Skills For Anthropocene Governance

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Pre-conference workshop and SIG working session at the ISSS 2015 Conference, Berlin, Germany

- Part 1: August 2, 2015 from 14:00 to 18:00
- Part 2: August 6, 2015 from 16:00 to 18:00

Held in partnership between ISSS Curating Emergence for Thrivability SIG and Global Education Futures

Introduction

It has been argued that the era of the Anthropocene calls for entirely new civilizational strategies. We must depart from behavioral strategies that take root in the time even before the emergence of modern civilization and lead to overconsumption of natural resources, destruction of biodiversity, disruption of climatic balance, and increasing chances of self-destruction of our species. The challenge we face requires multi-faceted responses that includes:

- development of entirely new technologies (e.g. sustainable renewable energy, energy-efficient construction, efficient recycling, materials that come from renewable sources, etc.);

- policies that encourage individual & collective behavior that reduces, not increases, existential risks for our civilization, as well as negative human impact upon Nature – and cultural patterns that do the same;

- organizations and institutions that work directly with some of the Anthropocene challenges on the local, national, and global scale – e.g. preventing the loss of biodiversity or reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

However, it is also often argued that the crisis we have to overcome in the age of the Anthropocene is caused primarily by the faulty models of thinking and acting that are permeating our society. The key to sustainable and prosperous society lies with education – the skills of children and adults. Some governments (e.g. in Scandinavian countries) have successfully addressed some of the Anthropocene problems by introducing new kindergarten, school & university level programs regarding ‘greener’ behavior of their populations. However, the level of response still does not match the level and the urgency of threats that we as humanity have already created for ourselves and Nature. We need to identify general and professional skills that would help us deal with the challenges of the Anthropocene on a planetary level – and we have to make global effort to have these skills introduced in the standard educational curricula of developed and emerging societies.
Purpose and structure of the workshop

The workshop on “Skills for Anthropocene Governance” is organized as a small Systems Lab where the collective intelligence of participants will be applied to map out and prioritize existing and future civilizational challenges that need to be addressed in the age of the Anthropocene. We will then map out general and specific skills that can be used to govern the Anthropocene. Finally, we will identify changes required in the institutions of conventional and new education (including schools, universities, global online learning platforms, skills-related social movements, etc.) that are required to install and reproduce these skills on the global scale – and possible policies and arrangements that can accelerate the transformation of education in this direction.

The workshop is the result of a partnership between the ISSS Curating Emergence for Thrivability Special Integration Group (the CET SIG) and Global Education Futures. It will be conducted as a series of participatory dialogues using widely and lesser known formats such as World Café and Rapid Foresight. Participants are asked to co-create, discuss, and share – rather than to only listen and ask.

Part 1 of the workshop will be held as a pre-conference event on Sunday, August 2, 2015, from 2pm until 6pm. During this session, the main content for discussion will be co-created by the participant group, including mapping of existing & future challenges, identifying skills for systemic thriving in the Anthropocene, and developing recommendations for education systems and policy makers. We will also establish ‘systemic challenge’ questions that may impede realization of these ideas – and we will address these systemic challenges during Part 2 of our workshop. The workshop will be open and free to all attendees.

Part 2 of the workshop will be held during the ISSS conference on Thursday, August 6, from 4pm until 6pm (and will also be taken up in the running evening workshops). This part will be the Curating Emergence for Thrivability portion of the meeting, and will be open for attendance independently of Part 1 (i.e., participation in Part 2 does not require prior participation in Part 1 of the workshop). During this session, we will re-capitulate the results from the Part 1, and will jointly address the ‘systemic challenges’ that our earlier work identified. We also anticipate generating ideas for actionable initiatives that can be explored and enacted after the end of the workshop.

About the workshop leaders

Alexander Laszlo, Ph.D., is the 57th President and Chair of the Board of Trustees of the International Society for the Systems Sciences (ISSS), Director of the Doctoral Program in Leadership and Systemic Innovation at ITBA, Argentina, President of Syntony Leadership, and former Director of the Doctoral Program in Management at the Graduate School of Business Administration & Leadership (EGADE-ITESM), Mexico. As Professor of Systems Science and Evolutionary Development, he currently teaches on evolutionary leadership, collaboration, and systems thinking at a variety of MBA and Doctoral programs internationally. He has worked for UNESCO, the Italian Electric Power Agency, and the U.S. Department of Education, has held visiting appointments with the London School of Economics and the European University Institute, and has been named a Level I Member of the National Research Academy of Mexico (SNI). He is on the Editorial Boards of five internationally arbitered research journals, recipient of the Gertrude Albert Heller Award, the

Pavel Luksha, Ph.D., is a Professor of Practice at Moscow School of Management SKOLKOVO, member of Expert Council of the Russian Agency of Strategic Initiatives, Founder and Director of Global Education Futures, and a Co-Founder of NeuroWeb imitative. As a Professor of Practice, he has taught change leaders of business, government, and education, in the areas of strategy, long-term thinking, system thinking, technological innovation management, and project management. He also worked in the areas of the development of education & training systems in Russia and emerging economies, curating dozens of innovative and change-making projects. He has developed Rapid Foresight, an innovative methodology of collective future thinking applied in hundreds of regional, industrial, and civil projects in Russia and across the world, and has launched one of the largest global events on future thinking education, the Foresight Fleet. NeuroWeb initiative, which has become a part of Russian National Technological Initiative, addresses systemic challenges of building next generation of collaborative online environments enhanced by brain-computer interfaces. Pavel has authored Global Education Futures Agenda and Atlas of Emerging Jobs which give comprehensive view of the necessary changes in skills & education, and published in international research journals on economics, system sciences, and strategic entrepreneurship. Before starting the work on the future of education, Pavel has worked within leading Russian & international companies in business consulting, manufacturing, investment banking, as well as launched his own startups.

About Global Education Futures (GEF)

Global Education Futures (www.edu2035.org) is an international collaborative platform launched in 2014 that involves shapers & sherpas of global education – education thought leaders, education innovators, education technology startup founders and education impact investors, administrators of top international educational institutions, regulators on national and supranational levels, etc. – to discuss and implement the future design of a global educational ecosystem.

In 2015, two large GEF events were conducted. The session in Menlo Park (California, USA), held in conjunction with the leading Silicon Valley venture capital meeting Global Technology Symposium, brought together around 100 global educational innovators from 12 countries to discuss how technological innovations and social transformation can bring forth learner-centered lifelong learning systems. A second meeting in Kazan, Russia, held in conjunction with the World Skills national competition, brought over 90 business and education leaders from 32 countries to discuss the changing demand for skills from economy and society, and the way education & training respond to these changes. These meetings were attended by the senior management of transnational corporations such as Samsung and Festo, leading educational experts and heads of educational practices at OECD, UNESCO, and the World Bank, heads of venture capital firms such as Learn Capital and national agencies supporting educational innovation such as Innovation Unit, administrators of top universities such as Harvard, and many leaders of educational startups, new educational institutions, think tanks, etc. The work of GEF relies substantially on participatory dialogues and collective vision building accomplished by participants at GEF forums.