

InnoSI
(Innovative Social Investment: Strengthening communities in Europe)
Grant Agreement Number: 649189

WP6: From foresight to welfare practices
Deliverable 6.2: Storylines

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Version			
Date		30.11.2016	
Work Package		WP6	
Deliverable		6.2	
Dissemination level			
WP Leaders		TUAS	
Deliverable Date		30.11.2016	
Version	Date	Comments	Modified by
V1.0			
V1.1			

FUTURE SCENARIOS

FOUR PEOPLE, FOUR STORIES

These future scenarios illustrate everyday life in 2027 through the stories of four individuals. They are William (81), Heidi (50), Laura (29) and Assim (38).

The future scenarios were drawn up in the welfare forecasting process of the Innosi project, which was implemented in ten European countries in 2016.

Above all, the aim of the future scenarios is to spark discussion. They can be used to challenge one's thinking and to come up with ways to prepare ourselves for the future as individuals and members of communities and societies. The stories were created by using techniques typical of futures research, such as operating environment analyses, designating change drivers, as well as identifying weak signals and global trends.

The future scenarios include aspects some of which are more probable than others. There is a lot of uncertainty in the perspective of just ten years into the future. However, it should be kept in mind that the future does not simply happen but is a result of numerous conscious and subconscious decisions and choices that we make in the present. The purpose of the stories of these four people is to stretch your thinking and to make you consider how the future might unfold.

Implementation of the Foresight Process

The foresight process consisted of the following tasks:

1. Scanning signals in ten European countries
2. Identifying tentative trends based on weak signals
3. Validating trends in Delphi Survey
4. Building future scenarios and storylines

The foresight process started by scanning signals about the changes and new innovative solutions that can be seen in our surrounding societies. Over 100 experts were involved in scanning the signals. The thematic perspectives of signal scanning were chosen based on the data and analysis of the WP2-4 in Innosi project. The perspectives were: 1) Parenting and early childhood education and care, 2) Economy and labour market, 3) Older people and, 4) Refugees and migrants. Signals were collected and shared in Pinterest, in an open platform.

The collected data was analysed and signals were clustered by researchers nationally. Combining the national findings researchers identified European trends which were described in the form of trendcards. Trendcards were validated in a European Delphi survey. This data was a basis for national future-oriented workshops where drafts of the future storylines were written from a human-centric perspective.

Not a retired pensioner but an active citizen

William (age 81, year 2027)

At 81, William has lots of contemporaries. The baby boom generation born after the Second World War has made its mark on the European welfare societies. Like many others who have passed their 80th birthday, William lives independently and copes in his daily life with the assistance of technology and his community. A new drug introduced to the market has considerably slowed down the progress of Alzheimer's.

During weekdays, William has breakfast with a family that lives next door. The arrangement is favourable for both parties, since William keeps the family's children company before they go to school. The children enjoy their time with William, since he likes to tell them not only about his life but also about the developments that revolutionised Europe. The fall of the Soviet Union and the breakdown of the Berlin Wall are history too ancient for the children. However, the migration throughout the 2010s and 2020s is something the children like to ask questions about, since their circle of friends consists of children from over a dozen nationalities. The children find it hard to believe that this was not always the case.

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William keeps in touch with his own family primarily through virtual means, which is easy thanks to the modern devices that utilise artificial intelligence and speech recognition. William's children have organised a weekly family dinner over the Internet. This livens up William's daily routines and also offers William's children and grandchildren living abroad an opportunity to get a glimpse of their old home country.

“The robot administers his medications and reminds him of regular mealtimes and other daily chores. William uses a meal scanner to check the energy content and nutritional value of the portion he prepares himself.”

Technology makes William's daily life easier. William, a bit amused, recalls how at first he was opposed to the care robot offered by a nurse, because the robot provides unparalleled assistance and helps him cope at home. The robot administers his medications and reminds him of regular mealtimes and other daily chores. William uses a meal scanner to check the energy content and nutritional value of the portion he prepares himself. In particular, William likes the applications based on machine learning, since they adapt to his daily routines.

However, even William is not ready for everything. William does not quite know what to think about an old coworker, who says he has a robot as his girlfriend. William is also puzzled over the meal delivery service which uses unmanned drones in sparsely populated areas. William has been pleased to read in the paper that the technologies and various technical devices utilised in the care of seniors have generated increased interest in the care sector among boys.

William has always liked sports. When he was younger, William played football actively, and now he likes to exercise and watches sports on TV. Since the passing of his wife, William has participated in a weekly virtual exercise session with other men. The exercising is real, but it is instructed virtually. The real-time image and sound provide a sense of community between William and the other men working out in their own homes. As a sports fan, William likes to follow football, in particular. Football has been an important part of his life since at least the 1960s, and today he is a walking (although at times a walker-using) football encyclopedia. William has Alzheimer's but never ceases to amaze his family members and friends with football-related memories. His grandchildren are proud to say that granddad may forget where he put his house keys but he never forgets the scores he saw at the Derby games.

William is also a member of the seniors' circle of the local football club, which is sponsored by a multinational utility company, his former employer. The members of the seniors circle receive door-to-door transport from their homes to home games, and junior players also give them a hand in heavy chores around the house. The members have lots of stories to tell and are thus welcome guests at the football club events.

William knows that from the biological standpoint, he is still not even close to his maximum age. The medication he takes to slow down Alzheimer's has started promisingly and given him a new faith in the future. This attitude has also been reinforced by William's role in bridging the past, present and future generations. He is increasingly convinced that even though health issues go hand-in-hand with advancing age, technology and a new kind of communality make a person's ability to function less and less dependent on age.

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Eco-friendly working and socially responsible living

Heidi (age 50, year 2027)

Ubiquitous computing has influenced the daily life of people and changed the power relationships in and between organisations and people. Defining network surveillance and the rights of individuals has become a topic on political agendas around Europe. **For the 50-year-old Heidi**, this development has created new interesting but challenging job opportunities.

In particular, Heidi is interested in ethical and legal questions related to data ownership as well as the risks posed by network environments on human rights. Heidi is concerned about the power of information networks: they make it possible to bypass the principles and institutions of the constitutional state and to administer "justice" online through the power of the masses. Related to these questions, Heidi is involved in several projects and has several sources of income, such as a part-time attorney's position in a global human rights organisation, public sector consulting projects, and her own company, which offers legal advice online. Work is fragmented, but for Heidi, being able to work flexibly and to do so in accordance with her own values is important.

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Heidi and her family live in an energy-neutral eco-building, in which the latest solar energy technology is used in the cladding and roof materials. The house has a separate, sound-proofed room for evening and weekend work, since Heidi and her surgeon husband both work partly from home. Technology has made it possible for a surgeon to perform most routine operations remotely. Tax reliefs have been introduced on remote work, since it facilitates the balance between work and family life and reduces commuter traffic.

"She knows that mitigating climate change is the greatest global challenge of her generation."

Heidi has absorbed the philosophy and understanding of one shared world. She knows that mitigating climate change is the greatest global challenge of her generation. Heidi's environmental awareness is not limited to accommodation and transport, but she keeps a close eye on her family's carbon footprint and also pays attention to the family's eating habits. When it comes to meals, Heidi has two principles she tries to hold on to: on one hand, she prefers locally produced food instead of food from global food companies and retail chains, and on the other, she strives to choose products which she knows burden the environment as little as possible. In addition to nurturing the environment, Heidi justifies buying foodstuffs that are fairly heavy on the wallet by their health

benefits. Heidi and her husband have also seriously considered genetic testing in order to have even more influence on their well-being through their own choices.

Heidi also has some gaps in her environmental awareness. The most notable one is that, without exception, she buys the clothes and shoes the family wears from the most economical sources, mostly from areas with low production costs in Asia, Africa and South America. Transports increase the burden on the environment, but Heidi appeases her guilty conscience by saying that what she does is socially responsible, since it creates jobs in areas where they are badly needed.

Heidi and her husband have three children. They live in an area where most publicly funded schools have a sponsor company, and the curriculum includes a requirement that the pupils work one day per week at the company. From the corporate standpoint, the cooperation is part of their social responsibility activities, which are also supported through taxation. Companies have realised that it does make a difference how they operate in their community. The sponsor companies are convinced that, in the long run, they benefit from investing actively in doing social good, instead of just trying to benefit from the resources provided by society. For the school, the cooperation is at the same time both statutory entrepreneurship education and activity to supplement the school's basic funding.

“Most public schools have a sponsor company, and the curriculum includes a requirement that the pupils work one day per week at the company.”

For environmental reasons and due to time constraints, Heidi strives to minimise travelling. However, it is not always possible. To solve the logistics issues in her life busy with work and family, Heidi relies on a self-propelling car, owned jointly by a group of friends, which takes her either to her destination or, alternatively, to a connecting stop where she can continue her journey in a public smart transport network that consists of different means of transportation. Transport has transformed into mobility as a service. Heidi smiles when she recalls how owning a car was of utmost importance to her father.

Comprehensive well-being is important to Heidi, and nowadays it is difficult for her to understand how just a little while ago, health was mainly considered to be a means for meeting the demands of working life. Heidi tends to think that work enables a meaningful life, not vice versa. She currently has a personal well-being coach, whom she meets once a month in connection with her monthly hair stylist's appointment and a health check visit at a multiprofessional well-being centre. Heidi believes in the slogan of her well-being coach: the best health investments are made when one is not yet ill.

Building networks and assimilating values

Assim (age 38, year 2027)

Thirty-eight-year-old Assim is from Syria but now lives with his new family in a suburb of a fairly ordinary European metropolis. Assim met his common-law wife through an online dating service. She has two toddlers from her previous marriage. The couple is happy, since they just found out she is four months pregnant.

After moving from Syria, Assim's view of a family was based on a clear division of tasks between women and men. Assim considered housekeeping and child care to be women's tasks, whereas men were the ones working outside the home. Assim's values were put to the test when he met his common-law wife with a Scandinavian set of values and when he became acquainted with the public daycare system in his new home country, in which the employment rate of women is high. At the children's playground outside his apartment complex Assim has also met his neighbours who are stay-at-home fathers, and he has been puzzled over how these men manage with their many children. After thinking things over for a while and participating in events organised in connection with the integration activities, Assim was ready to yield a little in his principles. He appreciates his common-law wife working and nowadays participates in cooking, among other things, at home.

“Assim was fairly quickly accepted into a degree programme. The programme based on a social impact bond was implemented in cooperation with a venture capital company, which is part of an international insurance group, and the authorities.”

Assim knows English satisfactorily and was fairly quickly accepted into a degree programme, in which he could continue his studies and graduate as an IT engineer. The degree programme based on a social impact bond was implemented in cooperation with a venture capital company, which is part of an international insurance group, and the authorities. Taking an investment risk was worth the company's while, since overall, the degree programme turned out to be successful. The majority of students who completed the programme were either employed by IT sector companies or established their own business. Although the project incurred expenses, the authorities were also satisfied with the project, since according to estimates, one tax euro invested in the project equals savings of up to three euros in social security costs.

After graduating, finding a job was difficult for Assim. However, he managed to employ himself by establishing a cooperative with his fellow students, which provided them with small customer projects. After the initial difficulties, the cooperative established a clientele. The cooperative provided Assim a flexible form of work, which made him feel useful as a member of society.

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Gradually, Assim became a popular invited guest at local events, where the integration of immigrants was discussed. Assim participates in a working group, which plans a "pop up" entrepreneurship model designed for immigrants, in particular. The group's work is still under way, but the initial trials look promising. The pilot has lowered immigrants' threshold to become entrepreneurs by means of both tax reliefs and temporary legislation, which allows positive discrimination in public sector procurement. In public procurement, special weight can be placed on a company that has been established by and actively employs immigrants.

Active participation in various networks offered Assim new opportunities. A start-up company project funded through the EU's Horizon4Everyone programme turned out to be particularly useful. As a result of the project, Assim now has a company, which offers digital services to traumatised refugees from areas suffering from war and crises. The company employs Assim and five others, of whom three are immigrants.

Assim has good connections with his relatives in Syria and he follows many traditions he learned as a child. Obligations related to his company take up a major portion of Assim's time, but at the same time, they have expanded his views of European customs. Assim appreciates his family and the opportunities he has received in his new home country. Encouraged by Assim's changed attitude, his common-law wife has also brought up the matter of Assim potentially participating in the care of their first biological child by taking a six-month family leave from his company, with the help of the family leave subsidies paid by society.

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Assim is happy with his life and has decided that he will continue building his future in the new home country. At the same time, he is concerned about the increasing number of immigrants who have not found their way to the labour market. Assim has noticed that entrepreneurship has become a new standard, not only to immigrants like him, but to an increasing number of natives. He knows from experience that entrepreneurship is a good option, as long as society ensures that the threshold for becoming an entrepreneur is kept low enough.

Learning globally, acting locally

Laura (age 29, year 2027)

Urbanisation has been rapid, and in 2027, more than 65 per cent of the world's population live in cities. In many areas experiencing depopulation, this development has resulted in diminished living conditions. There are also exceptions in this overall development, since not everyone wants to live their entire life in cramped and expensive cities. **Twenty-nine-year-old Laura** is one of the many people who enjoy the rural peace and quiet more than the hustle and bustle of a city. Together with her husband, Laura has settled in an area where the population development is negative. Laura and her husband operate a pet boarding facility.

She has been happy to notice that she is not the only one who enjoys the countryside, but the environment also attracts pensioners. The main customers of the boarding facility are well-to-do returnee pensioners, whose cats and dogs need short-term care and also increasingly often longer-term boarding services while their owners spend the coldest months of the year in the Mediterranean warmth and sun. The boarding facility is not the couple's only source of income. Laura's husband offers caretaker services to summer house owners and helps the elderly in minor renovations and repairs around the house, as well as works as a courier for packages purchased online.

“The basic income balances the seasonal fluctuation of the income of Laura's family and provides them an opportunity to live according to their values in the countryside.”

Laura and her family live in a community-oriented family village established through crowd funding. In the community-oriented village, the principles of the sharing economy are applied to daily meals, and the residents also produce some of their food themselves. In the summertime, the family village offers housing for seasonal labourers, and in the winter, the village facilities house long-term retreats.

“In the community-oriented village, the principles of the sharing economy are applied to daily meals, and the residents also produce some of their food themselves.”

The returnee pensioners employ Laura and her husband and the family village offers additional income, but still, these earnings support Laura's family only for a part of the year. Luckily, the long experimented basic income model has been incorporated into the citizens' welfare network. The basic income balances the seasonal fluctuation of the income of Laura's family and provides them an opportunity to live according to their values in the countryside.

When she was younger, Laura had a difficult time deciding what occupational field interested her and what she would like to be when she grew up. Laura fondly remembers a coach at the employment office, with whom she had important conversations about her future dreams and drew up a personal well-being plan. Now mastering multiple skills has become a way of surviving for Laura, and being self-employed is natural to her.

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There is no school in the town where Laura lives, since the number of children is so small. The lack of a physical school building is not a problem for Laura's children and the other children in the family village, since they are convinced that learning does not depend on location but willingness and motivation. The children's learning motivation is maintained by means of a pan-European virtual school, attended by hundreds of thousands of children and young people in comprehensive school. The virtual school is based on phenomenon-based learning packages, some of which are produced locally and some as international projects.

Laura follows the schooling of her children actively, which has also exposed her to ideas that seem interesting. Currently, Laura is particularly interested in the development of food and cultivation technologies, which she believes will offer her new job opportunities. Laura has already had her ideas pretested at the development project of an international think tank network. The work is still pending, but Laura has received encouraging feedback.

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All in all, Laura is fairly happy with the choices she has made, because she does not believe that well-being increases by obtaining more material things but, specifically, by cutting down on them. In the evenings, Laura cannot help but marvel how internationally one can live in the woods. The life of Laura's family is based on local and global networks. The children's school and Laura's own project under development have enabled her to establish solid international contacts, but the countryside is where she feels most at home, and she finds it difficult to understand the life of people living in cities.

ATTACHMENTS

The following four citizen profiles are a foresight tool used as a starting point for writing the first drafts of the future storylines in the national future-oriented workshops.

Senior citizen William, 71

LIFE SITUATION:

- Retired, worked as an electrician
- Lives independently in a nice suburb
- Wife died a couple of years ago and his children live far away
- Health: overweight, but still in quite good condition. The first symptoms of Alzheimer have appeared.

INTERESTS:

- Sports

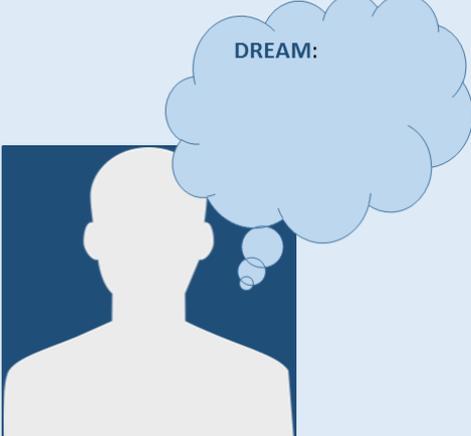
NEEDS AND WISHES:

- He likes children and would like to help families in the neighbourhood.
- He is missing company for e.g. attending sports events.

CHALLENGES AND STRUGGLES:

- Deterioration of physical and mental health
- Coping at home and taking care of daily chores
- Friends passing away and long distance to family members lead to loneliness
- Lack of IT competence

DREAM:



Working mother Heidi, 40

LIFE SITUATION:

- Family: husband who works as a surgeon and two children (2 and 7 years old)
- Lawyer in public court
- Health: in good physical condition, but suffering from stress

INTERESTS:

- Human rights, photography

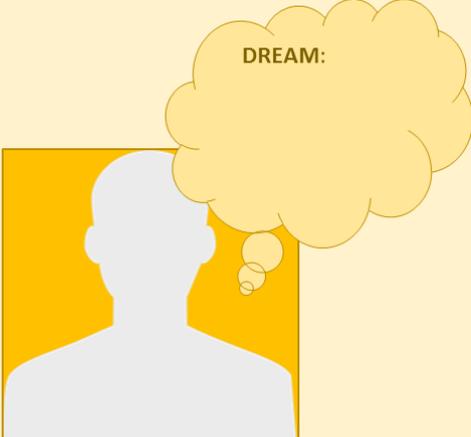
NEEDS AND WISHES:

- Needs reliable and flexible daycare and assistance with children
- She wishes to advance in her career

CHALLENGES AND STRUGGLES:

- Combining career and family life is challenging
- Keeping up with rapidly changing working life
- Lack of flexibility at the work place

DREAM:



Migrant Assim, 28

LIFE SITUATION:

- Arrived from Syria a year ago with his brother
- Unemployed, started university studies in Syria
- Interested in: business, IT
- Health: traumatic experiences
- Frustrated in his current situation

INTERESTS:

- business, IT

NEEDS AND WISHES:

- Would like to continue his studies and find a job
- He is missing his home country and family members

CHALLENGES AND STRUGGLES:

- Inadequate language skills for handling the bureaucracy
- Lack of networks hinders employment and integration
- Hostile attitudes in the society



NEET Laura, 19

LIFE SITUATION:

- Lives with her family (mother, step father and little brother) in the countryside
- Graduated from secondary school and started vocational training
- Unemployed
- Health: problems in concentrating and sleeping

INTERESTS:

- Fashion, animals

NEEDS AND WISHES:

- She would want to find her place in the community and society
- Doesn't know what she wishes for her future

CHALLENGES AND STRUGGLES:

- Lack of balance in daily life
- Low selfconfidence
- High unemployment rate in the area

