

# The COVID-19 is a unique opportunity to move towards more sustainable and equitable society

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COVID-19: a gate to a sustainable and just future? Credit: Potterf, Maria

Researchers at the University of Jyväskylä highlight how the struggles caused by the COVID-19 pandemic can guide us toward an equitable use of our shared environment and a transition toward sustainability.

The COVID-19 [crisis](#) has emphasized how poorly prepared humanity is to cope with global disasters and to face the new ecological norm under [climate change](#), degraded ecosystems and biodiversity loss. The final consequences of COVID-19 crisis on [sustainability](#) are not yet known. However, this crisis offers a unique opportunity to move toward a greener, more sustainable and equitable society to avoid the destruction of our planet and our own well-being.

We must proactively adapt to the potentially harder times ahead of us aggravated by global environmental changes. The COVID-19 crisis serves as a global-scale stress test for our resilience toward an [uncertain future](#), says visiting researcher Rémi Duflot from the Department of Biological and Environmental Science at the University of Jyväskylä.

## **Moving toward a sustainable future path**

The actions and objectives for a sustainable transition are already defined by the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development set forth by the United Nations. Many alternatives are ready to be implemented through sectorial entry points and can mitigate the social and economic consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic. Now, researchers argue that the implementation of a sustainable policy requires a change in societal priorities, shifting from the economic paradigm of growth (specifically GDP) to human wellbeing and a healthy environment. To quantify progress toward sustainable wellbeing, measures of success should account for the multiple dimensions of wellbeing using a collection of indicators such as Genuine Progress Index and the Sustainable Development Goals.

A sustainable transition, like an adequate response to a pandemic, requires a cohesive and inclusive society where people adhere to collective actions. Justice in a broad sense should be seen as a precondition to create institutional trust and [social security](#), and thus to

encourage citizens' participation in collective projects for sustainability, explains Duflot.

The research emerged as a collaboration within the School of Resource Wisdom community JYU.Wisdom, and was published as a "Note and Comment" in *Sustainability Science* in April 2021.

**More information:** Rémi Duflot et al, Building up an ecologically sustainable and socially desirable post-COVID-19 future, *Sustainability Science* (2021). [DOI: 10.1007/s11625-021-00940-z](https://doi.org/10.1007/s11625-021-00940-z)

Provided by University of Jyväskylä

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