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News & Events

IAF to Facilitate Rockefeller Foundation Searchlight Group Meeting

The Rockefeller Foundation has awarded a grant to the Institute for Alternative Futures (IAF) to facilitate the third annual gathering of Rockefeller Foundation Searchlight grantees, to be held in New York in May 2012.

The Searchlight function is an innovative application of the horizon scanning method in the development sector. Begun in 2009, the Searchlight function consists of a group of 11 forward-looking, regionally-focused horizon scanning and trend monitoring grantees who produce monthly trend-monitoring newsletters by conducting an ongoing exploration for novel ideas and intervention opportunities. In doing so, the Searchlight function aims to achieve four complementary and interrelated goals:

- Illuminate the current contextual environment in which philanthropies and global development organizations operate;
- Identify signals that could have longer-term implications;
- Showcase a diversity of opinions, methodological approaches, and points of view; and
- Highlight potential solutions or intervention opportunities to critical problems.

By providing a regular stream of future-oriented intelligence, the Searchlight function offers a deeper understanding of the changing global ecosystem in which global institutions operate and looking to assess the present to illuminate multiple potential pathways ahead.

An important component of the development of the Searchlight function has been an annual, in-person workshop of all the participating organizations to explore the trends that are emerging from various regions. The third such convening will be organized by the Institute for Alternative Futures with support from the Rockefeller Foundation in New York City in May 2012. Workshop attendees will include representatives from the Searchlight scanning organizations. IAF will also recruit a small group of thought leaders who will bring knowledge and experience on critical topics to help contribute to the Searchlight network by providing vital ideas that will help philanthropies more wisely shape the future.





IAF Assists GAO on the Future of Geoengineering Research

Since the closing of the Office of Technology Assessment in the 1990s, Congress has lacked an ongoing source for large scale consideration of emerging technologies. The U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO) has recently stepped in to provide Congress with that capacity. The House Committee on Science, Space, and Technology requested that GAO conduct a technology assessment of Climate Engineering – the collective set of measures that we might undertake to slow or reverse global warming. For the assessment, GAO asked IAF Senior Futurist Clem Bezold and Senior Fellow Bob Olson to facilitate the development of scenarios. GAO also consulted a wide range of experts, and surveyed the public about emerging options for removing carbon dioxide from the atmosphere or managing solar radiation. Bob Olson, who is the author of a report on geoengineering technologies that will be released shortly by the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, also provided comments on aspects of the report. The four scenarios considered possible future directions in climate engineering research, policy, and legislation over the next 20 years. GAO used these scenarios to elicit expert views on the future of climate engineering research. Findings based on their reactions include:

- A majority of experts consulted advocated starting significant research now or soon. They believed that such research would have the potential to help reduce future risks from climate change, but two decades or more of research will be needed to make substantial progress toward developing and evaluating climate engineering technologies. Research advocates also envisioned safeguards to protect against potential adverse consequences or risks arising from the research.
- Some experts opposed starting research, in part to prevent negative consequences either from the research or from deploying technologies developed from it. Some thought that pursuing further research would "open a Pandora's box better left unopened". Those who said climate engineering is not needed either believed that climate change has been exaggerated or preferred other approaches, such as "building ecosystem and community resilience to respond to climate change," "adopting more sustainable agricultural policies," or "making [a] massive investment in energy efficiency."
- A majority envisioned a federal effort that would direct and support research on climate engineering with specific features such as (1) an international focus, (2) engagement of both the public and decision-makers, and (3) foresight considerations to help anticipate emerging research developments and their opportunities and risks.
- Many trends can potentially affect research, including the pace of climate change, emissions-reduction developments, public opinion, scientific breakthroughs, and low-probability/high-impact events.

To view highlights and the full *Climate Engineering: Technical Status, Future Directions, and Potential Responses* technology assessment report, including the four alternative geoengineering scenarios, visit www.gao.gov/products/GAO-11-71.

U.S. Military Services Adopt Total Force Fitness Framework from IAF/Samueli Institute Conference

On September 1, 2011, Admiral M.G. Mullen publicly released the [Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Instruction \(CJIS 3405.1\)](#) that provides a framework for total force fitness which now applies to the U.S. Military Services as the basis for establishing policy. This framework came from a conference designed and organized by IAF in December 2009 with the Samueli Institute to, per Admiral Mullen, "provide our 21st century leaders with 21st century definitions of fitness, health, and resilience". Participants defined "Total Force Fitness" as consisting of eight integral components: social, behavioral, physical, environmental, medical, spiritual, nutritional, and psychological fitness. Furthermore, total force fitness should be prevention-focused, individual-centric, and recognize the family as central to the total fitness equation. As Admiral Mullen put it,

Total fitness is a state where mind and body are seen as one. It is a state where people, their families, and the organizations in which they serve are connected and thriving. I see total fitness as a point of balance between readiness and well-being, where each of these two conditions are mutually supporting and in complete balance. A total force that has achieved total fitness is healthy, ready, and resilient; capable of meeting challenges and surviving threats. Achieving that begins with the way we treat our people.

IAF released its report of the 2009 conference in a [February 2010 newsletter](#) and subsequently a full report was published as [a special supplement to Volume 175, No. 8 of Military Medicine](#) (27 MB), the international journal of the Association of Military Surgeons of the United States. We hope and anticipate that the framework and metrics for total fitness that came out of the conference will contribute to a healthier military as well as a healthier nation. Our work with both the military and civilian leaders addressing vulnerable populations by leveraging social determinants for health helps IAF see the potential of total

force fitness to translate into total community fitness.



Vision and Narrative for Puebla State Teachers Union in 2012 Mexican Elections

On September 29, 2011, Senior Associate Ben Sheppard and Mary Crannell of Idea Sciences conducted a workshop in Puebla, Mexico on developing and sustaining a compelling narrative for the Puebla state teachers union. The event was run as part of George Washington University's Graduate School of Political Management initiatives with Puebla University. The event took 30 participants through the steps of creating a robust vision and narrative, and the value of aligning sub-narratives with the strategic narratives.

With the Puebla state teachers union in Mexico being a major entity in local and national governance affairs, combined with the forthcoming national elections in 2012, the workshop enabled the organization to identify how they might best position themselves while respecting the plethora of perspectives and ideas within their union. Having created the strategic narrative in a group plenary session, the participants were then split into teams to identify how they could bring the narrative to life to make it compelling and dominant. Examples included using stories of teaching successes to convey the historical value of the profession while also communicating persuasively the need to modernize practices.

IAF Welcomes Jan Masek

Jan Masek has joined IAF as an intern and will be assisting IAF President Jonathan Peck and other futurists with a range of projects while at IAF. Mr. Masek has a background in various sales and marketing positions and brings an eclectic training in project management, information technology management, geographic information systems (GIS), and holds an undergraduate degree in business. He is just now completing a masters in strategic foresight with Regent University in Virginia Beach. Mr. Masek also holds a certificate in climate change decision making from the University of Washington. He has a passion for enabling social change, particularly when it comes to climate and sustainability issues.

IAF Welcomes Release of "Strategic Foresight for Corporate and Regional Development" by Godet and Durance

IAF prides itself in its mission to help communities and organizations to more wisely choose and create the futures they prefer. This includes sharing techniques for organizational and social transformation that will instill vision and integrity. Accordingly, we welcome the release of *Strategic Foresight for Corporate and Regional Development* by Michel Godet and Philippe Durance. Published with the help of UNESCO, this book on foresight provides a practical primer for how an organization can develop and disseminate its own vision, a shared language and common reference points at all levels and for all concerned to promote a culture of anticipation, resilience, curiosity, and inventiveness which will help bring about a more sustainable and peaceful world. *Strategic Foresight for Corporate and Regional Development* is available in several languages for download free of charge at <http://en.lapropective.fr/books.html>.

Upcoming Events

"Geoengineering for Decision Makers," speech at the [Science and Technology Innovation Program report release of *Geoengineering for Decision Makers*](#). Senior Fellow Bob Olson. 12:00–2:30pm on November 10, 2011, in Washington, D.C.

Vulnerability 2030 scenario workshop for Paso del Norte Health Foundation. Senior Futurist Eric Meade. November 15, 2011, in El Paso, TX.

"Addressing Diabetes Disparities in Underserved Communities," [panel at Second Annual Healthcare Summit](#) organized by Women in Government. Senior Fellow Bill Rowley. 1:45–2:30 pm on November 18, 2011, in Washington, D.C.

The Institute for Alternative Futures is a 501(c)3 non-profit research and education organization based in Alexandria, VA. IAF was founded in 1977 by Clem Bezold, Alvin Toffler, and James Dator. IAF has a long track record of using forecasts, scenarios, visioning, and other futures tools to help leading organizations understand the likely, challenging, and visionary developments that may take place in their environments, and to develop robust and visionary strategies that account for the inherent uncertainty of the future. IAF's past clients include the World Health Organization, AARP,

American Cancer Society, and Rockefeller Foundation, as well as a wide range of multinational corporations through its for-profit subsidiary, Alternative Futures Associates. To learn more about what we can do for your organization, call us at (703) 684-5880 or write to futurist@altfutures.org.

We'd like to know what you think! Please send us your comments, questions, and things you would like to see included in future issues to futurist@altfutures.org.

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