

## Rethinking education through imagining future scenarios

2-4 September 2015, Bangkok, Thailand

By Dorothy Lucardie, Board Member, Adult Learning Australia

In September 2015, participants from community-based learning and non-formal education practitioners, including ASPBAE members, attended a Futures Literacy Knowledge Laboratory that focussed on '*Rethinking Education through Imagining Future Scenarios*'. The workshop was sponsored by UNESCO Bangkok and the Chulalongkorn University Department of Lifelong Education as part of UNESCO's global efforts to rethink education.



The goals of the workshop on '*Rethinking Education through Imagining Future Scenarios*' were to develop participant capacities to use foresight tools and become future literate.

The goals of the workshop were to develop participant capacities to use foresight tools and become future literate. By adopting a laboratory approach, facilitators hoped to develop communities of practice that would encourage the use of anticipatory systems and processes for learning and sustainability and that would generate new ideas and insights to enable community-based learning and non-formal education to engage in societal transformation and search for greater sustainability.

ASPBAE members attending were B.K. Shrestha (Nepal), Nitin Paranjape (India), Ehsanur Rahman (Bangladesh), Qamar Bashir (India), Abdur Rakib (Bangladesh), Shanta Laxmi Khadgi (Nepal), Dorothy Lucardi (Australia), and Cecilia Soriano (ASPBAE, Philippines). A number of these members have been participating in a small working group on Futures Literacy that was formed at ASPBAE's Festival of Learning that was held in Jogjakarta, Indonesia, in 2014.

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One of the highlights for me as a participant was working in groups using Casual Layered Analysis to imagine futures, based on the consequences of current reality and then our preferred ideal future. Using our imaginations was greeted enthusiastically by all groups, particularly when given the opportunity to identify what would be ideal. The harder work was identifying what was happening in the present that would drive these possible futures and what were the underlying belief systems that supported the continued existence of these drivers.

By delving down into the causes of the future I learnt the importance of the present. While the workshop title highlighted the 'future', the techniques enabled us to see that the present was the most relevant platform to influence what the future may be. So rather than seeing the future as inevitable, mostly negative and non-sustainable, we could use anticipatory thinking to identify key drivers in the present that we could change and therefore have a different possible future that is more positive and sustainable.



Using Futures Literacy processes, such as anticipatory thinking and imagining the future, will be important tools for ASPBAE and its members to re-think education policy, systems, and delivery.

As we do not know everything that is likely to happen in the future (including new inventions, natural phenomenon, conflict between and within nations) I think this way of future thinking is a very empowering process. It is different from other types of strategic planning or scenario planning as it is not a direct linear response, but provides possibilities and, as a process, it acknowledges the importance and impact of belief systems from across cultures. We will not know exactly what will be in the future, but we will have the opportunity to modify the present to steer in the best direction.



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I believe using Futures Literacy processes, such as anticipatory thinking and imagining the future, will be important tools for ASPBAE and its members to re-think education policy, systems, and delivery in a way that expands our opportunities and will help identify what we need to do in the present for the best possible future.

ASPBAE members will continue to work with the established ASPBAE working group and UNESCO to share the application of these ideas in local communities.

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