The Future of Gender and Trust in Governance in 2040
Futures Literacy Laboratory Report

Background

This project was initiated following discussions between GIZ, Wits University, and the Future Africa Futures Literacy Incubator. GIZ requested the design and implementation of a Futures Literacy Laboratory (FLL) to explore the intersection of gender and corruption in preparation for the national anti-corruption dialogue on December 9, 2024. Two co-design meetings were held on November 12 and 22, 2024, to define the project objectives and design the lab.

The FLL took place over the course of a full day on December 3, 2024 at the Future Africa campus in Pretoria. The insights generated during the FLL are documented in this short report and will be used to inform the national dialogue and ongoing activities of the National Anti-Corruption Advisory Council. By participating in the FLL, members of the National Anti-Corruption Advisory Council were equipped to use the future as a lens to reframe their present challenges and opportunities, enhancing their ability to navigate and influence an unpredictable and complex landscape.

Laboratory Design

The co-design process entailed a small team of the FLL facilitators jointly making decisions about the lab topic, participants, format, agenda, and activities. This step ensured that the FLL was relevant to the local context and that the topic was engaging and interesting for participants.

What is a Futures Literacy Laboratory?
The Futures Literacy Laboratory (FLL) is a learning by doing collective intelligence process that involves getting participants to describe and imagine different kinds of futures in the context of a particular topic. The topic of this particular lab - "The Future of Gender and Trust in Governance in 2040" was chosen to engage participants in exploring the intersection of gender and corruption in South Africa. The year 2040 is significant as it marks 20 years since the launch of the National Anti-Corruption Strategy. Through the lab, participants engaged with different ways of using the future, imagining probable, preferred as well as strange and unexpected futures. The goal of these activities is to get participants to think about thinking about the future – and to disrupt the tacit assumptions that they usually use for this task. This process enhances participants' personal and organizational futures literacy, enabling them to: 1) gain a deeper understanding of the future's role in their perceptions and actions, 2) innovate and adapt to change, and 3) leverage the future to rethink the present, fostering creativity and new perspectives.

Key Aspects of the Co-Design Process
- Two virtual co-design meetings were held on November 12 and 22 to plan for and design the FLL.
- The FLL was designed to take place over the course of one full day at Future Africa Campus within the University of Pretoria.
- The design was divided into two stages: the morning session featured the four phases of a standard futures laboratory, while the afternoon was dedicated to a 3

Horizon exercise. This approach was chosen to facilitate both open exploration and the identification of areas for action or next steps.

- Key questions that emerged during the co-design process included:
    - How do we establish trust in family, social, and govt. settings pertaining to gender?
    - How is this trust used or abused in these settings?
    - Why do we need to apply a gender lens to an anti-corruption institution?
        - What are the harms of not applying a gender lens
        - What are the benefits of applying a gender lens
    - How can we imagine implementing this in the Office of Public Integrity (OPI)
- The lab topic was extensively discussed during the co-design. A topic provides a focus for group discussions and helps to draw participants attention to a particular area of interest. The topic should also avoid language that is leading, overly normative, or might constrain participants' imagination with predefined ideas and beliefs. For example, "The Future of Corruption" may lead to heated discussions that serve to entrench existing ideas whereas "The Future of Trust" allows for a more open exploration of social norms and values related to trust and corruption. In the end, the topic "**The Future of Gender and Trust in Governance in 2040**" was chosen as described above.

Laboratory Results

Characteristics of the participants

Participants were selected from the National Anti Corruption Advisory Commission, Government agencies (individuals that have worked on ethics, gender, and anti-corruption), civil society (with focus on corruption), and academia.

At the start of the day there were 26 participants, with one or two more joining in the afternoon. The participants were divided into four groups, each comprising 6 to 7 people.

Personal Information	Participants (N = 16) *	
	M ± SD	n (%)
Age	47 ± 12	
Min age	30	
Max age	64	
Gender		
Female		13 (81%)
Male		3 (19%)
Profession		

Table 1 - Participants Demographic Characteristics (data based on responses to the post-lab evaluation form which not all participants completed)*

Polak game

At the very start of the FLL, before commencing the phased activities, an icebreaker activity was conducted to introduce participants to what lay ahead and to set the tone for the laboratory by encouraging participation. The Polak game, inspired by Dutch sociologist Frederik Lodewijk Polak, is typically used at the beginning of a futures laboratory to introduce the concept that there are various ways to anticipate the future (Hayward & Candy, 2017). Participants are asked to position themselves within a two-dimensional Cartesian space along two axes: the vertical axis represents optimism or pessimism about the future, and the horizontal axis represents the degree of agency to impact the future. This simple exercise demonstrates that even within the room, there are multiple futures. It initiates the process of uncovering the often hidden assumptions we hold about the future, making the implicit explicit.
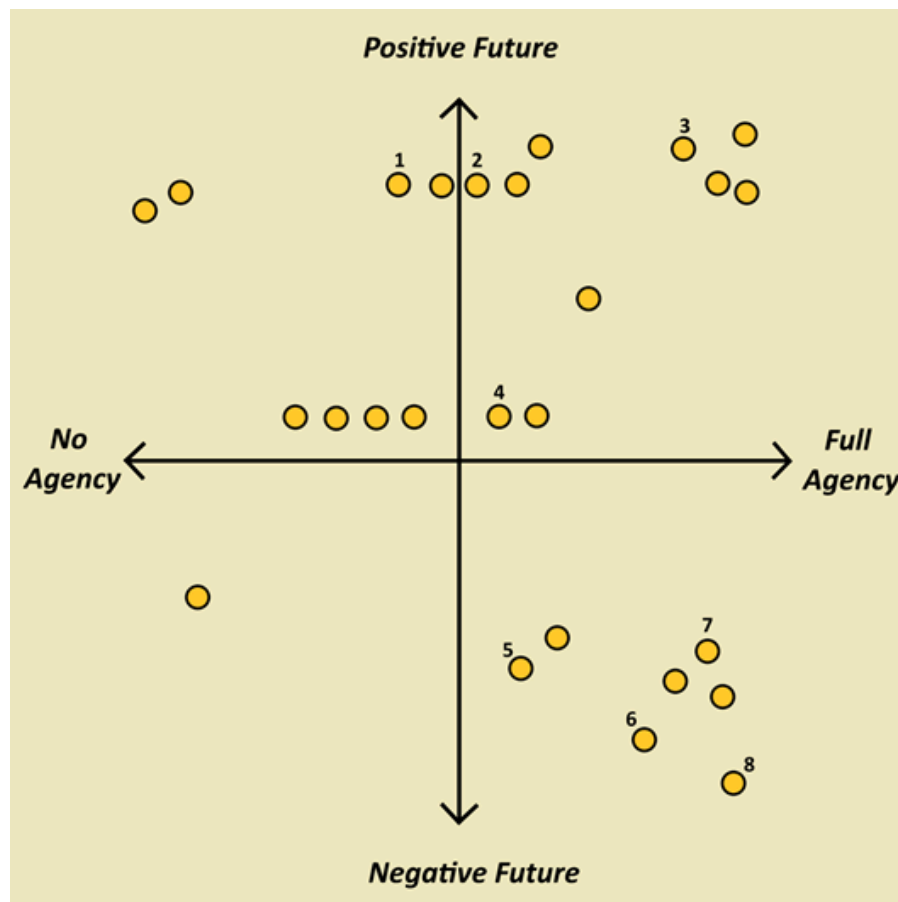

Figure 1 - Polak Game Resuts

Quotations from the Polak game:

1 - "It takes too much energy to be positive"
2 - "Recently, the special investigation unit came to our town and made positive changes"
3 - "It was my birthday yesterday... we shape the future we are problem solvers"
4 - "I'm generally optimistic but need to manage my expectations"
5 - "Technological progress in a positive but we have a crisis of leadership"
6 - "We have some agency.. but I think there will be no world left by 2040"

7 - "There is no grey area... either we are doing the right thing or not"

8 - "We all need to act now to make a change"

Phase 1: Probable & Preferred Futures

In phase 1, participants were asked to describe their probable and preferred futures for gender and trust in governance in 2040. By thinking through and sharing how they think about the future, the participants began to identify the often tacit anticipatory assumptions that shape their imagination of the later-than-now. The plenary facilitators played a role in revealing these patterns of thought to participants. Results from this phase have been digitized and can be accessed via the Miro platform:

https://miro.com/app/board/uXjVLo1DzPs=/?share_link_id=641833729485
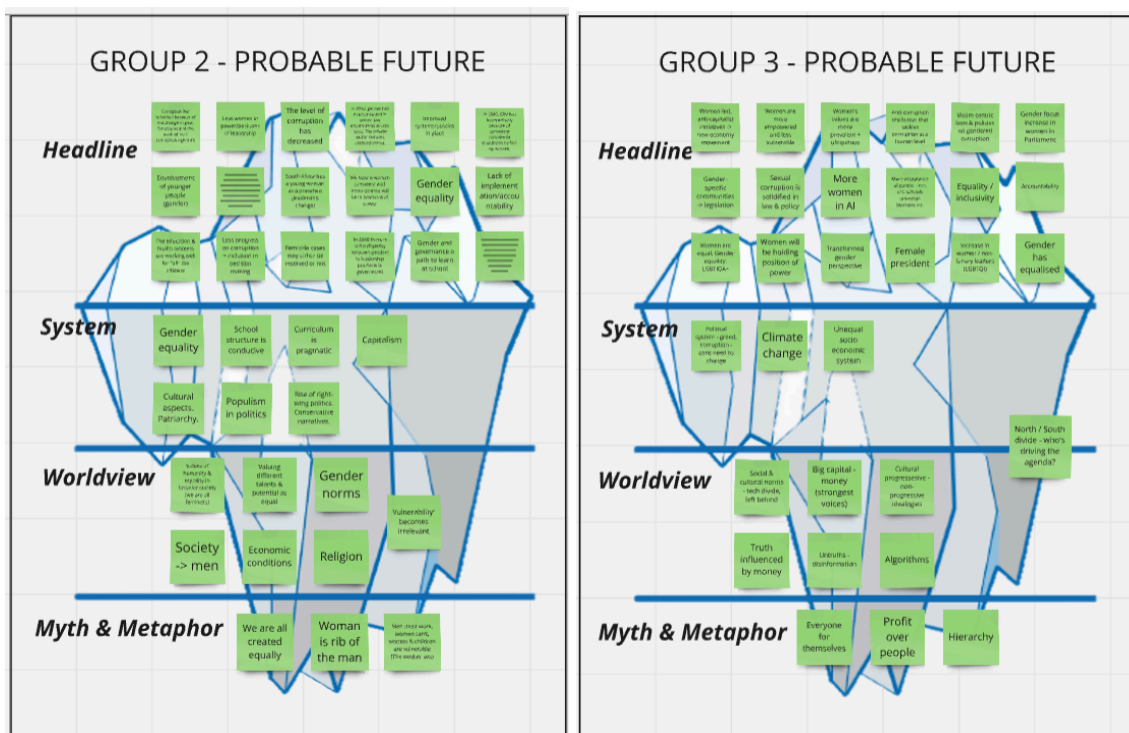
Figure 3 - Causal Layered Analysis results digitized in Miro platform

Participants were asked to use causal layered analysis (CLA) as a technique to & deepen the future they envisioned. CLA, developed by Sohail Inayatullah, is a method used to critically examine what drives our images of the future and open up space for alternatives. It consists of four levels: **headlines**, which are the surface understanding of an issue, usually backed by data, maps current response and views about the issue; **systems,** which are social, economic, political structures, community, and even familial policies, official or unofficial, underlying the issue; **worldviews**, which refer to deeper cultural assumptions and values that enable structures and behaviours; and **myth or metaphor** which represent the social narratives and imagery, acting at the level of collective consciousness.

Figure 4 - Group work during phase 1

Phase 2: Reframed Futures

In phase 2, participants embarked on a journey of experimentation and re-conceptualization. This phase is the heart of the futures lab, where the challenge lies in imagining futures that are neither probable nor necessarily desirable. It's a tough task because it pushes participants to fully engage their imaginations, breaking free from the dominant narratives that society often subconsciously accepts. By uncovering and questioning these assumptions, phase 2 invites participants into a world of novelty and complexity. Each group was asked to envision two scenarios of a reimagined future and bring these worlds to life through sculptures. The group reframe scenarios are outlined below:

Group 1:

No hierarchies in 2050
While hierarchies, whether in organizational structures, governance, or social systems, have been deeply ingrained in human societies throughout history, advances in technology, particularly in ICT-sharing platforms contribute to more decentralized and collaborative decision-making processes. Digital platforms and tools facilitate greater participation and reduce the reliance on traditional hierarchical models. Social movements advocating for equality, diversity, and social justice lead with their influence on the dismantling or restructuring of hierarchical systems.
The Age of Impermanence
The concept of permanence has become obsolete. Everything, from physical objects to relationships to institutions and policies, is designed to be temporary and dispensable, fully in relation to their relevance and efficacy at any point in time. Like a tide coming in and out, washing over marks on a shore, nothing is developed to exist for long.

Figure 4 - Group 1 presenting their reframe scenario sculpture

Group 2:

Gender Fluid Society
In a gender-fluid society, individuals have the autonomy to define their own gender identity, embracing the principle of gender self-determination. There is an understanding that gender is not fixed but can change over time, fostering a dynamic and authentic expression of self.
Government 3.0
In 2040, government services are all automated, having fully incorporated cutting-edge technologies. It is the norm to have Personalized public services (including healthcare and education); Predictive governance (e.g. for urban planning and disaster response); AI-driven decision support informs policy decisions; and Blockchain-powered security ensures the security and transparency of government transactions and records, including land registries and voting systems.

Figure 5 - Group 2 presenting their reframe scenario sculpture

Group 3:

"Progress" and "Development" Redefined
In 2040 progress is no longer defined by measures of economic output or industrial development. Instead, progress and wealth are understood in terms of the celebration of diverse cultures and traditions, artistic expression, cultural exchange, and the protection of heritage sites.
Murmuration: A Heterarchical, Learning Intensive Society
The nature of leadership and social behaviour has transformed profoundly - resembling that of a starling murmuration. Beginnings and ends, leading and following, inside and outside are all constantly changing yet there is a beautifully shifting order to things.

Figure 6 - Group 3 presenting their reframe scenario sculpture

Group 4:

The Mycelium Network Future
A socio-biological evolution led to humans becoming interconnected with the rest of nature, just as fungi are connected underground via incomprehensibly complex networks of mycelium. The Earth is a fully networked living entity, and people experience emotional and even physical responses to planetary health, including pain - from climate change, deforestation, loss of biodiversity, and other environmental challenges.
All Leaders AI Watchdog (ALAW)
Everyone in a registered leadership role (public sector, private sector, non-governmental organisations, including faith-based) is assigned an anti-corruption device which conducts 24-hour surveillance of all activities and senses any inappropriate conduct (potential corruption), tries, prosecutes and judges the individual based on an objective application of the law. It is an effective judge, jury and executioner.

Figure 7 - Group 4 reframe scenario sculpture

Phase 3: New Questions

In phase 3, participants took a step back to reflect on how the reframe in Phase 2 changed (or did not change) the way they thought about gender and trust in governance. Some of the "new questions" that came up highlighted the ways participants were re-examining their anticipatory assumptions and using this new perspective to re-evaluate the present:

" Is a centralised society the answer or should we look at localised mechanisms at community level? "

" How to build a future based on values rather than practicalities? How to be creative? "

" Do we need leaders? Can we coexist as just society that does not recognise gender / power? "

" What new systems can we construct? Cohesion and collaboration is vital "

" What needs to happen that people open their minds + change the way we live / govern / lead? -> How do we get there? "

" How to build interconnectedness b/t people -> people and people -> nature? "

Phase 4: Next Steps & Three Horizons

In phase 4, the participants were guided through a three horizons exercise to focus on ways in which the insights and capabilities gained through the laboratory can be used in their work and everyday environments. Three horizons is a futures method that entails taking a vision of the future (e.g. a more fair and equitable South Africa) and connecting it to existing systems and structures in the present. This highlights the tensions between the dominant way of doing things in the present and the change imagined in the future. The method is useful for identifying potential transitions that link the imagined future to the present. The method envisions three horizons, each of which describe very different conditions that become more or less prevalent over time.
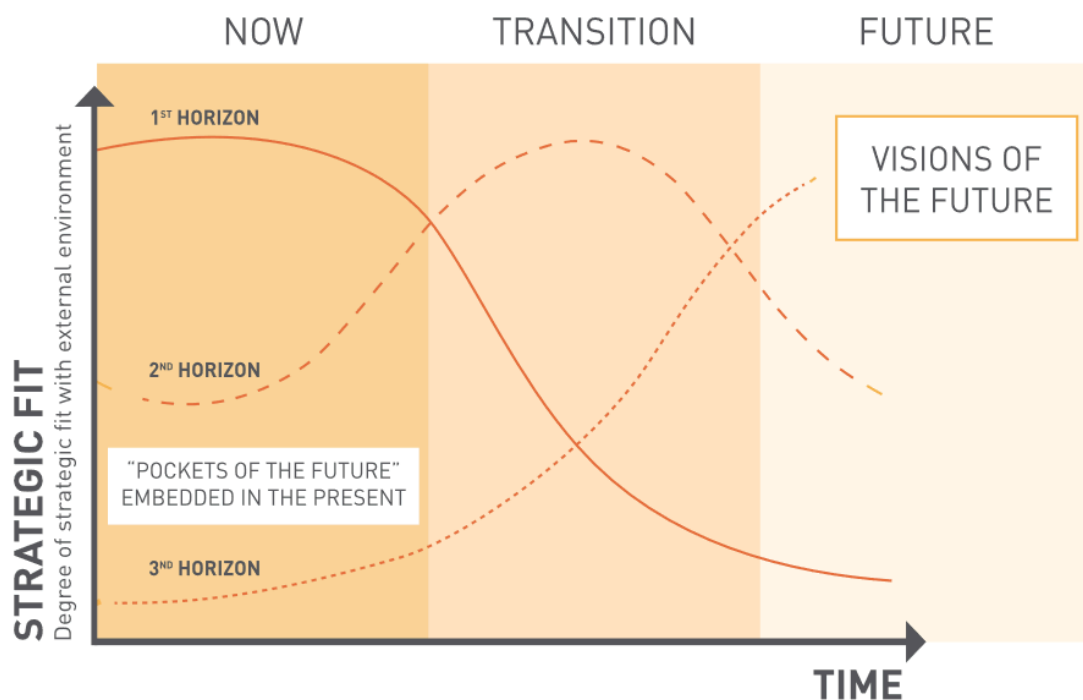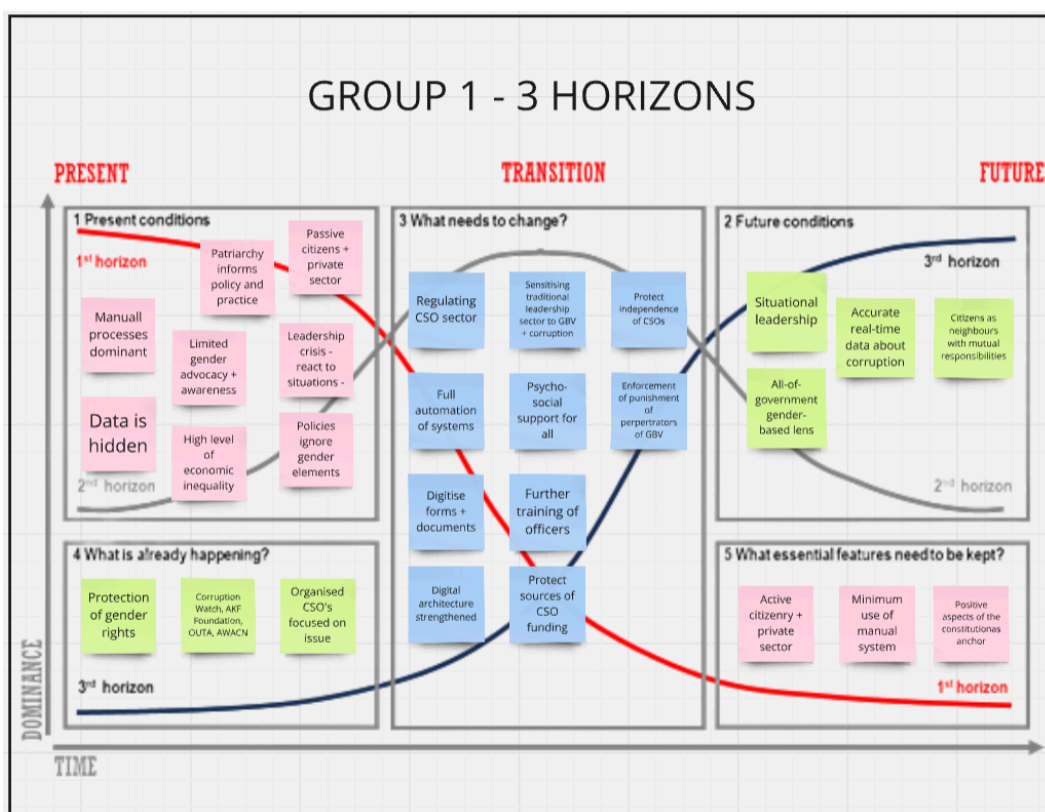
Figure 8 - Three horizons exercise

Figure 9 - Three horizons exercise from the lab digitized on the Miro platform:
https://miro.com/app/board/uXjVLo1DzPs=/?share_link_id=641833729485

Horizon 1: The prevailing systems and ways of doing things in the present

Horizon 3: Describing "new" ideas and systems that are not mainstream in the present but may become so in the future

Horizon 2: An intermediate space where transition between competing paths (1 and 3) plays out.

The recommendations derived from the 'levers of change' developed by each group in Horizon 2 are outlined below:

Group	Recommendation
1	Regulating CSO sector
1	Sensitising traditional leadership sector to GBV + corruption
1	Protect independence of CSOs
1	Protect sources of CSO funding
1	Full automation of systems
1	Psycho-social support for all
1	Enforcement of punishment of perpetrators of GBV
1	Digital architecture strengthened
1	Digitise forms + documents
1	Further training of officers
2	Open communication & collaboration between agencies, also to reduce

Group	Recommendation
	competition (Civil society can play a role)
2	Open communication about anti-corruption initiatives & strategy, improve public awareness, also of roles of different agencies
2	Exchange programmes with other countries' anti-corruption
2	Data collection & analysis (you can't measure what you don't know) (streamlined / centralised)
2	Skills transfer across agencies & across sectors
2	Contextualisation of new international obligations on gender & corruption
2	A human-centred approach to anti-corruption that takes into account the realities & vulnerabilities of the context (civil society)
2	Review existing policies for effectiveness & inclusivity & improve implementation (civil society can play a role)
2	Capacitation on gender dimensions of corruption / mainstreaming in prevention, investigation, data collection / analysis, HR, monitoring (civil society)
2	Proactive approach to prevention, robust & must be mandated to a specific agency
3	Victim blaming
3	Criminalise retaliatory actions against whistleblowers
3	SAPS / Law enforcement
3	Enforced consequences 4 perps
3	More progressive gender education
3	Education curriculum - include ethics, gender mainstreaming
3	From a gender initiative approach to gender mainstreaming
3	Peer counselling of men - non-violence
3	OPI's - all sectors
3	Reframing of social norms
3	Everything!
4	Diagnosing problems
4	Problem driven iterative adaptation
4	Gender lens
4	Resources + capacity for state institutions
4	Servant leadership
4	Communicate + celebrate wins + successes
4	Nationwide anti-corruption campaign on values + behaviours
4	*~~Financial~~ incentives for doing the right thing

Table 2: Levers of change identified by participants

* The participant originally wrote financial incentives before deciding to change their recommendation to focus on non-financial incentives.

Participant Feedback
At the conclusion of the FLL, participants were encouraged to complete an evaluation form to assess their key takeaways from the lab and to determine if it 1) altered their perspectives

on the future and 2) changed the way they thought about gender and trust in governance. The results of this evaluation are presented below:
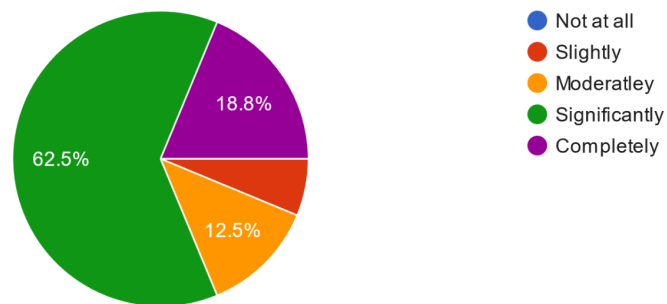

Figure 10 - Did participating in the futures lab change the way you think about the future? (16 responses)
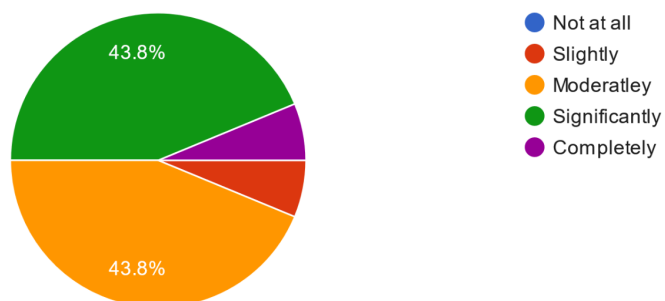

Figure 11 - Did your perception of the topic: "Gender and Trust in Governance" change as a result of the futures lab? (16 responses)
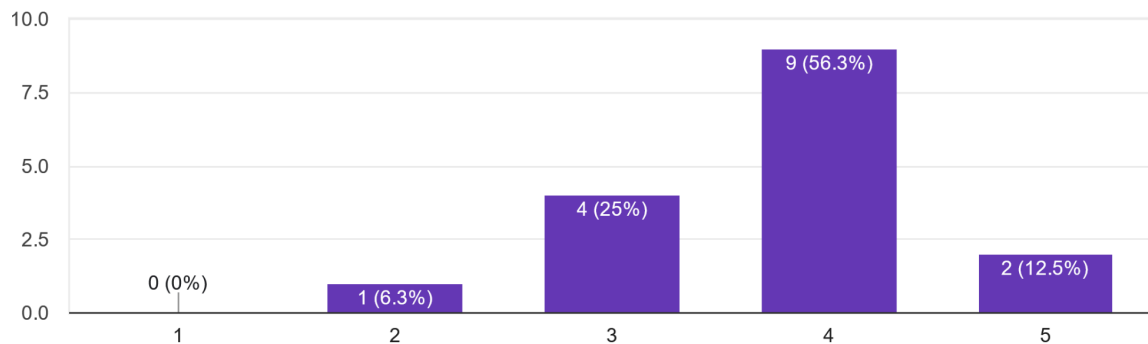

Figure 12 - How would you rate your level of optimism / pessimism about the future? (16 responses)
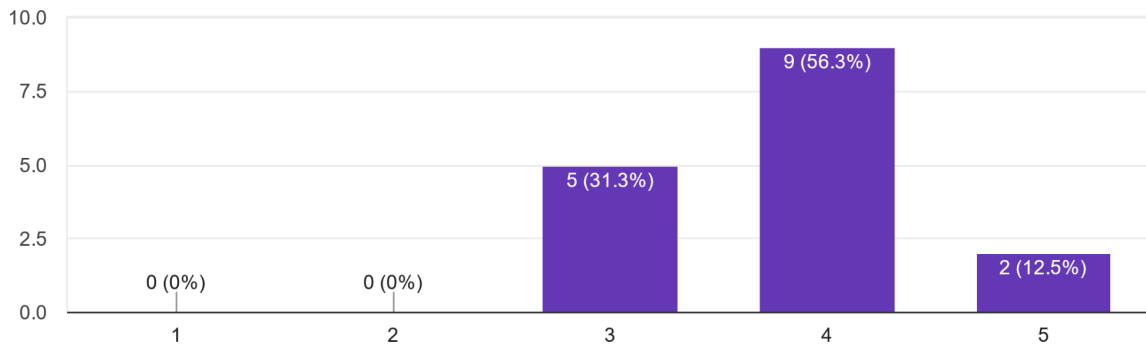
Figure 13 - How much agency do you have to influence the future? (16 responses)

Legend:
- Strongly disagree
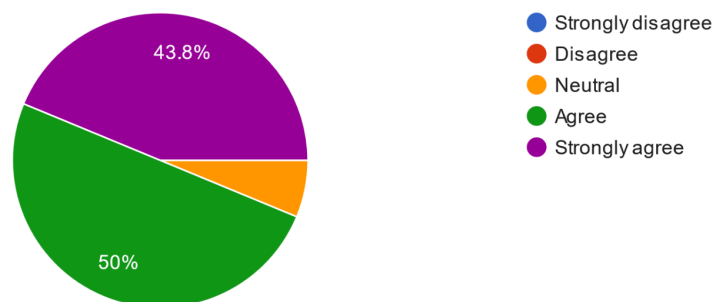- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly agree

Figure 14 - Indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statement based on your experience with the futures literacy lab: "The lab helped me realize and reflect on my assumptions about the future" (16 responses)

Insights

The futures literacy laboratory process began with participants describing their probable and desirable futures, specifically imagining the future of gender and trust in governance in 2040. By thinking through and sharing their visions, participants identified the often tacit anticipatory assumptions shaping their imagination of the future. In the second phase, participants challenged these assumptions and re-conceptualized the topic by imagining unusual futures that were neither probable nor desirable, using reframe scenarios. This phase opened participants to novelty and complexity in their worldview. The future served as a tool to unravel and explore thought processes on issues of gender and corruption, generating new insights and perspectives from the group. Key insights from the laboratory are documented here.

Why versus how: The group commented that discussions on anti-corruption often emphasize mechanisms such as policy, legislation, and enforcement, focusing on how to prevent corruption. However, these discussions tend to overlook a deeper examination of the values, power dynamics, and systemic realities that enable corruption to exist.

Diagnosis, action, and adaptability: There is a need to better understand the nexus of gender and corruption, which includes collecting data and researching the linkages and dynamics between them. At the same time, there is an opportunity to bring this issue to the attention of lawmakers, an opportunity that cannot be missed. It is crucial to avoid poorly

thought-out policies that could lead to ineffective implementation. However, it is also impossible to anticipate everything, as there is always uncertainty and unpredictability in the future. Recognizing the necessity for institutions that learn and adapt, one group used the metaphor of a wave washing away writing in the sand to illustrate the need for fluid and adaptable policies. As things constantly change, this highlights the importance of constant reflexivity, learning, and adaptability in any institution dealing with the complex issue of corruption and gender.

Technology and shared values: During the lab, technology was a recurring theme. Participants expressed a great deal of uncertainty about how technology would shape the future, using it as a vehicle to convey their hopes and fears. There was a sense of powerlessness regarding a world dominated by emerging technologies, leading to both positive and negative consequences. This sense of powerlessness, and the act of projecting hopes and fears onto something omnipresent and abstract like technology, may be linked to a resignation of our ability to control the future. Discussions also explored whether technology could address corruption, with AI frequently mentioned as a potential solution. However, concerns were raised about who controls AI and the implications of its governance. These conversations underscored the importance of critically adopting technology, recognizing the challenges of aligning shared values, and avoiding the assumption that technology alone can solve all problems.

Gaps in the discussion: The ideas and discussions that emerged during the lab had some interesting and notable gaps. There was an absence of discussion on power dynamics, which are crucial to understanding the broader context of corruption. Additionally, the lack of discussion on private sector involvement meant that important economic factors were potentially overlooked, highlighting the need for a more comprehensive exploration of these dynamics.

Group dynamics: Over 80% of the attendees identified as female, with the majority being in the 30-40 age range. Ensuring a balance of voices in future discussions could be crucial for effective strategy and policy development in future engagements.

Recommendations

Initial recommendations that emerged from the discussions in the futures lab are described here.

1. **Emphasize diagnosis**: Continue to collect data and conduct research on the linkages between gender and corruption in order to properly diagnose the issue. This diagnosis should take place regularly to inform anti-corruption strategies and allow for continuous learning and adaptation.
2. **Adaptable policies and institutions**: To enhance the effectiveness of anti-corruption efforts, it is recommended to design institutions and policies that are adaptable to dynamic and unpredictable contexts. It is important to act quickly when

opportunities arise and to be able to learn from past mistakes and successes, including those of previous institutions.

3. **Differentiation and specificity**: It is essential to define the levels of intervention, specifying which policymakers should be involved. Additionally, it is important to identify who is affected by gender and corruption, considering the differentiated views and impacts on various groups.

"The future is a social construct; if we made this present we can make a different future" - Councillor Thandeka

References:

1. Futures Literacy Laboratory Playbook. 2023. 978-92-3-100587-9. UNESCO.

2. Hayward, P. and Candy, S. 2017. The Polak Game, Or: Where Do You Stand? *Journal of Futures Studies, 22(2)*, pp. 5-14. DOI:10.6531/JFS.2017.22(2).A5.

3. Inayatullah, S. 1998. Causal Layered Analysis: Poststructuralism as method. *Futures* Vol. 30, No. 8 : 815–829.

4. Miller, R. (2018). Transforming the Future: Anticipation in the 21st Century (edited by Riel Miller). UNESCO. https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000264644

Annex

Lab Agenda

One Day FLL Agenda - Tuesday 3 Dec, 2024			
Time		**Session**	**Description**
08:00 - 08:30		Registration	
08:30 – 08:35		Getting started	Welcome participants and gives an overview of the agenda planned
08:35 - 08:55		Ice breaker and introductions	The Polak game will be used to get participants to begin examining their imagination of the future and to introduce themselves to each other
PHASE 1: REVEAL			
08:55 – 09:55		**Probable Futures** a) Headlines / bullet points, 2 or 3 per person (present tense, day in the life) [10 mins] **Preferred Futures** a) Headlines / bullet points, 2 or 3 per person (present tense, day in the life) [10 mins] b) Layered Analysis [20 mins] c) Report back plenary [20 mins]	**Time Travel Exercise**: wake up in 2040… Break-out group discussions will be followed by a plenary discussion. *Probable Futures & Preferred Futures:* 1) Participants will be describing **probable futures**, depicting, painting a picture, of a world you would bet on – what you most expect; 2) Participants close their eyes and imagine a **desirable future** in 2040. - Participants should think of a snapshot, not a movie. This is not about the road to 2054, it's about describing the world as it is already. You are there! Describe things in the **present tense** (e.g., it's Feb 2054 and I'm in X doing Y); - Give 3 min of silent time to create ideas. - 1 min per participant to share their individual thoughts; - As a guide to the peer-facilitators, no consensus is needed from this exercise so allow extremes;

			- *Use the Layered Analysis heuristic to explore and document participants' snapshots of the future.* Appointed rapporteur for each group shares summary in plenary, with option for other group members to also weigh in.
PHASE 2: REFRAME			
09:25 - 10:55		**Phase 2: Reframe** a) Presentation of reframing scenario and creativity exercise [5 mins] b) Creativity Exercise [35 mins] c) Plenary [25 mins]	Presentation of reframing scenario and creativity exercise Invitation to visit an unfamiliar future, one that is constructed without reference to its probability or desirability. Appointed rapporteur shares summary in plenary, with option for other group members to also weigh in.
10:55 – 11:20	**BREAK**		
PHASE 3 & 4: NEW QUESTIONS & NEXT STEPS			
11:20 - 12:30		**Phase 3: Back to the Present** a) Groupwork (in pairs) 2 – 3 bullet points per team [30 mins] **Phase 4: So what?** Identifying new ideas, projects, and ways of working b) Plenary [30 mins]	Returning to 2024, and asking: What was previously important, but seems less so? Vice versa? Participants revisit the images of the future from Phases 1 and 2 in order to assess the implications for perception in the present. How can the capabilities learned in the laboratory be used in the everyday environment of participants? * *Identify characteristics / values of the future that are important to the group*

12:30 – 13:30	LUNCH BREAK		
	Working Coffee Breaks Incorporated into Afternoon Sessions		
13:30 - 16:00		**3 Horizons**	Using 3 horizons with participants to understand agency and areas for intervention in their work / study / everyday environment. ** Identify key practice / policy / governance leverage points / issues (H2)*
16:00 - 17:00		**Plenary discussion and conclusion**	Discuss how to practically bring these ideas into the National Dialogue / **Recommendations**