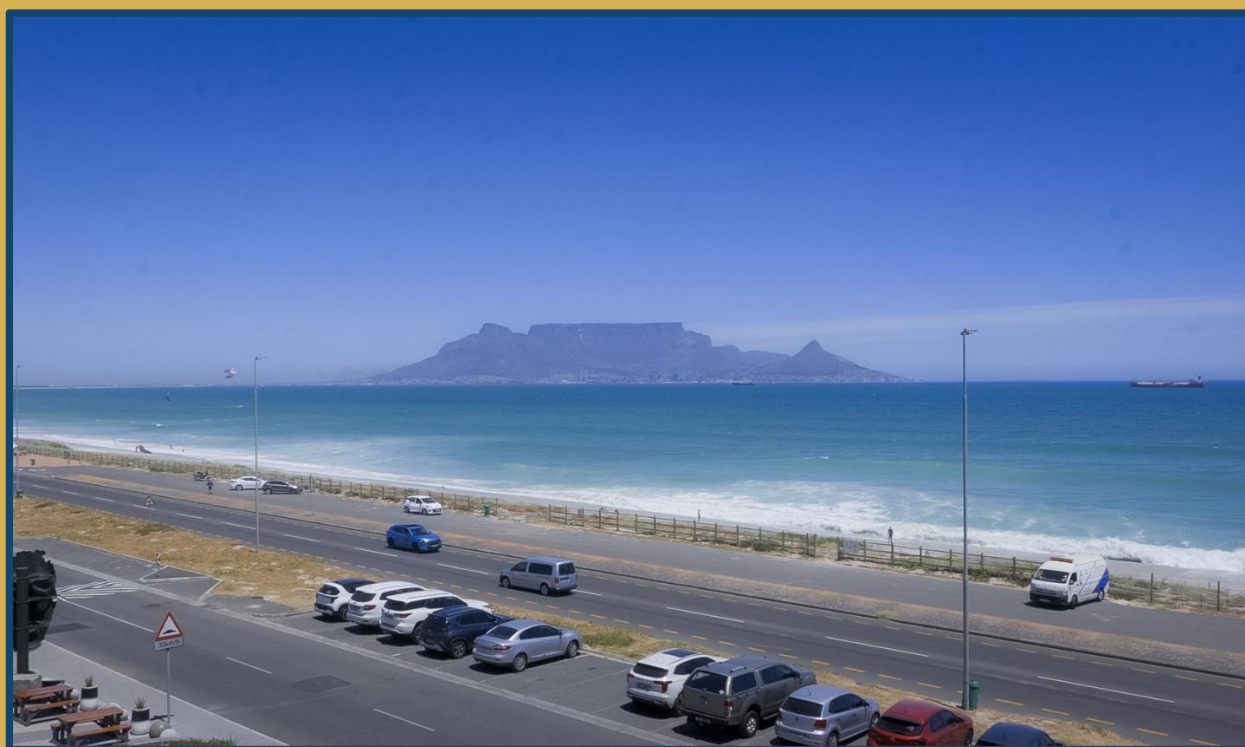


Workshop report

December 2024



Youth Futures Anticipation Summit

Blaauwberg Beach Hotel, Cape Town

12 – 15 November 2024



Project Overview

The **IDRC Youth Futures for Systemic Justice: Anticipation and Innovation Praxis in East and Southern Africa (ESA)** project is a collaborative initiative spearheaded by the South African Institute of International Affairs (SAIIA) [Futures](#) and [Youth](#) Programmes, the [Centre for Sustainability Transitions](#), and the [Bertha Centre for Social Innovation and Entrepreneurship](#), with support from the [International Development Research Centre \(IDRC\)](#).

Building on the successful conclusion of the first phase of the [Youth and Social Justice project](#) in November 2023, this second phase aims to explore the critical role of youth seed initiatives and changemakers in enhancing their capacity to anticipate future challenges and act strategically. The project focuses on empowering these initiatives and changemakers by developing competencies, fostering alternative innovations, and identifying strategic options that contribute to systemic justice, economic well-being, ecological resilience, by applying futures and relational systems thinking.

In this context, 'seed' initiatives refer to projects that introduce new ways of thinking and doing, challenge existing social, economic, or political systems, and operate on a small scale with the potential for broader impact.¹ These initiatives often exist at the periphery of current worldviews and mainstream practices, providing valuable alternative perspectives and solutions while demonstrating vulnerability and a higher potential for impactful support.

The project brings together twelve seed initiatives and a curated group of sixteen youth-focused changemakers to reimagine the transformative potential of youth initiatives in East and Southern African societies. Through action research, the project is focused on cultivating strategic foresight capabilities, systems thinking, and anticipatory competencies among youth innovators and changemakers. This collaborative approach emphasises co-creation with these wider participants that are viewed as changemakers, as they are embedded in intergovernmental organisations, youth development communities, governments, civil society, industry associations, and the private sector.

The intention of the co-creating of seed initiatives and changemakers is to enable transformative spaces² (Visioning Summit and Anticipation Summit) where the youth seed initiatives can interact with changemakers through enabling open dialogue, experimentation, and collaboration among diverse stakeholders to tackle complex challenges. They help reframe issues, co-develop solutions, and foster reflexive learning. These spaces must balance being "safe enough" for participants to explore new ideas while addressing ethical dilemmas and system readiness for change. Through diverse methods and

¹ Elena M. Bennett et al., "BrightSpots: Seeds of a Good Anthropocene," *Frontiers in Ecology and the Environment* 14, no. 8 (2016): 441–48, <https://doi.org/10.1002/fee.1309>.

² Laura Pereira et al., "Transformative Spaces in the Making: Key Lessons from Nine Cases in the Global South," *Sustainability Science* 15, no. 1 (January 1, 2020): 161–78, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11625-019-00749-x>.

tools, transformative spaces can catalyse innovation and act as starting points for embedding long-term, systemic transformation.³

As part of this initiative, a youth futures Visioning Summit was convened in Cape Town, South Africa, from 3-6 September 2024. This summit provided a platform for seeds and changemakers to collaboratively explore and envision bold and positive futures for youth competencies and anticipation in the Eastern and Southern Africa region. The workshop employed foresight methods such as Futures Wheel, and Three Horizons Framework to explore future possibilities and innovations.

Participants' contributions during the summit were instrumental in shaping the project's strategic direction and influencing the agenda of the Anticipation Summit held in Cape Town from 12–15 November 2024. Guided by skilled facilitators, this summit focused on personal learning journeys, roles of change agents in systems change, multiple pasts and futures, causal layered analysis, systemic innovations, and building anticipatory capabilities by integrating futures/foresight with relational systems thinking. This approach enhanced participants' anticipatory skills and empowered them to design contextually relevant interventions aimed at driving systemic change. The project seeks not only to empower participants but also to inspire lasting, transformative impacts within youth initiatives and changemakers across the ESA regions.

Disclaimer: This workshop report offers a basic overview of the three-day workshop proceedings. The report does not delve into detailed accounts of every conversation and discovery, as we are constrained by length and time. However, it does provide an overview of the strategic conversations that occurred and highlights the emerging insights from these discussions.

“It was clear that the shared passion for the development of our continent and the collective hunger for agency had brought us all together in this beautiful space of unity and purpose.” – Youth Researcher insight

Workshop design and methodology

The workshop aimed to strengthen youth participants' anticipatory competencies through a structured process of critical self-reflection and facilitates strategic conversations. A key component was the use of systemic leverage points analysis, co-creating anticipatory heuristics, and designed experiments to

³ Laura Pereira et al., "Designing Transformative Spaces for Sustainability in Social-Ecological Systems," *Ecology and Society* 23, no. 4 (November 19, 2018), <https://doi.org/10.5751/ES-10607-230432>.

develop the capacities needed to navigate uncertainty and foster systemic change within the focal areas of concern.⁶

Participants were divided into groups based on the focal areas of concern (field of work), irrespective of whether they constituted seeds or changemakers. These groupings were organised around four thematic areas identified from the Horizon 2 interventions in the Three Horizons exercise.⁷ The areas included: Sustainable Development and Inclusive Cultural Transformation, Education, Health, and Well-being, Economic Empowerment, Trade, Technological Advancement and Digital Inclusion, and Politics, Governance, and Accountability.

The workshop unfolded in phases aimed at deepening understandings of systemic social justice, build relationality, and encourage reflective practice. The first phase, *Embodying Relationality*, helped participants shift from a limited perspective to one that embraced flexible identities, fostering situational awareness and understanding their roles as changemakers.

The following phase - *Wayfinding, Ambiguity, and Incongruence* - introduced the Causal Layered Analysis (CLA) framework to examine systemic causes and hidden layers within ecosystems. This exploration helped participants uncover the cultural beliefs and myths underlying observable patterns.⁸

In the *Sensemaking* phase, participants imagined alternative future ecosystems by exploring new values, structures, and public narratives, setting the stage for identifying strategic interventions. The *Meaning-Making* phase then guided participants in identifying leverage points within ecosystems, ranking them based on their potential for systemic change.

The methodology then progressed to *Co-Creating Anticipatory Heuristics*. In this phase, participants designed contextually relevant interventions, developed situational awareness, and cultivated future-ready actions by creating safe-to-fail experiments to test and refine their strategies. In the final phase - *Wayfinding Towards the Reframed Ecosystem* - participants reflected on their experiences, shared their learnings, and discussed the strategic experiments they designed. The workshop concluded with reflections on the reframed ecosystems, emerging themes, and next steps, ensuring participants left with clear next steps for refinement in the forthcoming online Youth Futures Labs.

⁶ Rika Preiser et al., "Co-exploring Relational Heuristics for Sustainability Transitions towards More Resilient and Just Anthropocene Futures," *Systems Research and Behavioral Science* 38, no. 5 (October 2021): 625–34, <https://doi.org/10.1002/sres.2815>.

⁷ Bill Sharpe et al., "Three Horizons: A Pathways Practice for Transformation," *Ecology and Society* 21, no. 2 (2016), <https://www.jstor.org/stable/26270405>.

⁸ Inayatullah, Sohail, "Causal Layer Analysis: Poststructuralism as a Method," *Futures* 30, no. 8 (1998): 815–29.

The workshop agenda at a glance

Day 1: Tuesday, 12 November 2024 – Arrival & Reconnection	
Afternoon	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Registration & Welcome • Recap & Reintegration • Dialogue on Social/Systemic Justice • Change Agent Introductions
Day 2: Wednesday, 13 November 2024 - Understanding and Navigating Ecosystems	
Morning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presencing session • Embodying Relationality • Multiple Timelines Exercise
Afternoon	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding the Current Ecosystem • Wayfinding in Ambiguity • Sensemaking and Future Ecosystem Anticipation
Day 3: Thursday, 14 November 2024 – Innovating for Systemic Change	
Morning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presencing session • Reflexive Meditation • Meaning-Making & Strategic Innovation
Afternoon	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Co-Creating Anticipatory Heuristics • Designing Strategic Experiments
Day 4: Friday, 15 November 2024 – Reframing & Reflecting	
Morning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presencing session • Evaluating Feasibility & Impact Potential • Group Discussion on Heuristics & Experiments • Presenting Reframed Ecosystems
Afternoon	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflections on Becoming Anticipatory • Summary Conversation & Closing

The workshop groupings

Group name	Facilitators	Youth researchers	Changemakers
Sustainable Development and Inclusive Cultural Transformation	Reinhold Mangundu - CST	Muchira Gachenge (Kenya)	Atula Owade (Rwanda)
	Dr. Deon Cloete – SAIIA Futures	Aida Namukose (Uganda)	Sidney Muhangi (South Africa)
			T-Anne Reddy (South Africa)
			Toini Thomas Dhiginina Amutenya (Namibia)
			Mapumba Cilombo (South Africa)
			Nancy Barisoa (Madagascar)
	Juvenal Deoscori Materu (Tanzania)		
Group two: Education, Health and Well-being	Ben Carlyle - CST	Mmapitsi Semenya	Candice Chirwa (South Africa)
	Njeri Mwangiru – SAIIA Futures		Bonface Opany (Kenya)
			Alwande Khumalo (South Africa)

			Noku Katom (South Africa)
			Wanjiku Mwangi (Kenya)
			Mary Gitau (Kenya)
			Donavan Fullard (South Africa)
			Peter Lema (Tanzania)
Group Three: Economic Empowerment, Trade, Technological Advancement, and Digital Inclusion	Jurgen Wolfenden - CST	Felicity Zintle Magazi	Katlego KG Letsoalo (South Africa)
	Landisiwe Binza		Calvin Jodisi (Kenya)
	Letitia Jentel – SALLA Futures		Thembi Joja (South Africa)
			Mkhululi Ncube (Zimbabwe)
			Delicia Govender (South Africa)
			Armanda Pieters (Namibia)
			Olter Mulokozi Oscar (Tanzania)

Group four: Politics, Governance and Accountability	Lithalethu Mzinyati – SAIIA Futures	Simamnkele Dingiswayo	Metsi Makhetha (South Africa)
	Karabo Mangena – SAIIA Futures		Tshego Walker (South Africa)
	Francois Pretorius – SAIIA Futures		Arsene Ngombe (South Africa)
	Fergus Turner – Bertha		John Youhanes Magok (Ethiopia)
			Tshegofatso Thulare (South Africa)
			Nancy Kimathi (Kenya)

Day One

Welcome and Overview

The workshop commenced with a welcoming session that introduced participants to the structure and objectives of the event. Logistics and ground rules were communicated with the aim of fostering an environment of safety, openness, and collaboration from the outset.

Recap & Reintegration Session

The first formal session aimed to reconnect participants with the dynamic experiences of the Visioning Summit. A video recap highlighted the energy and collaborative spirit of the summit, setting the stage for the day's activities. Following this, a string game was introduced, where each participant shared their name, memorable experiences from the Visioning Summit (for those who had attended), and their intentions for the current workshop.

The game symbolised the interconnectedness of the group, with participants passing a ball of string while speaking. Each person had 1.5 minutes to contribute, with timekeeping provided by the sound of drums. This activity effectively reinforced the core theme of collective connection and collaboration.



Source: Simamnkele Dingiswayo

Systemic Justice Discussion

Next, a plenary session led by Fergus and Landi explored the concepts of social and systemic justice. Participants were encouraged to consider how their work contributes to broader social justice efforts and how progress is understood within their own contexts. Participants shared diverse interpretations of social justice and engaged in discussions about how systemic justice aligns with the project's overarching research approach.

Key themes emerging from these discussions included:

- The importance of active agenda-setting in driving transformation.
- The evolution of ideas and individuals in fostering systemic change.
- The crucial role of grassroots engagement in creating meaningful impact.

- The strategic use of resources to enable positive transformation.
- The exercise of agency in developing solutions to societal challenges.

These discussions highlighted that systemic change is a collective endeavour, shaped by the contributions of many, and underscored the shared responsibility of all involved.

“It was eye-opening to see how our seemingly distinct fields shared common values & goals in addressing systemic issues.” – Youth researcher insight

Change Agent Introductions

Facilitated by Letitia, Ben, and Reinhold, this afternoon session was designed to introduce participants as change agents through a dynamic World Café-style format. The session aimed to foster networking, connection, and deeper understanding by giving participants the opportunity to share their personal journeys and explore collective challenges and opportunities for collaboration.

Participants were divided into small groups of three to four, with some remaining in their groups while others rotated, ensuring a wide range of interactions. Each participant took on one of three roles: host, traveller, or scribe. The hosts stayed in their groups throughout the session, welcoming new travellers with a brief overview of the insights shared by previous participants. The scribes recorded key ideas, connections, and patterns, encouraging creativity in capturing the essence of the conversations. The travellers, on the other hand, answered thought-provoking questions and actively listened to others, making meaningful contributions in the short time available.

The World Café format offered an enriching space for participants to share their experiences, exchange ideas, and explore solutions to pressing social issues. The questions posed during the session were designed to stimulate deep reflection and dialogue:

Round 1: In two minutes, participants shared their work and reflected on a personal experience or moment that sparked their passion for social change.

Round 2: Participants discussed their current challenges and the social issues they are striving to address.

Round 3: The final round focused on fostering creativity and innovation within teams, with participants sharing strategies they use to inspire new ideas and approaches.

At the end of the session, each group shared the key themes that emerged from their discussions. These included:

- The importance of empowerment and agency, particularly among youth.

- The impact of personal experiences in shaping perspectives and driving action.
- The value of diverse forms of expression in communicating ideas and inspiring others.
- The role of mental models and paradigms in guiding behaviour and decision-making.
- A shared commitment to overcoming challenges and creating lasting, systemic change.

This exercise not only helped participants connect with one another but also strengthened their collective commitment to driving positive change. By aligning on shared values and insights, the session deepened participants' understanding of their roles as change agents and the transformative power of collaboration.

Close-Out Session

To wrap up the day, Fergus summarised the key takeaways and provided a preview of the activities for the next day. This closing session generated excitement and anticipation for the following day's sessions, ensuring participants felt prepared and engaged for the rest of the workshop.

Day Two

Six Streams Methodology: Emotional and Cognitive Stream

The day began with a presencing exercise, utilising the six streams of competence methodology.⁹ The overarching aim of these daily exercises was to foster a holistic and engaging learning experience. This session specifically focused on the emotional and cognitive streams. By aligning emotional connections with intellectual understanding, participants were encouraged to gain deeper insights and inspire meaningful change.

Embodying Relationality

The plenary session continued with an engaging and interactive activity: the Creature Features Ecosystem Game. Designed to help participants transition from a static "zoo mindset" to a more dynamic, adaptive "wild," the game aimed to foster relational awareness, develop anticipatory thinking, and encourage

⁹ Joy Reichart, "Balancing Ourselves Using the Six Streams of Competence," *New Ventures West* (blog), June 25, 2020, <https://www.newventureswest.com/balancing-ourselves-using-the-six-streams-of-competence/>.

participants to embrace flexible identities and systemic practices.¹⁰ As part of the exercise, changemakers learned how to adapt to and thrive in complex systems by embodying different creature characteristics.

To kick off the game, participants were invited to choose one of five creatures—each representing distinct traits that align with different approaches to systems change: a penguin, giraffe, lion, hippo, or zebra. These animals symbolised diverse qualities necessary for navigating and transforming systems, prompting participants to reflect on their own roles as changemakers and recognise the variety of perspectives essential for impactful work.

Here's a breakdown of the animal characteristics:

- **Lion:** The leader of the pack, exuding confidence and regal charisma. Lions are born to perform, always looking out for their crew and fiercely loyal. They have a natural inclination towards leadership, and like the king of the jungle, they eat meat.
- **Zebra:** Known for irrepressible optimism, zebras are dreamers and instigators who push for necessary truths in the face of adversity. They act as a motivational pillar, offering imaginative and incisive support. Zebras graze on grass and thrive on their ability to uplift others.
- **Giraffe:** The risk-averse, sceptical thinkers. Giraffes leave nothing to chance, operating within a set of restrictions, while dispensing encyclopaedic knowledge. They are comfortable with limitations, relying on their heightened perspective to navigate systems. Giraffes eat leaves, reflecting their grounded nature.
- **Penguin:** The brains of the operation. Penguins possess scientific precision, steady dedication, and a knack for observational wit. They approach tasks with a methodical, reliable attitude, ensuring that every detail is accounted for, and they are steadfast in their commitment to their goals.
- **Hippo:** Smart, resourceful, and adaptable, hippos offer straight-forward common sense and balance. They serve as high-level mediators, keeping their fellow creatures on an even keel. Sweet when needed and tough when required, hippos thrive in swampy rivers, symbolising their capacity to remain grounded in challenging environments.¹¹

Each participant was given five identical creature cards representing their chosen animal. The goal of the game was to collect one of each type of creature card by engaging in strategic swaps. However, there was a catch: to swap cards, participants had to demonstrate how their chosen creature was connected to the one they were seeking. This required creative thinking, finding commonalities, and persuading others to trade based on shared traits or characteristics.

¹⁰ Deon Cloete, "Towards Re-Imagining the Roles of Change Agents from a Critical Complexity Perspective: An Exploratory Action Research Approach." (Stellenbosch, Stellenbosch University, 2017), <https://doi.org/10.13140/RG.2.2.16110.92484>.

¹¹ Cloete.

Participants then engaged in a series of card exchanges with one another based on the following prompts:

1. **Inter-relationship Challenge:** "Explain how you are connected to one of the other creatures. If the other person is convinced of your connection, you can swap cards."
2. **Role Shift:** "Instead of identifying as a youth systems innovator, imagine you are a parent, partner, or carer. What creature features do you need now? Convince someone to swap with you based on these new traits."
3. **Contextual Shift:** "You are doing your systems change work in Africa but are now in New York. What creature features do you need in this new context? Find those traits and convince someone to swap with you."
4. **VUCA World:** "In our unpredictable, VUCA world, your context is about to change. Be prepared—find a creature card that will help you survive physically in an uncertain ecosystem."

The Creature Features Ecosystem Game proved to be a thought-provoking and engaging experience. It encouraged participants to reflect on their interconnectedness within the systems they work in, while also pushing them to think flexibly and embrace new roles in response to shifting circumstances. By adopting different creature traits, participants deepened their understanding of how to approach change in a dynamic, systemic way, and how to anticipate future needs and opportunities. Ultimately, the game provided a playful yet powerful reminder of the importance of flexibility, creativity, and relational thinking in the work of systemic change.

Multiple Timelines Exercises

Facilitated by Dr. Njeri Mwangi, this session invited participants to explore the complex and interwoven narratives that have shaped Africa's past, present, and future. The goal was to encourage critical examination of the various timelines that influence the continent's trajectory, prompting reflection on how these narratives shape Africa's socio-political and economic landscape.

The exercise began with an exploration of Africa's past through three contrasting timelines, each offering a different perspective on the continent's history:

- **Idyllic:** A vision of Africa as an idealistic, peaceful land of cultural richness and harmony, presenting an optimistic and utopian view of Africa's potential.
- **Colonial:** A timeline marked by the painful history of colonization, exploitation, and domination, shaping Africa's modern systems under foreign rule, with a complex legacy still felt today.
- **Living:** This timeline focused on the diverse lived experiences of Africa's people, capturing the struggles, resilience, and dynamic changes that have shaped the continent across regions and cultures.

With these historical narratives in place, participants then turned to the present, exploring three possible narratives about contemporary Africa:

- **Afro-Optimism:** A hopeful narrative seeing Africa's future brimming with potential, driven by a youthful population, a growing economy, and abundant natural resources.
- **Afro-Pessimism:** A more cautious and pragmatic view, acknowledging ongoing challenges such as corruption, conflict, poverty, disease, and political instability that impede progress.
- **Wakanda:** Inspired by the fictional yet aspirational vision of a transformed Africa, this narrative focuses on the possibility of a people-centric, thriving continent that transcends past challenges and fosters systemic change.

Additionally, participants examined different **Futures Archetypes**, which offered various ways to imagine Africa's future:

- **Continue/Disciplined:** The continuation of current dominant trends and systems, resistant to radical change, which limits growth potential.
- **Collapse:** The worst-case scenario where systems deteriorate, driven by current forces of change, with poor decision-making and a lack of innovation leading to Africa's decline.
- **Transformational:** A future characterised by radical innovation, systemic transformation, and dynamic change, where Africa experiences emergence and bold new ideas, breaking free from the status quo.

After a brief presentation, participants were randomly divided into three distinct groups, each assigned to one of the three timelines (past, present, or future). They were tasked with mapping Africa's evolution based on their assigned timeline, and then interconnected their group's narrative with those of other groups. This was done by physically linking the timelines using wool, symbolizing the interconnected paths that Africa could take and illustrating how historical, present, and future narratives can evolve and influence one another.



Source: Muchira Gachenge

To deepen the discussion, groups considered the following questions and prompts to better understand the trajectory of their timeline and archetype:

- What does the economy, commerce, and business landscape look like?
- What form does political leadership take?
- What core cultural norms and values guide society?
- How are innovative technologies shaping Africa's future?
- What is the state of health and wellbeing?
- How does the environment fare?
- What intergenerational dynamics exist?
- To what extent is systemic social justice and equity achieved?

As participants traced their group's trajectory across the different timelines, they reflected on how these perspectives intersect and influence one another, illustrating the diverse directions Africa might take.

Reflection and Key Insights

At the conclusion of the activity, participants were asked to reflect on the following questions:

- How do the different timelines intersect and influence each other?
- What disruptions, interventions, or changes could shift the trajectory of your group's future?
- As change agents, how are you linked to any of these stereotypes, narratives, or archetypes?

This session offered a thought-provoking opportunity for participants to critically engage with systemic narratives, exploring their implications for Africa's socio-political and economic evolution. It challenged participants to consider how historical, present, and future narratives could shape the continent's development, highlighting both the challenges and opportunities for transformation. Ultimately, the session invited participants to reflect on their role as change agents in guiding Africa's trajectory toward a more just, equitable, and sustainable future.

Understanding the Current State of Your Ecosystem

In this session, participants were divided into four breakout groups, each assigned to a thematic area focused on societal transformation, as identified through the Horizon 2 exercise during the visioning summit.

The four key areas were:

1. Sustainable Development and Inclusive Cultural Transformation
2. Education, Health, and Well-being
3. Economic Empowerment, Trade, Technological Advancement, and Digital Inclusion
4. Politics, Governance, and Accountability

The objective of the session was to deepen participants' understanding of their assigned ecosystem by exploring its current state, the challenges it faces, and its broader interconnections with other systems. Participants engaged in a structured exercise aimed at analysing the ecosystems through several key prompts, leading to insights that could inform potential pathways for transformation.

Key Steps and Findings from Each Group:

1. **Identify the Ecosystem:** Each group began by identifying the ecosystem they were examining. This involved determining the core elements of the ecosystem and mapping the various systems within which they operate. For example, in one group, systems related to food systems, eco-feminism, climate action, and ecosystem restoration were highlighted as central themes. These led to a broader focus on livelihoods, ecology, economies, and wellness.
2. **Define the Boundaries:** Groups worked to define the boundaries of their ecosystems. Some identified clear limits, such as geographical or sectoral boundaries (e.g., rural vs urban), while others focused on social and institutional boundaries. For instance, one group identified that the current system largely serves the elite, including urban dwellers and the global North, while excluding vulnerable groups such as those in rural areas and grassroots communities.
3. **Understand the Purpose and Outcomes:** Each group explored the purpose of their ecosystem and the outcomes it produces, both intended and unintended. For example, the Politics, Governance

& Accountability group noted that the ecosystem's purpose was to foster stability, cooperation, and shared prosperity. However, unintended outcomes included anger, stagnation, and manipulation by institutions. In contrast, another group focused on socio-economic inequality and climate change, identifying that the current system has led to criminal activity, resource competition, and migration.

4. **Explore Emotional and Social Dynamics:** Groups reflected on the emotional and social dynamics within their ecosystems. Here, groups identified feelings of hopelessness, resentment, and disappointment regarding the status quo, especially in relation to the economic empowerment and education ecosystems.
5. **Assess the Pace and Tensions:** Participants assessed the pace and tensions within their ecosystems. For instance, the Politics, Governance & Accountability group highlighted the slow and dynamic pace of certain governance processes, leading to resistance and tensions within communities. Meanwhile, groups focused on economic empowerment identified the rapid pace of technological advancement, which often left behind vulnerable groups, exacerbating tensions between globalized markets and local economies.

By analysing both the strengths and weaknesses of the status quo, participants gained a deeper understanding of the barriers to transformation and the necessary steps to create more inclusive, sustainable, and equitable systems. Each group's analysis provided valuable input for subsequent discussions on how to shape future pathways for transformation.



Source: Simamnkele Dingiswayo

Wayfinding Ambiguity & Incongruence

The participants continued their exploration of ecosystems, deepening their understanding of the systemic causes and hidden layers within these systems. This process was facilitated using Causal Layered Analysis (CLA), a methodology designed to deconstruct conventional thinking. CLA aims to foster a shared understanding of potential future outcomes and challenge existing paradigms. It is applied in participatory action research, where diverse perspectives are shared, contrasting worldviews are surfaced, and underlying myths are uncovered.¹²

Through CLA, participants identified surface-level narratives and observable patterns in their ecosystems, while also exploring the systems, cultural beliefs, and myths that underpin these observations. The process began with the **Litany** layer, focusing on observable issues, headlines, and the public narrative surrounding ecosystems. This involved revisiting the H2 innovations developed at the visioning summit, where participants were asked to list visible challenges, trends, or narratives dominating discussions about their ecosystems, as represented by the H2 innovations.

¹² Inayatullah, Sohail, "Causal Layer Analysis: Poststructuralism as a Method."

Next, the group explored the **Systems, Structures, Actors, and Interrelationships** layer, considering the key systems, structures, actors, and relationships that drive the observable patterns. Guiding questions helped probe these dynamics:

- Who are the key actors in the ecosystem?
- What roles do the actors play?
- What role(s) are you playing, and how do you feel about it?
- What role does your organisation play?
- What systems and structures are perpetuating the visible issues at the litany level?
- Who are the main actors influencing these ecosystem trends?
- What connections exist between actors in the ecosystem?

The next step in the CLA process focused on the **Worldviews, Values, and Culture** layer, where participants reflected on the worldviews, values, and cultural beliefs sustaining the systems and structures identified earlier. Key questions included:

- What values drive current attitudes toward ecosystems (e.g., exploitation vs. preservation)?
- What cultural beliefs support these systems?
- What collective experiences, emotions, and feelings shape our core beliefs?
- What core beliefs and values do we hold?

Finally, participants examined the **Myths and Metaphors** layer, exploring the deep-rooted myths and metaphors that reflect societal views on ecosystems. This layer involved the following questions:

- What cultural stories or images represent current beliefs about ecosystems?
- How do these metaphors shape public attitudes and policy towards ecosystems?
- What metaphors can you use to describe the ecosystem?

Examples of Findings from Each CLA Layer:

Litany – Observable Patterns and Headlines:

- Reactionary policies, particularly in areas such as healthcare (e.g., pandemics).
- Western influences and dominance in shaping systems.
- Access barriers, such as unaffordable services in education and healthcare.
- Mismatched, irrelevant, and non-contextual solutions.
- Language barriers contributing to literacy crises.

Structures, Actors, and Interrelationships:

- The privileged elite gain disproportionately from the current system.
- Exclusivity reinforces status and hierarchies.
- Gender norms and patriarchal structures persist, excluding certain groups.
- Politically-driven policies fail to meet the needs of marginalised communities.

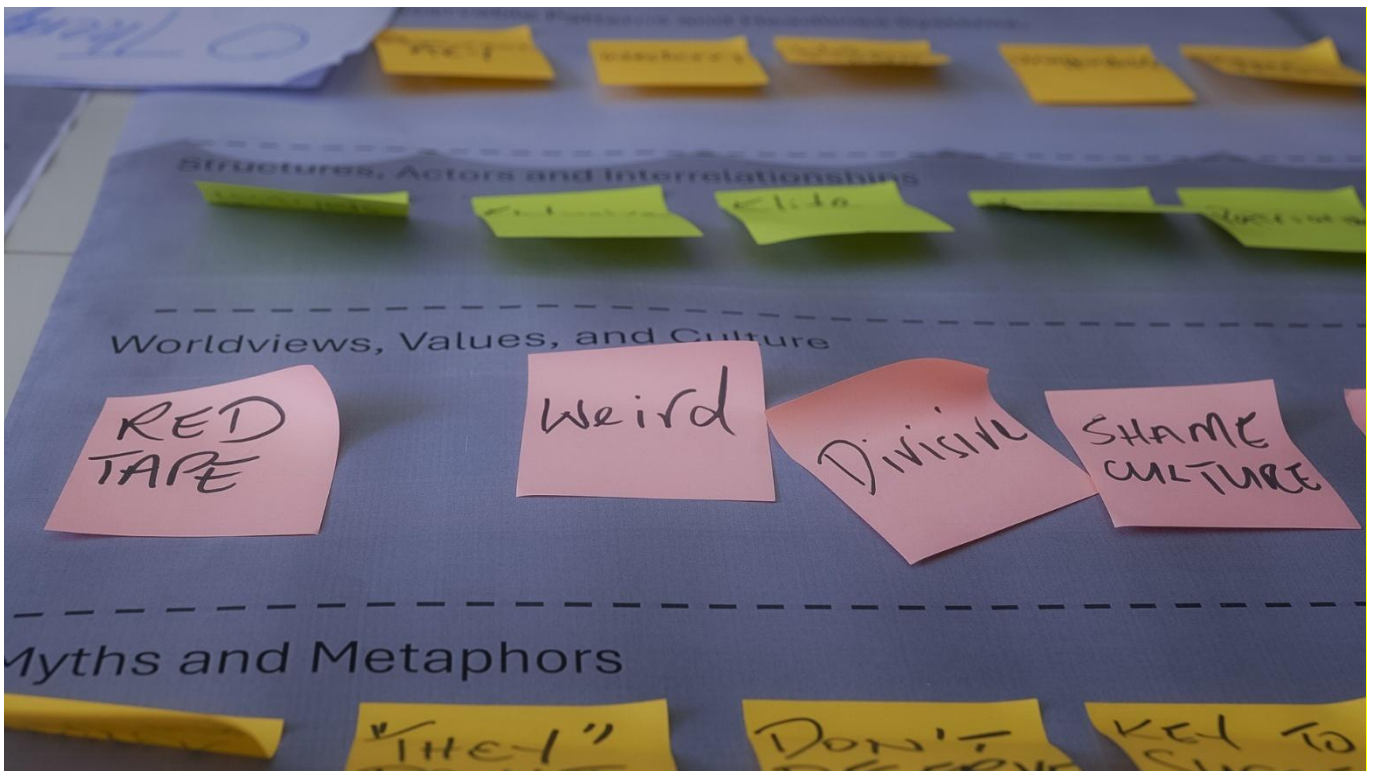
- Systems are not locally informed or contextually relevant.

Worldviews, Values, and Culture:

- A bureaucratic, red-tape-driven status quo.
- A divisive, individualistic mindset that fosters mistrust and blame.
- A focus on STEM, sidelining other fields and perspectives.
- Cultural narratives of survival rather than progress.

Myths and Metaphors:

- Hyper-productivity and the emphasis on work.
- The narrative of “those who don’t deserve” certain resources.
- The belief that education, health, and wellbeing are keys to success.



Source: Gys Loubser

Day Three

Somatic and Relational Exploration

The started with a continuation of the six streams methodological journey. Here, participants engaged in a somatic stream activity, reflecting on their personality dynamics and centres of balance. A relational stream exercise prompted self-observation, enabling participants to identify personal triggers of imbalance.

Wayfinding Journey Tracking

Following this, Deon led a Wayfinding Journey Tracking session, using the metaphor of a biosphere and the growth journey from seed to tree. This visual framework allowed participants to reflect on their progress and imagine transformative possibilities within their ecosystems. The exercise encouraged expansive thinking about the future, supporting participants in visualising long-term systemic change.

Sensemaking through Causal Layered Analysis (CLA)

Next, we revisited the Causal Layered Analysis (CLA) methodology. This time the exercise took a bottom-up approach, starting with reframed myths and metaphors, progressing to a reframed litany level. Participants were urged to work collaboratively to reimagine their ecosystems for 2035, exploring alternative narratives, values, and structures to underpin thriving, sustainable ecosystems.

They also examined cultural shifts, new metaphors, and the evolving roles of various actors. Creative expression was encouraged, with participants using sci-fi concepts and visual tools to stimulate innovative thinking. The session culminated in the identification of practical steps and potential "headlines" representing the group's envisioned futures, providing actionable direction for change.

Examples of Findings Across the Levels

Myths and Metaphors

Wholistic Systemic Health is Holistic Systemic Wealth: The belief that the health of systems, individuals, and ecosystems is intrinsically connected, with investment in holistic health leading to overall wealth for all.

Love is the New/Strongest Currency: A shift in values, where love and compassion become the most powerful forms of capital, shaping societal interactions and economic models.

Every Living Thing Has a Soul: A worldview that extends respect to all living beings—plants, animals, and even rocks—acknowledging their intrinsic value.

Human Beings Are Not the Center: The recognition that humans are one part of a larger ecosystem, where all beings hold equal value.

Worldviews, Values, and Culture

"Your Wins Are My Wins. Your Pain is My Pain": A shift towards collective well-being, where individuals share in each other's successes and challenges, creating a more compassionate society.

An Abundance Mentality: A worldview embracing abundance rather than scarcity, fostering a mindset where resources and prosperity are available to all.

Indigenous Knowledge Viewed as Valuable as Scientific Knowledge: The recognition that indigenous knowledge systems are as legitimate as scientific knowledge, promoting respect for diverse ways of knowing.

Change Will Come from the Ground-Up: The belief that true change begins with individuals and communities, with each person contributing to collective transformation.

Structures, Actors, and Interrelationships

Women and Youth-Led Government States: The vision for governments led by women and youth, ensuring inclusive and progressive leadership.

AI Integrated with Humans (for Good): The integration of artificial intelligence with human capabilities to enhance well-being, ensuring technology serves the common good.

A Common Currency and Borderless Africa: A unified economic system across Africa, with a common currency and free movement of people, goods, and services.

Wellbeing Economy: A shift towards an economy that prioritises the well-being of people and the planet over traditional measures of economic success.

Observable Patterns and Headline Systems

Intergenerational Governance: Governance systems designed with future generations in mind, ensuring decisions benefit both present and future communities.

Internet as a Human Right: The belief that access to the internet is essential for participation in society and should be treated as a basic human right.

Decentralised Information Sharing: A system where information is shared equitably across communities, reducing centralisation of power.

Fair Distribution of Resources and Dignified Lives: A vision for a society where resources are distributed equitably, ensuring dignity and access to necessities.

Reflexive Meditation Session on 'Used Futures'

Following the CLA activity, Jurgen facilitated a reflective meditation session. This focused on overcoming "used futures" and path dependency, inviting participants to reimagine themselves living in the future ecosystems they had co-created. Through a vision quest, participants reflected on outdated practices and considered innovative approaches to ecosystem transformation, prompting deeper reflection on personal and systemic change.



Source: Gys Loubser

Identifying Strategic Interventions

The next session focused on identifying strategic interventions within ecosystems. Participants worked in breakout groups to examine patterns that either reinforced the status quo or signalled transformative change. They probed systemic complexities, historical dependencies, and overlooked opportunities, identifying potential areas for impactful intervention. These insights were visualised on a systemic leverage points mountain, providing a tangible representation of their discussions.

Examples of Leverage Points Identified

- Ensure information reaches everyone, meeting people where they are.
- Incorporate human-centred design in all processes.
- Invest in local beneficiation capacities.
- Develop regional transportation infrastructure.
- Ruralisation of infrastructure.
- Emphasise collaboration over competition.
- Adopt the concept that "we are the system."
- Integrate more personal development into programmes.
- Increase youth integration into law-making and governance spaces.
- Build systems that enable universal access to services like the internet, healthcare, and education.
- Create a society built to serve its lowest, not its highest.

"I learnt and heard is that timelines are interconnected, a single past could lead to multiple futures." – Youth researcher insight

Co-Creating Anticipatory Heuristics

In the afternoon, participants co-created anticipatory heuristics—guiding principles to help navigate systemic change. Facilitators introduced these as contextually appropriate, flexible guidelines that could serve as relational and strategic compasses. Participants were encouraged to reflect on personal experiences, identifying heuristics in three domains: personal (inner world), organisational, and systems-wide. Different coloured sticky notes were used for each domain.

Reflective questions included:

- What grounds you? - Practices that foster presence and connection to one's deeper self.
- What patterns shape you? - Understanding how personal history influences relational work.
- What connects you? - How embracing interconnectedness supports systemic change.

- Which leverage area are you addressing? - Personal, organisational, or systems-wide?

The session was marked by lively small-group discussions, where participants refined their ideas and explored how personal growth and interconnectedness could influence systemic change.

Examples of heuristics shared are as follows:

- Find new ways of being comfortable with the uncomfortable
- Manage to have gratitude for multiple pasts, presents and futures
- Reconnecting with your past to provide peace to your present
- Cultivate the belief that nothing is above me
- See the positive in everything
- Question the unquestionable
- Develop the willingness to be told the truth

Designing Strategic Experiments

The final session focused on designing "safe-to-fail" prototypes—small-scale interventions to test the viability of the heuristics. Participants designed 2–3 experiments in three domains: intra-personal, group/organisational, and systems-wide. The session encouraged exploration of unconventional ideas to challenge entrenched thinking and stimulate creative solutions. Key considerations included mitigating unintended consequences and involving diverse stakeholders in the experiments.

Participants mapped their ideas on large sheets of paper, visualising the interplay between experiments and the broader ecosystem. The group brainstormed, sketched, and role-played different scenarios to test assumptions. Discussions emphasised inclusivity and the perspectives of underrepresented voices. By the end of the session, each group had crafted a portfolio of experiments aimed at creating actionable insights into behaviours, market dynamics, and socio-technical systems.

Examples of experiments shared are:

- Discuss gender and societal norms, challenging these norms.
- Promote agency among youth by accompanying them, not imposing decisions, but walking with them as they make choices.
- Test a circular economy with electronic waste by employing university students to experiment with electronic waste to solve processing problems.
- Recruit existing sorghum farmers in Rwanda to produce other millet varieties.

- Support young people in recycling plastic as part of a circular economy.
- Collaborate with organisations to help unpack family issues that cause self-doubt in girls.

Close-Out Session

The day concluded with a plenary session, where participants shared their reflections and key takeaways. Fergus praised the group for their creativity and strategic thinking, highlighting the innovative pathways they had identified. The day ended on an optimistic note, leaving participants motivated to continue their journey toward realising their envisioned ecosystems for 2035.

Day Four

Integration and Spirituality Exploration

The day began in plenary, focusing on the Integration and Spiritual Streams as part of the six-stream methodology. This session aimed to foster holistic alignment, personal meaning, and purpose, encouraging participants to reflect on deeper values that inspire balance and growth.

Landi introduced the Spiritual Stream, emphasising the importance of practices that nurture inner energy and connection with the broader web of life. Key aspects included fostering compassion, wisdom, and service to self and others, maintaining grounding practices such as engaging with natural elements, and cultivating stillness and spiritual nourishment.

The Integration Stream explored how to harmonise various life streams into a coherent whole. Participants reflected on balancing personal and professional life, embedding values and intuitions into daily practices, and resolving contradictions. Emphasis was placed on nurturing relationships and aligning actions with core beliefs. The session underscored the interconnectedness of these streams, inspiring participants to pursue personal fulfilment while contributing to collective harmony and impactful change.

Group Discussion on Anticipatory Heuristics and Designed Experiments

The session provided participants with an opportunity to explore anticipatory heuristics and designed experiments in a collaborative setting, encouraging cross-pollination of ideas and iterative refinement of strategies. The discussions were centred on envisioning the future ecosystem of 2035 and identifying leverage points and signposts to guide the journey toward that future.

Group representatives began by sharing examples of their anticipatory heuristics and experiments. This enabled participants to gain a deeper understanding of the reframed ecosystem and to reflect on their progress. They engaged with probing questions designed to surface key insights, such as:

- What have you observed and learned?
- Where do you see positive momentum or resistance toward the envisioned future?
- What small changes are evident in the ecosystem, in yourself, or in your organisation?
- What new questions arise, and what might be the next steps?

The discussions delved into the values, beliefs, and norms underpinning participants' relationships and environments. Participants reflected on their ways of probing, sensing, and responding within various contexts and considered the essential knowledge needed to take meaningful action. They also explored the 'roots', 'fruits', and 'seeds' they wish to grow, contribute, and pass on, using these as metaphors for their aspirations.

To synthesise the discussions, groups identified commonalities and differences among their heuristics and collaborated to create one overarching pathway. Where needed, backcasting was used as a tool to trace possible routes from 2035 to the present, allowing participants to pinpoint wayfinding moments and guiding principles for their journey.

The session concluded with the development of practical outputs, including refined heuristics, actionable strategies, and a set of guiding principles or "rules of thumb." These principles were designed to enhance ecosystem health, optimise opportunities, and support adaptability in the face of challenges such as disease or disaster.

Collectively Presenting the Reframed Ecosystem and Designed Experiments to Test the Anticipatory Heuristics

The workshop culminated in a vibrant plenary session where groups presented their collectively reimagined ecosystems. Participants were encouraged to think creatively and move beyond conventional formats such as PowerPoint presentations. The result was a dynamic and engaging showcase of ideas brought to life through plays, songs, poetry, voiceovers, and dramatic performances. This innovative approach not only captivated participants but also enriched the collective exploration of systemic change and transformation.



Source: Gys Loubser

One group performed an energetic song and dance session, using rhythm and movement to symbolise the harmony and collaboration essential to realising their envisioned future. Another group enacted a compelling scene in which a newly appointed leader sought guidance from the ancestors, engaging in a symbolic dialogue about navigating the journey from the present to the envisioned future of 2035. This powerful performance underscored the importance of drawing wisdom from the past to shape a resilient and inclusive future. Meanwhile, a third group adopted a structured approach, presenting their ideas as a detailed chart that clearly outlined the steps and relationships required to achieve their goals. These creative and thought-provoking presentations not only energised the session but also fostered a deeper collective understanding of the diverse pathways to systemic transformation.

The insights shared during these presentations will form the basis for refinement and further development during the online Youth Futures Labs in the new year.

Reflections on Reframed Ecosystems, Wayfinding, and Becoming Anticipatory

The session, which marked the climax of the workshop, shifted focus to reflecting on the feasibility and potential impact of the visions, dreams, and ideas participants had generated. The creative presentations

integrated key themes and practical takeaways, encouraging participants to envision actionable leverage points and signposts to guide their efforts.

Reflections and Key Insights

The presentations and discussions highlighted several overarching reflections:

- Multiple pathways exist to address individual and collective challenges within our ecosystems.
- Unity in diversity is essential for achieving meaningful systemic and individual change.
- True transformation often begins at the grassroots level and must engage all stakeholders from the ground up.
- Work and fair compensation can coexist in a balanced and integrated system.
- Resources are abundant when equitably distributed, but insufficient for unchecked greed.
- Proactive imagination and intentional action are required to drive change.
- It is possible to redesign and implement systems that genuinely work for everyone.

As participants concluded this final session, they left with a set of initial wayfinding leverage points, signposts, and heuristics to develop further during the Youth Futures Labs. The session was not only a celebration of creativity and collaboration but also a practical step forward in imagining and building a sustainable, inclusive future.

Prize giving and goodbye

The workshop concluded with a lively prize-giving ceremony featuring novelty awards in categories devised and voted on by the participants themselves. These included accolades such as "Most Courageous," "Mr/Miss Congeniality," and "The Firestarter," celebrating unique contributions and qualities that stood out during the event. The festive atmosphere transitioned into heartfelt goodbyes, with participants reflecting on their shared journey. The session closed with an overview of the next steps, including the upcoming virtual Youth Futures Labs, where the collaborative work and insights from the workshop will be further developed.

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