CHAPTER 6

THE FUTURE WORKSHOP

Do not go blindly into a future
shaped by a tiny elite.

1. Introduction
In general, to change or transform the actual situation of a system you can use two main approaches:

- First to criticize the actual situation, them to dream about a preferable future situation, and finally to find ways to move from the actual situation to a preferable one; or
- First depict a future preferable situation, then analyze the actual situation, and finally find ways to move from the actual situation to a preferable one.

The Future Workshop (or FW for short) belongs to the first category of approaches. It emphasizes: critique, learning, team work, democracy, and empowerment. This makes FW as a method suitable to support oppressed groups that are struggling for a better living and a better Society. FW has analogies to the sociological school known as Participative Action Research (Whyte, 1991). This can be seen in its focusing on facilitated and participative group processes to deal with real-life problems. FW has been developed as a method to support the political struggles of community groups for a better enforcement of their interests to create a better future worth to live for. The creator of this method, Robert Jungk, wanted to enable and support the development of social fantasy that should lead to conflict resolutions that can be turned against the business-as-usual and the profit-seeking of the establishment. FW seeks to support group creativity and to create group *synergy* for individuals that are in the same oppressed situation.

FW is a very popular method used in many different situations. This method has been used in communities, municipalities, NGO´s and small firms. Unfortunately, most applications have not been reported in accessible journals or publications. There is a lot of literature in German and Scandinavian languages, but in English there is only one book that is not easily accessible, Jungk and Müller (1987).
The main purpose of this paper is to give a practical and theoretical insight to FW, enhancing both practical guidelines to carry out such a workshop and methodological reflexions. The main purpose is to make this fundamental introduction so self-contended that the reader should be ready to organize or participate in a FW.

In Section 2 the origins of FW will be outlined. The five phases of FW approach will be presented in Section 3. Practical guidelines to carry out FW will be introduced in Section 4. Limitations and problems of the method will be outlined in Section 5. A real life application of the FW to discuss the future development of a small community is the theme of Section 6. Finally the last section presents some conclusions.

2. Origins
Originally the idea and approach behind FW started in the fifties. Robert Jungk (1913-1994), an Austrian writer and journalist, organized in this time structured meetings for a group of citizens with some join problems. The main purpose was to activate a basis, which through a join critique of the establishment was able to develop a proposal for a desirable future. The idea is that a group of people should cooperate to create ideas and strategies for the future. Therefore the name Future Workshops, this is a direct translation of the German name "Zukunftswerkstätten".

Jungk, the father of FW (see Box 1), has been inspired to design this approach from three main sources. First, socialist principles related to democratic, participative, and collective decision making by critical citizens that will become emancipated individuals, becoming their own attorneys before the state. Critique exposes, reveals, and unmasks the actual situation. Therefore, FW starts with a critique phase. Jungk worked as a film producer in the Spanish Civil War where he collaborated with anarchist socialist groups in their programs to design non-hierarchical, decentralized, and collective decision-making processes. Secondly, Jungk was inspired by Alex Osborne (1953), an American researcher of creativity and innovation, and his work on creative problem solving. Osborne developed the well-know brainstorming technique, this technique is used in the second phase of FW, the fantasy phase. And thirdly, suitable methods used to create and develop new ideas. These methods are based in the activation of the intuition of individuals, synergy effects in groups and critical potentials that can contribute to the creation of an alternative. The first applications of the concept in FW were used in Germany in the seventies as a tool in the political fight of civil action groups for a better enforcement of their interests to create a future worth to live for. FW were used by community groups in municipalities, local centres, trade unions, etc., where it was experimented with this form of social activity to create social fantasy in a problem solving process.

FW has developed in the practical world and not in academia. A huge amount of real-life applications, evaluations and experiences over a long period of time has contributed to its final shape. Jungk writes (Jungk and Müller, 1987) that the first workshops were not successful. It is first when in the political arena of European democracies concepts as citizen initiatives and citizen influence were present that FW were used in practice. Jungk mentions as a good example 28 workshops carried out in Nordrhein-Westfalen with the participation of around 500 people. These workshops were organized to get ideas about the design of human-friendly information and communication.

FW is primarily used by local groups to deal with local problems and find alternative solutions to the one proposed by the establishment. FW is usually denoted as a "green" method because of its wide application to environmental issues and problems. Later, it has been introduced in innovative firms that want to practice a more democratic and creative management style. Now this method is around fifty years old, but the emancipating approach making use of creative working processes and using facilitation technique is by no means out-of-date. More recently, FW has been used as a working method of self-controlled learning and a method applicable in the design of new systems, processes and artefacts. The fundamental idea that FW should be a tool in the social development of communities is still alive.

During the last years FW has been used by firms and public institutions, hierarchical and non-democratic organizations, in their planning activities. Here the concepts of empowerment and social learning are not always present. These workshops are often just legitimating the decisions already taking by the leaders of these organizations.

When Hitler came to power, Bob Jungk was a 19-year-old student in Berlin. Following the Reichstag fire he was arrested for anti-Nazi activities and deprived of his citizenship. With luck and the help of friends he was released, went to the Sorbonne in Paris, but later returned to Germany to work for a subversive press service. Before long he was forced to flee to Czechoslovakia. The fall of Prague took him to Paris and the fall of Paris took him to Switzerland. Even here he was jailed for his outspoken condemnation of the Nazis. After the war he returned to Germany, took a degree at Zurich and travelled widely.

From that time on, Jungk set his hand against oppression in all its forms. By 1952 he completed Tomorrow is Already Here, book highly critical of the emerging uses of advanced technology in America. But the focus of his subsequent work turned upon a trip to Hiroshima in the early 1950s. It was here that he met a number of people who were dying of radiation sickness. The major themes of his life's work were forcefully impressed upon him: the power and potential destructiveness of modern technologies, the corresponding need for careful foresight and the constant struggle to preserve human qualities in the brave new post-war world.

His work seems to fall into perhaps three broad phases. First was the painstaking research on nuclear issues, both military and civil, emerging in books like Brighter Than a Thousand Suns and The Nuclear State. There followed a later period spent looking for, and developing, ways of responding to the challenge. This produced The Everyman Project and, much later, Future Workshops. During this time he was one of the founders of the World Futures Studies Federation. He was the President (and one of the inspirations for) the London-based Institute for Social Inventions, now a well-established seedbed for innovative ideas.

In later years he became a kind of 'elder statesman' of the futures field, and an inspiration both to fellow futurists and many other people. In the late 80s he persuaded the city of Salzburg in Austria to support the establishment of the Robert Jungk International Futures Library. Here in elegant rooms overlooking the fast, grey river that bisects Salzburg, he founded one of the great repositories of futures material in the world. He later ran for president of Austria and suffered much personal abuse.

He did as much as any, and more than most, to identify the central dangers of this most dangerous of centuries. It is therefore no exaggeration to describe him as a kind of 'one-man' revolution.

Jungk's view was that if people use the powers that are available to them, then the future, as a 'place to live in', is far from being lost. He denied being an optimist, and claimed to be 'a pessimist who still believes that not everything has to be bad'. He felt that the important thing was to create contexts for social innovations; places where people can take ideas. 'From these seedbeds emerge the projects, the real practical changes that over time move our civilization from its present self-destructive course.'

Robert Jungk, the Austrian honorary President of the London Institute for Social Inventions, died in July 1994

Box 1. Extract from Global Ideas Bank (http://www.globalideasbank.org/)

3. FW's Phases
A "classic" FW, according to Jungk and Müller (1987), consists of five phases:
- *The preparation phase:* Here the themes, the invited participants, the methods, their rules and the time table of the workshop are settle by the organizers of the workshop and the facilitators. The room and local facilities for the workshop are settled.
- *The critique phase:* Here the problem is critically and thoroughly discussed and investigated. Brainstorming is the preferred creative technique follow up by a structuring and grouping of ideas in some main sub-themes.
- *The fantasy phase:* Here the participants try to work a utopia, to draw an exaggerated picture of the future. Brainstorming and other creative technique might be used. The social fantasies of the participants are developed in this phase.
- *The implementation phase:* Here the ideas found are checked and evaluated in what concerns their practicability. An action plan is elaborated.
- *The follow-up phase:* Here the action plan is monitored; eventually changes are performed and if needed new FW's are planned.

The preparation phase
This phase is concerned with the organization, planning and management of the workshop. This is a crucial phase because many problems that arise during the workshop are usually due to bad planning, poor organization and/or unsuitable physical environment.

Central questions in this phase are: Who are going to participate? What is their background and motivation? Should we invite some special groups? Should FW be totally open or the participants should be invited? How long time should be the duration of the workshop?

Thereafter, suitable locations and rooms should be found. It is recommended that the room is suitable adapted to the group creating a cozy, informal, and inspiring atmosphere. Different materials should be available: paper, pin boards, pencils, tape, 3M Post-It blocks, copy machine, transparencies, lab taps, projectors, toys, etc. Fruits, cakes, soft drinks, tea and coffee should be available during the pauses. This demand of a suitable working environment is not a special demand of FW, but many other forms of workshops and conferences give similar guidelines.

Another important issue is the specification of the theme or the problem that FW will be focusing on. The formulation should be carefully discussed by the organizers of the workshop and the facilitators. Ambiguity should be avoided. The question: Is FW an appropriate method to deal with the situation on hands? should be carefully discussed.

Moreover, it is important that the participants should be well-informed about the purpose and principles of FW, so that they will feel easy and positive by participating on the workshop. It is advisable just before starting the FW, to plan a simple warm-up exercise for all the participants.

A very important assumption of FW is that all the participants are equal in the democratic problem solving process. This assumption has to be checked in each situation because is

not easy to implemented in practice. Participants have usually different background, education and experiences and it is not unusual that power relations will be created that have influence in the group working process. It is the task of the facilitators to manage the democratic problem solving process.

In the year 1998, I was going to give a new course: Creativity and Problem Solving. I did not known exactly how to structure this new 14-week course of 4-hour per week. I invited 14 students to my summer house for a 3-day FW. The theme was: the design of a creativity course for engineers. I secured, with the help of two students, that all facilities, materials, food and soft drinks were available. The day we went to the summer house everybody was very enthusiastic about participating in such a workshop.

The critique phase
This phase will draw out specific issues and problems in questions; the objective is to establish a critical understanding of the theme and the problems in question. In a first step, a visualized brainstorming is carried out and a general and critical question concerning the problem is framed. The critique points will be written down in 3M-post it's or in big sheet of papers. In the classical FW all participants write down the points on a big sheet of paper lying on the ground or on a table. Later, the points are cut out and grouped. This method creates a stronger nearness than isolated note writing. Usually, this idea generation is made in groups following the brainstorming rules: criticism is ruled out, free-wheeling is welcomed, quantity is desired, and combination and improvement is sought.

In a second step, the results found are written down and systematized in clusters accordingly to topics, each cluster is entitled. The modern structuring technique known as Mind Mapping has shown to be very useful here. The whole Mind Map will be shown in a pin board or in a large wall.

In modern creativity terminology the first step is called the divergent process while the second step is the convergent process (see Chapter 5). In FW the divergent phase is supported by the brainstorming technique, but other techniques can also be used by the facilitator depending on the experience of the group and the problem in question. The convergent process can be supported by different tools as matrices, lists and maps. The advantage of Mind Mapping is that the whole situation can be visualized. Then, a topic could be taken again for a further divergent process; this will mean only the extension of the Map. All creative processes are composed of a divergent and a convergent process. It is the task of the facilitator to manage these processes and to allocate suitable time to them. Some groups do not like to diverge and want to converge as fast as possible (for instance businessman) while others do not like to converge (for instance artists).

It is always surprising to see the number of topics and ideas generated for each topic after one hour brainstorming. It is impossible to continue the workshop working with all topics and ideas; therefore a prioritization of the importance of each topic by the participants is needed. If through dialogue it is not possible to agree on a prioritization a simple votation system is recommended.

We began Friday afternoon, by going running to the forest. We ended bathing at the beach. After eating, we began with a 3-hour critique phase. All students were presenting in short form all the bad experiences they have had following courses at the university. Brainstorming was used for this divergent process. There were many ideas. They were structured using a Mind Map in the convergent process. Ideas were then categorized as: to be definitely avoided, to be avoided, or it cannot be avoided but we should find ways to deal with it.

The fantasy phase
This phase is also partitioned in two steps: a divergent and a convergent process. In the first step all participants try to create a utopia, to draw an exaggerated picture of future possibilities. Generally known solutions should be avoided and non-verbalized and intuitive knowledge should be enhanced. The participants should suggest solutions without reflecting about restrictions, traditions or other barriers, that is search for unconventional solutions. Suitable creative tools could be introduced as: fantasy trips, meditation, medial support, role plays metaphors, picture stimulations, story telling, etc. Central questions are: What would we do, if there were no constraints, plenty of resources, and no restrictive laws…? What would we do, if a fairy fulfils us all our wishes? One can also begin by turning the critique points into their opposite (negation of the negation). From this point of departure, the participants can use brainstorming techniques and creative games to discover and to reflect utopian ideas. It has been found that brainwritting can be more suitable at this step than the traditional brainstorming. The ideas and solutions found are collected and put in a bank of ideas, regardless of their practicability. It happens that ideas that are unrealistic today might be implementable in one or two years time due to radical changes in the economic, social and political environment.

In the second step, the most promising ideas have to be transformed, that is, they must be reduced to a possible and realizable core. Ideas have to be prioritized after a common analysis and evaluation. A SWOT matrix could be used to evaluated ideas strength and weakness as well as the possibilities and risks in connection to the problem to be solved. Mind Mapping could also visualize the different elements of a solution as well as its interrelation to other solutions.

On Saturday, at breakfast time, many students were talking about their dreams. Most of them have been dreaming about bad and good teaching experiences. During the morning a divergent process was carried out using different creative techniques: brainwritting, storytelling, picture stimulation. After a 2-hour break for lunch and walk out in nature, the convergent phase started. Different Mind Maps were elaborated for the best ideas. Many of the ideas were related to form, content or the structure of such new course. Some propositions were easy to implement while others demanded some extra resources. At night after dinner three groups were established one should make a performance, the second a song and the last one a game. After one-hour work all groups performed. It was really fun.

It is in this phase that the social fantasy of the participants is developed and synergy effects in the group are reached. Ideas, proposals and solutions are achieved in a creative and innovative way. These results will not have been found following a rational problem solving approach. This has a creativity promoting effect, because in FW, in a very relaxed atmosphere, far away from the stress of everyday life and profession, expression forms can be found and ideas and solutions may outcrop which could possibly not be discovered by using a direct and rational approach.

The implementation phase
Here the ideas from the last phase have to be seen with more realistic eyes and have to be adapted reality, to achieve suggestions for one or more projects that are possible to implement. This phase is composed of several steps.

First, all the ideas of the data bank are further discussed to assess the probability of that solution or idea of being implementable. If there are many ideas one has to select the most promising for further study. These are done by discussing each utopia and eventually modifying them to make them more probable to be implemented.

After these critical evaluations probably more information is required in form of expertise from different areas: economical, technical, social and political. This supplementary knowledge is added to the further evaluation of how realistic and probable is the implementation of a given project.

The next step is to formulate clearly the most promising ideas in form of maps and diagrams. Moreover, a SWOT analysis could be carried out for each project with the purpose of developing an implementation strategy. The strategies should visualize the economic aspects and the political reactions caused by the selected projects. The most promising projects are selected. Finally this step end with an Action Plan that specifies: Who does what, where, when and how?

On Sunday morning the work was concentrated in the design of the creativity course including as many ideas as possible that were suggested in the fantasy phase. The 14-week course was divided in three sections: first, introductory lectures about relevant topics with practical exercises to train some tools (4 weeks); secondly. oral presentations by the students about creative methods (4 weeks); and students work in a project whose results will be presented the last day of the course at a conference (6 weeks). It was agreed that from the beginning the students should be part of a group of 4-6 individuals. It was also suggested that some guest lecturers with some special expertise should be invited. By lunch time, a complete detailed course was designed. My role was manifold: I was going to be the teacher of the course so I could refuse to crazy or expensive ideas; I was the facilitator of the group work and I also was an expert due to my knowledge of the field creativity and problem solving processes. FW ended with an evaluation of the whole workshop and the different processes. The general conclusion was that the workshop was a very positive experience, everybody has learned something, and everybody was ready to organize another workshop.

The follow-up phase
FW should end with an agreement of the elaboration of a report that collects all the achieved results and presents the action plan. Such a report should first be send to all participants. After the conference ends, the facilitators prepare a report which is sent to all participants and the board of the organisation in question. This report contains:

- The complete ideas, projects, visions and objectives produced by each sub-group in both the divergent and convergent phases of the conference; and
- An evaluation of the different processes and activities carried out at the conference (the learning process and group dynamics).

In addition the workshop should end with an evaluation by each participant of the working process that has been gone through (see further Chapter 2). The central questions are: What was good? What was bad? What did we learn? How can wee do it better next time?

If it is needed, it is also possible to discus the idea of organizing another workshop for some specific issues. This is getting close to the idea of a permanent workshop. Another important activity is the question of communicating to the external world the achieved results; this can be done by writing about FW in the newspaper or contacting another media.

The main phases of this workshop are summarized in Box 2.

Critique phase
- Generate and collect critique issues (brainstorming)
- Structuring (clustering of ideas using Mind Mapping)
- Evaluation, Focusing, Prioritization

Fantasy phase
- Imaginative warm-up (fantasy plays, storytelling, games, meditation...)
- Turn critique into the opposite (negation of negation)
- Generate ideas (brainwritting)
- Analysis and elaboration of great ideas
- Register the ideas in a bank of ideas

Implementation phase
- Evaluate the register ideas
- Formulate in concrete terms the best ideas
- Choose the very best ideas (prioritizing)
- Action plan

Box 2. The main phases of FW and their central activities

The course on creativity and problem solving started in year 1998 following the same structure and content as developed in the workshop. Several evaluations show an enormous positive enthusiasm by the students about such a course. Some of them have for the first time experienced collective learning, team work, student's emancipation, responsibility for his own learning and a teacher being a facilitator, and expert and a supervisor. The many comments of the students have caused small improvements every year. The students are coming from many different countries from Europe and also some few outside Europe. They expressed that in their universities they did not have such a course. This multicultural aspect has given a new dynamics to the course. The structure and the contents of the course can be seen in Vidal (2003).

4. Practical guidelines

While planning and carrying out FW is important to reflect about the following practical aspects of the workshop:

- *The themes:* Reflect always about the suitability of FW to the problematic situation on hands. The most suitable themes are those with community concern, community knowledge and experience, and the participants are willing to take responsibilities for action. The projects can be real, for instance: the establishment of a youth centre; or more abstract as: the role of IT in primary schools. It is not a good idea to choose projects that are far away from the experience and the knowledge of the participants.

- *The number of participants:* Jungk and Müller (1987) recommend that for FW the number of participants should not be bigger than 15-20 persons, to secure that all will participate in an active way. If there are more participants it is a good idea to cluster the participants in groups and run parallel workshops with the same theme; then at plenum sessions ideas, solutions and projects can be presented after each main phase of FW. Workshops with 8-12 participants can become very creative, synergetic and dynamic if suitable facilitated.

- *Group work:* The success of FW is determined by the effectiveness and creativity of the group work. If the participants are invited to the conference it is recommended to use some selection criteria. It is clear that selecting the participants and distributing them into sub-groups is a very important task, which has to be solved seriously in order to develop effective group work and high quality results. A person with knowledge of the local community and experience with working together with people from the organisations involved should undertake this task. In connection with the group work in FW there are two social processes to be managed: the problem solving process and the group process. The problem solving process is the way the sub-groups in the conference act to solve the task of generating ideas and visions going through divergent and convergent phases. The group process is related to the manner in which the individuals in the group work together, how they learn, how they communicate, their social and power relationships, and how they deal with conflicts. Obviously, these two

processes interact in various degrees. In ideal group work, these two processes support each other. We talk about group dynamics, when energy and synergetic effects are created in the group work as a result of well-balanced processes where the task is just as important as the group trust and identity. In FW there is a third social process: the facilitation process (see Chapter 3)

- *Time-table:* There is not a specific standard duration of FW. There is very much variation just from one hour to a whole week. Obviously, the obtained results are conditioned by the duration of the workshop. The total duration will then be allocated to the different phase of FW. The most common is one-day or three-day workshops. Usually more time is allocated to the fantasy and implementation phases. For example in a three-day workshop, the time table could be: Critique: Friday 18-21 pm; Fantasy: Saturday 10-13 and 15-19 pm.; and Implementation: Sunday 10-13 and 14-16 pm. It is important to have some pauses, for walk out in the forest or by the sea, for social interaction and relaxation.

- *Suitable local and facilities*: It is important that the local and the location where the workshop is to be carried out have properly selected. All the necessary materials and practical tools should be available. The environment (forest or sea) should also be chosen to create a cosy atmosphere. For workshops with many participants, there should be suitable rooms for group work and a big room for meetings in plenum, Jungk and Müller (1987) suggest several ways of arranging the rooms for the workshops.
- *Suitable creative tools*: We have seen in Chapter 5 a whole family of tools and methods that the facilitator can use to support the group work. The selection of tools for a given group to deal with a given mess is more an art than a rational process; see further (Vidal, 2004).

5. FW: Problems and Limitations
Running a workshop in general and FW in particular is a social activity that demands interaction and communication among people that is not always unproblematic. Some of the most common difficulties are discussed below.

Conflicts in the main phases
In FW it is assumed that a consistent development of topics and core questions occur between the main phases from critique to action plan. This is a very demanding task for the facilitator and the group of participants, and their abilities to solve conflicts (see Chapter 4). Some crucial questions should be raised at the end of each phase to be secure that there are sufficient qualified ideas and topics to be used in the next phase. Otherwise, the facilitator should use more time, change methods, or change the working form.

Is a good idea to begin with a critique phase?
This is a crucial question to be raised in the preparation phase. This critique phase might have a demotivating effect. The group might turn desperate about the many complex problems and conflicts to be faced. Sometimes it is a good idea to begin with an invited speaker that will present a positive story about the theme in question. Other times, when

dealing with problems of organizational change it might be a good idea to use SWOT-analysis (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats) to structure the brainstorming process. Then, this critique phase is expanded to a problem identification phase. Other times, it might be better to start with a fantasy phase first, as it is the case with the Vision Conference presented in Chapter 2.

The effects of creative tools
It is not always easy to make a group work creatively. It needs courage to think about a desirable utopia. The facilitator should be careful while selecting creativity tools, the participants might react differently. If the participants are not used to work with their intuitions and feelings, then the fantasy phase might be a very difficult process. But never underestimate people, radical changes in attitude can happen very fast and synergy effects can be created. There is also the question of age, children and young people are ready to play and create.

The duration of the different processes
The duration of each of the phases of FW is context depending and cannot be predicted in advanced. Sometimes good ideas can be found under pressure of time; but communication, cooperative and collective works take their own time. Long pauses or a night's break might noticeably change the group's dynamics, giving time for incubation.

Who will support the group afterwards?
The action plan usually involves the realization of difficult tasks therefore the action group needs permanent support from more experienced groups or supervisors. Therefore after the end of FW it is recommended to address this question and design a backing group for the group who is going to carry out the action plan. Think also about the learning aspects and the possibility of permanent workshops.

The role of the facilitator
The golden rules while selecting the facilitators are:
- Two well functioning facilitators are better than one,
- Some tasks demand experienced facilitators,
- Confidence between the participants and the facilitators is essential,
- The facilitators should be highly motivated by the task,
- A good facilitator knows when he has to: "let it go", push or pull,
- A good facilitator is like a director of a performance where good timing is crucial, and
- You cannot facilitate boxing.

Power and communication
As a point of departure all the participants are equal and likeminded in FW. In reality, there are of course differences among the participants regarding their social status, their education and experiences, their sex and their age. Since knowledge is power and the experience in communication can be very varied, it is the task of the facilitator to manage the processes to give equal opportunities to all participants. If there are some hierarchies and conflicts, the facilitator should be able to deal with them in a positive way. It is no recommendable to use FW method in a firm where management wants to know who should be fired from the group of participants. In this situation one thing is sure; the

participant managers will not get fire even if the result of the workshop will recommend that.

6. Workshop at the Fri&Fro Community

Fri&Fro (www.friogfro.dk) is a building association located in Egebjerg, at the north of Zealand, Denmark. It has been established for building house for the members of the community after the following principles:

- To use sustainable materials and principles within building, sewage and waste,
- To create and live in a community following collective principles, and
- To minimize debts and speculations.

FRI&FRO started in 2004, after 2 years most houses for 16 families have already been builded following the above mentioned principles and experiencing the meaning of leaving in a community. During this period of time most energy has been used in the learning and practical aspects of building the houses. Some of the members of the community have by now experienced that rules, regulations and future visions do not correspond to the daily practice of the community. Other members do not agree with this point of view. Some members think that the principle of sustainability is not visible in the practice of the community. Other members think that everyday life does not work optimally. Some members give more importance to external activities while others are focusing more on internal aspects of the community.

These controversies and conflicts among the members of the community have caused a need "to be shake up" with the purpose to strength solidarity and the future visions for the community. Therefore, some of the members of the community have taken the initiative to start a process that should end formulating visions and goals for the future development of Fri&Fro.

The first step in this process was the organisation of a workshop to discuss important issues and problems that were experienced at the community. In January 2006, Fri&Fro applied to LEADER+ West Zealand for consulting assistance to organise and carry out such a workshop that should show the visions and possibility of actions for the community. LEADER+ West Zealand decided to support such application and recommended that the author of this book should be the organisator and facilitator of such a workshop. One member of Fri&Fro and the facilitator planned a one-day workshop, and after a meeting they agreed on the purpose of the workshop, the agenda, and the methods to be used. They also agreed in the use of FW as the main approach to structure the discussions.

The main purposes of the workshop were both:

- To create a discussion forum for the community members to clarify which aspects of the future development they will seek to influence and which kind of methods will be used, and
- To collect experiences about organising and carrying out future workshops that can be useful for the members of the community in their future work as a pivotal point for a local based and democratic process of change.

The Future Workshop for Fri&Fro was carried out at the local school in Egebjerg, March 4th, 2006, during the period 9 am to 16 pm.

Future Workshop in Fri&Fro
Saturday, the 4th March 2006

Future Workshop is the practical answer to the following question:
How can ordinary people develop collectively and cooperatively their wishes and visions to life, work and Society? How can they find ways to realize these visions?

Future Workshop is a method for an unusual learning process based on democratic principles, focusing on wishes and dreams as the starting point for the development of concrete visions and social innovations.

This Future Workshop has been designed, planned, organised and will be managed by two facilitators.

The main theme of the workshop is:

Fri&Fro's challenges in relation to solidarity, dialoguer, and sustainability.

Program

9.00 – 9.15 Introduction (The facilitator)
9.15 – 9.30 Warm up exercise (a member of Fri&Fro)
9.30 –11.00 Critique phase (The facilitator and co-facilitator)
11.00-11.15 Coffee pause
11.15-12.45 Fantasy phase (The facilitator and co-facilitator)
12.45–13.45 Lunch
13.45–14.00 Warm up exercise (a member of Fri&Fro)
14.00–15.30 Implementation phase: (The facilitator and co-facilitator)
15.30–16.00 Conclusions/Evaluation (The facilitator)

The facilitator is professor at The Technical University of Denmark and teaches creativity, facilitation, and problem solving.

The co-facilitator is student at The Technical University of Denmark and writes his MSc thesis on creative optimization.

Box 4. The agenda (Vidal, 2006)

Planning
At a meeting one member of Fri&Fro and the facilitator planned the event. It was expected around 20 participants and the facilitator will be supported by a co-facilitator.

It was discussed extensively which kind of workshop was more suitable for this event. It was decided that it should be a FW, because of the importance of having first a phase with criticisms to be able to identify the main problematic situations as seen by the members of the community. It was agreed that the purpose of this workshop should be to learn about the problematic situations, to generate visions for the future and to discuss how this visions are to be achieved.

The three main phases of the FW were thoroughly discussed and planned in time and space. All practical aspects and the needed material were also specified. The member of Fri&Fro committed herself to find a suitable place with appropriate facilities to carry out the workshop.

The theme of the workshop was formulated as:

Fri&Fro's challenges in relation to solidarity, dialogue, and sustainability.

The elaborated agenda is shown in box 3.

The Workshop Day
The facilitator started the workshop by presenting LEADER+ West Zealand and by giving an introduction to the purpose of the workshop and the method used as well as the agenda to be followed. The main tools were also presented: brainstorming for the divergent stage and mind mapping for the convergent stage

After the warm up exercise (a focusing test), the critique phase was started using a divergent process, trying to formulate as many critical points as possible. Brainstorming was used as a tool for idea generation, following the well-known rules: no criticism, quantity is required, fast idea's production and combination of ideas is permitted. Many critical points were produced. These were structured by the facilitator and co-facilitator using a mind map. The critical points were grouped as follows:
- Decision processes
  - Bad processes
  - Too much consensus
  - Too much talk, little action
  - Too little administration
  - Too little anarchy
  - Disrespect to democracy
  - Heavy procedures
  - Manipulation
  - Too much steering
  - Focus for projects not for people
  - Not willingness to compromise
  - Slow feedback
  - Sanctions contra broadness

- o No obligations
- External Focus
  - o Too little ecology and sustainability in the community
  - o Too little extern focus
  - o Too little pride
  - o No interaction with similar communities
  - o Loss of visions
  - o No optimism
- Economy
  - o Too tied to the community
  - o Meanness
  - o Too little budget for the community
  - o The tyranny of money
  - o Too much focus to economy
- Communication
  - o Too little story telling
  - o Bad communication
  - o Too little joint activities
  - o Too little cake
  - o None intern exchange of ideas
  - o Irritation instead of action

- Children
  - o Too noisy
  - o Too few children
  - o Too much focus for children
  - o No join norms
  - o No regulations
  - o Too little broadness
- Concrete points
  - o Communal house too small
  - o Bad Hygiene
  - o Car driving
  - o Too much mud
  - o Little aesthetics
  - o Lack of new material
- Culture
  - o Little self-reflection
  - o Too few hugs
  - o Too little differences
  - o Too much anarchy
  - o Too little happiness
  - o Force to happiness
  - o Too much negativity
  - o Too little god times
  - o Too much ego
  - o Many prejudices

- o Impossible to achieve everything
  - o Too little praise
  - o Too little patience
  - o Too little confidence
  - o Too little thankfulness
  - o Too fast judgement
  - o No sense of reality
  - o Separate private problems
- Visions and regulations
  - o Irony about principles
  - o Elitist concepts
  - o Too many rules
  - o Attach to an ideology
  - o It is forgotten that Fri&Fro is an alternative housing
  - o Many taboo areas

After a short pause, the fantasy phase was started by showing the mind map elaborated previously in the critique phase. There were some few suggestions about replacing some critique points. Afterwards, the participants started using the brainstorming tool, now they should use their fantasy (dreams) for the ideal situation for Fri&Fro. Many propositions were negations of some of the points in the critique phase. In addition, new ideas were also suggested. This phase took departure from the group denominated "decision processes", but during the brainstorming it was extended to other groups. That is the divergent and convergent processes were run in parallel. The final result was presented as a mind map having the following grouped ideas:

- Decision processes
  - o Informative and exiting meetings
  - o Practice instead of talk
  - o Creative meetings
  - o Learn about meeting processes
  - o Voluntary forums
  - o Practical decision processes
  - o No to endless discussions
  - o Four join meetings a year
  - o Coordination groups
  - o Decentralization
  - o From words to action
  - o Formulate solutions
  - o Cosy meetings
  - o Negotiation no discussion
  - o Do not be afraid of conflicts
  - o No to negativity in the meetings
  - o Constructive discussions
  - o High competence in working groups
  - o Solidarity and desire
  - o No to who-do-you-think-you-are attitude
  - o All have influence and responsibility
  - o Forum for dealing with conflicts

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- o Democratic cooperation
- o No predicates
- o Local cultural arrangements
- o Join travelling
- o Big family
- o Rules are changed to considerations
- External Focus
  - o Knowledge interchange
  - o Connect to other projects
  - o Open to others
  - o Ethical budget
  - o Action plans
  - o Give to others
  - o Concrete targets for ecology
  - o Alternative economy
  - o Proud to be part of Fri&Fro
  - o Bank of resources
  - o Example for others
  - o Active projects
  - o Political projects
  - o Happy with the community
  - o Active in the local town
- Economy
  - o No too tied
  - o Cheap house and economical security
  - o Money-less community
  - o Economical freedom
  - o Solidarity no economy
  - o Regulations cannot be changed
  - o Different forms of ownership
  - o Firms
  - o Economic security
- Communication
  - o Develop a mail culture
  - o None unsolved problem
  - o Framework for communication
  - o No hidden issues
  - o Learning the art of communication
- Children
  - o Join upbringing
  - o Ecological education
  - o Common boundaries
  - o Travel with children
  - o Creative workshops
  - o Close "monkey cages"
  - o The adults show the way
  - o Eating culture
  - o Big playing day

- o Cooperation with the local school
- Concrete
    - o Shops and market
    - o Larger common house
    - o Create clubs
    - o Membership of bicycle association
    - o Better homepage
    - o Night coffee informal meetings
    - o Signs for parking places
    - o Sauna etc
    - o Recycling shops
    - o Common songs
    - o Good walking paths
    - o Networking
    - o Pets
- Vision and regulations
    - o Keep the visions
    - o Agreement and stillness on regulations
- Dreams
    - o Time to others
    - o Balance in the environment
    - o Ecotopia
    - o Energy to live
    - o Love and spring
    - o Realize our own visions
    - o New vision, start from scratch
    - o Falling in love
    - o Knowledge sharing and creating discussions
    - o Other values than economic
    - o Holistic thinking
    - o Live work
    - o No bitterness
    - o Logical consequences
    - o Smile, satisfied
    - o Time to mature ideas
    - o No cars in Fri&Fro

After the fantasy phase, it was time for lunch. The participants have brought different kind of dishes. They were very hungry, sign of good and intensive creative work. The facilitators worked in the restructuring of the mind maps, and collecting information for the final report.

The facilitator began the implementation phase with a presentation of all the different focus areas coming from the two previous phases. The facilitator identified the areas "regulations and economy" as having too many contradictions, that it will demand a lot of preparation to start such a discussion and that several meetings will be needed to find a satisfying solution. Therefore, the facilitator suggested that the participants should be aware of this problem and prepare future work to tackle this mess.

Focus should be concentrated in the other areas. It was a complete agreement about this suggestion. Anyway some few persons started to make comments on these actual issues and an unfruitful discussion started. The facilitator stopped these discussions, and the workshop was ready to continue.

The participants should converge with suggestion that should end in actions for implementation. The process was very heavy and slow, most of the participants were tired after the creative work of the morning. There were not so many suggestions. The energy was down. The facilitator decided to make a break. After the pause, five focus areas were given high priority. They were selected using a votation procedure. These were:
- Communication
- Play – the artistic person
- Common pavilion for children
- Sustainability and ecology, and
- Join meetings – structure and culture.

The participants were allocated to these five areas and they should come with proposals for projects. After 30 minutes, the participants present their ideas to each other in plenum. The day ended with an evaluation of the workshop.

Evaluation of processes and tools
The participants were good during the divergent processes especially in the two first phases of the FW. Few times were some ideas criticized. Many ideas were produced in the morning of the workshop day. The two first phases were rather successfully.

In the implementation phase not all groups achieve implementable results in the form of action plans. For most groups the time available was not enough to produce actions. This was primarily because most participants were tired, very little energy was left. Better result could be achieved if another day was available for the implementation phase.

The facilitator pointed out at the end of the workshop that the actual situation is rather complex and messy. The problem solving process demands resources, experience and knowledge. Within this perspective, this FW should be regarded as a first step in the problem solving process. More workshops are needed.

Summarizing, the workshop was carried out in a very satisfactory way. The atmosphere was positive, constructive, and with a lot of engagement. It could have been desirable more time, another day to elaborate some action plans. Most participants were very enthusiastic with this form of work. This was expressed in the final evaluation.

In the final report, the facilitator formulated the situation of Fri&Fro using a metaphor:
All the members of the community are ready to sail together, they have already pack (houses) and they have an idea of where they want to go. But, they have not yet constructed the ship (the organisation) that will transport them. They have neither found the direccion (strategy) they will follow.

Fri&Fro's central problem is: How to design a democratic and effective organisation? How to develop a suitable strategy?

The final report end with the following quotation:
The change from autocracy to democracy seemed to take somewhat more time than from democracy to autocracy. Autocracy is imposed upon the individual. Democracy he has to learn (Lewin, 1948).

7. Conclusions

FW was presented as a method to develop ideas or projects for community development and problem solving in a participative, democratic and cooperative way. The design of the workshop task embodies the principles of creative problem solving while the social organisation of the group expresses the principles of facilitation of responsible participative democracy.

FW is characterised by three main aspects:
- The focus on group dynamics while other approaches focus on methods or on approaches for task solving as the steering factor
- It is based on modern concepts about the facilitation of creative problem solving processes; and
- It emphasises collective work and collaborative learning through the interaction of the participants with the aim of learning how to build, sustain, and develop responsible participative communities.

We have learned to design, manage, and evaluate FW; the next task is to try to answer the question: What did we learn from this experience? This is the field of the systematisation of praxis. To systematise is to describe, structure, and reflect analytically on the development of a practical experience, see further Vidal (2004a).

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