

World Business Council for Sustainable Development Geneva, Switzerland

Understanding the Pathways to Sustainable Consumption



Over nine billion people are expected to live on the planet by the year 2050. Creating sustainable systems of production and consumption to support the exploding global middle class requires systemic change. We must redesign how we produce goods, value them, use and reuse them, and educate the citizens of planet earth to live well as we reduce the demands on all environmental systems.

As part of its global initiative to chart pathways to sustainable change, The World Business Council for Sustainable Development (WBCSD) asked Collective Invention to help them better understand how to gain insight into human behavior change and how to more effectively motivate people toward what we call, "Enlightened Mutual Interest."

An important beginning step working with WBCSD was to conduct ethnographic research on four continents. Collective Invention then created a series of online immersive experiences designed to give WBCSD members insight into the lives of people who will be living in 2050. This was followed by face-to-face workshops where participants inhabited those lives and "worked in the future" to understand the forces, conflicts and opportunities we must now understand and work toward if we are to create a smooth transition to a sustainable global economy.

Working with Collective Invention's on-line immersion into the future, WBCSD members arrived at the UK workshop in the character of a person living in 2050.

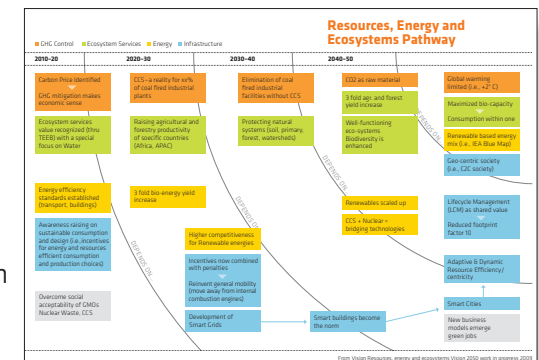


Collective Invention wrote and designed comprehensive summary reports of each workshop's outcomes.

This work dovetails with the WBCSD's larger perspective on areas of opportunity for industrial and consumer companies in the coming decades. The results and findings were compiled by Collective Invention into a series of reports and publications. These materials were designed to capture the outcomes of the workshops and related events. But they also took the important next step of communicating, using diagrams and words, the major frameworks of understanding global forces and systems thinking to "redesign the global economy."

As visionary computer scientist Alan Kaye said, "The best way to predict the future is to create it."

Collective Invention does this work using an eight-step process of insight discovery, concept generation, concept validation, prototype development and testing, implementation and evaluation. Guided by our "10 Principles of collective invention" (available, just ask) we work with clients to establish meaningful outcomes and project metrics, working deep into and beyond the issues together. Our practice is to transfer our process knowledge to our clients in the course of the work together, so this type of work can continue after the project is done.



WBCSD research was depicted by Collective Invention in a decade-by-decade sequence of steps to a sustainable state of the earth.

