

where nature is found. The arguments come together in the final, aptly named ‘possibilities’ chapter, which does not identify easy 10-point solutions, but outlines the direction and guiding principles and invites the reader to take their next steps.

Some questions remain unanswered by the book, such as what happens when competing value systems clash. It is also unsurprisingly written from a deeply personal, and therefore English, perspective, and an author from another part of the world would have written a different book. Nevertheless, this book will help the *Oryx* reader to think through their values and their relationship with nature. As recent work led by Rogelio Luque-Lora (Luque-Lora et al., 2022, *People and Nature*, published online 2 August 2022), one of Trudgill’s colleagues, has shown, conservationists do not get involved in efforts to conserve nature because of a love for dry science, but because of the emotions and values that emerged from their relationship with nature. I encourage the readers of *Oryx* to buy this book, let Trudgill’s seminars reshape their thinking, and (re)discover for themselves why we should conserve nature.

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Surviving Climate Chaos by Strengthening Communities and Ecosystems by Julian Caldecott (2021) 392 pp., Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, UK. ISBN 978-1-108-79378-0 (pbk), GBP 39.99.

Climate emergency, climate crisis, climate breakdown, climate catastrophe, climate chaos: it feels like we have found ourselves in the brainstorming session of Hollywood filmmakers looking for the title of the latest blockbuster movie. With a newsfeed full of natural disasters and emergencies—floods, fires or record-breaking heatwaves—we suspect that without immediate action, this story will not have a fairy-tale ending. The science is clear: we are living in a climate and nature emergency, and the plot is about to accelerate.

Building on the recognition that the human-induced climate and nature crises are inherently intertwined, Julian Caldecott’s main argument is that surviving the climate chaos requires communities and ecosystems to be able to cope with near-random environmental and climate impacts. Their strength depends upon their integrity; therefore, preserving and restoring the integrity of communities and ecosystems is the cornerstone of adapting to climate change.

Caldecott explains how international climate policy evolved since the adoption of

the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) at the Rio Earth Summit in 1992, along with the scientific evidence, the relation of the climate agenda to international development and aid, and biodiversity and sustainability goals. There is a need for placing climate adaptation on equal terms with mitigation (cutting greenhouse gas emissions) as we prepare for the unavoidable impacts. And for this, local-level action is crucial.

Communities experience the impacts of climate change as chaotic and unpredictable, and the risks that threaten their lives and livelihoods increase with every increment of global warming. Thus, every community, each with their own circumstances and dependent upon their own local ecosystem, must find its own way to survive and thrive in an increasingly uncertain climate.

Because of this diverse and context-specific nature of adaptation needs and action, there is no one-size-fits-all solution. And that is partly why the specifics of the Global Goal on Adaptation under the 2015 Paris Agreement are still being negotiated in the international climate forum, being one of the central questions at the COP27 this November. But for many countries it is clear that ecosystem- and community-based approaches play a pivotal role in climate adaptation. This is demonstrated by the detailed case studies from Nepal, Bolivia and Tanzania, which also illustrate best practice for designing theories of change and evaluating impact, based on adaptive performance, while keeping an eye on the qualities that may be more abstract and harder to measure, such as equity, knowledge and governance. Importantly, we welcome the recognition of local values and systems, and the need to address and abandon so-called entitlement myths.

One of Caldecott’s key points is that it is not necessary to reinvent the wheel; rather we should look at already proven tools and practices, such as community-based resources management involving secure tenure, participatory approaches, environmental education and intercommunity networking, through a ‘climate lens’ and integrate that rich knowledge in adaptation planning. Much of what good aid projects do already is also helpful for climate change adaptation, and we just need more of the same but better, whilst applying systems thinking. The author wants us to apply adaptation principles to society as a whole, by addressing the interconnectedness of social and ecological systems. To adapt, we must learn to think adaptively—which is easier said than done.

As climate change has the potential to undermine or reverse previous development

gains, we strongly agree that we need to build synergies across the climate adaptation, development and nature agendas. We share the author’s frustration that the international community is still divided over climate justice and how to share the financial burden of climate action. Nevertheless, we would argue with the opinion that adaptation action might have progressed faster if countries had accepted sooner that the climate changes naturally, with or without making a causal link to human activities. According to the book, mitigation and adaptation could have been addressed separately following the Rio Summit, allowing societies to mainstream adaptation and build resilience to natural variability in climate. In this case ‘all the debate about who caused what and who should pay for it, and the associated delay, would have bedevilled only one of the treaties’ (p. 204). However, the climatic changes we are currently experiencing (and expecting in the future) are more extreme and unpredictable than a climate system without human interference. Without scientific understanding of what degree of impacts can be expected beyond natural climate variability, it is difficult to plan adequate adaptation measures and convince governments to invest in them. Without acknowledging what causes the problem, and without a clear recognition of countries’ contribution to it, we doubt that anyone would have wanted to pay the bill or could have been held accountable for their own share of it. In addition, we would have hoped to find more detail on the increasingly important issue of losses and damages caused by climate change.

Despite the immensely complex topic, the book is written in an easily understandable and accessible way, while keeping its messages relevant for a wide range of audiences. The tone reflects the urgency of the situation and passion of the author. The final section offers specific take-home messages for researchers, teachers, students, national and local governments, aid professionals, the UNFCCC Secretariat, as well as for practitioners and citizens of the very localities that face the adaptation challenge everywhere. Reflecting on hope, purpose, trust, partnership, adaptive thinking and peace with nature, the book’s closure provides a good sense of direction. We found the book a rich, useful and educational resource, and would recommend it to anyone interested in the topic.

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