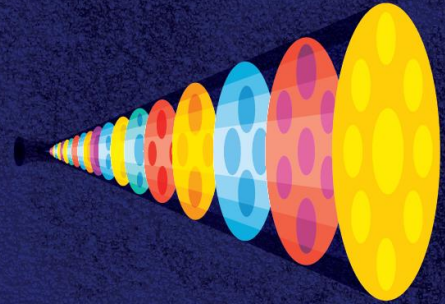


Youth4Foresight Toolkit

DG INTPA



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This document addresses colleagues engaging with young people, youth networks and organisations, or youth advisory structures as an introduction to both foresight concepts and the toolkit itself. Specifically, it aims to guide youth focal points (YFPs) in EU Delegations leading with youth advisory structures, but everyone can draw lessons and experiences on how to take advantage of this toolkit within their particular engagement. They can also share this introduction with youth experts and technical assistances helping them out.

We understand the foresight journey as a continuous and transformative process, and in this journey, not only youth will learn and be transformed, but colleagues and even youth experts as well.

Are you ready to explore the future?

Welcome to the beginning of your foresight journey! This is a journey where you will learn to see the world in a different way. With a wider gaze and eyes full of curiosity, a journey to transform your mind-set and even to start shaping the future.

So let us start from the beginning - *what is foresight?*

At its simplest, Foresight is the structured process of thinking about possible futures. The future is yet to be written, so it is up to us to shape it!

But thinking about the future actually is not easy. There are so many possibilities that it is easy to get lost, lose hope or simply repeat stories about the future that we already know and have heard before.

This toolkit offers a set of structured approaches that will help youth to think creatively, build their skills in thinking about multiple futures and develop novel recommendations for policymakers.

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.

EU Definitions

Foresight is the discipline of exploring, anticipating and shaping the future to help build and use collective intelligence in a structured and systemic way to anticipate developments

Futures is a concept that indicates the presence of possible alternatives that might happen, and the need to consider them.

Why should youth advisory structures think about the future?

In line with the [European Commission's commitment](#) to embed Foresight in better policymaking, INTPA management approved on 17 March 2022 a 5-year incremental approach for the rollout of Strategic Foresight. The approach sets down three objectives: (1) to build an institutional Foresight culture; (2) to inform (the mid-term review and) the next programming; and (3) to position INTPA as a leading futures-shaper partner in the international arena.

Youth

Young people will inherit the consequences of today's decisions, but all too often have no say in them. The Youth Action Plan in EU external action (YAP) sets a great framework for the EU to better engage with and empower young people worldwide. However, a strong institutional mind-set still leads to blind spots, ways of thinking and methods that do not cater for the concerns of young people.

Different youth collectives engaging with our colleagues will apply foresight in different ways, but the approach has the potential to offer value to young people regardless of how the engagement and the collective is structured. Foresight is a methodology with tools that can create space for young people to think freely, outside of institutional norms, and offer alternatives to current decision-making paradigms. Combining a structured yet creative approach to thinking through policy problems can help young people to:

The INTPA Foresight Hub is a community of 150 colleagues from HQ and EU Delegations. Members have set up a Youth4Foresight group whose goal is to provide foresight-related methodological, conceptual, and content guidance for those colleagues interested in better understanding young people's aspirations and frustrations, hopes and fears, and providing them with spaces and tools to co-shape their future, in line with Tool#20 of the Better Regulation Toolbox, as communicated in the [Commission's last update](#) on the European Year of Youth 2022

Youth focal points and colleagues

YFPs from EU Delegations co-created this toolkit designed to help you support youth to most effectively influence EU programmes, projects and policies. Many YFPs and colleagues have limited time and resources to plan and design activities for their group - this toolkit aims to do some of that thinking for you.


In particular, the toolkit responds to three challenges and opportunities YFPs and youth advisory structures members spotted:


- **Driving engagement**
To drive engagement and cohesion within the youth collectives engaging with us.
- **Creating policy messages**
To help youth collectives to create novel and interesting policy messages.
- **Taking action**
To support youth to take action in their own committees, projects and communities.

The toolkit is designed for colleagues to facilitate it, but the materials are self-explanatory enough for youth collectives to take the lead on the activities themselves if they want to do so. When a contracted youth coordinator expert or technical assistants manage activities, we suggest colleagues work together with them to adapt and implement the toolkit.

Generate genuinely novel ideas and policy messages

 **Build young people's legitimacy in expert spaces**

 **Give young people a mandate to speak truth to power**

 **Make complex topics energising and exciting**

Designing a foresight journey for your group

The toolkit includes six different tools to help youth collectives think about the future. The tools can be used either in order, with each tool building on one another's outputs, or individually, as each tool has a slightly different purpose.

Each tool fits within a three stage process: (1) Developing a mind-set to think about the future; (2) Exploring multiple different future possibilities; and (3) Deciding on actions to take forward and recommend



When designing the foresight journey for your group you might want to start by trying out one tool that meets your current needs, or maybe try putting a few together into a journey - try to use at least one tool from each of these three stages.

Running the tools with youth advisory structures

Each tool can be led by the YFPs for the whole youth advisory group, in smaller groups organised by specific topics or in their committees. Many youth advisory structures are already divided into thematic committees, but those structures without committees could work on a specific, or split them into group on specific topics for the purposes of some exercises.

The way each youth advisory structure usually meets can also slightly differ. You will need to think through how these sessions can fit best with how your group meets. For example, you might initially run a few tools with the whole group online or at a weekend residence. Then, over their mandate, you might encourage them to have a go themselves in specific thematic committees.

The following table shows each tool and some recommendations about how each tool can be facilitated:

<p>1. Images of the Future</p>	<p>Stage: Developing a futures mind-set</p>
<p>Aim: To challenge our assumptions about the future and open us up to imagining different futures. This tool helps us to get in the right mind-set for doing foresight.</p> <p>>>Instructions here</p>	<p>Recommended use: This tool is ideally suited to use with a whole youth advisory group near the start of their term. It will help you to understand how they each see the future, as well as develop a baseline by which to measure how their perspectives have changed. If young people want to run the exercise independently in their committees, they may prefer a more focused approach by imagining the future of their specific topics to uncover assumptions about it. They will find this easier having already run the main session as a whole group.</p>
<p>2. Detectives of the Future</p>	<p>Stage: Developing a futures mind-set</p>
<p>AIM: To learn to identify and understand emerging changes in the present. This tool helps build the skills to notice early signals of change and trends.</p> <p>>>Instructions here</p>	<p>Recommended use: Begin by conducting this tool with the whole youth collective facilitated by a colleague or experts/technical assistants. Subsequently, each committee or thematic group can build upon the insights from that first session to identify additional trends and discover their own signs of new. Facilitators can use the 'signs of new' already collected and provided in the tool instructions, but we strongly encourage facilitators, when suited, to also add some recent local news so the exercise has both global and local elements.</p>

3. [Futures Wheel](#)**Stage:** Exploring futures

AIM: To generate new ideas and spark interesting discussions about the future of a topic. This is an exploratory exercise, using "what if" questions to stretch our thinking about the future of a topic.

Recommended use: The futures wheel is a very simple tool that is most effective in small thematic/committee groups. After reading the instructions, participants should be able to self-facilitate the exercise so this is a good activity to get members to try doing some Foresight independently, although you may need to support them to coordinate the setting up of the session.

>>[Instructions here](#)

4. [Three Horizons](#)**Stage:** Exploring futures

AIM: To develop a deeper understanding of the system that sits around a topic, and to identify ideas for action within that system.

Recommended use: The three horizons tool is a good tool to help thematic committees to understand their topic. It may be useful for committees at many different stages of their foresight journey. It is important to properly explain the concept and theory of the three horizons approach before each group starts, but after that the tool is quite friendly for each group to self-facilitate their own discussion. It can also be used for a whole group at the beginning of their mandate or engagement with us.

>>[Instructions here](#)

5. [Visioning](#)**Stage:** Shaping action

AIM: To co-create a vision for a future that we want to move towards together. This can motivate a group and help to align around key messages to deliver.

Recommended use: This exercise really needs to be run with the whole group and should be facilitated by a colleague or experts/technical assistants. Participants will perform sketches of their future visions to each other, before reflecting on and comparing their future worlds, so lots of energy and creativity will be required for this session - but it will also be a great energiser!

>>[Instructions here](#)

6. [Reflection and Taking Action](#)**Stage:** Shaping action

AIM: To reflect and collect learnings from the foresight journey and to translate those learnings into the youth advisory work.

Recommended use: This tool can be used in many different ways - as a quick personal reflection, as a questionnaire or even as a long group discussion. It is a simple reflection activity intended to be coupled with any other tool to deepen the learning and encourage young people to translate that learning into their lives and work. As such, it can be run by a colleague or by young people themselves.

>>[Instructions here](#)

Facilitating the journey

Whether you are a seasoned facilitator or it is your first time, these tips should help you make the sessions go smoothly. But don't worry - preparing for these sessions won't take long at all.

Preparing for a session:

- Make sure you will create safe spaces for youth to share and discuss their thoughts and feelings about the futures. It is important to provide and ensure a safe space for youth, where they are not going to be judged or evaluated. A space where cultural differences are acknowledged and respected. It should be a space for learning and growth, where facilitators themselves and participants listen respectfully to others and show curiosity and openness.
- Share an agenda for the session and decide on groups ahead of time.
- Prepare any materials for the session, which might include setting up the Miro boards or printing the templates provided in this toolkit for each tool. Make sure everyone has the links and/or the information they need to join the session.
- Each activity has recommended timings in the tool instructions. These are intended as loose guidance, for you to edit and meet your needs and time availability. Groups will often need time at the beginning of a session to get settled, open the right links or find the right table., so plan in spare time to transition into and out of activities.

- When designing a session that lasts longer than 90 minutes, we recommend making sure there are breaks.

During the session:

- Start a session with an ice breaker. This is a fun activity to get people loosened up and energised. For example, you could get everyone to answer a question about themselves, or do a fun activity. Some ideas for icebreakers can be found here.
- While a colleague may introduce the activity, most group activities can be self-facilitated by youth. At the beginning of each session, it is important to clearly explain the steps involved in the use of the tool, before letting groups break out and try it on their own. It may be helpful to share the tool instruction for participants to read before the session.

Closing and following up on the session:

- Think about how you will capture the outputs of a session and share it back with the group. You might not need to capture everything - perhaps the final discussion is enough.
- It will be important to close a session by framing the next steps and outlining where the process is going. This sense of direction will lead to increased engagement.
- Think about what outputs might be inputs for the next session, or might be useful to discuss further, such as action ideas and next steps that arise from the session.

How others have used the toolkit

The toolkit was created in close consultation with YFPs, in particular from Ecuador, Ethiopia, Mauritius/Seychelles, Colombia, and Nicaragua and tools from the toolkit were piloted with a number of these EU Delegations youth advisory structures. You can hear some of their reflections on the process in this [video](#).

This is a live section of the toolkit where we plan to add new examples as more groups use the toolkit activities.

Ethiopia

In Ethiopia, YFP Pablo Molina Del Pozo scheduled a 3-hour session as part of a residential weekend. Members of the Youth Sounding Board used the Detectives of the Future tool in their thematic committees, each working at a separate table.

The main objective was for YSB members to learn the skills needed to understand change in their local and global environments. By the end, the groups had identified a series of trends (on post-it notes) that will be important in shaping their context in Ethiopia.

“Studying trends and signals of change helped us recognize important factors that could shape the future context we’ll be operating in. This highlighted areas we need to respond and adapt to” – YSB Member.

“I learned the importance of staying up to date on key trends, both within my industry and more broadly, that could impact my work in the future. I plan to implement a regular trend monitoring process to look for new signals and game-changing developments” – YSB Member

Ecuador

Ecuador’s YFP Michaela Zelenanska organized a two-day meeting with their advisory structure (CoCoECU) to:

- Explain the purpose of CoCoECU and have a clear vision of its work with the Delegation.
- Approve subcommittees work plans so that they can organize to have a real impact.
- Create a sense of unity among members to improve their functioning as a group.

“They were grouped by the subcommittees. They got 40 minutes to answer the questions and did a presentation at the end. We drew the three horizons timeline on the wall and they had post-its of different colours by subcommittee. (...) I think it was a good bridge for them before we started the actual planning the day after. From the feedback I received, they all claimed that it is now much clearer for them what is expected and what can be achieved with the YSB. They all agreed it was important to meet and have such an honest discussion” – Michaela Zelenanska, YFP Ecuador (CoCoECU)



Getting started

So you have read the introduction, but how do you get started using the toolkit? The steps will probably differ slightly for each specific case, but here are some to think about:

- Read the [instructions](#) for the tools you are planning to use, and watch the accompanying videos.
- Decide what you want to achieve with your group and which tools will help to achieve that. You may want to run a series of sessions that link together.
- Figure out how the tools will fit within the meeting schedule of your group, including if they are online, or in person. The tools could be implemented over a residential week(end), or spread out over a number of months to coincide with key milestones or thematic committees meetings.
- Will committees work in their own time or in centrally convened spaces? This may depend on the ability of the members to self-organise.
- Will the activity be done with the whole group or in specific thematic committees? Most of the tools are intended to be used in groups of 3-8 people.
- Introduce your structure to the concept of foresight and why you will be using this toolkit. You can share the [Introduction to the toolkit](#) and the [Introduction to Foresight](#) videos with them for inspiration.
- Figure out which tools can and will be self-facilitated by youth, and which ones will require your facilitation or the one of the experts/technical assistants.
- Encourage the members to watch the videos and read the relevant tools' rationales, instructions, and facilitation tips when needed (you can download the [Word versions](#) of the tools, edit and adjust them), so they understand why they are using them or they can take the lead on the exercises themselves.

Want to learn more about foresight?

Further resources:

If you are already a member of the INTPA Foresight Hub and/or the Youth4Foresight group you can access the [first INTPA Foresight Express series of webinars](#) (5 modules of 30 minutes each), engage in the INTPA Horizon Scanning process and [Foresight practice workshops](#), or consult the toolbox (including some of the tools of this toolkit) for organizing Foresight exercises in other internal settings and spaces.

The platform Ted-Ed in collaboration with the European Commission has launched a special micro-site called "Futures - Forward" with a collection of videos to learn more about: Perception of time, futures mind-set, multiple futures, investing in imagination and taking action. <https://ed.ted.com/future-forward>

The Youth4Foresight group in the INTPA Foresight Hub can also provide advice and support if you need it along your journey! We hope you have been inspired to learn more about foresight and take the next step on your journey.

Did you receive this PDF via email from a colleague? Become member of the INTPA Foresight Hub and/or the Youth4Foresight group for further collaboration and mutual support! Check out more about Foresight in INTPA [here](#) and send your application to the PA01 team:

INTPA-PA01-FORESIGHT@ec.europa.eu

You can come and go as you wish, participate in only one or more activities, depending on your interest and availability.