

Imagining the Future:

How Futures Thinking Supports Green Entrepreneurship for Deaf Learners



The Importance of Thinking About the Future

The transition towards a more **sustainable and environmentally responsible society** requires not only **technological innovation** but also new ways of **thinking about the future**. Environmental challenges such as **climate change**, **resource scarcity**, and **biodiversity loss** increasingly influence **economic development**, **labour markets**, and everyday life. In this context, the ability to imagine, analyse, and interpret possible futures has become an important competence for individuals and communities seeking to **adapt and innovate**.

This competence, often referred to as **futures literacy**, allows people to explore how **current decisions and behaviours** shape the **world of tomorrow**. For Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing learners, developing this ability can open new opportunities to participate actively in the **green economy** and to contribute with **innovative ideas for sustainable development**.

Futures Thinking as a Key Competence

Futures thinking is not about predicting what will happen in the future. Instead, it is a way of exploring different possibilities and reflecting on how **present actions** may lead to different outcomes. When learners engage in **futures thinking**, they begin to understand that the **future is not fixed** but rather shaped by human choices, social priorities, and technological progress.

This perspective helps people move beyond reacting to problems as they appear and instead encourages them to **anticipate challenges**, recognise **emerging needs**, and design creative responses. Within the context of **green entrepreneurship**, this ability becomes particularly valuable because many **sustainable innovations** originate from identifying environmental challenges that will grow in importance in the coming years.

Futures thinking also strengthens learners' ability to deal with **uncertainty and complexity**, which are characteristic of many **environmental and societal challenges** today. By considering multiple possible developments, learners become more flexible in their thinking and more capable of adapting their ideas to changing conditions. This competence is particularly relevant in the context of **sustainability**, where technological advances, environmental pressures, and social expectations evolve rapidly. For future entrepreneurs, the ability to **anticipate these dynamics** can support more responsible decision-making and help design solutions that remain relevant and valuable over time.



6TH ARTICLE

The Greenentre4deaf Project



Learning Through Future Scenarios

Educational approaches that incorporate **future scenarios** can play a significant role in strengthening this competence. Within the **GreenEntre4Deaf project**, learners are encouraged to explore different possible situations related to **sustainability**, technology, and community life. By analysing and comparing a variety of potential future developments, students gain a broader understanding of how **environmental, economic, and social systems** interact.

Imagining different trajectories of development helps learners reflect on the consequences of **present decisions** and understand that **sustainable futures** depend on responsible choices made today. Through these activities, participants not only develop analytical skills but also strengthen their creativity and ability to think strategically about **long-term solutions**.

From Environmental Challenges to Entrepreneurial Opportunities

This type of learning also creates a natural bridge between **environmental awareness** and **entrepreneurial thinking**. When learners explore possible **future scenarios**, they begin to identify areas where new services, products, or social initiatives may be needed. Environmental challenges, which are often perceived only as problems, can gradually be reframed as **opportunities for innovation**.

Ideas related to **sustainable mobility, circular economy solutions, eco-friendly product design, or community-based environmental initiatives** often emerge from this process of imagining future needs and possibilities. By connecting **sustainability challenges** with **entrepreneurial thinking**, learners develop the capacity to design solutions that create economic value while also contributing to **environmental and social wellbeing**.



**“THE FUTURE IS NOT PREDICTED
— IT IS CREATED.”**

Inclusive Learning for a Sustainable Future

An essential aspect of the **GreenEntre4Deaf project** is ensuring that these learning processes remain **accessible and inclusive**. **DHH learners** often benefit from visual learning approaches and interactive educational tools that support engagement and comprehension. **Scenario-based learning activities**, visual simulations, and interactive digital exercises make it easier to explore complex **sustainability topics** in ways that are intuitive and inclusive.

The transition to a **greener future** requires the creativity, knowledge, and participation of all members of society. Developing **futures thinking skills** allows learners to better understand **environmental challenges**, anticipate emerging trends, and recognise opportunities for **sustainable innovation**. Through accessible educational tools and inclusive learning environments, the GreenEntre4Deaf project empowers Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing learners to become active contributors to the green economy and to design solutions that benefit both **society and the environment**.