

# Education Sector Group Strategy Session

Asian Development Bank

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# Futures Thinking

Study

# Strategic Foresight

Action-oriented approach

# Discipline of Anticipation

Capacity or ability

Use the Future to  
Innovate in the Present

Not Prediction

# Insight

the capacity to gain an accurate or deep understanding  
of a thing or a situation

the future does  
not exist yet



Anticipate possibilities

Envision

Invent

Implement

Evaluate

# Revision

(refresh the vision)

Re-envision

Ideas, insights, stories,  
imagination



# UAE's Minister of Future: Imagination, ideas are the commodities of the future



UAE's Minister of Cabinet Affairs and the Future Mohammed Al-Gergawi delivers his opening remarks.  
(Screengrab)

“The future is like an ocean  
where we can sail almost  
anywhere, in any direction”

“An asset, a resource, a tool that  
can be employed”

“Like the past, it is an active aspect of the present”

“Strategic foresight is the ability to create and maintain a high-quality, coherent and functional forward view, and to use the insights arising in useful organisational ways. For example to detect adverse conditions, guide policy, shape strategy, and to explore new markets, products and services. It represents a fusion of futures methods with those of strategic management”

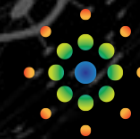
# The future in context

- 1) The **future does not exist yet**. But we can anticipate possibilities.
- 2) **No single future** but futures – implies plurality and multiplicity
- 2) The aim is **not prediction** but insight
- 3) Not neutral
- 4) That values, belief systems, and culture have roles to play in describing and creating reality – **alternatives and preferred**;
- 5) The future can be created through **engaged foresight**;
- 6) Deep reflection accentuates our inner selves, personal or social ethics, family, ethnicity, culture, kindness and compassion drives alternative and preferred futures to occur.



# Futures Thinking

- Long-range
- Examines the range of possible, probable and plausible futures
- What if questions and scenarios – move out from the present to imagine and create new possibilities
- Reconfigure the present – i.e. rethinking governance, calls into question of how we organize social, economic, make sense of technology, etc.
- Vision-oriented
- Leads to social transformation
- Acknowledge the fact that people and institutions perceives and constructs the world in different ways



# Expected Outcome/Possible Results

- New questions and ideas
- Enhanced capacity to use the future to innovate today
- Developed capacity to use imagination to innovate and catalyze change in the present
- Inspected, scanned, probed the drivers of change – visible and barely visible
- Created scenarios of alternative and preferred future environments
- Evidence of alternative, preferred and integrated future worlds – authentic prototypes and proof of concepts
- Actionable insights – strategies, plans, program, project and policy concepts, possibly new metrics and indicators of change, development and progress, leadership and change management agenda, etc.





Rapid Fire  
Futures Thinking  
Workshop

# Group Workshop (5 minutes)

Organize ourselves along the five domains to improve teaching and learning at a minimum/maximum of 6 to 8 members per group:

1. New technology to deliver better education
2. Measuring and tracking learning deficits at TVET and higher education
3. Skills for jobs
4. Open - Select a topic from a pre-identified list of additional topics
5. Open - Select a topic from a pre-identified list of additional topics

# Task (35 minutes)

- If your preferred outcome of (specific to your topic/domain) was a news headline or a viral hashtag in 2030, what might that news headline or hashtag be?
- What were the 1) promising initiatives, 2) gaps that were filled/addressed/resolved and 3) new instruments that enabled ADB to achieve the preferred outcome/news headline?
- If the news or success story was a metaphor, what might that metaphor be?

Major new instruments  
to capitalize on  
opportunities and  
minimize the challenges?  
(pulls/enablers)

Preferred outcome/  
news headline

Promising  
initiatives  
(pushes)

Gaps that needs  
filling  
(challenges)

## Task (12 minutes)

From your preferred outcome or news headline and conversations triangle map, assess:

- What is ADB doing well?
- What is ADB missing?
- What are your new suggestions going forward?

# GROUP PRESENTATION

Group will present for 5 minutes each.

The report/presentation should highlight:

1. The news headline in 2030;
2. The promising initiatives, gaps that were filled/addressed/resolved/ and new instruments that enabled ADB to achieve the preferred outcome/news headline;
3. The core metaphor of the success story/news headline;
4. Assessments on what ADB is doing well, what was missing and suggestions.

TEA/COFFEE BREAK

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**SYNTHESIS, OVERALL FEEDBACK  
AND ANNOUNCEMENTS**