

Playbook: Collaborative Foresight for Teams

A workshop to bridge the imagination-action gap



About Collaborative Foresight for Teams

Collaborative Foresight for Teams is a workshop in which teams gain futures-focused insights about their work, and ways to bring them into action.

The half-day workshop has four steps in which the participating team uncovers possible, desirable and unknown futures relevant to their topic at focus, key impacts and actions for the team to take.

The process helps the team to reveal new perspectives and opportunities and to align on how to work with the future going forward. It also helps the team to create a shared language around the future and builds their competencies in foresight and futures thinking.

The workshop results in a roadmap of actions for the team to take on key insights that emerge in the workshop.

The method and the playbook were developed with support from Swedbanks Ägarstiftelse Skåne. Before its release, it was tested with teams from five companies of various sizes and from different industries.

The method builds on Media Evolution's work on and approach of Collaborative Foresight and makes use of the wide range of future scenarios imagined by industry experts and practitioners in our past Collaborative Foresight cycles.

This playbook offers a step-by-step guide and a structure for a facilitator to use. As with any such structure, we invite you to tap your experience and adapt the method to meet the needs of the team.

Collaborative Foresight at Media Evolution

Collaborative Foresight is an inclusive, community-based, open-source and evolving way to work with the future developed at Media Evolution. It draws on and contributes to the fields of strategic foresight, futures thinking, futures studies, speculative design and participatory design.

Given our ability to tap into our 180 member organisations—representing a wide variety of industries, scale and sectors—our approach relies on organisational knowledge-sharing to power collective futures-making. In Collaborative Foresight, we create space and time to move through knowledge-sharing into collective imagination, and then translation of emergent futures into strategies for action.



Jon Koko

Bridging the Imagination-Action Gap workshop

- A 3,5-hour in-person workshop.
- The guidelines that follow are for groups of 3-5 persons with suggestions for adjustments for facilitating groups of 6 and above.
- With additional adjustments, the method can be used in online and/or in shorter or longer settings.



Jon Koko



Workshop overview

In the Collaborative Foresight for Teams workshop, the team (or group) focuses on a pre-chosen topic and explore the impacts of different kinds of futures on this focus. They capture the impacts and insights uncovered into an Imagination-Action Gap Canvas.

Towards the end, the team chooses the most important and novel insights and impacts and decides on actions they wish to take going forward.

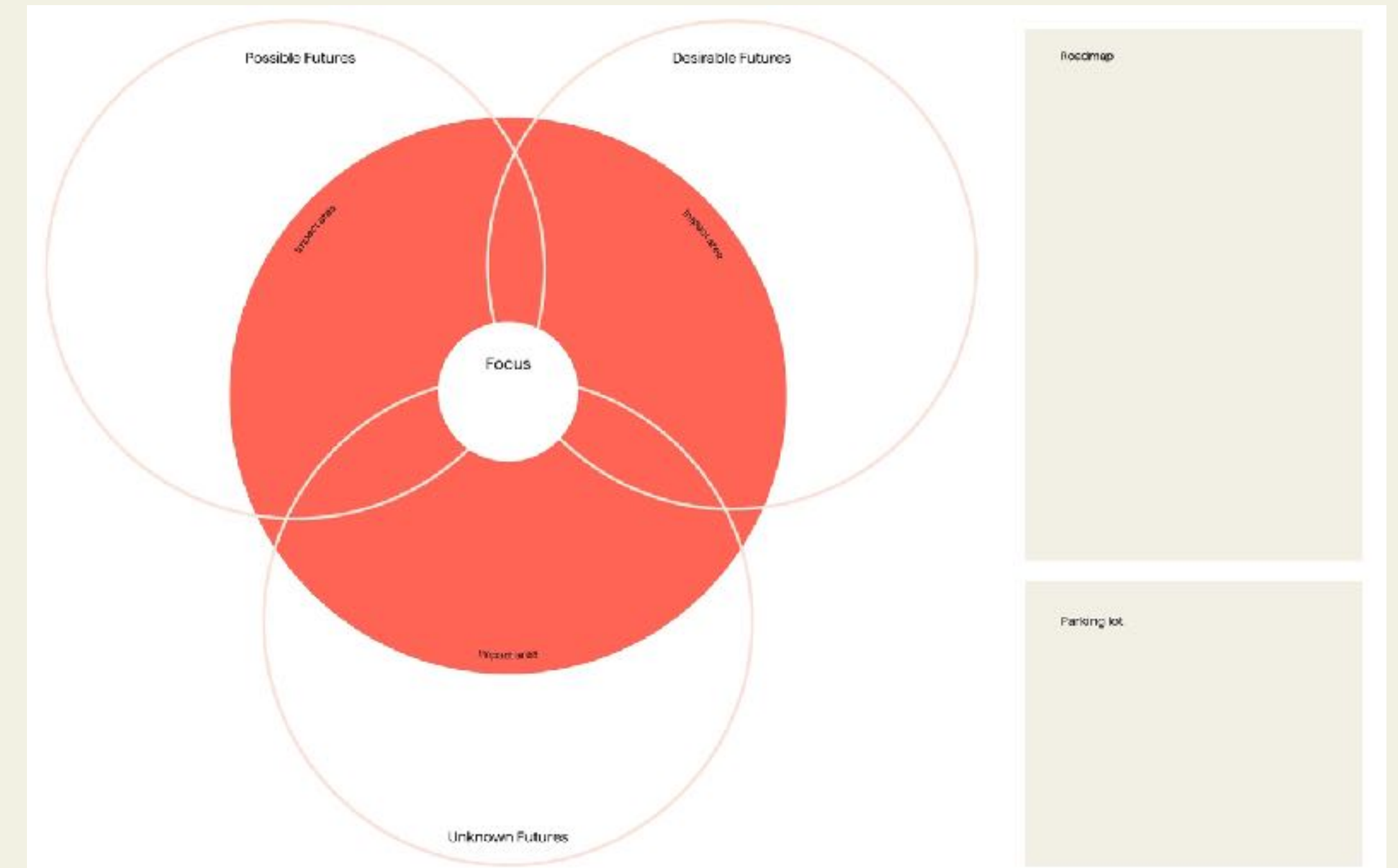
The workshop consists of the following parts:

- Introduction (15 min)
- Focus of the workshop (10 min)
- Possible futures (75 min)
- Break (10 min)
- Desirable futures (30 min)
- Unknown futures (30 min)
- From imagination to action - roadmap (30 min)
- Closing (10 min)

The Imagination-Action Canvas

The Canvas guides the team's work in the workshop as they move through different types of futures, identify insights and impacts and draft out a roadmap.

We recommend using the Canvas either as a large printout or by drawing a similar shape on a whiteboard/large paper.





Preparation for the workshop

1. Invite: Decide who should be present and invite them to the workshop. This could be a team working together on a particular product, service, strategy or other or a group of people from the same organisation looking for alignment and ways to work together.

2. Define focus and create a one-pager: Before the workshop, the team or group lead defines what the team will focus and apply futures on. Make sure the team/group lead answers the questions in the one-pager and shares it with the participants well in advance.

The focus can be a product, strategy, service or similar. We recommend this focus to be as close to the work of the team as possible and preferably a product, project or a service rather than a theme or a topic. Make sure to share the one-pager with workshop participants ahead of time.

3. Prepare materials (see next page) and update the presentation and Time Travel.

4. Book a suitable room with possibility for group work, showing a slide presentation and hanging up the Canvas.

Collaborative Foresight scenarios by Media Evolution community (1/2)

In part 5 of the workshop, the participants will read a future scenario and reflect on questions that emerge when relating their focus to that future, and discuss uncertainty and the unknown in general.

For this, we tap into futures scenarios imagined by groups of experts and practitioners in Media Evolution's Collaborative Foresight cycles exploring a diverse range of topics, such as futures of digital work, wise cities and creating, to mention a few.

For the purpose of the exercise on unknown futures, we recommend you to pre-select a scenario that you believe is furthest away from the group's own imaginations and reflections around their focus: what could challenge them the most?

See an introduction of the futures in the next page and [download the futures and accompanying questions here](#).

You can find more future scenarios in [Media Evolution's Collaborative Foresight books](#).



Collaborative Foresight scenarios by Media Evolution community (2/2)

Fractured Future (Futures of Digital Work)

By 2045, the world has become increasingly divided into two completely discrete spheres of existence, the digital and the analogue. Recently, however, it became clear that this dichotomy is not sustainable for the planet nor its inhabitants and many are trying to bridge the divide.

Nowhere to hide (Futures of AI for Sustainability)

A future in which the application of AI has led to total transparency of sustainability impacts and the end of greenwashing.

Earth-Centred Design (Futures of Wise Cities)

In 2050 life and cities in Southern Sweden are integrated with nature. Humans are working in tandem with other organisms to balance degraded ecosystems.

In Nature, No Greed (Futures of Digital Work)

It's 2050 in Skåne, and being present in the physical world is highly valued. The best jobs are those that maximise outdoor time and time spent physically together with other people. There's a social stigma around overt or obvious uses of technology.

Painting the Town Green (Futures of Behaviour Design for Well-being)

It is 2050, and the region-city of Copenhalmö has become a self-sufficient, regenerative city-state where urban agriculture and local food production employ and feed the population.

One-pager defining the focus

The one-pager will help the team lead or the team to decide on and align on a focus of the workshop prior to the start.

You can [download one-pager template here](#).

One-pager to define the topic at focus

Imagination-Action Gap workshop

[Instructions]

In the foresight method test workshop, we will guide your team in applying Collaborative Foresight on a topic, idea or material (such as a new or existing strategy, product, service or other). We advise you to choose a topic that is somewhat clearly defined and on which the team has the ability to act upon. The purpose of this one-pager is to offer a concise yet comprehensive way to present the topic to the team and the facilitators. You can use the guiding questions to create the one-pager. Please keep it brief (preferably no more than one page). You can use visuals or graphs if you like.

Title

(Provide a clear and concise title for the topic/material the team will work on)

Description

(Briefly describe the topic/material at focus)

Context and background

(Briefly describe the background or context of the topic/material)

Purpose

(Why is the team focusing on this topic/material? What objectives does it have to work on this topic?)

Current status

(Describe where the team is in working with this topic)

Potential action

(In what way might the team be able to take action on this topic?)

Questions

(Are there any particular questions or areas that the team wishes to focus on within this topic in the workshop?)



Workshop materials

1. One large Collaborative Foresight for Teams Canvas - you can either draw this on a large whiteboard or if you have access to a large printer, you can print it out (recommended size 916 x 1424 mm). [Download here.](#)
2. Print-outs of the filled in one-pager. [Download here.](#)
3. Slides with speaker notes. Download in [Keynote here](#) and [PowerPoint here](#).
4. Collaborative Foresight Futures from Media Evolution community: print one copy per workshop participant (see previous page). [Download here.](#)

5. Time travel exercise. [Download here.](#)

You will also need:

- Post-its and markers
- A computer and projector for slides
- Postcards or paper of similar size (one per workshop participant)
- One roll of tape
- A2 paper or larger (if 5 people or less: one; if 6 people or more: enough for two pieces/3 people).

Part 1: Introduction (1/3)

Time: 15 minutes

Set-up: half-circle by the projector

In this first part, you welcome the participants to the workshop, set the scene, present the program of the day and help the participants tune in on working with the future.



My Comet



Part 1: introduction (2/3)

- Welcome everyone to the workshop, introduce yourself
- In this 3,5-hour workshop, the team will travel through different types of futures: possible, desirable and unknown to uncover impacts on their focus and gain novel insights to take action on.
- This workshop builds on Media Evolution's approach called Collaborative Foresight that is defined by three main principles:
 1. Futures are plural - we are not trying to stipulate that one most probable future, but acknowledge the complexity in the world and how our attempts to predict the future often fail. Instead, we work

with multiple possible futures and find ways to be prepared for and work with various different ways the future might unravel, including those that we cannot even anticipate with today's knowledge.

2. Futures are imagined - we work with our imaginations and examine our assumptions about the future critically to broaden the range of possibility and be better prepared for what might come.
3. Futures are created - although no one is all powerful, we all shape what's to come through our actions in the present. We take this responsibility seriously and find ways to work towards more preferable futures.



Part 1: introduction (3/3)

- We will be applying these principle in practice when exploring multiple futures, practicing envisioning of desirable futures and exploring unknown futures, and finally, moving from our insights into actions we can start taking tomorrow.
- Tuning in exercise to get the group to start to think about longer-term futures (we'll start with a 10-years horizon which is often a sweet spot that keeps us close to now but allows for significant changes):
 - In the next 10 years, related to your work and the focus of this workshop, what one thing do you believe will remain the same and what one thing will change?

- 1-2 minutes of reflection and then a quick round of sharing.

Adjustments:

If the group does not know one another well, add brief introductions here.

If 6 participants or more: do the exercise in pairs (5 minutes) and let a few share reflections.

- Program of the workshop and presenting the Canvas that the team will be filling in as they progress through the workshop.

Part 2: Focus of the workshop (1/2)

Time: 10 minutes

Set-up: half-circle by the projector

Materials: Printouts of the one-pager

In this part, the team will briefly revisit the focus as outlined in the one-pager and make edits or additions to the focus.

One-pager to define the topic at focus

Imagination-Action Gap workshop

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Part 2: Focus of the workshop (2/2)

- Distribute copies of the one-pager to all or present it on slides.
- The facilitator or the team lead presents briefly the focus and why it has been chosen.
- Participants can ask questions, add or make small edits to the focus.
- Once done, you can place the one-pager to cover the 'Roadmap' part of the canvas for now.

One-pager to define the topic at focus

Imagination-Action Gap workshop

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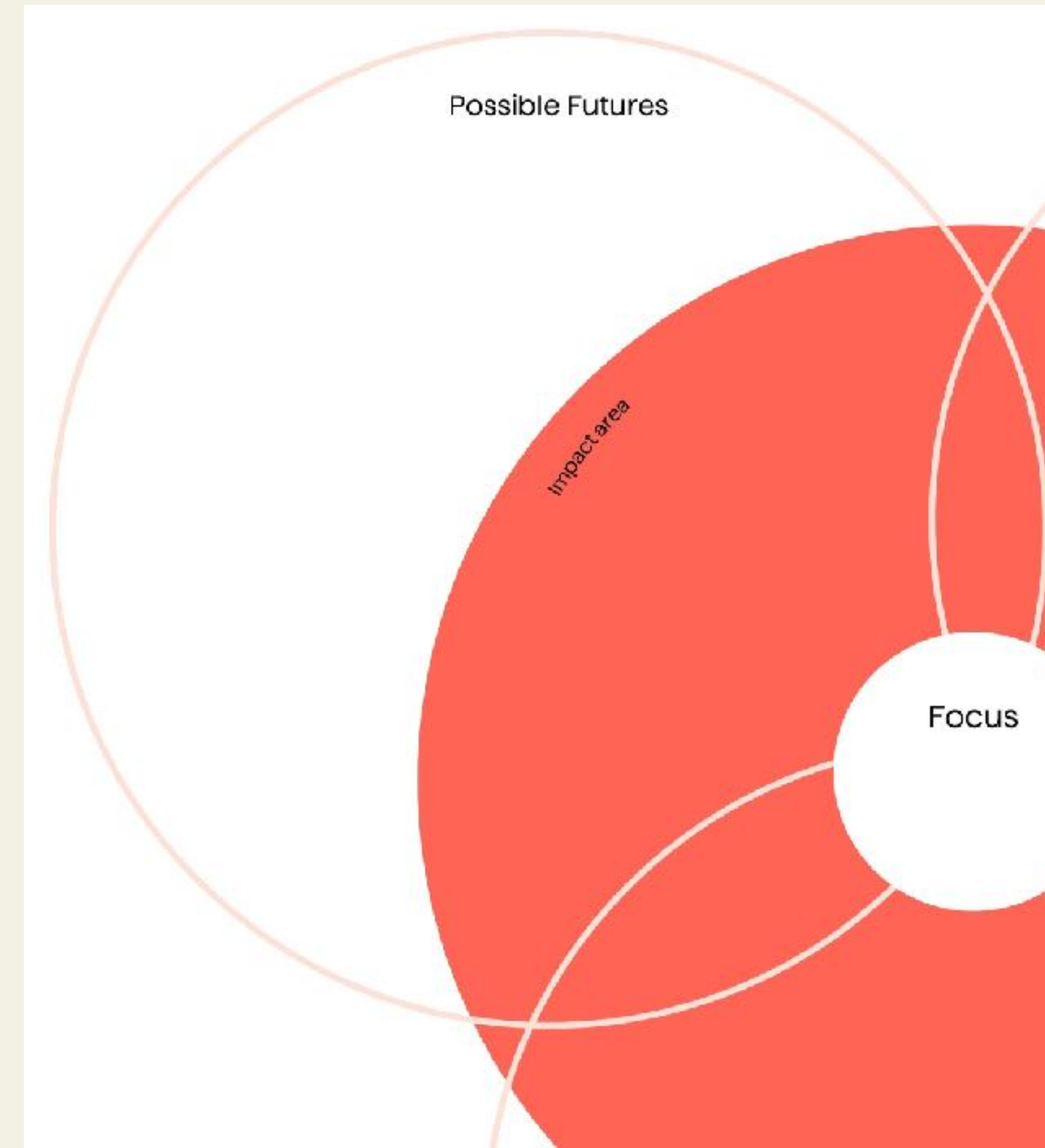
Part 3: Possible Futures (1/3)

Time: 75 minutes

Set-up: Table for group work

Materials: A2 poster (one per group) &
Post-its and markers

In this part, we identify key trends and signals that open up for possible futures and explore how important uncertainties might impact the team's focus.





Part 3: Possible Futures (2/3)

Note: This is often the most intense, work-heavy part of the workshop that needs vigorous time-keeping and facilitation to keep the group focus and help them move forward.

Adjustments - If 6 participants or more: Split the team into groups of 3-4 persons for this exercise. Each groups will only select one impactful uncertainty to focus on per group. Make sure that the groups focus on different uncertainties and save time for sharing between the groups at the end.

- Introduction (5 minutes): Presentation of this part: now it's time to share what you observe and believe will impact the future of the focus. We are particularly interested in signals and trends (see definitions in slides) that are shaping the focus today.

- Step 1 (8 minutes): Individually brainstorm trends and signals potentially impacting the focus. (One signal or trend per post-it)
- Step 2 (15 minutes): In group, everyone shares what they've written. (You can add that this is not the place to start to debate if one believes that the signal or trend shared is relevant or not. One can of course ask the person presenting to clarify but this is not the place to debate yet).
- Step 3 (5 minutes): The participants vote individually for the most impactful uncertainties = most impact AND most uncertainty around how it will develop or impact the focus. 3 votes/person.



Part 3: Possible Futures (3/3)

- Step 4 (10 min): Based on the votes, but in dialogue, the group is to select two of the most important uncertainties they have identified. The rest, especially the ones with the most votes, can be parked for the group to take back home and work on later. Move these two on the outer layer of Possible Futures in the main canvas.

Adjustment if 6 or more participant: let each group select only one impactful uncertainty and work with the separate poster.

- Step 5 (15-20 min): In what different ways might these uncertainties unravel? The group is to discuss both of the impactful uncertainties and identify different ways that these uncertainties

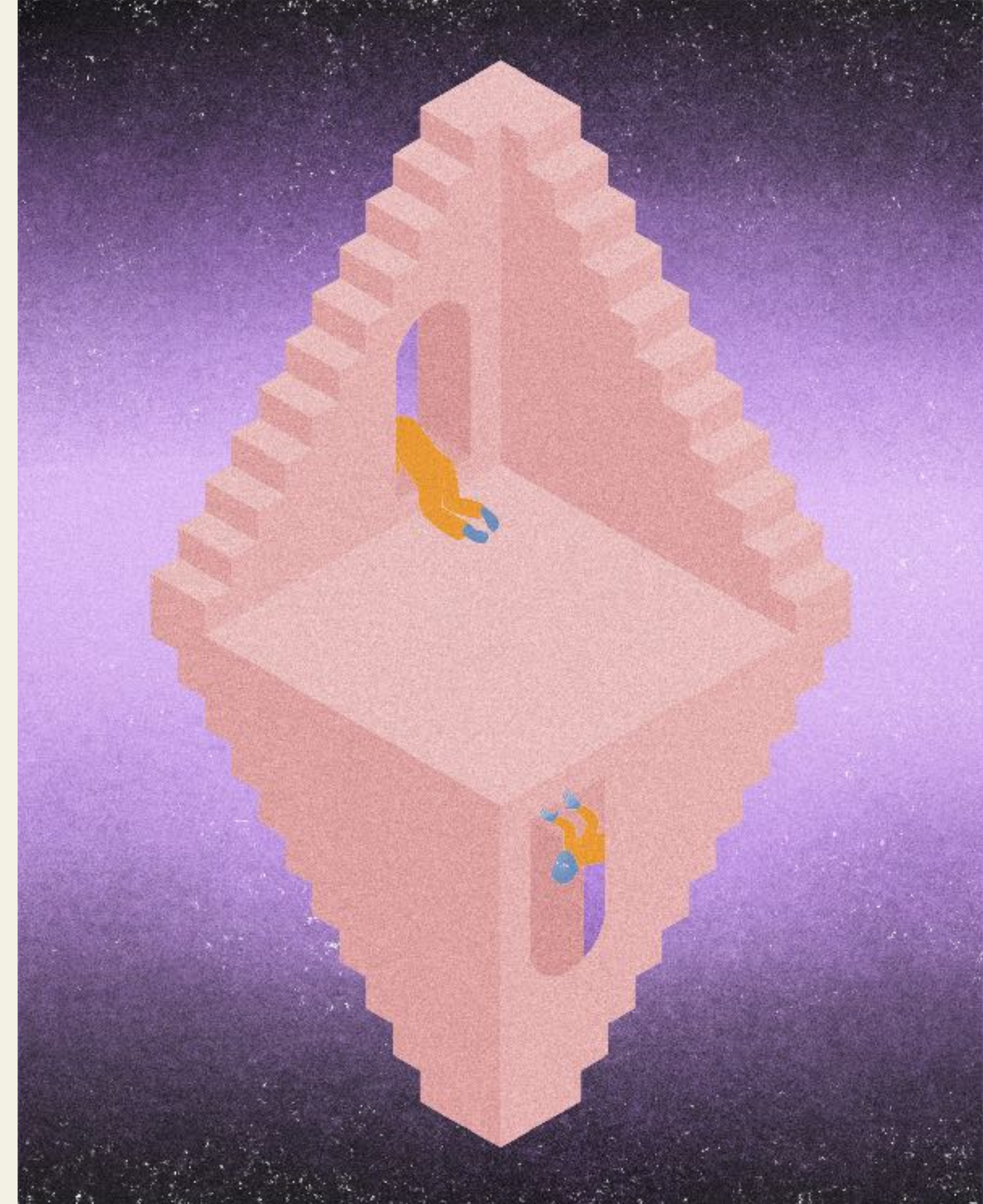
might unravel or develop going forward. The group is to capture these developments in the outer layer of Possible Futures in the main canvas.

- Step 6 (15-20 min): What impact might these developments have on your topic at focus? The group to discuss and write down post-its on the inner layer, the impact area, of the canvas.

Adjustment if 6 or more participant: let each group pick the most important impacts and related developments, hang them on the main canvas and present them briefly to the whole team.

- Congratulate the group for a job well done!

10-minute break



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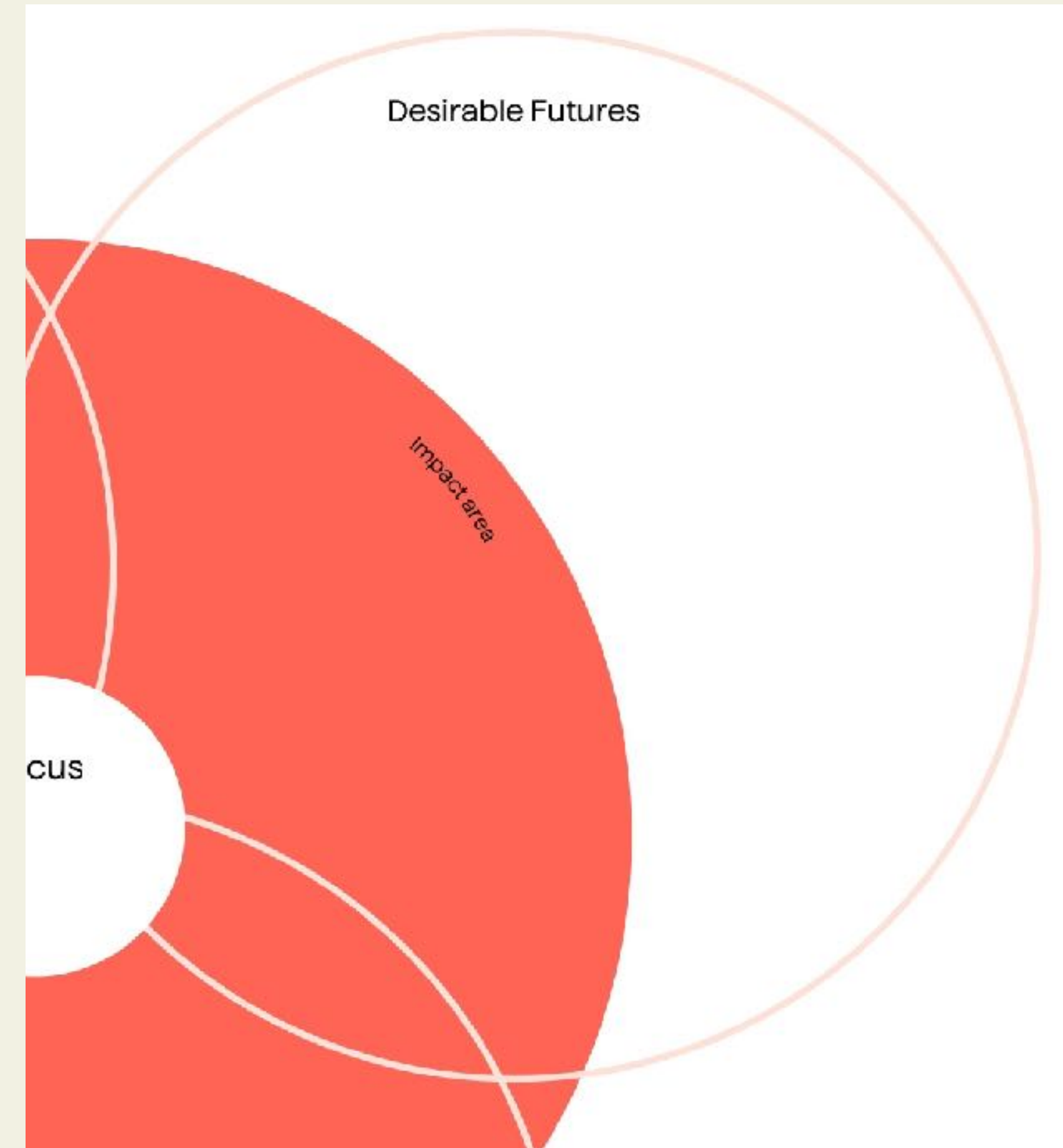
Part 4: Desirable Futures (1/2)

Time: 30 minutes

Set-up: Sitting in a circle/half-circle, as comfortably as possible, no tables

Materials: Time travel, postcards or similar, markers, tape

In this part, the team moves into active envisioning of the futures they wish to see and be part of creating.





Part 4: Desirable Futures (2/2)

- Introduction (5 min): Presentation by facilitator about how we are now changing mode and why it's important that we envision desirable futures: “what’s the point of foresight if we don’t use it to realise the futures we want?”
- Time Travel (8-10 min): Read out the Time travel while participants close their eyes and envision. Make sure to do this in a calm way, don’t rush. If possible, try to travel with the participants, that is, envision the things you ask them to picture in their minds - this way, you’ll be able to get the right pace.
- Step 1: (5 min) : In silence, everyone draws and/or writes a vision they’ve had from before or

something they saw during the travel. Once done, tape up the postcards on the outer level of the desirable futures canvas.

- Step 2 (5 min): In silence, the participants look and read through each others’ visions and write down impacts on their focus in the impact area in the poster.
- Step 3 (10 min): Discussion in plenum: what stands out?

Adjustment: If 6 or more participants: in step 3, the participants can discuss in pairs for 5 minutes and then few to share reflections in plenum.

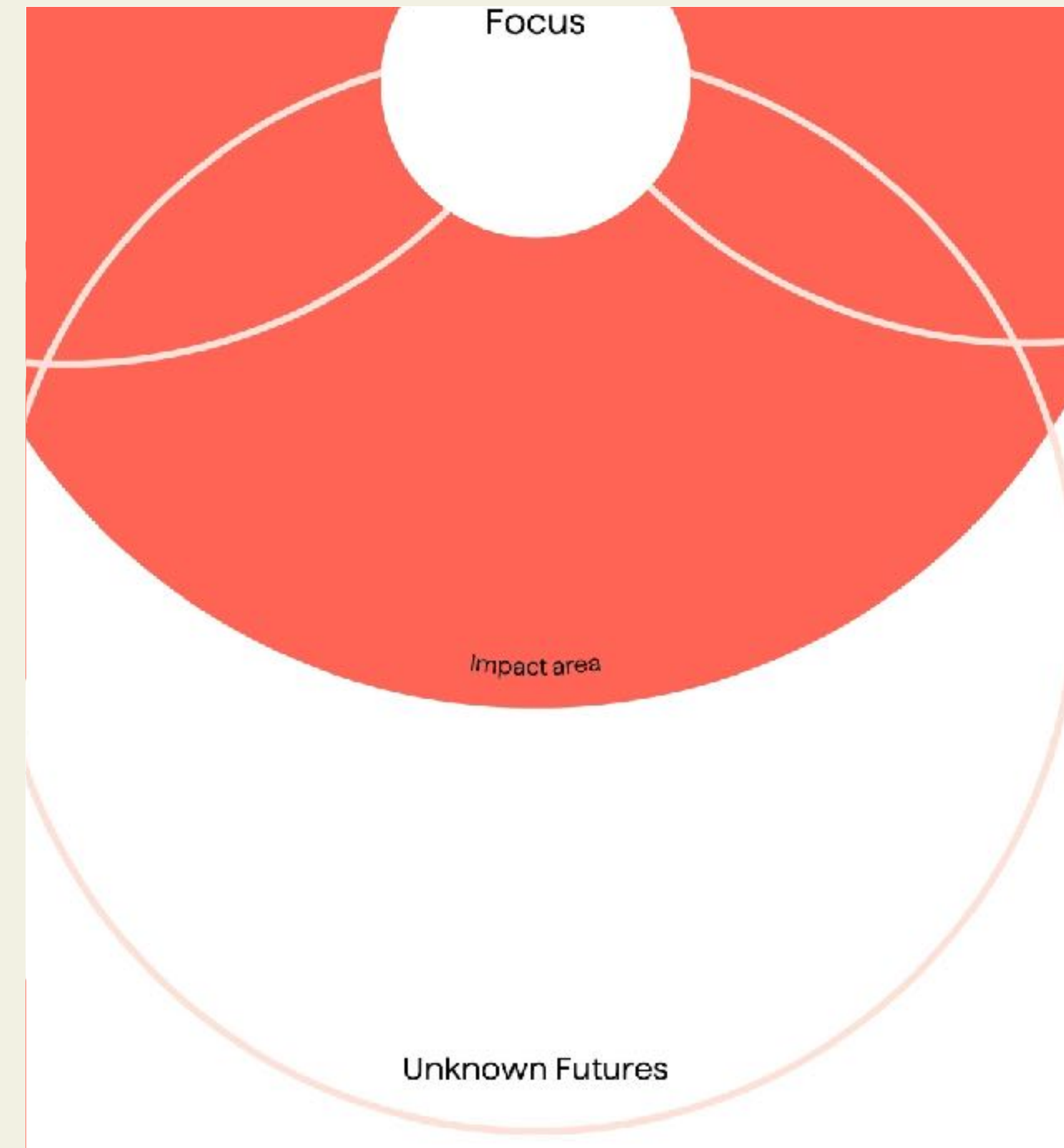
Part 5: Unknown Futures (1/2)

Time: 30 minutes

Set-up: moving inside or outside the room, then gathering by the Canvas.

Materials: future scenario print-outs and post-its

This part takes us into unknown futures to explore on the things we cannot anticipate, ask “what if?” and reflect on working with the unknown.



Part 5: Unknown Futures (2/2)

- Introduction (5 min): It is important for us to work with the understanding that there will always be things we are not able to anticipate, and this can be done by paying close attention to our assumptions about the future and exposing us to different views and imaginaries about the future. The purpose of this exercise is to expose the team to a scenario that might feel ridiculous or impossible but might open up for new reflections, questions and perspectives regarding their focus and working with the unknown.
- Step 1: (10 min) Individually, each participants reads through the selected scenario and reflects on the questions:
 - How might your focus impact this future world?
 - How would your focus need to change in this future?
 - How might you prepare your focus for any unknown future?
- Step 2: (10 min) In pairs, the participants discuss the questions and the scenario and capture reflections on a couple of post-its.
- Step 3 (5 min): sharing in plenum: sharing key reflections and attaching them to the 'impact area' of the Unknown Futures part of the poster.

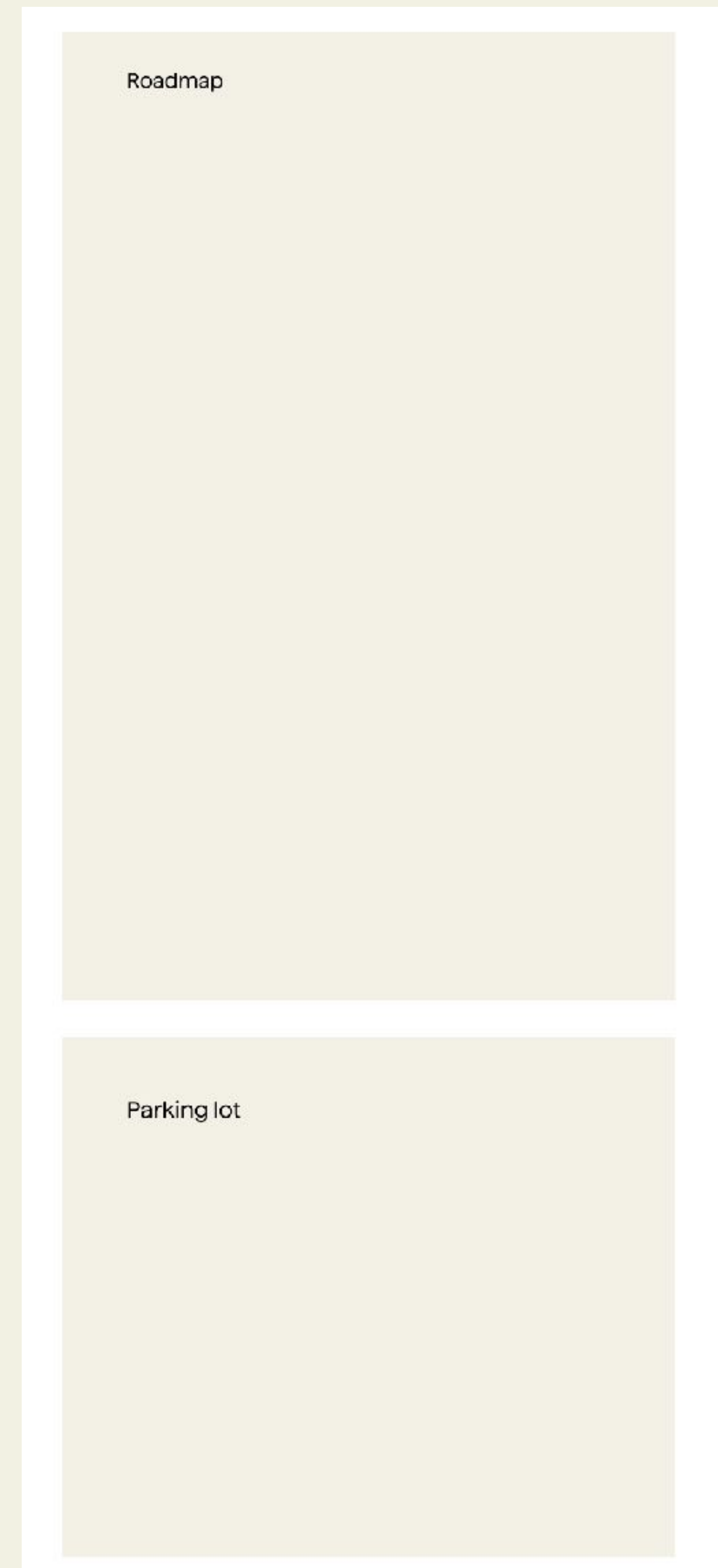
Part 6: From Imagination to Action: A Roadmap (1/3)

Time: 30 minutes

Set-up: standing by the Canvas

Materials: markers and post-its

This is where the bridge between Imagination-Action takes shape. The team picks most important and novel insights to address going forward and decides on actions and responsibilities.



Part 6: From Imagination to Action: A Roadmap (2/3)

Step 1 (10 min): Time to choose:

- (3 min) Each participants circles three things in the red impact area circle that they feel are the most important, novel insights or impacts to address going forward
- (7 min): Based on the votes, decide in team which three things the team wants to take action on going forward. Emphasise unexpected or most surprising insights that provoke exploring novel relationships, processes or tools. If the team struggles to pick three, you can advise them to park 1-2 insights/impacts in the general part of the roadmap to be addressed and remembered later.
- Once selected, you can help the team to move the selected insights/impacts onto the roadmap part of the Canvas.

Suggestion for 6 or more participants or if the group does not work together on a daily basis: you can skip the part in which the team agrees on most important ones and have the participants work on individual roadmaps on the three insights/impacts they have chosen. Use the extra time to let everyone share at least one action to help inspire or ask help from others and hold the one sharing accountable.

Step 2 (20 min): Roadmap

- Brief introduction: it's now time to bridge imagination and action. The team defines actions they wish to take on each of the three insights identified and selected. They write the actions on the roadmap part of the canvas.

Part 6: From Imagination to Action: A Roadmap (3/3)

- The team defines actions they wish to take on each of the three insights identified and selected. They write the actions on the roadmap part of the canvas.
 - At this point, it's good to point out that the team knows best what type of actions they tend to take and what gets done and how. But you can support them with the following cues:
 - How could they learn more about this?
 - Who should they talk to? Who could be a potential collaborator?
-
- Who from the team should be the owner of this action point (who makes sure to hold the team accountable that it gets done)?
 - Congratulate the team for work well-done and ask them how they will make sure that they'll hold each other accountable for taking the planned action.

Part 7: Closing (1/2)

Time: 10 minutes

Set-up: half-circle by projector

This is where we close the workshop and reflect on key takeaways.



My Comet



Part 7: Closing (2/2)

- Do a brief recap of where you have been today: exploring possible, desirable and unknown futures, insights and impacts identified and a roadmap of concrete actions to bring home.
- What's next: time to act, and possibly apply the methods in the team's work as they come in contact with new signals and trends or gain other insights. You can ask the team to bring the Canvas with them or take pictures of it.
- Final round: What do you bring with you from this workshop? Sharing one thing each.
- A big thank you.

After the workshop, you can:

- We'd love to hear from you! Please share your learnings from the workshop and your feedback on the playbook and method by emailing us at info@mediaevolution.se.
- Check in with the team a few weeks later for feedback and whether they have taken action on their roadmap.
- Share the playbook with the team in case they wish to revisit or employ any of the methods in their work.



How to credit this work?

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- Indicate if any changes were made

To honour the co-creators when using the method, please use the following language:

“Collaborative Foresight for Teams - a workshop to bridge the imagination-action gap is based on a co-creative approach to foresight called Collaborative Foresight developed by Media Evolution, <https://www.mediaevolution.se/Collaborative-Foresight/>,

When referencing the work in a citation, please use the following format:

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End of playbook