

Evaluating World Futures Day for distributed Collective Intelligence

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#Futures4EuropeConference2026 #Foresight #CollectiveIntelligence



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WORLD FUTURES DAY METHOD

Objective of the study: Evaluating WFD as participatory futures method that may generate distributed collective intelligence.

Invented by Jerome C. Glenn and launched by The Millennium Project in 2014 on March 1 in collaboration with major international futures organizations (Di Berardo, 2022). WFD 2026 was the 13th edition.

24-hour global online conversation that begins at noon New Zealand and conclude 24 hours later in Hawaii.

Discussions are facilitated every hour on a voluntary basis and provide opportunities to share, explore, formulate, and collaborate.

Hundreds of self-selected participants exchange ideas about the future in an open, agenda-free environment.

RESEARCH DESIGN

Objectives	Key constructs	Research Questions	Indicators
O1 – Inclusiveness: examining whether WFD allows equitable participation and plural dialogue.	C1 – Inclusiveness as an enabling condition: empirical/observable construct capturing participants' perception of equitable and inclusive participation.	RQ1: How effectively do participants perceive that WFD enables equitable participation and ensures that all voices are heard?	I1: Perceived equity of participation and inclusion of diverse voices.
O2 – Futures thinking capacity: assessing whether WFD enhances participants' ability to engage in long-term thinking, explore alternative futures, and anticipate emerging signals and trends.	C2 – Enhanced Futures thinking: empirical/observable construct capturing participants' perceived enhancement of long-term, alternative, and anticipatory thinking.	RQ2: How effectively do participants perceive that WFD enhances their ability to think long-term, consider alternative futures, and anticipate emerging signals and trends?	I2: Perceived enhancement of futures thinking.
O3 – Shared generative outputs: analyzing whether WFD generates shared outputs, including new ideas, emerging signals, and trends.	C3 – Collective knowledge generation: empirical/observable construct capturing participants' perceptions of novel shared outputs emerging from WFD beyond pre-existing individual knowledge.	RQ3: How effectively do participants perceive that WFD discussions produces shared outputs, such as collective ideas, emerging signals, or trends?	I3: Perceived production of novelty and shared insights.

RESEARCH DESIGN

Objectives	Key constructs	Research Questions	Indicators
O4 – Post-event impact: assessing whether participation leads to sustained shared understanding, intentions for collaboration, or follow-up initiatives beyond the event.	C4 – Post-event engagement: empirical/observable construct capturing participants' perceptions of post-event engagement, collaboration intentions, and follow-up initiatives.	RQ4: How effectively do participants perceive that WFD motivates them to take follow-up actions, initiate projects, or engage in collaborations after the event?	I4: Perceived follow-up actions.
O5 – Methodological reflections: identifying methodological improvements that could enhance WFD.	C5 – Methodological reflections: exploratory dimension capturing participants' suggestions regarding future improvements, including AI-supported enhancements.	RQ5: How desirable do participants perceive potential AI-support for insights, facilitation, or active participation in future WFDs?	I5: Perceived desirability of AI-support.
		RQ6: What additional suggestions, or methodological reflections can participants provide to enhance WFD's inclusiveness, generativity, futures thinking, and post-event continuity?	I6: Qualitative insights on methodological improvements.

PHASES OF THE STUDY

Feb. 2026	March 2-16, 2026	March 17 – July 30, 2026	Aug. – Sept., 2026
Survey design and pilot	Survey launch and data collection	Post-survey analysis	Report, dissemination

REAL-TIME DELPHI (Gordon & Pease, 2006)

Non-round-based approach that allows respondents to

- access multiple times,
- observe evolving anonymized aggregated responses;
- contribute new arguments,
- revise their own evaluations

For each item: 10-point Likert scale to assess perceived effectiveness and desirability, comment field to explain the ratings.

The study used the 4CF – The Futures Literacy Company HalnyX 2.0 RTD Platform.

ANALYSIS

Mixed-methods approach, integrating quantitative RTD data with qualitative textual responses.

- Descriptive analysis for each survey items (frequency, mean, median, IQR, SD, engagement in terms of n. of responses, comments, cross-tabulations)
- Multi-layer qualitative coding procedure for open-ended question and comments and polarity evaluation [positive/supportive (+1), critical/problem-oriented (-1), and neutral/descriptive/procedural (0)]

SURVEY

- **Section 1, Background Information** (Q1 – Q3): general data.
- **Section 2, Participation in WFD** (Q4-Q6): data about involvement in WFD (n. of editions attended, average duration of participation, role in the events).
- **Section 3, Personal experience of WFD** (Q7-Q12): perceived effectiveness of WFD in achieving inclusiveness, futures thinking enhancement, generation of shared outputs, and follow-up actions + perceived desirability of future AI-support to WFD (AI as an insight generator, facilitation tool, or active participant).
- **Section 4, Open reflections and suggestions** (Q13): open-ended question for additional reflections .

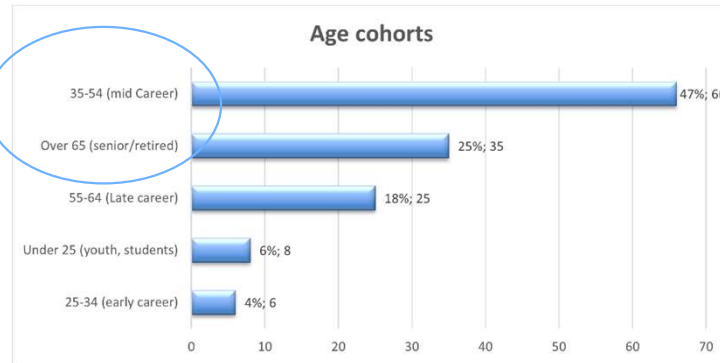
TARGET

Participants and facilitators of all 13 WFD (2014–2026).

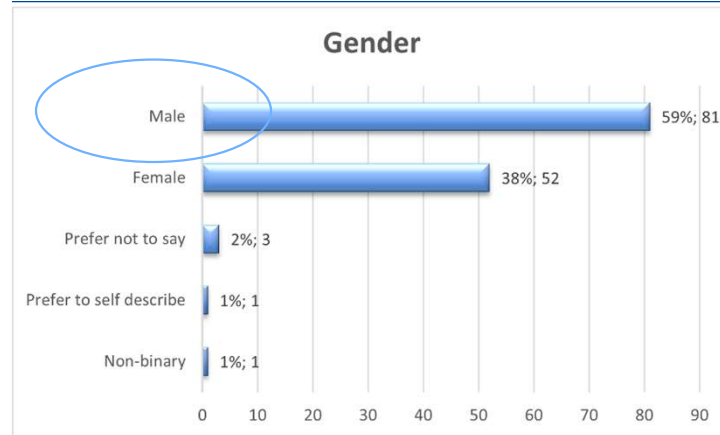
Self-selected respondents reached through multiple channels (direct invitations, websites, newsletter, social media, mailing lists).

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

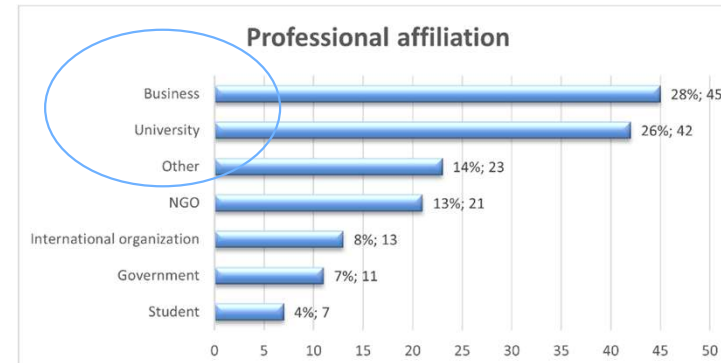
Total respondents:
142*



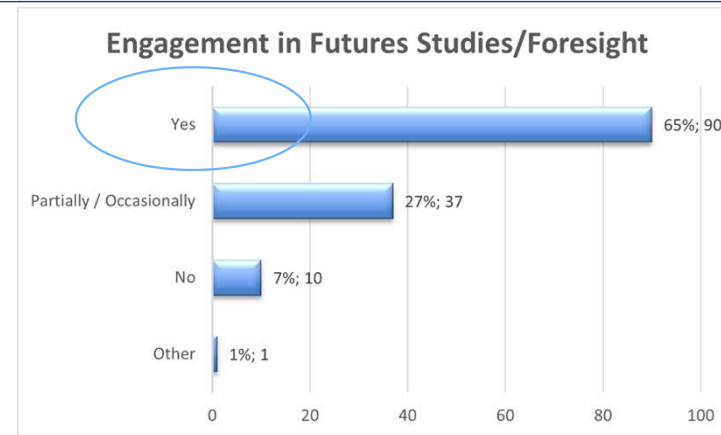
Total respondents:
138*



Total respondents:
138*



Total respondents:
138*

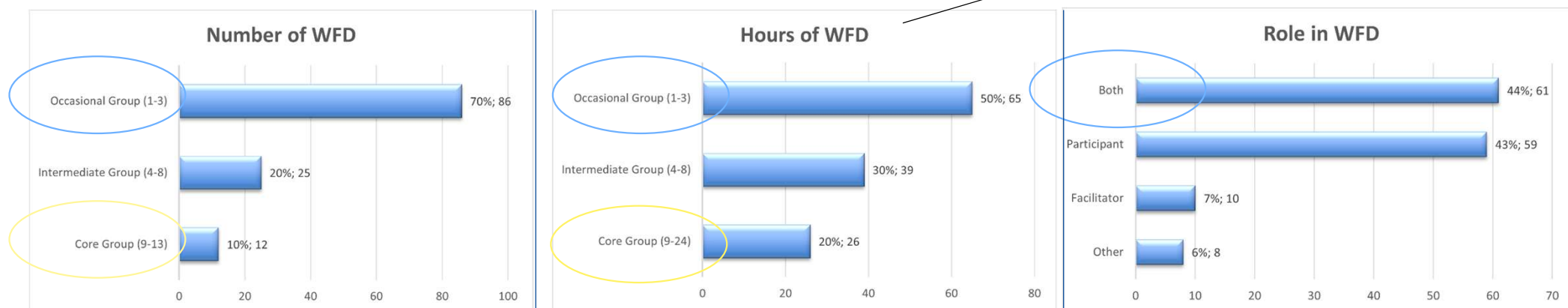


*Participation remained consistently high throughout the first 2 sections (Q1 to Q7), ranging between 136 and 142. A progressive attrition occurred in section 3 (Q8 to Q12), ranged between 99 and 111, before dropping to 32 for the final question (Q13).

Total respondents: 136

PARTICIPATION IN WFD

Cumulatively, the reported participation time corresponded to 729.5 person-hours across WFD editions.



CROSS-TABULATIONS

AGE/WFD N. (n = 120)

Over 45: highest average n. WFD (5.45), followed by the 55-64 cohort (2.95)

PROFESSION/WFD N. (n = 123, 145 answers)

NGO or International Org.: highest average N. WFD;
Government: lowest respondents and engagement.

PROFESSIONAL INVOLVEMENT IN FS-FORESIGHT/WFD N. (n = 123)

Respondents involved in FS/Foresight predominated
Occasional attended fewer editions.

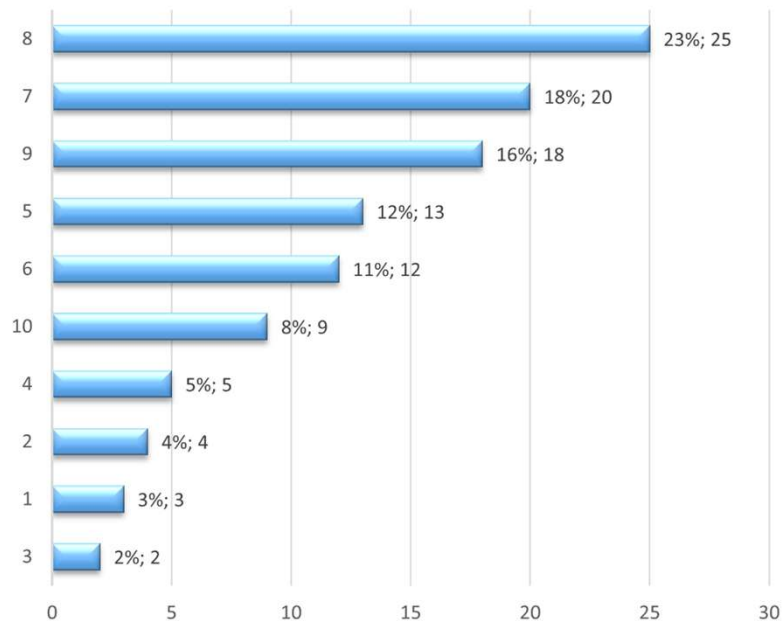
GENDER/WFD N. (n = 120)

Male respondents higher average number

PERSONAL EXPERIENCE OF WFD

Q8. HOW EFFECTIVE ARE WFD DISCUSSIONS IN ENSURING THAT ALL VOICES ARE HEARD AND PARTICIPATION IS EQUITABLE?

Rating of Inclusiveness



QUANTITATIVE DATASET

- n = 111 respondents
- n = 165 responses (1.49 responses per respondent and 54 revisions overall)
- Level of engagement (comments): 24%

The results indicate a generally positive perception of WFD effectiveness.

- Most frequent rating: 8 (followed by 7 and 9).
- Modal value = 8, Median = 7, Mean = 6.90.
- IQR = 2 The central 50% of the respondents between 6 and 8.

CROSS-TABULATION with professional expertise in FS/Foresight (n = 110)

- Non-specialists: small minority but highest rating combined with the tightest SD.
- Established professionals: moderate mean but highest internal fragmentation.
- Occasional practitioners aligned with experts.

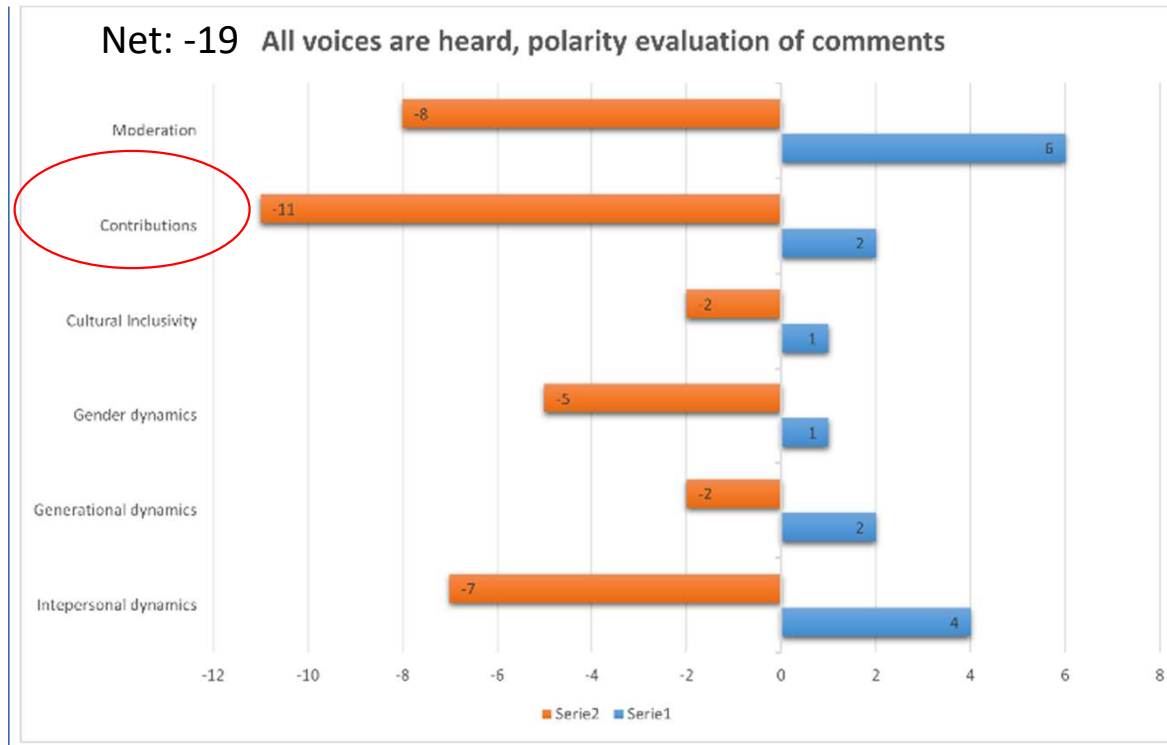
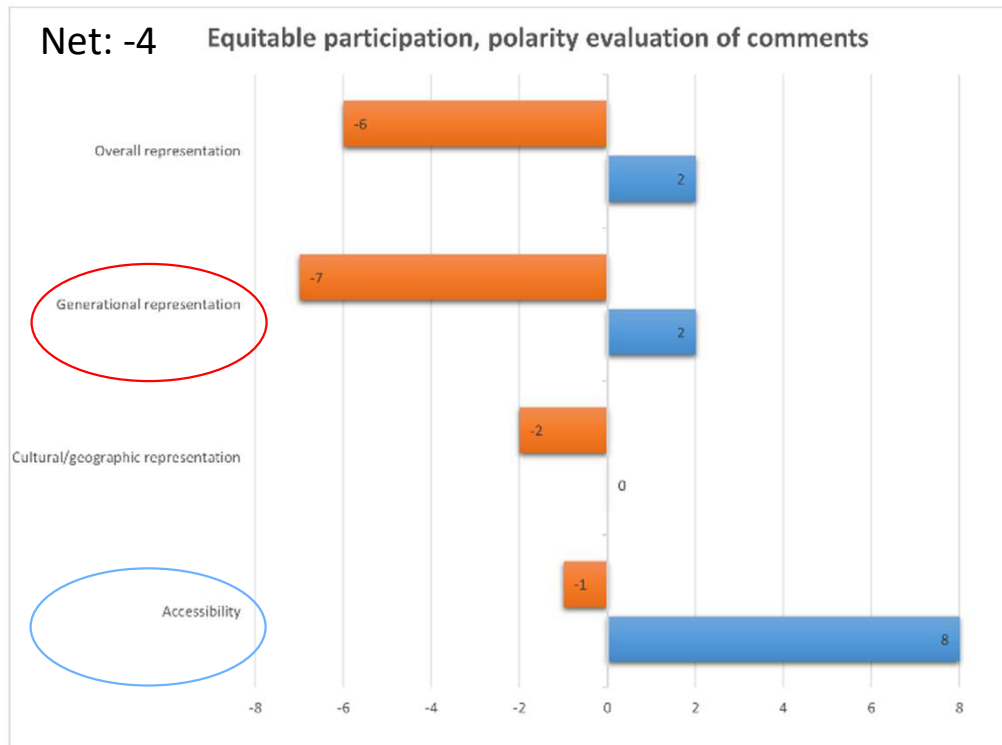
QUALITATIVE DATASET

n = 46 comments

83 total coded items (4 neutral)

PERSONAL EXPERIENCE OF WFD

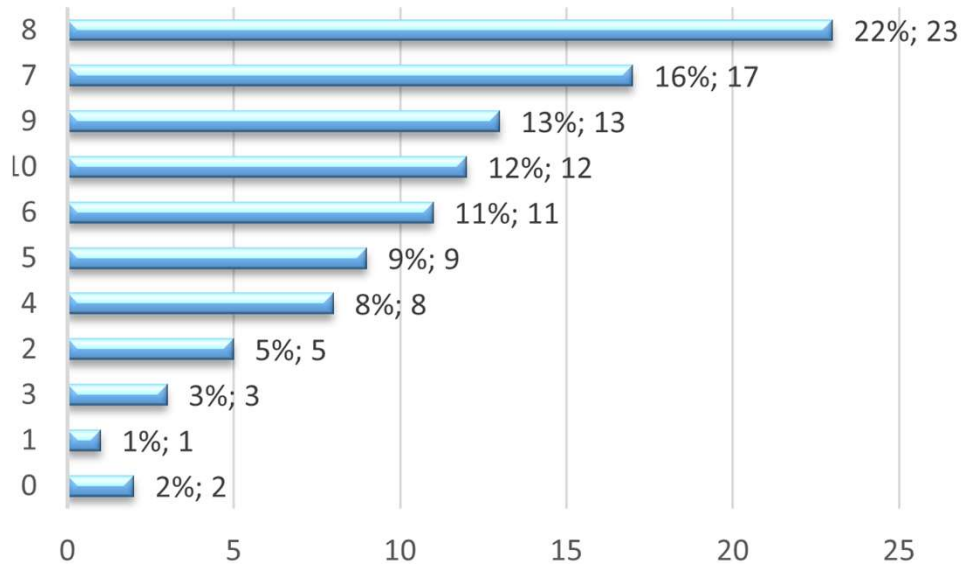
Q8. HOW EFFECTIVE ARE WFD DISCUSSIONS IN ENSURING THAT ALL VOICES ARE HEARD AND PARTICIPATION IS EQUITABLE?



PERSONAL EXPERIENCE OF WFD

Q9. HOW EFFECTIVE IS WFD IN ENHANCING YOUR ABILITY TO THINK LONG-TERM, CONSIDER ALTERNATIVE FUTURES, AND ANTICIPATE EMERGING SIGNALS AND TRENDS?

Rating of Futures thinking



QUANTITATIVE DATASET

n = 104 respondents

n = 128 responses (1.19 responses per respondent and 20 revisions overall)

Level of engagement (comment): 13%

The results indicate a generally positive perception of WFD effectiveness.

Most frequent rating: 8 (followed by 7 and 9).

Modal value = 8, Median = 7, Mean = 6.76.

IQR = 2 The central 50% of the respondents between 5 and 8.

CROSS-TABULATION with professional expertise in FS/Foresight (n = 103)

Non-specialists: small minority but highest rating combined with the tightest SD.

Established professionals: moderate mean but higher internal fragmentation.

Occasional practitioners aligned with experts.

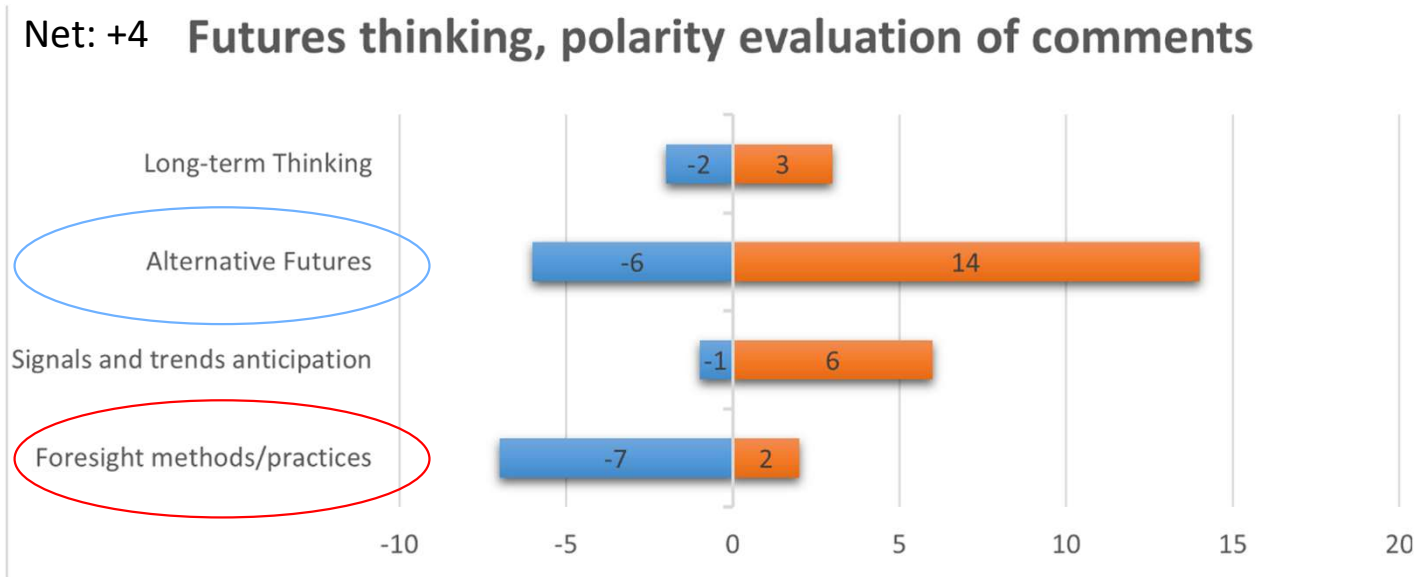
QUALITATIVE DATASET

n = 33 comments

47 coded items (6 neutral)

PERSONAL EXPERIENCE OF WFD

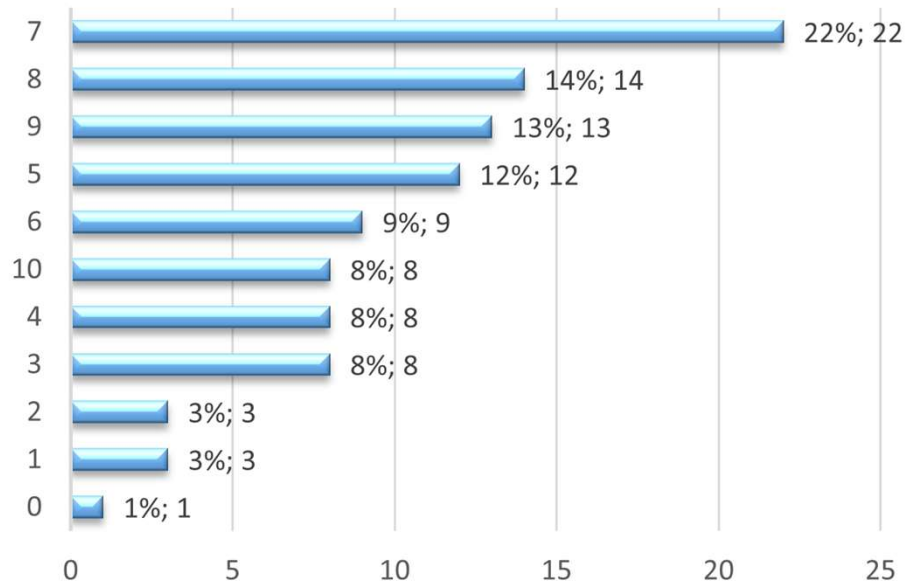
Q9. HOW EFFECTIVE IS WFD IN ENHANCING YOUR ABILITY TO THINK LONG-TERM, CONSIDER ALTERNATIVE FUTURES, AND ANTICIPATE EMERGING SIGNALS AND TRENDS?



PERSONAL EXPERIENCE OF WFD

Q10. HOW EFFECTIVE ARE WFD DISCUSSIONS IN GENERATING SHARED OUTPUTS, SUCH AS COLLECTIVE IDEAS, EMERGING SIGNALS, OR TRENDS?

Rating of Shared outputs



QUANTITATIVE DATASET

n = 128 respondents

n = 128 responses (1.27 responses per respondent and 27 revisions overall)

Level of engagement (comment): 16%

The results indicate a generally positive perception of WFD effectiveness.

Most frequent rating: 7 (followed by 8 and 9).

Modal value = 7, Median = 7, Mean = 6.36.

IQR = 3 The central 50% of the respondents between 5 and 8.

CROSS-TABULATION with professional expertise in FS/Foresight (n = 100)

Non-specialists: small minority but highest rating combined with the tightest SD.

Established professionals: moderate mean but higher internal fragmentation.

Occasional practitioners aligned with experts.

QUALITATIVE DATASET

n = 27 comments

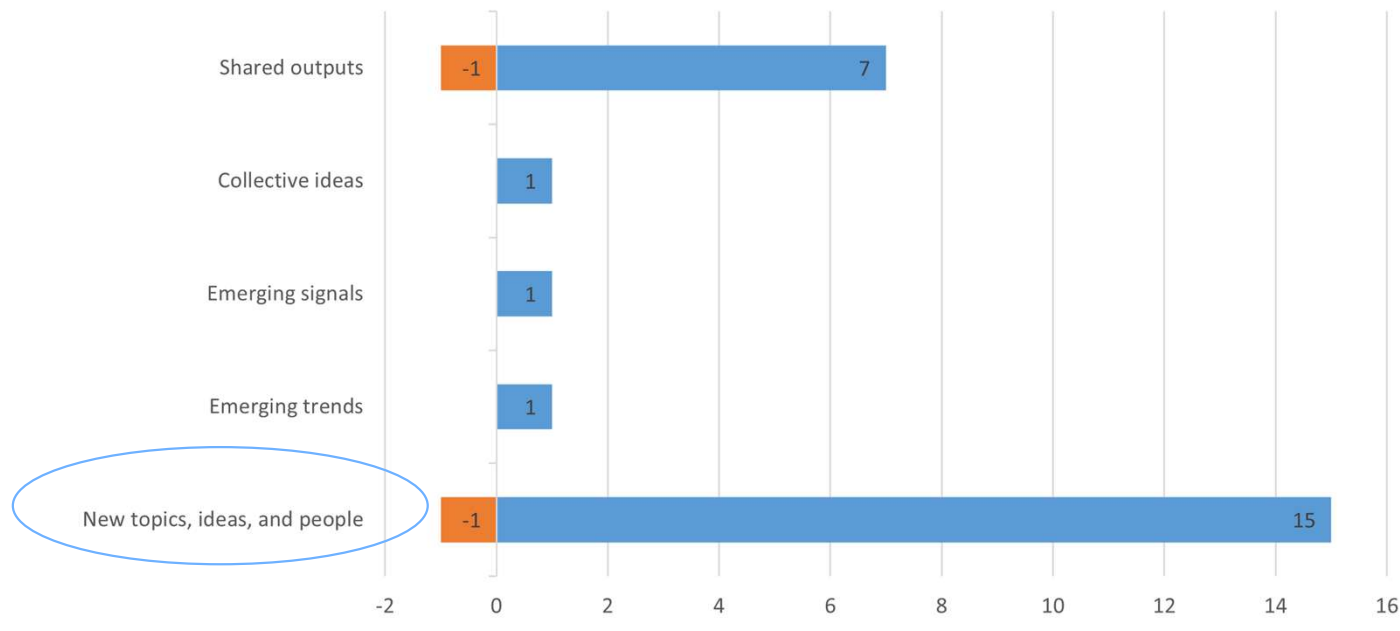
44 coded instances (8 neutral)

PERSONAL EXPERIENCE OF WFD

Q10. HOW EFFECTIVE ARE WFD DISCUSSIONS IN GENERATING SHARED OUTPUTS, SUCH AS COLLECTIVE IDEAS, EMERGING SIGNALS, OR TRENDS?

Net: +8

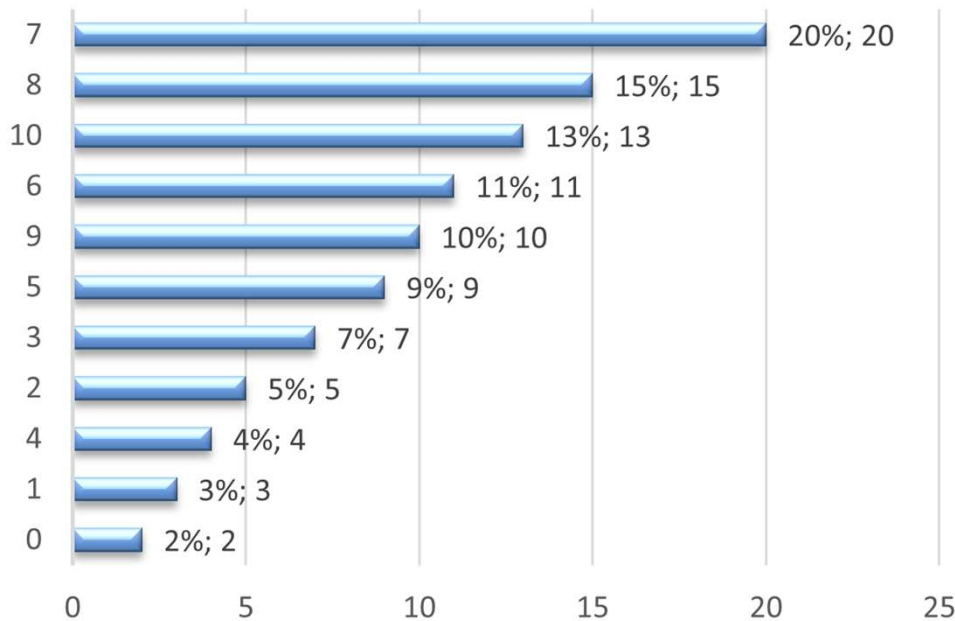
Shared outputs, polarity evaluation of comments



PERSONAL EXPERIENCE OF WFD

Q11. HOW EFFECTIVE IS WFD IN MOTIVATING YOU TO TAKE FOLLOW-UP ACTIONS, START PROJECTS, OR INITIATE COLLABORATIONS?

Rating of Follow-up actions



QUANTITATIVE DATASET

n = 122 respondents

n = 122 responses (1.23 responses per respondent and 23 revisions overall)

Level of engagement (comment): 19%

The results indicate a generally positive perception of WFD effectiveness.

Most frequent rating: 7 (followed by 8 and 10).

Modal value = 7, Median = 7, Mean = 6.36.

IQR = 3 The central 50% of the respondents between 5 and 8.

CROSS-TABULATION with professional expertise in FS/Foresight (n = 98)

Established professionals: highest evaluation

Non-specialists: small minority but lowest mean.

Occasional practitioners aligned with experts.

→ While non-specialists appreciate the introductory value of the event, trained professionals may possess the operational networks and methodological frameworks to translate large-scale foresight discussions into concrete collaborations and projects.

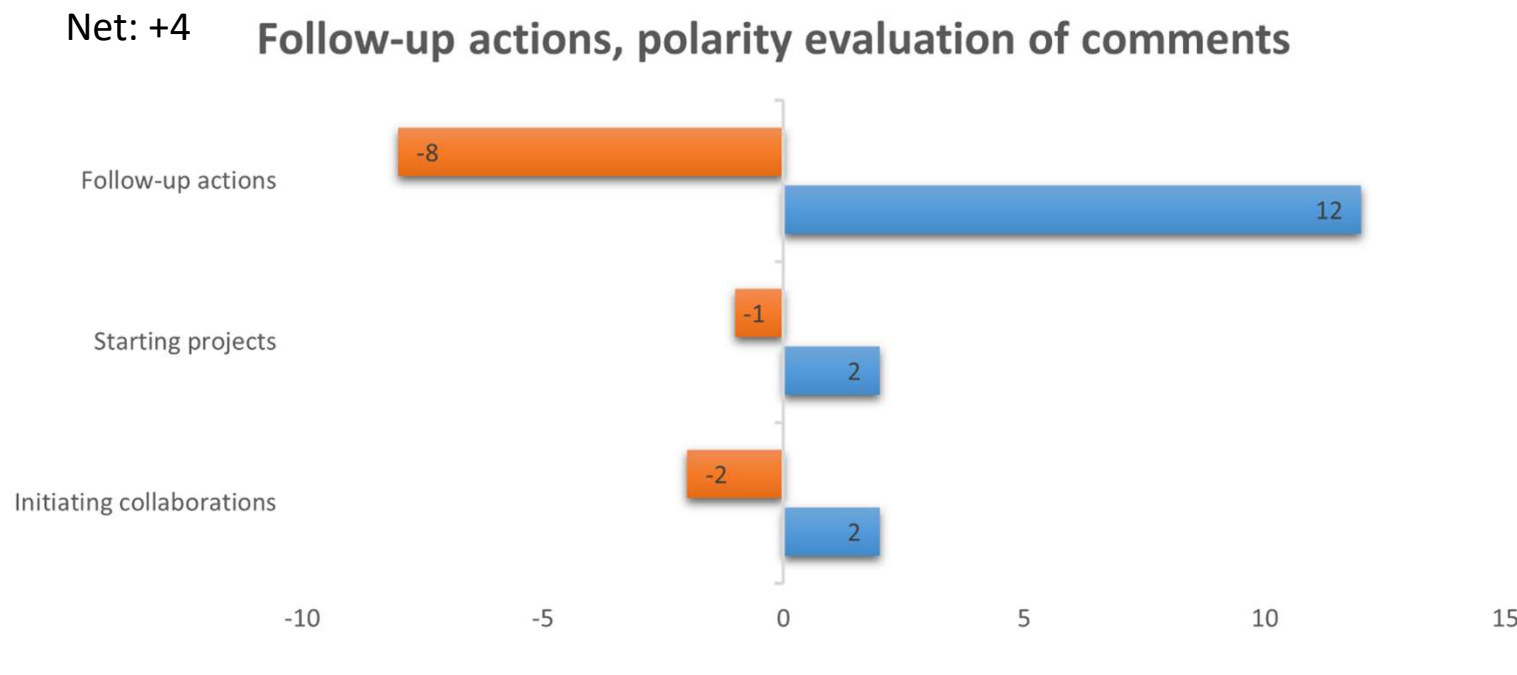
QUALITATIVE DATASET

n = 28 comments;

13 neutral

PERSONAL EXPERIENCE OF WFD

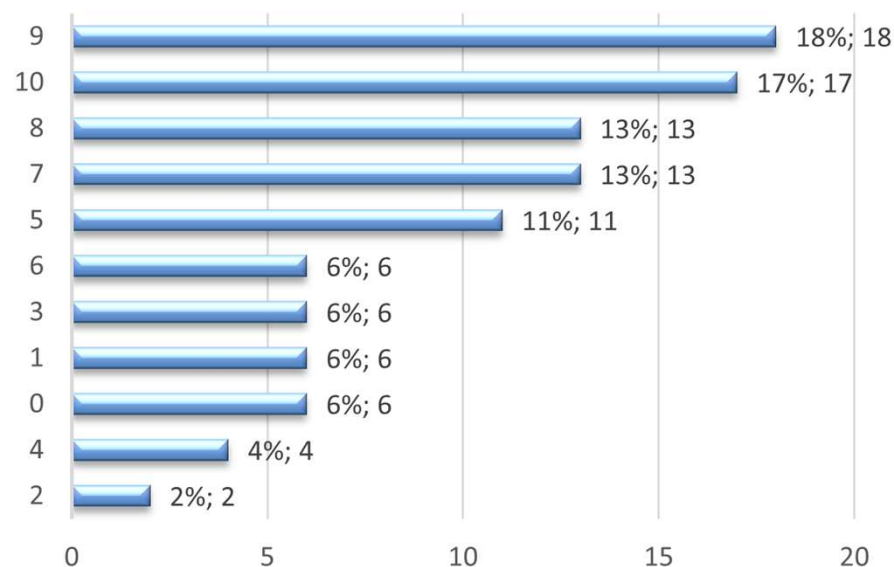
Q11. HOW EFFECTIVE IS WFD IN MOTIVATING YOU TO TAKE FOLLOW-UP ACTIONS, START PROJECTS, OR INITIATE COLLABORATIONS?



PERSONAL EXPERIENCE OF WFD

Q12. HOW DESIRABLE WOULD IT BE FOR WFD DISCUSSIONS TO INTEGRATE AI ASSISTED INSIGHTS, FACILITATION, OR EVEN AI AS AN ACTIVE PARTICIPANT IN FUTURE EDITIONS?

Rating of AI-support



QUANTITATIVE DATASET

n = 102 respondents

n = 135 responses (1.32 responses per respondent and 33 revisions overall)

Level of engagement (comment): 23%

The results indicate that AI-Support is desirable.

Most frequent rating: 7 (followed by 8 and 10).

Modal value = 9, Median = 7, Mean = 6.49.

IQR = 4 The central 50% of the respondents between 5 and 9.

CROSS-TABULATION with professional expertise in FS/Foresight (n = 101)

Non-specialists: small minority but highest rating combined with the tightest SD.

Established professionals: moderate mean but higher internal fragmentation.

Occasional practitioners aligned with experts.

QUALITATIVE DATASET

n = 30 comments

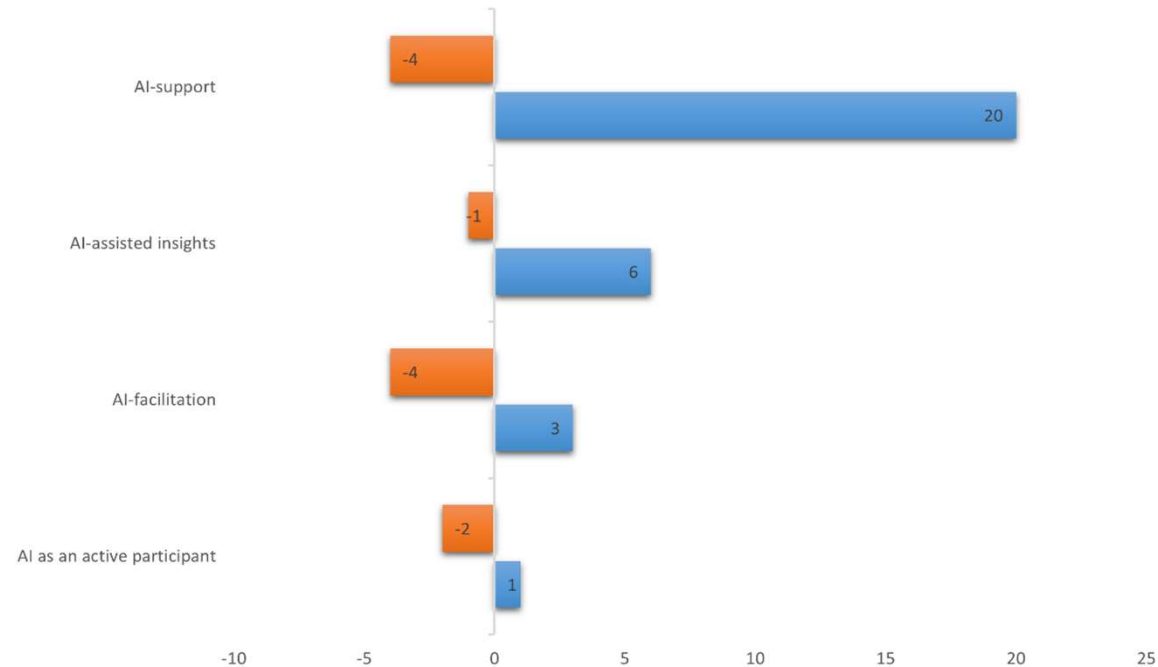
34 coded instances (6 neutral)

PERSONAL EXPERIENCE OF WFD

Q12. HOW DESIRABLE WOULD IT BE FOR WFD DISCUSSIONS TO INTEGRATE AI ASSISTED INSIGHTS, FACILITATION, OR EVEN AI AS AN ACTIVE PARTICIPANT IN FUTURE EDITIONS?

Net: +16

AI-support, polarity evaluation of comments



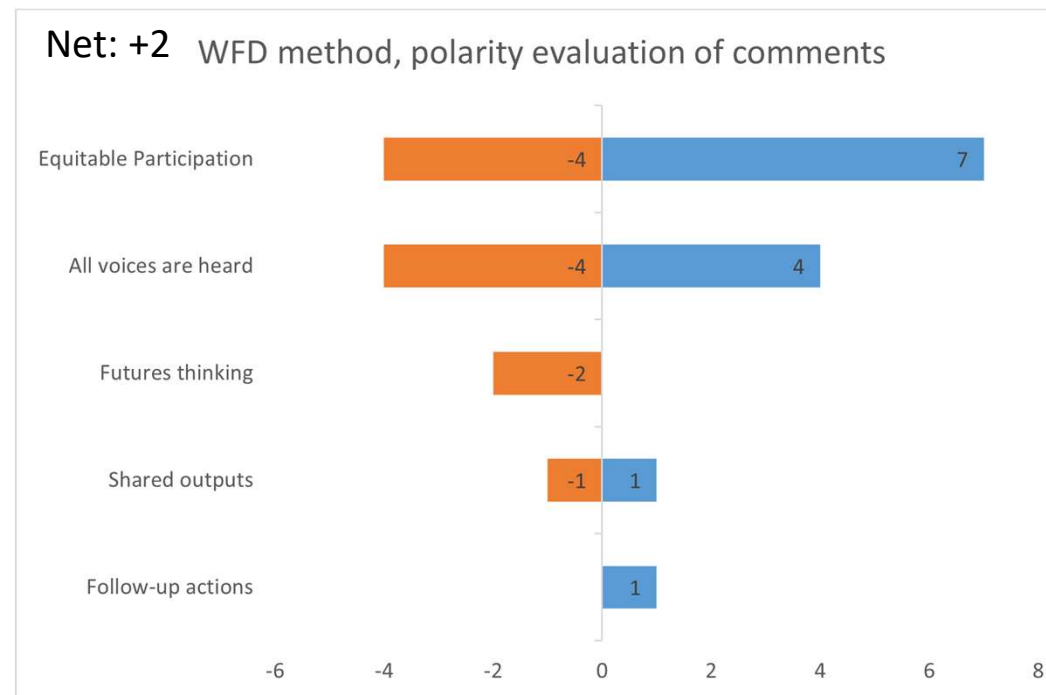
QUALITATIVE DATASET

n = 32 comments

71 coded instances (12 neutral)

PERSONAL EXPERIENCE OF WFD

Q13. IS THERE ANYTHING ELSE YOU WOULD LIKE TO SHARE ABOUT YOUR EXPERIENCE OF WFD, INCLUDING ASPECTS NOT COVERED IN THE PREVIOUS QUESTIONS OR SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT IN TERMS OF INCLUSIVENESS, GENERATIVITY, FUTURES THINKING, AND POST-EVENT CONTINUITY?



RECOMMENDATIONS

Area	Main Issues	Suggested improvements
Equitable participation	Underrepresentation of youth and some cultural and expert groups	Integrate youth sessions more closely with the main event; targeted outreach and promotion improvement
All voices are heard	Dominance of a few participants and of senior and male experts, and not effective moderation Language barriers	- Stronger facilitation, active invitation of silent participants, speaking protocols and interactive methods (e.g., “talking stick”) - AI-supported translation and multilingual participation - Pre-meetings with facilitators
Futures thinking	Discussions as insufficiently methodological, and too artistic, technology, and present-focused	Introduce foresight methods and exercises, horizon scanning, structured agenda, and thematic follow-up sessions
Shared outputs	Lack of synthesis across conversations Limited CI outputs	- Post-event reports, signal aggregation, thematic summaries and sessions - Common prompts across sessions, predefined objectives of the conversations - Previous Delphi-inspired procedures
Follow-up actions	Weak transition from dialogue to action Lack of continuity after the event	- Thematic working groups, follow-up takeaways - Facilitated matchmaking, structured follow-up collaboration channels, meetings, and periodic community activities
AI-support	AI-Support is welcome but AI-facilitation and attendance is debated Concerns about replacing human interaction	- Use AI primarily for summaries, translations, transcriptions, and synthesis - Experiment with AI but maintain human-centered facilitation and transparent AI use

SOME CONSIDERATIONS

- **WFD: positively evaluated in terms of effectiveness** (median and mean scores in the upper-mid range, modest SD changes)
- **RTD: limited convergence and n. of reviews/comments** (some evaluations influenced by prior experiences and perspectives)
- **INCLUSIVENESS:** Accessibility alone doesn't guarantee equitable and inclusive participation (concerns for unequal participation and underrepresentation of youth/cultures)
- **FUTURES THINKING AND COLLECTIVE LEARNING:** WFD is primarily a space for cognitive stimulation and sense-making than a structured environment for futures training
- **SHARED OUTPUTS AND FOLLOW-UP:** WFD is highly effective in stimulating ideas and relational activation, but there are few follow-up activities after.
- **AI-SUPPORT: envisioned as an augmentative infrastructure** (e.g., translations, knowledge management) supporting CI processes rather than replacing human interaction.
- **The study may be replicated for evaluating other futures participatory methods** (perceived effectiveness in terms of inclusiveness, futures thinking, shared outputs, follow-up activities).



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