

**ÉPoIAr  
Écologie Politique  
en Armorique**

# **What do we want to eat in 2050?**

A prospective creative writing workshop<sup>1</sup>

## **Instructions for organizers**



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*Thank you for your interest in the ÉPolAr writing workshop 'What do we want to eat in 2050?'. This toolkit is designed to enable you to run the workshop in English. The workshop is based on the Agrimonde Terra foresight study and aims to contribute to participants' reflection about land use and food production and consumption in the future.*

*In this toolkit, you will find:*

- Instructions for running the workshop, including texts to present the Agrimonde Terra foresight study (the present document)
- A booklet to be printed and distributed to participants
- Posters to be printed and displayed during the workshop
- An example permission form for use if you decide to collect the texts produced or photos or scans of them. This is necessary if you wish to share the texts and photos online or with ÉPolAr, for future research purposes.

*The workshop can be run in a number of different ways. In this document, we present a 'standard' version of the workshop designed to take place in a 3-hour session. In the similar document entitled "Instructions with options for organisers" we present versions of the workshop with various options:*

- *an option including the use of pictures (photographs, for example),*
- *an option in which participants discover the scenarios themselves,*
- *an option over several sessions, giving participants more time to reflect and write.*

*The options are independent, so there are as many ways of modulating the workshop.*

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## 0. PREPARE MATERIALS FOR THE WORKSHOP

Before you begin, make sure you have:

- Colour prints of the posters, one per scenario (size A0).
- Colour prints of the booklets for participants, either one each or one per group (A4 or A5)
- A printed set of instructions for organisers.
- A space in the room for the whole group to listen to the instructions at the beginning and to share their texts at the end (this could be a circle of chairs, for example).
- Tables the participants can sit around in small groups when writing.
- Paper and pens for each participant (A3 paper and some coloured pens are a good idea for the first writing exercise and could also help when brainstorming stories together).
- If possible, it is nice to provide refreshments, either for a break mid-workshop or for a more sociable moment at the end of the workshop.
- Something for taking photos (a smartphone or a camera) or a portable scanner and computer. Please note that if you take photos of participants or make copies of their text productions, you must get their permission. There is an example permission form in this toolkit; don't forget to print one per participant, if you decide you need them.

## 1. GENERAL INTRODUCTION TO THE WORKSHOP (10 mins)

Begin by introducing yourselves and your reasons for offering this workshop. You can use the following text to present ÉPolAr, if you want to:

### **Presentation of ÉPolAr**

The Écologie Politique en Armorique (Political Ecology in Brittany) collective, based in Rennes, aims to practice and promote political ecology, a reflection on the climatic and ecological upheavals that our planet is experiencing, fed by cross-disciplinary sources of knowledge and practices. It brings together researchers from agronomy, art and design, computer science, economics, environmental science, history, linguistics, literature, and mathematics to work together to understand how humans as organised societies can analyse these upheavals and adapt to mitigate their effects. Their ambition is to create opportunities for academics and non-academics to share knowledge and skills so that, together, they can examine these important issues and collectively imagine desirable solutions and possible ways to achieve them.

You can find information about the collective on their site:

[epolar@hypotheses.org](mailto:epolar@hypotheses.org)

and on the site of the Institute for humanities and social sciences in Brittany:

<https://www.mshb.fr/écologie-politique-en-armorique>

## **Presentation of the workshop**

One of the fundamental needs undermined by the current ecological crises is food. In concrete terms, it is a question of feeding 8 billion human beings in 2022, but probably 10 billion in 2050 and 11 billion in 2100 (according to the UN World Population Prospect published on 11 July 2022, see the "World Population" page on Wikipedia). Today, we are asking the question:

‘What kind of food do we want to eat in 2050 and how can we use the land to produce it?’

The workshop is an exploration of the future through writing. Exploration, not prediction. We are going to write in order to make what we imagine happen.

The foresight approach was inspired by a classical method in science which consists in giving oneself a set of scenarios to better study the future evolution of an aspect of the world. Knowing that the future is uncertain and that the possibilities are infinite, we set ourselves a small number of contrasting scenarios in order to represent this range of possibilities. This approach can be found in the IPCC scenarios for the study of climate or in those of ADEME to explore our capacity to achieve carbon neutrality by 2050 in different modes of society.

## **What are foresight studies?**

“I had been working on the future for over twenty years. In twenty years, what misunderstandings! How many times had I had to make it clear that foresight, while it did have the future as its subject of study, was in no way divination. [...] What foresight was not, nothing more simple. Foresight was not clairvoyance. It was not premonition or prophecy. It is in no way a prediction, nor even, and this is the minimum level generally expected, a forecast. No, strategic foresight does not describe the future. The future, simply, is its subject of study, and we have, to explore it, an extremely elaborate methodological toolbox [...] We do not seek to predict the future, simply to prepare it, which leads us to consider the future not as a territory to be explored, but as a territory to be constructed. It is to the French philosopher Gaston Berger that we owe the essential idea of foresight that the future is inextricably linked to action.”

From JP Toussaint. *The USB key*, Éditions de Minuit, 2020.

## **2. PRESENTATION OF THE AGRIMONDE TERRA STUDY (20 mins)**

### **Summaries of the Agrimonde Terra scenarios**

This workshop will be based on four Agrimonde Terra scenarios that have been used by economists to sketch out food security and land use challenges for 2050. These are obtained by making assumptions about the determining factors. What political structure do we favour? Has global warming stabilised? What diet has become established? Has urbanisation intensified? Which farming and livestock systems have been favoured? The

aim of the research is then to produce inferences about the food security, health, and the environmental impact of agriculture in each scenario.

In their report, the Agrimonde Terra experts looked at 7 scenarios of which we have selected 4. We have renamed them to make their titles as meaningful as possible: 'metropolisation and agribusiness', 'healthy diet and international cooperation', 'regional food systems' and 'rural communities in a fragmented world'. To get an initial idea, we can think of the "metropolisation and agribusiness" scenario as an extrapolation of certain current dominant political, economic and cultural trends. It is a question of trusting the financial markets and relying on technological advances to keep the system afloat. International cooperation is good and bad, with each country acting only when it is in its interest. Highly processed food and high animal product content contribute to health problems.

Scenario 2 "regionalized food systems", in a world organized in large regions, is based on majority trends. Here the regions refer to groupings of countries and not to the regions drawn in France for example. It could be the territory of the EU for example, Latin America, or just Western Europe. Binding agreements and arrangements exist for large-scale agricultural resource management. People eat better than today, but the political division of the world introduces imbalances between regions. Some become dependent on others to ensure food security for their population, and conventional and intensive practices are not fully phased out.

Scenario 3 "healthy nutrition and international cooperation" is an optimistic scenario that breaks with the current dominant trends / but is based on weak signals. All countries have agreed on a common policy for sustainable lifestyles. People eat well and to their hearts' content thanks to the proper application of dietary knowledge and through the virtuous use of technology.

Finally, scenario 4, "rural communities in a fragmented world" depicts a world that is politically and economically fragmented as a result of numerous crises. The communities are also not necessarily on the scale of a village and can extend over counties, for example. But the idea of this scenario is that if we have arrived at a fragmented political system, it is because we can no longer agree on a larger scale and therefore things are not going so well. In particular, trade is not sufficient to guarantee food for all, crises occur and the quality of our food will vary greatly from one year to the next.

Of course, all these assumptions are debatable. It is necessary to discuss and criticise them, and even to construct new ones. They have made it possible to carry out a scientific analysis of food issues up to 2050. However, they have not said much about what we are less able to measure, such as people's personal and collective experiences of living in such systems. It is to imagine these experiences that we present you this writing workshop, so we can use this foresight study to ask ourselves the question: What kind of world do we want to live in?

You can read the full Agrimonde Terra report here :

<https://hal.inrae.fr/hal-02788500/document>

Summarized versions of the report are available here :

<https://www.inrae.fr/actualites/prospective-agrimonde-terra-usage-terres-securite-alimentaire-mondiale-2050>

### **3. FIRST WRITING EXERCISE (15 mins)**

Invite participants to imagine it is 2050 and they will soon participate in a big annual festival or event. Working individually, with the paper and pens provided, they have ten minutes to produce an invitation, a flyer or a poster for the event. Participants can refer to the posters, if they need to. They must choose one of the following four events:

1. The opening event at the FIFA world cup, sponsored by KFC.
2. The harvest festival in the region of their choice.
3. The festival of bio-cultural diversity.
4. The village fête.

### **4. SHARING THE TEXTS FROM THE FIRST WRITING EXERCISE (15 mins)**

Participants who wish to do so, share their invitations, flyers or posters with the whole group.

Organisers then tell the participants that in this exercise they imagined a variety of different diets. This is the natural result of imagining the different possible trajectories that humanity may take between now and 2050, which will lead to different ways of feeding the population. The opening event at the FIFA world cup sponsored by KFC corresponds to the metropolisation and agribusiness scenario. The regional harvest festival corresponds to the regionalised food systems scenario. The festival of bio-cultural diversity corresponds to healthy nutrition and international cooperation scenario. The village fête corresponds to the rural communities in a fragmented world scenario.

### **5. SECOND WRITING EXERCISE (1 h)**

After the initial individual writing exercise, you will now invite participants to form small groups (about four people per group), and to work together to imagine and write about the experience of a person who attended one of the events described in the first exercise. Participants can either work on the same event as for the first exercise or they can decide to choose a different event from the list. Give the following instructions:

You will now imagine you are attending one of the events that have been presented. You have either come from a great distance, or you have been absent for a long time. You can choose the reason for your absence, for example:

- You have woken up from a long coma.

- You have emerged from a long cryo-freeze.
- The island you had been living on for the last 25 years, in isolation from other human societies, has been submerged by rising sea levels and you were forced to leave it.

Write a letter or a diary entry describing the big event you attend and what it reveals about society in 2050, and more specifically about the way land is used and food is produced.

You have one hour to invent your story and write your text. You can work in any way you like, either:

- Invent and write the whole text together, with one person taking on the role of scribe and writing down the group's ideas as they are collectively formulated
- Each group member is responsible for inventing and writing a separate part of the narrative
- The whole group invents the character and the main events together and then the writing is divided between members.

If you choose the second or third option, remember to allow time to read your separate sections to each other to ensure the coherence of the whole text.

## **6. SHARING THE TEXTS FROM THE SECOND WRITING EXERCISE AND DISCUSSION (30 mins, depending on the number of participants and the length of the texts)**

If possible, invite participants to sit together in a circle. Each group takes it in turns to read aloud their texts. The listening participants may find it helpful to close their eyes while they are listening to each text.

Once all the texts have been read, participants may want to discuss the workshop experience and the different visions of the future that have been presented.

## **7. COLLECTING TEXTS AND AUTHORISATIONS TO USE THEM (optional)**

If you decide to collect the texts produced during the workshop in order to share them with other people, for publication or research purposes, you need to ask participants to fill in an authorisation form. You can adapt the model provided in the toolkit. If participants wish to keep the papers on which their texts are written, but are still willing to share the texts, you can take photos of the papers or scan them. Don't forget to allow time to explain why you would like to collect texts, where and for what purposes they will be stored and if they will be published, for participants to read and fill in the forms, and for taking photos or scanning papers if participants wish to share their texts but also keep their papers.

## **8. UPLOADING TEXTS AND AUTHORISATION FORMS TO EPOLAR'S RESEARCH DRIVE (optional)**

Please contact us for more information, if you wish to share the productions from your workshop for communication and research purposes.

## **9. THANKS**

Thank you for organising this workshop. Don't forget to thank your participants too. Please send us your feedback on the experience, including any suggestions you have about how we can improve the workshop and the materials.

We would love to hear from you!