

# Summary Notes: Rise Up Be Heard “Think Critically, Act Creatively” Workshop

May 3, 2016



These are key point notes from the “Think Critically, Act Creatively” workshop conducted with the Rise Up, Be Heard fellows on April 30, 2016 in Fusion offices in Oakland, CA. The workshop was conducted by Gabriel Peters-Lazaro and Sangita Shresthova. Michelle Zenarosa and Jacob Simas co-facilitated the workshop and added a Fellow-specific perspective. The workshop was attended by nine Fellows.

## Opening



We opened the workshop with a quick media making exercise and asked all participants to come up with a one word response to a one word prompt (prompts drew on popular culture and health related topics relevant to California)

We then recorded their responses and played them back for the fellows. Watch the [video here](#).

## Introducing Civic Imagination

The moderators then introduced the work of Media, Activism, and Participatory Politics (MAPP) Project at USC and the concept of civic imagination as something that emerged from this work. For a more detailed description of the workshop background, [click here](#).

## Imagining a Future World

We then transitioned to brainstorming a future world in California, a world set in 2046. We intentionally left the parameters of the world open - specifying only that this is an aspirational world, a world that we could imagine as a desirable outcome. We also said that the world did not need to reflect our realistic expectations for the future.

We brainstormed the world in these categories:

**Prisons** - would be gone, prisons will have turned into universities

**Labor** - manual labor would be gone, automation of labor (but in a way that does not take away from employment).

**Health** - community based solutions, body scans to prevent disease, beaming into doctors office (to minimize barriers to doctor access), access to care universal (regardless of immigration status), universal access to medication, decolonizing medicine (eliminating control of medicine by big pharmaceutical companies), end of big pharma model

**Education** - based on sharing of information, shared technology (not just about having ipads in all schools), accurate history taught, crowdsourced curricula to reflect diverse stories/erased stories, adjustment of time in school to be effective for young people, culturally sensitive material, person to person based education, based on understanding young people's learning needs, no standardized testing, higher education free and seen as just as the next step in educational process

**Transportation** - in hover cars that give off zero emission and do not impact environment

**Environment** - no car pollution, fewer industrial spaces, equity - clean air for everyone, clean water, everyone has a choice to access clean water and clean soil (does not depend on income)

**Immigration** - Fewer deportations, focus on dignity when dealing with immigration, no borders

**Water** - universal access to clean water, filtering of drinking water, making ocean water drinkable

**Island** - California breaks off (laughter)

**Gender** - end of gender binary, spectrum as a standard

**Safety** - community solutions to security issues, support individuals, an approach that understands root cause of crimes

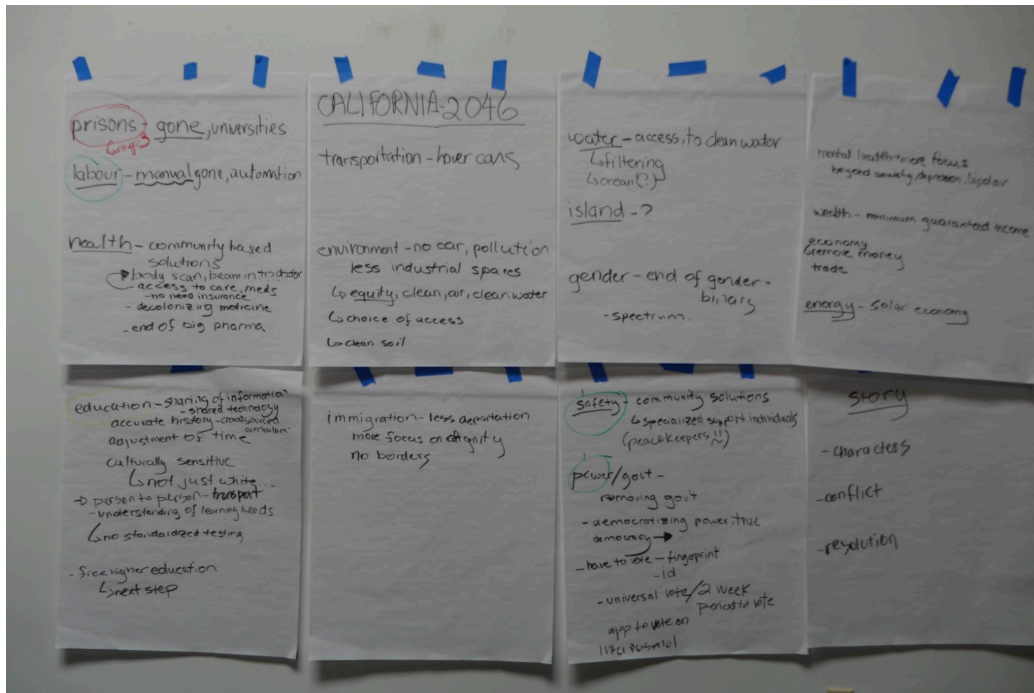
**Power / Government** - remove government, democratized power structure, a true democracy, universal/compulsory voting, app for voting, interpersonal discussions of issues

**Mental Health** - more focus on mental health issues that pushes beyond the 'top three' (anxiety, depression, bipolar)

**Wealth** - minimum guaranteed income for everyone

**Economy** - based on trade, maybe get rid of money

**Energy** - solar energy/economy



## Stories

The Fellows were then divided into three groups of three and were asked to come up with a story that had the following characteristics:

1. Engaged 1-2 topics from the future world brainstorm
2. Explained how we got to the future world
3. Included: characters, a conflict and a resolution

Finally, the fellows had to perform their stories (see linked videos).



**Group 1:** A moment in the future where all people in the world, except one, are incarcerated. Incarceration happens for the smallest misdemeanors. Prisons become thriving communities where learning is encouraged. Even guards become part of this process. In the end, there is no need to live outside prisons.

Watch [video here](#).

**Group 2:** A moment in the very near future where many people are incarcerated - walking across street can lead to 20 years in jail. The group had a very visually/experientially compelling way of portraying incarceration (people sitting crouched). The story followed a prison guard whose daughter is incarcerated leading him to take a stance against incarceration. He himself ends up incarcerated. But, he is able to hack the chip in his brain (everyone has one) to free everyone, and end mass incarceration.

Watch [video here](#).

**Group 3:** A day in the not so distant future (2020) when Trump is president. The setting is a school in California where children are taught a revised version of history. An outsider (a young person who just moved to the area) questions the teacher, leading to a sharp exchange. Other student in the class is quiet, but eventually “wakes” up and starts to question what she is being taught as well. Eventually, this leads to a popular revolt.



Watch [video here](#).

## Debrief

Key points brought up during debrief were:

- Freeing of imagination/Able to imagine again (participant voiced thankfulness for the work this workshop did for him in allowing him to imagine again)
- Prominence of prison theme (incarceration both as a physical and internalized experience)
- Brain chip - the ability to hack existing systems to advance change
- Power of the visual representation of incarceration
- How do we wake up people in the system?
- Minor infractions leading to life sentence (this is effectively a reality)
- Need to address underlying issues in schools
- Regarding policing - it is worth asking people in the community on both sides of the situation (both community and police officers) - story reminded participant of that
- Future world and stories are a great way to connect with community and think across communities - how can make that happen
- Worldbuilding as a way to connect alternative visions of the future
- This was hopeful/uplifting

## Next Steps

We identified these next steps:

- Jacob and Michelle to figure out how to take next steps with fellows.
- Possible assignment: connecting stories to real world issues
- Possible assignment: collect more visions/stories sources from Fellow's communities
- Interactive presentation of these collected stories
- Think Critically, Act Creatively workshop at final Fellow event, where fellows run the worldbuilding with attendees

All recorded media lives here:

<https://drive.google.com/folderview?id=0B3inuGr2JoIINjVKMDBGZWtXVIU&usp=sharing>