



ENVISIONING THE FUTURE

In this activity learners focus on a nearby natural site -a coast, wetland, etc.- that is important to them and envision how they would like this site to be in the future. They do not only reflect on the “envisioned” (desired, ideal) future of the site, but also on their role in shaping it. With this activity learners are encouraged to take ownership and responsibility for their behaviours and actions.

SUBJECTS

Environmental Studies, Language, Arts

LEARNERS' AGE

10-15 yrs (appropriate also for younger and older)

DURATION

60 minutes

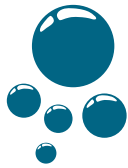
OBJECTIVES

- To identify their personal vision for an ideal future of a coast or other site.
 - To recognise similarities and differences in the visions of others.
 - To understand the difference between probable and preferred futures.
- To explore the necessary steps in order for a preferred future to become a reality.



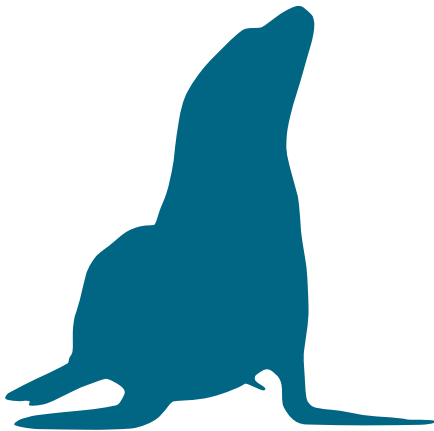


© Thomas Vlachogianni / MIO-ECSDE



The dooming media

All too often, we may feel disempowered by disturbing images or doomsday projections about the future. Stories about natural disasters, species extinction, human and animal suffering dominate the media. While these issues all call for urgent action, simply being informed about their existence may not instigate action or bring about change. Contrary, the media's dooming approach sometimes leads to a sense of apathy, powerlessness, guilt and pessimism which can discourage and even hinder action. In our educational practices it is important to not just focus on solving a problematic situation. It is important to strengthen and empower people so that they become agents of change, capable of creating a positive future.





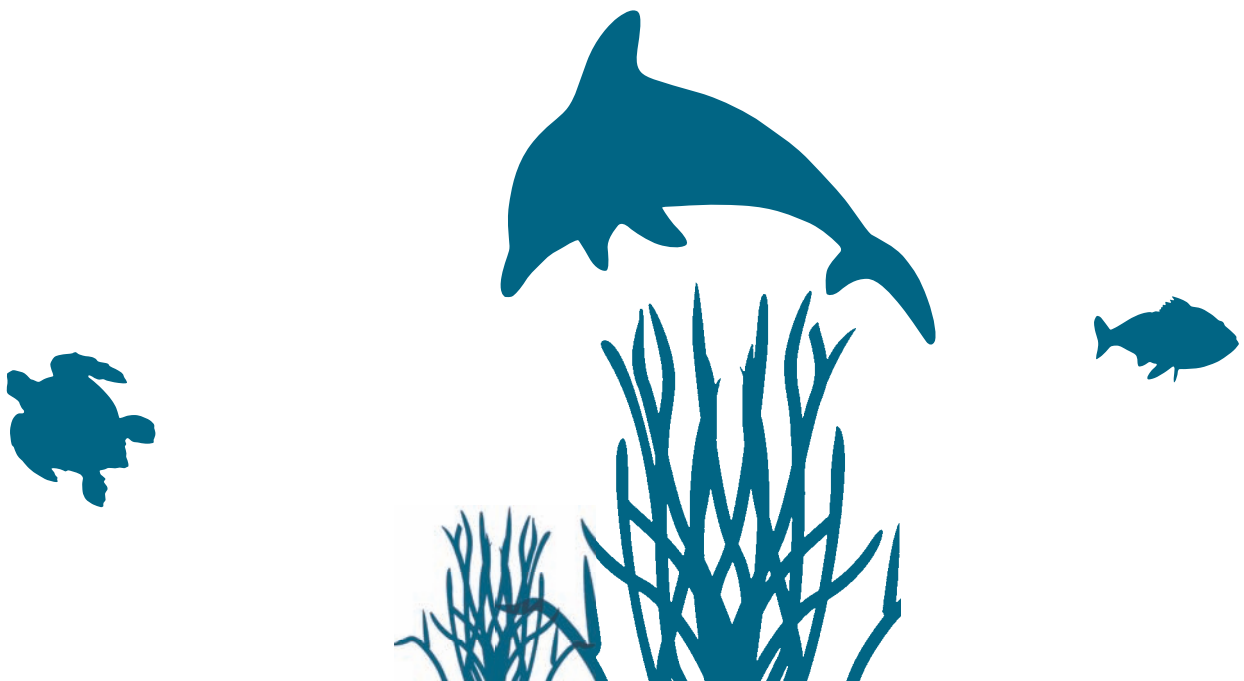
**KNOW
FEEL
ACT!**
to Stop Marine Litter

Envisioning exercise

Envisioning exercises help us imagine our possible (“business as usual” model) as opposed to our preferred (“ideal”) futures and discover beliefs and assumptions that drive our visions. Here is an example of an envisioning exercise.

Learners draw the evolution of a common, familiar site by integrating three milestones:

- Its status in 1800
- Its status today
- Its preferable vs. its probable future: Learners explain how these two might differ and how to move from a likely future to a preferred one.





Materials and Equipment

Blindfold for each learner
Coloured crayons
Notebooks and pens

Instructions step by step

STEP 1: Individually

On their own, each learner thinks of a natural site they are familiar with – it can be a nearby beach, wetland, riverbank or even neighbourhood park but it should be a place that is important to people’s lives.

Learners find a quiet space indoors or preferably outdoors. They each put on a blindfold and quietly let their thoughts and worries of the day drift away. Their task is to imagine ... what would the sustainable future be for this specific site?

Each learner then draws their vision on the back of the Worksheet taking time to reflect on what has influenced their drawing. On their own, they think of 3 words associated with their envisaged future site.

Then they note any actions they currently undertake or can take in the future to arrive at their envisioned future.

STEP 2: In pairs

Learners form pairs and present their drawing and vision to their partner. They discuss how their visions are similar and how they are different. They then try to guess the 3 words their partner used to describe his/her vision. They also discuss the actions they currently undertake or can take in the future as individuals to arrive at their envisioned future.

STEP 3: In class

In a class discussion, learners exchange and communicate their visions with peers. They share their drawings with each other and see if there is a common, shared vision for all the sites they have identified. If so, what are the common, key elements? Are there any challenges in achieving the vision? How can they be overcome? As a group, learners discuss the challenges, opportunities and necessary steps to achieve the desired future. What realistic changes must take place before the “shared vision” can become a reality?

