



FUTURES

NEWSLETTER NO.3
JUNE 2022

THE COURSE OF THE FUTURES

IS ABOUT TO START!



**LATEST UPDATES
ON THE
ACTIVITIES**



Photo: Guilherme Stecanella, Unsplash

This is the 3rd newsletter of the FUTURES project, in which we will present the latest activities related to its implementation. Enjoy reading!

*Bialystok University of Technology
project coordinator*

EXPERIENCING PAST AND FUTURE

by Loes Damhof

With the current situation in Europe weighing heavily on our hearts and minds, we are once again reminded that the future is emergent, uncertain and the world is complex. By becoming more futures literate we can make more sense of the world around us, but sometimes even that fails and we can only see the cracks for what they are: earthshattering phenomena where change might be hidden.

In our futures literacy labs we challenge participants to rethink their own assumptions about the future. But sometimes these assumptions are deeply rooted in century old cultural practices, anxieties, strong held convictions, pain from our ancestors, or deeply spiritual beliefs, and more is asked from us than mere reflection and dialogue. We need experiences that touch us deeper than the mind can reach. Experiential futures that challenge our assumptions or teach us something beyond words.



We can design these experiences, albeit carefully, as an invitation to deepen the dialogue about futures and ourselves. Sometimes these experiences happen to us, without warning, and then we are challenged to see the lesson in that as well.

Last week FUTURES partner Hanze was invited for a meeting of Futures Oriented Museums Synergies, a network of museums that use the future to challenge our behaviour and thinking today. The meeting took place in Futurium in Berlin: an open, inviting place to question all things related futures, to play and design, think and look. Through thought provoking questions visitors were asked to think about futures, to reflect and dream.

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And although effective, I couldn't help thinking about my earlier visit to the Jewish Museum, an exhibition free of charge, where the architecture itself makes one think, question but above all experience. The museum is all about all Jewish heritage and culture and as enlightening as it is beautiful. The parts on the Holocaust were bare, minimal to say the least. Without showing too many pictures or revealing names of the criminal regime, it made the strongest impact simply by the experiencing of being there: walking through the ascending and descending halls, stepping into a dark, cold tower. Walking on metal faces.

It reminds us of what is important, and yet so fragile.

Can these experiences teach us something? Or do they simply touch us in deeper places and are meant to settle down in our subconscious? Do they need to be talked about?

As experiences referring to the past can be transformative, so can experiences of the future.

They are often exhibited in museums and public spaces, but they also deserve a place in our Futures Literacy training programs, even if we don't know how to make sense of them yet. In the coming weeks the FUTURES project will experiment with experiential futures online and offline in our module Anticipation for Emergence. We will invite students to experience futures, to sense and to (re)discover what matters to them most.

While the world is raging with war, climate change and a pandemic, we must be brave to not succumb to our deepest fear and anxiety, but instead even go deeper into the cracks, to experience what is lying underneath. It might be hope and a chance for change.

THE COURSE OF THE FUTURES PROJECT IS ABOUT TO START

The partners of the FUTURES project have finalized the preparation of the training materials and contents that will compose the final course, named: *Replay your futures - Labs for exploring undiscovered pathways*. The course is divided into 3 modules that can be followed one after the other or individually:



Hanze University and the Foundation for Research and Technology (FORTH) developed the Module **"Anticipation for emergence - overcoming the poverty of our imagination"**



Bialystok University and Łukasiewicz Research Network - Institute For Sustainable Technologies worked on the Module **"Anticipation for future"**



Middlesex University developed the Module **"Performance for futures"**

The training materials are very interactive and the partners worked very hard to make them interesting and engaging: their final goal was the development of non-formal education/training resources o future literacy and foresight.



The partners decided to organize the pilot of the modules internally. The partners that will deliver the modules will be **Hanze University, Bialystok University, Łukasiewicz Research Network - Institute for Sustainable Technologies and Middlesex University.**

The authors of each module delivered at least one session of 2/3 hours of the module they have prepared within their institution, addressing about 20 of their students / early-stage researchers (to reach the final target of 80 people in total).

All the partners were invited to participate in the pilot of the session, to learn from the other author/s of the training how to deliver it and be able to give feedback to the teaching for improving it.

All the internal pilots took place online and were organized by the end of March 2022.

Once the internal testing phase was conducted, the partners replicated the sessions of the modules prepared by the other authors, within their institutions, addressing their students / early-stage researchers. In this way, at the end of the pilot course, the 4 organizations delivered at least one session of each module of the course *"Replay your futures - Labs for exploring undiscovered pathways"* with the target learners.

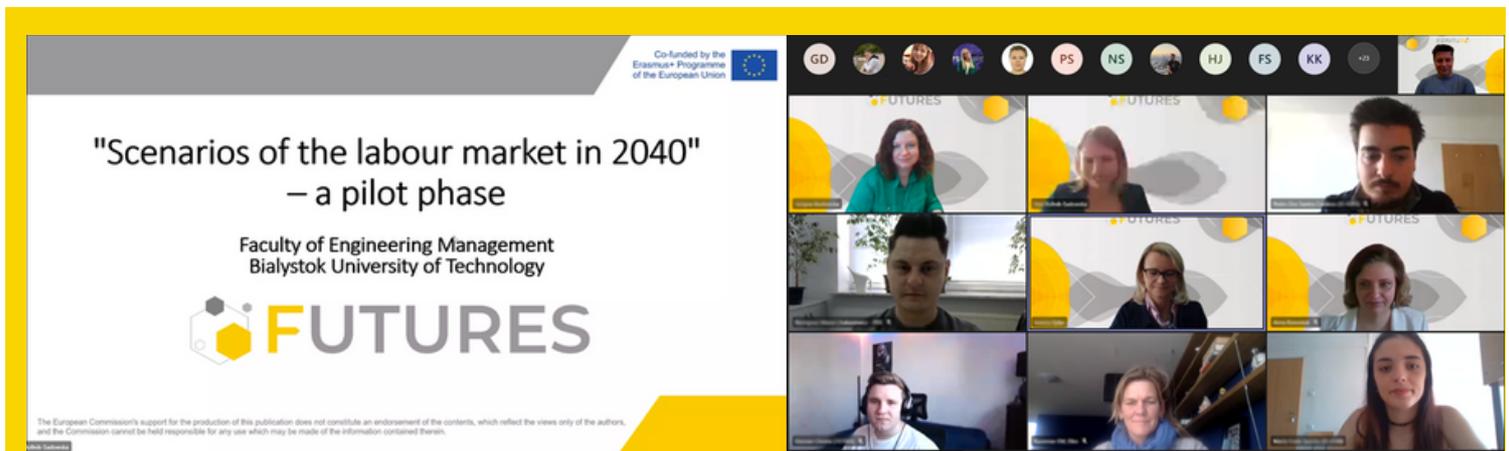
The organizations were free to decide whether to involve in the replication of the sessions the same sample of students or different students for each of them, or a mix of them.

The replication of the sessions took place by the end of April 2022 and the organizations could decide whether to deliver the session in person or online, taking into consideration the national situation.

The partners were eager to start the internal pilot, to finally work with students and early-stage researchers and implement all the work done in the past months dedicated to the preparation of the training materials.

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WORKSHOP OF THE FUTURES AT BUT: „SCENARIOS OF THE LABOUR MARKET IN 2040“



On March 25th, 2022, BUT project team conducted workshops entitled Scenarios of the labour market in 2040. In this event, held online via MS TEAMS platform, 32 participants took part. They represented two groups of project's beneficiaries: university students and PhD students (young researchers). The workshops were observed by the representatives of the project partners' organizations so that they could replicate the workshops in their countries.

The aim of the workshops was to familiarize participants with scenario method as one of the futures research tools. The main theme of the workshops was the labor market and its future.

Students worked in small groups with facilitators (BUT project team members) discussing one of four alternative scenarios describing future labour market. In particular, they focused on hopes related to the scenarios, fears they may generate, and competences or skills needed if the scenarios were to occur. By voting, the meeting participants selected the most desirable scenario (Youth in the virtual world).

During the workshops, BUT team had the opportunity to test selected learning materials developed within Training Manual and Foresight Toolbox which include foresight methods and tools of professional development (IO2).

APPLYING FUTURES AT MIDDLESEX UNIVERSITY



The work of the FUTURES research project is ongoing. One of the most exciting things about it, is that it is always evolving, in a constant process of emergence, finding applications in different environments. At Middlesex University, we are adapting our work from the second intellectual output, and are running futures workshops in two new contexts.

The first one is for an event open to doctoral students across the university, a first get-together of our research students since the start of the pandemic. Some of them have never been on campus, or met their supervisors in person! So there is a lot to catch up on, to foster a sense of community, but also, and crucially, to collectively think about our futures.

The initiative came from a colleague in the Business School, who wanted an experiential event to 'break the ice' between the doctoral candidates in the school. We proposed to run a version of act 3 of our 'Performance for Futures' module, *Devising and Dramaturgy*. In this context, we called it *Oblique Strategies for (non)-Academic Futures*. In it, participants will have the opportunity to write and embody versions of their future, which will then be disrupted using our own version of Brian Eno's and Peter Schmidt's **Oblique Strategies**, developing skills in anticipation for the future (scenario generation) and anticipation for emergence (embracing complexity).

The idea was so well received that the University's Deputy Vice Chancellor for Research, Knowledge Exchange and Engagement requested that the event be open to research students in all faculties and schools. We plan to make this a feature of the academic calendar for research students and together with them explore the possibilities that futures work can afford, perhaps with a different workshop every year, so that in the course of a standard 3-year full-time doctorate, students can experience all three acts of the 'Performance for Futures' module.

The second context in which we will run futures workshops is that of what we in Theatre Arts at Middlesex call 'the bridge' between the second and third, final year, of students' BA degrees. Now that the academic year is coming to an end, students attend a number of sessions at the university, in which they start thinking about and preparing for the next year. As part of this process, we have decided to replicate the workshops from the 'Anticipation for the Future' and 'Anticipation for Emergence' modules, run online by our colleagues at BUT and Hanze, respectively.

Still, our run of the workshops will not be exactly the same as the original. There are two important differences: the first is that we will be running the sessions in person and in one space, so we will have to find the in-person counterparts to breakout rooms and online resources used, such as Miro boards and Polls. These were effectively used by both Hanze and BUT, when the sessions were originally delivered.

The second difference – and this is one of the reasons we are a part of this project – is that we will add a performative element to the activities. Quite how we will do this remains to be seen... But the fact that we will be working on this with Theatre Performance and Production, and Theatre Design and Production students will be advantageous to us, as our students are generally open to experimentation and will no doubt be willing (and critical) participants in the sessions. We hope to enable them to think about their futures

in their third years and beyond, when they enter the labour market, and to use those images of the future to inform their present thinking.

This is a challenge we very much enjoy and relish; it is really nice to see the research making its way to various activities in the University, involving postgraduate students from a number of disciplines and including our theatre undergraduate students, acquainting them with the cutting-edge work of the FUTURES project.

FUTURES PROJECT AT ŁUKASIEWICZ INNOVATORIUM

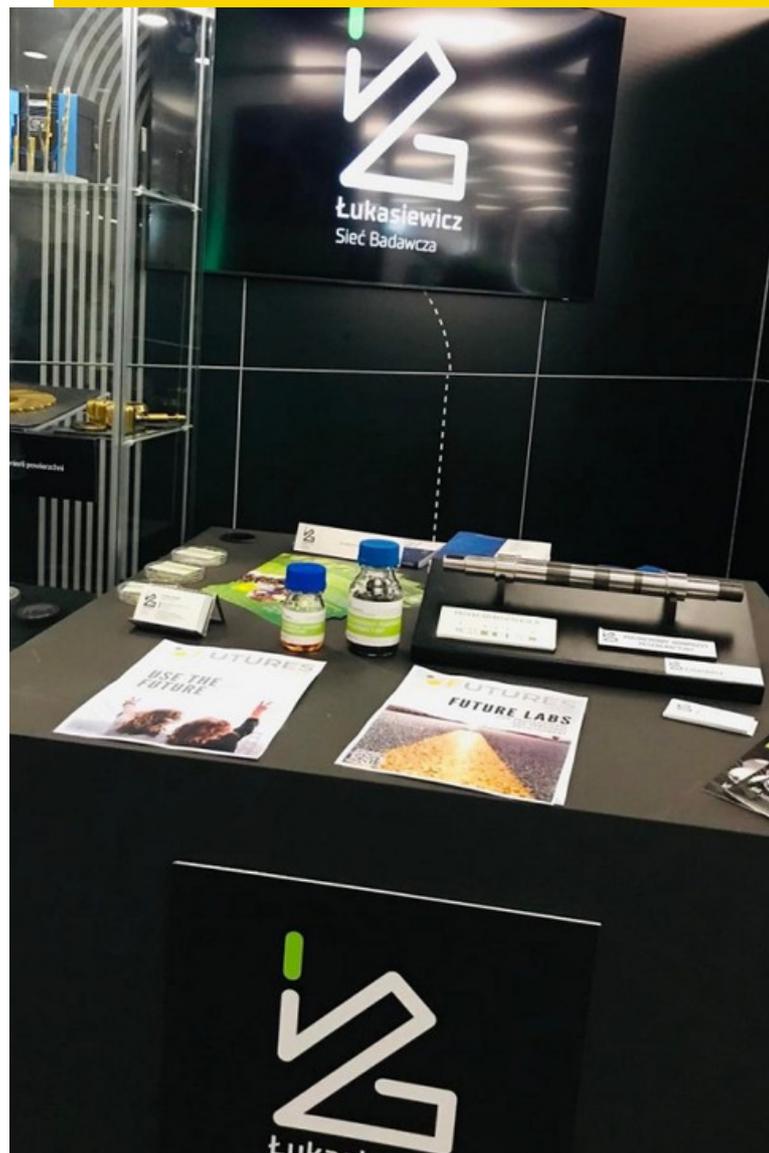


The Łukasiewicz Innovatorium took place on the 9th of June in Poznan, Poland. The event was attended by nearly 1,200 people, including representatives of leading Polish companies and startups, scientists and employees of the Łukasiewicz Research Network, public institutions, and the media. During 33 panels and matchmaking sessions, participants had a chance to talk about, inter alia, creating project teams and consortia which will aim at the preparation of applications for the Horizon Europe program and national funds.

The FUTURES team was present at Innovatorium as the project is in line with the goals and strategy of the Łukasiewicz Research Network. It is worth mentioning that in November 2021, the Center for Foresight and Internationalization (CFI) was established in Łukasiewicz, headed by Rafael Popper, an expert with over 20 years of international experience in the field of foresight and supporting the development of innovation.

During the workshops and matchmaking sessions, many topics directly related to the development of Early Stage Researchers and the future of Europe were discussed, including implementation doctorates, development of competences in the field of R&D, cooperation between science and business, the future of Europe in the context of a green and competitive industry, and the New European Bauhaus. Each time, the importance of employee development and future-oriented thinking was emphasized.

At the Łukasiewicz-ITEE stand, our team talked about the main goals of the project, and its impact on personal and professional development, which will significantly contribute to the development of various fields of science and economy, and presented dissemination materials. The Innovatorium participants were interested in the FUTURES project as many of them had never had a chance to learn more about foresight and Futures Literacy. They stated that the final result will be very interesting and certainly useful for people who care about their future, especially in the R&D sector. We are very pleased that the project, which is still under development, was received so positively and that the participants of the event declared the use of our materials. In this way, FUTURES contributes to the development of European science and economy!



Are you interested in:

- interpreting futures?
- imagining futures?
- professional development?
- personal development?

If you answered **YES** at least once, the results of the project could be appealing to you!



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PROJECT INFORMATION

Name: Future laboratories for professional and personal development

Number: 2020-1-PL01-KA2023-082243

Duration: 36 months

Funded: Erasmus + Programme of the European Union

Future laboratories for professional and personal development – FUTURES (2020-2023) is a European project which emphasizes the importance of high-quality adaptation skills as the means to support individuals in acquiring and developing key competences. A major part of these transversal competences and “soft skills” is the development of integrated and innovative ways of supporting personal development, resilience, adaptation, and critical thinking. As Futures Literacy (FL) increases individuals’ capacity to ‘use the future(s)’ to explore the present, the project aims to adopt such methodology also to foster professional development. In particular, the project underlines the need to **develop skills of young people**, for anticipating and promptly reacting to scenario changes, and imagining professional career paths.

The current global pandemic highlights precisely the importance of futures thinking, developing foresight and preparedness, but also an ability to embrace emergence, adapting to unforeseen circumstances that might impact participants’ professional lives.

Within the FUTURES project, **we aim to develop** the innovative, future-oriented processes, tools, and methods that will foster personal and professional development among European University Students, Early Stage Researchers and High School Students, including also those that aspire to enroll in University. The training materials developed in the project will empower individuals to realize that their images about the future (anticipatory assumptions) have a significant bearing on (limit or open up) their actions and choices today.

The project will serve to reach the following **results**:

- Design principles for a Future-oriented Training Programme (Intellectual Output 1);
- Foresight Toolbox and Training Manual for improving University Students and Early Stage Researchers future-oriented competences for personal and professional development (Intellectual Output 2);
- Foresight Toolbox and Training Manual for improving High School Students future-oriented competences for personal and professional development (Intellectual Output 3).

PROJECT PARTNERS



Co-funded by the Erasmus+ Programme of the European Union



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