

# THE TINY CAVE WORKBOOK

*Intro to the workbook*



I may live and work in the cave, and yet

## RESPONSES TO THE STORY

*In this section, we are inviting all that strengthens the wish for the tree.*

**STEP 1** On a rough sheet of paper, list down which images, phrases or expressions stood out to you from the story.

**STEP 2** What is it about your own story that it resonated with?

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**STEP 3** If this resonance pointed towards a value or belief that is important to you, how would you name that?

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**STEP 4** What is the history of this value - can it be connected to something in your family, community, culture or history?

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**STEP 5** In the area of roots on the next page, write down key words from **STEP 3** and **4**.

what in me is of the forest?



## THE SEEDS

*Put one sentence summary here*

When the forest had a storm, The Child and her friends ran for cover and found a cave. Before leaving the known environment of the forest, Selma picked up some seeds that had fallen on the forest floor. These seeds connect her to the forest, they stand for her hopes and dreams. As she sets foot into the narrowing cave, she whispers these hopes into the fist that holds the seeds. And then, as the echoing instructions begin inside the cave, she sneaks them into her pocket-hoping that someday they may bear fruit. A tiny cave however, is not the most nourishing environment for a seed to grow and it is unclear fruit will actually grow. The Child finds others —elders and other young people — trying to navigate the cave and also seeking to plant their seeds.

The Tiny Cave represents the imperfect and often oppressive systems that we work and exist in. The seeds are our hopes for a better world and life—more well-being, care, material resources and freedom for children and us all. It is what draws many to imperfect institutions like philanthropy and development.

On a quiet day, when the echoing is not as strong, the seeds in the pocket next to her heart still glow with possibility, even though the cave isn't yet ready to nourish them just yet.

While not all people will decide to engage with these systems in their quest for a better future, engaging with those systems does not make those hopes less powerful.

## JOURNAL PROMPTS



Free write on this page about the hopes you brought with you as you came into this work. Notice how some seeds are in a closed fist, while others are on an open palm. Use the two sides of this page to explore the different types of hopes. Then, discuss with your colleagues how you interpreted the closed and open fists in relation to your hopes.



## CULTIVATING NEW SOIL

*In this section, we talk about enablers of and barriers against a seed taking root inside the cave.*

Young people enter the Tiny Cave often looking for the resources and support to expand the impact of their work, to connect with others doing the same work and to be able to care for themselves and other communities as they work. Too often, what they find are rigid structures that limit their creativity and force them into preconceived and recognisable forms of work that serve to reinforce the existence of the cave. **The role of the practitioner in these spaces can be to carve out and defend liberatory opportunities even as we are all limited by the conditions of the cave.**



The next page is an empty cave. You are invited to doodle and colour in the walls, place rocks and boulders and create mossy corners and write keywords from the following questions in those spaces.

### *Boulders*

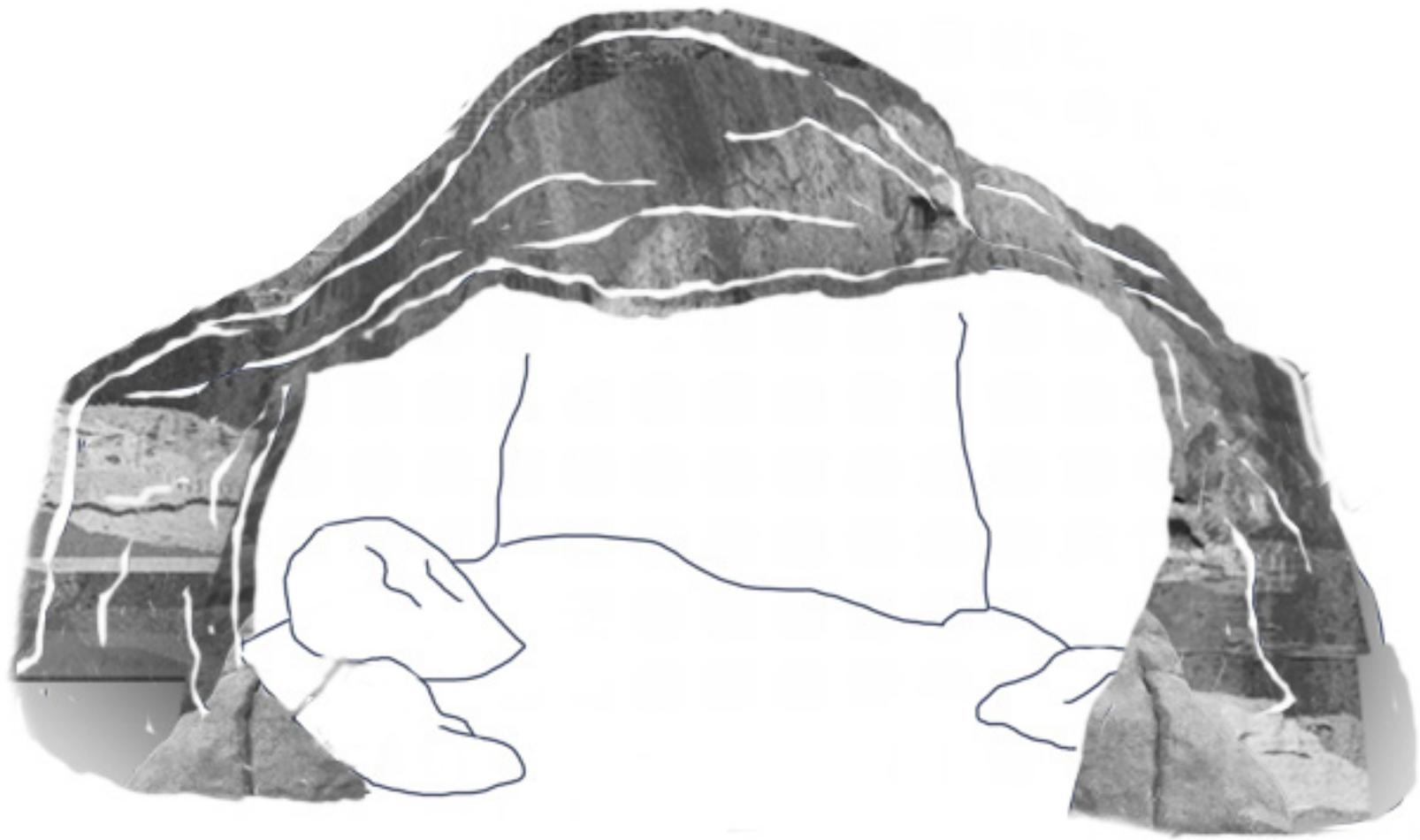
Go to **page 4**, and notice your responses to **STEP 1** and **STEP 2**. In these responses, can you recognise big dominating ideas or ways of being that feel constraining? Along the walls of the cave write keywords from your responses to **STEP 2** - these are the boulders making the structure of your cave!

### *Mosses*

On **page 4**, in some of your responses to **STEP 3**, can you notice little values or beliefs trying to sparkle at you? Let's call these mosses. On some areas of the floor of the cave and on some of the rocks, write down key words from your responses to **STEP 3**. You may want to highlight these responses in green, or use a green pen to write them!

### *A mossy cave*

For mosses to grow, we need moisture. Think about what and who keeps you believing in these values and what helps them win, even in small ways in your work setting. Then, in green colour again, write key words from this response over the outside walls of the cave. We now have the beginning of a mossy, living cave!



## BUT WAIT, HAVE SMALL HANDS AND BIG HANDS EVER GROWN A TREE TOGETHER?

*In this section, we invite stories that reinforce and stories that challenge what working from unequal power can look like.*

- STEP 1** On a rough page, name some relationships that you value where there is a power differential.
- STEP 2** Write about what you value about those relationships where you have less power.
- STEP 3** Write about what you value about those relationships where you have more power.
- STEP 4** Write about how these relationships have allowed you to meet mutual goals.
- STEP 5** Think and write about a time when you or someone you know/ know of has ever used their power in a principled way — what did you appreciate about it?
- STEP 6** On the next page, write keywords from your response to **STEP 2 around area of the small hand** in one colour.
- STEP 7** **Around the area of the leaf**, write keywords from your response to **STEP 4** in another colour.
- STEP 8** **Around the area of the big hand**, write keywords from your response to **STEP 5** in a third colour.



## DOES IT FEEL LIKE A TINY SPROUT MAY BE EMERGING?

*In this section, we think about where change has begun, where it is looking hopeful and*

Sometimes, power is scary. Navigating power when resources are at play or when there is inherent identity privilege can be tricky but it is not impossible.

**STEP 1** Return to Page 6.

**STEP 2** In the horizontal area just above the ground, write down key words that indicate the areas in your work where you think a foundational change has begun at your organization.

**STEP 3** In the vertical area alongside the trunk, write down steps that you are taking towards the change you want to see.

**STEP 4** Inside the leafy area , write down the small things that have made you feel hopeful that change is beginning at your organization.

## THANK GOODNESS FOR MYCELIUM

*In this section, we think about how we might bend the arc and be a bit subversive*

Just underneath the ground, given the right conditions, hairlike filaments called mycelium grow. These filaments form a network that is invisible to the human eye, but can spread out over many kilometres to ensure that resources and nutrients can go from where they are to where they are needed for new life to birth. This helps life begin and sustain in areas that may otherwise not be conducive. Perhaps such a network of relationships can help the cave grow a tree someday, and the resources from the cave go to the forest too.

**STEP 1** Together with colleagues, talk about how change happens in your organization.

**STEP 2** Think about where the levers or power might lie.

**STEP 3** Alongside the thin hairlike lines, list keywords from **STEP 1**.

**STEP 4** On the node points, list Key words from **STEP 2**.



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Courtesy the artist and Hauser & Wirth

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