

SCENARIO-LAB “The Art of the Long View – Building and Working with Scenarios”

European Trade Union Institute

in cooperation with the Institute for Prospective Analyses e.V. (Berlin)

11 - 13 October 2012 – Amsterdam

What is the workshop about ?

In this practice-oriented workshop, participants will learn and exchange on the different steps of a scenario-building process. Participants will then start to plan their own scenario activity. The idea is to stay in touch also after the workshop and continue working together in an interdisciplinary, cross-border network of people working with the scenario method.

What is scenario-building ?

A scenario is the presentation of a possible future situation in narrative form. It is a story or an analysis of something that has yet to happen. Is it really possible to predict how the future will look like? Definitely not, and this is not the aim of scenario-building. Instead, it provides you with a “future map” of what might be.

In a scenario-building process a group develops and explores in a structured learning process a set of several possible alternative futures to a specific future-oriented topic. The concrete question to be addressed by the scenarios and the time horizon depends on the group and the purpose of the process. It could e.g. be the future of a certain branch, long-term perspectives for the own organization or changing contexts within one might has to operate in the future.

The medium of the scenario method is the story. Stories are a form of communication. Complex and ambiguous interconnections, interlinked events and circumstances can be portrayed through stories in a way that makes it possible to experience them because they represent concrete imaginations that resonate not only intellectually, but also emotionally. Stories can be used to support processes of change, as they can uncover and question existing patterns of perception, enhance awareness of a topic and increase the motivation for personal participation.

Why applying scenario-building now ?

Scenario-building has proven to be particularly helpful in situations of great uncertainty and discontinuity. We are living in rapidly changing times, where the only constant seems to be constant change. Moreover, whether it be the financial, economic and debt crisis, depleting fossil fuels and other non-renewable resources, global warming or the loss in biodiversity, the current challenges facing humankind are considerable and the prospects often worrying. The “business-

as-usual scenario” represents just one among many other equally plausible futures, where even a situation of collapse becomes imaginable.

Instead of neglecting the uncertainties and discontinuities on the horizon, scenarios make them explicit. The learning process is directed towards acquiring orientation towards an open future. They offer a framework for exploring with others and jointly reflecting about possible actions and strategies for today and the future.

Scenario-building helps us to conceive alternatives and be prepared for several different futures and deal with the risks and opportunities lying ahead of us. Just as a regular compass is very useful for taking one’s bearings in space, scenarios enable one to take one’s bearings in time. Working with scenarios also makes clear that the future is not yet written and that it is worth trying to actively shape it.

How does scenario-building work ?

Scenario-building is an intense and dynamic group process. The working process of a scenario exercise takes place in small groups (expansive phase of the scenario exercise) and in the whole group (reflection on and bundling the results of the small groups’ work). A scenario exercise is divided into five phases:

- clarification of the question and the timeframe of the scenario exercise;
- identification and ranking of influencing factors and uncertainties;
- development of fundamental future alternatives;
- scenario development (plot, protagonists, title);
- reflection: implications and room for manoeuvre.

During this scenario lab, participants will get to know the different phases in a condensed form and learn about challenges and tips and tricks for moderating the individual phases.

Who should participate in the workshop?

The workshop is mainly addressed to trade union officials, employee representatives, trainers and advisors who wish to learn or deepen their knowledge about scenario-building. It is important, that you are interested in setting-up a scenario process and/or working with scenarios in your own context after the workshop.

You will

- learn how to prepare yourself for different futures with scenarios
- enhance your capacities of long-term thinking.
- get to know how to build scenarios
- reflect how to apply scenario-building in your own context.

Practical information

The workshop will start on Thursday 11.10.2012 at 18h and will be finished on Saturday 13.10.2012 (departure in the afternoon).

Costs for travel, meals and accommodation are covered by the ETUI, according to ETUI travel rules.

The workshop language is English.

If you are interested in participating in the workshop, please get in touch with us as soon as possible by sending us an email (mstollt@etui.org). As the number of seminar participants will be limited, timely response is of the essence.

All practical arrangements will be made by the ETUI. Any questions in this respect should be addressed to Ms Lut Coremans, lcoremans@etui.org, tel. 0032 (0)2 2240 498.

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More information about scenario-building and the scenarios
« Worker Participation 2030 – Four scenarios » can be found at:
<http://2030.worker-participation.eu>

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