



PART 4. CREATING ALTERNATIVES

WE PREPARE FOR MORE THAN ONE FUTURE

Strategic foresight prepares us for not one but multiple futures that could eventuate. This helps us better anticipate and prepare for change. Scenarios and causal layered analysis are tools to help us do this.



I found that the act of writing it down and really thinking about alternative futures, and the conditions and factors that lead up to each future, takes time, but it allows you to really unpack the finer details which are easily lost in aspirational visioning exercises. This was challenging but really engaging.

- Dr. Frances K. Vaka'uta,
Team Leader - Culture for Development, SPC



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✓ WHAT IT IS

A technique that examines different alternative futures.

✓ WHEN TO USE IT

Use it to better understand and manage uncertainties. It is also helpful for assessing what may go wrong, so we can prepare for it.

✓ WHY USE IT

By planning for multiple versions of the future, we can increase our readiness for the range of possibilities that the future may hold. Looking at different scenarios helps us talk to each other about what may affect a system under different conditions and agree present actions to achieve the preferred scenarios.



Involve senior leaders and relevant experts in the scenario-building process, as this will increase the likelihood that they will use scenarios to inform their decisions.



WHERE TO FIND MORE INFORMATION

Save the Children. 2019. The future is ours: strategic foresight toolkit – making better decisions, pages 65–78. 📄 Free to download at <https://resourcecentre.savethechildren.net/document/future-ours-strategic-foresight-toolkit-making-better-decisions>

UNDP Global Centre for Public Service Excellence. 2018. Foresight Manual: Empowered futures for the 2030 agenda, pages 31–33.

📄 Free to download at www.undp.org/publications/foresight-manual-empowered-futures

The Pacific Community. 2022. A compendium of Pacific practice in strategic foresight, pages 15 and 16.

👁️ Available at <https://purl.org/spc/digilib/doc/b47zt>

The UK Futures Toolkit. 2017. See pages 51-56, 👁️ available at https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/674209/futures-toolkit-edition-1.pdf

HOW TO DO IT



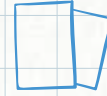
Time
60 minutes



No. of participants
< 50



Facilitation
One lead facilitator



Butchers/drawing
paper



Visual aids to inspire
visions for the future

Material



Sticky notes



Coloured marker pens



Virtual collaboration platform
i.e., Google Docs, Miro, Conceptboard etc. (if online)

Time & Activity

Step

Description

15 minutes

1



Select three scenarios and determine your future time-period.

Describe the no change or business-as-usual scenario

15 minutes

2



Describe the adaptive change scenario

15 minutes

3



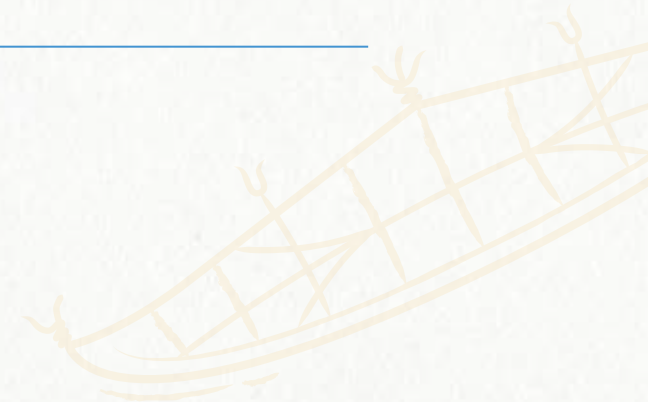
Describe the radical or transformative change scenario

15 minutes

4



Discuss the three scenarios



CASE STUDY 12: GETTING SENIOR LEADERS' VIEWS

WHAT WE DID

Recognising the importance of executive support for the strategic planning process, it was important for our senior leaders to be familiar with the methodology we were using to gain insights, and understand how we planned to use them.

We ran two 2-hour online workshops. The workshops covered what strategic foresight is and why we were using it. During the workshops, senior leaders experimented with the different foresight tools drawing on practical examples from different sectors.

WHAT HAPPENED

In one of the workshops we ran a 20-minute brainstorming session on scenarios. **We asked participants to describe what SPC would look like in four different scenarios:**

1. No change
2. Marginal change
3. Adaptive change
4. Radical change

Participants had five minutes to consider and respond to each scenario. In total, they came up with approximately 12 contributions per scenario. We then asked the participants to develop a fifth scenario of their preferred future for SPC.

They put forward 16 ideas of what SPC would look like in their preferred future, including:

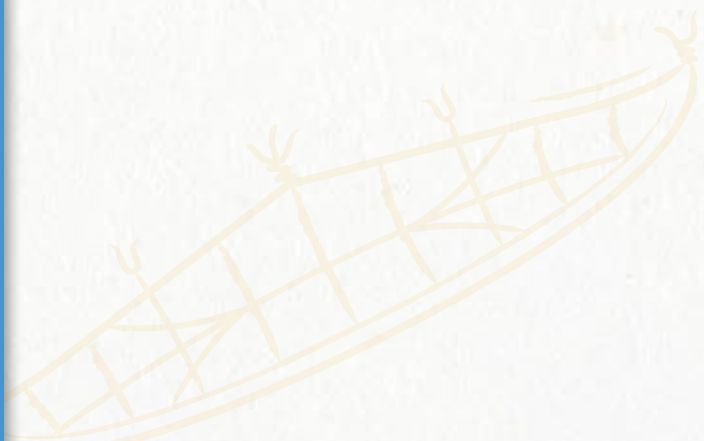
- o equitable outcomes for countries and territories
- o Pacific indigenous science and practice is front and centre in the decisions we make
- o digital transformation that aligns with us reconnecting with our environment
- o deep collaboration and seamless integration with CROP organisations
- o people working for SPC from their home island or village and staying connected to their culture and family.



WHAT WE LEARNT

The workshops gave senior leaders an interactive way to discuss the future of SPC, while becoming familiar with the methodology we were using to develop the strategic plan. They also helped prepare senior leaders to guide strategic discussions about SPC's future, with countries and territories at the CRGA Subcommittee meeting.

We also used scenarios when we used the systems mapping tool with senior leaders and other SPC staff ([see Case study 4](#)).



✓ WHAT IT IS

A tool that identifies and analyses the litany of social causes, discourses and worldviews, and myths and metaphors that shape our current and future states. Causal layered analysis (CLA) has four levels:

1. **Litany** – the commonly accepted headlines of the way things should be
2. **Systemic causes** – the social, economic and political causes of our current and future states
3. **Worldview** – the lenses we use to understand and shape our world
4. **Myth and metaphor** – the deep unconscious story

✓ WHEN TO USE IT

Use it to better understand what forces are shaping our current state, and what needs to change at each of the four levels to achieve our desired future state.

✓ WHY USE IT

It analyses all the forces that are causing the current state to be the way it is, and all the changes that need to happen to achieve the desired future state. This tool also helps participants think in terms of transformative change.



Most participants new to strategic foresight methods find it easiest to work on the litany (what you can see) and work down to discussing the myth and metaphor (the deep unconscious story). Give people enough time to have deep discussions about worldviews and myths and metaphors, for the current and transformed states. Participants from Pacific cultures connected easily with metaphors or narrative futures which stimulated important reflections on the Pacific knowledge and perspectives.



WHERE TO FIND MORE INFORMATION

Sohail Inayatullah. 2017. Causal Layered Analysis.

👁 Available at <https://www.futuribles.com/en/causal-layered-analysis-2/>

The Pacific Community. 2022. A compendium of Pacific practice in strategic foresight, pages 32–33 and 53–54.

👁 Available at <https://purl.org/spc/digilib/doc/b47zt>

HOW TO DO IT



Time
60 minutes



No. of participants
15–30 participants



Facilitation
One facilitator

Material



Butchers/drawing
paper



Coloured marker pens



PowerPoint display if working in plenary

Time & Activity

Step

Description

10 minutes

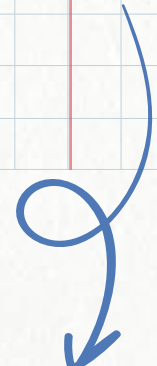
1 Explain the causal layered analysis exercise.

40 minutes

2 **Work through the present and transformed states in a U-shape.**
Commence with the present state litany, systemic causes, worldview and then metaphor. Move on to the transformed state beginning with the metaphor, worldview, systemic causes and then the litany.

10 minutes

3 Provide an overview of the findings from the causal layered analysis exercise.



CASE STUDY 13: CURRENT AND FUTURE STATES OF THE PACIFIC

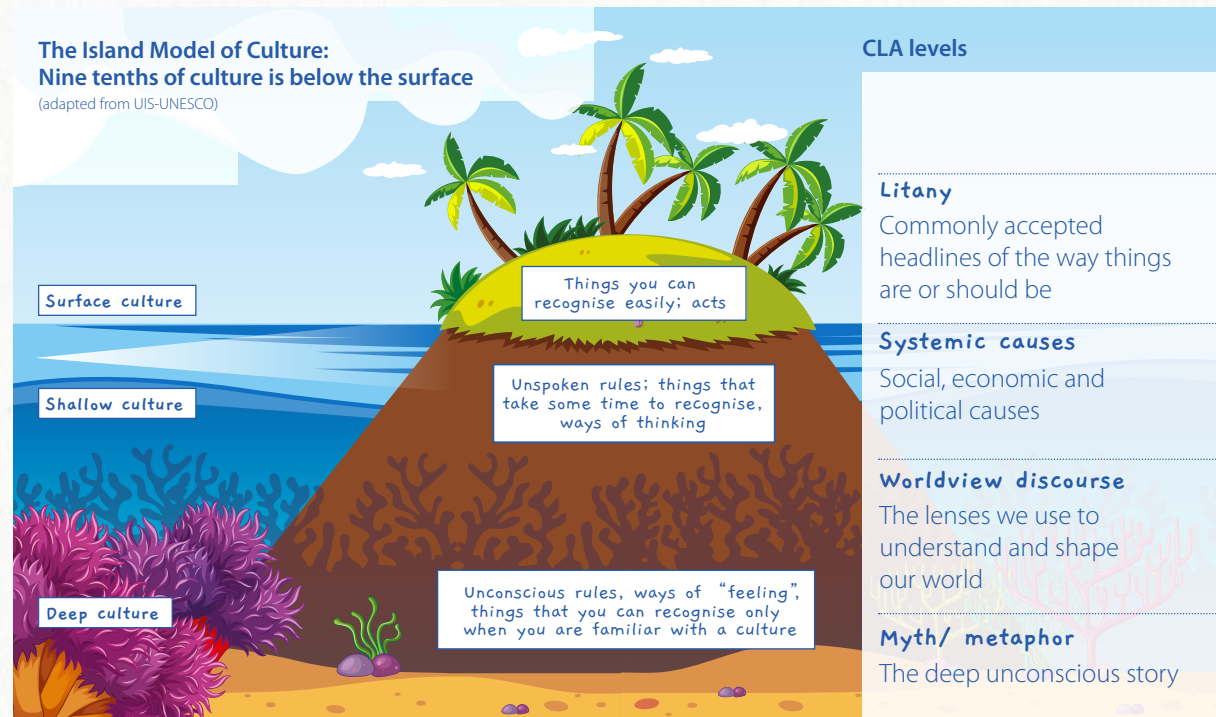
SPC Regional Director for Polynesia, Leituala Kuiniselani Toelupe Tago-Elisara used CLA to reflect on the current state of the Pacific region and what a new future state could look like through the lens of a regional organisation.

WHAT WE DID

The four levels in CLA are often represented by an iceberg metaphor. Leituala adapted the Island Model of Culture, which recognises nine-tenths of culture is below the surface. This model uses Samoan metaphors to describe the deep unconscious culture story (see Figure 11). This informed dialogue provides a shift to theory of action and recognition of change makers.



Figure 11:
The relationship between the Island Model of Culture and the four levels of causal layered analysis



Source: SPC Social Development Programme, 2019. Adapted from UIS-UNESCO

WHAT HAPPENED

For each of the four levels of CLA, Leituala mapped the old, or current, state of the Pacific region against the new, desired future state (see Figure 12).



CLA has enabled us to tell our story through our own eyes, using our own words to frame and design our strategies for the future. The use of CLA has helped strengthen the cultural considerations for strategy development and, as a Samoan matai or chief, this was an opportunity to situate our history and cultural identity in the regional development discourse, by applying Samoan metaphorical references to help frame our story from our perspective.

- Leituala Kuiniselani Toelupe Tago-Elisara, Regional Director - Polynesia, SPC

Figure 12:

The current and future states of the Pacific analysed using causal layered analysis

CLA	Old/ Current	New/ Future
<p>LITANY Commonly accepted headlines of the way things are or should be</p>	Pacific people need help, and they need someone to save them. Pacific people lack the capacity to lead their own development.	Pacific people have the knowledge, assets and tools to lead their own development. Pacific people have the voice and agency to determine their destiny as a collective.
<p>SYSTEMIC CAUSE Social, economic and political causes</p>	Colonisation. Politics of development aid in the Pacific. The place of the Pacific in international relations and the realities of "Small" Island Developing States.	Decolonisation of our policy and practice. Appreciation for our cultural wealth and cultural strengths as people.
<p>WORLDVIEW DISCOURSE The lenses we use to understand and shape our world</p>	"Small" Island Developing States all of the Pacific Island countries and territories, are vulnerable, isolated and operate from a deficit model.	Application of a Strengths Based Approach to Pacific development. Changing the narrative - economic, social, and political and elevating the Blue Pacific Narrative.
<p>MYTH/ METAPHOR The deep unconscious story</p>	Tagi a le pu mate: Like the crying of a dying triton or conch, this refers to a person whose life is in danger.	Vivili fa'amanu o matagi: A bird flying against the wind despite difficulties. Fofō alamea: We are the solution to our challenges. We are part of the problem, and we are also part of the solution. Sa'ilimālō: Leading a legacy in search of, or to achieve, great things for the good of the collective.

Source : Leituala Kuiniselani Toelupe Tago-Elisara



CASE STUDY 14: CREATING VISIONS FOR SPC'S STRATEGIC AREAS

CLA was used to develop vision statements for each key focus area in SPC's strategic plan. We combined this exercise with a futures triangle ([See Case study 7](#)) and backcasting ([See Case study 16](#)).

WHAT WE DID

Using Conceptboard, we ran two-hour workshops for the strategic plan's seven KFAs. Each workshop included 45 minutes for the CLA component. An average of 14 participants took part in each workshop, including country and territory representatives, and SPC senior leaders and technical staff.

In this exercise, we used the vision statements developed with the futures triangle ([see Case study 7](#)) to further define, and deepen our knowledge, of the transformed future state. We asked participants to conduct CLA on the present state, and this transformed future state ([see Figure 13](#)).

WHAT HAPPENED

We documented participants' contributions in seven Conceptboards and used them as evidence to draft the Strategic Plan 2022–2031. We used the metaphors for the transformed future state to create visual images for each of the strategy's KFAs ([see Case study 11](#)).

The metaphors are anchored in Pacific perspectives, philosophies and worldviews ([see Figure 13](#)).





Figure 13:
Causal layered analysis for each key focus area in Strategic Plan 2022–2031

	KFA1 Resilience and climate action	KF2 Natural resources and biodiversity	KFA3 Food systems	KFA4 Equity, education and social development	KFA5 Sustainable economies and livelihoods	KFA6 Planetary health	KFA7 Transforming institutional effectiveness
Litany	Coordinated resilient knowledge systems	Whole-of-Island-state-approach	Pacific recognition in global food systems	All people have access to well-being	High levels of early adoption of novel technologies	Health is measured by wellness and well-being	Working as one (integrated collaboration)
Systemic	Pacific voices and solutions	Interdisciplinary actions and decision-making	Systemic decision-making	Redesigned inclusive systems	Economic systems spreads prosperity and well-being	Risk-informed, responsive health systems	Inter-connected multidisciplinary approaches
Worldview	Equitable optimisation of resources	Balance of power/agency	Food sufficiency and health	Equity for everyone	Pacific leadership on learned best practices	Preventative health	Unified strengths for impact
Methaphor	Harmonic generosity of wisdom	The Earth and I are One. The Ocean is us.	Bountiful baskets and canoes	Woven basket of well-being	The tree we plant today will bear fruit tomorrow	<i>Healthy mana</i>	Many weavers, one fine mat

Source: SPC



As a researcher and development practitioner, I have a keen interest in examining and analysing deeper systemic and trans-disciplinary issues and perspectives and developing solutions in the same vein. I find that the lack of understanding of deep culture within the norms of society and understanding the ‘inner stories’ and blind spots of issues often lead to system/programme/intervention failures.

– Dr Amerita Ravuvu, Non-Communicable Diseases Adviser, Policy and Planning, SPC

WHAT WE LEARNT

CLA helped us refine our strategic narrative. The process created the opportunity for our staff, and countries and territories through governance committee representatives, to unlock their imagination, explore new possibilities, have constructive dialogue, generate alternative solutions and take on the perspectives of others.