SOLARPUNK FUTURES

CONTENTS

GUIDELINES FOR REINSCRIPTION
of our
STRUGGLE FOR UTOPIA

*As transcribed from **The Free Earth Archive** by the delegates to the Assembly for the Future*

Fig. 1. *The Free Earth Archive*, 02025. Passed down to us by our Ancestors, this archive documents humanity's legacies of freedom. *The Archive* is an example of an extremely durable diamond–obsidian composite cold–storage technology characteristic of the early 21st century utopians.
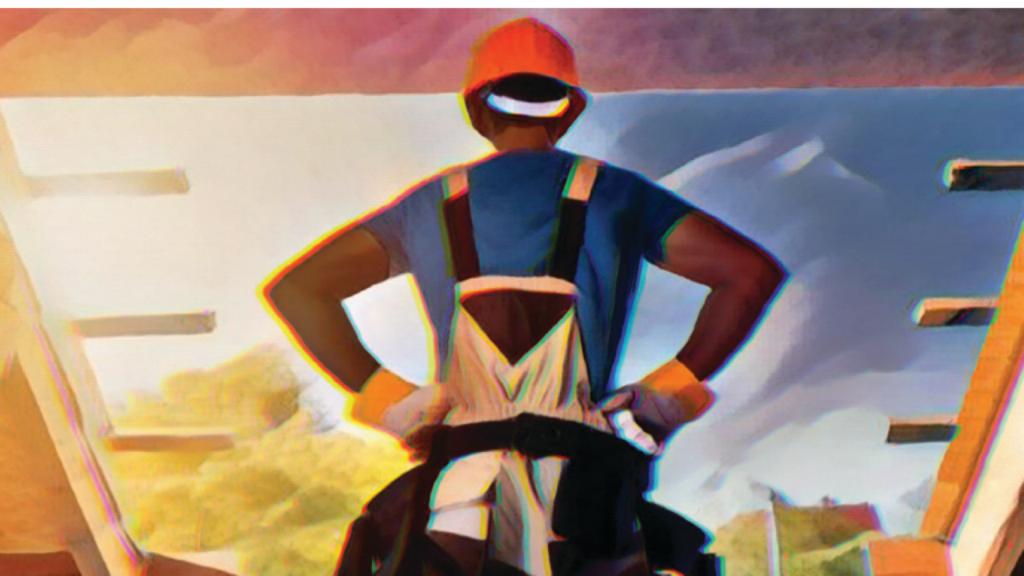
OVERVIEW

[*Excerpts from the* *The Free Earth Archive*]

Living now, in our free society, we must honor our Ancestors for their struggle. This is not just an ethical imperative, but the only practical method for maintaining our utopia. The struggle for utopia is a continuous process that demands — from any so bold as to fight for it — a memory of the joys and despairs our Ancestors found...

The following three techniques are designed to facilitate conversations. They allow future generations to remember, learn, and participate in humanity's legacy of freedom. Through these techniques, *The Free Earth Archive* grows as it is reinscribed.

There is a reason Technique 001 is a Festival — freedom is a struggle, but it is also a joy. Struggle in joyful solidarity for utopia. Good Luck!

MATERIALS

Along with these guidelines, you will find the following artifacts enclosed:

- *8 Ancestor Cards*
- *22 Value Cards*
- *35 Tool Cards*
- *17 Challenge Cards*
- *6 Cards to add your own struggles to* **The Archive** *(2 each of Values, Tools, and Challenges)*

Ancestors

Values

Tools

Challenges

SETUP

01. *Separate the cards into four piles, one for each type of card (Ancestors, Values, Tools, and Challenges) and place them all in the middle.*
02. *Distribute paper and pen to each of the Assembly Members (players).*
03. *Designate a timekeeper. A phone timer works well.*

PROTECTING THE ASSEMBLY'S INTEGRITY

Techniques like the Festival of Remembrance and the others enclosed can expose Assembly Members to the traumas of the world before. In order to ensure ongoing dignity of each member of the assembly, consent and boundaries around the techniques are key.

Lines and Veils

Assembly Members should disucss Lines & Veils at the beginning of each technique.

Lines are hard boundaries around themes or ideas that we do not cross. They are not alluded to. They simply do not happen. A line may mean redrawing a challenge card.

Veils are allowed to happen, but without details, and do not occupy the focus of the story at any time, i.e., violence can be alluded to but not decribed in detail.

Lines & Veils can be established by any member at any point they may arise.

Remember, the dignity of each of the members of the Assembly is more important than the outcome of any given scenario.

Modified Consensus

Modified Consensus is a simple way to make decisions while ensuring all opinions are heard and no one feels strongly against any group decision. Consensus here does not necessarily mean "full agreement," but consent, as in "no objections." There are more formal models, but the basic procedures are:

01. **Discuss** - *Share ideas freely and ensure everyone's voice is heard before making any proposals.*
02. **Object** - *Anyone can block any proposal if they feel strongly against it, i.e., "this is not good enough for now or safe enough to try."*
03. **Test for consensus** - *Rather than taking a vote in favor, you ask if anyone objects to a proposal.*
04. **Adapt** - *If there is a block, the whole group searches for adaptations to achieve consensus.*
05. **Vote, if needed** - *If, after discussion, no consensus can be achieved, a majority vote can be used.*

TECHNIQUE 001: FESTIVAL OF REMEMBRANCE

You have been chosen as members of this year's Assembly for the Future. Your sacred task is to lead the opening of the Festival of Remembrance where you collectively remember how each of your Ancestors came together to overcome the Challenges of the world before. The Assembly must project your minds backward into one of the many pivotal moments in our legacy of freedom to secure the utopia we've won.

The goal of this technique is to collectively "remember" one of the many stories that grew into our utopia.
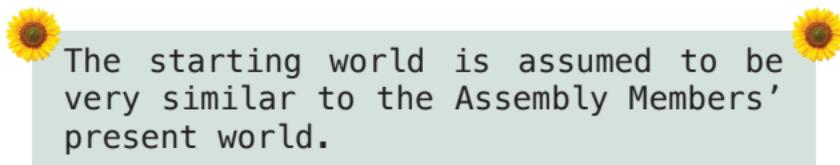
This technique has four phases:
  01. The Challenge
  02. The Ancestors
  03. Building the New World
  04. Remembrance

01. The Challenge

Our festival starts by naming one of the challenges of the world before. None of them were easy to overcome.

Draw one Challenge card as a group.

Any Member begins by stating, "When we overcame the Challenge of _____, I remember …" Everyone goes around the circle collectively describing the nature of the Challenge and why it was so daunting.

The starting world is assumed to be very similar to the Assembly Members' present world.

OPTIONAL TRADITION — WORLD-BUILDING
If the group would like to start with a modified world, the group may determine it using Modified Consensus during this phase, i.e., a more dystopian near future, a real historical moment from the past. The group may also limit the story's scope in time or space. Was it overcome intergalactically, at the national level, the municipal level? Was it for just one sweet day of freedom, or for many years thereafter?

OPTIONAL TRADITION — MASKING
Draw a Value card alongside the Challenge and decide as a group how capitalism masks the truth of that Challenge behind the Value, i.e., Capitalism uses the Value of Responsibility (in the form of individualist recycling) to mask the truth of Landfills.

Example: 01. The Challenge

[The group draws the Challenge of homelessness.]

Colette: *When we overcame the Challenge of homelessness, I remember that people without homes were often very isolated from other people who weren't homeless. This isolation made it extra hard to find work and services and resources.*

Ursula: *I remember how infuriating it was that people were denied shelter because they were prevented from doing good work for decent wages. Plenty of people were looking for work and just kept out of the economy.*

Alyssum: *Yeah, and there were tons of people who had more than one home, but there was so much scarcity on everyone's minds, no one ever considered just transferring all those unoccupied homes to people who needed shelter.*

02. The Ancestors

Our Ancestors are the reason we are here. The festival is designed to honor and reinscribe their struggle.

Each Assembly Member remembers an Ancestor by drawing one Ancestor, one Value, and two Tool cards.

Each Assembly Member remembers an Ancestor, the Values that guided them, and the Tools they brought along or created along the way.

Set a five-minute timer to write down each Ancestors' details.

Use your imagination to write how each Ancestor initially approached the Challenge. Since they won't fully overcome the challenge until the next phase, be sure to think about where they came up short and/ or which powers opposed them. Remember each Ancestor's name, background, and what motivated them to struggle for a better world.

Some Ancestors focused on only one of their tools. Others combined them in emergent ways.

When the timer is up, someone begins by sharing how their Ancestor initially approached the Challenge.

Example: 02. The Ancestors

[Alyssum draws the Coordinator, a Value of Biomimicry, and Tools of Land Rights and Graffiti. After the five-minute timer goes off, the group checks if everyone is ready and Alyssum volunteers to share first.]

Alyssum: *Alicia was an etymologist programmer who studied social insect behaviors. They utilized their knowledge and inspiration to design de-centralized algorithms on the blockchain for purchasing and combining tracts of cheap, vacant, and foreclosed land and returning that land to the commons. Those common lands are marked by a "Free Earth" graffiti tag for all to know and use as commons. Unfortunately, the resources to purchase this land were limited, and Alicia's group was only able to purchase a lot of degraded, even poisoned land, and much of it remained disconnected from other tracts.*

03. Building the New World

Together, we weave each of our Ancestors' narrative threads into the tapestry that built this part of our utopia. This is the culmination of the Festival of Remembrance.

Collectively tell the story of how the Ancestors came together to overcome the Challenge.

Work together to tell the rest of the story. Everyone participated in overcoming the Challenge (and many other unnamed ancestors, besides). Make sure everyone has a chance to explain the role of their Ancestor. Discuss which roadblocks were encountered and how the Ancestors overcame them.

The following questions can help guide you:

- ∞ *How did the Ancestors collaborate with one another to overcome the challenge?*
- ∞ *What was a key decision the Ancestors made together?*
- ∞ *How did those responsible for perpetuating the Challenge counter the Ancestors' efforts?*
- ∞ *How did the world look after the Ancestors' intervention?*

Build on each other's ideas with consent. Don't be afraid to "remind" or "be reminded" that something actually happened a little bit differently, i.e., modify or elaborate what someone else said. Any disagreements should be resolved in a friendly manner through Modified Consensus.

This phase ends when someone declares, "We honor our Ancestors for their struggle." The group uses Modified Consensus to decide if they have overcome the Challenge.

Example: 03. Building the New World

[In the previous rounds, Alyssum, Ursula, and Colette remembered their Ancestors, who are struggling against homelessness. Alyssum's Ancestor is putting vacant land into a Community Land Trust. Ursula's Ancestor started a Houseless Union, and Collette's Ancestor is designing a replicable, ecological community plan.]

Alyssum*: I think the vacant lands started to become more than just the idea of commons with some of Collete's Ancestor's community plans.*
Ursula*: The Houseless Union helped coordinate people to provide labor to help build the communities. Those same people needed shelter and community to live in.*
Alyssum*: Maybe Collette's Ancestor collaborated wtih the Union on experiments to improve the community plans, too.*
Colette*: I like that idea. I think the plans improved toward more community-sufficiency and the communities shared the improvements as they spread. We could have figured out a lot of communal-sufficient energy systems with more help and expertise.*
Ursula*: The Houseless Union also started lending tools and knowledge in addition to labor as it gained actual physical infrastructure in these communities.*

[Alyssum, Ursula, and Colette continue their dialogue until someone declares, "We've honored the Ancestors for their struggle" and the rest of the group agrees.]

04. Remembrance

The Festival memorializes our
Ancestors' struggle for utopia. The
Assembly must participate in the
legacy of freedom during this final
phase.

**Each Assembly Member answers at
least one:**

- ∞ *How long did it take to overcome the
  challenge? Could it have taken a much
  longer or shorter time?*
- ∞ *Were you able to fully overcome the
  Challenge, or just the worst of it?*
- ∞ *Who joined, ignored, or opposed your
  efforts?*
- ∞ *What is being done today, in the
  utopia, to mitigate the possibility of the
  Challenge arising again?*
- ∞ *What risks did the Ancestors take? Did
  they make sacrifices?*
- ∞ *What other Tools and Values could have
  been used?*
- ∞ *How do you think the Ancestors felt
  when they faced this Challenge?*
- ∞ *Did you question, affirm, or clarify your
  current real-world impact through the
  Festival?*
- ∞ *Who are some real-world people you
  hope will be remembered by future
  generations for facing this same
  Challenge?*

TECHNIQUE 354:
NAIL, MEET HAMMER

This technique can be used as individual Assembly Members or as a full Assembly.

The goal of this technique is to overcome a series of Challenges creatively by invoking specific Ancestors, Values, and Tools.

Pick one Ancestor, Value, and Tool as a group.

Draw three Challenge cards and describe how you overcame them.
Assembly Members describe to each other how they overcame these Challenges using only the available Ancestor, Values, and Tools.

If all present Assembly Members vote that the Challenges have been creatively overcome, the game ends.
Players may draw additional Ancestor, Value, and Tool cards. The more additional cards drawn, the more time it took to overcome that Challenge.

TECHNIQUE 759:
IRL RFN

This technique is an important way to ensure that *The Free Earth Archive* is more than mere history. This can be used by individual Assembly Members, or as a full Assembly.

The goal of this technique is to inspire ideas for facing Challenges In Real Life, Right F***kin' Now.

Select a Challenge your community is currently facing.

This does not have to be an existing card.

Draw a Value to guide your way, then quick-draw Tools until you spark an idea.

Organize a group to put that idea into practice!

18

ABOUT THIS GAME

This game was created by the artist collective Solarpunk Surf Club. We wanted to facilitate collective thinking toward realistic utopian futures and encourage people to engage in the real planning around what it might take to get there.

While leaving plenty of room for players, Solarpunk Futures is not neutral about the direction in which our utopia lies: consent, ecology, egalitarianism, direct democracy, and cooperation are all values embodied directly in the gameplay, as well as in many of the cards.

We exist in a time of deep alienation from each other and depoliticization from political ancestries — our legacies of freedom. Play allows us to transcend the ordinary and become visonaries. Whether players have known each other for a long time or they are strangers at a public event, Solarpunk Futures aims to inspire solidarity through collaborative storytelling.

We hope Solarpunk Futures will be relevant to educators and librarians, artists and performers, activists and community groups as a fun and engaging way to bring people together around compelling visions of the future. We hope people will play with their families, in schools and other places of

19

education, and in parks, libraries, and other public spaces.

Players can gain connections with one another and engage in fun, speculative utopianism to broaden their own ideas. Beyond the game, we hope to inspire people to take immediate action in their communities to bring about the Solarpunk Futures they imagine.

Solarpunk?

Solarpunk is a visionary utopian politics and aesthetic that critically engages the reality of capitalist catastrophe while maintaining radical optimism about humanity's hopes for a communal, ecological future.

Solarpunk is a restorative justice process at a planetary scale — among people, and between humans and non-human nature. That means reclaiming pieces of pre-capitalist culture, ensuring material accountability for harmful practices, and prefiguring radical adaptability toward new ones. Solarpunk maintains a utopian and ecological vision for the potentialities of our interrelations in the present.

CREDITS & LICENSES

Solarpunk Futures is a project by Solarpunk Surf Club, led by members Nick Lyell & Max Puchalsky. The following people made this game possible:

- *∞ Borealis, Laurie Beth Clark, Michael Peterson, Alyssum Pohl, Lizzie Kiser, and everyone else who playtested.*
- *∞ Solarpunk Futures is funded in part by a grants from the Madison Arts Commission and Dane Arts, with additional funds from the Wisconsin Arts Board.*

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SOLARPUNK FUTURES

To find out more about this game, updates, and expansions, visit our website at

thefuture.wtf

AN EXAMPLE OF FESTIVITIES

The following transcript of a complete, brief, Festival of Remembrance provides new Assembly Members one example of how to conduct the Festival.

O1: The Challenge

John: *I'll start. When we overcame the Challenge of Medical Debt, I remember there was a lot of misinformation and strong interests lobbying against the creation of universal health care for a majority of the people and it was difficult to overcome that.*

Sean: *I remember that there were lots of widespread diseases and unnecessary deaths from people in poverty unable to afford even a simple doctor's visit. A large portion of the population was just considered expendable.*

Octavia: *When I remembered medical debt, I went a different direction, and it was more about healthcare being seen as a for-profit entity so a lot of people were finding the ways that they could charge people the most, and so they were trying to get as much money out of it as possible.*

Eric: *That topic reminds me a little bit of just how scared of change a lot of people are where it's definitely a big change for the society and people will accept how things run as a given, in this case, healthcare being for-profit. So when you try to get rid of that accepted norm, it can be difficult sometimes.*

02. The Ancestors

[Octavia draws the Hacker, a Value of The Irreducible Minimum, and Tools of Vertical Farms and Pirate Radio.

After the five-minute timer is up, she volunteers to go first.]

Octavia: *Geraldine believed that healthcare was an irrefutable human right and that everyone should have access to resources to maintain their health and wellness. In her work with vertical farms to provide food for underprivileged areas, she got targeted by a Gestapo-like government organization. This targeting revealed that this economy and government was based solely on a for-profit scheme. This sparked a new passion to bring down "the man", literally starving and letting their population die. With her pirate radio broadcast among networks of other outraged marginalized people, she got people to establish community-supplied healthcare, where communities took care of one another through various means including raiding doctor's offices for antibiotics and supplies. Those who had experience would help at the clinics.*
Eric: *That's pretty good. Is there a place where she came up short or found that her skills alone were unable to overcome the Challenge?*
Octavia: *Yeah, she had no medical experience so she was kind of struggling. I think that mainly the issue is that it*

being community run, they lacked a lot of resources and expertise that they really needed to have really effective medical care. They were able to get ahold of antibiotics or painkillers so they could treat, like, strep throat, but they only had a few people with expertise to treat somebody with something like a thyroid issue.

[Eric draws the Elder, a Value of Usufruct, and Tools of Education and Direct Action.]

Eric*: My Ancestor is an elder. She was known only as Maestra. She lived, well, she supposedly lived in Mexico, but she communicated only through Q-anon-style info drops where she essentially told people where there were vulnerabilities in the supply chains and where they were. She directed people to storm the right location at the right time to be able to intercept medical supplies, and vaccine plans, and insulin producing equipment, and things like that. So in response to this very effective direct action tactic, national governments started cracking down, turning to more militaristic responses or militaristic presence along major supply routes. Shipping containers were guarded with armed guards and militias and things like that, so it was getting harder to use those kinds of mass people power tactics.*

[Sean draws the Grower, a Value of Solidarity, and the Tools of Cooperatives and Graffiti.]

Sean*: I'll go next. I had a grower as my Ancestor, and their name was Henry Maxwell. He was a farmer whose wife fell ill with a very preventable flu because they were unable to afford the flu shot as well as doctor visits or even going to the hospital, and unfortunately she ended up passing away with it. To alleviate his sadness, he ended up turning to art to try and paint the sadness away or express his feelings and overall this art ended up becoming his passion and enveloped most of his time. As he kept painting more and more he was noticing how angry he really was underneath all of it, and so the art became an outlet for his anger, and he wanted to start spreading the message. He turned to graffiti and started making murals of sick or dying patients with things like money with a little x through it showing that they couldn't afford to be saved. Over time the art became angry and angrier and it was very much like a Banksy-esque thing where everyone was super excited when the new one was unveiled, but no one cared even a week later. Eventually, the message intensified, it became murals of these legions of people storming hospitals or doctors' offices and demanding treatment for sick loved ones, but unfortunately the murals weren't enough to motivate people to actually create a movement to change the healthcare system on their own.*

[John draws the Builder, a Value of Care, and Tools of Photography and Unions.]

John*: Mine was a little bit smaller in scope. Jeremy was in the field of hospital administration and he sincerely believed that he could change the way that hospitals prioritize care rather than profits. He believed that he could become the intermediary between the administration and patients, and try to reform the hospital that he worked at, at least. He was initially disheartened at what he saw and for a while he had kind of felt like he had lost himself to working in that position. After a promotion, he felt like he had some power to change things and decided to start a photography campaign. He started this anonymous instagram account called Doctor Who and it was a place where doctors around the world could post their concerns and provide some accountability for grievances in hospital administration and other things. Then his account was found out, and he was fired from his job, but the movement had already taken off.*

03. Building the New World

Octavia: *Okay, well, I think Geraldine high-key followed Maestra. That would make sense because she was trying to get supplies and Maestra would know where it was.*
Sean: *Most likely, Henry would have discovered the pirate radio that Geraldine started and heard that there was this initiative making headway—that people were trying to come together and actually make a change and that was the one thing he wasn't able to do, so he wanted to join in. He would have joined—found one of the groups nearby and joined in on either raiding the caravans or just trying to help out any of these suppliers.*
Octavia: *I feel like Jeremy was fired from the hospital but theoretically, like, if he did enough on the instagram account and enough things gained traction, more doctors actually started helping at community hospitals, which gave a lot of the expertise and some of the special skills that were so limited.*

[Octavia looks to John for consent.]

John: *That could definitely have been the case — where Jeremy and Geraldine met up at some point, maybe through an interview on the pirate radio, like a podcast or something?*
Octavia: *Let's say it was.*
John: *They did an interview together and*

afterwards got connected and started trying to use the platform that he had created through this Doctor Who account, trying to find the resources the community clinics needed because so many doctors had benefited from it. The platform was a way that they could give back in some sense.

Eric*: I think Maestra would have also hooked up with some of these doctors and started getting them to basically develop curricula and use her ability to distribute these drops to get information into these community clinics. They essentially propagandized to the soldiers as well so they would actually start using the clinics. People surrounded them, welcomed them, and disarmed them. Maybe the graffiti helped with that, too?*

Sean*: Henry was able to come in and help create movement art after there was more of a solid organization. Maybe if Maestra had an image that she put forth of herself, that started being tagged everywhere. That could also be how Henry got into it: he started having all the people that would raid wear clothing, or tag locations, or supply chains that they hit with the graffiti and just help spread a movement. These actions would be a symbol of a new wave of universal health care, of people being able to get whatever care they need.*

Eric*: Maestra would also have given all of the other Ancestors in the group access to the megaphone, basically so that they all used it to direct people as well. Maestra*

become many!

John*: I was thinking one of the things, especially with graffiti, was trying to draw more attention specifically to the worst hospitals. For example, they started tagging the hospitals to call them out for bad practices.*

Sean*: Yeah, almost like a thieves' camp sort of symbology going on: "this is a good hospital," "we'll provide for you," and, "this one is run by a bunch of jerks that aren't going to do anything."*

Octavia*: I think we've honored our Ancestors for their struggle against unaffordable health care. Does anybody object to that idea based on what we've discussed so far?*

04. Remembrance

[The players take a moment to read through the questions and think about which they might like to answer.]

Sean*: To answer the question of "who are some real world people today facing the same challenge that you hope will be be remembered," I would say right now a really obvious one, at least in U.S. politics, is Bernie Sanders. He keeps trying to push for Medicaid and Medicare for all and getting universal health care. That's been something he's been pushing for constantly. Whether you support it or not, that's probably something he's going to become well known*

for for a long time. He understands that a lot of the people in poverty or a lot of people that don't have a lot in life right now aren't able to always go to the doctor or get the health care that they need because they can't afford it, or they don't have insurance. So I definitely say that that's something we're seeing on the political side.

John*: To answer the same question in a different way, I think a lot of different strata of society — a lot of doctors, for instance — are frustrated with and trying to challenge medical debt because they're equally frustrated with the system, and dealing with insurance companies, and realizing just how inefficient a lot of this actually is, and seeing a lot of this contradictory "evidence" being displayed, that the system we have currently is the correct one, and that there's no better way to do this, when they deal with it every day and just see how bad it really is.*

Octavia*: They're trapped. I mean a lot of doctors are trapped themselves, right? The administrators are the ones making a lot of the decisions that affect them directly because these hospitals are privately owned by shareholders and ultimately comes down to the fact that the people making the decisions don't have patients' interests at heart, so yeah, doctors are kind of just stuck in between.*

Sean*: We've created a system that, like, forces people who could provide health care to say "no," to people who need care.*

31

Eric: *Well I'm gonna go with the question, "were we able to fully overcome it, or just the worst of it?" I don't think we were able to fully overcome it because, based on the way we dealt with it, it doesn't really address future medical technology or — it's kind of like taking everything that exists now and trying to put it into the public domain. But I don't think we have a real plan for how we deal with the next pandemic or vaccine development, and all these things that require massive coordination and a lot of funding and resources.*

John: *Yeah, a lot of pharmaceutical companies are privately owned right now, and you can't really make vaccines at a clinic, per se.*

Eric: *Yeah, especially not new ones.*

Octavia: *I'll answer a quick one. I think it could have all happened in a really short time. People are really motivated by being healthy and taking care of each other and if we showed people an alternative, they would really jump on it quickly.*

The social ecological storytelling
game where you and your friends
build a better world.

1–8
PLAYERS

40
MINUTES

AGES
14+