



# FUTURES

NEWSLETTER NO.6  
MARCH 2023

## PROJECT MEETING IN HERAKLION

MAKING THE  
CASE FOR  
RIGOUROUS  
IMAGINATION



*The end of the FUTURES project is fast approaching, but that means **we are getting closer and closer to putting the final results of the project in your hands.** We still have a lot of work to do, including conducting pilot sessions and dissemination events in all partner countries and finalizing the results. From this issue of the newsletter, you will learn what happened in our project in the first quarter of 2023. We invite you to read it!*

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*Bialystok University of Technology  
project coordinator*

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# OUR MEETING IN HERAKLION: ADAPTING FUTURES MODULES FOR HIGH SCHOOL PILOTS

On March 9-10-11, partners from the FUTURES project gathered in Heraklion to discuss the adaptation of the 3 modules of the course to be piloted with high school students at the national level in Poland, Netherlands, and the UK. The meeting was held at FORTH and was attended by representatives from all partners, with in presence and online participants.



The course developed within FUTURES project is an innovative educational program aimed at empowering young people to develop the skills and knowledge necessary to navigate the complexities of the future. The course consists of three modules: **anticipation for future, anticipation for emergence and performance for futures**. These modules have been designed to help students develop critical thinking, problem-solving, and collaboration skills, which are essential for success in their professional and personal life.

At the meeting, the partners discussed the adaptations needed to tailor the course to the specific needs of high school students in each country. They considered factors such as language, cultural context, and educational standards to ensure that the course would be accessible and relevant to the students.

In addition to the discussions on adapting the FUTURES course for high school students in Poland, Netherlands, and the UK, the meeting also had a **practical component**. During the meeting, 16 students from Greece attended a **pilot session** organized by FORTH, the host of the meeting. The students provided valuable feedback to the partners on the modules' design and delivery.

**The students were enthusiastic and engaged throughout the session, and their feedback was extremely valuable in helping the partners refine and improve the work. The partners were grateful for the opportunity to work with the students and appreciated their willingness to share their thoughts and ideas.**



The partners also discussed the logistics of piloting the modules with high school students. They considered issues such as recruitment, training of teachers, and the development of evaluation tools to measure the modules' impact. They discussed also the importance of engaging high school teachers in the pilot process to ensure that the modules meet the needs of all participants.

Overall, the meeting was a productive and collaborative effort to adapt the FUTURES modules to the needs of high school students. The partners left the meeting with a clear plan of action for the pilot phase and a renewed sense of commitment to empowering young people to shape the future.

# PRESENTATION ON THE ELEMENTS OF FUTURES STUDIES



A brief presentation on the *Elements of Futures Studies* was delivered by Dr George Profitiliotis in December 2022 in the context of the workshop “Entrepreneurship in Europe in 2040: Opportunities and Prospects,” initiated by GRBossible “In Action” Youth Entrepreneurship Festival. During the Workshop, fundamental concepts of Futures Studies as well as areas that may give rise to business opportunities in the future were discussed, and

“Thing from the Future” was used as a means to activate the participants’ imagination to design business ideas from the future on the spot.

As part of the presentation, our involvement in the FUTURES project was also mentioned as an example of employing future-oriented tools in education and with regard to the personal and professional development of high school and university students as well as early-stage researchers.



**FORTH** praxi  
FOUNDATION FOR RESEARCH AND TECHNOLOGY - HELLAS help-forward network

## Elements of Futures Studies

### George Profitiliotis, PhD

Foresight Expert  
 PRAXI Network,  
 Foundation for Research & Technology - Hellas

# MAKING THE CASE FOR RIGOROUS IMAGINATION

by Loes Damhof

**“Our brains have become brittle. We are losing the capacity to imagine”**

Words from neuroscientist, poet laureate and friend Pireeni Sundaralingam. Pireeni lives in San Francisco, close to Silicon Valley where she does research on the impact of technology on our brains. Increased screen time, getting lost in the rabbit hole, notifications from social media accounts... all contribute our decreasing capability to anticipate. In fact, she just discovered that looking at our phones makes it harder for our brains to look beyond two weeks from now. As humans we have always suffered from the poverty of imagination, but as we are becoming more and more dependent on our devices, one might say we are downright starving.

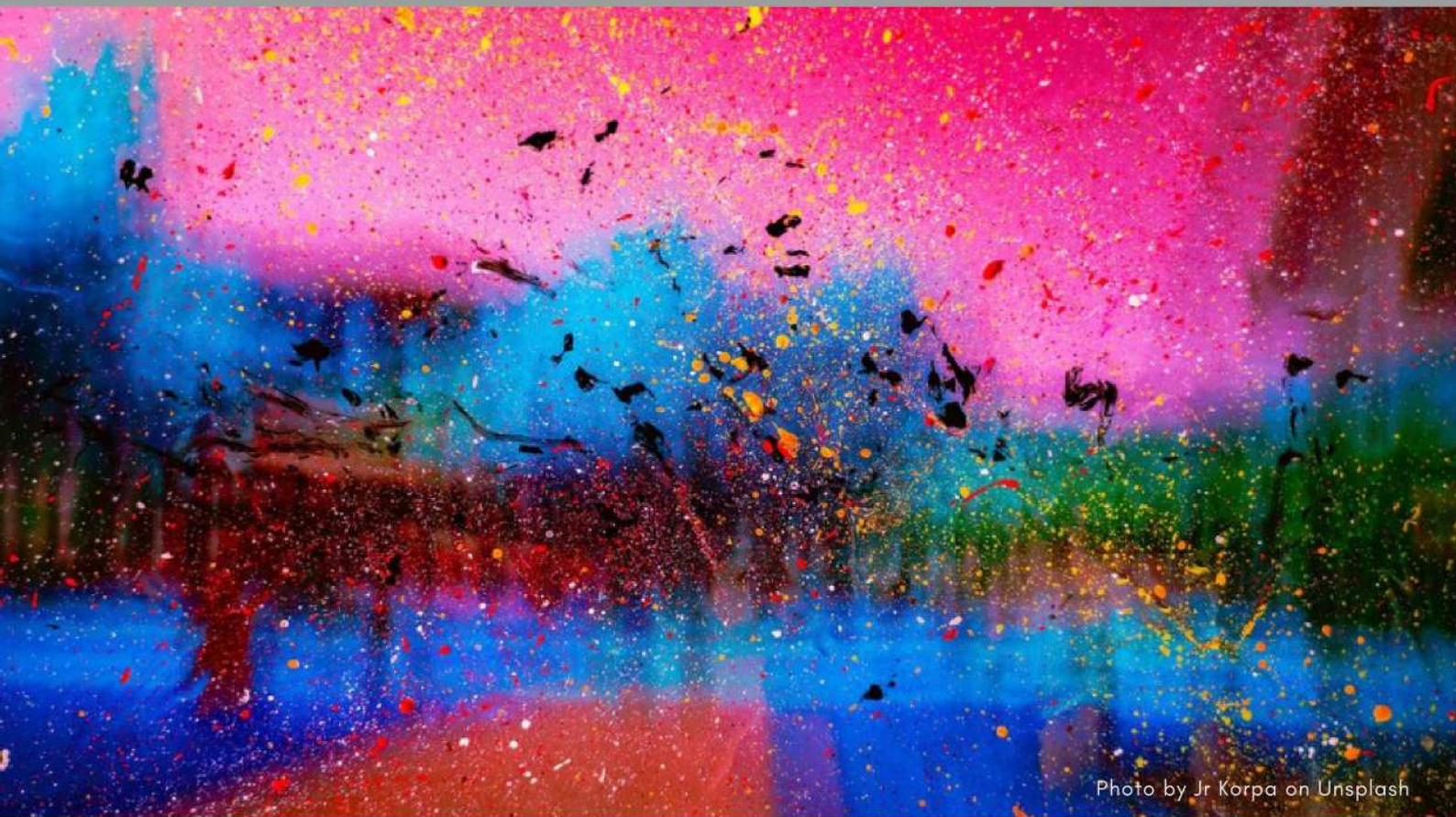


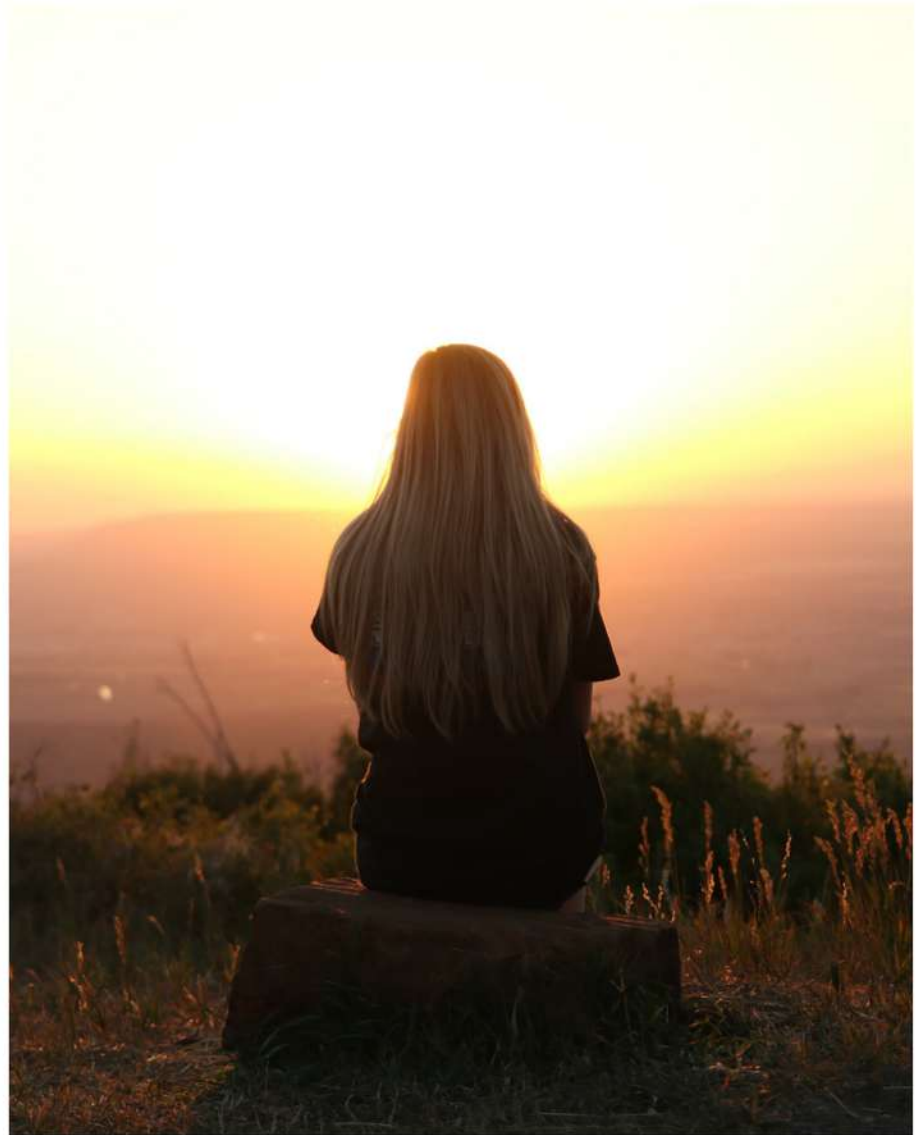
Photo by Jr Korpa on Unsplash

**It is time to make the case for rigorous imagination.**

In the FUTURES project we attempt to get youth enthusiastic for futures work. Recent surveys among middle school youth about what role futures play in the classroom, has given us some interesting data. An interest to imagine, yes, and a certain comfort talking about future jobs. But asked about exploring other pathways, we see ‘neutral’ opinions, which could point to a lack of knowledge about the subject. This can be for several reasons; for example the future as topic can be overwhelming. We think we see this in our futures literacy labs as well. Post-covid it has become more and more difficult for participants to ‘travel into the future’, to imagine beyond the now. This does not surprise us: facemasks and empty streets used to be the images of a dystopian sci-fi film. Since that has become the present, what is then the future? The globally experienced pandemic has shocked us into a reframed state of mind, and a feeling of anxiety has left us grasping for more certainty. With this mindset, it is not hard to imagine it is harder to imagine...

So how do we do this, and how do we stretch the imagination especially of those who might be less interested in the theoretic framework of anticipation? In adapting our Futures Literacy modules to youth, we decided to shift our focus on imagination as a more experiential tool. Without imposing the future as an overwhelming force on youth, can we design futures sessions that are fun, experiential and accessible so we can meet them where they are at? A new exciting development that the HUAS Chair is currently working on, is how to use imagination as a participatory tool for the broader public within public spaces, like museums. How can we use the actual space as a facilitator to stretch peoples imagination? How can we design meaningful experiences using space, art and exhibitions that help us to imagine futures we want to be a part of? By taking participants and especially youth through an embodied future, we might take ourselves away from the screens.

And our brains just might become a little less brittle in the meantime.



## THE FOUR MOST DESIRABLE SKILLS THAT WILL BE **NEEDED IN THE FUTURE**

According to the World Economic Forum, the Business-Higher Education Forum, in partnership with the Burning Glass Institute and Wiley, has determined the four most desirable skills that will be needed in our changing workplace of the future, while impacting organizations and employees in groundbreaking ways, viz:

- **ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (AI)/MACHINE LEARNING (ML).**
- **CLOUD COMPUTING.**
- **PRODUCT MANAGEMENT.**
- **SOCIAL MEDIA.**

[Read more  
Link to the report](#)

## WHAT IS FUTURES?

**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 a 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.

## 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

## PROJECT PARTNERS



### 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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