

The Future of Learning: Inputs from an African lens

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Futures Preparedness in L&D

- Africa in Context
- Systems and Futures
- Futures Tools
- The Futures Triangle
- Key Takeaways



Africa in Context



Snapshot: Africa as Globally Significant

Global Africa

By 2030, young Africans are expected to constitute 42% of global youth

The Continent is Home

By 2050, Africa is expected to be home to 461 million young people aged 15-24.

Intergenerational Growth

By 2050, young Africans will form over a quarter of the world's labour force. Additionally, within three generations, 41% of the world's youth will be Africans.



Labour

From 2030, 30 million youth are expected to enter the African labour market annually

Dividend Growth

Total working population of the continent is expected to grow by 70% to 450 million by 2035

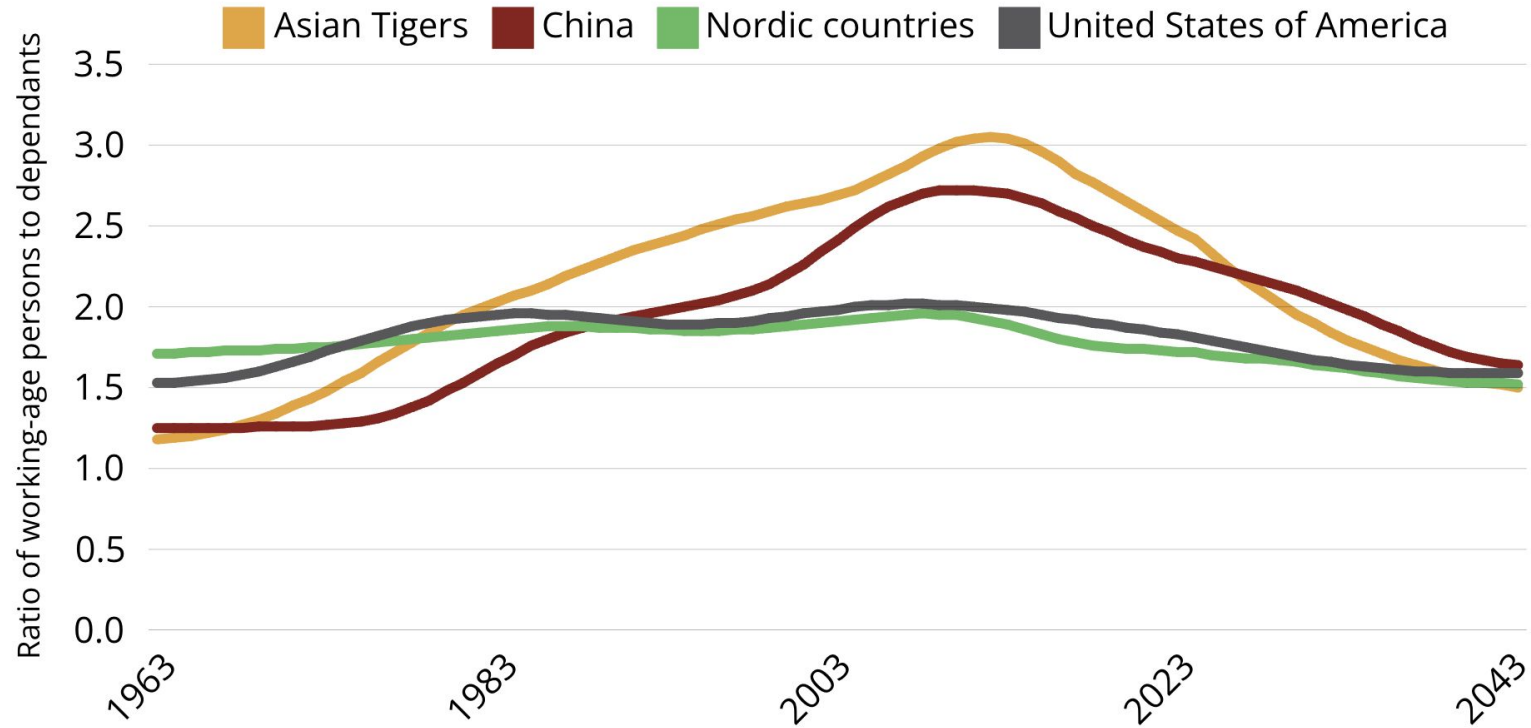
Integration as Markets Expand

Africa presents a US\$2.5 trillion dollar market opportunity for trade through AfCFTA.

**The rest of the
world is ageing**



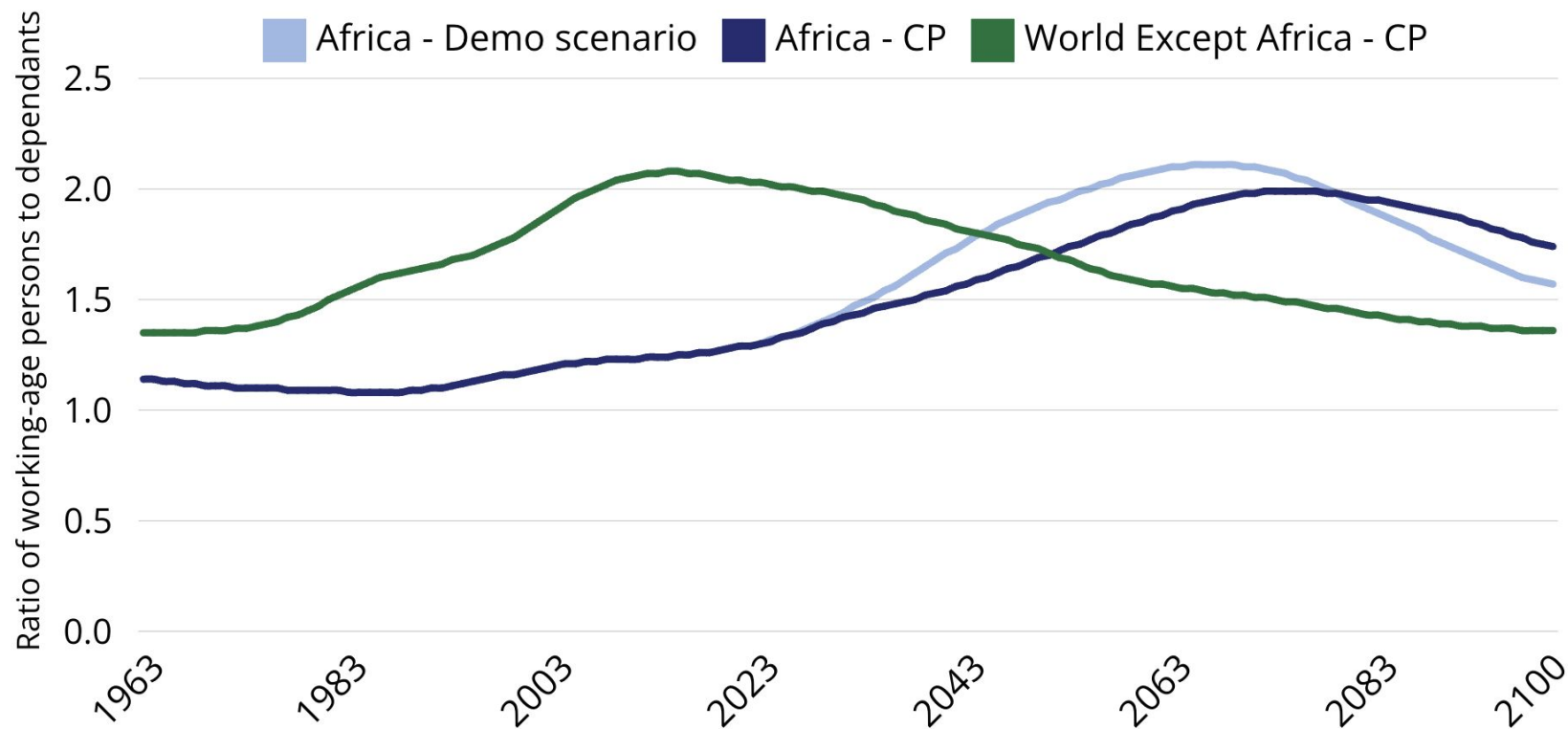
Demographic dividend: 1963-2043



**While Africa is
getting younger**



Demographic dividend: 1963-2100



Uptake of new technologies has leapfrogged progress in Africa

World Bank (2024)

- Over **160 million Africans** gained **broadband internet access** between 2019 and 2022.
- **115 percent increase in internet users** between 2016 and 2021 in Sub-Saharan Africa.

Go1 ENGAGE Report 2024 (p.7)

- “AI is a huge player in the future of L&D goals, with 39% of teams actively seeking to harness the power of generative AI”

Go1 ENGAGE Report 2024 (p.9)

- 55% uptake in AI for Financial Services towards Talent Acquisition
- 55% uptake in AI for Retail towards Continuous Learning and Development





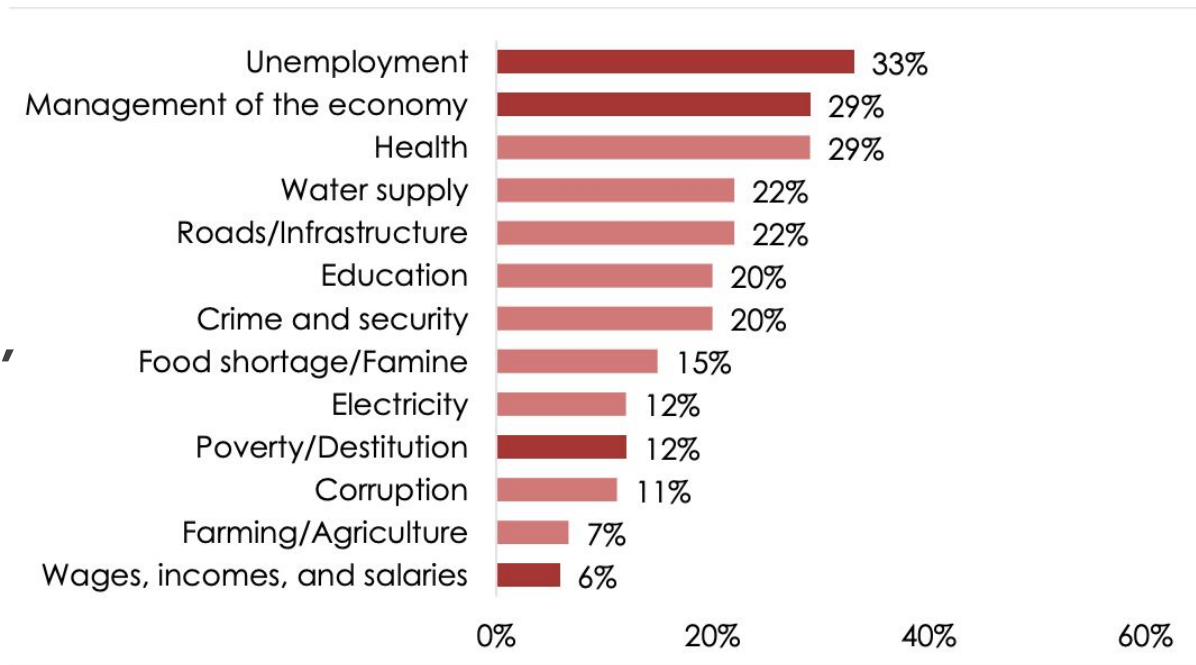
**Our challenges are also
far reaching...**



“Even though this generation of Africans is more educated than their elders, they are considerably more likely than their elders to be unemployed and looking for a job.” (Mo Ibrahim Foundation, 2023)



Challenges in Unemployment, Underemployment, and Economic Management



Based on the question: "In your opinion, what are the most important problems facing this country that government should address?" (Source: *Afrobarometer Dispatch No. 807*, p. 3, 27 May 2024)

The South African Case

Highest level of education (20+ years)

Name	Frequency	%
No Schooling	2 576 011	6,9%
Some Primary	2 778 297	7,4%
Completed Primary	1 317 726	3,5%
Some Secondary	11 880 302	31,6%
Grade 12/Std10	14 122 681	37,6%
Higher Education	4 602 765	12,2%
Other	300 207	0,8%

Africa has an unemployment crisis. The South African case - despite the size of the economy (28th globally) - is the worst.

“The biggest challenge in South Africa is the unequal quality of school education, its low average level and the high drop-out rates ... shortages and mismatches of skills are barriers to growth and inclusiveness” (OECD, 2017).

Source: Stats SA, 2023

+20%

Decline in the Education Indicator for governance in all African countries in the past decade.

Source: Ibrahim Index of African Governance, 2024, p.21

Trend: 5-year change (2019-2023) compared to 10-year change by number of countries



Largest Improvement	Sierra Leone
Change 2014-2023	+15.4
Score/Rank (2023)	60.6/15th
Largest Deterioration	Algeria
Change 2014-2023	-14.3
Score/Rank (2023)	56.6/22nd

Developing skills

African youth in search of decent work



90%

of jobs are informal

24%

of the economically active population are young people

20%

of the 15–24 age group are neither employed nor in education or training



4% of public expenditure on education devoted to vocational training



7% of pupils registered on a TVET course



43% only of people living in Africa have access to the internet

Source: UNESCO, 2023

Laying the Facts Bare

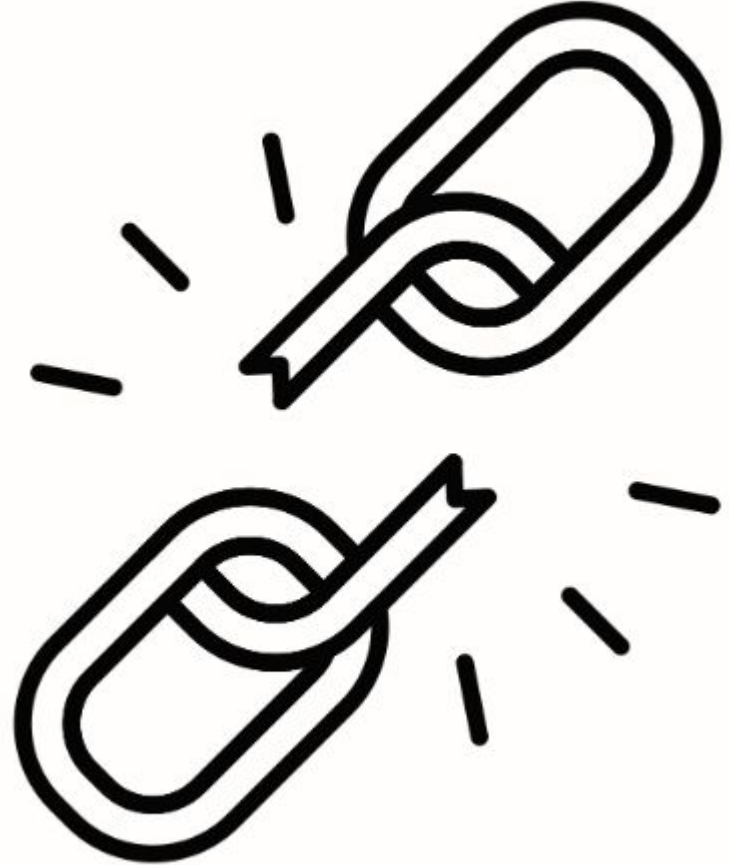
“26.1 % of Africa’s youth is non-employed, non-educated, non-trained (NEET). Angola and Madagascar are the only African countries whose share of NEET youth stands below 10%.” Mo Ibrahim Foundation, (2023)

“Lack of decent and productive employment remains the largest labour market challenge for sub-Saharan youth: informality and self-employment are the norm.” (ILO, 2024: 4)



“...informality and self-employment are the norm”

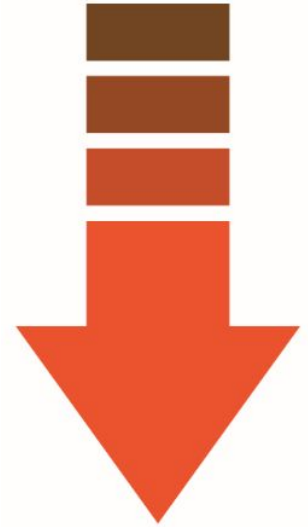
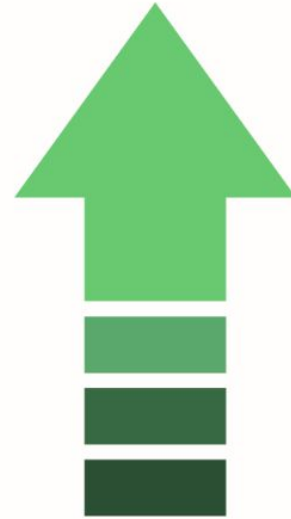
**There is a clear
disconnect between what
presents itself as a
potential to harness
flourishing and the skills
needed to enhance
market needs.**





Links to L&D Futures

Decreases in formal education prompt increased shifts in, and the entry of, various actors in continuous learning as we know it today.





Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) - a strong factor for economic growth on the African continent?

Challenges:

1. Structuring informal vocational training
2. Guaranteeing TVET access and inclusion for vulnerable groups
3. Strengthening the education > vocational training > employment continuum
4. Involving the private sector for the long term (funding and employment)
5. Strengthening the digital and ecological transition of TVET
6. Aligning the local training offer with economic realities
7. Professionalizing the training of trainers
8. Strengthening the management capacities of TVET stakeholders

Source: UNESCO, 2023



**Reflect: How do these
linkages affect the future of
L&D work from where you
stand?**



Implications for Lifelong Learning Norms?

Is continuous learning the goal of the future or a luxury of the past?





Systems and Futures: The Global is Local





We are all connected in a Multipolar, Multi-crises world

Volatility

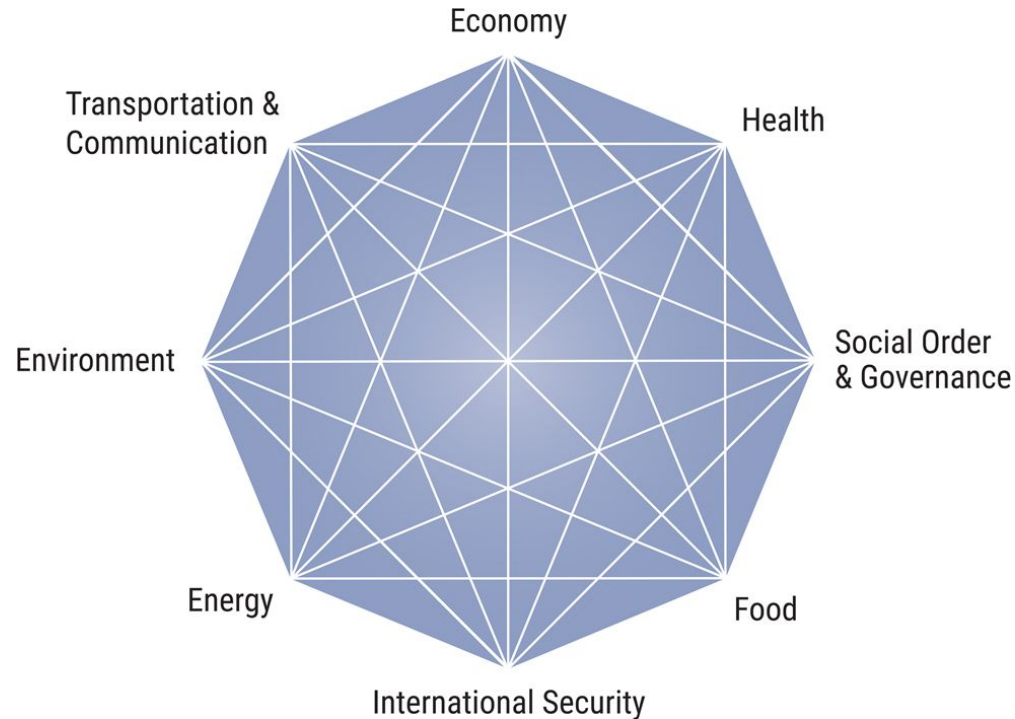
Uncertainty

Complexity

Ambiguity

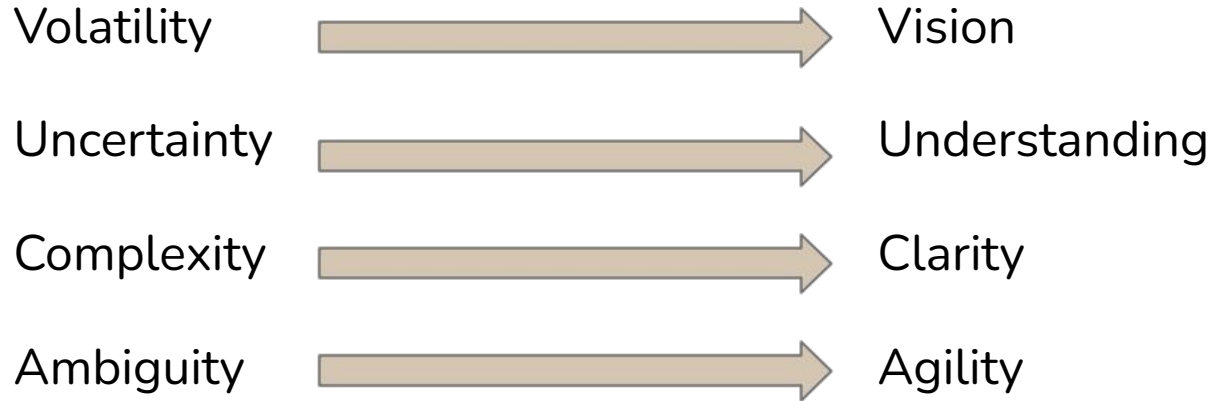


Connected in a 'Polycrisis World' (Lawrence et al., 2024)





The Opportunities in Building Scenarios in **VUCA**



Shifts in Context: Migration and L&D Futures





Futures Thinking as a Tool





The Future is Unknown - Only Plausible Futures

- Do not try to predict the future - you simply do not know
- Being prepared by building a range of scenarios based on expert contributions is more valuable than being right



Futures Thinking - The 3 Assumptions

- There is a range of plausible futures
- Seeds of the futures exist in the present
- People have some influence over the future that eventually plays out



Readiness and Change: Affecting Futures Consciousness Thinking



Future consciousness means to be aware of, and to be interested in, how the future could and should evolve – and how our current behaviour, attitudes and actions may affect the future.



Future consciousness is therefore our general awareness of change, of 'progress' (a value judgement), time and spatial relations: past, present and future.



It includes the human capability to hope, visualise, anticipate, forecast/extrapolate, imagine the future, hope for the future, to build 'future memories', to have ideals/values, visions, goals and plans for the future.



It encapsulates *a system of personal traits and psychological abilities* - such as effective thought processes and experiential learning – traits and abilities that help humans to understand and deal with the future and change.



Awareness Pathways: Futures Conscious Learning when Managing Complex Systems

Time	Perception of change and how one thing leads to the other over time
Shadows, emotions, and motivations	Elephants in the room, fear, hope, despair, being positive, being negative
Cognitive process	Perception, learning, memory, symbolism, Imaging, paradigms, brain-ruts
Linkages and interactions	“Holistic”/ systemic and integrative nature of reality
Role of self	Are we the result of our history or the cause of our destiny?
Moral awareness	Ethics, Values and Virtues - the moral-ethical basis of dystopian and utopian futures



Building the Future: Why Scenarios Matter

“A scenario is a story about the future, a sequence of events that unfold over time and that are coherent, internally consistent, and plausible.”

Source: Cilliers, 2014



Building the Future

SCENARIOS: What could happen TO our context

OPTIONS: What we can potentially do

STRATEGY: What we choose to do



The Futures Triangle



Sohail Inayatullah's Futures Triangle

The Pull of the Future:

- This represents the **vision** or the desirable future that attracts people or organizations. It answers the question: "What are we striving towards?" It could be a utopian vision, ideal scenarios, or aspirations that guide actions and decisions today.

The Push of the Present:

- These are the **current trends, forces, and drivers** that propel us towards the future. It includes factors like technological advancements, societal trends, political forces, and economic changes. This dimension focuses on what's already happening that shapes the direction we're moving in.

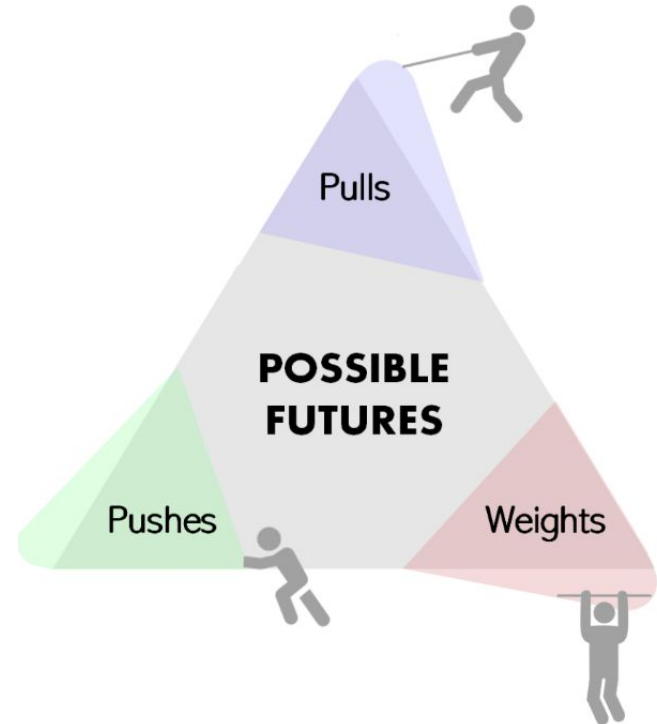
The Weight of the Past:

- This refers to the **barriers, traditions, or path dependencies** from the past that hold back change. It could be entrenched systems, beliefs, historical decisions, or structural constraints that resist new developments or emerging futures.

Justification for The Futures Triangle

There are a range of futures tools that exist but the futures triangle allows for a simplified way to:

- a. Recognise, and plan for aspirational outcomes in a VUCA world
- b. Refine (unlearn) ideas and ways of doing that no longer fit in an interdependent, multipolar world
- c. Scan the operational environment (internally, nationally, and globally) to identify present, or historical hindrances to progress upskilling





Key Takeaways

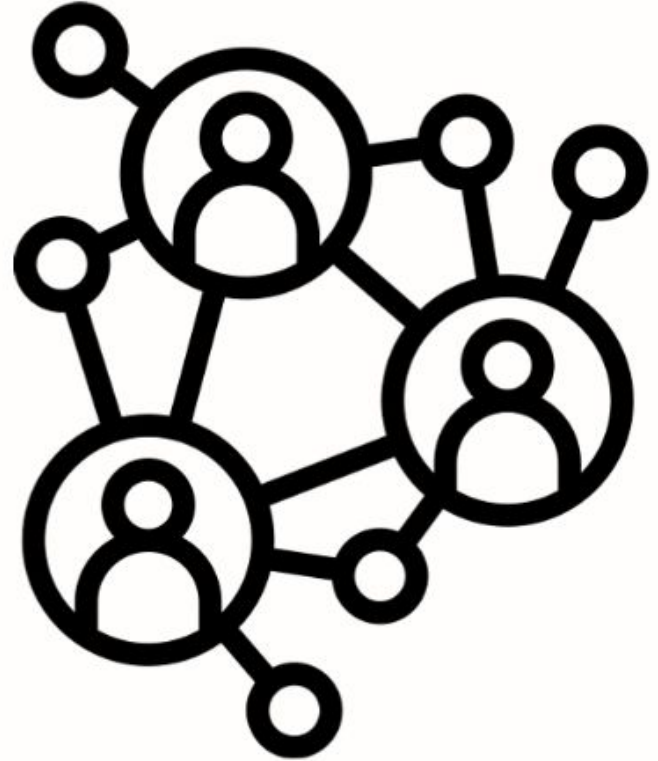


Knowledge sharing is
a key driver for
collaboration and
(un)learning. Learning
is not linear - even for
L&D facilitators.



L&D sustainability can
only be achieved
through use of
environmental scanning
and other foresight
methodologies in an
interconnected,
polycrisis world.

Expand your horizons!



Invest in your
contextual scenario
building to plan for all
futures. Whether
utopian or dystopian.

Scenarios give us
options for our
strategies as we
navigate a VUCA world.



Merci - Dankjewel - Thank You!

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