



dialog city

OUR COMMON FUTURE TOOLKIT

How to develop a workshop with
citizen and decision makers



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What is Futures Literacy?

Futures Literacy is the capacity to imagine and understand multiple possible futures in order to make better decisions today. Recognized by **UNESCO** as a key skill for the 21st century, it empowers individuals and communities to challenge assumptions, reveal blind spots, and explore alternative paths. Rather than attempting to predict the future, Futures Literacy focuses on anticipation as a tool for **reflection, creativity, and transformation**. It encourages a shift from reactive thinking to proactive imagination, making it especially relevant for artists and cultural practitioners who are already engaged in envisioning new realities.



The project

Dialog_City is a European cultural initiative reimagining digital transformation as a participatory, creative, and inclusive process. It brings together seven partners from small and medium-sized cities across **Austria, France, Germany, Greece, and Italy** to explore how digital innovation can foster civic engagement and cultural participation.

Key Components:

- **Citizen Archive Platform (CAP):** A digital space for citizens and artists to preserve and share cultural heritage.
- **Futures Literacy Toolkit:** Creative tools for imagining and shaping desirable futures.
- **Hybrid Festivals:** Events blending physical and digital formats to enhance cultural participation.
- **Art for Public Residency:** Residencies for artists focused on participatory urban interventions.

Imag(in)ing Living – Workshop Series

Imag(in)ing Living was a five-week online workshop series (Jan 9–Feb 8, 2025), exploring the imagination and shape of the future of “living” through visual literacy tools, storytelling, and critical reflection.

The workshop brought together **25 artists** from 9 countries (Italy, Greece, Germany, Austria, Belgium, France, Colombia, Serbia, and Romania–USA).

The workshop was organized by different organisations, 2 Vocational Training Centers from Italy (CFPCEMON and CIAC) and a Civil Society Organisation from Greece (CulturePolis).

Academic coordination was led by **Dr. Vicky Karaïskou**, Associate Professor at the Open University of Cyprus & UNESCO Chair Holder in “Visual Anticipation and Futures Literacy towards Visual Literacy”.

Imag(in)ing Living Toolkit

The tools are designed by Dr. Vicky Karaiskou - Associate Professor at the Open University of Cyprus & UNESCO Chair Holder in “Visual Anticipation and Futures Literacy towards Visual Literacy” in collaboration with Andromachos Dimitrokallis - Business & Personal Development Coach, specialized in strategic foresight, innovation, and transformation.

The tools make part of a larger collection of educational methods applied during the workshops. This toolkit includes **14 visual literacy tools** designed to help people reflect on how they live and envision the future. Used in workshops, it encourages critical thinking, empathy, and creativity.

What it offers:

- Promotes self-reflection and social imagination
- Reveals hidden assumptions and values
- Fosters inclusion and innovative thinking
- Supports storytelling and collaborative work

Who can become a Futures & Visual Literacy trainer?

This path is open to anyone interested in exploring and deepening their understanding of Futures & Visual Literacy, especially those who:

- Engage Communities Through Art
- Have an artistic practice that involves people and encourages active participation.
- Care About Social Transformation
- Are committed to using creative work to support social change and community development.
- Embrace Digital Tools & Enjoy experimenting with digital technologies as part of their creative or educational processes.
- Have Experience in Learning Contexts
- Bring experience in developing or participating in educational projects or initiatives.
- Value Collaboration & Enjoy working with others, especially in group or interdisciplinary environments.
- Prioritize Citizen Engagement

Who Can Benefit from Visual & Futures Literacy Tools?

The **tools** are designed to be accessible and adaptable to a wide range of users, workshop audiences, and thematic focuses. They can be applied across research, professional, and personal contexts. Specifically, these tools are useful for:

- **Individuals** seeking to understand what stands between their needs, desires, and a more fulfilling reality.
- **Students**, from the final years of primary school to postgraduate education.
- **Educators** at all levels who aspire to become catalysts for critical thinking and awareness in their students.
- **Researchers** and professionals from all disciplines, from the humanities to applied sciences.
- **Cultural sector stakeholders**, who play a key role in shaping identity and perceptions of reality.
- **Business professionals**, including employees and managers, aiming to foster leadership, growth, and inclusion.
- **Organizations and NGOs** working on sustainability, governance, health, environmental challenges, vulnerable populations and social justice.

The Visual & Futures Literacy tools are:

1. Alternative Futures
2. BABEL
3. Barcoded Baby
4. Frame
5. Identity Triangle
6. Improv-storytelling
7. Reframing concepts
8. Role Model Stereotypes
9. Role-playing
10. Sensing instead of making Sense
11. Stage
12. Visual Stimulus
13. Visuality Iceberg
14. Wall

How can the tools help?

Visual and Futures Literacy tools support exploration, reflection, and transformation across personal, social, and cultural dimensions. They can be used to:

- **Value personal experience:** Recognize individual stories as meaningful sources of learning and growth.
- **Uncover assumptions:** Surface underlying beliefs and expectations that influence perceptions of the future.
- **Embrace uncertainty:** Navigate change and ambiguity while exploring resilient and creative possibilities.
- **Reframe and innovate:** Shift perspectives to stimulate new ways of thinking and acting.
- **Connect memory and identity:** Investigate how memory shapes individual and collective identities.
- **Build understanding:** Foster dialogue, empathy, and connection beyond divisions.
- **Support democratic engagement:** Reimagine the past to reinforce participation, agency, and civic responsibility.

Workshop Structure

The Futures Literacy workshop must be an **immersive and participatory** experience combining critical thinking, visual creation, and emotional exploration.

The ideal structure include:

- Warming up activity
- Icebreaker
- Discussions of prior tasks
- Short theoretical inputs
- Exercices based on tools
- Intersession activities kept personal reflection alive between sessions.

Warming up activity

Goal: Encourage participants to think critically and creatively about the future of how we live.

How to run the activity:

1. Introduction (2 min): Explain that this is a reflective exercise. There are no right or wrong answers—just personal perspectives.
2. Questions (10 min): Ask participants to answer spontaneously and individually:
 - *What is your prediction for the future of living?*
 - *What do you expect everyday life to look like?*
 - *What assumptions are behind your vision? What are you taking for granted?*
 - *What alternatives emerge if you change those assumptions?*
 - *What is your preferred, ideal future of living?*
3. Sharing (10–15 min): Invite volunteers to share. Encourage comparison of different perspectives and ideas.

Inter-Workshop Activity

Purpose:

When we explore abstract concepts like “living,” personal memories and perceptions become essential. They shape, deepen, and diversify our shared narratives. Using images helps make these subjective realities more concrete and emotionally resonant.

Instructions for participants:

1. Reflect on what the word “living” truly means and feels like to you. It can carry many meanings—there's no single interpretation.
2. Take a photo with your phone or camera that represents your personal sense of “living.”
 - It doesn't need to be artistic or staged—just honest.
 - Please do not use images from the internet. We want your lived perspective.
3. Add a few keywords or a short phrase that captures what “living” means to you through this image.

There is no right or wrong here—just your own authentic view.

Inter-Workshop Activity

Purpose:

This activity helps uncover the often unnoticed narratives in our surroundings—especially public spaces—that shape how we understand and experience the concept of "living." It encourages awareness of the subtle yet powerful cultural influences around us.

Instructions for participants:

1. Look around your daily environment—at home, in the street, online, in shops, on screens, etc.
2. Identify images or symbols that seem to tell you what “living” is or should be about.
 - These might come from: social habits, advertising, media, traditions, values, norms, etc.
3. List them in bullet points. Name as many as you can—don’t overthink it.

There’s no need to analyze them yet—just observe and collect.

Inter-Workshop Activity

Purpose:

To help learners reflect on how societal norms and hidden biases shape their ideas of role models, and how these perceptions influence identity.

Task:

Choose and label three images:

- A – What you want a role model to be in the future
- B – A predominant role model in today's society
- C – What you hope role models will represent in future society

Reflect:

- What are the differences or similarities between A & B? How do they make you feel?
- What stands out when comparing B & C?
- What assumptions influence your image choices and reflections?

Inspiration future workshops

- **Time:** Desire for slower living and alignment with natural rhythms.
- **Work:** Reimagining work as meaningful and community-centered.
- **Care:** Emphasizing mutual support and emotional resilience.
- **Territory:** Advocating sustainable, just, and shared living environments.



Relevant readings

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Participants quotes

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"We imagine in very conventional ways. No one dared to think big."

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"Art could be a tool to challenge the status quo, but sometimes we don't know how to use it."

“

"I realized that my daily choices aren't as free as I thought."





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