



Research & Degrowth International



BLUE

DEGROWTH

DEEP DIVE ONLINE COURSE

May / June 2026

Syllabus

DEEP DIVE ONLINE COURSES

The Deep Dive Online Courses offered by Research & Degrowth (R&Di) are an educational initiative designed to explore focused themes through the lens of degrowth – such as policies and degrowth, the sea and degrowth, agriculture and degrowth, and more. These high-intensity courses are created for those who seek more than an introduction: researchers, activists, professionals, and curious minds ready to engage critically with the challenges and possibilities of social-ecological transformation.

Each Deep Dive consists of five live online sessions (2.5 hours each, totaling 12.5 hours) with no more than 30 students.

Research & Degrowth is a think-and-act-tank dedicated to the radical transformation of our economies and societies through research, advocacy, education, training and events around degrowth. For more than fifteen years, R&Di has successfully organized summer schools and university master's programs focused on degrowth. The online course represents a new educational format to reach out to a broader audience. Upon successfully completing the online course, all participants will receive an official certificate issued by R&Di.



We have been working hard to create this online course and are excited to be launching it to you. We're looking forward to this educational journey together!

COURSE DETAILS

The fifth Deep Dive we are offering is titled **Blue Degrowth**. It will take place every Wednesday between **May 13th** and **June 11th**, from **5pm to 7.30 pm CEST**.

The ocean is both the living matrix of the planet and a strategic frontier of contemporary capitalism. It regulates climate, stores heat and carbon, sustains immense biodiversity, feeds communities, and carries the bulk of global trade. Yet it is increasingly governed through blue economy and blue growth agendas that promise win-win solutions while often deepening extraction, enclosure, financialisation, and inequality.

A degrowth conversation that stops at the shore leaves one of the central terrains of ecological crisis and social reproduction unchallenged.

This course offers an intensive introduction to blue degrowth as both critique and proposal. It is designed as a two-way bridge: an introduction to degrowth for marine professionals, researchers, and activists, and an introduction to the Ocean for degrowthers who want to better understand marine ecologies, governance, livelihoods, and conflicts. Bringing marine ecological thinking into conversation with political ecology, critical ocean studies, environmental justice, and post-growth debates, it moves across ocean governance, blue carbon, shipping and ports, conservation, community economies, and the arts.

Course learning objectives

- Explain the socioecological importance of the Ocean and the historical and political-economic foundations of blue degrowth.
- Critically assess how the blue economy produces the ocean as a space of growth through law, science, finance, conservation, logistics, and infrastructure.
- Connect marine and coastal ecological knowledge with questions of labor, value, justice, commons, and imperial/colonial power.
- Evaluate concrete blue economy cases- including ocean governance, blue carbon, ports and logistics, and conservation finance- through a degrowth lens.
- Identify movements, community practices, and cultural interventions that prefigure just postgrowth ocean futures.

Requirements and Target


No prior expertise in degrowth, ocean policy, maritime economics, or marine science is required. The course is designed for participants coming from marine and coastal fields who want an introduction to degrowth, and for participants coming from degrowth who want to deepen their understanding of the Ocean. An interest in marine and coastal questions, political ecology, environmental justice, or ocean sustainability is recommended. For an overall introduction to degrowth, check our course “Introduction to degrowth” on our webpage.

Target Audience

- PhD and Master students: The course offers an interdisciplinary map of key debates across marine sciences, political ecology, ocean governance, and public policy, and helps participants identify research questions, case studies, and literatures for further work.
- Marine professionals and practitioners: The course provides a structured introduction to degrowth and its relevance for fisheries, climate, shipping, conservation, coastal planning, and ocean sustainability.
- Activists and organizers: The course offers conceptual tools and case studies for understanding blue growth, enclosure, financialisation, logistics, justice struggles, and possible alternatives.
- Researchers working in degrowth: The course offers an introduction to the Ocean as a socioecological system, governance arena, livelihood base, and site of political conflict.
- Policy-makers and public servants: The course provides a framework for thinking beyond blue growth toward sufficiency, justice, sovereignty, commons governance, and ecological limits in marine and coastal policy.

TIMELINE

The course consists of 5 live online sessions of 2.5 hours each, every Wednesday from May 13th to June 10th, 2026, from 5:00 pm to 7:30 pm CET.



May 13th 4.30 PM CEST - Introduction to Blue Degrowth - Irmak Ertör and Borja Nogué Algueró

May 20th 5 PM - International Ocean Governance & the Global Blue Economy - Tariq Al-Olaimy

May 27th 5 PM - Blue Carbon or Blue Capture? - Fernando "Nani" Ruiz Iglesias

June 3rd 5 PM - Conflicts at the Maritime Backbone of the Global Economy: Shipping, Ports & Logistics - Francesca Savoldi

June 10th 5PM - Are other Blue Economies possible? Convivial Conservation, Community Economies and the Arts - Louise Carver

TEACHERS



Irmak Ertör is a political ecologist and an associate professor at the Atatürk Institute for Modern Turkish History, Bogazici University, Istanbul, since 2019. Before her current position, she was working at the Institute of Environmental Science and Technology, Autonomous University of Barcelona (ICTA-UAB) as a post-doctoral researcher in the ERC-funded ENVJUSTICE project, focusing on global fisheries conflicts and environmental justice. She holds a BS in Economics and an MA in Modern Turkish History from Bogazici University, Turkey. She has been a Marie Curie (ITN) early-stage researcher of the ENTITLE project (European Network of Political Ecology) and completed her PhD on the "Political Ecology of Marine Finfish Aquaculture in Europe" in ICTA, UAB.

Currently, she teaches political ecology and alternative economies as well as continues to do research on socio-environmental conflicts and social movements of fisher communities, community-supported fisheries, food systems and food sovereignty, blue economy/degrowth, and environmental/blue justice. She has research published in journals like the Journal of Peasant Studies, Journal of Agrarian Change, Marine Policy, and Global Environmental Change, among others, and she is an associate editor of the journal New Perspectives on Turkey.

Borja Nogué Algueró is a postdoctoral researcher in the Environmental Sociology group at the University of Gothenburg, where he works within the Swedish Research Council programme A Sea of Plastic on European plastics governance and upstream pollution prevention. His research sits at the intersection of environmental sociology, ecological economics, and political ecology, focusing on why environmentally harmful material throughput persists even when sustainability is the stated policy goal. He completed his PhD at the Institute of Environmental Science and Technology of the Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona (ICTA-UAB), where his dissertation *Limits to Blue Growth* analysed how growth-oriented marine governance becomes normalised while redistributing environmental burdens, combining historical analysis with socio-metabolic indicators across shipping, ports, and fisheries.



He has published in journals such as Sustainability Science, Frontiers in Marine Science, and Environmental Research Letters. Borja is a member of the *Blue Degrowth Network* and of Research & Degrowth International. He has taught the Blue Degrowth seminar in the Online Masters in Degrowth at ICTA-UAB and has coordinated commissioned policy work with the City Council of his home town of Girona on ecosocial-transition planning.



Tariq Al-Olaimy is co-founder of an ecosystem of social and planetary initiatives, including 3BL Associates, Diversity & Nature on Board, Recipes for Wellbeing, Post-Growth.Earth and FutureFaith. Tariq is among the first 100 certified Biomimicry Specialists globally, with an academic background spanning investment and financial risk management, degrowth and post-growth economics, exponential innovation, and spiritual ecology. From the island of Bahrain, Tariq has held advisory, board, and co-chair roles with the Wellbeing Economy Alliance, World Economic Forum Foundations, Global Shapers Community, UNESCO, UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration, UN Climate Change High-Level Champions, Carboun, and EAT.

Grounded in the Systemic Sacred, Tariq is a member of the World Economic Forum's Global Future Council on Faith in Action and advises organisations, including the G20 Global Land Initiative, Greenpeace MENA, and Oceans5, on engaging faith communities in climate action and ecosystem restoration.

Fernando “Nani” Ruiz Iglesias is a PhD researcher at the Institute of Environmental Science and Technology of the Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona (ICTA-UAB). His work focuses on the political economy of environmental expertise, looking critically at how political-economic forces shape the production, application and dissemination of environmental science– and, in turn, how these forces shape scientific fields. His current research specifically explores the political economy of coastal blue carbon. Nani came to the political economy of science through a frustrating career attempting to apply his technical expertise to address social and environmental problems. He holds a master’s degree in marine science from the Université Côte d’Azur and a bachelor’s degree in mechanical engineering from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT).



He has worked as an engineer, analyst, and researcher: developing technologies to repurpose plastic bags in Arusha, Tanzania; conducting the data analysis for San Francisco's climate action plan; and studying seagrass soil carbon disturbances in the Mediterranean. These experiences led him to move beyond the purely technical and examine how technical and political forces are inextricably linked. Nani is also an active member of Science for the People, where he works toward the political education of scientists, and a contributor to The Luddie, an anti-capitalist tech blog.



Francesca Savoldi is a human geographer (PhD) working at the intersection of urban geography and political ecology. Her research explores how global infrastructural expansion reshapes urban geographies and socio-environmental relations, with a particular focus on port cities, as well as how coastal territories are being reconfigured through climate change adaptation and the rapid growth of blue economies. She is also the founder of the online platform Contested Ports. Francesca has taught and carried out research at several research institutes including TU Delft (where she was a Marie Skłodowska-Curie Postdoctoral Fellow), Erasmus University Rotterdam (ISS), Ca' Foscari University Venice, Glasgow Caledonian University, and Universidade Nova de Lisboa.

Louise Carver is a political ecologist and geographer whose transdisciplinary work examines questions of value and valuation in green and blue economies, especially regarding biodiversity. She works across research, policy, arts and cultural settings, leading the Convivial Blue Commons Living Lab with contemporary art-research organisation TBA21—Academy in Jamaica, and co-directs the Convivial Conservation Centre at Wageningen University (NL) as a global network of scholar practitioners reimagining the political economy of conservation.



PRICE

250 Euros

The basic fee of 250 Euros covers all costs for the course. This consist in five classes of 2.5 hours with a maximum capacity of 25 people. Classes allow interaction and exercise between lecturer and peers.

Two scholarships

The scholarships are intended for individuals who face significant financial barriers and would otherwise be unable to attend the course. To apply for a scholarship please explain your situation to us (see application form).

Session 1 - May 13, 2026 4.30 pm CEST

Introduction to Blue Degrowth - Irmak Ertör and Borja Nogué Algueró

This session will start 30 minutes earlier so that we can have a round of presentations

Before moving into specific sectors and conflicts, this opening session introduces blue degrowth as a field of inquiry, critique, and proposal. We begin from the ocean itself: as a climate regulator, carbon sink, oxygen generator, living habitat, livelihood base, and site of cultural meaning. From there, we trace how the sea has been turned from a planetary commons into a new economic frontier through law, science, technology, finance, and development discourse.

Drawing on the chapter shared for the course and on foundational blue degrowth scholarship, the class maps the emergence of the blue economy and blue growth as oceanic versions of the sustainable development paradigm. It then asks what a blue degrowth counter-paradigm contributes: ecological limits, commons thinking, anti-colonial and anti-extractivist critique, and attention to the struggles of small-scale fishers, coastal communities, and other ocean-dependent peoples. The session builds a shared conceptual language for the rest of the course by offering marine professionals, researchers, and activists a grounded introduction to degrowth, while giving degrowthers a first synthetic map of the Ocean as an ecological system, governance arena, and terrain of struggle.

Learning Objectives

- Describe the ecological importance of the Ocean and the multidimensional character of the current marine crisis.
- Explain how the ocean is produced simultaneously as a global commons and as an economic frontier within blue economy discourse.
- Identify the core arguments of blue degrowth as a critique of oceanic sustainable development.
- Map the main actors, struggles, and lines of debate that animate blue degrowth today.

Mandatory readings

- Nash, K. L., Cvitanovic, C., Fulton, E. A., et al. (2017). Planetary boundaries for a blue planet. *Nature Ecology & Evolution*, 1(11).

Recommended readings

- Nogué-Algueró, B., Hadjimichael, M., & Ertör, I. (2025). Blue Degrowth at the Crossroads: Contesting the Oceanic Sustainable Development Paradigm.
- Ertör, I., & Hadjimichael, M. (2020). Blue degrowth and the politics of the sea: rethinking the blue economy. *Sustainability Science*, 15, 1-10.
- Mallin, F., & Barbesgaard, M. (2020). Awash with contradiction: Capital, ocean space and the logics of the Blue Economy Paradigm. *Geoforum*, 113, 121-132.
- Childs, J. R., & Hicks, C. C. (2019). Securing the blue: political ecologies of the blue economy in Africa. *Journal of Political Ecology*, 26, 323-340.
- Standing, G. (2022). *The Blue Commons: Rescuing the Economy of the Sea*.
- Campling, L., & Colás, A. (2021). *Capitalism and the Sea*

International Ocean Governance & the Global Blue Economy - Tariq Al-Olaimy

On a planet where drifting plankton generate roughly half the oxygen we breathe, it is remarkable how often economic re-imagining stops at the shore. This session extends the degrowth conversation into the governance of the global ocean. We examine the institutional architecture of ocean governance- UNCLOS, the BBNJ / High Seas Treaty, the 30x30 target, the International Seabed Authority, and related policy forums- and ask what kinds of authority, expertise, and finance are being assembled in the name of protection.

The class then turns to the blue economy paradigm that frames much of this governance. Where blue economy narratives promise maritime growth with ecological safeguards, blue degrowth asks whether growth-oriented ocean policy can actually protect marine life and coastal communities. Blue bonds and debt-for-nature swaps serve as the session's central case study, opening broader questions about conservation finance, sovereignty, financialisation, and the search for alternatives grounded in sufficiency, commons thinking, and justice.

Learning Objectives

- Explain the main institutions and legal frameworks that shape contemporary ocean governance.
- Critically assess the blue economy paradigm through a blue degrowth lens.
- Analyze blue bonds and debt-for-nature swaps as examples of the tensions between marine conservation, sovereignty, and finance.
- Evaluate how non-state actors intervene in ocean governance from below.

Mandatory readings

- Silver, J. J., Gray, N. J., Campbell, L. M., Fairbanks, L. W., & Gruby, R. L. (2015). Blue Economy and Competing Discourses in International Oceans Governance. *The Journal of Environment & Development*, 24(2), 135-160.
- Hadjimichael, M. (2018). A call for a blue degrowth: Unravelling the European Union's fisheries and maritime policies. *Marine Policy*, 94, 158-164.
- HighSeasAlliance (2026). Historic High Seas Treaty enters into force.
- Al-Olaimy, T., & Patel, G. (2025). Blue Moral Economy: Faith-Based Approaches to Ocean Finance.

Recommended readings

- Childs, J., & Hicks, C. (2019). Securing the blue: political ecologies of the Blue Economy in Africa. *Journal of Political Ecology*, 26, 323-340.
- Thompson, B. S. (2022). Blue bonds for marine conservation and a sustainable ocean economy: Status, trends, and insights from green bonds. *Marine Policy*. WorldResources Institute (2026). *The High Seas Treaty, Explained*.
- DeepSeaConservation Coalition. *Momentum for a Moratorium*.

Blue Carbon or Blue Capture? - Fernando "Nani" Ruiz Iglesias

Blue carbon is promoted as a nature-based solution to climate change: protect and restore coastal wetlands, quantify their carbon, and translate ecological repair into climate finance. It is often presented as a win-win-win for people, planet, and profit. This session slows that story down. It follows blue carbon from concept to market instrument, examining how carbon accounting, conservation policy, media narratives, and corporate buyers help turn mangroves, seagrasses, and salt marshes into offset-ready assets. Drawing on political economy, political ecology, and critical physical geography, the class investigates how the field of blue carbon is co-produced by science, policy, capital, and communication. We examine the tension between biogeochemical complexity and the simplicity demanded by offset markets, and we compare corporate and expert framings with the perspectives of coastal communities and fisher collectives. The key question running through the session is whether blue carbon supports socio-ecological repair, or whether it enlarges carbon markets in ways that displace responsibility and deepen blue capture.

Learning Objectives

- Trace the emergence of blue carbon as a concept and its relationship to carbon markets and offsetting.
- Explain how scientific knowledge is mobilized and simplified to make coastal ecosystems legible to policy and finance.
- Critically assess the social and ecological contradictions of blue carbon projects.
- Compare dominant blue carbon narratives with justice-based critiques from coastal communities and fisher movements.

Mandatory readings

- Johannessen, S. C., & Christian, J. R. (2023). Why blue carbon cannot truly offset fossil fuel emissions. *Communications Earth & Environment*, 4(1), 411.
- Cormier-Salem, M.-C. (2017). Let the Women Harvest the Mangrove. *Carbon Policy, and Environmental Injustice. Sustainability*, 9(8), 1485.
<https://doi.org/10.3390/su9081485>

Recommended readings

- Nellemann, C., Corcoran, E., Duarte, C. M., Valdés, L., DeYoung, C., Fonseca, L., & Grimsditch, G. D. (2009). *Blue Carbon: The Role of Healthy Oceans in Binding Carbon*. UNEP.
- Johannessen, S. C., & Christian, J. R. (2023). Why blue carbon cannot truly offset fossil fuel emissions. *Communications Earth & Environment*, 4(1), 411.
- Barbesgaard, M. (2018). Blue growth: Savior or ocean grabbing? *The Journal of Peasant Studies*, 45(1), 130-149.
- Thomas, S. (2016). Between Tun Mustapha and the deep blue sea: the political ecology of blue carbon in Sabah. *Environmental Science & Policy*, 55(1), 20-35.
- Brent, Z. W., Barbesgaard, M., & Pedersen, C. (2020). The Blue Fix: What's driving blue growth? *Sustainability Science*, 15(1), 31-43.
- Transnational Institute (2015). *Fisherfolks are pushing the solution, not the illusion of blue carbon*.

Conflicts at the Maritime Backbone of the Global Economy: Shipping, Ports & Logistics - Francesca Savoldi

Ports are often presented as neutral nodes that move goods and generate prosperity. This session asks what ports look like when read instead as the maritime backbone of the global economy: infrastructures through which capitalism organizes circulation, externalizes ecological costs, fragments labor and territory, and normalizes growth. In a world where most commodities still travel by sea, shipping, ports, and logistics are not simply technical systems. They are political arrangements that prioritize speed, scale, and profit while reshaping coastlines and everyday life.

Drawing on human geography, critical logistics, and political ecology, we examine the historical rise of the logistical revolution, contemporary port expansion, and the conflicts generated by infrastructural gigantism, oligopolistic shipping, and inter-port competition. By following both container and cruise infrastructures, the class shows how maritime circulation depends on enclosure, toxification, and exclusion. It also centers resistance: blockades, fisher and community organizing, environmental justice campaigns, and other interventions that expose logistical vulnerabilities and open blue degrowth questions from below.

Learning Objectives

- Situate ports and shipping within the historical rise of capitalism and contemporary logistical globalization.
- Explain how maritime circulation externalizes social and ecological costs onto coastal territories and communities.
- Assess the role of port policy and blue growth strategy in legitimizing continued infrastructural expansion.
- Identify how struggles around ports can intervene in wider logistical systems and open blue degrowth horizons.

Mandatory readings

- Bond, P., Garcia, A., Moreira, M., & Bai, R. (2016). Take the Ports! Contesting Power in Global South Export Hubs. Rosa Luxemburg Stiftung.

Recommended readings

- Nogué-Algueró, B. (2020). Growth in the docks: Ports, metabolic flows and socio-environmental impacts. *Sustainability Science*, 15, 11-30.
- Savoldi, F., Bond, P., & Pau-Monasterio, F. (2026, forthcoming). The double movements of port cities: Top-down expansion, bottom-up resistance in Durban and Valencia. *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*.
- Campling, L., & Colás, A. (2021). Terraqueous horizons. In *Capitalism and the Sea*.
- Tsing, A. (2009). Supply chains and the human condition. *Rethinking Marxism*, 21(2).
- Podcast series: Frictions: communities rising against port expansion.

Session 5 - June 10, 2026 5 pm CEST

Are other Blue Economies possible? Convivial Conservation, Community Economies and the Arts - Louise Carver

The institutional and scientific field of biodiversity conservation is imagined as a bulwark for saving nature within and against the pressures of a growing global economy. Oceans, both near shore and the high seas, like terrestrial areas, are subject to global targets for growing the amount of space conserved as protected areas. Yet, despite efforts to expand conservation designations, the institutional field remains trapped within the same capitalist frameworks that are at the root of biodiversity crises. And so long as it avoids confronting the problematic logics of growth, marine conservation can exacerbate the dynamics of dispossession and enclosure, reproducing environmental injustices inherent to the capitalist political economies it is operating within.

This session starts by exploring the politics and possibilities of a post-capitalist marine conservation in and through a post-capitalist blue economy. It draws from conceptual and methodological approaches putting Convivial Conservation in dialogue with the feminist economic tradition of Community Economies, exploring the potential of the blue commons to re-signify both marine conservation and the blue economy together, as an interconnected system promoting sovereignty, interdependence, and justice. Drawing from a project Louise is deeply involved in with TBA21—Academy, with a coral restoration and marine conservation agency Alligator Head Foundation in Jamaica, this session discusses research practices as performative ontological experiments that aim to enact post-growth (blue) economic diversity. The session will also discuss the potential for engaged artistic practices, that work in part to ‘take back the blue economy’, attending to the historical legacies and ongoing realities of colonial-capitalist systems, still deeply imbricated in socio-ecologies of Jamaican coastal systems today.

Learning Objectives

- Explain how convivial conservation challenges mainstream conservation and blue economy logics.
- Identify community-economy practices and blue justice struggles that resonate with blue degrowth.
- Assess how arts-based and cultural practices can function as methods of ocean research, political intervention, and collective imagination.
- Reflect on the possibilities and limits of building plural, just, and ecologically grounded alternative blue economies.

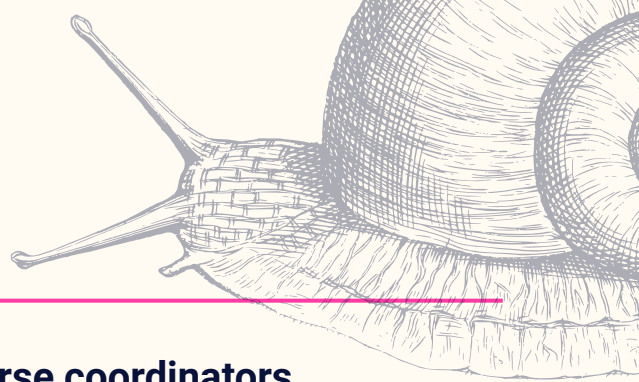
Mandatory readings

- Büscher, B., & Fletcher, R. (2019). Towards Convivial Conservation. *Conservation and Society*, 17(3), 283-296.
- Said, A., & MacMillan, D. (2020). 'Re-grabbing' marine resources: a blue degrowth agenda for the resurgence of small-scale fisheries in Malta. *Sustainability Science*, 15, 91-102.
- Childs, J. (2020). Performing 'blue degrowth': critiquing seabed mining in Papua New Guinea through creative practice. *Sustainability Science*, 15, 117-129.

Recommended readings

- Massarella, K., Krauss, J. E., Kiwango, W. A., & Fletcher, R. (2023). Exploring Convivial Conservation in Theory and Practice. In *Convivial Conservation: From Principles to Practice* (pp. 2-25). Mayfly Books.
- Arias Schreiber, M., Wingren, I., & Linke, S. (2020). Swimming upstream: community economies for a different coastal rural development in Sweden. *Sustainability Science*, 15, 63-73.
- Ertör, I. (2023). 'We are the oceans, we are the people!': fisher people's struggles for blue justice. *The Journal of Peasant Studies*, 50(3), 1157-1186.
- Febrica, S., & Morgera, E. (2022). Including cultural rights and creative capacities in blue economies to achieve the SDGs. *One Ocean Hub*.
- TBA21-Academy (2025). *Echoes of the Sanctuary*, curated by Louise Carver.

Contact



Course coordinators



Lorenzo Lonardi is a project coordinator at Research and Degrowth with a master's degree in Political Ecology, Degrowth, and Environmental Justice from ICTA-UAB. He is passionate about promoting degrowth ideas and creating accessible educational programs. As the coordinator of the "Introduction to Degrowth" online course and the "Deep Dives" online courses, Lorenzo focuses on organizing and delivering a program that supports learning and collaboration around sustainable and just alternatives to growth-focused economics.



Federico Arcuri is a project coordinator at Research and Degrowth. He is also an alumnus of the master's in Political Ecology at ICTA-UAB, with a thesis on a "Post-growth deal for Italy". He is interested in environmental conflicts, post-growth policy and geopolitics, especially with respect to EU-China relations. He co-organized the last two editions of the Degrowth Summer School, coordinating the bike caravan weeks and facilitating counter-cartography workshops. Co-organizer of the Beyond Growth conference Italia (April 2024), he is active in the Italian degrowth movement.

If you have questions about the "Deep Dives" Online Course feel free to contact Lorenzo or Federico:

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