Causal Layered Analysis

TOOL TYPE: MINI-WORKSHOP
RUN TIME: 60-90 MINUTES; PREP TIME: 30 MINUTES

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Created by Sohail Inayatullah, UNESCO Chair for Futures Studies.

NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS

1-8 people

WHAT YOU'LL NEED

- A room to meet in (or virtual whiteboard);
- Two large prints of the Iceberg worksheet;
- Sticky notes;
- Writing markers.

KNOWN APPLICATIONS

Personal reflection;
Discussing futures;
Game or workshop element; or
Analytical framework.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION

Causal Layered Analysis (CLA) applies **multiple ways of knowing** to help groups and individuals generate and discuss futures of a given topic. CLA allows **holistic exploration of futures**, probing into empiricist, interpretative, critical and unconscious (collective) dimensions to think and rethink the world, the future and our own positioning toward change. Each way of knowing is emphasized in its own layer.

HOW IT SUPPORTS INTERGENERATIONAL EQUITY

CLA allows for deep, holistic reflection about the future and how our **imaginings** are rooted to information or disinformation, different systems, power structures, interests, as well as cultural and philosophical foundations and collective myths and narratives. It provides a **framework** to share implicit ideas about the future and transform these ideas from their inner myths and metaphors. Because of this, it can profoundly change perspectives and mobilize action.

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CONCISE INSTRUCTIONS

- Invite a small group to try CLA with you (recommended), or do the exercise alone.

- Choose a topic (future of X) relevant to generational equity, abstract or specific.

- Complete the first iceberg worksheet together, starting from the top layer Litany, brainstorming several ideas for it, and going down the other layers: Systems, Worldviews, and Myths/Metaphors.

- Move to the second iceberg. Start from the bottom layer, Myth/Metaphor. Referring to the first iceberg, ask: What alternative myth or metaphor for the future of this topic would help us produce intergenerational equity?

- Referring to your alternative myth or metaphor, proceed through the above layers.

- Look at both icebergs and discuss: What can we do today for future people?

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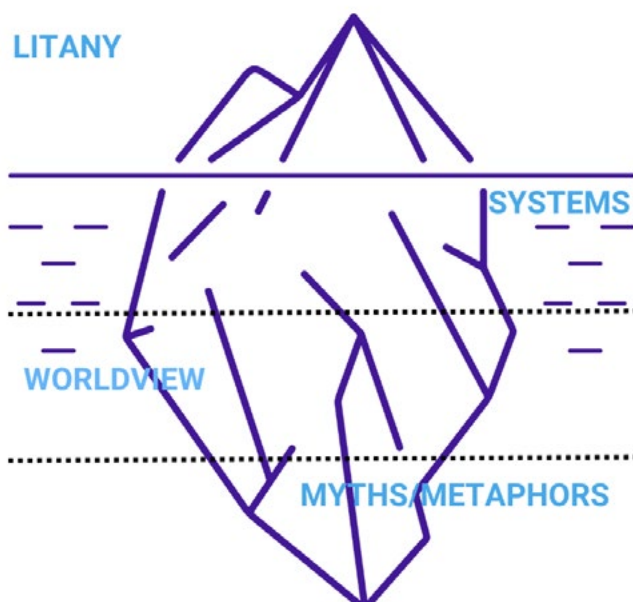
INSTRUCTION SHEET (1/2)

1. Before the session:

• Print 1 set of instructions and two iceberg pages.
• Select a topic to explore and a +35 years (or more) time horizon. It can be based on your work area (e.g. DPP staff might pick the future of peace/war 2057; FAO staff might pick food 2075; UNEP staff might pick biodiversity 2100; etc.). Or, it could be about a specific population in a specific place or shared context.
• When conducted in groups, the facilitator should plan to participate too. Below some instructions for the facilitator:

2. Start the session by saying:

We are imagining the future of our topic. To help us imagine it, we will go layer-by-layer starting from the top, on this iceberg.

3. For each layer:

Describe it to the group, give a few minutes for individual brainstorming on post-it notes, and then ask everyone to share their contributions and put them on the sheet.

LITANY: What do people of this future say about this topic? What indicators are discussed? What would they read in the news?

SYSTEMS: What systems produce the key events and conditions of this future? What are relationships like among various actors?

WORLDVIEW: What is the underlying philosophy? What are the dominant values? What is valorised or dismissed?

MYTH/METAPHOR: What myth, story, figure of speech, song lyric, or saying conveys the complexity of what happens in this future?

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INSTRUCTION SHEET (2/2)

4. Inform the group:
You will now produce a new iceberg, this time starting from the bottom: Myths/Metaphors. (Refer to Iceberg #2)

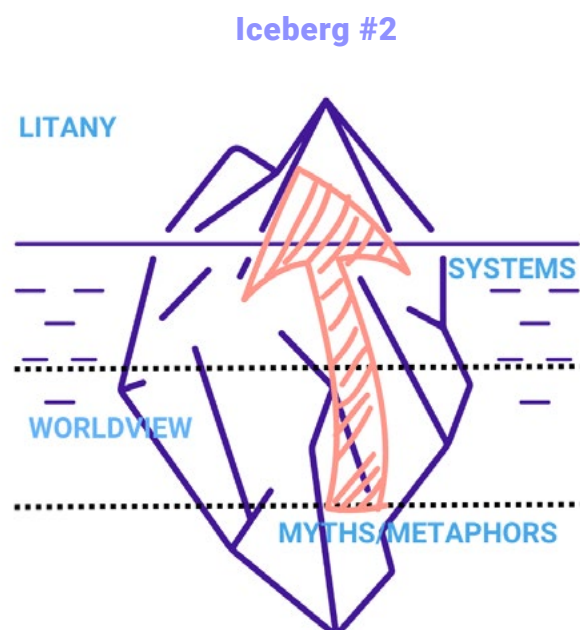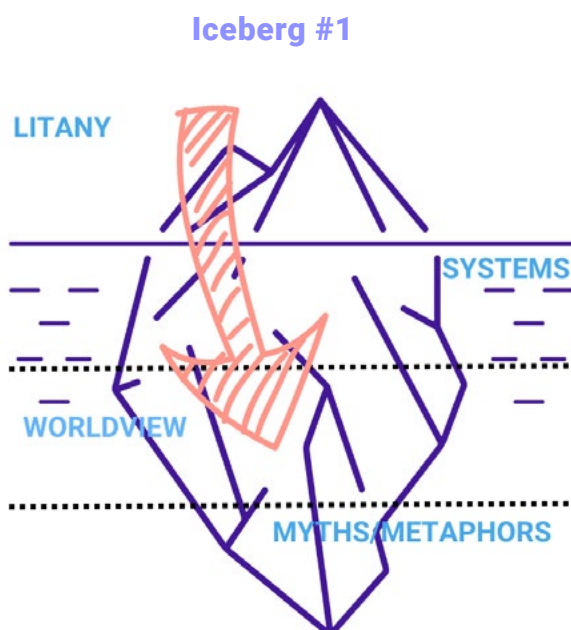### 5. Transform the Myth/Metaphor of Iceberg #1 - Ask the group:
What myth or metaphor would contribute best to intergenerational equity for our topic and time horizon? Write the chosen myth/metaphor on the myth/metaphor area of Iceberg #2.

6. Repeat step 3:
This time, going from bottom layer to the top layer.

7. Reflect upon the two icebergs:
What changed in the 2nd one? What do the two icebergs help us realise about intergenerational equity and our work area? Write your answers on the Realisations/Insights sheet.
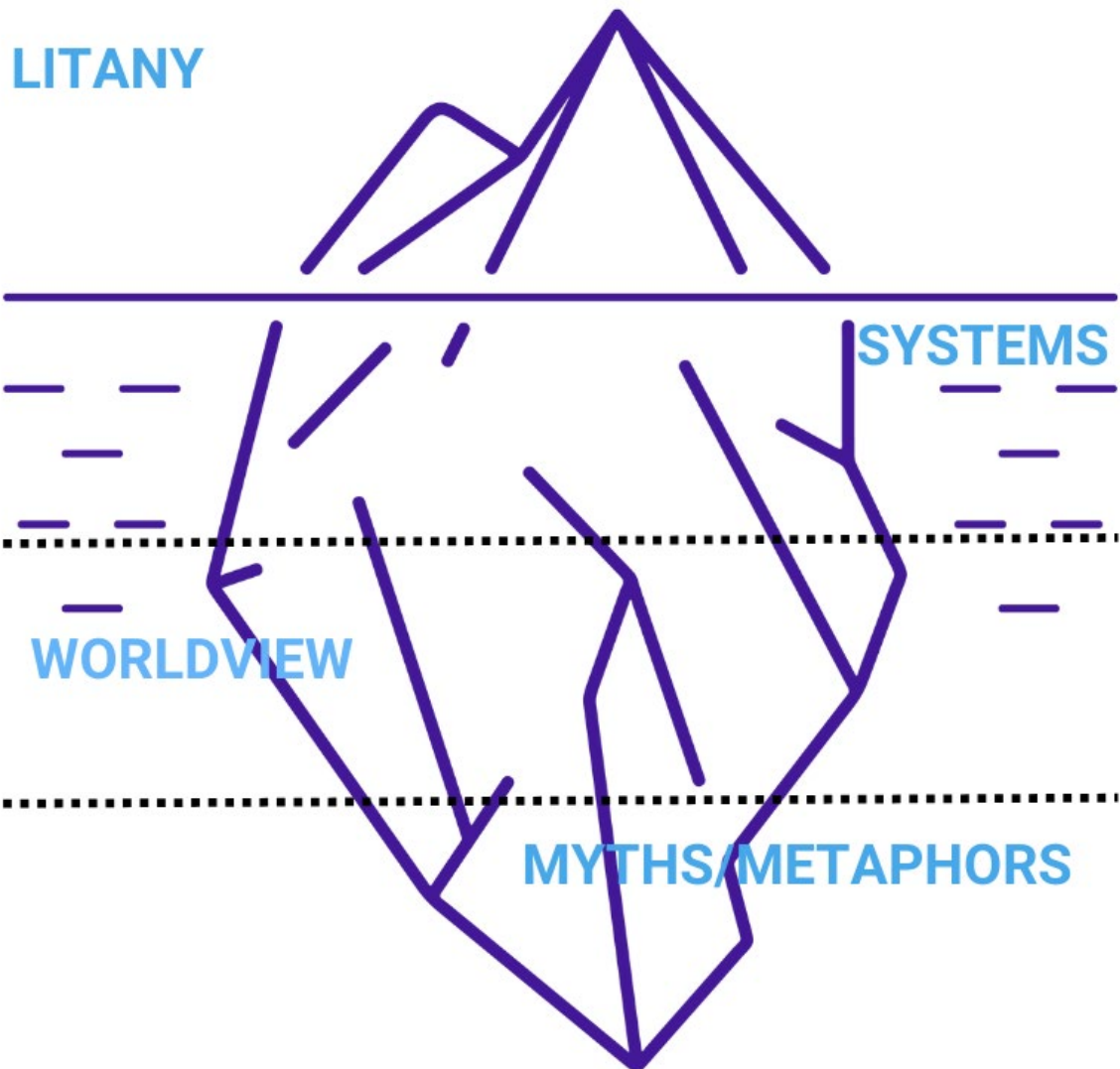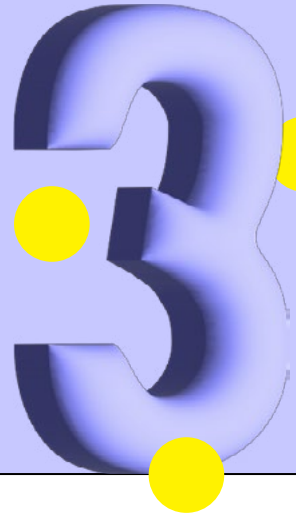
Iceberg #1

Iceberg #2

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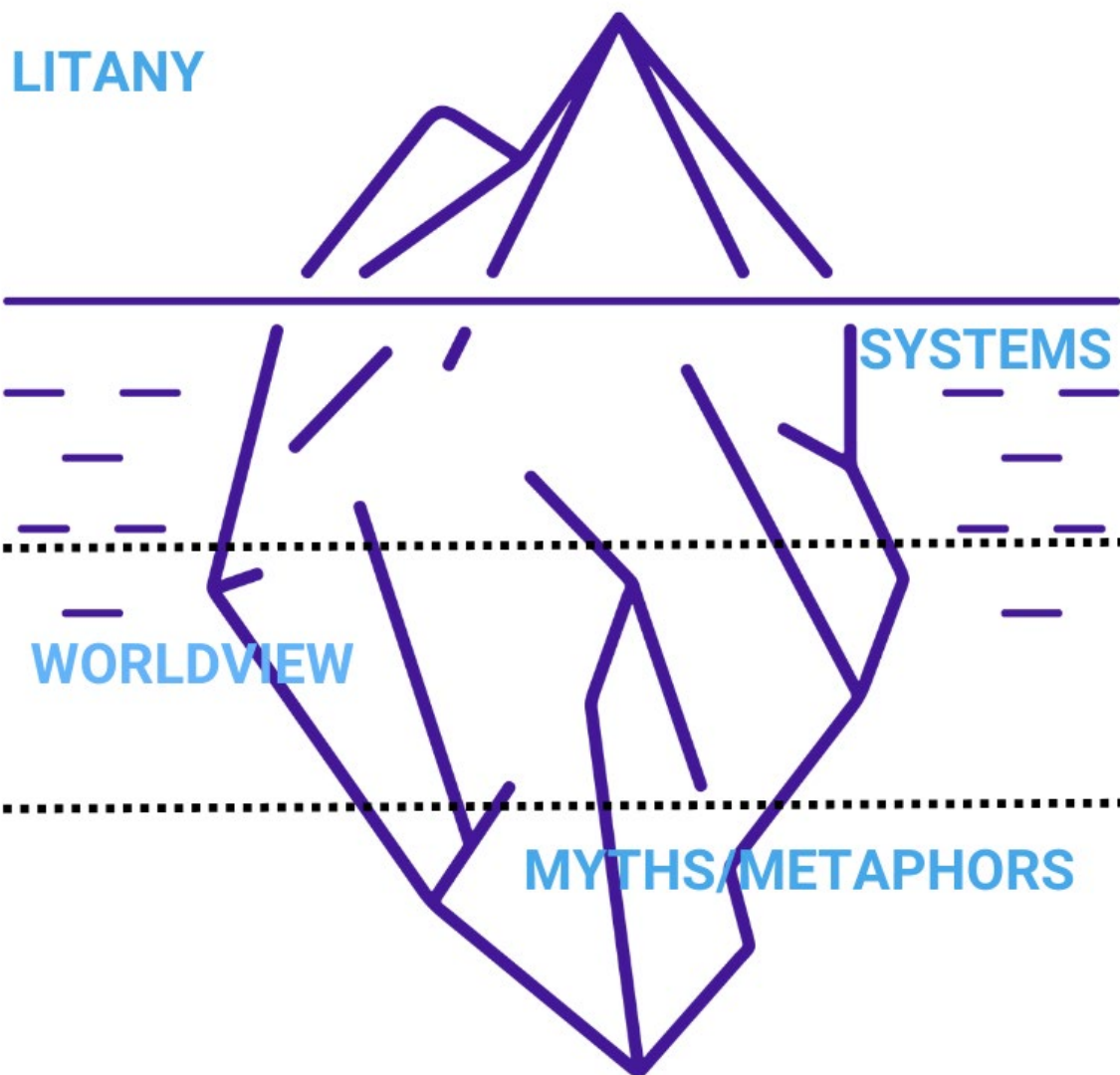
ICEBERG #1

LITANY

SYSTEMS

WORLDVIEW

MYTHS/METAPHORS

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ICEBERG #2

LITANY

SYSTEMS

WORLDVIEW

MYTHS/METAPHORS

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EXPECTED OUTCOMES

- A group or solo user will elaborate and their ideas about the future.

- Participants can gain new perspectives how they can frame future developments of their chosen topic.

RESOURCES

- A"CLA 2.0: Transformative research in theory and practice." Inayatullah, Sohail and Ivana Milojević. (2015).

- "Causal Layered Analysis" Millennium Project - Futures Research Methodology V-3. Inayatullah, Sohail (2009).

- "Causal Layered Analysis." How Do We Explore Our Futures? Methods of Futures Research. Rubin, Anita. pp. 252–268.

FEEDBACK

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