LOOK AHEAD BOLDLY

WORK BRAVELY TOWARDS THE FUTURE

A need to examine the future surfaces in very many different contexts. Situations of this type are encountered, for instance, when defining more precise objectives or when altering operational modes and strategies. Situations of this type have several things in commons, such as the need to react to changes and the need to know future goals.
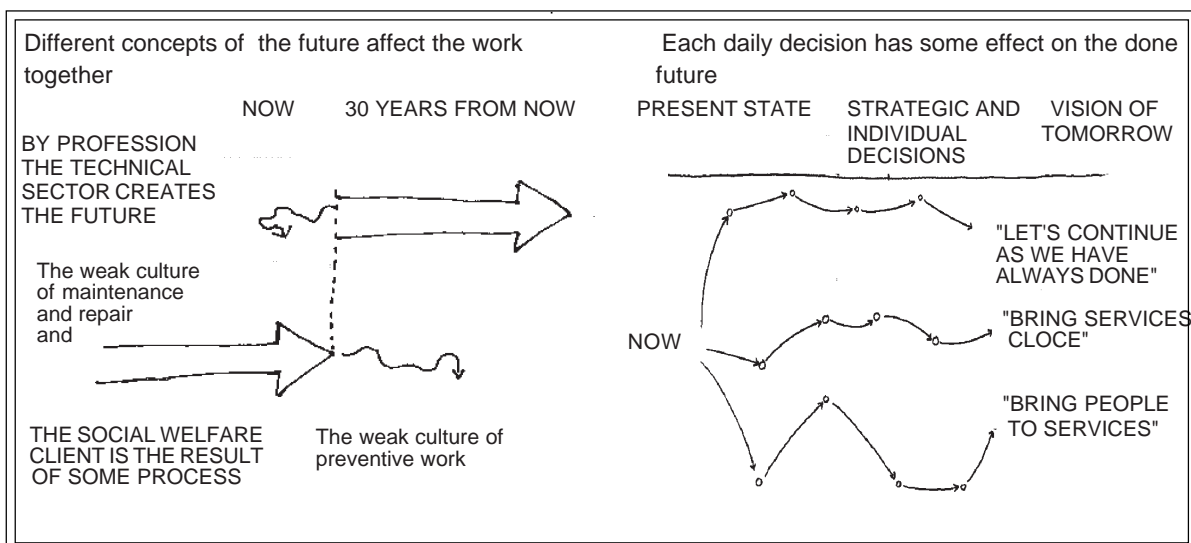
Different visions of the future come together in joint development work. A technological view of the world looks ahead; designs and plans may span 30 years into the future. A culture of maintenance and visions that look back in time are weaker. One example of a culture looking back in time is real estate management.

Social welfare authorities may take an active interest, for instance, when a client seeking income allowance steps into the social welfare office. The situation is inspected in depth by analysing the chain of events leading up to the present state of affairs. Examination of the future is less familiar to social welfare personnel. Preventive or constructive social welfare work has represented this sort of forward-oriented culture.

Preventive work is long-term work. It often requires new methods, orientation to the future, and the ability to study alternatives. It differs from corrective work also in that preventive work often means dealing with indirect effects. This leads to the inclusion of many actors which are outside the sphere of the social welfare and health sector, but which affect well-being and health.

Efforts on behalf of the future, however, are made at work every day. We can drift, trying to keep up what already exists, or we can exert an active influence on the future. At the very least, we can prepare for a range of different alternatives.

Different concepts of the future affect the work together

NOW   30 YEARS FROM NOW

BY PROFESSION THE TECHNICAL SECTOR CREATES THE FUTURE

The weak culture of maintenance and repair and

THE SOCIAL WELFARE CLIENT IS THE RESULT OF SOME PROCESS

The weak culture of preventive work

Each daily decision has some effect on the done future

PRESENT STATE   STRATEGIC AND INDIVIDUAL DECISIONS   VISION OF TOMORROW

NOW

"LET'S CONTINUE AS WE HAVE ALWAYS DONE"

"BRING SERVICES CLOCE"

"BRING PEOPLE TO SERVICES"

| STAKES | IDEACARD 1/2001 |

## Objectives must be made concrete

It is clear that objectives are essential. Without objectives, we are lost. Alternatives can be assessed by means of objectives that have been agreed on.

An inventory of the various objectives of residents, NGOs, businesses and administrative branches can be drawn up in advance. These objectives, however, are usually abstract; they need to be made concrete and prioritised. This work often leads to the rise of new goals.

Common goals can also be set in joint discussions. Joint discussions among representatives of different administrative branches are hampered by differences in how they perceive the world. Residents, the social welfare and health authorities, to some extent also the education and culture authorities are committed to their own operational modes; they lack a common language for a concrete, physical mode of expression. The technical or environment authorities are committed to concrete technical processes, such as town planning or project timetables; they lack a language for, and even an interest in, this joint discussion activity.

Common goals can be arrived at by means of at least the following three approaches.

1) The first approach is to make, e.g. the environmental objectives of the social welfare and health sector concrete in technical terms. This requires, however, that the social welfare and health sector learns how to communicate in technical terms. This requirement may be too much to ask, at least at the start of the process.
2) The requirement of learning how to communicate in a different set of terms can be replaced by calling in an interpreter. The interpreter, a trained "listener" from the technical sector, has the ability to understand the intention of the social welfare authorities and can "translate" it into technical objectives. A poor interpreter carries out a sort of shuttle diplomacy, approaching each participant separately. Once the task at hand is completed, the interpreter leaves the parties as foreign to each other as they were when the task began.
3) The third approach is by means of an "insight generator".
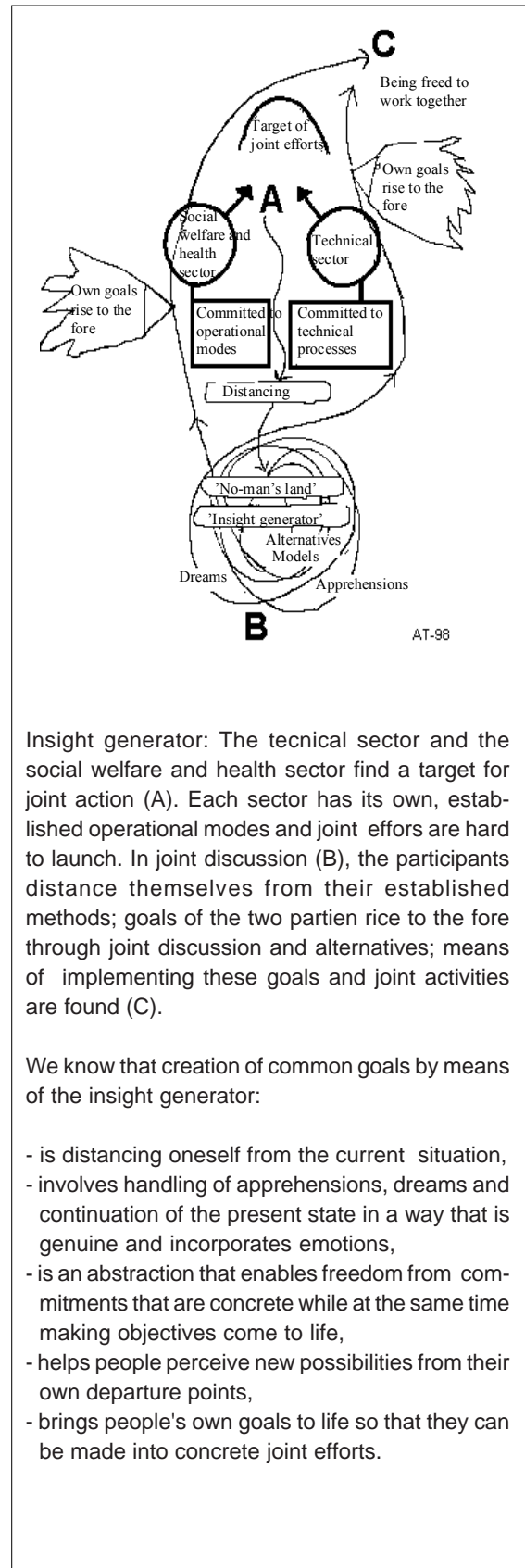
Insight generator: The tecnical sector and the social welfare and health sector find a target for joint action (A). Each sector has its own, established operational modes and joint effors are hard to launch. In joint discussion (B), the participants distance themselves from their established methods; goals of the two partien rice to the fore through joint discussion and alternatives; means of implementing these goals and joint activities are found (C).

We know that creation of common goals by means of the insight generator:

- is distancing oneself from the current situation,
- involves handling of apprehensions, dreams and continuation of the present state in a way that is genuine and incorporates emotions,
- is an abstraction that enables freedom from commitments that are concrete while at the same time making objectives come to life,
- helps people perceive new possibilities from their own departure points,
- brings people's own goals to life so that they can be made into concrete joint efforts.

The three futures of a municipality			
	1. The future where "The municipality will look after things"	**2. The future where "The municipality will look after still more"**	**3. The future involving "A new agreement with residents"**
Philosophy	The span of attention is short; brief visits to other's sand boxes	Services are provided centrally, the municipal resident is demanding and subjective, welfare comes from outside, a common sand box	Not all problems can be eliminated, a common sand box, a municipality for the little people Organisation at the grass-roots level, the will of the grass roots! The orientation: a citizens' community; facilities, the residents as subjects, people are responsible for themselves, municipal residents have initiative and are not divided by sector Able to put up with frustration, mental well-being is knowledge, the municipality provides guidance.
Region	How much can the municipality grow reasonably? Daytime and night-time municipal residents.	The municipality is a suburb of nearby cities; small municipalities disappear.	Increased co-operation with the nearby city; public transport is regional.
Services	The schools of smaller villages face being shut down in the near future Basic security exists	Provision of services based on obligation; each home is allocated a municipal health centre doctor. A return to an institution-based orientation? A safe route for school children, including taxi service	Competitive services with regard to private services or neighbouring municipalities; the municipality provides services in a decentralised manner New service modes, support for service-provision companies Schools and children a real resource; distance learning; schools as service centres Structures of the information society; new routes for the flow of information; Euro structures; Those who have left - those who have stayed
Community structure	The current struggle over the exceptional permits of four built-up areas	A tighter community and service structure than at present; changes in regional distribution	People can live anywhere they choose; 'eco-villages' that look after themselves; people generate their own services
Threat			Are the municipality's own services good enough? The forest isn't visible from the ground level; the displaced are cared for on the basis of norms; successful people choose their services themselves; actors are self-sufficient in their services and needs; comprehensive care for the disadvantaged as well

The discussions in one municipality started out from the remark: "We cant'go on this way." The table illustrates how the municipality proceeded from hopelessness to future alternatives. The directors of the education, social welfare and health care, and technical sectors outline alternative views of the future. A joint view of the future, shared by the different administrative branches, is important so that the administrative branches can, through their own decisions, implement the desired future in practice.

	The Mobile Services Model	The Mobile People Model
Care for older people	Services at home	Services in an institution
Transport	Transport in the villages in important	Transport to centres is important
Housing	It pays to renovate homes	Institutions and service housing are central
Municipal structure	Emphasises villages	Emphasises centralisation

Decisions made in an administrative branch affect other administrative branches as well. As an example, one municipality's alternative models for care for older people are given above. Each model calls for different solutions with regard to arranging transport and housing for older people. All three segments care for older people, transport and housing - together make up the policy line for the municipality's structure.

Alternatives supply the arena for discussion of the future

Any working group that sets out to examine the future often experiences the future as being something compulsory without alternatives.
The participants may be troubled by apprehensions about the future which should not be brought into the open "Our municipality has no future" or they may be full of dreams which they are too modest to reveal. Residents, people in positions of trust or public servants may not be willing to talk about the future.

There are at least three futures:
- what happens if nothing is done
- a horrible future
- an utopia og good

Public servants are cautious in creating alternativepicturesof the future.They are afrait of getting into a politically sensitive area, dealing with issues they feel belong solely to people in political positions of trust. On the other hand, public servants are afraid that political decision-makers, too, won't deal with these issue. Nor do residents necessarily send signals prompting discussion of the future.

In opening one's eyes to the future, examination of alternatives has proved to be a fruitful approach.

Creation of alternative pictures of the future calls or 'models', i.e. alternatives that serve to open the doors to thinking and alteration efforts.The alternatives can also be impossible, for overly realistic alternatives seem to lead to routines. We cannot get free of the restricting effects of the present, to proceed to real innovations.

The municipality is an entity

The differing goals of different administrative branches, and their differing proposals for solutions, affect one another. The social welfare and health sector or authorities handling care for older people cannot implement their own objectives without the assistance of other administrative branches. Solutions made in other administrative branches have direct or indirect effects on the social welfare and health sector's need for services. Correspondingly, solutions made in the social welfare and health sector affect the work of other administrative branches.

The above table illustrates how care for older people, transport and housing are carried out in two models of the future, and what these models mean to the structure of the municipality. If the wish is to organise care for older people according to the model where services are provided at home, then the municipal strategy, transport and housing must all be implemented according to the Mobile Services Model.