



Futures Conference 2026

The 26th Futures Conference focused on the critical theme of the sustainability transformation. This fundamental shift will renew societal and economic systems and practices, while also enhances human agency, well-being and quality of life. The conference was organised in collaboration with Sustainability Transformations Doctoral Education Pilot (SusTra) during 9–10 June 2026 in the University of Turku, Finland.

We were happy to host 320 participants from 43 different countries, representing all the continents of the world. The two intensive conference days consisted of three keynote lectures and six parallel sessions with nearly 50 tracks of different paper sessions and participatory workshops.

In the beginning of the first day, we had the pleasure of hearing an excellent introduction to the theme from the Chair of the Conference Scientific Board, Adjunct Professor **Katriina Siivonen** from Finland Futures Research Centre (FFRC).

Our warm thanks and gratitude to the distinguished keynotes: Professor **Inger Birkeland** (Norway), Professor **Per Högselius** (Sweden) and Associate Professor **Geci Karuri-Sebina** (South Africa). This special conference issue includes articles that provide insights into their keynote speeches and well as some of the sessions organised during the days.

The organising team wants to express heartfelt thanks to Professor **Arto O. Salonen** and Research Manager **Meri Löyttyniemi** from SusTra for an excellent and smooth co-operation in preparing and running the event.

We would like to thank warmly our excellent master's student **Tania Wijerathna** for her invaluable work helping us to organise the event successfully. Special thanks go also to all the writers in this issue and of course to our whole conference team: Scientific Board and all the session chairs and moderators. Thank you all for your hard work and good spirits!

Save the Date for the Next Year's Event

We hope you enjoyed the programme and your stay in Turku, met old and made new friends, and gained new knowledge and lots of good memories.

The theme for the next Futures Conference will be '*Varieties of Futures Knowledge – Theories and Practices*'. The event will be organised again onsite in Turku, Finland during 16–17 June. You can find more information about the event on page 13.

We hope to see you all in June 2027 in Turku, Finland!

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Transformation Through a Long Temporal Lens

Opening the 26th Futures Conference, Adjunct Professor **Katriina Siivonen** (FFRC, University of Turku) introduced Sustainability, Temporalities and Futures through a long view of transformation. Temporalities, she noted, invite us to look not only towards futures but also towards pasts, continuities and disruptions.

Siivonen defined transformation as simultaneous change in everyday actions, values and worldviews, and societal structures. It may proceed slowly but across several contexts at the same time.

She traced this process from the Iron Age through Christianisation, the Reformation and Enlightenment, industrialisation and nation states. Across these periods, knowledge, beliefs, institutions and everyday life changed together. Human relations with nature became increasingly extractive as production and consumption expanded. By the 1960s, she noted, further material growth no longer strengthened wellbeing in Finland.

The Transformation We Are Living Through

Another transformation is underway, marked by digital information flows, global production, misinformation, inequality and ecological crises. Climate change, biodiversity loss and transgressed planetary boundaries show its severity. At the same time, decolonialism, global justice, rights of nature and relational understandings of humans as part of nature point in other directions.

What should be sustained or transformed over the next hundred, five hundred or even thousand years?

The Paradox of Cultural Sustainability Transformation

Drawing on **Donella Meadows'** leverage points, Siivonen noted that legal, economic and institutional measures are necessary, but identified values, worldviews and the actions arising from them as the strongest and most difficult leverage point. From a cultural research perspective, she interpreted this as a cultural leverage point.

Her central claim was that cultural sustainability transformation is necessary: there can be no sustainability transformation without it. Yet it cannot guarantee the outcome because culture cannot simply be controlled. She called this the paradox of cultural sustainability transformation. Participation and human agency are necessary but cannot guarantee sustainability.

The keynote closed by returning to her earlier image of "asking for in the forest", drawn from the Finnish words *pyytää* and *metsästää*. She asked whether we could see ourselves as part of nature while taking seriously the scientific message of planetary boundaries. From there, she broadened the question to everyday consumption, asking what we demand from nature for food, clothing, housing and travel. She concluded by expressing the hope that the conference would help us find new ways of relating to nature through the ways we produce and consume. •

Find detailed programme, information about the Keynote Speakers and much more on the Conference website: futuresconference2026.com



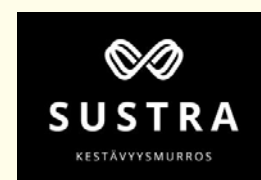
Organising Partner of the Futures Conference 2026:

SusTra Educates Forty Sustainability Experts in Finland

Sustainability Transformations (SusTra) is a doctoral education pilot implemented jointly by ten Finnish universities and the Finnish Environment Institute. The doctoral education pilot will train 40 doctoral researchers in 2025–2027. The Ministry of Education and Culture in Finland, together with the Research Council of Finland, has granted funding for SusTra, and the participating universities have hired the students admitted to the doctoral education pilot.

University of Turku is one of SusTra universities with six doctoral researchers in this pilot. Two of them, **Tarian Jenkins** and **Janna Jokela**, are doing their doctoral research at the Finland Futures Research Centre on the general theme cultural sustainability transformation and futures studies. In addition, the University of Turku has two doctoral researchers in biodiversity sciences and two in geography.

Sustainability transformations research is interdisciplinary and solution-oriented, focusing on climate change, biodiversity loss and depletion of natural resources. Themes of research include, citizens' lifestyles, planetary health and well-being, production and consumption, governance and law, and cultural transformations. Read more: sites.uef.fi/sustras.



The Future of Extractivism: Navigating Planetary Boundaries, Wicked Problems and Geopolitical Turmoil

In his keynote at the Futures Conference 2026, Professor **Per Högselius** (KTH Royal Institute of Technology, Sweden) examined extractivism as a historical, technological, and infrastructural condition of modern life. Almost everything we do, he argued, depends on resources extracted from nature, yet the same extraction that underpins our prosperity is breaching the planet's ecological limits. The result is an age of cognitive dissonance, and a set of wicked problems that will define the futures of resource use.

Resource Dependence and Cognitive Dissonance

Högselius opened with a simple observation made vast by arithmetic: humanity extracts around 100 billion tonnes of raw materials every year – roughly 12 tonnes per person, or 50 tonnes for a family of four. Modern comfort depends entirely on this, and many people in countries still seeking prosperity want to reach the same level. Yet extraction at this scale, he noted, is a central reason scientists conclude that at least seven of the nine planetary boundaries have already been breached. We want it to continue and we know it cannot: we live, he said, in an age of cognitive dissonance.

The Three Circles of Extractivism

To explain how the “great acceleration” became possible, Högselius offered the keynote's central framework: three circles of extraction. The first is technological – the machinery, mechanisation and automation of extraction, alongside the growing role of science, from nuclear fission and rare earths to petroleum geology and pulp-making. The second is infrastructural – the railways, canals, pipelines and LNG tankers that let countries consume resources they do not possess; his own Sweden, like Finland, became a major fossil-fuel consumer without any fossil fuels of its own. The third is ideological – nature imagined as a storehouse to be used, alongside political and economic systems that enable extraction. Högselius described imperialism and colonialism as exploitative technologies or algorithms, industrial capitalism as functioning like a tool, and the joint-stock company as an instrument for pooling capital into ever-larger extractive enterprises. These three circles, he stressed, mutually support one another rather than operating independently.

Acceleration, Substitution and Entanglement

Reading the present through the same three circles, he traced extraction growing more efficient and more fragile at once. Automation and AI let ever fewer workers extract ever more; fracking and horizontal drilling sustain oil out-

put, while low-grade ores leave mounting waste and pollute freshwater systems whose planetary boundary has already been breached. Efforts at substitution – cobalt-free batteries, green hydrogen for steel – sit beside deepening entanglement: a single smartphone now requires twenty to thirty different resources. On the infrastructure side, Högselius pointed to widened canals and the Belt and Road, but also to mounting fragility: the 2022 severing of Russian energy flows to Europe, the spring 2026 closure of the Strait of Hormuz, and low river levels idling French reactors.

Between Ecomodernism and Apocalyptic Extractivism

Two imagined futures dominate, he suggested. The ecomodernist vision trusts renewables, green hydrogen, the circular economy and “sustainable mining” to reconcile extraction with survival – attractive, he warned, precisely because it delegates change to scientists and engineers while citizens carry on as before. Its weakness is a naive faith in technological fixes which, as **Lewis Mumford's** once-hopeful oil and aluminium show, tend to breed new problems. The opposing apocalyptic vision foresees collapse, climate wars and a turn to degrowth and radical politics. He presented these as contrasting imagined futures rather than forecasts.

Operating beyond the Safe Space

Högselius closed by refusing both extremes. Whichever future we find more plausible, we already act outside the safe operating space, under ecological uncertainty and geopolitical turmoil that is reviving resource nationalism. Yet isolation is an illusion: our resource dependencies are so entangled that countries may go to war while still trading – as Russia, Ukraine and the EU do now. That same interdependence, he suggested, could instead force cooperation, and perhaps even a global regulation of extractivism capable of holding us back from destroying the systems we depend on. ●



Keynote

More than North Futures, More than South Possibilities

Associate Professor **Geci Karuri-Sebina** from the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, South Africa, and a leading scholar in futures studies, delivered a thought-provoking keynote entitled ‘More than North Futures, More than South Possibilities’. Rather than presenting new methods or practical tools, she invited the audience to pause and reflect on the assumptions that underpin futures thinking, particularly our understanding of time.

Rethinking Time Beyond Linear Progress

Karuri-Sebina challenged the dominant assumption that time is something to be organised, controlled, and optimised. Contemporary governance, planning, and futures work are often built around roadmaps, targets, milestones, and long-term visions extending to 2030, 2050, or beyond. Yet, she argued, these approaches rarely question the very conception of time on which they are based. Time is not simply a neutral parameter; it shapes how societies understand value, ambition, care, progress, and even the future itself. When our understanding of time becomes singular and linear, our capacity to imagine alternative futures also becomes limited.

Drawing on personal experiences, she illustrated how different cultural and environmental contexts reveal alternative temporalities. A visit to a Maasai community in Kenya left a lasting impression when elders explained that they relocate their settlement every seven years “so the termites can have their turn”. Rather than presenting this as an example of exotic Indigenous wisdom, she used it to question modern assumptions about permanence, coexistence, and renewal.

Sustaining or Sustainability?

A central distinction in the keynote was between *sustaining* and *sustainability*. Sustaining, she argued, focuses on keeping systems, organisations, institutions, and practices alive long after they have ceased to be meaningful. It seeks continuity through optimisation, efficiency, technological improvement, and perpetual growth. Sustainability, by contrast, follows the rhythms of nature, where endings are an essential part of renewal. Forests burn, seasons change, and organisms die, allowing new forms of life to emerge.

This distinction has important implications for futures thinking. Rather than asking how foresight can help systems survive indefinitely, practitioners should ask whether it enables genuine transformation. Continuing existing systems is not always synonymous with resilience; in many cases it merely delays necessary change. Instead, endings may be understood as an essential component of healthy social, ecological, and organisational cycles.

Multiple Temporalities and Future Practice

Karuri-Sebina introduced the metaphor of the *Entangled Time Tree*, an image developed with colleagues to illustrate that societies simultaneously experience multiple temporal rhythms rather than a single linear timeline. Ecological, technological, ancestral, ritual, cyclical, and recursive temporalities coexist and shape decisions in different ways. The purpose of the metaphor is not to replace one understanding of time with another, but to recognise the multiplicity of temporal experiences that already exist.

Applying this perspective to urban development, she challenged conventional planning approaches that prioritise permanence, efficiency, and predictability. Instead, she argued that sustainable cities require adaptable spaces, reversible infrastructure, and openness to change. Informal urban environments often demonstrate this flexibility by continuously responding to changing conditions, but she cautioned that formalising these adaptive practices may ultimately diminish the responsiveness that makes them effective.

A Changing Role for Foresight

Rather than diminishing the role of planners, architects, developers, or futurists, Karuri-Sebina emphasised that their responsibilities are evolving. Instead of directing predetermined futures, futures practitioners should create conditions in which diverse futures can emerge. This requires recognising when systems have reached the end of their useful life and supporting transitions rather than prolonging decline.

She concluded by suggesting that the greatest limitation in futures work is not the absence of methods but the assumptions embedded within existing methodologies. The temporal frameworks we adopt inevitably shape what we are able to imagine. Consequently, expanding futures thinking requires questioning these assumptions before seeking new solutions. •



Futures Session Imagining Transformative Futures: Methods and Visual Approaches

Imag(in)ing the Future: The Power of Imagination as a Driver to Sustainable Futures

In her presentation, **Vicky Karaïskou** raised the important topic of the role of imagination in driving societal transformations. Our imagination and creative ideas are confined by the walls of our minds. She presented her work that operates in the intersection of visual literacy and futures literacy: while futures literacy aims to reveal the assumptions impacting our images of futures, the visual literacy digs even deeper, to the roots of these assumptions.

Imageries of Sustainability Transformations – a Scoping Review on Positive Futures (or Their Absence)

The research by **Satu Lähteenoja** and **Aleksi Neuvonen** continued the same theme by discussing the urgent need for positive visions in our societies. Their scoping review of 158 sources, including academic articles, non-fiction books, policy reports, websites, and works of fiction, discovered significant shortages in the examined future visions. They discovered that the existing future visions rely heavily on technical solutions while the wider, necessary societal or economic changes are not discussed. Furthermore, the role of human agency is mainly seen from a narrow perspective as a technology user rather than considering civic action as a driver for the sustainability revolution. All in all, in the visions, the description of the transformation is rather simplistic and non-systematic.

Making Sense of Sustainability Transformations

Moving deeper into the transformation discussion, **Sanna Ketonen-Oksi** and **Minna Vigren**'s work discussed about the challenge of finding shared ground in the growingly popular transformation field. In their preliminary scoping review, they have discovered a growing fragmentation in the discussions on transformation. Some approaches focus on political and economic changes, while others highlight changes in relationships within systems or support small, local experiments. Their work maps out the core tensions in the transformation field and how these surface the different assumptions about agency, temporality, knowledge, and justice.

Future Images of Organizational Culture Transformation and Voluntary Employee Turnover in Chinese Accounting Firms

The work of **Jieni Zhu**, **Hanna Heino** and **Petri Tapio** discussed about the challenge of voluntary employee turnover in Chinese accounting firms. Their disaggregative delphi study found a clear gap between experts' desirable and probable views of organizational culture transformation in the examined companies. Changes related to how organizations work, like better systems thinking, more openness, and continuous learning, were seen as both important and likely to happen. However, changes focused on people, such as improving well-being, work-life balance, and equality, were seen as very important but unlikely to happen. Finally, four alternative images of the future were presented. ●



Futures session

Visual mindmap on insights from the session 'Sensing the future: arts-based practices for sustainability transformation' by Doctoral Researcher **Riikka Armanto**, Finland Futures Research Centre.

Futures Session Navigating Transformative Futures Across Time

Integrating Three Temporal Dimensions: A Hindsight-Insight-Foresight Methodology for Radical, Disruptive, and Sustainable Innovation

Uğur Şahan (CoreXas Consulting Group) began the session by proposing a methodology based on the dynamic integration of hindsight, insight, and foresight. Specifically, he introduced a five-stage framework that integrates these three temporal dimensions into a single adaptive workspace and channels their synthesis into innovation rather than analysis alone. The framework progresses from hindsight and foresight through insight to innovation and iterative learning. Building on this integrated understanding, it supports the development of radical and disruptive innovation systems while emphasizing continuous learning through iterative learning cycles during implementation. What Şahan particularly emphasized is that insight plays a critical role in connecting hindsight and foresight. Distinguished from sensemaking and sensing, insight functions as a process of temporal synthesis, crystallizing innovation opportunities through problem and need identification, pattern recognition, systems thinking, and contextual analysis.

From Neglecting to Embracing Futures in Sustainability Education

The discussion continued with **Liisi Pajula** (University of Tartu), who explored the role of futures literacy in fostering a sustainability mindset within the context of sustainability education. She argued that futures literacy is a theoretically integral but, so far, practically neglected feature of sustainability education. Rather than relying solely on predictions, Pajula suggested that learners should be encouraged to imagine desirable futures, thereby building a sense of agency and action for sustainability. She further emphasized the importance of critically reflecting on the concept of the “desirability” of futures. She concluded by highlighting the tension between capacity-building, or incrementalism, and transformation, raising questions about whether transformation is individual or social, and who decides its direction and scale.

2001: A Time Odyssey – Futures Beyond Spacetime

What is a time-need? How much time is needed? How is time measured and represented? These were some of the questions explored by **Veli Vormajoki** (University of Turku), **Mika-Petri Laakkonen** (Oulu University of Applied Sciences), and **Rajeeka Hannes** (University of Oulu) in their research. Vormajoki introduced the concept of time-needs to illustrate how different actors experience, measure, represent, coordinate, and control time in different ways. He argued that time should not be understood merely as a neutral background or a measure of duration. Instead, studying time-needs can reveal hidden conflicts and power relationships. Vormajoki further emphasized that futures studies also have time-needs. For example, forecasting often relies on shorter and more precise timeframes, whereas scenarios typically adopt longer and more open timeframes. He concluded by asking whose time-needs are included, ignored, or controlled.

Exploring the Joint Terrains of Futures Studies and Cartography

The last part of the session explored the potential joint intellectual terrains between futures studies and cartography through research by **Tero Villman** (University of Turku), **Eoin O’Sullivan** (University of Cambridge), **Toni Ahlqvist** (University of Turku), and **Rob Phaal** (University of Cambridge). Particular attention was given to cartographic metaphors in futures studies, including road-mapping, horizon scanning, and future pathways. They demonstrated that while cartographic practices rely on stable conventions and standardized cartographic symbols, futures studies still lack jointly developed standards, conventions, and features. They emphasized that cartography and map-making have great potential for developing shared principles and patterns for constructing and communicating futures knowledge. Finally, they suggested that design principles inspired by map-making and cartography, together with a common reference system and information-organising principles for foresight, can advance the use of temporal knowledge. ●

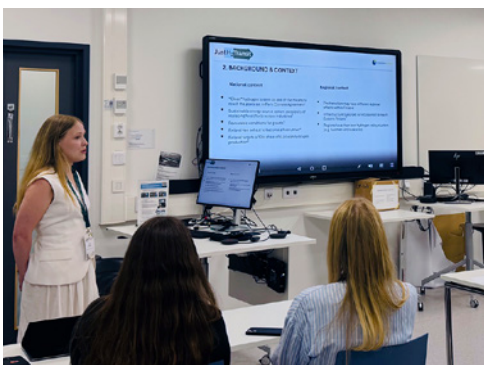


Feedback

"Networking opportunities, good presentations and interesting workshops."

"Very inspiring keynote speeches and many interesting presentations in the breakout sessions."

"Very important event for the field of futures studies and the possibility of meeting people. Yet if the event was in 3 days, it could be better for people to have time for all activities."



"Organisation was excellent, the programme on point and the engagement 100%."

"Maybe even too many tracks available between keynotes, it was difficult to choose which ones to attend. Good that all materials will be available on Howspace!"

"Interesting content and participants. Well-organised. Do not often have the chance to interact with this many futurists."

Feedback

Keynote

Imagining Sustainable Futures: Narratives of Place in Heritage-Making

Places can be deeply meaningful, weaving together past, present, and future. In her keynote speech, Professor **Inger Birkeland** (University of South-Eastern Norway, Norway) introduced place narratives as relationships between humans and land that shape visions of sustainable futures. Through imagination, she argues, heritage-making can become a form of future-making.

Two Place Narratives of Rjukan

Birkeland explores the concept of place narratives through the case of Rjukan, a town in Southern Norway. It was built during the industrial boom of the early 20th century, then subsequently experienced economic and social decline in the following decades. Birkeland was intrigued that within only a century, the town underwent both a rapid period of growth and a long, steady process of decline. She was able to identify two distinct place narratives of Rjukan. The first resembles a modern fairytale, telling the story of Rjukan's birth and growth. The second is a narrative of death where any images of positive futures are absent. This latter narrative became so powerful that similar developments elsewhere were referred to as a "Rjukan situation".

A new chapter began in 2015 when Rjukan was added to the UNESCO World Heritage List, preserving its human-made structures as a prime example of industrial heritage of the early 20th century. This new status prompted Birkeland to wonder whether a new place narrative might still emerge for Rjukan. More importantly, she began to question which voices are, and should be, included in the making of new or renewed narratives.

Heritage-Making as Future-Making

Birkeland approaches place as a bridging concept between dualisms such as nature and culture. Place is what holds

things together, connecting humans and land. Place narratives can transform relationships with places while carrying hopes and aspirations for futures. In the context of current sustainability crises, they can highlight relationships with land that have become imbalanced and are in need of healing.

However, Birkeland argues that the World Heritage framework is rather rigid in its understanding of preservation. What is currently being preserved at Rjukan are the fixed, human-made structures, including factory buildings, power plants, railroads, and other industrial infrastructure. According to Birkeland, preservation should instead focus on sustaining life processes. Drawing from animist perspectives as an alternative to mechanistic thinking, she emphasizes that change is unavoidable. The landscape of Rjukan has always been under transformation. Thousands of years ago, glaciers moving and melting shaped the landscape of Rjukan, and industrialisation later forged the area through human activity. Rather than preserving a fixed state, Birkeland argues for the acknowledgement of the living nature of the present. She highlights the need to discuss places in relation to multiple realities and world-views, thereby opening space for a multitude of temporalities and spatialities.

Towards a Multiverse

While traces of the past shape the present, imagined futures also influence current actions and agency. Birkeland emphasizes the need to reclaim the future by reclaiming imagination. She regards remembering and imagining as equally significant to perceptions of the present, and suggests that moving beyond familiar ways of thinking can enable new possibilities. Cultural heritage can connect people not only to the past and present, but also to open and plural futures.

Birkeland calls for an animist worldview where everything is connected, everything is alive, and humans exist as a part of the web of life. This means abandoning linear conceptions of time and purely geometrical understandings of place, and adopting multi-local and multi-vocal ways of engaging with the world. In this multiverse, infinite possibilities for futures exist simultaneously.

Finally, Birkeland also encourages researchers to bravely imagine the futures they want, not ones they think they ought to envision. She argues that imagination is very powerful and can focus attention on the possible. The capacity to dream and imagine possibilities and alternatives is essential for sustainable futures. As she concludes: dream on. ●



Futures Session Governing Uncertain Futures: Institutions Methods and Sustainability Competencies

Focusing on the Futures studies capability of helping societies and organisations with challenges of sustainability, security and governance, through four interconnected perspectives, this session explored how futures and foresight can support decision-making.

Participatory Futures Insights into the Complex Dynamics of Sustainable Peace in Tromsø, Norway

Timári Bálint (UiT, The Arctic University of Norway) opened the session by elaborating that absence of conflict is not the only meaning of peace. As a part of the Sustaining Peace Project's complexity, he conducted participatory futures workshops imagining Tromsø in 2050. This revealed the connection of sustainable peace with housing, transport, safety, inclusion and trust. He also identified Tourism growth, gentrification, and racism as potential pressures for peace in the region. Bálint emphasized that evenly distribution of peace requires inclusive governance and attention to local priorities.

Sustainability Competencies in the Workplaces: A Systematic Review

Lu Fu (University of Lapland) presented a systematic literature review on sustainability competencies in workplaces. Using PRISMA guidelines, they reviewed 23 peer-reviewed articles, and identified the gap between sustainability education and professional practice. They found that systems, anticipatory, strategic, collaborative and values-based thinking are important elements in working life, and foresight is a central competency for professionals. They also recognized leadership, political awareness, entrepreneurial initiative and connection to nature as workplace-specific needs. Fu introduced a four-dimensional model to help educators, employers and policymakers develop competencies for sustainability transitions.

Navigating Deep Uncertainty and Competing Temporalities: Using Delphi to Stress-Test Governance in the Geopolitical/Environmental Polycrisis

Aleksi Neuvonen's (Demos Helsinki) presentation explored how governance can prepare for geopolitical and environmental risks in the Gulf of Finland. He described a "polycrisis" in which war, climate change, pollution, infrastructure vulnerabilities and information disruption interact. They used a three-round Argument Delphi to stress-test governance under deep uncertainty, which produced four future scenarios, from technology-supported cooperation to a "security trap" where defence priorities displace environmental governance. Neuvonen emphasized that in deep uncertainty, testing assumptions and developing adaptive strategies is a necessary measurement.

Institutional Landscape and Practices of Futures Studies and Foresight in Ukraine

The session concluded with **Iryna Gerasymenko** (FFRC) and **Olena Sushyi** (Institute of Social and Political Psychology NAES of Ukraine) presenting their research on futures studies and foresight during war in Ukraine. They mapped activities across government, academia, business, civil society and international partners. Using the Futures Triangle, they showed how trauma and institutional weakness coexist with resilience, mobilisation, digital transformation and aspirations for recovery, freedom and a European future. They linked these dynamics to new parliamentary participatory foresight projects and psychosocial approaches to social forecasting. They argued that war is both an existential threat and a driver of new foresight practices. ●



Book Launch Our World of Futures Studies as a Mosaic (Part 2) – Diverse Regional Traditions and the Global Landscape

The Finland Futures Research Centre and the Finnish Society for Futures Studies celebrated the publication of *Our World of Futures Studies as a Mosaic 2*. Edited by **Tero Villman**, **Sirkka Heinonen**, and **Hazel Salminen**, this open-access anthology expands the mosaic concept introduced in 2024 by exploring regional contributions to futures studies worldwide.

The Mosaic Concept & Part 2

The book treats regional traditions as distinct parts of a larger global picture. While Part 1 focused mainly on pioneering European regions, Part 2 highlights perspectives that are less visible internationally. The book preserves the authors' original voices and linguistic nuances, ensuring that the perspectives remain authentic.

A key theme of the book is how language reflects perceptions of time and the future. For instance, Heinonen noted that the Finnish word *tulevaisuus* means “something that is coming and cannot be refused,” suggesting a view of the future as something moving toward the present. Salminen emphasizes that such meanings matter because language shapes how societies imagine time.

Futurist **Sohail Inayatullah** has praised the book for portraying futures studies as a layered and pluralistic field shaped by diverse perspectives, calling it essential reading.

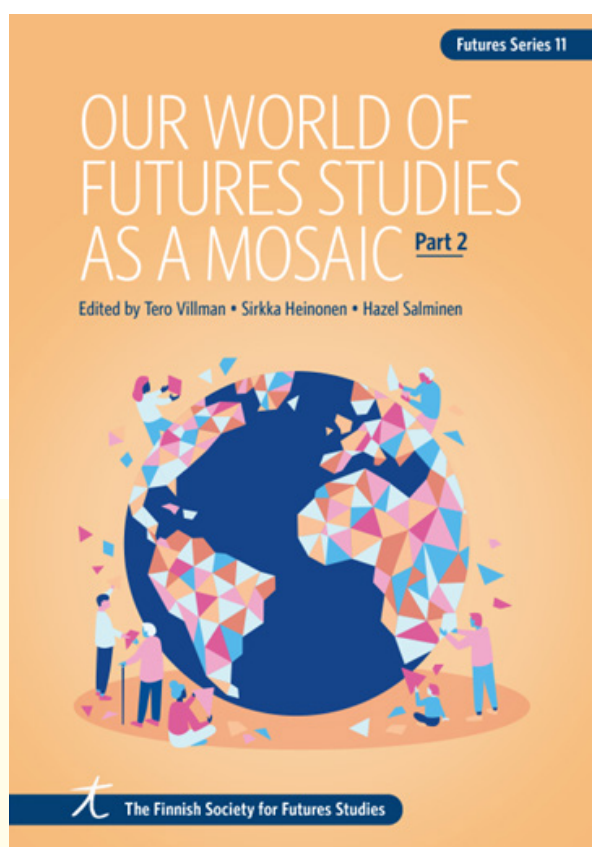
The book brings together contributions from multiple regions:

- **Africa & the Middle East:** **Muhammad Alaraby** examines the strategic trajectories of Egypt and the UAE within Arab Futures.
- **The Americas:** **Paola O. Aceituno** traces Chile's evolution toward institutionalized foresight, and **Guillermo Gándara Fierro** analyzes the Mexico 2050 project and its use of The Millennium Project's Global Challenges.
- **US & UK:** **Yuna Lee** and **Ian Miles** assess the UK National Foresight Program. Lee also explores the history of foresight in the US Congress through cycles of anticipatory democracy and anticipatory governance.
- **Asia:** **Shermon Cruz** highlights indigenous and decolonial foresight in the Philippines. Japan's chapter reviews 50 years of Science and Technology Foresight Surveys, including an analysis by **Yasuhiro Ura** (NI-STEP).
- **Europe:** **Iryna Gerasymenko** and **Olena Sushyi** use the Futures Triangle to examine Ukrainian foresight during wartime. Other chapters explore Hungary's transition from socialist prognostics to participatory foresight and **Patrick van der Duin's** analysis of Dutch foresight trends.
- **International Networks:** This part includes studies of the Foresight Europe Network (FEN) and a ten-year retrospective of the Ibero-American Foresight Network (RIBER).

Looking Ahead

The book launch concluded with discussions of ideas for Part 3, including a focus on grassroots civil society, the foresight architectures of organizations such as UNESCO, and oral histories documenting the pioneers of the field.

Although diversity is a richness in futures studies, it does not place the field in a bubble; rather, it remains connected under an umbrella of similarities. ●



Villman, Tero – Heinonen, Sirkka & Salminen, Hazel (eds.) (2026) *Our World of Futures Studies as a Mosaic. Part 2*. Futures Series 11, The Finnish Society for Futures Studies, Helsinki 2026.

The book is open-access and available for [download](#):



Committing to Fair Future for All, Forever?

With the 26th annual Futures Conference drawing to a close, Professor **Arto O.Salonen** reflects on the wealth of presentations offered by participants offering a multitude of solutions to the challenges of sustainability. With sustainability the challenge of our time and a responsibility shared by all the issues of climate change, biodiversity loss, and resource depletion cannot be solved by a narrow lens they require the systemic awareness of a planetary citizen.

The concept of planetary citizenship that the modern worldview is often dualistic, separating individuals, society, and the planet. Professor Salonen discussed that planetary citizenship provides a necessary scale for the sustainability transition because it recognises that human life is an inseparable part of a socio-ecological web.

Professor Salonen emphasizes that in a world of finite resources, our current high-consumption cultures – where everyday choices have global implications are no longer sustainable. Remarking on human nature, he observes that “people do not necessarily seek to harm one another, or the environment” yet poses the crucial question “then why do we continue to do so?”. He suggests that there is no single solution to the challenges posed by wicked problems instead, he proposes that human well-being and the

pursuit of a good life act as a bridge. By fostering belonging and expanding our sense of responsibility, planetary citizenship becomes the essential tool for encouraging change and systematic transformation.

In his closing, Professor Salonen’s powerful message “we should learn from history, but our actions will be judged by future generations” invites us all to reflect on our own actions and research. As an attendee at the Futures Conference the message resonates with the ethos of developing lasting solutions, that not only benefit people of the present but generations to come. ●



Organising a conference is always a huge team effort. We would like to thank warmly all the moderators, which we had a pleasure of having to assist us during the conference days. Special thank you to our brilliant conference intern **Tania Wijerathna** (sixth from the left) for all the hard work for making the event succesfull!

Futures Studies Summer School Challenged Us to Rethink Time and Sustainability



Is time a straight line from past to future, or does it twist and turn along the way? This was one of the questions explored in this year's Futures Studies Summer School, organised by the Finland Futures Academy (FFA).

Held from 4 May 4 to 22 June, the Summer School aligned with the theme of the annual Futures Conference 'Sustainability, Temporalities and Futures'. The summer school is a themed course that changes yearly, always connecting to the conference's content – and this year, students delved into sustainability and temporalities through the lens of futures studies. The program included four lectures and participation in both days of the conference.

The Lectures Approached Sustainability in Futures Studies from Diverse Angles:

- Associate Professor **İdil Gaziulusoy** (Aalto University) opened the course with a lecture on creative, critical, and speculative methods, sparking reflections in students' learning journals. Many noted the realisation that methods are never neutral; every choice implicitly reveals whose futures are deemed possible.
- Adjunct Professor, Senior University Lecturer **Katriina Siivonen** (FFRC, University of Turku) examined cultural sustainability transformation, surprising students with how values and cultural worldviews can act as slow yet powerful levers of change – potentially more enduring and effective than technology or policy alone.
- Professor **Petri Tapio** (FFRC, University of Turku) explored the relationship between futures studies and sustainability, prompting students to question their own assumptions about which methods suit which questions. Several admitted unconsciously defaulting to familiar, "hard" methods.

- Associate Professor **Geci Karuri-Sebina** (University of the Witwatersrand, South Africa) challenged linear conceptions of time, arguing that past, present, and future are intertwined in complex ways. This idea resonated deeply; one student summarised their insight as: "This time is not mine" – a poignant reflection on time's uncontrollability.

Beyond lectures, students attended the conference itself, which – according to their learning diaries – helped concretise the course's themes. Highlights included playful and participatory futures methods, as well as storytelling and world-building as tools for imagining futures. One student was particularly inspired by a board game testing the impacts of societal trajectories. Many were surprised by how effectively these approaches made abstract futures thinking tangible. Discussions also arose around epistemic justice – whose voices are heard in futures discourse and whose are silenced – as well as observations about declining future optimism among young people, both of which provoked deep reflection.

In their course reflections, students emphasised a renewed curiosity about the changing world. Many described how their understanding of futures and sustainability had expanded concretely, with course themes connecting unexpectedly directly to their own fields or work. This year's summer school seemed to strike a balance, offering both theoretical and methodological insights from four distinct yet complementary perspectives on sustainability.

Warm thanks to all lecturers and students for their active and thought-provoking participation! We already look forward to where next year's course will take us. ●

Finland Futures Academy (FFA) is a network of nine Finnish universities promoting and co-ordinating academic futures education in Finland. Read more: tvanet.fi/en

Study Futures Studies

Are You the Next Expert of the Futures?

The Master's Degree Programme in Futures Studies at the Turku School of Economics (University of Turku, Finland) is designed to educate foresight experts who help organisations to harness future opportunities and avoid unnecessary risks. The programme trains students to become professionals who are competent to choose from various methods when facing a particular development challenge.

The students enrolled in the programme will take a Master of Social Sciences degree, the size of 120 ECTS credits. The two-year programme is instructed in English. The next application period is open during January 2027.

Read more: <http://ty.fi/fs-masters>



Research

Strategic Research Council Project SISU Seeks for Sufficiency Solutions

The interdisciplinary project Sufficiency Solutions for a Resilient, Green, and Just Finland (SISU) identifies widely acceptable sufficiency solutions that will ensure that sustainability transformation and basic welfare state promises can be realized even in conditions where the economy does not grow or where growth is minimal.

The SISU project has several interlinked research objects and goals. First, it models the macroeconomic impacts of new sufficiency solutions to help people recognize different alternative futures, and the effects and experiences related to them. Secondly, it has as a goal to identify existing and emerging forms of vulnerability that may be exacerbated by changes in the economic structure. The aim is to empower and strengthen the agency of vulnerable individuals during the societal transformation period. Thirdly, the goal of SISU is to identify processes by which the trust and resilience of Finnish society is maintained and strengthened in the progress of sustainability transformation.

The fourth goal of SISU is to support cultural sustainability transformation by providing spaces where people can create heritage futures – meanings, practices, and skills – with the aim to leave future generations as a heritage a more sustainable world. This part of the research is led from Finland Futures Research Centre (FFRC). The work is based on the development work led at the FFRC and done in the project Dynamic Museum and Heritage Futures Workshop as instruments for ecological reconstruction (DYNAMO), funded by The Finnish Innovation Fund Sitra and Finnish Heritage Agency during 2020–2022.

The work on different SISU themes is combined in the transition arena, which will develop ways to utilize and apply sufficiency solutions in different areas of society. As a project funded by the Strategic Research Council (SRC) of Finland, societal impact is wanted and expected.

SISU is part of the JUST TRANSITION program funded by the SRC during 2023–2029. The SISU consortium consists of research teams from the University of Eastern Finland, Demos Helsinki, LUT University, University of Turku and (South-Eastern Finland University of Applied Sciences XAMK). The consortium is led by Professor Arto O. Salonen from the University of Eastern Finland. The part of SISU at the FFRC is led by Adjunct Professor, Senior University Lecturer Katriina Siivonen, deputy PI of SISU, who led also the DYNAMO project. ●

More information: <https://sisu-stn.fi/en/> and <https://sites.utu.fi/dynamo/en/>

Welcome to Futures Conference 2027

VARIETIES OF FUTURES KNOWLEDGE – THEORIES AND PRACTICES

16–17 June 2027 | University of Turku | Turku, Finland

The main theme of the Futures Conference 2027 invites us to explore the multiple faces of futures studies and the diverse knowledge claims associated with them. At the heart of these claims lies the human and societal capacity to imagine, anticipate, and engage with futures. Individuals, organisations, and other collective actors continually build expectations, construct images of the future and scenarios, and open new temporal horizons.

- What kinds of futures knowledge do we need in the present moment, and how can such knowledge be cultivated?
- What counts as futures knowledge, who can claim authority over it, and how are its credibility, legitimacy, and value established across different knowledge traditions?
- How are futures knowledge and future imaginaries shaped by power, politics, positionality, and questions of inclusion, exclusion, responsibility, and accountability?
- How is futures knowledge mobilised, contested, neglected, or transformed in societies and organisations, and with what consequences?

We welcome you to explore these questions and many more!

The event will be organised in close collaboration with Finland Futures Academy (FFA) and its member universities.

Important Dates

Call for papers available:
October 2026

Abstract submission starts:
October 2026

Deadline for the abstracts:
25 January 2027

Notification of acceptance:
1 March 2027

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UNIVERSITY
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FINLAND FUTURES
RESEARCH CENTRE



Research

Culture as a Strengthenener of Local Communities and Environment

We rarely notice networking and impact of cultural production on nature and local communities. At most, we are aware of the economic significance of the cultural production in non-urban areas. The wider impact is easily obscure. In the four-year Horizon Europe project IN SITU: Place-based innovation of cultural and creative industries in non-urban areas (2022–2026), we have studied the activities of cultural and creative industries in non-urban areas on a European scale.

In addition to statistical, macro level analysis, qualitative research has been carried out together with local communities in six countries, of which Finland is one. In all, the project included 13 partners from 12 countries. In Finland, the local research area has been Rauma and Eurajoki. From the University of Turku, the research has been conducted in futures studies and landscape studies.

Culture and Creative Industries Are Part of Non-Urban Infrastructure

The value of work in the cultural and creative industries in non-urban areas is perceived as part of a multidimensional systemic whole by using qualitative research methods. The characteristics of the work and the traces of slow but effective work are poorly visible in the official statistics.

The key values of the work are commitment to one's own through emotion, cooperation instead of competition, and care for communities and the environment. The work is characterised by female dominance, cross-sectoral cooperation and intergenerational work. From an economic point of view, private and collective trademarks are significant instead of the patents, which are characteristic of urban areas. Alongside of producing goods and services, maintaining the local ecosystem is the central goal of the work.

The work of the cultural and creative industries has the potential to strengthen local communities, people's well-being and the state of nature. The work is widely visible as intangible well-being outside its own activities. Visitors to the areas also become part of this ecosystem, both as recipients and givers. Nature, communities and both local people and visitors interact as parts of the ecosystem.

The professional activities of the cultural and creative industries are central to the economy of rural communities. Digitalisation gives it the opportunity to spread beyond its own geographical area. However, the significance of work is not only economic, but it becomes a fundamental part of the local infrastructure. The activities are anchored in libraries, museums, schools and associations. Volunteer work is strongly intertwined with professional work in the cultural sectors in public and private organisations. Both professional and voluntary work are done out of passion and often in precarious conditions. This easily leads to burnout. This also weakens the effects of work on the well-being of communities and nature.

Recognition of the Special Characteristics of Non-Urban Culture and Creative Industries Deserves Attention in Public Support

Public support for the activities of the sectors is of paramount importance. The European policy recommendations of the IN SITU project are built on the characteristics of the cultural and creative industries in non-urban areas. Cultural and innovation policy must be based on a deep understanding of the nature of the activities. Six areas that need support emerge in the policy recommendations:

1. The evaluation of activities should be community-based and cover social innovation and collective trademarks.
2. The research must support the opportunities of local communities to participate in the research and benefit from its results.
3. Development work must be carried out on a long-term basis to support the slow impact of cultural work.
4. European development work must take into account peripheral regions and their special characteristics.
5. The effects of the digital and green transitions must be monitored in non-urban areas.
6. Research and administration must support cooperation between informal and public actors.

The University of Turku's share of the IN SITU project was led by Senior University Lecturer in Futures Studies Katriina Siivonen and Professor of Landscape Studies Maunu Häyrynen.

More about the IN SITU activities:

insituculture.eu
insituculture.eu/resource/policy-brief-for-dg-rtd-d6-10
insituculture.eu/resource/book-situating-culture-interactive-version/

Some of the Recent Publications from the Finland Futures Research Centre

PhD Thesis

Kaboli, S.A. (2026) Orienting towards Uncertain Futures. How young adults in Finland imagine and negotiate their futures under precarious conditions. *Annales Universitatis Turkuensis* – ser. E – tom. 149, *Oeconomica*, Turku 2026, <https://urn.fi/URN:ISBN:978-952-02-0797-7>.

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Kockel, U., Haanpää, R., Craith, N.C. & Siivonen, K. (eds.) (2026) *Perspectives on Sustainable Nature-Culture Relationships, Beyond the Anthropocene*. London & New York, Routledge.

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**Next application period for Pentti Malaska Futures Award
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The University of Turku opens a call for the Pentti Malaska Futures Award for the sixth time. We are looking for bold, research-based innovations that can help in building a more sustainable global future.

The competition is open to Nordic actors and teams with a future-oriented and multidisciplinary research approach. The Award is €30,000.

Further information: utu.fi/futures-award