

What will it take to tackle climate change?

Tony Duckenfield, Beyond Logic Consulting

We've been failing to tackle climate change for at least thirty years and although there was some progress in 2022

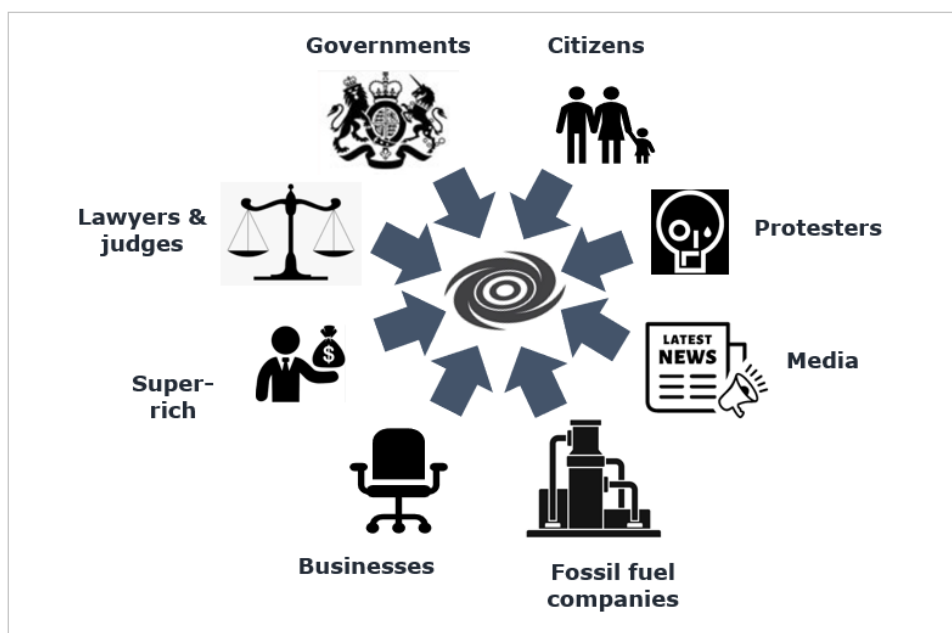
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we're a long way off creating the systems change needed. It's been pointed out that "To overcome the multifactorial and systemic crisis of sustainability we are facing, it is key to break free from the triangle of inaction which sees individuals, governments and companies not taking responsibility in the face of the great existential challenges of our times":

(https://www.linkedin.com/posts/verelrodrigues_sustainability-change-power-activity-7013805889434353664-9-y1?utm_source=share&utm_medium=member_desktop)

What's needed is for all the relevant players to accept that they have a role to play and to work towards a common goal, each doing their bit while seeing that others are also playing their part. Individuals may feel powerless, but with some help, they have the power to reduce their own carbon footprint and impact on the environment. This has more immediate benefits in terms of saving money and improving personal health and wellbeing.

Climate change players (all of which will have to play their part)



Ideally governments would lead the way in tackling climate change but the reality is that they are generally working to a four or five year election cycle so struggle to take actions which they consider unpopular with the electorate in the short term, even if they are the best for the medium and longer term. Nevertheless, they can still play an enabling role, particularly in areas such as education, energy, innovation, transport and health. Their role would certainly be enhanced if they listened to the will of the people and avoided the influence of vested interests.

Private sector companies are constrained by the need to make short term profits and increase shareholder value. However, financially responsible companies will recognise the threats which climate change pose, and the need to attract good talent which in turn requires being a responsible employer. Such companies can lead the way in developing and selling products and services which minimise their environmental impact.

Fossil fuel companies need to be part of the solution because of their undoubted power and influence; they are, after all a key reason why we haven't acted on climate change ([Congressional Report Reveals Fossil Fuel Deception | Union of Concerned Scientists \(ucsusa.org\)](#)). Specifically, they can speed up the transition away from fossil fuels by speeding up their own move to alternative energy sources.

Just Stop Oil and other protesters may divide opinion but what they're asking for is the same as the majority of citizens and they play an important role keeping the climate near the top of the news agenda when otherwise it would be crowded out; this article in the FT provides a thoughtful view of the topic.

(https://www.linkedin.com/feed/update/urn:li:activity:7006908425859145728?updateEntityUrn=urn%3Ali%3Afs_feedUpdate%3A%28V2%2Curn%3Ali%3Aactivity%3A7006908425859145728%29).

The role of the media (in all its forms) shouldn't be under-estimated, though this may well be the most difficult player to get on board because of the primacy of press freedom and the attractiveness of news articles which reinforce unhelpful messages such as conspiracy theories or attacks on personal freedoms, even where this is the freedom to harm oneself or others (or, indeed, everyone in the case of climate change). A hope here is that the media can get behind popular personalities who support the climate agenda, while they also have an important role in normalising good behaviours through the everyday characters portrayed in soap operas and dramas.

Given the unequal distribution of wealth and power, the wealthiest 1% will need to act, if for no other reason than the volume of emissions they're responsible for ([World's richest 1% cause double CO2 emissions of poorest 50%, says Oxfam | Greenhouse gas emissions | The Guardian](#)).

One of the agents that could really make a difference behind the scenes is the judicial system – the fear of litigation can be a real incentive for businesses and politicians to change ([Climate Law Blog » Blog Archive » A look back at significant decisions in climate litigation in 2022 \(columbia.edu\)](#)).

Also on a positive note, some businesses are starting to take climate change seriously as this post about investors and lenders illustrates: https://www.linkedin.com/posts/sotiriaphd_jpmorgan-unveils-financed-emissions-goals-activity-7013873700982706176-VHIM?utm_source=share&utm_medium=member_desktop. In fact, the hope is that we're close to a tipping point and that once the inflection point is reached things will happen quickly. Once the new direction of travel is clear, there will be a race to not be left behind. That's the hope, at least.

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<https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/what-take-tackle-climate-change-tony-duckenfield>