

INEQUALITY IS

May Boeve on inequality and climate change

May Boeve, co-founder and executive director of 350.org, talks about the challenge and opportunity climate change presents for bringing people out of poverty.

A conversation about inequality in all its forms.

Transcript begins.

MAY BOEVE: Addressing the climate crisis and shifting our economy from fossil fuels to clean energy has this incredible potential to build a better society.

[Inequality is logo. A graphic black equal sign with an orange slash through it. #InequalityIs. May Boeve, co-founder and executive director, 350.org. A young white woman with short blond hair.]

At its core, climate change is about inequality. The idea that the people who did the least to cause the problem are the most affected. And the narrative that the fossil fuel industry would like people to believe is that, actually, we're all responsible. But it's not true. The United States has done more to cause this problem than any other country. And, yes, China's emissions are—have caught up with ours. But on a per capita basis, forget it. The United States is still the elephant in the room, globally, driving this problem and creating this vast system of inequality. We need to confront the fossil fuel industry head-on if we're going to have a chance of seeing the kind of scale of action that we need.

["Switch on a fossil free future" is spelled with LED rope lights. A smiling activist holds up an oversized credit card that has been cut in half, that reads "No more fossil fuels." A large street protest with signs that read "Climate action now, and "many faiths, one planet."]

The Paris Agreement sent a signal that the world is clearly moving away from fossil fuels—which is good news. Now we have a way to tell governments that they can't build any more Keystone pipelines, they can't build major coal projects, they can't develop new oil wells offshore. That, actually, to be accountable to the Paris Agreement requires real shifts. We have a real opportunity to change the way we use energy, and that is a choice that government leaders need to take very seriously. Use the solutions to climate change to bring people out of poverty. Could we imagine if sub-Saharan Africa transitions its entire economy, leapfrogs the fossil fuel economy entirely, going straight to solar and wind, in bringing millions of people onto the electricity grid? Absolutely. This is the promise embedded in the crisis of climate change.

[Inequality Is Logo. Join the conversation. #InequalityIs.]

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