

Creating Futures Movement One Step at a Time

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The disastrous consequences of the global megacrisis we are very likely facing in the coming years were caused mostly by human activities over many years of development. Resolving it will require a deeper and wider transformation of our value systems, rather than a quick fix. Such a transformational change may require the questioning and modification of deeply held value systems about working, living and learning. While Halal and Marien have done a thorough literature review on trends driving the megacrisis, I found the most meaningful as well as convincing means to be "Forces of Social Change" on the list of trends resolving the megacrisis. The forces of social change could also be a catalyst for creating corresponding futures movements in accelerating the use of alternative energy, introducing new powerful forms of communication and developing green cities. To create an alternative culture of social learning for sustainability, new and emerging perspectives from a variety of marginal, radical and unconventional groups has to be encouraged. While we need a compelling vision of the future at the critical moment, the future is not fixed.

Results of a recent survey from a valid sample size of 550 student respondents, age 18 to 22, who have taken the course on "environmental change and sustainable futures" over the last four semesters, show that students take a practical approach to link the world. Yet they are relatively unaware of the potential societal and environmental pressures from overconsumption and unsustainable development issues. Clearly, for the students, the importance of learning new skills within the emerging knowledge economy and global market, and training for business positions outweighs that of creating a sustainable society. Nonetheless, students have also started to demonstrate the phenomenon of generational replacement. Nearly 82 percent of them disagree that "only politicians, business leaders and other people holding powerful positions could influence the future." They have a clear vision of the future, but see the future as evolving and thus continuously explore alternative futures. In my view, to make futures movement possible, it is essential to go deep into the inner dimension. The journey inwards heightens our understanding of ourselves and our potential which constitutes a necessary preparation for personal fulfillment and social responsibility in an interdependent and rapidly changing world. Slowly but surely, the younger generation can be expected to cultivate the qualities of a long-term perspective and creation of alternative futures.

In the contrasting positions toward the four scenarios Halal and Marien each holds, I sensed a mix feeling of technological optimism and what may be called "futures fatigue." The momentum or frustration for "Muddling Up" or "Muddling Down" scenarios are somewhat confined to a world-

view of the mainstream societies. After losing the capability of envisioning a common sustainable future, people's trust on evolution and innovation of human consciousness and adaptability are gradually vanishing. However, the world environment of culture and economy is dramatically changing. Asia is emerging as a, if not *the*, world center. Take the environment of higher education as an example, more and more middle class Asians will aspire to sending their children not to Western countries but to the top universities in Asia. Technologies such as the web and its evolutionary children will create true 24/7 virtual face to face education. The gamers of today will be the professors of tomorrow. Pedagogy will be more and more focused on a new balance of the individual and the collective, between discipline and creativity, between left and right brain, between status-quo and paradigms and emerging futures, between respect for the past and responsibility for the future.

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