

Backcasting From Sustainability Principles

Starting out with the end in mind.



<https://pixabay.com/en/chess-game-strategy-board-775346/>

Change is the law of life and those who look only to the past or present are certain to miss the future.

John F. Kennedy

Planning is bringing the future into the present so that you can do something about it now.

Alan Lakein

Tag : Social - decision making; Whole system – vision and purpose;

Challenge:

To stop planning for the future based on what has happened or worked in the past. This is known as forecasting and is an extremely efficient way of taking problems from the present into the future whenever we are dealing with complex systems (despite it's usefulness in less complex systems).

Solution:

To plan for success within the boundaries of social, ecological and financial sustainability; to create a future that can actually exist using the 4 principles laid out in The Natural Step Framework. The framework originates from a scientific, peer reviewed approach to achieving consensus on what sustainability actually means in practical terms that allow for planning and measurement of progress

Like a chess player or a chef, we start off with the desired goal in mind and use strategy, tactics and tools to approach that situation in a step-wise manner within rules that define success. That goal is “ what would our village, company, product, city look like if it was NOT breaking any of the 4 sustainability principles and what do we have to do to get from here to there?”

References :

Cuginotti, A (2015) *What is backcasting?* <http://augustocuginotti.com/what-is-backcasting/>

The Natural Step (2015), Retrieved 20/02/15 <http://www.naturalstep.org/en/canada/backcasting>

2 minute video explaining the 4 principles <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FFCNCQleCuk>

5 minute interview on the 4 principles. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5MQtWlgHwZ8>

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