

Imagining post-pandemic futures in the Global South

Research Group Affiliations

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Background

The COVID-19 pandemic has challenged prevailing assumptions, mindsets and visions, inviting development to be re-imagined. In the Global South, it has awakened many actors to the need to prepare for a range of future changes and to build anticipatory approaches (Ahvenharju et al., 2018; Miller, 2018). Therefore, the post-pandemic recovery calls for an assessment of the strengths and weaknesses in prevailing strategies, policies and programmes geared toward the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.

Aim of the session

The aim of the session is to explore budding developments and novel imaginations, expressed through initiatives in various domains and sectors in the Global South that promote resilient post COVID-19 futures. These initiatives may propose cumulative and complex learning processes and require capacities that can be relied on in the future (Poli, 2015). The cultivation of the seeds of sustainable futures (Bennett et al. 2016) may specifically benefit from foresight, as a way of identifying and generating novel opportunities for the future (Andersen & Andersen, 2017).

Emerging visions, developments as well as the capacities preceding post-pandemic futures have to be analysed carefully. Novel strategies and practices can face structural challenges, multiple complexities and uncertainties, especially in socio-economically vulnerable contexts. In some instances, transformative initiatives are contested on ideological grounds. This points to development theories as well as interlinkages with futures studies, as systematic, holistic, multidisciplinary and critical long-term analysis of future-related issues and alternative development trajectories (Masini, 1993; Bell, 1997).

Paper submissions

We welcome theoretical and/or empirical contributions of emerging alternatives as well as critical thought on novel approaches and methods aimed at challenging dominant imaginaries and prevailing policy prescriptions in the Global South. They may also introduce emancipatory learning approaches that interpret a wide array of emerging issues and weak signals of changes in the future horizon.

In their submission, we encourage the contributor(s) to consider the following themes, and how these may relate to your research and projects in the Global South:

- decolonisation of learning and its modes
- deliberation of possible and preferred futures, including through foresight and scenario-learning, aimed at challenging the business-as-usual

- discussion of emerging issues and phenomena that presently do not feature in the mainstream development agenda (and the SDG discourse)
- novel practices and their disruptive social effects, in recognition of planetary boundaries
- reflection on emerging technologies in innovative ways, exploring their potential from a critical standpoint
- transformative pedagogical approaches, beyond e-learning, and the necessary resources and tools to achieve learning objectives

The session is organised by the Sustainable Development Futures research group at the University of Turku, Finland Futures Research Centre.

Guiding literature

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Sowell, T. (2002). *A Conflict of Visions: Ideological Origins of Political Struggles*. New York: Basic Books.