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# UTOPIA - Manual for envisioning desirable futures

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tulevaisuuskortu

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# 1 Introduction

“Progress is the realization of utopias.”

Oscar Wilde

**Utopia literally** means a place that does not exist. Thinking of utopia is not useless dreaming. It is meant to show that an alternative world is possible. Utopia doesn't have to be a perfect ideal future because it doesn't exist anyway. It is enough that utopia is radically different and better than the present moment.

**You can create** utopia alone or together with others and it can be a personal or a wider vision of a collectively desirable future. Nevertheless when creating utopias it is necessary to consider the wellbeing of other people, future generations and the whole planet among other things

**Starting point** for utopia is a real problem in a world or phenomenon for which it is seeking to find alternatives. For this purpose we have chosen three themes based on already existing megatrends from which you can choose one or alternatively invent your own theme.

**We have created** an easy to use Utopia-tool which allows everyone to expand their own futures thinking, create their own utopia and enrich it with others. The following pages provides you instructions on how to use the tool

## 3 Utopia tool

THEME	THE POINT OF REFERENCE	TIMELINE
<input type="checkbox"/> Climate change and ecological reconstruction <input type="checkbox"/> From monoculture to multiculturalism <input type="checkbox"/> Living/residency <input type="checkbox"/> Something else:	<input type="checkbox"/> Personal living <input type="checkbox"/> Organization <input type="checkbox"/> Society	<input type="checkbox"/> 2050 <input type="checkbox"/> 2060 <input type="checkbox"/> Something else:

1. CREATE a headline for your utopia (fill in last):

2. FAMILIARIZE AND JUSTIFY your choice

Which theme did you choose? Why did you choose this theme? What do you know about the theme? What kinds of problems or perspectives are related to the theme? How did we arrive in the current state?

3. FORGET WHAT IS

What things are limiting you from imagining alternative futures at this moment or acting on behalf of them?

4. STRETCH your thinking with the knowledge of the future

What kind of futures would be possible or desirable? What would your utopia be like?

5. WORD your utopia concrete

Headline and date	The first paragraph
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Subtitle	
<input type="text"/>	

6. ENRICH utopia with others

What did others think about the utopia?

# 2 Utopia Tool User's Guide

## 1. CHOOSE a theme, point of reference and timeline for your utopia

Utopia is always criticism against the present moment. The target is to create and identify solutions by envisioning better alternative futures. On the Futures Day our purpose is not to re-imagine the whole society or the world. It is enough to focus on one of the three ready chosen themes or make up your own theme.

**Point of reference:** own personal future, the future of an organization or a community, the future of the society.

**By selecting your point of reference you can narrow down the topic. In practice, however, these overlap.**

**Time horizon:**

All that has not yet happened belongs to the future. However it's quite a different matter to discuss what is going to happen 1, 10 or 100 years from now. Perhaps the best way to gain a sense of the future horizon is to think back in time: to consider what the world was like 1, 10 or 100 years ago. In order for utopia to be sufficiently different from the present, it is advisable to look far enough into the time horizon of the future, for example 20-30 years.

## 2. FAMILIARIZE and justify your choice

When you have chosen your theme, point of reference and timeline, start building the utopia by familiarizing its current state. What theme did you choose? Why did you choose exactly this theme? What do you know about the theme? What kind of problems or perspectives it involves? How was the current state reached?

## 3. FORGET what is

On Futures Day you are allowed to forget the limitations and realities of the present moment. We are not interested in what is "realistic" or "probable" or currently factual but to explore what could be possible. The goal is to stretch your scope of future outlook towards new utopias.

**Write down all factors in the present moment that are limiting you to imagine alternative futures or acting on behalf of them These factors can be for example:**

Limitations (eg Legislation)

Realities (eg "It's expensive")

Resources (eg not enough knowledge, budget)

Beliefs (eg "We are a poor country", "Robots will take all jobs")

Values (does not fit my mindset),

Taboos (it is not appropriate to talk about)

**Great, now you can forget the limitations and get ready to start to create an utopia!**

Sometimes just listing limitations already opens the new way to think about what is possible. What is not possible today is probably possible in some timeline.

## 4. STRETCH your thinking with futures based data

Utopia is a future-based vision that is supported by the existing futures knowledge like for example [Megatrend Cards \(Sitra\)](#), [The Future 100 \(Wunderman Thompson\)](#), [Tech Trends 2020 \(Deloitte\)](#), [Global Trends to 2030 \(ESPAS\)](#), [Ten predictions for 2020 \(Nesta\)](#), [Megatrends \(Trendexplorer\)](#), [Foresight \(Future Agenda\)](#), [Atlas of the Decade \(IFTF\)](#) or [Signals of Change \(Forum for the Future\)](#).

**In futures thinking we are using the following terms to describe change:**

**Megatrend** = a major path of development, an identifiable cluster of phenomena with a clear direction of development.

**Trend** = long-term change moving in a clearly identifiable direction.

**Weak signal** = event or phenomenon that can be considered a first expression of change or a new trend in development.

Explore and review futures based data from the aspect of the theme you chose. Choose a couple of interesting drivers change and stretch your perspective by asking yourself "What if this signal, trend or megatrend strengthens or realizes in the future?". What kind of futures would be possible or desirable? What would your utopia be like?

Use your imagination and avoid unnecessary self-criticism. We recommend that you write down everything that comes up.

## 5. WORD your utopia into concrete

The danger of utopias is that they often stay on so general level that they don't have real content and it is not possible or meaningful to discuss about them. For this reason, we need to make utopia concrete.

**Word your utopia as a news of future, front page cover or news headline. Come up with a name for your utopia and write the name in the tools heading.**

## 6. ENRICH utopia with others

We have a joint future and it belongs to all of us which is why you should enrich your utopia with other people. Discussing about utopias can help to broaden the future even more and it can bring up new kinds of questions, perspectives or alternatives that you may not have thought of yourself.

**What did others think about your utopia? What was good about it? What was bad about it?**

**Did your utopia consider other people, future generations and the planets wellbeing?**

**Were new perspectives, alternatives or opportunities emerging from the discussions? Could you improve your utopia from the feedback? Could something be different or better?**

Share your utopia in social media

#tulevaisuuspäivä #tulevaisuusvaltuutettu #futuresday

# 3 Utopia tool

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# 4 Themes

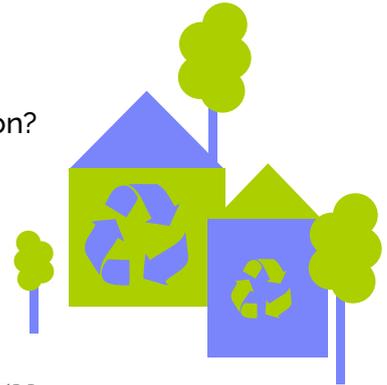
## 1. Climate change and ecological reconstruction

Climate change and ecological reconstruction will define the direction of the future for decades to come. Limiting global warming to 1.5 degrees requires not only the rebuilding of physical, non-fossil infrastructure, but also a low-carbon lifestyle for all of us. However, this does not have to mean giving up everything good and important to us; on the contrary, we can get something better.

### Supporting questions:

- What is the future of a good and carbon-neutral life?
- What kind of opportunities are related to ecological reconstruction?
- What important things in life won't change in the future?
- What kind of work does ecological reconstruction offer?

Read more: [BIOS Researc Unit](#)



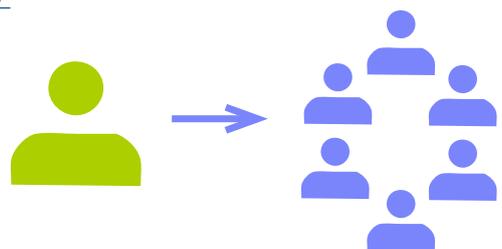
## 2. From monoculture to multiculturalism

The aging of the population is a unique phenomenon in the history of mankind, as there have never been more seniors on the planet than young children. Despite this, surprisingly little has been said about aging population and the debate has been dominated by the concern of the increasing pressure on public finances from the aging population. For example, much less thought has been given to what aging will mean for the elderly itself, what kind of good and meaningful aging will be, and how it will affect families, communities and organizations. Life-cycle identity has also changed and life is no longer progressing from relatively established patterns from childhood to old age. We see different forms of families, professional careers, sabbatical pressure, lifelong learning etc. People are older before they have children. The birth rate has fallen and it will also change society.

### Supporting questions for utopia:

- What is good and meaningful aging will be in the future?
- What kind of possibilities will the group of affluent aging people bring with them?
- What will the future families and communities look like as the population ages, shrinks and diversifies?
- What is the future of children and young people?

Read more: [The longevity issue \(MIT Technology Review\)](#)



### 3. Living/residency

There was a historical shift in 2015 because then for the first time in history most of the planet's population was living in cities. According to forecasts, almost 70 % of the world population will live in urban areas in 2050 which means nearly doubling the world's urban population. Many forces of change drive people to cities, and urbanization is not a natural law, but a phenomenon based on the decisions of individuals and society. So far, the debate about the future of housing and regional development has been largely dominated by the black-and-white urban vs. rural confrontation, although it is necessary to improve the living conditions of both urban and rural dwellers. Furthermore, despite the confrontation, in reality a large proportion of people enjoy themselves both in the countryside and in the city.

#### Supporting questions for utopia:

What is a good life and where can you live it?

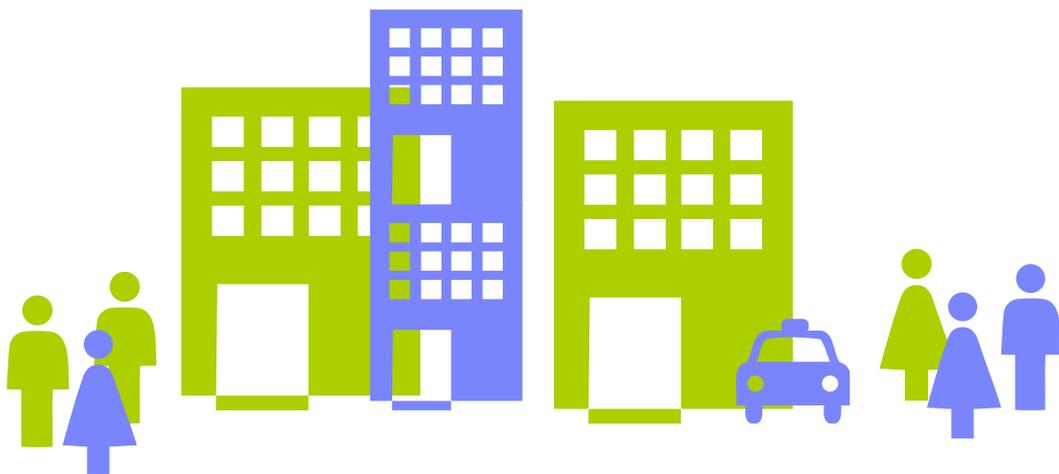
Where would you like to live in the future if you didn't have to think of the limitations of current time?

What would there be in your ideal living environment?

How do living conditions change as a result of climate change affect people's housing choices?

Can we live in multiple places in the future?

**Read more:** [The Future of Housing and Home: Scenarios for 2030.](#)



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