File: **fi6ffe46 -- 20210422.mp3**
Duration: **0:50:26**
Date: **15/06/2021**
Typist: **679**

START AUDIO

Interviewer: Okay, so Rhea, please, the floor is yours.

Rhea Muthane: Thank you. I will share my screen.

Interviewer: Yes, I'm just stopping my video because of my connection.

Rhea Muthane: Yes. Erm, can you see my screen?

Interviewer: Yes. I can.

Rhea Muthane: Oh, great. Hello, hi. So, I thought for this session today, we could talk a little bit about why we repair, or, like, explore this concept of why we repair, and I would like to do it a little differently from speaking, as an Indian, as a part of, like, a global community, and as a part of Makeflix. Why do we repair?

So, I'll start by introducing myself. Hi, I'm Rhea. I'm Rhea Muthane; I'm from India. And by profession, or, like, academically, I studied textile design, but I've been working as

a design researcher as a consultant. And I have a lot of various interests. Due to the pandemic, I'm doing a bunch of things which cannot be defined with one title, but some of my many interests are social entrepreneurship, grassroot innovation, and community building. And I'm extremely enthusiastic about repairs, as you will see.

And today, I will talk a little bit about Makeflix, the global community that I'm a part of, and a little bit about how we look at it. Very early on, we realised that we look at sustainability not as, like, a siloed subject, but as a combination of people and behaviour, the local ecology – that is, the flora, fauna – race equality, gender politics, and many other things that are not listed out here, but are extremely important. So, environment is a combination of so many different factors.

And a little bit about, even backtracking to how Makeflix, kind of, came about to be, was during the peak pandemic here in India, I started with this personal project called 100 Ways of Mending, which is something I started just to beat the blues and stay positive and enthusiastic through everything that was going on. And this was extremely personal, and not meant, or started, with any other higher intention in mind, but has grown to be a lot more than just a personal project.

So, 100 Ways of Mending is something that I've been posting on Instagram, and it's just tiny projects that I have been doing. And it's still an ongoing project, exploring the concept of repair and mending, and using repair as an artistic medium, and exploring what repair and making and all of these different components mean to us. Because I'm a textile designer, you can see my love for materials and textiles coming through.

And this is where, as I was starting to do this, a lot of people were starting to come up and talk to me, online of course, and there were starting to be a bunch of community, like,

conversations about wanting to do more, wanting to do this for themselves, having questions about, “Does this make sense?” Or, “How do I mend something?”

And out of questions like these came about the idea for Makeflix, and I was very fortunate enough to meet very amazing collaborators, partners, and people who have been interested in the same things as I have been in, out came Makeflix. So, we’re a global repair project that helps people reconnect with their waste. And we use repair as a medium to nudge people into thinking about their consumption, behaviours, environment and wellbeing.

The work that we do and the way we look at environment, and, kind of, approach we have, has four main parts to it, which is one, of course: environment. The second is: making is very inherent to our work. So, making as entertainment; not just the act of making, but to combine it with creativity. The third is to find likeminded people, and to build a community, do this open-source, do it with a lot of people, to share as you build, and not to build it in monopoly or in isolation. And the fourth is to have, like, a higher spiritual angle to it, or, like, a philosophy of sorts that helps guide. It could manifest as mental health or mindfulness; to each their own.

And here are a few projects from our community. These are some projects that we have sourced from people to talk about how they view repair and making. The one on the left is one of our community members, Anisha, who transformed her mother’s old Indian saris, her wedding sari, into this very chic, androgenous wood. And I think it’s so interesting; as a visual, we’ll just see something like, just the final outcome of repair as a combination of what the mother and the father are wearing, and I think has a lot of gender layers to it to explore. And I find that so interesting; that repair is able to be in a space which

has so much more to do with than just, you know, saving materials or saving money.

And the other one is from one of our workshops, where our partners convinced Anisha to repair her t-shirt with a hole into a highly detailed flamingo. One example of how we look at repair is not something that, you know, needs to be hidden, but needs to be celebrated, and mistakes are good. We just need to find the silver lining in each of them.

So, as it's not just about repair, but we find different narratives around repair, to see what it means to people. Why do they hold onto things, and what makes them want to save, or what makes them want to continue to pass an object on to people? So, for example, the example on the left is Hashaldi, who highlighted the holes in her t-shirt to make a constellation pattern, because that t-shirt had stayed with her for really long. And this is, like, a modern take on the idea of repair, which is very personalised. She saw stars in something that was broken or torn.

But the example on the right has a different angle to it. This is [Abni 0:06:43], who had her dad's old sweaters and plaid shirts, and she wanted to save them; her dad and her dad's family, being an immigrant family, had a lot of history with these objects, and these clothes that they had from their past, which almost artifacts to pass on in their family. And once that was gone, and was motheaten, she turned that into a laptop sleeve for herself.

And I find that very interesting; how both of these examples don't just highlight the life-cycle of the process, of the product, but they even highlight or celebrate it, with a sense of ownership.

And as we started doing that, more and more, we have been trying to explore the idea of building these projects not just for ourself, but with people, and enabling other people to build it for themselves, so as to start, like, a social movement of sorts.

And one of the ways we did that was to post a workshop with the Mozilla Foundation and explore – Mozilla Festival, sorry – and explore some of these questions about what value means to people, and why they want to hold onto things and pass on things, and, sort of, do it more intentionally.

And recently, we conducted an educational course; a course module, at the National Institute of Design in India, and explored this with a few fun interdisciplinary students. And this is one example of projects that came out of it, which is called Game It Yourself. The students [entered 0:08:13], like, three days' build, an entire game of making fun things out of trash. And they invited people, and ___ all their families in the middle of a pandemic.

And this is so interesting to see, because- also the game is linked to the website; their website in this thing, and I can drop a link later on. It's so interesting to see how we can design this into the [___ 0:08:43] effect, so that other people are able to do it for their own communities and their own family. And that's something that we have been wanting to focus and explore, and, sort of, give that individuality back to people.

That was a little bit about what we've been doing so far. But I want to talk about the repair culture in India. So, Makeflix is about- we're a bunch of interdisciplinary, multi- mix of diverse people from around the world, and Makeflix is not just restricted to just, like, textiles. This is just some of my work, which is why it looks like it is textile-heavy. But we want to explore, and we have been encouraging people to source in other sorts of examples. So, we're on that.

And I'm talking about India; Makeflix is not based out of India, just to clarify. I think it's important to talk about these narratives from our perspective. Because whenever we talk about sustainability or environmentalism, there's a very westernised, Eurocentric, Americanised way of looking at things, which is very circular, and there's, like, all these big jargons that come out. Which is great, and I think we all need those contributions. But I think also what's important is to think about these from a more- looking back into our own cultures, and, sort of, provide more decolonised perspectives to these; decolonised flavour to these [___ 0:10:13].

So, traditionally, across ___, ___ sort of things and celebrated objects, people in all different colours and hues and textures and events, and repairers no less. And we see a lot of crafts that emerged out of the idea of repair. And that celebrated repair, which kind of came from- these are all textile examples again; that's because of the fact that I'm making with the textiles and [___ 0:10:50]. Different sectors; we have crafts that celebrate ___ and ___ concept of ___.

Interviewer: Your audio is crackling a bit.

Rhea Muthane: Yes.

Interviewer: Maybe if you turn off your camera?

Rhea Muthane: I'll turn off my video, yes.

Interviewer: Okay.

Rhea Muthane: Can you hear me now?

Interviewer: I think so. Let's see.

Rhea Muthane: Yes? Okay. Yes, let's try this. Let me know if I break up again.

Yes, so that was a little bit about the traditional repair culture, and then I want to talk a little bit about 'jugaad', which is the repair culture that exists in our towns, in our communities inside and outside our homes, which is basically very fun, interesting, quirky ways to deal with very complex problems.

There are many different narratives to this; a lot of this comes just from the need of not having more, and just wanting to quickly solve problems. But I think it's very interesting to see how all of these trickle down into smaller, everyday practices that, like, every Indian home would have a [___ 0:12:17], or a box full of used plastic [covers], or used boxes, cardboard boxes, packaging materials, that you can again repurposed. Nothing is ever thrown away in an Indian household. If it's, like, leftover food, we have recipes for leftover food. If it's a t-shirt, it will be passed on. A new t-shirt; an older brother in the house would wear it, and then it would be passed to the younger brother, and then it would be finally made into a mop.

And I think all these three examples of traditional craft, the idea of jugaad, and this everyday practice of using and reusing things, have a common thread.

But then again, it kind of, has been, like, plaguing me; why do people repair? A very simplistic answer would be it's a

developing nation, and so, people have little to do but then to make do with what they have. But that answer never really, kind of, satisfied me, and throughout, like, the work that I have been doing over the past few years, and these very focused examples, and research projects and experiments, I've been trying to understand, why do people repair? Why do people want to hold onto things? Because in India, just, you never throw anything out. There are all kinds of roundabouts people find to not throwing things out. And it's interesting that that behaviour carries on to people, even after they have a lot of money.

So, money doesn't seem to be the reason why people want to hold onto things, and it's a, sort of, like people understanding something that we needed to understand that.

So, I have a hypothesis that I would like to share with you, and maybe have, like, a little bit of a conversation, which is: we have this- I mean, there's a lot I can explain, and this is a longer conversation, of course, but first, keeping that in mind, long story short, we have these worship- we call it 'puja', which is basically, like, rituals, or, like, ceremonies that we have to celebrate or worship our tools at specific festivals during the year, where we worship the objects that we use.

So, a student, in one of these pujas, would worship their books. A mother, or the woman of the house, would worship her kitchen utensils. If the father is there and he works at a factory, he would worship his factory tools. If there's a farmer, he would worship his farm tools. If there's a musician, he or she would worship their musical instruments.

And this is not something that happens on just specific times during the year. It also happens on more mundane, everyday events, like whenever you buy a new car, you would worship the new car. Or whenever you get a new object, you place it in

front of the god, and, kind of, ask for you to treat it well, and for it to serve you well. And I find that very, very interesting. Because every object is treated like it has a life of its own. It's treated like it is an equal; that it has respect. And I think that, kind of, changes the way we look at materials in itself. Because a tree stops being a tree, that just, an object that gives oxygen and greenery, fuel, but it becomes an object of worship. It becomes divine.

And this philosophy of seeing divinity in everything I think changes the way we approach materials, we approach processes, we approach objects. Because then you cannot throw anything anyway, because everything has God in it. Whether it is soil, where it's silk, whether it is the raw materials that we have, or if it is a process, you would never throw anything out. And if you look at any traditional [___ 0:16:24] system, every waste product, so as to say, at every stage, is made into something else. And the different tangential objects that come out of just the final object that the craft is doing.

And so as to, waste is not even a concept in an Indian craft ecosystem. And I find that very interesting. Because the value here comes from a larger framework of religion. And so, the questions are: how do we clear these common threads for our times, where now, we're in the pandemic. Global warming is an issue that's really, really serious, and getting more serious every day. And how do we derive the sense of value or common sense of ownership? And how do we build a sense of shared value with people, not just do it in isolation?

And out of a lot of these questions comes Makeflix – or need – comes Makeflix, where we're trying to do this with people from around the world, and build an open-source network, where people can come together, make things together, talk about things, and build objects, organisations, to solve them in

whatever way. And also ruminate about their consumption patterns, and think about the lifestyles that they want to lead.

And so, Makeflix is not owned by any one person, or a few broad entities. We want to, and we wish to, grow as an open-source network that continues to thrive, and build as people build it, and take it where they want to take it. This is our website, if anybody would like to see, and I will link them again.

Thank you.

Interviewer: Thanks, Rhea. Wow, that's great. That's great. That's amazing. And I think this- yes, it makes a lot of sense. I was wondering what you would be talking about; jugaad, and value, and why do people repair? And I think there is this connection- I have seen this connection made by Victor Viña; I don't know if you met his work? Victor Viña is Spanish, and he spent some time in India, and he once did this presentation on bricolage, 'gambiarra'; that is the term that we use in Brazil, and jugaad. And he tried to create, you know, this parallel between different kinds…

Also, I think there are similar cultural takes on reusing, and making sure things are now thrown to waste in different cultures. And I think you see that a lot in, you know, underdeveloped, or nations in developing stages. And I think there is a part of this, as, I guess, you point out, is naturally, you know, precariousness, and trying to extract value on a- you know, the more society can.

But this sense of divinity and a direct connection with objects and tools and materials, is very interesting. And I think there can be some kind of relationship to be made with, for instance, just comes to mind; the work of a Brazilian anthropologist

called Eduardo Viveiros de Castro, who worked- his line of work is called the Amerindian perspectivism. And there is this sense that the way Brazilian native cultures approach the world; it doesn't have this sense of separation between human and nature. And there is the sense of not only- in my relationship, for instance, with a jaguar; it's not only that I must be afraid of the jaguar; that he can eat me, you know, ultimately? But I can become, to the jaguar, what a chicken is to me. And there's this kind of perspectivism.

Rhea Muthane: Ah, yes.

Interviewer: And there's this sense of becoming something else. And you can become the trees, you can become the river, you can become the sky when you relate. And that's how this, kind of, more spiritual or religious connection comes. And you are in a world with the things, with the other beings, and every being is on the same level.

So, yes, it's very interesting; that perspective. And I wanted to- yes, just one note that I made here, when you talk about, you know, not hiding repair, but celebrating it. I don't know if you came across the Japanese culture of kintsugi; yes, things are even more valuable when you put an extra effort into repairing them.

Rhea Muthane: Yes, yes.

Interviewer: Even more than they were before. And this discussion about value, and what value means to people; I think this is

something that I want to explore [___ 0:22:23], because there is this very- I would say, it's come to a point where it's even ordinary to say that waste is just out of place. But I think that sentence hides the more, you know- I think the political issues that, and the, kind of, incentives – and this is something we've been discussing a lot – what kinds of incentives are there, not only to people understand the potential value of something, but actually to act upon?

Because one thing is, you know, my mother gets lots of discarded materials and creates craft with it. And that's one interesting thing, because both myself and my sister and my brother; we've learned from that, and even now, when my mother is retired, she spends a lot more time into that, and now my kids are watching her doing that. But in order to gain scale – and one of things that I would ask you, connected to the discussions that we made in the other sessions – is how do you think on a, kind of, municipal, local level, what kinds of measures could be done?

Because I feel that you talk about creating this international community, where people can make these things together, and share experiences, and connect, I guess, create meaningful connections that are not that easy to have with your neighbour. Because maybe your neighbour is interested in just, you know, making money and buying stuff.

Rhea Muthane: Yes.

Interviewer: And just another point. Because – sorry, my mind goes everywhere. But we had this moment in Brazil, about 20 years ago, and we – I'm talking about this group of people who were working in different kinds of activist projects related to

technology – and my own action to that world was through [___ 0:24:43]. It was a project that would collect discarded computers, both from households and companies, and would install Linux, and then deliver to different- we started in 2002.

And then we identified gambiarra. There is a thing; it's akin to jugaad. we identified gambiarra as one of the cultural aspects that we had in Brazil that was interesting, because it had this potential of providing socioeconomic value for people who were in the borders, who didn't have access to, you know, buying new things. So, they could apply gambiarra to solve their own problems.

It had this, kind of, environmental positive impact, in that we would be keeping things, and we were talking about computers, and that's clear, I guess, that as much time you can keep a computer being used, it will not become toxic waste, as all computers are poised to become.

So, we identified this cultural practice of gambiarra. But what we saw from Brazil – because by then, by the early 2000s, the economy was showing signs of growing a lot, and there was this boom in commodities, and people were- the acquisition – no, the consuming power – was growing. And what we understood is that because people were able to buy things, and on the other hand, China was providing – mainly China, you know, but maybe exaggerated – but people could buy cheap things from China, and they would not need to repair those things. So, the level of waste would increase; people were not using their hand skills; they were not exercising this kind of creativity, and they were becoming computers.

So, we started, kind of, celebrating the culture of gambiarra in exhibitions and publications, and we were trying to counter that trend. Now, I guess, unfortunately, Brazil has been through a very long economic and ecologic and political crisis – and now

health crisis as well – so, that's not something that we are that much concerned with. You know, people losing this, kind of, creative ability to solve everyday problems.

But, yes, sorry, just an aside pass. But what I would like to ask you was, you know, how do you see these kinds of practices being encouraged in a local level? You know, in neighbourhoods, or in a city, or in regions?

Rhea Muthane: That's- it's a very complex problem, I think. I don't know if I have one answer to it. I think it would require us to have, like, lots of different, multi-layered approach to the problem. Some of it would have to do with, probably, awareness or communication of a newer narrative, that- it's not just about buying, approaching scale and ease, but then also celebrating process, and maybe celebrating wear and tear of things.

I think there's a lifestyle shift, or, like, the way people look at lifestyles, and the way they approach life; that should also, kind of, shift. Because I think the whole hustle culture, at least in India, with the whole startup and the tech boom; everybody's just running, and because you have less time, and you're working 18-hour jobs, or, like, 16-hour jobs, it's very difficult for you to have time for anything else. Which is why you would get more things on the go. You would get more buy and use and throw. I think all of that is connected to how we utilise time and approach life generally.

And it would show up in different ways. Which is- I like that first graph – not graph, the Venn diagram, right? With sustainability in the centre for those people. I think that mindset also shows up in the way we [___ 0:29:30]. And it's, like, a cultural aspect. So, I think a shift happens in the way we look at all of this. This will, kind of, come about eventually. But that's also a very long

process. Maybe a shorter one would be to encourage these kinds of communities of make spaces. And even connect ___ narrative. I feel like we have a lot of this- there's isn't encouragement enough to…

I think you're frozen. No, you're back.

Maybe look at a new way to look at things. Because even if people are encouraged to just think, and make those connections for themselves, or inspired enough to do that, I'm sure every person, in whatever locality they are in, can find things. And each of our experiences of what you build in Berlin, and what I build in India with my community, would be very different. But I'm sure we'll have common threads.

And yes, I think it is interesting, and maybe with the pandemic we have that freedom of connecting across the world, and finding inspiration from a diverse set of people, and then still being very local, and having time on our hands, if I may say so, to maybe think about these things.

Yes, but also, this is how we look at scale, and consumption patterns generally. Not just with objects, but a consumption of communication systems, and information and entertainment also. Yes.

Interviewer: Nice. Yes, I think…

Rhea Muthane: Does that make…?

Interviewer: Yes, that's interesting. Having time on their hands; this is something that we have not come across. Maybe because part of the discussion that we had were, in these, kind of, you

know, rich countries, I think- so, in a sense, people have time, or at least more time than people would have in developing countries. You know, the very idea of working 16- or 18-hour days; it doesn't show up here in Europe, or in the US.

And the other thing that I think has shown up was having space; having storage space. Because, you know, of course, you need access to tools. But there are some- I think there are community and social takes to that in every different culture. So, either you can see in Edinburgh, in Scotland, there is a tools library, or, you know, in Brazil, there's always someone I can ask a drill; you know, there's always this. And, I think, here in Germany everyone has a toolbox somewhere.

But storage space is something that I'm missing, here. Because I used to live in a place in Brazil, a collective house with 10 other people. And we would have a storage space in the house. And here in Berlin, I'm in a small flat that has no proper basement. And I always see, because in the neighbourhood I am, people just throw things outside, and I'm always waiting to collect stuff and bring home to turn into somewhere else, now that I have my tools. But I didn't have storage space for that. And this is- I guess these spaces of freedom, both in terms of time and in terms of storage space, and then tools; I think these are some of the connecting necessities in order to create- even just to open space for this new narrative to emerge.

And I think the other thing is: we always need to be wary of greenwashing, and the amount of corporations that are willing to take this creative spirit, and say, "Okay, we are doing this small stuff; you should be happy with it." And these guys are not our allies.

So, I think this third- just to comment, and maybe, if you have specific feedback; the three ideas that I'm working with right

now: one of them would be this, kind of, universal registry of things, that would, for instance, have an individual entry… Yes, let me show you my example.

This is something I found on the streets in Dundee, in Scotland. And I was just passing by on a bike, and I saw this, you know, rolling over with the wind. And I thought, “Okay, this belongs to a child, so I will leave it there.” And then I just went another 200 metres, and then I decided to go back, because the wind was taking this to the river, and this thing would be lost forever.

So, I went back, and started even filming, and I was just watching to see if any child would appear. And I spent maybe 20 minutes waiting. And then I decided to collect it. It was in the early days of the pandemic, so I left it [___ 0:34:53] before I even touched it, really, without alcohol.

But what was interesting is that it says here in French, “If you find me, call this number.” But actually, it’s a number; it’s a 0800 number in France that I could not call from the UK; there was no way to call this number. And I tried going to their website, to this company’s website, and I sent an email, and they never returned.

But this idea of having a, kind of, individual entry for this object I think was a good inspiration. And then the way I’m thinking of a universal registry would be this, kind of, open database, perhaps an open standard for data, that would allow me to have an individual entry for this series of objects, and maybe even to this particular one.

And then I could access information about how to repair it, or what other things they can do with it, or where it comes from, what are its raw materials, and things like that. So, this is the first layer that I’m working on my research.

The second layer would be ways to interface with that dataset. So, I'm thinking of a mobile phone app, but I also am thinking of this, kind of, work-based setting, in which a camera would help identify this object, and fetch it against this database, and then give me information about how to reuse this thing, be it through repair or upcycling, or scavenging for parts, or selling on eBay, or things like that.

And then the third layer that I- as I mentioned, I was thinking of leaving for later, but I decided to take, because of the quality of the feedback I'm having, are the transformation labs – that's the way I'm calling them – would be- they would be, like, similar to makerspaces or fab labs, or, you know, places with tools, open for communities, but I think there's this shift in narrative, and I think we are, you know, aligned on that.

Because the way I see, and the way I first heard about, you know, fab labs, and maker culture back in 2008, 2009, I was very excited, because I've had- I've seen examples of people – for instance, Adrian Boyer, that works on the Rep Rap project – talking about products that you could transform into other products as life went on. So, you could have your kids' shoes, and then transform into other shoes as time went.

But then three years later, the maker culture and fab labs, and all that rhetoric, became only about prototyping things for mass production, and whereas I usually- the example I always use is, like, you know, making 3D prints of Master Yoda's head, and this, kind of, you see that everywhere in the world. People are not bringing their own cultures, and people are not using those things for repair.

So, the idea of the transformation shops, or transformation labs, would be to allow people to use those tools, and use that equipment, not only to make new things and eventually create a shiny new product that would be mass-produced somewhere

in the world, but also to use those things to repair and upcycle. And I see some, you know, scarce examples – or, sorry, sparse examples – of those things being made. But I think what I'm trying to create is this, kind of, blueprint for a transformation lab that would connect to zero-waste initiatives locally, and possibly with waste management or waste avoidance policies in different parts of the world.

So, yes, this is the, kind of, three axes. Sorry, I just talk too much.

Rhea Muthane: I actually know someone who worked with [___ 0:39:13], and did one of their theses on something that was similar to the universal registry of things. So, if you like, I can connect you with him.

Interviewer: Oh, yes. Yes, I'd love that.

Rhea Muthane: But it was just ___ a student that was done.

Interviewer: Hmmhmm.

Rhea Muthane: But I could connect you; maybe some interesting conversations would come out of that.

Interviewer: Nice, wow. That would be great.

Rhea Muthane: Yes. It's a very interesting…

Interviewer: How do you say, this kind of, community shop, or- how do people on Makeflix usually do- does everybody have their own workshop at home? Does anyone- I know it's pandemic times, so, it's hard to resort to community settings, but have any comments on that?

Rhea Muthane: So, we have been doing things a little differently. We haven't attempted any hardcore, like, tech or hardware projects so far. But we have been mostly doing clothing and tinier projects, which are home projects, and we encourage people to, kind of, find solutions within whatever they have, and learn to look at things that are around them, and find newer solutions, and look at them unusually.

So, the whole twist is, okay, if there's a limitation, how do you take that limitation, turn it around and make that into an opportunity? Which is basically jugaad on jugaad.

Interviewer: (Laughter)

Rhea Muthane: And people come up with… Sorry?

Interviewer: No, no, I was just laughing. I like that, jugaad on jugaad.

Rhea Muthane: You like that. And the thing is, once you frame it like that, people can find very interesting ways to look at it. So, when we

turned up at repair workshops, instead of saying, “Oh, you know, find these materials, and do that, and go buy that”, or, “You have to be this skilled”, we go, “No. See what skills you have. Look at what materials re around you. And then, now, look at how you can build unusual things, and unusual solutions from that limitation that you have.” Because this whole endeavour has been a pandemic project. Everyone’s been stuck in different time zones, with different kinds of problems, I think, which are very unique to each of us.

And that whole aspect of, like, looking at your everyday- but we like to call it, “Your everyday is your playground.” And, kind of, look at that, and if there is something: “Okay, you don’t have paints. How can you make paints from the vegetables that are in your fridge?” Or, “If you don’t know how to paint, can you paint with the leaves, and, kind of, you know, bundle them up and imprint the leaves on your clothes?” Just different ways of doing things.

Like, if you have an idea, then let’s figure different ways you can make that work, or, like, bring it to life. And people really like that, because it, kind of, challenges, and gamifies the whole process a little bit. And they’re sort of, like, against them, and, sort of, competing with each other, and getting pressurised; it’s like, “Oh, how can I think about this?” Yes, it’s been fun. And people actually enjoy it. And a lot of people come up with interesting things when you pose it like this.

So, like, I don’t think it’s about finding- having money, or, you know, providing infrastructure. It’s, kind of, learning to look at whatever is around you, turn it around a little bit.

Interviewer: Oh, yes, I like that. I once wrote about gambiarra in Brazil, and I think I described it as seeing the world as abundant, always.

And this is a very interesting challenge, because it requires people to change the way they see objects.

Rhea Muthane: Yes.

Interviewer: And I remember I also- the experience I had when I spent some weeks in France; a friend lent me his mother- the bike that used to belong to his mother-in-law. And the bike was just broken. I didn't have tools. So, I took that bike to a bike repair shop, and the guy there told me, "Oh, okay, I can fix this bike to you in two weeks, and it will cost you €25." And I was, like, "Two weeks to fix it?" It was, you know, change the brakes, or, you know, very simple stuff.

And there was no community repair that I could resort to. And I was really used to having community- not community, but to have bike shops everywhere in Brazil, and just to go there, and the guy would fix… But I was struggling with, you know, how much I would need to invest in tools, or someone who could lend me the tools, and I didn't speak any French.

So, these kinds of challenges, I think, appear. But then, eventually I found that there was this fab lab, in which there were loads of tools, and I could use some of them. But there was this process, and I had to just, you know, find other places in the city.

And there were also these comments last week; one of the participants, he's French, and he went to Los Angeles. And he told me that in that city, there was one neighbourhood that was lucky to have a community bike repair shop. But you had to be lucky to live there, because it's very hard to get to those

places. So, these kinds of things; I guess they bring different challenges.

Rhea Muthane: You know, what you've just said about you having figured out these whole repairs, tool kit, and finding that? It's so interesting, because I think different people, without having spoken to each other, we would all have these kinds of problems. And if each of us solved one problem, and then made it open-source, and made it open to a community, together, we would have so many solutions, and we would already have an ecosystem. And then if we each did it in each of our cities…

Interviewer: Hmmhmm.

Rhea Muthane: And, like, a directory of sorts, like, "Oh, my bike's broken, can I do something? I need to build this furniture; can I do something out of it? I need this done; can I do something?" Or, "I have so much trash, or so much office stationery just leftover; can I build something out of it?" Stuff like that. And I think just that conversation starter is very important. I guess there's just that narrative; you just need someone to just start, get the ball rolling, and it can probably happen on its own.

Yes, it's been something that's on my mind, and if you're interested, we can try doing it. (Laughter)

Interviewer: Nice. Yes.

Rhea Muthane: You just need a few enthusiastic people to do it, I think.

Interviewer: Yes, I think this space is for sharing, sometimes. And then again, there are, in different parts, or- I think 'Instructables' is a good source, but then there is this, kind of, bias towards some kinds of things [that are valued 0:46:12] in that community. And a way to document that is specific to a specific part of the world. But yes, I think that sharing these stories is a good way to start these conversations, and maybe there is space to do that.

One thing I wanted to ask you is: I know, you know, because [Kami 0:46:36] is in the Telegram group, and she attended one of the meetings. And she told me that she just finished an application or something like that. And this is being recorded, so please don't share anything that's confidential, and that you don't need to or don't want to share, but if you wanted to share anything with the other participants, and this is also going to my transcription, so, just please share just as much as you want about that, if you want.

Rhea Muthane: Erm, I mean, I think that whatever I have to say is very open. Like, we don't want to build anything that's, you know, owned by anyone. If people are interested to build something similar and have similar interests, and there's a lot that can come out of us sharing and building this together. And if anybody just wants to have- like, bounce off ideas off each other, or maybe just talk, always happy to help.

Can I get my email ID to them somehow? And maybe share the Makeflix website, and- so that they can find us. And love to chat. We're always looking for people, and right now, whoever we are, we're all in different parts of the world, and it's very

interesting to see all of this come together. Because all of our unique voices come, and very cool projects and perspectives come out of it. So, yes, it's interesting to just even, I think, talk to us. Yes, that's it.

Interviewer: Nice. Yes, there's always some- I think tomorrow, it's not 100%; there are some, yes, moving parts. But there may be a presentation tomorrow by this guy in Brazil, who has a collective called Gambiarrologia; the studies of gambiarra. And he's been doing some very interesting, both artistic and design work, and then education, in the last, I don't know, 13 or 14 years. And I think he will be sharing, tomorrow, information about an exhibition that he's preparing, and there may be some connecting points.

And you have been receiving the emails, right? So, that's our mailing list; if you just reply to reusecity@ whatever, live northumbriaac. On Microsoft. It's stupid, sorry. But if you reply to that, I guess maybe you can share URLs or other possibilities to interact with people.

Rhea Muthane: Yes. Yes.

Interviewer: But, yes.

Rhea Muthane: Will do that.

Interviewer: I think I'm- you know, I think we covered some interesting parts here, and this can be a good way to start conversations with the other participants. So, if you have anything else to add?

Rhea Muthane: No, thank you so much for having me. I hope to have some of these conversations again, and with more people who are watching this. I will share my email ID on the list, and the website URL. And yes, I'll attend tomorrow's session, and I'll keep- and I will maybe attend a few more I can next week.

Interviewer: Yes, this one tomorrow; I think it will be very late to you. It will be probably early Saturday. Because it's 5pm here in Germany. So, but, yes, I'll record that and hopefully share some other things on the email list.

Rhea Muthane: Yes.

Interviewer: So, I'll stop recording.

Rhea Muthane: Thank you so much, this was really cool.

END AUDIO