

LEADERS FOR HUMANITY



*Insights and Impact from the
“Leaders for Humanity: How Can We
Cultivate Foresightful Leaders?”
Learning Day Workshop at the
2024 Dubai Future Forum*

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A WORLD CALLING FOR NEW LEADERSHIP

Picture this.... A leader sits at the head of the table, juggling competing demands. Around them, technologies evolve faster than they can comprehend, societal expectations shift like quicksand, and every decision feels like a gamble in an unpredictable world. Add to this the growing burnout among leaders, younger generations opting out of leadership roles, and increasing challenges to personal and organizational well-being. This is the reality many leaders face today – a reality that calls for a profound reimagining of leadership.

In a world defined by rapid transformation, leaders must confront unprecedented complexity. The assumptions that once guided decision-making no longer hold, and the challenges – technological disruption, global crises, and shifting cultural norms – demand more than expertise or authority. They require imagination to envision what's possible, adaptability to thrive amid change, and the courage to navigate uncertainty. In this context, foresight is no longer a luxury – it is a necessity.

This urgent call for new ways of leading set the tone for the *Leaders for Humanity* session, where a global collective of foresight professionals and changemakers came together to explore and reimagine leadership for an era of profound uncertainty.



THE STAGE: DUBAI FUTURE FORUM AND LEARNINGS DAY

The workshop, *Leaders for Humanity: How Can We Cultivate Foresightful Leaders?*, was part of Learnings Day at the 2024 Dubai Future Forum, held at the Emirates Towers adjacent to the iconic Museum of the Future. This final day of the Forum aimed to translate ideas into actionable practices, empowering participants with tools to shape the future.

About the Session:

This workshop explored how foresight practitioners can support leaders in navigating complexity. Through engaging activities – including an empathy mapping exercise, playing an interactive card game, and a co-creation session – participants developed tools and strategies to reimagine leadership.

About the Dubai Future Forum (DFF):

The DFF is the world's largest gathering of futurists and foresight practitioners, designed to explore humanity's most pressing challenges and opportunities. The 2024 Forum convened experts across disciplines to share insights and solutions, fostering connections that shape a more resilient future.

Date: November 21, 2024

Time: 14:00 – 17:00

Location: Dubai Future Labs Garden





A COLLECTIVE SUPPORTING LEADERS

The Leaders for Humanity session brought together a truly global and diverse group of foresight professionals – practitioners who are catalysts for change, helping leaders and organizations navigate uncertainty and thrive in a rapidly shifting world.

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participants represented an array of geographies, industries, and expertise, enriching the workshop with perspectives shaped by unique regional and sectoral contexts.

Global Reach: Attendees hailed from regions including North America, Europe, Asia, and the Middle East, marking the first time this session was tested with a globally diverse group. This milestone expanded on the game's previous applications in predominantly Western and North American contexts, offering new opportunities to integrate insights shaped by global signals and trends.



Industry Diversity: Sectors represented included government, education, technology, consulting, public policy, and non-profits. Each participant brought a distinct lens, reflecting the varied challenges leaders face across domains.

THE POWER OF GLOBAL PERSPECTIVES

This session demonstrated the value of engaging a globally diverse collective. By bringing together practitioners from different cultural, economic, and social contexts, the workshop challenged assumptions and fostered richer, more inclusive insights.

Participants collectively noted how the interplay of diverse experiences:

- **Enriched scenario creation** by grounding them in region-specific signals (e.g., ethical AI concerns in Europe, technological adoption trends in Southeast Asia).
- Highlighted the **universal relevance of foresight principles** while respecting cultural nuances in leadership styles.
- **Broadened the applicability of the Leaders for Humanity game** to reflect a wider range of global challenges.



"This session underscored the importance of thinking beyond our own geographies. Hearing perspectives from other regions gave me new ideas for how to address challenges at home."

"As a foresight practitioner, I often help leaders see beyond immediate challenges. This session helped me expand my own thinking about what's possible in leadership."

WHY FORESIGHTFUL LEADERSHIP™ MATTERS

The *Leaders for Humanity* session opened with a critical reflection: why are historical leadership models faltering in the face of today's complexities? Leaders are increasingly asked to make decisions with far-reaching implications, often under conditions of constant uncertainty. These challenges—whether technological disruption, social upheaval, or environmental crises—demand a new paradigm of leadership.

Enter Foresightful Leadership™ ...

Foresightful Leadership™ isn't about predicting the future—it's about preparing for it. It requires leaders to challenge assumptions, imagine possibilities, and act decisively amidst uncertainty. This perspective calls for a redefinition of how leaders show up: not as singular authorities, but as adaptive, collaborative, and imaginative guides for their organizations.

To explore this, the workshop introduced FIVE key principles of Foresightful Leadership™. These principles didn't just frame the session—they were embedded in the design of every activity, guiding participants to both uncover and embody these traits (on the following page):



Foresightful Leadership™ principles served as both the foundation and the lens through which participants engaged in the workshop. Each activity was designed not only to uncover these principles but to allow participants to experience and apply them in real time.

	In Practice:	Integrated in Session:
HEALTHY PROVOCATION <i>Challenge norms, disrupt the status quo, and ask the tough questions others avoid.</i>	Participants examined how leaders can use healthy provocation to unlock adaptive strategies, such as rethinking their reliance on outdated metrics during scenario discussions.	The empathy mapping exercise prompted participants to identify where leadership behaviors stifle progress and explore provocations that could drive transformative change.
CURIOSITY <i>Seek diverse perspectives and explore the unknown with openness and humility.</i>	A participant shared how listening to opposing viewpoints in the game helped uncover blind spots in their leadership strategies.	By bringing together foresight professionals from diverse regions/disciplines, the session created space for cross-cultural perspectives, enriching scenarios and strategies developed.
IMAGINATION <i>Envision positive futures and inspire others to act toward them.</i>	During the gameplay session, participants crafted visionary responses, balancing ethics and innovation in ways that sparked new ideas for leadership.	Scenario creation challenged participants to imagine futures shaped by disruptive trends, encouraging them to think beyond immediate concerns and embrace creativity.
COLLABORATION <i>Foster collective intelligence, recognizing that the best solutions come from shared efforts.</i>	The co-creation of the Leaders for Humanity expansion pack highlighted how pooling diverse insights can lead to richer, more inclusive tools for leadership.	Group activities, from gameplay to card design, were structured to ensure participants worked together to generate ideas and refine strategies.
ADAPTABILITY <i>Embrace ambiguity and thrive in dynamic conditions.</i>	Participants considered how leaders might navigate shifting societal scenarios, crafting strategies to adapt to shifting norms and expectations.	The iterative nature of the workshop—where insights from one activity informed the next—demonstrated the importance of flexibility and responsiveness in leadership.

A JOURNEY THROUGH FORESIGHT AND LEADERSHIP



The Leaders for Humanity workshop was structured as an immersive, interactive journey, inviting participants to explore leadership challenges, and collectively reimagine the future.

The session began by grounding participants in the realities faced by today's leaders through an **empathy mapping exercise**, where they explored the pressures, emotions, and behaviors of leadership in a world defined by uncertainty. This activity laid the foundation for an understanding of the gaps and opportunities in leadership today.

Building on this empathy, participants engaged in **gameplay with the Leaders for Humanity card game**, experiencing firsthand how Foresightful Leadership™ principles—such as curiosity, adaptability, and collaboration—could be applied to navigate complex, future-oriented challenges. Through this playful yet thought-provoking activity, they tackled provocative scenarios, debated innovative strategies, and reflected on the tension between comfort and boldness in leadership approaches.

Inspired by the insights generated through their work and play together, participants transitioned into a **co-creation exercise**, where they crafted original Scenario and Response Cards which would be central to the development of the Leaders for Humanity expansion pack. Drawing on their diverse perspectives, participants:

- Designed **Scenario Cards** reflecting future real-world challenges across technology, society, environment, and economy.
- Developed **Response Cards** offering leadership strategies that spanned a spectrum from practical to imaginative, challenging leadership conventions.

By the end of the session, participants not only gained deeper insights into the complexities of leadership but also contributed inspiration to future global leaders.

ACTIVITY 1: STEPPING INTO LEADERS' SHOES

To build empathy for leaders by identifying the pressures, emotions, and behaviors that define their roles today, laying a foundation for understanding the challenges foresightful leadership seeks to address

Process:

Participants used the Leader Empathy Map in small groups to explore:

- What are leaders SEEING, HEARING, SAYING, and DOING?
- What are they THINKING and FEELING?
- What external forces and organizational factors are impacting them?

Key Insights:

The empathy mapping exercise revealed a rich and complex portrait of today's leaders:

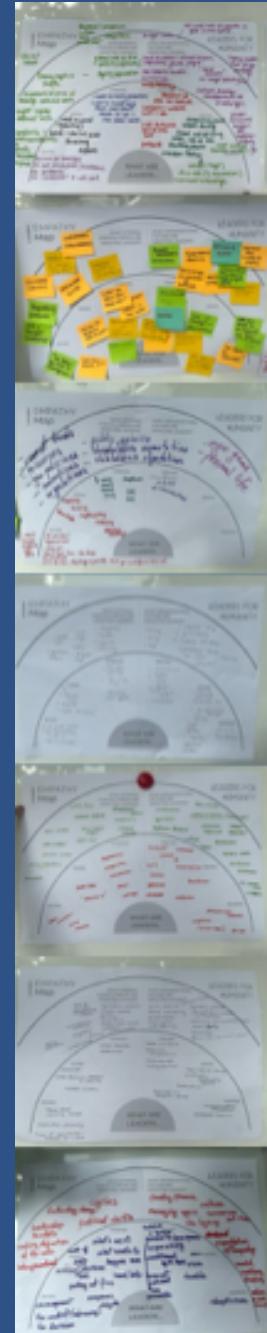
Behaviors Observed: Leaders are heavily reliant on reactive decision-making and short-term gains, often maintaining the status quo ("business as usual") or "faking it" under mounting pressures. Delegation is limited, and leaders focus on urgent but less critical tasks.

Emotions Identified: A pervasive sense of isolation, anxiety, and vulnerability shapes leadership dynamics. Leaders experience fear of failure, skepticism toward new approaches, and a feeling of inadequacy in navigating uncertain, high-stakes environments. Burnout and resignation were also prominent themes.

The exercise underscored the critical role foresight practitioners can and must play in addressing these pressures, enabling leaders to reimagine their approach, and embrace uncertainty.

External Pressures: Leaders are grappling with rapid technological changes, geopolitical tensions, climate impacts, and generational shifts in values and expectations. Regulatory complexity and public scrutiny exacerbate these challenges, leaving leaders with little room to focus on long-term strategies.

Organizational Factors: Outdated systems, cultural inertia, and rigid hierarchies restrict leaders' ability to implement meaningful change. Many feel unsupported and constrained by legacy systems and a lack of resources or flexibility.



"This exercise made me realize how much emotional weight leaders carry daily, and how foresight can help alleviate some of that burden by providing clarity and confidence in the face of uncertainty."

ACTIVITY 2: REIMAGINING LEADERSHIP THROUGH GAMEPLAY

To immerse participants in a collaborative exploration of leadership, encouraging them to challenge assumptions, propose bold actions, and reflect on how foresight principles can guide responses to uncertain futures.

Process:

Participants played multiple rounds of the game, working in small groups. Each round followed this structure:

1. Scenario Presentation: A Scenario Card (Blue Card) was drawn, presenting a future-oriented leadership challenge. Example: "AI systems now make 90% of hiring decisions. How do leaders ensure trust and fairness?"

2. Leadership Responses: Participants selected and played a Response Card (Yellow Card) that represented a potential leadership strategy

3. Group Discussion: After playing their cards, participants debated their responses, guided by prompts such as:

- How does this response differ from current leadership practices?
- What challenges might leaders face in implementing this strategy?
- What new ideas does this inspire about future leadership?

Key Insights:

The session generated a mix of lighthearted creativity and profound reflection. Each round brought unique perspectives and illuminated the tension between comfort and growth in leadership.

Balancing Ethics and Innovation:

Scenarios involving AI and climate challenges sparked intense debates about navigating ethical dilemmas while pursuing innovation.

The Role of Boldness:

Participants noted how many responses required them (and thus leaders) to step out of their comfort zones and adopt bold, unconventional strategies.

Collaboration is Key:

Gameplay discussions reinforced the importance of collective wisdom in addressing complex scenarios, but also how there was rarely singular or clear guidance on how one could / should lead in the scenario.

The interactive nature of the game unlocked creativity and fostered deep, engaging discussions. Participants also appreciated the balance of humor and seriousness in the cards themselves.



ACTIVITY 2: REIMAGINING LEADERSHIP THROUGH GAMEPLAY (cont.)



"It made me realize how often we default to safe, familiar solutions. This was a reminder to think bigger and bolder."

"This game challenged me to think differently about leadership—it's not about having the answers but fostering the right questions."



"We can't forget that playfulness can spark serious insights about leadership and strategy."

"I loved this! I would rank this at the level of 'Dilbert!'"



"It was refreshing to see how humor and creativity can spark serious insights about leadership."

ACTIVITY 3: EXPANDING THE GAME THROUGH CO-CREATION

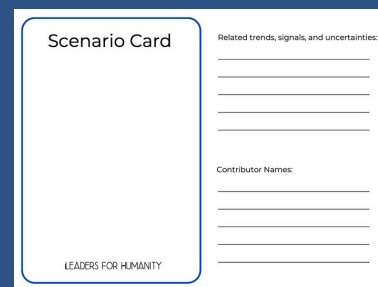
To collaboratively design new Scenario and Response Cards for the Leaders for Humanity game, ensuring the expansion pack reflects diverse global perspectives and addresses region-specific leadership challenges.

Process:

Building on the insights gained from the empathy mapping and gameplay exercises, participants contributed to the expansion pack through two key activities:

1. Crafting Scenario Cards

Using the template provided, participants created scenarios grounded in global signals, disruptive trends, ethical dilemmas, and emerging social dynamics. These cards were designed to challenge conventional thinking and provoke innovative leadership strategies.



The Scenario Card template is a rectangular card with a light blue border. It features a large central area for writing the scenario. To the right of this area, there are two sections: 'Related trends, signals, and uncertainties:' followed by five horizontal lines, and 'Contributor Names:' followed by five horizontal lines. The text 'LEADERS FOR HUMANITY' is printed in small letters at the bottom center of the card.

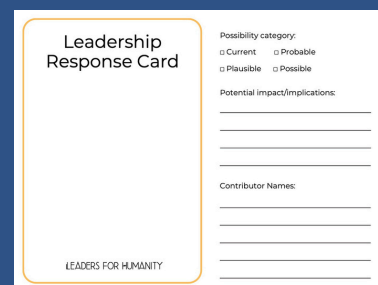
Examples of cards created:

- *"Every employee has a digital twin, and every decision is made virtually. To ensure meaningful human connection in the workplace, leaders must _____."*
- *"The workweek has been reduced to three days. How will leaders redefine productivity and purpose to align with this new norm?"*
- *"Climate migration has displaced over a billion people. To build inclusive workplaces for a constantly shifting workforce, leaders should _____."*
- *"A cyberattack has erased five years of company data. To rebuild trust and operational continuity, leaders must _____."*

2. Designing Response Cards

Strategies were categorized into three tiers:

- *Current:* Grounded in today's realities and actionable with existing resources.
- *Plausible:* Requiring incremental adjustments and near-term feasibility.
- *Possible:* Visionary approaches that challenge norms and stretch the boundaries of imagination.



The Leadership Response Card template is a rectangular card with a light blue border. It features a large central area for writing the response. To the right of this area, there are three sections: 'Possibility category:' with four checkboxes labeled 'Current', 'Probable', 'Plausible', and 'Possible'; 'Potential impact/implications:' followed by five horizontal lines; and 'Contributor Names:' followed by five horizontal lines. The text 'LEADERS FOR HUMANITY' is printed in small letters at the bottom center of the card.

Examples of cards created:

- *"Host cross-departmental forums to ensure diverse perspectives drive creative decision-making."*
- *"Introduce AI-powered empathy simulators for leadership training."*
- *"Launch a 'human-machine symbiosis' mentorship program where employees guide AI systems and vice versa."*

ACTIVITY 3: EXPANDING THE GAME THROUGH CO-CREATION (cont.)

Key Insights:

The co-creation process revealed several recurring themes and concerns, providing a nuanced understanding of the challenges and opportunities shaping the future of leadership:

<p>Technology and AI:</p> <p>Participants highlighted the growing influence of AI on leadership, decision-making, and human connection. Ethical questions around AI governance and its role in leadership emerged as key concerns.</p>	<p>Climate and Environmental Crises:</p> <p>Scenarios reflected the increasing urgency of climate migration, sustainability, and balancing compliance with proactive environmental stewardship.</p>	<p>Redefining Leadership:</p> <p>A need to reimagine leadership structures emerged, with a focus on decentralized models, co-creation, and navigating workforce resistance to change.</p>
<p>Generational and Cultural Shifts:</p> <p>Participants emphasized the challenges of leading multigenerational teams with diverse values and expectations.</p>	<p>Crisis and Uncertainty Management:</p> <p>Leadership in times of crisis was a central theme, with scenarios exploring resilience and responses to existential risks like cyberattacks and polycrises.</p>	<p>Preserving Human Connection and Well-being:</p> <p>Emotional and social challenges such as burnout, isolation, and mental health were highlighted as critical to effective leadership in digital and automated workplaces.</p>

Why These Insights Matter

The Scenario and Response Card creation process illuminated the complexity of modern leadership, underscoring the value of foresight in addressing these challenges. By creating tools rooted in collective wisdom, participants not only enriched the Leaders for Humanity game but also laid the groundwork for equipping leaders with actionable strategies to navigate uncertainty, balance priorities, and foster innovation. These insights reflect the transformative power of collective foresight in tackling global and local challenges, inspiring leaders to reimagine their roles and responsibilities in an era defined by disruption and transformation.

ACTIVITY 3: EXPANDING THE GAME THROUGH CO-CREATION (cont.)



"This exercise wasn't just about creating cards—it was about shaping tools that will inspire leaders to think differently about the future."



PARTICIPANT REFLECTIONS



FELT

Participants left the session with a renewed sense of purpose and connection, inspired by the creativity and global collaboration they had experienced. Many remarked on the value of the interactive format, which allowed them to reflect deeply on the challenges leaders face and the role foresight can play in navigating uncertainty.



THOUGHT

The session underscored for participants that leadership must evolve to prioritize foresight, collaboration, and adaptability. They were struck by how playful yet purposeful approaches like Leaders for Humanity can unlock new ways of thinking about leadership, enabling them to push beyond conventional boundaries.



DID

Each participant walked away with their own set of Leaders for Humanity game cards, generously provided by the Dubai Future Foundation. Empowered with the ability to use the game in their own work, participants also created tools and strategies during the session that they could immediately apply to inspire future-focused conversations in their organizations.



EXPANDING THE MOVEMENT

The session was only the beginning of a broader movement to reimagine leadership through foresight. From here, session facilitators, Meghan and Sabrina, will be engaged in the following as a result of the workshop:

Creating and Finalizing the Expansion Pack for late 2025 release:

Ongoing submissions of Scenario and Response Cards from participants, supported by a toolkit provided to participants post-session.

The expansion pack is slated for launch at the 2025 Dubai Future Forum, further enriching the Leaders for Humanity game with diverse, global contributions.

Translation and Localization:

Through emergent interest among global participants, partnerships are being explored to translate the game into new languages, including French and Spanish, to ensure accessibility and relevance in different cultural contexts.



Foresightful Leadership Research:

Collaborating with researchers and practitioners to deepen our understanding of foresightful leadership characteristics in practice.

Scaling Across Sectors:

Based on demand from participants, opportunities exist to adapt the game for use in various sectors such as healthcare, education, and public policy.

ENGAGE, EXPLORE AND EXPAND THE CONVERSATION

The Leaders for Humanity workshop is more than a session—it's a catalyst for reimagining leadership and fostering meaningful change. Whether you're interested in hosting a workshop, exploring how foresight principles can transform your leadership practices, or diving into the Leaders for Humanity game itself, we invite you to connect and continue the journey with us.

How to Get Involved:

- *Host a Workshop:* Bring the Leaders for Humanity experience to your organization or community to explore leadership challenges and opportunities in an engaging, interactive format.
- *Discover the Game:* Incorporate the Leaders for Humanity game into your team and leader conversations to spark fresh thinking and inspire actionable strategies.

Stay Connected:

We're thrilled to share that Leaders for Humanity is growing! Watch for updates on:

- The launch of the expansion pack at the 2025 Dubai Future Forum.
- New resources and translations to make the game even more accessible.
- Pending research into further characteristics of Foresightful Leaders.
- Research, insights and stories from practitioners using the game and principles of Foresightful Leadership in their work.

Contact Us (The Facilitators and Faces behind *Leaders for Humanity*) :

For inquiries about workshops, the game, or collaboration opportunities, reach out:

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