

Redefining Progress: Inclusivity and Diversity in Innovation and Research

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The Stratospheric Controlled Perturbation Experiment (SCoPEX), spearheaded by Harvard University, aimed to investigate solar geoengineering as a potential solution to climate change. However, the project encountered significant opposition from indigenous groups, environmental activists, and the broader public, culminating in its suspension. This case underscores the urgent need to redefine "progress" in scientific research and innovation.

Traditional notions of progress often prioritize technological advancements and scientific breakthroughs over social and environmental considerations. SCoPEX exemplifies the pitfalls of this approach, demonstrating that solutions to global challenges must be inclusive and diverse, integrating perspectives from all sectors of society. The opposition from the Sami Council and other stakeholders highlights the importance of respecting indigenous knowledge, environmental ethics, and community engagement in scientific endeavours.

This talk will call for a paradigm shift in how we define and pursue progress. By embracing a holistic approach that values inclusivity and diversity, we can foster more equitable and sustainable solutions. This redefined progress must transcend disciplinary boundaries, encouraging collaboration among scientists, social scientists, ethicists, and community leaders. Such interdisciplinary efforts can lead to more innovative, socially responsible, and widely accepted outcomes.

Through the lens of the SCoPEX project, this presentation will illustrate the necessity of integrating diverse voices in the research process. It will emphasize the role of inclusive governance, transparent communication, and community engagement in advancing responsible science. Ultimately, this talk will serve as a call to action for researchers, policymakers, and institutions to commit to a more inclusive and holistic vision of progress that addresses the complex challenges of our time.