

LEARNING JOURNEY

LAo1: ASSESSING ORGANISATIONAL THREATS (ESTIMATED TIME 60 MINUTES + VIDEO)

Context

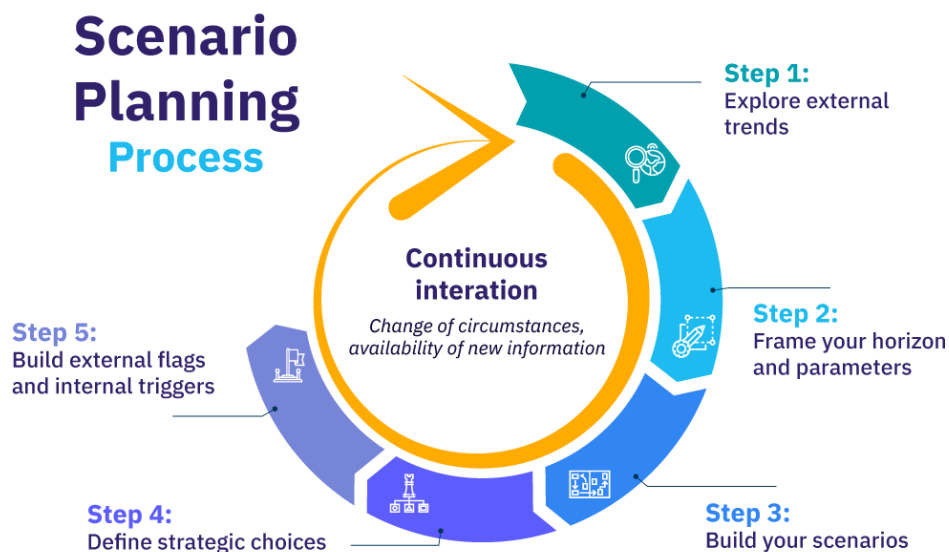
“If you are feeling confused and as though everything is impacting you all at the same time, this is not a personal, private experience. This is actually a collective experience” (Adam Tooze). And this experience has a name – the “Polycrisis”.

“Forewarned is forearmed.”
Old Proverb

“The confluence of crises facing leaders and managers is nothing short of remarkable. The concern for leaders and managers should be whether they are prepared.” (PwC)

The “My New Good Life” Learning Journey series has been developed to support leaders / managers better handle the “Polycrisis” to create successful and resilient teams and organisations.

This *Learning Journey*, which is comprised of four *Learning Adventures* (LA) will take you through a Strategic Planning process and beyond into how to go about transforming your team or organisation. The following diagram of a typical Scenario Planning Process is borrowed from [AIHR](#), which provides more detail on each of the steps.



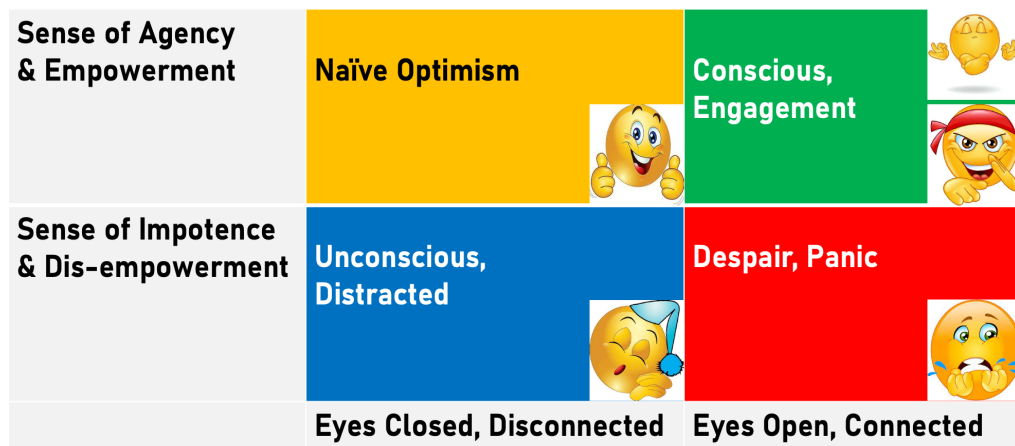
- **LAo1:** focuses on Step 1 – Exploring external (Global and Local) developments.
- **LAo2:** focuses on Steps 2 and 3 – Framing the process and exploring scenarios.
- **LAo3:** focuses on Step 4 – Exploring strategies that are resilient to change.
- **LAo4:** explores Step 5 and how to go about transforming your team or organisation

Objectives

As we start this *Learning adventure* LAo1, it is worth mentioning four broad stances that all of us probably adopt at one stage or another when facing significant challenges:

- Despair or panic
- Remaining deliberately unconscious (what problem?)
- Ignoring or denying (all will be well)
- Being aware and acting thoughtfully (conscious engagement)

These stances are illustrated in the diagram below:



None of these stances is intrinsically either good or bad. Some may represent helpful short-term strategies. However, as poet Robert Frost is quoted as saying, “The only way out is through.” This is a simple statement with a profound meaning that you can apply to many situations in life. The best way to overcome a challenge is to face it head-on rather than trying to avoid it.

This *Learning adventure* is designed to help you to do just that, by supporting you in thinking about your current context and potential future opportunities and threats as they relate to your organisation. This process may be hard work and / or cause you to feel difficult emotions. If you need support, please reach out to us (see details below).

Risks and Challenges

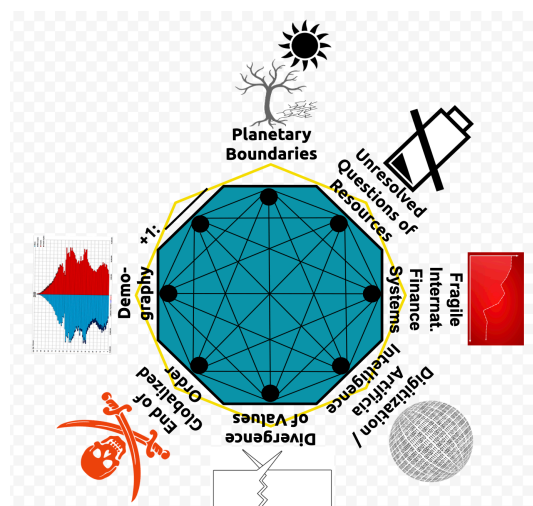
In this admittedly long [video](#), Daniel Schmachtenberger provides a good introduction to the landscape of interconnected risks and challenges that we will need to confront over the next decade.

If you would like to go deeper into any specific challenge, a list of resources is provided at the end of this *Learning adventure*.



We have selected 7 aspects, which we call “Global Shadows”. We call them global as we believe that these are the 7 developments that are making the most impact on humanity:

- Planetary Boundaries
- Unresolved questions of resources
- Fragile international finance systems
- Digitalisation / AI
- Divergence of values
- End of globalised order
- Demography



We believe that it is only a question of when and how these “Shadows” will affect us, if they are not affecting us already. For some, at least, we may be at the beginning of an exponential curve.

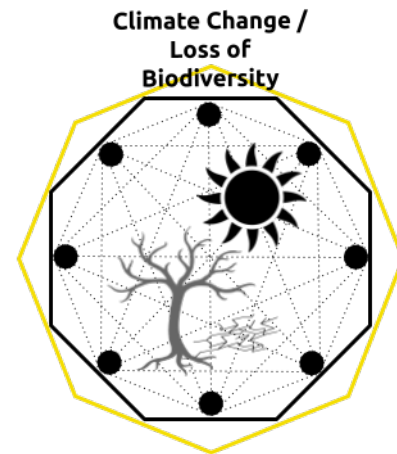
We also offer a placeholder for an 8th Shadow. We did not include pandemics, migration or the mental health crisis on the list as we see them as consequence of the 7 Global Shadows. But, please add one of them or any other factor you see as important.

We are also offering a space for “Local Shadows”. Some of them will be your location-specific “flavour” of a Global Shadow, others will be your location-specific Shadow.

Let’s explore each of the Global Shadows in more detail.

Climate Change / Loss of Biodiversity:

- We are already in the middle of runaway processes: rising temperatures, heat waves/droughts, floods/storms, etc.
- Sea levels rise, cities and arable land is being lost.
- Many countries will become too hot to live in.
- Water and food shortages will lead to even more migration and war.
- Food chains break, seas collapse, soil erodes.
- Fertility of humans and animals is in decline.
- Pollution, including microplastics, is growing.
- New bacteria and viruses are emerging, and antibiotics are losing their efficacy.



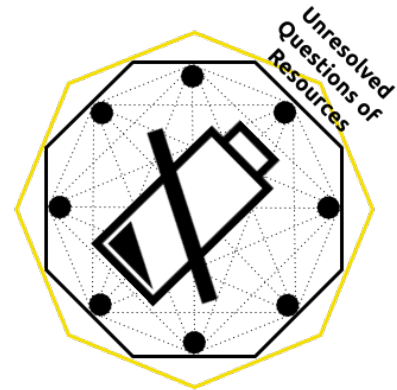
See **Appendix 1** for more details.

Capture any thoughts, plus organisational threats and opportunities in the following table:

This is the form it has in our country already:	This is what we expect in the future:
These are the effects we already experience directly in our organisation:	These are potential impacts on our organisation from what might happen:
This is how this Shadow is already indirectly affecting us:	This is how the Shadow could indirectly impact us in future, due to its effects in other countries:

Resource uncertainties:

- Oil and gas reserves are dwindling and the cost of extraction is increasing.
- Replacing fossil fuels with renewable energy will take time and require large financial investments.
- We don't have the metals and minerals we would need to develop a "green" energy infrastructure.
- Oil, gas, ores, water, ... are already pawns in the new emerging power structure.
- Prices for raw material and energy are bound to rise, at a time when nearly all processes in industry, offices and households depend on oil and electricity.

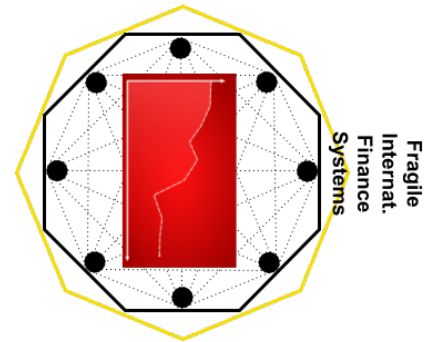


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Fragile Financial Systems:

- Since the introduction of money, we have experienced turbulent financial markets. This was as true for the Romans as it is today.
- We have recently created new financial instruments that many compare to casino gambling
- Our financial system with credit and interest depends on economic growth.
- With environmental destruction, a declining workforce (e.g. due to demographic changes), energy and ore scarcity, problems with supply chains etc. is continued growth possible?

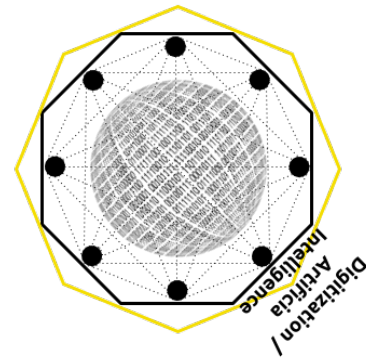


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Digitization and AI:

- Digitization and AI will certainly bring benefits, but they could also have severe negative risks.
- We may lose our most basic competences: calculation, writing, creating, etc. Humans may become obsolete.
- Our life and work will become increasingly dependent on technology, increasing the fragility of our systems.
- These systems are completely dependent on electricity. In the future electricity could become much more expensive and / or unreliable.
- AI will affect or completely take over a range of jobs.
- The military potential of digital technologies that are relatively cheap and easily accessible.
- The internet may become unusable as fake articles and realistic images / videos flood it.

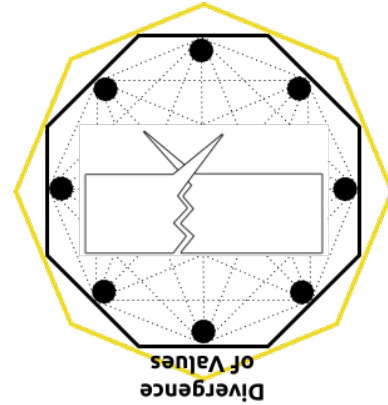


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Divergence of Values:

- Value tensions are growing within and between organizations, within and between countries (Global North / the “West” against the Global South).
- Social Media uses algorithms that favour the provision of news that triggers more reactions, accelerating this dynamic.
- Some “fault-lines” run along generations and along the rural/city-borders. Other battlegrounds: human rights, diversity, climate action, taxation, actions in pandemics, science, ...?
- The willingness to publicly ridicule or hate people, to take people to court, to accept or recommend violence or to use it oneself, seems to be growing.
- Fewer people are able or willing to understand and dialogue with different audiences. Few individuals are respected across camps.

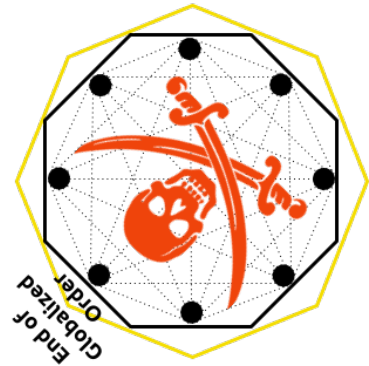


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The End of Global Order:

- There was a time when many believed: all countries will get capitalism, then democracy and finally Human Rights. This story is over.
- How will this new power game look like between China, Europe, India, Russia, the US and the next most powerful, but not always stable nations?
- The international presence of the US Navy used to guarantee supply chains. If the US withdraws, pirates will make international shipping much more difficult and expensive.
- The global economy is highly interwoven and fragile to even to local turbulences.

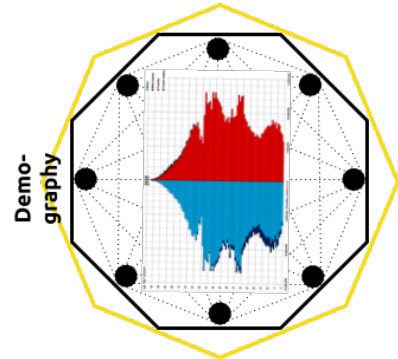


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Demographic Changes:

- Few countries have a reproduction number of greater than 2.1 per woman. Populations are no longer growing because there are more children, but because people are living longer.
- The graph (opposite) is from China. Europe (with some exceptions) and Russia are no better. Only a few countries e.g. France and US have reasonably healthy demographics.
- Fewer people are entering the workforce, more people are in retirement, dependent on public money and social and medical services and family support.
- Countries will need to contain or reduce social and medical services - leaving more burden on families



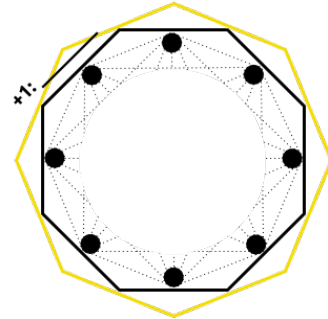
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The +1 Global Shadow:

Description of the +1 Global Shadow:

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Local Shadows

Add any local Shadows in the table below:

Local Shadows	Potential effects on us + Opportunities / Threats

Additional notes:

Capture any additional thoughts here:

Summary

In this Learning Adventure, we have reviewed the external context and you have started to develop a sense of what potential opportunities and threats for your team or organisation from the Global and Local Shadows. Having looked at them independently, you are now ready to dive deeper into how these different issues could play out in different scenarios. This is the focus of the second *Learning adventure* LAo2.

Support

If you would like to speak with someone about thoughts or emotions stirred by this *Learning adventure*, or to join our community for leaders and managers, please reach out to us at [support](#).

References

Websites:

[Joboneforhumanity](#)

[European Parliament: Future Shocks](#)

Books: Zeihan, Peter: The end of the world is just the beginning: ISBN 978-0-063-23047-7

Wikipedia book [summary](#)

Additional videos:

1. The End of Global Order: [Making Sense podcast](#)
2. A discussion on the potential impact of AI: [ChatGPT Could be the start of the end](#)
3. A series of three videos, covering environmental challenges, is offered by [The Week](#)

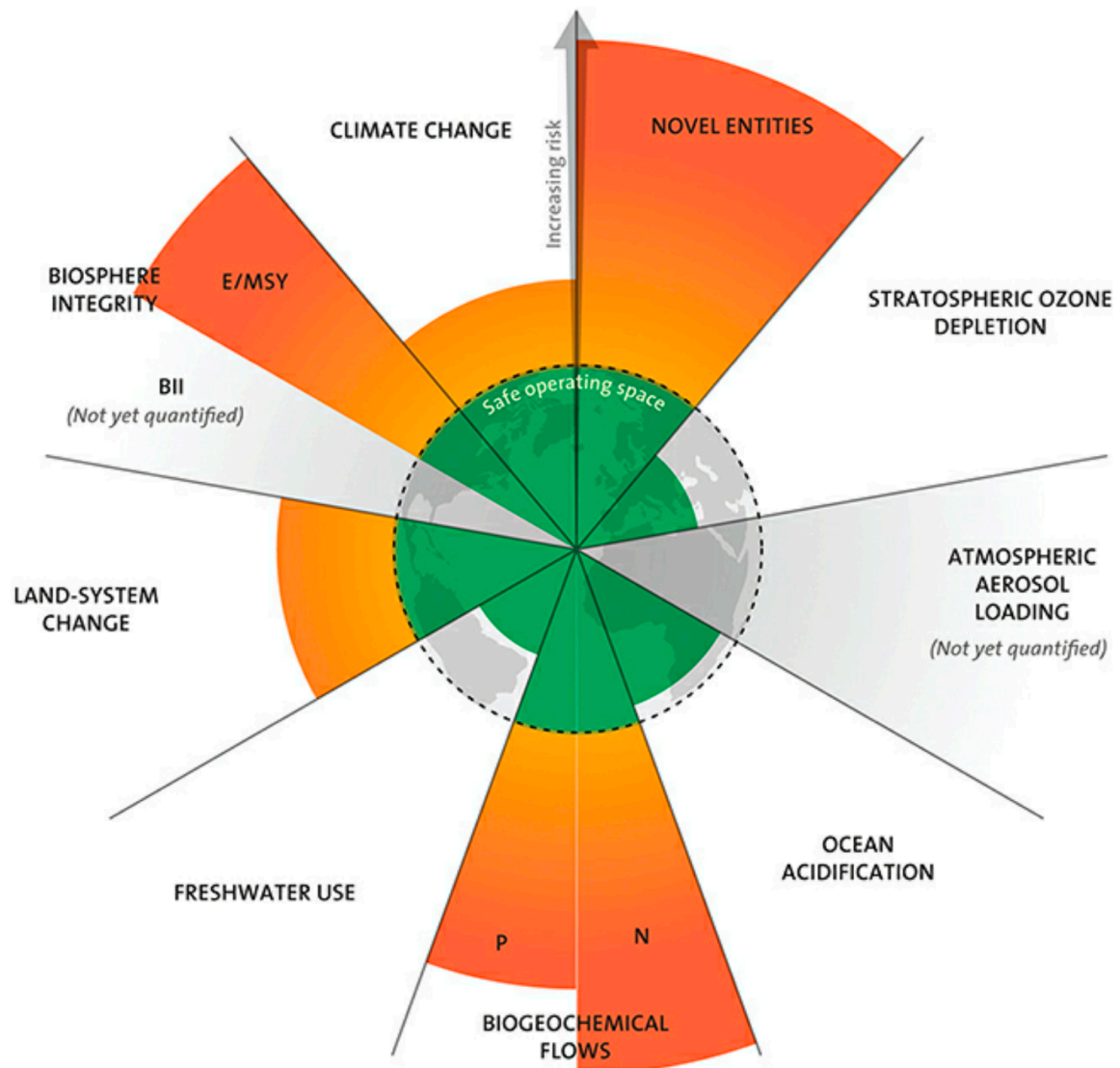
Contributors: Bernhard Possert, Anna Zanghi and Rob Bigge

Appendix 1 – Environmental Crisis, Facts and Figures*

Here is a short summary of environmental facts and figures.

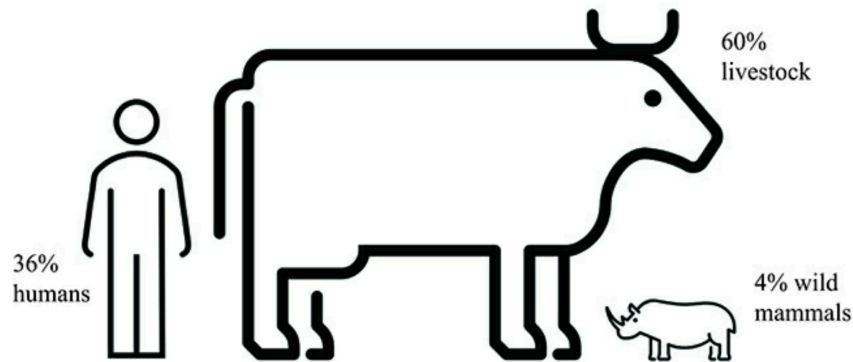
Since the “Industrial Revolution”:

1. Surface temperatures on Earth have risen by 1°C. Most of this has happened in the last 40 years. An increase of over 1.5°C is generally agreed to be dangerous. We are on track to reach 3°C by the end of this century.
2. Global sea levels have risen by 20 cm. The rate of increase has doubled since 2000.
3. The acidity of surface ocean waters has increased by about 30%.
4. Half of the most productive soil has disappeared. At the current rate, we will run out of topsoil in 60 years.
5. We have already surpassed many “planetary boundaries”. Planetary boundaries are a framework to describe limits to the impacts of human activities on the Earth system. Beyond these limits, the environment may not be able to self-regulate anymore.



The impact of this is already clear:

1. There are already 150,000 human climate-related deaths per year and this is expected to rise to 300,000 by 2030.
2. The population of mammals, birds, amphibians and fish has decreased by 68%. Many species become extinct every year.



Comparative mass of mammals on Earth@2022

3. Climate change-induced floods, storms, forest fires and drought are increasing each year making people homeless, and hungry and furthering migration. It is estimated that 3 billion people will become climate refugees in this century.

Coming soon:

1. The Arctic is forecast to be ice-free in summer by 2050, which is likely to trigger further extreme weather changes.
2. Permafrost across the Arctic is beginning to thaw irreversibly. This will cause the release of carbon dioxide and methane.
3. Parts of the west Antarctic ice sheet are melting, triggering further collapse and more drastic sea level rise.
4. The Amazon rain forest is at high risk of flipping from carbon sink to carbon source and then to savanna within the next few years.
5. 99% of tropical corals are projected to be lost when average global temperatures rise by 2%.

*A brief extract from Environmental and Climate Conscious Coaching – A Companion Guide to Evolving Coaching Practice