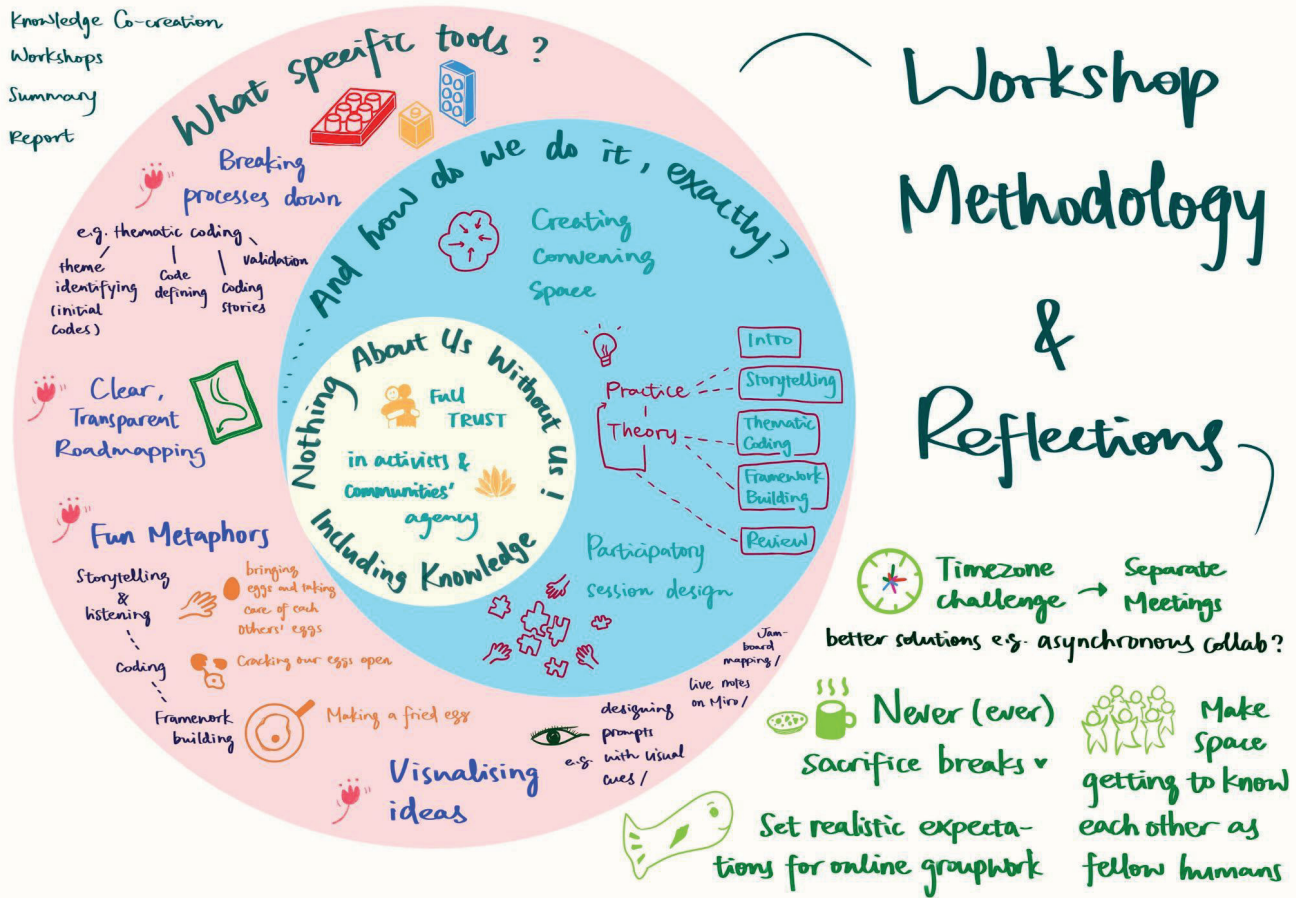


Visualisation based on AR  
 Knowledge Co-creation  
 Workshops  
 Summary  
 Report



## SUMMARY REPORT

# Autonomous Resourcing Knowledge Building Workshop Series

YASMIN CHE | JANUARY 2022

*A massive thank you to Tenzin, Dani and Gopika, for your enormous trust in a young feminist with little experience to show at hand and your solid support throughout this journey.*

## Context

Autonomous Resourcing (AR) is one of the transformative ways in which feminist movements are mobilizing financial, human, and material resources that directly support the liberatory aims of feminist political projects. AWID has been facilitating conversations around AR since the 2016 AWID Forum in Bahia, Brazil. Building on that initiative, the team convened working group discussions in 2018, interviewed a selection of activists in 2019, and curated online conversations in 2020.

It is with this backdrop that this knowledge building workshop series was proposed with two interlinked objectives: one, allow ideas around this topic to converge for the collective creation of a conceptual framework of autonomous resourcing; two, encourage activists to tell stories on autonomous resourcing in creative ways. The final outcomes, namely the conceptual framework and the stories, are presented to the public on a microsite which serves as a resource hub for autonomous resourcing practitioners for years to come. At the same time, in the spirit of AR, the Resourcing Feminist Movements (RFM) team at AWID is dedicated to ensuring that the knowledge-building process is truly participatory and collective.

To these ends, the team invited 10 feminist activists experienced in autonomous resourcing as advisors to engage in a knowledge co-creation process. Most of the advisors have taken part in AWID-led discussions on AR before, some in interviews, others in working group discussions. Some of them have met or have heard of each other before. Their experience spans across self-help groups, mutual aid initiatives, cooperatives, NGOs, social enterprises, etc. As the facilitator, I joined in October 2021 when all advisors have already confirmed their commitment thanks to the wonderful coordination of the RFM team, especially Tenzin who has been leading this conversation for a few years. In this summary report, I will document and reflect on both the methodology for knowledge co-creation as well as the actual workshop processes, before summarizing our overall assessment and looking into the future for this group and beyond.

## Methodology Review

The initial envisioning of the overall process from the RFM team was inspired by popular education methods to take a 'practice-theory-practice' path, drawing on the lived experiences and learnings from the participants, situating them within social, economic and political systems, and from there, a process of 'theorization' of those practices where the analysis and theoretical framework are developed /read /enriched, strengthening and promoting AR processes lead by feminist and social movements. The overall process was therefore designed with the sequence of introduction - storytelling - framework building - review, with the expectation that activists involved would take away inspirations for future thinking and actions.

The consultant's proposal kept the basic structure as well as the key participatory principles in the initial vision; it elaborated on the knowledge co-creation process with thematic coding exercises to balance rigor and space for group participation, keeping in mind the time limitation of 10 hours and the need to draw in existing analysis.

The detailed workshop flows were then finalized on an ongoing basis between the consultant and the RFM team, usually with one to two meetings before each workshop to leave time for the consultant to prepare visual prompts. The final design comes from collective efforts from Tenzin, Gopika, Dani, and me.

In the following subsections, I will elaborate on the thinking behind 4 major aspects of the methodology:

1. Collective knowledge building as politics and practice
2. Clarity and flexibility
3. Autonomy, agency and trust
4. Verbal, visual, and written communications

## Knowledge Co-creation as Politics and Practice

*“...knowledge is not built from facts that are simply there, waiting to be discovered and organized in terms of concepts and categories, but that it rather grows and is grown in the forge of our relations with others...Knowledge...is co-produced.”<sup>1</sup>*

For all of us familiar with feminist philosophy where we see knowledge as fluid social constructs, like the concept of gender, it would be quite intuitive (hopefully) to go one step further to think that any knowledge about our struggles, even the most conceptual and theoretical ones, can exist only *among* us, and would be most ‘alive’ when they grow from our lived realities and are sustained in our web of relations. Just like how Nani, one of our advisors, beautifully said, it is impossible for anyone to survive without connectedness in an ecosystem, and any idea that is out of touch, like micro-finance, won’t liberate anyone. The same can be applied to this process - our advisors could not have created the framework without making connections with each others’ stories, and the entire process design ensured that they owned the process as co-researchers, not data-providers. This is an unmissable premise I’d like to establish before diving into the methodologies of this workshop series.

How exactly does a participatory process allow a group to co-create knowledge? First of all, don’t prepare too much.<sup>2</sup> That is, don’t preempt participants, but rather offer scaffoldings for ideas to come through. For example, after storytelling, we had an exercise where people got into groups to identify patterns in similarities and differences among the stories, which served as an inductive abstraction that became our key themes. When it came to the actual construction of the framework, we basically cleared the space by saying, we don’t know how a conceptual framework should look like, and

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<sup>1</sup> Tim Ingold (2014), *That’s enough about ethnography!*, Retrieved from <https://www.journals.uchicago.edu/doi/full/10.14318/hau4.1.021> on 4 January 2022

<sup>2</sup> Of course, this doesn’t mean we cannot prepare necessary tools or try out exercises ourselves before the workshop to mitigate challenges.

we probably don't want to look anything like conventional frameworks, so here's the deal: let's list down some questions people have been asked around AR as a concept, and then offered a tree image (see below) as a placeholder for people to put down these questions; as we were clustering the questions to correspond with different parts of the image, a clear framework emerged naturally.



The second thing is to break down the thinking process which otherwise usually happens inside one person's head. It might be challenging to pin down the steps exactly, but certainly worth trying. Thematic coding, the main knowledge co-creation methodology used here, is broken down into identifying themes (initial development of codes), extracting quotes from stories (taking out all data that might be coded), elaborating on what each theme meant (defining codes collectively), as well as matching quotes to the themes (validating codes). Last but not least, adjusting for the diverse backgrounds as well as the virtual setting, we needed to gamify the exercises so that it remains engaging and fun. For this, metaphors and specificity in guiding questions are very helpful, which I will elaborate more on below.

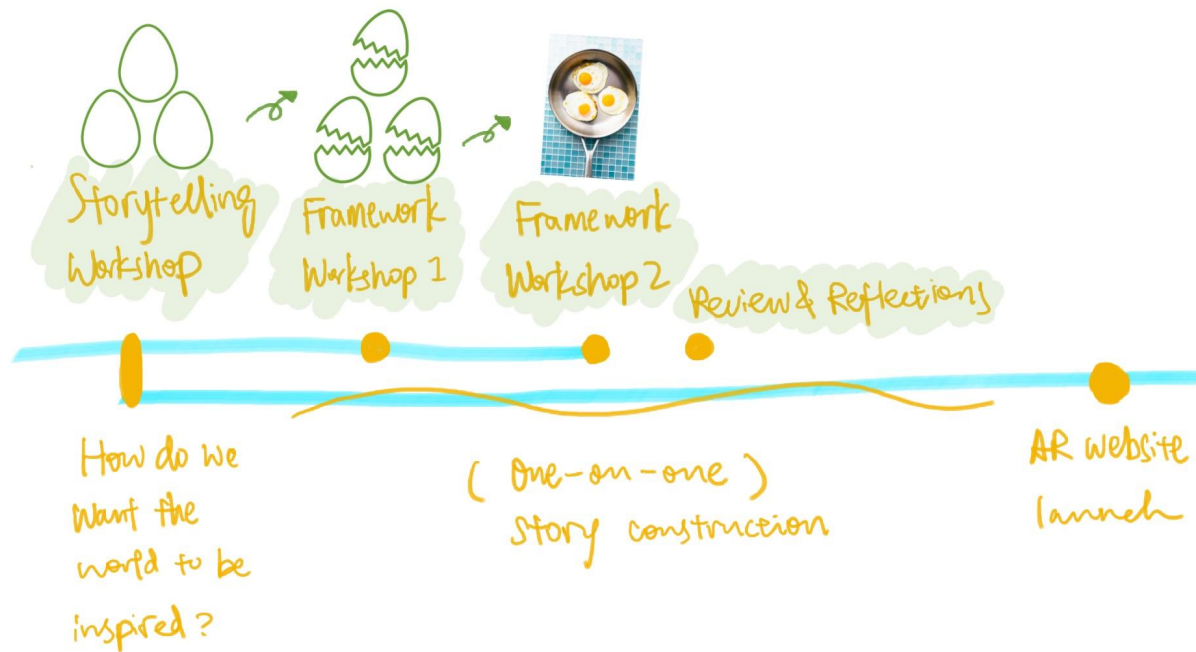
## **Clarity and Flexibility**

It might seem overly obvious, but I believe it's still helpful in pointing out that offering a clear roadmap and sticking to it throughout can establish a sense of certainty and faith in the process. It can also help align expectations and nurture curiosity as well as constructive inputs. In our case, this is especially important, since it was hard to tell at the beginning what the final outcome might look like. We made sure not only within the facilitators' team, but also among all participants, all the steps are clear.

At the same time, the team has also worked flexibly, building one detailed workshop flow after the previous one is finished, allowing immediate reflections to inform adjustments on the go. The facilitator's corner Jamboard where we used the 'ORID' method to debrief virtually proved to be quite effective on top of meetings and Slack conversations. It is with this flexibility that, after a fruitful yet dry third workshop, we made major changes to the fourth workshop to focus more on the framework construction rather than fleshing out more scattered thinking, so the skeleton of the framework was there before the final workshop.

## **Autonomy, Agency and Trust**

Just like any other participatory process, it is fundamental that participants can feel that they are free to exercise their full agency, and that they are trusted with the main tasks. Ani, one of our advisors, asked upfront at the beginning of our first workshop, how horizontal and transparent this process will be. Tenzin immediately assured her that this is an open and flexible process while AWID is committed to supporting it. Then, at the beginning of the second workshop, we offered a quick snapshot of the overall process (see below) and made it clear again that it is the advisors who own this process, not AWID, and whatever that comes out of this will bear the names of all of us.



At the same time, we needed to carefully consider when and how to introduce the existing work done on the topic of AR, as advisors were at varied levels in engaging with this concept, and we wanted to ensure relative autonomy/independence of the space so that people could develop their own thinking and a sense of ownership to some extent before hearing about the pre-existing work. To do that, the team chose to have Tenzin present the findings from her quantitative analysis only before the penultimate workshop. This turned out to be great timing, as the advisors had a good dive into the themes and framework building process and therefore welcomed it with excitement and were able to immediately connect their ideas to it. Another design along this line is setting out time in the third workshop to articulate together *why* we are bothered to have a conceptual framework at all, and *why* we need to share it publicly on the microsite afterwards. The question set off very well in the discussions, and we were able to identify two key objectives that directed us the whole way in

framework building, while keeping in mind the reminders that emerged from there, including the need to not ‘brand’ our work as AWID’s.

A safe, celebratory space is essential for free and active participation, which is always easier said than done. We included all the ‘classic rituals’ - fun and increasingly-intimate check-ins & check-outs, collective ground rules setting, ample time for group discussions, etc., but at the end of the day, I think it was the people who made the magic happen. From the curation of the list of advisors that grew organically from years of work on AR, to the warmth people brought to the space from day one, to the facilitation team’s dedication to openness, everything was indispensable.

### **Verbal, Visual, and Written Communications**

We all take in information and express ourselves in different ways. In a group setting, stating the obvious again here, it is crucial that we ensure communications come in varied ways for everyone to feel comfortable, free, and well-understood. Throughout this workshop series, we have been using email for group coordination, Google Calendar for scheduling, Zoom for meeting and Google Jamboard for visual facilitation. For each workshop, we developed slides/ Jamboard for easy participation. One example is the river image we used to share how the overall picture of AR knowledge co-creation from 2016 looks like. This gave us a clear perspective of how the previous conversations as well as the preliminary analysis done by Tenzin were to feed into the framework building process.





Just like this and the previous board example shows, we have used a lot of metaphors: river for journey, eggs-frying for knowledge creation process from stories to framework, AR experience as creatures, and finally the tree image for framework building. Asking advisors to compare their AR experience to a creature gave us the most beautiful stories with ginger, tingers, starlings, bonobos, bees, etc. Each metaphoric prompt served a different purpose, but the underlying rationale is the same - metaphors instantly engage with participants who would need to actively hold an image in their thoughts and start connecting it with the topics at hand. As mentioned above, we don't need to prepare too much, i.e. there's no need to fill the metaphor completely; people love and need the space to use their own imagination, and the best ideas usually come from the most free minds. Another thing is to not be too fixated on them; as tools, when their function is fulfilled, we can move on. For instance, when the fried egg image (egg yolk as values and principles and egg white as tactics) became insufficient in offering a comprehensive

enough structure for us to build the framework, we moved on from there to start using the tree image.

Meanwhile, challenges brought by the virtual environment like connectivity and shortened attention span have pushed us to keep finding better ways of listening and talking to each other.<sup>3</sup> Our advisors all could speak fluent English and were familiar with zoom as well as using digital devices in general, which gave us greater space to explore methods. That said, language, accessibility, and digital literacy might be something worth bearing in mind in other contexts. Some good practices in our group include:

- Never (ever!) giving up on break time
- Mixing up methods of engagement (e.g. small group discussion, plenary discussion with written inputs, etc.) every session to retain attention
- Accept technical challenges: address them the best we can, and when they persist, give up quickly and express feelings of understanding to not build up anxiety
- Follow up timely between workshops to retain memory and excitement
- Spend lots of time sharpening the guiding questions - they do affect people's level and directions of thinking
  - As a subset of this, use deep-listening questions to ensure attentive interactions between participants

We did explore using Miro as well during workshop three; it worked okay as a 'presenter's whiteboard' at the beginning, where (co-)facilitators could take live notes for everyone to instantly see and identify patterns. But when we needed to use it for the quote and theme matching exercise, the amount of bandwidth it demanded caused connectivity issues for at least two advisors, and most people expressed the need for prior learning to use it effectively. In sum, Google Jamboard is a very good low-bandwidth alternative to Miro in facilitating with visual aids, despite its limited

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<sup>3</sup> [Here](#)'s a simple, accessible and comprehensive resource handbook for facilitating groups online.

functions. I would suggest using Miro only when it's absolutely necessary and technically possible, and always leave out time for training/self-learning beforehand.

Last words on facilitation with visual tools such as Jamboard and Miro board: consider accessibility (internet bandwidth, participants' digital fluency, people's physical eye capacity, etc.) when deciding whether to use them or not. The value they bring are mainly: 1. like physical white boards in a meeting room, it allows everyone to see collective thought processes (including edits) as they happen and actively participate in writing themselves as well; 2. like presentation slides, grab people's attention and highlight ideas that's hard to do verbally. For needs like gathering written inputs from participants, if it's okay to leave things scattered for organisation later, Zoom chat box can be just as useful.

## **Process Review**

### **#1 The Introduction Workshop**

*Objective:* to create space for participants to share expectations, feel safe, build connections, and familiarize themselves with the workshop objectives as well as the broader context. The final vision of creating a Hub of knowledge on autonomous resourcing is shared.

*Summary:* Everybody met as a group for the first time. Tenzin, Gopika, and Yasmin introduced themselves before Tenzin offered a quick overview of the context and objectives of this process.

Nani, Chayanika, Rasha, Roula, Ani, Joey, Catherine then each introduced themselves with a visual or an artifact that represents AR to them. As they were talking, we took screenshots and put them on an upside down map (see below) to show the beautiful diversity and spread we have in this group.

Nani talked about wallets and the things in them as symbols of Autonomous sources of power for poor widows, divorced women, and women-headed families. Money is important but not the only form of resource, as the community-based barter systems show.

Chayanika brought the images of a conference that was collectively organized and funded, and shared a tension she sees in the need for free labour in AR while it's usually those more privileged who can afford to offer labour for free; eventually, an equal exchange should be established.

Ani showed us a record - she DJs and sells records for collective fundraising in music. Artists don't make a lot of money themselves but would use creative ways to fundraise selflessly. At the same time, good networks based on trust are very important for mutual aid. Gradually people are starting to think of fundraising in a more political way.

Rasha shared the fun-raising toolkit she developed for her organisation and introduced their examples like face-painting. For Palestinians, fundraising is political in its independence from conditional foreign aid, given the high dependency rate on aid.

Roula told us about the feminist queer corporativa she had been with for five years and just closed down during COVID. The group had trouble previously with grants from funders that don't speak to the communities' needs and set boundaries on activities, so the cooperative strived to survive on its own with members' salaries and cooperative economic activities, such as selling calendars.

Joey shared the experience of starting Miss Galaxy with us from her daughter's school car park, where she was attending a fundraiser. The Tongan Leitis' Association had no one who could write a proposal in the donor's language, so they decided to start the pageant to raise money.

Catherine showed us a water-based lubricant and shared the story of how the Sex Workers' Collective she co-founded managed to import the lubricant and break KY's monopoly. The group did take funding from the government, but decided to take on this trade so that they could resource their political activities such as lobbying.



After that, advisors went into small breakout rooms to discuss our motivation, how to work together, what they can contribute, and what they expect others to contribute. Main motivations for joining the process come from curiosity, an eagerness to discuss AR and refresh ideas with each other, and the appreciation for the coordination so far. When it comes to ground principles, people noted the importance of staying focused, sharing, learning, and listening to each other with empathy, and being open-minded. To work with these principles together, we agreed to be understanding with camera on/off, transparent, horizontal, mindful of potential conflicts, be present and focused to keep this a safe space.

In the plenary discussion, we touched upon the need for clearer expectations from advisors, the timeliness of such a space given the political context we're in right now (urgent economic recovery, rising mutual aid during the pandemic, etc.), and the



importance of valuing our work not just with the amount of money, but with the connections and impacts we build.

We ended on an exciting note with finalized scheduling for following workshops and a promise to set out a clear roadmap for this series.

Tenzin had a separate meeting with Eka and Victoria to brief them and add their stories to the map.

## #2 The Storytelling Workshop



**Objective:** to create a space for a peer-to-peer sharing and co-learning setting, document the stories, and start conversations on storytelling methods towards the final collation.

*Summary:* We started with a fun check-in asking everyone to share one thing they were most impressed by about someone else in the previous workshop, then shared a visual roadmap of brining eggs (stories) that day, cracking them open (coding) in the following workshop, and frying them (building the framework) in the one afterwards. In parallel to this is a timeline for story sharing - every advisor is encouraged to share their AR experience through creative forms to be published on the microsite in 2022.

In the spirit of centuries of women telling and holding each other's stories, we started the storytelling process with a few deep-listening questions for people to keep in mind, covering information, feelings, similarities, differences, and surprises.

For Nani, AR is like bees because they work efficiently and collectively in an ecosystem that sustains lives while having independent and full control of resources. To become independent in terms of resources is an essential first step in her organisation's work in supporting poor women-headed families. The self-help groups they started built cooperatives that collated members' resources and based a community financial institution on those.

Rasha compared AR to cactus for its prickly nature and its presence since ancient times. For her, AR is an indigenous practice that exists in the nature of Palestinian agrarian society and communities. It's also political in its determination to break away from aid dependency. Much like cactus that can make use of small amounts of water, AR practices generate and use resources creatively to sustain movements. She made lots of efforts in convincing communities that they can actually mobilize local resources, which is very empowering, although hard at the beginning.

Ani shared how bonobos, our closest living ancestors, stockpile resources together and create community support networks for child care, food, sex affection, etc. The projects and communities she has been part of all started out of survival needs, but gradually started thinking about the values and politics of AR. Connecting networks of various

scales was very important and helpful during the pandemic. She is also particularly concerned about the transparency and accountability of mutual aid groups.

Joey referred to activists who practice AR as tigers - restless until we achieve what we set out to do, and always use all means possible to find a way. The talents from the community in costume making and make-up were able to shine through the pageant, and this event in turn became a platform for them to advocate for their rights, against discrimination, etc. Now the other pageants are all hiring girls from their community to teach, which really shows a change in mindset.

Chayanika was deciding between earthworms that 'prepare the soil' for movements and ginger that has no beginning and no end, connecting multitudes. She found similarities in others' sharings how nature survives and thrives through plenitude and cooperation, not scarcity and competition. In the 80s, to be autonomous meant to be free of state, of money, and of party locations and positions. Now she sees AR practice among organisations across movements in sharing resources such as space and knowledge.

Catherine thought about the starlings who were building a nest under her Jeep, and continued rebuilding it in the same place even if she put the nest in a woodpile. She saw much determination to overcome any obstacles in them, similar to AR activists. Her collective was always determined to keep their freedom to speak politically even after taking government funding; they managed to do it through importing a water-based lubricant that was cheaper and better than the KY gel and made enough money to buy a building for safe space for the community members. They also supported the community with communication costs throughout the COVID lockdown time when their livelihood was affected.

We then went into breakout rooms to discuss the similarities and differences in our stories, all noted down in the Jamboard.

- Similarities:



- Ecosystem
- Sharing
- Cooperation
- Independency
- Collective
- Struggling with donors
- Determination
- Connection
- Being the weirdos/Remaining prickly
- Be a critical voice x 3 (that mobilizes the movement)
- Defying the power: Beat them at their game
- Adaptability
- Differences:
  - Political values and consciousness
  - Methodology
  - Scale between local and transnational
  - Different models of autonomous resources

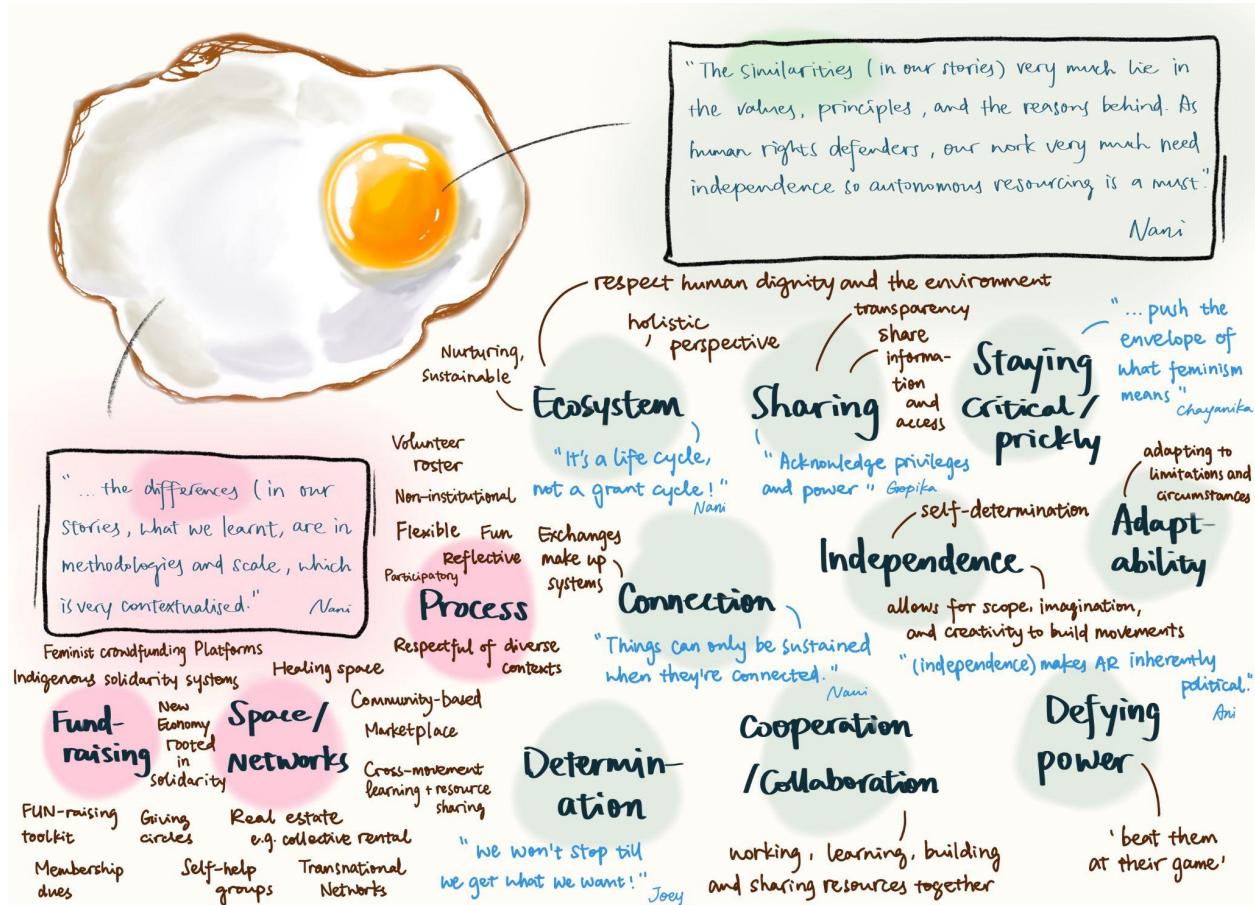
Gopika shared how the storytelling journey looks like and what support the advisors can expect to have, such as storytelling experts and illustrators.

During closing, each person shared one highlight from the workshop. Nani noted here how our similarities lied mostly in values and principles, while differences lied mostly in methods and scale.

Victoria gave her inputs through email: she thought AR is like ants given how hard they work and the level of good organisation. It is with strong value in autonomy that Argentina's feminist movement mobilized to help each other. "It is important for us to feel that we can afford anything we want if we organize towards it."

Eka and Victoria had a separate session with Tenzin and Yasmin to share their stories.

### #3 The Coding Workshop



**Objective:** to connect stories and the framework conceptualisation process by collectively going through a step-by-step gamified process of thematic coding.

**Summary:** Before the workshop, Yasmin scanned through all transcripts of the previous two workshops and took out quotes that stood out as resonating with one of the themes identified. She also took Tenzin’s analysis paper and added a few themes to the exercise for discussion.

We started with everyone sharing one resource they'd like to bring into the space for the workshop to happen - defining resources in our own ways. Some of us brought restful energy, some curiosity, others the scent of flowers.

We firstly took a step back to set intentions, asking ourselves why an AR framework would be useful and how the online platform could look like. People noted how a framework can help us explain to others what AR really is about, and how the platform can help us collate fresh ideas in AR practice. Meanwhile, it was agreed that the platform should use accessible language and not feel like it's 'branded' by AWID. A discussion around the name 'autonomous resourcing' happened and we came to a majority agreeing that it is an accurate and political name that's suitable for the community of practice.

Based on these understandings, we started the egg-cracking (coding) work first of all in the yolk: defining key themes in plenary one by one. After the plenary discussion where engagement was harder than usual, we took a break before coming back for the coding exercise. For the coding exercise we got into three pairs, Tenzin, Gopika and Yasmin each supporting one group with matching quotes with the themes on Miro. This saw us having many connectivity issues and confusions around instructions with limited time to wrap up properly. After coming back to plenary, we agreed to change this exercise to Word although people would love to learn about Miro if we had the time to, and the additional themes were then used as bonus parts.

## #4 The Framework-building Workshop



*Objective:* to build on the themes identified in the previous workshop and arrange them into a structured conceptual framework.

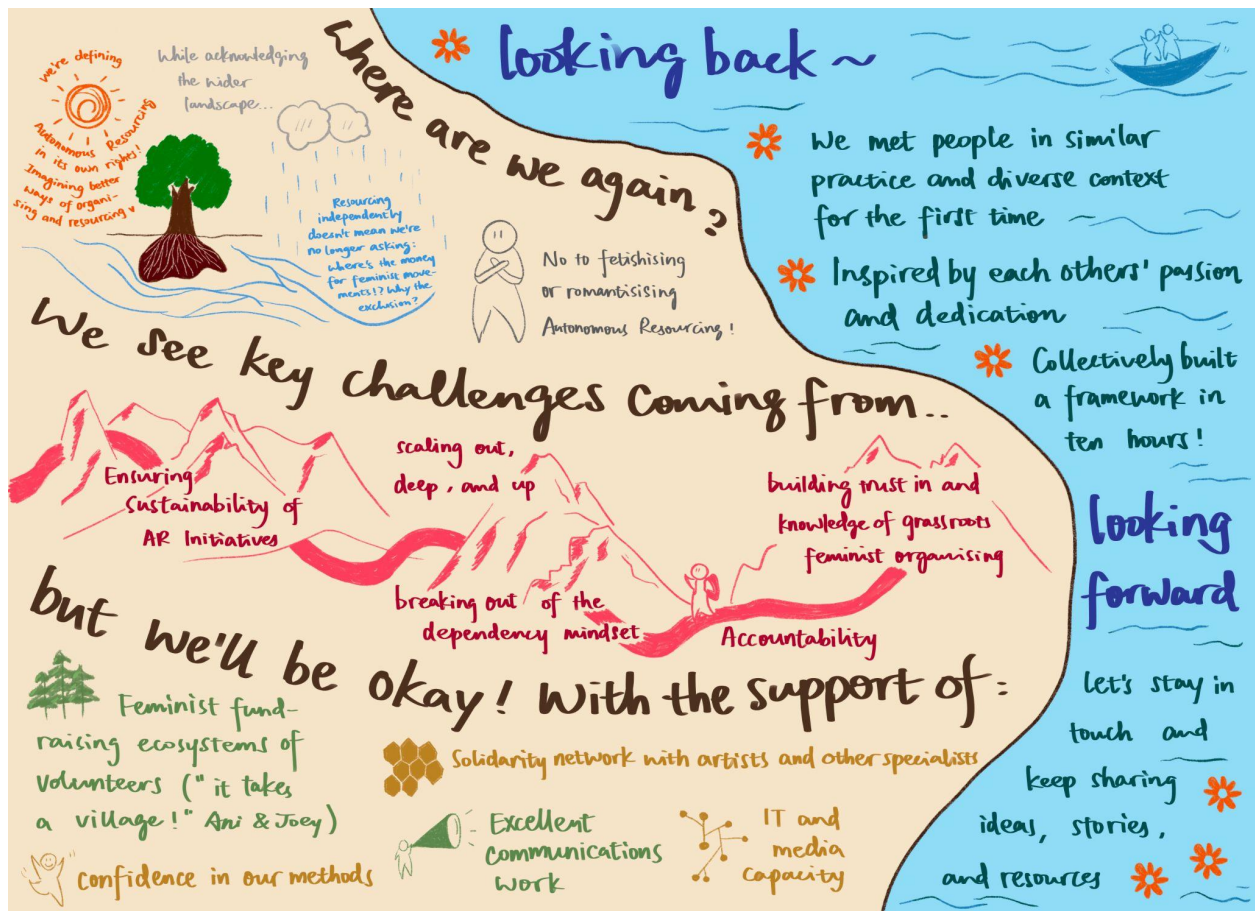
*Summary:* Tenzin shared a 20-minute video with all participants talking about the preliminary analysis on the AR-related conversations beforehand. We started the

workshop with a quick breathing exercise, an overview of the bigger journey on AR all the way from 2016, and a positioning of both preliminary analysis from Tenzin and the workshop series in this journey. We then went around the circle to share what each advisor picked up from the video. One of the highlights in the conversation was how ‘radical joy’ as a theme in autonomous resourcing resonated strongly with many of us.

We then offered the space for all of us to define what should be included in a conceptual framework, listing down questions that can help us go towards such a framework individually, then putting them in different parts of a tree image, corresponding to various parts: the root, the branches, the leaves, and the fruits. Coming back to plenary, the discussion around the ‘what is AR’ question helped us see two aspects of it: looking inwards, it related more to the values and politics we hold; looking outwards, it related more to the manifestations of our practices people usually would ask about. This clarification led to a clear image of how we want to frame the tree: ‘why’ questions in the roots, ‘how’ questions in the branches, and more specific ‘when/what/who/how’ questions in the crown/ leaves.

With that structure in mind, we offered back to everyone all the images and definitions of codes we have accumulated thus far, and asked advisors to go into the roots group and the branches group to attempt answering those questions with what we already have. These then served as the basis of our framework draft.

## #5 The Review Workshop



**Objective:** to collectively finalise the definition of autonomous resourcing within a structured conceptual framework and assessing our achievements and shortfalls in the process.

**Summary:** For the last two hours we had together, we started with sharing fond memories in the movements where we shared wisdom, generosity and humor. We then quickly went into completing the last bits of the tree image, starting with leaves representing tactics. Advisors gave inputs through the zoom chat box and the plenary roughly categorized them together into spaces, networks, fundraising, and processes. We also agreed to improve on this categorization afterwards before phrasing them into the framework draft. On stories, we reminded advisors to keep in mind the parallel storytelling journey where they are encouraged to think of creative formats and



perspectives they'd like to use. Whoever was ready to 'tease' their stories did so via the zoom chat box too.

After the tree image completion, we gave some space for everyone to think about the bigger ecosystem surrounding 'the tree' (AR), basically the resourcing of feminist movements overall, not romanticizing AR by recognizing privileges in access, and holding ourselves accountable. With four guiding questions on the Jamboard, advisors identified key challenges to AR as sustainability; scaling deep, out, and up; authoritarian governments and market-led culture; accountability and difficulties in quantification of our work, etc. Advisors have been trying to deal with these challenges by planning and communication clearly, and collaborating with allies actively. To enable more AR practices, the whole feminist resourcing ecosystem needs to recognize the existence and power of AR, and people can join the movements offering their power and talents in all aspects including technology, media, communications, art, etc., and the organising groups can commit to being held accountable.

A notable conversation here revolved around whether we should define AR in itself or in a relational way, addressing the donor-driven funding systems which have been inaccessible and limiting politically for activists. This point was later raised again by Eka in her review of the framework draft, and the team is in the process of rewriting the draft to reflect these inputs, framing AR as more traditional, indigenous, and independent practices.

Yasmin then quickly shared the journey ahead with everyone, mentioning the workshop feedback survey, the framework draft review, and the storytelling timeline, which will be coordinated by Tenzin.

Before checking out, advisors took some time to answer a few review questions. Overall people were satisfied with what we have achieved with only 10 hours together, and said

that the discussions broadened and deepened their understanding of AR, after meeting so many like-minded yet diverse peers from around the globe.

The final workshop ended on a happy and sad note, knowing this is the last time we were to see each other in a while. Everyone expressed strong appreciation for each other, and shared one resource they'd like to share to the group for sustaining our practices.

## **Reflections**

### **Overall Assessment**

Based on in-workshop review discussions as well as feedback survey responses, this has been a successful process through which we have not only produced valuable knowledge collectively, but also built connections and solidarity with a strong feeling of ownership. This was made possible by making the hours of the workshop friendly with most participants, while missing deeper engagements with two Advisors from the western hemisphere (Eka and Victoria). At the same time, facilitators, especially Tenzin and Dani, were flexible with doing late night hours etc and working as a tag team to cover hours for each other. As Dani reflected, whoever started with us in the workshop stayed all the way to the end, which shows clearly how much they value and enjoy the discussions here, which tends to be rather rare in virtual environments.

Out of 10 advisors, 6 participated in the feedback survey. 5 of them rated the workshops as 'Excellent', and 1 'Very good'. What people liked the most about the process is the warm connection with each other, followed by the space to share stories and reflect on them collectively with a participatory facilitation. All of the 6 advisors who responded to the survey chose 'new connections with movements' and 'solidarity' as something they took away with them after the workshops. In fact, Jibari, one of the advisors, proposed and coordinated in December to set up a WhatsApp group for more casual conversations on AR, and 7 advisors have joined. Such self-initiated group



communication really shows the ownership of the space and eagerness to communicate with each other. One of the advisors wrote, *“This was one of the best workshops I was part of. As I mentioned, it felt as though I have known the other participants for a while now. It was interactive, and creative.”*

People also appreciated the workshop methodologies a lot. One of the advisors wrote in the survey, *“Slow pace that allowed me to mull over my practice and turn it into knowledge that could be verbalized, analyzed and discussed with others!”* At the end of the final workshop, there was also demand for the methodology/ design to be shared.

We also took note of things that can be improved in similar processes in the future:

- Giving time beforehand to allow participants to prepare themselves technically, e.g. having a laptop at hand, watching tutorial videos for basic navigation in Miro/Jamboard (or do a dedicated briefing/ training) if it’s to be used in an upcoming workshop
- Despite the timezone challenges, have at least a few workshops where everyone could be together, or try more creative ways such as convening regionally first and then consolidate inputs together globally, so that participants feel more connected and everyone can attend in not-so-odd hours
- Integrate storytelling into the workshop designs to give space to more sharing

## **Looking Into the Future**

As one advisor wrote during the in-workshop review, *“I think what I was most interested in was the network aspect, and I hope that we can organically grow this into a grassroots network ! I think the potential/interest is there. I would love for there to be something like a Feminist Mutual Aid group.”* They were speaking for many in the group. How do we see this happening? Aside from the active WhatsApp group, some proposed having regular meet-ups online (e.g. every 4 months) in the future, while others expressed the desire to meet in person one day. Before the microsite launch, there will also be another round of

reviews from advisors, which can be arranged via email or Zoom. I myself will stay active in the group and look forward to the microsite launch. Building a close-knit community of practice with the momentum created here would be exciting and I wish everyone engaged all the best with this journey.