

## Using Futures Thinking to Survive and Thrive in the Transition

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It is relatively easy to make sense of phenomena in hindsight. Using foresight, on the other hand, is more challenging – after all the future hasn't occurred yet. And yet, in times of massive shifts and uncertainties it is precisely foresight that is needed. This often requires a shift in issues framing, a challenge to previous assumptions and an inquiry focused on asking a different set of questions. To start with, foresight includes asking not what will happen in the future but rather why and how (multiple) futures (eventually) materialize. It links various short-medium and long-term horizons, as well as the world we inherited (e.g., structures, worldviews, values and narratives) with the one in emergence. Indeed, given various technological, ecological, demographic, and cultural changes, there are probably very few aspects of our lives that will follow 'more of the same' or 'status quo' futures trajectories. The world of work, education, relationships and so on, will keep on being challenged by both current trends we are very well aware of as well as by those yet to present themselves. Chance, random events, innovation and human choice/agency, coupled with history, social structures and current reality will come together to create and determine particular future outcomes. The question relevant to each one of us is whether our focus will be on reactively adjusting to those future outcomes once they arrive or, alternatively, find ways to proactively address the world yet to be born.

This workshop will introduce structured thinking about the future, and overview various futures methods and their uses, including a number of case studies. This will be followed by the application of Causal Layered Analysis (CLA) on a chosen area/question of inquiry. CLA integrates empiricist, interpretive, critical, and action learning modes of knowing. Its utility is in generating transformative spaces for the creation of alternative futures as well as in developing more effective – deeper, inclusive, longer-term – policy. Workshop participants will choose their own research question; the workshop facilitator will then assist them with the CLA application in order to proactively address futures possibilities and find ways to move towards those that are preferred – linking vision with reality and emerging futures with the present moment.

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