

Abundantly Investing in Girls, Femmes, and Gender Expansive Youth of Color

December 5th and 7th Workshop Summary

The Abundantly Investing in Girls, Femmes, and Gender Expansive Youth of Color Future Economy Lab hosted a two-part workshop on December 5th and December 7th, 2022 where 29 participants representing youth, financial investors, philanthropists, banks, academics, civic leaders, and nonprofits discussed how to abundantly invest in girls, femmes, and gender expansive youth of Color, ages 13 to 24. We explored two topics:

- (1) The collective futures vision created by the youth fellows and visionaries/advisors in the lab
- (2) The 18 most catalytic factors that have the highest probability of transforming our current system(s) towards the futures vision, as defined by hundreds of girls, femmes, and gender expansive youth of Color

Please find a summary of key takeaways from the workshops on the next two pages!

What's next?

Over the next few months, we will begin a collaborative design process aimed at developing a financial mechanism that increases investments into girls, femmes, and gender expansive youth of Color and their communities by at least \$100 million. While 'aim' implies a direct, straight path, one of our participants described the upcoming journey with a beautiful allusion to an **arrow**...while we have somewhere to aim, the path is actually an arc! This design journey should be a bridge of experience filled with spaciousness and access to different perspectives - and we invite you to build this bridge with us.

You may feel discomfort and mistrust with financial instruments/investments, but that discomfort is what is necessary in this process. Your lived experience, whatever that may look like, can create something truly effective for our communities. Together, let's invest our time and energy in strategic disruption!

Continuing your engagement

There are multiple ways to stay involved!

Please email Jessica (jessica.wu@secondmuse.com) and/or Maheen (maheen@grantmakersforgirlsofcolor.org) if you have the capacity to be involved in co-designing this financial mechanism with us! Responsibilities would be a mix of 1:1 conversations and attendance at small group working sessions over the next few months. Please also reach out if you don't have the capacity for this specific work but want to stay involved in your own way - we'd love to discuss what that could look like.

Overview of Discussions

Collective Futures Vision

An **abundant future** is where we are **consistently thriving** in a **tranquil world**, surrounded by a **sustainable society** built on **communal love reimagined**, that is **inclusive** of all of us and our cultures.

One participant opened the conversation with the sentiment that the vision felt “beautiful and big”, with a holisticness that felt like everyone was “at the table, given space all the time”. Others shared that the intentionality of the words chosen gave them pause, especially three words/phrases that were brought up several times by different people: *tranquil*, *communal love reimagined*, and *consistently thriving* (the latter which someone mentioned is often missing from vision statements). When digging deeper into some of these concepts, a question was raised around how to get to communal love respectful of different cultures when some cultures are built upon segregation and separation. Also, how can we get to a sustainable society and what does that mean? One final sentiment shared was that the vision felt serious and thoughtful, and one participant expressed sadness that joy wasn't specifically included. However, another participant responded saying that possibly “joy is the metric” - if our world looked like the vision stated, then joy would be the outcome! Overall, participants expressed their excitement for a world in which this collective vision is realized.

18 Catalytic Factors

The conversation here was so rich and engaging that we discussed it over both workshop days! Participants shared a mix of general thoughts and names of specific individuals and organizations doing work in some of these spaces. These factors *can be direct outcomes but also included in approaches/strategies*.

3 Abundantly Investing in Girls, Femmes, and Gender Expansive Youth of Color Summary of Findings







Some of the biggest themes that came up included:

- Investing in strategic disruption to shift or remove the systemic barriers in place
- Redefining traditional finance terms like ‘returns’ and ‘value’
- Investing in daily operations of organizations that serve girls, femmes, and gender expansive youth of Color (one time investments fail to address the changing needs of girls, femmes, and gender expansive youth of Color as they grow older. Thus instead, investing in organizations that can mature with the community ensures consistent, not project-specific investment)
- Investing in infrastructure as employers, like stipends for technology and wellness
- Investing in cultural shifts, IP and legal infrastructures, and economic repair
- Investing in culturally responsive healing, mental health services, and spaces of healing

Looking Ahead

As we work together in designing this financial mechanism, participants raised critical questions and considerations which will be important to explore, such as:

How might we...

 <p>Pull away from existing structures in a way that is healing and transformational?</p>	 <p>Address anti-blackness?</p>	 <p>Address power dynamics?</p>	 <p>Address the warranted mistrust youth of Color may have towards traditional financial providers?</p>	 <p>Address the systematically racist distrust capital providers have towards community leaders?</p>	 <p>Encourage narrative shift towards the norm being an abundance of options for our youth rather than viewing abundance as a luxury?</p>
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Some specific ideas or strategies participants raised included:

Different debt instruments that value character over collateral in repayment terms and don't leave communities in debt

Shifting seed investments towards organizations that serve this community to address the hierarchy of innovation in venture capital funding; it's not just the merit of your work but also awareness and who you know (networks). A lack of visibility and access is misunderstood by venture capital companies as an absence of pipeline

New valuation metrics & evaluation tools because current success metrics are entrenched in colonialism & capitalism, and many people of Color work in informal economies which aren't always seen as translatable to business acumen for traditional investments

Increase organizational ownership over land and property because owning spaces puts more control in the hands of leaders already abundantly investing in girls, femmes, and gender expansive youth of Color