



BY HOUSE OF FUTURES

## VISION, INTEGRATION OF KNOWLEDGE AND MIND SHIFT

THE PURPOSE OF SEMINAR 1, "MIND THE LONG RUN, BABY!" (HELD 8-9 JUNE 2011) WAS TO SET THE TONE FOR THE PROJECT, TO CREATE A FRAME OF MIND WHERE TAKING A 100 YEARS' PERSPECTIVE NOT ONLY BECOMES URGENT AND NATURAL, BUT ALSO OPENS UP CHANNELS FOR EXPLORATION, DISCOVERY AND IMAGINATION. THE OVERALL CONCLUSION IS THAT ADVANCING SUSTAINABLE SOCIETIES AND ENABLING TRANSFORMATION MUST INCLUDE POSITIVE VISIONS, INTEGRATION OF KNOWLEDGE, AND MIND SHIFT. THIS ARTICLE SUMS UP THE CONTRIBUTIONS MADE BY PARTICIPANTS AT SEMINAR 1 HELD 8-9 JUNE 2011 IN COPENHAGEN, WHICH FORM THE FOUNDATION FOR THE CONTINUING DEVELOPMENT OF PREFERRED FUTURES SCENARIOS FOR SUSTAINABLE SOCIETIES 2112.

In order to address challenges as large and complex as growth and sustainability, we need to mind the long run. Nature is as old as the universe. Humanity is a million years old. The systems that humans have created to support our existence on Earth are a couple of hundred years old, and have a strong inertia that easily extends a hundred years into the future. These human-made systems with names like technology, capitalism, business, nation states, democracy, globalisation, and organisation, have many features. One of them is perpetual growth: Growth in the number of people, growth in human material wealth, knowledge and well-being. And also growth in the extraction and consumption of limited resources as well as unintended harmful by-products of these activities.

Is this development sustainable? Do we need conscious efforts to change the path we are on? And which efforts would that be?

It is unusual to take a 100 year view on human activities and decision making. It is also very difficult to do. But that is what the project "In100years – starting now" has set out to do in four seminars.

### KNOWLEDGE FROM SEMINAR 1

Day 1 (8 June) was dedicated to facilitating this by performance, story-telling, and wisdom as well as contributions from geologists, sustainability and leadership scholars, economists and futurists. At the site [www.in100y.dk](http://www.in100y.dk) you can find all the presentations from this seminar and in Box 1 are highlights from each speaker, while the other boxes sum up the working sessions from day 2.

On day 2 (9 June), we challenged our hand-picked expert participants to put this 100 years' mindset to work in a number of sessions. The idea was to create syntheses and co-creation rather than analysis and information. The result was literally overwhelming. Many concrete ideas and recommendations were articulated. But the most important message that emerged can be summed up in three concepts: Vision, integration of knowledge, and mind shift.

Vision, because our ability to act is hampered by a lack of a coherent shared sense of direction. We need a story that is big enough to encompass countries, cultures and communities on a global scale, and to give meaning, sense of purpose and legitimacy for decision makers.



Integration of knowledge, because a useful understanding of our present and future situation requires knowledge from many disciplines to be integrated, so that geologists, biologists, anthropologists, economists contribute their specific insights. But also an integration of such academic, scientific knowledge, with intuitive knowledge and wisdom traditions from the common experience of humanity.

And mind shift, because there was a strong feeling that we already have all the necessary knowledge, and even a widely shared desire to transform our systems and create

a sustainable path of development. The critical factor is overcoming old habits and established patterns of thinking, behaviour and rules that perpetuate our present path.

These three elements will form the foundation for the rest of the project "In100y – starting now". We have our work cut out – but it's cut out in a way that makes all the sense in the world. And we are starting now!



### BOX 1: VISIONARY VOICES

HIGHLIGHTS FROM SEMINAR 1, "MIND THE LONG RUN, BABY!", DAY 1, 8 JUNE 2011. SEVEN VOICES, SEVEN STORIES ABOUT THE FUTURES OF SUSTAINABLE GROWTH. READ THE SMALL CAPTURES AND QUOTES FROM THEIR PRESENTATIONS AND SPEECHES ON THE NEXT PAGES, OR TRY TO ANSWER THEIR QUESTIONS.

**THE POWER OF THOUGHT.** Minik Thorleif Rosing (DK), Professor Natural History Museum of Denmark

#### Quotes:

"Scientists have to realize that humans in general don't react to facts, they react to emotions, and what is more important humans needs positive aspirations to go in a different direction. We need inspired people to go a better way rather than having various people to tell other people not to go further in the wrong direction. That's why I think that art and culture in the broadest sense are as important as the natural sciences in order to move things in the right direction. As an example I can mention the media coverage a couple of years ago when Michael Jackson died. In the same year enormous areas of the ocean died. We might say that this is ironic, but it just illustrates that people are reacting to emotions and that we can't rule people by scientific facts."

"On the average the inner landscape of planet Earth is very boring, nothing much has happened, and it's not that dynamic."

"Humans can use a lot more energy that they can produce themselves, and we spend four times more than we really need (for all kinds of purposes)."

"A million years ago one particular species got the bright idea that they could outsource their metabolism. Later they invented all kinds of other things to be able to use other external energy sources to perform work for them. The idea of burning things was getting a little out of hand. You just watch the planet from the outer space and you'll see all the lights that are burning throughout the world in our industrialized society. Is this excessive use of external energy consumption something that is sustainable?"

**THE DIRECTIONS FOR ECONOMY.** Peder Andersen (DK), Professor in Environmental Economy, University of Copenhagen

#### Quotes:

"It's very hard to find a well-educated economist that thinks GDP is a good measurement of wealth/well-being/happiness, and we all know that there are more to add to this. We all know that economic activity produces externalities or side effects that are not taken into account, and of course we have to do that. Economists do not in general support the free market, and they do recommend regulations to correct for market failure as for example pollution and imperfect information. We all know that, and we have the tools."

"If there's anything people will react to it is money. They do react to change in real prices, budget constraints, and changes in relative prices."

"The dilemma is the question of optimal saving. A sustainable policy is a question of how much we leave for future generations, useful or not."

#### Questions:

- How many of you believe in the ministry of finance's general statements?
- How much do we want to save for future generations?
- What if we save something for the future generations that they can't use?
- Who will formulate that we need to obtain for future generations?
- Why should we suffer today in order to leave something for future generations that according to history will be richer?

**STEADY-STATE ECONOMY.** Daniel O'Neill (UK), European Director Center for the Advancement of the Steady State Economy (CASSE)

#### Quotes:

"I'm not going to talk about the need for an economy that is not based on growth. A lot has been said about that for the last forty years. You will hear about a vision of an economy that might function in a different way, a transition to something called a Steady State Economy. We might also call this de-growth, green economics, ecological economics, new economics – there's a lot a names out there, but they all describe a similar vision to that of a steady state."

"Economic growth is a primary policy goal of most governments, and there is a fundamental conflict between economic growth and environmental protection."

"Economic growth is used as an excuse to avoid dealing with poverty."

#### A Steady State Economy – in short:

A Steady State Economy is a stable population and a stable per capita consumption. Furthermore the energy and material flows are reduced and kept within ecological limits, and we have a constant stock of natural and human-built capital.

A Steady State Economy is characterized by these four values:

1. Sustainable Scale (of energy and materials flows)
2. Fair Distribution (of resources)
3. Efficient Allocation (among competing usages)
4. High Quality of Life

"We need to get the goal right, and that is to adopt the right macro-economic goal, namely the Steady State Economy. What do we need to do? We need to gradually change existing policies from growth towards a steady state, and we're working with 6 policies in our organisation", Daniel O'Neill said. These are:

1. Limit Resource Use
2. Stabilise Population
3. Reduce Inequality
4. Reduce Working Hours
5. Reform The Monetary System
6. Change How We Measure Progress

**NEW PERSPECTIVES ON SUSTAINABILITY.** Jan Rotmans (NE), Professor in Sustainability, Erasmus University Rotterdam

#### Quotes:

"We still have the idea that the market will lead us to a transformative change, which is not likely, and most other institutions are also in for incremental change and not transformative change. The only thing that could work is real radical transformative change. We need to do radical transformations in small steps."

"Many transitions thinkers think we are at a tipping point, and for a systems thinker like me, it's a time of chaos, instability and turbulence, and these form the best premises to change radically. If you want to change something do it in a tipping point period. Many organizations try to adjust themselves to new services and demands from society and the public, from citizens etc. So they are in a state of transition, and what you normally see is a transition through generations."

"We think we are in an area of change between dominant paradigms. What we have heard here for the last hour was the old paradigm: economic growth, savings, efficiency – that's the old paradigm. The old paradigm won't trigger the transitions that are required to move towards a more sustainable society. The process is a kind of Q&A's and this leads to new failures. We still have difficulties to express those new failures, and we need to look closer at those in order to gain a sustainable society."

#### What is transition?

There are multiple definitions, and in the book *Transitions to Sustainable Development. New Directions in the Study of Long Term transformative change* (Routledge, 2010) which is an interdisciplinary project, the authors – among them Jan Rotmans – have defined the need for change in three fundamental things: The way we organize, the way we think, and the way we produce. The problem is that these three needs for change are embedded, they are not to separate. "Can you image where the biggest barriers are?" Jan Rotmans asked the participants at seminar 1. His answer was: "It's in our mind!" He continued: "We have studied lots of historical transitions, and what we learned from these is that there are no great plans behinds those, and many of them failed, and if they succeeded there is no blue print or anything, but they are not fully spontaneous, they are in between."

"What are the dominant parts of transition? Most successful transitions arise from small developments and emergences. We have three characteristics that describe transitions:

Emergence, co-evolution and self-organization. That's a completely different language than economists use. In almost all cases something big starts from a small development, we call this the bottom-up cases, and if this happens in the 'meso'-systems you will have massive fast change that rarely happens, but there are examples of that. But do this lead to a more sustainable society? Hardly not. If you analyze it from our viewpoint transition is a shift in power and mindset."

**THIRD MILLENNIUM ECONOMY.** John Fullerton (US), Founder of Capital Institute

John has labeled the new economics the 3<sup>rd</sup> Millennium Economy, and House of Futures interviewed him on video before the seminar. We talked about different aspects of this new economy for more than an hour. The assessment by many is that John knows the marketplace of new economics and finance better than anybody and seems to have his heart in the right place. Watch the interview at [www.in100y.dk](http://www.in100y.dk)

*Quote:*

"Regarding the role of finance, it must evolve to serve the real needs of a sustainable economy, and it must power the transition to such an economy. This is a vital role, but also a radical shift from its current impact."

**SUSTAINABLE LEADERSHIP.** Steen Hildebrandt (DK), Professor in Leadership, Aarhus University

*Quotes:*

"Sustainable leadership is a central force in shaping the ongoing paradigm shift towards a sustainable future for individuals, corporations and societies. The urgent task is to improve our ability to combine the individual internal orientation with a global perspective. We all know how money talks; we also have to listen to the voices of life in order to foster and formulate a new mindset and live the future while we create it."

"In reality, the time horizon for many important decisions is a few years. And at the same time quite many decision dimensions are ignored, are not dealt with. This, in combination, is a catastrophe."

"Leadership is two-sided: The inner side, which is the leader's mental, emotional and spiritual basis, and the external or outer side which is all the so called results which we are aiming and striving at."

"To a large degree, we still act as if the goal is growth – material and economic growth – whatever the costs." "If we do not grow, we will die", an executive leader recently said. I am sure that we need growth. But at the same time we need to reconsider and redefine what growth is at the individual, the company, and the societal level. So still – whilst pursuing growth, we destroy a lot. Many people are suffering and the earth is put under enormous pressure."

"We have moved from – or are moving from - a local divisive culture to a global and systemically holistic orientation. This means that the cultures and the conceptions of the world we were born into are rather limited in the context of the present reality."

"This is the way living systems sense themselves – by listening to the feedback from within the system and from the environment. By becoming aware of these messages, we can improve our listening skills and thereby our respect for what we might call the voices of life, i.e. my own voice and the voice of the environment. We must develop a serious approach to the fact that emotions, thoughts, assessments, and decisions originate in the psyche, and as such are firmly based in human beings. Again: We cannot change the outer world without changing the inner world. This has to do with *the* single leader and with *the* single leadership team."

"A basic premise in our book is that in order to be able to take responsibility for sustainability, each of us must individually learn the basic feedback mechanisms which are the blueprints of the organization of all living systems."

"We should invite people to join processes of change and awareness building, which encourage them to think outside the box, generate new structures, and new corporate or organizational designs."

"The degree of internal grounding, the depth, the nuance, and the knowledge a human being has of his or her interior, determine the way and the extent to which he or she is able to interact with other people and the world at large. The internal dimension is a central point of development in leadership work in general and particularly in relation to the development of what we might call the highest future potential."



## BOX 2: 3 PARALLEL SESSIONS ON EMERGING TRENDS

Session 1 consisted of three very different working groups who applied quite different approaches and delivered three very different contributions. Yet there are surprising and significant parallels in their recommendations.

### SESSION: CULTURE AND CONSCIOUSNESS

"We know enough already" - "Change as a state of being" - "Finding joy". These were some of the key ideas formulated by the group - and performed in their presentation.

Key points:

*The need for positive images:* Start making changes where you are: A critical mass of change changes common goals – Fear is holding us back; we need to facilitate an End of Fear - Emergence of sustainable values: Sustainability cannot be a project for the elite - Realigning with nature – Take time to think, feel, engage – Create new rituals, new myths, new root metaphors

*The meeting of outer and inner science:* Cultural globalization, not just economic: Meeting of Eastern mindfulness traditions and Western psychotherapy - Connectivity across cultures - Connect in new ways – Stewardship, wisdom

*Emerging changes:* Gender balance - Cracks in the way we see a certain culture (e.g. Egypt's revolution) - Collective consciousness on global scale.

### SESSION: NATURE AND SCIENCE

The nature and science group worked on several levels. They considered specific projects that would promote a sustainable future (from vertical farming to cradle to cradle shipbuilding) as well as general principles for the future of science and nature (such as new roles for science in engaging with communities, and creating resilience in the context of climate change). Taking the long view, they summed up their contribution in a number of "hotspots":

- emergence of design thinking: New design criteria for sustainability
- shifting role of science in society
- emerging mind shifts, eg Waste = food
- collaborative partnerships in whole material cycles
- increased scientific social responsibility
- individual empowerment through enhanced access to data/knowledge and connectivity
- converting environmental constraints to business opportunities
- we have more information than ever before. Our systems for managing the information and converting it to knowledge are also changing – and need to change even more.

### SESSION: SOCIETIES AND SYSTEMS

This group worked with outlining key problems, drivers of change and proposals for solutions. They stressed the need for articulating positive visions and to change behaviours by breaking them down into actionable steps. Some highlights:

*Key problems:* Systemic "schizophrenia": We want to change, we know we have to – but we don't! (mind shift!)- Bottom-up awareness and pressure is crucial – but most NGOs work on top-down arena - We need grass root/popular pressure to create a political mandate for top-down change

*Need for political systems change:* Leadership beyond 4-year horizon of electoral cycles - Getting effective action/democracy/political organisation beyond national borders – Have courage to take political risks - Challenge: How to create harmony between economics, politics, culture on the one hand – and nature on the other. Working together requires new political thinking

*Solutions:* Solutions already articulated, the challenge is creating political will - Make it easy for people/consumers to do the right thing - Make sustainability cool - Make global relations visible - Make it visible that people care – because they do!



### BOX 3: BREAKTHROUGHS

Participants worked in pairs, but gave personal responses to the questions of how they see the concepts of sustainability and growth, respectively. Furthermore, they contributed views on what would be the biggest breakthrough in their respective fields of work.

Responses to the conceptual questions ranged from the definitional and descriptive, to the normative and personal. There was no real disagreement on how to perceive *sustainability*. Most are comfortable with something like the Brundtland definition, even as some participants seem to view it primarily in terms of nature and environment while others see a need for extending the idea to the social, political and cultural spheres. As for *growth*, some see it as a goal to be simply abandoned – i. e. it is understood in terms of ever-increasing use of scarce resource inputs and waste outputs which is damaging the future of the planet and of coming generations. Others had a perspective which allowed for qualitative growth, i. e. growth in the quality of life, broadly speaking, which would not necessarily be incompatible with sustainability. Also, there were a couple of responses noting that growth is a part of nature, and part of circular processes of life.

As for *breakthroughs* in participants' respective fields of work, they of course varied with the field of work. Apart from that, there were two big groupings. One saw breakthroughs in terms of specific, even measurable developments – such as CO<sub>2</sub>-emissions cut to 1/10 of today's; the creation of a "cradle-to-cradle" passport; the realisation of sustainable farming; the establishment in practice of a steady-state economy in one or more countries; the embedding of futures studies in public education systems, on a par with the subject of history. The other one took a more process-oriented approach, and pointed to changes in values and perspective – for instance that more systems and nations would be working together; that a common consciousness with clarity on goals and results be created; that relationships between inner and outer sustainability be established; that a new "scientific spirituality" would prevail; that there would be a broader acceptance of other values than economic ones; and that a "credible time machine" be invented where people can feel the future and the development path we are on.

### BOX 4: WHAT THE FUTURE NEEDS TO KNOW

Seven groups of three participants worked on this question: "Please discuss and identify 3 specific areas/themes where you think we need more knowledge, research and/or experience in the future". Many groups had difficulty limiting their contributions to three. At the same time, this session gave a very clear indication of strategies to pursue in the project's coming work.

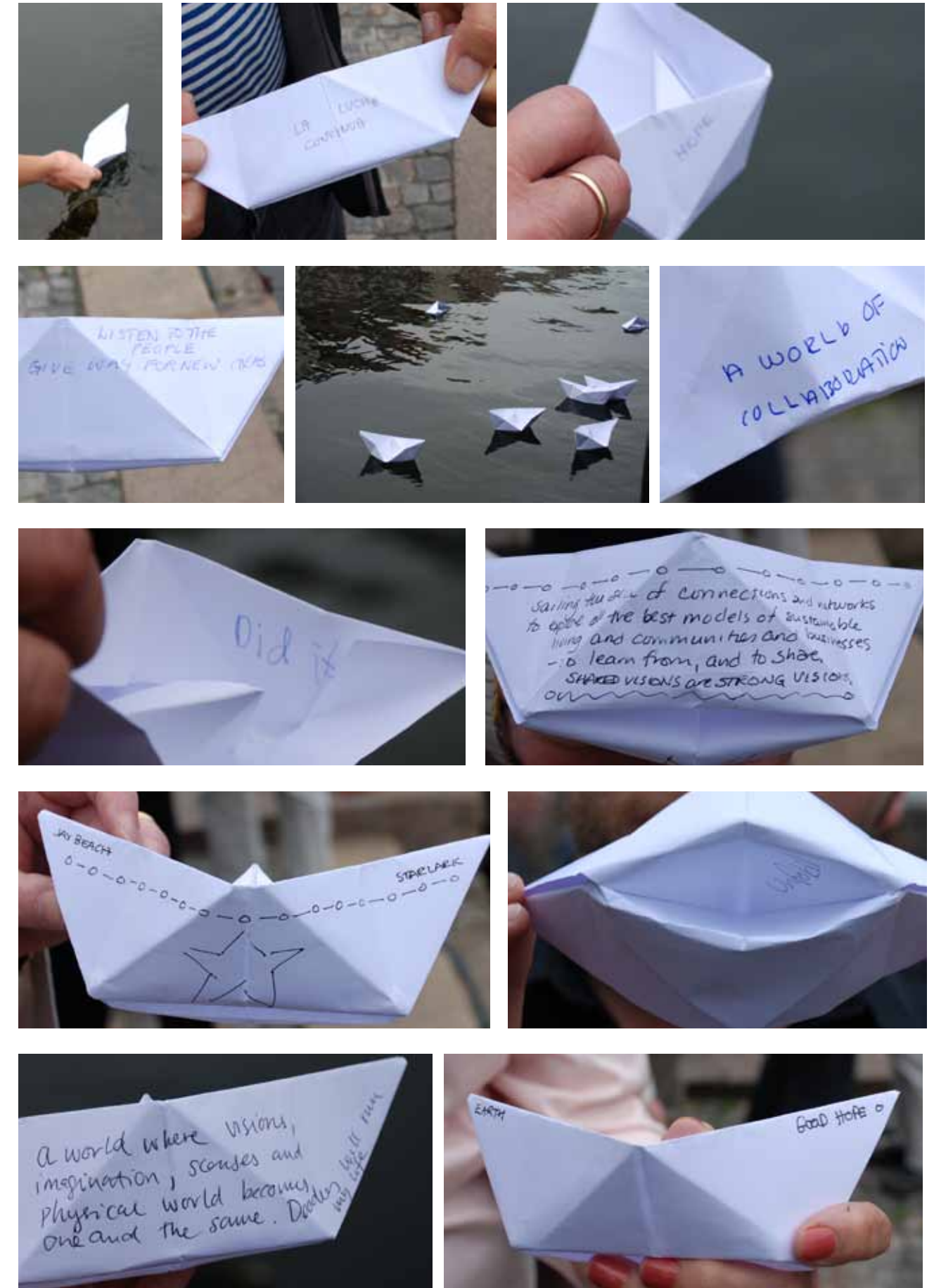
Some participants pointed to concrete areas of knowledge such as food security and energy and materials technology. But other than that, the responses overwhelmingly fell in three categories. One is the need for *cross-disciplinary knowledge*, a significant subcategory of which is the need to connect emotional and intuitive knowledge with scientific knowledge. Several use the word "holistic" knowledge, pointing to the need for synthesis and overview rather than generating more information. "We have facts, but not wisdom", as one response read.

Another main group of responses is a bit surprising, given the question: It's the need for *vision*. Also expressed as a need for stories, dreams, inspiration, or a new environmental ethic. There is "confusion and a lack of direction in society". A stronger sense of direction is regarded as crucial.

The third main category is *mind shift*, a word which was used by several groups. This deals with overcoming the problem of how to turn knowledge into action. "Knowledge on political/emotional motivation". "Mind shift from ego to eco and co-creation". We focus on means too much; we need to focus on ends".

Thus, what the *future needs to know* is how to create a *vision*, how to *integrate knowledge*, and how to accomplish a *mind shift* that will enable transformation.





FLOATING FUTURES. Closing the work day the participants were invited by Futures Mind Tours to participate in a ritual, in which they were first asked to write their personal future mission onto a small paper boat. Guided by the song of the agents of the travel agency/büro reisende, we all walked in a procession down to the canal, where their journey of In-100Years started the day before. Each of their individual mission were forming a floating ensemble of futures.