

# Climate Cares Centre Impact Report



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# Introducing the Climate Cares Centre

The [Climate Cares Centre](#) at Imperial College London was the first globally connected Centre to launch with a focus specifically on climate change, mental health and wellbeing. September 2024 marks the 1-year anniversary of the Climate Cares Centre, which was launched to raise the status of this programme of work. Our work began on this topic in 2019, and we have been at the forefront of the growing climate and mental health field. Working across research, policy, education, and intervention design, we work to understand and respond to the interconnections between climate change and mental health.

The Centre brings together the expertise of two prestigious institutes: the [Institute of Global Health Innovation](#) and the [Grantham Institute for Climate Change and the Environment](#). We have published over 20 research publications in high-impact journals and received coverage in international media. Our [briefing paper](#) has been cited by the WHO and downloaded almost 20,000 times, and most recently we published a [Global Research and Action Agenda](#) for Climate Change and Mental Health, the result of working with 960+ people from 90 countries as part of the Connecting Climate Minds project.

We invite you to continue reading to discover more about the Centre's work and its impact since our work first began in 2019.

**“Over the last five years, Climate Cares has grown from an idea to an internationally-recognised Centre that connects and innovates to catalyse a future safer for the climate and mental health. It was seeded from the glaring omission of mental health, wellbeing and psychological responses in decisions about the climate crisis and how to respond, and from the field of youth mental health missing the contributions of a rapidly changing world to rising youth distress. It's been challenging to witness the rising impacts of the climate crisis on the lives and health of people we speak with around the world, and immensely humbling to watch the responses grow in diverse cultures, geographies, research areas and policy. The Climate Cares Centre has played a pivotal role in shaping a field that centres the importance of connection – of ideas and peoples – and of human thriving, in acting for a safer climate for our minds.”**

**Dr Emma Lawrance,**  
Climate Cares Centre Lead, Imperial College London



# Climate Cares Timeline

2019

Climate Cares team **starts as a collaboration** between the Institute of Global Health Innovation and the Grantham Institute at Imperial College London

2019

**Workshops** with groups across sectors to raise awareness and build capacity

2020

**Changing Worlds study** began on experiences of young people in response to climate change in the UK, Trinidad & Tobago, Jamaica, Guyana, and the USA (p7)

2021

Publication of **policy briefing paper**, downloaded over 20,000 times: The Impact of Climate Change on Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing: Current Evidence and Implications for Policy and Practice (p15)

2021

Co-create a **guided journal** to help young people explore their emotions around our changing world (p10)

2021

Develop a **teacher's guide and class activities** for talking about climate change and mental health with the Natural History Museum (p16)

2021

Host the first-ever climate and mental health **session at COP26** in Glasgow (p12)

2022

'**Hold This Space**', an online version of the guided journal, created with scientists and young people

2022

Climate Cares leads the **European Hub for COP<sup>2</sup>**, launched at COP27 (p12)

2022

Co-guest edit the climate and mental health **issue of the International Review of Psychiatry**

2022

Working on the first comprehensive temperature and mental health **systematic review and meta-analysis**

2023

Launch an **online climate change and mental health short course** for public servants globally, in collaboration with Apolitical (p17)

2023

**Launch the Climate Cares Centre** – the first globally-connected Centre with a focus specifically on climate change, mental health and wellbeing (p1)

2023

Work with the **UAE Presidency at COP28** to ensure the inclusion of mental health in the ministerial declaration on climate and health – adopted by 151 countries (p12)

2024

Lead **Connecting Climate Minds** and publish the first Global Research and Action Agenda for climate change and mental health (p4-5)

# Why should you care about the links between climate change and mental health?

**Climate change is a risk multiplier for poor mental health**, compounding the likelihood of mental health challenges and worsening outcomes for people living with these conditions. Without appropriate support, compounding stressors from climate hazards and their consequences can incapacitate individuals, communities, and systems, worsening wellbeing, psychological resilience, and the capacity to cope with and act on climate change in a vicious cycle.

- Increasing temperatures and heatwaves increase suicide risk and lead to higher emergency room attendance by people with psychiatric conditions ([Thompson & Lawrance et al 2023](#))
- Acute traumas from extreme weather events can manifest as long-term post-traumatic stress disorder, substance misuse, depression, anxiety, and more deaths by suicide ([Lawrance et al 2022](#))
- The conditions needed for good mental health are being undermined, with exposure to air pollution, food and water insecurity, conflict, forced migration, disruptions to healthcare and education all related to poorer mental health outcomes across the lifecourse ([Lawrance et al 2022](#)).
- Awareness of the climate crisis is affecting wellbeing, especially of young people, and the climate crisis is experienced as an extension of colonialism by many affected communities ([Godden et al 2021](#), [Lawrance et al 2022](#))
- The cost of the additional mental health burden from climate-related hazards, air pollution, and lack of green space has been estimated at \$47 billion by 2030, growing to \$537 billion in 2050 ([Kumar et al 2023](#))

Conversely, **climate action is an opportunity multiplier for mental health and wellbeing**. Psychological resilience is a key pillar of climate resilience and collective action can protect mental health from climate distress. The conditions we need for climate mitigation and adaptation align with those that support good mental health, like strong communities, reduced inequality, cleaner air, active transport, and greener cities.



**“This moment in history calls on us to tackle the problems we face socially and environmentally with humanity, intentionality, and academic rigour – a task which the Climate Cares Centre is uniquely suited to. It has been a privilege to watch them carve new frontiers in research and innovation for the health of our planet, our hearts and our minds. The Climate Cares Centre has been an invaluable champion for voices and communities that often go underserved in the climate and health space; I am so grateful to work with them to platform the vulnerability and resilience of youth, and build a better story for the next generation.”**

**Sacha Wright**, Head of Impact and Research, Force of Nature

## VISION STATEMENT

The Climate Cares Centre exists to:

1. **Protect mental health and strengthen psychosocial resilience in a changing climate**
2. **Enable climate action that benefits mental health and wellbeing**

## CORE PRINCIPLES

Centering **connection** in how we work and everything we do by:

- Centring **systems thinking and transdisciplinarity**: bridging disciplines, systems and sectors to act on common causes and common solutions
- Fostering **people's connection to themselves, each other and to nature**
- Connecting **mental health and climate change research and action**: building cross-recognition, common language and appropriately integrated approaches
- Connecting across **cultures and countries** to share experiences, knowledges and solutions, including across the Global North and Global South
- Creating **aligned ways to measure and respond** to the mental health costs of climate inaction and co-benefits of climate action
- Connecting people and organisations to **resources that help them to thrive** while living in the planetary emergency



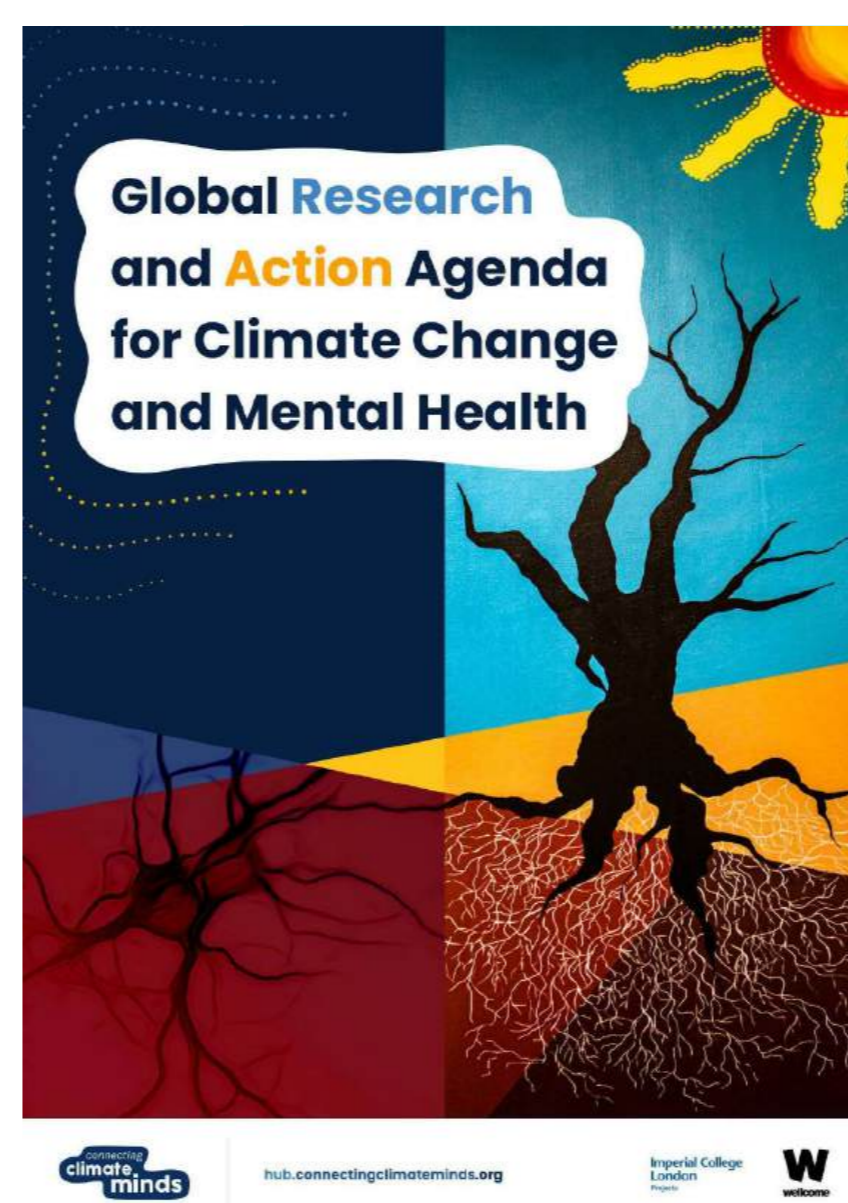
## GLOBAL COLLABORATORS



## Connecting Climate Minds

While the climate and mental health field is rapidly growing, it remains disconnected, unequal, and siloed. Most research is conducted in high-income settings, opportunities for co-beneficial action in policy and practice are frequently missed, and there needs to be more representation from diverse disciplines and affected communities. The Climate Cares Centre, in collaboration with a global coalition, led the Wellcome-funded [Connecting Climate Minds](#) initiative to address these challenges and foster an inclusive [climate and mental health field](#). We developed **1) aligned and inclusive agendas for research and action; 2) connected communities of practice for climate change and mental health** in the seven Sustainable Development Goals regions.

We held 18 virtual dialogues and 4 in-person dialogues (in Peru, Nigeria, India, and Cameroon), including with youth, small farmers and fisher peoples, and Indigenous communities. All outputs are featured on a co-designed [Global Online Hub](#), including a Collaboration area (more below), Research and Action Agendas, lived experience stories, case studies of best practices, and toolkits to support research and action in climate and mental health. The **10 Regional and Thematic Agendas** were synthesised into the **Global Research and Action Agenda**. It builds on the expertise of people with lived experience of mental health problems and of communities most affected by climate change, and is grounded in the insights of **960+ experts from 90 countries**.



[Read](#) the Global Research and Action Agenda



[Watch](#) a one min overview

## Global Online Hub

The [Global Online Hub](#) is a co-designed digital platform designed to **unite the fields of mental health and climate change**. Now, you can collaborate with colleagues working in this space. Whether you're seeking expertise for a project, looking to join forces on research, or wanting to share innovative ideas, our Collaborate area is a meeting place for individuals and organisations from various fields to **connect and collaborate**. **5,500 people from 140+ countries** have used the Global Online Hub since its launch in March.



[Sign up](#) to a network of researchers, policymakers, educators and community groups to share knowledge, resources and experiences in climate change and mental health.

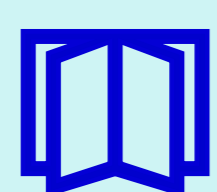


Delegates at the Connecting Climate Minds Global Event

## Global Event Barbados

The Connecting Climate Minds Global Event was a moment for **connection** – across the many diverse perspectives represented in the Connecting Climate Minds community – and for **celebration**, as a culmination of the initiative’s first year of work. The Global Event convened key members of the global community both in person in Barbados, and on a virtual platform. Representatives came to Barbados from the seven Regional Communities of Practice spanning the Sustainable Development Goal regions, the Lived Experience Working Group, the Red Cross Red Crescent Climate Centre, and Imperial College London’s Climate Cares Centre.

Over the course of three days, in addition to connecting and celebrating, participants worked to **finalise the Global Research and Action Agenda** for climate change and mental health, and collectively reflect on how to share the project outputs and **sustain the momentum** that has been built for the field.



[Read](#) more in the Global Event Impact Report and [watch](#) the recap video.



**“Being the Regional Community Convenor for Africa has allowed me to realise the intersection between climate change and mental health, which has been an untold story. Connecting Climate Minds (CCM) has really allowed us to start discovering how climate change impacts negatively on mental health in Africa. This wouldn't have happened so fast and easy without CCM. CCM has played a crucial role to advance this understanding, but more importantly it has helped us to galvanise like-minded people in research and community to start coming together and coalescing for a common purpose. This has had a phenomenal impact within a short time.”**

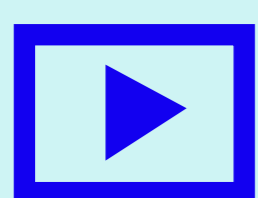
**Prof Kenneth Yongabi**, Professor and Dean of Health Sciences, Claretian University & Regional Community Convenor for Sub-Saharan Africa Region, Connecting Climate Minds



# Supporting a resilient and empowered generation

Young people are among those most affected by the climate crisis, as the generation that has contributed the least to the problem but whose futures are most at risk. As part of an [AXA Fellowship](#), we are working with young people in four different global contexts (the Philippines, Australia, the Caribbean and the UK) to understand more deeply how they are being affected by climate change, and the interactions between their thoughts and feelings (**psychological responses**), their ways of coping and adapting (**psychological adaptation and coping**), their **climate agency**, and their **mental health and wellbeing**. Our project will ultimately co-design, implement and evaluate relevant non-clinical interventions that **enable young people to build social and emotional resilience** and agency to cope with and act on the climate crisis in ways that support their mental health. We are using qualitative/arts-based workshops, surveys and scoping of the literature to first understand how young people are feeling about the climate crisis, which will inform the interventions.

This project is an extension of the [Changing Worlds study](#), which began in 2020 to explore youth responses to the climate crisis and COVID-19 pandemic in the UK ([paper 1](#), [paper 2](#)), USA, [India](#), [Trinidad & Tobago](#), [Barbados and Guyana](#). We were one of the first groups to explore the nature, prevalence and severity of diverse psychological responses to the climate crisis in young people and the interactions with their mental health, sense of agency to respond, positive and negative life impacts and future decision-making. This work has been featured in [Forbes](#), at COP27 and at the [World Economic Forum](#), and used by other researchers as a basis for their work. We supported significant capacity-building of the field in regions that hadn't collected data on these effects before. There is a clear need to go beyond surveys to qualitatively understand the nuances of these experiences and how they are shaped by culture and first-hand exposure to climate-related hazards. [Our scoping review](#) of interventions for mental health in the climate crisis highlighted a paucity of relevant evaluation work in this area, which this project is also addressing.



[Watch](#) this short video of Dr Emma Lawrance talking about the AXA Fellowship.



**“The Climate Cares Centre (CCC) has been a catalyst and driver for the development of research in the Caribbean Region in the novel and developing field of climate change and its mental health impacts. There are very few studies of the overall impacts of climate change on health in one of the most vulnerable regions of the world, however, the CCC assisted in a solid foundation for this and other work to be developed.”**

**Dr Sandeep Maharaj**, Director School of Pharmacy, The University of the West Indies & Lead of the Changing Worlds study for the Caribbean region

# Research publications

The Climate Cares Centre has furthered research in climate change and mental health across many key knowledge gaps, **publishing over 20 papers.**

In addition to the Centre's youth-focussed work highlighted above, this has included:

- **synthesis of the existing evidence across research disciplines** for how climate change and mental health are interconnected (e.g. Narrative review<sup>1</sup>, briefing paper<sup>2</sup>)
- the **evidence for relevant interventions**<sup>3</sup>
- assessing how climate and mental health show up in **current policy<sup>4</sup> and practice<sup>5</sup>** in the UK
- developing **relevant recommendations with diverse global stakeholders** to highlight to decision-makers the key actions they need to take<sup>6</sup>
- assessing the **mental health burden associated with increasing and extreme temperatures**<sup>7</sup>
- making the case for including **health in climate policy spaces<sup>8</sup> and integrating climate and mental health education**<sup>9</sup>
- supporting **youth** to share their experiences of mental health in the climate crisis<sup>10</sup> and highlighting the particular impact of climate-related emotions on youth psychological health<sup>15</sup>
- sharing how **climate-aware mental health professionals** are personally affected by the climate crisis, how they perceive their role<sup>11</sup>, and why their contributions are vital<sup>12</sup>
- exploring the links between **climate and mental health with the wider environmental crisis and conservation efforts**, including exploring underrepresented community perceptions of what constitutes a healthy environment<sup>13</sup>, and the need to consider the risks and benefits to mental health of conservation efforts<sup>14</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Lawrance, E. et al. (2022). The Impact of Climate Change on Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing: A Narrative Review of Current Evidence, and its Implications. *International Review of Psychiatry*. doi:10.1080/09540261.2022.2128725

<sup>2</sup>Lawrance, E. et al. (2021). The impact of climate change on mental health and emotional wellbeing: current evidence and implications for policy and practice. Grantham Institute Briefing paper No 36. doi:10.25561/88568

<sup>3</sup>Xue, S. et al. (2024). Mental health and psychosocial interventions in the context of climate change: a scoping review. *npj Mental Health Res*. doi:10.1038/s44184-024-00054-1

<sup>4</sup>Pirkle LT. et al (2022). Current understanding of the impact of climate change on mental health within UK parliament. *Front. Public Health* doi: 10.3389/fpubh.2022.913857

<sup>5</sup>Croasdale, K. et al. (2023). Planning for the perfect storm: Perceptions of UK mental health professionals on the increasing impacts of climate change on their service users. *Elsevier*. doi:10.1016/j.joclim.2023.100253

<sup>6</sup>Alford, J. et al. (2023). Developing global recommendations for action on climate change and mental health across sectors: A Delphi-style study. *The Journal of Climate Change and Health*. doi:10.1016/j.joclim.2023.100252.

<sup>7</sup>Thompson, R. et al. (2023). Ambient temperature and mental health: a systematic review and meta-analysis. *Lancet Planetary Health*. doi:10.1016/S2542-5196(23)00104-3

<sup>8</sup>Lawrence, E. et al. (2023). Why COP28 must be a health COP. *BMJ*. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1136/bmj.p589>

<sup>9</sup>Newberry Le Vay, J. et al (2023). Integrating mental health into climate change education to inspire climate action while safeguarding mental health, *Frontiers in Psychology*. doi:10.3389/fpsyg.2023.1298623

<sup>10</sup>Diffey, J. et al (2022). "Not about us without us" – the feelings and hopes of climate-concerned young people around the world. *International Review of Psychiatry*. doi:10.1080/09540261.2022.2126297

<sup>11</sup>Samuel, S. et al. (2022). Reflections of mental health professionals on working with and in the climate crisis. *International Review of Psychiatry*. doi:10.1080/09540261.2022.2093628

<sup>12</sup>Li, C. et al. (2022). The role of mental health professionals in the climate crisis: an urgent call to action. *International Review of Psychiatry*. doi:10.1080/09540261.2022.2097005

<sup>13</sup>Roberts LF. et al. (2022). Healthy Environments: Understanding Perceptions of Underrepresented Communities in the United Kingdom. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*. doi:10.3390/ijerph19159643

<sup>14</sup>Pienkowski, T. et al. (2024). Nature's contributions to social determinants of mental health and the role of conservation. *One Earth*. doi:10.1016/j.oneear.2024.05.004.

<sup>15</sup>Lawrance, E.L. Crises impact youth mental health. *Nat. Clim. Chang.* 14, 1016–1017 (2024). <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41558-024-02144-6>



**“It’s been a pleasure to witness the unswerving commitment and increasing global significance of the Climate Cares Centre, in leading the thinking, inclusive engagement and research about the impacts of climate change on mental health.”**

**Sir Philip Campbell**, former Editor-in-Chief, Springer Nature and Climate Cares Centre Advisory Board member



**“The U.S. HHS Climate & Youth Behavioral Health group has been looking for solutions to support youth behavioural health in the face of climate change – the Xue et al (2024) paper provided a great summary of what has been tried – we used it to identify organisations implementing interventions that are not being evaluated to work with on a funding proposal to conduct evaluation and further build the evidence base.”**

**Irena Gorski Steiner**, PhD, MPH, ORISE Fellow, US Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Climate Change & Health Equity



**“In my opinion this paper is the key reference, laying out a powerful and compelling argument as to why integrating wellbeing into climate education is so crucial. The authors skillfully synthesise key findings and arguments from a number of different angles to explore the psychological considerations that arise at this intersection of climate impacts, mental health and our responsibility as educators. I share it with people all the time.”**

**Louise Edgington**, Climate Specialist Educational Psychologist, BPS Climate and Environment Action Coordinating Group



**“The Climate Cares Centre has done leading edge work engaging people around the world in identifying the type of research and actions needed to address the mental health impacts of the climate crisis. No other organisation has been able to engage so many people in this important work. They are a true leader in the field.”**

**Bob Doppelt**, International Transformational Resilience Coalition (ITRC)

## Climate Cares research has been presented in various international conferences, such as...

**2021**

COP26

**2022**

Royal College of Psychiatry International Congress

**2022**

COP27

**2022**

OECD Wellbeing Conference

**2023**

National Institute of Mental Health Global Mental Health Conference

**2023**

European Congress of Psychiatry

**2023**

COP28

**2023**

Global Mental Health Action Network Conference

**2023** **2024**

Planetary Health Alliance Annual Meetings

**2024**

Nature Conference on Air Pollution and Climate Change

**2024**

European Commission High-Level Conference 'Research Perspectives on the Health Impacts of Climate Change'

**2024**

World Congress of Psychiatry

**2024**

World Economic Forum

## Guided Journal

Young people involved in the [Changing Worlds](#) study expressed a range of strong emotional responses and distress, particularly in response to climate change. In listening to their need for appropriate and accessible support, we worked with a group of ten diverse UK youth to **co-design a guided journal that contains 20 self-guided activities** to help young people explore their emotions, thoughts and values around our changing world, develop healthy coping strategies and hold difficult emotions and uncertainties, explore the future they would like to see, and build agency to contribute to that vision in sustainable ways. The journal has been piloted in the UK and Australia, and we are working with collaborators in Spain, Argentina and Trinidad to adapt and pilot the journal. The journal, **published by Cambridge University Press in early 2025**, is already sought after by clinicians and Universities, and used by students at Imperial College London experiencing the mental health impacts of studying climate and environment-related subjects.

In a pilot study we conducted in the UK in 2021, journal users generally reported **higher feelings of agency to enact positive climate action and reduced feelings of anxiety about the climate crisis** (in a cohort of highly-anxious individuals).

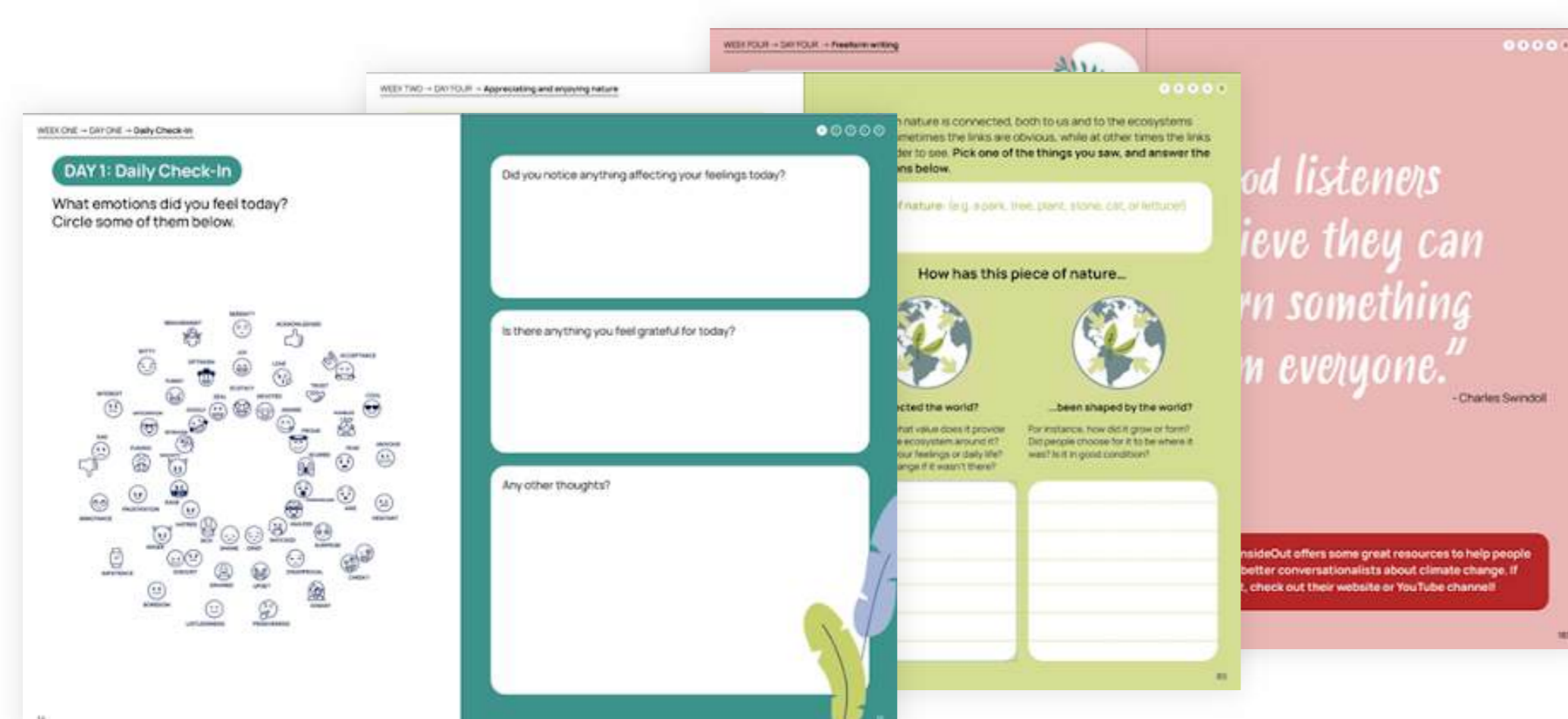


### TESTIMONIALS FROM USERS

**“It was very helpful during COP and trying to process what had happened without feeling so angry about it.”**

**“It was fantastic. I'd genuinely pay money for a journal like this to use full time. It's made me think a lot about how I feel in general, and more specifically to do with the climate.”**

**“I really enjoyed using the journal to check in with my mental health when I felt like it and re-evaluate my values and environmental actions.”**



**81%**

would **recommend this journal to a friend**

**69%**

felt the journal helped them **understand what they value in life**

# Supporting the mental health of climate professionals

Working in climate and environment related professions can take a **psychological toll**. Organisations have approached us to **support the mental health and wellbeing of their staff and upskill the organisation in climate change and mental health**. We have run workshops with Met Office scientists, BBC journalists and the UK's Climate Change Committee, as featured in this guest [blog](#) for the Met Office. We have also run workshops with Imperial College London students studying climate and environment-related subjects.



**“The Met Office has truly benefited from the compassionate expertise of the Climate Cares Centre. Their insights into the connection between climate change and mental health have been invaluable. They’ve helped our staff understand why they might feel the way they do about their work, especially given the tough realities and messages we have to convey. Nurturing an environment where we can be more open about mental health and the challenges it sometimes presents, is incredibly important to us because it helps our team stay resilient and effective, even under significant pressure. I, and Met Office colleagues, really look forward to developing this collaboration further into the future.”**

**Katrina Macneill**, Strategic Stakeholder Relationship Manager, Met Office

## Evaluating youth-led interventions: The Resilience Project



The Resilience Project (TRP) was founded in the UK in 2020 by young changemakers to create accessible and scalable support to preserve and enhance the resilience of today's youth. It resources young people to become effective and resilient change makers through a structured and clinically developed peer-support programme. In 2024, TRP expanded its programme to mainland Europe and East Africa and to an online delivery of the ten-week Resilience Circle programmes. Climate Cares, along with Dr Britt Wray's research group CIRCLE at Stanford University, are evaluating the programme. We are investigating the impact of the youth peer-support intervention (Resilience Circles) on levels of climate anxiety, risk of burnout, overall mental health and wellbeing, social connection, leadership capabilities and climate agency. The TRP's Board of Youth is co-designing the project with us in **the first evaluation of such a peer-support based climate-mental health intervention.**

## Integrating mental health into climate policy

The Climate Cares Centre has been central to the international efforts to bring attention to the psychological stressors and traumas of the climate crisis and the escalating consequences for mental health challenges. For the past three years, the Climate Cares Centre has made the case for mental health as a priority in the response to climate change by leveraging high-level multilateral policy spaces such as the UN Climate Conference of Parties (COPs).

Climate Cares organised the **first-ever climate and mental health session at the 26th Conference of Parties (COP26)** in the UK as part of the 'Resilience Hub'. In COP27 in Egypt, **we connected with new partners including the UN University and COP<sup>2</sup>, a global network of 450+ organisations** working to strengthen our collective ability to endure and adapt to the climate crisis by embedding psychological resilience within climate resilience. We contributed to climate and mental health side events advocating for the inclusion of both mental and physical health across all relevant climate negotiation streams.

Climate Cares spoke alongside the UK Department of Health and Social Care and the Canada Health policy team on the World Health Organisation stage, showcasing policy-relevant research and interventions we had conducted with young people.



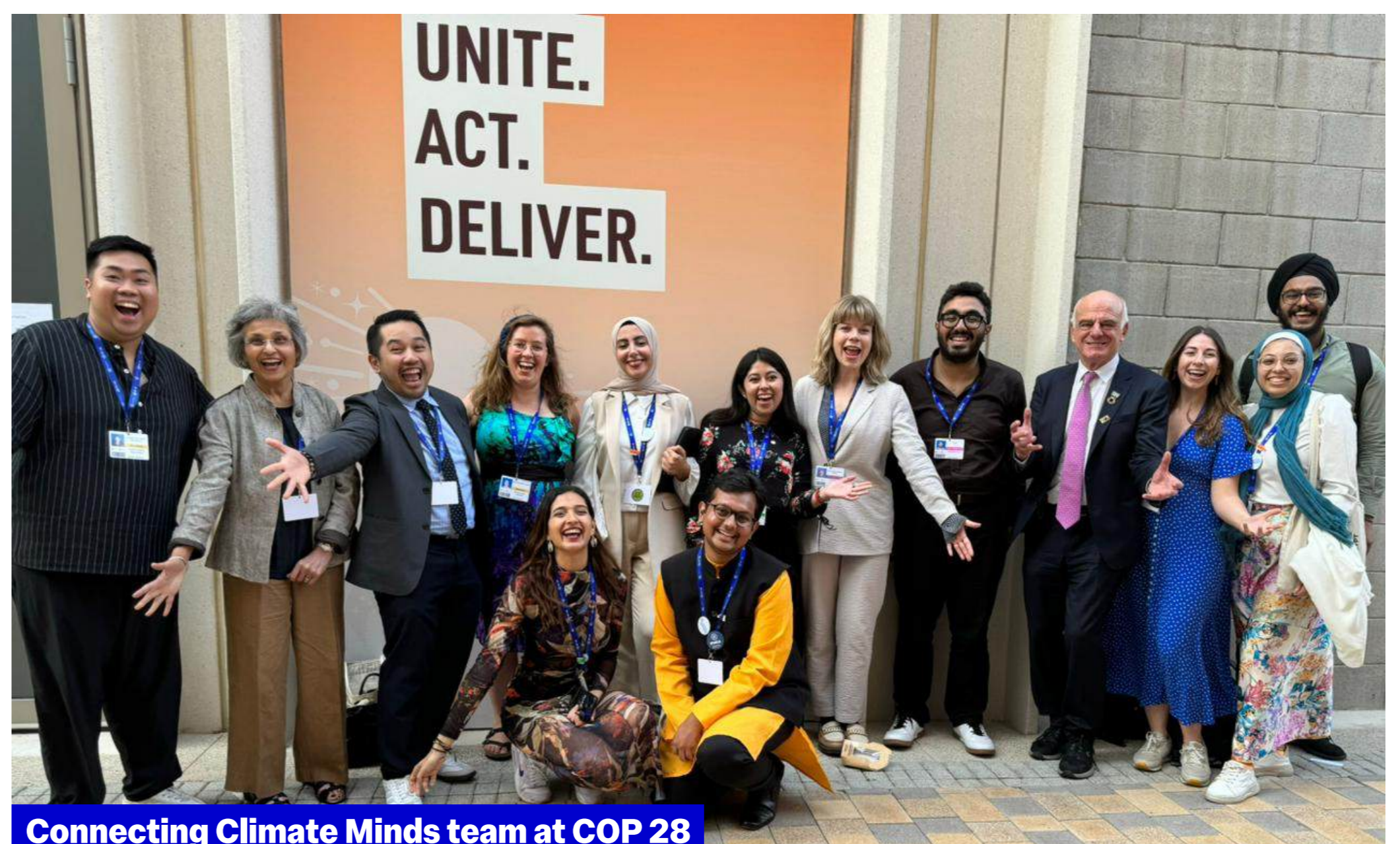
[Read](#) more in the Climate Cares COP27 blog post

At COP28 in the UAE – for the first time – a ministerial declaration on climate and health **with a reference to mental health and psychosocial wellbeing** was adopted by 151 countries. The **inclusion of mental health was informed by Climate Cares work with the UAE Presidency.**

Mental health was also featured in 14 of 55 national statements during the ministerial meeting on climate and health at COP co-chaired by Dr Omnia El Omrani, Policy Fellow at the Climate Cares Centre.



[Read](#) more in the Climate Cares COP28 blog post



Our advocacy saw mental health comprehensively included in the climate discussion through a variety of events.

- **We co-led a dialogue with Wellcome, the UAE Youth Climate Champion (YCC) team and the UN Children and Youth Constituency at the YCC Pavilion**, headed by UAE Minister of Youth, HE Shamma Al-Mazrui. This dialogue was attended by over 100 young climate activists and negotiators who shared their experiences of climate anxiety, and desired mental health support to foster resilience and agency to address their distress and resulting mental health challenges.
- **We held the first official in-person Connecting Climate Minds dissemination as a UNFCCC side event.** We focused on the methodology by which the seven regional communities have developed research and action priorities for climate-mental health nexus. We also highlighted the priority themes that emerged from the eighteen virtual and in-person dialogues across Peru, Nigeria, India, and Cameroon with indigenous communities, smallholder farmers, and young people.
- We organised a **youth-focused event at the Children and Youth Pavilion**, where we presented the work and process led by the Connecting Climate Minds team who developed a youth-led agenda for research and action in climate change and mental health level based on the insights and expertise of the 150+ young participants.
- We **co-led a session with the Spanish Government** on the impacts of climate change on children's mental health and the role of education in addressing climate anxiety.
- We held a **side event at the WHO Pavilion** with Force of Nature, Sustyvibes, and UN University to discuss the impacts of climate change on the mental health and wellbeing of young people and the opportunities to build resilience.



**Read** Dr Emma Lawrance and Prof Mala Rao's argument on "Why COP28 must be a health COP"



**"The Climate Cares Centre represents an essential source of innovative, trustworthy, and foundational research in the emerging climate and mental health field and has contributed to laying the ground for evidence-based policy making in this area"**

**Dr Alessandro Massazza**, Policy and Advocacy Advisor, Climate Change and Environment, United for Global Mental Health



**"The Climate Cares Centre bridges the gap between research and policy, making invaluable contributions to climate policymaking. Thanks to their work, the climate and health community has clear evidence based policy recommendations to ensure that mental health is a core consideration in the UNFCCC space, across adaptation, loss and damage and mitigation."**

**Jess Beagley**, Policy Lead, Global Climate and Health Alliance



# Leading the way on integrating mental health and climate policy globally

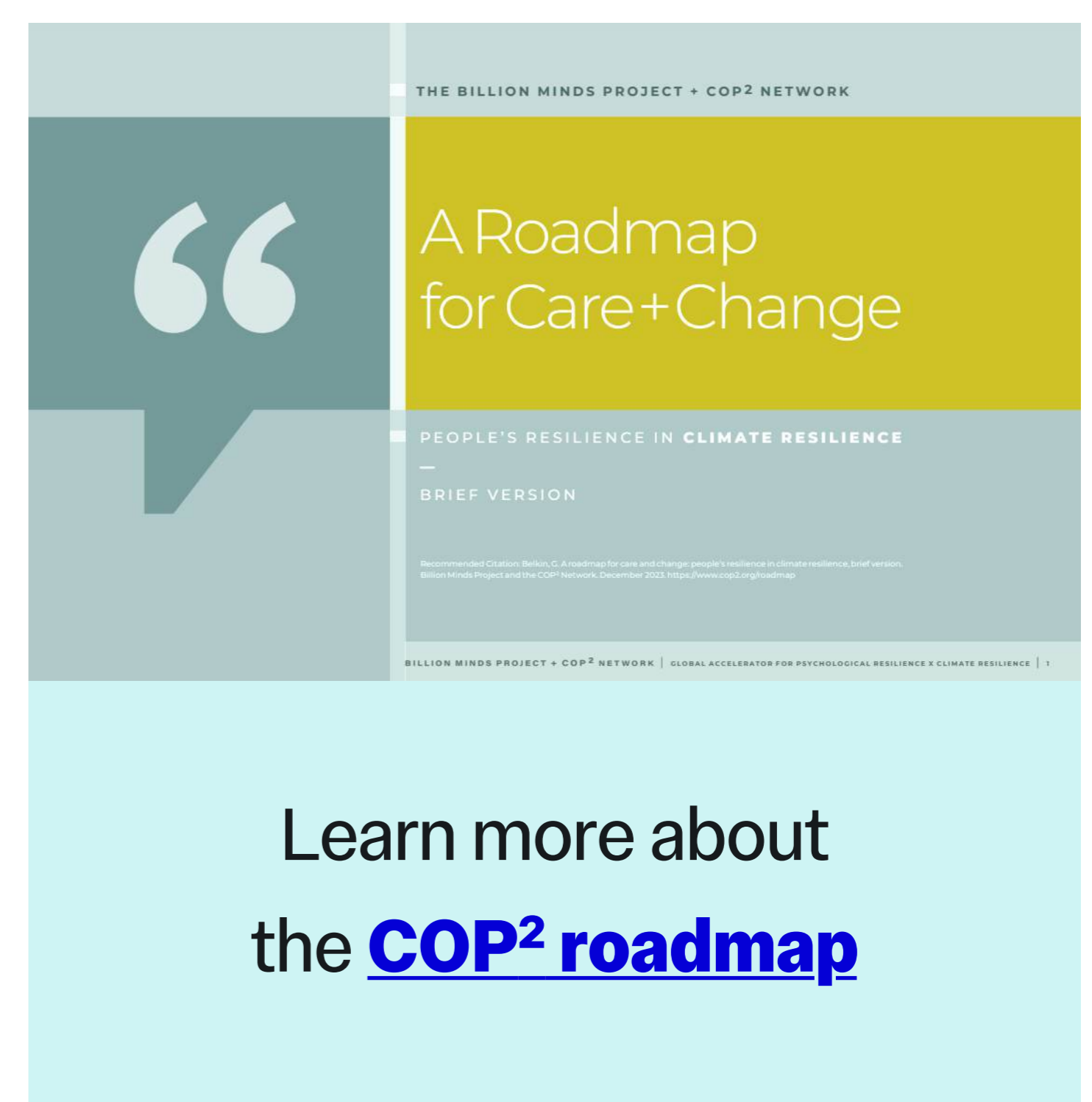
We have further elevated the mental health and climate change nexus through **briefings, bilateral engagements and speaking interventions in over 10 global intergovernmental events**, including the 76th and 77th World Health Assembly, the World Health Summit, the 78th United Nations General Assembly, the Paris Peace Forum, and Bonn Intersessionals with key partners including the World Bank, the Global Fund, the Rockefeller Foundation, and the UN High-level Champions. In June 2024, the Climate Cares Centre was invited by the World Economic Forum to deliver two **sessions** on climate change and adolescent and youth mental health in the Summer Davos in Dalian, China.

Further, country leaders at COP28 mandated the facilitation of an expert dialogue addressing the disproportionate impacts of climate change on children in June 2024. The Climate Cares Centre developed a **joint submission** with United for Global Mental Health focusing on **the evidence and recommendations for supporting children and youth mental health in the context of climate change that was integrated in the concept note** and outcome of the dialogue.

## Psychological resilience in climate resilience: COP<sup>2</sup>



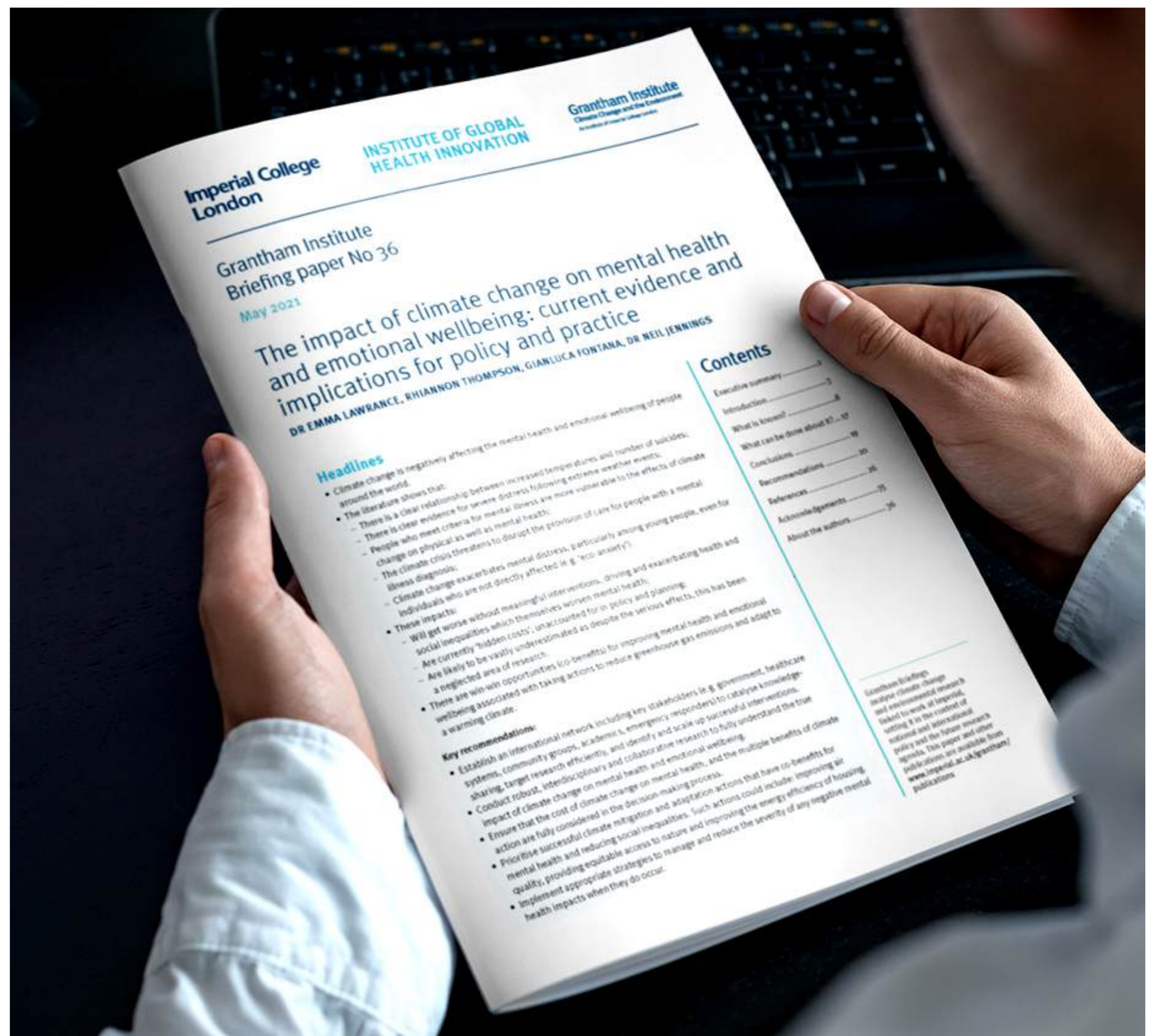
The Climate Cares Centre is the European Hub Lead of **COP<sup>2</sup>**, a global network of over 450 organisations working to embed psychological resilience into climate resilience and adaptation efforts. By convening 30 experts across Europe in dialogue, we developed content to inform the COP<sup>2</sup> Roadmap for Care and Change that was launched at COP28, in partnership with the Race to Resilience.



# Briefing paper

In 2021, Climate Cares published a Grantham Institute for Climate Change and the Environment [briefing paper](#) on the impact of climate change on mental health. Titled “The Impact of Climate Change on Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing: Current Evidence and Implications for Policy and Practice,” this paper has been cited by the WHO and downloaded over 20,000 times, and featured in over 30 international media articles.

The team delivered training sessions related to the briefing paper content including to the Environment Agency, Climate Change Committee, the Met Office and councils from around the UK.



## Britt Wray

Human and Planetary Health Postdoctoral Fellow, Stanford Medicine Center for Innovation in Global Health

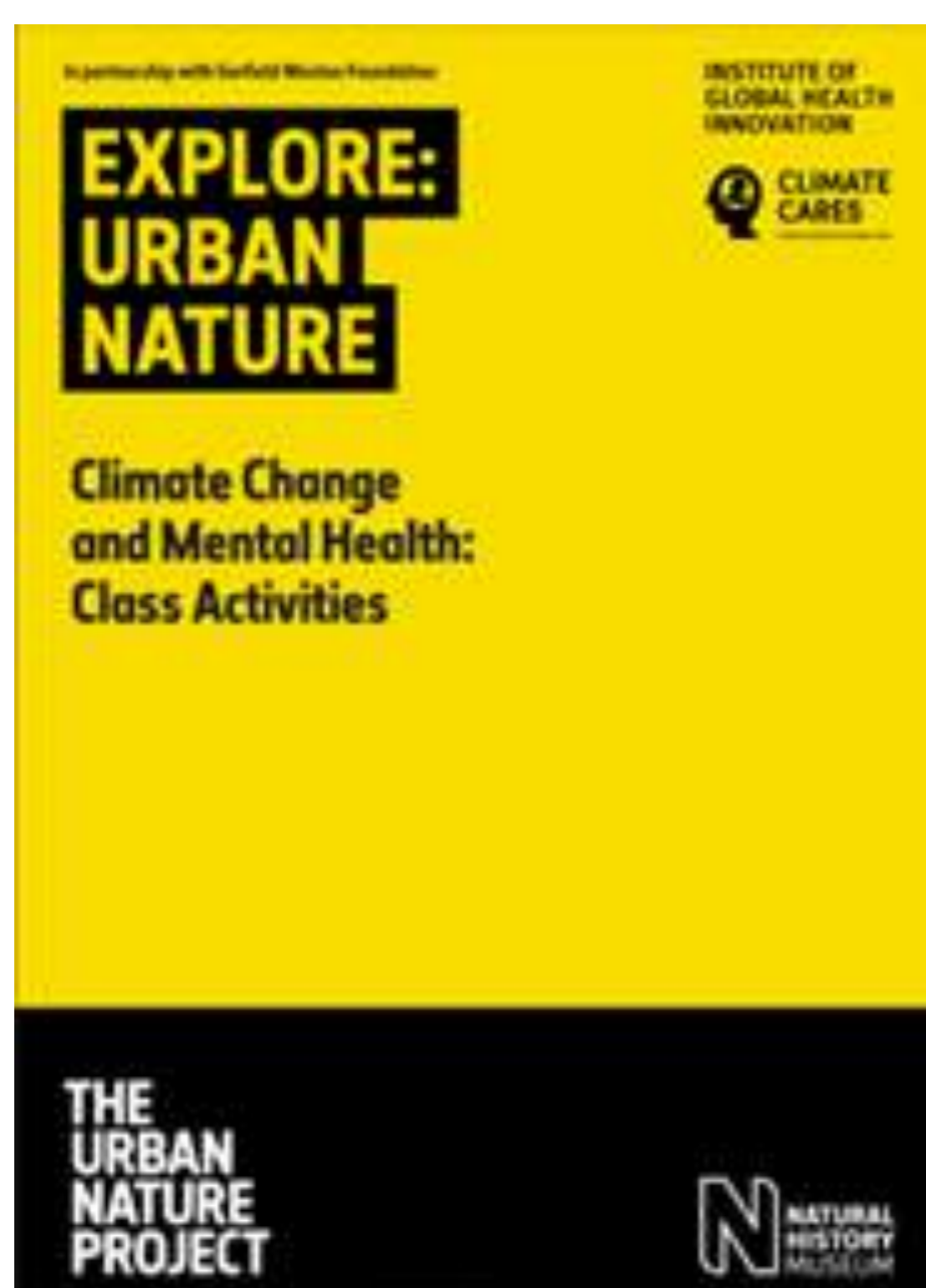
*“One of the most neglected areas of health in general is mental health, and this is no different for our growing understanding of how climate change affects people’s health. The mental health impacts of global warming have available remedies if we take time now to understand them, prioritize research in this area, and respond with wellbeing-protecting policies and individual and community actions.”*

The global impact of climate change on mental health and emotional wellbeing: evidence and implications for policy and practice

## Natural History Museum



In 2021, the Climate Cares Centre developed a teacher's guide for the Natural History Museum (NHM) alongside a set of class activities. This was rolled out to 140 teachers, who reported that these resources stimulated discussion and inspired young people about climate action. Teachers **called for the guide to be embedded in personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education and science classes**. Climate Cares produced an updated guide for educators for the National Education Nature Park in 2024, in collaboration with the Anna Freud Centre and the Natural History Museum. The Nature Park is commissioned by the Department for Education with participation from **1,400 nurseries, schools and colleges** in England.



Climate Cares has also supported youth mental health and agency in the climate crisis as contributors to several sessions of the NHM's youth programme 'Generation Hope', and provided advice on the mental health considerations for an 'Our Broken Planet' permanent exhibition design that is under development.



**“It's been a joy and a privilege to collaborate with Emma and the Climate Cares Centre as part of our Generation Hope programme. When we engage audiences with the planetary emergency we want to ensure we are bringing all relevant stories and perspectives together, and the intersections of climate change and mental health is a key factor, especially amongst a younger generation. It's been great to have the Climate Cares Centre bring reliable, evidence-based research into the discussions, as well as a focus on positive climate action and solutions. I hope we can continue to collaborate on our programming long into the future!”**

**Camilla Tham**, International Partnerships Manager, Natural History Museum in London

# Integrating mental health into climate change education

Supported by the Robert H. N. Ho Family Foundation Global and in partnership with the Anna Freud Centre and others, we are working to ensure climate change education empowers young people with the knowledge, tools, resilience and agency to take climate action and work in climate careers in ways that support their mental health, and to thrive in an uncertain future.

We will be **working with at least 800 young people and educators across the UK and rolling out resources through the Mentally Healthy Schools website, which reaches 1.2 million educators.** We are convening experts globally to foster knowledge sharing and collaboration. Together with this expert group, UK young people and educators, we are identifying gaps in support and co-creating proposals for resources that respond to these needs. This work builds on a perspective paper we published on this topic.

## Educating policymakers: Apolitical

**apolitical**

We created an [online short course](#) for public servants hosted on the Apolitical platform. Over 140 learners have enrolled on the course from **65+ organisations globally**, with particularly high engagement from the UK Department for Energy Security and Net Zero and Department of Health and Social Care. **The course has an 8.6/10 recommendation rating and 4.6/5 rating for quality of lesson content.** Learners have shared course content across their organisations and expressed how it has enabled them to **centre conversations about climate change in more positive ways**, better articulate the benefits of climate action and **get buy-in from stakeholders** on climate mitigation and resilience initiatives.



Apolitical team Kristen Harmse-Klaasen (left), Imperial's Jessica Newberry Le Vay, Emma Lawrance and Neil Jennings, and Apolitical's Livy Watson

We have been **instrumental in raising awareness** of the deep interconnections between climate change and mental health across different countries, disciplines and sectors, with significant 'ripple effects' for the field and people living with mental health challenges in the climate crisis.

We have achieved this through numerous talks to diverse audiences including: global nursing students, first year medics, public health professionals, climate change and mental health policy experts, journalists, university senior stakeholders and Vice Chancellors, cross-sector policy discussions in the UK and internationally, child psychiatrists, healthcare leaders, researchers from various backgrounds (health and climate, environmental scientists, commercial determinants of health, international development, global mental health, neuroscientists, psychologists, climate scientists), local councils, mental health funders and journal editors, among others.

We translate our research and policy insights into **accessible formats for diverse audiences**, for instance with the creation of short videos ([animation on climate and mental health](#) and [global agenda overview](#)). Our presentations and figures have been praised for their clarity and used by others to spread awareness of climate and health within their organisations such as the British Psychological Society in their recent publication *Clinical Psychology and Planetary Health: Changing Course in the Storm* or Dr Panu Pikhala's eco-emotions University course.

We have also worked with [OKRE and Wellcome](#) to upskill BBC journalists, soap opera writers and comedy writers on the links between climate and mental health so they can integrate this into mass media; for instance the TV programme *Doctors* subsequently approached us to support development of a script centring someone with a mental health condition experiencing severe heat stress.



**“The Climate Cares Centre have made inspiring contributions to BBC/ Wellcome workshops for leading producers and writers, and have already helped originate new broadcast content for engaging a mass public audience with climate and health, a critical part in paving the way for future policy action.”**

**Lucy McDowell,**  
Entertainment Partnerships Lead, Wellcome

## Thought Leadership and Field Building

In a nascent field, it is vital to ensure **global representation and integration** of climate and mental health considerations across relevant disciplines, policies and practices. Climate Cares has been instrumental in supporting a **diverse, innovative and impactful field** that supports **joined-up decision making** towards a future safer for our climate and our minds.

**Climate Cares has provided thought leadership in advising key stakeholders on climate and mental health, including:**



**OECD Wellbeing framework for economies and societies**



**WHO's Research Agenda for Action on Climate and Health, REACH**



**Climate Minds Coalition: UK-based coalition of mental health organisations**



**Public Policy Projects Climate and Health report**



**European Court of Human Rights evidence submission**



**Royal College of Physiology Roundtable on heat and mental health**

Climate Cares has supported the development and inclusion of expertise, including that of lived experience, in the climate and mental health field around the world. This has included supporting a global collaborative network of researchers understanding and supporting youth mental health in the climate crisis through the **Changing Worlds** study, building the climate and mental health field in all seven sustainable development regions through **Connecting Climate Minds**, and providing academic support and guidance, speaking opportunities, and advocacy to lived experience-led organisations like **Force of Nature** and **SustyVibes**. The learning is of course two-way, and Climate Cares has benefitted immeasurably from the expertise of lived experience experts and others across different cultures, backgrounds, disciplines and sectors around the world who have shared their wisdom, knowledge, networks and experiences with Climate Cares.

We strongly believe in the importance of **centring connection across countries, ideas and peoples** in our work. We seek to raise up the insights and perspectives of the many different people and organisations already affected by and responding to the impacts of the climate crisis on mental health and wellbeing globally.

The convening, connecting and field-building we have done has resulted in, for example:

- Our Advisory Board helping to catalyse the development of [COP2](#)
- The Connecting Climate Minds capacity-building work supporting the integration of climate and mental health policies in Jordan
- Our sub-Saharan Africa Regional Community Convenor working with communities to implement green technologies for water sanitation, after hearing in Connecting Climate Minds that access to clean water was declining with increasing floods and droughts and causing significant mental distress
- Our work with Caribbean colleagues led to the Caribbean College of Family Physicians launching an introductory course on climate change and mental health, and the Public Health team in the Office of the President of Guyana joining research to understand and respond to Guyanan youth mental health needs in the climate crisis



**“One of the most rewarding aspects of working with the Climate Cares Centre (CCC) was their ongoing commitment to helping us succeed... CCC's strong encouragement of collaboration throughout the process was a successful effort to ensure that no organisation or researcher worked in isolation. Overall, working with CCC was a rewarding experience, and their mentorship ensured that we executed the project [Connecting Climate Minds] to the best of our abilities. Being a part of the CCM project has influenced our ongoing research and advocacy work at SustyVibes. We are grateful for that and look forward to collaborating with the Climate Cares Centre in the future.”**

**Jennifer Uchendu**, Founder, SustyVibes Nigeria



**“I have been working with the Climate Cares Centre before it was the Climate Cares Centre. They have been essential in demanding and contributing not just to the evidence, science, and rigour needed to make real a global agenda on the climate change and mental health crisis, while at the same time elevating and collaborating with the voices and places most affected by it with authenticity and respect.”**

**Dr Gary Belkin**, Founder and Director, Billion Minds Institute and COP2, Advisory Board Member, Climate Cares Centre

## Featured in the media

The Climate Cares Centre has gained **significant attention in the media for its groundbreaking work** at the intersection of climate change and mental health. Featured in various international publications and news outlets, the Centre's initiatives have been widely recognized.

The Centre has **written 12 articles and blog posts**, and has been **mentioned or featured over 30 times** in a variety of media outlets. Members of the Centre have reached thousands of people, **speaking in over 80 engagements**.

### MEDIA





# Social reach

The Climate Cares Centre engages with people around the world.


**Climate Cares - Imperial College London**  
1,347 followers  
6mo · 🌐

'Researchers want to unpick how climate change affects mental health around the world — from lives that are disrupted by catastrophic weather to people who are anxious about the future.'

Read more in this Nature article about the [#MentalHealth](#) impacts of [#ClimateChange](#) and how we're addressing this through our [#ConnectingClimateMinds](#) project.

<https://lnkd.in/eiQQhbta>

Emma Lawrance Wellcome Trust Red Cross Red Crescent Climate Centre  
Institute of Global Health Innovation The University of the West Indies  
Climate Mental Health Network Grantham Institute - Climate Change and the Environment Force of Nature Planetary Health Alliance St. Luke's Medical Center Imperial Consultants (ICON)



**The rise of eco-anxiety: scientists wake up to the mental-health toll of climate change**  
nature.com

👍👍👍 56      4 comments · 14 reposts

**Grantham Imperial**  
@Grantham\_IC

Dear @Keir\_Starmer, we've got another message for you.

@Imperial\_JGHI & @ClimateCares' @Emma\_L\_Lawrance wants you to know that by taking [#ClimateAction](#) we can tackle interconnected problems like extreme weather, air pollution, [#MentalHealth](#) & young people's wellbeing 🌱💚🧡



5:12 PM · Jul 11, 2024 · 1,057 Views

👍 31



Climate change and mental health is

0:00 / 2:19

**Climate Cares**  
@ClimateCares

Measurement 📊

"Data, data, data" was what Dr @MarinaRomanello Executive Director of the @LancetCountdown, called for in her Keynote.

It's hard to tackle the mental health impacts of climate change if we aren't measuring them effectively. 🧠🌍



ALT

9:16 am · 21 Mar 2024 · 302 Views

**Climate Cares - Imperial College London**  
1,347 followers  
3mo · 🌐

Find out more about our [Apolitical](#) course on [#ClimateChange](#) and [#Mental Health](#).

Understand how the climate change and mental health crises are connected and compounding  
See how the right mental health and wellbeing support can benefit climate initiatives 🌱💚

<https://lnkd.in/evkXXB3P>

**Grantham Institute - Climate Change and the Environment Institute of Global Health Innovation**

and when people see and participate in climate action, their mental health improves.

Apolitical has developed this course with experts from the Institute of Global Health Innovation and Imperial College London. Through these lessons, you'll gain the knowledge and tools to address both issues at once, designing initiatives that support mental and environmental health.

Please email the [partnerships team](#) to make a group booking.

**Free seats**

We're offering free and discounted seats to select government partners. If you'd like to be considered, [register your interest here](#).



**By the end of this course, you will be able to:**

- Understand how the climate change and mental health crises are connected and

**WHO IS THIS COURSE FOR?**

- Anyone working in government who's involved in health or wellbeing policy and practice or climate and environmental policy and practice
- Anyone with an interest in climate change, mental health, and how these issues interact
- Any level of seniority

**Our partners**

**IMPERIAL**  

**How you'll learn**

Our courses will help you get ahead in government. We take a highly practical approach to learning: we combine bite-size theory lessons with tools and resources you can use right away. You'll also learn from your peers in the Apolitical community, through discussion forums and live events.

👍 11

The mental health consequences of the climate crisis are increasingly well recognised, as sadly, a growing intensity and frequency of climate-related hazards is compounding the stressors on the mental health and wellbeing of people around the world. There is a **clear need to protect mental health in a changing climate and create mentally healthy environments** through climate action and the building of psychological resilience.

This requires a multipronged approach, to:

- Build a **truly connected and inclusive transdisciplinary climate and mental health field**, that connects experiences and learnings of people across different disciplines, cultures, countries and sectors, and centres the needs of people living with the mental health consequences of climate change.
- Ensure mental health and wellbeing is **considered and accounted for in all climate policies and actions**, and climate change is **considered and accounted for in all mental health policies and practice**.
- Conduct **fundamental research and ensure this research is supported**, in line with the Connecting Climate Minds research and action agenda, to: understand the impacts, risks and vulnerable groups; the pathways and mechanisms of impact; the mental health risks and benefits of climate actions; and develop and evaluate evidence-based mental health support suitable for the context of climate change. This will require the development of suitable ways of sharing learnings, suitable indicators and metrics, and the combining of different methods and ways of knowing, being and doing.
- Support the identification, development, implementation and evaluation of **solutions at all levels that can create a safer climate for our minds**, whether through building of psychological resilience and agency in young people, improving public health campaigns to protect people living with mental illness from extreme heat, or showcasing in audience appropriate ways how reductions in the use of fossil fuels can improve mental health outcomes.

**“A growing body of literature suggests that the mental health and wellbeing of people all around the world is being severely affected by many of the climate-related stressors we report on at the Lancet Countdown. However, a scarcity of robust data and relevant metrics has undermined our capacity to quantify and expose these impacts, making it difficult for decision makers to adequately protect people's health from escalating climate-related harms. The leadership of the Climate Cares Centre to build awareness, research and policy efforts in climate and mental health globally, including through Connecting Climate Minds, has been a vital catalyst for mental health to receive the attention it deserves in the context of climate change. Their work is of increasing importance, as the need to support a trans-disciplinary field to measure and act on the climate mental health nexus will only grow.”**

**Dr Marina B Romanello**, Executive Director, The Lancet Countdown



The Climate Cares Centre is already working to achieve this vision that will improve understanding of the **interconnectedness of the health and wellbeing of people with the health and wellbeing of climate and earth systems**, and support solutions that help people and the planet to thrive.

## We are working on...

### The Climate Cares Centre strategy

To ensure that **we are responsive to the growing and dynamic field**, and can maximise our continued contributions. We are also **seeking resources** to enable us to continue our work.

### Connecting Climate Minds

We support the Connecting Climate Minds global community to **convene and capacity-build**. There is rich, ongoing work happening in the **regional communities of practice across community engagement, research and policy** that we support. We collate insights from CCM and disseminate **outputs to reach varied audiences**, e.g. policy briefs and academic papers, and present around the world, including at the World Economic Forum. We're making sure the **Global Online Hub** is a "go to" space for people coming into the climate and mental health field. We are connecting with COP<sup>2</sup> to create 'Observatories' that convene the expertise of researchers and implementers, to identify and scale up successful approaches to build psychological resilience.

### Policy advocacy and research

We are working with partners in policy spaces to **advocate for integration of climate and mental health policy and connect relevant stakeholders**. This includes working with the King's Fund in the UK to convene relevant policy experts, and with United for Global Mental Health, Unicef, WHO, the Global Climate and Health Alliance and others on mental health inclusion in international climate policy spaces. We are also **researching where and how mental health is being included in countries' climate policies**.

## We are working on...

### Building youth resilience and agency in the climate crisis

In the Philippines, Australia, the Caribbean and the UK we work to understand how young people are experiencing the climate crisis and how their climate-related thoughts and feelings (psychological responses) interact with the ways they are coping (psychological adaptation and coping skills). Our project will **co-design, implement and evaluate relevant non-clinical interventions that enable young people to build resilience, agency and good mental health in the climate crisis.**

### Integrating climate change and mental health education

We are working with the Robert H. N. Ho Family Foundation Global to improve education for young people in the UK to cope and act in the climate crisis in ways that support their mental health. We are **collaborating globally to map and disseminate existing support tools**, and working with educators and young people to identify and address needs, challenges and opportunities to integrate climate and mental health education.

### Development of relevant frameworks, indicators and metrics for the climate mental health field

Several on-going projects are **evaluating the framing** of the climate and mental health field and developing **relevant conceptual understandings and metrics.**

### Support for people working in climate careers

We are working with people in **climate careers to support their mental health**, and have planned research and intervention design work in this space.





**“The toll of the climate crisis on people's mental health and wellbeing is often overlooked. Our Climate Cares Centre makes this ultimate cost more visible. We put the voices and feelings of those most affected at the centre of our work, and connect key actors and new ideas. Through rigorous and impactful research, as well as co-designing policies, education and interventions, we foster a future that will be safer for both the climate and our minds.”**

**Prof Sir David Nabarro,**  
Co-Director, Institute of Global Health Innovation



**“I am so honoured to support Climate Cares and very proud of their work over the years, especially of their highly regarded influence on policy changes. Their work is also critical to studying rapidly changing climate matters by sharing their expertise on the mental effects that those changes are having on the people of the world.”**

**Lenore England,** Philanthropist

# Thanks

## Collaborators

Thank you to all our collaborators. It is a privilege for the Climate Cares Centre to work with and learn from the **expertise of so many organisations, networks and people around the world**, who have been instrumental in driving our impact to date and we look forward to deepening and expanding these collaborations.



## Wider network

We are grateful for the guidance of our **Climate Cares Advisory Board**, and for the tremendous efforts of the **Connecting Climate Minds project team, Advisory Board** and **global network**.

## Funders

We are particularly grateful to our funders, without whom our work would not have been possible:

**Lenore England**

**Wellcome**

**AXA**

**The Robert H. N. Ho Family Foundation Global**

**Natasha Müller, Founder of Kokoro**

**Massachusetts Institute of Technology**

**Imperial College London**



## Design

With thanks to **Pip Robyn Design** for designing this report.