

## Futures Dialogues

### Time and Possibilities:

### Governing and researching time in new ways for transformative futures

**Date and time:** Wednesday 24 June (14:00–16:00 Paris time)

**Languages:** English and French

**Format:** Zoom meeting – Please click [here](#) to register

Governments, organisations, decision-makers, education institutions, and societies are constantly involved in processes of collective time work – setting deadlines and timelines, coordinating policies and people, shaping the rhythms of cities, communities, and societies, mobilising certain histories, anticipating possible futures. The manipulation and shaping of time are at the heart of the organisation of collective life, from the coordination of the smallest local consultation effort to work the drafting of global international agreements. It both creates and shuts down possibilities for change.

This collective time work, however, is becoming even more complex. The slow demands of public consultation are in tension with rapidly changing political conditions. Gaps between short-term political cycles and long-term demographic, social and environmental challenges are becoming clearer. In these contexts, the temptations of authoritarian and emergency politics and policies begin to emerge. Imagined futures of social, political, technological and environmental change require increasing attention to the enduring impacts of colonialism and nationalism in various forms.

This situation makes visible the limited toolset available for clearly naming time-based problems and working creatively and democratically to address them. More than this, the dominance of a small set of time habits and culturally-loaded assumptions – from linear development thinking to the concept of time as quantifiable and limited resource – often obscure the rich diversity of time practices marginalised through colonialism and industrialisation that offer fruitful ways of shaping and working with time. Indeed, a linear view of time has underpinned international development thinking and discourse.

This Futures Dialogue makes time and social practices of time work the explicit focus of attention. It brings together leading thinkers in the emerging interdisciplinary field of temporal expertise to ask: What is the current state of research on time and collective time work? How might pluriversal temporal lenses open up better possibilities for social organisation and transformative changes towards a culture of peace, social justice and a liveable planet?

This [Futures Dialogue](#) will feature an introductory keynote, two moderated panels and reflections, followed by an open discussion on the futures of research on time and possibilities. Consistent with the theme of time and possibilities, it will also explore some different rhythms for dialogue and discussion, to allow in new patterns of thinking and relationships. These two panels will consider:

- (1) Governing Time: Why decolonial and pluriversal temporal perspectives are required;**
- (2) New directions: Towards new research agendas for time and possibilities.**

Key considerations for this session

**1. Questioning old habits?**

*Dominant temporal frames critiqued*

- Recognising temporal mismatches: short-term political cycles, long-term social and ecological challenges, and rapid technological change expose the limits of linear, progress-oriented time.
- Expectations of standardisation and synchronisation.
- Misuse of emergency temporalities: urgency-driven decision-making risks undermining democratic participation and deep deliberation.

**2. Challenging disciplinary boundaries**

*Time studies across multiple fields*

- Connecting diverse temporal knowledges: insights from science, social sciences, arts, Indigenous knowledge systems and foresight need to be brought into dialogue.
- Developing shared tools: new analytical concepts are needed to describe collective time work, temporal inequalities and temporal infrastructures.
- Co-producing temporal expertise: policymakers, communities, researchers and practitioners must collaborate to surface and negotiate different temporal needs and rhythms.

**3. Towards temporal imagination and temporal deliberation**

*Capacities and conditions*

- Expanding temporal imagination: societies need the capability to imagine multiple temporal futures beyond linear development models.
- Creating spaces for temporal deliberation: institutions require formats that allow reflection across timescales, from immediate needs to intergenerational responsibilities.
- Designing just temporal infrastructures: timelines, consultation processes and policy rhythms must support equity, plurality and long-term possibility.

The possibility of developing research networks associated with time, governance, possibility and imagination will be explored, including the potential for joint activities at World Futures Day 2026.

[Futures Dialogues](#), organized by UNESCO's Future of Learning and Innovation Division, aim to identify, analyse and debate emerging challenges and trends relevant to UNESCO's mandate. The session is convened in collaboration with UNESCO's [Futures Literacy and Foresight](#) team, and its [Management of Social Transformations Programme \(MOST\)](#), which aims to equip governments, civil society, and institutions with the tools to better anticipate and prepare for complex transformations.

\*\*\* Register [here](#) \*\*\*

## Provisional Agenda

| <b>Time and Possibilities:</b>   |   |
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| <b>Governing and researching time in new ways for transformative futures</b> |   |
| Wednesday 24 June 2026, 14:00 to 16:00 (Paris time)                          |   |
| 14:00-14:05  | <b>Welcome</b><br><b>Sobhi Tawil</b> , Director, Futures of Learning and Innovation Division, Education Sector, UNESCO  |
| 14:05-14:10  | <b>Introduction: Time and Futures</b><br><b>Keri Facer</b> , Professor of Educational and Social Futures, University of Bristol, United Kingdom   |
| 14:10-14:50  | <b>Panel discussion</b><br><br><b>Segment 1: Governing Time: Why are decolonial and pluriversal perspectives required?</b><br><br><b>Moderator: Kwamou Eva Feukeu</b> , Head of the Centre of Expertise on Africa, Max Planck Institute for Comparative and International Private Law, Germany <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Matthew Scobie</b>, Associate Professor, Scholar of Indigenous political economy, intergenerational accountabilities and critical accounting, University of Canterbury, New Zealand</li><li>• <b>Luz Horne</b>, Co-Chairholder, UNESCO Chair for the Interdisciplinary Study of Time for Sustainable Futures. Associate Professor, Director of the PhD Program in Latin American Literature and Cultural Criticism, Universidad de San Andrés, Argentina</li><li>• <b>Kais Hammami</b>, Director of the Strategic Foresight Center of the Islamic World Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (ICESCO), Dubai</li></ul> |
| 14:50-14:55  | <b>Reflection time</b><br><b>Moderator: Keri Facer</b>  |
| 14:55-15:05  | <b>Discussion</b><br><b>Moderator: Kwamou Eva Feukeu</b>  |

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| 15:05-15:30 | <p><b>Panel discussion</b></p> <p><b>Segment 2: New directions: Towards new research agendas for time and possibilities.</b></p> <p><b>Moderator:</b> Keri Facer</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Michelle Bastian</b>, Senior Lecturer, University of Edinburgh, Scotland, United Kingdom. Convenor of Temporal Belongings network, former Editor in Chief of the journal <i>Time &amp; Society</i></li> <li>• <b>Diego Andrés Golombek</b>, Co-Chairholder, UNESCO Chair for the Interdisciplinary Study of Time for Sustainable Futures. Director of the Laboratory for the Interdisciplinary Study of Time (LITERA) at the University of San Andrés, Argentina</li> </ul> |
| 15:30-15:35 | <p><b>Reflection time</b></p> <p><b>Moderator:</b> Keri Facer</p>  |
| 15:35-15:55 | <p><b>Open dialogue</b></p> <p><b>Moderator:</b> Keri Facer</p>  |
| 15:55-16:00 | <p><b>Closing remarks and next steps</b></p> <p><b>Irakli Khodeli</b>, Chief of Section, Management of Social Transformations &amp; Foresight, UNESCO Sciences Sector</p> <p><b>Keith Holmes</b>, Research Coordinator/UNITWIN, Future of Learning and Innovation Division, UNESCO</p>   |

\*\*\* Register [here](#) \*\*\*