

An Overview of the Futures Literacy Laboratory on

The Futures of Climate Responses, 2040



A workshop organised by the World Organisation for Animal Health (WOAH) with the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)



How can we be better prepared for future events when we do not know what will happen?

How can we be trained to manage situations which can be so diverse? Should we make some assumptions with the risk that other options may arise? Or do we accept the uncertainty of the future and integrate this uncertainty into our thinking and planning? That is certainly less comfortable but probably more reassuring because it should allow us to be more reactive/less powerless, when faced with an unknown situation.



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Terminology

FUTURE

the future, by its very definition, does not exist in the present, and cannot be accessed as an object of inquiry. What is accessible in the present, however, is our anticipation of the future, and this is available as an object of cognition and investigation. Thus, the only form of the future available to us in the present is this anticipation of the 'later-than-now' through anticipatory processes described below. But we should remember that a person's anticipation of 'the future' depends upon the reasons for thinking about the future and the different ways people have of imagining the future.

FUTURES

the diverse images, stories, and descriptions of imagined futures. Where 'future' is referred in plural form as 'futures' in this document, it is to emphasise its plurality and the multitude of futures humans are capable of imagining.

ANTICIPATORY ASSUMPTIONS (AA)

our entry points into the future. To project yourself into the future, you need to assume things about the present world known to you.

Anticipatory assumptions constitute the building blocks of human imagination. We imagine by building upon our existing frames of reference—in other words, our worldviews, knowledge, convictions, beliefs, hopes, fears, and values.

'AAs are the fundamental descriptive and analytical building blocks for understanding Futures Literacy and "using-the-future". AAs are what enable people to describe imaginary futures. AAs define the frames and models that are used to invent the content of the fictions that are conscious human anticipation' (Miller 2018:24).

ANTICIPATION FOR THE FUTURE (AfF)

when uses of the future are primarily for the purpose of preparation or planning for the future; this is typically goal-oriented and based on probability.

ANTICIPATION FOR EMERGENCE (AfE)

when the future is used in an open and emergent manner. Moving beyond deterministic causality and being conscious of a wider range of ways in which we imagine the future.

Introduction

The terms ‘foresight’, ‘futures thinking’ and ‘Futures Literacy’ have not been part of the every day lexicon at the World Organisation for Animal Health (WOAH, founded as OIE). The first time WOA staff —and many of its Members¹— were exposed to foresight methodologies and futures thinking was during the development and presentation of the technical item at the 87th General Session² in 2019, entitled, ‘*How external factors (e.g., climate change, conflicts, socio-economics, trading patterns) will impact Veterinary Services and the adaptations required*’.

As part of the technical item, a resolution was adopted, in which WOA’s Delegates asked the Organisation to establish initiatives at regional and global levels that use foresight methodologies to navigate the complexity and uncertainty across the spectrum of social, technological, economic, environmental, and geopolitical changes that take place daily.

The request encapsulated in the resolution is a monumental task for an Organisation that does not use foresight methodologies in its day-to-day work and that has not yet attempted to integrate foresight into its working model or foster a futures-thinking mindset.

WOAH’s *modus operandi* is to use science, scientific studies, and scientific assessments to understand and monitor the emergence of animal diseases. Based on this information, the Organisation develops standards for the improvement of animal health and welfare.

Exploring futures functions in a similar way to scientific enquiry. We all have some hypothesis of what the future could look like. These hypothetical images of the future usually arise from what we are exposed to today (forecasts, scientific facts, news articles, podcasts, social media, resolutions, publications, etc.), but also from the assumptions, beliefs, habits, experiences, and narratives that all people have, often unconsciously, cultivated or adopted since early childhood.

However, the opportunity is not often taken to test out hypothetical images of the future that have an impact on what is perceived, and what is paid attention to in our personal and professional lives.

This is where a Futures Literacy Laboratory (FLL) comes in. The laboratory follows structured, co-designed³ Collective Intelligence Knowledge Creation processes⁴ that provide participants with opportunities to explore their own predictions or ‘probable futures’, their hopes or ‘preferable futures’, and to have these images of the future completely reframed by another future they most likely never imagined.

If foresight methodologies are to be used as management tools to investigate various futures or to ‘use the future’ to ultimately act, take decisions, and develop strategies and policies in the present, then that investigation of the future should be broad in scope and go beyond forecasting⁵.

This is particularly relevant for WOA as an intergovernmental organisation which serves 182 Members, where the images of the future among Members are as diverse as the cultures, languages and traditions that exist in their local and regional contexts. For the Organisation to truly value this diversity, efforts must go beyond taking a narrow view of the future when developing strategies and programmes to support them.

In this sense, a Futures Literacy Laboratory could be used as a catalyst for open discussions about futures, thus allowing for exploration of the different reasons for thinking about the future, and the different ways of imagining it, which combine to result in innumerable images of the future. This reminds us that the future is impossible to predict, yet our images of it are

- 1 National governments (referred to as Members) appoint Delegates to represent them at WOA meetings and events.
- 2 The full name of the General Session is the General Session of the World Assembly of Delegates to the World Organisation for Animal Health.
- 3 A FLL is co-designed with UNESCO and the peer facilitators in the Organisation hosting the laboratory.
- 4 Collective Intelligence Knowledge Creation (CIKC) processes are a key design principle of Futures Literacy Laboratories. The laboratories are based on CIKC processes on the premise that learning is more likely to occur and be more efficient if a collective approach is taken.
- 5 Forecasting is a practice that attempts to predict what will happen in the future taking into consideration events and data in the past and the present.

influenced by our perceptions, which then inform the decisions and actions we take in the present.

There is no one-size-fits-all predictable future or set of futures before us. We can only take guesses, attempt to predict, imagine, prepare, and plan, and ultimately accept that the future cannot be known. With that realisation comes a reality check: we must embrace the uncertainty that comes with the unknown.

Respecting the multifaceted, unpredictable, and hence open nature of futures, WOAAH partnered with UNESCO to introduce Futures Literacy (FL) to WOAAH staff through two laboratories and a masterclass. FL is a skill that allows people to better understand how their images of the futures impact their current actions. As WOAAH is going through the process of using foresight methodologies to integrate futures thinking into its work, Futures Literacy is a necessary part of the process to consider multiple, more diverse futures in a variety of different contexts for the development of policies, frameworks, strategies, etc.

WOAH, foresight, futures thinking and Futures Literacy

The Organisation is facing the same environment of volatility, uncertainty, complexity, and ambiguity (VUCA)⁶ as its Members when it comes to current and future challenges, such as the climate crisis, emerging novel infectious diseases, antimicrobial resistance, technological innovations in animal production, impacts on animal health, biodiversity loss, and disruptions in food sources from any one or a combination of these challenges. Hence the need to undertake some internal capacity building in foresight and Futures Literacy to build a futures-empowered, resilient organisation.

In WOAAH's early exploration of foresight methodologies, it was noted that tools-based approaches were predominantly used. One example is the futures cone (Figure 1) which encompasses a range of different futures and their preconditions.

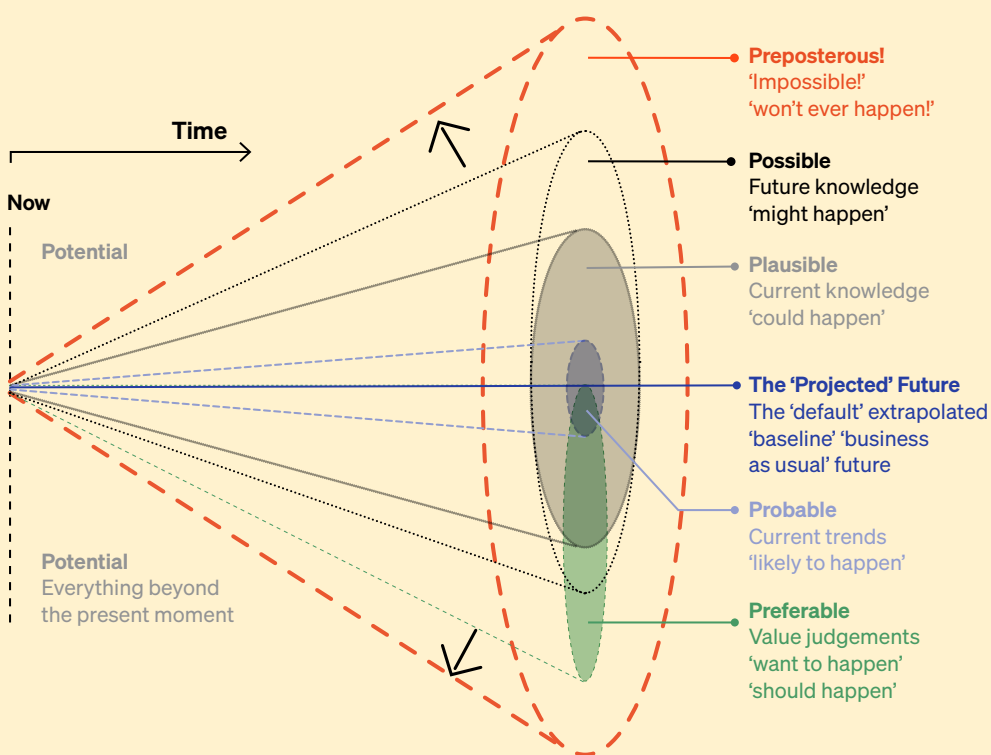


Figure 1: Futures Cone. Adapted from Joseph Voros, ©2017

⁶ The term 'VUCA' was coined in 1987 to describe a way of thinking and an approach to a dynamic world that moves away from the singularity of best practice, and towards experimentation and adaptation.ent.

Another example is scenario methods, which have a long tradition in foresight practices and are often used in the context of planning and preparing for the future, along with establishing and testing strategies. For WOAAH, it became apparent that there are numerous ways of exploring futures. It is tempting to use foresight methodologies to get a better hold of the future by producing probable and preferable images of the future, as well as the associated milestones, resources, and means deemed necessary to tackle them.

However, given the unpredictable nature of the future, it is important to develop our capacity to embrace uncertainty rather than seeking to eliminate it from our investigation of the futures. By committing to using foresight methodologies and fostering futures thinking, WOAAH intends to tap into a broader range of images about the future by exploring new ways in which futures are imagined. This is essential, particularly for an organisation that exists to support a culturally diverse membership through programmes, policies, and frameworks to improve animal health and welfare. Using only projected or probable futures to inform and orient WOAAH's work does not consider the diversity of the images of the future amongst its Members, thus risking underestimating the unpredictable nature of the future. In this regard, Futures Literacy, as a capability-based approach to using the future, offers both an alternative and complementary perspective to the use of foresight methodologies.

As a capability, Futures Literacy enables us to better sense and make sense of what is emerging in the present through experimentation and improvisation (complementary to planning and preparation). It encourages multiple ways of understanding the world around us. As such, FL makes us aware of how our knowledge and understanding of the complex, constantly changing and evolving world in which we live is enhanced and shaped by our individual experiences, context, intuition, and emotions, but also by literature, films, and stories. However, this also means interpretations of the future are shaped by context and experience thus limiting our understanding of the futures that are emerging.

Consider the possibilities in the ways in which we can imagine the future when we broaden our perception beyond what we already know. A shift away from extrapolation of the past into the future, and one toward openness, can enable the capacity to detect novelty and to make sense of complexity.

While it is comfortable to stay in the projected and probable lanes, the scope of thinking about the future is much more complex.

The Hypothesis of the Futures Literacy Laboratories

By using Futures Literacy Laboratories, which are a learning-by-doing, collective intelligence knowledge creation process, ways of anticipating the future become more diverse, hence better able to leave the comfort of projected and probable ideas and expand the scope of thinking to embrace novelty, uncertainty, and complexity, thereby allowing for innovation in addressing issues and challenges in the present.

Futures Literacy Laboratory (FLL1)

23, 25 & 26 November 2021

An open call was addressed to all staff across the Organisation looking for 25-30 participants to experiment with their images of the futures of climate responses in 2040. Twenty-eight staff members participated in the FLL1. This included 22 staff from headquarters (including four peer facilitators), and one participant from each of the following regional or sub-regional offices: Bangkok, Brussels, Buenos Aires, Gaborone, Nairobi, and Tokyo.

No briefing sessions were held with participants in advance about the laboratory or on Futures Literacy⁷. Limited information was provided in the invitation and participants were asked a few

⁷ In post-FLL1 briefings, for upcoming FLLs, the invitations will be written differently to include information about the objectives of the FLL. In addition, briefing sessions about the foresight methodologies to be used, some theory on FL along with how the participants are expected to contribute, what they and the Organisation will get out of it, will be held. Another lesson learned is to provide a questionnaire before and after the labs to gauge participants understanding of the process and purpose of the labs.

days in advance of the laboratory to give some thought as to what they felt climate response would look like in 2040.

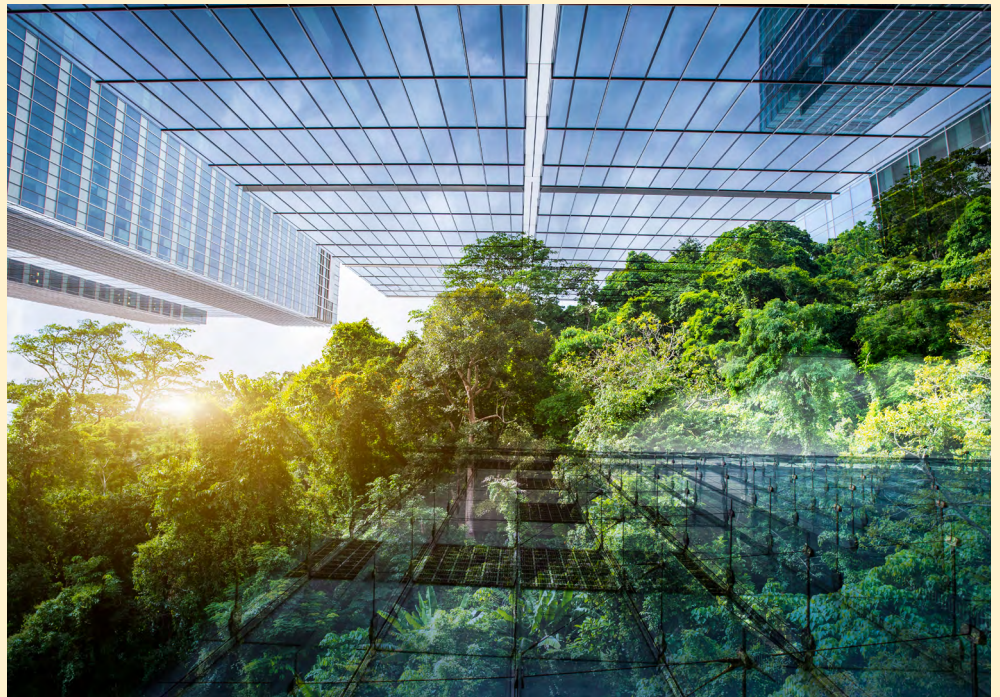
Limiting advance information was intentional, because WOAAH and UNESCO co-designers⁸ of the laboratory did not want participants to overthink the theoretical aspects of Futures Literacy, but rather to join with unaltered biases and assumptions constituting the foundation of their current images of the future. In other words, the preparation of participants for a FLL1 is not needed to extract learnings. The participants were split into four groups of five to six participants, and they stayed in these groups over the course of the laboratory.

Objectives of the first Futures Literacy Laboratory

1. To provide an initiation to Futures Literacy.
2. To facilitate participants' understanding of why and how Futures Literacy can be pertinent for projects and activities within WOAAH, in how we think about the futures of animal health and welfare in light of climate change, and the relationships humans have with their environment and other animals.

Objectives of WOAAH's partnership with UNESCO are two-fold

1. To explore how anticipatory systems and methods can be applied to actions for the implementation of the 7th Strategic Plan, the futures of WOAAH and animal health and welfare, and responses to external factors such as climate change.
2. To build WOAAH's own experience and capabilities in the application of futures thinking and Futures Literacy to support its Members.



⁸ The core team responsible for designing and facilitating the FLL is composed of UNESCO team members and colleagues from the hosting institution, in this case WOAAH.

The Phases of the Futures Literacy Laboratory

The laboratory is comprised of four phases that support the different stages of the Futures Literacy learning curve (Figure 2 below).

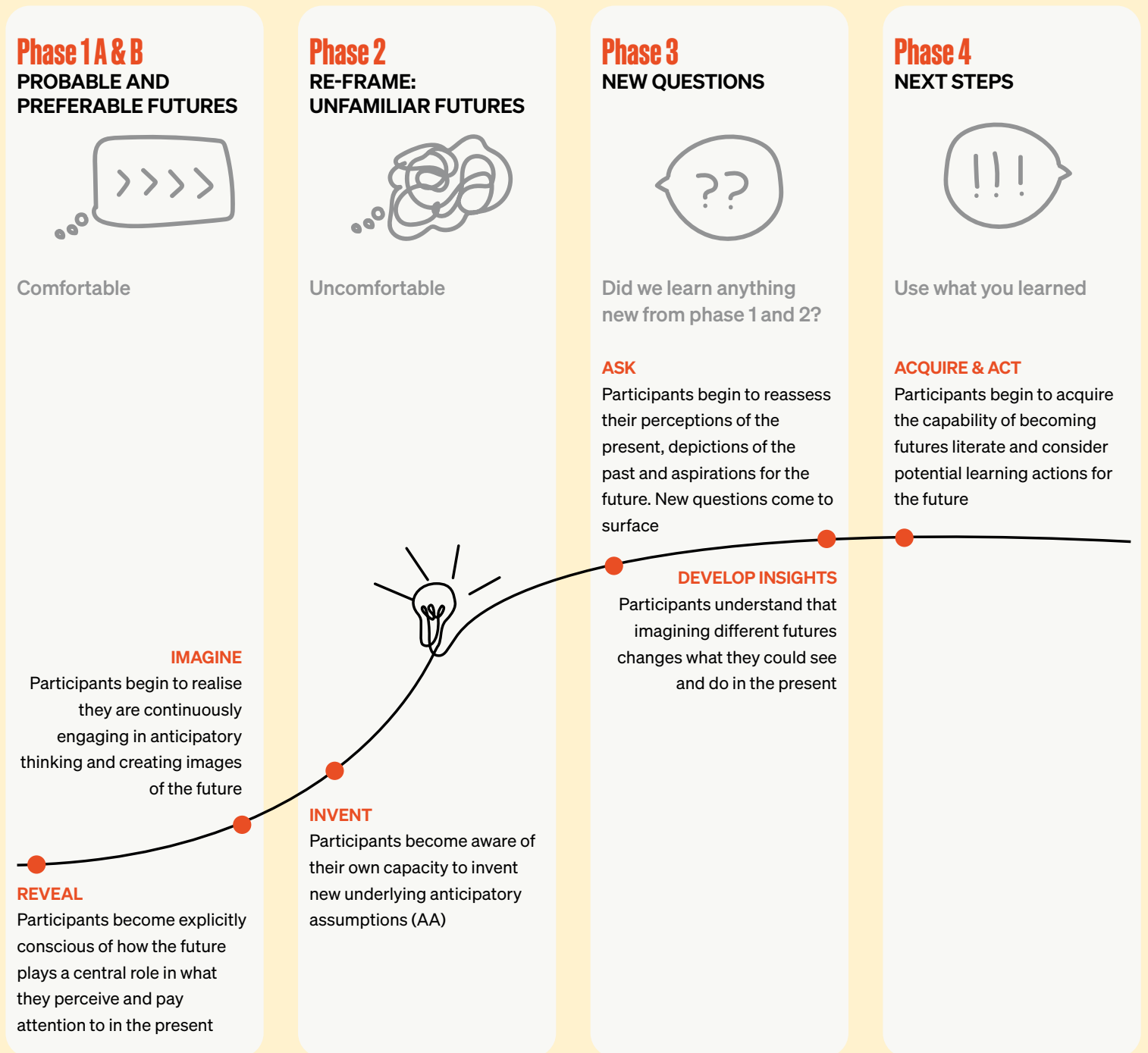


Figure 2: The action-learning process

Summaries of the Futures Literacy

Laboratory phases

The summaries below offer some insight into the diverse images of the future generated by the lab participants on the Future of Climate Response. WOAAH's mission is linked to climate response in that animal production and health both contribute to and are adversely impacted by the effects of climate change. Furthermore, the COVID-19 pandemic serves as a reminder of the unpredictable and uncertain nature of the future. This type of disruption forces us to break away from a business-as-usual approach, and calls into question how humans will co-exist with animals in the future.

Phase 1A – Probable futures of the future of climate response

A mix of optimism and pessimism

Group discussions during Phase 1A reflected both optimism and pessimism about the future of climate response. It is worth noting that the laboratory took place just after the closing of the UN Climate Change Conference (COP 26), the outcomes of which generated significant debate around the futures of climate change responses.

One group saw little reason for optimism, with continued fragmentation of societies—rich and poor—on a global scale, famines, further degradation of health systems, and continued erosion of trust in politics and decision-makers. None of which would lead to the fundamental transformation needed to change the way we live to mitigate or adapt to climate change.

By contrast, other groups' images of the future consisted of hope—via solutions such as new technologies to address climate issues, and a substantial change in consumption habits (more sharing, less waste)— particularly noting that much of the change needs to take place in the global North, including the sharing of benefits with the rest of the world. Innovations in food systems (diversified protein sources and less animal proteins), artificial intelligence in farming and animal production were also among these solutions. The images of probable futures also included putting more pressure on companies and industries to change their manufacturing and to offer more climate-friendly options to consumers.

In addition, participants believed that better leadership and social movements would bring about changes to reduce the impacts of climate change, while at the same time, acknowledging that not all innovations, technologies and socio-political changes would roll out equitably across the globe.

Phase 1B – Preferable futures of the future of climate response

Positivity abounds

The images of preferable futures were positive and optimistic. Participants shared that their preferable futures would entail fundamentally changing consumer behaviours, farming practices and humans' relationship with nature, consequently creating equitable access to food, minimising impacts on biodiversity, maintaining control of the spread of infectious diseases, decreasing waste (no more plastic, or overproducing food), improving the cleanliness of oceans, rivers, quality of air and blue skies. There was also a focus on leveraging sustainable technology while considering human rights.

An additional discussion took place on what the conditions for achieving a more equitable sustainable society would be—is it creativity to imagine better futures and then acting accordingly, is it a change in mindset?

Phase 1A and 1B – Summing up

This two-part phase explored the futures (probable and preferable) that are 'known' around climate responses. As WOAAH is working in the field of animal health, there are things that are

not questioned about the possibility of these futures coming to fruition. The data, the science, the evidence that would point to these futures are not questioned. This lack of interrogation means that assumptions have been established and hypotheses built based on the future the evidence points to. This phase of the Futures Literacy Laboratory helped identify the following anticipatory assumptions around responding to the climate emergency:

1. Humans feel responsible and guilty, so action must be taken now. There is a desire to see behavioural changes (individual, organisational and governmental), but are at the same time limited by the current paradigm, such as the evaluation processes of today to measure reduction in greenhouse gas emissions. Something must be done – anything!
2. If humans are in the driver's seat to get the climate crisis under control, then there must be some means of controlling it. There is an assumption that there are scientific or technical solutions to the problems and the issues that arise; this is underscored by the optimism that technology can broadly fix climate change problems. On the other hand, the possibility that these solutions are not available is a point of despair or renders humanity somehow incapable of addressing the issues.
3. Hope for the future of climate responses is constrained by what is today deemed realistic/probable/feasible to mitigate the impacts of climate change.
4. There is significant inequality between those perceived to be the greatest contributors to climate change (those who are well-resourced to escape the effects of climate change), and those who are impacted by climate change (those who are the most vulnerable in our societies). This calls into question power relationships and societal responsibilities.
5. The metaphor of 'voting with your money' as an expression of values arose as participants considered the power of personal purchases, such as buying local or fair trade, and how it could influence and change broader corporate choices and governmental policies. Thus, government legislation or consumer pressure could force corporations to modify products and value chains to become more 'climate-friendly'.

Images of the future, both probable and preferable, strongly influence what is perceived today as important, thereby impacting our choices and actions in the present. These images of the future are built, in turn, on anticipatory assumptions. By becoming more futures literate and hence better aware of anticipatory assumptions as well as their role in what is seen and understood today, the capacity to choose what anticipatory assumption is used in what context and for which purpose is acquired. Hence, the menu of choices that can be selected from is diversified, thereby also diversifying/multiplying possible actions. It is important to be aware of anticipatory assumptions, given that anticipation informs decision-making, thus leading to certain policies or solutions that will have an impact on society at large.

Phase 1 – Key takeaway

A Futures Literacy Laboratory enables participants to understand how and why anticipation surfaces. In this context, Phase 1 reveals Anticipation for the Future (AfF). AfF highlights the way in which planning and preparing are anticipated for the future. Within the AfF paradigm, the future is understood as a goal that is planned and prepared for or desired and hoped for. The likelihoods of these goals are evaluated and committed to. Examples of AfF are when participants proposed the development of artificial intelligence (AI) for global supply chains or addressing resource extractions in vulnerable regions. However, there is not always an opportunity in the evaluation of multiple futures to question these assumptions. This is where a reframe scenario comes in, which is addressed below.

Phase 2 – Reframe scenario

Plot twists – rewiring images of the future, from the Anthropocene⁹ to the Zoopocene¹⁰

This is the most challenging phase of a Futures Literacy Laboratory. Rarely are alternative scenarios considered that confront our biases and assumptions of the world; nor is the creative space given to experiment with different possibilities for the future.

A reframe scenario is intended to provoke and disrupt probable and preferable uses (images) of the future, and to move participants into the paradigm of Anticipation for Emergence (AfE), as opposed to Anticipation for the Future. Within AfE, the future is no longer conceived as a goal to prepare, plan, or wish for. Rather, the future is perceived as a kind of ‘non-future’ or as a ‘disposable construct’ (Miller 2018) that is used to enhance perceptions in, or of the in-flux, complex nature of the present. Since perception always precedes choice and action, enlarging it has the potential to also broaden and diversify the palette of alternative actions to choose from.

For this FLL, the reframe scenario was inspired by *The Little Prince*, written by Antoine de Saint-Exupéry. In this scenario, the Little Prince has arrived on earth in 2040, where animals have ‘tamed’ humans, which simply means they have developed a unique relationship to humans and vice versa. Animals are also conscious of humans’ impact on the environment, and express concern for human survival.

In this future, participants were asked to create stories around how society functions, how the entities live together, how connections are made if there is no common language, and finally, how climate change is approached if humans are not the ones in control.

What emerged from these stories were themes of harmonious co-existence and tensions in terms of general interactions and governance systems. In comparison to the previous stage, there was far less reliance on technologies for solutions, and more emphasis on collaboration and communal learning in tandem with conflicts and resistance on the part of humans being governed by other beings. Participants began to reconsider who the stakeholders are in addressing climate change.

While the scenario is strange and difficult to connect with, there are some aspects that are familiar to our experiences today, most notably a shared planet, and concerns around equality and inclusion. As with all scenarios, however, participants are meant to transport themselves into the story to see the world differently. The primary objective of engaging with a reframe scenario, is to spark not only imagination, but to be creative as a collective group of people using an unfamiliar, unknown point of departure. The uncertainty in the reframe scenario thus reflects the uncertainty of the future, thereby diversifying the way the future is used to inform decisions and actions in the present.

Phase 2 – Summing up

The reframe scenario in Phase 2 was a provocation designed to challenge the assumptions revealed in Phase 1. It was meant to explore a new, unfamiliar future, and to investigate new ideas or things not considered or to make the connection with probable or preferable futures to take a fresh look at positions in response to climate change.

For example, between Phase 1 and Phase 2, participants’ positions on the reliance of technical solutions in climate responses was prevalent. Therefore, the reframe scenario challenged participants to investigate changes that could take place at the organisational level—learning events, corporate social responsibility, engaging with Members and other organisations.

Having said that, some participants faced difficulty in immersing themselves into a far-fetched story such as the reframe scenario, which speaks to the significant learning curve in

9 ‘Anthropocene’ The period of time during which human activities have had an environmental impact on the Earth regarded as constituting a distinct geological age. Merriam-Webster.com Dictionary, Merriam-Webster.

10 A word invented by the writers of the overview to sum up the effect of shifting from Anticipation for the Future (AfF) to Anticipation for Emergence (AfE), using the reframe scenario to reconsider alternative futures for climate response.

detaching from existing anticipatory assumptions and in inventing new ones, particularly for scientists. Some noted that while the reframe scenario was an invitation to think differently, more 'realistic' events and issues such as AI can be equally disruptive. Wanting to build the reframe on AI reflects the pervasive anticipatory assumptions around 'continuity futures': the assumption that technologies, in particular AI, will continue to play a pivotal role in our futures. The question would then be to what extent a reframe scenario can be disruptive for participants if it is primarily based on those assumptions already held today.

In another Futures Literacy Laboratory, however, time can be taken to design a different approach to disrupting participants' current anticipatory assumptions. For instance, thinking through different reframe scenarios within the co-design process and test these with the members of the co-design team, and/or share a teaser of the reframe scenario on day 1 of the lab, so that participants can take more time to reflect individually before diving into group discussions for the reframed future on day 2. These could be potential strategies to alleviate participants' resistance to the reframe and could ease the learning curve.

As mentioned before, a Futures Literacy Laboratory enables participants to understand how and why humans anticipate. While Phase 1 reveals the paradigm of Anticipation for the Future, Phase 2 exposes a complementary paradigm: Anticipation for Emergence. Unlike AfF, AfE refers to the way in which futures are imagined, and not constrained by the imperatives of probability and desirability. This allows for new or previously ignored aspects of reality to emerge or to be noticed through sensing and making sense of novelty.

Since the reframed future feels unfamiliar and often strange at first, participants are challenged to explore new points of reference to find meaning and orientation within that alternative future. This happens through playing, testing out, and collectively negotiating meaning to define what the foundations of how the new world could operate. Liberating the future through AfE thus allows individuals to access creative and novel aspects of the present that tend to be obscured by AfF.

Phase 3 – New questions

After having travelled into the probable, preferable, and reframed futures of climate response, participants returned to the present and were asked to reflect on the impact of their time-travelling journey. The following question was asked, 'After having explored different versions of 2040, what are some new realisations or what perspectives have changed and what perspectives have remained the same in 2021?'

Phase 3 – The same, but different

The notion of partnerships to leverage expertise from networks and other organisations to broaden our thinking and actions related to climate change response remains the same. This is not surprising as WOAHA is not an authority on climate change impacts. Hence, partnering with other entities that hold specialised knowledge such as the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES), Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) are important for informing the work of WOAHA.

Phase 3 – Changed views, new questions

The shift from an anthropocentric view to one that is more representative of all entities and groups asks us to project ourselves into the minds of other species. Many of the questions asked reflected participant's experience in the ongoing pandemic. Thus, some discussion arose around rethinking of WOAHA disease control standards and guidelines to include additional information on the impact on the environment— currently, this does not exist.

In connection to this, some of the new questions that were raised by participants were:

- Are the criteria for disease reporting and control appropriate? Is there a need to revisit and adapt existing criteria?
- What are the implications of an anthropocentric view on animal welfare, especially when decision-making processes and agenda-setting for climate responses are human-led? Since humans have long been cultivating a self-perspective of heroism/saviourism, if animals were in power, would they be preoccupied with saving humans?
- Do WOA's current policies and strategies consider the plethora of impact factors (e.g., animal ethics, global warming, food security/safety, etc.) on the aetiology of diseases?
- If future pandemics cannot be prevented for certain, does this realisation change approaches to the prevention of diseases?

Participants also reflected on the question that if the future in the reframe scenario really came about, would the sense of survival as humans be heightened and would the transformations required be embraced to address climate change? Even if this future would not come to fruition, humanity's sense of survival in 2021 has not seemed to galvanise the world into collective action. It seems that, in general, the solutions for mitigating and adapting to the impacts of climate change are available, including reacting to the main issue of lowering temperatures; however, the world is not acting accordingly. Questions also arose around whether there is appropriate leadership for change, and what changes to dominant forms of leadership might look like. Voices of indigenous leaders, who have a radically different relationship with the environment and nature, should be welcomed in climate response decision-making. When transporting into the reframe scenario, technology played no role at all—there was more of a focus on changing our values systems and looking at how beings could co-exist harmoniously.

Related to this was the realisation that WOA's climate response is connected to its corporate social responsibility. Particularly noting that it is a contradiction for an organisation to promote certain sustainability values and health measures while not being fully environmentally conscious in its everyday operations. In other words, in the context of climate change, the Organisation should consider what actions it can take to minimise its carbon footprint.

Other questions arose around what the next steps for Futures Literacy are after this laboratory. How can other futures be explored, with all the possibilities for better or for worse? How are worst-case scenarios prevented or avoided and how can systems be improved to create better futures?

Speaking of better futures, this bears the risk of colonising the future with preconceived images based on what is deemed good or bad. In this vein, better futures are often associated with the idea of progress. Yet, when the question is asked for whom exactly progress is to be achieved, with what intention, from which standpoint and based on which anticipatory assumptions, it might transpire that what appears as progress to one, may result in destruction or regression for another. The promotion of 'better' or '(more) creative' futures can thus often be expected to perpetuate the illusion of progress and colonisation, potentially to emphasise and secure power and status. Contrary to popular belief, preferred (preferable) futures are therefore not a blanket image applicable to, or valid for, all of humanity. These considerations seem to be particularly important with regard to issues of agency, power, control, impact, and responsibility in connection with anthropocentrism.

Phase 4 – Next steps

In Phase 4, participants were asked what new actions they want to undertake based on the new questions raised and discussed in Phase 3. The actions could be related to climate responses, use of foresight, fostering futures thinking and enhancing Futures Literacy.

Overall, there was a recognition that there are numerous ways of perceiving futures, and thereby other ways of looking at the work of WOAAH from a much broader angle—one that is inclusive of animal perspectives and considers the environment. Although this realisation did not identify specific timebound actions, the Futures Literacy Laboratory process shone a light on the need to take a holistic view of animal health and welfare.

- For example, **WOAH could look at the interconnections between diverse data sets** that consider what is happening in the environment to develop dashboards for decision-making. In this case, WOAAH should begin with considering the questions to be asked and the content and type of data that could help inform decisions. This could be followed by considering with whom to partner, and the granularities of data: the data structure and how different data systems can connect.
- **Animal welfare perspectives should also play a prevalent role in the work of the Organisation**, over the long term, improving and adapting standards (or changing them) to take into consideration an inclusive approach for managing health risks in humans, the environment, and animals. WOAAH should consider where to insert messages about environmental considerations while managing animal health and welfare.
- Other ideas revolved around **awareness-raising campaigns, looking at the links between health and positive impacts on climate change**. WOAAH could investigate and understand more about the nexus between animal health and reducing greenhouse gas emissions. Participants reflected that while this nexus is intuitive, the dynamics involved are not well understood. There is an opportunity to promote research in this area so that we all understand the links between animal health and welfare, reduction of greenhouse gases and sustainable livelihoods.
- **The role of Veterinary Services in climate response is not fully understood—their skills and competencies could be leveraged to address contributions to and consequences of climate change**—how can WOAAH support or assist in this?
- The Organisation should also **engage its Members on the climate emergency**, such as by organising a day for discussion at the General Session to assist in the identification of priorities and actions around climate change.
- WOAAH could work on **establishing a corporate social responsibility strategy** to do its part for enhancing animal health by reducing its carbon footprint. An internal group could be set up to develop this and would take into consideration a travel policy, how we manage waste, including e-waste, and other environmental impacts of the Organisation's digital transformation.

Conclusions

In 2020, WOAAH was restructured to develop its foresight and foster futures thinking capacity to consider emerging trends and issues that are shaping the world today and will continue to do so tomorrow.

There is no one or easy way to integrate futures thinking capacity into individuals or organisations given that the domain is not well understood, the future cannot be predicted and that foresight methodologies are at times used in a way to attempt to reduce the uncertain nature of the future. The intent of this first laboratory was to introduce the notion of exploring futures—thinking about them, and looking into the possibilities, implications, and consequences of multiple futures.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This overview was written by:

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We also extend our gratitude to WOAHP Director General, Monique Éloit, and to the Organisation's colleagues who participated in the Futures Literacy Laboratory for their willingness to try something out of the ordinary and to step out of their comfort zones to think differently about the futures that are emerging.

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Foresight methodologies and Futures Literacy Laboratories provide opportunities for participants to engage with a multitude of futures. The latter pushes us to reconnect with our emotions and challenges overreliance on the pretence of rational and linear thinking: anyone who engages in exploring futures is bringing along their own set of biases and assumptions, even seasoned foresight practitioners and FLL designers need to check in with their own.

Using the future through foresight methodologies and Futures Literacy provides a platform for reflection, tapping into other views and exchanging ideas with the knock-on effect of breaking down silos within the Organisation. There was a desire and willingness for colleagues to learn from each other, open a space for discussion and collective intelligence to identify opportunities for collaboration inside and outside the Organisation.

Working through the various phases of the first Futures Literacy Laboratory provided the participants with an out-of-the-ordinary opportunity—that is, to use foresight methodologies to share perspectives on topics they are concerned about, to use creativity and imagination to conjure other futures that emphasise the perspectives of others 'who are not in the room', especially when it comes to making decisions or taking actions about the future of climate change and responses to it.

Addressing the cascade of consequences and impacts of the climate crisis requires other techniques, ideas and other ways of using our intuition. Foresight methodologies and Futures Literacy Laboratories can offer these opportunities. As one participant put it, we need to, 'move from old wine in new bottles to new wine in old bottles', meaning that WOAHP is the old bottle and the people who are foresight driven and futures literate, the new wine.

Everyone has a stake or an interest in the future. WOAHP is trying to see its position or determine where it stands in the variety of futures being described. Adopting a One Health approach, for example, is there something particular about the Organisation's positioning that allows it to be heard and take on listening to, reflecting on, and mobilising other expertise offered to this approach? The need to experiment with something like foresight and futures thinking as well as building Futures Literacy is also necessary to see the potential of WOAHP's position and approach more fully.

This Futures Literacy Laboratory was the entry point for WOAHP to explore futures for other topics using this methodology with UNESCO. The partnership between the two organisations will include at least another laboratory and a masterclass for participants.