



منتدى دبي  
DUBAI  
دبي  
FUTURE  
للمستقبل  
FORUM

2025

# Key Insights from the World's Largest Gathering of Futurists

مبادرة من مؤسسة دبي للمستقبل  
An Initiative by Dubai Future Foundation





**Disclaimer**

This report has been prepared for informational, educational, and guidance purposes only. It draws on discussions and thought leadership insights shared at the 2025 Dubai Future Forum which have been aggregated and interpreted by Dubai Future Foundation (DFF).

The findings and insights presented are not intended as direct recommendations for adoption or implementation. The views, interpretations, and conclusions expressed in this report do not necessarily reflect those of the Dubai Future Foundation. The report aims to provide information and stimulate critical thinking and informed decision-making in the areas of future foresight.

DFF disclaims all liability related to the content and use of the report (or any reliance placed on it, in particular, for any interpretation, decisions, or actions based on the information in this report).

DFF does not recommend or endorse any specific actions, strategies, or viewpoints discussed in this report. Other parties may have ownership interests in some of the content contained in this report.

DFF in no way represents or warrants that it owns or controls all rights in all content, and DFF will not be liable to users for any claims brought against by third parties in connection with their use of any content.

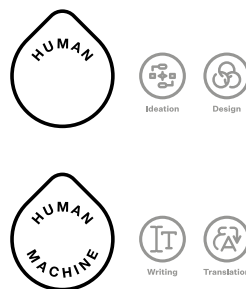
**Copyright**

Copyright © 2026 Dubai Future Foundation.

All rights reserved. All material in this report is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International Public Licence ('Creative Commons Licence'), save for content supplied by third parties, logos and any material protected by trademark or otherwise noted in this report. The Creative Commons Licence is a standard form licence agreement that allows you to copy, distribute, transmit and adapt this report provided you attribute the work and is available at:

<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/legalcode>

This notice also specifically excludes the DUBAI FUTURE FOUNDATION word and logo trademarks from the scope of this Creative Commons Licence. This report is provided in English as the authoritative and operative version. Any Arabic translation of this report is solely for convenience. While efforts have been made to ensure accuracy, the English version shall prevail in case of any discrepancies or inconsistencies between the two translations.



**Icons for Human–Machine Collaboration (HMC)**

<https://www.dubaifuture.ae/hmc>



# Contents

---

Foreword	<b>04</b>
Overview	<b>06</b>
About the Dubai Future Forum 2025	<b>08</b>
Key Insights	<b>10</b>
Beyond The Forum	<b>28</b>
Stay Engaged	<b>34</b>
Acknowledgements	<b>35</b>

---



# Foreword



**Khalfan Belhoul**

**Chief Executive Officer**  
Dubai Future Foundation

In a world defined by accelerating change and cascading uncertainties, platforms that enable critical debate and create clarity, inspiration, and collective purpose have never mattered more. The Dubai Future Forum has been one such moment on the global calendar, a place where leaders and thinkers converge to explore the forces shaping the future of our world and imagine what lies ahead. In just four years, the Dubai Future Forum has positioned itself as the world's largest convening for futures-focused dialogues, embodying Dubai's commitment to long-term thinking and the conviction that shaping the future is among society's most vital investments.

The 2025 edition of the Dubai Future Forum brought together participants from more than 140 countries, representing diverse disciplines, industries, and perspectives. What unites this global community is not a shared definition of the future, but a shared determination to shape it positively. At the Museum of the Future, conversations unfolded that challenged assumptions, offered new lenses, and sparked meaningful dialogue across cultures, sectors and time horizons. These exchanges - spontaneous, rigorous, imaginative - are at the heart of what makes the Dubai Future Forum distinctive.

But their value must not be confined to the two days spent together in Dubai.

The future does not pause, and neither should our engagement with it. That is why this Dubai Future Forum Insights Report exists: to carry forward the energy of the Dubai Future Forum, to distill signals and reflections, and to offer a resource that helps our community continue to think critically, creatively, and collaboratively throughout the year, however it might develop or turn out.

And so, during the 2025 edition we have listened actively into all sessions, spoken to a great number of individuals and developed this report to highlight key insights. We have not deployed AI note-takers to summarise session content. Consistent with the deliberate intention to connect as humans, with humans, we've relied on human intelligence and curiosity to source valuable connective thoughts with possible impact and application, drawing connections across themes and discussions. This approach reflects our belief that foresight and planning for the future is not only a technical discipline but also a deeply human one rooted in empathy and imagination.



What follows in these pages is not a comprehensive account of every session. Instead, it is a curated synthesis of the ideas, opportunities, and questions that surfaced. It captures the vibrancy and optimism of the global futures community while acknowledging the complexity of the challenges we face, even as yet greater tests to our futures were unfolding. The content presents uncertainty not as a barrier but as an invitation to think differently, to expand our perspectives, and to build futures that must be more resilient, inclusive, and ambitious. And, as the future comes at us faster and vehemently than ever, agility and dexterity with the relevant tools, insights and mindsets will serve us well, whatever our vantage point.

Dubai has long embraced this future-ready mindset. Our city has grown not by predicting the future, but by preparing for possibility, investing in bold ideas, and welcoming the world to help shape what comes next. The city has also used global and regional crises as momentum to adapt, mobilise and re-define resilience. Above all, 2026 has shown that when the world pauses, Dubai accelerates. The Dubai Future Forum embodied this spirit, and this report extends it.

As you move through the insights ahead, I invite you to treat them as prompts for continued reflection, tools that support your decisions, challenge your assumptions, and remind you of the conversations that resonated most deeply. Use them to reconnect with the community you met in Dubai, to revisit ideas that sparked curiosity, and to explore new pathways as you shape your own future, just as we are envisaging our future ahead. We look forward to welcoming you back to Dubai when we will once again gather to share, question, imagine and build. Until then, may this report accompany you on the journey.





# Overview

The eight insights in this report are shaped by a shared provocation that surfaced across the Forum: how can we preserve and enhance our collective humanity in the face of complex, uncertain, yet thoroughly exciting futures?

**The report unpacks this through the interconnected themes of shaping and activating better futures.**

## Shaping Better Futures

Better futures do not emerge from predictions alone. They emerge from better ways of seeing and shaping. We need experiential approaches that help people understand what is at stake, and participatory methods that embrace the pluralistic nature of our futures. This positions foresight as a practical capability that can influence design, investment, policy, and long-term strategy - provided it is used with intent and matched to the decisions it is trying to shape.

## Activating Better Futures

Innovation often brings optimism and opportunity, but how progress is shaped matters. Fully realising the benefits of innovation requires intention, care, and attention to who is included, so we can strengthen communities and connection, and expand opportunity.

The insights in this report remind us the future is not only something to prepare for, but something we can design for and shape with care. Choice is expressed through what we build, what we scale, what we regulate, what we accept and reject, and what we decide is worth keeping.

As you read, we invite you to treat these insights as a starting point to prompt reflection on what was learned and exchanged at the Forum. Take them back to your community to support your work, challenge assumptions, clarify choices, and continue the conversations started in Dubai. We welcome you to explore or revisit the sessions on YouTube.



# At a Glance

These insights are designed to help you **extract greater value from embedding futures practice into your organisations**, highlighting the skills, capabilities, processes, and mindsets which may help navigate the future.

This is matched with intelligence from the Forum about how the strategic context is changing, and consequently how you will need to adapt to changing values around where we live, work, and connect.

## SHAPING FUTURES

### Insight 01

#### The future of foresight is built on imagination

Wonder, curiosity, imagination, focus, and comfort with uncertainty are the defining capabilities for our futures.

### Insight 03

#### The future of foresight is built with discovery

Stronger connection and exchange between science and foresight are helping to shape more responsible futures.

### Insight 02

#### The future of foresight is experiential

Creative and immersive approaches are opening new pathways for people to experience and engage with the promise of foresight.

### Insight 04

#### The future of foresight is pluralistic

Foresight will be shaped by how widely it distributes agency: across knowledge systems, institutions, and generations.

## ACTIVATING FUTURES

### Insight 05

#### The future of communities is being redesigned

As digital access reshapes work and services, cities are being rethought around nature, community behaviours, and intentional physical connection.

### Insight 07

#### The future is long lives lived well

The promise of longevity will be realised if innovation is guided by a commitment to quality of life and equitable access.

### Insight 06

#### The future is regeneration over extraction

Youth-led demand for evidence-backed purpose is accelerating a shift towards regenerative futures.

### Insight 08

#### The future of work is still open for disruption

AI adoption is outpacing technological readiness, positioning judgement, sense-making, and ethical leadership as the new premium skills in the workplace.



2025

# Dubai Future Forum

The Dubai Future Forum is the world’s largest gathering of futurists, foresight practitioners, policymakers, scientists, and innovators, convened annually by the Dubai Future Foundation. The Forum creates a global platform for exploring how emerging technologies, societal shifts, and systemic challenges are reshaping the future of humanity.



2,500+

Participants



200+

Speakers

100+

Leading Foresight Institutions

70

Sessions



20+

Workshops and Deep-dive Sessions

7

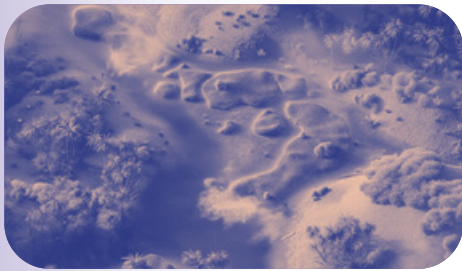
Immersive Experiences and Innovative Interactions





# Themes

As the world faces accelerating change, the Dubai Future Forum has continued to evolve, drawing on the collective intelligence of global thinkers, futurists, and visionaries to explore not just what lies ahead, but how we might navigate it with purpose and imagination. The themes for 2025 were designed to stretch the boundaries of possibility while grounding conversations in real-world impact.



## Theme 01

### Exploring the Unknown

Uncovering the groundbreaking discoveries reshaping our world



## Theme 02

### Empowering Societies

Strengthening systems, addressing global challenges, and safeguarding future generations



## Theme 03

### Reimagining Health

Exploring how science, technology, and nature are redefining wellbeing



## Theme 04

### Optimising Systems

Examining how innovation is transforming business, governance, and society



## Theme 05

### Foresight Insights

Diving into the tools, methodologies, and narratives that enable long-term thinking

In collaboration with  
**Global Futures Society**



# Key Insights

## Insight 01

# The future of foresight is built on imagination

”

**Creative confidence grows through action. Competence can be taught, but courage comes through trying and experimenting.**

”

**Imagination is not optional, it is a responsibility, and shaping the future depends on whether we dare to practise it fully.**

The futures we can shape will depend, in no small part, on deeply human capabilities: what we choose to pay attention to, how curious we remain about the world in front of us, and how we engage with the unknown. Across the Forum, we heard how easily these capabilities are being eroded. Attention spans are collapsing, and focus is becoming a new currency. Aversion to risk continues to constrain imagination. Meanwhile, AI can present ideas and advice with great certainty, rather than inviting people to question, interpret, and make meaning. The risk for us all is a drift into a perpetual ‘auto-complete’ mode of living.

Against this backdrop, speakers and participants reflected that the capabilities we most need - now and into the future - are the distinctly human ones. Wonder was described as a superpower because it helps us notice more of the world around us. Focus was framed as its companion skill: the ability to stay with what we notice long enough to make sense of it. Comfort with uncertainty, often strengthened through a design mindset, helps people and organisations stay engaged with questions that do not yet have clear answers, rather than jumping straight into ‘solution mode’ with ill-defined responses.

Curiosity and imagination were positioned as ways to work with what we notice. Curiosity drives inquiry: better questions, deeper exploration, and openness to complexity. Imagination expands the range of alternatives we can conceive and engage with. Taken together, wonder, focus, curiosity, imagination, and comfort with uncertainty represent capabilities that reinforce one another, and help us navigate complex futures with greater agency.

But there is a tension. Many educational and institutional systems prioritise order, certainty, and short-term results. When systems are optimised to minimise uncertainty, they can discourage experimentation, narrow the futures we are willing to explore, and reinforce a bias towards answers that sound certain. Yet shaping meaningful futures often requires imaginative risk-taking that can feel uncomfortable, or even ‘dangerous’.



This is why participants called for greater intentionality in how we develop and sustain these capabilities. That includes creating environments that protect attention, make room for inquiry, support safe experimentation, and strengthen collective sense-making. In other words, designing conditions where these human capabilities can be practised, retained, and valued.

Taken together, these threads suggest that what it means to be human in the future is not about having more information, or more powerful tools. It is about cultivating the capacities that help us stay present, notice more of the world around us, and navigate uncertainty with attention, courage, and care.

These conversations point to wonder, curiosity, imagination, focus, and comfort with uncertainty as essential human capabilities. If education systems and institutions continue to prioritise certainty and short-term outcomes, these capabilities can be eroded over time. However, if they are treated as capacities to be cultivated, decision-making can widen, and agency can remain firmly with people.

This matters because wonder, curiosity, and collective sense-making are not 'nice-to-haves'. They are strategic necessities for navigating uncertainty and shaping futures that are ethical and empathetic.

### Why does this matter?

### What might this lead to?

### Where did we hear this at the Forum?



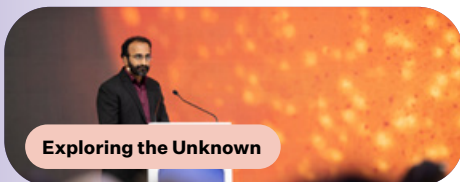
Designing learning, work, and civic environments to deliberately **train wonder and curiosity as everyday practices**, rather than rare moments of inspiration.



Treating **attention and 'National Cognitive Potential' as shared assets**, reshaping technologies and measures of progress to **protect deep focus** instead of fragmenting it.



Developing 'unsure AI' systems to signal uncertainty and invite reflection, so human imagination, courage, and responsibility remain central to how we navigate the unknown.



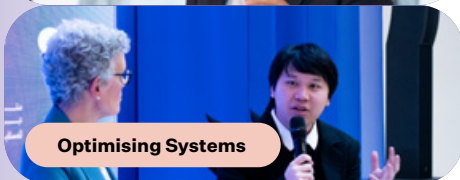
#### A Future With Nature: Why Wonder Is Our Superpower?

Positioning wonder as the antidote to scattered attention, showing how focused observation can stop us in our tracks, expand our sense of what is possible, and remind us what we choose to notice matters.



#### Chasing Tomorrow: How Far Can Human Curiosity Take Us?

Emphasising curiosity and exploration is accessible to everyone, showing how 'smooth friction' between different perspectives can turn diverse experiences into shared discovery.



#### Unsure AI: Can Intelligence Thrive Without Certainty?

Reframing uncertainty as 'wisdom in motion', emphasising how doubt can spur investigation and reflection, while warning overly certain AI risks turning our lives into 'auto-complete' if we lean on it without question.



#### Relearning Imagination: Are We Actively Shaping Our Future?

Exploring how fear of failure constrains imagination, positioning prototyping as a way to 'de-risk' bold ideas and build creative confidence by teaching competence and cultivating courage through action.

Watch more on YouTube



## Insight 02

# The future of foresight is experiential

”

If you are able to let imagination go just one step further it creates a very powerful space.

”

We are usually very analytical but [foresight] gets to the emotional side.

Creative and immersive approaches are becoming more prominent within foresight practice. Rather than relying primarily on analytical methods, the Forum shows that practitioners are increasingly experimenting with how the futures and foresight practice is experienced, using design, narrative, environment, and even senses to support engagement with long-term change and uncertainty.

Foresight has always involved creativity, from scenario writing to the metaphors of causal layered analysis. What is shifting now is the emphasis on approaches that allow people to experience the future rather than simply analyse it. We saw at the Forum storytelling, digital personas, sensory experiences, and other forms of immersion being used to help people connect emotionally and intuitively with complex ideas, and to help leaders and communities explore unfamiliar futures and engage with diverse knowledge systems.

This contrasts with how strategic foresight is often practiced today. Many organisations still rely on structured, analytical methods built around signals, trends, carefully framed uncertainties, and scenarios. These tools have immense value, but can miss underlying shifts in values, assumptions, and cultural patterns unless applied with real depth and skill.

Participants reflected on the limits of dominant and ‘linear’ models of thinking about the future. Other cultural traditions approach time, change, and possibility in entirely different ways. Experiential approaches create room to engage with those perspectives more fully, offering pathways into worldviews where time is non-linear and futures are sensed as much as reasoned.

Broader research in participatory futures reinforces what we heard at the Forum, showing imagination is increasingly important as a civic skill, and experiential approaches can include people who may not connect with conventional foresight methods. This was echoed in discussions on youth engagement and education, where the need for models to spark curiosity and build confidence in navigating uncertainty came through strongly.



### Why does this matter?

The Forum also showed experiential approaches are compatible within institutional settings. Examples from NATO, UNICEF, and Wonder Lab showed how organisations are already working with filmmakers, photographers, game designers, and digital creatives to explore futures in accessible and often surprising ways. These initiatives help stretch assumptions and open new conversations that might not emerge through analysis alone.

By moving beyond traditional foresight approaches, experiential foresight helps decision-makers, communities, and organisations grapple with uncertainty in ways that feel tangible and meaningful. Emotional and sensory engagement can surface values, assumptions, and cultural dynamics that often remain invisible in traditional foresight processes, yet strongly influence how decisions are made and change is accepted.

For institutions, this matters because strategies and policies are more likely to succeed when people understand and feel connected to them. Experiential approaches make futures thinking more accessible and inclusive, allowing diverse perspectives to contribute and reducing the distance between insight and action. They also help leaders and organisations stay with uncertainty, rather than rushing toward premature solutions.

### What might this lead to?



Testing **small, contained experiments** to understand what kinds of experiential approaches resonate with your community.



**Participating in global exchange** through the Global Futures Society to learn how others are integrating these methods.



**Building on the examples shared at the Forum**, and the knowledge and experience participants brought into the exchange.

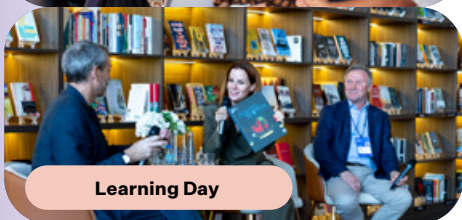
### Where did we hear this at the Forum?



Empowering Societies

#### The Art of Curating Tomorrow: How Can Spaces Enable Inclusive Futures?

Exploring how storytelling, sensory design, and exhibition techniques can shift public understanding of long-term futures. Curators discussed their use of narrative worlds, multi-sensory installations and emotionally charged environments to help people step into unfamiliar possibilities.



Learning Day

#### Foresight in an Age of Uncertainty: Why Does It Matter? and Mediation and Conflict Resolution.

Spotlighting real-life examples where creative approaches to storytelling have helped to open spaces for imaginative conversations about long futures across a range of institutional settings.



Immersive Experiences

#### Keepers of the Forest, the Art of Change, and AuraForest.

Demonstrating how immersive and multisensory experiences can deepen futures thinking. Through virtual reality, sound, scent, and narrative, these installations invited participants into Indigenous knowledge systems, personal timelines, and speculative ecological futures. Together, they showed how immersive storytelling can reconnect people with culture, nature, and more-than-human worlds, while expanding how futures are imagined, felt, and remembered.

Watch more on YouTube



### Insight 03

# The future of foresight is built with discovery



**As Copernicus reshaped our understanding of the cosmos, science once again challenges deeply ingrained assumptions.**



**We are not victims of time. We are stewards of it.**

The Forum conversations highlighted how scientific discovery is reshaping the boundaries of what is possible. Through exploration and sustained inquiry, it continually challenges the assumptions we hold about life, planetary systems, intelligence, and human limits. In doing so, science changes the context in how we make decisions, opening new possibilities and options for the future not previously in existence.

Scientists and explorers at the Forum presented research that has the potential to unsettle and reframe our knowledge boundaries. The Forum's Exploring the Unknown sessions and its Prototypes for Humanity marquee spotlighted a broad range of ideas and concepts describing future worlds which are more complex, more interconnected, and less predictable than our inherited models suggest. They also emphasised questions that evidence alone cannot answer, including what should be pursued now, what should be held back, what is ethical, and what would be irresponsible to ignore.

Discussions across the Forum highlighted that this is where foresight creates significant value. Foresight does not just provide commentary on science, but acts as the practice that helps communities work out what discovery means over time. When science and foresight move together, uncertainty is handled differently. A new space is created, where we can shape decisions and outcomes, not only by what is feasible, but by deliberation about which pathways are worthwhile, how they should be governed, and what they ask of people and places along the way.

This is where stewardship becomes visible. Scientific advances shape the futures becoming available and foresight helps determine which of those futures are nurtured and sustained through the institutions and everyday settings where new capabilities take root. Discovery expands the realm of the possible, while foresight strengthens the capacity to choose, deliberately, and with responsibility for life.



### Why does this matter?

New discoveries rapidly translate into new tools and frameworks that shape and re-shape what is possible and what is considered normal. With that in mind, foresight allows communities to protect and enhance our agency, by giving us the ability to guide what takes root rather than just taking whatever comes our way.

This also highlights the opportunity for stronger cross-sector and interdisciplinary collaboration. When science, foresight, policy, industry, and communities work together, discovery is expanded and meaningfully shaped. In this way, foresight enables stewardship and more deliberate futures.

### What might this lead to?



Creating thoughtful space between scientific discovery and application, using foresight methods to **explore divergent systems-level outcomes, tensions, and flow-on effects** to help improve the process of translation.



Normalising **exchange between discovery and foresight**, with scientists, explorers, and foresight practitioners working alongside one another as part of core research and innovation activity. This can draw inspiration from the Forum's Prototypes for Humanity showcase.



Grounding foresight more rigorously with live scientific questions, ensuring futures work continually draws from **emerging evidence and frontier research**.

### Where did we hear this at the Forum?



#### From Molecules to Stars: What's Next?

Showing how new instruments are turning distant atmospheres into readable molecular signatures, widening the category of 'habitable' worlds and challenging us to recognise life that does not match Earth's template.



#### From Ice to Insights: Why Should We Care About the Melting Poles?

Framing the cryosphere as both archive and early-warning system, highlighting how scientific signals only matter if they are carried into governance, planning, and decisions made far from the poles themselves.



#### Mapping Inner Worlds: Can We Decode Human Consciousness?

A provocative discussion on the nature of consciousness and the limits of reducing human experience to computational models. Speakers challenged dominant metaphors that frame the brain as a machine, warning against oversimplification and ethical blind spots.



#### Concepts of Time: How Do They Shape Our Future?

Expanding the vocabulary for navigating change across different speeds and horizons, underscoring judgement is often a temporal practice by knowing when to move, when to pause, and when to keep possibilities open.

Watch more on YouTube



## Insight 04

# The future of foresight is pluralistic



**There are new and different ways to cast the net.**

The future of foresight will depend on how widely it distributes agency: whose knowledge counts, who participates, and who benefits.

As AI adoption accelerates across government, business, and everyday life, that question becomes more urgent. We heard at the Forum that large-scale systems are increasingly influencing how futures are imagined and narrated, yet many are trained on dominant global data sources. This creates the possibility of what some speakers described as ‘cultural distortion’, where certain narratives are amplified while others are overlooked. The result can be a narrower range of futures being imagined.



**If [foresight] is interesting but not useful, it will be seen as a luxury [in organisations].**

In response, practitioners are placing greater emphasis on cultural plurality within foresight practice. Communities are being recognised as producers, not simply consumers, of their futures. Indigenous knowledge systems, intergenerational cultural wisdom, and relational worldviews are being treated as core assets. Rather than converging on a single future narrative, there is growing comfort with holding multiple futures simultaneously.

This shift toward plurality is inseparable from questions of participation. As the field expands, attention is turning to who gets to imagine futures, who can realise them, and who defines what ‘good’ practice looks like. Some participants noted that foresight can still feel accessible mainly to experts or well-resourced actors, and that when it is experienced as ‘interesting’ rather than useful, its value becomes harder to translate into action. At the same time, many speakers and participants emphasised that foresight is most impactful when it helps organisations prepare for unforeseen circumstances, strengthen long-term sustainability, and maintain relevance over time.



Youth participation and engagement play an equally important role in redistributing agency. Nurturing futures literacy early and enabling young people to influence decisions on the issues shaping their lives were recurring priorities. There was also recognition that young people are already shaping the future as advocates and drivers of innovation, and that strengthening intergenerational dialogue allows perspectives, power, and responsibility to be shared more deliberately.

Taken together, these conversations suggest a field moving toward a more distributed model of foresight - one that takes plurality seriously, widens participation, and connects futures thinking more directly to real-world decisions.

As foresight becomes more widely adopted - and increasingly shaped by AI - it will either reinforce existing concentrations of influence or help rebalance them. The systems, standards, and participation models established now will shape whose knowledge is preserved, whose perspectives inform strategy, and how confidently future generations step into decision-making roles. If plurality, collaboration, and youth engagement are treated as central rather than peripheral, foresight can mature as a practice that builds shared capability over time. If they are not, it risks scaling without deepening its legitimacy or broadening who truly shapes the future.

### Why does this matter?

### What might this lead to?

### Where did we hear this at the Forum?



**Embedding mechanisms to grow locally generated stories, data, and signals** so communities retain authorship of their futures.



**Supporting community-governed small language models** to preserve knowledge with care and consent.



**Supporting diverse entry pathways through co-designed standards and credentials** lifting practice without reinforcing existing hierarchies.



**Embedding foresight practitioners and distributed coaching capability within organisations** so futures thinking informs everyday tasks, budgets, operational rhythms, and strategic decision-making through influence rather than mandate.



Foresight Insights

#### Governance for the Long Term: How Can We Ensure Intergenerational Fairness?

Examining what meaningful co-creation with young people could look like, in contrast to traditional consultation. Participants emphasised the importance of involving youth directly in shaping long-term decisions, and discussed how governance and education systems might need to evolve to better support intergenerational collaboration and shared responsibility for future outcomes.



Foresight Insights

#### Business of Foresight: How Do Strategies Diverge?

Exploring how foresight operates inside organisations. Panellists reflected foresight becomes impactful through relationships, trust, and ongoing translation between futures thinking and strategic decision-making. The discussion underscored the importance of embedding foresight within organisational cultures, rather than positioning it as a standalone activity.



Foresight Insights

#### Alternative Futures Methods: What Can We Learn from Around the World?

Highlighting different foresight modalities drawn from global cultures that disrupt the familiar, structured analytical approaches typically deployed today. Like the settings they draw from, these culturally rich methods deserve to be felt and experienced.



Meaningfully involving children and young people in decision-making, and building futures literacy from an early age, requires more than a single intervention. It calls for a combination of education-focused approaches and the creation of environments where youth can actively participate, experiment, and learn. This page brings together examples from the Dubai Future Foundation’s work in partnership with UNICEF, highlighting practical ways futures thinking is being embedded through programmes, tools, and experiential initiatives showcased at the Dubai Future Forum.




## The Future Child Persona Playbook

**The Future Child Persona Playbook** offers a practical and human-centred approach to long-term thinking by placing children and young people at the heart of futures work. Developed by UNICEF Innocenti in collaboration with the Dubai Future Foundation and Artefact, the report moves beyond abstract forecasting to explore how decisions made today may shape the everyday lives of children in 2050.

The playbook introduces a participatory foresight methodology that blends futures thinking, design practice, and child rights principles. Drawing on workshops with children and young people across different contexts, it translates complex global forces such as climate change, demographic shifts, and emerging technologies into six future child personas. These personas help organisations better understand how policies, systems, and innovations may be experienced by future generations, bridging the gap between data and lived experience.

For organisations, this report is both a strategic resource and a call to action. It demonstrates how foresight can be more inclusive, ethical, and grounded, while offering practical tools that can be adapted for policy design, strategy development, education, and cross sector collaboration. By centring children as active participants in futures thinking, the playbook helps organisations strengthen long-term decision-making and take greater responsibility for the futures they are helping to shape.

 [Access the Report Here](#)



## Activation

### The Future of Childhood In a Changing World

An interactive exhibit that invited audiences to engage with the future of education and learning. This exhibition was inspired by the Playbook and its methodology guided the development and design of this activation.

Built from 45 workshops with over 800 children and youth led by UNICEF Innocenti Youth Foresight Fellows, it used a digital interactive interface to bring youth-created future personas to life. Participants could engage with the personas to understand their opportunities, challenges, and how they learn in the future.



## Insight 05

# The future of communities is being redesigned



**We are seeing a move away from mega cities toward smaller, more self-sufficient communities.**

The purpose and design of physical urban spaces are being rethought as digital participation becomes increasingly accessible. Rather than simply being places for work and service delivery, cities are evolving into intentionally designed environments for social connection, learning, and new experiences. Across the Forum, we explored how cities might be reshaped for a world where digital participation and services are widely available, and physical presence becomes more intentional.



**Physical presence is becoming a commitment. People will only come together physically when there is a reason to be together.**

Hyper-digitalisation and the rise of remote living are changing why people gather in person. Physical engagement is becoming deliberate rather than automatic. Participants noted that people enter shared spaces when they offer emotional resonance, collective experience, or embodied presence that cannot be replicated digitally.

At the same time, cities, services, and community infrastructure are being reconfigured to rebalance scale and function. Several sessions pointed to renewed interest in smaller, greener, and more self-sufficient communities. Remote work, improved low-cost logistics, and decentralised service hubs are making it easier for people to live further from traditional centres. Examples included Dubai's twenty-minute city approach, and hybrid models of work and education where digital participation is the baseline, and physical gathering is reserved for collaboration, apprenticeship, and civic life. Together, these patterns suggest a future in which smaller cities are designed around community behaviours, green space, and intentional connection.

A third thread highlighted the growing need to reconnect with nature. Multiple sessions emphasised that the more time people spend in virtual environments, the more essential natural spaces become for wellbeing, creativity, and social connection. Ideas such as living classrooms, regenerative public spaces, and nature-integrated learning environments reflected a vision of cities where forests, parks, and ecological systems are foundational to urban infrastructure.



### Why does this matter?

For decades, cities were designed around expansion, through increasing density, enabling daily travel for work, and concentrating services in centralised hubs. Mobility and scale were the organising principles. Today, as new cities emerge and existing ones evolve, different priorities are coming into focus. Sustainability and circularity have been important milestones, but behavioural shifts suggest people are increasingly prioritising access to nature and being intentional about being physically present. This signals a need to consider what we are optimising when designing cities and how valuable multi-disciplinary teams are to urban design in the future.

### What might this lead to?



Utilising **neighbourhood venues, pop-up spaces, and community-run programmes to encourage** people to experience **art, culture, and shared activities**, alongside larger and more established institutions.

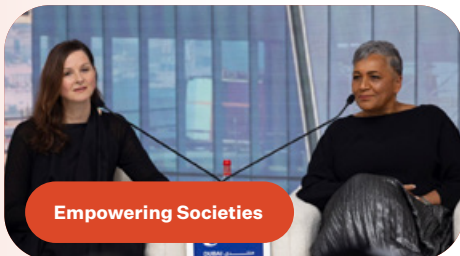


**Urban forest design and green public spaces** becoming more common, more valuable, and more popular features of cities.



Designing cities by **combining architecture and planning with insights from anthropology, ecology, education, and local communities** to better reflect how people actually live and relate to place.

### Where did we hear this at the Forum?



Empowering Societies

#### Reimagining Our Cities: What Does Belonging Mean in a Changing World?

Discussing how architecture and art shape memory, identity, and belonging in times of rapid change. Speakers explored the future as a process rather than a destination, emphasising curiosity, ethical responsibility, and deep attention to place. Drawing on nomadic and context-driven practices, the session highlighted the need for designers to balance history and adaptation, and to create spaces that honour culture, ecology, and evolving forms of community.



Empowering Societies

#### Urban Futures in Action: What Is Dubai's Model for People-Centric Cities of the Future?

Highlighting practical city level examples, including the twenty-minute city approach in Dubai. This reinforced the movement toward community scale planning, accessible services, and intentional design supporting changing patterns of work and life.



Empowering Societies

#### The Future of Coming Together: How Do the Arts Create Connection in a Changing World?

Illuminating how cultural experiences are evolving as technology, audience expectations, and social realities shift. Speakers from across the arts explored how music, performance, and storytelling continue to create spaces for collective meaning and connection. The session highlighted the enduring role of the arts as both a meeting ground and a catalyst for reimagining how communities gather and imagine shared futures.

Watch more on YouTube



Insight 06

# The future is regeneration over extraction



**Being a good ancestor means planting the seeds for a tree whose shade you may never sit in.**

Regenerative futures emerged as a recurring theme at the Forum. What stood out was that this was not framed only as climate action. Instead, regeneration was discussed as a broader shift: rethinking how we live, how we innovate, how we relate to each other, and what we choose to nurture as a society.

Alongside this, there was growing attention to a belief among many young people that their future will be worse than their parents' and a reluctance to express hope publicly. Hope is uncomfortable because it requires people to trust that the unknown may turn out well, or that action today will matter tomorrow. Yet this tension was viewed as a catalyst for regenerative conversations. If hope feels scarce, how do we keep progressing and innovating in ways that make hope credible again? Regenerative thinking offers an alternative pathway: progress grounded in care, accountability, and the expectation that today's actions should meaningfully improve tomorrow's conditions.



**We need to move beyond the low hanging fruit. Universal dignity must come first. Only then do we enhance the human experience.**

Regenerative futures also surfaced in discussions on product design, luxury markets, the future of family businesses, and how industries are preparing for resilience. Many speakers from the private sector described regeneration as a deeper relationship between human wellbeing, dignity, and planetary health. This relationship requires businesses to be clear about what they stand for, and how that purpose shows up in practice.

Speakers emphasised that purpose needs to align with the products and services a business offers, and guide how innovation decisions are made. Regeneration becomes a promise organisations make through what they design, how they resource it, and the trade-offs they are willing to be transparent about. Respectful innovation was repeatedly described as innovation that enhances life rather than extracts from it, reinforcing the idea that purpose must be embedded in strategy, branding, and operations.



Young consumers are a major force accelerating this shift. They are not stepping away from consumption, but they are far more deliberate about how they consume. They look for brands clearly articulating their purpose, backed with evidence, including clarity about sourcing, production, and long-term impact, as well as honest communication about progress and limitations.

For brands and businesses, this raises the bar. Regeneration becomes credible only when purpose is visible through action, enabling consumers to participate in regenerative futures through the choices they make.

**Why does this matter?**

Regeneration is becoming a test of credibility for businesses and brands. As consumers look for ways to participate in positive futures through everyday choices, brand purpose may increasingly shape trust, loyalty, and long-term relevance. When purpose is clearly articulated and visibly embedded in products, services, and innovation decisions, it allows consumers to act consciously and feel confident their participation contributes to something durable rather than extractive. For leaders, this reframes regeneration from a reputational concern into a strategic one, influencing how value is defined, how innovation is prioritised, and how organisations maintain relevance across generations.

**What might this lead to?**

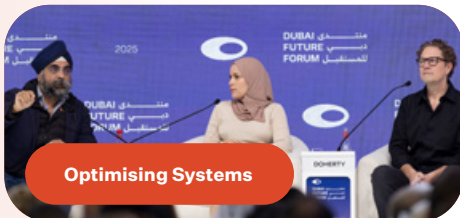


**A shift in how brands define and report success**, placing greater emphasis on positive impact for the people, communities, and places they operate in, not just financial performance.



**Brands and products communicating regeneration as a core value**, with greater transparency about their environmental footprint and the actions they are taking to reduce harm and restore ecosystems.

**Where did we hear this at the Forum?**



Optimising Systems

**Building a Regenerative Society: How Do We Redesign Our Foundations?**

Examining how regeneration extends beyond environmental repair into human wellbeing and dignity. Speakers described regeneration as an interplay between planetary health and humans flourishing, and emphasised the importance of universal dignity as the starting point for any regenerative model.



Foresight Insights

**The Global Consumer 2035: What Are World Markets Telling Us About the Future?**

Discussions on sustainable luxury and ethical consumption reinforced how consumer expectations are shifting. Participants described the rise of nature-based experiences as a pathway to wellbeing and a signal of a broader cultural movement toward regenerative value.



Reimagining Health

**The Future of Health: Do We Need To 'Re-Learn' From Nature? and Longevity Lunch at BOCA**

Shifting the focus from lifespan to health span and lived experience. Speakers and participants emphasised wellbeing emerges from prevention, balance, social connection, and alignment with natural systems, rather than medical intervention alone. The discussions extended health into social relationships, everyday environments, and cultural norms, highlighting longer lives raise fundamental questions about how we live, age, and find meaning.

Watch more on YouTube

ponents:



ical sensor (sensing part)

ctrons produce  
current proportional  
concentration

ip with NFC coil

a with... to an external

Dubai Future Forum 2025

Key Insights

Photo of a sensory part

## Insight 07

# The future is long lives lived well



**What we're not talking enough about is what we call human flourishing.**



**We vaguely plan for 'retirement' or 'staying healthy', but rarely for how we'll live, where we'll age, who we'll care for (and who will care for us), or what will give us meaning in our eighties, nineties or even hundreds.**

Advances in biomedical technologies once considered science fiction are rapidly becoming reality. Examples include gene editing through CRISPR, predictive analytics for disease, lab-grown organs, nanotechnology, and precision medicine tailored to the individual. Yet sitting alongside this technological progress is a deeply human challenge. While our scientific and technological capabilities have grown, health and longevity continue to be shaped as much by agency, ethics, equity, and meaning as by physiology. We may be extending life and monitoring our bodies with ever-increasing precision, but it is less clear whether these achievements will translate into lives that are genuinely well-lived. This surfaced as a key question at the Forum: are our advancements serving what humans genuinely value, or simply lengthening life without strengthening what makes it worth living?

Across sessions, speakers and participants reflected on the ways this tension is already playing out. Lifespan is often treated as a marker of progress, even though experiences such as purpose, connection, and dignity are rarely captured in traditional measures. Predictive health tools offer unprecedented insight, yet health systems still struggle to respond in ways that are empathetic and human-centred. Access to precision health remains uneven and inequitable, reinforcing existing structures and leaving vulnerable people and communities behind.

Health outcomes are shaped by more than individual choices alone. Participants pointed to the importance of agency and governance, noting decisions about data, ethics, and innovation shape health outcomes as much as personal behaviour. They also highlighted the close link between human and ecological health, drawing on examples such as Blue Zones and planetary health to show wellbeing cannot be separated from environmental resilience.



Why does this matter?

Our technology may be allowing us to build superhuman bodies, yet without attention to a 'life well-lived' we risk facilitating extended lifespans poor in experience. The future of health should not be defined by metrics alone. It must be understood as human, relational, ethical, and ecological. True superhuman health is not about the body, but about agency in action and the ability for each of us to flourish in a world connected and alive with meaning.

What might this lead to?



Equipping individuals with **knowledge, access, and decision-making tools**, from genomic literacy to personal health data wallets, so **people can actively shape their own health** journeys.



Designing healthcare systems that **embed empathy and ethics as core capabilities** alongside technical performance.



**Fostering partnerships** across governments, communities, and industry to support **equitable data sharing, ethical innovation, and resilient health ecosystems**.

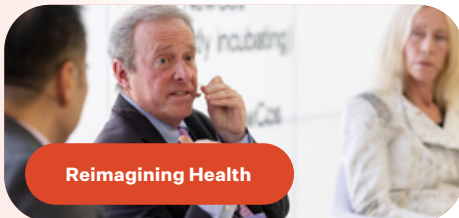


**Redefining progress** by shifting from survival-focused measures to those reflecting meaning, purpose, connection, and dignity.



Integrating **ecological wisdom into health policy, urban planning, and preventive** interventions so human health aligns with planetary resilience.

Where did we hear this at the Forum?



Reimagining Health

**The Precision Leap: Is Healthcare Ready for the Age of Anticipation?**

Highlighting a growing gap between technological capability and the transformation of healthcare systems. Speakers noted while predictive and preventative technologies are close to being viable, barriers remain in how healthcare is designed and operationalised. The session emphasised longevity is shaped not only by clinical intervention, but by emotional, mental, and social factors such as purpose and meaning.



Reimagining Health

**Beyond DNA: What If Your Genetics Are Not Your Destiny?** and **The Bionic Frontier: What Happens When Technology Meets Biology?**

Exploring how advances in gene editing, bionics, and regenerative medicine are shifting health from treatment toward permanent intervention and enhancement. Speakers described a move from substitution to regeneration, and from ongoing care to one-time cures, while noting ethical and regulatory frameworks are struggling to keep pace.



Reimagining Health

**Genomic Equity: Can Genomics Serve Everyone in the Future?** and **Wearables We Don't Wear: How Will Invisible Tech Redefine Care?**

Examining who is visible, as well as who is excluded, in increasingly data-driven health systems. Speakers highlighted how underrepresentation in genomic datasets risks shaping future interventions serving a narrow segment of the population, while the presentation by Roman Axelrod of XPANCEO on invisible wearables illustrated how intimate, continuous data collection is becoming embedded in everyday life.

Watch more on YouTube

## Insight 08

# The future of work is still open for disruption

”

**AI in itself doesn't do anything. You need data, systems and people to make it work. If you were starting over today, what would you do differently?**

”

**The future of adopting AI is not technical. It is behavioural and cultural.**

AI is reshaping how people work and create, yet organisational systems are not evolving at the same speed. In many workplaces, AI is being integrated primarily through workflow optimisation: automating processes, assigning tasks, accelerating reporting, and enabling fewer people to produce more output in less time.

This creates an impression of modernisation, but the deeper systems shaping work have barely shifted. Hiring practices, job design, performance frameworks, and workplace culture remain anchored in older assumptions about productivity and efficiency. The paradox is that technology is expanding what work could be, while organisations continue to optimise for speed rather than redesigning the experience of work itself. The Forum raised a sharper question beneath this preference for acceleration: what might we lose when productivity is defined primarily by speed? AI can make work faster, but that does not automatically make the experience of work better or more meaningful.

Participants described a very different relationship with AI. People use AI to learn, explore ideas, improve communication, and automate routine tasks. However, AI creates concerns for job security and reduces time for reflection. This misalignment shows people need time, trust, and psychological safety to integrate AI into their work, not just mandates to adopt new tools. Technological readiness does not equal human readiness.

The Forum highlighted the need for judgement, ethical reasoning, imagination, sense-making, and relational leadership. These deeply human capabilities sit outside the existing definitions of productivity dominant in many workplaces. As knowledge becomes fluid and ambiguity becomes more constant, the ability to interpret and contextualise will become the new premium skillset.



### Why does this matter?

Organisations must rethink what productivity means as AI reduces the value of routine tasks and predictable outputs. Without this shift, there is a risk of building a workforce poorly prepared for how work is changing. Future readiness is not only about adopting new tools or systems, but about whether people, workplace culture, and leadership practices can support learning, and adaptation in uncertain conditions.

In the private sector, this challenge will intensify as the number of AI productivity tools grows and organisations make choices about which tools shape everyday work at individual and company levels. In the public sector, the stakes operate at a different scale, where decisions about how AI is applied across national or regional services will influence workforce models, service quality, and long-term capability. In both contexts, institutions may need to act as enablers, supporting experimentation and building long-term capability.

### What might this lead to?



The **emergence of new readiness frameworks** measuring whether people, culture, and governance are prepared for AI, not only whether the technology has been deployed.



New expectations of what it means to be skilled. Professional education placing greater emphasis on **teaching people how to work with uncertainty**, how to interpret AI outputs with care, and **how to integrate human values into decision-making**.



**Workplace systems** such as performance management, job design, and career progression **redesigned to recognise sense-making, collaboration, and ethical reasoning**.



Public institutions adopting longer term **AI strategies focusing on workforce capability, service quality, and public trust**.



Certain **AI tools becoming standard workplace utilities**, such as writing and communication assistants, meeting summarisation tools, and research and analysis copilots.

### Where did we hear this at the Forum?



#### Navigating Change: Leadership in the Age of AI and Global Transformation

Highlighting how organisations feel pressure to adopt AI quickly, even while leaders remain uncertain about what it will truly change. Speakers described a widening gap between the acceleration of technological tools and the slower evolution of the systems shaping roles, performance expectations, and measures of value.



#### Assessing Future Readiness: Which Tool?

Exploring the difference between adoption and absorption. Contributors noted many organisations treat AI as a workflow upgrade, while individuals experience it as a shift in identity, capability, and workplace rhythm. Participants stressed technological readiness does not equal human readiness, and psychological safety is essential for meaningful integration.

Watch more on YouTube



Dubai Future Forum 2025

# Beyond The Forum

منتدى  
DUBAI  
FUTURE  
FORUM  
للمستقبل  
2025



# Futures In Action

The impact of the Dubai Future Forum extends well beyond the Museum of the Future and Dubai. This section highlights initiatives from around the world recognised through the inaugural Dubai Future Forum Awards, demonstrating how foresight is being applied in real contexts. We invite you to explore these examples and draw inspiration for your own work. If your work is shaping the future through foresight, we invite you to apply for the Dubai Foresight Awards next year.

## Building Longevity into Urban Design



## City of Longevity: Toolkit to Support Intergenerational Urban Design

**Winner** | Foresight for People, Dubai Foresight Awards 2025

The City of Longevity applies foresight to redesign how cities plan for aging across the full life course. Instead of reacting to aging populations, the methodology and toolkit uses long-term scenario modelling to prepare cities for being suited to the wellbeing of centenarians and newborns. A core innovation is the foresight taxonomy, which integrates environmental, social, behavioural, economic, and biological factors into predictive models of aging. This taxonomy is paired with human-in-the-loop AI systems that generate evidence-based 'longevity formulas' tailored to specific urban contexts.

The City of Longevity functions as a dynamic, open-source framework and practical toolkit, supporting anticipatory governance, prevention-focused urban design, and behaviour change at city scale. It shows how foresight can translate scientific evidence into actionable, adaptive strategies that help cities act as partners in longer, healthier lives.

## Embedding Futures Thinking in Policy Design



## For Our Future: Integrating Foresight and Intergenerational Fairness into Australia's Governance

**Finalist** | Foresight for People, Dubai Foresight Awards 2025

For Our Future applies foresight as a governance method to embed long-term and intergenerational thinking into public decision-making. The approach combines participatory foresight, futures literacy, and intergenerational impact assessment to move from short-term policy cycles to anticipatory governance. Designed to be used by governments, institutions, and civil society, it shows how foresight can be operationalised to create durable, future-fit governance systems.

In the Australian context, this includes advancing the Wellbeing of Future Generations Bill, designing a Future Generations Commissioner role, and coordinating a national coalition for intergenerational fairness. Foresight tools such as scenario testing, intergenerational impact assessment, and national dialogues have been used to create concrete outputs, including policy roadmaps, public narratives, and formal accountability mechanisms.

Photo from Foundations for Tomorrow: The Future Generations Policy Brief



### Foresight Practice to Enable Public Dialogue



## Futures That Heal: Participatory Scenario Projects to Support Community Codesign and Dialogue

**Finalist** | Foresight for People, Dubai Foresight Awards 2025

This portfolio brought together three participatory scenario projects in Hawai'i, Cyprus, and Ethiopia that used foresight to support communities navigating political tension, social division, and post-conflict recovery.

Through inclusive, carefully facilitated scenario planning, participants surfaced difficult truths, built trust, and developed shared language and options for moving forward. Across all three contexts, foresight strengthened relationships, enabled constructive public dialogue, and helped people act with greater confidence amid uncertainty.

### Applying Foresight to Design Equitable and Sustainable Futures



## Congo Basin Futures

**Winner** | Foresight for the Planet, Dubai Foresight Awards 2025

This project uses participatory foresight, storytelling, and Indigenous knowledge to explore alternative futures for the Congo Basin. Through online and in-person workshops across Africa and Europe, including with Indigenous Baka communities, the project examined undesirable and preferred futures in the context of biodiversity loss, conflict, and climate pressures.

By combining foresight tools with inclusive participation, the work supported hopeful, peaceful, and sustainable pathways, while elevating the significance of the Congo Basin in long-term thinking and intergenerational justice for populations living there.

### Climate Foresight to Guide Sustainable Innovation



## Cool Climate Collective's Three Futures Test

**Finalist** | Foresight for the Planet, Dubai Foresight Awards 2025

The Three Futures Test is a foresight framework designed to integrate futures thinking into early-stage climate investment decisions. It adapts the classic Three Horizons model into a practical decision tool for investors, moving foresight from abstract strategy into live due diligence. The method maps investment risk and opportunity across three futures: near-certain trajectories, second-order effects and feedback loops, and extreme but plausible disruptions.

The framework combines systems thinking, weak signal detection, S-curve timing, and Black Swan and Gray Rhino stress testing to assess financial viability, systemic leverage, resilience, and planetary fit. It is applied within investment memos to guide where and how catalytic capital is deployed. Already used across more than 20 climate tech investments, the Three Futures Test shows how foresight can be operationalised as repeatable infrastructure for directing capital toward long-term resilience and desirable planetary outcomes.



### Building Resilient Food Systems



## Seeding the Future: Transforming Agriculture in Egypt's Nile Delta

**Finalist** | Foresight for the Planet, Dubai Foresight Awards 2025

The methodology combined immersive foresight tools such as storytelling, serious games, and clay modelling to help farming communities and stakeholders explore future climate scenarios and test alternative responses. Rather than relying on technical forecasting alone, the approach centred lived experience and participation to surface behavioural, social, and economic implications of change.

This method enabled communities to co-design futures around Climate Smart Crops such as Panicum and Quinoa, linking imagination directly to action. The foresight process informed concrete outcomes including new public-private partnerships, expanded UNDP programming, and private sector engagement in contract farming. Designed to be adaptable and scalable, the methodology shows how immersive, participatory foresight can translate long-term climate uncertainty into actionable pathways for resilient, inclusive, and future-ready food systems.

### Embedding Futures Thinking in Policy Design

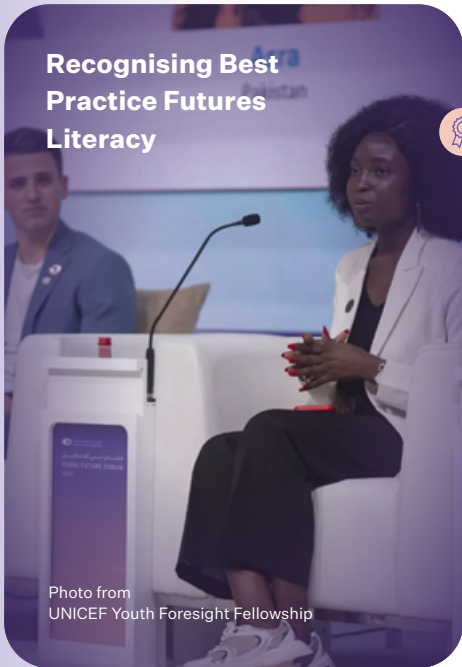


## Pasifika Futures Report: Embedding Indigenous Knowledge into Futures Thinking

**Winner** | Foresight Changemakers, Dubai Foresight Awards 2025

The Pasifika Futures Report reimagines foresight by grounding futures thinking in Indigenous Pacific knowledge systems. Co-developed by UNDP Pacific and the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat, the work centres Pacific philosophies of relationality, place, and intergenerational responsibility, challenging Western, expert-led foresight models. A key methodological innovation is the use of wayfinding as both a conceptual frame and foresight logic, offering an adaptive, collective approach to navigating uncertainty rather than fixed projections. The report combines established foresight tools such as horizon scanning, scenario building, and

stakeholder mapping with Indigenous methodologies including Talanoa, the Kakala Framework, and artefacts from the future. Pasifika Futures offers a replicable model for community-led, culturally grounded foresight that expands whose knowledge shapes the future and how long-term resilience is imagined and enacted.



### Recognising Best Practice Futures Literacy

Photo from UNICEF Youth Foresight Fellowship



## UNICEF Innocenti Youth Foresight Fellowship

**Finalist** | Foresight Changemakers, Dubai Foresight Awards 2025

The UNICEF Innocenti Youth Foresight Fellowship (UYFF) is the UN's first youth foresight function, established to meaningfully engage adolescents and youth in the long-term decisions that impact their lives.

It is a programme for 15–25 year olds to build foresight skills and real pathways into policy influence. It treats youth participation as a right, supports youth-led solutions from local to global, and has grown a 13,000+ member network spanning 160 countries.

Through youth-led foresight experiments, Fellows have facilitated workshops with hundreds of children and young people across diverse contexts, including low income and fragile settings. Their work has informed UN research, policy processes, and global dialogues, demonstrating how meaningful youth participation can strengthen long-term decision-making and futures thinking at scale.



Photo from em.lyon.business.school



## Sustainable Futures by Em Lyon Business School

**Finalist** | Foresight Changemakers, Dubai Foresight Awards 2025

Since 2018 the Sustainable Futures programme has served 7,000 students, 700 executives, and 250 organisations; each year participants are supported by more than 50 permanent and adjunct faculty, creating the largest living laboratory for applied foresight in management education. Led by Thomas Gauthier, the programme combines foresight, biophysical science, and creative practice. A core foundation of the course structure is that it embeds Earth-system limits in every scenario and treats ecological constraints as drivers of innovation.



# Conversations That Travel

Every year, people leave the Dubai Future Forum with more than insights. They leave with questions and ideas that keep resurfacing in their everyday lives. On the flight home, in team meetings, around the dining table, and through new collaborations with people they met at the Forum.

What reflections do you have, and what conversation will you start? Share them with us by tagging the Dubai Future Forum on our social media channels using [#DubaiFutureForum2025](#) and [#DubaiFutureForum](#)

Here are some reflections and share-backs that stood out to us from social media.

## A human touch

**Kylie H. from New Zealand reflected on the sense of belonging and connection she felt at the Forum.**



Taha Whānau reminds us that our wellbeing is strengthened by the communities we stand with. In Dubai, every conversation, every shared meal, every new connection felt like another colour added to a collective tapestry, a reminder that the futures we imagine are always richer when painted together.

## Leaving with more questions than answers

**Crystal I. from Kenya found her experience at the Forum opened up more questions than when she arrived.**



The new question isn't 'Do you know?' but 'Can you make knowledge move?', 'Can you synthesise across domains?', and 'Can you connect dots in ways that create something genuinely new?'

## The 'wildest' provocation

**Facilitator Leena Al Olaimy from Bahrain left this provocation for those who joined her to 're-wild the boardroom'.**



If a group of strangers can learn to govern for flamingos and mudflats in 90 minutes...what excuse do we have for boardrooms that still can't govern for their own grandchildren?

## Seeing things differently

**Alexandra A. from the UAE left the Forum with a different take on futures thinking.**



Maybe the future doesn't need more 'future thinking.' Maybe it needs better spaces for integration.



# Stay Engaged

Stay connected with us throughout the year, and be the first to hear about the latest research and initiatives from the Dubai Future Forum.

## Contact Us

[forum@dubaifuture.ae](mailto:forum@dubaifuture.ae)



### Subscribe to the official newsletter

Get key announcements and invitations delivered straight to your inbox.

YouTube



### Subscribe to DFF on YouTube

Revisit Dubai Future Forum 2025 through session recordings and engage with other DFF initiatives.

Linked



### Join the DFF LinkedIn community

Network and connect with other futures and futures-minded professionals from around the world.

## Learn About Other Initiatives



[Learn More](#)

### Global Futures Society

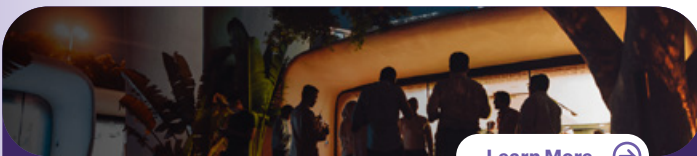
The Global Futures Society (GFS) seeks to foster global collaboration among foresight practitioners, thinkers, and innovators to shape a sustainable and inclusive future.



### RDI Grant Program

The Dubai Research, Development and Innovation Program sets priorities, funding, and partnerships to drive innovation, economic resilience, and growth across Dubai.

[Learn More](#)



[Learn More](#)

### Dubai Future Academy

The Dubai Future Academy supports Dubai by developing learning opportunities through collaborations with world-class education providers to become fast, agile, and sustainable.



### The Global 50

The Global 50 report shares the Foundation's view of the future and 50 opportunities for future growth, prosperity, and wellbeing.

[Learn More](#)



# Acknowledgements

Dubai Future Foundation wishes to extend our deepest gratitude to all who made the Dubai Future Forum 2025 possible. This includes all speakers and presenters, members of the Global Futures Society, Friends of the Forum, the Dubai Future Forum team, and guests from around the globe.

This report was led by Abdulaziz AlJaziri, Dr Patrick Noack, Lana Abdelhameed, Eman Alkadi, Isabella Pirolo, Zaina Aldeesi, and Feras Sobh. The report was supported by ThinkPlace, an award-winning strategic design consultancy that partners with public good organisations to create better futures for people, places, and planet. The ThinkPlace team was led by Chun-Yin San and Sneha Vaidya, with support from Hayley Cosgrove, Shara Francisco, Beth Heald, Don Mathew, Jervenne Teo, and Anston Thomas. We also acknowledge the past speakers and attendees who helped co-design the purpose and focus of the report.

Dubai Future Forum 2025 was made possible by the support of the following partners:

## Strategic Partners



## Thematic Partners



## Awards Partners



## Community Partners





# About the Dubai Future Foundation

**Dubai Future Foundation** aims to realise the vision of His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice President and Prime Minister of the UAE and Ruler of Dubai, for the future of Dubai and consolidate its global status as a leading city of the future. In partnership with its partners from government entities, international companies, startups and entrepreneurs in the UAE and around the world, Dubai Future Foundation drives joint efforts to collectively imagine, design and execute the future of Dubai.

Under the supervision and with the support of His Highness Sheikh Hamdan bin Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Crown Prince of Dubai, Chairman of the Executive Council of Dubai and Chairman of the Board of Trustees of Dubai Future Foundation, DFF works on a three-pronged strategy: to imagine, design and execute the future. It does this through the development and launch of national and global programmes and initiatives, preparing plans and strategies for the future, issuing foresight reports and supporting innovative and qualitative projects. These contribute to positioning Dubai as a global capital for the development and adoption of the latest innovative solutions and practices to serve humanity.

Dubai Future Foundation focuses on identifying the most prominent challenges facing cities, communities and sectors in the future and transforming them into promising growth opportunities by collecting and analysing data, studying global trends and keeping pace with and preparing for rapid changes. It is also looking at future sectors, their integration and the reshaping of current industries.

Dubai Future Foundation oversees many pioneering projects and initiatives, such as the Museum of the Future, Area 2071, The Centre for the Fourth Industrial Revolution UAE, Dubai Future Accelerators, One Million Arab Coders, Dubai Future District, Dubai Future Solutions, Dubai Future Forum, Dubai Metaverse Assembly. Its many knowledge initiatives and future design centres contribute to building specialised local talents for future requirements and empowering them with the necessary skills to contribute to the sustainable development of Dubai.



منتدى دبي  
DUBAI  
FUTURE  
دبي  
FORUM  
للمستقبل

2025