

FUTURES LITERACY LAB MANUAL FOR CLIMATE ACTION



TOGETHER_{FOR THE} FUTURE



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VELUX FONDEN

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Website: [Sammen om fremtiden](#) (in Danish).

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ABOUT THIS MANUAL



The manual was designed by The Danish Think Tank – Libraries of the Future and the Copenhagen Institute for Futures Studies as a source of inspiration for organising local Futures Literacy Labs at libraries within the framework of the project TOGETHER FOR THE FUTURE 2024-2025. The manual is based on best practice from the libraries in the project development group, but may be adapted to local needs and conditions. There is plenty of freedom of methodology when organising Futures Literacy Labs locally, so this should be seen as a set of guidelines and a source of inspiration only – but it is perfectly okay to think outside the box.

In the manual you will find the tools for conducting Futures Literacy Labs that we have found most suitable and relevant for this project. UNESCO's Futures Literacy LAB guide contains several methods and tools that you can read more about here: [Futures Literacy Laboratory Playbook](#).

Our hope is that The Danish Think Tank – Libraries of the Future and The Copenhagen Institute for Futures Studies will introduce futures literacy as a method in libraries with the project TOGETHER FOR THE FUTURE, and that the Futures Literacy Labs as an arena will be something that is subsequently developed locally in libraries in connection with other themes and other projects.

Enjoy your work!

Nicklas Larsen, The Copenhagen Institute for Futures Studies
Thomas Sture Rasmussen and Kristine Lykke Roed, The Danish Think Tank – Libraries of the Future
Copenhagen, 2024

ABOUT TOGETHER FOR THE FUTURE



The project TOGETHER FOR THE FUTURE 2024-2025 focuses on creating local climate action across generations, with the library serving as an arena and facilitator. A change and anchoring project to engage citizens in sustainable development forums.

TOGETHER FOR THE FUTURE 2024-2025 builds on the knowledge and learning gained in the Think Tank's previous project TOGETHER FOR GLOBAL GOALS, on the existing communities of action established through that project and perhaps still active, and on the libraries' competences in facilitating meetings between citizens.

Through multi-generational meetings between young people and adults aged 60+, the project aims to create a starting point for new common understandings of and hopes for a green future.

Futures Literacy works to democratise the future through the acquisition of skills and language that enable people to take part in the democratic debate about the future. This means that you can easily move from pacifying visions of the future to hope and possibilities for action, where, for example, new more sustainable futures can be established as an alternative to existing climate dystopias.

Multi-generational meetings for (renewed) hope

On the one hand, you have an older generation that wants to pass on a better and more sustainable world to the next generations. On the other hand, there are young people who are unhappy and, for some, feel that the state of the climate is the fault of older generations. We need ways to bridge the generational gaps so that together they will be able to create a shared vision of a better future – one that can inspire hope and action.

The project involves

- Training 60 library staff from 30 libraries to facilitate Futures Literacy Labs.
- Conducting local Futures Literacy Labs as multi-generational meetings in 30 libraries.
- Concrete joint climate actions, locally in libraries across generations.



PROJECT TARGET GROUPS



The project involves three target groups. First and foremost, library staff are trained to facilitate Futures Literacy Labs and run climate actions. Next, adults aged 60+ and young people who will participate in the Futures Literacy Labs, devise and execute the concrete climate actions locally.

Library staff: As a library staff member, you are a key player in facilitating multi-generational meetings. With your local knowledge, you can be the gateway and contact to young and older people in the communities you already work with, facilitate Futures Literacy Labs, and provide the necessary framework for further climate action.

Adults 60+: Adults 60+ is broadly defined and covers anyone aged around 60 years and above.

At The Danish Think Tank – Libraries of the Future, we know from the project TOGETHER FOR GLOBAL GOALS that providing senior citizens with a framework for doing something meaningful enhances the well-being of the target group. The target group of adults aged 60+ have found particular energy and meaning in intergenerational climate action because participants have the opportunity to engage with others, teach and themselves learn something new. For seniors, it is predominately about giving something back to future generations and passing on useful and meaningful experiences, knowledge and life skills to younger generations. Finally, they are doing something together and engaging with others with the purpose of creating a better future.

Youth: As participation in Futures Literacy Labs requires a certain level of abstraction, a lower age limit for young participants is recommended, corresponding to primary school grades 8–9 or high school.

Several studies show that young people are very concerned about climate change. Most recently, a 2023 study by the think tank Kraka showed that in a time of uncertainty, war and crisis, climate change is the number one concern among young people aged 12–30. Through Futures Literacy Labs, young people can create new visions of the future together with seniors, gain new and realisable possibilities for action and experience hope and action together with others.

→ Recruitment

In this project, it is up to the individual libraries, in collaboration with existing senior communities, to find out who it makes sense to invite to the Futures Literacy Labs at the local level. Find inspiration for recruiting the respective target groups in Appendix 5.

ABOUT FUTURES LITERACY LABS



Futures workshops, also known as Futures Literacy Labs, are a method developed by Riel Miller, former Head of Futures Literacy and Foresight at UNESCO, to help people become more aware of their own perceptions of the future and improve their ability to imagine alternative future scenarios.

These Futures Literacy Labs are divided into several phases that systematically lead participants through a process of exploring their current understanding of the future, challenging existing assumptions, and creating new questions, insights and perspectives on the future as something they can help shape through their own perceptions and actions.

At their core, Futures Literacy Labs are about expanding participants' *knowledge of the future*, known as Futures Literacy. In other words, this means knowing how to envision the future and knowing why it is necessary. Futures literacy is an essential skill that enables people to understand and interpret the role of the future in our everyday actions and observations of the world around us.

It helps us better understand the role the future and our perceptions of the future play in our lives, right here and now. This is a skill comparable to literacy, an essential skill that everyone can and should master and is accessible to everyone.

People can improve their ability to 'use the future' and become more 'futures literate' based on two basic principles:

- 1. The future doesn't exist yet and can only be imagined.**
- 2. Humans have a natural ability to imagine.**

This means that people are able to learn to imagine the future and that's what you train in a Futures Literacy Lab.

→ [Learn more about the background of Futures Literacy here.](#)



PHASES OF THE FUTURES LITERACY LAB



1. **Warm-up – vision and action:** The framework is set to initiate the conversation about the future based on the participants' individual positions on vision and action.
2. **Imagine the future – openness, discovery, hope and fear:** Participants start by sharing their current thoughts and expectations about the future. This helps identify implicit assumptions and typical patterns of thought.
3. **New perspectives on the future – creative friction:** Through creative exercises and scenario building, participants explore different possible futures. This phase challenges preconceptions and opens up new ways of thinking about the future.
4. **Rethink the present – reflection and learning:** In the final phase, participants reflect on what they have learnt and how this new understanding can be translated into actions in the present. The goal is to develop Futures Literacy that can strengthen participants' ability to navigate in an uncertain and complex world.
5. **Climate action – from thought to action:** By following up the Futures Literacy Lab with a climate action, you build on the hope you have created together in the lab. Micro-actions are important because they provide motivation and hope and help mobilise from problem articulation to action. See Appendix 1 for an inspiration catalogue featuring concrete climate actions.

WHY FUTURES LITERACY LABS?



Futures Literacy Labs are a powerful tool to prepare citizens for the future by *creating a framework for them to develop future literacy*.

This is important because having futures literacy improves people's ability to prepare for the unexpected and invent new solutions in a world characterised by uncertainty and constant change. In a way, it equips you to navigate a changing world and to influence the direction in which society is moving. It creates hope and empowerment.

Mastering futures literacy as a skill strengthens imagination, makes people aware of the sources of hopes and fears, and by expanding visions of the future, helps people better appreciate the diversity of the world around them and the choices they make.

Why Futures Literacy Labs at the library?

Developing future literacy is very much about stimulating and training imagination – something that is inherent in reading literature, where you learn to enter other worlds, as well as encounter other lives and perspectives. This is something that is already built into the mission and DNA of libraries.

Likewise, participation in Futures Literacy Labs strengthens citizens' democratic skills, enabling them to engage in public dialogue about the future, which coincides with libraries' mission of democratic participation, community action and equal access. This means that the public library both provides and serves a good starting point for creating Futures Literacy Labs as a framework for citizens to learn about the future.

Why climate action?

Futures Literacy Labs always end with a call to action to activate the new insights, hope and vigour in the real world. As a method, Futures Literacy Labs may be used in many contexts and applied on a wide range of topics. However, the project TOGETHER FOR THE FUTURE is specifically about creating a sustain-able future, which is why Futures Literacy Labs in this project end with a climate action.

When you look at the major challenges facing society today, the climate crisis is unavoidable. Several libraries are becoming an integral part of local climate action plans and are already strong in testing and facilitating micro actions within the climate agenda. Futures Literacy Labs can be one of several solutions to motivate and mobilise citizens to action.

CONDUCTING FUTURES LITERACY LABS



As mentioned, this manual is designed as inspirational material for organising Futures Literacy Labs locally at libraries. In the following sections, the important things to be aware of before, during and after conducting Futures Literacy Labs will be presented, and the actual process of a Futures Literacy Lab will be described.

There is also inspiration for recruiting participants (adults 60+ and young people), internal recruitment at libraries, facilitating Futures Literacy Labs, communication, concrete climate actions and follow-up and documentation.

It is recommended that the Futures Literacy Labs are held as stated, including the specific elements mentioned in this manual, but you are welcome to customise and redefine the framework around the Futures Literacy Lab itself in terms of themes, location, schedule, etc.

Before conducting Futures Literacy Labs	On the day of the Futures Literacy Lab	After conducting Futures Literacy Labs
<ul style="list-style-type: none">◦ Consideration of thematic action tracks, use of literature, inspiration from others.◦ Recruitment of participants◦ Preparation for the Futures Literacy Lab "on the day"	<ul style="list-style-type: none">◦ Welcome and introduction◦ 5 phases<ul style="list-style-type: none">· Warming up· Articulate the future· New perspectives on the future· Rethink the present· Climate action◦ Wrap-up and thank you for today	<ul style="list-style-type: none">◦ Developing concrete climate action◦ Communicating the event◦ Reporting to the Think Tank

BEFORE CONDUCTING FUTURES LITERACY LABS



When planning a Futures Literacy Lab, there are several considerations that may help ensure that the event is both meaningful and engaging for participants. The most important ones are listed here.

Choice of thematic action tracks: Futures Literacy Labs may be organised around many different themes. For this reason, consider which thematic action tracks should form the basis of the Futures Literacy Lab. The topics should be relevant to the participants and the goals set for the workshop. For example, themes might include the impact of technology on society, climate change, social justice, or the future of the labour market. These themes will shape the discussions and the future scenarios participants will develop.

As the purpose of TOGETHER FOR THE FUTURE is to take local climate action, we recommend the following framework that may be adapted to the local Futures Literacy Lab: "A sustainable future for TOPIC, LOCATION, in the year 2050."

Recruitment: Recruiting participants can be done by exploring new collaborations to recruit through, but it can also be based on potential participants already known at local libraries.

Appendix 4 contains texts for inspiration when recruiting citizens and colleagues for Futures Literacy Labs. You are welcome to use the texts as they are or select relevant parts.

Appendix 5 contains an overview of potential participants within the project's target groups.

The room: Choose a space that can accommodate 30–35 people, offering ample flexibility for both group work and collaborative discussions. This may include alternative settings such as holding the workshop in nature, in a forest, or more traditionally, at the library, which offers a more structured and safe environment.

Mood and theme: Try to choose a physical space that reflects the theme of the Futures Literacy Lab, signalling sustainability or future thinking. If the space doesn't naturally offer this ambiance, you may stage it using elements that signal the future or sustainability. This might include decorations such as technology-related objects, robots or green plants that create a futuristic and green atmosphere. The goal is to create an inspiring environment that stimulates participants to think creatively.

The empty chair as a symbolic element for future generations: An empty chair may be placed in the centre of the room as a symbol of future generations. During the introduction, this chair can be presented and used as a recurring element where participants are encouraged to consider what future generations would think about the topics discussed. This creates a concrete reminder of the long-term perspective that the workshop focuses on.

Press coverage and communication: Consider early in the process whether you want the local press to cover the Futures Literacy Lab or how else you want to communicate the event via social media and the like.



Practical implementation of the day: As facilitators, you probably have enough to do facilitating the Futures Literacy Lab. For this reason, you might want to consider whether colleagues are needed for practical tasks such as taking pictures for presentation, helping with group discussions, providing food, coffee, tea, etc., and generally being available to help with practical tasks so that facilitators can focus on guiding participants through the Futures Literacy Lab.

Materials and tools: Manuals, post-its, writing utensils and flipcharts. Depending on the specific playbook that will be created for the specific Futures Literacy Lab, additional materials or tools may be needed. Make sure you have these ready.

Futures overview: On a wall in the room where the Futures Literacy Lab will be held, you can prepare an overview of the future for use during exercises of the day. There should be four columns with the following headings: The Perceived Future, The Desirable Future, Alternative Future, Climate Actions.

Timetable: It is recommended to conduct the Futures Literacy Lab for around three hours, partly because it may be appropriate to adapt the school timetable if you want to involve students from secondary schools, etc. Thus, the template for conducting a Futures Literacy Lab in this manual is three hours, but you may adapt it as you wish.

Suggested time allocation, see the manual:

Welcome and introduction	15 min.
◦ 5 phases	
· Warming up	15 min.
· Articulate the future	30+20 min.
Break	10 min.
· New perspectives on the future	20 min.
· Rethink the present	30 min.
· Climate action	25 min.
◦ Closing and thank you for tonight	5 min.

Buffer of 10 minutes.

→ Remember to allow time for breaks along the way.

ON THE DAY OF THE FUTURES LITERACY LAB



The following material is available for use when organising local Futures Literacy Labs:

- **MANUAL:** Use this manual as a facilitator support tool during the event if needed.
- **POWERPOINT DECK:** Use the accompanying powerpoint deck to display in the room as desired. The PowerPoint deck is editable and can therefore be customised locally.
- **INTRODUCTORY VIDEO (in Danish):** Use the introductory video with Nicklas Larsen from The Copenhagen Institute for Futures Studies as desired, alternatively read the script for the introductory video aloud (p. 16 in this manual) or create your own introduction to the local Futures Literacy Lab.
- **TEMPLATE:** Use the template with an overview of the Futures Literacy Lab phases as desired. It can be printed in a large format and hung on a wall in the room, or printed in an A3 format and handed out to the participants so they can follow the phases of the future workshop themselves. Be aware of what the template will be used for in terms of whether it's hanging on a wall or printed for individual use.

The material was developed by The Danish Think Tank – Libraries of the Future and the Copenhagen Institute for Futures Studies for the project TOGETHER FOR THE FUTURE and is freely available on The Danish Think Tank – Libraries of the Future website: [Sammen om fremtiden](#) (in Danish).



WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION – SET THE SCENE (15 MIN.)



PURPOSE: Set the scene by articulating the theme and gaining the trust of participants. Make them believe that the process can bring something interesting and exciting to the table and that they should just focus on playing along.

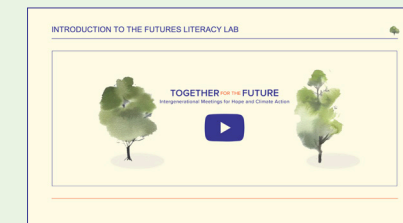
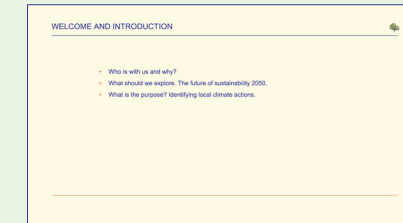
MATERIALS: Power point deck slide 2-3, introduction video/text.

DURATION: 15 min.

INSTRUCTIONS

1. **Welcome:** Introduction by the hosts of the day, including giving a time frame, a brief presentation of the participants, today's framing, programme and practical information.
2. **Introduction to Futures Literacy:** Joint introduction video by Nicklas Larsen from the Institute for Futures Research is shown via link (slide 3).

Alternatively, read aloud the text below.





INTRODUCTION TO FUTURES LITERACY

(for reading aloud instead of the introduction video):

Welcome. You are now about to start a Futures Literacy Lab. But before we get that far, here are a few words of advice.

Imagining the future is something we do naturally – we plan, dream and look ahead. But even though we do it every day, we actually know very little about how we can get better at it. UNESCO has done important work with their futures literacy methodology, which helps us become better aware of how we can actively use the future to inform the present.

The future is not a foregone conclusion and there are many possible futures. It is important to understand that we can impact the future – both by acting and by not acting. That is why it is crucial that we consider what we want the future to look like.

We can talk about democratising the future in an attempt to give everyone a voice. It gives food for thought that when we are out in schools, students light up when given the chance to share their vision, as they say, no one has ever asked us what OUR future should look like.

When we imagine the future, we learn to work with uncertainty. It makes us better able to deal with change and things we can't foresee because we have trained our ability to think ahead. It helps us to be flexible and find solutions in a fast-moving and often complex world.

Everyone has the opportunity to imagine the future. However, not everyone has the same resources or abilities to dream of a better future. Those who have the opportunity have a responsibility to use their ability to create change – for the benefit of both themselves and society as a whole.

Talking about the future in a library is not only meaningful, it is necessary. Libraries have always been places of learning, enlightenment and knowledge. This is where we meet to explore the past and the present through literature, but libraries are also ideal places to explore the future. Here, we can ask the big questions about what's coming and how we can help shape it.

Futures literacy empowers both the individual and society. By talking about the future at the library, we make future thinking accessible to more people – not just the experts or those with power and resources, but to all of us. Libraries are a platform for all of us to inspire each other to innovate and look forward.

Remember that the future doesn't exist yet. It only exists in images, and we must interpret and understand the visions of the future available to us. What do they mean? Who created them and for what purpose?

This way we can take ownership of our own imagination. Welcome to TOGETHER FOR THE FUTURE – a project created to bring generations together on climate action in Danish libraries, developed by The Danish Think Tank – Libraries of the Future and the Copenhagen Institute for Futures Studies, with generous support from the Velux Foundation.

PHASE 1: WARM-UP – VISION AND ACTION (15 MIN.)



EXERCISE 1: The Polak Game

PURPOSE: To make participants aware of their own perception of the future and their own sense of agency to influence development.

MATERIALS: Powerpoint deck slide 5-7, masking tape, post-its, writing utensils.

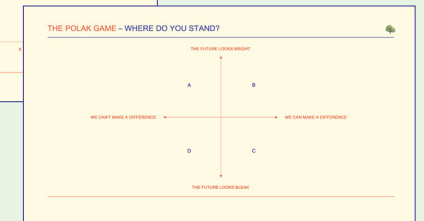
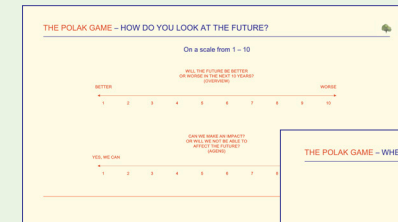
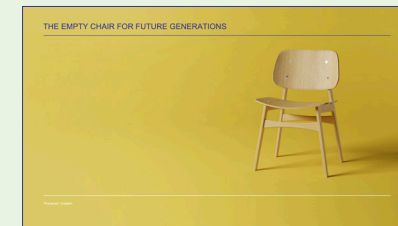
DURATION: 15 min.

To the facilitator: This exercise is an effective way to discover how people view the future and how they assess their own ability to impact it. It is important to emphasise that there are no right or wrong positions, and that we are influenced by our experiences, background and the things we see. Standing in one place today, does not mean we are locked in, as we can move as we experience different things, realise what is necessary and learn new things.

INSTRUCTIONS

Preparation: Mark a cross on the floor with masking tape, e.g., approximately 2 x 2 metres with 10 scale points on each axis. Alternatively, you may use the four walls of the room as the world corners of the matrix.

1. Read the questions on slide 6 aloud.
2. Give participants a moment to reflect on the two questions and write down their own placement on a post-it. They should write it down individually to avoid putting themselves in the same place all together.
3. Introduce the Polak Game matrix. Ask participants to place themselves on the matrix based on their written answers to question 1 and then question 2.
4. Once everyone has chosen their position, facilitate an open conversation. Ask participants to share why they see the future the way they do, where their view of the future comes from and what it would take for them to move in a different direction.





EXERCISE 1: The Polak Game – Continued

The 4 relative positions:

A: **Optimistic**, but sees himself as an observer rather than an active player. (**Passive**).

B: **Optimistic** and feel they can make a difference. (**Influence**).

C: **Pessimistic**, but still believe they can influence the future to some extent. (**Realist**).

D: **Pessimistic** and feels unable to change anything. (**Powerless**).

→ TIP:

If there are few participants, it's a good idea to discuss the different and relative positions in plenary.

If you have many participants, you can let them talk to each other in their respective squares.

PHASE 2: ARTICULATE THE FUTURE – OPENNESS, DISCOVERY, HOPE AND FEAR (50 MIN.)



EXERCISE 2: Analysing the Vision of the Future around us

PURPOSE: To make participants aware of the existence of dominant images/narratives of the future, including sources/senders with specific agendas, and to enable participants to critically assess prevailing perceptions of the future.

MATERIALS: Powerpoint deck slides 9–11

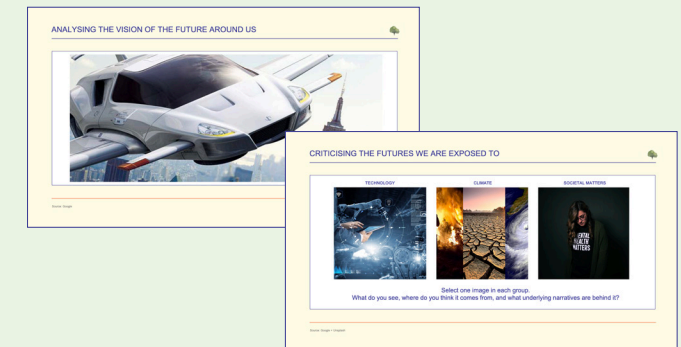
DURATION: 15 min.

To the facilitator: The future does not exist. It only does so when we think about it, talk about it, or process visions and images of it. Challenging dominant visions of the future is therefore crucial to strengthen imagination, include diverse perspectives and prepare us for an uncertain future that is not yet a given. When we critically evaluate the prevailing perceptions of the future, we avoid getting trapped in a narrow mindset based on existing narratives. This is crucial to ensure that we don't inadvertently contribute to undesirable developments. At the same time, it helps us to include the voices and values of groups that might not otherwise be heard, creating a more equitable and inclusive vision for the future.



INSTRUCTIONS

1. Show slides 9 and 10 and briefly explain that there are certain visualisations of the future and that we need to be aware of which sources feed our view of the future. (5min.).
2. Show slide 11 and divide participants into groups. Ask each group to choose one of the three images.
3. Group discussion about the selected image (5min.)
 - What do you see in the picture? How does the image show a future world?
 - Who do you think made the image and what do you think they want to tell us with it?
 - How can the image affect us or others?
4. Plenary wrap-up, each group talks about their analysis of the selected image (5min.)



**EXERCISE 3: The perceived future**

PURPOSE: To identify the future as participants hypothesise it will look like if nothing changes.

MATERIALS: Overview of futures, post-its, writing utensils

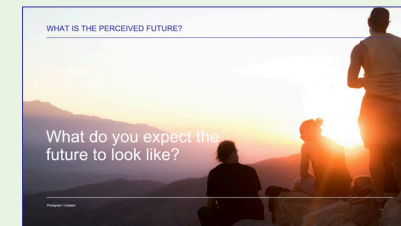
DURATION: 15 min.

To the facilitator: This exercise builds on the existing visions of the future that the participants have just worked with. They now have to imagine what the future will look like if what we see in the present continues into the future. This is also the first part of the mapping of futures that participants will go through in the Futures Literacy Lab.

INSTRUCTIONS

Preparation: Prepare an overview of the futures to be worked on today and hang it on the wall; *The Perceived Future, The Desired Future, The Alternative Future, Climate Action*.

1. Give participants 2 min. to individually write down on post-its (one message per post-it) *what they think the future looks like based on what they know today*.
2. Divide participants into groups and give them 8 minutes in each group to come up with 3 statements/words (one message per post-it).
3. Wrap-up in plenary. Each group briefly explains why they have chosen the three statements/words, while the facilitator collects their post-its and puts them on the overview/mapping under *The Perceived Future*. One group at a time.



**EXERCISE 4: Time travel to the desirable future in 2050**

PURPOSE: To move us to the future of 2050 and explore it, enabling participants to formulate a different future.

MATERIALS: Powerpoint deck slide 13

DURATION: 5 min.

To the facilitator: The time travel is made to the year 2050 because it is far enough into the future to have no singular dominant image of this future, and close enough to the present that it doesn't feel too abstract. Not making it too abstract increases the possibility for participants to think in concrete (climate) actions that can be done tomorrow and that will lead to a better future. For younger participants, it can be put in the context of their own lives, while for older participants it can be put in the context of their children or grandchildren's future lives. Ask participants to think back 25 years – "What things exist now that didn't exist 25 years ago?"

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Start by creating an atmosphere where participants can relax and open up their imagination. For example, use techniques such as guided meditation or visualisation to help them imagine what their desired future in 2050 feels like.
2. Ask participants to close their eyes and read slide 13 aloud.
3. Ask participants to open their eyes again and briefly ask them how they imagined their desired future in 2050:
 - What does your desired future in 2050 look like?
 - Possible auxiliary questions:
 - What does it look like? What things can you see?
 - What does our daily life look like?
 - What do we work on, how do we spend our free time and what relationships do we have?
 - What is most important to us?



**EXERCISE 5: The desired future**

PURPOSE: To identify the future as the participants want it to be.

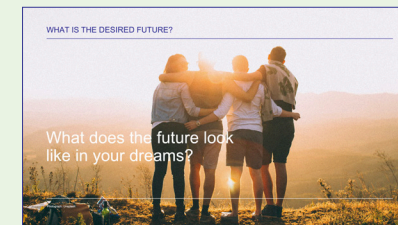
MATERIALS: Overview of futures, post-its, writing utensils

DURATION: 15 min.

To the facilitator: There is a difference between the perceived future that will happen if we don't act differently in the present (exercise 3) and the desired future that we dream about and can influence when we act differently in the present. Participants may find it difficult to make this distinction during the exercises. It's not wrong to confuse the two futures, but make sure to articulate this distinction (after the exercise is done) that the mapping of futures creates space for. This is when you start to realise that the future you dream of may not be the same as the perceived future, and that you have the right and opportunity to formulate a different desired future.

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Give participants 2 min. to individually write down on post-its (one message per post-it) *what they want the future to look like*.
2. Divide participants into groups and give them 8 minutes in each group to come up with 3 statements/words (one message per post-it).
3. Wrap-up in plenary. Each group briefly explains why they have chosen the three statements/words, while the facilitator collects their post-its and puts them on the overview/mapping under *The Desired Future*. One group at a time.



PHASE 3: NEW PERSPECTIVES ON THE FUTURE – CREATIVE FRICTION (20 MIN.)



EXERCISE 6: Exploring alternative futures

PURPOSE: To challenge participants by presenting them with a bizarre and alternative future narrative that encourages them to develop new ideas that do not simply follow the established tracks, underlying assumptions and current visions of the future.

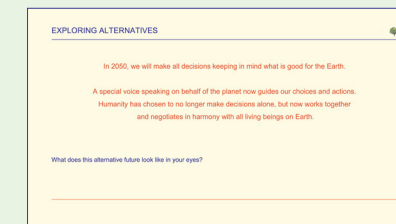
MATERIALS: PowerPoint deck, slide 17, overview of futures, post-its and writing utensils

DURATION: 20 min.

To the facilitator: Based on the identified underlying assumptions/narratives of the assumed and desired futures, an alternative future is now explored. The alternative future is explored as a means to understand what new actions or strategies could lead to more sustainable or innovative solutions. This approach makes it possible to discover the potential for radically different futures, and this step is crucial for developing new ideas that don't just follow established tracks, but dare to move into uncharted territory to achieve more sustainable or inspiring futures.

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Start by making it clear to the participants that something slightly alternative is coming up and that they should remember to just play along and accept the premise of the exercise.
2. Ask participants to close their eyes and read slide 17 aloud. Read it twice if necessary.
3. Give participants 2 min. to individually write down on post-its (one message per post-it) how they see *the alternative future*.
4. Divide participants into groups and give them 8 minutes in each group to come up with 3 statements/words (one message per post-it).
5. Wrap-up in plenary. Each group briefly explains why they have chosen the three statements/words, while the facilitator collects their post-its and puts them on the overview/mapping under *The alternative future*. One group at a time.



PHASE 4: RETHINK THE PRESENT – REFLECTION AND LEARNING (30 MIN.)



EXERCISE 7: Time travel back to the present and identifying new insights and questions

PURPOSE: Using back casting to help participants rethink the present and current actions based on their articulated desired future

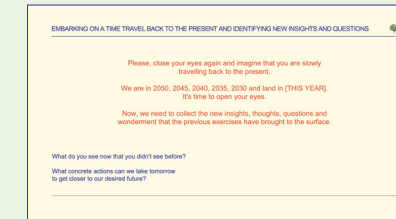
MATERIALS: Powerpoint deck, slide 19

DURATION: 15 min.

To the facilitator: Now it's about trying to identify the choices, steps and actions you can take in the present to get closer to the future you dream of, the desired future. The exercise will help participants identify necessary actions and strategies that can be implemented now to create a sustainable future in 2050. This is where you realise that your actions today shape the future, which hopefully means you see greater value and strength in your own agency.

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Ask participants to close their eyes and read slide 19 aloud.
2. Ask participants to open their eyes again and discuss the following questions with their neighbour:
 - What do you see now that you didn't see before?
 - What concrete actions can you take tomorrow to get closer to The Desired Future?
3. Facilitate a conversation in plenary about what participants see now that they didn't see before.



**EXERCISE 8: Transition to climate action**

PURPOSE: To identify concrete climate actions that participants can take "tomorrow" to get closer to their articulated desired future.

MATERIALS: Overview of futures, post-its and writing utensils

DURATION: 15 min.

To the facilitator: Based on the process so far and the (hopefully) increased awareness of their own agency and the importance of the present for the future, participants must now identify concrete (climate) actions they can take to make the future in 2050 more sustainable. This strengthens your ability to recognise that you can shape the future through your own actions.

**INSTRUCTIONS**

1. In plenary, go through the different futures that the participants have formulated so they understand and see the difference between them (5min).
2. Based on the desired future, ask the question: "What climate actions can/should you take today to reach your desired sustainable future in 2050?"
3. Give participants 2min. to individually write down on post-its (one message per post-it) *what possible climate actions they see*.
4. Divide into groups and give participants 8 minutes in the group to come up with 1 common climate action (1 post-it).
5. Wrap-up in plenary. Each group briefly explains why they have chosen that particular climate action. Continuously, the facilitator collects the post-its and puts them on the overview/mapping under *Climate action*.

→ TIP:

If participants can't think of any climate actions, you can help them get started with inspiration from Appendix 1, which contains a long list of possible climate actions.

PHASE 5: CLIMATE ACTION – CONCRETE STEPS FORWARD (25 MIN.)



EXERCISE 9: Climate action

PURPOSE: To inspire and encourage participants to plan and execute concrete climate actions to take steps together to tackle climate challenges.

MATERIALS: Overview of futures, post-its and writing utensils

DURATION: 15 min.

To the facilitator: Now it is time to put action behind the words, so the participants get aware that their actions today affect the future. It's easy to formulate climate actions that you already know, but remember that they should be formulated based on the desirable and alternative future you worked on earlier in the day.

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Tell the participants that part of the Futures Literacy Lab is to perform a joint climate action together and set the framework for how you have decided it will happen in your local context.
2. Based on exercise 8, point 5, where the groups have presented their chosen climate actions, they must now negotiate to jointly choose 1 climate action to perform together. Alternatively, they can vote on the climate actions. The intention is that they choose a climate action that is realistic and meaningful to them in relation to the desirable future they have formulated.

CLIMATE ACTION

1. Choose a climate action together

2. Planning – What, Who, and When

- What: Define the specific action and the related goal. What do they want to achieve and how will they be able to measure success?
- Who: Identify who is responsible for each part of the action. Who collaborates on what and who is in charge of which parts?
- When: Set a time frame for when each action should be completed. Are there any specific dates or events that participants can align their actions with in order to maximize visibility and impact?



EXERCISE 9: Climate action – Continued

3. Once the climate action has been chosen, participants must plan how they will implement it. Make it clear that the climate action is meant to be done by them collectively as a group and is not something they have to do individually.
 - **What:** Define the specific action and its goal. What do they want to achieve and how can they measure success?
 - **Who:** Identify who is responsible for each part of the action. Who collaborates on what and who is in charge of which parts?
 - **When:** Set a timeframe for when the action should be completed. Are there specific dates or events that participants can align their actions with to maximise visibility and impact? See the Annual cycle of work in Appendix 2.
4. Next step: The exercise ends with the participants agreeing on who does what to fulfil the chosen climate action at the chosen time.

WRAP-UP AND THANK YOU FOR TODAY (5-10 MIN.)



INSTRUCTIONS

1. Conclude with a conversation about whether the participants have moved during the day based on their position in the matrix from The Polak Game.
2. Provide participants with information about the next steps.
3. Thank you for your participation and engagement and see you at the climate action.

Thank you for your
participation today

→ TIP:

If there is time, you can choose to repeat The Polak Game (exercise 1) to see if people have moved on the axes.

AFTER CONDUCTING FUTURES LITERACY LABS



After the Futures Literacy Lab is conducted, the joint climate action must be carried out by the participants. It needs to be adapted to the local conditions and can be run immediately when the participants are already gathered or placed in the library's annual cycle of work as an activity.

In addition to the climate action, there may also be an opportunity to create an effective follow-up that visualises the results and keeps the momentum going in the conversation that has started. This could be by publicising the results or documentation from the day or climate action to the wider public, including media and politicians. Taking a broader perspective can also increase the motivation of participants during the Futures Literacy Lab and climate action process.

Implementation of a specific climate action: If the climate action is to be implemented as an activity, it would be obvious to implement it in connection with one of the dates in the annual cycle of work found in Appendix 2. It can also increase the effectiveness and visibility of climate action if it is linked to larger, already planned events. See Appendix 2 for important dates during the year.

Exhibitions and publicity: To further publicise the results of the workshop, you can create an exhibition where the main ideas and suggestions are presented to the public. This exhibition can be physical in the library, another public space, or digital where it can reach a wider audience. An exhibition is also an opportunity to invite local decision makers, citizens and other stakeholders to see what was worked on and what solutions were proposed. It would also make sense for the participants to invite their closest friends and relatives to find out what they have been working on.

For inspiration, check out the Literary Public Hearings exhibition at Albertslund Library (in Danish) in Appendix 3.

Joint event/presentation at The Climate Festival: As part of the follow-up, a joint event or presentation can be planned at the annual The Climate Festival. This will be a good platform to present the workshop results to a wider public, including politicians, NGOs and other actors working on climate change. Consider creating an interactive presentation where participants can engage and give feedback on the solutions presented. This can help anchor the results of the Futures Literacy Lab in the larger climate agenda and inspire further action.

Written and/or visual documentation of the Futures Literacy Lab and climate action: Consider creating a detailed documentation of the discussions, ideas and decisions made during the process. This documentation may then be shared with local politicians and media to raise awareness of the initiative and create a wider public dialogue. Documentation may be presented in the form of reports, infographics or videos that convey key insights in a visual and engaging way.

Ongoing communication and engagement: If you want to ensure that the workshop's results are not lost over time, communication is essential. This can include regular updates to participants, newsletters, social media or a dedicated website to track progress. You could also consider creating a platform for continued dialogue and collaboration between participants, perhaps in the form of an online group or network where ideas and resources can be shared. However, this is outside the scope of the project itself, but is recommended.

APPENDIX 1: CLIMATE ACTIONS FOR INSPIRATION



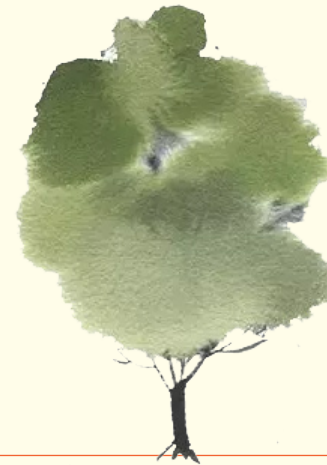
- **Swap market:** Come and swap your used items with others – give what you no longer need a new life by passing it on to someone else.
- **Communal eating of Futures Food:** Join a communal eating event exploring sustainable meals that could be the food of the future – taste new ingredients and learn about climate-friendly cooking.
- **Plant Croquis:** Draw plants together – learn to see the details in nature and take an artistic break.
- **Plant swap market:** Swap your plants and cuttings with others – get new green friends for your garden or home without buying new ones.
- **Workshop on seed bombs:** Learn how to make seed bombs and spread flowers and plants in urban environments – a fun and simple way to contribute to biodiversity.
- **Repair café:** Bring your broken things and get help to repair them – reduce waste and learn to appreciate craftsmanship.
- **Sew from recycling:** Come and sew new clothes from old fabric – transform your old clothes into something new and unique.
- **Visible mending:** Learn how to repair clothes in a way that makes the repair visible and beautiful – turning recycling into a creative form of expression.
- **Eat food waste together:** Make and share meals made from food that would otherwise be thrown away – reduce food waste and build community around sustainability.
- **Fermentation:** Learn how to ferment foods – discover ancient techniques that can preserve food and add flavour.
- **Bokashi / compost / meet a worm:** Explore composting methods and meet the little creatures that help turn waste into nutrient-rich soil.
- **Microscope workshop – meet other creatures:** Use a microscope to see the tiny organisms that live around us – get a new perspective on our hidden neighbours.
- **Lego – build the future:** Build future cities and solutions with LEGO – a fun and creative way to think about future possibilities.
- **Blend a book and make paper:** Recycle old books to make new paper – learn about sustainable production and creative recycling.
- **Collect rubbish together and make art out of rubbish:** Go for a walk, collect rubbish and make art out of it – a creative way of doing something good for the environment.
- **Solarpunk outdoor reading:** Join an outdoor reading of Solarpunk literature – inspire yourself with stories of a bright and sustainable future.

APPENDIX 1 – CONTINUED



- **Literature hiking:** Go on a hike where we read nature-inspired literature – immerse yourself in both nature and the words.
- **Workshop on plant dyes:** Learn how to dye textiles with natural dyes from plants – a sustainable way to create beautiful, natural colours.
- **Old-fashioned climate-friendly techniques:** Learn to knit dishcloths, make recycled nets or repair clothes with a focus on durability – old techniques that are still relevant today.
- **Create a community kitchen garden:** Create a community vegetable garden where you and others can grow and share vegetables – a practical way to build community and self-sufficiency.
- **Reduce your data usage:** Explore ways to scale down your data usage while still maintaining an active social life – a modern challenge for a more sustainable lifestyle.
- **Break five climate-damaging habits:** Identify five habits in your everyday life that are damaging the climate and get help to change them – small changes can make a big difference.
- **Plant a mini forest:** Help plant a mini forest – a small step towards increasing biodiversity and fighting climate change.

- [Inspiration catalogue from the SDG certification](#) (in Danish)
- [Climate action together from CONCITO/Democracy X](#) (in Danish)



APPENDIX 2: ANNUAL CYCLE OF WORK WITH RELEVANT DATES FOR CLIMATE ACTION



JANUARY

- UN International Clean Energy Day (26 January)

FEBRUARY

- UN International Day of Pulses (10 February)

MARCH

- UN International Day for Nature (3 March)
- International Women's Day (8 March)
- Waste collection with DN (31 March – 6 April 2025)
- UN International Zero Waste Day (30 March)

APRIL

- UN International Health Day (7 April)
- Week 17 (21 – 27 April 2025)
- International earth day (22 April)
- Climate Action Day (24 April)

MAY

- We cycle to work (all of May)
- UN International Plant Health Day (12 May)
- Day of the Bees (20 May)

JUNE

- World Bike Day (3 June)
- UN International Environment Day (5 June)
- UN International Maritime Day (8 June)

JULY/AUGUST – SUMMER HOLIDAYS

SEPTEMBER

- Nature Week – Danish Society for Nature Conservation (1 – 7 September 2025)
- The World's Best News is coming out (5 September)
- Denmark's national meat-free week (8 – 14 September 2025)
- World Cleanup Day – Plastic Change (20 September)

OCTOBER

- Make your October eco – Danish Society for Nature Conservation (all October)
- International Vegetarian Day (1 October)
- World Mental Health Day (10 October)
- UN Day (24 October)

NOVEMBER

- Buy Nothing Day! (28 November)
- Bike to work week (25 November – 1 December 2025)

DECEMBER

- Unesco World Futures Day (2 December)
- UN Human Rights Day (10 December)

* Please note that some dates shift from year to year.

** Please note that some dates are only relevant in Denmark.

APPENDIX 3: INTEGRATION OF LITERATURE AND OTHER LIBRARY MEDIA AND RESOURCES



Literature, music and media may play an important role in Futures Literacy Labs by inspiring and challenging participants to think beyond their own everyday experiences. For example, Guided Communal Readings, where participants read and discuss selected texts together, can serve as an introductory activity that inspires new perspectives. This can be particularly effective if the texts relate to the chosen thematic action tracks and promote reflection on future challenges and opportunities.

→ [Sustainable literature from Kolding Book Club](#) (in Danish)

Inspiration from previous projects

It can be useful to draw on experiences from similar initiatives, such as Literary Public Hearings from Albertslund Library. These projects have shown how literature can be used to create deeper conversations about future opportunities and challenges. By looking at how these events were structured, you can get ideas on how to use literature in your own Futures Literacy Lab.

→ [Literary Public Hearings from Albertslund Library](#) (in Danish)



APPENDIX 4: TEXTS FOR INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL COMMUNICATION



Here are two texts for communication, both internally to colleagues/organisation and to the citizens you want to recruit. The texts are intended as a draft that can be picked and chosen according to what makes sense locally.

Text 1:

Suggested text to send to colleagues in your organisation

A major transformation of society is ahead of us. In order to meet the common climate goals, Danes must go from 13 tonnes of CO2 emissions to initially 6 tonnes and in the longer term 3 tonnes. This is will not be easy and citizens will need to be prepared, both with knowledge, but also with opportunities to act either alone or in communities.

Libraries will play a bigger role here, as we are now included in local climate action plans in many places, and where libraries are not mentioned directly – the task is described so that it points to us. In other words, we need answers when the municipality/council/local community asks us.

One of the answers is Futures Literacy Labs, or futures workshops that could help to first create hope and then lead to concrete climate action.

The method was developed by UNESCO, and we see more and more examples of 'future competences' gaining ground, both nationally and, for instance, in the European Union where being able to relate to the future in different ways is part of 21 skills.

As an added bonus, it makes perfect sense for us as a library to utilise literature in this work. We are not working with utopias and/or dystopias, of which we have many on our shelves, but with "prototypes", prototypes (as we also know from Design Thinking) of futures.

However, literature and art can do exactly what may be difficult for those who come up with technical solutions as it can inspire and motivate – speak to the heart and emotions if you will. In addition, this is the biggest motivation to get people to move, act and become part of the necessary green transition. So, don't think of Futures Literacy LAB as a new task that has just been added on, but as a way to use literature in a new way, a method to facilitate the citizens' meeting so that it leads to action and not least an opportunity to recruit new target groups.

We hope you will welcome TOGETHER FOR THE FUTURE – because if part of the solution to the challenges of the future is on our shelves, maybe it is about time that we get started...

APPENDIX 4 – CONTINUED



Text 2:

Suggested text to send to citizens as an invitation to a Futures Literacy Lab

DO YOU WANT TO HELP RETHINK THE FUTURE?

Join us for a Futures Literacy Lab and strengthen your future skills as we work together to rethink our common future in a green and sustainable direction. During the day, we will move together from pacifying visions of the future to hope and possibilities for action, where, for example, new more sustainable futures can be established as an alternative to existing climate dystopias. We also need to take concrete climate actions and feel that we can make a difference.

With the project TOGETHER FOR THE FUTURE, we at the libraries want to set the framework for creating new visions of the future that give hope and inspire action. Through multi-generational meetings between young people and adults 60+, we create a starting point for new common understandings and hopes for a green future – for everyone.

Using the Futures Literacy methodology developed by UNESCO, we work to democratise the future through the acquisition of skills and languages that enable participation in democratic debate.

The Futures Literacy Lab will take place at [LIBRARY] on [DATE and TIME].

If you are interested in hearing more or registering for the day, please contact xxx.



APPENDIX 5: POTENTIAL PARTICIPANTS WITHIN THE TARGET GROUPS



Adults 60+:

It makes sense to approach existing groups and initiatives that already focus on sustainability and community engagement. Examples of such groups include:

- **Active seniors:** Here you can find seniors who are interested in actively contributing to society, including environmental and climate-related projects.
- **REPAIR Café and Green Neighbourhood Communities:** These platforms already offer activities that focus on sustainability and can be a good resource to find participants with experience in the field of green initiatives. You can read more about Green Neighbourhood Communities on their website:

→ [Green Neighbourhood Communities](#) (in Danish).

Youth:

To engage young people in the project, it can be beneficial to collaborate with local educational institutions and youth organisations:

- **High schools and junior high schools:** These institutions have young people who are getting their education and are often looking for projects and activities where they can make a difference.
- **Climate Movement, Youth Climate Councils and Youth Councils:** Young people engaged in climate and environmental issues are often organised in these councils and movements. They are motivated to participate in initiatives that work towards a more sustainable future.
- **Youth centres and other locally active groups:** Local youth organisations and youth centres often offer platforms where young people can meet and collaborate on projects that are important to them.

APPENDIX 5 – CONTINUED



Green enthusiasts:

If you wish to recruit people with a passion for the environment, please get in touch with local climate groups. These networks often consist of citizens working for sustainable communities and they can help connect you with green enthusiasts.

Maybe, you can recruit through their Facebook groups, which are often divided into local communities, or by reaching out to them directly via their websites. The green enthusiasts are not necessarily defined as 60+ or young, but they will be able to contribute with commitment and knowledge around climate action.

Internal recruitment in libraries:

When recruiting library colleagues to participate in, facilitate or otherwise contribute to Futures Literacy Labs, it is important to remember that Futures Literacy Labs do not have to be another thing that is added on top of the rest of the workflow.

On the contrary, it is an opportunity to utilise existing skills, such as event experience, guided communal reading, knowledge of literature, etc. Likewise, both Futures Literacy Labs and climate actions can be organised as activities in existing annual cycles of work and do not need to be organised in addition to other operations.

Futures Literacy and Futures Literacy Labs can also be used as an internal work tool. One way to anchor it in the organisation is to present it at joint meetings or workshops in connection with strategy days, staff days or similar events.

