

GREEN, EGGS AND BAM!

CO-CREATING A THRIVING, RESILIENT WORLD:

EXPLORING THE NEXT NORMAL

JUNE 11, 2020

HOSTED BY  verdis
GROUP



OVERVIEW

Everything has changed. What was normal a few months ago is no longer. COVID-19 has disrupted nearly every facet of our world's social, economic and environmental systems. But while it's nowhere near over, we firmly believe that now is the time for leaders to rethink everything; we must step back and assess what we have learned from our response to the pandemic and begin co-creating the next normal—one that is just, resilient, sustainable, and will avoid a more serious crisis than we are in right now: the climate crisis.

That's why, last month, Verdis Group hosted our first virtual [Green, Eggs and Bam!](#)—a thought-provoking sustainability conversation over breakfast. Special guest [Dr. Elizabeth Bagley](#), Director of Drawdown Learn at [Project Drawdown](#), discussed currently available climate solutions to achieve drawdown - the point when greenhouse gas emissions stop increasing and begin to decline. Then, our very own Chief Century Thinker Daniel Lawse provided an overview of the Adaptive Cycle and its relevance to sustainability in the time of COVID-19. Our conversation concluded with a group discussion around the lessons we have learned from the pandemic and how we can carry forward that wisdom.

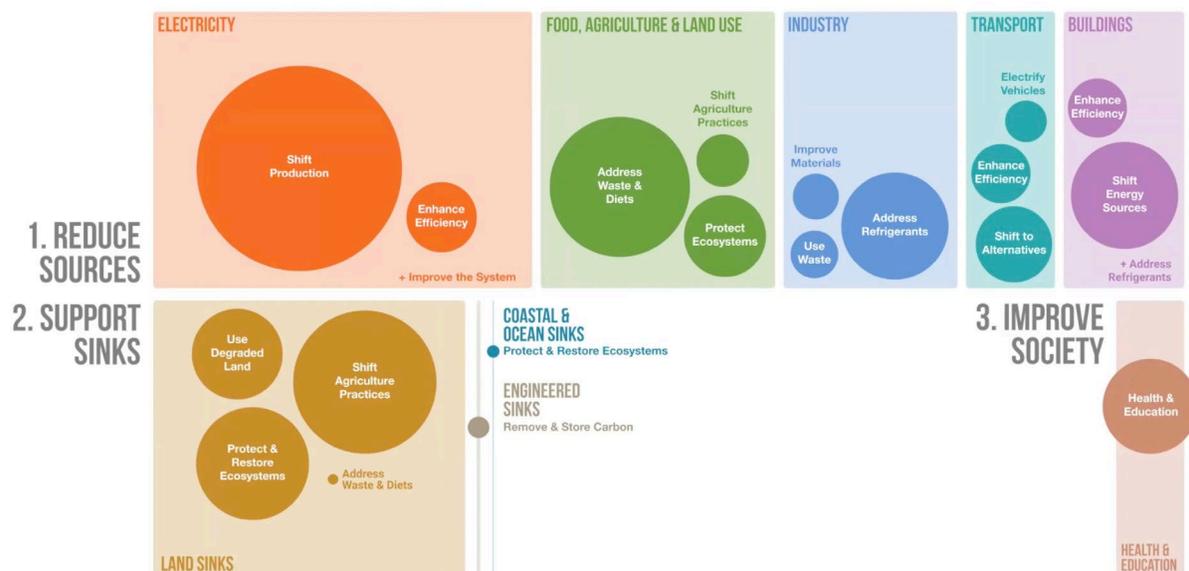
“We have the opportunity, and the obligation, to co-create systems that are safe and equitable, ensuring that both people and the planet can thrive together.”

- Dr. Elizabeth Bagley

PROJECT DRAWDOWN & CLIMATE SOLUTIONS

Dr. Bagley shared an overview of some of the “climate solutions [we have] in hand--now, today--to reach Drawdown and begin to come back into balance with the planet's living systems.” She shared the Drawdown framework for solutions that 1) reduce emission sources, 2) support carbon sinks, and 3) improve society (see below).

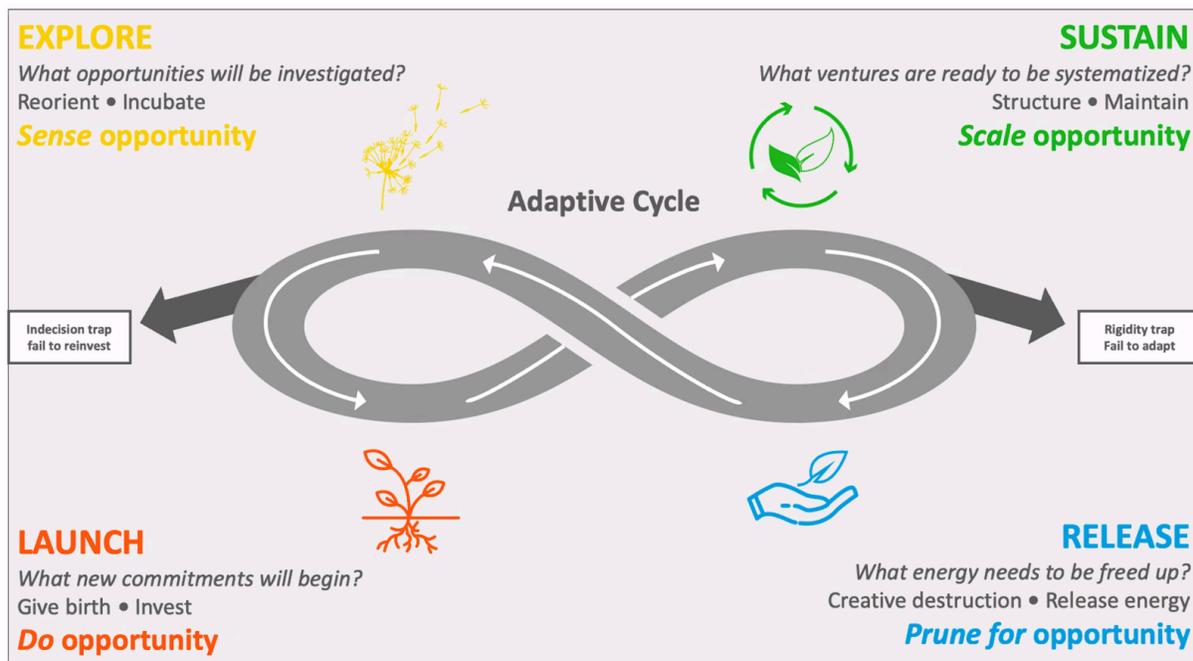
DRAWDOWN FRAMEWORK FOR CLIMATE SOLUTIONS



An important part of her message was that, when implemented intentionally, these solutions have co-benefits that contribute to a better, more equitable world, including improving health, restoring biodiversity, creating jobs, fostering resilience, and advancing social and economic equality. Dr. Bagley emphasized that there are ways that we can be working toward the next normal that are available right now, that we do not have to wait for new technologies, and that these solutions are most successful when tackled together through partnerships and collaboration. With that in mind, Dr. Bagley called us to action: “We have the opportunity, and the obligation, to co-create systems that are safe and equitable, ensuring that both people and the planet can thrive together.”

ADAPTIVE CYCLE

Climate solutions in the context of global disruption from the pandemic require adaptation and continuous learning. Daniel shared how the [Adaptive Cycle](#) framework (illustrated below) can help us navigate the increased uncertainty we are facing right now. He walked us through examples of how each phase of the cycle has been represented during COVID-19 and the ways society has reoriented, released, invested in, and maintained aspects of our lives. Drawing on a living systems framework, Daniel discussed how nature adapts to disruption using feedback loops and rapid learning, and how it can inspire us to co-create a thriving and resilient world. He encouraged us to consider the question, “Will we let the pandemic crisis prevent us from meaningful action? Or will we use what we're learning to accelerate and catalyze climate action?”



GROUP DISCUSSION KEY TAKEAWAYS

After the presentations, we entered into small groups to discuss two questions: 1) “What lessons and opportunities have we learned from the pandemic's disruption to our lives, organizations, and communities?” and 2) “What subsequent adaptations can we carry forward as we address the climate crisis and create a thriving and resilient next normal?” Below are some key takeaways from the conversations.

1. **How we Move Matters.** The abrupt and large shift to working from home has shown us how much cleaner our air can be. Walking and bicycling are increasing in popularity, and there are fewer cars on the road. With this in mind, attendees questioned old paradigms for land use: Do we need so much office space? How can we use our public right-of-ways to serve all users? Do we really need to widen our roads if working from home sticks around in a big way? With these critical questions, we challenged the way our community has conventionally thought about issues of transit and mobility.
2. **Our Systems are Not Equitable.** The pandemic has forced us to recognize how unjust our education, healthcare, economic, transportation, and other systems are. Nourishing meals are tied to school lunches for many, healthcare is tied to certain types of employment, and many of our essential workers are not treated as essential in the way we compensate and support them. With these issues at the forefront, attendees asked, “How can we provide equitable access to resources for all?”
3. **Big Change is Possible.** Saying we can’t make rapid, large scale change will no longer be an excuse for inaction on climate solutions. The global response to the pandemic has shown us that people are willing to drastically alter their lifestyles to take care of each other. Participants asked, “What rapid, large scale changes do we need to make to implement the climate solutions put forward by Project Drawdown?”

Thanks for helping us imagine a thriving and resilient next normal. Let’s make the choice to roll up our sleeves and get to work.

ABOUT VERDIS GROUP

[Verdis Group](#) is a sustainability consulting firm whose purpose is to create a thriving and resilient world. Founded in 2009, we have offices in Omaha and Lincoln, Nebraska. We help organizations and institutions identify and implement sustainability strategies. Our clients are universities, hospitals, municipalities, zoos and aquariums, non-profits, and businesses.

We excel at strategic sustainability and climate resilience planning for large organizations. We are deeply informed experts with the background to guide our clients toward tangible impacts while tailoring our process to the culture of each organization we work with. Many of our clients retain us to implement the sustainability strategies that emerged from the planning processes, allowing us to have built wide-ranging expertise on issues such as waste management and recycling, emissions reduction, active transportation, climate resilience, community engagement, behavior change, and much more.

Ready to co-create a sustainable, resilient and just next normal? Let’s talk!

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