Decolonising Play - In a Modern Age

Marie Williams

Dream Networks

Spatial Injustice & The Play Emergency

- Dream Networks collaborates to produce play spaces co-designed by children in marginalised communities in UK and Africa
- Every child has a right to play (Article 31 UNCRC) but millions of children have no access to safe play spaces
- Inequalities are interwoven within intersectionality's - gender, class, race, abilities

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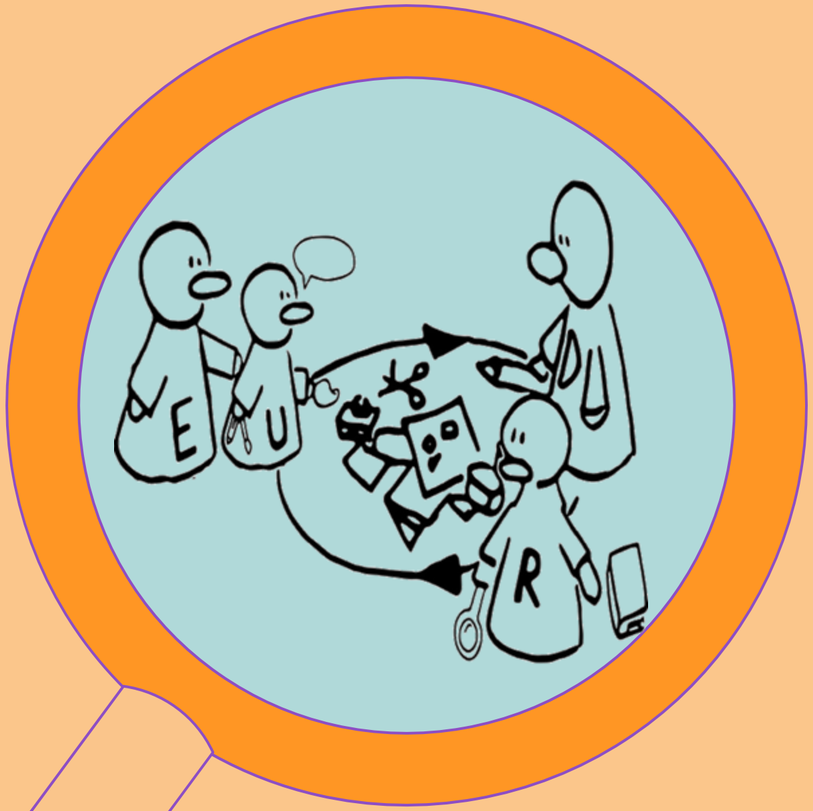
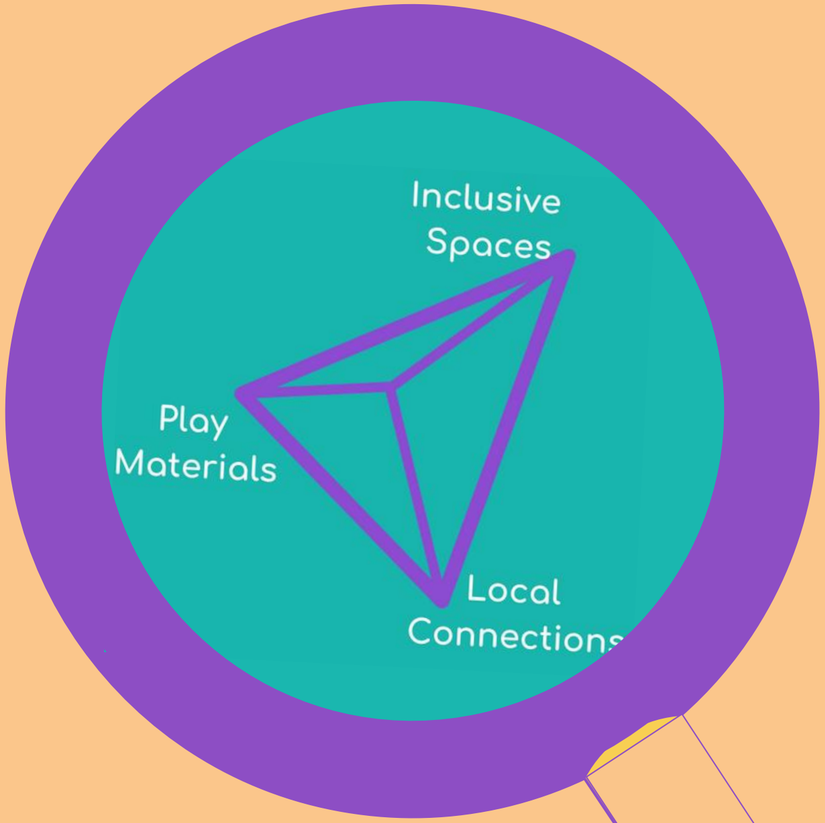
Deconstructing power structures and play design to liberate Play4all



Child-Led Design Thinking



Play4All

What is decolonisation?

“The dismantling of relations of power and conceptions of knowledge that foment the reproduction of racial, gender, and geo-political hierarchies that came into being or found new and more powerful forms of expression in the modern/colonial world.”

– **Nelson Maldonado-Torres**

“Putting Indigenous First,” , “Dismantling the tech and racist Bias”

-Elizabeth Dori Turnstall

“A process of unlearning and learning, liberating plural ways of seeing, being and knowing that the modern world suppresses”

-Marie Williams

“They’ve renamed the British Museum.”

Why do we need to decolonise?

Kenya

Taiwan

Mozambique

United Kingdom

Australia

USA

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3 OPEN UP SPACE FOR MORE PLURAL, DIVERSE FORMS OF PLAY AND AESTHETICS

Learn how people currently play and design spaces that celebrate the beauty of their play culture

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Co-design playground Walworth, London - Dream Networks

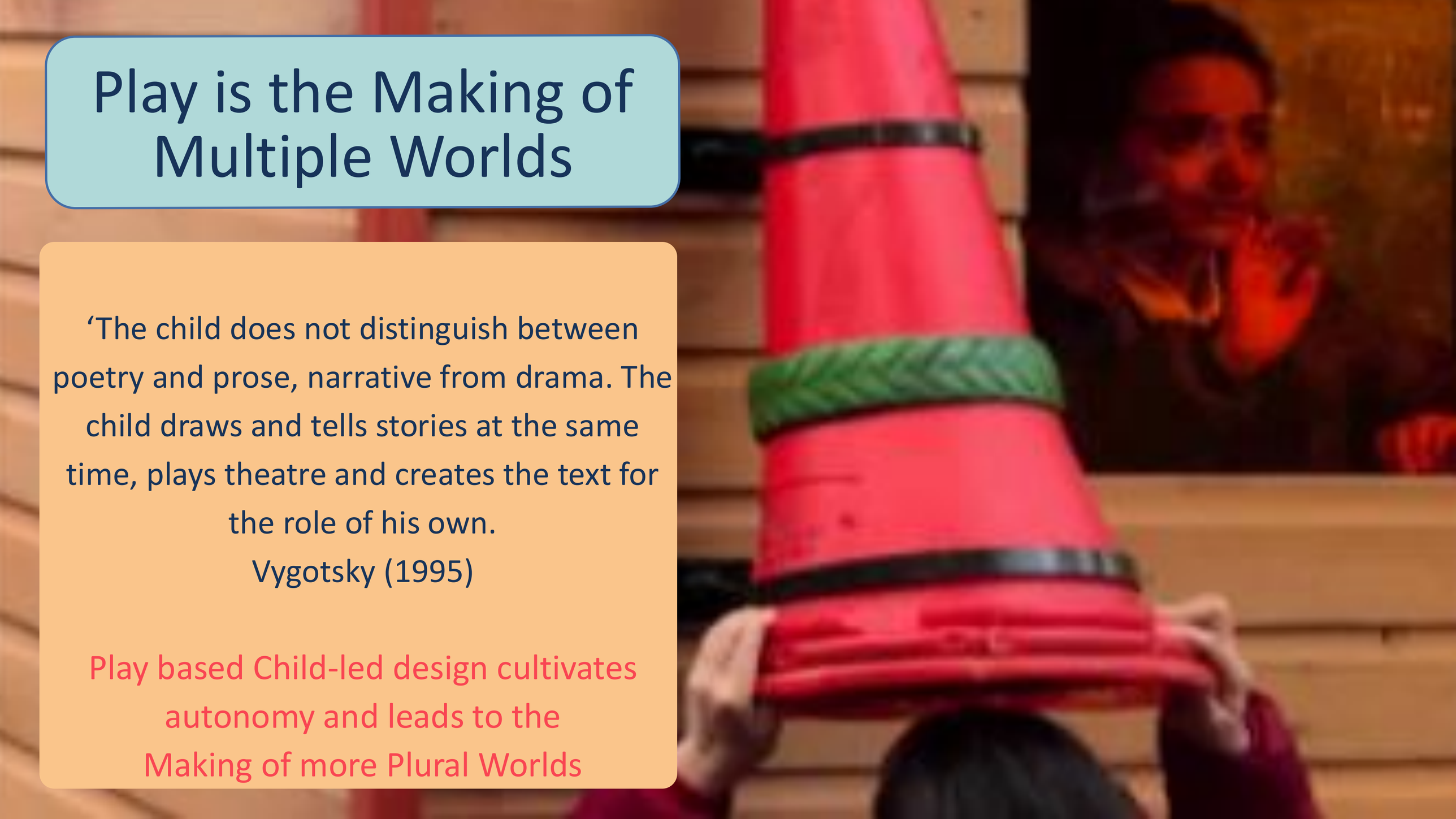
Co-design playground Molo, Kenya - Dream Networks

Play is the Making of Multiple Worlds

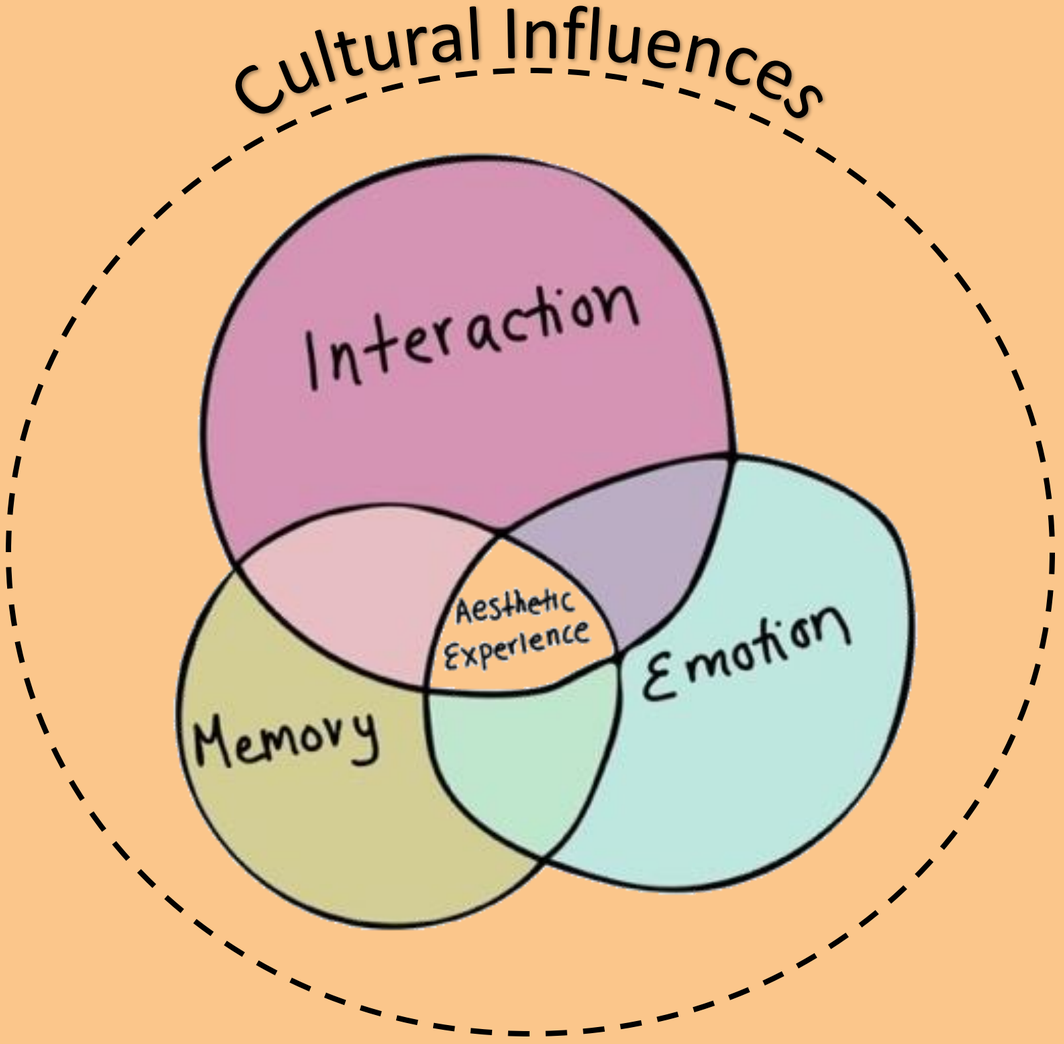
‘The child does not distinguish between poetry and prose, narrative from drama. The child draws and tells stories at the same time, plays theatre and creates the text for the role of his own.

Vygotsky (1995)

Play based Child-led design cultivates autonomy and leads to the Making of more Plural Worlds



Play as an individual, aesthetic experience



The domain of aesthetic experience, M Williams, 2024

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Do our physical spaces promote plurality?

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Amplify cultures

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How can we facilitate wider cultural influences?

- Stop
- Breathe
- Think of the children you serve
- What cultures and memories are elevated?
- What cultures and interactions are unknown?
- What do we need to learn?

4 UNDERSTAND PLAY NEEDS AND ENVIRONMENTS ROLE IN CULTIVATING PLAY

Co-design with children and the environment throughout the design and building process

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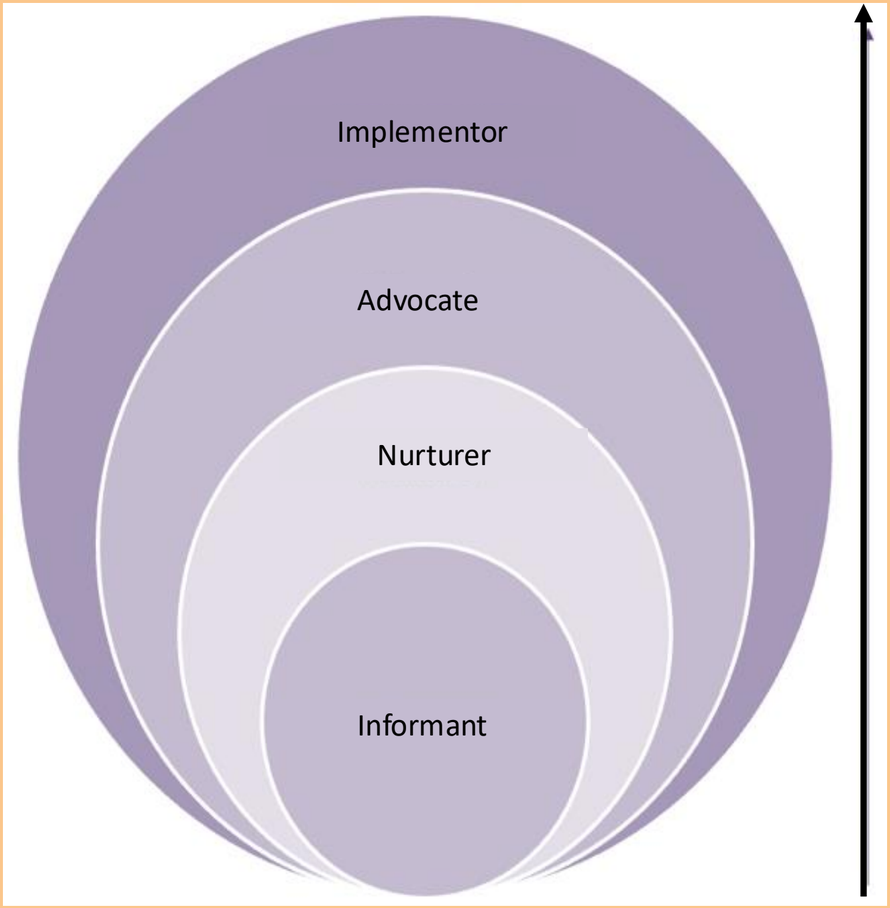
Co-designers, Birmingham- Dream Networks

How can we further enable children to decide?



Increasing decision making powe

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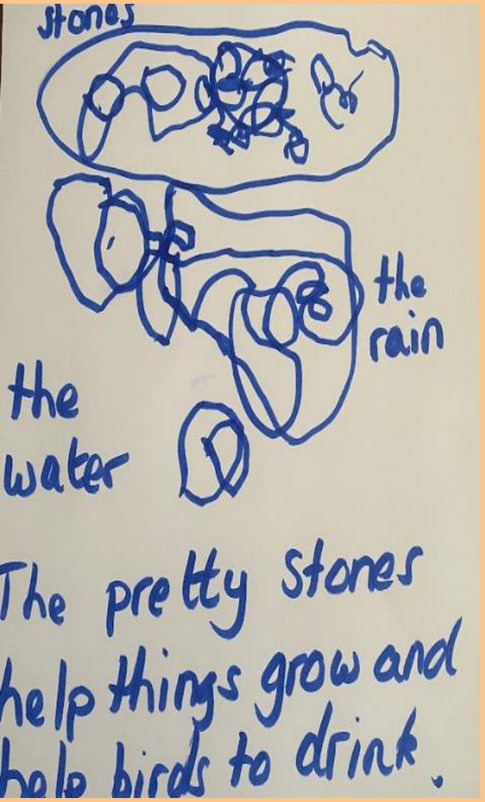
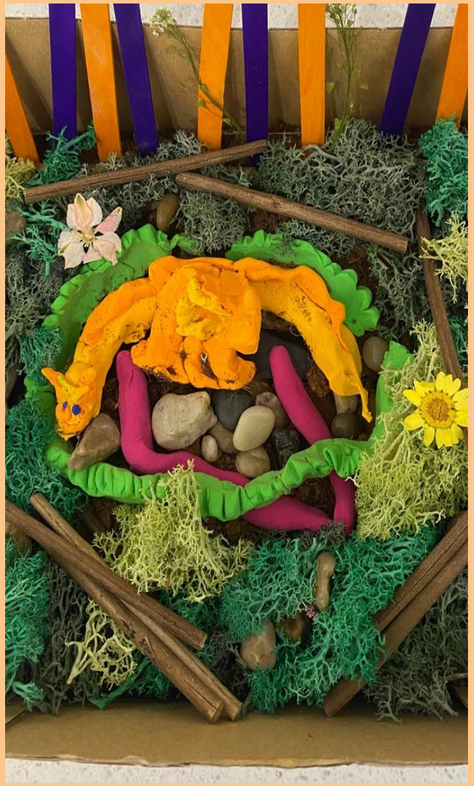
Cultivating Plurality



Poster Presentations

Modelling clay



Mixed Media

Play Bingo

AI generated design prompts

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5 SHIFT POWER TO COMMUNITIES AND DECENTRALISE PLAY PROVISON

Do not rely on policy, seek ways to work with communities to create play

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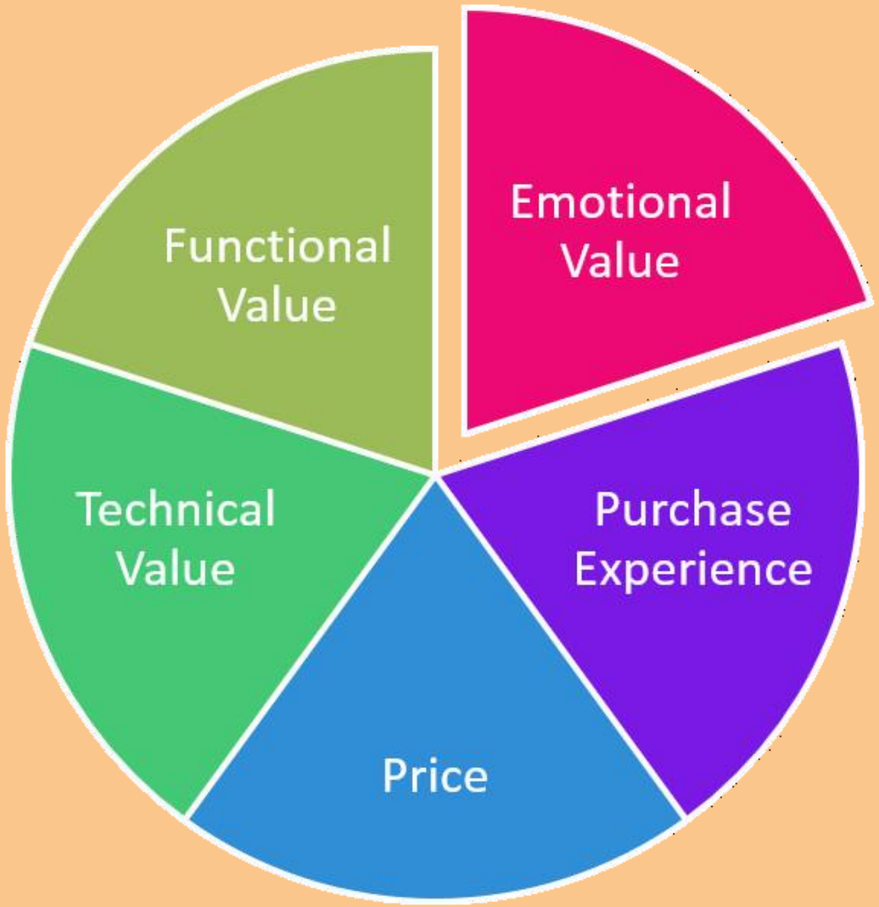
Co-production with Tony Gee and partners, Ladywood, Manchester Dream Networks

Create Meaningful Value

Create: bring (something) into existence



https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/how-create-mutual-value-your-customers-david-jones/

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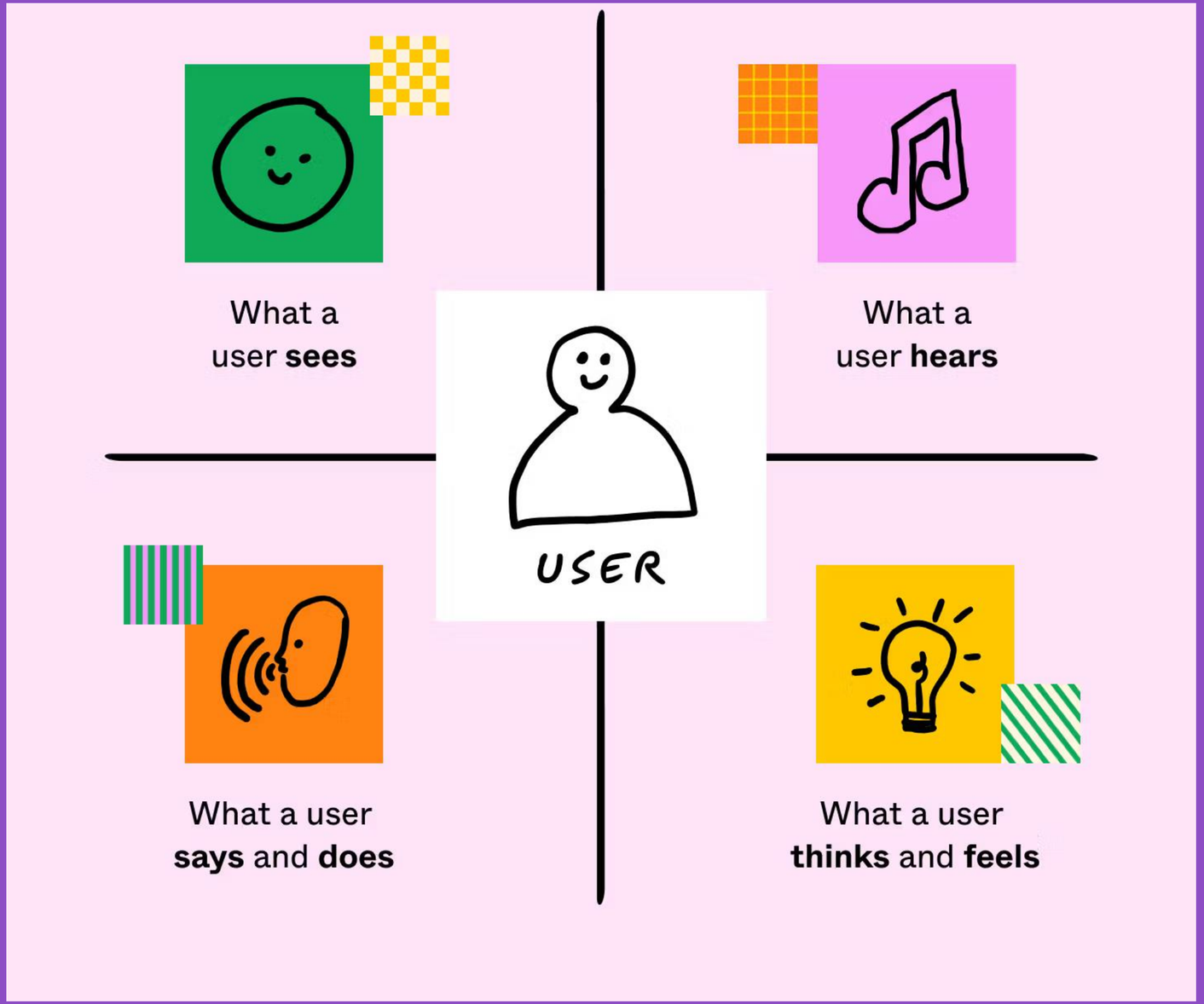
Let’s gain Perspective



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There will be no highlights on the eleven o'clock news

And no pictures of hairy armed women liberationists

And Jackie Onassis blowing her nose

The theme song will not be written by Jim Webb or Francis Scott Keys

Nor sung by Glen Campbell, Tom Jones, Johnny Cash

Engelbert Humperdinck, or The Rare Earth

The revolution will not be televised

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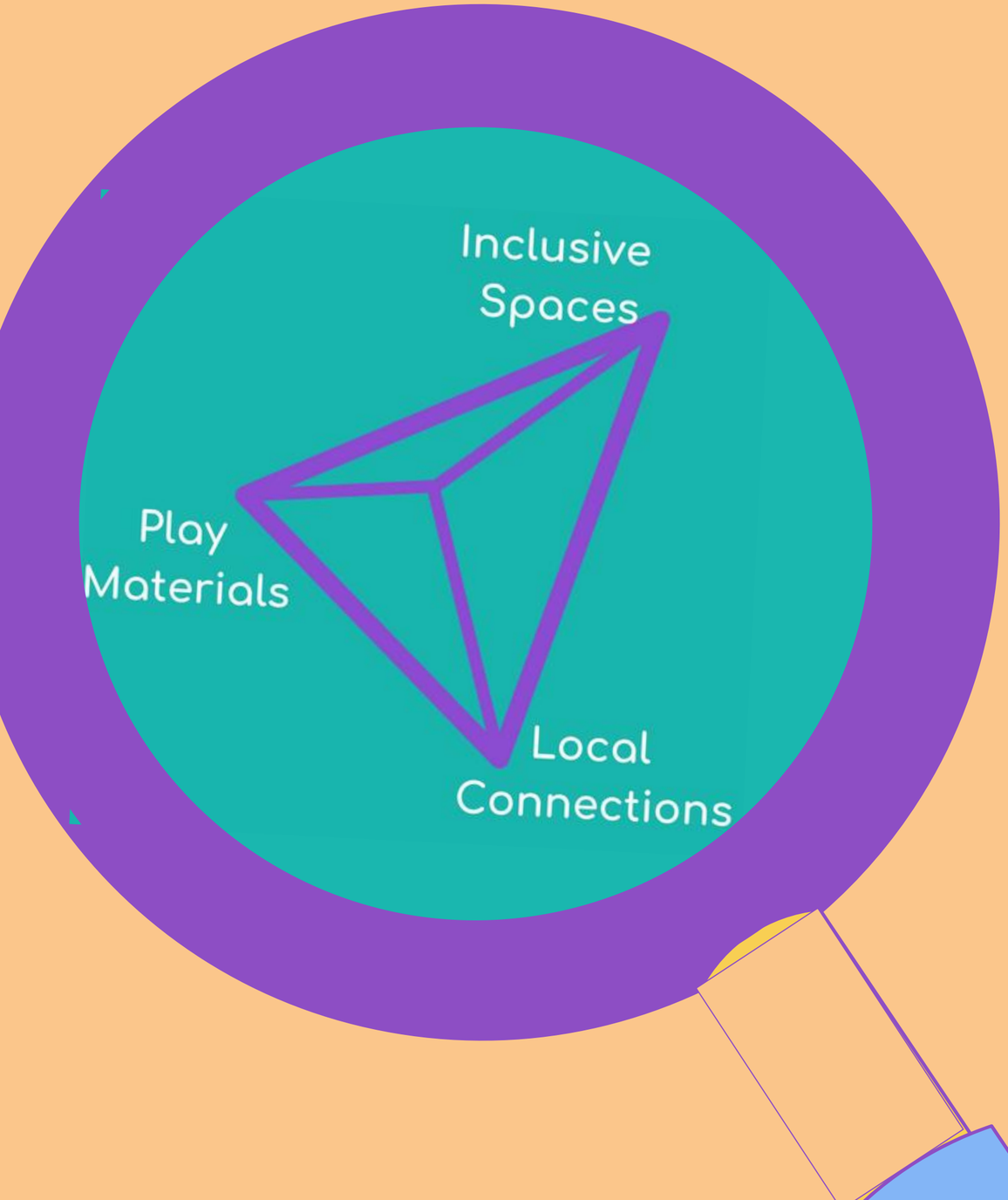

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