

The Futures Thinking Curriculum

A Foresight Approach to Social Justice

Acknowledgements

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Futures Thinking for Justice

The Futures Thinking Curriculum features the tools of strategic foresight in a singular methodology that builds on existing best practices and prototyped specifically for social justice issues.

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Glossary

Indicator:

an event that signifies a change in some aspect of society, such as technology, culture, politics, economics, the laws, or the environment

Trend:

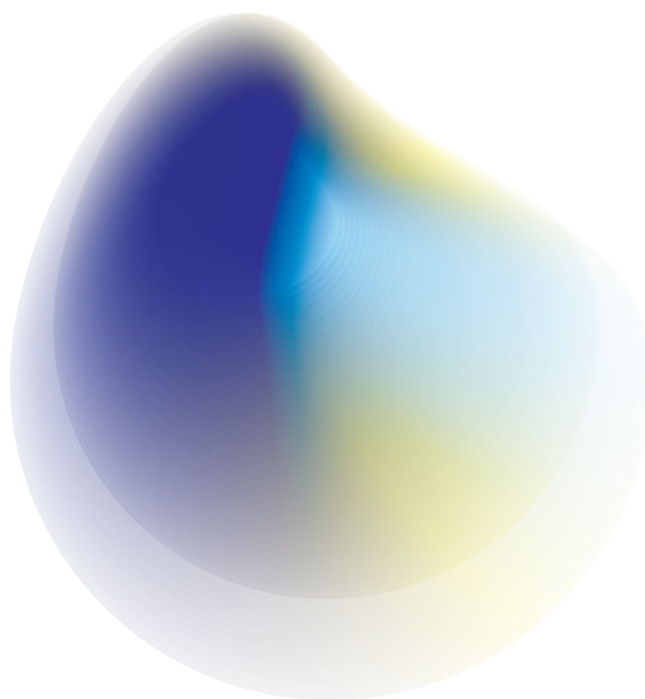
a series of indicators that points towards the same long-term change

Driver:

an underlying pattern of change that explains why a series of indicators are observed over time

Scenario:

a narrative of a world described by two (or more) drivers taken to their extreme logical conclusions



Futures thinking is like
predicting a range of
possible weather conditions
and preparing for sunshine...

... but ready for a rainy day.



01 Introduction

When we talk about the future, the most basic example that most people can relate to is weather prediction. A simple search for weather forecasts will yield the temperature, precipitation, sky cover, humidity, and other meteorological information stretching from days to months. These are all output from a complex model of global weather, over a hundred years in the making.

This (mostly) accurate set of information can then be used to optimally address many questions of varying consequence in our lives: Should we bring an umbrella to work today? Should we cancel that vacation next week? Should we invest in irrigation systems on our farmland to prepare for droughts this year?

This is analogous to the process of futures thinking. We first scope the area of interest (the weather), collect the relevant information (meteorological data), develop a model to predict a future outcome, and make use of the information to make a decision in the present. To get better information next time, we can circulate the outcome back into the weather model and improve the process of prediction.

Like the global weather system, social justice topics such as gender-based violence, cybersecurity, or criminal justice are complex issues with many variables interacting with one another to produce seemingly unpredictable outcomes.

Unlike the weather model, however, futures thinking provokes possibilities; instead of calculating a fixed prediction, we should intentionally look for a range of possible outcomes to anticipate and influence.

Our hope with this methodology is to create vivid scenarios to encourage deep and optimistic conversations about the future of various manifestations of social justice, before designing possible interventions to take today.

In our work, we wish to avoid recycling borrowed futures - traditional methods, even successful ones, that have been used in the past by other people in other geographical, political, and cultural contexts. Though our changing technological landscape may be bringing us closer together than ever, we believe that the best interventions require us to get specific with our stakeholders and their local surroundings.

As such, the only way to do this is by adapting, through prototyping, the methods and tools of strategic foresight to address the kinds of challenges we see here in Thailand - and to share best practices with our networks through this handbook.

“The premise of foresight is that the future is still in the making and can be actively influenced or even created, rather than what has already been decided or enacted in the past by others.”

- UNDP Foresight Manual

As we are working on the final touches of this handbook, COVID-19 is still spreading across the globe, catching the healthcare system in many countries off-guard, halting global travels, and changing the way we work and socialise. Nobody was really prepared, but it was clear that successful measures that were enacted in Thailand, Taiwan, New Zealand, Australia, and a few others were not duplicates of each other. We might have been inspired by each other and adapted what worked for our own systems.

This type of localising working solutions is analogous to the kind of participatory ecosystem we want to encourage for social justice changemakers. We want to break the habit of relying on a few technical experts - foreign or otherwise - and invite citizens and stakeholders to participate in the process of co-designing interventions for themselves. With our experiences, resources, and network, and enabled by the tools of futures thinking as presented here, we believe that we can empower others by conducting ourselves as a facilitator of better futures.

Future of Justice V . Futures Thinking

It is important to distinguish the difference between talking about the future of social justice and futures thinking for social justice. For us, the **future of justice** refers to scenarios in which we predict the effects of technology, social movements, economic trends, and other drivers in our justice system as a whole. It is when we paint a clear picture (or several) of what might happen to the justice system in the long-term. **Futures thinking for justice** refers to the methodology of strategic foresight and the tools by which we can arrive at these future scenarios.

This handbook contains a version of strategic foresight that has been adapted to the nuances in working on social justice issues. Our main goal is to equip changemakers and stakeholders with an additional set of tools for their work.

In other words, we are here to share the tools of strategic foresight so that you can forge your own conversations and define proactive actions around possible futures to come.



02 Scope of Project

Why strategic foresight for justice?

Under its justice innovation unit, Thailand Institute of Justice (TIJ) has been promoting an innovative and collaborative approach to sustainably address justice issues, with a focus on understanding relevant and up-to-date solutions as well as shifting the mindset of changemakers. We're on a quest to explore new frameworks of thinking and interdisciplinary problem solving approaches.

COVID-19 and what followed in the year 2020, during which this handbook was developed, highlighted the impact of walking into an uncertain future unprepared. Foresight is an especially salient topic for the justice sector where resistance to change is high and the delivery of justice services may not always be user-centric or effective.

We need to look ahead with critical eyes and strategic foresight suits this need.

Strategic foresight is a powerful learning and facilitating tool that produces interventions that is relevant in the long-term timeframe. In our research, we have found an inspiring, though limited, set of cases where strategic foresight is applied towards the justice system. Many narratives were about the big “J” justice - the Law, the Courts, or other formal system through which justice is applied. What sparked our curiosity in creating this work is our attempt to go beyond “the system” and bring justice into the everyday lived experiences.

We believe that strategic foresight is inherently human - centered and our work begins with the stories of everyday people as they intersect and make meaning of their own “justice”. We hope that this handbook will be applied towards the following and other uses:

Vision alignment for different actors

Responding to TJJ’s focus on multi-stakeholders collaboration to address justice issues, strategic foresight can help bring people from different backgrounds on the same page with current issues and agree on the possibilities of future scenarios. Seeing the same picture helps smooth the collaborative process, especially when working to change the status quo that touches on many actors in a system.

Anticipatory governance and management

Effective justice delivery is the foundation for sustainable development. However, at this hypersonic rate of technological changes, the justice system is facing real challenges in staying up-to-date. To solve problems only in the context of the present is no longer adequate; it is important for the authorities and stakeholders of the justice sector to take an anticipatory and proactive approach when dealing with problems. Strategic foresight offers such an approach.

Participatory and effective planning for true people - centered justice services

The process of strategic foresight is, by nature, participatory. It calls for contributions from multi-stakeholders, ensuring that the future scenarios take into account collective experiences of the relevant parties. As a result, the outcome will reflect the desire of the ‘users’. Applying this approach to justice-related issues will foster proactive solutions that address the real needs of the affected stakeholders.

Introduction to Futures Thinking

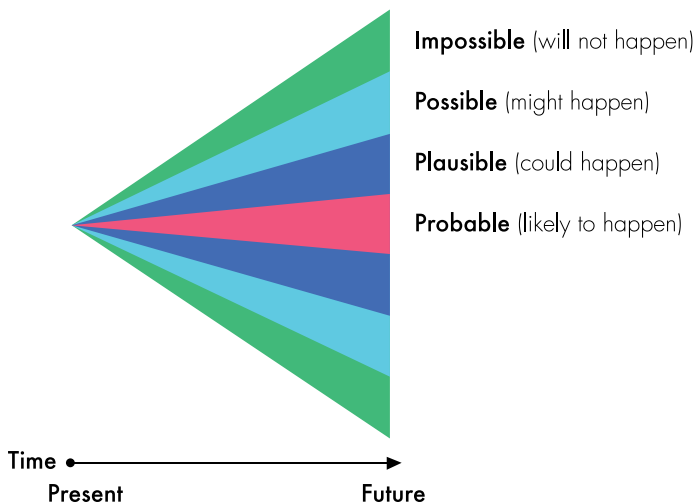
In this handbook, futures thinking refers to strategic foresight, a methodology that works with qualitative data about the present to project future uncertainties. The goal of this methodology is to create artefacts (i.e. scenarios, or narratives of the future) around which we can have a meaningful discussion and derive insights for concrete action.

The future is sometimes visually represented by a cone of uncertainty diagram, which depicts a range of outcomes, from probable to possible futures based on what we know today. What we are working to forecast with this methodology is within the “possible” futures.

We begin with an inquiry from the present day and an exploration of historical data to produce meaningful future scenarios.

The methodology consists of a series of tools, which will be explored further in this handbook. The tools themselves are subjective, and therefore do not lead to an objective prediction of the future of x (where x represents a certain topic in social justice). The real power behind this methodology is to help surface meaningful discussions about how the changes we see today will affect the future. Chapter 4 and 5 gives an overview of strategic foresight and provides the tools, including facilitator’s notes on using them in an educational setting.

Cone of Uncertainty Diagram





What is justice (to us)?

Justice is a big word that sometimes scares people off, leaving only the lawyers in the discussion to define what “justice” is and how it should be treated. Even though justice is a concept that can affect all of us everyday, this status quo allows little room for collaboration. In fact, this setup keeps us from ensuring access to social justice services for everyone, regardless of their status in society.

At TIJ, we hold the rule of law as the ultimate guiding principle for how society should function. This mission of TIJ aligns with that of the United Nations’ Sustainable Development Goals as the rule of law was incorporated as part of Goal 16’s target. Here, we acknowledge that the rule of law is not only the target, but also the means in and of itself. It is only with a strong rule of law that the other SDGs could be achieved. In the spirit of SDG 17, TIJ believes that one way to strengthen the rule of law in Thailand is through collaboration.



Only when everyone truly understands and holds dear that

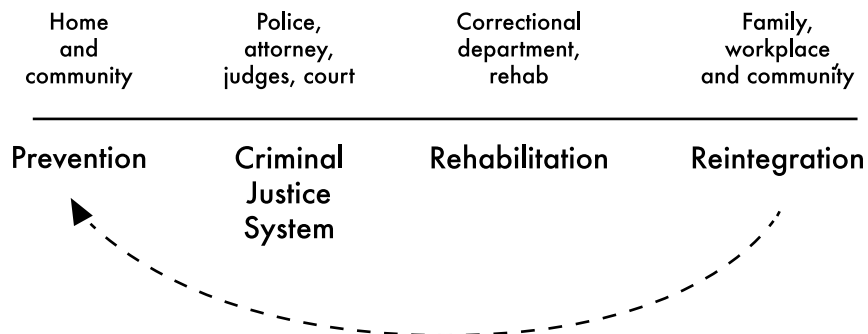
justice is everyone's matter

can the rule of law thrive.

In an effort to encourage collaboration on social justice issues, the first thing we need to make clear is the definition of "justice" is not one that is defined only by those who work in the system. Justice here extends to the social aspects, the true root causes of the problems that manifested in the form of crimes. We start at the individual, family, and community level, before expanding to the formal system, government and international community. We want to democratise justice, to keep our work in the realm of "small j" and away from the "big J" justice that excludes rather than welcome the voices of the people.

In conclusion, at TJJ we think holistically about social justice: starting from within communities (where the intervention is prevention) to the criminal justice system to prisons and back to society (where reintegration is the focus). We compiled this curriculum to fit the issues that TJJ is actively working on, which include but is not limited to: domestic violence, access to justice for vulnerable groups, social reintegration of ex-offenders, privacy and technology, and corruption.

Domains of justice innovation



How to use this book?

We intended this book to be a guide for facilitators who are looking to spark conversations and debates about the future in their speciality of social justice work. The rest of this handbook will discuss the current literature around foresight methods currently applied to social justice, the methodology of strategic foresight through a series of tools, a short facilitator's note with each tool as a guide, a sample curriculum template, and a brief case study on gender-based violence. We recommend browsing the book at least once through before designing your own curriculum tailored to your audience, topics, and intended outcome using the guidance we provided.

As discussed in previous sections, justice should extend beyond government services, policy, and the formal legal system. We would like to see justice more broadly interpreted to involve local communities and citizens. Currently, futures thinking in the social and public sector works are practiced in limited circles around the world, concentrated in a few governmental initiatives, foundations, and international institutions.

This literature review surfaces the uses of strategic foresight methods that engage with public stakeholders. Here, we will explore the frameworks and tools used in fields adjacent to social justice such as social services and policy-making.

03

Literature Review



UNDP Foresight Manual

Published by the UNDP Global Centre for Public Service Excellence in 2018, “The Foresight Manual: Empowered Futures for the 2030 Agenda” provides an overview of foresight frameworks to guide governments in applying foresight to implement the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). In particular, the Manual makes recommendations for incorporating the outcome - scenarios - into strategic plans such that governments are empowered to create their own contexts, rather than borrow futures from the works of other entities. The report is a highly comprehensive deep dive into foresight methodology for development, and in particular there are three insights that are relevant to our work.

First, the Manual identifies three broad approaches to foresight, though we may interpret these as consecutive phases or key characteristics of the same process:

1. Horizon scanning

Horizon scanning refers to a “method of systematically exploring the external environment” with the goal of understanding what is changing and how. Scanning is used to identify signals (or indicators, which are data points or events that reveal an emerging trend), trends (patterns of observable change over time), and drivers of change (disruptive forces with broad impacts across many sectors). It is thus a collection of tools with which we make sense of the key factors that are influencing possible futures, starting from what we observe in present.

2. Scenarios

Scenarios refer to alternative futures that are grounded in the uncertain changes that we see today (identified through horizon scanning). We can think of scenarios as a story or a world in the future, in which “perspectives, hypotheses, expectations, and assumptions” based on the data points about the past and present play out. These scenarios are created with vivid details about everyday life that should expose the good and the ugly consequences of the trends and drivers that we see today.

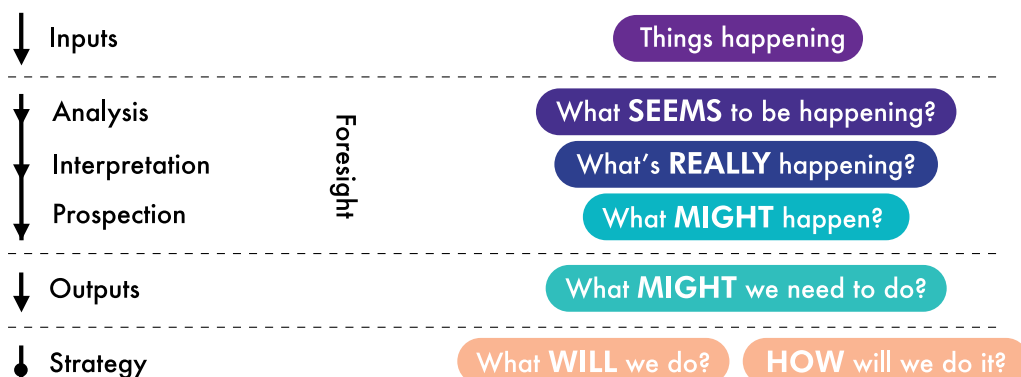
3. Dialogue and innovation

Scenarios provide the foundation for a rich discussion about the futures that we would like to come about, and those we would rather avoid. The story-based data within each scenario can be used to inform new “innovations” and strategic decisions today for the parent organisation and/or stakeholders. The Manual argues that this is the most important step - without good frameworks backed by good intentions, the value of foresight may not be realised at all.

Secondly, the Manual emphasises the significance of “deep interpretation” of data - a part of the synthesis process in order to build scenarios. This is illustrated by the foresight framework, in ‘question’ form, developed by Joseph Voros and elaborated further with collaborators. Here, practitioners attempt to make sense of the trends and signals to arrive at root causes (i.e. drivers) of the many changes happening in society at the present moment. The process is thus inherently and appropriately subjective. Without this interpretative step, a foresight project will simply extrapolate current happenings as is into the future and leave little room for reflection.

Thirdly, the Manual offers many frameworks and tools, though it points out that the most commonly used foresight tool is the 2x2 matrix that represents four scenarios created from two highly uncertain drivers of change. In order to create distinct possible scenarios, the drivers must be mutually exclusive and independent of each other. These possibilities afford us to have a discussion and react to what we think are desirable, and to give us a starting point from which we can strategise. The Scenario Matrix will be discussed later in the tools section.

The foresight framework, in ‘question’ form



Nesta Futurescoping

Nesta is an innovation foundation based in the UK that works on social issues using human-centered design principles. One of their practices that applies a foresight-based methodology is Futurescoping, where they observe emerging trends, anticipate future needs, and design participatory solutions for their partners, which include the UK government and European Commission.

At its core, the foundation's Futurescoping work hopes to challenge two "damaging trends" when it comes to the populace thinking about the future: fatalism and elitism. Fatalism is when we accept that the current status quo is a result of a decision made out of our control, elsewhere, and without our best interests in mind. Elitism is when we believe that the future is in the hands of the rich and powerful, whether that's corporations, government, or tech (e.g. Silicon Valley).

As such, the foresight approach by Nesta includes a participatory angle where input from the public and local communities are integrated into the process. In 'Futures Explainer: How to think about the future', the foresight process is summarised in three steps, in a similar fashion to UNDP's Manual:

1. Understanding

This is the gathering of data available to us today to inform ourselves of what might happen. The categories of methods include horizon scanning (based on data) and opinion-gathering (based on conversations and engagements with people).

2. Exploring

This is making sense and thinking about possible futures based on the data gathered. The categories of methods include quantitative modeling (based on numerical trends) and scenarios (based on qualitative data).

3. Imagining

This is generating insights from possible futures to inform an action or decision. The categories of methods include simulation and storytelling (imagination through experience) and speculative design (imagination through artefacts).

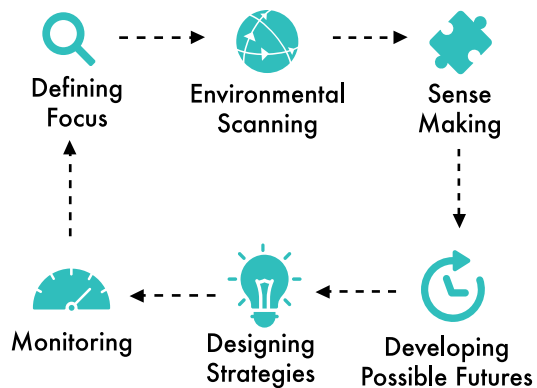
Participatory methods are included in the Understanding and Imagining steps, such as convening a citizen panel, crowd-sourcing, AR/VR, roleplay and theatre, amongst others.

Centre for Strategic Futures

Centre for Strategic Futures (CSF) was established in 2009 as an internal think tank within Singapore's Strategic Policy Office and became part of the Prime Minister's office in 2015. The centre is tasked with conducting "open-ended long-term research" to surface insights and inform policy planning as well as to build foresight capacity across governmental units.

They have developed their own iterative six-step methodology called Scenario Planning Plus (SP+), with a particular focus on spotting weak signals and wild cards - the latter refers to trends, events, or scenarios that seem to unexpectedly appear "out of nowhere".

Scenario Planning Plus (SP+)



The functions of these six steps can be mapped approximately onto the three categories we've seen in UNDP's and Nesta's approach. Defining focus, environmental scanning, and sense making approximates the "understanding" phase where the scope of the project is defined and relevant data gathered. Developing possible futures is "exploring" generative scenarios for further discussion. Designing strategies maps onto "imagining" phase where concrete strategies can be crafted. Lastly, monitoring is a way of keeping track of which future scenarios are unfolding through pre-determined indicators.

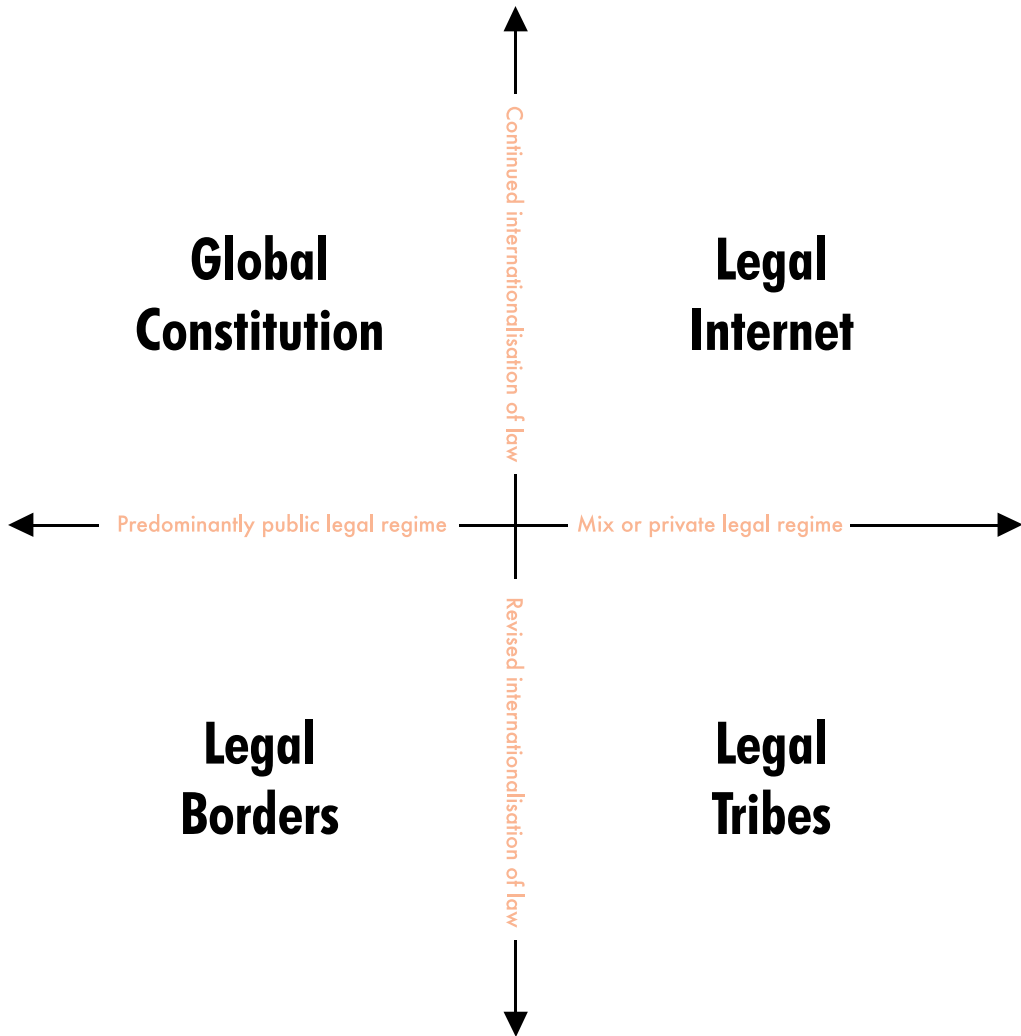
In addition, the Centre also publishes 'Foresight', a biennial publication covering research into "international megatrends and emerging issues" - topics such as work, climate, artificial intelligence, or aging society - and generating insights with respect to Singapore's society and planning.

The Hague Institute for Innovation of Law (Hiil)

Tangentially relevant to our search for futures thinking frameworks and tools are the reports produced by The Hague Institute for the Innovation of Law (Hiil), in particular *The Law of the Future and the Future of Law* (2011) and *Law Scenarios to 2030* (2012).

Law of the Future is a collection of think-pieces by experts in the legal ecosystem that touches on governance, privacy, crime, globalisation, cities, and even the law itself. As such the document may serve as expert opinions on the key emerging trends that futurists should look out for regarding each subject matter.

Law Scenarios, on the other hand, observes two uncertain drivers of the legal system - internationalisation of law and privatisation of legal regime. While the scope of the question falls outside our area of research (we are interested in the less formal definition of social justice), what's important is that the document leans on the rich details of the scenarios to answer a very specific set of questions pertaining the future of the legal system. Who determines the rules of law? How are those rules enforced? How are conflicts resolved? This is an exemplary case in point of how scenarios can be used to objectively and comprehensively think about the consequences to a subject (e.g. legal system) in the future.



The future of the legal system envisioned by two drivers of change

In summary, there are three key steps in making good foresight: making sense of the data today, making scenarios based on uncertainties in key changes, and using the scenarios to make strategic plans at the policy or program levels.

It is important to be very clear about the *raison d'être* of doing foresight in the first place: what questions are you trying to answer or what decisions would you like the scenarios to inform? Knowing the objective helps define the other variables in the methodology such as the stakeholders you need to engage throughout the process, the key drivers and data points relevant to the topic, or the experts you need to speak to. Forming a good foundation by answering these questions will help your team successfully navigate the leap from scenarios to strategic decisions.



4 Methodology

For our methodology, we have adapted the key practices and tools from the The Millenium Project and a course on forecasting at Stanford University taught by Paul Saffo and Cynthia Benjamin. Taking cue from current practices and our own experimentation, we are separating our methodology into three phases, each associated with its own set of tools.

The assumption here is that the participants come into the curriculum with only the theme of justice in mind to work on and no prior experience or research. In the following sections, we will explore each of these tools; what they are, how to use them, and how you can facilitate their uses. We recommend that these tools are first employed in the order presented, ideally in the context of a collaborative team of 3 to 5 people.

You can refer to the Case Study section for an example of how these tools are applied and the 3-day curriculum section for how this might be taught in a workshop format. Note that definitions or use of foresight terms in this handbook may not be universal.





Phase

Description

Tools

Scanning

Making sense of present and past data to focus on specific line of inquiry based on chosen theme

Mind maps
 Central question
 Futures wheel
 Historical backcasting
 Expert interviews

Foresighting

Identifying key drivers of change and creating possible future scenarios

Key drivers
 Scenario matrix

Strategising

Designing active interventions to ensure a desirable future outcome

Winners & Losers
 Futurecast map

05 Scanning

Scanning is the act of making sense of present and past data to focus on a specific line of inquiry based on a chosen theme.

The goal of scanning is to explore a theme within social justice in concrete terms, and in the context of relevant events. Good scanning is very important to exploring justice themes, because the process can bring conceptual, systemic issues down to the humanistic scale of experiences.

At the end of scanning, we should have generated enough data points about the selected topic and crafted a meaningful central question that we can revisit throughout the project. These are the tools within scanning:

- **Mind Maps**
- **Central Question**
- **Futures Wheel**
- **Historical Backcasting**
- **Expert Interviews**





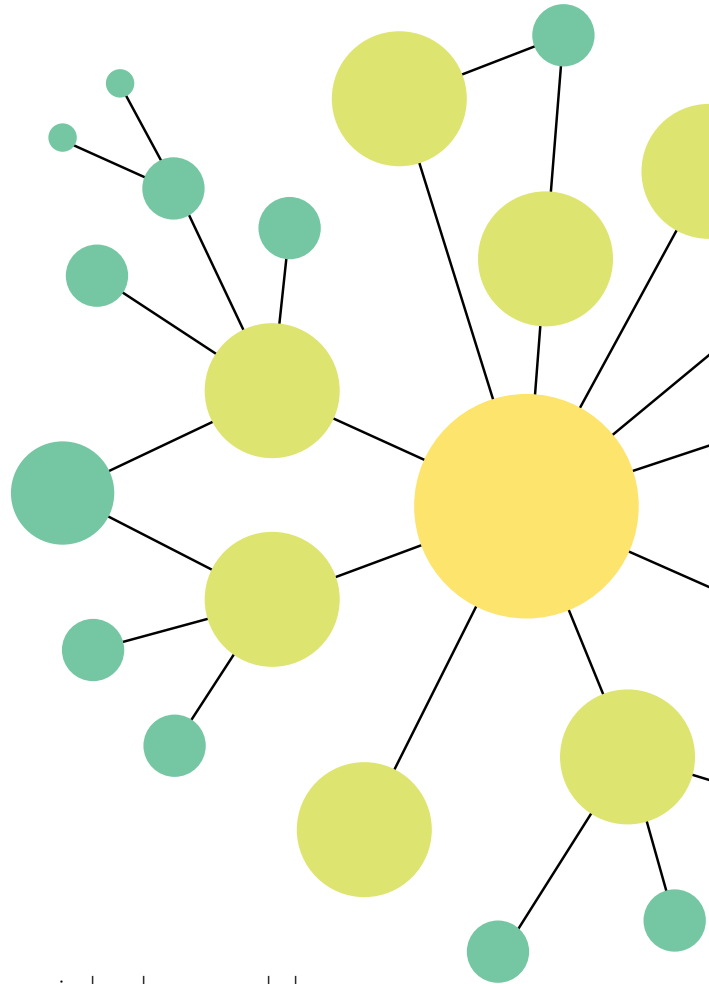
5.1 Mind Maps

What is it used for?

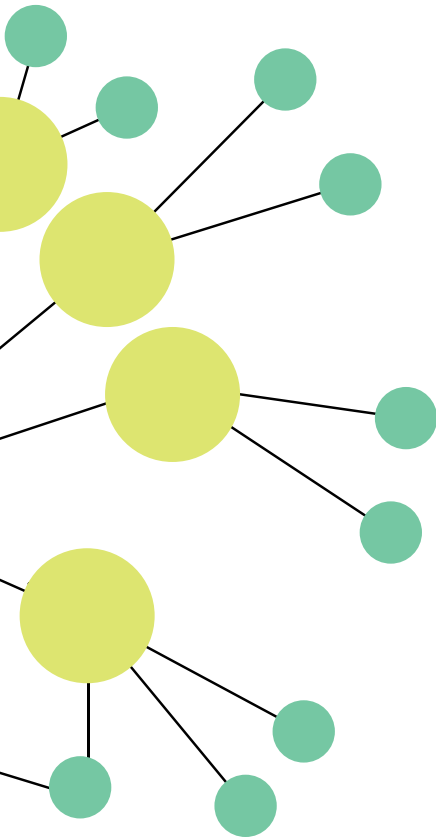
To scope out a landscape of concrete ideas that are relevant to your topic of interest

What is a mind map?

A mind map is a commonly used visualisation tool for individuals and teams to find inspiration for a project starting from a single topic of interest.



A mind map is done by open-ended, word association around an idea. In the context of justice, the mind map is particularly useful in breaking down conceptual ideas (e.g. gender-based violence) into concrete ideas that are more relatable at the individual level (e.g. domestic violence, feminist public spaces, victim-blaming, etc.). These ideas can then be used to inform subsequent tools in this chapter.



How to make a mind map?

1 Select a Topic

Express your topic in one or a few words, and write it in the centre of a page e.g. gender-based violence, cybercrime, social inequality.

2 Free Associate

Ask yourself: what ideas come to mind when you think about the topic? Write down at least 5 ideas and connect them individually to that central topic (like branches of a tree).

3 Repeat

Repeat the free association on each of the ideas, to create two or three levels of branches.

The resulting mind map is a collection of ideas that are related to each other through the central topic, which opens up to your team potential areas of research.

Facilitator's Notes:

- Mind mapping is a brainstorming tool used for divergent thinking and starting conversations. It is best if the team has a private space, away from noise, and start with an improve game to be in a generative, non-judgemental mindset.
- If a starting point of a topic is too conceptual or difficult to freely associate, suggest starting with a new but relevant topic that is more concrete. For example, instead of gender-based violence, the team can start with domestic violence, or LGBTQ rights.
- At the end of a mind mapping session, hold a debrief discussion with your team to identify which branches of ideas stand out and why. This will be helpful for framing a research question in the next step.

5.2 Central Question

What is it used for?

To focus the scope of foresight research through a future-oriented inquiry

What is a central question?

Strategic foresight begins with what we call a central question - a defined scope of inquiry that frames your topic of interest in the context of a future possibility. You can look at the mind map(s) you have created for concrete ideas that you can use to frame your central question.

A good central question provokes thought by investigating a future event or object that is measurable and relevant within a particular context and time horizon.



These criteria can be illustrated with an example:

What does a women friendly police station in Thailand look like in the year 2030?

The goal of crafting a good central question is to clearly define what falls in the scope of our project and what does not. This is a question we can revisit throughout the course of the project. Even though the question might encourage predictions about the future, that is not the intention.

A good central question is:

- 1 **Measurable**
- 2 **Relevant**
- 3 **Contextual**

Let's look at these in more detail with questions around gender equality.

Facilitator's Notes:

Ask these three questions as you help your team frame the central question. A good question will take time, and many many attempts. The answers to these questions should be "yes", before moving on to Futures Wheel.

- **Measurable:** Is your question tied to an action, event, or decision of some kind?
- **Relevant:** Can you name a community, an institution, or an organization that will care about your question?
- **Contextual:** Do you know where and for whom will this question matter?
- **Uncertain:** When you read the question out loud, do people mostly disagree with what the future would look like? (remember: strong disagreements mean the future remain uncertain and therefore open to possibilities)

You can use the following sentence structures to guide the writing of the central question:

- In what year will [event] take place in [a place]?
- What will [an action / an object] look like in [year in the future]?

Central question should be measurable

A well-specified central question gives the project focus without immediately jumping to a solution. After all, the scanning phase is focused on understanding, not acting. A question should not be so broad that we can only discuss conceptual ideas, or so specific that we limit our thinking. Most importantly, we have to be able to measure the outcome of the central question.

Put differently, a central question is a hypothesis that we are looking to “test” in the future scenarios. Questions with a time component works well: “When will event x happen?” or “what will x look like in the year 20xx?” are good places to start.

Social justice deals with systemic issues which can be difficult to discuss in concrete terms. Think about corruption, gender equality, access to justice, social reintegration - these are all big and important ideas that we can easily discuss in abstract terms ad infinitum. Mind mapping can help you identify a specific instance or manifestation of these ideas that are measurable. For example, gender equality might be represented by legalisation of gay marriage at the federal level, equal pay, or parental leave policy for both parents.

The key here is to look for an action, an event, or a landmark decision at the societal level that will have an impact on the citizens at the individual level.

Example:

- **Too broad** = What does gender equality look like in the future?
- **Better** = When will gay marriage become legalised in Thailand?

Central question should relate to stakeholders

Strategic foresight provides possible future scenarios that might emerge around a particular topic. The value of this information will have different values to different stakeholders, who in turn have varying levels of interest and agency in shaping a desirable future.

This is a good time to reflect on the audience of your research work: is it a policy think tank who can provide recommendations to lawmakers, or an NGO who works directly with people in the affected communities, or a corporate social responsibility task force who is looking to invest in an impactful cause? The central question should help you reflect on the decision that you need to make.

Promoting social justice involves many stakeholders, both within the formal justice system and external to it. Although there are many influential changemakers who can make use of strategic foresight, we steer you towards stakeholders who are able to actively shape the system. Most likely, these are institutions, governments, or corporations where the results of your forecasting can inform their strategic plans. We will revisit individual stakeholders when discussing Winners & Losers.

Example:

- **For an advocacy NGO:** When will gay marriage become legalised in Thailand?
- **For a CSR taskforce** = What might the most common family unit look like in Thailand in 2050?

Central question should provide clear context

It is easy to get carried away with big-picture concepts. Endemic to social justice is the idea that complex, systemic problems require complex, systemic solutions. While we do not disagree, we have found it difficult to be generative in our research without any constraints to provide context. As noted in the “measurable” criteria, it is best to focus on the particular and concrete rather than the system view.

Therefore, the central question should be concise and give enough context for the scope of research. You can start with geographic constraints (are we interested in country-level or global reach?) and key stakeholders (are we interested in specific communities or institutions?).

One sentence should be enough to communicate your central question; this does not mean we are limiting ourselves to a narrow scope but rather a specific starting point.

Example:

- **Broadly focused:** What is the system of social welfare and corporate policy support for the average families in 2050?
- **Highly focused:** What is the most financially stable family unit in Thailand in 2050?

Bonus: central question should be uncertain

In general, the question should hold the attention of the audience as well as the forecaster and leave room for uncertainties. This can easily be determined by asking the question to someone: if the answer is “it depends”, that’s a good central question.

When framing the question, you can think about any event or object as a reflection of our society’s values about a particular topic and how that might change in the future. This can be anything from an LGBT pride parade (reflecting changes in public perception of gender) to the law (reflecting institutionalised support for equal rights).

Note that a good question should not sound like a “solution” (otherwise there are no “possibilities” to forecast). We are not interested in the “how” of making the central question come about, but rather in the underlying meaning behind that central question.

5.3 Futures Wheel

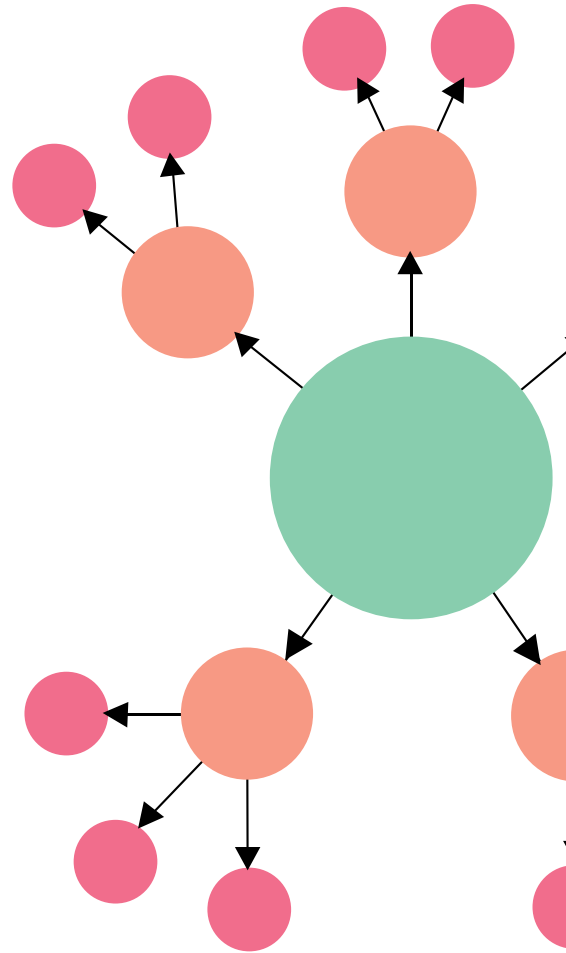
What is it used for?

To quickly scan future consequences based on a positive outcome of your central question

What is a futures wheel?

The futures wheel is structurally similar to the mind map but instead of free-association between ideas, we consider how an event in the central question can have an impact on other events and/or trends.

In a way, the futures wheel gives us a preview of what the future might look like - the desirable, not-so-desirable, and even contradictory possibilities.



How to make a futures wheel?

1 Make your central question a statement

Write your central question in a statement format in the center of the page. At this point, we are interested in a positive alternative future that has yet to exist. For examples:

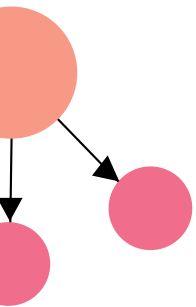
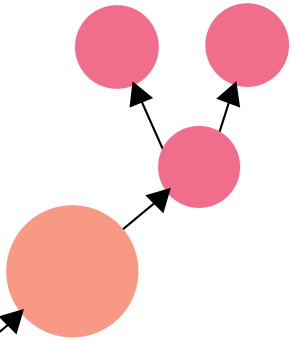
- “When will same-sex marriage become legalized in Thailand?” is stated as “Same-sex marriage is legal” (currently, same-sex civic unions are legal).
- “What might the most common family unit look like in Thailand in 2050?” is stated as “The most common family unit is the nuclear family” (currently, it is multi-generational core surrounded by extended family).

2 Imagine the consequences

If this statement is true, what would be a consequence of that? Write at least 5 “branches” of impact by thinking about cultural, social, political, technological, environmental or economic factors. These are 1st-order consequences.

3 Repeat

Repeat Step 2 with each of the branches to find 2nd- and 3rd-order consequences.

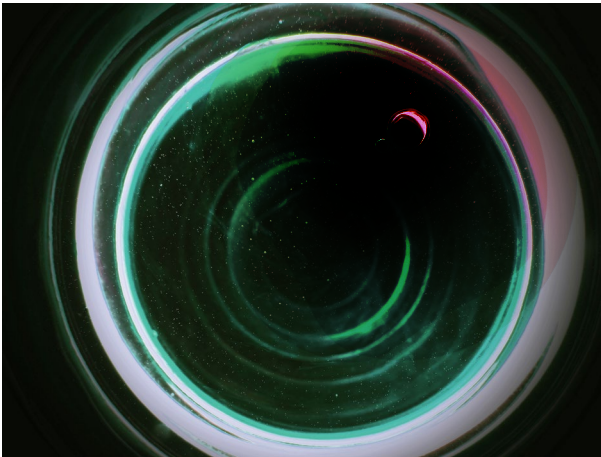


Even though futures wheel might in itself already paint a picture of a plausible future, we caution that you do not jump to conclusions. Treat each event as speculation, one that has a certain probability of happening depending on past and current trends, which we will explore through Historical Backcasting.

After completing the Future Wheel with your team, hold a short discussion and make a list of topics to pursue in your research. You can begin from 1st-order (near the center of the wheel) and work your way to 2nd-, 3rd-, or higher-order consequences.

Facilitator's Notes:

- When thinking about future consequences, make sure you consider a complete picture of the world. Guide the participants to think at least along these three dimensions: social, economic, and technological consequences.
- A consequence in futures wheel is only speculative of events that might occur and give you ideas on where to do research. Guide participants away from getting stuck with concrete predictions.
- After completing the wheel, encourage each team member to make a list of at least 5 topics that are interesting to read about further.
- As with brainstorming, we recommend having a quiet team space for discussing these topics.





5.4 Historical Backcasting

What is it used for?

To collect data points about relevant events in the past to identify drivers of change over time

What is historical backcasting?

Historical backcasting is a process of analysing past events to identify driving forces underlying changes over time that are relevant to our central question.

This step requires deep literature research based on the topics discovered through futures wheel. Historical backcasting should aim for a timeline at least double that of the forecasting timeline (e.g. look back 50 years for a forecast 25 years into the future). Backcasting should be conducted as a team so you can build off each other's perspectives.

Understandably, "looking to history for underlying patterns" is a broad, conceptual task. We recommend that you start by identifying social and technological indicators, such as public demonstrations or the release of personal devices. Try the following steps to generate the most meaningful set of data.

How to do historical backcasting?

1 Make a list of history

Based on the futures wheel, make a list of historical “happenings” that might indicate the start or trajectory of a long-term change. These may be:

a. An observed trend or rule:

for example, Moore’s Law (dictating processing power of computers) or the S-Curve (growth trajectory of a business)

b. A landmark event:

for example, a new law protecting LGBTQ rights, election of the first female PM, or Twitter banning the President

2 Read far and wide

Start researching these topics on the Internet, through academic sources if you have access. Wikipedia is a great place to start scanning - you can (and should) validate the references later.

Based on this timeline, you will likely surface interesting changes over time (trends) and the meaning behind these trends. We refer to these meanings as drivers of change, which we will use for building future scenarios. For example, you may find many data points about women’s role in the media and find that women have been portraying more stereotypically male characters over time. The driver of change here would be media representation of diverse gender roles.

3 Describe, in brief

For each trend or event, note the relevant dates and give a short description. It is best to have the data points in a format that is movable (e.g. digital or physical post-its).

4 Make sense of data

Organise these insights into a timeline and highlight your key insights based on your clustering, complete with dates and/or years.

Facilitator's Notes:

- Historical backcasting can be a time-consuming process for new teams. If you are running this in a time-boxed workshop setting - for example, if you have 3 hours to complete the scanning phase - we recommend scanning existing literature to help participants digest the history of a topic. We recommend 2 - 3 of each of the following sources:
 - **Peer-reviewed articles:** Peer-reviewed articles do a great job summarising big historical ideas (e.g. a religion's impact on gender and culture in a certain country) into easily digestible notes.
 - **Op-eds:** Op-ed articles from trusted sources, usually subject experts, often give a quick overview and some relevant statistics about a topic. They may also have qualitative data (such as testimonials, personal stories, and primary observations), though this will likely reflect the author's own political and social views.
 - **Research reports:** Research reports are great for identifying stakeholders and forces of change at the system level. Reports produced by reputable institutions are also reliable source for further references.
 - **Talks or seminars:** Conference talks and academic seminars are usually prepared by subject area experts, with the latest insights and research on a given topic, and often contain a strong point of view. Recordings, video or audio, of these talks and a short biography of these speakers is a great way to get introduced to the current discussions.
- Make the futures wheel visible in your team space - put a poster of it on the wall, for instance, to guide the readings and research. This will help focus the data points and drivers of change to be more relevant to your central question.
- Set aside physical or digital spaces to layout the data points about past events on a timeline. This will help you facilitate discussions about topics that is particularly relevant to a time period or identify gaps in important themes that might be missing from the timeline.

5.5 Expert Interviews

What is it used for?

To identify and/or verify important themes within a research topic from an expert point of view

What is an expert interview?

An expert interview is a formal conversation with a subject area expert who is familiar with the status quo and future of a given topic.

These experts are ideally people who work closely with the subject and may have thought about the future. The interview should be provocative in the sense that it surfaces interesting insights that you might have missed; in fact, you want to go beyond standard talking points that you can easily read about in publications. Here are a few basic etiquettes to keep in mind when conducting expert interviews:

1

Do your research

- Do research on the experts before reaching out: What are their areas of expertise? How does it relate to your topic? Clarifying this will help you connect better with the experts.
- Create an interview guide of at least 10 questions. You may end up using 2 - 3 questions, but you will always be better off going in with too many. These questions should be open-ended, not leading or disrespectful of their work.

2

Schedule an interview

- Reach out and be prepared to have several contacts due to scheduling conflicts. Respect that some interviewees might not want to be interviewed at all.
- Take diligent notes. It is best to go into an interview in pairs, so one can take notes while the other focuses on the conversation. If you need to record, be sure to obtain permission and state so at the beginning of the recording.
- Pause. Be a good listener by pausing generously between questions. They might be more willing to share more. Let the interview flow.



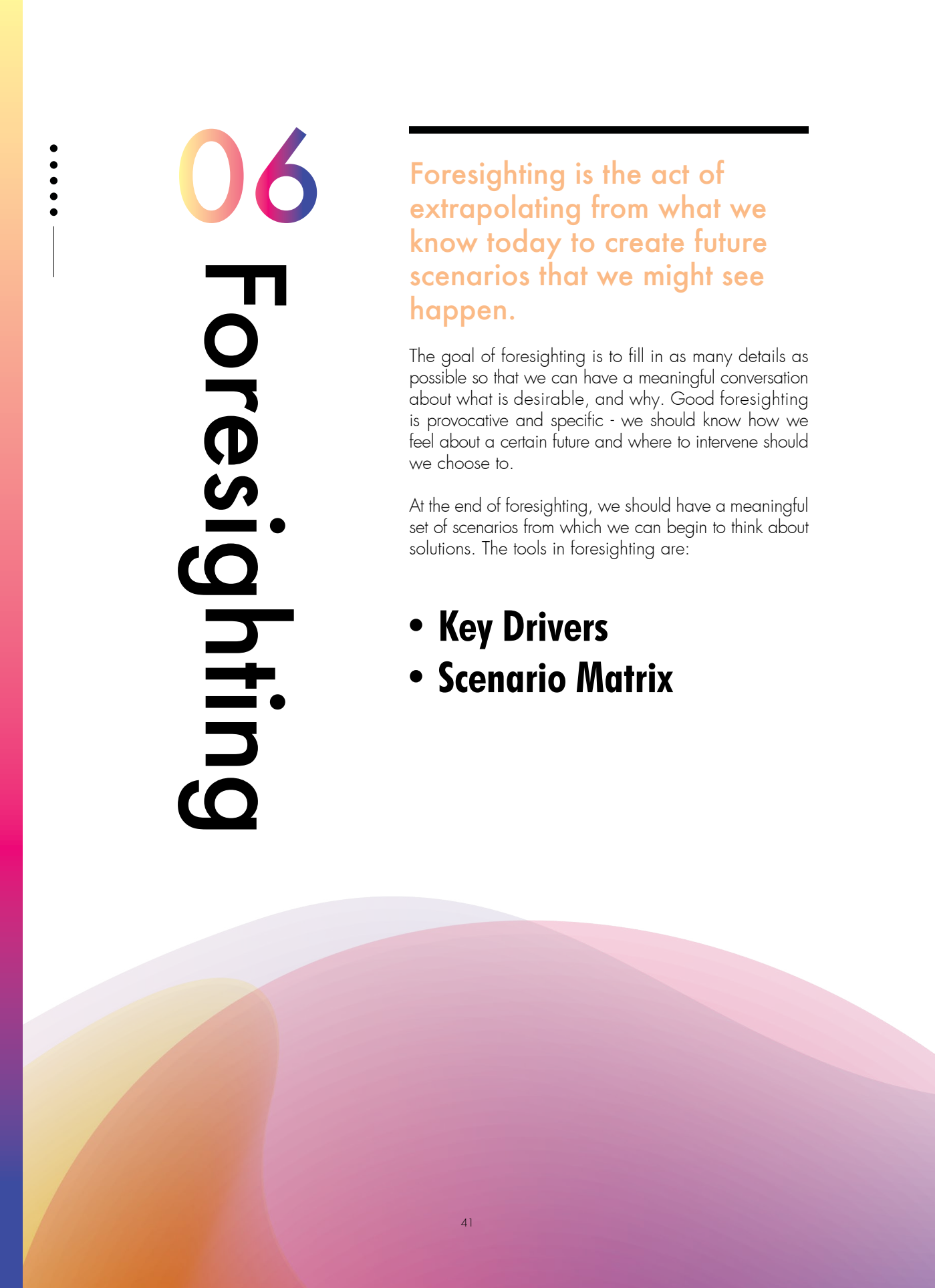
3

Debrief by writing

- After the interviews, write-up a short reflection based on the insights you heard and share with your teams. What are the implications of the insights you heard mean for your project?

Facilitator's Notes:

- The experts you reach out to can be academic researchers working on theories and big datasets, or practitioners with deep experience working in the field. They may have a publication on the subject or other publicly recognized body of work (as an artist or designer might), though they need not be well-known. A good expert interview is ultimately someone who 1) has a role working closely on the topic 2) represents the topic from a fairly unbiased place, and 3) is willing to discuss openly about their work.
- Scheduling a time to discuss may take longer than expected. If an in-person interview is not possible, a video or phone call is the next best medium for a live conversation. As a facilitator for a time-boxed workshop, you may want to conduct the interview live and pre-record it for your participants (with permission), or curate an expert talk.



06 Foresighting

Foresighting is the act of extrapolating from what we know today to create future scenarios that we might see happen.

The goal of foresighting is to fill in as many details as possible so that we can have a meaningful conversation about what is desirable, and why. Good foresighting is provocative and specific - we should know how we feel about a certain future and where to intervene should we choose to.

At the end of foresighting, we should have a meaningful set of scenarios from which we can begin to think about solutions. The tools in foresighting are:

- **Key Drivers**
- **Scenario Matrix**

6.1 Key Drivers

What is it used for?

To identify forces of change that leads to a divergent set of possible future scenarios

What are key drivers?

Between backcasting and expert interviews, there should emerge a set of drivers.

These are invisible forces that underlie the series of data points you observed around your topic.

Drivers of change can be changes in cultural norms, demographics, or other structures in society.

The difference between drivers and trends is the “why” and the “what”. For example, women electing not to change their last name after marriage is a trend, which may be driven by the normalisation of women’s roles in the workplace and/or the value of individual reputation at work.

When naming a driver, it should have a “neutral” label that describes a change. “Value of individual reputation in career” is a driver that could go either way: high emphasis on the individual may be a world that values the model of corporate leadership, while low emphasis on the individuals may describe a more team sports-like way of doing business. If you are stuck with how to identify these drivers, you can ask yourself: why is something happening over time?

Once you have these drivers, you can categorise them into two groups, key drivers and contextual drivers, according to these metrics:

- **Impact:**

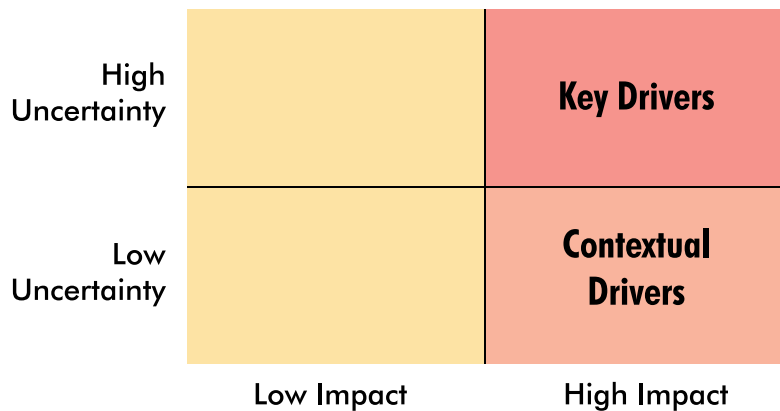
How much influence will this have on the answer to your Central Question?

- **Uncertainty:**

How sure are you about the outcome of the driver (or direction of change?)

What we're most interested in for building future scenarios are the key drivers. These will have a big impact on our futures, yet we are unsure of the direction of change - hence the exploration of multiple possible futures. On the other hand, we should keep in mind contextual drivers because these will surely come to pass and will impact our scenarios.

Most technology-related drivers fall under contextual drivers as these are highly certain to change in one-direction (think of our electronic devices: more storage, faster processing speed, bigger screens, fewer buttons). At the end of this section, you should have a list of key drivers from which you can build a scenario matrix.



Facilitator's Notes:

- Finding drivers is the most difficult step in the forecasting process. Drivers will sound similar to a "root cause" to a series of events you have observed from the past to the present. Keep in mind that drivers should be meaningful and relevant to your Central Question.
- Make sure to guide participants to find key drivers in multiple, though not necessarily all, across these domains: social, technological, political, environmental, demographic, economics, and cultural. Our experience showed that some domains such as environmental may be harder to relate to some topics in social justice. For that reason, we decided to omit commonly used frameworks, though you may look up STEEPV and PESTLE as a guide.
- When identifying drivers, remind the participants to ask: Is this the why or the what? Remember, we are looking for the underlying pattern that is causing the events observed today.

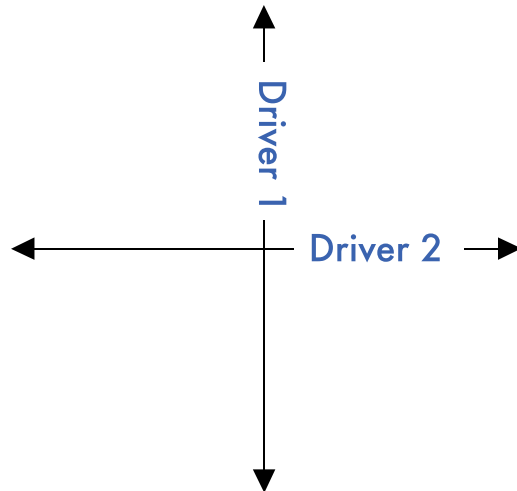
6.2 Scenario Matrix

What is it used for?

To generate a set of divergent future scenarios that is most impactful to the Central Question for rich discussions between stakeholders

What is a scenario matrix?

A scenario matrix is a set of four possible futures based on key drivers which we can use as a foundation for a generative discussion.



As discussed in the previous section, these key drivers are forces of change that are highly impactful to the outcome of the Central Question but are highly uncertain in its nature.

A scenario matrix is created from two compatible key drivers. Based on your work, there will likely be more than two to choose from which means that the team must apply judgment and an iterative trial and error process. For each key driver, there are two directions of change that are possible, therefore matching two key drivers will generate a total of four possible futures. A good scenario matrix will provide four futures that are:

- Mutually exclusive, otherwise it means that the two key drivers you have chosen describes an overlapping change in society
- Generative, leads to provocative discussions and even uncomfortable ideas

How to create a scenario matrix?

1 Select 2 key drivers

These should be mutually exclusive but complementary to each other (for example, a technological v. social driver). Do not overthink it at this stage, you can always come back to select new pairs.

2 Draw the axes

Label the driver of change as a neutral axis and describe the two extreme outcomes for each driver of change (for example, the axis of “influence of technology” may be described by “big tech” on one end, and “distributed tech” on the other). Each quadrant should now have two extreme characteristics based on the drivers.

3 Create a narrative

Describe in vivid details a narrative that is relevant to your central question in each quadrant. Start by asking simple questions to understand what “living” in this future feels like, for example:

- What is considered a normal social activity?
- What makes people happy or frustrated in this world?
- What do people think about big institutions, like governments and corporations?
- What is a measure of success in this future?
- How are conflicts resolved?

4 Give a catchy name

Label each quadrant with a catchy and illustrative name that captures each narrative described.

5 Try again

Trial and error is key here. If the team feels stuck in describing each narrative, try revisiting the key drivers to make another set of scenarios.

Picking a starting point

Once you have a scenario matrix, your team may decide to vote or rank the most likely and most desirable scenarios. The answers to these two criteria may not necessarily overlap. You can pose the same questions to your stakeholders as well. What are they excited by or scared of? What do they think will happen? Why?

It is worth repeating that we are not trying to make predictions. The purpose of the scenario matrix is to engage stakeholders in conversation about the future and create an action plan. We will discuss how we can use the scenarios further in *Winners & Losers*.

As a stakeholder, you may find yourself in a position to make meaningful changes, to protect the least advantaged from undesirable but likely scenarios (e.g. through corporate investments or crafting future-ready policy). Conversely, you might be in a position to imagine and bring about a more preferable scenario for all.

At the end of the day, these scenarios are only as useful as the insights that can inform potential actions that people, communities, and organizations can take today.

These actions may look like something like raising awareness (through speculative design), engaging the public (through participatory design), or identifying preventative solutions now (design thinking) - and will be discussed in brief in the conclusion to the next section.

Facilitator's Notes:

- To get to a distinctive set of scenarios, make sure that participants select pairs of key drivers that are mutually exclusive and cover different domains of society. A good pair to start off is one technological driver (such as "ownership of personal data") and one social driver (such as "female representation in media")
- Steps 3 and 4 may be followed interchangeably; giving your scenarios provocative names will help conjure vivid images of that future and it will be easier to come up with narratives. Try appropriating and adapting movie names or ideas from pop culture.
- Keep pushing participants to try different combinations of key drivers, even if they think they have found a good pair. Take time to debrief by asking questions about living in these future worlds. What does a day in this future look like? If the scenarios are too similar, encourage them to try again.
- Your participants may already think about the possible actions to take based on the scenarios and influence that they have. You can help them understand that they can do something to avoid undesirable scenarios, steer towards preferable scenarios, and/or designing quick fixes for today.
- At the end of the discussion, the teams should agree on at least two types of scenarios: the most desirable and the most likely, which may not be the same.

7 Strategising

Strategising is the act of designing active interventions to ensure a desirable future outcome.

The goal of strategising is to generate meaningful, human-centric insights based on the information we have about possible futures. Good strategising is actionable and relevant to the stakeholder and addresses the Central Question in some way. At this stage, we must take a stance in deciding what our desirable future should be and what we can do to get there.

In the end, we should be able to clearly articulate the people we are designing for and the “how” of helping them. The frames and tools for strategising are:

- **Winners & Losers**
- **Futurecast Map**

Strategising is the last step in the strategic foresight process as discussed in this handbook, whose goal has been to create tangible details about an uncertain future on a particular justice topic and have a discussion about possible futures. We hope that the information provided by the scenarios would spark the right conversation in the right stakeholders who will be inspired to take action.



7.1 Winners & Losers

What is it used for?

To focus the conversation on specific groups of individuals who will be most impacted and their needs in a possible future

Who are the winners and losers?

As designers, our goal is always to keep in mind the people whose lives we are trying to better - and futures thinking is no different.

For each of the scenarios, we will be able to identify the stakeholders who are likely to benefit (“winners”) and likely to be at a disadvantage (“losers”).

The latter is a vulnerable group for whom we can help design a better world as justice changemakers. For this section, we recommend selecting the most likely scenario as a starting point for analysis.

How to find the winners and losers?

To identify winners and losers for a specific scenario, you can brainstorm possible stakeholders in the scope of your central question (this is a good time to revisit your futures wheel and mind map). Each stakeholder will have a need that is addressed well or poorly in the future, hence their winner/loser status.

1 Who are they?

Briefly describe the biography of each stakeholder and label them as winner/loser.

2 What are their needs?

Keep in mind that in a future world, their needs may be different from their present needs.

3 How do they feel?

Describe their situation in the new future, and how it would make them happy or dissatisfied.

A list of winners and losers gives you a holistic, human-centric view of the scenario. You can use it to have a meaningful conversation about how to help the losers, while acknowledging the beneficial context. You can also use this list to plan the stakeholder engagement phase of your project.

How do we frame a good discussion question?

To help you generate an action plan, you may choose to state the user group and their needs in an opportunity statement, much like a HMW statement or point of view from design thinking. We encourage trying to address the most dire needs of the vulnerable future “losers”, using the following frame:

In a future world where...
[describe a scenario] ,
[describe the vulnerable “loser”]
... will need to ...
[describe their needs]
... because ...
[describe an insight from future scenario]

Facilitator’s Notes:

- Identifying winners and losers help make scenarios more relatable and tangible - though keep in mind that these stakeholders and their needs are at best hypotheses to be tested. Encourage the participants to extrapolate from their own experiences, and emphasise that this list can help them plan stakeholder engagements.
- By definition, winners are people who will have their needs and aspirations fulfilled in a future scenario, while losers are people who will suffer from some damage to their personhood or their needs not being addressed.
- Guide the participants to frame an opportunity statement in specific and clear terms. A good statement should be clear enough for people unfamiliar with your project and the process to understand what you are trying to achieve. We encourage reading this statement out loud to someone new as a way to check.

7.2 Futurecast Map

What is it used for?

To identify specific points of leverage and define prompts for ideating possible interventions

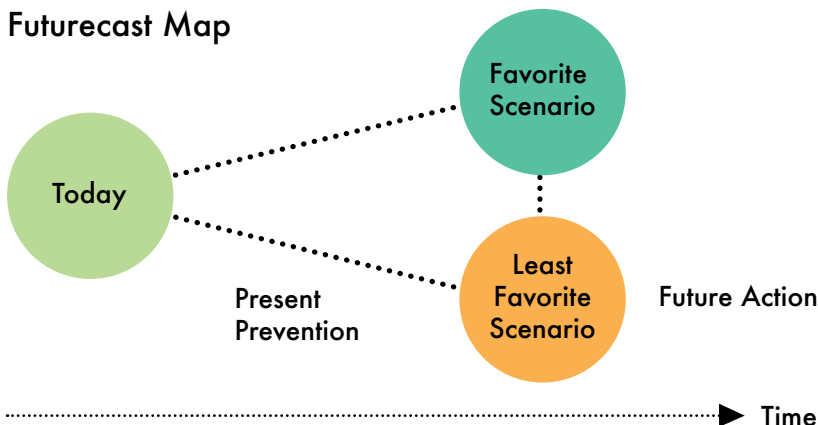
What is a futurecast map?

A futurecast map represents the extremes of future scenarios that could unfold over time and possible ways to influence future outcomes.

For our version of the methodology, we recommend starting with your team's favourite and least favourite scenarios to represent futures where you would like to head towards and avoid, respectively.

Laying out the relationships between the present and two divergent futures help us identify at least two possible points of intervention: acting today to realize the favourite scenario (Present Prevention) and acting in the future to change an undesirable future (Future Action).

Futurecast Map



How to make a futurecast map?

1 Make a timeline

Visually represent the present and futures in a futurecast map. Name and label the two scenarios explicitly.

2 Brainstorm!

For each scenario, use the following guiding questions to lead an open-ended discussion and generate a list of possible interventions under Present Prevention and Future Action.

- Where do you already see a resemblance to these scenarios today? How did it come to be?
- What kinds of events or signals would you observe if that scenario is becoming a reality?
- What are the experiences of winners and losers in each scenario? Where can you make their lives better? You can apply the same logic in the previous section to both scenarios.
- What kind of influence do you (the participants, who may represent different stakeholders) have on the drivers of change, that led to these two scenarios?
- If you have no limitations in terms of resources - personnel, finances, bureaucracy, technology - what would be the most impactful intervention?

3 Scope down ideas

Narrow down the list of interventions you would like to explore further, based on a previously agreed upon set of criteria such as feasibility and scalability. For the chosen ideas, you should spend some time discussing the specific details of what it actually is and how it might be done.

Facilitator's Notes:

Futurecast map is the last tool in this methodology which allows the participants to plan actions for a desirable future outcome and have a meaningful discussion. As a facilitator, your role is to lead a generative conversation where participants can openly share ideas about what these futures look like, potential signals from your favourite /least favourite scenario, or any setbacks one might expect from trying to achieve a "better" future. At this current stage, there are no "right" or "wrong" answers.

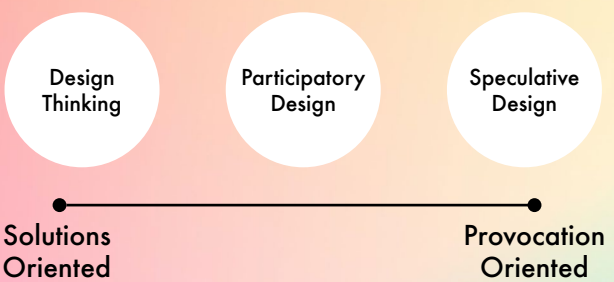
It is important to keep in mind the level of influence your participants have. If they are policy-makers or can influence changes at the systemic level, you may choose to work on bringing about the favourite scenario. If you are a non-profit or a foundation with local reach, you might work on helping the "losers" in the most likely outcome (note: most likely may not always be the least favourite). We recommend that the facilitators and participants loosen up through ice-breakers, much like the preparations for brainstorming or other creative activities.

Although we are not discussing specific problem-solving methodologies (such as design thinking), it is important to be clear where you can intervene so you can have a fruitful discussion with stakeholders. Running the futurecast map is quite open-ended and fuzzy. To help participants feel a sense of closure and direction, you can set the goal for this section to be for each team or the entire group to come up with one Present Prevention and one Future Action that they can build upon afterwards.



Future Prototyping: A Note

The most useful outcome of forecasting is the set of insights based on meaningful and rigorous creative work between stakeholders and those in positions of authority. Therefore, after completing the process, it is possible to use the futurecast map and intervention ideas as a jumping off point to a future-ready strategy. This strategy is what we have been working towards in this methodology. There are three possible design strategies to take, on a spectrum between solutions-oriented (i.e. generating concrete ideas to implement) and to provocation-oriented (i.e. engaging stakeholders in an emotional discussion). Depending on your goal and scope of work, you can apply these individually or in combination.



Strategy

What's the outcome?

Used for

Design Thinking

A product, service, experience, policy, or other recommendations meant to prevent an undesirable scenario from coming to pass or to anticipate the future needs of stakeholders.

Designing an action by a stakeholder to be implemented today

Participatory Design

A public experiential forum - such as an exhibition, pop-up experience, community workshop - meant to communicate the findings of futures thinking and engage community members in co-creating possible solutions. The public has the opportunity to express their emotions about the topic as well as their creativity in brainstorming.






Soliciting creativity, co-creation, and buy-in from stakeholders.

Speculative Design

A tangible object of some kind meant to convey the idea of living in possible future scenarios to a group of stakeholders and to engage people in conversations to get a vivid, emotional response. These future-oriented objects are used to spark reactions to the future, and encourage innovative initiatives that might not be normally considered "practical".

Triggering new, emotional responses and prompting generative discussions around possible actions.

Each of the strategies warrant their own textbook in the context of justice and may be discussed in future materials. A good conclusion to your foresight work may be reviewing and addressing your Central Question: What is the answer to the Central Question in your favourite and/or least favourite scenario? What are the implications to the stakeholders? Answering these questions will help give closure to what is surely an intense and insightful process.



08 Case Study: GBV

This section will give an overview of the tools in practice, using the topic of gender-based violence (GBV) as a case study to illustrate one use case.

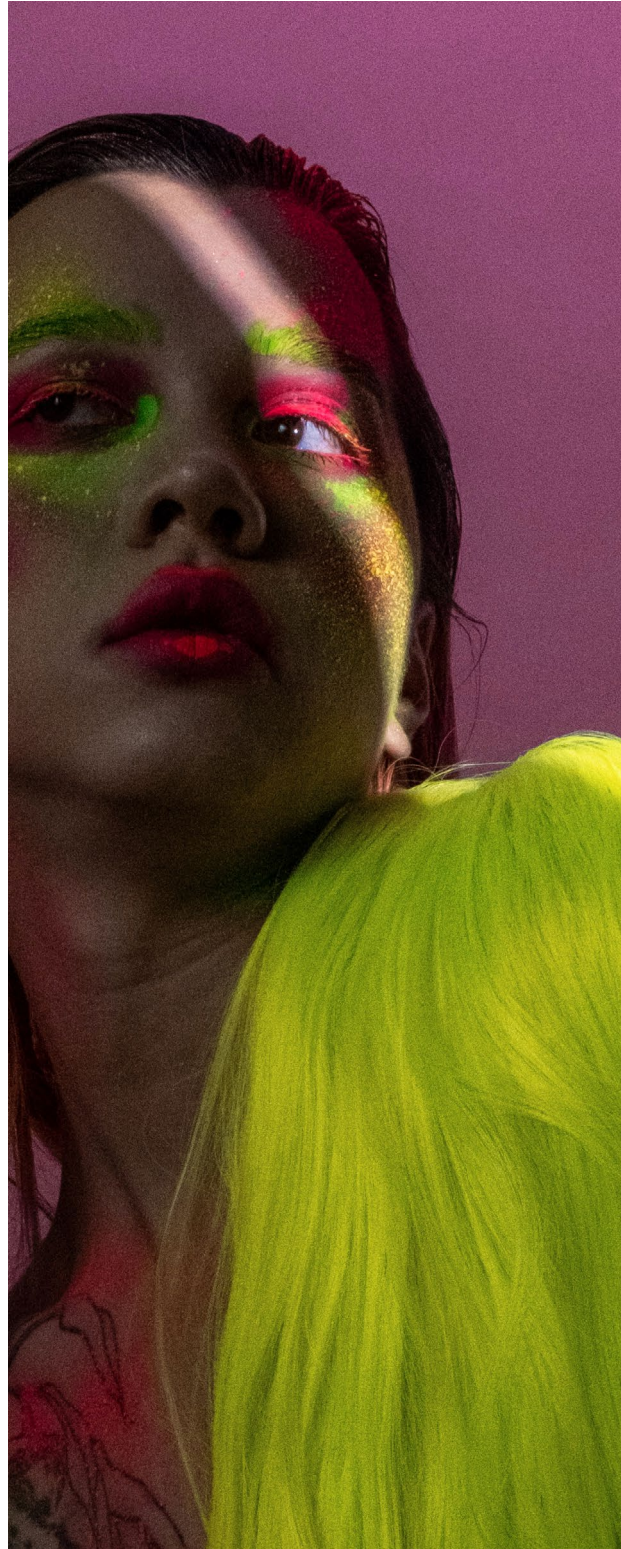
We began this case broadly and concluded with a series of provocative questions for discussion, and brainstorming. This reflects the journey of a participant who follows the sample curriculum presented in this booklet. To mimic a use case in which participants have little to no background in strategic foresight for the curriculum, we co-created this case study through a series of workshops with an internal team at TIJ who is newly introduced to the methodology.

We acknowledge that for existing organizations working on social justice, there will already be a specific scope within their projects, and as such the starting and endpoints should be adjusted accordingly. The tools shown in this section represent only snapshots of the tools discussed in previous chapters. We encourage every participant to fully utilize the tools to match the scope and scale of their projects.

Before continuing with this section, we would like to acknowledge that some issues discussed in this section may be sensitive to some readers. We would also like to note that the ideas presented here are generated for conversations in an open, judgement-free, and respectful environment. Any concepts that seem out of the norm are used to encourage meaningful conversations, rather than to provoke arguments.

Finding a Central Question

We began with a broad mind map of the topic of gender-based violence, which led us to topics of marriage, sexual abuse, cultural beliefs, social stigma, gender roles, and more. An example mind map on the next page highlights diverging sets of ideas for exploration.



Mind map



Expanding on the first mind map, we were able to reflect, clarify, and cluster some ideas together to inspire the framing of our central question and backcasting research. Specifically, we observed the following groups of ideas and questions emerging from our mind map:

The proliferation of social tools: how social media is used to express opinions, how freedom of expression as interpreted by the people v. the government, how current stories in mainstream media perpetuates stereotypes

The expectation of pre-written roles: gender - and culture - based roles in our society such as nuclear family structure, women's responsibilities at home, marriage to a good woman as the ultimate end-goal for men in heteronormative relationships, double standards for partners in an interracial relationship (e.g. perception of Caucasian men with Thai women, and vice versa), and the popularity of LGBTQ+ tourism

The lack of feminist storycrafting: victim-blaming in violence cases, harmful narratives in popular media, lack of female role models outside gender norms

The machismo of men: career choice tied with reputation and success, "coming of age" rituals like sex and alcohol, suppressing feelings in fear of being perceived as less manly, toxic masculinity standards like using violence to deal with problems, the role of husband above the role of wife in traditional beliefs



Based on these themes, we conducted preliminary research by way of academic papers, online publications, and newspapers to find common narratives and to situate ourselves in this topic in the context of Thailand. We explored widely across social, economic, and political dimensions to get acquainted with the history of gender-based violence. We then brainstormed a list of possible central questions and filter them according to our criteria of: relevant, contextual, uncertain, and measurable. After group voting and debriefing, we are left with three central questions to pursue:

What does a feminist movement agenda look like in 2030?

What will the first feminist children's book in Thailand be about?

When will there be an all-female police force in Thailand?

These questions revolve around the idea that gender-based violence is a symptom of an ecosystem that is hungry for a feminist identity, whether that is in the "big J" justice system (e.g. police force), in popular media (e.g. TV shows and literature), or as a social movement. For the purposes of this case study, we decided to craft a central question that combines elements of the three:

When will there be a politically charged feminist assembly, with a shared agenda, that is endorsed by the government?

Futures Wheel and Deep Reading

At this point, we actively chose to focus our work on the feminism angle in government and social movement. Indeed, in the process of generating meaningful scenarios, we should not aim to cover the entire spectrum of gender-based violence issues.

We changed the central question to the statement: "There is an all-women coalition in parliament that can affect laws" and created a futures wheel to explore the primary and secondary consequences of that scenario. A snapshot of the wheel is included here for reference.

For historical backcasting, we decided to focus on the following themes based on the futures wheel that seem relevant to the central question:

Celebrity Culture: How celebrities build expectations and act as role models;

Law Enforcement: How and which laws are enforced;

Fringe Assembly: How fringe groups form, assemble, and create communities;

Women in Government: How women are represented in government.



For the purposes of this case study, we did not conduct expert interviews but instead derived the drivers of change from further secondary research. Backcasting was done through deep reading of online resources as before, but with a particular focus on these aforementioned themes. Though we refer simply to the female/male binary in this section, deeper discussions can and will yield more nuanced narratives along the gender spectrum.

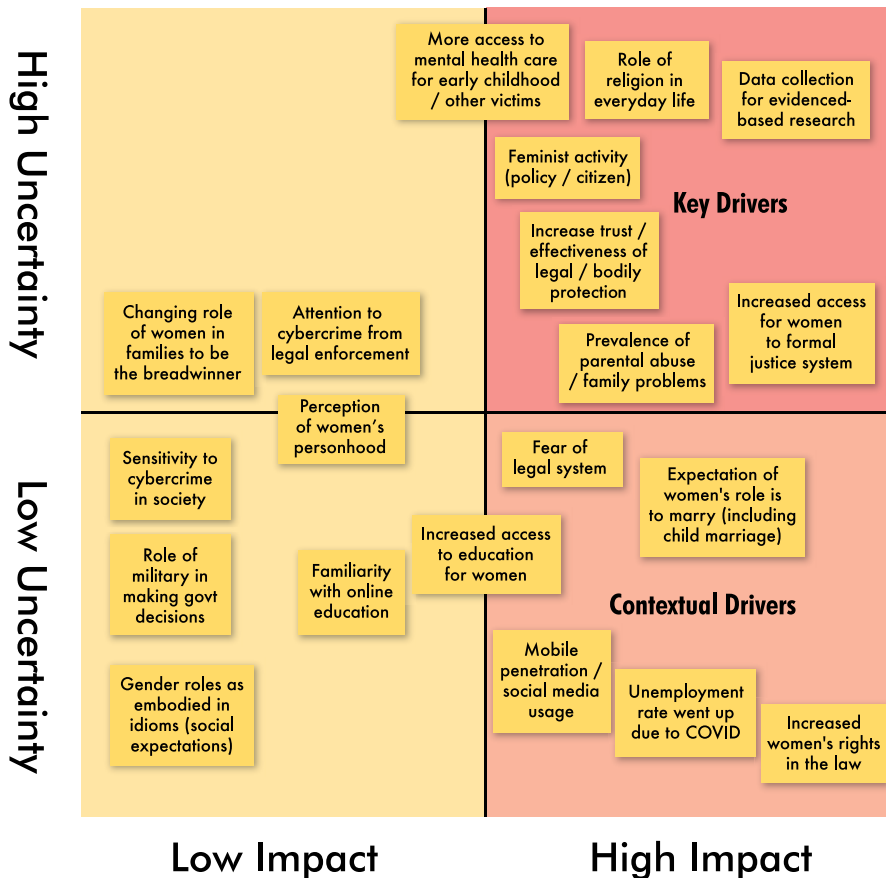


Categorising Drivers of Change

Drivers of change are the forces that push society in certain directions.

These are usually accompanied or identified by indicators, a milestone event that shapes our society in some ways and that is often newsworthy. Examining these milestones over time and looking for patterns (“why are these moments in the order they are in?”) clued us into the following set of drivers, organised into an Uncertainty v. Impact Matrix.

With these key drivers, we explored future scenario matrices with trial and error, and found two interesting threads around the perception of personhood for women in society (and the power they hold based on this perception by others) and diversity of women’s lives portrayed in popular media. Between the two drivers, there is a good combination of political, economic, and social/culture factors that can yield rich future scenarios.



Creating Future Scenarios

Refining these drivers of change through further reading and discussion, we arrived at the following drivers which were used to create a 2x2 scenario matrix.

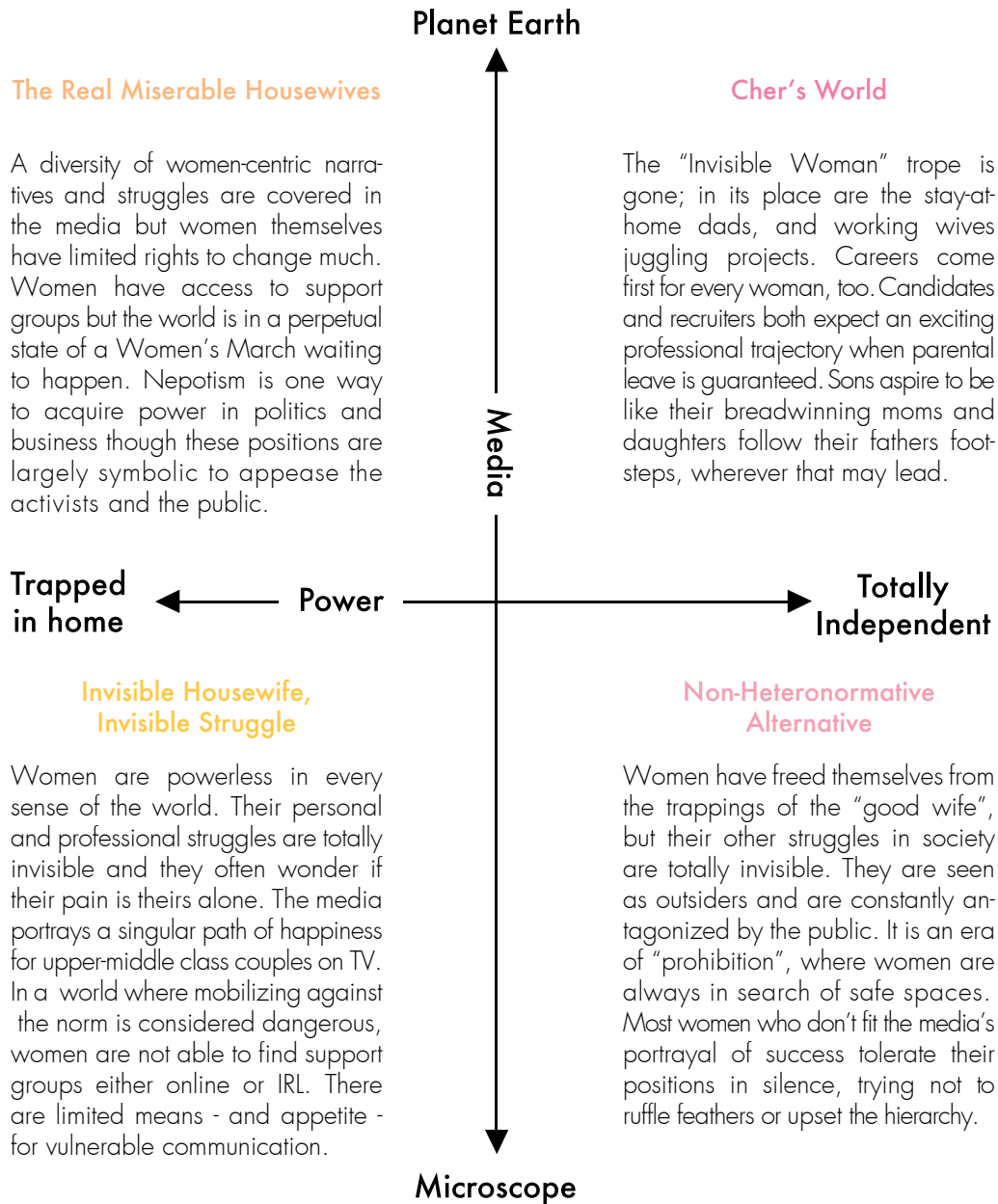
Driver of change #1: Social Power

This driver refers to the shifting power of women in society, both in a family unit and at work, which is influenced by other factors such as access to education and the formal justice system, changing legal protection, and/or ease of getting into business. In one version of the future, we see women's ideal role in society solidify as a stay-at-home wife who is financially dependent on her partner due to the continued culture of victim-blaming and perpetuating gender stereotypes. On the other end, we see a divergent future where women become financially independent through work and are free of traditionally gendered expectations.

Driver of change #2: Media Focus

This driver refers to the diversity of visible representation of women's experiences in popular media such as news programming, TV shows, and social media. In fictional settings especially, we see gender stereotypes - like courtship, family, and even toxic masculinity - being easily propagated through the same narratives of class hierarchy. In one version of the future, we continue to see the urban, middle class success stories persist in the media. In another, we get to observe a variety of narratives from different points of view and many distinct but equally representations of a life well-led.

In all these scenarios, the key discussion questions are: who is in control of the social narratives around gender roles and what are the consequences to everyone in society?



From these scenarios, we can explore in more vivid details what the best and worst case scenarios might be for a select group of stakeholders.



Best Case Scenario: Cher's World

In this scenario, women constantly get asked: "Why aren't you achieving more?". They can readily attain a level of success in their career and freedom of choice in their personal lives without the pressure of traditional gender expectations, regardless of their economic status. Young women and men both enjoy more socially diverse communities in our neighbourhoods, in college and at work, and more equal, gender-neutral parenting responsibilities at home. We collectively become a bit more individualistic in our pursuit of personal achievements. Boys and girls are raised in a world of diverse representation - female CEOs, Disney princes, and global media stars taking over Hollywood. There is no tax on feminine hygiene products; in fact, there are no longer "women's products", maybe "male fertility products" that used to be called condoms. The world is not free of sexism, but society addresses gender inequality head-on through policies and the law without finger-pointing. Competition aside, we consider the same standards we have now of career success as the ultimate end-goal of a happy life.

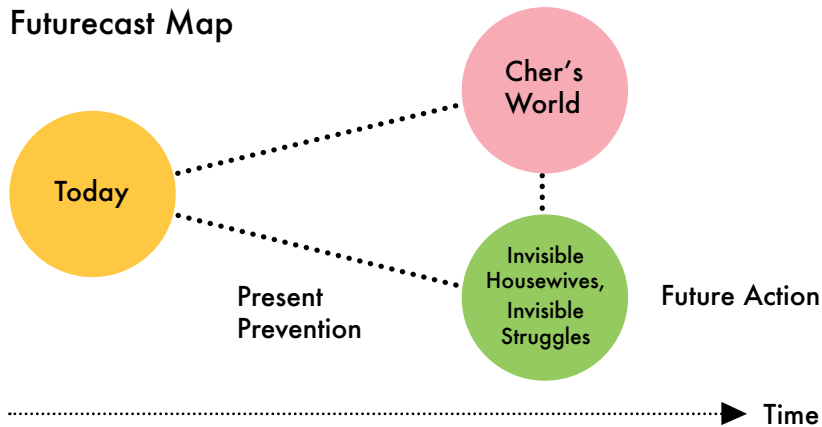
Worst Case Scenario: Invisible Housewife, Invisible Struggles

In this scenario, the divisive gender stereotypes that confines women to the home and alienates men from allyship persisted and is codified into our social structures. Popular movie franchises (horror, usually) repeat the same misogynistic tropes and jokes; boardroom meetings take place at golf clubs, more careers put out of reach or disbanded entirely for women, like the police cadet academy. These keep women and gender minorities out of daily life, and by design, out of the media, limiting the role creatives play in film and music and the arts. Without public support for comprehensive family care, young women are left to sacrifice their careers in the process of starting a family - the only aspirational story many grew up with.

Futurecast Provocations

Based on these scenarios, we can construct a simplified map for taking our next steps. Our case study ends with the following prompts for further discussion.

Futurecast Map



Present Prevention:

- How might we provide more learning opportunities for women in different career paths early on?
- How can we ensure a diversity of stories representing the good, bad, and ugly parts of our society in popular media?
- How do we help young men and women reframe career success beyond monetary or status achievements?

Future Action:

- What policies might need to be in place to empower a national advocacy group for women's rights in the future?
- How might we eliminate rigid gender roles in families through popular culture?
- How might we start a community of allies to support diversity in a traditionally male-dominated field?

What's Next?

In this example case study, we have approached the topic of gender-based violence from a broad perspective, as an organisation who advocates for gender equality and connects our stakeholders in meaningful ways. As TIJ, we might decide to pause our work here and turn towards our partners to bring these drivers, scenarios, and provocations to life through their work.

We would consider the level of influence our partners have in society, whether they are equipped to change policies or individual lives. We would identify the winners and losers that our partners care about, and revisit the narratives in the best or worst case scenarios. We would encourage our partners to commit to some action, whether that is to create new interventions today or to simply imagine better worlds with their own stakeholders.

At the end of the day, TIJ is an entity that empowers everyone to make social justice their business. We hope that this booklet has encouraged you - whoever you are - to take a meaningful step in that direction.



09 Sample Curriculum

As with any design process, the rigorous application of futures thinking requires the participants to work collaboratively in teams to iterate upon their own work, to listen to feedback, and of course to enjoy themselves along the way. One effective way of introducing futures thinking is through holding an extended series of workshops; the series outlined in this chapter distributes the methodology over 3 days.



Day	1	2	3
Phase	Scanning	Foresighting	Strategising
Tools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mind maps • Central Question • Futures Wheel • Historical Backcasting* 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Key Drivers • Scenarios Matrix* 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Winners & Losers • Futurecast Map
Time	2 - 3 h	2 - 3 h	2 - 3 h

*The tools highlighted can take up a lot of time to complete meaningfully, therefore it is recommended that participants start using the tools during the workshop and complete them after the session. Expert interviews are not included because they depend on the schedules of external stakeholders (which is outside of the context of the workshop).

Preparing the Participants

As a facilitator, you can prepare a short list of 3 to 4 articles or excerpts for each topic that you will be exploring during the workshops (refer to the Historical Backcasting section for how to choose resources). Encourage the participants to read thoroughly before the workshop by offering a few guiding questions:

- What are some key statistics that stood out to you from the readings?
- What are the turning points that occur in history or the recent past?
- Who are the key players/stakeholders in the system? Why? What is their role?

You may also want to send an outline of each phase and the relevant tools (Chapters 5, 6, and 7) a day in advance to acquaint the participants to the vocabulary and set expectations. The templates below should be reviewed with references to the tools discussed in this booklet.

Day 1 - Scanning (Total 160 mins)

Activity	Time <small>(mins)</small>	Guideline
Icebreaker	10	Start with an activity to warm-up participants and help people get to know each other.
Introduction to Futures Thinking	10	Welcome participants, introduce facilitators and 3-day schedule of the workshops. Assign participants to teams.
Introduction to Scanning	5	Introduce the tools for Day 1: mind map, central question, futures wheel, historical backcasting.
Mind map	15	Ask teams to share 1-2 insights, by posing questions such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What stood out to you or to the team? • What is a surprising connection they see on the mind map? • How do you feel seeing the connections? This first debrief session should create a safe space for participants to be able to openly share their thoughts out loud.
Central Question	15	Ask teams to come up with as many questions as possible based on the content of the mind maps, first individually and then together with their team members. Set aside time for teams to narrow down to 1 central question.
Debrief	10	Ask teams to share their group's central questions. Make sure the central questions pass the relevant, specific, contextual, and uncertain criteria.
Break	10	
Energiser	10	Kick-off the second half with an energising activity related to thinking about the future.
Futures Wheel	20	Introduce futures wheel as a way to frame research. Note: if you are using pre-selected readings as research into key drivers, then you may skip futures wheel.

Debrief	10	Check the futures wheel map for general insights. Did participants cover a good breadth of relevant topics?
Historical Backcasting	20	Give time to read up on the subject area and identify key changes over time, any trends, and drivers. You may want to assign backcasting as homework between Day 1 and Day 2.
Reflection	10	Summarise the activities in the scanning section and leave room for Q&A. Review Day 2 agenda.



Day 2 - Forecasting (Total 160 mins)

Activity	Time <small>(mins)</small>	Guideline
Icebreaker	10	Start with an activity to warm-up participants and get conversations started. There will be a lot of discussions on Day 2.
Introduction to Forecasting	10	Review activities from Day 1. Introduce the tools for Day 2: key drivers and scenario matrix.
Identify Drivers	30	Share a case study to help define drivers then ask participants to brainstorm drivers of change based on the backcasting exercise from Day 1.
Debrief	15	Ask teams to share and discuss drivers they have found. Make sure that they are not simply looking at the trends by asking "why".
Uncertainty Matrix	15	Introduce the uncertainty matrix and classify the drivers. Ask teams to down-select the key drivers and contextual drivers that they can work with.
Break	10	
Energiser	10	Kick-off the second half with an energising activity related to storytelling.
Scenarios Matrix	40	Ask teams to create scenarios from pairs of key drivers that are mutually exclusive. Encourage trial & error and sharing between teams.
Reflection	20	Ask teams to share their scenarios with each other. Before closing, ask teams to decide on their favourite and least favourite scenarios to discuss.

Day 3 - Strategising (Total 180 mins)

Activity	Time <small>(mins)</small>	Guideline
Icebreaker	10	Start with an activity to warm-up participants and get conversations started.
Introduction to Strategising	10	Review activities from Day 2. Introduce the tools for Day 3: winners & losers and futurecast map. These tools and the scenarios from Day 2 should set the tone for deep reflection and debate. Note: In this template, we recommend ending the workshop with a presentation of possible interventions.
Winners & Losers	10	Based on their favourite, least favourite, or most likely scenarios, let the teams brainstorm winners & losers and their needs. Select a few key winners and losers scenario for discussion.
Debrief	10	Ask teams to share who they think wins and loses in their scenarios and why.
Opportunity Statements	10	Frame a good challenge for at least one loser that is relevant to the central question.
Share-out	10	Ask teams to share one opportunity statement that they're excited about.
Break	10	
Energiser	10	Kick-off the second half with an energising activity related to brainstorming or roleplaying.
Futurecast Map	10	Create a futurecast map using their scenarios and identify the two points where they can intervene (present / future) to anchor their brainstorming session.

Brainstorming	20	Guide teams to brainstorm on possible ways they can help their losers (and other stakeholders).
Debrief	20	Share-out between teams and check that the solutions are relevant to their opportunity statements.
Storytelling	15	Give teams time to prepare presentations. Make sure to include their opportunity statements, scenarios, and interventions.
Presentations	20	Presentation time!
Reflection	15	Wrap-up insights from Day 3 and review forecasting process from all three days. Make sure to emphasise the need for meaningful discussions about the future through rich scenarios based on rigorous research into key drivers of change.





In our research and prototyping work to arrive at the content in this volume, our team created the space to reflect on the use of methodology for social justice. Here, we compile a few notable takeaways to keep in mind while designing your own futures thinking journey.

#1: A just future evokes strong feelings - and feelings are hard to measure

When starting with the central question, either using Future Wheels, traditional mind mapping, or brainstorming with colleagues, we have found it challenging to define measurable indicators or impact in the far future. A future world that embraces justice is one based on feelings - of inclusion, fairness, equity, and other dimensions - so it may take some time to find an appropriate indicator.

For instance, what does a fair world look like if we had to express it through an event? Furthermore, not everyone will perceive the same idea as just, and will have different visions and feelings towards a certain future. We have to constantly reflect: how do we make actionable items from people's **feelings** towards justice?

10 Practical Reflections



#2 : There is always a tension between systemic issues and personal stories

Conversations around justice naturally lead to systemic problems so there is a tendency to leap to institutional heights when talking about the future, such as the nature of governments, policies, and culture and what we can do to change that. A meaningful set of future scenarios should really paint with a mixture of personal, individual stories and big-picture social movements.

Especially when defining central questions, be sure to pick topics that lean towards the personal and relatable side, to help you think about indicators that are more easily observable. The systemic considerations can - and will - emerge later in the strategising phase. Hold on to this tension until you can really understand the human stories.

#3: Your stakeholder's level of influence will determine the paths they take

After creating the scenario matrix and identifying winners and losers, a key question to ask your own organization and your stakeholders is: what level of influence do you hold? The answer to this question will determine the scenario that is important to study and the possible courses of action.

For instance, research institutions and think tanks might be interested in shaping current policies through recommendations to guide society towards a desirable scenario. NGOs who work with vulnerable groups, on the other hand, may anticipate future needs in the most likely but least desirable scenario by creating new programs or services to protect their stakeholders. Knowing your influence means deciding to on your action today, whether that is changing the future for the better, preventing the worse for the "losers", or otherwise.

It might be worth repeating that when different stakeholders of a system gather in the same room, not all will have the same level of resources or influence to affect change.

#4: Look to published literature to get started on your topic of choice

We have found, perhaps not surprisingly, social justice is a very well-researched topic, even in its broad sense of the field. When carrying out historical backcasting, you will want to refer to the wealth of analysis in op-eds, academic journals, and industry/development reports.

As most social problems are systemic in nature, these are a quick and easy way to get to know the various stakeholders and even surface relevant drivers. One way to make sure you are getting good data is to triangulate the data from different sources, see where experts agree and where there are still debates.

#5: Give participants agency through personal reflections

When talking about future scenarios, it is very easy to lose touch with the concrete realities of today. Based on our prototype workshops with college students, public prosecutors, and the general public, a big challenge we faced was helping participants feel like this methodology is relevant to their work right now. One thing that we would like to further explore with participants is integrating a personal debrief session, where we surface lessons learnt based on the workshop.

We propose asking personal and emotional questions like, "How did the discussions make you feel today?" or "How has your views changed based on the work you created?". Moreover, to move participants into a mode of action, we can ask, "What's one actionable step that you can take tomorrow, knowing what you know today?".

These guiding questions need to be tested in various contexts but we feel no doubt that some sort of personal takeaway is important in making the learnings stick, considering how conceptual futures thinking can become. Beyond feeling emotionally invested in the problems, we hope that we could give participants a sense of agency in their own sphere of influence to do something to bring about a better future.

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Chapter 1

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Chapter 3

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The Lost Page

Dear readers,

If you are holding this artefact in your hands, we trust that you will use it well. We have spent a considerable amount of time to impart to you what we have learned in strategic foresight as applied to the justice system.

We are sending this to you from the year 3000, where not much has changed though most of us live underwater. We hope that the tools will empower you to imagine and anticipate a more desirable future for all of humanity. We do not know if we can change the past, but we sure are hopeful that you will make better choices for your own timeline.

We know that the topic of justice is broad, messy, complex, and systemic. But as our history - your present - has shown, justice is also personal, empathetic, and deeply emotional. We are, after all, a species of storytellers. Therefore, your everyday lived experiences can, will, and must inform your work in designing your futures. We believe that a just and powerful change starts with you, Justice changemakers who represent the vulnerable people.

The future of justice, whichever topic you choose to apply yourself to, is in sore need of your fresh perspective. We like to believe that the future is still uncertain. What will you do with this new knowledge to help shape a future that is inclusive, just, and simply delightful?

Yours anachronistically,

Council for Justice Across Alternate Timelines

