

Leading Through Crisis

Reducing the Impact of COVID-19 in Latin America and Africa

Session 1 | June 25th, 2020

Public Health Briefing - Dr. Cyrus Shahpar

“Situation Briefing and Special Topic: Adaptive Response”

Crisis Leadership Essentials - Prof. Rawi Abdelal

“Possible Futures: Mastering the Managerial Tool of Scenario Planning”

PUBLIC HEALTH

Situation Briefing, Dr. Cyrus Shahpar – Important Information

WHO Data (as of June 23, 2020)	Latin America	Africa
Total # of cases	2,067,856	232,215
Cases in the last 24 hours	39,532	7,542
Total # of deaths	96,016	5,117
Deaths in the last 24 hours	2,108	121

Special Topic, Dr. Cyrus Shahpar – Important Information

Use data to understand how you are doing. Some key indicators to consider:

- Cases
- Tests
- Hospitalizations
- Deaths

There is no single indicator that represents the disease status or trend; key is to recognize how certain indicators fit together to understand the current situation. Including:

- Cases and Testing
- Cases and Deaths

For further COVID-19 resources from the Partnership for Healthy Cities, including a library of materials in English, Spanish, Portuguese, and French, visit <https://cities4health.org/>

CRISIS LEADERSHIP

Faculty Teaching, Prof. Rawi Abdelal – Important Information

Change is hard under any circumstances. Often, for city leaders, the challenge is to drive change, but in this moment, **change is driving you**. Where will it take us?

Of course, no one has the answers, but you still need to plan for the future.

To help order your thinking and conversations, you need a way to take key uncertainties into account. You need a way to describe and plan for some finite number of plausible futures. This is what **scenario analysis** is all about: mapping out those plausible futures and using them as the basis for your planning.

Ask yourself: If a visitor from the future happened to drop in on your next team call, what would you want to know? The answer to this question is the start of your list of **uncertainties** and the first step in your scenario planning process:

1. Generate a list of critical uncertainties
2. Choose the two most critical. (Ideally, these serve as indicators for many of the others.)
3. Draw a “scenario grid.”
4. Name each of the four scenarios.
5. Estimate the probability of each scenario occurring.
6. Discuss with your team.
7. Iterate.



Question: If a visitor from the future were to arrive, and you could ask them “*what happened about...?*” What would you ask? (key uncertainties)

My Answer...

Putting it into Practice, Rawi Abdelal – Important Information

Scenario mapping helps us cope with uncertainty and plan for the future

- In environments that are resistant to change, risk-averse, and data-obsessed, scenario mapping is an underutilized planning tool.
- Instead of relying on business-as-usual assumptions or efforts to predict the future with quantitative analysis, this tool makes use of our most primal human talents: imagination and storytelling.

Organizations that engage in scenario planning:

- Get the strategy “right.”
 - They develop a common vision of future challenges and a portfolio of experimental efforts to address them.
- Build an organization to support the strategy.
 - They allocate resources and time to new ventures and manage the problem of things getting “worse before better.”
 - They actively embrace the tension between entrepreneurial energy on one hand, and control and coordination on the other.
 - They build deep cultural/emotional/values-based commitments to adaptive organizational change and innovation.

Bringing together the collective imagination, expertise, and experience of your team will help you:

- Structure the current confusion.
- Persuade those around you to prepare for several possible futures.
- Improve decision-making processes.

Considerations: [from “Living in the Futures” by Angela Wilkinson and Roland Kupers]

Again, the goal of scenario planning is not to predict the future. Rather, the “value lies in how scenarios are embedded in—and provide vital links between—organizational processes such as strategy making, innovation, risk management, public affairs, and leadership development.” Wilkinson and Kupers offer a few important considerations:

- The plausibility of a given scenario is more important for planning purposes than its probability. Scenarios with a “logical storyline” make it easier to apply judgments and intuitions.
- Scenarios should challenge assumptions about the status quo while leaving enough of what’s familiar intact for engaged planning.
- Make the story memorable, but discourage attachment to any one story.
- Limit the number of scenarios you consider, and avoid the temptation of creating a “middle path.”
- Use quantitative data and analysis to augment the narrative and explore different scenarios in finer detail, but don’t let the numbers take over the conversation.
- Involve outside stakeholders in scenario analysis to broaden expertise and strengthen relationships.
- Use scenarios as a mediation tool to encourage dialogue and manage disagreements.
- Integrate scenario mapping and analysis into strategic planning processes to better understand how your capabilities fit and interact with different possible futures.

Additional Resources:

- “Scenario Planning and Strategic Forecasting” by Jay Ogilvy in *Forbes*

Possible Actions:

- Practice the scenario-planning tool on my own, beginning with a list of key uncertainties
- Gather your team and work through the scenario-planning tool together.
- Use the scenario planning exercise to make decisions and prepare for several possible futures.
- Consider using this analysis to influence your public communications as you prepare your city for what's coming next.