Envisioning and Backcasting for Sustainable Futures

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Workshop Outline:

- **9.00** An introduction-
  - To CEMUS
  - To our course
  - To “Back to the Futures We Want” Pedagogical Project

- **9.10** Seeds for Sustainability
  - Workshop Activity

- **9.25** Futures Wheel
  - Workshop Activity

- **9.50** Sustainable visions of 2040
  - Workshop Activity
  - Silent Museum

- **10.05** Reflections and Discussion
Questions we are (preliminarily) exploring in our paper

1. **How could we facilitate learning around sustainable futures using ‘seeds’?**
   a. How did the framing of the assignment guide their ideas about sustainable futures?
   b. What are the opportunities and challenges of hosting such a project as part of a university course?

2. **What are the possibilities and challenges of this process to relate to sustainable futures?**
   a. What did they choose for their ‘seeds for sustainable futures’? What does this express about how they understand sustainability?
   b. How did the processes guide students’ understanding of futures thinking?
Chapter 25
Back from the future we want: backcasting as a pedagogical practice towards sustainable futures
Sachiko Ishihara
Alejandro Marcos Valls

In Peter Blaze Corcoran, Joseph P. Weakland and Arjen E.J. Wals (2017, eds.) Envisioning futures for environmental and sustainability education Wageningen Academic Publishers
Centre for Environment & Development Studies

24 INTERDISCIPLINARY COURSES
600 students/year from 40+ countries, 250 guest lecturers

TRANS-DISCIPLINARY EDUCATION & MEETING PLACE

PARTICIPATORY LEARNING PROCESSES
Global Challenges and Sustainable Futures
(Undergraduate, 7.5 ECTS, international, 40 students)

- **Multidisciplinary perspectives**
on present sustainability challenges in a global context
- **Causes & solutions to**
sustainability challenges in a specific city or region
- **Reflect on your own role relating**
to causes & solutions of sustainability challenges
- **Relate to different visions & ideas about what a**
sustainable future could entail

http://www.cemus.uu.se/gcsf/
“As ecological, economic, and social crises deepen we desperately need new visions of a sustainable and desirable world.”
-Robert Costanza and Ida Kubiszewski

-- Overview --

What would an ecologically, socially, and economically sustainable society look like?

1) Seeds for Sustainable Futures
2) Envision 4 Sustainable Futures
3) Backcasting Your Future Vision
**Seeds are:**

“*initiatives* (social, technological, economic, or social–ecological ways of thinking or doing) **that exist, at least in prototype form,** and that represent a diversity of worldviews, values, and regions,

but are **not currently dominant or prominent in the world**” (Bennett et al., 2016, p. 442).
Share your seed in your group!
If the seed becomes mainstream, what might happen next?

Consequences in...
- Environmental aspects?
- Social aspects?
- Economic aspects?

Think about both negative and positive outcomes!
What might a sustainable future of 2040 look like?

- Combine and build your ideas based on the seeds in your group.
- Visualize (if you want!)
- Max. 5 bullet points
BACKCASTING

How do we get to that future?

Vision:
What is the future we want? How does it look like?

Present
Think of steps to get there

Future
【Part 1】

Identify 3 “Seeds for Sustainable Futures” that exists in your chosen region today.

‘Seeds’: ‘initiatives (social, technological, economic, or social–ecological ways of thinking or doing) that exist, at least in prototype form, and that represent a diversity of worldviews, values, and regions, but are not currently dominant or prominent in the world’ (Bennett et. al, 2016 p. 442).
【Part 2】
Develop four different future scenarios of year 2040
【Part 3】
a) Critically reflect on one scenario
【Part 3】
b) Backcasting:
Develop 5 key action points for a target group and discuss possible pathways to act towards reaching your vision
Creativity

Critical Reflection
Analysis
Ground in Reality

Radically different from the past?

Out-of-the-box

Balance?

Techno-optimism?

Bio-physical limits?
Think, Pair, Share!

- What surprised you about this experience?
- What do you think might be opportunities and challenges of these processes for thinking about sustainable futures?
Exit Tickets - Please share your reflections!

- What do you think about using seeds to think about sustainable futures? Opportunities? Challenges?
- Please feel free to share any reflections from this workshop, or any resources/references that might be relevant for us!
- Optional: if you would like to continue this conversation with us, please share with us your contact information. (We will not share this information beyond us or use it for anything else than communication about our project)

Online: https://tinyurl.com/y4xf2oaz