

Integrating more ecology in our work

Hurricane Maria was a one-time disaster occurrence. In the 21st century, however, the issue of the environment and climate change is ongoing and has become central to system change debates. For many years, different community economic development movements worldwide have been slow to integrate environmental issues in their work. Often environmental concerns appeared as just one more thing to do for social activists working with marginal groups in society. That all changed in the last 40 years or so.

People have begun to see the thin atmosphere within which we exist is itself an overarching commons that none of us can live without. All earth-bound commons depend on it. Likewise, the ecosystem's health and capacity to support the diversity of life as we know it has been radically compromised by human actions. As Raworth shows in her Doughnut Economics imagery, we are recognizing planetary limits and resistance is growing year on year. Integrating ecological limits in our social change thinking is crucial.

In November 2018 thousands of students walked out across the continent of Australia to address the failure of national and global political leaders to take action in the climate crisis.

1.8 Watch the first 3 minutes of “Students Strike for Climate Change.” (4:32)

Today Show Australia. “Students Strike for Climate Change,” video, 4:32, posted by Today/ Channel 9 on Facebook, November 28, 2018, <https://www.facebook.com/iwakeupwithtoday/videos/294813634707498/UzpfSTeYMDY5NzA5MzU6MTAyMTUyNDc4OTY1Njk4NDM/>
(<https://www.facebook.com/iwakeupwithtoday/videos/294813634707498/UzpfSTeYMDY5NzA5MzU6MTAyMTUyNDc4OTY1Njk4NDM/>)

For rapid transition off fossil fuels the typical call, like that inspired by these youth, is to accelerate investment in renewable energy. Yet this is far from enough. On top of transitioning to renewables, we must also make major changes in how we live our lives. One approach argues that we must twin emission reduction with drawing down the excess existing greenhouse gases from the atmosphere. Paul Hawken's 2017 Drawdown: The Most Comprehensive Plan Ever Proposed to Reverse Global Warming changes the conversation in this direction. In his TED talk, Chad Frischmann, one of the team working with Hawken, introduces some of the 80 solutions profiled in the book.

1.9 Watch “100 Solutions to Reverse Global Warming.” (17:02)

100 solutions to reverse global warming | Chad Frischmann



Chad Frischmann. "100 Solutions to Reverse Global Warming," video, 17:02, posted by We the Future to TED.com, September 2018.

https://www.ted.com/talks/chad_frischmann_100_solutions_to_climate_change https://www.ted.com/talks/chad_frischmann_100_solutions_to_climate_change

Many of the proposed solutions are quite socio-technical. They offer real ecological benefits. But drawdown activists would also benefit from engaging the critical efforts of solidarity economy actors at balancing social justice and ecological sustainability. We re-engage these drawdown solutions in the land stewardship theme in Module 2, food in Module 3, the Green New Deal and sustainable livelihoods in Module 4, energy democracy in Module 6, and money and finance solutions in Module 7.

To accelerate these solutions will, as we demonstrate in the modules ahead, require deliberate and radical societal changes if we are to make drawdown a widespread reality.