

Futures Dialogues

Transcending Boundaries: Futures Thinking for Addressing Systemic Challenges

Date and time: Wednesday 28 January 2026, 14:00-15:30 CET (Paris time)

Languages: English and French

Format: Zoom meeting – [Please click here to register](#)

In an era of volatility, governments, organisations, decision makers and societies around the world need to develop capabilities to proactively anticipate, imagine and co-create equitable, inclusive and peaceful futures for both current and future generations.

The current technological revolution, driven by exponential advances in artificial intelligence, is reshaping how people live, learn, work, produce, and govern, while transforming relationships between humans and technology itself. These changes are unfolding at the same time as accelerating climate change, demographic shifts, and rising geopolitical instability, creating interconnected and compounding pressures that challenge existing systems and governance structures.

In this context, traditional linear planning based on extrapolation of past and present data into the future is not enough. Futures research and applied foresight approaches can play a critical role in advancing responsible long-term thinking and policymaking. When embedded across governance and organisations, these approaches can strengthen preparedness and resilience, inform strategic thinking and planning, and foster cultures of creative adaptability and systems' innovation.

This Futures Dialogue considers the potential of anticipation, futures research and applied foresight, for addressing global, systemic challenges and identifying new opportunities for managing rapid and complex change to foster positive social transformations.

It follows [UNESCO's World Futures Day 2025](#), held in Paris on 2 December, on the theme 'Anticipation in an Era of Volatility', which highlighted UNESCO's intersectoral and multidisciplinary approach to addressing challenges through futures thinking and foresight (see [recording](#) and [article](#)).

This interactive dialogue will begin with an overview and reflection on the outcomes of UNESCO's World Futures Day, followed by two expert panels and discussions on:

1. Foresight and Anticipation for Policy Making: Operational Challenges and Enabling Conditions
2. Building Anticipatory Capabilities – Sharing Best Practices

Implications for the development of UNESCO's Global Anticipatory Policy Coalition, a new global platform aimed at fostering knowledge sharing, peer learning and capacity-building among governments and foresight experts, to be launched in 2026, will also be explored.

[Futures Dialogues](#), organized by UNESCO's Future of Learning and Innovation Division, aim to identify, analyze and debate emerging challenges and trends relevant to UNESCO's mandate. The session is convened in collaboration with UNESCO's [Futures Literacy and Foresight](#) team, and its [Management of Social Transformations Programme \(MOST\)](#), which aims to equip governments, civil society, and institutions with the tools to better anticipate and prepare for complex transformations.

Provisional Agenda

Transcending Boundaries: Futures Thinking for Addressing Systemic Challenges

Wednesday 28 January 2026, 14:00-15:30 CET (Paris time)

14:00-14:05	<p>Opening and setting the scene</p> <p>Sobhi Tawil, Director, Future of Learning and Innovation Division, UNESCO</p>
14:05-14:15	<p>Overview of UNESCO World Futures Day 2025, Futures Literacy, and Foresight and the UNESCO Global Anticipatory Policy Coalition</p> <p>Clare Stark, Head, Futures Literacy and Foresight, UNESCO</p>
14:15-14:45	<p>Segment 1: Foresight and Anticipation for Policy Making: Operational Challenges and Enabling Conditions</p> <p>Moderator: Christine Kavazanjian, Project Officer, Futures Literacy and Foresight, UNESCO</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tanja Hichert, Co-Chairholder, UNESCO Chair in Complex Systems and Transformative African Futures, Stellenbosch University, South Africa • René Rohrbeck, Chairholder, UNESCO Chair for Organizational Anticipation, Resilient Leadership and Educational Innovation, EDHEC Business School, France <p>Comments and Discussion</p>
14:45-15:15	<p>Segment 2: Building Anticipatory Capabilities – ‘Sharing Best Practices’</p> <p>Moderator: Christine Kavazanjian, Project Officer, Futures Literacy and Foresight, UNESCO</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lydia Garrido, Chairholder, UNESCO Chair in Sociocultural Anticipation and Resilience, SARAS, Uruguay • Nicolas Balcom, UNESCO Chair on Learning for Transformation and Planetary Futures at Finland Futures Research Centre (FFRC), University of Turku (TBC) <p>Comments and Discussion</p>
15:15-15:25	<p>Key takeaways for the Global Anticipatory Policy Coalition</p> <p>Clare Stark, Head of Futures Literacy and Foresight, UNESCO</p>
15:25-15:30	<p>Closing remarks and next steps</p> <p>Keith Holmes, Research Coordinator/UNITWIN, Future of Learning and Innovation Division, UNESCO</p>

**** Register here ****