Factors

What are the factors that are most critical to the long term survival of humanity?

Development of a language and mode of dialogue appropriate to working collectively with the ecology of fundamental differences characteristic of real social and individual relationships, rather than dependent upon superficial reconciliation and reduction of complexity. This implies giving content to that which cannot be effectively named.

Development of the ability to integrate the polarized modes of understanding promoting fragmentation so as to engender a new kind of cognitively global framework that both justifies such polarization at one level and sustain a more comprehensive, if paradoxical, form of understanding at another. This implies a shift from either/or to both/and (of most significance with respect to ownership of property).

Reduction in dependency on relatively simplistic, selective, and often impoverished, metaphors underlying the models through which individuals, communities, humanity and the environment are readily defined, notably for policy purposes but also as a basis for any sense of identity and fulfilment.

Development of a proactive approach, integrating, rather than excluding, unwelcome phenomena (of the "shadow" of humanity) -- taking account of processes of denial, the functional truths associated with such phenomena, and the ever-present "obsolete" understandings associated with educational or historical phases and with the challenges to acquiring and using the latest insights.

Development beyond expectation of universal consensus on single-factor explanations, or on a single paradigm, (global) plan, charter, vision, strategy or (licensed) model -- towards collective use of an "ecology" of such knowledge organizing principles.

Development of social and cognitive experiments, equivalent to those in science and technology, in order to explore new community contexts capable of containing the richer dynamics of multi-cultural societies.

Development of fulfilling ways of living more simply in the present rather than depending on technology as a source of stimulus and meaningful quality-of-life.

What are the current map and trajectory of these factors?

Whilst there is acknowledgement of the significance of these factors within certain constituencies, there are major trends that effectively obscure them. Thus there is a widespread, misguided belief in the adequacy of existing language - whether that of a particular discipline or of English as a "universal" language -- to articulate the insights necessary for global transformation. Innovation in dialogue processes is simplistic and culture-bound in comparison with technological innovation. Major initiatives continue to be based on the assumption that a single global plan, charter, strategy or explanation can be articulated in response to the crises of humanity. There is little ability to handle fundamental disagreement and honour it within new initiatives. Such denial extends beyond disagreement itself to any problematic situations, involving a widespread desire to restrict attention to positive information and to design out negative feedback. Social experiment, in contrast to that of technology or commerce, is effectively inhibited and marginalized as dangerous (and often associated with eccentric sects). Exploration of more meaningful quality of life, with a smaller environmental footprint, is framed as quaint and unrealistic.

What are the problems and opportunities with the factors identified?

Problems: The factors identified focus on intangibles in a situation in which it is tangibles that appear to call for the most immediate action. Furthermore it is primarily on tangibles that governments, commerce and university research are most prepared to focus in order to sustain their legitimacy. In each case demonstrable success in the short-term is required, even if this has little useful impact on long-term challenges.

Opportunities: The many pleas for "new thinking" indicate that the limitations of the traditional approach on tangibles are increasingly recognized. Furthermore the low costs of work on intangibles and the degrees of freedom implicit in this emphasis, indicate that many can and will explore the opportunities of such factors without being dependent on major institutional support. Notably in the knowledge
industry, it has been recognized that the values of the future will primarily be associated with intangibles. Mathematics has much to offer in articulating possibilities currently framed in terms of two-dimensional solutions (notably in relation to territorial disputes).

**Potential in Your Field:** What do you envision as the greatest potential/future in your field in the 1000 year future?

Metaphoric innovation. Increasingly individuals, groups and societies will identify or design new metaphors to articulate subtler and more comprehensive forms of understanding that will offer them strategic advantages in navigating a complex environment. Some of these will draw on traditional knowledge or the environment itself. In search of helpful metaphors, others will "mine" the knowledge originally generated by the many disciplines. Already metaphorical innovation is recognized as a key to software and technological development. [Note that with respect to the above question, such innovation would transcend the restriction to the "sight" metaphor implied by "envision", or to the agricultural metaphor implied by "field"]

**Discussion Topics/Questions:** What are two or three topics/questions critical to the long-term future that you wish to explore in small group settings?

What are the most restrictive metaphors in current usage (notably by the international community) that inhibit social transformation and successful policy-making and what fruitful alternatives might be explored?

How can "nasty questions", evoking denial and negative feedback, be more fruitfully addressed through dialogue processes - avoiding the tunnel vision of single-factor approaches?

How might it be possible to replicate and position the experimental method of science and technology (research and development) with respect to social, community and life-style innovation relevant to meaningful quality of life in the future? Or are new methods required?

**1000 Year Vision:** Please articulate your vision of the 1000 year future in a 3-5 line statement

Cognitive innovation. For the individual (associated with one or more communities) this will imply considerable variation in sense of identity, and relationship to reality (or to any "other"). Coherence will be experienced through dynamic processes rather than static frameworks, challenging present legislative and governance procedures. Aesthetic factors will be vital to knowledge organization and comprehension and dissemination of meaningful strategies -- charters will be sing-able and benefit from the theory of musical harmony. ["Sound", "Smell", "Taste" and "Touch" will be as significant as "Vision" in articulating the future!]

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