. During lockdown there was a huge increase in levels of gender-based violence and intimate partner violence, not only between domestic partners but also in families, because they were locked down together. This highlighted even more starkly the lack of services for women. We frame our work as social justice but essentially, it has always been a network of community care led by women. It's always been women at the centre. Going forward how do we make sure we don't repeat these patterns of burdening women as the most affected by change, as well as being the agents of change?



NEW WORLD, NEW LANGUAGE

Language has the power to shape our understanding and experiences of our social system. Though responses to the pandemic have created opportunities to re-organise how we organise, we need to be conscious of the language we use when talking and thinking about our work. "NGO-speak is draining and locks us into old ways of working. How do we re-orientate ourselves, especially when talking about power, money and social justice work?" Through experimenting with new ways of being and doing we are inventing a new language for organising. Language that frees us. "We do not think ourselves into new ways of living, we live ourselves into new ways of thinking" (Richard Rohr).

PHASE 4 CONSERVATION: CONSOLIDATION OF NEW PATTERNS

After disruption (**Phase 1**), we have begun to seed (**Phase 2**) and grow (**Phase 3**) our new imaginings for the future social justice space. We are moving towards Conservation (**Phase 4**). In this phase, new patterns are established, or old patterns are reinforced. Our social justice advocates shared that despite the organising challenges and the heightening of the social issues faced, in some ways they feel more connected, more creative and more reflexive. To try and create a picture of what our next fully grown forests (futures) might look like, our band of social justice advocates went on a journey of imagining...



CHAPTER 5 IMAGINING THE FUTURES OF SOCIAL JUSTICE ORGANISING

YETFLIX

SEE WHAT'S NEXT

"All organizing is science fiction. When organizers imagine a world without poverty, without war, without borders or prisons—that's science fiction. They're moving beyond the boundaries of what is possible or realistic, into the realm of what we are told is impossible. Being able to collectively dream those new worlds means that we can begin to create those new worlds here."

Walida Imarisha



YETFLIX

Home TV Shows Movies Latest My List



FILM 100% Match 2033

Imagine-Nation (2033)

It's 2033 and after centuries of trial and error, the Custodians of Earth have done it, they have built a civilisation out of sheer imagination. Through harvesting the dreams of children, they have designed communities that are free from all the trappings of the societal constructs that have gone before. The Imagine-Nation takes these Dream Seeds and grows them into new systems, ways of being, communicating and communing. Follow the building of one such Imagine-Nation.

Warning: Please use your Home 4D Extension Pack as Imagine-Nation contains sensory add-ons to enable the viewer to see, feel, smell, taste and touch their new world.

Genre: Science Fiction

Seed from 2021

"We need to build on these kernels, these new experiments, to restructure our economies. We need ways of building something totally different while we resist the old."



OVERVIEW

TRAILERS & MORE

MORE LIKE THIS

DETAILS

Photo by Louis Maniquet on Unsplash

Y SERIES 100% Match 2031

Come Dine with Me - Social Justice Edition (2031)

In this new season of **Come Dine With Me**, join the hilarious antics of 4 social justice advocates competing to find common ground with guests from across the social spectrum by having them home to dinner. The winner is chosen by whoever manages to sway the most guests to their cause. Out of their depth from their usual social justice crowd, anticipate awkward blunders, saucy sabotage and peppery commentary.

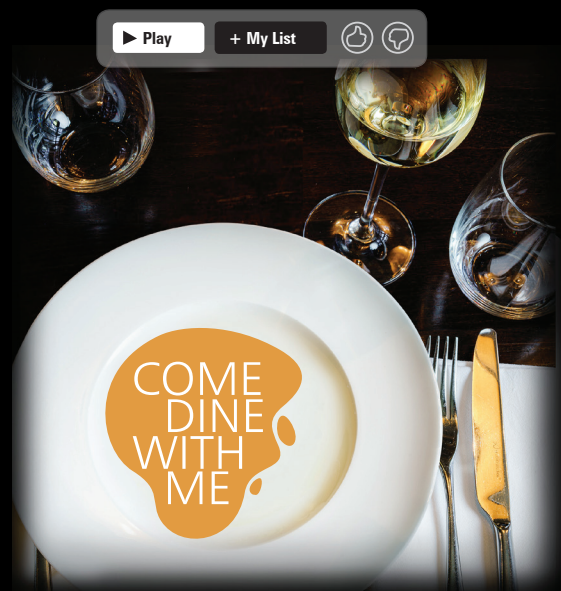
Spoiler alert: In this episode the acronym 'HR' does not go over well, and confusion ensues. Does it stand for human rights, hourly rate, hit and run, human resources, heavy rain?!? Will our social justice advocates succeed in making their cause accessible? Tune in to find out.

Genre: Lifestyle

Seed from 2021

"None of us are safe until we are all safe. We have to make the circle bigger in a way that is not co-opted by just the 'woke' or the 'radicals'. We have to include people in the 'moveable middle', to push for the world we want to live in in a way that calls people in and not out."

"This pandemic has given us an amazing opportunity to start to find different, creative, non-traditional ways of organising across sectors and across struggles. There are definitely synergies, connections and appetite, but how do we begin to do that from a place of trust, solidarity, community and equity."



Y FILM 100% Match 2032

IT'S JUST-US (2032)

The fault lies not in the ghosts that haunt us but in ourselves. A group of paranormal social justice archivists studying ancient democratic ruins of Southern Africa find themselves simultaneously terrorised and beguiled by the buildings themselves. One member of the unlucky party finds themselves haunted by ghosts of activism past that will not rest until the past and present values of social justice are reconciled. Can our heroes save their causes from impending doom, or are they destined to follow down the same treacherous path of those that haunt them?

Genre: Horror

Seed from 2021

"How do we reclaim core principles and values that I think have been lost amongst the left and progressive forces? I think there is a crisis of consciousness."

[OVERVIEW](#)[TRAILERS & MORE](#)[MORE LIKE THIS](#)[DETAILS](#)*Photo by Andrew Amistad on Unsplash*

Y SERIES 100% Match 2035

Sustain(our)Ability (2035)

Each episode follows different groups who have set out to pursue their vision of a dream community by building it themselves. Each community is completely unique, using their land in creative and innovative ways. Some of the most unusual builds in this season include: prisons converted into guerilla gardens, castles to co-operatives, anti-capitalist apartment blocks, and the FemiNest, a former palace that has been reclaimed as the new headquarters for global feminists. Look out for special guest presenters Zulaikha Patel, Angeline Makore and Kelvin Doe. Join our contestants as they demolish, build, and smash through more than just glass ceilings.

Note: the winner of Sustain(our)Ability receives... nothing, there is no winner because competition is part of the capitalist patriarchy. All the land and resources are communally owned and managed in a way that benefits the land and all creatures that reside in it.

Genre: Reality

Seed from 2021

"We need land. Safe, secure, rent-free space for activists to organise, collaborate, live and work. We also need space where we can build and experiment with alternative futures."



Photo by Hu Chen on Unsplash

Y SERIES 100% Match 2033

THE UNLONELY PLANET (2033)

Join our globe-trotting host as they seamlessly navigate their way across the globe. As a gender non-conforming, part-time sex worker, and recreational drug user, traveling alone, with no identity documents or proof of residence, watch as they travel with ease through a breath-taking array of fabulous landscapes crossing continents, deserts, mountains and oceans. As an Inhabitant of Earth they explore our unLonely Planet appreciating (not appropriating) the diverse smorgasbord of people, places, cuisines and cultures the Earth has to offer.

Please use your Home 4D Extension Pack as unLonely Planet contains sensory add-ons to enable the viewer to see, feel, smell, taste and touch their travel destinations.

Genre: Travel

Seed from 2021

"Maybe now there are possibilities to finally overcome nationalism which is the glue that holds reaction together. Overcoming political, social and cultural borders and boundaries is the future"

[OVERVIEW](#)[TRAILERS & MORE](#)[MORE LIKE THIS](#)[DETAILS](#)

Y Film 100% Match 2035

Mush-Room to Grow (2031)

Welcome to Fungi Forest, a colony of fungi led by the soon to be retired Kween and her well-intentioned spore Gus. One day Gus meets Z, a dragonfly who tells him of all the wonders and woes that lie outside the Forest. Determined to prove himself as worthy of the title of Kween, Gus leaves the forest in search of hedgehogs to help, spiders to save and rabbits to rescue. He tries and he tries but as much as he wants to, Gus can't seem to help. So Gus returns to Fungi Forest defeated and ready to give up the crown, only to find Nana-Buluku, the Goddess of Creation, waiting for him. Unbeknownst to him Nana-Buluku has connected all living creatures across the Eternal Web. So in order to help the hedgehogs, the spiders, the rabbits and all the creatures he met on his adventures, Gus must start first at home with his Forest.

Genre: Children's Animation**Seed from 2021**

"We need a better way to understand ideas of scale. Local problems need local solutions, but those small interventions can effect huge changes."



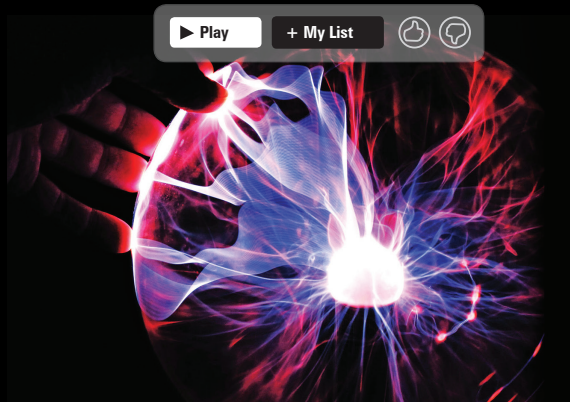
Y SERIES 100% Match 2035

T.R.U.S.T (2035)

Humans have discovered how to move at the speed of sound and the speed of light. This documentary goes behind the scenes at the Theoretical Research for Supersonic Technology (TRUST) Institute as intrepid scientists explore our ability to move at the speed of trust. Although early attempts at identifying the TRUST particle have been successful, our ability to harness it for the good of society has not. Being unstable and erratic, with some particles exhibiting exponential growth and some none at all, scientists theorise that once we can move at the speed of trust, the implications for social justice organising becomes limitless. Watch as this group of determined scientists attempt to break through the trust barrier and change society as we know it.

Genre: Documentary**Seed from 2021**

"How do you cultivate trust when people can't really meet in space? How do you build solidarity and alliances and connections and personal relations which lie at the heart of activism and any kind of change."



USEFUL READING

12 Highlights from our 2020 Research found at:

<https://www.mckinsey.com/featured-insights/innovation-and-growth/twelve-highlights-from-our-2020-research>

Organising in the Time of COVID-19 found at:

<https://www.openglobalrights.org/organising-in-the-times-of-COVID-19/>

Queer Lockdown: COVID-19 and Queer Life in South Africa found at:

<https://gala.co.za/queer-lockdown-covid-19-and-queer-life-in-south-africa/queer-lockdown-organisers-and-activists/>

The Future of Human Rights: from Gatekeeping to Symbiosis found at:

<https://sur.conectas.org/en/the-future-of-human-rights-from-gatekeeping-to-symbiosis/>

Reimagining Human Rights as a Frame of Justice found at:

<https://www.openglobalrights.org/reimagining-human-rights-as-a-frame-of-justice/>

Organising in the time of COVID-19: Eco-Feminist Perspectives found at:

<https://darajapress.com/2020/04/09/organising-in-the-time-of-covid-19-eco-feminist-perspectives>

Fragments of Activism found at:

<https://blackmanrossouw.co.za/product/fragments-of-activism-ebook/>

ENDNOTES AND INSPIRATION

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- 2 adrienne maree brown (2017) **Emergent Strategy**; Hope & Rudo Chigudu (2018) **Strategies for Building an Organisation with a Soul** accessed at <http://airforafrica.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/Strategies-for-Building-an-Organisation-with-Soul-WEB.pdf>
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- 4 Frances Westley & Nino Antadze, (2010) **Making a Difference: Strategies for Scaling Social Innovation for Greater Impact** accessed at http://innovation.cc/scholarly-style/2010_15_2_2_westley-antadze_social-innovate.pdf
- 5 Warren Nilsson (2019) **Social Innovation as Institutional Work** in Handbook of Inclusive Innovation
- 6 adrienne maree brown (2017) **Emergent Strategy**
- 7 Warren Nilsson and Tana Paddock (2014) **Social Innovation from the Inside Out** accessed at https://ssir.org/articles/entry/social_innovation_from_the_inside_out
- 8 Audre Lorde (1984) **Uses of the erotic: The erotic as power**
- 9 Warren Nilsson (2015) Positive Institutional Work: **Exploring institutional work through the lens of positive organisational scholarship**
- 10 Donati (2011) **Modernization and relational reflexivity**
- 11 Richard Malthouse, Jodi Roffey-Barentsen & Mike Watts (2014) **Reflectivity, reflexivity and situated reflective practice**
- 12 Warren Nilsson and Tana Paddock (2014) **Social Innovation from the Inside Out** accessed at https://ssir.org/articles/entry/social_innovation_from_the_inside_out
- 13 adrienne maree brown (2019) **Pleasure Activism: The Politics of Feeling Good**
- 14 Arundhati Roy (2020) **'The pandemic is a portal'** accessed at <https://www.ft.com/content/10d8f5e8-74eb-11ea-95fe-fcd274e920ca>
- 15 Yetflix episodes were the imaginings of **Ishtar Lakhani**

