



Imagining Ourselves Global Gathering Guide:
April, 2006: Money

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: Money and Economic Empowerment Young Women in Today's Economy

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
- ? 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) As each participant introduces themselves to the group, ask them to share why they decided to come to the gathering and 2 words to describe what a powerful woman is.
- 2) Instruct each participant to find a partner and ask each other the following questions:
 - a. What is your name?
 - b. Why did you choose to attend the gathering?
 - c. What does it mean to be empowered?

Each participant must then share what they learned about their partner to the group.

Activity 1: Status and Class: Who is she?

When discussing women's economic participation, the issue of socioeconomic class and status is an inescapable component of the conversation. This activity intentionally provokes dialogue among the group to discuss the complexities and issues related to class and status.

From the affluent streets of London to the congested slums of San Paulo, poverty and class affects us all. This phenomenon transcends cultures and political boundaries in such a way that even within a single city people experience very different socioeconomic realities. This issue is poignantly addressed by *Imagining Ourselves* contributor, Hala El Koussy.

Use Koussy's piece *Two Women from Egypt*, which is provided below, to facilitate a conversation about this topic. You are also encouraged to reference the online exhibit for additional material. Share background information about the artist and country with the group and ask the following questions to start the discussion:

What do the images have in common?

What are some differences between these two women?

How is class and status represented in these images?

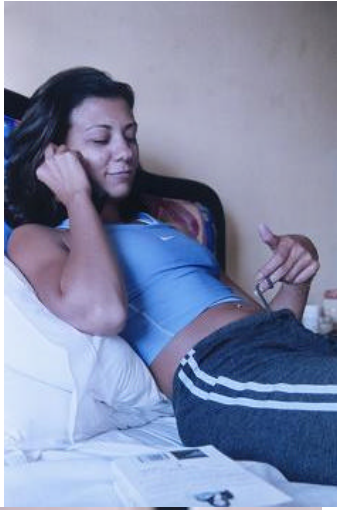
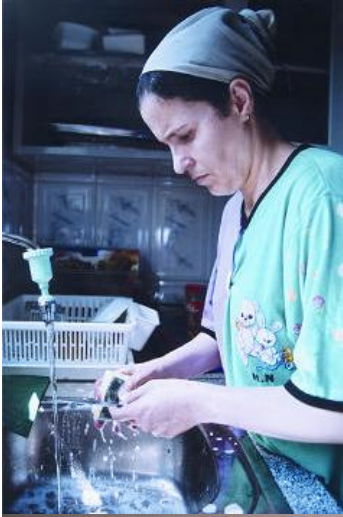
How does class unify and/or divide women?

Topic Facts:

- 1) Today, women represent over 40% of the global labor force. Approximately 70% of women in developed countries and 60% in developing countries are engaged in paid employment (International Labor Organization, "Fact Sheet"). Many millions of women dwell in the so-called informal economy of the developing world: agricultural workers, those who work at home, domestic employees, the self-employed, unpaid family workers and workers in unregistered enterprises. In India, for example, 93% of all workers are in the informal economy; other examples are 62% in Mexico and 34% in South Africa (International Labor Organization, "Fact Sheet").

Artist/Piece Information: Hala El Koussy (Egypt)

Born in 1974 and educated in Cairo, Hala El Koussy has worked as a commercial photographer and a part-time photography teacher at the American University in Cairo since 1998. Since 2000 she has developed and exhibited her own projects, often on the subjects of (mis)communication and the politics of food. Her work has been exhibited in Cairo, Italy and the United Kingdom.



Hala el Koussy, Selected Photos from Series *Magda and Nevine: Two Women from Egypt*

Madga and Nevine: Two Women from Egypt

Nevine leaves her family's home at eight-thirty every morning to go to her office at a major Cairo construction site. Magda comes to work at Nevine's house at about ten o'clock A.M. She finishes work and leaves the house at about four-thirty P.M. Nevine goes home at five o'clock. The two women move within the confines of the same domestic space at different times of the day, hardly ever crossing paths.

For Nevine, her home is a place to unwind after long, stressful days at work in a male dominated environment. For Magda, working as a maid (a profession stigmatized by society) in Nevine's home is just a means to support her large family of six. Their paths are divergent. Being women they have a lot in common, but they share more with women from their own economic backgrounds across the East/West divide than they do with each other.

The photographs here are of the everyday, the mundane, the not so memorable moments. With an almost boring quality about them, these images of domestic routine try to break notions of exoticism and the difference of the other.

Activity 2: Work and Family

The role of an urban woman is evolving. In the past, women generally worked taking care of the household. With increased education and variety in career choices many women find themselves caught between taking their new opportunities and fulfilling societal obligations. For many women around the world, they struggle to define their role as a woman. What is a woman's work and what are her duties?

Use the work by Indian artist, Heeral Trivedi, to spark the conversation. Her work specifically addresses the role of the urban woman. Provide participants with copies of her paintings, along with copies of the Artist/Piece information provided below. Ask the following questions to facilitate the dialogue:

How is the woman depicted in the paintings?

How is the artist's experience similar or different from your personal experience or the experience of women and girls in your country?

What does the artist mean by "culture police"? Who/what are they, and will they exist for your children?

How is the modern/urban woman gaining economic power and independence?

What steps can we take to mobilize women to be economically active in their communities?

Topic Facts:

- 1) Worldwide, women earn on average slightly more than 50 per cent of the income earned by men (Gender Equality, Development and Peace for the Twenty-first Century 2000, www.un.org/womenwatch).
- 2) The microcredit and microfinance movement is the new wave in economic development. Microcredit programs extend small loans, and other financial services such as savings, to very poor people for self-employment projects that generate income, allowing them to care for themselves and their families (www.microcreditsummit.org).
- 3) More women work today than ever before. In 2003, 1.1 billion of the world's 2.8 billion workers, or 40 per cent, were women, representing a worldwide increase of nearly 200 million women in employment in the past 10 years. However, women still face higher unemployment rates, receive lower wages than men and represent 60 per cent of the world's 550 world's poor (*Global Employment Trends for Women 2004*- International Labor Organization).

Artist's Description of Piece:

Heeral Trivedi: *Domestic Weave* reflects the multiple roles of a young woman in an urban household. Woven around the central figure are women in different situations. While one is performing the dutiful chores of the kitchen surrounded by the earthen pickle jars, the other is at work being an independent breadwinner.

My generation of women, who live in the cities as I do, often find themselves under surveillance from the culture police. Although women in urban households are offered higher education, they are not always offered their choice of the future thereafter. It is still difficult to challenge the social norms in terms of religion, work, marriage and childbearing. My works talk about these choices and the need to recognize them as every woman's right. The need to realize that education is not just the means to a better living standard but also for accepting the flaws in the social structure on the basis of gender.



DOMESTIC WEAVE (2003) '24X24'

Many women of my generation today recognize the choices they have in matters of marriage and childbearing and they dare to acknowledge these choices in spite of social and religious pressures. Very few members of my mother's and grandmother's generation were offered these choices, and very few who were educated.



WRITTEN ON THE FOREHEAD (2000) '54 x 36'

I believe that women in my generation are privileged to have the chance to pursue education, career and choose our own social status. This gives them the strength to challenge injustice or inequality on the basis of gender. However, modernization and global commercialization have brought many outside, western influences. The question that now lies in front of young Indian women is: how does one hold onto one's cultural and religious inheritance amidst these outside influences. Are we going to be able to hold onto our cultural past and pass it onto the next generation as our mothers did?

Artist/Piece Information: Heeral Trivedi is an artist whose work reflects the young urban Indian woman. Her works explore the choices available to women of her generation and the need to recognize these choices as every woman's right.

Activity 3: Alternative Thematic Questions for Month Two Discussion

- 1) How do women from different cultures, socio-economic or racial backgrounds view money differently?
- 2) How is poverty viewed differently in “developed” and “underdeveloped” countries?
- 3) How has a professional career become part of a woman’s identity? Is her identity more complex, rich, powerful, contradictory etc.?
- 4) Does our generation view money, power and economic opportunity differently than past generations? If so, what are the differences?

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 Money and Economic Empowerment of Women. Below are a few suggestions, but feel free to provide your own local examples.

Resources on Money and Young Women in Today’s Economy:

- ✍ World YWCA http://worldywca1.org/nat_assoc.html
- ✍ Global Fund for Women www.globalfundforwomen.org
- ✍ International Development Exchange www.idex.org
- ✍ Pro Mujer www.promujer.org
- ✍ Finca International www.villagebanking.org

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?