Caplor Horizons

Inspiring and enabling leaders to deliver a sustainable future

Water connects us all. Shape-shifting through liquid, vapour and ice, water unites every environment and every living thing on our planet. Without water there is no life. Without water there can be no sustainable future.

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INTRODUCTION

"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed people can change the world. Indeed it is the only thing that ever has." Margaret Mead

In this chapter, we outline how and why we have written this book; who it is aimed at; and why we felt that the world needs a book on "organising differently for sustainable futures". We also provide summaries of chapters four to eleven. This is a book that can be read in any order, or as stand-alone chapters, so feel free to dip into the chapters that most resonate for you first!

About this book

This book is a collaborative, voluntary venture, showcasing the knowledge, experiences, interests and imagination of a talented team of individuals from Caplor Horizons, a UK based charity. Sixteen "Advisors", all experts in their respective fields of international development, academia, business, consultancy and politics, have contributed towards this book resulting in leading-edge ideas and concepts.

We have tried to harmonise our many writing styles into a single voice for the benefit of our readers, but at times certain authors' voices may stand out as being different. We recognise the enormous value of difference and diversity, and of the many perspectives that any organisation or community can draw upon. Our gender, generational, national, and cultural differences enable our creativity, innovation, and excitement.

Caplor Horizons is a not-for-profit organisation that is already contributing to organisational effectiveness at a practical level by trialling and role-modelling new ways of working. To achieve greater influence, we create opportunities to promote relevant ideas that might lead

people to think, learn and act differently. Now we'd like to step up the way we showcase our experience and ideas in the form of a book.

We hope this book will help to build our "Caplor Community". This community is concerned about the sustainability of the planet and about the future of humankind, as well as the immediate problems of today. It believes that we can all be leaders in our own distinctive way. It believes that everyone matters. It believes that collaboration helps achieve greater impact and that strength comes from diversity. The Caplor Community wants to help provide the confidence to others to go out into the world and make an impact on things that matter. To inspire and enable leaders, whatever their role and whoever they are, to deliver a sustainable future.

Who is this for?

"If your actions inspire others to dream more, learn more, do more and become more, you are a leader." John Quincy Adams

This book is aimed at anyone in any sector and at any stage in their organisational careers who wishes to enhance their organisation to achieve more sustainable futures – we call you "change makers". Whether you are a volunteer, entrepreneur, activist, founder, private/public/third sector leader, if you care about creating a more humane organisation that can meet future needs, better support your team, and in turn contribute to a better world, this book is for you.

This book focuses on the word "organise" as a verb, not just "organisation" as a noun. A real-world look at how we can organise for change, how we can organise our learning journey, and how we can organise differently to enable a sustainable future. With this in mind, there is a section within each of chapters four to eleven that offers steps of how you might practically implement some of our ideas within your movement, team or organisation. This section, known as "The Kitchen" in this book, also provides a summary of the key messages within each chapter, some questions for activists, some questions for reflection and some recommended further reading should you wish to learn more.

We encourage you to read these chapters in any order or as stand-alone chapters. As a result, we have allowed for some repetition of key concepts throughout the book, albeit with

different nuances to certain points. If you are not familiar with the "Caplor House", we strongly recommend that you read Chapter 3 before reading Chapters 4 to 12 as this model is used throughout to structure the chapters.

What do we mean by "organisation"?

Throughout this book, we use the word organisation as a catch-all term to refer to groups of people collaborating for a particular purpose. For example, this could include social movements, businesses, charities, cooperatives, institutions, social enterprises, community groups, committees and much more.

Furthermore, we use different terms interchangeably to describe charitable organisations such as NGO (Non-Governmental Organisation), not-for-profit, and third sector organisations.

We also believe that everyone is a leader. Therefore, when referring to leaders we mean anyone, no matter what their perceived role, position, stage of their career or ability.

Why do we need to organise differently?

"When the world is predictable you need smart people. When the world is unpredictable you need adaptable people." Henry Mintzberg

Today's world has been turned on its head by the coronavirus pandemic. It has challenged all our assumptions about what is normal, and what to expect in the future. It is an illustration, if we needed one, that we are operating in a turbulent "VUCA" world and must think afresh about what this means for our leadership. VUCA stands for Volatility, Uncertainty, Complexity and Ambiguity.

By *Volatility*, we mean that the changes all around us are happening rapidly and on a large scale. For example, the coronavirus pandemic is currently having serious implications for many people and organisations across the globe. It is disrupting whole sectors and markets, changing the way we work and live, especially how we operate at a distance from each other and use technology. And this health crisis is on top of other short- and longer-term volatile situations – such as ongoing conflicts, the environmental crisis, escalating levels of poverty, human rights abuses and major issues of injustice, such as those epitomised by the "Black Lives Matter" movement.

Such volatility leads us all to experience a dramatic sense of *Uncertainty*, which means that predicting the future based on the past is no longer reliable or possible, and forecasting what the world might be like in the future is little better than guesswork.

Covid-19 has taken the world by storm, leaving every individual, organisation and leader feeling considerable uncertainty about how the future will unfold. To this we add the *Complexity* of today's global environment. So many factors now shape our world. We have seen how a virus can rapidly reshape our world and making obsolete the previous "cause and effect" approach to decision-making that aided us and gave us certainty in the past. We can no longer predict with any accuracy or certainty the outcomes of our actions in today's world. Yet our interconnectivity is visible for all to see. So how can we as leaders support and enable our communities and organisations to find a path through this turbulence?

Knowledge is of course more available to us today than ever before. This is illustrated by the volume of science at our disposal about the coronavirus and its behaviours, but this knowledge is also quickly obsolete, and we cannot be certain of its reliability. We see *Ambiguity* about what today's global events mean for our lives and futures, and what effects they may have on our world. During this pandemic, we are experiencing information overload, but at the same time this information is contradictory, ambiguous, and partial, making it increasingly difficult for leaders to make sound decisions with any sense of certainty or confidence.

So why do leaders need to pay attention to how they organise for today's VUCA world and sustainable futures?

Leaders around the world, who struggle to keep their organisations afloat and refreshed against a backdrop of increasing turbulence and frequent unexpected challenges, will see their organisations lose their edge and potentially their battle for survival.

Think back to the first organisations you engaged with. This might have been your school, a local church, a hospital, a shopping centre or airport. Or your first employer? What did the organisation look like? It's possible that you were looking at a hierarchy, an organisation with many layers and levels, probably functionally organised, with clear roles and clear job descriptions. Offices may have been labelled. Job titles reflected status. Organisational structures were set up to reflect the way people were organised and the roles they filled.

Such hierarchies reflected stability, continuity, repeatability, and they worked because people generally joined up for the long term, made career progress by climbing the hierarchy, and respected roles even more than the person in that role. This kind of organisation worked in many sectors for many years.

What about our organisations today? You may still know or even work for organisations that look and feel like the organisations described above: clear roles and defined responsibilities to deliver measurable results in a stable context. Maybe some of these still work today. But there is no doubt that many such organisations have already changed, abandoning outdated structures, unable to deliver results in today's VUCA world from such a rigid framework.

Organisations are changing and must change further.

Even as early as the 1980s, Gareth Morgan (1986) contrasted organisations as machines – traditional bureaucracies, with organisations as organisms – adaptive living entities that adapt to meet the demands of their environment. He was amongst the first to see the writing on the wall for the old rigid hierarchies that assumed people were willing to act according to strict controls and treated most of their workforce as "hired hands". It is noteworthy that Morgan also wrote a chapter in the same book entitled, "Organizations as Psychic Prisons", a popular chapter amongst MBA students at the time who often found themselves trapped in employment roles that demanded heart, soul and mind, but resisted challenge and rejected new ideas.

Old style machine organisations have now largely been replaced by "matrix organisations", or project-based, networked, fluid forms of organisation. More recently, Charles Handy has been arguing for more federal organisational models, collaborations of smaller organisations with a small unifying core. And Frédéric Laloux's (2014) "Teal" organisations have also influenced and enriched our understanding of why organisations must become organic living entities, more values-based, society-focused, and devolved, with a distributed leadership philosophy and practice.

In this book, we ask what next for organisational forms in today's VUCA world?

There is no doubt that we urgently need new forms of organisation for more sustainable futures. More than ever before we are now technologically networked and this digital

connectivity is more reliable than ever across the world. We are also more focused on enabling individuals with family commitments to work effectively and efficiently at a time and in a place that meets their needs. We must meet these and other human challenges if we are to enable the full potential of our diverse workforces to be reached. Digitisation and distance will bring new challenges of their own for today's leaders. If leaders are no longer co-located with their teams how will they effectively lead from a distance? What will be the role of trust and organisational values within this new context? How will cultures be transmitted?

Of course, this means that organisations will not only need to be structured differently in the future, they will also feel very different, and will require different work-related values from the past. Homogeneity and role cultures will continue to give way to greater flexibility and diversity. The value and contribution of staff in an organisation can now be more individually focused and developed. Low skilled labour will increasingly be replaced by robotics, meaning that those previous hired for their hands will be encouraged to learn skills that will enrich the organisation beyond robotic work. Fewer staff perhaps, but each one contributing uniquely to the organisation that engages them.

Book Outline

This book starts by introducing Caplor Horizons (Chapter Two) and one of our distinctive leadership models: the Caplor House (Chapter Three). It then explores the many facets of organising for sustainable futures chapter by chapter (Chapter Four – Chapter Eleven), summaries of which can be seen below. The final two chapters, Sustainable Futures (Chapter 12) and New Horizons (Chapter 13) offer a more holistic viewpoint, taking into consideration learning from the rest of the book.

Our readers will have noted that the themes chosen for the chapters of this book are not the usual topics you might find in books written about organisations. The themes emerged through many exciting discussions about what enables successful organising in today's world.

The following summarises some of the key messages in the book ahead:

Chapter Four: The Learning Organisation

Like the changing world, the notion of the learning organisation has long been something of a cliché. Many have attempted to describe the learning organisation, but few have made it work. Real learning organisations are learning cultures. It is in their DNA that not only do individuals participate in continuous learning but also that the organisation itself is continuously learning, innovating and adapting. This chapter introduces a range of key models such as Senge's systems thinking, Scharmer's Theory U and Kolb's experiential learning cycle to highlight the importance of unlearning and experiential learning in order to achieve a sustainable future. It also offers the Caplor House as a tool to understand different ways and preferences of learning.

Chapter Five: The Proactive Organisation

In a VUCA world, organisations will not only be adaptive they will be proactive. The most proactive will survive and thrive. Being proactive means breaking out of the mould. It means "blue ocean" thinking. It means taking a visionary approach to strategy to meet multiple changing needs and opportunities. Proactive organisations see and implement novel configurations with partners and customers, take risks and lead their sectors. They are bold, courageous, restless, and far-sighted. However, proactive organisations must pay attention to culture if they want to succeed in the long term. This chapter offers the Caplor Horizons Voyage Board and the Caplor Islands tool to help proactive organisations successfully navigate through strategic change.

Chapter Six: The Connected Organisation

As we discussed earlier, the outside world is now unavoidable. Events across the globe enter our workplace and homes unsolicited via our phones, tablets and laptops. But being connected passively and unavoidably is not what we mean by connected organisations. Connected organisations are consciously and proactively connected. Next generation leaders are already upwardly coaching their older peers in the constantly changing networking opportunities to be found in digital social connections and networks. The pace of these digitally driven shifts will only get faster. This chapter offers Hudson's Collaboration Triangle to prompt organisations to consider the level of collaboration they aspire to.

Chapter Seven: The Human Organisation

Machine organisations were and still are the opposite of human organisations. People brought their professional self to work but left their whole selves at the door. To deliver a sustainable future, organisations need the *whole* person. Advances in neuroscience support this. Deeper understanding of the whole person enable us to maximise the contributions of all staff. It also means a better fit for each person to their work and greater self-actualisation, self-esteem and self-confidence inside and outside the workplace. This chapter introduces Caplor Horizons' Human Horizons tool, which gets below the surface of traditional understandings of behaviour, revealing the internal dynamics of our brains, bodies and life stories based on neuroscience.

Chapter Eight: The Soulful Organisation

Today's world increasingly demands organisations that respect and liberate the whole person: that encourage breadth of experience, that recognise family and social interests, that support staff who wish to contribute to society both at home or overseas, that encourage external achievement through sport, music, religion, politics or other modes of self-expression. Today's organisations require their leaders to build and sustain heart and soul. This chapter offers the Caplor Horizons' Leaderful Way tool to illustrate that leading with soul is possible in whatever environment you work in, bringing countless benefits for you and everyone involved.

Chapter Nine: The Worldly Organisation

A worldly organisation differs from a global organisation in its cultural depth and understanding. Worldly organisations are sensitive, embracing and respectful of difference. They are curious to understand the many cultures in which they operate, and the many different worlds within worlds that make up our globe. Worldly organisations are learning organisations that understand their broader contexts and horizon scan into the future. But they also understand their worlds from close up. Worldliness enables cross-cultural partnerships and collaborations. This chapter offers some tools and models for enhancing these partnerships including the Six Senses of Partnership and the Culture Tree.

Chapter Ten: The Influencing Organisation

Next generation organisations care about bigger causes and the future. They are skilled at influencing thought leaders, corporate leaders, and political leaders. Their influencing is based on deeply held values and principles. Influencing organisations are confident, courageous, resilient and focused. Their staff share their values and advocate on behalf of the organisation and with a more sustainable fairer society in mind. Effective communication is key to becoming a successful influencing organisation. This chapter offers a "connected communication" model to ensure that communication is clear and does not get "snagged" along the way.

Chapter Eleven: The Reflective Organisation

Reflection is probably one of the most critical, but least understood, and most underdeveloped management capabilities in today's world, and in particular today's modern world, where speed and fast action are revered above most else. Leaders often complain that they are too busy to stop, think, and question. A common misconception is that reflection is associated with inaction or slowness, but in reality, reflection is a highly proactive and conscious process that must be practised to become proficient. Practices such as mindfulness, going for a walk, listening to music, and sharing insights should be encouraged within reflective organisations. This chapter offers a selection of individual, paired and collective reflective techniques to enhance your team.

Chapter Twelve: Sustainable Futures

What values will matter in the future? Whereas in the old-world reliability, loyalty, predictability, and time service were all core values, in today's VUCA world we predict that creative thinking, adaptability, innovation, entrepreneurship, and teamworking will be foregrounded and critical. Furthermore, organisations are at last becoming more aware of the planet's finite resources. The public as a consumer is pressuring its suppliers to cut out palm oil, save energy, reduce plastic, and take care of the community and the environment in its production. People and planet are starting to outweigh "prosperity" in some instances, and company objectives are now more broadly measured by quadruple (purpose, people, planet, prosperity) bottom lines.

The astute reader will have noted that these many facets of organising for sustainable futures are all interconnected and overlapping ideas. They are the core themes that we have identified and developed but inevitably in a VUCA world there will be other themes that we have failed to predict. Perhaps these will form the basis of a second volume in the future! However, as we write this book we see these facets as the core elements for change and continuity, for sustainable futures and for a just and fairer world.

Chapter One: Introduction

Morgan, G. (1986) *Images of Organization*. California: Sage Publications.

Handy, C. (2002) *The Elephant And The Flea: New Thinking For A New World: Looking Backwards to the Future*. London: Penguin Random House UK.

Laloux, F. (2014) *Reinventing Organizations*. Nelson Parker.