

2030: Envisaging the future of young people from 10 to 17 years in Lahti, Finland

Anthony-Claret Onwutalobi
(Lahti University of Applied Science)

Introduction

Since the history of man, change has remained constant. Future is the harbinger of change; it has always come with surprises and disruption to man and her environment. In the past thirty years, we have observed a great disruption in Finland and other advanced countries. We have witnessed a profound revolution from industrial to information societies; we have seen that knowledge has replaced mass production as the basis of wealth, power, and social interaction (innovationwatch.com, 2005). Environment has endured massive changes due to human action. It has been predicted that more and more changes are due to come in future and some of them may be entirely new and disruptive to us while others maybe just minor or incremental changes. Some changes are desirable while others are undesirable.

Most advanced countries have long started to develop new strategy and policies to help understand the future and pattern of changes that comes with it, to be able to plan on how to manage or deal with it. Since it has been confirmed that, Governmental policies, innovative ideas and human actions can affect the kind of change we will see in the future. The city of Lahti, Finland likewise is conscious of the facts that human actions and innovative ideas can help shape the future of their city. For this reason, they have therefore started to pull talents and resources together to plan for the future of Lahti.

In this article therefore, we have been given a task to select any relevant aspect of this future of Lahti to discuss and highlight some salient future possible scenarios. The author therefore will be looking at the future of youngsters between 10 to 17 years in Lahti to imagine what their life style will be like in the next 10 to 20 years. In attempt to produce this report, we will be looking at different key variables to help us shape up research questions of what will be expected and why. We will be answering questions like, what will the youngsters probably like to see happening in 15 years and what will possible be trending in those period. We will be developing different scenarios cases and finally we will report these scenarios and present the possible best scenario of the kind of future that is possible and highlight the reasons why the author thinks so.

We used FAR Future table tool to organize our variables and construct our future table. We then decided to list out possible key variables that we would like to work on. We choose Education, Health care, Leisure

activities, Social communications, technology and environment. We also decided on the variables values and determine their dependencies between the variables. Once we established the dependencies, we created a future path and made an image of the future and then tabulated for reporting. The variables we constructed will be explained below.

This study is very important because, it informs the Lahti government of the possibilities of changes that might occur in 15 to 20 years to enable them to pull human and capital resources to support the most desirable changes. Our created scenarios are not forecasts but rather possible worlds. With them, they can prepare for the future and seize opportunities.

Keywords: Strategy, Scenario, Societal change, Future Foresights

Theory and Literature Overview

According to Country Brand Report from Demohelsinki.fi, Finland has been selected as one of the most developed country in the world. Presently, it is reported that almost two thirds of the Finnish population lives in urban areas and this number keep growing (Demohelsinki, 2015). In recent years, Finland believes that the continuous development of her cities will determine the future economic, social and territorial development of the country. Different city projects are started to this end. According to European commission 2011 report, it reechoes the same position that cities do play a key role as the driver of any economy and a center of 'connectivity, creativity and innovation'. The report holds this view because it is believed that developed cities may leverage on its population density to offer a huge potential for energy savings and perhaps move towards a carbon-neutral economy (European Union, 2011). While this is the case, it also true that unplanned cities can be a place where poverty, segregation unemployment and so many kinds of problem may thrives. The European commission report pointed out the important of city planning as an essential component in building a better and successful city. Complementary to this view, the city of Lahti is making effort to develop its cities and they are currently building different strategy towards the future. To fully understand city of Lahti new strategy we need to explain what strategy means and what possible scenario are available to meet up with the strategy.

Strategy is mainly to understand the bigger picture of an organization long term direction, it covers what goals and objectives the organization intend to achieve in a long run. When (Pearson, 2012) argues that strategy is the long-term direction of an organization, it implies a complete view of the term than some dominant definitions that have been presented.

For example, if we review strategy definitions of three leading strategy theorists of our time in the namely Alfred Chandler, Michael Porter and Henry Mintzberg as contained in figure 1, it exposes different angle on

how strategy is perceived. From the definitions, we could easily see the distinct interpretations as each of them points to important but distinct elements of strategy. For instances, Chandler in his definition was mainly emphasizing on just the logical flow from the determination of long-run goals and objectives of an enterprise and the allocation of resources to execute the goals. Whereas, Porter’s definition was mainly focusing on deliberate choices, difference and competition to deliver a unique mix of value, conversely, Mintzberg employed the use of the word ‘pattern’ to imply that strategies do not necessarily follow a deliberately chosen and logical plan, but can materialize in more uniform way later (Pearson, 2012).

Figure 1.1 Definitions of strategy



Kuva 1 Definition of Strategy

From these definitions, we could infer that Alfred Chandler and Michael Porter may have captured the city of Lahti strategy well in their definitions as they both maintained that a strategy could be of a logical flow from the determination of goals and objectives to the allocation of resources and thereby seeking deliberate choices, difference and competition to remain at the top. The city of Lahti are however, employing this pattern in striving to select a better choice that will help to advance the development of the city.

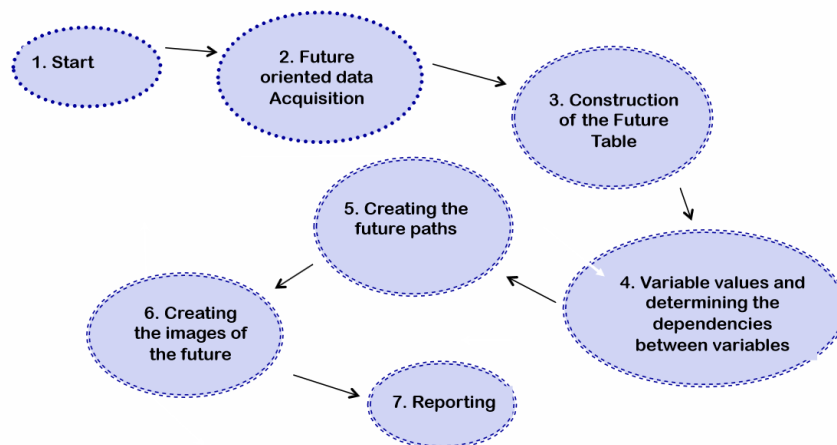
These choices could be the possible scenarios that can be made available after setting goals and objectives that they intend to achieve in future. Since future is usually associated with change, an attempt to seek for different possible alternatives becomes very important. To understand scenario, so many definitions have been provided by experts. According to Michel Godet, scenario is defined as ‘the set formed by the

description of a future situation and the course of events that enables one to progress from the original situation to the future situation' (Godet, 2000).

Clarkson (2013) concurred that 'Scenario planning could be a way of discussing difficult and complex future issues in a clear and structured way, to be identify and prioritize risks and opportunities'. Additionally, Clarkson (2013) also maintained that scenario is an important and effective tool that helps people to think about different possibilities in the future. As presented by one of the lecture during the course, She reaffirmed that scenario are used to challenge people to come up with creative responses to the main question of any project – for example, considering that we are looking at how can the city of Lahti retain youngsters in Lahti city in 2030? The scenarios we came up are not an outcome in themselves, but a means to answer this question imaginatively. In her presentation, Masini (2000) **acknowledges** that scenario is a description of a person's interaction with a system.

In creating scenario, the scenario planning method forces a thorough creation of several scenarios and their assessment and association. This rigorous process provokes designers to examine different option, to consider the association between them, and to categorize best possible targets as well as possible limitation and barriers. There are no fixed methods used in creating scenarios as long as one have defined the evaluation's scope, including time frame and the major issues you are investigating (Schoemaker, 1995). One reliable method provided in our lecture seems very efficient. It is a FAR Future Table. There are few literatures available about this method but the lecturer material cited some example on how it is been used. Below in kuva 1, we will see the flow chart as how this method is been implemented.

Scenario working with the Future Table



22

LAMK Lahden ammattikorkeakoulu
Lahti University of Applied Sciences

Seppälä, Y. 1984

Kuva 2 Scenario working with the Future Table

Method

The group was formed by ensuring that all the members are from different disciplines of professional and educational background. In the group, we quickly appointed different roles to every member. At first, we started to look for topic and target group. Different opinions were presented and we finally decided to choose the youngsters between the ages of 10-17 years bearing in mind the Lahti future strategy for internationalization. Our reason for choosing this target group is that we believe that if we develop a good plan for this age group it will make them to stay in Lahti which will also meet up with the strategy of Lahti. Once we settled for the topic and target of the scenario, we used FAR Future table tool to organize our variables and construct our future table. We then decided to list out possible key variables that we would like to work on. We choose Education, Health care, Leisure activities, Social communications, technology and environment. We also decided on the variables values and determine their dependencies between the variables. Once we established the dependencies, we created a future path and made an image of the future and then tabulated for reporting. The variables we constructed are explained below.

Education: We understand that the city of Lahti would like to promote the lifelong learning and development of the city's inhabitants, helping them take control of their lives and play an active part in their community, and improving their physical and mental well-being and psychological growth while also creating conditions for increasing the city's appeal in the future. In connection with the strategy, we selected education because we believe that if the education is competitive, it will attract more youngsters to stay in city of Lahti

Healthcare: City of Lahti currently provides services in basic healthcare, and the hospitals look after those suddenly taken ill and long-term patients. The Social Services unit supports families, helps with social problems, problems with income and with changes in living circumstances. But we believe that if the city of Lahti would like to retain the youngsters in their city, they would need to step up their health care services, we created different scenarios and we also considered if the city remains traditional and do things the way it has always been done; it may not provide positive outcomes.

Leisure activities: We know that City of Lahti is well known for its culture supply. They also help to promote the lifelong learning and development of the city's inhabitants, helping them take control of their lives and play an active part in their community, and improving their physical and mental well-being and psychological growth while also creating conditions for increasing the city's appeal in the future. However, in the next 15years to come, so many things will change. Will City of Lahti meet up with the

demand of change in coming years? We discussed possible new changes that might come in this areas and what possible scenarios and how it will affect the youngsters of this age bracket in the future.

Social communication: We could not get any credible information about the city of Lahti plans on social communications but we believe that this is very important and deciding factor for youngsters going forward. Technology is fast changing and cities that explore possibilities of extending the boundaries of communication will hold the key to retaining more people. We created possible scenario considering social communication.

Technology: Technology is also very important factor because the change that will occur on this area in the near future will be tremendous. We also considered it during our scenario.

Cultural and Mental Environment: The City of Lahti offers residents and businesses a healthy, safe, functional and pleasant environment, where everything is within easy reach but what about the cultural and mental environment. Is the environment receptive to foreigners? Is the environment friendly? Is it a multicultural environment? These questions are important in making decisions so we considered it as an important variable in ensuring that we retain youngsters in the city of Lahti.

Results

After our scenario, the outcome of the study is presented in Kuva 2. From the scenario, one can easily see that this FAR future table demonstrates city strategy



Kuva 3 Possible Scenarios of Youngsters between 10 -17 years in the City of Lahti

Young 10-17 years in 2030	Independent explorer	Technocrat	Money talks	Hippie	Traditional
---------------------------	----------------------	------------	-------------	--------	-------------

Education	Career oriented	Virtual education	Private school	Free style curriculum	Public education
Healthcare	Private	Virtual healthcare	Private healthcare	Preventive measures	Public healthcare
Leisure activity	Travel	Virtual reality	Flying skateboards	Activity parks (nature)	Activity parks (nature)
Social communication	Wireless network everywhere	Distributed technology	Big brother watching	Telepathy	Wireless network everywhere
Technology	Robot control	Smart tech	Passive sports	Energy breakdown	Smart tech
Cultural & mental environment	Ownership	Multicultural	Ownership	Human friendly	Clean & healthy nature & water

Kuva 4 FAR FUTURE TABLE

Discussion of Results

In this section, from the figure 3 above, we could see the different scenarios that we have come up with as the outcome of the FAR FUTURE table. The Scenario Planning offer a form of provocative, "what-if" thinking that helps us strategically consider how the world will be different as a result of our actions and efforts. When you follow different paths in the scenario each leads to a conclusion that may be desirable or undesirable. For example, from the independent explore, it shows a kind of scenario where most things are done by robot and life is dependent on technology which give us more opportunity to travel and enjoy. Our best possible scenario is the technocrats. In this scenario path, most things become virtual or distributed. This scenario will be more disruptive innovations that will make a big change in the lives of people. We believe that if the city of Lahti uses their strategy to work with this scenario that the probability of retaining more youngsters in Lahti will be feasible.

Discussion of Collaboration

With the technocratic scenario, we found out that it will be very suitable with the strategy of City of Lahti and can work well with the work life of people of Lahti as majority of tasks in done virtually given people opportunity to address most essential things about them remotely at their convenience.

References

American Mobility Who Moves? Who Stays Put? Where's Home? 1st ed. 2015. Web. 1 Dec. 2015.

demoshelsinki.fi, 'Mission For Finland, How Finland Will Solve the World's Most Wicked Problems'. N.p., 2015. Web. 1 Dec. 2015.

European Union Regional Policy 2011, Cities Of Tomorrow Challenges, Visions, Way Forward. 1st ed. Brussels: European Commission, Directorate General for Regional Policy, 2015. Web. 1 Dec. 2015.

Future Scapes Final Scenarios. 1st ed. Forum for the Future: N.p., 2015. Web. 1 Dec. 2015.

Gaffney, Gerry. What Is A Scenario?. 1st ed. Information & Design, 2015. Web. 1 Dec. 2015.

Strategy. 1st ed. MyStrategyLab: N.p., 2015. Web. 1 Dec. 2015.

What Is Strategy. 1st ed. 2015. Web. 1 Dec. 2015.

Wickedproblems.com,. 'Wicked Problems: Problems Worth Solving - Methods For Creating Designs'. N.p., 2015. Web. 1 Dec. 2015.

Participatory Methods Future Workshop Societal Change and Future Foresight Method 30.10.2015 Kristiina Soini-Salomaa

Schoemaker, Paul. "Scenario Planning: A Tool for Strategic Thinking." Sloan Management Review, no. Winter (1995): 25.

The question 'What is strategy?' is discussed in R. Whitting-ton, What is Strategy – and Does it Matter?, International Thomson, 1993/2000 and M.E. Porter, 'What is strategy?', Harvard Business Review, November–December 1996, pp. 61–78.

D. Collis and M. Rukstad, 'Can you say what your strategy is?', Harvard Business Review, April 2008, pp. 63 – 73.

The classic discussion of the roles of rational strategy formulation and strategy implementation is in H. Mintz berg, 'The design school: reconsidering the basic premises of strategic management', Strategic Management Journal, vol. 11 (1991), pp. 171–95 and H.I. Ansoff, 'Critique of Henry Mintzberg's The Design School', Strategic Management Journal, vol. 11 (1991), pp. 449 –61.

EVA'sGLOBAL SCENARIOS Playing fieldsof the future lecture material

