

PRACTICING ADAPTATION THROUGH OUR EXPERIENCE WITH COVID-19

Reflective journaling

'Climate change is a pandemic in slow motion. Covid is climate change in a pressure cooker. And there's a lot we can learn from that.' (Rob Wijnenberg in [De Correspondent](#))

The pandemic has forced every organisation, company, government and individual to adapt to a new reality very radically with often rapidly changing measures and restrictions. Some of them have been beneficial to our carbon footprint (e.g. travel restrictions), others are encouraging the use of singular use plastics and giving rise to more waste (e.g. face masks, plastic cups, paper towels, ...). But what is clear in this crisis, is that as a society we *are* able to radically change courses if our existence is threatened. Covid-19 has been an advanced exercise in radical adaptation.

What can we learn from the adaptation in this past year that we can apply in climate adaptation?



How did we adapt to Covid-19?

What are the **main challenges** that Covid-19 presented you with in the past year?
Make a long list, write down anything that comes to mind!

What turned out to be the **most vulnerable aspects** of your organisation in this Covid crisis? Where did you lack the flexibility that made other organisations less vulnerable?

*Sometimes challenges also make us come up with creative solutions that we would otherwise never have been able to think of. At best, they take us to another level. Have a look at your list of challenges again and see if you can **find 3 challenges that led you to a solution or a project that you are proud of.***

Which ingredients led to the success of each of these 3 solutions or projects?
Which people, which typical characteristics of your organization and which elements both in your environment and in the context in which your organization is active, ...?

- *Who and what surprised you and why?*
- *What were unexpected interventions and resources?*

*When disaster strikes, there can be a moment when you switch from powerlessness to confident action. At what point in time did this turning from disaster to a successful action happen? **When did your organisation change course?** Was there a specific reason that led to that change of course?*

What did you gain from this pandemic, as an organisation and as an employee?
Write down 5 examples.

How did the pandemic show what was essential to our organisation?

*A crisis like the Covid pandemic is so uprooting that the first and most urgent concern is to **keep your organisation financially safe**. What was the minimum needed to keep your organisation going, to keep it safe? (e.g. which employees had to continue working, which aspects of the organisation had to be kept going, ...)*

*Once you and/or your colleagues managed to secure that basic operation of your organisation, what were then the **activities you absolutely wanted to be able to offer** to your audiences? What was the minimum activity for it to make sense that your organisation was still running?*

Going from there, try to formulate **what** you think **is essential to your identity as an organisation**, in terms of what you offer. Try to put it into one, short sentence.

The identity and mission of an organisation are often linked to a few underlying core values of the organisation and the people leading it. What would be those **core values for your organisation**? Write down a least three values.

Covid-19 and the carbon footprint of your organisation

*In what aspects **did your carbon footprint grow** or were the sustainability goals of your organisation challenged?*

***Which solutions** did you find to some of those challenges? Give 2 examples.*

In what aspects **did your carbon footprint drop** dramatically during the pandemic? (think of e.g. energy, transportation, catering, waste, water, ...). Describe for every aspect how and why it dropped. Try to look at all angles, e.g. when it comes to transportation there will be flights of artists but probably also employees, the daily commuting of employees will have stopped, etc.)

Which of those aspects are **impossible to maintain** post-Covid without blocking your organisation's way of working?

Which aspects are **easy to hold on to** post-Covid?

Have a look again at the list. **Is there a way to come to the same result** of lowering your carbon footprint **without jeopardising** your organisation, or maybe with alterations to how your organisation is working now? Try to find at least 2 aspects.

Adapting to climate change

*As an organisation, as a society, you want to build more resilience so that you can go through periods of change relatively unharmed, so that you are more flexible while manoeuvring processes of transformation. Going over your answers and thoughts above, **where do you think your organisation needs to become more resilient?***

*There are many effects and side effects that climate change entails apart from the rising heat and drought, and increased flooding. The crop yield will be affected, fresh water will become more scarce, road infrastructure will suffer, there will be more power outages and IT failures, fire risks, damage to buildings, etc. **Which 5 climate change effects** do you see that will put pressure on your organisation and its way of working?*

Choose three that you are eager to start on as soon as possible, if not today. What could you do right now to adapt your organisation to that reality? Give three possible ways of doing that.

- While you are doing this exercise, look back at the core values that you've written down before. How can you guard the core values of your organisation and the essence of your work while adapting to climate change?

What or who do you need to do this (people, resources, knowledge, context, skills, other organisations, ...)? Maybe you can find some ingredients in your Covid era success stories that you can use here?

***Share these questions and
your thoughts with colleagues!***

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