

- **Literacy and gender equality**- The ability to read and write is next to universal: in 2004, 80% of adult men and 73% of adult women had basic literacy skills. Of great social importance is the rapid growth of female school enrolment and the increasing presence of women in the labour market. These deep changes constitute a primary driver of economic growth in developing countries.
- **Globalisation**- Over the last fifty years, world gross domestic product has increased by about five times, while trade has increased tenfold over the same period. This data suggests that the intensity of the commercial exchange between countries has developed faster than the overall economy. However, globalisation has gone beyond the exchange of physical commodities and it is progressively also modelling the lifestyles and consumption patterns of individuals and societies.
- **Social tension and opposition to change**- New international flows have diminished the role of traditional political institutions—sometimes with negative consequences for social stability. In many societies, stability (or slow evolution) has been substituted by unstoppable and irreversible transformations. As a result, individuals and communities perceive a high degree of insecurity—insecurity that touches every aspect of their lives. Growing masses of people feel threatened by the changes that affect their material (work, income, house), psychological (personal relationships), and cultural life (with the need to continuously update knowledge and professional skills).
- **The social improvement of the masses**—resulting from increasing literacy and income, universal means of communication and a new social role of women—has eroded the traditional role of the elites and have weakened the traditional regulatory role of the state.
- **Economic growth and evolution of political institutions**- The economic success of authoritarian regimes, mainly in Asia, suggests that (at least in the short term) economic growth is independent from the democratisation of political institutions. However, economic development favours the development of democratic institutions—but only if economic growth leads to substantial changes in cultural and social structures.
- **Breakdown of natural equilibria**- When demographic growth is multiplied by the growth of per capita income and consumption, one can have a measure of the global impact on environmental sustainability. Demographic and economic development is endangering our current forms of civilization and social co-living and our future ability to inhabit our planet. Alternative scenarios developed by international organisations suggest the possibility of a serious breakdown of natural equilibrium unless political, scientific, and economic tools are directed to a correction towards an acceptable equilibrium between humankind and with nature.

Considering how society has changed over the years could link to strategic planning. Analysing the organisational environment and the impact that the contemporary society has on an organisation will keep you one step ahead.