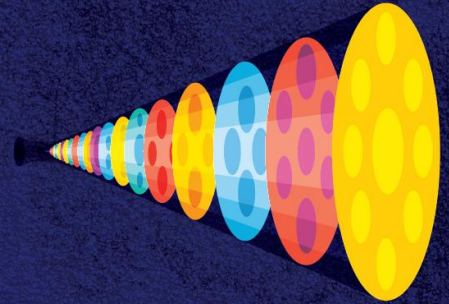


Youth4Foresight Toolkit

JANUARY 2024



Youth4Foresight Toolkit (JANUARY 2024) - INTPA FORESIGHT HUB NETWORKS BUILDER

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Images of the future

Purpose: Create awareness of our own unconscious images of the future and start thinking about a vision for a future that we want to move towards together.

Time taken: 90 minutes

Participants: Do this activity as a whole youth advisory structure, or in smaller groups (e.g. thematic committees).

Difficulty level: Easy

What comes before: This tool will work well as the very first foresight exercise people participate in.

What comes after: Continue with Detectives of the Future, or choose another tool from the toolkit.

Videos: [Introduction to the toolkit](#), [Introduction to foresight](#), [Introduction to Images of the future](#)

Group sizes: 3-5 people

Facilitation: The exercise should be facilitated by a Youth Focal Point or experts/technical assistants (in which case the “Why use this tool?” and “Instructions” parts can be shared with the participants beforehand), or groups can self-facilitate the tool if they have read this document.

Welcome to the first tool of the Toolkit: Images of the Future!

Why use this tool?

The people with the greatest awareness of their image of the future are often the most empowered to drive the future they want. The skills and ability to develop images of the future are ones that can be acquired, and they are instrumental in ensuring that the future is not left to chance but is carefully designed to be good to future generations.

This exercise will bring each individual's images of the future to the surface so they can learn about the differences in how they each see the world. It is important to remember that there is no one perfect image of

the future and that all of our images of the future are equally valid. The skills involved in 'futures thinking' also allow us to better understand the role that the future plays in our own lives. We hope that by using this toolkit young people will experience the personal benefits of being better at anticipating and planning for their own futures.

What are images of the future?

Images of the future are the vivid imaginary depictions of the future that we all have in our minds. Those images are different for everyone - some people have clear ideas of what they think will happen in the future, but we all have unconscious ideas shaped by the world around us. Without thinking, we all assume certain things are going to happen.

This tool has three main objectives:

- Create awareness of the unconscious assumptions and images of the future that we all possess. By surfacing these images, we are preparing ourselves to challenge and think beyond our existing assumptions about the future.
- Enable bonding and relationships to form between participants. By sharing and reflecting on their ideas for the future, they may build trust and get to know each other at a deeper and more personal level.
- Understand how group members see the future at the start of the process. This can act as a baseline to understand everyone's levels of optimism, agency and evaluate how future foresight activities influence their thinking.

In addition, this tool gives sufficient freedom of expression as it can take the form of a written narrative, a collage, a drawing, a role play or any other form that the group or/and the YFP and experts/technical assistants decide to better adapt their cultural context and needs.

Instructions

Introducing the activity (10 minutes)

The exercise is briefly explained without going into too much detail on the concept of images of the future, as the reflections on why everyone's images of the future are important and why we need to be aware of them comes later.

Step 1: What future do you imagine? (20 minutes)

A day in my life... in 2050!

We start with an individual imagination activity. Each participant takes a pen and paper and writes or draws 'a day in the life' of themselves in the future. Everyone should imagine the year is 2050 and think about what his or her day looks like.

Everyone should use all his or her senses. If people finish early, they can start to discuss with their partner the differences and similarities between their visions of the future.

Step 2: Sharing in groups and plenary (30 minutes)

Uncovering assumptions

In small groups (3-5 people), spend 15 minutes discussing your images of the future. Each group is self-facilitated. The following questions can help everyone compare their stories:

- What is different and similar between your image and others in the group?
- Why do you think you have this image of the future?
- What do you find most surprising about someone else's future story?
- Who or what is influencing your image of the future?
- Can you identify any assumptions you have made about the future?

- How do you think our culture influences our images of the future?

These questions can be read aloud by the facilitator, printed out or shared on a powerpoint slide so everyone can refer back to them.

After discussing in small groups, each group shares during 15 minutes some of their most interesting discussion points with the full group. The purpose of building up from solo visioning to a whole group one is to create a conversation that brings everyone together over a shared set of personal learnings.

Step 3: Explain what Images of the Future are (10 minutes)

Learning about Images of the Future

Now that the whole group has done their own exploration of their image of the future, the facilitator explains the concept of how each person has their own image of the future, and how that guides their decisions, actions and dreams for the future. The intro to the tool and the video might be useful for helping the facilitator. There are also links to additional reading in the resources section below.

Step 4: Postcard exercise (10 minutes)

“This Present Moment used to be the Unimaginable Future” (Stewart Brand, *The Clock of the Long Now* (1999), 163-4.)

Thanks to a set of historical postcards, the whole group will think critically about the images of the future. Each group discusses a set of 3-4 postcards. These prompts questions can help structure the discussions:

- What do you think about these images?
- What assumptions has the artist made in their image of the future?
- What elements from his present context have the artist extended into their representation of the future?
- In which ways do you think past images of the future have influenced our present moment and/or innovation and technological advancements?

Step 5: Reflection (10 minutes)

Finally, the whole group reflects together on what has been learned from the exercise and how it relates to the willingness of creating better futures through the engagement in the youth advisory structure.

What next ?

This tool does not have a specific output to carry into the next tools, but it's the perfect one to launch a Foresight journey as it will unveil the assumptions behind everyone's images of the future and how further exploring futures to better inform our willingness to create change as a youth advisory structure member.

Preparing for the workshop

The facilitator needs to think how the groups should be mixed so there is a mix of personalities, and everyone gets to meet new people.

For an in-person workshop:

- Make sure the material needed for each step is ready before the session. You can print them or make them available on screens if you do not have printing ability. The materials you will need are:
 - Reflection questions for step 2. Since this activity is self-facilitated, it will be useful for the groups to have easy access to the questions.
 - Postcard images for step 4. There should be enough for 3-4 postcards per group. You will find a set of futuristic pictures by Jean-Marc Côté and other artists painted in 1899, 1900,

1901, and 1910, imagining the year 2000 in France in this folder. Other futuristic representations from the past in your own country and/or region can also be useful.

For a virtual workshop:

- You can directly share the above-mentioned folder of images with participants and ask them to pick which post cards they want to imagine.
- Make sure you have the ability to make breakout rooms in the virtual meeting software that you are using.
- You can copy the [Miro board](#) to help capture some of your discussions

Facilitator tips

- Try to pick different groups every time you break out into smaller groups in this activity, since the purpose is to get everyone meeting and talking with each other. Put people together who do not already know each other and who are not in the same topic specific/committee group.
- Try to encourage everyone to speak throughout the session. When creating a vision together it is so important that everyone feels heard. Try to avoid one or two voices dominating, or doing all of the feedback for their group.

Suggested exercise timings

Please note that you can expand the timings but always try to keep your session shorter than 3 hrs.

Introducing the activity	10 minutes
Step 1: What future do you imagine? <i>A day in my life... in 2050!</i>	20 minutes
Step 2: Sharing in groups and plenary Uncovering assumptions	30 minutes
Step 3: Explain what are Images of the Future Learning about Images of the Future	10 minutes
Step 4: Postcard exercise <i>"This Present Moment used to be the Unimaginable Future"</i>	10 minutes
Step 5: Reflection	10 Minutes

Useful links

- [Miro template](#)
- [Video introduction to foresight](#)
- [Video introduction to Images of the Future](#)

Additional resources

To learn more about images of the future see the following resources:

- A [blog describing the concept in more detail](#)
- [The original book by Fred Polak: The Image of the Future.](#)

Eight types of imagination (effective, constructive, fantasy, empathy, strategic and emotional imagination, dreams, and memory reconstruction). These boil on each other to develop vivid images of the future. One might realize through self-awareness a strength in one type of imagination over others. However, it is important to state that all human beings have the intrinsic capability to use the diverse types of imagination through different levels of intensity. Read more about these types of imaginations from Carneyarts (2022) [here](#).