

Addressing climate change as a social issue

September 20 2016

We cannot rely on governments, businesses or the public to adopt technological solutions to solve the problem of climate change, instead, social solutions must be put in place, according to research published in the International Journal of Sustainable Society.

According to Stephen Axon of the School of Natural Sciences and Psychology, at Liverpool John Moores University, UK, addressing real and present climate change has looked to technological solutions. However, this has to a large extent not led to immediate action to address the severity of the imminent crisis of rising [global temperatures](#) and associated problems due to the increase in atmospheric [carbon dioxide concentrations](#) due to human activity. Indeed, there has been an over-reliance on seeking out technological responses and only minimal attention paid to the role of social solutions that might actually get sufficient numbers of people engaged in the problem.

Axon suggests that following the UN Climate Change Conference in Paris in December 2015 there has been increased awareness of the growing problem of climate change among members of the public. There is now a need for people to demonstrate unity, use social media to garner support and attention and to ensure our young people are also educated and empowered with regards to the problem. Such social changes will help to ensure that those in power are sent a clear signal that climate change must be addressed and also show the so-called "denialists" that the public opinion expects the problem to be addressed and not ignored or rebuffed.

The transition to a [sustainable society](#) in which we have faced up to climate change and found ways to ameliorate the problems it is bringing and perhaps even halting the rise in temperatures will be characterised by social and behavioural solutions and these must be tailored to the needs of individuals and communities, shaped and reshaped in response to individual need, Axon suggests. A community-led, grassroots response is the way forward. By demonstrating a united front against [climate change](#) within and beyond communities, mirroring rhetoric with action and empowering [young people](#) to engender new sustainable habits it might be possible to remove barriers to action and make sustainability acceptable in more meaningful ways to individuals.

More information: Sustaining public engagement with addressing climate change and the role of social solutions.

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Citation: Addressing climate change as a social issue (2016, September 20) retrieved 28 June 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2016-09-climate-social-issue.html>

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