



Application for a UNESCO Chair in Socio Cultural Anticipation and Resilience

Short Description

The aim of this application is to establish a **UNESCO Chair in “Socio-Cultural Anticipation and Resilience”** at South American Institute for Resilience and Sustainability Studies (SARAS²)¹. In addition, part of the Chair’s activities will be dedicated to encouraging the creation of a UNITWIN Network on Futures Literacy.

The **focus** of this UNESCO Chair is on exploring and contributing to the conditions that enable positive individual and social transformation for sustainable wellbeing, through supporting the development of strategic foresight capabilities and responsible anticipatory systems². The programme involves research and knowledge co-production, capacity enhancement and policy development. The Chair and Project will contribute to developing and diffusing the awareness that anticipatory capacities are key competence and skill if humanity is to make full use of its ability to act.

The aim of the Uruguay UNESCO Chair is to conduct action-research and learning-by-doing processes that will improve the anticipatory capabilities of individuals, communities and organizations by advancing the theory and practice of Futures Literacy. Conscious human efforts to address societal transformation and sustainability are inherently related to why and how people ‘use-the-future’. In Miller et al (2018) that phrase is presented in single quotes to draw attention to two aspects: first, that the future strictly speaking can only exist in the present as anticipation, and second, to highlight how different ways of framing the future generate different perceptions of the present and hence alters preferences and choices.

This **UNESCO Chair will pay particular attention to the sociocultural aspects of anticipation and change**, in the understanding that time is a ‘symbolic organizer’ (Vidal Jiménez, 2013) for culture (time-binding concept, Korzybski, 1921, 1974). The focus will be on the ontological level as an approach to capturing ‘the core’ of the anthropological (Bennett, 1976) dimensions of anticipatory systems and processes. The underlying theory of

¹ The South American Institute for Resilience and Sustainability Studies (SARAS²) is an interdisciplinary research institute aimed at contributing substantially to the production of knowledge and capacity building in processes and mechanisms that determine the sustainability of ecosystem services, key to determining human well-being.

² Professor Ted Fuller (Lincoln University) has been developing the concept and practice of responsible anticipation.

anticipation defines anticipation as the capacity of a system to have its actual processes influenced by future states (Rosen, 1985).

The socio-cultural aspects of anticipatory systems intervene actively in our actions and learning processes informing present options and are directly related to our capacity to perceive and precipitate change (Polak, 1973; Bennet, 1976; Bourdieu, 2007; Gee, 2008; Nutall, 2010; Garrido, 2016, 2018). A useful theoretical development borrowed to work with sociocultural components is the concept of *habitus*, as incorporated objective structures which shape current practices and perceptions, ensuring through this recursive 'mechanism' their reproduction (Bourdieu 1984; Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992). Opening up the 'black box' of cognitive processes of explicit anticipation to reveal anticipatory assumptions in the images of the future using theory of anticipatory systems, enhances social theory and an understanding of the relationships spanning perception, imagination, decision making with continuity and change.

There is a strong relationship between perception/choice and knowledge of anticipatory systems and processes (UNESCO Scoping Global/Local). Recent studies and experiments show how 'sticky' the past is and why we suffer from 'poverty of imagination'. Given current wide-spread *futures illiteracy* it is difficult to sense and make-sense of novelty and create new and shared-meaning related to the constant reality of uncertainty. Instead of the conditions of our freedom, the lack of determinism, being a source of inspiration and confidence, the perpetual uncertainty of complexity is a source of fear and defensive efforts to impose planning on tomorrow. Improving anticipatory capabilities expands boundaries, enables discovery and creates new alternatives. Uncertainty becomes an asset rather than a liability.

Anticipation is a key capacity in learning and creativity, a strong rationale for strengthening personal and social anticipatory capacities and competences with direct relation to the improvement of education and innovative ecosystems. Anticipation also is a key aspect of processes of adaptation and resilience. Adaptation and transformation require the management of new or changing information, uncertainties and multiple types of knowledge. The practical strategies in relation to increasing Social Ecological Systems (SES) resilience are: (1) learning to live with change and uncertainty; (2) increasing the diversity of all SES components (diversity of economic objectives, diversity of natural resources used, diversity of actors involved, etc.); (3) combining different types of knowledge and learning; and (4) creating opportunities for self-organization and links between different levels (e.g. between national and local spheres) (Folke et al., 2003, 2005).

Exploring all these issues would be at the forefront of the Chair's research, teaching and community engagement activities.

Action-research conducted by UNESCO since 2012 has provided clear **proof-of-concept level evidence** of the relationship linking anticipation, perception and decision-making (UNESCO, Scoping Global/Local Anticipatory Capacities, 2015).

The work of the Uruguay UNESCO Chair builds on these efforts and will contribute to the development of the Discipline of Anticipation and Future Studies grounded in a Futures Literacy Framework (Miller et. al. 2018). The Chair will contribute to further theoretical and applied research, teaching and social capacity-building that includes specialized support for policy-makers.

The **scope of the project encompasses all of Latin America** with the aim of transferring and co-creating knowledge on anticipatory systems and futures literacy through strengthening relations between universities, social institutions and other development bodies inviting them to join a **collaboratory network** with other institutions in Africa, Europe and Asia. The activities of the Chair will be implemented, in part, through a collaborative regional project (*Imaginando Futuros en América Latina*) that has been inspired from a similar initiative by UNESCO in Africa ('Imagining Africa's Futures'). With the aim of addressing gaps in the available literature and research in Spanish, this project will seek to stimulate the production and dissemination of knowledge in Spanish.

The project will be managed by the Futures Laboratory Network at Institute for Resilience and Sustainability Studies (SARAS²). The Future Laboratory Network is a specialized unit for research and education on anticipation and futures literacy.

The **responsible project leader** will be Lydia Garrido Luzardo, Futures Laboratory Network, SARAS. Co-responsible: Cristina Zurbriggen, SARAS, Advisory and Executive Boards Member.

The proposed 4-year plan includes five interconnected **avenues of action**:

- **Evidence-based research** on anticipatory and resilience systems and processes with focus on the relation between anticipatory assumptions (information-knowledge), decision-making (action) and change (transformative capacity).
- **Research and design of assessment criteria** for index and impact indicators on anticipatory capabilities, transformative enablers and creative resilience that could be used in "social impact" frameworks for policies and theoretical developments.
- **Enhance capacity and knowledge transfer.** Design (tailor-made) and implement experimental and experiential learning-by-doing approaches with collective intelligence knowledge creation processes with Futures Literacy Laboratories (FLL). Life-long learning programs. Train on Futures Literacy Framework (FLF) and facilitation on FLL. Post graduate programs in collaboration with other Universities on Anticipation and FLF. Particular focus on anticipatory policy making capacities, by training policy-decision makers in anticipation and futures thinking.
- **Communication.** Support interactive (experiential) extension activities with broad social participation: e.g. policy-decision makers, social organizations, students, practitioners and experts in different disciplines, academia, entrepreneurs, etc. Academic seminars and conferences on anticipatory and resilience systems for social transformation. Workshops and activities to communicate the main results. Website with materials such as texts, videos, programs, conferences, working groups, etc. Document translation into Spanish.
- **Networking.** Interchanges with participation in collaborative projects and activities with other institutions inside UNITWIN Networks and other Universities and institutions. In addition to the positive global interaction, we are especially interested in strengthening the Latin-American and Caribbean connections. So far there has been remarkably little attention paid to the diffusion of anticipatory systems work and the recent advances in developing frameworks and methodologies for futures literacy into Spanish. In that sense, the Chair will contribute with UNESCO wide initiative Imagining Futures (as the current "Imagining

Africa’s Futures”) working on the conditions to develop “Imaginando futuros en América Latina y el Caribe” (Imagining LAC’s Futures”).

The **domains of practice** will be mainly (i) learning and education, (ii) creativity and innovation, (iii) sustainable development and inclusion, (iv) resilient socio-ecosystems; (v) research-policy-nexus for anticipatory governance. Attention will be giving on gender inequalities, cultural specifics, and the nature of responsible and ethical practices.

The following outcomes are expected:

- Futures Literacy: Development of a set of protocols for appropriate design, implementation and assessment on the ground of the different kinds of anticipation (under the rubric of futures literacy), together with syllabi and teaching materials on the discipline of anticipation and futures literacy framework.
- Anticipatory Capability Profile: Development of an Anticipatory Capability Profile for communities, institutions and policy-makers, with a set of recommendations on how a community, organization or institution may raise its responsible anticipatory performance.
- Resilience Profile: Setting of a resilience index and analysis of the resilience level of selected communities and regions, including a set of recommendations on how to raise their resilience level.
- Anticipation and Futures Literacy Framework Network in Latin America

The Chair and Project are designed to engage with participants in action-research and learning-by-doing processes as complex socio-ecological systems.

There is a wide social spectrum of **beneficiaries**: e.g. policy makers and collective policy-decision makers using the future for responsible and sustainable policies, social organizations involved on sustainable and resilience challenges, students and educative institutions and systems, entrepreneurs and innovative ecosystems.

Proposed schedule of major activities

2018 (from September)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consolidating intention and action frameworks (resources, organizations, networks), the composition of global partnership and organizing modes: defining Working Principles, joint planning, a detailed programme. • Deciding about specific themes and contents with follow up (research, courses, publications, etc.). • Translation to Spanish the collaborative publication <i>Transforming the Future: Anticipation in the 21st Century</i>, UNESCO
2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3-5 Futures Literacy Laboratories workshops • Evidence-based futures literacy analysis (on 5 research questions) • 1-2 Courses (postgraduate) • 1 Transversalization FL Project • Scientific articles and lay publications

2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • International workshop (December) • Networking activities for “Imaginando futuros en América Latina y el Caribe”. • 3-5 Futures Literacy Laboratories workshops • Evidence-based futures literacy analysis • 1-2 Courses (postgraduate) • 1 Transversalization FL Project • Scientific articles and lay publications • International workshop (December) • Designing and raising funds for “Imaginando futuros en América Latina y el Caribe”
2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3-5 Futures Literacy Laboratories workshops • Evidence-based futures literacy analysis • 1-2 Courses (postgraduate) • 1 Transversalization FL Project • Scientific articles and lay publications • International workshop (December) • Implementing “Imaginando futuros en América Latina y el Caribe”
2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3-5 Futures Literacy Laboratories workshops • Evidence-based futures literacy analysis • 1-2 Courses (postgraduate) • 1 Transversalization FL Project • Scientific articles and lay publications • International workshop (December) • Implementing “Imaginando futuros en América Latina y el Caribe”

For further information please contact
Lydia Garrido Luzardo
Futures Laboratory Network, SARAS
lydiagarrido@gmail.com
tel. +59898601122