



THE UN WOMEN REGIONAL OFFICE FOR EUROPE
AND CENTRAL ASIA PRESENTS:

AWAKE NOT SLEEPING

REIMAGINING FAIRY TALES FOR A NEW GENERATION

This powerful collection of fairy tales from across Europe and Central Asia aims to **change the way societies think about women and girls' roles, leadership and rights** by **rewriting and reimagining popular fairy tales.**

The initiative explores the role of fairy tales in the cultural struggle for gender equality, ending violence against women and intersectional feminism. Over time, many fairy stories that were created by women for women, about characters who challenged the restrictive gender roles, expectations, values and laws of their time were rewritten by story collectors.

This new collection of reimagined fairy tales provides new generations the opportunity to explore new possibilities of seeing gender equality for themselves, their friends, families and communities.

Drawing from 28 stories across the region, the "Awake not sleeping" collection and the companion guide invite you as a reader, an educator, or an important adult in a child's life to further awaken your curiosity and the curiosity of children and young people about the role of stories in creating gender equality and building equal and respectful relationships.

Explore the collection of reimagined fairy tales [HERE](#).



Reimagining fairy tales

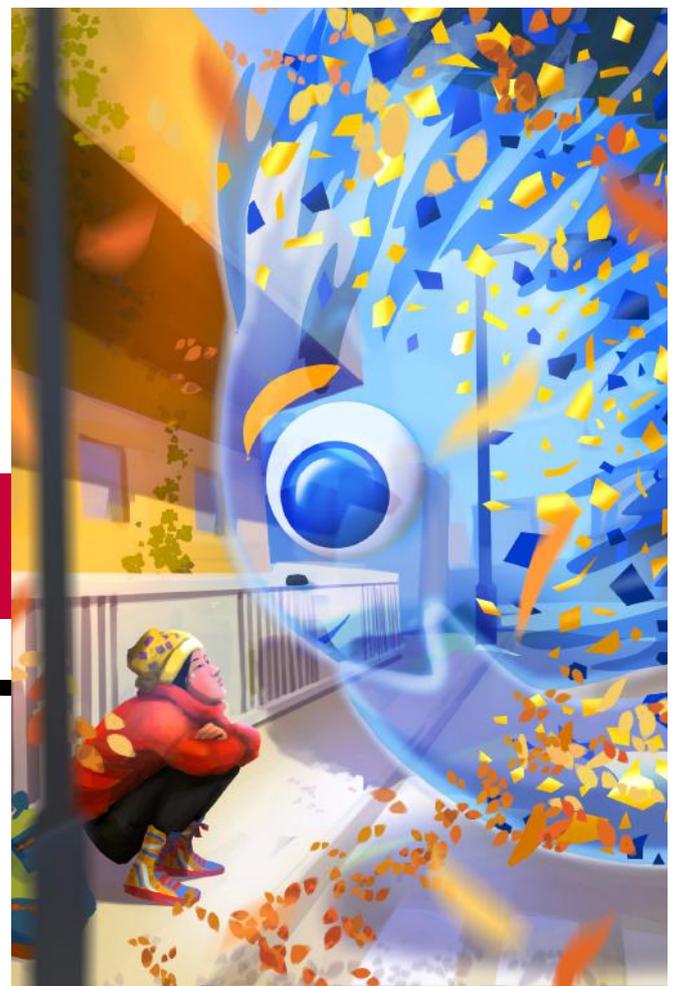
From September 2020 - April 2021 UN Women gathered 100+ feminist writers and activists for feminist stories writing workshops to reimagine familiar fairy tales and write new ones for a new generation. The workshops supported writers to critically analyze classic tales and to reflect on how to transform, reinterpret, redefine or disrupt these tales as tools for promoting gender equality.

"I would like to highlight the extremely friendly and professional atmosphere of the workshop," praised one participant. "Those who led the workshop were not just professionals, but also inspirers: I felt how this project was important for them too. In such an atmosphere, you always perceive information and new knowledge better."

Another participant added: "It helped me think more accurately of the audience we were writing for [children]. I also enjoyed using the tools and theory we discussed to rewrite the stories and make them fun, dynamic and enjoyable for a young audience, rather than simply didactic."

The role of fairy tales in shifting gender stereotypes

Tales and historical characters are part of every society's cultural heritage, disseminated over the generations through oral, pictorial and written traditions. They play an important role in conveying folklore, core values and norms, including gender norms. For children, fairy tales constitute a big part of their socialization process, stimulating their imagination, creativity and enabling their identification with characters. Such stories allow children to temporarily escape from reality and are also powerful educational and socialization tools, helping girls and boys grow and develop their personality.



Marking the **25th anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action**, and in line with the **Generation Equality Forum** in Paris in June 2021 as an intergenerational and intersectional gathering of women activists to create renewed momentum and accelerate progress towards women's rights – UN Women is garnering efforts to enable positive change and promote gender equality by developing and devoting a modern fairy tale collection for the young readers and citizens of tomorrow.

“The world is changing dramatically. It is particularly poignant that as the COVID-19 pandemic forces people’s physical disconnection, **it is also showing how people are all connected by histories, literature and social interactions that are grounded in common values.**”

ALIA EL-YASSIR, UN WOMEN REGIONAL DIRECTOR FOR EUROPE AND CENTRAL ASIA

Alia continues, “Despite all the detrimental consequences of the pandemic, it is also an opportunity to reflect and, even more importantly, to act to make gender equality and human rights a lived reality for all.”

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