

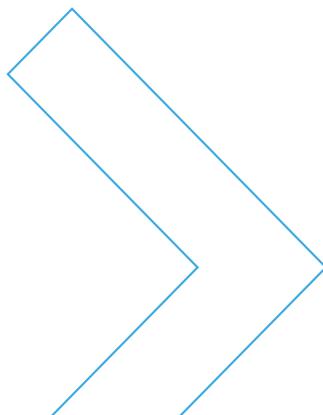
Moving into the next paradigm - are we up to it?

Organisational Agility

Enabling people and businesses across Aotearoa New Zealand to strive towards a profoundly different horizon.



A white paper written by:
Dr Tresna Hunt and Brett Oetgen from
The Institute for Social Sustainability.





Frances Valentine - CNZM
Founder Tech Futures Lab and
The Mind Lab

Tech Futures Lab CEO Frances Valentine recently presented a paper to a Tech Futures Lab learning cohort, suggesting that our nation's remarkable responses to both the horrific 2019 mosque massacre and the current Covid-19 crisis, have potentially created a seismic shift in the way the world now sees us.

Looking through a contemporary science-based lens, Frances argues that Aotearoa New Zealand's future <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/trust-new-zealands-global-brand-frances-valentine-cnzm/> now rests less on our past reputation for agriculture, tourism and sporting excellence, and more on our potential to:



Build a globally recognised trust-based economy



Be leaders in the establishment of environmental-societal dynamics



Redefine what it means to be human in the digital era



Build pathways towards long-term technological frontiers

If this is a future that we may aspire to move towards as a nation, then the question we all have to answer, is what do we need to do to get there?

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Clearly that's a highly-complex question and the answers to it even more so. But what we do know is that at a very human level, we will first need to disrupt many of the cultural habits-of-thought and patterns-of-behaviour that keep us rooted in our past and have the potential to derail our efforts to transition into the future. We will also need to reinvent our fundamental approaches to the way that many social, educational and workplace ecosystems function.

Above all, if we are to thrive through the fourth industrial revolution and take advantage of the myriad opportunities that exist to build a genuinely sustainable future, the first step we need to take is to enable people to rapidly evolve the way they think, feel and behave so that they can learn how to adapt to a future that, in many ways, is already here.



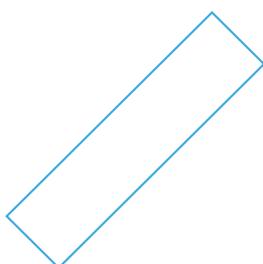


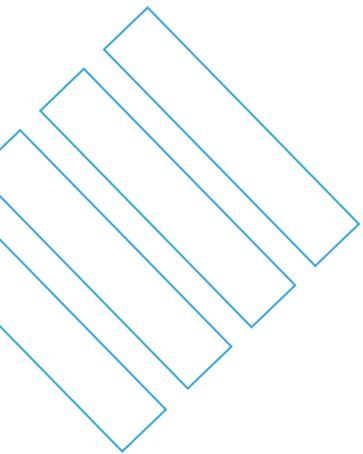
Unfortunately, this is not going to just somehow magically happen. We need to consciously and collaboratively build systematic and robust strategies that can be applied across multiple social ecosystems.

We established the Institute for Social Sustainability to build a platform that stimulates, nurtures and accelerates this movement towards new ways of thinking and behaving that become bridges into a new cultural identity and a new future. Underpinned by almost six years of R&D inside NZ organisations and using the latest thinking in psychology and the human sciences, our aim is help cultivate what we refer to as a socially sustainable mindset:

A way of thinking and behaving that is built around processes and strategies designed to move individuals and collectives towards more conscious, equitable and sustainable ways of living and working.

If we are to move towards the sort of future that so many of us are now talking about in the aftermath of Covid-19, then this is the fundamental mindset we need to cultivate.





The context for Organisational Agility

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My fear is that homo sapiens are not just up to it. We have created such a complicated world that we're no longer able to make sense of what is happening.

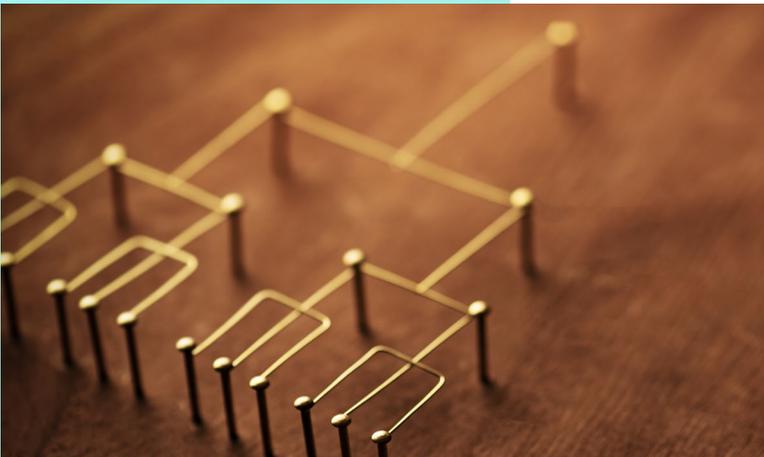
Professor Yuval Noah Harari
Author of Sapiens and Homo Deus

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This is the crux of the problem most organisations face today. We have created so much complexity, so many new models, theories and ideas - all of which contribute to a very confusing change landscape - that many people, and the organisations they work for, can no longer make sense of the world we now live in and are therefore struggling to adapt.

Professor Harari fears that 'we are just not up to it'. We're concerned that especially in the context of the emerging future of work, he may well be right. And if he is, what chance do we stand of successfully and sustainably moving towards the new horizons that the likes of Frances Valentine and other futurists are now talking about?

To fully understand the wider context for why organisations need to urgently prioritise the development of their capability to adapt, we need to first look backwards to get a more accurate perspective on our current environment. During the industrial revolution, when complexity was first beginning to ramp up, ways of working together to innovate and solve problems were based around hierarchies. This was the most efficient way to get things done. In this traditional way of solving problems the world was simple enough that we could divide people into two distinct categories:



1. The people doing the planning and problem-solving (up the top of the hierarchy) who gave instructions.
2. The people who put the solutions into practice (further down the hierarchy) who received those instructions.

Humans across generations have been trained to work and think in this comparatively stable way and the need to adapt has not been that significant. But as we made the world more and more complex over the course of the first three industrial revolutions, the nature of the problems we needed to solve in order to keep innovating, became substantially more complex. So complex, in fact, that in the fourth industrial revolution, our hierarchical way of problem-solving can no longer keep up.

To offset this, we have over recent times decided to innovate by changing how we plan, strategise and solve problems. We are now attempting to 'collaborate' or 'join our brains together' in order to increase our ability to perform these functions

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more efficiently. This seems to make sense in theory, but something we don't fully understand is the magnitude of the impact that this shift is having on us. Moving to solve problems faster and with more agility is good as a theory but underneath that theory is the need for a seismic shift in the way we think, feel and act. This is because the theory demands that we engage with others in our ecosystems in ways that are unfamiliar, and, at times, can feel contradictory to how we have been trained by tradition across generations.

Many businesses these days have, of course, adopted the myriad new methodologies and technologies designed to improve collaboration, communication, innovation and productivity. But many of these practices do not adequately understand nor take into account the broader and longer-term impacts they are having on our ability to be innovative and productive human beings.

Furthermore, many organisations are still operating under a traditional hierarchical planning and problem-solving structure because they don't understand how else to organise themselves. These organisations face a high risk of growth stagnation because they're becoming increasingly unable to sustainably adapt to change.

If Aotearoa New Zealand is to truly step up onto the world stage as a globally recognised trust-based economy, organisations have an instrumental role to play in creating workplaces that know how to continually adapt and thrive on complexity and constant change.

Want to talk with us?

If there's any questions you've got, we're here to help answer them.

Visit us

99 Khyber Pass Road, Grafton,
Auckland, New Zealand

Call us

Talking it out can help.
Get in touch direct on **09 522 2858**

Email us

If you'd rather jot your questions down in writing,
flick us an email to **info@techfutureslab.com**