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The Keys Within Week 1

THE NATURE & MEANING OF
GLOBAL UNSUSTAINABILITY

Advices for this week:

- ▶ This week works aims at bringing clarity to the problem of global unsustainability. **We will uncover some surprising facts, and begin to understand the nature , scale and scope of the problem**
- ▶ If you feel discomfort while going through this section, this is normal & part of the journey. We will learn and develop skills to accept this discomfort. **Trust the process.**
- ▶ We are taking a big step back to have an overview of the global situation. Imagine you were an alien coming from an advance civilisation trying to make sense of what is happening on earth with the human species. Try to keep your mind at this level of observation.



Week 1: Table of content

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What is global unsustainability?

Unsustainable definition:

- ▶ Characteristic of something not able to be maintained at the current rate or level.
- ▶ Disrupting the ecological balance by depleting or destroying natural resources.
- ▶ Not able to be upheld or defended.

Global sustainability:

Global sustainability defines the conditions under which humans and nature, societies and the biosphere, the human civilization and the Earth can **co-exist** in ways that support present and future generations.



Part 1: THE ECOLOGICAL ASPECT OF GLOBAL UNSUSTAINABILITY



- ▶ Our relationship with our natural environment
- ▶ When humanity's overshoot the limits of its planet ecosystems
- ▶ Direct consequences of the overshoot



Our codependency with the natural environment

- ▶ The food we eat, the water we drink, the air we breathe are all provided by the ecosystems of our planet.
- ▶ The ecosystems of our planet provide the necessary condition for our human existence to be
- ▶ We are fully depending on the planet ecosystem to survive. More, it seems that we are the result of a process of evolution of the planet ecosystems.



We often hear that we need to save our planet. It is important to understand that it is not the planet ecosystems that need humans to survive but the other way around. **Destroying the planet ecosystems is destroying the condition needed for our survival, and therefore ourselves and our future.** We are interdependent and interconnected with the natural environment.

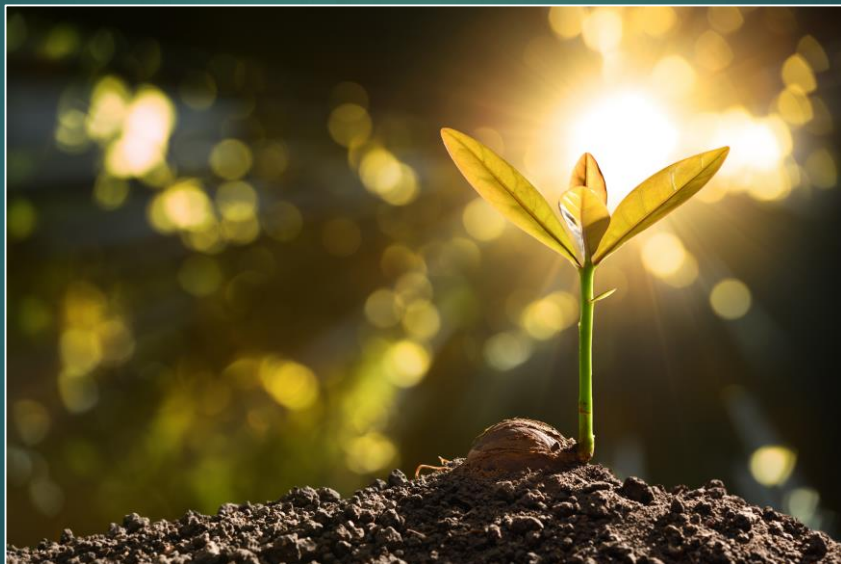
Our impact on the environment: humanity's ecological footprint

- ▶ It is key to be able to demystify the complexity of humanity's impact on the surface of the globe if we want to be able to understand this problem
- ▶ Human activities on the surface of the globe have an impact on the planet ecosystems:
 - ▶ We extract resources
 - ▶ We release pollution
 - ▶ We damage the planet ecosystems
- ▶ These consequences are called humanity's ecological footprint
- ▶ Earth and its ecosystems have a limited capacity to sustain humanity's ecological footprint



Earth ability to sustain human activities: earth biocapacity

- ▶ Our planet ecosystems have the ability to sustain human activities
- ▶ Earth has the capacity:
 - ▶ To produce resources
 - ▶ To absorb pollution
 - ▶ To repair damaged ecosystems
- ▶ This ability is called earth biocapacity
- ▶ **Earth is like a living entity with a capacity to regenerate its ecosystems, yet this capacity is limited.**



When humanity's overshoot the limits of the planet

- ▶ When humanity's ecological footprint overshoots earth biocapacity
 - ▶ We extract more resources than the planet can produce
 - ▶ We release more pollution than the planet can absorb
 - ▶ We destroy the ecosystems at a higher rate than the planet can repair
- ▶ This creates a global situation of unsustainability



Immediate consequences of the overshoot



Resources overconsumption

1,75 planets are considered necessary for humanity not to over consume the planet resources (GFN)



Ecosystems overexploitation & destruction

75% of the planet ecosystems are either badly damaged or destroyed. (UN)



6th Mass extinction

60% of wildlife has gone extinct in the last 40 years and 1 Million species are in danger of extinction. (UN)



Pollution

Affects all ecosystems, 9M people are estimated to die prematurely as a consequence of air pollution.



Climate Change

We have 10 years to half our emissions & avoid irreversible catastrophic impact of climate change. (IPCC)

Part 2: OTHER ASPECTS OF GLOBAL UNSUSTAINABILITY



- ▶ We often talk about sustainability thinking only about the ecological aspect. Yet global sustainability is a subject that covers many other factors and aspects.
- ▶ By looking at these different aspects, we start to understand the scale of the challenge we are facing
- ▶ Understanding the scale and complexity of the problem we are facing is key to be able to propose solutions that are going to be effective.



Socio economic factors



The world population has more than doubled in less than 50 years reaching 7.8 Billion in 2020



Growing inequalities: 1% of the world population has about half of the world wealth, 70% has less than 3% of it.



Inequal economic development based on the region of the world, notably between the North & South



Many jobs are not sufficiently incentivized to guarantee people access to their basics



Global debts estimated in hundreds of trillions of \$

Geopolitical, political & cultural factors



Military spending are increasing and reached more than 1,8 Trillion \$ in 2019, less than 10% of this amount would be enough to solve world hunger & poverty.



Nationalists leaders promoting division and competition are on the rise in many regions of the world.



The need for countries to be collaborative is often sacrificed by the need for country to be competitive.



Countries government often work in secrecy and under the influence of lobbyist standing for corporation and powerful financial interests.



Globalization results in cultural erosion with traditional cultures inexorably being replaced by the dominant western consumerist culture.

Psychological & technological factors



Depression and anxiety, together with the consumption of drugs are in increase in developed economy. This highlight an underlying mental health crisis in the western world, which numbing drugs consumption does not allow to be addressed.



As the level of awareness about the unsustainability of our current economy increases; eco-anxiety, which is a form of stress related to the ecological emergency is in the rise in western countries



Specialists consider that the rise of suicide in the west is linked with a crisis of meaninglessness. Our society appear to be crucially lacking meaning.



Ai & job automation are increasingly performant and replacing human jobs. This might create unemployment and reinforce inequalities. concentration of wealth



Increasingly powerful & destructive technologies make past rivalry dynamics more destructive. There is also an increase risk of these destructive technologies to fall in the hands of authoritarian forms of power and violent groups.

Interdependence & interconnection



Our world problems should not be seen as separated from one another but as interdependent and interconnected with one another. That is a key element because the traditional and still dominant approach to these issues appear to address these problems separately as if they were not interconnected with one another.

PART 3: GLOBAL UNSUSTAINABILITY, CURSE OR BLESSING TO HUMANITY?



- ▶ Is everything getting worse?
- ▶ Is the glass half full or half empty and can we see both sides to the answer.?
- ▶ Can we see the challenge of global unsustainability as an opportunity for positive change?



Is everything getting worst?



- ▶ The number of those living in extreme poverty has decreased significantly
- ▶ The rate of literacy is higher than ever and education continues to improve globally
- ▶ Health condition have improved drastically together with housing, sanitation and diet
- ▶ The level of freedom has increased and more than half of the world population now lives in democracy
- ▶ Global life expectancy has doubled in the last century and we live far longer and better than our ancestors



Is the glass half full, or half empty?



"The test of a first-rate intelligence is the ability to hold two opposed ideas in mind at the same time and still retain the ability to function." Scott Fitzgerald

- ▶ For those who see the glass half empty, the belief is that it is too late to do anything and that doomsday is unavoidable. They are dominated by a sense of despair.
- ▶ For those who see the glass half full: the belief is that humans always have found solutions to their challenge and therefore will find solution too. They are dominated by a sense of hope.
- ▶ Both sides have plenty of good arguments & statistics to justify their perspective. Both despair and hope can be disempowering if they result in apathy. **People waiting for the change & resolution to be brought outside of themselves are not going to be part of the solution.**
- ▶ So is the glass half full or half empty?

In fact the glass is both half full and half empty, and it is one because it is one that it is the other. There is an interrelation between the 2 notions. Arguing about the glass being half full or half empty, or just seeing one aspect without seeing the other is incorrect.

In our case we see that the sense of despair growing as a result of the failing system can be a great driver for change. **Despair and hope are not opposed to each other but complementary to drive action and change.**

Proposal of perspective



- ▶ Our global situation clearly is concerning as humanity has not yet integrated some very important limits, starting with the one of our planet.
- ▶ It is just logical that we have failed to integrate the limits of our planet, with the dominant narrative promoting individualism, competition for short term profits, unlimited accumulation of capital and growth in a materialist and consumerist economy. In fact, compulsive growth on a limited space is the archetype of the cancer.
- ▶ The global challenge of unsustainability that we are facing is a call for change through sense making and meaning. Our ability to achieve global sustainability as a species will depend on our ability to respond to that call. That means that we will need human centered solutions to address a human centered problem.

The challenge that we face to achieve global sustainability is an opportunity for positive change and a call for a new way of interacting with one another and our natural environment. To do so, we will spend next week focusing on exploring the past origins, root and systemic cause of global unsustainability.

“We are living in a world that is in the late stage of a Caterpillar. It is very important to let go of the old and start to gravitate to the new because we are leaving behind a world that is no longer sustainable and moving into a world in which we can thrive.” Bruce H. Lipton

Résumé & key knowledge for this week



- ▶ Global ecological unsustainability is the result of humanity's ecological footprint overshooting earth biocapacity.
- ▶ There are other factors of global unsustainability, such as social, economic, geopolitical, cultural, psychological, political and technological factors. All these aspects are interdependent and interconnected.
- ▶ There are different ways to look at the problem of global unsustainability, from the most pessimistic to the most optimistic. We are suggesting to look at it from both side and to consider this challenge of global unsustainability as an opportunity for collective positive change in the world.



Additional Links

- ▶ The Global Risks Report 2020
<https://www.marsh.com/ca/en/insights/research/global-risks-report-2020.html>
- ▶ Are we on the road to civilization collapse?
<https://www.bbc.com/future/article/20190218-are-we-on-the-road-to-civilisation-collapse>
- ▶ The environment in 2050: flooded cities, forced migration – and the Amazon turning to savannah
<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2019/dec/30/environment-2050-flooded-cities-forced-migration-amazon-turning-savannah>
- ▶ What is the tragedy of the commons? - Nicholas Amendolare
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CxC161GvMPc&t=191s>
- ▶ How to save our planet?
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0Puv0Pss33M&t=187s>
- ▶ The Turning Point
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p7LDk4D3Q3U>
- ▶ "The Last and Most Important Advice I Will Ever Give"
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JW6BGoQrx6k&feature=youtu.be>
- ▶ The nine planetary boundaries
<https://www.stockholmresilience.org/research/planetary-boundaries/planetary-boundaries/about-the-research/the-nine-planetary-boundaries.html>
- ▶ Terrified of Climate Change? You Might Have Eco-Anxiety
<https://time.com/5735388/climate-change-eco-anxiety/>
- ▶ Affluence is killing the planet, warn scientists
<https://theconversation.com/affluence-is-killing-the-planet-warn-scientists-141017>
- ▶ Pulitzer winner Chris Hedges: These "are the good times — compared to what's coming next"
https://www.salon.com/2020/04/28/pulitzer-winner-chris-hedges-these-are-the-good-times-compared-to-whats-coming-next/?fbclid=IwAR074okpSoUiFZRVb-N49p5DCg5UcZRoz_IPjEgxoHv4ISwvQHnnP_D4Jk
- ▶ Global Warming: What We Got Wrong | Simon Sinek
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wQjZVkkYF7E&t=49s>
- ▶ A crisis of meaninglessness is to blame for the rise in suicides
<https://www.dallasnews.com/opinion/commentary/2018/06/25/a-crisis-of-meaninglessness-is-to-blame-for-the-rise-in-suicides/>

Mission for this week:



Sharing session with the pod meeting (15 min each)

- ▶ Share what motivated you to join this quest? What are your intentions? What would you like to have that you do not have today after this quest? (write this down)
- ▶ From all the aspects of global unsustainability that we have covered, which one is more of a concern to you, and why?
- ▶ Can you describe some of the commonalities and cause of all these factors of unsustainability?
- ▶ What will realistically happen if we do not address the problem of global unsustainability and push it to the limit?
- ▶ How important is the subject of global sustainability (1/10)? Does it get the intention it deserves in our daily lives? If no, why do you think it doesn't?
- ▶ How does it make you feel to think about this problem? Can you describe your thoughts, feelings and emotions?
- ▶ Do you see the glass half empty, half full, or both?

Advice: do not necessarily search sophisticated responses, be very simple and intuitive, understanding reality is often much simpler than we think.

