

## **Should Change be Radical?**

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The word 'radical' means 'of the root or origin'. 'Radical' change refers generally to drastic political, economic and social reforms. But radical can also mean extreme, and in this manner radical change can happen as a result of dramatic environmental factors. Today the scientists are telling us that change in our ecosystem will be radical: "Warming of the climate system is unequivocal" (IPCC report, 2007). Change is happening, now - whether we like it or not: unprecedented changes in the ecosystem are radical.

But when we ask if change should be radical, we assume we have control over the future we build, and what we mean is; 'should we instigate radical reforms and policies?'. Today, we have a community of physical scientists who now are unanimous on the detrimental effects of global warming. The root of the problem is environmental crisis. The origin of the solution will be how we decide to react to this challenge.

We can mitigate the situation and make the effects of climate change less severe. To avoid catastrophic climate chaos we need to dramatically reduce greenhouse gas emissions. This goal is not going to happen without active participation from the population at large, along with government incentives and regulation, new sustainable systems design, and changes in our consumption patterns.

This paper is about projects that will facilitate these changes. The phenomenon of the 'dematerialization' of design, and new 'systems design' provides new models for dealing with our environmental crisis – and we will examine some of these projects. We need to harness all of our critical skills at this point to develop sustainable methods & systems to develop a low carbon culture. We cannot indulge any type of design that is not grounded in ethics and sustainability. While discussing these issues, this paper will examine a few models for radical change within the design and activist communities (Massive Change, World Changing, 2010 Imperative, and Transitions Towns).

Change is going to happen. How much better to understand this and take control of the change than to become victims of change. We cannot carry on as we are and simply reduce our carbon – we need to get to the 'root' of the problem – and reduce consumption. While confronting the challenges that lay ahead will not be easy, if we are mature enough as a culture to see this as a 'convenient opportunity' to make a more simple, less wasteful, low carbon future than the radical change ahead need not be so painful.

### **References and sources**

Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, Fourth Report. February, 2007.