

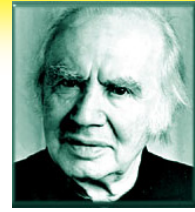
## Alba Iulia CoNet Network Meeting 27 and 28 May 2010 Future Workshop



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## Robert Jungk 1913 – 1994 With fantasy against routine and resignation „How to create desirable futures“



- ▶ In 1933 when Hitler came to power, he was a student in Berlin with a Jewish family. Following the Reichstag fire: arrested, released, fled to Paris, Prague, Switzerland.
- ▶ After war: activities against oppression in all its forms. 1952 *„Tomorrow is Already Here“*; a book highly critical of the emerging uses of nuclear and other dangerous technology. Visit to Hiroshima, research on nuclear issues. Book: *Brighter Than a Thousand Suns* and *The Nuclear State*.
- ▶ Later: looking for ways of responding to the challenge. This produced *The Everyman Project* and later the Future Workshops.
- ▶ He became important: World Futures Studies Federation, London Institute for Social Inventions, in the late 80s establishment of the Robert Jungk International Futures Library in Salzburg in Austria.

Jungk's view: if people use the powers that are available to them, then the future, as a 'place to live in', is far from being lost.

Idea: to create contexts for social innovations; places where people can take ideas. 'From these seedbeds emerge the projects, the real practical changes that over time move our civilisation from its present self-destructive course.'

There are a lot of workshop methods on the market, but they are altogether relatively similar. In Alba Iulia, we proposed to use and experience the future workshop method developed by Robert Jungk. It is the classic prototype of the 1960's, which very much influenced the further development of group work in development policies and management. Reinhard has already sent you some information papers about the philosopher, journalist and peace movement activist Robert Jungk and his future workshop method.


I like Jungk's future workshop approach very much. I have very often used this method, especially in connection with urban and social planning and community development. In my experience it can produce the best results. Let me bring in some comments about the special ideas of this approach and the theoretical background.

This workshop method is less technocratic than other methods. This is easy to understand, when we see who Robert Jungk was....

These ideas are reflected in the future method approach.

Source: Global Ideas Bank 22 May 2010 Internet

## Future Workshop – based on Robert Jungk

Phases		
	Preparation phase	
Core of the future workshop	1 Critique phase	
	2 Fantasy or utopian phase	
	3 Implementation phase	
	Follow-up phase	
		<i>Intuitive-emotional</i> <i>Rational-analytic</i>

The core principal is to have three separate phases during the workshop. The understanding of the phases is based on some important social psychological aspects.

**The workshop starts with the critique phase.** The critique phase helps to find the workshop's main issues – the workshop focus.

The critique phase is not the same as the brainstorming of the positives and the negatives like the strengths and weaknesses in the well-known SWOT-Analysis, which we did in the baseline study and at the kick off meeting in Berlin. In the future workshop it is really welcomed, that participants put all things on the table, which they dislike, which they complain about, which they object to or even .

Nowadays we have to think positively. Normally, it is not so politically correct to express the negatives, especially not, when the negatives are emotionally charged. Normally, in official contexts we don't dare argue emotionally, we are used to rationalising even emotional aspects – not saying what we are feeling in connection to topics, the environment and organisations.

Jungk's understanding is: The **intuitive and emotional sphere is closely linked to the rational and analytical sphere**. Both are helpful and should fit together. It is counterproductive to repress one's feelings. If the negative aspects are kept secret – they hinder productive discussion later.


During the critique phase inputs are not discussed. It is a collection of aspects, but it is helpful to bring in relatively specific critique. The moderator should pay attention that the group members don't start to argue. It is great, when the results can be grouped at the end of the phase.

Having an open critique phase makes way for the next phase – the fantasy phase.

## Future Workshop – fantasy phase

- ▶ Reality is of no importance
- ▶ In thinking, anything is possible
- ▶ Without constraints we can and should wish for everything we hope for
- ▶ We are allowed to have crazy ideas and dreams

Phases	
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*Intuitiv-emotional*  
*Rational-analytic*

### Ways of strengthening open mindedness and creativity:

- ▶ working with paper, coloured pencils and model-making,
- ▶ bringing in movement and action
- ▶ Additional: time travel, visiting other examples
- ▶ motivating atmosphere, being in a good mood,
- ▶ listening to another person's input, picking up on their ideas and responding with further ideas.

**In the future workshop's fantasy phase** participants are encouraged to bring in all ideas, even if they seem to be unrealistic, crazy or stupid. Nothing should be excluded. Firstly, all ideas are important and of value. There is no distinction between the professionals and the laypeople. The professionals participate as people, they don't claim that their ideas are more helpful than the ideas of Mr. Everyman or Mrs. Everywoman.

This fostering and support of open thinking is also scientifically based – especially by the sociology of knowledge.

Normally our thinking and reasoning are based on accustomed routines, thought patterns and habits of reasoning, also called *paradigms*. This prevents or makes it difficult to develop alternative ideas and concepts. To describe this we use the image of „the scissors, which we have in our minds“, where we cut off those ideas which are out of the ordinary before we dare even think them.

Most of you know the brainteaser games, which demonstrate our barriers to “thinking outside the box”. This is similar to what psychologists term confirmation bias, the tendency for people to prefer information that confirms their preconceptions or hypotheses, independently of whether they are true.

So if we also want to consider alternatives and new ideas, when we don't want to stick to ideas which haven't moved the current situation forward, we have to do something against the common inability or refusal to see beyond the current models of thinking. Often we suffer from a lack of thinking alternatives. We have also lost all great utopian alternatives.

After German reunification, when I managed the social planning process to build a new youth centre in an east German city – the team was used to socialist architecture and was convinced that only a rectangular and prosaic solution would be affordable. Only rather ugly solutions were discussed, a round form was unthinkable. In the end – after a process of opening up fantasies towards “anything goes” they built a very bright and joyous house within the same budget.

Especially deprived people, the poor and often also the elderly, settle for the existing situation and achievements and they can't imagine that life and conditions could be different, they have buried their dreams. Sociologists struggle with this paradox of satisfaction, when they measure well being. Another example: When children and parents are invited to participate in designing a new playground. Without encouraging their creativity, sometimes they only look in the product catalogue and produce a list of most liked products. Sometimes workshops and participation outcomes are rather disappointing, when they don't succeed in bringing in fantasy.

I don't want to go deeper into the possibilities of strengthening open mindedness and creativity: Just some remarks in the blue box.

This depends on the moderator and the participants. The moderation style is soft, most important is ensuring there is a good atmosphere. In general the moderator behaves modestly and restrained.


## Time Travel

- ▶ Imagine: After a long sleep you (the attendees) finally awake in the year of 2030 – just like Sleeping Beauty being woken up by a kiss. You return to Alba Iulia and you're astonished. Some things have changed a lot, some things just a little. The city has just been presented the – internationally highly regarded – award for its exemplary, trend-setting and innovative development concerning social and urbanistic aspects.
- ▶ You take a tour: What do you see? What has changed?
- ▶ After that you return to the present: What has already been achieved in 2025? In 2020? 2015?

## Future Workshop – implementation phase: bridging the wished for and real conditions

- ▶ To check solutions
- ▶ To estimate the possibilities of implementation
- ▶ To find ways of how to manage obstacles – to develop a strategy for implementation
- ▶ To define steps and a time schedule of implementation
- ▶ Especially to propose first actions, how to start

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*Intuitiv-emotional*  
*Rational-analytic*

Bridging the wished for and real conditions is a huge topic. I will just mention the most important steps – most of us are at least somewhat familiar with these.

## Future Workshop – preparation phase

### When and how diversity benefits the teams

The wisdom of the many people depends on the setting. Success factors for the intelligent groups are:

- ▶ Independent opinions
- ▶ Equality of the group member's treatment
- ▶ The diversity of the group
  - Very different people working together
  - Taking different roles: having different social, ethnic and professional backgrounds.



Open up the group beyond the same old members you always work together with. Try to systematically include people from all walks of life.

Workshops should always be well prepared. In our case here in Alba Iulia, I'm sure Reinhard and Nico have done their best. For the general understanding I would like to strengthen only two aspects.

First: Who are the participants? Mostly they are personally invited – this makes it easier to manage organisational matters.

Furthermore concerning local action plans, urban or social development or projects, it is very important to include people, who will bring in different view points. Often administrations or organisations think: the colleagues in the municipality and the professionals know all the important aspects, they prefer to keep to themselves. It is very productive to have a heterogeneous group. Let me do another short trip through social psychological and management research about collective intelligence.

The competence of groups is well explored. A popular question is: Are or when and how are groups smarter or more intelligent than experts? In general:

• **Individuals and experts** are more capable of solving a task, where it is important to find a precise answer, when it is necessary to concentrate and focus on a task.

**Groups are often more capable of:**

- solving brain teasers and tasks of evaluating and estimating than the best individual in the group and to recognise the pattern behind it
- finding new ideas and deciding on the best
- solving problems, which demand lateral thinking,
- finding answers, to problems, where no unique solution exists.

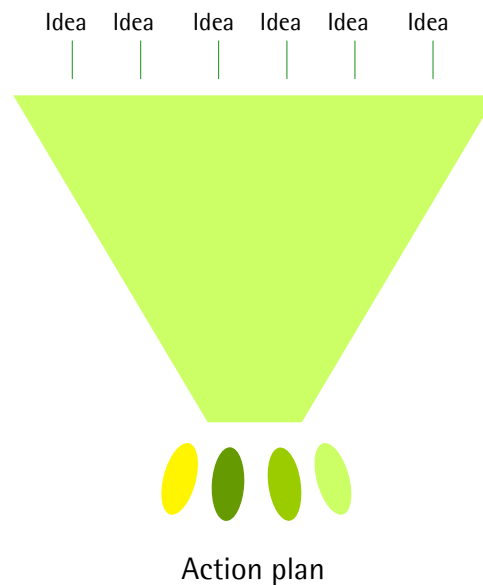
Groups especially are much more capable, when the task is to make a prediction about a future event: election results, economic developments, results of a football match.

But the success also depends on the setting. A group of ten intelligent people doesn't mean an intelligent group. Often group dynamics disturb communication. Besides the willingness to work together, some common values and the ability to think in a complex way – several big studies have proven, that the diversity of the group members is most important. Diversity means:

The biggest suggestion is: open up the group beyond the same old members you always work together with. We systematically try to include people from all walks of life.

## Why and what for

- ▶ To give cities to city support for Alba Iulia's project Lumea Noua
- ▶ To explore workshop methodology
- ▶ To encourage the production of Conet's action plans



An important issue for preparation is also „the why and what for“ of the future workshop: Together with the invitation and at the beginning, we have to communicate the workshop's background, the causes and motives and the central concerns.

When participating in a future workshop, people are giving up their precious time and would like to know that this makes sense. In our opinion the benefits of doing a future workshop here in Alba Iulia concerning Lumea Noua's development is threefold:

1. Alba Iulia's project Lumea Noua benefits. We have the possibility to listen to the results of your research, to see the area and to talk to some local people and to discuss and give feed back to further develop your projects. We did this kind of cities to city support during most of our Network meetings – more or less elaborated.
2. Workshops are part of most project development processes – especially within integrated approaches, which involve citizen participation, cooperation and governance. While exploring how to practise current approaches to strengthen social cohesion, it is an essential part of our topic to reflect on workshop methodologies.
3. All of us promised to work on an local action plan. The draft of it should soon be finished – in the late autumn of this year. This time schedule opens up the chance to reflect on the plans and projects and to improve certain elements.

Conducting a qualified future workshop is a good chance to create productive results – or interim results, with affordable effort and expenditure. We are realistic practisioners, who know that in the CoNet projects time and money are limited. Maybe our future workshop in Alba Iulia is motivation for further prodeeding to produce your local action plan in your cities. At least I hope so.

This can partly be financed within the CoNet budget. In my expert budget there is also 1 day support per city included – and I would like to invest this to facilitate setting up your local action plans or producing other results – maybe a documented example in our CoNet's cohesion guide.

## The importance of documentation – communicate results



The last slide concerns necessary follow-up.

Today I would only like to emphasise the importance of documentation.

Without documentation, everything – even exceptionally positive events – are soon forgotten.

It's part of the workshop method that everything is written on flip-charts, wall posters, meta-plan sheets and so on.

The moderator has to pay attention that this is done.

Developing a local action plan and communicating these results - these notes are often too banal, too abstract and not self-explanatory enough.

The big recommendation is to have an extra note-taker, whose job it is to write a readable and appealing report.