

ROOTED AND RISING REPORT

2020 PILOT



Youth Climate Leadership Certificate Program



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Executive Summary

In the fall of 2020, we piloted the Rooted and Rising Certificate Program for Youth Climate Leaders, certified by the York U. Faculty of Education, and administered by the Young Lives Research Lab. This report documents the origins, intentions, and some of the experiences of Rooted and Rising (R+R).

Over 12-sessions, 22 young people age 13-30 and passionate about climate change gathered over zoom with rotating members of our 10-person teaching team. Originally intended to be in-person, R+R was adapted to 1 in-person opening on the land, and 11 online classes due to COVID-19 restrictions.

We rooted the program in 7 values: gratitude, care, resilience, inspiration, joy, disruption, & uplifting transformation. The intention was to curate a caring space for young leaders to step more deeply into their unique gifts and leadership styles. Each week we engaged a different theme, guiding students along a spiral of learning. Halfway through the program, students organized into project teams, and a portion of each class was devoted to this project work.

Unique qualities of Rooted and Rising:

- **Rotating Leadership:** each week a unique 2-3 teaching team combination led the class. More educators also joined each call as participant-supporters. We are proud to have demonstrated shared leadership.
- **A Focus on Relationships:** Attending to and curating the relational sphere is sacred work, and we believe it is the future of sustainability education. (continued on next page)

Executive Summary

- Climate change asks: how do you relate to Water? Earth? Yourself? Family & communities (human, plant, animal, microbial, spiritual)? Others? The legal system? Money? Spirit?
- **Connecting with Spirit:** Climate change is a holistic challenge that goes beyond resources and policy. R+R sought to engage the whole challenge. Spirit was present in our program. We honoured and processed emotions. We engaged our bodies, our intuition, and our minds.
- **A Community of Interdependent Leaders:** A common feeling student-leaders took from the program was a sense of **belonging**: It is not up to you to carry the burden of the time-sensitive climate crisis alone. You exist in a community of passionate change-makers. This knowing brought hope, motivation, confidence, and a sense of peace and spaciousness. R+R affirmed that each of our leaderships are needed, each of us are **worthy**, and our **strengths & passions fit together** to form the mosaic of change we desire.
- **Care:** How can we cultivate the self-knowledge, self-compassion and sense of worthiness that can keep us from burn out, release us from imposter syndrome, and carry us through **eco-anxiety**? Care is a practice we can live into, attending to what needs nourishment, to cycles and seasons, in our work and relationships.
- **Living the World We Want:** R+R was oriented to the world that we want to live in, and asked, how can we live that world into existence? The program opened discussion on this, and itself was a practice in community and co-operation.

Our student-leaders described a caring world where all of life is nurtured, and young people are encouraged in their gifts. Where humans collaborate to meet their basic needs and nurture ecosystem health. The concept of community in this future is extended to plant, animal, microbial, and ancestral relations. In it, we can breathe. There is time to simply exist. We embrace beauty, joy, play, and rest. Humans have remembered again our roles as co-creators and caretakers of the natural, social, and spiritual worlds of which we are a part.

With gratitude – Kristen Alaan Sison, Doug Anderson, Steve Alsop, Andrea Bastien, Roxy Cohen, Sarah El-Halwany, Bella Lyne, Blake Poland, Joseph Smith, Kate Tilleczek
report written by Bella, Roxy & Kristen. designed by Kristen: www.bonesthrown.com

"I really like the non-judgmental environment and the strong and determined personality that everyone has, and it really inspires me to want to be a greater leader for the future."

devon's future

[Editable via link](#) ▼
[Published](#) ▼

DECOLONIZING THE MIND

Healing through neurodecolonization and mindfulness



EMERGENT STRATEGY

adrienne maree brown

SMALL IS GOOD, SMALL IS ALL.	TRUST THE PEOPLE, IF YOU TRUST THEM THEY BECOME TRUSTWORTHY.
CHANGE IS CONSTANT, BE LIKE WATER.	MOVE AT THE SPEED OF TRUST, CONNECTION IS MORE IMPORTANT THAN MASS.
THERE IS ALWAYS ENOUGH TIME FOR THE RIGHT WORK.	LESS PREP, MORE PRESENCE.
THERE IS A CONVERSATION THAT ONLY THE PEOPLE IN THIS ROOM RIGHT NOW CAN HAVE. FIND IT.	WHAT YOU PAY ATTENTION TO GROWS.
NEVER A FAILURE, ALWAYS A LESSON.	

**INTERGENERATIONAL
KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE**



regenerative economy
term

A regenerative economy is organized around the proper valuation and replenishment of "natural capital," the abundance provided by nature. It is the opposite of the extractive model, which depletes and destroys natural resources regardless of the consequences for people and nature.

In a rural context, community land rights provide a strong foundation for regenerative economies. These rights enable local people to harvest the fruits of their own labor and steward their precious natural resources in a way that fosters ecosystem health, economic stability, and community well-being over the long term.



If we build a society based on honoring the earth, we build a society which is sustainable, and has the capacity to support all life forms.

From (they/them) to Everyone:

Hassan talked about industrialization, which is something frequently I forget about as where a lot of our modern consumption come from \

From: to Everyone:

Mic talked about how the consumer doesn't usually consider what they are buying, and how its wasting ressources

From: to Everyone:

I liked how she reflected on we need to change the mindset of peoples in order to change the out look of the world, and recognizing that there are many different mindsets

From: to Everyone:

Sierra and I were talking about how multi-dimensional the issue of climate change is and the importance of expanding people's mindsets.

From: /her to Everyone:

I resonated a lot with Devon's micro activities of climate change. the little but impactful things in the present moment. I find that climate change is interconnected with our own internal behaviors. from how we consume and how we react when information is given to us. it allows us to be more mindful in our everyday lives that leads to large impact on climate change.

From: (she/her) to Everyone:

speaking on the solar energy paint- I think that's sooo cool!! I'm very interested in renewable energy :)

"Everyone in this group has also inspired me in terms of learning how to effectively communicate how you feel about topics and learn in a deeper, more spiritual way, because I felt like that was something that was lacking for a long time."

Origin Story

We heard young climate leaders calling for learning spaces that care with and support them as they step into their leadership.

We heard this call in many places:

- in FridaysForFuture youth & children protesting school to demand climate action
 - FFF-Toronto's teach-in with members of our team (Sept 2019), where youth asked to learn how to speak with adults about climate change
- in talking to – and being – young people on the protest lines for climate justice, Black Lives Matter, LandBack
- in the experiences of youth organizations like Conscious Minds Co-op that felt they could only go so far with their work without more confidence, skills, experience, and mentorship
- in our own experiences graduating university and still lacking a clear sense of our life path, and core competencies for change-making
- in teaching in university spaces, while craving to embody a different orientation to teaching and learning

We created Rooted and Rising to respond to these needs, and to do so with the urgency youth demanded.

In May 2020 the idea formed, and emails across networks went out seeking educators who felt the call. In September 2020 the 10 of us met for the first time as a team. We were new to each other – with most on the team knowing only 1-2 others before we began. And we found between us a beautiful balance of age, experience, and areas of passion.

We started this program as a pilot, knowing we would find our program through practicing it.

Origin Story

We began crafting the program by clarifying our values. It took us two hours of discussion, questioning, and honest sharing from the heart. It felt clear that we had all done a lot of work on ourselves (inner work), and that we were meant to work together on activating this project. Our planning flowed with grace, joy, and respect; our divergent views were embraced.

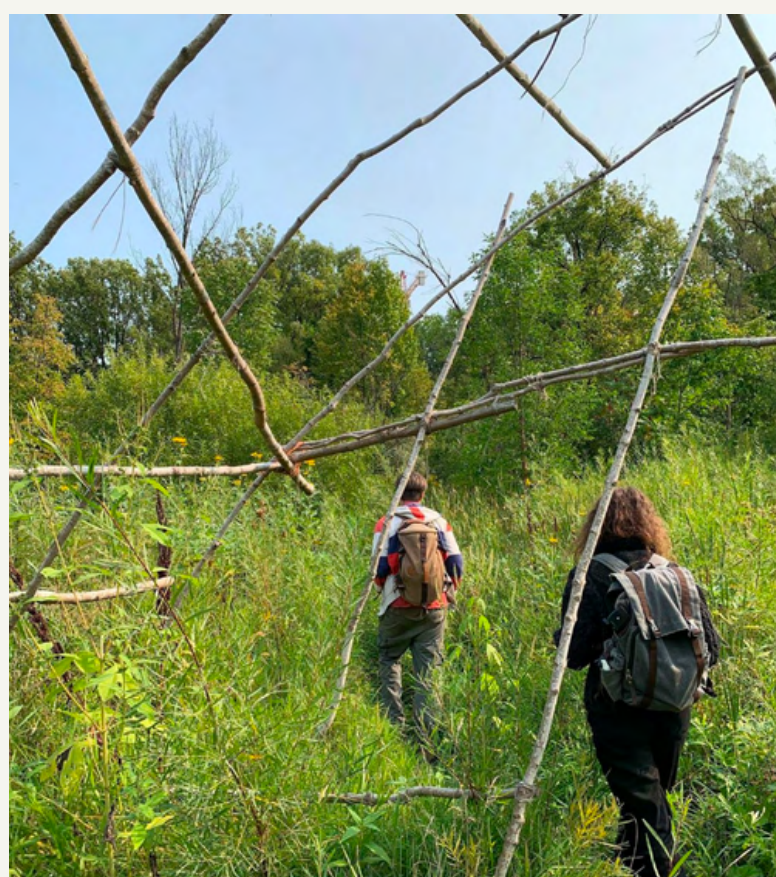
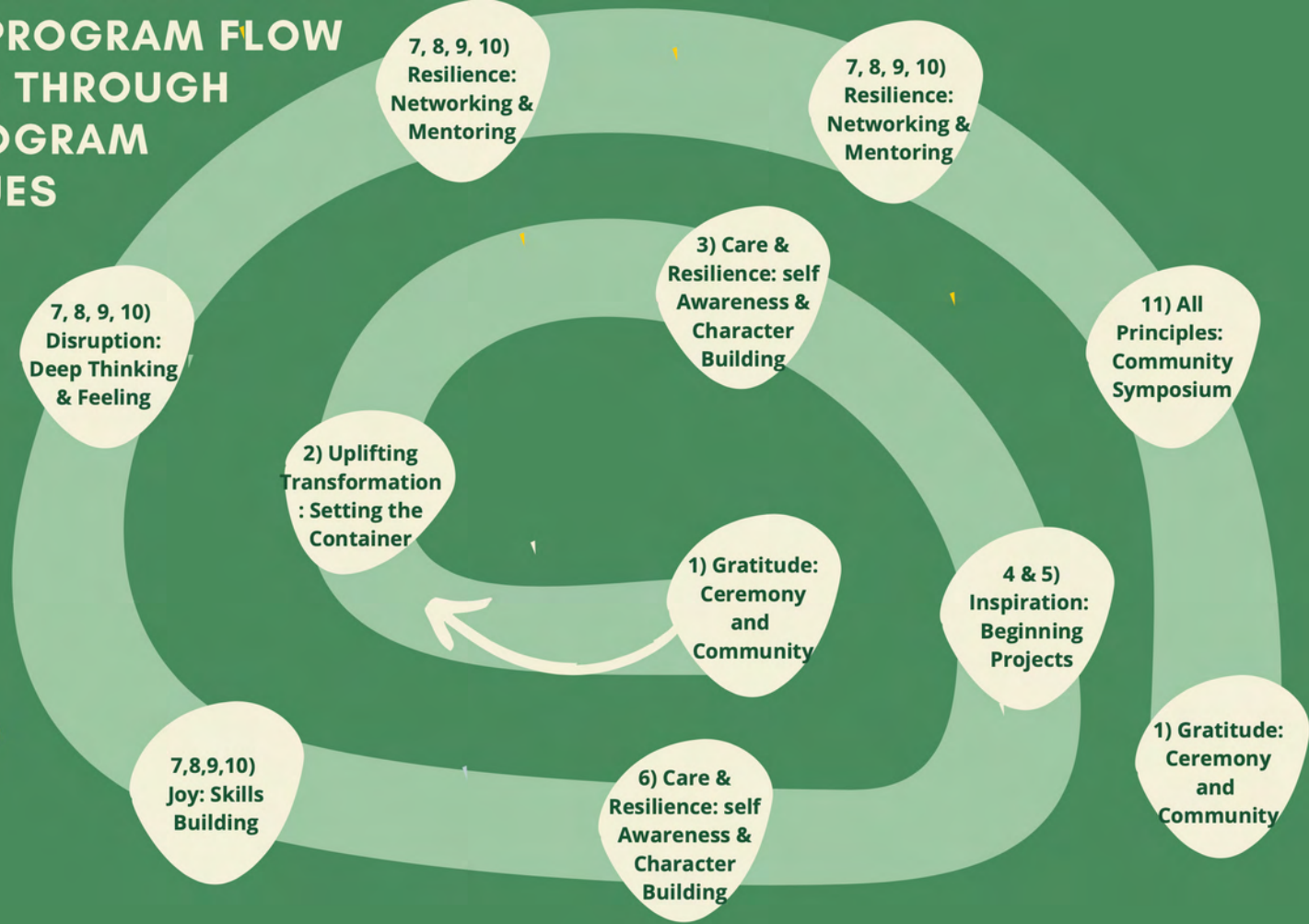
R+R flowed from the values we wrote up collectively, which we strived to embody across the program and within each session. (see next page for values spiral)

Our intentions were to hold a learning space for youth passionate about climate change to:

- Feel loved and cared for; to feel like they belong.
- Form relationships – meet friends and build community.
- Step into their unique gifts, purposes and leadership. To feel proud about these gifts. To be celebrated and encouraged to express them.
- Skill-up: to share specific skills and ways of seeing and being that we and our Elders have come to know as valuable for climate justice.
- Practice collaboration. Learn from this practice.
- Practice compassion, and process feelings that come up in a non-judgemental environment.
- Connect with mentors and elders working in different realms.
- Practice having conversations with people in positions of power.

“So much of the work is relationships” – Bella

THE PROGRAM FLOW TOLD THROUGH 7 PROGRAM VALUES



bonesthrown • Following

bonesthrown back to school but on the land 🌿
 rooted & rising begins in 2 weeks 🌲
 may we deepen into center - into this moment + the teachings of fire so we may leave the well-worn (outworn) path for meandering paths through the woods (or wherever your gifts guide you) 🌟

1w

👏👏

1w Reply

rox.cohen So excited! Going to be a magical 12 weeks 🌟🌟🌟🌟🌟🌟🌟🌟

Liked by **98 others** and

SEPTEMBER 16

Teaching Team



Andrea Bastien has an extensive, continuous, and evolving relationship with music and community engagement. She has worked with an abundance of organizations including Redwire NYM, UMAC, Indigenous Media Arts Group, Raven Spirit Dance, imagineNATIVE, Toronto Aboriginal Youth Council, TDSB Aboriginal Education, Naadmaagit Ki Group, and Indigenous Climate Action. Some past roles: youth advocate, advisor, administrator, performer, program facilitator, & communications coordinator.



Joseph Smith is an educator in a diversity of places: TDSB high school teacher, T.A. at York University Humanities, Professor at Tyndale University English Department, and Co-Founder of the non-profit Generation Chosen that focuses on mental health and emotional intelligence within inner-city communities. Joseph is also the narrative ambassador with the Black Experience Project and sits on the board of Operation Black Vote Canada as the Director of Outreach.



Roxy Cohen served as the coordinator for the pilot program. She has connected R+R to her PhD in Education at York University, asking, what is meaningful education for young people who care about climate change? Roxy is the co-founder and Treasurer of Conscious Minds Co-operative, and a dedicated volunteer towards food sovereignty with the St. James Town Community Co-op.

Teaching Team



Bella Lyne is an organizer with Climate Justice Toronto, a youth-led collective that seeks to address the climate crisis through grassroots organizing, solidarity-building, and mobilizing a broad-based youth movement across the GTA. Bella has worked as a facilitator, program coordinator, and administrator for various youth programs including Arts4All, and Canadian Roots Exchange's Youth Reconciliation Initiative (YRI).



Blake Poland is a professor in the Dalla Lana School of Public Health, with cross-appointments in Geography & Planning, and Adult Education (LHAE/OISE). He is the Director of the Collaborative Specialization in Community Development (www.cscd.utoronto.ca), and co-lead of the Healthier Cities & Communities hub at DLSPH. His work focuses on community development, community resilience, civic engagement in sustainability transitions, social change, dialogical methods, critical social theory, and qualitative research methods.



Dr. Steve Alsop is a professor in the Faculty of Education and the Department of Science and Technology Studies at York University. He is passionate about education in diverse places, and researches and engages with schools, universities, community groups, museums, science centres and environmental organizations.

Teaching Team



Kate is a 6th generation Irish settler on Turtle Island, a grandmother, mother, educator, Professor and Canada Research Chair in Youth, Education & Global Good in the Faculty of Education at York University. Kate is Director of the Young Lives Research Laboratory (YLRL) which she created in 2009 to make a unique intergenerational space within and beyond the university to understand, research, support and work with/by/for young people as they navigate local/global challenges to their wellbeing (such as ecological degradation, digital technology, and social injustice).



Doug Anderson (Bungee Métis) is the Creative and Strategic Director at Invert Media (www.invertmedia.com). He has consulted on Indigenous education and community development across Canada for over 30 years. Since 2001, Doug has been translating Indigenous perspectives into diverse education systems, media, environmental policy and practice. In 2013, Doug founded Naadmaagit Ki Group (NKG), which has led significant developments in urban Indigenous land-based learning, cultural resurgence, and community re-integration.



Sarah El Halwany is a PhD candidate at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (OISE), University of Toronto. She has supported teachers in various school boards implementing pedagogies aimed at social and environmental justice through science education. Her research looks at emotions as central to ways students relate to science and environmental issues. You can follow her on Twitter @HalwanySarah, or find her on ResearchGate Sarah Halwany.

Teaching Team



Kristen Sison [@bonesthrown](#) is a Filipinx artist-healer, community choreographer and storyteller transforming education for climate change. Born in Scarborough and rooted in Tkaronto, she is a co-founder of Conscious Minds Co-operative, Kapwa Collective, and Seven Waves. Kristen's work is centred on creating spaces to remember and live into ways of being that heal our connection with Earth and Spirit. It's Bigger Than All of Us, launching Spring 2021, is a magazine + archival project she curated, following her first self-published magazine, Womxn. The intention: to re-story reverence, uplift the sacred, and reflect the journey of being both humxn and divine.

“Rooted and Rising is the world I want to live in”

“Taking a nap in a forest on a bed of moss – that’s how I felt after each class”

“Inspiring. Going to miss it a lot”

“Non-judgemental space where I am appreciated”

“Spiritual”

“Joyful and caring”

“Learning from a place of true curiosity and like lightning”, not the stressful side of learning like in formal school

Rooted & Rising Team



Deborah MacDonald: thank you for all of your work, determination, and creativity behind the scenes with administrative and financial accounting support! Deborah is the Senior Research Associate and Manager at the Young Lives Research Lab where she supports the collaborative, participatory action research activities of Dr. Kate Tilleczek's Tier I Canada Research Chair in Youth, Education and Global Good. Deborah promotes connection and liaison with partners and participants across Canada and all around the globe, and contributes to the collaborative design, implementation and evaluation of a variety of multidisciplinary research projects and partnerships based in youth and community wellbeing, education, and better understandings of the impacts of the modern world on young people today.



Pablo Aranguiz Mesias: thank you for your informative and inspiring videos on a just transition, and climate change from Global South perspectives created for us! Pablo is an Associate Researcher with the Young Lives Research Lab. Pablo has spent almost 20 years in the archipelago of Chiloé working with and for the Indigenous Williche communities of the region. As Professor of Sustainable Development at the Wekimün Chilkatuwe school, and as a long-time associate of the Williche Council of Chiefs of Chiloé, Pablo has supported the implementation of dozens of participatory action and community-based projects. He holds a Master's degree in Analysis and Management of Mediterranean Ecosystems, with an undergraduate degree as a Forestry Engineer, and is currently working towards his Ph.D. in Local Development and International Cooperation.

Thank You!

Thank you to our:

- Funders: for your financial support, and your contributions to the program itself. Thank you for valuing these young leaders. David Suzuki Foundation the Young Lives Research Lab, and DUCA Impact Lab
- York U. Faculty of Education: thank you to the Dean & Professional Learning Staff for support!
- Youth Partner Organizations who contributed to the program & helped us connect with young leaders: FridaysForFuture Toronto, Generation Chosen, & Conscious Minds Co-operative
- Elder Whabagoon for grounding us into the program in our opening session, and for encouraging us to listen, and look up!



Teaching in the Digital Realm

Two weeks before Rooted and Rising was set to start in March 2020, COVID-19 hit, and we decided to postpone. In the hope that the pandemic would pass by Fall, we rescheduled the program for late September. When it became clear that we couldn't meet in person we adapted and shifted the program online.

We held 3 optional zoom calls over the summer to process the sudden changes and uncertainty we now found ourselves in as a program, and as a global community.

What Went Well

Opening Ceremony on the Land

- We are grateful to be the only course in the Education Department that received approval to lead 1 class in-person.
- This made a big difference in our ability to form connections online in the weeks to come.

Embodiment and Breathing Activities

that helped engage the whole self, not just the mind.

- In class we took breaks to breathe together. Stretch together. To express complex climate emotions through movement and sound.

Nature Noticings

- We encouraged students to take nature walks between classes and journal. While not all students completed these reflections, those who did found great value in the experience.

The **chat box** was a really important space for connection and conversation.

- The chat was used to affirm wisdom shared by both students and teachers. At points, it was also a space for critical dialogue and questioning. Everyones used it respectfully, even in moments of disagreement.

2 lead teachers + teachers who participated in the sessions as co-learners and support. They could observe students reactions, respond to needs, and engage in the chat conversations

<p>MilaNote We are grateful for this collaborative workspace where we hosted the class. Why MilaNote?</p>	<p>Values Alignment – In MilaNote everyone has the power to add or delete course content. The teaching team extended trust, & shared the responsibility to care for our collective digital place with students.</p>
<p>MilaNote made it easy to make our digital place visually appealing; it could be colourful, include gifs, and accommodate divergent thinking.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students created vision boards and mapped their networks of care on MilaNote. They could write in linear text, share thoughts digital post-it style, make mind-maps, create mood boards + more! 	
<p>Access – Some students would join class on their phone which made using Zoom and MilaNote at once challenging. We gave students the option to share ideas in the Zoom chat so we could add their contribution to MilaNote for them.</p> <p>Realtime co-creating – In many classes, we asked students to add content to a shared space, mimicking a lot of collaborative processes we might have engaged in person. We encouraged emoji-reacting to boost ideas!</p>	
<p>Adapting – we listened to students when they expressed feeling overwhelmed and overworked. We delayed one class and turned it into a bonus session. This freed up 2hrs of dedicated project work vs the normal 45 min we planned for.</p>	
<p>Challenges</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sessions were cut to 2.5hrs from the 3–4 hrs we scheduled for the in person version of R+R. Tough decisions had to be made around what to include or not; many sessions felt very full. • Collaborating off camera – not all students were able or willing to join on camera. While we still connected over chat, it was difficult as educators to gauge student reactions and sense how the session was going.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Heavy load online / screen fatigue – most students were working and/or in full time school online while taking R+R, spending many hours of the day on screens. • Missing the informal time around classes for relationship building. Time before class starts, the conversations that come up as we trickle out of class together. At the opening session, some students stayed a full hour after class. 	
<p>Teaching In The Digital Realm 17</p>	

"This program has rekindled my love of learning and sharing.

And I just feel so connected to all of you even through zoom... the energy that you resonate and that you have – it's so so beautiful."

– R+R participant



Teaching in the Digital Realm

Tensions and Digital Manifesto

In the bonus session of the program, we reflected on the tensions of the digital age – the magic of online spaces and the drain. Below are two collaborative spaces created in class. The first highlighting tensions that we reflected on together. The second is a manifesto, put together in 20 minutes, imagining forward the kind of digital world we want to live in.

Our emotions from last time....

annoying,	rejuvenating,
infuriating,	liberating,
anxious,	connect with others
overwhelming,	excited
isolated,	valuable
loss of privacy	Groom & turn off notifications
lack of human	educational
eye strain,	entertaining
guilty,	relief
draining	
stressful	
unproductive,	
missing human connection	
nervous	
wellbeing suffers	
mental exhaustion,	
doom scrolling	
project negative feelings to others	

What we love or find useful about digital tools or ecologies

(for us, our community, planet,

accessibility, ability to love openly across time and space and distances, resource sharing, connecting to people and creating relationships that are reciprocal across platforms/artistic collab etc.

being able to communicate sometimes effectively with people who are far away

studying, reading, access to helpful and thoughtful information, watching interviews on youtube of people who inspire me, podcasts, watching films i wouldn't have access to without the digital, discovering new and old music, downloading pdf books

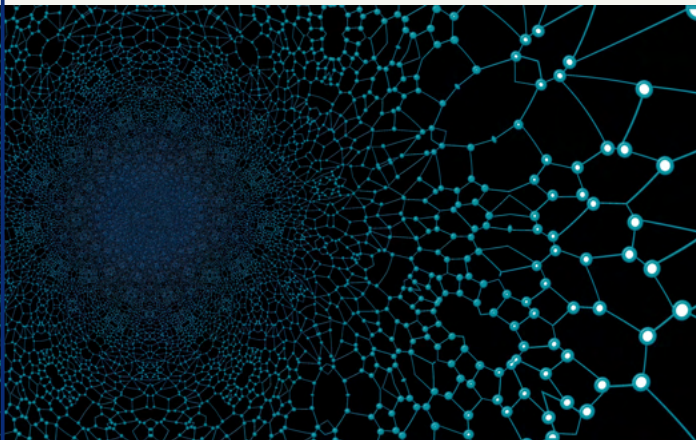
Collaborate with technology on world generating

Seeing news and stories that media corps would never publish or cover.

connecting with soul family across the globe that i otherwise would not be connected to

I love seeing all the different ways people live - helps me imagine what is possible for myself. what i want for my own future + what I don't.

The wealth and accessibility of technical information (cooking, sewing, crafts, gardening, etc)



Tensions

What we dislike or find challenging about digital tools or ecologies (for us, our community, planet, society)

it can be hard to focus on things, there are so many distractions, and it doesn't fully replace in-person interactions

IT'S ADDICTIVE QUALITY!!!! GRRRR makes me feel like i lack control (which is really lack of discipline)

What I am shown on my phone and social media (and google search) is chosen by corporations with the goal of profit not freedom.

So many options with their own learning curve

8 words

addictive, easy to fall into bad habits (endless/mindless scrolling), looking at peoples profile - comparing other people to yourself, judgement, access to overwhelming negative information

No real control or transparency in SM. Both in the algorithms but also just the very literal specifics of my SM platforms. A whole group got deleted and I never even got a notification.

One act of **SEEKING BALANCE** or **RESISTANCE** or **RESTRAINT** to practice this month

can compete/compare yourself to others or practice radical vulnerability and connect and share while enforcing boundaries in a space that can also teach you these tools

turning off all push notifications, airplane mode when at home, deleting apps, auditing the information kept on my phone (photos, contacts, apps, notes etc) and deleting/purging what i no longer need, only using instagram for half an hour a day, only using email when it's on laptop - never on iPhone, designated time to check messages - no more constant checking, setting boundaries, recognizing when you have impulses to check you phone and calling yourself out, 'stopping the cycle'

Being aware of how much time is spent on screens and why, purposely taking time to not be on screens

Make a chart of which technologies are essential for which modern task, Choosing days to engage or not with these different types of tools, learn about an old technology, or a new one.

trying to start my day without digital devices, (wake up and move or be slow for 2 hours) allows me to resist the pull towards using social media throughout my day - also helps me begin with a higher consciousness

Never relying on any **single** digital company. Diversify your digital investments so that a single source can't control you.

deleting my phone's news app - choosing my own sources of news more actively.

Digital Manifesto

Please Zoom in to view details!

A Manifesto is.....

- **A list of numbered tenets** (Sense of urgency)
- **Challenge and provoke** (Impossible, unpredictable)
- **Are advertisements** (Promote a movement)
- **Come in many forms** (Writing, Art? Music?)
- **Better short than long- maybe visual?**
- **Are theatrical- maybe visual?**
- **Are fiction dressed as fact**
- **Embrace paradox**
- **Are on the cutting edge** (Make it new and edgy!)
- **Are magic (almost)** (A dream!)

The XXX MANIFESTO (a good title?)

POINT #1

SOVEREIGNTY

Our tools will empower us Cyborgs to

- 1: be adaptable
- 2: to form ideas of our own, "deprogram ourselves" outside of dominant programming and monolithic thinking
- 3: cultivate the beauty + strength of our imaginations!!!

POINT #2



Connecting across digital platforms to create nomadic communities that have access to one another and trade systems that exist outside of a commodification framework

Start typing...

Start typing...

Our Internet Space



We will work for a socially just internet and set of digital tools that addresses systemic racism, sexism, homophobia and all forms of hate and discrimination

The internet is a place where people have autonomy over their data, and can assert control over that data in an accessible way.

The internet - or the Mindstream - is a digital ecology that intimately connects our souls, and it should be treated as such.

We the Cyborgs demand access to free and humane internet communication spaces

There should be a myriad of ways and organizations through which we can access a free and accessible internet. The internet **must** be a rhizome.

finding ways to create the hardware for technology that is less exploitative (recycle vs. constant mining)

Finding a positive space. So much of the Internet has become negative or overwhelming. It is also addictive in its own way and many people no longer connect with the world outside of technology. It would be so beneficial to find a way to create that time away from tech

Well Beings



Principles of reciprocity and spirituality to be grounded in the design and use of all tools and ecologies.

Give everyone their own garden and all the support to care for it well.

Access to Space, the right sky, imagining, the hugeness of reality.

A space where practices of slowing down can be shared

A space where we learn to evoke our other senses (beyond visual/auditory)

Recognizing that everything is art, and everyone has not only the capacity but the drive to create

We will reclaim and build our TIME and SPACE that serves us.

Well. Being. or LIVING WELL must include all world views and cosmologies of balance with people, plants, planet and more than humans -- Inter connections matter!

We will include human and more than humans in the good use of technology for wellbeing of all species of the planet...

Shared Principles / Values Lead The Way of our Forming Digital Commons



Principles / Values First - We the Cyborgs will create a platform that gathers folks with common visions of Freedom + Justice, who share common values and principles. We will use this space to interweave our global community and strengthen the mobilization and interconnectivity of our movements.

We strengthen ourselves underground through this tool, like Mycelium!

new perspective / new possibilities

a recontextualization of our relationship with digital

a reclamation of our power - we have the ability to make the digital work for our lifestyles

7 principles that guided
our program flow:

Gratitude

Care

Inspiration

Resilience

Disruption

Joy

Uplifting Transformation

The image is a screenshot of a PDF viewer displaying a slide from a program guide. The slide has a dark green background with white text. The title is "Rooted and Rising" in a large, bold font, followed by the subtitle "LEARNING TO GET ALONG" in a smaller, bold font. Below the subtitle is a paragraph of text: "The next 12 weeks together are all about taking control of your life, stepping into empowering friendships, and leading changes in our collective ways of living. RaR is a healing space for radical disruption. A time to slow down, build character and gain clarity." The slide is part of a larger presentation, as indicated by a sidebar on the left showing thumbnails of other slides (numbered 1 through 5) and a navigation bar at the top of the viewer showing "3 / 16" and "58%".

Rooted and Rising
LEARNING TO GET ALONG

The next 12 weeks together are all about taking control of your life, stepping into empowering friendships, and leading changes in our collective ways of living. RaR is a healing space for radical disruption. A time to slow down, build character and gain clarity.

THE PROGRAM FLOW TOLD THROUGH

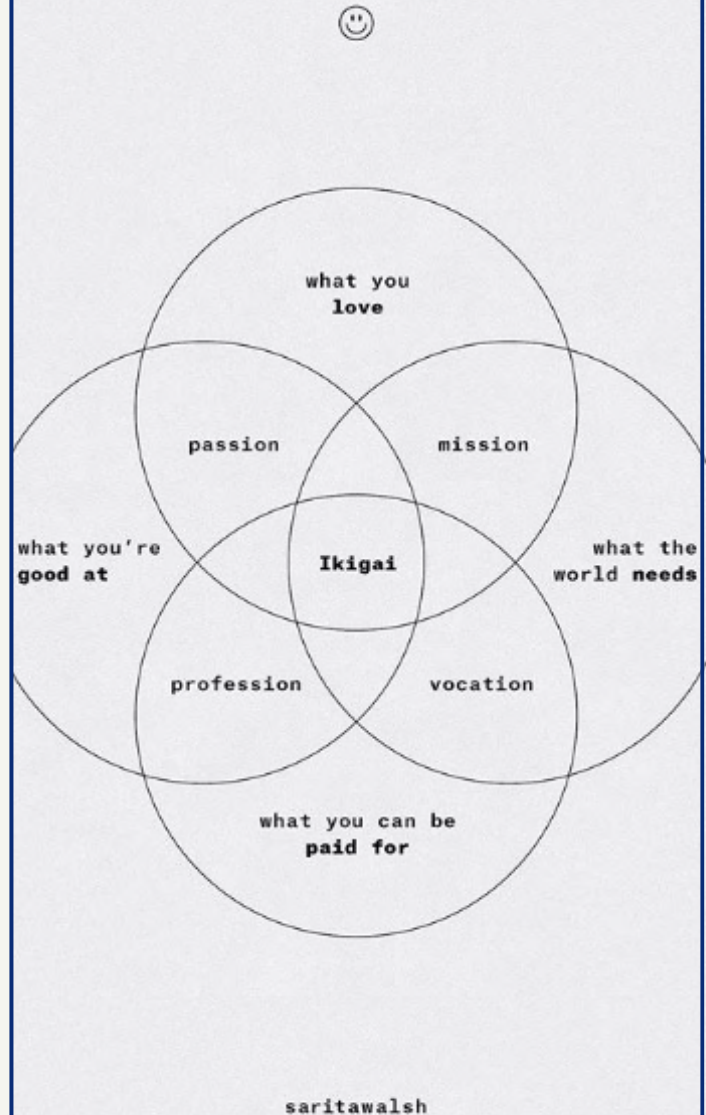
7, 8, 9, 10) Resilience: Networking &

7, 8, 9, 10) Resilience:

Session Highlights

We want to highlight some of the sessions that best represent the values and goals that we had for this program. Each session brought with it lessons, both from what went well and from what could have been improved. Additionally, so much of the richness of each session came from the wise contributions of the youth who never stopped teaching each other and the teaching team.

Every session was designed to align with one or two of the core values of the program, but as we went the values seemed to sprout up in surprising places.



Session 1: Opening Ceremony with Elder Whabagoon
 Session 5: Choosing Projects
 Session 6: Disability Justice and Death

"I feel in rooted and rising, I have learned to be less afraid of the things that I truly care about. I have learned to be patient with myself and understand, I am a process. I want to give myself the time and space to trust myself and to trust in my own strength."

Session 1: Opening Ceremony with Elder Whabagoon

We began the program the way we began each session, with **gratitude**. Our first session was a unique opportunity in this distanced and digital time to meet together on the land, in a ceremony dedicated to expressing our gratitude. We met by the Humber River [[More about the site](#)]. We offered tobacco and asked for Elder Whabagoon to guide us in opening our space. We planned very little and trusted Elder Whabagoon to lead us in a good way.

Two weeks before the ceremony, three members of our teaching team, Doug Anderson, Roxy Cohen and Kristen Alaan Sison, met at the site to hold a fire and introduce themselves to the land. They spoke their intentions to the fire – allowing the elements and spirit to bear witness to what we wanted to create. This was also an opportunity to create a video where they introduced themselves and the land to the students.

The intention of this opening session was manifold. It was a response to the question: **What is a land acknowledgement, really?**

“The women who designed this course had a wonderful idea to **build the principle of gratitude in this. In spite of it all, there's something at the center that's going to give us the chance to be a bit more peaceful.** Isaac's video talks about going home – all it means, even if my family is not from this treaty area – wherever you are, you're home. We want the course to begin by slowing down and proceeding from this point. Slow down ...we have a lot of work to do, but we don't want people, including ourselves, to go into that heightened level of responsibilities without feeling comfortable and safe, so it's really important for those of us that's been struggling (and for me that's everyone I know). I want us to feel like, **let's take care, and slow down and think about it together.**” – Doug Anderson

Session 1: Opening Ceremony with Elder Whabagoon

The relationship between Indigenous peoples and treaty people / non-Indigenous people is related to what is happening on the land. Beginning our work together as a community with Elder Whabagoon, and grounding ourselves in our treaty relationships, connected us more deeply to our collective responsibility to the land, and to our reciprocal and interdependent relationships. We hoped that beginning in ceremony could **center us into our hearts during this time of chaos, allowing us to listen to the guidance that is always with us**, and that has brought us together as a community. This session opened a space for the youth to speak these intentions into the fire and in front of the birds and trees.

"Sitting around the fire is also about building relationships with one another. Coming into a space of ceremony is a way of centering and steadying ourselves in a time of chaos, with many things swirling around us. It's a way to fortify our strength, our spirits, and to be able to listen to the guidance that is always with us, and that has brought us together as a community. This is a way for us **to be grounded in this place that we have all been beautifully privileged to live on and ask how we can do that in more intentful and caring ways together.**"

- Kristen Alaan Sison

"The opening ceremony brought me a lot closer to myself. The dedicated space to think without distraction in a different way than I do in my day to day life made me realize some things within my current situation and I was really grateful for that"

Listen to a 7 minute podcast episode with Elder Whabagoon, as she shares a teaching about offering gratitude to the Four Directions: tinyurl.com/k5jup9bn

Structure and Accessibility Notes

2 groups in person and 1 online. 12–2pm, 2:30–4:30pm, online 6–8pm

In an effort to make this opening as accessible as possible, and to support the health and safety of participants we split the group into two and also hosted an online session for those who could not participate in person. The complexity of this moment was reflected in the number of Covid19 scares and the challenges of travelling to and arriving at the site.

We learned a lot of **lessons** from planning, participating in and reflecting on this session. We were reminded of the **joy** of informal after class social space when the second half of the group stayed almost a full hour extra, hanging out with Elder Whabagoon, her partner Carl and each other. Before we entered Covid19 Lockdown we talked about having a drop in space once a week in the middle of the week, but in the rush to adapt to the new circumstances this was never created.

"I felt very connected to nature. I remember the Elder saying the birds and nature will speak to you. And then Kristen was talking and the birds just started going crazy. And I've never experienced that in my life. And I felt like that was my moment."

It was extremely clear throughout the program that youth wanted to be on the land more. Elder Whabagoon gifted us with songs and teachings and opened webs of communication and a container in which we could all connect with self, spirit, our winged relations, trees, wind, fire, Earth, water, each other.

At the same time, the online space made the session more accessible to many and the online group also had a good session. One student reported this was the first zoom call she had ever felt fully present and focused in.

The second in-person group had no time restraints, and many participants stayed a full hour afterwards talking informally with each other, Elder Whabagoon, and the teaching team.

Sierra's Future

- Note
- Link
- To-do
- Line
- Board
- Column
- Comment
- Add image
- Upload file
- Trash

Sunrises, Sunsets, Stars at Night, Moon Phases

Protection of our natural wonders and ecosystems

Plants we see growing every year in their respective seasons

Not Just Sustainable, but Resilient!! Organic + Non-GMO!
Locally Grown + Fair Trade! Permaculture Instead!
Aquaponics Systems! STABLE FOOD SYSTEM!!!

👍 1 🍌 1 🗨️

First Vision Board
[September 25th to October 17th]

Zakirah's Future

Community Gardening! giving people access to fresh food produced close to home and fostering a sense of community within urban spaces :)

This is an example of aquaponics and how we could incorporate biodiversity into farming in the city

taking over unused parking garages (when we eliminate cars) to garden or make indoor parks

I hate living in the sky because I don't feel rooted or close to nature but perhaps we could bring that nature to the sky

Some people find it scary or apocalyptic how the earth could take over like this if we stopped fighting it off or lost to its power but I find it beautiful how resilient nature truly is

Another way to make green buildings while enjoying the beauty of architecture

Turning Spaces No longer in use into green spaces

Green buildings which could grow food

building homes around nature

Adding Plants to the buildings- vertical gardens

Session 5: Choosing Projects

This session was a two part, and both are definitely worth highlighting. This first part was a simple but highly effective exercise designed to both broaden our perceptions of leadership and give youth the language to help them articulate and acknowledge their own leadership traits. The second portion had only one aim, to decide on projects and get people into project groups.

"Acknowledge that we are chronically imperfect and human, and **our limits guide us to remember that we need each other.** Instead of the usual comparison of "oh they have this gift, I don't, I'm worthless," shift to: "awesome, they can do that, and all of us are filling in this web." - Kristen

One of the biggest takeaways from the first activity was the diversity of strengths. The group was surprised and excited to see gifts that they had never thought of as possible leadership traits. Though the young people expressed a discomfort naming their gifts (another symptom of imposter syndrome, perhaps?), the simplicity of reacting to leadership traits in a shared Milanote board allowed the young people to overcome this discomfort. By the end, youth were even adding their own new suggestions to the board based on the gifts they carry that were not initially named.

Many of the young people reflected on wanting gifts and traits that they didn't identify with. They expressed a sense of longing and desire for gifts that they don't have or once had. This also led to an acknowledgement of the cyclic nature of the gifts we hold and that at different times in our life we hold different gifts.

"Our gifts cycle as we go through different cycles and circumstances." - Field

Leadership Qualities / Skills / Strengths

A snapshot of the interactive board we created in MilaNote with some qualities and styles of leadership. Students emoji reacted to gifts they felt they carried. Zoom in!



Getting into groups was a slightly more challenging task. There was a lot of inspiration and a desire to take on often grand projects that would have been difficult to complete in the time remaining. It was also hard to pick, and many people were torn between many different projects. We did manage to get folks to settle on a handful of amazing projects but reflecting on this, we wish we had used this as an opportunity to revisit the interconnectedness between the various groups intentions. Additionally, we could have revisited the idea of **fractal change**, where in the small and large are mirrors of each other. Allowing us to see that **the small things we do, are a piece of the larger, and ever growing and changing path towards more life-giving human systems.**

"We wish we got to do this kind of work in school." – 2 participants on the freedom to choose projects

"My leadership is going to change as I continue to progress in terms of what my strengths as a leader are, I feel especially through this program. I feel like I've learned a lot about myself, in terms of how I feel I fit into a movement. I don't necessarily feel like I'm the best person delegating or doing things like that, but I do feel that communication is a stronger point for me and so learning how to use that in an effective way I think is really important."

Chat

in the darkest situations and using it to effectively create change personally or in the world

From . to Everyone:
i felt that resilience is also about being able to endure whatever challenges come our way without sacrificing parts of ourselves

From . to Everyone:
I wrote that care is ensuring that you are both healthy and happy. It is especially important in this turbulent time, with so many crises surrounding us.

From . to Everyone:
yes! this is like a bigger thing as well but often people forget to feel good because so much time is spent on theoretically feeling good later

From . to Everyone:
but i think taking care is not necessarily something that needs to be prepared for

From . to Everyone:
"less prep, more presence"

"The biggest thing that I've learned is to connect with a deeper part of myself and to trust that part of myself within me. That sums it up quite well."
- R+R participant



Session 6: Disability Justice and Death

This session was the second part of our dual session on **care** and **resilience**. While the first session focused on mapping our networks of relationship, responsibility and care, the second brought back themes of interdependence through conversations about disability justice and death.

"Relationships of reciprocity is the meaning of life from where I'm standing" – Field

"It is from being disabled that I have learned about the dangerous and privileged "myth of independence" and embraced **the power of interdependence. Interdependency is both "you and I" and "we."** It is solidarity, in the best sense of the word. It is inscribing community on our skin over and over and over again." – Mia Mingus, Interdependency

The session fell on Samhain, the gaelic pagan holiday that celebrates the thinning of the veil between the world of the living and the spirit world. It was a perfect opportunity to explore our connections to the ancestors and to the cycles of life and death, and how they connect to the work of climate justice.

Our intention was twofold: to expand our understanding of **Life-Death-Life Cycles**, and connect to our sense of **Interdependence**. To hold space for what is dying and also what continues to live and be powerful and beautiful despite normative expectations, and the harms and violence of capitalism, colonialism, and other systems of oppression. Our aim was to connect this way of thinking to our work to confront the climate crisis as a system that arises out of our sense of separation from each other. We need to disrupt the idea that other beings (humans and non-humans alike) are disposable or part of some lifeless process of machination.

"We need to think about life at all times of creation. Even under dire circumstances of climate change. How can we love and build right relation with profoundly polluted water, water that we are entangled in harming through the infrastructures and systems we have to live through (sewers, garbage, industrialism)?" – Erin Marie Komsmo, Indigenous and Decolonizing Studies in Education

Session 6: Disability Justice and Death

A digital dambana, or altar, to hold space for our expansive conversation on life/death, and honour our collective grief.

The screenshot shows a digital altar interface with a dark background. At the top, the title "life/death/life" is centered, with navigation options "Editable via link", "Published", "Export", and "Zoom out" on the right. A "0 Unsorted" indicator is in the top right corner. On the left, there is a circular image of a full moon. Below it, a white box contains the text: "Intent: Many traditions believe that around this time of year, the veils between the material and the spirit realm grow thin. Festivals that give us collective space and permission to grieve, share stories, foods, pictures, and our love for those who have left help us cope with loss. They remind us that all we've loved in others is meant to live through us, that honouring our ancestors is an action, and that we shouldn't take our joy for granted or mistake our pain for something permanent. So much of our purpose is revealed to us inside of paradigms that know all of life is a cycle and that we are an important part of its cycle. We are never individuals making our way in the world alone; we are strands of vast tapestries that weave all of time together. - Chani Nicholas on Scorpio Season". In the center, a white box reads: "A space to grieve. To honour and pay respect to all that has come before, and that which is passing away." Below that, another white box contains a quote: "Our grief for the Earth is the measure of the depth of our love; and love is the material of transformation" "Feeling the wounds of the world propels us" "We remember that the plants have not succumbed to despair - they are growing on the mine waste - they are healing land, storing carbon and holding biodiversity. They are making food, medicine, and beauty. They give more than they take and heal the earth. Surely we can do the same." - Robin Wall Kimmerer. To the right of this quote is a large block of green text: "UNTIL WE CAN GRIEVE FOR OUR PLANET WE CANNOT LOVE IT— GRIEVING IS A SIGN OF SPIRITUAL HEALTH. BUT IT IS NOT ENOUGH TO WEEP FOR OUR LOST LANDSCAPES; WE HAVE TO PUT OUR HANDS IN THE EARTH TO MAKE OURSELVES WHOLE AGAIN. EVEN A WOUNDED WORLD IS FEEDING US. EVEN A WOUNDED WORLD HOLDS US, GIVING US MOMENTS OF WONDER AND JOY. I CHOOSE JOY OVER DESPAIR. NOT BECAUSE I HAVE MY HEAD IN THE SAND, BUT BECAUSE JOY IS WHAT THE EARTH GIVES ME DAILY AND I MUST RETURN THE GIFT." Below the green text is a small image of green leaves. On the far right, there are two vertical text columns: "AS WE NAVIGATE IN A PANIC GENTLY ACROSS THE DEATH EXPERIENCE WHICH WE SYMBOLICALLY AND COLLECTIVELY" and "WE CHOOSE TO SURRENDER NEW BEGINNINGS ASKED TO BRING US TO TRUST IN OUR CHANGING TRANSFORMATION". At the bottom right, there is a white box with a card icon and the text: "Ecocide: criminalized human activity that violates the principles of environmental justice, as by substantially damaging or destroying ecosystems or by harming the health and well-being of a species (including humans). Solastalgia: as a kind of affliction, a grief for places erased. https://www.earthisland.org/journal/index.php/articles/entry/eicturing-nature".

"Pray for the water regardless of its health – our culture wants us to think in binary of pure / impure, disentangling from this idea that once something is polluted, it doesn't have value – which is a very extractive framework to view things in – if we only view people as resources and ways we can extract from them, of course we will only classify them by how they can serve us." - Clemi

Lessons: Disability Justice teaches us how to deepen our care for one another. To create communities that embrace our interdependence, and live in more reciprocal relationships. The structures we live in have pulled us from our spiritual connections intentionally; it is a spiritual crisis that we are in, and remembering our connection to Spirit, our ancestors, and the unseen is deeply needed now. "Love is the material of transformation, and grief is a measure of the depth of our love." Our community had a lot to say about expanding our understanding of death! An affirmation of the need to create more spaces to honour our grief in community, and be with the teachings of death.



"The lessons I've learned from rooted and rising are: it is possible and to let go of all the jadedness, and to let myself have periods of caring for myself. Second, to approach the world with tenderness and openness and to reduce harm everywhere for myself and for everyone... and always lead with kindness because we're allowed to do that."

Exercise Highlight: Imposter Syndrome

"i lovedddd the workshop by dr. joseph smith!! that was soooo interesting to me (and called me out hehe!!)" - Rooted and Rising Participant

During the 7th Rooted and Rising class, teaching team member Joseph Smith led one of the most stand out activities of the program. This exercise asked participants to review an imposter syndrome questionnaire to determine how much you experience the symptoms of imposter syndrome.

The exercise started by asking the participants to imagine and draw a representation of a community they are a part of, if they were no longer there. While initially students were nervous to share their drawings, once one person shared many others also wanted to. We only had time for 2, but students were eagerly putting their drawing into the camera & holding them there for a long time.

These exercises on imposter syndrome really resonated with the young people. Many of them experienced this phenomenon and felt both seen and called out by the questionnaire in particular. Through this recognition, we saw that the youth felt less alone, especially since the teaching team members expressed that they too experienced many of the symptoms of imposter syndrome listed. This exercise was helpful in **building empathy for self**, and in the long term, hopefully that empathy will increase the youths' **resilience**.

"With Rooted and Rising I'm learning that, baby steps are still steps, and I should acknowledge that. From my time at Rooted and Rising I've learned so much about the world, but also about myself as well. I've learned that I have mild imposter syndrome, but I was like, you know what, that's ok. I want to learn how to improve that." - Rooted and Rising Participant

Natural Law and Western Law

In our second to last content based session, we split the time in half with the first devoted to an overview of western concepts of law and personhood and the second devoted to a presentation on natural law. Joseph Smith, who also led the session on imposter syndrome, presented on western law. While Doug Anderson, who was also involved in planning the opening session on the land, presented on natural law.

It was immediately clear that the format and/or the content of the western law presentation was creating a strong emotional response for the youth. The chat began to pop off with comments about feelings of discomfort, and a sense that the presentation was reminding them of past challenging experiences in university classrooms. However, the sense of challenge and discomfort was not limited to the first half of the session. The chat remained active throughout Doug's presentation, and the youth continued to ask challenging questions of Doug and of each other.

The level of tension and conflict that emerged through this session was stimulating and also demonstrative of the value of **disruption** that we were intending to engage during this session. Our original intention was to create a space where we could **disrupt our ways of thinking** and knowing, making space for new paradigms to bloom. However, we did not expect the youth to so clearly embody the spirit of disruption throughout the session. During this session more than any other time in the program, the youth challenged the structure, and ideas being put forward in the session. We know that "disruptive" is usually a description applied to negative behaviour that undermines the intentions of the class. In this case, we use "**disruptive**" and "**disruption**" to **describe the ways that the youth felt empowered to challenge us on our own assumptions and to drive forward conversations that were revealing, instructive and inspiring.**

"This is a place to start with a retelling of stories, honoring of spirits and noticing of the land that surrounds all of our rivers. These few months were a calm pool of reflection and its ripples will continue to be moments that I let myself cascade into depth of thought and being. I remember now that the value of water in its most original form, my own value as a little river, and the value of other knowledgeable and wonderful water bodies like all of you are immeasurable."



Natural Law and Western Law

Reflecting on this session we want to acknowledge the real discomfort that the first presentation about western law created. We really hear the young people who told us that this presentation centering the ideas of a series of old white men was not what they wanted or expected. We think that this discomfort could have been eased by properly framing this presentation as being in conversation with the presentation on Natural Law that followed it. We also think that it is possible that the format of the presentation, which was almost a lecture, created a bit of friction because of the participatory space we held in throughout the rest of the sessions. If we were to engage with this content in a future version of Rooted and Rising, we would anticipate the challenge of having these conversations and create more space for the emotional reaction that the young people have to these western philosophies.

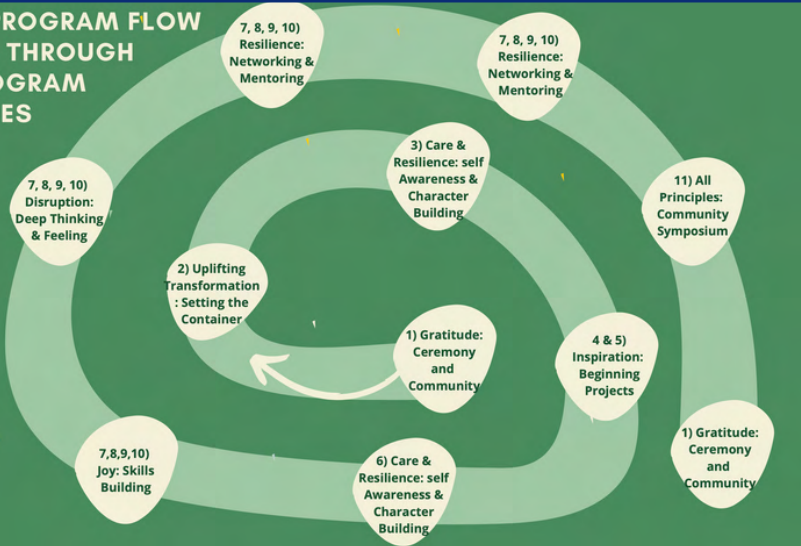
Another take away from this session was a sense of **joy** and **celebration**. **We were excited to see that the young people felt comfortable to voice their concerns and discomforts**. Throughout the session, the young people challenged the ideas, and structure, and did not hesitate to speak up, even with ideas being put forward by those much older than them. We hope that this indicates a comfort, sense of **ownership over the space**, and **flattening of the participant-facilitator hierarchy**, all of which were clear goals for the space. We also felt honoured to witness the young people's willingness to engage in contentious conversations with each other. Some even offered to extend the conversation beyond the time constraints of the session. We love that rather than being intimidated by these points of tension or conflict the young people wish to continue to work through the most challenging ideas they encountered.

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4:36:13 From [REDACTED] (she/her/they) : there is id
4:36:20 From [REDACTED] : -- do you want to video it during the break? that would be a cool breakout room
4:36:26 From [REDACTED] : Gravity is a natural law in our world, not a sacred law. There are worlds without gravity.
4:36:29 From [REDACTED] (He/Him) : [REDACTED] - if you live in Toronto, and would like to take a distanced walk on the land and
that further, Im in
4:37:13 From [REDACTED] : if something came and hit the earth, gravity would change haha
4:37:22 From [REDACTED] : Iâ€™m not in toronto unfortunately but we could continue in a breakout room ig
4:38:14 From [REDACTED] : lol my lyft driver is so patient w all these sounds
4:38:19 From [REDACTED] : worlds without gravity? You realise gravity is a field that exists throughout the
universe?
4:38:23 From [REDACTED] (she/her) : LOOOOL
4:38:35 From [REDACTED] : i cant lie that was funny
4:38:58 From [REDACTED] : lol yes! thatâ€™s the point haha bring in some funny :)
4:39:47 From [REDACTED] (she/her/they) : I'm really glad for all this chatting in the chat, these were the types of spaces I was
hoping for to have these conversations in, even with the tensions sometimes because there's a safeness and respect for differing
opinions
4:40:31 From [REDACTED] (she/her) : this music>>> im vibinggg
4:44:43 From [REDACTED] : I hope I didnâ€™t miss too much. My students came knocking at my door cause the laundry room
is broken ðŸ”
4:44:58 From [REDACTED] : You are right as far as this particular level of reality goes, and from that perspective, Iâ€™m
speaking in non-scientific lay terms. So materially, gravity exists throughout the material universe, but its force varies. But
gravity as we know it would be very different elsewhere. But beyond that, gravity may emanate from a profounder â€œbeyond place or
spaceâ€ ; as I understand it there are â€œlayersâ€ of reality that are beyond all form (which includes human thought, which is
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Short Summaries of all Sessions

THE PROGRAM FLOW TOLD THROUGH 7 PROGRAM VALUES



Follow our Program Spiral, beginning with Gratitude

Opening Ceremony on the Land (full description in section 4)

Session 2 – Uplifting Transformation: In this session, students engaged in discussions about the root causes of climate change and began to hone in on their visions for the future and intentions for the course. Andrea Bastien and Roxy Cohen led youth through the creation of personal vision boards for a better world.

Session 3 – Care and Resilience Pt. 1: The youth created care maps to help them reflect on their relationships to other beings. Kristen Alaan Sison and Bella Lyne led a discussion on interdependence and reciprocity that helped draw attention to the networks of human and more than human beings that surround and support the young people.

Session 4 – Inspiration Panel: This panel took place before picking projects. It included representatives from a variety of organizations including many of our project partners. Guests included staff from the David Suzuki Foundation and Generation Chosen, youth activists from Fridays For Future and Conscious Minds Co-op, R+R educator Doug Anderson, and Mike Schreiner, Leader of the Green Party of Ontario.

Session 5 – Choosing Projects (See description in section 4 above)

Session 6 – Care and Resilience Pt. 2 (See description in section 4 above)

Short Summaries of all Sessions

Session 7 – Communication (see also description on Imposter Syndrome): In addition to the imposter syndrome activities described below, Roxy Cohen and Joseph Smith led a communication activity called straight talk, and showed a video and led a discussion on creativity.

Session 8 – Project Work: Instead of additional content, the youth took this session to work on their projects.

Session 9 – Western Law and Natural Law (See description above)

Session 10 – Banking: A guest speaker from one of our funders and partners DUCA Impact lab joined us to talk about finance and its relation to the climate crisis.

Session 11 – Project Report Back: This was the first half of our closing weekend. Each group reported back to the rest about their project and the experience of completing it.

Session 12 – Leadership Statements: In this final session the youth presented leadership statements describing their learning throughout the course, sharing their leadership qualities, gifts, and visions of a climate just future. Youth were encouraged to invite witnesses to join this session, many invited friends or family members to join in this final celebration.

Bonus – The Digital Age – In this session, Dr. Kate Tilleczek shared research she and colleagues have undertaken to slow down with youth and examine our rapidly developing relationships with/in online. We explored the range of emotions and tensions that come up when experiencing online spaces. Then, we created a Manifesto for the Digital Age – dreaming the kind of digital world we do want to live in.

"This community is such a warm place. Everyone is so accepting, it's just like: you're here! and it feels like when we're all together it's possible to do things."



Eden's Future

0 Unsorted



Photo by [Oliver Cole](#)



Photo by [ev](#)



Photo by [Katrina Wright](#)

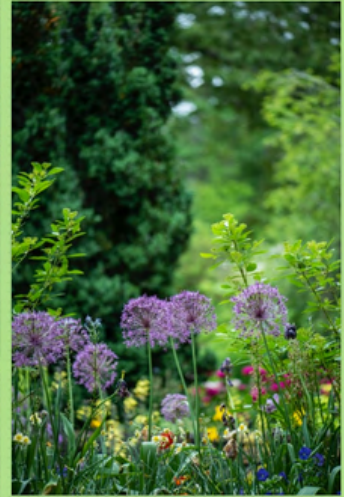


Photo by [Victor Garcia](#)

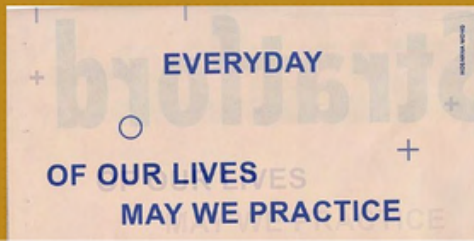
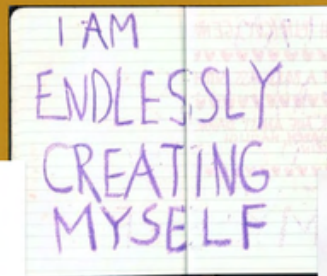
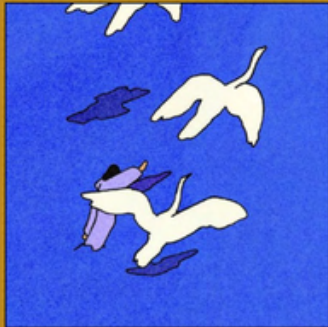


Photo by [Kamala Saraswathi](#)



Kristen's Future

0 Unsorted



Student Projects

In the last month of the program, students self-organized into projects, rooting into group activations and connecting with each other through shared passions. We disrupted traditional understandings of leadership, making space for students to embody the kind of leadership they wish to see. Students identified their personal strengths, gifts, and passions as the seeds of their projects!

After hearing from a panel of representatives from our partner organizations, the students were encouraged to dream. We supported their organizing process through group brainstorming and project plan templates. The range of projects were beautiful, with many connecting to the work of our partners:

One team took up Mike Schreiner’s policy-work invitation. They developed arguments and early plans to establish youth councils on climate change in each district of the province. In the 1992 Rio Declaration aka Agenda 21 Canada agreed to youth councils at every level of government. This team asked: how can we activate past promises without going to a new vote, because it’s already been agreed to?

Inspired by Yannick from David Suzuki Foundation’s thoughts on systems thinking, a second group started to develop a simple computer simulation that allows people to explore the food system, and the complex web of other systems to which it is connected.

A third group made up of artists, aspiring teachers and Conscious Minds Cooperative members, developed the concept, text and illustrations for a children’s book that teaches about respect for water.

Group 4 created a video series uplifting the voices of youth climate activists who wouldn’t normally label themselves “activists” but still do important climate justice work.

Student Projects

Group 5 created three stickers meant to be plastered around the city as a reminder of life-forms and ways of being that used to thrive where the city stands now, and could exist again. The stickers depict a caribou, a canoe and corn, and printed versions were sent to each program participant along with their certificates at the end of the program.

Group 6 focused on the possibilities for intergenerational healing through working with clay. They arranged a private workshop with Filipina artists Tamara + Hilary where [they filmed a video](#) on the power & importance of making studio spaces accessible for BIPOC youth to create, especially with Earth.

Group 7 worked with one member of the teaching team to support the land restoration work they are doing outside the program – they planted 70 strawberry plants along the Humber River, and created a stop-motion video with a voice-over detailing strawberry teachings they received as they planted.



Stickers of Being Project



"When looking at your world in a way that respects all living things' processes, cultures, lessons, and languages, it highlights the fact that humans are just one finite dot in a complex connection of dots – rather than masters over everything they can manage to conquer. And this acknowledgement makes clear the responsibility we have to all the other beings connected in this web."



Waste is definitely a colonial construct



Help bring us back to ceremony



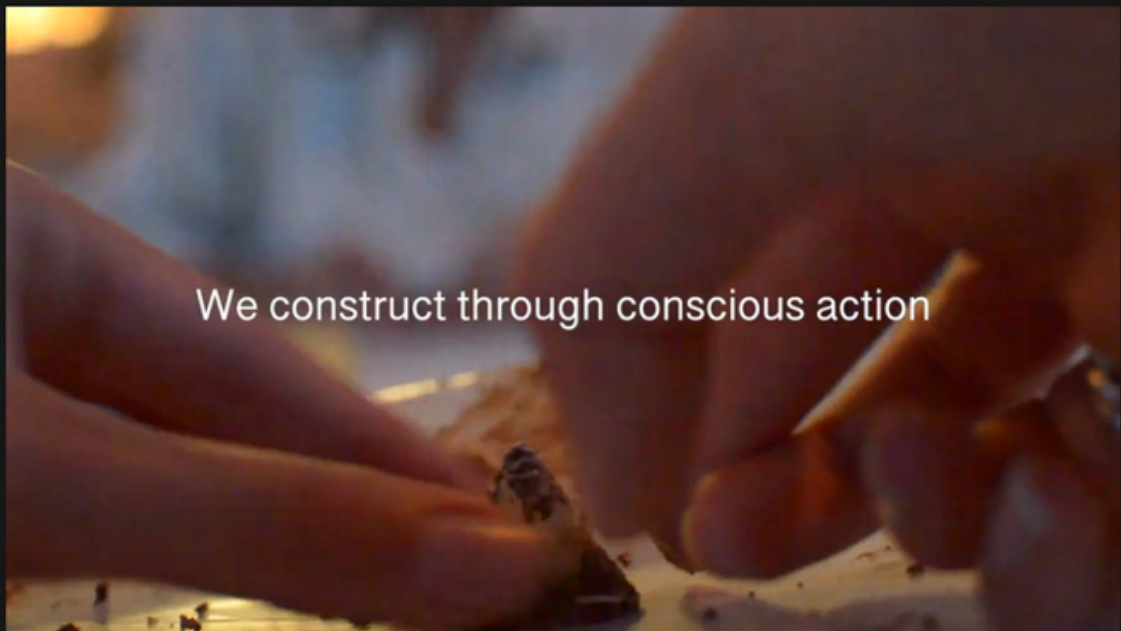
Connecting us to each other

Co-Creating through the Climate Crisis - Clay Project, Rooted and Rising



Through our collective healing

Co-Creating through the Climate Crisis - Clay Project, Rooted and Rising



We construct through conscious action

Co-Creating through the Climate Crisis - Clay Project, Rooted and Rising



We are caretakers & co-creators

Co-Creating through the Climate Crisis - Clay Project, Rooted and Rising



Love, Rooted & Rising

Co-Creating through the Climate Crisis - Clay Project, Rooted and Rising

Thank you to everyone at Rooted & Rising
It is an honour to heal, catalyze change,
& grow alongside you

Co-Creating through the Climate Crisis - Clay Project, Rooted and Rising

"I feel rooted and rising, I have learned to be less afraid of the things that I truly care about. I have learned to be patient with myself and understand, I am a process. I want to give myself the time and space and patience to sink further into these things that I care about. And allow myself to take up that space, and to trust myself and to trust in my own strength. Over time, I want to become a healer."



What Kind Of World Do Youth Want?

"A world where people have the time to just breathe without the immense worry of time or money or persecution. A world where people are free and equal and making that future possible is what I'm focused on next."

What Kind Of World Do Youth Want?

Declarations from our final Rooted and Rising Session:

"I want to live in a world where we co-exist peacefully, and where everyone has equal rights, and all have a sense of belonging and peacefulness. I want to live in a world where we share resources globally, and where everyone has their basic resources of food, water, happiness, shelter."

"The world I imagine is so complicated that I had to create a new political ideology."

"The world I want to live in is a world that's **peaceful, accepting of everyone, and fair**. I would like to live in a world where **we treat ourselves equal to the earth, not greater than the Earth.**"

"I would love to live on Earth where just **everybody sees everything and everyone as equal.**"

"I want to live in a world where people are **loved accepted and supported**, no matter what."

"I want to live in a world where **everyone feels like they have a purpose in life**, because everyone does have a purpose in life. "

"People can feel joyful, feel accepted, feel passionate, feel loved, feel with other living beings, plants, animals, whatever. Feel relaxed, feel safe, feel anger, feel sadness, I just want to create spaces like this."

What Kind Of World Do Youth Want?

"I have a sustainable healing lodge up there so this space right here – a ready, thriving community is the world I want to live in. I've grown up and been able to cultivate myself in spaces where so many beautiful leaders and compassionate people have an aim to build a world that we're all going to thrive in and feel compassionate and be accepted and have the supports to reach your best self in, and we all get together – it's such a catalyst for change."

"A world where children and young people's true selves are welcomed and encouraged, always a world that does not shame or guilt, a world of perpetual recontextualization"

"I want to live in the kind of world that holds to account the **inherent capabilities of every being** to live their best life, and for their uninhabited path to lead in that way."

"The kind of world I will live in is one where we all **actively look for gifts we can share with others, give freely** and accept the gifts that come to us as well. **Trusting we are here to bring out the best in everyone** without pressure, supporting each other."

"The kind of world I want to live in is one where I can **play**, and just have **fun**, where **money becomes a tool to empower people and not as a representation of power**. That's a world that I'd like to live in, where **everyone's more in tune with nature and more gratitude.**"

Jessica Huang's Future

- Note
- Link
- To-do
- Line
- Board
- Column
- Comment
- Add image
- Upload file
- Trash



Banff National Park



ties and human settlements
live, safe, resilient and



Unsorted

- I am happy.
- I am beautiful.
- I am healthy.
- I am strong.
- I love my body.
- I attract positivity.
- I attract opportunity.
- I attract love.
- I am kind.
- I am smart.
- I am confident.
- I am successful.
- I am worthy of all the blessings coming my way



Statement:
My name is Jessica Huang, but what some people may not know about me is that my middle name is my Chinese name which is Cece. It means smile. My mom named me that because she said I was always smiling a lot as a child. My last name connects to my ancestral roots because it is generations from my grandpa on my mom's side. My mom's side of the family has a huge family that has a huge history of how they each got to Canada. To have "Huang" as my last name is an honour to my ancestor to remember where I come from. My strengths are that I am a great multitasker, I enjoy working with others, and I am a great problem solver. As a leader, I believe I am great at taking initiative in group works. My purpose on this Earth is to teach and help others when they need someone to lean on. I want to live in a world that we are able to respect everyone around us regardless of our skin colour, the way we look or culture. I would like to live in a world where financial money is not a problem, all be able to own land and we all are able to afford healthy food. The lesson I am taking from my time in Rooted in Rising is to remember to connect with nature, water and our earth. I will remember to connect with the land we are on, and the different perspectives we can learn from all generations. As well as remember to care for ourselves and remember to slow down in the world we live in. The questions I have for myself are, what are ways I can reconnect with myself and boost my confidence? As well as what are ways I can connect with nature and water in the city? I am ready to learn more about the history of Indigenous people as well as the rights we have as humans.



in your twenties

Nyla's Future



Hold the teachings of the heart berry near



Have pride in my heritage and ancestry so that I can connect more deeply with others



keep playing!



What Kind Of World Do Youth Want?

"Rivers hold power, sustenance, and strength, and mine has given me the best parts of myself. Each day I dive into my river I connect to people. I wash over others with warmth, and **I remain fluid, in flux, never fully formed.** And so my world too forms and flows. It is ever changing – **a world with imagination and possibility.** It is **full of learning.** But most of all, it teaches me not to interpret the meanings too strongly, to be always open and stay true to my own meandering path. To not have only one aim and one way of looking at everything – to hold this, even through all the chaos and anxiety of now."

"I'd like to live **a free life where I have the time to be curious, and just exist,** which has been like a very current issue for me. I've been feeling so trapped to go off script, feeling so trapped and stuck with everything that goes on and it just feels like – everyone has decided my life for me, before I got the chance to decide what I want to do. Um, so yeah, the time to be curious, and just exist."

–

Some repeated key words: peace, acceptance, love, equal, joy, play, fun, passionate, gifts are honoured and encouraged, thrive. compassion, freedom to breathe

"I realized through programs like this, what my real strengths are. I am a healer...And I know that I am meant to be a teacher. I am a teacher, I am a healer, and I'm proud to do that, I'm proud to be that person."

"What I'm taking away from my time in R+R is: don't let the noise get to you. create your own Symphony... here all your reactions and all your sharings... this is the symphony, that we're going to go forward with, that's what I feel."

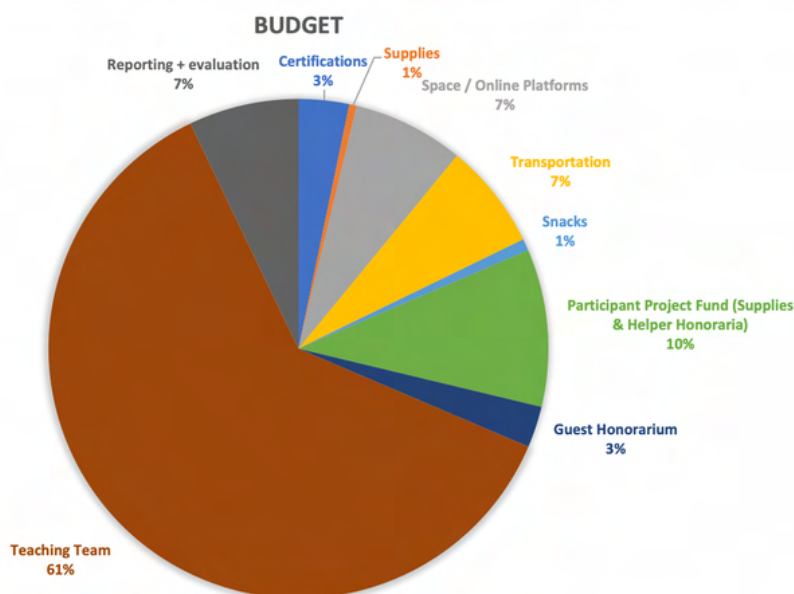
Teaching Team Testimonials

- I loved watching students become more vulnerable and gain confidence with their voice
- Made me feel full of possibility
- Couldn't wait for Saturdays
- Already miss the feeling, the community
- A lot of care and affirmation. A space where people could come and be loved on
- Witnessed sadness and anxiety dissipate over the learnings
- Heartening that it exists
- It will influence my work
- Unique Synergy
- Hesitation before we started being in an academic setting as someone who's explicitly not an academic – have found academic collaborations in the past to be flat. I had none of those feelings in this space
- Easy, effortless, joyful to work together
- Most powerful part of the program: people surrounding the younger people looking at difficult challenges and surrounding them in the way we have.
- Cute little notes and comments throughout create a feeling of an intimate, magical space
- Encourages magic, and intuitive connectivity to enter
- What you give, you create and receive back
- Quizzes and Archetypes that students can identify with + feel seen worked well, like the Leadership Qualities Board and the Imposter Syndrome Test

The R+R pilot program was offered at no financial costs to the participants. We sought funding to increase student and teaching team capacity to engage. Funds were used for transportation and food when we gathered in person, online tools and platforms, honoraria, administrative costs, and supplies.

We are particularly proud and excited about our **Project Fund**. Through these funds, students were able to purchase equipment and supplies, honour those who helped them in their project execution, and print tangible results. Out of this fund came stickers, photographs, a book, and more!

Some members of the teaching team received honoraria for their role in the creation and running of the program. These **honoraria represent approximately 10% of the amount of time invested** by the teaching team into the Rooted and Rising pilot.



In total we raised \$11,225.

Student Project Fund: \$1300

When projects started, students were told the total fund available, but no limits were set on how much an individual project could take. Each project was encouraged to spend what they needed while being considerate about the small amount split between 6 groups. We acknowledged each project would have different needs, and each needed to consider its own needs, as well as the needs of others. It was an opportunity to practice the concept of the **Dish With One Spoon Wampum Belt Covenant**.

Each project spent a different amount, ranging from \$0-\$450. Collectively, the projects finished \$155 under budget.

Short List of "I Learned-s":

- Stretching and meditation does a lot for my spirit, it does a lot for my body
- The power of breathing mindfulness
- I am really ready to give my body a time of healing and relaxation
- Baby steps are still steps
- There are so many other passionate caring people out there: I am not alone, I do not have to carry the burden of climate change alone.
- A lot about myself: Who I am / my gifts / strengths more clearly, how I feel I fit into a movement, what my body needs
- To connect with a deeper part of myself and to trust that part of myself
- Lead with kindness
- Approach the world with tenderness and openness
- To be less afraid of the things I care about
- Be patient with myself and understand that I am a process

The Future of Rooted and Rising

This was a pilot program, and we are in the process of curating the next iteration. While concrete plans are still materializing, we are thinking about:

- a longer program
- a program that takes breaks and comes back together as part of its rhythm
- prompted by keen student interest, a 2-cohort program – 1 cohort of new students and another of returning students, who can cultivate their skills as guides, curators, and peer mentors
- more time together on the land
- more using our hands, learning skills, conversation paired with creating and caring with our hands
- more relationship building both among participants and with folks beyond the program
- more slowness, more time with the projects
- more time early in the program with our ancestral histories and our relationship with Treaties: how to walk in peace and friendship?
- more intentional intergenerational connectivity
- more storytelling and worldbuilding
- more time reimagining industry & practicing alternative ways of working

"I've learned in Rooted and Rising that there are plenty of people out there who care. That's very heartening to know. And I'd like to thank everybody for creating this space, and this crucial time that we're living in, and I invite everyone to come out onto the land whenever you can, and learn together."

