



2-2023

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Recommended Citation

(2023) "Latest Research: Summary 1. Climate Change Research and the Search for Solutions: Rethinking Interdisciplinarity," *Journal of Nonprofit Innovation*: Vol. 3: Iss. 1, Article 2.

Available at: <https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/joni/vol3/iss1/2>

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Latest Research: Summary 1

Climate Change Research and the Search for Solutions: Rethinking Interdisciplinarity

From Lisa Schipper, Navroz Dubash, and Yacob Mulugetta *Climatic Change* Vol. 168, Iss. 3-4, (2021), <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10584-021-03237-3>. See article for in-text citations.

Context

After the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) Special Report on 1.5C in 2018, the escalated pressure to act on climate change has urged scientists to move past providing information regarding climate change and to helping define solutions. The growing need for solutions has put a spotlight on how different disciplines collaborate through interdisciplinary research approaches.

This paper highlights new ways of generating and communicating knowledge about climate change, through interdisciplinarity. This paper proposes four interconnected mechanisms researchers can use moving forward.

4 Better Ways to Generate and Communicate Knowledge on Climate Change

1. Change the Objective of Research
2. Pull Knowledge from Diverse Resources
3. Invest in Qualitative Research of Human Behavior
4. Broaden the Body of Knowledge for Active, Relevant Decision Making

Four Mechanisms

1. Change the objective of research. The old objective, which the paper defines as a quest for a singular vision of past, present, and future, should evolve to plural and co-existing perspectives. "Diverse simultaneous narratives provide greater opportunity for political creativity" (Schipper et al., 2021).
2. Pull knowledge from more diverse sources. Researchers can ask and answer questions from various perspectives and cultures. Diverse perspectives and worldviews can aid researchers in asking and answering climate-change questions.
3. Invest in more qualitative research of human behavior. To provide effective solutions to climate change, researchers and practitioners need to also consider how people respond to climate change. This lens requires social science and humanity research in the political, sociological, and institutional factors of populations to see if and how potential solutions can be implemented.
4. Broaden the body of knowledge for active, relevant decision making. Allowing flexibility as new research and developments emerge can provide needed course corrections over time, rather than encouraging a more mechanistic approach of set targets.

Application

Solutions to climate change require inputs from all disciplines as well as reframing questions and approaches. This change requires welcoming several narratives, understanding human behavior, including multiple disciplinary perspectives, and searching for solutions that allow for an adaptive course of action.