

Climate Change Reflection

There is still little knowledge and understanding about climate change in the general public. Three interviews have been conducted discussing the following questions: “Discuss the possible impacts of global warming over the next 100 years.”, “What has been done to solve climate change as an existential threat?”, and “Why is international funding lacking to address such a threat?”. A summary of what the three interviewees and I think and know about climate change will be presented.

First, a PhD student from Argentina has been interviewed. He is aware of global warming, ice melting, rubbish accumulation and storage problems, deforestation and associated fires, and coral reef death. While discussing, I mentioned rising sea levels as a major issue regarding ice melting. Regarding what has been done to solve the climate crisis, he mentions international agreements such as the Paris Agreement with the aim of reducing carbon dioxide emissions. However, he is sceptical of such agreements as he believes countries prefer having to pay fines for not meeting the goals than investing in meeting the goals. The European Union will also ban fuel-powered cars by 2035, and countries such as Denmark are innovating nuclear power to make it more sustainable. In Latin America, bans on mining virgin indigenous areas have also been put in place. However, even with such policies which aim to preserve the environment, the conditions are still worsening. The interviewee believes that besides being very expensive to address the climate crisis, there is no real incentive for governments to invest in saving the planet. Poorer countries may not even have sufficient resources and funds, so he believes that it is up to MEDCs to address the climate crisis. To this point, I added that MEDCs dump waste in LEDCs, which is an unsustainable way that the problem is being covered up.

Second, a Swedish student shared her thoughts. She believes that in the near future, we will reach a tipping point where the environmental damage will be irreversible. Her thoughts were focused on how the rising sea levels will give rise to masses of global warming refugees which will be a major political issue. Stricter migration laws will probably arise as a result, especially in Europe. She believes that little has been done to solve climate change. On a small scale, people are protesting, but this has no real impact on policymaking. Companies are mostly greenwashing to conceal the unsustainable nature of business-as-usual activities, but most are not taking the real initiative to change their ways. The changes that she has observed are mostly on the individual scale, which has relatively little impact on the environment as a whole, as the biggest polluters are large corporations. She thinks that no real difference is taking place because priorities lie with making a profit. She believes that even with coordinated international cooperation, international funds could not address the climate crisis because there is no concrete “magic bullet” that we can invest in. The climate crisis needs to be addressed by individuals, corporations and governments simultaneously and it is difficult to coordinate all these different scales. Accountability is an issue as the blame is pushed around on other parties because nobody wants to change their lifestyle or business models in order to save the planet. To add to the

discussion, I suggested the government impose stricter laws and regulations on corporations, and she agreed that this could help the climate change crisis.

Lastly, I discussed this with a financial advisor from IKEA. She has a relatively positive view of climate change. She believes we, as a species, have the gift of adaptability, and we will be able to adapt to the environmental changes we will observe. As for what has been done, she observed that there is a lot of focus on spreading awareness to the general public, but again, no mention of real policies has been made. As for what IKEA is doing, they are working on limiting wood use to help with deforestation, using renewable energy such as solar panels to fuel energy use in stores (and aim to not consume more energy than the solar panels can provide), and making their products easier to recycle by using similar materials in the same product (as well as using recycled materials), and finally encouraging suppliers to use renewable energy in production processes. They are also working on tracking the carbon footprint of their products, but this is still a work in progress. As for why international funding is not able to address the crisis, she agrees with the previous interviewees. There is no profit-driven incentive for change.

To conclude, while the interviewees agree that climate change is an existential threat, the general consensus seems that there is no real incentive for governments, firms and individuals to address this threat. The interviews illustrate how little knowledge exists of real action that has been taken to combat the crisis. Perhaps because there are not enough policies that address climate change.