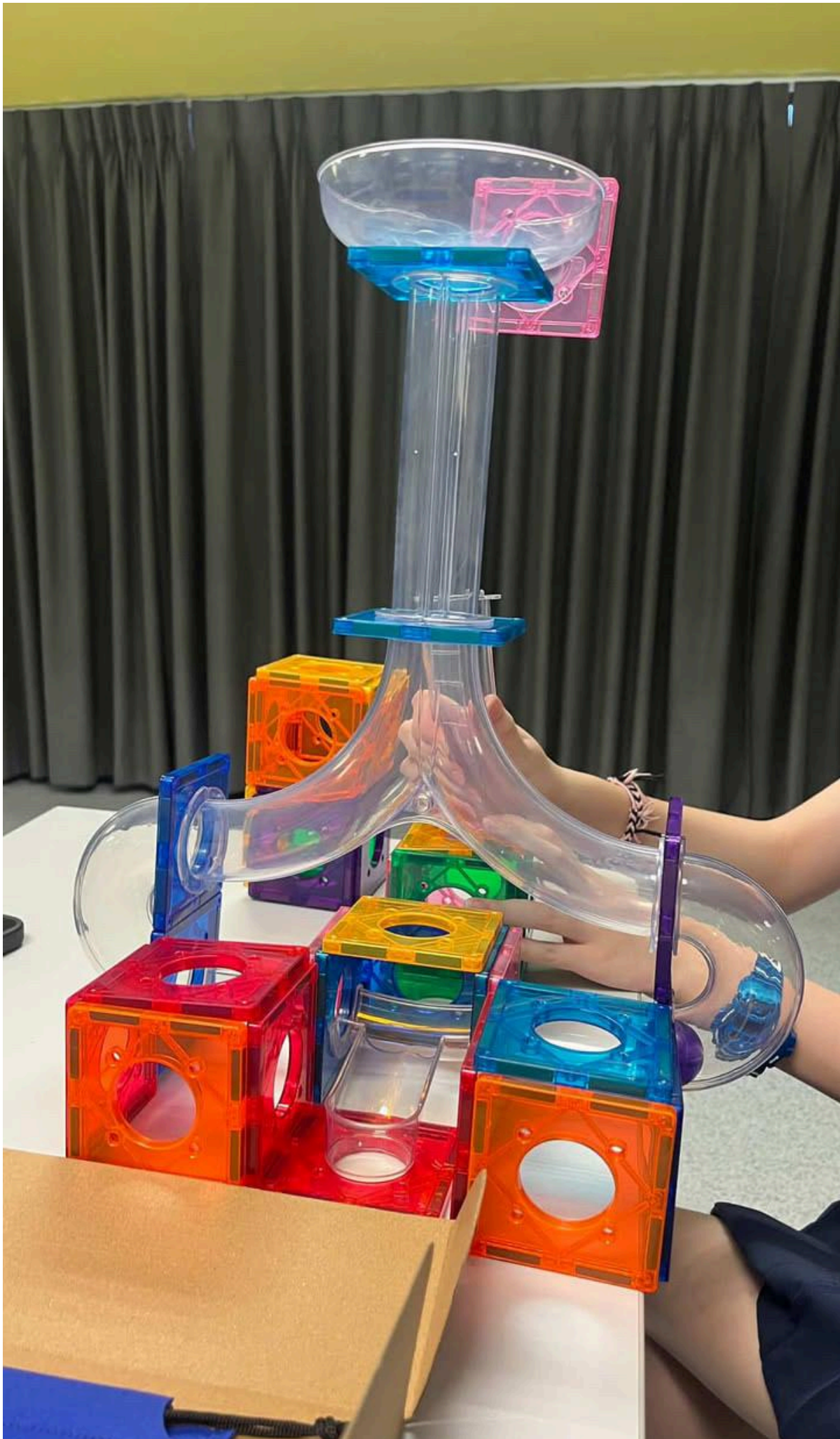


Define Your Dystopian World

Food is a resource that many people rely upon everyday to keep themselves alive and healthy. Any sort of effective control over it would be a powerful tool to coerce the masses into doing the will of whatever body is controlling because any resources that are required by people to survive would evoke a strong emotional reaction from people, making them disregard their logical reasoning to stay alive as suggested by Hobbes' idea of the state of nature. Hence, a central unarbitrary government is required to keep the worst of human nature in check. Thus, the dystopian we are proposing is one where central authority has broken down, from economic collapse, government corruption and ethnic violence, resulting in a society where militias and gang use violence to enforce and the control of food supply to maintain their power.

After the collapse of the economy and the total loss of confidence in fiat currency, power shifted to those who could control survival resources. Rival gangs rose to power and fought the Metro War to dominate underground transit routes and key supplies, which escalated into a prolonged civil war. With no central regime, food became the most valuable political instrument. Economic collapse causes strain on the population, to the degree that the middle class collapses and poverty soars. Hunger became a tool used by those who control violence to cement their rule over a population without mechanisms to hold them accountable. Food, is no longer merely sustenance but a political tool.

1. Erosion of Basic Rights – Food is no longer a guaranteed human right as those who resist the ruling powers risk starvation by using it as a political tool.
2. Tools of Political Oppression – The authorities figures reward loyalty with food while punishing dissent by withholding it, reducing autonomy by increasing resource dependency.
3. Psychological Control – Complacency is created by holding a monopoly over scarce resources. Propaganda bolsters the image of the ruling group as the sole provider, while social division and hierarchies of loyalty are enforced by unequal distribution of food.



Prototype: DeepHarvest Vault

•Context of the Dystopia

In a city where gangs utilised hunger as a form of control, communities have no safe and independent food source. Citizens are hence vulnerable to coercion, manipulation, and loss of freedom by being reliant on resources controlled by gangs.

•Purpose & Function

DeepHarvest Vault is an underground, community-run food security system built in abandoned metro tunnels to subvert gang coercion.

Cold Seed Storage – Long-term preservation of diverse crops are maintained with the climate regulated to meet its preservation needs.

Hydroponics & Mushroom Farming – Solar-powered LED lights and recycled water are used to have a year-round food production process.

Water Filtration – Fog nets, filtration systems and underground tanks are used to generate clean irrigation and drinking water.

Rotating Access Keys – A community quorum system ensures no single person can monopolize the food supply.

•Ethical Questions and Trade-offs

Control vs. Equality – Who decides distribution in times of scarcity?

Security Risk – If discovered, the vault could become a target for gangs to get seized.

Resource Allocation – Limited energy and materials may limit production capacity.

•Reflection: Design as Oppression or Empowerment

A system like DeepHarvest can empower communities by breaking dependence on violent powers, ensuring fair distribution, and protecting the right to food. Both calories and dignity are given to citizens, removing hunger as a tool of control. However, if gatekeepers seize power within the vault, it could become another instrument of oppression as resources are monopolised by those who hold the keys which is violence. In times of crisis, the intricacy of design determines whether a technology liberates or enslaves.

The security of food resources are crucial to the flourishing of a community as the basic needs that control life and death are controlled by themselves rather than an external authority guiding them. A system akin to DeepHarvest would protect communities by empowering them with the ability to control their own food supply, liberating them from the use of food as a political tool by powers that be. However, those same powers can seize the vaults to monopolise it and use it to manipulate and coerce individuals to do their will, eliminating the community's ability to determine its future. In time of crisis, design details determines whether technology liberate or enslaves.