



Imagining Ourselves Global Gathering Guide:
March, 2006: Love

This gathering guide is intended to give you a set of tools, activities, and questions to engage your guests in intimate group conversations on the monthly themes that are highlighted in the *Imagining Ourselves* online exhibit and book. Come join the conversation whether you're with work folks, family or friends. Remember that your attitude and preparation set the tone. Plan for a good time!

Background:

About *Imagining Ourselves: A New Generation of Women:*

Imagining Ourselves is a platform for young women to create positive change in their lives, communities and the world. The project reaches out to a generation of women – the one billion women between the ages of 20 and 40 asking them to answer the question, “What defines your generation?” Launching on International Women’s Day, March 8, 2006, the *Imagining Ourselves* project will include:

- * A published anthology featuring the photography, painting, collage, poetry and essays from women all over the world with an introduction by world-renowned author, Isabel Allende.
- * An online exhibition, with multilingual, interactive options; and online educational curricula targeted for high schools and universities.
- * Global gatherings around the world including launch, community, and on-the-ground events featuring prominent women participants.

About the International Museum of Women: The mission of the International Museum of Women is to value the lives of women around the world. With the aim of helping to change values, attitudes and practices adverse to women’s well-being, the Museum illuminates women’s history, amplifies the voices and contributions of women, promotes awareness of women’s issues globally, and inspires action through history, art and cultural exchange.

Goals for Global Gatherings:

- ✍ To begin a global dialogue on experiences affecting women in their twenties and thirties.
- ✍ To share and articulate your beliefs and attitudes with others around the globe, and learn what other women of the same age are thinking.
- ✍ To learn from the wisdom of others who have come before and will follow after.
- ✍ To be motivated to take action to address the challenges of women and girls.
- ✍ To ... (additions from host are welcomed)

Register: Join the online community www.imow.org to post your gathering in our list of *Imagining Ourselves* events, read about other gatherings, and communicate with your

peers around the world. (To register your gathering with us before March 8, 2006, please email Laura Kuo at lkuo@imow.org).

Logistics: Guests want to be comfortable, chairs/tables, cushions, food, beverages, potluck? These questions should be decided early. Also let your guests know how long the event will run. If you're taking pictures, let them know, and make sure they feel comfortable. Pictures are a great way to let other young women see what your group was doing.

Image or Prose selected from IO site www.imow.org Please respect our artists by including their name, country, and title of piece when sharing their work.

Facilitation Tips and Exercises: Love

Facilitator Reminder:

The activities below are intended to serve as a guide. As facilitator, you are encouraged to adjust or mold the activities to accommodate the interests of the group. Each Global Gathering Guide will provide you with two different activities and optional icebreakers. You may choose between topics, use both, or create your own. Reference material and additional information is also provided for further insight into the topics. The main idea is that people gather together to discuss the issues/topics highlighted in each month of the *Imagining Ourselves* online exhibit and the corresponding chapters of the *Imagining Ourselves* book. We also encourage you to document the gathering. Please take notes and pictures during the event and share your experience online with the *Imagining Ourselves* community.

Materials:

- ? Computer with an Internet Connection (if possible), to display images and work
- ? Paper
- ? Pens/Pencils
- ? Art supplies (art materials can be selected at Facilitator's discretion)
 - o colored paper
 - o paint
 - o markers
 - o scissors
 - o glue
 - o magazines
- ? Comfortable location/space to conduct workshop
- ? Camera, if possible (Take photos to report back and share with other young women around the world)
- ? Copies of pieces/works by IO contributors for participants
- ? Artist's biography and country information for participants

Be Inspired:

(5 Minutes)

Introduce the *International Museum of Women, Imagining Ourselves* and yourself as facilitator of the workshop. Please reference the Background Information for a description of the museum and the *Imagining Ourselves* exhibit.

Inform the group of the purpose of the gathering and the agenda.

Following the basic introductions, allow participants to introduce themselves to the group so they feel comfortable engaging in an intimate conversation with each other.

Facilitators may use icebreakers to get people involved and energized about the gathering.

Optional Icebreaker/Introduction Activities:

- 1) Using art supplies (whatever materials you have available) instruct participants to create a piece of art that best represents them. This should be a quick activity. Allocate about 10 minutes for participants to complete their artwork. After completion, each person introduces themselves and explains how their work represents them.

- 2) As each participant introduces themselves to the group, ask them to share why they decided to come to the gathering and three words that describe the person they are “inside”.

Activity 1: Relationships in a Changing World

Love is an experience which transcends generations and cultures. Despite the universal nature of love, advancements in education and economic independence have swayed the global trend toward later marriage for women. According to the UN State of World Population study in 2004, the global trend toward later marriage shows that the average age of first marriage among women rose from 21.4 in 1970 to 25.5 in 2000. Of course, this phenomenon has allowed for positive and negative consequences for women in their personal and professional lives. The goal of this activity is to gain international perspective regarding women's views on love and relationships, while encouraging participants to share their experiences and ideas about love.

Use the piece "*Wahad Areese, Please!*" (*A Husband, Please!*) to focus the discussion, more specifically, on relationships. Display the image for participants to view and ask the following questions about the piece:

What is surprising or interesting about this image?

What questions would you ask the artist?

What does this image suggest about the artist's views on love and relationships?

After this discussion, share the artist's biography and background information about the piece. Also share the Topic Facts provided below with the group; these facts might spark interesting conversation. Then bring the discussion back to the participants' personal experience by asking the following questions.

What role does love play in your life?

What types of relationships, such as marriage or friendship, are important to our generation of women?

How have these relationships changed for our generation as opposed to the past generations?

What outside pressures, for example pressures from family or society, have hindered or enriched your relationships with others?

Topic Facts:

- 1) Around the world, there is a trend toward later marriage. The average age of first marriage among women rose from 21.4 in 1970 to 25.5 in 2000. (UNFPA- State of the World Population, 2004).
- 2) 82 million girls in developing countries who are now between ages 10 and 17 will be married before their 18th birthday (UNFPA- State of the World Population, 2004).
- 3) The high fertility rate for women under the age of 20 years is decreasing rapidly in most regions of the world. This trend is reducing health risks and offering better opportunities for young women. Over 90 per cent of youth under the age of 20 are unmarried. However, in Sub-Saharan Africa and South-central Asia, more than 20 per cent of women under the age of 20 years are married (*United Nations Report on Global Situation of Youth Shows Changing Trends*, 1999).

Artist/Piece Information:

About the Artist: Zena el-Khalil (Lebanon/United Kingdom): *“Wahad Areese, Please!” (A Husband, Please!)*

Zena el-Khalil was born in England in 1976 and grew up in Nigeria, where she read a lot, participated in karate competitions and listened to Iron Maiden. Later, she moved to Lebanon and attended the American University of Beirut. She obtained her master of fine arts in 2002 from the School of Visual Arts in New York, but after realizing that everything she ever wanted in life was in Beirut, she moved back there. She presently lives in Beirut with her husband, Wael, a Greenpeace Rainbow Warrior, and her Jack Russell terrier, Tampopo. In 2003, as an exploration of the complexities of marriage in Lebanon, Zena did a performance piece during the First International Beirut Marathon. For the piece, she wore a wedding dress she had spray-painted shocking pink and interviewed runners about issues related to marriage.



Zena el-Khalil, *“Wahad Areese, Please!”*

Activity 2: Violence and Relationships

Violence affects the lives of millions of women all over the world; it is an experience that transcends all socioeconomic and cultural boundaries. Domestic/intimate partner violence continues to be a serious issue, particularly for women, but is not exclusive to the female experience. This exercise intends to facilitate dialogue about gender stereotypes and women's experience with relationships and violence.

As the facilitator of this fragile and sensitive topic, start the activity on a positive and interactive note with a collage. Encourage participants to create a collage that defines intimate partner/domestic violence. Once participants finish creating their collages, allow each person present their work. Ask each person to create a collage that answers the question, *How do you define violence?*

Use the piece *In All My Dreams*, by *Imagining Ourselves Anthology* contributor, Rovena Agolli's (Albania), to provoke conversation about the topic. You are encouraged, as the facilitator of the gathering, to download additional images from IO virtual exhibit regarding the topic. Generally, people are more responsive and engaged when in a conversation when they are able look at the art. Be sure to provide participants with copies of the images and artist information. Agolli's image is included below. Additional reference information is provided below under Topic Facts.

Use the selected piece, *In All My Dreams*, to spark the dialogue. Ask the following questions:

How is violence represented in the art?

How is violence used in romantic, familial, platonic relationships?

Is violence only physical?

Is violence only used against women? In what ways do women participate in violence?

Why is or isn't it a fair assumption that women are less violent than men?

Topic Facts:

- 1) The Council of Europe has stated that domestic violence is the major cause of death and disability for women aged 16 to 44 and accounts for more death and ill-health than cancer and traffic accidents (Amnesty International).
- 2) 700,000-2,000,000 people, mostly women and children are trafficked across international borders for forced labor and sex. Most are from Asia, but also come from the former Soviet Union- 100,000 and Africa- 50,000. Trafficking features as the third-largest income for organized crime (more than 10 billion dollars per year), which tends to arise out of ethnic conflicts and war, or impoverished families who are forced to sell their children for income (Program for Appropriate Technology in Health- "Violence Against Women," 2002).



Rovena Agolli, *In All My Dreams*

Art/Piece Information:

Rovena Agolli is an Albanian artist living in Monterey, California.

In All My Dreams: Artist's Description of Piece

Violence, especially towards women, is still a problem in many families in southeastern Europe, and particularly in my own country, Albania. The inability of women to erase the system of violence and their silent acceptance of a horrible compromise, create the façade of a happy marriage.

Activity 3: Alternative Thematic Questions for Love and Relationships

Discussions

- 1) How has advanced technology, such as the internet, changed the dynamics of relationships for our generation?
- 2) How does our generation of women view the trend towards fewer children? How has the institution of marriage and family been threatened; has this change been positive or negative?
- 3) Marriage for love or arranged marriage? What pressures exist from family or society to marry?

Wrap Up:

- ✍ Have your group share what they learned, and what may have surprised them about the conversation.
- ✍ Identify Next Steps: Based on what you learned or observed in the discussion, what might your group do to contribute to positive change in your own lives, in your community, or on a global level?
- ✍ Share resources: Encourage your guests to get involved with community organizations to guide/support other women, especially on themes related to the topic of Love and Relationships. Below are a few suggestions, but feel free to provide your own local examples.

Resources and Love and Relationships:

Report Back:

IMPORTANT—Please take the time to log on to the *Imagining Ourselves* online exhibit, and create a short report about your gathering on our events pages. It only takes a few minutes, and it's important to share your thoughts with other young women around the world who are eager to learn from you! (This is separate—and possibly more important—than the evaluation form that follows, which is simply helpful feedback for us to improve our future gatherings.)



Evaluation of Global Gathering:

(Handing this form to your guests for additional feedback will help us improve our future gatherings. Responses can be mailed to: Gatherings, c/o International Museum of Women, PO Box 190038, San Francisco, Ca 94119, USA)

Date of Gathering: _____

Location of Gathering: _____

Number of People at Gathering: _____

Please briefly answer the following questions:

- 1) Did you learn anything new from the discussion, and if so, what? Was there anything surprising that came up in the conversation?

- 2) Do you leave the discussion (or participation in the Imagining Ourselves project in general) with any new ideas that could be applied to your own life or to your community?

- 3) What suggestions or constructive criticism would you have for the organizers of the gathering, or for the organizers of the Imagining Ourselves project?