

### **ASSIGNMENTS PLAY LESSON 12-15**

**Kjaer Academy Online Course Module Three** 



### Introduction





Play will help you overcome bias and think out of the box

### **PLAY MODULE THREE**

All the PLAY module assignments are designed to encourage you to play like a futurist, using some of the key tools in the practical play toolkit. Each assignment builds on the previous one, and they are all essential to fully equip you to play.

The assignments assume that you have completed the THINK and WORK modules and will apply the principles and thinking you have taken from these. However, you can still complete the assignments even if you have only followed the PLAY course module.

Common for all the exercises is that you can take the work as deep as you like, though we will always recommend taking a deep dive for the full learning outcome. You may choose to complete them over a few hours, days or even weeks. The more time you invest, the more you will learn and build valuable experience.

### Assignment overview



### All assignments are centred on the learning topics in the module:

- **12 Trend management in action:** Understand the typical trend management process.
- 13 Trend Toolkit [part I]: Get familiar with and build your own key tool, the Trend Atlas.
- 14 Trend Toolkit [part II]: The Trend Compass, Index and Trend Cards and their uses.
- **15 Storytelling the future:** The purpose and process of narrating future scenarios.
- 16 Final futurist coursework: Connect the dots and practice your skills (see separate Lesson 16 document).

The exercises are designed to activate your learning and help you think like a futurist. We encourage you to approach each assignment with an open mind and a willingness to challenge conventional perspectives. If possible, share your thoughts and ideas with others – anyone with an interest in the future. Why not invite them to participate? Sharing your work, discussing it, and collaborating are essential for honing your futurist skills. Practising and training your skills as you go along will also be very useful in your final futurist coursework where you will connect the dots and put everything you have learned into play.

You have now embarked on the path of PLAY on your journey towards becoming a futurist.



We recommend taking a deep dive for the full learning outcome

### Getting ready to PLAY



### What you need to PLAY and to complete the exercises

- Paper it can be a notebook, but to play freely we recommend A3 size or bigger.
- Basic drawing equipment pens, ruler, coloured pens, pencils or a tablet.
- Internet access for online research like reports, visuals, videos etc.

### Optional but recommended

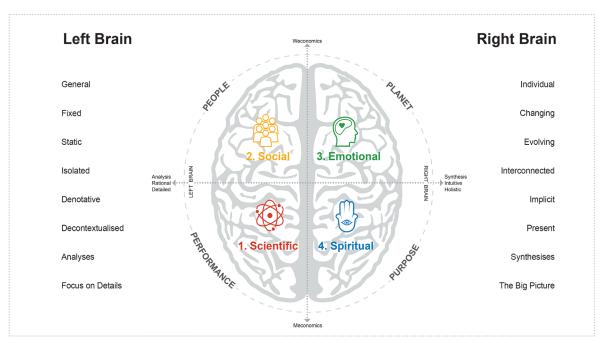
- Kjaer Global's THE FUTURIST TOOLKIT: Trend Cards 2035+ or make your own trend cards.
- Post-it notes in multiple colours.
- A camera (a phone camera is fine).
- A digital canvas to organise inspiration and ideas (Pinterest, miro, Canva or others like the Adobe tools).
- Analogue canvas for thinking, creating, iterating and document your process (pin board, wall or other).
- Audio recorder for notes and interviews (a phone audio recorder is fine).
- A printer.

You can use your tools and apps of choice or find suitable digital templates or similar. For some of the exercises, we provide templates for download directly from the course page.



Play is essential to develop and hone your futurist skills





The Kjaer Global whole-brain thinking model

### Using Artificial Intelligence (AI) in your work

Al is a helpful addition to the tools we have available as futurists. We see it as a partner and a new way to explore ideas and trends. However, it is important to note that Al cannot substitute deep research, and any 'fact' presented by Al should always be double checked. Al can also be prone to 'hallucinations'. This can be problematic if you use it for research, as Al sometimes fabulates its own versions of reality. Its ability to 'hallucinate' is however very useful when creating future scenarios or during PLAY sessions, where you want to open up to new thinking and ideas. Like all tools, Al works best when you truly understand how to use it. In this case prompt building and developing meaningful 'conversations' by organically modifying your prompts (input into the conversation) will guide the outcome.

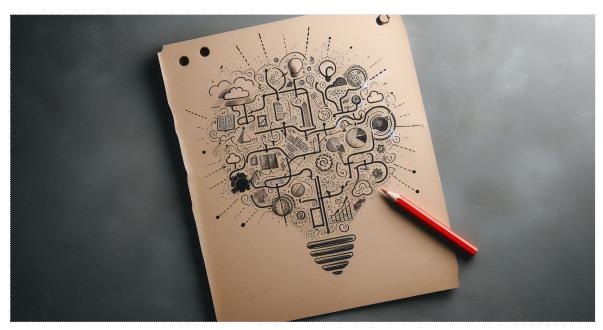
Interested in a prompt building workshop? Contact us on info@kjaer-global.com

"It is by logic we prove, but by intuition we discover"

Henri Poincaré, mathematician and philosopher of science

# 12 Trend management in action





A mind map doesn't have to be artistic or pretty but should be used to externalise your ideas

### **EXERCISE:** Ideation and mind mapping

### **OVERVIEW**

**Make a mind map of ideas and setting up a canvas** (digital or analogue). Gather your ideas and exercises from previous lessons and start making mind maps to ideate an imagined forecasting project.

#### **CREATING MIND MAPS**

Study the elements on the online lesson page to understand the connection between *Design Thinking* and the *Trend Management Process*. Externalising your ideas is vital to a good project process, so for this exercise you will create mind maps. Use any canvas to map out ideas and for 'deep divers', begin building an outline for your forecasting project. It is possible to start from *3. Reflect*, and just do the mind maps but we recommend the deep dive for a full learning outcome. Ambitious futurists will do both the mind map and the project outline exercises to kick-start their final Futurist Assignment in lesson 16.

"Give me six hours to chop down a tree and I will spend the first four sharpening the axe"

Abraham Lincoln

### Assignment [all levels]



#### **HOW TO PRACTICE**

Creating a mind map you can go as deep as you like. However, these maps offer a broad overview, so avoid excessive detail. Ambitious? Use a digital mind map template that will allow you to iterate throughout the process. But whether you use days or just hours, these are the steps to consider:

- 1. IMAGINE: Gather your material from previous exercises and review it.
- **2. EXPLORE: Select images, text, statistics or other material that captures your imagination** and sparks an interest to go deeper. Add to your collection by expanding on the topics that are of interest to you e.g. new technology, education, culture or a specific industry or business challenge.
- **3. REFLECT: Select a number of topics and do mind map for each**, try to not make them to defined and closed. Be aware of any biases that begin popping up they will close your mind to new perspectives. Your mind map should be a visual brainstorm of ideas with clear links between the ideas and leaps of thinking.
- **4. DEFINE:** This is where you try to convert some of your ideas into concepts. Group or re-group your material and ideas in a new area of your digital or physical canvas. Give them a heading that captures your concept for a forecasting project. Use your mind maps to guide this process.
- **5. REFINE: Select the topic you would like to take forward in the next exercises.** Deep divers; go to part two of the exercise: outlining a forecasting project.

### **ACTIVATE**

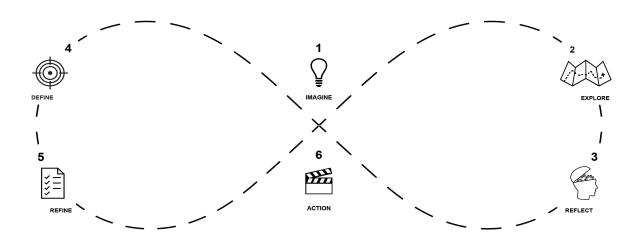
By the end of this exercise, you should have a few mind maps on paper or on a digital canvas. Ideally you will have either a physical canvas on a wall or a large surface, or a digital canvas or similar - with your ideas expanded on and clustered into mini project brainstorm areas.

"Almost all creativity involves purposeful play"

Abraham Maslow

### 12 Trend management in action





The Kjaer Global process illustrating its *Design Thinking* connection and its iterative foundation

### **EXERCISE**: Outlining a forecasting or trend management project

#### **OVERVIEW**

**Study the elements of the typical foresight or trend management project closely.** You may find some more important than others, or some harder to do. Create an outline of a process for an imagined forecasting project and make an argument for why it will work.

### "Whoever wants to understand much must play much"

Gottfried Benn

### **HOW TO PRACTICE**

**Creating your process outline.** Go as deep as you like. However, we believe that thorough preparation is key to a good outcome, so we recommend taking your time to engage.

**1. IMAGINE: Find your focus.** Determine which imaginary project you are creating a plan for: this could be for a specific client – private or public player, or it could be personal or for your current job and team. Use your mind maps to narrow down your ideas while opening up the individual topics.

### Process frameworks [Deep Dive]



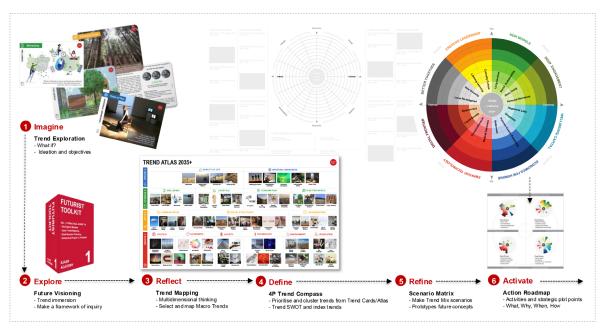
- **2. EXPLORE: Brainstorm the possible themes or elements for your foresight project**. Sketch them on a paper or use your digital canvas. E.g. desktop research, interviews etc.
- **3. REFLECT: Expand on your themes or elements.** Decide what you need for each in terms of resources. You may even want to think about a time frame for each point in your plan.
- **4. DEFINE: Organise and re-organise your plan if you need to.** Try to draw possible pathways of iteration. These are speculative and just meant to get you thinking about how the various elements in the plan connect.
- 5. REFINE: Synthesise and refine your plan. Write a brief argument for your choices.

#### **ACTIVATE & DEEP DIVE**

By the end of this exercise, you will have your roadmap or a project outline. A one-page overview (A3 or digital canvas). For the deep dive, you should also prepare a more detailed itemised companion document.

### Remember; plans and planning are not the same

Plans can change but what truly matters is understanding the value of planning. Planning a project means turning an idea into specific, measurable, achievable goals; plots along a path to a greater goal, which is the project objective. Careful planning is a roadmap to succeed with your ideas.



A typical Kjaer Global process map with tools and models; going from Imagine to Activate

### 13 Trend Toolkit [part I]





The Trend Atlas poster is useful to have close to your work area

### **EXERCISE:** Exploring and creating a simple Trend Atlas

#### **OVERVIEW**

**Get familiar with and build your own key tool, the Trend Atlas.** Use Kjaer Global's Trend Atlas 2035+ to explore future trends through the four dimensions: *Scientific, Social, Emotional*, and *Spiritual*. Then create your own Trend Atlas in a simplified light version. This exercise will familiarise you with the Trend Atlas framework and hone your forecasting and analytic skills. Using a set of Trend Cards for this exercise will be very helpful.

### Brief recap on identifying trends [see WORK Lesson 10 exercise]

- Collect data: Gather data from primary and secondary sources.
- Plot recurring signals or themes intuitively, both quantitative/qualitative trends.
- Contextualise the trend: Understand the broader social, cultural, and historical context.
- Interpret trends: Relate trends to relevant theories or philosophies for deeper understanding.
- Validate findings: Substantiate insights with multiple use cases and sources for credibility.
- Document and communicate results: here that means, create a Trend Atlas light version.
- Triangulate: Validate trends or signals with at least three significant and diverse sources.

### Assignment [all levels]



# "The creation of something new is not accomplished by the intellect but by the play instinct"

C. G. Jung

#### **HOW TO PRACTICE**

- **1. Explore all dimensions.** Study the elements making up each of the dimensions: *Scientific, Social, Emotional, Spiritual.* Scientific broadly follows the classic PESTEL analysis frame covering: Politics, Economics, Science, Technology, Environment and Legislation. See the lesson for full definition of the dimensions or use the dimensional cards in Kjaer Global's *THE FUTURIST TOOLKIT: Trend Cards 2035*+
- 2. Reflect on the trends. Identify trends and drivers for each dimension. These could be:
- Scientific: Advances in Al or renewable energy.
- Social: Changes in community values or social structures.
- **Emotional:** Growing focus on mental health.
- **Spiritual:** Rising interest in mindfulness or metaphysics.

Using a set of the *Trend Cards 2035*+ is very helpful in this phase. If you already created your own trends as 'Postcards from the Future' in the WORK Lesson 10 exercise, it's time to use them now.

- **3. Define your key themes.** For each dimension in the Trend Atlas, cluster the key themes and trends that seem most relevant today and likely to impact on the coming decade.
- **4. Refine and map the trends.** Sort your trends or themes into the Trend Atlas template [PDF in the online lesson]. You may want to shift them around or even change them entirely at this point. Note that your trends could be relevant in all the dimensions but will manifest differently though the lens of each dimension. Place them where you feel is most appropriate.

#### **ACTIVATE**

By the end of the exercise, you should have a personal Trend Atlas with several key themes and trends in each dimension. It is normal to have more trends in the Scientific and the Social dimension. Your Trend Atlas should be a one-page overview (A3 or digital canvas).

### **DEEP DIVE**

For the deep dive, you should prepare a more detailed itemised companion document defining your trends.





Using the Trend Atlas and Trend Cards to create a Trend Compass

"Maps are like campfires – everyone gathers around them, because they allow people to understand complex issues at a glance"

Sonoma Ecology Center

**EXERCISE**: Creating a Trend Compass using the Trend Cards

### **OVERVIEW**

**Create your own Trend Compass.** Work from the Kjaer Global's Trend Atlas 2035+ or the Trend Atlas you developed in the previous exercise to make a Trend Compass. Use the Trend SWOT framework (on page 13) to analyse the impact of one or more trends in your compass. Finally, create a Trend Index. You will find plenty of inspiration on the lesson page.

Before you start, make sure you have fully read and engaged with all the online lesson material.

### Assignment [all levels]



#### **HOW TO PRACTICE**

- 1. Imagine: The Trend Compass is useful for analysing specific inquiries about future developments.

  E.g. exploring the impact of trends on a new communication strategy or a product launch. In this exercise you make a generic compass. It will make sense to use a concept from the Lesson 12 exercise as your focus.
- **2. Explore: In Lesson 13 you made a Trend Atlas**, **analysing and evaluating trends**, mapping your chosen key trends into the four dimensions (*Scientific, Social, Emotional, Spiritual*). Now explore and review your selection. You can use the *Trend Cards 2035*+ for your review, which we recommend, as they are easy to move around and to cluster.
- **3. Reflect: Familiarise yourself with the structure of the 4P Trend Compass**, the Trend Index and Trend SWOT. Note how the Trend Compass and Trend Index connect with the Trend Atlas. 'Deep divers' can draw a map of the relations and possible routes of iteration between the models.
- **4. Define: Download the Trend Compass template** from Lesson 14 or sketch your own on a large piece of paper. Carefully sort your trends into the Trend Compass to make a coherent trend overview. You can choose to work with just four Macro Trends. You can also chose to do eight or twelve trends. Alternatively create your own template to allow for more trends. At this stage you may want to add new trends from the Trend Cards or from your own trends. You most likely have to swap some things around, as this stage is still very iterative ∞.
- 4. Refine: Now refine your Trend Selection. Go to the next part of the exercise [on page 13]

#### **DEEP DIVE**

- **1a. For learners who wish to dive deeper**, the *Imagine* step helps to refine your focus and write a statement about what you want to explore with your Trend Compass. It can be very specific or more generic. Use your project idea and outline from Lesson 12 as your guiding focus. Re-view and re-write if necessary ∞.
- **2a. Make your own 'Postcards from the future':** To fully engage and deep dive with the trends, we recommend using the PDF templates in the lesson to make your own trend cards. Follow the steps in the WORK module, Lesson 10 exercise, to identify and define your trends.

### 14 Trend Toolkit [part II]





The SWOT framework and workshop exercise

**EXERCISE:** Perform a Trend SWOT Analysis

#### **OVERVIEW**

The Trend SWOT Analysis is not strictly essential to creating a Trend Index, but it can help you evaluate the trends with greater precision. The Trend Index evaluation can also be done through team discussions (typically in a workshop setting). By using expert interviews and/or your intuition – provided the trends are anchored in sound data and you are fully familiar with the data – you can now index or rate the trends.

#### **HOW TO PRACTICE**

**6. Reflect:** A Trend Index is a Trend Compass where each trend's impact has been carefully evaluated in relation to a relevant question to make a comparison or pinpoint opportunities. E.g. "How does this trend impact in various regions?" Have your Trend Checklist from Lesson 14 at hand when doing this exercise.

In this exercise you will use the Trend SWOT Analysis to evaluate one or more trends. You can make a deep analysis or keep it simple. The important thing is that you have a way to compare and assess the impact of the trends. The SWOT framework can be used to analyse very specific inquiry, but for this exercise you can keep it generic by asking:

- Strength: What are your strengths in relation to this trend?
- Weakness: What are your weakness in relation to this trend?
- Opportunity: What opportunities do the trend offer?
- Threats: What threats do the trend represent?

Your index value should reflect your conclusions – indicating the relative impact of the trend on a scale 1-10 (1=low impact and 10=high). You must use the same questions to evaluate all the trends in the index.

### Assignment [Curious + Deep Dive]



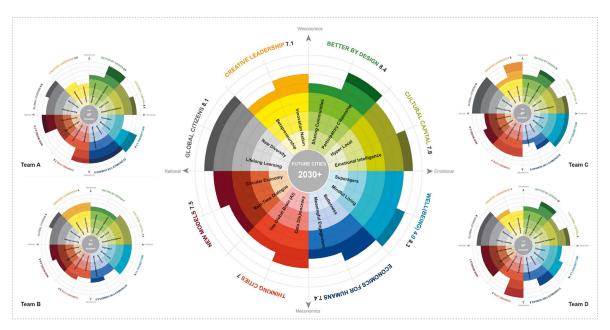
### **EXERCISE:** Create a Trend Index

#### **HOW TO PRACTICE**

- 7. Define: The Trend Compass template contains markings for indexing the trends on a scale 1-10. The evaluations are qualitative as it is your assessment and not hard data that determines your indexed value. However, your trends analysis should be founded on both qualitative and quantitative data. Because of its qualitative nature, the best indexes are created in workshops or groups, allowing for a collective evaluation, which is often more accurate than individual assessments. For this exercise, a single perspective is fine.
- **8. Refine: You may find that your index looks messy.** This is fine. In fact, better than fine, because that means you have been thinking creatively and are playing with your material. In this stage, however, you should refine your Trend Compass and final index into new templates and make them presentable. We recommend using colours that correspond to the dimensions in the Trend Atlas ∞.

### **ACTIVATE**

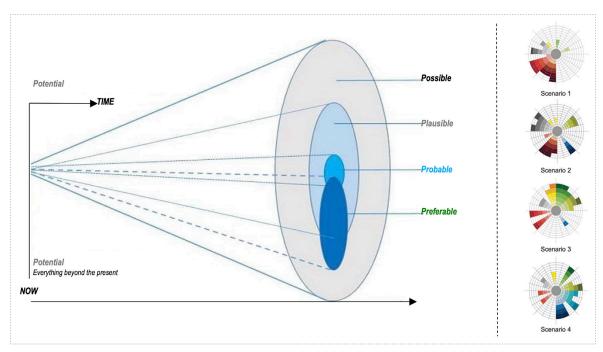
By the end of this exercise, you should have a Trend Compass and a Trend Index, both serve as a one-page overview (A3 or digital canvas). For the deep dive, you should also prepare an more detailed itemised companion document with your Trend SWOT Analyses.



Future Cities 2030+ Workshop – four teams A+B+C+D created a Trend Index – consolidated in the center

### 15 Storytelling the future





Using the Trend Compass to index and cluster various 'trend mix', we imagine distinct future scenarios

"This is the real secret of life – to be completely engaged with what you are doing in the here and now. And instead of calling it work, realise it is play"

Alan Watts

EXERCISE: Apply your futurist skills to create Narrative Scenarios 2050 through a 4P lens

### **OVERVIEW**

**Storytelling the future.** Develop a scenario matrix considering the Kjaer Global 4P Framework: *People, Planet, Purpose, Performance*. The narrative scenarios should take the form of a 'letter from the future' or a 'day in the life' of a relevant imagined future protagonist. Revisit the WORK Lesson 11 for a recap on the 4Ps if necessary. This exercise will help you imagine a potential future and reflect on its implications.

### **INSPIRATION**

**Scenario Matrix, Narrative Scenarios and letters from the future.** Before you begin, it would be beneficial to explore the following [pages 17-20] for inspiration. Here you'll find plenty of specific examples.

### Assignment [all levels]



#### **HOW TO PRACTICE**

### 1. IMAGINE: Identify two key uncertainties

Choose two critical uncertainties that could shape the future, such as technological adaptation or regulation, global climate responses, social change, economic shifts, or human well-being. Use your Trend Compass or the Trend Cards for inspiration.

#### 2. EXPLORE: Create a Scenario Matrix

Create Axes of Uncertainty to make a matrix with four quadrants, each representing a distinct possible future. E.g. Axis one: technological adaptation (e.g. high vs. low) Axis two: global climate responses (e.g. business as usual vs. radical intervention) – this should give you four quadrants with combinations such as High /Technological Adaptation + Climate Response/Business as Usual. How would that world look? You can find more inspiration in the examples on the lesson page.

### 3. REFLECT + 4. DEFINE: Apply the 4P Framework to one of your scenarios

- People: How do individuals and communities live and interact?
- Planet: What is the state of the environment and global ecosystems?
- Purpose: What are the dominant values and ethical considerations?
- Performance: How do economies, businesses, and systems function?

### 5. REFINE: Write your Narrative Scenario [in your preferred style]

Use your chosen scenario in your matrix to write one of the following:

- **a.** *A letter from the future.* It should be from the perspective of someone living in that world in year 2050. Include your reflections from the 4P framework. [200-word max]
- **b.** A day in the life of your chosen protagonist. Reflect on their daily life, challenges, aspirations and hopes while highlighting the unique traits of this future world. [200-word max]

#### **ACTIVATE**

When writing, imagine the future boldly and be specific. The scenario should help uncover possibilities and challenges, inspiring us to consider how today's decisions impact tomorrow's world.

# 15 Storytelling the future





Scenarios make the future come alive and can help us communicate central challenges and opportunities

#### A LETTER FROM THE FUTURE

In this example, we have re-written the PRACTOPIA scenario from the ANE Vision 2030+, future of engineering project (you can download the full report from the lesson page).

### Some key traits from the original scenario:

- Tech is a mean to independence and key to sustainability
- Tightly regulated innovation
- Scaling solutions can be a challenge
- · High degree of specialists
- · Lean, local and circular economy
- · Local solutions before global
- Try to bring clarity to complex designs
- · Trust through transparency

PRACTOPIA ONE: This scenario is defined by strictly regulated markets and technology, and a focus on local communities.

### Inspiration and examples



### Dear Future Engineer,

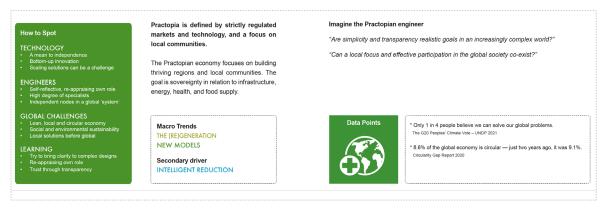
I'm writing from Practopia – a world focused on community, local resilience, and sustainable practices. Here, markets and technology are carefully regulated to strengthen regional autonomy, from infrastructure to food and energy, with the goal of ensuring local sovereignty in all essentials.

Our education system prioritises training and specialisation, creating high demand for engineers like us. We're part of a lean, circular economy that values sustainability and minimizes waste, with national policies that limit global market influences. This emphasis on community-building has transformed engineering, as smaller, mission-driven start-ups and independent freelancers become the norm.

In Practopia, engineering isn't just technical – it's deeply human-centered, focused on social and environmental good. Ethical business models are the standard, blending entrepreneurial spirit with genuine local care. We consider ourselves as independent nodes in a global system, dedicated to solving issues locally while keeping the bigger picture in mind.

To address complexity, we now study Intelligent Reduction Engineering, where we demystify advanced systems to build public trust and assess risks transparently. As engineers, we're encouraged to continually reflect on our responsibilities and the impact of our work, ensuring that our innovations contribute meaningfully to a sustainable world.

Warm regards,
A Fellow Engineer



The Narrative Scenarios are composed from our extensive trend research and qualitative interviews

### 15 Storytelling the future



PRACTOPIA TWO: Now consider the same scenario, here written to highlight the challenges.

Dear Future Engineer,

I'm writing from Practopia – a world built on local resilience and strict regulation. Here, everything from markets to technology is tightly controlled to prioritise regional autonomy in infrastructure, energy, health, and food supply. On paper, it's a sustainable system, yet it comes with challenges.

While our education system is geared toward training specialists, the intense focus on local skills and "Intelligent Reduction Engineering" limits our exposure to diverse fields and global ideas. Engineering here is now mostly small-scale, with freelancers and start-ups dominating. The constant need to 'prove' our value to local communities can make it hard to pursue larger, more ambitious projects. Funding is available, but only for initiatives that strictly align with narrow, local priorities, often stifling broader innovation.

Ethical business models and sustainability goals are essential here, but the rules can feel restrictive. Engineers are seen as responsible not only for their work but for every ripple effect it has on the community.

Our role as 'independent nodes' sounds empowering, yet the pressure to solve complex problems alone, without much global collaboration, is overwhelming at times. We're encouraged to constantly assess our impact, but balancing responsibility and innovation in this tightly controlled system can feel exhausting.

In solidarity,

A Fellow Engineer

This example highlights the importance of narrative focus – what do you chose to include? And what is your viewpoint, the challenges or the positives?

### Inspiration and examples



PRACTOPIA THREE: Finally consider this example. This time the scenario is written as a 'day in the life of a young engineering student' in the Practopia scenario.

**6:30 AM:** I wake up to the gentle hum of the solar window shades rising, letting in the morning light. Living in Practopia means everything is optimised for sustainability, down to the smallest details. I grab my tablet and check today's modules for my degree in Intelligent Reduction Engineering – a mix of system design and ethics that's become essential here.

**8:00 AM:** I bike over to the learning center, passing the community garden on the way. Practopia values local production, so gardens like these are everywhere, along with solar panels and water collection systems. At school, our first workshop of the day is on Simplexity – how to make complex systems transparent and manageable. It's fascinating, but we're reminded constantly of our duty transparent and accountable.

**11:30 AM:** Our ethics seminar is up next. We discuss case studies on the use of AI. Regulation is heavy in Practopia which can be inspiring – but also intimidating. Every project feels like it must pass through a narrow moral gate.

**2:00 PM:** Lunch with friends at the community cafeteria. Most students, like me, are training for specialised roles in sustainability and local tech. We joke about how it sometimes feels like we're all being trained to think the same way, with so many rules about what's 'right' for the community. Still, we're passionate about helping Practopia thrive.

**5:00 PM:** After lunch, I head to my internship at a local start-up focused on waste reduction. As an intern, I'm learning how to use local materials efficiently, but the pressure is real – funding is strict, and each design is closely scrutinised to ensure it aligns with Practopia's regulatives.

**9:00 PM:** Finally home, I reflect on the day. I wonder what it would be like to have fewer constraints, to explore bigger ideas beyond our borders. Still, there's comfort in knowing that my work has meaning, even if the balance between freedom and responsibility can feel like a tightrope. Now my window shades dim the light to tell me it is time to rest.

Note how this scenario includes both the challenges and the positives. This style can be highly engaging and specific.

Now, it's your turn!

## Notes



# Notes





Kjaer Academy
Education & Upskilling
© Kjaer Global Itd.

kjaer-global.com kjaer-academy.com

Contact: info@kjaer-global.com