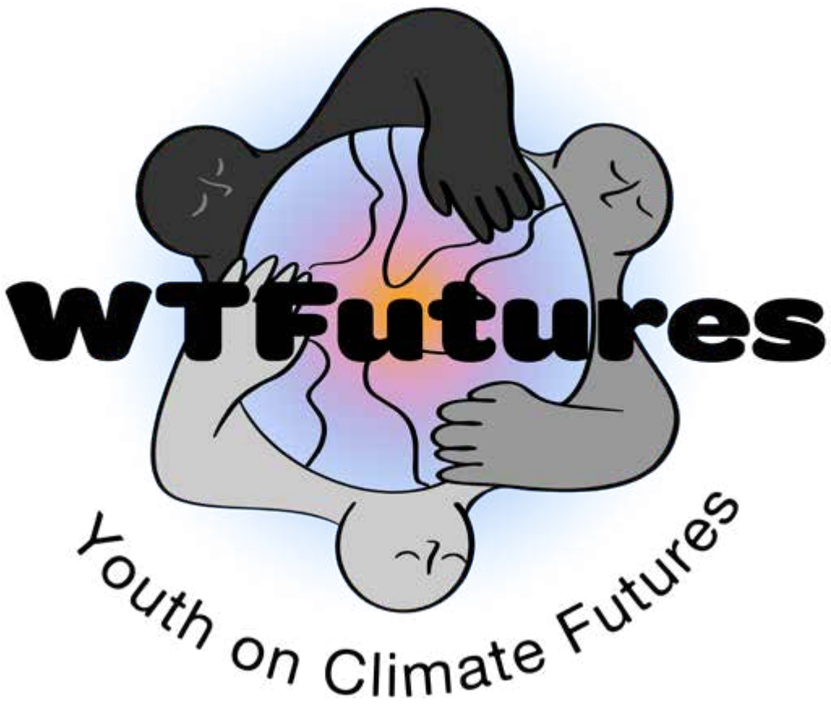

DETAILED ANALYSIS & PROJECT PRESENTATIONS

Plurality University Network ≺ u+ ≻ Réseau Université de la Pluralité

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INTRODUCTION: WHAT IS WTFUTURES?

While the evidence of climate change is overwhelming, climate action is facing a backlash. This could, in part, be attributed to its failure to connect with the aspirations, but also the difficulties, of people all over the world.

Young people are not exempt, in spite of surveys telling us that their choices and actions are already largely influenced by climate issues.

WTFutures – led by the Plurality University Network and supported by the European Climate Foundation – is about listening to them:

- To better understand how young people in the world see the future in the context of climate change, and of the different (political, economic, cultural, social…) ways of responding to it.
- To evaluate how importantly climate change influences their thoughts about the future – be it their own future, or that of larger communities.
- And to understand whether and how they imagined what a sustainable world might look like.

In order to answer these questions, we sought out past and ongoing initiatives in which youths take time to articulate their knowledge, experience and interrogations regarding climate change, the responses to it, and the futures that result from them.

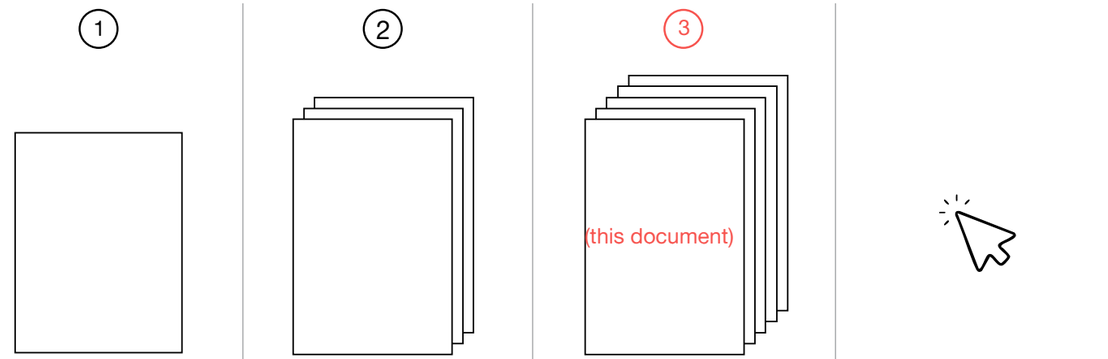
We wished to elevate the visibility of these initiatives and their outcomes; to create interactions among them; and to gain insights based on their combined findings.

We selected 54 projects from 29 countries. We spoke with their initiators. We read their material as well as research papers, surveys, and other reports. We organized online discussions on various cross-cutting issues.

In a separate report, we describe the seven “Key Learnings” of WTFutures. This report intends to give readers access to the richness and the diversity of the material shared by the 54 projects.

The WTFutures Universe

This "Detailed analysis" report provides full details on our systematic analysis of the 54 projects, as well as a summarised presentation of each project. It complements two other reports: one on WTFutures' key learnings and next steps, and an Executive Summary. All contents can also be found on the website.



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY 7 pages	KEY LEARNINGS 32 pages	DETAILED DESCRIPTION AND ANALYSIS OF THE PROJECTS	WEBSITE **WWW.WTFUTURES.XYZ**
	· How we worked	· How we worked	· How we worked
	· What we learned: 7 Key Learnings	· Description of the 54 projects	· What we learned: 7 Key Learnings
	· What’s next: fictional projections and further developments of WTFutures	· WHAT the young participants had to say: Thematic analysis of the 54 projects	· Description of the 54 projects
		· HOW the projects worked with youngsters: analysis of the methods and the experience	· WHAT the young participants had to say: Thematic analysis of the 54 projects
			· HOW the projects worked with youngsters: analysis of the methods and the experience
			· What’s next: fictional projections and further developments of WTFutures
			· Additional content

A LOOK INSIDE THE ENGINE ROOM

The initial intention of WTFutures was *"to better understand how young people in the world see the future in the context of climate change, and of the different (political, economic, cultural, social…) ways of responding to it."*

HOW WE WORKED

IDENTIFYING AND DOCUMENTING PROJECTS

We believe that every inquiry must be built from the ground up. From the start of this project in November 2024 until its end one year later, this meant staying open to surprises and even challenges to what we initially thought we would learn.

We sought past, ongoing, and upcoming projects where young people:
- Collectively explore perspectives on the future and climate change.
- Using some form of collaborative process, regardless of its nature – foresight tools and methods, artistic and fictional approaches, action-learning, etc.

We were also particularly focused on plurality, be it in terms of geography, age groups, initiators, objectives, as well as visions of tomorrow – utopian, dystopian, critical, alternative, interrogative, unconventional, etc.

Since our scope was international, we started broad. We published a call in three languages (English, French and Spanish). We reached out to networks in different countries – working either on climate or on futures-related topics – who could guide us towards projects they identified as relevant to our research. We opened a **dedicated website** where we documented the projects we encountered, and on which projects we had not heard of could document themselves. Our goal was to ensure that we reached people, projects, and communities beyond established pathways.

SELECTING THE PROJECTS

We contacted more than 80 projects, conducted structured interviews with over 45, and ultimately selected 54 projects that were closely aligned with our focus on youth, climate, and futures.

Projects by Geographical Origin

Africa, Middle East	North America	Latin America	Asia	Europe	Oceania
7	7	3	6	29	2

Projects by Age Groups

Children (under 10)	Teens (10-17)	Young adults (18-35)
13 (24%)	31 (57%)	41 (76%)

(the sum total is higher than 100%, since projects could address several age groups)

Obviously, future developments of WTFutures should focus on diversifying the geographical distribution of its projects, as well as increasing the representation of children in the project participants.

STARTING A CONVERSATION

Throughout the project, we endeavoured to establish a dialogue with those who were leading projects across the world.
- On the website as well as social media, we highlighted “featured projects” and described a wide range of initiatives so that people who identified with these examples – rather than with our formal definition – would also be encouraged to reach out.
- We brought together a few crossborder networks as well as experienced practitioners in an informal committee, which helped us make sense of the insights that we had not anticipated: for example, the question of eco-emotions, the ethical considerations that arise when working with youths, etc.
- We organized three open, online “Agoras”, drawing close to 120 participants to discuss some of the themes that strongly emerged from the projects: Education (with Alena Tomanová, Hanna Røkenes, Alfredo Jornet, and Umar Sheraz), Emotions (with Svetlana Chigozie Onye, Aniela Fidler-Wieruszewska, and Arnaud Sapin), and Action (with Maria de Mater O’Neil, Erika de Torres, and Prarthana Gupta).

ANALYSIS AND OUTCOME

The analysis was the most time-intensive phase of the project. After reviewing all the projects and interviews, we met for a week-long residency in Paris to begin structuring our findings, kickstarting a series of editorial meetings which lasted throughout the summer of 2025.

During this time, we also reflected on the best ways to make this analysis available and usable to a diverse audience. In addition to a classic report, we collaborated with the web designers Juliette Lépineau and Elias Rhouzlane to create a web platform that would present the diversity and richness of the content we had gathered. With Juliette Lépineau and Natali Mällo, we created short-form communication content that could be easily accessed and shared.

Below, you will find a description of how we analyzed each of them. The list of the 54 projects can be found on page 42, followed by a description of each project.

HOW WE ANALYZED THE PROJECTS

The 54 projects that WTFutures analyzed, based on their published material as well as on interviews with the teams in charge, were analyzed along three axes.

AXES #1 AND #2: WHAT THE YOUNG PARTICIPANTS SAID

We analyzed this material in two ways:

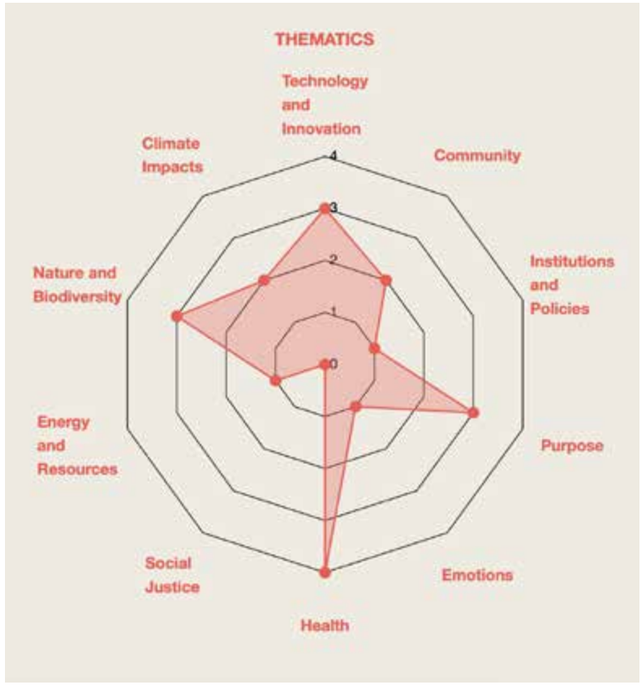
“Thematics” categorize the content, the topics that matter to youngsters.

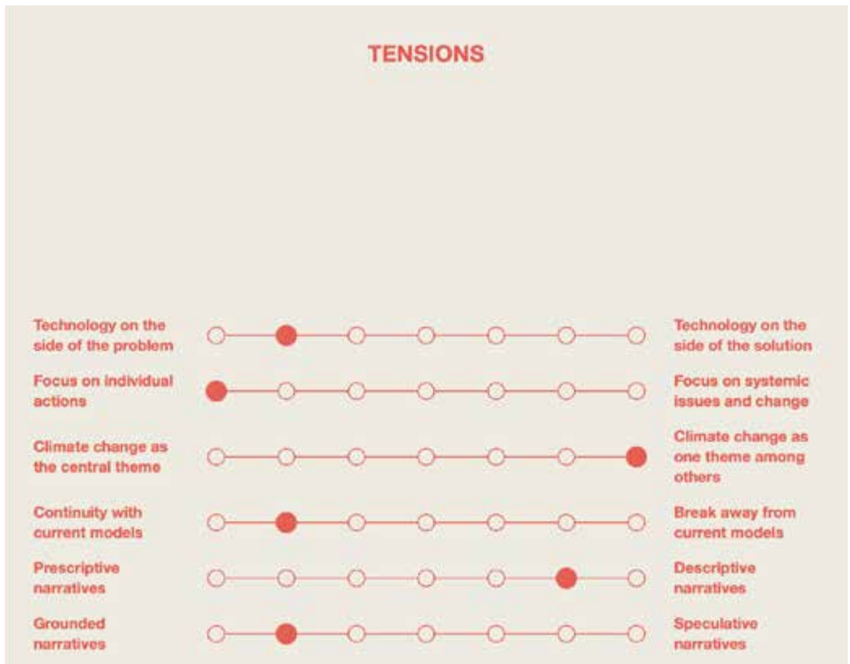
Climate Impacts	How young people imagine what a future marked by climate change might look like.
Community	The role that human relations and community plays in how young people imagine the future and, in particular, the consequences of and responses to climate change.
Emotions	What young people express about the range of emotions that climate futures elicit in them, how to deal with them, and how they connect to action.
Energy and Resources	Visions and challenges regarding the production, distribution and use of resources. Two main categories emerged: energy, and food.
Health	How health, and in particular mental health, features in the images of the future that young people form.
Institutions and Policies	What young people said, both in terms of policy recommendations, but also on how they perceive their political institutions.
Nature and Biodiversity	How the idea of “nature” is represented and thought of in young people’s vision of the future.
Purpose	How young people imagine their purpose in today’s and tomorrow’s world.
Social Justice	How young people connect their visions for the future to struggles for dignity, inclusion, and fairness, and to what extent these concerns are connected to climate futures.
Technology and Innovation	The role that technology plays in how young people experience life, and their expectations towards tech and innovation in responding to climate change.

“Tensions” identify polar differences in vision and outlook, and locate the projects somewhere between the poles.

Climate change as the central theme / As one theme among others	What influence climate change exerts on how youngsters imagine their future ; how climate change is, or isn’t, connected to other concerns.
Continuity / Break away from current models	Futures based on today’s economic, social and political arrangements vs. futures imagining wholly alternative mechanisms.
Grounded / Speculative narratives	Images of the futures explicitly based on participant’s lived reality and environment, vs. purely imaginative futures, untethered from young people’s actual experience.
Focus on individual actions / Focus on systemic issues and change	Individual and technical responses to climate change, vs. a focus on the interconnectedness of issues and the need to act at a systemic level.
Prescriptive / Descriptive narratives	Images of the future laden with values (desirable futures, or negative futures imagined as warnings) vs. neutral description of plausible or likely futures.
Technology on the side of the problem / Technology on the side the solution	How young people value the role that technology plays in shaping their futures and that of the Planet.

This thematic analysis also helped create graphic representations of what each project focused on:





AXIS #3: HOW THE PROJECTS HAPPENED

Here, the analysis focused on the process, the methodologies, and the experience lived by young participants.

Climate Change Literacy	What, if anything, the projects did to develop their participant's awareness and knowledge of the existence, the causes and/or the effects of climate change.
Embodying the Narratives	What importance the project gave to connecting the participants to the futures they were imagining, through their bodies, senses and emotions.
Futures Literacy	What, if anything, the projects did to develop the participants' ability to better understand the role of the future in what they see and do, and/or equip them with foresight tools and skills.
Learning New Skills	What importance the projects gave to the learning of other skills, be they creative, technical, organizational, entrepreneurial, reflexive, social, etc.
Links with Political Initiatives	Whether and how the projects emanated from, or interacted with, formal policy-making projects on a local, national and/or international scale.
Meaningful Experience	How much attention the projects put in making the young participants' experience engaging, in producing a lasting effect, as well as in taking into account what the participants produced.
Youth Agency	Whether and how the projects contributed to their young participants' ability to act in ways that shape their life trajectories, and/or to engage in collective action.
Youth-Led Projects	What role youngsters took in the design, governance and running of the project.

WHAT YOUNG PARTICIPANTS HAD TO SAY (1/2): THEMATICS

Themes categorize the content, the topics that mattered to youngsters. We identified 10 main Themes that featured prominently our 54 projects.

CLIMATE IMPACTS

COMMUNITY

EMOTIONS

ENERGY AND RESOURCES

HEALTH

INSTITUTIONS AND POLICIES

NATURE AND BIODIVERSITY

PURPOSE

SOCIAL JUSTICE

TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION

CLIMATE IMPACTS

This section examines how, and how prominently, the perceived or expected effects of climate change influence how young people imagine the future. These impacts are now part of many young people's immediate lived reality, and not just distant risks. As a consequence, youths may describe both how they personally organize around these effects, and how they collectively fight them and/or their causes – sometimes turning adaptation to climate constraints into catalysts for reimagining livable worlds.

CLIMATE IMPACT FEATURED IN THE NARRATIVES

Climate change is not a distant threat but a lived reality. In many parts of the world, youths already experience its consequences daily, prompting them to frame futures less around prevention and more around relief and recovery. Young people increasingly recognize they are growing up in a climate-affected world, where the crisis is not background noise but a central trend shaping their lives.

> *"We've grown up in the climate crisis. It shapes our education, our jobs, our futures. We can't afford to be passive — we have to make space to act, even if it's messy"*
>
> Net Zero and You(th)

Different proposals across these projects show how youths imagine mitigating climate impacts that are already here and will intensify in the future:

- **Heat:** *In Message towards the Region*, young people imagine *"greening schoolyards and neighborhoods"* to reduce heat in post-Soviet districts where concrete exacerbates heatwaves. *Youth Climate Lab* participants also reimagine urban spaces, prioritizing biodiversity as a transformative solution.

- **Air and water pollution:** Youths envisions water, land, and air freed from plastics and chemicals. *"In the year 2041, global warming has finally disappeared and there will be no climate issues anymore… Since the air quality is better and there's no pollution, people will live in a clean environment with fresh and cool atmosphere" (Museum of the Not-Yet-Possible).* In *Museo Del Futuro,* young participants imagine a rewilded Mexico City, its rivers restored, with public parks replacing industrial zones, where the city coexists with nature after decades of water crises and air pollution. *Citadins, Citadines 2050* participants paint a bleaker picture: *"an environment so degraded it is almost uninhabitable outside a fortified "Bubble" around Paris's historic center, at immense social cost, with few escape routes except revolt or extraordinary ingenuity."*

- **Energy and power systems:** Decentralized, renewable energy systems are proposed to empower communities to be more autonomous during disasters (storms, fires, blackouts). *(Youth Climate Lab)*

- **Greenhouse gases:** Circular economy models, such as green investment cooperatives funding renewable energy projects and sustainable transport, are envisioned to reduce emissions and build community wealth. *(Youth Climate Lab)*

- **Shared spaces and governance:** Fictional narratives and graphic novels imagine life in post-carbon cities with community-run food systems, co-housing, and decolonized governance structures. Projects highlight land-based Indigenous climate solutions and collaborations with Indigenous youths and elders to restore traditional ecological knowledge in watershed governance and to design land stewardship rooted in seasonal cycles — imagining these also as future educational systems. *(Museo Del Futuro)*

These narratives show that climate impacts strongly influence young people's future worldviews, intersecting with other issues such as mental health,war, justice, work, and identity. For them, the call for climate action really amounts to building a livable future during their lifetime.

> *"Many of our feelings derive their intensity from the knowledge that the crisis is still not being taken seriously enough. If policymakers were more ambitious then we would only need to grieve the impacts that are already 'locked in,' rather than feeling worried and angry about the potential scale and impacts of continued climate neglect"*
>
> Not About Us Without Us

CONSEQUENCES OF CLIMATE CHANGE

In a growing number of countries, the consequences of climate change are now a daily reality. Whether recovering from disasters, enduring permanent heatwaves, or living in ongoing insecurity, young people strive to adapt to this new reality and still imagine alternative futures.

- **Storms and disaster recovery:** In *Puerto Rico 2054*, young people are "designing for disaster" in the wake of Hurricane Maria, which damaged housing, schools, and food distributions. In spite of their situation, the students envisioned positive futures, designing water and food distribution systems as well as other types of services (community- or government-led) that could support strategies for resilience and survival.

- **Eco-anxiety:** Young people report a form of eco-anxiety tied to climate events and compounded by structural pressures. The Youth Talks global consultation captures this emotional toll: *"Climate issues harm young people's sense of futurity and generate anxiety." Yet this fragile futurity does not necessarily translate into passivity; many express willingness to make sacrifices "provided these sacrifices make sense and are compatible with them finding their place in the world."* (more in the "Eco-emotions" section)

- **Heat:** *"With some schools already closing earlier in the day so children can seek relief from heat, a future in which night-mode learning is the norm is becoming more and more likely," (Climate Futures in Mali).* Workshops also flagged health impacts such as heat stress leading to irregular menstrual cycles and heavier bleeding, making school attendance even harder for girls.

- **Migration:** Some youth-led narratives explicitly address climate-driven migration. *La Crise dont vous êtes le héros* imagines a “welcoming metropolis” designed to accommodate inevitable climate migration within France and from abroad.

The impacts of climate change on young people are being felt and reflected through all of these projects. While they might still be associated with the future for some, they are daily realities for others. In any case, while the narratives often respond to these with positive solutions and creative ideas, climate change and its consequences are nonetheless felt as a permanent threat looming over tomorrow and impacting future decisions youths might need to take.

> → In the *Climate Natives* section of *the Key Learnings* report we reflect further on what it means for young people to grow up in a world where climate change has never *not* been an issue…

COMMUNITY

In this category, we encounter projects where community is the starting point of the futuring process, and/or the center of the narratives. For other groups of participants, community spirit is not yet a reality, but rather a wish for the future. Human relationships are also viewed as a strong lever of change and resilience to face any adversity in the future. This lever of change is already activated in certain contexts, in projects where young people are invited to engage in collective actions to build their preferred futures.

What makes a community?

1- What did we understand as a form of community in the narratives within the WTFutures corpus?
- People being part of the same **territory**, but on what scale? In the projects, participants describe forms of relationship in cities, neighbourhoods, valleys…, but never at the larger scale of a country.
- People sharing a **cultural identity**. As an example, several projects are taking into account “indigenous” knowledge, practices, rituals, history, etc.
- People in similar **social positions** - notably marginalized, vulnerable populations united by this common experience.
- People sharing a **common interest or cause**.
- Or simply people **choosing to be together** for a variety of reasons. Online communities are the most common examples.

2- What is “expected” from communities? Mostly what make them more than just collections of people:
- Social bond.
- Sense of belonging.
- Care - community as an “antidote” to loneliness, individualism, polarization, etc.
- Resilience, the ability to respond to catastrophes and traumatic experiences.
- Resistance.
- Agency, concrete changes, implicitly or explicitly contrasted with the lack of change coming from higher levels of decision.

COMMUNITY AS THE STARTING POINT FOR STORIES

In some projects, the concept of community takes up a lot of space for the simple reason that it is the center of the futuring process. It is the case for *Kijiji Cha Amani*. The storytelling workshops, called “parachute mapping”, are built for the participants, all coming from the same place, to draw and discuss their conditions of living together.

In *Parque Explora: Laboratorios Creativos*, the participants expressed a need for future stories that talk about what they care about, something that resembles them, that suits their community, something they don’t seem to find in generic narratives or stories from other places of the world. According to Luz Helena Oviedo Villegas, who led the project, *"the first lesson I learned was that the participants’ territory is very present in their answers. For participants from indigenous groups, in particular, their future projection is to go back to their territories and to do something for them.”*

COMMUNITY AS A WISH FOR SOCIAL CHANGE

In other contexts, the “community” theme emerges as a wish, or even a call, for renewed human relationships in the city. Three French projects particularly emphasize this desire for social change. *Destination Beauvais 2040* has seen this idea emerge as one of the main themes throughout the workshops. In *Butterfly 2050*, even the architecture adapts to this new way of living in some narratives: *“Indeed, buildings are now much more focused on community living. They feature several shared spaces that allow for a variety of services.”* (excerpt from “La sagesse de l’habitat”, translated from French)

In *Aubervilliers 2124,* the wish for community spirit is described as a renewal of citizens’ involvement in the life of their city or neighborhood.

COMMUNITY AS A FACTOR OF STRENGTH AND HEALING

The collective force emerging from a community is also seen as a strong lever of change to get to preferable futures. Building, or rebuilding communities is part of the strategy of transformation, of the mechanics to counter climate change or other antagonistic elements. In *Climate Futures in Brussels 2030,* community resourcefulness is judged as more reliable than high tech.

The same lesson came out of *Citadins, Citadines 2050: “as the participants’ creations tell us, the real key to resilience lies in social connection: the ability to act together, to help each other, to trust each other, to live powerful experiences together despite the harsh times.”*

This strength of community in the narratives often comes from a lived experience of reliance on local human relationships in times of crisis. After hurricane Maria hit Puerto Rico, many people felt left on their own by the lack of government action. That is why *Puerto Rico 2054* invited students to specifically investigate how people helped each other and how communities rebuilt themselves in an organic way.

Crafting Change through Natural Dye-making presents another facet of community resilience: the concept of care, in this case expressing a form of collective healing in part based on indigenous cultures and practices: *“Reconnection to artisanal and traditional practices as acts of care and resistance.”*

COMMUNITY AS A WAY TO BUILD THE FUTURE TODAY

While politics at the level of a country can be slow and frustrating, the horizontal organization between people of the same territory is a way to see concrete change in the short term. It is a way for young people to get involved to transform an unsatisfying present in hopeful futures.

Enter Nusantara and *Bagmati River Youth Project* both put the community at the center to develop projects and build the future they want at the local level. The programs invite youngsters to imagine and engage in climate actions participating in what they want to see become reality.

In the *ClimateWorks Lab* or in the *Centre for Reworlding*, the community space is a platform for sharing knowledge, for intergenerational and cross-cultural learning, and for debating. It also forms the core of what participants want to protect.

> *"Climate change related disasters impact equity-denied people and communities more. Equity benefits everyone, yet it is frequently used to deepen divides between the powerful and the vulnerable, hence the reason why we frame our communities as 'equity-denied' instead of marginalised or vulnerable. Conflict resolution, speaking to people that disagree with you, problem solving issues that affect others, etc. is critical work now - actions that help build resilience and halt survivalist instincts."*
>
> Centre for Reworlding

Finally, the theme of community is sometimes intertwined with another category of this analysis: Social justice (see *"Social Justice"*). It is particularly the case when the community is marginalized or precarious. *Museo del Futuro* called this *"Social justice through design": "Some [produced artefacts] envisioned a radically inclusive city where public spaces were co-designed by residents, especially in marginalized neighborhoods. Youths imagined new forms of housing, education, and care systems based on solidarity and mutual aid."*

EMOTIONS

Several projects deal specifically with the range of emotions that climate futures elicit in young people - what is generally called eco-anxiety, but in reality, covers a wide, nuanced range of emotions. Some projects focus on measuring these emotions and understanding their causes and effects. Others try to find ways to help young people deal with these emotions. Others still are addressed to activists, and interested in the links between emotions and action.

A significant (20) number of projects address "eco-anxiety" or "eco-emotions". Some make emotions their central focus *(TEAP, Éco-Motion, Feeling Futures);* others consider addressing them as a step in a process, a necessary condition in order to move ahead.

→ In the *Key Learnings* section, we expand on what research tells us about eco-emotions, as well as on how to deal with these emotions and how they connect to climate action *(Emotions reclaimed).*

A MASSIVE PHENOMENON

"Eco-emotions" refer to a wide range of strong emotions elicited by the perspective and/or the experience of climate change, as well as of the lack of support and action to fight it and prepare for its effects: typically, anger, grief, anxiety, guilt, sadness, powerlessness, and on the other side, hope.

These feelings among young people are recorded by projects and surveys all over the globe. As an example, *The Eco-anxiety Africa Project (TEAP)* found that 66% of young Nigerians were experiencing eco-anxiety, and over 40 % thought they didn't have the resources or support to overcome it. Other local and global surveys confirm that eco-anxiety is widely shared among young people worldwide.

Eco-emotions have a strong impact on how young people see the future, and their place on it. But they can also have crippling effects on their everyday life.

> *"Knowing how much unnecessary harm is being caused, we can find it difficult to engage with basic tasks such as relaxing, sleeping, studying or working. Some of us also struggle with exorbitant feelings of guilt about our carbon footprints, despite our understanding that the structures and systems we live in make ethical choices extremely difficult. [...] We also debate with ourselves and our partners whether or not to have children, both because of the stress humanity is already putting upon the planet and because we are concerned about the quality of life our children may have."*
>
> Not About Us Without Us

ACCEPTING, NAMING, COPING WITH ECO-EMOTIONS

Young people are often at a difficulty in qualifying the emotions they feel, says Aniela Fidler Wieruszewska *(Feeling Futures): "they lack language and tools to connect with their emotions. There is no emotional literacy, so they have neither the vocabulary nor the confidence to describe what's actually going on inside them."* This led her to using tools such as the **Feelings Wheel** to help people put words on their emotions by just pointing at them.

Several projects have tried to find ways to help young participants name their emotions, share them with others, and accept them, which are the preconditions to learning to live with them. Methods range from mindfulness to "acceptance therapy" *(Éco-Motions)*, to personal and collective storytelling, to using arts (music, dance, singing, etc.). Creativity is, in Svetlana Chigozie Onye's words, *"a way to process emotions. After the participants create that artistic piece, allowing them to speak about why they wrote or drew this, allows them to get to that point themselves." TEAP* and other projects also organized intergenerational interactions with elders and/or linked with indigenous *(Centre for Reworlding)* or religious *(TEAP)* practices, in both cases to legitimize emotions and provide "models" that can help young people cope with their emotions.

In one case, *Puerto Rico 2054,* the project emerged almost organically from a major climate-related crisis, Hurricane Maria in 2017:

> *The students were designing while living in a disaster. Some didn't even have roofs over their heads. Despite that, they showed concern, creativity, and resilience. They gradually shifted from being overwhelmed to being more focused and hopeful. Their visions of the future were not dystopian, they were practical and optimistic. (...)*
>
> *The process gave students emotional grounding. By the end of the semester, they felt more in control. The class became a form of therapy, a way to stop focusing solely on the disaster and instead imagine the future. They worked with cardboard mock-ups because computers weren't an option. They embraced the power of imagination. This project was blessed by the sense of community it created.*
>
> Maria de Mater O'Neill, Puerto Rico 2054

SAFE SPACES

It is not easy to get young people to acknowledge feelings of anxiety. Young people, particularly teenagers, also don't like to stand out in their group. *"They don't want to show that they are scared",* (Aniela Fidler Wieruszewska), *"they don't want to say anything if their friend hasn't said something"* (Svetlana Chigozie Onye).

Whatever the methods used, getting young people to open up about these complex emotions generally requires the existence of some sort of permanent or ephemeral "safe space" where participants accept and support each other. *TEAP* has created a formula called *ZenCafes: "Young people would come to Lagos, or meet virtually, and we use guided questions to let them vent about their experiences of climate change, talk about eco-anxiety and then find hope."* ZenCafes are multiplying in various parts of Africa via a training and grants program called Zen Guardians.

ACTIVIST EMOTIONS

Several projects specifically focus on studying *(JustFutures)* and supporting *(Éco-Motion, Youth Climate Labs, Campus de l'Engagement)* climate activists, who can themselves be overwhelmed by the perspective of climate change, as well as by the difficulty of getting things done on this front.

These projects do not limit themselves to helping young activists process their emotions: they also recognize that activism, in its collective form, is in itself a way to *"move from fear to love" (Fearless Futures),* even a form of *"group therapy"*, in the words of one of *JustFuture's* young participants. Activism provides an outlet to emotions; peer-to-peer and other types of support; and mechanisms to "politicize" our emotions, i.e., to connect them to broader issues than ourselves.

→ We dive deeper into the importance of activism in the *Key Learnings* report.

ENERGY AND RESOURCES

In this section, we group projects that have focused, at least in part, on the production, distribution and use of resources (natural or other assets needed to fulfill tasks and needs). Two main categories of "resources" emerged from the WTFutures corpus: energy, and food.

16 out of the 54 projects addressed the subject of resources in depth. The most frequent types of resources described are energy and food. We sometimes encountered some mentions of water but barely anything on other materials (except in *Urbanités Numériques en jeu).*

Several factors may contribute to explaining their place in the young people's narratives:

- Energy and food are **sectors** with which we are in contact. They are resources we consume as citizens and which consumption we can influence at our scale. Thus, they are parts of the ecological transitions we can better grasp (compared to other domains like finance or law which are black boxes for many people).

- Energy and food are also widespread topics of discussion in the media and in politics. They form, to a certain extent, a **common ground** in the fight against climate change.

- Resources are topics of the fight against climate change we can talk about on **technical** terms. Compared to other subjects (such as individual behaviours, politics), they are easier to quantify and objectivize.

- But they are also **interconnected** with many other domains and can consequently spark change at a systemic level. For example, if we find a way to produce massive and clean energy, we can power machines to decontaminate the air, we can keep on traveling far, and so on; on the other hand, an energy-constraint future begs the question of who and what will be prioritized or sacrificed.

- Finally, they can work as **symbols.** They carry within themselves a representation of our ways of living and functioning as a society. They condense almost all the issues, although only partially, but summarize them well.

FOCUS #1 : ENERGY

• Energy as the source of youth engagement

The "Energy transition" is the core work of Enter Nusantara, an initiative promoting renewable energy implementation, campaigning for a coal ban and also developing storytelling and other creative awareness formats. This initiative was created by young people who wanted to take into their own hands this urgent and concrete matter to fight against pollution and climate change.

The material and concrete dimension in energetic issues encouraged these young people to take action and influence themselves how their communities or families are supplying and consuming.

• Energy as an enabler of other changes

In other projects, the mention of energy seemed like a byproduct of its significant presence in the media and in political discourse. It is the case for the *Museum of the Not-Yet-Possible,* where some narratives seem to fantasize energy solutions for the sole purpose of making all other promised technological developments possible.

> *“Now how does a self-powered generator that emits cleaner air and produces enough energy to power buildings, homes, business, communities? Coming into power the world, we introduce INFINITE. A power source that’s able to power itself and regulate how much energy is being poured out, and can also convert external sources of energy such as solar, wind, hydro, and thermal.”*
>
> Excerpt from the students’ project “INFINITE”

• Energy as the example of a systemic transformation

In *Butterfly 2050,* the concern for energy is the starting point of multiple processes of optimization, efficiency of use and sobriety. While some narratives give AI the role to calculate every consumption in order to avoid any possible waste, others rely on low-techs. The world of Eclipse (one of the narratives of the project) functions entirely with low techs: solar deflection to communicate locally, solar ovens, pedal-operated washing machines, passive coolers to mitigate heat, redirected skylights to avoid electric lighting, and so on…

Nowadays, low tech propositions are not the most discussed publicly but these stories seem to demonstrate that some young participants want to reflect more deeply and innovate in these technical domains. Decentralized energy systems empowering the communities and models of circular economy are some examples that emerged from *Youth Climate Labs*’ discussions. These two propositions actually shift the responsibility for energy and resources issues from national management to local organizations.

• Energy as a “gateway” competence, a condition to participate in climate discussions

The youths involved in very institutional contexts also integrate their point of view on energy and resources as a way to have their say in the current negotiations. These issues are almost mandatory points to consider when putting together comprehensive proposals for decision-makers *(Le Théâtre des Négociations, Emerging Breakthroughs on Climate Change).*

The pupils involved in *Urbanités numériques en jeu* were specifically trained in the technical aspects of their architectural projects to help them gain agency in the urban planning or renovation projects they were included in. It enabled them to express their desire for sustainable development by proposing to reuse material, integrate solar panels in the structures and even rainwater harvesting solutions.

FOCUS #2: FOOD

What and how food is produced, processed, distributed and consumed is a good summary of how a society is organized and evolves. It says much about economics, logistics, culture, and of course the relationship between human and nonhuman forms of life. Food appears as a significant, sometimes central component of many of the images of the future formulated by young people in the projects surveyed by WTFutures.

Future Images of Youth on Food systems, a Finnish research project that analyzed 123 essays on “food and eating in Finland in 2050” written by high school students, found six archetypal “images of the future”:

- **“BAU+”** (Business as usual): evolutionary changes driven by convenience, innovation, economics, and some policy.
- **“Conscious consumer”:** dietary changes driven by young consumers, leading to major reduction in meat consumption, attention to health and ethical production.
- **“Back to the roots”:** focus on local (even urban and home-grown) production and consumption, organic food, culinary tradition and convivial meals, support to farmers. “Strict regulation”: regulation dictates who produces and eats what, meat is reserved for the wealthy.
- **“Technology solves”**: individualized diets and meals based on high-tech food-production industries (cloning, cellular agriculture, robotic farms), innovation replaces traditional agriculture.
- **“Dystopia: food for survival”:** food shortages mean highly regulated daily intakes in order to feed the majority. Only a privileged few retain access to quality food.

Aubervilliers 2154 imagines a radical reorganization of this suburban city’s space, with one third of its surface dedicated to growing food, as well as submitting transportation and logistics to the needs of equitably feeding the population. There are other, social, democratic and cultural aspects to the transformations imagined by a group of students, but the “new urban metabolism” is clearly the driving factor.

Four ideas seem to be shared in the stories and images of the future created in the aforementioned, as other projects:

- Local food production, distribution and consumption, including in cities, connected with social justice concerns;
- The reduction, sometimes the near-disappearance of meat consumption *(Citadins, Citadines 2050);*
- Agroecology and other sustainable forms of agriculture *(Pedagogías del Mañana);*
- The cultural value of food (cuisine, meals as collective moments, rituals…)

HEALTH

In the WTFutures corpus, health emerges as a subject interconnected with the impacts of climate change, but it is also a concern on its own – in part due to recent history which has produced a profound effect on young persons (COVID 19). Numerous narratives mention health issues and imagine how they could evolve in the future. Mental health, above all, is a subject that is very important for young people and that has emerged throughout the whole corpus.

A SUBJECT INTERCONNECTED WITH CLIMATE CHANGE

In 18 out of 54 projects, health appears to be a major topic, although not necessarily linked to climate change. The students behind the *Museum of the Not-Yet-Possible* foresee major progress in the years to come: healthier lifestyles, medical innovations, smart health, etc..

In *Message Towards the Region* or *Générations F*, pandemics are also occurring as an echo of COVID-19 that greatly impacted young people at a time when they were still growing up. In *Museo del Futuro*, health systems are reimagined with a great emphasis on how to better help populations in need, with the intent to reflect about the fight against climate change and for social justice together.

In *Climate Futures in Mali,* the participants discussed the direct links between climate change and health problems, like heat waves dysregulating women's periods and worsening the bleeding. The heat stress there is directly affecting their bodies today and thus, legitimately, raises concerns for the future.

In *Kijiji Cha Amani,* many links are also made between climate change, deforestation, emission of pollutants and issues of hunger and global health of the community.

A SPECIAL PLACE FOR MENTAL HEALTH

According to the World Health Organization, *"One in seven adolescents has a mental health condition. Suicide is the third leading cause of death among young people globally. [And] today, climate change, conflict, poverty, inequality and displacement are intensifying risks."*[1] The "mental health" crisis among young people in many parts of the world is well-documented by research and international organizations. It has also found its way into several WTFutures projects. In *Message Towards the Region*, young participants want to dedicate special spaces to take care of mental health. The teenagers and young adults in *Future Is Now* describes how, the digitization of society worsened the sense of loss of purpose and loneliness of youth, creating or deepening mental health issues

As this project shows, climate change is not the only cause of this crisis, perhaps not even the main one. It is, however, important enough to become the main focus of projects of *Éco-Motion* and *The Eco-Anxiety Africa Project.*

1. Chiara Servili, **"Children and young people's mental health: the case for action",** World Health Organization, June 2025

Both projects try to help young people navigate their different emotions of fear, guilt, discouragement, anger, sadness related to climate change. *Éco-Motion* specifically helps young activists overcome the obstacles they encounter in their actions, some of which clearly impact their mental health. *TEAP* began by acknowledging the feeling of burnout by Nigerian climate activists, and extended towards all youths by recognizing that the prevalence of eco-emotions (66% of Young Nigerians, according to an initial survey), along with the lack of spaces or opportunities to express them, could lead to trauma, depression and sometimes suicide.

An additional difficulty comes from the fact that there is still a stigma around mental health in many communities, and that mental health issues related to climate change are still not easily understood by mental health professionals. These two issues were among the factors that brought together 23 young activists from all across the world to write *Not About Us Without Us.*

According to them, young people from all around the world are experiencing a wide range of deep eco-emotion, some of which affects their mental health and their daily lives. They are in need of support to deal with these issues while also challenging what being "mentally healthy" could mean.

However, the same authors also warn their readers not to consider all eco-emotions as pathological:

> *"Mental health professionals must actively challenge the notion that the absence of uncomfortable feelings about the current state of the world (such as worry, sadness and frustration) is necessarily a sign of 'good mental health' and that the presence of these feelings suggests the presence of a 'disorder'. Indeed, the absence of strong feelings in response to upsetting global issues is more often a cause for psychotherapeutic concern than their presence"*
> Not About Us Without Us

→ An entire Theme is focused on the topic of eco-emotions. (page 10)

INSTITUTIONS AND POLICIES

In this section, we look at what the projects say, not just in terms of policy recommendations, but also in terms of how young people perceive their political institutions, what they expect (and don't expect) from them, and how they would transform them. This also leads to reflection on alternative governance mechanisms, as well as youth's involvement in policymaking.

HOPE AND (MIS)TRUST

From most projects comes an initial message: there is a lot that institutions could and should do, and that they are not doing, or not doing at the necessary scale.

> *"Despite our diversity, we share a wide range of deeply uncomfortable climate-related feelings, including worry, sorrow, grief, fear, anger, hopelessness and responsibility. These feelings tend to persist over time, increasing when we experience climate impacts, when we hear of them happening overseas, or when we are reminded of the inaction of political and corporate leaders."*
>
> Not About Us Without Us

Young people's perception of institutional "inaction" appears overwhelming, and it is actively eroding their trust in institutions. This does not mean that young activists have given up on trying to influence policymaking, from the local to the global stage. Quite the opposite: it should invite institutions to alter governance mechanisms in order to structurally include youths in decision-making, so that they are not limited to hoping that others will eventually do what is expected of them.

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

Many of the projects we have surveyed have come up with policy recommendations. We list a few of them below. Although they can get quite precise and technical, most of them are not particularly new or radical. What the projects have to tell us is not so much about the substance of policies, but rather about (i) what young people's priorities may be, and how they might differ from those of experts and policymakers; and (ii) again, how to overcome inaction.

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS (not exhaustive)	SOURCE PROJECT(S)
Law and regulation	
Legal personality for non-human entities (rivers, forests, animal species…)	Emerging Breakthroughs, El Futuro Es Clima
Punish green washing.	El Futuro Es Clima
Changing incentives	
Coercive policies, taxes and subsidies to reorient production, consumption and innovation.	ClimateWorks Lab
Taxing the organizations causing the most climate damages.	
Financial mechanisms	
Carbon markets.	Théâtre des Négociations
Redirecting innovation funds towards sustainable initiatives.	Emerging Breakthroughs on Climate Change
Closing the mitigation/adaptation "funding gap".	Emerging Breakthroughs
Helping the least developed country to do their ecological transition; debt cancellation.	
Loss and damage policies: climate litigation, climate insurance, dedicated funds, social justice funds for the communities most affected by climate change…	Local Conference of Youth
Climate reparations fund model aimed at redistributing wealth toward Indigenous and racialized communities most affected by climate impacts.	Youth Climate Lab
Sectorial transitions	
Eco-literacy in education.	Emerging Breakthroughs, El Futuro Es Clima
Equitable and massive energy transition in production as well as energy use (transportation, etc.)	Emerging Breakthroughs (and many others)
Others	
Climate migrations policies.	Théâtre des Négociations
Moratorium on mining in the Arctic circle.	Théâtre des Négociations
Mental health actions.	El Futuro Es Clima, The Eco-Anxiety Africa Project, Not About Us Without Us
Government support for grassroot climate actions.	Youth Climate Labs

GOVERNANCE RESHUFFLING

Many projects envisage a major shift of governance towards the local, community level, and some actually experiment it.

Puerto Rico 2054 was born from the government's "absence" during hurricane Maria in 2017, and the need for community reliance and self-organization. It relates to an apparently common belief that climate resilience in the face of extreme weather events will need to rely on community action and solidarity as much, or perhaps more, than on technical measures or government intervention *(Citadins, Citadines 2050).*

Most of the projects organized around a city *(Aubervilliers 2124)* or a local ecosystem , ended up describing heavily community-centric approaches of governance, with higher-level public institutions (municipalities, regions, national governments) acting as supports, rather than in the lead. In the case of *Bagmati River Youth Project* (a project supported by the Nepalese government), the massive participation of young people in the "visioning" phase transformed the population's relationship with their local river, and generated concrete community projects all along its banks to sustain the investments in infrastructure made by the Asian Development Bank.

There is also the hope that more local governance might be a way to counter the political polarization that many young people regret in national politics *(Youth Talks, Message Towards the Region).* One of the youth groups in Butterfly 2050 describe *"local circular agoras"* where decisions are made based on *"consensus and compromise".*

However, a few projects also consider changes to higher-level governance structures and mechanisms: National climate assemblies *(El Futuro Es Clima),* formal involvement of youths in governance, new forms of climate negotiations *(Le Théâtre des Négociations)...*

YOUTH PARTICIPATION IN GOVERNANCE

In most projects, local and community governance, as well as youth-led initiatives, are not meant to replace government institutions, but to work alongside them – and, at times, to goad them into action or to counterbalance bad decisions. *"Young people cannot be left without allies",* write the researchers involved in the British Academy's *Youth Futures Under Construction project.*

That means ensuring that young people have a real say in the decisions taken on climate, and other issues. Today, their representation is seen as either nonexistent, symbolic or tokenistic. One finds youth councils in several institutions, but they are usually at best places for young representatives to express themselves, with no formal voice in decision-making.

→ How, concretely, could this be made to change? We discuss this in more depth in the *"Key Learnings"* section *("Involving young people in decision making")*

A MAJOR RESPONSIBILITY

Trust between young people and governments is low, particularly on climate action. This does not reflect a lack of expectations on the part of young people – in most projects, participants desperately call for government action –, but rather the feeling that these calls are not listened to.

> *"Children should not have to be the ones pushing for governmental change, because governments should understand their responsibilities and effectively put them into practice. Yet, because governments fail to do so, it is necessary that governance becomes equitable and accessible, as well as youth inclusive, because my generation will not have the same power to create change through policy in the future as governors have today and therefore should be included when it comes to speaking of our own future."*
>
> Catarina, 18, Emerging Breakthroughs on Climate Change

If they wish to avoid a deeper rift between them and the "Climate Natives", governments need to take the initiative.

NATURE AND BIODIVERSITY

Here, we are interested in all the plural forms that youngsters used to talk about nature, biodiversity, fauna, flora, and so on. Looking for these elements in the narratives helped us understand how young people might view the future relationships between humans and the rest of the living world.

We initially expected nature, animals and plants to figure prominently in young people's images of the future. We were wrong. Biodiversity is present in the projects, but apart from 7 projects, it is rarely the core topic.

Nonetheless, the projects yielded really interesting insights on how young people were looking at this issue.

NATURE AS GREENING

The first layer of integration of nature in the narratives is the idea of adding more plants, flowers and trees to human-made environments such as cities. For example, the young citizens of Nitra in *Message Towards the Region* want to plant more trees around their schools. In Paris, the students involved in *Défis Résilience* imagined political incentives to bring more green, hoping it would bring more biodiversity in the city, and help cool down the streets.

> *From courtyard to balcony*
> *Biodiversity in condominiums*
> *The first axis is the compulsory greening of condominiums, with a target of 50% of the surface area within 5 years."*
>
> Défis Résilience

NATURE AS EXPERIENCE: A RENEWED RELATIONSHIP

In some initiatives, the importance of gardening and revegetation is a sign of renewed attention to nature. *Pedagogías del Mañana* developed pedagogical modules to overcome "vegetation blindness" with help of the visual artist Seila Fernández Arconada. The children first learned

how “plant blindness[2]” tends to erase flora in human history and perception. Then they reconnected with plants, learning to name them and care for them.

Bagmati River Youth Project enabled the local youth to change their perception of the local river. Even though Bagmati is a sacred river, it was full of waste and pollution. Changing how young people perceived the river and its ecosystem became the precondition for them to begin caring for it in tangible ways.

> *“Clean, green, magical, beautiful Bagmati in ten years, where people can meditate, exercise or simply view the scenic beauty of nature along with different flora and fauna in the water and basin area.”*
> Bagmati River Youth Project

NATURE AS MILIEU

Further reflecting about humans’ relationship to nature, many narratives question the numerous interactions we have with other living beings. *Crafting Change through Natural Dye-making* proposes during their workshops a collective reflection on humans’ connections to land and waters. It invites participants to reflect on how colonial relationships transformed ecosystems, and to draw inspiration from indigenous knowledge.

The narrative that emerged from *Aubervilliers 2124’*s workshops completely reimagined the place of nature in the city, turning one-third of the urban territory into forests and/or agricultural production spaces. It completely transforms how we imagine everyday urban features, with for example a cemetery-orchard. Human societies and nature are so intertwined that it is no longer possible to say where one begins and the other ends.

The scenario also relies on collaboration with natural processes in order to properly decontaminate polluted areas of the city. Several techniques were used, from mycoremediation (fungi) to phycoremediation (algae), as well as planting flax and hemp which also provided material for building construction or isolation.

For the relationship with the fauna, we can look at the tribe of the Fénicy coming out of *Générations F.* The citizens in this community of 2225 have a special connection with animals, even capable of communicating with them and collaborating in an ethical way for some tasks like shipping goods.

NATURE UNDER ATTACK: RIGHTS OF NATURAL ENTITIES

Some young participants advocated for ecosystems’ or nature’s rights.
It was at the center of the experience of the *Théâtre des Négociations* where the students enacted a COP negotiation while representing delegations outside the current UN model such as oceans, soil, forests, atmosphere, polar regions and so on.

We can not know to what extent it influenced the result of these complex negotiations, but a great place is given to nature in the 30 pages-long document containing their common visions for the future.

> *“Representatives of ecosystems will be recognized as having specific governance competencies for innovative and ambitious climate-related actions. An international legal framework shall be established for each major and unique ecosystem that addresses transboundary environmental and climate change issues.”*
> Théâtre des Négociations

PURPOSE

This theme relates to how young people try to define their personal and collective place, role, and purpose, in a world marked by climate change. From just growing up to finding one’s voice, to becoming active agents of change, the projects cover a wide spectrum of ideas and issues.

PLACE – FINDING ONE’S INDIVIDUAL AND COLLECTIVE ROLES IN A CONSTRAINED WORLD

Young people imagine their roles in the future as negotiators, artists of the future, co-researchers, and systems thinkers, seeking not just inclusion, but shared authority. Themes that arise are articulated in relation to climate breakdown, economic insecurity (work of the future), conflict (wars), and social disconnection, also revealing strong constraints, limited resources, lack of political access, emotional silencing (non-recognition), that prevent them to fully take the place they wish to take, today.

This difficulty is not new, but it is intensified by a sense that the world is no longer expanding with opportunities. Nevertheless, in most projects rather than imagining themselves as passive heirs of a damaged future, youths value their strength such as imagination. *“Youths have more imagination than adults, they're smarter, they have more dreams” (Générations F).* They see themselves as active shapers of politics, climate action, education, and community life *(Youth Futures Under Construction).* They envision high-level jobs for themselves such as head of banks *(Banking on Youth),* or acting as heroes saving the planet *(Kidding the Future),* leaders of needed revolutions *(Générations F),* or having new important skills to adapt to the world they also wish to see.

> *“I'm in a tribe called the Mogonis. It's 2123 and we're making things that we stick on our faces so we can talk in Morse code with plants.”*
> Générations F

While structural barriers such as lack of access to resources, and non-consideration by elders, might hinder their full involvement *(Feeling Futures Through the Stuff We Wear)*, calls for “collective courage”, pep-talk and manifest of qualities needed to navigate the world of tomorrow, are also expressed:

> *“We don’t have much time, the planet doesn’t have much time. The struggle is necessary and we need to unite and build rather than divide and dismiss…The climate emergency needs strong and courageous people- strong and courageous to listen, empathize, mediate, unite, negotiate. Only then will we be able to move forward…”*
> JustFutures

2. Christine Ro, **“Why 'plant blindness' matters — and what you can do about it”,** BBC, 2022

The purpose imagined by the participants are generally active within the diverse landscape of necessary climate and social change and within the political system in place. Whether in their speculative stories or by suggesting actual concrete ways in which they could be more involved, what comes out from these projects is the desire to be part of important decisions and to play a part in what will shape their future.

IMPORTANCE OF RELATIONS, COMMUNITY AND INTERGENERATIONAL DIALOGUE

Dialogue is seen as a critical part of how young people start building purpose within their communities in the future.

In several narratives, youths place strong emphasis on relationships, both with people and with their environment, as the foundation for action. In a certain way, distinguishing the role they play not as individuals acting alone, but as finding their purpose within an ecosystem of human and non-human actors. In the *Générations F* theater project, young participants embody *"children and teenagers from different possible futures, each displaying signs of their new way of life in relation to the environment in which they live."* This project represents "tribes" with distinct visions, values, and agency, where children have a part to play within the community.

The *Centre for Reworlding* emphasizes the importance of an intergenerational cross-cultural model where *"children and seniors [are] active participants"* and where *"inclusive, culturally-affirmative spaces are grounded in Indigenous knowledge and community".* These places should exist to "build depth" and continue longstanding struggles for justice and sustainability, while taking the time to listen to what young people have to say.

FINDING VOICE THROUGH STORYTELLING AND EMOTIONAL EXPRESSIONS

Within the political arena, young people also share the need to find their voice. Storytelling can help them understand their place and their contribution to society, especially in matters of climate change.

While young respondents from *Youth Talks*' global consultation articulate profound concerns about *"wars and conflicts, alongside economic inequalities and depletion of resources,"* they also synthesize themes of youth identity, struggle, and hope, revealing a *"paradox between aspirations of peace and social justice and the realities of a world troubled by tensions and disparities."* and where youths are *"in the process of finding their place in a world that may not seem as full of opportunities... or seems more threatening than the one their elders grew in."* Within these narratives, emotional expressions and stories emerge as political tools that can help translate complex ideas into collective action.

Several young participants in *Net Zero and You(th)* depict how personal narratives draw others into climate conversations, through storytelling and personal tales. *"Climate action begins with a story and every young person already has one to tell"*, says one participant. Through storytelling and other practices based on dialogue, youths link personal experience with wider transformations, connect to others, and work towards having a political impact.

ACTIVE AGENTS

> *"Youths are not passive victims but active agents of change."*

This is also how youths from *Youth Futures Under Construction* view themselves: participating in co-research, artistic resistance, documenting lived realities, leading local transformative projects, etc. Yet, the project also demonstrated that *"efforts must be supported by broader structural change"* and that *"young people cannot be left without allies,"* underscoring once again the limits of youth agency without systemic transformation. How can we *"learn or re-learn personal values and virtues that allow people to 'live together' in harmony,"* such as *"respect, kindness, solidarity, tolerance, openmindedness, empathy, acceptance, responsibility, friendship, love"? (Youth Talks)* Far from being a set of soft skills, adopting those qualities become *"core attitudes and values needed to 'make society'",*

For many youths, in order to be an active agent and to work collectively in taking that place in society, these qualities need to be not only considered but individually and collectively worked on: *"it's not a matter of priority, rather of sequence. You need healthy, secure individuals to deal with the climate crises."* (interview with Marine Hadengue, *Youth Talks)*

Young people imagine both their individual and collective place as being vital, imaginative, emotional actors who are pursuing strategic, emotionally smart and meaningful work, while being deeply connected to values of care, community and justice. In these projects, they articulate how dialogue and storytelling can open doors, enabling them to claim space and influence in shaping the future.

SOCIAL JUSTICE

This section focuses on the links between climate change, climate action, and social justice. From looking at the consequences of climate change, to imagining climate action, the projects share one conclusion: climate change is not simply an environmental issue, it is deeply entangled with inequalities related to race, class, gender, geography, and political voice. Many projects try to imagine how climate action and social justice action could happen together and feed into one another.

CLIMATE CHANGE EMPHASIZING LIVING INJUSTICE

Around the world, young people are not only inheriting the consequences of the climate crisis, they are also contending with its deep entanglement with structural injustices. Indeed, for today's youth, as we have discovered throughout this project, climate change is rarely perceived as a "standalone" issue. It intersects with economic inequality, gender, race, education, political instability, and community health. Youth's visions for climate action are therefore inseparable from demands for dignity, equity, and social justice.

→ In the Tension *Climate change as the central theme / as one theme among others,* we identified the projects reflecting on the climate issue in relation to other concerns and compared them to those putting climate at the center of their work.

Across all the projects we examined, young participants repeatedly emphasized that climate change amplifies existing inequalities rather than standing apart from them. As the *Youth Talks* global survey puts it, *"Concerns about wars and conflicts, alongside economic inequalities and depletion of resources, reveal the paradox between aspirations of peace and social justice and the realities of a world troubled by tensions and disparities."*

These tensions are particularly sharp in the Global South, where climate change is not a future threat but a lived experience. In many African regions, climate events are intensifying and are either the cause or the result, alongside political unrest and poverty. In such contexts, climate justice is not just a theoretical ideal but a condition for survival and resilience.

> *"It is well known that countries that have contributed the least to climate change are the hardest hit, and are often unprepared to address its negative implications. The climate crisis also exposes vulnerable and marginalized groups – including children – to further risks."*
> Climate Futures in Mali.

Yet despite these challenges, some examples demonstrate that youths are imagining and enacting futures grounded in care and solidarity. In *Puerto Rico 2054,* students worked through the trauma of the aftermath of hurricane Maria by "designing for disaster," exploring what future climate relief might look like - if it could have existed at that time. As one participant noted, *"Amid the chaos, the class became about designing climate futures, thinking about what climate relief might look like in 2054, and imagining that a better future was still possible."* These visions reflect how young people can transform adversity into imagination, and imagination into hope.

CLIMATE ACTION AND SOCIAL JUSTICE ARE INSEPARABLE

Youth initiatives across the WTFutures projects consistently treat climate action and social justice as inseparable.

Some projects specifically center on social justice through creative or educational means. In *Voices of Tomorrow*, recurring themes included *"personal opportunities through education and work, particularly for girls"*, connecting climate futures to gender equity and social mobility. The project's report states that young people consistently call for *"community-based projects and finance, empowering local communities and grassroots organizations"*. Projects like *Crafting Change through Natural Dye-making,* offer a relational, ethics-based approach. Grounded in feminist care ethics and Indigenous knowledge, the need for agency here reframes activism as a form of caregiving, *"validating emotional labor, land-based practices, and community care as essential forms of youth-led climate justice and resistance." Urbanités Numériques en jeu* gives marginalized youths in urban areas the tools to shape their cities through digital co-design, promoting "equity, sustainability, and civic empowerment."

IMAGINING JUSTICE

Some projects try to imagine social justice reforms linked with climate change at an international level. In *Le Théâtre des Négociations,* initiated by Frédérique Aït-Touati and Bruno Latour, students simulated climate diplomacy and proposed *"the creation of a legal status for climate refugees and a working group under UNHCR guidance, embodying youth-driven legal innovation and solidarity with displaced populations."*

In institutional and policy spaces, young activists continue to push for inclusive change in the present, which when taken into account, helps shape the future. UNICEF's *Our Future Pledge* highlighted how, in one of their futures, *"exponential growth in inclusivity of women, marginalized communities, special needs, and refugees rights has unlocked better futures for all".*

This is also exemplified at the municipal level. Projects like *Aubervilliers 2124* remind us that climate adaptation strategies need to be put in place and to prioritize the most vulnerable: *"These transformations need to be implemented with social justice in mind… directed primarily towards vulnerable populations and collective catering (schools, offices, hospitals, the local prison…)."*

Youths compelled by climate issues are aware of how the climate crisis affects the most vulnerable populations, even if in some countries they are not living the consequences on the front line. In Canada, youths emphasize the need for a "preventive" approach, wanting to mitigate rather than recover from disaster. As *Net Zero and You(th)* puts it: *"We've grown up in the climate crisis. It shapes our education, our jobs, our futures. We can't afford to be passive, we have to make space to act, even if it's messy."*

Ultimately, what emerges across these diverse initiatives is that young people are not only asking how to stop climate change, but are reflecting on the complexity of action: what is just for themselves and for other youths. The unbalance of the world is very real to their eyes and finding ways to experiment with climate action that are just and respectful seems like a priority for those who care about the planet. Young people may be laying the foundations for a world in which climate action is inseparable from justice, and justice is inseparable from hope.

TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION

This theme relates both to the role that technology (the tools, as well as the services based on technology) plays in how young people experience life and think about their future, and to the expectations towards tech and innovation in responding to climate change, in terms of mitigation as well as adaptation. What part does technology play in climate and other crises perceived by young people? Can we innovate our way out of climate change, or its consequences? Are there alternative ways of innovating?...

CLIMATE *AND* DIGITAL NATIVES

Climate natives are of course also Digital natives. Digital tools and services play a significant, sometimes central role in their lives, notably through social media. They may love it and/or hate it, in varying proportions, but it's part of their outlook on the future. According to research, and to young persons themselves, social media contributes strongly to the mental health crisis among youths: the young Slovaks participating in *Future Is Now* connect it to *"addiction, solitude, alienation of real life and natural environments",* polarization; and, looking further in the future, to people feeling *"socially useless due to the replacement of their work by automation."*

Techno futures are also some of the most basic tropes of science fiction and popular forms of futuring, where technological innovation often determines the direction of social change. No wonder there are so many flying cars, robots, virtual reality, brain chips, as well as surveillance

technologies, in the images of the future produced by young participants all over the world *(Kidding the Future, Museum of the Not-Yet-Possible).*

That being said, how do this experience and these (somewhat pre-formatted) imaginaries of technology inform young people's views of a future marked by climate change?

To begin with, there is very little mention of the role of technological innovation in *creating* climate change, by way of creating needs, increasing consumption, facilitating the circulation of goods and materials, accelerating cycles, rebound effects, etc. Contrary to another science fiction trope, the projects we have surveyed, also do not describe technological dystopias where technology becomes the main instrument of (soft and hard) oppression – with one exception *(Citadins, Citadines 2050).*

OPTIMISM AND WARINESS

Overall, many projects either do not mention technology, or express a certain level of trust in it. Some just express trust that science and technology will bring "solutions": clean energy generation and use (like in transportation), carbon capture and storage, cleanup of pollutants, sustainable materials, etc. This optimism seems particularly present in East Asia.

Interestingly, we have found no significant mention of "extreme" technological futures such as the singularity or transhumanism.

However, some projects express a certain level of skepticism or wariness that tempers, or at times contradicts, the optimism. Along with the negative effects of social media, surveillance (authoritarianism and/or soft control) and automation (making human work irrelevant) are the two factors mentioned in several stories.

> → The tension between optimism and distrust towards technology is further explored in the "Tensions" section: *Technology on the side of the problem / Technology on the side of the solution.*

ACTIVE TECH

There are also hints of an alternative technology agenda, which relates as much, or perhaps more, to climate adaptation than mitigation: decentralized, off-grid, renewable power generation *(see "Energy and Ressources")* powering, for example, local agroecology *(Climate futures in Mali);* pedal-powered machines; passive cooling; aquaponics as the cornerstone of a circular and sustainable food system in South Africa *(Eduponics).*

The innovation here is organizational, not just technical. In some cases, advanced technology powers these alternative arrangements: decentralized energy grids organized with blockchains *(Emerging Horizons),* massive climate transhumance powered by "AI and digital twins" *(Butterfly 2050)*... Instead of calling this agenda "low tech", we will therefore call it "active tech", because the technologies in question, be they high or low, do not solve problems *for* people, they enable them to solve their own problems as well as choose their own priorities.

In this sense, the vision of technology expressed by the young participants also connects to their quest for a role in society that they can, at least in part, define for themselves.

WHAT YOUNG PARTICIPANTS HAD TO SAY (2/2): TENSIONS

Tensions focus on the differences between the various images and narratives of the future produced by the young partcipants. We identified polar differences in vision and outlook on 6 key issues. We then located the projects somewhere between the poles, according to what the youngsters developed in their narratives.

CLIMATE CHANGE AS THE CENTRAL THEME / AS ONE THEME AMONG OTHERS

CONTINUITY WITH / BREAK AWAY FROM CURRENT MODELS

GROUNDED / SPECULATIVE NARRATIVES

FOCUS ON INDIVIDUAL ACTIONS / FOCUS ON SYSTEMIC ISSUES AND CHANGE

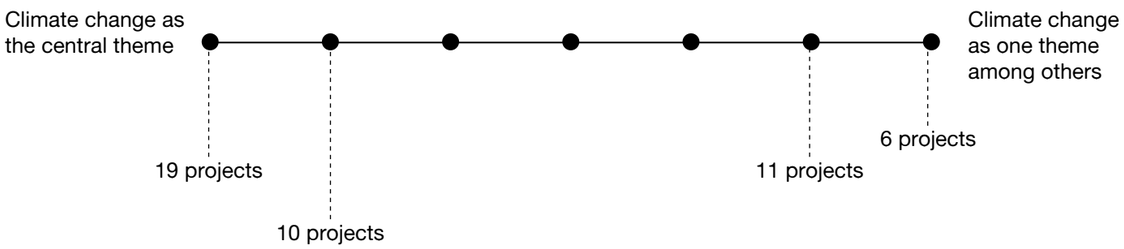
PRESCRIPTIVE / DESCRIPTIVE NARRATIVES

TECHNOLOGY ON THE SIDE OF THE PROBLEM / TECHNOLOGY ON THE SIDE OF THE SOLUTION

CLIMATE CHANGE AS THE CENTRAL THEME / AS ONE THEME AMONG OTHERS

This tension accounts for the fact that climate change can occupy two different places in the projects studied in WTFutures, as well as in the visions of the future articulated by their young participants:

- *Some* projects made climate change their initial, sometimes their sole focus – although for possibly different reasons.
- Other projects focused on how young people imagined the future, letting the participants define how central climate change was in their vision.



By construction, WTFutures attracted a larger number of projects who made climate change their sole or main focus.

THREE WAYS TO MAKE CLIMATE CHANGE “CENTRAL”

Among the projects that explicitly focused on climate change, we could identify three fairly different ways of framing their intention:

1. Climate change is the **defining factor of change** influencing the conditions of life today (particularly in Africa, Pakistan, or in Pacific islands at risk of being submerged) and tomorrow *(Générations F, Imagining 2060, Puerto Rico 2054).* The goal of the projects can be to help participants make sense of what is happening, learn to cope and/or become better able to project themselves into what that means for their future and that of their community – as a preamble to imagining what they can do about it. In some cases, one of the issues may be to “denaturalize climate change” *(Futures and climate change with primary school pupils in Southern Togo):* since climate change is already part of the daily reality for many young people, they can see it as a “fact of nature”, losing track to its origin in human action, and therefore closing whole avenues of action (such as undoing some of the actions leading to climate change).
2. Climate change, or one of its dimensions, is a policy topic which gives birth to a consultation (typically initiated by public institutions, such as Paris with Défis Résilience or Nantes with *La Crise dont vous êtes le héros*) or an address coming from citizen groups towards policymakers, institutions, and corporations.
3. Climate change is the common cause already shared by the participants, however the project pursues at least one additional goal:
   - To develop a better understanding between various “constituencies”: young and old *(Centre for Reworlding),* young people and older “experts” *(El Futuro es Clima),* activists and policymakers or corporate executives *(ClimateWorks Lab)…*
   - To deal with the emotional effects of climate change – from the various forms of “eco-anxiety” down to serious mental health issues – either on everybody *(The Eco-anxiety Africa Project)* or with a focus on climate activists *(Not About Us Without Us, Éco-Motion).*
   - To change how climate specialists and activists frame climate issues and proposals and engage with the rest of the world (Net Zero and You(th), JustFutures).

One project connected to *Climate Action Photovoice* followed a different path. The SEMI project (Science, Empowerment and Wonder for the Planet) reunited 80 young participants for a two-years co-creation process of a video installation . The themes they were given were youth participation and climate action. But by the end of the first year, the students decided that they wanted to focus on action, and not exclusively around the climate crisis. They chose to add other issues to the project.

CLIMATE CHANGE AMONG OTHER CHALLENGES

> *“Without naming climate change implicitly, Climate change and disasters ruled the students' daily lives during this exercise.”*
> Puerto Rico 2054

How does climate change feature in how young people imagine the future, when they are left free to articulate which topics make more sense to them?

- In a small number of projects, it appeared that the young participants had a superficial knowledge of the issues, for example putting pollution on par with climate change, or wishing the problem of climate change gone by 2040 thanks to a combination of magic technologies (infinite, clean energy) and easy changes (switching to electric cars). This could lead to minimizing the importance of climate change, as one technical, therefore solvable, issue among others.
- In most projects, however, young participants seemed well aware of the characteristics and the importance of climate change. It figured clearly among the elements that shape their vision of the future (in general, and theirs in particular), however it is not alone: war and conflicts, technology (both as a positive and as a problematic force - addiction, isolation, violence…), mental health, as well as the dearth of economic/work opportunities in a world perceived as deeply unequal, also loom large in young people’s future landscapes.

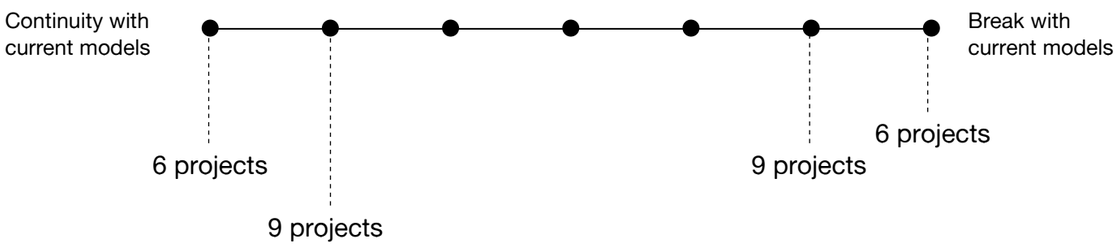
> *“Youth from marginalized communities shared how food security, housing access, and exposure to pollution shaped their understanding of sustainability.”*
> Net Zero and You(th)

War redefining young people's outlook on the future?

In several projects, the issue of war and other types of armed conflicts featured prominently among the factors defining young participant's images of the future. This is of course particularly the case in areas that are subject to, or neighbours of, such conflicts : Eastern Europe *(Message Towards the Region),* the Democratic Republic of Congo *(Kijiji Cha Amani),* the Middle East, and others *(Youth Futures Under Construction, Voices of Tomorrow).*

We have no way to assess whether this signals a lasting shift of young (and other) people's concerns towards the future, or whether it will remain connected to local situations. Assuming it does, this could produce a significant reshuffling of the order in which they rate their hopes and concerns regarding the future.

CONTINUITY WITH / BREAK AWAY FROM CURRENT MODELS



This tension opposes two visions on how today's and tomorrow's major challenges and changes can be addressed:

- Changes occur within the present economic and institutional frameworks, through regulations and personal and corporate behaviors, as well as by using technology in order to maximize efficiency;
- Or rather via disruptive or even revolutionary changes, either in terms of social and economic systems, or in terms of technological breakthroughs making today's problems and ways of thinking obsolete.

THE NARRATIVES CONTINUE THE CURRENT MODELS

In this part of the tension we will find narratives of the future where the transformation uses the rules and mechanisms of our current society: behavioral change, technology, institutions and public policies.

• Changes in behaviours

The first layer of continuity with the current models are the narratives calling upon eco-gestures. *Campus de l'Engagement* is an educational structure whose activities focus on promoting eco-citizenship. They help young adults develop projects at the local level, such as gardening activities to bring more nature into the city. They also set up awareness campaigns to enable more people to learn about climate change and sustainable behaviors.

• Change from within existing institutions

Campus de l'Engagement and other projects also help youngsters develop institutional skills (communication skills, knowledge about laws and policies…), which will help them advocate for changes in media, government institutions, etc. . Youths adapt to how existing institutions work in order to make their own concerns heard. Other projects of our corpus also gave young people the opportunity to learn about international negotiations, like *Théâtre des négociations*, although in this case, they were also given the opportunity to challenge how these negotiations worked.

• Evolutionary transitions

The word "transition" has long been debated among environmentalists: does it describe a feasible path towards systemic transformations, or does it euphemize the scale and the speed of the transformations needed to move towards sustainability?

The images of the future emerging from *Young Voices for Fairer Futures* and *Emerging Horizons* are decidedly evolutionary: a "transition" limited to energy (from fossil fuels to renewables), optimization via AI and other digital tools, "green jobs", and responsible behaviors supported by education. In their "business as usual" scenario, the participants of *Emerging Horizons* make it a point to preserve the benefits of capitalism, seen as a source of economic development and of a *"plethora of life choices".*

THE NARRATIVES BREAK AWAY FROM THE CURRENT MODELS

• The power of imagination

When young participants were given the opportunity to think outside the box, some transformative ideas emerged. For example, the narratives of Mexico City in 2068 in *Museo del Futuro* address many topics in an innovative way. In the fictions, the urban and wild lives are reconnected and a new relationship between humans and the ecosystem emerges. Also high tech and indigenous knowledge are no longer pitted against each other, but instead work together, bridging different views in the world and enriching each other.

> *"A City rewilded: Youth imagined a future where parts of Mexico City had been reforested and rivers restored, with public parks replacing abandoned industrial zones. The city learned to coexist with nature after decades of water crises and air pollution."*
>
> Museo del Futuro

The future time frame proposed in *Générations F* is also a perfect opportunity for young people to free their imagination. While following predictions of climate change in 2225, the participants still had the opportunity to imagine major changes in society occurring in the 200 years separating them from today. In one workshop, a Third World War and a children's revolution enabled the establishment of a whole new way to organize society, this time in close interaction with other living beings. In Nancy (France), the Fénicy tribe collaborated with storks (a local and emblematic animal) for shipping goods. They even invented a language to communicate with them called pointillism, taking the shape of a collaborative dance.

• Advocating for systemic social issues linked with climate change

Young people also used these narrative platforms to highlight important issues that, in their opinion, are not currently being discussed enough in the climate debate.

Projects like *Crafting Change through Natural Dye-making* and *Centre for Reworlding* brought forward the need for a decolonial approach intertwined with the fight against climate change. They are part of a movement of broader social critique linking colonial history to today's climate change and rising inequalities. In their work, they intentionally focus on indigenous knowledge, craftsmanship and art. Their activities are an opportunity to reflect, share, and reimagine climate activism through care, craft, and emotion. The Centre for Reworlding also puts an emphasis on intergenerational discussion, giving as much value and place to the voice of a 5, 40 and 80 year-old.

> *"Reworlding imagines a world that could have been – before colonial disruption – as our beginning – to decouple from maladaptive ways of engaging/disengaging with the climate emergency context."*
>
> Jen Rae, co-founder, Centre for Reworlding

The Fearless project (described in *A Fearless Mural for COP27)* is also aligned with these principles while also advocating feminist values in their workshops. For example, the characters painted on the mural of the COP27 offered a feminist view on climate activism. It gave place to the marginalized voices in the fight against climate change.

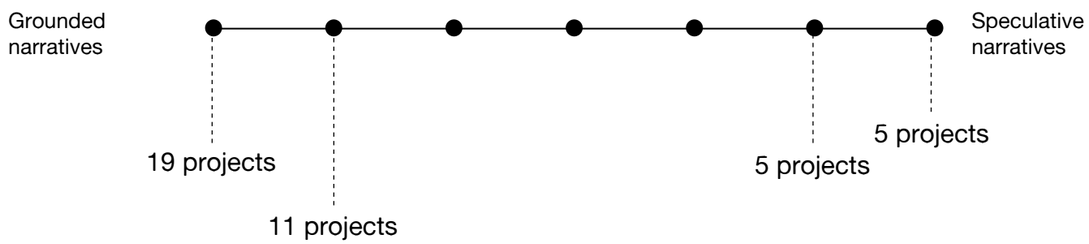
> *"Painted on the threshold of the Youth Pavillion in the Blue Zone are three women: Puyr Tembe, an indigenous leader from Brazil holding roots in her fingers as a remembrance of our traditional knowledge systems in the global south, Vanessa Nakate from Uganda representing the choices we can make now, and Ayisha Siddiqa from Pakistan reaching into the sky representing a future we can reclaim."*
>
> A Fearless Mural for COP27

Finally, a small number of projects also propose a vision of the future based on degrowth *(El Futuro es Clima).*

We would like to point out here that young people should not always be expected to provide out-of-the-ordinary proposals. They are, as much as adults, influenced by media, pop culture or public opinion. We have detected in certain discourses a form of assignation of young people to imagination (which is controversial from a scientific standpoint). Moreover, when youngsters think out of the box and develop ambitious ideas, they often themselves turned away due to a "lack of realism".

Imagination should not be restrained to an age group (and elders should not hide behind this stereotype to avoid being imaginative!).

GROUNDED / SPECULATIVE NARRATIVES



This tension distinguishes between:

- Grounded images of the future, strongly connected to where they emerge from, to the past and present experience of the participants, and sometimes to action on the ground.
- Speculative images of the future, deliberately untethered from local conditions, and even sometimes from scientific or economic realism, in order to leave more space to imagination.

As with all other tensions, these polarities are extremes, and many projects fall somewhere in between.

Grounded narratives mainly focus on how young people are responding to environmental and social challenges today in their local communities. Often, these narratives are part of projects that most of the time guide youths' reflections on a certain topic relative to plausible strategies for resilient living: cities, education, food, mobility…They discuss different adaptive solutions, grounded in their local communities.

On the other side of the spectrum are speculative narratives, which represent a minority in the WTFutures projects, and provide imaginative visions extending beyond immediate feasibility. These narratives explore idealistic macro-transformations such as whole systems, cities, education, international politics, philosophies of relationships with nature, and governance reform. They envision transformative, aspirational, or systemic changes needed for the world with little or no perspective of implementation in the short term.

GROUNDED NARRATIVES PRESENTING APPLICABLE IDEAS

Climate Action Photovoice invites youths to explore through photovoice activities how they imagine their future cities: *"Some of the photos focus on the visible impacts of human activities like the production of carbon dioxide, trees in the city and where to put places of refuge in case of heatwaves."* Students explore their environmental concerns creatively, imagining how their communities might evolve by integrating different educational strategies to address climate change:

> *"Through photos and personal stories, students explore emotions, facts and relationships tied to climate change, as well as the people and places where they live and learn. They highlight needs and share ideas about how they want to act and bring change."*

Other projects situate themselves on the side of activism and also present narratives at a local level that wish to generate scale on how participants' action can make a visible difference. These projects offer alternative narratives by proposing solutions that could be implemented quickly to reduce climate impact. *Enter Nusantara* in Indonesia, for example, calls for a ban on coal mining, offering alternative energy narratives for a future where solar energy is a central as well as developing concrete solar projects on the ground.

While these projects present different settings and approaches, they wish to generate actions that offer concrete alternatives and possibilities to reduce, for example, local or national greenhouse emissions.

• Urban and community resilience

Several projects envision radically transformed urban environments imagined by those who live there. In *Défis Résilience,* grounded narratives include the redesign of public spaces to foster social and ecological resilience: *"The first axis is the compulsory greening of condominiums, with a target of 50% of the surface area within 5 years… and subsidies from the City of Paris for the purchase of equipment".*

La Crise dont vous êtes les héros projects the metropolis as a reversible, agile space: *"An agile territory, capable of changing and adapting to the crisis context…where everything can be changed without pain, provided that it is anticipated collectively."* While this last quote may feel closer to a speculative utopia, it still emerges from a group of young citizens from Nantes (France) imagining a desirable future for the city they live in. The subject youngsters are asked to work on is one that they know and experience everyday: their own city.

• Learning from action

Many narratives are also rooted in educational settings, offering proposals for change within local education systems. Participants imagine futures where learning is hands-on, interdisciplinary, and deeply connected to climate action. In *Eduponics,* students acquire skills through practical aquaponics projects: *"Eduponics integrates aquaponics into the education system, providing a hands-on way to teach students about STEM* [Science, Technology, Engineering & Mathematics] *subjects like biology, chemistry, and environmental science."*

In *Message Towards the Region,* youths were asked to imagine and depict the education and learning environments of the future. They came up with proposals that put mental health and "emotional well-being" into a "major concern" within educational systems. Here, the "ground" is not the place, but the participants' lived experience.

• Environmental symbols

Grounded narratives often blend subjective experience and imagination with symbols and alternative realties. *The Bagmati River Youth Project* describes immersive, emotional engagements with nature:

> *"The mountains are smiling and sitting with sweet water. Nature is rejoicing with joy and playing with fresh leaves. The trees are dancing to the tune of the wind's flute… Just as the Bagmati River fills our soul, our heart, and our sweetness, Radha Rani purifies the mind and makes the mind happy."*
> (translated from Nepali)

Other narratives, such as *Parque Explora*, envision returning to their territories to take environmental action: *"For participants from indigenous groups… their future projection is to go back to their territories and to do something for them."*

Focus on Indigenous and Decolonizing Practices

Tackling Climate Change through a decolonial perspective is mentioned in different projects within the WTFutures corpus. These initiatives invite us to rethink our ways of reflecting and acting, particularly on climate issues, by implicitly asking: What if, rather than inventing new practices to tackle climate change, we listened to and learned from cultures that have existed long before us, and included the perspectives of marginalized communities who have long engaged with the environment in fundamentally different ways? In other words, what if we learned from those who did not maintain an exploitative relationship with other non-human living beings on this planet?

According to Oxfam, to decolonize means *"undoing colonial legacies, addressing coloniality, and delinking from structures shaped by Western colonialism."*

So, what does this mean in practice? Canadian scholar Vanessa Machado de Oliveira, co-founder of *Gesturing Towards Decolonial Futures* (https://decolonialfutures.net/), emphasizes that Indigenous practices and alternative worldviews should shape not only what we teach but also *how* workshops and artistic interventions are designed. Meaning that we need to reflect on certain patterns embedded in the way things are formatted.

As she also writes in *Hospicing Modernity* (2021)[2]: *"Modern/colonial systems are not neutral: they are embedded with extractivism, separation (human vs. nature), hierarchies of knowing and being, and past and ongoing violence."*

Addressing climate change meaningfully, then, requires not only technical measures but also a transformation of the frameworks that produce degradation and exclusion. Among the practices Machado de Oliveira highlights many different elements to take into consideration, within them:

- Accountability: Asking who benefits, who is harmed, and whose knowledge is centered,
- Nonlinear and cyclical time: Reflecting seasonal and ancestral rhythms rather than clock time.
- Embodied learning: Engaging through doing, making, sensing, and ritual rather than purely intellectual reflection.
- Introducing complexity and uncertainty: Learning to sit with paradox, ambiguity and not knowing

The *Fearless Foundation,* for instance, explores decoloniality through feminist and queer perspectives. Its workshops, based on ritual processes to understand how the past, personal journeys, and collective hopes, culminate in public mural exhibitions. These participatory practices allow community members to decide what they want the world to see from them in imagining "*safe and sacred futures".* The project integrates decolonial values into climate action by framing the crisis through the lens of the threats faced by marginalized communities.

Other projects within the WTFutures corpus for example describe their work as *"indigenizing and collectively imagining into action a world worthy of its children-for the sake of all our future ancestors" (Centre for Reworlding).* Rooted in Australia and Canada *(Crafting Change through Natural Dye-making)*- two countries built on the stolen lands of Indigenous peoples- these projects invite us to rethink our ways of acting, particularly in relation to climate.

2. Vanessa Machado de Oliveira (2021), Hospicing Modernity: Facing Humanity's Wrongs and the Implications for Social Activism, North Atlantic Books

SPECULATIVE NARRATIVES

Speculative narratives are a minority across the projects, exploring more aspirational, systemic, and sometimes utopian futures. They also present desired and hopeful themes as distant objectives, whose realization is less achievable in the short term.

• Global scenarios

Global studies on futures often provide speculative scenarios, as participants come from many different parts of the world and are anchored in diverse realities. To reach common ground and imagine futures collectively, they often have little choice but to work with generalities. For example, in *Our Future Pledge,* a project led by UNICEF Innocenti, three "climate-informed futures" are presented. These include broad themes such as *"collapse, technological control, and child exploitation"* where unchecked climate change and deepening social inequalities making overall life *"short and hard"*; another scenario emphasizes *"inclusivity and resilience",* where digital technology supports prosperity as a shared goal and advances equality; and a final one that explores disruption, where technological progress allows the wealthy to live longer, while others seek *"some kind of liberty in virtual spaces."* These scenarios address their own tensions between good and bad within very broad general perspectives.

In *Emerging Horizons,* another UNICEF project, the visions of the future turn less toward technology and more toward ecological and just employment opportunities, while embedding *"lifelong learning"* about climate issues, such as the integration of *"indigenous knowledge".* Within these scenarios, many references to alternative socio-economic models emerge-for example through *"renewable energy and safe spaces," "circular economy models," and "community-centric approaches to governance and policymaking."* These scenarios aim to present compelling alternatives for how the global "system" could function to address climate change, utopias of desirable narratives.

• Technological integration

A few other narratives present scenarios focusing on either bad or good technological futures. For example, in one of *Butterfly 2050*'s stories, AI is integrated into everyday life without consequences or debates, dominating social processes and swooping in to solve very complex problems: *"Technologies like AI are now perfectly integrated into the urban landscape, so much so that they are almost invisible. The AI we're using here, Lumi, is an everyday aid, but it's neither intrusive nor enslaving."*

On the other hand, the "Disruption" scenario in *Our Future Pledge* offers a bleaker image of technological integration, with giant leaps in privatization: people with means live much longer lives in gated areas while others find some liberty and accomplishment in virtual space, but seem very lonely.

The *Museum of the Not-Yet-Possible* develops speculative narratives where potential environmental solutions are presented through a scientific "geoengineering" angle:

> *"We hope that through genetic modification, plants can absorb chemical substances that are harmful to the environment in the batteries…which will not hurt the insects that eat the ecosystem," and "Since the air quality is better and there's no pollution, people will live in a clean environment with fresh and cool atmosphere."*

• Climate migration and environmental solutions

Climate change-induced migration emerges as a recurring speculative narrative. Participants recognize the realistic likelihood of displacement caused by environmental degradation while projecting those realities onto other countries. For example, in *Butterfly 2050,* a French project, one narrative depicts Tiana, a 16-year-old climate refugee forced to leave her home in French Polynesia: *"Tiana is 16 and a climate refugee: with her family, she had to leave French Polynesia in a hurry."* Similarly, other scenarios depict families relocating due to forest fires or deforestation.

These narratives emphasize the social and logistical dimensions or climate impact that would have or already has extreme consequences in different parts of the world, highlighting the human cost of climate change. While these effects are already experienced by some young people (e.g., students from the Pacific Islands participating in *Imagining 2060)*, they are presented as a speculation in *Butterfly 2050's* narratives, as they take place far from the realities the participants from these workshops are currently living.

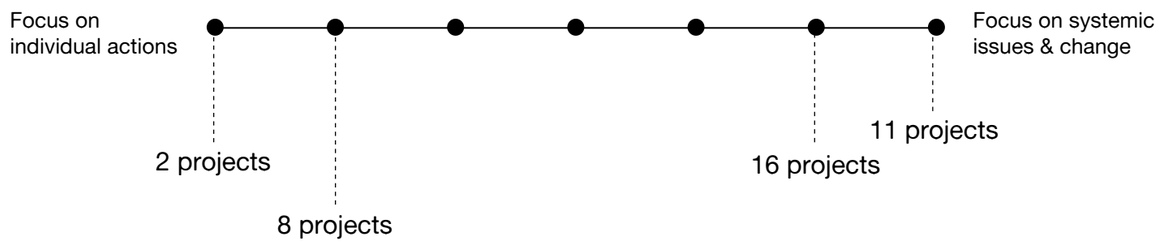
• Living with nature

Some speculative narratives also demonstrate how humans might coexist with the natural environment in the near future. In *Butterfly 2050,* one scenario notes that previously damaged ecosystems, such as the ocean, are now protected and valued for mutual well-being:

> *"[The ocean] is now protected and seen as a source of mutual well-being between humans, other animals, flora and living things in all their forms"*

Together, these projects illustrate how grounded narratives provide plausibility, context, and linkages to existing knowledge as well as present-time action; speculative narratives offer utopian ideas and solutions "for the world" or "in general," responding to a broader imagination exercise.

FOCUS ON INDIVIDUAL ACTIONS / FOCUS ON SYSTEMIC ISSUES AND CHANGE



This tension opposes:

- Individual actions and "linear" (i.e., direct, usually technical solutions to specific problems) responses to climate change;
- A focus on complexity, the interconnectedness of issues and the need to act at a global, systemic level.

INDIVIDUAL BAD, SYSTEMIC GOOD?

Climate experts and activists tend to perceive individual gestures (sorting garbage, forgoing meat…) as symbolically useful but ultimately inefficient. Similarly, local or technical "solutions" can be seen as inadequate, since climate change is a global, systemic issue.

Accordingly, most of the projects we studied express a focus on systemic issues and changes, targeting whole systems (e.g., energy, "circular economy"), territories (cities as in *Beauvais 204*0 or *Aubervilliers 2124)*, or putting forward legislative changes that would significantly alter the incentives for all economic actors *(LCOY).* Projects focused on training also insist on *"equipping youth with the knowledge and tools to understand systems-level change" (Youth Climate Lab).* Many projects link climate change to other issues, mainly social justice, but also, for example, gender discrimination or colonial legacy *(Centre for Reworlding),* adding yet another level of complexity.

When young people themselves tend to focus on technological "fixes" *(Message to the Region, Museum of the Not-Yet-Possible),* the organizers or the researchers sometimes express a little frustration, linking this outcome to poor climate literacy or to the need to improve the methodology.

However, things are not so simple.

On the one hand, some youths – particularly, it seems, in East Asia – may not consider that systemic changes are necessary *(Youth Talks),* at least not if it comes to questioning the central role of technology, or capitalism *(Emerging Horizons).* They put their trust in technology to make the problem go away (infinite energy) or to manage it better (carbon capture and storage, AI and blockchain to better manage renewable energy grids…).

WHAT CAN I REALLY DO?

Most young people do seem to consider individual changes as insufficient, and to doubt the efficiency of technological solutions, but find it difficult to know what else they can do.

They mention a lack of knowledge of possible actions *(Net Zero and You(th), Feeling Futures Through the Stuff We Wear),* a lack of support *(Not About Us Without Us).* Some feel that the existing systems' inertia is too strong for them to make a difference, in the absence of serious institutional support *(Youth Futures Under Construction).* Others treat this inertia as a call to act on a more local, communal or entrepreneurial basis, without waiting for larger players to catch up.

THERE'S PLENTY OF ROOM IN THE MIDDLE

A closer look at many projects yields a slightly more nuanced view: many of them are located somewhere in between the two poles (individual / systemic), and see interesting links between small-scale action and systemic changes. The facilitators of *Climate Futures in Brussels 2030* express it in a particularly honest way: *"Participants were eager to imagine small, concrete changes, like changes in materials, food, and shared practices, which challenged adult facilitators to rethink assumptions about what counts as "real" or "systemic" change."*

- When the participants of the Youth Climate Lab imagine a community bike repair and reuse network, they see it as a starting point to "reduce transportation emissions and empower low-income residents", connecting climate action, mobility and social justice.

- Enter Nusantara's focus on energy is also seen as a way to provide a simple, motivating and actionable entry point into broader climate awareness and action.

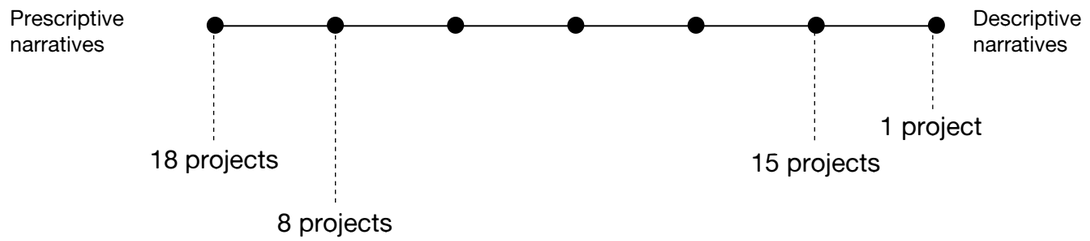
- In Kijiji Cha Amani, drawing and storytelling lead young participants in rural Democratic Republic of Congo to make the link between environmental degradations, violence and community life.

- By teaching aquaponics, Eduponics intends to help local communities in South Africa and beyond imagine more sustainable, circular ways to feed themselves.

- The ClimateWorks Lab's methodology seamlessly moves from hearing from each participant's personal stories, to understanding the complexities of climate change, to helping each participant craft their own, personal climate action plan.

These examples try to strike a delicate balance between, on the one hand, "token" gestures and, on the other hand, levels of action that can seem unreachable to most people (young and otherwise). They may also be a way of recognizing that, in the face of insufficient or even insincere climate action by political institutions, youth agency needs other, more concrete outlets.

PRESCRIPTIVE / DESCRIPTIVE NARRATIVES



This tension sets apart :

- Prescriptive narratives of the future, which express visions of preferred futures as well, in some cases, as specific goals, roles, behaviors, and collective responsibilities youths imagine for themselves and others in the future;
- And descriptive narratives, which focus on imagining future life experiences, environments, opportunities and issues, without advocating a particular course of action.

PRESCRIPTIVE NARRATIVES

Across the WTFutures projects, prescriptive narratives are more prominent than purely descriptive ones. These narratives articulate youths' visions of preferred futures while explicitly defining desires, goals, behavioral norms, institutional roles, individual and collective responsibilities. They are also signs of present situations or concerns and can serve as frameworks to guide how societies and communities should organize themselves to address climate and social challenges, even or especially when these aspirations are grounded in fundamental human needs like food, shelter, and work. Which in other words might mean that these basic needs are not a given for everyone - or, are very fragile in some cases.

• What youngsters want for themselves

Normal lives: career, food, shelter
In *Bagmati River Youth Project,* the prescriptive narrative is grounded in achievable, personal ambitions. The youths emphasize stable homes, families, and careers, illustrating that what might seem conventional elsewhere is deeply aspirational here: *"Their personal future visions were not extravagant, revealing to organizers that conventional ambitions and goals felt ambitious, potentially out of reach, to young Nepalis."* The narratives here are entwined with socio-economic realities, shaping future actions toward securing a sustainable grown-up life.

What they don't have control over
Other narratives, such as *Voices of Tomorrow* for example, produced a virtual exhibition that *"identified themes to shape youths future"*, presenting visions where youth prescribe themselves as being a source of hope for the future, but where futures that place technology at the center of their interactions are considered both a source of enthusiasm and a source of fear.

• What youngsters want for their city

In *Défis Résilience,* young participants were tasked with *"formulating concrete proposals in response to 6 major challenges put forward by the City of Paris".* The process involved two 'retro-speculative' workshops to project themselves into a desirable future and then retrace the various steps that would lead to them.

Adaptive to change
The proposals emphasized innovations like "Vélib 2.0," child- and cargo-bike-on-demand models with helmets, indicating a call for behavioral shifts alongside infrastructural change. Défis Résilience further prescribes more of an adaptive response to specific climate crises, *"Paris facing a food supply disruption / severe drought / long-term power cut / intense heat wave".* This project was launched by the Paris municipality. However, the way its participants shaped the narrative indicates that, for them, the future is not only about policy and infrastructures, but also how citizens adapt and respond to these changes.

Access to food
Urban transformation is also vividly prescribed in the Aubervilliers 2124 project, where *"The objective of transforming Aubervilliers into a 'Feeding City' became the cornerstone upon which all other urban transformations were built." The narratives proposed included dedicating "one third of the city's surface to producing food,"* creating "a new urban metabolism" to reorganize logistics and waste flows.

Participating in building the city's ecosystem
In the same project, citizens are called to civic responsibility: *"Citizens were encouraged to donate one day a week for locally useful work, including on farms and vegetable patches."*

Social equity is also integral to these narratives: *"These transformations needed to be implemented with social justice in mind [...] directed primarily towards vulnerable populations and collective catering."*

• What youngsters want for society

The *Butterfly 2050* competition encapsulates narratives centered on youth agency, sustainability, and inclusion and what youth want for society: *"To inspire a new generation, ready to shape the future according to sustainable and inclusive principles."* The narratives also demonstrate that the youths imagined what we call prescriptive narratives in many varied ways and across the different stories:

Presence of technology
- In *La sagesse de l'habitat* (The wisdom of habitat), a link is made between survival and adaptability, all the while normalizing technology as being omnipresent *"perfectly integrated into the urban landscape, so much so that they are almost invisible."*
- The *Transhumance* narrative prescribes a politically supported, AI-managed lifestyle that works: *"smoothly managed by AI and a team of engineers,"* with consensus reached *"among civil society, government, and all stakeholders."* about its implementation.

Different economic model
L'école du nous (The School of us) envisions "*the generalized transition of the economic model toward one based on well-being and sufficiency,"* implying a societal shift away from growth-centric values.

Human-centered values
- *Tourner la page* (Turning the page) calls for cultural democratization: *"Artists want to make art a democratic tool, by making the public an actor in each work,"* encouraging participatory social transformation.
- *Eclipse / Le Cercle* (The Circle) propose a realignment to more human centered values: *"Since 2050, a form of denumerization has been underway, putting the human back at the heart of social interactions",* with a new time-zone system to *"realign ourselves with living time and the sun".*

In the project *Théâtre des Négociations*, proposals on human-centered values also include the *"creation of a status for climate refugees, the establishment of a carbon market by 2050, a moratorium on Arctic mining from June 2016…"* Institutional and international recognition for climate refugees was also demanded: *"All Parties recognize that climate refugees [...] shall be protected by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)".*

DESCRIBING ACTIONS, EXPERIENCES OR EXPRESSIONS

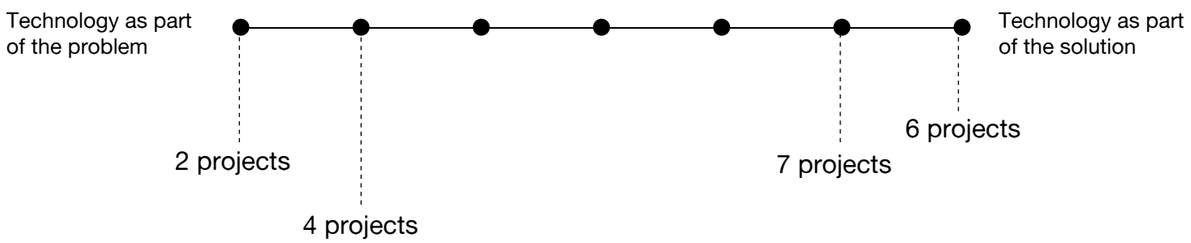
In contrast, descriptive narratives in WTFutures projects emphasize documenting actions, experiences, or expressions without explicitly prescribing a future course or actions or finding a desired solution.

For example, the *Fearless Foundation* describes its work as having *"created over 40 public monuments in 16 countries, working with communities most invisible or marginalized,"* naming groups including *"Muslim and Dalit women in India, Indigenous communities in Brazil and North America, communities affected by gang violence in Pakistan, Syrian and Palestinian refugees in Lebanon and queer communities in Tunisia and Indonesia as they reclaim these public spaces."* These collective artworks display and demonstrate the existence and reality of these communities.

The mural they created during COP27, depicted figures like *"Puyr Tembe, an Indigenous leader from Brazil holding roots in her fingers… Vanessa Nakate from Uganda representing the choices we can make now, and Ayisha Siddiqa from Pakistan reaching into the sky representing a future we can reclaim"*. The mural narrates symbolic representations of existing figures that hold inspirational messages.

Prescriptive narratives in these projects are more common than descriptive ones and serve to put forward dreams and desires youth may have toward specific future outcomes, embedding them in institutional imperatives. They are often linked to participatory processes that are put in place to discuss and come up with ideas around a specific topic: whether urban food systems, climate adaptation proposals, cultural practices, or governance. Meanwhile, descriptive narratives preserve lived experience, document realities in countries and put forward symbols and realities.

TECHNOLOGY ON THE SIDE OF THE PROBLEM / TECHNOLOGY ON THE SIDE OF THE SOLUTION



This tension distinguishes two opposite roles that technology (and the applications it enables) holds in the narratives:

- As either the source of specific problems (such as addiction) or a factor exacerbating pre-existing issues such as loneliness, polarization and pollution.
- Or as part of the answer – sometimes even *the* answer – to major challenges facing humanity, including climate change.

TECHNOLOGY ON THE SIDE OF THE PROBLEM

On this side of the tension, we find projects where technological tools and services are described as contributing to creating or exacerbating problems in human societies, particularly through their impact on climate and on social relationships.

• A source of major environmental and social problems

The teenagers participating in *Future Is Now* express a wide range of concerns on how AI and social networks might impact employment, social structures and relationships and even the sense of individual purpose. They also worry about surveillance systems and other privacy-intrusive technologies taking control of their own lives away from them.

The same participants also mention mental health, which is a recurring theme over the corpus. Digital overconsumption (social networks, “brain rot” content[1], addictive applications) is boosted by each new arrival in the digital landscape, as we could see recently with widespread generative AI.

Some young participants question the ability of institutions and corporations to reflect or act on the ethics of such technological developments. However, in *Message Towards the Region,* the narratives feature significant technological advances, particularly in robotics, which are all overseen by a human-run ethics committee.

1. “Brain rot describes digital media that is considered trivial, simplistic, or low in quality. It may also refer to the perceived negative cognitive, emotional, and behavioral consequences of consuming such material, especially in the context of short-form entertainment. The term also more broadly refers to the deleterious effects associated with excessive use of digital media in general (...) which may affect mental health.” (**Wikipedia**)

• Reliance over technology as a false solution

Some young people warn about overreliance on technology to solve systemic problems, as for example during the French *Local Conference of Youth* of 2023:

> *“The youth of LCOY France 2023 oppose techno-solutionist distractions. Techno-solutionist carbon capture/sequestration projects only provide a partial response to the much more systemic crisis facing the climate and the living world in general.”*

• Few instances of low-tech visions in reaction

In some submissions of *Butterfly 2050*, society makes a conscious choice to rely less on technology, and to reorient its innovation agenda towards “low tech”. However, this alternative vision of the role of technology is not very widespread in the WTFutures corpus.

> *“Technology, yes, but not too much of it. The last few decades have been a demonstration of technological abuse, immersing computers and electronics in the smallest tasks of our daily lives. Since 2050, a form of “de-digitization” has been underway, putting the human back at the heart of social interactions.”*
>
> Excerpt from “Le Cercle”, translated from French

TECHNOLOGY ON THE SIDE OF THE SOLUTION

In the corpus we can encounter two possible ways to see technology as being part of the solution to climate change. The first is more a matter of mental evacuation, where “technology” magically resolves any inconvenience. The second is based on scientific knowledge and specific technical innovations providing at least partial and desired solutions.

• Innovation as a magic wand

One of the projects of the corpus is particularly striking: *Museum of the Not-Yet-Possible*. The students' narratives display an ubiquity of technologies: AI, hydrogen-fueled cars, brain-inserted micro-chips, flying vehicles, virtual reality, robots… Technological development is seen as the answer to the vast majority of problems encountered, sometimes solving global issues as climate change by the wave of a magic wand.

> *“Natural disasters have been defeated by the central AI. Not only has it navigated us successfully out of the effects of climate change using its superior management skills but it also protects us by warning us of coming disasters early and telling humans exactly what we can do to protect us from those events.”*
>
> Excerpt from *Museum of the Not-Yet-Possible*

The pupils involved in *Exploring Future Schools Scenarios in Melbourne* also seem fascinated by all forms of “futuristic” innovation.

• Science and technology providing specific solutions

Other narratives display specific technical solutions, mobilizing scientific knowledge. “Green techs”, particularly for renewable energy and alternative means of transportation, feature in many future narratives throughout the WTFutures corpus.

For example, solar panels are the focus of *Enter Nusantara’s* activities. *Going Green, by Eduponics,* encourages young people to take action through an entrepreneurial model to develop agricultural green technologies (particularly aquaponics) at the local level.

> *“The majority of students envisioned their preferred future as an altered city landscape that included solar panels, electric cars, wind farms and other uses of green technology.”*
>
> Imagining 2060

For the young participants in *Imagining 2060,* science is even perceived as having a greater role in the transformations to come than politicians.

• Social networks as tools for awareness and mobilization

For better as well as worse, social networks are part of young people’s lives. Without being naïve about their effects, the young participants in many projects turn to them in order to organize communities and protests, to raise awareness of specific issues, or to share their views and emotions.

> *“Tackling the issue of floods in Brazil, Over the Waters is a storyboard for a post on TikTok to create awareness to the issue of increasingly recurrent and severe flooding. The video stressed the emotional and lived experience of the flood as a strategy to promote empathy and to entice political interest and involvement. Combining the video with a letter from the future and an invitation for young people to join public assemblies, they offered a call to action [...]. They crafted a communication strategy that combined emotional and rational appeals, aimed at inspiring young people to participate in government-led assemblies focused on flood mitigation.”*
>
> “Over the Waters”, an excerpt from the Crafting Action brochure - JustFutures

• An essential element for our future societies

Behind the trust in technology, we can read two things: the trust in innovation, entrepreneurship and optimization (“smart” solutions) but also the unwillingness to let go of what are perceived as the good sides of present societies (choice, convenience, freedom, opportunities…).

It is the case in the project *Emerging Horizons.* In the “Business As Usual” scenario created by the young participants, technological progress on energy efficiency and renewable energies was one of the characteristics of the present that they wished to keep in the future. In their “Vision of the Future” horizon, they expressed hope in innovation and technology for their ability to further and assist human knowledge, particularly thinking of AI and blockchain.

HOW THE PROJECTS HAPPENED: PROCESS, METHODOLOGY, EXPERIENCE

In this section, we display HOW the projects were designed and what they brought to the youngsters participating in them. The analysis focuses on the processes, the methodologies, and the experience lived by young participants. We identified 8 different mechanisms. Each of them functions as a filter to display related projects.

CLIMATE CHANGE LITERACY
EMBODYING THE NARRATIVES
FUTURES LITERACY
LEARNING NEW SKILLS
LINKS WITH POLITICAL INITIATIVES
MEANINGFUL EXPERIENCE
YOUTH AGENCY
YOUTH-LED PROJECTS

CLIMATE CHANGE LITERACY

"Climate change literacy" can cover a wide range of subjects and forms. At its most basic, it is about awareness and understanding of the existence, the causes, and the consequences of climate change. However, depending on context and public, it can also be about deeper topics such as being prepared for extreme weather events; how climate policy is produced; how to deal with our and others' climate-related emotions…

In a broader sense, climate change literacy can also refer to how a systemic, transdisciplinary matter such as climate change should be integrated into standard education systems, at all levels.

BEYOND AWARENESS

A little less than half (24 out of 54) of the projects identified within WTFutures felt it necessary to develop their participants' basic awareness of climate change and/or to dispense knowledge of its causes and consequences (in the form, for example, of a **Climate Fresk**). The others did not see this as necessary. What surveys and projects alike do seem to say is that there is no longer a strong need to develop the awareness of climate change among young people, and that its first- and second-order consequences are also generally understood.

On the other hand, a few experiences *(The Future of the Togolese Coastline)* alert us to a possible consequence of being "climate-native": the 'naturalization' of climate change, which, having always been part of young people's life, can appear to have no history, no specific causes.

There are, of course, plenty of knowledge gaps remaining. Some of the projects try to fill them in ways that *"do not look like a class" (Feeling Futures Through the Stuff We Wear)* : peer-to-peer learning, building up knowledge from experience (the tour of a sustainable denim factory in *Feeling Futures*, the discovery of an organic produce store and an urban garden in *Pedagogías del Mañana)*. The goal is not to make sure that participants have a comprehensive knowledge of climate change – probably an impossible task –, rather to give them the tools, the self-confidence and the desire to go find the information they need when they need it.

TAKING CLIMATE LITERACY TO THE NEXT LEVEL

There is a distinct educational element in many projects, focused not on generalities, but on more precise topics or issues:

- Adaptation to climate change, readiness in the face of extreme events and "polycrisis" *(Aubervilliers 2124, La Crise dont vous êtes le héros…)*
- Mixing climate literacy and futures literacy: in the words of Aniela Fidler Wieruszewska *(Feeling Futures Through the Stuff We Wear), "framing sustainability in a futures lens evokes much more agency and generates more engagement."* Several projects concretely experiment this mix, particularly in higher education *(Imagining 2060).*
- Complexity and system-level change *(Youth Climate Lab).*
- Climate policymaking literacy: understanding who sets policy and how, how systems are regulated, how to assess and formulate policy, how negotiations work, etc. *(LCOY, Net Zero and You(th))* This connects to one of our transversal insights, "School of Activism, Activism as School".
- Emotional literacy: being able to name one's eco-emotions and to relate to others' emotions, process grief, *"hold conflicting truths: that climate change is terrifying and that constructive action is still possible." (Net Zero and You(th), Feeling Futures)*

INTEGRATING CLIMATE LITERACY INTO STANDARD EDUCATION

Several projects advocate for the presence of climate literacy in standard education, however, the way to reach this goal is not often described.

Climate change is not a discipline, rather a multi-faceted phenomenon that can never be grasped as a whole (a "hyperobject", **in the words of Timothy Morton**).[3] It can only be taught across disciplines *(El Futuro es Clima)*, probably in a collective form (so that different learners can apply different lenses on the same questions), mixing hands-on and theoretical approaches *(Eduponics)*. For the *Youth Climate Lab,* climate literacy education should also be *"designed with regional specificity and culturally appropriate materials."*

Following the "Young Foresight Fellows" behind the *Emerging Horizons* project, we can conclude that *"advancing eco-literacy is a catalyst for transformative change"*, in education and beyond.

→ We dive deeper into these changes in the *"Key Learnings"* report *("Rethinking learning").*

EMBODYING THE NARRATIVES

This category regroups the projects that developed a way to connect the participants to the futures they were imagining through their senses. Different forms of bodily engagement are featured through WTFutures' corpus: some using theater, dance, others inviting participants into crafting activities. Ritualistic, meditative and caring spaces also help participants reconnect to their bodies in a more spiritual way. Embodiment can also mean to invest one's body in the project, to be on the field, to connect to the lived environment, be it social, natural or urban.

WHAT DO WE MEAN BY EMBODIMENT?

In the context of WTFutures, we call "embodiment" all the different forms of engagement of the body and the senses in the projects, in addition to analytical reflection and the use of language. A little more than half (28 out of 54) of WTFutures's projects pursue that goal in one way or another.

Various forms of embodiment can take place at different stages of the project: by grounding the work in the lived environment in which it takes place; by using artistic techniques in order to create dialogue and/or imagine alternative futures; by prototyping and/or experimenting some of the ideas coming from the projects, etc.

3. Timothy Morton (2013), *Hyperobjects Philosophy and Ecology after the End of the World,* University of Minnesota Press

HOW DOES EMBODIMENT BENEFIT THE PROJECT AND ITS PARTICIPANTS?

• Freeing the participants' imagination

In most cases, engaging their body and senses, especially thanks to creative practices, helped participants free their imagination. Sometimes it can be very difficult to see beyond the issues of the present and to put aside a certain form of realism or even pessimism. For a discussion to happen and be interesting, it is needed to open up the fields of possibilities.

That is what led the research team behind *JustFutures* to experiment different forms of craft with young activists: *"The word "craft" took on special significance in this process – creating was like working with clay: hands-on, tactile, and a powerful vehicle for meaning-making."* Crafting was a way for participants to delve into their thoughts. Doing something with their hands can help them to go further in their reflection concerning the future they are advocating for.

> *"[Visual] arts approaches, such as drawing, help children feel more at ease, are engaging, and provide possibilities for children to describe and understand their emotions, and define their real opinions, desires and wishes"*
>
> Hannigan et al., **Reimagining climate change futures: A review of arts-based education programs,** 2025.

• Letting emotions express themselves

The subject of embodiment has been discussed during our second Agora on Eco-emotions. Both Aniela Fidler Wieruszewska *(Feeling Futures Through the Stuff We Wear)* and Svetlana Chigozie Onye *(The Eco-anxiety Africa Project)* resorted to creative practices: singing, dancing, and storytelling in Nigeria, while in London, Aniela Fidler Wieruszewska gave her participants textile scraps on which to apply their imagination.

> *"I work a lot with textiles and making. There's this idea inside positive psychology called state of flow, where you feel relaxed and focus on something deeply, and your brain decompresses. In a state of flow, you can have very intense conversations. Creativity is intrinsically emotional and reflective."*
>
> Aniela Fidler Wieruszewska, Feeling Futures Through the Stuff We Wear

Creative practices are a way of channeling the body into an activity in order to appeal to one's emotions, which may be blocked otherwise.

Dancing, crafting, doing something with our hands or body, works as a way to reach our inner emotions and to "feel" the future narratives.

The practices of care featured in some initiatives *(Centre for Reworlding, Crafting Change through Natural Dye-making, A Fearless Mural for the COP27)* are also a form of embodiment through different mechanisms:

- Create a space for love and safety (with boundaries and shared values),
- Recentering, returning to the body thanks to meditation,
- Connecting with one's heritage and past through ritual practices,
- Healing the body and the mind with collective support and empathy,
- Taking time, giving place to slow activities.

A powerful example is *Crafting Change through Natural Dye-making,* which invited young climate activists to reconnect with artisanal and traditional practices as acts of care and resistance. The workshops were co-facilitated by Courtney Wynne *(Indigenous Climate Action),* an Indigenous community caretaker who shared traditions, ceremonies, and knowledge, such as smudging with sage and land acknowledgment rituals.

> *"The work is deeply rooted in feminist care ethics, a framework that understands care as a political and relational act involving the recognition of need, the assumption of responsibility, the taking of action, and the provision of support or healing."*
>
> Crafting Change through Natural Dye-making

Through protocols co-designed with Indigenous collaborators, by introducing different marginalized perspectives and ontologies such as feminist and queer angles, by taking the time to learn and do things through slow crafts, storytelling, and rituals that resist the tyranny of clock, these projects create the conditions for participants to experience decolonial climate action and practice what it means and how it can be felt. Changing perspective is the objective, rather than rationalized solutions.

HOW CAN WE CREATE EMBODIMENT?

• Invest the field

First of all, the investigation processes, often at the beginning of the projects, can operate as a form of embodiment. It is a way to experience issues on the field, as pupils in the city of Leganes and Cabuérniga did as part of the initiative *Pedagogías del Mañana. Climate Action Photovoice* presents a whole tool of investigation, enabling young people to seek out signs of climate change in their daily lives and personal experiences.

• Connect to the body thanks to meditation and rituals

In some projects, embodiment is achieved thanks to meditative exercises or rituals:

> *"With soothing background music inviting them to take deep breaths, in and out, a narration was provided to guide them through the visioning. Youths were given fifteen minutes to think about their dreams and then five minutes to draw their dreams on a piece of paper, giving them a title."*
>
> Bagmati River Youth Project

The women facilitating the workshops of the Fearless Foundation also give an important place to the body in the rituals through which they take their group *(A Fearless Mural for the COP27).* The bodies of the participants also end up on the final murals since the figures are painted after a photograph taken of them taking a pose, as they want to be represented to the world.

• Artistic and creative practices

Different forms of embodiment through creative and artistic practices were encountered in WTFutures' corpus.

One of the most striking examples is the use of theater to play the climate futures imagined in *Générations F* and *Citadins Citadines 2050.* These projects enabled the young participants (teenagers and young adults, respectively) to imagine and give shape to their stories by expe-

rimenting with their bodies in a fictional space. By acting, they can live and feel their imagined futures in their bodies.

Other forms of creative practices have been used in the projects, such as sculpture and dance in *Museo del Futuro.*

→ We dive deeper into the role of artistic practices in the Key Learnings report: "Art as a connector."

• Invite the narratives in the material dimension

Different projects of the corpus proposed ways to bring the images of the future into the material dimension of the present. These approaches are close to Design Fiction but all have their special twists.

Museo del Futuro, for example, gathered over 100 young people to create a "Time Machine" museum. The speculative artefacts created by the young participants are presented as if they were part of a curated exhibition from 2068. This process gave form to what youngsters imagined of Mexico City's past, present, and future. Conceived as a mobile structure, the Time Machine could travel between districts and spark conversations among different youths.

Dr. Nur Anisah Abdullah made her students experiment with the Future Bazaar method to create a *Museum of the Not-Yet-Possible.* The Artefacts of the Not-Yet-Possible convey a whole different way to imagine how we travel, eat, adapt to climate change, etc.

The project *Imagining Futures / Future Imaginings* brings another proposition to make the narratives infiltrate the material dimensions of youngsters. As part of the methodology, the designers brought "material memory" objects to the workshop, such as hoes, pangas, bones, and spears. These objects act as signs from the future and from the past: *"These objects from conflicted pasts were used by young people to describe 'futures-already-in-the-making', the steps were already in place for the futures to emerge as they would like."*

• Reflect on how we share the narratives and the reflection outside of the workshops

A last form of embodiment involves the public, by sharing the project's outcomes in a public space, in more or less participatory forms.

The exhibition of *Museo del Futuro* described above is one of the possible forms to convey the work of youngsters to other people.

Générations F developed a whole discussion process with local citizens, since the core intention of the project is to enable young people to have a voice in the public space. After five days of theatrical creation, the children involved in the workshops perform in front of an audience, who have been invited to meet a tribe coming from the future. The performance is fully interactive, the children directly answering the questions of the public, and also asking them questions about how their society (our society in the present) functions – which is not an easy exercise.

FUTURES LITERACY

In this section, we observe what the projects have done to develop the participants' ability to better understand the role of the future in what they see and do – and develop their ability to prepare, recover and invent as changes occur – what UNESCO calls Futures Literacy. We uncover multiple uses and benefits of Futures Literacy, both for young people and to their older interlocutors.

WHAT IS FUTURES LITERACY?

Futures Literacy, **according to UNESCO**, is *"a capability (...) that allows people to better understand the role of the future in what they see and do. Being futures literate empowers the imagination, enhances our ability to prepare, recover and invent as changes occur. (...) It is a skill that everyone can and should acquire."*

We all anticipate, both in the short term (before crossing a street) and the long term (to make life choices), but we mostly do this unconsciously: we are generally unable to articulate the images of the future on which we base our decisions. And we are certainly not taught to do it, except in the rare Futures Studies departments of selected universities.

Futures Literacy is, above all, about turning these unconscious behaviours into conscious individual and collective practices. According to a leaflet produced by the *Future Is Now* project, Futures Literacy is about helping persons and collectives to:

- *"better understand the role that, through anticipation, the future plays in what they see and do;*
- *"understand the real-world effects of imagining futures;*
- *"articulate the differences between various uses of the future, depending on context and purpose."*

Most of the projects identified within WTFutures, but not all, sought to develop some kind of futures literacy in their young participants. For some, it was an end in itself – futures literacy as empowerment –, while for others it was a means to help participants produce better images of the future and be more relevant to the topic at hand. Some used informal, playful, experiential methods, while others relied on more structured forms of teaching.

When is the future?

The projects have chosen a great variety of time horizons for their futures. 2040 and 2050 seem to be the most frequent, with some occurrences to (nearby) 2030, 2060, one 2124, and a last project happening 200 years from now *(Générations F).* The "**Futures Literacy Toolbox**" from the *Future Is Now* project has this (non-scientific) recommendation: *"Choose a horizon slightly longer than their age (ex. 20 years if they are 15-18 years old). It is a time period that they can relate to, but it is also just beyond their experience, therefore likely to open their minds to new ideas."* Indeed, the choice of time horizon (or even that of not setting any) strongly depends on what is expected from the work.

HOW TO GENERATE FUTURES LITERACY?

Over the years, Futures Studies have produced a large amount of tools and methods, which may at times seem overwhelming. However, the projects studied by WTFutures have found a great variety of ways to develop their own variant of Futures Literacy with their participants:

- Some projects preceded the real futures work by a whole “capacity-building” phase: this is what, for instance, UNICEF Innocenti does with its yearly cohorts of “Youth Foresight Fellows”. In turn, several members of these cohorts did the same on the ground *(Climate Futures in Mali).*
- Some used specific techniques from the Futures Studies toolbox during their workshops *(Kidding the Future*).
- Others relied on very informal and even playful practices *(Climate Futures in Brussels 2030, Feeling Futures, Pedagogías del Mañana…).*

What these approaches have in common, is that they generally do not aim to train aspiring futurists, but rather to equip young people with new “soft skills” that can be used in a large variety of life situations, especially in an increasingly complex and unpredictable world. Together, they show that there is no single correct way to build up one’s futures literacy.

Some foresight techniques used in WTFutures projects (from most to least used; counting resolutely unscientific)	
Futures wheel: a graphical exploration of direct and indirect consequences or a particular change.	**Retro speculation:** backcasting from a given future, recounting the likely events that lead from the present to this future.
Futures triangle: a method to map forces of change and their interaction, categorizing them by their timeframe: the “push of the present”, the “pull of the future”, and the “weight of the past”.	**Three horizons:** a framework for analyzing a system’s change as an interplay between three “horizons”: the currently dominant system, the desired future, and in between, the messy space of transition.
Horizon scanning: the detection and examination of potential threats and opportunities in the future. It often differentiates trends (recognizable, consistent, long-term patterns of change) and “weak signals” (novel and unexpected phenomena that may or may not harbor lasting and significant change).	**“What if” questions:** exploratory prompts used to imagine alternative futures by setting a strong, transformative hypothesis (e.g, “What if extreme weather events permanently reshape global food production zones?”), and imagining how the future might unfold from there.
Scenario building: a structured method for developing multiple, plausible descriptions of how the future might unfold. Scenario sets often distinguish between “business as usual” (pursuing current directions), a desirable future, and a pessimistic and/or “disruptive future”.	**Time traveler game:** an exercise where participants imagine themselves as travelers from the future (or past) to explore how today’s decisions, events, or trends might look in a different time context.
Causal Layered Analysis (CLA): a method for exploring multiple layers of understanding about the future, from surface-level trends to deeper worldviews and myths, in order to reveal underlying causes and assumptions shaping issues.	**Design fiction:** the practice of creating speculative artifacts to explore and provoke thinking about possible futures and/or the social, ethical, or cultural implications of emerging technologies.
Polak game: an exercise to help participants reflect on their personal and collective attitudes toward the future by asking two simple questions: “How do you feel about the future?” (optimistic vs. pessimistic), and “Do you believe	**S-curve:** a graphical representation of the life cycle of a technology, innovation, or trend, showing slow initial growth, rapid acceleration, and eventual maturity or saturation.

LEARNING NEW SKILLS

The educational value of the projects studied in the WTFutures corpus goes well beyond Futures Literacy and Climate Change Literacy. In this category we will paint a broad picture of the plurality of skills passed on to youths that may be creative, technical, entrepreneurial, organisational, reflexive, social, etc.

> *[In] an era defined by complexity, individuals need capabilities that help them engage with uncertainty, make sense of emergent issues and opportunities, and work together –creatively, skilfully and ethically – to bring about positive societal transformations.*
> Kligyte *et al.*, **Educating for sustainable and equitable futures: A transdisciplinary future-making capability framework,** 2025.

LEARNING TRANSDISCIPLINARITY AND DEALING WITH COMPLEXITY

In analyzing what the projects had to say about education, we found that there was a strong convergence towards connecting academic disciplines to take complexity into account, and towards learning "life skills" such as collaboration.

Numerous initiatives studied in WTFutures advocate for a transdisciplinary education approach where different domains come together to make sense of a complex world. Young people will need to learn how to combine learnings from different disciplines in order to achieve their goals, whatever they may be.

Such is the case for *ClimateWorks Lab,* whose mission is to support young activists in developing personal projects related to the fight against climate change. To help them in this development, they orient them towards system mapping methods to identify issues they want to work on (complexity-related skills) or towards visioning exercises to identify personal motivations (which we could describe as self-awareness, emotional or reflexive skills).

LEARNING TO INVESTIGATE (AND LEARN) ON THE FIELD

Participatory research methods combine practice, context-awareness and knowledge-building in an iterative process. Learners co-produce their own knowledge, discuss it with actors on the ground, and reflect on it so as to become able to use it elsewhere. In *Climate Action Photovoice,* youngsters are given tools (a camera and some principles of photographic investigation) to then go out and capture images that reflect the issues that they feel are important to discuss.

Climate Futures in Brussels 2030 also proposes to its participants to do field research in the form of street interviews, then helps them process the information by teaching them how to do thematic mapping. The students in the *Imagining the Future for Transformation* course work with actual projects in Europe and Africa, trying to find the right “distance” in order to be both appreciative and critical, particularly towards projects that come from a culture that they know little about.

“Young Ambassadors” are also deeply invested on the ground in *Kijiji Chi Amani.* They are responsible for community-based fact-checking and rumor verification. Tracking down reliable as well as fake news at the local level is both a valuable skill, and a responsibility.

More broadly, many projects intend to teach the youths how to debate in a sane manner, work in teams and listen to others *(Défis Résilience, Museum of the Not-Yet-Possible, Centre for Reworlding).*

LEARNING PROFESSIONAL AND TECHNICAL SKILLS

Some projects sought to develop technical skills in, for example, agroecology or renewable energy production, aimed not at future professionals, but at helping communities prepare for a future where the local availability of these skills might come in handy *(Enter Nusantara, Eduponics).*

Aside from introducing pupils and students to aquaponics, *Eduponics* is also about developing project management and entrepreneurship skills and experience, by concretely running small, sustainable agricultural projects from and around their school.

Other initiatives involve young people in workshops directly connected to real professional practice. *Urbanités Numériques en jeu* for example enables children in a class to be involved in real-world urban planning and renovation projects. They even learn how to use some modelization tools and get precise knowledge on the use of building materials.

LEARNING TO DEVELOP AN ACTIVIST PROJECT

Several initiatives target activists (or activists in the making), recognising that activism is both a knowledge-intensive and an emotionally demanding activity, and that both these characteristics need to be nurtured. It is the case for *Campus de l’Engagement*, whose goal is to develop what they describe as the “skills of the future”: civic engagement, critical thinking, collective leadership, and communication.

The young adults involved in this program become capable of (or better at) creating citizen mobilization campaigns, media content, organizing events, facilitating workshops, creating and running community spaces, etc.

In the *Local Conferences of Youth,* capacity building as activists is also at the program’s core. They learn how to navigate a very codified institutional world, to write and discuss policies, as well as advocacy writing.

These learnings are clearly valuable outside of activism; however, what these projects also tell us is that activism can be a significant part of young people’s life itineraries, well beyond their formative years – and that, to them, it counts as a professional endeavor, not a hobby.

→ See also *Lifelong Activism* in the *Key Learnings* report.

LEARNING TO USE CREATIVE TOOLS AND EXPRESS ONESELF

It is also really important to mention the value for young people to learn creative and artistic practices, like scriptwriting in *Climate Futures in Brussels 2030* or theatre in *Générations F.* These experiments are not one-offs. The young people involved in it might discover a great way to continue to express themselves and it could even inspire vocations.

Creative and artistic techniques can also introduce new ways to think about an issue and help young people deepen their understanding of the world on a daily basis.

→ We explored this issue further in the "Embodiment" section above.

LEARNING ABOUT CRAFTS AND HERITAGE

Across several strands of climate activism, practitioners, mostly situated on colonised land, are increasingly turning toward Indigenous forms of knowledge sharing - rituals, traditional practices, and storytelling. Young people, in particular, appear to show a growing interest in these approaches, which are gaining traction worldwide (Fridays for Future MAPA - Most Affected People and Areas - movement, Indigenous Climate Action, Possible Futures, Youth for Climate Movement (Argentina), etc).

In *Crafting Change through Natural Dye-making*, a particular form of craftsmanship is taught to the participants: *“natural dyeing and textile-making, activities chosen for their ritual, relational, and land-based qualities.”* This activity takes on an additional dimension through its links with indigenous traditions, ceremonies and knowledge.

Here, discussing the future also means learning about the past, about the roots, and learning to reconnect to the land and the ecosystems.

Another project, *Centre for Reworlding,* also draws on indigenous knowledge, Aboriginal knowledge in particular, which is passed on to the young participants.

The *Centre for Reworlding* positions itself explicitly against colonial imaginaries. Reworlding, in this context, relies on intergenerational and cross-cultural learning. Their approach emphasizes unlearning and relearning. Canadian scholar Vanessa Andreotti, co-founder of Gesturing Towards Decolonial Futures, describes this idea as follows:

> *“Disarming and de-centering, dethroning and de-arrogantizing, detoxifying and decluttering, mourning, grieving and healing, digesting and metabolizing, seeing ourselves as cute and pathetic, so that the wider metabolism can breathe and move more easily within and around us”*
> Gesturing towards decolonial futures, **https://decolonialfutures.net/**

Moving away from education focused solely on technical solutions and instead helping people, both young and old, to face complexity is an integral part of decolonising practices. This approach invites us to question how we do things - the time we take, the ways we engage in dialogue, and how we inhabit learning processes.

The status of knowledge itself is shifting, being considered an heritage: *“Being responsible for the knowledge shared. This is one of the reasons Indigenous people have sustained culture since time immemorial: through intergenerational learning and storytelling.” (Centre for Reworlding)*

LINKS WITH POLITICAL INITIATIVES

A large proportion of the WTFutures projects are, at least in part, driven by the will to influence policy-making. Some are linked to or initiated by institutions at different levels (local, regional, international…). Others position themselves as a grass-root movement addressing political institutions or processes and demanding change. Through consultations, partnerships, imagination sessions, advocacy platforms, and campaigns, these projects elevate youths’ voices to rethink policymaking, democratic innovations, and climate governance. They also point to a shifting political landscape where young people's voices and their actions are increasingly valued – at least in words.

PUBLIC CONSULTATIONS WITH YOUTHS

Many projects experimented with participatory democracy mechanisms involving youth, linked to local and international policymaking. They either reached out to youth-led organisations or built partnerships with organisations working with young people. For example, between 2022 and 2024, *Destination Beauvais 2040* connected a formal “Council for the Future” with “future workshops” by and for citizens, including several focused on children and youths, *“to engage directly with local decision-makers as equal partners.”*

Similarly, *La Crise dont vous êtes le héros* in Nantes Métropole used interactive climate scenario games to involve youths in municipal climate adaptation strategies, directly linking foresight to institutional resilience goals. In Slovakia, the *Message Towards the Region project was “co-developed with the City of Nitra and the Council of Youth of the Nitra Region, anchoring the foresight work within local governance frameworks.*” It facilitated structured dialogues with elected officials, addressing policy issues such as school curriculum reform by workshopping ideas with youths from the region. Through partnerships with municipal or regional governments, these initiatives fostered democratic dialogue with youths to help shape urban policies on themes such as climate, technology, education, and political reform.

These projects reveal a growing desire to change how policymaking and public governance recognize the value of proposals coming from young people. The extent to which such proposals will be concretely implemented still remains to be seen.

MUNICIPAL CLIMATE ADAPTATION STRATEGIES CONSIDERING SOCIAL CONTEXT

Some initiatives within public consultation contexts highlight the intersection of social justice and climate adaptation in metropolitan areas and the importance of reaching out to more vulnerable communities. Projects like *Citadins, Citadines 2050 “engaged participants from both socially disadvantaged neighborhoods and local authority field agents… fostering dialogue across social divides”* in order to understand how climate impacts are being perceived by communities who do not usually attend consultations in their own time. By reaching out and meeting with these communities on their own ground, it tries to make sure their perspectives can be included into governmental climate resilience strategies. This approach supports institutional priorities for inclusive governance and equity in planning, all the while experimenting with more innovative approaches.

TOP-DOWN, CLIMATE GOVERNANCE AND YOUTH

Youth-led initiatives connected to global climate governance are examples of more formal political channels for participation. *Local Conferences of Youth* (LCOY) train young advocates in policy and advocacy, enabling them to articulate and present their visions for climate justice. LCOY also links youth advocacy directly to UNFCCC (UN Climate Change) negotiations, giving young people the opportunity to both build skills and bring their demands into formal political arenas.

The *Emerging Horizons* foresight process similarly integrates youth-generated futures into UN climate policy frameworks. Its report presents policy questions tailored for further action by UN agencies and youth climate leaders. These futures serve as examples of alternative ways to approach and frame the issues at stake.

Some institutions or funds have been working with movements or organisations who are active on the ground and who mobilize citizens, youths, from different parts of the world on questions of climate, especially in areas where local governments are not necessarily supportive of these initiatives. The Fearless Mural project at COP27 Egypt inserts/situates youth activism within the official UN negotiation space, creating a *"perfect time for politics to come out from working behind closed doors... to see what is happening on the ground" (A Fearless Mural for the COP27).*

INNOVATING, TEACHING AND INFORMING POLITICS

Several projects focus on enhancing institutional abilities to engage with youth and civil society through foresight and participatory tools and vice versa. The EU-funded *Imagining Climate-Just Futures* initiative trained over 3,400 citizens across 12 countries and European partners to lead participatory scenario-building, embedding youth narratives in policymaking. The project description notes it is *"combining participatory foresight, youth empowerment, and creative engagement to shape inclusive climate justice narratives".*

In Canada, *Net Zero and You(th)* empowers young people to *"learn to critically assess government plans, track local climate initiatives, and ask better-informed questions as citizens"* enabling them to be more informed and to adapt their language to a political context. This is also to encourage youths to engage in local or national democratic processes such as participatory budgeting and youth panels. An important point to highlight is that within these dynamics, youths are often expected to adjust their tone and style to fit political discourse if they want to be taken seriously.

Kijiji Cha Amani in a conflict-affected region of the Democratic Republic of Congo, engages communities through participatory "parachute mapping" to visualize the links between climate change, land use, and insecurity. These locally grounded narratives inform advocacy towards regional authorities and NGOs, pushing for integrated environmental and peacebuilding policies. These types of activities demonstrate how, in fragile contexts, collaborative governance, where citizens and communities align to address a problem, can complement formal political structures, when these prove unable to respond to citizens' needs.

BOTTOM-UP, ACTIVISM AND CLIMATE JUSTICE

Grassroots activism remains a vital force applying pressure to politics and political decisions for more ambitious climate policies. The link with policymaking here becomes about applying pressure. These initiatives are drivers of bottom-up political change. In Indonesia, *Enter Nusantara* campaigns in many different ways, by organising mass protests targeting banks still investing in fossil fuels, with the explicit goal to ban coal. The campaign's outreach efforts (social media), has influence on policy debates and cultural perceptions around climate justice, all the while recruiting more youths in a national pressure movement.

PLAYING WITH NEW WAYS OF LINKING CITIZENS AND POLITICS

Le Théâtre des Négociations exemplifies an experimental approach to connecting citizens and politics by transforming the rigid format of international climate negotiations into a participatory, imaginative arena. Instead of mirroring traditional state-based delegations, the 2015 event invited 200 international students to a theatre in Nanterre (France) for a different kind of simulation: many of the students represented new kinds of (non-human) "actors" such as oceans, soil, youth, or the internet, entities usually absent from formal policy arenas but central to planetary life. By staging negotiations as a live, collective performance, it disrupted diplomatic conventions and allowed participants to test new alliances, rethink priorities, and generate bold proposals such as a legal status for climate refugees or a moratorium on Arctic mining. This experiment not only broadened the views on who and what gets represented in political decision-making, but also highlighted the potential of theatrical, creative formats to renew public imagination, foster collective agency, and bring long-term issues into the democratic sphere that need to be answered by taking in complexity.

From local, national, and international councils to citizen consultations and international climate negotiations, youths are recognized as essential political actors shaping just, inclusive, and sustainable futures. While institutions are adapting their processes to include and/or hear youth voices, and while young people themselves are demanding to be heard through activism and grassroots campaigns, it remains crucial to scrutinize how these mechanisms are implemented to ensure youths' voices genuinely influence policy and proposals are acted upon.

For now, however, at the institutional level these initiatives often function more as knowledge pools than as drivers of concrete change, with relatively few proposals being piloted or adopted. This raises important ethical questions: how can we ensure that youths genuinely benefit from these consultations and that participation translates into meaningful impact?

→ We delve into what makes youth participation meaningful in the next section, *Meaningful experience.*

MEANINGFUL EXPERIENCE

During our work on WTFutures, a question emerged from all the projects we learned about: what makes them a meaningful experience for youngsters? What do they take away from their participation in the project? What makes them mutually beneficial, for the organizers as well as the young participants, as opposed to an extractive process?

LOOKING FOR WHAT MAKES WTFUTURES' PROJECTS MEANINGFUL

We found that projects can be meaningful experiences to young people in a gradual way:

1. First of all, by **ensuring good participation conditions:** the organisers have to provide them with what they need to be at ease;
2. Then, by **integrating educational objectives** to the experience: pass on tools and knowledge;
3. By **focusing on the youngsters' concerns,** the workshops also help them make sense and reflect on something they already consider as issues;
4. **Bringing the participants pride and joy** throughout the process also makes it a memorable moment;
5. Finally, **building a horizontal, trusting relationship** where the youths are being taken seriously and involved in every step, even in the decisions, turned out to be the most valued effort in making the experience meaningful to them.

• Ensuring good participation conditions

For *ClimateWorks Lab,* the City Hive team following them paid special attention to the youngsters' needs, offering stipends, food, and a flexible schedule. They also focus on overcoming financial and logistical barriers:

> *"Throughout the process, the emphasis was not on perfection or speed, but on agency, adaptability, and ongoing engagement. Meetings always included shared meals, which helped build trust and community. Youth were given financial support through stipends and transit reimbursements, lowering barriers to full participation."*

• Pass on the tools and knowledge

An ambitious way to meaningfully integrate young people in foresight practices is to thoroughly train them on future studies methods, then sponsor them to work on it. In 2022, UNICEF Innocenti recruited a group of young foresight practitioners from around the world to become its first cohort of "Youth Foresight Fellows". Fellows worked with UNICEF over the course of six months as consultants to design and participate in research processes to inform UNICEF's Global Outlook, and create tools for future youth foresight projects *(Our Future Pledge).*

> → Many other projects linked their work on futures with educational outcomes that will benefit the participants well beyond the project itself: you can find more about them in the relevant sections on *Futures Literacy, Climate Change Literacy* and *Learning New Skills.*

• Address young participants' concerns

While Maria de Mater O'Neill was teaching a design class in Fajardo (Puerto Rico) in 2017, Hurricane Maria hit the country. It devastated the region and disrupted local life for several weeks. That was the starting point to develop a methodology around resilience for the young designers, which became the *Puerto Rico 2054* project. Here it was meaningful because it was something the students needed at this specific moment, dealing with a difficult and hurtful situation. The futuring process helped the youngsters deal with their emotions and the concrete difficulty of studying in this situation, while the projects they developed made sense in their community and had a concrete impact.

Climate Action Photovoice also has a process to make the theme emerge from the group, so that the participants' real concerns are discussed.

> → The *Youth-led* projects, described in another HOW section, have an inherent tendency to be closer to the concerns of youths, with young people taking charge of the entire development of projects.

The practices of care at the heart of some of the projects of our corpus are also participate in making them meaningful experiences (*Centre for Reworlding, A fearless mural for COP27, Crafting Change through Natural Dye-making).* The intergenerational discussions featured in these projects, associated with indigenous ways to share knowledge, were also seen as ways to legitimate young people's voices in the discussion.

The Eco-Anxiety Africa Project (TEAP) also uses this intergenerational lever to help young people legitimate their eco-emotions and cope with them. The project is not about producing something: its goal is solely to help, to support the participants and create a space where they can express their eco-emotions, and help each other process them.

These initiatives are meaningful because they help young participants to make sense of their environment, of what they experience and feel.

• Pride and joy as a goal of the project

Obviously, one way of making a project meaningful is for it to produce concrete effects on the ground. As an example, *Message Towards the Region* developed a real co-creation process involving young people and policy makers to imagine the future of the city of Nitra together.

> → More examples can be found in the *Links with political initiatives* section.

Interacting with decision-makers, and perhaps achieving concrete results, is also a source of pride for the young participants, and can help them have a broader view of how they are able to act at the level of their environment and community.

There is also a core and great value in the sole act of creating a place of discussion between young people. That is something they value and that often comes in the feedback of the projects (see *Net Zero and You(th)* or *Générations F).* Participants find peers who share their values and do not feel alone anymore.

According to Aniela Fidler Wieruszewska *(Feeling Futures Through the Stuff We Wear)*, it is also deeply important to just make it fun, and creative.

• Build an horizontal relationship with the young participants

In the field of research, extractive participation is also a risk that needs to be thought of. The designers of the participatory methods of *Youth Futures Under Construction* and *JustFutures* had in mind a similar question: how does this research also serve the participants taking part in it? For *Youth Futures Under Construction* the method has been co-created with youths as co-authors and researchers. They even constituted youth advisory boards. Then young people are not objects studied in the research but real stakeholders learning something and taking credit from the experience.

During the *JustFutures* project, Anabela Carvalho and Maria Fernandes-Jesus, who we interviewed, worked in cooperation with different activist groups in Portugal. They initially encountered trust issues with them and had to work their way around it, reform the projects' organisation and find common interests between their research and the activists' goals. Despite the additional hard work, it is important for them to bridge research work with the community. This effort was necessary and enabled a lot of learning occasions on both sides.

Imagining Futures / Future Imaginings is another example of deep involvement of youngsters in the management of the process. Youth Advisory Boards were formed in each geographical district to co-design the process, guide ethical practices, and define meaningful forms of expression. It was defined and conceived from the beginning as a collaborative and horizontal project.

UNICEF INNOCENTI ON MEANINGFUL YOUTH ENGAGEMENT

In their report **"Meaningful Youth Engagement in the Multilateral System",** UNICEF Innocenti wrote a concise definition summarizing the issues around what they define as "Meaningful Youth Engagement" in processes set up by international institutions with the intent of involving young participants:

> *"Meaningful youth engagement is where children and youth are involved as equal partners; where their views and circumstances are respected; where marginalized youth also get the opportunity to participate; and where youths from all backgrounds are welcome and engaged as agents of change rather than just beneficiaries."*

Several of their recommendations echo what we found in WTFutures:

- **"Provide support before, during and after youth engagement"** - Support can take multiple forms: clear guidance on the goals, financial resources to cover costs, logistical support, training, networking, professional opportunities…
- **"Create enabling environments that empower young people"** - this recommendation refers to how young participants can delegitimize themselves while talking to older people. There is a need to help them gain confidence in the process.
- **"Make participation go beyond consultation"** - the goal here is to avoid tokenistic participation and give a real place to youngsters' voices.
- **"Be inclusive and truly representative of youth voices"** - it is crucial to ensure that places for youth engagement are inclusive and representative (young people with disabilities, with unconventional backgrounds, ethnic minorities…) Organizers have to be pro-active to integrate various young people by reflecting on the financial, cultural and physical barriers that may need to be overcome.
- **"Be accountable"** - if there is one thing stopping young people from getting involved in adult-led initiatives, it is the feeling of never being truly listened to or understood. Apart from self-confidence, trust between youngsters and adults is necessary to build a meaningful engagement.

YOUTH AGENCY

Agency refers to the capacity for people to make choices, take action, and influence long-term pathways for themselves and their communities. From overcoming feelings of powerlessness to helping young people find their place in an uncertain world, to empowering them as agents of change, agency is either the core objective, or an important side effect, of most projects in the WTFutures corpus.

WHAT AM I TO DO ?

The *"multifaceted and intersecting challenges faced by young people today" (Youth Futures Under Construction)* can easily generate a feeling of powerlessness. The authors list *"conflict, insecurity, limited government support, deep-set gender discrimination, climate change, infectious disease and a widespread lack of decent jobs."*

In a broad study across Norway, Italy, Germany, and Austria the result confirms that while young people tend to increasingly position themselves as key actors in societal transformation they don't always understand how they can act. As a 17-year-old Norwegian student expressed, *"I feel very powerless … because I don't have the opportunity to make the big differences. Therefore, I hope that we as a society have come further, so that individuals and politicians work together to stop/reduce climate change." (Narratives of Change in Science Education)*

The researchers involved in the project stress that education and educators must also work with students and go beyond scientific literacy so youths can *"develop a sense of agency by understanding their place in the world and give them the tools to be active and reflexive citizens."* This includes fostering critical thinking and learning to *"recognize and resist passively adopting ideological assumptions that prevent them from becoming meaningful historical actors."*

DESIRE TO ACT

Numerous initiatives demonstrate how young people can be empowered to envision, co-create, and lead transformative climate futures. These projects reveal diverse approaches on youth agency and action, from collective imagining and participatory governance to educational empowerment and community-led environmental stewardship, demonstrating that there is a desire to act, but maybe not the space made for youth in the more institutional and organizational fields.

As the *Enter Nusantara* project (a youth-led initiative in Indonesia) reminds us, *"Youth are not just 'the future' but active agents of the present, capable of shaping climate policy and reimagining how sustainability, justice, and finance intersect."* This perspective is an important learning from WTFutures as it is a challenge to today's views (mainly fostered by adults) that

see youths merely as future beneficiaries (in terms of political decisions), and offers to position them instead as vital participants in today's urgent climate and social transformations.

ENVISIONING PATHS TO ACTION

Within the projects, we identified different paths to action, where initiatives are practicing or experimenting different tools with youths that lead to action. For example, the *JustFutures* initiative encapsulates this desired shift by engaging young people with varying levels of activism in collaborative projects designed to envision *"a society where young people have an active role in constructing just climate futures."* The process values hands-on creativity, through solidarity-driven work: *"utopian impulses and hope emerged, giving rise to 'real' utopias, practical visions of inclusive and negotiated future societies."* Hence framing the areas where youths could act in the direction of the future they envisioned.

Similarly, in Nepal, the *Bagmati River Youth Project* empowered youths to lead a six-week capacity-building project focused on local ecological restoration. The program was *"not only a consultation, but a goal to transform youngsters into agents of change, able to take ownership and responsibility of their river."* With 196 participants completing the program and thousands more engaged virtually, youths conceived a *"wide range of actions, from awareness raising programs to the production of vermicomposting units."* One young participant shared, *"I want to share the experience when I led a few of my friends to make a group and start cleaning the jungle near our community … I realized how I can be the leader of change."*

Some young participants in the *Net-Zero and You(th)* project also ended up putting in place projects within their communities after participating in a series of workshops that helped them imagine and narrow down how they could be useful within their action scale.

ALLOWING YOUTHS TO ACT ON THEIR TERMS

In *Climate Futures in Brussels 2030*, young voices articulated a clear desire for meaningful involvement beyond traditional protest: *"Young people want to engage in climate action, but on new terms. Not just protest, but co-creation. Not just demands, but governance and world-building."* This aligns with *El Futuro es Clima* in Spain, which convened a "Metaforum" of 40 randomly selected young participants alongside a parallel group of 20 climate experts to deliberate on how to prioritize responses to climate inaction. Young participants emphasized how their highlighted priorities often differed from experts' technical focus. In other words, in bringing in new ways of seeing things, it gave them perspective and a sense of usefulness, as they also understood "climate action" in their own terms.

FUTURES LITERACY AND CONTEXT DRIVEN ACTION

In learning how to think critically, educational projects that mobilize different future approaches are fertile ground to deepen youths' understanding on various climate related issues by providing new skills sets and in understanding complexities. In *Kidding the Future,* a project taking place in Pakistan, Umar Sheraz teaches futures literacy tools that invite youths to reflect on trends, investigate historical perspectives from elders in their communities, and collaboratively explore the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals in the perspective of expected, alternative, and preferred futures.

Activities such as the "time-traveler game" where students envision a child they love 30 years into the future, and collective exercises using the "Futures Triangle" helped youths identify forces shaping their preferred futures. This allows a deepening of perspective in subjects that can sometimes seem set in stone, and adapting some "general realities" to the realities of a context, a country. One young participant observed, *"You told us that SDGs are interconnected. If we had justice in our country, the other SDGs would've taken care of themselves."* By learning and opening up perspectives, youths are more equipped to understand where and how their actions can have meaning in their specific context, as not all actions are relatable from one country to the next.

ACTIONS NEEDED RIGHT AWAY

Cross-cultural research, that take place in countries which are already living the effects of climate change, such as the *Imagining 2060* study involving Taiwanese and Australian students, demonstrate that some students from vulnerable Pacific Island nations expressed deep concerns, *"My preferred future cannot happen unless we take action right away"* and recognizing the existential threats their homelands is facing with rising waters or other catastrophes. *Enter Nusantara* powerfully asserts that youths are *"active agents of the present,"* defending that their meaningful participation in fighting coal mines in Indonesia is crucial today for building sustainable, just futures that reflect the complexities of lived realities *right now.*

Within the WTFutures project, it is clear that youths are not and wish not to be *just* future stakeholders, but active agents shaping the world today in which they will be living tomorrow, affected by climate and social transformation. Here, there and around the world, they are co-creating, leading and acting in projects that reflect on policy, education, governance, and in their community. By amplifying young voices, providing spaces for experimenting with these approaches and integrating futures literacy into education, we can foster the critical thinking and the agency young people already have or, sometimes need to navigate uncertainty, challenge dominant narratives, identify areas of action and lead transformative change.

YOUTH-LED PROJECTS

Youth leadership emerges in multiple ways, ranging from youths initiating projects on various subjects, to young participants designing methodologies, producing outputs, and acting as political and cultural agents of change. By designing and leading projects according to their own vision, youth collectives are reinventing ways of working collaboratively, while demonstrating that they are not merely beneficiaries or future actors of society, but present leaders shaping climate narratives, governance, and community action.

YOUTH-LED BY DESIGN – AND ONWARDS

16 out of 54 projects in the WTFutures corpus explicitly define themselves as youth-led. The leadership, design, and direction of the projects are conceived and driven by young people, setting the tone for the rest of the project's structure and outputs.

Many initiatives emerge directly from youths' experiences, demonstrating that leadership arises from concern – whether for the Planet or for issues directly affecting them. *The Eco-anxiety Africa Project* (TEAP) in Nigeria was born from the observation, by young founders of a prior organization, Sustyvibes, that climate change was harming their own mental health. *Enter Nusantara "was born out of a coalition of youths who recognized both the urgency of Indonesia's climate crisis and the need for an inclusive movement."* In these projects, youths take ownership of their experience without waiting for outside support.

YOUTHS PARTICIPATING AND CO-CREATING THE AGENDA AND METHODOLOGIES

Projects often center youths as creators rather than passive recipients. Fearless Foundation, for instance, uses participatory art interventions where youths and community members *"determine what they want the world to see from them".*

ClimateWorks Lab emphasizes participant-led agenda: *"rather than prescribing a fixed curriculum, the team adapted to the group's interests, letting conversations and project themes emerge from within".* Similarly to this bottom-up strategy that listens to participants, *Éco-Motion* combines foresight, therapy, and group-supported planning to allow youths to create individualized strategies for sustainable engagement, where *"the starting point is always their own perception of a desirable future.".*

Youth-led initiatives are great places for engagement since young people are designing themselves their conditions of work *(Enter Nusantara, Bagmati River Youth Project).* They can focus on what makes sense for them and not on goals defined by others.

YOUTH-PRODUCED OUTPUTS AND MEDIA

Youth leadership extends to tangible outputs that carry their voice and vision. *Enter Nusantara* produces outputs such as a podcast fanzines and art exhibitions, all framed through youths' perspectives and designed to encourage other young people to participate. These serve as a communication device to engage with them. *Net Zero and You(th)* alumni initiate local projects including *"community fridge campaigns, participatory budgeting proposals, and youth climate panels". TEAP's* ZenCafe program trains youths to replicate safe-space gatherings across Africa through the Zen Guardians program. These outputs show that youths do not merely participate in predefined activities: they actively create and disseminate content, narratives, and interventions on platforms (online or offline) that are relevant to their peers, making the projects both successful and meaningful to them – and, who knows best which communication strategy to use in order to reach and implicate youths, than youth !

PEER-TO-PEER LEADERSHIP AND SCALING

Some projects include structured mechanisms for youths to train and support one another. *TEAP's* Zen Guardians model allows trained youths to establish their own ZenCafes in other countries. *ClimateWorks Lab* encourages participants to develop community-oriented projects and personal climate action plans, fostering leadership skills that extend beyond the initial program. The project's young participants are also encouraged to develop relations and share meals outside of the program so as to foster more profound relationships.These practices embed peer-to-peer mentorship and informal meetings as core components of youth-led work.

YOUTHS LEADING POLICY, CIVIC, AND SOCIAL DOMAINS

Many projects emphasize that youths are current agents of change, not deferred "future leaders." Enter Nusantara stresses that youths are *"active agents of the present, capable of shaping climate policy and reimagining how sustainability, justice, and finance intersect." Local Conferences of Youth* (LCOY) trains youths to *"articulate and present their visions for climate justice"* within the UNFCCC (United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change) process. Although UNFCCC is not youth-led, LCOY is reserved for youth voices, allowing them to develop recommendations that concern them. *Net Zero and You(th)* positions participants as translators *"between generations, between policy and lived reality, and between fear and action." TEAP* similarly engages youths' voices in challenging stigma and influencing policymakers regarding the mental health impacts of climate change in Nigeria.

YOUTH PERSPECTIVES AS CENTRAL KNOWLEDGE SOURCES

Youth lived experiences and insights are critical knowledge. *Éco-Motion* builds upon participants' eco-emotions and perceptions of desirable futures to guide the organisations' strategy. *Fearless Foundations* and *LCOYs* integrate youth perspectives into public-facing advocacy, reframing institutional and global climate dialogues around their lived realities and imaginative capacities. If we take the time to look into youth-led initiatives, these projects report key insights on how politics can be done differently when integrating youths' perspective, or by allowing youths to lead the project: in some projects, *"participants moved away from debates and moralizing tones, instead using personal stories to open dialogue with those holding different views" (Net-Zero and You(th)).* In models where youths have an active organizational role, leadership is often distributed, co-creative, and grounded in the lived realities of the people participating, which on political topics such as climate, can be quite a learning opportunity. These projects position youths as today's agents of change, engaging in civic, policy, and climate action. They embed values such as peer mentorship, collective resilience, and capacity building. By supporting youth leadership, social and ecological transformation scales faster and in real time, as strategies to foster engagement and participation are significantly more adapted, direct and relevant to their age groups. Although these projects show that young people are capable of designing, governing, executing, and communicating ambitious projects, producing ideas, policy directions, knowledge as well as action on the ground, the effect on institutional and corporate decisions has so far been frustrating.

→ How this could change is the focus of one *Key Learnings* report: *Involving young people in decision making.*

THE 54 PROJECTS



Authagraph is an equal-area type world map projection that was invented by Japanese architect Hajime Narukawa in 1999.

THE 54 PROJECTS

NAME OF THE PROJECT	MAIN INITIATORS	COUNTRY
A Fearless Mural for the COP27	Fearless Foundation	Egypt
Aubervilliers 2124	Point de Rassemblement	France
Bagmati River Youth Project	ADB, Youth for Asia	Nepal
Banking on Youth	ADB, Youth for Asia	Philippines
Butterfly 2050	République Française	France
Campus de l'Engagement	ENvironnement JEUnesse	Canada
Centre for Reworlding	Centre for Reworlding	Australia
Citadins, Citadines 2050	LABEC and U+	France
Climate Action Photovoice	CREDA	Italy
Climate Future in Brussels 2030	BrusselAVenir	Belgium
Climate Futures in Mali	Mamadou Doucouré, UNICEF	Mali
ClimateWorks Lab	City Hive	Canada
Crafting Change through Natural Dye-making	UCL, Lakeshore Arts	United Kingdom
Défis Résilience	CAUE Paris, Manon Besançon	France
Destination Beauvais 2040	City of Beauvais, inSiglo	France
Éco-Motion	Éco-Motion	Canada
El Futuro es Clima	Demos Lab	Spain
Emerging Breakthroughs on Climate Change	UNICEF Innocenti	International
Emerging Horizons	UNICEF Innocenti	International
Enter Nusantara	Enter Nusantara	Indonesia
Exploring School Scenarios in Melbourne	Neil Selwyn and al.	Australia

THE 54 PROJECTS

NAME OF THE PROJECT	MAIN INITIATORS	COUNTRY
Feeling Futures Through the Stuff We Wear	Aniela Fidler-Wieruszewska	United Kingdom
Future Images of Youth on Food systems	Minna Kaljonen et al.	Finland
Future Is Now	Youthwatch, BrusselAVenir, U+	Slovakia
The Future of the Togolese Coastline	Akouété Serge Yemey	Togo
Générations F	LUIT, Zelda Soussan	France
Going Green, by Eduponics	Eduponics	South Africa
Imagining 2060	Tamkang University	Taïwan
Imagining Climate-Just Futures	Oxfam Intermón	Spain
Imagining Futures / Future Imaginings	Kate Moles *et al.*	Uganda
Imagining the Future for Transformation	University of Utrecht's Urban Studio	Netherlands
JustFutures	Anabela Carvalho *et al.*	Portugal
Kidding the Futures	Umar Sheraz	Pakistan
Kijiji Cha Amani	James Kataliko	Democratic Rep. of Congo
La Crise dont vous êtes le héros	Nantes Métropole	France
Local Conferences of Youth	YOUNGO	France
Message Towards the Region	Youthwatch	Slovakia
Museo Del Futuro	Mexico City Initiative (MCI)	Mexico
Museum of the Not-Yet-Possible	Nur Anisah Abdullah	Taïwan
Narrative of change in Science Education	Hanna Rokenes and al.	Norway
Net Zero & You(th)	Apathy is boring	Canada
Not About Us Without Us	Jennifer Olachi Uchendu et al.	International

THE 54 PROJECTS

NAME OF THE PROJECT	MAIN INITIATORS	COUNTRY
Our Future Pledge	UNICEF Innocenti	International
Parque Explora: Laboratorios Creativos	Parque Explora	Colombia
Pedagogías del Mañana	Cooperativa Garua	Spain
Puerto Rico 2054	Maria Mater O'Neil	Puerto Rico
The Eco-anxiety Africa Project	Sustyvibes	Nigeria
Théâtre des Négociations	Frédérique Aït-Touati, Bruno Latour	France
Urbanités Numériques en jeu	Institute for Research and Innovation (IRI)	France
Voices of Tomorrow	Curriculum For Life	United Kingdom
Young Voices for Fairer Futures	Reasons to be Hopeful	USA
Youth Climate Lab	Youth Climate Lab (YCL)	Canada
Youth Future Under Construction	The British Academy	United Kingdom
Youth Talks	Higher Education for Good Foundation	Switzerland

A FEARLESS MURAL FOR THE COP27

COUNTRY(IES)
Egypt, Global South

ORGANISATION(S)
Fearless Foundation, Prarthana Gupta, Dridhata Silwal, Greenpeace MENA, Children and Youth Pavilion

YEAR(S)
2022

LINK(S)
https://fearlesscollective.org/project/cop27-egypt/

"We make space to move from fear to love through the co-creation of beauty in public space."

FEARLESS FOUNDATION'S APPROACH

Fearless Foundation first started as Shilo Shiv Suleman's art project in 2012. It was an intense moment of protest in India, following the "Nirbhaya" gang-rape and murder in Delhi. People took to the streets with their anger written on signs and posters. According to Prarthana Gupta and Dridhata Silwal, the words were harsh and reflected a sense of fear.

The Fearless project was an open call for people to work on affirmative sentences, spreading love and hope in moments of protests. Shilo created a method of public and participative art interventions with women and misrepresented communities, as a form of activism.

It is now a non-profit foundation, disseminating this approach across the world, and particularly in the global south.

"We have created over 40 public monuments in 16 countries, working with communities most invisible or marginalized – including Muslim and Dalit women in India, Indigenous communities in Brazil and North America, communities affected by gang violence in Pakistan, Syrian and Palestinian refugees in Lebanon and queer communities in Tunisia and Indonesia as they reclaim these public spaces with the images and affirmations they choose."



Based on a ritualistic process to understand the past, their journey and their hopes, the stories are then showcased publicly as murals. The participative workshops create a space to help the participants from the community determine what they want the world to see from them and to guide them in the imagination of "safe and sacred futures".

"Born from immersive workshops facilitated with different communities – the methodology brings together symbol, ritual and storytelling to activate imaginations and create collective mythology."



The artists work in total cooperation with the community participants, painting with them. When the whole process is finished, they organize a "fearless feast", a street party where allies and decision makers are invited to this deeply political artistic event.

For Prarthana and Dridhata, it's the perfect time for politics to come out from working behind closed doors. It is high time for them to see what is happening on the ground, what the youth and everyday people are saying and feeling.
Fearless Foundation has 3 categories of artistic campaigns: "at the root" on gender and envi-

ronmental justice, “embodied” on the gender spectrum and “border softer” on migration and conflict. All of them are reflecting the feminist, queer and decolonial values at the heart of the broader project.



The issues of climate change appear frequently during the workshops, but always in intersection with other themes woven with it. For example, while working on a mural in Sri Lanka with a community of female surfers, the subject of sport, gender and climate movements were unveiled as interconnected concerns. Additionally, when brought up in the discussions, the climate crisis is never looked at from a technical point of view but from the threats the communities are facing.

A MURAL FOR YOUTH AT THE COP 27

In 2022, Fearless Foundation collaborated with Greenpeace MENA and the Children and Youth Pavilion to work on a mural giving insights on the point of view of young peoples in the global south communities, living in the places most impacted by the climate crisis.

The location of the workshop and mural was the Blue Zone of the COP27 in Egypt, a UN-run place frequently receiving a variety of audiences amongst government members and civil society.

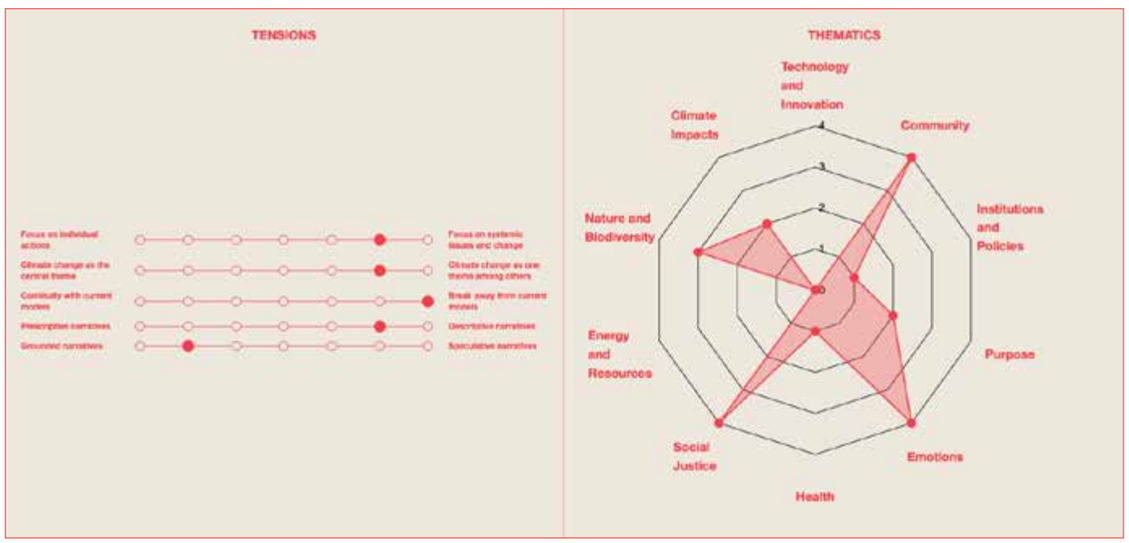


The themes discussed and represented by the young activists were numerous and ambitious: loss and damage, displacement of populations, reparations, contemporary legacy of colonial and capitalist violence and so on.

The characters painted on the mural offered a feminist view on climate activism.



“Painted on the threshold of the Youth Pavillion in the Blue Zone are three women: Puyr Tembe, an indigenous leader from Brazil holding roots in her fingers as a remembrance of our traditional knowledge systems in the global south, Vanessa Nakate from Uganda representing the choices we can make now, and Ayisha Siddiqa from Pakistan reaching into the sky representing a future we can reclaim.”



AUBERVILLIERS 2124

COUNTRY(IES)
France

ORGANISATION(S)
Point de Rassemblement, École d'urbanisme de Paris

YEAR(S)
2024

LINK(S)
https://aubervilliers2124.osuny.site/

Aubervilliers is a city just North of Paris, with a population of 90,000. It is a dense urban area (15,500 inhabitants/km2), with 40% of the population living under poverty level, and the same proportion of immigrants. Having experienced the difficulty in feeding its population during Covid lockdowns, the city decided to support a project whose goal was to imagine how it could more efficiently provide for its population in the coming decades.

Commune d'Aubervilliers 2124

© Atelier Aubervilliers

HOW

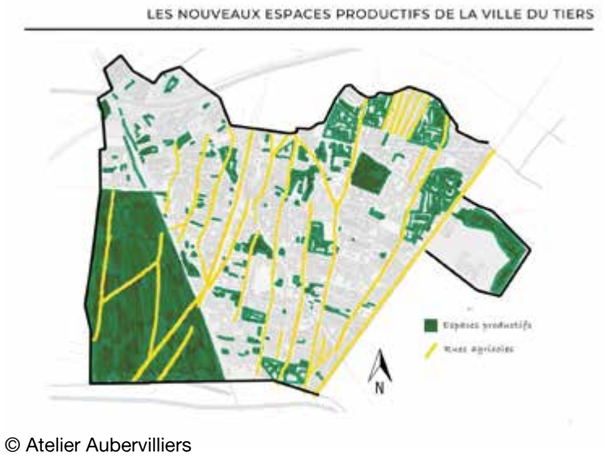
The project was initiated by **Point de Rassemblement** (Rallying Point), a local nonprofit working on collective modes of adaptation to ecological upheavals, and the **Paris School of Urban Planning.** Nine students participated in the project. Their work gave birth to a detailed description of how Aubervilliers had become a "Feeding City" in 2124, and what it took to get there.

WHAT

The objective of transforming Aubervilliers into a "Feeding City" became the cornerstone upon which all other urban transformations were built.

• The "one-third city"

The goal was set to dedicate one third of the city's surface to producing food. This included large areas dedicated to farming, smaller urban farms in former courtyards, as well as "agricultural streets" bordered with vegetable patches and fruit trees, and covered with trellises that provide shade while allowing other plants and fruits to grow. The cemetery itself also became an orchard.



© Atelier Aubervilliers

Farming on several former urban, or even industrial surfaces, required a major, and long, decontamination process. Several techniques were used, from mycoremediation (fungi) to phycoremediation (algae), as well as planting flax and hemp which also provided material for building construction or isolation.

There was no meat production, and meat consumption was way down.

• A new urban metabolism

The canal and its surrounding buildings were repurposed for food logistics. "Cyclohubs" were established in each neighbourhood for food distribution. Food waste was reduced by several means. A local currency was created. Even human excreta were used for compost.



© Atelier Aubervilliers

• Citizen participation

Children and adults alike received (mostly hands-on) food education. Citizens were encouraged to donate one day a week for locally useful work, including on farms and vegetable patches. Collective decisions, from the most local to the municipal level, encouraged participation.



© Atelier Aubervilliers

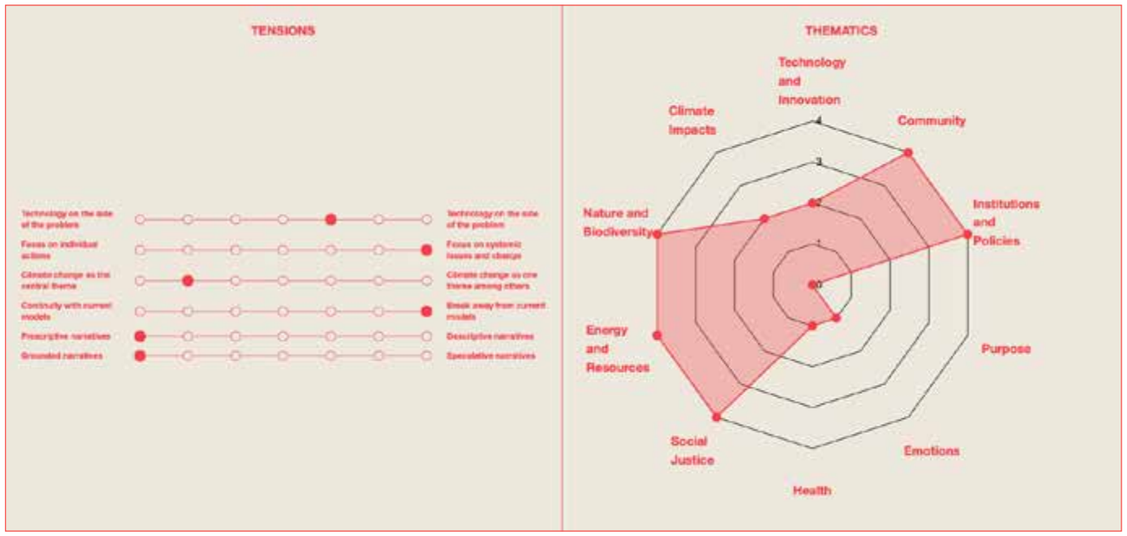
• Transformed mobilities

Cars were progressively banned from most of the city, except for traversing roads as well as some axes important for urban logistics. Walking and cycling became the most common forms of transport, aside from public transport to move around the Paris region.

• Social justice

These transformations needed to be implemented with social justice in mind. Acknowledging that local production could only provide for 10,000 out of 90,000 inhabitants, it was directed primarily towards vulnerable populations and collective catering (schools, offices, hospitals, the local prison…)

To avoid gentrification, rents were capped, low-income housing was subsidised, and all building renovations gave priority to their former residents.



BAGMATI RIVER YOUTH PROJECT

COUNTRY(IES)
Nepal

ORGANISATION(S)
Asian Development Bank's (ADB) Youth for Asia, Adam Sharpe, Avini Dixit, Sadip Raj Pandey, Leizl Agad

YEAR(S)
2020–2021

LINK(S)
https://drive.google.com/file/d/1QUrvXVvPPcL5B6rT-mQ7pK2bf1R2tXU_F/view

A PROGRAM IMAGINED BY YOUNG PEOPLE FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

The activities of the Bagmati River Basin Youth Program were built around the broader context of a Nepali government plan for the Bagmati River to tackle water security and anticipate the effects of climate change on the ecosystem.

For the Asian Development Bank, the intention of these workshops was to enable the sustainability of their investment. They had given loans to redevelop the riverbank infrastructure and build community spaces, and they wanted the local population to be engaged as well in the transformation of the environment.



AI Practitioner, November 2022, Sharpe et al.: Futures for Youth by Youth

Since a very large part of the population there is young, focusing on youth engagement seemed evident to involve the community in the protection of Bagmati. Not only was it a consultation, the goal of the program was to transform the youngsters into agents of change, able to take ownership and responsibility of their river.

> *"By the end of the Bagmati River Basin Youth Project capacity-building program, 196 participants completed the intensive six-week SDG program facilitated by ten youth facilitators. Additionally, the "world's largest lesson" also concluded by delivering 102 virtual sessions to empower 1,703 youth participants with the help of 107 youth facilitators."*

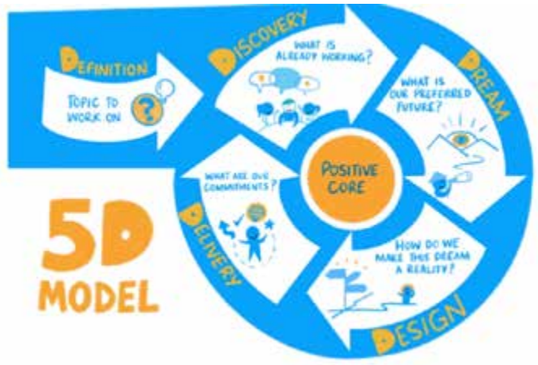
Adam Sharpe, youth participation and foresight practitioner, during an interview, told us that the facilitation process had been completely conceived with the young people in the Kathmandu Valley. They were actually leading their own project. Every step of the program was conceived by them, with the support of "expert" facilitators like him.

The following idea -to use music during the workshop as an embodiment process- is an example of their numerous ideas initiatives:

> *"With soothing background music inviting them to take deep breaths, in and out, a narration was provided to guide them through the visioning. Youths were given fifteen minutes to think about their dreams and then five minutes to draw their dreams on a piece of paper, giving them a title."*

A COMPREHENSIVE METHOD FROM THE IDENTIFICATION OF ISSUES TO LOCAL ACTIONS

The participants of the workshop followed the **"5-D Cycle of Appreciative Inquiry":** Definition, Discovery, Dream, Design, Delivery.



AI Practitioner, November 2022, Sharpe et al.: Futures for Youth by Youth

After **Defining** the topic of this program (the Bagmati River and its issues), they delved into more personal questions about their experiences with nature, community service and positive change (**Discovery**).

Then, they **Dreamt** their ideal vision of the Bagmati River of the future.

> *"A Google form was made to record the title for their vision and to upload their drawings, to collect the data. There were around 200 different visions, and every vision was unique."*



AI Practitioner, November 2022, Sharpe et al.: Futures for Youth by Youth

Finally, the participants **Designed** projects to implement in their communities. Together, they conceived of a wide range of actions, from awareness raising programs to the production of vermicomposting units.

The **Delivery** part was intended for the youngsters to spread the word about what they learned during the program.



AI Practitioner, November 2022, Sharpe et al.: Futures for Youth by Youth

THE TRANSFORMATION OF THE RELATIONSHIP WITH BAGMATI

What stood out most about this experience is how deeply the relationship to the environment has been transformed. Even though Bagmati is a sacred river, it was full of waste and pollution. Hence, the young people, not having any previous memory of beautiful scenery, had quite a bad relationship with the river. They avoided it and consequently did not care for its protection.



AI Practitioner, November 2022, Sharpe et al.: Futures for Youth by Youth

Therefore the program's goal was to change their point of view with the power of visioning. They first asked what was the best experience youngsters had in nature. The participants often shared memories of the Himalayan mountain. Then they were asked to imagine: what if you could feel the same for the Bagmati river?

The river became the place of every dream (community's activities, meditation, sport). The assumption of what the river could be changed drastically.

Future of Bagmati, the summary of participants' visions:

> *"1. Clean, green, magical, beautiful Bagmati in ten years, where people can meditate, exercise or simply view the scenic beauty of nature along with different flora and fauna in the water and basin area.*
> *2. Systematic and sustainable developmental plans: With water treatment plants, proper disposal of sewage from the nearby houses, planned urbanization, development of parks, boating services and so on.*
> *3. Saving Bagmati is shaping our bright future and Bagmati is our national property."*

After this step, the ground was fertile for young people to be engaged in the protection of the ecosystem and gain agency in their environment. They were really motivated to improve the conditions and participate in building the Bagmati of their dream. Their engagements were significant and the impacts were visible.

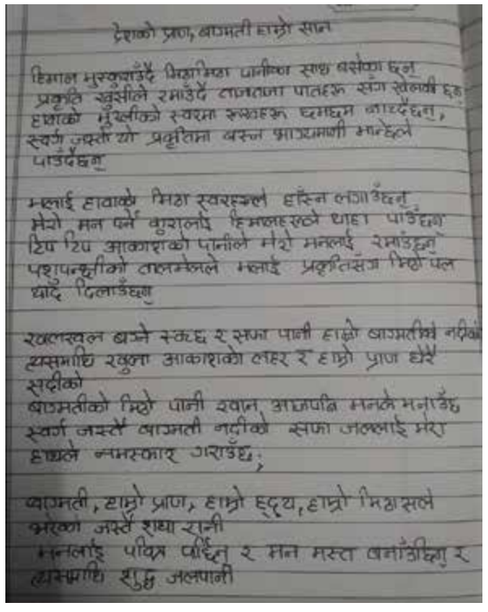


AI Practitioner, November 2022, Sharpe et al.: Futures for Youth by Youth

"I want to share the experience when I led a few of my friends to make a group and start cleaning the jungle near our community. The high point was that I realized how I can be the leader of change."

THE SOUL OF THE COUNTRY, BAGMATI IS OUR PRIDE

To conclude this exploration of the project, we invite you to immerse yourself in a poem written during the workshops.



देशको प्राण, बाग्मती हाम्रो सान

हिमाल मुस्कुराउँदै मिठामिठा पानीका साथ बसेका छन्
प्रकृति खुसीले रमाउँदै ताजातजा पातहरू संग खेलेकी छन्
हावाको मुरलीको स्वरमा रूखहरू छमछम नाचेँछन्,
स्वर्ग जस्तो यो प्रकृतिमा बस्न भाग्यमानी भन्छेले
पाउँदैछन्

मलाई हावाको मिठा स्वरहरूले हाँस्न लगाउँछन्
मेरो मन पर्ने बुरालाई हिमालहरूले थाहा पाउँछन्
टिप टिप आकाशको पानीले मेरो मनलाई रमाउँछन्
पशुपन्छीको तालमेलले मलाई प्रकृतिसँग मिठो पल
याद दिलाउँछन्

खलखल बग्ने स्वच्छ र सफा पानी हाम्रो बाग्मतीको नदीको
त्यसमाथि खुला आकाशको लहर र हाम्रो प्राण धेरै
सदीको
बाग्मतीको मिठो पानी खान आजपनि मनले मनाउँछ
स्वर्ग जस्तै बाग्मती नदीको सफा जललाई मेरा
हाथले नमस्कार गराउँछ;

बाग्मती, हाम्रो प्राण, हाम्रो हृदय, हाम्रो मिठासले
भरेको जस्तै शय्या रानी
मनलाई पवित्र पार्छिन् र मन मस्त बनाउँछिन् र
त्यसमाथि शुद्ध जलपानी

The soul of the country, Bagmati is our pride

"The mountains are smiling and sitting with sweet water. Nature is rejoicing with joy and playing with fresh leaves. The trees are dancing to the tune of the wind's flute. Lucky people are getting to live in this nature that is like heaven.

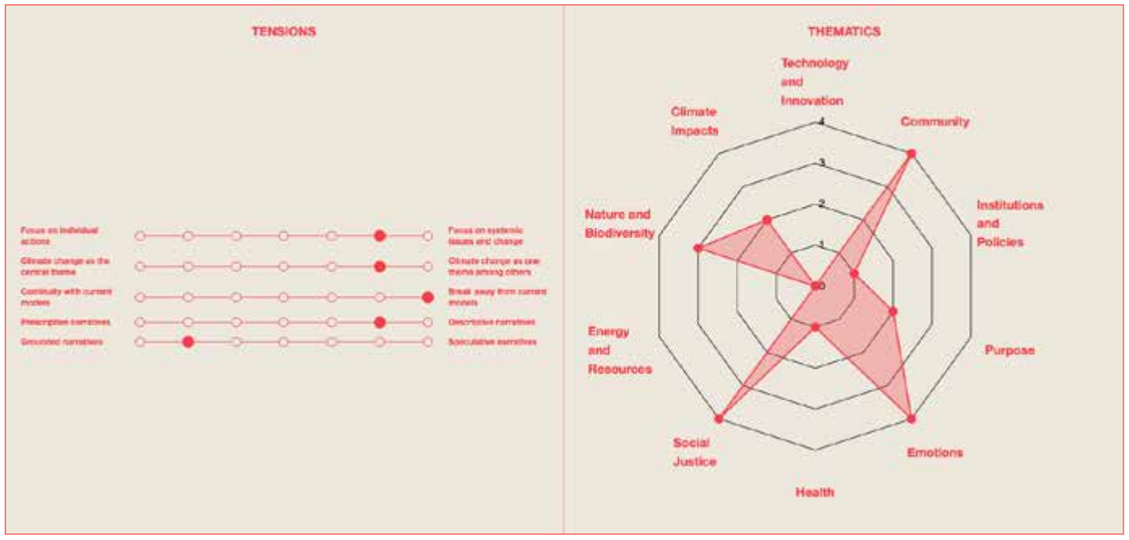
The sweet sounds of the wind make me laugh. The mountains know what I like. The trickle of water from the sky delights my heart. The harmony of animals and birds reminds me of sweet moments with nature.

The clear, clear water of our Bagmati River, the waves of the open sky above it, and our souls are many centuries old.

To drink the sweet water of the Bagmati, even today my heart celebrates it. My hands greet the clear waters of the Bagmati River, which are like heaven.

Just as the Bagmati River fills our soul, our heart, and our sweetness, Radha Rani purifies the mind and makes the mind happy, and above all, pure water."

(translated from Nepali)



BANKING ON YOUTH

COUNTRY(IES)
Philippines, Vietnam, India, Spain, UK, USA, Canada

ORGANISATION(S)
Adam Sharpe, William Lucht, Youth for Asia

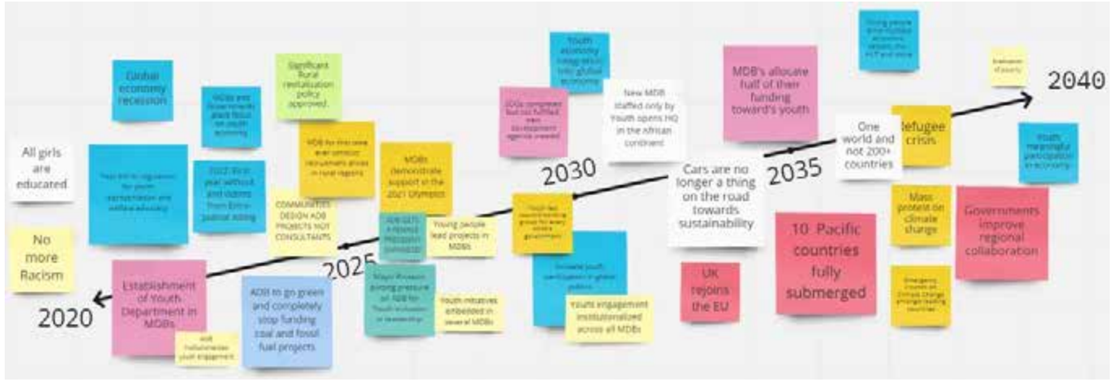
YEAR(S)
2020

LINK(S)
https://jfsdigital.org/articles-and-essays/vol-25-no-4-june-2021/banking-on-youth-young-people-champion-sustainability-futures-for-multilateral-development-banks-in-2040/

BANKING ON YOUTH – YOUNG PEOPLE CHAMPION SUSTAINABILITY FUTURES FOR MULTILATERAL DEVELOPMENT BANKS IN 2040

During an online workshop facilitated by Adam Sharpe and William Lucht in 2020 for Asia (YfA), 17 people from over 10 countries across Asia-Pacific and Europe explored the futures of Multilateral Development Banks (MDBs) in 2040.

First reflecting on the history of MDBs, the participants described a best case, worst case, business-as-usual (BAU), and an outlier scenario in four groups. They then came together to model a preferred scenario and build its backcast.

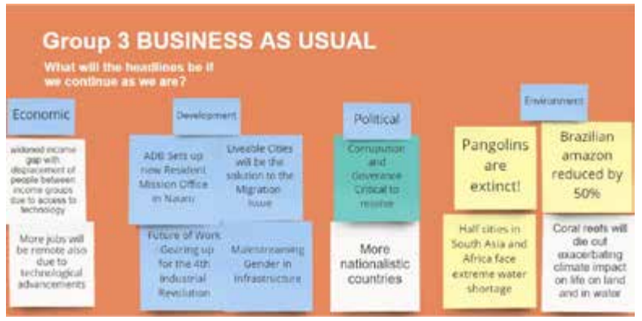


Backcasting exercise on how participants see their preferred future coming to fruition

They also finished the workshop by inventing different metaphors to guide the MDBs through their new strategy and culture.

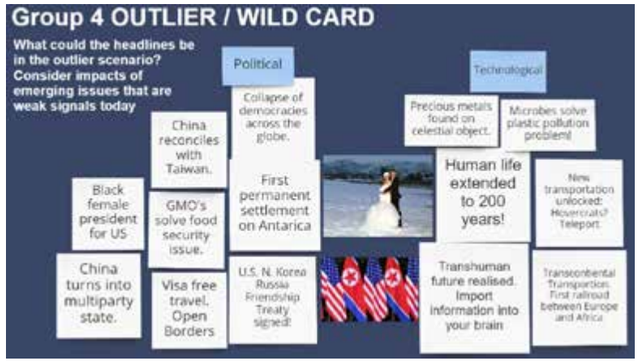
WORST, BEST CASE, OUTLIER AND BAU TO BUILD A PREFERRED FUTURE SCENARIO

The worst case scenario displayed different dramatic occurrences: extreme climate events, recurrent food insecurities, worsening poverty rates, mass climate migrations and civil disorder.



Business as usual scenario

In the "business as usual" scenario, even if MDBs enhance their accountability and sustainability, they fail to have a meaningful influence on the course of events.



Outlier scenario

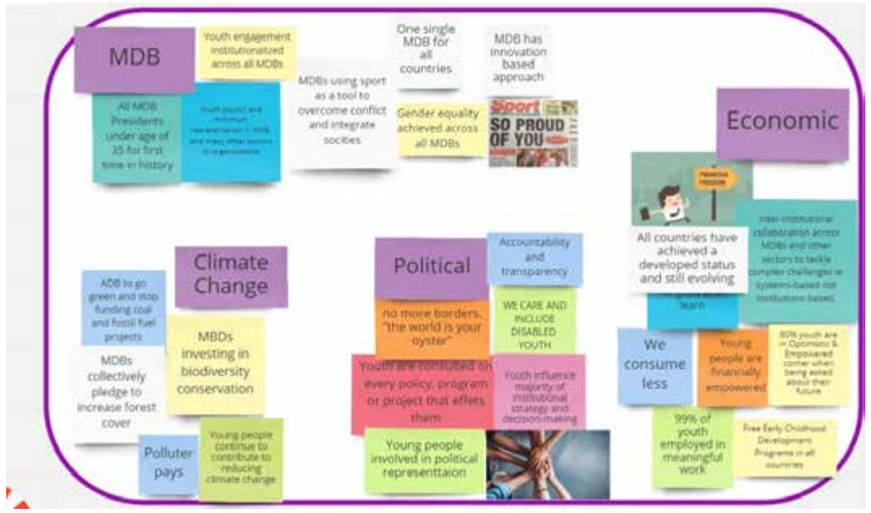
The outlier/wild card scenario features technological innovations boosted to their maximum, including bio technologies. This whole dynamic leads to a posthuman era. Unfortunately, this core reliance on technologies generates numerous downfalls.



Best case scenario

Finally, the most important element on which the best case scenario is founded is the establishment of ambitious participatory democratic systems in every part of the world.

This step of reflection on four extreme scenarios helped build the preferred future scenario for the MDBs.



The Preferred Future: MDBs Become Engines of Sustainable Development in 2040

In the preferred future, the MDBs are vectors of transformation in their regions. This becomes possible with a core change in the institution, highly collaborative. At the society level, humanity renewed its connection with nature.

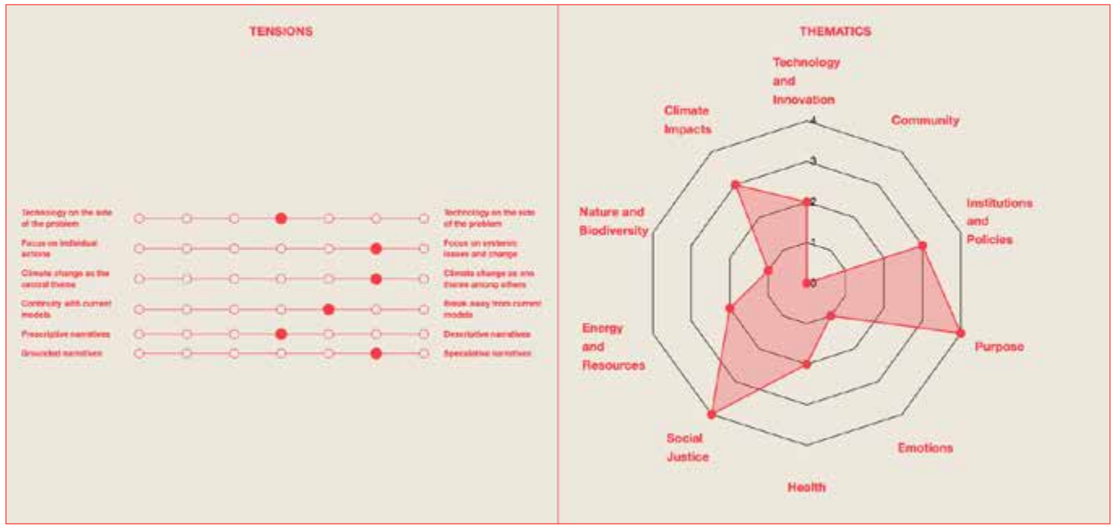
In this narrative, youngsters hold a central place in the political changes. They notably are leaders in the MDBs. For example, we can see in the backcast: *“2028 – Young people start leading MDB projects”.*

> *“Sustainable development, diversity, and new technologies were key themes that emerged during the workshop, with participants highlighting the need for MDBs to become more flexible, adaptive, and inclusive if they are to achieve a prosperous, resilient, and sustainable Asia-Pacific.”*

FUTURES LITERACY AND YOUNGSTERS

Apart from the narratives, youngsters are already really involved in the Asian Development Bank through the Youth for Asia program for the production of knowledge and different operations. These workshops were an opportunity of empowerment for the young leaders involved in this institution.

> *“The intention of this futures workshop was to increase futures literacy within the YfA team whilst deepening their understanding and engagement with YfA’s long-term vision to institutionalize youth participation in the delivery of Strategy 2030 (Asian Development Bank, 2018).”*



BUTTERFLY 2050

COUNTRY(IES)
France
ORGANISATION(S)
Secrétariat Général pour l'Investissement, Nathalie Becoulet, Julie Diette, Cité européenne des scénaristes
YEAR(S)
2024–2025
LINK(S)
https://www.info.gouv.fr/organisation/secretariat-general-pour-l-investissement-sgpi/butterfly-2050

"In 2050, the participants will be an integral part of those who will build the world: the first architects and beneficiaries of the future. By encouraging them to project themselves into the future, to identify the challenges and opportunities ahead, the "Butterfly 2050" competition aims to inspire a new generation, ready to shape the future according to sustainable and inclusive principles." (translated from french)

WHAT IS BUTTERFLY 2050?

In line with the national strategic plan "France 2030", the Secrétariat Général pour l'Investissement conducted from March to July 2024 the "Butterfly 2050" project.

Youngsters of 16 to 25 years-old, coming from all parts of France, were invited to build shared future visions by imagining the desirable France of tomorrow.

After several workshops and masterclasses on graphic facilitation, film resources, script coaching and public speaking, they finally delivered 9 scenarios approaching the following 3 themes: "Habiter en 2050" (dwelling in 2050), "Bien vivre en 2050" (well-being in 2050) and "Apprendre en 2050" (learning in 2050).

You can download the full versions of the 9 scenarios on the **web page dedicated to the project**.



A second edition of "Butterfly 2050 – Dessine ton futur" was launched on the 3rd of February 2025. 110 young people from 7 regions of France are teaming up on 4 new themes: caring, living together, learning and eating.

Now let's dive into the narratives and explore the main themes of these students' works.

ADAPTATION TO CRISIS IN AN UNCERTAIN FUTURE

"We imagine a future made up of diverse uncertainties where we have adapted and thought out our lifestyles and everyday habitats in harmony with the new climatic and social challenges. This will involve a more community-centric organization, without erasing individualism and private property, as well as a strong decentralization of resources and infrastructures."

Excerpt from La sagesse de l'habitat (The wisdom of habitat) , translated from french

Every story of Butterfly 2050 features a wide range of climate events and new weather conditions impacting directly the lives of the inhabitants. Extreme heat, rising sea level, more intense and frequent storms, diminution of the material and energy resources punctuate the scenarios and even co-exist with each other.

CLIMATE MIGRATIONS

These extreme conditions lead to the displacement of populations unable to live where they used to. Indeed, a lot of scenarios written by the students depict the lives of climate refugees.

"March 2050. Brother and sister Tim (15) and Robbie (9) have just moved to a new town, after their old home was destroyed by the forest fires that sweep the Landes every summer."

Excerpt from Tourner la page (Turning the page), translated from french

“Despite the Brazilian government’s efforts to make up for decades of deforestation and industrial agriculture, the environment had become truly unliveable, Matheus and his family thought they’d never get out. Until the Brazilian government announced a relocation plan in collaboration with countries least affected by the crisis and most capable of taking in climate refugees. Matheus’ family was assigned to France.”

Excerpt from *L’école du nous* (The school of us), translated from french

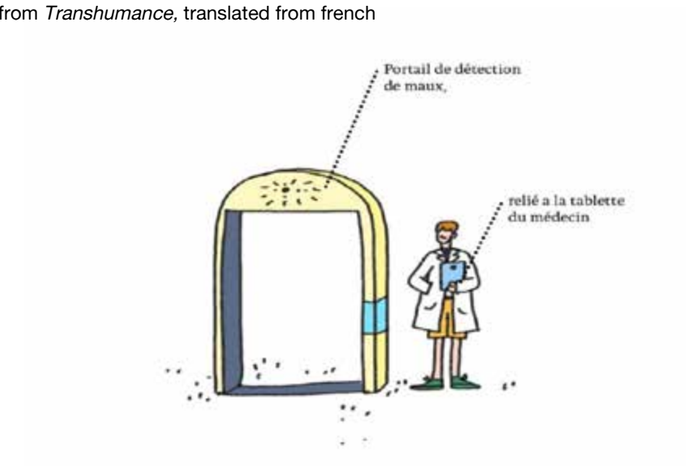
“When asked to imagine her future, Tiana recalls her past. Tiana is 16 and a climate refugee: with her family, she had to leave the Tuamotu Atoll in French Polynesia in a hurry. Having just arrived at her new school in Bordeaux, all this seems almost anecdotal to her after the catastrophe she experienced…”

Excerpt from À *contre-courant* (Against the current), translated from french

Moreover, when they are not displaced against their will by the consequences of climate change, other movements of populations emerge as a chosen way of living. The story Physiopolis imagined and introduced a new way of living, close to a neo-nomadism. In the same spirit, the story Transhumance depicts a seasonal exodus organised by the French government to help some urban families to escape from the city during the hottest months.

“Planned summer transhumance: A seasonal urban exodus, planned by public and private players, supported by planning and management tools, including AI and digital twins.”

Excerpt from *Transhumance,* translated from french



SYMBIOSIS WITH NATURE

Another common feature shared by the 9 scenarios is the renewed relationships with “nature”: other living beings and ecosystems. Scientists in *ENEZEG* can even understand and talk with ocean species thanks to some important progress in technology. This link can also appear in some inventions in these worlds which use biomimicry. But the connection of human societies to other living beings is not just rational and scientific, it is also more deeply present in a philosophical and moral aspect.

“Previously ignored and damaged by pollution, this environment [the ocean] is now protected and seen as a source of mutual well-being between humans, other animals, flora and living things in all their forms.”

Excerpt from *ENEZEG*, translated from french

“We have a duty to protect marine creatures who have no voice to defend themselves. Whales, turtles, corals, all these living creatures are counting on us to preserve their home. They are the ocean’s sentinels, warning us of dangers to come. Ignoring them is suicide.”

Excerpt from *ENEZEG*, translated from french



SYMBIOSIS WITH AI OR AGE OF LOWTECHS

Another symbiosis that we can discover in the worlds created by the students is a symbiosis with AI, which sometimes is co-existing (almost paradoxically) with the symbiosis with the natural ecosystems. In several future narratives, AI is everywhere and seamlessly integrated in humans’ lives.

“Technologies like AI are now perfectly integrated into the urban landscape, so much so that they are almost invisible. The AI we’re using here, Lumi, is an everyday aid, but it’s neither intrusive nor enslaving.”

Excerpt from *La sagesse de l’habitat* (The wisdom of habitat), translated from french

But in other submissions, the over-consumption and utilization of technology is criticized and a sober way of life is established.

“Technology, yes, but not too much of it. The last few decades have been a demonstration of technological abuse, immersing computers and electronics in the smallest tasks of our daily lives. Since 2050, a form of denumerization has been underway, putting the human back at the heart of social interactions.”

Excerpt from *Le Cercle* (The Circle), translated from french



Going even further, the world of *Eclipse* functions entirely with low techs: solar deflection to communicate locally, solar oven, pedal-operated washing machine, passive cooler to mitigate the heat, redirected skylights to avoid electric lightning and so on…





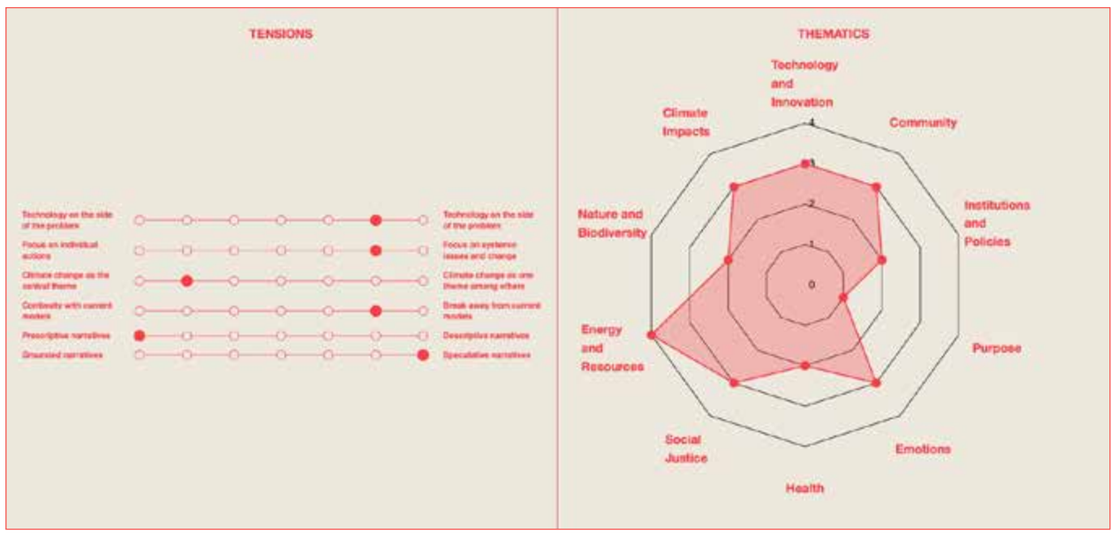
NEW CONCEPTION OF SOCIETY, POLITICAL LIFE

Apart from the domain of technique, the students proposed ambitious societal transformations exploring for example news ways to build a democratic conversation with the use of consensus and compromise *(ENEZEG)* or through artistic processes *(Tourner la page*, Turning the page). *Eclipse,* on the other hand, imagines a world where people freed themselves from the current time system to reconnect to a more natural perception of the time and a slower life.

> *"Political life is at the heart of the city, and takes place within the various circular agoras spread over several islands."*
>
> Excerpt from *ENEZEG*, translated from french

> *"Finally, in a break with the entertainment world of the early 21st century, artists want to make art a democratic tool, by making the public an actor in each work. Thus, street theater springs up in every city, many people play music in groups, or invent new narratives together."*
>
> Excerpt from *Tourner la page* (Turning the page), translated from french

> *"I don't understand how some of our fellow citizens can continue to live by the atomic clock. You know, 10 years ago, we made the choice to change our time system and switch to fluctuating periods, in order to realign ourselves with living time and the sun. Repeated burnouts, pandemics of insomnia, climate disruption, the energy crisis: do we really need to redo the whole picture of the 2038 crisis to remind chrono-reticents of the consequences of the great acceleration?"*
>
> Excerpt from *Eclipse,* translated from french



CAMPUS DE L'ENGAGEMENT

COUNTRY(IES)
Québec, Canada

ORGANISATION(S)
ENJEU (ENvironnement JEUnesse)

YEAR(S)
2023-ongoing

LINK(S)
https://enjeu.qc.ca/programmes-de-certification/cegep-vert-du-quebec/?utm_source=chatgpt.com

ABOUT THE ORGANIZATION

Founded 45 years ago, ENvironnement JEUnesse works in environmental education "by and for the environment." The organization emphasizes outdoor learning and develops programs adapted to schools and colleges. Its mission is to foster eco-citizenship rooted in democratic participation around socio-ecological issues.



© 2025 ENvironnement JEUnesse.

CONTEXT

Building on its experience with programs such as *Cégep Vert du Québec*, ENvironnement JEUnesse is reimagining its offer for college students. With the *Campus de l'Engagement,* the organization seeks to design a learning-by-doing pathway for young adults, in partnership with youth initiatives and environmental events. Its goal is to equip, motivate, and connect young people ready to take concrete climate action.



© 2025 ENvironnement JEUnesse.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Le *Campus de l'Engagement* is an annual program welcoming three cohorts of 18- to 30-year-olds, each following a personalized pathway in communication, facilitation, or mobilization. It combines workshops, field visits, networking events, and training sessions. At the end of the program, participants receive a skills certificate attesting to their learning.

EDUCATIONAL GOALS

At the heart of the Campus is the development of future-oriented skills: civic engagement, critical thinking, collective leadership, and communication. The program encourages questioning how environmental issues are presented in colleges and promotes positive action narratives rather than alarmist messages. Engagement is seen as a collective process, mobilizing a community around local, concrete projects.

METHODOLOGY AND APPROACH

Grounded in the principles of Environmental Education (ÉRE)—which seeks to nurture the individual and collective capacity to understand, feel, imagine, and transform the world so it remains livable, fair, and joyful—the program emphasizes active learning, co-creation, and democratic participation. It embraces a transformative approach that values young people as agents of change.

Drawing on the experience of Cégep Vert, it also demonstrates the potential of educational partnerships to foster active participation from the entire college community (administrators, students, staff).

Type of curriculum:

· Three flexible courses: communication, facilitation, mobilization
· Experiential and localized: field trips, visits, citizen events
· Real attention to on-the-ground realities: how is the environment discussed in colleges?
· Targeted networking events for engaged youth
· Certificate recognizing the engagement and skills acquired



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TYPES OF PROJECTS DEVELOPED BY PARTICIPANTS

1. CITIZEN MOBILIZATION CAMPAIGNS
· Organizing a petition or an event around a local issue (e.g., protecting a green space, improving access to active transportation). Setting up an environmental committee within a college or municipality.

2. EDUCATIONAL OR MEDIA CONTENT CREATION
· Producing podcasts, videos, or posters about local climate issues. Running an Instagram account or page dedicated to the environment

3. COLLECTIVE AND INTERGENERATIONAL EVENTS
· Organizing a youth climate forum. Setting up a citizen café or green agora for community dialogue

4. INTERVENTION OR SPACE-TRANSFORMATION PROJECTS
· Creating a community garden, composting area, or ecological corridor
· Greening a schoolyard or underused parking lot

5. PEER TRAINING AND WORKSHOP FACILITATION
· Designing and running workshops in schools, community centers, or youth spaces
· Training young peers in eco-responsible communication or climate leadership basics

Participants in the programs have shared feedback such as:

“I realized I’m not alone. Other young people are asking the same questions, and together we can make things happen.”

“Before, I didn’t know where to start. Now I have tools, contacts, and a project I can lead.”



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SKILLS AND COMPETENCIES DEVELOPED

• Collective action skills
· Organizing events, mobilizing people, facilitating groups
· Practicing teamwork, dialogue, and shared decision-making

• Critical thinking and systemic understanding
· Gaining a deeper grasp of the structural causes of environmental issues
· Learning to distinguish false solutions from fair transition pathways

• Communication skills
· Tailoring messages to different audiences (youth, elected officials, media)
· Speaking and writing confidently about complex issues

• Sense of personal and collective efficacy
· Building confidence in one’s ability to create change
· Developing a positive, sustaining, and joyful relationship to engagement

• Eco-citizenship knowledge
· Understanding democratic participation tools (public consultations, councils, community organizations)
· Learning about laws, policies, and institutions governing the environment in Québec

The Campus seeks to make environmental engagement a collective endeavor. It responds to an identified challenge: young people want to get involved but lack structured spaces to act. Environmental education offers a strong foundation for building critical, ethical, and political competencies in youth. Inspired by models such as Cégep Vert, the Campus promotes the idea of a responsible college community, animated by a network of actors and good practices, and embodies the move from intention to action.





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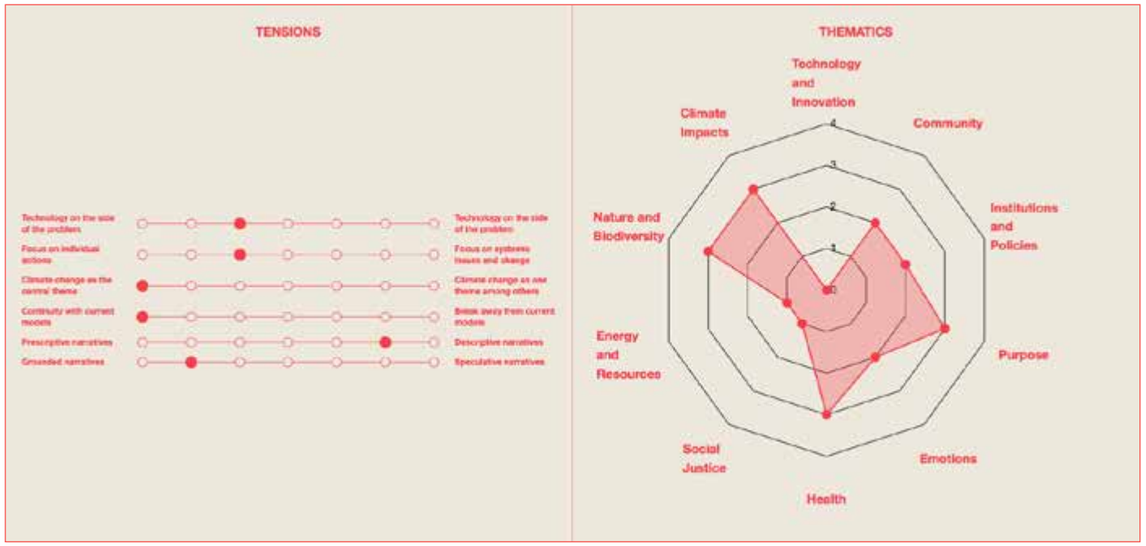


CENTRE FOR REWORLDING

COUNTRY(IES)
Australia

ORGANISATION(S)
Centre for Reworlding, Jen Ray

YEAR(S)
2025

LINK(S)
https://www.centreforreworlding.com/

"Through Creative Resilience Lab, palavers, events, workshops and projects the C∞R aims to bolster inclusive collaboration and creative leadership in climate emergency response and action including prioritising the mainstream integration of arts and culture in national climate emergency discourses, policy frameworks and tertiary education. Our work focuses on having hard conversations, communal intergenerational learning, relationship building and cultivating deep collaborations."

CLIMATE CHANGE IS A COLONIAL CRISIS

"It is the end of the world as we know it. Every beginning is an ending with a backstory, a right now, the unimaginable, the inevitable and the beyond of what might be possible. The ending teaches us where to start. Reworlding imagines a world that could have been – before colonial disruption – as our beginning – to decouple from maladaptive ways of engaging/disengaging with the climate emergency context. "
Jen Ray

Participants range in age from 4 to over 70 years old. A core aspect of C∞R' work is creating inclusive, culturally-affirmative spaces for intergenerational and cross-cultural learning together. Their ways of working, grounded in Indigenous forms of knowledge sharing, disrupts dominant Western forms of peer-to-peer orientation and education, so children and seniors are active participants in the projects.

For example, a few weeks ago, we invited a 5-year-old to give a talk to a group of people between the ages of 18–75 at one of our gatherings.

In the climate context, we need to be listening to our children and elders more than ever – they are our past and future. We are responsible for the knowledge sharing between. This is one of the reasons Indigenous people have sustained culture since time immemorial – through intergenerational learning and story-telling. By making the gathering inclusive of children, it means that parents can come and participate with their children welcomed to join.

Many are unaccustomed to this form of learning having been raised in Western educational systems where children are grouped by age in classrooms. At our gathering, this child told his story for 10–15 minutes, showing a picture and playing a ukulele. His soft voice meant the others had to lean in to listen. The story told through the child directly related to the content of the gathering. It was a mic-drop moment. Examples like this are part of rethinking who gets to speak and be heard. This initiative took place in Madison as part of Joy Work in Desperate Times.



C∞R

PROTEST METHODS & BANNER-MAKING WORKSHOPS

The first workshop that worked with youth was held in Melbourne and is now organized on an ad hoc basis, where large textiles and activist banners are created and where protest methods are shared between long-term social activists and young people. This work is done to support young people in activism by situating them within a lineage and community of activism to support the next generation and build depth. A lot of labour and knowledge is lost in many activist movements as people move on, energy is used up in the start-up phase and often aligned groups don't share resources and collaboration to amplify each other's work. In many cases, there are community folk who stay up all night painting banners and are not the ones carrying them at the rally.



C∞R

HOW TO CONNECT YOUNGER ACTIVISTS WITH EXPERIENCED ONES?

Participants learn banner-making techniques using fabric or upcycling fast fashion waste to create reusable protest signs, rather than disposable ones. Banners have been created for protests and parades for Aboriginal rights, climate change, affordable abortion and trans rights. In 2025, the latest banner ‘Ungovernable’ is for an action in the USA and will be gifted to a social justice organisation. The workshop included people from 5–60 years of age.

WHAT IS CREATIVE RESILIENCE LAB ?

Creative resilience lab explores connections to different activist groups as well as ancestors and the relation to current situations. The work is focused on creating stories that are linked to activism and partnerships and engaging with youth through partner organization.

It is a two-day immersive and collaborative lab to foster collective knowledge exchange on the climate emergency and disasters, involving Indigenous custodians, local artists, scientists, community organizations, emergency services, local government representatives, and philanthropists. Through experiential scenarios, expert panels, exercises and dialogue the lab is designed to amplify sustainable cross-sectoral relationships and capacity for collaboration in community-based creative resilience approaches in the immediate now but also considering how this work now will impact future generations.

The work is intergenerational and focused organisations to invite young people to participate in different ways in the labs. It is a belief that everyone is an expert at something. Everyone should have their legs under the same table when we are working on complex problems such as disaster preparedness and climate adaptation. Young people bring perspectives and experiences that we frequently overlook and undervalue.

“come as you are” philosophy, removing obligations and focusing on personal invitations. The more diverse the space, the better the outcomes.



C∞R

BREAKING INERTIA & ACTIVATING KNOWLEDGE

Climate change related disasters impact equity-denied people and communities more. Equity benefits everyone, yet it is frequently used to deepen divides between the powerful and the vulnerable, hence the reason why we frame our communities as ‘equity-denied’ instead of marginalised or vulnerable. Conflict resolution, speaking to people that disagree with you, problem solving issues that affect others, etc. is critical work now – actions that help build resilience and halt survivalist instincts.

Many communities involved have lived experiences of disasters and displacement and know how to build and work with communities in crisis. Care, uncertainty, discomfort, dignity reinforcing ways and humility are often ‘givens”. The approach of Creative Resilience focuses on abundance rather than scarcity – how do we pool knowledge, skills, tools, etc. instead of stockpiling? How do we prioritise waves of care instead of reactive modes of charity? How do we do this work with joy for the long term? How do we imagine new futures and build the scaffolding to get there?

The Centre for Reworlding protocols were co-created with a group of Indigenous Aunties and collaborators that we share in all of our events. It helps guide people less familiar with Indigenous ways of problem-solving, stewardship, knowledge sharing and being.

CITADINS, CITADINES 2050

COUNTRY(IES)
France
ORGANISATION(S)
The Plurality University Network (U+), Labec
YEAR(S)
2024
LINK(S)
https://www.plurality-university.org/projects/citadins-citadines-2050

The *Citadins, Citadines 2050* project is an experiment in "creative foresight" which took place in 2024, in three urban areas (Marseilles, Paris and the Seine-Saint-Denis department), based on the following intention:

> *Mobilize art and fiction to explore how urban territories might adapt in the face of climate change, involving populations whose voice is usually not heard on these subjects: socially disadvantaged and/or vulnerable residents ("Citizens"), local authority field agents ("Agents").*

WHAT

From April to May 2024, five cycles of workshops were organized with groups of 10 to 30 participants: citizens in Noisy-le-Sec (93) and Paris, agents in Paris and across the Seine-Saint-Denis department, citizens and agents together in the Noailles-Belsunce districts of Marseilles. With the help of eight artists, the participants produced striking descriptions of life in their territories in 2050.

The "Citizens" group in Paris was composed only of teenagers and young adults, gathered (through the nonprofit Laboratoire d'Expression Créative, Labec) around a common passion and practice: theatre. Using this means of expression, alternating improvisations, writing, and enactments, they created three plays about Paris in 2050.

The three plays (written by Apolline Delagarde, Neva Bonachera and Maëlle Grech) have several features in common. The territory they refer to is Greater Paris, divided into "Zones" that reflect social and political power relations. The time period (2050) follows a catastrophe about which little is known—unless it has simply been forgotten. The environment is severely degraded, sometimes uninhabitable, except for the inhabitants of "Zone 1," the "Bubble" surrounding Paris' historical center — but at what cost, even for them? These three stories paint a rather bleak future, from which there is no escape except through revolt or, very exceptionally, individual or community resourcefulness.

Theme	Description
Environment	An environment that has been severely degraded by both extreme pollution and the effects of climate change. People live with it and seem to have given up on the idea of combating its causes.
Society	Social inequalities have become entrenched. They are reflected in the geographical distribution of the population (the "Zones," see below), the use of surveillance and even force to contain the aspirations of the poorest, and the difficulty many people have in meeting their basic needs: water, education, health, etc.
Food	There is little mention of it, but it appears that animal husbandry is virtually non-existent; that access to healthy plant-based products is a luxury, even if a few suburban neighborhoods organize pockets of urban agriculture; and that people, especially when poor, tend to eat synthetic foods.
Technology	Modern technologies (digital, nuclear power plants in orbit, artificial insemination, etc.) coexist with older ones (radio, food crops in outer areas). Digital technology is—as it is today—the backbone of a consumer society (intrusive advertising) and a means of monitoring the "dangerous classes." Certain technologies are used for extreme forms of exploitation: electricity generated by prisoners' muscle power, cheese made from women's milk ("femmage"), and tiles made from human bone dust.
Governance	An (generally nameless) authoritarian power emanates from the Central Zone. It relies on surveillance, control of the borders between zones, control of information (and emotions) and, sometimes, force.
Territory	Greater Paris is divided into socially stratified "zones": at the center, "Zone 1," where life is peaceful and relatively comfortable under the protection of a bubble; on the outskirts, increasingly deprived neighborhoods where people survive and, often, are bored.
Economy and work	Between unbridled capitalism and a form of neo-feudalism. In the outlying neighborhoods, people live off precarious jobs, generally serving the needs of Zone 1. Other forms of non-monetary work are emerging, bordering on mutual aid, the commons, and activism: community radio, urban agriculture, popular schools, etc.
The central tension	Live as best you can, or fight? Accept the system, or destabilize it even without knowing what will follow?

NEVA
I think I'd like to be a flower.

MIKE
Why?

NEVA
I'm not sure. When you're a flower, you don't have to pay for water. Or rations. You get watered, you get fed. You get as much as you need. I could grow somewhere else, and they'd take me into the Bubble. Everyone would take care of me, no one would trample on me. People would watch where they walked because I'd be important. At least, that's how it seems: That flowers are worth more than me.

Excerpt from one of the plays.

HOW



Photo credit: Violette Louis Mathieu

The process alternated three phases:

1. During the first half day, U+ is in charge and helps the participants elicit how they relate to the future (using the Polak Game), then share their experience and knowledge of the effects (not the causes) of Climate Change. Then, they begin to imagine how the experience of living in their city 25 years from now would be.
2. During the second phase, which takes no less than a day (and almost a week in the case of the Paris group), the artists are in the lead. The goal is to create an engaging, powerful creation based on what happened during phase 1. In the case of Paris, it concluded with a first public enactment of the three plays.
3. The last phase lasts for two to three hours, during which participants are invited to look upon their own creation: What do they say about the future? What could we have added to it? What messages do these stories from 2050 seem to send to us (and others, eg, policy-makers) in the present? And also: What have we learned, personally and collectively? What do we take away from the process?

WOW!



Photo credit: Violette Louis Mathieu

Four clear lessons emerged from this process:

1. A MORE INCLUSIVE PARTICIPATION IS POSSIBLE

The Citadins, Citadines 2050 project sought to involve, in work on the future and climate change, participants that are very rarely encountered in such initiatives: people in precarious or fragile social situations, and field workers employed by local authorities. The result is unambiguous: these two audiences have an essential contribution to make, and it doesn't take much to get them talking about climate change and/or the future. On the other hand, they do not always feel concerned, or welcomed, by participatory approaches that are supposed to be open to all. Inclusivity requires work, and special attention to audiences who are not used to having their voices taken into account.

2. BUILD ON SHARED AWARENESS OF UPCOMING CHANGES

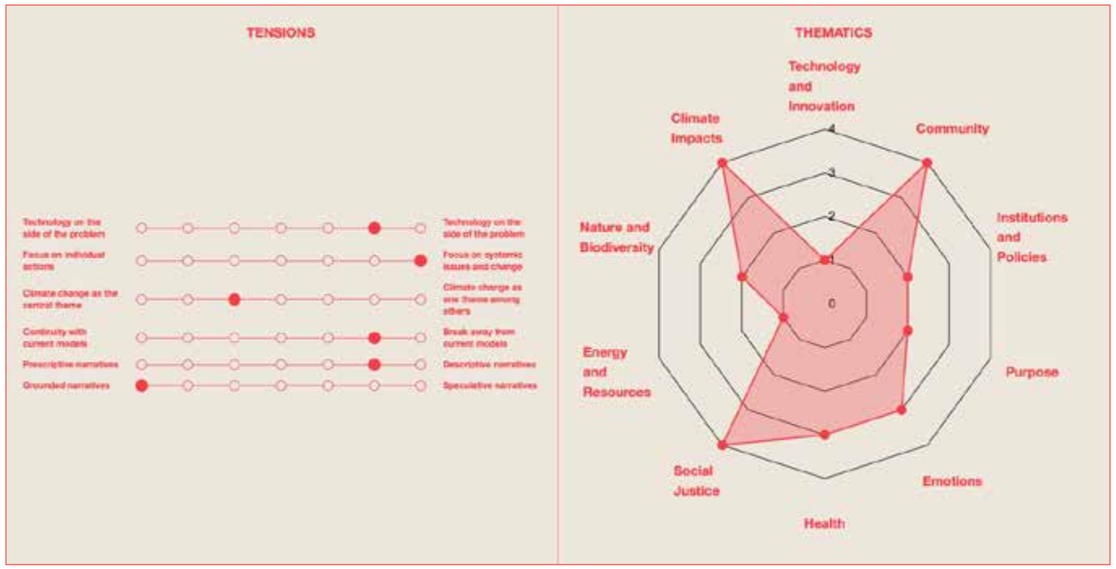
All participants were acutely aware of the ongoing ecological upheavals and have a fairly detailed understanding of their causes and consequences. They understand that these upheavals will lead to very profound changes in their territories, their lifestyles, their activities, etc. It does not seem necessary to convince them of this, but rather to engage in a dialogue now on how to anticipate these transformations, prepare for them, adapt to them, and turn them into an opportunity as much as a constraint.

3. LINK ECOLOGICAL AND SOCIAL ISSUES

The stories produced by the participants express a shared feeling that ecological degradation could accentuate, even radicalize, social inequalities, thus constituting a perfect dystopian scenario. On the other hand, addressing both issues head-on allows more positive adaptation scenarios to emerge, notably through concrete and horizontal solidarity.

4. RESILIENCE IS A SOCIAL MATTER, RATHER THAN A TECHNICAL ONE

There are certainly technical measures that can be put in place to avoid the worst consequences of climate change, but, as the participants' creations tell us, the real key to resilience lies in social connection: the ability to act together, to help each other, to trust each other, to live powerful experiences together despite the harsh times – and to compensate the probable (according to our participants) inadequacy of technical and institutional systems. Any territorial adaptation/resilience strategy should undoubtedly make strengthening social ties, at micro-local scales, one of its very first priorities.



CLIMATE ACTION PHOTOVOICE

COUNTRY(IES)
Italy

ORGANISATION(S)
CREDA (Centro per la Ricerca, l'Educazione Ambientale e per la Sostenibilità), Daniela Conti

YEAR(S)
2023–2025

LINK(S)
https://sense-steam.eu/steam-labs/creda-with-efee-as-supporting-member/

We met Daniela Conti while exploring and collecting information about the Imagining Climate Just Futures, an international initiative to imagine climate-just futures and the paths of action to achieve them.

That's how we discovered her work with CREDA, an association working on the issues related to sustainable development through the lens of education. Located north of Milan, they set up projects in collaboration with schools and teachers, in formal and non formal settings.

THE PHOTOVOICE METHOD

Through the discussion, we discussed a particular method employed by CREDA to enable youngsters to talk about climate issues: Photovoice. It is a participatory action research method that uses photography as a means of accessing the various points of view, images and knowledge of the participants. This method was created by Caroline Wang and Mary-Anne Burris of the University of Michigan in the 1990s **(Wang, C., & Burris, M. A. (1997). Photovoice: Concept, Methodology, and Use for Participatory Needs Assessment.)**

This approach's main objective is to grasp the real concerns of people, how they perceive problems in their environment. Each person is asked to take photos about challenges, issues they want to show, discuss and change. The participants are then gathered to talk about the pictures, explain what they wanted to display, add context and the information that seems important. A research period can be integrated into the workshop to dig deeper into the topics and their ecosystems.

Afterwards, the group sorts out the material into different themes, they choose key elements, give them titles and write a short description to put the photos on display. The production takes the form of an exhibition that can be installed in different places (a museum, a street, a school) to present the work and what it says about specific issues.

The goal of the exhibition is to talk with people outside of the group, other citizens. The pictures and the reflection developed with them are a great trigger to courageous discussions on the problems unveiled.

The discussions, according to Daniela Conti, are less theoretical and more grounded. The exhibitions invite emotions, sensations into the depiction of the issues.



CREDA (Centro per la Ricerca, l'Educazione Ambientale e per la Sostenibilità)

CLIMATE CHANGE FROM A SUBJECTIVE VIEWPOINT

Photovoice has been used by Daniela Conti and her team in different settings to enable the expression of climate concerns and images of climate futures. For example, they proposed it for an Horizon Widera initiative called **SENSE The New European Roadmap to STEAM Education** (art-integrative science education).

In a local experiment in the city of Monza, two classes of 16 year-old students and their teachers participated in a workshop to imagine a just and sustainable future for their community.

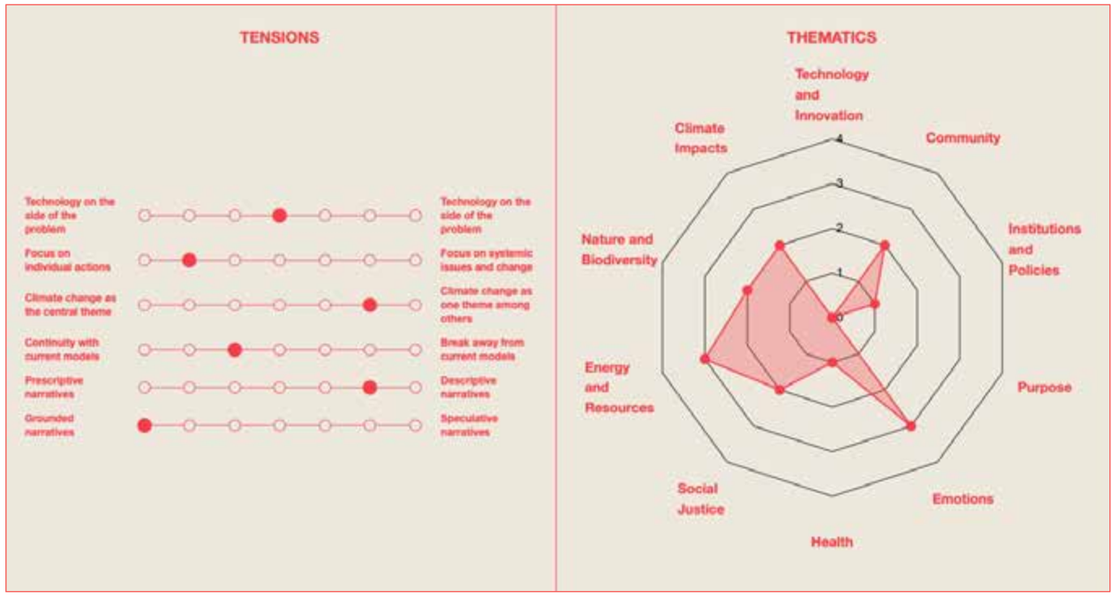
> *"Through photos and personal stories, students explore emotions, facts and relationships tied to climate change, as well as the people and places where they live and learn. They highlight needs and share ideas about how they want to act and bring change. This photovoice activity creates a learning environment where young people challenge dominant climate narratives, imagine their future cities and take meaningful steps within their communities."*

What emerges from this experiment is a constellation of concerns and subjects related to the climate crisis: quality of life, justice, democracy, reflection on one's role and involvement. Some photos are focused on the visible impacts of human activity like production of carbon dioxide and others display trees in the city, places of refuge in case of heatwaves.

BONUS PROJECT: SEMI (SCIENCE, EMPOWERMENT AND WONDER FOR THE PLANET)

At the moment, CREDA is also working with a contemporary art collective and 80 students on a two-year project dedicated to the co-creation of a video installation using a generative AI app and content developed around the themes of youth participation and climate action. The project's name is SEMI, an Italian word for seed and it is a place for youngsters to gather seeds, new skills, through different learning modules and experiment around environment, art, expression with their body, senses.

The first year was dedicated to nurturing and talking, discussing their concerns. It is really a participatory project in the sense that the students are deeply invited to give feedback and twist what is proposed to them during the workshops. By the end of the first year, they even decided that they wanted to focus on action and not exclusively around the climate crisis.



CLIMATE FUTURE IN BRUSSELS 2030

COUNTRY(IES)
Belgium

ORGANISATION(S)
BrusselAVenir

YEAR(S)
2019–2020

LINK(S)
https://brusselavenir.be/exploration/climate/

The project centered around a fictional radio show, Brussels Talks, scripted and performed based on insights and scenarios developed through workshops, street-level engagements, and participatory research. The work explored climate futures in ways that challenged conventional climate communication by foregrounding imagination, community, and accessibility.



INTENTION AND APPROACH

1. To give young people and people in general space to express how they see Brussels in a changing climate context.
2. To link climate action to social realities, including inequality, work, urban life, and systemic change.

From the beginning, the project emphasized imagination not only as a tool for dreaming, but as a way of creating alternatives and sparking conversations that bypass political fatigue or cynicism.



PARTICIPANTS

Participants were recruited through an open call, distributed through networks of schools, universities, and existing partners. A second workshop series was organized in partnership with a school program.

Participants were mostly young people, students and young professionals, with a mix of activist, artistic, and technical backgrounds. In the process of working together, their varied perspectives on climate and justice converged into shared speculative narratives.

The team deliberately worked with different youth communities, including those not traditionally involved in climate spaces. This helped surface both enthusiasm and skepticism about mainstream environmentalism.

METHOD

The project unfolded in multiple stages:

- **Exploration and dialogue:** Gathering questions in the street, mapping themes, collecting visions through video and workshop.
- **Building scenario:** Creating a future world for Brussels in 2030 based on participants input.
- **Script-writing:** Collectively developing a fictional radio show based on the scenario, with input from participants.
- **Artistic production:** Performing and recording Brussels Talks, a fictional radio show set in 2030. The final performance included carbon-neutral energy generation by the audience during the show, a symbolic and practical engagement with climate responsibility.

The radio format was chosen for its accessibility and symbolic relevance in shaping public conversations.

INSIGHTS

- Imaginative formats like radio and role-play proved more effective than traditional workshops for engaging young people on climate.
- Themes that came out the most were community themes, such as gardening, mutual aid, circular economies, these emerged more strongly than high-tech solutions.



- Tensions arose when a person working for a group funded by a large tech company participated in the radio show. This opened space for critical reflection on alliances and contradictions within climate action spaces.
- Participants were eager to imagine small, concrete changes, like changes in materials, food, and shared practices, which challenged adult facilitators to rethink assumptions about what counts as “real” or “systemic” change.
- **One key critique from youth was that some of the future scenarios felt too much like today’s solutions projected into the future, suggesting a desire to go beyond incrementalism.**

MESSAGES FOR DECISION-MAKERS

Young people want to engage in climate action, but on new terms. Not just protest, but co-creation. Not just demands, but governance and world-building.
Current institutional frameworks expect youth to adapt to existing systems. This project shows the value of meeting youth where they are, through creative, artistic, and participatory means.
Artistic formats offer new entry points into climate conversation. They give people something to share, reflect on, and be proud of, a crucial part of creating durable engagement.
Anger and disillusionment are present, but so is imagination. Youth participants emphasized a need to shift from blame to co-responsibility, including tools like citizen councils to redistribute agency in decision-making.

WHAT WORKED WELL:

· Open-ended creative formats (e.g.role-play, radio scripting).
· Scenario building rooted in field research and local realities.
· Using imagination to unlock futures beyond linear thinking.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED:

- The script-writing process was too top-down; youth should have had more say in final outputs.
- Limited resources made artistic production difficult (e.g., underfunding for radio actors).
- The team would have liked to be bolder in world-building, moving beyond today’s frames of reference.

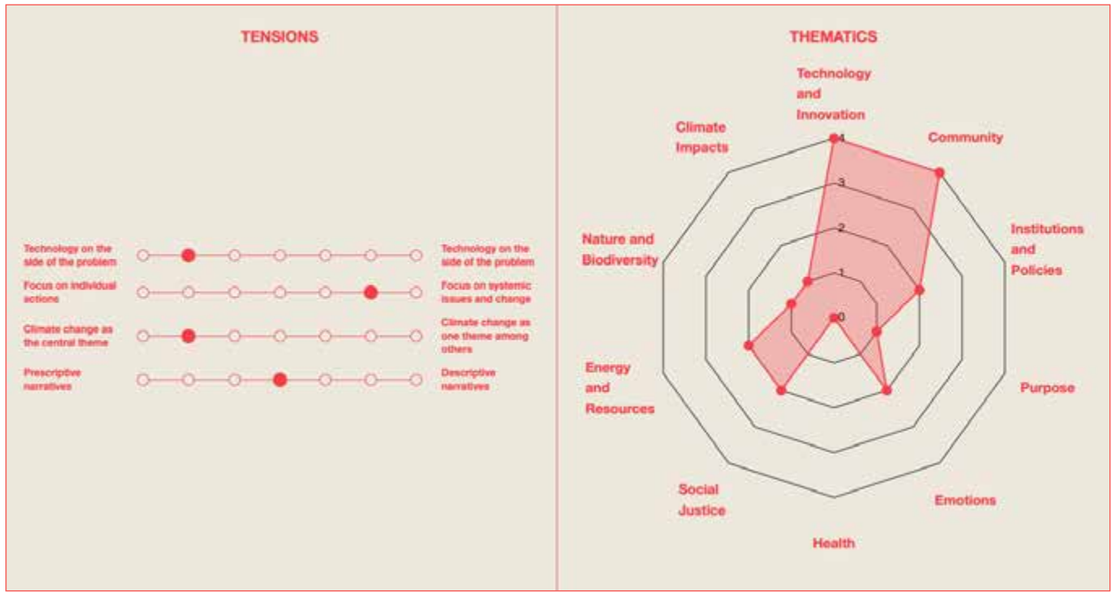


NEXT STEPS

BrusselAVenir has launched a follow-up project focused on peace futures in Brussels in 2048. This new initiative works with young multimedia artists to explore what a peaceful city could look like—building on the same methodology of participatory storytelling and speculative design.

The legacy of Climate Futures in Brussels 2030 lives on in:

· The radio show itself (Brussels Talks)
· A methodology that can be replicated (imaginative, participatory, cross-sectoral)
· Ongoing interest in future storytelling as a tool for civic and ecological transformation



CLIMATE FUTURES IN MALI

COUNTRY(IES)
Mali

ORGANISATION(S)
Mamadou Doucouré, UNICEF Innocenti, UNICEF Mali

YEAR(S)
2023

LINK(S)
https://www.unicef.org/innocenti/reports/child-rights-youth-foresight-report-2024

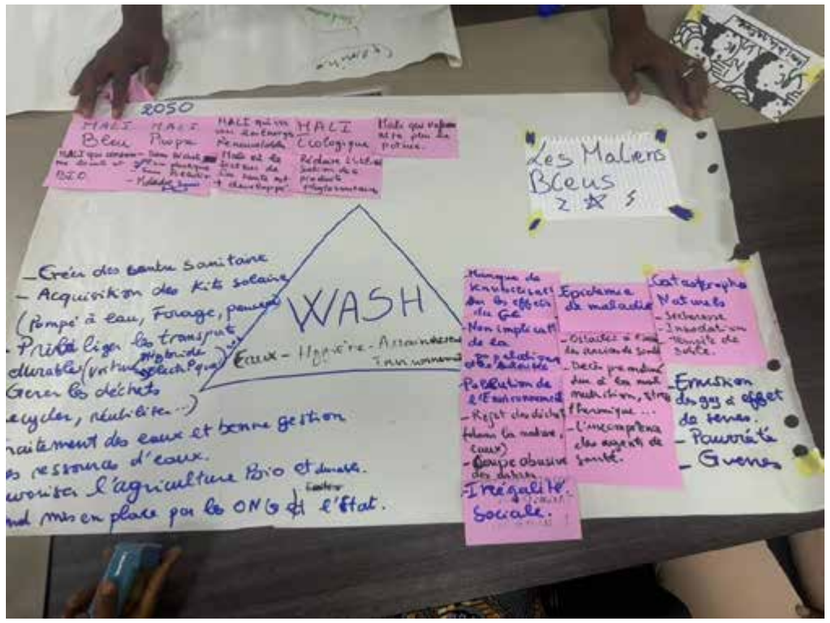
CLIMATE FUTURES IN MALI: IS THE NIGHT FOR LEARNING?

A doctoral student in Biotechnology, Mamadou Doucouré was selected by UNICEF Innocenti as one of the 2023 “Youth Foresight Fellows”. After several weeks of training with foresight tools and methods, he ran a series of foresight workshops in Mopti, a city in the center of Doucouré’s home country, Mali. The topic: “How do Malian adolescents and young adults see the future of climate change?”

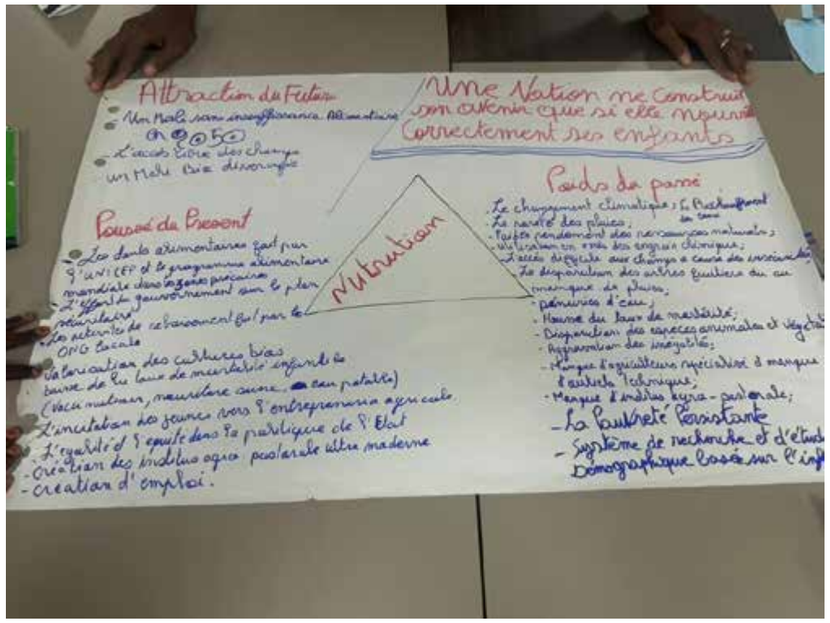
HOW

With the help of UNICEF’s country office in Mali, Mamadou brought together a group of some 20 participants. Some were already “**UNICEF U-Reporters**”, with a keen eye on their country’s ecological and social challenges. Other participants came from or through local youth groups.

The group met three times. Half the time was dedicated to “capacity building”, equipping the participants with foresight tools and methods and applying them to the issue at hand: **horizon scanning**, the **Futures Triangle**, Images of the Future (scenarios) and the **Futures Wheel** (to develop systems thinking)…



Photos courtesy of Mamadou Doucouré



Photos courtesy of Mamadou Doucouré

The second half was dedicated to exploring the futures of climate change in Mali by 2050 while looking at the intersections with education, migration, security, and child rights.

The U-Reporters were already aware of and working on climate change. However, the capacity building phase made a big difference. It reduced the gap between the U-Reporters and other participants, and made those who already held strong opinions on the topic more open to discussion. It allowed participants to connect systemic factors and global futures to their personal futures.

WHAT



UNICEF Innocenti – Youth Foresight Research

One of the most striking insights coming from the group was that education would happen in 'night mode': *"With some schools already closing earlier in the day so children can seek relief from the heat, a future in which night mode learning is the norm is becoming more and more likely",* writes Mamadou. *"This could have consequences not only for children's and young people's right to education [the scenario foresees lower grades for boys and girls alike] but also for their right to play. The Convention on the Rights of the Child emphasizes that 'every child has the right to rest, relax, play and to take part in cultural and creative activities.' But when would children have the time to enjoy such things? Most will be unable to rest and play during the day as they seek to avoid the heat that continues to grow unbearable."* Night mode also means new security issues for children, especially girls.

Another issue arose from the workshops: *"Heat stress has been found to result in irregular periods and heavier bleeding. As such, youth explained that while it is already difficult for many girls to attend school when they are menstruating – receiving little to no support since menstruation is still a taboo subject in many communities – they will struggle even more with increasingly hotter days."*

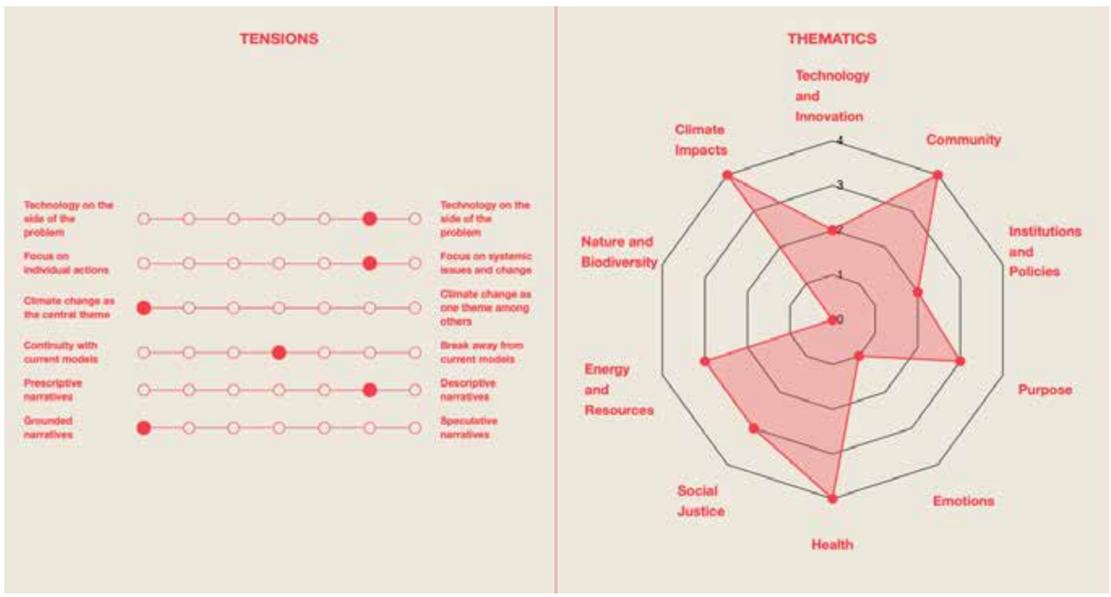
The participants concluded by advocating for more climate-relevant education, educational buildings better adapted to heat (including cooling), and support to menstrual health.

WOW!

Again, part of the panel was heavily biased towards conscious, engaged youths. However, two opposite sets of emotions could be felt within the group. Some were feeling the weight of eco-anxiety, while others felt the opposite: particularly "youth agro-entrepreneurs", who felt that technology (in the form of off-grid renewable energy sources or cheap pumps) would help even faraway villages fill basic needs such as access to water and irrigation.



Photos courtesy of Mamadou Doucouré



CLIMATEWORKS LAB

COUNTRY(IES)
Canada

ORGANISATION(S)
City Hive

YEAR(S)
2023–2024

LINK(S)
https://cityhive.ca

The project brought together a cohort of young adults (18–25)—university students, recent graduates, and early-career professionals—for an eight-month learning journey centered on climate justice, systems change, and personal empowerment. Over the course of the program, each participant developed a personal climate action plan as well as a community-oriented project. These projects ranged from public workshops and climate cafés to online campaigns and sector-specific climate initiatives.

The guiding principle of the Lab was simple: climate action does not belong only to the experts. Instead, it can (and must) be integrated into every field of activity such as education, media, business, urban planning, etc.. The ClimateWorks Lab created the space and support for participants to explore how their own lives and work could become levers for systemic change.

PROCESS AND STRUCTURE OF THE PROGRAM

The ClimateWorks Lab unfolded in three interconnected phases:

1. **Learning:** Participants came together to share personal stories and discuss how climate intersects with different fields and communities. This stage focused on storytelling, peer learning, and building a shared vocabulary around climate justice.
2. **Ideation:** Youths engaged in systems mapping and visioning exercises to identify personal motivations and social leverage points. Guest speakers from diverse professional backgrounds helped illustrate the variety of ways one can act on climate across sectors.
3. **Action:** Each participant created a tailored climate action plan. While implementation was not required to be complete within the eight months, participants began activating their plans and preparing for long-term commitment.

Throughout the process, the emphasis was not on perfection or speed, but on agency, adaptability, and ongoing engagement. Meetings always included shared meals, which helped build trust and community. Youth were given financial support through stipends and transit reimbursements, lowering barriers to full participation.

PARTICIPANTS AND FACILITATION

Participants were selected through outreach in youth and university networks, and emphasis was placed on creating an inclusive cohort. The City Hive team paid special attention to reducing financial and logistical barriers, offering stipends, food, and a flexible schedule. This practical support helped make space for meaningful participation, particularly for racialized and marginalized youth often excluded from climate decision-making spaces.

Facilitation was youth-responsive and participant-led: rather than prescribing a fixed curriculum, the team adapted to the group's interests, letting conversations and project themes emerge from within. One key activity was "power mapping", where participants explored how systems of influence work in their sectors and how to strategically intervene.

OUTPUTS AND PUBLIC MATERIALS

The Lab's projects, and what came out of them, are ongoing and diverse. Some examples include:

· A climate café series inviting public dialogue
· Youth-led workshops on climate futures in education and employment
· A social media campaign connecting everyday jobs to climate narratives
· Personal climate integration plans for architecture, design, and communications sectors

Public-facing materials will be shared via City Hive's website and social channels as projects reach maturity. Some outputs are already being used to inform the design of a future, larger-scale version of the program.

INSIGHTS AND LESSONS LEARNED

The ClimateWorks Lab revealed just how urgently young people want to engage in climate work, and how rarely they are provided with the tools, support, or institutional trust to do so. When given the opportunity, participants displayed remarkable creativity, care, and leadership.

What was observed :

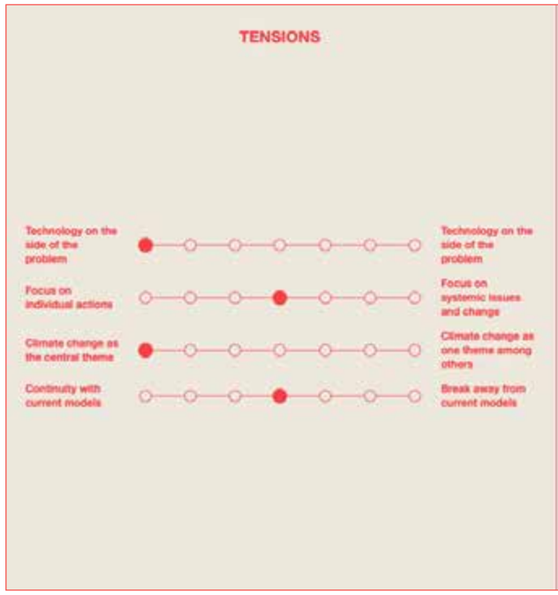
· Youth leadership flourishes in flexible, self-directed environments.
· Food and shared ritual (like meals) were central to trust-building.
· Many young people are not waiting for jobs to be created in green sectors, they want to integrate climate action into any role, from business to media to education.
· Current job systems, particularly in Canada, still treat climate as a future problem, which is increasingly out of sync with the values of the younger generation.

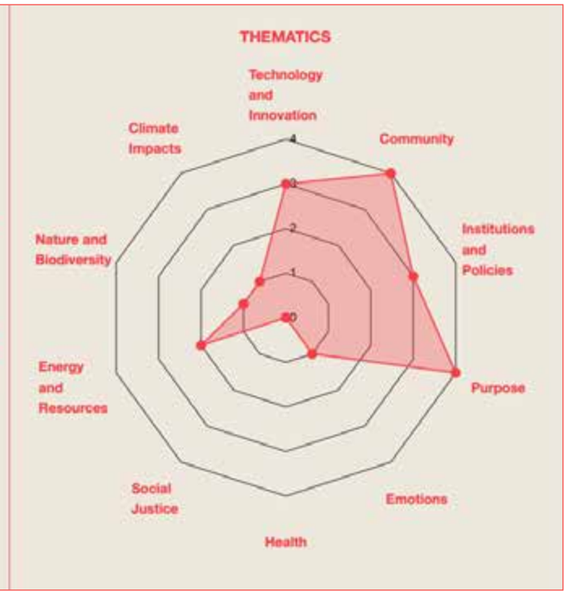
ClimateWorks Lab was a pilot. City Hive plans to continue the program, refining its structure and potentially expanding its reach. The hope is to embed this kind of climate leadership development into more institutional pathways, including higher education and in developing more work aligned with climate concerns.

For City Hive, this project is part of a broader call to action: decision-makers must stop expecting youth to build the bridge to power on their own. Institutions need to co-create those bridges, invest in them, and recognize youth not just as “future leaders”, but as current actors capable of shaping our shared ecological and social futures. Right now.



Instagram @cityhivevan





CRAFTING CHANGE THROUGH NATURAL DYE-MAKING

COUNTRY(IES)
United Kingdom, Canada

ORGANISATION(S)
Hannah Kujundzic, UCL, Lakeshore Arts

YEAR(S)
2024–2025

LINK(S)
https://lakeshorearts.ca/ycc-2025/
https://www.instagram.com/climatecaretaking/

This doctoral research project was conceived and developed by Hannah Kujundzic, a PhD candidate in Social Sciences at University College London (UCL). Developed in collaboration with Lakeshore Arts, a community arts organization based in Toronto, the project investigates how youth climate activists act as caretakers—not only of the planet, but also of their specific communities and of themselves. **The work is deeply rooted in feminist care ethics, a framework that understands care as a political and relational act involving the recognition of need, the assumption of responsibility, the taking of action, and the provision of support or healing.**



Photos courtesy of Hannah Kujundzic

The project focuses on practices of care and maintenance that sustain and heal, in both human and more-than-human relationships. Central to its inquiry is the idea that young people are already practicing these forms of care, often without them being recognized as such within their own traditional narratives of activism. The project seeks to better understand and give value to these practices, particularly those that are slow, relational, emotional, and embodied.

WORKSHOPS AND CREATIVE PRACTICE

The workshops were designed around natural dyeing and textile-making, activities chosen for their ritual, relational, and land-based qualities. Kujundzic was trained in these methods during a 3-day intensive summer course hosted by NYCI at Maynooth University in Kildare, Ireland titled ‘Climate Creativity: Using Stories and Art to Explore Climate Justice with Young People,’ where she developed the ability to host natural dye workshops for climate-engaged youth.



Photos courtesy of Hannah Kujundzic

The workshops were co-facilitated by Indigenous community caretaker, Courtney Wynne (Indigenous Climate Action), who shared Indigenous traditions, ceremony and knowledge throughout the workshops.



Photos courtesy of Hannah Kujundzic

Key elements of the workshop included:

- Intentional land acknowledgement and collective reflection on connections to land and waters, belonging, and colonial histories.
- Establishing collective intentions and social contracts for the space, including boundaries and shared values.
- Foraging in a nearby park for dye materials (and including local vegetables: beets, cabbage, onion skins) after a discussion on respectful and relational gathering practices, led by Courtney.
- Discussions around why dyeing and slow, embodied practices matter for climate activism.
- Co-creation of textile artworks, incorporating plant fibers and meaningful objects, which were later exhibited publicly.
- Facilitated focus group discussions on topics related to social justice and climate action, the role of care in the climate crisis, and the role of art and creative practice in activism, opening space for debate and reflection.



Photos courtesy of Hannah Kujundzic

METHODOLOGY

The research process was experimental and flexible, deliberately challenging dominant research formats that are often quantitative in psychology fields, particularly within institutional contexts like Canada. The methodological approach is qualitative and arts-based, drawing heavily on creative, participatory, and community-driven practices.



Photos courtesy of Hannah Kujundzic

Participation was recruited through a four-stage process:

1. **Community immersion and snowballing:** attending climate group meetings (e.g. Fridays for Future Toronto, Climate Justice UofT), community events and connecting with youth networks.
2. **A social media and poster campaign** shared through climate activist networks, which included a survey to determine participant interest and eligibility. This survey recruited 100 young people (aged 16–25) engaged in climate action in Toronto.
3. Recruited from community immersion and the survey, 34 participants were invited for **semi-structured interviews** to explore personal narratives of care and climate engagement.
4. Finally, **workshops with 30 final participants,** shaped collaboratively and focused on creativity, land-based learning, and emotional processing.



Photos courtesy of Hannah Kujundzic

OUTCOMES AND EXHIBITION

An exhibition was held at the end of the workshop series, serving as both a space of public education and knowledge transfer. For example, the exhibition included a table dedicated to demonstrating the process, and free ‘How To: Natural Dye at Home’ zines available for the public to take home. It provided participants with a platform to reflect, share, and reimagine climate activism through care, craft, and emotion. The exhibition aimed not just to show products but to highlight processes of connection and transformation.



Photos courtesy of Hannah Kujundzic

Participants expressed excitement and pride in sharing their work and engaged in ongoing dialogues about activism, colonialism, and ecological grief. Themes that emerged from their creations included: natural disasters and crises (e.g. wildfires in Canada); natural landscapes (e.g. sunsets, stalactites, fields of flowers); feelings of hope and inspiration (e.g. being held by nature); community care (e.g. friendships, family members, climate activism) and the balance of grief and hope.



Photos courtesy of Hannah Kujundzic

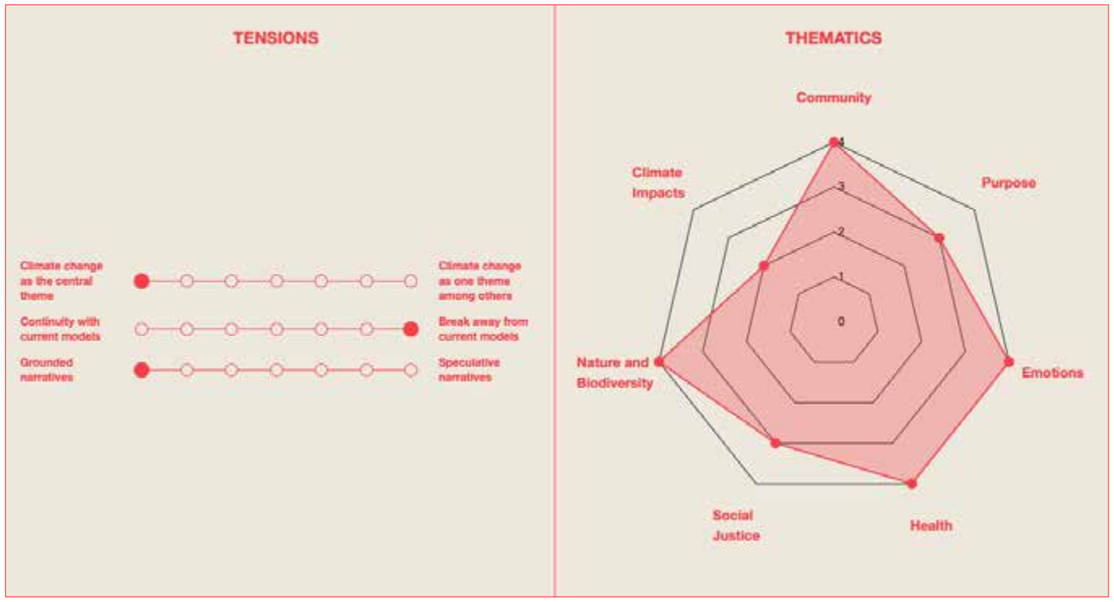
REFLECTIONS & IMAGINED FUTURES

The project revealed both the power and the precarity of arts-based activism. While the workshops generated strong emotional bonds, Hannah Kujundzic also reflected on the challenge of legacy—how to sustain the momentum and relationships after the facilitator steps back.

Participants expressed a desire for:

- Free and accessible natural dye workshops for wider youth communities.
- Reconnection to artisanal and traditional practices as acts of care and resistance.
- Deeper questioning of systemic structures—moving beyond individual actions to broader social critique.
- Greater emphasis on slowness, rest, and emotional support as legitimate activist strategies.

Emotions played a central role throughout the project, with hope and grief surfacing as key motivators for action. The workshops became a space for emotional processing, community care, and empowerment—countering burnout and isolation through collective healing and shared ritual.



DÉFIS RÉSILIENCE

COUNTRY(IES)
France

ORGANISATION(S)
CAUE de Paris, Manon Besançon

YEAR(S)
2022–2023

LINK(S)
https://www.caue75.fr/content/planclimat-climathon
https://www.caue75.fr/content/defis-resilience

CLIMATHON

In 2022, from December 8th to December 10th, as part of the revision of Paris' Climate Plan, the Council of architecture, town planning and environment organized a major consultation workshop with 40 Parisian students, aged between 18 and 25.

Using a hackathon format, the students, divided into 6 teams, were given 48 hours to formulate concrete proposals in response to 6 major challenges put forward by the City of Paris.



© CAUE de Paris – Jean-Baptiste Vicquelin

THE 6 CHALLENGES:

· Challenge 1 – Paris, a 100% bicycle-friendly city
· Challenge 2 – Paris, a 100% renewable energy city
· Challenge 3 – Paris, a haven city for biodiversity
· Challenge 4 – Paris, a zero-waste city
· Challenge 5 – Paris, a 100% eco-renovated city
· Challenge 6 – Paris, an adapted city



© CAUE de Paris – Marilou Dif.

THE WORKSHOP'S PROGRAM:

The first evening, the first part of the Climathon, was dedicated to debating climate issues during mini-conferences using the fishbowl method to facilitate exchanges between experts and students.

The following day, students met in teams for various ideation sessions, including 2 "retro-speculative" workshops to project themselves into a desirable future and then retrace the various steps that led to it.

The final day was devoted to preparing the presentation of the ideas to a jury.



© CAUE de Paris – Jean-Baptiste Vicquelin

DÉFIS RÉSILIENCE

We are now in 2023, on October 6th and 7th. This time as part of the overhaul of the City of Paris' Resilience Strategy, new students gathered around a more condensed 24-hour format. The principle remained the same: to formulate proposals for action in the face of 4 crisis scenarios envisaged on the scale of the city of Paris.

THE 4 CRISIS SCENARIOS:

1. Paris facing a food supply disruption
2. Paris facing a severe drought
3. Paris facing a long-term power cut
4. Paris facing an intense heat wave



© CAUE de Paris – Défis Résilience

This time the students were divided into 8 teams (2 for each situation) and followed the same schedule:

· first evening dedicated to building skills in the form of mini-conferences
· next day focused on ideation and formatting
· presentation of proposals on the second evening

A SEMI-PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Throughout the whole process, the students are in contact with experts from different climate domains and from the administration. Indeed, the organizers wanted this event to broaden the youngsters' knowledge. Some students even pursued their career in the domains they discovered during the workshops.



© CAUE de Paris – Défis Résilience

After the hackathon, the best teams were invited to present their proposals to other stakeholders to gain even more experience. For example, the Vélib company, operating the self-service bicycle system in the city of Paris, has been interested in the project of a cycle-friendly city.

> *"To encourage more people to use bicycles in Paris, the team is proposing to encourage the use of an existing service that has already given a major boost to the development of cycling in the capital: Vélib'. To achieve this, they propose to work with users to invent Vélib' 2.0 and reinforce its role as a genuine public bicycle service in Paris. […] To reach new users, different models will be deployed, such as children's bikes or cargo bikes, all accompanied by helmets to increase cyclists' safety. […] Kiosks will be set up in public spaces, providing easy, direct access to information through the presence of human contacts."*
>
> *Vélib 2.0* (translated from french)

INSTITUTIONAL PROPOSALS

The projects presented during these hackathons, all taking place in the city of Paris, are founded on three major pillars: citizen's awareness, community and political action.

In most of the proposals, one lever of the project is related to sensitization or the transmission of knowledge to the Parisian population. These processes are thought to help them change habits or to develop the proper reflexes in case of crisis. Sometimes, the citizens are also involved in consultative or participatory sessions.

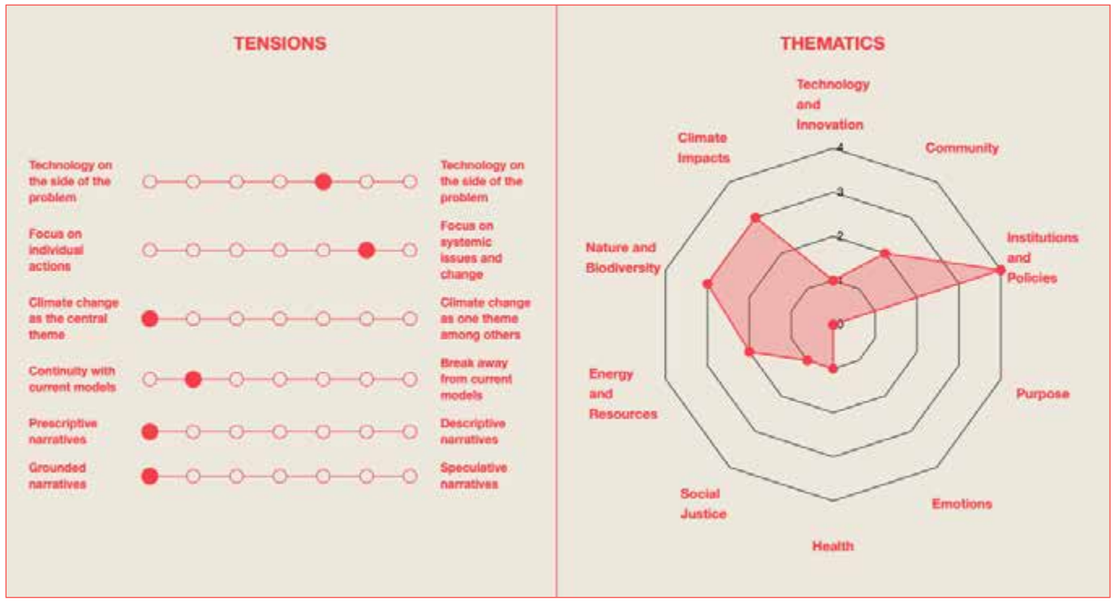
As far as the community is concerned, it is often mentioned as a way to seek help, share material or simply build relationships.

> *"These sites are dedicated to training local residents or professionals in agricultural production, host awareness-raising workshops and also provide a place to meet and share."*
>
> Agricultural embassies. To raise awareness and coordinate concrete actions. (translated from french)

> *"A wide-ranging communication campaign has been launched to inform the general public and direct them towards citizen mutual-help networks."*
>
> SPUQE. Strategy for prioritizing water uses and quantities. (translated from french)

Last and not least, the city of Paris, as an administration, holds a great role in the transformations proposed by the students: taxes, incentives, obligations, new services, fundings…

> *"The first axis is the compulsory greening of condominiums, with a target of 50% of the surface area within 5 years. To achieve this, the group is proposing incentives such as deducting biodiversity-related expenses from property tax, modifying the distribution of deductible co-ownership expenses, and subsidies from the City of Paris for the purchase of equipment."*
>
> From courtyard to balcony: Biodiversity in condominiums (translated from french)



DESTINATION BEAUVAIS 2040

COUNTRY(IES)
France

ORGANISATION(S)
City of Beauvais, inSiglo Agency

YEAR(S)
2024

LINK(S)
https://www.beauvaisis.fr/loisir/culture-mediatheques-musees-evenements-culturels/destination-beauvais-2040/
https://www.beauvaisis.fr/vie-pratique/jeunesse/conseil-du-futur-beauvais-2040/

Beauvais is a city in the North of France, with a population of 56,000. After creating a “Council for the Future” in 2022, the City of Beauvais initiated an process that lasted over two years, whose intention was to build upon the memory of the 2020 Covid pandemic in order to imagine the city’s futures. Among the questions asked: What makes a city hold together in the face of a major crisis? How, after such a crisis, do we imagine the city of tomorrow?

HOW

The Council for the Future and its partner inSiglo decided not to do a classic foresight exercise, and in particular not to do “scenarios”, but rather to work with young and older citizens on their images of the future: the changes they see coming, their hopes, desires and worries.

The process started with individual interviews and collective discussions on the lived experience of the pandemic. This was followed by 10 “projection” workshops with a variety of publics: students and teachers, health and care professionals, merchants and consumers on the local market, city council employees, teenagers, and kids. The groups worked on different themes they could easily relate to: food, housing, everyday life, care…



Destination Beauvais 2040 – “Building a city takes time”

Kids were taken on a special journey where they were invited to draw images of the future. According to Delphine Bondran, who was part of the inSiglo team and designed this process, “if you ask them to talk about the city in 2040, it doesn’t work*. If you ask them to project themselves into the future in a fictional way, they have plenty to say.”*

The groups of kids worked on their own, before being joined by some (adult) members of the Council for the Future. The time travel they had been on before helped them speak to grown-ups on a more equal footing. *“To allow youngsters to express themselves about the future, also provides them with tools that help them perceive themselves as actors of this unsettling world”,* says Delphine Bondran.

WHAT

The book that came out of the process does not make a distinction between insights coming from young participants and others.

It represented the images of the futures produced by the participants along five “thematic lines” inspired from subway maps.



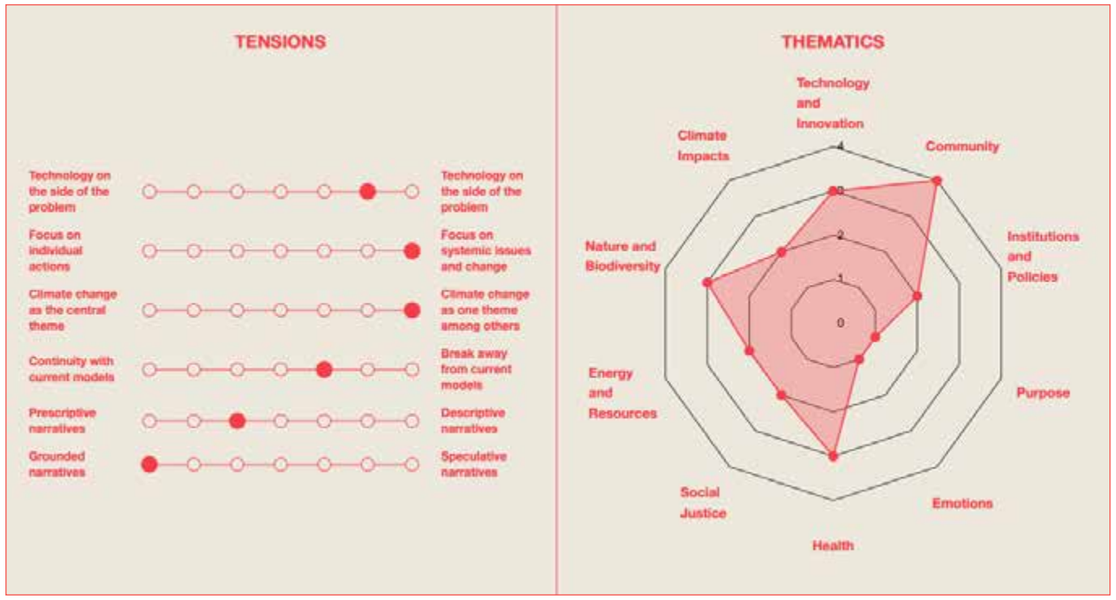
Destination Beauvais 2040 - "Prospective lines map"

- The **"Nature" line** imagined a city more connected to natural ecosystems: more vegetation, local and urban food production, less meat consumption…
- The **"Technology" line,** very inspired by the Covid experience, imagined a very digital future, with 24/7 real-time services, but mitigated by "digital humanities".
- The **"Densification" line** imagined Beauvais as an attractive city able to double its population while maintaining social bonds and its quality of life: higher (and deeper underground) buildings, less space used by cars, multi-usage spaces and buildings, 24/7 sports and entertainment…
- The **"Openness and inclusion" line** was about welcoming newcomers and being inclusive to all: lifelong education, community care, a lively artistic scene…
- The **"Implication" line** was about involving all citizens in the city's workings: DIY, reuse and reparation, participation in local agriculture, peer-to-peer care…



Destination Beauvais 2040 – "The collection of drawings by the children of Beauvais"

The children groups started with somewhat stereotypical images of the future: lots of flying cars, greened cities with houses built on the top of trees, love and fear of animals. They also tended to imagine multiuse devices: trams which are also restaurants, a cinema which is also a health center. They, as well as the teenager group, expressed a mix of fascination and fear (bullying, solitude, and being automated out of jobs) towards technology.



ÉCO-MOTION

COUNTRY(IES)
Canada

ORGANISATION(S)
Isabelle Béliveau, Éco-Motion

YEAR(S)
2025

LINK(S)
https://www.collectif-ecomotion.org

TOOLS

One of the methods proposed is the creation of an adaptation plan: a personal tool based on a vision of a desirable future. Although this plan is developed individually, it is created with the support of the group, enabling a concrete transition from reflection to action. Eco-Motion's approach draws on several complementary disciplines: foresight, acceptance therapy, the work of researcher Panu Pihkala, and mind mapping.



Collectif Éco-Motion

PARTICIPANTS

Faced with eco-emotions and feelings of powerlessness, the journey is often uneven and bumpy. However, by learning to tolerate the ups and downs and developing self-regulation strategies, people are able to maintain their commitment over the long term, with greater consistency and enjoyment. The support offered also includes empathic communication, particularly non-violent communication, and integration into a support network. Participants may experience great pain or difficulty in expressing their deepest needs. The starting point is always their own perception of a desirable future.



Follow Éco-Motion on LinkedIn

The time horizon for projections generally depends on age: for Generation Z, it is often between five and ten years. They are then asked key questions: "What would you like to see happen? Can you describe it?" The more a person is able to imagine that this future is achievable, the more inclined they are to move towards it.

CHALLENGES OF THE WORK TODAY

Many young people feel discouraged when faced with a lack of tangible results from their climate actions. While there are ways to re-motivate them, a major obstacle remains: the current system, which limits the momentum for action. This raises the following question: "What conditions are limiting your desire to build this desirable future?" The challenges of this work lie as much in projecting ourselves into the future as in how we experience the transformations of the present. Eco-Motion's approach explores visions of a desirable future, possible actions to achieve it, and obstacles to be overcome. One of the innovative aspects is taking the time to identify and work on these barriers to project implementation. The collective also works with emotions, a field that is still poorly documented in group dynamics. Each person experiences and perceives the future in their own way, which makes the themes addressed non-linear.



Instagram @eco.motion.co

As for taking action, there are many ways to do so, and they do not follow any standardized model. The team adopts a psychoeducational approach. Some participants choose to change jobs, start retraining, or decide to do less but better, focusing on meaningful projects. Increased awareness can also generate a sense of urgency to want to do everything at once. In these cases, support helps to improve communication, refocus energy, and reevaluate available resources. A question is asked: “What is your real vision, and how much energy do you have available?” The goal is to bring projects back to a human scale, recognizing that we cannot move as fast as technology.

WHAT EMERGES FROM THE WORK CONDUCTED BY YOUTH, ON DESIRABLE FUTURES?



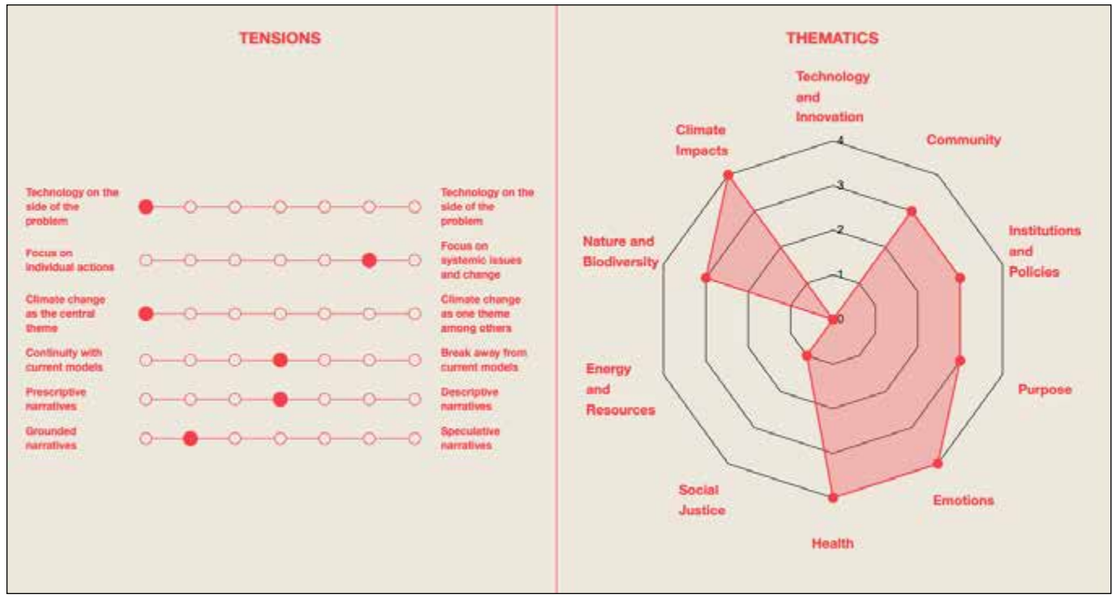
Follow Éco-Motion on Instagram

The project had a large outreach amongst many youths. Among the benefits that have been shared by youth, are that of feeling surrounded by others, and of finding strength in understanding their limits and the limits of their action in our systems. This can be helpful in reconnecting with possible actions to take at a human scale, and visualizing these in a more realistic and achievable manner.

The goal is to maintain a healthier, more sustainable commitment that is aligned with one’s capabilities. Éco-Motion works throughout Quebec, not only with young people, but also in CEGEPs, universities, NPOs, businesses, and with transition workers.

WHAT COMES NEXT ?

A notebook is currently being developed. It will include an adaptation plan structured around three stages: current state, path, and desired state, with the means (or “vehicles”) to achieve it. As a specialist in eco-emotions, Eco-Motion considers them to be valuable indicators for analyzing how emotions influence actions. Everyone has a predisposition to eco-anxiety, even if testimonials reflect only about 1% of this reality. All emotions can be linked to the current polycrisis. Guilt, for example, takes on a new function when placed in an ecological context.



EL FUTURO ES CLIMA

COUNTRY(IES)
Spain

ORGANISATION(S)
Demos Lab

YEAR(S)
2022–2023

LINK(S)
https://www.demoslab.com/elfuturoesclima

HOW



Initiated by Demos Lab, a Spanish think tank whose mission is to “strengthen democracy through citizen participation”, “El Futuro es Clima” (“The future is climate”) intended to better understand what is preventing climate action and make actionable proposals to overcome these barriers.

After an online “macro survey” in 2022, where more than 4000 young people expressed their hopes and worries about climate change, El futuro es clima organized a collective deliberation between two separate bodies: a “Metaforum” made up of 40 randomly selected young participants (16–30 years old), and an “Advisory Council” (Consejo Asesor) made up of 20 climate experts. Before beginning their work, members of the Metaforum received an extensive briefing on climate issues and science.

Both groups worked separately, then met to discuss convergences and differences. They rated their priorities according to three criteria: Urgency, Importance and Context (the latter referring to the readiness of actors to act on proposed actions).

WHAT

- **Differing priorities**

Both groups came up with a significantly divergent list of priorities.

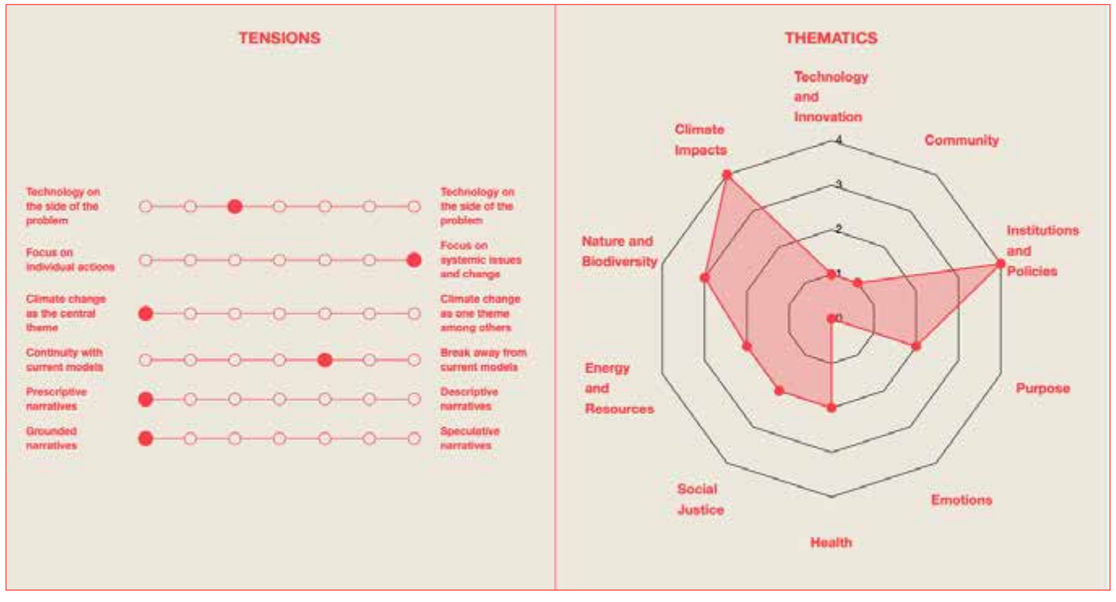
The young participants placed emphasis on communication (reaching out and listening); degrowth rather than technological fixes; and basic material necessities such as work, education, and health. Whereas the experts expressed their frustration at short-termism (high in urgency and importance, low on context – meaning they do not see how it can be overcome); their hope on younger generations; knowledge, narratives, and engagement; and some technical measures such as taxes and financial incentives.

Consejo Asesor	Metaforum
1.Juventud	1.Comunicación
2.Transporte.	2.Educación.
3.Participación Ciudadana.	3.Salud.
4.Ciencia y Tecnología.	4.Transporte.
5.Cosmovisión y pertenencia.	5.Fiscaliad.
6.Fiscalidad.	6.Decrecimiento.
7.Educación.	7.Transición justa.
8.Salud.	8.Rural.
9.Comunicación.	9.Alimentación.
10.Cortoplacismo.	10. Participación Ciudadana.

PROPOSAL AND FLAGSHIPS

The two “councils” finally came together to identify a number of areas for action, formulate a consensus and describe one “flagship action” per area. However, the level of priority assigned to each area often differed between the Metaforum’s young participants and the experts. Below is a selection:

- **Communication** [Metaforum priority: very high; Experts: Very low] – Flagship: legally punish green washing.
- **Education** [Metaforum priority: high; Experts: low] – Flagship: add a “climate change” subject study, working as a bridge between traditional disciplines.
- **Health, both physical and mental** [Metaforum priority: high; Experts: low] – Flagship: proximity access to parks or forests for all.
- **Mobility** [Metaforum priority: high; Experts: very high] – Flagship: a national mobility card covering all means of public transport.
- **Taxes** [Metaforum priority: average; Experts: average] – Flagship: a tax on fossil fuels and polluting products.
- **Degrowth** [Metaforum priority: average to high; Experts: not discussed] – Flagship: 4 days workweek.
- **Citizen participation** [Metaforum priority: not discussed; Experts: average] – Flagship: a national Climate Assembly.
- **Youth** [Metaforum priority: not discussed; Experts: very high] – Flagship: an intergenerational dialogue biennale.
- **Cosmovision** [Metaforum priority: not discussed; Experts: average] – Flagship: legal rights to Nature and specific ecosystems.



EMERGING BREAKTHROUGHS ON CLIMATE CHANGE

COUNTRY(IES)
Italy, International

ORGANISATION(S)
UNICEF Innocenti, Alejandro Daly, Eric Njuguna, Catarina Lorenzo, Farzana Faruk Jhumu, Francisco Vera Manzanares, Gunnhildur F. Hallgrimsdottir, Hailey Campbell, Mariam Hassan Al Ghafri, Nikka Gerona, Sonko Jamal, Winifred Awinpoya Atanga

YEAR(S)
2025

LINK(S)
https://www.unicef.org/innocenti/media/11156/file/UNICEF-Innocenti-Emerging-Breakthroughs-Climate-Working-Paper-May-2025.pdf.pdf

What does the future of climate action look like? More importantly, how do young people – who will inherit both the challenges and solutions of today's climate decisions – envision this future?"

Twelve UNICEF Leading Minds Fellows (coming from Colombia, Venezuela, Kenya, Brazil, Albania, Bangladesh, Iceland, USA, UAE, Philippines, Uganda and Ghana), already deeply invested in a wide range of climate actions, worked together to answer this broad question.



A PROCESS GIVING THE POWER TO YOUNG PEOPLE

For UNICEF this report is not just a pretext or an instrumentalization of young voices. It is anchored in the belief that young people should be more involved in decision making processes inherently shaping their lives, notably on climate change issues. As a living future generation, they have a say concerning the building of their conditions of existence.

Additionally, they revealed having promising insights and ideas, going beyond the usual ecological paradigms and enlightening major concerns.

> *"This report represents UNICEF's commitment to upholding children's right to participate in decisions that affect their futures, recognizing that the climate crisis is fundamentally a child rights crisis."*

The team of 12 Young Foresight Fellows undertook an ambitious foresight program. Firstly they conducted a trend analysis and an horizon scanning exercise to identify the climate signals emerging globally. They sorted out 150 of them by analysing and prioritizing them together.

Then, in a convergence process, they grouped these various signals to deliver 26 key climate breakthroughs, related to five thematic areas. Delving more deeply in the issues, they used different tools – Futures wheel (direct and indirect consequences), STEEP-V framework (Social, Technological, Economic, Environmental, Political, and Value factors) – to detail their propositions.

YOUNG PEOPLE'S POLITICAL VIEWS ON CLIMATE CHANGE

Here are the five themes and their related propositions:

- **Eco-literacy**

Formal education: climate curricula in schools
Social media, peer-to-peer learning and storytelling on climate
Digital media to fund conservation efforts
Climate policy literacy

- **Equitable energy transitions**



· Closing the funding gap for a just energy transition
· Alliances for a world beyond fossil fuels
· Country-specific energy transitions
· Concerns on carbon capture advancements
· Systemic shift: Resource extraction for renewable energy materials

Farzana, 26: Fair Energy Access for All: "All children and youth around the world should have the opportunity to enjoy access to energy; and this should be done in a way that would not heavily commit their natural resources. Children, especially in Least Developed Countries, should not have their resources taken away."

• Climate finance

· Equitable climate finance policies
· Debt cancellations
· Redirecting fossil fuel subsidies for climate
· Taxation of wealth and climate damages
· Climate budgeting
· Challenging development of carbon markets

• Loss and damage



· Climate litigation
· Dedicated funds for loss and damage
· Climate risk insurance
· Measurement of non-economic damages
· Compensation for cultural damages

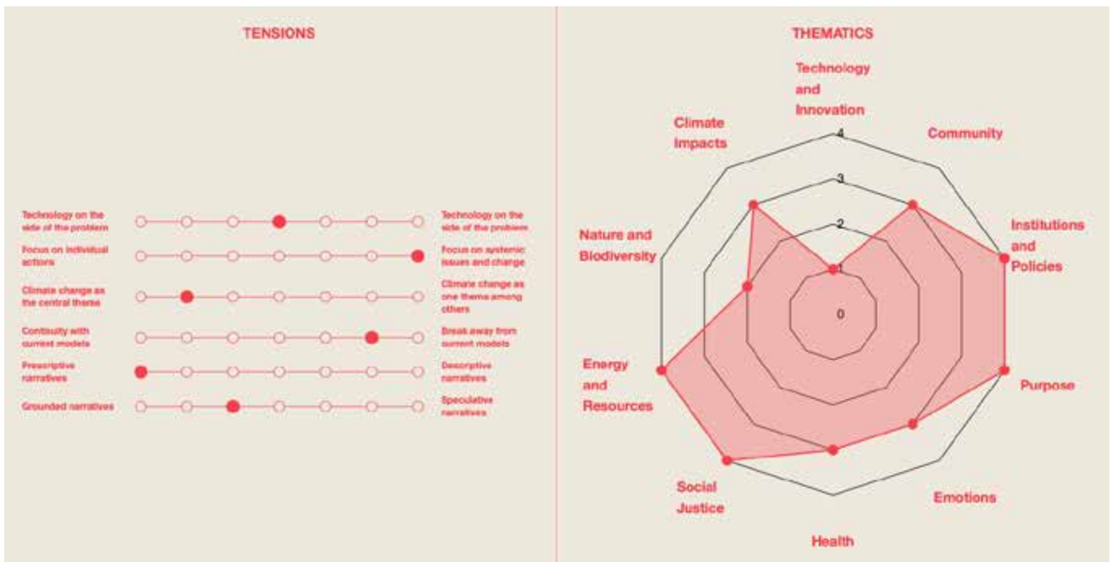
Nikka, 22: Prioritizing Youth in Climate Recovery: *"Breakthroughs in Loss and Damage will recognize the importance of prioritizing young people's well-being during climate disasters. This means funding will be allocated to the implementation of post-disaster activities or recovery plans aimed at providing long term support to help young people cope with the aftermath. Also, by doing so, we can ensure that young people are equipped with the necessary tools and guidance to be resilient in the wake of disasters"*

• Community-centric governance



· Legal personhood for non-human entities
· Community-driven legislation against pollution
· Decentralized governance mechanisms
· Regional environmental rights agreements
· Youth inclusion in climate governance
· Elevating children's rights

Catarina, 18: Youth- and Children-Responsive Governance: *"Children should not have to be the ones pushing for governmental change, because governments should understand their responsibilities and effectively put them into practice. Yet, because governments fail to do so, it is necessary that governance becomes equitable and accessible, as well as youth inclusive, because my generation will not have the same power to create change through policy in the future as governors have today and therefore should be included when it comes to speaking of our own future."*



EMERGING HORIZONS

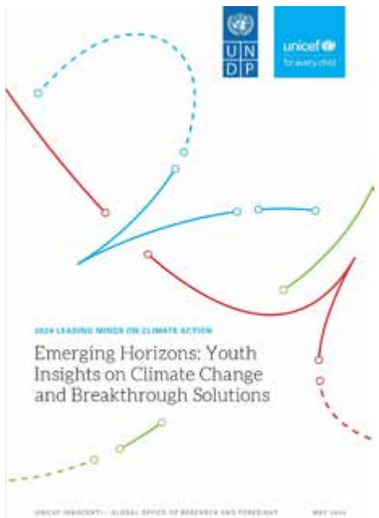
COUNTRY(IES)
Italy, International

ORGANISATION(S)
UNDP, UNICEF

YEAR(S)
2023

LINK(S)
https://www.undp.org/publications/emerging-horizons-youth-insights-climate-change-and-breakthrough-solutions

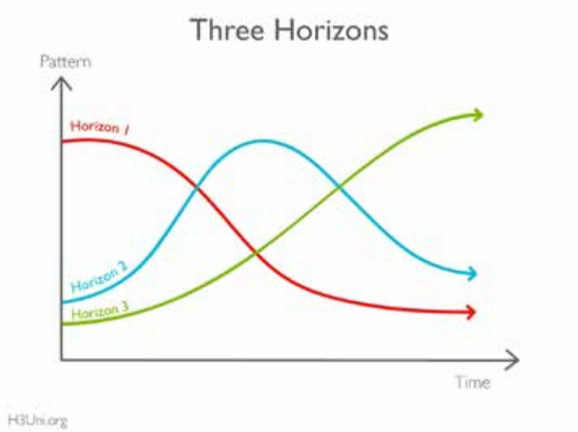
EMERGING HORIZONS: YOUTH INSIGHTS ON CLIMATE CHANGE AND BREAK-THROUGH SOLUTIONS



HOW

In 2023, 100 proponents of climate-related projects were gathered by UNDP in an event called "**Youth4Climate: Sparking Solutions**". During this event, the participants took part in a participatory foresight workshop designed by UNICEF Innocenti. "Emerging Horizons" shares the insights that came out from the workshop.

The workshop used a classic foresight tool called the **Three Horizons**: *"This approach helps us to recognize that three horizons exist always in the present moment – the current system that is declining or the pattern being lived right now (Horizon 1), the vision of a better future that is rising (Horizon 3), and the area of innovation and disruption that will either be captured to maintain the old system or harnessed to bring about the new (Horizon 2)."*



WHAT

The Three Horizons are not alternative futures, rather co-existing visions of the future at any given moment. The insights from each Horizon therefore complement themselves.

• Horizon 1: "business as usual"

This first horizon sees a continuation of traditional governance and policymaking which is both top-down, and reactive rather than proactive. The main drivers for public and private action are economic and focused on the short term. Climate literacy is low, societies as well as individuals are unprepared for climate shocks. Social disparities are high and growing.

However, the participants identified three assets they wish to carry forward in the future: progress on energy efficiency and renewable energies; community engagement and leveraging "indigenous knowledge"; capitalism, seen as a source of economic development and of a "plethora of life choices".

• Horizon 3: "visions of the future"

The common vision was that of an ecologically sustainable, just and equitable world, also providing economic and job opportunities. Innovation and technology are seen by the young innovators as "pivotal", leading to (and relying on) "smart government" and lifelong learning, including on climate where the group calls for "integrating indigenous knowledge". A second foundation is community engagement and local initiatives.

• Horizon 2: "innovation and disruption"

The participants imagined an interplay between modernity and traditional practices, for example in agriculture, but also in urban planning where they call for "repurposing ageing infrastructures" rather than just replacing them.

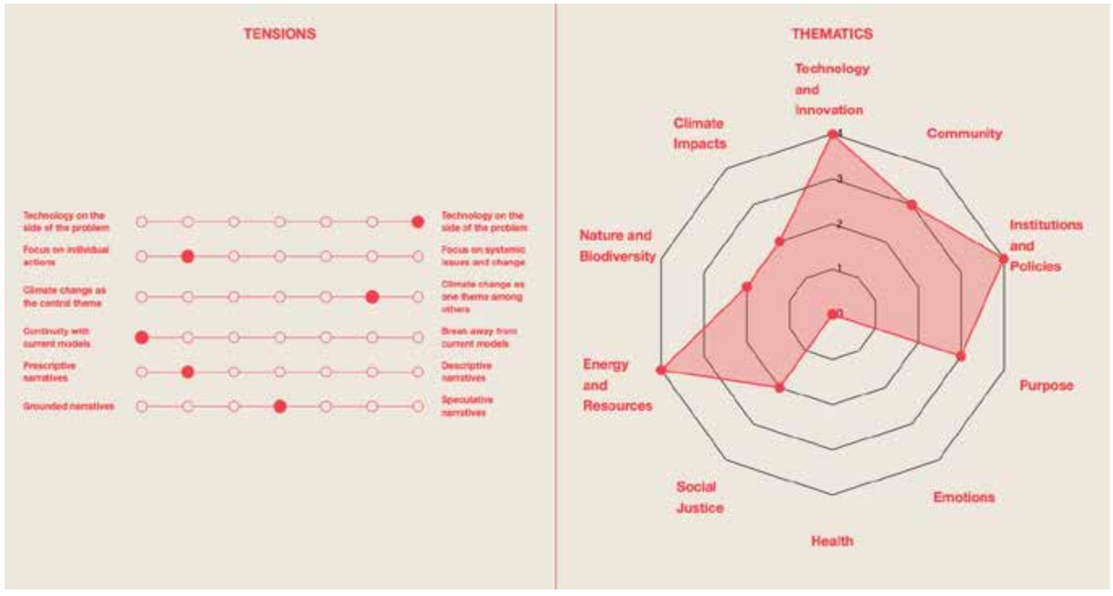
The vision of innovation focuses on:

- Renewable energy and sustainable practices, highlighting local and peer-to-peer production and storage (with the help of AI and Blockchain);
- Digitization, however with a concern for overreliance on technology;
- Community engagement, peer to peer initiatives, and active participation of youths in decision-making.
- Economic fluidity, opportunities for innovation, and a “circular economy” model.

Tension points and further research

Finally, the group highlighted three key conditions of change:

- Transforming governance and policymaking through community-centric approaches;
- Embedding equity in economic models for renewable energy transition;
- Advancing eco-literacy as a catalyst for transformative change.



ENTER NUSANTARA

COUNTRY(IES)
Indonesia

ORGANISATION(S)
Enter Nusantara

YEAR(S)
2020 – (ongoing)

LINK(S)
https://enternusantara.org/

Enter Nusantara is a youth-led initiative in Indonesia dedicated to building a just and sustainable ecological transition. With a population deeply affected by the impacts of climate change and a strong dependence on coal, Indonesia's young generation has become a powerful force for change. This project empowers youth (aged 17 to 29) to take direct climate action through three interconnected pillars:

1. **Renewable energy implementation:** Installing solar panels in communities across Indonesia.
2. **Campaigning for a coal ban:** Organizing large-scale protests, advocacy campaigns, and direct engagement with stakeholders like banks and financial institutions still investing in fossil fuels.
3. **Youth engagement and creative activism:** Fostering climate awareness through workshops, storytelling, games, zine-making, and exhibitions.



Zine From Roads to Roots – Enter Nusantara

A YOUTH-LED, INCLUSIVE CLIMATE MOVEMENT

Enter Nusantara was born out of a coalition of youths who recognized both the urgency of Indonesia's climate crisis and the need for an inclusive movement that bridges divides between civil society organizations. The team,with three core members covering workshops, digital activism, and on-the-ground actions, builds spaces for learning, collaboration, and leadership.

Young people who join through social media open calls take part in various activities:

· Hands-on solar energy installation projects
· Workshops on renewable energy, digital campaigning, and climate storytelling
· Public demonstrations and climate strikes
· Documentary screenings followed by open discussions
· Collaborative content creation, including zines, podcasts, and awareness games



Zine Beragam Project – Enter Nusantara

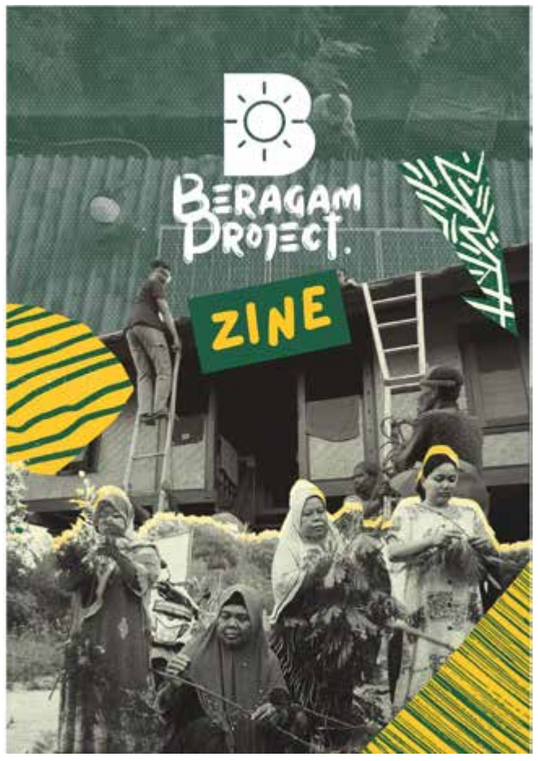
Inclusivity is at the heart of the initiative, as Enter Nusantara actively seeks to unite diverse environmental movements across the archipelago through mutual support and solidarity.

TOOLS AND CONTENT CREATED

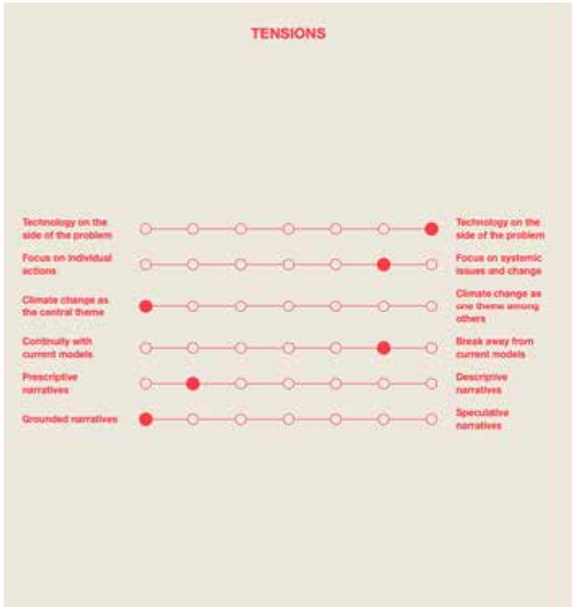
The project has produced a variety of communication tools and creative outputs to amplify youth voices:

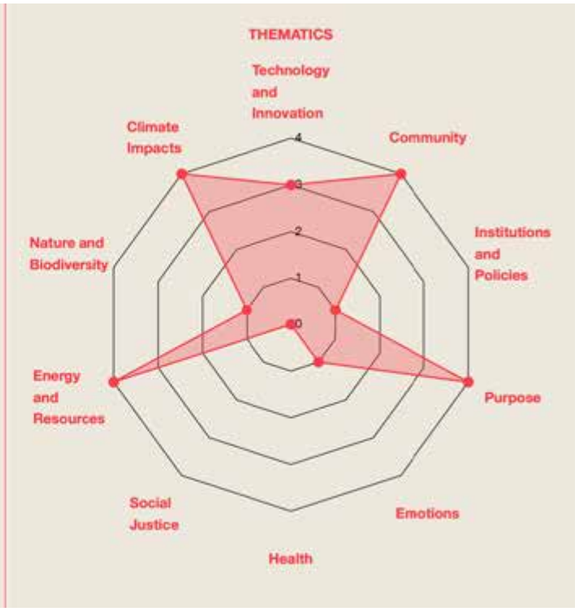
· Documentaries about youth-led energy transitions:
· Action tools and guides for young activists on Instagram: See example
· Participant-made media: podcasts, collaborative zines, and visual campaigns – Zine sample

One standout output is the Spill the Tea podcast, which tackles climate topics in a fun, honest, and youth-accessible way. Another is the BERAGAM exhibition and campaign, exploring Islamic financing and climate justice through a youth lens.



Zine Beragam Project – Enter Nusantara





LOOKING TOWARD THE FUTURE

Enter Nusantara's vision is bold and long-term: a coal-free Indonesia led by an informed, organized, and creative generation of youth climate leaders. The team sees their role not just in deploying clean energy technologies but in shaping a cultural and political shift across the country. They emphasize that youth are not just "the future" but active agents of the present, capable of shaping climate policy and reimagining how sustainability, justice, and finance intersect in Indonesia.

EXPLORING SCHOOL SCENARIOS IN MELBOURNE

COUNTRY(IES)
Australia

ORGANISATION(S)
Neil Selwyn, Fareed Kaviani, Yolande Strengers, Kari Dahlgren, Bronwyn Cumbo, Markus Wagner

YEAR(S)
2023–2024

LINK(S)
https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0016328725000059

ANTICIPATING THE TRANSFORMATION OF EDUCATION

As part of their reflection on anticipation capacities, a research team developed a "futures education" program which was tested between December 2023 and March 2024, with adolescents aged between 12 to 14 in schools in the Melbourne metropolitan area.

> *"This emphasis on anticipation raises a host of questions – ranging from how education provision might be best reimagined considering changing economic and/or geopolitical conditions, through to the possible implications of climate disruptions or global health crises"*

Students are indeed the most relevant people to involve in a consultation process about the future of learning, being at the center of the studied setting. A scenario-building exercise revealed itself to be a great way to work with them. The research team advocates for a better inclusion of young people in foresight reflections of such domains.

> *"Schools is a good [futures] topic – everyone knows what school experience is because we're in school. So, if you were doing the future city, flying cars and everything, it would be hard to describe. But we're already experts in school, right?" [Female student, School B, Interview group#1]*

INVOLVING YOUNG PEOPLE IN A FUTURING PROCESS

The program was designed to introduce the students to a range of futures thinking skills.

During the 3 days-session, the students assisted to 4 different modules:

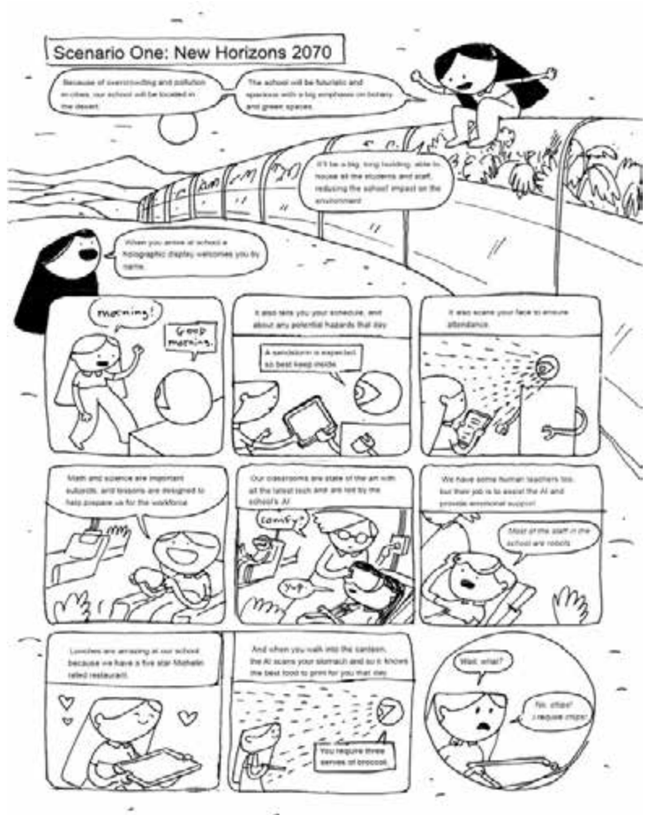
- Thematic discussions to approach different domains (emerging technologies, AI, energy, climate futures and future literacies) ;
- Scenario-building workshops to imagine in groups the future schools in the years 2050–2070 ;
- Creative representation to create presentation supports ;
- Group presentations to discuss the emerging issues.

For the third phase, the students used a wide range of digital tools, including AI softwares. According to the facilitators, it impacted quite negatively the creative process and limited the youngsters' imagination.

> *"Despite the options to draw, sketch, write music or stories, all groups were keen to source existing online visualisations, stock photographs or use generative AI tools such as Dall:E. While these uses of digital imagery resulted in a set of highly competent presentations, the final visualisations showed a pronounced flattening-out of students' initial 'future school' ideas and arguments from during earlier brain-storming sessions."*

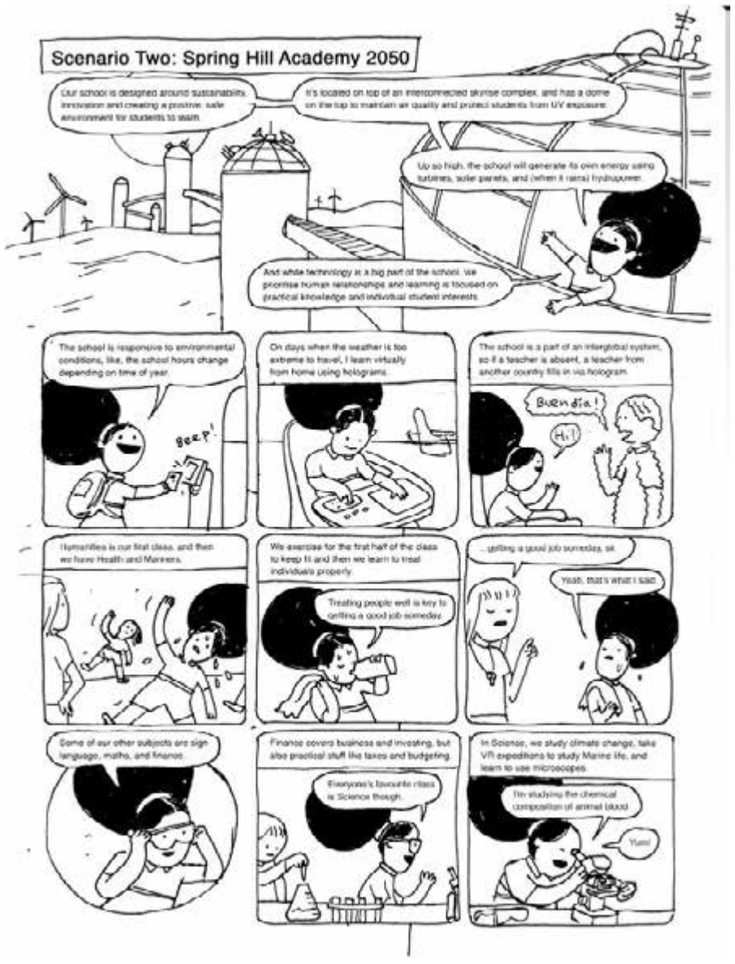
INSIGHTS FROM THE STUDENTS' WORKS

Ten different scenarios and future schools were built by the adolescents. The research team selected 3 of them to be professionally illustrated.



Scenario One: New Horizons 2070

The three main issues studied during the program (emerging technologies, energy and climate change) are well represented in the stories. But new technologies are particularly at the center of the narratives, showcasing a wide range of possibilities, from robots to holograms, surveillance systems and personalized recommendations.



Scenario Two: Spring Hill Academy 2050

The research team also reported interesting conversations with students, discussing ways to protect their school from frequent climate events.

> *"[A] Global warming? We'll use a bubble that protects the students from natural disasters.*
>
> *[B] It depends on the extent of the disasters. We'll just keep this scenario as a 'possible'. It won't be that bad. Right?*
>
> *[A] Well, we're technically building this school in the middle of the desert. Right? I mean, it's gonna be that bad. It's in the middle of a desert.*
>
> *[B] What are we talking about? Surely, it might be semi-arid soon?*
>
> *[A] Yeah. It is worth thinking about because the desert is rarely used, right?*
>
> *[C] So, you know, we can do something like on Mars that protects people from the environment.*
>
> *[B] So this school looks like an entire society in a bubble.*
>
> *[Q] And the students will come all the way from Sydney?*
>
> *[A]That's the point. It's a boarding school.*
>
> *[Q] So, it's just basically a school?*
>
> *[A] Definitely"*
>
> [Interview group #4]

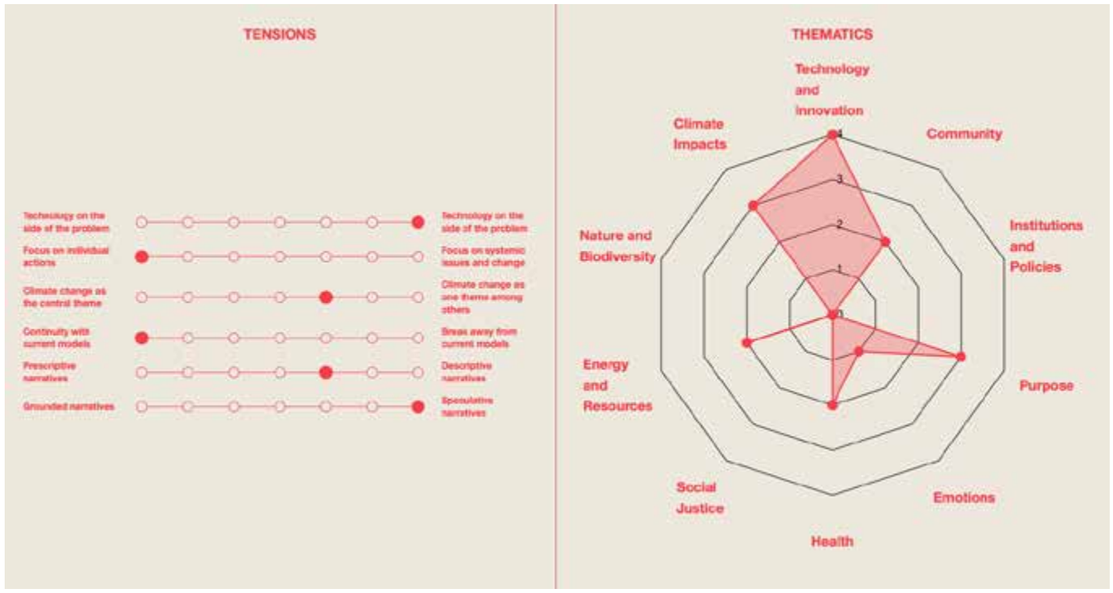


Scenario Three: Rich Park High

Nonetheless, the students' narratives did not differ a lot from what school is nowadays in terms of structure, organisation and principles. *"Students tend to anticipate the continued core structures of schooling, albeit shaped by values of care and relationality."* Moreover, they were greatly influenced by already existing "futuristic" innovations. For example, the building of "New Horizons 2070 is directly issued from the Neom development in Saudi Arabia. It shows a tendency to replicate and take cues in the present, probably to ensure a sense of credibility.

This criticism led to a highly enriching discussion on the limits of the foresight framework:

> *"If we wanted to support radical reimaginings of how young people might engage with learning then we should not have used the word 'school'. Indeed our effort to support the speculative redesign of 'future school' highlighted the fact that school is one of the most obdurate 'legacy infrastructures' in young people' lives that impact any decisions that one might make about future possibilities. As Macgilchrist et al. (2024, p.19) put it: "These legacy infrastructures are never …'neutral': they afford and disafford certain ways of designing for post-digital futures as we experience path dependencies emerging from decisions made in the past about the sociotechnical worlds in which we live and the futures we hope to attain"."*



FEELING FUTURES THROUGH THE STUFF WE WEAR

COUNTRY(IES)
United Kingdom

ORGANISATION(S)
Aniela Fidler Wieruszewska

YEAR(S)
2024-ongoing

LINK(S)
https://anielacomplicatedsurname.com/
https://www.instagram.com/feelingfutures

Aniela Fidler-Wieruszewska is a designer, creative researcher and strategist specialising in storytelling and futures thinking. She is also doing a PhD at Glasgow Caledonian University, through which she researches how young people experience change, feel and deal with the climate emergency through things we wear. Fashion, climate and futures: How do they bring those three ideas together? Do they think about this at all? What do they feel about it? How to help them connect these dots, while supporting them cognitively and/or emotionally?



Photos courtesy of Aniela Fidler-Wieruszewska

WHAT

• The awareness is here, but it needs a pathway to expression

According to Aniela Fidler Wieruszewska, most young people are somewhat aware of climate change. They might not be able to explain it, but they know it exists. However, at the beginning, she introduced it from the problem perspective, "and they shut down", she reports. "It was like, 'Yeah, we know this, and we don't know what to do about it.'" So she took them to **Black Horse Lane Ateliers**, a factory in London that makes jeans in a sustainable way. Seeing change happening gave the participants a sense of possibility, which opened up the possibility to discuss why change is needed. "By understanding that stuff has to be made, you soon discover the systemic dimension: when you talk about reducing water to wash denim, you also learn that water is an issue."

• Eco-anxiety, or anxieties

As soon as Aniela started talking with young people about how they feel about the future, anxiety emerged naturally. *"Anxiety is a feeling of fear about something that hasn't happened yet. It comes from anticipation and is essentially a concern for the future – in the case of eco-anxiety, for the future of the Planet and our environment."*

Also, when asked about sustainability, participants both said that it's very important, but they struggle to say what sustainability actually looks like in their lives – especially when the system around them isn't built for it. There are knowledge gaps ("I want to but I don't know how") and financial limitations ("I can't afford it"). *"To feel something strongly and be unable to practice it makes them very uncomfortable, which creates another kind of eco-anxiety. You need to create a space for that contradiction and not judge it"*, says Aniela.

This led Aniela to put emotions at the heart of her approach, rather than as a side issue that needs to be moved out of the way of 'serious' work.

• Futuring/sustainability in particular, rather than in general

In terms of feelings or emotions, when participants think about *Fashion* alone, *"it's all positive: joy, creativity, identity, fun. But the moment you ask them about Fashion and Sustainability, emotional responses become overwhelmingly negative: guilt, frustration, helplessness. It disturbs me, because that's not what I want people to feel about sustainability."* However, on Fashion and Future, the level of anxiety was very similar to the Fashion/Sustainability combination, while the level of positive feelings was double! *"Participants felt more excited to talk about fashion and future than they were to talk about fashion and sustainability. That told me that framing sustainability in a futures lens evokes much more agency and generates more engagement."*



• Durability and community

According to Aniela, *“Lots of young people were interested in the durability of things they own. They are fed up with things falling apart. It’s just a waste of money and space. They want new stuff, of course, but they don’t want that stuff to be single-use. They want cool, affordable stuff that lasts. They feel frustrated and angry at a system that doesn’t let them enjoy those things long enough. Or, since they have zero money, they want to use them as investment (if it doesn’t lose too much value) because they love resale. However, they don’t go as far as imagining a community wardrobe where they all exchange everything. That’s too abstract for them. If influencers did it, and if it were more accepted by the public, then they might do it, because no one is going to judge them. They have this community-based way of thinking about what’s possible and what’s not.”*

HOW

• Generating and sustaining young participants’s engagement

To engage young participants, in Aniela’s experience, *“It was important that they didn’t feel like it’s a class where they have to give the right answers.”*

If the sessions happen outside school, the young participants have to be very motivated and their parents often need to make time for it. If at all possible, the most effective way is to work with a school.

• Three steps

With each group, Aniela typically runs three 90-minute sessions.

- The first session starts with a visit or an introduction of a sustainable innovator profile, so that young participants can immediately get excited about the work and are incentivised to come again. Then participants dive into emotions, with the help of three prompts: “How do you feel about fashion? How do you feel when you think about fashion and sustainability? When you think about fashion and future?” To answer, they can use stickers and place them on a big **“Feelings Wheel”**. Each participant has their own wheel, they are not forced to share their feelings.
- Ahead of the second session, Aniela asks participants to bring a ‘fragment’ that represents the future of fashion in 15 years. It could be an image of a catwalk in 2040, a song, etc. Then, participants engage in fiction writing about the world – and fashion – in 2040.
- During the third session, participants draw objects or services that could exist in the futures which they previously described in writing. They carry on illustrating their futures through crafting, using glue and denim scraps, while Aniela has conversations with them in ‘focus group’ mode.

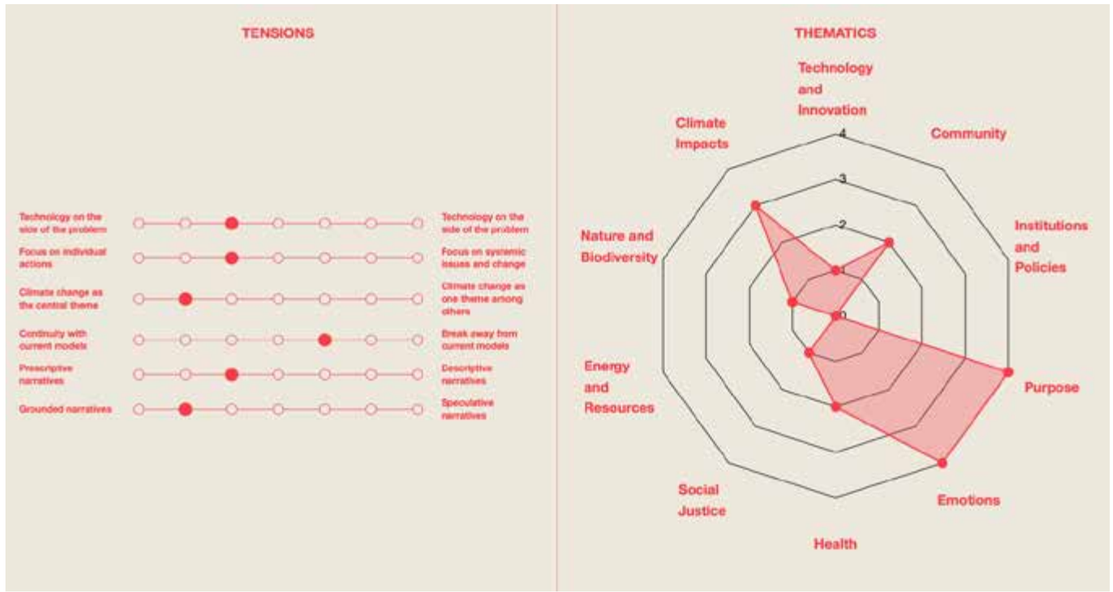


Source: **https://feelingswheel.com/**

• The difficulty of naming anxiety

In Aniela Fidler Wieruszewska's experience, *"One thing that really didn't work was bringing eco-anxiety as a subject. The expression itself was unknown to many of them. The emotion was there, but the label wasn't. Also, anxiety as a feeling is intimidating, and they don't really want to talk about it when their peers are around."*

Many young people struggle to articulate their emotions around climate and sustainability (and sometimes in general). "*They lack an emotional vocabulary, because education is not so interested in emotions."* This is the reason why Aniela introduced the **Feelings Wheel**: so that they can just pick and choose rather than look for words.



FUTURE IMAGES OF YOUTH ON FOOD SYSTEMS

COUNTRY(IES)
Finland

ORGANISATION(S)
Minna Kaljonen, Vilja Varho, Kirsi Sonck-Rautio, Roosa Ritola, Anni Savikurki

YEAR(S)
2021

LINK(S)
https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0016328725000308

A RESEARCH WITH FINNISH HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

At the beginning of 2021, Finnish students from six different high schools around Finland, were asked to write an essay where they imagined ”food and eating in Finland in 2050”.

“Write ca. 1 page text where you imagine food and eating in Finland in 2050. Consider how responding to environmental and sustainability issues affects food production and consumption. You may discuss, e.g., what foods are eaten, what kinds of raw materials they are made of, where and with whom food is eaten, how and where food is produced, where food is bought or how it is delivered and how food is packed. Be bold! In 2050 you are nearly 50 years of age.”



The location of the participating schools.

This exercise was part of a research project whose goal was to identify the specific views (the future images) of youth concerning the evolution of food systems through the means of imagination and writing. (Even if, as specified by the writers, youth should not be considered as a homogeneous category.)

> *“Future images differ from visions, which typically are desirable future states, constructed by an organisation to direct its actions. In comparison, future images can also be dystopic and often are most interesting when there are several future images to compare. The future images can reveal what people currently value, fear or hope for, as well as what they consider possible for the future.”*

123 essays were submitted, and then analysed and sorted both by researchers and algorithms to extract the future images of the students concerning the food systems. Following the work of Dator on generic future types (**Dator, 2009**), they started the exploration of the future images with the four following categories : “Continued growth”, “Collapse”, “Discipline”, and “Transformation”. The exploration of the body of writings guided the research team to adapt this first canvas and transform the 4 generic types into 6 categories: “BAU+” (Business as usual), “Conscious consumer”, “Back to the roots”, “Strict regulation”, “Technology solves” and “Dystopia: food for survival”.

These future images were then more profoundly described using a PESTEC table (Policy, Economic, Social, Technology, Environment, Culture). The result of this work is presented in the following table:

Table 3
Future images of sustainable food 2050 by Finnish high school students.

	Social	Technology	Environment	Economy	Policy	Culture and values
BAU+	Dietary changes are slow and difficult to achieve; Online shopping, restaurant eating and ready-made meals diminish cooking together	Reduces need for human labor in production and delivery; Packaging relies on plastic but is recyclable	People have better knowledge on sustainable food production and consumption; Organic farming increases	Efficiency in production increases; Circular economy and recycling in food chain operations increases; GMOs and new plant breeds in use	Regulation of sustainable production is emphasized; Incremental changes to current policies	Efficiency and convenience is valued
Conscious consumer	Youth with conscious consumption is a driver for change; Eating together is valued, but people have individualised diets; Experimenting with multicultural foods; Vegan food becomes gourmet; The taste of meat is no longer desirable	Technologies and novel plant-based products are used to leverage dietary changes; Tailored foods are delivered to homes	Health and environment are interlinked for sustainable diets; Global food security and planetary health raise worries	Radical reduction in meat production and consumption; Demand for novel plan-based products is high and they are readily available in markets; International trade is diminished for securing right to food	Regulation of ethical food production; International food aid	Ethical consumption; Planetary health; Global equity
Back to the roots	Community farming and farming in cities increases; Everyone has access to locally produced fresh food; Home food and cooking together is valued; People move to countryside	Organic production and home-grown food are valued; Minimal packaging of food	Food miles are minimized; Land-use is optimized so that people in cities can source their foods from the regions nearby; Fishing and hunting increase	Domestic and local food is available for all; Farming becomes more profitable	Support to Finnish producers and production	Self-sufficiency; Naturalness; Livelihood of farmers
Strict regulation	Red meat is only available to rich people and eaten only as festive food	New food delivery mechanisms such as automatons; Biodegradable packaging	Climate change is taken under control with the help of strict regulation	Food is produced in laboraties and indoors; Meat is sold only in specific shops and restaurants; Meat is produced in large units	Consumption of meat is regulated strictly via taxes and quotas; Production of meat is allowed only for few species	Environment and animal welfare
Technology solves	Diets and food preferences are highly individualized; Food can be eaten and delivered anywhere; Cooking with family has disappeared	Technological solutions used to develop tasty meat substitutes, including artificial meat; Algae and other novel sources of plant-based foods are taken into use; Agriculture is developed to depend less on variations in weather and climate; Robots are in active use in all food operations from field cultivation to delivery and cooking	The number of cultivated fields is radically reduced; Abandoned fields are reforested	Cloning, cellular agriculture and other Finnish food innovations spread and succeed globally		Environment; Technological progress
Dystopia: Food for survival	Societal distress and inequality on rise; Democracy is in danger; Wellbeing is lost	Real food is replaced with tasteless laboratory products, which turn taste into a luxury experience	Nature is pumped empty; Impossible to feed all since, climate change has destroyed arable land; Food shortages and wars are common	Animals are raised in centers under supervision; Globally current food crops are available only for rich, while others get something grown quickly; Food prices rise	Consumption of food is controlled heavily, esp. red meat; People have been assigned individualised diets, which are monitored and regulated	Survival of many is prioritized, at the expense of quality of life

Future images of sustainable food 2050 by Finnish high school students

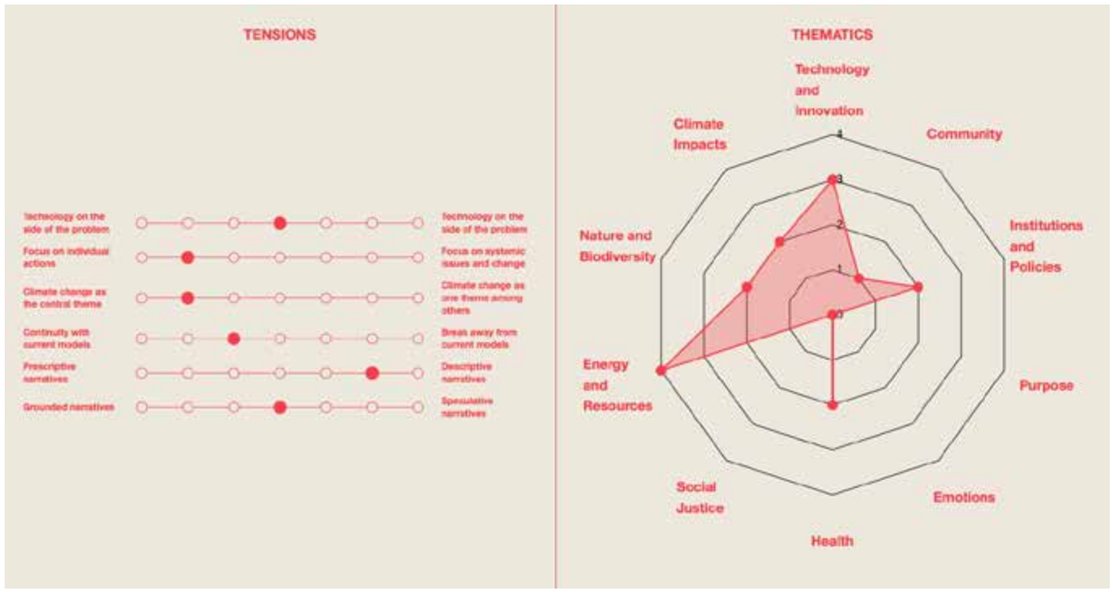
THE FUTURE IMAGES ON FOOD

Looking at this panorama of the future images of food systems, the researchers were able to draw a few conclusions.

First of all, climate change is a “central driver for change” for a vast majority of the participants. Nonetheless, the solutions proposed in reaction to the state of the Earth’s ecosystem differ in terms of strategy: conscious consumption, re-localisation, techno-optimism…

Technology is a particularly well represented theme. In “Technology solves” narratives, technological development is the core strategy for society’s adaptation. But in other writings, technology is also the source of numerous risks: *“The “Dystopian” future image emerges as a counter narrative to Dator’s ideal “Transformation” trajectory. In the “Dystopian” image of the Finnish youth, technology disrupts our relation to food. Some of the dystopian images fear the collapse of traditional values, quality of nutrition and culinary experiences central to food.”*

What the “Dystopian” narratives also enlighten us about are the important values around food: *“Youth clearly value the social and cultural meaning of food, the shared meals, local food production, and healthiness of food, seeing them as also being under threat.”*



FUTURE IS NOW

COUNTRY(IES)
Slovakia, Belgium, France

ORGANISATION(S)
Youthwatch (Slovakia), BrusselAvenir (Belgium),
The Plurality University Network (France)

YEAR(S)
2022–2024

LINK(S)
https://www.plurality-university.org/projects/the-future-is-now

FUTURE IS NOW: FUTURES LITERACY FOR YOUTHS

Between 2022 and 2024, “The Future is Now” experimented with methods to “Equip young people and the youth sector with futures literacy (tools, methods and practice) that allows them to imagine alternative futures and influence the present.” The project involved more than 200 youngsters (teenagers to young adults) in Slovakia and Brussels, in ten separate sessions.

Future is Now

Funded by the Erasmus+ Programme of the European Union

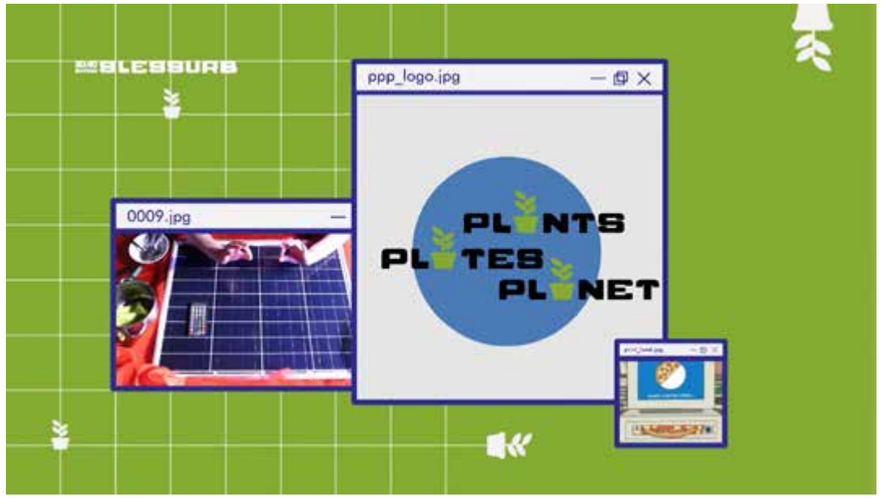
WHAT

An analysis of the stories and creative material created by the young participants yielded several insights.

Many young people initially view the future (at least the future in general, sometimes not their personal futures) in a rather negative light, leading them to feel uncertain and sometimes fearful. However, (i) a significant part of our young participants – with strong variations from session to session – have a more positive outlook on the future, and (ii) the results with older audiences are not very different.



Many young participants hold basic ideas about the future that are shaped by dominant narratives they encounter in media, books, and films. It’s no surprise, then, that for many, the first things that come to mind when thinking about the future are the climate crisis and technology. These themes appear in nearly all the stories co-created with young people, although the collective creation also helps them move beyond them.



That being said, the most important topics emerging from the groups’ creative and reflexive work are the following:

- **Environmental crises, ecological restoration, and the urgent need for sustainability** are recurring themes, reflecting growing concerns about the planet’s future, the necessity for action and, if we believe the stories, the reality of inaction.
- The rise of **digitization, automation, AI and autonomous machines** (**aka** robots) also frequently appears, with a focus on how these technologies will affect the labor market, social structures, and individual purpose. As robots take over more tasks, young people question the role of human work and its significance in a highly automated world.

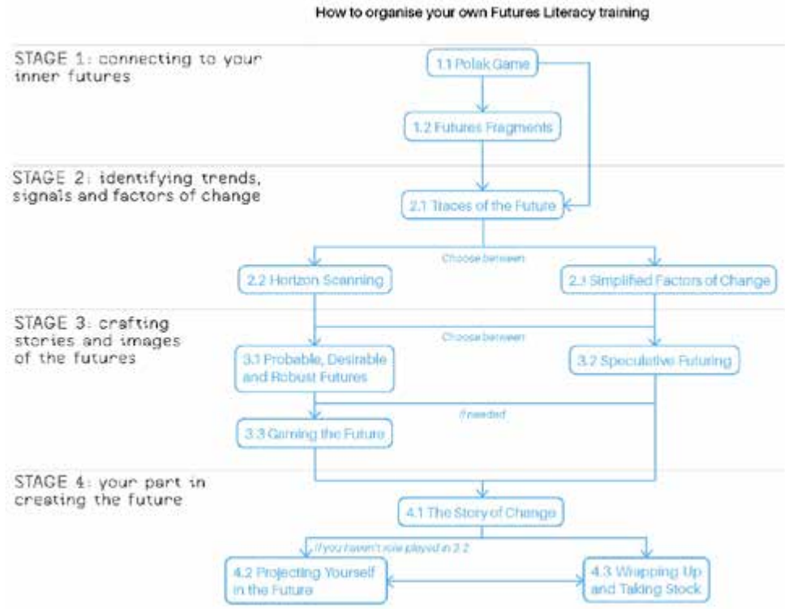


- Our young participants place significant emphasis on mental health. Mental health challenges are a constant concern in their stories, particularly regarding emotional regulation, loneliness, digital overconsumption and/or bullying, and the loss of purpose due to automation. This often connects to a broader theme of losing deep and meaningful relationships.
- The theme of surveillance, especially through AI and intrusive technologies, also surfaces frequently. Young people do not want such control over their lives and, in their imagined futures, are prepared to resist a world dominated by artificial intelligence and other digital control mechanisms.
- While society already feels the effects of increasing polarization, this theme also appears frequently in their future stories. Whether it's polarization due to identity politics, societal inequality, or the disparity between the rich and poor, the challenge of coexistence and understanding others emerges as a significant issue. At the same time, there is a strong desire, if not a necessity, to coexist despite these differences. This is evident in stories that feature refugees, where individuals are forced to leave their homes due to environmental challenges. Despite their differences, these characters are united by a common desire to confront difficult situations together and find new ways to survive.

HOW

The methodological approach of all workshops was based on a "**Futures Literacy**" framework. Initially championed by UNESCO, Futures Literacy is defined as "the skill that allows people to better understand the role of the future in what they see and do", "the capability of imagining diverse and multiple futures, and using futures as lenses through which we look at the present anew."

Each session developed is a slightly different form, adapting to the participants, the context, and also experimenting with various approaches. In spite of those differences, a common pattern emerged, which has been translated into a "**Futures Literacy Toolbox**":



1. **Stage 1, "Connecting to your inner future",** aims at "understanding one's basic relationship with, & engaging in conversations about, the Future(s)." It is mostly made up of short, playful, collective exercises.
2. **Stage 2, "Identifying trends, signals and factors of change"** was sometimes merged with the previous or following stages. It is mostly about being aware and/or understanding what generates change, and why the future is likely to be different from the present.
3. **Stage 3, "Crafting stories and images of the future"**, is about imagining alternative futures. After testing with classic scenario methods, the project decided to focus on more creative practices: theatre, video, podcasts, collages… This resulted in 10 different, sometimes very imaginative, stories from 2050.
4. **Stage 4, "Your part in creating the future"**, is about two things: making futures personal, by inviting participants to imagine themselves in the futures they have created together; and taking stock, by identifying the takeaways (in terms of skills, of emotions, of actions…) for each participant.

WOW!

Among the most powerful **lessons learned from the project** are the following:

• Generating hope through action

What was found significant through the experience of co-creating stories of different futures is that young people do see hope. Triggered (at least in part) by the Futures Literacy activities, they begin to realize that the future doesn't have to be entirely dystopian, and to recognize the important role they have in shaping it. Often for the first time, they are also considering what they can do about it — whether individually or collectively.

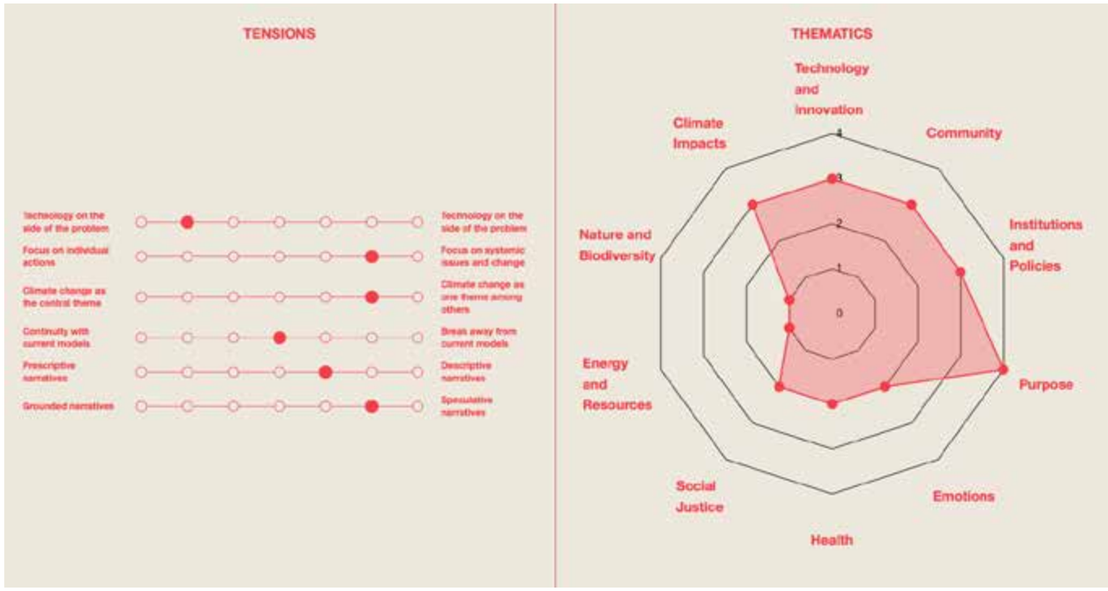
A unique theme that stands out is the emphasis on personal agency and the belief that individual or collective action can drive significant change, offering a more optimistic view of societal

transformation. Hope does not come from a passive belief in a positive future, it emerges from the participants' realization that, in a generally more difficult environment, they can together be forces of change.

• Getting over the tired utopia vs. Dystopia debate

While theoretically relevant, the classic distinction between probable and desirable futures did not prove very helpful in practice – especially during the early stages of the work.

- **Making the difference between "probable" and "desirable" is not as easy as it seems,** especially when thinking about the future where complexity and uncertainty make it more difficult to untangle knowledge, beliefs, and values. When talking about a post-growth future, is it because we "objectively" think that the environment will force this future on us ('probable'), or because we feel it will reconnect us to deeper sources of meaning and satisfaction ('desirable')? When refusing such a future, is it because we believe that technology will provide a way out of the environmental crises ('possible'), or because it feels too bleak to even contemplate ('undesirable')?… In our experience, these differences became more easy to discuss after the group creation than before.
- **Don't ask participants to produce "positive futures":** there is a strong pressure to generate positive images of the future. It is based on two assumptions that have not been verified in the project: first, that when left alone, people will tell overly dark ("dystopic") stories; second, that dark images of the future breed despair and anomy. What we found in practice was that when given freedom, participants mostly told stories in which, in a world where life is generally more difficult than today (not an unreasonable assumption), the protagonists were able to carve out spaces for change, solidarity and hope.
- **People will, and should, disagree on what is a desirable future.** Discussing desirable futures is in fact the essence of what politics is about. There is no reason why young people should agree about them more than their elders! The best that can be expected from the group effort should be to create images of the future where different values can cohabit, and in the reflexive phase at the end, to allow participants to debate their respective views of what is and isn't desirable in a constructive way.
  Whereas, when the constraint to tell positive futures weighs too heavily, participants will often oblige by producing bland stories where things magically go right, with no trade-off nor major difficulties, removing most of the complexity that is such a central concept of Futures Literacy.
- **It is more interesting, and more difficult, to help participants move away from the "tropes" coming out of the entertainment industry.** Young participants have all been exposed to movies, TV series, video games, novels and comics full of fancy technologies, savior heroes, "Big Brother" or Terminator-like technologies, etc. This is where an open co-creation process, mostly directed by the needs to produce a good (shareable) story and media production, can help: by giving space to the imagination of all participants, by letting characters and stories unfold in unexpected ways, by leaving space for fun, etc.



THE FUTURE OF THE TOGOLESE COASTLINE

COUNTRY(IES)
Togo

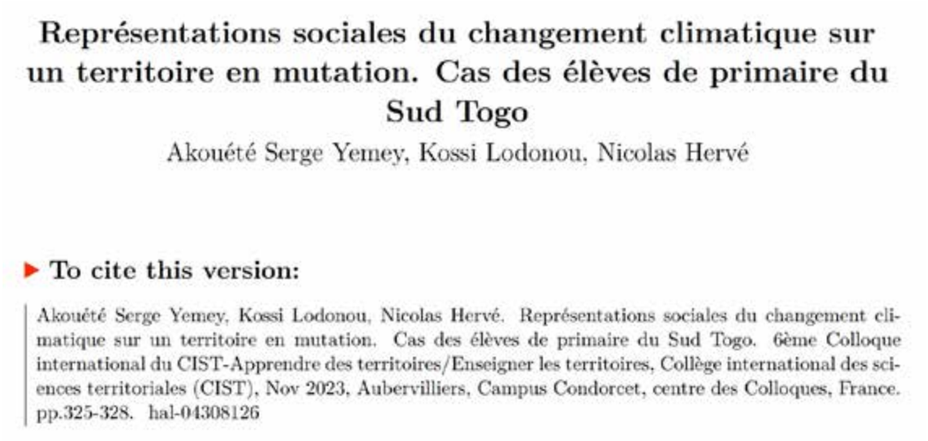
ORGANISATION(S)
Serge Yemey

YEAR(S)
2023–2025

LINK(S)
https://hal.science/hal-04308126/document

FUTURES AND CLIMATE CHANGE WITH PRIMARY SCHOOL PUPILS IN SOUTHERN TOGO

As part of his PhD project, Serge Yemey worked with CM1 and CM2 classes (4th and 5th grade equivalent) from three schools in Togo's coastal zone. The aim of his work was firstly to understand the representations of climate change held by these children aged 9 to 15, and then to set up various educational schemes to improve their relationship with climate risks. The area is already severely affected by rising sea levels.



Représentations sociales du changement climatique sur un territoire en mutation. Cas des élèves de primaire du Sud Togo

Akouété Serge Yemey, Kossi Lodonou, Nicolas Hervé

▶ To cite this version:

Akouété Serge Yemey, Kossi Lodonou, Nicolas Hervé. Représentations sociales du changement climatique sur un territoire en mutation. Cas des élèves de primaire du Sud Togo. 6ème Colloque international du CIST-Apprendre des territoires/Enseigner les territoires, Collège international des sciences territoriales (CIST), Nov 2023, Aubervilliers, Campus Condorcet, centre des Colloques, France. pp.325-328. hal-04308126

REPRESENTATIONS OF CLIMATE CHANGE: PRESENT, PAST AND FUTURE

What was first striking in the study of the children's representations of climate change was the naturalization of the consequences of climate change: the young people surveyed did not consider the anthropogenic actions involved in the climate crisis. Seeing this, Serge Yemey experimented with educational tools for a better understanding of climate change. It demonstrated the importance of education to face the impacts and risks of climate change.

Nonetheless, the students may not have scientific knowledge of climate change, they have experiential knowledge of it. Local knowledge also played an important role in the schemes set up as part of this study. The whole process was rooted in the territory. For example, one of the phases of work with the youngsters was oriented towards the past, gathering the collective memory of local residents, investigating the mitigation strategies developed locally, and describing the modifications of the territory.

Serge Yemey's work with these children has also involved multiple moments of work on futures through a variety of postures:

- **Imagining the future**

During an initial diagnostic phase, the children were invited to express their vision of the future and their conception of climate change through a questionnaire. This enabled an initial analysis of their images of the future.

- **Scenarios of the future**

Following an education session on futures, the young people set about fictionalizing their territory in the future through speeches and drawings. They proposed actions to adapt and mitigate climate change. The classes met as a whole group for a debate to choose the futures they collectively preferred.

- **Projects for the future**

Finally, they are in the process of translating their learning into action on collective projects on the territory. It is the moment for them to share their reflections on preferred futures with the other generations of inhabitants and start acting and "making" the future.

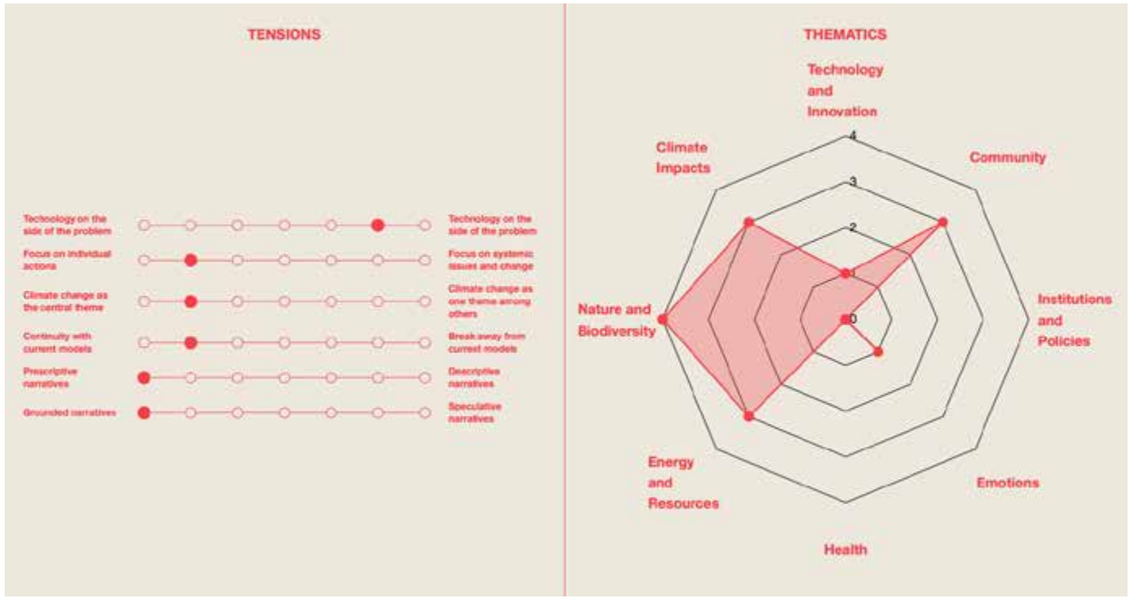
ON THE IMPORTANCE OF EDUCATION

This study takes place in a broader reflection about Education. We had the opportunity to talk with Serge Yemey about his experience.

He was impressed by the ability of students to imagine the future, to go beyond the collapse we all feel. They feel concerned and actively want to go towards a more ecological future. They also have a great capacity for imagination and are a great source of ideas.

Serge Yemey thinks we should give the students the place to create a new world, to experiment, in formal or non-formal educational settings.

He advocates for an education for choice: giving young people the opportunity to think for themselves. Being an educator is political, you need to give the students the keys to be actors in their lives and community, including critical thinking.



GÉNÉRATIONS F

COUNTRY(IES)
France

ORGANISATION(S)
Laboratoire urbain d'interventions temporaires, Zelda Soussan

YEAR(S)
2024–2025

LINK(S)
https://www.luit.fr/g%C3%A9n%C3%A9rations-f
https://www.calameo.com/read/0079924041af17e677323
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Générations F in Nancy – Photo credit: Rose Rondelez

"Representatives of the tribes of tomorrow have gathered in a square to dialogue with current generations. They are children and teenagers from different possible futures, each displaying signs of their new way of life in relation to the environment in which they live. Each tribe is different, bringing its own questions, offerings, thoughts and actions. To welcome them, the audience of the town where they arrive is brought together in an agora where words and emotions circulate in an authentic and democratic relationship between human beings of all ages." (translated from french)

GÉNÉRATIONS F IN A NUTSHELL

Générations F is a collaborative fictional and theatrical creation project involving 10 young people (aged between 10 and 18) from the same neighborhood or territory, embodying a generation of the future.

The creation of their universe takes place over the course of a week, during which they take part in a series of workshops, accompanied by a stage director (Zelda Soussan) and a choreographer (Rodrigo Vilarinho), as well as a costume designer, a sound designer, a set designer and a legal expert (called in to help the children develop certain technical aspects of their story).

Their generation lives 200 years into the future, in climatic conditions determined by a climatologist's estimates, with specific flora and fauna. The state of the earth's ecosystems is the starting point for their imagination.

After 5 days, a theatrical performance in front of an audience stages the meeting between the future generation, revealing its functioning, and the present. An exhibition of notes and design drawings also showcases the work carried out during the week.



Générations F in Nancy – Photo credit: Rose Rondelez

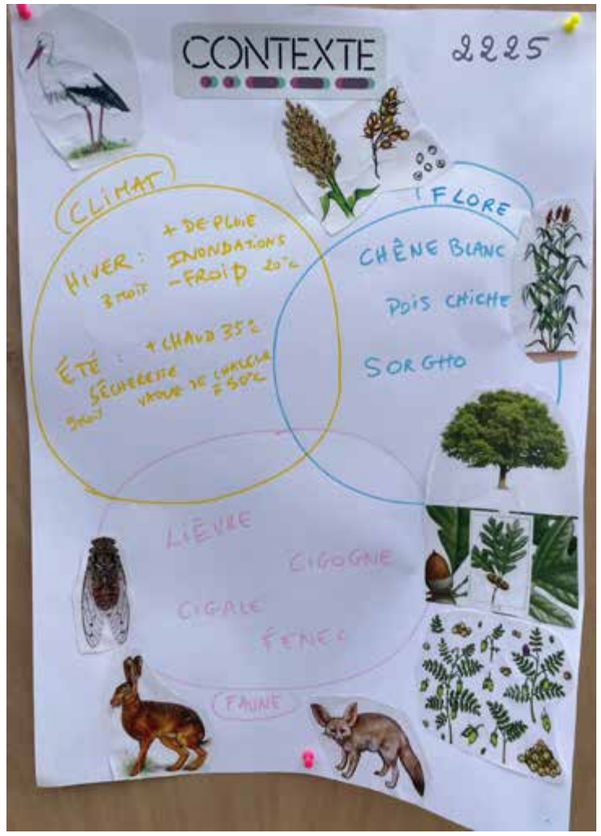
THE PROJECT'S GENESIS

The first intention of the project emerged when Zelda Soussan listened to the video of a class given by the jurist Isabelle Michallet : by Cité anthropocène (in french, automatic translation available). The lecture was about the legal possibilities and issues concerning the rights of the future generations. These rights exist in different countries but in France it is a concept really hard to grasp and handle.

This is where Zelda identified an opportunity for theater, whose role is to give a voice to the “the great absentees”. She wanted to develop a protocol to enable youngsters, which are or will be the future generations, to play and embody this concept.

> *“Theater creates this projection and gives a framework of belief in this created future generation.” Zelda Soussan (translated from french)*

Apart from the global, or at least national challenge, regarding the representation of future generations, the theatrical device tackles concrete political issues. The youngsters all come from the same territory and the synopsis is entangled in the local context. Consequently, the debates occurring during the final performance are real and showcase people’s concerns (for the youth and the public).



Générations F in Nancy – Photo credit: Rose Rondelez

YOUNG PEOPLE AT THE CENTER OF THE ARTISTIC PROJECT

Générations F, as an artistic protocol with youngsters, wants to give the place and enable young people to express themselves in the public space. The project also defends the creative right to imagine possible futures.

Hence, Zelda Soussan and the team of the LUIT, Laboratoire urbain d’interventions temporaires (or urban laboratory for temporary interventions), have the core intention to infiltrate reality and the political and mediatic spheres of the territory. For example, in Nancy, the children involved in the protocol were already invested in the metropolitan youth council. And they took the experience further by bringing the performance to the political representative of the city council.

> *“After a while, maybe, some people will say, yes, we’re going to listen to the children, we’re going to integrate them more into the current system.”*
> Marcel, Poukoïs tribe (translated from french)

Nonetheless, behind these great responsibilities, children are still children and the protocol needs special accommodations compared to a collaborative creation with adults.

First of all, children need a lot of breaks in between working sessions. These times are also great for them to get to know each other. The space of discussion between youngsters is really valuable and the relationships created are one of the main take-away points for the participants.

Another great adaptation is to transform some sessions into games. It is also really important, according to Zelda, to alternate manual, cerebral and physical exercises.

Finally, in order to break with the school system, it was really important for Zelda to get the youngsters to learn self-management skills. For them to handle the distribution of speaking times during the week, they, for example, had a cuddly toy of speech.



Générations F in Nancy – Photo credit: Rose Rondelez

A TRIBE LED BY CHILDREN

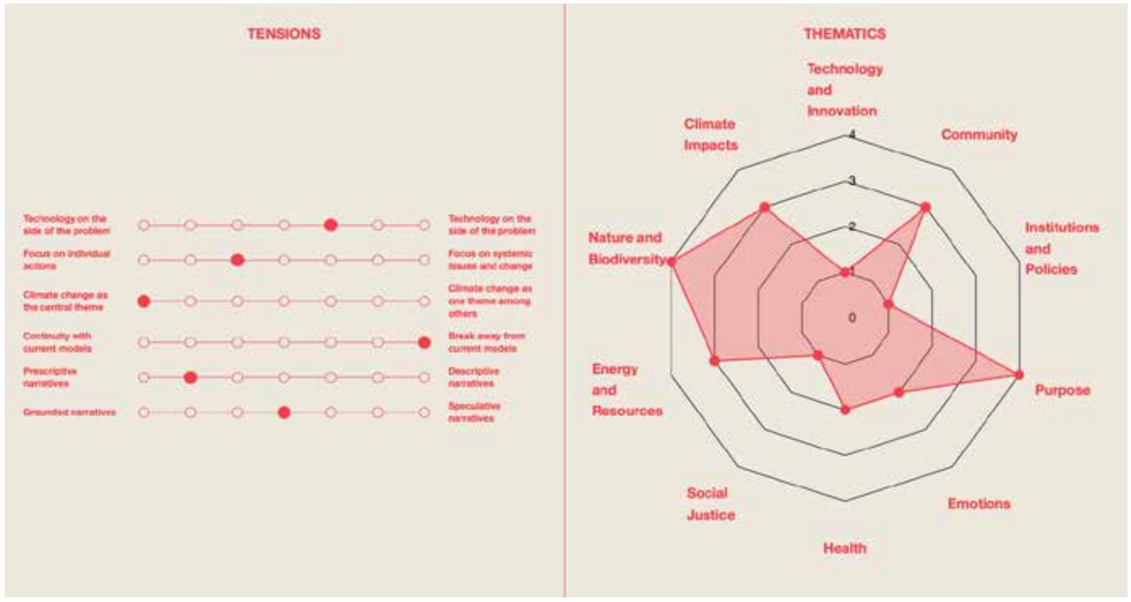
Since the representatives of the tribe visiting the humans of 2025 are children, the youngsters participating in the performance have to find a reason why they have been appointed as representative. It influences the writing of the story where children have most of the time an important place in the instances of their community.

They participate in the governance, can work earlier and have important jobs and can even lead revolutions.

> *“They have more imagination than adults, they’re smarter, they have more dreams.”* ***A member of the Fénicy tribe*** *(translated from french)*

Another important element coming out of these creations is the relationship with nature. For example, in Nancy, the Fénicy had several important connections with animals. They collaborated with storks (a local and emblematic animal) for shipping goods. They even invented a language to communicate with them called pointillism, taking the shape of a collaborative dance. They had pet bunnies. But they were also hunters of wild hares, overcrowding the region.

The relationship with plants was the focus of another tribe, in a different city: *“I’m in a tribe called the Mogonis. It’s 2123 and we’re making things that we stick on our faces so we can talk in Morse code with plants.” (translated from french)*



GOING GREEN, BY EDUPONICS

COUNTRY(IES)
South Africa

ORGANISATION(S)
Eduponics, Mikhail Accom

YEAR(S)
2020-ongoing

LINK(S)
https://www.eduponics.co.za/goinggreen



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WHAT

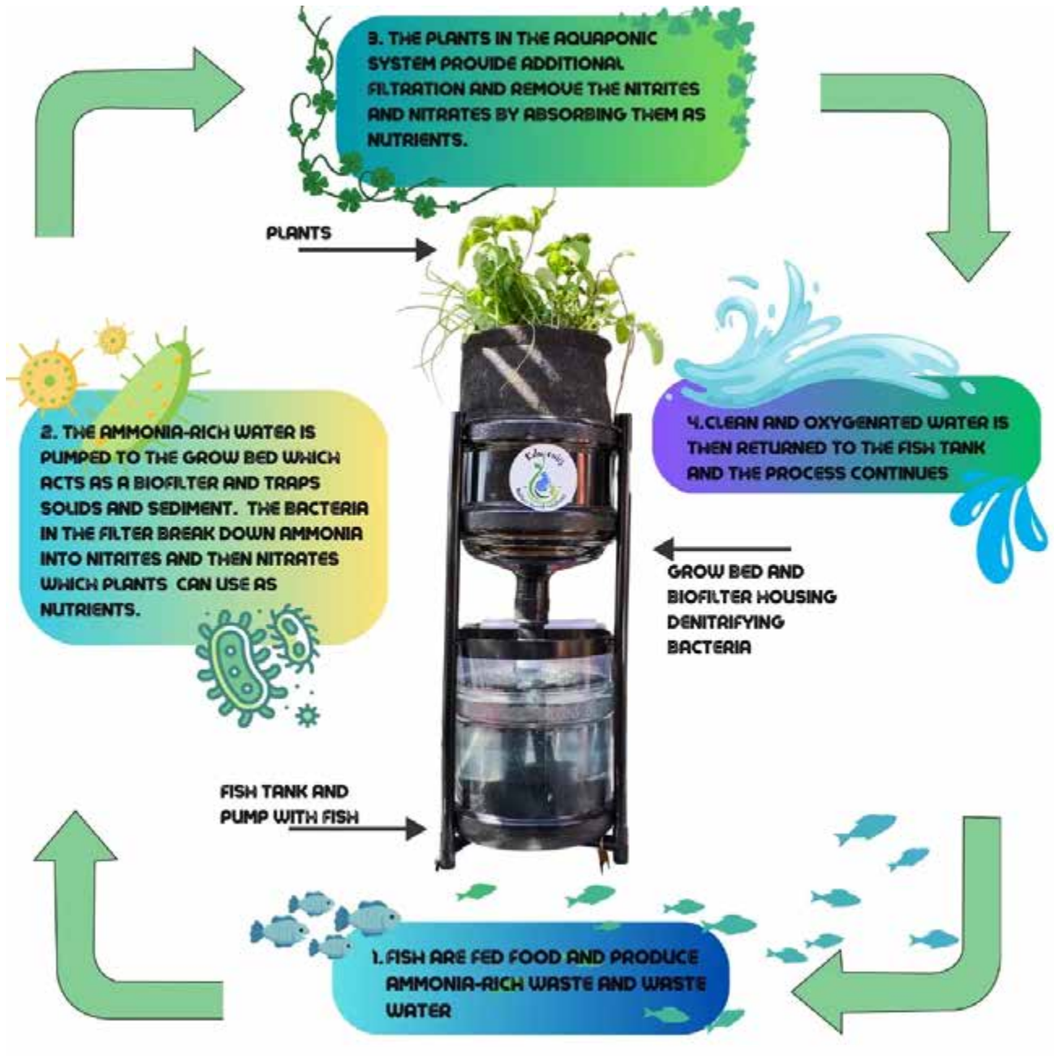
Eduponics is a social enterprise based in The Cape, South Africa. Its mission is to “integrate **aquaponics** into the education system, providing a hands-on way to teach students about STEM subjects like biology, chemistry, and environmental science.”

Extending out of a “Climate smart hub” on the campus of **the Cape Academy of Mathematics Science and Technology** (CAMST), Eduponics develops both tools and methods for aquaponic farming, and hands-on educational programs based on this practice, that it intends to deploy in schools throughout South Africa and beyond.

The originality of Eduponics – and its challenge – is that it pursues several simultaneous goals: develop the practice of aquaponics in the country using schools as starting points in their communities; make agriculture and foods systems more sustainable, both ecologically and economically; and support new, hands-on forms of education that combine various disciplines and involve critical thinking, teamwork, and entrepreneurship.

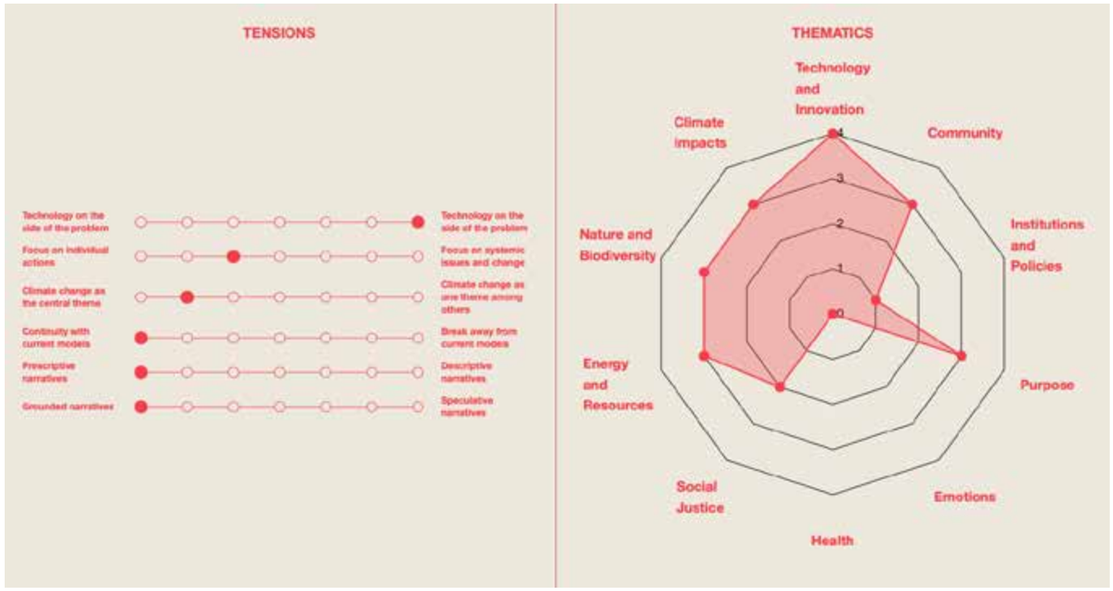
HOW

Eduponics provides various tools and resources. It has created a small aquaponic system to be used in schools for educational purposes. It trains educators on aquaponics, tailoring the training to their respective disciplines. In CAMST, it intends to develop a sustainable ecosystem combining agrivoltaic energy, aqua/hydroponics, black-soldier fly farming (to feed into the aquaponics system), and the commercialization of the resulting produce.



© 2025 Eduponics Go Green

Eduponics is one of the offshoots of **Climate Actions Now**, a nonprofit created by Robert Stephenson. Originally, CAN is an educational program happening in Africa and other continents, whose role is to engage kids in active learning through social entrepreneurship. Over a period of three months, the kids are tasked with organizing an event (mostly, music). In teams, they take one of the tasks related to the event, learning along the way across many disciplines, developing project-related skills and self-confidence… and making money, one-fourth of which is reinvested into a local climate-related project. Climate futures are not central to CAN, however some of the projects inspired by it, are, as is the case for Eduponics.



IMAGINING 2060

COUNTRY(IES)
Taïwan

ORGANISATION(S)
Jeanne Hoffman, Tamkang University, University of the Sunshine Coast

YEAR(S)
2019

LINK(S)
https://jfsdigital.org/articles-and-essays/vol-23-no-4-june-2019/imagining-2060-a-cross-cultural-comparison-of-university-students-perspectives/

STUDYING THE STUDENTS

This research project aimed to investigate deeper the link between images of the future and climate emotions, recently put forward in climate conversations. The aim was to investigate the current images of the environment and the desired narratives of the future shared by a cross-cultural group of undergraduate students at Tamkang University, Taiwan.

The information was gathered with a survey (that included drawing). **Causal Layered Analysis** (CLA) was also used to guide youngsters to look into the conventional conceptions of climate change, identify the stakeholders involved in possible climate actions, and question their place in it.

> *"The time horizon of 2060 was chosen to give the students enough runway to break from business-as-usual climate change visions, to something that could be remarkable and transformative."*

ANSWERS TO THE SURVEY

• Concerns about the current and future state of climate

The first two questions of the survey asked the students how they were viewing the current (2019) and future (2060) state of the environment and climate change.

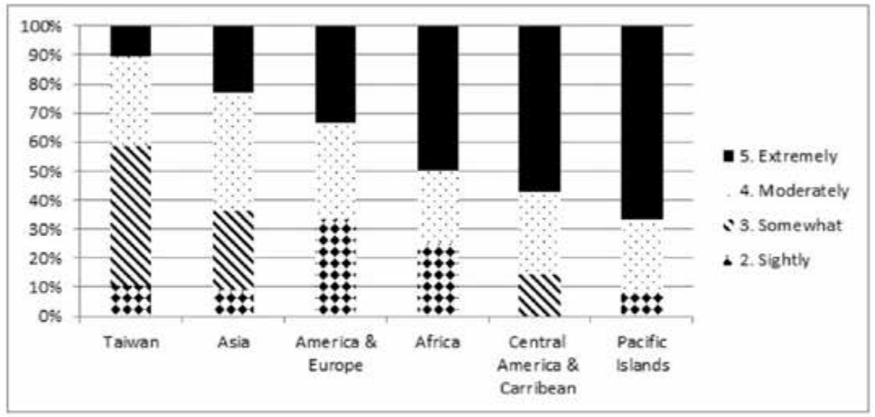


Figure 1. Cross-cultural comparison of level of concern for the current (2019) state of the environment

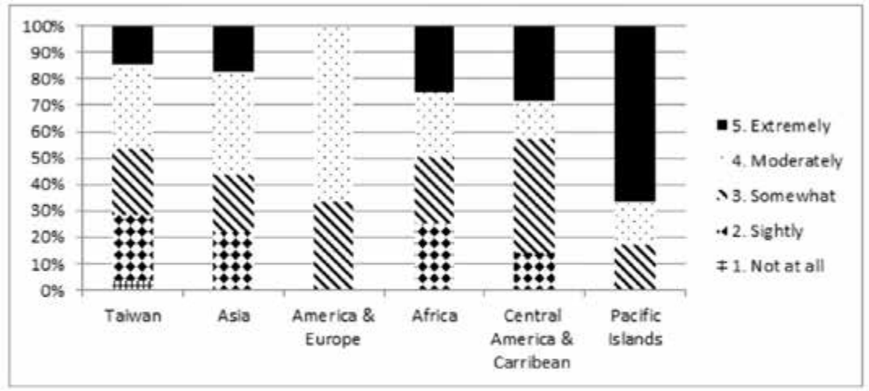


Figure 2. Cross-cultural comparison of level of concern for the future (2060) state of the environment

The CLA showed that the students were very concerned with the health of the planet and were quite sensitive to the feeling of urgency for climate action. Here are some of the metaphors expressed by them to describe it: *"moment of change", "now or never", "big hole everyone tries to mend", "elephant in the room", "a train that is halfway to hell".*

• Images of preferred futures for 2060

Answering, by writing and drawing, the question about their preferred futures for 2060, students elaborated a variety of narratives. The research team sorted them out in five categories: Altered City, Technology Improvements, Environmental Quality, Relocation and "Others" to gather all the non-fitting stories.

> *"The majority of students (49%; n=38) envisioned their preferred future as an altered city landscape that included solar panels, electric cars, wind farms and other uses of green technology."*

Being at the centre of the narratives or being tools to achieve these images of futures, technology and science are a major parts of student's preferred scenarios. Science was even perceived as having a greater role in the transformations to come than politicians : *"AI will be extremely well developed at that time", "more scientific discoveries and technologies will happen in the future" and "with advanced technology everything can be built to an advanced level".*

Some other students were less optimistic about the possibility of achieving their preferred scenarios. Most of these students came from the Pacific Islands and talked about their conflicting emotions concerning their homeland: *"Kiribati is one of the most vulnerable countries to climate change. Based on what I have seen and learned, my preferred future cannot happen unless we take action right away"; "With technology advancing everyday, homes surrounded by forest or by the ocean won't be an option. My country (Marshall Islands) is one of many that face the threat of sea level rising" and "advanced countries focus their research on electronic machines".*

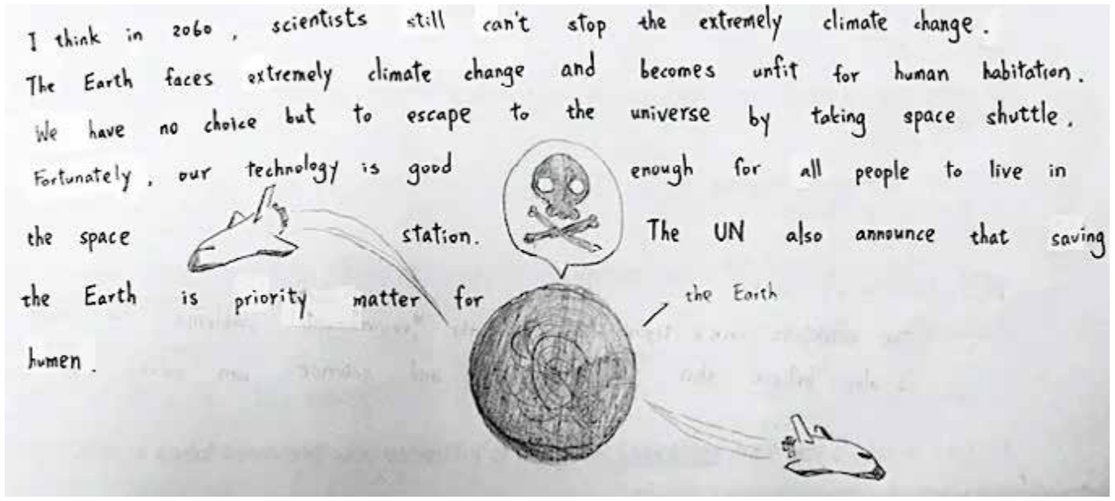
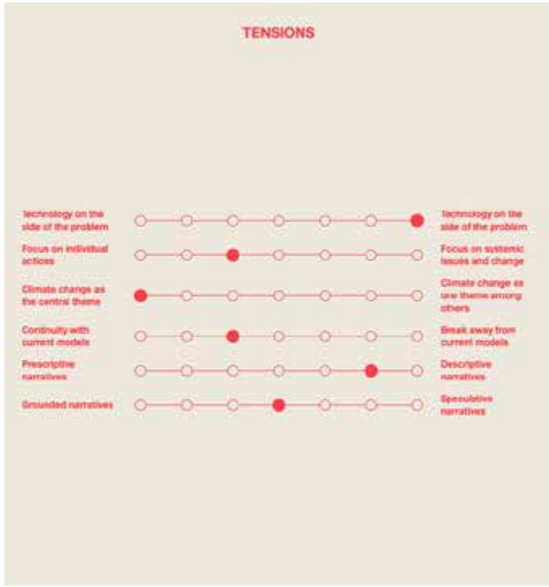
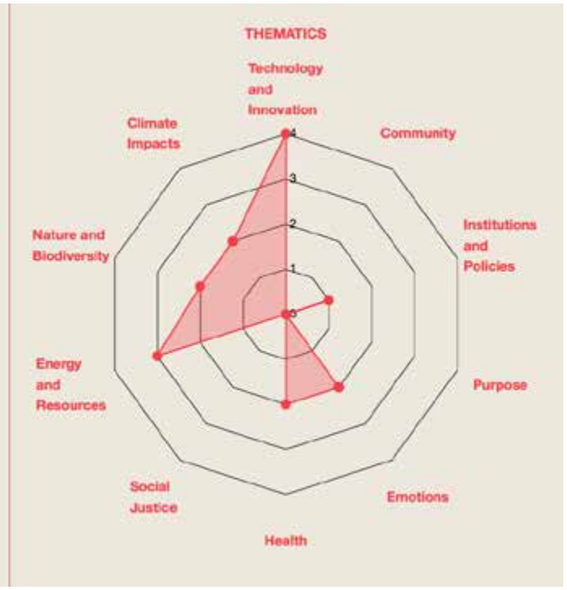


Image 4- A. Relocation





IMAGINING CLIMATE - JUST FUTURES

COUNTRY(IES)
Spain, Albania, Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Kosovo, Netherlands, Romania

ORGANISATION(S)
Oxfam Intermón, Altekio Iniciativas hacia la Sostenibilidad, La Xixa Teatre, the Green Hub (University of Twente), Save the Children, Woman Engage for Common Future, Makesense, CREDA onlus, Xarxa d'Economia Solidària

YEAR(S)
2024–2025

LINK(S)
https://www.instagram.com/imagining.futures/
https://futursimpossibles.org/2024/09/23/imagining-climate-just-futures-exportem-la-nostra-metodologia-en-la-construccio-descenaris-de-futur/



"The European "Imagining Climate-Just Futures" project encourages citizens to imagine the climate-just future they want and take action to achieve it "
From the project's Instagram

A MAJOR EUROPEAN INITIATIVE

Imagining Climate-Just Futures is a European project developing and supporting a wide range of activities giving space to citizens to reflect on climate futures. The ambition of this initiative is to engage more than 3,400 European citizens in over 50 activities and workshops of various kinds (awareness-raising, discussions, policy training, local actions, artistic and creative propositions…)

The consortium intends to achieve this goal through three main levers of change: activism, community and culture.

Among the targets of this broad project, young activists have a special place. The intent is to provide them with spaces of discussions, tools for navigating the world of policies.

THE CATALAN BRANCH: RUBÈN SURIÑACH PADILLA, XARXA D'ECONOMIA SOLIDÀRIA DE CATALUNYA, ECOHUB

We had the chance to discuss with Rubèn Suriñach Padilla who is involved in the Imagining Climate-Just Futures project. With XES (Xarxa d'Economia Solidària), they shared their knowledge concerning the facilitation of participatory workshops to build future scenarios, notably based on the **Futurs imPossibles** campaign. They also organized training sessions to help their European partners build up their skills in order to confidently develop similar projects in other countries, other languages.

Out of this process, they updated one of their previous methodological guides to enable people to spontaneously use the method and allow for even broader dispersion.



Building Participatory Future Scenarios for a Socioecological Transition Methodological guide 2024 Version

Construcció participativa d'escenaris de futur per la transició ecosocial, Guia metodològica, Versió 2024

The guide includes four participatory methods for future scenarios building:

- **Scenario planning through drivers of change:** identifying two major drivers of change for the future, participants form a grid of four quadrants with four different futures to explore and detail. They are then invited to identify the desirable and undesirable parts of each one and build strategies to favor the preferable futures.
- **The Three Horizons model:** working here on a single scenario, participants depict three different horizons representing the undesirable present issues (Horizon 1), the desirable dynamics for socioecological transition (Horizon 3), and the path between the two, comprising weak signals of the present (Horizon 2).
- **Appreciative gaze approach:** this exercise proposes to build an hopeful scenario of a future, based on a micro-utopia of the present: "What if we look at some current experiences and movements and project them with hope towards the future? What if, instead of pointing out their limits, biases and shortcomings, we imagined the potentialities they could deploy in favourable political, economic and cultural contexts?"
- **Chronicles of the Great Transition:** this last method makes the participants travel to a desirable future where they will create an extract of a newspaper describing how the Great-Transition happened in spite of all the challenges that were on the way.

WELCOME TO ECOLOGICAL REALISM

> *"We deal with more news every day related to extreme weather events, the cost-of-living crisis and water scarcity. What was terrible speculation about the future until now has become a harsh reality. This is what we call ecological realism. It's now more crucial than ever to prepare for potential situations arising from the socioecological crisis."*

Ecological realism is set as the initial diagnosis sparking the need for more scenario planning exercises to take place everywhere with more and more people. It is also a diagnosis the facilitators have to convey to the participants, and that has to be taken into account during the workshop and the imaginative phases.

But the real goal, for XES and the Imagining Climate-Just Futures initiative, is not to create new narratives but to bring back collective dialogue to share the hopes and fears between citizens, and build grounded utopias.

Based on the scientific forecast, ecological realism-scenario planning methods particularly need to focus on *"the consequences of climate change, the depletion of fossil fuels and critical resources to provide renewable energy and the impact of biodiversity loss."*

TO BE CONTINUED

For the moment, the guidelines for these utopian-thinking workshops have been sent to the partners in all the 5 countries participating in the "Imagining Climate-Just Futures" initiative. Over the next months, they are going to pilot the tools, facilitate various workshops and collect multiple pieces of evidence and testimonies of these discussions.

There are consequently no final results to be published yet.

Rubèn and his colleagues are organizing workshops with different youth organizations (scout movements for example) in Catalonia. Apart from facilitating workshops with youngsters, they also help the organizations build their strategic plan based on scenario planning, for them to pursue the utopian-thinking activities on their own.



L'Optimista

12 . 3 . 2045 EDUCACIÓ, CULTURA I LLEURE núm. 3

No era depressió, era capitalisme

Les dues principals farmacèutiques productores de psicofàrmacs tanquen per la persistent falta de demanda dels seus productes

Després d'anys de baixada en la venta de psicofàrmacs, Xdestruir i Astrament tanquen per no poder-se sostenir econòmicament. Abans de la Gran Transició, els governs havien seguit subvencionant directa i indirectament aquestes farmacèutiques, però el canvi polític va posar-hi final.

Han estat dècades complidades per a la salut, destacant la pandèmia del 2020 i l'alça de l'ecoansietat dels anys 20 i 30. Així i tot, fruit de la col·lectivització dels malestars i la gran feina que s'ha fet a nivell social i polític en la millora de les condicions laborals, amb mesures de mitigació i adaptació a la situació climàtica i amb el foment i millora d'espais naturals comunitaris ha permès una decaiguda exponencial del consum de psicofàrmacs. També han estat fonamentals les mesures d'habitatge i regeneració d'espais verds a les ciutats.

Entrevista a la representant de l'associació Salut Comunitària i Preventiva:

• **Com valores la notícia del tancament d'Astrament i Xdestruir?** *Molt contentes perquè és la prova que les polítiques públiques en salut mental han funcionat. L'horitzó d'una salut mental que ja no és un tema.*

• **Sou conscients de la pèrdua de llocs de treball que significa?** *Entenem que és una pèrdua temporal de llocs de treball però també una oportunitat per crear-ne de nous més harmònics amb la vida. Destruir és necessari per crear.*

*L'equip de redacció ha intetat entrevistar els directius de les dues farmacèutiques però no han volgut atendre el rotatiu.

Per fi! Acord històric en l'aprovació de la jornada laboral de 20 hores pàg. 4

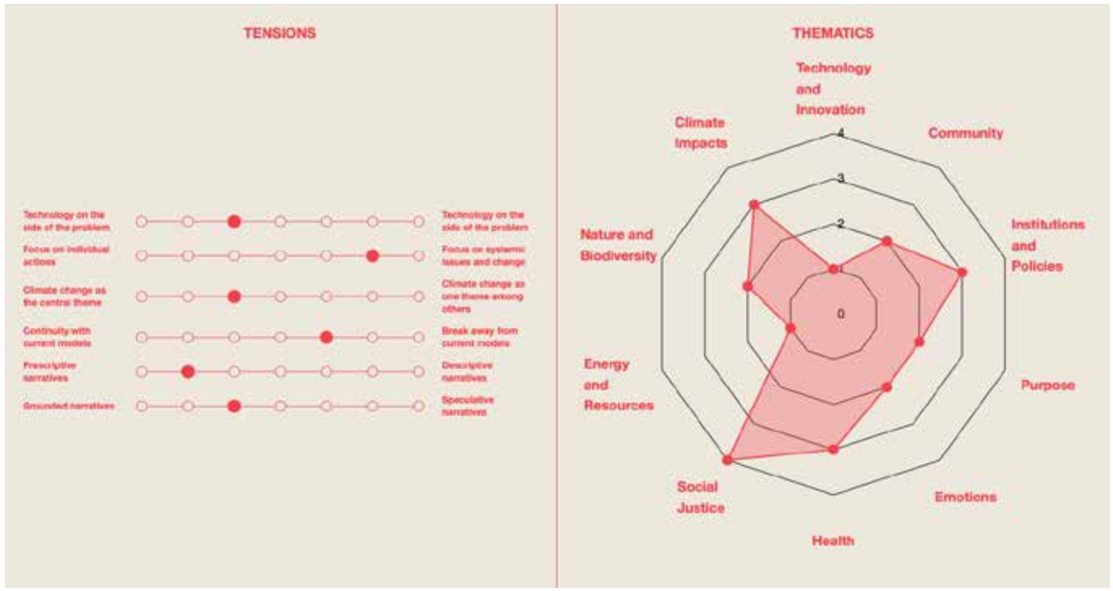
Els ànecs de la Ricarda hem recuperat el nostre espai pàg. 5

Èxit absolut de la temporada 2045 del programa televisiu «Permacultura... a casa teva o a casa meva?» pàg. 11

Ja no queda cap bloc de pisos en mans d'entitats bancàries! pàg. 12

L'Optimista, núm. 3

Here is a newspaper frontpage created with the methodology “Chronicles of the Great Transition” (not specifically with youngsters). The main topics coming out of this narrative are: the pharmaceutical industry and its capitalist downfall, the shortening of the working day, the transformation of an airport into a natural reserve, the nationalisation of housing stock and so on.



IMAGINING FUTURES / FUTURE IMAGININGS YOUTH-LED CREATIVE HERITAGE WORK IN UGANDA

COUNTRY(IES)
Uganda

ORGANISATION(S)
Cardiff University, Gulu University, Refugee Law Project (Makerere University), National Memory and Peace Documentation Centre (NMPDC)

YEAR(S)
2020–2022

LINK(S)
https://doi.org/10.5871/jba/011s3.225



The British Academy

Journal of the British Academy, **11(s3)**, 225–247
https://doi.org/10.5871/jba/011s3.225
Posted 2 November 2023

Imagining futures/future imaginings: creative heritage work with young people in Uganda

Kate Moles, Will Baker, Francis Nono, Daniel Komakech, Arthur Owor, Florence Anek, Catriona Pennell and Jennifer Rowsell

Abstract: Drawing on research in Uganda, we describe our project in which we invited young people to think about their lives in ways that opened up creative and hopeful imaginaries of the future. We understand future imaginary work to be a significant part of memory work. An important component in the ways we think about the past is imagining the futures it ties to. We wanted the idea of the future to be something our young participants constructed together, in dialogue and iteratively, so that the project had a sense of collaboration and shared interests. To do so we developed the idea of a touring exhibition through which multiple voices, positions, understandings and values could be accommodated side by side. The article contributes to scholarly and public debates about reparations and memorialisation, particularly by showing the crucial role young people can play in articulating more just futures.

Keywords: youth futures, creative methods, imagined futures, Uganda

This participatory arts-based research project engaged young people across four conflict-affected districts in Uganda—Kitgum, Kasese, Amuria, and Adjumani—to explore how the past, present, and future intersect in their everyday lives. Conducted during the COVID-19 pandemic, the project emphasized youth agency, creativity, and community memory in a society still shaped by the legacies of colonialism, war, and displacement.

Rather than focusing solely on trauma or victimhood, the project foregrounded "future imaginary work" as a way to deepen youth engagement with heritage and transitional justice. Through drawing, poetry, storytelling, drama, object curation, and collective exhibitions, young people reframed difficult pasts as starting points for imagining more peaceful, just futures.

> *"We wanted the idea of the future to be something our young participants constructed together, in dialogue and iteratively, so that the project had a sense of collaboration and shared interests." (p. 225)*

METHODOLOGY

- Youth Advisory Boards were formed in each district to co-design the process, guide ethical practices, and define meaningful forms of expression.
- Creative outputs included poems, visual art, stories, music, objects, and proverbs, rooted in everyday life.
- A touring exhibition moved from region to region, inviting young participants to add their work, react to others' contributions, and discuss shared challenges and futures.
- Material memory objects,such as hoes, pangas, bones, and spears,were both reminders of war and symbols of endurance and transformation.

> *"These objects from conflicted pasts were used by young people to describe 'futures-already-in-the-making', the steps were already in place for the futures to emerge as they would like." (p. 237)*

EXAMPLES OF IMAGINED FUTURES

Young participants envisioned futures grounded in peace, unity, and opportunity, yet remained honest about doubt and hardship:

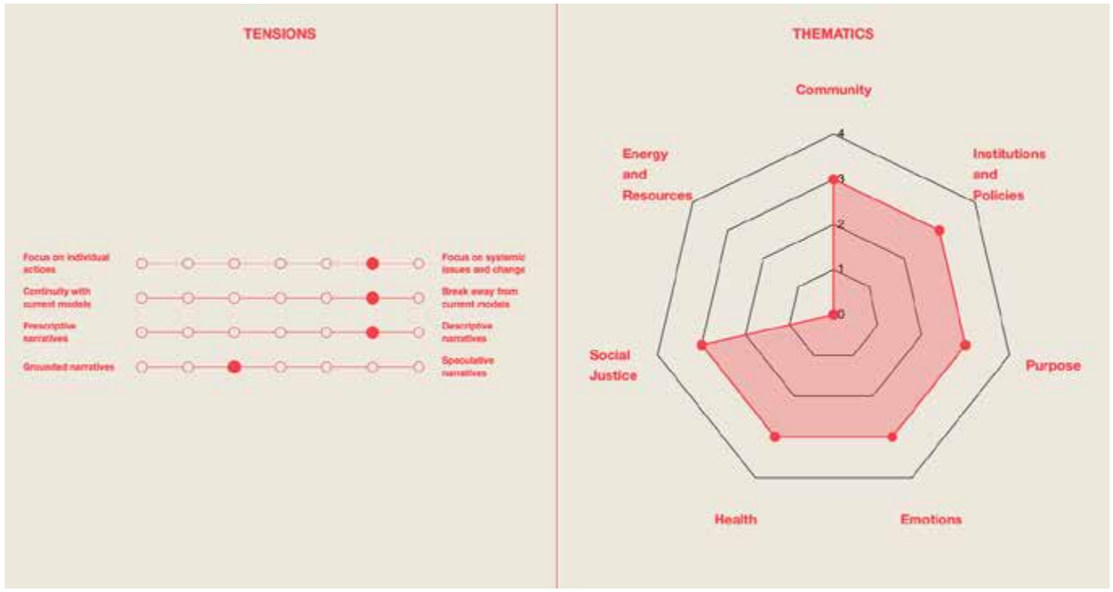
- Peace through sport and friendship, *"If people are in sports they forget about their bad things when they are idle, leading to a better performance of peace and unity." (p. 242)*
- Youth as communicators and educators: *"If I become a journalist in the future, I know if there is anything wrong, I can help the community and my country. I can speak it out." (p. 243)*
- Reconciliation through selective remembrance: *"Let's forget the mistakes… and aim to change the world to be a peaceful world, not again a world of conflict." (p. 241)*

Many youth emphasized building the future through dialogue, shared memory, and practical community efforts such as education and reforestation. The project invited reflection not only on what should be remembered, but also on what might need to be let go in order to move forward.

OUTCOMES

- Expanded understanding of youth heritage work as active, future-facing, and situated in local contexts.
- Democratization of memory work, disrupting national narratives with vernacular, embodied experiences.
- Creation of living archives of art, memory objects, and dialogues reflecting Uganda's diverse post-conflict realities.
- Strengthened youth civic voice in transitional justice processes, often dominated by adults or state institutions.

> *"Young people have an important part to play in processes of 'rememoration'… digesting the formal, state-led education they receive and placing it alongside the memories of the past that they have been exposed to within their local connections." (p. 240)*



IMAGINING THE FUTURE FOR TRANSFORMATION

COUNTRY(IES)
Netherlands

ORGANISATION(S)
University of Utrecht's Urban Studio, Josephine Chambers, Jonas Torrens

YEAR(S)
2023-ongoing

LINK(S)
https://www.uu.nl/en/research/urban-futures-studio/initiatives/imagining-the-future-for-transformation

HOW

Imagining the Future for Transformation is an elective course for Master's students. In this highly participatory course, "students embark on a ten-week journey as members of the social movement – 'Creative Collectives for Utopia' (CC4Utopia), which serves as a critical and imaginative friend for transformative societal initiatives. CC4Utopians learn how to become both an archaeologist and co-designer of the future:

- *An archaeologist in the sense of uncovering the politics and dynamics that have narrowed what futures we see as plausible, or even possible.*
- *A co-designer through their collaboration with diverse societal groups to generate approaches that can convincingly challenge the status quo and help expand our imagination and action towards more just and sustainable futures."*

About 40 students take part in the course each year. They mostly come from the university's Sustainable Development program, however some students also come from Innovation, Sustainable Business, etc.

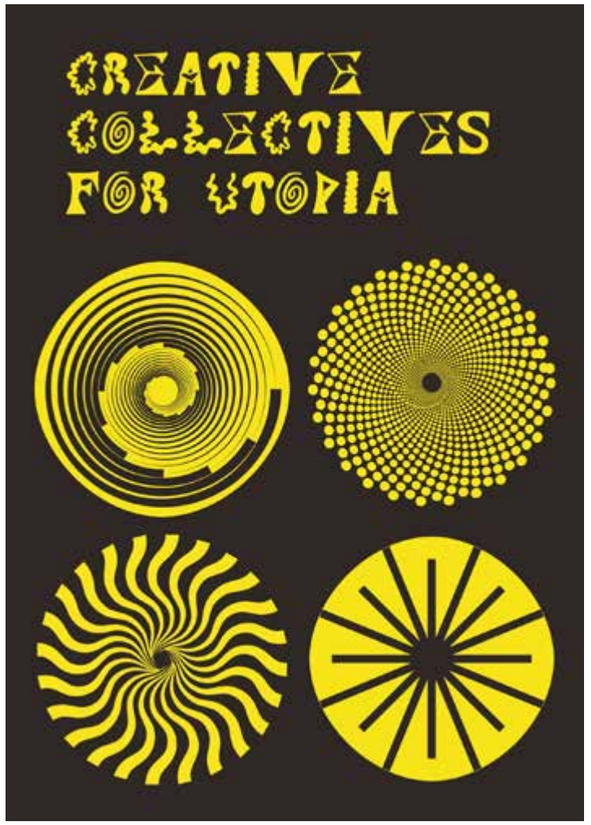


Josephine Chambers, who designed and leads the course, analyzed the first session's experience, in 2023, **in a long blog post**. However, the course continuously evolves based on the previous years' experience. What follows is based on this paper as well as an interview with Josephine Chambers.

• Creating the space for critical and creative work

The course kicks off during a meeting that takes place in one of Utrecht's creative spaces, outside of the university. The goal is to create a friendly, interactive space where students can both share, and come to accept the diversity of perspectives in the class.

Students have been asked to come with something that describes "how they picture the future". Some came with a text, or a poem, others with a drawing, one with a diorama. The first takeaway from this is to understand that one can think about the future in very different ways, and on very different scales (e.g., from personal to global). While these images of the future are being shared, students are invited to move in the room, depending on how close or far away they feel towards each image. Those closest or furthest away are asked to explain why. To move beyond superficial differences, another exercise encourages small group discussions between students who found themselves in different corners of the room, often in relation to different academic backgrounds. On topics that can get very emotional, the goal, at this stage, is to encourage human-to-human interactions, with no need to perform in front of others.



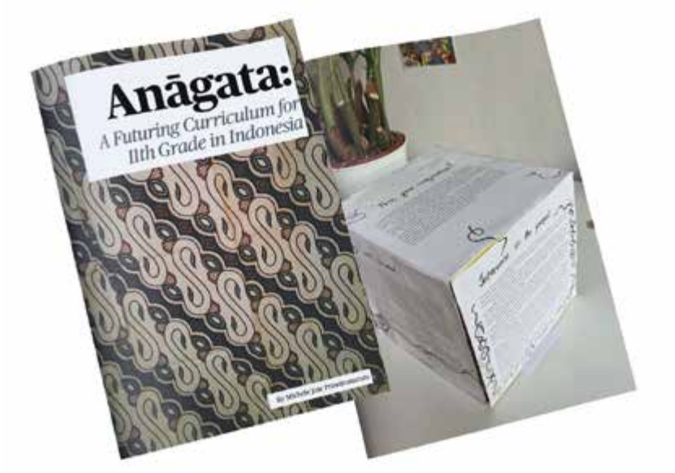
• The “creative collective for utopia”

In the spirit of encouraging critical reflection while generating solidarity among them, students are welcomed as members of the university-society boundary movement the “Creative Collectives for Utopia” (CC4Utopia).

After the initial session, one half of the course is dedicated to introducing students to both theory as well as case studies. However, the more traditional lectures are interspersed with many experiential moments and exercises: “opinion lines” along which students stand to see their differences on a certain question; interrogate the coloniality behind a personal object that matters for each student; mapping the trip from home to university and reflecting on what is and is not on the map; collages from magazines to describe decolonial futures, etc.

Aside from not overloading students with content, one of the goals of these exercises is, in Josephine Chambers’ words, *“to give students space where they can feel creative, where they can express their authentic emotions and their normative opinions on things, and navigate those differences together.”*

The outcome of this first part are “Utopian Guides”, where each student distills what they learned about how people can think about, or engage with, the future, using creative forms with an audience in mind. A former high school teacher from Indonesia imagined a curriculum on futures for Indonesian students; others explored the power of music in processes of imagination; one student analyzed what dominant imaginaries were expressed in past issues of National Geographic.



The initial group, in 2023, also came up with a set of six “principles” that they see as *“vital to consider in any initiative that seeks to reimagine and reshape the future”*: Plural process (effective participation and diversity), Decolonial justice (questioning dominant narratives and power relations to liberate imagination), Generative temporality (connecting past and future), Creative modes (to diversify modes of thinking as well as perspective and generate “compelling alternative imaginations of how the world could be otherwise”), Prefigurative power (looking for tangible and experiential futures, beyond pure imagination), and (Self)reflexive positionality (reflecting on how peoples’ background, experiences and identities shape preferred futures and ways of futuring).

• Engaging with real-world creative initiatives

In the second part of the course, students collaborated with real-life organizations that, as part of their work, engaged with imagination and the future in creative ways. Some were found close by, in the Netherlands, and others in Africa, Asia or Latin America. There were several challenges there. One was to avoid extractivism, just asking projects for their time while not knowing whether or how they would benefit from the students’ work. Part of the answer was to compensate them upfront for the time spent with the students. The other was for the students to find the right “distance” in order to be both appreciative and critical towards the projects, particularly for projects that come from a culture that they know little about: how, in the face of an ambitious, well-led, deeply grounded project, to be more than just supportive, but develop a reciprocal relation?

In the case of **West Papua’s “Green State Vision”**, the students came up with a list of questions that would help the organization further the different ways in which they imagined this future. This year, the students are designing situations that can open up space for imagination in the context of crises of the imagination, such as the deadlock between farmers and the Dutch government, and the harmful hidden impacts of the EU’s green energy transition.

Each year’s course ends with the publication of a booklet entirely produced by the students: **“Creatives Collective for Utopia”** (2023;pdf), **“Visions of Better Worlds”** (2024; pdf).

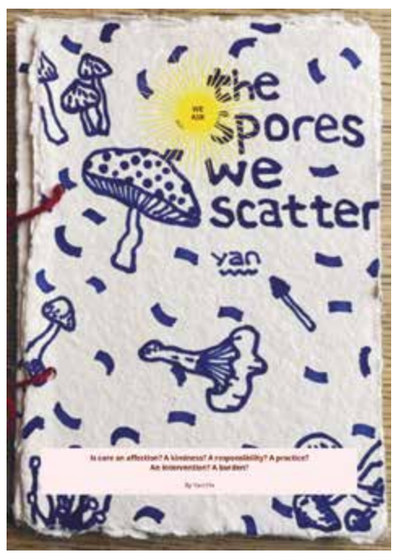
WHAT

According to Josephine Chambers, the students' feedback is very positive. However, the experience also taught the teachers a few things.

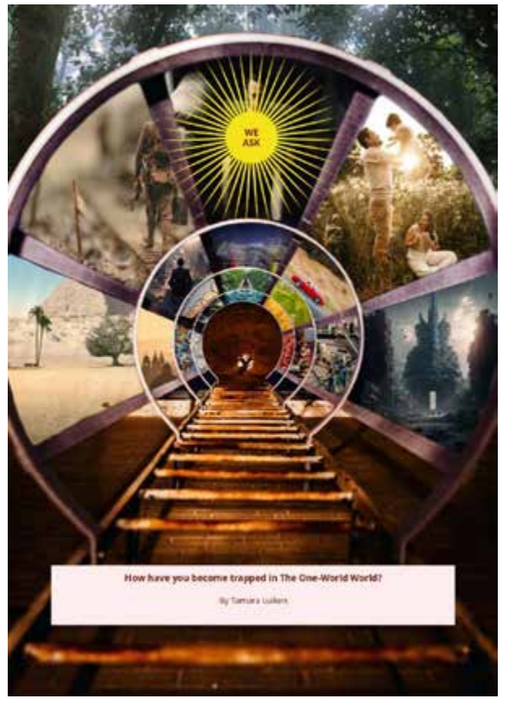
Students expressed how much they appreciated having room for creative expression. Some were, however, anxious about how to approach the openness of creative assignments and still achieve a high grade Over time, most students came to appreciate this freedom of expression that is not so typical of academic assignments.



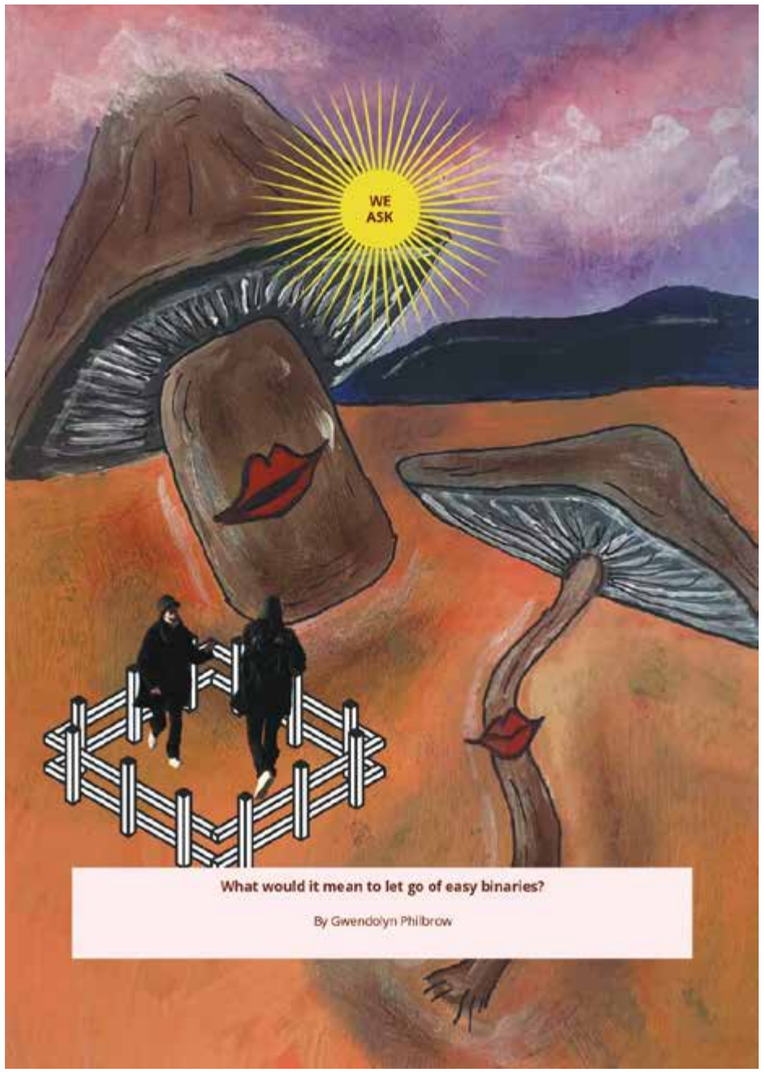
One important issue from the start has been to deal with the powerful emotions that the course's topic evoked within many of the students. These emotions are not just intellectual: young students may rightly feel, or even have experienced, that their personal future is as threatened, or limited, as the collective future.

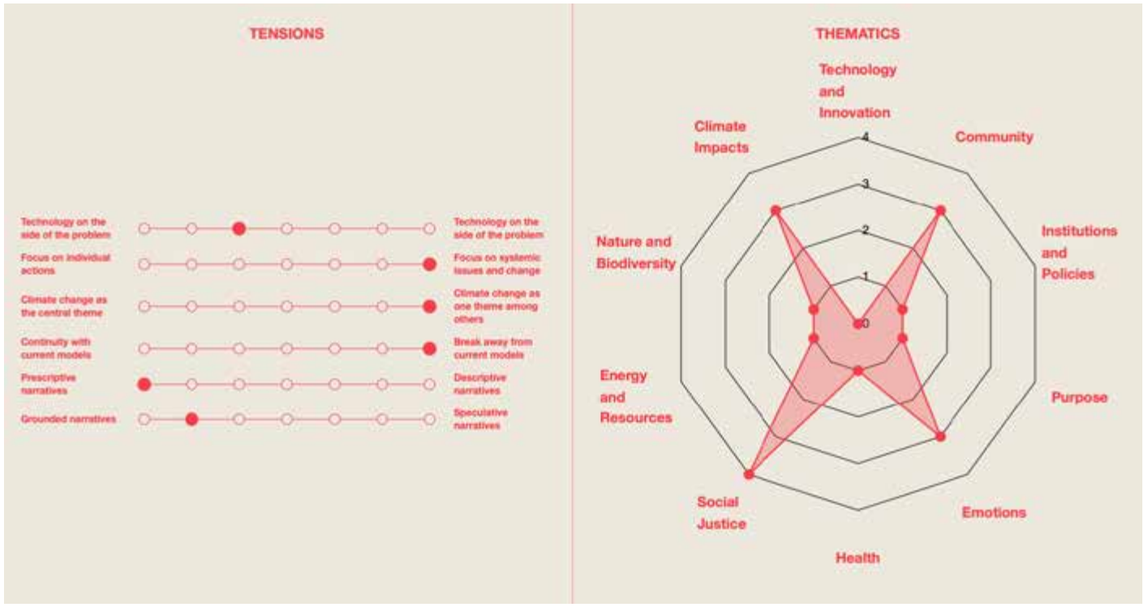


Josephine Chambers mentions two distinct, although related, factors connected to these emotions: certainty, and polarization. Certainty would refer to the quick identification of what the causes of the problems are, who is responsible, and who can or cannot be part of the solution. Such certainty, though often born out of legitimate anger, can shut down the possibility to explore different possibilities.



Polarization, which can quickly appear within the class itself, could make it difficult for people harboring differing views on one or several issues to interact, evolve, and be open to different perspectives. Part of the pedagogical work was to deal with these potential issues, seeing them both as learning opportunities, and as moments of discomfort that should be navigated with care.





`The course also grapples with the question of: is it the content (what is said about possible, desirable, etc. futures), or the process (how one creates space and capabilities for people to imagine)? One way to ease this tension is, in Chambers' words, to *"embed futures work into real social movements that are actively trying things out in the real world",* rather than just dreaming futures in safe, privileged settings. This helps students learn that it is important to treat the content and process as intertwined.

JUSTFUTURES

COUNTRY(IES)
Portugal

ORGANISATION(S)
Anabela Carvalho, Maria Fernandes-Jesus, Carla Malafaia, Mehmet Ali Üzelgün, Daniela Ferreira da Silva, Tânia R. Santos, Dora Rebelo, Ana Garcia, Juliana Diógenes-Lima

YEAR(S)
2021–2025

LINK(S)
https://justfutures.pt/en/home-en/
https://brochure.justfutures.pt/en/#p=1

AN ACADEMIC RESEARCH PROJECT

> *"The JustFutures project will contribute to understanding young people's agency and political imaginaries. It will do so by mapping existing collective action groups, analysing narratives and media(ted) discourses of climate futures and examining, through extensive field work, young people's imaginaries of climate futures."*

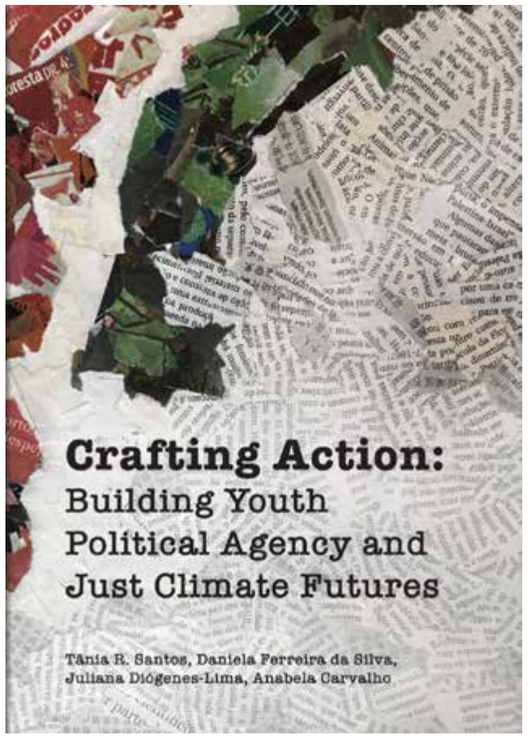
This research project, studying Portuguese youth's involvement in climate and political action, is anchored in the context of the recent mobilisations of youngsters, in movements such as Friday for Futures.

This large analysis of organizations and discourses aims to understand the different ways young people envision and think about their place in these debates and in the transformations of society. Thus, one part of the research is to understand the vision, the imaginaries of the future that they have.

To gather the necessary information, the research team worked in cooperation with different activist groups in Portugal. It was, according to the project managers, both one of the most interesting parts and one of the most difficult steps of the process. There were issues of trust to work on with young activists. They also don't have a lot of time to dedicate to the research, since they are already volunteering in their organizations. Thus, arranging meetings was hard work.

But, according to Anabela Carvalho and Maria Fernandes-Jesus, who we interviewed, it is important to bridge research work with the community. This effort was necessary and enabled a lot of learning occasions on both sides.

#CRAFTINGACTION



• Crafting Action: Building Youth Political Agency and Just Climate Futures

Another section of the JustFutures project is dedicated to enhancing youth' skills "to envision, plan and build just futures." For example, "Crafting Action" aimed at creating a space of collaborative exploration and creativity to discuss young people's political agency.

Young people between 13 and 32 years old were involved in these workshops, taking place in Lisbon and Porto.

> *"We decided to bring together young people with varying levels of activism experience, from highly involved to those with little to none, to collaborate on achieving this goal. It was an opportunity for young people to experiment with new ways of relating to different, and sometimes conflicting, perspectives while building a project together. Groups of participants were asked to create a communicative product with a clear objective: to elevate the voices of young people in the climate change debate, and, as consequence, to envision a society where young people have an active role in constructing just climate futures. As a source of inspiration, we mentioned various creation possibilities, including zines, letters from the future, manifestos, podcasts, among many others."*

Starting with creative processes, focusing on imagination, the workshops lead to many reflections on how to act and enable to kick start some projects.

“The word ”craft“ took on special significance in this process – creating was like working with clay: hands-on, tactile, and a powerful vehicle for meaning-making.”



Crafting Action: Building Youth Political Agency and Just Climate Futures

A MULTIPLICITY OF NARRATIVES

The research project unveiled a plurality of political imaginaries among the youth climate organizations. Some are more attached to governmental plans and processes while other groups advocate for more transformative and radical changes.

> *“Francisca: Dear young human beings of 2024, I am Francisca Sousa, and I come from the year 2100, where Earth is at peace. This is just one of the many possible futures available to you. Today, 100% of our energy production is clean and renewable, which means it does not emit polluting gases into the atmosphere. We’ve been living this way since 2068, with this transformation being gradual and accelerating quickly from 2025 onwards. Basically, everything we touch generates energy-our walking, gym activities, and even public transport, which generates its own energy through friction.”*
>
> – Excerpt from a Letter from the Future

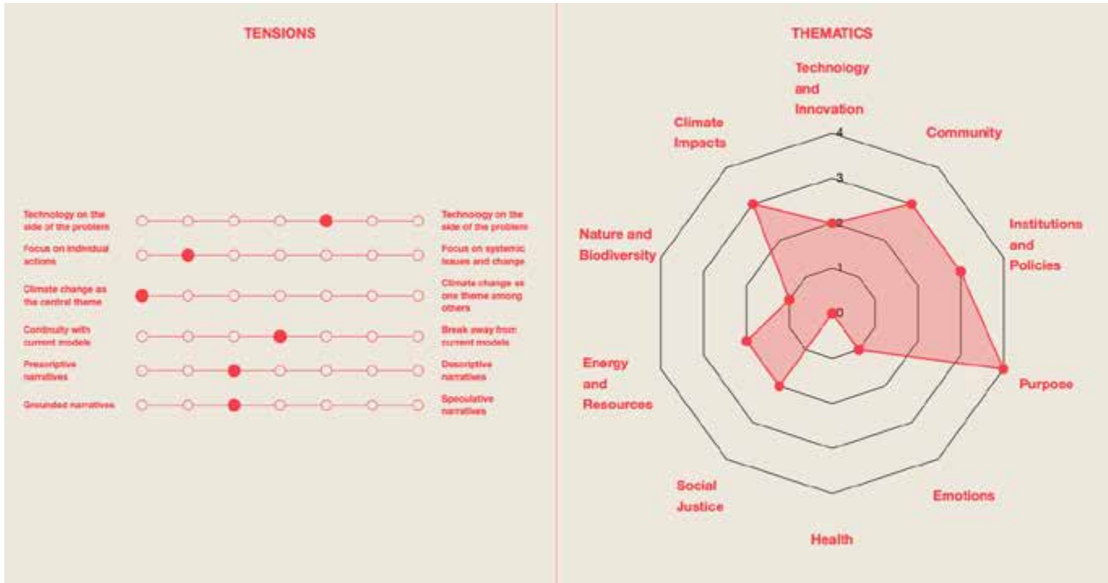
On both sides, a more important place for youngsters is a key element. They want to be heard and taken into account.

Another common issue is the importance of reliable information. Communication tools, on social networks particularly, were imagined and discussed during the workshops to spread knowledge and enable a more massive involvement of the population.

> *“Tackling the issue of floods in Brazil, Over the Waters is a storyboard for a post on TikTok to create awareness to the issue of increasingly recurrent and severe flooding. The video stressed the emotional and lived experience of the flood as a strategy to promote empathy and to entice political interest and involvement. Combining the video with a letter from the future and an invitation for young people to join public assemblies, they offered a call to action […]. They crafted a communication strategy that combined emotional and rational appeals, aimed at inspiring young people to participate in government-led assemblies focused on flood mitigation.”*
>
> – Excerpt from the Over the Waters

A lot of emotions, positive and negative, were present in the narratives. It led the research team to write a whole article on the **analysis of affect in Dystopias and Utopias.** They explain that utopia is not the only narrative leading to action. On the contrary, dystopias are great objects to discuss the ongoing crisis and give place to one’s emotions.

> *“From there, utopian impulses and hope emerged through solidarity and collective work, giving rise to ‘real’ utopias—practical visions of inclusive and negotiated future societies that embraced contingency and possibility”*



KIDDING THE FUTURES

COUNTRY(IES)
Pakistan

ORGANISATION(S)
Umar Sheraz, Sobia Irum, Saba Nazir

YEAR(S)
2023

LINK(S)
https://kiddingthefuture.com/2023/09/06/world-environment-day-at-teach-the-future-pakistan/
https://kiddingthefuture.com/2023/07/07/exploring-the-futures-space-at-unity-international-school/
https://jfsdigital.org/2025/03/11/a-rocket-to-the-future-futures-triangle-for-childrenbu/

In this article we will review two projects displayed in our WTFutures collection, both facilitated in Pakistani schools by Umar Sheraz, a futurist based in Islamabad.



Exploring the Futures Space at Unity International School by Umar Sheraz and Madam Sobia Irum

PROJECT #1 : EXPLORING THE FUTURES SPACE AT UNITY INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL

The first project, a Futures Thinking Program, took place at the Unity International School in Islamabad, Pakistan, during four class periods with girls and boys from class 6 to 8 (approx. 11 to 14 years old).

The animation of the four classes has been built with a wide variety of tools and methods, some of which were inspired by resources from the educational platform **Teach the Future** (a WTFutures partner organization). The adolescents were first invited to reflect on the importance of futures thinking and introduced to the concept of trends. Between the first and second classes, they were given a mission to investigate trends of the past, from the lives of their grandparents and parents.

The rest of the foresight exercises was based on the SDGs. In groups, the adolescents had to select one of the 17 SDGs and reflect on the following questions in the context of Pakistan: What do you think is going to happen? (Expected futures, cause-effect thinking) / What might happen instead? (Alternative futures, contingent thinking) / What do you want to happen? (Preferred futures, value-based thinking).

The third and fourth classes introduced the **Futures Triangle** and Futures Wheel tools and the exploration of “what if” questions to deepen the previously described futures and the issues related to the SDGs.



Exploring the Futures Space at Unity International School by Umar Sheraz and Madam Sobia Irum

“You told us that SDGs are interconnected. If we had justice in our country, the other SDGs would’ve taken care of themselves “ Verbatim from a young participant

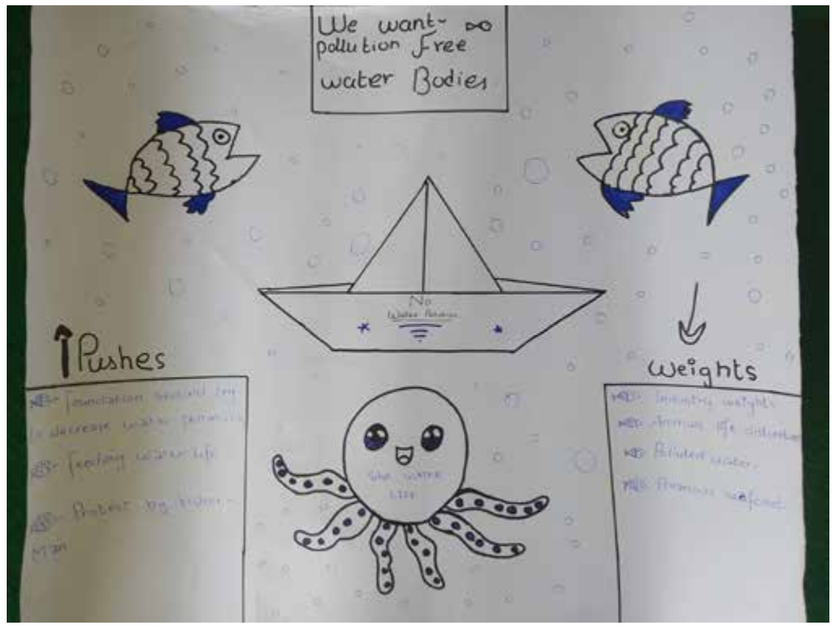
PROJECT #2 : WORLD ENVIRONMENT DAY AT SILVER OAKS SCHOOL

This second project took place in the context of the World Environment Day. Umar Sheraz proposed several activities to the students at Silver Oaks School in order to explore several facets of futures thinking.

First they experienced the time-traveler game: using closed-eye visioning, they were asked to imagine a child they really love and explore their future 30 years from now.

To reflect on their relation to the concept of future, they were then asked to position themselves along the 2 axis : Bleak futures / Bright futures and I can influence the future / I can't make a difference in the future (this activity is called the Polak Game).

Finally, the adolescents individually drew their preferred future and, in groups, used the Futures Triangle to identify the forces in favor and in opposition to these preferred futures.



An example of a Futures Triangle

Umar Sheraz shared:

> *"Some kids drew/wrote about politicians being more serious about climate change. Others expressed the need for Islamic unity and Islamic teachings. While still others drew time travel machines and flying cars."*

MORE ABOUT UMAR SHERAZ

Umar Sheraz is part of Teach the Future, a nonprofit organization dedicated to improving future thinking skills of young people and teachers. He is convinced that foresight should be, first and foremost, a tool for children to think about their future and that it's high time adults/professional futurists incorporate their views in futures thinking processes.

> *"Our children are going to inherit a challenging and uncertain world. Through this initiative, we strive to prepare our future generations with futures-thinking skills. This learning process involves gaming, interaction, meditation, drawing, and a host of fun-filled activities for change agents, activists, teachers and children." Extract from* ***the Kidding The Future website***

As we dive in his work, we can notice his important and clever use of metaphors to teach about foresight. Here are a few examples :

- "To make it simple for the students, an analogy was drawn about thinking about the future and piloting a ship at sea. You have to anticipate requirements, conditions and essential items before embarking on the journey. On inquiry the children responded with requirements of appropriate clothing, direction, maintenance, security from pirates, food/ drink and weather conditions as some essential things which need to be thought about before leaving for the sea journey."
- The metaphor of "a "crow's nest" on a ship's top was given to elaborate how sailors used horizon scanning to look out for pirates, storms, land and any other emerging issue. The work of a futurist is like the person on the crow's nest who guides the people on the ship's deck to impending danger or land nearby.
- "The participants were given the analogy of a spaceship that is moving towards a destination (a desired future); at the same time, it has weight(s) pulling it down and some pushes prompting it to move ahead."

During our discussions with Umar, he shared with us how much he likes working with children. He is particularly fond of their ingenuity (worrying on ice cream melting in case of heat) and their capacity to invent fun stories, as shown below.

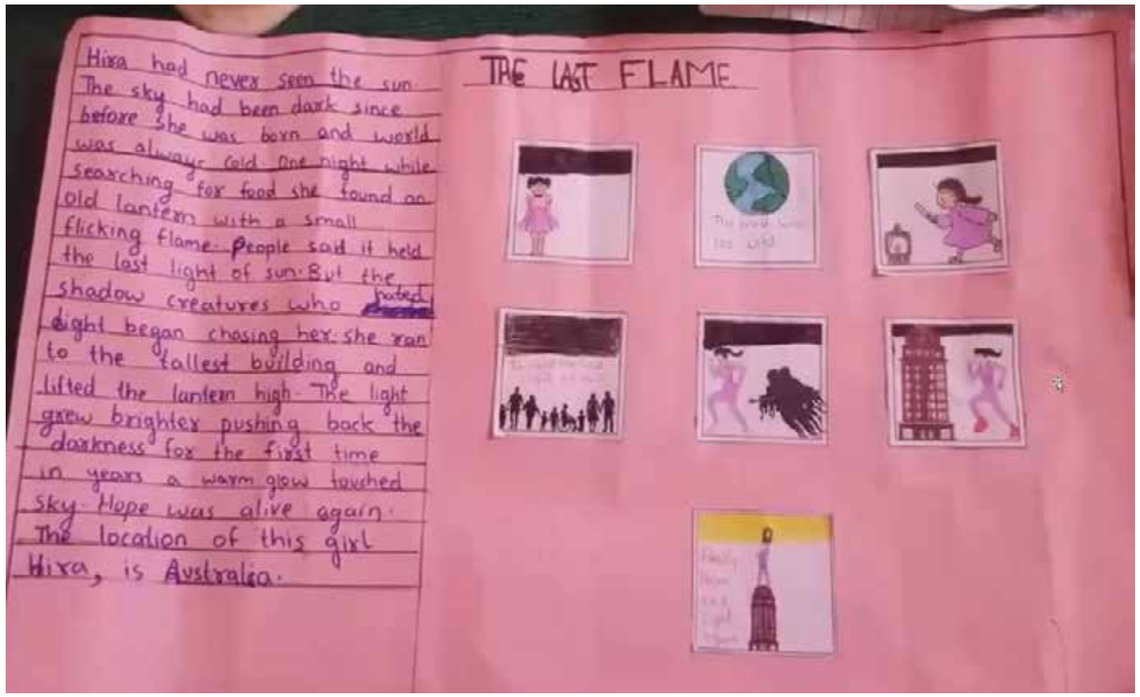
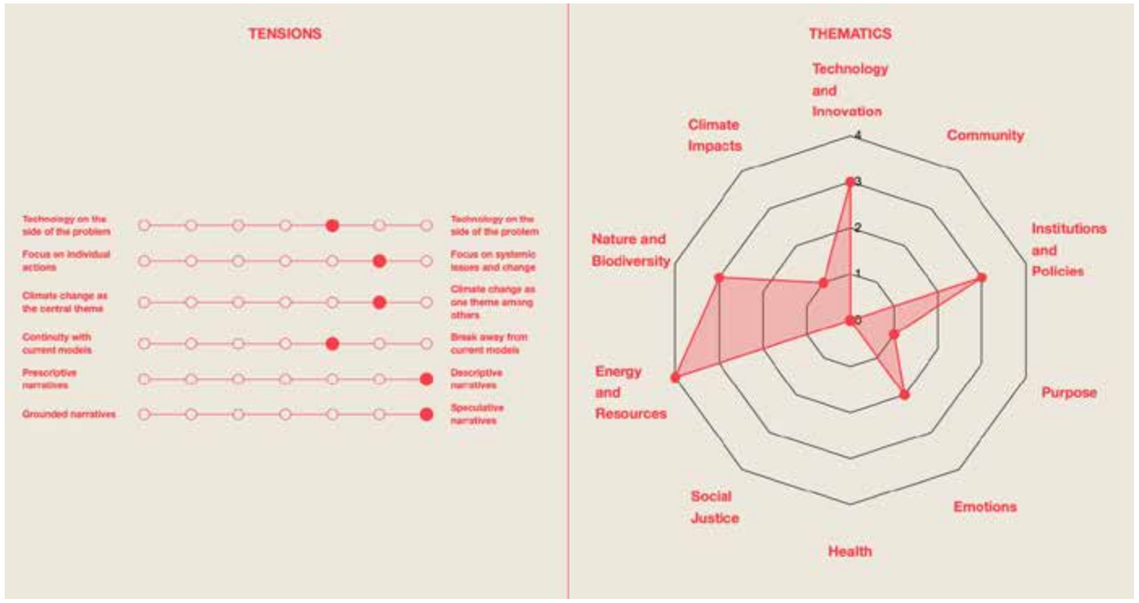


Photo courtesy of Umar Sheraz



KIJIJI CHA AMANI

COUNTRY(IES)
Democratic Republic of Congo

ORGANISATION(S)
Kijiji Cha Amani (The Peace Village)

YEAR(S)
Ongoing

LINK(S)
https://odil.org/initiative/kijiji-cha-amani/

KIJIJI CHA AMANI – COMMUNITY ADVOCACY FOR CLIMATE AND PEACE

Kijiji Cha Amani is a grassroots initiative that raises awareness on peaceful coexistence, environmental justice, and community resilience in regions affected by violence and ecological degradation, particularly in eastern DRC (Democratic Republic of Congo).

The organization plays a dual role:

- Community-based fact-checking and rumor verification, through a network of local ambassadors;
- Advocacy and mobilization on issues such as deforestation, land conflict, climate change, and security, working with citizens, authorities, and NGOs.



"PARACHUTE" MAPPING SESSIONS

A unique feature of Kijiji Cha Amani's approach is the use of "parachute" storytelling workshops — visual and participatory sessions where participants draw their lived environment on a large circular cloth, often shaped like a parachute, to identify relationships between environmental degradation, violence, and community life.

These parachutes become tools for advocacy, dialogue, and local climate education.



EXAMPLE 1: RUTSHURU, *"A FOREST THAT HIDES BANDITS"*

In Rutshuru, a 3-hour parachute session helped participants map their daily reality and raise awareness about how environmental and social crises are deeply linked.

Participants depicted:

- A forest and bush zone, where armed bandits hide and attack civilians;
- A former refugee camp, now a deforested military base;
- Agricultural lands and banana plantations, which also serve as local beer production sites, sometimes targeted by bandits;
- Cellular network towers, which participants described as pollutants due to the constant use of fuel generators.

This visual narrative led to a call for the state to combine environmental protection with public safety, emphasizing the need for community-led climate management and improved village security.

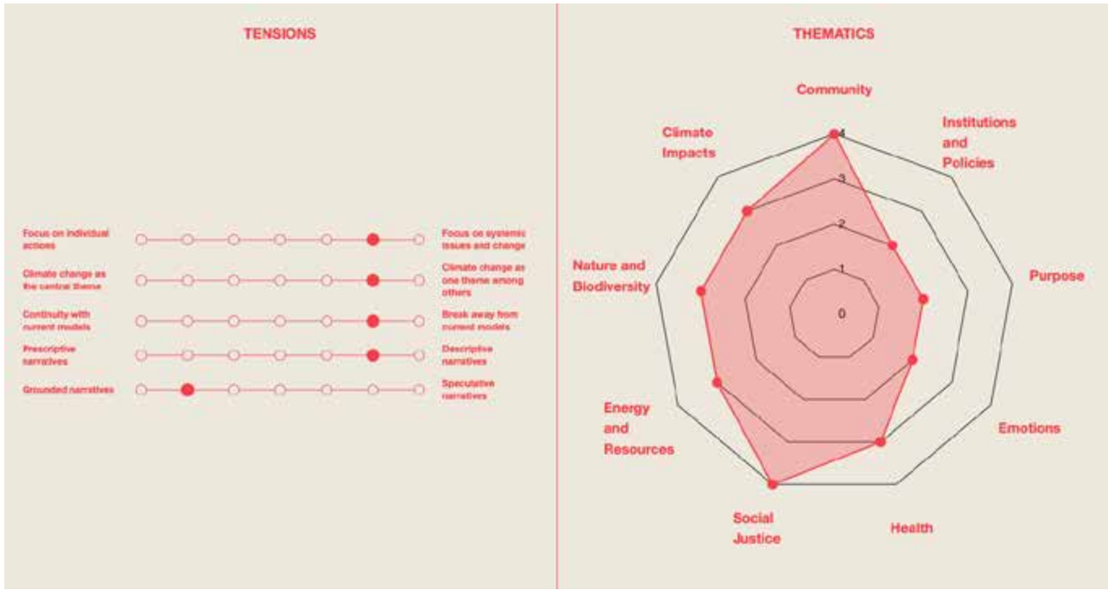
EXAMPLE 2: KIWANJA, *“A SAFE FOREST”*

In the rural commune of Kiwanja, a 2-hour parachute session focused on climate change adaptation and deforestation. Farmers discussed:

- Increasingly erratic dry seasons, which disrupt planting calendars;
- A strong local belief that cutting down trees should be a punishable offense, comparable to harming future generations;
- Fears that ongoing deforestation could lead to hunger and land conflicts;
  The urgent need to protect Virunga Park and reforest to stabilize the local climate.

These discussions shifted local perceptions of climate responsibility, stimulated collective reflection, and were deeply appreciated by participants, who requested more such dialogues.





OUTCOMES AND IMPACT

- Enhanced environmental awareness, rooted in local knowledge and real-life challenges;
- New community narratives linking climate change, security, and justice;
- Empowered community ambassadors engaging in rumor tracking and environmental advocacy;
- Increased citizen engagement in discussions with authorities and NGOs on climate and safety;
- A deeper sense of ownership over ecological futures — one based on lived experience, cultural values, and collective memory.

LA CRISE DONT VOUS ÊTES LE HÉROS

COUNTRY(IES)
France

ORGANISATION(S)
Nantes Métropole, Pratico-pratiques

YEAR(S)
2023

LINK(S)
https://dialoguecitoyen.metropole.nantes.fr/project/grand-debat-fabrique-de-nos-villes/step/participer
https://dialoguecitoyen.metropole.nantes.fr/blog/quels-services-pour-mieux-sadapter-aux-crises-les-jeunes-rendent-leur-copie

In 2023, Nantes and its surrounding cities (Nantes Métropole), in the West of France, organized a “Great Debate” on how to collectively build the city of tomorrow. Among many participative formats, La crise dont vous êtes le héros (The Crisis in Which You Are the Hero) was aimed at an audience aged 16–30. The objective of this workshop was “to generate a collective and nuanced vision of life in the city tomorrow in the face of the crises it will face.”

HOW

Through a cooperative game session followed by a collective working session, participants were asked to work on the issue of adapting the territory (anticipating and managing crises), identifying the roles of the territory’s stakeholders, and the impacts on the processes and form of the city’s fabric.



Nantes Métropole

45 young participants participated in three different locations.

Each session began by introducing the participants to what Nantes might look like in 2039, based on IPCC scenarios as well as the actions already undertaken by the city. The goal was to introduce a “positive, yet nuanced” vision of the city in 15 years time.



Nantes Métropole

The game itself introduced participants to four crisis scenarios happening in 2039: an extreme heatwave, a power outage, a new lockdown, and a massive influx of climate refugees. Participants had to respond to three challenges: Imagine a solution to a given problem; Manage a scarce resource; Imagine a new service offered by the city.

In another session, participants read what the other groups had produced. They identified what stood out in the response to each type of crisis. Then they debated “plausible and desirable solutions” to be ready for these crises, taking care to identify what they also disagreed on.



Nantes Métropole

WHAT

An analysis of the stories produced by the workshops identified 11 conditions for a “desirable metropolis” in 2039:

- **Conviviality:** connections between people
- **Comfort:** ensuring well-being
- **Beauty:** aesthetics for all
- **Safety:** taking into account tensions, stressful and insecure situations
- **Proximity and accessibility:** facilities and services on the right scale
- **Mental health:** psychological well-being
- **Culture and interculturalism:** knowledge, skills, traditions, and customs that bind human groups together
- **Anticipation and preparation:** modes of action
- **Conflict resolution:** practices and conditions for conflict management
- **Privacy:** space allowing for individual comfort
- **Social justice:** consideration of situations of vulnerability, pursuit of equity.

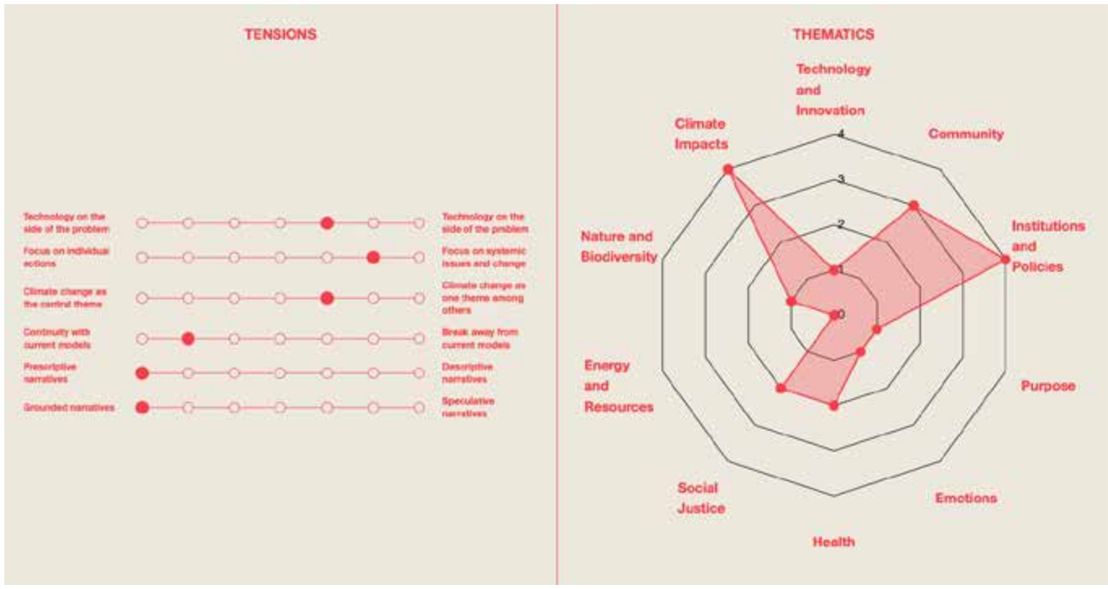


Nantes Métropole

Five archetypes of futures metropolises also emerged:

- The **‘welcoming metropolis’** takes into account the unavoidability of climate migrations, both within France and from other places in the world.
- The **‘anticipatory metropolis’** focuses on awareness of, and training for, crises, as well as social bonds and mental health.
- The **‘metropolis of flows’** focuses on helping people share scarce space and resources in times of crises, by organizing both circulation, quiet spaces, shared resources, etc.
- The **‘proximity metropolis’** focuses on hyperlocal access to all basic services.
- The **‘solidarity metropolis’** focuses on social justice.

“In conclusion, the image that emerges from reading these five metropolitan figures is that of a reversible metropolis. An agile territory, capable of changing and adapting to the crisis context it faces, and of returning to its initial state. It appears implicitly that the metropolis is seen as a territory tailor-made for questioning, where everything can be changed without pain, provided that it is anticipated collectively.”



LOCAL CONFERENCES OF YOUTH

COUNTRY(IES)
France, International

ORGANISATION(S)
YOUNGO, Jeunes Ambassadeurs pour le Climat, CliMates

YEAR(S)
2023–2025

LINK(S)
https://lcoywg.wixsite.com/home/fr
https://jac-asso.fr/lcoy-2024/

YOUNGSTERS IN INTERNATIONAL NEGOCIATIONS

Every year, just before the Conference of Parties (COP, reuniting the signatory countries to the United Nations Convention on Climate Change), takes place the international Conference of Youth (COY). This event gathers young people from all over the world to discuss and prepare the negotiations with the policy makers, aiming to assure that the interests and concerns of youth are taken into account. The COY is an official part of the larger COP process, under the supervision of YOUNGO, the children and youth constituency of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).

During the previous months, Local Conferences of Youth (LCOY) take place all around the world, reuniting youngsters involved in climate activism or interested in the subject. Numerous workshops take place for capacity building, policy training, advocacy writing, on global climate subjects but also on territorial issues. The local discussions are then reported back to the COY for further discussion and broader representation.

More importantly, it is a space for young people to come together and share knowledge, ideas, and discuss how they feel about climate change and all the related pressing issues.



LCOY 2025: Gabonese youth assert their climate leadership

FOCUS ON LCOY IN FRANCE



In France, two youth organizations, Jeunes Ambassadeurs pour le Climat and CliMates, have been coordinating a LCOY at l'Académie du Climat (The Climate Academy) in Paris for several years. Designed, in accordance with the general values of COY, as a moment of training and reflection for the French young people, they proposed different workshops around themes such as international climate negotiations, biodiversity, popular ecology, mitigation and adaptation, gender, finance loss and damage.

Amongst the scheduled activities, CliMates animated two emblematic examples of their awareness-raising workshops: "**COP in My City**" and "**HeatWave, ma ville contre-attaque**".

Heir to the Théâtre des Négociations (another project showcased in WTFutures), COP in My City is a simulation of a UN international climate summit where participants represent a country, a city, or a sector of activity. Together they play the negotiations and must reach an agreement to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and face climate change. But they also have to defend their own interests. The whole exercise is indeed to find balance in this conflicting complexity.

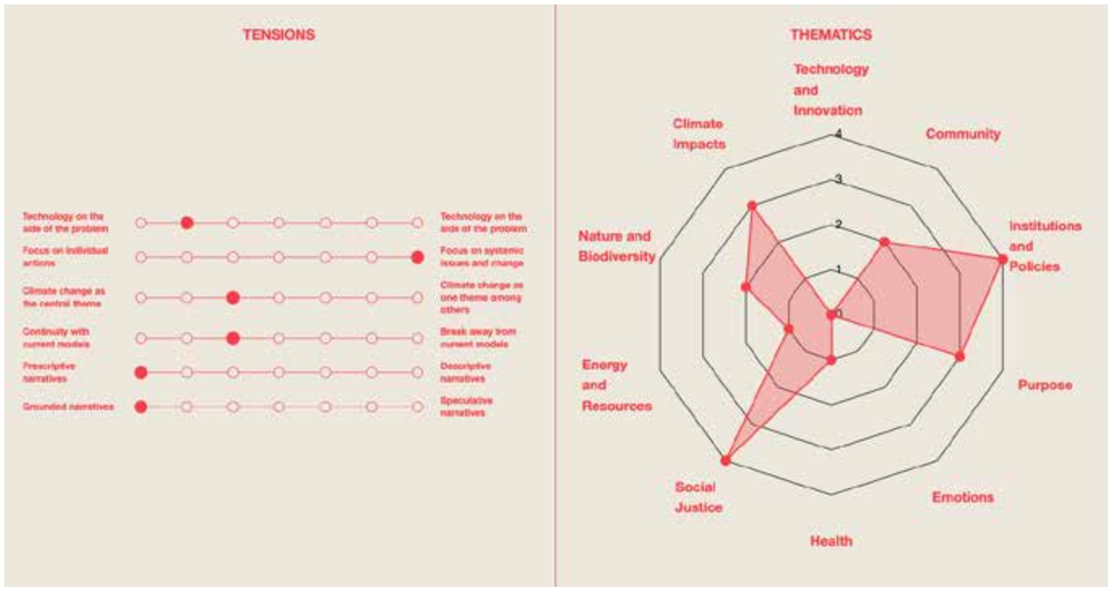
"HeatWave, ma ville contre-attaque" (My city counterattacks) is also a simulation workshop in which each participant plays the role of a member of civil society. The city is facing the imminent arrival of an extreme heatwave in their city. By working together, these citizens will have to use strategy and creativity to implement innovative solutions to reduce the impact of the heatwave and help the population.

YOUNG PEOPLE'S DEMANDS

Here is an example of some requests written during the french **LCOY 2023**:

- **Inclusiveness in the negotiations:** *"The youth members of LCOY France 2023 want the COP to be a real opportunity for those most vulnerable to climate change to make their voices heard."*

- **Fair finance:** *"The youth of LCOY France 2023 demand the implementation of serious measures to combat tax evasion and the introduction of taxation on: dividends paid to private shareholders by large companies; super-profits when these are significantly higher than in previous years"*
- **Against techno-solutionism:** *"The youth of LCOY France 2023 oppose techno-solutionist distractions. Techno-solutionist carbon capture/sequestration projects only provide a partial response to the much more systemic crisis facing the climate and the living world in general."*
- **Transformational adaptation:** *"The youth of LCOY France 2023 demand the use of transformational adaptation projects, including nature-based solutions that are beneficial to biodiversity, ecosystem integrity and restoration, and respect the rights of indigenous peoples, recalling the risks of maladaptation associated with incremental adaptation."*
- **Local, feminist, and ecological democracy:** *"The youth of LCOY France 2023 want a more representative and participatory democracy. We propose giving more space and power to residents by establishing citizen conventions with randomly selected participants and mandatory representation quotas."*



LCOY FRANCE INSTAGRAM

WTFutures chose to present these workshops between youngsters, and particularly the advocacy writing exercises that come after, as forms of futuring. These practices may seem very institutional, however the young participants are still taking time to formulate their thoughts on climate futures, on how to adapt, on which elements they want to be taken into account. They also come up with scenarios and strategies to enable the future they want to live in.

The COY and LCOY are therefore relevant examples of how youngsters are engaging in imagining and building the climate futures they want.



MESSAGE TOWARDS THE REGION

COUNTRY(IES)
Slovakia

ORGANISATION(S)
Youthwatch

YEAR(S)
2024 (ongoing)

LINK(S)
https://www.youthwatch.sk

WHO ARE THE PARTICIPANTS?

How many? 167 students
Where from? Nitra Region, Slovakia
Age? 13–17 years old
Selection? The City of Nitra helped distribute the workshop invitation through its local networks.



CAN YOU TELL US A BIT ABOUT YOURSELF AND YOUR ORGANIZATION?

Youthwatch contributes to societal change by incorporating the perspectives, needs, and values of young people. The organization promotes inclusive participation and brings new visions of shared futures into public discourse and policymaking.

LET'S TALK ABOUT THE PROJECT. WHAT'S IT CALLED?

The project is called Message Towards the Region. It aims to support the City of Nitra and the Council of Youth of the Nitra Region in addressing the emerging needs of their younger population. The city of Nitra was looking to better understand and engage with its youth. Youthwatch proposed to apply futures literacy methodologies to spark meaningful conversations and foster co-creation between youth and decision-makers.

The intention was twofold:

1. Pilot futures literacy approaches to see whether they could effectively engage young people in civic processes.
2. Empower youth to imagine and express their visions of the future of their city and their lives.



METHOD

Youthwatch piloted a structured program centered on futures literacy, using participatory methods like world-building and role-play to encourage youth engagement.

The program explored two main themes:

1. **Futures of Leisure Time (2040):** How youth imagine spending their free time in the future.
2. **Education:** As Slovakia undergoes curriculum reform, youth were invited to imagine the future of schools and learning.

Over the course of the project, Youthwatch:

· Organized 7 workshops
· Facilitated round tables with elected officials
· Engaged both students and teachers



Leisure Cycle: Visions of leisure in 2040

Young people imagined:

- Spaces just for youth, accessible 24/7, without adult supervision.
- Self-managed spaces for gathering, sharing information, and socializing.
- Repurposing empty buildings, including a large unused one in Nitra:
  - One example: the third floor transformed into a therapeutic space.
  - Each floor had a distinct, youth-designed purpose based on their interests and emotional needs.

Education Cycle: Futures of learning

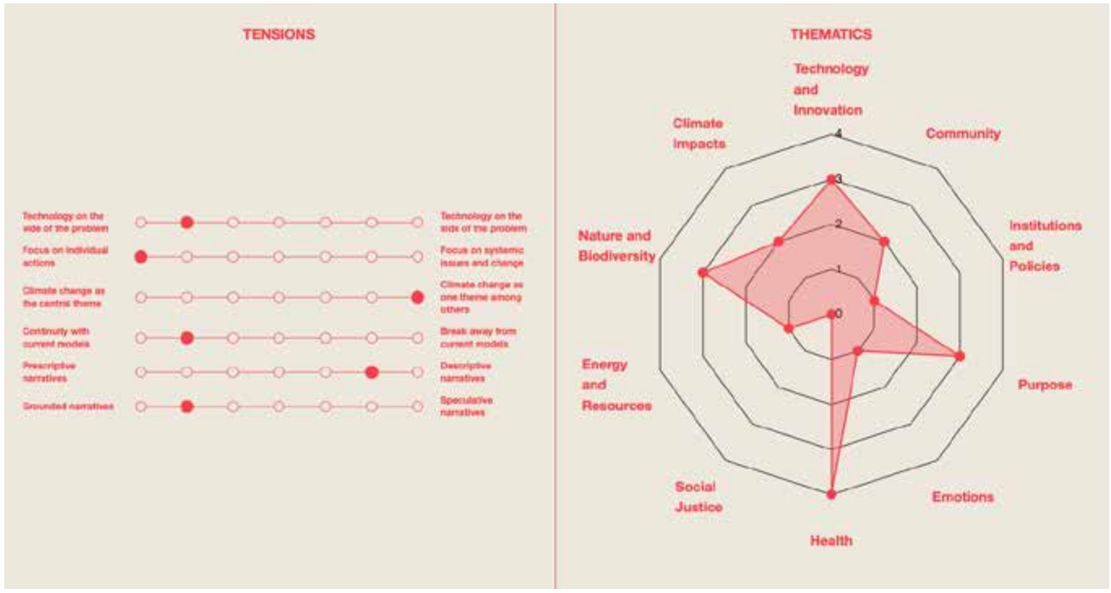
Amid ongoing education reform in Slovakia, workshops explored:

- Future curricula that integrate climate change, AI, migration, war, and pandemics.
- Emerging concerns about safety in schools, especially with the rise of school shootings in Slovakia and abroad.
- Mental health as a major concern, with youth expressing the need for future leisure to support emotional well-being.

Imaginative outcomes included:

· Unconditional income and automation in the workforce.
· Household AI robots with ethical oversight:
  · Robots report to humans.
  · A human-run ethics committee oversees robotic behavior (including police robots).

Youth scenarios often leaned dystopian, reflecting broader sociopolitical anxieties (e.g., war in Ukraine, social unrest). Although greenery and nature appeared in their visions (e.g., trees around schools), awareness of climate change was limited and mainly focused on recycling. Youth seemed more concerned with personal and emotional safety than environmental issues, which could become a future area of focus. Youthwatch asked participants about future involvement, but there is no clear follow-up mechanism. For many, it was their first time participating in a foresight process, and some even invited peers to join future workshops.



MUSEO DEL FUTURO

COUNTRY(IES)
Mexico

ORGANISATION(S)
Harvard Graduate School of Design – Mexico City Initiative (MCI), FARO Tláhuac, Programa de Jóvenes Iztapalapa ¡Préndete con tus derechos!, Daniel Hernández, Iván Hernández, Jorge Navarro

YEAR(S)
2012

LINK(S)
https://research.gsd.harvard.edu/mci/portfolio/museum-of-the-future/

MUSEO DEL FUTURO – TIME MACHINE MEXICO CITY 2068

As part of the Museo del Futuro (Museum of the Future) project launched by the Mexico City Initiative at Harvard GSD, over 100 young people from Tláhuac and Iztapalapa collaborated in 2012 on a participatory artistic and speculative design process to imagine the past, present, and future of their city.

This phase of the project centered around the collective creation of a Time Machine, a mobile, sculptural museum made up of 14 steel “cells” — designed both as a symbolic return vessel for the fictional curators from 2068, and as a tool for youth-led storytelling and imagination.



Museum of the Future, Kate Balug, Laura Janka

Methodology

Through a series of creative summer workshops led by local educators and artists, youth explored a wide range of media including:

· Recycled art
· Sculpture
· Dance and movement
· Storytelling and oral histories



Museum of the Future, Kate Balug, Laura Janka

Each “cell” of the machine was filled with youth-generated content, representing their visions of Mexico City’s past struggles, present realities, and possible futures, socially, environmentally, and culturally.

Once completed, the Time Machine traveled between the youth centers in both districts, acting as a catalyst for community conversations and public events focused on imagining Mexico City in 2068.

Outcomes

· Creation of a collective speculative artwork centered on urban futures and memory
· Youth participants gained skills in art, narrative, and collaborative design
· The mobile museum format fostered intergenerational dialogue about the city’s trajectory
· The project challenged top-down visions of the future, empowering young people from marginalized neighborhoods to co-author urban imaginaries
· Demonstrated the power of fiction, fabrication, and play as tools for critical urban inquiry and civic participation



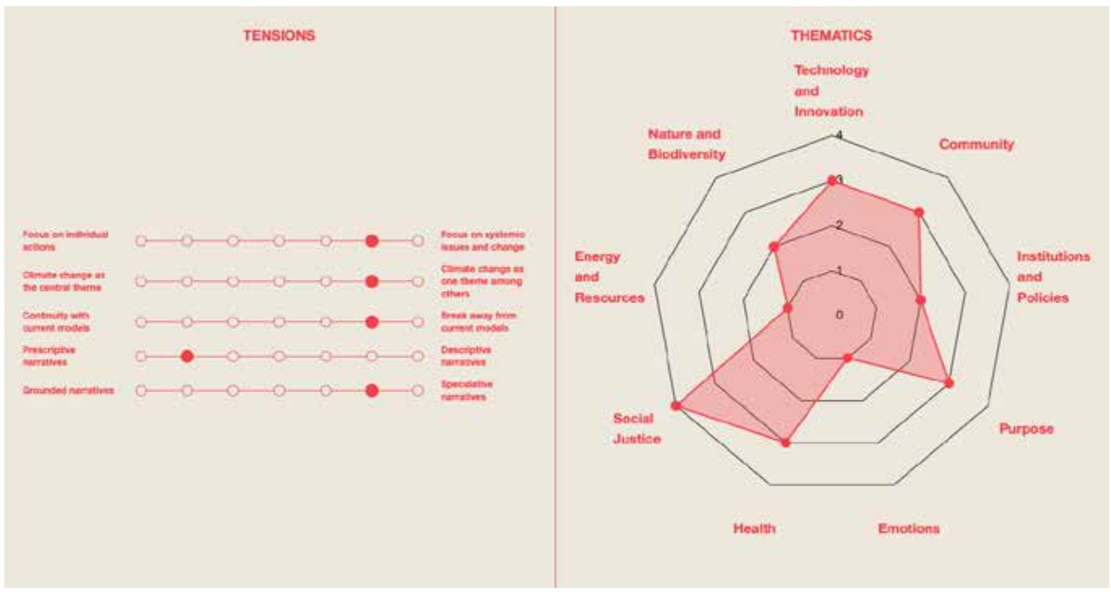
Museum of the Future, Kate Balug, Laura Janka

Examples of narratives from 2068

- **A City rewilded:** Youth imagined a future where parts of Mexico City had been reforested and rivers restored, with public parks replacing abandoned industrial zones. The city learned to coexist with nature after decades of water crises and air pollution.
- **Social justice through design:** Some cells envisioned a radically inclusive city where public spaces were co-designed by residents, especially in marginalized neighborhoods. Youth imagined new forms of housing, education, and care systems based on solidarity and mutual aid.
- **Remembering the struggles:** Several pieces reflected on the violence and inequality of the early 21st century, suggesting that in 2068, communities regularly gather in the Time Machine to remember and reflect on past injustices to avoid repeating them.
- **Technological futures rooted in culture:** Youth proposed hybrid futures where Indigenous knowledge, local traditions, and new technologies work together, for example, floating farms and solar-powered markets rooted in chinampa agriculture.



Museum of the Future, Kate Balug, Laura Janka



MUSEUM OF THE NOT-YET-POSSIBLE

COUNTRY(IES)
Taïwan

ORGANISATION(S)
Dr. Nur Anisah Abdullah

YEAR(S)
2021–2023

LINK(S)
https://www.instagram.com/p/CI8F4hNDIbL/?img_index=1

The Museum of the Not-Yet-Possible reunites the production of two iterations of a Futures Studies course in Tamkang University, run by Dr. Nur Anisah Abdullah. The first iteration took place during the Spring Semester 2021 and the second during the Fall Semester 2022.

"The objective of this course is to have students use futuring tools and methodologies to understand, challenge and develop images of the future economy and/or a better society that are more sustainable, equitable, fair & just, and simply liveable than the present or the past."

EDUCATIONAL GOALS IN A UNIVERSITY CONTEXT

Dr. Nur Anisah Abdullah designed this elective course with the will to develop the thinking abilities of her students. She told us in an interview that she feels that foresight is dominated by consultants and used in commercial (money-driven) settings.

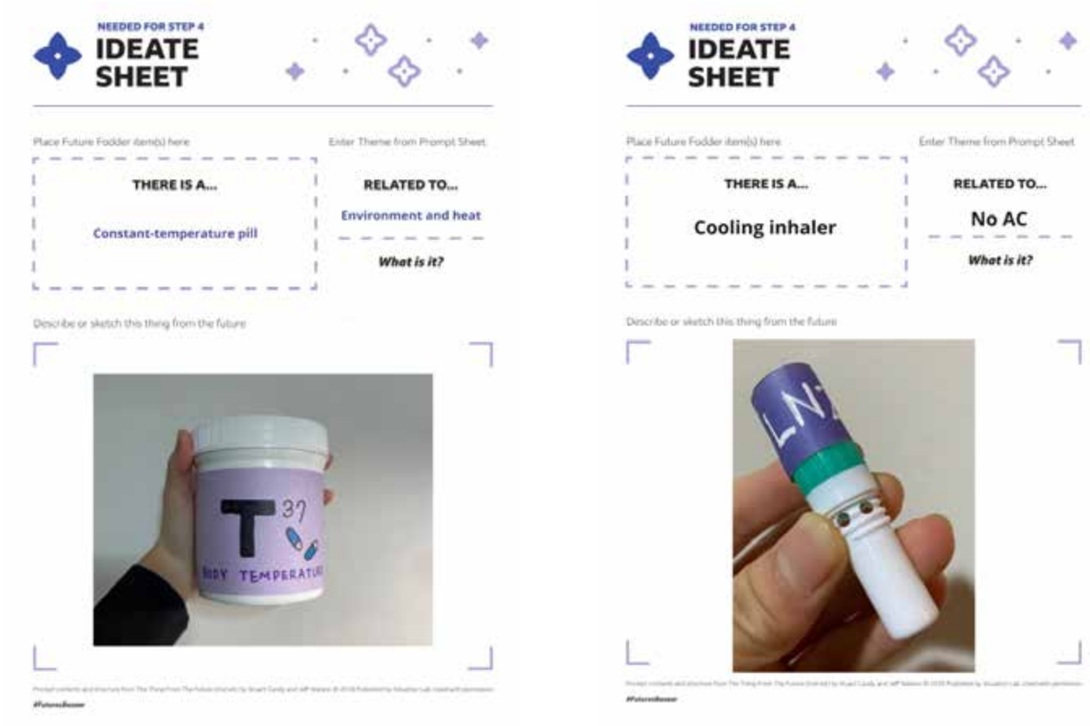
She advocates for futuring methods to be widespread and to enable critical approaches outside of the domain of strategic planning.

However, her students were not used to working on open fields of reflection. She had to overcome several challenges to engage them in the project. One of the answers was to make them work in groups. According to her, thinking about a future world is too much for one person and interactions expand the possibilities. Moreover, collaborative learning is very rare in Tamkang University. Team work became a core element of her pedagogical approach.

"Such learning can be arduous for students who are used to being asked to find an exact answer to the question, 'what is' rather than to explore and learn about the questions, 'what's there' and 'what if'. So, the strategy of getting students working in smaller groups where they can research, analyse, explore and discuss issues together makes learning futures studies something more do-able and possibly, fun." ***Nur Anisah Abdullah, Learning Futures Studies Collaboratively***

Imagining the future was also made funnier and easier with the use of multiple tools guiding the exploration. Mainly working on online whiteboards, the students explored contemporary challenges through a great variety of guides : S-Curve (evolution of trends), Futures Wheel (emerging issues and their impacts), Futures Triangle (pull of preferred futures, push of the present and weight of the past) and Causal Layered Analysis (students' worldviews, current reality and transformed reality).

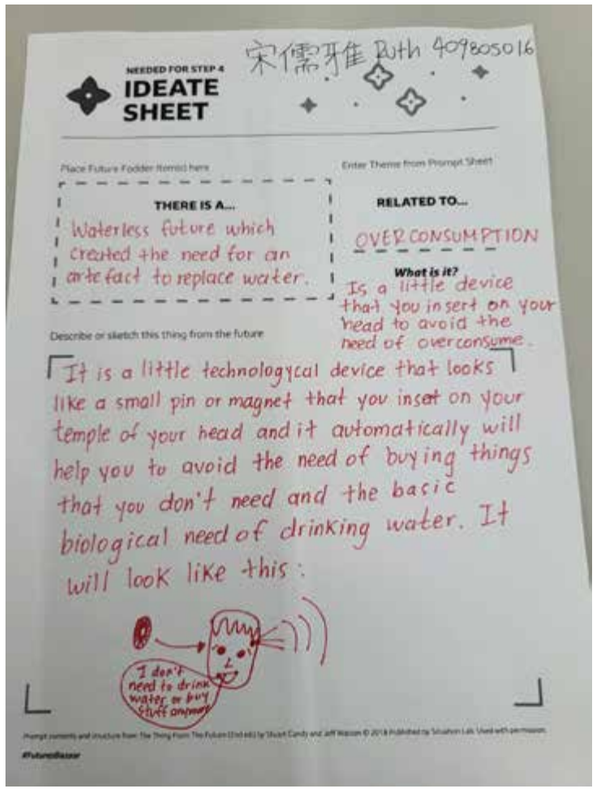
Students also experimented with the material dimension, to expand their creativity by crafting the future. Once their scenarios of preferred futures were elaborated, Dr. Nur Anisah Abdullah used the **Futures Bazaar toolkit** to make them create artefacts from these futures, called Artefacts of the Not-Yet-Possible. Most of these artefacts were displayed on the Instagram account **@notyetpossible**, the use of social media thought to be a place of interaction and discussion around the project.



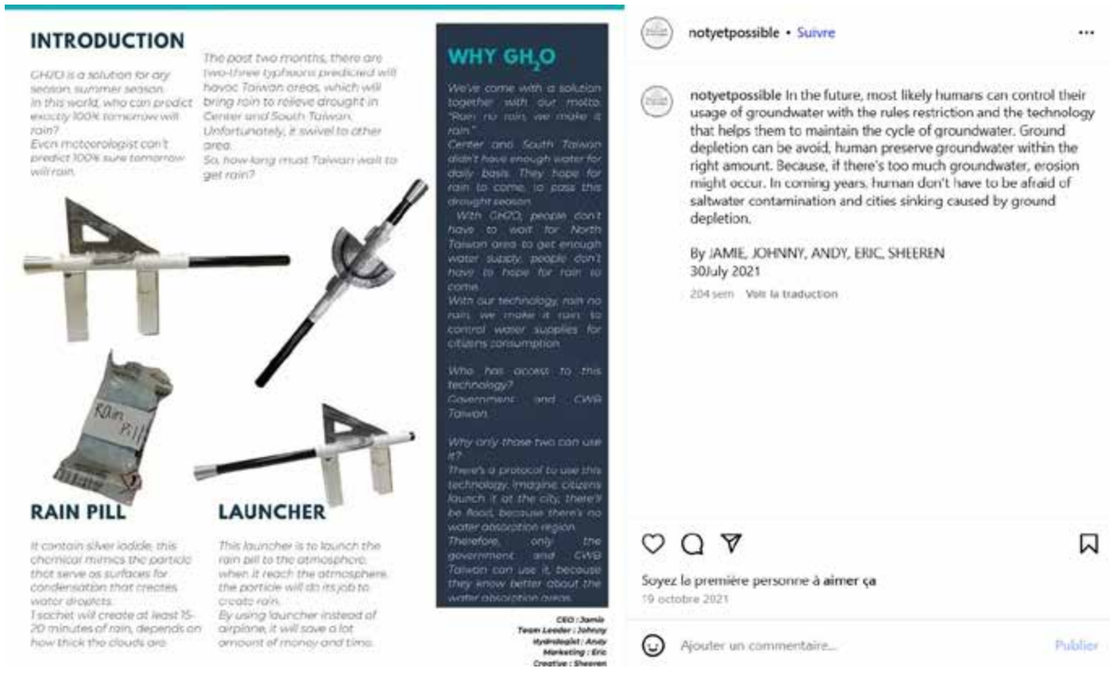
Museum of the Not-Yet-Possible, productions of the students collected on Miro

TECHNOLOGY FACING A PLURALITY OF CONCERNS

While browsing through the students' works, a striking element is the ubiquity of technology in the narratives: AI, hydrogen-fueled cars, brain-inserted micro-chips, flying vehicles, virtual reality, robots… Technological development is seen as the answer to the vast majority of problems encountered, sometimes solving global issues by the wave of a magic wand.



Museum of the Not-Yet-Possible, productions of the students collected on Miro



Instagram @notyetpossible

The exercise was not particularly focused on environmental issues, but some elements referred to them. There are several mentions of air pollution, and the necessity of “cleaning” it. Their scenarios also wish for clean water and clean land that are polluted today by plastic and chemical components. Another frequent element is the issue of energy sources: which to use, how to produce it?



Museum of the Not-Yet-Possible, productions of the students collected on Miro

“In 2050, we hope that through genetic modification, plants can absorb chemical substances that are harmful to the environment in the batteries. In addition, the plants can decompose harmful substances by themselves through photosynthesis which will not hurt the insects that eat the ecosystem and can embellish the environment.”

Excerpt from the students’ project “Battery Issue Solution”

“Now how does a self-powered generator that emits cleaner air and produces enough energy to power buildings, homes, business, communities? Coming into power the world, we introduce INFINITE. A power source that’s able to power itself and regulate how much energy is being poured out, and can also convert external sources of energy such as solar, wind, hydro, and thermal.”

Excerpt from the students’ project “INFINITE”

As Dr. Nur Anisah Abdullah expressed in our interview, the students are conscious about climate change, and they talk about it. However they lack some Climate literacy, they have a limited knowledge about its causes and effects. They also focus on the consumer's pollution and not the producer's pollution (they would address the subject of the plastic straw but not the industry behind it).

> *"In the year of 2041, global warming has finally disappeared and there will be no climate issues anymore. Transportation will be more eco friendly and use alternative resources as fuels, just like the Supersonic Train Cube that uses electricity or solar power instead of diesel. Since the air quality is better and there's no pollution, people will live in a clean environment with fresh and cool atmosphere."*
>
> Excerpt from the students' project "Supersonic Train Cube"



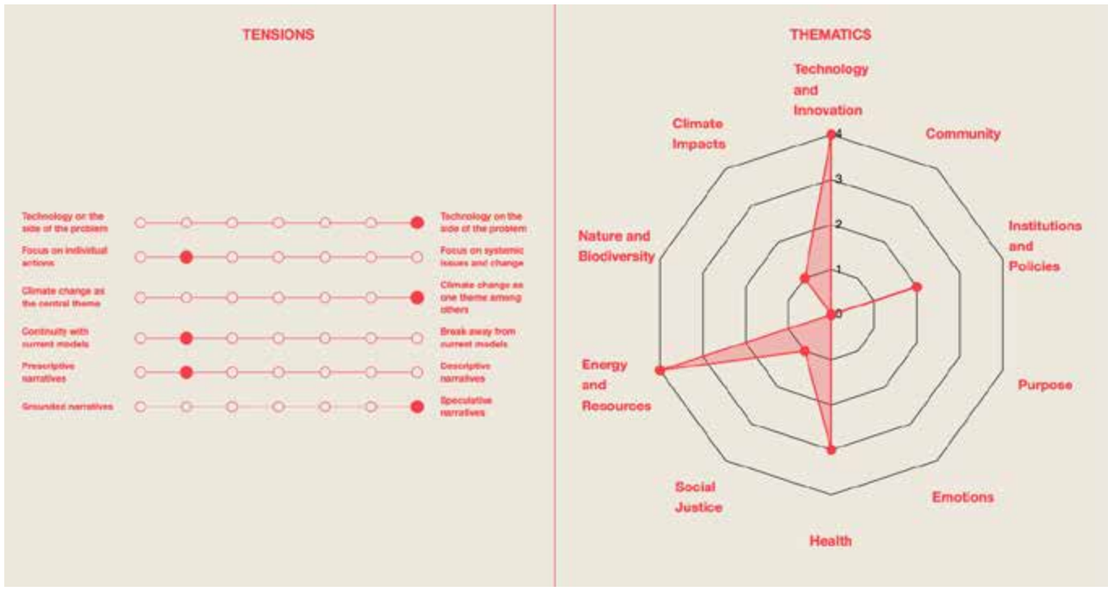
Instagram @notyetpossible

Nonetheless, the narratives express various concerns. Whether related to climate change or not, the students want progress to be made on health (healthier lifestyle, medical innovations, mental health, pandemic, smart health). In another domain, the issue of a low birth rate seems to be very important and various projects proposed solutions to increase it.

Safety (online as well as global) is also addressed, most frequently as a side benefit of their inventions. Additionally, some stories mention the issue of social inequality (gender or economic) and try to bring some propositions to improve these situations.

Finally, regarding the ways to implement the technological devices they designed, the students call on two major actors: the government and the private sector. The role of the government is to set up coercive policies, incitative taxes and to fund the projects with subsidies. The companies, for their part, are responsible for innovating and above all communicating the solution for the population to change their behaviour.

> *"Worrying about having not enough water? Check out our new water bottle now! IWater! Eco-friendly- Make our Earth better! A bottle that can change your life! Convert seawater into drinkable water. Pore size of 0.1 micron to filter out bacteria. Ergonomically designed water mouth. Portable size, suitable for people from all ages"*
>
> Excerpt from the students' project "IWater"



NARRATIVE OF CHANGE IN SCIENCE EDUCATION

COUNTRY(IES)
Norway, Italy, Germany, Austria

ORGANISATION(S)
Hanna Røkenes, Alfredo Jornet, Erik Knain

YEAR(S)
2024–2025

LINK(S)
https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0016328725000539

> *"Imagine an ideal future 25 years from now. How was that created or achieved? How did we get there?"*

This is one of the five questions submitted to 273 upper secondary and high school students from Norway, Italy, Germany, and Austria as part of an environmental and science education research.

The intention was to explore the connections between narratives, desired futures, agency and responsibility. For this purpose, the research team studied the student's answers by highlighting categories of actors, desired futures and pathways, and then counting their iterations.

AN IN-DEPTH LINGUISTIC ANALYSIS OF FUTURES NARRATIVES

This study highlights several findings concerning the youngsters' images of the future:

(1) The stories show a certain trust in technology and science to bring solutions.

In most cases, the stories written show an important trust and optimism concerning the ability of science and technology to solve global issues. The innovations cover areas such as transport, cleaning up various pollutants and sustainable materials.

(2) Another focus of action is the behavioural change of citizens.

From the promotion of eco-gestures to an un-specific rise in awareness. A lot of responsibility is given to people at an individual level. Some young people seem to have mixed feelings about it, already knowing that their proposals are not enough.

> *"The ideal future of course consists of all world crises being resolved and everyone living in peace and having a good life. Now I understand that it is not possible, so a more realistic future is perhaps that me and my family do what we can to live as sustainably as possible. That we mainly eat plant-based, that we shop more second-hand, etc. Such small everyday measures that we as individuals can do. In any case, I feel very powerless when it comes to things like this, because I don't have the opportunity to make the big differences. Therefore, I hope that we as a society have come further, so that individuals and politicians work together to stop/reduce climate change."* ***17–18 years old student from Norway***

Another study by two members of the same team (Hanna Røkenes and Alfredo Jornet), using collage to help young participants to express their desired futures, confirmed these two first insights.

> *"The findings show that most of the students' narratives are about changing awareness on the climate crisis, leading to changes in consumption behaviors and technology, and exhibit certain technological optimism"*

Hanna Røkenes, Alfredo Jornet, ***Affective Contradictions and Narratives of Change: A Critical, Cultural-Historical Approach to Hope and Action in Education for Sustainability***

(3) In their text, students often put young people in a more central role than today.

A major part of the analysis was to identify the actors of the narratives. The actors mentioned the most are "we" (n=81) and "people" (n=72). Still, the research team discovered that the narratives give to young people a more important place in the realization of changes.

Table 5. Actors in the categories "solutions" and "transport.".

Actor	All Narratives (%) [95 % CI]	Solutions (%)	Transport (%)
I	13 [2,24]	12	16
We	30 [**20**, 40]	33	**13**
People	26 [16,37]	17	**47**
Everyone	14 [0,25]	14	16
Politicians	8 [0,19]	9	13
They	5 [0,16]	3	6

(4) The need for drastic structural changes is widespread in the narratives but it lacks details about the pathways or the actors responsible for this change.

> *"We got there because politicians and leaders with power took initiatives that force the population to shine. E.g., stricter laws and regulations, less use and disposal, purchase regulation. Yes, we may lose some prosperity, but it is necessary for the planet to function. Some have to be strict, we have to lose something to win bigger later. I don't believe that the people themselves can take enough initiative, those with power have to 'force' us, then most people will probably realize in the end that it is the best." 14–16 years old student from Norway.*

Transformation at the societal level is often mentioned in the stories. Politicians are pointed out as responsible actors, in positions of power. Thanks to regulations and laws, they force other stakeholders to change. However the narratives often seemed simplistic concerning the transformations proposed.



We had the opportunity to discuss the topic of education in depth with Hanna and Alfredo during the first Agora.

THE IMPORTANCE OF EDUCATION IN THE CONSTRUCTION OF YOUNGSTERS' NARRATIVES

The research paper and this writing exercise take place in a broader context of research on the transformation of education to face our contemporary challenges. This includes the **open schooling movement** in which Erik Knain and Alfredo Jornet are particularly involved.

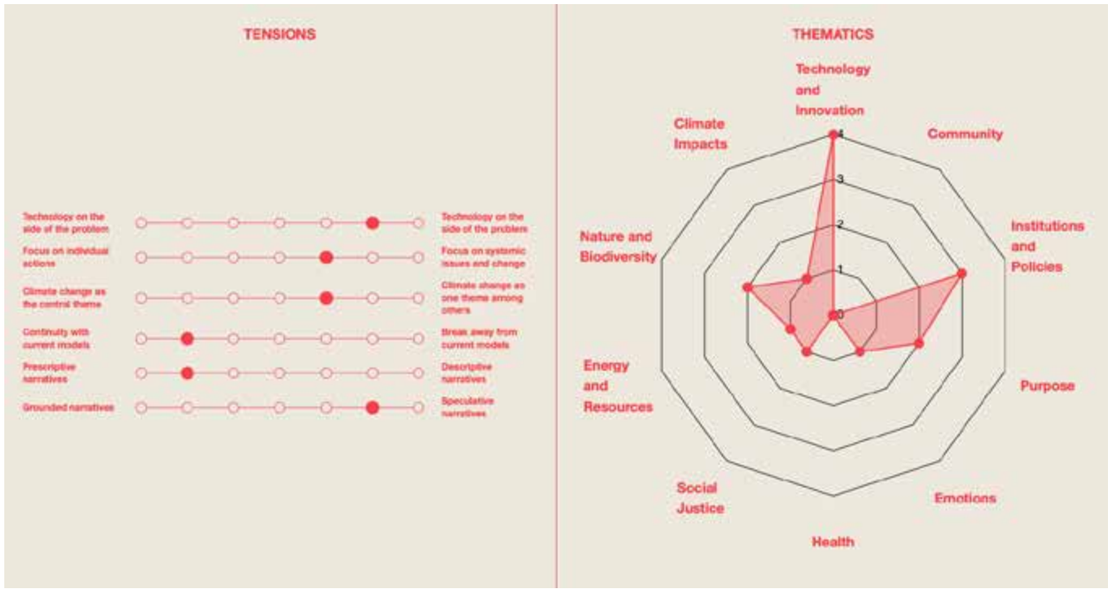
It is an experimentation framework where they seek to establish collaboration between schools and out-of-school actors like NGOs, enterprises, researchers, municipalities and families to create a different approach to sustainability education.

> *"As citizens of the world we are dealing with complex issues and challenges like climate change, global health or migration. These challenges require us to build visions of the future that empower our actions today. Can science education play a role in that? In a rapidly evolving world it is essential to learn how to deal with uncertain and ever-changing futures. This is why it is so important to equip our next generations with 'future-scaffolding skills', skills that enable people to construct visions of the future that support possible ways of acting in the present with one's eye on the horizon."* ***FEDORA Project***

For the authors of the document, with whom we had the opportunity to discuss, the role of education is to help students develop a sense of agency by understanding their place in the world and give them the tools to be active and reflexive citizens. It can be achieved by increasing their scientific literacy, favouring the imagination of alternative futures but also by being involved in more concrete and collective actions.

Last but not least, it is necessary to develop critical thinking through education. This was another important conclusion of the study, revealing that young people have little to no critical approach concerning the belief that technology can solve every problem.

> *"For students to become critical, yet visionary participants in society, they need to learn to recognize and resist passively adopting ideological assumptions and narratives that prevent them from becoming meaningful historical actors who develop a sense of their own identity in relation to broader social and historical forces"*



NET ZERO & YOU(TH)

COUNTRY(IES)
Canada

ORGANISATION(S)
Apathy is Boring

YEAR(S)
2023-ongoing

LINK(S)
https://www.apathyisboring.com/net_zero_and_youth

Net Zero and You(th): Storytelling & Climate Action is a national youth-led initiative developed by Apathy is Boring to support young people across Canada in exploring climate issues through storytelling, peer dialogue, and civic reflection. Instead of focusing solely on technical solutions or policy critique, the program uses storytelling to empower youth to make sense of their lived experiences, develop communication tools, and cultivate long-term civic engagement.

The project unfolds through regional cohorts (Québec, Alberta, and British Columbia), each engaging small groups of 5–15 participants in three core sessions:

1. Understanding Net Zero
2. Storytelling
3. Dialogue, Sharing, and Mobilization

Cohorts meet online and, where possible, in person. Each session provides space for building community, deepening climate literacy, and practicing intentional conversations—especially across generational and political divides.



NET-ZERO AND YOU(TH), @apathyisboring

WHAT THEY LEARNED

Participants from across the three cohorts shared a wide range of transformative insights and reflections. Several major outcomes stand out:

1. New ways of framing climate conversations

- Participants moved away from debates and moralizing tones, instead using personal stories to open dialogue with those holding different views.
- Storytelling offered a way to explore emotions like fear, grief, and hope without paralysis.
- Participants learned to frame climate issues through empathy, which helped when speaking with older generations, skeptics, or disengaged peers.

> *"I stopped trying to 'convince' people. I started telling my own story,and that invited them into the conversation."*

2. Concrete knowledge of net-zero policies

- Youth gained a clearer understanding of Canada's net-zero landscape, including who sets policies, how energy systems are regulated, and where contradictions lie (e.g., continued fossil fuel expansion in BC).
- They learned to critically assess government plans, track local climate initiatives, and ask better-informed questions as citizens.
- Participants began seeing climate action as tied to institutional processes, not just grass-roots activism.

> *"Before this, I didn't know who was actually responsible for climate planning in Canada. Now I can follow the policy—locally and nationally."*

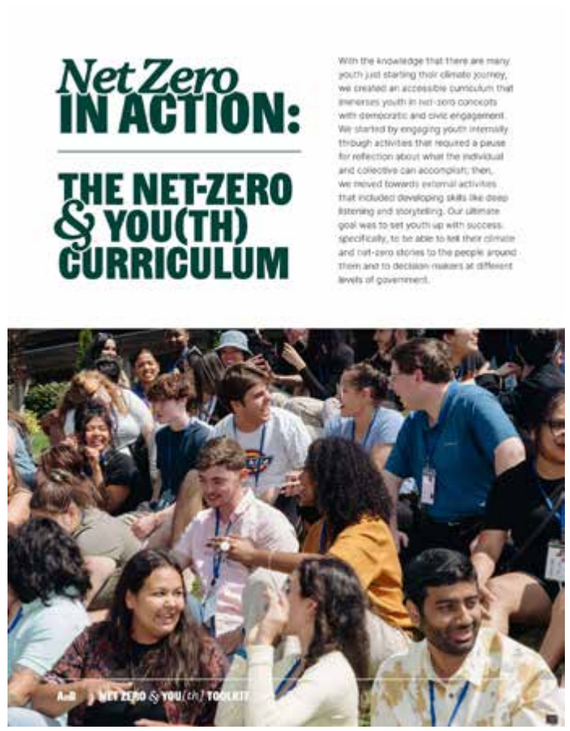
3. Practical tools for intergenerational and community dialogue

- Youth practiced deep listening, role play, and scenario building to engage in conversations across political or generational lines.
- They gained tools to discuss net-zero goals with older family members, civic leaders, or indifferent audiences without judgment.
- The cohorts provided safe rehearsal spaces where vulnerability and not-knowing were welcomed.

> *"I used to avoid climate conversations at family dinners. Now I know how to open them, how to keep them going."*



NET-ZERO AND YOU(TH) PROGRAM, Province Specific Research: Ontario



NET-ZERO AND YOU(TH) TOOLKIT, Apathy is Boring Research and Development Team, 2025

4. Building a network and a sense of collective momentum

- A sense of isolation shifted to belonging. Many youth reported feeling less alone in their climate anxiety and more connected to a shared cause.
- Participants found peers who shared their values—and who were equally committed to action, reflection, and care. After the sessions, several alumni stayed involved, created partnerships, or initiated local projects (e.g., community fridge campaigns, participatory budgeting proposals, and youth climate panels).

> *"I now know I'm not alone. There are people like me across the country trying to make change—and that keeps me going."*

5. Expanded emotional and strategic capacities

- Participants developed new emotional literacy, learning how to name eco-anxiety, process grief.
- They reported being able to hold conflicting truths: that climate change is terrifying and that constructive action is still possible.
- The programs shift the focus from climate engagement as a work of politicians and experts to a community's work based on values.

> *"What stayed with me wasn't just the content, but the tone as I also had space to imagine."*

UNEXPECTED DISCOVERIES

- Climate justice is not experienced the same everywhere. Youth from marginalized communities shared how food security, housing access, and exposure to pollution shaped their understanding of sustainability.
- Net-zero is not yet culturally legible. Participants noted that many people, even those concerned about the environment, have no idea what "net zero" means or why it matters,-making storytelling even more vital.
- Policy awareness changes priorities. Learning about the contradictions in Canadian energy policy (e.g., coal, oil subsidies) gave participants a more nuanced understanding of greenwashing and systemic inertia.

What makes youth perspective unique

Participants insisted that youth are not just future decision-makers,they are already navigating climate breakdown daily. Their approach to net-zero is deeply informed by lived experience, financial uncertainty, cultural realities, and a desire to link personal responsibility to systemic change.

They ask not just: "What can I do?" but "What can we change together?"

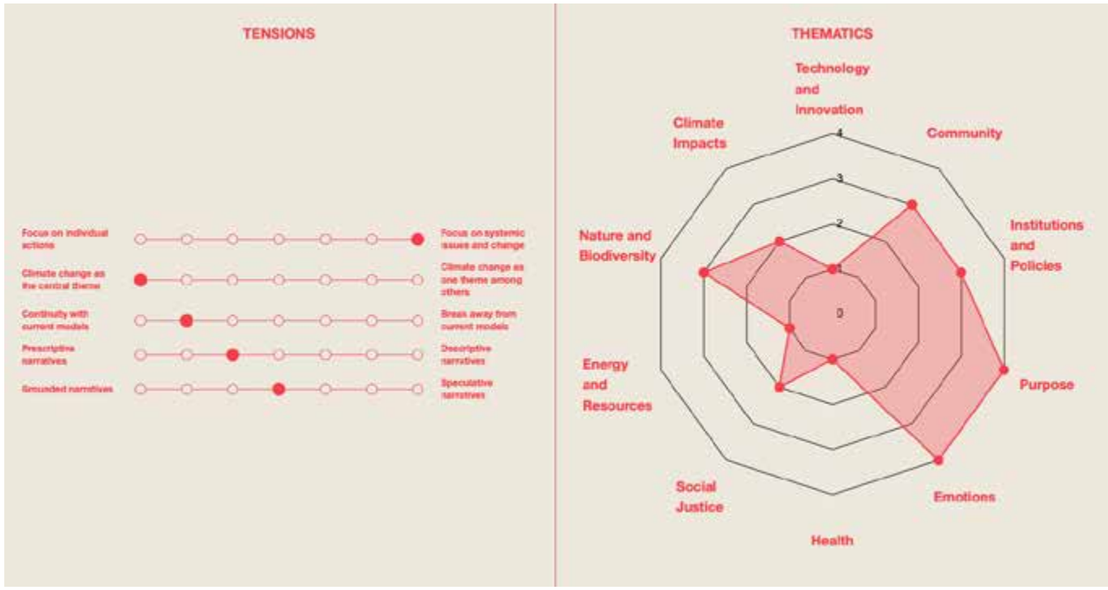
> *"We've grown up in the climate crisis. It shapes our education, our jobs, our futures. We can't afford to be passive—we have to make space to act, even if it's messy."*

CONCLUSION

Net Zero and You(th) is not a training program in the traditional sense, it's an ecosystem for youth to find their voice, build solidarity, and make meaning out of uncertainty. It equips young people to become translators between worlds: between generations, between policy and lived reality, and between fear and action.

In 2025, participants will share their stories through national showcases, local partnerships, and possibly a published anthology. Apathy is Boring continues to develop adjacent programs (like Table Topics) to offer long-term continuity for youth leaders eager to stay connected.

Ultimately, the power of the program lies in its simplest promise: *"Climate action begins with a story and every young person already has one to tell."*



NOT ABOUT US WITHOUT US

COUNTRY(IES)
From the UK to Canada to the Philippines, Poland to Nigeria and South Africa
ORGANISATION(S)
23 concerned young people from 15 countries
YEAR(S)
2022
LINK(S)
https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/09540261.2022.2126297#abstract

HOW

In 2022, twenty-three concerned young people aged 16–29 from fifteen countries published a "commentary" paper in the International Review of Psychiatry, reflecting on their common experience of the importance of mental health responses to climate change.

This paper was the result of an initiative led by **James Diffey** (UK, researcher at Imperial College's Climate Cares Centre), **Sacha Wright** (UK, public health researcher) and **Jennifer Olachi Uchendu** (Nigeria, co-founder of Sustyvibes and The Eco-anxiety Africa Project, also featured in WTFutures), with the help of one senior researcher, Emma Lawrance (Climate Cares Centre Lead at the Institute of Global Health Innovation within Imperial College, in London).

Most of the participants did not know each other before the project and were selected after an open call on social media, taking care to maximize geographic and age diversity. They worked together for several months, mostly online, designing a method where they would be "both the authors and subjects"and taking great care to acknowledge both the commonalities and the differences in their respective experiences and views.



WHAT

Mental health and climate change: an under-appreciated issue

The authors take a broad definition of mental health as "wellbeing, daily functioning and ability to cope with challenges in life and society", as opposed to the absence of a diagnosable disorder. Echoing a growing body of research (the paper contains numerous references), the participants say: *"Despite our diversity, we share a wide range of deeply uncomfortable climate-related feelings, including worry, sorrow, grief, fear, anger, hopelessness and responsibility. These feelings tend to persist over time, increasing when we experience climate impacts, when we hear of them happening overseas, or when we are reminded of the inaction of political and corporate leaders."*

These feelings are not abstract. For many co-authors, they can come from the first-hand realization that the place they grew up with may not be inhabitable anymore due to heat, draughts, floods, etc. Their effects are also very concrete: *"Knowing how much unnecessary harm is being caused, we can find it difficult to engage with basic tasks such as relaxing, sleeping, studying or working. Some of us also struggle with exorbitant feelings of guilt about our carbon footprints (even in poorer countries with relatively small footprints such as Vietnam), despite our understanding that the structures and systems we live in make ethical choices extremely difficult. In the absence of meaningful ways to contribute to climate action at structural levels, it can be hard to know how to navigate our desire to help, and many of us can struggle with feelings of shame and frustration about this too. […] We also debate with ourselves and our partners whether or not to have children, both because of the stress humanity is already putting upon the planet and because we are concerned about the quality of life our children may have."* These feelings, they say, supported by a growing body of research, are shared by a large share of the world's youths.

In spite of this, the mental health implications of Climate Change remain understudied, under-appreciated in most of the circles working on climate issues. The initial response to these concerns has also, at times, been misdirected: *"Mental health professionals must actively challenge the notion that the absence of uncomfortable feelings about the current state of the world (such as worry, sadness and frustration) is necessarily a sign of 'good mental health' and that the presence of these feelings suggests the presence of a 'disorder'. Indeed, the absence of strong feelings in response to upsetting global issues is more often a cause for psychotherapeutic concern than their presence"!*

Emotions are not the opposite of actions

If taken seriously, "rather than being signs of dysfunction, uncomfortable climate-related feelings often [can] have enormous value; for instance, worry as a warning of potential threats, anger as a rejection of injustice, and grief as a healthy recognition of loss. Together, our climate-related feelings connect us to like-minded people around the world, they motivate our action, they remind us of our care for both other people and the natural world, and they guide us as we think about the better future we would like to create."

The need for support

The authors call for "support" to help young people cope with their climate feelings. This support starts with everyday "validating responses", acknowledging the pain rather than mocking

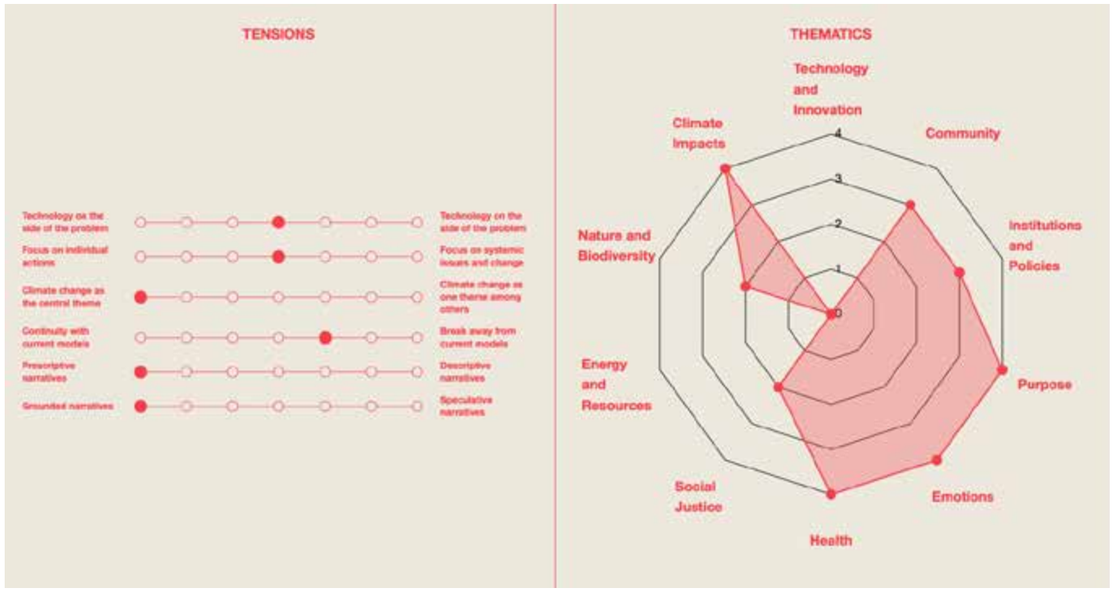
it or suppressing. It extends to mental health professionals, who can either be of great help in designing and holding *“non-judgmental spaces” and naming the feelings – or who can also “invalidate their clients’ climate-related feelings, with deeply harmful effects.”*

Support should also come from climate action from policymakers and business leaders: *“Many of our feelings (such as sadness, worry, grief and frustration) derive their intensity from the knowledge that the crisis is still not being taken seriously enough. If policymakers were more ambitious then we would only need to grieve the impacts that are already ‘locked-in’, rather than feeling worried and angry about the potential scale and impacts of continued climate neglect.”*

Hopes

The paper goes on to articulate four hopes: *“(1) political support for climate action; (2) climate-related mental health support; (3) intergenerational collaboration; and (4) a radically more compassionate world more broadly.”*

What the authors describe as *“meaningful intergenerational collaboration”* includes two ideas: really listening to young voices in climate discussions, as opposed to tokenistic involvement; and providing *“meaningful climate-related opportunities available and related financial, educational and mental health support.”*



OUR FUTURE PLEDGE

COUNTRY(IES)
USA, Italy, International

ORGANISATION(S)
UNICEF “Young Foresight Fellows”

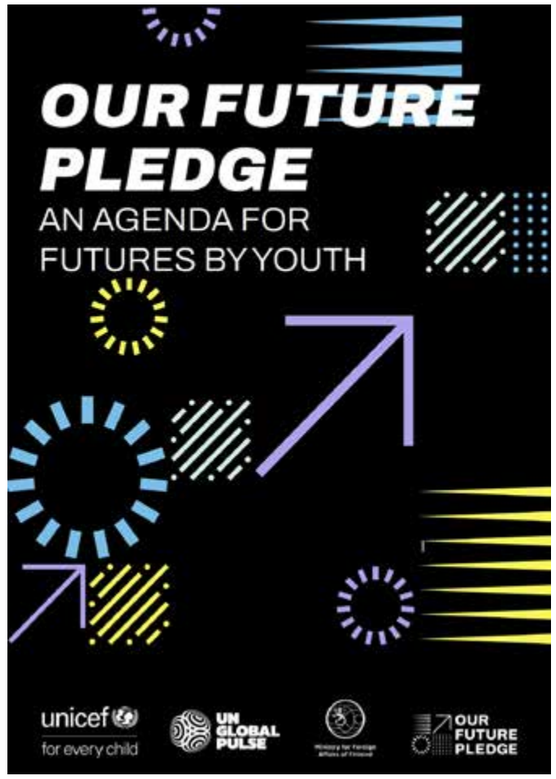
YEAR(S)
2023

LINK(S)
https://www.unicef.org/innocenti/reports/our-future-pledge-agenda-futures-youth

OUR FUTURE PLEDGE: AN AGENDA FOR FUTURES BY YOUTH

Our Future Pledge: An agenda for futures by youth is a toolkit and global campaign created by the first cohort of nine “UNICEF Youth Foresight Fellows” from across the globe, gathered by UNICEF Innocenti – Global Office of Research and Foresight.

Here is **a video for the campaign announcement** on X.



What

The toolkit presents three scenarios, presented as three “rooms”, each corresponding to a different climate-informed future:

1. **“Cries and crises”** (collapse, control and child exploitation): Unchecked climate change and social inequalities have made lives “short and hard again”. Hope comes from a “child corporation”, a mix of humanitarian action and neo-slavery.
   “This scenario suggests that young people are acutely aware of the challenges posed by climate change and are concerned about their future in a world where action is not taken to address it.”
2. **“Inclusivity and Resilience”** (technology and knowledge as sources of interconnection, understanding – and solutions): Sustainability, equality and inclusivity are the norm, digital technology supports shared knowledge and understanding, “prosperity is a shared goal”. “Exponential growth in inclusivity of women, marginalized communities, special needs, and refugees rights had unlocked better futures for all. People felt empowered to respond to issues of resource management, wars, and food crises with a shared vision for international collaboration and peace policies.”
   “This scenario suggests that young people place a high value on [equitability and sustainability] and are willing to work collaboratively to achieve them.”
3. **“Disruption”** (technology and privatization): Technology has advanced in giant leaps, everything is privatized. People with means live much longer lives in gated areas. Others find some liberty and accomplishment in virtual space. Privacy is a thing from the past.
   “This scenario suggests that young people are highly aware of the potential pitfalls of technology and are concerned about its impact on society.”

Which one is the authors’ “preferred future” seems obvious. However, they took care to mention a fourth, empty room, inviting others to write their own preferred future.

How

In 2022, UNICEF recruited a group of young foresight practitioners from around the world to become its first cohort of “Youth Foresight Fellows”. Fellows worked with UNICEF over the course of six months to design and facilitate a comprehensive foresight research process to inform UNICEF’s Global Outlook which provides an annual in-depth analysis of trends and events impacting the rights and wellbeing of children across the globe.

Using the insights from this research process, Fellows were given the freedom to design a product that would make futures thinking more accessible to young people. *Our Future Pledge* is what was created.

It initially presents itself as a form of time travel to three “rooms” representing three different futures (in 2042), inviting the traveler, when coming back, to learn from what they saw in these futures and act on it: “It was a stark reminder of the interdependence we all share and the responsibility we have to create a more just and equitable future. Running from the room, I knew that I could no longer remain a bystander. I had to take action to ensure that we build a future where no child is left behind.”

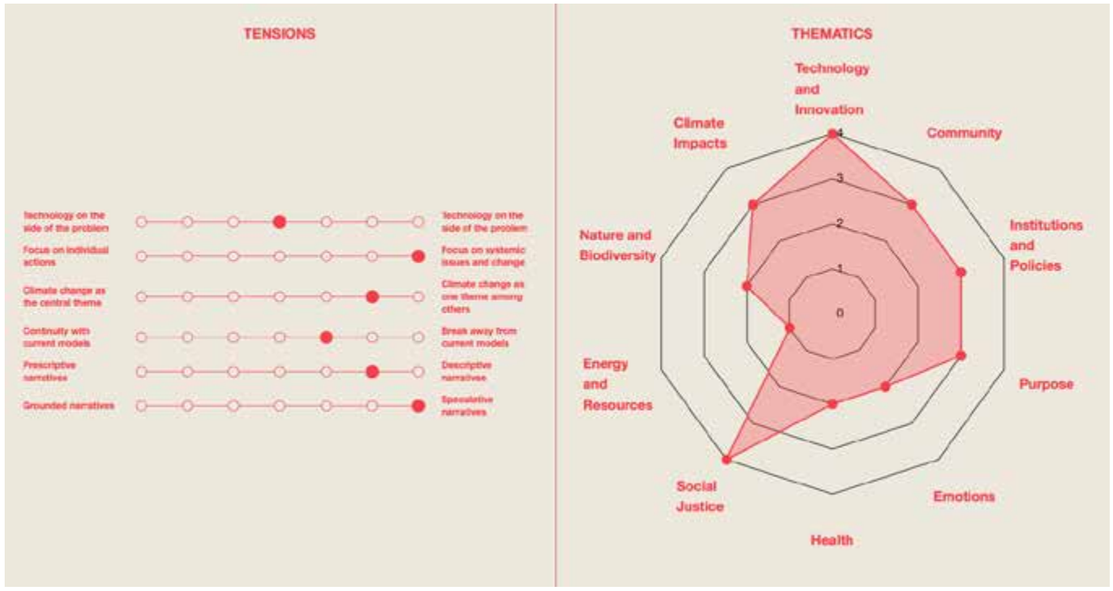
The nine young futurists who created *Our Future Pledge* saw it, not as a finalized document, but as a tool for other youth foresight projects. In the report, they provide the data and analyses they used to build their three “rooms”, as well as a simplified guide for readers to do their

own scenario-building. The intent was for #ourfuturepledge to become a sort of campaign to share the futures they want.

Next steps

Following this, UNICEF Innocenti also published a "**Youth Foresight Playbook**". It provides guidance to futurists and non-futurists willing to set up a "youth-centered journey to the future", wherever they are.

Aside from classic, basic foresight tools (the Futures Wheel, scenarios, backcasting…), it connects foresight approaches with UNICEF's 10 "principles for meaningful youth engagement" in foresight: Respect, Participation, Ownership, Collaboration, Experimentation, Transparency, Accountability, Flexibility, Skills-building, and Compensation.



PARQUE EXPLORA: LABORATORIOS CREATIVOS

COUNTRY(IES)
Colombia

ORGANISATION(S)
Parque Explora

YEAR(S)
2022–2023

LINK(S)
https://www.parqueexplora.org/

Parque Explora is a science museum in Medellín, Colombia's second-largest city. Several "community engagement" programs aim to make their public more diverse and to lower the barriers that separate the museum from certain local communities. The "Creative Labs" (Laboratorios creativos) are born from this intention. Each year's lab is different from the previous ones, but they all share four components: targeting people with some kind of social vulnerability; active participation; experimentation; and mixing science and art.

In 2022–2023, the theme was "the Future".



Medellín's Parque Explora

HOW

While the initiative was not limited to young people, four of the groups were composed of youths: one from a school, one from the Afro-descendant community, one from Indigenous communities, and another made up of "young leaders" connected through a church. Some of these groups were already established, while others were self-formed in response to an open call transmitted through local community leaders. Each group typically included 15 to 20 participants, except for the school group, which had 30.

The museum's invitation was to think about the future with the help of an artistic technique, and an artists collective. According to Luz Helena Oviedo Villegas, Outreach and science engagement coordinator, "We are very interested in art as a vehicle to, not only convey messages, but as a form to spark conversations with and among people." Parque Explora worked with several artistic collectives using serigraphy, ceramics, photography, and video: **Tricilab, Sensopía**, Moravia City Rappers, and **Tallerarte**. Several preparatory sessions were held before the workshops in order to help the artists combine the future-focused methodologies developed by Parque Explora with their artistic techniques.

Each group met four times for close to three hours. Since each workshop was led by a different artist collective, all groups worked differently. However, in principle, the sessions were organized as follows: Session 1 introduced key concepts from futures studies, along with the artistic techniques participants would be using. Participants also discussed possible and preferred futures. Session 2 was more about new possibilities, and alternative futures. Sessions 3 and 4 focused more on what participants can do today to have a say about (or in) the future.

In practice, it proved challenging to both use the creative techniques that the art collectives came with, and think about the future. "The collectives are really good at getting people to express themselves, but they are not all that focused on the future", reflects Luz Helena.

At the end, all the participants gathered in the museum for an exhibition and a discussion with and among them.



Parque Explora: Laboratorios Creativos

WHAT

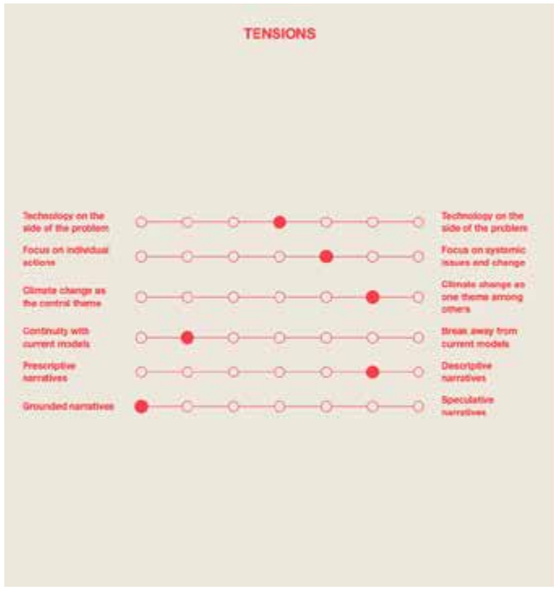
According to Luz Helena, *“The first lesson I learned was that the participants’ territory is very present in their answers. For participants from indigenous groups, in particular, their future projection is to go back to their territories and to do something for them.”*

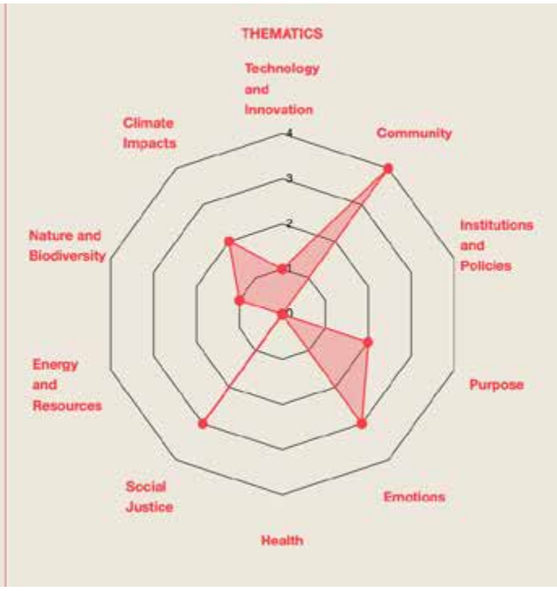
Most of the participants said that they were able to develop or strengthen some capabilities, and that it gave them a rare opportunity to talk about their future.

However, the workshops uncovered a strong feeling, among the participants, that it’s other people who decide the future, not them. Maybe this is related to the context of vulnerability, of people who are struggling with so many things. However, the participants clearly found value in being able to talk about the future, to imagine better futures and to understand that they might have a say in them.



Parque Explora: Laboratorios Creativos





LOOKING FORWARD

“If we had to do it again”, says Luz Helena, “there are several things we would change. One is to have more control over the sessions, so that the ‘futures’ aspect of them remains strong. Another, which we are already implementing, is to work with artistic collectives who are already an assembled group, and mostly work in their neighborhoods rather than asking the partici-pants to come to Parque Explora.”

The last challenge is to always be more relevant to people. In 2023–2024, Parque Explora didn’t impose a topic, we asked the groups to come up with a question that was important to them. Four out of six chose an environmental issue such as solid waste, water quality, or changes in land use in connection with gentrification. In 2024–2025, the relationship with nature is the main, overarching topic for the whole of Parque Explora, including the Creative Labs.

PEDAGOGÍAS DEL MAÑANA

COUNTRY(IES)
Spain

ORGANISATION(S)
Cooperativa Garua, Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofia

YEAR(S)
2023–2024

LINK(S)
https://www.museoreinasofia.es/actividades/pedagogias-manana-2

Short description of the project (Spanish)

HOW

Pedagogías del Mañana is a program directed towards schools and teachers in Spain, whose goal is to “foster eco-social education” through artistic creation, and “affirm the role of School as a place capable of leading transformative activities, and of imagining alternative futures”.

Over the course of two years, several classes, from 5th to 11th grade, in various locations throughout Spain, worked with educators and artists to explore a topic that connects ecological issues, social issues, and local characteristics. Then the groups met in Madrid’s Reina Sofia museum to share their experience.

Alongside those experimentations, the project also developed training courses for teachers, whose goal was to help them integrate futures and “ecosocial education” in their activity.



Photo courtesy of Jose Luis Fdez. Casadevante Kois. Cooperativa GARÚA.

WHAT

In the Vargas (Cantabria) high school, visual artist Seila Fernández Arconada helped the 40 young participants become aware of “vegetation blindness”: the invisibility of vegetation in most representations, from their absence in cave paintings to the selective gaze of present adults looking at pictures of landscape and identifying only animals or man-made artefacts. Then they reconnected with plants, learning to name them and care for them.



Pedagogías del Mañana, Museo Reina Sofia, 2023. Photo credit: Román Lores

In a school in Caldearenas (Aragon), pupils took sides against the development of skiing installations in a preserved valley, creating posters and building fake equipment such as a cable car cabin, which they located in unlikely places, in order to develop awareness in the community that “something was out of place”. The project named itself as a slogan in the Aragonese language: “Ya ye prou!”, meaning “Enough, already!”



Photo courtesy of Jose Luis Fdez. Casadevante Kois. Cooperativa GARÚA.

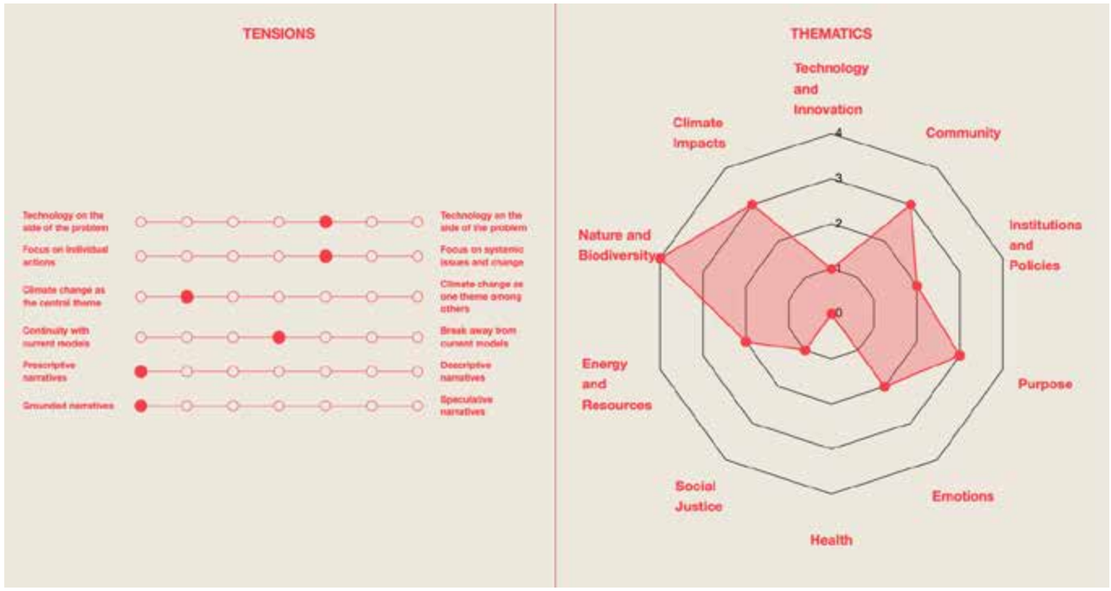
In Leganes, near Madrid, students created a news broadcast from the future, describing how their community was transformed by agroecology. Previously, they visited the neighborhood association, an organic produce store, and an urban garden, and made collages to illustrate the news with images.

News bulletin from the future (Spanish)

In Cabuérniga (Cantabria), young pupils **explored the ecological, social, economic and cultural aspects connected to the Saja river**, connecting knowledge, emotion, and ecological challenges. The biodiversity of the Saja, health, biocultural memory, literature, and the school community have served to structure the educational intervention. Interviews, photographs, field trips, an exhibition, and the creation of new signage for the river are some of the creations that came out of this work.



Image courtesy of Jose Luis Fdez. Casadevante Kois. Cooperativa GARÚA.



At the end of the project, all participating students and teachers travelled to Madrid to meet within the Reina Sofia museum. This allowed both students and teachers to meet and reflect on their respective experiences. For the students, it added a layer of importance to the project, helping them to become more deeply involved.

PUERTO RICO 2054

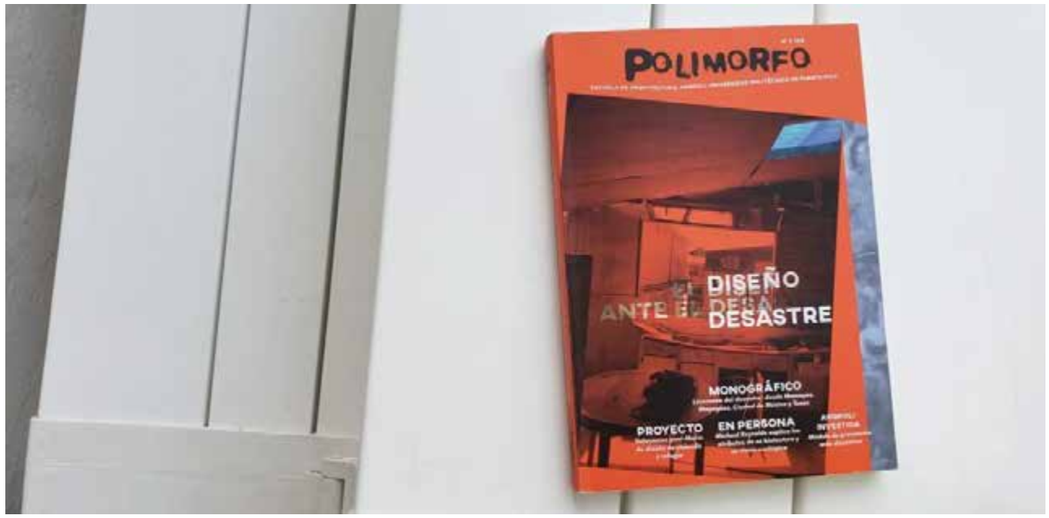
COUNTRY(IES)
Puerto Rico

ORGANISATION(S)
University of Puerto Rico in San Juan, Maria de Mater O'Neill

YEAR(S)
2017

LINK(S)
https://rubberbandpr.com/2019/01/23/design-and-disaster/
https://www.academia.edu/36761649/Puerto_Rico_2054_Design_Pedagogy_in_a_time_of_crisis

The day after Hurricane Maria, the country had no electricity but the university insisted that teachers continue to teach classes. Maria de Mater O'Neill reached out to a fellow educator for support, Lesley-Ann Noel. Together, they developed a methodology centered on resilience. Amid the chaos, the class became about designing climate futures, thinking about what climate relief might look like in 2054, and imagining that a better future was still possible. The students were undergraduates, 19–20 years old at the time. Many of them are now emerging designers.

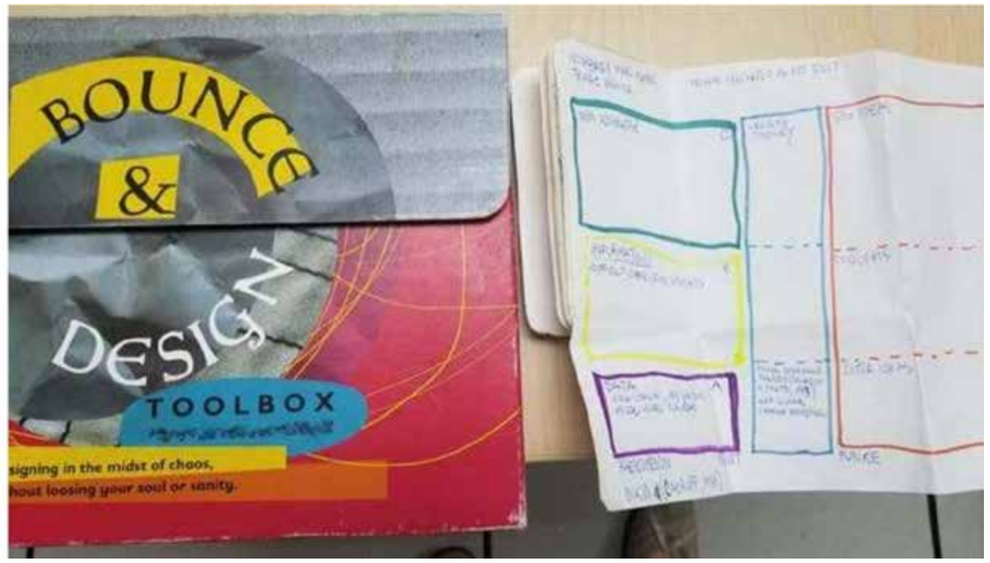


Design and Disaster by Dr. Maria de Mater O'Neill

Puerto Rico was in full disaster mode. The students and the teacher met twice a week for almost six months. Communication was so poor that sometimes in order to call her colleague Leslie, Maria had to walk to the middle of the highway! Everyone was under a lot of stress. But Puerto Ricans have a strong sense of community. The government was absent; there was no organized response. It was the communities that maintained order. While the attitude was one of disorientation, everyone moved forward. Students kept a diary. Everything had to be done on paper because there was no electricity, no digital tools. The projects emerged from direct, lived experiences of disaster.

The course outline was divided into four parts as follows:

· Understanding what happened
· Thinking about Utopia
· Making in times of catharsis
· Reflection and critique



Resilience toolkit designed by O'Neill, alongside a planning diagram from a student's journal. Source: O'Neill.

The students were designing while living in a disaster. Some didn't even have roofs over their heads. Despite that, they showed concern, creativity, and resilience. They gradually shifted from being overwhelmed to being more focused and hopeful. Their visions of the future were not dystopian, they were practical and optimistic. It says a lot about young people's aspirations and how they want to face climate change. Policymakers, scientists, and activists should pay attention to these grounded, hopeful visions.

The process gave students emotional grounding. By the end of the semester, they felt more in control. The class became a form of therapy, a way to stop focusing solely on the disaster and instead imagine the future. They worked with cardboard mock-ups because computers weren't an option. They embraced the power of imagination. This project was blessed by the sense of community it created.

> *"The anticipated result at the end of the semester was a selection of usable prototypes that addressed problems in their community. In the project, the concept of community was defined as the people with whom the students commune with such as their friends, family, and people who live on their street, among others. The final prototypes did not have to be fully functional, and could in fact be conceptual proposals, so long as they responded to the needs of users."*

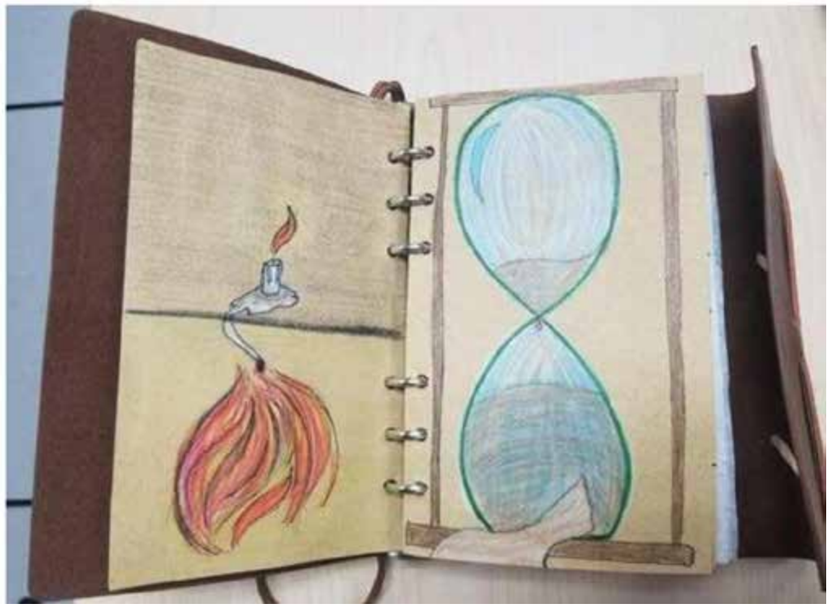


Greta's final project was a model-making toolkit to help users imagine new possibilities for fallen trees. Source: O'Neill

The following themes were identified in the responses to the questions:

1. Inside and outside of the catastrophe – where some people seemed to live in a bubble because very little had happened to them when compared to people whose lives had been devastated within the same community. Gabriel, who identified this theme was working with his own community
2. Apagado (turned off) - where some people had a lack of energy and emotional engagement to confront coping with the disaster. Luisa, who identified this theme, was working with a community in a nearby town, Humacao, and also with a close friend who had lost everything. She also used the resilience toolkit as she said it helped her to focus.
3. Survival mode – Where people accepted any job as a response to the massive rise in unemployment. Luis, who explored this theme, was working with people who lived on his street.
4. Mobility – People lacked access to places since roads were blocked, and bridges had collapsed. Post-María it took a very long time to travel from one place to another. Tonio was working with a relative who has a farm. He was also using the resilience toolkit to support his research.
5. Emotional regulator - where people had to learn how to be stoic and level headed. Ana worked with her family as her community. A family member who had maintained calmness and strength despite the stresses of the situation had inspired her. She also used the resilience toolkit as part of her process.
6. One day at a time - The act of planning under these circumstances had become impossible. Josefina, who was researching this theme, was focusing on her own family.
7. Reusing resources - Trees were denuded and uprooted in the storm, and they are being discarded and not used. Greta proposed this theme.
8. Garbage – Although the garbage continued to be generated, garbage collection and recycling services had stopped. The professor, O'Neill, who also took part in the brainstorming and prototyping activities, proposed this theme.

(To read more about the themes identified, read the research article)



This was Luisa's response to the sketch challenge as a response to the problem that she had identified: Apagado (turned off). Source: O'Neill

After the identification of problems and themes, students were asked to create sketches about their selected theme. Emphasis was placed on imagination and not trying to solve any problem. This gave them a chance to reflect on their feelings.

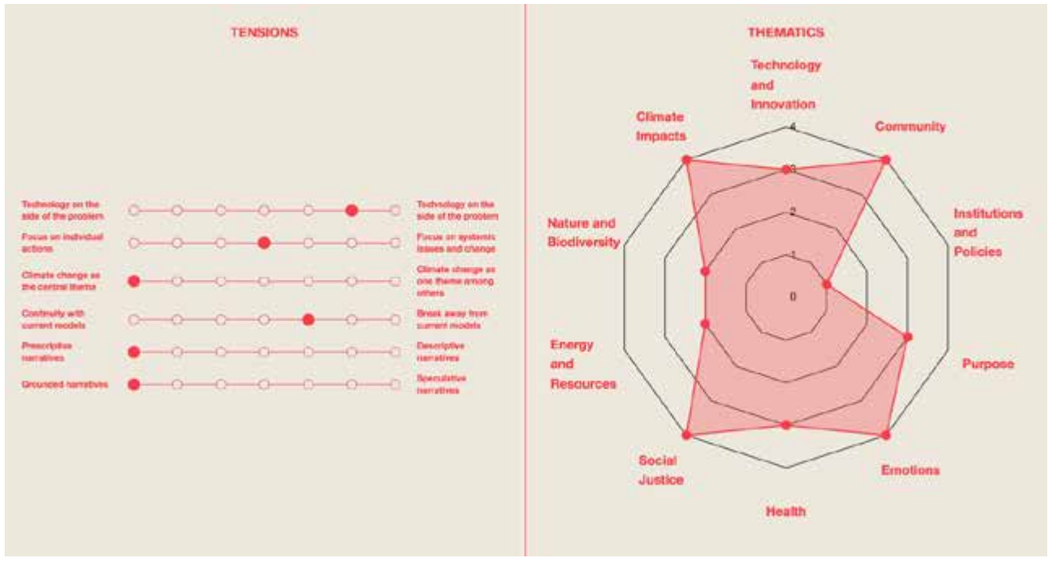
Though they could have chosen utopia or dystopia, students chose to envision a utopian Puerto Rico, and all but one future scenario described a Puerto Rico with a better future and better prepared for natural disasters. Without naming climate change implicitly, Climate change and disasters ruled the students daily lives during this exercise.

When Maria teaches foresight and speculative writing, she steers students away from dystopias. She thinks it's important to focus on plausible, positive futures—realistic enough to strive toward, but hopeful enough to motivate action. Her dream is that students become conscious of what they can do now to shape those futures.

Since the end of the project, she has also been encouraging students to work with soundscapes and storytelling, to develop richer, more immersive future scenarios.



“One day at a time” toolkit with a puzzle and simple daily tasks to strengthen self- motivation. Source O’Neill



THE ECO-ANXIETY AFRICA PROJECT (TEAP)

COUNTRY(IES)
Nigeria

ORGANISATION(S)
Sustyvibes

YEAR(S)
2022-ongoing

LINK(S)
https://teap.sustyvibes.org/

TEAP is an offshoot of Sustyvibes, born from the realization that a significant amount of African youths were experiencing some form of eco-anxiety: facing the very real consequences of climate change, knowing they will only accelerate, and lacking resources and support to cope. TEAP's mission is to create knowledge; to support mental health professionals in connecting climate and mental health issues; and to create spaces where young people find ways to express their emotions, accept them, share them, and ultimately gain resilience and hope.

Sustyvibes was created in Lagos, in 2016, with a mission to make sustainability both cool and actionable for Nigerian youths. A few years later, despite Sustyvibe's success, some of the founders and team members felt that dealing with the issue of climate change was harming their own mental health. They wondered whether this was happening to others and did a survey: it found out that 66% of young people were experiencing some form of eco-anxiety, and over 40 % thought they didn't have the resources or support to overcome it.

The Eco-Anxiety Africa Project (TEAP) was born from that, in 2022.

ECO-ANXIETY IS DIFFERENT IN AFRICA

Svetlana Chigozie Onye, who leads the projects, describes eco-anxiety as a range of emotions that people feel in relation to climate change: fear, anger, grief, hopelessness, solastalgia… According to her, *"eco-anxiety manifests itself differently across Africa because climate events are happening quickly, and young people are also facing different issues like political instability and poverty, and they have neither the social capital nor the support they would need. All of this affects their ability to recover from, and thrive in the context of climate change, and it does have mental health impacts",* sometimes reaching pathological levels: depression, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), suicidal thoughts, etc.

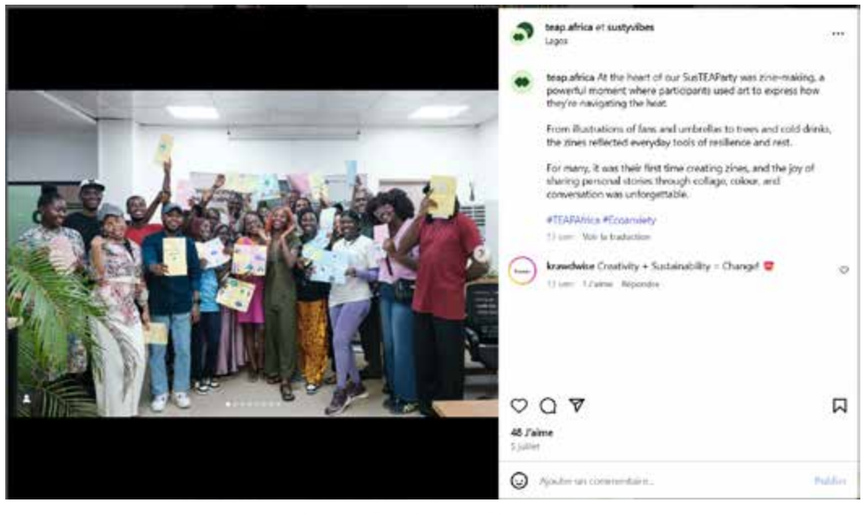
Research remains a pillar of TEAP, which cooperates with several international research projects. One of them, Anchor, is about *"aiding African mental health professionals in learning more about the connection between climate change, environmental issues, and our psychological well-being."*



The Eco-Anxiety Africa Project (TEAP)

SAFE SPACES TO SHARE AND PROCESS EMOTIONS

"We have to consider the stigma that exists on mental health in many African communities, where you're expected to just survive and go through life", says Svetlana. "As we started to do youth-led gatherings, we had to help the participants identify themselves within the definitions of eco-emotions we gave them. When we provide that educational element, they are often able to say 'this is exactly what I'm feeling'." Young people, particularly teenagers, "don't want to say anything if their friend hasn't said something. So, for example, we play a video of someone else speaking about how they're feeling anxiety, grief and pain, because then they can realize that it's okay to feel that too."



Instagram @sustyvibes @teap.africa

From this experience, TEAP has also developed a growing activity: **ZenCafe**, whose goal is to allow young participants to express their emotions, accept them, share them, and ultimately cope with them. *“Young people come to Lagos, or meet virtually, and we use guided questions to let them vent about their experiences of climate change, talk about eco-anxiety and then find hope”, explains Svetlana. “We build resilience through individual practices like mindfulness, but also, in Nigeria where storytelling, music and dance are so important to find joy and reprieve from pain, we also try to bring those practices into our youth gatherings.” Since religion plays such a big part in the everyday life of Nigerians, ZenCafes can also invite those who want it to pray. “We also try to bring elders to talk about how they have been able to build hope despite what has happened. What did they experience of nature in the past that is now changing? Seeing your elders being able to speak about the loss that they’re also experiencing because of climate change validates youth’s emotions and also gives them the opportunity to verbalize their pain.”*

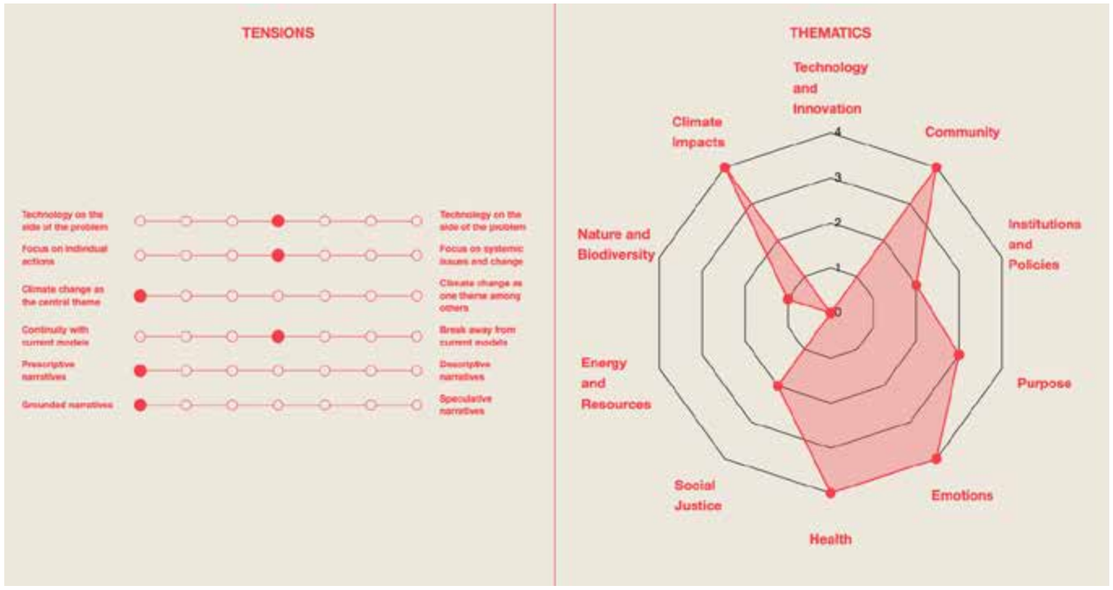


Instagram @sustyvibes @teap.africa

The program has been so successful, that TEAP is now working on multiplying ZenCafes in Nigeria and b eyond, via a training and grants program called Zen Guardians. After two weeks’ training, the Zen Guardians are capable of setting up and running their own ZenCafes where they live, be it in Kampala (Uganda) or Johannesburg (South Africa).

RAISING AWARENESS OF THE MENTAL HEALTH EFFECTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE

TEAP’s last line of activity is directed towards policymakers, in order to make them aware of the mental health impact of climate change, and the fact that mental health is and will be a major part of climate recovery.



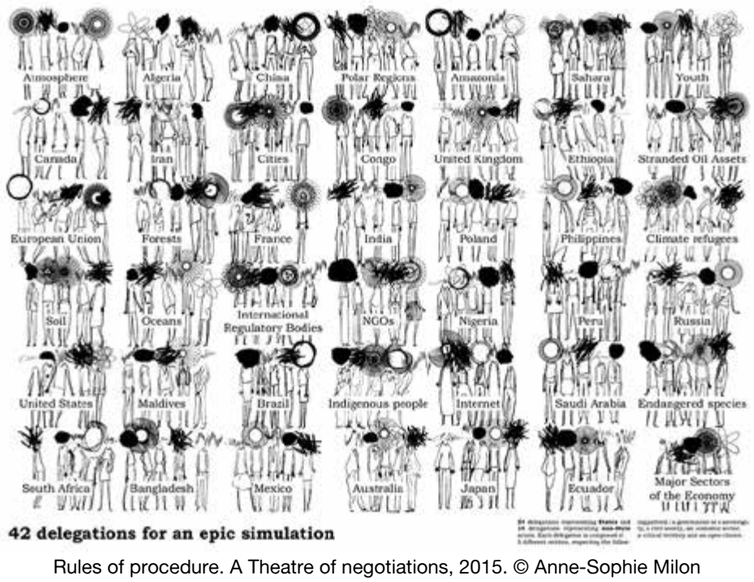
THÉÂTRE DES NÉGOCIATIONS

COUNTRY(IES)
France
ORGANISATION(S)
Frédérique Aït-Touati, Bruno Latour
YEAR(S)
2015
LINK(S)
https://www.thaetre.com/2019/07/02/le-theatre-des-negociations/

AN INNOVATIVE AND TRANSFORMATIVE CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES

In 2015, « Make it Work --- Le théâtre de négociation » reunited 200 international students for three days and one night to negotiate, as global delegations were about to do during the COP21, on the challenges of climate change. One major difference is that several of the students were invited to represent delegations outside the UN model such as oceans, soil, youth, internet and so on.

Also, even if a delegation had a common position, there could be internal differences between the various entities within the delegation. For example, the French delegation included entities with interests as diverse as the French Ambassador for Climate Negotiations, the energy multinational Areva, the Paris City Council, French Polynesia, and the Climate Action Network.



Rules of procedure. A Theatre of negotiations, 2015. © Anne-Sophie Milon

This experimental framework enabled these newly formed delegations to break, and play, with the codes of a UN negotiation format: asymmetrical signature agreement, ghost articles, meeting space free of territorial delegations'logic.

> *"At the end of the second day of negotiations, we realized we were arguing on the wrong matters. We were negotiating about amounts of greenhouse gases emissions instead of our vision of the world and what we want for the future. The negotiations turned on the next morning, when a group of delegates, frustrated by the failure of finding a consensus, stopped negotiating to gather in a separate room and tried to build on creativity and a different way of thinking."*
> *– Declaration of entities n°1*

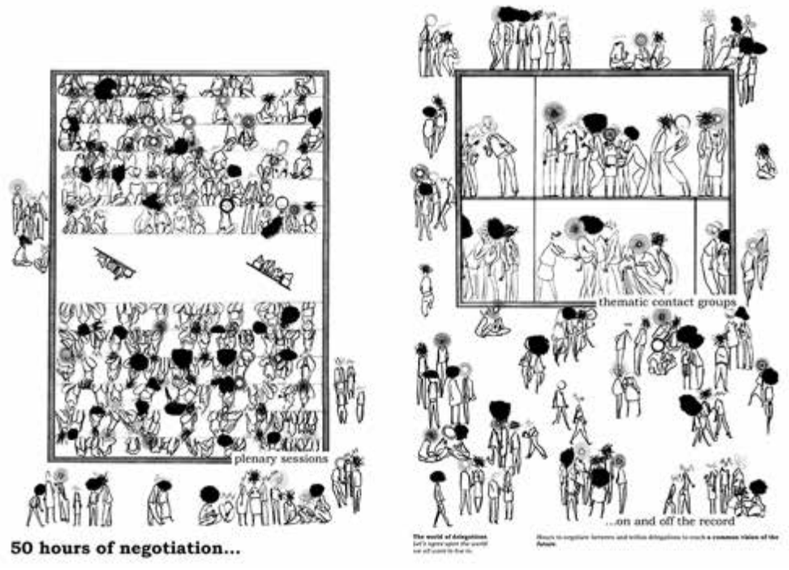
Even though they couldn't reach a perfect consensus, the students themselves were clear about the limits of the exercise and the true value of the experience:

> *"It is not about having a global VISION, it is about experiencing and having a global will to move forward, change, reflect upon ourselves. Something all the entities did, in different ways. We could not manage to agree on a common vision of the future, since we don't even have a common vision of the present. The diversity of our perceptions and our concerns prevent us to agree on a common vision but constitutes our common richness"*
> – Declaration of entities n°1

RESULTS OF AN INTERNATIONAL NEGOTIATION IN THE HANDS OF THE YOUTH

The students produced collaboratively a 30 pages long text containing consensual visions of the future, common solutions that delegations committed to apply, and a toolbox of solutions and declarations endorsed by only certain entities.

Some quite ambitious elements emerged from these negotiations like the creation of a status for climate refugees, the establishment of a carbon market by 2050, a moratorium on Arctic mining from June 2016…



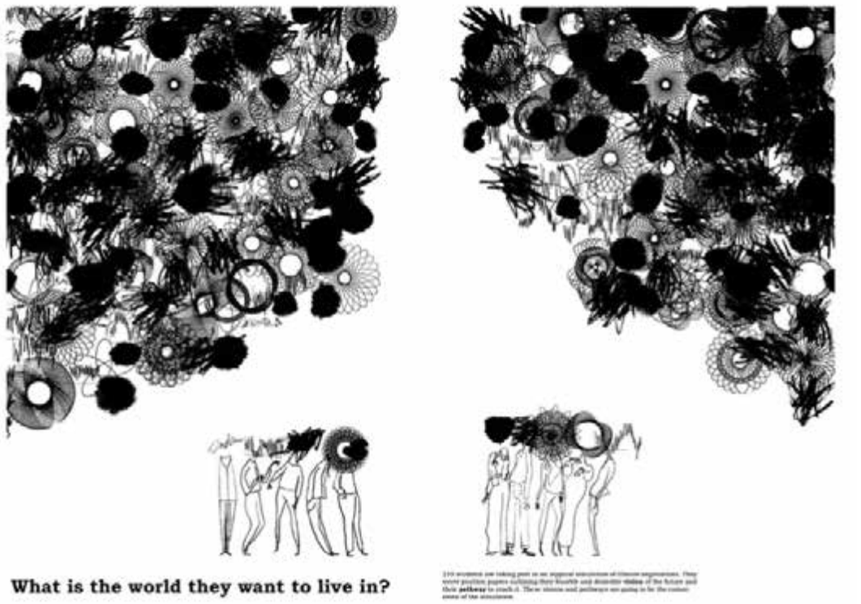
Rules of procedure. A Theatre of negotiations, 2015. © Anne-Sophie Milon

You can find in this document the whole production of the students. The introduction is in French but the formal texts, result of the negotiations, are in English. **Read the results.**

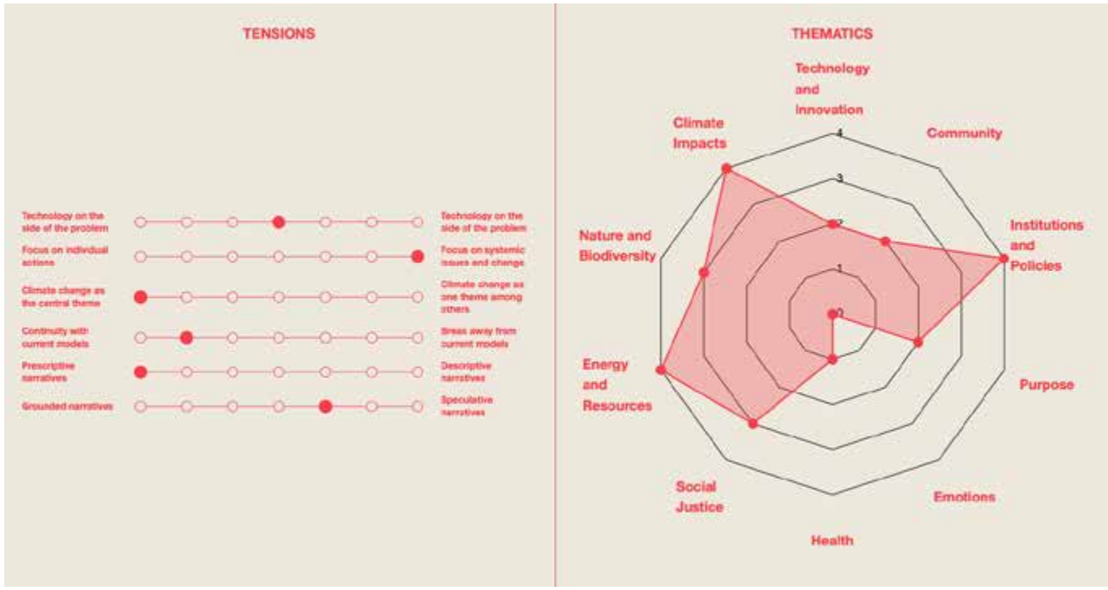
And here are two particularly striking extracts to take you deeper into this work:

> *“Article 22 – Climate refugees’ legal status – All Parties recognize that climate refugees as people were forced to leave their homes and communities domestically or internationally because of the effect of climate change. All Parties collaborate to assist the international and domestic migration flows and population displacement regarding those climate refugees according to their capacities and situation. This legal status is linked to and protected by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).”*

> *“Endangered Territories – Article 35 – Pathway to Article 22 – A working group on climate refugees shall be set up under the guidance of UNHCR that will address the issue of refugee resettlement and aid internationally and domestically. The proposed instrument will deliver further definition on climate refugees according to scientific data. It should then create obligations to international community to deal with both prevention and remediation of the climate change refugee problem.”*



Rules of procedure. A Theatre of negotiations, 2015. © Anne-Sophie Milon



URBANITÉS NUMÉRIQUES EN JEU

COUNTRY(IES)
France

ORGANISATION(S)
Institute for Research and Innovation (IRI), Créteil Academy, Departmental Council of Seine-Saint-Denis

YEAR(S)
2020-ongoing

LINK(S)
https://tube-numerique-educatif.apps.education.fr/w/94d6020e-112f-4da2-a99d-dd8b272b5345
https://boutique.fypeditions.com/products/le-nouveau-genie-urbain
https://shs.hal.science/halshs-02892176

The project offers students of the Seine-Saint-Denis department (on Paris' north-east border) the opportunity to reclaim and reimagine their living environments (especially their school), in the context of the transformations brought by the 2024 Olympic and Paralympic Games.

Through partnerships with educators, architects, and urban professionals, students participate in real-world urban planning and renovation projects, such as redesigning schoolyards, neighborhoods, or parts of the Olympic Village, using emerging technologies like Building Information Modeling (BMI).

USING GAMES TO WORK WITH YOUTH

The primary tool is the videogame Minetest (now called **Luanti**), used as a collaborative 3D modeling environment. Each participating school works on a specific project area (e.g. a schoolyard or neighborhood), relying on official cartographic data from France's **National Geographic Institute.**

Before building in the game, students engage in documentation, field research, and ideation work. They alternate between real-world urban walks (observations, interviews, mapping) and virtual modeling sessions. The goal is to stimulate creativity, group work, and spatial thinking – with the game serving as a pedagogical tool, not an end in itself.



Urbanités numériques en jeu

Projects are later presented to a panel of teachers and urban planning professionals. In many cases, architects act as intermediaries with local authorities, turning these models into urban consultation tools for and by young people. Furthermore, some of these perspectives are integrated in the remodelling of the backyard of the school itself.

BACK AND FORTH BETWEEN FIELD AND RESEARCH

Several engagement models have been tested:

- Project classes: long-term involvement across multiple years (grades 6–9)
- Three-day workshops: short-term intensives with specific groups
- After-school clubs
- Territory ↔ Virtual game feedback loops: alternating between field investigations and game-based modeling



Urbanités numériques en jeu

TRAINING FOR EDUCATORS

To support implementation, participating teachers attend three annual training days, structured around:

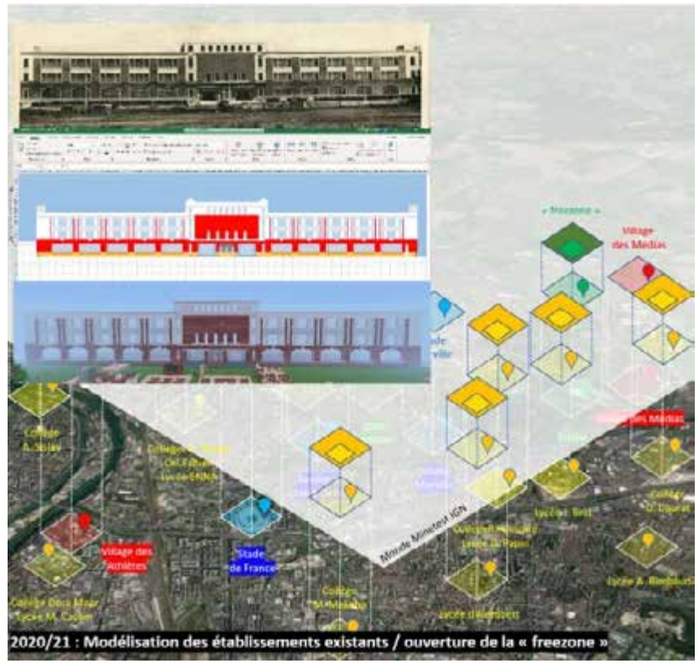
1. Theoretical sessions on the anthropological, political, and economic dimensions of urban transformation;
2. Hands-on training on Minetest and its extensions;
3. Curriculum planning sessions to design and adapt classroom activities.



Urbanités numériques en jeu

EARLY RESULTS

Since 2020, 8 middle schools and 2 high schools in Seine-Saint-Denis have taken part in the project, producing around 20 design proposals over two years. A new website is currently in development.



Urbanités numériques en jeu

FUTURE PERSPECTIVES

- Develop a national open-source platform for educational use of Minetest and urban modeling resources
- Offer a new model of youth-led urban consultation
- Promote a contributive research model where professionals, students, and residents collaborate on equal footing
- Support the emergence of new professions at the intersection of digital, architecture, and urban transformation



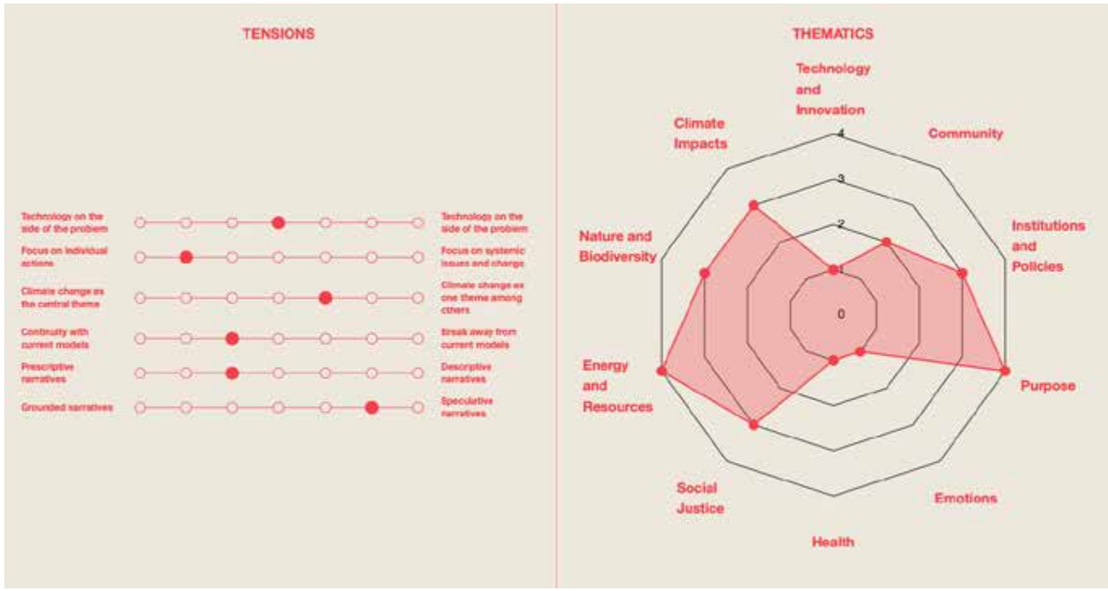
Urbanités numériques en jeu

HOW CLIMATE IS PRESENT IN MODELISATIONS

As students explored how to redesign their everyday environments, many of their proposals reflected a strong concern for ecological resilience and social well-being, revealing a new generation's imagination of a livable urban future. Especially students who went to school in very urban areas, sometimes close to highways and polluted air.



Urbanités numériques en jeu



Examples of common elements from these workshops included:

- **Greening of schoolyards and neighborhoods:**
  Many students proposed transforming paved, heat-absorbing courtyards into tree-filled, shaded, and biodiverse play areas, as a direct response to the urban heat island effect and climate change. Vegetation was often combined with spaces for learning, rest, and creativity, such as edible gardens, insect hotels, and shaded – with the help of very big trees- outdoor classrooms.
- **Reclaiming public space for play and community:**
  Teams imagined multifunctional spaces where sports, play, learning, and socializing could coexist, fostering a stronger sense of community and ownership. These spaces were seen **not just as recreational areas.**
- **Renewables and reuse:**
  Some teams included reuse of materials, integration of solar panels, and even systems for rainwater harvesting in their virtual models, showing an intuitive grasp of sustainable urban systems.

VOICES OF TOMORROW

COUNTRY(IES)
United Kingdom, International
ORGANISATION(S)
Curriculum For Life
YEAR(S)
2025
LINK(S)
https://voicesoftomorrow.curriculumforlife.com/

The Voices of Tomorrow project is *"a global initiative amplifying young people's creative visions for the future through art".*

HOW

Voices of Tomorrow was launched by Curriculum for Life, a British charity whose **mission** is *"to equip young people to develop and thrive during and after their educational journey"* – what they call Life Skills.

The project asked young people to *"Create a vision of the future through drawing, poetry, music or another art form and submit it"* online before May 21, 2025. It also provided the design for a simple workshop, addressed to educators and community leaders.

The project has received hundreds of submissions from 15 countries – mostly visual arts. A selected number of submissions is displayed in a **virtual exhibition.**



Voices of Tomorrow Virtual Exhibition © 2023. Curriculum for Life

The project's team also intends to *"identify themes in the works and share them with leaders to shape our future"*, although no schedule is available.

WHAT

Since the thematic analysis of submitted works is not yet accessible, sorting through the hundreds of submissions is difficult. A few recurring themes seem to emerge:

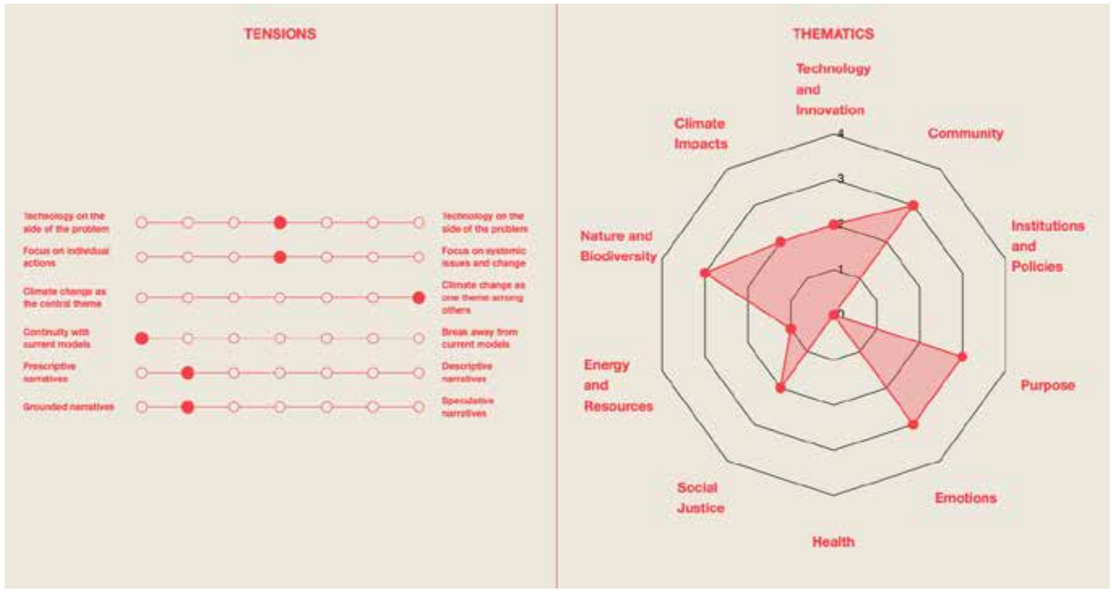
- Personal opportunities through education and work, particularly for girls.
- Peace (and war).
- Being together, understanding between humans, and sometimes between humans and non-humans.
- A love of, or a nostalgia, of Nature; pollution and climate change.
- Technology, often a source of hope and enthusiasm, sometimes a source of fear or suffering.
- Youth as, by itself, a source of hope for a better world.



Work of the children © 2023. Curriculum for Life



Work of the children © 2023. Curriculum for Life



YOUNG VOICES FOR FAIRER FUTURES

COUNTRY(IES)
USA, UK, International

ORGANISATION(S)
Reasons to be Hopeful, Teach the Future

YEAR(S)
2024

LINK(S)
https://www.reasonstobehopeful.co.uk/young-voices

In 2024, Reasons to Be Hopeful and other associations (Teach the Future, School of International Futures, Future Friends) launched a call asking 5–18 year-olds throughout the world to answer one question: *"Imagine you are in charge - What is ONE thing you would do right now to create a better future for people and planet?"*

HOW

The answers could take almost any form: a short statement, a long text, a drawing, a video, a poem, etc.

The call generated answers from 9 different countries (India, Nepal, Nigeria, Lebanon, Thailand, Turkey, UK, USA, Uzbekistan), with respondents ranging from 11 to 19 years old.



WHAT

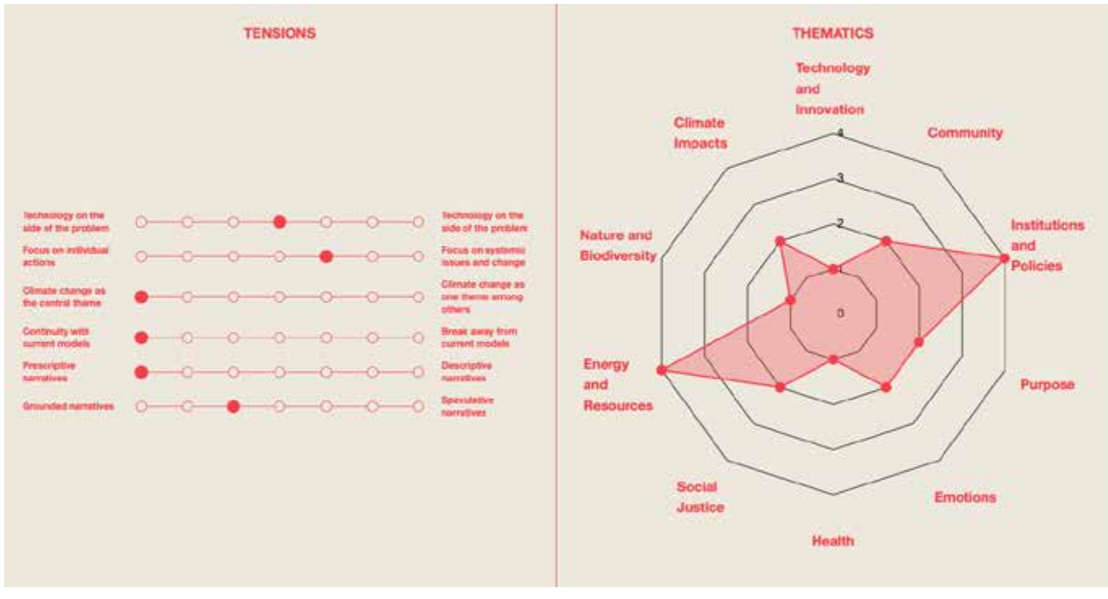
The answers highlighted four dominant themes:

1. Renewable energy, from calls to a global energy transition down to small, community based projects where local energy could enable better access to water and a more sustainable agriculture.
2. Community-based projects and finance, empowering local communities and grassroot organizations.
3. Education, from preparing for future "green jobs" to providing the skills to make sustainable choices in everyday life.
4. Leadership, and the need to be able to confront powerful interests as well as entrenched habits.

WHAT'S NEXT

The initiator of Reasons to be Hopeful, Jane Taylor Rahman, defines herself as "a psychotherapist and a parent", and it is "through this dual lens that she understands how the climate crisis uniquely affects wellbeing, particularly in young people."

Building up on this project, as well as several surveys showing the prevalence of various forms of negative "eco-emotions" with young people, she intends to develop the awareness of concrete projects working on solutions to climate change. According to her, such awareness is a first step towards overcoming debilitating climate anxiety.



YOUTH CLIMATE LAB

COUNTRY(IES)
Canada, International

ORGANISATION(S)
Youth Climate Lab (YCL)

YEAR(S)
2017-ongoing

LINK(S)
https://www.youthclimatelab.org/approach

YOUTH CLIMATE LAB – SYSTEMIC YOUTH EMPOWERMENT FOR CLIMATE ACTION



Youth Climate Lab (YCL)

Strategic approach

YCL's work is structured around a three-pillar approach:

1. Activate
Through capacity-building workshops, mentorship programs, and access to resources, YCL equips youth with the knowledge and tools to understand systems-level change and navigate the climate space confidently.
2. Accelerate
YCL provides platforms and support to scale youth-led climate initiatives, whether through incubation programs, funding opportunities, or networking with policy and business actors. Their acceleration programs foster entrepreneurial thinking tied to social and ecological impact.
3. Amplify
Youth voices are elevated through storytelling, research dissemination, and participation in national and international fora (e.g., COPs). YCL emphasizes equitable representation, particularly of Indigenous youth, racialized communities, and young people from the Global South.



Youth Climate Lab (YCL)

Shifting the role of youth

YCL's work has helped shift the role of youth in climate action from advocacy to decision-making and innovation, across multiple sectors from governance to the green economy.

Key outcomes include:

- Creation of inclusive spaces for youth-led dialogue and solution-building, often focusing on climate justice, equity, and systemic transformation.
- Support for community-rooted initiatives, such as Indigenous-led climate research or youth-designed climate policies tailored to local realities.
- Development of new models for engagement, including hackathons, climate fellowships, and circular economy labs, that connect young people with experts and institutions.
- Policy influence, with YCL alumni contributing to national climate plans, just transition strategies, and international climate negotiations.

Visions of the "future"

Youth Climate Lab encourages youth to imagine regenerative, equitable futures where climate action is embedded in all aspects of their lives and how they are invested in them

Participants have envisioned:

- Decentralized energy systems that empower communities;
- Reimagined urban spaces that prioritize resilience, access, and biodiversity;
- Circular economic models that embed care, sustainability, and solidarity;
- And intergenerational leadership frameworks, where youth and elders co-create solutions grounded in justice and respect for all beings.

These visions have been conceptualised in tools.

Examples of youth-imagined futures through ycl initiatives (climate and non-climate)

1. Reimagining finance: “designing youth futures”

In this program, youth participants developed prototypes for a just financial system that supports climate action. For example:

- A green investment cooperative managed by and for youth, enabling local projects like renewable energy retrofits or sustainable transport.
- Climate reparations fund model aimed at redistributing wealth toward Indigenous and racialized communities most affected by climate impacts.



Youth Climate Lab (YCL)

2. Circular economy lab (ottawa)

This local lab brought together youth to reimagine a waste-free and circular urban economy. Projects included:

A community bike repair and reuse network to reduce transportation emissions and empower low-income residents and a zero-waste campus café model piloted in collaboration with local universities, including composting systems and reusable container schemes.

3. Climate convergence (youth-led policy design)

Youth participants co-developed policy proposals on topics like climate adaptation, youth employment, and intergenerational equity. Examples:

- A national green Jobs for youth strategy, focused on rural and Indigenous communities.
- Climate literacy mandates in fields of education, designed with regional specificity and culturally appropriate materials.



Youth Climate Lab (YCL)

4. Art × climate programs

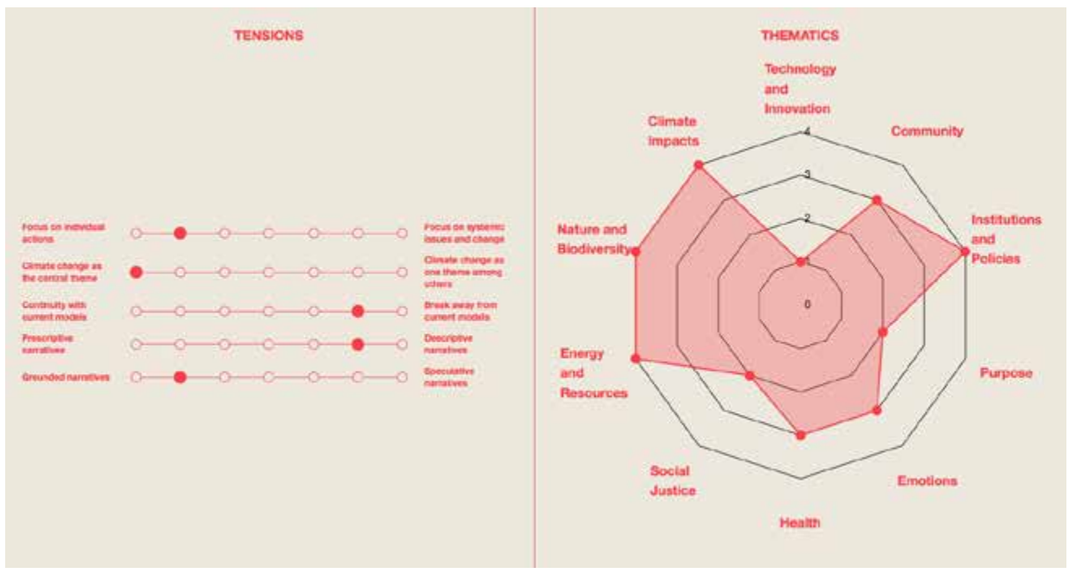
YCL integrates creative methods to imagine climate futures. In workshops and exhibitions, youth produced:

Fictional narratives and graphic novels imagining life in post-carbon cities with community-run food systems, co-housing, and decolonized governance structures. and put in public art installations representing “climate grief” and “climate hope” as catalysts for community dialogue.

5. Land-based indigenous climate solutions

In collaboration with Indigenous youth and elders, YCL supported:

- Projects restoring traditional ecological knowledge in watershed governance.
- Design of land stewardship curricula rooted in Indigenous languages and seasonal cycles, imagined as part of future educational systems.



YOUTH FUTURE UNDER CONSTRUCTION

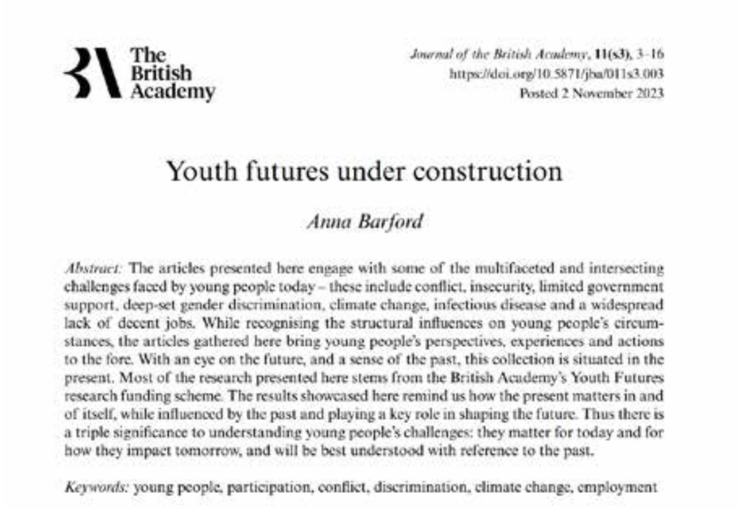
COUNTRY(IES)
United Kingdom, International

ORGANISATION(S)
The British Academy

YEAR(S)
2020–2022

LINK(S)
https://journal.thebritishacademy.ac.uk/articles/11/s3/003

This article introduces a “supplementary issue” of the Journal of the British Academy edited by Anna Barford, which summarizes the findings of the **Youth Futures** project. The issue explores how young people in countries like Uganda, Palestine, Ghana, Cameroon, Sierra Leone, Nepal, Indonesia, and others, navigate structural challenges such as conflict, inequality, and climate change. Conducted from 2020 to 2022, the research used participatory and qualitative methods, including youth advisory boards, diary studies, and arts-based exhibitions, to center youth voices.



The British Academy

Journal of the British Academy, **11(s3)**, 3–16
https://doi.org/10.5871/jba/011s3.003
Posted 2 November 2023

Youth futures under construction

Anna Barford

Abstract: The articles presented here engage with some of the multifaceted and intersecting challenges faced by young people today – these include conflict, insecurity, limited government support, deep-set gender discrimination, climate change, infectious disease and a widespread lack of decent jobs. While recognising the structural influences on young people's circumstances, the articles gathered here bring young people's perspectives, experiences and actions to the fore. With an eye on the future, and a sense of the past, this collection is situated in the present. Most of the research presented here stems from the British Academy's Youth Futures research funding scheme. The results showcased here remind us how the present matters in and of itself, while influenced by the past and playing a key role in shaping the future. Thus there is a triple significance to understanding young people's challenges: they matter for today and for how they impact tomorrow, and will be best understood with reference to the past.

Keywords: young people, participation, conflict, discrimination, climate change, employment

The project emphasizes a triple temporal lens, showing that youth experiences must be understood across past, present, and future. It highlights the “headaches” youth face, including job insecurity, gender discrimination, climate disruptions, and colonial legacies, while also recognizing their creative and civic agency.

Youth are not passive victims but active agents: from artistic healing in Uganda to resistance in Palestine and climate grief reflections in Indonesia. However, the research insists their efforts must be supported by broader structural change.

MAIN OBJECTIVES

- Investigate how young people today navigate structural challenges like conflict, inequality, and climate change.
- Understand youth aspirations and future imaginaries while emphasizing their experiences in the present.
- Promote youth participation in the research process itself, beyond tokenistic engagement.

METHODOLOGY

- Qualitative and participatory approaches
- Use of youth advisory boards, collaborative autoethnography, diary studies, and arts-based memory/futures exhibitions
- Research co-produced with youth as researchers and co-authors

FINDING, INSIGHTS

Triple temporal lens

Youth challenges must be understood through the past, present, and future. The present is not merely a staging ground for adulthood but a vital moment in itself.

Youth ‘headaches’

The collection details the layered difficulties youth face:

· Lack of decent jobs
· Gender discrimination
· Insecurity and conflict
· Gambling as a survival strategy
· Impact of climate disruptions on livelihoods
· Legacies of colonialism and conflict

Civic & agency

Youth are active agents. Examples include:

- Young Ugandans using art and exhibitions to heal post-conflict memories and imagine peaceful futures.
- Young Palestinians documenting and resisting home demolitions.
- Climate-focused youth reflecting on grief and hope through autoethnography.

STRUCTURAL CHANGE NEEDED

While youth show resilience and innovation, their efforts are not enough alone. Broader systems, economic, legal, and institutional—must change. “Young people cannot be left without allies”, writes Anna Barford, who led the project.

INNOVATIVE PRACTICES

Youth-led co-research

Use of co-research frameworks balancing power between technical researchers and youth.

Arts-based futures work

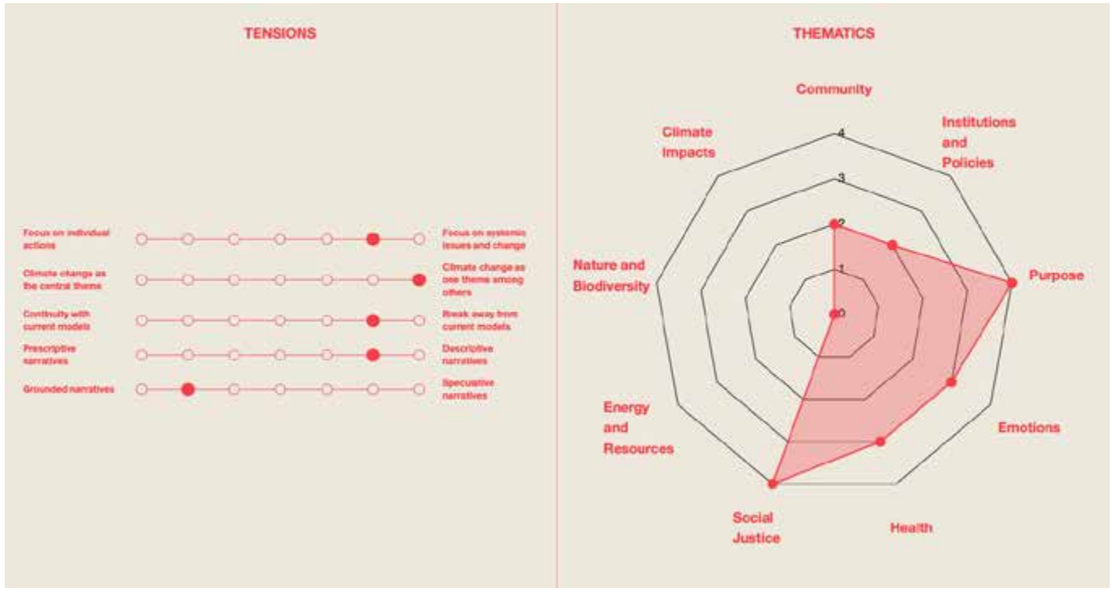
Exhibitions with curated objects (e.g., weapons as symbols of resistance) to open intergenerational dialogues on conflict and peace. (see article on Uganda)

Youth think tanks, “digital diaries”

Youth documenting their daily lives and economic coping during the pandemic.

IMPLICATIONS FOR POLICY, PRACTICE

- Engage youth beyond consultation by co-created research, policy, and programs.
- Design interventions that address structural constraints (e.g., discrimination in job markets, unregulated gambling industries).
- Recognize youth not as “adults-in-the-making” but as present actors with legitimate claims and insights.



YOUTH TALKS

COUNTRY(IES)
Switzerland, International

ORGANISATION(S)
Higher Education for Good Foundation

YEAR(S)
2022–2023

LINK(S)
https://youth-talks.org

Youth Talks is “Project Zero” of the **Higher Education for Good Foundation**, whose mission is “to help higher education institutions transform their curricula to meet the needs of the mid-21st century and ensure a more sustainable future.” The intent was to consult young people (15–29 years old) on their aspirations, their concerns, and what they need to build this sustainable future.

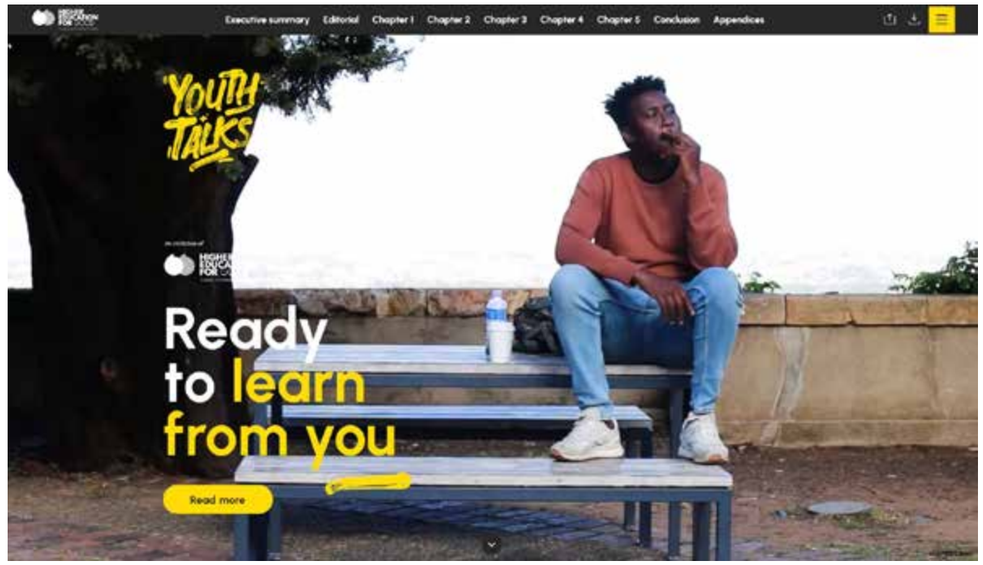


With the help of a scientific committee, the Youth Talks team made a number of radical design choices for this consultation. It would only ask a small number of open questions (eleven), so as not to lock respondents in predefined boxes. It would not focus the questions only on education, so as to better understand what the goals of educational activities should be. It would rely on partners and “ambassadors” – as well as social media – to reach the highest and most diverse possible number of young respondents.

55,000 RESPONDENTS

The result: close to 1 million answers from 55,000 respondents in 212 countries, analysed by a combination of (pre-Generative AI) natural language-processing tools and humans, both researchers and experts in large qualitative surveys (**Bluenove**). Some of the answers were also compared to those of statistically representative international samples, leading the team to believe that, although the answers mostly came from self-selected respondents, the analysis can reasonably be considered as representing what “Generation Z” has in mind.

The survey’s report thus provides a quite unique view of how these young people see the future, and their place in it.



Youth Talks – Higher Education for Good Foundation

HOPES AND WORRIES ABOUT THE FUTURE

The first questions were about the future, and what respondents wished and worried about, both for themselves and for the world. The responses highlighted a significant divide between “the West”, which puts personal happiness first in terms of aspirations and money first in terms of worries, and the rest of the world, where people seem to focus more on their success, their achievements, and the risk of failing to reach them. Marine Hadengue, who directs the project, connects the search for “happiness” in the West to a well-documented mental health crisis, largely due to isolation and addiction to social media. The issue of mental health will be the focus of Youth Talks’s third consultation, expected to begin in early 2026.

When thinking, not about themselves, but about the world, young respondents overwhelmingly place two issues at the top: wars and conflicts, and environmental issues. When asked about the collective issues that need to be addressed, three answers come on top: environmental issues, discrimination and inequalities (this one mostly in the West and in Latin America), and what the Youth Talk analysts calls “the individualism paradox”, i.e. the perception that individualism, which can be an aspiration, comes with a lack of cooperation, empathy, understanding, or even intolerance, bigotry and hatred. This section of the report concludes: *“Concerns about wars and conflicts, alongside economic inequalities and depletion of resources, reveal the paradox between aspirations of peace and social justice and the realities of a world troubled by tensions and disparities. How can we find our way in a world that aspires to stability when we are constantly jostled by conflicting forces?”*

WHAT WE MIGHT OR MIGHT NOT RENOUNCE

The next questions were about what young people were, or not, ready to sacrifice for the future. Here, the responses differ significantly from one region to another. What transpires, though, is that young people seem more willing to sacrifice material resources (money, time,

consumption items) than personal (well-being) and social (relationships, but also identity-affirming lifestyles). It is easy to mock the answers as reflecting a lack of will to give up many unsustainable practices. However, other responses point out the (well documented) limits of individual gestures towards sustainability. The responses to these difficult questions can also be read in a different light: young people are in the process of finding their place in a world that may not seem as full of opportunities, or even seem more threatening, than the one their elders grew up in. Youths are therefore not readier than their elders to give up the core (material or immaterial) resources that may help them find this place, and be resilient in the face of difficulties. Also, in many cases, they do not own that much that is theirs to sacrifice.

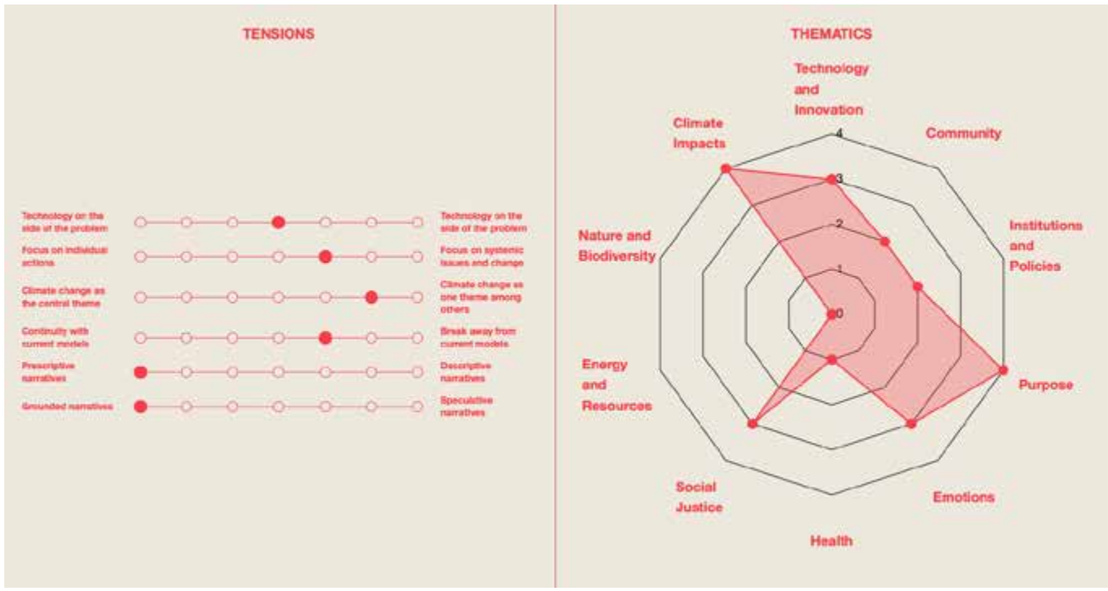
WHAT EDUCATION SHOULD DO

According to Marine Hadengue, the answers to the question "To build up this desired future, what we must all learn at school is…" yielded some of the most unexpected results. *"The top answer given by young people is to learn or relearn personal values and virtues that allow people to "live together" in harmony. They mention areas such as respect, kindness, solidarity, moral values in general, tolerance, openmindedness, empathy, acceptance, responsibility, friendship, love, and more. This result, coupled with the near-total absence of traditional skills and aptitudes such as science, technology, engineering, math, social sciences, and the humanities, all of which are traditionally taught at school, is staggering. All over the world, the youth are practically shouting at the top of their lungs about the urgent need for a foundation of values and virtues on which to develop our social relationships and interactions with each other, and bring them back into harmony."* Only China seemed to give precedence to more classic knowledge.

Hadengue insists: these are not "soft skills", they are core attitudes and values needed to "make society", recreate or strengthen social connections. According to her, education – and commercial corporations – insist on equipping young people with tools, techniques and knowledge, which are all useful, but only if the foundations of the societies they grow up in remain strong.

HOW IMPORTANT IS CLIMATE CHANGE IN THESE FUTURES?

As can be seen, climate issues are highly present in young people's minds, but they are far from the only ones. A world (or a country) at war can not focus solely on climate. Climate issues harm young people's sense of futurity and generate anxiety, but so do conflicts, polarization, addiction to social media, isolation, or the lack of opportunities to grow up as an autonomous person. When thinking of sacrifices, many young people probably have the environment in mind, and they seem ready provided these sacrifices make sense and are compatible with them finding their place in the world. *"It's not a matter of priority",* says Hadengue, *"rather of sequence. You need healthy, secure individuals to deal with the climate crises."* Especially because young people seem highly conscious that, if the sacrifices are theirs to make, it is because those who are currently in power failed to make them.



WHO IS BEHIND WTFUTURES?

THE PROJECT TEAM

Chloé Luchs-Tassé is a futurist with a multidisciplinary background in fine arts, digital culture, and international organizations. She designs strategies, develops new projects, and creates collective methods focused on ecologically engaged transitions and futures. In 2018, she co-founded the Plurality University Network (Paris, France). Now based in Montréal, she works as a foresight and strategy consultant.	
Daniel Kaplan is a futurist and social entrepreneur, with one leg in innovation, and another in imagination. In 2000, he created the Next-Generation Internet Foundation (Fing), a think-&-do-tank to “anticipate digital transformations”. In 2018, he co-founded the Plurality University Network (U+), of which he is the Director.	
Rose Rondelez is a designer committed to contemporary social and ecological issues. After forging an academic path at the intersection of social and political sciences and design, she develops her practice around topics such as imaginaries of the future, relationships with non-human living beings, and citizen participation. She is a project manager for U+.	
Juliette Lépineau is an illustrator and graphic designer working in the cultural and artistic fields. She is in charge of the visual communication of U+ and WTFutures.	

ABOUT THE PLURALITY UNIVERSITY NETWORK

The Plurality University Network (U+) is a nonprofit organization based in France, whose mission is to “connect those who mobilize the resources of the imagination to explore and enable empowering, just and sustainable futures”. With members all across the world, it is both a community of practice, and a platform for experimenting with innovative approaches whose common goal is to develop the capacities of individuals and organizations to imagine change and project themselves as agents of transformation.

https://www.plurality-university.org/

ABOUT THE EUROPEAN CLIMATE FOUNDATION

The European Climate Foundation (ECF) is a major philanthropic initiative working to foster the net-zero transition and ensure a healthy, thriving planet for current and future generations.

https://europeanclimate.org/

NON-CONCLUSION

Rather than a conclusion, we would like to offer a few ideas on what you can do with the content of WTFutures, either on your own, or in interaction with us.

Whether you're one of the projects featured in WTFutures, or a project that should have featured in it; a youth organization, or an organization working with and for youth; an educational or a research organization; an institution or a corporation truly interested in how to involve young people in how you work and decide…

- All the material in WTFutures is open source. Feel free to circulate, reuse, adapt, translate, or otherwise wrangle with it. Just remember to quote us and, if at all possible, to share what came out of it!
  → Where? **https://wtfutures.xyz/**

- Circulate the ideas that you consider the most powerful, relevant or perhaps intriguing. We have created a variety of formats to help you do this easily.
  → Where? **https://shorturl.at/rpBQG**

- There are certainly dozens, if not hundreds, of projects we have missed during this first year. If you are running one of them, or if you're inspired by someone else's project, feel free to reference them directly on our collaborative platform.
  → Where? **https://platform.plurality-university.org/wtfuture**

- Challenge and enrich these ideas: What did we miss? Where did we get things wrong? What existing knowledge or experience have been overlooked or mischaracterized? How could we elaborate on the most fecund ideas and directions for action?
  → Where? Just drop us an email at **wtf@wtfutures.xyz**

- We will create several occasions for interested people and organizations to discuss WTFutures, especially through online discussions continuing the "Agoras" program initiated in 2025. Use Linkedin or Instagram to remain informed. Also, if you're interested in having us join your discussions rather than the opposite, do reach out!
  → Where?
  Linkedin: **https://www.linkedin.com/company/plurality-university-network/**
  Instagram: **https://www.instagram.com/plurality_university/**

https://wtfutures.xyz/
CONTACT wtf@wtfutures.xyz

A project by the Plurality University Network,
supported by the European Climate Foundation.

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2025
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