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#### Nature Reports Climate Change

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The Macmillan Building, 4 Crinan St  
 London N1 9XW, UK  
 Tel: +44 (0) 20 7833 4000  
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# nature REPORTS climate change

the news behind the science, the science behind the news

## PEOPLE POWER

Most of us have by now admitted our culpability in planetary warming, yet humans are still faced with the intractable problem of how to stop meddling with the climate. Unfortunately, that's not just a question of developing the right policy or technology. Despite being close allies in our efforts to limit the negative impacts of our existence, science and innovation alone can't get us out of our present fix.

We are, after all, the ones burning fossil fuels. And while technologies such as carbon sequestration can buy us time, they still fail to address the more fundamental issue of how well a burgeoning human population can survive on an over-stressed planet.

Changing human behaviour will be crucial, if difficult. And achieving real sustainable development may well involve reverting to a less consumption-driven lifestyle (see page 93), a point highlighted in the latest vision statement of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, which was submitted to the panel's scoping meeting last month.

Gathering in Venice from 13 to 17 July, over 200 experts in physical and socioeconomic sciences discussed the panel's next assessment and committed to including the social aspects of climate change, such as costs and humanitarian consequences, in the next report, due out in 2014.

Even with the long lead-in time, much work will be needed to achieve that aspiration. Although climate change is ultimately a social challenge that will require a level of global co-operation never before seen, there is a dearth of research on how humans respond to, and collaborate on, such problems (see page 89).

That deficit is, in part, the fault of human behaviour itself: our tendency is to stick to our well-established cliques and beliefs rather than reaching out to those with other perspectives, values and ideas (see page 94). Solving climate change will require all manner of experts working together to understand, for example, not only the efficacy of any given technology but the willingness of society to adopt it.

If recent trends are anything to go by, such co-operation will become increasingly common. A number of research centres have sprung up in the past year — such as the Yale Climate and Energy Institute — housing dream teams of diverse experts that bring a range of tools to bear on the problem of climate change.

Both new and planned publishing ventures reflect the expectation that more of this interdisciplinary research is forthcoming. Two imminent publications worth noting are Wiley's *WIREs Climate Change* review journal, due to launch in December, and the American Meteorological Society's *Weather, Climate and Society*, to be launched in the fall.

Much more is needed in this regard, and such initiatives should be commended for breaking new ground. If sociologists, economists and climatologists can successfully collaborate, they can perhaps unveil how the rest of us could work together to solve what is undeniably a collective-action problem.

OLIVE HEFFERNAN, EDITOR

Published online: 4 August 2009  
 doi:10.1038/climate.2009.75

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