**SCENARIO 1**

**A balanced human-machine think tank**

It’s 2035. You are the director of a major think tank focused on environmental policy and the climate crisis. A seismic disruption has occurred for your industry - artificial intelligence has effectively taken over the analytical work of think tanks.

Advanced AI systems can now ingest massive data sets, crowdsourced inputs, and empirical research to generate robust policy proposals at an unprecedented scale and speed. The AI can model complex scenario projections, weigh trade-offs, and optimize for intended outcomes better than any human team.

Many of your veteran PhD researchers have been made redundant, their deep subject expertise no longer as valuable compared to the capabilities of machine intelligence. However, a new generation is rising that understands AI is a powerful tool, not a replacement for human values and ethical judgment.

This vanguard is being led by young people seeking more balanced lives, prioritizing purposeful work on society's biggest challenges like climate over traditional careerism. They have grown cynical about elite institutions and top-down power structures after being raised in an era of crisis, inequity and institutional failure.

Your team proposes reimagining the think tank as a "collaborative do-tank" - an open platform that collaborates with these motivated youth to channel AI's analysis into ethical, equitable, real-world solutions. The AI rapidly runs scenarios that activist teams then validate from the ground up using inclusive processes to align with community needs.

Policy proposals published on this platform go through rounds of transparent peer review, multimedia feedback, and robust public debate. Those that achieve bottom-up consensus can be rapidly prototyped, funded and implemented in partnership with local governments and businesses.

It's a synergy between machine intelligence and grassroots human intelligence striving for climate progress. AI provides the analysis, but ethical humans provide the guiding values and implementation ensuring benefit to all.

**TAKE A BREATH. TAKE IT ALL IN.**

1. *In one word, describe how you feel about pioneering this balanced human-machine future.*
2. *What are the first actions to transition your think tank to this participatory, youth-led "collaborative do-tank" model responsibly harnessing AI capabilities?*

**SCENARIO 2**

**A crowdsourced, crowdfunded, gate-less think tank**

It’s 2035. You are the director of a prominent think tank, but your organization has for years been struggling to obtain funding to support your work. Most philanthropic organizations have closed and the usual government or multilateral funding has almost dried up. A big contributor to this is the fact that public trust in think tanks, long perceived as elite institutions, has been declining.

However, you also sense a profound shift in the public mindset. After years of disinformation, bitter polarization and paralysis on major issues, people seem desperate for facts, authentic leadership and real solutions to shared challenges, including climate change and deep inequality.

In the wake of scandals discrediting traditional elite policy institutions, an unmistakable hunger has emerged for a fundamentally new approach - one that rebuilds credibility through radical transparency and grassroots inclusion.

Your remaining team realizes your think tank could have a renaissance by completely restructuring as a crowdsourced, open source policy hub. This afternoon, you will gather for an impassioned strategy session on opening up your work for public collaboration and ditching closed-door policy making:

The plan is to create online collaboration platforms where people can directly contribute data, analysis, feedback and policy ideas. These platforms are open to anyone wanting to contribute time and talent, no matter their background. An open data vault will make all your materials publicly available with commentary enabled. You'll hold virtual town halls to get input and build a sense of solidarity around the issues. All reports go through publicly-viewable peer review by experts worldwide before release. No more closed-door processes - every step of your work is conducted via virtual public forums, multimedia channels, open data sharing and global crowdsourcing.

You also take advantage of this moment to overhaul your resourcing model: Your funders will now be individual citizens supporting your mission through micro-transactions and small donations.

There are risks. Powerful entrenched interests, including billionaires—some of whom have taken over entire responsibilities of the state—may try to sabotage the open processes. Public opinion could still be too fractured to find common ground. But many on your team feel this bottom-up, inclusive, radically transparent model is the only way to rebuild trust and make rapid progress on major challenges.

**TAKE A BREATH. TAKE IT ALL IN.**

1. *In one word, describe how you feel about this inclusive, bottom-up future vision.*
2. *What are the first concrete actions you would take to transition your think tank to this radically open model? Who could you partner with initially?*

**SCENARIO 3**

**A think tank for a second chance in Mars**

It’s 2035. You are the director of a prestigious think tank, but the global landscape around you has radically transformed. A new era is unfolding where billionaires and private corporations wield immense power and influence over services and functions traditionally handled by national governments.

In this climate, your think tank has found itself increasingly sidelined and underfunded as government contracts dry up. The public purse is strained, and democratically-elected officials have outsourced huge swaths of policy work and public services to ultra-wealthy private benefactors, a phenomenon others have coined as “The Musk Effect”.

However, a monumental achievement has captured the interest and ambitions of the billionaire class - the first crewed landing on Mars. This sci-fi dream realized has stoked fantasies among the wealthy elite about opening new frontiers, building off-world colonies, and exploiting the literal territory of a new planet.

Given your earth and social science expertise, your team sees an opportunity. You begin repositioning the think tank as a specialized consultancy to attract funding and set the agenda for Mars exploration and settlement through an ethical, long-term lens.

You envision convening collaborative futures councils of scientists, philosophers, economists, anthropologists and more to holistically map out scenarios for sustainable human stasis and advancement as a multi-planet civilization. How can Mars urbanization avoid replicating Earth's ecological mistakes? How do you preserve human rights and dignity for future colonists?

In this new paradigm, your research proposals and long-view thinking appeal to billionaire benefactors obsessed with establishing their legacy and securing humanity's expansive future for generations. By guiding these powerful interests, perhaps your think tank can positively shape Mars exploration, although many in your team still feel uncomfortable about this path.

**TAKE A BREATH. TAKE IT ALL IN.**

1. *In one word, describe how you feel about navigating this privately-funded future.*
2. *What are the first concrete actions you take to transition your mission, fundraise from wealthy patrons, and assemble the Mars futures councils?*

**SCENARIO 4**

**An ‘everyone an expert’ think tank**

It’s 2035. You wake up to a world where the very idea of "expertise" has been turned on its head. Thanks to the democratization of media creation, anyone with a smartphone and TikTok 2.0 account can position themselves as a policy analyst or thought leader on any topic. Traditional credentials from elite universities or think tanks no longer carry much weight.

At the same time, national governments like the United States have become increasingly isolationist and retreated from their traditional public service roles. In this vacuum, corporations have stepped in as the new moral leaders, philanthropists and problem solvers. Big businesses are taking the reins on everything from climate action to public health to infrastructure.

As director of what was once a prestigious think tank, you find yourself at a crossroads. Your funders have all pulled out - governments no longer see value in policy research, and corporations are creating their own internal think tanks. Your team of PhD researchers is demoralized as their years of training are discounted compared to the viral influencers shaping public opinion.

However, your team identifies an opportunity in this fluid landscape. You could completely redefine your institution as a platform for elevating credible grassroots experts and facilitating open knowledge-sharing. The think tank could crowdsource policy solutions from people closest to the problems.

You envision creating multimedia channels for anyone to share video policy pitches which are then debated, collaborated on, and iteratively improved through public crowdsourcing. The most robust ideas approved by the crowd get amplified and shared with corporations and local governments for potential implementation and funding.

It's a democratized, bottom-up model - no more hidebound elite processes. But it's also a platform for curating legitimately rigorous and ethical policy work that bubbles up from everyday people's experience.

**TAKE A BREATH. TAKE IT ALL IN.**

1. *In one word, describe how you feel about this grassroots future of policy innovation.*
2. *What are the first steps you would take to transition your think tank to this open, crowd-driven model? How could you incentivize participation and ensure quality?*

**SCENARIO 5**

**An ambient media savvy think tank**

It’s 2035. You are the director of a leading think tank, but the way information, ideas and narratives spread has completely transformed. Communication no longer flows through conventional channels or screens like TV, websites or social media. Instead, the seamless blending of digital visuals and data into our physical surroundings has given rise to "ambient media": Imagine images and news alerts showing up in front of you as you walk down the street, even without you reaching for your mobile phone or any screen. This has been made possible by augmented reality, interactive surfaces, and programmable materials which can manifest information all around us as immersive experiences integrated into the built and natural environments we inhabit. In short, it's media and communication channels that quite literally envelop and ambient us.

In this radically shifted mediascape where ambient, immersive experiences are the dominant mode for spreading ideas and narratives, think tanks face an existential dilemma about their own communications models.

Traditional policy reports, written for elite academia and government circles, risk being tuned out as overly abstract and disconnected from the experiential realms most citizens now inhabit. Even slickly produced video or interactive web content may fail to break through the fragmented echo chambers of tailored ambient media narratives.

To stay relevant and impactful, you realize think tanks must fundamentally adapt and innovate their insights delivery - shifting from PDFs and websites to ambient, immersive storyworlds capable of enveloping diverse audiences and shifting mindsets. But without corporatizing yourselves as pay-to-play propagandists for monied interests, ethical paths forward seem unclear.

One radical idea is to transform your think tank into something like an open "visual communications collective." Instead of dense reports, your analysts and researchers would create interactive data visualizations and digitally rendered visual stories that anyone could freely experience, remix and build upon using advanced technologies.

These could take the form of immersive augmented reality environments that simulate the impacts of different policy choices. Or responsive projected artworks made of programmable materials that physically morph to illustrate key concepts. The idea is to make your policy work experiential rather than text-based.

Another possibility is pivoting to be more like an "immersive policy studio" that uses cutting-edge tools to turn complex issues into interactive narrative experiences designed to foster deeper understanding. You could construct augmented reality simulations that allow people to virtually live out the pros and cons of potential policies. Or create reactive architectural installations where surfaces and structures dynamically transform based on different policy variables and data flows.

The overall goal is to shift away from one-way communicating through traditional reports and presentations. Instead, you would strive to build compelling, accessible visual stories and

participatory experiences that can evolve based on real-time feedback and allow the public to genuinely engage with and even directly shape policy thinking.

**TAKE A BREATH. TAKE IT ALL IN.**

1. *In one word, describe how you feel about radically reinventing the think tank model for this new ambient paradigm.*
2. *What very first experimental steps would you take to begin piloting immersive, experience-driven policy kernels and participatory co-creation with the public?*

**SCENARIO 6**

**A holistic, youth-led think tank**

It’s 2035. You wake up to find a world where the traditional bastions of power - governments, corporations, elite universities - have been thoroughly disrupted by a generational youth shift. A great rebalancing is underway, catalyzed by the existential crises facing civilization and the desire for a more sustainable, fulfilling existence.

The old think tank model, centered on academic credentials, bureaucratic hierarchy and dense white papers, has been firmly rejected by the young vanguard now in charge. They came of age amid climate upheaval, social upheaval, and mistrust of institutions seen as self-serving and disconnected from real human needs.

This cohort deprioritizes narrow careerist ambition, instead seeking purpose, personal wellbeing, and deep community and environmental connections. Expertise has been democratized - knowledge and skills spread laterally through decentralized networks and open-source education, not siloed in universities or archaic credentialing bodies.

Your team has worked alongside these dynamics and completely reimagined what a think tank can be. No longer a closed crowd of expensively-educated urbanites, you have transformed into a radically open organization amplified by this engaged new generation.

Research questions and policy priorities are crowdsourced directly from diverse communities bearing the brunt of climate impacts, social injustice, economic insecurity - not decided top-down. Proposed solutions - multimedia, multilingual, immersive - are publicly workshopped, prototyped and continuously iterated.

Those demonstrating real-world traction are matched with distributed networks of "nudge-funding" backers and local partners for scalable implementation in their communities. Progress is collectively monitored in real-time by transparent data dashboards that transcend national borders.

This participatory model brings genuine grassroots wisdom to bear on complex challenges, replacing aloof analysis with an ethic of empowered "citizen policymaking" by those most impacted and motivated to create positive change in harmony with natural systems.

**TAKE A BREATH. TAKE IT ALL IN.**

1. *In one word, describe how you feel pioneering this grassroots future, youth-led future.*
2. *What are the first actions to rapidly decentralize your organization into this open "do-tank" pipeline led by holistic, community-grounded youth changemakers?*

**[EXTRA SCENARIOS]**

**A multispecies convenor think tank**

It’s 2035. You wake up to a world where the very definition of "rights-holders" has radically expanded. After decades of dire warnings about biodiversity collapse and climate change going unheeded by sluggish governments, a scientific and philosophical breakthrough has occurred.

New technologies have allowed researchers to decode the informational and chemical communication networks of plants, fungi, microorganisms and even non-human animals. For the first time, humanity can directly interface with the complex intelligences of our co-inhabitants on this planet.

As these communication channels open, it becomes undeniably clear that these other lifeforms possess sophisticated cognitive abilities, emotional capacities, decision-making and even cultural traditions. Essentially, they exhibit all the traits we previously assumed were uniquely human and the basis of legal personhood.

Your think tank was one of the first institutions advocating for the legal and moral rights of nature to be recognized and encoded into law and policy. Now that we can interface with nature's intelligences, there is an urgent need to facilitate these dialogues and represent their interests.

The think tank shifts its purpose to become a diplomatic embassy - using emerging xenolinguistics to advocate for the political sovereignty and land rights of forests, microbiomes, reef systems, migratory species and more. You assemble multispecies governance councils to negotiate sustainable policies that respect all life's interests.

You realize now why society ignored climate warnings for so long. We simply lacked the capacity to *listen* to the biodiverse intelligences most impacted and understand their needs. With this hurdle overcome, swift cooperative action finally accelerates.

1. In one word, describe how you feel about pioneering this pluralistic future? (Hopeful? Humbled?)
2. What are the first actions your think tank would take to build these unprecedented multi-species dialogue forums and policymaking platforms?
3. Do you think your organization has the necessary muscles to prepare yourselves for this future?

It’s 2035. You are the director of an environmental think tank, but the way expertise and policy work is conducted has radically shifted in recent years. A cultural reckoning has unfolded, with more and more people rejecting the cutthroat rat race in favor of finding equilibrium between meaningful work, personal wellbeing and purpose.

In this awakening, young people in particular are leading the charge for change. They grew up in an era of crises - a global pandemic, accelerating climate impacts, fake news undermining truth. But they also witnessed inspiring movements to prioritize human flourishing above empty status games.

Crucially, today's youth are deeply motivated to tackle the existential threat of climate change and environmental breakdown using new collaborative, decentralized, and transparent models.

At your think tank, you've realized that the old elite, closed-door processes lack credibility and must be radically transformed to stay relevant and trusted. You propose reinventing completely as an open "do-tank" where people worldwide can directly contribute effort, ideas, and solutions.

All research, data analysis, and policy proposals become public projects on open workspaces and collaboration platforms. There are no degrees or credentials required - just a willingness to roll up sleeves and work alongside others towards audacious climate goals.

Participants gain respect through demonstrated achievements and completion of measurable objectives, not job titles. Decisions are made cooperatively by active contributors, not rigid hierarchies. Funding comes from voluntary micropayments and crowdsourced backers, not gatekept institutional funders.

You see inspired young activists as the catalyst to bring this vision of a distributed, grassroots "do-tank" to life. Their passion, digital literacy, and rejection of calcified power structures is the key ingredient.

1. In one word, describe how you feel about pioneering this open, energized future for climate policy work.
2. What are the first concrete actions you'd take to transition to this participatory model led by motivated youth? How do you cultivate that generational transition?
3. Do you think your organization has the necessary muscles to prepare yourselves for this future?