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Prosperity Thinking: Between the iceberg model and how might we question

Jatwani, Chhavi, Vignoli, Matteo and Roversi, Sara

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Prosperity Thinking : Between Iceberg Model and How Might We question

Chhavi Jatwani, Matteo Vignoli, and Sara Roversi

Future Food Institute

University of Bologna

Abstract

Complex planetary scale challenges require tools and approaches that help break down the problem and allow change makers to identify their role and agency in contributing to solving it at their scale. This work aims to help change makers analyze a complex planetary problem, identify its root causes, and frame a focused and specific challenge statement. Through this, the complex problem becomes much more actionable and contextual. In this workshop, we explore a combination of two fundamental tools coming from two different approaches - systems thinking and design thinking to identify an intervention space that keeps in mind both human needs and planetary boundaries. The results show that merging the analytical approach of systems thinking and the bias toward the action approach of design thinking are the right ingredients to escape inaction and passivity towards our world's biggest challenges today. After this workshop, changemakers often feel energized and motivated by the reduced scope of the chosen complex problem. It has also shown a change in mindset to how they approach business innovation challenges. They are now more likely to consider planetary boundaries while innovating.

KEYWORDS: iceberg model, design thinking, systems thinking, food systems, sustainability, planetary boundaries, doughnut economics

RSD TOPIC(S): Learning & Education, Methods & Methodology, Socioecological Design

Why & What

With the release of the United nation's sustainable development goals, there is a need to mobilize action at both local and global levels. This is why we are developing Prosperity Thinking (Vignoli et al., 2021), a design methodology that helps break down complex sustainability challenges and create actionable spaces of interventions for change at every level. With our food system being one of the highest emitters of greenhouse gas emissions (Clune et al., 2017), we have chosen it as our community of practice and test.

It aims to channel the motivations of designers, innovators, and change-makers that are willing to change the food system but are unclear on where to start. In Innovation, it is common to develop solutions that can cause negative externalities. By embedding the planetary boundaries right at the start of the innovation process, it is possible to avoid such externalities. We have conducted this workshop with 80 sustainable food system advocates in an educational program focused on food and climate change.

This workshop aims to take the best of both worlds of systems thinking and design to analyze a complex problem and create actionable intervention areas.

References

Clune, S., Crossin, E. and Verghese, K. (2017), “Systematic review of greenhouse gas emissions for different fresh food categories”, Journal of Cleaner Production, Vol. 140, pp. 766–783.

Vignoli, M., Roversi, S., Jatwani, C. and Tiriduzzi, M. (2021), “HUMAN AND PLANET CENTERED APPROACH: PROSPERITY THINKING IN ACTION”, Proceedings of the Design Society, Vol. 1, pp. 1797–1806.

Workshop format

120 minutes | online | maximum number of participants 25 | using Miro

Workshop agenda

10 minutes – Introduction to facilitators + ground rules + workshop intent

20 minutes – Explaining the premise of Prosperity thinking

20 minutes – Analyse a planetary challenge with Iceberg model

20 minutes – Fill the How might we table identifying key actors and corresponding actions

20 minutes – Develop the how might we statements with planetary boundaries

20 minutes – Ideate interventions on one of the statements

10 minutes – Final sharing and insights