Transformative Skills Guide: Expanding the Definition of Climate Literacy

Consultation Draft

Draft 1.6

Please complete your feedback by Wednesday, October 30th! (link)

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01 Introduction

Given the urgency and all-encompassing nature of climate change, every person, community, and organization must eventually participate in a response. The primary challenge is no longer to develop new technologies or policy ideas. It is rather a challenge of collaboration and implementation at an unprecedented rate, scale and depth. Transformation is needed in our built environment, our food and energy systems, our economies, and most fundamentally, in our relationships with each other and the natural world. To meet these extraordinary challenges, societies need radically better ways to collaborate, make decisions, solve problems and enact change.

Understanding the issue–its causes, impacts, and solutions–is critical in activating concern and motivating engagement with solutions. But while knowledge of Earth systems and the human influences of climate change is necessary, it is not sufficient. Also required are the human qualities and skills needed to translate understanding into effective, transformative collective action. Some of the skills we need will be practical or technical, such as installing solar panels or changing the way we grow crops. But perhaps more important (and often overlooked) are the foundational inner skills that underpin our ability to perceive, think, and act in the world. For instance, the capacity for people's 'complexity awareness' supports wise decision-making by helping us see more of the system that we are embedded in.

This guide to transformative skills for climate action expands climate literacy to encompass those inner skills, qualities and capacities that help translate scientific understanding into transformative shifts in the way we do things, individually and collectively.[1] The hope is that this guide will help educators and practitioners shift culture and equip the whole of society with these essential inner resources.

1.
Expanding the definition of climate literacy: The U.S. Global Change Research Program's definition of climate literacy is an "understanding of how the climate system works, how human actions influence climate, and how climate influences people and other parts of the Earth system." To expand this definition, we recommend adding the understanding of how to use climate-related knowledge for transformative collective action and decision-making.

About the Table of Skills in This Document

This guide introduces a table of inner skills that are helpful for collective action to reduce environmental harm and adapt to a changing climate. These 23 skills, including self-awareness, critical thinking, empathy and creativity, are intended to be broad and transferable to multiple contexts.[2] They can be cultivated in K-12 education, higher education, workforce learning & professional development, community learning, faith learning, families, and other learning environments.

This table is adapted from the Inner Development Goals, an international framework of essential skills, qualities and capacities that people and organizations need to support progress towards the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals.[3] The Inner Development Goals were created through consultation with thousands of researchers and practitioners in sustainability and international development.[4] The framework provides a shared language that can enable dialogues and exchange of knowledge and practices across diverse countries, communities, and learning contexts.

Given the global and collective nature of the climate challenge, the table in this guide draws from this established framework to highlight the transformative skills needed to apply knowledge from the U.S. Global Change Research Program (USGCRP) Climate Literacy Guide's Essential Principles to the current crisis. These skills are grouped in the same five dimensions as the Inner Development Goals: Being; Thinking; Relating; Collaborating; and Acting (Figure 1).

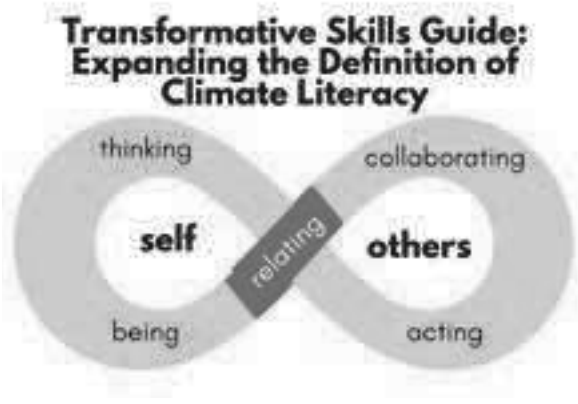

Figure 1.
Illustration of the five dimensions of transformative skills as drawn from the Inner Development Goals framework, highlighting how they operate both individually and in association with others.

2.
Transferable skills development. UNICEF

Understanding ‘inner skills’

Inner skills are innate and learned abilities that we all possess to varying degrees. We can choose to cultivate them, and build on our strengths and address our weaknesses. Refining these skills is an open-ended journey. It requires continued, intentional practice to embody them at a high level. Thankfully, we don’t each have to master all the skills listed in this document. As different people work together in diverse teams and organizations, their inner skill sets will complement each other. There can be a tendency for the word ‘inner’ to be interpreted as purely individual, but transformative skills are also held and developed at a group level, and it’s important to emphasize a shared culture of learning alongside personal responsibility.

Inner skills are not simply optional additions to specific technical skills, nor are they just for those working in non-technical sectors. Rather, they are fundamental to the practical actions that address climate change, regardless of the sector, and are necessary conditions for ‘external’ behavioral changes. Intentionally developing these inner skills can help people to see themselves as part of the solution, providing a sense of direction as they find their own unique roles in bringing about societal transformation.

Role of Educators and Practitioners

Educators and practitioners will have an important part to play in helping people, especially young people, to identify their role and hone the skills required to act on climate change. Fortunately, some inner skills like critical thinking and empathy are increasingly being taught in educational settings in the form of social and emotional learning (SEL)[5] which can have benefits for individuals such as mental health and positive life outcomes, but also for collective groups by addressing 'bigger than self' concerns.[6] Compassion, for example, is a form of motivation that combines the capacity to feel moved by the circumstances of others with a will to help. As well as promoting individual well-being and positive outcomes in the workplace, it can also increase responsiveness and sustainable behavior, making it a key capacity for climate action.[7] This document aims to support educators and practitioners in their existing efforts by providing examples for fostering these inner skills in various contexts.

5.
Holbein, J. B. (2017). Childhood Skill Development and Adult Political Participation, American Political Science Review, 111:3, pp. 572–583.

6.
Jagers, R. J., Rivas-Drake, D., Williams, B. (2019). Transformative Social and Emotional Learning (SEL): Toward SEL in Service of Educational Equity and Excellence, Educational Psychologist, 54:3, pp. 162–184.

7.
Bristow, J., Bell, R., Wamsler, C. (2022). Reconnection: Meeting the Climate Crisis Inside Out. Research and policy report. The Mindfulness Initiative and LUCSUS. www.themindfulnessinitiative.org/reconnection

02 Table of Inner Skills

The following table collects some of the transformative inner skills within the dimensions of ‘being’, ‘thinking’, ‘relating’, ‘collaborating’ and ‘acting’. Each overarching dimension is defined, followed by four or five related skills. In order to open the imagination to what the application of each skill might look like in different contexts, the table includes examples of both how to develop the skill or ability in others (‘develop’) and how someone might demonstrate the skill if it has been developed sufficiently (‘demonstrate’). For each skill, the examples in the ‘develop’ column are then applied in the skill’s ‘demonstrate’ column. Examples are provided for a diverse range of contexts: within corporations, sports, faith-groups, schools, museums, non-profits, families, and beyond. The hope is that any reader may be able to see themselves somewhere within the scenarios in the table. The examples are not meant to be prescriptive, rather they highlight a range of possibilities for cultivating skills. We encourage the reader to consider how each skill could be developed in their specific context with their particular audience.

Dimension #1: Being – Relationship to Self Cultivating our inner life and developing and deepening our relationship to our thoughts, feelings and body help us be present, intentional and non-reactive when we face complexity.	
1.1 Inner compass: Having a deeply felt sense of responsibility and commitment to values and purposes relating to the good of the whole.	
Develop: A community group holds workshops for local families to explore their values and identify what is most important to them to protect and nurture in the natural world.	Demonstrate: A family holds regular family meetings to discuss shared priorities, deciding how they can reduce their carbon emissions and contribute to the community.
1.2 Integrity and Authenticity: A commitment and ability to act with sincerity, honesty and integrity.	
Develop: A group of faith leaders host an honest discussion about whether their own decisions and actions in relation to climate are aligned with shared ethics.	Demonstrate: A religious organization asks for input on their sustainability plan from their employees; they then thoughtfully address employee responses into their plan (See for example).
1.3 Openness and learning mindset: Having a basic mindset of curiosity and a willingness to be vulnerable and embrace change and grow.	
Develop: A team in a manufacturing business takes part in a workshop that introduces the benefits and habits of continuous learning and adapting their processes and practices to changing environmental and climatic contexts.	Demonstrate: Teams embrace the adoption of new technologies and approaches to deliver on the company's sustainability objectives.
1.4 Self Awareness: Ability to be in reflective contact with own thoughts, feelings and desires; having a realistic self-image and ability to regulate oneself.	
Develop: A mental health provider notices an uptick in climate anxiety and facilitates 'climate cafe' peer-support groups to help participants explore and discuss difficult emotions (See for example).	Demonstrate: A mental health service client recognizes and gives space for feelings of climate anxiety and despair and regulates it by taking action with a supportive community.
1.5 Presence: Ability to be in the here and now, without judgment and in a state of open-ended presence.	
Develop: A nonprofit organization that serves wounded military service members offers a fly-fishing program designed to enhance the benefits of time in nature, socialization, camaraderie, and peace of presence (See for example).	Demonstrate: Veterans involved in a nature-based program report improvements in psychosocial well-being (See for example) and opt to continue to increase their time in nature beyond the program's duration and advocate for local land conservation.

Dimension #2: Thinking – Cognitive Skills Developing our cognitive skills by taking different perspectives, evaluating information and making sense of the world as an interconnected whole, is essential for wise decision-making.	
2.1 Critical Thinking: Skills in critically reviewing the validity of views, evidence, and plans.	
Develop: A school teacher asks students to explore how a climate news story is presented differently according to various sources (See for example).	Demonstrate: Prior to re-posting climate information on a social media platform, a student traces the data back to its original source to ensure the accuracy and credibility of the data and the source.
2.2 Complexity Awareness: Understanding of and skills in working with complex and systemic conditions and causalities.	
Develop: A librarian leads a lecture series engaging the local community in a discussion about how local agricultural practices contribute to climate change and how climate change will impact agricultural practices in the future.	Demonstrate: A community group collaborates with key actors in their local agricultural sector to work out an action plan that could help the city to implement an agricultural water reduction strategy, which would help to reduce emissions and increase future resilience. (See for example).
2.3 Perspective Skills: Skills in seeking, understanding and actively making use of insights from contrasting perspectives.	
Develop: A high school teacher uses a Socratic seminar focused on different green energy solutions, giving students specific instructions to gather data and perspectives from multiple sources (See example here).	Demonstrate: Before signing a pro-wind petition, a student considers multiple perspectives about a large-scale wind installation in their community.
2.4 Sense-Making: Skills in seeing patterns, structuring the unknown, and being able to consciously create stories.	
Develop: A journalist writes an article based on interviews with landscapers in the midst of a climate-induced heat wave to understand the impact of the heat on their businesses.	Demonstrate: An owner of a landscaping company reads an article about landscaping during a heat wave and considers which hydration strategies to adopt or adapt based on climate observations made in their own context and knowledge of their local soil and water conditions (e.g., raising mower height, watering deeply and infrequently, and avoiding mowing during peak heat, etc.).
2.5 Long-term Orientation and Visioning: Long-term orientation and ability to formulate and sustain commitment to visions relating to the larger context.	
Develop: A college faculty member teaches a climate unit that focuses on "Letters from the Future" where students write a letter to their past selves, telling stories about how we became a climate resilient and just society (See for example).	Demonstrate: Students present their "Letters from the Future" to their local city council, highlighting the strategies they feel will have the greatest positive effects (See for example).

Dimension #3: Relating – Caring for Others and the World Appreciating, caring for and feeling connected to others, such as neighbors, future generations or the biosphere, helps us create more just and sustainable systems and societies for everyone.	
3.1 Appreciation: Relating to others and to the world with a basic sense of appreciation, gratitude and joy.	
Develop: A museum facilitator offers a free program for local young children to walk around the museum's natural spaces and collect nature-based items that appeal to them (See for example).	Demonstrate: After conducting an art activity with young children, the museum hosts an exhibit to showcase children's artistic appreciation of the beauty of nature.
3.2 Connectedness: Having a keen sense of being connected with and/or being a part of a larger whole, such as a community, humanity or global ecosystem.	
Develop: A resident led, community-based environmental justice (EJ) organization prioritizes collaboration among diverse members as integral to their program (See for example).	Demonstrate: The diverse membership in the environmental justice organization successfully brings a community-centered lawsuit to "advocate for the mitigation and analysis that the community deserves," getting the support of the state Attorney General (See for example).
3.3 Humility: Being able to act in accordance with the needs of the situation without concern for one's own importance.	
Develop: An NGO organizes a site visit by a group of policymakers to communities surrounding a coal-fired power plant to learn about rising rates of respiratory illnesses (See for example).	Demonstrate: A group of county policymakers who have traditionally relied on the expertise of the county's local utility leaders to shape energy policy gradually shift their opinion in support of the community's requests for installation of scrubbers at local coal-fired power plants after local residents present their views at public hearings.
3.4 Empathy and Compassion: Ability to relate to others, oneself, and nature with kindness, empathy, and compassion and address related suffering.	
Develop: A member of a neighborhood association shares about the importance of supporting vulnerable neighbors during a heat wave in their city, and facilitates a discussion at a community meeting to brainstorm specific ways to help.	Demonstrate: Local county facilities remain open later into the evening during an excessive heat warning to serve as cooling centers for residents who may be vulnerable to excessive heat and/or not have means of cooling off (See for example).

Dimension #4: Collaborating – Social Skills To make progress on shared concerns, we need to develop our abilities to include, hold space and communicate with stakeholders with different values, skills and competencies.	
4.1 Communication Skills: Ability to really listen to others, to foster genuine dialogue, to advocate own views skillfully, to manage conflicts constructively, and to adapt communication to diverse groups.	
Develop: A high school social studies teacher implements a "climate communication" module that introduces core principles of Non-Violent Communication approaches to enable challenging conversations about climate across cultural divides.	Demonstrate: With support from a local university, a student group hosts a climate storytelling roundtable at their school where a diverse group of speakers, including students and community leaders from representative neighborhoods, share stories and perspectives on their experiences regarding climate change and climate resiliency (See for example).
4.2 Co-creation Skills: Skills and motivation to build, develop, and facilitate collaborative relationships with diverse groups, characterized by psychological safety and genuine co-creation.	
Develop: In an effort to engage local young people in co-creating relationships and climate solutions, a youth-serving organization launches an interactive, virtual Dungeons and Dragons-based climate justice adventure (See for example). *"I like D&D because it's just like going into your favorite fantasy book or TV show and getting to make the decisions yourself."* *- Dulari, D&D player, 11 years old*	Demonstrate: Empowered with a sense of agency from D&D gameplay, local youth come together and invite additional youth from a neighboring community to co-create potential climate solutions for their whole community (See for example).
4.3 Inclusive Mindset and Intercultural Competence: Willingness and competence to embrace diversity and include people and collectives with different views and backgrounds.	
Develop: Local Indigenous leaders offer a course on Traditional Ecological Knowledge at a local community college to bridge Indigenous and non-Indigenous knowledge systems around ecological stewardship (See for example).	Demonstrate: A fire chief learns about Indigenous prescribed burning practices and works with the local Tribe to adjust the county's wildfire prevention practices, incorporating Traditional Ecological Knowledge (See for example).
4.4 Trust: Ability to show trust and to create and maintain trusting relationships.	
Develop: At the beginning of a meeting between community members, Indigenous leaders, and a university research center on climate solutions, a project team leader invites everyone to establish shared goals and ground rules before diving into the agenda (See for example).	Demonstrate: A diverse team of researchers and community members working together on a climate adaptation project take a moment to pause and reflect on differing opinions about a specific recommendation, asking probing questions and practicing active listening to look for commonalities and a way forward that respects these differences.
4.5 Mobilization Skills: Skills in inspiring and mobilizing others to engage in shared purposes.	
Develop: Staff and Fellows from a local sustainability nonprofit hosts assemblies, classroom visits, and waste audits at elementary schools, encouraging self-mobilization and shared purpose (See for example).	Demonstrate: Elementary school students mobilize and lead a green team at their school to implement student-designed strategies to become the very first school to reach zero waste goals in their community (See for example).

Dimension #5: Acting – Enabling Change Qualities such as courage and optimism help us acquire true agency, break old patterns, generate original ideas and act with persistence in uncertain times.	
5.1 Courage: Ability to stand up for values, make decisions, take decisive action and, if need be, challenge and disrupt existing structures and views.	
Develop: A parent encourages their child to speak up about their beliefs about a climate solution at the dinner table and reacts in a way that encourages their child's decision-making even if it challenges the parents' own beliefs and worldviews.	Demonstrate: An elementary student who has experienced empowerment at home asks if they can speak on their school's weekly "newscast" about a climate or sustainability issue that is important to them.
5.2 Creativity: Ability to generate and develop original ideas, innovate, and willingness to disrupt conventional patterns.	
Develop: A high school hosts an annual sustainability business event featuring student-built green businesses. In the year beforehand, the juniors have a class on developing business ideas, presenting them in a "Shark Tank"-like experience, working in teams, and hearing from green business leaders.	Demonstrate: Students create and showcase innovative businesses with small carbon footprints that brings awareness to climate-related solutions (See for example).
5.3 Optimism: Ability to sustain and communicate a sense of hope, positive attitude, and confidence in the possibility of meaningful change.	
Develop: A local social media influencer runs a series of posts on understanding negative media bias and provides tips for where to find positive climate action stories in their community.(See for example)	Demonstrate: Community members share positive climate action stories and hopeful sustainability news on their social media. (See for example)
5.4 Perseverance: Ability to sustain engagement and remain determined and patient even when efforts take a long time to bear fruit.	
Develop: A youth sports organization developing socio-emotional skills alongside sports development integrates discussions on climate change and the hard work that societies must take to address it, linking the skills needed in sport and life to the skills needed to create a healthier planet. (See for example).	Demonstrate: After developing social-emotional skills such as perseverance and determination through sports or school, a student-athlete works hard in school and career to create their own position as Sustainability Director at a large company (See for example).

03 Case Studies

The following four case studies demonstrate the Inner Development Goals (IDGs) in action. They have been selected to showcase how various IDGs can be operationalized in climate literacy programming and efforts. The examples are intentionally diverse across audience, approach, and outcome. As this is a working draft, we welcome additional suggestions for case studies over time.

Case Study Matrix of Inner Development Goals Addressed	1. This is Indigenous Land	2. Amplifying Youth Voices for Community Action	3. Morris Area Rural Citizen Dialogues	4. Inner Development in International Organizations to Accelerate the Green Transformation
1.1 Inner Compass				
1.2 Integrity & Authenticity				
1.3 Openness & Learning Mindset				
1.4 Self Awareness				
1.5 Presence				
2.1 Critical Thinking				
2.2 Complexity Awareness				
2.3 Perspective Skills				
2.4 Sense-Making				
2.5 Long-term Orientation & Visioning				
3.1 Appreciation				
3.2 Connectedness				
3.3 Humility				
3.4 Empathy & Compassion				
4.1 Communication Skills				
4.2 Co-creation Skills				
4.3 Inclusive Mindset & Intercultural Competence				
4.4 Trust				
4.5 Mobilization Skills				
5.1 Courage				
5.2 Creativity				
5.3 Optimism				
5.4 Perseverance				

Case Study 1:
This is Indigenous Land: An Indigenous Land-Based Approach to Climate Change Education

Manitoba, Canada

Overview:
This is Indigenous Land is an urban and rural Indigenous land-based climate change education camp. Through a four-day camp experience, participants learn about Indigenous people's enduring relationships with land and place, explore their roles in protecting land and water, and connect with other young people committed to climate action. The camp brings together Indigenous facilitators with a team of post-secondary students and youth for an immersive experience in Indigenous land-based climate change education.

Approach:
The camp design integrates:

- Relationality: Exploring what we love about the land — Help learners foster a conscious relationship with land
- Making climate change matter: Understanding what we stand to lose — Link climate change to what learners already care about
- Relational accountability: Protecting what we love — Empower learners to intervene
- Confronting loss through ceremony: Ecological grief and Indigenous practice — Help learners confront and grieve climate change related losses through ceremony

Initially, the Land and Water Program was designed as a peer mentor program that employed experiential approaches to introduce post-secondary and high school students to climate change vocations. However, the Indigenous land-based

approach had a more significant impact on the participants' overall engagement and learning by (1) seeing "the land as our primary text and teacher," (2) centering relationship and connection to the land and each other, and (3) recognizing that everyone has something to offer (the high school students, youth who are not engaged in formal post-secondary programs, and others).

Outcome:
The program helps participants recognize the serious and pressing nature of the problem (climate change and its impacts on Indigenous land, culture, and spirituality) and understand the importance of collective action for climate change prevention and interventions. The Land and Water Program aims to build a community of young Indigenous climate activists and land defenders.

Inner Development Skills Targeted:
1.1 Inner Compass
1.2 Integrity and Authenticity
1.3 Openness and Learning Mindset
1.4 Self-awareness
1.5 Presence
2.2 Complexity Awareness
2.3 Perspective Skills
2.5 Long-term Orientation & Visioning
3.1 Appreciation
3.2 Connectedness
4.4 Trust
4.3 Inclusive Mindset and Intercultural Competence

Learn More:
Adapted with permission from the Global Environmental Education Partnership (GEEP)[8] Ferland, N., J. L'Arrivee, A. McLeod, C. Nolin, and J. Vandal. Case Studies. This is Indigenous Land: An Indigenous Land-Based Approach to Climate Change Education. 2019. For further information and to read the full case study, visit: thegeep.org (All GEEP case studies are available here.)

8.
The GEEP is a partnership of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, the Environmental Protection Administration of Taiwan, and the North American Association for Environmental Education. For more information, visit: www.thegeep.org

Case Study 2:
Amplifying Youth Voices for Community Action

Illinois, United States

Overview:
Earth Force's Environmental Action Civics approach enables young people to develop Inner Development Skills such as thinking, collaboration, and acting. In this example, high school students in a diverse (48% Latino, 48% African American, and 4% white), traditionally working-class, Chicago neighborhood were empowered to influence local government policy supporting climate adaptation.

After initially studying the flooding of Lake Michigan, a class at St. Francis de Sales High School turned their attention to their community's flooding problem after realizing that a recent flood had left a member of their class homeless for a period. This shift gave the students insight into the complexities of climate change and how it impacts their lives and the lives of their friends and family.

The students delved into the issue and discovered that a local practice of routing house downspouts into the sewers caused local street flooding. The absence of city investment in stormwater infrastructure compounded the flooding problem. The students also came to understand the need for localized solutions and for community members to have a voice in those solutions.

Approach:
This project was facilitated using the Earth Force approach to environmental civic action which centers on youth voices and their lived experiences. The process involves six steps:

Step 1: Community Environmental Inventory
Step 2: Issue Selection
Step 3: Policy and Community Practice Research
Step 4: Goal and Strategy Selection
Step 5: Planning and Taking Civic Action
Step 6: Reflection, Going Public, and Planning for the Future

Through training, Earth Force equips adult facilitators to work in partnership with young people to help them facilitate systemic change in their communities. Collaboration skills are emphasized throughout, whilst activities in steps one to four foster abilities like critical thinking, perspective-taking, and sense-making, and steps five and six develop acting qualities like courage, creativity and perseverance. By actively involving young people who have been marginalized in identifying problems, participating in decision-making processes, and assuming leadership roles, this approach honors their voices and helps them to express their concerns and perspectives. The approach represents a shift from teaching young people facts about the environment to fostering personal growth and collective action.

Outcome:
The students embarked on a mission to address the problem, collaborating closely with their local elected officials. The students launched a community education campaign, raising awareness about the detrimental effects of stormwater from house downspouts flowing into the community's sewer systems. Their advocacy extended to rewriting city policies aimed at discouraging harmful practices and promoting sustainable alternatives.

More broadly, academic research into the Earth Force approach found 81.3% of educators believed that students' ability to plan and carry out projects aimed at changing local policies improved, and 90.6% of educators stated that participating increased their students' belief that they can make a difference in the community.[8]

9.
Start Here – Earth Force Resources. (2023). Earthforceresources.org. https://earthforceresources.org/start-here/

Inner Development Skills Targeted:
2.1 Critical Thinking
2.2 Complexity Awareness
2.3 Perspective Skills
2.4 Sense-making
3.1 Appreciation
3.4 Empathy and Compassion
3.5 Mobilization Skills
4.1 Communication Skills
4.2 Co-Creation Skills
5.1 Courage
5.2 Creativity
5.4 Perseverance

Learn More:
Adapted from text written by Vince Meldrum, Executive Director/ CEO of Earth Force. For more information about Earth Force and Environmental Action Civics, visit https://earthforce.org/ and https://earthforceresources.org/

Case Study 3:
Morris Area Rural Citizen Dialogues

Minnesota, United States

Overview:
Climate Dialogues are designed to help rural communities come together to think critically and strategically to address local climate change. The Morris Climate Dialogue was the first of many projects in Minnesota, organized by the Jefferson Center, aimed at stimulating rural residents to work together and tackle climate change.
The Citizens' Jury method was used to ensure effective engagement and community problem-solving. A Citizens' Jury is an intensive, moderated participatory process that brings together a group of randomly selected community members to deliberate on an issue. Over a period of days, the selected

community members are exposed to an issue and hear from a wide range of witnesses and experts. Trained moderators oversee the process to ensure the proceedings are fair. The jurors examine the witnesses and can even call for more information if necessary. The jurors use deliberation to come up with an action plan. The sponsoring body is often required to act on the report.

Approach:
Fifteen randomly selected Stevens County residents met for three days at the West Central Research and Outreach Centre in Morris, Minnesota. The group of fifteen were tasked with listening carefully to a variety of perspectives, deliberating possible solutions, and deciding how the Morris Area might combat climate change.

Early in the process, participants listened to a presentation by the Center for Earth, Energy & Democracy on energy burdens and discussed community concerns related to energy use and poverty. Additionally, they listened to five presentations focusing on (1) extreme weather and insurance, (2) climate and agriculture, (3) local infrastructure concerns, (4) energy and energy efficiency, and (5) options to strengthen resilience.

Outcome:
As a result of this process, residents collaboratively identified top challenges, opportunities, key facts, implications, and actions, and wrote a report outlining their recommendations for community action.The success of the Morris Area Rural Climate Dialogues indicates that a small, diverse group of community members, educated by experts and focused on producing a plan of action that a community can agree on, can be extremely useful for engaging on a complex issue such as climate change.

Inner Development Skills Targeted:
1.1 Inner Compass
1.3 Openness and Learning Mindset

2.1 Critical Thinking
2.2 Complexity Awareness
2.3 Perspective Skills
3.1 Appreciation
3.2 Connectedness
3.3 Humility
4.1 Communication Skills
4.5 Mobilization Skills
5.1 Courage
5.4 Perseverance

Learn More:
To learn more about the Morris Area Rural Climate Dialogues, visit https://participedia.net/case/rural-climate-dialogues-morris-area

This case study is adapted with permission from "Morris Area Rural Climate Dialogues," Participedia, 2020, ,<https://participedia.net/case/5107>, accessed. September 2024

Case Study 4:
Inner Development in International Organisations to Accelerate the Green Transformation

Cologne, Germany & Brussels, Belgium

Overview:
The Inner Green Deal, a non-profit organization, offers capacity building programs to accelerate the green transformation through inner development, reconnection to nature and community action. Inner Green Deal programmes support policy makers in the European Union Commission (EU Government) and the United Nations, as well as sustainability leaders in a range of organizations by developing skills and qualities that help them in their climate and environmental work.

Approach:
The programs build on academic research into "inner transitions" towards sustainability that features in the most recent Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) report on climate science.[10] Through a series of five online modules and a range of in-between practices (meditation, nature walks, dialogues, personal projects), participants cultivate qualities in the five categories represented in the Inner Development Goals framework, which is used to structure the curriculum. Programs are designed to support a range of audiences including:

Leaders and teams: programs that focus on how organizations can contribute to sustainability; discover the role they can play through collaboration; rediscover the value of nature; and develop champions and facilitators who can engage colleagues and scale efforts.

Community facilitators: train-the-trainer programs designed to enable champions who understand how to support climate anxiety and grief, and who can help build community resilience.
Individuals: Courses for individuals to build an understanding of the current state of the planet and how to make a difference; development of the inner skills necessary for impactful, sustainable action; taking systemic action together; and mindfulness-based practices to support shifts in consciousness and a sense of agency.

Outcome:
A leading sustainability science professor led the evaluation of programs at the EU, UN and a range of other organizations and reviewed both quantitative data (pre-and post-surveys) and qualitative data (what people shared during the programme verbally or in written form). Key findings include:

- Significant strengthening of inner qualities across five key dimensions (being, thinking, relating, collaborating, acting), with increases ranging from 28% to 61%.
- Significant reduction in eco-anxiety (-19%) and feelings of helplessness (-27%). Increases in gaining clarity on one's role and feelings of self-efficacy.

10.
See '17.2.3 Psychology, Individual Beliefs and Social Change' Denton, F., K. Halsnæs, K. Akimoto, S. Burch, C. Diaz Morejon, F. Farias, J. Jupesta, A. Shareef, P. Schweizer-Ries, F. Teng, E. Zusman, 2022: Accelerating the transition in the context of sustainable development. In IPCC, 2022: Climate Change 2022: Mitigation of Climate Change. Contribution of Working Group III to the Sixth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change [P.R. Shukla, J. Skea, R. Slade, A. Al Khourdajie, R. van Diemen, D. McCollum, M. Pathak, S. Some, P. Vyas, R. Fradera, M. Belkacemi, A. Hasija, G. Lisboa, S. Luz, J. Malley, (eds.)]. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, UK and New York, NY, USA. doi: 10.1017/9781009157926.019

- Increases in pro-environmental behavior (even among participants with already high levels of pro-environmental action).
- Significant integration of inner dimensions in sustainability-related work processes, with 56% to 78% of participants having made some or substantial changes to areas such as strategic priorities, team collaboration and training activities.

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Conclusion

Confronting the climate crisis requires more than just scientific knowledge or policy solutions. It demands a profound shift in how we show up, think, relate, collaborate, and act. By broadening the concept of climate literacy to include transformative inner skills, this guide calls on educators and practitioners to foster the human capacities essential for collective action. Skills like self-awareness, sense-making, long-term orientation, creativity, trust, and courage are not just complementary to technical know-how; they are the essential tools that empower individuals to move from understanding to implementation.

The examples within the table serve as inspiration for how one could participate in the cultivation of transformative skills, and the case studies presented highlight the power of integrating these approaches into diverse educational and community initiatives. From fostering youth leadership to equipping policymakers and decision makers, these examples illustrate how transformative inner development can drive real-world solutions. In the face of unprecedented global challenges, the cultivation of these skills offers a hopeful, urgent, and tangible call to action. By embedding these capacities into climate literacy, we can equip people to engage more deeply, collaborate more effectively, and ultimately create the change needed for a more sustainable and inclusive future.

Please complete your feedback by Wednesday, October 30th! (link)