OUR FUTURE ▶

GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION

LEARNING UNIT

THINKING THE FUTURE

THINKING
THE
FUTURE
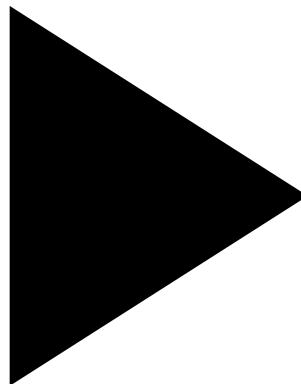
GLOBAL EDUCATION

Global Education (GCE – Global Citizenship Education), as defined by UNESCO, is a form of education that is essential in today's interconnected and culturally diverse societies.

It is an educational approach that aims to develop young people's awareness of living in an interconnected world, where local and global challenges are closely linked.

It is not just a matter of acquiring information, but of promoting a critical, supportive and responsible attitude towards the issues of our time, such as inequality, climate change, social justice and peace.
Global Education invites us to look at the planet with a sense of belonging and responsibility, promoting citizenship as an ethical and participatory dimension, which recalls the idea of being "citizens of the world".

The aim of global education is to educate citizens who are not only able to understand the ever-changing world, but also to contribute to transforming it positively.

Thanks to "Our Future" project, we developed a GCE programme co-designed and tested in Italy, Morocco and Tunisia, on the issue of the future built on 3 steps:

Thinking the future to promote knowledge and awareness about the global future(s),

Feeling the Future to explore feelings and emotions of young people about the future, and

Acting the Future to foster active citizenship to promote personal and community change.

The activities offer young people the opportunity to reflect on their identity and the role they can play in an increasingly interconnected future, where challenges cannot be tackled alone. Through targeted activities and tools, the young people are able to link their personal experiences to global issues, imagine sustainable and inclusive futures, stimulate creativity and imagination to think about alternative scenarios, and at the same time strengthen transversal skills such as collaboration, intercultural communication and critical thinking.

INTRODUCTION

Addressing the issue of the future with younger generations must begin with exploring their own identity, examining their roots and their present. This step is also important in helping young people find their place in the global community, understanding how the personal and local dimensions are closely connected to what is happening in the world.

This Global Learning Unit is dedicated to the exploration of young people's knowledge: about himself/herself, global trends and future(s). It introduces young people to the fundamental concepts of future literacy and develops their foresight capabilities. Through engaging activities and reflection, participants will learn to understand possible, probable, and desirable futures shaped by current global and local megatrends. Most importantly, they will gain the knowledge and start building confidence in themselves and the group to act proactively for positive change in their personal lives and communities.

Thinking the Future consists of four sessions, each lasting two hours. Starting with an exploration of one's identity between past and present (session 1), the learning unit proposes to explore one's place in the global community (session 2) and to examine global trends that may affect our futures (session 3). Session 4 helps young people explore their possible futures in light of their dreams and aspirations, but also in light of the likelihood of achieving them based on what they have learned.

STRUCTURE

DURATION	SESSION TITLE	CORE OF THE SESSION
2h	*1. That's me, that's us!*	Participants connect with their own past and introduce themselves to begin building trust and group cohesion.
2h	*2. Me and our world: Mapping perceptions*	Participants learn to recognize and challenge their perceptions of the world, developing critical awareness of the present.
2h	*3. Global trends and the future*	Participants explore global megatrends and their potential impacts in the future.
2h	*4. Foresights*	Participants exercise their foresight abilities and reflect on desirable futures at both global and local levels.

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IMPORTANT FACILITATION NOTES

Know your group
Before starting, gather as much information as possible about your group. Young people facing structural barriers or living in highly disadvantages conditions may feel increased frustration if the discussion reinforces a sense that their future is beyond their control or too daunting to navigate with the resources they have. Carefully assess whether these activities are appropriate for the group. If you decide to proceed, ensure you have a support network in place to manage any difficulties that may arise.

Consider diversity
Language barriers and cognitive barriers, may require additional time and alternative communication strategies. Plan accordingly and remain flexible. If relevant, consider prioritizing hands-on and visual activities. These formats allow meaningful participation without relying heavily on abstract language. As a reverse, consider physical-disabilities and make sure to create engaging activities accessible to all.

Adapt for group size
Larger groups naturally affect dynamics and timing. Before each session, adjust exercise durations accordingly. As a general rule, allow approximately one or two minutes per participant for each round of sharing or discussion.

Monitor energy levels
Stay attuned to your group's attention span. Incorporate breaks or brief energizers as needed to maintain engagement, or to decompress from tensions. A well-timed pause can restore focus and emotional balance.

Create a safe space
Some activities may touch on sensitive issues, especially for young people who have experienced vulnerability. Pay close attention to participants' levels of engagement, and recognize both emotional expression and withdrawal as valid responses. The primary goal is to nurture visions of inclusive and humane societies. Adjust the pace and depth of activities so that everyone can participate positively and meaningfully. Be ready to offer guidance or refer participants to specialized professionals if needed. If serious distress arises (panic, tears, or breakdowns), calmly pause the session and create a diversion (e.g., a short break, a game, switching to a practical task).Return to the situation later to offer reassurance and help make sense of what happened. Remember: your role is not to follow the program rigidly, but to guide young people through a meaningful and safe learning process.

Be prepared and flexible
Prepare materials and display, settings, and timing in advance, but leave room for adaptation. If an activity doesn't go as planned, don't force it—slow down, change approach, or ask participants how they would like to proceed.

Take care of the learning setting
Whenever possible, prepare the space in advance — arrange chairs in a circle, organize materials, and display them visibly. Welcome your group into a warm, well-prepared environment that invites participation and learning. Co-create the group's rules of participation with your participants, ensuring everyone feels ownership and clarity.
 Refer back to these shared agreements whenever needed to support positive group dynamics and respectful interaction.

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THAT'S ME, THAT'S US!

OBJECTIVES

Self-discovery
 Creating connections with others and
  group building
 Developing social skills: empathy, active
  listening and self-expression

TIMING AND PROGRAMME

TOTAL TIME: 2 HOURS	
30 MIN	WELCOMING AND GENERAL INTRODUCTION
50 MIN	SNOW(O)MEN

15 MIN	OPEN FEEDBACK
25 MIN	CLOSURE

ACTIVITIES DESCRIPTION

WELCOMING AND GENERAL INTRODUCTION
-30 min
Start by greeting the participants and thanking them for joining the session. Present yourself and why it is important to you to spend this time to collectively discuss about the future with them.

To kick off the session in an engaging and lighthearted way, begin with a fun icebreaker that encourages self-expression and creativity. Ask each participant to introduce themselves by sharing their name and an imaginary su-perpower they would love to have — whether it's something practical like superspeed or something whimsical like the ability to talk to animals. Take this chance to also ask them to indicate the pronouns they what to be used to address them. Encourage them to explain their choice briefly, keeping their response to about one minute to ensure everyone gets a turn.

After this first round of introduction make and energy check-in: ask participants to mime and stay in a static pose to show others how they feel about being there, in that moment. Invite participants to take a look at each other's.
Acknowledge briefly the mood of the room. Thank them again and emphasize how impor-tant each participant's contribution is for the richness of this time together.
Ask participants to propose and discuss the rules of the group for a respectful, inclusive discussion. Write them on a board/poster and ask participants make a pledge to respect them.

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SESSION 1

THE SNOW{O}MAN - 50 min

Hand each participant a printed paper with the snow{o}man shape (see Annex 1). Explain that this blank snow{o}man represents their human state just after birth—a white, blank sheet. Before the young people begin drawing, guide them through a moment of self-reflection. Ask them to think about:

How they perceived themselves as young children

How they viewed and thought about their life back then

Their childhood thoughts, feelings, and emotions

Their early dreams and hopes

Give them a few quiet moments for this reflection. Then, invite them to take colorful markers and begin drawing their inner imagery onto the snow{o}man. Encourage them to express freely what comes to mind from those early memories and feelings.

After the drawing time is over, participants present their work to the whole group. They can share while sitting in their seats or standing in front of the group—whatever feels most comfortable for them. Invite each person to:

- Show their drawing to the group
- Explain the various meanings behind their artwork
- Share what the different elements represent

Take a couple of minutes to explain that this sharing creates a space for reconciliation—a chance for each young person to reconnect with a part of themselves they may have forgotten long ago. It's about rediscovering that inner child within all of us, the one we sometimes miss: innocent, unburdened by social expectations and backgrounds.

OPEN FEEDBACK - 15 min

Ask participants to share if they felt particularly connected to something someone else shared.

Allow for questions from participants and open comments. Encourage them to share their opinions, both positive and negative, and to express any doubts that they may have.

CLOSURE - 25 min

Ask participants to share one thing that surprised them during the session, and to express with one word how they found the exercise. Gather feedbacks from participants on the session in terms of time, activities, rhythm, by asking them if they would like something to be different the next session. Adjust future sessions accordingly, if possible, to maximize engagement.

TIPS FOR THE YOUTH WORKER

Enforce zero tolerance for aggression, hate speech, bullying and/or discrimination to
ensure a safe space

Highlight participants' contribution, and appreciate honesty and vulnerability, without
forcing it

Make sure to perceive and convey the positive elements

Express appreciation and thankfulness

MATERIALS

Poster for rules

Annex 1 - The Snow{o}man

Pencils, markers, paper, post-it (etc.)

ME AND OUR WORLD: MAPPING PERCEPTIONS

OBJECTIVES

Discovering perspectives and world representations

Promote knowledge about global perspectives

Reinforce global empathy and sense of solidarity

Introduce future literacy

TIMING AND PROGRAMME

TOTAL TIME: 2 HOURS	
10 MIN	INTRODUCTION

60 MIN	MAPPING OUR WORLD
30 MIN	ME AND THE FUTURE
20 MIN	OPEN FEEDBACK AND CLOSURE

ACTIVIIES DESCRIPTION

INTRODUCTION - 10 min

Ask participants what they remember from the previous workshop and give them a brief summary of what happened. Remind them the rules chosen during the previous session and ask if they want to add something.

MAPPING OUR WORLD - 60 min

Ask participants to take a pen and a piece of paper. Explain that they have 5 minutes to draw the world map from memory, making it as detailed as possible, without using any reference materials.

Once everyone has finished, ask participants to create a circle and place their different drawings at the center. Give them a few minutes to walk around and look at everyone's maps.

It's now time to reflect on the experience. Guide the discussion with these questions:

1. Was it easy to draw the world?
   2. What did you start with and why? What were you thinking about while doing the exercise? (Perhaps a map you see daily, the place where you live, places you've visited...)
   3. What is more detailed in your map, and what is less detailed?
   4. What might your map reveal about your personal knowledge and experience of the world?

Listen actively to their responses and encourage honest sharing.

SESSION 2

Display a Peters' world map (see Annex 2) for comparison. Facilitate a group discussion by asking:

1. What do you perceive as different in this map?
   2. How do media, education, and personal experiences shape our worldview?
   3. Why is it important to recognize diverse perspectives?

Ask to share these insights with the group. Explain that our map drawings reveal more than just geographic knowledge—they expose deep-seated cultural biases and power dynamics. Often, participants unconsciously place their own region at the center of the map, drawing it larger and more detailed. This instinct mirrors our perceived reality, due to two cognitive "shortcuts":

1. Cognitive Centering: We tend to magnify what we know best, making our familiar regions appear more prominent and significant.
2. Geopolitical Influence: Countries with historical or current economic and political power are frequently drawn larger, reflecting global power structures.

Introduce a new topic for discussion and ask participants if they think that the way we draw maps ALSO changes how we think about the world. You can ask: what do you think happens when we center our own world?"

After collecting a few answers, if it didn't come up naturally, mention that:
When we always put ourselves in the middle, we start thinking our part of the world is more important
We might accidentally make other cultures seem less interesting or valuable

Ask participants to share how they think this could impact the real world.
After collecting responses, if it didn't come up, add that:
Some countries end up getting more help, business/humanitarian interest, or resources just because they look "bigger" on our mental map
We might continue old, unfair ways of thinking about global relationships
Some cultures and populations get "erased" or made to seem less important

Before closing the activity, ask participants to look at their own map and then search for a planisphere (world map). Have them identify their most "blurred area" on the real planisphere.
Give them 15 minutes to:
Find out what countries are in that area
Google it and learn 5 things about that country, OR
Go on YouTube with their mobile phone and listen to 1 song from that country

Give them 15 minutes to share what they found.
Close with this reminder:

"Remember: The world is way more interesting when we look beyond our own backyard!"

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SESSION 2

ME AND THE FUTURE - 30 min

After the break tell participants that since we have looked at our own past and learnt about others' ones, and after having challenged our perception of the word, it is now time to start looking at the future.

Tell participants that before you discuss the future with words, you're going to explore it with your hands.

Show them the building materials available (this might be a LEGO kit, modelling clay, recycled materials, or other creative supplies). Ask them to think about how they imagine themselves in 10 years and to answer by building something that shows how they see themselves then.

Add this challenge: their creation must include a beautiful element—something they like to look at, a small item that looks beautiful to them either in its shape or in its meaning, which they would like to bring to in their future.

As participants create, walk around the room and engage with the young people. Encourage them to think about and represent:
·Who they would like to be
·With whom they'd like to be
·Where they might be living or spending their time
·What they think they could be doing in their daily lives in 10 years' time

Give them space to create freely while gently prompting their reflection with these questions.

After 10 minutes of building time, ask participants to sit in a circle. Invite them to share one at a time:

A short description of their creation
·What is the beautiful element they included in their creation

Give each participant 1 minute to share. You can keep time with a timer or an hourglass to ensure everyone gets an equal opportunity to present.

Listen attentively and hold space for each person's vision of their future. Encourage the group to give their full attention to whoever is sharing.

OPEN FEEDBACK AND CLOSURE - 20 min

Ask participants to share if they felt particularly connected to something someone else shared.

Allow for questions from participants and open comments. Encourage them to share their opinions, both positive and negative, and to express any doubts that they may have. Ask participants to share one thing that surprised them during the session, and to express with one word how they found the exercise.

Gather feedbacks from participants on the session in terms of time, activities, rhythm, by asking them if they would like something to be different the next session. Adjust future sessions accordingly, if possible, to maximize engagement.

TIPS FOR THE YOUTH WORKER

Make sure to perceive and convey the positive elements
Gather all the materials needed for the session in advance. If using a LEGO kit, organize pieces by type (bricks, landscapes, animals, people). For other materials (bottles, paper rolls, laces, sticks, tape, glue, markers, etc.), ensure there's enough for everyone to build freely. If using modeling clay or Play-Doh, provide ample quantities and invite participants to collect small natural items (seeds, flowers, bark, feathers) to personalize their creations.

MATERIALS

Pencils, markers, paper, post-it
Annex 2 - Image of Peter's map
Lego kit / modelling clay / playdoh / recycled mixed materials + tools (scissors, tape, glue) for making figures and combining them in scenes

SESSION 3

GLOBAL TRENDS AND THE FUTURE

OBJECTIVES

Enhance the ability to imagine one's future and transform it in light of global challenges
    Acquire Knowledge about megatrends
    Found connections about megatrend and our vision of the future
    Foster collaboration and cooperation

TIMING AND PROGRAMME

TOTAL TIME: 2 HOURS	
10 MIN	INTRODUCTION AND RECAP
10 MIN	KEY WORDS
50 MIN	THE MUSEUM OF THE WORLD OF THE FUTURE
40 MIN	INTRODUCTION OF MEGATRENDS
10 MIN	OPEN FEEDBACK AND CLOSURE

ACTIVITIES DESCRIPTION

INTRODUCTION AND RECAP - 10 min
Ask participants what they remember from the previous workshop and give them a brief summary of what happened. Remind them the rules chosen during the previous sessions and ask if they want to add something.

KEY WORDS - 10 min
Ask the group to define the word "future", build a collective definition. Ask participants to stand up and divide in two groups according to whether they think there is only one future or multiple futures possible. Those who think there is just one future go to the right, those who think there are many futures go to the left. Ask them why they positioned themselves this way.

Back to the circle, explain that in this session we will work on future literacy, we talk about "futures"—with an 's'—rather than "the future" in the singular. Using the plural form shows that different futures are possible: bestcase scenarios, worst-case scenarios, businessas-usual outcomes, or totally transformative ones.
This approach helps preparing, adapting, and making better choices today, because we've thought about the possibilities that tomorrow might bring. We can do the same for our own lives and our communities, helping us move through uncertainty with ease and aim towards our preferred future in a more open-minded and realistic way.

SESSION 3

Introduce the definition of future literacy by UNESCO: as "the capability to understand the role of the future in what people see and do in the present. It is a skill that empowers individuals to imagine multiple futures, anticipate change, and make more informed decisions. Essentially, it's about learning how to "use the future" to better navigate the present and shape a desired future".

THE MUSEUM OF THE WORLD OF THE FUTURE 50 min

On the wall of the room, create an exposition with the modified cards of the megatrend (see Annex 3).

The participants move around the walls of the room and individually choose the megatrend they are more curious about. The participants can create small groups according to their interests focusing on a single card.

Inside the group, you propose a discussion on the question: "What future trend is this story representing?". Participants discuss the question proposed and try to guess the megatrend the card is referring to. Once every group has a "title" for the megatrend represented, in plenary participants discuss if the title they thought is appropriate. At the end, you reveal the real megatrend. Note: you can adapt the activity to how many people are in the group and how much they want to share.

IF THERE IS SOME EXTRA TIME, you can also propose these questions:

  What surprises you the most about the megatrend?

  What opportunity do you think we will have in this future world? (positive questions)

INTRODUCTION OF MEGATRENDS - 40 min

Ask participants if they have ever heard of Megatrends and what they think they could be. Gather answers, then say "in future literacy, megatrend are large-scale, long-term, global patterns of change that significantly influence our world and will continue to do so for decades". Can you think of some megatrends? Gather answers. Put the megatrends cards on the ground (Annex 4). Ask participants to organize them in order of how much they think they know about them as a group. Tell them that they can not talk, but must use non-verbal communication and behavior observation to decide each megatrend card's position. They have 10 minutes to agree on the ranking. After they have reached an agreement, ask them to comment on the dynamic. Were they surprised by final result? Were there topics in which one participant felt very informed, that the rest of the group decided to place as "little known". Take a few minutes also to comment on how they behaved in the "silent" discussion, without being able to use words.
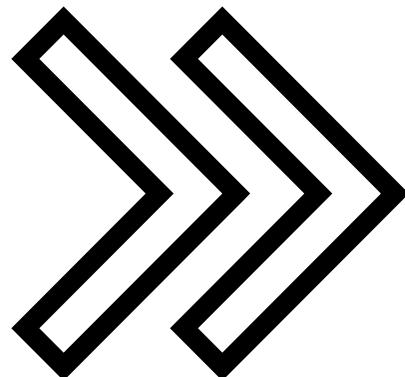
SESSION 3

OPEN FEEDBACK AND CLOSURE - 10 min
Ask participants to share if they felt particularly connected to something someone else shared and if some of the megatrends particularly scare or excite them. Allow for questions from participants and open comments. Encourage them to share their opinions, both positive and negative, and to express any doubts that they may have.

Ask participants to share one thing that surprised them during the session, and to express with one word how they found the exercise.

Gather feedbacks from participants on the session in terms of time, activities, rhythm, by asking them if they would like something to be different the next session. Adjust future sessions accordingly, if possible, to maximize engagement.

TIPS FOR THE YOUTH WORKER

Familiarize yourself with the topic of megatrends (Annex 6) [VMP1] and the Learning Unit content.

Try to anticipate any challenging passages in the activity. If relevant, adjust the language level, simplify the messages, translate and culturally adjust texts and annexes. Pay attention to the Megatrends cards: language should be simplified according to the language and knowledge level of participants and should be translated.

MATERIALS

Pencils, markers, paper, post-it, tape
Annex 3 - Cards for The Museum of the World of the Future
Annex 4 - Cards Megatrends
Annex 5 - Future and Megatrends - Essential Guide

OUR FUTURE

FORESIGHTS

OBJECTIVES

Increase knowledge of global megatrends and exercise the ability to imagine possible desirable futures

Imagine different scenarios at global and local level

Support participants in distinguishing between ideal, possible, probable and desirable futures

TIMING AND PROGRAMME

TOTAL TIME: 2 HOURS	
10 MIN	INTRODUCTION AND RECAP
15 MIN	KEY WORDS
50 MIN	EXPLORATION EXERCISE
30 MIN	MYSELF AND THE COMMUNITY IN MY POSSIBLE DESIRABLE FUTURE
15 MIN	OPEN FEEDBACK AND CLOSURE

ACTIVITIES DESCRIPTION

INTRODUCTION AND RECAP - 10 min
Ask participants what they remember from the previous workshop and give them a brief summary of what happened. Remind them the rules chosen during the previous sessions and ask if they want to add something.

KEY WORDS - 15 min
Show participants the image at Annex 6. Ask them what they see. Introduce the difference between possible, probable and desirable futures.
Ask them to collectively identify the differences between "forecast" and "foresight". Explain the group that in this session they will explore the "futures" with foresights.

EXPLORATION EXERCISE - 50 min
Ask the group to think back to the last session and the ranking of megatrends they had built together. Invite them to choose one megatrend to explore: they can decide to choose the one that they felt they knew the best, the most unknown or one from the middle. Let them discuss until they agree. If needed, you can show them a picture of the ranking or place the cards in the middle to help their memory.
Once they have chosen, divide the group in two: one will work on global effects, the other on their national/local context. Ask them if they can make foresights, by thinking about the effects, both positive and negative (see Annex 7 for an example from Tunisia).

OUR
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SESSION 4

While they discuss, move around the room and if you see that they are struggling prompt some questions, as:

1. What is the worst thing that could happen with the evolution of this megatrend? How would it affect people? Would it have the same impact on everyone or people in situations of vulnerability would be more affected? Why?
2. What is the best thing that could happen?
3. Among these, which are the most likely to happen?
4. Among these, which are the most desirable to happen?
5. How do these foresights interact with the other megatrends? (Annex 8)

Ask the group to identify a speaker and to explain the other group the foresights they have created.

MYSELF AND THE COMMUNITY IN MY POSSIBLE DESIRABLE FUTURE - 30 MIN

Ask participants in light of what they explored, what they would like their personal future to look like in 15 years. Let them discuss. Ask participants to imagine how they would like their community to be like in that same future, 15 years ahead. Let them discuss. Place a big poster at the center and some markers, ask them to write on it what they think is important that they start doing today to make sure that the future looks like what they desire. Cluster ideas and real aloud. Ask for opinions.

OPEN FEEDBACK AND CLOSURE - 20 min
Ask participants to share if they felt particularly connected to something someone else shared and if some of the megatrends particularly scare or excite them.

Allow for questions from participants and open comments. Encourage them to share their opinions, both positive and negative, and to express any doubts that they may have. Ask participants to share one thing that surprised them during the session, and to express with one word how they found the exercise.

Gather feedback and thank participants for the good experience shared!
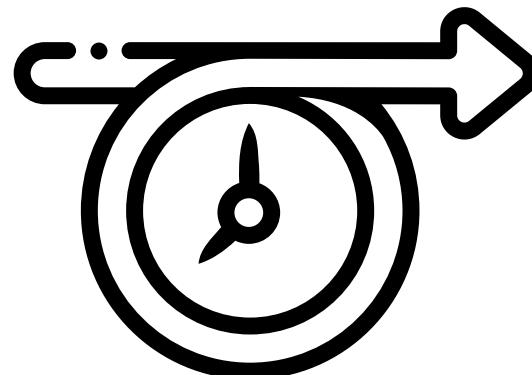
TIPS FOR THE YOUTH WORKER

Make sure to perceive and convey the positive elements
Express appreciation and thankfulness

MATERIALS

Pencils, markers, paper, post-it, posters

ANNEXES

II
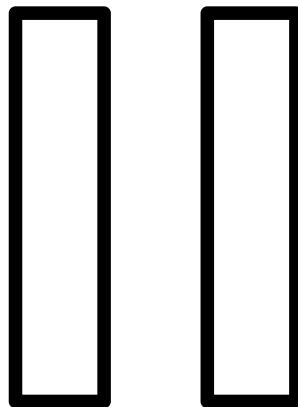
Annex 1 - The Snow{o}man
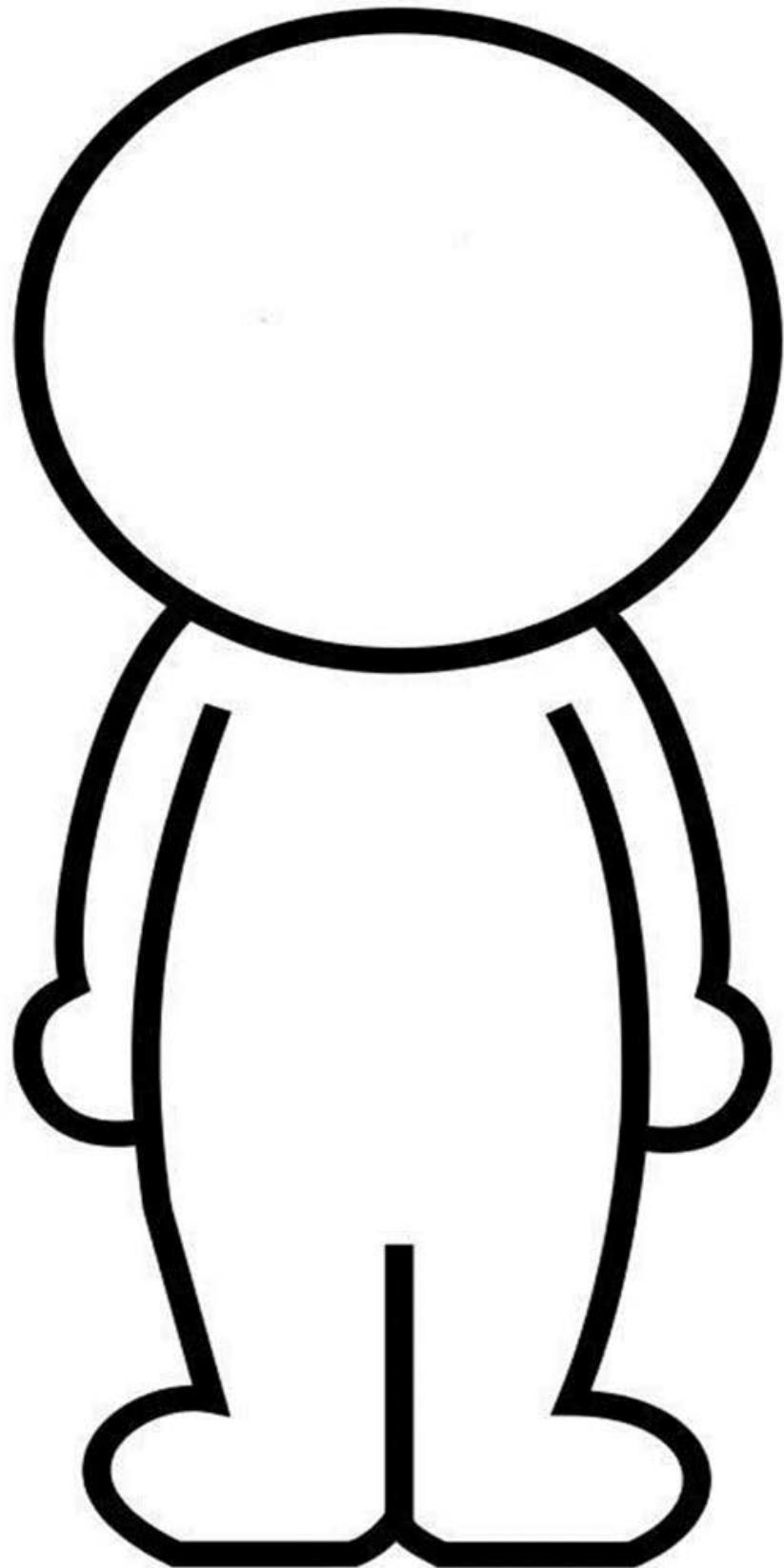
Annex 2 - Image of Peter's map

Peters wanted to restore the dignity of each people, while respecting the size of each country, according to a post-colonial logic that gave the Global South the same importance as the North.

Knowing that any projection of the globe onto a plane involves distortions, Peters understood that fidelity to the proportions of the surfaces meant sacrificing the accuracy of distances. The continents therefore appear elongated.

His vision is based on:

   Fidelity to areas: each area (country, continent, sea) is represented in its actual size.

   Fidelity to position: all east-west lines are parallel and horizontal.

   Accuracy in axis: all north-south lines are vertical.

   Completeness: the Earth is represented in its entirety, without "cuts" or double representations.

   Even distribution of errors: distortions are not concentrated only in areas far from Europe.

   Base colours for continents: unlike colonial maps, Peters chooses a base colour for each continent.

Annex 3 -

Cards for The Museum of the World of the Fu-

ture

In 2023, Canada's wildfires were so massive that smoke reached New York City and turned the sky orange, showing how climate change affects everyone, even across countries.

Tesla and other electric car brands exploded in popularity, pushing governments to ban gas cars by 2035 in many places like the EU.
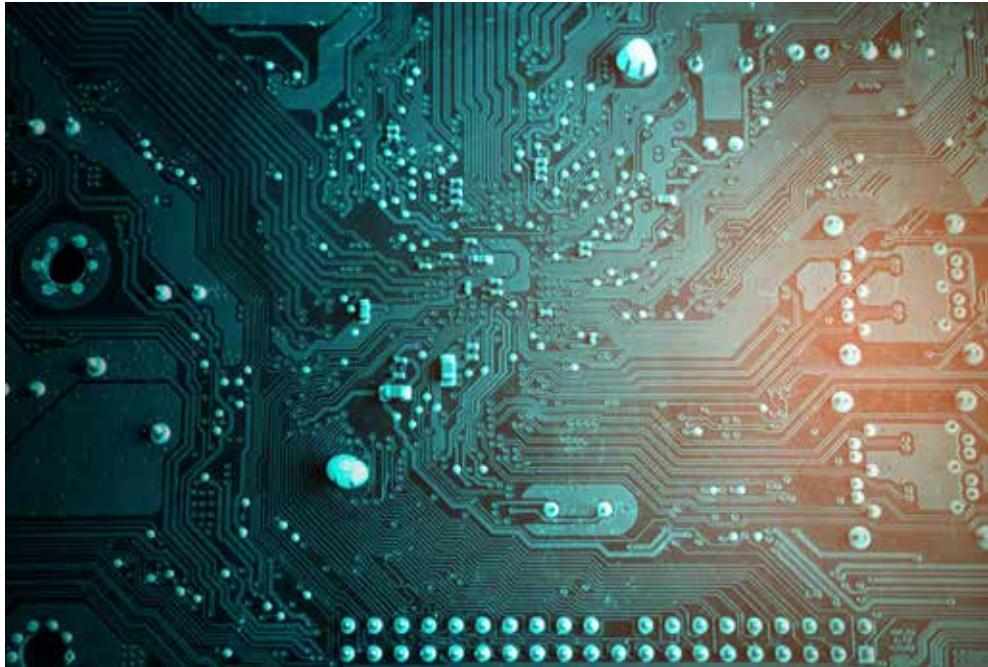
ChatGPT became one of the fastest-growing apps ever, and now AI writes music, designs logos, and even helps doctors spot diseases.

TikTok uses massive amounts of data to learn what people like, that's why your "For You" page feels almost psychic. Data = power in the digital world.

Japan now sells more adult diapers than baby diapers because so many people are elderly, while in Nigeri most people are under 25.

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Shanghai and Delhi each have over 25 million people entire countries inside one city! Skyscrapers rise, but so do traffic jams and pollution.

China's Belt and Road Initiative built roads, ports, and railways across Africa, Asia, and Europe showing how global power isn't only in Western hands anymore.

Scientists used mRNA technology (like in Pfizer's COVID-19 vaccine) to fight the pandemic a huge leap that's now helping cure other diseases too.

When billionaires like Jeff Bezos and Elon Musk flew to space, people debated online: "Why spend billions on rockets while others struggle to afford rent?"

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During COVID-19, stores ran out of toilet paper, and PlayStations, showing how dependent we were on global supply chains. Now, countries are producing more locally.

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Fashion brands like Patagonia donate profits to protect the planet, and Gen Z shoppers prefer buying from sustainable or cruelty-free brands.

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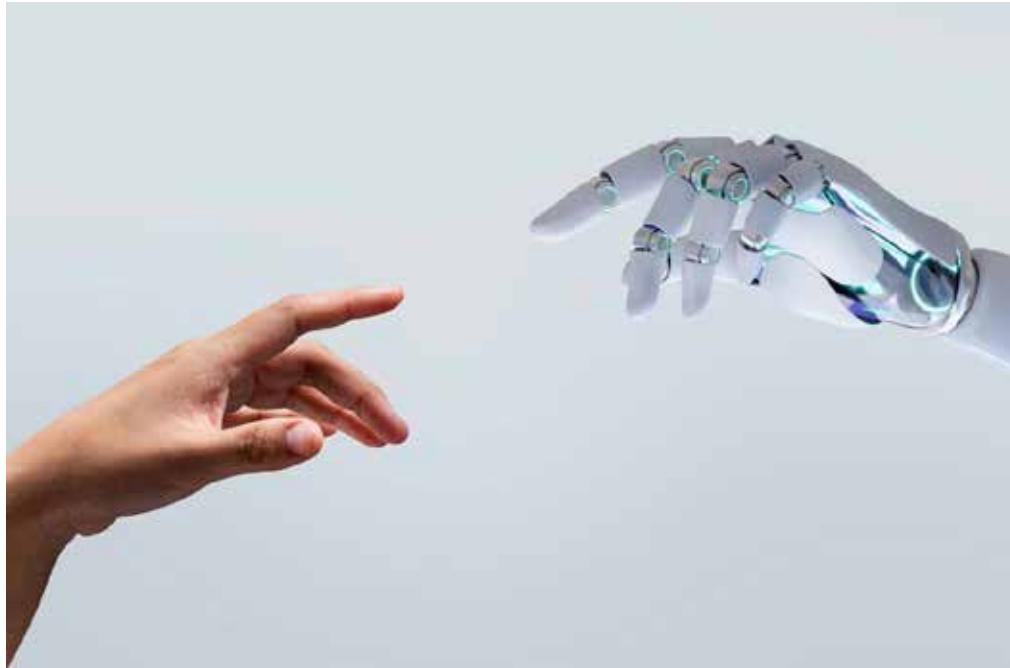
In medicine, AI + 3D printing allowed scientists to create artificial organs for testing drugs, showing how different technologies can merge to save lives.

OUR FUTURE

Cybersecurity attacks between Russia, China and US / Also the Russia–Ukraine war shook the world economy, caused energy crises in Europe, and even affected gas prices in the U.S. proving how global everything is now.

California's droughts led to water shortages and expensive food. Meanwhile, Singapore built the world's largest vertical farms to grow food indoors.

OUR FUTURE

Annex 4 -
Cards Megatrends

MEGATRENDS

MEGATRENDS: what is it?

Imagine looking at the world as if it was a giant puzzle that's constantly changing. Megatrends are the major forces that are transforming this puzzle, piece by piece, on a global scale. They're not passing fads, but deep changes that last for years or even decades.

Some examples? Climate change, the growing use of technology and artificial intelligence, population aging, or the increasing focus on gender equality.

These phenomena influence work, education, consumption, cities, and even the way we live together.

Understanding megatrends helps us imagine the future and make more conscious choices today for tomorrow: What job do I want to do? What kind of world do I want to live in? How can I contribute?
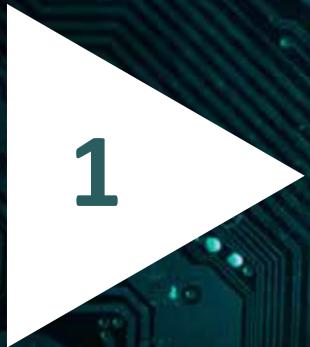
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FASTER TECHNOLOGICAL CHANGE AND HYPER-CONNECTIVITY

OUR FUTURE

FASTER TECHNOLOGICAL CHANGE AND HYPERCONNECTIVITY

Technology is rapidly changing **the way we live**—how we communicate, socialize, work, produce, and even govern.

Just think about the fact that new apps and digital tools are being developed every day. Data collection is becoming increasingly important and Artificial Intelligence, the Internet of Things, and robotics are becoming more sophisticated and central to our lives.

Hyperconnectivity is also expanding: we are **more and more connected** and constantly online. This certainly allows us to communicate, learn, and create like never before, but it also brings challenges. Among these, we must consider the challenge of regulating the technology use, especially for reasons of safety, privacy, and ethics. At the same time there is the **challenge** of **balancing progress and well-being**: in fact we already see that our levels of attention and concentration can be affected.

Technology will be a **powerful ally** in reaching climate goals—in decarbonization, transport, and agriculture—and it will become increasingly important for everyone to understand how to use technology wisely, without being exploited by it.

2

INCREASING SHORTAGE OF RESOURCES

Why are we using more and more water, land, energy, and raw materials?
Why are natural resources running out faster than ever?

One of the reasons is the **growth of population**. There have never been so many people living on Earth, and we need more space to live, bigger cities, more food to eat, more land to farm, more water to drink and grow crops, and more energy to produce everything we use.

But these **resources aren't unlimited**. To make sure future generations still have what they need, we have to learn how to manage them in a more sustainable way. That means being smarter about how we use them, choosing more eco-friendly solutions, and supporting innovation that helps protect the planet.

Also, to keep a **good life quality** for everyone, we need to think about **global fairness**— making sure that people in both richer and poorer countries, and people of today and tomorrow, all get a fair chance.

3

JOB CHANGE
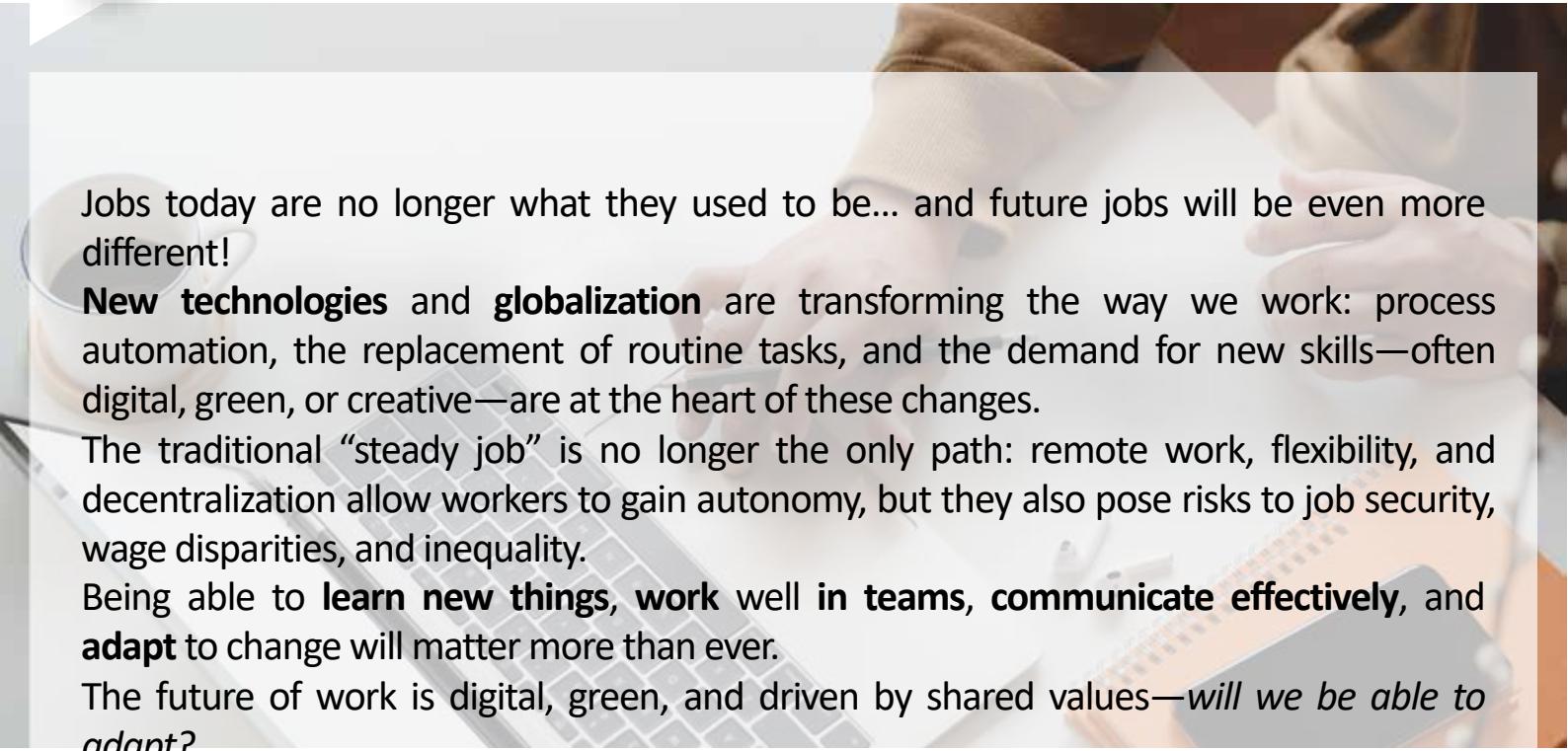
Jobs today are no longer what they used to be… and future jobs will be even more different!

New technologies and **globalization** are transforming the way we work: process automation, the replacement of routine tasks, and the demand for new skills—often digital, green, or creative—are at the heart of these changes.

The traditional "steady job" is no longer the only path: remote work, flexibility, and decentralization allow workers to gain autonomy, but they also pose risks to job security, wage disparities, and inequality.

Being able to **learn new things**, **work** well **in teams**, **communicate effectively**, and **adapt** to change will matter more than ever.

The future of work is digital, green, and driven by shared values—*will we be able to adapt?*

4

REDESIGNING
SECURITY

REDESIGNING SECURITY

Today, the word *security* no longer refers only to war or crime. More and more, we hear about climate security, health security, digital security, and food security. The pandemic, cyberattacks, climate change, and social inequalities have shown us that **security** is something that affects **everyone, every day**. As a result, the very concept of what security means will continue to evolve in the future.

One example: even fake news and disinformation can be a threat to security, as they are increasingly leading to a "radicalization of opinion," undermining political issues, universal rights, and electoral systems.

So what does it mean to feel safe today? It means **having access** to healthcare, healthy food, secure internet, a livable environment, and equal rights. That's why we must think of security as something we **build together**—with responsibility and solidarity—both locally and globally.

5

CLIMATE CHANGE
& ENVIRONMENT

The **climate is changing**: temperatures are rising, and we are seeing more floods, wildfires, droughts, and many animal and plant species are at risk. This is happening because, for too long, we have polluted, cut down forests, wasted resources, and relied too heavily on unsustainable energy. Climate change threatens everyone's health, safety, and future.

To tackle this in the future, there are two main approaches: **mitigation**—reducing the causes of climate change (such as CO_2 emissions)—and **adaptation**—finding new ways to live well in a changing climate (like building heat-resilient cities or protecting coastlines).

The systems we have in place today and our deeply rooted **behaviors** need to be questioned. Bold decisions are needed from governments, but small everyday actions from each of us matter too: together, we can still make a difference.

6

GROWING
URBANIZATION

OUR
FUTURE

GROWING URBANIZATION

Every day, more and more people are moving to **cities**. The number of people living in urban areas has more than doubled in the past 40 years, and it's expected to reach between 67% and 70% of the global population by 2050.

Cities offer **more opportunities** for education, jobs, services, and entertainment—but they also bring challenges like traffic, pollution, overcrowding, and social inequality. Just think about this: cities take up only 2% of the Earth's land, yet they are responsible for 60% of energy use, 70% of global emissions, and 70% of worldwide waste. It's clear that change is needed.

New technologies are helping to solve some of these issues and are also making it easier for governments to connect with citizens. But to truly face these challenges, we need **smarter, better-planned cities**—with efficient transport, green spaces, affordable housing, good waste management, and digital services.

7

NEW WAYS OF LEARNING

NEW WAYS OF LEARNING

Today, **learning** doesn't just mean sit in a classroom, listen to a teacher, and study from textbooks.

Education is changing: thanks to technology and hyper-connection, you can now learn online—through videos, interactive courses, or digital platforms. But it's not just what we learn that's changing—it's also how. **Experiential learning**, teamwork, and the importance of **social and emotional skills** are becoming more and more central. With all these tools, everyone can build their own learning path.

Teachers are doing a wider range of activities than before, and some people think that formal school learning might become less central, while unstructured or **informal learning** is gaining more value.

There's no single "right" way to learn. What really matters is discovering what excites us and finding the path that fits us best. In the future, learning won't be "once and for all," but something continuous, flexible, and personal.

8

RISING
INEQUALITIES

OUR
FUTURE

RISING INEQUALITIES
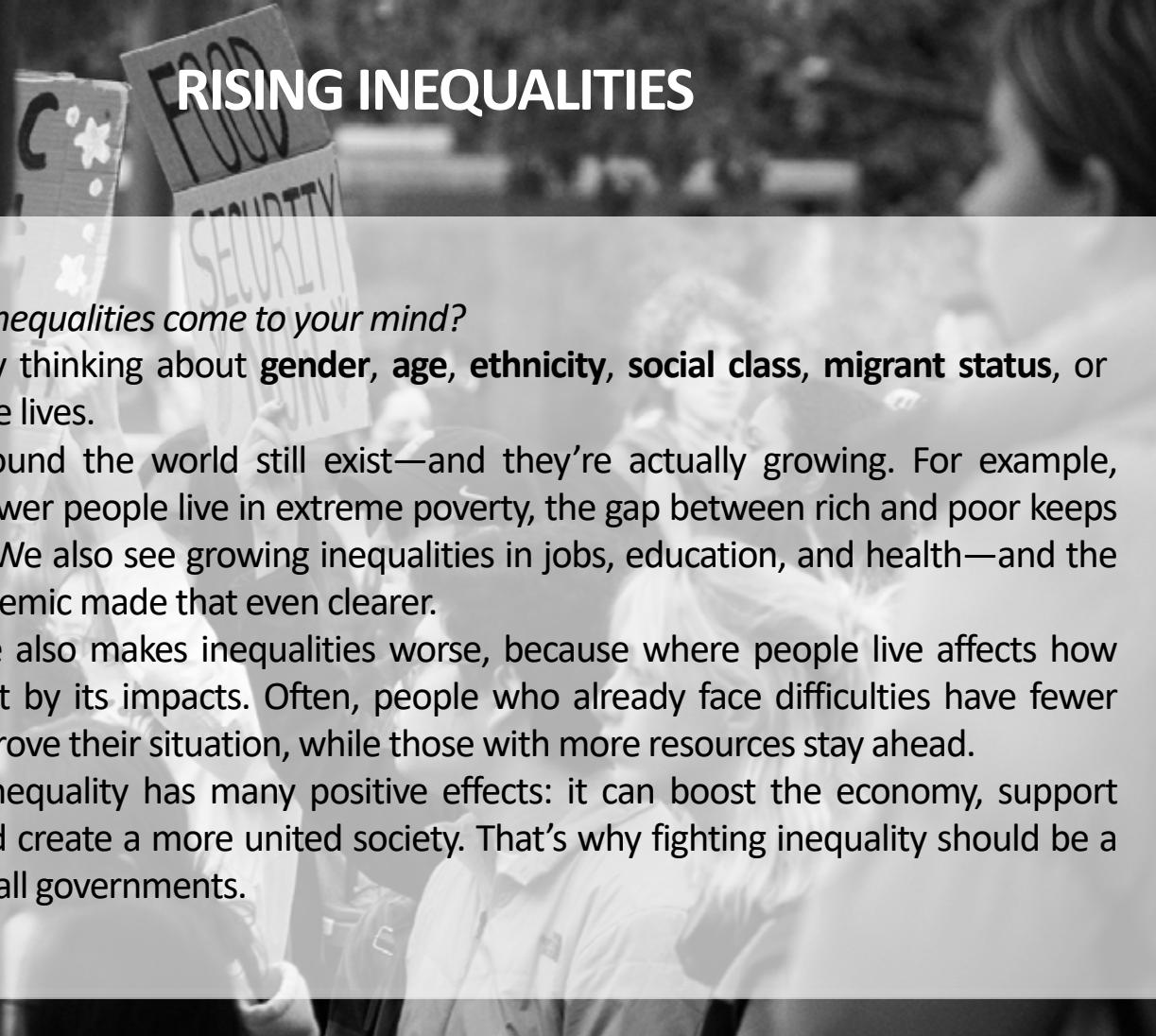
What kinds of inequalities come to your mind?
You're probably thinking about **gender**, **age**, **ethnicity**, **social class**, **migrant status**, or where someone lives.

Inequalities around the world still exist—and they're actually growing. For example, even though fewer people live in extreme poverty, the gap between rich and poor keeps getting bigger. We also see growing inequalities in jobs, education, and health—and the COVID-19 pandemic made that even clearer.

Climate change also makes inequalities worse, because where people live affects how hard they're hit by its impacts. Often, people who already face difficulties have fewer chances to improve their situation, while those with more resources stay ahead.

But reducing inequality has many positive effects: it can boost the economy, support democracy, and create a more united society. That's why fighting inequality should be a top priority for all governments.

9

GROWING RELEVANCE OF THE EAST AND THE SOUTH

GROWING RELEVANCE OF THE EAST AND THE SOUTH

For a long time, the world was mostly led by countries in Europe and North America. But today, the economic, political, and cultural influence of countries in **Asia**, **Africa**, and **Latin America** is growing fast.

China has already passed the U.S. as the world's biggest economy, and Asia is expected to produce more than 50% of the global output by 2050—making it the leader of the **world economy**.

Africa is also becoming more important, especially thanks to new trade zones and more diverse economies.

Globalization will slow down a bit and become more fragmented. This is because some countries want to be more independent, or because of growing nationalist and populist ideas.

Like any big change, this shift will bring new opportunities, fresh points of view, and new alliances—leading us into a more "**multipolar**" world, with many different centers of power.

10

GROWING

CONSUMPTION

GROWING CONSUMPTION

The **demand for goods and services**—like clothes, food, tech, and travel—is growing fast. *The reason?* There are more people on the planet.

By 2030, about 1.3 billion more people than today will be able to consume, bringing the total number of global consumers to nearly **5 billion**!

Consuming isn't bad in itself, but **the way we consume** now is changing how things are made—and it has major effects on the environment, the climate, and social inequalities.

Today, we want convenient, personalized things and unique experiences. That's why online shopping, subscription services, and experience-based offers are booming. At the same time, we care more about buying products that are sustainable, responsible, and ethical. *The challenge for the future?* Finding the right balance between consumption and sustainability.

11
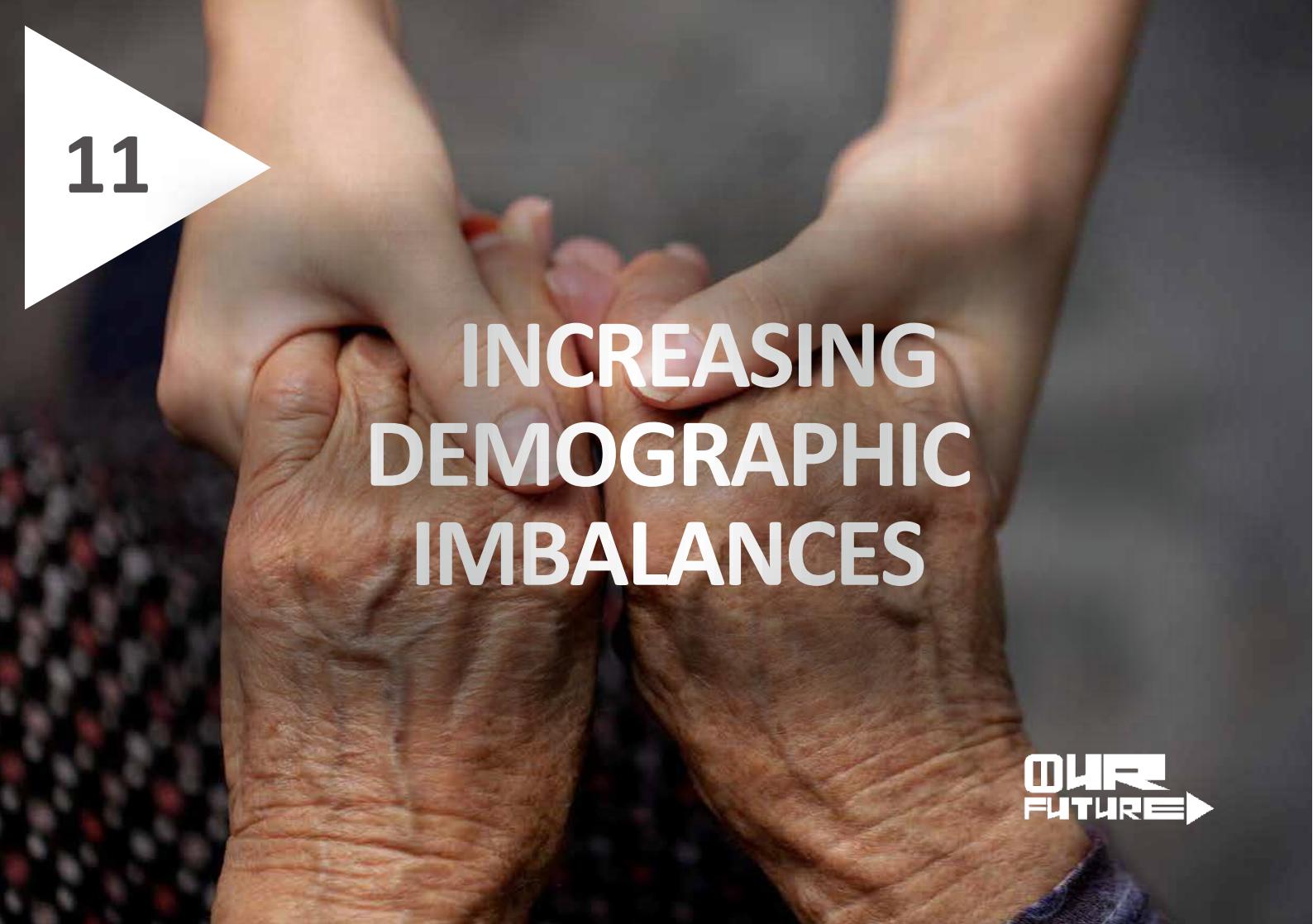
INCREASING DEMOGRAPHIC IMBALANCES
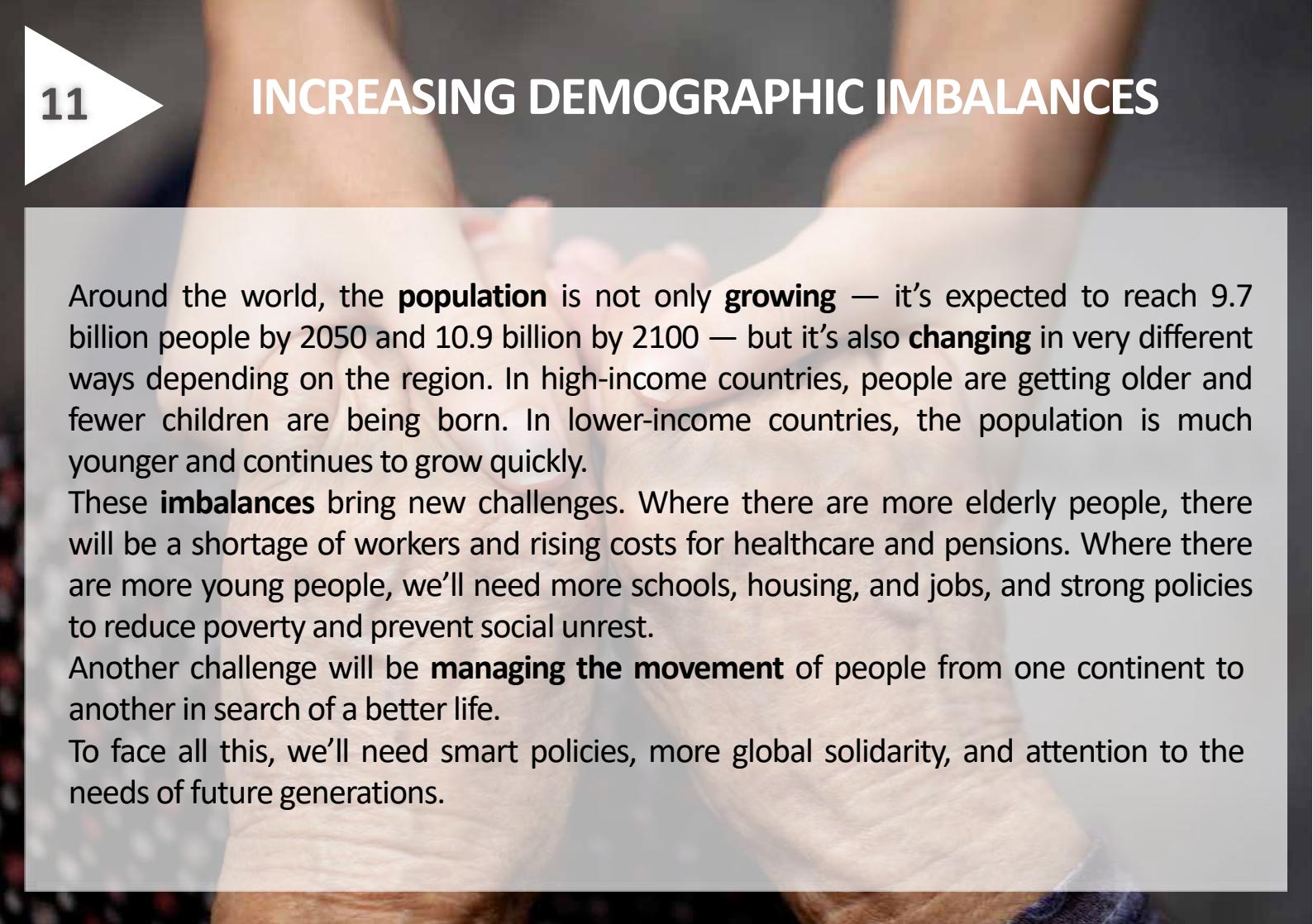
Around the world, the **population** is not only **growing** — it's expected to reach 9.7 billion people by 2050 and 10.9 billion by 2100 — but it's also **changing** in very different ways depending on the region. In high-income countries, people are getting older and fewer children are being born. In lower-income countries, the population is much younger and continues to grow quickly.

These **imbalances** bring new challenges. Where there are more elderly people, there will be a shortage of workers and rising costs for healthcare and pensions. Where there are more young people, we'll need more schools, housing, and jobs, and strong policies to reduce poverty and prevent social unrest.

Another challenge will be **managing the movement** of people from one continent to another in search of a better life.

To face all this, we'll need smart policies, more global solidarity, and attention to the needs of future generations.

INCREASING INFLUENCE OF NEW GOVERNING SYSTEMS

OUR FUTURE

INCREASING INFLUENCE OF NEW GOVERNING SYSTEMS

Ways of governing are **multiplying** and becoming more **diverse**.

Non-state actors, growing interest in participatory government, the crisis of information, and the rise of media platforms are all contributing to the creation of **new forms of governance**.

At the same time, **democracy** is going through a period of crisis and change. We're using more innovative tools, working on the digital transformation of countries, and modernizing public services, but this digitalization also puts at risk the way decisions are made.

Many decisions are becoming **automatic** instead of conscious choices, and that can threaten human rights, ethics, responsibility, and the transparency that democracy requires.

Politics today often appeals more to emotions and personal beliefs than to **facts** or the common good — and this is a challenge we must take seriously for the future.

13

INCREASING SIGNIFICANCE OF MIGRATION
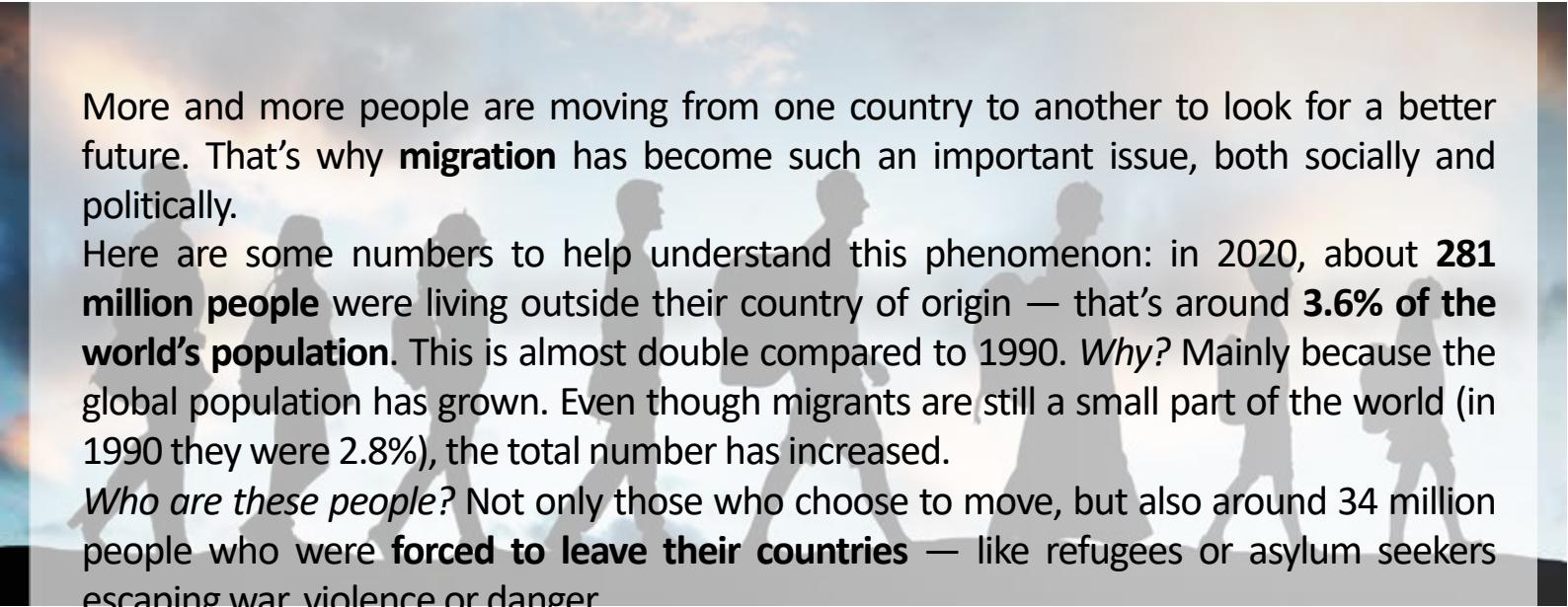
OUR FUTURE

More and more people are moving from one country to another to look for a better future. That's why **migration** has become such an important issue, both socially and politically.

Here are some numbers to help understand this phenomenon: in 2020, about **281 million people** were living outside their country of origin — that's around **3.6% of the world's population**. This is almost double compared to 1990. *Why?* Mainly because the global population has grown. Even though migrants are still a small part of the world (in 1990 they were 2.8%), the total number has increased.

Who are these people? Not only those who choose to move, but also around 34 million people who were **forced to leave their countries** — like refugees or asylum seekers escaping war, violence or danger.

Migration has always existed — it's part of human history. What really matters is how we decide to manage it.

14

SHIFTING
HEALTH
CHALLENGES

OUR
FUTURE
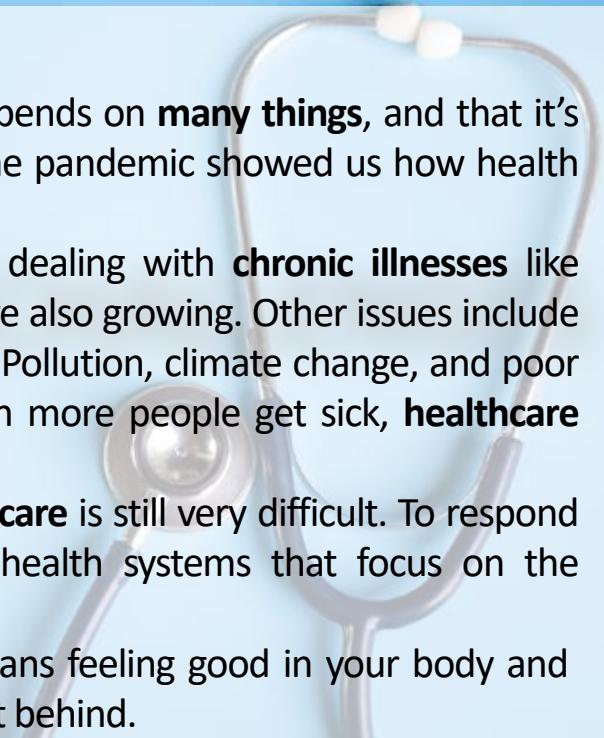
We now understand more than ever that health depends on **many things**, and that it's closely connected to the **environment** we live in. The pandemic showed us how health is a global issue and how quickly things can change.

Today, we face new challenges: more people are dealing with **chronic illnesses** like diabetes and obesity, and mental health problems are also growing. Other issues include an aging population and the spread of **new viruses**. Pollution, climate change, and poor living conditions also make people sicker, and when more people get sick, **healthcare costs** go up.

In many parts of the world, **access to basic medical care** is still very difficult. To respond to all these challenges, we need stronger, fairer health systems that focus on the wellbeing of all people.

Because health is not just "not being sick" — it means feeling good in your body and mind. And that matters for everyone, with no one left behind.

FUTURE AND MEGATRENDS
An essential guide for Youth Workers

WHAT ARE MEGATRENDS?

Megatrends are global forces of change that are transforming the world on a planetary scale. They are not passing fads, but profound transformations that develop over decades and influence all aspects of society: the economy, technology, the environment, culture and social relations.

Key characteristics:

They occur simultaneously in different parts of the world, but with local specificities

They are interconnected and influence each other

14 GLOBAL MEGATRENDS

What are they?

The <u>Competence Center on Foresight</u> has identified 14 global megatrends that represent the most significant forces of change for the future, which are:

1. Increasing demographic imbalances
2. Continuing urbanisation
3. Accelerating technological change and hyperconnectivity
4. Climate change and environmental degradation
5. Expanding influence of East and South (New Power Balances)
6. Aggravating resource scarcity
7. Growing consumption
8. Widening inequalities
9. Changing nature of work
10. Changing security paradigm
11. Increasing influence of new governing systems
12. Increasing significance of migration
13. Diversification of education and learning
14. Shifting health challenges

A matter of perspective

As we have seen, megatrends affect all parts of the world, but they present very different challenges and opportunities depending on local contexts and global power dynamics.

This difference is fundamental to understanding why young people can experience the same global phenomena in completely different ways. Below, we will give examples of some of the 14 megatrends to better explain this difference in perspective.

Let us consider the increase in demographic imbalances (1): while Europe faces an ageing population and the challenge of sustaining its pension system with fewer and fewer young workers, other countries around the world must manage large youth populations seeking employment and fulfilment. In the so-called "North of the world", the problem is often a lack of young people; in the "South of the world", the problem is finding space for all the young people entering the labour market. This same megatrend therefore generates opposing needs: the North could benefit from more young workers, while the South needs to create millions of new jobs.

Acceleration of technological change and hyperconnectivity (3): in high-income countries, automation threatens to replace many existing jobs, creating anxiety about technological unemployment. In low-income countries, on the other hand, technology can represent an opportunity to leapfrog entire stages of development: innovative digital solutions are being created here precisely because they start from less established infrastructures. The digital divide is not only an obstacle, but can become a competitive advantage for those who know how to exploit new technologies.

Climate change and environmental degradation (4) reveal perhaps the most dramatic differences. The global North has contributed most to historical CO2 emissions, but often also has more resources to adapt to change: advanced technologies, resilient infrastructure, social protection systems. The Global South, despite having contributed less to the problem, often suffers the most devastating effects: desertification, extreme weather events, threats to food security. For young people, this means that the climate crisis is not just an environmental issue, but a matter of global justice.

The new balance of power (5) also shows opposing dynamics: while the North is seeing its global influence decline, the South is gaining increasing weight in the world balance. For young Africans or Asians, this may mean greater opportunities for South-South cooperation and the development of alternative models, while for young Europeans it may require, for example, rethinking their role in a multipolar world.

This North-South perspective should not be oversimplified, but rather help us understand why the same megatrend can be perceived as a threat in the North and an opportunity in the South, or vice versa. For a youth worker who works with young people from different backgrounds, understanding these differences is essential to facilitate dialogues that value different perspectives without falling into stereotypes or generalisations. Furthermore, presenting young people with both challenges and opportunities will increase their critical thinking skills and will not fuel that sense of uncertainty and mistrust towards the future.

TALKING ABOUT IT WITH YOUNG PEOPLE: HOW?

This brief introduction is not enough to explore the topic of the future and megatrends in depth – if you are interested, take a look at the Reference section, a document containing a webography on the topic, links to find the right tools and lots of advice from experts – but if you are a youth worker, teacher or educator who wants to start discussing the topic with a group of young people or a class, here are some tips on how to do it best.

Allow emotions to flow

Talking about the future can generate very different emotions in young people: enthusiasm, but also fear, uncertainty or disorientation. It is important to create a space where they can freely express what they feel. Feeling listened to, welcomed and not judged is the first step towards addressing major issues with greater awareness. Even those leading the group may feel affected by concerns or doubts: if you feel it is appropriate, feel free to share how you feel. This will help to create an atmosphere of trust and authenticity, which is essential for addressing complex issues such as those related to megatrends.

Work on protagonism

Addressing megatrends does not just mean describing future scenarios, but giving young people the tools to become active protagonists of change. Young people are not just recipients of the changes taking place: they can be protagonists. Climate and social rights activism, youth entrepreneurship, intercultural dialogue projects and the use of technology to generate positive impact are all examples of how young people can contribute first-hand to building a more equitable and sustainable future. Therefore, promote activities that encourage discussion, speaking out, and the co-creation of ideas and solutions. In this way, young people will feel part of the process and develop the awareness that the future is not something to be endured, but something they can help to build.

Consider different perspectives

As we have seen, megatrends do not have the same effects everywhere in the world. It is important to encourage young people to think critically about global inequalities and the different perspectives between the global North and South. Include questions and activities that help to recognise these imbalances and promote a supportive and global outlook. Taking inspiration from the chapter "A question of perspectives", you could work with the group to identify challenges and opportunities for the remaining megatrends. Educating for inclusion also means learning to view the world with greater nuance and awareness.

Spread the word about skills

In the discussion about the future and megatrends, the need to develop certain key skills will emerge. These include critical thinking and the ability to adapt to change, which will become increasingly essential in a constantly evolving world. Advanced digital skills, intercultural sensitivity and the ability to work in diverse teams help young people to navigate global contexts effectively. Equally important is the ability to be creative and resourceful, to imagine new solutions and give shape to original ideas. Mention these skills to them and allow for a brief moment of discussion and debate on the topic.

TO SUM UP

Megatrends are not predictions but trends that are already underway

They manifest themselves differently in different contexts but have common dynamics

They create both challenges and opportunities for young people

Young people can be active players in shaping these changes

Cultural diversity is an asset for understanding and addressing megatrends

The future is not predetermined but can be influenced by today's choices

Annex 6 - Lighting Futures
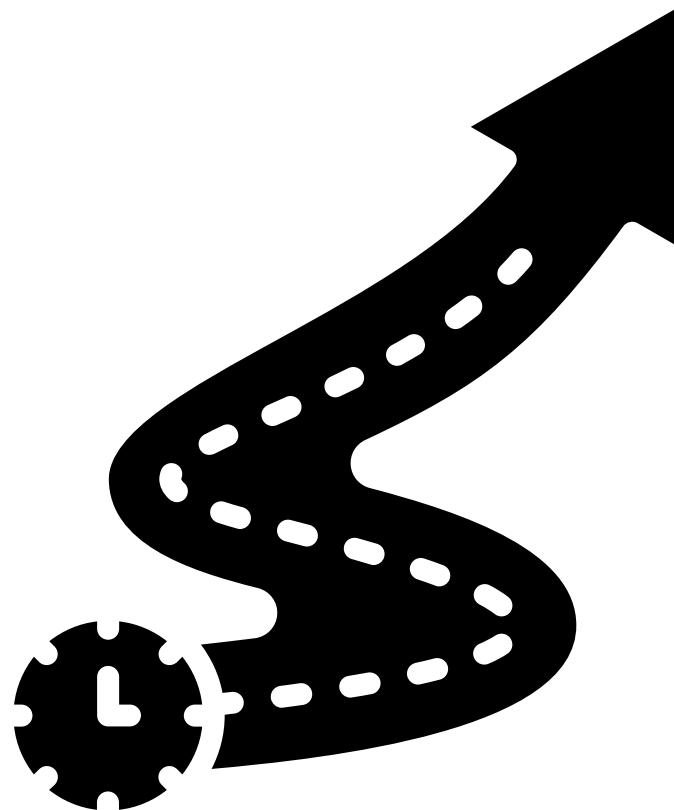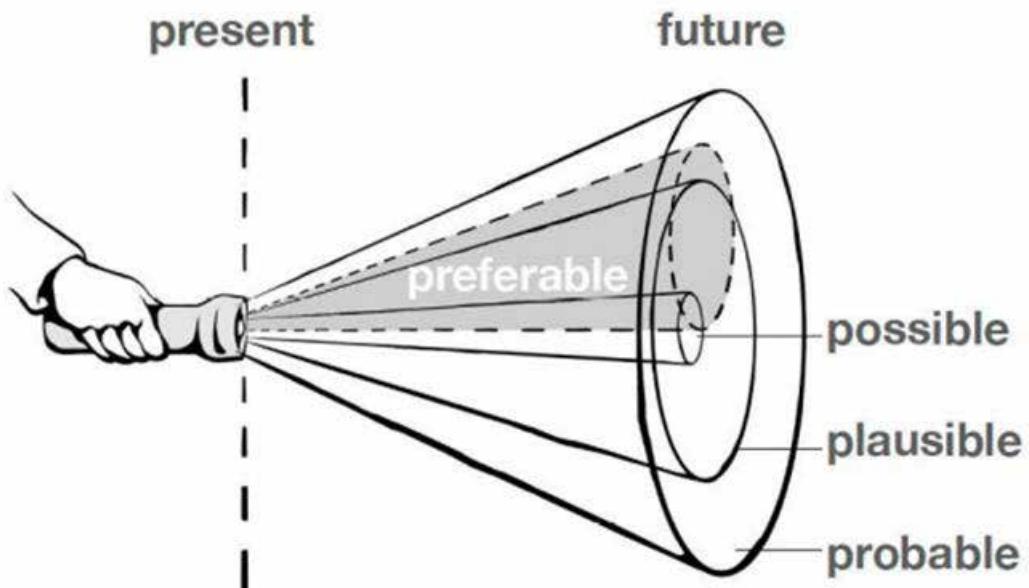
Figure 1: Speculative Design is the idea of possible futures and using them as tools to better understand the present and to discuss the kind of future people want, and, of course, ones people do not want. (Source: own representation according to Dunne & Raby, 2013)

The image illustrates the concept of the "Future Cone," a model used in futures studies to visualize different types of possible futures. The model shows that the future is not a single point, but rather a range of possibilities expanding over time.

Possible futures: Everything that could happen, without logical or scientific limits.

Plausible futures: Futures that could happen based on current scientific and technological knowledge.

Probable futures: Futures that are most likely to occur, based on current trends.

Preferable futures: The desired futures — those we aspire to and work toward.

Annex 7 - Local examples from Tunisia

1. Climate Change and Environmental Degradation: Tunisia has been through its worst drought on record, causing dams to drop to ~25-30% capacity.
2. Energy Transition: Tunisia signed an agreement ("H2 Notos") with TotalEnergies, VERBUND, etc., to produce green hydrogen using solar & wind power in South Tunisia. The idea is to export it to Europe.
3. Artificial Intelligence and Automation: Tunisia is using AI to help draft its 2026–2030 development plan, analyzing data to choose priorities like healthcare, renewables, etc. Also, an AI-innovation hub opened in Sousse with help from Nvidia to train young engineers and do pilot AI projects.
4. Digitalization and Data Economy: Tunisia is building what would be Africa's first completely digital hospital, with telemedicine and digital systems so people across the country can access specialized care even if they live far away.
5. Demographic Shifts: The 2024 Tunisian census revealed older population is growing: percentage over age 60 has risen a lot. Fewer children under 5. Births & marriages sharply declined in 2024.
6. Urbanization and Megacities: Because so many people moved to cities, there are neighborhoods with poor services: no proper roads, stuff like mud roads in rainy season, lack of electricity or water in some areas.
7. Global Power Shifts and Multipolarity: Tunisia has large numbers of sub-Saharan migrants trying to cross to Europe. Recently, authorities dismantled many makeshift camps (e.g. near Sfax), moved people, sometimes deporting.
8. Health and Longevity Revolution: Because Tunisia's population is aging (people are living longer), the government officially made geriatrics (care for older people) a medical specialty.
9. Rising Inequality and Social Polarization: A man was sentenced to death for Facebook posts criticizing the president.
10. Global Supply Chain Reconfiguration: During COVID-19, stores ran out of toilet paper, and PlayStations, showing how dependent we were on global supply chains. Now, countries are producing more locally.
11. Shifting Values and Consumer Behavior: Fashion brands are showing support to the humanitarian crisis in Gaza and Gen Z are continuously boycotting brands that are engaged in the genocide.
12. Technological Convergence: The government is working with WHO on policies ("Health in All Policies") to reduce risk factors like unhealthy food, inactivity, etc. That involves using data, awareness campaigns, policy changes: part of the digital/data shift in health.
13. Geopolitical Fragmentation and Security Challenges: Tunisia dismantled camps of subSaharan African migrants, forcibly deported many, amid tensions with locals and debates over government treatment and human rights.
14. Food, Water, and Resource Security: Tunisia raised drinking water prices (up to ~16%) because of drought and low dam capacity.

- What is the WORST thing that could happen with the evolution of this megatrend?
- How would it affect people?
- Would it have the same impact on everyone or people in situations of vulnerability would be more affected?

- What is the BEST thing that could happen with the evolution of this megatrend? How
- would it affect people?
- Would it have the same impact on everyone or people in situations of vulnerability would be more affected?
- Why?

Among these,
which are the MOST
DESIRABLE to happen?

How do these foresights INTERACT with the other megatrends?

OUR FUTURE ▶

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Webography:

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    Other Resources: https://knowledge4policy.ec.europa.eu/resources_en? f%5B0%5D=knowledge_service%3AForesight

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