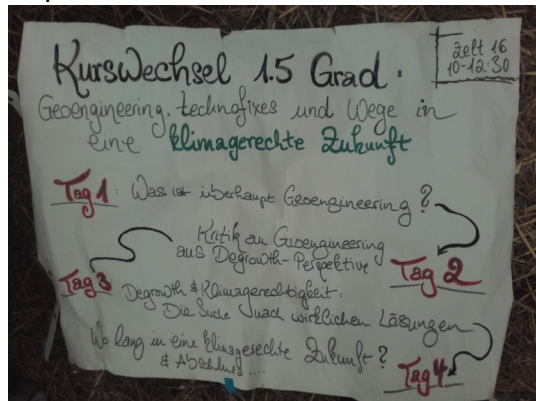


Workshop: Geoengineering from a degrowth and climate justice perspective

September 5, 2017



Workshop materials. Photo: Linda Schneider

In late August, the annual climate camp drew several thousand climate activists to the German brown coal mining region of Rheinland for a full week of workshops, panel discussions and fruitful exchange.

The climate justice movement also took to the streets - or rather: to the coalmines. For the third time, the direct action campaign Ende Gelände organised mass actions of civil disobedience, blockading coalfields and train tracks - climate protection on the ground!

We at Heinrich Böll Foundation took the opportunity to discuss geoengineering from a Degrowth and climate justice perspective with a group of 30 people in a 4-day course at the Degrowth summer school.

After an introduction to the idea of geoengineering, the different technologies and the associated risks and impacts, we developed a critique of the concept of geoengineering as well as individual technologies from a broad Degrowth perspective, one that incorporates climate and resource justice, human rights concerns and is sensitive to global power structures and their reproduction through large-scale technofixes.

From a Degrowth perspective it is clear that real solutions are radical emissions reduction pathways that transcend mainstream economic thinking. Greenhouse gas emissions are inextricably linked to economic growth, high-consumption lifestyles and the exploitation of natural resources - a radical response to the socioecological crises we're facing implies a deep transformation of social and economic structures and power relations in our societies, including the adherence to perpetual economic growth.

From a degrowth-based critique of geoengineering, we derived a set of criteria that technologies should satisfy to qualify as helpful for a climate-just 1.5°C world. To only mention a few – they should be low-risk, reversible and controllable, they should not compromise biodiversity, human and land rights, and adopt a holistic perspective that does not push concerns for human rights and ecosystem integrity aside. And: They must not serve as excuses for continuing fossil emissions!

There is a whole range of such technologies and approaches, that also have the co-benefit of drawing down CO₂, such as the careful restoration of the world's ecosystems: rainforests, moors and oceans, and the transformation of industrial agriculture towards locally adapted agroecology and peasant agriculture.

The conversation about geoengineering in the climate justice movement is only just beginning – we will continue fostering this conversation at this year's Peoples' Climate Summit in Bonn (November 3-7, 2017) in the context of COP23: We will hold an open capacity-building workshop on geoengineering – we'll keep you posted about the exact date and location!