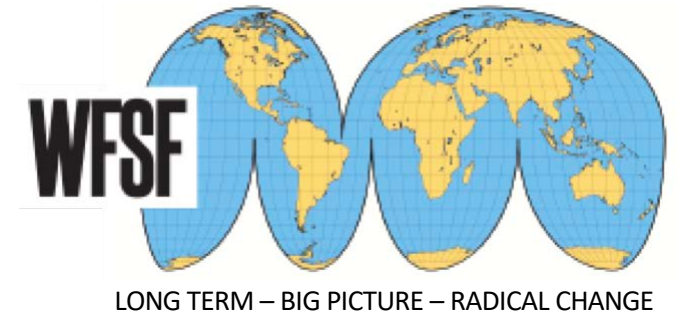


# WE ARE WFSF



History, Leadership, Activities, Membership







# WFSF HISTORY



## About WFSF (1)

WFSF is a UNESCO and UN consultative partner and global NGO with members in over 60 countries. We bring together academics, researchers, practitioners, students and futures-focused institutions. WFSF offers a forum for stimulation, exploration and exchange of ideas, visions, and plans for alternative futures, through long-term, big-picture thinking and radical change.

WFSF is a non-profit global NGO governed by a President and Executive Board. We are independent, non-commercial and lead the way in futures research & scholarship.

Founded in Paris in 1973, WFSF is a global network of leading futurists. WFSF membership is transdisciplinary and very diverse. WFSF welcomes scholars, teachers, researchers, foresight practitioners, policy analysts, activists, students and others with a long-range view. Members include women, men and young people from all corners of the globe.





## About WFSF (2)

We collaborate with dozens of futures-focused organisations all over the world and invite applications for institutional membership from suitably qualified organisations.

WFSF has a long-standing commitment to truly global futures, meaning openness to creating alternative futures that embrace cultural diversity and individual difference.

WFSF is dedicated to stimulating awareness of the urgent need for long-term thinking in government, policy, civil and educational institutions, to resolve complex local, national, regional and global problems.



## The Leadership Team

The WFSF Executive Board consists of eleven members: the President who is elected for a four-year term and oversees the organization; the Director who is appointed by the Executive Board and manages the Secretariat; and nine Executive Board members elected for a four-year term. The current President is Erik F. Øverland, PhD, from Norway.

Erik works on multiple foresight projects in Norway, and across Europe. He has a PhD in Futures Studies from the Free University of Berlin. Erik is a Co-Editor-in-Chief for the European Journal for Futures Research.

For information about the other member, please go to:

<https://wfsf.org/category/leadership/>





# UNDERSTANDING FUTURES STUDIES



## What is Futures Studies?

Futures Studies is a scientific research field involving scholars and researchers across many disciplines. There are undergraduate and post-graduate programs available in universities around the world. You will notice that we use the plural term “futures” and you may wonder why we use this and not the singular term: “future”?

The answer is that WFSF, since its inception, has encouraged and supported a pluralistic approach to futures studies. This pluralism is reflected in the diversity of the WFSF membership and the research it supports. The WFSF uses the plural term “futures” studies rather than the singular “future” studies to counter the notion of only one future, the latter having both conceptual limitations and political implications. This pluralisation of futures opens up the territory for envisioning and creating alternative and preferred futures. A major focus of futures studies for us at WFSF is how we envisage and develop desirable outcomes in the times ahead.



## A Pluralistic Approach to Understanding Futures Studies (1)

While it is commonly thought that futures studies is an attempt to predict the future based on extrapolation from present day trends, empirical/predictive futures is only one of at least five approaches to futures research that have been identified. Building on earlier models of Sohail Inayatullah (1990), Eleonora Masini (1993), Wendell Bell (1997), and Richard Slaughter (1999, 2003), and her own youth futures research (1997), Jennifer Gidley has developed a taxonomy of five traditions, or paradigmatic approaches, to futures studies (Gidley 2004, 2009, 2011, 2013).





## A Pluralistic Approach to Understanding Futures Studies (2)

“There are many ways that the development of the futures studies field could be characterised. One broad contextual approach is to identify five traditions currently operating within the field, each of which represents different epistemological, or even ideological, underpinnings:

The empirical-positivist tradition focuses on trend analysis and prediction, originated in the USA. It was supported by the formation of the World Future Society in the 1960s.

The critical-normative tradition originated in Europe and grew out of a critique of what was perceived as an overly empirical approach to futures in the USA. This led to the foundation of the World Futures Studies Federation in the early 1970s. ...



## A Pluralistic Approach to Understanding Futures Studies (3)

... The cultural-interpretive tradition arose in large measure from the work of those WFSF members who sought to include non-Western cultures and to invoke a deeper consideration of civilisational and planetary futures.

The empowerment-activist, prospective, action research approach began in Europe in the nineties and has been taken up by some Australian researchers.

The integral/transdisciplinary futures approach is newly emerging and appears to have potential for authentic multiperspectival and planetary inclusion, providing it remains open. ...





## A Pluralistic Approach to Understanding Futures Studies (4)

... These are not mutually exclusive approaches, nor should this contextualisation imply a linear developmental model. These are all suitable pathways to futures research and pedagogy depending on the context. Well-informed futures researchers and educators may utilise any or all of these traditions depending on their operational context." (Gidley 2009).

In Global Knowledge Futures (2013) Gidley's five-stranded futures typology begins with a single bifurcation between positivist and post-positivist. In this model, the critical, cultural, empowerment & integral approaches reflect the pluralism of the post-positivist turn.



## References for Researching the Traditions of Futures Studies (1)

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## References for Researching the Traditions of Futures Studies (3)

Inayatullah, S. (1990). Deconstructing and reconstructing the future: Predictive, cultural and critical epistemologies. *Futures*, 22(2), 115-141.

Masini, E. (1993). *Why Future Studies?* London: Grey Seal.

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Slaughter, R. (2008). What difference does integral make? *Futures*, 40, 120-137.

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# WFSF MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION



## “Long Term, Big Picture, Radical Change”

WFSF is the leading futures organisation concerned with the scholarship of futures research and the promotion of alternative visions for humanity. In this critical time in human history, we invite you to join the WFSF in its efforts to promote futures thinking as a way to anticipate and respond to the complexity and scale of global challenges. Joining WFSF will provide you with opportunities to collaborate with and support other future-oriented individuals and organisations including UNESCO and the UN family. In working together you will be able to design alternative and preferred futures and network with others with similar concerns.

While many futures organisations today have succumbed to the narrow and short-term mindsets of corporate and commercial interests, WFSF has remained true to the vision of its founders: to democratise futures research and to commit to creating humane futures for all.





## You are invited to join the WFSF in its efforts to:

- ✓ Promote futures studies in general;
- ✓ Promote awareness of challenging global problems;
- ✓ Design prospects for alternative and preferred futures;
- ✓ Support and collaborate with other futures-oriented organisations;
- ✓ Promote networking between individuals and organisations concerned with futures;
- ✓ Promote cooperative participation in studies of the futures of humanity;
- ✓ Encourage innovative, transdisciplinary thinking across all disciplines and cultures;
- ✓ Help introduce futures-oriented thinking in all branches of knowledge and action;
- ✓ Promote freedom of inquiry, discussion and thinking about diverse futures.

**We wholeheartedly welcome all new members into the WFSF community!**

## WFSF Membership Benefits

As a WFSF member you will be able to:

- a) Meet a cross-section of the world's leading futures researchers, teachers, professional practitioners and others committed to open, creative and innovative futures for humanity;
- b) Receive news of UNESCO and UN-ECOSOC projects and participate in high-level meetings related to futures and foresight, if you are approved to do so by the WFSF Executive Board as one of our representatives;
- c) Participate as a speaker in WFSF World Conferences, regional meetings and partner events;
- d) Meet colleagues in your region of the world to build your regional networks;
- e) Meet colleagues with specialist knowledge or expertise on different futures studies themes;
- f) Participate in a range of extraordinary discussions with these individuals through our private but very active email discussion forum hosted by the Institut Futur at the Free University of Berlin.
- g) Ask futures questions to our membership and receive a wealth of responses to assist with your research.
- h) Receive news from time to time about upcoming Futures Events around the globe





## WFSF Constitutions

The participants in the World Futures Studies conferences in Oslo (1967), Kyoto (1970) and Bucharest (1972) founded the World Futures Studies Federation (herein called "Federation") in Paris in 1973. As a professional and learned body, the Federation was designed to promote cooperative participation in discourses and studies of the futures of humanity.

The constitution in its present form was adopted in Nairobi, Kenya, in 1995 and took effect from 31 December 1995. It was amended on 6 December 1999, in Bacolod City, Philippines, then on 3 July 2008, in Trollhättan, Sweden, and then at the GA in Bollwiller, France, on 6th June 2009.



# DONATIONS & SPONSORSHIP





## The Importance of Donations

Futures Studies is based on the belief that we as humans have personal agency to select or create a future of our choice or of our making. At all times there are endless possibilities. If we have the vision, courage and creativity we can create our preferred futures. Futures studies is about empowerment, challenging the status quo, seeing things differently, changing mindsets and going beyond business-as-usual. It is about anticipating growth in all its facets and about being open and receptive to all the signals of change and being willing to adopt new approaches and adapt to what we cannot change.

If you find that your own personal values, or those of your organisation, align with ours, you may wish to consider making a one-off donation or sponsoring one of our projects.

Your donation will enable us to expand our activities and programs. We have many student members in low-income countries who could participate with your support.

Please support our Youth Solidarity Scholarship Fund to enable more young people to participate in upcoming Conferences.



## How to Contribute

Any person, member or otherwise, may make a donation of any amount to WFSF through the Donation link on the Home Page

Please make sure you give your name, unless you want your donation to be anonymous.



Contact us for more information:  
[secretariat@wfsf.org](mailto:secretariat@wfsf.org)



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