



EmpowerHer Futures of Leadership workshop 04.03.2024

📅 When: 04.03.2024, 16.30 - 19.30 CET

📍 Where: Online

👤 Who: Between 16 and 18 participants from the EmpowerHer project. Facilitated by Sveinung Sundfør Sivertsen, [Fremtenkt](#).

Theory and method

Futures Literacy as a leadership skill

Futures Literacy denotes the ability to understand how images of the future shape our understanding of the present, and the skill to imagine alternative futures as a tool to explore possibilities in the present.

The concept of Futures Literacy has been developed by UNESCO, and is understood as a competency in analogy to traditional reading and writing literacy, and more modern forms of literacy such as digital literacy.

Where traditional literacy concern our use of language, and digital literacy our use of information and communications technology, Futures Literacy concerns the various ways in which we “use the future” in the present: for example, when planning a course of action for our own education, or imagining the kind of sustainable future we would like to bring into being.

Whenever we do something today with the aim of producing some result later on, we are in effect using our imagination to anticipate what that future will be like, and act accordingly. Hence, the way we imagine the future already plays a major role in how we understand and orient ourselves in the present.

In an increasingly complex, uncertain and changing world, old images of the future may no longer be relevant or useful to understanding what we should be doing today to help create a society that meets the needs of present generations without undermining the ability of future generations to meet their needs. Poverty of imagination and “business as usual” go together, and in order to move society and business towards sustainable development, we need to enhance and expand our powers of imagination.


Increased attention to our use of the future in general, and in particular how and what we imagine the future will be like, can help us be more creative in seeing opportunities to effect change, more resilient in face of the unexpected, and better able to understand novel phenomena that emerge as we move forward through time.

All leadership is about making or supporting making decisions about the future, whether the immediate future of everyday operations or longer term futures when formulating and implementing strategies. Hence, increased attention to how we “use the future” is highly relevant to all forms of leadership.

In the context of SDG and ESG leadership more specifically, FL equips leaders with a key competence not only to comprehend the evolving landscape but also to help shape it. Future leaders need to respond to technological advancements, global shifts, and societal changes, cultivating the agility to pivot in response to unforeseen challenges. They must also train their creative imagination to envision and implement innovative solutions for sustainable development – an urgent and highly complex endeavour.

Leaders who are future-literate are better equipped to navigate uncertainty, make informed decisions, and inspire their teams to embrace—and create— change. By fostering FL, we empower emerging leaders to proactively drive progress towards sustainable development goals. In essence, FL is a key enabler for individuals aspiring to lead in an ever-evolving world, providing them with essential skills to shape a better and more resilient future.

For more information about Futures Literacy, check out the UNESCO website:



Futures Literacy
Being futures-literate empowers the imagination. It enhances our ability to prepare, recover and inv...

<https://www.unesco.org/en/futures-literacy>

Or watch this talk by one of the leading academics in the field of Futures Literacy, Loes Damhof:



Futures Workshop and Futures Literacy Laboratories

Futures Literacy can be acquired in various ways. One prominent path to increased FL is collective intelligence exercises using workshop methods like the Futures Workshop (Robert Jungk et al.) and Futures Literacy Laboratories (Riel Miller, UNESCO).

In this workshop, [Fremtenkt](#) used a combination of these two methods to explore participant ideas about leadership, examine and challenge assumptions we take for granted when imagining the possible futures of leadership, and using this to expand the scope of possibilities that you the participants are aware of as you embark on your journey to acquire knowledge and skill to become future female leaders for a sustainable society.

The workshop contained three phases:

1. Explore
 1. Critique
 2. Desirable
 3. Probable
2. Reframe
3. Realise

Results from each of the phases is collected below.

Phase 1.1: Critique 🙄

Where we presented our own examples of **bad** leadership practices.

Group A summary

A bad leader displays characteristics such as lack of transparency, micromanagement, poor listening skills, failure to provide feedback, disinterest in receiving feedback, absence in important situations and avoidance of conflicts.

They hinder of team growth, lack accountability, lack empathy, and are unclear about goals and objectives. Bad leaders don't trust their team, and fail at building trust in turn.

These traits ultimately result in ineffective leadership and negative impact on the team's performance and morale.

Group B summary

Bad leaders fail to answer questions and redirect responsibilities away from themselves. They are poor communicators, tend to treat employees like children and criticise individuals instead of results.

They fail to manage time and workload, abuse their power, create and ignore conflict, crosses personal boundaries, lacks appreciation for others' work, and fails to show emotional connection with the team.

Group C summary

A bad leader exhibits traits of micromanagement, ego-driven decision making, communication issues, lack of empathy or emotional intelligence.

They tend to foster unequal relationships with team members, and may be "out of context" in their business approach. Bad leaders tend to resist change, and instil in others their own negative mindset.

Group D summary

Bad leaders tend to force their leadership on others and display excessive strictness. They show excessive concern about others' opinions, engage in gossip and show a lack of trust in others.

They use overly complicated language and make sarcastic comments. Bad leaders avoid responsibility, fail to form own opinions, and lack social skills.

Notes



Notes from group discussion A

Team leader is not transparent to employees, employees can not trust the leader (lack of transparency and lack of...



Notes from group discussion B

a leader doesn't answer questions, redirects to other people · a leader who doesn't inform people of their respons...



Notes from group discussion C

Micromanagement · Ego-driven decision making · Communication issues · Lack of empathy or emational intelege...



Notes from group discussion D

forced leadership · being too strict · having too much empathy · using too complicated words · caring too much a...

Phase 1.2: Desirable 🌞

Where we discussed what we **want** leadership to be like in 2040.

Group A summary

We want leaders who are intelligent, respected, adaptable, and able to collaborate with others from diverse backgrounds.

Our desired leaders serve as role models, continuously learning and striving for development while focusing on a clear vision for the future.

They must be transparent, inclusive, innovative, and possess strong communication skills.

Despite advancements in AI, leaders will always be needed for their empathy and human touch in guiding teams and communities towards success.

Group B summary

A good leader embodies qualities such as being inspiring, respectful, tolerant, mentally and physically healthy, altruistic, and empathetic.

They possess strong communication skills, are active listeners, and excel in problem-solving and conflict resolution.

Good leaders prioritise creating a safe space for growth, have healthy boundaries, effective time management, and the ability to build a cohesive and diverse team.

Group C summary

We want leaders who embrace diversity, inclusivity, and equality by welcoming people of all genders, races, and income levels.

They are empathetic and attentive to the needs of their team members and approach challenges with a positive mindset.

Group D summary

A good leader embodies qualities such as being helpful, friendly, and available for others while maintaining a balance between being demanding and motivating.

We want leaders who exhibit characteristics of being a community worker, mediator, and inspiring model to follow. Who are responsible, self-confident, and strive for sustainability while having a critical vision and empathy.

Our desired leaders are not populist, but rather visionaries who can communicate effectively with anyone and everyone, making them an essential asset to any group or organisation.

Notes



Notes from group discussion A

Fair choice of leader (someone who has intelligence to lead the team), someone who is respected from others · L...



Notes from group discussion B

Qualities of a desirable leader: · inspiring · safe (you feel heard and acknowledged by this person) · respect from b...



Notes from group discussion C

Diversity, Inclusivity and Equality - people of all genders, races, income are welcomed · Empathetic, attentive to t...



Notes from group discussion D

helpful, friendly · available for others, not busy all the time · calms you down, less stress · can have fun · cares abo...

Phase 1.3: Probable 🤔

Where we discussed what we think leadership will **probably** look like in 2040.

Group A summary

In 2040, leadership will be characterised by a focus on sustainability and learning, with leaders needing to be agile and adaptable. Working relationships between leaders and team members will shift to a more advisory or coaching role, allowing employees to find solutions and develop themselves with their leader's support.

There will also be more opportunities to explore different leadership styles, with a heightened emphasis on satisfaction, well-being, and mental health.

Technologies and AI will play an increased play role in leadership. There will be a more "natural selection" of leaders, allowing those with natural leadership abilities to rise to the forefront.

Group B summary

In 2040, we think leadership will be characterised by a blend of technological expertise, increased representation of female leaders, a focus on sustainability, and a more globalised approach.

Leaders will be well-educated, young, tolerant, and adept at multi-tasking. They will prioritise work-life balance and maintaining boundaries between personal and public life, while also emphasising the importance of humane and offline interactions.

This new era of leadership will be hybrid in nature, incorporating elements of traditional and modern approaches to effectively navigate the complexities of a rapidly changing world.

Group C summary

In 2040, leadership will probably be characterised by qualities such as flexibility, embracing new technologies, prioritising work-life balance, understanding the changing needs and dynamics of the world, operating without geographic boundaries, and fostering authenticity within individuals and organisations.

Group D summary

In 2040, we think many leaders will still be driven by a selfish desire for financial gain. We also think leadership in certain sectors will be characterised by populism. At the national level, there will be more polarisation and extremism, also among leaders.

At the international level, there will probably be greater emphasis on cooperation and improved soft skills.

Within smaller groups and organisations, leadership will be more inclusive and focused on human-oriented approaches. Additionally, the influence of artificial intelligence will greatly impact and shape the characteristics of leadership in the future.

Notes



Notes from group discussion A

Sustainability focused leadership · Learning focused leadership (leaders will need to be agile and able to adapt ve...



Notes from group discussion B

Technology-driven decision-making · More female leaders · Well-educated · Young (25-40 instead of 40-60) · Tol...



Notes from group discussion C

Flexibility · Technologies · Work-life balanced more, than now · understanding needs and dynamics of the world · ...



Notes from group discussion D

Desire money · Still populist · More international · Better soft skills than now · Inclusive leadership · In small groups...

Phase 2: Reframe 🤔

Where we challenge the assumptions we take for granted about future leadership. Reframing scenario:

Leaderless future

In this version of 2040, the tasks, responsibilities and powers that today are typically assigned to formal leadership positions are distributed throughout organisations and throughout society.

Public works and private enterprise are structured bottom-up, with tasks being defined and solved by fluid groups of collaborators – somewhat like a flock of starlings that dynamically self-organises without any formal leaders.

Group A summary

In this leaderless version of 2040, leadership will be characterised by informal leaders who are respected by others, inspiring each other through shared experiences.

Individuals with special skills will help others learn and grow, while communities will be united by common values and goals.

Leadership will be decentralised, with teams organising and taking initiative on their own, creating a passionate and collaborative environment where everyone has the opportunity to become a leader.

Group B summary

In this version of 2040, leadership is viewed as a group effort rather than a position held by one individual.

In a future without formal leaders, everyone is seen as an equal, requiring qualities such as empathy, the ability to predict behaviours, flexibility, a sense of responsibility and purpose, and a "all for one and one for all" mindset.

The balance between group work and individual work is emphasised, with a focus on collaboration through voting and discussions. This decentralised approach to leadership values independence and team-oriented efforts, prioritising doing good and promoting sustainability.

Group C summary

Leadership qualities in a future without formal leaders will be characterised by decentralisation, facilitated by the internet, globalisation, and technology.

Knowledge sharing and teaching each other will be essential for effective leadership. Diversity, inclusivity, and equality will be prioritised, with people of all genders, races, and income levels welcomed.

However, to function in groups without formal leaders, individuals may need to have similar backgrounds in order to work together harmoniously.

Group D summary

In this leaderless version of 2040, "leadership" is characterised by qualities such as listening to each other, self-organisation, less selfishness, active involvement, support, caring for one another, immediate problem-solving, and focusing on individual strengths.

These qualities are essential in a future without formal leaders, where individuals must collaborate and work together to achieve shared goals.

Notes



Notes from group discussion A

Leveling everything down to some ancient times, when everyone was doing things somehow without guiding (fishi...



Notes from group discussion B

everyone is an equal leader so everyone should have leadership qualities: · empathy, · ability to predict behaviour...



Notes from group discussion C

Decentralisation · Internet, globalness, technologies · Knowledge sharing/teaching each other · Diversity, Inclusiv...



Notes from group discussion D

listening to each other · self-organisation · less selfish · involvement · Support · take care of each other · solving p...

Phase 3: Realisation 🧑‍🔧

Where we planned how to implement insights from today into our own future leadership practice.

Reflect on how **one insight** or idea from today's workshop can be turned into **one concrete** action you can take **tomorrow** to further develop your skills and experience as a leader.

Notes

- My habit of thinking about the future may have been deficient in desirable and reframe phases, whereas to dominant of critique and probable phases - which may have been quicker, but also somehow limiting so my tangible action is to think about more angles to the future than usually and maybe this will bring also some surprising results or motivation
- Good leader has to be passionate and motivated about the concrete topic, work and his team. It is important to develop personal soft skills, because communication, problem solving skills and time management is crucial nowadays. Leader needs to share information and be transparent, to inform whole team about actual activities and important stuff. Future leaders will need to be able adopt and learn fast, being able to support their team and set goals, without telling exact steps how to achieve them. Every team member needs to have a possibility for growing, being creative and plan their own work and leader has to be good support and coach for everyone. Respectful attitude from leader and from team.
- I think it will be good to read some books about working with different types of people, with their unique talents, personalities and so on. It could improve my group management skills, help people find their best place in the team and give them greater job satisfaction. Additionally, I believe that it is good to have a lot of practice working with people and continue to develop awareness of people's needs, opportunities and aspirations.
- After all I somehow have a feeling that the humanity, passion (for something) and charisma will be crucial and possibly event take a lead role among the other top qualities necessary for the leader - today or in the future.
- (add your notes here!)
-

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Notes from group discussion A

- Team leader is not transparent to employees, employees can not trust the leader (lack of transparency and lack of trust)
- Micromanagement from team leader
- Lack of listening skills
- Not giving feedback to team
- Do not accept feedback from team, just act like "I know everything" and want to take whole spotlight from success
- Leader do not show up for others (example- important presentation and whole team is there except leader)
- Avoiding conflict situations
- Do not let others to grow, to learn new things, just keep in their level
- Lack of accountability
- Just talking, not doing something
- Lack of empathy
- No clear directions what team want to achieve, what are the goals, what are we working for
- Seagull management
- Demotivating team, do not support it
- Leader do not trust team, criticises others without explanation and support

Notes from group discussion B

- a leader doesn't answer questions, redirects to other people
- a leader who doesn't inform people of their responsibilities (lack of communication or no communication)
- a leader who treats everyone like children (lack of trust, micro-management, overcontrolling)
- bad time management, bad workload prediction
- criticizing a person, not a result/product
- taking advantage of power, workplace violence
- creates conflict, ignores it
- a leader who crosses personal boundaries
- a leader who doesn't appreciate someone's work, doesn't give people positive feedback
- a leader who doesn't show emotions, seems distant from the team

Notes from group discussion C

- Micromanagement
- Ego-driven decision making
- Communication issues
- Lack of empathy or emotional intelligence
- Not equal relationship with other members
- "Out of context"- person due to their business
- Resistance to change, ir don't want to make any changes
- Negative mindset

Notes from group discussion D

- forced leadership
- being too strict

- having too much empathy
- using too complicated words
- caring too much about what others think
- being gossipgirl/gossipboy
- don't trust others, asking too many unrelated questions
- sarcastic comments
- Doesn't take responsibility for his action
- Failure to have an opinion
- lack of social skills

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Notes from group discussion A

- Fair choice of leader (someone who has intelligence to lead the team), someone who is respected from others
- Leader will be a good example and a part of team
- Leader will be able to highly adapt for changes that will be going around (for new technologies) to take advantage and bring benefit for company (continuous learning and adaptability)
- Team leaders will need to be able to collaborate with leaders from other countries
- Women will be leaders more and more (women brain is also different, made to take care)
- Diverse leaders
- More visionary (seeing "big" picture, changing something focusing on vision)
- Striving for development
- Full transparency and accessibility
- Inclusive leadership
- Innovation
- Huge influence from AI, many things automative, but not able to replace leaders
- A lot things will be taken by AI, but remaining leader communication skills
- Many communities led by leaders (opinion leaders)
- Leaders will be in different levels
- Empathy and good communication skills

Notes from group discussion B

Qualities of a desirable leader:

- inspiring
- safe (you feel heard and acknowledged by this person)
- respect from both sides
- tolerant
- mentally and physically healthy
- altruistic
- healthy boundaries
- empathetic
- communicative (good communication skills)
- active listener
- provides space to grow for other people
- good problem-solving and conflict-resolving skills
- amazing time-planning
- ability to create a compatible team
- AI
- diversity in leadership

Notes from group discussion C

- Diversity, Inclusivity and Equality - people of all genders, races, income are welcomed
- Empathetic, attentive to the people
- Positive-minded

Notes from group discussion D

- helpful, friendly

- available for others, not busy all the time
- calms you down, less stress
- can have fun
- cares about group
- community worker
- leader school,
- not populist
- balance between critical vision and empathy
- responsible
- have a balance between being friendly, helpful and being demanding, motivating
- mediator
- inspiring
- model to follow
- not from any party
- person who strives for sustainability
- visionary
- good listener
- self-confident
- modest
- understands everyone
- can communicate with anyone and everyone

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Notes from group discussion A

- Sustainability focused leadership
- Learning focused leadership (leaders will need to be agile and able to adapt very quickly)
- Work relationships between leader and team members will change, leader will be there to set vision, guidelines for the framework
- Leaders will be advisors or coach (helping to set correct directions, but not saying in which way this should be done)
- Employees will be able to find solutions on their own and develop themselves with leader support
- More possibilities to explore leadership style
- Focus on satisfaction, well being, and mental health (key point to achieve goals)
- Supporting possibilities to become a leader also for employees (trainings etc)

- Natural selection of leaders (somehow it will crystalize who are natural leaders and they will be able to be leaders in team)
- Technologies, AI

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Notes from group discussion B

- Technology-driven decision-making
- More female leaders
- Well-educated
- Young (25-40 instead of 40-60)
- Tolerant
- More work-life balance and boundaries between personal and public life
- Multi-tasking
- Focus on sustainability
- International leadership because of globalisation
- Hybrid leadership
- Humane and sometimes offline

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Notes from group discussion C

- Flexibility
- Technologies
- Work-life balanced more, than now
- understanding needs and dynamics of the world
- no geographic boundaries, decentralized power
- being authentic

Notes from group discussion D

- Desire money
- Still populist
- More international
- Better soft skills than now
- Inclusive leadership
- In small groups, organisations more human-oriented
- In the national level more extreme
- Selfish
- Leadership strongly affected by AI

Notes from group discussion A

- Leveling everything down to some ancient times, when everyone was doing things somehow without guiding (fishing, hunting etc). Back to basics in some kind
- Informal leaders, opinion leaders, someone everyone else is respecting, "alfa dog" - in animal life there also are situations when one of the, is some kind of leader
- inspiring each other by sharing experience
- everyone can share ideas, become a leader
- Community is passionate and feeling the same about some kind of things
- Someone who has special skill for some kind of action can help others to learn, to do this kind of activity
- Agile framework- teams organize their work on themselves (team members should be proactive, show their initiative)
- People who share the same values in one community and their activities and be based on same values for development
- In any kind of community there anyways will be unofficially leaders

Notes from group discussion B

- everyone is an equal leader so everyone should have leadership qualities:
 - empathy,
 - ability to predict behaviours,
 - flexibility,
 - sense of responsibility and purpose,
 - "all for one and one for all" mindset
- balance between group work and individual work
- no dictatorship
- independence
- voting and discussions
- team-oriented
- focus on doing good and sustainability

Notes from group discussion C

- Decentralisation
- Internet, globalness, technologies
- Knowledge sharing/teaching each other
- Diversity, Inclusivity and Equality - people of all genders, races, income are welcomed, but to have no leader we need them to have similar backgrounds...?

Notes from group discussion D

- listening to each other
- self-organisation
- less selfish
- involvement

- Support
- take care of each other
- solving problems that arise immediately
- everyone should focus on their strengths