



Exploring a Compassionate Approach to climate crisis in education

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A case story on three programs where the Compassionate Systems Framework was utilized to teach about the climate crisis between 2020 and 2022.

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Part 1

Motivation, beliefs, and approach

Introduction

As I write this, 33 million people are affected by flooding in Pakistan, while more than half a million have lost their homes (Islamabad, 2022). However, this crisis should not be seen in isolation but as an indicator of the radical growth of climate-related catastrophic events. Flooding events worldwide have increased by 144% since 2000 (UN, 2022). The unfairness of the situation makes it even worse as Pakistan, with its vast population of 225 million, has only contributed one percent of the global emissions of greenhouse gases since 1800 (ibid).

We have waged war on nature and nature is tracking back and striking back in a devastating way. Today in Pakistan, tomorrow in any of your countries.

António Guterres as quoted in (Islamabad, 2022)

The world is burning and flooding, causing “the biggest health threat facing humanity” (WHO, 2021), and it feels as if most people do not care. At least if you judge from the actions, people take based on this knowledge. In an extensive study of 10,000 youth from ten countries, 84% answered that they were either extremely worried (27%), very worried (32%), or moderately worried (25%). However, 65% of them also agree that governments are failing young people, and 64% agreed that governments are lying about the impacts of actions taken (Hickman et al., 2021). The tremendous gap between the seriousness of the situation and the response by world leaders, business leaders, and “grown-ups” in general, is so striking that the youth feel alienated and misunderstood, or as the co-author and climate psychologist Caroline Hickman says concerning the abovementioned study:

There is a general ‘othering’ of children in society, and children’s voices that threaten the predominant narrative of the most powerful group in society.

Carolin Hickman as cited in (Thompson, 2021)

This paper will not try to convince the reader that the climate crisis is real and that it is one of the, if not the most urgent crises of our time, and that, therefore, we naturally need to understand it very well and educate our kids and youth on the topic. Therefore beginning with the current case of Pakistan was not intended to convince anyone of the severity of the situation but rather to bring emotions to the forefront of the reader's experience.

There are two primary reasons for doing that. Firstly, by activating emotions, the likelihood that the reader will remember some of the points of the paper goes up. Secondly, it serves as the foundation of the paper's main point: Understanding the complexity and consequences of the climate crisis is very emotional territory. Acknowledging emotions when teaching our youth about the climate crisis is paramount. By doing so, you can be a part of the healing needed between generations to lessen the sense of othering so many young people experience.

The following section will give a short introduction to the Compassionate Systems Framework and the En-Roads simulator, which will give the reader the foundational understanding needed to understand the arguments of the case story.



Compassionate Systems framework and how it applies to climate crisis education

This section offers an abbreviated introduction to the Compassionate Systems Framework (CSF) for the unfamiliar reader and exemplifies how the CSF can be utilized concerning the climate Crisis. The framework was founded in 2016 by Dr. Mette Boell and Dr. Peter Senge, who, in collaboration with the International Baccalaureate, prototyped the framework at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

The basic aim of the Compassionate Systems Framework is to grow “compassionate integrity” in students and teachers – to have alignment between how we think, feel and act by virtue of an ever-unfolding awareness of inter-connectedness.

(Abdul Latif Jameel World Education Lab, 2019)

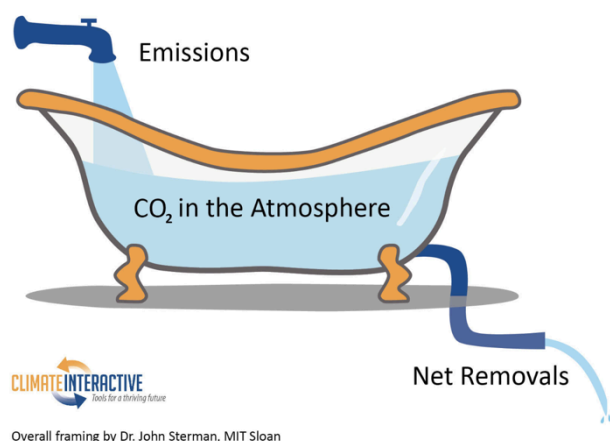
The framework has two primary portals to developing awareness of the abovementioned inter-connectedness; Systems Thinking and Social and emotional learning (SEL). The systems thinking skills which aim at navigating and understanding complex systems include; feedback dynamics, delay effects, non-linearity, and stock and flow dynamics. The Social and Emotional aspects of the framework include cultivating compassion, relational capacities, contemplative practices, emotional literacy & expression, etc.

Systems thinking is essential when trying to understand the climate crisis because it is one of if not the most complex problems of all time, often referred to as the perfect problem. Therefore, we believe that perfect knowledge about the climate crisis is not only unrealistic but unnecessary. What is important is that a few simple dynamics are widely understood.

Here is an example of how a few foundational systems dynamics understandings and models can help us comprehend the climate crisis:

Stock and Flow

This simple model shows the inflow, stock, and outflow of CO₂e in the atmosphere. Here exemplified by a bathtub. The idea is that the inflow is the amount of CO₂e we emit into the atmosphere, the stock is the amount of CO₂e in the atmosphere, and the outflow is the removals.



A five-year-old child can understand this, and yet if we observe the political discourses around the world, they are often focused solely on the emissions (the inflow) and rarely talk about the stock (current amount of CO₂e in the atmosphere) and even more rarely get to the point where it is clear that the politicians understand that to begin to reverse climate change, we need not only to break the emissions curve, we need to have a bigger outflow, more removal, than the inflow, emissions.

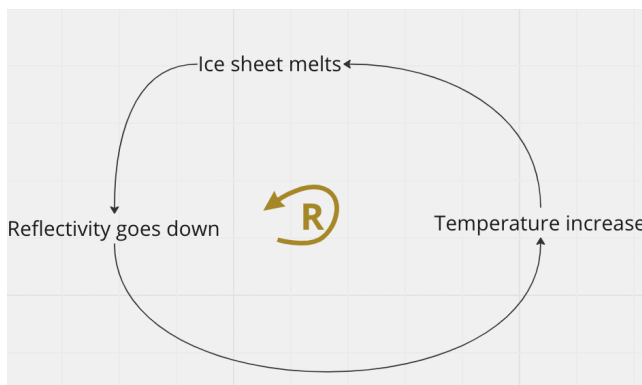


Delay Effect

However, even if removals were larger than emissions, the *delay effect* would mean that it would be many years before we would feel the positive effects. The effects of the carbon level in the atmosphere take many years to reveal themselves. Scarily, this is also true for the carbon already in the atmosphere; we have yet to see the negative effects of the current 418.1 Parts per million (PPM) in the atmosphere. The approximate delay effect from a spike in greenhouse gasses to the maximum heating is 10 years (Ricke & Caldeira, 2014). However, there is also a delay from temperature to flooding, drought, sea-level rise, etc.

Reinforcing dynamics

Another important dynamic to understand is that of positive reinforcing dynamics. In everyday language referred to as a vicious cycle, although it can also be good things. Some of the often talked about tipping points are excellent, although scary, examples of reinforcing dynamics.



A famous one is the Albedo effect: temperature increases, ice melts, reflexivity of the earth goes down, more heat is absorbed, and temperatures increase even further. Understanding reinforcing dynamics help us appreciate the seriousness of the issue and good places for intervening.

Non-linearity

The last basic component of systems dynamics that is vital to understand is non-linearities. often referred to as tipping points in the climate crisis debate. Non-linearity means that a system is unpredictable and can change behavior. For example, the gradual heating of the world's oceans might not dramatically influence the currents and streams. Still, at a certain unknown point, streams such as the gulf stream might break down, with devastating consequences. The gulf stream is already showing signs of instability (Carrington, 2021).

I believe that if people understood the yet-to-be-seen consequences of CO₂e already in the atmosphere and the effect the heating will have on several reinforcing dynamics with potential or certain non-linear properties, the actions taken by governments, businesses, and civilians alike would be very different. However, genuinely starting to comprehend the severity of the crisis does not come without emotional consequences.

Therefore, it is vital that if we are to teach our kids the truth, and we should, we are morally obliged to teach them tools to navigate, understand and express their emotions and do this in safe spaces where there is room to do so. The first step is to learn basic interoception through contemplative practices, mindfulness, body scans, breath awareness, etc. Interoception allows us to know what we are feeling. The second step is learning to distinguish between emotions to express ourselves in ways where we can feel heard and met. The third and quite challenging step is to learn how to use the emotional tension that arises from a distance between the current reality of our planet and the planet we are striving to create as a necessary force of energy leading to constructive action rather than an overwhelming burden leading to apathetic and escapist reactions.

Another aspect of developing inner sustainability is cultivating compassion. When we experience compassion, we are less disconnected from each other and, therefore, more connected. This experience is essential for us to work for the greater good rather than just personal gain, which is an essential step in the necessary revolution.

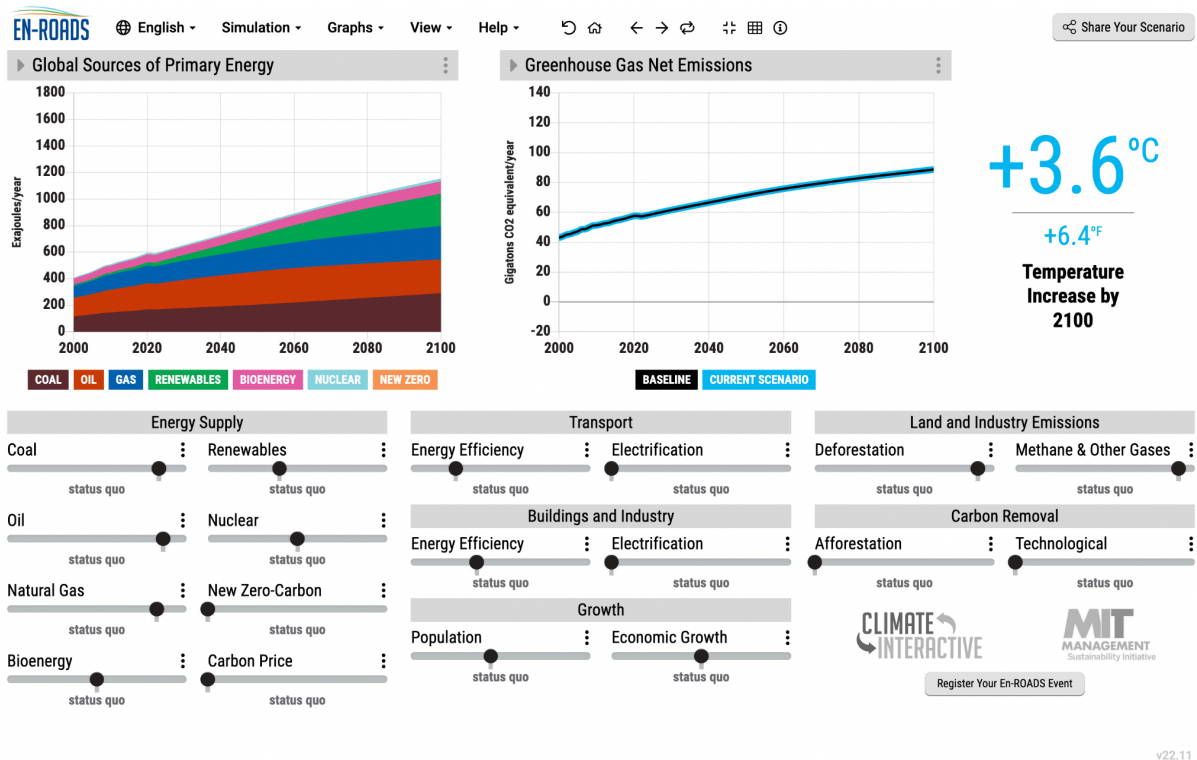


Systems thinking allows us to understand interdependence, and compassion allows us to feel it. Two entry points to the same end aim to develop compassionate integrity based on systems awareness.

En-Roads simulator

This section gives the reader a brief introduction to En-Roads as this is a vital tool in our climate crisis-based programs.

Screenshot of the starting page of the browser run En-Roads simulator



En-Roads, developed by Climate Interactive at MIT, is a user-friendly simulator allowing the user to test about 30 different policies and their impact on hundreds of factors such as heating of the planet, financial impacts, air quality, etc. The simulator is grounded in the most recent research and calibrated with other simulators. En-Roads has been used in international policy agreements, such as the Paris agreement and is utilized by En-Roads ambassadors around the world with the proclaimed aim being:

To break through the noise and equip elected officials, business leaders, and others with the knowledge they need to implement equitable and high-leverage climate solutions.

(Climate Interactive, 2022)

Working with the simulator allows the user to test beliefs in real time about what policies would be helpful, the synergies of policies, and, most importantly, it creates a vision. It shows the user that adhering to the Paris agreement IS possible with the knowledge we already have; however, it also shows that this requires a profound transformation of foundational aspects of modern societies.

We have been lucky enough to have the Co-Founder and Executive director of Climate Interactive, Andrew Jones as a guest facilitator on several occasions. His primary in the session was that En-Roads helps us create shared visions grounded in science.



Part 2

Climate programs

Learning Group | November 2020 - March 2021

The “Learning Group,” our first attempt at a climate-based program, was, as the name implies, a group focused on learning how to go about this combination of the Compassionate Systems Framework and the climate crisis, which many of us cared so much about. I have yet to meet a great systems thinker that is not passionate about the climate. We reached out to some of our partner schools and gathered a small group of six students, four teachers, a vice principal, and two activists from Thailand, Denmark, Spain, & Indonesia. The Learning Group was developed and led by Antoine Beland, Gustav Böll, and Peter Senge from the Center for Systems Awareness and included Andrew Jones as a guest speaker.

The group's premise was that we would have biweekly meetings and work with the En-Roads simulator and the Compassionate Systems Framework as a starting point for prototyping what meaningful climate crisis education could look and feel like.

We ended up having 13 sessions of 90 minutes with a structure that allowed for independent learning between sessions. The independent learning was mainly focused on completing the [En-Roads training program](#), an online program helping enable people to become En-Roads ambassadors, meaning they can lead sessions with the simulator, which many of our group members ended up becoming. On the other hand, the sessions were much more hands-on and focused on deepening understanding of systems dynamics and facilitating challenging conversations with the simulator.

All sessions started with what we call an opening ritual, which we do in all of our programs, workshops, etc. This fourfold practice consists of a short guided meditation/grounding, *journaling*, check-in, and hearing back.

Grounding

The *grounding* would usually be around 5-8 minutes and invite the participants to focus on their breathing, scan their body or feel their sense of connection to the planet.

Journaling

The *journaling* followed, giving the participants about 2-5 minutes to reflect quietly on a few questions. The first question was and is almost always, “how am I doing today?” giving the participants a chance to *check in* with themselves before checking in with others. The second question was something related to independent learning or the program of the day; examples of this could be, “What stood out to me in independent learning?”, “How am I feeling about having to facilitate today?” or “What emotions do I experience when working with topics related to the Climate Crisis?”.

Check In's

After the *journaling*; we would send them into breakout rooms to check in with each other. There are two basic rules in the check-in practice: Firstly, no interruptions, meaning that one person will share, then the next, etc., until everybody has shared before opening up the conversation. Secondly, we try to listen with as much energy and attention as we speak; in other words, we try to practice active listening. After being in breakout groups for about 12-15 minutes.



Full-group conversation

After the check-in, we called people back and heard back from whoever wanted to share elements of the conversations they had just had in their smaller groups. This part is essential as it allows everyone to get a sense of the larger group.

We started by introducing the simulator and examining how the field of systems dynamics applied to this complex problem. Some of the first exercises included understanding delay effects and looking into the [squeezing the balloon](#) dynamic. Later in the program, the emphasis shifted toward practicing facilitating with the simulator, opening up conversations, creating a good learning environment, and inspiring others. When the program ended, we decided to stay in touch and met a few times to share the progress we had each made with the simulator.

Learnings and insights

In the after-action review, we, the facilitators, were all very excited about how the program had played out as we felt that we had learned so much about how to continue the journey towards developing a Compassionate Systems approach to climate crisis education.

- o The most generative sessions were those where people used the facilitator to share scenarios and reflect together playfully and curiously.
- o Our assumption that all participants were emotionally invested in the topic was true.
- o Bringing together grown-ups and youth as equal learners allowed for deep intergenerational learning enjoyed by all ages.
- o Having a more fixed structure would be helpful.
- o Having an international group gave us a chance to put our country's climate policies and our experiences with the effects of the climate crisis into perspective.
- o More structure to the contemplative side of the program could be beneficial.

Compassionate Climate 1 | October 2021 - April 2022

Based on what was learned in the Learning Group, the [Compassionate Climate program](#) was developed and offered to the wider Compassionate Systems community. It consisted of 12 90-minute sessions. The group, this time, consisted of 6 students, 1 school director, 7 teachers, 4 administrators, and 1 Center for Systems Awareness staff. The participants were from; Germany, Japan, China, Indonesia, USA & Canada.

Moreover, we welcomed our friend Josephine Lau Jensen to participate as a researcher, which resulted in her master's thesis on the link between Systems Thinking and Contemplative Education in the teaching around the climate crisis. Through participant observation, semi-structured interviews with participants, and the facilitators paired with her theoretical framework, the paper had some interesting findings, a few of which will be included below. This program was developed and facilitated by Rask Wanscher and Gustav Böll and included Peter Senge, Andrew Jones, and Hanneli Aagotsdatter as guest facilitators.



Where the first cycle had been building the plane as we flew it, this time, a full lesson plan was developed before the beginning of the program. Most of the content was similar, although reshaped to create a more intuitive flow for the learners. A Key difference in this cycle was that we worked together with Hanneli Agotsdatter, contemplative faculty at the Center for Systems Awareness, developing more structure in the sequencing of the meditations at the beginning of the sessions and how they could support the cognitive learning of the sessions better. To exemplify, we started with basic mindfulness practices, such as noticing the breath and body scans. We Progressed into calming the mind meditations and only then started to work in the more murky territory of emotions. Ultimately we introduced more advanced practices, such as loving-kindness meditations, aimed at cultivating compassion.

Each session was aimed at helping the learners take their next step on their inner journey and relationship with the climate crisis while pairing this with their deep understanding of the systemic forces driving this problem. For example, when focusing on the intersectionality and equity issues of the Climate Crisis, it was very natural to incorporate compassion practice as the unfairness that we see when examining these aspects of the crisis is so tangible that empathy and compassion are a natural response. Also, learning about such dramatic global inequities from a solely intellectual angle can be an extremely unpleasant experience.

When embarking on these necessary yet unpleasant realizations, be it equity issues, mass extinction, or prospects of future escalations of the crisis, it is essential to take the time to feel into how this knowledge lands in our bodies, have tools to hold these emotions and create a generative space to hold these emotions before the exploration of the topics. Another example of how the inner and outer learning played together is that when we began to work with facilitating for one another in the group, the *grounding* was a breathing exercise which is super helpful to stay calm in stressful situations, as the vagus nerve is both influencing our breathing and heartbeat.

In this cycle, there was a sense that students were less active in the whole group conversations. There could be several explanations for this; firstly, most of the students in this cycle were, in contrast to the students from the first cycle, not previously introduced to the CSF and learning spaces spanning age groups and countries. Secondly, the ratio was slightly different, with fewer students per adult. The lack of student voices negatively affected the program and created less of the playful generative learning we had experienced in the Learning Group.

Insights from Josephine's Master thesis

One of the key findings was that several educators were challenged by what they experienced as a slow pace in the beginning but were later inspired by it.

“In this type of environment there are a lot of people feeling they are running out of time, even though they have plenty of time. This has been a process for the teachers to understand that we care about skills and not so much about content. These are the big paradigm shifts for educators, and if the adults cannot do it then the kids will also struggle to do it.”

Ciara - As cited in (Jessen, 2022)

This quote is great because it talks about several important points. Firstly, taking the time to check in and grounding ourselves is a practice that pays off in the long run. Not only because it dramatically increases the well-being and feelings of a community but also because we are to stay within the paradigm because people are much more ready to learn once they have had a chance to arrive. Secondly, Ciara also notices that we do not spend much time on so-called “perfect knowledge.” As mentioned earlier, we stress the importance of understanding fundamental dynamics rather than technical knowledge. After all, the essence that most people need to understand is that this is very urgent, affects almost everything, and we must take action to decrease the CO2e concentration in the atmosphere.



“Learning doesn’t come from the experience; it comes from the reflection of the experience. Because that’s the part I think we sometimes miss in our learning to be able to apply it to our lives.”

Ka Robbins - as cited in (Jessen, 2022)

Here Kat reflects on reflection, but this quote is also interesting because it points to something vital: There is a difference between learning something and applying this to our lives. That difference is apparent concerning the climate crisis, as so many people know something about it yet do nothing. The difference between procedural and descriptive learning is essential when designing and conducting learning to change behavior.

Another main finding was the effects of inner exercises and compassion cultivation and how that made the learning very personal for the participants:

“For me, a lot of the learning has been very personal, in the way connection to the planet takes in. Because if the connection is not there and if you do not feel it, then you are not going to care. There has been a lot of disconnect from me personally, and a lot of people who have been colonized, so now looking back on this disconnect I see how it stems from oppression. And this knowledge my ancestors have been passing on, or have tried to, which has not been considered important, though it always was important. So, I think reminding that connection for myself and my kids is where I am going to start.”

Educator from the US – as cited in (Jessen, 2022)

This quote points to something that we are very aware of when we plan programs around the Climate Crisis. For most people, this situation does matter, but they are just not in contact with the parts of themselves where these matters. These blind spots might be one of the reasons youth are more in tune with the crisis because they have not yet had the time to shut off these parts of themselves (and let us hope they never will). When slowing down, feeling into the body and heart, and meeting others who care, most people will start to get in contact with their instinctive sense of connection to other people and belonging to the planet. That is what is needed to change the trajectory of the world. However, as we can also read in this quote, it can be challenging to come into contact with hidden parts of ourselves. Therefore, educators embarking on the journey of utilizing contemplative practices should be well-versed in the practices themselves, so they know how it feels to enter various inner landscapes. Moreover, one should be carefully considering the level of experience in the group before deciding which type of practice to engage with and for how long. Lastly, ideally, there should be support structures in place in case a student opens up for something that cannot or should not be contained within the group.

Learnings and insights

Based on our after-action review and extensive debriefing, a few learnings and insights stand out to us:

- o Combining the inner and outer work more deliberately worked really well.
- o Next time we would like to include more students as we assume this could create a more playful environment.
- o Only accepting people who have already had an introduction to the Compassionate Systems Framework is necessary to ensure we can get through the rather extensive curriculum in twelve sessions.
- o Having teams from schools, including teachers, students, and leaders, would enable more integration in their local setting after the program ends.
- o The more interactive sessions are the most fun.
- o We are reflecting on whether we could tie the program more to concurrent political events such as the climate COPs.

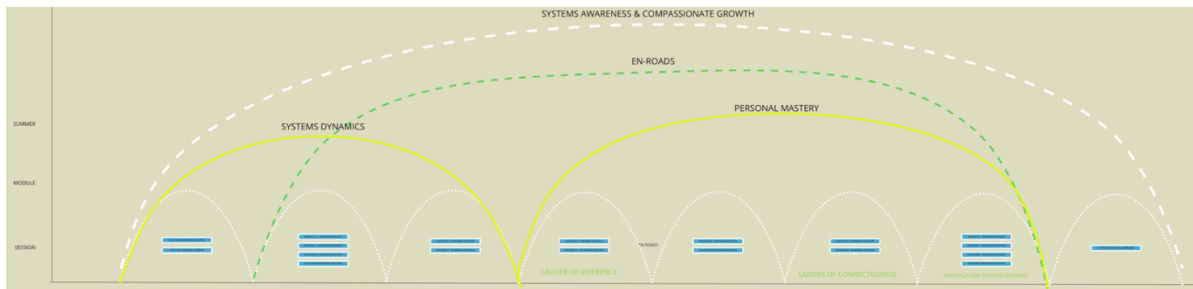


Climate Change and You | summer 2022

In the Summer of 2022, we hosted a summer program in collaboration with the [RISE Initiative](#).

Since we were working with RISE, we had time constraints which forced us to create a program very different from the Compassionate Climate program. We had about 55 active participants from about 45 countries. The program consisted of two-hour sessions done twice to accommodate the timezone diversity of the group. All participants were between 15-17 years old and were so-called RISE finalists meaning that they had submitted a project to RISE and had gotten through the first round of peer and expert reviews. This means that our group was very talented and committed youth from all over the world. We utilized an online whiteboard software called Miro to do collaborative work and for the students to learn independently between sessions. Using MIRO means we have much more data from this program, some of which you will see below. The program was designed and facilitated by Jonas Jebril, Laura Larsen, Rask Wanscher, Jane Drake, and Gustav Böll, with Peter Senge as a guest facilitator.

Since we could not conduct our usual 12 sessions, we decided to make the En-Roads training program and ambassadorship an optional add-on for the extra-engaged and time-committed students. Therefore, for most participants, the En-Roads simulator played a more minor but essential role in their individual learning journeys.



This model shows the overlapping learning arches of the program, starting with Systems Dynamics, utilizing the Iceberg, Shitting the Burden, reinforcing loops, and stock and flow dynamics. The program then moved into personal mastery, including our beliefs about the crisis explored through a reflective tool called the ladder of inference and how we relate to the crisis through the ladder of connectedness.



Some of the most exciting parts of this program were its truly international nature, which became very clear in one of the independent learning, where we asked the students to write about their mental models and relationships to the climate crisis and how these had changed over time.



One student from Dehli in India wrote beautifully about how the Arravelli mountain range used to play a vital role in guarding Delhi from the sand and smoke storms coming from the Thar desert, but since the mountains were destroyed in order to build more highways now the air quality in the city is worse than ever. He goes on to reflect:

“What is most striking of all is that this damage cannot be undone. The mountain range will now remain eroded for eternity, serving as a grim reminder that the blessings of nature are not to be taken for granted.”

Student from India

Another student from Cambodia reflects on how her village environment has changed dramatically in her lifetime due to the introduction of plastic products and motorized vehicles;

“In a blink of an eye, all you see are people motorbiking around the road. Tractor, car, and rise harvester suddenly popped up. Everyone abandoned the basket and pick up one of those “convenient” plastic bags. That stuff flew around the village as if it was a part of the wind and no one bothered to pick it up nor put it in the trash bin. “

Student from Cambodia

She further mentioned how crops are affected by the instability of rain which in turn causes people to migrate to other countries.

As the last example Palestinian student points to the effects that the rising sea levels (and lack of precipitation) have had on the economy of the region:

“Another climate change event in Palestine, especially Gaza, is the rise of sea levels, which destroy many agricultures, and that’s why Gaza’s economy is low.”

Student from Palestine

These are just a few of the numerous examples shared by students, and the learning that took place when they shared these experiences was extraordinary. A Primary learning point was that this crisis looks different everywhere, yet we are all affected by it.

Many students expressed that they genuinely felt like global citizens when on these calls and that it broadened their perspectives. We believe that when conducting education about the climate crisis, few things are more effective than giving people direct connections to someone experiencing the consequences, especially if there is already a relationship between the two persons.

An issue we experienced was that some kids had difficulties with their internet connections, making it difficult for them to participate fully. The correlation between the country's affluence and internet quality made this an equity consideration for us. We responded by recording all sessions, changing the independent learning format to include fewer online materials, and certifying people with internet issues, although their participation was less than required. These moderate quick-fix solutions naturally did not get to the bottom of the issue. However, it provided an interesting opportunity to open up a conversation about equity, an unavoidable and essential topic in any comprehensive climate crisis education curriculum.

Towards the end of the program, the sense of community was powerful in this group, and many expressed that they were amazed at how quickly they could bond, even via zoom. This talks to a crucial point: many of us, especially among the youth, feel alone with our struggle and a deep sense

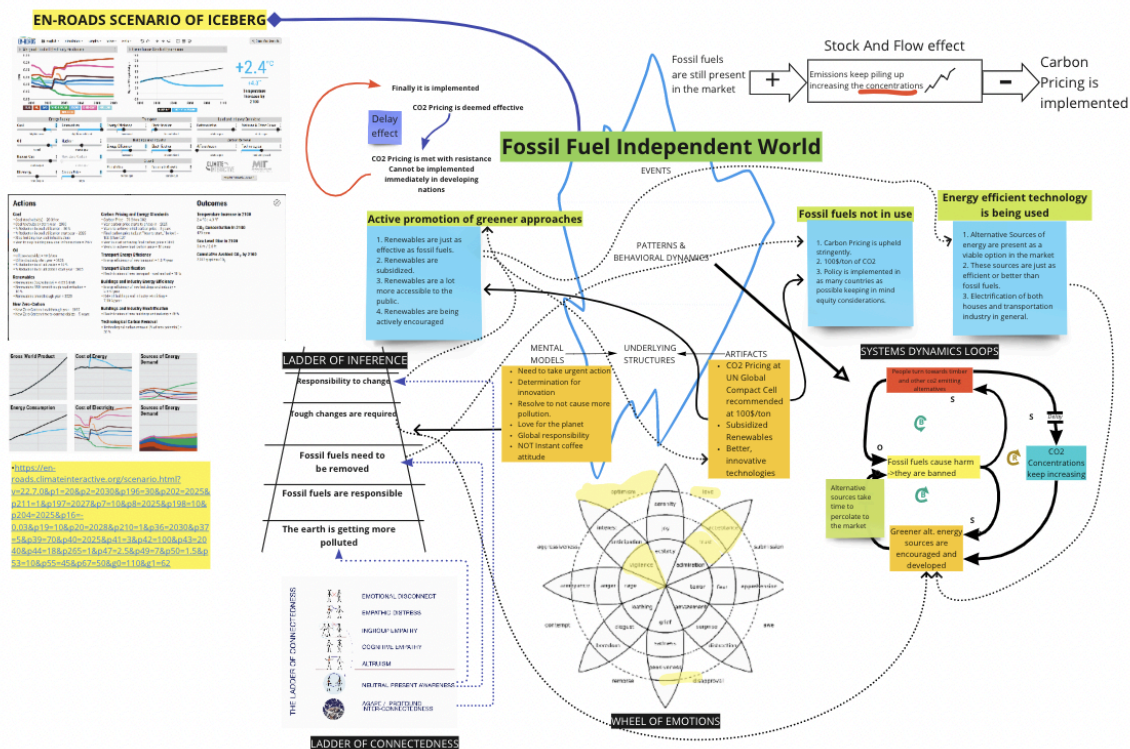


of care for the state of the planet. More than 42% of the 10,000 youth referred to earlier had experienced being dismissed or ignored when raising their existential concern for the planet's future (Hickman et al., 2021). Therefore, when conducting climate crisis education, one of the most important aspects is to create a community where people feel seen and heard.

Lastly, based on our many years working with the Compassionate Systems Framework, the facilitation group anticipated at least a little pushback on the meditations and talked about emotions. Usually, someone in a group expresses severe to mild disapproval of inner work; therefore, it was astonishing and encouraging that we did not see this in either of the two groups. Of course, we do not know what people were thinking and feeling. Still, our sensing was that it was very natural for the students from all over the world that, of course, we needed to work on creating balance in ourselves to be better suited to create balance in our communities and the world.

At the end of the program, all active participants reviewed a pdf format of their individual learning journeys, including the icebergs they had made, their stories on their personal relationship to the climate crisis, and all the resources they had received.

Here is an example of one of the students utilizing several tools to understand a fossil fuel dependent world:



Learnings and insights

- We learned that the more international the group, the broader the scope of experience and perspective.
- The sense of community is easier to establish in a more age-consistent group.
- Having the En-Roads simulator as an add-on instead of the carrying component allows for much deeper personal work.
- Young people from all over the world care deeply about this issue. They have no trouble in understanding why working with contemplative practices and emotions are necessary parts of the solution.

A few inspiring outcomes

These photos show a session hosted by CSF Student Ambassadors at the British School of Jakarta, who have been represented both in the Learning Group and Compassionate Climate 1. They taught an interdisciplinary unit with about 100 year-8 students where they incorporated elements from the climate simulation game developed by Climate Interactive.



At the United World College in Changshu, China, we welcomed the head of academics into Compassionate Climate 1. She has since then introduced the simulator to 262 students as the beginning of an ongoing dialogue about sustainability.

We have also had the opportunity to work with several curriculum developers who have joined the program intending to bring the Compassionate Systems and En-Roads into their schools' curriculums.

Lastly, youth council member Journey, and his teacher Ittichai from Darunsikkhalai School for Innovative Learning in Bangkok, who participated in the Learning Group, have been working with the simulator in younger year groups in their school. Moreover, they are now preparing a project where they will visit other schools in Bangkok and use En-Roads and the Compassionate Systems Framework to explore ways of making the schools they visit more sustainable. They intend to go further with the project and go to more rural parts of Thailand if everything goes well in Bangkok.

Throughout these programs, we have helped approximately 30 people to become En-Roads ambassadors.

The following and last section will concern the next steps moving forward.

Part 3

Future plans and aspirations

Compassionate Climate 2 | starting February

Based on our learnings from all three programs, we have made some alterations to the Compassionate Climate that we will be doing again starting in February. The most significant change is that we have chosen to do this program by invitation to some of our partner schools where Youth leadership flourishes. We have invited each school to participate as a team of students, teachers, and leaders to ensure that the school will have the capacity to build a strong climate crisis curriculum after the program. Moreover, En-Roads ambassadorship will be optional, and the main focus will be on more personal work about the system's understanding. However, En-Roads will still be utilized, and we will encourage participants to become ambassadors. This next cohort will also include a stronger focus on the [SDGs](#) and the [IDGs](#) as a way for us to make the connection between inner and outer sustainability even more tangible.



Compassionate Climate Community

The larger plan for the future includes an international online community of Compassionate Systems thinkers passionate about the climate crisis. We are starting this community which will include all alumni of the abovementioned programs and a few others focused on climate. The intention is to create a space where ideas can be shared, feelings can be met with compassion and understanding, and partnerships can be formed. We believe that international communities with a shared systems understanding and acknowledgment of the inner dimensions of working with the Climate Crisis can act as leverage points for sustainable understanding and action.

Conclusions

We have strengthened some beliefs and formed new ones based on our experiences working with so many wonderful people worldwide. This conclusive section will list our current conclusions and learnings about what is most important when creating learning environments with the Climate Crisis as the topic for exploration.

Everybody should understand the most foundational dynamics of the Climate Crisis for humanity to move through this crisis. Therefore, educating ourselves, as well as the young people we are serving, about this topic is of vital importance. Most people do not need to understand the science behind the climate crisis. Instead, we should focus on educating ourselves to the extent that we can take constructive steps to mitigate emissions and other removals. When bringing these understandings to ourselves and our youth, it is essential to recognize the existential nature of the crisis and create spaces where emotions can be shared, held, and worked with. Such spaces can be created by focusing on the connection between inner and outer sustainability and requiring the inclusion of procedural knowledge, including contemplative practices.

Working internationally creates the opportunity for people to experience what the crisis looks and feels like in various places worldwide, broadening the shared reality and bringing it to life in people's experiences. Working intergenerationally allows us to acknowledge that we are all learners in this unfolding crisis and potentially helps to bridge the generational gap and heal some of the trauma from not being heard or taken seriously in their concerns, which is especially present but not limited to the youth.

I wish you all good luck on the journey towards accepting the excruciating reality we are in, Learning to hold the tension where we are and where you want us to be, finding the courage and hope to take steps in the right direction with the support of loving communities driven by compassion for the people and the beautiful planet we inhabit.



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