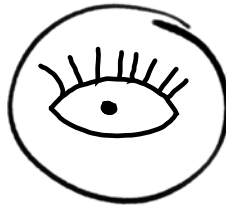
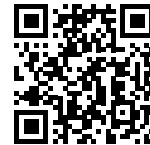


1 Short profile



2 Practice example

Outputs: How does the Wiesenhügel neighborhood in Erfurt want to live after tomorrow?



Content of the tool: Mood Boards as a Door Opener



Mood Boards as a Door Opener

→ Large-format collages of photos, images and graphics are ideal for triggering associations and getting people to start imagining different futures.

The topic

A mood board lends itself to a vast range of topics. Along with pictures, your mood board can also include key words or diagrams. Mood boards help participants combine their creative, intuitive response to images with analytical thinking, e.g. by drawing links between the topics visualised. For a more complex discussion, it can be helpful to work with multiple mood boards, each capturing a different aspect of the topic. Do not choose topics that are too abstract. The participants should be able to relate the topic to their everyday life.

The Xtopian moment

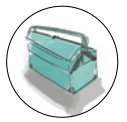
The different images, photos and graphics on the mood board trigger feelings, questions or thoughts. These can be used as the starting point for a conversation and for participants to develop their own ideas or entire visions of the future. Images that are ambivalent, contradictory or even provocative can help to trigger responses that you can then explore in conversation and use in further work on your Xtopia. If you work with multiple boards, it is highly recommended to have a trained facilitator on each board.

The target groups

You can use mood boards as a great starting point when working both with adult participants or with children and young people. Visually appealing mood boards encourage people to open up and engage in discussion. In addition to a physical board, online collaboration tools can also be used.



Time required	Group size	Format	Location	Materials
<p>Introduction 5-10 mins</p> <p>Execution approx. 15 mins per mood board</p> <p>Conclusion 15-30 mins</p>	<p>3-8 people per mood board; participants can move freely between the mood boards or may be instructed to do so after a set time</p>	<p>Small groups, each with a facilitator</p>	<p>Plenty of indoor or outdoor space; alternatively an online collaboration tool</p>	<p>Approx. 8-10 images on an A1 board</p>



The educational goals

Mood Boards as a Door Opener can incorporate all sorts of diverse images and are a great way to awaken associations in people's minds. This helps participants begin to imagine for themselves what the future could look like and to start engaging in discussion on this topic. Participants become aware of their own unconscious ideas or attitudes and can reflect on them together. Importantly, this can reveal whether one person's utopia is another's dystopia.

Application

You should integrate your mood board into a workshop or teaching unit. For example, you could use a mood board as the basis for each of the tables in a world café.

Preparation: Find suitable photos, images or graphics and arrange them on a large poster (at least A2) – either directly on the paper or digitally ready to print out later. Surprising, provocative and ambivalent scenes help participants engage with the topic, as do interesting and aesthetically appealing images. Depending on the group, you could also use graphics, artworks or other illustrations. Make sure you have the right to use the images. Quotes or short phrases may be used to complete the mood board.

Execution: The mood board is placed on a table or hung up so that a small group can work with it. First, participants look at all the elements on the board. The facilitator then invites participants to concentrate on certain images. For example, they could ask participants to start by describing what they see. This encourages participants to think about how they relate to the pictures and begin talking about their own attitudes and ideas. The discussion that develops may be guided by the images on the mood board or may move on from them altogether. Write down the thoughts and ideas that emerge, e.g. on large sticky notes around the board, so that you can use these later.

Follow-up: At the end, the most interesting ideas from each board can be presented and discussed in the whole group. Other methods, e.g. image theatre, could follow on from the work with the mood boards.

Potential and challenges

Images and graphics are readily available these days, so it is relatively easy to put together a good mood board. You can tailor the choice and arrangement of images to the target groups. Make sure to give this careful consideration so as not to accidentally reinforce stereotypes or confuse the topic being addressed. You can create mood boards for any topic, but you should ensure they are not too abstract for your target group. In a longer workshop setting, you could leave the mood boards hanging in the room as a constant yet unobtrusive presence. Participants may be emotionally affected by some of the images, either positively or negatively (e.g. one young participant was excited to recognise an influencer in one of the photos). The facilitator may need to digress from the core topic to respond to this. Depending on the context of the event, image rights may be an obstacle to choosing suitable images, particularly if visual documentation is planned but no funds are available to acquire the images you need.

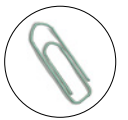
Source: Jossin, J., Voigt, A., Godlewsky, T., Beecroft, R., Arnold, M., Bernstein, F., Messerschmidt, S., Rothfuss, D., Multhaup, S., Olshausen, I., Aweh, M., Lafratta, M. & Amrehn, U. (2023). *Toolbox for Xtopias: New tools for futurists*. kassel university press. doi:10.17170/kobra-202312089182

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More info: unsplash.com, pixabay.com, gratisography.com or freepik.com have images you can use for free. However, please always check the licence terms for each image. In some cases, you may need to acknowledge the source, for example.

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More tools and materials: xtopien.org/toolbox

xtopien.org



Implementation example: Use of mood boards as a door opener in Erfurt

We tested mood boards for the first time in a two-and-a-half-day Xtopian workshop in the Wiesenhügel neighborhood in Erfurt. There, we worked with the younger residents in particular to develop visions of how they would like to work and live in the future. In an interplay between images and language, the mood boards provided an ideal introduction to envisioning in a setting similar to a world café. A rating of the most popular ideas allowed to select (new) motifs for graffiti.

