

Climate change and COVID-19

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The lockdowns, travel restrictions, and remote working and remote learning that became obligatory for many people around the world during the COVID-19 pandemic may have been inconvenient for some of them but they also represented a lesson we might learn regarding how well we can cope without the daily commute. Such a lesson could point

us to new ways of working and learning that might even have a reduced carbon footprint, suggests work published in the *International Journal of Global Warming*. Indeed at the height of the lockdown and enforced remote activity, during the second and third quarters of 2020, carbon emissions fell enormously.

Aseel A. Takshe, Davide Contu, and Noelia Weber of the Canadian University Dubai, UAE, Jon C. Lovett of the School of Geography at the University of Leeds, and Paul Stenner Faculty of Arts and Social Science, School of Psychology and Counseling, The Open University, UK, suggest that change is afoot. They explain how the various restrictions implemented in efforts to curtail the spread of the coronavirus may have altered our perceptions of effective climate change actions. The team has now surveyed environmental students to see how their perceptions have changed and through their statistical analysis of the results have found four discourses that emerge.

The first sits well with the notion that we ought to learn the lessons of the so-called new normal and that this could benefit us in slowing climate change. The second is more pessimistic but suggests that we should at least endeavor to not return to pre-pandemic habits. The third discourse from the [survey analysis](#) demonstrates that many think economic recovery will have precedence over any consideration of the huge problem of climate change. Finally, the opportunities for sustainability after COVID-19 emerge.

The team suggests that, in the UEA, at least, projections for lowering [carbon emissions](#) could be achieved if the government implements a 'green' [economic recovery](#) in parallel with more stringent climate policies, such as abolishing any carbon-intensive investments. They add that adaptation will, of course, be a shared responsibility between governments, communities, and individuals. There is now a need to undertake similar surveys in other nations to determine whether or not

similar discourses emerge and to measure the temper of environmental students elsewhere.

More information: Aseel A. Takshe et al, Prioritising climate change actions post COVID-19 amongst university students; a Q methodology perspective in the United Arab Emirates, *International Journal of Global Warming* (2022). [DOI: 10.1504/IJGW.2022.120071](https://doi.org/10.1504/IJGW.2022.120071)

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