

Climate change and resource scarcity

A discussion paper for
non-environmental civil society groups

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Contributing to the Carnegie UK Trust Inquiry into the Future of Civil Society

The increasingly visible impacts of climate change and of fuel and food scarcity are all around us, as is the growing number of policy responses.

We are also surrounded by initiatives and calls to action that aim to tackle the problems, but it's still unclear whether change will come at the pace needed.

Amongst this flurry of activity it is also obvious that the breadth of people engaged in tackling these issues is limited, as is the nature of the challenges that are being discussed.

This does not mean that people are not taking the issue seriously. As the messages from research become clearer and more consistent, and the number of statements of concern from governments, corporate heads, NGOs and high profile individuals accumulate it is clear that there is a growing understanding that we are all stakeholders in the issue. The number of people who don't want to, or don't think we need to, do something about climate change is shrinking away.

But climate change is a complex and diffuse problem - there are no clear single

points of origin of the problem - we all contribute in almost everything we do. The problem arises from social trajectories that began with settled agriculture and took a step change in the Industrial Revolution. The areas of debate lie in different conceptions about how to tackle the issue, how much to prioritise one intervention over another. Even governments struggle to find effective levers that will enable the necessary changes.

The Carnegie UK Trust has initiated a programme of work designed to understand and improve the societal response to these issues and in particular the response and likely impacts on civil society. These are likely to be transformative problems that will play a major role in shaping civil society in the coming decades.

As part of this work we will be talking to a wide range of people – sometimes through interview and sometimes through group workshops – to explore how they see the challenges and solutions, what role they think they and others can play, and what help they need to become more effective.

Our Aims are simple and vitally important:

- We want to increase the constituency of people engaged in addressing the challenges and problems that climate change and resource scarcity will bring so that the momentum and pressure to find solutions increases
- We want to improve the level of understanding of the problems we may be looking at so that better solutions are found
- In particular we want to increase understanding of why these issues are of core importance to non-environmental groups, so that these groups are empowered to contribute and understand why their contribution is so crucial

Amongst other things we will be producing a Guide to the issues aimed specifically at 'non-environmental' groups.

The conversations and events we hold will help us inform what is produced.

Also in this wider programme of work the Carnegie UK Trust will be looking at the question of what practical changes organisations can undertake through their daily operations to reduce their own carbon emissions. We hope that this work will synergise with and support the initiatives of other organisations who are considering similar issues.

This Discussion paper however focuses on a slightly different set of questions that we want to explore with participants. They are based on issues that have arisen from formal and informal discussion of the issues with different individuals and organisations over the last three years, especially through events and meetings held at the Eden Project. We recognise that these questions are not definitive, but they do touch on areas of concern that we believe are receiving insufficient attention, and that may hold the key to a wider engagement from Civil Society.

What will be the social impacts of climate change and resource scarcity?

There is an ever growing range of information sources that build understanding of the likely impacts of climate change by demonstrating how weather patterns may change and the possible consequences of global changes such as sea level rise.

It may sound odd to say this, but we can't understand the consequences of climate change by just thinking about changes in the weather.

The biggest variables in predicting impacts are not to do with climatology - they depend on

- 1 how rapidly and effectively we respond
- 2 what sorts of societies we build and how vulnerable they are to change
- 3 the secondary consequences of the threat and the changes we make, because these will send ripples through society in countless ways

To effectively engage a spectrum of society we need a much greater diversity of conversations about climate change, ones that move beyond climatology and Arctic science and focus in on other key questions where a broader range of people have something to contribute.

The same is true of resource scarcity. Ultimately the fundamental levels of energy supply and food supply (and other resources such as water) available to us have vitally important scientific, technical and 'environmental' dimensions. But in practice the actual patterns of supply and scarcity are driven by trade and markets, the choices made for societal investment from skills to infrastructure and government policy.

The crucially important questions of who wins, who loses and how we build more effective and just systems of resource supply require that a broader range of issues are addressed by a broader range of people.

Successful human societies have evolved in the context of a huge range of different patterns of resource availability. It is when conditions suddenly change that times become dangerous. Change also puts pressure on cultural health, for example by encouraging extremism or creating conditions that allow loss of civil liberties. Civil society needs to engage to help mitigate against those risks as well.

How do we start conversations that engage a broader spectrum of people and help them understand that a) these 'environmental' issues are relevant to them and b) that their skills and insights are critical to finding solutions?

Have we got a clear enough picture of the different ways in which change challenges society? Who can we learn from?

How do we foster a culture that accepts change?

The impacts of solutions

Mitigation is defined by The International Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) as: "intervention to reduce the sources or enhance the sinks of greenhouse gases." This means for example reducing energy use or switching to non-carbon fuel sources. Adaptation is "adjustment in natural or human systems to a new or

changing environment." So adaptation is any move we make to reduce the damaging impacts of climate change, such as changing housing systems to avoid the risk of flooding, or changes to welfare support.

The question of whether society should focus on mitigation or adaptation has been

highly political. Many environmental groups have been reluctant to open discussions about adaptation, feeling that it weakens the drive to find solutions based on mitigation.

But it is time for a more sophisticated understanding. Everyone has a stake in promoting mitigation - and in doing what we can. But there is also no question that adaptation is needed.

This is in part because the changes to climate that have already been set in motion will impact in the coming decades however successful the mitigation is. It is also because some of the mitigation steps that we may have to take are themselves so radical that they will require major adaptations in how we live. The society of the developed world is so reliant on abundant fossil energy that any move to reduce its use will require dramatic change now and into the future. Effective mitigation IS adaptation.

Climate change will impact on society in different ways and through different means and the changes will themselves precipitate new changes, impacts and consequences.

In the primary instance there is/are the

- direct effect of changing climate
- indirect effects of policy or investment changes or actions taken to mitigate
- effects of attitudinal or cultural shifts as a consequence of the above e.g. mental health issues, intolerance.

Change will then precipitate change, for example migration will follow weather impacts. This will in turn have direct

impacts such as pressure on welfare systems, indirect impacts through policy responses and cultural impacts through changing social perspectives.

It is likely that policy and investment changes, driven by forecasts of what climate change and resource scarcity will bring, will have earlier impacts on many communities and individuals in the UK than actual shifts in the weather. For example many people will find that the loss of asset value of houses prone to flooding will come through the mediation of insurance companies before it comes through water. Similarly programmes of incentives and punitive measures to reduce energy use are being drawn up now, and will rapidly start to be applied.

Some of the impacts of expected climate change in 2050 are already here!

Many people that we have spoken to from socially focused civil society groups have found it difficult to accept that climate change and resource scarcity issues are as urgent and pressing as the daily problems they wrestle with. But policy responses to climate change are being drawn up now – often behind closed doors or with only the engagement of environmental civil society groups.

Calls from scientists are for something approaching 80% reduction in the levels of greenhouse gas emissions. The point is very simple but the ramifications are complex – achieving change of this magnitude is a systems challenge, and it will not only give us technical and methodological challenges, it will also provoke wide ranging challenges to our concepts of justice and a 'good society'.

The simple reality is that there are changes underway now (driven by the *threat* of climate change) that will transform society. There are already decisions being made that will impact on people's lives - especially those who are most vulnerable and poor - and it is crucial

that civil society is active and engaged to ensure just solutions and that the best opportunities are taken for positive rather than negative change, and that the outcomes reflect the principles and best practice of promoting social justice and protecting vulnerable people.

How do we promote better engagement with the policy and financial decisions that will set a framework of response to climate change?

Moving beyond 'Environmental Perspectives'

There is a deep and persistent tendency to categorise issues such as climate change and resource supply as 'environmental'. Although there is a kind of logic to this it is hugely unhelpful because it traps people into assumptions about the nature of the impacts and the relevance to their lives, and also into assumptions about who needs to engage and help find solutions.

In 2007 the Mental Health Foundation commissioned a ground breaking study on the possible impacts of climate change on mental health. A survey was also conducted as part of this work to investigate how highly people rated this as a worry in their lives:

'In a YouGov survey commissioned by the Mental Health Foundation, 70% of people say they are most worried about terrorism and 58% by immigration. In contrast, environmental issues are less of a concern – only a third are worried about climate change (38%) and a quarter by the threat of a natural disaster (23%).

Commenting on the research, clinical psychologist Dr Michael Reddy said:

"As social animals, we are sensitive to dangers from other humans that are intentional, such as terrorism. Accidental dangers, such as natural disasters fail to motivate us in the same way. Immigration ranks highly as a worry because humans identify themselves as belonging to particular groups who share the same values and codes of behaviour – this is one of our main ways of feeling secure. Feeling a threat to one's group from an unknown force, such as immigration, can threaten this sense of security and make people feel anxious."

The critical point though is that climate change is not an isolated 'issue', it is a **driver of change** at many levels that is likely to impact through terrorism and immigration as much as through storms or drought. We constantly see people falling back into the language and narratives that maintain a dichotomy.

We have undertaken a simple mapping exercise to explore the different ways in which climate change and resource shortage will impact on people's lives in ways that will be the concern of wider civil society.

Increasing costs aggravating poverty

- Greater food costs (arising from increased energy costs; crop disease; crop failures - drought, flooding etc; biofuel expansion (and policy) causing competition for food crops and arable land.
- Greater costs of any commodity needing high input of fossil energy - e.g. water
- Greater transport costs (food, commodities and people commuting to work)
- Greater insurance costs
- Costs of housing
- Green taxes - e.g. tax on energy inefficient houses could disadvantage low quality housing stock

Indirect effects - Recession and unemployment

- Greater market volatility and uncertainty, reduced investor confidence - leading to job losses, reduced investment and less philanthropy
- Competition for jobs (esp. unskilled labour) at the local level due to influx of climate refugees (compare to current impact of the EU with workers from Eastern Europe, influx of workers from Africa, etc.), which can decrease social tolerance

- Loans withdrawn (or rates raised dramatically)
- Greater pressure on weak financial systems and institutions

Increasing opportunity

- Creation of "Green Jobs" in response to government policies/initiatives, birth of niche markets in energy and adaptation services – but jobs for who?
- Potential for social enterprise solutions
- Social justice - need for effective access to these growth sectors - training, development, engagement skills, locational issues

Loss of assets or asset value

- Damage or loss of housing on marginal land e.g. flood zones
- Loss of insurance cover
- Loss of workplace, equipment, loss of farmland etc.
- Loss of market value of vulnerable assets (and follow on impacts e.g. negative equity)
- Loss of assets through policy-driven obsolescence – e.g. old machines that can't meet strict emissions requirements

Social equity and welfare issues

- Aggravation of the long standing conflict between the perceived needs of labour and environment
- Redirection or shrinking of social investment from government or other sectors e.g. philanthropy
- Compensation and choices of investment to protect against climate - who wins who loses

- Loss of mobility options (rising costs, penalisation of car ownership without adequate transport choice)
- Failure of service delivery to keep up with mobility changes?
- Loss of security - insurance, health insurance
- Green taxes hitting people least able to invest in life changes
- Increased pressure on welfare and emergency services
- Loss of civil rights? Could we see a 'war on climate change' in the tradition of the 'war on drugs' and 'war on terror'?

Changes in the political sphere

- Weakening and paralysis of government in the face of complex challenges
- - inability to balance complex and competing demands
- - inability to communicate decision-making rationale sufficiently to citizens
- - inability to control/appease negative responses (by citizens, industries, etc.) to (necessary but unpleasant) policies
- Continued or increased dedication of government funds to large-sum, single-initiative fixes rather than (much more administratively complex) dispersed, local solutions
- Potential reductions in funding for civil society
- Minor overriding democratic process – e.g. new initiatives overriding town planning systems
- Major overriding of democratic process - totalitarianism in government

- Greater impetus for privatisation of public goods and loss of public rights – 'disaster capitalism'

Demographic change and the indirect impacts

- Influx of environmental refugees
- Pressure on welfare and homeless services
- International conflict
- Influence on immigrant populations of disasters in their countries of origin
- Decreased extra-national involvement and mediation by strained governments
- Changes in economic balance between nations and between industries

Health challenges

- New disease patterns
- More disability and veterans - victims of conflict, disaster and health problems
- Mental health problems driven by cumulative effects of pressures such as unemployment
- Loss of hope for the future, depression related to uncertainty
- Stress related social disruption - e.g. child welfare affected by poverty, unemployment
- Higher health care costs

Weakening (or continued absence) of community cohesion

- Growth of survivalist 'off grid' mentality
- Promotion of 'individual behaviour change' rather than collaboration and collective action

- Isolation of people living in 20th Century housing patterns built on assumptions of easy transport
- Racism
- Conflicts between environmental activists and wider society
- Promotion of intolerance?
 - intolerance of immigrants, etc. driven by unstable societal/economic conditions
 - 'green terrorism' e.g. anti-car driving
 - backlash against climate initiatives by people who 'lose'

Whether these are really significant or even credible impacts is difficult to say, mostly because the people who may know are only patchily engaged. It is rare to find many of these issues on the agenda of any climate change conference. Are they receiving any focus from the people who have experience and insight in these different domains?

The problems of engaging a broader range of people in climate change can operate at many different levels. For many organisations there are governance barriers. We have heard many anecdotal examples of situations where initiatives from non-environmental groups have been blocked or slowed by high level management or trustee intervention

because the relevance to the core agenda has not been understood.

The Charity Commission guidance on this issue is set out on these web pages:

<http://www.charity-commission.gov.uk/enhancingcharities/environqanda.asp>

“Q. Our charity’s objects contain no reference to the environment. Are we allowed to promote the protection of the environment in our work, or would we be in breach of trust?”

A. The law requires charities to act within their objects, which means that all of their assets have to be used to further those objects directly or indirectly. The Commission would encourage charities to explore the full scope of their objects without acting outside them. If challenged, trustees must be able to demonstrate, with evidence, the link between their activities and how their charitable purposes are being fulfilled.”

So, there is a key link to the level of trustee understanding, and if the trustees of an organisation sees climate change and resource scarcity as ‘environmental issues’ then in many cases they cannot act. The problems need reframing in a new language.

How do we build a wider understanding of the likely nature of climate change and resource scarcity impacts, to engage a much greater diversity of people in promoting and helping to find solutions?

Are there other major impacts that need to be addressed?

What are the barriers to Civil Society engagement?

If it is crucial that a wider spectrum of civil society groups engage with these issues, we need to understand the potential barriers and start to remove them. We believe that these could include:

- Continued perception that these are environmental issues, not drivers of social change
- Failure to resolve perceived conflict between environmental gains and social gains (e.g. jobs versus labour debates; development versus limits to growth)
- Conflicting narratives and beliefs – e.g. different faith narratives about the need for engagement with 'environment'; stewardship of the Earth
- Perceptions of relative urgency - vulnerable people need support today to face today's problems
- Justice issues - whose behaviour needs to change and who decides? Different visions of success
- Complexity barriers - too hard and too bewildering
- Governance barriers such as perspectives of trustees

What barriers are important in limiting civil society engagement?

How can they best be tackled?

Whose responsibility is it to act?

The scale of the changes needed calls for changes at individual, community, national and international levels. There will need to be shifts in almost every domain - housing, agriculture, transport, commerce. The change would need a complex ecology of action from that relies on many different actors.

The models of change that are widely proposed however tend to cluster in specific areas - promoting personal action, calling for government action and calling for corporate action. The Energy Savings Trust provides an example of the how

action is concentrated in these domains www.est.org.uk.

Statements from government have often focused on what individuals should do. They nearly always focused on a subset of domestic actions that are all worthwhile but are often first generation (i.e. when they are done, what happens next?) and they avoid some of the bigger and more complex structural questions. For example many of the calls to action argue that people should drive less, but a key reason why people drive is that planning systems have, for decades, forced a separation

between work places, living places, retail places and recreation places. A revolution in planning is needed so that there can be a revolution in driving behaviour.

One of the reasons it is crucial to have social change organisations engaged is because they often have experience of how behaviours do, or could change. They understand the complex interaction of personal and community motivation and the system we are in, as well as the need to ask core questions such as “whose behaviours?”, “who holds the levers?” and “is there equity and justice in the ideas being proposed?”.

Government action through policy, legislation and the choices made for investment of funds and services also need a wider social partnership. Proposals need to be grounded in public (and civil society) confidence and support and the role of different actors in delivering solutions needs to be understood. Even where the action falls to government alone, a constituency of support is often required before there is political confidence to act.

For a long time the missing element of focus is at a community level with relatively few attempts to explore what can be done through collaboration at different scales. (Transition Towns and Every Action Counts movements are important exceptions where a welcome focus on community and third sector level possibilities has started to emerge.)

Crucial is the insight that collective action can mean more than just the scaling of individual action. It is possible to achieve certain types of things by working collaboratively together in ways that individuals, even when massed, could not do. Examples would include:

- Community scale solutions e.g. community energy trusts
- Co-operative systems
- Mutuels and other mechanisms for releasing capital

Collective action is also a tool for community creation and for building new networks, new social capital. This transformative effect of collective action may be what is needed above all else.

How do we promote a stronger vision of collective action as the best means to address these issues?

Finding better solutions

Climate change and resource scarcity will transform our society unless they are addressed. If we do not engage effectively then this transformation may not be positive. But it is also the case that the

responses that are needed are also likely to impact on every level of society.

The current discourse around solutions to climate change, reducing carbon footprints and renewable energy

technologies, appears to lie outside of both the competencies and mission of many social groups.

Underlying the cries to action is an almost tacit belief that any and all responses to carbon reduction are to the common good. Analogies are made with wartime sacrifices. Calls for tighter and stricter legislation abound. But how many of our social liberties should we sacrifice to win this war? One of the roles of civil society is to watch and engage with major societal governance shifts to help protect crucial values and to help find the optimum solutions.

A lack of engagement presents real dangers. For example Naomi Klein has argued that in contemporary USA events such as Hurricane Katrina have provided opportunities for what she calls 'disaster capitalism' – a furthering of the process of privatisation of public goods and undermining of public values – in ways that bypass effective scrutiny and challenge.

Of course engaging civil society doesn't mean that everyone will agree on priorities or solutions - it's crucial to the mosaic of civil society that some people hold hard to the particular issue they champion or lobby they represent. The first and most important step is that the breadth of civil society recognises that climate change is an issue that is relevant to them, and that a greater range of voices must be heard.

Collectively however civil society stands for a certain principles such as the vision of a 'good society' and the need for citizen engagement and collective action emerging from a diversity of voices.

The responses to climate change that have dominated discourse so far focus

mostly on either personal behaviour change or government action. If they have any vision of collective action, it is usually framed around the idea that that a thousand small actions add up to a powerful whole. They do, but this is not enough.

Individuals do not have agency over enough aspects of society for their cumulative actions to impact on everything that needs to change. We need collective action solutions to bigger questions, like how towns and cities and energy, transport and food systems are designed and financed. We also need collective action to build a political constituency for change. "We can't really solve this problem one light bulb at a time." Bill McKibben.

Adaptation also needs a complex ecology of solutions. Adaptation is not just about having sandbags and a sunshade to hand for when the weather is fierce, it is about thinking how to restructure everything we do and everything we have around us in ways that reduce the demand on fossil fuels, but also in ways that are fair and just, protect diversity and vulnerable people, and move towards a good society.

Maybe the wartime analogy for climate change is accurate – because it is a battleground of ideas and values. Will we find that the ways that we have tried to solve the problem have furthered the values and systems that got us into the mess, such as hyper individualism and loss of the commons and shared community values. Or will it be the chance to explore new models of a good society, based on new ideas, projects that demonstrate possibilities that can synergise or scale to address a major challenge. We need

mitigation in forms that do not entrench poverty. We need adaptation in ways that

do not limit social transformation.

How can we best engage the breadth of civil society to recognise the nature of the challenges and to help find solutions?

The costs of change

A major focus of debate has been on the costs to society of addressing climate change. The Stern Report stands as the major government statement in this regard, arguing strongly that money spent now avoids major cost later.

But the harder questions lie behind this debate - where do we find the money, who pays, who loses? The different elements in play include:

- Green taxes (both as disincentives and as means of generating money)
- Insurance premiums (which both discourage investment in high risk activities and, sometimes, provide a fund for renewal)
- Market solutions incentivising investment in carbon reduction (including trading and offsetting)
- Encouraging discretionary spend (premium tariffs, procurement policies, household level investment in micro-generation etc.)

The barriers to liberating investment lie at a deeper level. They have roots in issues such as committed budgets and financial structures, 'sunk' investment and silo systems that aren't necessarily best adapted to the needs of the 21st Century. Even the private sector has its own barriers based on perceptions of risk, expected return, discount rate etc. that all create substantive barriers to investment in a more adaptable society.

Both the private and public sectors are controlled by set rules and beliefs about how money should be deployed. It may be that a key role of Civil Society, and especially the social enterprise sector is to provide new sources of finance but also new sets of rules for how that finance is deployed – e.g. linking the commercial rigour of the public sector to public benefit and without shareholder concerns, to allow new interpretations of issues such as rate of return or 'efficiency' of invested capital.

What are the most effective ways to liberate new finance for social change?

Does civil society have options for addressing the finance challenge that complement and are different from other sectors?

Opportunities from climate change and resource scarcity – who will be the winners?

Not all of the climate change debate is presented in negative ways. There is a strong secondary discourse that focuses on the 'opportunities' that climate change will bring. Mostly this refers to business innovation, but it is also true that if we have a need to re-tool some aspects of society there could be a chance to try and tackle some of the unresolved ills of the contemporary world.

But whatever we play for, the future will be tough and there will be many people who suffer greatly. Change has winners and losers. Frameworks like contraction and convergence try to address the global justice questions and find the best

solutions, but changes at a UK level will have losers as well. It is crucially important to engage with policy and other changes happening now, to ensure that good solutions emerge

“We must not use poverty as an excuse not to act, and must look for action that benefits the poor.” Nick Mayby, E3G.

Even when there are ways to build new economies and incomes, who will be the beneficiaries? If there is an increase in Green Collar Workers, or a Green New Deal, we need to develop approaches that will ensure that the benefits do not just flow to established professional classes and established investors.

Can we identify real 'opportunities' that are meaningful for wider society?

What contribution can civil society make to ensuring that benefits are equitable and based on the values of a good society?

Dealing with unpredictability and long horizons

One of the reasons that mobilising effective solutions is difficult is because although there is great confidence at the global level of the scale and nature of threat, there is still uncertainty about what will happen locally, and when it will happen.

There is a need for a more sophisticated approach to planning. Not only do today's choices create the future, the perceived future dictates choices today. We have to not just solve problems, we need to solve them in ways that pro-actively help shape the sort of society we need.

The time-frames that climate change will require us to think about go beyond any meaningful planning horizon for most contemporary organisations – including government. But how do we do that? What barriers exist and what methodologies could be explored? We need suggestions on where to look, such as leaning from some of the leading thinking on intergenerational contracts.

Even with this work done we have to accept that the world of 2050 or 2080 may be so hard to anticipate that to frame 'impacts' in today's terms will be of limited

value. Is the current focus on 'evidence based' policy making helpful in addressing these problems?

The Transition Towns movement is an example of a growing focus on social resilience. They are beginning to explore the core conditions that are needed for a society to be resilient in the face of potentially radical, and possibly unpredictable, change. They are also starting to put a focus on possible structural weaknesses in society that need to be addressed, such as 'just in time' resource supply systems.

What do we need to do to tackle the problems of unpredictability and long time frames?

How will these issues affect the governance and operating systems of organisations?

What changes do we need to help happen in wider society?

Where do we find hope?

Any period of rapid change is testing for society. Not only are there countless technical and functional issues and economic problems, the role of traditions, heritage and culture and the very fundamental questions of personal and social identity and purpose are put under enormous strain.

So as well as the functional questions that radical change will ask of us, we also have a challenge of creating a culture that faces and maybe even welcomes such change. The alternative may be that a cultural denial will magnify the challenge or add new stresses such as increased

isolationism or fundamentalism. Arguably many of the great conflicts of the 20th century were the results of not knowing how to change, how to move forward without betraying the past.

Climate change is daunting not only because of the scale of the challenge, but also because it may ask us to give up things that we currently see as important. We have to find a way of viewing the future that makes it feel both possible and worth fighting for. Without some faith in good possibilities, we risk fostering nihilism, or at least disengagement, and we risk closing

options in ways that make the worst scenarios self-fulfilling.

At the heart is the issue of what makes a 'good society'. For example is all trade 'consumption'?

The climate change challenge has given enormous impetus to the conceptual model of the 'footprint' – the negative consequences of human presence on Earth. But this is at best a zero-sum game, and probably unwinnable game. To live is to leave a mark.

Can we have within the human gift of possibilities the chance to be a positive force? If we don't allow ourselves this, we

have closed countless doors, and we have disengaged one of the most fundamental engines of positive social change – hope.

It's almost impossible to write of hope without sounding sentimental, but it's important to understand that hope is not an "apple pie" word. Hope is not the same as naivety or denial or ignorance. Hope does not mean that positive outcomes are assumed; in fact hope is only a relevant word when things look dark. But hope is the fuel, the inspiration, the shield that lets people face things that otherwise can't be faced. In times of difficulty a good society has to be a hopeful society, or it has nothing.

How can civil society effectively foster hope and positive options in the years ahead?

What broad vision should we develop for the role of civil society?

What next?

The questions above are designed to help begin a debate that will both clarify and energise civil society engagement with the issues of climate change and resource scarcity.

Through a series of interviews and workshops we will be asking for responses, but the questions are just openers. Sometimes they point towards difficult

territories that can be explored but probably never fully understood and resolved.

We are keen to see this debate go anywhere it will. If you want to put new ideas in or propose new directions for the enquiry then we would be pleased to hear from you.

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