

PRAXIS OF FUTURE DESIGN

SECOND EDITION



Yoshinori Nakagawa

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SECOND EDITION



Chapter

1

Introduction

- The Birth of the FD Concept
- The Progress of Our Future Design Research
- How to Use This Document



The Birth of the FD Concept

The concept of “Future Design” (FD) was conceived by Dr. Tatsuya Saijo in 2012 while he was affiliated with Osaka University. For more details about this, please refer to his “Future Design Declaration.” The core idea of this concept is to stimulate the willingness of people today to act as representatives of future generations through methods such as the “Imaginary Future Generations” thought device. If such methods really work, it is hoped that we can initiate and expand a

movement within organizations (and even throughout society) aimed at designing a future where future generations will feel compelled to say “thank you” to the present generation.

Dr. Saijo joined Kochi University of Technology in the spring of 2013, which provided an opportunity for me, who was also at the university at the time, to join the research circle dedicated to developing the methods of Future Design.

The Progress of Our Future Design Research

Since then, Dr. Saijo and I advanced our research on Future Design at Kochi University of Technology. A fortunate aspect of our research was that we encountered practitioners from governmental agencies, private companies, and citizen organizations who were eager to take action now to create a better future. We were also fortunate that they chose to apply Future Design in their practical activities.

Typically, university researchers work within a system where peers from the same academic field review each other's research. Only the results that pass this review are published as academic papers. This system, sometimes referred to as the “journal community,” is crucial for ensuring the reliability of academic outcomes. However, this system has a significant gap: it does not assess how important these academic outcomes are to people outside the research community.

For us researchers, the practitioners who showed interest in Future Design filled this gap in a significant way. By applying the methods we proposed, they critically and objectively evaluated them. It was through this feedback that we began

to consider what further research was necessary for Future Design to be practically viable in real-world settings, beyond the confines of the university office and laboratory.

How to Use This Document

The practitioners we have quietly supported have accumulated know-how related to Future Design by implementing it in real-world settings. I, too, have accumulated practical know-how on Future Design through the guidance and collaboration with these practitioners. Given this background, I have decided to compile the knowledge I have gathered so far into a single document and make it publicly available.

In this document, while taking into account the ideas of Dr. Saijo mentioned earlier, I would like to define the term “Future Design” as follows:

Future Design is the practice of envisioning the

future by stimulating our present consciousness to represent the voices of future generations and facilitating the transition of society towards that future.

This document is written for those who wish to engage in the kind of practice described in the above definition, or who aspire to involve others around them and further develop this practice on a larger scale.

I encourage you to learn from the know-how of those who have pioneered the use of Future Design, add your own originality, and implement your unique version of Future Design.



In Conclusion

In the 2018 fiscal year, the Uji City Hall in Kyoto Prefecture organized a series of workshops where citizens were invited to discuss the future of their local community, incorporating the methods of Future Design into the discussions. Several researchers, including myself and Dr. Saijo, supported these discussions, and the workshops were held over four sessions.

During the final session, some participating citizens expressed the sentiment that it would be a waste to let the knowledge and experience gained through the Future Design workshops end there. Motivated by this, they gathered like-minded participants after the workshops and formed a citizen group called “Future Design Uji.” Unfortunately, I was unable to continue my involvement with this group as time passed, but in 2024, I happened to meet one of the group’s founders. It was then that I learned that this citizen group has indeed continued its activities for six years since those workshops in Uji.

Let me share another similar example. In the 2022 fiscal year, Professor Saijo and I, along with others, had the opportunity to support a Future Design workshop organized by a private company. By 2024, I discovered that this company, after the workshop had ended, had independently adapted the methods of Future Design to develop its own future vision project.

There is yet another case. In the 2022 fiscal year, the Town Hall of Kijo in Miyazaki Prefecture implemented Future Design as part of a staff training program. The key person in this initiative was Ms. Keiko Fumita, a town hall employee. Dr. Saijo and I supported this training. Later, she began using Future Design in her work, adapting the methods to fit her needs, and eventually applied Future Design in the process of formulating the town’s comprehensive plan. I only learned about this development in 2024.

These examples show how practitioners from various types of organizations have taken the concept of Future Design, rooted them within their organizations in their own unique ways, and taken action to create a better future. It appears that Future Design indeed holds significant appeal.

As more organizations independently adopt and integrate Future Design, and as they collaborate to achieve things that cannot be done alone, this may lead to a significant transition toward a sustainable society.

The ultimate goal may still be distant, but I hope this document serves as the first step towards that distant goal.





Chapter 2

What Does the FD Workshop Lead to?

- What Does Social Transition Mean?
- How Does FD Contribute to Social Transition?
- Summary

In Chapter 1, “Introduction,” we defined Future Design as follows:

Future Design is a practice where we, as the people living in the present, use the thought device and imaginary future generations to envision a desirable future for them and then transition the society toward that future.

This is a broad definition of the term “Future Design.” However, in some contexts, it may be appropriate to define the term more narrowly as “a workshop technique utilizing the thought device of imaginary future generations.” In fact, Chapter 3 of this document will adopt this narrower definition and provide a detailed explanation of how to use the FD technique.

The thought device of imaginary future generations is a mechanism designed to incorporate the voices of imaginary future generations into the present-day decision-making processes. It does so by enabling us, as individuals, organizations, and society, to

(i) adopt the perspective of future generations who will be affected by our decisions, and

(ii) imagine what decisions those future generations would hope for us to make⁽¹⁾.

In this chapter, as preparation for Chapter 3, I will discuss how the workshop technique of FD, defined narrowly, can contribute to the ultimate purpose described in the broader definition of FD—namely, transitioning the society toward a desirable future.



1 What Does Social Transition Mean?

Research on the transition to a sustainable society began around the year 2000 and has since been increasing exponentially⁽²⁾.

These studies seem to have agreed, overall, that “social transition means a change in the ways of living of the society.”

A Dutch researcher, Dr. Rip, and his colleagues defined a regime as a set of rules held by the members of the society, implicitly suggesting that replacing a regime constitutes a social transition⁽³⁾. In simpler terms, a regime is a collection of implicit rules that the people within the society accept as “natural” or “self-evident.” These rules shape our daily activities. For example, imagine a Catholic university that would have an extra cafeteria selling exclusively halal food (food permissible under the Islamic dietary laws). Such a cafeteria would embody the implicit rule of respect across for other religions and world views, and this respect would likely influence the students’ actions in their daily

lives. From this example, it is clear that a regime is one of the key components of a culture.

Expanding on Dr. Rip’s definition, another Dutch researcher, Geels, redefined the regime as a “set of mutually coherent rules” and explicitly proposed that its replacement constitutes social transition⁽⁴⁾.

Using this expanded concept of regime, he described the transition in the British merchant shipping industry from sailing ships to steamships, between the 19th and 20th centuries. In the era when sailing vessels dominated, shipowners had their own rules, and the cargo owners had their own rules, and these rules coexisted in harmony. After approximately 100 years, this set of rules was replaced by another set with the rise of steamships.

Having a regime seems to have at least two significant implications.

First, sets of rules drastically reduce the number of

decisions we have to make in our daily lives, thereby lowering our cognitive burden. When a rule is accepted as “natural,” we can live our social lives while avoiding major trouble without questioning its validity.

Second, cultural norms representing the ways of life of a particular society allow us to preserve a particular culture and affirm who we are, which constitutes a part of our identity.

However, there is no guarantee that the norms existing within a society are optimal from the perspective of sustainability. For example, many

modern Japanese people seem to share the rule that “not carrying a reusable water bottle and, instead, buying bottled drinks on the go is an effective way to avoid the hassle of preparing drinks and carrying a heavier load.” On the beverage supply side, there are likely such rules as “vending machines should be placed in high-traffic and easily visible locations.” Together, these rules promote a high level of plastic waste and contribute to many environmental problems, including that of microplastic accumulation. In such cases, a need arises to transition the stable set of coexisting social norms to more sustainable norms.



2

How Does FD Contribute to Social Transition?



For those who aim to lead the transition of our society (referred to here as “forerunners”), I would like to explain why it may be expected that the FD workshops, which utilize the thought device of imaginary future generations, will contribute to the transition toward a sustainable, free, democratic society. This expectation is based on the seven characteristics of the thought device of the imaginary future generations, with particular emphasis on the importance of the characteristics (1) and (2).

However, I would like to offer an advanced disclaimer. Among the points listed below, some have been sufficiently verified through experimental or case studies, while others are based merely on the experiential observations of those who have implemented the FD workshops. The efficiency and impact of the latter have yet to be validated by future research.

Characteristic (1): **Facilitating the Voluntary Acceptance of Gentle Intergenerational Ethics by Individuals**

In workshops using FD, the participants adopt the thought device through which they imagine the future people and the harmonious future world .

After experiencing the process, the participants, upon returning to their current identity as present-day individuals, become capable of evaluating their own actions from the perspective of the future generations.

An essential point here is that the workshop organizers do not impose strong demands on the participants to adopt specific values or beliefs. By avoiding such impositions, the pathway remains open for the participants with diverse values and beliefs to embody the imaginary future generations. (Even individuals with opposing political stances can simultaneously become imaginary a part of the future generations, while continuing to hold on to their views)

In this way, the FD takes a modest stance, merely encouraging the participants to acquire gentle norms. Despite this modesty, the participants who have experienced FD often begin to regulate their own actions from the perspective of the future generations. I believe this commitment to a restrained approach lies at the heart of FD, and it is precisely that aspect that enables FD to contribute to the social transition.

At the beginning of this chapter, I mentioned the extensive body of research on social transitions. These studies are sometimes criticized and the question is asked, “How to respond to transitions that are heading for an unsustainable direction?”⁽⁵⁾. Indeed, it is conceivable that the insights into the social transitions could be unintentionally applied in ways that lead the society toward unsustainability.

For those aiming to contribute to the social transition using FD, a clear response to this critique is available: “By using the thought device of imaginary future generations and cultivate the

gentle norms, the individuals may envision the future and lead practices aimed at realizing that vision, ensuring at least a minimal level of consideration for the interests of the future generations.” This serves as a solid response to such criticisms.

Characteristic (2):

Encouraging Individuals to Break Free from the Status Quo Bias

In general, realizing the social transitions involves overwhelming of costs. These costs include monetary expenses, effort, and time. For example, in the case studied by Dr. Geels, it took about 100 years for the society to transition from that dominated by sailing ships to one dominated by steamships. Similarly, if we consider the efforts to transition from a society contributing to the global warming to a more sustainable society, which began with the establishment of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) in 1988, it is time consuming as well as 36 years have already passed since its establishment. It may take several more decades to complete this transition, which may potentially require a total transition period of 50–100 years.

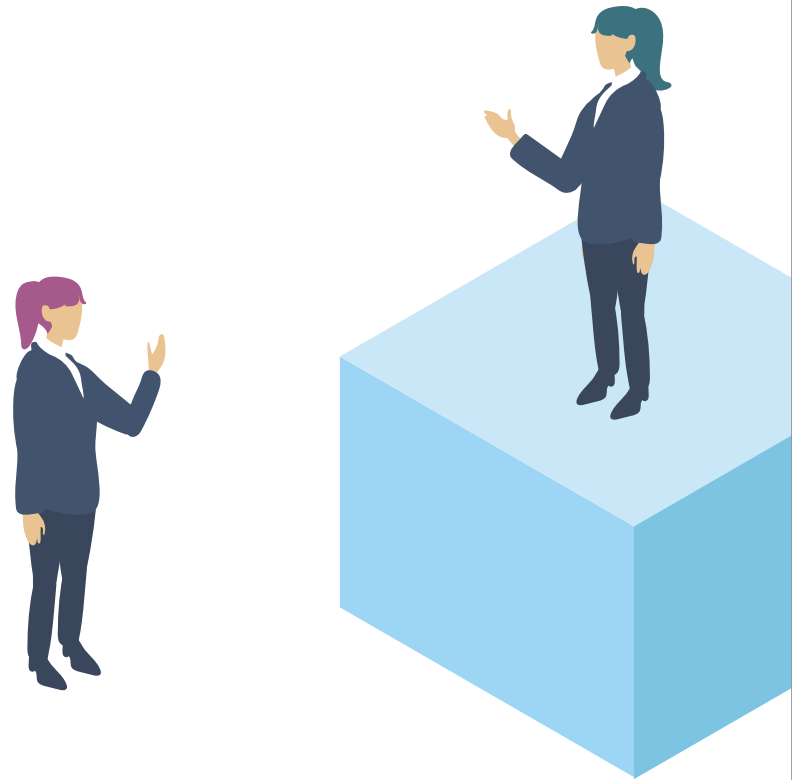
Given the immense costs required for such transitions, it may appear rational for us, as present day individuals, to be satisfied with the current norms and maintain the “natural” ways we currently employ, rather than contribute to the social transitions.

This human characteristic (namely, our individual tendency to avoid change and prefer maintaining the current situation) is known in the field of psychology as the status quo bias. The thought device *to imagine the future generations* has the function of helping us to free ourselves from this status quo bias.

A German psychologist, Dr. Godefroid, explains the mechanisms that bind us to the status quo bias through several concepts⁽⁶⁾, two of which are introduced here.

The first is the transition cost. Even when dissatisfied with one’s current residence, it is often difficult to allocate the money and time required to move. Moving expenses would be the cost encountered in such situations.

The second is the sunk cost. Consider a university



student who has little prospect of graduating from the school but continues to repeat years of courses, unable to accept the loss of the previously paid tuition fees. Such a person maintains the status quo to avoid confronting these costs.

The thought device to imagine ourselves as the future generations has the potential to liberate us from these costs because these costs are borne by the present-day individuals, not by future generations. Indeed, those who experience the perspective of the imaginary future generations often realize that while these costs may be significant for them as the present day individuals, they are not critical concerns for as they pretend to be the people of the future.

Breaking free from the status quo bias in this way also enables us to create more imaginative visions. As present-day individuals living within a variety of constraints we accept as “natural,” we implicitly hold the assumptions about the range of the future possibilities that are achievable. By adopting the thought device moving us to the imaginary future generations, we can relativize these constraints and creatively imagine ourselves and the world around us, free from the limitations that currently bind us.

Characteristic (3): _____**Enabling the Creation of Social Visions from the First Person Perspective**

The power of the thought device of imaginary future generations to enhance the appeal of our visions does not end there. This device also supports the creation of future visions from a first person perspective.

No matter how extensively a future society is described through the objective lenses—such as population figures, economic conditions, levels of technological advancement, or political systems—it is unlikely to inspire excitement in most people. It is only when we understand how individual humans will live, experience happiness, and strive to find happiness within the society that we begin to feel empathy and excitement for that future.

Without this element, it is unlikely that any social transitions envisioned by the future oriented thinking would gain the widespread empathy and support.

By adopting the first person perspective through the thought device, people can vividly imagine not only what the future society may look like in an abstract sense but also how they personally may experience life and happiness within it. This personal connection is the key to the making visions compelling and relatable.

**Characteristic (4):** _____
Easily Imitable by Anyone

The FD method, with the characteristics described above (1–3), can be a useful tool for the people who care about the future and want to lead the changes. That is because it supports the transition within the regions and organizations they may directly influence toward sustainability.

For these local efforts to result in a broader social transition, it is essential that there emerge some facilitators who would introduce the general population to the future visions and strive to replicate those efforts. By adopting the FD, those facilitators may inspire others to experience FD.

It is worth noting that the diverse future visions generated through this process may sometimes align in terms of the social norm changes they call for, and sometimes they may not. In the former case, the argument for the necessity of the norm change will gain greater persuasive power within





the society. In the latter case, as the replication of the experience is achieved, the dominant opinion about in what direction to steer the norm change will naturally emerge.

Here, the characteristic of the FD as being **“easily imitable by anyone”** gains importance. It is true that successfully conducting an FD workshop requires lots of detailed knowledge. However, one does not need to worry excessively about this. Even a beginner can relatively easily replicate an FD workshop with just a basic manual (i.e., this one). The ease of replication stems from the fact that what sets the FD workshops apart from others is the adoption of the thought device to imagine the future generations, and that facilitating the adoption of this device by participants does not demand specialized knowledge or skills from the workshop organizers.

As outlined in Chapter 3 of this paper, all the organizer needs to do is instruct the participants to take on the role of future generations and discuss the type of world they envision themselves inhabiting. Admittedly, this will undoubtedly be a challenging task for the participants. However, the motivated participants will likely interpret these seemingly impossible instructions in their own creative ways and begin discussions as

representatives of future generations.

Thanks to the ease of the imitation, efforts by the facilitators in one region (or company, municipality, etc.) using the FD may easily spread to other regions (or companies, municipalities, etc.). This can be referred to as the horizontal dissemination of FD.

That said, for the efforts of the facilitators to promote the norm changes, another type of dissemination is necessary in addition to the horizontal dissemination. For example, the FD-based initiatives in one municipality may spread to the government; the initiatives in one country's government may spread to international organizations; and efforts in one department of a company may eventually propagate to the entire company. This type of dissemination may be called the vertical dissemination of FD. That may be beneficial.

In prior research, the dissemination of the advanced initiatives is sometimes distinguished by the term replication and scaling up ⁽²⁾. The horizontal and vertical dissemination of FD, as defined in this book are conceptualized with this distinction in mind.

FD is a technique with the potential to facilitate not only horizontal dissemination but also vertical dissemination. That is because the thought device to imagine the future generations can be applied across a wide range of the spatial scales—from the local areas, such as the neighborhood associations to the global scale of the entire Earth. Dr. Tatsuyoshi Saijo, the founder of FD, refers to the applicability of the FD at all its spatial scales as the fractal nature of FD. He argues that FD should be used in such venues as the G7 Summit of the advanced economies⁽⁷⁾, based on the fractal nature of FD.



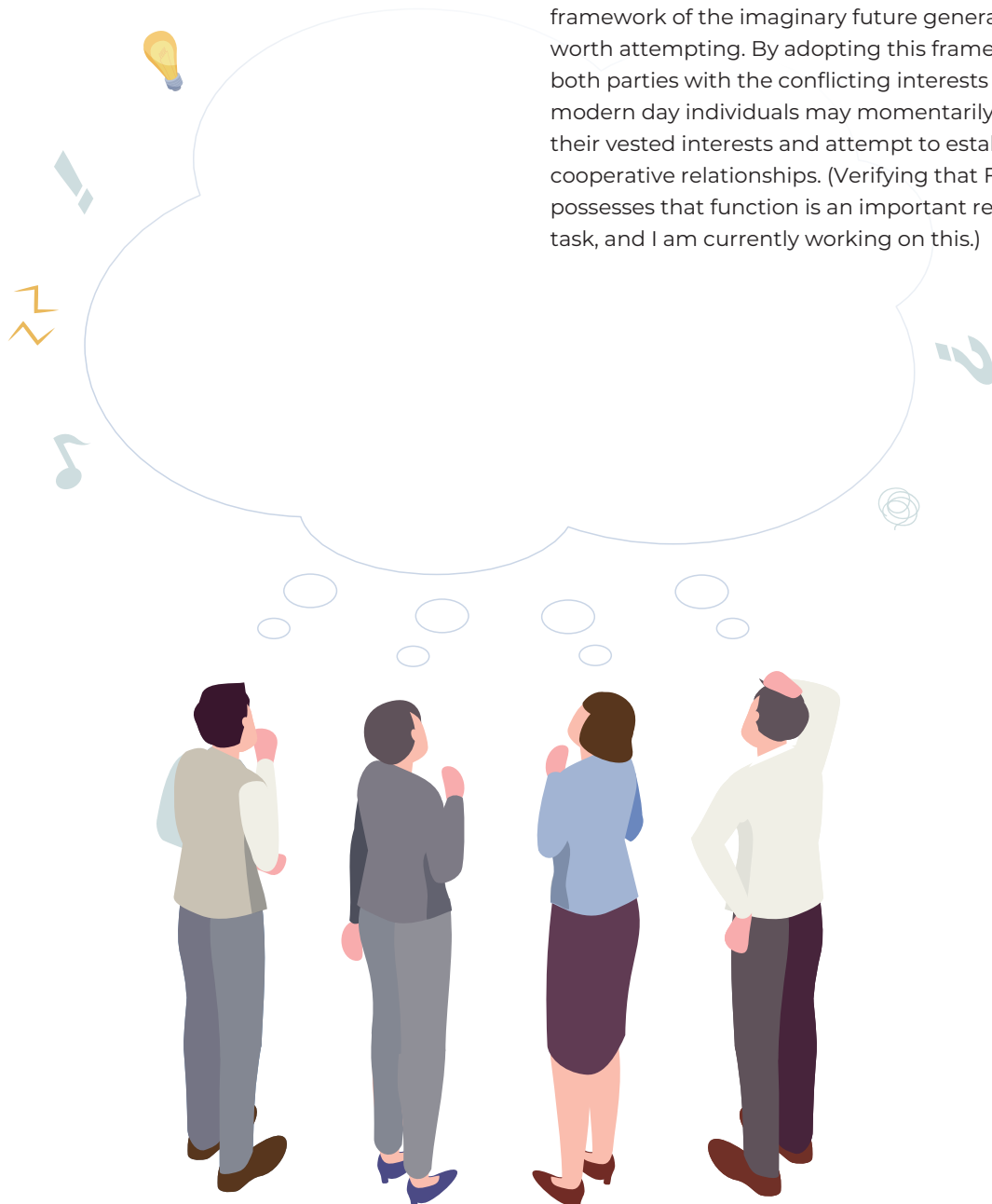
Characteristic (5): **Promotes Network Formation Through Social Identity**

The individuals who have experienced the perspective of the imaginary future generations will increase in number through the horizontal and vertical dissemination described above. These individuals will share a common social identity of having experienced the perspective of future generations, even if in a simulated way⁽⁸⁾. They will develop a sense of camaraderie and derive joy from this shared experience. As a result, they are likely to become a major force supporting the society's transition toward sustainability.

Characteristic (6): **Facilitates the Softening of the Rigid Conflicts of Interest**

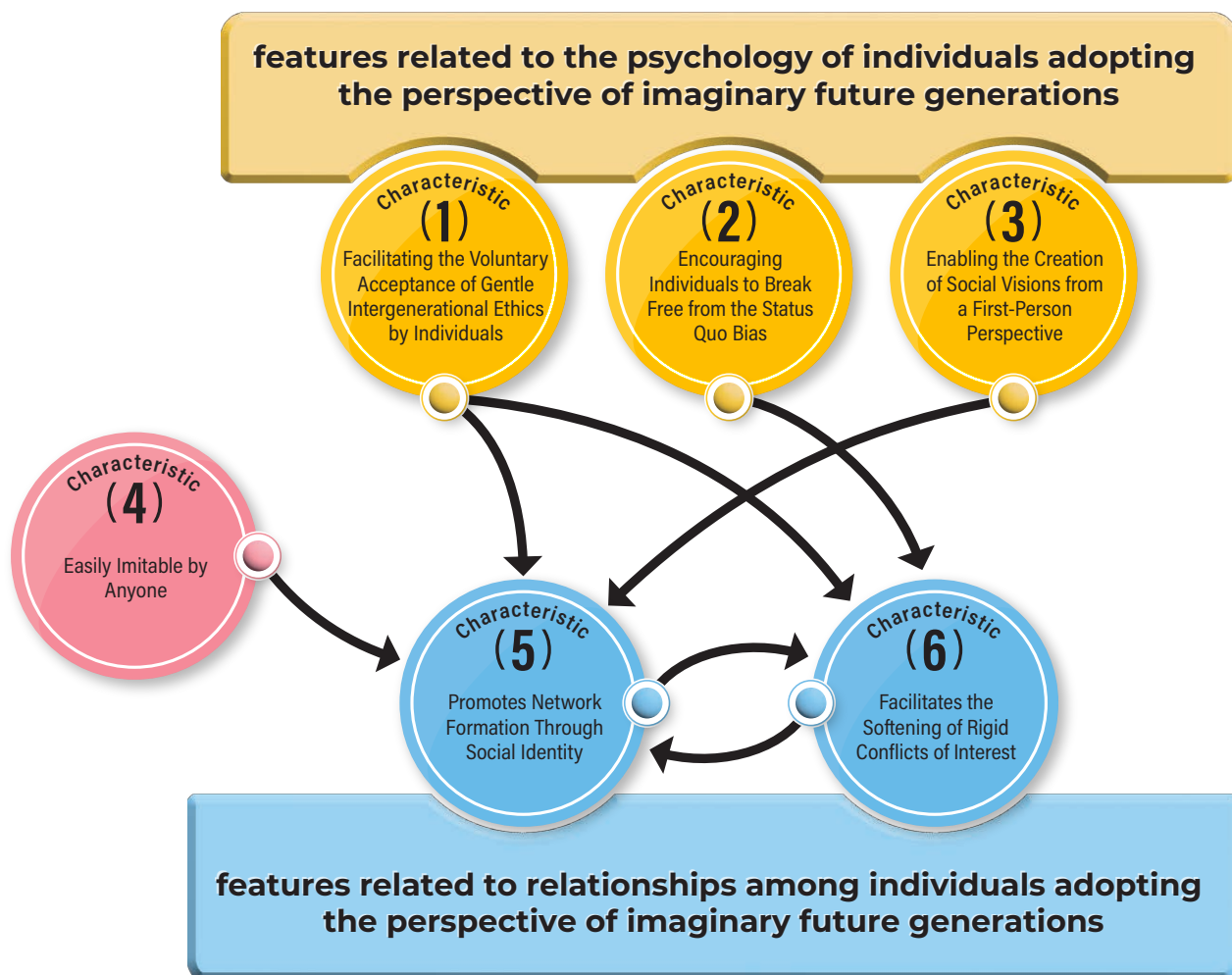
As the initiatives of the facilitators spread through both the horizontal and vertical dissemination, the number of people advocating for replacing the existing norms with new ones will increase. That will intensify the conflicts between those who wish to preserve the current norms and those who seek to replace them with a new ones ⁽²⁾. Furthermore, conflicts may also escalate among those with differences in opinions on what kind of regime should replace the existing one.

There is no guarantee that FD can resolve such conflicts. Nevertheless, the strategy of encouraging both opposing sides to adopt the conceptual framework of the imaginary future generations is worth attempting. By adopting this framework, both parties with the conflicting interests as modern day individuals may momentarily set aside their vested interests and attempt to establish cooperative relationships. (Verifying that FD indeed possesses that function is an important research task, and I am currently working on this.)



3 Summary

Thus far, we have discussed the six characteristics of FD. Their interrelationships are illustrated in the diagram below.



Characteristics (1) through (3) can be summarized as “features related to the psychology of individuals who adopt the perspectives of the imaginary future generations.” These characteristics determine the nature of the visions created through the thought framework of the future generations, shown in the diagram. Such visions are marked by being “creative, inclusive, and guided by the gentle intergenerational ethics.” Creativity is ensured because they are created by the individuals who have overcome the status quo bias. Moreover, the process of envisioning the society from the first person perspective guarantees inclusiveness. This inclusiveness means that the visions comprehensively align the microlevel depictions of

the individual's immediate surroundings with macrolevel depictions of society as a whole.

Characteristics (5) and (6) can be summarized as “features related to relationships among individuals adopting the perspective of imaginary future generations.” Those who have had the unique experience of viewing the future society from the first person perspective will find it easier to build relationships because of their shared experience. Furthermore, such individuals are highly likely to share the gentle intergenerational ethic, “making decisions as modern people while considering the perspective of the future generations.”

If these individuals form a group that shares this ethical perspective as a part of their social identity, they are likely to collaborate in realizing the visions they have created. Moreover, the individuals who resist the social transition due to their vested interests might also be drawn into the group. This inclusion could facilitate smoother social transitions. That is because those individuals, after experiencing the perspective of the imaginary future generations, might overcome their status quo bias and adopt the gentle ethic, thus becoming motivated to join the group.

Lastly, the realization of this scenario hinges on **characteristic (4)**. The concept of the imaginary future generations is exceptionally simple, enabling anyone to easily replicate the Future Design workshop. This simplicity makes it relatively easy to increase the number of the individuals in the society who have experienced the perspective of the imaginary future generations and accelerate the formation of the aforementioned group.





Future Design workshop Guide for Practitioners

As mentioned in the "Introduction," the ultimate goal of the Future Design is to promote the transition to a sustainable society by acquiring the perspective of the future people. With the hope that you, too, will engage in such practices, Chapter 3 has been written as a guide for you to carry out a Future Design workshop yourself.

1

Understanding the Types of Workshops

What is an FD workshop?

A Future Design workshop (hereinafter referred to as an “FD workshop”) is defined as a discussion in which participants, using a thought device called an “imaginary future person,” immerse themselves in becoming future people. They sketch out the desired future state (referred to as a “vision”) while also outlining the path for that vision to materialize.

However, it is essential to be cautious in understanding the meaning behind the clarifying expression “desired future state.”

For instance, let us consider ourselves, contemporary individuals in 2024, attempting to envision the “desired future state” of 2054 by becoming imaginary future people.

In this scenario, please note that the future we envision as imaginary future people would be the society of 2054, where we are living while expressing gratitude to the past generations who lived from 2024 to 2054. It is crucial to understand that among these “past generations,” we ourselves from 2024 are included.

Why Workshops?

While it is possible for individuals to independently use the mental apparatus of becoming imaginary future people, there are significant benefits to engaging in discussions within a workshop setting where two or more people use this thought device. This is because by collaborating with others who share the common goal of “becoming imaginary future people,” it becomes easier to execute this challenging task. In 2016, with the support of Dr. Keishiro Hara and others, Dr. Ritsuji Yoshioka of Yahaba, Iwate Prefecture, hosted an FD workshop to which citizens were invited. Post-event interviews with participants revealed how they explored the meaning of “becoming imaginary future people” while stimulating each other⁽¹⁾.

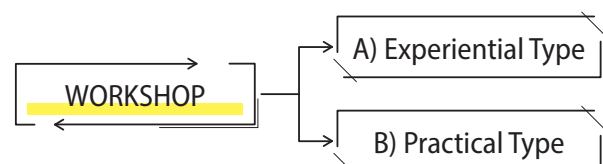
Furthermore, hosting workshops allows a large number of people to simultaneously gain the perspective of imaginary future people. This enables the creation of an atmosphere within the organization in which it becomes natural for people to think, speak, and act from the perspective of imaginary future people. This not only liberates us from various constraints as contemporary individuals but also fosters a momentum within the

organization to emancipate ourselves. Consequently, this may lead to the initiation of cultural transformations within the organization. Moreover, as more organizations adopt this approach, it may pave the way for broader societal transformations. Thus, workshops serve the purpose of fostering visions while retaining such a larger objective.



Types of Workshops

Deciding what type of FD workshop you want to conduct is the starting point for all activities once you have picked up this manual. The types include (A) experiential type, aimed at experiencing FD, and (B) practical type, conducted as an official step embedded in the decision-making process of your organization. While the A (experiential) type can be relatively easy to implement, conducting and succeeding in the B (practical) type requires a bit more ingenuity. To conduct a B (practical) type FD workshop successfully, both the awareness and expectations regarding Future Design within your organization must be sufficiently elevated.



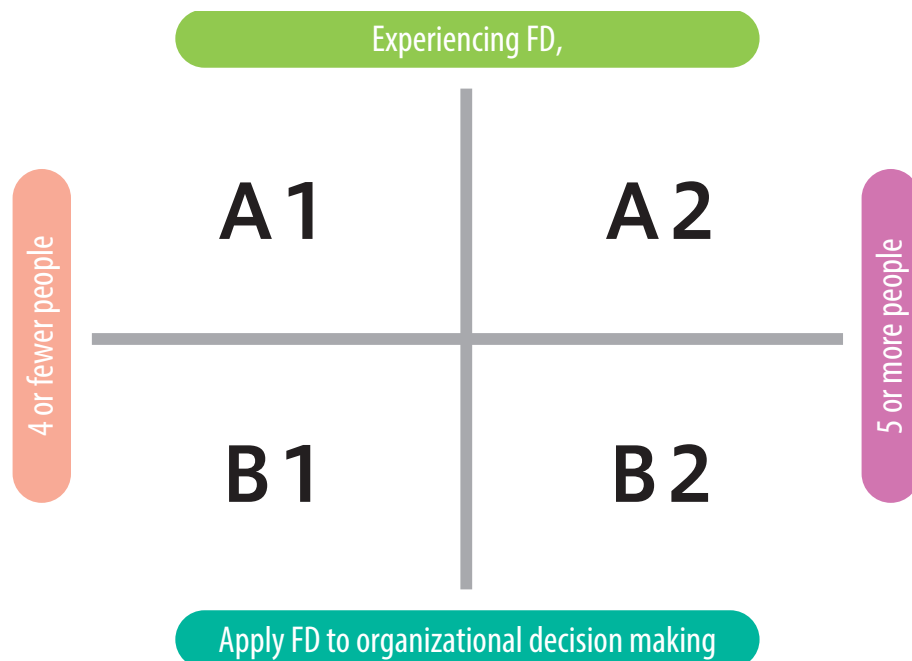


Figure 1 Four Types of Workshops

Therefore, starting with the implementation of Type A (experiential) workshops and then advancing to Type B (practical) workshops can be effective. An example of Type B (practical) workshop implementation is when Mr. Masaaki Takahashi from the Planning and Finance Division conducted an FD workshop in Yahaba, Iwate Prefecture, in 2019 as part of the formulation of the Seventh Comprehensive Plan. In 2022, Ms. Keiko Fumita from the Town Development Promotion Division in Kijo Town, Miyazaki Prefecture, conducted an FD workshop to examine the format of the town's public relations newspaper and linked its results to budgetization.

Regardless of whether you conduct workshops of type A (experiential) or B (practical), the operational methods of the workshop will change significantly depending on how many people you involve. The dividing line is around four people. (Section 2 will explain the reason for this.) On the basis of the above, we would like to classify FD workshop into four types:

Type A1 (Experience × Small-scale):

Provide an opportunity for you and a group of no more than four individuals (including yourself, if desired) within your organization to experience Future Design.

Type A2 (Experience × Large scale):

Provide an opportunity for you to offer Future Design experience to a group of more than four individuals within your organization.

Type B1 (Practice × Small-scale):

Lead a group of four individuals or fewer (including yourself if desired) within your organization to conduct Future Design and incorporate it into organizational decision making.

Type B2 (Practice × Large scale):

Lead a group of more than four individuals within your organization to conduct Future Design and incorporate it into organizational decision making.

Concrete examples of “organizations” in the above text include private companies, local governments (or their departments), and so on. Moreover, it is possible for individuals from multiple organizations interested in a common issue to gather and form one organization. For example, in February 2024, about 40 people from various organizations related to Mount Fuji gathered to conduct an FD workshop to think about the future of Mount Fuji. The event was organized by Mr. Shunji Katsumata and others from the General Incorporated Association Kanoe Saru (an organization formed by successors of the priest’s family who took care of Fuji Faith believers climbing the mountain). (In this document, this will be referred to as the “Mount Fuji FD workshop.”) Among the participants were the following:

- Local governments
- Mountain hut owners
- Relatives of the priest’s family
- Mountain guides
- Chambers of Commerce and Industry
- Surrounding shrines
- Institutes related to Mount Fuji’s natural environment
- And others.

Figure 2 Consortium of the Mount Fuji FD workshop



2

Organizing the Workshop Steering Committee

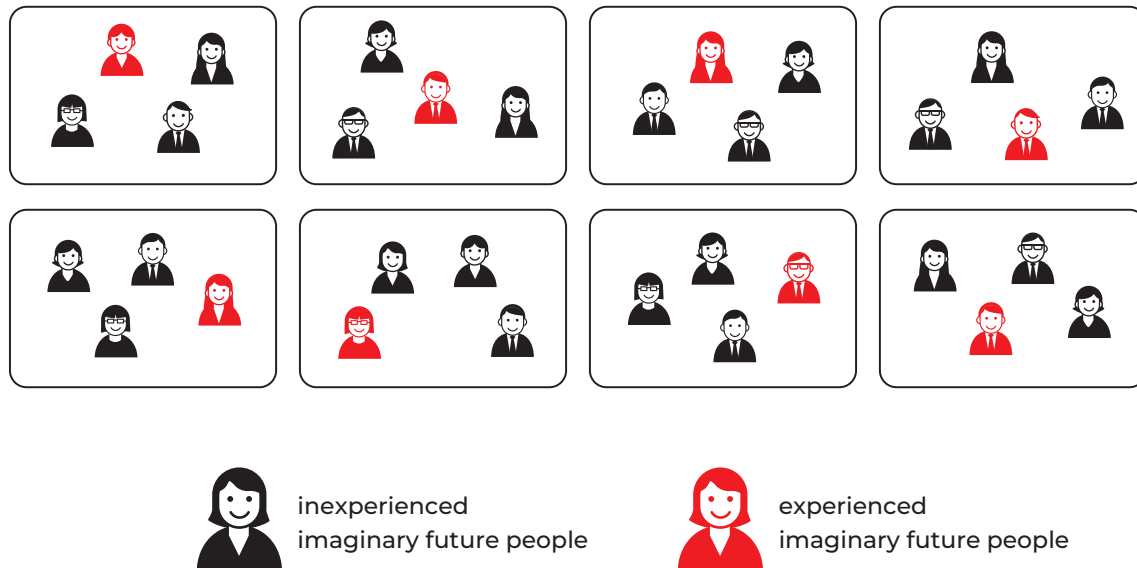


Figure 3 Group Composition Using Experienced Imaginary Future People

When you decide to conduct an FD workshop, you should organize a steering committee composed of individuals responsible for its implementation. As you are assumed to be the central chairperson of the steering committee, this section is written with that assumption in mind.

Among the four types mentioned in Section 1, if you choose the A1 (Experiential × Small-scale) or B1 (Practical × Small-scale) type, targeting four people or fewer, it may not be impossible for you to be the sole member of the steering committee responsible for executing the workshop. However, if you are also taking on the role of a facilitator of the whole venue, it might be challenging to support group discussions simultaneously. Moreover, numerous aspects need to be considered when implementing the workshop. Therefore, having at least one person to consult with and having them join the steering committee can be a significant source of support for you.

However, if you choose the A2 (Experiential × Large scale) or B2 (Practical × Large scale) type, targeting more than four people, it is advisable to organize a steering committee consisting of multiple members. This is because having facilitators to support participants' discussions in each group would be beneficial when dividing participants into multiple groups. When conducting a B2 (Practical × Large scale) workshop, where the output of

discussions is intended to be used within the organization, the importance of having such personnel is even more pronounced.

However, when FD workshop participants are numerous, it may not be realistic to assign steering committee members as facilitators to each group. For example, in the Mount Fuji FD workshop mentioned in Section 1, a steering committee of six members invited about 40 participants. With such a ratio, the steering committee could not support the discussions in each group. Therefore, this steering committee conducted a preliminary FD workshop for 8 out of the 40 participants. As a result, 8 individuals who experienced being imaginary future people were able to disperse among the groups as regular participants in the actual workshop, ensuring that each group had at least one experienced imaginary future person. While these 8 individuals are not members of the steering committee, they could be referred to as associate members.

Furthermore, while the term “facilitator” was used earlier, it is unnecessary to secure facilitators with specialized skills to conduct FD workshops. The members of the steering committee will fulfill the role of facilitators, and what is required of them in supporting the discussions during the workshop will be detailed in Section 6, “Supporting Discussions During the Workshop.”

It should be noted that, when conducting FD workshops of the types aimed at using Future Design in decision making within your organization (B1: Practical × Small-scale and B2: Practical × Large scale types), the steering committee for those workshops should be given an official position within the organization.

Sharing Principles within the Steering Committee

There are principles to be followed in the practice of Future Design. One of them is the “Principle of transparency.” As the size of the steering committee grows, there is a risk that not all information known to some members of the committee will be shared with the entire group. Consequently, members may feel left out, unable to grasp what preparations are being made for the practice of Future Design, potentially leading to discord within the committee. To foster an environment where all members can contribute to the success of the practice by exercising their

creativity, it is essential to establish beforehand within the steering committee which types of information will be shared and to what extent.

Another of the principles is the “principle of erasure”. This is a principle advocated as a guideline for futurology experts collaborating with organizations such as governments and private enterprises. If the steering committee intends to proceed with the practice of future design while receiving advice from external experts, please share the goal among the committee members to enable them to eventually practice future design autonomously even in the absence of those experts. Furthermore, if you become proficient in the practice of Future Design through this process and eventually take on a role of guiding others, strive to adhere to the principle of erasure yourself and aim to create a situation where you can practice autonomously. Through this chain, the concept of Future Design will continue to permeate the world.



3

Designing the Overall Structure of the Workshop



Implementation days and implementation period

Workshops vary in duration, ranging from short, quick sessions to longer ones spanning two days or more.

For those seeking to conduct the workshop in the shortest time possible, it is feasible to complete discussions as imaginary future people within five minutes. Even with the time required before and after the discussions, the workshop can be completed within about 30 minutes. For example, Research Institute for Humanity and Nature hosts an annual short-term education program called TERRA School (Transdisciplinarity for Early career Researchers in Asia School) aimed at young researchers across Asia who aspire to pursue interdisciplinary studies. In 2023, approximately 20 researchers gathered at the institute. During their stay, Nakagawa provided them with a 30-minute slot for a Future Design workshop. Despite the brief five-minute discussion time, the participants fully immersed themselves in the role of imaginary future people and engaged in lively discussions.

Conversely, one of the longest Future Design workshops Nakagawa knows of was conducted by the General Incorporated Association Shiawase Suisin Forum (Forum for Promoting Happiness) in Kochi Prefecture. This organization, formed primarily by members of the Tosa Economic Council (comprising members from various municipalities, universities, and companies in Kochi Prefecture), conducted a series of six workshops over approximately 6 months in 2021. Approximately 30 participants divided into seven groups, each envisioning a different future for Kochi Prefecture. They began discussions on the theme of “clothing, food, and shelter” for the people of Kochi Prefecture in 2050, delving into topics such as “interpersonal connections”; “urban and rural relationships”; “economy, industry, and resources,” while changing themes with each session. In the

final session, we discussed “mechanisms for transitioning to a new society.”

As you plan your Future Design workshop, keep in mind these variations in workshop duration and design one that is feasible and practical for you.

Next, we will introduce the three elements that make up the FD workshop—Present Design, Past Design, and Future Design—in order. However, it is worth noting that these three elements are sometimes collectively referred to as “Future Design.”

Present Design

Everyone participating in your FD workshop will likely adopt new perspectives that they have not previously considered by gaining the viewpoint of a future person. To ensure participants clearly perceive this, it would be beneficial to conduct what we call a “Present Design” discussion. In Present Design, we discuss themes that will be deliberated upon as future people in Future Design from the perspective of present-day individuals (i.e., the perspectives participants typically adopt).

However, if time constraints exist, we may opt to omit Present Design. Present Design serves to reaffirm the perspectives participants usually adopt. Therefore, if participants are already aware of how the future looks from such perspectives and what actions need to be taken on that basis, the necessity of Present Design diminishes. For example, in the case of the Mount Fuji FD workshop introduced in Section 1, almost the same participants had already gathered before its inception to conduct a workshop without the thought device of imaginary future people. Therefore, omitting Present Design in the FD workshop was a rational choice.

Past Design

Past Design is an exercise aimed at understanding how current society is influenced by the decision making of past generations through reflection on past societies. It also serves as preparatory work for conducting Future Design discussions smoothly. Studies have revealed that people's perspectives can change through reflecting on decisions made by past generations^(2,3). We have repositioned such experiences as preparatory work for Future Design^(4,5). Specifically, Past Design includes the following two tasks:

[Task 1] Depicting the current state of society based on the decisions made by past generations, in a way that past generations can also understand.

[Task 2] Sending a message to past generations based on Task 1.

We will explain later why these tasks become preparatory work for Future Design. If you are considering the future 30 years from now in Future Design, it may be useful to aim for a past about 30 years ago in Past Design.

What themes should be used for Past Design? Two approaches can be considered. The first is to treat Past Design as preparatory work for Future Design and set independent themes that are not directly related to Future Design.

The second method is to choose themes directly related to Future Design. Let us revisit the example of the Mount Fuji FD workshop. In this 2024 workshop, materials from approximately 60 years ago, in 1964, were selected for Past Design. One newspaper article reported the opening of a toll road connecting the foot of Mount Fuji to the fifth station, while another, four months later, reported the unprecedented number of climbers on Mount Fuji. Considering the current issue of over-tourism on Mount Fuji in 2024, these articles were deemed relevant, as they represented old yet somehow new information. Participants engaged in Tasks 1 and 2 after reading these articles.

Whether the FD workshop is conducted in one day or spans multiple days, if you can allocate more than two hours, it is advisable not to omit Past Design. If you are using Appendix 1 as it is, allocating 30 minutes should be sufficient to conduct Past Design.

Future Design

Future Design discussions using the thought device of imaginary future people are the core part of an FD workshop. This is composed of the following tasks. However, in case of time constraints, Task 3 is omitted.

[Task 1] Depicting, in a way understandable to past generations, how the current world has come to be.

[Task 2] Sending a message to past generations based on Task 1.

[Task 3] After the message from Task 2 reaches past generations, depicting the history leading to the realization of the current world (referred to as Future History).

Now let us organize the relationship between Task 1 and Task 2 in Past Design and Task 1 and Task 2 in Future Design as shown in **Table 1**. This will help us understand how Past Design and Future Design are similar and why the former prepares for the latter. This table assumes that Future Design is conducted in 2024. Additionally, Past Design and Future Design are assumed to target societies 30 years before and 30 years after 2024, respectively.



Table 1 Relationship between Past Design and Future Design

	Past Design	future Design
Task 1	Depicting how the world in 2024 looks to the people of 1994 as a result of their decision making.	Depicting how the world in 2054 looks to the people of 2024 as a result of their decision making.
Task 2	Sending a message to the people of 1994 (or those from 1994 to 2023)	Sending a message to the people of 2024 (or those from 2024 to 2053)

Example of overall design

At the beginning of this section, we mentioned the existence of a wide range of variations in the number of days and hours for FD workshops. Depending on the duration, the amount of time allocated to Present Design, Past Design, and Future Design will vary. Below, we provide four variations (Examples 1 to 4) as shown in the table. Regardless of the variation chosen, please note the sequence of Present Design → Past Design → Future Design. Refer to Section 3 of this chapter for the definitions of Task 1 and Task 2 in Table 2. Present Design should always precede Future Design to ensure that participants can experience the effectiveness of Future Design later by first considering the future from the perspective of present-day individuals, which is how many people

typically think. Past Design should always precede Future Design directly, because Past Design serves as a warm-up exercise for Future Design.



Table 2 Examples of Overall Workshop Design

	Example 1	Example 2	Example 3	Example 4
Number of days and hours	30 minutes × 1 session	3 hours × 1 session	3 hours × 2 sessions	3 hours × 3 sessions
Present Design	Omitted	Omitted	Implemented in the first half of the first session	Implemented in the first half of the first session
Past Design	Omitted	Implemented	Implemented in the latter half of the first session	Implemented in the latter half of the first session
Future Design	Conduct Task (1) and (2)	Conduct Task (1) and (2)	Conduct Task (1) and (2) in the second session	Conduct Task (1) in the second session, and Task (2) and (3) in the third session

4

Determining Workshop Themes and Instructions

Future Design (Task 1) Instructional Text

As outlined in Section 3, Future Design involves participants envisioning the future as imaginary future people, and this task is the central aspect of the FD workshop as a whole. For the steering committee, preparing a clear instructional text specifying what aspects of the future participants should envision is a task that requires the utmost attention. This is because slight variations in the wording of the instructions can significantly influence the direction of participants' discussions. Therefore, in this section, we will consider how to design the instructional text.

In Section 3, we introduced the case of the FD workshop held in 2021 by the General Incorporated Association Shiawase Suishin Forum, in Kochi Prefecture. If we were in the position of the steering committee at that time, we would want to list some examples of instructional texts that could be considered as guidance to participants in envisioning the future.

These three sets of instructional texts have nuanced differences. In **Example 1**, using the expression “how you are living” allows participants to envision both desirable and undesirable futures. Regardless of which future is envisioned, it will be a meaningful experience for the participants.

Alternatively, if the steering committee desires participants to envision a desirable future including the path leading to its realization, they need to guide participants to envision such a future. To achieve this, it would be beneficial to employ expressions such as “how you are leading a happy life” as seen in **Example 2**.

However, adopting the expression used in **Example 2** may lead participants to exclusively envision overly optimistic futures, risking the loss of significance in the discussions. For instance, even if a future scenario is depicted in which various problems faced by people in 2024 have been resolved due to significant technological advancements, it would be challenging for us living in the present to derive meaningful insights from it.

To address such issues, it would be beneficial to use the expression “striving to find happiness” as seen in **Example 3**. This expression communicates the nuance that “although Kochi Prefecture may have faced various difficulties between 2021 and 2050, there is still room for the people of 2050 to strive to find happiness.” This

**Example 1**

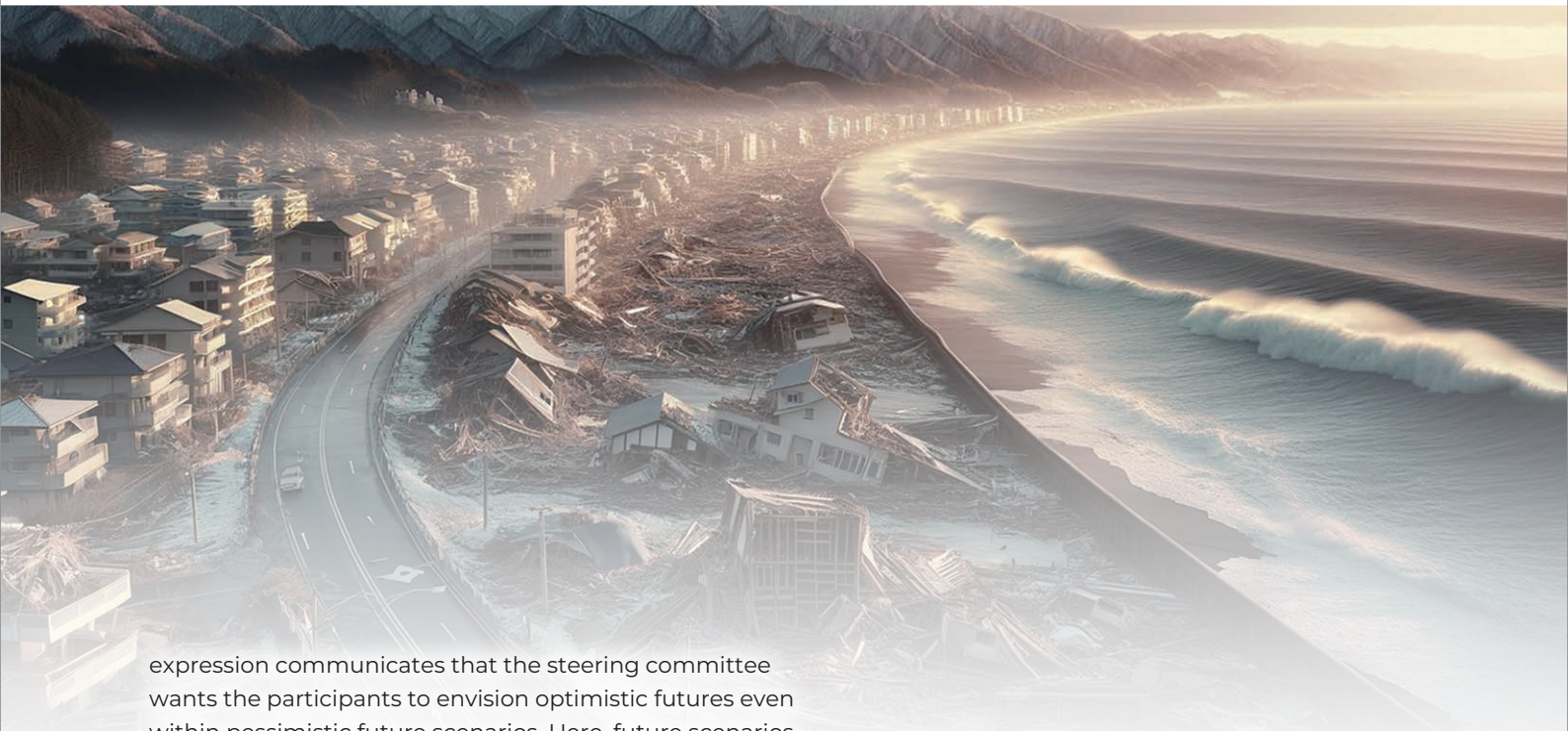
You have time-traveled to the year 2050 at your current age and will continue living there. Describe as vividly as possible how Kochi Prefecture looks in 2050 and how you are living in it.

Example 2

You have all time-traveled to the year 2050 at your current age and will continue living there. Describe as vividly as possible how Kochi Prefecture looks in 2050 and how you are leading a happy life in it.

Example 3

You have all time-traveled to the year 2050 at your current age and will continue living there. Describe as vividly as possible how Kochi Prefecture looks in 2050 and how you are striving to find happiness while living in it.



expression communicates that the steering committee wants the participants to envision optimistic futures even within pessimistic future scenarios. Here, future scenarios are defined as assumptions about the external environment in the future that are difficult for you, as participants imagining the desired future state, to control.

To reconcile pessimism and optimism at a more advanced level, [Example 3](#) can be slightly modified, and instructional text like [Example 4](#) can be adopted. The underlined portion has been newly added. With this addition, regardless of which aspects of Kochi Prefecture in 2050 participants choose to depict, they are likely to envision the state of 2050 based on discussions about the recovery process from the damage of the Nankai Trough earthquake. In Kochi Prefecture, envisioning the future with the pessimistic event of the Nankai Trough earthquake in mind is considered crucial. This is because the Earthquake Research Committee of the National Government evaluates a 70%–80% probability of an earthquake of magnitude 8–9 occurring in the Nankai Trough within the next 30 years.

In addition to this modification, it is permissible to clarify within the instructional text which aspects of Kochi Prefecture in 2050 you would like participants to depict. The result is shown in [Example 5](#). This method is highly effective when members of the steering committee have a clear idea of the outputs they want from the FD workshop. For instance, if they want participants to engage in intensive discussions about the vision of the local community in 2050, it would be beneficial to modify [Example 4](#) as [Example 5](#). The underlined part has been added. A similar instructional text was actually used in one of the six FD workshops organized by the Shiawase Suishin Forum.

Example 4

You have all time-traveled to the year 2050 at your current age and will continue living there. Fifteen years ago, in 2035, Kochi Prefecture suffered significant damage from the Nankai Trough mega-earthquake. Now, in the year 2050, 15 years later, please describe as vividly as possible how Kochi Prefecture looks and how you are striving to find happiness while living within it.

Example 5

You have time-traveled to the year 2050 at your current age and will continue living there. Fifteen years ago, in the year 2035, Kochi Prefecture was severely damaged by the Nankai Trough earthquake. Please describe in as much detail as possible what the local community in Kochi Prefecture will look like in 2050, 15 years later, and how you are striving to find happiness in your life there.

Example 5 explicitly uses the term “local community.” However, if the steering committee considers this to be too restrictive for participants, it may be appropriate to impose a slightly more relaxed constraint. Specifically, the instructional text can be modified as shown in **Example 6**. Compared to **Example 5**, the underlined portion has been added, and the double-struck portion has been removed. With this addition, participants will likely be encouraged to depict Kochi Prefecture in 2050 in contrast to the early 2020s, where “there was recognition of significant issues such as declining birth rates and aging population within Kochi Prefecture, shortage of community activity leaders, a weakening of relationships among residents.” However, this instructional text does not explicitly state which aspect of the appearance of Kochi Prefecture in 2050 should be depicted. In this sense, **Example 6** employs a more loosely binding approach to participants.

To you and all members of the steering committee, I would like to request that you create your own instructional text while referring to the variations presented in **Examples 1–6**. Additionally, feel free to develop new types of instructional text. As a reference, I would like to introduce some innovations introduced in the Mount Fuji FD workshop that are not mentioned in **Examples 1–6**. They are as follows:

“Now, 30 years later (2054), what is the situation surrounding Mount Fuji like, and how are you living, striving for happiness?”

* In your discussions, please be mindful of the following keywords: Tourism, natural environment, cultural heritage, worship of Mount Fuji, mountain trails from the foot of the mountain to the summit.

These keywords, attached at the bottom of this instruction, reflect the concerns of the steering committee. These keywords reflect the interests of the steering committee. Instead of directly referring to the interests in the main text, which would complicate matters and make it difficult for the interests of the steering committee to be communicated to the participants, this approach was adopted. I hope you will develop your own instructional text format while considering such examples.

Example 6

You have time-traveled to the year 2050 at your current age and will continue living there. If we reflect on the early 2020s, Kochi Prefecture faced challenges such as an aging population, declining birthrate, shortage of community leaders, and weakening community ties. Additionally, 15 ago, in 2035, Kochi Prefecture suffered significant damage from the Nankai Trough earthquake. Now, in the year 2050, 15 years have passed since then; please vividly depict how ~~the local community~~ Kochi Prefecture has transformed and how you are striving to find happiness within it.



Future Design (Task 2) Instructional Text

As outlined above, we have listed examples of instructional text for participants to envision the future. Now, let us consider how we can instruct the imaginary future people to send messages to present-day people, referring back to the example of the Shiawase Suishin Forum. The underlined parts represent the points of difference.

Example A is the most common type of instruction Text. Participants presented with such instructions may send messages either to the Shiawase Suishin Forum or to other organizations. The former corresponds to creating a declaration of intent regarding the actions the individuals living in 2021 will take in the future, while the latter corresponds to making recommendations to organizations other than themselves.

Example B is effective when participants prefer to create a declaration of intent rather than recommendations to others.

Example C breaks down **Example B** into more specific details. Simply considering actions they can take individually when creating declarations of intentions may mean that the picture of the future they envision for 2050 is mere wishful thinking. Therefore, declarations of intent should incorporate how they will address the multilayered external environment surrounding the Shiawase Suishin Forum (see **Figure 4**). **Example C** is derived from the “conditions/consequences matrix” (6) proposed by qualitative researchers Corbin and Strauss.



Example A

Based on the vision of 2050 that you have depicted, please send a message to the people of 2021.

Example B

Based on the vision of 2050 that you have depicted, please send a message to the members of the Shiawase Suishin Forum in 2021.

Example C

Based on the vision of 2050 that you have depicted, please send a message to the members of the Shiawase Suishin Forum in 2021. Please include the following elements in your message:

- Actions that the Shiawase Suishin Forum can take independently
- Actions that the Shiawase Suishin Forum can take in collaboration with other organizations within Kochi Prefecture
- Actions that the Shiawase Suishin Forum can take to promote collaboration between organizations within Kochi Prefecture and those outside Japan
- Actions that the Shiawase Suishin Forum can take to promote collaboration between organizations in Japan and those overseas.

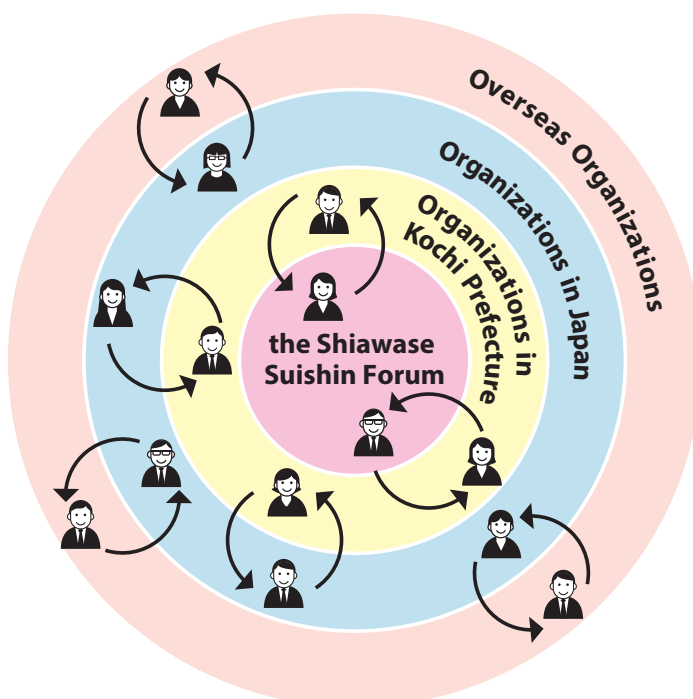


Figure 4 Multilayered External Environment Surrounding the Organization

Future Design (Task 3) Instructional Text

After completing Task 1 and Task 2, when participants are asked to depict the Future History from the present to the future, it would be beneficial to provide the following instructions. Again, if we assume a Future Design workshop conducted in 2021, here is an example:

Please depict the Future History, leading from the delivery of the messages considered in Task 2 in 2021, to the realization of the future depicted in Task 1.

Present Design Instructional Text

Regardless of the themes and instructions (Task1~3) chosen there, please select themes and instructions for Present Design that align completely with them. Otherwise, participants may find it difficult to compare what they have considered in Present Design with what they have considered in Future Design.

For instance, let us consider adopting the following instructions for Future Design:

- (1) You have traveled to the year 2050 at your current age and will continue living there. Please vividly depict how Kochi Prefecture looks in 2050 and how you are living in it.
- (2) Based on (1), send a message to people in 2021 about the direction in which they should take their first steps.

In this case, for Present Design, please adopt the following instructions. Note that apart from whether the discussion is from the perspective of contemporary individuals or future generations, there are no other differences. This will help participants clearly recognize the difference between Present Design and Future Design.

- (1) Please depict as vividly as possible what Kochi Prefecture looks like in the year 2050, approximately 30 years from now, and how people are living in it.
- (2) Based on (1), discuss the direction in which you, in 2021, would like to take your first steps.

Past Design Instructional Text

As mentioned in Section 3, Past Design can be conducted separately from Future Design or in conjunction with it. For instructions regarding Past Design conducted independently, please refer to Appendix 1, and for instructions regarding Past Design linked with Future Design, please refer to Appendix 2.

5

Designing the Workshop Timeline

Once the overall design of the workshop (Section 3) and the determination of themes and instructions (Section 4) are completed, please create a detailed timeline. Here is an example of a timeline from the Mount Fuji FD workshop (one session) introduced in Section 1. The event was held on February 9, 2024, from 16:00 to 19:00.

When designing this timeline, the key consideration was whether sufficient time was allocated for group discussions in (4-2). Typically, when participants engage in discussions as imaginary future people for the first time, it takes some time before the discussion direction becomes clear, and trial and error continues for a while. It is advisable to assume that this process will take

about 20 minutes. Therefore, we allocated 60 minutes to (4-2) to ensure a net discussion time of 40 minutes (= 60 minutes - 20 minutes).

Additionally, please note that a total of 40 minutes is allocated in (4-3) and (5). These 40 minutes are for participants to shape their own outcomes. By securing this time, the burden on the steering committee is significantly reduced. However, if the steering committee plans to record the audio all-group discussions and transcribe them to extract the results, the need for such time allocation will be minimal.

- 
- (1) 15:50–16:00: Participants arrive, seat themselves in groups, and introduce themselves.
 - (2) 16:00–16:20: Opening greetings and explanation of the purpose.
 - (3) 16:20–17:00: Past Design.
 - (3-1) 16:20–16:25: Introduction of newspaper articles to be used as discussion material and explanation of group discussion topics.
 - (3-2) 16:25–17:00: Group discussions.
 - (4) 17:00–18:25: Future Design.
 - (4-1) 17:00–17:10: Introduction to the concept of imaginary future people.
 - (4-2) 17:10–18:10: Group discussions as imaginary future people.
 - (4-3) 18:10–18:25: Summary of group discussion content and preparation for presentations.
 - (5) 18:25–18:50: Presentation of discussion contents by each group.
 - (6) 18:50–19:00: Closing remarks.

6

Supporting Discussions During the Workshop

Engaging in discussions as imaginary future people can be unexpectedly challenging for first-time participants. In this section, I would like to explain how to support such participants.

Control Tenses

One of the most crucial elements in becoming imaginary future people is consciousness of tenses. For example, in the Mount Fuji FD workshop held in 2024, participants immersed themselves in their roles as future people in 2054. In such cases, events from 2024 should be discussed in the past tense, while events from 2054 should be discussed in the present tense. To help participants maintain awareness of tenses throughout the discussion, the master of ceremonies should create an environment where participants are reminded of tenses, either by projecting the following wording on the screen or distributing it on paper:

"You are living in 2054, so please discuss events from 2024 in the past tense."

(Incorrect)

"In the near future, Yamanashi Prefecture will create a gate at Fifth Station of Mount Fuji and limit the number of climbers to 4,000 per day."

(Correct)

"At that time, Yamanashi Prefecture created a gate at Fifth Station of Mount Fuji and limited the number of climbers to 4,000 per day."

If each group can establish a facilitator from the steering committee to support the discussions that committee member can take on the role of a tense reminder. For example, if a participant unintentionally speaks in the wrong tense, saying something like, "I heard this on TV the other day...", the tense reminder can intervene by saying, "So, there was a TV program like that 30 years ago." Additionally, as mentioned in Section 2, if each group has one experienced imaginary future person, they can also take on the role of a tense reminder.



Encouraging Participation Over Note-Taking

During group discussions, someone will often insist on taking notes as the group's scribe. However, this is not ideal because individuals solely focused on note-taking fail to contribute creatively to the discussion, missing out on the valuable opportunity to experience being imaginary future people.

To create an atmosphere in which everyone contributes to the discussion, it would be beneficial for the overall facilitator (not the facilitator of each group) to show an image similar to [Figure 5](#) to all groups, indicating that the discussion as imaginary future people is akin to a community gathering. In pre-modern Japan, people had traditionally gathered around wells to exchange information about events in their surroundings and deepen their understanding of how the local community was evolving by connecting these pieces of information. No one would likely have been taking notes during these gatherings. The same approach should be adopted in FD workshops.



Figure 5 Image of a Community Gathering

Discourage the Use of Sticky Notes by Participants

This manual discourages participants from using sticky notes during discussions. We want to emphasize the progression of discussions as “one participant’s statement on an idea inspires another participant to conceive and voice their own idea,” while this process continues to unfold. The chaining of ideas entails finding connections between one idea and another, creating context in the process. Following this flow serves as a significant clue when extracting outcomes from group discussions.

If participants use sticky notes independently, it becomes challenging to understand how each idea fits into the broader context of the discussion. Additionally, if participants are merely jotting down independently generated ideas, there is little need for the workshop format.

However, this guide does not entirely negate the use of sticky notes. It acknowledges the significance of committee members facilitating

each group, jotting down participants’ contributions on sticky notes. Participants can focus on the discussion in the assurance that facilitators are capturing their ideas. Here are some points to consider:

1. Do not show the written sticky notes to participants during the discussion to avoid disrupting the flow.
2. Number the sticky notes sequentially to recreate the chronological sequence of ideas for later reference.
3. Limit the number of sticky notes to around 30–40 to facilitate post-discussion processing.

1

The charm of Ochudo Circuit
(a path that circumnavigates
around the fifth station),
rather than the summit,
is being widely rediscovered.

2

More people climbing Mount Fuji
are reflecting on the premodern
Edo period.

3

With an increase in climbers
from the foothills,
new issues regarding toilets
and parking lots are arising.



7

Summarizing Workshop Results

Requirements for Summarizing Workshop Results

In this section, we will discuss how to summarize the visions discussed by imaginary future people during the workshop.

Summarizing the results of group discussions, whether in an FD workshop or any other workshop, poses significant challenges. That is because there is no single method to summarize what occurred during the one or two hours of discussion; it heavily depends on the perspective of the summarizer. This is akin to describing a historical event, which can give rise to countless interpretations. For instance, in a workshop attended by Nakagawa who is an author of this manual about a decade ago (unrelated to FD), participants were divided into groups of about five and engaged in discussions for around an hour. Following the discussions, each group's representative had a few minutes to present the outcomes to all participants. During one group's presentation, a capable representative (let us call him A) summarized their group's content. Immediately thereafter, another participant from the same group (let us call her B) expressed admiration, saying, "Ah, I see, so that's what we were discussing!" If B had been the presenter, A might have perceived their content as being off the mark.

In an FD workshop, these challenges are amplified. Participants, adopting the unfamiliar mindset of imaginary future people, will likely explore a broader range of directions in their discussions, especially in the early stages when they are still finding their footing. Under such circumstances, some statements made early on may significantly influence subsequent discussions, while others may be forgotten. However, discerning what constitutes influential versus forgettable remarks is subjective. What may appear to have little impact on group discussions at first glance may have significantly influenced someone who continued to participate in the discussions while keeping that remark in mind.

Given these challenges, it is difficult to conclusively determine the best method for summarizing group discussion content in an FD workshop within this guide. Nonetheless, when summarizing group

discussion content, keep in mind the following two conflicting requirements:

1. Creating a summary in a way that does not burden discussion participants or members of the steering committee excessively.
2. Ensuring that various aspects of the future mentioned in the summary are comprehensible to the reader or listener in terms of how they relate to each other.

The meaning of "1" is self-evident and requires no further explanation. However, "2" needs elaboration. During discussions as imaginary future people, statements will be made regarding various aspects of the future. Even if these statements were listed in a bullet-point format without explaining their relationships, someone who was not present during the discussion would inevitably wonder, "How do these aspects relate to each other?" For example, in April 2020, amid the COVID-19 pandemic, a future design discussion was conducted by two economists, Dr. Keiichiro Kobayashi and Dr. Motohiro Sato, envisioning Japanese society in 2050, 30 years after the peak of the COVID-19 outbreak. Summarizing this discussion in bullet points like the following would not provide an understanding of what kind of future the two envisioned for 2050:

- Online education is widespread in schools.
- Telework is prevalent.
- Lifelong learning (adult education) is widespread.
- University education is going online.
- The basic income of citizens is guaranteed.

If the same items were embedded within a narrative like the one below, the vision of 2050 described by the two economists would become much clearer. The underlined sections correspond to the bullet points before. It is worth noting that this summary is a slight modification of one previously presented by Nakagawa and Saijo⁽⁷⁾.

The proliferation of ① online education in schools during the post-COVID era dissolved the concept of classrooms and liberated children from fixed relationships. This also influenced the way adults work. Instead of having a fixed relationship with a company, it has become natural ② for individuals to telework as freelancers while possessing expertise. These professionals contribute to the flexibility of society by acquiring skills flexibly in response to structural changes and meeting new needs. Additionally, ④ online university education contributes to ③ adult education, allowing individuals to choose and study the most necessary and effective content for their future work from around the world. For these professionals, the concept of “unemployment” based on a fixed employment relationship with a company no longer exists, and the government does not provide relief for the unemployed. Instead, opportunities for lifelong learning and ⑤ guaranteed basic income are provided online, from any stage of life. In such an environment, individuals can pursue meaning as flexible professionals or find fulfillment in family life by leveraging the benefits of telework.

Embedding each item that was listed in bullet points within cohesive phrases ensures that the relationships between these items are well defined. Note that these relationships are not limited to cause-and-effect relationships.



For instance, within the phrases above, the situation of ① online education in schools and ② teleworking as freelancers (by adults) is indeed causally linked. However, the logic that ③ demand for adult education increases in such a situation and is supported by ④ online university education also holds. While there is a difference between ① being about primary and secondary education and ④ being about university education, they involve similar situations, allowing readers to feel that the four underlined sections are consistent with each other. Such relationships, in which different facets of society resonate or align with each other, are expressed within this story.

With this explanation, you should now understand the meaning of the conflicting requirements of “1” and “2” mentioned earlier. Next, let us discuss how to balance these two aspects.

Method 1: Use Oral Presentations by the Groups

The quickest method is to incorporate a “presentation of discussion content by each group” time slot into the FD workshop, as demonstrated in the timeline design example in Section 5. The steering committee should ensure that these presentations are recorded reliably and transcribe them later. This allows for capturing each group’s outcomes, regardless of how well Condition 2 is fulfilled. If we assume a 3-minute presentation, the transcribed audio likely amounts to approximately two or three pages. If a more concise summary is desired, leveraging the power of generative AI like Chap-GPT to partially assist in creating a summary of the desired length would be advisable. Moreover, if committee members were actively facilitating each group by taking notes using sticky notes, leveraging these transcriptions to supplement any perceived gaps in memory would likely enhance the quality of the outcomes.

Method 2: Allocate Time for Group Summaries During the FD workshop

If Method 1 is adopted, ensuring the quality of presentations by the groups themselves is crucial. Therefore, if time constraints permit, it is advisable to allocate time during the FD workshop for group discussions aimed at summarizing their discussions. This helps reduce the risk of significant variations in the presentation content depending on who serves as the presenter. If, as outlined in Section 6, committee members were actively facilitating each group by using sticky notes to jot down discussion content, it would be beneficial to hand over these notes to participants to aid in summarizing the group discussions.



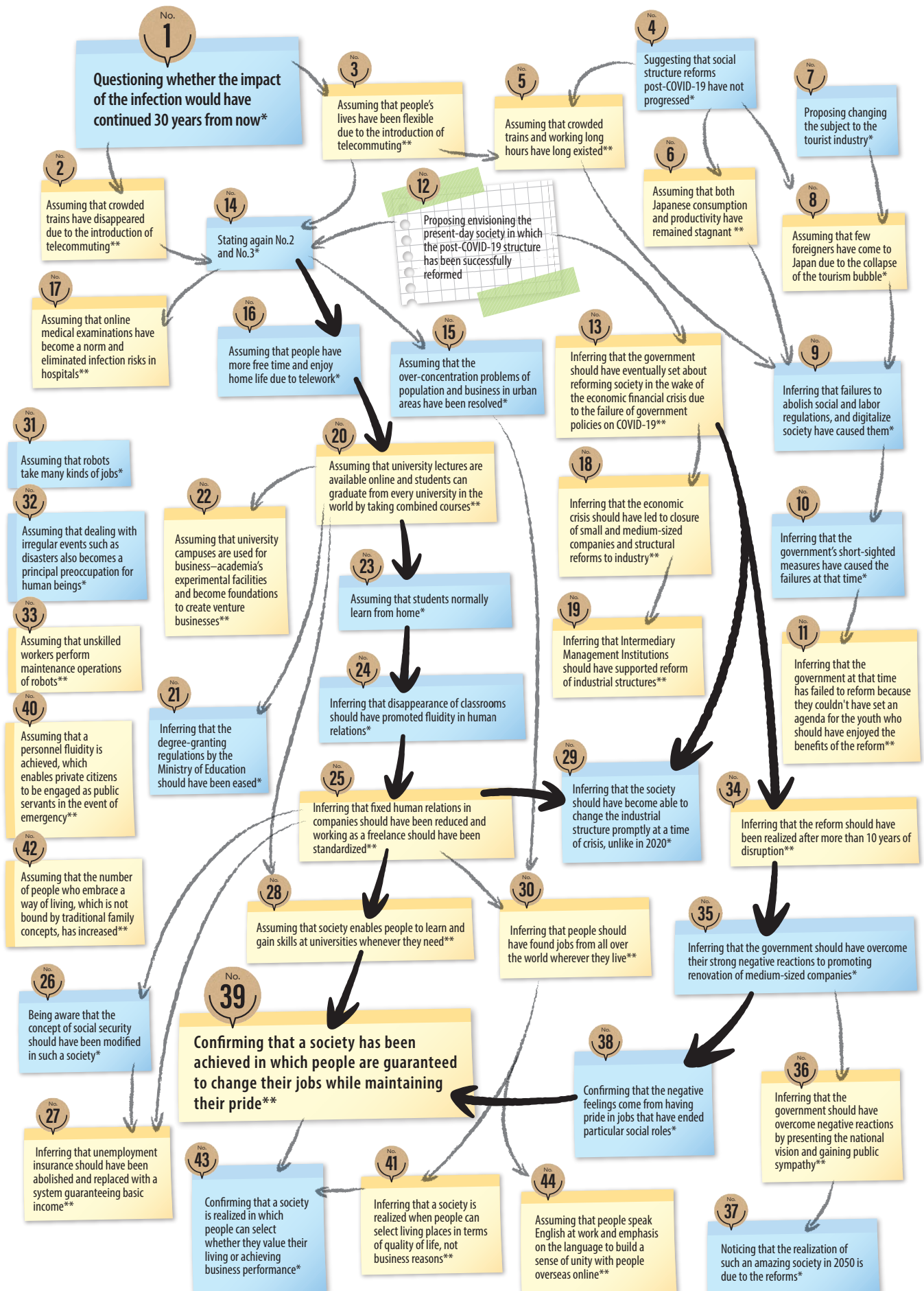


Figure 6 dialogue map [Light Blue: Statements by Dr. Keiichiro Kobayashi, Yellow: Statements by Dr. Motohiro Sato]

Method 3: Committee Compilation of Outcomes

Although somewhat labor-intensive, there may be instances in which the steering committee decides to meticulously review and compile the discussion content from each group. In such cases, transcribing the discussion audio and keeping in mind what we call a “dialogue map”⁽⁸⁾ while summarizing the transcribed results would be advisable. The summary provided Chapter 7 regarding the discussion between Dr. Keiichiro Kobayashi and Dr. Motohiro Sato was based on the creation of a dialogue map such as the one in **Figure 6**. However, creating a dialogue map requires significant effort, so it is not highly recommended. Nonetheless, understanding what a dialogue map entails can help you grasp the flow of discussions, so I will provide a brief explanation below.



In a dialogue map, arrows are drawn from one statement (A) to another statement (B) if the analyst (in this case, Nakagawa) considers that statement A was made with statement B in mind. In this way, relationships between all statements are defined. Drawing such a map reveals the flow of statements during the discussion and how multiple flows converge as understood by the participants. With such an analysis, you can then (1) write paragraphs corresponding to identified “flows,” and (2) devise wording to connect paragraphs based on relationships inferred from the dialogue map. In this figure, the main flows and recognized sections by the analyst are represented by bold arrows, and the color indicates who made each statement.

If we look at this map, it is evident that five points toward the bottom left were not placed within any flow. These were deemed to have little influence on the overall discussion and were therefore disregarded during the creation of the summary text. Trying to forcibly incorporate such statements into the summary text would make it difficult for readers to understand.

Of course, the summary text created through these procedures is still based on the analyst’s subjectivity. However, through creation of a dialogue map, the analyst’s subjectivity and how it influenced the creation of the summary text can be made explicit. Specifically, that allows for the clarification of how the analyst interpreted that different statements are associated with each other. This helps fulfill the analyst’s accountability for why certain summary texts were produced, contributing to the persuasiveness of the summaries.

Furthermore, if one wishes to avoid the labor of transcribing recordings, following the method outlined in Section 6 by having facilitators jot down participants’ statements on sticky notes and using them to create a dialogue map would be advisable.



8

Using Workshop Results

When an FD workshop is conducted, participants are commonly divided into multiple groups. In such cases, through the workshop, two or more future scenarios will be generated. Among these, some scenarios may be incompatible with each other.

For workshops of Type A1 and A2 as defined in Section 1, the purpose is to provide participants with an experience of Future Design, so it does not matter how many future scenarios are generated. However, for workshops of Type B1 and B2, the aim is to obtain ideas that will be useful for organizational decision making. In such workshops, if multiple different future scenarios are generated, how should they be used?

The most obvious method for this is to compare the multiple future visions and choose one from among them. It would be appropriate to choose using a method agreeable to everyone in the organization (e.g., voting). However, when only one future vision is selected in this way, the efforts of those who conceived the other visions go to waste. This is inefficient. Therefore, in this section, we will introduce four methods for using multiple future scenarios.

Action-Oriented Method

The first method to introduce was conceived by Mr. Masaaki Takahashi and others from Yahaba town, Iwate Prefecture, during the formulation of the Seventh Comprehensive Plan in fiscal year 2019. The process of their conception has been documented in a paper, so please refer to that⁽¹⁾. Takahashi needed to devise a method that would satisfy everyone, including the town council, in incorporating the ideas of workshop participants, who were not necessarily representative of all town residents, into the town's top-level plan, the comprehensive plan. Thus, Takahashi and his team arrived at the following method.

In their case, the town residents, divided into six groups, envisioned future scenarios and deliberated on the actions the town should take to realize those visions. Subsequently, the participants collectively compiled and prioritized a list of 110 actions proposed to the current Yahaba town to realize their envisioned future. To determine the priority of the 110 actions, they conducted a voting process. Specifically, each group was allocated 20 votes, and each group selected actions to vote on based on whether they contribute to the realization of their envisioned future.

In this way, Takahashi and his team developed a method that prioritized for voting the actions the current Yahaba town should take, rather than making the future scenarios that fully reflect the participants' values the subject of the vote. This approach allowed for an easier acceptance by the town's residents who did not participate in the workshop, as it provided a clear meaning: the actions ranked higher were considered to have a higher potential to contribute to realizing more desirable future visions.





Special Envoy Method

The second method to introduce is also developed by Yahaba town, led by Mr. Takahashi. This method was developed in fiscal year 2022. It takes inspiration from the concept of special envoys, referring to reporters dispatched by media organizations such as newspapers and television stations to report from foreign countries.

Specifically, in the first stage, multiple groups independently create future visions. Then, in the second stage, participants from different groups form new integrated groups to create a unified future vision. The members assigned to these new groups act as “special envoys” who had been dispatched to different future scenarios and now come together to create an integrated future vision. These special envoys contribute the strengths of the original future visions they belonged to and skillfully combine them to create one integrated future vision.

Some may be concerned whether the special envoys with separate future visions can truly create one integrated future vision in the second stage. However, there is no need to worry too much about this aspect. That is because the difficulty level in the second stage is not significantly higher than that in the first stage. In fact, given that in the first stage, the vague future visions held by each member were already reconciled to create one future vision, integration was already being achieved in the first stage.

Stock Method

The third method is to stockpile multiple future visions instead of immediately using them within the organization, making them easily accessible for everyone to reference and employing them with a long-term perspective. In Chapter 7 of this book, it was recommended to express the discussion results of each group in FD workshops as stories. By summarizing such stories as concepts and stocking them, many people within the organization can share these stories. Even if support for a certain concept is not widespread at the moment, it is entirely plausible that the importance of that future vision may increase due to future changes in social, economic, technological, and other environmental factors. Preparing diverse concepts in advance for such situations can become a valuable asset for the organization.

Here is one specific example. In section 7, we summarized the future scenarios envisioned by Dr. Keiichiro Kobayashi from Keio University and Dr. Motohiro Sato from Hitotsubashi University in story format. This story may be summarized into a concept as follows⁽⁷⁾:

“A flexible society supported by professionals where the opportunity to start over anytime with assurance is guaranteed.”

In advocating for the creation of such summary concepts, we referred to Chapter 5 of the book authored by Corbin and Strauss⁽⁶⁾.

Let us introduce another example. In the FD workshop of the Shiawasde Suishin Forum in Kochi Prefecture, which has been mentioned several times in this book, seven groups drew up seven different future visions. Subsequently, the steering committee extracted concepts from each future scenario, including

“The coexistence of population decline and maintaining the land with dual-point residence.”

In 2021, in Kochi Prefecture, one mode of movement involved people working alone in urban areas and returning only on weekends to non-urban areas where their families lived. This concept illustrates a future vision in which this is expanded, and people have residences in both urban and non-urban areas without the concept of a “primary residence.” People with such lifestyles balance their weekday work with weekend leisure, experiencing spiritual richness. Additionally, their presence contributes to maintaining the population in depopulated areas. Furthermore, two conditions were identified as necessary for the spread of this concept. The first is that the infrastructure connecting urban and non-urban areas must be maintained at a minimum level. The second is that vacant houses in non-urban areas should be more accessible to people unrelated to the land.

By summarizing future scenarios in such a compact form and stocking them, it is increasingly likely that people who were not present at the scene where the future scenarios were created will want to use those concepts. In fact, Mr. Toshio Tamura, a resident of Yusuhara town, Kochi Prefecture, and representative of the Senmaida Furusato Association (Terraced paddies association), saw this concept as a catalyst. He subsequently launched a citizen-led FD workshop steering committee in 2024 to further develop the concept. (As an aside, this initiative is unique in that residents lead a series of workshops, with Mayor Hisato Yoshida participating as an observer. It will be interesting to see how such grassroots activities by citizens will influence local governance in the future.)

Multiple-Combination Method

The fourth method is the multiple-combination approach, in which multiple future visions are literally combined. While the first method involves integrating multiple future scenarios, leading to changes in each vision, the multiple-combination method entails using multiple visions simultaneously without altering them. Since the authors of this book, Nakagawa have not yet attempted or verified the feasibility of this approach, this method is still in the idea stage.

As mentioned above, this section has introduced four methods for using multiple future visions. However, likely other methods beyond those presented here can be mentioned. Please develop your own approach tailored to your organization and its context.



9

Incorporating Expert Insights

In some cases, the steering committee may determine that it is necessary to incorporate the expertise of specialists when participants in the FD workshop become imaginary future people so as to envision a future. For example, in discussions conducted by the General Incorporated Association Shiawase Suishin Forum as mentioned in Section 3, the following specialized insights may be required:

- Anticipated tsunami inundation damage in the event of a Nankai Trough earthquake (as the damage is anticipated from a Nankai Trough earthquake in Kochi Prefecture).
- Urban planning of each municipality in Kochi Prefecture (as changes in urban planning may be necessary to realize the relocation of urban functions to higher ground in anticipation of tsunamis).
- Outlook for biomass power generation and forestry in Kochi Prefecture (Kochi Prefecture has the highest percentage of forested land in the country at 84%, which could shape a vision that leverages this as a strength of Kochi Prefecture).
- Current situations and outlooks of neighborhood associations and municipalities in Kochi Prefecture (as some participants may believe that connections between individuals are significant determinants of people's happiness).

In cases where it is deemed desirable to incorporate specialized insights into the discussion, how should one proceed?

Have experts provide lectures

One way to incorporate specialized insights is to ask experts to give lectures. However, simply receiving a lecture shortly before or on the day of the future design discussion may not immediately integrate the knowledge gained into the participants' own understanding, making its application in the discussion unlikely. Therefore, in the workshops organized by the General Incorporated Association "Shiawase suishin Forum," lectures were scheduled not on the day of the discussion but approximately one month prior. For example, the last few tens of minutes of the second (March 20, 2021) of six workshops were used to



provide explanations by urban development experts about the current state of neighborhood associations and connections between individuals in Kochi City, the capital of the prefecture. By adopting this method, participants have the opportunity to supplement their knowledge and make it their own between the lecture and the discussion.

Experts also participate in the discussion as imaginary future people

Another effective method is to have experts participate in the discussion alongside other participants, without segregating them.

Even individuals who are not typically considered experts have their own unique perspectives and knowledge. For instance, during an FD workshop held by Uji City Hall in Kyoto Prefecture in 2020 to envision the future of the community, one participant named Ms. M was a mother with a daughter in elementary school. Her daughter struggled to adapt to school, leading Ms. M to question Japan's educational system, which uniformly admits children to school at the age of six and provides standardized education. With this

concern in mind, Ms. M contributed to envisioning the future of the Uji City community during the FD workshop. Additionally, a woman who participated in a citizen FD workshop in Yahaba Town, Iwate Prefecture, expressed feelings of loneliness because local young people were leaving the town after attending university and not returning for work, prompting her to contribute to envisioning the future of Yahaba Town based on this awareness.

In this way, individuals who are not typically considered experts also possess unique perspectives and knowledge, similar to academic experts. Therefore, having both experts and non-experts sit at the same table, becoming imaginary future people together, and collaborating to envision the future while learning from each other's perspectives, is entirely natural.

Dr. Masako Ichihara from the Institute for Research Institute for Humanity and Nature is actively putting this idea into practice⁽¹⁰⁾. She has been conducting FD workshops continuously since fiscal year 2024, inviting 1) employees of Kyoto Prefecture and Kyoto City; 2) farmers in Kyoto Prefecture; and 3) experts in meteorology, agriculture and other fields, to envision how people in Kyoto Prefecture will adapt to climate change in the future. In these workshops, participants from all three categories contribute to the discussion as imaginary future people, transcending their respective positions to learn from each other's perspectives.

If the steering committee chooses to adopt such a method, it is crucial to carefully select which academic field experts to invite. Deciding which specialized perspectives participants should bring to the discussion is one of the important decisions of the steering committee.





Chapter

4

Sample of Materials for Conducting FD workshops

Once your answers for each of the points mentioned in Chapter 2 are gathered, it is time to proceed with creating materials for conducting the FD workshop. In many cases, these materials are created using Microsoft PowerPoint and projected onto screens in the venue during the workshop. We will introduce a sample of such materials below and explain how to conduct an FD workshop using this sample.

1

Positioning of Sample Materials for Publication



In **Table 2** of Section 3 of Chapter 2, Examples 1 to 4 were introduced for the overall design of FD workshops. In this chapter, we assume the scenario of conducting a simplified version of an FD session before implementing those patterns and introduce sample materials for it. This sample has been created to be completed in as little as 30 minutes. Please obtain the original data (Microsoft PowerPoint file) from the following link: [link]. Please note that while you are encouraged to modify some areas in this sample, other areas have been set to prevent modification due to copyright reasons. Embedded editable text boxes are provided only in areas intended for your modification.

<https://doi.org/10.20568/0002000037>

In April 2023, the Ministry of Finance's Future Design Team released their own sample titled "Let's Think About What We Can Do Now for a Better Future" on the internet. This is a highly understandable educational material suitable for explaining the content of FD to those who encounter it for the first time, intended for individuals wishing to spread the concept of FD. Furthermore, this material is designed to be highly

versatile, as it can be used by people in any group without the need for tuning by the instructor (i.e., there is no need for the instructor to adjust the material based on the context of the group).

With such excellent educational materials available, when you want to organize an FD workshop involving people from the same organization, it is advisable to start by using the Ministry of Finance's materials. Once that is done, you can move on to considering setting up a tailor-made theme suitable for the context of your organization and conducting an FD workshop. It is at this point that the samples introduced in this chapter would be most useful.

The main difference between the Ministry of Finance's materials and the samples introduced in this chapter is that **the latter are created on the assumption that they will be adjusted by you.** Through this adjustment process, I hope you will enhance your experience in conducting FD workshops like those presented in **Table 2**, Examples 1 to 4.

2 Adjusting the Sample

Table 3 is the table of contents for the sample. The sections where you can make changes yourself are “04 Past Design” and “05 FD Discussion.”

01	Opening Greetings
02	What is FD?
03	Formation of Groups
04	Past Design Discussion
05	FD Discussion
06	Compilation of Discussion Results
07	Presentations

Table 3 Table of Contents for the Sample

04 Past Design Discussion

This Past Design focuses on the “rental record problem” that was a major issue in Japan in the 1980s.

Indeed, regardless of the theme set for 05 FD Discussion it is possible to use the “rental record problem” as is in Past Design. If you want to lighten the workload of the steering committee, it would be advisable to do so.

However, by setting the theme of Past Design Discussion in conjunction with 05 Future Design, the discussions in 04 will be directly linked to the discussions in 05, leading to a deeper discussion in the latter.

If you are adjusting 04 Past Design on your own, please replace the pages corresponding to the “rental record problem” in this sample (pages 13–14). You can replace all of them, or you can use the format of this sample while replacing only the images and text boxes.

05 FD Discussion

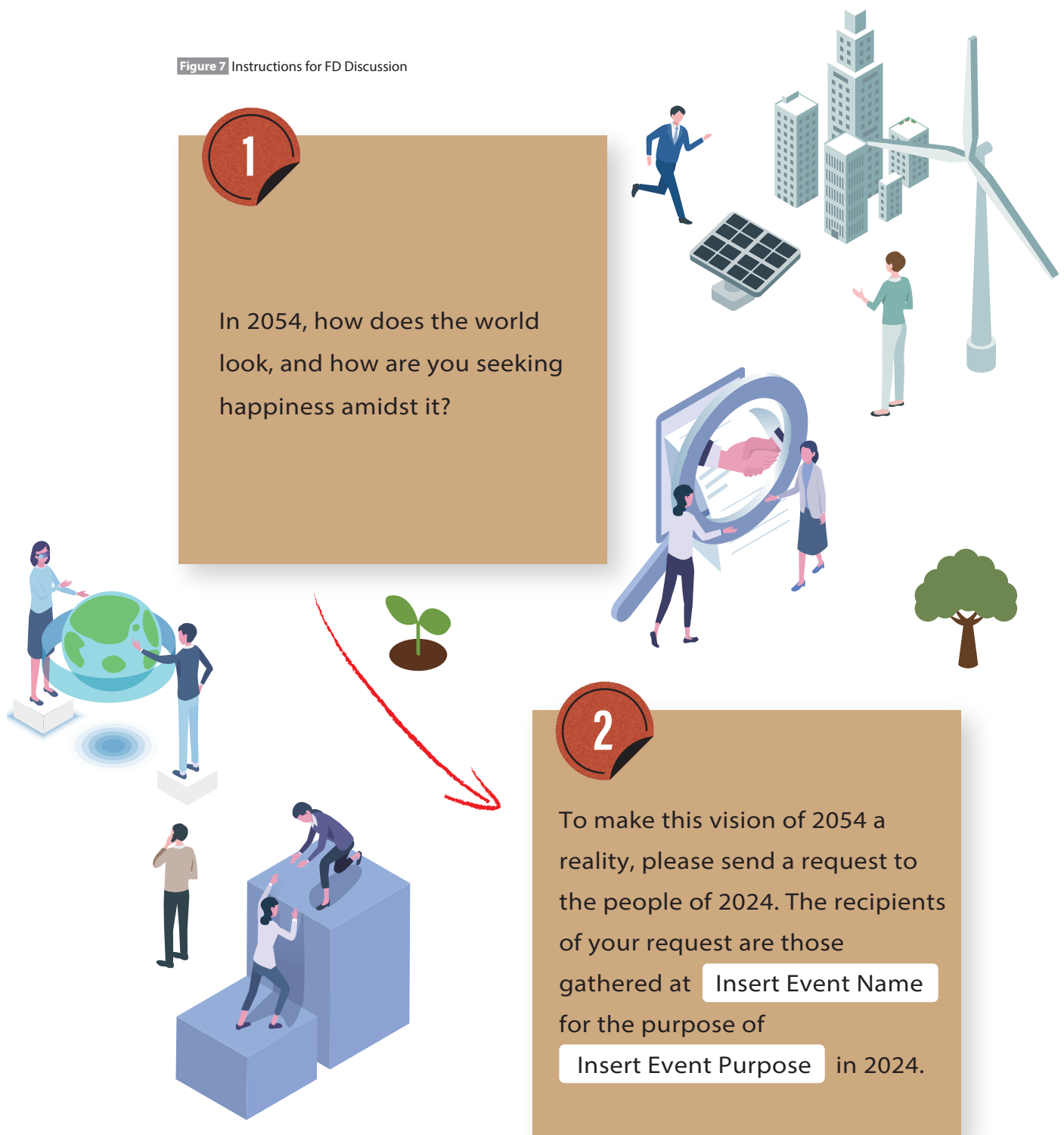
In FD Discussion, be sure to rewrite the instructions provided in the sample with your own wording.

Figure 7 shows a slide with two sets of instructions for FD Discussion.

In the second point of the instructions (2 in Figure 7), there are two blank spaces, so please fill in the blanks according to your own context. If this 30-minute Future Design is implemented within the short-term educational program TERRA School (Transdisciplinarity for Earlycareer Researchers in Asia School) mentioned in Chapter2, Section3, you would fill in the blanks as follows:

To make this vision of 2054 a reality,
please send a request to the people of
2024. The recipients of your request are
those gathered at **TERRA School**
for the purpose of **discuss the future of**
interdisciplinary research in 2024.

Figure 7 Instructions for FD Discussion



Regarding the first set of instructions (marked as ① in Figure 7), the sample employs a highly versatile format that allows the state of the world to be depicted from various perspectives. However, at the endpoint of the discussion indicated by ②, the addressees for the request are constrained, indirectly influencing the discussion outlined in ①. In other words, an implicit request is made to set

the perspective of the discussion in ② in such a way that meaningful requests can be derived in ②, despite the freedom granted to depict the world in ①. Therefore, it may sometimes be advisable to explicitly specify within the text of ① what perspective the discussion should be approached from.

3

Practical Workshop Using the Sample

This sample is designed to complete a workshop in as little as 30 minutes. However, it is also possible to conduct longer workshops using the same sample.

The sample consists of seven elements from 01 to 07. Regarding the allocation of time for each element, options like those shown in Table 4 could be considered. The most simplified method 1 (30 minutes) involves skipping the “Past Design Discussion” (04) and “Compilation of Discussion Results” (07). Subsequently, simplified method 2 (50 minutes) only skips the “Past Design Discussion” (04). The most thorough approach is method 3 (70 minutes).

Here are some additional detailed points to note.

03 Group Formation

Here, participants will be divided into groups of two. In cases of odd-numbered participants, one group of three will be formed. As this workshop using the sample is intended to be relatively short, the number of participants per group is kept low to ensure that each individual has ample opportunity to contribute, given the limited time.

05 FD Discussion

Before the start of this discussion, it is advisable to create an atmosphere that makes participants aware of the fact that they have time-traveled. In Yahaba town, Iwate Prefecture, participants are made aware of the time slip by having virtual future individuals wear traditional Japanese garments. Dr.



Tsuyoshi Okamoto of Kyushu University has students become imaginary future individuals in class, but instead of traditional garments, they wear bibs. Ms. Keiko Fumita of Kijo town, Miyazaki Prefecture, has participants close their eyes for about 10 seconds during the time slip. For those of you reading this document, we encourage you to devise effective staging that rivals the effectiveness of these three examples.

Table 4 Time Allocation Methods

	Method 1	Method 2	Method 3
01 Opening Greetings	3 minutes	3 minutes	3 minutes
02 What is FD	5 minutes	5 minutes	5 minutes
03 Group Formation	2 minutes	2 minutes	2 minutes
04 Past Design Discussion	Omitted	Omitted	15 minutes*
05 FD Discussion	15 minutes*	15 minutes*	15 minutes*
06 Discussion Summary	Omitted	15 minutes	15 minutes
07 Presentation	5 minutes	10 minutes	15 minutes
Total	30 minutes	50 minutes	70 minutes

* Out of which 5 minutes are for explaining the discussion topics, and the remaining time is the actual discussion time.

06 Compilation of Discussion Results

After the discussion, distribute sticky notes and markers. Please refrain from distributing them beforehand to prevent participants from using them during the discussion. Then, while presenting this page on the sample file to the participants, the overall moderator should encourage them to visualize the ideas that emerged during the discussion. Write ideas about the vision for 2054 on yellow sticky notes and messages for 2024 on blue ones. Additionally, encourage each group to categorize ideas written on yellow sticky notes or express the relationships between them using lines to clarify the overall picture of the ideas.



07 Presentation

Finally, allocate time for presentations. If time permits, it is advisable to have presentations from all groups. If time is limited, select several groups to present by raising hands. Note that the final page (page 23) of the sample PowerPoint file contains the following wording.

As a future person, you have demonstrated creativity and conceived a message directed toward your present-day self.

Upon receiving the message conceived by none other than yourself, as a present-day individual, you will find it difficult not to reconsider your thoughts and actions for the sake of the future person.

In this way, the futurability you possess naturally becomes manifest.

Participants will be able to grasp the concept of Future Design by encountering this statement after experiencing the discussion themselves.

In this sample, emphasis is placed on participants' natural experience of such a realization, hence the minimal explanation of "02 What is FD?" preceding the discussion.

Furthermore, when conducting the workshop using Method 1 or Method 2, please note that you will need to adapt the following three points in this sample slides:

- Table of Contents within Page 2
- Sequential numbers used throughout Page 3 to 22
(01 to 07)
- Page numbers beyond the omitted slides

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