

## Action Atelier: FUTURES STUDIES FOR SUSTAINABILITY

Against the backdrop of VUCA (volatility, uncertainty, complexity and ambiguity) and BANI (brittle, anxious, non-linear, incomprehensible) environments, management education needs to equip students with adequate methods, skills, and competencies to deal with complexity and uncertainty. By integrating courses into the curriculum which use futures studies methodology (e.g., futures literacy laboratories or futures workshops), students and lecturers go beyond critically reflecting the status quo (i.e., various problems in specific industries) by exploring probable, possible, and preferable visions and working towards the implementation of these respective (positive) futures.

The usual way for teaching and learning about global ecosystems is that these are threatened by the businesses' lack of a holistic or systems perspective to make comprehensive decisions and take responsible actions (Cumming & Allen, 2017). To solve this dilemma, and unleash the transformation potential of education, many publications by UNESCO shed light on sustainable development and competency frameworks for education (Leicht et al., 2018; UNESCO, 2017). Among these, anticipatory competencies, e.g., "futures literacy" (UNESCO, 2021), are among the competencies that were suggested to be fostered in the future. The *Futures Workshop* ("Zukunftswerkstätten") (Jungk & Müllert, 1997) and Futures Literacy Laboratories (FLL) are methodologies (Miller, 2018), which can have various application possibilities (Bergheim et al., 2018) that I consider relevant for management education and other disciplines.

This workshop will provide insights into the journey of the different "futures workshop" phases (preparation, critique, visioning, and implementation phase) and deliver further application possibilities. Navigating through these phases provides participants with fertile ground to create compelling narratives for sustainable business development by learning about and experiencing selected exercises reaching from trends analysis, foresight, and scenario planning to backcasting and prototyping and how to combine these with workshop elements such as, e.g., solarpunk storytelling, improv theater and Lego® Serious Play®. The session will have two parts: (i) Providing a brief lecture input (20 min.) about why it is essential to include a sustainability perspective within management and business courses in higher education and how it could be combined with the field of futures studies, especially the "futures workshop/lab" methodology. This brief input is followed by (ii) involving participants in selected exercises (40 min.), e.g., a scenario planning and backcasting exercise. Lastly, (iii) participants will discuss application possibilities and potential stumbling blocks in their institutions (25 min.) before the workshop will be concluded by flash feedback and a debrief (5 min.).

### References

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