

Back from the future: A vision of the turquoise economy

Alexandra Köves
Corvinus University of Budapest

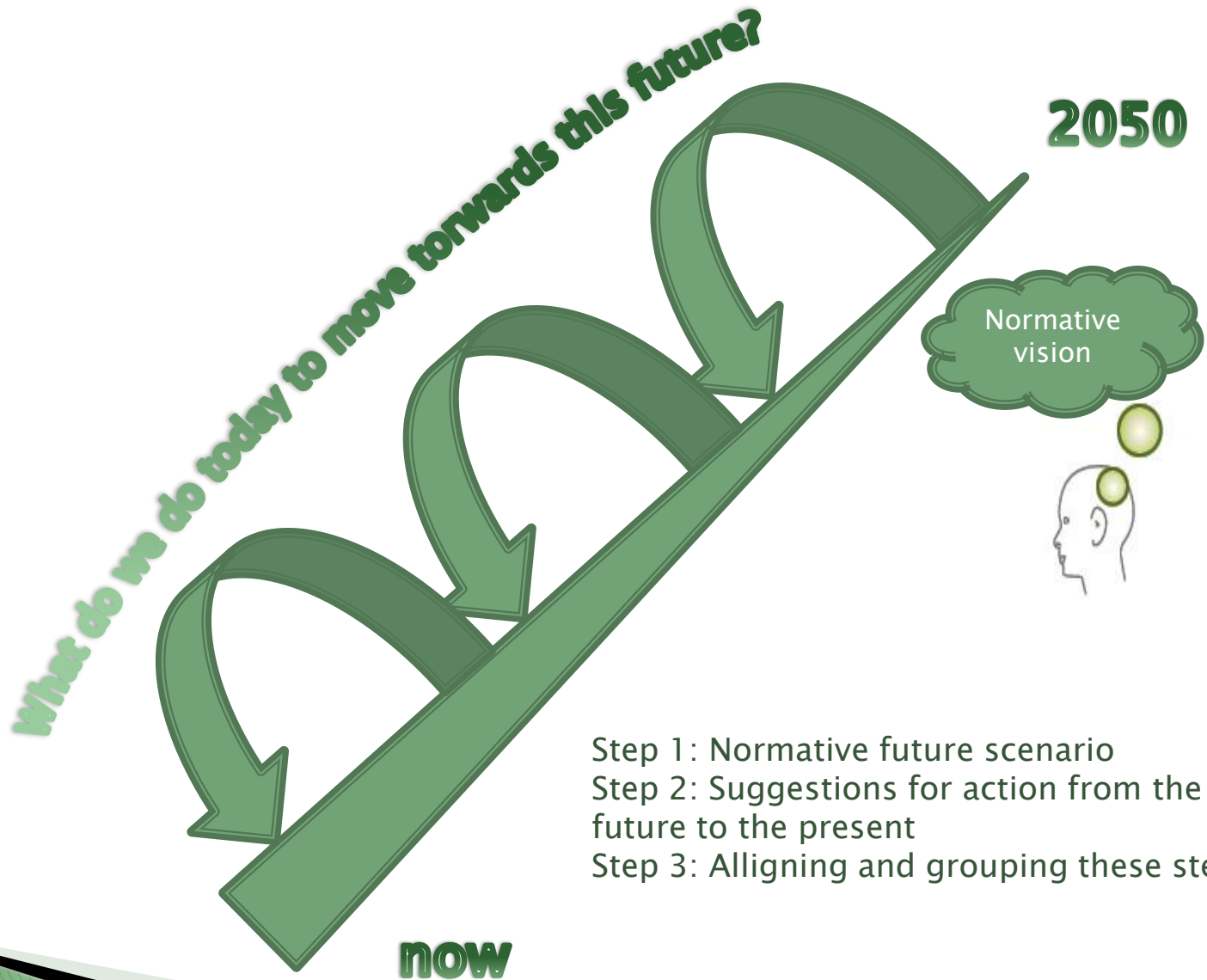
The theoretical background: ecological economics

- There are ecological and social limits to economic growth
- Current problems are complex, intertwined and their solution requires transdisciplinary approaches
- Post-normal science: science cannot be done from an ivory tower – it must provide adequate (also policy) solutions and involve all stakeholders

"Ecological wisdom does not consist in understanding how to live in accord with nature; it consists in understanding how to get humans to agree on how to live in accord with nature".

Ken Wilber, A Brief History of Everything , p.268

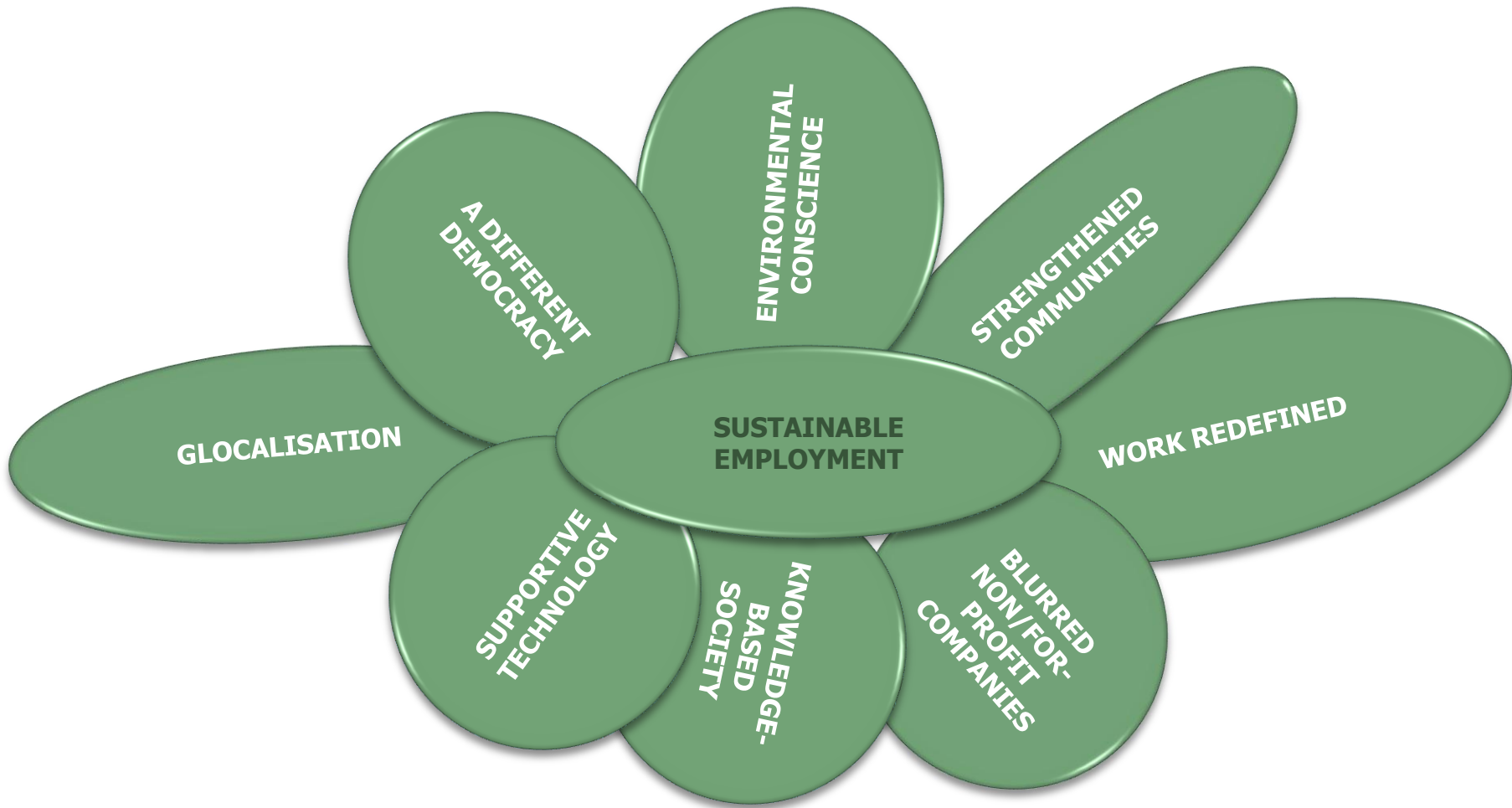
The method: backcasting – how to think out-of-the-box?



The Hungarian backcasting workshops

	First backcasting workshop	Second backcasting workshop
	The world of work in 2050: sustainable employment in Hungary	
Number of participants	16	14
Participants	experts	university students
Participants' background	experience with employment policy (business, academic, civil, public administration)	environmental orientation (MSc in Human Ecology; MSc in Environmental Economics)
Participants' average age	46 years	26 years
Date	March 2012	January 2013

The vision



The turquoise elements

Interior individual accounts (*upper-left quadrant*) – focuses on the inner development of the individual and works with an integrated image of humans

- ▶ The concept of work not only includes self-development per se but work is self-development and self-development is work
- ▶ Humans are allowed to perform activities at least in part of their life when they do what suits best their inner development (and not only in their free time)
- ▶ Humans are treated integrated in all spheres of life (at their workplaces they are not only employees or employers but parents, children, commuters, football players or anglers, etc.)

Tools:

- ▶ A wide array of accepted forms of employment
- ▶ Guaranteed basic income
- ▶ Learning, self-development, housework, child care, elderly care are legally and socially accepted as work

The turquoise elements

Interior collective accounts (*lower-left*) – *emphasises the importance of common understanding*

- ▶ Deliberative decision-making processes are in the forefront
- ▶ Social participation is part of life (and considered „work“)
- ▶ Companies are a lot like current social economy enterprises where people work together based on common values
- ▶ Social transformations are based on attitude changes rather than external forces

Tools:

- ▶ Deliberative democracy (fora for deliberation)
- ▶ Wide opportunities for social participation
- ▶ Closing the gap between non-profit and for-profit enterprises

The turquoise elements

Exterior individual accounts (*upper-right*) – *relies on the conscious behavior of individuals*

- ▶ The effects of economic actions are reflected upon and taken into consideration regardless of time and space
- ▶ People take responsibility on all relevant levels (e.g. they know how the work they do impacts their own development as well as the development of others and that of nature)

Tools:

- ▶ Monitoring and feed-back loops
- ▶ Awareness-raising

The turquoise elements

Its

Exterior collective accounts (*lower-right*) - *emphasises globally networked human societies in integration with nature*

- ▶ People live in glocalised communities, i.e. a global network of local communities, where the economic activity takes place mostly on the local community level but with conscious consideration on its global social and ecological effects

Tools:

- ▶ Support of LETS, local currencies
- ▶ Local production and consumption networks
- ▶ Revising global trading rules

Turquoise because...

- ▶ it focuses on self-realisation and self-development
- ▶ presumes global conscience
- ▶ thinks in global, universal communities

Integral because...

- ▶ does not attempt to dissociate from current and previous systems
 - ▶ does not translate but transforms
- 

Conclusions

- ▶ Backcasting is a method that gives people a chance of leaving their cognitive realities behind
- ▶ Participants seemed to be ready to move towards second-tier thinking

Food for thought:

- ▶ If the current economy is at best on the verge of orange and green and the vision of 2050 is turquoise, is it possible that green is just a few decades?

Thank you for your kind attention!

alexandra.koves@gmail.com