

From What If to What Next

Time: 1 hour 45 minutes

Facilitation guide:

Introduce the aim, mindset and exercise

Aim:

- To explore how to make our vision a reality.

Mindset:

- We don't drive forward from the present with its current mindset, which is the cause of a lot of the problems we face. Instead, we position ourselves in the future and let the better world emerge from that perspective.
- There will be tensions, but they can be resolved through dialogue and collaboration.
- Think both/and rather than either/or.

You will by now hopefully have a wealth of What If questions grouped together into themes. But which ones have the potential to become viable strong initiatives, and around which is there most energy in your group to make them a reality. To work this out, explain that everyone has 3 stars or dots that they can put against a 'What If' area they would like to focus on - they can add more than one star to an area if they think it's really important. Give everyone 10 minutes to look through the questions and add their stars or dots.

In person: Invite people to move around view the list on one or more pages, either displayed on the wall or floor. You can use small star or dot stickers, or just invite people to draw with

pen next to the idea they want to focus on.

Online: Ensure everyone can access the shared document you are using at the right place. Invite people to add three asterisks * to the ideas they want to focus on.

4. Then spend 10 minutes as the whole group to decide which of the popular themes to focus on in smaller groups for the rest of the session - the number of stars next to a theme should help guide this. There can be more than one theme to focus on.
5. Be clear that this stage is crucial, as the next steps that come out of this exercise will help to make your vision a reality. Place people in small groups based on the theme (or themes) for 60 minutes. As far as possible, let people choose which theme they are drawn to - these may be the people who continue to work in this area.

Online: An easy way to let people choose a breakout room is to ask them to rename themselves in zoom based on the area of focus, e.g. "Transport Tom", and manually assign them to rooms.

Explain that they should spend 15 minutes on each of the following questions in order to come up with some next steps/actions to make them happen which they should note. You might suggest a stretch half way through. Emphasise this is about next steps, not designing a whole project and that it will form their action plan.

1. Who do we need to get round the table to make it happen?
2. What resources do we need to do this?
3. What could we do now?
4. What are our immediate next steps, what will we do tomorrow?

Then bring people back together and have a 5 minute break and spend 15 minutes hearing each group feedback their next steps to the wider group.

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