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5.2 Future Workshop

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1 Aims, contents, definition

The Future Workshop is a kind of event, which is applied successfully in education, economy, culture and politics since the beginning of the 1970s. The Future Workshop is specified by many characteristics. Its most outstanding characteristic is that it helps a group of people to turn a radical criticism (in several steps) into new ideas, which can be realized together afterwards. The Future Workshop has a political background. It was developed by the future researcher Robert Jungk. Future research was a matter of experts, but it often missed the interests of the public. The Future Workshop, as Robert Jungk understood it, should counteract to that. His concept was based upon the critical faculty of the public: every single human being is considered to be an expert for his own matters. The Future Workshop assembles human beings, who take into consideration the local problems as well as the global problems and who want to solve them together with the help of their fantasy. So in its origin the Future Workshop is a democratic and change-oriented event: "The goal of the work in Future Workshops is to include every interested citizen in the decision making, which is usually only up to politicians, experts and planners. We want to encourage the single human and show him that he is absolutely able to participate in the discussion about huge goals" (Jungk/Müllert 1989, p. 17). So the Future Workshop became an instrument, which was used by the (at that time new) social movements, especially by the environmental movement. It was discovered in schools, in adult education, but also in companies, churches, trade unions, parties and associations. It is used to find innovative solutions for existing problems. The political approach of the Future Workshop is still present today. Nevertheless the Future Workshop is also used for specific purposes, which are not related to its political character.

Definition: "Future Workshops are a social procedure to solve problems, a purposeful procedure, a methodically creative working in groups, an open process, which is determined regarding its contents and its process by the participants" (Müllert 1996, p. 12).

I extend this definition: Future Workshops require a specific moderation. This moderation takes care that the special process of the Future Workshops follows certain phases and determined rules. In addition the moderation supports the social cohesion among the participants, which is connected with a Future Workshop. It also supports the participants' self-commitment on a common project.

This unit wants to:

- provide basic pieces of information about the Future Workshop as a form of event,
- show the tasks of the moderation of a Future Workshop and
- give methodical hints for the arrangement of a Future Workshop.

This unit allows an insight into the essence of the Future Workshop, the composition and planning as well as typical methods of a moderation of a Future Workshop.

2 Future Workshop

2.1 Future Workshop - what is that?

Future Workshops are much more than only ideas-forges. They are based on the participants' readiness to leave their usual ways of thinking. Future Workshops consciously emphasize a certain distance from the influences, which effect us in our everyday life. To be able to leave our habits, it is important to be able to communicate trustingly with the other participants. Therefore a good group climate is desired. This is also expressed in the fact that Future Workshops usually have a longer duration. A limited thinking shall be turned into an unlimited thinking. It shall become possible to extend limitations and to invent a future, which seemed to be impossible until now. The participants shall be encouraged to plan their future.

There are several workshop types. These have the following main focusses (according to Kuhnt and Müllert):

- getting through the problem: developing counter imaginations and proposals,
- help for the problem solution: developing programmes, plans, concepts and filling topics,
- sensitization for the problem: picking up current topics,
- consulting regarding the problem: overcoming routines, supporting cooperation, reorganizing structures, finding perspectives,
- introduction to the problem: finding into a topic, a request, a question,
- searching for problem solutions (personal): reducing fears, working on interpersonal problems, supporting self-confidence (compare Kuhnt/Müllert 1996, p. 20),
- searching for problem solutions (institutional): finding new products and procedures.

The Future Workshop is traditionally integrated into the context of the network of persons and institutions, who face the global dangers of earth and mankind. "Although we accumulate a high amount of knowledge, this does not enable us to understand the world, on the contrary the information explosion rather contributes to a lack of understanding and to uncertainties. Despite of all that humans shall not be slaves of complexity but its master" (Vester 1999, p. 7). This is a part of the preface of the Club of Rome for the book "Die Kunst vernetzt zu denken" ("The art to think networked"). The theses and proposals regarding the dealing with the complexity of the world society, which are presented in this book, fit

the intentions of the Future Workshop. The main focusses of Future Workshops are, according to Kuhnt and Müllert, in the following areas:

- human-appropriate communication: (among others the restoration and shaping of interhuman relations and contacts) - 30%,
 - new professions, workplaces and fields of activity: (among others different forms of work and their organization) - 20%,
 - open learning, experiences und perceptions: (among others autonomous teaching and learning forms, new approaches of self-awareness, education and project work) - 15%,
 - ecologically oriented living environment: (among others a changed perception of city life, living, new traffic concepts, new forms of leisure time behaviour) - 15%,
 - social and political activities: (alternative concepts of participation, of involvement, of taking over responsibility) - 10%
- (compare Kuhnt/Müllert 1996, pp. 21).

The effects of these Future Workshops must not be considered short-term, but they aim -as the idea of networking- at long-term effects and at sustainability. This sustainability is constituted by the spectrum of the following five effects (according to Kuhnt and Müllert):

- Democratization effect – designing the future together. The participants cooperate equally and free of hierarchies.
- Learning effect – making project-oriented learning experiences. By a constant exchange of experiences, knowledge and ideas all participants profit from each other.
- Synergy effect – gaining confidence in the common powers. The participants realize that their results can only be achieved by the common work.
- Motivation effect – getting involved in the designing of the future. The participants identify with the results and are encouraged to take over responsibility.
- Creativity effect – solving problems in a new way. The participants leave the familiar ways, enter into unfamiliar situations and discover new perspectives

(compare Kuhnt/Müllert 1996, pp. 14).

This shows that a Future Workshop must not be mixed up with a technological procedure. The request is to develop concrete changes with the involved humans. These changes provide positive perspectives for the participants. They also contain positive developments for society. To reach this the Future Workshop follows a determined composition. It includes preferably 15-25 persons (compare Dauscher 1998, p. 111). In this respect it can be assigned to the moderation of small groups. On the other hand it is also possible to realize several Future Workshops simultaneously, if there are more participants.

2.2 Composition of a Future Workshop

The Future Workshop tries to find a way from extreme criticism of the existing situation over an unlimited utopia to the level of the realization of new concepts. It starts with an introduction for the participants (compare 7.2 in the appendix). This introduction has two functions. On the one hand it introduces the topic. The purpose is to clarify the different approaches of the participants, as far as this is possible in an initial phase. On the other hand the participants shall be introduced to each other. It is essential that the single group members come to trust the other participants and that openness towards the contents and the persons is supported. This also includes to reach a distance to the private and the professional everyday life. The introduction shall show that the Future Workshop bases on the esteem and the respect for the persons and the topic. A first impression that the participants are in a "protected" environment is radiated.

The introduction includes the preparations for the further procedure of the Future Workshop. This contains the following equal phases:

1. the phase of criticism and complaint,
2. the phase of fantasy and utopia as well as
3. the phase of realization and practice.

These phases are composed like funnels: at first the participants open up for all ideas, which belong to the topic and fill them into the funnel. Afterwards the most important ideas are selected, the high amount of thoughts becomes restricted. Finally it is decided which ideas shall be worked on in the next phase. Those ideas, which are not chosen, are not thrown away, but they are documented precisely so that they can be reactivated later (compare the schematic illustration in 7.3 in the appendix).

What happens in the three phases (compare Kuhnt, Müllert, 1996, pp. 62)?

The task of the first phase is to produce a radical criticism of the existing situation. It describes the is-state as the participants see and perceive it at the moment. This phase offers the participants the opportunity to name all those aspects, which cause them annoyance, anger and frustration in connection with the topic. The factual level shall be treated as well: all problems, difficulties and obstacles shall be mentioned. It is important to express criticism and complaints concretely and precisely. So the subject of the research is the "what" and the "how". General remarks are analyzed until the participants can develop an exact imagination of what is meant. Every criticism is allowed.

As soon as the criticism has been collected satisfactorily the summary of the mentioned facts in categories starts (this process is called "clustering"). The participants decide which aspects are sensible for such a summary ("cluster") and afterwards they determine the composition of these clusters. When statements are unclear they are always illustrated by examples. The selection of the aspects of criticism requires the agreement

of all participants. The participants know that they cannot work further on all aspects. So they feel induced to reach an agreement and at the same time show consideration for the other participants without neglecting the own interests. Everybody can state his criticism, no complaint is suppressed, the selection of the most important points requires an agreement: in this phase a positive group feeling arises already. The first phase ends with the decision which cluster shall be worked on in the next phase.

The first phase allows radical criticism. Radical means primarily to go to the roots of the negative situation and of the anger. The second phase serves to turn the radical criticism into something positive. From the criticism there shall be developed an utopia by fantasy. This means that first of all the participants have to open up for fantasy and utopia. They prepare to leave behind what bothers them. All thoughts are allowed, restrictions are not taken into consideration. The participants turn away from the criticism and become positive. In this phase it is sensible to not only work with the head, but to include all senses in the development of fantasies. Like this positive imaginations become possible, it is important to create new perspectives by imaginative ideas. Usually in this phase the work takes place in small groups. The ideas of these groups are presented in the plenum. Now those ideas are selected, which shall be turned into utopias. The rule for the transformation into a utopia is that there is not shown any consideration for restrictions. Since the group experienced especially a high amount of creativity and joy at the work in this phase, the feeling is strengthened now to be strong and able to effectuate something together. To find out what the special creative and productive potential of the developed ideas is, it is important to check the utopias: What is the reason for the suitability for the future of the respective utopia? Which aspects provide new, fascinating ways? In the end of this phase the utopia is chosen, which shall be realized.

The third phase deals with the realization. First of all it must be prevented here that a frequently occurring misunderstanding appears: It is not about the immediate realization of the chosen utopia, this would not be possible. It is rather about to consider how the utopia could be realized and what has to be done to start the realization.

Realization signifies a synthesis of the thesis of the criticism and the antithesis of the utopia. The utopia is translated into the reality. In this synthesis the real conditions are included again. The goal is to develop a strategy how the utopia can be realized together – even against resistances. So in a Future Workshop the shapes and the concept of the realization are developed. Often this already has the character of a project plan. But it is frequently sufficient to determine the concrete idea and to set a frame for the next steps. But the most important aspect of the realization phase is to document what the next step shall be. The Future Workshop ends with the answer to the question, which all participants are

asked: "What has to be done first – the next day, in the next week?"
(compare Kuhnt, Müllert 1996, p. 105)

2.3 How does a Future Workshop work?

The Future Workshop orients to the formal structure of the funnel: opening - restricting - deciding. Within this structure, which shall be understandable for the participants any time, quite a variety of methods and techniques of moderation are possible. The Future Workshop works with a frequent change of social forms: plenum, team work, partner work and individual work are possible. Methods, which rather appeal to the intellect, alternate with those, which include as many senses as possible. Methods, which serve leisure, alternate with activating methods. The rooms of the house are used as well as the surroundings.

The general rules of moderation are valid (compare unit 1.1). It is essential that the moderator does not interfere in the contents. He has to represent the participants later – that is his business. Each phase of the Future Workshop has its own rules:

Rules of the criticism phase

- Abstain from discussions in the plenum!
- Say it briefly!
- Express examples!
- No abstractions!
- Stick to the topic: a MUST!
- Visualization of all statements!

(compare Kuhnt, Müllert 1996, p. 71)

Rules of the fantasy phase

- Abstain from discussions in the plenum!
- Say it briefly!
- Express examples!
- No abstractions!
- Stick to the topic: a CAN!
- Visualization of all statements!

(compare Kuhnt, Müllert 1996, p. 80)

Additional rules of the fantasy phase

- Everything is allowed!
- Everything is possible!
- Pick up the others' ideas, work further on them!
- Be positive: money and power are not significant!
- Killer phrases are forbidden!

Rules of the realization phase

- Visualize everything!
- Say it briefly!

- Stick to the topic: a MUST!
 - Become concrete!
- (compare Kuhnt, Müllert 1996, p. 96)

The rules do not affect the creativity of the group. They support it in its productivity.

3 Moderation and special methods in a Future Workshop

There are various methods, which are appropriate for a Future Workshop. In the following paragraphs the typical methods for the single phases of the Future Workshop are listed exemplarily.

3.1 Moderation in a Future Workshop

The moderators have several tasks in the Future Workshop:

- They are responsible for the framework of the event.
- They introduce the topic of the event.
- They introduce the rules of the Future Workshop.
- They guide the group through the phases of the Future Workshop.
- They take care that the timetable is kept.
- They are responsible for the methods and techniques.
- They are responsible for the protection of the results.

The main task of the moderators is to take into consideration the character of the different phases of the Future Workshop. So they first of all provide a factual orientation. In the prephase they provide circumstances, which allow the group to create a distance to the everyday life and to open up for the experience of the Future Workshop. In the criticism phase they take care that the group does not become frustrated in spite of the radical criticism. They prevent this by creative methods and by an aim-leading working plan. In the fantasy phase the moderators support the liberation from all existing restrictions. But they also take care that the often arising euphoria does not become too superior. In the realization phase they provide a balance between the will of the group regarding the realization of their utopias and the real conditions. They suggest firmly that the participants reach obligatory agreements about the continuation of the agreed plans. They offer to accompany possibly planned follow-up meetings.

Altogether the moderation has the task to create a balance between the emotional development of the group and the factual productivity.

3.2 Planning

The planning of a Future Workshop depends on the temporal framework, which is available. For a Future Workshop a duration of one week is

optimal. Without a lack of quality a Future Workshop can also be reduced to a duration of three days - in this case the realization phase is usually shortened to the determination of the framework of further steps. Future Workshops with a short duration have to abstain from certain aspects during the different phases. In those cases it is important to document the developed ideas and to agree on the further procedure. The longer a Future Workshop works the higher is the chance that the participants reach obligatory agreements and stick to them. The general planning model is the following for every phase:

- introduction and overview,
 - scheme about the time,
 - work in several steps,
 - transition to the next phase
- (compare Müllert/Kuhnt, 1996, pp. 51).

All phases are concluded by a feedback, the results are documented. In case that several Future Workshops take place simultaneously because of a high number of participants, an additional common working phase clarifies how to deal with the results.

3.3 Special methods in a Future Workshop

3.3.1 Getting to know each other in a topic-oriented way

Getting to know each other takes place in small groups by the work on the topic. The sub-groups are composed by a random principle. The participants have the task to exchange positive experiences regarding the topic and to document them on a flipchart paper. Apart from that the participants get to know each other. The factual results are reported to the group, the involved persons introduce each other (compare Kuhnt, Müllert 1996, appendix 1.4).

3.3.2 Flag of criticism

A huge paper flag is arranged on the floor. In the middle of the flag the criticism question is visualized. The participants sit or stand around it. They are asked to name their complaints and problems aloud and to write them down on the flag wherever they want. The moderators repeat the single statements, ask the participants to write down everything and emphasize the topic again and again by their questions. In the beginning a minute of the individual reflection takes place (compare Kuhnt, Müllert 1996, appendix 3.2).

3.3.3 Translating imaginative ideas

In the plenum fascinating ideas are arranged in a stellate way. The moderators ask the participants to name interpretations, other expressions and translations for the fascinating ideas: "What does that mean, what is the background, how would you translate it?", all contributions are visualized (compare Kuhnt, Müllert 1996, appendix 5.2).

3.3.4 Creating utopias

The moderators invent a framework action on the basis of the topic during the procedure of the Future Workshop: for example to produce a film, to develop a newspaper or to report over a journey. Every sub-group is asked to contribute a scene to the film, to write an article or to present a journey experience. For the presentation the results shall be available in written form, single sequences can be played (compare Kuhnt, Müllert 1996, appendix 12.2).

3.3.5 Setting up demands

For the realization phase the participants receive the task to continue the development of the translated utopia by establishing demands. These can be short- middle- or longterm demands. They can also refer to the far future. The addressees are open (compare Kuhnt, Müllert 1996, appendix 15.1).

4 Summary

The Future Workshop is an excellent form of event to reach new solution plans for problems in the political, economical, educational and cultural sector. It is also suitable to think over forms of living and to reach new ones. The Future Workshop sticks to a clear didactic concept. It bases on rules, which require the instructions of the moderator. The Future Workshop discovers frequently new and very interesting ideas. Because of its methods it stimulates the participants to stay together for the realization of their ideas. Common imaginations for the future can be realized together.

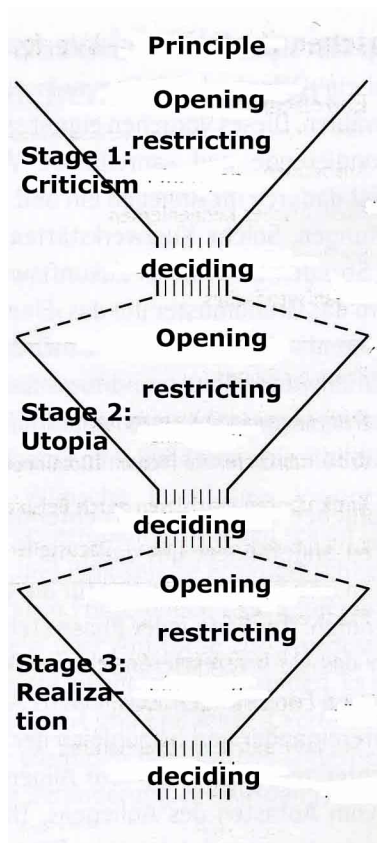
5 Literature

Dauscher, Ulrich: Moderationsmethode und Zukunftswerkstatt, Neuwied 1998

Jungk, Robert/Müllert, Norbert, Zukunftswerkstätten, München 1989
 Kuhnt, Beate, Müllert, Norbert: Moderationsfibel Zukunftswerkstätten.
 Münster 1996
 Vester, Friedrich: Die Kunst vernetzt zu denken, München 2002⁴

6 Appendix

6.1 Phases of a Future Workshop



(compare: Kuhnt/Müllert 1996, p. 60)

6.2 Example: Introduction

The following text is a model for the introduction in the beginning of a Future Workshop. In this Future Workshop the topic was "Dealing with groups".

Future Workshop 08.10.-10.10.1997
 Dealing with groups

In this Future Workshop the topic is "Dealing with groups".

All of you know teamwork from school, university or maybe even from adult education. Positive as well as negative experiences are connected to this term.

The Future Workshop offers the opportunity to talk about the own experiences with teamwork and to reflect them. Together with the other participants you have the possibility to develop fantasies from the criticism of experienced group situations about how you could imagine an optimal cooperation in groups to be like. The Future Workshop will help to model your new ideas, which develop during the workshop, for a realization in the adult education and in the further education.

It is about different points of view. The dealing with groups can for example be discussed from the participants` point of view or from the point of view of the moderators or organizers.

The discussion can contain group processes, like for example superior roles, questions of authority, rankings and participation behaviour. Groups can be steered from the outside or they can steer themselves. Groups produce dynamics, in which conflicts can arise and unload.

Teamwork has different goals. For example in adult education there is frequently intended the goal to make learning for single group members more effective. This includes a clear objective of an event as well as a clear "business basis", the rules of cooperation. In teamwork it is important to keep the central thread visible for everybody, results have to be produced and protected. It is not only essential that the result is satisfactory for the whole group but also that the single participants have the feeling to take a good profit from the event.

Students of adult and further education may possibly work as a trainer during their studies or want to prepare for such a work. The question, which qualification is required for this activity and how these qualifications can be presented on the labour market, is obvious.

These thoughts shall serve as an orientation for the topic of the Future Workshop. This does not determine systematics, these belong to the decision process in the Future Workshop. You can and shall bring in your thoughts and interests, which did not appear here, together with all the other participants.

The Future Workshop is moderated by Gernot Graebner. We will be working in "Haus Neuland". Maybe you already know this educational institution. It is set a little bit outside of Bielefeld and offers very favourable working rooms. The surroundings will invite us, if the weather is good, to go for walks and to enjoy nature.

6.3 Example: Documentation

Future Workshops should preferably be documented to facilitate the further work on it for the participants or other persons. The structure can be created sensefully in the following way:

Documentation: Future Workshop XY

Date	Action
Wednesday, the 01.00.200x	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction to the Future Workshop • Feedback of the day

Thursday, the
02.00.200x

- First Phase: Criticism and complaint
- Second Phase: Fantasy
- Feedback of the day

Friday, the
03.00.200x

- Third Phase: Realization
- Total feedback, evaluation, protection of the results
- Application cases in the practice, agreements

1 month later

- Follow-up meetings